TROOPER

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TROOPER

Character List
PILOT — CHERRY COLLATED

KJ Flaxton
James Burk
Dakota Flaxton
Lee Flaxton
Ruby Flaxton

Lt. Hollis Figgins
Dr. Reitz
Ilene Katz-Klausner
Robert

Syracuse
Officer Greene
Aubrey Jensen
Eloise Bass
Alex Gonzalez
Miriam (Mimi) Stanhope
Owen Stanhope
Emma Burk (non-speaking)

Dispatch (on walkie)
Phone Operator (on phone)
Trooper (O.S.)

TROOPER

Location List
PILOT — CHERRY COLLATED

INTERIORS

Syracuse High School
    Gym
Flaxton House
    Kitchen
    Ruby's Bedroom
Troop HQ
    Holding Cell
    Bullpen
    Interrogation Room/Hallway
    Medical Examiner's Officer
KJ's Prowler
    Moving
    Side of Road
Niagra Motel
    Motel Room
    Manager's Office
Bathroom
National Superstore

EXTERIORS

Upstate New York
Interstate 90
Troop HQ
    Parking Lot
    Motorpool
Niagra Motel
Eloise's House (Niagara)
Syracuse
Side of Road (Niagara)
Cemetery
Meadowvale Road (Plattsburgh)
Desmond Lane (Plattsburgh)
Lorraine Street (Plattsburgh)
Interstate 87 (Plattsburgh)

(Continued)

Continued:

Plattsburgh
Residential Street (Syracuse)
Flaxton House
Backyard

ACT ONE

1 EXT. UPSTATE NEW YORK - DAY 1

Purple mountains majesty, indeed. Americana. Farms stretch to the horizon. Mini vans with families on vacation. You can smell the apple pie. It's a place where KIDS still ride bikes in the streets. A GAS STATION ATTENDANT uses a POLE to change the price of UNLEADED. We find a NEW YORK STATE TROOPER PROWLER parked outside:

2 INT. GYM - SYRACUSE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY 2

A JUNIOR VARSITY BASKETBALL GAME. Shoes SQUEAK on parquet. Light bulb FILAMENTS glow on the scoreboard. Syracuse Dragons vs St. Abraham Panthers. Close game. Tense. Intense.

A DRAGON, number 23 -- dives after a loose ball -- skinning elbows and knees. A VOICE CUTS THROUGH THE CROWD!

KJ
Genius hustle there, 23.

Meet KJ FLAXTON (often pronounced CAGE.) NY STATE TROOPER. IN UNIFORM. Badge gleaming. KJ turns to the typical SYRACUSE DAD (30s) sitting next to her. Baseball cap. Flannel.

KJ (CONT'D)
23's mine. Lee. My rebel with a cause. That makes me the cause --

KJ makes you feel like OLD FRIENDS, even if you just met.

KJ (CONT'D)
I love these games, but the true sport is picking out the parents...

KJ profiles a MAN in the FRONT ROW. Sweaty. Balled. Fists.

KJ (CONT'D)
Tyrannosaurus Dad. He'd wear his Letterman jacket if it'd fit. Reliving his glory through his son.

KJ points out a WOMAN standing under the green glow of the EXIT SIGN. BLACKBERRY to one ear. FINGER in the other.

KJ (CONT'D)
Ilene's a Ghost Mom. Can't cut the umbilical cord to her desk. Trying to be here for her kid, but not really --

SYRACUSE
You can't judge a book by the cover.

2 CONTINUED: 2

KJ
That's why they put the picture there.

Lee makes a stellar basket. Pulling within a point. KJ cheers! Whistling! Almost embarrassing.

KJ (CONT'D)
Didn't think you were a Panther fan?

Upstate raises his hands into frame to reveal -- HIS WRISTS ARE HANDCUFFED. Not a Dad. KJ'S SUSPECT.

SYRACUSE
What am I doing here...?

The Panthers call a TIME OUT. 15 seconds left in the GAME.

KJ
The home invasion in Solvay. The Hammonds. Stealing for your boys, Charlie and Sam. Got a name for you. Bread burglar. Les Miserablian.

SYRACUSE
That's a play?

KJ
A book. And thick. Plenty of time to read it where you're going.

SYRACUSE
If that were true, I'd be in a cell.

KJ
I got ya covered --

KJ looks at the door. HER PARTNER. TROOPER JAMES BURK. Arms crossed. Officious.

KJ (CONT'D)
He thinks this is a waste of time, but I say you'll confess here and now. Wanna know why...? Oysters --

Did KJ say... oysters? Uhhhm. Okay? **The REF's whistle blows. GAME ON -- Lee's team is down by one point.**

KJ (CONT'D)
You thought the Hammonds were out to dinner. Time enough to snag that 70 inch LED. Who knew Diana'd have a bad apalachicola? That's the oyster --

He's silent. KJ knows she's beating down the right path... **The Panthers have possession, running out the clock --**

2 CONTINUED: (2) 2

KJ (CONT'D)
They come home. You panic, tying them up with dish rags, duct tape. Improvised. You're a thief, not a sociopath. I think.

LEE STEALS THE BALL -- driving toward the basket --

KJ (CONT'D)
Confess now and the judge may be lenient. Out in 4 or 5 years to come to your son's basketball games -- so you can be a father, not an inmate --

Lee passes. He's a team player. Another kid lays it up. DRAGONS WIN! THE CROWD ERUPTS! KJ BEAMING WITH PRIDE!

SYRACUSE
You guarantee that? Out in 4 years?

KJ
Can't guarantee anything. But, I won't let you go through this alone.

Syracuse thinks. Then. Nods. OKAY. He'll confess.

KJ (CONT'D)
Well there ya go.

KJ gives Burk a thumbs up. She got him. Then looks at Lee. Beaming. Whistling. LEE doesn't wanna smile, but he relents. Despite the embarrassment. His mom is one of a kind...

3 <u>EXT. INTERSTATE 90 - DEAD OF THE NIGHT</u> 3

A 65 MPH SPEED LIMIT SIGN stands sentinel. Adjust to find -- THE NIAGARA MOTEL AT THE FALLS. NEON FLICKERING. Off the highway. EVERYONE'S ASLEEP. Dark windows. A dozen cars in the parking lot (although when you watch this again on DVR, you'll notice a UNIQUE VAN.) Then --

BAM. BAM. BAM. THREE GUN SHOTS RING OUT. MUZZLE FLASHING IN THE WINDOW LIKE LIGHTNING IN A BOTTLE. But no one comes out. Not a soul stirs. Crickets. Chirping.

4 <u>INT. THE FLAXTON HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING</u> 4

An idyllic kitchen. KJ makes breakfast and packs lunch. Multi-task-master. Her daughter, RUBY (11), sits on her VIOLIN CASE so she can reach the counter. Reading a book. (WE NOTE -- Ruby has BAND-AIDS on her finger tips.)

KJ
Lee! Breakfast! Ruby get the cereal.

4 CONTINUED: 4

DAKOTA -- KJ's sister -- flies in. A harried mess.

DAKOTA
Sorrysorrysorrysorry! I couldn't find my name plate thing for work.

KJ
You're not late, Dakota.

DAKOTA
You said 7:30.

RUBY
It's 7:12. Ruby. Cereal. Lee!

Ruby gets up and starts pouring the cereal as Dakota remembers --

DAKOTA
I set all my clocks 23 minutes fast to fool myself. And so I did.

KJ
It's a slog. I so appreciate you taking Ruby to school.

DAKOTA
What're sisters for?

VOICE (O.S.)
WHAT'D YOU DO TO MY BIKE?

LEE (15) ENTERS. KJ's son from the basketball game. Carrying a BMX BIKE missing the FRONT WHEEL --

LEE
You threw away my tire?

RUBY
Where are the spoons?

KJ
They didn't feel right by the sink.

RUBY
I hear it takes 2 years to get used to a new house.

LEE
You're insane --

KJ
I hid your tire and you'll get it back when you clean the rain gutters.

4 CONTINUED: (2) 4

RUBY
I'll tell you where it is for 20 bucks.

KJ
Ruby, don't toy with your brother.
And don't waste band-aids, hun.

RUBY
Violin blisters.

LEE
Nerche.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (3) 4

KJ & DAKOTA
Swear jar.

LEE
You don't even know what a nerche is --

RUBY
You two are scary.

DAKOTA
Psychic.

KJ gives Lee the eye -- as if she were reading his mind, but there's something else to discuss now that everyone is here --

KJ
Hey, uhhh... I know it's your dad's weekend. But he's gotta cancel, so we'll just swap this for next.

RUBY
Again? He's gonna miss my concert... And he knows that, right?

DAKOTA
I've got my ticket. Mozart rocks!

RUBY
It's Mussorgsky.

DAKOTA
As long as it's not Chopin.

KJ
Rubes, it's not Dad's fault his job's all the way in Ohio. It's killing him --

It breaks KJ's heart... seeing her daughter suffer like this... And Ruby knows it. Clever little kid --

RUBY
Can I get a turtle? A turtle named Edamame. Because he eats Edamame. Or a lorikeet. Also named Edamame.

KJ
We've been over this. Pets are a distraction. You need to focus on studies and chores and music.

DAKOTA
You couldn't think up a better excuse?

4 CONTINUED: (4) 4

KJ
Not an excuse. Eat up. We're out in 10 --

KJ's strict. Not cruel. Part of you wishes your ship were this shape. As they eat breakfast... we cut to:

5 EXT. TROOP HQ - NORTH SYRACUSE - DAY 5

KJ parks her PROWLER. Getting out to see -- THE BARRACKS -- Like a military regiment. ELITE. INTIMIDATING. KJ walks past the K9 UNIT TRAINING on the lawn. ATTACKING padded Troopers. FOLLOWING scents. But, KJ eyes --

A HUSKY. Refusing to OBEY. Simply STARING at her.

KJ approaches LT. HOLLIS FIGGINS -- head of Troop M. Leads by example. Of the people. KJ checks the Husky --

KJ
Got a new recruit, Boss?

HOLLIS
Stray. Found him up at Oneida. Canadian sled dog, I figure.

KJ
Gotta mend those porous borders.

HOLLIS
I don't think he's Al Qaeda. But, he is a fighter. Some trek.

KJ
You're a peach, taking him in.

HOLLIS
I got an eye for talent.

KJ
You just like dogs more than people.

HOLLIS
Skills aren't mutually exclusive.
(then to business)
Niagara PD called in a case, something messy. I want you and Burk on point.

6 INT. TROOP HQ - MOMENTS LATER 6

KJ's on the move -- when she's intercepted by:

ILENE KATZ-KLAUSNER. Ghost mom from the basketball game. Holding a REAL ESTATE SIGN with her smiling face. But Ilene's fuming -- stalking KJ --

6 CONTINUED: 6

ILENE
6 of my signs stolen. Stolen! Punk boys cut right through the chains.

KJ
It's not exactly a Trooper case.

ILENE
Imagine someone took the sign when I sold your old place, KJ --

KJ
You know I patrol 53,000 square miles of New York State. Homicides. Narcotics. Organized crime.

ILENE
Well, you don't know who stole them.

KJ's got a great big heart. Cares about her community.

KJ
I'll keep an eye out. Best offer. And Bunko's at my place next week --

As KJ presses on -- she comes to:

JAMES BURK. Coming from the gym. Sweating. Unwrapping the tape from his hands.

KJ (CONT'D)
You ready to go a few rounds, Burk?

BURK
I'm not gonna hit a girl.

KJ
You'd lose either way.

BURK
Now, I'm reconsidering.

KJ
Reconsider in the car. We got a long ride out to Niagara.

BURK
I'm driving.

7 OMIT. 7

8 INT. KJ'S PROWLER (MOVING) - DAY 8

KJ drives. Burk's shotgun. He wears SUNGLASSES. Classic aviators. KJ does NOT. Intentionally. They're SILENT. Burk looks out the window -- taking in New York State --

KJ
Hey, d'you get that condo on Genessee?

BURK
Yeah.

KJ
Sweet little neighborhood.

BURK
It's good.

KJ
And how's Emma liking school?

BURK
Good.

KJ eyes Burk. He's not big on elaborating or conversation.

KJ
Ya know people drive 5 miles slower when a Trooper is on the road. Slowing the flow. Big black tampon.

Burk doesn't laugh. A man of focus.

BURK
Did Niagara PD generate a case-file? Scene pics we can study or...

KJ shakes her head. Nope. But can't help fill the silence.

KJ
It's not cake. Adjusting to a new state. New people. A new gig.

BURK
I'm good.

KJ
This isn't DC.

BURK
Criminals are criminals.

KJ
Folks here are salt. Good people sometimes make bad choices.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: 8

Sounds a touch naive to Burk.

BURK
You've been on the job what, 5 years?

KJ
6 come May.

BURK
I've only been a cop. Rookie to vice to homicide detective. 82% solve rate in interrogation. I'm --

KJ
-- Good?

Yes. Exactly. Thank you.

KJ (CONT'D)
Is this about the basketball game?

BURK
No.

KJ
Not even a skosh?

BURK
Not even, whatever skosh means.

KJ
Interrogation rooms are intimidating.

BURK
It's not called the cuddle room.

KJ
I just think people talk in Starbucks. Living rooms. Bleachers. That's where people talk --

BURK
82% says different.

KJ
It's a B --
(can't hold her tongue)
Minus.

9 EXT. INTERSTATE 90 - DAY 9

KJ's prowler drives past the lonely SPEED LIMIT SIGN -- pulling into THE NIAGARA MOTEL AT THE FALLS. WE SMASH TO:

10 EXT. NIAGARA MOTEL - MOMENTS LATER 10

KJ and Burk follow NIAGARA PD OFFICER GREENE through the dank parking lot, past a posse of Niagara PD and yellow tape.

OFFICER GREENE
Trooper Flaxton, Burk meet Aubrey Jensen -- the motel manager called in the report. He can fill in gaps...

They come to a dude named AUBREY. 40s. Heavy. His buffalo-wing-colored fingers seem nervous:

AUBREY
What're Troopers doing here?

BURK
We take over when local doesn't have our, experience.

KJ
It's not all handing out tickets to jerks in jaguars. That's just icing on the jurisdictional cake --

BURK
Who're the players?

OFFICER GREENE
Room's registered to a Don Rankin. He married Eloise Bass last night --

Officer Greene stops outside a door:

OFFICER GREENE (CONT'D)
There's a... whole buncha blood, but no bodies. Burglary? Abduction?

11 INT. MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS 11

OUR CRIME SCENE. AN EXTENDED STAY MOTEL ROOM. KITCHENETTE. COUCH. A BOUQUET OF ROSES. 4 EMPTY CHAMPAGNE BOTTLES. GARTER BELT. WEDDING NIGHT gone horribly awry --

AN ANGRY, OXIDIZED RUST-TINGED BLOOD STAIN ON THE MATTRESS. BLOODY DRAG MARKS ON THE SHAG CARPET LEADING OUT THE DOOR.

BURK
Homicide. Killer stood here. 3 shots to the chest judging by the blowback. At least one person is dead. Don? Eloise? Could be both.

KJ eyes DON'S WALLET. Driver's license. Big. 220 pounds.

11 CONTINUED: 11

KJ
Don's from Austin, Texas?

AUBREY
It's a company address. R8-Consulting --

OFFICER GREENE
I talked to his supervisor. Don travels for work. Austin, Texas. Lawrence, Kansas. Plattsburgh, New York. Doesn't own a home -- lives in motels, that's how he met Eloise --

AUBREY
She's our concierge --

BURK
This place has a concierge?

AUBREY
Corporate way of saying she gave out coupons to the Ferry. TGIFridays.

BURK
Anyone report the gunshots?

AUBREY
That'd be the no tell part of motel.

KJ
You mean the sex and blow.

BURK
Officer Greene. Why don't you assist Mr. Jensen and get us a guest registry --

Greene exits with Aubrey. KJ eyes Burk. Was he professional or dismissive? A detective itching to scratch facts:

BURK (CONT'D)
No forced entry. No fight. Wallet left behind. Phone. Purse. Not a robbery no... Vic knew the killer. Don killed Eloise. Eloise killed Don. Unknown assailant executed both --

KJ doesn't respond. HER TONGUE. CLICKING. Thinking...

KJ
You got a quarter?

Uhhhmmm? Burk warily fishes out a quarter. KJ smiles thanks, and then -- stunningly -- puts the quarter in the MAGIC FINGERS with AN EMPTY THUNK! She sits. VIBRATING.

11 CONTINUED: (2) 11

BURK
You gonna process the scene or do you need some me time?

KJ
I am processing. Just not keen on the forensic bits.

BURK
This is how it gets done.

KJ
It's not complicated. People commit crime, just gotta understand people.

BURK
Book 'em, Oprah.

KJ checks out the wedding paraphernalia. Bouquet. Garter. POLAROID PHOTOS OF THE BRIDE AND GROOM. Eating TWINKIES...

KJ
Plenty of story. I could hear yours was the only quarter in the magic fingers. No honeymoon fornography. Wrapped prophylactics. My guess is Don couldn't rise to the occasion --

KJ points out the 4 EMPTY BOTTLES OF CHAMPAGNE on the bureau.

KJ (CONT'D)
A lot of people got a little tipsy or 2 people got loaded. Even men with the strongest countenance succumb to the softening caress of alcohol --
(the bed stops)
You got another quarter?

BURK
So they were too drunk to screw.

KJ
Too drunk to open wedding presents --

KJ searches ELOISE'S PURSE. FINDING A WRAPPED PRESENT. KJ opens the gift. GOLD. Well, GOLDEN. LUGGAGE TAGS.

KJ (CONT'D)
To my husband Don. XOXO. Eloise. Luggage tags. Engraved. Intriguery.

BURK
That's not a word. I think a blood tech should check these drag patterns.

11 CONTINUED: (3) 11

KJ
I think we should find Eloise's car.

BURK
You're assuming it's gone.

Burk shakes his head. Whatever. Officer Greene returns --

OFFICER GREENE
Eloise's car is gone from staff parking. Patrol just spotted it upstream from the falls --

Burk eyes KJ -- how'd she know...?

KJ
No keys in her purse.

Burk turns to Greene -- already on the move --

BURK
Tell your men to keep back, no one touches that car!

12 EXT. DAM - NIAGARA - DAY 12

START ON: ELOISE'S WHITE HYUNDAI ELANTRA. KJ and Burk approach in the reflection on the windshield.

BURK
Blood. On the steering wheel --

-- GUNS and FLASHLIGHTS lead the way through THICK MIST -- HEADING TO THE RIVER'S EDGE. QUICKLY. QUIETLY UNTIL --

KJ shines a FLASHLIGHT on a TRAIL OF BLOOD DROPS. Like bread crumbs. All they have to do is Hansel & Gretel the blood --

Burk STOPS TO RADIO FOR BACK UP. Standard. Procedure. But, without looking, KJ TURNS OFF BURK'S WALKIE. Quiet as a ninja. These PARTNERS aren't on the same page.

KJ barrels forward -- undeterred by custom -- Burk just behind her until THEY SPOT A SILHOUETTE. Ghostly.

KJ
Eloise Bass? Turn around, please. Palms out. Slow.

THE FIGURE SLOWLY TURNS LIKE A TRAGIC BALLERINA IN A CHILD'S JEWELRY BOX. ELOISE BASS. Mascara infused tears run down her tragic cheeks. And worse:

12 CONTINUED: 12

HER TAFFETA WEDDING DRESS IS SPATTERED WITH DROPS OF BLOOD. Eloise stares at KJ and Burk -- down the barrel of their guns -- BLOODY HANDS RAISED -- struggling --

ELOISE
-- I'm sorry --

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

13 EXT. DAM - NIAGARA - DAY 13

Red lights from the Troop prowler cast an ominous glare on the landscape. KJ's focused on ELOISE BASS. Sitting in the BACK OF AN AMBULANCE giving a statement to BURK. A once beautiful bride now BROKEN, BLOODY. As KJ's TONGUE -- CLICKS --

14 EXT. DAM - NIAGARA - MOMENTS LATER 14

Burk joins KJ -- notebook in hand, working facts:

BURK
Eloise Bass. Concierge at the Motor Lodge. Wed Don Rankin last night. Got drunk. Blacked out. Woke up and Don was gone -- she thought he was hurt and went looking for him --

He flips the page -- keeps reading --

BURK (CONT'D)
Eloise's dad Gary suffers from late-stage Parkinson's. She is drowning in medical bills and loans and --

Burk closes his book -- peering at KJ through the mist --

BURK (CONT'D)
I think Eloise married Don to become his beneficiary. Killed him to get his cash. Dumped his body in the river here -- leads right to the falls. Motive, means, opportunity.

KJ takes out the LUGGAGE TAGS. ELOISE'S WEDDING PRESENT --

KJ
Not buying it...

BURK
It's not a sale.

KJ
If Eloise ideated on murder, she'd buy a gun, not luggage tags. She dreamt of traveling with her husband --

BURK
To Plattsburgh?

KJ
Away from that crap-ass motel.

14 CONTINUED: 14

BURK
Because of luggage tags?

KJ
Engraved --

BURK
(mocking in his walkie)
Dispatch, get a unit to Things Remembered at the mall. NOW!

DISPATCH (ON WALKIE)
Come again...?

BURK
(oh, oops)
Sorry...joke malfunction...

KJ smiles as she heads off... walking to meet -- ELOISE. Still sitting in the back of an ambulance. Stern compassion.

KJ
Eloise. My name is Trooper Flaxton. KJ. I need you to come with me.

15 INT. BATHROOM - LATER 15

KJ's alone with Eloise. Private. KJ gloves up --

KJ
We need your dress for evidence.

ELOISE
Mind untying my bustle?

KJ helps Eloise. TENDER. Like a mother and daughter.

KJ
What can you tell me about last night?

ELOISE
Not exactly my Barbie dream wedding... Ceremony, then Karaoke and brews. Don bought shots. I sang Crimson & Clover. Even danced with my Dad.

KJ
Must've made him happy seeing you all beautiful. You take care of your Dad all by yourself?

ELOISE
My mom died when I was 12. I can't afford otherwise.
(MORE)

15 CONTINUED: 15

ELOISE (CONT'D)
Dad got us twinkies for wedding cake. Awful and perfect. Don and I got to the motel and his company sent all this champagne. We drank and drank --

KJ
-- you can step out --

As Eloise steps out of the dress, KJ bags it for evidence.

KJ (CONT'D)
I have to swab your fingers. To test for gun shot residue...

Eloise offers her hand... as KJ circles Eloise's METICULOUS MANICURE with a dab of cotton --

KJ (CONT'D)
Pretty nails, beautiful color. That is one cute ring.

KJ notes Eloise's RING -- it's made out of TINFOIL.

ELOISE
Don made it from the to-go box at Bucca. Such a charmer.

As KJ bags the GSR kit. Eloise is struck -- the inhumanity of being evidence -- of being suspect.

ELOISE (CONT'D)
I didn't kill my husband --

KJ's compassionate, but wary as she wraps up the GSR kit --

16 OMIT 16

17 OMIT 17

18 EXT. NIAGARA MOTEL/INT. PROWLER - DUSK 18

KJ sits in her prowler. BLUETOOTH in her ear. BURK stands in the headlights. WE HEAR KJ'S PHONE RINGING -- AND THEN:

RUBY (ON PHONE)
Hey mommy --

KJ
Hey, it's gonna be a late night here -- Aunt Dakota's gonna pick you up.

RUBY (ON PHONE)
Okay cool.

KJ
We should do something special this weekend. Picnic in the Everson sculpture garden? Putt-putt?

KJ hears CARS -- ROARING past -- so PERCEPTIVE --

KJ (CONT'D)
Where are you, Rubes?

RUBY (ON PHONE)
Uhhm, outside orchestra rehearsal.

KJ
Don't sass Lee tonight. Love you --

RUBY (ON PHONE)
Love you more.

KJ hangs up. THEN DIALS ANOTHER NUMBER. She looks at Burk out the window. Raising her hand, "just a sec." We hear:

ROBERT'S VOICEMAIL
Hi this is Robert with Kroft Insurance. Leave me a message.

KJ
It's me. Ruby's blue you can't make her concert. Thought you should know so... just give us a call.

KJ hangs up. Exiting the Prowler -- joining Burk --

BURK
Got the report from the lab, Eloise tested positive for GSR --

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: 18

KJ
GSR can be false positive based on proximity. Eloise didn't fire a gun --

BURK
I got science says she did.

KJ
Have you fired a .45 without chipping a fleck of polish? It's a high degree of difficulty to stick the landing.

BURK
It's inadmissible is what it is.

18 CONTINUED: (2) 18

KJ
Right, let's go find evidence that is --

As they head into:

19 INT. MOTEL ROOM - CRIME SCENE - NIGHT 19

KJ snoops the nooks. Looking at the wedding paraphernalia... Burk believes they're done -- *

KJ
Ya know 50% of couples divorce. 60% cheat. Why does anyone get married?

BURK
Knocked up. Citizenship. Love. *

KJ
What's love gotta do with a dress? Ring? The only upside is registering for a new mixer.

Burk tries to keep them on point -- *

BURK
Look, I called his offices in Texas, * Kansas and Plattsburgh -- Don's got * no next of kin. No other suspects. No other motives. *

KJ
Yet. We gotta know who Don really was.

BURK
An overweight traveling businessman. You think cholesterol shot him?

KJ holds up DON'S WHITE SHIRT.

KJ
The relationship with Eloise was newish. Not even in the Bovine stage. You know how women buy men bright colored shirts and prints. Pink. Orange. Branding our cattle.

BURK
Smells like bullshit to me.

KJ
Don only has white shirts. He was professional. Devoted to his work.

19 CONTINUED: 19

BURK
Conjecture, counselor.

KJ
Okayfine, but his company was cheap --

She points out the EMPTY CHAMPAGNE BOTTLES --

KJ (CONT'D)
They sent budget bubbly. 2 for 1 at National Superstore this week.
(off Burk)
You're so rich you don't clip coupons?

BURK
The champagne was good enough to finish. Along with the twinkies.

KJ
They were celebrating, he was happy --

KJ looks at POLAROID PICTURES of Eloise and Don -- eating twinkies. Drinking. Kissing.

BURK
You're making my case. Desperate girl lures lonely man. Cupid concurs and he's the original gangster of love --

Burk stops. Looking at the SMALL, KITSCH CUPID FIGURINE. His BUTT mooning them. Burk thinks... considering...

KJ
What?

BURK
Why's Cupid facing the wall? You'd think it'd be turned toward the room.

Burk turns Cupid around to see: A WIRE. A LENS.

BURK (CONT'D)
A camera? Classy. What say we lodge a complaint with the manager?

KJ's already on it. Heading out the door in time to see

20 <u>EXT. NIAGARA MOTEL - CONTINUOUS</u> 20

AUBREY. THE MANAGER. RUNNING THROUGH THE PARKING LOT.

KJ
Aubrey? Guilty ones always run.

As Burk is about to dig in for a CHASE. KJ yells out --

20 CONTINUED: 20

KJ (CONT'D)
Burk!

Burk looks over to see KJ, TAKING OUT HER SIDEARM.

BURK
The hell're you doing?!?

WHEN -- BAM! KJ FIRES -- INTO A DUMPSTER -- STARTLED -- AUBREY FALLS FLAT ON HIS FACE. BREAKING HIS NOSE.

AUBREY
There's gravel in my nose!

BURK
That's your mountain of paperwork for discharging a sidearm...

KJ
Worth it.

21 INT. NIAGARA MOTEL - MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT 21

KJ hands Aubrey a COLD COKE from the Vending Machine for his BLOODY NOSE, turning to Burk:

KJ
See, this is a proper suspect --

AUBREY
Dude, I didn't kill anyone --

KJ
And the spy cams make sure no one steals the ice buckets?

AUBREY
Away from family businessmen will, how do I say this, bone hookers.

BURK
You record it and what...? Blackmail?

Aubrey knows he's caught... he punches up a screen on his computer. Filled with spy cams and an internet page:

AUBREY
I got a web site, thing, 20 bucks a month. Adultery-Inn-Niagara-dot... Inn like, like motel, with the 2 Ns.

KJ
That passes for clever, Nerche?

21 CONTINUED: 21

BURK
Nerche?

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (2) 21

KJ
He's scum.

AUBREY
Agreed. But I'm not a killer.

BURK
How do I know that... Camera didn't record the murder... unless --
(a thought)
Eloise turned it around. Right? Because... She knew it was there.

AUBREY
I didn't hire her because of her skills at handing out coupons --

KJ processes. Wait? What? Eloise?

BURK
Your Eloise is a prostitute.

22 EXT. ELOISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 22

KJ and Burk stand outside as Eloise opens the door.

ELOISE
Any news? Have you found Don?

KJ looks inside the house to see Eloise's Dad -- GARY BASS -- sitting on the couch. Severe Parkinson's. TREMBLING.

KJ
You got anyone who can watch your dad?

ELOISE
A cousin in Olean, yeah. Why...?

KJ removes her CUFFS. Holding them out --

BURK
Eloise Bass, you're under arrest for prostitution and a suspect in the murder of Don Rankin.

As Burk reads Miranda, KJ wants Eloise to deny the charges... She doesn't. Offering her wrists. As KJ CUFFS Eloise, she glances at Burk. A concession. He was right. She was wrong.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

23 EXT. SYRACUSE - MORNING 23

KJ AND DAKOTA RUN-WALK. Sweating. Keeping each other competitive, but still sisters -- bonding.

DAKOTA
You're quiet.

KJ
This case... I thought this girl Eloise was innocent, but she is no angel... Burk was right.

DAKOTA
Tell me more about this new partner.

KJ
Don't.

DAKOTA
What? I'm not interested in long term parking. Just the sex.

KJ
That's what you said about Andy Barret.

DAKOTA
In my defense he had a red i-roc and depeche mode blazer.

KJ
And then I bailed you out of jail.

DAKOTA
We all have Andy Barrets.

KJ
The things we do for a little love.

DAKOTA
When are you gonna go on a date, she asked not so subtly --

KJ
I won't do that to the kids.

DAKOTA
You gotta do something for yourself.

But, that's simply not where KJ's head is at --

23 CONTINUED: 23

KJ
Did you notice anything off about Ruby when you picked her up yesterday?

DAKOTA
I didn't. Ruby told me orchestra was canceled. She got a ride home from that Layla's mom... why?

They run in silence for a minute and then --

KJ
Ruby lied to me.

24 INT. RUBY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER 24

KJ SCANS the bedroom. Just like the MOTEL CRIME SCENE.

QUICK CUTS: KJ SEARCHES THE ROOM. RUBY'S CLOSET. DRESSER DRAWERS. UNDER THE BED. Typical hiding spaces. But no. Nothing. But as KJ is on the ground she spots:

The carpet DIMPLES from the feet of Ruby's bed are off-kilter. Ruby's bed was moved. And recent. KJ HEAVES the bed -- and there, obscured by blankets and stuffed animals, KJ discovers:

A STACK OF ILENE KATZ-KLAUSNER'S REAL ESTATE SIGNS. OH CRAP! RUBY'S THE THIEF. RUBY? Ruby enters -- caught:

RUBY
Oh. Ooops.

KJ
Ooops? Seriously? This is stealing. Ruby. This is serious --

RUBY
It's just a prank.

KJ
It's a crime.

RUBY
What? Are you gonna arrest me?

25 INT. TROOP HQ - HOLDING CELL - DAY 25

KJ (still in plain clothes) has Ruby locked up. So. There. Gives new meaning to take your daughter to work day.

KJ
You're too damned smart to be this stupid. What were you thinking?

25 CONTINUED: 25

Ruby shrugs. Her lips pressed together. Color drained. As if to tell KJ -- she has nothing else to say. Fine then --

KJ walks off. Ruby hears a door open. AND SLAM CLOSED. Oh. Crap. She really left. Ruby checks the next cell. A drunk sleeping it off... Oy.

RUBY
Mommy?!?

It looks like KJ's not coming back. A. Long. Beat. Of. Silence. Then: The DOOR opens. But it's not KJ returning. It's DAKOTA. Entering with a TROOPER.

DAKOTA
Your mom paid your "bail." Let's get you to school --

RUBY
How much do I owe?

DAKOTA
$300. Payable in chores.

RUBY
3? Come on.

DAKOTA
She took Lee's tire for not cleaning a gutter. Your pain is yet to come...

Dakota's heart breaks for Ruby. Tough being KJ's kid.

26 <u>INT. TROOP HQ - BULLPEN - DAY</u> 26

KJ's on the phone. We hear:

ROBERT'S VOICEMAIL
Hi this is Robert with Kroft Insurance. Leave me a message.

KJ
So, our Ruby stole Ilene Katz-Klausner's real estate signs. What's the equivalent of making her smoke a pack of cigarettes? Make Ruby sell a house in this economy...? I just --
(a moment of doubt)
I dunno. Call me back please thanks.

KJ hangs up. Then picks up ILENE's business card. That face. Smiling. As Ilene picks up:

KJ (CONT'D)
Hi, Ilene. Funny story --

27 INT. TROOP HQ - INTERROGATION ROOM/HALLWAY - DAY 27

Burk walks down the hall. Baffled. Trying to keep his anger in check. Looking for --

HOLLIS --

BURK
Hey, L.T. -- where's my soup?

HOLLIS
Kitchen's down the hall.

BURK
No. I had Eloise Bass stewing in interrogation and now she's gone --

HOLLIS
Soup. That's some DC slang?

BURK
Yeah.

HOLLIS
You mind if I use it?

BURK
It's all yours. Where is she?

HOLLIS
KJ took her out.

BURK
Out where? She's under arrest!

HOLLIS
Yeah... gotta love our KJ.

As the proverbial storm cloud forms over Burk --

BURK
Just curious, do you know Flaxton's solve rate?

HOLLIS
Zip up your fly and put away your ruler. I put you with KJ for a reason --

28 EXT. TROOP HQ PARKING LOT - DAY 28

KJ and Eloise sit on the back of KJ's prowler. An impromptu picnic of VENDING MACHINE DELICACIES and COFFEE are laid out. KJ offers Eloise --

KJ
Twinkie or Ho Ho?
(then realizing)
I didn't intend to comment on your occupation with pastry, that's merely a tragic misnomer.

As Eloise tentatively takes the twinkie... we see her hands are cuffed. KJ's kind. Not stupid.

ELOISE
I dunno what you expect me to say.

KJ
Nothing. Can't give you comfort, but I can give you comfort food. You're in deep. Prostitution?

ELOISE
My Dad is sick. Do you know what jobs a girl can find in Niagara? Stripper. And hooker. I worked for Aubrey the once... twice.

KJ
Desperate times call for -- murder?

ELOISE
I loved Don. Don had this fiancée. Mimi. She was sick. Died. He got me. My pain. I can barely get my Dad dressed. I needed help. I wanted to be loved. Don was my shoulder.

Shoulder. Interesting choice of words. KJ thinks -- mulling --

She takes Eloise's HAND. But what we think is a moment of CONCERN. And CARE. Isn't. She inspects her fingers as if she were buying a chicken. Bones....

KJ
Give me a squeeze.

ELOISE
What?

KJ
Hard as you can.

28 CONTINUED: 28

Eloise, hesitantly, SQUEEZES KJ's hand...

-- when she looks to see --

BURK. Stalking out of TROOP HQ. Making a bee line for KJ.

KJ (CONT'D)
Gimme a sec here...

KJ heads for Burk. Cutting the distance. HIGH. NOON.

BURK
Insane. Inappropriate.

But KJ cuts him off --

KJ
She didn't do it.

BURK
Because she said so --

KJ
Because look at her. I've felt stronger gusts of wind and Don's two steaks away from a coronary. There is no way Eloise moved a corpse alone.

28 CONTINUED: (2) 28

Burk looks to Eloise, standing. Sighing. Because KJ is totally right on.

KJ (CONT'D)
We have got to find that Don's body --

29 OMIT 29

30 OMIT 30

31 INT. PROWLER - NIAGARA - DAY 31

Burk drives as KJ studies a MAP. Burk still clings to the frustration from the interrogation room --

BURK
We're looking for what...?

KJ
Where two people would dump a body.

BURK
In the falls. Harbor patrols been searching steady for a day now.

KJ
The point of hiding something is so it won't be found. I hid my son's tire so he'll clean the rain gutters.

31 CONTINUED: 31

BURK
I think you're nicer to the criminals than your family.

KJ
He'll find it when he does his chores. I put it on the roof.

BURK
You always ask me about my daughter -- but that's the first you ever talked about Lee.

KJ
Harbor patrol won't find Don. The killer knows we'd check the falls. Like my Lee. Who hides something where it'll be found?

BURK
I checked on you, Flaxton. 5 partners. 2 years. That's a lot.

That is a lot. *

KJ *
I'm sorry for going behind your back, * taking Eloise out of interrogation.

BURK *
No you're not. *

KJ *
No, but yes on the first part. *

And an apology is an apology... It counts. *

BURK *
That was smart, using the twinkie to * make Eloise think on her dad....

KJ *
Is that what I was doing? *

BURK *
You watch a lot of CSI or what? *

KJ *
I'm just an upstate girl. Hair * damaged from too much aqua net. 2 kids. 3rd career. No one thought I'd make the force. But, I earned every thread.

KJ fights the sun to see the map. *

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (2) 31

BURK
Why don't you wear sunglasses?

KJ
I like people to look me in the eye.

Burk checks KJ. Calling her on bullshit. She admits. *

KJ (CONT'D)
My head is abnormally small.
Cantaloupes are larger. Here --

KJ reaches out her hand for Burk's sunglasses. Putting them on. They are... awkward. Comically large.

KJ (CONT'D)
How can you see out of these? Looks like night.

BURK
Polarized lenses.

She lifts them up and down. Up and down. Up and down. An idea forming...

KJ
Oh my crap. I think I know where Don's body is.

Still checking. Up and down. Up and down. Up and down.

KJ (CONT'D)
This town is lousy with neon. They'd dump him where it was pitch. Where in this town are there no lights?

As she looks at the map... WE SMASH TO:

32 OMIT 32

A33 OMIT A33

33 OMIT 33

34 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY 34

K9 UNIT CADAVER DOGS search through the grass and dead flowers. Noses to the ground -- hunting. KJ and Burk walk through the graves as --

KJ
Cemetery is 4 blocks from the motel. Kinda genius place to hide a body.

BURK
It's like looking for a needle in a stack of needles.

KJ
Don wasn't embalmed so he'll stink worse than the Redskins on a Sunday.

BURK
I'm a Dolphins fan.

KJ
I'm sorry.

LT. HOLLIS joins them -- the CANADIAN HUSKY on a leash -- supervising the scene with a discerning eye --

HOLLIS
When I heard you were at a cemetery I was worried you off'd each other --

KJ
I'm growing on him.

BURK
We're registering at Pottery Barn.

KJ
How's Canada training up? Learning to convert from metric?

HOLLIS
Naw... he doesn't play well with the pack. Gotta send him to the pound.

34 CONTINUED: 34

As KJ pets the husky. Running her hands through his thick coat. She's interrupted by --

TROOPER (O.S.)
Over here --

KJ, Burk and Hollis make their way over to -- Troopers... digging away at the ground -- dogs braking something crazy -- when Burk spots:

BURK
Stop stop... what's that there --

THE BLOODY COMFORTER FROM THE MOTEL. KJ and Burk get their hands dirty, sifting away the dirt to find --

DON'S CORPSE.

KJ
Well, there ya go.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

35 INT. TROOP HQ - INTERROGATION ROOM - LATE DAY 35

KJ finds Eloise sitting behind bars -- stark.

KJ
We found Don's body. We are inching closer to the truth.

ELOISE
I was sitting here hoping he was still alive. Stupid. They destroyed my wedding ring. The guards thought it was a piece of tin foil. Trash.

KJ
I'm sorry.

Small consolation. KJ's the only one looking out for Eloise.

36 OMIT 36

37 INT. TROOP HQ - MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE - LATER 37

As KJ and Burk wait for the coroner -- DON'S CORPSE ON THE * THE MEDICAL EXAMINER, DR. REITZ (60s), morbidly skinny, enters -- * already reading his report --

DR. REITZ
Evening children. We're looking at 3 shots to the chest. No defensive wounds. Tox has his B.A.C. at .16 --

KJ
Don's an alcoholic. Jaundice fingers. Rhinoceros nose. 4 empty champagne bottles -- Don can't have one drink.

Burk checks Dr. Reitz. He nods. KJ's right.

KJ (CONT'D)
I used to be a rehab social worker. My sister was an addict. Clean now. Thank God for 2nd 2nd 2nd chances --

And just when we think we know KJ. SHE CHECKS A UNIQUE, CIRCULAR MARK ON DON'S BACK. DOUBLE RIMMED WITH DIVOTS.

KJ (CONT'D)
What's this lividity mark here?

DR. REITZ
Post-mortem, Don's body was lying on something as the blood settled --

BURK
Something in the trunk or back seat of the car that dumped his body.

KJ
Nothing matched this in Eloise's car --

BURK
Just means his body wasn't moved in her car. Or she tossed it. So, what're we looking for here?

Dr. Reitz SHRUGS his shoulders.

KJ
This could help find a killer -- what do you mean...?

KJ SHRUGS. Aping. Irked by Dr. Reitz's complacency.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: 37

DR. REITZ
Tech said it's not in the database.
It could be anything.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (2) 37

KJ
Could it be a piano? A microwave? It's a 6 inch circle with 5 divots. What in your trunk looks like this...?

Dr. Reitz SHRUGS. APATHETIC. KJ's eyes flair. Really???

KJ (CONT'D)
You've gotta be f--

38 INT. THE FLAXTON HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT 38

THE SWEAR JAR. KJ deposits a TWENTY. She chewed out Dr. Reitz something fierce. KJ takes a SKETCH of the CIRCULAR MARK. Searching through her PANTRY for a match when:

LEE PASSES IN -- BICYCLE TIRE IN HAND -- HE FOUND IT.

LEE
You think you're so clever, but I still didn't clean the gutter. So --

LEE EXITS -- crossing with DAKOTA. KJ seems, unfazed. Weird. Right? And then:

LEE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
WHERE'S MY CHAIN!?!? YOU SUCK!

KJ smirks. Always one step ahead. She goes back through the pantry. Noticing the cereal boxes are empty...

KJ
I gotta make a market run. You need anything? Milk?

DAKOTA
I'm fine.

KJ knows that "I'm fine." It's not so good.

KJ
What's up?

DAKOTA
(hesitant)
I know it's not my place, but -- hiding bikes? Arresting Ruby? On top of the music and sports and -- it's a lot, isn't it?

KJ
You'd prefer I was like Mom. Because up-selling gym memberships was always your dream job.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: 38

DAKOTA
That's... unnecessary --

KJ
You're right. It's not your place.
(then calling out)
Hey Ruby, wanna go shopping?

39 INT. NATIONAL SUPERSTORE - NIGHT 39

KJ INTERROGATES Ruby like all her suspects -- normal places. In this case SHOPPING. AISLE 5. Beverages. Soda/Juice/Beer. KJ and Ruby share a CHOCOLATE MILK --

KJ
I don't get why you stole the signs?

RUBY
I said I'm sorry.

KJ
Sorry doesn't answer the question.
Why Ilene Katz-Klausner?

A beat. Ruby's feet shuffling on linoleum. Slurping milk.

RUBY
She baked cookies at the open house.
Our house never smelled like cookies.
She's such a liar.

KJ
You miss the old place?

Ruby shrugs. She guesses. Yeah. Doesn't have the words.

KJ (CONT'D)
You know it's not Ilene's fault Dad
and I split up -- right...?

She understands. And doesn't.

RUBY
Maybe if the house didn't sell, you
would've figured stuff out --

And there it is. With Ruby's Dad canceling his weekend. Missing her concert. It's about their broken family -- Ruby drinks. Chocolate milk mustache. Sweet. Innocent.

KJ wipes away Ruby's milk mustache (invoking the imagery of KJ swabbing Eloise -- mothers caring for daughters).

39 CONTINUED: 39

KJ
It's not easy dad being so far away all the time, is it? He loves you --

Ruby bites her lip. She doesn't want to cry. Doesn't want to talk about it. KJ gets it. Wrong place. Wrong time.

KJ (CONT'D)
You want juice boxes for lunch?

Ruby nods yeah. And goes to grab some JUICE BOXES, when KJ notices right across the aisle:

CHAMPAGNE. THE SAME BRAND FROM DON AND ELOISE'S MOTEL ROOM. ON SALE. 2 FOR 1. BEST BUY OF THE WEEK. JUST LIKE KJ SAID.

KJ has a thought. As Ruby returns with the juice boxes -- KJ takes out the LIVIDITY MARK SKETCH FROM DON'S BACK --

KJ (CONT'D)
You need a distraction. A game. Scavenger hunt. First one to find this circle gets a really good prize.

RUBY
Like a pet turtle named Edamame? Or a lorikeet? Or a cat?

KJ
You're in no position to negotiate --

WE JUMP CUT: AS KJ'S SHOPPING CART FILLS WITH GROCERIES -- THEY LOOK FOR A MATCH TO THE CIRCULAR MARK. CHECKING OUT JAR LIDS. Peanut Butter. Jelly. Pickles. HOME WARES. Colanders. Pots. SPORTING GOODS. Frisbees. Soccer Pylons. They cross in the middle --

RUBY
So many 6 inch circles!

AND THEN TO HARDWARE. UNTIL THEY REACH PAINT. PAINT CANS. 6 INCH CIRCULAR LIDS. Ruby runs down the aisles rainbow colors of paint. All smiles and excitement. Grabbing:

RUBY (CONT'D)
Mom! Mommy!

A CAN OF PAINT. INTERIORS. AN OVERLY DESIGNED LABEL. KJ compares it to the sketch. 6 inch. Double rimmed. 5 divots. AN EXACT MATCH. KJ gives Ruby a big old kiss. Her brilliant daughter. Ruby glows. Accomplished. Off KJ -- knowing that one can of paint won't solve Ruby's larger problem.

KJ takes out her phone... dialing.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: (2) 39

KJ
Hey Burk -- guess what I found --

40 INT. TROOP HQ - BULLPEN - MORNING 40

KJ walks up to Burk -- his desk cluttered with papers, maps, the paint can and a box of donuts. The SPEAKER of Burk's PHONE plays awful hold music.

BURK
I got in early. All they had was day old crullers.

KJ
That's the best kind. Who're you talking to?

BURK
Grace in forensic accounting. Trying to link whoever bought this paint to Don Rankin. Someone in his company... his dead fiancee, Mimi... Eloise...

KJ
Sisyphusian --

BURK
That's not a word. It's Sisyphean. And it's not. 82% might be a B. Minus. Still 2nd highest in my unit.

Burk has a MAP under the crullers --

BURK (CONT'D)
Don had four work hubs. We can eliminate Kansas and Texas. Too far off. So Niagara and Plattsburgh --

Burk folds the MAP to NEW YORK -- 98 RED Xs

BURK (CONT'D)
According to the manufacturer this brand went on sale 3 months ago.

KJ
And expensive.

BURK
The kind contractors use to turn a profit. Bonus for us, there's only been 98 purchases --

KJ
You gonna knock on 98 doors?

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: 40

BURK
No, I'm cross referencing anyone who gassed along the thruway on the day of or just after the murder.

PHONE OPERATOR
Trooper Burk...?

Burk picks up the phone off of speaker -- Burk listens. CIRCLING names on a long list -- then:

BURK
Thank you, Grace.
(then hanging up)
9 names. I say we pound some pavement and flash some badge. It might just be 9 paint enthusiasts.

She admires his work, then grabbing the keys --

KJ
Or it might be our killer. I'm driving --

41 EXT. I-90 - DAY 41

The Prowler speeds down the road -- as KJ and Burk are ready to hit the proverbial pavement. Heading to:

42 EXT. MEADOWVALE ROAD - PLATTSBURGH - DAY 42

DING. DONG. KJ and Burk stand outside a suburban house. Paint can in hand. As a MAN opens the door...

BURK
Mr. Azzolino, can we ask you some questions?

43 EXT. DESMOND LANE - PLATTSBURGH - DAY 43

As Burk and KJ walk up --

BURK
Miriam Stanhope... she fueled in Herkimer day of Don's murder --

BURK rings the doorbell...

44 INT. DESMOND LANE - PLATTSBURGH - DAY 44

KJ and Burk talk to MIRIAM STANHOPE. Mid 30s.

MIRIAM
We moved in what...? Month ago.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: 44

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
Nice people, but disgusting. Spaghetti stains on the walls. Just painted my dining room --

BURK
And where is Mr. Stanhope?

Miriam holds up her hand to show -- NO WEDDING RING.

45 EXT. LORRAINE STREET - PLATTSBURGH - DAY 45

KJ and Burk with a contractor, ALEX GONZALEZ --

ALEX
Three days ago...? I was finishing a Condo complex in Utica.

BURK
Is there someone who can confirm that?

ALEX
My foreman.

KJ
Thanks for your time.

As they walk back to the prowler...

BURK
That makes it 0 for 9. Dead end.

As they get in the car, Burk driving. Angry doors slamming closed.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

46 EXT. I-90/INT. PROWLER - DAY 46

Burk drives. Quiet. The day yielded nothing. KJ checks her cell phone. Zero new messages. Burk understands --

BURK
Robert still hasn't called back?

KJ shakes her head, nope. Not yet.

BURK (CONT'D)
You ever talk to anyone about it? The divorce. Department shrink?

KJ
Shrink. Heh... no.

BURK
Might help. Sharing. Get at your trust issues.

KJ
My trust whats?

BURK
That thing where you always need to be right, right?

KJ
I don't always need to be.

BURK
Like that.

Uhhhm, there's ribbing and then there's a step too far --

KJ
Is this why your wife divorced you? Too much detecting. I see the tan on your ring finger. Why you moved.

A beat -- then simply:

BURK
Annie... went for a run and had a brain aneurysm. Died. So... yeah. Judging a book by the cover -- you only had to read page one of my file.

A big lump in KJ's throat makes it difficult to say:

KJ
I'm so sorry.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED: 46

He could twist the screw. He doesn't. Kind.

BURK
It's cool. Emma is...
(lightening the mood)
Punishing me for moving. I see her cold shoulder more than her face. Bright side, I got paint, Emma's room could use a coat -- means I'll be the one crashing on the couch --

KJ thinks about the paint... the fresh coat...

KJ
When did that Miriam Stanhope say she painted her kitchen?

BURK
Last week. No fumes...

KJ
No boxes. It takes a day to pack and a month to un...

BURK
Hold on --

Burk flips on the siren -- jerking the wheel -- driving into the median. Heading right back to:

47 EXT. DESMOND AVENUE - PLATTSBURGH - DAY 47

KJ and Burk walk back up to the door --

KJ
What do we know about Miriam Stanhope? Any connection to Don or Eloise?

BURK
Nothing on paper... She's a waitress at Adam's Ribs.

They look down the street to see --

A VAN. Driving. Slowly. (We've seen this van before, at the motel.) And in the PASSENGER seat -- MIRIAM STANHOPE. And just as eye contact is made -- THE VAN DRIVES OFF -- tires squealing.

KJ
Guilty ones always run.

KJ and Burk run back to the Prowler. KJ faster, beating Burk to the driver seat. Engine ROARING like a beast. Peeling out. Sirens blaring. THE CHASE IS ON!

48 EXT. I-87/INT. PROWLER - DAY 48

THE CRUISER HAULS ASS. SIREN SCREAMING. BLUE LIGHTS PULSATING -- STANHOPE'S WHITE VAN IS FIRMLY SET IN KJ'S SITES. SHE'S NOT GIVING AN INCH. RELENTLESS. DOGGED. PURSUIT.

KJ (ON WALKIE)
10-12 on a white van license Frank Edgar 3762, passing Bear Swamp Road at 85 -- send EMS --

Burk runs the licence through the computer --

BURK
Van's registered to Owen Stanhope. Contractor --

KJ
She said she wasn't married.

BURK
She's not. It's her brother.

DISPATCH (ON WALKIE)
EMS en route, Cayuga 440. Restrictive pursuit policy is in effect --

BURK
Are you current on policy, Flaxton?

Of course she is. But her eye's on the prize. When:

KJ's phone RINGS. ROBERT. Seriously? Now? Work and life crossing at the worst possible moment. Stanhope's Van. Just in reach. And stunningly, KJ answers (VIA BLUETOOTH) --

KJ
Hi, Robert --

BURK
Seriously? Now?

KJ promises with a look, this will only take a sec --

ROBERT
Sorry about the phone tag.

KJ
We all have our things --

BURK
Heads up!

KJ almost sideswipes into a SEMI -- nearly becoming ROAD KILL -- then steering back into safety --

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: 48

ROBERT
Is that a siren? Is this a bad time?

BURK
It's not good.

KJ
It's fine -- we need to talk -- I can wear a lot of hats, but I can't be Ruby's dad. She needs you --

ROBERT
We've been over this.

KJ
Nut up. Make time.

BURK
Get him off the road.

ROBERT
What?

BURK
Not you dude... Muscle him down.

KJ nods. Yeah yeah. It's a damn great plan.

KJ
Hang on a sec.

KJ puts Robert on hold. ACCELERATING THE CRUISER AND THEN --

-- PULLS A PIT MANEUVER --

REAR ENDING THE VAN AND SPINNING IT SAFELY OFF THE ROAD.

-- KJ PULLS OVER -- SKREEEEEEEECHING TO A STOP!

49 <u>EXT. I-87/PLATTSBURGH - CONTINUOUS</u> 49

As KJ and Burk get out of the prowler they see -- MIRIAM and OWEN making a run for it. KJ takes off after Miriam --

BURK grabs OWEN -- swiftly and decisively muscling him against the Van -- pinning him --

BURK
Do. Not. Move.

A50 <u>EXT. PLATTSBURGH - CONTINUOUS</u> A50

KJ runs hard -- down the train tracks. Miriam just ahead of her, when, incredibly, she hits her BLUETOOTH --

A50 CONTINUED: A50

KJ
Hey... What was I saying?

Holy crap. She's gonna keep talking to Robert?

ROBERT
Nut up.

KJ
I'm so sick of covering for you --

ROBERT
I have to work. I have 2 mortgages.

KJ
I work. I'm here.

ROBERT
This is why I don't call back.

KJ
Don't make excuses just do your job.

And with that KJ tackles Miriam. Venting all her anger into the chase. Sending them both to the ground. Her BLUETOOTH EARPIECE coming loose, as KJ cuffs Miriam --

We hear KJ's bluetooth --

ROBERT
KJ? I think you're breaking up --
are you sure this is a good time?

50 EXT. I-87/PROWLER - MOMENTS LATER 50

KJ frog marches Mimi back to the prowler. Burk has Owen cuffed -- putting hum in the back of the cruiser.

OWEN
Don't tell them anything, Mimi.

KJ
Mimi?

BURK
Don's fiancee Mimi?

KJ
You're supposed to be dead, girl.

KJ looks at Miriam -- Mimi -- intriguery --

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

51 INT. STANHOPE HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY 51

KJ and Burk have MIMI and OWEN STANHOPE. Handcuffed. And very confused.

OWEN
Shouldn't we be at a precinct?

BURK
We have a warrant to search your home. I could crush you in interrogation, but I hear that's not where people talk. Is it, KJ?

It's the first time Burk's called her KJ. KJ notes it. Touched even. KJ looks around the KITCHEN --

TOYS. Legos. Batman. Probably belonging to a BOY. AND THE FOOD. JUICE BOXES. Same brand KJ bought at Walmart. Fruit leather. Microwave. Knife block. MIXER.

KJ
Where's your son, Mimi?

MIMI
He's on a play date.

KJ
But you're not Don's fiancee... nice mixer -- you're his wife... his wife, but didn't take his name.

OWEN
Don't say anything without a lawyer --

MIMI
I'm not talking, Owen.

KJ
I fight like this with my sister too. I get it. It's hard to raise a kid alone. You need help.

BURK
Help disposing the body.

KJ
Not so complicated. Don cheated on you. And you killed him.

OWEN
You have no proof.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: 51

KJ
I got juice boxes... National Superstore. Across the aisle from the champagne. 2 for 1. On sale --

BURK
They gave Don the champagne -- he was an alcoholic. You knew he'd get wasted --

KJ
Then waited on Eloise to pass out. Knocked. Don opens the door and --
(they know the rest)
Where do you keep your foil?

MIMI
Middle. With the tupperware.

KJ opens it...

KJ
That's smart. I'm so stealing that. We are so much the same, Mimi. Only difference is I never married --

But what? Burk thought KJ was divorced (and so did we).

KJ (CONT'D)
50% divorce. 60% cheat. I didn't see the point. I didn't need a dress or a ring to know that I was in love --

As KJ talks, she rips off a piece foil. TWISTING.

KJ (CONT'D)
And just like your Don, my Robert commuted to work. That's where he met Joyce -- cheated on me -- Joyce --

Still hurts to even say her name...

KJ (CONT'D)
So Robert moved to Ohio and I -- I armored up. I could do it all. My job. My kids. Everything myself. Only there's uh -- there's rage. There's a whole mess of rage --

The confession is more for Burk. KJ's truth. We see now -- KJ's shaped the FOIL into a RING. Like Eloise's...

KJ (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry Don did this to you and your boy. He broke a promise --

Mimi considers for a moment -- and then --

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: (2) 51

MIMI
My purse... Inside the wallet --

KJ reaches into Mimi's purse and pulls out A FOIL RING. Same as Eloise's. KJ was right. A silent admission --

MIMI (CONT'D)
It wasn't just because of Eloise --
keep looking... the photos --

OWEN
-- Mimi stop --

KJ looks inside and pulls out -- A PHOTO. CHEESY. SEARS. Don with ANOTHER FAMILY. Wife. Kid. And then -- KJ TAKES OUT ANOTHER PHOTO. Don with ANOTHER FAMILY.

MIMI
Texas. Kansas. Bastard had 3
families -- about to make it 4 --

OWEN
Shut up, Mimi!

MIMI
I had to stop him -- I had to save
that poor girl --

HOLY CRAP! KJ STARES AT THE PHOTOS. DON WITH 3 OTHER FAMILIES. A HORRIFIC PERVERSION OF EVERYTHING KJ HOLDS DEAR.

KJ
Well... There you go.

52 <u>EXT. ELOISE'S HOUSE - NIAGARA FALLS - NIGHT</u> 52

KJ escorts Eloise up to her front door.

KJ
State Attorney's giving you probation
for prostitution -- first offense --

Eloise nods, okay. As Eloise walks away, KJ stops her --

KJ (CONT'D)
Don't be too hard on yourself, kay.
You're not wrong, wanting to be loved.

ELOISE
Thank you --

KJ watches Eloise walk up to the stoop -- her father, GARY opens the door. As Eloise HUGS her dad.

53 INT. PROWLER - NIGHT 53

The dashboard lights KJ's face. It's been a hell of a case. Happy to be driving home. Quiet... Reflecting on her solitary reflection in the windshield. Feeling alone.

54 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - SYRACUSE - DAY 54

WE START ON: ILENE KATZ-KLAUSNER'S REAL ESTATE SIGN. We adjust to find: KJ and RUBY. In the process of going house to house -- REHANGING the signs Ruby stole.

KJ
After we hang the signs, you're gonna put Ilene's postcard in every mailbox --

Ruby nods. Okay. KJ checks Ruby -- as they work --

KJ (CONT'D)
You know you can blame me. If you're angry about Dad and I. I'm a big girl. I can take your heat.

Ruby looks up at KJ. Eyes full. Raw innocence.

RUBY
I hate that you and dad broke our home --

KJ
Yeah. Me too. Silver lining? I hear it only takes 2 years to get used to a new home --

Ruby smiles, going to hang another sign. Off KJ --

55 INT. THE FLAXTON HOUSE - KITCHEN - DUSK 55

DINNER. Like breakfast. Chaotic. Dakota's prepping for the BBQ. Ruby does homework. LEE BAND AIDS HIS KNUCKLE. Fingernails filthy. KJ joins Lee --

LEE
Cut it cleaning the gutter. Happy?

KJ
It's hard being the only bud in a house filled with women. But, you're so capable of greatness. So I push. That's me. That's my job, right?

LEE
Please don't say bud.

KJ gives Lee his BIKE CHAIN. KJ smiles, hitting Lee on the arm. She adores her rebel.

55 CONTINUED: 55

KJ's PHONE RINGS.

KJ
Hey guys... Go out to the backyard --
There's a surprise --

56 EXT. THE FLAXTON HOUSE - BACKYARD - SECONDS LATER 56

Ruby runs outside to find -- BURK coming through the back gate. Ruby deflates...

RUBY
Mom, we have to adjust your definition of surprise -- it's just some guy --

BURK
Lemme guess... Ruby?

But we know this isn't just some guy. KJ's inviting Burk into her home. That's major --

As KJ, Lee and Dakota join the others they hear it -- A DOG -- BARKING -- AS WE REVEAL:

BURK'S DAUGHTER, EMMA (14) STANDING WITH THE HUSKY! THE CANADIAN SLED DOG. Ruby's confused...

KJ
Well, say hi to Edamame.

RUBY
We can keep him?

KJ nods, yeah. Ruby beams. The kids welcome Emma. Playing with the dog. Smiling.

Both parents are touched at the tableau --

BURK
Thanks for having us over.

Burk reaches into his jacket. Hands KJ a PRESENT. KJ's touched. Opens it to find: SUNGLASSES.

BURK (CONT'D)
Spring loaded sides should fit even your tiny melon --

KJ tries them on. Pretty. Bad-ass. Pretty bad-ass.

KJ
Thank you.

But before it gets all twee --

56 CONTINUED: 56

BURK
Did you hear about Mike Daley -- the nerche robbed his own video store.

KJ
You don't even know what nerche means.

BURK
Nerd and douche. I am a detective. Only wrong 18% of the time --

DAKOTA
Stop talking shop. Dinner's ready. James, you can sit next to me...

Dakota leads Burk off, turning back to look at KJ --

KJ mouths, "Don't." Eyes smiling. But still kind of serious too. Sisters. Even after a fight.

THE FAMILY digs into a BBQ that looks so delicious, you'd want to sit down with them too...

KJ takes in the picture, as Edamame cuddles up to her.

KJ
Welcome to the family.

END OF ACT SIX