

# **BIRD DOG**

Pilot Episode  
"Whopper"

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Turner Network Television

FIRST REVISION  
August 4, 2010

"BIRD DOG"  
Pilot

EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - DAY

A venerable inn rests on the apron of an Oregon lake. My God, we could be looking at a post card for the Cascades. In a boat on the shimmering water, rugged lodge owner LYLE SIMMS, 42, casts a line.

INT. GREAT ROOM - LODGE - DAY

The lobby of the family-run resort. Office, reception desk, lounge -- overlooking a dock and, just beyond, the L.L. Bean tableau of Lyle's expert haul cast.

MARSHA

A sixty pound trout? That's unheard of.

MARSHA HOOVER, 30, is peering at Lyle between machine gun taps on her iPhone. Rapacious, a little too put together, Marsha is a journalist.

JUNE

These reports on the 'net, I know they're sprouting like weeds...but we don't know who's posting them. Honest.

JUNE SIMMS, Lyle's wife, labors over reservation forms. Homespun, she seems both sincere and beleaguered.

MARSHA

Hey, I'm *thrilled* to cover the story...but seriously, no one's seen a fish that big since Jonah...

LYLE (O.S.)

WHOOOAAAHH!

Marsha's eyes pop to...

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Lyle Simms has hooked a fish. His rod bends like a pretzel. Line HISSES from his reel. He WHOOPS again.

EXT. LAKE - DAY/INTERCUT LODGE

Lyle's boat wobbles. He manages to grab his hand-held recreational radio and YELP...

LYLE

It's a whopper!

June snatches her own radio, ups the volume. Boggled, Marsha jerks a camera from her Chloe handbag, darts onto the deck, begins madly to snap photos. Around her form a half-dozen Guests, drawn by the excitement.

Suddenly, whatever's on the other end of the fisherman's line makes a major league run. Lyle Simms is yanked from the boat! *And dragged recklessly across the lake until he disappears!* That is some GIANT fish.

Marsha is shocked. June rushes onto the deck.

MARSHA

Call 911!

EXT. LAKE SHORE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

A hundred yards from the Lodge, now hidden behind conifers, a rainbow trout JUMPS -- though it's hardly a monster. CAMERA FINDS the shoreline. A shadow walks away quickly. There, sticking from behind boulders, are the lifeless legs of the once virile Lyle Simms...

EXT. GAIL'S COTTAGE - DAY

Different legs -- alive and shapely -- protrude from beneath a hybrid Ford Escape. A cell phone SOUNDS.

GAIL McGRATH, 30, rises. J. Crew face smudged with grease, a body toned by running, her burgeoning ability one step ahead of confidence -- Gail lifts her phone off a box labeled "Motor Oil." Checks the Caller ID.

GAIL

I know, softball at six.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Tim called in. He needs you.

GAIL  
 (alerting)  
 Yeah?

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)  
 Crystal Lake Lodge. Some sort of strange  
 fishing accident.

GAIL  
 On it.

She instinctively swipes at her smudges, reaches into the motor oil box. To her surprise, it's empty. GROANING, she hurries toward her house, a picturesque cottage in the woods bordering a small town.

INT. GAIL'S COTTAGE - DAY

Gail speeds past a stone fireplace, Steinway baby grand -- she pulls off her T-shirt and, in a sports bra, alights in the laundry room. She jerks from the dryer an inside-out khaki shirt. Abruptly Gail HEARS A KNOCK. Huh?

GAIL'S FRONT DOOR

She throws open the portal, faces:

SAM, a rumpled 55-year-old in a *Yankees* cap and heirloom Bermuda shorts. Holding a Samsonite suitcase last advertised in 1974. Sporting a quirky, matter-of-fact look that is, with no obvious justification, assured.

SAM  
 Miss me?

Off-guard, then surprisingly cold, Gail charges back to her bedroom, shuts the door to a sliver.

Sam is unfazed. He wanders into the house. His eyes find a portrait on the mantle -- a woman in her forties -- inviting, elegant. Karen. Sam now is fazed. He can only stare, taken with the image.

GAIL (O.S.)  
 (from her bedroom)  
 What are you doing in Oregon?

SAM  
 Missed a left turn in Kansas.

GAIL (O.S.)  
 You staying?

SAM  
 Thought I might.

Gail reappears, now in jeans and buckling a belt, on which hang a radio and a service-issued Glock. For the first time on her khaki shirt, we can SEE stenciled: "SHERIFF."

GAIL  
 Try the Evergreen Motel.

Sam flickers disappointment -- as Gail marches out.

EXT. STREET - HIDDEN PINES - DAY

Gail strides past quaint homes with *Sunset* landscapes, aimed toward the Capra-esque town square of Hidden Pines. In his garden, a MAN holds up a lush beefsteak tomato.

MAN  
 I'll leave a dozen on your step, Gail!

Gail nods gratefully, even as she strains at her RADIO...

GAIL  
 Because. I was changing my oil. And I ran out. Can't Russell pick me up?

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)  
 Sure. In maybe three hours.

Gail GRIMACES...

ANOTHER VOICE  
 You remember *Hill Street Blues*?

Gail pivots. Creeping up is Sam -- behind the wheel of an '86 Mustang with New York plates.

GAIL  
 Ghawd, you and your sixties bands.

SAM  
 It was a cop show. Saw one once, the whole point was...the key to resolving a case, is getting there fast.

EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - DAY

ON Gail, a reluctant passenger in Sam's car as it speeds under the gate post of the Lodge.

The Mustang lands at a Sheriff's 4-wheel, stationed at the front steps of the inn. Gail spots on the deck, June Simms -- her cheek smeared with dried blood -- distraught. Being both comforted and grilled by Marsha Hoover. Seeing Marsha, Gail glooms. A DEPUTY walks up, looks at the Mustang like it's a rotary phone.

DEPUTY

Hey Gail. Victim is Lyle Simms, believe that? He always said he wanted to be out on his lake, when he checked out.

Sam is staring O.S. At a parking sign marked "Owner." There is no vehicle in the space, only tire tracks.

GAIL

Where's the body?

DEPUTY

'Bout a hundred yards east, on the shore. He was killed by a fish.

SAM

A fish. Armed?

GAIL

Just drive, okay.

EXT. LAKE SHORE - DAY

The crime scene. Taped off. A dark van holds next to a Sheriff's SUV. Stooped over the bloodied form of Lyle Simms is a Chinese-American woman, Dr. JOANNE SEE, 44. Her flattering silk blouse and tight skirt seem wrong, but then she's an Internist doubling as County Coroner.

Slumped on a rock is a shapely woman of 33, GINGER REESE, normally a free-spirit, now etched in grief. Her polo shirt marks her a Crystal Lodge employee.

TIM

Where were you, when you heard the ruckus?

Ginger's interrogator wears the gold badge of "McKENZIE COUNTY SHERIFF." Boyishly handsome, more at ease in the field than behind a desk, he is TIM BURKE, 36.

GINGER

At our incinerator, burning trash. I've been trying to get Lyle to replace the damn thing...horrible for the environment...he said he'd find the money, he really cared...he...  
(stumbles with emotion)

Sam's Mustang wheels up. Gail steps out. Sam hangs behind the yellow tape. Examining a head wound on the victim, Joanne spots Sam and, oddly, seems to recognize him. Tim eyes Gail, sees she's circling the scene.

TIM

(back to Ginger)  
So you heard cries, you came running.  
And you found Lyle's body?

GINGER

June was already here. She was holding him.

TIM

Anyone else?

GINGER

There was a guest out hiking. She got here before me too, but June was first.

RUSSELL (O.S.)

Sheriff, shall I call Fish & Wildlife?

A Deputy in a "SHERIFF" windbreaker, tape measure drooping from a pocket, steps up. He is 48, buzz cut hair, reed skinny. RUSSELL GITZ, Detective Sergeant -- community legend, everyone's favorite birthday party magician, perennial Deputy of the Year right up to 1989.

TIM

To...?

RUSSELL

Get 'em out here with sonar. That big boy oughta light up like JAWS.

JOANNE

For the record, C.O.D looks more like head trauma than drowning.

RUSSELL

Either way, we're talkin' dangerous predator. Enough dynamite, we'll blow that bruiser all the way to Portland.

HEAR a CHUCKLE. Heads turn. It's Sam.

SAM

Fish drags a guy on shore feet first? Ripley's know about this?

Tim studies the position of the body, looks back at a mortified Gail, then Sam. The guy has a point.

TIM

Who's he?

GAIL

(tight)  
Distant relative.

Gail edges into the tall weeds above the victim.

GAIL (CONT'D)

Joanne, back at the Lodge, I noticed blood on June Simms' face...

JOANNE

She cut herself, running through the brush to get to her husband.

GAIL

So the blood on Lyle's cheek is from...?

JOANNE

June, I think. Smear'd when she embraced him. His skull is crushed, but that wound's on the back of his head.

Joanne has knelt over a small log, covered with wet moss. There is tissue and blood on one end.

JOANNE (CONT'D)

Speaking of head wounds...

Gail has paused in the knee-high growth above the scene. She scans the ground closer.



GAIL

Hmmm...

TIM

Find something?

SAM

Tire tracks.

Tim alerts. How could "the relative" know *that*? Sam's standing 60 feet away.

MARSHA (O.S.)

Tim!

Pushing past Sam is Marsha Hoover, camera in hand. She ignores the crime scene tape.

MARSHA (CONT'D)

Could you move closer to the body?!

Already Marsha is snapping photos with impunity. Gail stiffens, looks for a rebuke from a suddenly uneasy Tim.

TIM

Uh, Marsha. We're still processing the scene...

MARSHA

Go ahead, don't mind me...

Gail, on egg shells but determined, moves toward Marsha.

GAIL

I swear, Marsha, you could still be in high school.

MARSHA

(is that an insult?)

What?

GAIL

Same scrappy reporter. But see, *now*, by law you can't take pictures until we finish the CSI.

Marsha smiles thinly. Are those hackles rising?

MARSHA

I'm sorry, you're so right, Gail. Unless *Tim* doesn't mind.

Tim's suddenly head counselor at Camp Cat Fight.

TIM

You know what? Could you drive me back to town, Marsha? Lions Club's having both me and Bixby give our campaign talks. Russell's going to need the kit in the SUV to make casts of the tracks...

Marsha snaps one more pic of Tim. Victorious.

MARSHA

Sure! Eye on the prize, you're so right.

Tim eyes Gail, a little self-conscious, sotto voce.

TIM

You got this?

Gail nods. He peers once more at Sam before leaving...

TIM (CONT'D)

Who's this guy, again?

GAIL

(beat)

My father.

EXT. LODGE - FRONT DECK - DAY

Sam drives up, Gail exits. Time has passed.

GAIL

I've got witnesses to interview. Go.

SAM

Go where?

GAIL

I'll call you when I'm finished.

SAM

But it's beautiful here, Central Park without the flashers.

GAIL

Then stay outside.

(walks away)

I mean it.

INT. LODGE - GREAT ROOM - DAY

START ON a worn family Bible, in the lap of June Simms. PAN UP her still soiled torso, to her grief-stricken expression -- the blood smear prominent on her cheek. She is finishing a phone call.

JUNE

Your father was so proud of you. Take tomorrow's flight, don't worry about me. Eva and Billy are here. I love you, too.

EVA BANKS, 38, a pretty if anxious Latina who speaks with an accent, takes the phone from June. She embraces June's shoulders, crosses to hang up -- revealing Gail, note pad in hand.

GAIL

That's Eva Banks...with an "e?"

EVA

Yes.

GAIL

When did you arrive at the Lodge?

EVA

Thursday.

GAIL

How is it you know the Simms?

JUNE

From our Navy days, in San Diego.

EVA

My husband and I were invited here by Lyle...5 years, we haven't seen them...

GAIL

And you were hiking this morning?

EVA

Like every morning. I heard June screaming. I ran to her. Horrible...  
(trembling, dials her cell)  
Why can't I reach Billy? He took Lyle's truck this morning, said he's going to town...

GAIL  
Billy's your husband?

EVA  
And Lyle's best friend...he'll go crazy  
when he hears...

Now both Eva and June are WEEPING.

EXT. LODGE - DAY

Sam leans against his car -- eavesdropping, we realize, through open windows. Inside, from a separate entrance, Joanne See leads in Ginger Reese.

Suddenly a sedan barrels up to the Lodge. On its door is magnetic sign: "Sweely Realty." Out jumps a plow horse of a man -- NATE SWEELY. He hurries into the Lodge.

INT. LODGE - GREAT ROOM - DAY

Nate angles past Joanne, who is passing a xanax to the still-raw Ginger. Nate heads straight to June. They embrace. Until self-consciously June pulls back...

JUNE  
Eva, this is Nate. Nate Sweely. We grew  
up together.

EXT. LODGE - DECK - DAY

With Sam glued to the inside -- A HORN TAPS. The van from the crime scene rolls up. Sam glimpses a body bag in the rear. From the Lodge comes Joanne See, about to board. But she diverts momentarily to Sam...

JOANNE  
Karen was my patient. And my friend.  
I'm sorry for your loss.

SAM  
You know me?

JOANNE  
Well, lots of pictures of you, in Karen's  
house.

SAM

I didn't see any.

JOANNE

I think...Gail took them down.

Sam winces, and yet -- a communion with Joanne See hangs there. She climbs in the van, it starts away.

A cell phone SOUNDS. Sam can see through the open window Nate SWEELY absentmindedly pawing in his jacket. When in fact, his blinking phone is on the seat of his own car. Sam notes the Caller ID on the handset: "ADAM SINCLAIR, GLEN EDEN RESORT." Then the *missed call* screen on the phone *resets* with a text: "GOOD JOB."

EXT. LAKE SHORE CRIME SCENE - DAY

Deputy Russell Gitz, a gypsum smear on his nose, looks like a kid in mud puddle as he tries to cast the tire tracks leading from the lake. Sam's Mustang pulls up. Gail, embarrassed by the sight, avoids Sam's eyes.

SAM

None of my business, but I've seen those tire tracks...

GAIL

Correct, it's not your business. And yes, they match the tire pattern in Lyle Simms' parking spot.

Whoa. The girl's got chops. Sam is impressed.

GAIL (CONT'D)

(deferential)

Russell...you're all over this...you want me to head back, jump on the paperwork?

RUSSELL

Right!

(to Sam good-naturedly)

Kid's got promise. Me, I love investigations. All except the details.

EXT. LODGE - FRONT DECK - DAY

Sam's Mustang swings back from the crime scene. The "Sweely Realty" car still rests at the Lodge.

Eva Banks is sitting on the steps to the deck, dabbing at her muddy pants with cleaning fluid. She looks up. From the passenger window, Gail extends her card.

GAIL

Mrs. Banks, when your husband contacts you, please have him call me.

EVA

You want to see my husband?

GAIL

Yes, and the vehicle he's driving too.

EVA

Vee..veeheek...

SAM

(translating)

*Camion.* You from...where? Columbia?

EVA

Si. Tumaco.

Gail glances at Sam. Her turn to be impressed.

EXT. FOREST HIGHWAY - SAM'S MUSTANG - DAY

The Mustang powers through the gate; Gail's on her radio.

GAIL

Nadine, could you please run a check on Lyle Simms' pickup...put a search on the truck and the possible driver, William Banks. Oh, and remind the Sheriff, he promised to play shortstop at six.

Sam has locked to a passing billboard -- calling for the election of "*Clyde Bixby*" as McKenzie County Sheriff. "*Experience You Can Trust. For a Change.*" Sam notes the image of the candidate -- Bixby is a portly sixty.

SAM

What's the story on Bixby?

GAIL

Sheriff before Tim. Til he termed out, now he wants his throne back.

SAM

Nice guy, your Sheriff. You interested?

GAIL

(red-faced)

What? No! We're both new, he's giving me a chance...

SAM

He with the reporter?

GAIL

They date. A lot.

SAM

She strikes me as competitive.

GAIL

We were both up for Homecoming Queen. I won. She hacked her hair to spikes.

SAM

Hey, she could pass for a queen in the Bronx. How about you, you got a love life?

GAIL

(changing the subject)

You can tell a Columbian Spanish accent?

SAM

Thirty years in three different boroughs, you turn into a citizen of the world.

GAIL

Well, except for Oregon.

It's there. Between them. Sam fumbles with a CD, stuffs it in an after-market player. "COWBOYS AND ANGELS."

SAM

Looka this. Found it in a drawer. It was yours, remember? George Michael. I took you to his concert back when. You and your friends. In Jersey.

GAIL

(almost drawn in, then...)

Guy turned out to be a perv. Be careful who you trust.

A ROAR as the "Sweely Realty" sedan guns past them and, ahead, turns into a luxurious drive. Stone pillars proclaim: "GLEN EDEN RESORT." Sam slows.

GAIL (CONT'D)  
Keep going. What are you doing?

SAM  
Your local real estate baron got a call, then a text, while he was in the Lodge. From the "Glen Eden Resort."

GAIL  
You were *reading* his phone?!

Sam suddenly wheels into the resort.

GAIL (CONT'D)  
Would you please butt out!

SAM  
The message said, "Good job." Of what?

Gail starts to protest. But something has kicked in, just as with Sam. A scent. The tingle of the hunt.

INT. GLEN EDEN RESORT - DAY

Gail and Sam enter the lobby -- as opulent as the Lodge was rustic. Closest thing to fishing this crowd gets, is caviar. Gail glances at the office suite on the second level. Spies Nate Sweely. Just as she starts there...

ARMANDO'S VOICE  
Gail?

Near the exit, a man carrying a mat, ARMANDO, has spotted Gail, comes back to her. Pony tail, garbed in linen, he reeks intimacy. As much as she'd like to shield from Sam what follows -- doesn't work.

ARMANDO  
I miss you.

GAIL  
Kind of busy, Armando.

ARMANDO  
Find your shanti, we can talk about this.



GAIL

I never lost my shanti. Just the three months we spent together.

She marches to the elevator. Sam falls in stride.

SAM

You were doing a number with that gumba?

GAIL

"*Doing a number?*" You know Miami Vice has been cancelled, right?

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE - GLEN EDEN RESORT - DAY

START ON a digital camera. In Nate Sweely's hands. He and a Hugo Boss Suit are scanning photos we cannot see -- as Gail and Sam enter through the door marked: *ADAM SINCLAIR, President*. Surprised, Sweely snaps off his camera. The suit, ADAM SINCLAIR, 50, calmly steps to his desk.

SINCLAIR

Gail. Bet you're busy, sweetie. I just heard about Lyle Simms.

GAIL

We're trying to figure out what happened.

SINCLAIR

Funny, I drove by the Lodge this morning, on my way back from Portland. Who knew fish could be so dangerous?

Gail has noticed a big landscape blueprint on Sinclair's wall. "Phase Two." Lots of lines and arrows.

GAIL

What's with the photos, Nate? You two doing a project together?

SINCLAIR

(answering for a wary Nate)  
You know how it is...grow or die. We're always looking for investments.

GAIL

Like lake front property?

SAM

Geez, you're right, that big pond  
there...kind of shaped like Crystal Lake.

Sam points to the wall. A second map taped to the first  
shows Crystal Lake on the boundary of Glen Eden's land.

SINCLAIR

Who're you?

SAM

Sam McGrath. Bronx, New York. What's  
poppin'?

SINCLAIR

(to Gail)

Related?

GAIL

Only by blood.

Gail has moved to study the markings on the maps.  
Sinclair and Sweely edge toward the diagrams, a  
protective reflex. Sam, on the other hand, begins to  
fiddle with Sweely's momentarily abandoned camera.

SINCLAIR

Look, our business is our own, but I can  
say this...we've been looking to develop  
a championship golf course. Good for us  
and good for McKenzie County...why not?  
It's no secret the fishing lodge has been  
struggling financially.

Sam scrolls two pictures on Sweely's camera. INSERT:  
PICS of the Crystal Lake Lodge and its dock. Impressed,  
Sam flips open a tiny panel on the camera...

SAM

Looka this thing. Records on this little  
square, huh? Retired guy like me, I  
gotta get one of these...I can shoot the  
mountains, the mooses...

Riveted to Gail, Nate now moves to reclaim his camera.

SINCLAIR

Nate has been helping Glen Eden prepare a  
bid for Crystal Lake. That's why I was  
in Portland, meeting with bankers.

(MORE)

SINCLAIR (CONT'D)

Of course, we had no idea Lyle Simms was going to die in a boating accident.

(then)

By the way, you have no appointment. Why are you here?

For an instant Gail is caught off-guard. Not Sam.

SAM

I'm a tourist. Looking for a hotel. What's a room cost?

SINCLAIR

Five hundred dollars.

SAM

That include the deed?

Gail nudges Sam toward the door.

GAIL

Sorry, Mr. Sinclair. I'll be sure to make an appointment next time. That could be soon. There was nothing "accidental" about Lyle Simms' death.

EXT. GAIL'S COTTAGE - DAY

Sam's car arcs into the homestead. Gail jumps out. Her boots and pants are caked in mud from the lake.

GAIL

You should get to the motel before it fills up.

SAM

Right. You're busy, huh?

GAIL

Yes. I've got to change. I've been called everything from a Water Girl to Deputy Doll...people see me working like this, I fully expect Dirty Harriet. The Evergreen Motel's on the south end of Summit Street, you can't miss it.

(Sam hasn't moved)

Like, leave.

He doesn't budge. Gail glares.

SAM

I left my suitcase in the house.

INT. COTTAGE - DAY

Sam follows the rankled Gail into her front room. She spies his bag in the corner.

GAIL

There. Ghawd, you're days on the road with one suitcase?

SAM

What can I say, I'm a clothes horse.

This, from a guy dressed like Oscar Madison. Gail frowns, shoots into her bedroom.

Sam scans the living room, drifts to a family scrapbook on the piano. INSERT a picture of a younger Karen and Sam, on a blanket in Central Park. Sam holds baby Gail lovingly. Sam flips pages. INSERT a second photo: A posed souvenir from the "*St. Barnabas Father-Daughter Dance, 1990.*" A ruddy Irishman in his fifties has his arm around 10-year-old Gail. Sam's eyes glisten.

Gail reappears, in a dark suit. Badge now added to her belt. In time to SEE Sam swipe at his eyes. Gail feels a stab of emotion. But again she hardens -- takes the scrapbook and sticks it in the piano bench.

SAM (CONT'D)

I forgot. Uncle Ryan used to fill in for me now and then. You hear from him?

GAIL

Yeah, every tax season. But I'll say this. He was here for Mom's service.

SAM

I'm sorry.

GAIL

Me too. Couldn't even make her funeral? Why are you here now, Sam?

SAM

"Sam?" What ever happened to "Dad?"

GAIL  
My question exactly. For 20 years.

The moment is snapped by Gail's RADIO.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)  
Four-oh-nine.

GAIL  
Nine.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)  
Gail, better get here quick. Your case  
just broke wide open...

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY

Modern, but crafted from logs to appeal to the tourists.  
Deputy Russell Gitz leads Gail and Sam down a hallway.

GAIL  
You got a positive ID?

RUSSELL  
The California DMV record squares, he's  
who he says he is...William Eugene Banks.

Russell leads Gail and Sam into the colorful bull pen --  
where sleek computers compete with antiquated taxidermy.  
A figure sits with his back to the door.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
Want to tell Detective McGrath what you  
told me, Mr. Banks?

The man turns. Eyes red. BILLY BANKS may be linebacker  
tough, but he's on the verge of a cracking...

BILLY  
I killed Lyle Simms.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - BULL PEN - DAY

Russell grins like a Cheshire as he pours coffee for Sam.

RUSSELL

Just for you...our New York blend.

SAM

Yeah, what's that?

RUSSELL

Eight dollars a cup.

Russell loves his own joke. Behind them, Gail and Sheriff Tim Burke hover over Billy Banks.

BILLY

When Lyle invited us up, I thought it was just for old time's sake...

GAIL

It was more than that?

BILLY

He wanted...to stage a publicity stunt. Lyle was gonzo. What better way to rescue a dying business than to make people think his lake was full of jumbo trout?

TIM

So Lyle recruited you.

BILLY

(nodding)

He figured the local reporter was ambition-on-a-stick, she'd jump at anything.

Tim glances uncomfortably at Gail. Sam misses nothing.

BILLY (CONT'D)

So we worked out the whole gag. Rigged a line, underwater guides, cable hooked to his truck. The second I heard "whopper" on the radio, I jammed the gas, just like we planned. I drive like a bullet over the hill.

GAIL  
But something went wrong.

BILLY  
We measured three times! Six hundred,  
twenty-two feet. We used to lay mines  
for the Navy, for godssake...

SAM  
Yeah? Me too. What ship?

Tim turns to Sam, then Gail. What's going on here?

BILLY  
U.S.S. Curts. Drug interdiction, for the  
DEA.

SAM  
Columbia?

BILLY  
(Sam knows his stuff)  
Yes sir.

SAM  
That where you met Eva?  
(Billy's nodding)

GAIL  
Do you *mind* if we ask the questions?

Sam shrugs innocently, reaches for sugar. Gail turns  
back to Billy...

GAIL(CONT'D)  
Who knew about your stunt?

BILLY  
Just me and Lyle...and June, so's she  
could steer the reporter.

GAIL  
No one else?

BILLY  
We're ex-military, man, need-to-know  
only. Two tours together, best years of  
my life. We were blood brothers.  
(emotional)  
I met Eva on our second liberty. Lyle  
helped me smuggle her out of Columbia.  
(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

Eva was being forced to marry some drug lord. Lyle said, if you love her, man, save her!

(he pokes at tears)

We got her out, I married her...me, Eva, Lyle, June...we were inseparable.

GAIL

In San Diego. The eighties?

BILLY

We had quarters on Coronado. June was a small town girl, I think Eva helped her survive all that time we were off to sea. Raising hell and taking names.

(in agony)

Lyle Simms was the best I ever knew.

GAIL

If this was just a prank gone bad, Mr. Banks, why'd you run?

BILLY

I didn't run! It was our plan. Soon as I reeled in the cable, circle back to town. Make sure the truck was seen. None of the yokels could add it up.

(raw)

You gotta believe me, it was an accident!

INT. TIM BURKE'S OFFICE - TIME CUT - DAY

Tim leads Gail and Russell into his glassed cubicle.

TIM

(eyeing Gail)

Russell, book Mr. Banks on...?

GAIL

The act was reckless. Manslaughter two.

TIM

Manslaughter two. For now.

RUSSELL

Man-two. You and me think alike, Sheriff.

That seems to depress Tim as Russell exits. Tim reaches his desk, is quickly checking messages, confirms Russell is out of range.



TIM

Sometimes I'm amazed the people of McKenzie County let me out of a patrol car. You ought to be Sheriff.

GAIL

I don't have your command presence.

TIM

Just don't take another job any time soon. You're coming to my re-election party, right? Friday night?

GAIL

If I get my cleaning back on time...I got one dress that works.

TIM

(an admiring mutter)  
You kidding? They all work.

GAIL

(did she hear that?)  
What?

Something happens to Gail. Her cheeks color. Her eyes drop. Tim fidgets too. Sexual tension, is what it is.

TIM

Sorry. "Off limits." But come. Really.  
(she's nonplussed)  
I need you.  
(her heart's racing)  
To answer questions from...  
(the message in his hand)  
Adam Sinclair. My major campaign donor and the guy still makes me nervous.

GAIL

He uses money like a club.

TIM

See, you deal with that better than I do.

GAIL

You've just got to stand up to him.

TIM

(reading the message)  
Like you we're doing? This morning? You were "badgering" Adam Sinclair?

GAIL  
 (thrown)  
 My dad was looking for lodging...

Tim is drawn to their view of the bull pen: Sam's still engaged with Billy Banks. Tim punches his INTERCOM. Now they can HEAR Sam and Billy.

SAM (ON THE BOX)  
 You said you measured the cable run.  
 How'd you know where to stop?

BILLY (ON THE BOX)  
 We spray-painted a tree. Orange.

Tim's intrigued with Sam. Even as the info piques Gail.

TIM  
 What's your Dad do?

GAIL  
 He's retired.

TIM  
 What *did* he do?

GAIL  
 (difficult beat)  
 He was a cop.  
 (then quickly)  
 Listen, I'm going to run back out to  
 Crystal Lake. Tie up some loose ends.  
 Okay?

TIM  
 Sure, but you know what else you might  
 do?

GAIL  
 What?

TIM  
 Take your father.

On the brink of protest, Gail wills acceptance.

EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE - LATE DAY

One pine, in a sea of pines, sprayed orange. CAMERA BOOMS higher to SEE in the distance, at the scene of the crime, Sam's car headed this way. Gail, a passenger.

GAIL

You were *not* in the Navy, by the way.

SAM

Uncle Grady was. Remember him? Always brought Bushmills to your birthdays...

GAIL

No. Where is he now? Jail?

SAM

Of course not. Rehab.

GAIL

Ah. He's the white sheep.

They reach the impossible-to-miss tree. Gail and Sam step from the car. Sam notices Gail carries a metallic case, pulls from it a small electronic device. Sam ignores it -- instead, glances back to the lake shore. It's now hidden by the hill in between.

SAM

Lake's disappeared. No way Banks could have seen Lyle from here.

GAIL

Billy had to assume, based on this pre-measured stop-point, Lyle was idled in the shallows.

SAM

Hidden from the Lodge, free to disconnect himself from the cable.

GAIL

Except. Billy had pulled Lyle straight into the rocks on shore.

(eyeing her device)

But. We're not 622-feet from the lake. It's 800 feet.

Sam realizes Gail's little black box is a GPS.

SAM

I had a gut-feeling we might be further away.

GAIL

Yeah well, gut's are fallible.  
(the GPS)  
Not this.

Suddenly she's pacing back toward the lake, eyes on the readout. Sam trails.

Gail scans the pines along the rutted off-road. Abruptly she finds her target, a small, freshly cut pine stump.

Gail kneels at the stub, now takes from her case an ultraviolet light. She uses the case to shade the stump, lights it up. INSERT: There is paint residue on the stump. Orange paint. Gail rises, eye to eye with Sam, Holmes & Watson.

GAIL (CONT'D)

Someone changed the stop point.

SAM

Someone wanted Lyle Simms dead.

SHOUTS abruptly ring out. From the lake. Gail and Sam hustle to their car...

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - DOCK - LATE DAY

Gail and Sam speed toward the Lodge's boat dock -- SEE:  
a livid Ginger Reese chasing Nate Sweely to his car.

GINGER

You missed your calling, asshole! Find  
an ambulance to chase!

NATE

An ambulance wouldn't make as much noise  
as you!

Nate drives off hard in his "Sweely Realty" sedan. Just  
as Gail and Sam pull up. Sam gets out, peers at Ginger.

SAM

Sounds just like *my* neighborhood.

GINGER

I found him measuring the dock, taking a  
water sample. I tried to throw him off  
the property. It's what Lyle would have  
done...he's done it before.

GAIL

Lyle had problems with Nate?

GINGER

Nate Sweely is a vulture. Lyle would  
give this land to the Conservancy before  
he'd see it developed. He swore to me.

SAM

In blood, or over danish? Mind telling  
me, what exactly's your job title here,  
Ms. Reese?

GAIL

Assistant Manager. Ginger, what do you  
mean, you "tried" to throw Nate off the  
property?

GINGER

He said he had permission.

GAIL

From...?

GINGER

June Simms.

SAM

Maybe June's got her own idea of "going green."

GINGER

Maybe June's gone soft. God knows she's got a soft spot for Sweely.

GAIL

What's that mean?

GINGER

(beat, pulling back)

Maybe you should ask her. I'm going swimming.

Ginger is already walking toward the end of the dock, unbuttoning her shirt.

SAM

Where's your suit?

GINGER

No use for them.

SAM

Yeah? Can I go to the Lodge, get you a towel...

GAIL

Dad!

Sam turns. Happy, of all things. Gail called him "Dad."

INT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - RECEPTION DESK - LATE DAY

JUNE

Nate Sweely was just finalizing an appraisal of the Crystal Lake Lodge. In case I need a loan.

Behind the desk, June is swamped, frayed. Gail interrogates, as Sam nibbles berries from a bowl.

GAIL

So this is not about selling?

JUNE

I don't know yet. We're in debt. I've got two children in college. Family is everything.

SAM

Mrs. Simms, how long you had your relationship with Mr. Sweely?

JUNE

(surprised)

What's going on here? Lyle died in an accident...

GAIL

The cause of death is still open. June, what *is* your relationship with Nate?

June flusters -- a reticent woman now in the spotlight.

JUNE

He's a realtor. And. My friend.

GAIL

Good friends?

JUNE

It's no secret in Hidden Pines, growing up we used to date. As much as a preacher's daughter could date.

SAM

So, just for the record...who inherits this land?

JUNE

(with assurance)

Unless Lyle changed his will, I do.

Gail absorbs this, nods, pulls Sam toward the door.

GAIL

Alright. I'll be in touch.

(to Sam)

Come on. If we don't get moving, the Evergreen Motel will sell out.

JUNE

The Evergreen just called. They're full already...trying to place overflow.

Sam is staring toward the dock, and the lithe figure of Ginger cutting through the water. Which Gail sees.

SAM

I could always stay here...I'm into water sports...

GAIL

(propped smile)

Don't be silly...

EXT. GAIL'S COTTAGE - DETACHED GARAGE - NIGHT

Sam's headlights sweep Gail's still idled Ford and strike the detached garage studio behind her cottage...

GAIL

Just tonight.

SAM

You see this mick complaining? You saved me 500-dollars.

Through a doggy-door in the garage pops an ungainly bloodhound. He wags his tail, BARKS -- though he seems to be barking not at the car, but at a tree.

GAIL

Atta boy, Chekhov. Don't let that birch make a move. Bloodhound. No direction.

SAM

Chekhov?

Now the dog is ambling toward them as they exit the car, tail wagging.

GAIL

Mom was directing "Cherry Orchard" at the college when she rescued him. She loved his melancholy...Chekhov it was.

Sam laughs softly, heads alone for his garage room. Stoops once to pet the hound.

SAM

I'm not surprised. Your Mom had a thing for strays.

The remark strikes Gail -- sinks in.



GAIL  
You should eat. Come to the house.

INT. GAIL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gail enters, eyes the cookware like she's never seen it before, locates a skillet. As Sam follows in...

SAM  
You cook! Your Mother was a great chef.  
She used to make these biscuits...

Gail turns. Saved by the bell.

GAIL  
You want biscuits?

INT. "UGLY ELK CAFE" - NIGHT

Sam and Gail down the last of their perfect baking soda biscuits. The space is an eccentric mix of greasy-spoon, "*Northern Exposure*" kitsch and Mediterranean color.

Closing nears. Three men brush past their table -- by their garb, Smoke Jumpers. The last Hunk is ripped, cocky, tattoos prominent. He leans into Gail.

SMOKE JUMPER  
Call me.

GAIL  
I would, but I lost your number. Right after I hit delete.

The Jumper and his buddies CACKLE, leave -- Sam glowers.

GAIL (CONT'D)  
(explaining herself)  
He had a sensitive side.

SAM  
Front or back?

From the counter with more coffee comes a jovial man in an apron, the suave Greek owner NIKOS, 50.

NIKOS  
You like the biscuits?

SAM

Like? I'd wrestle a sumo for these.

GAIL

Really? 'Cause, they're Mom's.

NIKOS

Karen was the first person to welcome me to Hidden Pines. She gave me her recipe.

SAM

(turns to Gail)

You see? The "stray" thing.

GAIL

Stray? How long did you and Mom date, Nikos?

NIKOS

Two incredible years.

SAM

Okay, I don't need to hear this.

GAIL

Like two teenagers on the back row...

Sam's pointing to a "FOR SALE" sign in the window.

SAM

So! You're hanging up your apron?  
What's that about?

NIKOS

I'm selling "The Ugly Elk." I'm retiring. To Crete. Eventually everyone must go home, don't you think?

SAM

Yeah. I'm retiring too. Can't wait for the good life.

NIKOS

Where will you retire, Mr. McGrath?

Sam glances at Gail. Careful.

SAM

I'm looking.

EXT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

Sam's Mustang pulls in. From the CD player, once more George Michael SINGS. Which no longer angers Gail.

GAIL

Okay, George Michael was hot. I was the envy of my school, after you took us to his concert.

SAM

I remember, you hit me up for ten bucks the next day, just to buy his new album.

GAIL

The Father-Daughter Dinner Dance was coming, we wanted to make sure we had just the right music.

(reliving it)

Bunch of 10-year-old Catholic school girls. So excited. My best friend wanted me to be sure and dance with her father, so she could dance with you. I told her "no." You were all mine.

SAM

(quiet beat)

And I was a no-show.

GAIL

Yep.

SAM

I was working a multiple homicide. Don't remember the perp. The M.O. All I remember, is your voice...on the phone...when I told you I couldn't make it. You know what you said?

GAIL

No.

SAM

You said, "That's all right, Daddy." Like you knew when I called, what it would be.

(then)

I should have done better, Gail. In a million ways. You deserved more.

Gail reels. Uncertain how to handle this.

SAM (CONT'D)

Sorry. I don't know when to shut up.  
It's a Bronx thing.

He steps out -- SEES Chekhov staring at an implement.

SAM (CONT'D)

Chekhov. Not that you couldn't whip its  
ass. But it's a lawn mower.

The dog follows Sam to the garage. Gail is warming.

INT. COTTAGE - MORNING

Gail comes into the kitchen from her bedroom, reaches for a coffee cup. She SEES outside -- Sam, in an ancient "Knicks" tank top, changing the oil in her Ford. Gail beams, locates another coffee cup. The PHONE RINGS.

GAIL

McGrath residence.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Good morning, Sam McGrath there?

GAIL

You're looking for Sam McGrath?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Right, this is Sergeant Jimmie Lopez,  
NYPD. He's not picking up his cell, but  
he left this number.

GAIL

He's kind of tied up, I can ask him to  
call you.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Please do. We expect him back from his  
disability leave next week. He needs to  
call in.

ON Gail. Floored.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. COTTAGE - MORNING

Gail marches to the Ford. Sam is crawling from beneath the car. We now can SEE a scar on his chest.

GAIL  
*Disability* leave?

Sam is gut-punched. His eyes drop to the scar.

SAM  
I picked up a slug. Some mook with a  
snout full of blow.  
(then)  
It's why I couldn't come to Karen's  
service. I was laid up in the hospital.

GAIL  
You couldn't frigging *call*?

SAM  
I should've...the news about Karen,  
it...hit hard. I always thought...we'd  
end up together.

GAIL  
You are so full of...you are not  
"retired." You're on leave. You're a  
New York cop. You'll die on Avenue A.

She storms back to the house. Sam tries to follow.

SAM  
Look, I didn't know how you'd take my  
visit...I was keeping the door open...

GAIL  
You always kept the door open! And every  
time you had to make a choice, you went  
right back to where you wanted to be.

Her cell phone SOUNDS. She jerks it from her pocket,  
doesn't even check the ID.

GAIL (CONT'D)  
What?!

GINGER

It's Ginger Reese. I'm with one of our maids. From Salvador. You need to hear what she just told me....

INT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - MAIDS' CLOSET - MORNING

A young maid, FELIPA, cowers before Gail, Sam and Ginger.

GAIL

Understand, we don't care about your immigration status.

GINGER

Felipa, just tell them...about the night before Senor Lyle died.

FELIPA

I hear Senora Eva and her huss-ban...

GAIL

Billy.

FELIPA

Si. Fighting. En espanol.

GINGER

Which they didn't think anyone else would understand.

GAIL

Fighting about what?

FELIPA

About Senora Eva's lover.

GAIL

And who was that?

FELIPA

Senor Lyle.

EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - DOCK - DAY

Eva Banks is scared. Gail and Sam question her on the dock, as a baffled June observes from her distant office.

EVA

Ever since San Diego...Lyle pushed me, to have sex. In secret. Said he might tell the Lozados where I live, if I didn't...

GAIL

The Lozados?

SAM

Drug cartel, family of the guy Eva left at the altar.

EVA

Billy, he was a hothead, even then. I lived in fear he'd find out...

GAIL

Did Lyle Simms come to you for sex, here at Crystal Lake?

EVA

The day before he died. I thought he was working, on the lake with Billy. He came to my room. He forced me to bed.

SAM

Did you try to fight him?

EVA

I was ashamed. Angry! After so many years! I told Billy that night.

GAIL

And Billy blew up? At you? Why would he be mad at you?

EVA

With my husband, it's always my fault.

SAM

So you argued. Did he strike you?

EVA

No. He went looking for Lyle.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

BILLY

You bet, we had a fight that night. Eva accused my best friend of hitting on her.

GAIL

Not "hitting on her," Mr. Banks. The accusation amounts to rape.

Gail, Sam and Tim Burke surround Billy Banks.

BILLY

Look, me and Lyle were working on the underwater pulleys. He went back to the Lodge for more beer.

(shrugs)

Lyle gets a buzz on, he gets affectionate. A lot of women find that attractive. Some women misunderstand.

SAM

Your wife says after you had words, Billy, you went looking for your best friend. In a fit of anger.

BILLY

Yeah, I found him. Lyle said he never had, never would, do anything with Eva. That was good enough for me.

INT. TIM BURKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Tim, Gail, Sam angle into Tim's office.

GAIL

One of them's lying.

TIM

But which?

(thinking)

Russell was shooting snooker with Judge Cole's bailiff, found out the Judge has gone mountain biking, due back tomorrow. We've only got a day before Billy Banks is arraigned and out on bail.

GAIL

Can we get a warrant, to search the Banks' room?

(off their look)

It's a fishing lodge. The bedding's changed weekly. If Lyle Simms had sex with Eva Banks, may be DNA evidence.



TIM

Slippery grounds. One procedural screw up and Bixby will have me out of a job.

SAM

Fortune favors the bold, my friend.

GAIL

Where'd you get *that*?

SAM

A racing form at Aqueduct, but still, it's a life lesson.

Beat. Tim steps to his desk, produces a paper.

TIM

Mr. McGrath, I'd like you to sign this, makes you a special deputy. By the book. "I's" dotted, "T's" crossed.

GAIL

Oh *please*, Tim...

TIM

Just...work together...the two of you. Your radio code can be "Bird Dog." Let's everyone know it's official.

GAIL

*Bird Dog?*

TIM

You're the Bird, he's the Dog.  
(Gail's coming unglued)  
It's *one* case.

EXT. COTTAGE - DAY

In a huff, Gail slams the door to her finally-in-service Ford. As Sam steps from the car, she grabs a dress covered in plastic and scurries to the house.

GAIL

Bird Dog!

SAM

Hey, you don't hear me complaining.

GAIL  
Why would you complain?

SAM  
I got second billing.

GAIL  
It's embarrassing.

SAM  
It's not like you're gonna hear "Bird  
Dog" every five minutes...

Her radio SOUNDS...

TIM'S VOICE (RADIO)  
Bird Dog, this is four-oh-one.

INT. COTTAGE - DAY

Gail crosses to a closet to hang the dress. Sam trails.

TIM'S VOICE (RADIO)  
Nate Sweely just phoned. He claims you  
stole the SD chip from his camera.

GAIL  
What?

Gail drills Sam with a look. He shrugs, wholly innocent.

GAIL (CONT'D)  
No idea what Nate's talking about.

TIM'S VOICE (RADIO)  
Alright, I'll deal with it. Ten-four.

Gail stares hard at Sam. Sam stares back. All of the sudden he pulls something from his pocket. An SD chip.

SAM  
Oh, look what I found in my cuff.

GAIL  
(horrified)  
You had no warrant.

SAM  
I wasn't the cop, you were.

GAIL

What were you going to do with it?

SAM

Tried all night. Couldn't figure out how to play it.

GAIL

Play it? You don't play it. You read it. If you don't know what it is, why steal it?!

SAM

You notice Sweely was pink?  
(beat, Gail's lost)  
In Sinclair's office. Cool mountain air, but the guy's flushed. Did you catch how he stared a hole in you, never blinked?

GAIL

(chagrined)  
No. What's your point? It's the shifty-eyed person who's lying.

SAM

Unless that person's a black belt in deceit. Like say, a guy who sells vacation real estate? What's he hiding?

She stares at her father. Suddenly she snatches the chip, sticks it in a reader linked to her PowerBook. INSERT: Photos upload on the screen. The Crystal Lake Lodge at sunset. The dock. The lake itself.

SAM (CONT'D)

"Play." What a putz, I am. You don't play a picture, huh?

GAIL

No. But you play...this.

She is staring at a section of the lake. The border of the picture is lined in red. Gail clicks on it.

The picture comes to life; it's a VIDEO. Shot from behind trees. Showing two people in the lake, entwined. Naked and in lust. Lyle Simms and Ginger Reese.

EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - INCINERATOR - DAY

BIG EYES well, stare a Gail's PowerBook screen. Ginger's eyes. She moves away from the image, pokes at blackened mess of debris around the incinerator.

GINGER

Gotta get rid of this relic. Something blew up, this morning. An aerosol can, I think. Hair spray maybe.

SAM

Or orange paint?

Sam has Ginger in his gaze like a big game target.

GAIL

About the video, Ginger...

Ginger squares her shoulders.

GINGER

I fell in love with Lyle. He promised me he would leave June...and leave Crystal Lake to the Nature Conservancy.

SAM

Yeah well, you wanna bag a tree-hugger, ply her with trees.

GINGER

(murderous glare)  
Isn't it against the law to take movies of people on private property?

INT. SWEELY REALTY - DAY

A storefront on Main. Sam hands the SD chip to Nate...

SAM

My bad, Mr. Sweely. I accidently dropped this widget in my cuff.

NATE

(miffed)  
Unbelievable...

SAM

Then I accidentally discovered your sex tape.

Just before Nate's shock can turn bellicose...

GAIL

Never mind the moral outrage, Mr. Sweely. If we checked Lyle Simms' email account, would we find one from you? With this video file attached?

NATE

What are you implying? That I was trying to blackmail Lyle Simms?

SAM

No, no. It's a direct accusation.

Nate glares at Gail -- no way she's backing off.

NATE

I sent Lyle the video. Along with a cash offer from Adam Sinclair...for the Crystal Lake property.

GAIL

What was in it for you?  
(Nate hesitates)  
The county attorney can subpoena Glen Eden's records.

NATE

A finder's fee. One million.

GAIL

And what was Lyle Simms' response?

NATE

He was defiant.

GAIL

Did you call his bluff, show the video to June Simms?

NATE

I did. She told me marrying Lyle Simms was the biggest mistake of her life.

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY

ON a court document marked "WARRANT," carried by Gail as she and Sam hurry toward the exit.

SAM  
I'm impressed, you got the search warrant. In New York we'd call that a fishing license.

Suddenly Russell Gitz flags them.

RUSSELL  
Guess who just paid a jailhouse visit to Billy Banks, on the way to their lawyer for a reading of the will?  
(a regular Billy Bush)  
June Simms.

GAIL  
Overhear anything?

RUSSELL  
(eyeing Sam)  
That would be a breach of professional conduct, spying on...

GAIL  
Russell.

RUSSELL  
Billy Banks threatened to kill his wife.

EXT. MAIN STREET - HIDDEN PINES - DAY

With purpose, warrant in hand, Gail briskly crosses an intersection, Sam and Russell in tow.

PASSING PHARMACIST                      PASSING MATRON  
Beautiful day, huh Gail?              Vi's back, we'll call!

On a mission, Gail still acknowledges each.

SAM  
Who are these people?

GAIL  
We call them "neigh-bors."

Cub Scouts on a field trip enthusiastically circle Russell. He pulls a quarter from one boy's ear. Sam takes in all this, holds it up to his own life...

SAM

Yeah well. I got a neighbor. I must have, I hear his TV at night.

EXT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY

Etched on the glass door: *Earnest Gillstrap, Attorney at Law*. Reflected over the writing, Gail and Sam rapidly near. But then -- a man steps through carrying a manila envelope. MAX, 42. Professorial, shaggy, ivory tower type. SEEING Gail, Max lights up.

MAX

Gail. My divorce. It's final. The wall is fallen.

GAIL

(carefully)

I'm happy for you, Max. Good luck with the rest of your life.

Max deflates, moves off. Sam is abashed. Gail bridles.

GAIL (CONT'D)

It's not Manhattan, okay? Mom used to say, you have to kiss a lot of frogs.

SAM

Do you keep, like, a frog scorecard?

GAIL

No!

SAM

Shall I start one?

But Gail already is walking after another who is exiting the lawyer's office. June Simms.

GAIL

June. Just curious, did your husband leave anything to the Nature Conservancy?

JUNE

(turns, surprised)

No. Why would he?

SAM

Well, might be good for a lifetime of water therapy with Ginger Reese.

June opens her car door, slides behind the wheel.

GAIL

Did you tell Nate Sweely, marrying Lyle was the worst mistake of your life?

JUNE

I learned long ago, my husband wasn't capable of fidelity.

SAM

What about you, Ms. Simms? Ever tempted to retaliate? Eye for an eye? Say, with Banks?

June, for a beat, looks startled. Before she speeds off.

INT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - CORRIDOR - DAY

Gail, Sam and two County Deputies are being led by the maid, Felipa, toward a guest room -- just as from that room bursts Eva. Cell phone in hand, Eva looks not just surprised to see the investigators, but terrified.

EVA

He's getting out!  
(off their confusion)  
June called me. Billy has hired her attorney, they're going to release him!

GAIL

Not until tomorrow, Mrs. Banks.

EVA

He will hurt me!

GAIL

Just...step aside please.

INT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - EVA'S AND BILLY'S ROOM - DAY

Gail, Sam and a Deputy comb the room. Bed sheets, glasses, nothing escapes scrutiny. From the window, Gail SEES the other Deputy sifting the incinerator for evidence. Something clicks. She drifts to the closet.



EXT. CITY LIMITS - HIDDEN PINES - DAY

Gail's Ford flies back to town, she and Sam within.

GAIL

The State Police in Springfield are supposed to handle our forensics. They take forever. Joanne lets us use a space at the hospital.

SAM

Could you drop me at the house? I'm supposed to do this conference call. From the NYPD. They're pissed about my "non-reponsiveness."

All it takes. Gail's defenses spike. She spins the car.

EXT. COTTAGE - DAY

The Ford stops in front of the cottage. Sam exits.

GAIL

Take all the time you want. I can do this on my own...Mom was an epic lesson in self-reliance. She picked Hidden Pines, packed us up. Never looked back.

SAM

But. It's not like we left each other's lives. There was always you. Besides, Karen didn't *want* to leave. Gangbangers shot up a police picnic in Battery Park, you were nearly hit. She took the first small-town teaching job she could get.

GAIL

Doesn't change how it turned out. She didn't need anyone. I don't either.

SAM

Do I have this all wrong? You want to do this on your own?

She clouds. Sam watches her speed off, shaken.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. MCKENZIE COUNTY REGIONAL HOSPITAL - LATE DAY

HUGE CLOSE-UP: A swirl of snake shapes, coated with beads of liquid, slides INTO FRAME. Gail's view through a microscope, we realize. Behind her, Joanne See enters through a door marked "AUXILIARY PATHOLOGY LABORATORY." The improvised work space is budget CSI. Joanne plops a microwaved sandwich in front of Gail.

JOANNE

Eat. Where's your father, he want something?

GAIL

I don't know what he wants. I don't know why he's in Hidden Pines. Who asked him?

Joanne studies this bitterness, makes a decision.

JOANNE

Your mother. The week before she died.

(stunned, Gail looks up)

She swore me to secrecy.

(then)

What the hell, we swore secrecy more times than the CIA. I held the phone for her. She said to your dad, "Gail will miss me. But she'll need you."

PAGE (INTERCOM)

Doctor See, front desk please.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECEPTION - LATE DAY

Waiting, Sam scans the wall behind the Receptionist, SEES: Photo of Dr. Joanne See, Chief of Staff. Another picture, Joanne in a charity hoops game, leaping. Another, Joanne covered in pie at a Kiwanis contest.

JOANNE

Mr. McGrath. This way.

INT. HOSPITAL - TILED CORRIDOR - LATE DAY

Joanne leads Sam -- who is admiring the figure she cuts.

SAM

You do it all, I'm impressed. What's next, going on the road with Lady Gag-me?

JOANNE

I credit Karen. After my ex took off to marry his heiress, Karen was relentless, she got me out of my shell.

SAM

Out of your shell. Nice. No one's got a shell in the Bronx.

JOANNE

(with a smile he can't see)  
I finished the autopsy. The tissue snipped from Simms head trauma matches the tissue on the log we found at the scene. After he hit the rocks, Lyle wasn't dead yet.

SAM

Someone finished him off.

JOANNE

Gail's been sweating over a microscope the last two hours. She didn't find semen on the Banks' bedsheets, but she's isolated something else. Pubic hair.

Sam, led to the door of the Lab, suddenly realizes...

SAM

Wait. Gail does the heavy lifting at a crime scene, then does the labs herself?

JOANNE

She double majored in Criminal Justice and Forensic Science. You didn't know?

SAM

No.

JOANNE

A shame.

SAM

I blew it, Joanne. A chance staring me in the chops 20 years ago, and I was too selfish to see it. I coulda been her father.

JOANNE  
Seems to me she needs an anchor.

SAM  
I've never been an anchor to her. Just  
dead weight.

JOANNE  
So why do you suppose, as her life's  
work...she chose this?

INT. AUXILIARY LAB - NIGHT

Joanne, Sam, enter. Gail is mounting a slide -- next to  
a pair of pants on the bench, a swatch cut from a knee.

GAIL  
(cool)  
How'd your call go?

SAM  
I said, "I'm retiring." They said,  
"Wonderful. We wanna make you a  
Lieutenant."

GAIL  
And what did you say?

SAM  
"No thanks."

GAIL  
So it's done?

SAM  
Morons. They insisted I sleep on it.

So it's not done. Gail smothers her dismay, dives onto  
the microscope. Sam fingers the garment Gail has cut up.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Wait a second. I think I've seen these  
before.

GAIL  
You have.

Gail rises, suddenly rocked by the image in her scope.

GAIL (CONT'D)

Oh m'God.

RUSSELL (V.O., RADIO)

Bird Dog...Bird Dog...

JOANNE

That's so cute.

Exasperated, Gail snatches up her portable radio.

GAIL

Yes, Russell?

RUSSELL (V.O., RADIO)

FYI, Billy Banks has been released.

GAIL

What?!

RUSSELL

Judge Cole got rained out on his ride, he's back. Ernie Gillstrap popped Billy out on bail.

(LAUGHING)

*That'll* teach Ernie.

GAIL

What do you mean?

RUSSELL (V.O., RADIO)

Banks stole his car. Tore out of here like a buck in Spring. Probably in Reno by now.

Gail and Sam need no words, they bolt.

EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - DAY

Gail and Sam race up to the Lodge in her Ford. In front are the Sweely Real Estate car, and a Lexus -- driver's door wide open. From the Lodge come PANICKED SHOUTS.

INT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - GREAT ROOM - DAY

Gail and Sam scale Lodge steps, rush in. Nate Sweely is holding June protectively, behind the reception desk.

Ginger is on the floor, blood draining from her nose.  
Billy has his wife Eva by the throat.

BILLY

You dreamed up the whole story and you  
know it! To set me up for murder!

GAIL

(pulling her Glock)  
Stop! Now! Let her go!

Billy glares at Gail, chest heaving. Sam braces, ready  
to intervene. Gail is fearless...

BILLY

She *knew* you'd think I killed Lyle  
because I believed he was screwing my  
wife. She's trying to frame me!

EVA

(hysterical)  
Lyle made me have sex, in our room, while  
you were working...I swear...

BILLY

Liar!

GAIL

Actually, Mr. Banks, we know your wife  
was in your bed having sex...but it  
wasn't with Lyle Simms. Was it, June?

June Simms looks shocked. Nate Sweely double-takes.

GAIL (CONT'D)

There's evidence of sex in Eva Banks'  
bedsheets, no question. Pubic hair.  
Female.

(Billy is agape)

We crossed matched the DNA of the hair,  
with blood taken from the streak on Lyle  
Simms' cheek. That was your blood, June,  
left when you embraced your husband. It  
was you, sharing Eva's bed.

June is shattered, tries to speak. Eva steels...

EVA

Don't say anything, June!

A moment on the brink of explosion, and then...

SAM

This is better than The L-Word. When did it start, Ms. Simms? Back in San Diego? All those nights, your husbands off to sea?

(Billy turns angrily to Eva,  
Gail re-aims her weapon)

Once you and Billy got here to the lake...didn't take long for the old tapes to start playing, huh?

INT./EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - FLASHBACK - DAY

SEE Lyle and Billy in a boat on the lake, laboring. FIND June alone, sorting reservations at her desk -- until a woman's hand brushes the nape of her neck. It is Eva. June can't help it, she's stirred.

BACK TO SCENE - PRESENT

Gail is gesturing to Billy, calm down and sit. He does.

GAIL

Stands to reason, Eva, while the boys were out rigging their stunt that day, you lured June to your bed.

INT. LODGE CORRIDOR - FLASHBACK - DAY

June comes nervously down the hall, KNOCKS on Eva's door. Eva answers, draws June into the room.

BACK TO SCENE - PRESENT

GAIL

That when you told Eva about the publicity stunt, June? How it would work? Pillow talk?

Ginger Reese, blotting with tissue her bleeding nose, rises in rage -- scowls at Eva and June.

GINGER

They were in this together!

JUNE

No! Eva, what did you do...?

SAM

Want me to tell her, Eva? You waited 'til dark, stole the can of paint and maybe some tools from Lyle's truck, and you changed the stop mark.

EXT. LAKE ROAD - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Eva makes a last saw-stroke through a 7-foot pine painted orange, the tree falls. Eva drags it away.

EXT. LODGE - INCINERATOR - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Shining with sweat, Eva slinks out of the darkness and throws into the incinerator a can of orange spray paint.

SAM (V.O.)

'Course, you probably realized your fingerprints were on the can of paint, so you trashed it.

BACK TO SCENE - PRESENT

Sam's on a roll, circles Eva.

SAM

All that was left, was to take your morning hike, hide in the trees, and let Billy hit his mark.

EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE SHORE - FLASHBACK - DAY

Eva peers through alder leaves. Across the lake RINGS Lyle's CRY...

LYLE (O.S.)

It's a whopper!

Somewhere, an ENGINE REVS, TIRES SPIN. Along the rocky shore below Eva, the water boils to life. HEAVY SPLASH. Lyle Simms is dragged across the lake surface. Skipping like God's mad stone-toss.



His jubilant expression suddenly CONTORTS, his eyes bulge. Boulders loom. Lyle Simms is pulled violently on shore, to his doom.

BACK TO SCENE - PRESENT

June Simms is horrified. Billy, rocked. Sam ratchets up.

SAM

When did you realize Lyle wasn't yet dead, Eva? When you slogged through the mud and unhooked the rig?

EXT. LAKE SHORE - FLASHBACK - DAY

Eva tracks through mud to reach Lyle. She pulls a hook on his hidden harness. Lyle GROANS. Eva is startled. HEAR a winch GRIND in the distance. The cable abruptly slithers uphill, dragging the harness as well.

Lyle MOANS again, is trying to rise! Eva is near panic. She spies the slimy moss-covered log next to Lyle. Grabs it. Raises it high. Eyes blazing. Strikes downward.

BACK TO SCENE - PRESENT

SAM

Left you just enough time to finish him off. And hide, until June came running from the Lodge and found her husband.

A WAIL escapes June. Billy lunges at Eva. Sam grabs Billy, pins him to the wall. Eva now desperately tries to regroup, snarls at Gail...

EVA

You can prove I love June, but you can prove nothing else! It's your story!

GAIL

Except, I remember you cleaning your pants, that day on the deck of the Lodge.

EXT. LODGE DECK - FLASHBACK - DAY

Just as Gail saw her before, Eva dabs at her muddy pants with solvent.

GAIL (V.O.)  
 You used cleaning fluid? On plain mud?  
 Who does that?

INT. LODGE - BANKS ROOM - FLASHBACK - DAY

Searching the room, as Sam pours through drawers in the b.g., Gail has moved to the closet -- eyes Eva's distinctive pants -- takes them from the closet.

GAIL (V.O.)  
 I tested those pants, Mrs. Banks. We  
 found traces of orange paint.

BACK TO SCENE - PRESENT

ON Eva. Cornered. June, in tears, creeps toward Eva.

JUNE  
 Eva, my family, my church...I told you it  
 was over!

EVA  
 (at Gail)  
 Maybe I scraped against that tree by  
 accident. On my hike.  
 (glaring at Ginger)  
 Maybe *she* killed Lyle! You don't  
 know...!

For a blink, Gail hesitates. Not Sam.

SAM  
 We haven't even finished the analysis of  
 the log we found at the murder scene.  
 Whose finger prints will we find on that  
 murder weapon, Ms. Banks?

Eva's last shred of resistance snaps. She breaks down.

EVA  
 I have been a prisoner. All my life. In  
 Columbia. In my marriage.  
 (to June)  
 What we had, in San Diego...the only  
 happiness I've ever known. I  
 thought...with Lyle gone, Billy in  
 jail...we had a chance. A *chance*.

EXT. CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE - DECK - DAY

Deputies take Eva from the Lodge in handcuffs. Gail and Sam emerge, she leans toward his ear...

GAIL

We were never going to get finger prints off that log, it's covered with slime.

SAM

You knew that. I knew that. Perp didn't know that.

She looks at her father with surprise and -- wonder.

GAIL

I would've never thought of that.

SAM

Yeah you would've. It's in the genes.

INT. HUCKLEBERRY HOTEL - BALL ROOM - NIGHT

The re-election fund-raiser for Sheriff Tim Burke. DJ, full bar, Northwestern Chic. Gail enters with Joanne See, awkwardly sheds her coat. Wow, we haven't seen Gail like this. Artful makeup & hair, come-hither little black dress with noteworthy décolletage.

Tim approaches -- clearly awed. Joanne, almost conspiratorially, takes leave.

TIM

Congratulations on the Banks arrest...

(looks about)

Couldn't come at a better time.

(looks at her)

Congratulations on that dress, by the way.

(covering his attraction)

Where's your father?

Gail searches the room, Sam's absent. Gail flashes disappointment.

GAIL

Off doing his own thing, I guess. He does that a lot.

TIM

You really *do* look amazing.

(she blushes)

You...want to dance?

(she hesitates)

Nothing in the book against it, I swear.

Just as Gail steps forward, Marsha Hoover looms up -- looking over-cooked Hollywood Red Carpet. Gail and Tim barely have time to react before Marsha is pulling Tim away toward -- the wealthy Adam Sinclair.

MARSHA

To *work*, Mr. Sheriff. Gail understands.

Tonight's not about play, we're in a war.

Marsha slings that last phrase straight at Gail. Gail is abandoned. Feels lost.

A new tune spins from the DJ. Wait a second, that's George Michael's "*ONE MORE TRY.*" Suddenly Sam is there.

GAIL

You made it. I'm shocked.

SAM

I had some business to take care of.

GAIL

Business?

Sam takes from his dated herringbone sports jacket...

GAIL (CONT'D)

A bill of sale?

SAM

For the Ugly Elk Cafe. I intend to operate it. As a bar.

GAIL

What do you know about running a bar?

SAM

Years of research.

GAIL

Did you...?

SAM

Slip a Lincoln to the guy playing the music?

(shrug of admission)

The Bronx thing.

(then)

At the risk of bodily harm...may I have this dance?

Gail wavers. She takes his arm, stiffly they begin to circle the floor. Maybe it's the music, maybe it's her father's steady gaze -- Gail begins to mist.

Something catches her eye. Marsha has Tim on the dance floor as well. So much for fund-raising. Tim sneaks a look at Gail. Marsha spies this, pulls Tim closer. Gail pines. Sam misses nothing.

SAM (CONT'D)

I want you to know...not only are you the most beautiful woman in the room...you're the best detective in the room.

Gail blooms. Until their feet tangle.

SAM (CONT'D)

Sorry. I got all Travolta's moves, I just need a little practice.

GAIL

Such a crock.

SAM

I get better.

GAIL

We'll see.

END OF PILOT