The Mysteries of Laura

Developed
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ACT ONE

EXT. VENICE BEACH, CALIFORNIA - DAY

We SMASH into a high-octane POLICE PURSUIT, a dozen LAPD SQUAD CARS and DETECTIVE VEHICLES flying down Washington and surrounding streets.

POLICE DISPATCH (O.S.)
All units. Vehicle proceeding westbound toward boardwalk. Suspect is armed and dangerous.

We WHIP PAN 100 yards ahead, landing on

THE PERPETRATOR

a menacing badass driving a windshield-bashed sedan. He FISHTAILS into a BEACH PARKING LOT, pummeling the hapless ATTENDANT, who is sent flying into the side of the vestibule.

The Perp SKIDS to a stop and exits his car, GUN in hand. To the horror of nearby BEACHGOERS, he turns and starts FIRING at the fast-approaching police units. BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM. One unit swerves out of control, CRASHING into a lightpost.

In response, numerous UNIFORMS and DETECTIVES fly out of vehicles, guns at the ready. One detective, "HANDSOME" BILLY SANDS, boldly starts running toward the perp, who turns and SPRINTS to the nearby BOARDWALK, teeming with TOURISTS.

We STAY WITH BILLY, who lands in the MOB of people and pushes his way through, his eyes DARTING in search of the perp. On the move, concentrating intently, he answers his RINGING CELL.

BILLY
Yeah?

LAURA (O.S.)
I got eyes on him.

BILLY
(mystified)
What're you talking about? *I'm* the one who just ran like a gazelle after the guy.

INT. LAURA'S VOLVO - CONTINUOUS - LAURA'S P.O.V. - INTERCUT

We're inside a worn, beater Volvo. And while we don't yet see THE DRIVER, we do see the mess around her: loose Goldfish crackers, legos, kid Crocs, dripping juice boxes. Disgusting.

The car moves down an ALLEY, keeping pace with THE PERP, who we see sporadically through GAPS between buildings, trying to blend with the foot-traffic.

LAURA (O.C.)
Are gazelles that slow once they hit thirty? Didn't realize.

BILLY
That hurts. Where are you?

LAURA (O.C.)
You'll catch up. I got him.

BILLY
Wait for me!

But she's already hung up. Annoyed, he picks up speed.

EXT. FARTHER DOWN THE BOARDWALK - DAY - NEXT

The Perp passes a SIDE-ALLEY, oblivious to the beater VOLVO pulling to a stop. Out slips a power-walking MOM in old sweats and a blouse, oversized PURSE on her shoulder, bed head, but despite herself still a MILF. It's of course the woman behind the voice we've heard, our unassuming heroine...

DETECTIVE LAURA DIAMOND.

She falls in line BEHIND THE PERP, keeping pace. When an approaching family passes and bystanders are at a momentary minimum, she seizes the moment and DRAWS HER GUN, shouting--

LAURA
LAPD! On the ground!

People RUN FOR COVER as the startled PERP TURNS. He gets one look at the house frau and practically rolls his eyes as he GRABS a dreadlocked RASTA MAN and puts a GUN TO HIS HEAD.

VENICE BEACH PERP
Don't be stupid, lady! Get the h--

LAURA
(interrupts, polite)
Excuse me. It's Detective. And I really think you should put the gun down. I'm a little Type A and--
(indicates her own gun)
--practice all the time with this thing.

We see the Boardwalk has cleared, people hovering in storefronts watching the unlikely stand-off.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Now I'm going to count to three...

VENICE BEACH PERP
(laughs, derisive)
Is that right.

LAURA
One.....Two....

Suddenly outraged, the Perp JAMS HIS GUN into the side of his panicked hostage's head, screaming--

VENICE BEACH PERP
BLOW ME, BITCH!

Wild-eyed, he cocks the gun, ABOUT TO FIRE! Laura sighs.

LAURA
Three.

BAMMM. She shoots the perp's EAR OFF, SPLATTERING BLOOD and SKIN across Rasta Man's face. The PERP drops, SCREAMING.

Laura promptly GRABS THE PERP'S GUN, CUFFS him, then digs into her purse, pulls out a pack of BABY WIPES, and cleans off hyperventilating Rasta Man's face, venting to him--

LAURA (CONT'D)
They never believe me.

Rasta Man glances down at the bloody mess of a perp below.

LAURA (CONT'D)
(gentle, motherly)
Look away.

Finally other COPS DESCEND ON THE SCENE, an incredulous Billy leading the way. Laura is casually matter-of-fact.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Got him.

INT. WEST LOS ANGELES POLICE PRECINCT - DAY - NEXT

Entering the sprawling, sunlit BULLPEN, Laura gets a hero's welcome -- high-fives and backslaps -- from her fellow cops.

LAURA
(to passing well-wishers)
Thanks. Thank you. Thanks.
(noticing well-wisher's tweaked shirt collar)
Kwon, your collar's a little...
(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)
(she adjusts it)
There you go.

She makes her way to her mess of a CUBICLE, as cluttered as her car. Still fielding compliments, she tosses down her purse and searches through a pile of junk, finally uncovering half a BURRITO. She takes a bite, as--

MEREDITH (O.C.)
Wow, that's...nauseating.

Laura rolls her eyes, turns to DETECTIVE MEREDITH MARTINEZ -- 35ish, sexy, tightly-wound, perfectly coiffed and outfitted.

LAURA
(chewing away)
Meredith.

MEREDITH
(winces, then)
Heard you discharged your weapon.

LAURA
Matter of fact, I did. Into the face of the liquor store double-homicide perp.

MEREDITH
Last time I checked, standard procedure was to wait for a hostage negotiator before opening fire.
(then off Laura's outfit)
Nice sweats. Didn't realize it's Casual Thursday.

LAURA
(cheerful smile)
That's next week. Today's *Douchebag* Thursday. But I'm sensing you knew that.

CAPTAIN HAUSER (O.C.)
Detectives.

The women turn to see CAPTAIN DAN HAUSER, 55ish, their teddy-bear of a boss.

CAPTAIN HAUSER (CONT'D)
Nice take-down, Diamond.

LAURA
Thanks, Captain. Though standard procedure was to wait for a hostage negotiator before opening fire.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
(scoffs)
Eff standard procedure.

Laura cracks a smug grin. Meredith walks off in annoyance.

CAPTAIN HAUSER (CONT'D)
I need a favor. What do you have on tap for tonight?

LAURA
(without hesitation)
Laundry, bath, triple martini. Why?

CAPTAIN HAUSER
Eric Walden, the computer mogul guy? Some jackass has been sending him death threats. We've had a detail up there a week, the wife's freaked....Told the Chief we'd do a drive-by, hold her hand a bit. They're up in Brentwood Park.

LAURA
(cringes)
Ew. You know I'm allergic to Brentwood. Take Meredith - she'll pee her pants getting a look inside Eric Walden's house.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
Would you want to put in overtime with Meredith?

Laura's distracted by precinct office assistant MAX PATEL, 25ish, impossibly thick eyeglasses, urgently waving her over.

LAURA
(to Captain, giving in)
Text me the address.

She crosses over to Max as he hangs up the phone.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Maximilian. What's up?

MAX
(gravely)
9-1-1 at Westmont.

OFF Laura -- uh oh.

EXT. WESTMONT SCHOOL - DAY - NEXT

Laura SKIDS her Volvo -- flashing SIREN LIGHT cockeyed on the roof -- to a stop in a Loading Zone, and rushes into--

INT. WESTMONT SCHOOL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

An all-business Laura enters the eerily quiet lobby, where she is immediately intercepted by a shellshocked ADMINISTRATOR. They stay on the move, as--

LAURA
How bad is it?

WESTMONT ADMINISTRATOR
Like nothing I've ever seen. We evacuated the room and locked down the corridor.

Laura nods, then, as they reach a classroom door, advises--

LAURA
Stay back.

WESTMONT ADMINISTRATOR
(obviously)
Ya think?

He bolts off. Laura braces herself, then ENTERS--

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Eyes wide in horror, Laura is stunned to see DRIPPING, BLOOD-RED SPLATTER all along the walls and floor.

She gravely approaches the unseen perpetrators, telling them through gritted teeth--

LAURA
This is a depraved, unspeakable act. I am sickened. Get ready to be inside for a very long time. Life as you know it is over.

We REVERSE to reveal five-year-old identical twin boys, HARRISON and NICHOLAS, caked and dripping with fingerpaint.

LAURA (CONT'D)
What do you have to say for yourselves?

HARRISON/NICHOLAS
Sorry, mommy.

EXT. WESTMONT SCHOOL - DAY - NEXT

An incensed Laura drags the adorable, filthy boys out of the school and tosses them in the back of--

INT. LAURA'S CAR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Laura angrily PEELS OUT into traffic and instinctively throws on the SIREN. The boys squeal in delight.

Rolling her eyes, she immediately TURNS OFF THE SIREN and slows down. The disappointed boys slump in their seats.

EXT. LAURA'S CONDO - VENICE - DAY - NEXT

A cute multi-unit property of postage-stamp bungalows. Laura marches the still-dripping boys from the car into--

INT. BATHROOM - LAURA'S CONDO - DAY - NEXT

TIGHT ON THE WINCING BOYS being HOSED DOWN in the shower by their stone-faced mom, who wields the spray gun with casual, been-there-done-that prowess.

INT. BATHROOM - LAURA'S CONDO - DAY - NEXT

As Laura impressively towels off the two boys simultaneously--

LAURA
I hope you're prepared to explain yourselves to your father. He is not going to be happy.

She's barely finished her sentence when--

JAKE (O.S.)
(cheerful as can be)
Santa Claus in the house!

Laura rolls her eyes, as the boys light up, delighted.

HARRISON/NICHOLAS
Daddy!

They immediately SPRINT OUT, naked and dripping. A beat. Prepared to be doubly pissed, Laura follows them into--

INT. LIVING ROOM - LAURA'S HOUSE - DAY - NEXT

Laura's husband, JAKE BRODERICK, 45ish, is kicked back on the couch with an open PIZZA BOX on his lap, contentedly eating a slice and watching the still-naked boys giddily rip open new DART GUNS. He smiles when he sees his glaring wife.

JAKE
I brought pizza.

LAURA
And guns? Are you kidding?

JAKE
(scoffs)
Dart guns. Couldn't hurt a fl--
(takes a dart in the eye)
Owww. Not in the face, buddy.

LAURA
And what're you bringing presents for?! They're busted. We have to meet with the principal in the morning. You didn't get my message?

JAKE
(no biggy)
I did. We got a couple of trouble-makers on our hands.

He steals the guns from the boys and OPENS FIRE. The boys retreat in happy hysterics. Laura can't believe this.

LAURA
(to the boys)
PJs! Go!

The naked running duo disappear down the hallway. An amused Jake stands and embraces his incredulous wife.

JAKE
Someone needs a hug.

He gives her a great one -- warm and comforting -- but Laura just stands there, not hugging back. Then, as she sniffs--

LAURA
Are you wearing cologne?

JAKE
(beat, whoops)
Just a splash.

LAURA
Who bought you cologne?

JAKE
Who says I didn't buy it myself?

LAURA
You hate cologne.
(then)
New girlfriend?

JAKE
(scoffs, dismissive)
No.
(off her look, clarifies)
Friend.

LAURA
(evenly)
How nice for you.

She doesn't seem that upset. Are they not together?

LAURA (CONT'D)
Maybe you can get your "friend" to sign your divorce papers for you so we can be done with this already. I sent mine in over a week ago.

And there we go. They're not.

JAKE
You always were the overachiever.
(then, gathering keys)
I gotta skip taking the boys tonight. Police business.

LAURA
Skip? This is parenting, Jake. Not yoga class. And for your information, I have police business tonight also.

JAKE
So you'll get another detective to cover for you. I'm a lieutenant. My precinct needs me.

LAURA
Wow. Thank you for reminding me what a spectacular disappointment you are. I'd completely forgotten.

He smiles and sneaks in a KISS, which after all these years still gives Laura a pang of excitement, try as she might to ignore it. Then he bolts for the door, shouts to the boys--

JAKE
Later, gators!

And he's gone. We hang on Laura for a beat. Now what? She bee-lines for the

KITCHEN

and dials a number on the PHONE. Ring. Ring.

SAMMI (O.S.)
Hey!

LAURA
I'm screwed. Can you babysit?

Laura is looking out the WINDOW at the unit ACROSS THE COURTYARD, where SAMMI -- 25ish, super cute actress-singer-waiter-tarot card reader -- now appears IN HER OWN KITCHEN. The women see each other through their windows, as--

SAMMI
Depends. Any objection to the pups and I rocking Real Housewives?

LAURA
Wouldn't have it any other way.

SAMMI
In.

LAURA
God bless you.

EXT. WALDEN ESTATE - BRENTWOOD PARK - NIGHT - LATER

A stunning, sprawling gated mansion. Laura and Captain Hauser each exit their cars, Laura futzing with her CELL.

LAURA
No bars? Really? What if my sitter needs to reach me?

CAPTAIN HAUSER
(taking out his cell)
You can use mi--
(sees no bars on his)
Nevermind.

LAURA
Zillion dollar house and can't make a phone call.
(disdainful)
Brentwood.

They pass two UNIFORM OFFICERS standing guard, then enter--

INT. WALDEN ESTATE - NIGHT - NEXT

A servile Latina housekeeper, MARGARITA, 25, leads Laura and the Captain down a sleek hallway lined with art -- Laura has to dodge the protruding arm of a statue -- then into

THE DINING ROOM

A small DINNER PARTY is in progress. Just five people. An uber-skinny fashionista, DEEDEE WALDEN, 35ish, and her preoccupied husband ERIC WALDEN, 45ish, techie-chic, stand. AD LIBBED introductions are made, then Deedee regards Laura.

DEEDEE WALDEN
A middle-aged female detective. Just like on SVU. I love that.

LAURA
(smiles, faux-gracious)
How awkward of you to say.

ERIC WALDEN
Thank you both for coming. I feel a bit silly causing all the commotion, but Deedee insisted we take this seriously.

DEEDEE WALDEN
What's not serious about a death threat? I'm afraid for us to be in the house alone. We've entertained every night for a week. My chef's at his wit's end.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
I'm sure he is.

LAURA
That is a tale of woe.

ERIC WALDEN
(indicates)
This is Richard Levine, my attorney. ... Our dear friend, Lisa. .... And my brother, Ned.

More AD LIBBED greetings between the cops, douchey-slick RICHARD, 40ish, another skinny-fashionista, LISA, 35ish, and sad-sack NED, 50ish. Deedee addresses the new arrivals--

DEEDEE WALDEN
Can I offer you a glass of wine or a piece of chocolate cheesecake?

LAURA
(immediately)
Yes and yes.

She takes an open seat, explaining to no one in particular--

LAURA (CONT'D)
Left my Hot Pocket at home in the microwave.

98-pound Lisa pushes her untouched cake wedge over to Laura.

LISA
Take mine. I'm watching my gluten.

LAURA
And it shows.

She unabashedly digs into the cake, Walden placing a glass of wine in front of her. He then turns to the Captain.

ERIC WALDEN
(indicates bottle)
Captain?

CAPTAIN HAUSER
(hands up in protest)
I shouldn't.

LAURA
(takes a gulp of hers)
I shouldn't either.

CRASH. The groups turns to see Eric has DROPPED the wine bottle, now in pieces on the stone floor, wine everywhere.

DEEDEE WALDEN
My floor! Damn it, Eric!

Her husband looks suddenly tense, overwhelmed.

ERIC WALDEN
Sorry....Just...thinking about work, I suppose.

RICHARD
You look like hell. Go to bed.

Eric nods agreement.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
We'll check your room.

He eyes Laura, who's now powering down the rest of her cake.

LAURA
Right.

Deedee tosses a napkin over the wine disaster, calls out--

DEEDEE WALDEN
Margarita!

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - WALDEN ESTATE - HIGH-SPEED MONTAGE

In what will become a fun signature device of the show to bypass procedural tropes, we RAPID-FIRE JUMP CUT through Laura and the Captain checking the various CLOSETS and BATHROOMS of the luxurious bedroom suite.

SLAM INTO Laura's jaw dropping as she sees RACKS of clothes in DEEDEE'S CLOSET. One sexy piece of LINGERIE catches her eye and she holds it up to herself in the mirror. Not bad.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - WALDEN ESTATE - NEXT

Laura and the Captain return to an oddly morose Walden.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
Everything seems secure.

LAURA
If you don't mind my asking, Mister Walden, any reason somebody would want you dead?

ERIC WALDEN
(beat, oddly distant)
I'm no saint. Even the best of us can make terrible mistakes.

Laura didn't expect such a raw outpouring from the guy.

LAURA
You wanna elaborate on that?

ERIC WALDEN
I just....I'd give anything to have my life back the way it was. Anything.

LAURA
Sir, ten minutes ago you were apologizing for wasting our time. What's going on?

He waves her away, slumps into a love seat. Weird. The cops exchange curious glances. Hauser turns back to Walden--

CAPTAIN HAUSER
We'll let you get some rest. I'm putting two officers right outside the door. You need anything further, call anytime. I'll give you my card.

He does and the cops AD LIB their goodnights, exchanging another look on the way out. Odd duck.

EXT. WALDEN ESTATE - BRENTWOOD PARK - NIGHT - NEXT

Laura and the Captain meander back to their cars.

LAURA
Turns out you can be a captain of industry and a drama queen.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
Multi-talented. Thanks for tagging along. Jake watching the boys?

LAURA
(gimme a break)
What do *you* think?

CAPTAIN HAUSER
That he pulled rank and isn't even paying for the sitter.

LAURA
Oh he'll pay. I stole his ATM card last week.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
You certainly seem over the guy. And yet I still see a wedding ring on your finger.

LAURA
(dismissive)
Haven't gotten around to taking it off. I really should hock it for something useful. Probably could trade for a pretty snazzy vibrator.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
(smiles, but it fades as)
No pressure from me. Haven't taken mine off either...Probably never will.

LAURA
(beat, sensitively)
You hanging in there?

CAPTAIN HAUSER
For a guy who buried his wife a month ago, I'm doing okay.... Therapist says I should stop driving by the bend where her car went over, but for me that is therapy.

LAURA
(nods, beat)
The universe can be a real sonofabitch.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
(dismissive)
Universe had nothing to do with it.
(chuckles, softening)
Sorry, cynical widower alert.

LAURA
You're entitled.

UNIFORM OFFICER (O.C.)
Captain!

Startled, they turn to see a UNIFORM OFFICER waving them back.

INT. HALLWAY / MASTER BEDROOM - WALDEN ESTATE - NEXT

The detectives RUSH THROUGH THE HOUSE with the frazzled cop.

UNIFORM OFFICER
We were right outside the bedroom door, didn't move an inch since you walked out. All of a sudden we hear yelling, a struggle. We try the door -- it's locked -- we bust in...

They reach the BEDROOM, bolt in to find a SECOND UNIFORM OFFICER standing in shock next to the loveseat, where ERIC WALDEN is slumped over, blood trickling from his neck, DEAD.

UNIFORM OFFICER (CONT'D)
Makes no sense. How in the hell?

Deedee rushes in right behind the stunned cops.

DEEDEE WALDEN
(falling apart)
Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god...

OFF the Captain, Laura -- how in the hell, indeed.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - WALDEN ESTATE - NIGHT - LATER

CRIME SCENE -- detectives and FORENSIC SPECIALISTS dusting for prints, taking photos, etc. Laura and the Captain stand with the dry coroner, RENALDO, who indicates the fatal wound.

RENALDO THE CORONER
Right-handed perp, given the angle. Some kind of fast-release syringe right into the larynx. My guess is a paralyzing agent with a cyanide kicker. He was toast in seconds.

BILLY approaches from across the room.

BILLY
No sign of a break-in. Windows and French doors are locked and secure.

LAURA
Killer was in here when we left.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
(scoffs)
We searched the room top to bottom.

LAURA
Apparently not.

The UNIFORM OFFICER from before approaches.

UNIFORM OFFICER
Situation at the front gate.

EXT. WALDEN ESTATE - BRENTWOOD PARK - NIGHT

The CORONER'S VAN and a half-dozen SQUAD CARS crowd the driveway. Laura and Billy approach to find douchey-lawyer RICHARD LECTURING a UNIFORM COP guarding the gate.

BILLY
Problem here, guys?

RICHARD
(smarmy smile)
Actually, there is. Your subordinate is telling me I can't leave, and I'm telling <u>him</u> this technically constitutes false imprisonment. I'd hate to have to file a lawsuit against the police.
(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)
But it may come to that if I can't get home to prepare for an international conference call I have in six hours.

LAURA
That sounds important.

RICHARD
Very.

LAURA
Tell you what. How about you either go back inside for questioning, or we'll be happy to swing by your house, pick up whatever items you need, and you can prep all night long in lockup with the gangbangers and the meth heads. It's very safe. We provide condoms.

BILLY
Actually I think we're out of condoms.

Richard stares uneasily at the detectives. Both just smile pleasantly. Finally, he turns and heads back to the house.

INT. KITCHEN - WALDEN ESTATE - NEXT

Deedee, Richard, Ned, Lisa, Margarita, and CHEF JEAN LUC, 30s -- sit and stand around the luxurious breakfast table, emotional and anxious. Laura pokes around the room and adjoining PANTRY as the Captain and Billy face the group.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
Folks, we're terribly sorry for your loss. But at the same time, you're unfortunately all suspects now in a murder investigation.

DEEDEE WALDEN
This is outrageous! We're talking about my husband! I loved this man. We all did!

LAURA
(chimes in from sidelines)
Respectfully, ma'am, I'm gonna go on a limb and say someone in here loved him not so much.

OFF the suspects, eyeing each other with a hint of suspicion--

INT. WALDEN ESTATE - NEXT - HIGH-SPEED MONTAGE

In our next series of RAPID-FIRE JUMP CUTS, we variously see Laura and Billy INTERROGATE THE SUSPECTS: Jean Luc and Margarita, Lisa, Ned, Richard, until we finally SLAM INTO--

LAURA AND BILLY questioning a weepy DEEDEE

LAURA
Just to clarify my time line, when we left the dining room, you "supervised" Margarita's clean-up of the wine, went to take your Xanax, then sat on the deck with Richard, where no one else saw you.

Deedee nods, wipes away a tear.

LAURA (CONT'D)
One last thing. Your husband made a strange comment about not being a saint, terrible mistakes....Any idea what he was talking about?

DEEDEE WALDEN
(beat, speculating)
He was a tough businessman. People were angry about him not sharing technology for the new cell phone he's launching, but to kill a man?
(then)
The irony is, this was the best year of our lives. Eric and I...we were happy. I was a lucky woman.

BILLY
(warm, hint of flirtation)
I'm guessing he was the lucky one.

Deedee smiles through her tears. Laura just stares at Billy.

INT. WALDEN ESTATE - NIGHT - NEXT

Laura and Billy walk down the entry HALLWAY. Laura pokes her head into the GUEST BATHROOM, gives it a once-over, as--

BILLY
It's good form to compliment the widow. That's Police Work 101.

LAURA
No. It's not.

BILLY
Should be.

UNIFORM OFFICER
(calls from down hall)
Detectives.

INT. SAFE ROOM - WALDEN ESTATE - NIGHT - NEXT

TIGHT ON A SECURITY MONITOR, displaying the FRONT GATE.

UNIFORM OFFICER (O.C.)
Wait for it. Here he comes.

We WIDEN to see Laura, Billy, and the Captain viewing SECURITY FOOTAGE being cued up by the Uniform.

ONSCREEN, a teenage SKATE PUNK in a hoodie, FED EX envelope in hand, approaches the gate.

UNIFORM OFFICER (CONT'D)
Hello. Oh, look, a police car.

Sure enough, the Punk seems to spot the squad car in the driveway, at which point he turns and bolts off.

UNIFORM OFFICER (CONT'D)
And b'bye.

LAURA
Somehow I don't think that kid works for Fed Ex.

BILLY
(reading time stamp)
9:21. Six minutes before needle hits the neck.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
(to the Uniform)
Pull a screen shot. Maybe we can get an ID.

EXT. WALDEN ESTATE - NIGHT - NEXT

The Captain, Laura, and Billy confer with the other UNIFORMS.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
No smoking gun, we're not making an arrest tonight. Send 'em all home.

The Uniforms nod, walk off. Hauser turns to his detectives.

CAPTAIN HAUSER (CONT'D)
Where are we with alibis?

LAURA
Lisa the dinner guest was in the "potty" with "digestive issues."

BILLY
I doubt she can lift a syringe, let alone inject a guy.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
How about the chef or housekeeper?

LAURA
Both in the kitchen. And not giving off the co-conspirator vibe. Unlike Deedee and Richard Le Douche.

BILLY
I'm getting a vibe off of brother Ned. Found him snooping around the guest house before questioning.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
Let's put a tail on all three.
(then to Laura)
Sorry, kiddo. Looks like your drive-by turned into a front page murder investigation.

LAURA
(checks her watch, shit)
And I'm out of oatmeal and Target closed at eleven. What the hell am I supposed to serve for breakfast?

INT. WESTMONT SCHOOL - MORNING

TIGHT ON the twins eating PIZZA. WIDEN to find them with their unshowered mom on a bench outside the PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE. Laura checks her watch, scans the hall. No Jake.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - MORNING - NEXT

The fidgety, pizza-sauce smeared boys at her side, Laura puts on a brave face as the droll, displeased PRINCIPAL reads a LIST of offenses--

WESTMONT PRINCIPAL
January 6th, covering Sophie's face with green Sharpie during nap time....February 19th, classroom feces incident....
(MORE)

WESTMONT PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)
March 3rd, found in school office shredding Mrs. Hwang's US Citizenship papers.

LAURA
(chimes in, clarifying)
I don't think that was political. They can't read a word.

The Principal just stares at her. A beat. He turns back to his list, about to continue, when JAKE BURSTS IN the room.

JAKE
(smooth, all smiles)
Principal Bellinkoff, how are you, sir? I like that suit. Armani?

WESTMONT PRINCIPAL
(immune to the schmooze)
I'll cut to the chase. Enough is enough. Your boys are no longer welcome in the Westmont community.

LAURA
(suddenly panicked)
I don't need them to be welcome. I just need to drop them off at eight and pick them up at five....Isn't there some kind of detention hall?

WESTMONT PRINCIPAL
They are expelled. Done. Gone.

OFF Laura, Jake--

EXT. WESTMONT SCHOOL - MORNING - NEXT

Out on the school's FRONT LAWN, the unfazed boys use their unfazed dad as a HUMAN JUNGLE GYM, while a very fazed Laura tries to drive home the gravity of the situation.

JAKE
Whatever. It's Pre-K.

LAURA
Pre-K equals childcare and now we have none! We're screwed.

JAKE
So we find a new school.

LAURA
In the middle of the semester? We need a place to put them tomorrow.

As the boys splinter off, chasing each other--

JAKE
You'll figure it out. You're very resourceful. That's why I love you so much. And know why you love me?

LAURA
Because you're unhelpful and completely detached from reality?

JAKE
Because I'm calm under pressure.

LAURA
Yeah, that's what I hate about you.

JAKE
And your sense of humor. Love, love, love. I have to run.

LAURA
(reeling, riled)
Good, run. If you're not gonna share in the work or the worry of this three-alarm fire, I'm not sure what you're even doing here. You should just go home, sign the divorce papers, and get officially out of my life once and for all!
(calls out)
Boys, we have to go!

JAKE
What if I don't want to sign the papers?

Laura stops in her tracks, thrown by Jake's question.

LAURA
It's not in your "nature" to be monogamous, remember? Or did your weekly afternoon delights with Jenny the acupuncturist cause some sort of amnesia?

He moves in close, holds her waist. She tenses, but can't bring herself to pull away, still warming to his touch.

JAKE
Laura, come on. The cheating, the leaving. We're talking about the biggest mistakes of my life. It's out of my system.
(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)
(indicates)
We're both still wearing our rings.
That's gotta mean something.

PASSERBY (O.C.)
Excuse me.

LAURA
(showing Jake her ring)
It's stuck on my finger, okay?
Probably because of all my stress
eating, thanks to you.
(then matter-of-fact)
I don't have time for this
conversation. I have to find a pre-
school for criminals and, in my
spare time, solve a murder.

PASSERBY (O.C.)
Excuse me!

Annoyed Laura turns to see a WOMAN at the school entrance.

LAURA
WHAT?

PASSERBY
Your children are urinating on each
other.

And, we see, they are. OFF Laura--

INT. PRECINCT - LAURA'S CUBICLE - DAY - NEXT

With both boys on her lap (sharing earbuds, watching a show on an iPad), Laura clicks through MUG SHOTS of skate punks, Billy next to her. Meredith sits nearby.

LAURA
Don't see Fed Ex boy.

BILLY
Me neither. I'll have Maxy widen
the search to County.

Seeing the boys squirming uncomfortably, Billy picks one up--

BILLY
C'mere, buddy--

LAURA
You don't wanna--

--and puts the kid on his own lap. A beat.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Is he supposed to feel...damp?

LAURA
Sorry. Pee-pee swordfight.
Usually dries up in an hour.

MAX bee-lines over to the detectives, TABLET in hand.

MAX
Newsflash. All your suspects have been background checked and Googled up the wazoo. Most are squeaky clean, but give it up for--
(clicks onto IMAGE of)
Ned Walden. String of arrests. Assault, fraud, check kiting. Also multiple bankruptcies.

MEREDITH
(from the sidelines)
Loser-est sibling since Roger Clinton.

BILLY
Or the fat Baldwin brother.

LAURA
And he was skulking around the guest house?

BILLY
In the dark, talking on his cell.

LAURA
That's weird. Captain and I had no service anywhere on the property.
(lightbulb)
Wait a sec. Walden was about to launch some kickass new phone...

MAX
(off his TABLET)
Obit says Walden Mobile's one day from unveiling a smartphone that "boasts unprecedented reception thanks to next-gen technology."

BILLY
Sounds like Ned found himself a phone upgrade in the guesthouse.

LAURA
Think Ned has the nads to kill his brother and steal the prototype?

BILLY
Could be a helluva payday if you find the right buyer.

MAX
The entire world gets to see this phone tomorrow. If someone's willing to pay for a preview, that's happening today.

LAURA
We need a twenty on this guy.

MAX
(hands her an address)
Done. I'm good.

EXT. VICEROY DAY CLUB - DAY - NEXT

Hipster POOL PARTY, jam-packed with barely clad beautiful people, DJ music pumping. We pull back to LAURA AND BILLY at the RED ROPE, stopped by a fey, fashion-forward BOUNCER.

DAY CLUB BOUNCER
Guest list only.
(eyeing Laura's sweats)
You are definitely not on the list.

LAURA
(flashes her BADGE)
Am I on the list now, skinny jeans?

But Billy, taking note of the curious glances they draw from every passing guest, takes his partner aside.

LAURA (CONT'D)
What? The tail said Ned's poolside, we gotta get poolside.

BILLY
Yeah. And we can bust our way in and make a scene....Or we can blend in and see what he's up to.

LAURA
How exactly do we blend?

INT. HOTEL GIFT SHOP - DAY - NEXT

All-business Laura quickly sorts through the skimpy SWIMWEAR, grabs a bikini and bee-lines for the waify, bored SHOP GIRL.

HOTEL SHOP GIRL
One-eighty-five.

LAURA
A hundred and eighty-five dollars? I could pick this up for thirty bucks at Target.

HOTEL SHOP GIRL
I doubt Target carries Prada.

LAURA
(fuck you)
You'd be surprised by the selection.

HOTEL SHOP GIRL
(fuck you back)
I bet.

A beat. Laura hands over her credit card.

EXT. VICEROY DAY CLUB - DAY - NEXT

BIKINI-CLAD LAURA finds Billy among the throngs at the pool. He can't help but check out his sexy partner.

BILLY
Damn.

LAURA
Prada, baby.
(eyeing his short trunks)
Where'd you get those?

BILLY
Just rolling in my boxers.

Laura nods -- good call. They split up. We FOLLOW LAURA to the deck-top HOT TUB overlooking the party. She considers, then -- what the hell -- gets in, immediately in ecstasy.

LAURA
Oh my god yes.

Meantime, DOWN BELOW, Handsome Billy makes the rounds, making flirty eye-contact with one sexy babe after another.

BILLY
Hey....How are ya....Solid thong...

Finally, he SPOTS NED seated with a shifty-looking MAN. Billy takes out his phone to dial, but it starts to RING.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Got eyes on him?

We INTERCUT to Laura, up in the tub.

LAURA
Yep. Wait for it....

We PUSH IN as Ned discreetly hands off the SMART PHONE to the guy, who in exchange hands over an ENVELOPE, then takes off.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Move in. I've got Ned.

They SPLIT UP, Billy pursuing PHONE GUY while Laura -- wet and, well, *jiggly* in her bikini -- races ACROSS THE GROUNDS--

LAURA (CONT'D)
(pushing through crowd)
'scuse me....margarita run....

IN THE LOBBY

Laura, catching stares in her wet, dripping suit, finally closes in on Ned, GRABBING ONTO HIM. He startles seeing her.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Hey Ned. You come here?

NED
Lemme go!

He tries to pull away. Laura performs a clunky but effective KARATE move and FACEPLANTS him, then notices a TOURIST FAMILY gawking uncomfortably at the dripping bikini babe asskicker.

LAURA
Boyfriend trouble.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY - NEXT

TIGHT ON A WAD OF CASH being counted. We WIDEN as--

LAURA
Twenty-five hundred. Good for ten year's worth of mac and cheese, but not exactly enough to kill a guy.

We REVEAL Laura's thrown her WET BLOUSE on over her bikini, now inadvertently even sexier. She and Billy confer as CUFFED Ned and Phone Guy are processed by two UNIFORM COPS.

BILLY
(scrolling Walden's PHONE)
Unlikely Ned killed anyone, unless he did so during a nineteen minute phone call with one Derek Lederman.
(indicates PHONE GUY)
Tech Reporter for WebNews.Net.

NED
(calls out, overhearing)
Of course I didn't kill my brother. I just sold the phone to pay off a football bet.

He pulls out a crumpled piece of PAPER. Billy inspects it.

BILLY
You gave the Jets plus three? Are you an idiot?

LAURA
I think we've established that.

NED
People think I'm the scumbag, but my brother was the one banging some other chick in his own bed.

LAURA
(beat, perks up)
Did Eric's wife know that?

NED
Yeah. Caught him in the act.

Laura SIGNALS Billy and he accompanies her back into

THE HOTEL GIFT SHOP

Laura casually REACHES IN HER BLOUSE, starts wriggling, as--

LAURA
Bam. Motive and a cover-up. Deedee made Eric out to be a prince.

BILLY
(nods, remembering)
That woman is...smoking hot.

LAURA
And probably our killer.

Her hands reappear holding the DRIPPING WET BIKINI, which she tosses down on the counter in front of incredulous SHOP GIRL.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Return please.
(then indicating)
I left the tags on.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. WALDEN ESTATE - DAY - NEXT

Margarita leads Laura and Billy out to the POOL, where Deedee and Richard are conferring on lounge chairs. The cops murmur--

BILLY
Richard Le Douche is back?

LAURA
Full service lawyer....
(to Deedee, APPROACHING)
I hope we're not interrupting.

RICHARD
Just some corporate housekeeping. Even in the wake of a tragedy, the stock price has to be protected.

LAURA
Words to live by.
(then to Deedee)
So to recap. Best year of your lives, happy happy...*and* you found Eric humping someone in your bed?

Deedee wasn't expecting that. A beat.

DEEDEE WALDEN
That incident was completely out of character. Eric was a devoted husband. I'm not about to sully his legacy with irrelevant gossip.

Richard places a gentle hand on Deedee's wrist to calm her down. Laura takes note of the affectionate touch.

BILLY
Ms. Walden, a mistress is a potential suspect. Who is she?

DEEDEE WALDEN
I don't know. I only saw her from...behind.

LAURA
Awkward.

RICHARD
If there's nothing else, I'm late for an appointment.

Laura watches Richard grab his LAPTOP with his LEFT HAND, then slide a DOCUMENT into a GREEN SUEDE FILE CASE we see lying on a table in front of DEEDEE. As Laura observes--

LAURA
Unusual case...for a man. Gift from your girlfriend? Boyfriend?

RICHARD
I'm single.

DEEDEE WALDEN
I'll walk you out.

The detectives regard the pair as they WALK OUT OF EARSHOT.

LAURA
They seemed cozy. And full of crap.

BILLY
You like 'em both?

LAURA
He's a southpaw. Conspirator maybe. But she'd be trigger-man.

BILLY
What's with the file case?

LAURA
It's Deedee's, not his. We need to see what's in there. Guessing it has less to do with corporate housekeeping and more to do with her getting all her husband's money.
(checks her watch)
Shoot. I need to relieve Max.

BILLY
You go. I'm on Le Douche.

INT. MAX'S CUBICLE - PRECINCT - DAY - NEXT

Max and Laura's boys at the COMPUTER, clicking through MUGSHOTS.

MAX
(off a mugshot)
Tony Tickle-Tummy. Coincidentally guilty of tickling tummies.

The boys laugh hysterically. Laura arrives, breathless.

HARRISON/NICHOLAS
Mommy!

LAURA
(scoops them up)
Hello, handsomes.

MAX
Twenty new skate punks for you.

Laura glances at the ONSCREEN MUGSHOTS. Shakes her head.

LAURA
Keep trolling.

MEREDITH CROSSES to her cubicle, spots Laura.

MEREDITH
She returns. Does this mean Max can pick up lunch already?

LAURA
Detective, Max is an investigative aide, not a personal assistant.

MAX
You want a kindergarten update?

Meredith smirks, taking note. Laura downplays.

LAURA
In a minute. But I also need you to track down Eric Walden's lover.

MAX
In. How do we find her?

LAURA
If my own man-whore's any indication, where there's a mistress, there's a paper trail. Credit card or phone records, secret email, selfie junk shots...

MAX
Any leads to start with?

LAURA
Yes. She likes it doggy style.
(then, as Meredith leaves)
Okay, talk to me. Pre-K.

MAX
All full.

LAURA
Really? Even the sketchy, unaccredited ones on Craig's List?

Max nods, hands over his LIST OF SCHOOLS, cross-out marks through all of them. OFF Laura, not to be denied--

EXT. PRE-K - DAY - NEXT

Laura pulls up to a cute school building. With her antsy boys in tow, she heads straight for the STAFF PARKING LOT. Standing in front of a ROW OF CARS, she DIALS MAX on cell.

INT. PRECINCT - DAY - INTERCUT

Max sits at his COMPUTER, searching Walden's records.

MAX
What's up?

LAURA
Run this plate.
(off first car)
6-4-7-C-3-9-1.

He clicks open a NEW SCREEN and runs the search.

MAX
Okay...

LAURA
Anything outstanding?

MAX
Nope.

We RAPID-FIRE JUMP CUT through many cars -- Laura reading plates, Max running the search. Finally, a pink MINI-COOPER--

LAURA
(reading off plate)
C-U-T-I-E-P-Y. Duh.

MAX
Whoa! You hit the mother lode.

INT. PRE-K SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY - NEXT

Laura stands at the FRONT DESK, her tired boys sitting at her feet. After a beat, platinum blonde NURSE CULP approaches.

NURSE CULP
I'm Nurse Culp. You asked for me?

LAURA
Marissa Culp? "Cutie-pie?"

NURSE CULP
In the flesh.

LAURA
(flashes her BADGE)
Why don't we step outside.

EXT. PRE-K - DAY - NEXT

Laura faces off with an incredulous Nurse Culp.

NURSE CULP
Jail?

LAURA
Six unpaid parking tickets and a moving violation? You're looking at six months, easily....Unless...

NURSE CULP
Unless what?

LAURA
(moves close, intense)
You get my boys enrolled in Pre-K.

NURSE CULP
Excuse me? Isn't that...blackmail?

LAURA
You park in handicap zones like they're your driveway and you're telling me what's illegal?

NURSE CULP
(beat, then allows)
I could arrange an interview.

LAURA
I don't think you're following. You are on your way to lock-up. Pretty hard to keep your hair that blonde in a ten-foot cell.

NURSE CULP
It's the best I can do! The Head of School's a stickler for protocol.

OFF Laura, good enough--

EXT. RIVIERA COUNTRY CLUB - DAY - SAME

RICHARD smacks a ball at the DRIVING RANGE. WHIP PAN out to

THE PARKING LOT

Billy loiters by Richard's CAR, places a call to Laura.

BILLY
He left the girly file case in his car, which is locked at Riviera.

LAURA
Some "appointment." Don't they have valet? Get it unlocked.

BILLY
How am I supposed to do that without a warrant?

EXT. RIVIERA COUNTRY CLUB - NEXT

Laura exits her car and bee-lines past Billy, lets down her hair and throws on lipstick. Instant sexy. She approaches the VALET, on a dime kicking into damsel-in-distress mode.

LAURA
Excuse me? I am such a dummy. I left a work folder in my boyfriend's car. He already thinks I'm always forgetting things, and if I have to interrupt his golf game it'll be humiliating.

ANGLE ON BILLY, watching from a distance. He shakes his head in awe as the valet hands Laura the car keys.

EXT. RIVIERA PARKING LOT - NEXT

As Billy keeps an eye on Richard hitting balls at the DRIVING RANGE, Laura slips into the car and digs into the FILE CASE, where she finds a LEGAL DOCUMENT. As she quickly peruses--

BILLY
What is it?

LAURA
The Walden's unfiled <u>divorce</u> papers. And Eric's the Petitioner. He accuses <u>Deedee</u> of infidelity!

She SNAPS PHOTOS of the pages, then finds Richard's LAPTOP on the floor and quickly opens it. Billy sees Richard finish up.

BILLY
Empty bucket. We gotta bounce.

Laura clicks on RECENT DOCUMENTS. A file pops open entitled WALDEN-PRENUP-REVISED. She snaps more photos.

EXT. RIVIERA COUNTRY CLUB - DAY - NEXT

Power-walking Laura tosses the KEYS to the Valet with a WINK and bolts off just as an unsuspecting RICHARD exits the club.

INT. PRECINCT - INTERROGATION ROOM - NEXT

Laura faces off with an unnerved Deedee.

DEEDEE WALDEN
Eric threatened to divorce me but never filed...How do you know that?

LAURA
Unnamed witness. Who also says you've been tweaking your pre-nup. Seems a bit unethical-slash-illegal, given that you're already a widow.

DEEDEE WALDEN
I have no comment.

LAURA
Didn't ask for one. Though I am curious about big Rich gently stroking your hand earlier. Know what I think? Rhetorical. I think you've been nailing your dead husband's lawyer and changing your share of the estate. Makes you a pretty good candidate for murder.

DEEDEE WALDEN
Look. Richard and I had been... involved. But it was over.

LAURA
So you were cheating, Eric was cheating....Why'd you lie to me?

Deedee looks away, welling up with tears. Finally--

DEEDEE WALDEN
When we married, Eric made me sign a pre-nup that gave me nothing if I was unfaithful. I was fine with it. I loved him so much I would've signed my life away.
(MORE)

DEEDEE WALDEN (CONT'D)
Then irony of ironies, I catch him cheating....I slept with Richard to get back at Eric. But we made up -- he broke it off, swore she was out of his life for good. And he agreed we'd revise the pre-nup. That's what Richard was working on.

LAURA
So you lied to protect your money?

DEEDEE WALDEN
I was a partner, a confidant, a best friend to my husband. I deserve my share. Yes, I messed with the papers. If I didn't and it came out that I'd had an affair, the estate lawyer might have voided my entire stake. But I am not a murderer.

LAURA
Who can back you up, besides Rich?

DEEDEE WALDEN
No one else knew, other than Eric's mistress.

LAURA
Too bad you can only identify her ass cheeks.

DEEDEE WALDEN
Detective, I loved this man. There is no way I could kill him. You have to believe me. You have to.

OFF Laura, despite her suspicions, connecting with Deedee, believing her unlikely story--

INT. PRECINCT - NEXT

Laura confers with Hauser, Billy, and Max. Meredith hovers.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
Sounds bogus. No name for this supposed mistress? No description?

MAX
Also no paper trail. At least not one I've uncovered yet.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
Laura, please. Is it not obvious wifey and lawyer took Walden out?

MEREDITH
Concur. I suggest we warrant up, look for the weapon, chemicals...

LAURA
(in Meredith's face)
Are you on this case?
(then to Captain)
Deedee and Richard are a theory. But not the only theory. We're still looking for skate punk and we need to find the mistress. For all we know she could've had the Walden's gate code. Jilted lover, plants herself inside the house, kills Walden, slips out.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
(rolls eyes, dismissive)
Longshot. Knock yourself out. But put in for the warrants.

As the others peel off, Billy hangs back.

BILLY
Not that I'm ruling out Deedee's story, but why do you buy it?

LAURA
Just have a gut feeling it's the truth. If you'd ever been in love with an a-hole, you'd get it.

BILLY
Can't say I didn't warn you. I could see Jake was a dog from a mile away.

LAURA
Not like I had a lot of options.

BILLY
You know that's not true.

Billy stares her down. And we suddenly sense there's a "what might have been" aspect to this partnership.

LAURA
What can I say? Blind spot.

OFF LAURA, regarding her partner as he gets back to work--

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - NIGHT - RAPID-FIRE JUMP CUTS

Laura and Sammi frenziedly CLEAN THE CONDO. Wiping down counters. Vacuuming. Tossing TOYS and SIPPY CUPS and random detritus onto a fast-forming junk mountain in the BOYS' BEDROOM, where HYPER HARRISON AND NICHOLAS bounce off walls.

We SLAM INTO Laura DIALING JAKE. Gets voicemail.

JAKE (VOICEMAIL)
Hey it's Jake. Talk to me.

LAURA
Third message. Let me be clear. I landed us a school interview, which will go down at my place in ten minutes. You must be present. Do not mess with me. I will hurt you.

As she hangs up, Harrison BODYSLAMS his brother into a framed photo, which falls and SMASHES. The boys stare guiltily at their mom. Then Harrison COUGHS. Laura has a brainstorm.

LAURA (CONT'D)
I think someone needs cough syrup.

HARRISON
No, mommy!

But Laura has already run off, returning with the medicine. She pours a heaping spoonful for the kid.

LAURA
Here we go. Choo-choo.

Harrison reluctantly gulps it down. Laura pours out another spoonful, turns to Nicholas.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Next customer.

NICHOLAS
I didn't cough.

LAURA
But you might.

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - NIGHT - NEXT

Laura and her blissfully-quiet, DROWSY BOYS sit opposite an unsmiling ELEANOR CALDECOTT, 60s, who checks her watch.

LAURA
Any second. Jake's never late. Must be a work emergency. Family dinner is very important to him. To us. And the boys. All of us.

ELEANOR CALDECOTT
What does your husband do for work?

HARRISON
He kills people with guns.

LAURA
(awkward laugh, then)
Hardly ever.

The door FLIES OPEN. Jake enters, sweaty in GYM CLOTHES.

JAKE
Sorry. Work emergency.

LAURA
Jake, this is Eleanor Caldecott of Caldecott Academy.

JAKE
Of course. I've heard great things.
(aside to Laura)
Tell your super the gate's stuck.

He sits beside Laura, pulls a dozing boy onto his lap, smiles.

ELEANOR CALDECOTT
Do you not live together?

LAURA
(glares at Jake, then)
Not presently.

ELEANOR CALDECOTT
(to Jake)
And you are in...law enforcement?

JAKE
We both are. Homicide. Separate precincts.

Laura rolls her eyes.

ELEANOR CALDECOTT
And separate homes. How...modern. Boys, what is your favorite book?

The groggy boys just stare back at her. Laura is dying.

LAURA
What do you say, guys?
(can't think of a book)
That...one about the bear? Guys?
(to Eleanor, riffing)
Sorry, it's past their bed time.

ELEANOR CALDECOTT
It's six o'clock.

JAKE
Early to bed, early to rise...

NICHOLAS
(chimes in, to Jake)
I have a tummy ache.

JAKE
What'ya have for dinner, pal?

NICHOLAS
Cough medicine.

ELEANOR CALDECOTT
Well. This has been illuminating.

She stands to go. Surprising herself, Laura starts to cry.

LAURA
Look, these are good boys--

ELEANOR CALDECOTT
I'm sure they are. But we focus on the whole family, and this one is frankly unfit for my school.

Jake loses his shit, scaring the hell out of Eleanor.

JAKE
HEY! I may not be Father of the Year, but this woman works her ass off and still is there for our sons! She's the best mom you could hope to have in your stupid school, you snobbish, judgmental...pre-K Nazi queen!

The horrified woman bolts out the door. A beat.

LAURA
And there goes pre-school.

Jake puts an arm around Laura. Husband and wife sit in silence, Laura numb, all out of tears. Finally--

JAKE
Should I spend the night?

Laura stares at him in disbelief, the touching moment suddenly evaporated.

LAURA
(obviously)
No!

Jake shrugs. It was worth a try. A beat.

LAURA (CONT'D)
I appreciate your rant. But like I said, you're detached from reality. I'm a terrible mother.

JAKE
You're not so bad.

He kisses her on the forehead, kisses the boys, then--

JAKE (CONT'D)
I'll make a few calls. We'll figure this out.

And he too leaves. A beat. Laura regards her wedding ring, checks how easy it'd be to remove. Still stuck. She sinks back in the couch, her two boys snuggled asleep on her lap.

INT. PRECINCT - MORNING

Laura arrives into an upbeat bullpen, falls in with Billy.

BILLY
Where're the dudes?

LAURA
Dropped them at Chuck E. Cheese.
(off his nod)
They're at home with a babysitter.

BILLY
Whatever works. Good news here. Waldens have three cars, all in Eric's name. One's been in the shop for weeks so we searched the other two. Ready? BMW, lipstick in there -- clearly Deedee's wheels....Syringe under her seat.

LAURA
(thrown, perplexed)
Really?

BILLY
Yep. Lab's into it, should have--

He continues, but Laura is focused on a SKATE PUNK being booked ACROSS THE ROOM. Laura grabs the PHOTO of her SKATE PUNK. Not the same kid, but in front of this punk we see a ripped open FED EX ENVELOPE. Laura bolts to the BOOKING COP.

LAURA
Who's this?

BOOKING COP
Just a young entrepreneur offering home doobage delivery.

We see a hefty bag of MARIJUANA sticking out of the envelope. Laura puts her PHOTO in front of the punk.

LAURA
This a coworker of yours?

The punk clearly recognizes the face, but shrugs ignorance.

BUSTED SKATE PUNK
No.

LAURA
Wrong answer. Okay, new charge for our friend here. Accessory-after-the-fact to first degree murder.

BUSTED SKATE PUNK
Whoa, whoa, whoa. Lemme see again.

LAURA
(photo in face)
Where is he?

INT. ARCADE - HAWTHORNE - DAY - NEXT

Kids play video games, skee-ball, etc. Laura, feigning nerves, approaches a GANGLY DUDE at the PRIZE COUNTER.

LAURA (CONT'D)
I'm looking for Skank.

GANGLY DUDE
He's out. You need something?

LAURA
(leans in, discreet)
Just a small baggie. And maybe one of those brownies....I don't usually do this but it's that time of month.

The Dude stares her down for a beat.

GANGLY DUDE
You a cop?

LAURA
(laughs aloud)
Do I look like a cop?

Fair point. The Dude pulls out his wares for Laura, when--

SKANK ENTERS

GANGLY DUDE
Yo. Soccer Mom's looking for you.

Sensing trouble, Skank TAKES OFF, Laura on his heels.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Skank tosses down his SKATEBOARD and speeds away.

LAURA
Why is everyone making me run this week?!

She sprints after him, shouting into her CELL--

LAURA (CONT'D)
ALLEY!

The chase serpentines along the back of an APARTMENT BUILDING, Skank knocking down LAUNDRY LINES and crushing CHICKEN COOPS, Laura shocking the kid by relentlessly keeping up with him. She may run like a girl, but a fast girl.

His lead narrowing, Skank's about to break for the STREET when BILLY'S CAR SCREECHES INTO THE ALLEY, cutting him off. Laura TACKLES SKANK, then PUNCHES HIM IN THE THROAT.

LAURA (CONT'D)
That's for selling weed out of an arcade. No room at the playground?

Skank GAGS, having a very hard time catching his breath. Laura leaves the gasping punk with Billy, returning to help a startled BARRIO MAMA REHANG all her strewn clothing.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Lo siento.

INT. PRECINCT - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY - NEXT

Laura and Billy face off with scared, bruised SKANK.

SKANK
I don't know nothing about Walden getting killed! He liked his bud! You call in, deal is I come in thirty minutes or less.

BILLY
(has to admit)
That is impressive.

SKANK
Other night, I show, see the black and whites, and got the hell out.

LAURA
Skank, we got you in front of Judge Wong. Her pot-head son just totaled the family minivan. She's gonna love you. Wanna catch a break, get reassigned? I need a lead. Ever meet any of Walden's friends?
(Skank shakes his head)
See him with anyone?
(another head shake)
Deliver to him anywhere else?

SKANK
(beat, thinks on it)
Yeah, actually. Month ago, he made me haul my ass up near Santa Barbara to some hotel. He was yelling at his girlfriend -- took him forever to answer the door.

Laura and Billy exchange a look -- holy shit.

BILLY
How do you know it wasn't his wife?

SKANK
Cause this lady was saying she'd go nuclear if he didn't leave his wife.

Finally armed with a real lead, Laura bolts into--

INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

--startling the Captain with her adamant pronouncement. Billy and Meredith follow in, as--

LAURA
Deedee's telling the truth. The mistress is real.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
(skeptical)
Is that right. Who is she?

LAURA
I don't know yet.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
And there we go.

LAURA
But he took her to a hotel in Santa Barbara! Someone must've seen her.

MEREDITH
Or not.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
Time to end the fishing expedition. I'm ready to arrest the wife. Now.

BILLY
The syringe pan out?

MEREDITH
It was clean. Probably fell out of a pack that included the murder weapon. But please -- Deedee Walden had motive, opportunity....

CAPTAIN HAUSER
Not to mention, Chief's deep up my ass to make an arrest before Walden's memorial tomorrow.

LAURA
So we'll run up to Santa Barbara tonight! It's not Deedee, Captain, I'm telling you. Let us play this out. Chief crawls any further up your butt, I'll pay for the enema.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
(annoyed beat, then firm)
Nothing comes of it, we book Deedee first thing in the morning.

LAURA
Don't count on it.

And she and Billy are out the door.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. BOUTIQUE HOTEL, SANTA BARBARA – DUSK

A gorgeous inn tucked into a forested hillside.

INT. BOUTIQUE HOTEL – LOBBY – DUSK – SAME

As Laura and Billy wait for the HOTEL MANAGER to finish with some guests, a BELL BOY offers a tray of drinks to the cops.

BELL BOY
Water infused with mint and thyme?

BILLY
I'm good.

LAURA
(to Bell Boy, *sotto*)
I'll take his.

Laura grabs two -- savors a gulp -- as the clerk frees up.

HOTEL MANAGER
Checking in?

LAURA
Do you rent by the hour? I could really go for a nap and a shower -- especially if you have those rain faucets? I'm kidding. Sort of.
(flashes her BADGE)
Recognize this guy?

She shows a PHOTO of Walden.

HOTEL MANAGER
Of course. Mister Walden was a regular. So tragic.

BILLY
The woman with him last month is a person of interest in our homicide investigation. We need a name.

HOTEL MANAGER
Mister Walden was quite secretive. I never even <u>saw</u> his companion.

LAURA
Well <u>someone</u> must have.

INT. HOUSEKEEPING - BOUTIQUE HOTEL - NEXT

Laura speaks with a gaggle of MAIDS in very mediocre SPANISH. A few make eyes with Handsome Billy. We SUBTITLE--

LAURA
First I am giving you much congratulations. You are the cleaningest hotel I am ever visiting. The toilet in the lobby? Very washed and pretty. If anyone has a good idea for taking--
(mimes picking her nose, then resorts to ENGLISH)
--boogers out of grout, *por favor* let me know.

A mix of confused looks and a few grateful smiles. Laura flashes the PHOTO of Walden. Back to SPANISH--

LAURA (CONT'D)
This man, Mister Walden, stays here last month. Who is remembering?

The women look to one MAID in particular. Laura notices the visibly nervous maid oddly COVER ONE HAND with the other.

LAURA (CONT'D)
You washed this man's room?
(off her nod)
He is with a woman. You see her?

The maid speaks perfect English.

HOTEL MAID
No. They were very private. I saw him one time only. But never her.

The maid's still covering her hand. Curious, Laura accidentally-on-purpose SPILLS her mint water. As the maid instinctively cleans up, Laura LOCKS ON a diamond-encrusted platinum WEDDING RING the woman wears on her finger. A beat.

LAURA
Beautiful ring. You know, I've been looking to upgrade mine. Where can I get one like that?

Laura stares the woman down. A tense beat.

HOTEL MAID
I don't know....

LAURA
No, you don't. It belongs to the woman I'm looking for. Doesn't it?

Billy -- thrown by the seemingly unfounded accusation, is doubly thrown when the maid, now weeping, NODS.

HOTEL MAID
I found it in the room after they checked out. I was just holding it until they called. They never did.

OFF Laura, wheels turning--

EXT. BOUTIQUE HOTEL - NEXT

Exiting, Billy looks to his visibly perplexed partner.

BILLY
How'd you know it was the mistress's ring? And why do you have your sick-to-your-stomach face on?

LAURA
I've seen that ring before. But it can't be....

INT. LAURA'S CONDO - NIGHT - LATER

Lost in her head, Laura enters, finds Sammi in a gravity-defying YOGA POSE. We hear the TV on in the other room.

SAMMI
Hey! The puppies ran me ragged so I threw them in front of a DVD.

LAURA
Not a problem.

She crosses to the DEN. We see a DVD playing, but no boys.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Nicholas? Harrison?

SAMMI
Are they not...? Shoot!

A panicked Sammi RACES through the condo, searching. But mom knows best. She casually bee-lines straight for--

INT. BATHROOM - LAURA'S CONDO - CONTINUOUS

--where she finds the boys DRENCHED HEAD TO TOE IN SHAMPOO and SLIDING ACROSS THE FLOOR.

LAURA
No shampoo derby when I'm out. You know that.

SAMMI
(runs in, relieved)
Guys! Really?
(then to Laura)
I'm so sorry. Can't believe I fell for the ol' leaving on the TV trick.

Laura FREEZES, having an epiphany. To herself--

LAURA
It was a trick.
(turns to Sammi)
Can you cover for one more hour?

SAMMI
Sure.

LAURA
(to boys)
Rinse. Then conditioner.

She bolts out.

EXT. WALDEN ESTATE - BRENTWOOD PARK - NIGHT - NEXT

DING DONG. Margarita the housekeeper answers the door. We REVERSE to reveal Laura and Billy.

MARGARITA
Missus no is here.

LAURA
Better. We'll be in and out.

She and Billy walk right in, passing Margarita.

BILLY
What're we doing?

LAURA
Reenacting.

Billy follows Laura into

THE DINING ROOM

LAURA (CONT'D)
Captain and I come in, hello hello, I mow down half a cheesecake, Walden offers us wine, drops the bottle...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - WALDEN ESTATE - NIGHT - NEXT

Laura and Billy enter, as--

LAURA
We escort him into the bedroom, secure the area, Walden gets weird, slouches into the love seat, goodnight goodnight--

INT. HALLWAY - WALDEN ESTATE - NIGHT - NEXT

Laura and Billy exit the bedroom, closing the door, as--

LAURA
We station the uniforms right at the door, then we head out.

They start down the hall, when from behind we hear a CRASH, then another, as if someone is being attacked in the bedroom.

BILLY
What the hell?!

Startled and racing back

INTO THE MASTER BEDROOM

Billy is confused to find it perfectly intact. Which is when he notices the sounds are emanating from LAURA'S CELL PHONE, resting on the dresser. Laura holds up the cell, deadpans--

LAURA
Forgot my phone.

Billy recognizes the look on his partner’s face.

BILLY
You know who did it.

Laura nods.

LAURA
And I know how.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

EXT. WALDEN ESTATE - DAY

A hundred well-to-do MOURNERS -- all of our SUSPECTS included -- crowd the manicured grounds, taking seats for the MEMORIAL ceremony. As Laura and Billy enter, the Captain, standing with the stern POLICE CHIEF, calls them over.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
Diamond, Sands. You know the Chief.

They shake his hand, AD LIB greetings. Then, *sotto*--

CAPTAIN HAUSER (CONT'D)
Just explaining that we're ready to arrest the wife, soon as we convince the DA we have a case.

POLICE CHIEF
And do you have a case?

CAPTAIN HAUSER
Everything but the weapon. Hit a snag because she turned out to be diabetic, which supposedly explains away the syringe we found in her car....We'll put it to bed quickly.

LAURA
Whatayasay we put it to bed now?

The Captain and Chief both look to Laura in confusion.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
(off surroundings, firm)
Laura, it's not the time for more fishing.

BILLY
She's not fishing. She solved the murder.

LAURA
Actually, two murders.

DEEDEE WALDEN (O.C.)
Then for god's sake, tell everyone.

They turn to see an adamant Deedee eavesdropping.

DEEDEE WALDEN (CONT'D)
I will not spend another minute enduring suspicious glares from people assuming I killed Eric.

She marches to the LECTERN, speaks into the MICROPHONE.

DEEDEE WALDEN (CONT'D)
Detective Laura Diamond from the LAPD has an important announcement.

Laura looks to Billy -- should I do this? He shrugs -- go for it. She hesitantly approaches the mic, her tone serious.

LAURA
Good morning.
(gets FEEDBACK, adjusts)
Whoa. Hot mic. Okay, where to begin? How about this -- Deedee Walden did not kill her husband.

We see Deedee exhale in vindication. Nearby, the Captain and Chief look disconcerted. Laura forges ahead.

LAURA (CONT'D)
The person who did kill Eric Walden committed a nearly perfect crime. It was the work of an obviously brilliant mind. I suspected Eric's brother at first--
(looks to Ned)
--but then I got to know you better.

Ned's not sure whether to be relieved or insulted.

LAURA (CONT'D)
So who else was in the house?
(indicates to)
There's neighbor Lisa, she of the size zero waistline and the "digestive issues."

INT. BATHROOM - WALDEN ESTATE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lisa kneels over the toilet, GAGGING herself, then PUKING.

LAURA (O.S.)
But Lisa's alibi checked out.

We CUT TO LAURA later entering the GUEST BATHROOM (WE GLIMPSED THIS FROM BEHIND EARLIER), wincing at the putrid smell.

EXT. WALDEN ESTATE - BRENTWOOD PARK - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

LAURA
(to a cowed Lisa)
Little advice? If you're gonna toss your cookies, the cookies don't have to be gluten free.
(moving on)
The Walden's housekeeper, Margarita, and their chef, Jean Luc, were present that night.

We see them seated, looking quite uneasy at the moment.

INT. KITCHEN - WALDEN ESTATE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

We PAN ACROSS the clutter of dirty dishes, pots and pans--

LAURA (O.S.)
But their alibi checked out, too. Though I think they were up to something more intimate than putting the leftovers away--

--to the PANTRY, where we glimpse Margarita UP ON THE COUNTER, Jean Luc, pants down, thrusting into her.

We CUT TO LAURA later noticing something on the PANTRY FLOOR (WE ALSO GLIMPSED THIS FROM BEHIND EARLIER), as--

EXT. WALDEN ESTATE - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

LAURA
Unless the condom I came across--
(whoops)
--poor choice of words --the condom I found on the pantry floor was for squeezing out cake frosting.
(turns her attention to)
Also present was Richard Levine, Eric's attorney and Deedee's...
(how to put it)
...buddy. But Deedee vouches for Richard's alibi and he's a lefty, which the killer isn't.

Richard looks relieved to be off the hook. Deedee chimes in.

DEEDEE WALDEN
Then who?! No one else was in the house.

LAURA
No? I was....
(then, pained to say)
So was my boss.

A sullen Laura, and everyone else, turn to a stone-faced

CAPTAIN HAUSER

LAURA (CONT'D)
He tragically lost his wife Karen last month in a car accident....Or was it an accident? Her car went over a cliff on her way back from a tryst with her lover, Eric Walden.

Deedee and the crowd are stunned by this revelation. But Laura, scrutinizing the Captain's face, sees only guilt.

EXT. HOTEL BUNGALOW / INTERROGATION ROOM - FLASHBACK

Pot-dealer Skank stands outside, hearing ANGRY VOICES inside.

LAURA (O.S.)
Eric tried to break it off with Karen that day. They fought.

We CUT TO DEEDEE at the precinct, insisting to Laura--

DEEDEE WALDEN
He swore she was out of his life for good.

EXT. WALDEN ESTATE - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Laura eyes the Captain, torn between sympathy and anger.

LAURA
Tell me if I'm off. You knew about the affair. When Karen died, you suspected Eric was responsible.

EXT. WALDEN ESTATE - BRENTWOOD PARK - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Outside Walden's house, we again see Hauser tell Laura--

CAPTAIN HAUSER
(dismissive)
Universe had nothing to do with it.

EXT. WALDEN ESTATE - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

LAURA
(still to Captain)
It must have eaten you up inside when you saw her in the morgue and she didn't have her ring on. She lost it in the hotel room.

Laura holds up the RING. The Captain is visibly shaken.

LAURA (CONT'D)
I always loved this ring. Loved that you had a matching one.

INT. WALDEN ESTATE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Eric offers wine to the Captain, who HOLDS UP HIS HANDS as he declines.

We PUSH IN ON ERIC as he NOTICES THE RING on the Captain's hand, then STUMBLES, suddenly realizing.

LAURA (O.S.)
Eric saw it on your finger. And that's when he realized -- <u>you</u> were Karen's husband. <u>You</u> had sent the death threats. <u>You</u> had come to murder him.

EXT. WALDEN ESTATE - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

LAURA
But he didn't say a word. And that's when you knew for certain -- <u>Eric killed your wife</u>.

INT. BEDROOM - WALDEN ESTATE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A rattled Eric offers his odd mea culpa to the detectives.

LAURA (O.S.)
He all but admitted it in the bedroom, said he'd give anything to have his life back the way it was.

EXT. WALDEN ESTATE - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

LAURA
(to the Captain)
He was pleading for mercy, offering to buy your silence. But you were determined to get revenge.

INT. BEDROOM - WALDEN ESTATE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

With Eric slumped in the love seat, the Captain approaches him to hand over his CARD.

LAURA (O.S.)
And you did. Right under my nose.

This time though we see a SYRINGE in the Captain's hand and he discreetly PLUNGES IT INTO WALDEN'S NECK, then casually exits with unsuspecting Laura.

EXT. WALDEN ESTATE - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

LAURA
That was clever. But not as clever as planting some kind of device in the room on a timer--

INT. BEDROOM - WALDEN ESTATE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The UNIFORM COPS bust in, thrown to find no struggle at all, but only Walden's lifeless body.

LAURA (O.S.)
--making it sound like the murder happened ten minutes later, when you were outside -- with me.

CUT TO the chaos of the CRIME SCENE. The Captain discreetly recovers an iPOD from behind some clutter on a dresser.

LAURA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You recovered the device when you entered the crime scene--

EXT. WALDEN ESTATE - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Laura still stares down the inscrutable Captain.

LAURA
--and that was that.

Every person present now stares accusingly at THE CAPTAIN. A beat. He suddenly TURNS AND RUNS.

Billy and Laura SPRINT after the Captain, her BULKY PURSE BOUNCING all over the place.

Chasing him ACROSS THE MANICURED LAWN, Laura signals “back off” to Billy as she pulls ahead and TACKLES Hauser. They ROLL and roll, until he RIPS AWAY HER PURSE, then stands and pulls out HIS OWN GUN.

Billy hangs back, hand on his holster, but knows better than to deny Laura this moment. Hauser waves his gun alternately at both detectives, as--

CAPTAIN HAUSER
I'm a better shot than Billy, Laura. Don't be stupid.

She lays into her boss, incensed.

LAURA
Why not?! You obviously wanted me to be a complete idiot the night you decided to use me as your dupe!

CAPTAIN HAUSER
It wasn't like that...

LAURA
No?! How exactly was it?! You were my mentor! How dare you take advantage of my loyalty, my friendship?! And what -- now you're gonna shoot me? Screw you!

Humiliated, desperate, the Captain begins to fall apart--

CAPTAIN HAUSER
That sonofabitch murdered Karen!

LAURA
And if you'd come to me, I would've helped you put him away! We coulda proved he ran her off the road -- his Bentley's in the goddamn body shop with a bashed fender!

We sense this isn't news to Hauser. And Laura realizes--

LAURA (CONT'D)
You knew that. You didn't want to arrest him.

CAPTAIN HAUSER
Rich guys like Walden don't go to prison....And I'm sure as hell not going to either. I'm sorry, Laura, I am, but now, you both have two choices. Let me disappear...or we're gonna have a problem.

LAURA
Then we have a problem.

Undaunted, she reprises her ultimatum from Venice Beach.

LAURA (CONT'D)
I'm going to count to three, then
I'm coming for my handcuffs.
If you want to pull the trigger,
that's up to you.

Reeling, beyond desperate, Hauser cocks his gun, aiming back and forth between the cops--

CAPTAIN HAUSER
Don't do this, Laura!

LAURA
One....Two....

CAPTAIN HAUSER
I mean it!

LAURA
Three.

She matter-of-factly approaches. Panicked, the Captain

PULLS THE TRIGGER.

Click, empty chamber. Now really pissed, Laura FACEPLANTS him with a suckerpunch. Billy rolls his eyes at the Captain.

BILLY
She took your bullets, jackass.

INT. PRECINCT - DAY - LATER

Entering the BULLPEN, Laura again gets a hero's welcome -- high-fives, backslaps -- from other cops. But this time their tone is subdued, as is Laura's. To passing well-wishers--

LAURA
Thanks. Thank you. Thanks.
(indicates well-wisher has food on his lip)
Schmutz.
(he wipes it away)
There you go.

Max falls in with her, keeping pace, as--

MAX
Monumental bust.

LAURA
Thanks for the help.

MAX
My mind's officially blown. You think you know a guy....Not to pile on to the unfortunate events of the day, but still coming up goose-eggs on the school front.

LAURA
(sighs, depressed)
Can't believe I'm saying this, but I think I need a nanny.

MAX
On it.

He peels off. She glumly crosses to her CUBICLE, cluttered as ever. Tosses her bag down, as--

MEREDITH (O.C.)
I suppose a compliment is in order.

Laura turns to find Meredith, holding a BAG OF CLOTHES.

LAURA
Was...that the compliment?

Meredith just grimaces, then hands over the BAG.

LAURA (CONT'D)
What's this?

MEREDITH
School uniforms. My sorority sister runs a pre-K on Montana.

LAURA
(beat, floored)
Do I have to interview?

MEREDITH
You're in. I already told her the boys are a nightmare. Fortunately for you, she likes a challenge.

Laura just stares, then does the unthinkable. To Meredith's visible discomfort, Laura HUGS HER.

INT. PRECINCT - DAY - LATER

TIGHT ON clinking coffee mugs. We REVEAL Laura and Billy, feet up at their desks, toasting, if not gleefully.

BILLY
You solved another one, Columbo.

LAURA
One we never should've had to solve. I'm still reeling....How could he?

BILLY
I know, it hurts. I feel it, too. But hey, a collar's a collar, and nobody's got more than you. You should apply for Captain.

FAMILIAR VOICE (O.C.)
Now there's an inspired idea.

Surprised, they turn to see JAKE, arriving at their cubicles.

JAKE
Nobody tells people what to do like Laura.

He LAUGHS at his own joke. Billy doesn't find the comment amusing -- and we sense doesn't care much for Jake.

BILLY
Always a pleasure, Jake.

He walks off. Oblivious to the attitude, Jake turns to Laura.

JAKE
Sorry about your killer boss. Go figure. Saw you called. What's up?

LAURA
What's up is I had no idea what to do with the boys and wanted to see how your alleged "calls" were coming along. But that fire's put out, no thanks to you. So all I really need from you now is to sign your papers. Cause we're done, Jake. We're done.

With that, she uses all her strength to TUG THE WEDDING BAND off her finger and hand it to Jake. He regards it, nods.

JAKE
If that's what you really want, I'll sign them tonight.

LAURA
Good.

A beat. He's still standing there. Laura eyes him curiously.

LAURA (CONT'D)
You can go now.

But instead, Jake spots and good-naturedly salutes the POLICE CHIEF, who we see enter the bullpen, all-business.

POLICE CHIEF
'Scuse me, people! Gather up!

Laura stares in confusion as the PRECINCT ASSEMBLES.

POLICE CHIEF (CONT'D)
Sad day here. But our work continues. Some of you must know Lieutenant Jake Broderick, Mid-Wilshire Homicide. Formerly, that is. Meet your new Captain.

JAKE
(*sotto,* to Laura)
Go figure.

Laura's jaw drops. She's so thunderstruck that Jake's schmoozy WELCOMING REMARKS are completely lost on her.

But ever the detective, what she doesn't miss is a subtle exchanged look between Jake and MEREDITH, who sneaks a discreet WINK at the new boss.

Laura's incredulous eyes dart to Jake, then Meredith, then down at the SCHOOL CLOTHES on her desk.

Are you fucking kidding me??? OFF Laura--

END OF EPISODE