THE BRIDGE

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICAS - NIGHT

Steel and concrete vein connecting El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. The Rio Grande little more than a boxed in, trash strewn black trickle on this moonless Bordertown night. Past the gleaming lights of the two cities severed by the border wall lies a vast and unforgiving desert hiding secrets best left buried...

Tonight the CAMERA FINDS a black ESCALADE creeping across the bridge as WE PUSH IN.

INT. CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

The DRIVER a mere shadow behind the wheel. We never see his face, just sense the whorl of his presence, a hand here, shirt collar. He checks his watch and we see he's wearing surgical gloves. We see what he sees -- the red border light flashing green as he pulls onto the center of the bridge, a cruddy, weathered sign:

"WELCOME TO MEXICO/BIENVENIDOS A MEXICO"

Now El Paso is in his rear view mirror, the messy heart's blood sprawl of Ciudad Juarez through his windshield, Murder City, ground zero for the narco war.

At this hour there are few cars on the bridge. He checks his watch again and then it happens...

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICAS -- NIGHT

One by one the lights suddenly go out, PLUNGING the bridge into DARKNESS, save the sweep of a few motorists' headlights.

INT. CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Our mysterious Driver kills his headlights, pulls to the side of the bridge and EXITS the car, moving with purpose...

BORDER TECH #1
(Prelap)
Lights are out on the bridge...

INT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICA'S SURVEILLANCE ROOM -- NIGHT

A pair of American BORDER TECHS hunched over computer monitors as alarms sound and their CAMERA FEEDS blink to static.

BORDER TECH #2
Cameras too. Hell's goin' on?

His partner rises to check something --

BORDER TECH #1
Auxiliary's down too. Call the Commander, we got a code three...

As they spring into action we cut back to...

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICA'S -- NIGHT

QUICK HANDHELD SHOTS of our Driver pulling something from the trunk of the car, dragging it into the road.

TIGHT ON his watch as he checks the time and then ducks away from the headlights of a car crossing on the other side of the bridge... He scurries back to his car and takes off.

INT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICA'S SURVEILLANCE ROOM -- NIGHT

Tech #2's talking frantically to his supervisor on the phone:

BORDER TECH #2
...It just happened. Mexicans don't know shit, water and power don't know shit, everything's just black, sir.

Border Tech #1 leans into his screen and whattya know the lights begin to magically POP ON, the CAMERA FEEDS shudder back on line...

BORDER TECH #1
... We've got juice!

BORDER TECH #2
(into phone)
They just went back on -- how the hell should I know...

As he hunkers to check the VARIOUS CAMERAS winking back to life. Tech #1 STOPS WHEN he sees a horrible sight...

BORDER TECH #1
Holy shit. Shut the border.

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICAS - NIGHT

OVERHEAD SHOT of a WOMAN'S BODY resting smack in the middle of the bridge. She's white, blond. Her dead eyes stare up at the stars smeared in the sky... as we SMASH TO THE

MAIN TITLES: **THE BRIDGE**.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. STREET NEAR BRIDGE, CIUDAD JUAREZ -- NIGHT

TIGHT ON a SHADOWY FIGURE watching the flashing lights of approaching police cars streaming onto the bridge from both the US and Mexican side of the border. This is STEVEN LINDER, 30's, white, a wolf of a man dressed in a too tight leather jacket, no stranger to the dark and jumbled chaos of Juarez. He takes a drag on his cigarette. He's been waiting for this night a long time. And now here it is, moonless, alive with possibility...

A BEAT as he crushes the half smoked cigarette under his boot and then retrieves the stub, pockets it carefully. This is a man who leaves no trace. He takes one last look at the red and white flash of the police cruisers on the bridge and turns to a sudden gust of wind blowing in off the desert. It's time...

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICAS - NIGHT

Both sides of the bridge are closed to traffic. In the center we see a crush of Crime Techs, Border Patrol Agents and uniform officers from both sides of the border. A car pulls up from the Mexican side. Out steps a man. This is Mexican State Homicide Investigator MARCO RUIZ, (40s) still rubbing the sleep from his eyes as he flashes his badge to the uniforms and swings under the crime tape.

Marco finds El Paso homicide detective SONYA NORTH, (30s) unkempt hair blowing about her face, leather pants, calf boots...

They meet over the body. It is literally on the line that divides the U.S. and Mexico. The head on Sonya's side, the feet on Marco's. Sonya eyes Marco --

SONYA
Who are you?

A BEAT as Sonya stares at him. She's there but not there, a distant ship on the horizon, not cold but something else... However tonight she's focused on the body perfectly straddling the border. Marco smiles warmly, fishes in his pocket and shows his BADGE, lightly accented English...

MARCO
Marco Ruiz, State Police.

SONYA
Sonya North, El Paso Homicide.

He puts a hand out to shake but she just looks at him, lets him dangle.

MARCO
Do you know who she is?

SONYA
(nods)
She's American.

MARCO
Okay.

SONYA
Lorraine Cross, the judge.

The name means nothing to him. He has his own dead.

A UNI crosses to Sonya...

UNI
There's a gal asking to talk to the cop in charge.

They spot CHARLOTTE MILLWRIGHT, (40s) wealthy ranch wife -- with the hair, clothes, all that -- straining against several officers. Sonya stays on point with Marco --

SONYA
She's American, the car came from El Paso. It's ours.

Marco gestures -- it's all yours.

Sonya crosses to Charlotte who's frantic behind the crime scene tape. Sonya fixes her with that faraway stare a beat...

SONYA (CONT'D)
Detective Sonya North. You have information?

CHARLOTTE
Information?

SONYA
On the crime.

CHARLOTTE
(confused)
No. We need to cross the bridge...

SONYA
You'll have to wait.

CHARLOTTE
We can't wait, my husband's having a heart attack...

She points to an AMBULANCE from Mexico, stopped on the Mexican side of the bridge --

SONYA
This is a crime scene.

CHARLOTTE
We're American. We need a hospital --

SONYA
The bridge is closed.

CHARLOTTE
I can pay you.
(then)
To let us cross.

She fishes out her fancy wallet from her fancy purse. Sonya is blank. Charlotte offers a clutch of BILLS --

SONYA
No one crosses.

Sonya turns her back on the woman, walks past Marco who has been watching all this with interest. As Sonya returns to the body, Charlotte looks at Marco, eyes pleading...

CHARLOTTE
Please.

MARCO
Why were you in Mexico? Don't you know the danger?

CHARLOTTE
We were looking at some horses...

Her tears take her over. Marco watches as Charlotte runs back to the ambulance. He waits a beat, ducks back under the crime scene tape and follows her, sees her get in the back with her unconscious husband, KARL (60s)...

Marco crosses to the PARAMEDIC behind the wheel, motions for him to roll the window down...

MARCO
¿Qué tiene?

PARAMEDIC
(points to his heart)
El corazon...

MARCO
¿Es muy grave?

Off the Paramedic's nod, we CUT BACK TO:

CENTER OF BRIDGE. Sonya stands over the body, questioning SAMUELS, a BORDER AGENT who was on duty when the killer's Escalade crossed --

SONYA
What kind of car?

SAMUELS
Don't know.

SONYA
It's your job to know.

SAMUELS
Our job is border security and interdiction, not dead bodies, Ma'am.

SONYA
The car would have crossed over into Juarez.

SAMUELS
That makes it Mexico's problem.

Before she can continue the Ambulance starts moving, drives slowly past the body and crosses over into America --

SONYA
Stop!

She chases after the ambulance, but it's too late. She grabs one of the Unis who have just allowed the ambulance to pass.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Who authorized that?

Marco steps out of the crowd, faces a furious Sonya...

MARCO
I did.

SONYA
You compromised my scene.

MARCO
Her husband's very sick.

SONYA
What's your name again?

MARCO
Marco Ruiz.

SONYA
Badge number?

MARCO
He needed a hospital.

SONYA
There are hospitals in Mexico.

MARCO
You ever been to one in Juarez?

SONYA
Why does that matter?

MARCO
Here.

He holds his badge out for her to inspect again. She takes down the number --

SONYA
My body. My scene. You had no right.

MARCO
I don't need your body.
(off look)
Just this morning I got nine heads in the parking lot of City Hall...

SONYA
Why tell me that?

MARCO
We have our own dead.

She studies him a beat. Then:

SONYA
How do you let that happen?

Judgmental, yes. Like most other El Paso law enforcement, she thinks very little of the Mexican cops. But her tone is matter-of-fact... she really doesn't understand.

Sonya moves off to the body again. Marco shakes off the remark, crosses to his car where several other Juarez police officers stand waiting on his word.

MARCO
Americans are taking it. I'm going back to sleep.

As they disperse --

EXT. JUAREZ -- NIGHT

CAMERA PANS across a dark mountainside where we can just make out the words "LEA LA BIBLIA - ES LA VERDAD" painted in massive white print as we...

EXT. JUAREZ -- NIGHT

SWOOP into the city, past blocks of squat bunker-like houses behind high concrete walls topped with razor wire. The walls of course tagged with petty street gang poetry. A pack of wild dogs roam looking for trash, pause under a BRIGHT PINK CROSS standing in an abandoned lot, plastic flowers crucified over the name of one of the lost girls of Juarez as we...

EXT. STREETS, JUAREZ -- NIGHT

What passes for a nice neighborhood in Juarez, gaudy narco tecture houses with their golden domes, iron gates -- monuments to the spoils of the drug war.

CAMERA FINDS Linder as he crosses down a street filled with SUV'S parked outside a house party. The rhythmic oompah pa of a narcorrido reverberates. The door opens briefly to reveal a few drunken SICARIOS (narco soldiers) parting to make way for EVA, (20s) a hot mess all jeweled and tarted up, the girlfriend of a drug dealer. Her two girlfriends follow her out. Inside, we glimpse a BOY in a RED and BLACK SHIRT -- 18, a baby face, somehow different than the jaded narcos he's hanging with. The girls shut the door...

And linger outside the house. At first their chatter looks light, but with a closer look -- Eva is wiping tears. As her make-up washes away, we also see BRUISES on her face.

Linder presses himself into the shadows, watching Eva. She kisses her friends goodbye, then slips away into the night...

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Linder follows her down an alley. She hears his footsteps; turns and sees him. He approaches, holding out a bandana. In Spanish:

LINDER
For your tears.

Eva is frozen as he hands her the bandana. She looks at it like it's some kind of signal... which it is.

EVA
Are you the one... ?

She starts to shake.

LINDER
Yes. I am the one. Now come.

She stiffens as he grabs her elbow, leading her...

LINDER (CONT'D)
Where is your car?

A beat as she points to a Honda parked on an empty side street. He pushes her across to the car.

LINDER (CONT'D)
The keys.

She fishes in her purse, hands him the keys. Instead of opening the door, he pops the trunk.

EVA
No.

LINDER
Si.

Eva hesitates, looks around. The street is totally fucking empty, the din of the house party faraway and faint...

EVA
Por favor...

She looks around -- she's gonna run. Before she can, he GRABS HER and throws her in the trunk of the car. Stifles her cry. Takes her purse and then presses his face close to hers and puts a finger to his lips --

LINDER
Shhh....

He SLAMS THE TRUNK shut as we...

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICAS -- NIGHT

It's just Sonya now with the dead woman. She kneels, finishing up her notes. She motions to MORGUE ATTENDANTS --

SONYA
I'm done.

Two Morgue Attendants close in. One grabs the shoulders, the other the feet...

Sonya pulls out her cellphone to call her Lieutenant when she hears the morgue attendants react...

MORGUE ATTENDANT
Shit...

She turns in time to see the dead woman's body CLEAVE IN TWO, perfectly vivisected. She strides over and stares at the two halves -- what the fuck is going on?

INT. UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER OF EL PASO -- NIGHT

Charlotte hopping out of the ambulance as paramedics wheel her unconscious husband into an operating room, nurses working feverishly on his vitals, threading catheters, trying to stabilize him... Charlotte peels away, sees a man standing there. This is DR. BARNES and he's dressed in a jacket, string tie and boots -- not scrubs...

DR. BARNES
Charlotte, I came as fast as I could --

CHARLOTTE
Will you operate?

DR. BARNES
I was at a wedding. Had too much to drink...
(off look)
Doctor McGrann will do the bypass.

CHARLOTTE
<u>You're</u> his doctor.

DR. BARNES
I'll be here to consult. It's a routine procedure...

CHARLOTTE
I'll pay you.

DR. BARNES
Come on now...

CHARLOTTE
I'll fund that heart clinic you've been lobbying the board of directors for. We'll build a whole new wing --

She stops as several nurses come RUSHING out of the room. She reads the doctor's face -- this is not good.

INT. EL PASO PD, ENTRANCE -- NIGHT

...Catch LT. HANK WADE (50s) possessing a weathered cowboy swagger even at this hour as he ENTERS the HQ, talking with Sonya on his cell. INTERCUT WITH SONYA DRIVING AS NEEDED.

HANK
You sure it's Judge Cross?

SONYA
In two pieces.

HANK
Well damn.

INT. SONYA'S TRUCK (MOVING) -- NIGHT

Sonya driving fast as she talks to Hank...

SONYA
The Mexicans didn't want the body.

Hank shrugs, not surprised.

HANK
The Feds?

SONYA
They don't know yet.

INT. EL PASO PD, BULLPEN -- NIGHT

Hank moves into the nearly empty bullpen, phone pressed to his ear. He goes to the coffee maker, entirely befuddled by it. Presses a few buttons here and there --

HANK
(into phone)
They will. Morning light will bring those boys, Border Patrol, DEA, ICE. Everybody'll wanna piece of this.

SONYA
It's mine.

HANK
How do you work this damn thing?

SONYA
What?

He means the coffee pot. Starts striding through the halls, looking for someone to help him --

HANK
Lorraine Cross on the Bridge of the Americas. Someone's sending a message.

SONYA
What do you mean? What is the message?

HANK
She's an anti-immigration nut. Believes in the wall, anti-Dream Act, all that.

He spots KITTY, middle-aged civilian clerk, working her curves and orange lipstick, just arriving for work. He signals for her to follow him. She does, back to the coffee pot --

HANK (CONT'D)
Have you told the family?

SONYA
I'm on my way now.

HANK
It's the middle of the night, Sonya. There are children there.

SONYA
I know.

HANK
Tread lightly.

SONYA
Their mother was murdered. There is no other way to say it.

HANK
Why don't I join you?

SONYA
Hank. No.

She hangs up. He does too, sighing. Kitty's waiting patiently. He points to the coffee maker --

KITTY
Good morning, Lieutenant.

HANK
Do you know how to do this?

KITTY
(shakes head)
I just go to Starbucks.

HANK
Aw damn.

Off which --

EXT. JUDGE CROSS'S HOUSE, WEST SIDE EL PASO -- NIGHT

Nice neighborhood in the foothills of the Franklin mountains. The CAMERA PUSHES PAST a child's bike abandoned in the front yard to find a light in the living room as we PRELAP MIKE CROSS'S VOICE:

MIKE
(prelap)
She was on her way to a conference in Austin...

INT. JUDGE CROSS'S HOUSE, WEST SIDE EL PASO -- NIGHT

Sonya with Judge Cross's husband, MIKE (40s) numb with grief and the shock of what she has just told him. Sonya remains unmoved. She has not tread lightly.

SONYA
Flying?

MIKE
She drove. I called her before I went to bed...

SONYA
What time?

MIKE
Eleven, but she didn't answer.

SONYA
She was dead by then. I'll need your phone. And computer...

MIKE
Right now?

She nods. He hands her the phone, too lost in grief to protest --

SONYA
Why didn't she fly?

MIKE
She liked to drive.

She thinks for a beat --

SONYA
Maybe an affair.
(off look)
People have needs.

MIKE
There was no affair.

SONYA
Well you wouldn't know. She would keep it secret. You have secrets.

It's matter-of-fact, not cruel. At least not intended to be cruel. But of course Mike is reeling --

SONYA (CONT'D)
Were there any recent threats?

MIKE
She put a lot of bad people away...

SONYA
So, yes?

MIKE
Nothing lately.

SONYA
What was the conference she was going to?

MIKE
Secure Our Border.

SONYA
Secure it from what?

MIKE
Spillover violence. Illegals. She was the keynote speaker.

Sonya stares at him, considering this. Then --

SONYA
Did she use drugs?

MIKE
Drugs? Lorraine? She was a mother for christ sake.

Sonya waits, blank. He's had it.

MIKE (CONT'D)
I'd like you to leave now.

Off this --

EXT. MARCO RUIZ'S HOUSE, JUAREZ -- NIGHT

Marco pulls through the gate. Pauses to make sure the gate shuts behind him. He looks up at his house, sees a light on the basement, frowns...

INT. MARCO RUIZ'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

He enters, the cozy mess of a house full of children, navigating in the half dark toward the basement door.

INT. RUIZ HOUSE, BASEMENT -- NIGHT

Marco pauses outside a door, listening. He knocks -- no answer and then ENTERS.

Sitting in front of a Playstation is an 18-year-old in a BLACK AND RED SHIRT -- same kid we saw at that narco party. He turns -- yup, same baby face. This is Marco's oldest son, AGUSTINE, GUS for short. Headphones on, deeply absorbed in *Call of Duty*, his character stalking a digital Cuba in search of Castro.

Marco watches his son maneuver, killing without pause. Life here means nothing.

MARCO
Gus?

No answer. He taps him --

GUS
What?

He takes off the headphones.

MARCO
I can smell it.

GUS
What?

MARCO
The dope.

No response --

MARCO (CONT'D)
Where'd you get it?

GUS
Tico at school.

MARCO
You know who Tico's uncle is?
(MORE)

MARCO (CONT'D)
(off look)
Aurelio Guetta, soldier for the Zetas. That's where your dope comes from.

GUS
It was just a joint.

MARCO
And now you owe him. Maybe his uncle wants you to make a delivery for him. Drive him someplace.

GUS
That's not how it is --

MARCO
That <u>is</u> how it is. That's how you get caught up. These narcos will reach out and grab you like that.

He snaps his fingers.

GUS
Fine.

He puts on his headphones, tuning Marco out.

MARCO
You go across for classes, you come right back. No parties, no Tico.

Gus doesn't respond. Doesn't even look at his dad. Marco moves out --

INT. RUIZ HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marco ENTERS and sees his wife ALMA (30s), beautiful and bathed in the blue glow of the alarm clock next to the bed.

He undresses, sets his gun and phone on the nightstand.

A BEAT as he pulls his pants off and winces as he moves slowly to the bed, pulls the covers back only to find one of his daughter's stuffed bears on his pillow. He smiles, sets the bear on the floor and a big breath as he crawls into bed, obviously in pain, but from what?

ALMA
Were you on the bridge?

MARCO
Yes.

ALMA
What happened?

MARCO
A body. The Americans took it.

ALMA
Did you check on Gus?

MARCO
Yes.

ALMA
Is he asleep?

MARCO
Yes.

ALMA
He didn't come home til ten.

MARCO
Maybe he had a night class.

ALMA
He didn't.

MARCO
I'll talk to him.

ALMA
Maybe he should stay in El Paso.
With my sister.

MARCO
I like him here.

Marco rolls away, lets out a pained gasp.

ALMA
Does it hurt?

MARCO
Yes...

Marco stares at the ceiling having one of those moments...

INT. EL PASO MORGUE - NIGHT

Sonya enters the morgue to find Judge Cross's body inhabiting two slabs -- one for her torso, the other for her legs. MONITORS on the wall display photos of the wounds. Gory but Sonya seems not to notice. Nor does M.E. CHIP RODRIGUEZ (30s), smiles like he's got a secret, like he's smarter than most...

CHIP
You're going to like this.

She looks at him. Doesn't engage in the playfulness.

SONYA
Cause of death?

He shrugs, points to a photo of a nasty puncture wound at the base of the victim's skull.

CHIP
Some heavy gauge needle. Entered the base of the spine, then the brain cavity where it wiped out motor function. Quick, neat and almost painless.

A beat as Sonya studies the entry wound.

CHIP (CONT'D)
But even better...

Chip holds out surgical gloves. Sonya snaps them on and pulls back the sheet to reveal the severed torso in all it's grisly glory. She studies the torso, probes the puncture wound, the crosscut abdomen as Chip watches, waiting for her to puzzle it out.

SONYA
No petechial hemorrhaging.

She palpates the skin, notes an INCISION at the neck artery...

SONYA (CONT'D)
She was bled out and then cut in half...

CHIP
Probably made the bisection less messy.
(then)
And the other half?

Sonya crosses to the other slab, pulls back the sheet on the lower half of the body.

SONYA
The lower half is much darker...

Chip nods. Sonya notes what looks like a burn on the thigh.

SONYA (CONT'D)
... Is this frostbite?

CHIP
Freezer burn. Post mortem.
(off look)
For at least a year.

SONYA
That's impossible.

CHIP
The legs don't belong to Lorraine Cross.
(then)
This victim is a Hispanic female. I'm guessing late teens to early twenties.

Sonya snaps the gloves off. WTF is going on?

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. ZAROGOSA BRIDGE, US/MEXICO BORDER -- NIGHT

We see Linder driving across the bridge in Eva's Honda. Faint WHIMPERS from the trunk. He passes under a sign welcoming him to the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. There's barely any traffic at this hour and only two inspection lanes are open. He chooses one, pulls to the gate arm only to have a BORDER AGENT wave him up for a little chat.

That's when he notices Eva's PURSE on the seat next to him and quickly shoves it under the seat, masking his movement by turning the radio up.

BORDER AGENT
Passport?

Linder reaches into his pocket, hands him the passport.

BORDER AGENT (CONT'D)
How long were you in Mexico?

LINDER
Three hours.

BORDER AGENT
What did you bring back from Mexico?

LINDER
Just a smile, officer...

The guy looks at him. Stops with the rote questioning --

BORDER AGENT
What were ya doin' in Juarez?

LINDER
Seeing a friend.

The Border Agent smells bullshit --

BORDER AGENT
I got a friend in Juarez. Haven't visited him in six years.

Linder looks at him, sheepish. Confiding --

LINDER
Okay. I went over for the Senoritas.

The Border Agent gives him a conspiratorial smile -- the man had a need.

BORDER AGENT
Anything good?

LINDER
Worth the visit.

The agent grins, hands the passport back...

BORDER AGENT
Have a good night.

He signals Linder through into America with his secret cargo, radio masking her trapped whimpers as we...

INT. UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER OF EL PASO -- NIGHT

TIGHT ON Charlotte pacing in the purgatory of a hospital waiting room, plastic flowers in a plastic vase, ancient Time Magazines, the blur of nurses, the old man combing the Bible for answers.

DR. Barnes ENTERS with a SURGEON in scrubs behind him. They have that 1,000 yard stare, the bearers of bad news...

DR. BARNES
Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE
How is he?

Dr. Barnes shakes his head. She stares. Then pure animal grief as she knows. Her husband is dead. Gone.

INT. RUIZ HOUSE, BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Marco's cellphone BUZZES on the night stand. He reaches out, SILENCES it. It immediately buzzes again. He answers. INTERCUT WITH SONYA IN THE MORGUE.

MARCO
Bueno?

SONYA (O.S.)
Is this Marco Ruiz?

MARCO
Si. Yes...

INT. EL PASO MORGUE - NIGHT

Sonya on the phone with Marco...

SONYA
Sonya North, El Paso PD.

MARCO
The one in charge, I remember.

His crack met with silence, then...

SONYA
Were you sleeping?

MARCO
I do that at night.

SONYA
There were two women on the bridge.

MARCO
You found another one?

SONYA
No. The victim was two bodies. An upper half and lower half. Two different women.

MARCO
Chingame...

SONYA
Have you found half a body in Juarez?
(then)
Hispanic, late teens to twenty.
You'd have the top half.

Marco sits up in bed, groans with pain.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Something wrong?

MARCO
No. I'm listening.

SONYA
Do you have a girl matching this description?

MARCO
I don't know. We have lots of bodies, parts of bodies, bones...

SONYA
It could be a year old. The legs were frozen. Can you look into it?

MARCO
Yeah. I'll check in the morning.

SONYA
Who can I call to look into it now?

Marco pulls the phone away from his ear -- later is not an option for this woman.

MARCO
I'll do it. I'll call you back.

SONYA
When?

CLICK. Marco hangs up. Sonya stares at the phone...

INT. RUIZ HOUSE, BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Marco drags himself out of bed clumsily. Alma watches...

ALMA
What is it?

MARCO
This El Paso detective. I can't tell if she's crazy or just American.

ALMA
Maybe both.

He leans over and kisses Alma.

MARCO
I'll be back.

EXT. JUAREZ POLICE STATION -- NIGHT

Marco exiting his car, gingerly, enters the building...

INT. JUAREZ POLICE STATION, FILE ROOM -- NIGHT

Marco sits with CELIA (30s), plump, mischievous eyes. Got dragged out of bed to help Marco, but he's lucky. She likes him. Maybe they even had an affair...

CELIA
Missing female, fifteen to twenty years old? We get five of those a week, Marco.

MARCO
I know. Go back a year. Only the ones with partial remains.

CELIA
We talking top half, or bottom?

MARCO
Top. The Americans found the legs.

As Celia feeds this into the database. Then waiting --

CELIA
Things okay at home?

MARCO
Fine. You?

CELIA
Same.

MARCO
That's good.

Some unspoken thing between them. Playful --

CELIA
So you'll be firing blanks, now?

A beat as Marco shoots her a look.

MARCO
Was my procedure in the bureau minutes?

CELIA
(ball busting smile)
Is everything working?

MARCO
It will be.

CELIA
And that's it? Now you're fixed?

MARCO
What do you mean?

CELIA
You heard about the castrated toms?
(off look)
Tomcats.

MARCO
No...

CELIA
My brother's a vet. He says the first thing that happens is they gain weight, then they sleep all day.
(MORE)

CELIA (CONT'D)
(snaps her fingers)
A wild predator turns into a fat sleepy pussy just like that...

MARCO
They're castrated. That's not the same thing.

Celia looks at him, clearly enjoying this, part flirtation, part payback.

CELIA
Okay...

Celia punches a button, sorting the search results. Turns to him with a tart smile.

CELIA (CONT'D)
You got lucky tonight.
(points to screen)
Cristina Fuentes.

Off Marco staring at the screen, and the photo of CRISTINA, 16, dark hair and eyes, as we...

INT. EL PASO PD - CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS (CAP) -- NIGHT

Sonya pacing as she discusses the case with her boss, Hank --

HANK
New Mexico or Arizona have any missing girls?

SONYA
Nothing that matches our half.

HANK
Sheriff's boys are looking for the Judge's BMW. I guess by daylight it turns up.

SONYA
And by daylight the FBI's gonna be here, trying to take my case.

HANK
You're going to have a task force situation, Sonya.

SONYA
Well, I want to lead it.

HANK
You sure about that? 'Cause a case like this can change you. Scratch your soul. Invade your dreams...

SONYA
I don't dream.

Sonya's cell rings. She looks at the number, puzzled, and then answers.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Sonya North.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JUAREZ POLICE STATION, HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Marco reading from a file, downloading Sonya...

MARCO
Cristina Fuentes, sixteen. Went missing from a *maquiladora*.
(then)
She got on the bus in the morning, never came home. Partial remains discovered in a death house.

SONYA
Death house?

MARCO
Abandoned house where the Sicarios dump bodies. They fill one up, find another.

SONYA
When was she found?

Hank sips coffee, watches Sonya as she talks --

MARCO
A year and a half ago. It fits.

SONYA
Can you send the file?

MARCO
It's better if I come to you. She's one of the dead girls of Juarez.
(then)
Give me half an hour.

SONYA
It's not necessary. It's my case --

He hangs up before she can say another word...

STAY WITH Sonya, still with the phone to her ear...

SONYA (CONT'D)
Hello?
(to Hank)
He's coming here.

HANK
Good.

SONYA
Why is that good?

HANK
He's got a body too, right?

SONYA
He doesn't care about his.

HANK
(checks watch)
He called you at 4 a.m. with her name.

SONYA
Right. Fine.

HANK
We have two bodies placed directly on an international border. This case is gonna take us down south. And last I checked that badge on your hip don't mean shit in Juarez.

Sonya smells her armpit, then reaches into her desk drawer and pulls out a fresh shirt.

Hank has seen this before; he looks away as she pulls her shirt off, oblivious to her state of undress, and slides the fresh one on --

EXT. EAST EL PASO -- NIGHT

Past the sprawl of El Paso into the hard pan desert of the foothills we see a car snaking up a washed out road, headlights illuminating jack rabbits, moths, the occasional trailer surrounded by broken down trucks and cars.

It's the Honda. Linder driving. He stops at a metal bar gate. Exits the car, unlocks the gate. Looks around and gets back in the car.

The road snakes behind a mesa and in the sweep of the headlight beam stands a small white TRAILER.

He pulls to the trailer, parks and opens the trunk to reveal Eva freaked the fuck out. She jumps out and starts to run. Linder quietly reaches in and KILLS THE HEADLIGHTS plunging the place into darkness. Instead of chasing after he simply watches her stumbling over rocks, falling...

LINDER
Watch for rattle snakes. They come out at night.

She falls and doesn't rise...

LINDER (CONT'D)
Scream if you have to. There's nobody for miles.

EVA
Ayudame...

She crumples to the ground, crying. He goes to her. Slings her over his shoulder and crosses to the trailer, opens it and flicks a light on...

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

Linder sets Eva down on a mattress with clean sheets, sees that she's scraped her knee.

LINDER
You've hurt yourself.

EVA
Donde estamos?

LINDER
A safe place.

Linder finds a First Aid Kit, takes out some iodine and gently cleans the wound. Eva recoils at his touch. Linder fixes her with his unblinking gaze...

LINDER (CONT'D)
Hold still, please.

He dabs the wound clean, presses a bandage to it and then rises.

LINDER (CONT'D)
You must be tired. *Duermes tu.*

Eva pushes herself back on the bed, away from him.

LINDER (CONT'D)
I'll be back.

He steps out of the trailer. We stay with Eva as she hears Linder throw a LATCH and snap a PADLOCK over it.

She runs to the door, tries to open it. No way out. As she panics, screams again --

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER OF EL PASO -- NIGHT

Charlotte looking out the hospital window, black mountains, her own numb reflection -- and when she turns, the still figure of her husband, Karl lying dead behind her.

She crosses to him, touches his cold arm and recoils. This is not her husband. She pulls at the WEDDING BAND on his finger. She can't get it off.

A NURSE enters...

NURSE
Would you like more time?

Charlotte turns, disoriented.

CHARLOTTE
No.

The nurse hands Charlotte a pamphlet.

NURSE
The hospital provides non-denominational grief counseling.

Charlotte waves away the pamphlet. Then:

CHARLOTTE
I don't... know how to do this.

NURSE
Of course not.

Charlotte turns back to Karl, tugs at the wedding ring again. The nurse offers some Vaseline. Together they accomplish the task; off comes the ring. Charlotte grips it tight.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Is there someone I can call?

CHARLOTTE
Me. I'm the person to call. His wife.

NURSE
Do you have children?

CHARLOTTE
A daughter. She's not...
(MORE)

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
(tries to recover)
So, what happens now?

NURSE
Someone from the hospital will contact you about a funeral home.

CHARLOTTE
I... leave him here?

The nurse nods. Hands her a PLASTIC BAG from a table.

NURSE
Your husband's clothes and personal items.

Charlotte clutches the bag. Takes one last look at her husband and walks past the nurse --

INT. EL PASO PD - ENTRANCE - DAWN

Marco waits, holding a bakery bag, case file tucked under his other arm. A Clerk ignoring him. Sonya joins him from behind secure double doors.

SONYA
Email would have been quicker.

MARCO
But not as pleasant. I brought some breakfast...

He offers her the bakery bag --

SONYA
Where's the file?

He hands her the case file and she opens it, walking briskly back to the doors, only to stop when she sees that he's following her --

SONYA (CONT'D)
Where are you going?

MARCO
With you.

SONYA
Why?

MARCO
You've got my file.

Sonya faces the inevitable --

SONYA
My boss says there's gonna be a task force.

MARCO
Probably.

SONYA
And you want to be on it?

MARCO
Cristina Fuentes was found six blocks from my house. She went to the school my girls will go to.
(then)
Of course I do.

Sonya indicates to the clerk that it's okay; waves Marco through. He follows her --

INT. EL PASO PD -- CAP -- CONTINUOUS

Marco follows Sonya into their offices. A sign indicates "CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS" --

SONYA
This is CAP. Crimes Against Persons. We do homicides.

They find bulldog Kitty behind her desk --

MARCO
Good morning...
(reading nameplate)
Kitty.

SONYA
He needs a day pass.

Sonya moves over to her desk. Marco lingers with Kitty who takes an instant shine to him --

MARCO
It might be more than a day.

KITTY
And who are you, Hon?

He badges her --

MARCO
Marco Ruiz, Chihuahua State Police. I'll be assisting Detective North in an investigation.

KITTY
That ought to be interesting.

MARCO
Why is that?

KITTY
Sonya's... on the odd side.

MARCO
I noticed. Would you like a *pan dulce?*

He opens the bakery bag.

MARCO (CONT'D)
The ones with walnuts are good...

She smiles, takes one, can't help but be charmed.

KITTY
I do like those Mexican pastries.
Here ya go...

She hands him a PD pass -- throws some flirt, winks.

MARCO
See you later Kitty.

KITTY
Hope so.

Marco finds Sonya at her desk sitting and staring into space, the file in front of her.

AS BEAT as she sees him.

SONYA
May we begin?

MARCO
Yes...

Sonya opens the file and is instantly absorbed as Marco PACES uncomfortably. She looks up --

SONYA
Did you get the pass?

He shows it to her. She goes back to the file. He continues to pace, annoying her.

MARCO
Need me to translate for you?

SONYA
No.

MARCO
Hablas Espanol?

SONYA
Bastante.

MARCO
Good.

SONYA
Can you sit?

MARCO
Actually I can't.

SONYA
You're irritating me.

MARCO
I'll stand still.

SONYA
Why can't you sit?

MARCO
I had a procedure.
(beat)
A vasectomy, yesterday.

Sonya looks at him, blank --

MARCO (CONT'D)
I have five kids with three different women. It was time.
(off look)
You have children?

SONYA
No. Why would I want to?

MARCO
I've never heard anyone say that.

SONYA
More people should.
(re: the case)
Evidence was collected, but never processed.

MARCO
Yes.

Marco paces. Sonya can't stand it.

SONYA
You drove here, right?
(off nod)
Pretend that chair is a car.

MARCO
Okay, I'll try.

Marco eases himself into a chair with considerable pain.

SONYA
Much better.
(off look)
How was she killed?

MARCO
I don't know.

SONYA
Your name is on this report.

MARCO
My name is on a lot of reports.

SONYA
There are no interviews. Not even with her parents.

MARCO
There's a saying we have in Juarez. *Desde el plato a la boca, la sopa se cae.*
(then)
From the bowl to the mouth, the soup falls.

SONYA
What does that have to do with the case?

MARCO
Cristina Fuentes was one of two hundred and fifty girls who disappeared last year. They go missing from the buses, the factories. Always 15 to twenty years old, dark hair, beautiful.

SONYA
So you have a serial killer.

MARCO
No one knows.

SONYA
And no one cares?

MARCO
There are so many bodies. And the chiefs... don't really want us to investigate.

Sonya stares; understands this not at all. Hank comes from his office. Shaking hands --

HANK
Morning. Lieutenant Wade.

MARCO
Mucho gusto. Marco Ruiz.

SONYA
His name is on the report for Cristina Fuentes. But he didn't investigate at all.

Marco, piqued, starts to say something; but stops himself. Hank observes this; gives him a break --

HANK
Well now he's got a second chance. Sheriff's Department found Judge Cross' car.

SONYA
Where?

HANK
Interstate 10, outside of Van Horn.

Sonya grabs her keys, heads out --

MARCO
I guess she's driving.

HANK
Little piece of advice.
(off look)
Buckle up...

Marco follows her out --

EXT. MILLWRIGHT RANCH, OUTSIDE OF EL PASO - MORNING

A town car drives Charlotte through the gates of her sprawling ranch, down a drive lined with live oaks, the fields green and full of shimmering quarter horses...

EXT. MILLWRIGHT RANCH -- MORNING

Charlotte looks out the window as the car continues up to the main house, a testament to old Texas money and the rewards of being a gentleman rancher.

The car stops. Charlotte alights, and sees CESAR (50s) the ranch caretaker and her late husband's right hand man waiting for her.

He removes his hat, pokes a tear from his cheek --

CESAR
I heard about *Senor* Karl...

CHARLOTTE
Have you told the rest of the staff?

Cesar nods.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Good. I don't want to be disturbed.

CESAR
Si.

Charlotte grabs the plastic bag of her husband's clothes and enters the house...

INT. MILLWRIGHT HOUSE, BEDROOM - MORNING

Charlotte searching her drawers, finally finds that pack of cigarettes she's stashed. She pulls one out, lights it and stands at the window looking out at the field of horses cantering in a nearby paddock.

On a desk in the corner are dozens of photos of her and Karl standing at horse shows, vacations in far flung places -- a life together in carefully framed photos. She sweeps her arm across the desk, sending the photos crashing.

She slumps into a chair, takes another drag of the cigarette and lets the tears come...

A BEAT as she spots her husband's clothes in the bag. She rises and dumps them out on the bed -- wallet, some loose change, watch and TWO CELLPHONES. She opens one phone and sees on the home screen a photo of the two them on the ranch. But the other cell phone is locked -- a security code required. Why would her husband have two cell phones?

Suspicious, she does a thorough search of his wallet -- the usual stuff, that is until she finds a SINGLE KEY hidden in one of the folds. Seems old Karl had some secrets...

EXT. HIGHWAY, TEXAS -- DAY

A highway cuts across the parched Texas scrub land, the sky an impossible lonesome cowboy blue as the CAMERA FINDS a truck barreling down the road...

INT. SONYA'S TRUCK (MOVING) - MORNING

Sonya's got a tough, tricked out, green pick-up truck. She speeds and Marco rides shotgun --

MARCO
Have you slept?

SONYA
No.

MARCO
'Cause I haven't slept.

No answer. She doesn't seem to need conversation.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Nice truck.

SONYA
Yes.

MARCO
American police must pay well.

SONYA
It was my sister's.

MARCO
Your sister has good taste.

SONYA
Had.
(off look)
She died.

An uncomfortable beat. They pass a cheesy fast food place named Whataburger --

MARCO
Now they make a good breakfast burrito...

She doesn't take the hint, flies by the joint. Fine. He figures he'll try to catch some sleep, but then:

SONYA
Did you take money from that woman?

MARCO
What woman?

SONYA
On the bridge. To let her pass.

MARCO
No.

SONYA
They say you're all corrupt. Mexican police. You all take bribes.

MARCO
Not all.

She nods. Hard to tell if she believes him.

MARCO (CONT'D)
The cartels threaten us --

SONYA
I thought they gave you money. So you won't do police work.

MARCO
No. They tell us, *plata o plomo*.
(explains)
Take our silver or take our lead.

SONYA
So you just let girls die.

MARCO
I do all I can. But the situation is *todo chingado.*

Which means all fucked up. His face tight.

SONYA
You should try harder.

Marco gives up; looks out the window --

INT. MILLWRIGHT HOUSE, BEDROOM -- DAY

Charlotte sitting on the bed, punching security code after security code into her husband's locked cell phone.

CHARLOTTE
(sotto)
Shit, shit, shit...

She tries another code. Another. Frustrated she tosses it aside, only to have it start RINGING. It's a BLOCKED NUMBER.

She answers. Silence and then a woman's voice...

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Bueno?
(then)
Karl?

CHARLOTTE
Who is this?

The line goes dead.

EXT. SIDE OF HIGHWAY -- DAY

Long desolate strip of the Texas interstate. A SHERIFF'S CRUISER parked in front of a silver BMW on the side of the road.

Sonya's truck approaches, pulls over; Sonya and Marco alight. Clock the BMW. The driver's side is open.

A Sheriff's Deputy, MANNY STOKES, 30s, with braces on his teeth, tips his hat. To Sonya --

STOKES
Ma'am, you may not want to look.

Sonya badges him, moves to the car with Marco.

PULL TO REVEAL the bloodless and severed legs of JUDGE CROSS, still in heels, in the driver's seat. Marco notes some surgical tubing leading from the body out the car to a small lake of blood soaking into the dry earth.

MARCO
We dealing with a doctor?

SONYA
Where's her purse?

STOKES
Passenger seat. Everything's there.
Cash, credit cards, what have you...

Sonya gloves up, goes to the passenger side. Rifles through the purse. Opens the wallet. An EMPTY SPACE where the judge's ID would be.

SONYA
Did you pull her ID?

STOKES
No ma'am.

SONYA
Then it's missing.

MARCO
Maybe that's his trophy.

SONYA
Did Cristina have her ID?

MARCO
I don't remember.

SONYA
Her mother would know. We'll go to Juarez, ask her.

Marco laughs. Gives her a look up and down; the pants, boots --

MARCO
You gonna wear a hoodie?

SONYA
Why?

MARCO
Tie back your hair? 'Cause you can't go to Juarez looking like that.
(then)
It's not a good place. Not anymore.

Some sadness about that. Sonya looks back at the body; then --

SONYA
You want to write the scene?

MARCO
Go ahead.

But, he notes the generosity. For the first time from her.
She pulls out a pad and pen, kneels next to the pool of blood --

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. TRAILER -- DAY

TIGHT ON Linder as he strips the sheets off the bed, puts them in a garbage bag. Eva nowhere in sight.

We see him pull off his shirt, stuff it in the garbage too. As he reaches for a fresh shirt, we see a LONG SERPENTINE SCAR running the length of his left forearm... he fingers the scar, before he pulls on a tee shirt.

He turns and finds EVA'S PURSE on the floor. He rifles through it, pulls EVA'S ID from the wallet, studies it. Then he notices a PHOTO OF A SMALL CHILD in the wallet. Pulls it out, too.

A BEAT as turns it over, an idea slithering. Possibilities...

INT. EL PASO PD - CAP - DAY

Hank with DETECTIVE TIM COOPER (30s), brash cowboy charmer. He's looped into the case. Looking at crime scene photos of the two bodies on the bridge --

COOPER
Judge Cross. She needed bent over a couch, bad.

HANK
Well she got worse. Half of her's in the Pecos morgue.

COOPER
(incredulous)
And the Mexicans want in on this?

HANK
Their half was one of those missing Juarez girls.

COOPER
Puttin' up them pink crosses sure as shit ain't working. This fella know about Sonya?

HANK
Know what?

COOPER
That she's a whackjob. You see what she keeps in that bottom drawer of her desk?

HANK
No I have not. Nor do I care, Timmy.

Sonya ENTERS with Marco. Cooper shuts up; knows she might have overheard. Then --

SONYA
This is Marco Ruiz. Tim Cooper.

COOPER
(busting balls)
Buenas Dias.

MARCO
Howdy partner.

Cooper smiles, likes this guy already.

SONYA
You have the footage from the bridge?

COOPER
Went a few rounds with those Homeland Security boys, but yeah, I got it.

HANK
(to Sonya)
You come with me.

Cooper takes Marco to his computer; Sonya follows Hank to his office --

INT. HANK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Hank ushers her in, toes the door shut. Picks up a report --

HANK
What's this?

SONYA
I filed a report on Marco with the Mexican State Police.

HANK
I see that.

SONYA
He compromised my crime scene. Let an ambulance drive through it.

HANK
Because a man was having a heart attack.

SONYA
Yes.

HANK
I woulda done the same thing. No evidence was compromised.

SONYA
How do you know?

HANK
Sonya, you have to work with Marco.

SONYA
I know.

HANK
Filing this report will affect your ability to do that.

SONYA
Why?

HANK
People don't like being ratted out to their bosses.

SONYA
Then they should follow procedure.

HANK
Sonya, trust me. You don't want to file this.

Before she can respond Marco taps at the door, enters --

MARCO
Got something...

Sonya and Hank move out --

INT. EL PASO PD - CAP - CONTINUOUS

They gather at Cooper's computer running footage of the bridge traffic... he stops on a BLACK ESCALADE passing by the camera.

COOPER
Sonofabitch knew there were cameras.

HE PUNCHES in and we see a SHADOWY FIGURE behind the wheel, baseball hat pulled over his face, impossible to ID.

SONYA
We sure it's him?

COOPER
Timing is spot on. Woulda been the only car on the bridge at the time.

HANK
Plate on the car?

COOPER
Just a partial, which I ran.

He hands a sheet of paper to Sonya. She's thrown --

SONYA
Daniel Fuller?

Hank is surprised too.

MARCO
Who's Daniel Fuller?

COOPER
Dickwad reporter. El Paso Times.

Off this we...

EXT. MILLWRIGHT RANCH, BARN - DAY

Charlotte ENTERS the barn to find Cesar stacking feed bags next to the grain bin. He straightens when he sees Charlotte standing there.

CESAR
Nobody has bothered you, have they?

CHARLOTTE
No.

She holds out her husband's cell phone.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
This was in Karl's pocket. Have you seen it before?

Cesar shakes his head slowly -- not sure what the hell she's up to.

CESAR
No. Why?

CHARLOTTE
A woman called for Karl.
(off look)
He's gone, Cesar. You answer to me now.

CESAR
Si.

CHARLOTTE
Who is she?

CESAR
I don't know.

Charlotte flinches, but doesn't want to give Cesar the satisfaction of seeing her vulnerable. She pulls out the KEY she found hidden in Karl's wallet.

CHARLOTTE
What about this?
(off look)
I found it in his wallet.

CESAR
Miss Charlotte, I don't know...

CHARLOTTE
You're lying to me, Cesar. What is it?

Cesar holds her gaze a long beat, realizes she's the boss.

CESAR
It's better I show you. Come.

Off Charlotte as we...

INT. EL PASO TIMES - NEWSROOM/KITCHEN AREA -- DAY

El Paso Times REPORTER, DANIEL FULLER (30s), wrecked from no sleep and some serious partying, searches through the refrigerator in the kitchen area of the news room. He finds a bottle of beer in the back -- helps himself, then takes two pills from his pocket. Pops them, washes them down with the beer. He wipes his face and hair, then moves into the --

INT. EL PASO TIMES - NEWSROOM - CONTINUOUS

It's almost empty, save a young, diligent reporter named ADRIANA PEREZ, (20s) who is at her computer already. Daniel's desk isn't far away. As he approaches --

DANIEL
You're here early.

ADRIANA
I have to be in Juarez by 8.

DANIEL
That's more like 9 or 10, Mexican time.

Adriana smiles, polite, but not engaging.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
You're wasting your life on that beat. You know that?

ADRIANA
I'm wasting my life, huh?

It's a subtle dig that he doesn't catch. He's an addict, fallen from grace when the Houston Chronicle fired him for substance abuse. He's no cleaner, a year later. He guzzles his beer --

DANIEL
So what're you doing across the bridge?

ADRIANA
Meeting a woman who helps pregnant girls over the border. Anchor babies, you know --

DANIEL
(interrupts)
I <u>don't</u> know, Adriana, and I desperately don't care. And guess what, neither do our readers.

ADRIANA
I care.

He finishes his beer. He hands her the dead soldier, starts to head out --

ADRIANA (CONT'D)
Denise was looking for you last night. You had a deadline.

DANIEL
Denise can fuck off.

ADRIANA
Where were you?

DANIEL
Down the street, reporting.

ADRIANA
So, you were at the bar all night.

DANIEL
Are you my mother, Adriana?

ADRIANA
No.

He gets nasty now --

DANIEL
No. You're just a little cub reporter. And I've written for the Houston Chronicle, New York Times...

ADRIANA
I know --

DANIEL
So don't tell me how to deal with my fucking editor.

ADRIANA
Fine.

DANIEL
Good luck chasing the Mexicans. Try not to get shot.

He smirks to himself, moves out --

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK (MOVING) - DAY

Cesar driving across the ranch with Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE
Where are we going?

CESAR
Just a little farther.

He turns past an outbuilding on the ranch, down a two-track road and they come to a small cabin tucked behind some trees.

CHARLOTTE
I've never seen this part of the ranch before.

CESAR
Come.

He parks --

EXT. EL PASO TIMES, PARKING LOT -- DAY

Fuller crosses the lot and finds his car. He clicks the remote as we...

INT. FULLER'S ESCALADE - DAY

He sits behind the wheel, shuts the door when CLICK. The doors LOCK suddenly. He snaps awake, tries a door and shit it won't open. Same with the windows. It seems he's locked in his own car. What the fuck is happening?

He sees a WIRE running from the rear view mirror -- what the hell is that doing there?

FULLER
What the...

He pulls on the wire, sees that it runs to something behind his seat. That's when he hears the TICKING and sees a digital clock mounted to two VIALS OF BINARY EXPLOSIVES, ammonium nitrate. It's a bomb. The clock reads 20 MINUTES and our cocky asshole reporter is trapped inside his car.

EXT. CABIN, MILLWRIGHT RANCH - DAY

Charlotte follows Cesar up to the door of the cabin.

CHARLOTTE
I don't understand. Is this what the key's for?

CESAR
Please, I show you.

Charlotte watches as Cesar pulls a ring of keys from his jacket, finds the key and opens a door.

He motions her inside...

INT. CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Charlotte follows Cesar into the cabin. There's not much inside except some empty PIZZA BOXES, dozens of empty FAST FOOD BAGS. She notes the windows have been blacked out.

Cesar opens a door and clicks on a light, revealing a staircase leading into a basement.

CESAR
Down there.

CHARLOTTE
God damn it, Cesar, I don't like this...

CESAR
It's okay *Senora.* Come.

Charlotte follows Cesar down the staircase and finds an empty basement. At the far end there is a large WOODEN DOOR with a crossbar and lock. Cesar points to lock on the door bar.

CESAR (CONT'D)
There.

CHARLOTTE
Is that what the key's for?

CESAR
Si...

A BEAT as Charlotte tries to absorb all this. Then she removes the KEY, hands trembling, and approaches the locked door.

CHARLOTTE
What's in there?

He just indicates she should open it. A beat, then she slides the key into the lock...

INT. SONYA'S TRUCK (MOVING) -- DAY

Sonya ripping through the streets. Marco sits shotgun, worried as she takes her eyes off the road to stare at her cell phone --

SONYA
Daniel Fuller's not answering.

He puts a hand out for her cell --

MARCO
You drive, I'll call.

He takes the phone --

SONYA
He's a pill head. Been arrested for battery.

MARCO
He organized enough to freeze a girl for a year? Slice this judge in half so elegantly?

SONYA
It was his car on the bridge.

MARCO
No answer...

SONYA
We're here anyway.

She swings a tight turn onto San Antonio Street --

EXT. EL PASO TIMES, PARKING LOT - DAY

TIGHT ON a BOMB SQUAD TECH pulling on the heavy bomb suit. We pull back to reveal uniform officers pushing back traffic and onlookers.

WE FOLLOW the Bomb Tech as he joins several other men in the bulky suits walking with their bomb gear to Daniel Fuller's car.

Sonya pulls up in the Truck and is brought to a halt by a phalanx of police and bomb squad support members.

OFFICER
Fall back behind the perimeter!

Sonya and Marco exit the car and badge one of the Bomb Techs.

SONYA
Detective North...

BOMB TECH
You're gonna have to vacate the area.

MARCO
What's going on?

BOMB TECH
There's a car rigged with a bomb in that lot.

SONYA
A black Escalade?

BOMB TECH
Affirmative. Now fall back please --

SONYA
-- It belongs to Daniel Fuller. He's wanted in connection with a double homicide.

BOMB TECH
Well ma'am, he's the one called it in. He's trapped in there.
(then)
And he's gonna be scattered all over this block if you don't let us assess the situation and do our jobs.

Sonya watches the Bomb Tech cross the barricade, frustrated --

INT. FULLER'S ESCALADE -- DAY

WE HEAR THE STEADY BEEP of minutes ticking away on the timer. Fuller's like a caged animal, windows fogged up from his hyper ventilating, trying the door to see if it will somehow magically open. It does not.

Finally he sees the apocalyptic image of FOUR BOMB TECHS walking slowly toward him in their bulky suits.

He pounds at the window.

FULLER
Help! Get me out!

The first Bomb Tech reaches the car, looks inside. Fuller points to the TIMER DEVICE behind him.

BOMB TECH #1
Stay calm. Don't move.

A Tech slides a SNAKE CAMERA through the windshield/door gap. We hear CHATTER...

BOMB TECH #2
Binary solution... digital timer...

FULLER
What the fuck!

BOMB TECH #1
Eight minutes, forty seconds. Windows wired in...

EXT. STREET - DAY

A block outside the parking lot sit Sonya and Marco just outside the police tape, waiting, helpless...

MARCO
Call him again.
(off look)
Fuller, call him.

Off Sonya with her cell...

INT. FULLER'S ESCALADE -- DAY

A hole saw whirs through the windshield. It stops and we hear the steady BEEP of the countdown. A BOMB TECH carefully attaches a suction cup to the windshield and pulls a disc of glass free.

Fuller checks the timer -- FOUR MINUTES AND COUNTING.

His PHONE SUDDENLY RINGS. He answers --

FULLER
Help me!

SONYA (O.S.)
Daniel, this is Detective Sonya North.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. STREET -- SAME

Sonya on the phone as Marco watches...

SONYA
Were you on the Bridge of the Americas last night?

FULLER
What?

SONYA
Were you on the bridge? Yes or no?

FULLER
(losing his shit)
No -- I was here all night. How is this going to get me out?

SONYA
Do you know Judge Cross?

FULLER
What?

SONYA
Judge Lorraine Cross.

FULLER
Just -- from her cases.

SONYA
What cases?

BEEP, BEEP, BEEP...

FULLER
Oh god...

SONYA
How about Cristina Fuentes?

Fuller, despairing --

FULLER
I am fucked. So fucked...

SONYA
Daniel! This is important.

FULLER
Important? I'm going to die!

SONYA
Have you written about Judge Cross?

FULLER
I don't remember. Maybe...

SONYA
When?

FULLER
Oh god. I'm such an asshole. I've fucked everything up...

One of the Bomb Techs reaches through the hole in the windshield -- but he can't quite reach the bomb. Daniel sees the guys exchanging worried expressions --

SONYA
Daniel listen to me.

He looks back at the timer as it reaches 3 MINUTES and then it fucking skips a minute -- HE'S GOT TWO MINUTES LEFT.

FULLER
It skipped a minute! It skipped a fucking minute!

Bomb Tech #2 looks inside, confirms that the timer has indeed slipped below two minutes.

EXT. PARKING LOT -- DAY

And then something happens: One by one the Bomb Techs trade looks and step away from the car, signaling that they have precious little time to make it to safety.

BOMB TECH #1
Fall back...

SONYA
Daniel.

The men retreat, leaving Fuller to the last minutes of his life...

FULLER
No. Come back! Where are you going?

He pounds on the window as the men fall back and he's left with the steady BEEP of the timer...

One of the Bomb Techs turns and raises his hands up in a futile gesture, sorry...

EXT. STREET -- DAY

ON MARCO and SONYA. Marco sees the first of the bomb techs retreating. He motions to Sonya...

MARCO
That's enough. Let him die in peace.

SONYA
He needs to focus.

MARCO
He's sitting on a bomb. They can't help him.

SONYA
So he'll tell me the truth.

Now Daniel hears the flat calm of Sonya's voice...

SONYA (CONT'D)
Daniel, you must talk to me.

INT. FULLER'S ESCALADE -- CONTINUOUS

Fuller eyes the timer -- one minute, thirty five seconds, a strange calm settles over him. This is the end...

FULLER
Yes.

He whimpers, closes his eyes, trying to will away the fucking beeping.

SONYA
Everything will just stop. The body will feel no pain...

He looks out the window and sees the police, firemen and bomb support running away from the impending blast...

FULLER
Are you sure?

SONYA
Don't look at the clock.

FULLER
Okay...

Waiting for the next soothing word --

SONYA
Did you know your car was used to dump two bodies on the bridge?

FULLER
(broken)
No...

SONYA
Focus. Who would do this to you?

FULLER
I've fucked with so many people.

SONYA
Who? Recently?

FULLER
This can't be it. No way, I've got so much to fix...

SONYA
Daniel?

A LONG BEEP FILLED BEAT...

SONYA (CONT'D)
Don't look at the timer.

But he does and he watches the seconds stream by 8,7,6,5,4, 3, 2, 1 ... The final second ticks away and there is nothing but SILENCE for moment. Fuller squints, braces for kingdom come.

Instead there's a CLICK. And the DOOR LOCKS POP OPEN and the STEREO SPITS OUT A CD...

SONYA (CONT'D)
Daniel, are you still there?

He pulls open the door, races away from the car and falls to his knees and VOMITS as we TIME CUT:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Bomb Tech #1 approaches Sonya and Martin and hands them the CD in a clear evidence bag...

BOMB TECH #1
It's clean.

Sonya examines the CD. She and Marco get inside the Truck.

INT. SONYA'S TRUCK -- MOMENTS LATER

Sony slides the CD into the stereo. WE HEAR A MALE, ALTERED VOICE:

VOICE
Four thousand, three hundred twenty-one. Such a tidy number -- 4321. Lorraine and Cristina are just two. Two drops in a bucket. Two stars in the multitudes. You'll see. We have some interesting times ahead of us... this is only the beginning.

And that's it. CD pops back out. Marco and Sonya trade looks as we...

FADE OUT.

END PILOT