

ADN

Written by

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EXT. US EMBASSY, CARACAS - DAY

Barricades and a few GUARDS. The foot traffic is light but the security is serious. A BUREAUCRAT (38) exits the gate. He looks NERVOUS. He checks over his shoulder, walks on.

INT. CREMA PARAISO - LATER

The Bureaucrat enters, anxiously scans the room, spotting a WOMAN already seated in the corner, facing the door.

This is EILEEN FITZGERLD, 44. She's attractive but it's her energy that leads. She's no bullshit with a confident charm. She's accessible but hard to pin down. She's who she needs to be in any given moment which right now is calm and warm.

EILEEN

Hi Steve. Good to see you.

STEVE

(Sitting)

Sorry, I'm late. I've only been here a few months. Kinda buried.

EILEEN

I appreciate you making the time. Hope I wasn't pestering you too much, I just wanted to make sure we got the chance to sit down face to face while I was here.

STEVE

Oh yeah. Me too.

(Eileen waits)

I know the confirmation hearing is coming up...

EILEEN

Six days. I publish in four.

STEVE

Right. Look I'm only doing this because I believe no one should be above the law. Even the good guys. And I do think the General's one of the good guys. Serving under him was the highlight of my career.

EILEEN

Of course.

STEVE

But I know a reporter with your reputation wouldn't be on this if it wasn't important.

EILEEN

It is important.

Steve nods, exhales, trying to muster his resolve.

STEVE

This is gonna derail the General's confirmation, isn't it?

EILEEN

Maybe. But considering he's the President's choice for Defense Secretary I think the American people have a right to know.

Steve nods, slipping deeper into self-doubt and regret.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Steve, did you bring the documents?
(Off Steve's blank look)
The thumb drive? Do you have it?

Steve looks at her, MOMENT OF TRUTH. Then...

STEVE

Ah shoot. I totally spaced. I'm sorry. It's back at the embassy.

EILEEN

(Pleasant)
No problem. I'll walk you back.

STEVE

(No way in hell)
Oh, no. That's OK. Really. I'll just grab it and...

EILEEN

Blow me off.

Steve freezes, cover blown. Eileen leans in.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Look, I get it Steve, this is scary and it's much easier to just do nothing. However doing nothing is no longer an option.

(MORE)

EILEEN (CONT'D)

This story's written and I came to Caracas because of your access to the General and the truth.

(she sits back)

One of the perks in working for The Vanguard is they will pay for my fancy hotel for as long as I need. So we can drag this out while you work up your nerve or you can give me that thumb drive in your pocket and you get on with your life.

Steve simply reaches into his pocket and places a THUMBDRIVE on the table. Yeah, Eileen's good. And scary as shit.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

You did the right thing, Steve. Thank you. And for what it's worth, I have a good feeling the American people are going to thank you too.

END OF TEASER

INT. KITCHEN, THE VANGAURD, NYC - AFTERNOON

Eileen is working a FANCY ESPRESSO MACHINE in a very MODERN KITCHEN. She's got her EARBUD in, mid conversation.

EILEEN (INTO PHONE)

Uh huh. Read that back to me.

She dumps a HEAP of sugar into her Americano and stirs as she exits into the newsroom. Floor to ceiling windows reveal Manhattan in all directions from the eighteenth floor of this classic flat iron building. This is a moneyed, modern American newsroom with all trappings. OZ for journo's.

EILEEN (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

No. Keep the second graf where it is. Drop that line in at the end. And I'm good with the art.

She passes a MASSIVE 70" flatscreen TRACKING READERSHIP. Below that, a BANK OF SMALLER TV'S playing various news outlets. Eileen peels off down a row of desks, each equipped with large flat screens as a DIVERSE STAFF (30's-40's) are buried in their screens and working the phones.

Eileen plops down at her cluttered desk, reads her piece with a feverish intensity.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Hey Eileen. You gotta a minute?

A YOUNG WOMAN, 28, Black, Ivy education hovers.

EILEEN
(Without looking up)
On deadline.

YOUNG JOURNALIST
It's about your story. It's
important.

EILEEN
Who are you?

YOUNG JOURNALIST
I'm Shailey Granger from research.
And not to overstep but I really
think you should consider providing
a bit more of the General's
background for context.

EILEEN
Context about what?

SHAILEY
(Gaining confidence)
A troubled childhood. First Black
cadet to finish top of his class.
He overcame a lot, broke a lot of
barriers. That might be relevant.

EILEEN
It's compelling, not relevant and
I'm thirty-five minutes from
publishing a story that I've spent
four months investigating and
although I appreciate your 'all
hands on deck' approach here...
well, come to think of it, I guess
I don't appreciate it. And, more
importantly, I really don't agree
with it. Thank you.

She turns back to her screen. Shailey beats a hasty retreat.
Tough love in the big leagues.

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - SUNDOWN

Eileen's story is topping the charts on the 70" screen
tracking readership. She's clocking it from the office of
RICHARD METHA, (60's, Indian, measured) at his desk.

RICHARD

The story's getting read. 15,000
uniques every ten minutes. And we
already have TV asks from Morning
Joe, Today Show, GMA.

EILEEN

Anything from the General?

RICHARD

Nothing yet.

EILEEN

Well, I have a date with a bottle
of wine and my couch.

RICHARD

Eileen. This is very good work.

With a half smile, Eileen exits the office. Job. Well. Done.

INT. EILEEN'S APARTMENT - LATER

Bad TV plays. Eileen is sprawled on the couch. A GLASS OF
WINE on the coffee table, next to the remnants of TAKEOUT.

Her phone rings. She checks it, hits speaker.

EILEEN

How we doing?

RICHARD(ON SPEAKER)

The General's team is going after
your source.

EILEEN

Shocker. Who'd he hire?

RICHARD

Baxter. Crisis Management.

EILEEN

Big time. He's nervous. Twitter?

RICHARD

It's scattered. A bit from the
right and the left.

EILEEN

The left?

RICHARD

The General's a Dem. Don't engage.

EILEEN

Deep in some quality broadcasting.

RICHARD

Good. Stay off your phone. Night.

Richard hangs up. Eileen's wheels are spinning. "The Left." She PICKS UP HER PHONE, she can't help herself. She starts scrolling, reads.

EILEEN

"Liberals must stop eating their own. The General is one of us."

(Shaking her head)

Yeah, if by "us" you mean a crook.

She's getting sucked in. She sits up, more scrolling.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

(To the Tweet)

Because you didn't read the whole article, you putz. If you did...

She starts typing, replying to the Tweet. She's in.

INT. EILEEN'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

It's RAINING outside. 4:30am on the clock. Eileen's asleep when her phone rings. She wakes, grabs it.

EILEEN

I still have ten minutes. Morning Joe's first up and it's at six.

RICHARD

We canceled it. We're getting blow back on the piece. Social media is leaning hard into the race aspect.

EILEEN

What race aspect?

RICHARD

You were on Twitter last night.

EILEEN

A bit. Let me defend my story.

RICHARD

Come on in and we'll discuss.

Click. Eileen sits up, confused and pissed.

INT. THE VANGAURD, RICHARD'S OFFICE - EVENING

End of a long day. Eileen sits in a large CONFERENCE ROOM with Richard, two other EDITORS, A SENIOR PR and a HEAD OF LEGAL. The tension in the room is thick. Eileen is on edge.

RICHARD

Anything from your source?

EILEEN

He's gone dark. Disappeared.
Embassy said he took personal time.

HEAD OF LEGAL

Did you know the General had an
affair with your source's ex-wife?

EILEEN

Obviously not. But I do wanna see
proof of that affair. They're
trying to discredit my source.

RICHARD

Either way, the documents your
source supplied are a real concern.
They claim they're photoshopped.

EILEEN

He's a bad guy. We know it.

RICHARD

Maybe but if those documents are
forged, it's an issue. They're
framing it as a hit piece with
racial motives.

SENIOR PR

(Looking at a print out)
These tweets are all you, correct?

EILEEN

Yeah, and I stand by them. Come on,
Richard, this is all smoke. The
fact remains, the General used his
power and connections to help bad
people sell arms and innocent
people died as a result!

RICHARD

There's another element at play,
Eileen. Connected to race.
(Off Eileen's look)
Complaints have surfaced. About how
you've treated the staff.

(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Especially women. Specifically
women of color.

EILEEN
What?!

SENIOR PR
Including one yesterday.

EILEEN
Who? Shailey? From research?

SENIOR PR
She's head of research.

EILEEN
And she overstepped! I'm not gonna
pull punches because she's a woman
or because she's black. That's how
you learn. That's how *I* learned!

RICHARD
Regardless. The narrative is
gaining traction.

EILEEN
Where?

SENIOR PR
It started with the Daily Beast.
Now the Times, Washington Post, and
Fox News have picked it up.

That lands with a thud. Eileen's taking water from all sides.
She scans the room. The faces of her colleagues are ashen.
She's the story now. She simply gets up and walks out.

LAWRENCE O'DONNELL (V.O.)
Eileen Fitzgerald is a highly
respected journalist. She has had
an outstanding career.

Colleagues try not to stare as she passes. Dead woman
walking. She grabs her coat and bag, keeps moving.

LAWRENCE O'DONNELL (V.O.)
But this story is, undeniably, a
stain on her reputation.

She walks past the BANK OF TV SCREENS. Only Lawrence is
audible. She arrives at the elevator, and presses the button.

LAWRENCE O'DONNELL (ON TV) (CONT'D)
 As for the charges of racism,
 bullying and misogyny. This is not
 the Ms. Fitzgerald I know.

She gets on the elevator and turns to face us.

LAWRENCE O'DONNELL (CONT'D)
 But we live in a time when these
 charges must be taken seriously and
 dealt with by Ms. Fitzgerald and
 her employer, the Vanguard.

And with that, the elevator door and this chapter of Eileen Fitzgerald's life, closes.

EXT. STREET, ISLAMORADO, FLORIDA KEYS - DAY

A painfully bright day in a place far, far away. Eileen is walking along a busy two lane highway, as cars speed past. She's dressed in jeans and an old t-shirt, wearing dark sunglasses and carrying a PLASTIC BAG OF GROCERIES.

EXT. STREET, ISLAMORADO, THE FLORIDA KEYS - LATER

Eileen walks down a quiet side street, the closer we get the worse she looks. She's obviously been through the ringer.

She approaches a line of identical WHITE CONDOS. Simple but nice, each with their own prefab white picket fence. She spots a MAN (60's) with a rumpled academic look, sitting on the steps of one condo, buried in his phone.

Eileen pauses for a minute, then pushes the gate open letting the door slam behind her. The Man looks up from his phone.

MAN
 (Smiling)
 Hi Fitzgerald.

EILEEN
 (Flatly)
 Stanley.

STANLEY
 Your hair's shorter.

EILEEN
 You haven't seen me in twelve
 years. Why are you here?

STANLEY
You wouldn't return my calls so I
thought I'd pop by.

EILEEN
'Pop by'. From Alaska.

Stanley shrugs, a wry smile on his face. Something's up.

INT. EILEEN'S CONDO - LATER

Eileen leads Stanley inside. She's tense. Stanley glances
around the place, it's simply furnished and a bit of mess.

STANLEY
Airbnb?

EILEEN
Bought it years ago.

She sets her bag down next to a row of empty WINE BOTTLES.

STANLEY
I never thought of you as a fun in
the sun kind of gal.

EILEEN
Well now you know.

There's a real edge to Eileen. She's changed, flat. The spark
is gone. Stanley notices some PAPERS on the table.

STANLEY
You working on something?

Eileen ignores him, busies herself with the groceries.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
Your side of the story?
(Off her look. What else?)
I'd like to hear it.

EILEEN
You can buy the book.

STANLEY
They should've had your back.

EILEEN
Yeah, well they saw the Twitter mob
coming and they ran the other way.

STANLEY

Your source was bad but so was the General. You were right.

EILEEN

And you flew 3,000 miles to commiserate with me. A little refresher, Stanley, you hung me out to dry too. Twelve years ago. The Cleveland Plain Dealer. Remember?

STANLEY

Yeah. I do. I screwed up.

EILEEN

You did! But here you stand. To that end, out with it, Stanley. Why are you here?

STANLEY

I'm here to offer you a job.

EILEEN

(Shaking her head)
Jesus...

STANLEY (CONT'D)

One year contract. General Assignment. No strings.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

I'm not that desperate, Stanley.

STANLEY

You're living in the Florida Keys!

EILEEN

At least it's warm.

STANLEY

You don't care about warm! You care about what's right and wrong.

EILEEN

I don't! I don't give a crap about right and wrong anymore! I'm out!

STANLY

You can't be out. You're too good!

EILEEN

(Angry)

I'm too good?! Really? Didn't you read the news, Stanley? Hashtag, my time's up. I'm a hack, a Karen, a racist, a misogynist, an elitist, and every other 'ist' you can name.

(MORE)

EILEEN (CONT'D)

I spent my whole career trying to root out injustice only to find out I'm not part of the solution, I'm part of the PROBLEM! So yeah, I'm out. I'm out, I'm out. I'm OUT!

Eileen sweeps the empty wine bottles off the counter. CRASH!

Stanley is stunned. Eileen can't make eye contact.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Thank you for the offer, Stanley.
My answer is no. Please leave.

Stanley can see she means it and it's fucking heartbreaking. He crosses to the door and after one last look, he's gone.

Eileen is left alone, deeply shaken. Whatever scab had formed was just ripped open. She goes to the counter, pours herself a big glass of wine. Her default. Her life boat.

DING DONG. Shit. She crosses the door, slowly opens it.

STANLEY

Can you at least point me to a crappy bar with a good burger?

Off Eileen's face. A glimmer... At least Stanley didn't run for the hills, like everyone else in her life. Ice broken.

INT. PUB - LATER

Stanley has a coke. Eileen has a glass of wine.

STANLEY

We just had our second kid when the Daily News reached out. Going home to Alaska felt right.

(Then)

You sure you don't want to eat something?

EILEEN

No. I'm fine.

STANLEY

Are you?

Stanley holds her gaze, deeply sincere. Eileen squirms.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Are you talking to anyone?

EILEEN

I'm talking to you. Or at least I'm trying to so can you stop.

Stanley shrugs, sits back, knows not to push.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

So you're the big boss now. Is it all you hoped for?

STANLEY

Yeah. It is. One catch: Alaska's a fat mess. Crime and corruption are spiking. One in three towns don't have a police department. Public institutions are failing and oil money is drying up so it's only going to get worse.

EILEEN

Sounds like heaven for a newspaper.

STANLEY

You'd think. But my staff has been cut from about a hundred and fifty to thirty and we're covering a state that's two and half times the size of Texas. It's embarrassing what we're missing. It's shameful.

EILEEN

You're a local newspaper in America. It's a divine miracle that you're still open.

STANLEY

And what happens when we're not? Considering how bad things are now, I can't even imagine Alaska with no oversight. No one asking the hard questions. Sounding the alarm.

EILEEN

You gotta plan B?

STANLEY

Had one. She just turned me down.

EILEEN

I'm one reporter. I couldn't fix your problem. You know that.

STANLEY

I also *know* I could never lure a big foot like you to Alaska if...

EILEEN

If I wasn't radioactive...

Stanley nods, pretty much. Then he pulls a PHOTO from his briefcase, places it on the table. It's of a NATIVE ALASKAN WOMAN (18, sweet face.)

STANLEY

Gloria Nagiac. Lived in a village, on the North Slope. She went missing after a party. Three months later, two hunters found her body in the woods outside her village.

EILEEN

(Picking up the photo)
Homicide?

STANLEY

The police ruled out foul play. They say suicide or accident. Her mother disagrees.

EILEEN

Most parents do. Look, that's horrible. But it's a story about a dead woman in Alaska. I've never even been to Alaska. Why me?

STANLEY

It's not just a story about a dead woman in Alaska. She's indigenous.

He sets a LARGE STACK of PHOTOS down. Maybe FORTY in all.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

So are they. It's a story about how Indigenous women in Alaska keep ending up missing or murdered and no one cares enough to find out why. We need to make them care.

Eileen leafs through the stack. ALL INDIGENOUS WOMEN. ALL MISSING OR MURDERED. It's ABSOLUTELY HAUNTING.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

It's a big story. One of a handful that I want to get before they turn out the lights. That's 'why you', Eileen.

(MORE)

STANLEY (CONT'D)

I'm here because I know who you are. I know that you've been through hell. But you still live and breathe to shine the light on what is wrong in this world. And what's happening in Alaska right now is very, very wrong.

She looks at Stanley and then back at the photos.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

The GATE SIGN reads ANCHORAGE. Standing below the sign is an impatient TICKETING AGENT.

EILEEN (O.S.)

Stanley. It's me. I'm standing at the gate and I'm leaving you this message so you have record of it.

Eileen is standing at the empty gate ignoring the Agent.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

What happened in Cleveland cannot happen again. I need to know that you have my back regardless of how it goes down. No excuses. And I report only to you. No one else.

TICKETING AGENT

Ma'am. We have to board.
Ma'am please. I'm going to close the gate.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Eileen is finishing a GLASS OF WINE in business class. The plane taxi's as a STEWARDESS reminds passengers to fasten their seatbelts. She takes Eileen's glass.

She seems agitated. She sits back, looks out the window. She adjusts her seatbelt, turns on the air above her head. She turns to the BUSINESS MAN in the seat next to her.

EILEEN

Is it stuffy in here?

The Business Man just shrugs 'no'. Something is definitely off. Eileen is having trouble breathing. She adjusts her seatbelt again and then presses her HELP BUTTON.

The plane is accelerating down the runway reaching max speed. She's desperate now. She jabs her Help button repeatedly before finally, undoing her seatbelt, she squeezes by her shocked Neighbor.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'm having... I'm having
some trouble breathing.

STEWARDESS (OVER THE PA)
Please remain seated. We are about
to take off.

But Eileen isn't listening. She's lurching down the aisle
using the seat backs to steady herself. She looks crazy.

STEWARDESS (CONT'D)
M'am. Please return to your seat.

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| EILEEN | STEWARDESS (CONT'D) |
| I can't. I can't breathe. I | There's no problem with the |
| think there's a problem with | oxygen! |
| the oxygen levels or... | |

The plane begins lifting off the ground.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
I'm telling you I can't...

THUD! Eileen goes down without warning, out cold. Another
PASSENGER screams.

END OF ACT 1

ACT TWO

INT. AIRPLANE - LATER

Eileen's eyes flutter open. She's horizontal across three
seats in the first row of COACH. She sits up, alarmed.

WOMAN (O.S.)
You're OK.

Eileen turns to an ALASKA NATIVE WOMAN seated next to her.

EILEEN
What happened?

WOMAN
You fainted. You've been sleeping
for an hour. Your vitals are good
but you should drink lots of water.
And your old seat is still open.

EILEEN
Are you a doctor?

WOMAN

No. I'm a village health aid. Which is like an EMT. My name is Melinda.

EILEEN

Eileen.

MELINDA

Has that happened before?

EILEEN

No. Never. I felt like I was having a heart attack.

MELINDA

I'm pretty sure it wasn't that.

EILEEN

What's your guess?

MELINDA

It's just a guess but it might have been a panic attack.

(Eileen reacts)

Have you been under a lot stress?

EILEEN

No. And I don't have panic attacks.

MELINDA

There's always a first. You should see someone when you land.

Melinda jots something down on her napkin.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

My number. I live in a village outside Anchorage. If it happens again or you need help finding someone to see, you can call me.

Eileen takes it.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Your body is trying to tell you something, Eileen. You should listen.

INT. PLANE - LATER

C/U: GOOGLE SEARCH: "WHAT CAUSES A PANIC ATTACK?"

Eileen is back in business class, on her computer. She pulls her screen close, ensuring no one sees, starts to read.

The fasten seatbelt light chimes. She looks out her window and there it is, ANCHORAGE tucked along Cook Inlet with the towering Chugach mountains on the horizon. It's stunning.

INT. AIRPORT - LATER

Eileen exits baggage claim dragging two suitcases. She spots GABRIEL (22, Mexican) standing front and center with a big sign that reads; EILEEN FITZGERALD ADN. He waves excitedly.

GABRIEL

Hi Ms. Fitzgerald. Welcome to Alaska. Can I help with your bags?

He awkwardly grabs her bags. He's very nervous.

EILEEN

Hi. Uh...Thanks.

GABRIEL

How was your flight? Any problems?

EILEEN

(Lying)

No. No problems.

Melinda passes. She nods, smiles. Timing is a funny thing.

GABRIEL

OK. Great. Let's go.

And just like that Gabriel is gone. Eileen frowns, follows.

INT. CAR - LATER

Eileen is in the passenger seat of Gabriel's 2012 HONDA, staring off into the distance. Gabriel keeps stealing glances at her. Eileen is trying to ignore him but finally relents.

EILEEN

Do you work for the paper?

GABRIEL

Intern. But I want to one day. It's my dream. To be a journalist.

EILEEN

I didn't think people dreamt about being a journalist anymore.

GABRIEL

I do. And I just have to say, I'm a huge fan of you and your work. It's truly inspirational to meet you and... drive you. Regardless of what happened, you know with your last story.

Eileen can only nod and take it on the chin... this kid.

EXT. SPENARD, EILEEN'S LODGINGS - LATER

Eileen slams the door in a quiet neighborhood. It's a quirky mix of small houses and trailer parks. It's got an edge. They are in the driveway of an A-frame house with a porch. Gabriel leads her to the front door.

GABRIEL

It's nice, right? Trust me, this Airbnb was by far the best for the price. I stocked your fridge. Just the basics. Am I talking too much?

EILEEN

Right on the edge.

GABRIEL

Copy. Here are the keys and a sleep mask.

He holds out the MASK and KEYS. Eileen only takes the keys.

EILEEN

Thanks but I don't use a mask.

GABRIEL

First timers from the lower 48 have trouble with the daylight. The sun won't set until about eleven thirty. You should take it.

He keeps holding it out. Eileen finally snatches it.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Shall I show you around inside?

EILEEN

No. Good night Gabriel.

GABRIEL

See you in the morning. Can't wait!

INT. STANLEY'S HOME, BEDROOM - LATER

Lights out. TWO LUMPS under the covers. A CELL PHONE rings. Stanley wakes, his WIFE stirs. He checks his phone, answers.

STANLEY
Just like old times.

EILEEN (ON PHONE)
ADN only did one spot news story
and a short folo on Gloria Nagiac?

STANLEY
We had to move on.

INT. EILEEN'S HOUSE - SAME/INT. STANLEY'S HOUSE

Her computer and work is spread out on the table next to an empty pizza box. It's very bright in her house as compared to Stanley's because her shades aren't drawn.

EILEEN
And there's no public information
or press releases about the case on
the Barrow police site.

STANLEY
Unfortunately, not surprising.

EILEEN
No wonder it keeps happening.

Stanley's Wife groans. She clocks it.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
Police report tell us anything?

STANLEY
Can't get it. They're stonewalling.

EILEEN
Three months later? That's stupid.
What'd the coroner say?

STANLEY
Inconclusive. Body was too
decomposed. Hey Eileen, it's 10:30.
Can we pick this up tomorrow?

EILEEN
(Checking her watch)
It is? Jesus. It's bright as day.

STANLEY

Welcome to Alaska. I'll see at the
editors meeting 9:30 am. Night.

Stanley hangs up. Eileen sits down and types.

C/U: GOOGLE SEARCH: ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS, BUILDING. Images of
the ADN BUILDING pop up. It's an impressive structure with a
huge glass lobby. Eileen nods, surprised. Not bad.

INT. EILEEN'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eileen lies in her bed, wide awake, staring at the WINDOW
SHADE. Even with it down, the room is bright. She checks the
clock 11:38pm. She peeks outside, yep, bright as day. She
sighs, gets up with a groan.

INT. EILEEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Eileen stomps into the bright as day kitchen and snatches the
SLEEP MASK off the counter. She stomps back to the bedroom.

INT. EILEEN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Eileen is sound asleep, mask on. KNOCKING. She doesn't move.
MORE KNOCKING. She jolts awake. Checks her phone.

EILEEN

Crap!

INT./EXT. EILEEN'S HOUSE, FRONT DOOR

Eileen opens the door, MASK ON HER HEAD, to find an eager
Gabriel holding a newspaper and coffee.

GABRIEL

Morning... oh you used the mask!

EILEEN

Give me 15 minutes.

She shuts the door, opens it again, takes the coffee. Slam!

INT. CAR - LATER

Gabriel is driving. Eileen is buried in the ADN paper.

GABRIEL

Here we are. Anchorage Daily News.

Eileen lowers her paper to see a STRIP MALL.

EILEEN

This isn't it. Where's the big
glass lobby with white pillars?

GABRIEL

Oh. That was the old building. The
paper moved three years ago.
(whispering)
Downsizing.

INT. LOBBY, ADN - LATER

Gabriel leads Eileen through the tiny lobby. One FEMALE
RECEPTIONIST (40's) who never looks up. Never.

GABRIEL

(Without stopping)
Hi Janice. This is Eileen
Fitzgerald. She's starting today, I
have a key card for her.
(Turning to Eileen)
I think she might be deaf.

Gabriel keys the metal door and leads Eileen into...

INT. ADN NEWSROOM - SAME

So it's *not* the Vanguard. But it still looks like a newsroom.
Just a much smaller, emptier, oddly shaped version of one.

There are about 15 people scattered about working at their
desks. No one really takes notice of Eileen.

GABRIEL

Your desk is right over here if you
wanna drop your coat. I left you
some new pads and pens.

EILEEN

(She drops her coat)
Why is it so quiet?

GABRIEL

Is it?

EILEEN

Yeah. Extremely. It's depressing.

GABRIEL

Oh. Well that's the 9:30 meeting in there. Looks like they started.

INT. BOARDROOM - LATER

The meeting is in progress. SIX PEOPLE sitting around the small room. Eileen opens the door, eases in, apologetically.

EILEEN

Sorry I'm late. Hi.

STANLEY

Gang this is Eileen Fitzgerald.
Eileen, our legion of doom.

A few chuckles, nods. Eileen nods back, sits.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Let's do intros as we go around.
Bob? You wanna continue?

BOB

Thank you Stanley.
(Looking at Eileen)
Bob Young. Editor at large.

There's an old school formality to Bob. He glances at his notes, muttering ALMOST to himself.

BOB (CONT'D)

So where was I before the interruption...

Eileen raises an eyebrow-- so it's gonna be like that.

BOB (CONT'D)

We still don't have many details on the armed stand off with police at the Muldoon apartment building. The suspect was male. Twenties. Caucasian. Completely nude. He claimed he was being unfairly evicted. He's in police custody. Jieun Park is working on a folo.

STANLEY

Did you get an apartment number?

BOB

Anchorage PD would not provide it.

Eileen clocks this. Perks up.

EILEEN

If the cops entered the apartment of a private citizen, they should provide the unit number.

BOB

They feel differently.

EILEEN

What about the CAD notes?

BOB

We don't have access to them.

Eileen reacts.

EILEEN

To CAD notes? Those are public record. They're hiding something.

BOB

You don't know that.

EILEEN

Wanna bet?

STANLEY

Eileen, we've had a deteriorating relationship with Anchorage PD. They're no longer prioritizing media requests.

EILEEN

So sic legal on them.

STANLEY

Our legal is not as effective with the PD as we like him to be.

EILEEN

He's a wimp or just no good?

Now it's just getting awkward. Apparently, Eileen left her manners back in... well she never really had manners.

BOB

Charlie's a very nice guy. He's very well respected in this town.

EILEEN

Good for Charlie but you don't need a nice guy. You need a jerk who gets records.

BOB
That's rude.

EILEEN
Damn right it's rude. Rude gets the job done. It's also right.

STANLEY
Eileen. We'll talk about this offline. OK?
(Eileen start to speak)
OK?

Eileen sits back in her chair raising her hands in mock innocence. Day one is off with a bang.

EXT. BOARDROOM - LATER

Meeting over. Eileen beelines for her desk, takes out her phone, finds a name and dials.

EILEEN (INTO PHONE)
Hey, Pete. Eileen Fitzgerald. Yeah, it has been a minute. Good. I'm...

Eileen pulls back her chair to sit--A SEVEN YEAR OLD BOY pops out from under her desk. She jumps.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
Ah!

The KID blows past her, never looking up from his iPad. She watches the Kid disappear under another desk.

EILEEN (CONT'D)
Sorry about that, I saw a... bug.
Hey look, I need some help getting hold of some police records. In Anchorage. Alaska.
(Quietly)
No, I'm not really back in the game, just helping a friend at the Daily News here but if anyone asks for a name use...
(Checks over her shoulder)
Bob Young. Editor-at-large. Yeah. I gotta jump into a meeting, can I email you the details? Thanks Pete.

She hangs up, checks under her seat again. WTF?

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Eileen?

She turns to see a FEMALE REPORTER (37.)

CLAIRE
 (Very direct)
 Claire Muncy. I'm a reporter here.
 Welcome. We're lucky to have you.

Claire is VERY direct. Not a drop of bullshit or wasted energy in her. She's a senior reporter at the paper.

EILEEN
 Thanks. I read your piece on the white nationalist group this morning. It was good. Disturbing.

CLAIRE
 Yeah, very disturbing. But thanks I gotta get to the courthouse for his hearing actually.

EILEEN
 You cover courts too?

CLAIRE
 We all cover everything. Small newsroom.

EILEEN
 Got it. Hey, a kid was just under my desk.

CLAIRE
 Yeah, Zachary. He's Austins's son.

She points to AUSTIN (30's, white) who has a phone under his ear. He waves.

AUSTIN
 He doesn't bite. Promise. Welcome.
 Austin Greene. Editor.
 Photographer. GA reporter.

Eileen nods, waves.

EILEEN
 So everybody really does everything.

CLAIRE
 Yeah. It's kind of the Alaskan way.

EILEEN
 Meaning?

CLAIRE

There's a frontier mentality here.
There aren't a lot of us so people
rely on each other. They have to.
It's a tough place to go it alone.
If you have any questions just ask.

EILEEN

Great. You wanna grab a drink after
work so I can pick your brain.

CLAIRE

I don't usually have free nights.
Three kids. I gotta be home by six.

EILEEN

Full plate.

CLAIRE

If you don't mind the commotion you
can come over for dinner one night.

EILEEN

(Never)
Yeah. Sure.

CLAIRE

Except tomorrow. I gotta speak at
career night at my kid's school.

EILEEN

Lucky you.

Claire smiles, moves on. Eileen's desk phone rings.

EILEEN (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

Eileen Fitzgerald. Where are you?

She looks around. Spots Stanley in his office, waving.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Got you. Be right over.

She hangs up, grabs a pad and pen off her desk and turns to
go, almost colliding with JIEUN PARK (Korean, 26.)

JIEUN

Oh. I'm sorry.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Woah. Sorry. I didn't see you
there... right directly
behind me.

JIEUN (CONT'D)

(Quietly)
I wanted to introduce myself also.

EILEEN
 (She waits)
 Now? Or later because...

JIEUN
 Now. Jieun Park. I'm a reporter.

EILEEN
 Are you on that police stand off...

JIEUN
 In Muldoon. Yes.

EILEEN
 Anything new on that?

JIEUN
 No. Not right now. Why?

EILEEN
 Because there's more to that story
 than a naked guy waving a gun. I'll
 get the CAD notes so we can figure
 out what apartment he lived in.
 Give me a day.

JIEUN
 OK. Thank you. Bye.

Jieun suppresses a smile, goes. Eileen's phone rings again..

EILEEN (INTO PHONE)
 I'm coming. I'm coming.

MALE VOICE (ON PHONE)
 Is this Eileen Fitzgerald?

Eileen freezes. It's not Stanley. She's on guard.

EILEEN
 Who's calling?

MALE VOICE
 Formerly of the Vangaurd?

EILEEN
 Who is this?

MALE VOICE
 A concerned citizen.

EILEEN
 What's your concern? Citizen.

MALE VOICE

You.

EILEEN

So stop being a creep and introduce yourself.

MALE VOICE

Soon enough. Welcome to Alaska, Ms. Fitzgerald.

Click. Eileen hangs up, deeply unsettled.

END OF ACT 2

ACT THREE

INT. STANLEY'S OFFICE - LATER

Eileen walks in, plops down. New chair but a familiar seat.

EILEEN

You put out a press release on me?

STANLEY

No. Why? You want one?

EILEEN

Nope. Just checking. Oh. I found a kid under my desk.

STANLEY

We need to be flexible with our reporters' 'situations'.

EILEEN

At least you gotta lot of women on staff. I like that.

STANLEY

Majority of women actually.

EILEEN

But still men at the top.

STANLEY

Speaking of, Bob...

EILEEN

Editor-at-Large Bob? He's gotta go.

STANLEY

No he doesn't.

EILEEN

Well keep him away from me.

STANLEY

I think he feels likewise.

EILEEN

I need to get up to Barrow. Poke around. Can I go tomorrow?

STANLEY

Yeah. I'm going to send you up with someone to help...

EILEEN

I don't need help.

STANLEY

The North Slope is like nowhere you've ever been, trust me.

EILEEN

I was in Afghanistan for two years, Stanley. I can deal.

KNOCK. ROSALIND 'ROZ' FRIENDLY (28, Yupik) is at the door. Roz is the full package of brains, confidence, and drive. She was born for this job and she knows it. She's a rocket.

ROZ

Hey. You wanted to see me?

STANLEY

Yeah. Come on in, Roz. Meet Eileen Fitzgerald.

ROZ

Oh. Didn't see you.
(Shakes her hand)
Rosalind Friendly. Welcome.

They shake hands.

STANLEY

Roz, I want you to travel with Eileen up to Barrow.

ROZ

Utqiagvik.

STANLEY

Yeah. Sorry. Utqiagvik.

EILEEN

Not Barrow.

ROZ

That's the colonial name. It was renamed six years ago.

(To Stanley)

I can't go. I'm deep in my story.

STANLEY

It's two days. I need you to go.

ROZ

So, what? Big foot here drops in and we have to drop everything.

EILEEN

That's not friendly, Ms. Friendly.

ROZ

What's the story?

STANLEY

The death of Gloria Nagiac.

ROZ

You mean murder.

EILEEN

You have proof?

Roz glares at Eileen.

ROZ

I have my gut. And I know Alaska.

STANLEY

Your gut's not good enough. We need facts. We need to prove it wasn't an accident or suicide. If she was murdered, we need hard evidence. And we report on that.

ROZ

OK. And say we do that. So what?

EILEEN

"So what"?

ROZ

I'm not talking to you.

EILEEN
It's my story...

ROZ
And you've been here for five
minutes. Good luck in *Barrow*.

EILEEN
(To Stanley)
Really?

ROZ
Stanley, even if we report on how she was murdered. EILEEN (CONT'D)
Died.

ROZ (CONT'D)
Died. The cops aren't gonna do
crap. They never do.

STANLEY
Then we report on that.

This stops Roz cold. She's intrigued. Eileen clocks it.

ROZ
You mean that?

STANLEY
I do. I want answers. There's no
reason that there are no answers.

ROZ
There's one big one. She's a native
woman. And the system is racist.

STANLEY
You may be right. And that's why I
want to report on her death.

Roz is VERY intrigued now. She pivots, points to Eileen.

ROZ
I'm in but why do we need her?
She's a white woman from New York.
It's not her story to tell.

EILEEN
Team player.

STANLEY
Yes, Roz, she's white and
from New York. She also has
twenty-five years of
investigative experience.

ROZ

But she doesn't know crap about
Alaska or Alaska natives. This
whole white savior thing is stale.

EILEEN

Here we go.

STANLEY

That's why you're gonna help
her. So do you need a another
day to tie things up or can
you go tomorrow?

Roz shakes her head, realizes it's a done deal.

ROZ

Tomorrow. Get it done. Can I go?

STANLY

Thank you, Roz.

And she's gone.

STANLEY

Remind you of someone?

EILEEN

Not me. She's a Gen whatever. They
play tough until their little
feelings get hurt and they...

STANLEY

Get you canceled?

EILEEN

Yeah. That. For being racist which
is bullshit.

STANLEY

It happened. To you. And you have
to deal with it.

EILEEN

You trying to fix me, Stanley.

STANLEY

No. But what you went through, what
you're going through, is traumatic.

EILEEN

But I'm here and I'm ready to work.

STANLEY

Eileen, Alaska is not a place you
come to get unbroken. It can be...
hard here.

(MORE)

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Too much light in the summer and
too much dark the rest of the year.
It's easy to feel isolated. Alone.

EILEEN

Good to know. I gotta get to work.

Eileen has a very hard shell. Stanley nods, she gets up
leaves. He watches, concerned.

INT. NEWSROOM - LATER

Eileen is on her computer reading the Facebook page of Gloria
Nagiak. Pictures of Gloria in her prime. She jots names from
posts on a list marked; PEOPLE OF INTEREST.

One series of posts from OTIS CRENSHAW catches her eye. They
range from emotional to angry. The final post from him reads;

"Just kill yourself like you've been threatening to do."

EILEEN

You may have got your wish, Otis.

She does a NEXUS LEXUS search on the name Otis Crenshaw.
There are a bunch of hits on police trouble and arrests.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

No stranger to trouble. That earns
you a top spot on my VIP list.

LOUD REPORTER (V.O.)

DAMNIT! DAMNIT!

Eileen turns to see a very tall BLACK REPORTER bounding
across the newsroom on his cellphone.

LOUD REPORTER

Well that really sucks, Karl!
That's my story! So figure it out!

He hangs up, immediately calm.

LOUD REPORTER (CONT'D)

Hey. Who are you?

EILEEN

Eileen Fitzgerald.

LOUD REPORTER

Oh. From New York. Right. Dwayne
Morris. Breaking news.

EILEEN

That's it. Aren't you supposed to do a little bit of everything here?

DWAYNE

I told them if they ask me to do anything else, I'm out.

EILEEN

You must be good.

DWAYNE

I am good. And I'm the only Black reporter at the paper so they don't want to lose me. It's a Win Win.

(Then)

You've had a rough year.

EILEEN

I did.

DWAYNE

So why here?

EILEEN

Only place that offered me a job. And from what I can tell this place needs all the help it can get.

DWAYNE

Win Win.

(His phone rings)

Gotta take this.

(Into his phone.)

Karl? Tell me good things, Karl.

He starts off, passing Austin, they fist bump.

EILEEN

(Spacing his name)

Hey...uh...

AUSTIN

Austin.

*

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Austin. Sorry. How do I check criminal cases filed in state?

AUSTIN

Courtview. I can show you.

(He takes Eileen's mouse)

Should be right here.

EILEEN

Where's Zachary the desk pirate?

AUSTIN

His mom got him. So just add the name here and press search.

Eileen does exactly that. Austin reads over her shoulder.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)

Yeah, so he was charged multiple times, including three felonies, two of those sexual assault. But never convicted. Bad dude.

EILEEN

And, apparently, very slippery.

Austin leans in, starts typing again.

AUSTIN

Here. Let's check Vinelink to see if he's currently incarcerated.

EILEEN

(Sniffing)

Were you just smoking pot?

AUSTIN

No. Just picked some up from the dispensary across the street. It's a good one. So he's not in custody or in jail.

EILEEN

Thanks Austin.

AUSTIN

You got it. Good luck.

He walks off, Eileen looks back at her computer. She clicks Otis's page. There's a photo of Otis Crenshaw (20's, Alaska Native.) He looks like any kid trying to look tough.

INT. JIEUN PARKS APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jieun is working on her couch in a tiny, sparsely furnished apartment. She's eating a burrito when her phone rings.

JIEUN (INTO PHONE)

Hello?

EILEEN

Hey. It's Eileen.

Jieun sits up, surprised.

JIEUN (INTO PHONE)
Oh. Hi Eileen...

EILEEN (CONT'D)
I just heard from my guy in
NY. We got the CAD notes. Go
to the PD in the am, see the
PIO. Don't take no.

JIEUN (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
Yeah. OK. Thanks so much for...

Click. That's it.

INT. PUB - LATER

Eileen, sets down her phone, perched at the end of the bar,
working. An empty plate in front of her. She sips her drink.
The Bartender lifts her empty plate.

BARTENDER
Where you from?

EILEEN
How'd you know I'm not from here?

BARTENDER
Clothes. Hair. Demeanor. Computer.

EILEEN
(Smiling)
Good eye. New York. I'm Eileen.

BARTENDER
Karla. What brings you to
Anchorage, Eileen from New York?

EILEEN
Work. I'm a reporter.

KARLA
Cool. Well sit here long enough and
you'll hear plenty of stories.

EILEEN
Are you a local?

KARLA
Nope. From Houston. Came up for a
job. Lost the job. Now here.

EILEEN
What was the lost job?

KARLA

Accountant at an oil company. I'm a
sucker for a spread sheet.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Excuse me, Karla.

They turn to see a SCRUFFY DUDE standing at the bar.

SCRUFFY DUDE

I sure could use a Jack and soda
and if I'm not being too bold...

(nodding to Eileen)

I'd like to buy a drink for our
visiting friend here for
interrupting.

EILEEN

Do I really stand out that much?

KARLA

Yes.

SCRUFFY GUY

Yep.

EILEEN

Good to know.

KARLA

One sec, Jamie.

She turns to Eileen, lowers her voice. Serious.

KARLA (CONT'D)

Listen up, Eileen from New York.
You gotta be careful in Alaska.
Lotta weirdo's, lotta violence
toward women. A lot. Jamie's cool,
I know his friends. But keep your
guard up, you hear?

EILEEN

I do.

INT. BAR - LATER

Eileen and JAMIE are deep in conversation. Jamie is funny and
a bit odd but it's clear he's intelligent.

JAMIE

I ended up staying in that village
for about a year.

EILEEN

Just fishing.

JAMIE

And drinking. And... living.

EILEEN

Why'd you move to Alaska, Jamie?

JAMIE

I came to Alaska because I needed to disappear... from it all. In fact, it seems to me that most people end up here for one of two reasons. To disappear or to reinvent themselves. How about you?

Eileen considers the question, answers honestly.

EILEEN

Well... I've already disappeared once and I hated it. So I guess it's door number two.

JAMIE

Reinvention. Big one. And if Alaska isn't a match, you gotta plan B?

Eileen thinks about it. The conversation just got very real.

EILEEN

No. I don't.

JAMIE

Does that concern you?

Eileen eyeballs him, not one to beat around the bush.

EILEEN

It scares the hell out of me.

Jamie nods, sits with the intensity of her crisis. Then...

JAMIE

(Raising his glass)

Well, Ms. Fitzgerald, here is to reinventing yourself.

Eileen almost smiles. They clink glasses.

INT. EILEEN'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - MORNING

Knocking at the door. Eileen's eyes pop open. Hungover.

EILEEN

Ouch.

She grabs her phone, looks at it. She sits up, NAKED JAMIE sleeping next to her. She sighs. Yep. Day two, that happened.

INT. EILEEN'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR

Eileen opens the door. Gabriel is waiting with a coffee.

EILEEN

I need 15.

She takes the coffee. Slam.

INT. EILEEN'S HOUSE - 14 MINUTES LATER

Eileen's dressed. She places the coffee next to Jamie.

EILEEN

Sorry, I have a flight to catch.

JAMIE

Oh yeah. You gonna be OK?

EILEEN

What do mean?

JAMIE

You know, your last flight.

He makes a hand gesture of "falling over".

EILEEN

Oh. That. I'm fine. Enjoy your coffee and let yourself out. Bye.

And she's gone.

JAMIE

(Calling after)
And leave my number.

END OF ACT 3

ACT FOUR

INT. 737 AIRPLANE - LATER

Eileen is looking over her notes. Roz is on her computer. A bump. Eileen grips her chair. Roz clocks it.

ROZ

You don't like flying?

EILEEN

My last flight was a little...
nutty.

ROZ

Well get used to it. You have to
fly everywhere in Alaska. It's huge
and the road system sucks.

EILEEN

We need a rental car?

ROZ

Booked. It's next to the airport.

EILEEN

You know this place well?

ROZ

I was up here a few years ago on a
bootlegging story. Plus I grew up
in a village. Lot of similarities.

EILEEN

Bootlegging story?

ROZ

Some villages are dry, it's like
prohibition, so the locals get
creative. We could maybe use it as
a cover story if anyone asks what
we're doing. Might be better if
folks, especially the cops, don't
know why we're here.

EILEEN

Makes sense.

Eileen sets out a photocopy of a map of Utqiagvik.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

So if this is the village and they
found her body out here. Could she
have walked?

ROZ

Possible, yeah. But why? That's
three miles in the cold and dark.

EILEEN

She was upset or drunk or high.

ROZ

Because she's native?

EILEEN

Because she was eighteens and struggling. And last seen at a house party.

She hands some PRINTOUTS to Roz who takes them and reads.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

She was in and out of rehab. She had a record. So she's having a bad night, she walks out there, she gets lost or decides to give up.

Roz looks over the documents. Eileen has a case.

ROZ

Maybe. You make a mistake out there, especially that time of year, you're done. But if I'm being honest, I feel like you're doing what they all do. Start by blaming the victim.

EILEEN

And by 'they' you mean...

ROZ

White people. She drank, smoked pot. So she deserved what she got.

EILEEN

I'm not blaming her but the police ruled out foul play...

ROZ

Of course they did.

EILEEN

And you said yourself she could have walked out there. It tracks.

ROZ

It does. But if she was white, we'd be assuming she was murdered.

EILEEN

Not me.

ROZ

You sure about that?

(Eileen hesitates)

Look, the racism and the violence visited on Indigenous people is insane.

(MORE)

ROZ (CONT'D)

And it's been going for centuries.
You need to acknowledge that.

EILEEN

I do. But we can't ignore the facts
in this particular case. And right
now, as messed up as the system
might be, the facts do not point to
foul play in Gloria's death.

ROZ

Facts. On the North Slope. You
really are from the outside.

Roz returns to her work. Eileen process this, looks out the
window. And there it is... UTQIAGVIK. A spit of town perched
on what appears to be the edge of the world.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Jieun steps up to the window. A grumpy, white PIO awaits.

JIEUN

Hi. Jieun Park. Anchorage Daily
News. I'm here for the CAD notes on
this case.

She slides the paper across the desk. The PIO takes it,
barely looks at her. He reads the case # and types.

PIO

Those are not available to press.

JIEUN

Uh. I think they are actually. Can
you double check. Please.

He sighs. But he does. And doesn't like what he reads.

PIO

Oh. This is the thing with that
lawyer from New York?

Jieun is a bit in the dark here. She just shrugs.

JIEUN

I was just sent to pick it up.

He gives her the stink eye, walks away.

INT. ADN NEWSROOM - LATER

Jieun hurries through the newsroom, sits at her desk.

JIEUN

Hey Claire. Where's the best place to track down the owner of private property again.

CLAIRE

The planning department website. It's ridiculously chaotic, but if you can manage it, you'll find it.

JIEUN

Right. Thanks.

Jieun digs in.

INT. UTQIAGVIK AIRPORT TERMINAL - LATER

A giant QUONSET HUT, more way station than airport. Roz and Eileen knife through throngs of mostly INDIGENOUS people.

ROZ

(Sotto to Eileen)

Assistant District Attorney in red coat. Brian Sullivan. He would have been talking to detectives about filing charges in Gloria's case.

EILEEN

Let's find out why he didn't.

They approach the ADA who is chatting up his YOUNG ASSISTANT.

ROZ

Hi Brian. Roz Friendly. ADN.

BRIAN

Yes, of course. Hi Roz.

ROZ

This is Eileen Fitzgerald. She's here with me reporting on the bootlegging crackdown by Barrow PD.

BRIAN

Nice to meet you Eileen. I will say the locals have been very supportive of those efforts.

Sullivan is slick. Roz hides her disdain.

EILEEN

I'd love to hear more. Maybe we could sit down and discuss?

BRIAN

Of course. In the meantime there's a borough hall meeting here tomorrow night and the police chief will be there discussing it.

EILEEN

We'll be there.

She pulls out her phone, makes her play.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Can I get your cell, Brian?

Sullivan's caught off guard. He recovers, pulls out a CARD.

BRIAN

Here's my card. It has my office number which is much more reliable.

EILEEN

Oh. And Brian... did the police refer Gloria Nagiac's death to the DA's office to prosecute?

Sullivan looks shocked, but then covers with a smile.

BRIAN

Open investigation. Sorry.

He leaves. They watch him go.

ROZ

He's hiding. So who dropped the ball? The cops or the DA's office?

EILEEN

Good question. And put that borough hall meeting on our dance card.

INT. RENTAL CAR - LATER

The village is comprised of small, ramshackle houses connected by dirt roads. Broken down trucks and detritus litter the landscape. And beyond the houses, nothing but water, ice and earth.

EILEEN

It's an intense place. So isolated.

ROZ

It's also beautiful. And the land is bountiful. But if you don't know it, it can be dangerous. The earth swallows people up. You make a mistake, you pay with your life.

Roz pulls into the driveway of a SMALL WOODEN BUILDING.

EILEEN

This the courthouse?

ROZ

Tribal Council. We can go to the courthouse after.

EILEEN

Why?

ROZ

It shows respect and some humility. And I already set the meeting.

EILEEN

(Pissed)

Next time check with me first.

INT. TRIBAL COUNCIL OFFICE - DAY

A simple room with some NATIVE ART on the walls. Eileen and Roz sit with FOUR NATIVE WOMEN (30-60.) One NATIVE MAN (35.)

ROZ

Thank you for agreeing to sit with us. I am here to assist my colleague, Eileen Fitzgerald in reporting on a story that is of interest to our paper.

40 YR OLD WOMAN

(To Eileen)

What is the story about?

EILEEN

Bootlegging. We are taking a look at the police crackdown on bootlegging in Utqiaġvik.

The table just sits, silent. Blank faces. Roz jumps in.

ROZ

But that is not the story that we are here for today.

Eileen shoots her a look. WTF?

ROZ (CONT'D)

We are looking into the death of
Gloria Nagiac. Our paper wants to
find out what exactly happened.

Looks exchanged. Eileen clocks the temperature change.

35 YR OLD MAN

Have you spoken with, Sylvie, her
mother?

ROZ

We are meeting with her today.

35 YR OLD MAN

You should talk to her first.

EILEEN

Can I ask, do you know Otis
Crenshaw? A friend of Gloria's.

40 YR OLD WOMN

Of course. Otis and Gloria dated.
Otis was... troubled.

EILEEN

Was?

40 YR OLD WOMN

He died last month. Hunting
accident.

Woah. Eileen blinks. Coincidence? Roz clocks this.

EILEEN

You said they dated. How long?

A few furtive glances, they definitely know something.

60 YR OLD WOMAN

Where are you from Ms. Fitzgerald?

EILEEN

New York. City.

Saying it out loud reinforces the obvious. NYC is far away.

60 YR OLD WOMAN

And why did you initially tell us
your story was about bootlegging?

Eileen gauges the room, makes a call...

EILEEN

Because, as a reporter, I can be guarded and distrustful when it comes to my stories. But I am committed to finding the truth. And if it's at all possible, I will.

60 YR OLD WOMAN

(Satisfied)

Thank you for your honesty. We appreciate you coming to see us.

EXT. TRIBAL COUNCIL OFFICE - LATER

Eileen and Roz exit the building, walking toward the car.

ROZ

Where'd you get Otis Crenshaw from?

EILEEN

Facebook. He posted to Gloria's page. Said she should kill herself like she was threatening to.

ROZ

(Rocked)

You're sharing this with me now?

EILEEN

Well what was that in there? What happened to our bootlegging cover?

ROZ

It wasn't going to work with them.

EILEEN

Then give me a heads up so I don't sound like an idiot.

ROZ

So you want me to predict when you're gonna sound like an idiot?

Eileen stops at the car, turns on Roz with intensity.

EILEEN

I want you to stop acting like a smart ass. You want me trust you, share with you. Then do the same with me.

Roz blinks. Eileen is right.

ROZ

I didn't anticipate their reaction to the bootlegging story. I should have. It was a mistake. That's why I ditched it. I'm sorry.

(Then)

To the courthouse?

Eileen nods, gets in the car.

INT. ADN - LATER

Editor-at-Large, Bob is at his desk. His phone rings.

BOB (INTO PHONE)

Bob Young. Oh. Hi Captain. To what do I owe the honor? What?

(Turning red)

I don't know what you're talking about. Where was the lawyer from?

INT. ADN, STANLEY'S OFFICE - LATER

Stanley is sitting at his desk working. His SECRETARY, SHELLY, (50's) enters.

SHELLEY

Stanley, we just got a very troubling email. I put it top of your box.

Stanley opens up his email. Starts reading.

STANLEY

"The top five most dangerous animals in Alaska: Polar Bear. Moose. Grizzly Bear. Wolves. Disgraced New York Reporter."

C/U on Email: It's a colorful layout with photos of each species and a BULLSEYE on each photo. Including Eileen.

SHELLEY

Read the last bit.

STANLEY

"Fortunately Alaskans know what it takes to defend ourselves and we are always willing to exercise our second amendment rights." Jesus. She's been here two days. Any idea who sent it?

SHELLEY

No. It's anonymous. But our friends at the Anchorage Eagle published a story today about her coming here. It wasn't pleasant. My bet is some nut job picked up on it and is making Eileen his new hobby.

STANLEY

Let's hope he's all talk. I'll have to tell her. Send this to legal.

BOB (V.O.)

Stanley. We need to talk.

Bob is in the door.

STANLEY

Seems that way.

BOB

I just got a call from Captain Hulen at Anchorage PD. He was not happy. Apparently some big lawyer from New York called, made a big stink with their higher-ups to get the CAD notes on the Muldoon case.

Stanley sits back, sighs. New York means Eileen.

BOB (CONT'D)

She used my name! I have a reputation in this town Stanley and I resent some outsider...

STANLEY

I got it, Bob. I'll talk to her. Did the notes yield anything?

BOB

That's not the point.

Knock. Knock. Jieun is at the door.

BOB (CONT'D)

Not now, Jieun.

JIEUN

Uhm. I think it's important. It's about Muldoon.

STANLEY

Go ahead.

JIEUN

The apartment is owned by an LLC
that's controlled by Jordan Teller.

Stanley and Bob react. Woah.

BOB

Jordan Teller?!

STANLEY

Teller? Why does a guy with
his money own an apartment in
Muldoon. Any idea what his
relationship was to the guy
who was arrested?

JIEUN

No yet. I'll get into it.

STANLEY

Please do. Thank you both.
(Bob starts to speak)
I know, Bob. I'll talk to her.

Bob leaves, not entirely satisfied. Stanley sighs, looks back
at the email with a photo of Eileen... and the BULLSEYE
AROUND HER FACE.

END OF ACT 4

ACT FIVE

INT. COURTHOUSE BARROW - SAME

Eileen steps up to the window.

EILEEN

(Friendly)
Hi. I need copies of these case
files related to Gloria Nagiac.

The SWEET WOMAN, looks at the list.

SWEET CLERK

Are you a lawyer?

EILEEN

Reporter. Anchorage Daily News.

SWEET CLERK

I don't think I can give you these.

EILEEN

(Still friendly)
Yes, you can.

(MORE)

EILEEN (CONT'D)
 (Turns to Roz)
 She can. Right?

ROZ
 I would if I was you. *Trust* me.

Eileen smiles at the Clerk as Roz makes a "crazy" gesture to her behind Eileens back.

INT. CAR - LATER

Eileen is flipping through copies of the cases as Roz drives.

EILEEN
 Possession. DWI. Resisting arrest.
 Not good but not too bad either.
 (Shutting the folder)
 We gotta get the police report.

ROZ
 Not easy. Cops up here are hard to crack and crazy lawyered up.

EILEEN
 How does the PD in a place like this have big lawyer money?

ROZ
 One clue. Under the permafrost.

EILEEN
 Oil.

ROZ
 One of the many precious minerals extracted by our friendly neighborhood colonizers. Oil flows from here all the way down to the Gulf. And the last thing big oil wants are disruptions. Of any kind. Here we are. Her mother's house.

Roz pulls over. Turns off the car. Thinks for a moment.

ROZ (CONT'D)
 You think she did kill herself?

EILEEN
 She considered it.
 (She hands her a list)
 Here are some questions. You can lead.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - SAME

Eileen looks around the neighborhood comprised of 'monopoly houses'-- four walls and a steeple roof and not much more. It's rundown due to shoddy construction and the relentless beating by the conditions.

ROZ (V.O.)

Thank you for talking to us. We know this is hard for you.

INT. SYLVIE NAGIAC'S HOUSE - DAY

Eileen and Roz sit at the kitchen table. SYLVIE (50's) places two cups of tea down. She looks tired beyond her years.

SYLVIE

Losing my daughter was hard. I have no problem talking about it. I want to find out what happened.

The house has a warm cluttered vibe. There's food cooking on the stove. Pictures of family are everywhere. A large PHOTO OF GLORIA is prominently displayed.

ROZ

Of course. And that's why we're here. We are going to get to the bottom of this.

EILEEN

We're going to try...

Roz picks up on Eileen's point. Sylvie clocks this.

ROZ

We're going to try. So can you tell us what type of mood was Gloria in the night she went missing.

SYLVIE

Gloria was busy. And she was getting more private with me. But she wasn't upset or anything. Not that I could tell.

ROZ

And we know she's had some problems with drinking and drugs...

SYLVIE

Is that your focus?

ROZ

We're trying to get the full picture. Every detail can help.

Sylvie looks at Roz and Eileen.

SYLVIE

She had her difficulties but she was a good girl. It's not easy growing up here. Where are you from?

ROZ

Me? Unalakleet.

SYLVIE

So you know how it is being a young person in a small village. Sometimes you want more.

This lands with Roz, she nods. Eileen clocks it.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)

She went to a house party that night with her friend, Alice. Alice left, she said Gloria was talking to her ex-boyfriend and two guys she didn't know.

EILEEN

Where is the ex-boyfriend now?

SYLVIE

Roger? He lives here. He knows what happened. I know it. He never looks me in the eye.

Sylvie takes out a MAP.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)

(Pointing to the map)

Roger lives here. And that's where they found her body. After the break up.

EILEEN

Break up?

ROZ

Snow melts. Ice breaks up.

EILEEN

Is there anyway that Gloria might have walked out there on her own? Maybe she was upset or confused.

Sylvie stares at Eileen. Cuts through it.

SYLVIE

It wasn't an accident. It wasn't suicide. She was murdered.

EILEEN

But the coroner's report was inconclusive and the police said they didn't suspect foul play.

SYLVIE

(Calmly)
She didn't have her crutches.

EILEEN

Excuse me?

SYLVIE

She could never walk three miles without her crutches.

Eileen and Roz both react. HUH?!

EILEEN

She was... on crutches?

SYLVIE

Yes. She busted her ankle four weeks earlier. Slipped on the ice.

Roz and Eileen share a look. NO FUCKING WAY SHE WALKED.

EILEEN

(Catching up)
I uh... I didn't read anything about crutches. Did you tell the police?

SYLVIE

Of course I did. Like I said, no one seems to care. They should.

INT. CAR - LATER

Eileen and Roz exit the house, walk toward the car.

ROZ
Smoking crutch?

EILEEN
She didn't walk. She had to be
dumped. How did everyone miss it?

ROZ
You want my answer?

EILEEN
I want the truth.

They get into the car. Roz gets a text.

ROZ
Crap. Can we go by the hotel? I've
been chasing down this source in
Juneau and she finally wants to
talk. I need a landline.

EILEEN
I'll drop you and drive out to
where they found Gloria's body.

ROZ
No way. You're not going out there
by yourself. Anything goes wrong,
you're screwed. Just wait for me.

EILEEN
OK.

ROZ
I'm serious.

EILEEN
I know. OK. I'll wait.

She gets in the car. Roz looks dubious....

INT. CAR - LATER

And for good reason. Eileen is driving alone. She didn't wait. And she's a few miles outside the village. Nothing but greenish/brown spongy tundra out one window and dark blue Arctic Ocean out the other. Her phone rings. She answers...

EILEEN
I have all the proof I need,
Stanley! Gloria was murdered.

Eileen is lit. She can feel the story.

STANLEY

Is it a story we want to publish?

EILEEN

No. I want to keep digging. We need to get that police report. We need to find out where the ball was dropped.

INT. ADN NEWSROOM, STANLEY'S OFFICE/INT. EILEEN'S CAR

WE WILL CUT BACK AND FORTH.

STANLEY

We'll get into it. Good work.

EILEEN

It's so obvious, it's barely work. But I need that police report.

STANLEY

Understood. But this time we'll let our lawyers handle it.

EILEEN

Ah. Jieun got the CAD notes.

STANLEY

And Bob got a lot of flack from Anchorage PD. Apparently the New York lawyer used his name.

EILEEN

(Smiling)
That's odd.

STANLEY

(Glancing at his computer)
Eileen, there was something else...
We got a disturbing email today.

EILEEN

About what? Hello? Stanley?
Stanley?
(He's gone. Dropped.)
Good timing.

She drops the phone.

CLAIRE (V.O.)

Claire Muncy. I'm here to talk about my career as a reporter for the Anchorage Daily News.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL, AUDITORIUM - SAME TIME

Claire is addressing a small auditorium of HIGH SCHOOLERS.

CLAIRE

My job is to help Alaskans stay informed. To give them the facts they need to make the best decisions for their lives and their community.

ANONYMOUS STUDENT

Fake news!

Laughing. Claire eyes her DAUGHTER who sinks into her seat.

CLAIRE

Yes. There are some people who believe that the press has an agenda. That we are biased. That we even lie. That is not my experience. We may not be perfect and we may make mistakes but we are not 'fake' and we are not the enemy of the people.

EXT. NORTH SLOPE - LATER

Eileen gets out of her car, looks around. It is literally the end of the road and it truly feels like another planet.

CLAIRE (V.O.)

We are your fellow citizens. And we care deeply about the truth and about the communities we serve.

She checks the MAP that Gloria's mom gave her. She starts off toward the sandy beach along the water and then continues along a natural berm where the beach meets the tundra.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - SAME

CLAIRE

Now reporters don't make a lot of money. And most local papers like ADN are understaffed and overworked. In fact, we're barely surviving. So maybe it's not the best career after all.

Karly is really hearing her mother now. A glint of pride.

EXT. NORTH SLOPE - LATER

It's about a half hour later - she checks her map. She looks around. No roads. No people. Nothing but the raw and awesome spectacle of sea, land, and sky.

CLAIRE (V.O)

But I think of journalism as more of a calling than a career. A calling to be faithful to facts. To hold power to account. To give voice to the voiceless.

She slowly turns, it's impossible not to feel COMPLETELY VULNERABLE in this place.

A FLOCK OF EIDER DUCKS take flight. Eileen watches them fly across the expansive sky... and that's precisely the moment when everything starts to shift.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

And I believe we must protect this calling. Protect a fair and free press. With everything we have.

Eileen is having trouble focusing. She looks around, the world is starting to spin. She starts gasping for air.

EILEEN

Oh no. No. No. No. Not here.

She takes out her phone, checks it. No signal.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Oh, come on. Come on!

She holds up her phone, circling, searching for a signal.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

OK. Breathe. Not now. Please...

She is frantic now. Gasping hard. She struggles, falters, and finally, she COLLAPSES.

CLAIRE (V.O.)

Because if journalism dies. The truth dies with it.

Eileen lies motionless somewhere between the sea and tundra. In the same spot where Gloria Nagiac's body was found.

END OF PILOT