

# finding carter

by

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Based on

"Finding Carter"

by

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Presentation draft  
October 4, 2013

COLD OPEN

1

INT. JUST SAY YO (YOGURT SHOP) - 8 P.M.-ISH

1

CARTER STEVENS, 16, (think Buffy, minus the vampire slaying) and her mother LORI, mid-40s, (cool, fun mom) are at Just Say Yo, a yogurt sundae bar. It's a slow summer night in York, Pennsylvania, a nothing-ever-happens-here kind of town. Lori piles many different toppings on her yogurt. Carter just dumps scoop after scoop of gummi bears on hers.

CARTER

I just have to say, it's starting to piss me off.

LORI

What is?

CARTER

How it's the same *every time*. Hello, two people, wow, *clearly* they should be together, but we have to sit there for two hours watching them figure that out. The end. Nothing happens except what we knew was going to happen!

LORI

Because it's a romantic comedy. Not "Anna Karenina."

CARTER

Great. Now you ruined "Anna Karenina."

They go to the cash register; Lori pays for the yogurts.

LORI

(off Carter's cup)

Carter, they have cookie dough. Fruity Pebbles. Crushed Oreos ... I can't believe I'm begging my child to eat crushed Oreos for dinner. I am the worst mother.

CARTER

Stop it. I love when we have a movie and Just Say Yo night.

LORI

Me too.

They sit at a table.

LORI (CONT'D)

But the idea is to get something that blends with the yogurt and enhances the taste. Sadly, that's my idea of a cooking tip.

CARTER

You know what I loved, when I was little, how you would say, "If we ever get separated -- "

LORI

" -- I'll meet you by the nearest tub of gummi bears."

CARTER

And one day at school, we had a cop come talk to us about safety --  
 (mimics a stern voice)  
 "Never get in a car with anyone you don't know. Don't go with people who ask you to help find their dog. And if you're ever lost, what's the first thing you look for?"

Under dialogue, Carter's cellphone trills, indicating she has a text message. Carter reaches for it.

CARTER (CONT'D)

(like an eager child)

"Gummi bears!" That cop did not like me.

They both laugh. Carter checks her phone, shakes her head.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Max.

LORI

I thought you two broke up.

CARTER

We did. He's just too lazy to find someone else.

LORI

So what is this, a booty call?

CARTER

No! Uccch, mom! He's just letting me know everyone's hanging out -- please never say the words "booty call" to me ever again.

LORI  
Go. Hang out with your friends.

CARTER  
Hunh-uh. This is our night.

LORI  
We saw a movie.  
(off yogurt cup)  
We had dinner. I'm good.

CARTER  
You sure?

LORI  
Hang out with your mom when you could  
be with your friends? That's just  
weird. I won't let you.

Carter gives Lori a quick peck on the cheek before racing off.  
This is their standard goodbye:

CARTER  
Love you.

LORI  
Love you more.

CARTER  
Not possible.

LORI  
Yes possible.

Carter goes.

2 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

2

(NOTE: SCENE TO BE RESET IN A TBD DIFFERENT LOCATION FOR  
PRESENTATION PURPOSES)

CLOSE ON a pair of hands -- Carter's -- working an unbent paper  
clip inside the lock on a door. There's a satisfying click, and  
we pull back to see a triumphant Carter and several of her  
friends, including MAX, a sexy stoner.

MAX  
Niiiiice --

But then they hear the PERSISTENT BEEPING of an alarm system.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Uh oh.

Carter slips inside the darkened building. A beat later, the beeping stops. Carter pops her head out, Cheshire cat grin.

CARTER  
(chiding Max)  
When will you learn to trust me?

Carter ducks back inside; the others follow her in.

3

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - POOL AREA - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

3

(NOTE: THIS SCENE ALSO TO BE RESET IN A TBD DIFFERENT LOCATION FOR PRESENTATION PURPOSES)

The kids have gathered in the shallow end of the pool, goofing around, drinking, smoking pot. Max is in the process of backing Carter into a corner of the pool.

MAX  
'Member the last time we were here?

CARTER  
I remember that you almost drowned trying to show me your handstand.

Max now has Carter cornered, leaning his head to her neck.

MAX  
What else?

Carter looks like she is about to give in to Max's seduction, then suddenly drops underwater and swims under his arm. She comes up to see two uniformed COPS and a SCHOOL SECURITY GUARD.

COP A  
(clapping forcefully)  
Fun's over! Everyone out of the pool!

The kid with the joint immediately submerges it.

COP A (CONT'D)  
(re: the joint)  
Nice try. Let's see. We got breaking and entering, possession of an illegal substance, underage drinking --

Carter and her friends, except Max, climb out of the pool.

CARTER  
(to Cop A)  
Officer, listen, this was a bad idea. We screwed up, we know that --

COP A  
And I should just let you off with a warning.

CARTER  
We're good kids. Having some harmless fun.

COP B  
(off Max)  
This one's naked.

COP A  
Indecent exposure. Sorry, guys. We're taking you in. Let's go.  
(to Max)  
You too, Magic Mike.

Off Carter and her friends, knowing they're screwed.

4 INT. POLICE STATION - HOLDING CELL - A LITTLE WHILE LATER 4

Carter and her friends are in a holding cell.

CARTER  
It's outrageous. School board cuts the music program but puts in a state-of-the-art surveillance system. That's a blatant misuse of funds.

MAX  
(off where they are)  
Is it, though?

The kids laugh. Cop A enters, opening the cell.

COP A  
Next time this happens, you'll be talking to a judge. Tonight, you just have to face your parents. Let's go.

Everyone stands to file out. Cop A stops Carter.

COP A (CONT'D)  
Not you. Yours isn't here yet.

CARTER  
(to her departing friends)  
I'm fine. See you on the outside.

As the kids exit, Cop A locks the cell with just Carter in it.

DISSOLVE TO:

5            INT. PRISON STATION - HOLDING CELL - A COUPLE HOURS LATER    5

Carter lays on her back on the cell's hard bench, eyes following a fly, as someone unlocks the cell. Angle on: SUSAN SHERMAN, not a cop, a bureaucrat, sporting a CPS (Children's Protective Services) ID badge.

CARTER

Awww. And I was just getting comfortable.

6            INT. POLICE PRECINCT - CONFERENCE ROOM - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Carter sits at a table. Susan places a soda and chips in front of her.

CARTER

Listen, I get it. This is some kind of scared straight thing you and my mom worked out.

(hands up)

I'm set straight. Can I go home now?

SUSAN SHERMAN

I'm sorry, Carter, it's not that simple.

CARTER

Why not? Where's my mom? Can we get her in here?

SUSAN SHERMAN

Your mom's not here.

(beat)

She's not coming.

CARTER

She can't be that mad. Let me call her.

SUSAN SHERMAN

Right now, we are doing all we can to locate her.

CARTER

Wait, wait, wait -- what do you mean? Did something happen? Is she okay?

SUSAN SHERMAN

Carter ... I need you to listen to me.

CARTER

I am. I'm listening. What?

SUSAN SHERMAN

My name is Susan Sherman. I work for  
Childrens' Protective Services.

CARTER

Can you just skip to the part where my  
mom is missing?

SUSAN SHERMAN

Your mother ... she goes by the name  
Lori Stevens?

CARTER

What does that mean -- goes by?

SUSAN SHERMAN

That's not her real name.  
(carefully)  
Carter Stevens is not your real name.

CARTER

Well, it's my name, and it's real.  
What are you --

SUSAN SHERMAN

When you were three years old, you were  
abducted from the front lawn of your  
home in Great Falls, Virginia. The  
woman you think is your mother is not  
your mother. She is your kidnapper.

CARTER

(frightened and angry)  
That's crazy! Stop talking!  
(standing)  
I'm going home!

Carter runs for the door, desperate to get out of there, but  
Susan Sherman keeps her from leaving.

SUSAN SHERMAN

Carter --

CARTER

I just want to go home. I just want to  
see my mother.

Susan Sherman puts her arm around Carter, comforting her.

SUSAN SHERMAN

You will, Carter.  
(then)  
But it's going to be a different home.  
And a different mother.



Off Carter's terror and confusion.

DISSOLVE TO:

7

INT. POLICE STATION - CONFERENCE ROOM - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Carter is back at the table, now flanked by Susan Sherman and IRIS DAWSON, an uber-professional FBI analyst. Carter looks like she's trapped in a "Twilight Zone" episode and she needs to figure out how to get out of it.

SUSAN SHERMAN

Does the name Lyndon mean anything to you? Lyndon Wilson.

CARTER

No.

IRIS DAWSON

That's your real name. Lyndon Wilson.

CARTER

Excuse me, Agent --  
(searching for Iris' name)

IRIS DAWSON

Dawson.

CARTER

Agent Dawson. I know the FBI is very good at ... being the FBI, but I think there's been some kind of computer glitch, or something got filed wrong --

Susan slides Carter's mug shot in front of her.

SUSAN SHERMAN

This is your mug shot, from last night.

CARTER

Can I keep this?

Iris Dawson slides another photo in front of Carter. It's one of her at three years old.

IRIS DAWSON

This is you a month before you were abducted.

Carter studies the picture. She's never seen it before. She is confused, scared, overwhelmed by what this picture means.

CARTER

I've never seen this picture. It might not be me.

IRIS DAWSON

It's you. See?  
 (pointing at the two  
 pictures)  
 The ears. They're the same.

CARTER

It's an ear. It looks like an ear.

IRIS DAWSON

Actually, ears are as distinct and unique as dental records. Which we also have.

She pushes over a folder.

IRIS DAWSON (CONT'D)

And fingerprints.

Iris produces a card mounted with two strips of fingerprints, one smaller than the other.

IRIS DAWSON (CONT'D)

(off the first set)

These were taken last night.

(off the smaller set)

These we lifted from your toys after you disappeared thirteen years ago.

A beat of silence. Carter pushes away all the evidence.

CARTER

But my mom --  
 (adamant)  
 -- my mom would never do this.

SUSAN SHERMAN

People abduct children for many reasons.

CARTER

*Sick* people.

SUSAN SHERMAN

She might have been depressed. It could be she lost a child of her own. Or believed she would never have children.

CARTER

Stop talking about her! You don't know her. She's an amazing person, and even if what you're saying is true, I don't care, I still want her to be my mother.

IRIS DAWSON

Carter ... you understand that can't happen.

SUSAN SHERMAN

Your real parents are here. Right down the hall. They're very anxious to see you.

CARTER

Now? No! I'm not ready.

There's a knock on the conference room door, and Susan Sherman opens it. COP C stands at the door, with two people right behind him -- Carter's parents, ELIZABETH and DAVID WILSON.

SUSAN SHERMAN

I'm sorry, we need a little more time.

A glimpse of Carter is all it takes -- Elizabeth bursts into the room, desperate to see the child she thought was lost forever. David follows, more cautious, more sensitive to the situation. Elizabeth stops short, gasping at the sight of Carter.

ELIZABETH

*Lyndon ...*

She goes up to Carter, and reaches out to touch her face. She is crying, but her expression is one of pure and utter joy.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

*Lyndon.*

*(a beat)*

Do you know who I am?

David stays behind his wife, hands on her shoulders for support. Carter looks at her for a long beat.

CARTER

No.

ELIZABETH

*(heartbroken)*

You don't remember me at all?

CARTER

I'm sorry.

DAVID  
Lizzie, she needs time ... we all do.  
(to Carter)  
I'm your dad.

CARTER  
I figured.

ELIZABETH  
What about your twin sister? Do you  
remember Taylor?

CARTER  
(stunned by this news)  
I have a sister ... I didn't think I  
had any relatives.

ELIZABETH  
Is that what she told you? That  
monster who stole you from us?

CARTER  
*She wasn't a monster!*

ELIZABETH  
*She stole you, she brainwashed you,  
when you were only three years old --*

DAVID  
Do we know who she was?

Iris Dawson pulls a photo from a folder and hands it to David.

IRIS DAWSON  
Does she look familiar? She goes by  
the name Lori Stephens --

CARTER  
Can you please stop saying "goes by"?

ELIZABETH  
David. David. Oh my God --

DAVID  
(to Iris Dawson)  
We know her.

Off Carter's shock.

DISSOLVE TO:

8

INT. POLICE CONFERENCE ROOM - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

8

Carter sits off by herself, while her parents each stake out some corner of the room for a cellphone conversation. Elizabeth's voice is commanding; David's is soothing.

ELIZABETH

(commanding, into phone)

Kyle, that's impossible. She must be in the system. Her one and only crime is stealing my child? I don't think so. Have we reached out to Mexico? To Canada? Well, get them to prioritize this!

DAVID

(into his phone)

She's fine, she looks great ... she's in shock, of course. We all are ... yes, believe me --

He throws a look to a preoccupied Elizabeth, and then at a dazed Carter.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(into phone)

-- we're all very anxious to get home.

He hangs up, goes to Carter, puts a hand on her shoulder.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(to Carter)

How you holding up?

Carter gives him a look: You did not just fucking ask me that.

ELIZABETH

(still barking orders,  
into phone)

I want her picture visible to all TSA personnel. Train, bus, car rental agents.

CARTER

She sounds like a cop.

DAVID

She is a cop.  
(he's used to being  
corrected)  
Sorry. Detective.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
(to Elizabeth)  
We should get going. We have a long  
drive and they're all waiting --

Elizabeth holds out a "one minute" finger.

ELIZABETH  
(into phone)  
And put out there's a reward. Ten  
thousand dollars.

DAVID  
(to Elizabeth)  
Who's paying that reward? Are we  
paying that reward?

ELIZABETH  
(to David)  
I want this woman caught! Isn't that  
what you want?

DAVID  
You know I do.

CARTER  
Does anyone care what I want?

David and Elizabeth look at each other, chagrined.

DAVID  
Of course --

ELIZABETH  
(simultaneous, into phone)  
Kyle. Let me call you back.

She hangs up.

CARTER  
My mother ... she was your friend?

ELIZABETH  
Clearly, she wasn't.

DAVID  
We were friendly.

ELIZABETH  
She said her name was Janet --

DAVID

She did in-home hospice care. Stayed with people the last few days of their lives. One of them lived on our street, that's when we met her.

CARTER

She sounds like a good person.

DAVID

She was. We thought she was.

ELIZABETH

(frustrated)

Janet what? Why can't I remember?

DAVID

She always said we had such a beautiful family. I thought she was being sweet.

ELIZABETH

You know what else she said? "I love your girls. Too bad you can't spend more time with them." She was monitoring my work hours!

CARTER

You didn't spend time with us?

ELIZABETH

Of course I did!

(then)

But you have to understand, it's hard for a woman on a police force, especially if you have kids. You get no street duty, except to give parking tickets. I wanted them to know I was serious that this was my career. So I was taking classes in arson and fraud, I trained for the bomb squad --

CARTER

The bomb squad? That's bad-ass.

ELIZABETH

(pleased)

I thought so.

CARTER

Much more important than spending time with your kids.

DAVID

Lyndon, your mother had to work. She was helping to support the family.

(Elizabeth scowls; he corrects himself)

She was supporting the family.

ELIZABETH

(to Carter)

But you're right, I wasn't there for you, I've never forgiven myself. Never. Finding you ... feels like a second chance. I'm going to do it all differently this time, Lyndon --

CARTER

You could start by calling me Carter.

ELIZABETH

(struggling)

I don't know ... if I can do that --

DAVID

(to Carter)

Can you understand, that name is a painful reminder of the worst part of our lives?

CARTER

Can you understand I just had my entire life ripped out from under me and my name is all I have left?

There's a silence as David and Elizabeth look at each other.

ELIZABETH

(quietly)

If that's what you want ... we'll call you Carter.

CARTER

(drily)

Thanks. You're a peach.

The drive home. Carter sits in the back seat, her head pressed against the window, with that dazed, Jesse Pinkman-like thousand-yard-stare: What is happening to my life? She jolts into a state of awareness as the car bumps up into a driveway and David announces:



DAVID  
 This is it.  
 (turning to Carter)  
 We're home.

Off Carter, steeling herself.

10

INT. THE WILSON HOME - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

10

Carter steps into the living, but before she can even take in who's there, her super warm maternal grandparents, JOAN and BUDDY MARSHALL, pounce on her.

JOAN/BUDDY  
*Lyndonnnnnn!*

DAVID  
 Joan, Buddy, please, back off, she's not ready --

BUDDY  
 Hell with that!

Buddy wraps a startled Carter in a giant bear hug. We can see on Carter's face that this sparks a distant memory.

CARTER  
 (whispers)  
 Pop-pop.

BUDDY  
 Welcome home, baby girl.

JOAN  
 Buddy, can I get in there?

BUDDY  
 (releasing Carter)  
 You remember your Grandma Joan --

Joan hugs her. Under dialogue, Elizabeth's phone rings.

JOAN  
 You will after a bowl of my mac 'n' cheese, I still make it extra-gooey, just the way you like it.

BUDDY  
 (re: the phone)  
 'Lizabeth, turn that damn thing off!

ELIZABETH  
 I can't, Dad.

JOAN

Buddy, she's trying to catch the kidnapper.

Carter winces, anxiously watching Elizabeth move off to take the call. Now Carter turns to the rest of her family: fraternal twin, TAYLOR, and 12-year-old brother, GRANT. Taylor appears demure, strait-laced, especially in comparison to Carter's cool grunge. Grant has a detached quality, as if everyone else is part of a behavioral science experiment he's observing.

CARTER

Hi.

TAYLOR

(an identical inflection)

Hi.

CARTER

(points to Taylor)

Taylor, and --

(turns to Grant, and then to David)

-- do I have a brother?

GRANT

They didn't mention me? I couldn't be less shocked.

DAVID

Grant, this has been an emotionally chaotic day, and I would appreciate it if you could keep your sarcasm to a minimum for one night.

CARTER

Obviously, you were born after --

GRANT

Yes. I'm the replacement child.

DAVID

Grant!

GRANT

You said, to a minimum. I think that entitles me to one line.

Carter smiles; she likes this kid. She turns to Taylor. The two girls have weirdly similar behavior; they both stand and silently study each other for a long beat. When they speak, they understand each other's truncated sentences.

CARTER  
 (I don't remember you.)  
 I'm sorry.

TAYLOR  
 It's okay.

CARTER  
 (Do you remember  
 anything?)  
 Do you --

TAYLOR  
 Not really.

BUDDY  
 Last time the two of you were together,  
 you were Little Lyndon and Tiny Taylor.  
 What are we going to call you now?

Under dialogue, Elizabeth re-enters the room.

CARTER  
 Carter. I want to be called Carter.

JOAN  
 (with distaste)  
 Oh, I don't know --

ELIZABETH  
 Mom, it's decided.

JOAN  
 But it's just so inappropriate --

ELIZABETH  
 (overlapping)  
 Mom!

JOAN  
 (throws up her hands)  
 I can't even have an opinion?

Now David's phone rings. He looks at the screen.

ELIZABETH  
 Let me guess. Your book agent. We're  
 not even home an hour and she's already  
 breathing down your neck.

David clicks the go-to-voicemail button.

DAVID  
 I'm not going to take it.

CARTER  
You write books?

DAVID  
Yes, well, so far just a book. But it did pretty well.

GRANT  
Should probably tell her what it's about.

DAVID  
Thank you, Grant, I was getting to that.  
(to Carter)  
Actually, it's about you. It's called "Losing Lyndon."

CARTER  
Sounds like I should read it. Right after I finish "Anna Karenina."

ELIZABETH  
Oh, are you reading "Anna Karenina"?

CARTER  
No.

JOAN  
(to David)  
Now I guess you can write the sequel. "Finding ... Carter."

DAVID  
That's not something we have to talk about right now --

CARTER  
Or never. Never works for me.

Off Carter, nonplussed anyone would even think this was okay.

11 INT. WILSON HOME - GUEST BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

11

Carter is just waking up in this unfamiliar place. She has slept a picture of her and Lori on the bedside table. She picks up the picture, lays it next to her in bed, looking at it as she holds on to her blanket. There's a knock on the door.

ELIZABETH (O.S.)  
Lynd --  
(quickly)  
Carter? Are you up?

CARTER  
Just a second!

Carter leans over the side of the bed, stuffs the picture into her duffel bag, then shoves it under the bed. Then she lays back down, takes a deep breath, and calls:

CARTER (CONT'D)  
Come in.

Elizabeth enters, with a simple tray of toast and orange juice.

ELIZABETH  
(re: the tray, a little  
laugh)  
Believe it or not, I gave this a lot of thought. Your grandmother's out there making omelettes and waffles, but I don't know what you like, or if you even eat breakfast, and you just don't seem like a breakfast-in-bed type, so --

She smiles, hoping she's making some headway with Carter.

CARTER  
(dismissive)  
This is fine. Thank you.

ELIZABETH  
Okay. Good. Well ... I was thinking, maybe you and Taylor could take the car, she could show you around town, introduce you to some of her friends --

CARTER  
Or I could just go see the ones I already have.

ELIZABETH  
You mean, back where you ...

CARTER  
Yes. Back where I know people.

ELIZABETH  
What is that, a two-hour drive?  
(thinks for a beat)  
Sure. I can take you.

CARTER  
I'm sixteen. I don't need my mommy to take me on playdates.

ELIZABETH

I can't just give you my car.

CARTER

That's exactly what you offered a minute ago.

ELIZABETH

You and Taylor.

CARTER

In other words, somebody has to be in the car with me.

ELIZABETH

Carter, I'm willing to do whatever it takes to make this relationship work. I just need to know you want that too.

Carter considers this; then:

CARTER

It would help a lot if I believed you trusted me.

SMASH CUT TO:

12

INT. ELIZABETH'S CAR - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

12

Carter in the driver's seat, singing along with "Runaway" by Linkin Park.

CARTER

(singing)

"I wanna run away  
Never say goodbye  
I wanna know the truth  
Instead of wondering why  
I wanna know the answers  
No more lies  
I wanna shut the door  
And open up my mind ... "

13

INT. WILSON HOME - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

13

David and Elizabeth huddle.

DAVID

Have you lost your mind? You can't just let her go on a road trip!

Elizabeth has her phone out; she speed-dials a number.

ELIZABETH  
 Calm down. I didn't.  
 (into phone)  
 Kyle? The tracker's on and she should  
 be passing Denny's in two minutes.

Elizabeth hangs up.

DAVID  
 You're having her followed? That's  
 your solution?

ELIZABETH  
 Do you have a better one?

DAVID  
 How about just saying no?

ELIZABETH  
 David, just because I'm a cop doesn't  
 mean I always have to be the bad cop.

Off Elizabeth, stalking out.

14

EXT. YORK, PA. BOWLARAMA - ABOUT AN HOUR LATER

14

Carter and Max sit on a hill behind the Bowlarama. They've been there for a while, and Carter is clearly very bummed.

CARTER  
 You called Khaz? And the girls? What  
 about Casey?

MAX  
 She had to work.

CARTER  
 Really?

MAX  
 (admitting)  
 No.  
 (then)  
 Carter, you gotta understand, people're  
 a little freaked out --

CARTER  
 You want to talk about freaked out?  
 Let me tell you about freaked out. Not  
 only is my mom not my mom, my name is  
 not even my name, and apparently, my  
 friends are not really my friends.

MAX

For what it's worth, you still got me.

He puts a friendly arm around her shoulder. Carter leans her head against him.

CARTER

Thank you.

Max pulls out a joint.

MAX

And I got this.

CARTER

Thank God.

Max lights the joint and hands it to Carter. ANGLE ON: Kyle watching them. As they smoke the joint:

MAX

So these people, your family -- you like them?

CARTER

It's weird. They're total strangers, but when the grandfather hugged me, it was like this spot in my brain just went halogen.

MAX

Like a "Bourne Identity" thing. Maybe you're an assassin.

CARTER

I was abducted when I was three.

MAX

So, probably not an assassin.

CARTER

I have a twin sister who I don't remember, but I feel like I know her really well. I don't know ... I could get to like them eventually. Except the mom. I *hate* the mom. She's the human equivalent of nails on a chalkboard.

MAX

At least you get to say goodbye to someone.



CARTER  
I'm not saying goodbye to you. I never  
could.

As they hug, Max sees something over Carter's shoulder.

MAX  
That's uber creepy.

CARTER  
What?

MAX  
Some guy over there -- he's watching us  
in his rear view mirror.

Carter turns; Max points to Kyle's car.

15      INT. KYLE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS - CROSSCUT AS NECESSARY      15

Kyle sees Carter and Max looking at him. He reacts: Shit! and starts his car. Suddenly, Carter notices:

CARTER  
He's got a Virginia license plate.  
(she runs towards him,  
yelling out his license  
plate numbers)  
B! R! 8! Z!  
(Kyle drives off)  
571! My mom's a cop! We'll find you!

MAX  
Your mom's a cop? Probably  
shouldn't've had that weed.

CARTER  
Nah, it's okay. My other mom's a  
felon. She's the one I take after.

Off Carter and Max, their arms around each other, heading back to her car.

16      INT. WILSON HOME - KITCHEN - LATER THAT EVENING      16

Carter enters. Taylor is cleaning up the kitchen after dinner.

CARTER  
It's official. You're the good  
daughter.

TAYLOR

Are you hungry? Mom made a plate --

Carter uncovers a dish to reveal a delicious-looking meal.

CARTER

A cop who cooks. She can do it all,  
huh?

TAYLOR

Actually, I made that. I do most of  
the cooking around here. Every so  
often, Grant makes a "soup" --

CARTER

We don't eat those?

TAYLOR

One had a dollar bill floating in it,  
so no.

CARTER

(re: the dinner food)  
This is fantastic.

TAYLOR

Thanks.

CARTER

I actually ... I like to bake.

TAYLOR

Yeah?

CARTER

A killer chocolate pecan pie. Served  
hot with vanilla ice cream ... I'm a  
big fan of dessert.

TAYLOR

Some nights, it's all I eat. I say I'm  
going to dinner, and I meet my friend  
Gabe at this yogurt place --

CARTER

(suddenly very alert)  
Self serve, all kinds of toppings?  
(off Taylor's nod)  
Can we go?

TAYLOR

Soon as you're done --

CARTER  
 (instantly)  
 I'm done.

TAYLOR  
 I'll just tell my mom --  
 (correcting herself)  
 -- our mom --  
 (correcting herself again)  
 -- mom --

CARTER  
 You can have her. She's all yours.

They crack up. Elizabeth and David enter the kitchen.

DAVID  
 You're back!

CARTER  
 According to the FBI, this is where I  
 live now.

ELIZABETH  
 Was it fun to see your friends?

CARTER  
 Yeah, loads o' fun. I even made a new  
 one. Guy in a dark green Subaru. He  
 sat in his car all day watching me.

TAYLOR  
 (horrified)  
 Oh my God! You got his license plate,  
 I hope.

CARTER  
 As a matter of fact --

She pulls out a piece of paper and hands it to Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH  
 I'll look into it.

Elizabeth is uncomfortable; Carter registers this.

CARTER  
 You can find him, right?  
 (lightbulb)  
 Or maybe you already know who he is.

ELIZABETH  
 How would I possibly --

CARTER

I know you were nervous, letting me take your car, go off by myself.

ELIZABETH

I was, yes. But it's not like I had you followed or anything.

CARTER

Just thought I'd ask. 'Cause if you didn't, I have a stalker.

A beat -- Elizabeth's opportunity to tell the truth. Instead:

ELIZABETH

Let's hope it's not that serious.  
(re: the plate numbers)  
I'll get to the bottom of this.

Taylor picks up her mother's car keys.

TAYLOR

We're going to Yo Mama.

DAVID

That's great. Have fun!

After Carter and Taylor are gone, David turns to Elizabeth. She holds up her hands in a "Don't say anything" gesture.

ELIZABETH

I know.

DAVID

You just lied to her --

ELIZABETH

(overlapping)  
I can't do what you do, David. Stand back and hope it all works out. I'm trying to reach her. I can't.  
(then, sharply)  
Feel free to jump in any time and help me.

17

INT. YO MAMA (ANOTHER YOGURT SHOP) - A LITTLE WHILE LATER 17

CLOSE-UP on a tub of gummi bears. Pull back to reveal Carter looking at it, then looking around the shop as if she might actually see ... *holy shit, is that Lori?* Taylor, unaware that Carter's brain has left her body, walks up with a cup of yogurt.

TAYLOR  
 You're not getting anything?  
 (off Carter's daze)  
 Carter! Are you okay?

CARTER  
 (snapping back to reality)  
 Sorry. It's been a weird day --

Carter sees: Taylor's yogurt cup is filled with gummi bears.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
 -- that's how you like your yogurt?

TAYLOR  
 I know, it's lame.

CARTER  
 You mean, la-mazing!

TAYLOR  
 Yeah! Can I steal that?

Taylor has put the yogurt on the scale to pay. She immediately turns to ZUBIN, the manager working the cash register.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
 (re: the yogurt)  
 Not this. I'm paying for this.

ZUBIN  
 Four twenty five.

As Taylor pays:

CARTER  
 (to Zubin)  
 Excuse me -- who do I talk to about  
 getting a job here?

ZUBIN  
 That would be me, but right now, we're  
 fully staffed --

CARTER  
 Listen --  
 (name-checks his tag)  
 -- Zubin ... I like that name. Zubin,  
 trust me, you want me to work here.  
 It's the opportunity of a lifetime.

ZUBIN  
 Really? What's so great about you?

Carter seems like she's about to tell him, but stops herself.

CARTER

No. I want it to be a surprise when I show up for work tomorrow. Two o'clock sound good?

ZUBIN

Uhhh --

CARTER

Great. See you then.

Carter and Taylor take a seat by the window.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Where's your friend, Gabe? I thought this was "your place."

TAYLOR

He's at a party.

CARTER

He didn't take you? Nice boyfriend.

TAYLOR

Oh no -- not my boyfriend. I've known him since second grade. We just hang out. Play a lot of Sporcle.

CARTER

I don't know what that is.

TAYLOR

It's a website, all kinds of quizzes --

CARTER

I'm sorry. I stopped listening at he's at a party and we're not.

TAYLOR

I don't go to a lot of parties. See, my sister was abducted and my mom's a cop. I don't exactly fall under the heading of "fun time."

CARTER

Oh, we have to change that.

Carter pulls Taylor out of the store.

18

INT./EXT. PARTY HOUSE - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

18

Kids grinding, drinking, smoking, puking -- it's a pretty fun party. Carter is surrounded by a crowd, watching as she pours bourbon in a bar glass and ignites it with a fireplace wand.

(THIS PIECE OF BUSINESS WILL BE CHANGED.)

CARTER

The trick is, you only want to drink  
the bourbon --

She tosses back the drink, fire and all.

THE CROWD

*Whooaaaaaaa!*

She slams the glass back down.

CARTER

-- not the fire.

And indeed, there's still a blaze going inside the glass.

THE CROWD

*WHATTTTTT!*

(they burst into applause)

ANGLE ON: Taylor, off in a corner. GABE (not bad, could use some cooler clothes) hands her a drink in a red solo cup.

TAYLOR

What is it?

GABE

Not sure. Something lethal.

TAYLOR

(taking a sip)

I can't taste the alcohol.

GABE

That's what makes it lethal.

Gabe keeps looking over at Carter.

TAYLOR

This is fun.

GABE

What?

TAYLOR

Me sitting here while you stare at my sister.

GABE

Was I? Sorry. But you can't blame me for being intrigued.

TAYLOR

Being abducted has its rewards.

GABE

She tell you what it was like?

TAYLOR

She lived in a two-bedroom apartment in York, Pennsylvania. It wasn't like she was sold into child slavery.

GABE

You're happy she's back, right?

TAYLOR

Yeah, of course I'm happy. I don't know how happy she is, though.

GABE

She looks pretty happy.

TAYLOR

Gabe, as you can probably tell, because you cannot take your eyes off her, my sister was having a totally fun and awesome life where she got to drink and smoke and probably be a complete slut. While I was standing off in some corner, never doing anything that would remotely qualify as fun or awesome, because I lived in constant fear of the terrible thing that happened to my sister. Except ... it didn't!

Taylor drains the drink in her red solo cup.

GABE

Whoa, slow down --

Taylor grabs two Jello shots off a tray, gulps them down. She lets her hair down and removes an unnecessary layer of clothing.

GABE (CONT'D)

Taylor! What are you doing?



TAYLOR  
Making up for lost time.

Off Taylor, heading for the heart of the party.

DISSOLVE TO:

19      EXT. WILSON HOME - ABOUT 2 A.M.      19

A car sits at the curb --

20      INT. GABE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS      20

-- Gabe behind the wheel, Carter beside him.

CARTER  
Thanks for the ride.

GABE  
Yeah, of course, any time. You're  
pretty much the most fascinating person  
I've ever met.

CARTER  
You need to get out more.

GABE  
I'm sure you have a boyfriend. At  
least one.

CARTER  
I had one once. But that was some  
other life.

He looks at her, intensely drawn to her.

GABE  
I really want to kiss you.

CARTER  
I can tell.

They leans towards each other; the kiss is tentative, but is  
about to deepen, but they are unpleasantly interrupted by the  
sudden glare of a flashlight and a sharp rap on the window.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
Owww. What the hell --

GABE  
I think it's your mom.

CARTER  
 (hopeful)  
 My mom?

Gabe opens the door to reveal Elizabeth, with David.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
 (bummed)  
 Oh. That mom.  
 (to Elizabeth, re:  
 flashlight)  
 This isn't a coal mine. Could you turn  
 that off?

ELIZABETH  
 Gabe, is that you?

GABE  
 Hi, Mrs. Wilson. Mr. Wilson.

ELIZABETH  
 Do you know what time it is? Where's  
 Taylor?

CARTER  
 (a mock gasp, to Gabe)  
 Oh no, where's Taylor? We lost Taylor!

ELIZABETH  
 Really? That's your idea of a joke?

CARTER  
 (points to the back seat)  
 Chill. She's right there.

*Bam*, the flashlight goes back on to reveal a drunk, passed out  
 Taylor sprawled face down across the back seat.

ELIZABETH  
 Oh my God --

DAVID  
 It's okay, she's just drunk.

CARTER  
 And she may have had a pot brownie.  
 (beat)  
 Or two.

DAVID  
 (to Taylor)  
 Tay-Tay -- sweetie? Let's get you  
 inside. Come on. Can you stand up?

David rouses Taylor, and steers her toward the house

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'm going to get her inside. Good night, Gabe.

GABE

Good night, Mr. Wilson.

(to Elizabeth)

Mrs. Wilson.

(to Carter, who is getting out of his car)

Really nice meeting you.

CARTER

Oh, p'shaw. I bet you say that to all the girls who show up thirteen years after they were abducted.

Gabe smiles, and drives off. After he goes, Carter turns and heads for the house. Elizabeth stops her.

ELIZABETH

Obviously I'm happy for you two to get along, but I'd prefer you didn't pass your bad habits onto Taylor.

CARTER

My bad habits? So, there are already things about me you don't like. What are they?

ELIZABETH

What I meant was --

CARTER

Just name one. Or you can name one thing about me you do like. Name anything you know about me at all.

ELIZABETH

I want to know you, but you've done everything you can to avoid me.

CARTER

Because you're stiff! You're humorless. You're a control freak. You operate from a place of fear. My mother used to tell me every day she loved me. I haven't heard you say it once, to any member of your family.

Carter turns and walks off, towards the house, completely oblivious to the pain shooting across Elizabeth's face.

21 INT. YO MAMA (YOGURT SHOP #2) - THE NEXT DAY

21

Carter's first day of work. Zubin has figured out who she is, and he's juiced she works for him. He sidles up to a customer, showing him a newspaper with Carter on the front page.

ZUBIN

That's her. She works here. Tell your friends.

Carter smiles, pleased that Zubin is spreading the word.

DISSOLVE TO:

22 INT. YO MAMA (YOGURT SHOP #2) - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

22

Within no time, Carter is a local celebrity. The place is packed with people who want to meet her. David and Grant enter, watching Carter work the crowd, posing for selfies with fans:

CARTER

I want to be on all your Instagrams. Facebooks. Tweet about me.

GRANT

(to David)

She's so cool, don't you think?

DAVID

She is.

Grant heads over to the yogurt bar, and David walks over to Carter, holding out his phone.

DAVID (CONT'D)

What about me? Can I get a picture?

CARTER

Hell, yeah.

(she snaps the picture)

Make that the cover of your next book.

DAVID

I thought you didn't want me to write about you.

CARTER

I don't. The j.k. was silent. Next time it won't be.

DAVID

Give me a chance. I'm slow, but eventually I do catch on.

Carter looks at him, they smile at each other. A nice moment. David heads over to Grant.

ZUBIN  
(to the crowd at large)  
Don't forget to say where she works!

CARTER  
That's right! I want people to know  
where to find me!

ANGLE ON: Grant, whose face falls when he hears this.

GRANT  
Oh, crap. I know what she's doing.

DAVID  
What's she doing?

GRANT  
She's sending a message to her mother.  
(David furrows his brow)  
The one who kidnapped her. She's  
telling her to meet her here.

DAVID  
I hope you're wrong. Still ... we  
should tell your mom.

Off David and Grant, watching Carter posing for another fan.

23

INT. WILSON HOME - ELIZABETH AND DAVID'S BEDROOM - SAME 23

Elizabeth and David are getting ready for bed; it's clear each has their own individual process and there is absolutely no intimacy, tenderness, or even a mild connection involved.

DAVID  
You think Grant's onto something?

ELIZABETH  
I think it's worth putting the yogurt  
shop under surveillance.

DAVID  
If I may make a suggestion ... maybe  
you shouldn't be there.

ELIZABETH  
Of course I'm going to be there. Why  
wouldn't I be there?

DAVID

I don't think it'll help in your quest to have a relationship with Carter.

ELIZABETH

You say that like you have one.

DAVID

I have a picture with her.  
(shows her his phone)  
It's a step.

ELIZABETH

Okay, well, I would like to arrest the psycho bitch --  
(with rising emotion)  
-- who let me die inside ... because I lost my child ... and I could never do anything to help her ... that's the step I need.

David rushes to Elizabeth, holds her, as she breaks down.

DAVID

Lizzie, it's okay, it's okay, you don't have to be so strong all the time.

Off the two of them, making a long-lost connection.

24

INT. YO MAMA (YOGURT SHOP #2) - THE NEXT DAY

24

ANGLE ON: Taylor and Gabe, sitting together like they do this all the time, which they do. Only this time, Taylor is dressed much funkier, much more Carter-like, in ripped denim shorts and wife-beater under a plaid shirt. Carter, at work, is visible in the background, working the cash register.

GABE

I like this new look.

TAYLOR

I felt like I needed to do some renovating. I'm sick of seeing myself as this ... tragic figure.

GABE

Change is good. Long as you don't go overboard, which you kind of did the other night.

TAYLOR

Yeah, that was rough. But I definitely want to go to more parties, you and me.

GABE  
Carter too, right?

Carter walks up.

CARTER  
What what? Heard my name.

She brushes back a piece of Gabe's hair, addresses him with unmistakable fondness.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
You talking about me?

GABE  
Isn't everyone? You're practically a meme.

Taylor recoils, watching the two of them make googly eyes at each other. She is not thrilled.

TAYLOR  
What's going on?

Carter and Gabe break eye contact.

CARTER  
(joking)  
Nothing now. Thanks, buzzkill.

TAYLOR  
You two like each other?

Gabe and Carter look at each other.

CARTER  
-- I don't know --

GABE  
-- starting to --

TAYLOR  
Since when?

CARTER  
What's with the questions? I already have two moms.

TAYLOR  
Great! I'm happy for you! Guess I should have just stayed in my corner!

Taylor races out of the yogurt shop, colliding with a TOTAL HIPSTER in wire-rim flip-up sunglasses and a funky bowler.

CARTER  
 (to Gabe, re: Taylor)  
 What was that?

GABE  
 I have no idea.

At that moment, Zubin summons Carter back to work.

ZUBIN  
 Breaks over. Back to your post.

Carter returns to work behind the cash register.

CARTER  
 Can I help the next customer?

A customer puts a cup of yogurt on the scale.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
 That is a very stylish cup of yogurt.  
 What did you do, layers? I'ma have to  
 try that myself.

The customer pays and moves off.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
 Who's next?

CLOSE UP: on a cup of yogurt being placed on the scale. It's  
 filled to the top with gummi bears.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
 Here we go, someone after --

Carter looks at the customer. It's the TOTAL HIPSTER.

LORI.

Carter's heart stop. Her voice fades.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
 -- my own heart ...

Carter freezes, unsure what to do. Zubin glares at her.

ZUBIN  
 Carter?

No response.

ZUBIN (CONT'D)  
 (to Lori)  
 I'm sorry, miss, I'll ring you up --



CARTER  
(quickly)  
No, I got it.  
(to Lori, shaky)  
That'll be four eighty.

Lori hands over a \$10 bill. Carter sees she's written on it:  
LOVE YOU MORE.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
(whispering)  
Not possible.

Lori flips up the shade part of her glasses and locks eyes with Carter.

LORI  
(also whispering)  
Yes possible.

CARTER  
Mom --

Then Carter sees, through the window, two pairs of cops approaching the yogurt shop, guns at their side.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
(sharply, to Lori)  
Back here.

Carter pulls Lori behind the cash register, and grabs a Yo Mama baseball cap and apron.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
Put these on.

As Lori does, Carter pulls a tray of free samples out of a freezer.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
Take the free samples, and walk out the front door.

LORI  
Carter --

CARTER  
They'll be watching the back.

LORI  
I'm sorry.

CARTER

Go now.

ANGLE ON: the front door. Elizabeth enters. Kyle is by her side. Both have their guns drawn.

CARTER (CONT'D)

(to Lori, in an  
exasperated tone)

Brenda, I know it's hot, that's why we  
need somebody to pass out free samples.

(low, urgent, in Lori's  
ear)

Now.

LORI

I'll be back.

Lori walks toward the front door with the tray of free samples.  
*Right past Elizabeth.*

ELIZABETH

(to Carter)

Where is she?

CARTER

Where is who?

ELIZABETH

Carter, this place is surrounded by  
cops. I promise you, Lori Stevens is  
not getting away.

ANGLE ON: what Carter sees through the window: Lori handing her  
tray of free samples to some grateful kids, and then walking  
quickly, purposefully, down the street, out of sight.

CARTER

Hard to believe you need this many  
people to catch her. She's not exactly  
Lara Croft. The woman can barely throw  
a Frisbee.

(chokes up a bit)

Though it was fun to watch her try.

ANGLE ON: Gabe going over to Kyle.

GABE

(to Kyle)

Dad. What's going on?

KYLE

The less you know, okay?

Carter sees Kyle. And recognizes him.

CARTER  
 (to Kyle)  
 Hey!  
 (to Elizabeth)  
 That's the guy. The one in the green  
 Subaru.

GABE  
 That's my dad.

CARTER  
 Your *dad*?  
 (realizing, to Elizabeth)  
 You lied to me.

ELIZABETH  
 Carter --

CARTER  
 You did have me followed.

ELIZABETH  
 Yes. I'm sorry. I'm very sorry.

Carter's expression curdles; she can't believe this is the mom  
 she's stuck with.

CARTER  
 You're right. Lori Stephens was here.  
 She risked her life to see me for five  
 seconds, just to tell me she loves me.  
 (bursts out)  
 Because she's my *mother*. And you took  
 me away from her. You want to find my  
 abductor? *It's you.*

As Carter races out of the yogurt shop, away from Elizabeth,

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW

\*  
 \*