

WILD CARDS

Written by

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"Pilot"

Aka

"The Infinity Thief"

CBC
Piller/Segan

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INT. MANSION - DAY

A CLEANING BRUSH soaked in FOAM works back and forth across marble floor.

TONI NEWTON (30) is on her hands and knees, hair tied back, sweating, pushing through the backbreaking work, until...

HIGH HEELS click off the floor then stop in front of her.

MRS. PALLIONE

Who are you? Where's Maria?

Toni looks up and stands to meet the woman of the house - MRS. PALLIONE - 30's Italian, HEAVY ACCENT, wearing at least 10k worth of designer clothes, 50k in jewelry.

TONI

Maria's appendix burst last night so she asked me to fill in.

MRS. PALLIONE

It's always something with her.

Mrs. Pallione takes her Louis Vuitton wallet out of her Louis Vuitton purse and lays CASH on the kitchen island.

MRS. PALLIONE (CONT'D)

I don't have change. You can send five dollars with Maria when she's back tomorrow. And tell her, I expect her back tomorrow.

She starts to head out--

TONI

Uh, Ma'am, just have a quick question -- where is the Comet?

MRS. PALLIONE

Seriously? Maria should have told you all this.

Annoyed, she sets her purse on the kitchen island to get the Comet from the cabinet.

MRS. PALLIONE (CONT'D)

All you had to do was look.

She grabs her purse and heads out.

TONI

Have a nice day!

The moment Italian Cruella Deville exits, Toni drops the brush in the bucket, and lets her hair down.

TONI (CONT'D)
 (imitating)
*All you had to do was look... All
 you... All you had to do...*

Toni's not mimicking her, SHE'S NAILING DOWN HER ACCENT. She grabs a beer from the fridge and coolly pops it open.

She then pulls out the LOUIS VUITTON WALLET from the back of her jeans that she just stole out of her purse.

TONI (CONT'D)
*I don't have change... I don't have
 change...*

Toni hits PLAY on her phone. NEEDLE DROP Lizzo's 'JUICE'.

INT. MANSION - MASTER BEDROOM CLOSET - DAY

PAN OVER WOMEN'S SHOES IN THE MASTER CLOSET: FERRAGAMO. MANOLO BLAHNIK. PRADA. YES, IT'S SHOE PORN.

Toni dances through the enormous master closet -- pulling items -- a skirt, a top, shoes, sunglasses. Shopping like she's Pretty Woman with an expense account.

She pops open a JEWELRY BOX filled with rings and bracelets but all she takes is a SAFE DEPOSIT KEY.

TONI
 (in Italian accent)
 They never hide the key.

INT. BANK - BANK MANAGER OFFICE - DAY

A BANK MANAGER is on the phone in his office when TONI BURSTS IN, dressed in Mrs. Pallione's Clothes, and SOUNDING exactly like her with a perfect ITALIAN ACCENT.

She drops down into a chair, out of breath, fanning herself.

TONI
 I need help with my box.

BANK MANAGER
 Uh, sorry, what...?

The Bank Manager's ASSISTANT follows behind.

ASSISTANT

This is Mrs. Pallione, I told her
she had to wait--

TONI

My safe deposit box. Here - take
all the things you need or
whatever.

Toni tosses Mrs. Pallione's ID and SAFE DEPOSIT KEY on the desk. As the Bank Manager compares it to her, Toni clocks MANY PHOTOS on his desk of JUST him and his CAT. Beside them is an URN marked CHAUNCY (the cat). She starts fake crying.

TONI (CONT'D)

It has been a terrible day. My
pussycat - Benigni, he died.

BANK MANAGER

Oh my god, you poor woman. I know
of the pain you are going through.

TONI

Grazie. Now please, make this fast,
fast, fast. I need to lay down.

BANK MANAGER

Absolutely. I'll handle it myself.

INT. BANK - SAFE DEPOSIT BOX ROOM - DAY

The Bank Manager slides out the safety deposit box for Toni.

BANK MANAGER

Let me know if there is anything
else you need, and once again, my
deepest condolences on your loss.

He exits. Once alone, she opens the box and examines its contents - A huge EMERALD NECKLACE, an immense RUBY RING. She then takes out a VENEZUELAN PASSPORT and takes a moment to look at it. (*remember this - it pays off big time later*)

INT. BANK - FRONT DESK - DAY

Toni struts toward the exit, passing an assistant pushing a MAIL CART. (*Small detail, but again, important later*).

BANK MANAGER

Mrs. Pallione...?

Toni turns to see.... THE REAL MRS. PALLIONE with the bank manager and TWO UNIFORM COPS.

MRS. PALLIONE
Are those my clothes? MY SHOES???

TONI
(still with Italian
accent)
Aren't they fabulous?

EXT. VANCOUVER PD MARINE UNIT BOAT - DAY

A small VANCOUVER PD MARINE UNIT BOAT floats just off shore from the city.

The officer on board is **CLAY ELLIS** (30's). Grizzled, tough, handsome and he deplores every goddamn second of this humiliating posting. He's cold. He's bored. He's a cop on a fucking tug boat.

Suddenly, SIRENS ring in the distance. Along the shoreline, a ROW OF POLICE CARS speed down the streets. Ellis watches the action with longing.

ELLIS
We'll get back there. One day.

Breaking his reverie - a SPEEDBOAT whizzes by with a group of partiers on board.

ELLIS (CONT'D)
But not today.

Ellis starts up his boat and chug, chug, chugs away.

EXT. WATER - DAY

Ellis pulls up against the fancy speedboat. There are six rich, beautiful, obnoxious people onboard who are partying and taking pictures for Instagram.

The BOAT OWNER is about to really piss Ellis off by calling him...

BOAT OWNER
Captain Nemo! Something wrong?

ELLIS
You can't ride on the bow.

BOAT OWNER
The what?

ELLIS
The front of the boat.

BOAT OWNER
Why not?

ELLIS
It's illegal. While the boat is moving, everyone on board has to be in proper seats.

Ellis holds out a ticket to the boat owner.

BOAT OWNER
You're giving me a ticket?

ELLIS
That's one of many possible consequences for breaking the law.

BOAT OWNER
What about him?

The boat owner points to Ellis's CAT - *yes, a real cat* - sitting on the bow of his vessel.

ELLIS
He's a cat.

BOAT OWNER
Shouldn't he be in a seat?

SUDDENLY, ELLIS'S RADIO BLARES OUT --

RADIO (V.O.)
MARINE UNIT 819, COME IN, MARINE UNIT 819.

ELLIS
(scrambles to grab radio)
Unit 819 here!

RADIO (V.O.)
Robbery in progress. Royal bank on 4th and Balsam. Backup needed.

ELLIS
Me?

RADIO (V.O.)
Yes you!

ELLIS

On my way!

Ellis tosses the ticket into water, jumps to the helm and GUNS the engine.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

Hold on, Marc! Today's the day!
We're back!!

EXT. BANK - DAY

Ellis screeches up to the bank in his MARINE UNIT PATROL CAR, and runs to the entrance where there are TWO UNIFORM COPS outside, standing with Toni in HANDCUFFS.

ELLIS

What's the situation?!

UNIFORM #1

Take it easy, skipper. This here's the situation.

He hands Toni off to Ellis.

UNIFORM #2

Identity theft, attempted robbery.

ELLIS

Okay. The rest of the suspects?

TONI

That's it. Just me.

UNIFORM #1

Take her in and book her.

ELLIS

Why can't you do it?

UNIFORM #1

We have an important assignment.

TONI

They have a baseball game against Fire station 18. Big game. I got fifty on these guys.

UNIFORM #1

(fist bump)

We won't let you down, Toni.

TONI

I know you won't, Phil.

Ellis processes, then decides - *fuck this* - and walks away.

UNIFORM #1

Where you going?

ELLIS

I'm not a goddamn taxi service.

UNIFORM #1

It's a direct order from the captain because everyone else in the area is on a real case. Or was the demotion to water cop not enough for you? Because I heard there's an opening in animal services.

Off Ellis glaring at them...

INT. ELLIS'S MARINE UNIT CAR - DAY

Ellis puts Toni in the car. Ellis's CAT suddenly jumps into her lap.

TONI

Oh wow, a cat! Hey girl.

ELLIS

It's a boy. And don't talk to him.

TONI

Is this your cat?

ELLIS

Yes.

TONI

I'm having a cat day. It must be a sign. This here - me and you - was meant to be. Oh, he likes me.

ELLIS

No, he doesn't.

TONI

What's his name? Why do you have your cat in the car? Is he magic like Sabrina's cat? I have so many questions I'm vibrating.

ELLIS
His name is Marc. End of
conversation.

Toni looks deep into Marc's eyes.

TONI
I see you, Marc.

Marc purrs. Ellis scowls. He drives off.

INT. POLICE STATION - ROBBERY/HOMICIDE BULLPEN - DAY

The bullpen is abuzz with Detectives listening to **CAPTAIN PAOLA RAMOS** (45). She's standing in front of a huge cork board that has photos of evidence and maps of robberies.

CAPTAIN RAMOS
As you all know, a 10 million
dollar painting was stolen out of
the lobby of the law firm of Walker
and Thyme.

Ellis walks in with Toni in handcuffs. DETECTIVE YATES, the
jerk only other jerks like, is the first to notice.

DETECTIVE YATES
Yo, Master and Commander - how's
the high seas?

Everyone laughs. Ellis bites his tongue. He hates every one
of these assholes.

CAPTAIN RAMOS
Settle down. Some professionalism
please.
(beat)
Leave Crimson Tide alone.

More laughs. Ellis sits Toni down and starts typing up her
intake.

ELLIS
Name.

TONI
Toni - with an I. Newton, like Sir
Isaac. Why are they ragging on you
like that?

ELLIS
Address?

TONI

736 Rosewood, apartment 3. Did you used to work with them?

ELLIS

Date of Birth.

TONI

December 5, 1988. Sagittarius. So you used to work with them but for some reason got transferred to sea patrol?

ELLIS

Marine Unit.

TONI

That definitely has a better ring to it than 'sea patrol'.

ELLIS

Dammit. I need a new login. Stay here. Don't move.

TONI

You got it, Amigo.

Ellis gets up. Toni turns to listen to the Captain brief the rest of the department.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

--this was the third major robbery in the last 6 months from the same thief.

TONI

How do you know it's the same thief?

CAPTAIN RAMOS

Who are you?

TONI

Toni Newton, at your service.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

Mind your own business.

DETECTIVE LOPEZ

I'd actually like to know that as well.

TONI
(to Det. Lopez)
Power to the people, brother.

CAPTAIN RAMOS
He leaves a signature at every
scene. This symbol here...

Captain Ramos points to A PHOTOGRAPH of a SYMBOL THAT RESEMBLES AN INFINITY SIGN BUT WITH AN ADDED BRUSH STROKE CURLING OFF EACH OF THE LOOPS.

CAPTAIN RAMOS (CONT'D)
We haven't released this
information to the press because
criminals who leave signatures want
publicity. We were hoping by not
making him a star, he'd slow down.
But that hasn't been the case.
Internally we're calling him The
Infinity Thief.

TONI
How do you know it's a HE?

CAPTAIN RAMOS
The forensic psychology unit worked
up a profile.
(ignoring her)
Any other questions?

All the detectives turn to Toni to see if she does.

TONI
I'm good.

CAPTAIN RAMOS
Each robbery has been perfect in
execution. Not a single print or
speck of dust to go on - *until now.*

She points to the evidence board - A PHOTO OF A VINEYARD.

CAPTAIN RAMOS (CONT'D)
Last month The Infinity Thief stole
a collection of rare watches from
the Brock museum. Forensics just
came back with something; they
found specs of dirt around the
casing. Very specific samples. The
dirt can be traced to a region of
vineyards outside the city where
they specifically produce ice wine.

Toni, who has been watching intensely, wanders out of her seat up to the board. She points to a different photo: a WAD OF GUM ON THE FLOOR WITH FOUR TOOTHPICKS STICKING OUT OF IT.

TONI

What's that?

CAPTAIN RAMOS

Nothing. It's gum. We tested it. No DNA. Some bored kid left it there. Ellis you want to grab your suspect here?

ELLIS

(returning, sotto to Toni)
I told you not to move.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

(to the bullpen)
We have warrants and we're going to canvas every vineyard owner down to every field worker. Call your families and tell them you won't be home for dinner. Today is the day we catch this guy. Everybody ready?

Obnoxious "Hell Yeah"s from everyone as they file out.

TONI

This is exciting, isn't it?

INT. CELL - DAY

WHAM! The cell door closes on Toni.

ELLIS

They'll take you for processing tomorrow.

TONI

They're not going to catch that thief.

ELLIS

Tell me, oh wise one.

TONI

Someone as good as this guy - or girl - doesn't accidentally leave behind dirt that specific. It's a game. A distraction. But that wad of gum there - that's the clue they want us to figure out.

ELLIS
Yeah? What is it?

TONI
I don't know yet.

ELLIS
You'll have a lot of time on your hands to think about it.

TONI
One more thing - I'm gluten free, who should I tell?

ELLIS
I'll pass it along to the chef.

TONI
Thanks!

Ellis walks off.

TONI (CONT'D)
(calling after him)
Goodnight you prince of Maine, King of New England!

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Toni finishes eating her gluten free dinner. She stands up and looks out the small window of her cell. Across the street is CITY HALL with its TALL PILLARS. She gets lost in thought when suddenly, something about those pillars sets a lightbulb off...

TONI
Guard!

EXT. MARINA/INT. ELLIS'S BOAT - NIGHT

Ellis lives on a boat docked in the marina. He's inside reading while eating his frozen dinner. Marc the cat eats on the kitchen counter. Quiet companions. His cell RINGS.

ELLIS
Yeah?

TONI (V.O.)
 Hey, it's Toni. Listen, after
 dinner - which was surprisingly
 good - I was staring at the pillars
 of city hall when it just
 clicked...

ELLIS
 Who?

TONI (V.O.)
 Toni. From today. You know, the
 sassy, fiercely charming woman with
 drop dead style you hung out with?

ELLIS
 How are you calling me?

INT. POLICE STATION - CELL BLOCK - INTERCUT - NIGHT

Toni is on the phone.

TONI
 I get a phone call.

ELLIS
 You're using your one phone call to
 call me?

TONI
 I know where he's going to hit
 next. 4 toothpicks are four
 pillars. Gum. The letters G - U -
 M. Move them around: U - G - M.
 They stand for the UDITSKY GRAHAM--

ELLIS
 UDITSKY GRAHAM MUSEUM.

TONI
 They have a jewel room. The
 featured display is centered
 between four pillars.

ELLIS
 That's a fun little theory. Go back
 to bed.

TONI
 I bet you anything those jerks are
 passed out drunk at those
 vineyards. Because there's nothing
 there.

ELLIS

Goodbye.

TONI

Just check it out. If you crack
this case I bet they let you out of
Sea Patrol.

He hangs up and tries to get back to his book, but he can't
get the idea out of his head. He dials his cell.

SHELLEY (V.O.)

Precinct 23, Shelley here.

ELLIS

Hey Shelley. Have they found
anything out in the vineyards yet?

SHELLEY (V.O.)

Nope. They're all still out there.
I heard a bunch of the guys passed
out drunk. Why?

ELLIS

Just curious. Thanks.

He hangs up. His eyes land on his MARINE UNIT PONCHO hanging
by the door. God, he hates that thing.

EXT. UDITSKY GRAHAM MUSEUM - NIGHT

Ellis gets out of his car outside the small museum.
Everything looks copacetic. He walks around to the back where
he finds a service door slightly ajar. He cautiously opens
it and steps inside.

INT. UDITSKY GRAHAM MUSEUM - NIGHT

Flashlight on, he makes his way inside.

ELLIS

Police. Anyone there?

He hears something. Stops.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

POLICE. ANNOUNCE YOURSELF.

He hears it again. No answer. He turns a corner into the --

JEWEL ROOM

JUST LIKE TONI SAID there are FOUR STONE PILLARS surrounding A GLASS DISPLAY -- THAT HAS A HOLE CUT IN IT. THE JEWELS ARE GONE.

He hears the sound again -- he spins around -- ON THE GROUND IS A SECURITY GUARD BOUND AND GAGGED.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

(into cell)

This is officer Ellis, badge number
8397, I need backup at the Uditsky
Graham Museum --

A SHADOW rolls over him -- Ellis spins around -- BOOM! He's knocked out cold.

END ACT 1

ACT IIINT. UDITSKY GRAHAM MUSEUM - NIGHT

Ellis holds an ice pack to his head as FORENSIC AGENTS and UNIFORM COPS comb the scene. Captain Ramos is there, and she is not happy with any of this.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

Run me through this again. I'm just trying to get the facts straight here.

ELLIS

The facts are you took the entire department apple picking, and I caught the thief in the act.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

What I'm really trying to understand is how the cop we demoted to the life aquatic figured this out when you're not even on the case?

PRE-LAP: BANG, BANG - a courtroom gavel takes us to...

INT. COURTROOM OF JUDGE MURPHY - DAY

Toni sits at the defendants table talking with her court appointed lawyer.

TONI

I love this part. It's like a heavyweight fight. There's the announcer...

BAILIFF

Case 7392...

TONI

They announce the fighters - The champ versus the underdog...

BAILIFF

The people VS Toni Newton...

TONI

Then the ref...

BAILIFF

The honorable Judge Murphy
presiding.

JUDGE MURPHY (55) who exudes a *'do not waste my time'* vibe.

TONI

It just gives you goosebumps
doesn't it? Oh, and here's my cut
man.

Ellis sits behind Toni.

TONI (CONT'D)

I'm ready, send me in, coach.

ELLIS

Just stick to the plan.

JUDGE MURPHY

We have a busy day today everyone,
so let's get to it.

TONI'S LAWYER

Your honor, the arresting officer
on the case has a proposal for the
prosecution. It's a little
unorthodox, but--

JUDGE MURPHY

Skip the runway, counsellor, just
get it off the ground.

Ellis stands up.

ELLIS

Clay Ellis, your honor. We're going
to need my Captain for this too.

INT. OFFICE OF JUDGE MURPHY - DAY

Toni, Ellis, and now Captain Ramos are in with the Judge.

JUDGE MURPHY

Let me get this straight - *you* came
closer to catching this thief than
the entire department because *she*
took one look at the evidence board
and cracked a clue that no one else
even considered?

CAPTAIN RAMOS

I don't think that's a fair
assessment--

TONI

Pretty much.

ELLIS

Exactly right.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

Judge, this is ridiculous. What am
I doing here? I'm leaving.

JUDGE MURPHY

Sit. It may be ridiculous, but the
mayor is livid about this case, and
you have made no headway. It's his
donors that are being robbed and
humiliated and that means his
contributions are going down the
drain. If this isn't solved
quickly, major changes will happen
across the department. So think on
that, Captain.

(beat)

Ellis, stop hiding the ball, and
give me the pitch.

ELLIS

If you look at her file - it's one
scam and con after another --

TONI

Never once found guilty. All
charges dropped. I'm batting a
thousand.

ELLIS

Exactly. She's an expert when it
comes to cons, theft, and general
swindling of all sorts.

TONI

A vote of confidence if I've ever
heard one.

ELLIS

She already gave us our first lead.
Let her help me on the case. If we
crack it, she gets leniency as the
court sees fit.

JUDGE MURPHY

And what's in it for you?

ELLIS
I get my slot back at
Robbery/Homicide.

CAPTAIN RAMOS
You've got to be kidding--

Judge Murphy holds up his hand for quiet. He glares at each one of them, sizing up the situation.

JUDGE MURPHY
Okay. If you can close this, I'll
talk to the Police Commissioner.

TONI
Yes!

JUDGE MURPHY
But let me be clear - if either of
you cross the line, there will be
no mercy from this court.

ELLIS
Great pep talk, your honor.

TONI
I'm all fired up!

CAPTAIN RAMOS
I don't believe this.

EXT. COURTHOUSE/INT. ELLIS' CAR - DAY

Ellis and Toni walk to his car then get inside.

TONI
I have to say, even though this was
my idea, you were completely right
that it should come from you. It
felt authentic. You had the right
amount of cynicism sprinkled with a
pinch of hope. Well played.

ELLIS
Let's get one thing straight - I
wasn't swindling anyone. This isn't
a con. It's a job.

TONI
Got it. What first?

ELLIS

We look over the case files. See if anyone missed anything.

TONI

Waste of time. If you're going to steal jewels like this guy is, you need a fence. If it were me I'd go talk to Joey and Noah Epstein.

ELLIS

Never heard of them.

TONI

That's why you got me, baby.

ELLIS

And let's keep the chatter to a minimum. We're not friends. I'm a cop, you're a criminal. Are you getting the disconnect?

TONI

*What about Homies? Allies?
Comrades? Comrades it is! I'm
thinking we should get matching
hats--*

Ellis turns up the music to end the conversation.

TONI (CONT'D)

(shouting)

I'M GROWING ON YOU, AREN'T I?

EXT. LEIGHTON AUCTION HOUSE - DAY

A high end auction house. Luxury cars fill the lot. Toni and Ellis get out of their car.

TONI

Just give me a minute here...

She turns around, rifling through her oversized purse, takes some things out, starts messing with her hair and....

Voila. She's tied up her hair, horn rimmed glasses, conservative pink cashmere button up sweater. Total Transformation.

TONI (CONT'D)

When we go in, I'm Claire, not Toni.

ELLIS

Why?

TONI

I know the owners. Best we don't mix history into this.

ELLIS

You ripped them off?

TONI

You say tomato...

INT. LEIGHTON AUCTION HOUSE - ENTRANCE - DAY

They walk up to the check in desk where **HENRY** (60) the SECURITY GUARD is minding the sign in sheet and the BIDDING PADDLES. Toni now speaks in a perfect ENGLISH ACCENT.

TONI

Apologies for our tardiness. My valet had a spell of... tummy troubles, let's say. I adore your tie and kerchief - Hermes?

Before Henry can utter a word she's already grabbed a paddle and is on her way inside. Ellis, follows behind.

INT. LEIGHTON AUCTION HOUSE - AUCTION HALL - CONTINUOUS

An auction in progress. The auctioneer is **JOEY EPSTEIN** (40), and beside him is his **IDENTICAL TWIN BROTHER, NOAH EPSTEIN**.

JOEY is handsome, well dressed, gregarious, loves working the crowd.

NOAH has bad posture, baggy clothes, unkempt, visibly uncomfortable in front of an audience. Total opposite.

JOEY

This next piece is something my brother Noah hounded me to get. As irksome as that was, he was right. Let's open the bidding at seventy thousand.

Toni grabs a seat, pats the one beside her for Ellis to sit. She's watching the BIDDER actively bid on the painting.

BIDDER

Seventy thousand.

TONI
Ninety thousand!

ELLIS
What are you doing??

TONI
This is part of our investigation.
The department will cover it, right?

ELLIS
No, they won't!

BIDDER
One hundred!

TONI
One hundred seventy five!

GASPS from the crowd. TONI eyes the BIDDER -- who eyes TONI -- Mexican standoff. The Bidder bows out.

JOEY
One hundred seventy five to the
woman in the pink sweater!

The crowd applauds. Toni smiles. Ellis is going blow a fucking gasket.

TONI
Don't be so glum, Rockford. We won!
Now let's talk to the Dead Ringers.

INT. LEIGHTON AUCTION HOUSE - ACCOUNTING OFFICE - DAY

Toni hands her paddle to **Henry**, the security guard from when they first walked in.

HENRY
Ah, yes you won the Ho-Jin Huang
painting - one hundred and seventy
five thousand. If this is your
first time buying from us, we need
a cashier's check or cash.

TONI
I'll be paying cash but I must
speak with Joey and Noah first.

HENRY
I can help you with anything.

TONI
 Oh, wonderful.
 (discreetly to Henry)
 I understand you must protect Joey
 and Noah from the showboats and
 divas around here, but you see,
 about a year ago Joey, Noah and I
 shared a very special night
 together in my hotel...

Toni takes out her phone and shows Henry a photo of a NEWBORN
 BABY.

TONI (CONT'D)
 Isn't he gorgeous? Looks just like
 them. I just don't know which
 one...

HENRY
 I'll take you to their office.

INT. LEIGHTON AUCTION HOUSE - JOEY AND NOAH'S OFFICE - DAY

HENRY lets them in to Joey and Noah's office.

Joey and Noah Epstein are at their desks. Joey is eating
 CHINESE TAKE OUT from GOLDEN CITY CHINESE RESTAURANT.

Toni takes down her hair, removes the glasses, and speaks in
 her normal voice.

TONI
 Joey, Noah!

JOEY
 No way, get her out!

TONI
 Joey, come on--

JOEY
 (to Henry)
 She's banned. Did you not see her
 picture on the wall?

Joey points to a PRINTOUT OF A SECURITY CAMERA PHOTO - in it
 Toni has on a Barbara Streisand circa A Star Is Born wig,
 Riviera Sunglasses - barely recognizable.

HENRY
 I didn't recognize you, Toni. Well
 done.

TONI

Thanks Henry. Looking good, I like the beard. Now, gentlemen, I'm here in an entirely new capacity today.

(flashes POLICE BADGE)

I am now a guardian of the law.

ELLIS

(grabs back his badge)

Give me that.

TONI

Sorry.

ELLIS

I'm Detective Ellis. Toni is consulting on a case. Silent consultation. That means she doesn't talk. She just nods or whistles.

JOEY

You bid on a hundred and seventy five thousand dollar painting. Who's going to pay for that?

TONI

He would have won it at 90. Call him back, offer it at 150 and he'll jump. I just made you an extra 60 grand.

NOAH

She's right.

TONI

Thanks, Noah. How you been? Is that knee still acting up?

NOAH

It's better. Thanks for asking.

ELLIS

Everyone shut up. Memory lane's closed for the day. We're here investigating the robbery at the Uditsky Graham Museum.

JOEY

What did you tell this guy about us?

TONI

I didn't tell him anything.

JOEY

So why are you here?

TONI

Maybe I told him something.

ELLIS

We're off the record. I don't care what you buy, what you sell. We just need to find who's stealing these jewels or who may have bought them.

JOEY

We don't sell hot properties. We have however, at times, known of people in possession of these things and may have inadvertently made introductions.

TONI

For a fee.

JOEY

I got out of that game. A promise to my brother.

NOAH

It's true.

TONI

If Noah says so, I believe him.

Toni walks up to Joey's desk and grabs an EGG ROLL.

ELLIS

You hear anything about the stones coming on the market?

JOEY

Not a thing.

TONI

My god, this egg roll is amazing!

NOAH/JOEY/HENRY

Best in town/there is no equal/manna from heaven--

Ellis is losing patience with all of this.

ELLIS

STOP! Here's what we're going to do.

(MORE)

ELLIS (CONT'D)

Since neither of you seem to have any information, we're going to verify the origin of every piece you have in this place to be sure they are legit. You'll have to shut down while we do it. Shouldn't take more than a month or two.

JOEY

Okay, okay, you don't need to play the bad cop. I can give you a list of names. There aren't many people who would be in the market for items like those.

As Joey starts writing down the names, Ellis looks over at Toni. She's not even listening, SHE'S STARING INTENTLY AT THE FLOOR BY THE BOOKCASE, brushing the ground with her foot.

ELLIS

Toni?

TONI

(snapping to attention)
Yeah. We're good.
(to Joey and Noah)
Thanks guys. Good to see you.

JOEY

Don't come back soon.

NOAH

Good to see you, Toni.

EXT. LEIGHTON AUCTION HOUSE - DAY

Toni and Ellis exit the auction house with the list in hand. Toni is skipping she's so energized.

TONI

That was amazing! We're like Bones and the dude from Buffy, Castle and that hot girl, 'A Star is Born', except you're Lady Gaga and I'm Bradley Cooper. So what next?

ELLIS

We run down this list.

Toni grabs the list and tears it up.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

What are you doing??

TONI

This is a big, fat nothingburger. Joey would never hand over names of real buyers. That would be the end of him.

ELLIS

So what do you suggest?

TONI

I say we grab a drink at a seedy dive you're a regular at, talk about the case, maybe get into a bar fight --

ELLIS

I'm taking you home. You will not leave until I call and say you can. I don't care how bored you are or how unpleasant or noisy your apartment is. You need food - order in. You need fresh air - open a window. Got it?

TONI

Got it, locked it, threw away the key.

ELLIS

Good. Where do you live?

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

They pull up to a MANSION. If you told me Drake lived here I'd believe you.

ELLIS

You live here??

TONI

Right now I do.

ELLIS

Okay, I get it. The owners are out of town, you broke in and you're squatting. Did you think I would believe that you live here--

BUTLER (O.C.)

Ms. Toni, welcome back.

At the front door is the hunkiest BUTLER you've ever seen.

TONI

I don't have a permanent home. But I do have a knack for meeting kind souls who generously lend me their places.

(to Butler)

Thanks, Ricky. We got any Mac and cheese left?

BUTLER

I'll cook some up. Will your friend be joining?

TONI

That would be a hoot!

ELLIS

Absolutely not.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

Remember what I said - do not go anywhere.

OFF Toni who gives him an affirmative wink.

EXT. LEIGHTON AUCTION HOUSE - NIGHT

Night. The parking lot is completely empty.

INT. LEIGHTON AUCTION HOUSE - JOEY AND NOAH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

GLOVED HANDS pick the lock of the office...

A person creeps in and slowly makes their way to the BOOKCASE. They start feeling around the back panels when...

FLASH! The lights snap on revealing TONI! She spins around to find ELLIS in the doorway with his hand on the light switch.

TONI

I was just about to call you!

ELLIS

You are so predictable.

TONI

Now that's insulting. I am hardly predictable. Case in point...

Toni slides a back panel over to expose A HIDDEN LEVER. She pulls it down -- the bookcase slowly swings open, revealing... A SECRET PASSAGEWAY.

TONI (CONT'D)

I know you're impressed.

ELLIS

I should take you in for breaking
and entering.

TONI

Come on. Don't you want to see
what's in there?

He walks past her into the dark tunnel...

INT. LEIGHTON AUCTION HOUSE - SECRET ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ellis turns on his flashlight. It's pitch black, low ceiling,
narrow, creepy.

TONI

I'm going to be so stoked if we end
up in Hogwarts.

Ellis's flashlight scans the darkness. There are stacks of
paintings, a large safe, antique clocks, vases, and then --

A body... It's JOEY... DEAD.

END ACT II

ACT IIIINT. LEIGHTON AUCTION HOUSE - SECRET ROOM/JOEY AND NOAH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Forensics and Unis are processing the scene. A FORENSICS AGENT examines Joey's body.

FORENSICS AGENT

Cause of death appears to be blunt force trauma to the head. Judging by the position of the body, he was hit from behind.

ELLIS

So he was either taken by surprise or he trusted someone enough to turn his back on them.

FORENSIC AGENT

Still no sign of the murder weapon. He must have taken it with him.

TONI

Why does everyone keep assuming it's a 'he'? I'm seeing a lot of misogyny in the assumption of criminal activity. Women can be lowlife, no good miscreants just as well as men can.

ELLIS

He's still got his wallet which is filled with cash, and that watch doesn't look cheap.

TONI

It's a Vacheron Constantin. Forty grand, easy.

ELLIS

This wasn't a robbery.

CAPTAIN RAMOS (O.C.)

Ellis!

Ellis and Tony step out to the office to meet Captain Ramos who is LIVID.

CAPTAIN RAMOS (CONT'D)

(to Ellis and Toni)

Did I miss something?

(MORE)

CAPTAIN RAMOS (CONT'D)

Because no one called me about a warrant. Why the hell were you here in the middle of the night?

ELLIS

Following up on a hunch.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

I should throw you both in jail.

TONI

We uncovered a murder. Shouldn't that be rewarded? I'm thinking Tim Horton's gift certificates or, if you're feeling generous, maybe a spa day?

CAPTAIN RAMOS

Are you kidding? I want you both out of here. Get back to your case.

ELLIS

This is our case. They're related.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

How?

ELLIS

We go talk to Joey, and later that night he turns up dead? There's no way this is a coincidence.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

Leave this to the real detectives or you're back on the boat, and she's back in cuffs.

Captain Ramos walks out.

TONI

Hey, thanks for not throwing me under the bus there.

Ellis can't hear her because he's fuming over Ramos' order.

TONI (CONT'D)

You look mad.

Ellis starts pacing. Scanning the room for clues.

TONI (CONT'D)

Is this where you're gonna go all rogue? Do it your way or the highway?

His gaze lands on something on the desk.

TONI (CONT'D)

You got something? Is this where
you go all Sherlock Holmes on the
case?

He tears a sheet out of a calendar book off and marches out.

TONI (CONT'D)

We really need a theme song.

She rushes after him.

EXT. NOAH'S HOUSE - MORNING

A modest house in the suburbs. Noah's wife PENNY (40) is
outside digging around her stunning ROSE BUSHES.

TONI

Those roses are incredible. It's
like an episode of Bridgerton
without all the sex.

ELLIS

We're looking for Noah Epstein.

PENNY

I'm his wife, Penny.

Noah steps outside.

NOAH

Penny's won best neighborhood
garden 5 years in row. What brings
you around?

INT. NOAH'S HOUSE - MORNING

Noah is crying after receiving the news about his brother.

TONI

I'm so sorry, Noah.

ELLIS

Did Joey have any enemies?

NOAH

Not that I know of.

PENNY

Everyone loved Joey. He was the life of the party and if it wasn't a party, he turned it into one.

ELLIS

You sound almost annoyed at that.

PENNY

After their parents died, it was Noah who turned the business into what it became. He did all the real work. Day and night, never going on vacation, while Joey bought a penthouse apartment and lived the life of Reilly.

NOAH

Penny--

PENNY

It's true.

NOAH

I know everyone thought I was jealous of Joey, but I wasn't. I like my routine, my quiet life. He liked excitement, adventure.

ELLIS

Could you take a look at some photos and see if anything seems out of place?

As Noah looks at the crime scene photos, Ellis looks around the room. He approaches a DISPLAY CASE OF ANTIQUE BOOKS.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

These look really old--

PENNY

Don't touch those!

(beat)

I'm sorry. Those are signed, first editions of every Jane Austen novel.

NOAH

Those books and her roses are Penny's most prized possessions.

Noah shows a photo back to Ellis.

NOAH (CONT'D)

Here's something. There's a small statue missing from the vault room. A Bronze replica of the Count Of Habsburg. He had it made in 1746 for his mistress to remember him when they couldn't be together.

ELLIS

Would someone break in just to steal that?

NOAH

I can't imagine. Almost everything else in there is worth more.

Ellis writes on his notepad so Toni can see: *MURDER WEAPON?*

ELLIS

One more question - Joey had a meeting listed on his calendar for last night. Someone by the name of Sokolov.

Ellis shows Noah the calendar sheet he took from the Office. Noah is completely shocked.

NOAH

He promised me he stopped all that.

EXT. NOAH'S HOUSE - DAY

Ellis and Toni walk back to the car.

TONI

Mikhail Sokolov, otherwise known as Caviar Mike. You know why no one steals the Mona Lisa? Because it's impossible to sell it - unless you're Caviar Mike.

ELLIS

So if Joey had the jewels, he'd call Caviar Mike. Let's go talk to him.

TONI

Can't talk to Mike.

ELLIS

Why not?

TONI

He's the son of a Russian diplomat so he has all those legal protections. He's impossible to get to without a direct introduction and his circle is very tight and very small.

Dead stare from Ellis.

TONI (CONT'D)

What?

ELLIS

You're giving me the set up of how impossible it is to get to this guy, but then you're going to impress me with the fact that you have a way. So don't waste any more time and just get to it.

TONI

You know me so well. How are we not a meme already? Give me your keys. I'm driving. We gotta see someone.

ELLIS

Who?

INT. DAVIDSON MEN'S CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - GENERAL POPULATION - DAY

GEORGE GALLANT (55), handsome, happy, strolls through the prison like George Clooney in a casino. Everyone nods, smiles, fist bumps him, guards included.

GUARD

George, you got a visitor.

INT. DAVIDSON MEN'S CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - MEETING ROOM - DAY

George is brought into the meeting room by the guard. The moment he sees Toni they rush up and hug each other.

GEORGE

My darling!

ELLIS

(to Guard)

How about the no touching thing?

GUARD

That don't apply to George and
Toni.

(to Toni)

Toni, I took your advice. Sure
enough, my girl gave me a second
chance.

TONI

Treat her right, Davis. Treat her
right.

They fist bump and Davis leaves.

TONI (CONT'D)

(to George)

I have a surprise for you. I'm a
cop!

ELLIS

You are not a cop--

GEORGE

Do you have a badge?

TONI

Not yet.

ELLIS

Not gonna happen.

GEORGE

A gun?

TONI

Soon.

ELLIS

Never.

TONI

And this is my partner - Clay Ellis
meet my dad - George Gallant.

ELLIS

Your dad?

GEORGE

Clay Ellis? I've heard of you. It's
a pleasure to meet my daughter's
partner.

ELLIS

We're not partners.

TONI

We are. Okay Dad, we need your help. I need a face to face with Caviar Mike.

GEORGE

Ooohh. That's not going to be easy.

TONI

I know. But it's important.

George thinks.

GEORGE

Caviar Mike holds a regular poker game for high rollers at the Regency Hotel. Call Teddy Takamoro. He'll get you in. He owes me.

TONI

Thanks Dad. I love you.

GEORGE

I love you too, baby girl.

They kiss and embrace.

EXT. DAVIDSON MEN'S CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - DAY

Ellis and Toni walk back to the car.

ELLIS

I looked into you. How did I not find that your father was in prison?

TONI

Different last names.

ELLIS

That doesn't matter. You barely exist on paper. It's like the only things I could find on you are what you want people to know.

TONI

If you want to be effective in my line of work, you don't want to be googleable.

ELLIS

So who are you?

TONI
Who are any of us really?

ELLIS
For most normal, non-criminals,
what you see is what you get.

TONI
So you're nothing more than a tall
drink of bitterness and silent,
seething rage?

He's about to respond when he realizes, yup, that's pretty
much it.

ELLIS
I'll pick you up at 8:00.

EXT. TONI'S MANSION - NIGHT

Ellis pulls up to the mansion still dressed the same as he
was earlier that day.

TONI (O.S.)
What are you doing?

Ellis looks UP - Toni's on the grand balcony in her silk
bathrobe and towel around her hair.

ELLIS
Why aren't you ready?

TONI
Why aren't YOU ready?

ELLIS
I am ready.

TONI
You can't go like that. Ricky will
dress you.

ELLIS
No one is dressing me.

TONI
And we are NOT taking that car.

Toni goes back inside. Ricky appears at the front door.

EXT. REGENCY HOTEL - NIGHT

A red, Ferrari 812 GTS pulls up to the hotel. VALETS open the doors. HEELS touch down. A LONG, GORGEOUS, RED DRESS. Then, Black Prada shoes, Tom Ford Black Suit. They look HOT.

She holds out her elbow and he reticently takes her arm.

ELLIS
(nonplussed)
So what's the play here?

TONI
(Russian Accent)
I'm a Russian heiress to a
microchip Oligarch and you're my
halfwitted boytoy/goat yoga
trainer.

PRE-LAP: Knocking on a door.

INT. REGENCY HOTEL - VIP SUITE - CONTINUOUS

A bodyguard lets them into the huge penthouse suite where they find a high roller poker game going on. There's a full bar with staff.

TONI
(quietly to Ellis)
That's our guy. In the red shirt.

CAVIAR MIKE (55), wearing a red shirt, raises the table a huge stack of chips.

Fully aware all eyes are on them, Toni makes a show of their interaction.

TONI (CONT'D)
(to Ellis)
Dah-ling, Vodka please. And a kiss
for good luck.

He scowls, then relents to give her a quick peck on the cheek. She throws him a look - *get into the part, buddy* - and grabs his head and kisses him.

At first it's awkward, but to their mutual shock, they melt into a hot, steamy kiss, powerless to the chemistry between them. They break apart and right away know they will never speak of it again.

TONI (CONT'D)
 (in Russian, subtitled)
 Deal me in, gentlemen.

TIME CUT TO:

CLOSE ON - A HUGE STACK OF POKER CHIPS in front of Toni.

Only Toni and Caviar Mike are still in the hand.

The DEALER lays out the last river card - ACE OF HEARTS.

Caviar Mike shows his hand - 2 Queens, 1 Ace. (gives him two pairs) *Ooooh*, the crowd knows he's got this.

Toni shows her hand - that Ace gave her a Royal Flush.

Caviar Mike, pissed off, pushes himself away from the table and stomps out to the balcony.

EXT. REGENCY HOTEL - VIP SUITE - BALCONY - NIGHT

Caviar Mike is having a drink and cigar.

TONI
 May we join you?

CAVIAR MIKE
 You took enough of my money. Can I
 keep my peace and quiet?

ELLIS
 We want to ask you about Joey
 Epstein.

Caviar Mike looks them both over and now he gets it.

CAVIAR MIKE
 I don't have to talk to you even if
 you are cops. I got diplomatic
 immunity.

ELLIS
 We'll give you back all the money
 you lost.

TONI
 What?? No, we won't.

ELLIS
 Yes, we will.

TONI
Maybe half.

ELLIS
All of it.

CAVIAR MIKE
Deal. So what about Joey?

ELLIS
He's dead.

CAVIAR MIKE
That's too bad for him.

ELLIS
We know you met with him a few days ago.

CAVIAR MIKE
I didn't. We were supposed to but he never showed up.

ELLIS
How did you know him?

CAVIAR MIKE
I've unloaded some things for him. He said he had something else. Something big.

ELLIS
What else did you unload for him?

CAVIAR MIKE
That, I can't and won't tell you.

ELLIS
Then I can't and won't give you back your hard lost dollars.

CAVIAR MIKE
Listen, I can't tell you those things, but I know who can. You want to know what Joey was into? Ask the guy who introduced us - his head of security, Henry.

OFF Ellis and Toni sharing a look of surprise.

END ACT III

ACT IVINT. HENRY'S HOUSE - DAY

Henry, the security guard, gives Toni A CUP OF TEA then sits.

TONI

This tea is fabulous.

HENRY

So what can I do for you?

ELLIS

How long have you worked for the auction house?

HENRY

36 years. Noah and Joey's parents hired me.

ELLIS

You must be close with the boys.

HENRY

They're family. Their parents died in a car accident when the boys were 18. Horrible tragedy. Two of the best people you could ever meet.

ELLIS

They took over the business at 18? That's pretty young.

HENRY

Legally, it was theirs. But I handled things until they could manage on their own.

ELLIS

It's interesting how much they trusted you. Considering you did 6 years in prison for robbery.

Henry tenses - he wasn't expecting that.

HENRY

I was 28 years old, no family, I'd just gotten out of the joint. Noah and Joey's parents hired me when no one else would.

(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)

They gave me a chance and made me part of their family. I'd do anything for them and the boys.

Ellis looks at framed photographs on Henry's mantle.

ELLIS

This them?

PHOTO 1: JOEY AND NOAH AT TEN YEARS OLD WITH THEIR PARENTS AND HENRY - RAISING GLASSES OF WINE OUT IN A VINEYARD. They all look so happy.

HENRY

Yes.

TONI

And is this the Chinese restaurant where you get the tea?

PHOTO 2: Joey and Noah as kids with their parents and Henry at the GOLDEN CITY CHINESE RESTAURANT.

HENRY

Yes. When their parents were alive they ate there every Sunday.

Ellis points to PHOTO 1.

ELLIS

This is Chester Ice Wine Vineyards. An hour outside the city. Where they found the traces of dirt from one of the crime scenes.

TONI

And the thief left a signature at every scene.

Toni takes out her phone and PULLS UP A PHOTO OF THE INFINITY THIEF'S SIGNATURE SYMBOL. She holds it beside the PHOTO 2:

THE INFINITY LOOP IS A PERFECT MATCH OF A SMALL CORNER OF THE RESTAURANT'S LOGO - AN ORNATE CHINESE DRAGON.

ELLIS

The only question left is - are you the infinity thief or was it Joey?

Henry stays quiet.

TONI

We read your record. You weren't a smash and grab thief.

(MORE)

TONI (CONT'D)

You pulled off some pretty sophisticated stuff - techniques that are pretty similar to those of the infinity thief.

(whispers)

And between us - kudos to you - you rocked that shit.

ELLIS

And you and Caviar Mike go way back, don't you?

Henry takes a beat but he's an old pro. He knows there's no point in lying.

HENRY

I told Joey not to leave those damn clues. Even as a boy, he always needed so much attention.

(beat)

Joey was always trying to get me to tell him about my days as a thief. He loved it - like listening to the Count Of Monte Cristo. But it was always just stories.

(beat)

Then 6 months ago Joey started acting strange. Not his usual self. Happy go lucky one day, depressed and moody the next. I didn't know what changed - then I read about the robberies and I knew he was using my techniques.

(beat)

I confronted him. He told me he was in a mountain of debt. I made him a deal - I'd connect him with Caviar Mike so he could unload those things, but no more after that. He had to promise that was it.

(beat)

But when those jewels went missing I knew he was at it again.

ELLIS

So what happened the night of the murder?

HENRY

I went to the office to have a talk with him. He was risking everything - but I didn't understand why.

(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)

And if he got caught it was his brother that was going to suffer for his mistakes. For all their differences, they loved each other. That wasn't the boy he was raised to be.

(beat)

We argued. But I thought I got through to him.

ELLIS

So why'd you kill him?

HENRY

I would NEVER lay a hand on either of the boys. They're all the family I got.

INT. POLICE STATION - OUTSIDE INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Henry sits in the interrogation room handcuffed to the table as Ellis, Toni and Captain Ramos talk on the other side of the two-way mirror.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

He admits to being at the scene - that's opportunity. He admits they argued - that's motive. He has a record and the same MO as our thief.

ELLIS

We searched every inch of his apartment - no murder weapon, no missing jewels. Joey was the thief, but I'm telling you, Henry is not our murderer. He loved Joey.

TONI

I agree.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

The prosecutor says we have enough to charge him. They'll take it from here.

ELLIS

No.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

No??

ELLIS

He's the wrong guy. You can't charge him. This isn't right.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

You're the last person who should be talking about what's right.

That cuts Ellis deep. He storms out.

TONI

He's right.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

You're lucky I didn't bring charges against you both for disobeying my orders. Now get out.

Toni exits.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Toni exits the station, catches up to Ellis.

TONI

Hey, wait up.
(beat)
What was that all about?

ELLIS

Leave me alone.

TONI

We can't give up.

ELLIS

It doesn't matter. They'll believe whatever story makes it easy for them.

TONI

C'mon, we can finish this. Lets pull an all-nighter, drink bourbon, hunched over files--

ELLIS

THIS ISN'T A GAME.

TONI

(serious)
I know.

ELLIS
I don't think you do.

Ellis storms off leaving Toni to really think about that.

TONI (V.O.)
So what did you find out?

INT. PRISON PHONE ROOM/INT. TONI'S MANSION - INTERCUT

Toni's talking to her father, George, on the phone.

GEORGE
Ellis was kicked out of his
division for being on the take.

TONI
Ellis? No way. I don't believe
that.

GEORGE
That's the story.

TONI
So why is he still on the job?

GEORGE
I don't know.
(beat)
Am I sensing concern for this guy?
You hardly know him. What do you
care?

TONI
(beat)
I gotta go, dad. Love you.

GEORGE
Love you, baby girl.

Toni hangs up. She runs it all through her mind trying to
make sense of it.

EXT. MARINA - ELLIS'S BOAT - NIGHT

Ellis is sitting on the deck of his boat parked in the marina
(not the police boat. His own rundown sailboat). He's having
a beer, looking over photos of the crime scenes - THE MISSING
BRONZE STATUE MURDER WEAPON, THE INFINITY LOOP SYMBOL, THE
PHOTOS OF NOAH AND JOEY WITH THEIR PARENTS. Marc the cat
slinks around his legs.

TONI (O.C.)

I did not picture you as someone
who lives on a boat.

She climbs aboard, sits next to him and grabs a beer. The cat
rubs up against her.

TONI (CONT'D)

Do you like living on a boat?

ELLIS

I hate boats. I hate the water.

TONI

So why do you live on one?

ELLIS

You seem to have all the answers
you need about me. What do you
want?

TONI

I found out why you got demoted.

ELLIS

There you go. You know it all.

TONI

You once said that I'm an expert
when it comes to cons, theft, and
general swindling of all sorts.
Thank you, and very true.

(beat)

My best guess - you were the one
who *wasn't* corrupt. But dirty cops
don't trust honest ones, so they
got you booted out.

(beat)

There's no way you were ever on the
take. You do not have it in you.
You're one of the rare good guys.

She's entirely sincere about that.

ELLIS

That's pretty good but it doesn't
really matter, does it? Like Henry,
once the story takes hold, there's
no going back.

TONI

Hell yeah, it matters. I don't like
it when the bad guys - or girls -
win.

He grins. Breaking the moment - A GROUP OF TEENAGERS skateboard along the walkway and stop at Ellis's boat.

ELLIS

What are you hooligans up to tonight? Shoplifting? Vandalism?

J.J. - the leader of the pack, steps up.

J.J.

We robbed a couple banks and now we're giving the money to smelly, homeless dudes. You're our first stop.

ELLIS

Great. I could use the money.

J.J.

This your girlfriend?

ELLIS

Definitely not.

TONI

We're comrades.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

You go to school today, J.J.?

J.J.

(showing his sneakers)
Nah. New Jordans went on sale.

ELLIS

You don't go to school tomorrow I'm calling your case worker.

J.J.

(to Toni)
Miss, you're too pretty to hang with this dude. Wanna chill with us?

TONI

First, that is very sweet. Second, I'm too *smart* to hang with this dude, not too *pretty*. That was a little chauvinistic, but I'll let it slide because those Jordans are SWEET.

J.J.

She is way too good for you, Ellis.

J.J. and his crew skate off.

TONI
What's with the kids?

ELLIS
My brother was a social worker. He worked with those street kids. He had a real gift with them. They only talk to me 'cuz of him.
(beat)
He was murdered six months ago. We never caught the guy.

That was a lot to digest. Then, it all clicks for her...

TONI
This was your brother's boat. And Marc was his cat.

ELLIS
He loved this crappy boat and that dumb cat more than anything.

She sees Ellis in a whole new light. He's a softie.

TONI
My dad always used to say - there's no heavier anchor for a person's heart than family.

Toni's words sets off a lightbulb for him. He picks up the photo of Joey and Noah's family at the Chinese restaurant.

ELLIS
Let's go eat.

TONI
Are you buying?

ELLIS
No.

TONI
Can I put that siren thingie on the roof of the car?

ELLIS
No.

TONI
Okay, great!

EXT./INT. ELLIS'S CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

They drive in silence but Toni is clearly chomping at the bit to talk.

TONI

That was nice back there. We had a moment don't you think?

Silence...

TONI (CONT'D)

You opened up, told me your story of grief and heartache that made you into the man you are today.

More Silence...

TONI (CONT'D)

Now I understand you better. That's important for a partnership.

Deafening Silence...

TONI (CONT'D)

And there's a give and take that's implied in a partnership--

ELLIS

Please, stop. Tell me your story. Just get it over with.

TONI

I thought you'd never ask.

ELLIS

I never would have.

TONI

It's a long story.

ELLIS

Make it short.

TONI

Do you really want to shortchange the window into my soul I'm about to open for you?

ELLIS

Yes.

TONI

I get it. We're on the clock. Okay here we go - my dad was a conman, my mom didn't know until he went to jail. She and I fought all the time. She died in a car crash.

Beat. He looks over at her.

ELLIS

You can give me more than that.

TONI

See, I knew you cared. So yeah, my dad is a lifelong conman - and a great one at that. He and I were always best friends. My mom and I - oil and vinegar. Maple syrup and Tapatio sauce. Harry Styles and Led Zeppelin --

ELLIS

Move on.

TONI

The first time he went to prison I was 14. I missed him something awful. My mom and I butted heads like Britney Spears and her conservatorship. One night, we had a particularly bad fight. It was clear I was following in my dad's footsteps and she'd had it. She yelled at me "why are you like this??!". And I yelled back "who do you want me to be?". And she said: "anyone else".

(beat)

It literally knocked the wind out of me. She hated who I was. She stormed out of the house and drove off.

(beat)

I never saw her again. She died in a car accident that night.

ELLIS

I'm sorry she did that to you.

Reliving the moment is still hard for Toni. They drive in silence for a long beat letting the emotion of the moment blanket them, then...

TONI
I feel like we should hug.

ELLIS
For the love of God--

TONI
Fist bump?

EXT. / INT. GOLDEN CITY CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Ellis and Toni stand at the register talking to RONNY KIM (60), The owner.

RONNY
I was so sad to hear about Joey. I knew his whole family. They came here for years.

ELLIS
When was he here last?

RONNY
I don't know, but Noah started coming back with his wife recently.

Ellis clocks the SECURITY CAMERA in the corner.

ELLIS
You know what would really help that family, Ronny? If you still had the tapes from that camera.

RONNY
No tapes.
(Off Ellis - disappointed)
I got the cloud. Follow me.

TONI
Can we get also some Kung Pao Chicken? I'm starving.

INT. GOLDEN CITY CHINESE RESTAURANT - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Ellis and Toni stand over Ronny at the computer. Toni munches on her food.

RONNY
There they are.

SECURITY FOOTAGE - Noah and Penny making out in a booth.

TONI

Ronny, what do you put in the food?

RONNY

That's nothing. They had sex in the bathroom. I don't have that on tape.

ELLIS

Freeze that. Look at Noah. He's eating with his right hand...

TONI

But he's left handed...

Beat. Then it dawns on both of them...

ELLIS

That's not Noah.

TONI (CONT'D)

That's not Noah.

TONI (CONT'D)

Jinx.

ELLIS

I know who killed Joey.

As they race out, Toni yells back...

TONI

Thanks Ronny. Best Kung Pao chicken in town!

RONNY

Review us on yelp! Five stars!

END ACT IV

ACT VEXT. NOAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Noah opens his door to find Ellis and Toni there.

TONI

Hey Noah, sorry to bother you at night. Can we come in? Great.

INT. NOAH'S HOUSE - DEN - CONTINUOUS

Noah's wife Penny is on the sofa because they are in the middle of a game of...

TONI

BOGGLE! I LOOOOOVE Boggle. Like, Bella - Edward level of unhealthy obsessive love.

PENNY

What are you doing here? We thought you arrested Henry.

TONI

(finding Boggle words)
Lead... deal... ladle... lad...

ELLIS

We just need to clear a few things up.

NOAH

Sure, whatever you need.

ELLIS

Henry went to the office the night of the murder. He figured out Joey was the thief a while back, and Joey promised he'd stop, but when he didn't, Henry went to confront him.

NOAH

What I don't understand is why did Joey do it in the first place?

TONI

That's a good question.
(more Boggle words)
(MORE)

TONI (CONT'D)

Rest... tree... see... stereo! 6 letters, baby!

ELLIS

Joey said he was in debt. But our forensic accountants couldn't find any evidence of that.

PENNY

It doesn't surprise me. Just look at the way he lived.

ELLIS

Henry also couldn't figure out why Joey seemed to need such a large amount of money. Toni...?

TONI

(Boggle)

Rent.. tase... tar... neat..

ELLIS

TONI! Your phone?

TONI

Sorry, I am killing it here! This might explain why Joey became a thief.

On her phone, Toni shows Noah and Penny the security cam footage of Joey (dressed as Noah) making out with Penny at the Chinese restaurant.

ELLIS

Joey would dress like you when he and Penny would go out together.

NOAH

Penny...?

TONI

They were going to run away together. That's why Penny was at the office that night too. They were going to sell the jewels to Caviar Mike and disappear. But then Henry showed up, and Penny hid in the secret room. After Henry made his case, Joey had a change of heart. In the end he couldn't go through with it.

PENNY

This is insane...

ELLIS

But you'd made your decision to leave. You weren't going to go back to your life. When Joey tried to walk away, that's when you killed him.

TONI

But where are the jewels you ask? Or I asked. But you were thinking it.

ELLIS

The one place Noah wouldn't look for them...

Ellis opens the DISPLAY CASES OF THE JANE AUSTEN BOOKS.

NOAH

Be careful. Those are incredibly rare.

ELLIS

When I first looked at these I noticed a thin layer of dust on everything in here - except not on this one...

Ellis removes the book EMMA and opens it. IT'S BEEN HOLLOWED OUT AND INSIDE ARE THE JEWELS.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

She knew you'd never imagine she'd desecrate her most prized possessions.

PENNY

I don't know how those got in there! I bet you it was Joey who hid them in there!

ELLIS

You know what would be really helpful right now to really bring this home? The murder weapon.

Ellis strolls out the front door. They're all left staring at each other.

TONI

I don't about you but I need to know what happens next. That was a hell of tease.

EXT. NOAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

They all follow Ellis outside. UNIs are already on the scene waiting. Ellis digs into Penny's prized Rose Bushes. He pulls out THE BRONZE STATUE.

ELLIS

Criminals always repeat their habits. Penny's prized possessions were her safe places.

NOAH

(to Penny)

I don't understand? With my brother?

PENNY

You never want to change anything! We still live in your parents house! I want a life of excitement, passion! Joey promised me all of it, until the bastard chickened out. Both of you scared of leaving your little cocoons.

UNIs handcuff Penny and take her away. Toni looks over at Noah. Her heart breaks for him.

TONI

I'm so sorry, Noah.

NOAH

I thought I knew who they were, but I was totally wrong about them.

Noah walks back inside his house. Ellis and Toni exchange a look - maybe they were wrong about each other too?

INT. POLICE STATION - CAPTAIN RAMOS'S OFFICE - DAY

Toni, Ellis, and Judge Murphy are in Captain Ramos's office.

JUDGE MURPHY

A deal's a deal. Ellis, you are to be conditionally reinstated as detective. You will remain on the marine unit and fulfill the duties needed there, but you will be an active part of Captain Ramos's roster.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

I have to keep him?

ELLIS

I have to stay on the boat?

JUDGE MURPHY

Yes and yes. Ellis, you live down there anyway. Take the win.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

And her?

TONI

Yes, do me next!

ELLIS

Judge, can I say something first?

(beat)

From the beginning there was one thing that always bothered me. Toni is a good conwoman. And yet the day I met her at the bank, she was caught pretty easily. Now that I've worked with her, that doesn't feel like the person I've gotten to know.

(beat)

So I did a little digging...

TONI

Otherwise known as 'detectiving'.

(off Ellis' side eye)

Sorry, please continue.

Ellis picks up a remote and turns on the TV.

ELLIS

This is security footage inside the bank.

We see TONI emerge from the safe deposit room. (Sc. 5)

TONI

That's me!

ELLIS

If you'll watch carefully...

Toni passes an ASSISTANT pushing a MAIL CART.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

Right there. Now watch from another angle.

From this angle we clearly see Toni SLIP AN ENVELOPE into the mail cart as she walks past.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

I'm sure you're all wondering what
did she mail during the course of a
robbery?

Ellis pulls out THE ENVELOPE.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

It's addressed to Ricky Martinez.
(calling out)
RICKY.

Waking into the office is RICKY - THE HUNKY BUTLER.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

This is Toni's butler...

CAPTAIN RAMOS

Butler?

ELLIS

It's a long story. Ricky moved here
from Venezuela a few years ago. He
then brought over his cousin Maria
and helped get her a job. That job?
Live-in housekeeper for Mrs.
Pallione - the woman Toni is
accused of robbing.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

Mrs. Pallione made an insurance
claim for a two hundred thousand
dollar necklace.

ELLIS

That no one ever recovered. Because
it was never stolen.

Ellis opens up the envelope and pulls out a VENEZUELAN
PASSPORT.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

This is what Toni stole.

Captain Ramos takes the passport and reads the name inside.

CAPTAIN RAMOS

Maria Martinez.

ELLIS

(calling out)
Maria...

In walks MARIA (40). The moment she sees Toni she bursts into tears and embraces her.

TONI

Maria!

ELLIS

For two years, Mrs. Pallione has made Maria work 20 hours a day, forced her to live in a small bedroom in the basement and hasn't been paid. She was able to do all this because she had Maria's passport locked away so Maria couldn't leave. Ricky, asked Toni to help his cousin break free of this indentured servitude.

Through the office window, we see the TWO UNI's who first handed Toni off to Ellis bring in Mrs. Pallione in handcuffs.

MRS. PALLIONE

YOU! YOU DID THIS?? I am going to have my lawyer send you to prison for the rest of your life...

She rages on in Italian as they drag her away.

TONI

And that's how my man Ellis does it
- *SWISH* - nothing but net.

JUDGE MURPHY

Safe to say those charges have been dropped. The bank however, still maintains that you broke into their vault and that is a federal crime. But we negotiated a probationary term, during which you will continue working with Detective Ellis and under Captain Ramos.

TONI

It's like winning the lottery. Twice!

ELLIS

You've got to be kidding.

JUDGE MURPHY

Now I'd like to have word with Ms. Newton alone so we can be clear on her new responsibilities.

It sounds serious. They all leave and Judge Newton turns down the blinds. He looks Toni up and down, then breaks into a huge grin and hugs her.

JUDGE MURPHY (CONT'D)
You did good, kiddo.

TONI
It was fun.

JUDGE MURPHY
I went out on a limb for you. But I won't be able to protect you like this anymore. You need to walk the line.

TONI
I know. You're the best uncle in the world.

JUDGE MURPHY
I promised my sister, may she rest in peace, that I'd always take care of her girl.
(beat)
Now, I know you. You got something else cookin'. I know you won't tell me what it is, but answer me this - are you sure you know what you're doing?

TONI
Absolutely.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Ellis waits in his idling car outside the courthouse. Toni gets in, bubbling over with excitement.

ELLIS
Let's get something straight - no more lies, no more gifts, no more shady dealings.

TONI
Got it.

ELLIS
Anything you want to tell me now?

TONI
Yes.
(beat)
Since we're officially partners I was thinking we should paint flames on your car. So everyone knows it's us.

ELLIS

No.

TONI

Okay, how about a tiger and a
hammer? I'm the tiger - *ROWR* - and
you're the--

Ellis CRANKS THE MUSIC to drown her out -- "Northern Touch"
by Rascalz.

TONI (CONT'D)

IS THIS OUR THEME SONG??

AND THAT ENDS EPISODE 101 OF WILD CARDS!