

THE BETTER SISTER

Episode 102

Written by
Regina Corrado

Directed by
Leslie Hope

White Production Draft - 05/07/24
Blue Pages - 05/23/24
Pink Draft - 06/13/24
Yellow Pages - 06/17/24

We catch glimpses of images and snatches of sound from a long ago camping trip. There is a lake beach, brown water, a forest edge. *

HANK (V.O.)
Chloe? Chloe!

YOUNG NICKY (V.O.)
Chloe!

YOUNG CHLOE TAYLOR, 9, lays on the beach, her body buried in sand and covered with stones, eyes closed. They pop open.

YOUNG CHLOE (V.O.)
Now I lay me down to sleep.

YOUNG NICKY TAYLOR, 13, kneels before her sister, placing stones along her buried body like a decorative ritual burying. Chloe sits up, breaking out of her sandy-mummified coffin --

YOUNG NICKY
She has risen!

YOUNG CHLOE (V.O.)
I pray the lord my soul to keep.

HANK (V.O.)
You know, this Wallace Lake is man-made.

About a hundred feet away, their father HANK, 40s, emanating a manic cheerfulness, Vietnam War survivor, alcohol abuser, charming as hell until not, sets up their tent, a mug on the table next to him.

HANK
Chloe!

YOUNG NICKY
And if I die before I wake, bury me
at Shadow Lake.

YOUNG CHLOE
But this is Wallace Lake.

YOUNG NICKY
I like Shadow better.

Young Chloe moves into the water --

YOUNG CHLOE
It's shallow, right?

YOUNG NICKY
Yeah, get in there.

Chloe wades further in, thrilled with the assignment --

*

3

EXT. WALLACE LAKE - FAMILY CAMPOUT - MOMENTS LATER

3

Nicky looks out at the water. Now still, calm. Chloe nowhere to be found. Nicky moves closer, drops her bag and runs out --

YOUNG NICKY
Chloe!

BENEATH THE WATER, Chloe's face twists with panic as she tries to touch bottom. She has her sights on a special rock, strains for it, desperate to grab it for her sister. But then she panics, realizes she's out of breath and in too deep. Then Hank's arms circle her, a prominent dog-tag tattoo on his wrist. They break surface --

YOUNG NICKY (CONT'D)
Chloe!

HANK
Chloe!

ACT ONE

4

INT. CHLOE'S BATHROOM - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - PRESENT DAY

Chloe's fully dressed, eyeing herself in the mirror. She taps between her eyes using Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), takes deep breaths, slows her heart down.

CHLOE
'My sister is here, my husband has been murdered...' Even though I am feeling anxiety, I release it --

Then she hears the initial beats of a song playing, cocks her head. *Is that coming from another apartment?* But then, the drums and synthesizer kick in and Madonna's voice -- *something in the way you love me won't let me be* -- "Borderline."

CHLOE (CONT'D)
What the fuck is that music?

She knows it can only mean one thing: Nicky has figured out the motherfucking Sonos.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
It's just music.

5 **INT. HALLWAY - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS** 5

Chloe heads down the hallway, the song growing louder.

CHLOE
It's just music.

MADONNA
*If you want me, let me know / Baby,
let it show. Just try to understand
(understand) / I've given all I can
/ 'Cause you got the best of me --*

CHLOE
Okay. What is that fucking music?

6 **INT. KITCHEN - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS** 6

Chloe arrives, hanging back at the doorway as she takes in the scene unfolding before her. Every handle to every drawer is smeared with butter. Confectioners' sugar covers the soapstone countertops, blender top off, dishwasher open.

ETHAN's on a stool watching NICKY make breakfast (a close observer will notice the dog tag tattoo on Nicky's wrist, now understood to be an homage to their father's). She's putting on a show, they're both enjoying themselves --

NICKY
I mean, what is it with this
Ottolenghi guy? There's like forty
ingredients per crepe.

Ethan laughs -- but he's also trying hard to muscle through his grief. Finally, Ethan notices Chloe. Suddenly looking around and seeing what a mess they've made --

ETHAN
I'll clean up 'soon as we're done.

CHLOE
Don't worry about it, sweetie.
Annalisa comes tomorrow.

A somber beat, then Nicky tries to bring the mood back up --

NICKY

We're making cheese crepes with honey and pistachio. If we can figure out how to make orange blossom water.

Chloe's in no mood for her sister, annoyed by her upbeat chatter --

CHLOE

Music off. Have some respect. You go ahead, eat without me. I have a few things to do at the office.

Ethan looks up, surprised --

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I'm meeting with Catherine's cybersecurity guy. Some important things I need to go over with him.

Ethan drops his head, pokes at the foam in his coffee --

CHLOE (CONT'D)

The last thing I want to do is leave, but --

ETHAN

I'll be fine, it's okay.

NICKY

Yeah, I'm here.

Chloe makes eye contact with Ethan, reassuring --

CHLOE

We'll have dinner together tonight, something good.

She rinses her coffee mug and places it in the open dishwasher, firmly closing it. Chloe ruffles Ethan's hair --

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I love you.

Nicky eyes her sister, the merlot stain on Chloe's lips, the faint rim of dark lipstick Chloe's left on her coffee mug.

NICKY

Nice lipstick. You look good.

CHLOE

(to Nicky)

Keep your phone on okay? So I can
check in.

NICKY

Yes, boss.

Chloe exits the kitchen irked by her sister. The music is
turned way down from the other side of the door which prompts
a shrug from Ethan -- *Chloe's house, Chloe's rules.*

7 **INT. LIEUTENANT'S OFFICE - HAMPTONS POLICE STATION - DAY** 7

GUIDRY and BOWEN sit across from LIEUTENANT DENNIS CLARK,
60s, Irish Catholic, formal in a working class way, at it a
long time, believes in the work. Has a long history with, and
a soft spot for, Guidry. Thinks Bowen might end up halfway
decent, if he doesn't let his aspirations get in his own way.

GUIDRY

Sisters, can you believe? I smile
every time I think about it.

LIEUTENANT CLARK

So the boy's mother, who's also the
victim's ex-wife, is the wife's
sister?

GUIDRY

And that's the way they all became
the Brady Bunch.

Clark laughs. Bowen remains focused, threatened by their
shared sense of humor --

BOWEN

Nicky Macintosh --

GUIDRY

Sister-mother-ex-wife from Ohio.

BOWEN

We're waiting on her phone records
to come through, confirm
whereabouts at the time of murder --

Clark gives a nod of approval --

BOWEN (CONT'D)

And swabs came back from the
package Ms. Taylor received --

LIEUTENANT CLARK

The porno present?

GUIDRY

Fingerprints linked to a Mrs. Karen
DiManco --

LIEUTENANT CLARK

-- what? A woman did that? That's
the end of civilization right
there.

BOWEN

Lives in Bayside, a prior
indictment for 'inciting a riot' --

Clark's monitor is blocking Bowen's face --

LIEUTENANT CLARK

Hey Bowen, can you stand up please,
can't see you.

Bowen goes to stand against the wall --

BOWEN

Yes sir. Um, a prior indictment for
inciting a riot organizing a bus
trip down to D.C. on January 6th,
but has an alibi the night of the
murder --

GUIDRY

Still want to meet her, be fun.

BOWEN

Reaching out to the guests at the
dinner party Ms. Taylor attended --

GUIDRY

Feelers out to the boy's school,
connecting with the dean today.

BOWEN

The doorman who dropped him off --

GUIDRY

(cutting him off)
'The big money is --

She gestures to Bowen, *you deliver it* --

BOWEN

The kid's DNA was found under the victim's fingernails.

LIEUTENANT CLARK

I saw that. What do you make of it?

BOWEN

Some families are physically intimate --

GUIDRY

Don't be gross.

LIEUTENANT CLARK

I brushed my grandson's hair this morning, probably get the same result if you swabbed me.

(a beat)

But it's certainly not nothing.

GUIDRY

Not nothing? Combined with lying about the alibi it's more than enough. The only 'missing' items were from his room. And the cut on his arm. We already put in for a warrant to search the Manhattan apartment.

Off Clark's *'nice work, as you should have'* nod.

BOWEN

(re his earlier thought)

We'll talk to the doorman there.

GUIDRY

(a la Clue)

My money's on the kid, with the knife, in a dirty hamper. But I'd like to talk to him again, if the mothers allow.

A note of advice, re Guidry tempering herself --

LIEUTENANT CLARK

Family's been broken wide open. You walk next to that, not bulldoze through it.

A UNIFORMED OFFICER pokes his head in --

LIEUTENANT CLARK (CONT'D)

Yeah.

UNI

Jake Rodriguez here for his interview.

LIEUTENANT CLARK

Hey, house mouse. You need a fucking hair cut.

Uni's used to the ball breaking, gives a tight smile and leaves. Bowen laughs --

LIEUTENANT CLARK (CONT'D)

You too, Serpico. Make a choice -- the hair or the mustache.

BOWEN

Yes, sir.

Guidry laughs. The detectives rise, head for the door --

LIEUTENANT CLARK

Guidry, hang back --

Bowen would belie the jealousy he feels, the desire to be someone's guy, the way Guidry is Lieu's. Once they're alone --

LIEUTENANT CLARK (CONT'D)

No one else I'd want on it.

GUIDRY

Thank you, Lieu.

LIEUTENANT CLARK

But I can't have any bullshit on this one, Nan.

He eyes her, an admonishment with roots.

LIEUTENANT CLARK (CONT'D)

Not just East-enders paying attention, half of Manhattan's peering in my window already. You bludgeon anyone with a phonebook, I can't bury it.

GUIDRY

Come on, boss, they don't make phonebooks anymore.

But Clark is serious --

LIEUTENANT CLARK
Friendly warning.

8 **INT. HALLWAY - HAMPTONS POLICE STATION - DAY**

8

Guidry meets Bowen in the hallway.

BOWEN
What was that?

GUIDRY
Wanted my fried catfish recipe.

As they enter the interrogation room --

9 **INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - HAMPTONS POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS**

JAKE RODRIGUEZ sits at the table --

BOWEN
Mr. Rodriguez, thanks for coming.

JAKE
Of course.

BOWEN
Hope it wasn't too much trouble.

JAKE
No, not at all.

BOWEN
Ms. Taylor informed us that you and Adam Macintosh were working together with a client, the Gentry Group?

JAKE
That's correct.

Bowen's reading from his phone --

BOWEN
Their website says they "run logistics and operations for developers all over the world, taking a synergistic approach to real estate acquisition and construction management, from conception to execution."

GUIDRY
Enlighten the common folk please.

She moves to the coffee pot, gestures in Jake's direction --

JAKE

They help people build stuff.
(re Guidry's offer)
No, thank you.

GUIDRY

You seem like a tea guy.
(off his nod)
Two kinds of people in the world.

BOWEN

The calendar entries they sent over
-- your firm met with them for the
four days leading up to Adam's
murder, including the day of.

Jake's face stays calm, though this is news to him.

GUIDRY

Your attendance is recorded in all
those meetings, except the last
one. Adam took that alone.

JAKE

It's not rare for an associate to
have an additional meeting added to
the itinerary last minute, before a
client leaves town.

GUIDRY

Is it common for them to favor one
over the other?

JAKE

What do you mean?

GUIDRY

The picking and choosing who they
meet with, that a normal part of
things? Kept score of, far as say --
how making partner goes?

Jake sees her game, keeps a poker face.

JAKE

You'd have to ask our boss Bill
Braddock.

Guidry makes a note for herself --

BOWEN

How'd Adam seem in the days prior?

JAKE

The same.

Guidry's about to ask 'how so' but Bowen steps on her toes.

BOWEN

And last time you spoke to him was?

JAKE

At Chloe's event.

GUIDRY

(a different tact)

Right. You three were close.

JAKE

Spent time together, in the city.
Out here.

BOWEN

And when did you arrive out here?

JAKE

Day before last. Met my contractor.

GUIDRY

You had some free time, since you
weren't in the meeting.

Jake smiles, shakes his head --

JAKE

We had dinner after.

GUIDRY

Was it a date? You and the
contractor?

JAKE

Not my type. I can give you his
information if you like.

Jake takes out his phone, writes the number down, hands it to
them. Guidry eyes him, doesn't move, Bowen takes the paper.

BOWEN

We'll reach out, anything else
comes up.

Bowen and Guidry rise, Jake exits.

GUIDRY
He hated Adam.

BOWEN
Hates you too, now.

GUIDRY
(pleased)
Do you think so? Let's get his
phone records. Get Fran in here to
bag that cup.

10 **EXT. TRIBECA STREETS - DAY**

10

Chloe walks down White and Duane and Worth and Leonard -- streets she's walked a million times before. Past buildings that used to be warehouses that have been converted to condos, past old food markets that are now high-end wedding dress shops. She passes her old apartment, eyes the building.

CHLOE'S POV - the five-story walk up. And then a car drives into frame, parks.

Late 90s SAAB, cool, could be a classic. A MAN (ADAM) gets out, moves to the building, hits the buzzer.

11 **INT. CHLOE'S OLD APARTMENT - 13 YEARS AGO - FLASHBACK - DAY**

Chloe's editing at her kitchen table. Tee shirt and jeans, barefoot. Books and magazines everywhere. The BUZZER SOUNDS. Again, long and loud. She moves to the intercom, presses --

CHLOE
Hi, who are you looking for?

ADAM (O.S.)
Chloe Taylor. It's Adam.

She buzzes him up, nervousness rising through her.

12 **INT. HALLWAY - CHLOE'S OLD APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS**

Chloe's at the banister listening to Adam's footsteps on the stairs. As he lands --

CHLOE
What are you doing here?

ADAM
I was in the neighborhood.

CHLOE

Really?

ADAM

(earnest)

Did I do something?

Chloe's thrown, attempts a casual response --

CHLOE

No. I've been really busy at work.

ADAM

Yeah, so have I.

CHLOE

How's Ethan?

ADAM

(I miss you)

He misses you.

They look at each other --

ADAM (CONT'D)

May I come in?

13

INT. LIVING ROOM - CHLOE'S OLD APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

13

She leaves the door open, he enters. Adam eyes a painting that leans against a wall. Above it, there are multiple holes from where Chloe failed to get the nail in --

ADAM

Need some help?

Chloe looks to the pock-marked wall --

CHLOE

Oh no, it's fine, I'll call the super to --

But Adam's already moving for the piece, the hammer nearby --

ADAM

Nothing a little spackling won't fix.

CHLOE

Thank you.

ADAM

Ethan likes the little school you
found him. He's really happy there.

CHLOE

That's good.

He places the piece on the wall, looks to her re it's
position. She nods. As he puts it down, gets the nail --

ADAM

If you hadn't intervened, who knows
what his life would be right now.

Chloe doesn't answer --

ADAM (CONT'D)

You regret helping us, signing
those papers.

CHLOE

No. But my Mom, oof... that hasn't
been, you know. She's still really
angry at me for doing that.

He places the nail just above the hole in the wall, watches
as he hammers it in, unable to help herself from staring at
the muscles in his arms then his shoulders as he lifts the
painting and sets it on the nail.

ADAM

There.

It's a little crooked. She reaches around him to straighten
the edge. Their intense attraction for each other undeniable.
Chloe steps back, putting a safe distance between them.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I miss talking to you.

CHLOE

(re Ethan)

He's here, he's safe.

ADAM

That's not all it was about.

Chloe looks at him. Adam closes the apartment door --

CHLOE

Please leave it open.

ADAM

Why?

CHLOE

I need to get back to it, my writing.

He steps closer --

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Please.

ADAM

You open the door.

Chloe can't meet his eyes.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Go ahead.

Chloe's head is swimming, desire fanning up through her belly, legs weak. She walks to the door and...locks it.

Before she can turn around, Adam's upon her, hands in her hair, pulling her mouth to his. Chloe's spinning, lost in it. The chemistry between them eclipsing any guilt and shame she feels about her sister.

14

EXT. TRIBECA STREETS - DAY - RESUME PRESENT

14

Chloe's settled on a nearby bench.

MCCABE (O.S.)

Ms. Taylor?

Chloe looks up to find JERRY MCCABE, 70's, rumpled Jimmy Breslin (look him up) type, front pocket stuffed with small pad and pens, folded lottery tickets, a half-smoked cigar --

MCCABE (CONT'D)

I'm Jerry McCabe. Tech detective.
We spoke last night.

CHLOE

Hi, nice to meet you in person.

He sits on the bench with her, takes his note pad out --

MCCABE

Tell me about your problem.

CHLOE

This has been going on for awhile,
these threats --

MCCABE

(pointing to his right ear)
In this ear. Lost a hearing aid
today. No idea where. So, which
platform?

CHLOE

Poppit mainly, any forum that
mentions me. Those same screen
names I sent you last night keep
appearing. KillerChad69, Kurt
LoMein.

MCCABE

A lot of them are dummy accounts.
Takes longer to get into their
server, get the subscriber
information, and identities linked
to the emails. 'A little time, I
can get it for you, but wouldn't be
admissible in court. Need a
'subpoena' to legally ID the cunts
doing this to you.

CHLOE

(she's struggling a bit)
Just so you know, the kind of work
I do isn't about celebrity or
status, self-promotion.

MCCABE

But those other avaricious fucks,
the self-promoters, they'd deserve
this?

CHLOE

No, no, but I thought I was one of
the good guys, trying to help
people.

MCCABE

Oh come on, Saint Teresa had a
Twitter they'd call her a twat.

(a beat)

(MORE)

MCCABE (CONT'D)

But let me reassure you -- I don't
care how many password encryptions,
spoofed IPs, concealing software,
fucking fire walls they scramble,
public computers, borrowed, stolen.
I track them down.

A beat -- Chloe thinks about the "gift" she received.

CHLOE

How often do these comments become
more than that? How often do people
follow through?

MCCABE

Seen an uptick, 'last few years.

Not what she wanted to hear. McCabe pats her hand, she lets
him. Something about this old goat gives her comfort --

MCCABE (CONT'D)

Some of the threats're coming from
a computer registered to The Real
Thing.

Chloe blinks at him --

CHLOE

That's my office.

MCCABE

Yeah, sorry.

Off Chloe, stunned. --

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

A15

INT. HALLWAY - THE REAL THING - DAY

A15

TWO LAWYERS, white older MEN, walk slightly ahead of Chloe, strategizing, talking about her, only vaguely to her as she moves behind them, preoccupied in her phone.

LAWYER ONE

Best not to comment about this case
-- online or off. We'll funnel the
press inquiries through us so you
don't have to deal directly right
now.

LAWYER TWO

Less you say, better you look --

CHLOE

I haven't found that to be true.

They've arrived at her office. She steps ahead of them to open the door.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

15

INT. CHLOE'S OFFICE - THE REAL THING - CONTINUOUS

15

The shades are pulled down. Condolences everywhere -- baked goods, baskets of cheese and bouquets of lilies.

LAWYER ONE

They'll put words in your mouth
anyway, just don't make it easy.

But she's not listening to these brain surgeons who (try) to make themselves comfortable in her office. She's looking at her email from two days ago when one catches her eye. From Lyft. A trip summary --

She zooms in on the map showing Lyft's saved destination as "Adam's Office" and then a random location in Queens --

CHLOE

(to herself)

What the hell's in Queens?

LAWYER TWO

Pardon?

Chloe's sitting at her desk now, looks up briefly before finding the email on her computer, hitting print.

She tries to piece together what this could mean. Where was her husband the day he died and why did he lie about it?

Just then CATHERINE enters without knocking. Chloe's relieved to see her --

CHLOE
You're early.

CATHERINE
Always.

By way of introduction --

CHLOE
Bill sent Farris and Lazar over.

Catherine recognizes one, unimpressed --

CATHERINE
Farris. Hello. Give us the room please.

FARRIS
Certainly.

LAZAR
We'll be down the hall.

CATHERINE
Not necessary.

The men exchange a look, *did she just fire us?* They leave --

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
I'll have replacements here within the hour.

CHLOE
Thank you. And for the McCabe thing.

CATHERINE
Jerry's a real person, not like those two.
(a beat)
Have you had any problems with anyone here or --

There's a tentative knock on the door, Chloe's assistant SONIA pokes her head in --

SONIA

Oh, so sorry --

CHLOE

No it's okay, what are you doing
here so early?

Paranoia's creeping up Chloe's spine --

SONIA

(re condolence baskets)
I wanted to organize before
everyone else got in --

CHLOE

Catherine, you remember my
excellent assistant, Sonia Carter.

Sonia flushes at the compliment, but recovers nicely --

SONIA

Wonderful to see you again.

She almost curtsies --

CATHERINE

You as well. Do your thing.

Catherine moves to the window --

SONIA

How should I handle press
inquiries?
(off Catherine's look)
Over seventy-five since this
morning. All the major newspapers,
international magazines, everybody.

CHLOE

Let's run them through legal.

CATHERINE

Forward all press questions to me
please. And copy me on all future
correspondence. I want them to know
I'm listening.

SONIA

Okay.

CHLOE

(re the gifts)
Make a list of who sent what.
(MORE)

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Donate the food to the women's
shelter. Flowers can go in the
break room. Keep the bakery stuff
for my son.

Sonia takes the opportunity to broach the personal --

SONIA

How is Ethan?

A beat --

CHLOE

Not really sure.

Sonia nods, realizing she overstepped, heads for the door --

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Sonia, if my sister calls, put her
through.

She stops briefly at the door --

SONIA

I didn't know you had a sister.

Chloe doesn't respond. Sonia exits. Off Catherine's look --

CHLOE

She's at my place.

CATHERINE

Oh Lord. Is she... ?

Catherine mimes drinking --

CHLOE

Sober apparently. Came to "help" --

CATHERINE

Christ, that's all you need.

(a beat)

What about Adam's ex? The mother?

It's clear now Catherine doesn't know that Chloe's fuck-up of
a sister and Ethan's mother (Adam's ex) are the same person.
Chloe doesn't miss a beat --

CHLOE

Haven't heard from her yet.

Catherine looks at her watch --

CATHERINE

When's your meeting with Bill?

CHLOE

'Had no openings 'til later.

CATHERINE

Couldn't move his "health club"
appointment, such an old whore.
That husband of his is a saint.

Chloe laughs, then quiets, reflecting upon how odd it is that her laugh exists in a world where Adam is dead. Tears well, born of the overwhelming simultaneity of it all. Catherine places her hand atop Chloe's, holds her stare --

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

You're in it. Nowhere else to be.

Chloe nods, grateful.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

But not alone. 'Few days, I'll put
something small together, out at
the beach, away from all the
vultures. So you can mourn with
your people.

Chloe's trying to get through the next few hours, can't imagine the next few days. But she's never argued with Catherine's vision, not that she has the energy to now.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

And your employees need to hear
from you now.

In this moment of surreal floating, Chloe's grateful for Catherine's direct authority, nods. Catherine heads out. Chloe composes herself, intercoms Sonia --

CHLOE

Will you gather everyone in the
lobby, I want to say a few words.

SONIA (O.C.)

On it.

Chloe takes stock of her desk -- organized files, a photo of Ethan. Chloe dials Nicky's cell, gets the voicemail --

NICKY'S VOICE

Leave a message --

Then an automated message --

ROBOT VOICE
This voice box is full.

CHLOE
Of course it fucking is.

16 **INT. CLOSET - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - DAY**

16

Nicky dials her phone, puts it to her ear, while perusing Chloe's clothes, touching the cashmere and silk. INTERCUT as appropriate with Ethan IN HIS BEDROOM --

ETHAN
(sleepy)
Nicky?

NICKY
Hey. You doing alright?

ETHAN
Uhm. Yeah. Where are you?

NICKY
Down the hall.

His biological Mom's a little weird --

ETHAN
Huh.

NICKY
Were you sleeping?

Nicky wanders, opens Chloe's drawers. Then she spots something, kneels down to inspect it. It's a SAFE.

ETHAN
Those three hundred crepes really
wiped me out.

NICKY
Go back. Sorry. Just saying hi.

ETHAN
Cool, hello.

17 She punches in four numbers trying to guess the combination.
Ethan's birthday? No dice. She tries 1234. Nothing. She moves
on, not wanting to trigger something. She moves out into --

Chloe ends the call. STAY with Nicky -- looking down at her phone, at her saved voicemails. Lots from "Mom" and many, more recently, from someone named "Debbie." Nicky hasn't listened to any of them.

She locks the phone, puts it in her pocket, hands returning to the railing. After a beat, she realizes she's gripping, white-knuckling. She desperately needs a meeting. Her eyes close, her lips move in a prayer we don't hear. Then, the sound of water, a stream flowing into the dirt of the planter next to her. She opens her eyes to see her father, Hank, body half turned away as he pisses into the potted plant. He zips up, looks out at the view --

HANK

Lotta sky.

He looks at her --

HANK (CONT'D)

Put it out of your mind. 'Can't think about it.

Her drinking? Her resentment? Fuck you and your cryptic advice, Hank. When she looks back, he's gone. But Nicky's steadier now, back to her center. Putting it out of her mind.

18 **INT. CHLOE'S OFFICE - THE REAL THING - DAY** 18

Chloe looks up, sees the lobby area mostly full now. She takes the Lyft receipt she printed, tucks it in her purse, walks to the window, watches them closely, then exits --

19 **INT. EMPLOYEE BULLPEN - THE REAL THING - CONTINUOUS** 19

-- into the main area. Sonia jumps up to walk with her, but Chloe shakes her head. Sonia stands down, but stays close --

CHLOE

(addressing the room)

Good morning everyone.

(she waits for quiet)

I've appreciated your kind notes and emails. They mean a lot. I wish I had a plan or something wise to share -- but all I can say is it's awful. All of it. And it's going to get rough. So brace yourselves.

Because they'll attack the cause. The magazine, my family. Whatever good will be tainted by its connection to... this.

(MORE)

CHLOE (CONT'D)

It's a perfect opportunity to undermine the difference we've made.

(a beat, emotion rising)

And I promise if you give me your strength, I'll give you mine.

(begins to exit, turns)

Oh and I've hired a cyber security expert -- someone in this room is threatening me and my family online. And that makes me sad. But we'll find out who, it's only a matter of time.

Chloe heads for the exit. The room's dead quiet as they watch her go. ON CHLOE head held high --

20

INT. LOBBY - CHLOE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MANHATTAN - DAY 20

Bowen talks to ARTY. Guidry's outside, pacing on her PHONE --

BOWEN

So was it a regular thing, you driving Ethan out there?

ARTY

Every once in a while, help out Ms. Taylor, make a few extra bucks. I used to be a driver.

BOWEN

And after you dropped him off?

ARTY

Watched the Mets game with a buddy, bar out there. Unlimited wings, you're there before six.

BOWEN

Mind writing down his information? Bar's name?

Arty nods 'no problem,' as he does --

BOWEN (CONT'D)

Would you say you're close to the family?

ARTY

You get to know people pretty well. Especially when they have kids. Watch 'em grow up. And Chloe and Ethan -- some of my favorites.

Bowen notes the omission of Adam. Arty hands the paper over.

BOWEN
Any idea when Ms. Taylor might be
back?

Arty shakes his head --

ARTY
I'll tell her you were here.

BOWEN
We'll wait. Thanks.

Bowen heads outside.

A21 **EXT. CHLOE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MANHATTAN - CONTINUOUS** A21

Bowen joins Guidry, still into her phone --

GUIDRY
Thanks so much.

She hangs up, texts on her phone, excited and focused.

BOWEN
Doorman's got an alibi. And no dice
on meeting with Adam's boss --
Braddock's a busy man. Assistant
said he'd call when he can. What's
word on the warrant?

GUIDRY
Still waiting, but should be soon.
(re her phone, the call)
That was my connect in County
Records, said Adam Macintosh's
father died serving a twenty-year
sentence for drug possession.

BOWEN
And his mother?

GUIDRY
Welfare chiseler -- deceased it
seems, but paper trail is thin.
(going on)
Absent father may've made Adam come
down hard on his son.

BOWEN
-- or give him everything he didn't
get.

*

GUIDRY

Sometimes, I suppose.

(at the luxury building)

But imagine being him -- everywhere you look there's proof you've made it -- the wife, the career. Then your kid's a fucking pot-head. A shiftless blob in your house who -- every time you look at him -- reminds you of who you actually are underneath your Brooks Brothers suit.

BOWEN

You got it in for Ethan.

GUIDRY

No, no, no. Trust me. I wish the mother was the one who did this. No one likes to watch a wealthy woman fall more than I do!

(softening)

I do not want that sweet, soft boy to be guilty.

BOWEN

I love when you show your belly.

GUIDRY

Whatever Ethan Macintosh's version of feeling alienated, like an unlovable piece of shit is -- that his overachieving, fit, father piled on about -- I don't know, maybe Ethan got tired of it. Maybe there weren't enough Gucci sneakers in the world to make him feel adequate. Maybe he stabbed his father to death to shut him the fuck up. Because he'd had enough. Just saying.

Bowen studies her --

BOWEN

You get picked on a lot growing up?

GUIDRY

Dyke from the deep South, what do you think? Let's wait inside. Make everybody nervous.

21

INT. ODEON RESTAURANT - DAY

21

Chloe enters, passes TWO SUITS having lunch at the bar. A well dressed WOMAN alone doing a crossword puzzle, glass of champagne in front of her. The restaurant's half full, a group of MOMS with strollers occupy a table. She spots Bill at the end of the bar chatting with the BARTENDER, he approaches, by way of greeting --

*
*

BILL
You need a drink.

CHLOE
I'm too wound up.

Exactly. Bill motions to the bartender, as Chloe sits --

*

CHLOE (CONT'D)
'Haven't had a minute to grieve, by the way. My sister sucks the air out of every room she's in.

He gives her his martini. She takes a sip, closes her eyes for a moment. He takes her hand.

BILL
I've lost a lot of people, kiddo. In many different ways, but when they disappear in a snap -- that'll rock your world. No matter how you felt about them.

He's right, she looks away, emotion rising --

CHLOE
I loved Adam.

BILL
Of course you did. My first lover, Lucas, so gorgeous, shoulders hurt your eyes to look at. Had AIDS when there was nothing that could be done. No meds, nothing. I knew he was going to die. But one night he went for a walk on the beach and killed himself.

*
*

CHLOE
Jesus, Bill.

*
*

BILL
I had dinner on the stove -- shrimp with jalapenos.

*
*
*

Chloe pats Bill's hand, *sorry for you too* --

BILL (CONT'D)

Not to make it about me but let's
do anyway.

*

She smiles --

CHLOE

(can't help herself)
But the questions don't stop. I
don't even know where Adam was the
last day of his life. What was he
up to? Who is this Gentry company?

BILL

They seem like every other group we
represent. But I'll get a low-down
from one of the younger associates.

CHLOE

Thank you.

He takes her hand.

BILL

I cared for your husband very much.
Such a hard worker. Incredible
memory. Relentless.

*

Bill raises his martini --

BILL (CONT'D)

To the relentless men we loved. I
may just stay here and get shit-
faced.

Chloe's phone flashes, she checks the caller ID --

CHLOE

Excuse me. My doorman.
(answers the call)
Hi Arty. Everything okay?

ARTY'S VOICE

Sorry to bother you, Ms. Taylor.
There are two detectives here
looking for you.

CHLOE

Did they try to go upstairs?

ARTY'S VOICE

Told them you weren't home. Offered
to call you. I hope that's okay.

CHLOE

I'm on my way. *

(hangs up)

Hampton detectives are at my place.
Maybe they have news. *

She gathers her purse, looks to the printout inside --

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I found a receipt. Adam's. From two
nights ago.

(a beat)

He wasn't where he said he was.

BILL

Leave it with me. I can check it
against his other write-offs.

She hands it to him --

BILL (CONT'D)

Did you fire the lawyers I sent
over this morning?

CHLOE

Catherine.

BILL

Get an attorney referral from Jake.
Lawyer up -- now.

Chloe rushes away, Braddock watching her go, his expression
hardening. He reaches for his cell phone, dials. Then --

BILL (CONT'D)

Need you to check on something for
me, before this girls gets herself
killed. *

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

22

INT. LOBBY - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

22

Chloe strides into the lobby. Arty jerks his thumb in Guidry and Bowen's direction. Guidry's standing, Bowen on the couch.

CHLOE
Thank you, Arty.

Arty nods, all discretion, loves being part of things --

ARTY
Anything you need.

Chloe approaches. Guidry gets right to it --

GUIDRY
Ms. Taylor, forgive the drop-by.
We were in town on other business.

CHLOE
Oh, I thought maybe you caught the
person who murdered my husband.

GUIDRY
No. Sorry.

The energy drains from her. She can tell they're sizing her up. Never one to shy away from appraisal --

CHLOE
You want to come up?

BOWEN
How's your son?

CHLOE
Come, let's talk upstairs.

And as they follow her into the elevator Chloe sends Nicky a text warning of their arrival. Awkward silence as they wait for the elevator.

23

INT. ELEVATOR - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Chloe pushes the button for "17" five times. Bowen shoots Guidry a look, she gives him a nod, the go-ahead.

BOWEN

Before we get upstairs -- we
checked your sister's cell phone
records on the night of. It was
pinging in Cleveland.

CHLOE

What does that mean?

BOWEN

Means she wasn't in New York --
according to the cell towers.

Chloe digests the information. Bowen watches her closely,
Chloe's inscrutable --

CHLOE

I've been doing some digging of my
own. It's good you're here.

The detectives exchange a look. The elevator doors open and
they step off before Chloe can elaborate --

24

INT. LIVING ROOM - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER 24

Chloe enters the apartment, Bowen and Guidry right behind.
Nicky's at the kitchen island working on some jewelry. Fiona
Apple on the stereo, Chloe addresses the Sonos --

*

CHLOE

Music off.

NICKY

Hey there --

CHLOE

This is my sister Nicole.
Detectives Guidry and Bowen.

Guidry gives a nod and smile --

NICKY

Nicky. Hi. We spoke on the phone.

CHLOE

(quietly to Nicky)
Is Ethan still sleeping?

NICKY

He was up for a bit. Seems okay.
(to the detectives)
What are you doing here?

Chloe's appalled by how blunt Nicky is --

CHLOE
(re living room)
Let's sit down.

Nicky joins them in the living room --

BOWEN
This won't take long.

They all sit. Guidry's eyes roaming, clocking the high ceilings and stunning view. Nicky perches on the arm of Chloe's chair --

*
*

GUIDRY
I'll get right to it. Records show your husband owned a handgun.

*

Chloe won't look at Nicky --

*

CHLOE
Adam was concerned about safety. My profile was rising and that brought unwanted attention to the family. I never wanted a gun in the house. I told him to get rid of it. He promised me he would. We're not gun people.

*
*
*
*

Guidry loves her guns, can't resist --

*

GUIDRY
What do you mean "gun people?"

She predicted Guidry's defensiveness, proceeds patiently --

CHLOE
Our father served in Vietnam, 'saw combat, hated firearms of any kind.

*
*
*

Nicky nods --

*

NICKY
Yeah, not sure we need to be sharing all of this, but Dad was a bayonet man, more like.

Chloe turns to her sister, *shut the fuck up Nicole* --

*

BOWEN
Where's the gun now.

CHLOE

I don't know.

NICKY

Anyway, why are we talking about guns when the murder weapon was a knife?

GUIDRY

Just trying to get a full family portrait. And not for nothing, nine millimeter, 'took eight months to legally register, including submitting finger prints, and an affidavit signed by you is a lot of effort to lose track of.

Nicky scoffs.

GUIDRY (CONT'D)

And is this the same gun Ethan brought to school?

All three heads turn in Guidry's direction. Bowen didn't know this information either, but he doesn't show it.

NICKY

I'm sorry, what? He did what?

Chloe puts her hand on Nicky's thigh, squeezes --

CHLOE

It was all a misunderstanding.

GUIDRY

Not what the Headmistress at Ethan's school said.

CHLOE

I don't understand how that's at all relevant.

So let's move on, Chloe redirects --

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Whereas I have some information that might be relevant. My husband charged Lyft rides -- in the last few days -- to our personal credit card. He was dropped at an intersection in Queens. If Adam had been working they would've been on the business account.

Guidry and Bowen exchange a look --

BOWEN

Oftentimes people getting dropped
off at intersections instead of
exact addresses ... that's about
other bad behavior.

Chloe doesn't miss a beat --

CHLOE

Our marriage was strong.
(enough of that)
I hired private tech security to
track down the cyber threats. I'm
assuming you haven't followed up on
that either?

You lazy fucks --

GUIDRY

Our people are on it.

CHLOE

Okay, well, they're coming from
someone in my office. So. Once we
get more --

Chloe's interrupted by Ethan's voice --

ETHAN

Mom?

He's stumbled out of his room, sleepy in sweatpants and a
baggy shirt. Surprised to see the detectives, he hesitates --

NICKY

Whoa. You need go back to your
room.

He's stunned, eyes darting to Chloe. Guidry speaks up --

GUIDRY

Actually, we had a few more
questions for Ethan if it's okay
with you two.

Nicky's laser-focused attention flashes to Guidry, then to
her sister --

NICKY

What do you mean "more?"

Ethan attempts to pacify --

ETHAN
I'm fine. Cool to answer whatever.

Nicky's on her feet now --

NICKY
No, actually, it's not fine.

ETHAN
Nicky, it's --

CHLOE
-- if he wants --

A trump card she's been waiting fifteen years to play --

NICKY
(to Ethan)
Go to your room. I'm your mother.
Go to your room. That is final.

Her authoritative tone effective, he quickly exits --

NICKY (CONT'D)
(to the detectives)
This innocent visit is over.

Guidry and Bowen look to Chloe, who's shocked too -- but she makes no move to override Nicky's decision. The detectives stand, readying to leave --

*

GUIDRY
One more thing --

*

NICKY
-- talk to our lawyer.

GUIDRY
Results showed Ethan's DNA under
Adam's fingernails.

Nicky and Chloe, both momentarily shocked, processing --

BOWEN
Thank you for your time. We're
leaving now. It's a beautiful
apartment Ms. Taylor. Really
lovely.

Nicky's gathered herself enough to let her street show --

NICKY

Kick yourselves in the ass on the way out.

25 Guidry gives a low whistle and they're gone. 25

26 **INT. LIVING ROOM - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS** 26

Chloe and Nicky are alone. Nicky still looks at the door, her gut read of Guidry rolling off her tongue --

NICKY

That bitch is a problem.

Chloe goes for her phone, starts moving --

CHLOE

It doesn't make us look very good --
you acting like white trash.

Nicky follows after --

NICKY

Is that what you're concerned
about? How we look? Do you
understand what's happening here?

Chloe's looking through the contacts on her phone --

CHLOE

I'm getting a referral for a
lawyer.

NICKY

A referral? Wake up, Chloe -- they
think Ethan killed his father! His
DNA! What in the fuck?

Chloe stops in her tracks --

CHLOE

Stop it!

The line Chloe's dialed is ringing, Nicky's still at her --

NICKY

Why are you just doing this now --
what were you waiting for?! You let
him talk to them alone! He's a
minor.

CHLOE

-- Shhhhhush!

Chloe escapes into the kitchen to get away from Nicky -- waving her away as she goes --

INT. LOBBY - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT

Guidry and Bowen come off the elevator --

GUIDRY

(re: Nicky)

Can tell that one's very familiar with criminal justice. Sorry about that element of surprise.

BOWEN

You're good. Maybe we go to the courthouse, check up on things.

GUIDRY

Thought you'd never ask.

27

INT. KITCHEN - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

27

There's a muffled voice on the other end of the line. Chloe clears her throat --

CHLOE

Jake, hi.

(a beat)

We're holding steady.

(a beat)

I need a criminal lawyer --

*

NICKY

One who works with juveniles --

CHLOE

(turning her back)

-- someone with experience representing teenagers.

(a beat)

Yes, for Ethan. And right away.

*

NICKY

What's he saying?

CHLOE

Shut up.

(a beat)

No, not -- yeah, okay thanks. No, I trust you. Make the call.

*

(ends the call, to Nicky)

What's wrong with you? Are you on something?

*

NICKY

What?

Chloe grabs the plastic-wrapped crepe Ethan left for her --

CHLOE

This energy, like you're tweaking.

NICKY

This is not tweaking.

CHLOE

Well what do you need? Do you need to call your sponsor? Call your sponsor.

NICKY

You need to go fuck yourself.

CHLOE

Oh, is that one of the Twelve Steps?

NICKY

I'm going to take a shower.

CHLOE

Please, please go take a shower.
Please get out of my face.

*

NICKY

Is the lawyer on the way, or what --

*

CHLOE

-- I'm handling it.

NICKY

-- because those two jerk-offs are coming back here for sure.

*

*

*

CHLOE

We don't know that.

*

*

NICKY

Get your head out of your ass.

CHLOE

Go, Go!

*

Nicky exits the kitchen. Chloe's got her cell in one hand, crepe in the other. Chloe's phone PINGS. From Jake, a contact card for "Michelle Sanders, Esq." And: *I took care of it. You're on my mind.* She doesn't respond.

*

*

Instead she tears the Saran-wrap off and shoves the entire crepe in her mouth. She stands over the sink, face covered in mascarpone, devouring it. Wild-eyed and pissed off. Her cell rings --

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Hi Bill.

BILL (O.S.)

Who'd Jake recommend?

CHLOE

Michelle Sanders. You know her?

BILL (O.S.)

Do I. Smart move. How's your sister?

Chloe throws a look over her shoulder --

CHLOE

Aggressive and inappropriate -- probably high. Who the hell knows.

BILL (O.S.)

They can't help themselves, the addicts. They chew up everything in their path.

28 Off Chloe, eyeing herself in the glass of the cabinet now reflecting -- 28 *

29 **INT. LIVING ROOM - TAYLOR CHILDHOOD HOME - 16 YEARS AGO - FLASHBACK - DAY** 29 *

A younger Chloe with her mom, SHEILA, 50s, resilient, attractive, but worn down a bit by hardship. Velveeta in the microwave -- *

CHLOE

This isn't her usual voicemail's-been-full-for-three-weeks-and-the-phone's-now-dead routine. She's way worse.

SHEILA

You've got to find some compassion. Pray on that.

CHLOE

I don't pray anymore.

SHEILA

That's nothing to be proud of.

CHLOE

Adam doesn't feel safe with her in the house.

Sheila studies her daughter, makes her squirm --

SHEILA

Careful there, not your place.

CHLOE

I made the trip to see for myself.
She's drinking all day now?

SHEILA

Nicole has been through a lot.

CHLOE

And that justifies all the things
she doesn't do for her son?

They're coming close to talking about Chloe's childhood --

CHLOE (CONT'D)

She's not a Vietnam vet, Mom. Dad had real demons.

SHEILA

That mind of yours, such a gift.

Why did that sound like an insult?

CHLOE

There's a baby involved.

SHEILA

Exactly. You have no idea what pregnancy does to some women.

CHLOE

I see, okay, I'm not a mother so I couldn't possibly understand --

SHEILA

Why is everything a fight with you?

CHLOE

You're as sick as she is, fucking enabling this --

The SLAP comes out of nowhere. Chloe's stunned. Her face stings, but she doesn't touch it. Sheila hasn't wavered --

SHEILA
Look inside yourself -- this is not
about the baby.

Chloe is filled with shame. Just then Nicky comes down the stairs in an old robe, looking exhausted, like she's been crying or drinking or both.

NICKY
Chloe? You're still here.

Nicky throws her arms around her sister. Holds her.

NICKY (CONT'D)
You smell good. Herbal Essences.

Nicky slowly pulls away --

NICKY (CONT'D)
I just gotta -- get dressed.

Nicky pads towards the living room in a daze --

NICKY (CONT'D)
Then maybe we can take Ethan to
Samosky's, get some donuts.

Nicky moves to sit on the couch, curls up, her face morphing, a dark cloud gathering over her. Chloe watches after her, Sheila hands her the Velveeta and chips from the microwave --

SHEILA
Go be a sister.

TIME CUT: *

INT. KITCHEN - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - RESUME PRESENT - DAY *

Chloe's at the kitchen island -- *

ETHAN (PRE-LAP)
Mom!

30

INT. KITCHEN - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - RESUME PRESENT - DAY

Ethan and Nicky arrive in the kitchen at the same time. Ethan's walking with his laptop, scrolling in horror. Nicky's finished showering, didn't wash her hair. Chloe notes the silky robe she's wearing -- *

ETHAN

This is so messed up.

*

Ethan slides the phone across the countertop, the browser pulled up to the "New York Post." A headline blares: "*SLAIN LAWYER'S SON HAS HISTORY OF VIOLENCE: BROUGHT GUN TO SCHOOL.*" Beneath it, a PHOTO from Chloe's event. The photographer caught Ethan looking at the ground, shirt untucked. He looks shifty and...weird. Chloe's stomach sinks, she plays it cool.

*

*

*

CHLOE

Nobody believes this, it's a tabloid. They'll print anything.

Nicky's already put it together --

NICKY

That cop leaked it.

ETHAN

Wait, what?

NICKY

She talked to your school. About what happened with the gun.

He looks down, then to Chloe, hoping she'll explain for him --

CHLOE

It was a mix-up. The gun was put in the wrong bag when we were going between houses. The whole thing was blown out of proportion.

Nicky still looks at Ethan. She's very still, it's scary --

NICKY

When was this?

ETHAN

Last year.

NICKY

Oh my God.

*

The building phone RINGS. Chloe answers --

CHLOE

Hello.

ARTY (O.S.)

I'm sorry, Ms. Taylor. The detectives are outside with NYPD.
(MORE)

*

*

ARTY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Nothing I can do if they're headed
up.

*
*

Chloe hangs up the phone --

*

CHLOE

*

The detectives are here with
company.

*
*

(nearly hissing to Nicky)
Put some clothes on.

*
*

I fucking told you --

*

NICKY

*

Take care of Ethan -- don't worry
about me and my clothes.

*
*

Nicky goes.

*

ETHAN

*

Mom, I look like a psycho in that
picture. Why are the cops back?
What's going on?

*
*
*

Off Chloe, trying not to panic --

*

*

*

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

31 **INT. LOBBY - CHLOE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY** 31

Guidry, Bowen and SIX OFFICERS stride across the lobby toward the elevator, Arty watches feeling helpless -- *

 GUIDRY
 We may need to cuff the real
 mother. Maybe put her outside.

 BOWEN
 You wanna lose your badge? You
 can't move white women around.

 GUIDRY
 Maybe you can't, but I can.

Bowen turns inward, feels the seriousness of the moment. She eyes him, a vote of confidence --

 GUIDRY (CONT'D)
 (re cuffing Ethan)
 The kid's yours.

32 **INT. LIVING ROOM - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - DAY** 32 *

A LOUD KNOCK. Chloe opens the door. Guidry and Bowen enter with COPS -- *

 GUIDRY *
 (to the Uniforms) *
 Two stationed at the door.

The Officer's oblige. Guidry passes Chloe a warrant --

 GUIDRY (CONT'D)
 Search warrant for the premises.

Chloe reads, hands it back. Nicky returns, stands with Ethan.

 GUIDRY (CONT'D)
 They'll start with the bedrooms.

 NICKY
 They're searching the whole place?
 Is that legal?

Four officers walk down the hallway leading to the bedrooms. Chloe moves as if to follow them, but Bowen blocks her --

BOWEN

'Our right to hold you in place
while the search is conducted.

NICKY

Lawyer's on the way so you can stop
bullying us with this bullshit.

Bowen searches the room, eyes Nicky's jewelry-making tools --

NICKY (CONT'D)

Supplies for my jewelry business.

He holds up a small, heavy silver hammer --

BOWEN

What do you do with this?

Nicky's look is clear -- *I stick it up your ass.*

GUIDRY

Bag it all.

NICKY

You people love this shit.

Then an unfamiliar voice joins the fray --

SANDERS

Who's the commanding officer here?

MICHELLE SANDERS, late 50's, owns the room the moment she enters. Brooklyn born by way of Jamaica, a true New Yorker. Raised by activist parents, she's made it her mission to stand up even when she's told to stand down --

*

SANDERS (CONT'D)

I've been hired by the family as
counsel for Ethan Macintosh.

GUIDRY

I'm Detective Nan Guidry, my
partner Matt Bowen. Four uniforms
searching the premises.

SANDERS

May I see the warrant please?

(to the family)

I'll get to you all in a minute.

Guidry hands her the warrant, she examines it --

SANDERS (CONT'D)

'Reason to believe Ms. Taylor is holding evidence of a crime?

GUIDRY

The warrant speaks for itself.

SANDERS

This warrant is for all areas that the suspect, Mr. Macintosh, has access to. You're treating Ms. Taylor and her son as if they were co-occupants without making any attempt to discern between separate living spaces.

(feeding the answer)

I'm assuming -- an apartment this size -- some portion of the space is devoted to business, correct?

CHLOE

(picking up on her cue)

Ethan never uses the office. It's solely for my writing and my husband's law research. I have proof on our tax returns if you need it. It's a lawful write-off.

GUIDRY

Not necessary.

SANDERS

(to the detectives)

That office is off-limits.

(off Bowen's nod)

That's where we'll be.

Ethan, closest to the hallway leads the way. Enters first --

33

INT. OFFICE - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

33

-- and in a split second of privacy, reaches into a pocket of his jeans, pulls out a small gray flip phone, and drops it, in one motion, between a chair back and its cushion. He moves to a corner of the room and turns to face the three women who have entered right behind him. Looking very guilty.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

34

INT. OFFICE - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - DAY

34

Sanders, Chloe, Nicky, and Ethan are crowded inside the office. Chloe turns to a terrified Ethan --

CHLOE

Ethan, look at me. The police are trying to gather all the information they can. Just like at the house.

Sanders turns to Chloe --

SANDERS

(firm, but kind)

This has nothing to do with the crime scene processing they did in East Hampton. They're searching for criminal evidence based on probable cause against a specific suspect.

NICKY

What does that mean?

SANDERS

They have information we don't.

(turns to Ethan)

Son, do you have any idea what that could be?

Ethan swallows hard a few times --

ETHAN

Maybe Kevin said something different than I did.

CHLOE

What do you mean?

SANDERS

Ms. Taylor. Make some space please.

ETHAN

(deep breath)

I was on the beach by myself for a little while the night Dad died.

SANDERS

But that's not what you told the police... ?

He looks up at Chloe guiltily, then --

ETHAN

No. I said we were together all night.

NICKY

God dammit! Why would you lie?
Ethan, what's wrong with you? I know you didn't do this.

CHLOE

Of course he didn't do it!

SANDERS

(to Nicky)
Are you family?

CHLOE

This is my sister.

NICKY

And Ethan's mother.

CHLOE

(evenly)
Biological. Ethan lives with me.

Sanders looks from one to the other. Okaaaay. She can't get into this right now. She eyes the door to the terrace --

SANDERS

I understand emotions are high right now. I need to talk to my client in private.

Chloe and Nicky exit onto the terrace, stand a good distance apart from each other. They're visible through the glass. Sanders continues --

SANDERS (CONT'D)

All right. Just us in here.

*

She reaches out to touch his shoulder, helps him regulate.

*

SANDERS (CONT'D)

My name is Michelle, by the way. I don't think we officially met.

*

*

*

This makes him smile a little.

*

SANDERS (CONT'D)

I will do everything in my power to
protect and serve you 'best I can.
But you gotta do some things for
me, you hear?

ETHAN

(good soldier)
Yes, ma'am.

SANDERS

You mustn't speak to the
authorities again without me
present. And if I'm not there you
simply say: I'm not talking without
my lawyer. Nothing more, just that.
Now, say it ten times.

ETHAN

I'm not talking without my lawyer.
I'm not talking without my lawyer.
I'm not talking without my lawyer.

Ethan's voice continues as Chloe and Nicky watch Sanders
interrogate their son --

35

EXT. TERRACE - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - SAME

35

NICKY

Is Ethan fucked up? Crazy?

CHLOE

No, he's a good boy. Look at him.

And through the glass, there he is -- a gentle hulking figure
perched on a stool as Sanders talks to him. Chloe suddenly
sees him the way the world might: clumsy, damaged, dangerous.

NICKY

Well, right now he looks like a
monster 'cause that's how those
motherfuckers are painting him!

She punch-points the air for emphasis --

CHLOE

Can you cool it with the Jerry
Springer antics?

NICKY

Sick burn, 1998 --

FROM INSIDE - Sanders closes the curtains so we can no longer see into the office. Now Chloe and Nicky can only see their own reflections. Chloe's CELL RINGS, she answers --

CHLOE
Hi, Catherine.

CATHERINE (O.S.)
You saw the article on Ethan?

CHLOE
Yes, who's responsible? I want his name and number.

CATHERINE (O.S.)
They're all named Jimmy over there, those raving assholes. Is it true?

Chloe goes silent.

CATHERINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Okay, another time.

Chloe ends the call --

NICKY
Who the fuck cares about that article, in ten minutes it'll be someone else.

CHLOE
-- can you just pretend to be civilized while we figure this out.

NICKY
When you stop kissing that cop's ass, sure.

CHLOE
What -- which one?

NICKY
Fucking Borat or whoever the fuck he's trying to be.

The shared hostility briefly unites the sisters --

CHLOE
He's a star compared to the other one.

NICKY

Yeah, she's a real dick. Fucking
dog with a bone.

Then Guidry pokes her head out from the living room --

GUIDRY

The search has concluded. Please
return to the living area.

Nicky gives Guidry a salute, then once Guidry's back inside,
she flips her off.

37

INT. LIVING ROOM - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

37

*

Sanders leads them out of the office, Chloe with her arm
hooked through Ethan's, followed closely by Nicky. Guidry
addresses Sanders --

GUIDRY

Will the suspect please stand over
here.

NICKY

Don't call him a fucking suspect --

CHLOE

Nicky --

Ethan looks to Sanders who nods her consent. He unhooks his
arm from Chloe's. His shirt is now drenched in sweat. Chloe
feels more than sees the four uniforms step closer, something
about their positioning invoking a pack of wolves --

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Don't scare him please.

Guidry produces two large, clear plastic bags - one
containing a pair of sneakers, one a pair of headphones.

GUIDRY

We found the supposedly 'stolen'
items from the Long Island home
hidden in the suspect's room.
Wrapped in a trash bag in the back
of his closet. Bloodstain, on the
right shoe.

Ethan falters, looks at Chloe, his face wrenched in panic.

GUIDRY (CONT'D)

Proof the suspect took these items -
- after murdering Adam Macintosh --
in an attempt to make it look like
a robbery.

All at once, everyone's moving. The sickening realization grows -- Chloe can no longer help him. She's overtaken. A choreographed move. Cops step between Chloe and Ethan, anticipate her rushing forward, build a wall of bodies.

NICKY

Don't touch him!

Sanders authoritative voice cuts through din --

*

SANDERS

My client is a minor invoking all
applicable rights -- including
those to silence and an attorney.

The sound that comes from Chloe is choked with emotion --

CHLOE

Ethan!

Bowen is frisking Ethan, Guidry recites his Miranda Rights --

GUIDRY

Ethan Macintosh, you're under
arrest for the murder of Adam
Macintosh. Before we ask you any
questions, you must understand what
your rights are.

CHLOE'S POV -- as Guidry's voice becomes distant, distorted --

GUIDRY (CONT'D)

You can decide... not to answer any
questions or make any statements.
Do you understand what I'm saying
to you, Ethan?

SANDERS

Do not engage with my client.

GUIDRY

Take it easy, counselor.

SANDERS

This is easy.

ETHAN

I'm not talking without my lawyer's
permission.

Bowen brings Ethan's arms behind his back, cuffs him. Guidry anticipates Nicky's reaction. Gestures to the uniforms to restrain her. Nicky screams, fighting against the two officers it takes to hold her back --

NICKY

Get your fucking hands off me.

GUIDRY

If you continue to struggle, the
police officers will arrest you.

CHLOE

Ethan. I'm so sorry. I'll fix this,
I promise.

*

Sanders puts a hand on her arm --

SANDERS

Watch your words, Mom.

Nicky's mascara is running down her face. Chloe can hear her sister, sounding somehow muted and far away, shouting for the cops to let her go. While Nicky's all thrashing movement, Chloe is totally still. Despite the chaos around them, Ethan's eyes haven't left Chloe --

The cops drag Ethan out of the apartment, officers wrenching his body between them --

NICKY

Ethan!

ADAM (PRE-LAP)

Ethan!

38

**EXT. BACKYARD - NICKY'S HOUSE - 15 YEARS AGO - FLASHBACK -
AFTERNOON**

We'll eventually come to understand what we're seeing was reconstructed by Chloe based on the story Adam told her. The light's faded. Two BODIES bob limp in the shallows. Nicky, slumped over. Baby Ethan, his donut-shaped floatie half-upturned. Same sinister lapping of water...

Adam scoops him from the water, lays him on the grass. Ethan's tiny body blue. Adam checks his breathing -- nothing, begins chest compressions...

BESIDE THE POOL, baby Ethan takes a choked breath. Adam holding his son to his chest...

ADAM'S HAULED NICKY OUT; she's soggy, pliant, groaning. He shakes her roughly, slaps her face --

ADAM

Nicole.

A39 **EXT. DRIVEWAY - NICKY'S HOUSE - 15 YEARS AGO - FLASHBACK - EVENING**

RED LIGHTS FLASH OVER Adam, Ethan in his arms, at the end of their driveway, pale in the last of the light. The ambulance wails away from them, carrying Nicky toward the hospital --

ADAM (V.O.)

I didn't know what else todo.

*

39 **INT. CHLOE'S OLD APARTMENT - 15 YEARS AGO - FLASHBACK - EVENING** 39

Chloe on the phone with Adam --

CHLOE

Thank God you were there.

INTERCUT as appropriate with Adam --

40 **EXT. BACKYARD - NICKY'S HOUSE - 15 YEARS AGO - FLASHBACK - EVENING**

ADAM

If I don't put an involuntary psych hold on her tonight she'll be back in this house tomorrow. And the cycle will start all over again until she ends up killing my son.

Tears in her eyes, Chloe tries to keep her voice even --

CHLOE

What do you need?

ADAM

Someone else in the family asking for it, other than me. Your parents said no.

Chloe closes her eyes, nods her head --

ADAM (CONT'D)

I need you.

And with that, Chloe's eyes flutter open, a different reality dawning on her...

CHLOE

Whatever we have to do to protect
Ethan.

41

EXT. CHLOE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - RESUME PRESENT - DAY

41

RED LIGHTS FLASH on Ethan's face as he's escorted out in handcuffs, looking back at Nicky and Chloe. Arty is between the sisters and nosy BYSTANDERS. Ethan ducks to get into the cop car as the COPS follow him inside. He looks out the window to his moms.

Nicky's stepped back, away from Chloe, hooks her arm in Arty's, teary, heartbroken. Arty pats her hand.

ARTY

I'm so sorry.

NICKY

He's just a baby.

END OF EPISODE