

LONG SLOW
e x h a l e
Pilot/101

"Traveling Violation"

Written by
Pam Veasey

Revised 6.2.20

LONG SLOW EXHALE

Pilot/101

"Traveling Violation"

FADE IN:

1 **EXT. GEORGIA STATE HIGHWAY 19 - DAWN** 1TITLE: **TODAY**

Orange blades of sunlight bleed through the thick rows of shortleaf pine and mesic oak trees that line the narrow two-lane highway.

A SEDAN appears on the horizon. Only vehicle in sight. Its right turn signal flickers as the car pulls onto the shoulder of the road. The tires grinding against the gravel surface as it comes to a stop.

2 **INT. SEDAN - DAWN** 2

JANA "JC" ABERNATHY (40s) behind the wheel, weary and disheveled, disregards the continuous tick of the vehicle's blinker and stares down at her phone resting in the cup holder. She quickly shakes off whatever thought she had regarding her cell and instead lowers her driver's side window. Takes in the fresh air with a long slow inhale. Appreciates the sound of the rushing Chattahoochee River. Her eyes search her surroundings --

JC'S POV

Settles Bridge in the distance -- a rusty skeleton of the original, deckless and near collapse.

A TRUCK passes, moving well above the posted speed limit, causing the sedan to slightly rock.

JC

Shifts off the turn signal, tilts her head back against the headrest, swipes her brow with her forearm -- leaving traces of... BLOOD? JC catches a glimpse of her reflection in the rear view. SEES the streak of RED. Recollection overwhelms her. Panic replaces exhaustion. She quickly pops the car's trunk. Bolts from the driver's seat.

3 EXT. SEDAN - SHOULDER OF THE HIGHWAY - DAWN

3

As JC hastily approaches the open trunk of her sedan, she unbuttons and slips out of what we now see is a BLOOD-STAINED BLOUSE. She shivers in the cool, morning breeze that seems to intentionally target her exposed torso. Her gaze shifts -- scanning the horizon for oncoming vehicles and the nearby trail for curious joggers. Nothing and no one in sight.

INSIDE THE TRUNK -- JC'S HANDS

Rummage through a DUFFEL. Retrieve a SWEATSHIRT. Toss the BLOODY BLOUSE into the trunk. The shifting of the items: duffel, a gym bag, a large crumpled tarp and a collection of reusable shopping totes REVEALS... very briefly, what looks like A LIFELESS HUMAN HAND! WTF!?!?

JC

Pulls the sweatshirt over her head and slams the sedan's trunk shut. Exhale.

JC (V.O.)
(her thoughts)
Stay calm. Just stay calm.

JC rounds the vehicle toward the open driver's side door, slides behind the wheel, jerks the car door closed.

4 INT. SEDAN - SHOULDER OF THE HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

4

JC tilts the rear view toward her face and vigorously wipes the dried blood from her brow.

JC (V.O.)
(her thoughts)
Turn back.

She grips the steering wheel. Shakes her head. Her breathing rapid and deep.

JC (V.O.)
(thoughts)
No. No. I can't go back.

Tears fill JC's eyes.

JC (V.O.)
Not now.

She quickly shakes off her emotions, pushes the car's ignition button. And as the sedan pulls onto the road and OUT OF VIEW--

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

THE RISING SUN BLINDS US and WE... BLOOM TO WHITE

TITLE CARD: *LONG SLOW EXHALE*

TITLE: **11 MONTHS AGO**

WE HEAR -- PING. PING. PING.

TIGHT ON

A BASKETBALL

Rotating in SLOW MOTION, descending from an open palm and colliding with a hardwood floor.

PING. PING. PING.

We get a glimpse of the NCAA FINAL FOUR LOGO embossed between the recessed black lines of the basketball's leather.

PING. PING. PING.

SUDDENLY... The sound of the bouncing ball is suffocated by the enthusiastic PLAY BY PLAY OF COMMENTATORS and the RHYTHMIC CHANTS OF A CROWD--

--INSTANTLY the ACTION ACCELERATES. REVEAL WE'RE--

5 **INT. PEPSI CENTER - DENVER, COLORADO - NIGHT**

5

This is the NCAA Women's Basketball Championship. **CLAYTON HALL COUGARS** versus the **KENNEWICK STATE UNIVERSITY TIGERS**. The arena is packed. The crowd on their feet.

POV of cell phone cameras capturing the game on video or LIVE on Instagram.

DEFENSE! (Clap-Clap) DEFENSE! (Clap-Clap) DEFENSE!

Players and Coaches of both teams are off the bench, hovering near the sidelines.

The Cougars' Point Guard, **ELFRINA "EL" POWAUKEE** (19) stunning Native-American, hair swept back into a single brunette braid -- the length of which is unknown as it's tucked beneath her jersey -- bounces the ball down the floor, fighting off pressure from an opponent. She glances at --

THE GAME CLOCK

Seconds tick away -- 00:23... 00:22... 00:21...

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

COMMENTATOR #1 (O.S.)
The Cougars have done a fantastic
job of facing K-State's two three
zone.

COMMENTATOR #2 (O.S.)
Tigers have no time outs remaining.
Clayton has one.

ELFRINA POWAUKEE

Shifts her attention toward --

THE SCOREBOARD: KU-75 CLAYTON-73

COMMENTATOR #1 (O.S.)
Abernathy's gotta put her best
three-point shooter Shannon
Crawford back in the game.

COMMENTATOR #2
Do they go for the win or a tie?

Clayton's Head Coach, JC Abernathy, at this moment -- a
vision of beauty, strength and uncompromising confidence.
[Her hair is cut in a fashionable bob -- our visual
difference between 11 MONTHS AGO and TODAY] JC makes eye
contact with Elfrina, while **ASSISTANT COACH EMILY FISK** (30s)
leans close and offers Abernathy her opinion. JC shakes her
head.

JC
(calls out to the
players on the
floor)
Let's win this! You can do it!

Clayton's **ASSISTANT HEAD COACH EDDIE HAGEN** (30s), handsome
with a striking smile and easy demeanor, signals a play.

HAGEN
Two! Two!

ON THE BENCH

The Cougars' Power Forward, **SHANNON CRAWFORD** (22), quickly
jerks her head in the direction of Hagen and Coach
Abernathy. Frowns. Her reaction goes unacknowledged as she
plops down in a chair next to a fidgeting and nervous **LORNA
AVERY** (18)-- clenching her fists, biting her lip, overwhelmed
by the crucial final seconds of the game. Next to Lorna is
CORRINE PORTER (20), a lean, fit, player, who shows no lack
of confidence, cheering on her teammates. Senior, **PAT
HAINES** (21), lowers her head, closes her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2)

5

She can't watch.

COMMENTATOR #2 (O.S.)
Powaukee moves into half court.

COMMENTATOR #1 (O.S.)
Doesn't look like Abernathy's
taking that time out.

COMMENTATOR #2
Tigers need to double team and
commit a foul, here.

*THE ANNOUNCERS' PLAY BY PLAY AND THE CROWD'S CHANTS FADE.
WE HEAR ONLY THE DEEP, CONTROLLED BREATHING OF THE PLAYERS,
THE SQUEAK OF THEIR SNEAKERS AGAINST THE HARDWOOD COURT AND
THE BOUNCE OF THE BALL.*

ELFRINA

Delivers a swift pass -- WHOOSH -- to her teammate --

RENEE BAILEY(21)

Just outside the top of the key, unguarded and in position to score. Renee shoots the ball. It bounces off the backboard.

The Cougars' red-shirt freshman sensation, **JORDAN DURAN**(20), short, feisty and fast, goes for the rebound, but --

THE BASKETBALL

Is tipped by a Kennewick Player.

JORDAN

Scrambles after it. But it's --

COUGARS' TRUE FRESHMAN, VERDELL IGAHAR(17)

Lanky, with long arms and legs, an unpredictable athlete whose suburban girl appearance contradicts her aggressive behavior, scoops up the ball, hesitates -- panic swells. She tries to make a move but under the pressure loses balance, and is just about to step out of bounds when she shovels the ball back to --

RENEE

In the corner. Completely alone. No question it's a three-pointer from that distance.

Renee's fingertips grasp the ball.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (3)

5

She pump fakes a pass then dribbles -- remaining behind the three-point line.

JORDAN

Shoot it!

ON THE SCOREBOARD

00.03.45 seconds and counting.

IN SLO-MO --

RENEE

Lifts from the ground, bends her elbows and releases--

THE BASKETBALL

Floats above the paint.

ABERNATHY

Watches its flight.

THE BALL

Slams against the backboard, swirls around the rim -- once, twice...

THE BACKBOARD BLOOMS TO RED AS TIME RUNS OUT.

A BUZZER BELLOWS

THE BASKETBALL

Gently funnels through the net. WHOOSH!

SILENCE erupts into PANDEMONIUM! THE SPECTATORS are ON THEIR FEET.

COMMENTATOR #1 (O.S.)

It's an upset! They've done it!
Clayton Hall Cougars are the NCAA
Women's Basketball National
Champions!

RENEE BAILEY

Is toppled to the floor by the embrace of her teammates.
RED, WHITE AND BLUE CONFETTI rains from above.

JC ABERNATHY

Exhales.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (4)

5

A small prideful smile blooms to a grin as she watches her players celebrate. She then turns and blows a kiss toward --

THE STANDS

Where her HUSBAND, **GARRET FOSTER**(40s) and SONS, **WILL**(15) and **LOGAN**(13) wave and cheer.

After a handshake and a whisper into the ear of the opposing Head Coach, JC joins in the celebration.

IN A SERIES OF QUICK STYLIZED JUMP CUTS --

JC

-Embraces her assistant coaches, Eddie Hagen and Emily Fisk.

-Poses for photos, while grasping a hold of the championship trophy with Clayton Hall's **ATHLETIC DIRECTOR HILLMAN FORD**(50s).

-JC embraces her husband and sons.

GARRETT
(over the crowd
noise)
So proud of you.

WILL
Way to go, Mom.

JC smiles, shares an ELABORATE "SECRET" HANDSHAKE with her youngest son, Logan, just before she gets pulled away--

JC
Love you guys.

FROM ATOP A LADDER

-JC snips the nylon fibers, separating the net from the rim of the basketball hoop. Her broad smile captured on her players' cell phone cameras.

6 **INT. PEPSI CENTER - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT**

6

[THIS SCENE IS INTERMITTENTLY SEEN THROUGH PHONE AND NEWS BROADCAST CAMERAS]

JC surrounded by her players and coaches dances a popular Tik Tok routine with Jordan and Corrine. The players recording the well-choreographed moves on their phones and sharing it on social media.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

TEAM

Go JC! Go JC! Go JC!

JORDAN

Okay, Coach.

TEAM

Champs! Champs! Champs!

Just beyond the group--

SHANNON CRAWFORD

Leans against a locker taking in the celebration. Tears streaming down her cheeks. Teammate, Lorna Avery, pulls her into a hug. PAN TO--

ELFRINA

Phone to her ear.

ELFRINA

(speaking loudly
over the noise)

Mama, where are you? I didn't see
you after?

INTERCUT WITH:

7 **INT. COLTON CREEK BAR - NIGHT**

7

Crowded. Noisy. Several tables line the walls that are decorated with license plates and hub caps. Twelve red leather stools are occupied at the bar. A collection of neon beer signs emit a constant high-pitched buzz that rises above the rock music that bleeds from the speakers.

Near a table, **WAITRESS, ADA POWAUKEE** (late 30s), a beautiful, Native-American woman with light eyes, dark hair and a smooth caramel complexion presses her cell to her ear with her shoulder as she serves beers to three men at a table. One slaps her ass as she walks away. She flips him off.

ADA

(into phone)

Baby, I can barely hear you. I'm
at work.

ELFRINA

(into phone)

I thought you were coming... I left
a ticket for you...

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

ADA
(into phone)
Didn't get a chance to... Truck's
in the shop. But I know you did
good.

ELFRINA
(into phone)
Did you at least watch?

ADA
(into phone)
I tried to, Elfrina, but you know
how Jake gets about the TV at the
bar.

Ada moves to the bar and sets down her tray. She is
distracted from her call by a Young Male Bartender, JAKE,
who kisses her neck from behind. His hands roam her shapely
figure. She smiles.

ADA
Jake, stop.
(into phone)
El, I gotta go. Call me later. I
want to hear everything.

Ada surrenders to the public display of affection.

8 **INT. PEPSI CENTER - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT**

8

ELFRINA
(into phone)
Mom?

Elfrina, deeply disappointed, MOVES OFF and PASSES--

HER TEAMMATES

Chanting and dancing. Drenching each other with water --
water bottles replace the traditional champagne celebration.
And the contents of a water cooler is dumped on Associate
Coach Emily Fisk.

JC [PRE-LAP]
--Very proud of my Team and
tremendously happy. Which is
something you guys never hear me
say. Actually--

CUT TO:

9

INT. PEPSI CENTER - PRESS CONFERENCE - NIGHT

9

Microphones on a table. A blue vinyl backdrop dotted with sponsors' logos. The CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY prominently displayed.

JC sits on a dais next to Jordan Duran. Besides being fast and feisty, Jordan is also very funny. What you see is what you get with Jordan. A very happy Renee Bailey and a rather reserved Shannon Crawford flank them.

JC

--I think my husband, Garrett, and my two sons just might be happier than I am. I'm kinda tough to live with after a big loss.

JORDAN

You think?

Laughter erupts.

REPORTER #1

Coach Abernathy, did you consider going for the tie?

JORDAN

(interrupting)

I did.

Press members chuckle.

JC

(smiling at Jordan)

No. We came here to win.

REPORTER #2

Shannon, you gathered your teammates at the top of the fourth quarter. Looked pretty animated. What did you tell them?

SHANNON

(mellow)

Just stay focused. We could win.

JORDAN

It was Renee who was yelling like she lost her mind.

RENEE

Nuh uh.

JC

Uh huh.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

Laughter.

RENEE

(explaining)

It's my senior year. Kennewick beat us last year in the Elite 8. Year before that they embarrassed us in the Sweet 16. Shoot, I wanted that trophy.

JORDAN

What she had said was, "time for payback, bitches."

Laughter erupts.

JORDAN

Oops. Can I say that?

RENEE

Dang, Jordan.

REPORTER #3

Coach, are the rumors true that your assistants Emily Fisk and Eddie Hagen are leaving Clayton to take over other programs?

JC

Our focus has been on winning a national championship.

JC turns to field other questions. End of discussion on that topic.

REPORTER #4

Three of your starters are returning. Your bench is strong. Any predictions for next year?

JC

Yeah. Repeat!

High fives are exchanged with a chorus of whoops and hollers. Off Jordan Duran lifting and kissing the trophy then raising it above her head--

10 **INT. HOTEL SUITE - LATER THAT NIGHT**

10

SLOWLY PAN a wall of windows that provide a view of the illuminated Denver Skyline. In the foreground, a packed suitcase is open on the bed. Several flower arrangements and gift baskets, adorned with the red, white and blue colors of Clayton Hall Cougars, clutter a small desk. WE HEAR the sound of WATER FROM A SHOWER.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Whoohoo! National Champions!

JC (O.S.)
(thru laughter)
Ssssh.

CUT TO:

11 INT. HOTEL SUITE - BATHROOM SHOWER - NIGHT

11

Beads of water cascade over skin. JC stands under the shower head, chin lifted, eyes closed, her arms folded over her chest, her hands cupped beneath her arm pits. Her elbows rise and drop with each inhale -- exhale, as the steaming hot water pelts her flesh.

TWO HANDS

Massage her shoulders.

LIPS

Apply gentle kisses to the nape of her neck. REVEAL *Eddie Hagen* as he slides his hands around JC's shoulders and toward her breasts.

HAGEN
(whispers)
National Champions.

She turns to face him. Then--

JC
This ends tonight.

Hagen nods as he leans in to kiss her. JC pulls away.

JC
Eddie, look at me. I mean it. I love Garrett. This was... a weak moment, temptation that I let get out of hand. But I'm not gonna let it destroy my marriage.

HAGEN
Okay.

She lowers her head, expressing the shame she feels for participating in this infidelity.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

HAGEN
Hey, I hear you. I get it. It's
over.

JC appreciates his understanding, they fold into an
embrace...

HAGEN
(whispers)
Just let me have tonight.

--Then a kiss.

BLOOM TO BLACK

TITLE: ***EIGHT MONTHS AFTER THE CHAMPIONSHIP WIN***

12 **EXT. ABERNATHY/FOSTER HOME - DRIVEWAY - DAY**

12

An SUV in the driveway. On its hood are keys, a phone, a
leather tote and a coffee mug.

FIND

JC, dressed for work -- a coach's athletic wear, bouncing a
basketball. She goes one on one with her son, Logan, under
a garage-mounted hoop.

JC
You ready? You ready, Logan?

LOGAN
Mom, just shoot it.

JC steps back and attempts a three-pointer. The basketball
bounces off the rim and falls to the ground. Logan
celebrates, arms in the air.

LOGAN
Somebody's throwing bricks. Yes!

He runs off toward the house.

LOGAN
(calling out)
Will! Mom choked!

Garrett exits the house, carrying a cup of coffee.

GARRETT
(calling to Logan)
Hey, get your stuff. It's time to
leave for school.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

GARRETT (CONT'D)

(to JC)

What was the bet?

JC

Six Flags White Water on his
birthday.

Garrett grimaces and groans.

GARRETT

Oh, Jana. Nooo.

JC

Yeah, I know. Think if I offer him
a thousand dollars we can get out
of it?

GARRETT

We? I'm not going. I didn't miss
that shot.(laughing; off her
shock)Hillman just called the house
phone. He's been trying to reach
you.

JC checks her cell, dials.

GARRETT

Won't be home 'til late. We're
breaking ground on the Bunker Hill
Development.Garrett picks up the basketball, sinks it right before he
moves off.

JC

Show off.

(into phone)

Hillman. Hey... Practice this
morning. After that I--(listens; then
alarmed)

What? Alright, I'm on my way now.

13 INT. DRAKE ATHLETIC FACILITY - WOMEN'S LOCKER ROOM - MORNING 13

TIGHT ON

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

LORNA AVERY

Dressed only in bra and underwear as she stammers back against a locker. The result of a forceful push by--

CORRINE PORTER

CORRINE

Did I send for you! All up in my face like that.

It's a fight. The two grapple -- pushing, shoving, threatening to throw blows -- as their teammates move out of the way. Among them, Verdell Igahar, Jordan Duran and the newest recruit, **NIKKI DESANDRO** (17)-- a strikingly handsome and rather masculine-looking player. Elfrina Powaukee is focused on her phone -- on her SCREEN an Instagram DM regarding Shannon Crawford -- "Where U been?"

ELFRINA

Hey! Cut it out.

Their fight is more verbal than physical -- each encroaching on the other's space.

LORNA

I ain't afraid of you, Corrine.

CORRINE

Point your finger in my face again and see what happens.

LORNA

You need to keep Shannon's name out your mouth.

CORRINE

The rest of us are practicing. Where she been for the last two weeks?

JORDAN

If she ain't gonna play she shouldn't even be on the team.

LORNA

That's for Coach Abernathy to decide, not you.

As this continues...

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (2)

13

ANGLE ON VERDELL

Taking advantage of the chaos and shielded by her open locker door... She retrieves a carefully folded tissue from deep in her backpack. Unfolds it to reveal TWO PILLS. She quickly pops one into her mouth. Swallows it down with sports drink. THE OTHER TABLET FALLS FROM THE NAPKIN ROLLS UNDER A LOCKER. Verdell quickly bends, desperate to retrieve it. Unreachable.

VERDELL

(whispers)

Damn it.

When Verdell looks up she makes eye contact with Nikki Desandro.

VERDELL

Can I help you with something,
Nikki?

Nikki quickly looks away.

LORNA

You know what? You need to stay
outta other people's business,
Jordan.

JORDAN

Who you talking to? Say something
else to me, bitch, and I'll knock
what's left of those lemon drop
titties off your chest.

"Ooohs" and "Aaahs" followed by laughter.

JORDAN

And before you keep running your
mouth... Shannon was shitting all
over your game last season. Reason
you barely got to play.

LORNA

Shut up.

CORRINE

(off Lorna's look)

Oh, you thought she was your girl,
huh?

JORDAN

(cackles; then...)

Ah, yeah, no. Got your mouth
hanging open now, don't cha?

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (3)

13

Lorna is clearly stung by the comment.

CORRINE

Uh.. Uh... Whatchu say, Lorna? I didn't hear you?

Corrine and Jordan exchange smirks.

LORNA

You know what? I'm gonna pray for you two cuz you're both heathens.

CORRINE

Charges toward Lorna. But Elfrina pulls her back. Lorna throws a water bottle.

SUDDENLY TEAMMATES shift their eyes toward the threshold of the locker room. REVEAL--

ASST. COACH EMILY FISK

Standing in the threshold -- watching.

EMILY

Don't stop on my account. Makes it easier to set the lineup for the next game.

LORNA

They were talking badly about Shannon and Corrine pushed me.

CORRINE

What? We back in high school now?

JORDAN

They should call y'all Jehovah-snitches.

EMILY

Looks like we're starting practice with suicides. Let's go. In the gym. Now.

(pointing to Jordan
and Lorna)

I'll talk to you two later.

JORDAN

This ain't on me. I didn't do nothing.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (4)

13

EMILY

Exactly. You're a leader on this team. And you did nothing.

JORDAN

Tch.

(quietly to Corrine)

Shannon's a no show so now I gotta step up?

EMILY

Is there a problem, Jordan?

JORDAN

No, Coach. No problem.

Lorna and Jordan exchange potent side-eye looks. Lorna pulls on a shirt.

EMILY

Let's go! I want twenty from everybody! Length of the court.

NIKKI

Seriously?

ELFRINA

All of us, Coach? Really?

EMILY

Talk to your teammates about it, El.

A chorus of moans and complaints erupt: *"Are you kidding me?" "Gawd, I hate suicides." "This is so unfair."*

Coach Fisk is unfazed. Players head out of the locker room.

EMILY

Verdell, you too. Make sure they get it done.

Verdell slides her left foot into a flip flop and we see that her right foot is in a boot. She won't be participating in the drill. Coach Fisk hands her a whistle.

14 **INT. DRAKE ATHLETIC FACILITY - BASKETBALL COURT - DAY**

14

Verdell stands against the wall, whistle around her neck, watching as the rest of the Team [11 players] begin suicides -- run up, touch the ground, run back, touch the ground, run to the other basket, touch the ground and do it again.

Jordan shoots a look up toward the Coaches' offices where Emily Fisk keeps a watchful eye--

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

The two women make eye contact -- a momentary glance, just before Shannon is swarmed by the media.

"Is it true you're transferring from Clayton?" "Why are you leaving the program?" "Have you been cleared to transfer by the NCAA?" "Did you and Coach Abernathy have a disagreement?"

SHANNON

No comment. Can you let me through here, please? Pardon me. No comment.

17 **INT. TRESNOR ADMIN BLDG. - CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

17

JC, clearly rattled, shaking her head, is with UNIVERSITY **CHANCELLOR MELINDA BARRINGTON** and Athletic Director, Hillman Ford.

JC

I've reached out to Shannon Crawford by phone, text, email, with no response. Even left word for her parents. I don't know what her plan is or why she hasn't reported to practice. And I had no idea she was planning to transfer. She just left here so I'm guessing you know more than I do.

JC clocks the look between Hillman and Barrington.

JC

What is it?

BARRINGTON

Shannon has accused Assistant Coach Hagen of sexual assault.

JC is taken aback... shaken.

HILLMAN

Jana, is it true?

JC

(stunned; shaking her head)

What? No. I mean... Shannon never came to me and complained of any unethical or improper behavior by Assistant Coach Hagen.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

HILLMAN

Did she mention anything to the other coaches or your support staff?

JC

No.

DR. BARRINGTON

But you can't be sure of that.

JC

That's not something my staff would keep to themselves.

DR. BARRINGTON

What about emails or texts that might have suggested something was going on?

JC

If there was even the slightest whisper of misconduct I would have been told. And I would have immediately informed you, Hillman.

HILLMAN

Do you think Shannon Crawford is lying?

JC

(thinks a beat)

Gawd, I hope so. Because if she's not...

The thought leaves JC speechless.

DR. BARRINGTON

She claims, among other things, that her playing time throughout the season was directly connected to whether or not she...

(searching for the word)

--Satisfied Assistant Coach Hagen.

JC pauses at the disgusting thought.

JC

I decide who plays in a game.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (2)

17

DR. BARRINGTON

But your assistant coaches do advise you about potential match-ups or a particular player's strengths and weaknesses against your next game opponent.

JC

Yes.

DR. BARRINGTON

And Eddie Hagen offers his opinion about who starts, who goes in the game?

JC

All of my assistant coaches prepare analysis after scouting and watching film. And I decide who starts.

DR. BARRINGTON

I understand that Shannon Crawford is our best three-point shooter.

JC

Number one in the conference.
(impatient)

Why?

Dr. Barrington takes note of the tension. Doesn't flinch.

DR. BARRINGTON

In the final championship game you could have easily called a time out, made a substitution. Put Shannon in the game. But you didn't. Why not?

ON JC

Clearly smarting from being challenged about her decisions as a coach as well as the implication.

JC

What you're implying, Chancellor, is absolutely ridiculous.

HILLMAN

I'm not going to mince words here, JC. And pardon my language, but Shannon said she refused Hagen a blow job earlier that day--

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (3)

17

JC
This is absurd. You know this is
insane, right?

HILLMAN
--And because she refused him, she
was benched a majority of the
fourth quarter and was denied the
opportunity to play in the final
minutes.

JC gently shakes her head, shifts her glare from Hillman to
Barrington and back again.

FLASHBACK TO:

18 **INT. PEPSI CENTER - NIGHT**

18

*The Cougars are out on the floor for warm-ups. JC and Hagen
watch the Team.*

HAGEN
Shannon seem a little off to you?

JC turns her attention to--

SHANNON

On the court, chasing an errant pass from a teammate.

JC
Nervous maybe.

BACK TO:

19 **INT. CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE - TRESNOR ADMIN BLDG.- DAY**

19

JC shakes off the memory.

JC
The five young women that were on
that basketball court were clearly
capable of executing the play and
obviously did so. We won the
National Championship.

HILLMAN
You've known Eddie for a long time.

JC
Five years. Four as my Assistant
Coach.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

HILLMAN

I need you to be honest, Jana. Not just with me, but with yourself. Is there anything you know... Something our inquiry might uncover that would support Shannon Crawford's accusations against Eddie Hagen of sexual assault?

JC stares at Hillman, then drops her eyes, shakes her head

FLASHBACK TO:

20 **INT. DENVER HOTEL SUITE - BATHROOM SHOWER - NIGHT**

20

A SERIES OF QUICK STYLIZED CUTS WHIZ BY:

JC's legs wrapped around Hagen's waist. Her back pressed against the shower tile. Beads of water cascading over their entwined bodies. His hands firmly gripping her buttocks as he thrusts back and forth. Each are gasping and moaning, anticipating climax...

BACK TO:

21 **INT. TRESNOR ADMIN BLDG. - CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

21

JC

No. Nothing.

Hillman and Dr. Barrington, nod, confident with her answer.

22 **INT. PUBLIC BATHROOM - DAY**

22

TITLE: **TODAY**

Water flows from a sink facet. Two cupped hands interrupt the flow.

JC

Splashes the water on her face. Takes note of small traces of blood under her short nails. Scrubs vigorously. Pumps the lever of the hand towel dispenser. Rips off a sheet.

She rummages through her tote for a brush. Runs it through her hair. Straightens her sweatshirt. Stares in the mirror.

JC (V.O.)

(her thoughts)

Damn it. What are you doing?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: 22

JC (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(then aloud to her
reflection)
Ugggh. Just go. Finish it.

JC exits the bathroom INTO --

23 **INT. RAINBOW CAFE - CUMMINGS, GA - DAY** 23

A diner slash bar. This is where the locals hang out. The walls are covered with a collection rodeo memorabilia -- mostly posters from the many years of the County Fair Roundup.

JC moves quickly toward the register. Waits impatiently for what seems like minutes to JC but is only seconds. Taking in the patrons around her -- avoiding any real eye contact. A **WAITRESS** extends a to-go coffee cup.

WAITRESS
(to JC)
One small coffee to go. You want
sugar or cream with that?

JC
No, black is fine. Thank you.

JC grabs the coffee. Hands the Waitress cash and moves out the door.

24 **EXT. RAINBOW CAFE - DAY** 24

JC approaches her sedan, quickly climbs behind the wheel. Slams the door shut and starts the ignition. Her sedan pulls out of the parking space.

25 **EXT. JC'S SEDAN/CUMMINGS FAIRGROUNDS - RODEO ARENA - DAY** 25

WE HEAR the WHOMP, WHOMP, WHOMP of a flat tire.

26 **INT. JC'S SEDAN - DAY** 26

JC, behind the wheel, scans her surroundings. Brings the car to a stop.

JC'S HANDS

Pound the steering wheel.

JC
Shit.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

JC (CONT'D)
(yelling)
What else can go wrong!?

JC pops the trunk, but before she climbs out of the car her cell rings. The sound startles her. She checks the caller ID then takes the call over her car's bluetooth system.

JC
Hey. What's up?

LOGAN
(thru speaker)
Where are you?

JC
I'm on a recruiting visit. I decided to leave early.

LOGAN
My soccer bag's in the trunk of your car, Mom. I need my cleats.

JC
Oh, Logan, I'm sorry. I didn't know. Just have your Dad buy you new ones.

LOGAN
Those are my lucky cleats. Can't you just come back before my game?

JC
I won't make it back before you start. If you don't want to buy new ones. Wear an old pair.

LOGAN
They don't match my uniform. It'll look stupid.

JC
Logan, please. You need new cleats anyway. You'll make 'em lucky.

LOGAN
(disappointed)
Alright.

JC
Hey. Good luck. I Love you. Bye.

JC thumbs out of the call, presses her forehead to the wheel. Waits a beat, then bolts from the car.

27 **EXT. CUMMINGS FAIRGROUNDS - RODEO ARENA - DAY**

27

The large parking lot and fairgrounds is empty. Not a car or soul in site. Not rodeo season. JC's sedan is parked beneath the stands of the Arena.

JC stares at the contents of her trunk. Lifts a gym bag (Logan's). Clocks a fresh blood stain -- soaking through the white threads of a BROOKHAVEN SOCCER TEAM PATCH. JC tosses the bag onto the ground.

JC carefully checks her surroundings -- no advancing traffic or pedestrians, no movement of any kind. She pushes against the tarp-wrapped body [WE DO NOT SEE THE FACE OR SEX OF THE VICTIM] She struggles to pull up the vinyl lining of the trunk.

JC manages to retrieve the lug wrench from beneath her load and tosses it to the pavement. Its collision with the asphalt echoes. Now the hard part -- the tire and the jack.

28 **EXT. CLAYTON HALL UNIVERSITY - CAMPUS QUAD - DAY**

28

JC and Hillman on the move. The quad is fairly empty, dotted with a small number of Pedestrians. Most of Clayton Hall's faculty and student body are attending classes. Hillman Ford divides his attention between texting and conversation.

HILLMAN

I've informed Eddie that he'll be taking a few days off.

JC

You spoke to him? What did he say?

HILLMAN

The details of his conversation with me are confidential.

JC

Hillman, come on.

HILLMAN

And university counsel would prefer that you not communicate with Eddie or Shannon. Not even through text or email.

JC

I'm sorry, but I can't promise that.

Hillman slows to a stop. Looks up from his phone.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

HILLMAN

We're trying to handle this internally. These are very serious allegations, Jana, that could reflect on this program and this University.

JC

I'm well aware of that.

HILLMAN

Then I would think you'd be on board with trying to protect Clayton Hall's reputation --

JC

Eddie Hagen is my assistant coach. I recruited Shannon. I'm close with her family. I'm possibly the only person who can find out what the hell is going on.

HILLMAN

(sternly)

Jana, determining what happened, if anything, is not your job.

(softens; but
through clenched
teeth)

And clearly, Shannon didn't feel she could come to you.

(calms)

As Athletic Director, I'm telling you to keep a low profile. For your own protection.

JC

Protection from what exactly?

HILLMAN

The truth. A lie or sexual assault. Either way, this looks bad.

(then)

Next week you can hold a press conference on Shannon's status.

JC

Which is what?

HILLMAN

At this point... we don't know.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED: (2)

28

JC

Shouldn't I issue some kind of statement or press release before then? Do I at least answer questions from compliance?

HILLMAN

The Title IX Director is not aware of this issue as of yet. We're taking this one step at a time.

JC

We have a game on Friday. My star player is MIA. And suddenly my assistant coach is no longer on the bench. The media will ask questions. I owe my players an explanation.

HILLMAN

Your assistant Coach is out sick and Shannon Crawford is... dealing with personal issues. What you should all be focusing on is winning a game.

(eyes his buzzing phone)

I gotta go.

Hillman Ford moves off, climbs into his JEEP CHEROKEE 4X4 and drives away. JC watches him go then retrieves her cell. Thumbs a number.

JC

(into phone)

Eddie, call me.

JC hangs up, moves off.

The familiar jingle of ESPN's SPORTSCENTER leads to--

SPORTSCENTER HOST #1 (V.O.)

...Where in the world is Shannon Crawford?

29 **INT. ELLIS DRAKE ATHLETIC FACILITY - MAIN HALL - SAME DAY**

29

JC moves through this contemporary and impressive tribute to Clayton Hall Athletics. Trophy cases adorned with decades of accolades from championship athletic teams -- the newest addition displayed beneath glass on a pedestal -- The Women's NCAA National Championship trophy. As JC disappears behind double doors--

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

SPORTSCENTER HOST #1 (V.O.)
She was spotted on the Clayton Hall campus today. However, sources confirm that Crawford did not attend class or practice with her teammates.

30 **INT. DRAKE ATHLETIC FACILITY COACHES' OFFICES/BULLPEN - DAY** 30

ON THE TELEVISION

A SportsCenter telecast -- Footage of Shannon leaving Tresnor Administration Building.

WIDEN TO REVEAL Assistant Coach Emily Fisk and support staff crowded around a wall-mounted flat screen television, while a Crew of Technicians are removing computers from cubicles and offices.

SPORTSCENTER HOST #1
The University and athletic department continues to downplay the absence of their All-American, All-Conference, star player. Without Crawford the Cougars are off to a slow start to say the least. 0 and 3. Coach JC Abernathy has yet to officially comment--

Suddenly the television blooms to black.

THE STAFF

Turns to see JC tossing the remote onto a desk as she moves into her office. Employees scatter.

31 **INT. DRAKE ATHLETIC FACILITY - JC'S OFFICE - DAY**

31

JC rounds her desk. It's an impressive space. Windows providing a view of the prestigious Clayton Campus as well as the basketball practice court one floor below. A wall of glass that blooms opaque with the touch of a button obscures her view to the office bullpen. JC touches the button as Emily moves into the threshold.

EMILY
The athletic department is confiscating all our computers. What's going on?

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

JC
This is the first I'm hearing of
it.

VIVIAN WILCOX, JC's assistant, moves past Emily.

VIVIAN
They need your tablet. Coach Fisk,
I'll need yours as well.

EMILY
I'm using it.

VIVIAN
If a device was issued by the
University they own it and
everything on it. And they have
the right... Blah, blah, blah.
Just telling you what they've told
me.

JC reluctantly hands her tablet to Vivian.

JC
Vivian, reschedule my recruiting
visits for Thursday.

Vivian nods, exits, closes the office door behindher.

EMILY
Coach Earl Delaney called.
Shannon's father sent him an email.
Implied she might be available to
play at Van Buren this season.

JC laughs.

EMILY
This is funny?

JC
I was imagining Earl pissing in his
pants from excitement when he read
that email.

EMILY
JC are we losing her? She's our
best player.

JC exhales...

EMILY
Okay. One more time. What's going
on?

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (2)

31

JC
(surrendering)
Emily, did Shannon ever come to you
complaining about Coach Hagen?

EMILY
Yeah. Countless times. She
complains about everything.

JC
Mmm. Yeah.

EMILY
Just tell me, JC.

JC
This is not to be repeated.
Doesn't leave this room.

EMILY
Understood.

JC
Shannon is accusing Eddie of sexual
assault.

EMILY
What?

JC
I was as shocked to hear it as you
are. You never suspected anything,
right? Shannon never suggested
something was wrong?

EMILY
No. Of course not. Oh, my gawd.
Eddie? What do we do?

JC
I don't know, Em. I don't want to
believe it's true. But why would
Shannon lie?

Both ladies are stunned to silence and close to tears.

32 **EXT. CUMMINGS FAIRGROUNDS - RODEO ARENA - DAY [TODAY]**

32

JC tightens the last lug nut on the spare tire.

SWAYNE (O.S.)
(calling out)
Looks like I arrived too late.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

JC jumps. Turns to see **ARLIN SWAYNE** (30s+), rugged, scruffy, wearing a cowboy hat, flannel shirt and jeans. JC rises, slams the car trunk shut, clenches the lug wrench, moves toward the driver's side of her car.

SWAYNE

Too late to help you change that tire. I can check the lug nuts. Make sure they're tight.

JC

(cautious)

I'm good. Thanks.

SWAYNE

(sincere; sees her caution)

Sorry. Forsyth County Sheriff's Department called me. Someone reported a car near the arena. Lot a times it's kids smokin' pot. Vandalizing property. I keep an eye on things around here. Security.

JC

I was just leaving.

He extends his hand.

SWAYNE

Arlin Swayne.

JC hesitates, but then surrenders to the handshake.

SWAYNE

Want me to put that tire back in your trunk? Sure you can get that nail pulled out. Tire patched.

JC

It's pretty old.

SWAYNE

Still some good tread there. I always say roll on 'em 'til they're bald.

JC

Better if I just get a new one. Is there a place I can get rid of it?

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: (2)

32

SWAYNE

I can do that for you. You know,
that's a temporary spare?

(off her nod)

You headed far? Best you don't
drive more than 70 miles.

JC

I'm good.

SWAYNE

Well if you're here mid October,
look me up. County Fair. Get you
into the rodeo. Something
everybody should see once. Didn't
get your name?

JC

Ah... JC.

SWAYNE

Nice meeting you, JC.

JC climbs into the car, starts the ignition.

33 **INT. SEDAN - DAY**

33

JC tosses the lug wrench into the backseat. She jumps when--

TAP, TAP, TAP. Arlin raps a knuckle against the driver's
side window.

JC rolls down the window. Arlin lifts Logan's gym bag that
she tossed from the trunk.

SWAYNE

Think you forgot this.

JC's POV

The blood-stained patch and fabric of the bag facing toward
her.

JC reaches for the bag, quickly pulling it through the
window and inside the car.

JC

Thanks.

Her sedan pulls away.

34 **INT. SEDAN - DAY** 34

IN THE REAR VIEW

JC watches as Arlin rolls the flat tire toward his truck.

35 **INT. DRAKE ATHLETIC FACILITY - TRAINING ROOM - NIGHT** 35

Several therapy tables and various equipment. Verdell in shorts and a t-shirt sits on a training table. **TRAINER, MEGAN RILEY** applies pressure to Verdell's right ankle.

MEGAN

Swelling is gone. But you're still feeling pain?

VERDELL

(flinching)

Ahh. Yeah. I finished the prescription Dr. Sloane gave me long time ago. Need a stronger dose or something. I mean it's been like eight weeks.

MEGAN

High ankle sprain. Some are worse than others. Takes time to heal.

VERDELL

Come on, Megan. Dr. Sloane will refill the prescription if you call him.

MEGAN

That's not exactly how it works, Verdell.

VERDELL

Coach Hagen said he'd call but he's not here. We play TU tomorrow. Shannon's not playing and I'm out too? Nikki's a freshman. They'll eat her alive.

MEGAN

Just ice it for a few more days--

VERDELL

(instantly enraged)

Ice. What's that gonna do? I need the pain to go away so I can play!

Verdell hops off the table heads out. Megan watches her go. JC, bag over her shoulder, witnessed the exchange and goes after Verdell.

36 INT. ATHLETIC FACILITY - WORKOUT ROOM - NIGHT

36

JC trails behind a frustrated Verdell.

JC

Hey!

Verdell turns, ready to attack -- sees JC; instantly softens.

JC

I know it's frustrating.

VERDELL

Megan don't care. I could be giving birth to two big-headed twins and she'd be telling me to ice it for a few days.

JC

(suppresses a laugh)

That's not true, Verdell. What we don't want is for you to further injure yourself and then not have you for the rest of the season. We need you in the tournament.

VERDELL

You think that's gonna happen with all that's going on?

JC

What's going on?

VERDELL

Shannon.

JC

What about Shannon?

VERDELL

We're waiting on you to tell us, Coach.

A bit of a Mexican standoff. Until--

JC

This conversation is about you. Jump.

VERDELL

What?

JC

Jump up. As high as you can.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

Verdell grits her teeth.

JC

You know why you're hesitating?
Cause you know it's gonna hurt like
hell.

JC starts laughing.

VERDELL

What's so funny.

JC

You remind me of me. When I
played. I was cocky, sure of
myself, thought I knew more than my
Coach and trainer. Played with an
injury. I was terrible.

(mimes shooting a
basket)

Bricks. Entire game.

VERDELL

Thought you weren't very good
anyways.

JC

Hey. That's not the point.

Now they're both laughing.

JC

We need you, Verdell. But right
now, shut up and heal.

JC moves off.

37 **EXT. DRAKE ATHLETIC FACILITY - PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT**

37

Very few vehicles remain. JC's steps echo as she approaches
her vehicle. THEN SUDDENLY --

A HAND

Grabs her arm.

HAGEN (O.S.)

(urgent whisper)

Jana.

JC is startled. Jumps. Turns to see Eddie Hagen, haggard,
fidgety, rattled.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

JC

Shit. You scared me.

HAGEN

I'm sorry.

He pulls her into the shadows.

JC

Where have you been? Why haven't you responded to my texts or returned my calls?

HAGEN

I didn't think it was a good idea.

(then)

This is fucking crazy. Right? I didn't do what Shannon said I did, JC, I swear to you. And Hillman says, "I'm officially out sick."

(rattled; emotional)

You think I should hire a lawyer? I mean it's my word against hers.

JC

Did Hillman say you needed a lawyer?

HAGEN

(pleading)

--You've gotta tell them that I didn't do this. That Shannon made the whole thing up.

JC

I don't think--

HAGEN

--They trust you. If you say it, they'll know she's lying. You have to tell them that Shannon is lying.

JC

I haven't even talked to Shannon, yet.

HAGEN

(thru clenched teeth)

She's lying JC.

(softens)

You can make this all go away.

A beat. Off her look.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (2)

37

HAGEN

(dawning)

You don't believe me. You don't believe I didn't do it.

JC

I didn't say that, Eddie. It's just that none of this makes sense. Why would Shannon want to face the scrutiny? Risk being caught in a lie. Tarnish every opportunity she has ahead of her.

HAGEN

She wanted to be the star of the National Championship game and you took that away from her. You didn't play her in the last minutes.

JC

She told you that?

HAGEN

A few of the other players mentioned that she was pissed about it.

(then)

This is revenge.

JC

That was eight months ago. And if that's true why isn't she coming after me?

HAGEN

I don't know.

(then)

But what better reason for the NCAA to allow her to transfer and play for another school without having to sit out a year.

JC

You think it's a calculated plan to transfer? I just don't believe Shannon would be that petty and irresponsible. She can't be that stupid.

Hagen stares at JC.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (3)

37

HAGEN

I didn't do what she's accusing me of. JC, I swear to you I didn't do it. If this gets out my career is over. I'm done. Doesn't matter that I'm innocent. Fuck. I can't believe this is happening to me, right now. You've gotta help me.

JC pulls him into a hug.

TIGHT ON

A basketball game in progress. TU versus Hampton College. Our PICTURE PAUSES... REWINDS. WIDEN TO REVEAL WE'RE--

38 **INT. ABERNATHY/FOSTER HOME - JC'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT**

38

Walls are decorated with framed articles and engraved accolades of JC's many years in women's college basketball.

JC sits behind her desk. Studies film of the Cougars next opponent. The glow of her computer monitor and a small desk lamp -- the only light in the room.

GARRETT (O.S.)

You should get some sleep, Jana.

JC turns to see Garrett entering the room. He wraps his arms around her.

JC

I gotta another hour of film. I'd like to win our game.

GARRETT

Might be tough with all that's happening. What are you gonna do?

JC

I've been asked to...lay low.

GARRETT

You're the head coach. How exactly does that work?

JC

As Hillman explained it. Right now this is just about Shannon not playing... nothing else.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

GARRETT

So you're not doing press after the game?

JC

Cross that bridge when we get to it, I guess.

GARRETT

(shrugs)

Odd strategy.

JC

The administration is handling it all.

GARRETT

And what if Shannon doesn't like the way they go about it?

JC

Ugggh. I don't know. I just want to coach. Prepare for [the game](#). I've got recruits visiting campus next week.

GARRETT

You can't just blindly move forward, JC. How can you meet with those young players and act like nothing's going on? When this becomes public--

JC

--You think Eddie did it?

Garrett neither confirms or denies.

GARRETT

He's never been my favorite person you know that.

JC

(defensive)

Doesn't make him guilty of sexual assault, Garrett.

GARRETT

You're quick to defend him.

JC

I'm defending myself. I hired Eddie.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (2)

38

JC (CONT'D)

This whole thing speaks to my character and my judgment. If it did happen, if there was sexual assault, I had no clue. And Shannon was dealing with it. I'm the head coach. I have no good excuse for not knowing. And yet, I swear to you I just... I didn't know.

Garrett wraps his arms around his wife. Her rigid body softens in Garrett's embrace.

GARRETT

Your job isn't just coaching. You devote a lot of hours to the program.

JC

It doesn't matter. I go into people's homes and convince them that Clayton Hall is the best opportunity for their daughter. I ask for their trust and I promise that I will take care of their child. Sorry, I didn't know. Is that what I should tell Shannon's mother and father?

They stand quietly in their embrace.

39 **EXT. CLAYTON HALL UNIVERSITY - CAMPUS QUAD - ESTABLISHING** 39

Students on the move. Some on bikes and skateboards, toting backpacks and sporting headphones.

40 **INT. CAMPUS HOUSING APARTMENT BLDG. - MORNING** 40

Two Coeds move down the hallway as JC knocks on a door. The door swings open. Shannon Crawford stands in the threshold.

SHANNON

I can't talk to you.

JC

Shannon, please. I need to know what happened.

SHANNON

I don't want to talk to you about it.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

40

JC

I'm not here as your coach. I'm
here as your friend.

SHANNON

(smirks)

Then say what you gotta say and go.

JC

Can I at least come inside?

SHANNON

No.

JC

(surrendering)

Are you okay?

SHANNON

What do you think?

JC

Why didn't you come to me?

SHANNON

What? You butt hurt cuz you didn't
find out first?

JC

You should have told me or Coach
Fisk.

SHANNON

When? Right in the middle of our
undefeated run? Before we played
Notre Dame or after? Right before
the NCAA Tournament? The elite
eight? The Championship game? All
we kept hearing from you was, "stay
focused, no distractions."

(emotional)

And if I had come forward and we
lost? Who was everybody gonna
blame?

JC

Shannon, if you were being sexually--

SHANNON

If? If? So you came all the way
over here to see *if* I was lying?

JC

No--

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: (2)

40

SHANNON

Director Hillman told me not to talk to you. Please, just go away.

Shannon closes the door. JC, taken aback, is left staring at the closed door.

41 **EXT. DAYTON HALL UNIVERSITY - CAMPUS QUAD - DAY**

41

Shannon runs with urgency. A hood over her head conceals her face. She weaves through the throng of students and INTO--

42 **INT. DRAKE ATHLETIC FACILITY - DAY**

42

Shannon scales the grand staircase.

43 **INT. ATHLETIC DIRECTOR HILLMAN FORD'S OFFICE - DAY**

43

Shannon sits in a chair, wringing her hands, one leg bouncing repeatedly. Hillman Ford sits across from her.

SHANNON

I mean, I just walked across campus to get food and everyone was staring at me, whispering and pointing. I feel like I did something wrong. Do they know?

HILLMAN

You're the star player. Your absence is news. That's all anyone knows. Unless you you've shared your secret with someone, Shannon?

SHANNON

(shakes her head)

I wish I hadn't said anything. You promised me--

HILLMAN

I promised you that you would be able to transfer to another university and continue playing basketball. I've reached out to the NCAA. That's what you wanted when you walked in here three days ago. Now, I would normally take this to the Title IX--

Shannon shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED:

43

SHANNON

No, please. I mean... It's just...

She can't think of the words.

HILLMAN

What?

SHANNON

I feel like I made a mistake.

Hillman stares at her a beat.

HILLMAN

You can't take this back, Shannon.

Tears stream down her face.

44 **INT. VANDORFF SPORTS ARENA - NIGHT**

44

Pregame warm ups. Both teams on the floor. Spectators finding their way to their seats.

Players move to the PULSATING THUMP of rap music that booms from the arena's sound system -- Rico Nasty's latest hit.

SWISH, SWISH, SWISH.

Basketballs cascade through the hoop one after the other as the Cougars go through their drills.

ON THE SIDELINE

JC

Moves around the floor, weaving through the drills offers a last minute pep talk to her team.

JC

How we starting?

TEAM

Fast.

JC

How we starting?

TEAM

Strong.

JC

Who's got it better than us?

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

TEAM

Nobody!

JC

(to Corrine)

I don't want to see you sticking
that butt out on the free throw
line, Corrine Porter.

CORRINE

Dang Coach, how many times you
gonna tell me?

JC

How many times you gonna keep doing
it?

EMILY FISK

Studies the game plan then looks up her expression instantly
changes.

EDDIE HAGEN

Dressed in a suit coat and tie moves toward the bench.

JC

Clocks Hagen approaching and quickly advances.

JC

(urgent whispers)

What are you doing here, Eddie?

EDDIE

I'm innocent. Hillman can go screw
himself. I'm not hiding.

JC glances around. Can't make a scene. She puts her hand
on Eddie's shoulder walks him slowly toward the tunnel that
leads to the locker room.

JC

(with a smile)

You can't be here. You need to
leave.

Eddie stops.

EDDIE

No. I'm not surrendering, Jana.
This is my career and reputation
we're talking about. I'm fighting
back.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: (2)

44

JC

This isn't the way to do that.
Hillman is--

EDDIE

Hillman ain't thinking 'bout me.
I'm the sacrifice to save the
University's precious image. And
until he fires me, I'm the
assistant head coach and I'm here
to do my job.

JC

Go. Home.
(off Eddie's stare)
You've accomplished what you needed
to. You reported to work. But
suddenly, you're not feeling well.
I'm concerned, so I'm sending you
home. We've got a long stretch of
road games ahead and we need our
players healthy. Okay?

Eddie stares. Doesn't move.

JC

Eddie, don't make me call for
security.
(then)
Feel better.

She turns and walks back towards the bench. Clocks the
opposing coach and approaches. Shakes hands, engages in
pleasantries. Emily Fisk watches as Eddie exits.

45 **INT. FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT**

45

The place is packed -- standing room only. College frat
boys and coeds, beer and drugs. Music booming from a sound
system.

Several members of the team are among the party-goers, PAN
TO FIND -- Jordan and Nikki, rocking to music, beers in one
hand cell phones in the other. In the b.g. A LARGE SCREEN
TV plays SportsCenter highlights.

CORRINE

Drops a shot glass of whiskey in a beer and swallows it
down. Foam escapes from the corners of her mouth as she
empties the glass and high fives with the four frat boys
that cheer her on.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

JORDAN
(re: Television)
Ahhh, shit. Hold on, hold on, here
we go. Turn that up.

Everyone turns their attention toward the television.

ON THE SCREEN - SPORT CENTER HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GAME

Jordan moves down the court, passes the ball to Nikki. She sinks a three. Followed by three more clips of Nikki sinking three-point shots. The final one shown in three different angles.

NIKKI

On Instagram Live -- with Sports Center on the TV behind her.

NIKKI
Okay, a bitch made SportsCenter!!

PHONE CAMERA POV - Jordan moves into the frame.

JORDAN
Ain't gonna bring up the four
layups you missed. Oh. Did I say
that out loud?

ON CORRINE

CORRINE
(to Nikki; extending
her red solo cup)
Oh look, Freshman. My beverage cup
is empty.

NIKKI
Why y'all wanna dim my light like
that?

Nikki snatches the cup and moves off. Corrine high fives Jordan as they laugh.

ON VERDELL

Back against the wall, A HANDSOME BOY stands in front of her. He reveals TWO PILLS in the palm of his hand.

VERDELL

Attempts to grab them. But the Frat Boy snatches his hand away and places both tablets on his tongue. Verdell pouts. Frat boy leans close and kisses her.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (2) 45

Transfers a tablet into her mouth. She smiles. Swallows it down with his beer.

46 **INT. ELFRINA'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT** 46

Elfrina has sex with a MALE STUDENT. Her beautiful naked body atop his pulsating silhouette. He groans. Elfrina is silent.

KNOCKING ON THE DOOR

Startles them both. But neither allows the interruption.

KNOCKING CONTINUES

ADA (O.S.)

El, are you in there?

El quickly dismounts.

ELFRINA

Shit.

MALE STUDENT

Oh, El.

47 **EXT. ELFRINA'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT** 47

Ada, a bit disheveled, a bruise around her right eye, rings the doorbell. Standing shivering beside her is a young girl, her daughter, DANNY POWAUKEE, 14. Ada pounds on the door.

ADA

I know you're here, Elfrina.

The door opens. El, dressed in an oversized sweatshirt, peeks out.

ELFRINA

Mom.

ADA

Hey, baby.

DANNY

Hey, El.

Elfrina clocks her little sister. Shoots a disgusted look at her mother--

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

ELFRINA
Why'd you bring Danny? And what
happened to your face?

ADA
It's nothing.

ELFRINA
Stop seeing him, Mom.

ADA
I don't need to hear it, okay?
Listen, they're gonna turn off
electricity on me and your little
sister. I need some money.

ELFRINA
I thought you were working?

The Male Student, now dressed, opens the door wider and
moves past El.

MALE STUDENT
Catch you later.

Ada watches him go.

ADA
I just need two hundred dollars.
If it's a problem just say so.

ELFRINA
No... I mean... my stipend... I
just... don't get a lot, you know.

ADA
You said if you moved off campus
you'd get more money.

ELFRINA
I do.

ADA
Don't boosters slip you cash?
Look, I'll pay you back. I
promise.

Elfrina stares at her mother a beat.

ELFRINA
You said that last time.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: (2)

47

ADA
Shit, girl. You gonna make me beg
out here on your doorstep all
night?

Elfrina moves aside. She hates this. Ada and Danny enter.
The door slams shut.

48 **INT. ATHLETIC DIRECTOR HILLMAN FORD'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

48

An impressive office in the multimillion dollar Drake
Athletic Facility. A stunning view to the football stadium
below where a soccer game is in progress.

Hillman Ford stares out the window as JC enters.

JC
I got your message.

HILLMAN
Close the door. Have a seat.

JC closes the door but doesn't sit.

JC
(explaining)
I didn't know Eddie was coming to
the game.

HILLMAN
We have a bigger problem. Photos
recovered on Eddie Hagen's
computer. This is not something I
share easily, Jana.

JC
Okay.

HILLMAN
This isn't proof of what Shannon
said. It does establish an
improper relationship. Only you
and I, and the tech who recovered
them will know about this. Of
course, Eddie and Shannon both
know. The photos were found in an
email exchange between the two. I
don't know who else they may have
shared them with.

JC
Hillman, just show me.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

HILLMAN

I just want you to know that Shannon did not mention this. And Eddie doesn't know we've found them. What's important to remember is that you and I don't have to disclose our discovery of these photos unless necessary.

JC

You're asking me to lie.

HILLMAN

I'm simply saying that one thing may have nothing to do with the other. If Shannon failed to mention them... Why would we?

JC

Should I even see them?

HILLMAN

Yes. I want you to. Jana, I'm trying to spare us the public embarrassment. You brought a National Championship to this University. You are the face of this program. And I certainly don't want you blind-sided by anything.

Hillman motions for JC to move to the chair behind his desk. He moves the mouse connected to the computer.

JC sits in front of a computer. Her eyes fixed on the screen. Hillman stands behind her. She strikes the down arrow key on the keyboard. Light reflects off her lenses, each strike of the key a different flicker of light -- a slide show. Her face betrays her -- what she sees is not good.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

Photos scroll by:

-- Large breasts, nipples pierced, A RED X above the left nipple and adjacent to the words: "X marks the spot. Tattoo would look great right here."

-- Naked buttocks, a red X on the meat of the cheek.

-- Shaved female genitalia, a Red X just above the vaginal lips.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (2) 48

JC rises from the computer and walks out of the room.

49 **INT. ELLIS DRAKE ATHLETIC FACILITY - MAIN HALL** 49

JC moves down the hallway, coat on, a satchel over her shoulder, car keys in her hand. Her cell phone begins to buzz.

JC doesn't even look at the phone's screen and instead slides her phone into her coat pocket. It starts to ring as she exits the building. She doesn't answer.

50 **EXT/INT. DRAKE FACILITY - PARKING STRUCTURE/CAR - NIGHT** 50

JC climbs into her car. Sits behind the wheel of the car for a beat.

JC pushes the car's ignition button and pulls out of her parking space.

THE INCESSANT RINGING OF A DOORBELL SOUNDS.

51 **INT. APARTMENT BLDG. - HALLWAY - NIGHT** 51

JC pounds on the door. Returns to ringing the doorbell.

HAGEN (O.S.)

Okay, okay. I'm coming.

The door opens. Hagen, shirtless, sweatpants. Disheveled and groggy. Appears he was sleeping.

HAGEN

JC. Jesus, I know you're mad about the game--

JC

Shut up. You lied to me.

HAGEN

What are talking about?

JC

You lied. I saw the emails.

HAGEN

What are you talking about?

JC

The emails. The photos. X marks the spot? They took our computers from the offices.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

51

HAGEN
(realizing)
Shit. Shit.

Eddie's mind is reeling.

JC
You lied, Eddie.

She starts off. Eddie grabs JC by the arm.

HAGEN
No. Please. JC don't go.

JC breaks from his grip continues down the hallway. He follows.

HAGEN
I can explain. Just let me explain.

JC
What you have to say, I don't want to hear.

HAGEN
Please. Just give me two minutes.

The chime of the elevator down the hallway sounds.

HAGEN
Let's not do this out in the hallway. Come inside. JC, please.

JC reluctantly, moves into Eddie's apartment. Eddie follows closing the door behind them.

52 **INT. HAGEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

52

JC paces. Hagen pulls on a shirt.

HAGEN
It was an innocent discussion about tattoos.

JC
Your emails and those photos suggest otherwise.

HAGEN
Shannon was thinking about getting one.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52

HAGEN (CONT'D)

Couldn't decide where she wanted it. So I made a few suggestions. We laughed about it. And that was it. Never came up again.

JC

And you didn't see anything inappropriate about that?

HAGEN

It was just a joke, JC. Fuck. She's twenty-two years old. I thought I was having an adult conversation.

JC

You were her Coach, Eddie. What were you thinking?

HAGEN

I wasn't. It was a stupid, stupid mistake. But it was just about tattoos. How the hell do we get from emails to sexual assault?

JC

You tell me.

HAGEN

I know it looks bad--

JC

To say the least.

She heads for the door.

HAGEN

JC don't go. Please. It matters to me that you believe me.

She opens the door. He pushes it shut. Turns her around. Her back against the door. Their bodies very close.

HAGEN

You didn't have to drive all the way over here. You could have called me on the phone. But you wanted to look into my eyes and see if I was lying. What do you see?

(silence; a beat)

I'm scared. I don't know what to do. I'll do what you tell me to. Whatever you want me to.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (2) 52

They stare into each others eyes for a beat. Hagen brushes hair away from JC's face. Then she abruptly pushes his hand away, turns and walks out the door. Slamming it behind her.

BLOOM TO BLACK

TITLE: **TONIGHT**

53 **EXT. GEORGIA HIGHWAY 19 TURNOUT - NIGHT** 53

JC's sedan is idling. Parking lights on. Trunk facing away from the road.

54 **INT. SEDAN - NIGHT** 54

JC waits. Headlights blind her as a vehicle slows to a stop right in front of her sedan. JC pops the trunk, climbs out of her car.

55 **EXT. GEORGIA HIGHWAY 19 TURNOUT - CONTINUOUS** 55

A silhouette climbs out of Hillman's Jeep Cherokee parked just in front of her and advances. It's not until the figure gets much closer that we see it's her husband, Garrett Foster.

GARRETT

Okay, let's do this.

Garrett and JC move to the trunk of her car, lift the tarp-wrapped body from the back, then move into the brush. After a beat WE HEAR --

SPLASH! SPLASH!

They both return, climb into their vehicles and drive away AS WE --

DRONE ACROSS--

56 **THE CHATTAHOOCIE RIVER - NIGHT** 56

FIND A BODY FLOATING, face down, illuminated by the light of a FULL MOON. It drifts into a small series of rapids, sinks from our view and then suddenly bobs to the surface. Face up... REVEALING--

--THE LIFELESS FACE OF HILLMAN FORD.

FADE OUT.

END OF PILOT