

INT. TED STEVENS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA - DUSK

Alaska Airlines Flight 99 touches down on the runway at Ted Stevens International Airport in Anchorage. Julia Greer soon makes her way through Concourse C, toting a single bag. She has just returned from a three-day nurses' conference in Memphis. Passing through the baggage area, Julia soon presses her key fob inside the parking garage and locates her truck. Once on International Airport Road, she now heads for the Minnesota Drive exit to get onto Seward Highway.

EXT. SEWARD HIGHWAY, SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA, CHUGACH MOUNTAINS - MOMENTS LATER

Glad to finally be free of traffic lights, Julia passes the all-too-familiar Potter Marsh before taking in the panorama of the Kenai Mountain Range, which never disappoints. Lost amid the beauty Seward Highway provides, Julia passes a body of water to her right, known as Turnagain Arm, which serves as a bleak reminder of the day her best friend, Abby, slipped beneath its steely-gray waters thirty years ago.

JULIA

I don't think you ever get over the death of your best friend, especially someone so young. Abby and I met in 1985 as members of the LSU women's swim team. I was from Squaw Valley, California, while Abby hailed from Ash Grove, Missouri.

Julia begins to pick up speed for the forty-minute drive to Girdwood.

We had an amazing Freshman year and traveled throughout the Southeastern Conference doing what we did best. Swim! We were fast, both in individual events and relays, often swimming six miles a day in practice. We had a lot of fun that year!

The tidal waters begin to swirl along the rocky shore, parallel to the highway.

But, enough of that. The following summer, Abby left LSU to marry Joe Coulter and follow him to Eagle River, Alaska. I never saw her again.

(MORE)

JULIA (CONT'D)  
She drowned a month later in a  
notorious body of water known as  
Turnagain Arm, home to one of the  
most dangerous tidal bays in all of  
North America.

A trio of Dall sheep cling to the steep cliffs along the  
Seward Highway.

This is a tale of love and loss,  
and the firm belief that time  
eventually heals all wounds. As for  
the turbulence in between, well,  
that's the stuff that great stories  
are made of...

Julia pulls into her gravel driveway just off Alyeska  
Highway. Inside the house, she drops her bag, enters the  
master bedroom, and soon crawls into bed next to her sleeping  
husband, Will, while the lofty glaciers huddled around  
Girdwood silently look on.

CUT TO:

INT. GARLAND FUNERAL HOME, ASH GROVE, MISSOURI - AFTERNOON

Twenty-five years earlier, mourners are waiting in line to  
greet the Gladstone family at Garland Funeral Home in Ash  
Grove, Missouri. Daughter Abby's casket, now visible, is  
closed for obvious reasons since drowning victims are rarely  
shown. LSU teammate Julia Arden now pays her respects to  
Abby's parents, Lyndon and Christine, as well as her sisters,  
Pamela and Tessa.

CHRISTINE  
Julia. Come and sit down next to  
me.

Padding one of the seats arranged behind the receiving line,  
Julia complies.

That's better...

JULIA  
Thank you, Mrs. Gladstone. I'm as  
shocked as you are.

CHRISTINE  
And I'm just as numb... You know, I  
had a bad feeling after the wedding  
when she traveled up to Alaska.

JULIA  
I remember you having reservations.

CHRISTINE

Why, the thank you notes weren't even written out yet, now this...

JULIA

Such a freak accident.

CHRISTINE

Life is precious, Julia! Are you planning to return to LSU in the fall?

JULIA

Well, yes. I have the nursing program to think about.

CHRISTINE

That's right!

Christine's husband, Lynn, turns around. I'd best get back in line. Do come over afterward, we've got so much food! You simply wouldn't believe it...

Julia takes Christine's hand.

JULIA

I must be getting home to my summer job in Squaw Valley. Besides, coming here was hard enough; I can't imagine attending the funeral and burial tomorrow.

CHRISTINE

That's alright, Julia. We appreciate you coming all this way just the same... Have a great semester, and please don't hesitate to call me if you ever need to talk.

They stand up.

JULIA

I will, Mrs. Gladstone.

CHRISTINE

Time heals all wounds.

Taking Julia's hands.

JULIA  
I suppose. But how long does that take?

CHRISTINE  
God only knows.  
(half smiling)

As Christine rejoins the line, Julia quickly exits the funeral home, only to find widower, Joe Coulter, waiting for her outside.

EXT. GARLAND FUNERAL HOME, ASH GROVE, MISSOURI - MOMENTS LATER

Julia now approaches Joe, who is standing under an ash tree. They soon embrace.

JULIA  
Joe. What happened?

JOE  
Well, I was in such a hurry to get to my claim the day it happened.

JULIA  
Claim?

JOE  
Gold claim. Where Seattle Creek empties into Turnagain Arm...

Julia remains confused as Joe continues.

I had a registered claim there to dredge for gold along the shore. Abby and I took a shortcut across the arm at low tide to save time driving into the Kenai Peninsula.

Joe looks over his shoulder at Abby's family filing out of the funeral home.

Then, our jeep got bogged down on the muddy bottom.

JULIA  
That much I do know!

JOE  
Anyway, I was too intent on getting Abby out myself and then hurrying over to the claim.

(MORE)

JOE (CONT'D)  
You know how men are always so  
reluctant to ask for directions?

JULIA  
I do. You were always king of the  
hopelessly independent.  
(sarcastically)

JOE  
As I was saying, the hours passed  
so quickly that morning that by the  
time I ran up to the highway, the  
tide was already approaching her  
waist. The nearest fire department  
was in Girdwood, twenty-five  
minutes away. I had a bystander  
call them from a nearby cafe.

JULIA  
And they arrived...

JOE  
They did, and quickly went to work  
in the freezing water, using a  
highly pressurized hose that  
displaces the glacier mud  
underwater. But by the time they  
attached it to the firetruck, the  
water was up to her nose.

Envisioning the tragic scene.

There was an Alaska State Trooper  
named Greer, who jumped off the  
support boards, desperately trying  
to pull her free. Another rescuer  
joined him, but became so numb he  
could no longer feel his  
extremities. That trooper, Greer,  
was the last one to hold Abby until  
she disappeared beneath the  
surface.

JULIA  
Such a tragedy! I replay it in my  
mind almost every hour! What agony  
she must have endured that day.

JOE  
I remember sitting there on the  
shore, waiting for the tide to ebb,  
so that we could retrieve her body.

Turning away from Julia's intense gaze.

When they brought her out, she  
was...she was as white as any snow.  
I swear, I'll never forget it.

Turning to watch the Gladstones get into their vehicles.

Then, after a funeral director in Anchorage prepared her body for transport to St. Louis, Abby was flown home. I followed her here the following day. I tell you, meeting the Gladstones after I landed was...gut-wrenching.

Choking back the tears.

JULIA  
Oh, Joe, I can only imagine.

JOE  
I can't see how I'll ever be able to forgive myself.

JULIA  
But it wasn't your fault. You mustn't blame yourself. Surely...

JOE  
It was reckless of me. Alaska presents enough danger without attempting to cross the mudflats of Turnagain Arm at low tide.

JULIA  
Turnagain, what?

JOE  
Turnagain Arm; it's a bay just south of Anchorage fed by Cook Inlet and the greater Gulf of Alaska. It has the second-highest tidal flow in all of North America, as much as thirty feet. It's said, and I can attest to it, that if you're out on the flats at low tide and you begin to hear water trickling around your feet, it's already too late to escape the swiftly charging bore tide! Add mud to the mix, and the outcome is almost always, well...fatal.

JULIA  
And just how deep is this mud, anyway?

JOE

It's not the depth, as much as the properties that constitute the stuff. When glaciers grind over the top of bedrock, the ensuing powder, or flour, as it's called, is filled with tiny shards of stone that can act as a vice around almost any boot entering its surface.

JULIA

And that's what happened to Abby?

Joe hangs his head in acknowledgement.  
We'd better get over to the Gladstones.

JOE

You go ahead. I can't face them, not tonight. Tomorrow will be hard enough. Let's get out of here...

JULIA

There's a bistro not far from here. We can get something to eat and drink.

JOE

That sounds good. Come on.

JULIA

You can follow me. Better yet, I'll drive. It'll be easier. Let's go.

They both get into Julia's rental car and drive away into the dwindling light.

INT. UNITED AIRLINES FLIGHT 69 TO RENO, NEVADA - MORNING

Flying home the next day, Julia looks out the window at the dense cloud cover from twenty-five thousand feet to once again reflect on the life of her best friend, Abby.

FADE TO:

EXT. FRESHMAN MOVE-IN DAY, LSU, BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA - AFTERNOON

Eleven months prior: It's Freshman Move-In Day at LSU. An eager Abby Gladstone is assigned to an all-female athlete high-rise located next to the natatorium.

Her three-person room is comprised of two swimmers and a softball player. Abby and her family soon enter the room.

ABBY  
Quick, Pam, grab the top bunk!

PAM  
What?  
(confused)

ABBY  
Climb up the ladder and stay on top!

Pointing out the bunk. Pam looks over to her mother, who nods in approval. She now scales the ladder at the end of the rack and flops down on the bed.

PAM  
Like this? Just like camp!  
(laughing)

ABBY  
I always got the top bed at camp, too, not to mention the Junior Nationals last year!

CHRISTINE  
Tess, start unpacking those boxes over there and put the items on that desk in the corner, in front of the window.

TESSA  
Yes, Mother.

Abby's father now rolls a large bin into the room from the hallway.

CHRISTINE  
Lynn, bring that over to the dresser next to her desk. I'll put her clothes away...

LYNN  
Got it!

ABBY  
Mother, that's not necessary!

CHRISTINE  
The way you keep your bedroom at home, oh, yes, it is! Don't be a stranger to the laundry room.  
(MORE)

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)  
I'm told it's in the basement, and  
free of charge! How are you doing,  
Tess?

TESSA  
I've plugged everything in: the  
lamp, the alarm clock, and the  
cordless phone.

CHRISTINE  
Good. Lynn, you had better return  
that bin. Someone downstairs in the  
lobby may need it.

Lynn rolls the bin out of the room, glad to be free of the  
women. As he's leaving, a roommate and her large family  
suddenly appear at the door.

LYNN  
Hi, I'm Lynn Gladstone.

Acknowledging the roommate's father and shaking hands.

RUSSEL  
Russ Kepler, Fort Smith, Arkansas.  
This is my daughter, Rebecca, and  
my wife, Lynn.

LYNN  
Nice name you've got there, Lynn!  
(laughing)

Rebecca's mother only smiles and slides her way into the  
room, leaving the rest of her family standing in the hallway.  
Do you need a bin?

RUSSEL  
Thanks. They were plum out of them  
down there.

Commandeering the precious cart.

LYNN  
My pleasure. Fort Smith? Let me  
guess, your daughter's a softball  
player...

RUSSEL  
(nodding)  
A pitcher. The SEC is big on  
women's softball. It helps even the  
score where Title IX is concerned.

CHRISTINE

Lynn. Can you help me hang these drapes I made?

LYNN

What's wrong with the existing drapes?

CHRISTINE

For starters, they're filthy. Besides, these will brighten up the room a bit.

LYNN

Alright. Duty calls.

Turning to Russel and grinning. As Lynn begins to work, Russel and his wife begin to unpack.

PAM

Are we almost done? I'm hungry!

TESSA

Me too!

CHRISTINE

Sorry, ladies. This is taking longer than I expected. I'll remember that when you start college, Tess...

TESSA

By that time, I'll be swimming for Kentucky!

CHRISTINE

Tess, leave your sister alone! You'll be saying goodbye to her any minute now.

RUSSEL

Where did you say you're from?

Opening up his toolbox to assemble a floor lamp.

LYNN

Missouri. Southwest of St. Louis. We've got ten hours ahead of us, after stopping to eat...

PAM

Yes!

Looking over at Tess and pumping her fist.

CHRISTINE

Alright, the drapes are done.

ABBY

They look great. Really.

CHRISTINE

Thanks, honey. One more thing to do, then we're out of here!

TESSA

What's that, Mom?

CHRISTINE

I have to make up Abby's bed.

The Gladstone girls render a collective sigh.

ABBY

That's not necessary!

CHRISTINE

(emphatically)

I didn't come all this way and fail to make my oldest daughter's dormitory bed. Pam, you can get down now!

Pam jumps down from the bunk.

Tess, get out the sheets and pillow cases from the footlocker.

After making Abby's top bunk, this fully satisfied mother vacates the crowded room with the rest of the family, surrendering it to the preoccupied Keplers. Outside, the Gladstones give Abby an affectionate kiss and bid her farewell. On the drive home, Christine leans her head against the passenger window, sobbing all the way home at the thought of leaving her eldest child so far away at college.

INT. LSU NATATORIUM, BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA - EVENING

A month later, the LSU men's and women's swimming teams host their annual Purple and Gold Intrasquad Meet. The next event on the program is the 400 medley relay, with sprinter Julia Arden set to leg the foursome in the freestyle. She is the only freshman competing this evening. Contestants have already jumped into the water for the backstroke and are soon ready for the starting horn.

INT. FAIRCHILD DORMITORY, LAUNDRY ROOM, LSU, BATON ROUGE,  
LOUISIANA - EVENING

Abby is sorting out her clothes, just as Julia enters the laundry room.

ABBY  
Well, hello there...!

JULIA  
Hi.

Setting down her clothes basket.

I thought I'd get some laundry done  
before we leave for Stillwater.

ABBY  
Hey, let's sit together on the bus.  
I want to compare notes.

JULIA  
Notes?

ABBY  
Swimming notes!

JULIA  
Ah, I see...

Julia begins to load a washing machine with clothes.

ABBY  
I prefer to keep up with my  
competition.  
(amusingly)  
You're fast!

JULIA  
And so are you...

ABBY  
They don't call the 50 Free a drag  
race for nothing.

Both laugh as Julia pours some laundry detergent into the washer.

JULIA  
Well, alright, I'll ride with you.  
We sprinters need to stick  
together!

ABBY  
Especially, freshman sprinters.  
Right?

JULIA  
Right....!  
(nodding)  
Well, I've got to get back to my  
room. I have an early Biology  
midterm to take tomorrow.

ABBY  
Yuk!

Shoving her forefinger into her mouth.

INT. LSU TEAM BUS, INTERSTATE 49, SOUTH OF SHREVEPORT,  
LOUISIANA - MORNING

After 250 miles of highway, Julia closes her chemistry book  
and sets it next to Abby.

JULIA  
That ought to do it!

ABBY  
Hey, that book is digging into my  
thigh! I'm sorry, but studying  
chemistry that intensely would  
cause my eyeballs to fall out! Just  
do your best....!  
(sighing)

JULIA  
A legendary statesman once  
remarked, uh, I think it was  
Churchill or somebody, that it's  
not enough to do your best, you  
have to do what is necessary.  
Anyway, the nursing program is  
demanding enough and will get  
tougher as time goes on. I want to  
keep my GPA as high as possible  
before the difficult subjects  
begin, like Organic.

ABBY  
Organic. That's Biology, right?

JULIA  
(laughing)  
No. It's chemistry!

ABBY  
More chemistry?

JULIA  
Uh hmm... My grades weren't the best in high school, but my future's at stake here!

ABBY  
Well, I'll stick with my major, thank you...

JULIA  
Sociology?

ABBY  
What's wrong with that?  
(defiantly)

JULIA  
Oh, nothing. It's better than Communications, I guess! Not to change the subject, but I heard that your roommate is leaving school.

ABBY  
You heard it right. Rebecca said she misses her boyfriend at home something fierce and can no longer go on without seeing him every day.

JULIA  
Seriously? I made it a point when I came here to never date anybody while attending college, let alone nursing school.

ABBY  
Hmm.

JULIA  
So, you're in a double now?

ABBY  
You wanna move rooms?

JULIA  
I don't know... You don't seem to be much of a studier.

ABBY  
I don't study in the dorm, only in the library!

JULIA

Well, since that's the case, sure!  
Let me talk to my RA. It shouldn't  
be a problem... Three swimmers in  
one room. Kind of like the Swim  
House off campus!

ABBY

Right! It'll be fun.

They cross the Alabama State Line.

JULIA

So, why did you choose to swim at  
LSU, anyway? You claim to have had  
many other offers. Alabama, right?

ABBY

Yes, and Indiana, Florida, and  
Kentucky.

JULIA

Name dropper.

They both share a good laugh.

Long Beach State, Pepperdine, Cal  
Berkeley, and UNLV were my other  
choices. LSU just felt like the  
right fit, academically.

ABBY

Well, I came here to swim! My  
Mother strongly encouraged it.

JULIA

And why was that? My God, Indiana  
and Florida are two of the best  
programs in the country.

Abby turns from the window as if to impart something  
insightful.

ABBY

When I visited here with my Mother,  
a champion high school swimming  
coach in her own right, she was  
impressed by Coach Fielding.

JULIA

In what way?

The bus begins to slow down to make a scheduled lunch stop.

ABBY

Good. We're getting ready to stop. I'm famished! Anyway, with my Mother looking on, Coach Fielding said, that while he couldn't teach me anymore about my technique, since I was already the fastest seventeen-year-old in the nation at the time, he would school me on my mental approach to the blocks during my Freshman year, and, by the time I'm a Senior, the final crawl to the touchpad. That way, I'd be ready in time for the U.S. Trials, just before the Summer Olympics in Barcelona.

JULIA

Hmm. Who knew? Wow, I never got that pitch.

ABBY

Well...

JULIA

But you did! Ask me if I'm impressed.

The bus now pulls into a Shoney's Restaurant in Shreveport.

ABBY

Are you impressed?  
(grinning)

Young Californian, Julia Arden, fakes a southern accent while batting her eyes.

JULIA

Why, I certainly am!

Drawing stares from the upperclassmen exiting the bus, Abby and Julia, immersed in laughter, now file out behind them.

INT. COWGIRL INVITATIONAL, STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA - EVENING

The Cowgirl Invitational is being held on the campus of Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma, on September 20-22, 1985. The following women's swimming teams participating in the three-day event include Tennessee, Auburn, Kansas State, Kentucky, LSU, Oklahoma State, Arkansas, Colorado State, and Northern Iowa. Abby and Julia locate a copy of today's program in the locker room.

Both are surprised to learn that they will be swimming in the 200-meter Freestyle Relay at 5:10 pm. During this event, Abby and two other LSU participants later crowd around the starting block, waiting for Julia to finish her leg. While LSU places fifth in this event, Abby has the second-best time overall and the best split time of the entire field.

REMINISCENCE END

INT. ALASKA AIRLINES FLIGHT 99 TO ANCHORAGE, ALASKA - MORNING

Returning to Eagle River after Christine Gladstone's funeral, Joe recalls the early months of his relationship with Abby while gazing out the window at the snowcapped peaks of the St. Elias Mountain Range.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GUADALAJARA SWIMMING INVITATIONAL, GUADALAJARA, MEXICO - AFTERNOON

Abby stands on the awards platform with three other LSU teammates on January 22, 1986, as they receive their silver medals for the 400-meter Medley Relay, comprising one hundred meters of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle. In addition to their medals, each is presented with a bouquet of dahlias arranged by a local florist. Julia and other members of the LSU swim team look on while applauding the recipients.

EXT. LSU NATATORIUM PARKING LOT, BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA - DUSK

The following day, Joe Coulter is sitting in his Jeep while parked outside the LSU Natatorium. He is waiting for Abby, who is returning from a weeklong contest at the Guadalajara Intercollegiate Tournament in Mexico.

Joe locates the Moody Blues' CD *The Present* in his console and places it into his Dolby player while waiting for her to arrive. The song *Behind the Wheel* begins to play, causing him to smile. The buses from the airport soon appear and make their way through campus to the Natatorium. Abby and Julia now appear outside with elaborate Mexican hats hanging down their backs, as they wait for their baggage to emerge from the storage hold.

ABBY  
I'll catch up with you, Julia. Joe  
may want to eat before the  
cafeteria closes.

JULIA  
(glowering)  
Can I at least take your bag with  
me? I'll set it on your bed.

ABBY  
Thanks. Joe, over here!

Waiving her arms. Joe exits the car and approaches the pair.

JOE  
Bye, Julia!

Now directing his attention to his girlfriend.  
How was your trip?

ABBY  
(smiling)  
It was great! We took in plenty of  
sunshine at Guadalajara's outdoor  
swimming complex. Very  
professional, I must say...

Taking his hand.  
You must be hungry! Come on, we'll  
hit the 459. I still have money  
left over from my trip.

JOE  
Great. I ate at a Waffle House in  
Cape Girardeau around ten this  
morning, but haven't had anything  
since...

ABBY  
Poor baby!

JOE  
Sure, you probably had food on the  
plane!

Abby laughs as they enter the 459 Dining Hall and stop at the counter to purchase a meal pass. Once inside, they select their entrées and beverages, slide their trays onto a nearby dining table, and begin to eat. Moments pass. Joe is now seen having a rather animated discussion with Abby.

ABBY  
Alaska?

Later, back at the dorm, Abby and Joe's bare feet are sticking out of the top bunk, while Julia, wide awake, plugs her ears below.

INT. GLADSTONE RESIDENCE, MOUNTAIN GROVE, MISSOURI - DAY

One week later, Christine Gladstone opens a letter from daughter, Abby. In it is a clipping from the *Bayou Buzz*, the LSU Athletic Department's weekly newsletter. Biting her lower lip as she reads, Tessa soon comes downstairs into the kitchen.

CHRISTINE

Your sister received a silver medal in Guadalajara for the 400-meter Medley Relay. Shall I read the article to you?

TESSA

No thanks! Where is Guadalajara, anyway?

CHRISTINE

It's in Mexico, silly. I'm told they have quite the swimming and diving complex down there...

TESSA

It's probably one of those short pools!

(giggling)

Christine appears flustered.

CHRISTINE

Well, if you won't read it, then I'll read it for you!

TESSA

Go right ahead, I won't be listening.

CHRISTINE

Very well...

Adjusting her glasses.

Headline: Lady Tigers Bring Home Silver at the Guadalajara Intercollegiate Tournament  
Dateline: January 22, 1986  
Guadalajara, Mexico

(MORE)

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)  
The LSU Lady Tigers won silver in  
the 400-meter Medley Relay at the  
Guadalajara Intercollegiate  
Tournament in Mexico today.

Christine scans down to the final paragraph.  
Freshman Abby Gladstone (Mountain  
Grove, MO, Mountain Grove HS)  
finished the relay in blazing  
speed, resulting in a combined time  
of 4:08.05. Miss Gladstone turned  
in a similar performance in the 200-  
meter Freestyle Relay at the  
Cowgirl Invitational in Stillwater  
last September.  
Look, there's even a picture of her  
on the awards podium. My, what  
lovely flowers they received!

Tessa runs up the stairs and slams her door.  
Hey! Take it easy up there! If  
you're lucky, I'll be getting the  
same clippings from you next year.  
(shouting)  
So, be happy for your sister for  
once, Tess!

TESSA  
(yelling)  
I'll be happy for her when I'm a  
star swimmer at Kentucky!

Christine gets up and posts the article on the refrigerator  
under an LSU Tiger magnet, with Abby's image plainly visible  
for all to see.

INT. COULTER RESIDENCE, EAGLE RIVER, ALASKA - AFTERNOON

Fifteen-year-old Gracie Coulter is seated on her bed with a  
scrapbook belonging to her father, Joe. There, she makes an  
astonishing discovery. Unaware of his previous marriage, she  
comes across a wedding photo of Abby Gladstone, dated June 7,  
1986. In the pages to follow, she finds a dried bridal  
arrangement of hydrangeas entwined with honeysuckle, a  
nuptial program, and a souvenir napkin embossed with the  
names Abby and Joe. But, perhaps the most troubling keepsake  
of all is an article from the *Spokane Chronicle*, dated July  
17, 1986, titled *Alaska's Deadly Mud Flats Trap 18-Year-Old  
Newlywed*. Opposite this article is a sheet of paper  
containing lyrics to a song Gracie's never heard before.

GRACIE  
(in voiceover)  
Once upon a time  
Once when you were mine  
I remember skies  
Reflected in your eyes  
I wonder where you are  
I wonder if you think about me  
Once upon a time  
In your wildest dreams...

Alarmed at the realization that Abby could well have been her mother, Gracie closes the scrapbook, suddenly anxious to question her father.

**SEQUENCE**

EXT. SEWARD HIGHWAY, PORTAGE, ALASKA - MORNING

Joe crosses over the Twentymile River while driving on Seward Highway, just north of Portage, at the head of Turnagain Arm. His newlywed bride, Abby, suddenly straightens up in her seat to take in the enormous glaciers surrounding this slate-gray forty-five-mile body of water on their left. So moved by the beauty this moment affords, she instinctively reaches for Joe's hand. As they make their way up the valley towards Anchorage, the Moody Blues' latest song, *Your Wildest Dreams*, accompanies this scene courtesy of the Dolby player hidden beneath the dash.

**SEQUENCE ENDED**

Returning home late from work one night, Joe pulls onto Dawn Street, where Gracie is waiting for him in the driveway, holding a flashlight.

JOE  
Is everything alright?

GRACIE  
We need to talk, Dad.

Joe gathers his coat and follows his daughter into the house.

INT. COULTER RESIDENCE, EAGLE RIVER, ALASKA - LATER

Before long, Joe climbs the stairs and enters Gracie's bedroom, closing the door behind him. He immediately spots his scrapbook lying open on her bed.

GRACIE

Why didn't you tell me you were married before?

JOE

Does your mother know you found that scrapbook?

GRACIE

No, but she's noticed I've been quiet for the past few days...

Dropping her eyes on the book.

JOE

Since you found...

GRACIE

Why did I have to find out this way?

Holding up the keepsake, causing a shiny blue matchbook to fall out onto her quilt.

And what's this, Dad?

(baffled)

It says, J & T...

JOE

Please put that back!

(flustered)

It's a matchbook from Aunt Julia and Uncle Tim's wedding...

Looking over at Gracie's clock radio.

Look, it's late. I suggest we discuss this tomorrow after I get home from work. Okay?

GRACIE

(sighing)

Okay...

JOE

I promise to tell you everything you want to know. I'll build a fire out back, and we can...talk. Come on, put the book down and get some sleep. I'll see you in the morning.

GRACIE

Alright.

(resigned)

Gracie returns the matchbook to its rightful place and sets the album down on her nightstand. As her father tucks her in, he draws the top sheet and quilt tightly up to her chin, and bids her a fond goodnight.

INT. COULTER RESIDENCE, EAGLE RIVER, ALASKA - THE NEXT DAY

The following morning, Joe and his wife, Stephanie, are seated at the kitchen table having their morning coffee. With school over for the summer, Gracie and her brothers gratefully sleep in. A quiet pause settles in between the two. Eventually, Joe speaks, albeit hesitantly.

JOE  
(hesitating)  
Gracie found my scrapbook...

STEPHANIE  
So that's why she's been acting so funny! Oh, dear, so she knows...?

JOE  
She knows about Abby and her death. I cut her short last night due to the time. But I promised her that we would talk tonight. I thought I'd make a fire out back so we'd have some time alone to talk about it. She's curious, that's all...

STEPHANIE  
True... But I don't know what perspective a fifteen-year-old can bring to the conversation. I was hoping to give it a few more years. I'm just surprised she hasn't heard it already on the school bus.

Getting up.

Practically everyone in Eagle River remembers what happened to...

JOE  
Stephanie, please! I have an entire shift ahead of me to supervise.

STEPHANIE  
You're right. Would you like some toast? I'm putting some in for me.

JOE  
Sure.  
(somberly)

## STEPHANIE

I just thought one of the parents  
would have said something by now,  
causing the children to, you know,  
tease.

Joe remains quiet.

Sorry, I brought it up...

## JOE

(regrettably)

No need, honey. No need.

Stephanie brings the toast over to the table and proceeds to butter the pieces before pushing two of them to her husband.

Thanks! If Gracie wants to know  
everything, I'll tell her  
everything. But, carefully. In a  
way that any young person would  
understand.

Joe looks at his watch and quickly dispatches his toast and coffee before kissing Stephanie and leaving for work.

See you later!

INT. COULTER RESIDENCE, EAGLE RIVER, ALASKA - LATER

Gracie awakens and rolls over onto her side before reaching for the scrapbook on her nightstand. Finding the errant matches still in place, she reads Aunt Julia's wedding invitation preserved on the same page.

## GRACIE

(in voiceover)

Mr. and Mrs. Richard J. Arden  
request the pleasure of your  
company at the marriage of their  
daughter Julia Lynn to First  
Lieutenant Timothy Michael  
Buranich, U.S. Army, on Saturday,  
the tenth of June nineteen hundred  
ninety-five at two o'clock in the  
afternoon at The Chapel of Our  
Lady, Presidio of San Francisco, 45  
Moraga Ave, San Francisco, CA.  
Reception to follow at the  
Officers' Club.

Running her fingers across the invitation's raised calligraphy, Gracie now turns the page. On the reverse side, she finds a laminated St. Francis prayer card containing the name Timothy M. Buranich and an obituary.

Long Beach Press-Telegram, Friday,  
April 30, 2004  
First Lieutenant Timothy M.  
Buranich, U.S. Army, was killed in  
action during the Battle of  
Fallujah on April 28, when the M2  
Bradley he was driving ran over an  
improvised explosive device,  
killing him and injuring three  
others. He was a member of the 2nd  
Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment  
from Fort Benning, GA. Lieutenant  
Buranich was a graduate of Long  
Beach State University. He is  
survived by his wife of 8 years,  
the former Julia Arden, of Long  
Beach, as well as his parents,  
Michael J. and Patricia Buranich,  
of Anaheim; brothers Richard T.  
(Joan) and Glenn P. (Angela), both  
of Newport Beach and a sister,  
Joann (Lawrence) Briggs of Los  
Angeles, several nieces and  
nephews. Visiting hours, scheduled  
for Thursday, May 6, from 4 to 8:00  
pm, will be held at Luyben  
Mortuary, 5161 E. Arbor Road, Long  
Beach, CA. A rite of Christian  
Burial will be held at the Church  
of the Holy Innocents in Long Beach  
on Friday, May 7, at 11:00 am.  
Burial to follow, with full  
military honors, at Forest Lawn  
Cemetery. In lieu of flowers,  
donations may be made to the  
American Red Cross.  
Luyben Dilday Mortuary

INT. TRIDENT SEAFOOD, PROCESSING LINE NO. 5, ANCHORAGE,  
ALASKA - DAY

Like the workers he supervises, Joe walks processing line number five at Trident Seafood, dressed in protective rain gear, rubber boots, waterproof pants, gloves, safety goggles, and a face shield. Today, the line he's supervising is busy packing frozen Pacific Cod. Joe is now approached by a front office superior. During the morning break, he calls home, where Stephanie soon picks up in the kitchen.

JOE  
Hi, it's me.

STEPHANIE

What's up?

JOE

We have a large load of cod coming in this afternoon, and I've been asked to supervise an additional shift.

STEPHANIE

Well, we sure could use the overtime, my being off all summer!

JOE

I know, but I promised Gracie that she and I would talk tonight.

STEPHANIE

Oh, that's right. I just heard her getting up... I'm sure she'll understand.

JOE

Still...

(hesitating)

A loud bang echoes in the plant.

STEPHANIE

What was that?

JOE

A forklift accidentally dropped a crate of snow crab on the line next to us. Oh, boy...!

(cringing)

Anyway...

STEPHANIE

Leave it to me, Joe. If she poses questions that I don't know the answers to, which are few, you can address them with her tomorrow. I'm perfectly capable, you know!

JOE

You're right. Thanks, babe. See you tonight.

STEPHANIE

Bye, Joe, and be safe in there.

Joe looks at his watch and returns to the processing line, now able to put in two shifts.

INT. LONG BEACH MEDICAL CENTER, HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE, LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA - MORNING

Julia knocks on the half-opened door belonging to her Human Resources Officer for a scheduled appointment.

JULIA  
Is this still a good time?

Setting aside his work, Roger stands and greets his longtime executive nurse.

ROGER  
It sure is! Come in, come in.

Roger shakes Julia's hand, and both sit down.  
How are you, Julia?

JULIA  
I'm fine. As busy as ever!

ROGER  
How I know!

Letting out a deep breath.  
So, what brings you here? Is  
everything alright with your staff?

JULIA  
Oh, yes. Everything's fine.  
(hesitant)  
I believe I'm in need of a change,  
Roger...

ROGER  
(sympathetically)  
That's understandable given your  
situation.

Julia looks away.  
After all, it's been five years...

JULIA  
I agree. I have no ties to speak of  
in Long Beach, with the exception  
of this hospital.

Rising to announce her intention.  
I'm thinking maybe a year with  
Mercy Ships or Doctors Without  
Borders would suffice...

ROGER

I see. I can certainly reach out to their recruiting departments, if you like.

Julia sits back down.

JULIA

I'd like that. Thank you.

ROGER

I remember Kate Riley inquiring about something similar a few years ago. She ended up with a group called Nurses Without...no, that's not right. What was that group? They're up in Marina del Rey. Maybe it's Nursing, uh, something!

JULIA

I can find out...

ROGER

There's also the Nurse Corps, run by HHS, which serves areas of the country with limited access to healthcare. They have a repayment program. Are you still paying off any college loans?

JULIA

I was on an athletic scholarship while attending LSU...

ROGER

That's right!

JULIA

But after graduation, I went for my nurse practitioner's degree at Cal State Fullerton. After years of deferment, the last time I checked, I still owed a little over sixteen thousand dollars.

ROGER

I'm sure the corps would pay that off. They generally require a two-year commitment.

JULIA

In the boonies, I suppose!  
(laughing)

ROGER

True! But there are literally  
thousands of HPSA sites all over  
the country.

JULIA

Except Hawaii!

ROGER

There may be a few there, too.

(chuckling)

You'd be surprised, Julia! Tell you  
what, if you're interested in  
taking a two-year leave to serve in  
the corps, I'll, ah, provide you  
with a list of qualified HPSA  
locations and we'll go from there.

Julia nods in agreement.

JULIA

I'd like that very much.

(halting)

Okay! Great!

Getting up to leave, Roger takes his cue and stands.  
Thank you, Roger.

ROGER

Not at all. I'll be in touch.

Julia leaves the office and returns to the emergency  
department.

INT. COULTER RESIDENCE, EAGLE RIVER, ALASKA - MOMENTS LATER

Gracie comes down from her bedroom and enters the kitchen.  
She reaches into the cupboard for her favorite cereal, grabs  
a bowl and spoon, swings open the refrigerator door for a  
carton of milk, and sits down at the table, just as her  
mother is coming out of the pantry.

STEPHANIE

There you are! How does it feel to  
sleep in?

Squeezing her shoulder affectionately.

GRACIE

It's great, Mom.

STEPHANIE

I heard you had a conversation with  
your Father last night.

GRACIE

About his first wife? Abby?  
(curtly)

Suddenly catching Stephanie off guard.

STEPHANIE

Well...yes!

GRACIE

Honestly, Mom, I had no idea!

STEPHANIE

Your Father and I discussed the  
matter earlier this morning. We  
were just waiting for you to get  
older, that's all. Besides, it was  
a painful time for Dad...

GRACIE

Painful? Can you imagine my shock  
finding out about Abby Gladstone?

STEPHANIE

Scrapbooks, where adults are  
concerned, are private, young lady!  
You simply shouldn't be snooping  
around in places where you don't  
belong. Besides, your Father and I  
have tried to shield you from  
sensational details you're far too  
young to fathom...

Gracie drops her spoon into the bowl.

GRACIE

Try me!

STEPHANIE

Alright!

Beginning to sob quietly.

Dad was asked to work overtime. He  
called me, all worried that you'd  
be disappointed if he agreed, since  
you were going to talk out back  
tonight.

GRACIE

He did?

(surprised)

STEPHANIE

(shrieking)

Of course, he did!

GRACIE

(upset)

Oh, Mom, please don't cry.

Now pleading with her mother.

STEPHANIE

Your Father loves you very much, Gracie, and is as concerned as I am about you learning the fate of...of Abby Gladstone. So, I told him not to worry, that I'd, uh, answer any questions you may have today. And, if I don't know the answer to specific questions, Dad said he would take them up with you face-to-face tomorrow.

Sitting down across from her daughter.

(ardently)

Look, as a woman and as your mother, I'm probably better able to explain events as they happened. Unpleasant as they may be for you. Okay?

GRACIE

Okay.

(submissively)

STEPHANIE

We'll talk over lunch on the patio. Say, one o'clock. I'll make something good. And please, don't let on to your brothers about this.

GRACIE

I won't. I promise. I'm so sorry, Mom...

Gracie gets up from the table and places her bowl in the sink before sheepishly returning upstairs.

INT. LONG BEACH MEDICAL CENTER, EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT, LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA - LATER

Eating lunch at her desk, Julia checks her email. She soon opens a message from Roger containing an attached list of HPSA sites currently seeking qualified medical professionals. Inspired, Julia suddenly takes great interest in one site in particular.

JULIA  
(in voiceover)  
AK - Anchorage Borough, **Girdwood Health Clinic**, providing medical services to the Turnagain Arm communities of Girdwood, Hope, Bird Creek, Indian, Sunrise, and Portage.

She now replies to Roger's email as follows:

Please forward my name and CV to the HPSA site operating in Girdwood, AK. To the boonies, I go!  
Thank you.

EXT. COULTER RESIDENCE, EAGLE RIVER, ALASKA - AFTERNOON

Gracie comes downstairs, where she is summoned to the outdoor patio. She now steps out of the house.

STEPHANIE  
Out here, Gracie!

GRACIE  
This looks lovely.

Sitting down to a meal of chicken salad on croissants, mixed fruit, and iced tea.

STEPHANIE  
I thought we'd eat first and talk later.

GRACIE  
That sounds great!

Helping herself to a sandwich.

STEPHANIE  
So, anything more from the Youth Employment Program?

GRACIE

Yeah. It's down to either staying on at Chugiak Pool for the summer or flower maintenance at Turner Park. I prefer to work outdoors, so I guess Turner Park is my choice.

STEPHANIE

I would let the office know today.

GRACIE

I will.

STEPHANIE

When would you start?

GRACIE

Next week, July fifth. Turner Park has better hours, eight to four, with a lunch break. I'd make more money as a lifeguard at the pool, but hey!

Reaching for another sandwich.

STEPHANIE

These are good, aren't they?

GRACIE

They are. I don't know why I'm so hungry!

STEPHANIE

Somehow, fresh chicken tastes better than canned. Pass the fruit.

Gracie passes the bowl to her mother, but not before helping herself to some of it.

Let's get down to business, shall we?

GRACIE

Alright.

STEPHANIE

Ask me anything. And, like I said before, if I don't know the answer...

GRACIE

How did they meet?

STEPHANIE

Well, your Father was from Sennet,  
which is the next town over from  
Mountain Grove, where Abby was  
from.

GRACIE

In Missouri?

STEPHANIE

Yes, just outside of St. Louis.  
Your Father said they met in a  
local grocery store where Abby was  
working.

GRACIE

So, they began dating?

STEPHANIE

I suppose... Anyway, it couldn't  
have been more than a couple of  
months since Abby left home to  
attend LSU that August.

GRACIE

They graduated from high school the  
same year?

STEPHANIE

Yes.

GRACIE

But Dad never went to college.

STEPHANIE

No, he didn't. Oh, he regrets it  
now, but he's doing alright for  
himself. Between us, we earn a  
decent salary. Not to mention what  
we get from the Permanent Fund. But  
you're going to college, young  
lady!

GRACIE

So...this Abbey went to LSU?

STEPHANIE

Yes. In Baton Rouge.

GRACIE

Louisiana, right?

STEPHANIE

Right. It's about a ten-hour drive from Mountain Grove.

GRACIE

Yikes!

STEPHANIE

Oh, it'll be just as long a drive if you attend the state university in Fairbanks...

GRACIE

Okay, so Abby goes off to LSU on a swimming scholarship?

STEPHANIE

Yes. Her mother was the swimming coach at the high school she attended. She was heavily recruited by Indiana, Florida, Kentucky, and, uh, let's see...and Alabama, among other schools.

GRACIE

What was her event? I'm friends with swimmers at school.

STEPHANIE

I believe she was a sprinter.

GRACIE

So, she was fast...

STEPHANIE

Very! Your Father told me she was the fastest seventeen-year-old woman swimmer in the country before signing with LSU.

GRACIE

How tall was she?

STEPHANIE

Oh, about five-two, I'd guess by her pictures.

GRACIE

More pictures?

STEPHANIE

Yes!

GRACIE  
(timidly)  
May I see them sometime?

STEPHANIE  
Sure, as long as you ask.  
(poignantly)

GRACIE  
Don't worry, I've learned my  
lesson...! She only stayed at LSU  
for one year?

STEPHANIE  
Sadly, yes. Your Father, eager to  
start a life with her, proposed,  
and they were married shortly after  
the NCAA Swimming Championships  
that year.

GRACIE  
Did they get married in Missouri?

STEPHANIE  
No. Carson City, Nevada. Her  
parents were furious! First, that  
she quit LSU, and second, that she  
decided to get married in Nevada,  
instead of her hometown. At Joe's,  
uh...I mean, your Father's  
insistence. Then, they traveled up  
to Alaska, where he owned this  
house...

GRACIE  
Abby lived here, in this house?  
(surprised)

STEPHANIE  
Oh, it was a different structure  
then, to be sure, but in the main  
part of the house, yes!

GRACIE  
And that never bothered you?

STEPHANIE  
At first, it did. But with the  
additions we made, and the enlarged  
kitchen, I don't know... Your  
Father and I have made a life  
together here, with three beautiful  
children!

(MORE)

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)  
Eagle River is our home, and it  
doesn't get much better than  
that...

Gracie gets up from the table.  
Where are you going?

GRACIE  
I have to pee. I'll be right back.

She soon returns to the table.  
Where were we?

STEPHANIE  
This house. You asked if Abby  
living here caused me any angst.

GRACIE  
Yeah. So, Dad and Abby came up here  
after their wedding. How long were  
they married?

STEPHANIE  
One month.

Drawing a blank stare from Gracie.  
You saw her bridal photo?

GRACIE  
Yes...

STEPHANIE  
Well, she was married on...June 7,  
1986, and she, she died a little  
over one month later on July 15.

GRACIE  
Five weeks.

STEPHANIE  
Just five weeks.

Taking a sip of her iced tea.

GRACIE  
I know she died in Turnagain Arm,  
but where?

STEPHANIE  
As your Father tells it, Seattle  
Creek, where it empties into the  
Arm.

Gracie appears confused.

It's on the other side of Turnagain Arm, opposite where the Seward Highway crosses over the Twentymile River... Near Portage!

GRACIE

I see...

STEPHANIE

You're probably curious about how Abby died.

GRACIE

Well, yes.

Sitting up in her patio chair.

STEPHANIE

Gracie, what I'm about to tell you is what your Father conveyed to me. And, I want this to stay with you for now. You are not to tell your brothers yet. Understood?

Gracie nods her head while her mother takes in a deep breath.

Well, your Father was in a hurry that morning to get to his claim, near Seattle Creek, where he had a permit to dredge for gold along the shore. He decided to take a shortcut across the arm at low tide to save time driving through the upper Kenai Peninsula. Once they got out onto the floor of Turnagain Arm, his Jeep became bogged down in the muddy surface. So, young Abby jumped out to push. At last, freeing the vehicle, she attempted to rejoin your Father, but her boots became stuck in the mud from all the exertion she used to push him out. Anyway, he got out of the Jeep and tried and tried to free her, but in that glacier mud, one can become so easily mired that it's close to impossible to escape its grasp! You've probably noticed the many danger signs along Seward Highway.

GRACIE

I have...

Suddenly, more serious.

STEPHANIE

Dad said the hours passed so quickly that morning that by the time he ran up to the highway to get help, the tide was approaching her waist.

Gracie covers her mouth.

GRACIE

My God!

STEPHANIE

The nearest fire department was in Girdwood, twenty minutes away. A driver witnessing the struggle agreed to call emergency services from a cafe up the road.

Observing her daughter closely.

Are you going to be alright, honey?  
Maybe this is too much for you...

GRACIE

Please continue, Mom.  
(crying)

STEPHANIE

When the Girdwood Fire Department arrived, they went to work above the freezing water on floatable support boards using a highly pressurized underwater hose that quickly removes glacier mud surrounding a victim's feet. But by the time this hose was finally attached to the fire truck, the tide had risen to Abby's neck.

Sensing her daughter's alarm.

Okay, I'm going to stop here!

GRACIE

I'm fine, Mom. I am!  
(defiantly)

STEPHANIE

But honey, you're trembling...

GRACIE

I'm good!

STEPHANIE

Alright! But I'm going to be quick  
about it.

GRACIE

I'm good!

Stephanie now reaches across the table, joining hands with Gracie.

STEPHANIE

A state trooper who was at the scene then jumped off the support boards into the water, desperately trying to free her. Another rescuer joined him and apparently became so numb that he could no longer feel his extremities and was soon pulled from the water. With the tide now over her nose and gaining quickly, that lone rescuer, the trooper, was the last one to hold Abby until the freezing water ultimately rushed over her head, causing her to vanish beneath the surface.

Crushing Gracie's knuckles.

Such a tragedy! Dad says he remembers sitting on shore waiting for the tide to go out so that her body could be retrieved.

(drained)

I'm almost done...

GRACIE

Alright, I'm ready, Mom.  
(bravely)

STEPHANIE

Very well. He said that when emergency services finally brought Abby out of the flats and onto the shore...

(now whispering)

She was, as your Father described it...as white as any snow! These were his very words.

Mother and daughter fall silent until Gracie finally gets up to clear the table.

GRACIE

I've got this, Mom...

She soon departs the patio with an armful of dishes, leaving her emotionally spent mother in far worse condition than herself.

EXT. COULTER RESIDENCE, EAGLE RIVER, ALASKA - NIGHT

Joe pulls into the driveway after his twin shift, where Gracie, holding her flashlight, soon approaches him to tightly wrap her arms around his drooping neck.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GIRDWOOD HEALTH CLINIC, GIRDWOOD, ALASKA - MORNING

Weeks later, Julia approaches Turnagain Arm for the first time while taking in the breathtaking Chugach Mountains that surround this infamous body of water. Driving the 3500 miles alone from Long Beach, she makes a right turn onto Alyeska Highway, just north of Portage, until reaching Glacier Creek, where she takes a left. Hired only weeks ago, Julia pulls into the Girdwood Health Clinic parking lot to be sure of its location, eager to begin work tomorrow as a Nurse Practitioner in this remote, federally-designated Health Professional Shortage Area, nestled deep in the wilds of Southeastern Alaska.

INT. GIRDWOOD HEALTH CLINIC, GIRDWOOD, ALASKA - THE NEXT DAY

Julia enters the front door of the Girdwood Health Clinic and immediately reports to the reception desk. This facility, shared with the U.S. Post Office, consists of a series of interconnected trailers.

JULIA

Hi, I'm Julia Buranich, the new Nurse Practitioner.

IRIS

Oh, yes, welcome to Girdwood, Ms. Buranich.

JULIA

Why, thank you!

IRIS

Our personnel director slash chief nurse, Margaret Stastny, stepped out for a minute, but she'll be right back. It's a small town, so she doesn't have far to go!

JULIA  
So I've noticed.

IRIS  
By the way, I'm Iris.

JULIA  
You have a lovely name, Iris.

IRIS  
Well, thank you there, Julia.

They shake hands.

Where are you staying?

JULIA  
I'm renting a chalet up the valley,  
across from Moose Meadow, near the  
ski resort. On Aspen Mountain Road.

IRIS  
How wonderful! You'll have a  
beautiful view of Mount Alyeska  
from there!

JULIA  
I know! So very different than Long  
Beach.

The front door opens.

IRIS  
Margaret, this is Julia Buranich.

Margaret gives Julia the once-over and takes her hand.

MARGARET  
Welcome! We've been waiting for  
you. Your resume is most  
impressive. We don't get someone  
like you every day. We're used to,  
uh...

JULIA  
Graduates fresh out of college and  
wet behind the ears.

MARGARET  
Yes! How did you know?

JULIA  
I supervise ER nurses in a large  
hospital setting, many of them new  
to the field.

MARGARET

That's right. Well, it's different here. You'll find out. Come on back to my office and we'll talk some more. Then I'll show you around the clinic and introduce you to the staff.

Julia follows her to the back of the trailer.

IRIS

Welcome aboard, Julia.

JULIA

Thank you, Iris.

INT. GIRDWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT, GIRDWOOD, ALASKA - AFTERNOON

A pickup truck pulls into the parking lot of the Girdwood Fire Station. The driver exits the vehicle, passes through the open garage doors, and walks to the back of the building to the Chief's office.

CHARLIE

Hey, Will, how are you?

WILL

You old dog, you. Come on in! Take a seat.

CHARLIE

I don't mind if I do.

Still fascinated by the wall of awards and mementos mounted behind Will's desk, mostly from his career with the Alaska State Police.

WILL

So, what's news? You know everything that goes on around here. I swear, Charlie, if you lived in New York, you'd know everything there, too...

CHARLIE

I'm retired, remember.

Yuckking it up.

I ran into Bruce a minute ago at the post office, and he tells me we have a new nurse in town. From California... Southern California, at that.

WILL  
You don't say?

CHARLIE  
She's forty-two, drives a new Land  
Rover, and is quite the looker.

WILL  
And how would Bruce Larsen know?

Leaning back in his chair and stretching.

CHARLIE  
Why, Iris Stebbins, that's how...

WILL  
A new Land Rover, you say?

CHARLIE  
With California plates!

Will changes the subject.

WILL  
Hey, how are the Fourth of July  
festivities coming along?

CHARLIE  
Good, good. We have another meeting  
on Thursday. You should come!

WILL  
I just might do that! What time?

CHARLIE  
Seven o'clock, over at the Gerrish  
Library.

WILL  
You know, I'm still impressed with  
that building every time I see it,  
particularly on those swarthy  
winter nights...

CHARLIE  
Thanks, Will!

WILL  
For what?  
(blankly)

CHARLIE  
My work on the building committee!

WILL

That's right...! You're a  
distinguished member of this  
community, Charlie, and don't you  
forget it!

CHARLIE

Likewise.

Getting up from his chair.

So, are you going to follow up on  
Bruce's intel regarding our new  
nurse?

WILL

I might...

Charlie touches the bill of his Last Frontier baseball cap  
and walks back through the station house, leaving this busy  
Fire Chief to his work.

EXT. COULTER RESIDENCE, EAGLE RIVER, ALASKA - EVENING

Julia turns onto Dawn Street and soon pulls into the  
Coulter's driveway. Toting a gift bag up the front steps, she  
rings the doorbell.

STEPHANIE

That must be Julia! Gracie, quick,  
get the door!

Gracie rolls off the couch and onto the floor before getting  
up and opening the door. There, she finds Aunt Julia waiting  
on the porch.

GRACIE

Aunt Julia?

JULIA

You must be Gracie. I hardly  
recognize you, you're getting so  
old. Why, the last time I saw you,  
you were just a toddler.

She bends and gently kisses Gracie's cheek. Stephanie now  
arrives at the door.

STEPHANIE

Julia. Come in. Let me get a look  
at you. Still the prettiest nurse  
in California! Joe! Julia's here.

JOE  
(bellowing)  
I'll be right in! I'm lighting the  
grill.

Under his breath and out of earshot.  
These things don't happen all by  
themselves...

STEPHANIE  
And this is Gracie.

JULIA  
I told her when she answered the  
door that I hadn't seen her since  
she was a toddler.

STEPHANIE  
I know, at your wedding! She's  
grown into quite the young lady.

GRACIE  
(embarrassed)  
Oh, Mom!

JULIA  
Where are the boys?

STEPHANIE  
They left for scouting camp on  
Monday, for two weeks on Mirror  
Lake.

Julia holds up the gift bag.

JULIA  
Something for the house.

Stephanie pulls a bottle out of the bag.

STEPHANIE  
Cabernet Sauvignon.

JULIA  
From Napa.

STEPHANIE  
So I see.

JULIA  
Oh, and I stuck a fine white in  
there just in case you're having  
fish.

STEPHANIE  
Salmon, in fact. Cohos are in  
season.

JULIA  
I know! I saw so many people  
casting their lines into Bird Creek  
today on my way up. That water  
looked incredibly cold.

STEPHANIE  
Freezing. It comes off the melting  
snows in the Chugach.

JULIA  
I'm learning fast for a California  
girl!  
(humorously)

STEPHANIE  
Come on into the kitchen with me. I  
have to check the rice. Gracie, can  
you set the table?

GRACIE  
On the patio?

STEPHANIE  
That's the plan if the weather  
holds. Thank you.

Gracie passes her father as he walks into the kitchen.

JOE  
Julia!

JULIA  
Joe.

Kissing him.

Your kitchen is lovely. So sensible  
- and spacious.

STEPHANIE  
Joe added it onto the old house  
right after we were married. Do you  
like it?

JULIA  
It's beautiful...

Admiring the provincial cupboards, handsome appliances,  
burnished pots and pans, and tall casement windows.  
Absolutely wonderful!

JOE  
How much longer on the rice?

STEPHANIE  
Oh, you can put the salmon on now.  
I'll keep it warm on the stove.  
That reminds me...

Opening the double-wide refrigerator and removing the spinach salad and coleslaw she prepared earlier in the afternoon.  
What would you like to drink,  
Julia?

JULIA  
I'll have some wine. Anything red.

JOE  
I already have some bottles opened up. I'll pour you a glass. Then, I'll put on the salmon steaks.

He now stops himself before departing the kitchen.  
You look great, Julia...

JULIA  
Why, thank you, Joe.

Batting her eyes before catching sight of Stephanie.

EXT. PATIO, COULTER RESIDENCE, EAGLE RIVER, ALASKA - MOMENTS LATER

Joe slides the salmon steaks off the platter and onto the grill, just as Julia leaves the house and steps out onto the patio. She now visit with Joe.

JULIA  
The steaks look wonderful! I told Stephanie earlier, that I saw so many people casting lines into Bird Creek on my way up here.

JOE  
We're in full season now...

JULIA  
They had better save some for the bears!

JOE  
Oh, they get their share, believe me!

Applying some seasoning to the steaks.

JULIA  
(earnestly)  
How are you, Joe?

JOE  
I'm the happiest I've ever been,  
really... And you?

JULIA  
You know me...  
(grinning)  
After losing Tim in Iraq, I'm still  
playing hard to get...!

JOE  
How long has it been, Julia?

JULIA  
Five years.

Casting her eyes to the blue stone beneath her sandals.

JOE  
God, it's been that long?

JULIA  
Um hmm... You look good, Joe!

JOE  
I try.

JULIA  
Are you still working the same job?

JOE  
Oh, yeah! Still on the processing  
line. But I've put in for a  
supervisory position.

JULIA  
Nice! Better pay, I'll bet!

JOE  
You got it. Substantially more...

JULIA  
And Stephanie?

JOE  
Still teaching at Eagle River  
Elementary. Fourth grade this year,  
I believe.

An awkward pause comes between them before Joe continues.  
Do you ever think of Abby?

JULIA  
Joe, there isn't a day that goes by  
when I don't.

JOE  
You were good friends.

Extending his hand.

JULIA  
The best...!

Biting her lower lip.

JOE  
Until I came into the picture and  
took her away.

JULIA  
She loved you, Joe, and would do  
anything for you... Hey, remember  
when you came to visit LSU for the  
first time and got a speeding  
ticket on campus?

JOE  
I was in a hurry!  
(laughing)

JULIA  
You certainly were.  
(blushing)  
We had good times. It's hard to  
believe it's been twenty-five  
years.

JOE  
(chuckling)  
And the time Abby got her nose  
stuck in a soda can.

JULIA  
And you had to squeeze the can to  
get it out!  
(laughing)

JOE  
Gently, oh so gently.

JULIA  
Indeed! Now that would have left a  
scar...

They suddenly fall silent.

JOE  
(soberly)  
Not that it would've mattered. She  
was gone within the year... When I  
arrived in Missouri for her  
funeral, it was as though all eyes  
were directed at me. It was  
agonizing!

JULIA  
I remember, I was there.

JOE  
That's right. You were a lifesaver  
that day, Julia. I remember  
skipping dinner at the Gladstones  
after the wake and going to that  
bistro with you.

JULIA  
Hmm. And you insisted I stay in  
your hotel room that night! You  
were so despondent, Joe. And, I  
must say, a gentleman, given all  
the pressure you were under.

JOE  
Of course!

JULIA  
I considered comforting you that  
night...but, you had such a faraway  
look!

JOE  
Really?  
(astonished)

JULIA  
Yes. We were close friends, why  
not...? You were beside yourself!

JOE  
I'm shocked.

JULIA  
Don't flatter yourself, Joe  
Coulter! It was one night, that's  
all.

Batting her eyes.

JOE  
Oh, right!  
(flustered)

Just then, Gracie returns to the patio with the wine glasses, causing them to end their adult conversation.

EXT. COULTER RESIDENCE, EAGLE RIVER, ALASKA - LATER

With various prepared dishes spread out on the patio table, Joe, Stephanie, Gracie, and Julia enjoy a delightful dinner under the midnight sun.

JOE  
How's your salmon, Julia?

JULIA  
Fabulous, Joe! Fresh is so much  
better.

Pointing with her fork.

And the coleslaw goes perfectly  
with the salmon.

STEPHANIE  
Thank you, Julia. It's Gracie's  
favorite. You can pack some in your  
lunch tomorrow if there's any left,  
honey. Joe, pour around some of  
that Zinfandel.

Joe sets his napkin down and begins to pour around the table.

GRACIE  
May I have a little, Mom?

STEPHANIE  
Just a splash.

JULIA  
Where are you working this summer,  
Gracie? I've forgotten...

Gracie watches as her father pours her half a glass.

STEPHANIE

Oh, Joe, that's too much!

JOE

Don't be silly, it's fine. Just sip it, honey.

GRACIE

Thanks, Dad! I work at Turner Park, tending flower beds and, occasionally, hanging plants. It's part of the Youth Employment Program, here in Alaska.

JULIA

That's great. And what are your hours?

GRACIE

Eight to four-thirty, Monday through Friday. I work for them as a lifeguard at the Chugiak Pool during the school year.

JULIA

A lifeguard! When did you get certified?

GRACIE

Last summer.

JULIA

And you like it?

GRACIE

I do. The long hours can be monotonous.

JULIA

I know! But you must concentrate on keeping alert. Events can change in an instant.

GRACIE

Do you still have your certification?

JULIA

I do. As part of the Emergency Water Response Team at Long Beach Medical Center, I'm required to.

GRACIE

Hey! Maybe you can join me working  
at the pool!

STEPHANIE

Gracie, allow Julia to enjoy her  
meal. You can talk later.

GRACIE

(sighing)

Okay, but I might be too tired  
after dinner.

JOE

Let me guess, all that watering  
under the hot sun?

GRACIE

You know it!

Taking up her fork and beginning to eat.  
Hmm, this is good...

JOE

I'm glad you like it.

Moments pass. The group finishes up dessert just as Gracie  
announces she's retiring for the evening.

GRACIE

I'm going to leave you adults  
alone. I have another day of  
watering to do tomorrow. Anyway, it  
was nice meeting you, Aunt Julia.  
(grinning widely)  
Goodnight!

Gracie stands and gives her aunt a peck on the cheek, then  
departs the patio.

JOE

(concerned)

She's, she's...

Drawing a sharp look from Stephanie.

STEPHANIE

She's, uh, tired is all...and needs  
her sleep.

JOE

(sarcastically)

Uh, I was just about to say that!

Stephanie turns to Julia.

STEPHANIE  
So, Girdwood...!

JULIA  
Yes. Can you believe it? After Tim died, I became so wrapped up in my work that I forgot about the world entirely. And I realized that, other than his gravesite, Long Beach has no hold on me.

Taking another sip of wine.

So, I went to see my Human Resources Officer at the medical center, and at first, I wanted to take a year off and join Mercy Ships or Doctors Without Borders. But, Roger, that's my HR person, steered me towards HHS at an HPSA. Oh, sorry, a Health Professional Shortage Area.

JOE  
(somewhat threatened)  
And Alaska just happened to come to mind?

JULIA  
Sort of...

STEPHANIE  
Well, Girdwood, in fact, most all of Alaska fits the bill where lack of healthcare professionals is concerned.

JULIA  
Though I must confess...and please forgive me, Stephanie, that while I indeed wanted to get away, I've always had a keen interest in learning more about how Abby died.  
So...

Julia suddenly stops talking while studying Joe carefully.

JOE  
(defensively)  
Whatever do you mean?

STEPHANIE

Now, Joe, don't be that way. She  
and Julia were best friends!

JOE

I realize that, but what else is  
there to know?

Getting up from the table, he bristles at Julia's intent.  
I believe I've told you everything!  
I was there, remember?

STEPHANIE

Joe, maybe you need to step away  
for a minute.

JOE

Why, I have nothing to hide!

JULIA

I'm not saying that you do. Oh,  
Joe! You shared the most intimate  
details with me, and I'll forever  
be grateful to you for that. But I  
need to find out for myself.

JOE

Find out what?

STEPHANIE

Joe, please, let her finish.

JULIA

(now confessing)  
You see, ever since that fateful  
day, I've...I've been punishing  
myself for not saving Abby...!

JOE

Saving her from what exactly?

JULIA

From leaving college, marrying so  
young, and following you up here to  
Alaska.

Joe sits back down.

JOE

Why, Julia, I never knew. Why  
didn't you say something? Why? Why!

STEPHANIE

Joe, please...!

JULIA  
(overcome)  
Because I was too young!

Rapping the glass tabletop, while choking back her tears.  
Eighteen, to be exact, just like  
Abby! And three years older than  
Gracie! Think about it, Joe...!

Stephanie now cuts in to referee.

STEPHANIE  
Hear her out, is all, honey. This  
has evidently been on Julia's mind  
for some time.

JOE  
Is that true?

JULIA  
(sincerely)  
Yes, what your wife is saying is  
true.

JOE  
Well, what more do you want to know  
about that...about that day?  
(flustered)

JULIA  
Do you have the police report?

JOE  
(distraught)  
Police report!

JULIA  
And the coroner's report?

Joe gets up to escape the discussion.

JOE  
I'm afraid I'll have to leave you  
two for now! Goodnight, Julia.  
Goodnight, dear. I'm out of here...

Joe leaves his thoroughly bewildered friend alone with  
Stephanie and ducks into the house.

JULIA  
I'm sorry, Stephanie, I honestly  
never thought Joe would react this  
way!

STEPHANIE  
(whispering)  
I'm sorry, too! He's had to field  
the very same line of questioning  
from Gracie lately...

She begins to gather the dishes on the table.

JULIA  
Here, let me help!

Julia begins collecting the silverware.  
I would've hoped Gracie didn't  
learn about Abby until she was at  
least eighteen. Still, it wouldn't  
be easy at any age. Especially for  
a young girl... Come on, I'll help  
you with the dishes.

STEPHANIE  
Thanks, Julia. You're a dear...

Later on, a calculating Julia drives by Turnagain Arm,  
glimmering in the evening light, while on her way home to  
Girdwood.

INTERMISSION

EXT. SPEEDWAY GAS STATION, SEWARD HIGHWAY, GIRDWOOD, ALASKA -  
AFTERNOON

Julia tops off the tank of her Land Rover on a fine Tuesday  
afternoon while stopping at the Speedway Gas Station on the  
corner of Seward and Alyeska Highways. A Girdwood Fire  
Department vehicle soon pulls up to the pump opposite her.  
Chief Will Greer gets out of the truck and begins to pump,  
just as Julia is about to drive away. She now powers down the  
window.

JULIA  
Are you the Fire Chief here in  
Girdwood?

Will peeks around the side of the pump.

WILL  
Why, yes. Yes, I am. Will Greer.

Offering his hand. Julia quickly notices that his ring finger  
is vacant.

Oh, sorry for the gas smell.

JULIA

That's alright. It's a gas station,  
isn't it?

WILL

Right.

(chuckling)

JULIA

I've been meaning to speak with  
you.

WILL

You have?

JULIA

Yes, I'm the new nurse practitioner-

WILL

I've heard...

JULIA

I'm the new nurse practitioner in  
town from Long Beach, California,  
and I was wondering if your  
department could use another member  
on your Emergency Water Response  
Team?

WILL

Oh...?

Will finishes filling his gas tank before fastening the cap.

Uh, we're planning on having  
another training class in...

JULIA

Oh, I don't need any training per  
se. I head up the Long Beach  
Medical Center Water Rescue Team.

WILL

I see...Miss?

JULIA

It's Ms. Julia Buranich.

WILL

I'm pleased to meet you. Uh, tell  
you what. Stop by the fire station  
tomorrow, and we'll talk. We could  
certainly use someone with your  
experience and medical know-how.  
That goes without saying!

JULIA

This is a bad week for me. We're conducting a vaccination campaign at the clinic every day. However, anytime next week would be fine.

WILL

How about Tuesday?

JULIA

Tuesday would be great! I get out of work at four, and I'll drive right over.

WILL

We're located on the other side of Alyeska Highway, on Egloff Drive. You can't miss it!

JULIA

I'll do that, Chief.

WILL

Please, until you're on the job, it's Will.

JULIA

Okay. Thanks, Will.

They both get in their vehicles and head up Alyeska Highway in the direction of its namesake mountain.

INT. GIRDWOOD HEALTH CLINIC, GIRDWOOD, ALASKA - THE NEXT DAY

JULIA

This won't hurt a bit.

Administering yet another shot to an Alaska Native who was waiting in line with other members of his Dena'ina Athabascan village.

No, no, please wait, I have to place a band-aid on that arm. Thank you.

Finished for the day, Julia washes up in the back, just as Iris enters the work area.

IRIS

(sighing)

How is our vaccine supply?

JULIA

We're down to two. I'm told that a new shipment will arrive by air early tomorrow morning.

IRIS

We'll use them up, that much I do know. By my count, we vaccinated fifty-five today alone.

Julia pulls some paper towels from the dispenser to dry her hands.

JULIA

Hmm. That sounds about right. It astonishes me, Iris, that native populations living so close to this clinic need a campaign to get their MMR shots!

IRIS

Well, it works, doesn't it?

JULIA

I'll say, my feet are killing me. These floors are simply unforgiving. Is there any talk of building a new facility?

IRIS

Sure, there's plenty of talk, but just that, talk.

JULIA

I know how that goes!

Gathering her effects while Iris follows close by. Goodnight, Iris. Say, I've been meaning to ask you, is there a library in town? I need a place with adequate research materials.

Iris studies her new nurse practitioner carefully.

IRIS

Research?

JULIA

Yes, research! You never know when it might come in handy.

IRIS

Well, the Gerrish Library here in Girdwood is known for its excellent resource materials.

JULIA

And where is that located?

IRIS

On Egloff Drive, in the Fire Department Complex.

JULIA

(timidly)

I see...

Considering the location.

IRIS

And there's the Roundhouse Museum.

Julia looks at her vacantly.

It's located at the top of Mount Alyeska, but you'll have to take the tram.

JULIA

The tram?

IRIS

Yes. The wheelhouse is located just outside the Alyeska Resort, where you can buy a ticket to take you three thousand some-odd feet to the top. From there, it's just inside the restaurant.

JULIA

There's a restaurant all the way up there at three thousand feet?

IRIS

Uh, hmm! With a full bar and a spectacular view of the seven glaciers in the vicinity. You absolutely have to see it!

JULIA

I believe I will, after visiting that library you mentioned across the way. The...

IRIS

The Gerrish.

JULIA  
Yes, the Gerrish... Alright then!  
Goodnight, Iris.

IRIS  
Goodnight. See you in the morning.

Julia exits the clinic and unlocks the door of her Land Rover, but not before stopping to spot the lofty alpine restaurant perched high on Mount Alyeska, just beneath its snowcapped, majestic summit.

INT. GERRISH LIBRARY, GIRDWOOD, ALASKA - AFTERNOON

A few days later, Julia approaches the Gerrish Library on a drizzly Saturday afternoon. She soon passes under a chalet-style roof leading to the entrance. Inside, she locates the librarian, who is busy putting books away.

MILLIE  
May I help you?

JULIA  
You can. My name is Julia Buranich  
from the Girdwood Clinic.

MILLIE  
Oh! I've heard so much about you,  
Julia.

Taking her hand.

JULIA  
(grinning)  
All good, I hope.

MILLIE  
(whimsically)  
Of course, of course. What can I do  
for you?

JULIA  
Well, I'm interested if you have  
any archive material regarding a  
drowning incident that occurred on  
Turnagain Arm in 1986?

MILLIE  
Abby Gladstone?

JULIA  
Yes. You seem...familiar with her  
accident.

MILLIE

Well, it was a big story then. The newspapers around the state covered it extensively, not to mention the greater Northwest. Poor thing, and only married one month! Did you know her?

Putting away the last book on the cart.

JULIA

Why, yes, I did. We swam together at LSU and were roommates there.

MILLIE

How wonderful...

JULIA

Can you...point me to any materials you have regarding the incident? Anything at all.

MILLIE

Follow me.

Julia follows the librarian to the back of the facility. Opening up a tall cabinet, Millie removes a red-well-marked Newlywed Drowning 1986. She hands the file over to Julia.

JULIA

Thank you. You've been most helpful.

MILLIE

You'll find a fresh pair of gloves on the bottom shelf. Help yourself!

Stopping momentarily before leaving Julia alone.  
That's funny...

JULIA

What?

MILLIE

There was a young lady here just the other day who asked to see the same file.

Running her hand along the edge of the red-well.  
Take your time, we close at six.

JULIA

Thank you.

MILLIE  
And call me if you have any  
questions.

Julia studies the receptacle before finally removing its contents.

JULIA  
(voiceover)  
So, I approached this Holy Grail of  
archives before me, unsure about  
what I might find. Sure, Joe had  
told me everything he possibly  
could, but there are always  
important details to any story that  
you simply can't uncover without  
plain old, painstaking research.

She removes a legal pad and a bottle of water from her bag and takes a swig before setting the bottle down on a nearby table, safely away from the documents.

Let's see. Here's an article from  
the Anchorage Daily News, dated  
July 16, 1986.

Reading it over carefully.

Nothing new here. Oh, wait! Here's  
a photo of... Is that Chief Greer?  
It is! He's the Alaska State  
Trooper in the article who was in  
the water with Abby, desperately  
trying to save her moments before  
she died. He looks to be thirty  
pounds lighter. Trooper weight, I  
guess! Here's a series of other  
articles at the time.

Julia now comes across the Alaska State Police Report issued the day after the accident. Next, she finds an additional police report filed by the Whittier Police Department, which, given the arrival time printed on the document, was the first to reach the scene. She lays both reports side-by-side and makes a crucial discovery.

Look at this. In the Whittier  
Police report, Joe said he and Abby  
arrived on the flats only an hour  
beforehand.

Moving her forefinger over to the State Police report.

In the Alaska State Police Report, Joe claims the very same thing, even though eyewitnesses interviewed later by law enforcement place the couple on the flats three hours earlier. Hmm....

After noting this on her pad, she continues with the next item.

A photo of Joe's Jeep Cherokee taken on shore and...what's that? A trailer of tools hitched to the vehicle? I didn't know that. Look at those tires, they're caked in mud...! Here's a picture taken after the tide retreated of the spot where Abby struggled so desperately.

Turning to the next photo.

(astonished)

Oh my God, here's a picture taken of her lifeless body after it was dragged from the water by authorities. Joe was right, Abby's face and arms are as white as snow, and her clothes covered in mud, especially around the cuffs of her jeans!

In an instant, she reaches for her water bottle and begins to swallow frantically. Calming herself, Julia soon returns to her work.

What are these? Hmm...permits issued by the EPA, the Army Corps of Engineers, and...the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, evidently required for dredging stream beds in the Municipality of Anchorage. And this, uh...a Placer Mining Claim, issued by the State of Alaska, describing the specific dimensions of Joe's claim, extending from the mouth of Seattle Creek.

She takes down this information, including the complex coordinates.

Next, are a series of what look to be documents regarding the funeral home, who prepared her body, as well as an airline transport invoice. And this... Yes, I was hoping I'd find this!

(MORE)

JULIA (CONT'D)  
A Certificate of Death issued by  
the State of Alaska. Let's see, the  
Coroner's Cause of Death reads:  
acute hypothermia morbidity  
accompanied by myocardial  
infarction. Glory be! Abby died  
before she went under! Meaning, she  
didn't die from drowning after all!  
She died of heart failure before  
the water even covered her head!  
Well, what do ya know...

Jotting this information on her pad, she now gets up from the table and follows the signs to the restroom. Millie looks up from her reception desk as Julia passes by.

MILLIE  
Finding everything alright?

JULIA  
I'd say!

MILLIE  
Glad to be of service! When you're  
finished, just leave the documents  
on the table and I'll put them back  
in order before returning the file  
to the cabinet...

Moments pass. Julia is now back at the table. Attached to the Certificate of Death is the Autopsy Report. While scanning one of its narratives, she locks in on the following text:

JULIA  
(voiceover)  
The victim was between twelve and  
fourteen weeks pregnant at the time  
of death.

Julia leans back in her chair, trying to wrap her head around this bombshell.

It all makes sense now: Abby  
leaving LSU, getting married to Joe  
on such short notice, and moving  
away to distant Alaska.

She stops while trying to associate with Abby's plight.  
(reminiscent)  
(MORE)

JULIA (CONT'D)  
At eighteen, it had to be  
devastating for her, let alone  
being trapped on the bottom of  
Turnagain Arm just weeks later,  
when ice-cold, thirty-eight-degree  
water approached her waist, then  
shoulders, nose, forehead...ugh!

She now departs the library with newfound insight concerning  
the calamity that befell her best friend, Abby, so many years  
ago.

EXT. COULTER RESIDENCE, EAGLE RIVER, ALASKA - NIGHT

A campfire burning in the Coulter's backyard lights up the  
eastern sky on this mid-summer night, while a patchwork of  
snowfields on not-so-distant Eagle Peak, evident to the naked  
eye, appears just above the fallen scree. Gracie stokes the  
coals with a long poker while seated next to her father at  
the edge of the simmering logs.

GRACIE

The Youth Employment Program bused  
a bunch of us summer workers to  
Girdwood the other day to help set  
up for their field days this  
weekend.

JOE

That's a nice town, and resort  
too...

GRACIE

Anyway, the town provided us with  
free lunches at the fire  
department. I had some time to  
myself afterward before returning  
to work, so...I wandered over to  
the library located next door.

JOE

Oh?

GRACIE

They have a great resource section  
dedicated to local history.

JOE

Do they now?  
(smiling)

GRACIE

Uh hmm. I asked the librarian...her name is Millie, I believe. I asked her if they had any material on the Turnagain Arm drowning accident in 1986.

Stirring the glowing coals while Joe stays silent.

She said they did and walked me to the back, where she pulled out a folder labeled Newlywed Drowning 1986. In it were two police reports. One by the Alaska State Police and the other by the Whittier Police Department.

Joe suddenly stands up and tosses more logs on the fire while Gracie continues.

In both reports, Dad, you claim to have been on the mud flats for about an hour, whereas witnesses interviewed by police that day place you at the scene three hours earlier. It can't be both! Which is it?

Joe now returns to his chair.

JOE

I was afraid the authorities would arrest me for criminally negligent homicide.

GRACIE

Criminal what?

JOE

Negligent homicide, since I waited far too long to call for help. You know, emergency services. If I told them that we had arrived at the accident site only an hour ago, I might be able to escape prosecution. I, uh, had to think fast!

GRACIE

But...

JOE

In the end, police determined from eyewitness accounts that Abby and I had arrived three hours earlier, not one.

GRACIE

I see...

Stirring up more embers.

JOE

But the police never charged me,  
nor did the district attorney. I  
sweated out the likelihood of  
criminal charges for a month, at  
least, following my return here  
from the funeral.

GRACIE

That's it?

Joe leans back.

JOE

(exhaling)

That's it!

GRACIE

I didn't have time to review all  
the documents because I had to  
return to work...

Studying her father carefully.

Is there any reason for me to  
return there to read the rest of  
the file?

JOE

Absolutely none...!

Looking Gracie straight in the eye.

GRACIE

Thanks, Dad.

(smiling)

JOE

Don't mention it. Say, are you up  
for some popcorn inside?

GRACIE

Sure! But we had better extinguish  
the fire first.

JOE

Go on now and get into your  
pajamas. I'll handle this!

Gracie returns to the house while Joe douses the fire with water, sending the resulting cloud of steam skyward, concealing the dimly lit stars.

EXT. TIDEWATER SLOUGH, GIRDWOOD, ALASKA - AFTERNOON

The Girdwood Fire Department Emergency Water Response Team is responding to reports of a stranded hiker mired in the muddy waters of Tidewater Slough outside of town, where Alyeska and Seward Highways meet. In charge of the five-man crew is a diminutive female decked out in hip waders, standing along the road toting a bullhorn.

JULIA

You there, remain where you are!  
We're coming in to get you out of  
there. Any further steps will cause  
you to sink deeper, making it more  
difficult to rescue you! Nod your  
head if you understand.

The middle-aged hiker does as he's told.

Alright, team, get out the support  
boards and lay them out towards the  
hiker without entering the water.

The team of rescuers carries out the command just as Chief Greer arrives on the scene.

WILL

How are we doing, Julia? The  
ambulance is on its way.

JULIA

Good. I've instructed the hiker to  
remain in place and avoid any  
movement. He seems to be  
cooperating.

Will quickly removes a pair of binoculars from the front seat of his truck and returns to Julia's side. The team secures the support boards around the hiker before a highly-pressurized hose connected to a pump is slid out onto the boards.

Alright, if everyone is secure,  
I'll start the pump.

All four team members give a thumbs-up. The pump is started, and the five-foot wand, now in the hands of its operator, penetrates the surface of the water down to the hiker's boots.

The pressurized mechanism soon displaces the surrounding mud along the bottom, ultimately freeing him to climb onto the support boards, where he crawls his way to safety with the assistance of rescue personnel.

Alright, then! Fine job! Let's collect those boards and return them to the truck along with the hose. I'll keep the pump running just in case.

Stripped of his outer clothes and boots, the hiker is set on a gurney where medical technicians examine him. Julia soon appears to provide critical warming therapy using Mylar blankets before accompanying the patient on the forty-minute ambulance ride to Providence Medical Center in Anchorage. Hours later, after arriving back at the fire station, Julia finds a tiny envelope affixed to her windshield marked-Julia. She soon starts the Land Rover, keeping the vehicle in park, before opening the correspondence. Inside, she finds an invitation.

WILL  
(voiceover)  
Have dinner with me! As your chief,  
this is not an order. I repeat, not  
an order. - Will

Julia softly bites her lower lip, and before long returns to her rental house beside celestial Moose Meadow.

INT. HOTEL ALYESKA, GIRDWOOD, ALASKA - EVENING

Will enters the Hotel Alyeska, waves hello to the front desk, and climbs the broad staircase to the spacious lobby. There, he finds Julia seated on a leather couch facing a roaring fire. He approaches her from behind.

WILL  
Julia?

JULIA  
Will.

WILL  
Have you been waiting long?

JULIA  
A few minutes is all.

Standing up to greet him.  
I'm thrilled about the restaurant you've selected. I've never ridden on an aerial tram before.

WILL  
The ride never ceases to amaze me.  
You'll love it! Ready?

JULIA  
Yes. I just need to grab my purse.  
This is an amazing hotel!

Looking around.

WILL  
Isn't it? The Japanese owned this  
place for many years after  
inaugurating it in the nineteen  
nineties.

JULIA  
It's stunning.

She follows Will's lead as they walk down a broad hallway toward the Tramway, located just beyond the sliding back doors. Will waves to the person behind the ticket booth glass, who nods in acknowledgement. Outside, a small object halfway up the mountain soon comes into view, while an enormous wheel next to them pulls a heavy cable, inching the transport ever closer.

WILL  
The gondola will be arriving here  
in another five minutes or so. I  
don't see any passengers waiting  
here, so maybe we'll have the car  
all to ourselves.

JULIA  
Hmm...

WILL  
And, no, I didn't arrange for it  
that way!

JULIA  
(laughing)  
Did I say anything?

The tram now glides into the wheelhouse to let the returning passengers out. It then takes a sharp turn in the direction of the mountain to prepare for its next birth. The gondola soon stops and opens its doors for Julia and Will, before finally departing. Pine trees on the ground below now begin to drift silently by.

It's surprising how quiet the ride  
is.

WILL

Right? I'm always astonished by the tranquility it provides.

JULIA

Hmm... How high is the mountaintop?

WILL

The restaurant is twenty-three hundred feet above sea level, but the overall height of the mountain is just under four thousand feet.

Traces of snow begin to appear on the mountainside as they approach midway.

JULIA

(overcome)

Such an amazing view!

WILL

Just wait until you get up there. The panorama never ceases to excite me.

JULIA

How long has this tramway been here?

WILL

Since the early nineties, about a year or so before the hotel opened. Turn around, you can see the resort getting smaller and smaller.

Julia turns and walks to the rear of the tram.

JULIA

Wow!

(gratified)

Thank you, Will.

WILL

You haven't seen anything yet. I want to warn you, though. The air will be pretty thin once we get up there. I always feel like somebody's standing on my chest.

JULIA

You're kidding?

WILL

You'll see...

The restaurant now comes into view as they approach the end of the ride. Julia returns to the head of the car.

We're almost there.

JULIA  
What a lovely chalet!

WILL  
Do you like it?

JULIA  
Oh, yes! Seeing it up close is quite different than viewing it from the ground.

WILL  
Hmm...

The tram arrives at the top, stopping with a slight jerk. Julia and Will step out of the car and take the stairs leading up to the restaurant. Once on the establishment's observation deck, they turn to take in the scene below, including breathtaking views of Turnagain Arm.

JULIA  
Will...!

WILL  
What?

JULIA  
(inhaling)  
What a view...!

Will laughs, enjoying Julia's delight and satisfied with the date so far.

Such beauty. Oh, I think I'm going to cry...

Scanning the distant valley beneath them.  
You're right, my chest feels a little tight.

WILL  
Told you! Come on, the restaurant is right indoors. Our reservation is for seven, and we're several minutes late.

JULIA  
I don't want to leave this deck!

WILL

I know the feeling, but you'll have just as good a view from the comfort of our table.

JULIA

Very well...

Julia follows her date into the unique atmosphere of Seven Glaciers Restaurant, nestled several thousand feet above sea level.

INT. SEVEN GLACIERS RESTAURANT, MOUNT ALYESKA, GIRDWOOD, ALASKA - MOMENTS LATER

Inside, a hostess greets the pair and shows them to their table overlooking Turnagain Arm in the distance. A waiter soon appears.

WAITER

Chief Greer.

(nodding)

What can I get you, madame?

JULIA

Do you carry Blue Moon?

WAITER

Why, yes, we do!

JULIA

I'll have one. Will?

WILL

I'll have the usual...

WAITER

Very good. Your menus will be right out.

WILL

Thank you, Phil.

Julia looks over at Will.

JULIA

The usual? Do you come up here often?

WILL

(chuckling)

I'm afraid my usual isn't so unusual.

JULIA

Oh?

WILL

Scotch on the rocks!

JULIA

What kind?

The waiter arrives with the drinks, setting them down in front of the couple.

WAITER

Your menus.

Passing them out.

The special tonight is a pan-seared Halibut encrusted with almonds, in a beurre Blanc sauce with sautéed shallots and mushrooms, served with rice pilaf and steamed cherry tomatoes.

JULIA

That sounds wonderful!

WAITER

I'll leave you to your drinks and be back for your order.

WILL

Thanks, Phil!

Julia keeps the orange slice in place as she tips the glass to her mouth.

JULIA

Hmm. This is good!

WILL

When I was a kid, oranges were considered a premium in Alaska...

Julia takes another sip of her Blue Moon while taking note of Will's drink. He now leans back in his chair.

Johnny Walker Gold. You likely never heard of it.

JULIA

I've heard of Johnny Walker Black and Red, and even Blue, but never Gold.

WILL

Julia, you're in Alaska! We have plenty of gold up here...

JULIA

No, really!

Will takes a deep pull on his scotch.

WILL

Alright. For some odd reason, Johnny Walker Distilleries only markets this in Alaska, Canada, and likely Japan. The Japanese love their scotch!

JULIA

You seem to know your liquor up here. How about the cuisine? Shall we order?

WILL

Sure thing!

JULIA

What's good here?

WILL

Oh, just about everything! This restaurant is highly rated in Wine Spectator.

JULIA

Really...?

WILL

In Girdwood, of all places.

Taking another swig of his drink while looking over the menu.

I, uh, happen to be a turf man, so I'm a bit partial. But I could go for the halibut special.

JULIA

Hmm, me too...

They both close their menus. Phil soon returns to the table.

WAITER

Have you decided?

WILL

We'll both have the halibut special.

WAITER

Excellent. It comes with a house salad. And your dressing? We offer a wonderful homemade orange balsamic!

JULIA

Ah! I'll try it! It will go perfectly with my Blue Moon.

Displaying her winning smile.

WAITER

And you, Will?

WILL

The usual.

WAITER

(patronizing)

Ranch... I'll be back with your salads.

WILL

Thanks.

Over the next hour, the two enjoy their dinners in the company of seven snow-peaked glaciers. Phil soon approaches them afterward.

WAITER

May I interest you in dessert?

JULIA

None for me, thank you. Will?

WILL

None for me either, but I'll have another scotch.

WAITER

Very good.

Phil clears away the dishes and leaves.

WILL

I limit my drinks up here to two since high elevation increases the effect of alcohol.

JULIA

No kidding?

The waiter sets the Johnny Walker in front of Will, then turns to Julia.

WAITER  
May I interest you in coffee or tea?

JULIA  
Nothing for me, thank you. Can you show me to the restrooms? I wouldn't want to take a wrong step up here.

WAITER  
Of course, follow me.

Moments pass before Julia returns to the table.

JULIA  
Say, I passed by the Roundhouse Museum on my way back here. Iris Stebbins told me about the many historical items contained there.

WILL  
She's right, there are many articles crammed within that modest space. Care to see it?

JULIA  
Tonight?

WILL  
Sure. I'll ask Phil.

He points to Phil, who soon steps over to the table.  
Any chance we can look through the Roundabout Museum tonight?

WAITER  
Of course. I'll bring the key right over.

JULIA  
I could easily come back another day...

WILL  
Nonsense. We're only feet away.

Phil soon places the key on the edge of the table and settles the tab with Will. Taking one last sip of his drink, Will gets up.

Shall we?

JULIA  
Certainly. Lead the way...

They arrive outside the tiny museum while Will slips the key into the lock.

WILL  
The light switch is over here  
somewhere...

JULIA  
You've been here before?

WILL  
For fire inspections.

Will flips on the lights.

JULIA  
Wow! Look at all these artifacts!  
And photos!

She makes her way over to the Twentieth Century section to browse through the collection and notices one photo in particular of two young men on the southerly shore of Turnagain Arm sitting in a mud-caked Jeep, while a woman in the distance stands all alone in waist-deep water. Julia points out the picture to Will.

May I?

WILL  
I see no harm. Wait a second, is  
that who I think it is...?  
(astonished)

Looking over Julia's shoulder.

It is! It's a photo of Joe Coulter taken on the day of, of your friend's drowning! But who is the guy sitting next to him, and why aren't they in the water trying to save Abby?

JULIA  
(flustered)  
I was hoping you could answer that!

WILL  
I'm afraid I can't at the moment, but I know some folks who can identify the other individual!

He picks the object up and removes the picture, setting the orphaned frame on the curator's desk with a sticky note attached, explaining the photo's absence.

I'll contact Anne in the morning.  
Anything else?

Julia carefully scans the remaining items in the exhibit.

JULIA  
I don't see anything of value.

WILL  
Come on.

He returns the key to Phil before leaving the restaurant with Julia. They now enter an empty tram to take them back to the hotel, this time in the glow of a forgone sunset.

EXT. ALYESKA RESORT, PARKING LOT, GIRDWOOD, ALASKA - LATER

Will walks Julia to her vehicle, just as a loud noise is heard.

JULIA  
What's that?

WILL  
It's probably a bear trying to get into somebody's car. They only do that at night if there's food left inside. It happens all the time, unfortunately!

JULIA  
Sounds like it's coming from over there!

Pointing in the direction of the commotion.

WILL  
Hmm. The back lot. It's very popular among our four-legged friends...

JULIA  
Where are you parked?

WILL  
Two vehicles down.

Julia stands back to observe his pickup, where she spots an army decal affixed to the back glass.

JULIA

You were in the Tenth Mountain  
Division?

WILL

You know of it?

JULIA

Why, yes. I became an expert in  
various sections of the army while  
working at the Long Beach Medical  
Center. We saw a great many  
patients who were in the military  
wearing armed forces hats and  
bearing those sizable insignia  
tattoos.

Revealing her pure, vacant forearms.

WILL

Oh, yes. Lots of those, I'll bet!

JULIA

Let's see, the largest ones  
appeared on the biceps and forearms  
of members of the Big Red One, 1st  
Army Division out of Fort Riley...

WILL

Kansas!

JULIA

That's right! Uh, the Screaming  
Eagles of the 101st Airborne  
Division and the...the 75th Ranger  
Regiment out of Fort Benning. There  
are so many emblems on display in  
the Army alone, not to mention the  
Navy and Marines. Let's not forget  
about them!

(hushed)

Quiet. I don't hear that noise  
anymore...

WILL

You seem to know a lot about the  
military!

JULIA

I do.

(soberly)

My husband, Tim, was a First  
Lieutenant in the U.S.

(MORE)

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Army, stationed at the Presidio in  
San Francisco. He was killed in  
action during the Battle of  
Fallujah in early 2004.

WILL  
I'm sorry...

JULIA  
Thank you...

Now, fixing her eyes on the ground and speaking in a subdued tone.

He was a good man, I loved him very  
much, and he loved me. We had many  
happy times together, until,  
well...

(exhaling)  
Anyway, that was then. The question  
before me now is, will I ever fall  
in love again? And, is it possible  
for anyone...to truly love twice in  
a lifetime?

Suddenly cutting herself short and talking more brightly.  
And here I am, in Girdwood, Alaska,  
of all places...

WILL  
It's a good place to...to get away.

At once self-effacing.

But what do I know? I've lived here  
all my life, except for those four  
years at Camp Drum. I'll have you  
know that the winters down there  
are far worse than they are up  
here.

JULIA  
What would I know? I'm from  
California, though Squaw Valley  
does get its fair share of snow...

She now proceeds to lean her shoulder against the side of the Land Rover.

Were you married at one time, Will?

WILL  
Yes. Sharon and I were married for  
over thirty years.

JULIA  
Did you have children together?

WILL

We did! Two boys and one girl.  
They're all grown now with families  
of their own. None of them live  
around here, though!

JULIA

And where is your ex-wife, if I may  
ask...?

WILL

You may. She died about six years  
ago in 2004. The same year as your  
soldier husband. Sharon fought a  
valiant battle before succumbing to  
cancer of the cervix.

JULIA

I'm terribly sorry! I honestly  
didn't know.

WILL

But how could you? Why, you've only  
been up here a few months.

JULIA

All the same, I'm sorry...

Will quickly reverses course.

WILL

Did you and Tim have any children  
together?

JULIA

No. Tim and I had our careers, and,  
you know...

WILL

I do. Sharon and I were lucky, I  
guess.

JULIA

Yes! Children are wonderful.

Pausing before saying goodnight.

Well, I must be going. God, I could  
walk home from here!

WILL

That's right, you're on the other  
side of Moose Meadow.

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)  
Though I wouldn't advise walking at  
night in these parts!

JULIA  
Bears?

WILL  
(grinning)  
And moose! Thus the name of the  
meadow!

JULIA  
Anyway, I had a great time tonight,  
and so appreciate you asking me  
out. I don't have many friends up  
here, so...

WILL  
We should do it again!

JULIA  
(appealingly)  
Yes, I'd like that. But next time  
we go Dutch. Alright?

Lightly tapping his hand.

WILL  
Alright. I'll consider it... And  
I'll get in touch with my State  
Police friends to see if they can  
positively identify that individual  
in the photo sitting next to Joe  
Coulter.

JULIA  
Thank you. I'd appreciate that.  
Goodnight.

WILL  
Goodnight!

Will sees Julia into her Land Rover and safely out of the parking lot before walking to his truck. Prior to entering the cab, he stops to study Mount Alyeska, site of his date tonight with young, beautiful Ms. Buranich, while beaming stars above bathe its northern slope in light.

INT. ALASKA STATE POLICE HEADQUARTERS, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA -  
THE NEXT DAY

Chief Greer arrives at State Police Headquarters in downtown Anchorage.

A guard manning the parking booth immediately waves him into the lot. He enters the building through the employee entrance and is buzzed into the facility. Will takes an elevator to the top floor and soon arrives outside the Superintendent's office, where a uniformed Lieutenant is there to greet him.

MARGE

The Superintendent is in with someone right now, Chief. I'll let him know you're here once he's free.

WILL

Thanks, Marge.

MARGE

Have a seat. May I get you anything?

WILL

Sure. Coffee, black.

MARGE

Be right back...

Will sits down on the couch and picks through the magazines displayed on the coffee table, settling for a current issue of FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin. The Lieutenant now returns with his coffee.

How are things in Girdwood?

WILL

It's been quiet, thankfully...

Superintendent Rogers soon shows his guest out to the foyer and nods in Will's direction. With his visitor gone, he approaches Chief Greer and the two shake hands.

ROGERS

Will. I got your message. Come on in...

WILL

Thanks, Lieutenant.

Handing his cup over before entering the Superintendent's office.

ROGERS

You need more coffee?

WILL

No thanks.

ROGERS  
Sit down, Will.

They sit across from each other in a less formal area of the room.

How's the family?

WILL  
They're good. I'm a new grandfather!

ROGERS  
Who?

WILL  
Greg and his wife, Rhonda. They had a baby boy last week.

ROGERS  
You don't say! Congratulations.  
This makes how many now?

WILL  
Seven!

Shifting on the couch.

ROGERS  
Now, what brings you here?

WILL  
Well, I have a photo I'd like one of your detectives to look at.

Rogers reaches for his iPhone in his suit pocket.

ROGERS  
I'll get our ABI supervisor on the phone right now. What should I say this is about?

WILL  
Do you recall the drowning in Turnagain Arm in 1986?

ROGERS  
The newlywed?

WILL  
Yes.

ROGERS  
What about it?

Will removes the photo from his jacket and hands it to Superintendent Rogers.

WILL

This is a picture I borrowed from the Roundabout Museum.

ROGERS

On Alyeska?

WILL

Yes.

Rogers studies the photo.

I'm interested in the person on the left.

ROGERS

Is that the victim in the background standing in the water?

WILL

Abby.

ROGERS

That's Abby Coulter?

Will nods affirmatively.

What's your theory?

WILL

Abby's waist-deep in water, and those two, her husband and whomever, are just camped out in the Jeep! What are they waiting for? Why aren't they out there trying to get her out?

Getting up to pace the floor.

ROGERS

Hmm...

WILL

It's as if those two are waiting for her to...to drown. How else do you explain this picture?

Stopping his movement.

ROGERS

Do we know who took it?

WILL

No. All I know is this photo was in  
the Roundabout Museum last night  
when...

ROGERS

When what?

Will begins to pace again.

WILL

When I was on a date, already! Are  
you happy now?

ROGERS

A date? Will, that's marvelous!

WILL

Yeah, yeah...

ROGERS

Who is she?

WILL

(somewhat embarrassed)

Her name is Julia Buranich. She's a  
nurse on our water response team  
who's doing a two-year hitch with  
HHS at the Girdwood Health Clinic.

Returning to the couch.

ROGERS

Where's she from?

WILL

Long Beach, California.

ROGERS

I see... And how old is she?

WILL

Pete!

ROGERS

Come on, how old is she?

WILL

Oh, alright! She's forty-two.

ROGERS

Damn!

Slapping his knee.

WILL  
It was only one date...

ROGERS  
With more to come, I'll bet!

WILL  
We'll see. Now, how about that supervisor?

ROGERS  
I'll get him on the line right now.  
Aren't these things great?

Holding up his iPhone.

WILL  
I still rely on my good old beeper!

ROGERS  
Say, set the photo down, and I'll snap a picture of it and send it to my ABI guy ahead of time. That way, his staff can get to work on it before you arrive downstairs.

WILL  
Good idea!

ROGERS  
And, Will...

WILL  
Hmm?

ROGERS  
Be careful out there among those eligible women!

WILL  
Yeah, yeah...

INT. GIRDWOOD HEALTH CLINIC, GIRDWOOD, ALASKA - MOMENTS LATER

Julia enters the side door of the clinic and checks in with Iris before prepping the examination room.

JULIA

Sorry, I'm late. There was a big black bear in my driveway this morning. I tried to shoo him away, but he wouldn't budge.

IRIS

How do you know it was a he...?  
(laughing)  
Speaking of the male species, how was your date with Chief Greer last night?

JULIA

How did you find out?

IRIS

I have my spies...

JULIA

Well, he took me to Seven Glaciers Restaurant.

IRIS

He did?

Clasping her hands together.

Oh! How was it?

JULIA

Great. The tram ride was a first for me.

IRIS

It's always a thrill. And the food?

JULIA

We both had the halibut special.

IRIS

I'll bet it was wonderful; it always is up there. And the view!

JULIA

Absolutely stunning... We visited the museum.

IRIS

Let me guess, Will let you in with the key?

JULIA

Um hmm. There are so many artifacts in there.

IRIS  
Indeed!

Tossing her head back.  
So, how soon before your next  
rendezvous?

JULIA  
Very funny! What's on tap today?

IRIS  
No scheduled appointments. It's  
drop in day, remember?

Julia now moves to the rear of the clinic to await her first patient. Moments pass.

IRIS (CONT'D)  
(shouting)  
Julia. Julia!

JULIA  
Yes!

IRIS  
There's a young Dena'ina girl  
insisting that she be allowed to  
enter the clinic through the side  
door.

JULIA  
Send her around, and I'll see what  
she needs.

She opens the door and finds a hysterical young woman wearing a native ch'da, made of caribou hides, adorned with shells and long ermine tails.

May I help you?

ELEANOR  
Can we talk inside?

Darting her eyes each way.  
I have something very important to  
tell you. In secret...

JULIA  
Come in.

Closing the door after the visitor.  
Follow me. We can talk in the  
examination room. Right this way!

ELEANA

Thank you.

JULIA

Can I get you anything?

ELEANA

Oh, no.

JULIA

Please sit down.

Studying this young girl closely before closing the door.

You're Dena'ina Athabascan, is that right?

ELEANA

Yes.

JULIA

We treat many of your people here.  
What village are you from?

ELEANA

Idlughet, up north, but my family's ancestral home is on Pedro Bay in the south. I'm, uh...I'm not feeling very well.

Wiping her brow.

JULIA

I can see that. Let me get you a cool glass of water, and you can tell me why you're here.

She steps into the hallway, heads to the water cooler, fills up a glass, and returns to the treatment room.  
There you go...!

Eleana proceeds to drink vigorously.

Better now?

ELEANA

Oh, yes, much better, thank you.

JULIA

So, what brings you in here today?  
Let's start with your name.

ELEANA

My name is Eleana Balluta.

JULIA  
I'm familiar with that last name.

ELEANA  
Oh, my family must never know  
about...

JULIA  
Rest assured! Whatever you tell me  
is strictly confidential.

ELEANA  
I'm afraid I don't understand,  
confid...

JULIA  
It means secret. Not even your  
family can learn of this visit if  
you don't want them to.

ELEANA  
Oh, I don't...!

Shaking her head as Julia inches the clinical stool closer.

JULIA  
(whispering)  
So, why are you here today? You can  
tell me. No one will know. You have  
my word...  
(imploring)  
What is it?

ELEANA  
Well, there's this man. Dave  
Kimball is his name...

JULIA  
Go on.

ELEANA  
(sobbing)  
He tried to kill me last night!

JULIA  
(dumbstruck)  
Where? When!

Reaching for some nearby tissues.

ELEANA  
On the mudflats of Knik Arm! Across  
from Eagle River! It was just past  
dusk.

(MORE)

ELEANA (CONT'D)  
He asked me if I wanted to take a  
ride across the arm. So, I  
agreed...

JULIA  
Do you know this man, or is he a  
stranger?

ELEANA  
Oh, no! I know him. We  
began...seeing each other over the  
summer.

JULIA  
I'm afraid I don't understand. You  
said he tried to kill you, how?

ELEANA  
Well, about halfway across Knik  
Arm, he told me to get out of his  
vehicle. He said he was going to  
leave me here alone. I explained to  
him that the tide would be on its  
way soon and that the water would  
be high, due to the new moon the  
night before. He said he didn't  
care, and if I screamed, there  
wasn't a soul around who would hear  
me.

JULIA  
Wait a minute.

Julia gets up to use the intercom.  
Iris, hold my calls and tell any  
patients that show up in the  
waiting room that I'll be with them  
shortly. Thank you.

She sits back down and leans into Eleana.  
So he said he didn't care, and if  
you screamed, no one would hear  
you. Is that right?

ELEANA  
Yes!

JULIA  
Then what?

ELEANA  
He drove back in the direction of  
Eagle River. I know that much!  
(MORE)

ELEANA (CONT'D)  
I watched his taillights disappear  
in the early evening light.

JULIA  
But how did you make it out of Knik  
Arm alive?

ELEANA  
Why, I walked!

JULIA  
Didn't the mud ensnare your feet?

ELEANA  
If I were wearing hiking shoes,  
sure! But what Dave failed to  
notice was that I was wearing  
moccasins, made of caribou skin. In  
moccasins, you can walk clear  
across the arm without getting  
mired in the mud. This made it  
possible for me to escape the tide  
with plenty of time to spare...

JULIA  
But why would you wear moccasins in  
Knik Arm?

ELEANA  
How was I to know he would kick me  
out of his Jeep halfway across the  
flats? I only wore them to impress  
him!

Helping herself to a tissue to dab her eyes.

JULIA  
How long have you been seeing this  
man?

Eleana gets up, walks over to the examination table, and with  
both hands on the sanitary paper braces herself.

ELEANA  
(disgraced)  
Long enough to be carrying his  
child!

A shiver goes up Julia's spine.

JULIA  
How long have you known?

ELEANA

For a couple of months. I told Mr. Kimball only last week.

JULIA

Mr. Kimball! How old is this man?

ELEANA

He's forty-five. I bought him a birthday present yesterday and gave it to him last night. A fine thank you, I got!

Turning around to face Julia.

What am I going to do? My father will surely banish me from the house!

JULIA

Take off your shawl so I can see how far along you are.

Eleana removes her ch'da and drapes it across the table. She now raises the bottom of her blouse as high as the midsection.

Oh, Eleana, you won't be showing for another couple of months. I suggest you go home, and I'll see you a week from today. We open first thing each morning, Monday through Saturday. Alright?

Squeezing her shoulder.

ELEANA

Alright...

(exhaling)

JULIA

(earnestly)

Do you trust me, Eleana? Hmm...?

Eleana nods her head in the affirmative.

Eat plenty of fish! Fish is good for you as well as the baby...

ELEANA

Okay.

(resigned)

By the way, what's your name?

JULIA

My name is Julia.

ELEANA

Can I get a ride home from you,  
Julia? I'm very tired.

JULIA

Of course. And drink plenty of  
water! Do you have running water in  
your house?

ELEANA

No, but there's a community pump in  
our village. The glacier water is  
very clean...

JULIA

And cold! Come on...

Entering the hallway, she raises her voice.

Iris, I'm going to take Eleana  
home. Are there any patients in the  
waiting room?

IRIS

Not at present!

JULIA

I'll be back early this afternoon  
if any do show up.

A muffled response is heard as Julia and Eleana step  
outdoors. They now get into the Land Rover for the hour-long  
drive to Idlughet.

INT. ALASKA BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, ALASKA STATE POLICE  
HEADQUARTERS, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA - SAME TIME

Will enters the glass doors of the Alaska Bureau of  
Investigation, located on the fourth floor of state police  
headquarters, where a Sergeant mans the front desk.

WILL

I'm Will Greer. Superintendent  
Rogers sent me...

The Sergeant's phone begins to ring.

SERGEANT

Chief Greer, Superintendent Rogers  
is on the line...

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. JULIA'S RENTAL HOUSE, MOOSE MEADOW, GIRDWOOD, ALASKA - DUSK

Will pulls into a gravel driveway off Aspen Mountain Road, exits his truck, and rings the front doorbell. Julia soon appears at the door.

JULIA

Will.

WILL

It's a perfect match!

JULIA

Come in, come in!

They walk to the rear of the house and enter the kitchen.

I've poured some chardonnay. Would you like some? Sorry, I'm clean out of scotch.

(smiling)

WILL

Sure, I'll have a glass. But just one.

Julia retrieves a crystal-stemmed glass from the cupboard and fills it halfway.

JULIA

To your health.

Raising her glass, while Will follows suit.

WILL

Likewise!

(smiling)

Now on to business. Through forensic photo analysis, the Alaska Bureau of Investigation confirmed today that the individual shown in the photo borrowed from the Roundabout Museum last night is that of David L. Kimball. Further, according to Alaska Driver's License records containing his exact likeness, his birthday was yesterday!

Will now props his boot up on the rear dowel of a kitchen chair.

And, witnesses on shore identify him as leaving a young woman in the middle of Knik Arm last night.

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)  
An FBI tactical team is at this hour surrounding his house to arrest and take him into custody.

Julia pulls out a chair and sits down at the table.

JULIA  
(stunned)  
I don't believe it! So, Eleana won't have to pick him out of a lineup?

WILL  
Not for the arrest anyway. But, she will be called to testify before a Federal Grand Jury, and later, after a True Bill is handed down, the ensuing trial.

JULIA  
Why federal?

WILL  
Because the attempted murder took place in Native Alaskan Territory against a member of the Dena'ina Athabascan tribe. Moreover, Eleana Balluta is a minor.

JULIA  
(steamed)  
Statutory rape! I thought she looked young...

WILL  
Fifteen, to be exact. And she won't be sixteen for another four months. Not that it matters, she's still underage! Anyway, the Feds are going to rely on eyewitnesses who were on shore. One of whom had binoculars that he passed to others around him after observing the incident for himself. These witnesses will negate you being involved, at least for now.

JULIA  
Me?

Julia gets up from the table.  
What do I have to do with it?  
(MORE)

JULIA (CONT'D)  
I only contacted the state police  
to report the incident because I am  
bound by law to report it.

WILL  
Hey, the underage girl provided you  
with her account of the crime, or  
crimes as it were. So, your name  
will most certainly make it onto  
the witness list.

JULIA  
(reflecting)  
That may be the case...but I was  
told about David Kimball's conduct  
in confidence. I'm duty-bound under  
HIPAA, especially as an HHS  
clinician, to, you know, strictly  
maintain provider-patient  
confidentiality.

WILL  
Still, you may be compelled to  
testify, either secretly before a  
federal grand jury or at trial, if  
it comes to that. You know, he just  
might plead guilty, letting you off  
the hook entirely.

Taking one last sip from his wine glass.

JULIA  
But how?

WILL  
(teasing)  
A little thing called a grand jury  
subpoena...

JULIA  
I'll defy it!

WILL  
(laughing)  
Relax. A federal judge will be on  
hand to decide the matter.

JULIA  
Woo, that's a relief! By the way,  
did the curator at the museum ever  
contact you?

WILL  
Actually, I got back to her first!

JULIA  
Come again?

WILL  
I advised Anne this afternoon that  
the photo we took out of the museum  
last night is now material  
evidence.

Julia swirls her glass to take in another mouthful while Will  
peeks at his watch.

I have to be at FBI Headquarters  
before they begin questioning  
Kimball. We have a trooper  
detective joining them, so they  
asked me if I wanted to look on.  
Through a two-way mirror, of  
course! Gotta run.

JULIA  
Goodnight Will. And keep me  
informed!

WILL  
As much as I'm able! But after  
tonight, the lid goes on regarding  
information associated with this  
case. Tightly, I might add! It's a  
federal investigation now...

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE, SIXTH AVENUE, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA -  
LATER

Chief Greer stands in front of a two-way mirror looking into  
an interview room at the FBI Field Office in Anchorage.  
Holding a cup of steaming decaf, he watches as two FBI agents  
and a state police detective begin to question David Kimball.  
The suspect had already been read his rights by the time of  
Greer's arrival. An assistant U.S. Attorney and his  
investigator now enter the observation booth.

WILL  
Hi. Will Greer, Girdwood Fire  
Chief.

Shaking hands with both visitors.

AUSA KEMP  
Brian Kemp, assistant U.S.  
attorney, here in Anchorage. This  
is my top investigator, Greg  
Mitchell.

Investigator Mitchell nods.

MITCHELL  
Chief!

AUSA KEMP  
If this is our guy, he's in a  
boatload of trouble.

WILL  
It's him, alright...

Taking another sip of coffee while leaning against the reinforced glass.

MITCHELL  
Our Victim Witness Specialist may  
be joining us. She specializes in  
crimes involving Native Americans.

WILL  
I look forward to meeting her.

AUSA KEMP  
What's he saying?

They all stop talking to listen in.

FBI AGENT 1  
Dave, we have witnesses on shore  
who place you and your vehicle at  
the scene, so quit the BS.

DAVE  
Even if I was in Knik Arm last  
night, which I wasn't, how could  
these witnesses be so sure it was  
me?

The Alaska Bureau of Investigation detective now stands and walks over to a table containing evidentiary items. He selects a clear plastic bag containing a dark object. The ABI detective now returns to his seat and holds up the bag.

ABI DETECTIVE  
Do you know what this is?

DAVE  
I'm at a loss...

ABI DETECTIVE  
It's a pair of binoculars!

DAVE  
Oh? So?

ABI DETECTIVE  
They belong to one of the witnesses  
who positively identified you out  
of a dozen driver's license photos.

DAVE  
One witness, one...

ABI DETECTIVE  
This witness passed these  
binoculars to the other witnesses  
on shore.

DAVE  
Big deal. You got nothing!

Folding his arms defiantly.

FBI AGENT 1  
They each pointed out your driver's  
license photo using the very same  
lineup. Separately, I might add,  
and at entirely different times.  
These witnesses were unanimous in  
their determination, every single  
one of them! How do you explain  
that? And, they all described your  
Jeep in detail...

DAVE  
There are literally thousands of  
vehicles like mine in Alaska!

FBI AGENT 1  
But how many with a vanity license  
plate?

Dave mops his forehead with the sleeve of his hoodie.  
Does HOT POPPY ring a bell,  
hotshot? Isn't that your license  
plate?

DAVE  
Yes, but I wasn't...

A knock is heard on the door, and a lanky individual enters  
the room. He now hands the lead FBI Agent two sheets of  
paper.

FBI AGENT 1  
Thanks, Mike.

The agent quickly reads its contents and shows it to his fellow agent as well as the ABI detective, who both nod their heads affirmatively.

See that guy who just left the room? He's a forensic wiz with obtaining incriminating telecommunication records. Phone calls, emails, and, are you ready for this, text messages, identified as SMSs. Do you know what SMS stands for, dummy? Hmm? It stands for Short Message Service.

DAVE  
You have no right to be looking through my phone!

FBI AGENT 2  
We didn't! Your text messages and phone calls were obtained through a search warrant issued upon your iPhone provider. It was signed by a federal judge last night here in Anchorage. Sure, we had to get Judge McLennan out of bed for it, but once we provided her with the truckload of probable cause we assembled against you, why, she was more than happy to sign it.

Dave remains silent.

FBI AGENT 1  
Okay, Hot Poppy, explain this SMS!

Sliding it across the table.  
Go ahead, read it...

Dave shudders, flips over the paper, and drops his head. Just wait until the jury sees this flashed across a giant monitor at your trial! We'll refer to it as Government Exhibit Number 1.

Drawing quiet laughter from those in the room.

FBI AGENT 2  
To put it into plain English - the smoking gun!

ABI DETECTIVE  
More like a smoking canon!

FBI AGENT 1  
 Yeah! So, you don't want to read  
 the text out loud? Allow me! My  
 technical wiz, Mike, decoded it for  
 me: HP, that's you, yesterday, 8:42  
 pm.

Looking over his reading glasses.

Help! Feds at my door!!! Must be  
 about dropping off my pregnant  
 girlfriend in Knick Arm last night.  
 If I'm jammed, so are you!!!  
 Remember that! Sound about right,  
 there, Dave?

ABI DETECTIVE  
 If I'm jammed, so are you!!!  
 Remember that! Who exactly are you  
 referring to? Come on, you gotta  
 know that we'll eventually  
 determine this person's identity.  
 We refer to it as subscriber  
 information. Name, address, and  
 other spicy details...

DAVE  
 (coaxingly)  
 Wouldn't you all want to know! This  
 conversation is over! I want a  
 lawyer and no longer wish to waive  
 my rights. The next time I open my  
 mouth, it'll be in the presence of  
 a highly-paid defense attorney.

The occupants in the room sit silently before investigators begin to gather their materials to leave this not-so-confident attempted murder suspect alone with his thoughts. A U.S. Marshal soon arrives to handcuff Dave and later transport him to the Anchorage Correctional Complex, located only a few avenues away.

EXT. TRIDENT SEAFOOD, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA - MORNING

Joe pulls into his reserved parking space at the Trident Seafood parking lot in downtown Anchorage. He slides his iPhone off the dashboard to check his texts before entering the plant. Scrolling past insignificant messages, he stops to read one from his friend, Dave Kimball:

HP  
 Yesterday 8:42 pm

hlp! feds @ m dor!!!  
 (MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)  
mst b abt drppng o/f m pg gf in  
knik lst n8. if im jmd, sry!!!  
R.T.!

Joe places the phone in his shirt pocket and immediately slumps back in the seat. Beginning to sweat profusely, he studies his reddening face in the review mirror before exiting the vehicle to start his shift, this time with a rapidly beating heart.

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE, SIXTH AVENUE, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA - THE NEXT DAY

Back inside the FBI Field Office, this time with retained counsel, Dave Kimball sits down in the same room with the very same group of investigators. Chief Greer is already in the observation booth behind a two-way mirror. He is suddenly joined by Assistant United States Attorney Brian Kemp, Investigator Gregory Mitchell, and Victim Witness Coordinator Monica Kupiak. The time is 8:15 am.

AUSA KEMP  
We meet again!

WILL  
Good morning.

MITCHELL  
Chief, this is the Victim Witness Coordinator I told you about.

MONICA  
Hi, my name is Monica Kupiak.

Reaching across the others to shake Will's hand.

WILL  
It's a pleasure to meet you. I have some questions I'd like to ask you afterward, if that's alright.

MONICA  
Sure. I'd be happy to field any questions you have.

Investigator Mitchell smiles.

WILL  
Greg says that you're an expert in handling Native Alaskan victims.

MONICA

I am. Let's talk later. The suspect's lawyer is speaking right now.

WILL

(whispering)

Of course...

Turning to AUSA Kemp.  
Who's this guy?

AUSA KEMP

He's a local attorney. His name is Stewart Long. He's very accomplished and a real straight shooter.

Will nods and focuses in on the interview.

ATTORNEY LONG

My client is willing to share vital information with you in exchange for his...

Turning to his client.

His signed confession, which I have here in my briefcase. This will be turned over to you, if, and only if, he's credited with certain information he's about to share with you this morning, if that's agreeable?

FBI AGENT 1

All I can promise you, Mr. Long, is that we will verify the information he provides us first, before bringing any confession to AUSA...

ATTORNEY LONG

Please, call me Stewart.

FBI AGENT 1

Very well, Stewart...

ATTORNEY LONG

It concerns a murder that took place not far from here, twenty-four years ago...

FBI AGENT 1

I understand, Stewart, but...

ATTORNEY LONG  
Of a young newlywed named Abby, who  
drowned in Turnagain Arm in July of  
1986!

Will is visibly stunned.

Agreed?

FBI AGENT 1  
Only as far as verifying and  
bringing this information to my  
prosecutor, yes, we're agreed.

ATTORNEY LONG  
Go ahead, Dave, tell them...

FBI AGENT 2  
Wait a minute, just so we're clear,  
your client is waiving his right to  
remain silent as well as his right  
against self-incrimination.

ATTORNEY LONG  
That's correct. Go ahead, Dave,  
tell them...

David Kimball proceeds to tell investigators assembled in the room his up-close, eyewitness account of the murder of Abby Gladstone Coulter.

DAVE  
On July 15, 1986, I happened to be riding with my friend Joe Coulter and his wife, Abby, along Turnagain Arm. It was early in the morning when we took a shortcut just before Twentymile River and drove across the mudflats in the direction of Seattle Creek, where Joe's dredging site is located. Can I have some water? I've got a lot to say and am going to need something to soothe my throat. I asked a guard for a drink last night, but he proceeded to ignore me.

FBI AGENT 2  
We have some bottled water in the refrigerator. I'll be right back!

Dave resumes his statement.

DAVE

So, we get about three-quarters of the way across the arm, and Joe puts the Jeep in neutral and starts revving the engine, and I'm like, What are you doing? Then, Joe tells Abby to get out and push.

The FBI Agent arrives with the water and sets it down in front of Dave, who opens the bottle and takes a gulp.

Thank you. So, she does what Joe says, gets out of the Jeep, and begins to push. Then...

FBI AGENT 1

Wait a minute, why didn't you get out and help her push?

DAVE

Because Joe turned around in his seat and put his hand on my knee, stopping me. He looked at me, like, I only want her to push.

Taking another swig of water.

After about ten minutes, Joe puts the Jeep in drive and begins to move forward. Abby walks out from behind the vehicle and swings back into the front seat. I could sense she was miffed that I failed to get out and help her, but, hey...

We moved across the mudflats until we hit a kind of deep gully. You know how the flats are when the tide is out, how it looks like the surface of the moon? Then, Joe flips the transmission into neutral again without Abby noticing and asks her to get out and push one more time.

I distinctly remember because she turned around and gave me a look I swear I'll never forget...

Dave stops momentarily and slides his finger down the side of the cool water bottle.

ATTORNEY LONG

Do you need a minute, Dave?

DAVE

I just want to get this over with!

ATTORNEY LONG  
Go ahead, and when you're done,  
we'll have something to negotiate  
with...

DAVE  
(grinning)  
But she gets out of the Jeep anyway  
and begins pushing, while Joe revs  
the engine, faking exertion and  
swearing away, saying Come on, come  
on!  
That must have been about the time  
Abby's boot got lodged in a really  
bad fissure. In fact, she told Joe  
that her foot was stuck. So, what  
does Joe do? He places the Jeep in  
drive and guns it all the way to  
shore!

ABI DETECTIVE  
Leaving Abby behind?

DAVE  
(nodding)  
Leaving Abby behind, yeah...

ABI DETECTIVE  
Alright, then what?

DAVE  
We drove up the gravel embankment  
and parked the Jeep, while Abby was  
stuck, pleading with Joe to come  
back and help her. I felt terrible,  
but Joe looked at me, like, You're  
in this too! In fact, Joe said if  
police ever determined that Abby's  
drowning was intentional, and not  
an accident, I'd go to prison right  
along with him, as an accessory to  
the crime.

FBI AGENT 1  
And you bought that bull? Is that  
the reason you didn't run for the  
police?

Dave leans in toward the FBI Agent.

DAVE  
(determined)  
You'd have to meet Joe Coulter.  
(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)  
He can be very, what's the word I'm  
looking for, manipulative...! I  
could kick myself now.

FBI AGENT 2  
Save it! Continue.

DAVE  
Mathematically, Joe had everything  
worked out ahead of time.

Counting on his fingers.

The bore tides, the fact that they  
would be considerably greater after  
a new moon, which occurred the  
night before, at times rushing in  
at twenty-five miles per hour,  
reaching a height of some thirty  
feet or more. Like I said, he had  
it all figured out, including  
exactly how long it would take for  
the water to reach Abby's chest,  
before running for help.

ABI DETECTIVE  
Let's stop right here for a minute.  
I'm going to show you a picture  
taken by a passerby on the day  
you're describing. Can you identify  
the individuals contained in this  
photo?

Sliding the picture across the table. Attorney Long quietly  
consults with his client before allowing him to identify the  
parties contained in the photo.

ATTORNEY LONG  
Where did you obtain this?

ABI DETECTIVE  
We have our sources...

Attorney Long motions for his client to proceed.

DAVE  
Well, this is Dave and me, sitting  
in the Jeep. God, it was muddy  
there!

ABI DETECTIVE  
Okay...

DAVE  
And, uh, that's Abby in the  
distance, unable to move.

Pointing to the woman in the background.

ABI DETECTIVE  
Proceed!

DAVE  
So, once the water was up to her  
chest, Joe makes a beeline for the  
road and hoofs it to a local  
tavern, where he calls the state  
police station in nearby Girdwood.  
The Whittier Police Department must  
have received a distress call,  
since they were the first to arrive  
at the scene. As planned, I had  
already hidden in the alder bushes  
around Ingram Creek, but still had  
a pretty good view of Abby's  
imminent drowning!

Finishing his water bottle and putting on the cap.  
I remember thinking, if she wasn't  
killed by the rising tide, she'd  
soon be dead from the thirty-eight-  
degree water...

FBI AGENT 1  
Dave, that trailer being towed by  
the Jeep, what did it contain?

DAVE  
Dredging equipment! You know, Joe  
had a motorized mechanism we often  
used to disperse underwater flour.  
We used it all the time when  
dredging along the shore.

FBI AGENT 2  
Flour?

ABI DETECTIVE  
The locals call the muddy substance  
flour. The granular muck is  
actually comprised of tiny shards  
of pulverized granite, produced  
when massive glaciers, some three-  
stories high or more, grind their  
way over the surrounding mountain  
range.

(MORE)

ABI DETECTIVE (CONT'D)  
The flour is eventually carried  
below by streams of melting ice,  
where it eventually makes its way  
into Turnagain Arm.

Dave nods his head in approval.

DAVE  
That's right!

FBI AGENT 1  
So he failed to use the very  
mechanism that could've proved  
instrumental in saving Abby's life!

DAVE  
He never gave it a thought...

FBI AGENT 1  
And neither did you, you...! You  
make me sick!

ATTORNEY LONG  
That's enough!

Shielding his client.

FBI AGENT 2  
Anything else?

DAVE  
Yeah, when Joe came back to wait  
for police and emergency services  
to arrive, he waded into the icy  
water, pretending to be helping  
her. But by that time, Abby  
appeared listless, buoyed only by  
the rising tide. You all know what  
transpired from there...

After a brief lull, the ABI detective jumps in.

ABI DETECTIVE  
I have a question. How did Joe  
explain why the Jeep was already on  
shore when police arrived?

DAVE  
I don't know, he never said. My  
personal view is...

ABI DETECTIVE  
Go ahead, Dave.

DAVE

My personal view is, knowing Joe, he probably told them something like, Hey, I had to get that rig out of the water, so when I finally freed up Abby's foot, I'd be able to quickly get her home or to a hospital.

ABI DETECTIVE

I see...

FBI AGENT 2

Okay, Dave, after the ambulance left for the hospital and the police drove away, did you ride home with Joe?

DAVE

No! He insisted that we leave separately, so as not to draw any attention. So, I thumbed a ride home. That's it!

ATTORNEY LONG

Anything else?

ABI DETECTIVE

Yes. Based on your knowledge, Dave, what caused Joe to murder his wife?

DAVE

(shocked)

You don't know? Joe left Alaska for Carson City, Nevada, a few days before his and Abby's wedding. She had just finished up her spring semester and he hadn't seen her in over five months. When they arrived in Eagle River after the reception, he discovered that Abby was three months pregnant by another guy, who turned out to be a member of the LSU Men's Swim Team. So, he...

FBI AGENT 1

So, he had her killed by the bore tide in Turnagain Arm!

DAVE

That's correct.

Attorney Long now addresses the lead agent.

ATTORNEY LONG  
If there's nothing else, I'll wait  
to hear from you after the details  
of my client's account this morning  
are fully vetted. If everything  
checks out, you'll receive his  
written confession and we'll take  
it from there with AUSA Kemp.

FBI AGENT 1  
Alright then!  
(exhaling)  
I'll call the deputy marshal to  
take Dave back to the lockup. Thank  
you, Stewart.

Attorney Long and the investigators zip up their portfolios  
while Will Greer stands motionless behind the two-way mirror,  
where he is soon seen addressing Monica Kupiak.

INT. COULTER RESIDENCE, EAGLE RIVER, ALASKA - MORNING

The kitchen phone rings in the Coulter residence, where  
Gracie picks up the receiver.

GRACIE  
Hello?

JOE  
Gracie.

GRACIE  
Oh, hi, Dad.

JOE  
Hi, honey. Can you put your mother  
on the phone?

GRACIE  
Sure. I'll yell to her. She's  
upstairs vacuuming.

Gracie goes to the staircase and calls to her mother.  
Mom!  
(louder)  
Mom...! Dad's on the phone!

STEPHANIE  
I'll pick it up in my bedroom,  
honey!

Turning off the vacuum, she now reaches the phone.  
Joe?

JOE  
We need to talk...

STEPHANIE  
Joe, it's 8:45 in the morning!

JOE  
I know, I know...

STEPHANIE  
What is it...? Joe, I don't like  
the sound in your voice. You sound  
shaky.

Switching the receiver to the other shoulder.

JOE  
Because I am shaky! I should be  
shaky... My heart is pounding a  
mile a minute!

STEPHANIE  
Why? What happened? Is it  
management?

JOE  
Dave was arrested last night!

STEPHANIE  
Dave Kimball? Why, I just saw his  
wife last week in Carr's  
supermarket... I'm afraid I don't  
understand, where, and for what?

JOE  
I should have shared the  
information I'm about to admit to  
you a long time ago.

STEPHANIE  
Now you're scaring me. Why was Dave  
arrested?

JOE  
He was arrested by the FBI at his  
home in Eagle Ridge for attempted  
murder...

Stephanie plops down hard on the unmade bed, steadyng  
herself.

STEPHANIE  
What?

JOE

You heard me right... Look, this is probably going to hit the newspapers, so I might as well get out in front of the story. Dave was in the jeep with Abby and me when we drove across Turnagain Arm the day she died.

STEPHANIE

I'm glad you got that off your chest, but what does Dave Kimball's arrest have to do with who else was in your Jeep that day? I don't...

Joe turns around in the breakroom to ensure there's no one else around.

JOE

Because he tried to drown his pregnant girlfriend in Knik Arm the night before, in circumstances very similar to how Abby died. Hold on, someone's coming into the break room...

Joe waits for the individual to finish using the vending machine.

Okay, I'm back.

STEPHANIE

Dave has a girlfriend? How old is she?

JOE

She's fifteen and Native Alaskan!

STEPHANIE

Statutory rape...

JOE

What?

Covering his ear to hear.

STEPHANIE

You said fifteen. If a girl is under sixteen years of age in Alaska, it's considered rape. A felony!

JOE  
(grimacing)  
Ugh. Statutory rape. I hadn't  
considered that...

STEPHANIE  
I'm still unclear how Dave's  
conduct involves you!

JOE  
He could talk...!

STEPHANIE  
Talk about what? Nothing's going to  
happen to you, Joe. You're a good  
man, and don't forget it! Alright?

JOE  
(now calmer)  
Alright... I've got to get back to  
the line.

STEPHANIE  
You do that, Joe! I believe in you,  
you know that!

JOE  
Gotta go, babe. Love you!

Joe leaves the break room and returns to supervise his line,  
just as Gracie quits her eavesdropping and cautiously sets  
the receiver back down on the phone.

I/E. GERRISH LIBRARY, GIRDWOOD, ALASKA - LATER

Stephanie pulls into a parking space at the Gerrish Library  
and addresses her daughter.

STEPHANIE  
I'm still not clear why you made me  
drive down here.

GRACIE  
I told you. I may have left  
something in there last week.  
Either that, or I left it at the  
fire department next door. I won't  
be long!

Gracie gets out of the vehicle and heads right for the front  
door. Entering the library, she greets Millie, who is once  
again seated at the front desk.

Hello again.

MILLIE  
Why hello there, young lady!

GRACIE  
I didn't have time last week to finish going through the file I was researching...about the newlywed drowning. May I look through it again?

MILLIE  
I remember. This way.

Leading Gracie to the rear of the library. Millie opens the doors of the upright file cabinet and retrieves the requested red well.

Here you go. The gloves are on the bottom shelf.

GRACIE  
Yes, I remember, thank you.

MILLIE  
Tell me, why is someone your age so interested in this file?

GRACIE  
I may be writing a book someday.

MILLIE  
I see... Holler if you have any questions.

GRACIE  
I certainly will. Thanks again.

With the librarian back at the front desk, Gracie picks up where she left off. Thumbing through more documents, she soon discovers glossy eight-by-ten photos of her father's muddy Jeep, the spot where Abby struggled on the floor of Turnagain Arm, taken after the icy waters had receded, and her lifeless body when authorities brought it up on shore.

(voiceover)  
Ew! Disgusting... I'd like to study this picture more closely, but I'm going to pass! Alright, these are official permits for dredging along the shore, and what's this, a Certificate of Death with an attached copy of the autopsy. Let's see, where's the cause of death? Oh, here it is: acute hypothermia morbidity accompanied by myocardial infarction. Whatever that is!

Gracie browses through the remaining documents. Upon reaching the final item, she returns to the autopsy for one last look. Seconds pass before she spots something wonderful that went unnoticed the first time around. There, in black and white, the final narrative of the report, just above the coroner's signature, reads as follows:

The victim was between twelve and fourteen weeks pregnant at the time of death!

(overjoyed)

Yippie! So, she couldn't have been my mother had she lived, Abby was already pregnant with an entirely different baby!

She leaves the records on the table along with her gloves and skips out of the library.

MILLIE

Did you find what you came here for?

GRACIE

Oh, yes, thank you, Millie. I left everything on the table, just the way you like it. Bye-bye...

Back in the car, Stephanie notices a great change in Gracie's demeanor.

STEPHANIE

Did you find what you were looking for?

GRACIE

Yes, Mom. And I couldn't be happier!

For the first time in weeks, Gracie enjoys taking in the extraordinary scenery of Turnagain Arm at high tide.

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE, SIXTH AVENUE, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA -  
MOMENTS LATER

Will comes out of the FBI observation room with a grim look on his face. He says goodbye to the investigators and locates a payphone in the lobby, where he calls Julia. Finding her unavailable, he leaves the following voicemail message on her iPhone.

WILL

(voiceover)

Julia, it's Will.

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)  
If you're available, meet me at  
Chair 5 Restaurant tonight @ 7:00.  
I have some rather important news  
to share with you. Thanks.

Greer heads out of the building, enters his vehicle, and drives the forty miles home to Girdwood.

EXT. COULTER RESIDENCE, EAGLE RIVER, ALASKA - AFTERNOON

Soon after his shift, Joe pulls onto Dawn Street and into the driveway, only to be met by two Alaska Bureau of Investigation detectives and a state police car easing up behind him. It is here, he is read his Miranda rights, handcuffed, and placed into the backseat of the detectives' car, while a stunned Gracie and inconsolable Stephanie look on through the tall casement windows inside the kitchen.

**SEQUENCE**

INT. SEC CHAMPIONSHIPS, ARKANSAS NATATORIUM, FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS - EVENING

Abby takes the last crawl to the touchpad in the championship round of the 400-meter medley relay at the 1986 SEC Swimming and Diving Championships in Fayetteville, Arkansas. As anchor, she remains in the pool while fellow relay members gather around the starting block to congratulate each other. Looking up at the scoreboard, realizing they have come in first, Abby Gladstone splashes the water with both palms in jubilant celebration. Their first SEC women's swimming title in school history, LSU will not win another such title until 2003.

**SEQUENCE ENDED**

EXT. BELUGA POINT, OUTSIDE GIRDWOOD, ALASKA - DUSK

After dinner at Chair 5, Will takes Julia to Beluga Point, overlooking Turnagain Arm, where they both try to make sense of Joe's shocking arrest. With the evening chill coming on, he places his fire chief jacket around her shoulders as she slowly leans her head against his thickly-set silhouette. All this, while the bore tide swirls about the jagged rocks below.

## I/E. GIRDWOOD AND VICINITY, ALASKA - DAY

Photos of Julia and Will, taken in breathtaking Southeastern Alaska, move across the screen during summer, winter, spring, and fall. One picture in particular has Chief Greer down on one knee while on the observation deck outside Seven Glaciers Restaurant after yet another thrilling tram ride up the face of Mount Alyeska.

## INT. CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS, GIRDWOOD, ALASKA - MORNING

After a yearlong engagement, Will Greer and Julia Arden Buranich are married during a private ceremony at the Chapel of Our Lady of the Snows in Girdwood. The bride's wedding ring is adorned with Opals from the Nelchina Mines of Alaska. As for the groom, a simple gold band will do. After a two-week honeymoon in Guadalajara, the couple returns to the chapel, where a miniature guardian angel, purchased in Mexico, is placed on the broad wooden trim running beneath an upper window. This golden-winged beauty watches over Turnagain Arm to this very day.

## EPILOGUE

Ten years later, in the comfort of her study, Julia Greer posts a heart-warming memory on the website *Ancestry*, marking the 35th anniversary of Abby's death.

JULIA  
 (voiceover)  
 It is mind blowing to think it has  
 been 36 years since we met in an  
 extremely hot laundry room in  
 college. As teammate and soulmate,  
 you were my first and last Best  
 Friend! Still miss you every day -  
 JABG.

Joseph Michael Coulter was sentenced to 20 years and is currently serving time at the Goose Creek Correctional Center in Wasilla, Alaska.

David Leonard Kimball was sentenced to 96 months and was remanded to the Federal Correctional Institution in Sheridan, Oregon. He was released in 2018 and completed his term of supervised release in 2023.

Eleana Balluta gave birth to a healthy baby boy in 2011 and currently resides with her husband in the tribal Village of Idlughet.

As for Gracie, she left Eagle River at the tender age of 18 to attend the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, where she majored in English. Four years later, this cherished daughter, like her mother, graduated with full honors.

THE END