

BLUE BLOODS

"Hushed"

Written by

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TEASER

EXT. ALLEY - DAY 1

CSU has the scene. All the TECHS are careful not to step on one another as they process a black SUV blocking the alley.

DETECTIVES DANNY REAGAN and MARIA BAEZ flash their badges as they arrive. A UNIFORMED OFFICER lifts the yellow tape for them to enter.

DANNY

I still don't understand what exactly it is that's got you so chipper this morning.

MARIA

A girl can't just be happy?

DANNY

What's his name?

MARIA

Why does there have to be a *him*?

DANNY

Fine. What's *her* name?

MARIA

Carmen. And Ana.

DANNY

Your mom and sister? Since when are you chipper about them?

The too eager M.E. (20s), waves them over.

M.E.

Detectives. We've been waiting for you for like forever.

MARIA

Yeah. The call went out as a suspicious death. What do we have? GSW? Stabbing?

M.E.

No, no. Nothing like that. The victim choked to death on his own vomit.

Danny and Maria exchange puzzled looks.

DANNY

You're new, right? You don't call
out a couple homicide detectives
for people who choke on vomit.

The M.E. puffs up with pride.

M.E.

You do when unknown persons
incapacitated the victim and caused
said vomiting.

Danny checks inside the vehicle.

The 400+ pound CORPSE looks peaceful behind the wheel.

DANNY

This guy looks like a heart attack
waiting to happen.

M.E.

That was my initial thought, too.
Actually, it's probably why I was
assigned this case. Had it not been
for my semester at the TSU's Body
Farm, I wouldn't have caught it.

MARIA

Body Farm?

DANNY

Research facility specializing in
decomposing bodies.

(to M.E.)

Caught what?

M.E.

I'll have to run a tox panel to
confirm, but this man died due to
an allergic reaction to nitrous
oxide.

MARIA

Laughing gas? You've got to be
kidding.

M.E.

I'd never kid about COD. It's
dissipated by now, but the vehicle
was full of the gas when I arrived.

MARIA

Was the guy a dentist? Maybe a
container he'd been hauling
ruptured?

Maria opens the rear of the SUV. It's empty.

M.E.

I got a little woozy when I opened
the door. To reach that level of
parts per million, you'd need
several concentrated canisters.
There isn't a single one in the
vehicle or in the surrounding area.

The detectives examine the area. Nothing.

INT. SUV - DAY 1

Danny opens the passenger side door. Checks the glove box.
Flips through the paperwork.

DANNY

The car is registered to TRPS.

MARIA

TRPS? Never heard of it.

DANNY

Yeah. We'll have to run it to get a
name. Got a concealed carry permit
here in the name of Theodore
Rossmore. We got an ID on the
victim, yet?

EXT. ALLEY - DAY 1

Maria looks to the M.E.

M.E.

I wouldn't let anyone mess with the
body until you arrived.

MARIA

Good call. The scene's been
documented?

After his nod, she waves a couple TECHs over to remove the
body. She stands back while the guys struggle to remove the
dead weight from the SUV.

The man's pants leg rides up in the commotion.

DANNY

Whoa, whoa, whoa.

MARIA

What is it, partner?

DANNY

Secure that weapon. Ankle holster,
right leg.

The techs lay the body on the waiting bag then step out of the way. Maria takes possession of the gun. She searches the body for other weapons. Comes up empty.

MARIA

Got it.

She rolls the body a bit to retrieve the wallet from his back pocket, though.

M.E.

Tsk, tsk. I thought everybody knew you weren't supposed to sit on your wallet anymore. Throws the spine out of alignment.

Danny moves on to the backseat while Maria goes through the wallet.

MARIA

ID confirmed. I've got a New York driver's license for one Mr. Rossmore. I've also got some business cards. TRPS. Theodore Rossmore Protective Services. What was he protecting?

Danny stands back to survey the scene as a whole.

DANNY

That, partner, is the million dollar question.

INT. PATROL CAR (DRIVING) - DAY 1

OFFICERS JAMIE REAGAN drives while EDDIE JANKO rides shotgun. She consults an app.

EDDIE

Turn left up here. The bodega should be on the corner.

Jamie follows her instructions, but can't help grousing about it.

JAMIE
What's wrong with the usual spot?

EDDIE
It's usual. Don't you want to get out and expand your horizons?

JAMIE
I take it you do.

EDDIE
Come on. This is our city. We can't let the tourists have all the fun.

Jamie finds a parking space and radio's in.

JAMIE
This is car 542. We're going 10-63 at 37th and 9th.

DISPATCH
Copy 542. Enjoy your meal.

Jamie eyes the bodega a little bit down the block. He's skeptical.

JAMIE
Thanks.

INT. MAMA NABILA BODEGA - DAY 1

Jamie and Eddie enter the bodega. Middle Eastern music plays. Incense rises near the register.

They interrupt an obviously tense moment between a couple average white GUYS (20s) who are invading RASHEED AL-WAFIQ'S (50s) space. Frightened, his wife, NABILA (50s), holds on to son, ASHAR'S (20s) arm.

JAMIE
Is there a problem here?

The guys smile and back down when they see Eddie and Jamie standing in the doorway.

GUY
No problem, Officer. No problem at all.

EDDIE

Really? Does that look like "no problem" to you, partner?

JAMIE

No it does not.

The guys step further away. One tosses a pack of cigarettes on the counter.

GUY

Forget about it. Plenty of other places who sell both cigarettes and lotto tickets.

The guys brush past Eddie, obviously expecting her to move, on their way out the door. She doesn't.

Rasheed summons up a smile.

RASHEED

There was no need for you to come all the way out here. The neighbor lady. She is too nosy. She shouldn't have called and bothered you.

EDDIE

No one called. We're here for lunch. We heard that this bodega serves the best biryani in New York.

Nabila smiles and comes out of her hiding place.

NABILA

Yes, yes. You must eat.

While she serves them up a couple plates, Jamie looks out the door. The customers are still hanging around.

JAMIE

They come in here often?

RASHEED

They are not a worry. Come, sit and eat.

He escorts them to a couple small tables in the back deli area. Nabila serves them.

ASHAR

Why don't you just tell them?

Rasheed switches to Arabic to scold him.

RASHEED
(Arabic)
We do not need to invite more
trouble. Hold your tongue.

Ashar rolls his eyes and heads into the back room of the bodega.

It's awkward, but Jamie and Eddie taste the food. It's amazing. Even Jamie is impressed.

JAMIE
My compliments to the chef.

INT. SQUAD - DAY 1

Danny hangs up the phone as Maria sits at her desk across from his.

DANNY
The registration came back on the SUV. TRPS isn't owned by the victim. The company was incorporated by one Mr. Denison Jeffers of Brooklyn. The SUV also comes back to him.

Maria freezes. Stunned.

MARIA
Are you sure?

DANNY
You know the guy or something?

Maria does a quick image search.

MARIA
If you would bother to stay current on pop culture, you would too.

She turns her monitor for him to see the gazillion image results on the screen.

MARIA (CONT'D)
Denison Sculls Jeffers, stage name D. Scully. He's only the biggest musical talent to come out of Brooklyn. He just announced his Slick & Wet Tour. It's set to begin at the Gardens next month.

DANNY

Unless he's put on a few pounds,
that's not him in the morgue.

Danny goes around the desk to get a closer look at the photos. He points to one.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Enlarge that.

Maria clicks on the photo. Pushes in on the huge guy standing behind D. Scully as he signs autographs.

DANNY (CONT'D)

That's him. That's Mr. Rossmore.

MARIA

D. Scully's bodyguard. So now we
know what he was protecting.

DANNY

But was he on duty last night? I
think it's time we talk to this D.
Scully. Find out what he knows
about his bodyguard's extra
curriculars.

INT. DA'S OFFICE - DAY 1

ERIN REAGAN, running late, tries to shove files in an already overstuffed briefcase.

STEVE MASZRY (30s), timidly peeks his head in. He has a few files clenched tightly in his hand.

STEVE

Hey Erin. Got a moment?

ERIN

Actually, no. I was due in court
ten minutes ago.

(to assistant)

Alice, I need those copies.

STEVE

You're busy. Don't worry about it.

ALICE hurries in, hands Erin the copies. She stuffs them in the briefcase and the handle breaks. Half the contents spill out on the floor.

ERIN

No.

STEVE

It's okay. Let me help you.

Together, they quickly pick up the mess. Steve jerry-rigs the handle so she can use it short term.

ERIN

Thanks, Steve. You are the best.

STEVE

Knock 'em dead, Erin.

She races from the office. His supportive smile slides away, leaving him looking small, hopeless, and broken.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE**INT. DANNY'S CAR (DRIVING) - DAY 1**

Danny shoots a questioning look at Maria.

DANNY

You've gone all quiet all of sudden. What gives?

MARIA

It's just... If our DB was on duty, we've likely got a missing person on our hands, too.

DANNY

Let's not worry until there's something to worry about.

She nods. Goes back to staring out the window.

MARIA

I talked Mom and Ana into a girl's night. We have tickets to see D. Scully at the Garden. If he's dead, they will never let me live this down.

DANNY

It's not like you killed him.

MARIA

Try telling them that. And then there's the rumors. God help us if he turns out to be a second victim. The whack jobs will be coming out of the woodwork.

DANNY

What rumors?

MARIA

Just a bunch of unsubstantiated garbage. That he likes the girls a bit too young. Gets off on giving them golden showers and stuff like that.

DANNY

What makes you think they're bogus?

MARIA

C'mon, Reagan. A guy with that high a profile? The rumors go back decades. We would've busted him by now if the allegations were actually true.

A look passes between them. She knows she's being naive and he won't call her out. For now.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Believe me. If I ever see evidence to the contrary, I'll be the first to toss his sorry ass in the dirtiest cell I can find.

INT. MAMA NABILA BODEGA - DAY 1

Jamie and Eddie finish their meal. Ever attentive, Nabila clears their table.

JAMIE

Thank you, ma'am.

When she walks away, Eddie leans in to whisper:

EDDIE

We can't just leave. Those guys are still outside.

JAMIE

You noticed that, too.

Jamie gets up to head to the register. Ashar is behind it, but he's staring outside.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

How much do we owe?

ASHAR

Oh. Uh... Ten ninety five.

EDDIE

Reasonable and delicious.

Jamie pulls out his wallet. Keeps his eyes on it as if he's focused only on paying.

JAMIE

Is there anything you'd like to share with us? How often do those guys come around?

ASHAR

No schedule. Just whenever they're bored, I guess. That seems to be a lot more often these days. They scare away customers--

RASHEED (O.S.)

Ashar!

Jamie and Ashar look over at Rasheed as he reenters from the back.

RASHEED (CONT'D)

Pay my son no mind. They are a temporary nuisance. We do not wish to stir the pot.

Rasheed finishes up the transaction and hands Jamie his receipt. Ashar looks everywhere, except at him. He's hates being silenced, yet again.

INT. D. SCULLY'S CONDO - HALLWAY - DAY 1

JOSH STEIN (40s), balding in an expensive tailor-made suit, pounds on the door.

JOSH

Open the door, Denison!

He continues pounding as Danny and Maria round the corner.

DANNY

Hey. NYPD. What's with the racket?

Josh gives them a sheepish look.

JOSH

Sorry about that. Trying to rouse my wayward client. I told him not to go out partying last night. He's supposed to be in the studio right now. I'll just use my key. Please apologize for me to the neighbor who called you about the noise.

MARIA

I'm Detective Baez, he's Detective Reagan. We're not here about the noise.

DANNY

Who are you?

JOSH
I'm Joshua Stein, his manager. Has something happened? Is he okay?

INT. D. SCULLY'S CONDO - DAY 1

Danny and Maria follow Josh inside. The little man races from room to room, looking for D. Scully.

JOSH
Denison? Where are you? Denison?

Dejected, he comes back to the entry.

JOSH (CONT'D)
He's not here.

DANNY
Do you know where he could be?

Josh shakes his head and stalks around the room like a caged animal.

JOSH
I know where he's supposed to be. I haven't been able to get either him or Big Teddy on the phone all morning.

MARIA
You mean Theodore Rossmore?

JOSH
Yeah, his bodyguard. Big Teddy. I can't believe the two of them would do this to me today. Big Teddy is usually so responsible.

DANNY
Does D. Scully have a habit of disappearing?

JOSH
(snorts)
Only when he's...

He catches himself. Frowns at the detectives.

JOSH (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. You never said why you're here. If it wasn't the noise, then...?

DANNY

We found Mr. Rossmore's body behind the wheel of D. Scully's SUV this morning. We were wondering if he knew anything to help us figure out why.

Josh clutches the counter top. Genuinely shocked and saddened.

JOSH

Big Teddy's dead? How? Was it someone who was after Denison?

Danny and Maria exchange a look.

MARIA

Why would someone be after him?

Josh staggers to the nearest chair and collapses in it.

JOSH

Have you talked to his mother yet? She's going to be devastated? And the arrangements. We're going to need a special coffin...

DANNY

Mr. Stein. We need you to focus. Was D. Scully with Big Teddy last night?

JOSH

They're always together. Big Teddy would never leave D. Scully's side. Not for anything. Too many unstable people out there.

DANNY

Unstable enough to kill Big Teddy and kidnap D. Scully?

JOSH

Is that what you think happened?

MARIA

We're exploring all the angles at the moment.

Josh just stares at them for a moment. Almost in a trance, he stands and shuffles to a shelf of awards. He picks up a Grammy and stares at it.

DANNY

Do you have someone particular in mind when you mention unstable people?

Suddenly, Josh hurls the Grammy across the room hard enough that it goes through the plaster and lodges in the wall.

Danny and Maria draw their guns.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Hey! That's enough. Sit down.

Josh snaps out of his rage just as fast as he slipped into it. Tense moment over, the detectives lower their weapons.

JOSH

I'm sorry. What did you ask?

MARIA

Who would want to kidnap D. Scully?

Josh shrugs.

JOSH

Toss a rock. I'm sure you'll hit somebody he's pissed on.

DANNY

We've got a ticking clock here. If someone did take D. Scully, he likely killed Mr. Rossmore in the process. Your client could be in real danger. We need your help to find him.

Josh's eyes go real cold. He scribbles an address and phone number on a note pad and hands it to Danny.

JOSH

Let that asshole stay gone. I'll be at Mama Rossmore's if you need me.

Broken, the man trudges out the door leaving the stunned detectives in his wake.

MARIA

What was that?

DANNY

Still think there's nothing to those rumors?

Off Maria reconsidering her position.

INT. DA'S OFFICE - DAY 2

Erin strides down the hall and knocks on Steve's door. No answer. Alice comes by with some files.

ERIN

Have you seen Steve? He wanted to talk with me about something.

ALICE

I haven't seen him today.

Alice walks away, leaving Erin standing there puzzled.

EXT. FOOD TRUCK - DAY 2

DETECTIVE TIM SALYORS (50s), white guy who's still in good shape, pays for his food and walks off with a smile of anticipation.

DANNY (O.S.)

Detective Salyors?

Salyors turns to see Danny and Maria striding up. He sizes them up in that initial glance.

SALYORS

What can I do for you, Detectives?

DANNY

This is Baez, I'm Reagan out of the 54. Sorry to interrupt your meal. We caught a case and you may be able to offer a bit of insight. Your CO told us you were out here.

SALYORS

You mind walking with me? The only way the wife permits these tasty treats is if I walk while indulging.

DANNY

Be my guest.

The three fall into step together. Salyors tears into his food.

MARIA

We understand you worked a sexual abuse case involving a man named Denison Jeffers.

Salyors stops chewing and studies them both. He swallows hard. The once yummy food may as well be a turd.

SALYORS

Don't tell me he's at it again. I saw that he's back in town. Prepping for some tour. Slippery and Slick or some nonsense like that.

DANNY

Actually, we believe he's the victim. We found his bodyguard's body in his SUV and he's nowhere to be found.

SALYORS

Do yourself a favor. Don't bother. Couldn't have happened to a nicer guy.

DANNY

Care to elaborate?

Appetite gone, Salyors casts a sorrowful look at his food. He chucks it in a nearby trash can.

SALYORS

Jeffers is the lowest of the low. He's a straight up unapologetic pedophile.

MARIA

We know the rumors. What do you have by way of fact?

SALYORS

That is fact. Problem is, he's so damn smooth and charismatic that too many people are willing to write off said facts as just rumors.

He slants a pointed look at Maria.

DANNY

We're all ears.

SALYORS

Jeffers is the poster child for growing up poor and making it big. The folks in his old neighborhood were so proud. Then the rumors started.

(MORE)

SALYORS (CONT'D)

He liked to hook up with prepubescent girls and bless them with urine on their chests so their breasts would grow.

MARIA

That makes no sense whatsoever.

SALYORS

You know how kids are. They want to believe anything an adult tells them. Add in a little celebrity and you've got a recipe for disaster.

DANNY

We didn't see where he was ever charged...

SALYORS

The guy's like Teflon. Dozens of victims and I could never get anything to stick. With his millions, a couple thousand to pay off a witness was just the cost of doing business.

DANNY

How is he not broke after paying off that many people?

SALYORS

That's the thing. It wasn't all cash. One girl's father ended up with a bass player credit on Jeffers album. That man no more plays an instrument than I do. No, Jeffers is an expert at giving the witnesses what they desire most and making the whole thing go away. If that failed, he resorts to outright intimidation.

MARIA

Without witnesses, the prosecution couldn't make their case.

SALYORS

One victim did make it to trial. His equally scummy lawyers drew things out so long, the girl grew up. She no longer looked like a child victim when she took the stand. The jury acquitted him and his record was expunged.

MARIA

The justice system failed these girls.

SALYORS

That's rich. The real kicker: the justice system was never set up to protect these victims.

DANNY

How do you mean? It's there to protect everybody.

SALYORS

If you truly believe that, Detective, you've already lost. Nobody matters less to our society than young black women. Nobody. Jeffers knows that and uses it to his advantage. We'd be having a different conversation right now if one, just one, little white girl had been among his victims and you both know it.

Maria looks away, uncomfortable.

Off Danny trying to swallow this truth.

EXT. MAMA NABILA BODEGA - DAY 2

There's tons of foot traffic. Jamie and Eddie make their way through the crowds toward the bodega. The "closed" sign is up.

EDDIE

Strange. It's the middle of the day.

JAMIE

And you'd think they'd want to capitalize on this rush.

Jamie peeks in the window. Ashar opens the door a crack.

ASHAR

You're back? My mother's biryani is not that good.

JAMIE

We were concerned.

Eddie nods across the street at the customers loitering and watching them.

EDDIE
Apparently with good reason. Are they still harassing you?

Ashar pauses a moment to think. He checks behind him. Not seeing his parents he opens the door so Jamie and Eddie can see inside.

The once pristine floor is covered with blood. A pig's head sits in the middle of the mess.

ASHAR
What do you think? Are we still being harassed?

EDDIE
What can we do to help?

ASHAR
I don't know, teach me magic so I can get that thing out of here without touching it.

EDDIE
What?

JAMIE
It's haram. It's forbidden for him to touch it.

ASHAR
You know the Quran?

JAMIE
Only bits and pieces. Why don't we get it for you?

Eddie looks at Jamie like he's crazy. No way she's touching that thing. He gives her a pointed look. She relents.

EDDIE
Yeah. We're happy to help.

Just before they can step inside, Rasheed comes out of the back with a large stick. He spots the officers and shakes his head.

RASHEED
No, no, no. You cannot be back here today.
(MORE)

RASHEED (CONT'D)

We were fine before my son decided
to open his mouth with complaints.
You make things worse.

He gestures toward the head with the stick.

JAMIE

That is not our intention, sir.
We're here to help you.

RASHEED

No. The police never help. We will
take care of ourselves. Please. Do
not return.

Jamie and Eddie have no choice. They step back outside.
Rasheed closes the door and locks it in their faces.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT 2

Erin knocks on the door. She pauses in the entrance when it
just swings open.

ERIN

Steve? It's me, Erin. Are you here?
Your door is open.

No answer.

Erin enters and looks around the insanely messy apartment.

Newspapers all over the place. Stacks in corners. Crime
stories have been cut out and hung on every available
surface. What's missing among the clutter is anything
personal. No photos. No trinkets. It's all paperwork. Case
files. Junk everywhere.

Erin makes her way through the debris to leave a note on the
desk. She freezes.

Steve's body is on the floor. He's been shot in the head.
Blood and brains are splattered everywhere.

Off Erin's horrified face.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT 2**

COPS secure the scene. TECHs collect evidence. The CORONER loads the body while a shaken Erin looks on.

ANTHONY ABETEMARCO ponders the scene now that the body has been removed. He reads a note on the computer.

ANTHONY

"I tried."

He waves Erin over.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Did you see this?

ERIN

Yeah and it's bunk. Whoever heard of a two word suicide note? And where's the gun? How did he get rid of it *after* he died?

Anthony studies the area. Puzzles things out.

ANTHONY

The M.E. said he was standing when he shot himself. Stands to reason...

He lifts a stack of fallen newspapers. The gun is there. He beckons an OFFICER over to collect and bag it.

ERIN

Steve did not kill himself. He came to me yesterday, wanting to talk about something. A case, I think. He was not a man bent on taking his own life.

ANTHONY

You've got to stop beating yourself up over this.

ERIN

I'm not beating myself up. You know who I am going to beat up though? Whoever killed him. Criminals don't get to target the ADAs and get away with it. I'll see to that.

INT. SQUAD - DAY 3

Danny comes in. Spots Maria already at her desk going through the files Salyors sent over.

DANNY

You been here all night?

MARIA

I couldn't sleep. There are so many of these girls. The things he did to them... Any one of them or their families could've gone after D. Scully.

DANNY

You're positive he was the target and Rossmore was collateral damage.

She picks up a file and tosses it his way.

MARIA

Tox screen came back. That M.E. was right. Rossmore died from nitrous oxide poisoning.

DANNY

I guess that's our first break. Nobody else in that office would've ever considered this possibility. Heck. I barely considered it.

MARIA

It looks like the perp flooded the vehicle with the gas. It would've made D. Scully compliant. He would've just gone with them.

DANNY

You checked surveillance in the surrounding area, yet?

MARIA

Yeah. There's nothing. The area may as well have been a dead zone.

Maria drops the file she'd been reading and rubs her eyes.

MARIA (CONT'D)

My God, Reagan, I don't even know where to start, we have so many suspects. And the things he did to these young women? I'm no longer sure I want to find him.

Danny pulls up a box and sits at his desk.

DANNY

Welp, that's the joys of the job,
Baez. Finding scumbags and saving
them from themselves.

Maria checks her watch.

MARIA

We gotta start somewhere, right?
Well there happens to be a support
group of his victims meeting pretty
soon. Think we should check it out?

Disgust settles on Danny's face.

DANNY

He's molested enough women that
they can form their own support
group?

MARIA

Still want to find him?

DANNY

Lead the way.

They head out.

INT. PRECINCT - DAY 3

Jamie and Eddie walk down the hall after roll call.

JAMIE

Incidents of harassment against
Muslims is already on the rise. I
hate the idea that we might've
caused it to escalate at that
bodega.

EDDIE

What can we do? They made it pretty
obvious that they don't trust cops.

JAMIE

Maybe it's time someone proved them
wrong.

EXT. STREET - DAY 3

Late, Erin hurries out of her building and sets off down the street at a fast clip.

A black SUV pulls up at the curb a little bit in front of her. She sighs and heads over.

The window in the backseat eases down revealing FRANK REAGAN.

ERIN
Are you stalking me?

FRANK
That would be a crime.

ERIN
Then what are you doing here?

FRANK
I heard about Steve. That you found him.

ERIN
All true.

FRANK
Well. Are you okay?

ERIN
I've been an assistant D.A. for how long now? This wasn't my first DB. I'm fine.

She steps back and checks her watch.

ERIN (CONT'D)
At least until Judge Malloy gets ahold of me. She hates tardiness.

FRANK
Get in. I'll give you a ride.

ERIN
Thanks, Dad. In this traffic, it'll be faster to walk.

She's already backing away.

ERIN (CONT'D)
Love you.

Frank watches her go, concern all over his face.

FRANK
Love you, too.

INT. CHURCH - DAY 3

All dark-skinned African American women, KAMIRIA (30s), MEG (20s) HATHORA (30s), RONEISHA (30s) sit in a circle in the middle of the room. IVY (20s), who speaks from the middle of the circle has their complete attention.

IVY
...the dream again. But this time I was in the drivers' seat.

Danny and Maria quietly listen just inside the door.

IVY (CONT'D)
The edge of the cliff was still rushing toward me, but I wasn't afraid. I was in control. It was just like in a movie. You know. Where the car spins around and skids, but stops just before ending in total disaster. That's what happened. The other door swung open and the box that had been on the seat flew out over the cliff, but I was safe. And I was whole.

She pauses to take a breath. Smiles.

IVY (CONT'D)
Next thing I know, I was standing on the edge of the cliff, looking over. For the first time, I didn't think about jumping. Instead, I just enjoyed the view. It was beautiful.

The other ladies clap and Ivy takes her seat.

HATHORA
That's about all we have time for today...

She spots Danny and Maria.

HATHORA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. This is a closed meeting.

Outed, the detectives show their badges.

DANNY

Our apologies, ladies. This is Detective Baez, I'm Detective Reagan. We were hoping to talk to with you all about Denison Jeffers.

RONEISHA

This is a sacred space. That name is not permitted to be uttered here.

Danny and Maria exchange looks.

DANNY

Okay. Well, it seems he's missing. We're just following up on every lead. Have any of you heard from him lately?

The ladies all exchange looks.

KAMARIA

He's missing? Jesus be a fence. He's at it again.

Roneisha gives her a comforting hug.

MARIA

At what again?

MEG

You must know or you wouldn't be here. This is what he does. He goes missing when he's lured some new unsuspecting child into his clutches. Try his bodyguard. Big Teddy always knows where *he* is.

DANNY

That's the thing. We found Mr. Rossmore's body in Jef... *his* SUV. We think whoever took him, is responsible.

Shocked looks all around.

MEG

Big Teddy's dead? No. That can't be right.

Roneisha starts sobbing. Heart-wrenching, wailing sobs.

RONEISHA

No, Lord, not Big Teddy.

DANNY

You all knew him well?

IVY

He took care of us. You know...
after.

The ladies close ranks around Roneisha.

DANNY

Took care of you how?

HATHORA

He got us clothes. Gave us a place
to clean up. Then made sure we got
home safe.

MARIA

You're saying Big Teddy knew all
about what he'd done to you and
kept quiet about it?

MEG

What could he do? He was in just as
tough a spot as we were. Keeping
his mother in a decent assisted
living facility ain't cheap. *He* was
footing the bill.

KAMARIA

I've never blamed him for choosing
his mother over us.

HATHORA

Detectives, if he's gone off the
grid and Big Teddy isn't around to
temper him, I'm betting there's a
little girl out there somewhere in
serious trouble.

MARIA

So you're saying we need to run
down all the girls who've gone
missing in the city?

HATHORA

Not the whole city. Prospect Park
is his hunting ground. For better
or worse, he always goes home.

INT. THE LITTLE SHOP BODEGA - DAY 3

Jamie and Eddie head inside the bodega. Their inventory is virtually identical.

The owner, HANDSOME HARRY (50s), stands to greet them with a toothy smile.

HANDSOME HARRY
Officers. To what do I owe the pleasure?

JAMIE
I'm Officer Reagan, this is Officer Janko. Are you familiar with a bodega called Mama Nabila's?

HANDSOME HARRY
The Muslim shop that opened a last year around the corner? Yeah. It's my job to know.

EDDIE
So then you've heard that the owners seem to be a target for harassment.

Harry's smile falls away.

HANDSOME HARRY
It's just awful, right? Good people set up shop and just try to make a living, but this happens. I tell you. The world we live in.

EDDIE
Have you heard anyone make any anti-Muslim statements? Anyone in the neighborhood particularly upset that they've set up shop here?

Harry shakes his head.

HANDSOME HARRY
No. Nothing like that.

JAMIE
Then what is it like?

Harry looks around the shop and leans in conspiratorially.

HANDSOME HARRY

I've heard a rumor. Just a rumor, mind you, that a gang might be trying to move into the neighborhood. Things have been vandalized at other shops in the area. Not just Mama Nabila's.

EDDIE

That's funny. No one else mentioned any vandalism. We've been talking to shop owners all day.

HANDSOME HARRY

They're all afraid to talk. Why do you think I'm whispering? I don't want to be next. I'd be much obliged if you could do something to keep that from happening.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY 3

Eddie and Jamie walk the neighborhood. The area is well-kept and has great foot traffic.

EDDIE

Gangs? This isn't turf they'd normally fight over.

Jamie spots a local butcher shop. Points it out to Eddie.

JAMIE

Think this might be our source for the pig's head?

EDDIE

Worth checking out.

INT. BUTCHER - DAY 3

Jamie and Eddie head for the counter where YURI SERGANOV (40s) smiles his welcome.

YURI

What can I do for you?

JAMIE

We're Officers Janko and Reagan. This might sound kinda strange, but has anyone purchased a pig's head from you recently?

YURI

Yep. And 5 pints of blood. Had to special order both. Why? Did someone get sick? My meat is guaranteed fresh.

Eddie holds up a calming hand.

EDDIE

No, nothing like that. It was used to vandalize a property owned by Muslims.

YURI

Damn it! I knew it was too good to be true.

JAMIE

We don't follow.

YURI

They said it was for a new Mexican place to make pork tamales. I already set up a deal to get more from my distributor.

JAMIE

Can you describe the customers for us?

YURI

Just a couple white guys. Average height, average build. Nothing special about either of them.

Jamie hands Yuri his card.

JAMIE

Do us a favor. Call if you see them again.

Yuri shrugs and tucks the card away.

YURI

Sure, but they're usually just hanging out at the bodega around the corner. The Little Shop, I think it's called.

Jamie and Eddie exchange a look.

EDDIE

We're familiar.

INT. SQUAD - DAY 3

Maria and Danny comb through missing person reports.

DANNY

I'm hitting dead end after dead end over here. You having any better luck?

MARIA

Actually, I think I might've just hit the jackpot. Ten year old female went missing in our target radius after school the same day we caught the case.

DANNY

You're kidding. This long shot paid off?

He goes around to read over her shoulder. Checks out the picture on the BOLO of MERCY ST. JOHN (12) cute, white girl.

DANNY (CONT'D)

The girl is white. Jeffers prefers darker victims.

MARIA

What if his victims weren't always his choosing? The ladies said Big Teddy tempered him. Could be with him gone, Jeffers went way off the rails. Could be he's the one who killed Big Teddy. If so, I think we're safely in "off the rails" territory.

DANNY

I don't know, Baez. It's a pretty thin lead.

MARIA

You got a better one to run down?

He's surprised at her brusque tone. Shakes his head.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Then let's roll.

INT. UPSCALE HOME - DAY 3

The place is crawling with FBI PERSONNEL. Danny holds the door for a TECH changing out equipment. He and Maria follow the man inside.

They don't get far before SUPERVISORY SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE CLARA WOMACK (30s), tall African American woman, blocks their path.

WOMACK

Who are you?

DANNY

Detectives Baez and Reagan. NYPD.
We just need a moment with the St.
Johns then we'll be on our way.

WOMACK

Nobody informed me you were coming.

DANNY

Nobody informed us you were here,
so I guess we've both had a
breakdown in communication.

Womack is not amused.

WOMACK

Go repair your chain of command,
Detectives. We've got a missing
child to find. If you've nothing
pertinent to add, you're just in
the way.

MARIA

We may have a bit of overlap in our
cases. That's why we're here.

WOMACK

I'm listening.

MARIA

We're investigating a murder...

CHINA (O.S.)

Murder? Did she just say murder?

CHINA ST. JOHN (42), tiny mama bear, races over.

CHINA (CONT'D)

Who's been murdered? Please tell me
it wasn't my baby. Oh, Simon. They
found her body.

SIMON ST. JOHN (50s), hurries over just in time to catch his wife as she starts to collapse.

Womack glares at them.

DANNY

I'm sorry, Ma'am. There's been a misunderstanding. We have not found your child's body. It's an extreme long shot, but our cases may be connected.

SIMON

Connected how?

DANNY

Do you know if Mercy was a fan of a singer named D. Scully?

The parents exchange confused looks.

CHINA

Actually, yes. She's was just begging us the other day to let her go to some concert with some friends. We looked him up. She's too young to go by herself and we're scheduled to be at a fundraiser that evening.

MARIA

I assume you've taught her not to go with strangers, but would she be inclined to disregard that training if she ran into him on the street?

SIMON

What? Of course not. She'd never go voluntarily with some strange man.

DANNY

With all due respect, sir, he wouldn't be a stranger. She's a fan. It's quite possible that she feels like she knows him.

CHINA

Wait. Are you saying that you think this singer has our child? Is he a pedophile or something? You know how those stars can be. Oh my God.

China gasps and clings to Simon, imagining the worst.

Womack steps in.

WOMACK

No. That's not a theory supported
by what we know so far. Detectives.
A word.

Womack gives the frightened parents a reassuring look then
escorts Danny and Maria out.

EXT. UPSCALE HOME - DAY 3

Womack keeps a lid on her temper until she, Danny and Maria
are well out of earshot of the house.

WOMACK

What the hell was that? We are
doing our best to keep things here
under control and the two of you
stroll in here with some cockamamie
theory and rile the already
panicked parents up? Get out or I'm
going to have a talk with your CO.

DANNY

We're following a legitimate lead
here. A known pedophile went
missing the same day as a little
girl. Doesn't take much to connect
the dots. Learned that in
kindergarten.

WOMACK

Well, Detective, I suggest you go
back to school because the perp
we're looking for is a woman.

That takes the wind out his sails.

With one last disgusted look at them, Womack strides away.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE**INT. MAMA NABILA BODEGA - DAY 4**

Eddie and Jamie enter Mama Nabila's. Ashar is alone, stocking shelves. He looks up with a smile when they enter. It falls away when he recognizes them.

ASHAR

You two just can't stay away can you?

JAMIE

Not until we see that a wrong has been made right.

ASHAR

Except your very presence here is just going to create more wrong. I'm not cleaning up more pig's blood because of you two.

EDDIE

We've got good news on that front. The butcher who sold that head to the perps won't be selling them anymore. They strike us as lazy so I doubt they'll have the drive to get one from farther away.

Ashar stares at them, pleasantly surprised.

ASHAR

You did that?

JAMIE

We told you. We just want to make this wrong, right. Anything you can tell us about your tormentors would go a long way toward helping us do that.

Ashar pauses to think. He's on the verge of talking.

A couple Muslim MEN enter the bodega with prayer rugs. They nod a greeting to Ashar who responds in kind then head for a door in the back.

In response to Jamie and Eddie's questioning looks--

ASHAR

We have a prayer room in the basement.

JAMIE

Is that common knowledge around the neighborhood?

ASHAR

I would guess so. We've never tried to hide it.

EDDIE

When the bullies show up, do they ever harass anyone praying or do they target only you and your parents?

Ashar takes a moment to think.

ASHAR

They never bother any of the men who come here to pray. I just figured it's because they're cowards and it's easier to pick on an older couple.

Eddie and Jamie exchange a look.

ASHAR (CONT'D)

Why? Does that mean something to you?

JAMIE

We'll let you know.

EDDIE

You have a good day.

INT. DA'S OFFICE - DAY 4

A woman possessed, Erin goes through Steve's case load. Anthony comes to the door.

ANTHONY

You wanted to see me?

ERIN

Yeah. I need you to run down a few guys for me.

She hands him a list. He reads.

ANTHONY

I've never heard of any of these guys before. Which of your cases are they for?

ERIN

Not my cases, Steve's. I want the whereabouts of every single name on that list at the time of his murder.

ANTHONY

Erin...

ERIN

I ranked the list by priority. Start with the 7-8ths gang. Steve finally got enough evidence to bring one of their shot callers to justice. They cut off a woman's head and left it in a bag on a park bench as a message to her boyfriend.

ANTHONY

Erin, the M.E. ruled Steve's death a suicide.

ERIN

Then he missed something. I'm not going to make that same mistake.

She goes back to her work.

Anthony stares at Erin. Wanting desperately to say something to get through to her. Has nothing. Finally leaves.

INT. PATROL CAR - DAY 4

Pensive, Jamie drives. Eddie rides shotgun.

JAMIE

You find it strange that not one other business owner mentioned gang activity?

EDDIE

Most don't even seem to know that Mama Nabila's is being harassed.

JAMIE

And they all seem to know about the prayer room in the basement, but no one seems to care.

Eddie looks at Jamie when he doesn't elaborate.

EDDIE

Spill, partner.

JAMIE

Don't you think that if this harassment were truly about religion, someone would've done something to the prayer room by now?

EDDIE

I don't know. Low hanging fruit, maybe. I don't think we're dealing with a couple geniuses.

JAMIE

They're smart enough to get gone since we've been patrolling the area more heavily.

EDDIE

Instincts for self preservation, I suppose.

JAMIE

I don't know, Janko. I think we're working this from the wrong angle. I'm not sure Islam is the belief system that actually in contention here.

EDDIE

What do you think it is, then?

JAMIE

Capitalism.

EXT. PARK - DAY 4

D. SCULLY (40s), completely naked, staggers through the park. He's clearly out of it. Takes no notice of the shocked PASSERSBY jumping out of his way. He carries Mercy St. John, torn clothes and just as out of it, on his back.

People call 9-1-1. Others take photos or video the scene.

INT. DANNY'S CAR (DRIVING) - DAY 4

Danny taps the steering wheel in agitation. Maria rides shotgun.

DANNY

It's like he just disappeared. No one has seen him. His credit cards are untouched.

MARIA

I hate to say it, but I'm starting to think we should be looking for a body. Who drops off the grid like this?

DANNY

Hopefully the ladies can tell us something else. Something we haven't thought of.

Maria shoots him a look.

MARIA

But you are going to go easy on them, though. You know how you get when you're frustrated.

DANNY

What? Of course I'm gonna go easy. They're victims in all this. It can't be...

The radio crackles to life cutting him off.

DISPATCH

Please be advised, we've got a 10-10 in progress. Prospect Park. Be advised, suspect is male black and naked. Caller IDs male as celebrity named D. Scully.

DANNY

You've got to be kidding me.

DISPATCH

He has a young female white with him.

MARIA

Is it Christmas?

DANNY

Not yet it's not.

He grabs the radio.

DANNY (CONT'D)
5-4 detectives. Show us responding
to Prospect Park.

MARIA
If he's actually got Mercy St. John
with him, we've got to get them
both before the FBI does or we'll
never close this case.

DANNY
Don't I know it.

He hits the lights and siren then stomps on the gas.

EXT. PARK - DAY 4

Danny's car skids to a halt outside the park. He and Maria hop out and race toward the UNIFORMED OFFICER who has both D. Scully and Mercy St. John now wrapped in blankets.

UNIFORM
Sir, can you tell us your name?

D. Scully is non responsive.

The uniform shakes his head.

UNIFORM (CONT'D)
I'm calling in a Psych consult.

DANNY
Hey, hey, hey! We're detectives out
of the 5-4. This man is a material
witness to a murder. We'll take it
from here.

UNIFORM
I was just about to call a bus.

Maria catches sight of several black SUVs heading their way.

MARIA
Reagan. Christmas is over.

DANNY
I see 'em.

He helps D. Scully up from the bench while Maria tends to Mercy. Guide them both back to their car.

The detectives are keenly aware of the FBI bearing down on them, but can't urge the two to move faster.

Foot traffic blocks the SUVs. Womack hops out.

WOMACK

Reagan!

She takes off running toward them.

Danny and Maria get D. Scully and Mercy loaded in the back of their car.

WOMACK (CONT'D)

Stop right there!

Danny goes to close the door, but D. Scully stops him.

D. SCULLY

I didn't take her. I swear. I didn't take her.

Danny glances up at Womack. She's getting closer.

DANNY

Let's talk about it later.

Like a little kid, D. Scully nods and shrinks into the seat. He stays far away from Mercy as the car will allow. Almost like he's afraid of her. Danny clocks this.

Danny hops behind the wheel and takes off just as Womack gets within spitting distance.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR**INT. HOSPITAL - DAY 4**

Danny and Maria question D. Scully while a DOCTOR treats him.

DANNY

Can you tell us where you've been
for the past three days?

D. SCULLY

Three days?

DANNY

Yes. Where were you?

D. Scully frowns in real hard concentration, trying to remember. He smiles.

D. SCULLY

I was laughing.

Danny looks at Maria, frustrated.

MARIA

Where were you laughing? Do you
remember who was with you?

D. SCULLY

No. We were laughing. Then throwing
up. I had to pee all the time.
Probably because I kept drinking.

DANNY

Drinking what? Alcohol?

D. SCULLY

Water. I had to keep drinking or
I'd stop laughing.

Danny shrugs at Maria. They're getting nowhere.

DANNY

Is he high on something, Doc?

DOCTOR

His pupils are dilated so my best
guess is yes. I won't know more
until I get the tox panel back.

MARIA

Make sure you screen him for everything. No matter how farfetched.

DANNY

Include Nitrous Oxide in that screening will ya?

The doctor looks at Danny like he's lost his mind. Sees that he's dead serious and shrugs.

DOCTOR

Sure thing.

D. SCULLY

It felt so good to pee.

On that note, Danny and Maria step outside.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY 4

Danny paces in agitation while Maria keeps an eye on the doctor.

MARIA

We're gonna have to wait for him to sober up before we try again.

WOMACK (O.S.)

Detective Reagan!

Danny sighs his irritation at Womack's booming voice.

DANNY

Why do I get the feeling that we're not going to have that luxury, partner?

He turns on the charm and faces Womack as she strides angrily toward them. Several additional AGENTS surround her.

WOMACK

Cute trick in the park. But now we're taking this man into federal custody until we can get to the bottom of this kidnapping. Step aside, Detectives.

DANNY

Whoa now. Wait a minute. This man is a material witness to a murder.
(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)

We need his statement and we can't get that until he's come down off whatever is in his system.

WOMACK

You should've thought of that before trying to squirrel him and our victim away.

DANNY

They needed medical attention forthwith. Are you saying that we should've ignored a medical emergency?

MARIA

Can you blame us? You haven't been particularly hospitable thus far.

WOMACK

You haven't given me a reason be. No matter. This is my collar and you're welcome to leave at any point.

She presses the order to his chest then turns and heads inside D. Scully's room. Another agents follows while one remains behind to block the door.

DANNY

So you're just gonna leave a homicide unsolved?

He glances at the order.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Damn it!

MARIA

Can't fight the Feds.

DANNY

Not without getting jammed up.

MARIA

Come on, partner. Let's go tie up the loose ends we can.

INT. SQUAD - DAY 5

Danny broods at his desk. Maria hangs up her phone.

MARIA

That was my buddy at the lab. He confirmed that Mercy St. John was covered in urine and semen belonging to Denison Jeffers. The Feds closed the case. He's going away for a long time.

Danny grunts his acknowledgement.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Awww, c'mon. It's sorta a win. He deserved to go down years ago.

DANNY

Yeah, but don't you think it's too perfect? Other than the massive deviation from his MO, I mean.

MARIA

So we got lucky. I tell you, I'm never going to think of the lyrics, "baby soft skin bathed in liquid gold" quite the same way ever again. It turns my stomach that he was actually making money off bragging about his crimes.

She crumples up a piece of paper and tosses it at him when he doesn't respond.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Okay. Spill. What's rattling around in that Reagan brain of yours?

DANNY

"I didn't take her. I didn't take her." That's what he kept saying.

MARIA

What? Are you saying you believe him? Danny, the evidence is disgustingly rock solid.

DANNY

That's what I mean. When has it ever been this solid in the past? DNA? C'mon, Baez.

MARIA

You heard the ladies in the support group. Big Teddy always helped them clean up after.

(MORE)

MARIA (CONT'D)

Maybe now that he's gone, D. Scully didn't know how to cover his tracks.

DANNY

I don't think they are his tracks. That's all I'm saying.

MARIA

So, who's then?

Danny pulls up Hathora's file and slides it over to Maria.

DANNY

She just knew. How is that possible?

MARIA

You can't be serious.

DANNY

She darn near steered us right to Mercy St. John. Did that sound like just a guess to you?

MARIA

She knows how he operates.

DANNY

I think she did the operating for him.

MARIA

Do you hear yourself, Reagan? You can't really think those ladies kidnapped D. Scully. Kidnapped a little girl. Covered her in his DNA then set them free to be discovered by us. That means they killed Rossmore, too.

DANNY

It's not impossible. Just think about it.

Danny sits up, getting into his theory.

DANNY (CONT'D)

The laughing gas made it easy for him to go with them. They could've used it to make him do whatever they wanted while they had him.

MARIA

Like laughing and peeing.

DANNY

Bingo. Then they let him go with the girl who's now covered in his bodily fluids. We run the evidence and get an open and shut case that nobody is going to think twice about.

MARIA

Except, Rossmore died.

DANNY

Unintended collateral damage. They were genuinely shocked to hear he died.

MARIA

But you're forgetting Mercy St. John in all this. You really think those ladies are cold enough to subject her to the same horrors they themselves experienced?

DANNY

If it finally gets him off the street, I think that's exactly what they did. Either way, we need to go ask them about it.

INT. DA'S OFFICE - DAY 5

Anthony knocks on Erin's door.

ERIN

That was quick. Do you have the shooter?

Anthony pauses.

ANTHONY

Yes. And it's not who you think.

ERIN

Tell me.

ANTHONY

I ran down the gang like you asked. Turns out, the woman was wearing some kind of camera glasses at the time of her murder.

(MORE)

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

The video uploaded to the cloud.
The gangbanger plead out.

ERIN

Okay. So it was someone else on the list?

ANTHONY

No Erin. Steve was really good at his job. The only one better is you.

ERIN

Stop with the flattery and just tell me who the shooter was.

Anthony hands her a file.

ANTHONY

I went over his life with a fine toothed comb. You know what I found? Nothing. He had no actual friends. He was an only child and both his parents are deceased. He was absolutely disconnected from everyone around him.

ERIN

What is this? This file is on Steve.

ANTHONY

The M.E. got it right. And deep down, I think you know that. This job... It ain't for folk who don't have nothing to ground them back to reality. Who don't have people to help them see something other than the worst humanity has to offer day in and day out. He'd just had enough, Erin. Whether you had talked to him the other day or not, the outcome would still be the same.

Erin's on the verge of tears as his words start to register.

ERIN

Thanks, Anthony.

He nods and leaves her alone in her office. She holds it together until he closes the door then lets the tears start flowing.

INT. DA'S OFFICE - DAY 5

Erin takes a deep breath and knocks on her boss' door.

ERIN

Sir, if you have a minute, I'd like to talk over the possibility of adding a counselor to our staff. Someone cleared to hear details of our cases that might be driving us to self harm.

BOSS

Come in, Erin.

Erin goes inside and closes the door.

INT. MAMA NABILA BODEGA - DAY 5

Jamie waits with Rasheed, Nabila, and Ashar.

JAMIE

I'm sure they'll be along at any moment.

Rasheed casts a nervous look at the door.

RASHEED

You shouldn't be here. What if they think we're talking to you?

ASHAR

What does it matter, Father? We've kept silent this long and things have only gotten worse. Maybe it's time to try something new.

Eddie and Handsome Harry enter. He looks around appreciatively.

HANDSOME HARRY

You folks got a nice place here.

RASHEED

Thank you. You are?

The men shake hands.

HANDSOME HARRY

Harry Stallon. Your neighbor from around the corner. I've got a similar set up.

JAMIE

Mr. and Mrs. Al-Wafiq, I'd like you to meet the man who's been responsible for the harassment you've been suffering.

That hits everyone like a slap in the face. Rasheed snatches his hand back.

RASHEED

You hate Muslims? You must go. Go now. You are not welcome here.

HANDSOME HARRY

I don't hate Muslims. I don't know why Officer Reagan would make such an outlandish statement.

JAMIE

It's true. He hasn't been attacking you because you're Muslim. He's been attacking you because his business has declined by 49% since you opened your doors.

EDDIE

So, the four of you are going to sit down and figure out a compromise that no longer includes pig heads tossed on floors.

JAMIE

And here's where you're going to start. Mr. Al-Wafiq, you hate that you have to sell haram to make ends meet. Why don't you turn that part of the business over to Mr. Stallon?

EDDIE

And you, Mr. Stallon will turn over the deli part of the business to the Al-Wafiq's. Mrs. Al-Wafiq is a trained chef. You'll never be able to compete with her on that front anyway.

JAMIE

There's plenty of business around here to support you both if you just work with each other instead of against. So what do you say?

The two older men eye one another warily.

ASHAR

We'll do it.

NABILA

Yes. It is a good compromise.

JAMIE

Wonderful. Now, we'll just leave the four of you alone to talk over a payment plan for the restitution Mr. Stallon due to the vandalism.

RASHEED

Let's just move forward from here, shall we?

Harry heaves a relieved sigh. He offers Rasheed a heartfelt hand shake.

Eddie and Jamie take their leave. Their work here is done.

INT. CHURCH - DAY 5

Danny and Maria sit in the circle with Meg, Hathora, Kamaria, Roneisha and Ivy.

MARIA

Thank you all for meeting with us. We wanted to bring you the good news in person.

KAMARIA

Good news?

MARIA

Yes. The FBI is currently holding Denison Jeffers in a federal detention center. He's been charged with kidnapping. The evidence against him is, well, substantial. He'll have a hard time wiggling out of this one.

RONEISHA

You said federal charges? Those are pretty serious, aren't they?

DANNY

Yes, they are. There are mandatory sentence guidelines that have to be followed. He's going to be gone for a very long time.

IVY

Finally.

DANNY

Of course, that's just how you all planned it, though, right?

RONEISHA

What?

The ladies exchange confused looks. Except for Hathora and Meg. Danny clocks that.

DANNY

C'mon. The jig's up. You all got out clean. There's no evidence that you all colluded to get him sent away.

MARIA

We haven't even discovered how you obtained the nitrous oxide.

DANNY

So relax. Besides, after what he did to you all, he deserved it.

KAMARIA

What are you talking about? You think we had something to do with his finally getting caught? I wish!

MARIA

It's just too bad Big Teddy got caught in the crossfire. From what we've learned, he was a pretty decent guy.

DANNY

And his mother, Mrs. Rossmore. I'm sure she'll be all right without him. I mean, no one is ever abused in those assisted living facilities.

MARIA

Right. She'll be just fine.

Meg fidgets. Bites her lip. Hathora remains stone faced.

DANNY

Just like little Mercy St. John. I'm sure she'll be fine, too.

(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)

But you'll be there for her as a fellow victims of D. Scully, right? She's in good hands.

HATHORA

If she needs us, we're right here. However, I'm sure her folks would prefer a higher priced therapist. If she even needs one.

DANNY

I'm sure you're right.

He stands to leave.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Although, she is a few years younger than any of you were when Denison victimized you. I don't know, did she seem like a pretty resilient kid to you when we found her?

MARIA

What? No way. That girl is traumatized for life. It'll be a miracle if she's ever a functioning member of society.

MEG

That's not true! She's fine! She was blindfolded the whole time.

HATHORA

Meg! Shut up.

IVY

Oh my God. Were you two involved?

HATHORA

Of course not.

DANNY

Well, that's not what Meg here is saying. Why don't you continue?

HATHORA

Keep your mouth shut, Meg.

MEG

Did we hurt that little girl? That was never supposed to happen. Just like Big Teddy.

(MORE)

MEG (CONT'D)

Did you know vomiting was a side effect of laughing gas. He was just supposed to be fuzzy headed, not dead.

HATHORA

Stop talking!

MEG

No! Don't you think we've been silent for far too long?

Hathora flies across the room to try to physically shut her up. Danny steps in and restrains her. She puts up a fight while he cuffs her.

HATHORA

You stupid cow! They were fishing.

DANNY

Hathora Munson, Meg Newson you both are under arrest for the murder of Theodore Rossmore.

Maria cuffs Meg while Danny continues to read them their rights. The other women look on, stunned.

INT. REAGAN HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY 5

Frank, Danny, Erin, Jamie, HENRY, LINDA, NICKY, SEAN and JACK sit around the table for their usual Sunday feast. Erin is particularly subdued as she picks at her roast beef.

Frank and Henry exchange a pointed look.

HENRY

The silence at this table is almost deafening.

JACK

I could invite this girl Shana over. She's black and never silent. Actually, she's pretty loud.

DANNY

Jack!

LINDA

That's not nice.

He looks genuinely confused.

JACK

What? Everybody knows that black girls are loud.

FRANK

Just like everybody knows that we Irish Catholics are just a bunch of red-haired, violent, drunks who are always looking for a fight?

JACK

Well, that's not true.

FRANK

Just like it isn't true that all African Americans, particularly women, are loud, brash and angry.

JACK

But Shana is loud and angry. Like all the time.

LINDA

The point is, Jack, you can't judge an entire race on the actions of one person.

Properly chastised, Jack goes back to his food.

NICKY

Uncle Jamie, is it true somebody threw a severed pig's heads in a bodega?

Groans all around.

LINDA

That's disgusting

ERIN

Nicky! Yuck.

SEAN

I think it's cool.

NICKY

What? It got you guys talking. So? Is it true, Uncle Jamie?

She winks at Jack who's glad the heat is now off him.

JAMIE

I'm afraid so. Another bodega wanted to get them closed down. Thought harassment was the best way to do that.

FRANK

All is resolved?

JAMIE

Yes sir. The two bodegas have agreed to cooperate instead of compete. Everybody wins.

HENRY

Especially the pig.

Danny pushes his plate away.

DANNY

Cooperation is heck of a thing. We just closed a case where the adult victims of a pedophile colluded to have him sent up.

JAMIE

Is that the pop star thing? You got a lot of folks mad at you. They've got tickets and now there's no tour.

DANNY

I wish I could take the credit. The FBI took him. Good riddance. This guy needed to be taken off the street years ago.

ERIN

The case files have already been transferred to my office. I'm just thankful they weren't assigned to me. Anyone who crosses them on the stand will look like a heartless piece of work. Here's hoping for a plea.

DANNY

Good luck with that. If Baez and I hadn't tricked them into confessing, they would've gotten away with it. They still have to some extent. Jeffers is going away for the one crime he didn't actually commit.

LINDA

That's terrible. Is there anything you can do?

DANNY

Even if the FBI agent on the case didn't hate my guts, I don't know that it would be right to even try. This man destroyed the lives of dozens of women. The true tragedy is that these women had to resort to this conspiracy to get justice. Their skin's a little darker so we didn't listen to their cries for help. We didn't protect them from a sick predator who was destroying them. We failed them. I'm not about to compound that.

FRANK

"Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe." Frederick Douglass.

As everyone ruminates on the gravity of suppressed voices, we

END OF SHOW