

POKER FACE



PILOT - "DEAD MAN'S HAND"

by

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TOILET PAPER ROLLS

Stacked and rattling on a HOUSEKEEPING cart. Pushed down a threadbare endless high rise hotel hallway by a uniformed housekeeper in her 20s named NATALIE.

INT. ECONOMY HOTEL ROOMS - EVENING

In quick cuts she does her work in a few rooms, efficient.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - EVENING

Natalie has worked her way down to the end of the hall, where the doors are spaced farther out. She knocks on a relatively imposing one at the very end.

NATALIE  
Housekeeping!

Professional pause, and she goes in.

INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE

Nothing that would impress on the Vegas strip, but for this place it's palatial. A brilliant desert sunset through picture windows. Someone's made themselves at home, towels and robes and snack wrappers, nice luggage open on the bed. A laptop computer open and glowing on the desk.

Natalie gets to work, gathering towels and pulling linens.

At some point her eyes flash drift across the laptop's screen. And slowly, she stops. Frozen still.

The screen faces away from us, but whatever's on it has Natalie frozen. She approaches it slowly.

And we realize the expression on her face: horror.

Tears in her eyes, she chokes breath into her lungs.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY

Natalie stumbles out, hand over her mouth. Takes a moment. Very frightened. Then she steels herself. She TAKES HER PHONE from a tucked away spot on her cleaning cart and powers it on.

INT. HIGH ROLLER ROOM

She walks quickly into the room, raises her phone and snaps a picture of the screen. The camera's shutter sound resonates in the room.

And in the silence that follows, an off-screen TOILET FLUSHES.

Natalie's head snaps towards it. She straightens up and gets the fuck out of there, leaving the linens, towels, everything.

A moment later a small bald man steps out of the bathroom. Looks at the room, and at the door. Then at his laptop.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY

Natalie walks fast and stiff legged down the hall, reeling. Ducks into

INT. UTILITY ROOM

and stops. Breathes. Freaking out. Tries calling someone. No answer. Looks at her phone. Deciding what to do. Then she decides.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY

Checking to see it's empty, she goes.

INT. STAIRWAY

Clattering down the concrete steps, floor after floor.

INT. CASINO FLOOR

Emerging into the bustle of an expansive casino floor, about the same level of niceness as the rooms. Old women with buckets at the slots, guys in t-shirts and flip flops at the blackjack tables.

Natalie weaves the perimeter quickly, keeping her eyes peeled. Then she spots:

CLIFF LEGRAND. Muscular in a suit, mid fifties, a stern countenance that suggests a military background. Head of security.

Natalie goes to him, barely holding it together.

NATALIE

Mr. Legrand

CLIFF

Natalie, what's the matter? Is he back?

NATALIE

No, no it's not - no I was doing the top floor, the high roller room, and I saw something, and I

We cut to a WIDE of the casino and don't hear the rest but see Natalie show Cliff the phone. He looks stern, glances around, then leads her quickly into a narrow hallway.

A huge lit sign above the bustle: FROST HOTEL AND CASINO

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE HALLWAY

A service elevator dings and opens - we're on the 21st floor. Cliff leads Natalie into the quiet office hallway, supporting her by the elbow, comforting.

CLIFF

It's alright, you did the right thing.

INT. FROST OFFICE RECEPTION ROOM

Cliff leads her into a plush if dated waiting room with "STERLING FROST JR." stenciled on the door. A middle aged ASSISTANT reacts.

ASSISTANT

Hi Cliff, he's still in there with

CLIFF

It's alright Ginger.

Cliff picks up Ginger's phone and hits a button.

CLIFF (cont'd)

Ginger would you get Natalie some water.

(to Natalie)

Maybe something stronger?

(then into the phone:)

It's Cliff, we have a code red.

Cliff grunts and hangs up.

NATALIE  
Just water.

Ginger goes. Natalie and Cliff wait.

The door opens. STERLING FROST JR, late 40s, slight with soft eyes. He takes in Cliff, Natalie.

STERLING  
What's up, Cliff?

INT. STERLING FROST JR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The nicest room we've been in so far. Floor to ceiling windows look out on the desert night. Sterling behind a sturdy old desk, looking at Natalie's phone, shaken. Natalie sits with a glass of water, Cliff stands behind her.

STERLING  
I don't believe it.

Natalie looks nervous.

NATALIE  
It was in the presidents suite

STERLING  
No, I - I believe. I believe you. I just. Mr. Caine's suite, one hundred percent certain?

NATALIE  
Room twenty ten. I know who Mr. Caine is.  
(beat)  
I know this is a big deal.

Sterling looks to Cliff, who nods gravely. Sterling breathes.

STERLING  
Natalie. It doesn't matter who he is, or how much money he's got or what he means to this casino. This  
(the phone)  
is... beyond just moral revulsion, this is illegal and we have an obligation... you did the right thing.

(MORE)

STERLING (cont'd)

And now we're going to do what we need to do. It's in our hands now. Okay?

She nods, tears in her eyes.

STERLING (cont'd)

Get changed, go home, rest.

NATALIE

I have to - I left my cart just in the hallway, I have to

STERLING

No, leave it, don't worry about it

NATALIE

I have to at least clock out with Louis, tell him

STERLING

Don't clock out, we'll handle all of it. You've been through enough tonight. We're going to contact the, FBI I think? We'll contact who we need to and in the morning we'll let you know what the next step is, you'll probably have to give a statement, I don't know how it works, but we'll be there for you.

He smiles reassuringly. Hidden under the desk, he deletes the photo before he hands the phone back to her.

STERLING (cont'd)

Is your husband home?

NATALIE

Yeah. He's home.

STERLING

But you feel safe, going home to him?

NATALIE

He's fine, yeah.

STERLING

Alright, get changed then go straight home. I don't want Caine getting wind that something's up, and running off before the FBI can get here. So just for tonight, don't tell anyone about this, ok? Leave it to us.

MOMENTS LATER: she walks out. When the two men are alone, a moment of tense silence.

CLIFF  
Should we call your father?

STERLING  
No we're not calling my fucking father. I'm handling this. I can handle it.

Cliff is cool as a cucumber. And obviously doesn't think Sterling can handle anything. Almost as a challenge:

CLIFF  
Then tell me what to do.

Sterling nods. Shaky. But decided.

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE HALLWAY

Cliff comes out into the hall, walking fast.

INT. CLIFF'S OFFICE

Much more of a working office - a whiteboard with a shift chart, memos on the wall, all related to security. Cliff goes to a GUN SAFE under the desk, opens it and pulls out a PEARL HANDLED .22.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOCKERS - NIGHT

A few female employees changing for their shifts. Natalie at her locker, still in her uniform, pulling herself together. She opens her locker, removes street clothes.

INT. CASINO FLOOR

Cliff cuts through the casino fast.

INT. EMPLOYEE EXIT

A utilitarian hall with two METAL DETECTORS leading to exit doors. Cliff speeds out through the detectors, which beep. The GUARD on duty gives him a little salute.

GUARD  
Night chief.

CLIFF

Night Ben.

EXT. STERLING FROST HOTEL AND CASINO - NIGHT

The high rise hotel/casino in all its glory, lit up in the desert night. In the foreground, Cliff pulls out of the employee parking lot in his BLACK SEDAN, and peels out into the street.

EXT. FROST NEVADA - NIGHT

A wider view of the small casino strip, which the FROST casino dominates. Cliff's black car crosses the major bridge across the river, headed out of town.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

In the casino parking garage, Natalie walks to her car. Down the row, a fellow worker named NICHELLE spots her and waves.

NICHELLE

Hey Nat!

Natalie waves back but doesn't answer, unlocks her beat up Sentra and quickly gets in.

EXT. BULL RUN NEVADA - NIGHT

A sleepy little town, low income homes and trailer parks. In the distance the river and glittering lights of the casino are visible.

EXT. NATALIE'S HOME - NIGHT

A small one bedroom home with a dirt lawn. Pickup truck parked out front. Lights on.

Cliff's car pulls up, silent as a shark. He looks around, then gets out and approaches.

INT. NATALIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

On the couch watching TV with a beer, JERRY. Mid 20s, mean face.



A sharp rap at the door. Jerry doesn't move. Another rap.

JERRY  
We aint voting!

Pause. Rap rap rap.

JERRY (cont'd)  
Shit.

Jerry heaves himself up, goes to the door.

JERRY (cont'd)  
Goddammit.

Opens it and this happens very quickly: Cliff kicks the door open, grabs Jerry, spins him.

Jerry's slight, no match for Cliff. But he fights back. BITES Cliff's wrist. Cliff snarls, yanks his arm away, grabs Jerry by the back of his hair. The pearl handle .22 up to the side of his head. One POP, a little spray of blood from the temple. And Jerry falls.

Silence.

Cliff moves quick, professional. Turning off lights, turning up the volume on the TV.

Then hunches by the window and waits.

INT. SENTRA - NIGHT

Natalie drives her beat up Sentra. Freaked out but keeping it together. Windows down, feeling the wind.

She doesn't notice, in her bag on the passengers seat: Her phone, on silent, ringing. From "CHARLIE." It goes to voicemail.

EXT. NATALIE'S HOME - NIGHT

Silence. Then Natalie's Sentra pulls up. It parks. Natalie sits in the car a moment, looking at the tv-lit window. Not looking forward to going in there. A ridiculous HULA GIRL bobble head gazes at her from the dashboard. She goes in.

INT. NATALIE'S LIVING ROOM

A key in the lock. Then the door swings open. Natalie enters, blinking in the dark.

NATALIE

Jerry?

A flash and pop, and Natalie falls to the ground. Cliff steps from the darkness and shoots her once more. Then he wipes the gun down and places it carefully in Jerry's right hand.

EXT. NATALIE'S HOME

Cliff gets in his car, making a call on his cell. Someone picks up.

CLIFF

Okay, it's done.

INT. CASINO OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A dark large room suspended above the casino, looking down on the gaming tables. Sterling stands with his phone at his ear. He lowers it, hangs up. Takes a second to collect himself.

Then walks back across the room and sits across from an unseen woman.

WOMAN (O.S.)

You alright?

STERLING

Yeah. Where were we?

CUT TO BLACK

FADE UP ON

EXT. BULL RUN - EARLY MORNING

Sun on the horizon, sea blue sky. The casino in the distance. A trailer home sits on a dirt lot, a beat up dusty '69 Plymouth Barracuda parked in front.

INT. TRAILER

A cozy mess. Lazy sunlight. Lying on her back in bed is CHARLIE CALE, mid thirties. She scrolls through her phone, occasionally grunting in reaction to something. At some point her phone's alarm goes off and without missing a beat she silences it.

CHARLIE  
Yeah alright yeah.

She stretches.

LATER: Charlie's in the shower. Phone propped up playing the local NPR station, some current political debate.

EXT. TRAILER - EARLY MORNING

Now in shorts, flip flops and a sleeveless t-shirt, Charlie ambles out into the dirt lawn. Her neighbor John-O, an elderly man with jet black rockabilly hair, putters in his junk filled yard.

CHARLIE  
What's good John-O?

JOHN-O  
Yo yo yo. You wanna help me ebay some old old Playboys? I'll cut you in, They're mint.

CHARLIE  
John-O, I gotta go to work in a few.

She cracks open a beer.

JOHN-O  
They're mint.

CHARLIE  
Johhhhn-O, where'd you get em? No more break ins, don't make me bail your ass out again.

JOHN-O  
None of that no, John-O's clean-O. Bitty's in the kitty, shit's in the kicker, the world is a beautiful place.

CHARLIE  
Alright.

She lights a cigarette, sits in a lawn chair. Her phone playing a news podcast, a report about online child pornography sites on the dark web.

Reacting to the report:

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Fuuuck.

Sips her beer.

LATER: She tosses in her bag and slides into her Barracuda. Keys it, and is met with a lurching grind. Tries again. Again. No luck. She exhales.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Oh for god damn.

She picks up her phone, calls someone. After a moment:

CHARLIE (INTO PHONE)

Hey, you leave yet?

EXT. BULL RUN NEVADA - MORNING

A beat up SENTRA drives over the bridge towards the casino.

INT. SENTRA

Charlie rides shotgun, flipping her phone. Natalie drives, wearing a baseball cap and big Elvis sunglasses. We'll have plenty of time and cues over the next few scenes to recognize her and realize we've flashed back in time, no need to get it immediately.

CHARLIE

You hear about this child porn ring thing?

NATALIE

What?

CHARLIE

They had a thing on my news, kiddie porn, dark web, like all the worst shit. Rich fucks have these rings, it's all run out of Russia, on the dark web, oh my god.

NATALIE

Charlie I've been having a not great morning, I don't need this, right now. Why do you listen to that stuff?

CHARLIE

Why do I listen to the news?

NATALIE

Yeah, what's the point. You can't do nothing about it. Every day you're mad about something you can't do nothing about. Better off with music.

CHARLIE

I'm doing something about it right now. I don't care, come at me Russian pervos. Time's up on that shit.

Charlie retweets a news story, with the comment "SICK!"

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Done.

Natalie turns the music up. On the dashboard, the funky hula girl bobble head bobs along to the song.

EXT. STERLING FROST HOTEL AND CASINO - MORNING

The Sentra pulls into the employee entrance.

INT. EMPLOYEE EXIT

Charlie and Natalie file in with a line of others in their shift, scanning their badges and going through the metal detectors. Charlie, still glued to her phone:

CHARLIE

How you doing, you alright?

NATALIE

Yeah I'm good.

Charlie's head pops up, like she's just woken up.

CHARLIE

Bullshit.

NATALIE

What?

Natalie goes through the metal detector, it beeps. She fishes her keys out of her purse, puts them in a tray, tries again.

CHARLIE

I hear bullshit, I say the word  
bullshit, it's a thing I have.  
You're not good, what's up?

BEEP. Natalie backtracks again, digging in her bag for what might be setting it off.

NATALIE

Nothing.

CHARLIE

Uh huh.

NATALIE

Can, maybe not right now, can we not?  
I'm fine.

CHARLIE

Bullshit. But alright.  
(beat)

It's these things setting it off, you  
got a pound of chrome on your face.

Charlie takes Natalie's Elvis sunglasses off, revealing a poorly concealed black eye. Natalie snatches them back, puts them back on.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Son of a bitch. Hey -

Natalie heads in. Charlie tries to follow but her phone sets off the metal detector.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Son of a bitch!

INT. EMPLOYEE LOCKERS - LATER

Charlie finishes getting into a slightly ridiculous COCKTAIL WAITRESS outfit. Natalie in her housekeeper uniform gets makeup applied to the shiner by a half dressed pit boss, NICHELLE.

CHARLIE  
I'm gonna break his face.

NICHELLE  
I still don't get it, you looked at his phone?

NATALIE  
No, I didn't even, he's such an idiot. I'm knitting on the couch, the apple tv was on with the screen saver where it puts up our photos, so it's my sister's kids and Tahoe shots from when we went last month and then it's his dick, like boom. His dick on the tv. He didn't know - cause the whatisit with the photos on his phone

CHARLIE  
The cloud.

NATALIE  
The cloud!

CHARLIE  
The cloud of boners.

NATALIE  
So he gets home and I say who the fuck are you sending your dick to and he plays dumb and then

She motions to her eye. Nichelle finishes up.

NICHELLE  
That's as good as I can get it.

NATALIE  
Thanks Chelle.

Natalie closes up her locker, fits it with a combo padlock.

CHARLIE  
Nat, please tell me you kicked his ass out.

NATALIE  
(weakly)  
Yeah. I did.

She goes.

Charlie watches her walk off, then to herself:

CHARLIE  
Bullshit.

INT. CASINO FLOOR

Charlie works the floor as a cocktail waitress. At first she's distracted, but then she starts joking around with some of the regular customers. They know her, they like her. The staff too. She works the floor, gets tips, she's comfortable here, in her element.

EXT. LOADING DOCK

On a break, Charlie smokes with a few short order cooks and valet parkers. Laughing, shooting the shit.

A MANAGER comes out, vaping. Nods to Charlie.

MANAGER  
Hey Chuck. When you clock out the big guy wants to see you.

CHARLIE  
Big guy who?

The Manager looks up at the "STERLING FROST CASINO" sign high above their heads, raises his eyebrows.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
Oh. Shit.

A BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO: 40 year old STERLING FROST (senior) in a 1980s style suit and cowboy hat, in front of a construction site. Handsome. We're in:

INT. RECEPTION ROOM

The same waiting room from before. "Sterling Frost Jr." on the door. Charlie stands in front of the Assistant, who's on the phone. Charlie's eyes come off the photo of Sterling Frost Sr, to her phone.

She's texted Natalie "hey gotta stay late, getting fired, will uber home." A pulsing ellipses turns into a reply from Natalie: "k?"

The Assistant hangs up, looks up at Charlie.



CHARLIE  
Charlie Cale, I'm here to get fired.

INT. STERLING FROST JR'S OFFICE

Charlie is beckoned in. Sterling stands and comes around his desk to greet her.

STERLING  
Hello Ms. Cale. I'm happy to finally meet you.

CHARLIE  
Yeah well. Alright.

STERLING  
Sit down. Something to drink?

CHARLIE  
No. Like what?

STERLING  
What?

CHARLIE  
To drink.

Sterling motions to the wet bar.

STERLING  
Anything.

Charlie considers this like a chess move, then

CHARLIE  
No I'm good.

Her eyes catch on a framed picture on the desk, Sterling JR with his now elderly dad Sterling Sr, at a podium at a big party, arms around each other.'

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
So I think I know what this is, and you should just do it.

STERLING  
What do you think this is?

CHARLIE  
Well. Your dad gave you this casino when, three months ago

STERLING

He didn't give it to me, I'm managing it.

CHARLIE

Alright, and I think maybe there was alot to do with the handover and paperwork and stuff and for whatever reason he must have just gotten around to telling you about me.

STERLING

Yes, he did.

CHARLIE

So now that you know about my whole thing you're going to fire me, cause it's probably the smart thing to do and I never understood why your dad let me stick around.

STERLING

I think he liked you.

CHARLIE

Ho. He did not. I dunno what version of the story you got.

STERLING

Well let's start there then.

Sterling takes a beat, then begins the story.

STERLING (cont'd)

Once upon a time, in Denver, a milquetoast collection of the best poker players in central Colorado met at a Fairfield Inn suite off I-25. Not a barn burner, just a run of the mill Thursday night mid stakes ring game. A young woman from out of town was at the table. She was cute, she livened up the room, she had plenty of cash, so they let her play. Three hours later she had mopped the floor with each and every one of them. Which happens. But. This had been happening. The previous week, in Cheyenne. Week before in Rapid City.

(MORE)

STERLING (cont'd)

Same young woman, cutting a haphazard path across the middle of the country, never in big games and never in corporate owned casinos, but always the same result. She didn't lose. The word spread quick, cause as you know, gamblers talk. But here's the thing: as far as anyone could tell, she was playing straight. No wires, no shills, and yet - she played with an almost supernatural infallibility. "Like she could see through the cards." So when she showed up here and slipped into a tournament, my dad was interested. And he watched her, secretly, for two days. Watched her play. Sat in the crows nest, himself, ten hours a day. Studied her. And my dad figured out what she was doing. Even when he figured it out, he didn't believe it. It was impossible, it was insane, but it was the only explanation. And when he confronted her with it, she did not deny it.

(beat)

So it's true?

Charlie lifts her hands in a "welp" shrug, gets up and goes to the wet bar. Gets a beer.

STERLING (cont'd)

That's... And you haven't gambled since. You really haven't?

CHARLIE

Your dad put the word out that I play dirty. You said it, gamblers talk. To this day no podunk penny game in the country will take my buy-in. I'm blackballed. But he didn't break my fingers. You know how scared I was when he had me brought into that back room? Your dad can be a scary guy.

STERLING

I know.

CHARLIE

But he called me "kid," said "this is a mess, kid." Gave me a job, let me work here. So maybe he does like me.

STERLING

He gave you a job to keep you in a cage, you seem awfully blase about this. You've got this gift and my dad made sure you'd never use it again, aren't you pissed?

CHARLIE

Well Sterling.

(cracks the beer)

No I'm not pissed. Hear you tell the story I was the Cincinnati kid, methodically fleecing the country until my master plan was thwarted. Dude, I was a dumb ass. I had no grand plan, no map with yarn or anything, I figured out I could do this thing, so I did it and it worked for awhile. I had money for dumb shit and I stayed at nice hotels but it was kinda boring. And I knew it wouldn't last forever, and it didn't. So. And now you know what? I'm doing fine. I like my life. I like this job, I'm bummed you're firing me but I'll find another job and I'll probably like that one too. I'm still pretty much a dumb ass and I'm doing just fine.

Sterling picks up a pack of cards. Holds the top one up, its back to Charlie.

STERLING

I'm holding an Ace of spades.

CHARLIE

(reflexive)

Bullshit.

He turns it - the two of diamonds. Does another.

STERLING

Six of hearts.

CHARLIE

Bullshit.

Shows it - king of spades. One more.

STERLING

Ten of spades.

Silence from Charlie. He shows the ten of spades, puts it on the table.

STERLING (cont'd)  
And you're not reading the cards.

CHARLIE  
How could I read the cards?

STERLING  
You're reading me.

Silence.

STERLING (cont'd)  
It's not like it's one thing, like my eye twitches or something,

CHARLIE  
No

STERLING  
It's just a general

CHARLIE  
Yeah

STERLING  
You can just tell.

CHARLIE  
That something's off. That's the only way I can describe it. I can just tell.

STERLING  
When anyone is lying.  
(beat)  
One hundred percent of the time.  
(beat)  
I'm going to touch my nose.

CHARLIE  
No, that doesn't - I'm not a soothsayer, I can't predict the future. There's nothing mystical about this. It's just if you're intentionally lying. That's it.  
(beat, realizes)  
You're not firing me.

STERLING

Charlie, how can you not see that this is a... a gift. You have been graced with a gift. I'm happy you're enjoying your dead end life but for you to be a nobody, to work as a cocktail waitress? For you to not use this? It's criminal. I'm not firing you. I'm giving you an opportunity to work with me, to use your gift, and get very, very rich.

Charlie's not excited.

CHARLIE

I been rich.

STERLING

How was it?

CHARLIE

Easier than being broke, harder than doing just fine.

STERLING

Due respect, you've had money, you've never been rich.

The land line on his desk starts to ring.

STERLING (cont'd)

I need to know you're in before I tell you what I want to do. And I need your answer by the end of the day tomorrow, it's time sensitive.

(picks up the phone)

Yeah?

CHARLIE

If I say no am I fired?

Sterling, listening to the line, shakes his head at her question, of course not. Then to the person on the other end:

STERLING

Ok, is Cliff - offsite, alright well, get Cliff there, he'll know. Ok. Who's he shouting for? No. Ok.

He hangs up.

STERLING (cont'd)

Sorry.

CHARLIE

Something up?

STERLING

Some drunk on the casino floor.  
Shouting for his wife. Cliff'll  
handle it.

CHARLIE

So if I want to -  
(stops, worried)  
Wait, who's he shouting for?

INT. CASINO FLOOR

Jerry, Natalie's husband (who was on the couch in the opening) tears through the casino floor, shouting:

JERRY

NATALIE! Natalie where are you, you  
dumb bitch, I want my wife. She  
works - NATALIE!

Charlie bursts out onto the floor. Yup, exactly what she feared. She scans her eyes over to the employee entrance, sees a small crowd of housekeepers and dealers rubbernecking. Nichelle and a worried Natalie among them.

Charlie locks eyes with Nichelle, motions for her to get Natalie out of there. Nichelle pulls Natalie back into the locker room.

Charlie goes down to the floor, where security guards are approaching Jerry from all sides.

CHARLIE

Jerry! Jerry you stupid  
asshole. Hey. She isn't  
here. She is not here.

JERRY

Don't lie to me Charlie  
she's here. I need to tell  
her, I'm not going to hurt  
her, I'd never hurt her

Jerry shuffles back, one of the guards goes for him and tackles him back on to a blackjack table. Jerry's leg goes up, Charlie spots a PEARL HANDED PISTOL in an ankle holster, on his inner right leg.

At that moment Cliff rushes onto the casino floor, past Charlie.

CHARLIE  
Cliff he's got a gun.

Cliff goes straight for Jerry and in two seconds it's over, and Jerry's being dragged across the floor into the security office, shouting all the time:

JERRY  
I know my rights! I'll kill you!  
I'll kill you!

They vanish through a door. Charlie watching them go. Holy shit, that was intense.

INT. CLIFF'S OFFICE

Through the hallway outside, we see SECURITY GUARDS drag a kicking and screaming JERRY. Cliff follows, pausing briefly to lean into his office and toss the PEARL HANDLED PISTOL onto his desk.

INT. UTLITY HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Natalie still freaking out. General hubbub with the staff. Charlie cuts through it all, goes to Natalie, who has just powered up her phone.

CHARLIE  
Hey, hey - they've got him,  
Cliff's got him, it's  
alright.

NATALIE  
He had been texting me crazy  
shit all morning, I keep my  
phone off on my shift, I  
didn't see it - I'm ok, I  
just need to breathe

Louis, her manager, is gruff but sympathetic.

HOUSEKEEPING MANAGER  
Take the rest of the day - you got  
someplace safe to go?

CHARLIE  
She's staying with me tonight

NATALIE  
No

CHARLIE  
You're staying with me.

HARD CUT TO:



INT. TRAILER - MORNING

Similar to when we first met Charlie, but Natalie's sleeping with her in the tiny bed. Pulp Fiction plays on an ipad on the end table. Charlie flips through her phone. Natalie stares into space.

CHARLIE

It's crazy the things people stick up their asses.

NATALIE

Yeah.

(beat)

What are you reading?

CHARLIE

"Ten craziest things people have stuck up their asses."

NATALIE

Jerry's gonna be home tonight. He's gonna be there and he'll be sorry and sweet and he'll get sober for awhile.

CHARLIE

Get a restraining order.

NATALIE

It's his house, he owned it before we got together.

CHARLIE

Divorce him, you get the house.

Natalie gets up.

NATALIE

No I signed a thing. I dunno, I was stupid. I can't afford to be out on my ass right now. Maybe that's a dumb reason to stay with Jerry but it's just true, with my mom and everything I can't afford it.

CHARLIE

You can stay here.

Natalie smirks, c'mon.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Just pisses me off.

NATALIE

I know. I think in another life you were a knight. Helping the little guy. Miss Galahad.

Natalie kisses Charlie's head and exits.

JULES (ON THE TV)

*Maybe I'll wander the earth. Like Kane in Kung-Fu.*

EXT. TRAILER - MORNING

Charlie in her Barracuda, keys it and it turns over. Purrs. She gives the thumbs-up to Natalie in her Sentra.

CHARLIE

The car gods smile upon us this day.

Natalie returns the thumbs up and drives off.

Charlie watches the dust trail of Natalie's Sentra recede towards the highway. Thinks a moment. Then she makes a call on her cell.

CHARLIE (INTO PHONE)

Hey, whosis, Joe? Hey man, how goes. You know, bitty's in the kitty, shit's in the kicker, the world is a beautiful place.

From his yard, John-O raises a hand and calls

JOHN-O

Yeah!

CHARLIE (INTO PHONE)

Hey Joe gimme Sterling's office.

EXT. STERLING FROST HOTEL AND CASINO - LATE AFTERNOON

In time lapse the desert sun arcs across the sky, until it's low and looming in early evening.

INT. CASINO FLOOR

Buzzing, blinging, swarming with life. We move over it, coming to...

INT. HIGH ROLLER ROOM - CASINO FLOOR

Partitioned off, with its own bar and a few nice tables. At one of them sits the SMALL BALD man from the suite in the opening scene. He plays hold-em while his small entourage hangs out behind him on their phones, bored.

STERLING (O.S.)  
You know who that is?

CHARLIE (O.S.)  
Mr. Caine.

STERLING (O.S.)  
Saaed Caine. Oil guy. Right. And do you know why you know who he is?

CAINE drops a sizeable stack from the racks of chips n the table in front of him. We follow his practiced movements.

CHARLIE (O.S.)  
Cause he's a high roller, anything he asks for we bump it to the top of the ticket and tell the floor boss.

STERLING (O.S.)  
Caine is a whale. He's one of four or five whales we get in here every year, we fly them in, they drop what islands cost in a weekend, for them it's a drip in the bucket. Whales. But Caine is our Moby Dick.

We slowly ZOOM BACK to reveal Charlie and Sterling on the main floor of the casino, behind a partition that looks into the high roller room, observing Caine.

STERLING  
Our whole casino, you wanna guess what percentage of our profits come from the high roller room?

CHARLIE  
I know it's alot. Fifty perfect?

STERLING  
Seventy. You know how much of that comes right out of this asshole's pocket? When my dad handed me the keys he told me two things: keep the carpets clean, and keep Caine happy.

CHARLIE

Alright.

STERLING

Right now. He's raising big. Is he bluffing?

Charlie looks at Caine push the chips out.

CHARLIE

No.

Caine wins the hand with pocket kings, and gets up from the table, heads out. Someone takes care of his chips for him.

Sterling beams at Charlie, like a kid with a new toy.

STERLING

My dad goes back with this guy. So he never scrutinized his spending. I did, I scrutinized. The past few years, he's spent less and less at our tables. And not out of thriftiness. Turns out he's doing private pick up games in his suite! We fly him and his whole crew out, comp everything, we do this, and this cheap bastard's running his own game on our property.

(beat)

So here's the proposition. We're gonna fleece that son of a bitch. You and me.

EXT. STERLING FROST JR'S OFFICE - EARLY EVENING

They enter, Sterling turns on lights against the growing dim and opens the sliding glass door to his balcony.

CHARLIE

So you get me in his private game and I take him, we both get a ton of dough, he gets his hand slapped and maybe thinks private games are not so good luck for him, sticks to the tables.

STERLING

Not you though, that's too risky, he's seen you on the floor.

(MORE)

STERLING (cont'd)

We gotta work a camera system, get a shill in the game, you signal him, we'll figure it out. Can you do your thing over video?

CHARLIE

I think so. When's he doing this game?

STERLING

Day after tomorrow, we got forty eight hours.

CHARLIE

And your dad's alright with this, plucking the golden goose?

STERLING

My dad?

The phone rings on Sterling's desk.

STERLING (cont'd)

Augh, I told em - hold on.

CHARLIE

(very serious)

Has your dad ok'd this?

STERLING

It's my name on the office door.

(picks up the phone)

Ginger I told you -

CHARLIE

Uh huh. Unless a twelve foot tall J and R are being shipped, it's his name on the casino. I don't care if he's retired, if I piss off your dad again he'll break more than my fingers.

Meanwhile Sterling has said "alright" into the phone and hung up. Apologetically to Charlie:

STERLING

Hey, gimme twenty minutes. Meet me in the crows nest in twenty.

CHARLIE

What, you gotta actually work?

She heads for the door but he guides her towards a small alcove in the back of the office.

STERLING

Here. Use the private elevator.

It dings and opens, a tiny cute wood paneled elevator. He guides her in, hits DOWN.

CHARLIE

Ooh lah lah.

(as the doors close)

Is this a bar?

After the doors close he goes to the main office door, opens it. Cliff and a distraught Natalie in the waiting room. We've seen this scene already.

STERLING

Cliff. What's up?

INT. CASINO OBSERVATION ROOM

AKA the Crow's Nest. An observation station perched above the casino floor, with panoramic one way mirrors all around.

Charlie enters, sipping a beer. Pulls her phone from her bag, checks it - one missed call. From NATALIE.

CHARLIE

Shit.

She calls Natalie back. Waits, staring down at the gaming tables. The call goes to voicemail.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Hey Nat, I just saw you called, don't know how I missed it. I'm sorry. Call me back.

She hangs up. Worried. Waits. Time passes. A few beers pass. Down on the floor, she spots SAAED CAINE emerging from the elevators with his entourage. She locks on him, watching him with a growing sense of foreboding.

CRACK - the heavy door opens, Sterling enters.

STERLING

Hey. That was more than twenty, sorry.

He crosses to her, looks down at the casino.

STERLING (cont'd)

What's it like, always knowing the truth?

CHARLIE

Yeah, no. I just know if something's a lie, and outside of poker that's less useful than you think. Cause everyone lies, all the time, it's like birds chirping, people lying - once you tune into it it's fucking everywhere all the time, and they usually lie not to cover up some deep dark secret, but about stupid meaningless shit. The trick is figuring out why someone's lying.

Sterling's phone rings. He stands, walks a discreet distance away. Answers it silently, listens a second, then hangs up and comes back. Sits.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

You alright?

STERLING

Yeah. Where were we?

The slightest perceptible hitch from Charlie, then

CHARLIE

Would you have to kill me if I pulled out of this?

STERLING

You're worried about my dad.

CHARLIE

I just got some bad mojo but yeah let's start there.

STERLING

My dad gave me this job because he trusts me.

CHARLIE

Bullshit.

A long pause from Sterling. An "alright" pause. He sits in an easy chair, she sits too.

STERLING

My dad gave me this job because he thinks I'm a fuck up, and he's made that clear to me and everyone here. To everyone working here I'm the kid clomping around in his dad's shoes. I've made mistakes, I haven't, you google me you know - I've had bad situations. Previously. This is my last chance to prove I'm not what he thinks I am. He figures this place runs itself, there's not much I can mess up.

CHARLIE

But you're gonna prove him wrong.

STERLING

I'm gonna show him I can do things my way. And I'll do whatever it takes. You believe me?

CHARLIE

(she does)

Yeah.

(beat)

But

STERLING

One point five million. Clean cash. No matter what our take is on the night, no matter if it even works or happens. And you can disappear after. No further obligations. One point five million for saying yes right now.

He holds his hand out.

Charlie smirks. Knows it's a bad idea. But it's a very rich bad idea. The worried line of her mouth breaks a tiny smile.

CHARLIE

Alright Sterls. Let's do it.

She reaches out and shakes his hand. The instant their hands make contact

SMASH CUT TO:

"SLAIN"



The word, pixelated and filling the entire screen.

Charlie's eye, tear filled and horrified.

The full headline on her phone: "LOCAL WOMAN SLAIN" and beneath it "Gruesome murder/suicide"

Charlie's face, in shock.

Beneath the headline, Natalie's picture. Next to it, Jerry's.

We are

INT. TRAILER - EARLY MORNING

Charlie slowly sits up, looking at her phone.

EXT. STERLING FROST HOTEL AND CASINO - MORNING

Establishing.

INT. EMPLOYEE EXIT

Charlie, zombie-like, shuffling in, glued to her phone. She walks right through the metal detector and it beeps, the GUARD tries to stop her and she just looks at him and keeps walking.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOCKERS

Like a funeral. Girls crying, consoling each other. Charlie sits with Nichelle, both on their phones.

NICHELLE

Son of a bitch.

CHARLIE

Yeah. Son of a bitch.

NICHELLE

I saw her leaving last night, she looked upset. And it says it happened when she got home. I had just seen her. Like I just saw her.

Charlie blinks. Looks at the MISSED CALLS log on her phone.

CHARLIE  
Did she say anything?

NICHELLE  
No, she saw me but kept walking.

CHARLIE  
Huh. That's - huh. What time?

NICHELLE  
Like just after eight. I'm usually off before she is, it's weird, her shift doesn't end till later right?

The time stamp on the missed call from Natalie - 7:56pm

CHARLIE  
Right.

A female SECURITY GUARD accompanied by a female COP shuffle down the aisle. The guard has a pair of bolt cutters, checks her notes and goes to Natalie's locker. The girls in the locker room hush as they realize what's happening.

As the Guard goes to cut Natalie's padlock off -

NICHELLE  
Wait. She told me her combo once when she was sick.

Nichelle dials in a number combo and opens the lock, swings the locker open.

The cop empties the contents, mostly clothes, into a plastic bag. Charlie watches. The final item is the pair of Elvis sunglasses.

Her phone buzzes - a text from "STERLING" - "Let's get to work."

INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - DAY

Mr. Caine lies on the bed in a bathrobe, the TV on. A call girl comes out of the bathroom as we boom DOWN through the floor...

INT. CORNER SUITE 1 - DAY

...and through an empty suite with the exact same layout but lower ceilings. We don't stop our downward plunge, going through the floor again into...

INT. CORNER SUITE 2 - DAY

An identical suite. This one has Sterling on his knees examining a couch. He turns, looks at Charlie, sitting in the back of a room, still shell shocked.

STERLING

I didn't realize you two were close.  
I'm sorry.

CHARLIE

She called me that night. I don't know when I missed the call, it must have been when we were together. She might have been asking if she could stay with me. If I had picked up...

STERLING

Hey, you can't go down that path. Nobody knows why she called you, she could have called for a lot of reasons. You can't blame yourself for this, it'll lead nowhere good. Right?

Charlie manages a half hearted nod. Sterling gently tries to re-engage with their planning session.

STERLING (cont'd)

So this suite is identical to Caine's, with the exception of ceiling height. This is the table they'll use for the game.

A large round table at the end of the room, backed by panoramic windows.

STERLING (cont'd)

It's heavy and big so it's unlikely he'll move it, and our informer said last time he sat with his back to the window, facing the room, which makes sense. And is good for us.

CHARLIE

Why'd she go home early?

STERLING

Why'd she what?

CHARLIE

Her shift ends at 9. I missed a call from her just before 8 and Nichelle saw her leaving just after 8.

STERLING

Maybe she got sick?

INT. UTILITY HALLWAY - MORNING - FLASHBACK

Charlie talks to a gruff HOUSEKEEPING MANAGER while staff dodges by them.

HOUSEKEEPING MANAGER

She woulda clocked out if she got sick, or even texted me.

CHARLIE

Whoa, she didn't clock out?

HOUSEKEEPING MANAGER

She just ghosted. Left her cart in the hall, Cecilia had to clean up the rest of her floor.

INT. CORNER SUITE 2

STERLING

Wait you talked to her manager?

CHARLIE

Louis, yeah

STERLING

Why did you do that?

CHARLIE

Cause I wanted to know why she went home early, why she called me. Something happened just before eight o'clock, it was scary enough that she called me for help and then basically ran. What happened?

STERLING

Considering she went straight home, the obvious answer is her husband called her. Maybe, who knows, threatened suicide, so she rushes home.

CHARLIE

That's what you'd assume, that's what everyone is going to assume, just reading the news on here.

(waves her phone)

But I knew Nat, and I know that doesn't make sense.

STERLING

I know you think you have a read on people, but it actually makes perfect sense

CHARLIE

Nat kept her phone off during her shift.

Sterling takes this in.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

So whatever spooked her wasn't a call, it wasn't Jerry, it was something that happened here, while she was working. What was it?

STERLING

Look. Her husband was an abusive low life. It's tragic and sad but it's not complicated. I'm sorry. I don't want to be insensitive. But we're in the middle of a very time dependent operation and until tomorrow night I need you focused. Can you still do this?

She breathes. Knows he's right. Makes an attempt:

CHARLIE

A camera in the couch won't work.

STERLING

Why not? It's the clearest eyeline

CHARLIE

Swapping out the couch is clunky, could get noticed, and you're going to need multiple eyelines on him.

STERLING

Multiple cameras?

CHARLIE

Cause you don't know where the other players will be sitting, blocking your view.

STERLING

So what do you think?

She motions to two matching lamps on end tables near the back wall.

CHARLIE

Lamps.

STERLING

Yeah. Yeah I can get my guy to put cameras in the bases of these, easy. That's good, thinking about the angles. You're good at this.

He goes to inspect the lamps. Charlie is lost in thought.

EXT. STERLING FROST HOTEL AND CASINO - LATE AFTERNOON

Charlie pulls out of the casino. Signaling a left turn. Then, deep in thought, she comes to a decision and flips a right.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

A large sign out front - "COUNTY SHERIFF - Charlie's barracuda parked out front.

SHERIFF PARKER (PRE-LAP)

I'm still not sure I understand how I can help you.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Charlie sits across from a kind eyed but tired SHERIFF MATT PARKER. She has her phone out, showing the missed call.

CHARLIE

She was a friend of mine, you can see here, she tried to call me the night she died. And I don't know why, and I thought, her personal belongings -

SHERIFF PARKER

Personal belongings?

CHARLIE

Her phone. If I can look at her phone, maybe she texted someone else or called someone else, maybe there was an email or something that can help me... just...

SHERIFF PARKER

Yeah, I can't help you with that.

CHARLIE

It's here right? It's in the thing with the caged, with the bars,

SHERIFF PARKER

The jail? Why would we put her phone in jail?

CHARLIE

No smaller bars, little bars, I'm not, what's the word

SHERIFF PARKER

A little jail? Like we made a little jail for her phone?

CHARLIE

Where you lock up the evidence - LOCKER, the evidence locker, Jesus.

SHERIFF PARKER

You know why it's in the evidence locker? Because it's evidence. After the coroner's determination is official it's all sent to the next of kin, probably her mom. I know it's different on tv but when you're a cop you don't just toss evidence around willy nilly to anyone who's - hey!

Charlie has picked up a printed crime scene photo from the cluttered desk - Jerry splayed out, the pearl handle pistol in his right hand. Parker snatches it away from her.

SHERIFF PARKER (cont'd)

(beat)

Look. Working this county, I see this more than I'd like. Domestic abuse, escalating to something like this, it's usually the result of a pattern. You weren't responsible for that pattern. This isn't your fault is what I'm saying

CHARLIE

It isn't that. Jerry was a son of a bitch but... something's off, there's a lie here. I need to find it.

He seems sympathetic.

SHERIFF PARKER

The investigation isn't closed yet. I'll check with the coroner, I'll go through everything again, and if you think of anything specific that can help, call me. I promise, you give me something I can use, I'll use it. But do me a favor, don't go beating yourself up, and trust us to do our job. You're not a cop.

EXT. POLICE STATION

Charlie exits, not satisfied but what can she do.

As she pulls away, the camera tracks to reveal the entire "COUNTY SHERIFF" sign - "FROST COUNTY SHERIFF"

EXT. TRAILER - SUNSET

Charlie sits in her lounge chair with a beer and the remnants of dinner, smoking and flipping through her phone. It rings. "WORK"

CHARLIE (INTO PHONE)

Yeah?

STERLING (ON PHONE)

It's Sterling.

CHARLIE

Yeah, hey. How's the lamps coming?

STERLING

Good, we should be able to do a test tomorrow morning. Did you talk to the police about Natalie's death?

CHARLIE

...yeah?



STERLING

Sheriff Parker called me, he was going to do a whole new round of questioning, a whole thing.

CHARLIE

Good!

STERLING

No not good! No, Charlie we talked about this, you know what we're in the middle of here? Tomorrow?

CHARLIE

Okay listen, no wait listen to this though - the gun was in Jerry's right hand. When they found him. His right hand. But he wore it in an ankle holster - on his inner right leg. So?

STERLING

So he was a leftie.

CHARLIE

A leftie. So if he shot her, she's dead... he's got all the time in the world to put the gun to his head and pull the trigger, why in those circumstances would a left handed man use his right hand?

STERLING

There are literally a dozen reasons he could have - Charlie, Charlie!

CHARLIE

No, yeah maybe but put it with all this other stuff and -

STERLING

I told Parker you're distraught, you're emotionally distraught, and I'll speak to you but he should not spend any more of the department's resources on this. This is me speaking to you. Let this go and focus on the task at hand.

CHARLIE

Wait you can just tell the cops what to do and they do it? How's that work?

Sterling almost laughs.

STERLING  
See you in the morning.

Hangs up. Charlie is pissed.

CHARLIE  
Well I'm not a cop, bitch.

She takes a pull of her beer.

CUT TO: a cheap DOOR LOCK with CRIME SCENE tape running by it, being jimmed open.

EXT. NATALIE'S HOME - EVENING

Charlie hunches nervously outside Natalie's side door while John-O finishes his work and swings it open.

JOHN-O  
John-O don't do this shit no more, I told you.

CHARLIE  
I'll bail you out.

JOHN-O  
Physician bail thyself.

They duck past the tape and enter.

INT. NATALIE'S LIVING ROOM

Dark, eerie. But also strangely normal. Charlie lights up the flashlight on her phone and starts looking around.

JOHN-O  
(whistles)  
Nice place.

CHARLIE  
Don't touch anything. By touch I mean steal.

Charlie's flashlight lands on a discoloration on the carpet near the front door. She freezes, staring at it.

John-O spots a picture of Natalie and Jerry.

JOHN-O

Ohhh, this is that nice girl picked you up sometimes. Isn't she gonna be pissed you're breaking into her home?

Charlie steels herself.

CHARLIE

Wait in the car, I'll be a minute.

INT. NATALIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She rifles quickly around the bedroom until she finds what she was looking for - an IPAD. She clicks it on, the lock screen is Natalie and Jerry in Tahoe. The Face ID tries to unlock, doesn't work.

CHARLIE

Shit.

INT. NATALIE'S LIVING ROOM

Charlie goes to the picture John-O spotted, tries to unlock the ipad while pointing the camera at the picture. A noble but stupid attempt, no dice. She covers the camera with her thumb, tries again, and this brings up a little number pad asking for a pass-code.

Charlie tries "1234" then "4321" - nope. "1111" "2222" "3333"... striking out all the way up to 9.

Defeated a moment... then she opens her own phone (with her pass-code "1234") and searches her email for "NATALIE BDAY" and finds a mass email "MY 30th BIRTHDAY BITCHES" - checks the date, April 12th.

Keys in "0412" - nope. Tries "1204." No. Finally, does a little math on her fingers and enters Natalie's birth year, "1991" - nope.

CHARLIE

Shitsworth.

The headlights of a car pass by, and she remembers where she is. Takes the ipad and goes, leaving the room empty, and the picture of Natalie and Jerry smiling in its frame.

INT. TRAILER - EARLY MORNING

A now familiar tableau of Charlie in bed, sunlight through the window... but instead of being on her phone she's tapping random numbers into Natalie's iPad, which is plugged in next to her bed. Her eyes are bleary. Who knows if she's been doing it all night.

Moments later: she opens her fridge. Doesn't see what she wants.

CHARLIE  
Aaauuuuuggghhh.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - MORNING

A cinder block liquor store on a desolate sun baked block. Charlie walks down the sidewalk in flip flops, iPad in hand, trying random codes as she walks into the store.

INT. LIQUOR STORE

She grabs a six pack of beer from the refrigerated case, and stops at the little free-standing ATM. Blearily puts in her card, asks to withdraw 20 bucks and enters her PIN - "1234."

As she's waiting for her cash, she looks at her locked phone, and a spark goes off in her mind.

CHARLIE  
Oh oh oh oh -

INT. NICHELLE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Nichelle has her phone to her ear while trying to get her 5 year old dressed. A 2 year old runs around behind her banging on the walls with a plastic bat.

NICHELLE  
Charlie say that again, Natalie's what?

Intercut with:

INT. TRAILER - MORNING

CHARLIE

Her thing, her, when they were going to cut it off but you said she got sick and you had the combo for her thing with the clicking thing where she puts her clothes FUCK what's it called

NICHELLE

Her locker?

CHARLIE

HER LOCKER GODDAMN IT what is up with me and that word yes her locker combo

NICHELLE

9248.

CHARLIE

Thanks Chelle.

Moments later - Charlie keys "9248" in and the ipad unlocks.

She allows herself a moment of victory, then dives in.

Clicks the promising MESSAGES app... but gets a "to set up messages on this ipad enter your apple id." Shit.

Goes to email instead.

Nothing, some innocuous emails about work and from family.

Shit shit. Checks Facetime. Last call was a week ago with MOM.

Clicks back out to the home screen. Filled with games and dumb apps. The home screen picture visible behind them, Natalie and Jerry smiling lake-side.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

I'm missing something Nat. Tell me what I'm missing.

As Charlie gazes at it her eyes drift to the top of the photo. To the bright, clear sky above lake Tahoe.

With a single, puffy cloud.

Something snaps into place. BINGO.

Charlie clicks PHOTOS.

The very first shot is Natalie taking a selfie. Charlie zooms into the mirror behind her and sure enough, the pic was taken with Natalie's phone. These are her phone pictures synced up via the cloud.

She flips through them... more selfies, a sunset shot, out with the girls, one of Charlie drunk... she goes to grid mode and scans the pictures for a few pages. Nothing suspicious or enlightening.

Then she pauses.

Clicks back to the "LIBRARY" menu. Then scrolls down... way down...

...to "RECENTLY DELETED"

The grid is a matrix of thumbnail dicks.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
Augh. Dick cloud.

A few random normal ones are in there, which Charlie checks out. Scrolling down to the most recent shot.

A shot of a laptop computer screen. Weird.

The time stamp on it is the night of her death... 7:54pm

She double checks the missed call on her phone from Natalie - 7:56pm

Charlie breathes in. Expands the photo. Zooms in on it.

Her eyes go wide with horror, the same that we saw in Natalie's eyes in the opening scene.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
Holy holy.

EXT. BULL RUN NEVADA - MORNING

Charlie's barracuda tears down the highway towards the distant tower...

EXT. STERLING FROST HOTEL AND CASINO

...and hops the curb peeling into the casino parking lot.

INT. CASINO FLOOR

Cuts through the flashing games and tables, iPad in hand, furious.

INT. STERLING FROST JR'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Sterling, Cliff and Charlie stand over his desk. The iPad open to the photo. They both take fleeting glances at it, like their eyes are touching something hot.

CHARLIE

And that's it. Look at the time stamp. She was cleaning Mr. Caine's presidential suite. His laptop was open, and she saw this.

CLIFF

How do you know this is Caine's suite?

STERLING

(weary)

The ceilings. You can see in the background here. The presidential suite is the only one with these high ceilings.

CHARLIE

She could have just let it go. But she did something. She took a picture of it for evidence. And I think he must have caught her doing it. Had his bodyguards take her home, kill her and Jerry, set it all up.

CLIFF

That's a jump. There's no reason to think this is connected to her murder

CHARLIE

You think it's coincidence she got killed the night she -

CLIFF

I'm saying it could be, there's no solid connection. It's a jump.

CHARLIE

Fine. Can we call the FBI and bust his sick ass for this sick ass shit?

A long beat of silence.

STERLING

Let's take him first. We take his money tonight, then call the FBI.

CHARLIE

(WHAT?)

Fuck that

STERLING

You believe he did this. My dad always said, hit em where it hurts. A guy like this, that's his MONEY.

(the photo)

This is not going anywhere, one more night. So we do this thing. Hit him where it hurts. Yeah?

CHARLIE

Alright.

STERLING

We're rigging the cameras, should have the test suite ready by noon. Go get some breakfast.

INT. CASINO BAR - MORNING

A BEER is plunked down on a bar. Charlie stares at it dumbly. She sits at a bar on the periphery of the casino, deep in worried thought.

BARTENDER NICK

The usual right?

She picks it up

CHARLIE

Yeah.

Then puts it down

CHARLIE (cont'd)

No. No. Uh, coffee.

Nick shrugs, takes the beer and replaces it with coffee. A cocktail waitress DEBBIE comes up, working, to the bartender:

DEBBIE

Two seven and sevens and a tomato juice.

(MORE)



DEBBIE (cont'd)  
 (sees Charlie)  
 Hey babe, missed you.

CHARLIE  
 Hey Deb, yeah I'm off this week.

She drinks the coffee, winces. Debbie looking up at the TV above the bar.

DEBBIE  
 Oh god.

Charlie looks - a news story about Natalie's death.

CHARLIE  
 Nick can you turn this up?

The bartender does. The NEWS ANCHOR framed with pictures of Jerry and Natalie.

NEWS ANCHOR  
 ...history of battery and abuse.  
 Frost Casino has released video  
 footage from an incident two days  
 before the slaying, with Mr. Hill  
 coming to his wife's place or work in  
 an apparently drunken rage.

Security footage of Jerry on the casino floor, screaming

JERRY (ON TV)  
 Where's my wife! My (BEEP) wife!

Then being subdued by Cliff. Debbie points to a corner of the screen

DEBBIE  
 Hey that's me!

NEWS ANCHOR  
 Mr. Hill was detained by hotel  
 security, and later at his wife's  
 request released without charge.

Another security cam angle: Cliff dragging Jerry out.  
 Another angle: the employee exit. Cliff shoves Jerry  
 through the metal detectors and out into the bright sun.

JERRY (ON TV)  
 I'll kill you! I'll (BEEP) kill you!

Charlie's eyes narrow. She sips her coffee.

INT. CASINO FLOOR - LATER

Cliff breezes through on his way to the elevators.

CHARLIE

Hey Cliff, wait up. Wait up wait up.  
Hey, are you going up, I thought we'd  
go up together if you're going up -

She catches up with him.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

The two of them alone in the staff elevator. As the doors ding closed, Charlie has not stopped talking, fast and edgy.

CHARLIE

- so I'm watching the news and  
they're saying about the whole thing  
and I'm getting angry thinking what  
doesn't fit something doesn't fit and  
it's driving me nuts then I remember  
you took Jerry into the back room and  
I figured you would have released him  
to the cops so what was he doing home  
that night but no, no no, you just  
let him go for some reason and I  
wanna know why, cause the tv news  
said it was at Natalie's request but  
I was with her and she didn't request  
shit, she didn't -

CLIFF

Are you on coke?

CHARLIE

No, coffee! I thought "oh this'll be  
a good thing, I won't have a beer and  
be a dumb ass I'll have coffee cause  
that's for thinking" but I never  
fucking have coffee and I'm spazzing  
out, I'm sorry, I know I am but this  
is important.

CLIFF

You're asking why we released him?  
Well we decided not to press charges,  
give him a warning. And Natalie  
split, I think she went with you  
right? So she wasn't around. So  
what else were we going to do?

CHARLIE  
And he never tried to come back?  
After you let him go? He never came  
back to the casino?

CLIFF  
No.

The elevator DINGS. Charlie is looking at him weirdly.

CLIFF (cont'd)  
Am I lying?

CHARLIE  
No you're telling the truth.

The doors open.

CUT TO: A pixelated video image of STERLING sitting at the table in the Corner Suite 2. Cliff sits in one of the other chairs, his back to us.

Charlie is in:

INT. STERLING FROST JR'S OFFICE

Watching this on two monitors set up on the desk. She studies Sterling's face as he holds up three card, one after the other, their backs to us. Over a scratchy speaker:

STERLING (ON SPEAKER)  
Two of hearts. Ace of diamonds.  
Eight of diamonds.

Charlie breathes, unlocks her phone.

INT. CORNER SUITE 2

Charlie enters.

CHARLIE  
Bullshit, true, bullshit.

STERLING  
Alright. This is going to work.

She looks at the lamps.

CHARLIE  
Where are the cameras? I can't even  
see -

STERLING

Here, by the knobs. He's going out to dinner at six tonight, we'll swap these out for the lamps in his room. We'll station you here in my office.

CHARLIE

So how's it work?

Cliff shows her a picture on his phone of a middle aged man.

STERLING

This is our guy. You won't meet him before, it's safer if you don't. Presenting himself to Caine as Don McClintock, he's been in the game a few times before. He'll wear a clicker on his ankle.

Sterling hands Charlie a little remote with a single button.

STERLING (cont'd)

One click for true, two for bullshit. Say that to me.

CHARLIE

One for true, two for bullshit. That's it?

STERLING

Keep it simple. Don't get freaked out if our guy loses a few at the top, eases into it. You just keep watching and feeding him the info. By the end of the night the betting will get big and that's when he'll make a move.

CHARLIE

What are we taking Caine for?

STERLING

You'll see. Just don't freak out when it gets big. Truth or bullshit. That's all you focus on.

CHARLIE

Always.

STERLING

Cliff will be ready to move in if anything goes bad. Anything else...

(MORE)

STERLING (cont'd)  
anything else? I think that's it.  
You got any other questions?

CHARLIE  
What was the call about?

STERLING  
What call?

CHARLIE  
The night you pitched me this whole  
thing. In the crow's nest. You got  
a call. Seemed like bad news.  
I asked if everything's ok, and you  
said yeah.

Cliff's eyes sharpen, and Sterling tried to play it cool.

STERLING  
Uh huh?

CHARLIE  
You were lying.  
(beat)  
This all sounded a lot more intense  
than I wanted, I wanted to just  
casually ask about it but I've had  
coffee...

STERLING  
What is this about?

CHARLIE  
Are you saying you don't remember the  
call?

Sterling stops. Knows he can't lie to her.

CLIFF  
What the fuck is this?

STERLING  
No it's ok Cliff. I remember it.

CHARLIE  
So who was it?

STERLING  
It was Cliff.

CHARLIE  
What was Cliff calling about?

STERLING

What do you think it was about?

The tension has ramped up high. Charlie looks at Cliff. Then at Sterling. She stands down.

CHARLIE

Some random thing I dunno, a security thing, I just, you know I've been distraught over all this, I've had coffee.

Charlie gets up to go.

STERLING

Alright. Cliff calls me fifty times a day, don't you Cliff? About fifty things. Get back here at seven, that'll give us time to get settled. And Charlie?

She stops in the doorway.

STERLING (cont'd)

Maybe have a beer.

She exits. A moment of silence between Sterling and Cliff.

CLIFF

You gonna say it?

STERLING

She's sharp but she doesn't know anything.

CLIFF

She's more than sharp, she's a human lie detector and she's asking questions like she thinks something's up. She already found the photo, I don't know how she found that, you think she's going to stop? She's a regular little Michael Westen.

STERLING

Who?

CLIFF

(you know)

Michael Westen. The detective, from Burn Notice.

Sterling raises his hands - what?

CLIFF (cont'd)  
Pull the plug on this, Sterling.  
Play it safe. I worked with your  
father for twenty five years -

STERLING  
Fuck you, fuck him, fuck all you, I'm  
doing this. It's my call, I'm doing  
it. Then we'll deal with her, the  
girl and the photo.

CLIFF  
We'll deal with her?

STERLING  
Whatever it takes.

CLIFF  
You're the boss.

EXT. STERLING FROST HOTEL AND CASINO - EVENING

The sun has just set, a glow in the sky.

EXT. CASINO FRONT VALET

Four Navigators waiting curbside. Mr. Caine and his  
entourage exit the casino and get in the cars.

VALET CAPTAIN  
Have a nice dinner, Mr. Caine.

A SECURITY CAMERA watches them drive off.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

A hand knocks on a door.

CLIFF  
Room Service.

No reply. Cliff unlocks the door of the Presidential Suite  
and opens it - the room is dark inside.

From their hiding place beneath his room service cart Cliff  
takes two LAMPS.

INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE

Totally dark. Working in the light of the ajar door, Cliff removes two table lamps from the back of the room and replaces them with his. Plugs the new ones in.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY

He stashes the old ones in his cart, closes the door and rolls away.

INT. STERLING FROST JR'S OFFICE BALCONY

Sterling smoke a cigar alone, checks his watch. Impatient.

INT. CASINO FLOOR

Cliff scans the casino floor. At a bar table he spots their SHILL, the one that they showed Charlie a picture of, Don McClintock. Well dressed, having a drink with a few other well dressed men, all checking their watches.

DON MCCLINTOCK

No Caine yet, I guess we have time  
for another round?

The guys all agree. Don makes subtle eye contact with Cliff, who looks concerned.

INT. RECEPTION ROOM

Empty, the receptionist has gone home for the night. Cliff breezes through.

INT. STERLING FROST JR'S OFFICE

Cliff enters. Sterling leaves his cigar on the rail and rushes in, red faced.

STERLING

Where the fuck is she?

CLIFF

I don't know. Where's Caine? All  
his players are still waiting at the  
bar.



STERLING

Caine's having a long dinner and  
thank god cause where is she?

CLIFF

We'll give it another ten and then  
start calling around.

Charlie enters. She goes straight to the bar and gets a  
beer.

STERLING

Ok, good. Good but what the hell.  
You're twenty minutes late, if Caine  
wasn't late this would be a problem.  
What do you think this is? Oh sure  
get a beer. Ok, but good. You're  
here. It's alright.

CLIFF

I'm going to check on Caine.

He goes, leaving Charlie and Sterling, who turns on the  
monitors. Charlie sits, nervous but quiet.

STERLING

When he gets here he'll bring all the  
guys up, they'll get right to it, so  
you stay here, we're not going  
anywhere. Ok, we're good. We can  
order food if you want. If you  
haven't eaten. Have you eaten?

Charlie just stares at him.

STERLING (cont'd)

What?

CHARLIE

I got no way to elegantly segue into  
this so I'm just gonna launch in.

STERLING

Segue into what?

CHARLIE

My friend Natalie, how she did the  
thing I'm always just yelling at my  
phone about, she did the right thing  
when she saw something awful and  
actually did something about it. And  
you killed her for it. Well you had  
Cliff kill her. Same thing.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (cont'd)

(beat)

Say "bullshit" if it isn't true -  
look me in the eye and say it.

Sterling just stares coldly back.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

There's only one reason Natalie would  
have taken a picture of Caine's  
laptop: to turn him in, to show  
someone. Like the police. But she  
didn't show the police, obviously.  
She tried calling me but I missed it.  
And she didn't tell her supervisor.  
So I figure, Sterling, I figured she  
came to you and Cliff that night.  
Did I figure right?

STERLING

You figured? This accusation is  
based on figuring?

CHARLIE

I figured - god that's a weird word,  
you say it over and over - I was  
figuring until this afternoon. When  
I saw something on tv. Now I'm done  
figuring, now I know.

She brings up a clip on her phone - the local news, the  
released security footage of Cliff throwing Jerry out.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Jerry had his stupid little pearl  
handled pistol, he had it on him when  
he came to the casino. I saw it, I  
told Cliff about it. And Cliff  
wrestled him into his office. Then  
escorted him out. What do you see.

STERLING

I see what everyone sees - a drunk  
shit kicker threatening his trailer  
trash wife. That is all there is to  
see.

CHARLIE

Nuh uh.

On the phone - Jerry being shoved out through the metal  
detectors. Charlie pauses it. Scrubs back and forth as  
Jerry goes through the metal detector.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
Eh? Eh. Eh? Eh. What's missing?  
You can get this.

She points to the bright indicator light that goes off on the metal detector.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
The gun's missing. And that means  
Cliff took it, and didn't give it  
back. And Jerry never came back for  
it, Cliff told me that and it was  
true.

(beat)  
So that means the night of the  
murder, Jerry could not have had that  
gun. Cause it was right here. With  
Cliff.

Sterling smirks. Cliff stands in the office doorway.

STERLING  
You hear that Cliff?

Cliff nods.

STERLING (cont'd)  
Ok Encyclopedia Brown. Who else saw  
he had a gun? Cliff, who is head of  
security, will say he wasn't armed.  
What, are you going to explain to the  
cops that you can tell when people  
are lying? That you "figure" we  
killed her? That lefties never hold  
things in their right hand? When you  
tell the cops in my town, with my  
name on it, this string of "I think  
this cause I think this" what do you  
think is going to happen?

CHARLIE  
Your dad's town.

STERLING  
Cliff take her phone.

He does, she puts up a brief struggle but gives it.

STERLING (cont'd)  
Cause if you're recording this  
thinking you'd get a confession like  
in the movies then I don't know what  
to tell you.

CHARLIE

I wasn't.

Cliff has opened her voice memo app, sure enough she wasn't.

STERLING

You've been distraught the past few dsys. Been drinking, missing your shifts, I've told your supervisors don't worry about it cause I knew you were going through a tough time but... you were going through a tough time. Losing your friend, blaming yourself. And finally I had to let you go. You came up here tonight and I tried to break it gently, but you lost control and, this is tragic but before we could stop you, you ran and took a flying leap off that balcony.

Charlie laughs but she's scared.

CHARLIE

Who's gonna believe that?

STERLING

Look at you. Who's gonna give enough of a shit to not believe it?

CHARLIE

No.

CLIFF

You wanna stand up, this'll be easier.

CHARLIE

No, really no. Cause I wasn't recording our conversation just now. But I was this afternoon.

The two men freeze. Cliff looks at the app, hits PLAY on the most recent recording.

STERLING (ON PHONE)

*Alright. This is going to work.*

CHARLIE (ON PHONE)

*Where are the cameras? I can't even see -*

STERLING (ON PHONE)

*Here, by the knobs.*

Sterling laughs.

STERLING

There's nothing criminal about cheating in a private poker game, and even if there was, see previous note RE: my cops.

CHARLIE

You keep thinking I'm trying to convict you, Sterling. I'm not a cop. And a wise man once told me, you want to hurt someone, you hit 'em where it hurts.

(beat)

I didn't send the recording to the cops.

Cliff gets it first. He RUNS out of the room. It takes Sterling a moment but when he realizes...

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY

Cliff RUNS down it, past a housekeeper's cart, to the PRESIDENTIAL SUITE door. Has his keycard out and swipes it -

INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE

Bursts in and throws on the lights.

Clean and empty. The bedroom too. He opens the closet. Empty. Cleared out. The balcony door curtains billow like ghosts. This room is vacant.

Mr. Caine is gone.

Sterling dashes in, out of breath.

STERLING

Oh fuck.

Charlie appears in the doorway.

STERLING (cont'd)

What time did you send it to him, maybe we can -

CHARLIE

Right after I left. He's in the air by now.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (cont'd)

And every one of your whales, every big roller in the world and all of the medium ones and most of the small ones, they all know. Everyone is gonna know that the Sterling Frost Casino plays dirty. You're blackballed, buddy.

(beat)

Cause gamblers talk.

Sterling's eyes go vacant as this sinks in.

Cliff breathes hard, then... laughs ruefully. Sinks into a chair. When he talks it's to Sterling.

CLIFF

You stupid fucking child.

Sterling, still shell shocked. Stumbles a few steps into the room, looks back at Charlie, Cliff's laughter ringing in his years.

We go with Sterling as he turns and walks stiffly but quickly through the billowing silks of the balcony door curtains into the cool desert air and with one hop jumps off the balcony. A yelp of horror from Charlie dies quickly above us in a rush of air as we fall with Sterling sixteen stories and into the pavement below.

Cliff runs to the balcony. Charlie stands frozen in the doorway, hand at her mouth, horrified.

CHARLIE

Oh fuck...

Cliff turns back to her, his eyes wild.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Oh fuck

She RUNS.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY

Charlie SPRINTS and gets a length down the hall before Cliff appears, chasing her. His GUN is out. He FIRES, on the run.

CHARLIE

WHAT??

Again, and the housekeeper's cart takes a hit. One more time -

And Charlie's HIT. We can't tell where but she is thrown down in a half spin, landing with her back to the housekeeping cart. But without pausing she LAUNCHES herself into the adjacent STAIRWELL door, leaving blood on the white stacks of toilet paper on the cart.

INT. STAIRWAY

The concrete stairwell that Natalie took. Charlie holds her side and spins down it FAST. Cliff bursts in from the hall, sees the head start that Charlie has and the blood on the concrete from her wound, and heads BACK into the hallway.

INT. ELEVATOR

Cliff, out of breath, gets on the elevator and talks into a walkie talkie.

CLIFF

We've got a code blue, we need to lock down all the exits NOW, every way out lock it down, and get a guy on the ground level stairwell, I'm coming down.

The doors close.

INT. STAIRWAY

Heaving, bleeding, Charlie gets to the SECOND floor. One more to go. But she stops. Realizes Cliff isn't following her. Thinks.

Below her, the sound of the stairwell door OPENING.

She grabs a FIRE EXTINGUISHER off the wall

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY SECOND FLOOR

Charlie emerges from the stairwell door into the quiet hall. She limps down it, to where a Housekeeper's cart is parked.

She goes into the open doorway of the hotel room being cleaned...

INT. HOTEL ROOM

And walks STRAIGHT THROUGH IT past the Housekeeper who barely looks up from her work. She goes to the picture window and OPENS IT then BREAKS the screen away using the fire extinguisher.

The Housekeeper watches her.

HOUSEKEEPER

Charlie?

CHARLIE

Hey Jen. Take care of yourself.

EXT. STERLING FROST HOTEL AND CASINO

Deep evening, sky aglow. Very small in frame, Charlie clammers out of the broken window on the second level, drops the ten feet to the grass below with a grunt.

Then heaves herself up and limping like Quasimodo drags herself across a long barren stretch of utility concrete, the hotel tower looming behind her.

Into the employee parking lot, where she finds and falls into her Barracuda.

INT. BARRACUDA

Charlie's a bloody mess. Distant sirens. She puts the key in the ignition and holds her breath. Please god.

SHE TURNS THE KEY.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The Barracuda ROARS past us, away from the distant tower of the casino. Cop cars head the opposite direction, their lights ablaze.

CUT TO:

A COFFEE CUP

With a smudge of blood on the handle.





STERLING FROST SR (cont'd)

(beat)

I let you off once, Charlie. I gave you a life. It was a pretty good life, right?

CHARLIE

So what happens now?

STERLING FROST SR

Tell me where you are. You might as well tell me where you are. Cause there's no corner of the country small enough for you to hide in. There's no off the grid that's off the grid enough for you to hide from me. I'm a tough old bastard and I've got some years left and I'm going to spend them finding you so I can hit you where it's going to hurt. And when I do kill you, finally, you'll thank me for it. Now tell me kid... am I lying?

CHARLIE

Hey I gotta go.

She hangs up. On her way to her car she drops her phone, picks up a big rock and SMASHES it, tosses it out into the desert.

Gets in her Barracuda and drives off a long straight road into the middle of America.