

MOUNTAIN MYSTERIES: CASE OF THE GOLD CAT

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FADE IN:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

SUPER: "HAVEN, COLORADO, SEPTEMBER 9th"

The old mining town, now ski town of Haven, Colorado, never looked brighter on this sunny, fall morning. SHERIFF ELLIE MAY LYONS (25), a smiling, curvy brunette in a Sheriff's hat, an untucked uniform shirt and blue jeans, strolls behind a half-dozen cars and trucks on Main Street, marking a back tire of each for two-hour parking. She's eating a giant jelly roll from the donut shop.

She purposely misses a junk-heap of a pickup truck and moves on.

A curious, snarky TOURIST (60) watches Ellie tag his late-model BMW.

TOURIST

You missed the junk-heap!

ELLIE

Donut store delivery truck. Don't want the town to go without donuts, do you?

On cue, DERRICK FRANKLIN (35), a handsome African-American, races out with a pink dozen-donut box on a delivery, and TONY WHITE (40), a snow bum, races out with a small bag of donuts.

The Tourist stares at Tony as he looks for his old bicycle, then at Derrick as he hops in the old pickup.

Ellie whispers to the Tourist.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Like clockwork, 'cept Tony's missing a few gears.

DERRICK

Morning Sheriff. Gotta get these to the church.

ELLIE

Like clockwork.

Tony yells to the Sheriff.

TONY

Morning, Ellie.

ELLIE
Better get that whole apple fritter
back to Cecil this time!

Tony laughs as he hops on his old bike.

TONY
Will do, Sher...

BANG

Ellie, Tony, Derrick, and the Tourist turn toward the same mountain.

TOURIST
What was that?

Ellie runs down the street and yells back.

ELLIE
Gunshot. Muzzle-loaded rifle. First
day of elk season!

Tony rides his bike slowly away. Ellie looks at her smartphone for the time (8 AM), and marks tires.

Ellie looks down the street and sees ROSA GONZALES (35), a pretty Latina looking out of the Museum window.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
That's a little early?

Ellie continues marking tires.

EXT. OLD MINE - DAY

SUPER: "OLD PRITCHARD MINE, 8:30 AM"

CECIL LANGLEY (92), dressed in an old thick, wool, gray-tweed sports jacket and gray jeans, lies dead outside the old mine shaft. His chest oozes blood, as SHERIFF HANK PORTER (45), a dark-haired, handsome, and fit brute, scrambles up century-old mine tailings to reach him.

He looks around as he climbs. Three Hunters (50-65) in full camouflage gear and orange vests, and with antique muzzle-loading rifles, stand idly by the body. The Sheriff's patrol car is parked downslope by the road, as Ellie races up with lights and siren. Ellie cannot see the body, as the three hunters scramble down the talus slope.

Ellie hops out of her patrol car.

ELLIE
Sheriff up there?

The hunters nod yes.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
You boys fire any shots today?

The hunters nod no.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
See any elk?

Sheriff Hank comes into view up at the mine and yells.

HANK
It's Cecil Langley. Been shot.
Body's still warm. Ellie, call your
Doctor-friend, and tell her to show
up as the Coroner!

ELLIE
Oh my God! Cecil?

HANK
Then check each rifle again and get
statements.

ELLIE
I'll come up and help.

HANK
You heard me. Follow orders for
once. Send Doc up when she gets
here.
(angry)
You're a disgrace! Where are your
uniform pants?

ELLIE
Jelly donut stain. Had to get 'em
cleaned.

Hank is fuming. Ellie looks disappointed. She makes a call.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Doc, better get up to the old
Pritchard Mine on the Ski Peak
Eight Road. Bring the old army
stretcher and a bag.
(pause)
Thanks, Doc.

HUNTER #1

We told the Sheriff we heard the shot from the next canyon and came over in about ten minutes. That's it.

ELLIE

Sorry, boys. One more time.

Ellie takes notes.

We see Sheriff Hank looking around in the rocks beneath his feet for clues. Nothing!

Ellie finished taking statements, as DOCTOR "DOC" RUFA KALKHAN (32) a Middle Eastern beauty in a purple hijab and gray pantsuit, drives up slowly in a Prius and hops out.

DOC

Coroner station wagon's in the shop. Would've had to stuff 'em in my Prius anyway.

Doc sees Ellie's sad mood.

DOC (CONT'D)

Someone we know?

ELLIE

Old Cecil Langley.

DOC

Praise be. Town historian? Hunting accident?

ELLIE

Stray bullet, probably. I'll help with your stretcher.

Doc and Ellie fetch the stretcher from the Prius with all the passenger-side seats folded down. Doc also carries an old leather "doctor's briefcase."

Hank yells from above.

HANK

Stray bullet. I'm sure. I'll come down and get the stretcher.

ELLIE

I'll come up. No problem.

HANK

Ellie, go cover the east-side road.
Get statements from everyone
exiting the forest for a couple
hours. I'll cover town-side.

ELLIE

But, Sheriff, they're likely long
gone by now. Like closing the barn
door after the horse gets out.

HANK

Do as you're ordered. And call Tony
to tell him to eat the apple
fritter. Cecil ain't coming to the
daily donut party!

Doc whispers to Ellie.

DOC

He's such a caveman.

Ellie whispers back.

ELLIE

Send me photos. We'll grab dinner
tonight. My turn to buy.

DOC

(to Ellie quietly)
Deal.

(loudly to Hank)
I can get the stretcher myself.

ELLIE

Okay, Hank. I'll take the east
side. Call me if you need anything.

HANK

I want this wrapped up before my
men's baseball practice today at
two. Justice delayed is... justice
ain't done right.

ELLIE

(mumbles)
Idiot.

HANK

What?

ELLIE

(yells)

It's an idiom: Justice delayed is justice denied. It's attributed to William Penn, but it may date back to the Magna Carta.

Doc chuckles as she carries the stretcher up to Hank.

HANK

Whatever. Then check in on old lady Hanson. She called this morning about her lost cat.

ELLIE

Winnie Hanson is Cecil Langley's older sister.

HANK

This old guy's gotta older sister?

Hank looks away, then looks back.

HANK (CONT'D)

Tell her that her brother's dead!
And get your uniform pants on!

Hank turns back to the body. Doc and Ellie freeze, stunned. They shake their heads in disgust and move on.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

SUPER: "WINNIE HANSON'S HOUSE, NOON"

Ellie drives with the windows down, along a long dirt driveway to an old house to see a late-model Jaguar convertible beat her there. Gray-haired WINNIE HANSON (95) in an old print dress sits in a rocking chair, being comforted by a bottle of port wine and DELANO GREEN III (45), a casually dressed, handsome lawyer with a dozen white roses in his hand. Winnie is tipsy and rude.

WINNIE

Don't want your damn flowers.
Should've brought a bottle of port!

Ellie hops out and races up to them. She takes the roses from Delano and forces them into Winnie's stubborn hands.

ELLIE

Winnie, I'm so sorry about your brother. Mr. Green, what are you doing here?

DELANO

Call me Delano, remember? It's all over town. The hunting accident. Stray bullet. Cecil and I talked baseball a lot. Just came to pay my respects.

Ellie smiles at him.

WINNIE

Want to be left alone.

DELANO

I understand. Can I go put the roses in water for you?

WINNIE

Stay out of my house. You said your piece. Now go.

Delano looks like his feelings are crushed. Winnie thrusts the flowers to Ellie, as Delano turns to leave.

DELANO

My condolences, ma'am.

Ellie puts an arm around Winnie, as they watch Delano walk sadly to his car.

Winnie pushes Ellie's arm off and looks away.

DELANO (CONT'D)

Sheriff, you promised to go get coffee with me someday. Come with me this afternoon and watch the 1890s-baseball team warm up for tomorrow's Founder's Day Picnic.

Winnie snaps her head to glare at Ellie.

ELLIE

It would be fun to see the Vintage Baseball reenactment. What time do they practice?

DELANO

Four PM. Two hours after the men in town practice. Your boss is the coach! You know all this!

ELLIE

That's right. I'll be on duty then. Sorry. Rain check, Mr. Green?

DELANO
Delano, remember?

Winnie kicks Ellie in the ankles again.

ELLIE
Delano. We'll see.

DELANO
Could fly you to New York, fancy
dinner and the theatre, back the
next day?

Ellie's eyes light up temporarily. Winnie kicks Ellie's ankle
again. Ellie waves to Delano.

ELLIE
I'll think about it!

Delano peels out down the dirt driveway. Ellie turns to
Winnie in anger.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
I know why I don't trust Delano
Green. He's a lawyer! But why don't
you trust him, Winnie?

WINNIE
Help me in, gosh-darn it. It's
about a cat. A lost cat!

Ellie helps Winnie inside.

INT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The inside of Winnie's house hasn't changed in a century.
It's a museum of old furniture, paintings, and family nick-
knacks. Ellie helps Winnie to her favorite chair.

WINNIE
Bring my port wine? Gosh-darn
delivery boy ain't twenty-one...

ELLIE
In the squad car. Get it in a
minute. Sorry about Cecil. We'll
find out what happened. Don't
worry.

Winnie goes off on a tirade.

WINNIE

Worrying is like eatin' celery.
Totally useless. Takes more energy
to eat celery than you get by
eatin' it. Worrying's the same way.

ELLIE

Never thought of it that way. Why
don't ya like Delano? Named after
your favorite President, I bet!

WINNIE

Named long before. It's a family of
snakes! He's Delano Green the
Third, and I knew the other two.

ELLIE

Family of snakes?

WINNIE

Goes back to Rexford Green, and
grandma, Martha Carter, born in
this house in 1872.

Ellie looks around.

ELLIE

You never mentioned her when I'd
come by and check your house for
every raccoon and black bear in the
county, or bring your bottle of
port!

WINNIE

You never asked about the cat!

Ellen paces impatiently.

ELLIE

What is this about a cat?

Winnie points to an old roll-top desk.

WINNIE

Inside the lower-left drawer. Under
children's artwork is a framed
drawing.

Ellie hunts down the frame and examines the drawing. It's
faded, and the pencil-work is smudged in places, but you can
see a gold miner, his pan, and a large nugget in the pan. The
paper is torn just to the right of the miner.

ELLIE

Who's this, and who's the artist?

Winnie is reluctant to tell the story.

Ellie runs out to her patrol car to retrieve the bottle of port.

She returns and unscrews the cap for Winnie, but holds it back. Winnie talks.

WINNIE

The miner is Linus Carter, my great-grandpa. The artist is Grandma Martha when she was sixteen years old, before they took her to the Colorado State Penitentiary at Canon City.

ELLIE

State Penitentiary? What for?

WINNIE

Stealing the Cat; the giant gold nugget that Linus found. Martha said it looked like a cat.

ELLIE

Did she steal the gold?

WINNIE

Course not! Problem was, Grandma Martha couldn't talk. Born without vocal cords or some such thing.

Ellie is sad.

ELLIE

She couldn't defend herself.

WINNIE

Didn't read or write, but she could draw. Judge wouldn't allow it.

ELLIE

And the judge was...

WINNIE

Rexford Green, great-grandpa to Delano Green III. Gave her twenty years, she served ten. Never found the Cat.

ELLIE

Seems far-fetched to me. Is that why you called the Sheriff this morning?

WINNIE

My brother Cecil wouldn't rest 'til he found the Cat, and exonerated our grandma! I think he was on to something, and that's what got him shot!

ELLIE

You tell the Sheriff any of this?

WINNIE

No, Ma'am. Don't trust him.

ELLIE

Why's that?

WINNIE

He don't come by when I call about a bear pokin' around, and he won't bring me my port wine!

Ellie hugs Winnie. Winnie pushes her away.

ELLIE

Let's keep this between you and me.

WINNIE

Leave me alone with my port wine, while you find my brother's killer, and that darn gold Cat!

Ellie smiles and studies the drawing.

ELLIE

The drawing is torn. What's missing? Why is it wrinkled?

Questions make Winnie angry as she chugs down the port.

WINNIE

That's the mystery, isn't it? Grandma never returned home or to Alpine County. Learned to read and write in prison, and became a guard and teacher. Had a daughter in prison, my Ma, Ingrid, who married Doc Langley, and moved back in here.

ELLIE

She had you and Cecil.

WINNIE

But never went near the Green's.
Turned the other way, even in this
small town. Don't blame her.
They're snakes!

ELLIE

Could your Ma speak, read, and
write?

WINNIE

Lord, yes. Taught school here for
over fifty years.

ELLIE

Anyone talk about what happened to
your grandma?

Winnie throws a glass figurine on the floor, and it shatters.

WINNIE

Cecil asked all the questions in
the family. Look where it got him!

Ellie turns sad again.

ELLIE

I'd better stop by Cecil's place,
see how Tony's holding up.

WINNIE

Sleeps in the barn, ya know!
Haven't the faintest idea why Cecil
and that good-for-nothing ski bum
struck up a friendship! Near twenty
years now.

ELLIE

I think it was the apple fritters!

Winnie glares at Ellie.

WINNIE

Cecil was always yelling, "I'll buy
if you fly." Hated shopping and
eating out places. Loved those
apple fritters!

Winnie turns sad.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

Just like me, I guess. Hate going out.

ELLIE

Agoraphobia. Must have been hard on Cecil being a historian.

WINNIE

Gave him an excuse to keep his own library to live in day and night.

ELLIE

Why'd he go out to the old mine this morning, do you suppose, Winnie?

WINNIE

You're the detective, Ellie. Forget the gosh-darn Cat. Find his killer! Keep the drawing to yourself.

Ellie tries to kiss Winnie on the top of the head, but she pushes her away. Ellie begins to walk out.

ELLIE

I'll do my best, Winnie.

INT. PATROL CAR - DAY

Ellie races up a road when her radio blares.

HANK (O.S.)

Ellie, you there?

ELLIE

Go ahead, Hank.

HANK (O.S.)

Get back to the office pronto. Doc's here. Got some bad news.

ELLIE

Be right there!

Ellie steps on it.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Ellie races in to see Doc and Hank looking at a bullet in a small plastic evidence bag. The clock reads 1:13 PM. Doc's head is down.

HANK

Tell her what ya told me, Doc.

DOC

Found a black powder bullet from a muzzleloader. Sheriff was right.

ELLIE

And, elk season with regular rifles don't start up for two weeks.

DOC

No powder burns, so it wasn't too close a range.

Hank stands taller, in a hero's pose.

HANK

Just an accident! Like I said!
Let's finish this up, Ellie. Jump
on that paperwork.

ELLIE

I didn't see the scene, Sheriff. I
can't do it.

HANK

I got other things on my mind! File
the report. That's an order. And
where are your uniform pants?!

Hank grabs a baseball glove, bat, and ball, and starts to
exit.

ELLIE

But...

HANK

Don't overthink things like you
always do, and it will be a snap!

ELLIE

But...

Hank is gone.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

But what was Cecil doing up at the
old mine to begin with? How did he
get there?

DOC

How do you work for that
Neanderthal?

(MORE)

DOC (CONT'D)

He asked me if I was going to wear
my scarf to the Founder's Day
Picnic.

Ellie chuckles.

ELLIE

I've told him about your hijab
several times. Doesn't always
listen.

Doc laughs. She points to her hijab.

DOC

I told him I showered in my hijab.
He believed me.

Ellie laughs.

ELLIE

Got some photos to show me?

Doc shows Ellie a dozen photos on her smartphone. Ellie
examines them casually as she speaks to Doc.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Hank's smarter than he lets on.
You'll see. He just gets overly
excited and easily distracted, like
the big baseball game tomorrow, but
he comes through in the end.

Ellie pauses at one of the photos showing Cecil in a nice
tweed jacket, white shirt red with blood in the chest area,
and one pocket of his pants turned inside out.

DOC

What do you see?

ELLIE

Cecil's in his best coat. Did he
have any money on him?

DOC

Wallet with twenty-two dollars,
untouched. Why?

ELLIE

Still had his watch on, too. Wasn't
a robbery. So why is one pocket
turned out? Mind if I drop by and
look at the body after I make a
call to Canon City?

DOC

Better come soon. Mortuary from Denver was hired to scoop him up for cremation as soon as I'm done.

ELLIE

Don't make sense. Cecil didn't have a pot to pee in. Who paid?

DOC

Derrick.

ELLIE

Derrick Franklin? He's a donut cook! He can't afford it! I'd better go see him.

Ellie starts to race out.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

In the meantime, Doc, see if you can stall the mortuary, and email those photos to me, highest resolution you can.

DOC

You got it, Ellie. But what about that report the Sheriff wants...

Ellie exits.

INT. DONUT SHOP - DAY

A clock on the wall reads 1:47 PM when Ellie runs in to find Derrick mopping up. He avoids eye contact while he talks.

DERRICK

Closed, Ellie. Apparently, health-conscious tourists are turning their backs on cinnamon rolls and bologna sandwiches.

ELLIE

Might be the bologna. Try protein-infused Nutella. Tell customers it's the new Hollywood sugar and fat weight-loss program.

DERRICK

Not a bad idea. What can I do for ya? I got baseball practice in ten minutes.

ELLIE

How can you afford to pay for Cecil
Langley's cremation? And, what's
the rush?

Derrick stops mopping, smiles briefly, then pretends to be
angry with Ellie.

DERRICK

Why won't you go to the Founder's
Day Picnic with me?

ELLIE

Answer my questions first.

Derrick closes in on Ellie.

DERRICK

Some sort of prize if I do?

Ellie looks at Derrick's powerful hands, then his strong
neck.

ELLIE

Is that lipstick?

Derrick instinctively covers his neck with one hand.

She takes a step back, but smiles.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Probably just jelly filling. What
time did you get here this morning?
And did you leave the building for
any reason?

Derrick turns away, upset.

DERRICK

Look, Cecil helped me out
financially when neither of us had
money, but I needed a bridge loan.

ELLIE

Bridge loan?

DERRICK

To pay rent. We had a bad month.
Two deep-fryers needed repair.
Cecil sold his car, so he could get
his apple fritters every morning.
His second joy in life.

ELLIE

Next to history. I know.

DERRICK

We had a few better months, and I wanted to pay him back, but like a fool, I kept postponing. I felt bad when I heard the news. A stray bullet got him before I could thank him in person with the money.

Derrick is sad, and Ellie steps over to hug him.

ELLIE

Who told you Cecil was dead?

Derrick picks up the mop and continues mopping.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I asked, who told ya?

Derrick turns, embarrassed.

DERRICK

Rosa! Okay. She stopped by.

Ellie is shocked.

ELLIE

Explains the jelly stain.

Derrick looks up at the clock (1:58 PM), and tosses down the mop.

DERRICK

Shit, I can't miss practice. Big game tomorrow.

He pushes Ellie toward the door as he removes his apron.

ELLIE

Maybe you and Rosa can grab some ribs at the picnic tomorrow after the game?

DERRICK

Don't have time for this, Ellie. Now, let me get to practice.

Derrick rushes out.

EXT. DONUT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Ellie exits and looks up the street. Derrick locks the door and runs off down the street. Ellie sees the Museum, and strolls on up.

EXT./INT. MUSEUM - DAY

The door has a "Closed" sign, but Ellie pounds on the door. Volunteer curator Rosa wears glasses, brown hiking shorts, and a plaid shirt with a deep, sexy V-neck, and reluctantly stomps to the door.

ROSA
Closed. 'Cause of Cecil.

ELLIE
Sorry about Cecil! Open up, Rosa!

Rosa unlocks the door, and Ellie pushes in and looks around. She sees a paper coffee cup from the donut shop, and is a little jealous.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Stop by for donuts?

ROSA
Delivery.

ELLIE
Derrick said something about a few deliveries. What time was that, exactly?

ROSA
Six-forty-five. Seven maybe.

ELLIE
During his morning rush?

ROSA
Slow season, I guess. Can I help you, Deputy Sheriff? What's this about?

ELLIE
Museum doesn't open 'til ten. You're just a volunteer, but you were here at six-forty-five? Seven maybe? Is that typical for a volunteer working four days a week?

ROSA
I volunteer when I can. Love
history. You know that!

Ellie smiles, approving of the answer.

ROSA (CONT'D)
Cecil told me last night when he
left that he might be bringing
somebody by before opening.

ELLIE
Did he tell you where he was going
this morning?

ROSA
No.

ELLIE
Talked about any old mines lately?
I know he volunteered here 'bout
every day.

ROSA
Wasn't a talker. Mostly catalogued
and described donated artifacts,
printed materials, and such.

ELLIE
So, you got here early, Derrick
brought you donuts and coffee --
sweet of him --, and you waited for
Cecil?

ROSA
But he never showed.

ELLIE
Who told you Cecil was dead?

ROSA
Your redneck boss! I'm a third-
generation American, and he still
threatens to deport me. Can I go
now? The new doctor asked me to go
by and identify the body, so his
drunken sister, old lady Hanson,
didn't have to.

ELLIE
Yeah. Go on. Where were you at 8
AM?

ROSA

Am I a suspect for an accidental death -- shooting a stray bullet up by an old mine I've never been to, with a rifle I don't own?

ELLIE

I'm asking the questions.

ROSA

I was here, doing Cecil's job best I could in the back storage room.

ELLIE

Anybody vouch for you about eight AM?

ROSA

No. Suppose not.

ELLIE

Security cameras?

ROSA

Haven't worked in years. We're volunteers! Museum is broke!

ELLIE

I'll call if I have any more questions.

ROSA

I told the Sheriff everything when he called at ten.

ELLIE

Know any reason someone would want to kill Cecil?

ROSA

Kept to himself. Said he was trying to find his sister's lost cat. No one would want to harm him.

ELLIE

Did he tell you any more about the lost cat?

ROSA

Assumed it was a barn cat? Maybe her favorite. I didn't ask, and he didn't say anything more.

ELLIE

You've been most helpful. Can I see
your back storage room?

Rosa leads Ellie to a small room filled with antiques, old
newspapers, and artifacts of every description.

ROSA

Cecil catalogs every donation. If
he says it's worthy, I put it in a
display.

Ellie sees a large empty wooden crate shipped from "Colorado
State Penitentiary, Canon City, CO"

ELLIE

What was in here?

ROSA

Don't know. Let me check Cecil's
inventory notes.

Rosa looks around, calmly at first, then furiously.

ROSA (CONT'D)

Must be here somewhere!

ELLIE

Lock this room, and don't let
anyone in 'til I tell ya! Got it?

ROSA

Yes, Sheriff.

Ellie begins to exit, then turns back quickly.

ELLIE

Nobody gets in here! I'm gonna make
a few phone calls. Back in an hour.
Keep the closed sign up too. No one
comes in or out! Got it?

ROSA

Got it.

Ellie races out.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Ellie is on the phone when Hank comes in with Tony White.
Both men have baseball gloves, and Hank has a wooden baseball
bat. They're smiling and laughing until they see Ellie. Ellie
looks up at a clock: "3:35 PM."

HANK
Best practice ever. We're gonna
kick-butt tomorrow!

ELLIE
(sarcastic)
Wonderful.

Tony nods and smiles idiotically.

HANK
He's our shortstop and batting
third. Plus, Tony says he and old
man Langley were in a domestic
partnership for twenty years.

ELLIE
What?

Tony looks away.

HANK
Not that there's anything wrong
with that. I'm a 21st-Century
sheriff.

ELLIE
Ridiculous. Cecil wasn't...

HANK
Long as a guy can play shortstop
and hit like that. Plus, he says he
was with you when you heard the
shot.

ELLIE
When I heard "a" shot. There might
have been more earlier, when I was
in the car or out of earshot.

HANK
Getting his statement, so we gotta
townie witness. Big game tomorrow.

ELLIE
Tony, Sheriff, why do you think
Cecil was hiking alone up by the
old mine at eight AM wearing his
Sunday-best clothes?

Tony and Hank look very puzzled and uncomfortable.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I'll ask Derrick if he knows. See if he saw or heard anything else unusual this morning.

HANK

Franklin's our left fielder. He was cooking all morning at the donut shop. I asked him. Tony, take a seat.

Tony sits down at Hank's desk with a smile. Hank sits and turns toward his computer monitor. Ellie mumbles sarcastically, and just loud enough for Hank and Tony to hear.

ELLIE

Derrick had time to make a few deliveries. Just sayin'. No hunters drove out the east side, so a few more statements from townies couldn't hurt.

Hank stands, upset.

HANK

I suppose I should haul the whole team in here if it'll make you feel better!

Ellie starts to head out.

ELLIE

Great, I'll follow up on Winnie Hanson's lost cat!

HANK

I should remind you; I'm the Sheriff here.

Ellie turns before exiting with a sarcastic retort.

ELLIE

You don't have to remind me, Sheriff.

Ellie slams the door as she leaves. Hank looks to Tony.

HANK

What's got into her?

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Ellie drives up to Winnie's house and sees Winnie sitting in the rocking chair with a pencil and notepad, her hands shaking as she writes. She's tipsy and rude as usual. Ellie hops out and races up to her.

WINNIE

Darn shakes.

ELLIE

You okay, Winnie? Hard to tell Parkinson's from the DTs.

WINNIE

What are you doing here?

ELLIE

Need help writing?

WINNIE

Never did a will. Doubt Cecil did. Never heard of one anyway. And that got me to thinking.

ELLIE

I think you got a few years left, but everyone should have a will and health directives.

Winnie gets angrier.

WINNIE

Health directives?

ELLIE

Difficult questions, like, do you want to be resuscitated by Doc or the ambulance team if you have a heart attack?

WINNIE

Good heavens, no! When your time is up, it's up.

ELLIE

Feeding tubes in your arms and down your throat at the hospital?

WINNIE

I ain't going to no hospital!

ELLIE

And who do you want your house,
land, and belongings to go to...
If something were to happen to you.

WINNIE

Cecil and I both said we'll give
what the museum doesn't want to
National Public Radio.

ELLIE

I'm surprised your family hasn't
talked to you about these things,
and you haven't got them written
up.

WINNIE

Got no family left. Second worst
thing in the world is watching your
children die before they even got a
chance to get married. Worst thing
ever is being the last of your kind
alive.

ELLIE

I can ask Rex to fill out your
forms. He's a lawyer. I know you
don't like him, or...

WINNIE

Or what?

ELLIE

Or Doc and I can come by and help
you with simple forms I can get off
the web.

Winnie's eyes glaze over.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

We'll be by sometime. Can we bring
you something from town?

WINNIE

I could use another port wine.
Don't blame me. I was in mourning
for my brother. Catch my brother's
killer, is all I ask!

ELLIE

Killer?

WINNIE

Weren't no accident! Cecil never would have walked up to that old mine by himself! Somebody took him there and killed him!

ELLIE

Mind if I swing by his ranch and take a look around?

WINNIE

Go ahead. Just find his killer.

ELLIE

Now, Winnie, don't talk like that. Everybody says it was a stray bullet from a hunter.

WINNIE

Stray bullet in the heart. I don't think so.

Ellie kisses Winnie on the top of her head, and starts to leave.

ELLIE

I'll look into it, Winnie. Did Cecil tell you anymore about your missing gold Cat lately?

WINNIE

(yells)

No. But I don't care about the gold! Find my brother's killer! And bring me my port wine.

Ellie pauses and chuckles.

ELLIE

Bob at Bob's Liquor is gonna think I have a little drinking problem.

WINNIE

One bottle a day is all. That darn Doc with the pretty scarves doesn't allow any! I don't like her.

ELLIE

I need to borrow a key to your brother's house for an hour.

Ellie returns to Winnie's side. Winnie pulls a chain up from around her neck. It has two house keys on it. She takes one off and hands it to Ellie with an angry, distrustful face.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Bring it back in an hour, I
promise.

Ellie waves as she drives away.

EXT./INT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Trees and hills surround Cecil's old ranch house. A barn off to the side has a broken-down VW Bus in front of it.

Ellie looks at the clock on her smartphone: "4:15 PM"

She races to the barn, knocks once, and opens the door. It squeaks as it opens.

Ellie sees a mattress on the ground, an electric tea kettle, bags of dehydrated backpacking food, and old Playboy magazines. A backpack, a two-gallon water jug, and a few rolls of toilet paper round out the meager furnishings and supplies. Ellie picks up a Playboy.

ELLIE
You're not that gay, Tony!

She takes a few photos, and lets herself out.

She walks over to Cecil's house, and finds the door is locked.

She takes the key that Winnie gave her from her pocket.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
High security. I love it.

She lets herself in, and sees neatly stacked books everywhere. She heads straight for the study, where a desk is stacked with more books, letters and bills. Ellie thumbs through the envelopes, and stops at one from Rex Green. She reads aloud.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Offer stands at thirty thousand an
acre. Call me! DG3. Two years ago,
Delano Green? Huh? Cecil never
tossed the offer out?

Ellie thumbs through a few more envelopes. One is from Colorado State Penitentiary. The contents are empty. Ellie looks around calmly at first, then frantically.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
What's going on here?

Outside, she hears the squeaking of the barn door. She hears someone running across the driveway.

She returns the envelopes to their original location, and she peeks out to see Tony in a panic.

TONY

Get out of that house, Sheriff!
Private property! Private property!

ELLIE

Winnie Hanson, next of kin to the
deceased, permitted me fifteen
minutes ago in person.

TONY

She's delusional. Mind's gone
entirely. Don't nobody trust that
crazy wino!

ELLIE

Seems sound as ever to me. And I've
known her for years!

TONY

Folks say she went crazy when her
kids were killed.

Ellie is stunned!

ELLIE

Killed?

TONY

Car accident. Run off the road by a
tourist, they think.

ELLIE

Anybody prosecuted?

TONY

Nope. It's why Winnie hates cops!

ELLIE

She hates everybody!

From the woods nearby, six SHOTS from a pistol ring out.
Ellie dives on Tony to protect him. Tony screams in fear.

He's shaking and holding his upper leg, which is bleeding
slightly.

Ellie calms him down and calls for an ambulance, while Tony
yelps in pain.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

This is Sheriff Ellie May Lyons at Cecil Langley's ranch house, one mile west of County Road 27 and Ridgeway. We have a forty-year-old male with a bullet wound in the upper-right leg. Get here stat. I'll apply pressure. Tell Hank I need backup -- now!

She puts down her radio and comforts Tony.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

You'll be okay. You'll be okay.

TONY

Shortstop! Batting third tomorrow! What are we gonna do now?

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: "5:30 PM"

Yellow police tape encircles the front of Cecil's ranch house and Ellie's patrol car. Hank is scratching his head, trying to determine the trajectory of the bullets. Ellie looks more perplexed.

ELLIE

Heard six bullets. Mostly in our direction, but not all!

HANK

Only found one bullet, and that one grazed Tony's leg.

Ellie paces.

ELLIE

Has to be connected with Cecil's murder!

HANK

Accidental death!

ELLIE

A ninety-two-year-old man doesn't accidentally hike several miles to scramble up rocky cliffs by eight AM, to get accidentally shot squarely in the heart by a stray bullet!

HANK

I've got a black-powder bullet during muzzleloading season, and maybe dozens of hunters in the area. What do you have?

Ellie looks away sadly.

ELLIE

No suspects and no motive.

HANK

See!

Ellie stares at Hank coldly.

ELLIE

But somebody shot at Tony and me on the same day that Cecil gets shot. I don't believe in coincidences, and I took an oath to protect and serve, and citizens in my town may be in danger!

HANK

Okay. Okay. See what you can find, but don't tarnish our annual Founder's Day Picnic and our old baseball reenactment! Got it?

ELLIE

Oh, I got it!

HANK

If you don't find anything in twenty-four hours, we're calling it an accident, and moving on.

ELLIE

Twenty-four hours.

Hank moves up close to Ellie and whispers.

HANK

Between you and me, Tony had the most to gain if he had a chance in hell of inheriting the Langley Ranch, but he's got you as an alibi, and he's a target too!

Ellie turns toward her patrol car.

ELLIE

Know where I can find Delano?

HANK

Said he was going to watch the old-timers' baseball practice at the field.

ELLIE

See ya later.

HANK

You've been shot at! You might need counseling.

Ellie smirks.

ELLIE

You give me all the counseling I need, Hank.

Ellie drives off.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Ellie drives up to the field and is stunned by "Baseball History." Ten Old-Time Baseball Players (25-65) are in 1895-1905 baseball uniforms, and have a few old gloves and bats (1900-1905). Many of the men have beards and long hair, and look sloppy, baggy, and unkempt -- but they can play baseball.

Ellie sees Delano hiding behind a tree, and peeking out at the ballplayers.

Delano sees Ellie and motions for her to be quiet and sneak up to him.

Ellie complies. She slowly sneaks up to Delano and whispers. The old-time players see Ellie is a Sheriff and a woman, and let her be.

ELLIE

Scouting. For an advantage tomorrow?

DELANO

Closed practice. In the payment contract. I should know. I wrote it.

Ellie can't take her eyes off the old-time ballplayers.

ELLIE

Wow. Authentic!

DELANO

Mix of uniform styles, mitts, bats,
and balls from 1895 to 1905, but
the town kids and families love
seeing them kick our butts every
year.

ELLIE

How long have you been here?

Delano avoids eye contact, looking out at the players.

DELANO

Hour or so.

ELLIE

They know you're watching?

DELANO

Against the rules. I was about to
leave.

The old-time pitcher pitches underhand and the batter hits a
deep fly to left-center field. With reckless abandon, the
center fielder (a clone of San Francisco Giants' Hunter
Pence) tears after the ball and makes a spectacular diving
catch.

ELLIE

Amazing!

DELANO

And the rules of the time, 1884,
allow you to catch it on one bounce
for an out. He was showing off for
you. That's Trapper Jackson!

ELLIE

Trapper Jackson? Played eleven
years for the Pirates and Cubs?

Delano is stunned.

DELANO

Geez! You know your baseball! I
chipped in more to get him to come,
but the crowd loves him.

ELLIE

Does he sign autographs? Take
photos?

DELANO

No. It's in his contract. Wants none of that. Grew the beard and plays as Homer Samsom. Crowd loves it.

ELLIE

I should've come the past two years, but Hank had me on duty, filing, and filling out all the reports he neglects the week before the big game.

Delano looks into her eyes. They share a moment.

DELANO

Want to see some of my collection of baseball memorabilia?

ELLIE

Is that like going upstairs to see your etchings?

He smiles genuinely.

DELANO

No funny stuff. I promise!

ELLIE

Five minutes is all I have.

DELANO

Five minutes.

EXT./INT. GREEN MANSION - DAY

Delano Green lives in a forested estate with a wraparound driveway and four-car garage. He pulls his red sports car into a two-car garage, as Ellie parks the patrol car in the circular drive. Ellie sees a mud-covered late-model Jeep also in the garage, then quickly spots security cameras angled at the garage and front doors.

Delano exits the garage to escort Ellie into the house.

ELLIE

You've done well for yourself.

Delano acts embarrassed and shy. He extends an arm to guide Ellie.

DELANO

Not all me. A bit of old money involved. These are just things. I value people.

Ellie is stunned by the opulence of the entrance and the mansion.

ELLIE

Wow. Live here alone?

DELANO

No wife, currently, if that's what you're asking.

ELLIE

Couple of ex-wives, I heard.

DELANO

They were well compensated. Never came around.

ELLIE

No kids?

DELANO

I married women who didn't want to swell.

ELLIE

Bikini models is what I heard.

DELANO

Townies talk, don't they.

ELLIE

Who cleans this place? It's immaculate!

DELANO

Rosa Gonzales. Three days a week. While I'm at the bank, of course.

ELLIE

Hence her volunteer days at the museum.

DELANO

She likes history almost as much as we do.

ELLIE

And Cecil did.

Delano looks away. Ellie sees that, then looks around, amazed at the house.

DELANO
Can I bring you a fine wine?

ELLIE
On duty. Tap water's fine.

DELANO
I enjoy an aged scotch.

Delano makes himself a drink and brings a glass of water to Ellie.

ELLIE
The baseball memorabilia?

Delano snaps his fingers.

DELANO
Oh, yes. The playroom.

Delano leads Ellie downstairs.

ELLIE
Huh? I assumed your playroom was upstairs.

DELANO
Can't believe all those stories.

ELLIE
Can't I?

Downstairs, Ellie sees a sports bar, pool table, poker table, and big-screen TVs.

DELANO
My man cave. These are some vintage baseball cards you might like. Greatest center fielder to ever play the game.

Ellie marvels at the collection.

ELLIE
Willie Mays! And there's Maris, Mantle, and Jackie Robinson rookie cards. Nice, but I assumed you had older cards.

DELANO
In the safe.

ELLIE

Of course.

Ellie marvels at a case of collectable bats, mitts, and autographed baseballs. Delano is nonchalant.

DELANO

Hank tells me you think Cecil was murdered?

Ellie responds without looking at him.

ELLIE

Just trying to tie up loose ends.

DELANO

Loose ends?

ELLIE

Rosa told me Cecil was going to bring somebody back to the museum.

DELANO

Maybe he needed a ride back from the mine. Ever think of that?

Ellie pretends to be pleasantly surprised.

ELLIE

Never thought of that! But somebody shot at Tony and me this afternoon.

Ellie turns and faces Delano to assess his facial muscles.

DELANO

Tony owed a lot of people money.

ELLIE

But why then? You wouldn't know anything about that because you were hiding behind a tree watching the old-timers practice.

Delano is expressionless.

DELANO

Right.

ELLIE

Why would someone shoot at Tony and me?

DELANO

How should I know? Maybe you weren't a target?

ELLIE

Exactly. I don't know! It's a loose end. And the stray bullet that hits Cecil squarely in the heart -- that's a loose end too.

DELANO

How's Tony doing?

ELLIE

Fine. No permanent damage, but your team lost a shortstop and big hitter, and the Sheriff is worried sick, not because someone shot at us, but because of the game tomorrow!

Delano looks and walks away.

DELANO

I'm sure he's worried about you and Tony.

ELLIE

I know. He gets distracted. Do you own any firearms, Delano?

DELANO

Who doesn't up here? Got bears, mountain lions...

ELLIE

And potential burglars, I suppose. Lot of nice things in this house, and then there's the safe.

DELANO

Security cameras and alarms.

ELLIE

Right. About those firearms?

DELANO

Glock pistol in the bedroom. Locked rifle cabinet has a shotgun and a deer rifle, but I don't hunt anymore.

ELLIE

Saw pictures of you online on
safaris and trophy hunting.

DELANO

Quit that ten years ago. I made
mistakes. Flipped to wildlife
conservation now. Donate heavily to
the Wildlife Defense Fund.

ELLIE

Repentant sinner. Good for you. But
you were a deadly shot from what I
saw.

DELANO

All the money in the world can't
delete photos on the web. I regret
those photos every day!

ELLIE

Interesting.

DELANO

What do you mean?

ELLIE

You regret the photos and not the
actions displayed.

DELANO

That's not what I said.

ELLIE

I'd better be going.

Ellie starts to walk upstairs. Delano grabs her arm and gets
an evil glare from Ellie. He releases her arm immediately.

DELANO

Don't you want to check out my
firearms?

ELLIE

No.

DELANO

Why? Put your suspicions to rest.

ELLIE

Afraid I can't do that.

DELANO

Why not?

ELLIE

I'm looking for a muzzleloader and a high-powered twenty-two rifle with a scope.

Delano weakly smiles.

DELANO

See. Don't have anything that fits that description.

ELLIE

Right. You've got nothing to worry about. I've got to get back. I'll let myself out.

Ellie steps lively up the stairs. Delano's face is emotionless.

DELANO

Barbecue dinner with me at the picnic tomorrow after the game?

Ellie answers without turning around.

ELLIE

You never give up, Delano. You got that going for you. We'll see.

Ellie exits. Delano smiles.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

In a small, local restaurant, Ellie and Doc stare at the menu with puzzled expressions.

ELLIE

Same vegetarian options as last week.

DOC

As last year. But they're really good. And expensive. And you're buying!

They laugh.

ELLIE

Where's Cecil?

DOC

Stenson's meat locker. We don't have a facility to hold him long.

ELLIE

What's Jake Stenson have to say
about it?

DOC

He said, 'Meat's meat!

A Waitress, Abby (23, cute), bounces up to the table, hearing
Doc.

WAITRESS

Hi, ladies. Going to the dark side
and ordering meat tonight?

They all laugh.

ELLIE

No. No. We'll have the regular,
water with lemon for Doc, and black
coffee for me.

WAITRESS

Two vegan stews, small dinner
salads, dressing on the side, hold
the bread, a mercury-laced tap
water with lemon, and a cup of joe.

DOC

You're good, Abby.

ELLIE

The best.

The waitress smiles and exits. Ellie leans in and whispers to
Doc.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Find anything unusual? On Cecil?

DOC

Good muscle tone for ninety-two.
Old bullet wound in the back.

ELLIE

Iwo Jima. He was eighteen or
twenty, something like that.

DOC

Not deep. Must have outrun the
bullet.

ELLIE

Didn't outrun the last one.

DOC
Nobody that age could have.

ELLIE
What?

DOC
Sounds odd, but it didn't do as much damage as I thought.

ELLIE
Slow motion bullet?

DOC
Slower than usual.

ELLIE
Slow, Doc?

DOC
Can't figure it out. I didn't see many bullet wounds in med school. We did our rotations in Emergency, but this I've never seen.

Doc looks away. Ellie turns a little angry.

ELLIE
You're not being very clear for someone getting a free meal!

Doc looks back.

DOC
Like the bullet was slowed down by something.

Ellie whispers.

ELLIE
The damage wasn't what you expected to see?

DOC
Plenty to stop Cecil in his tracks at his age. But like his bullet from Iwo Jima, just didn't get the penetration...

Standing over them is Derrick Franklin, who laughs and interrupts.

DERRICK
Is deep penetration the topic?

Ellie and Doc sit back stunned.

ELLIE

What are you doing here?

DOC

Did you tiptoe over here?

DERRICK

Just getting some ribs and a potato to-go. Big game tomorrow.

ELLIE

Find a shortstop yet?

DERRICK

Nope. Hank is making calls tonight. Heard about the shooting. Twenty-two? Kids fooling around, I bet. Hope Tony's okay.

ELLIE

He'll be fine.

DOC

Just a scratch.

ELLIE

Getting dinner for one or two?

Derrick places his arms around Ellie from behind.

DERRICK

You're the only girl for me. You just don't know it yet!

Ellie shakes his arms free.

DOC

That's sexual harassment!

DERRICK

Jealousy doesn't suit you, Doc. But you're still cute!

Doc smirks.

ELLIE

We were having a private conversation.

DERRICK

I'll let you go. My order's ready anyway.

The Waitress returns with Derrick's order in a to-go bag. She sneers at Derrick, which Ellie and Doc see.

DOC
Good night, Derrick.

Derrick turns and begins to leave.

ELLIE
Oh, Derrick, you don't happen to own a twenty-two, or a muzzleloading rifle, do you?

Derrick gets defensive and angry, and yells as he stomps out.

DERRICK
You're crazy, Deputy Sheriff Lyons. You know that? You're tearing this town apart!

Derrick exits.

DOC
That went well.

ELLIE
I got less than twenty-four hours to solve this case.

The Waitress arrives with their order.

WAITRESS
Then you're going to need all the strength you can get, Ellie.

Doc and Ellie weakly smile. The waitress departs.

ELLIE
Want to throw a baseball around after dinner?

DOC
Cricket's my game. Besides, I've got more research to do on bullet wounds. Ask Rosa; she played softball for years.

ELLIE
Not talking softball. Baseball!

Ellie and Doc eat and laugh.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

The baseball lights make it bright as day. Ellie is dressed in a shiny new workout suit. She tosses a hardball in her glove as she walks around the bases.

An old Subaru sedan pulls up to the field and stops. Rosa steps out with a softball mitt and softball.

Rosa yells to Ellie as she makes her way to the infield.

ROSA

Coming 'cause of Doc, not 'cause of you.

ELLIE

Doc called you?

ROSA

Pumped my stomach last New Year's when I went a little crazy.

ELLIE

I remember.

ROSA

She saved my life, and wouldn't let me pay, so I'm paying her back now.

ELLIE

Fine.

ROSA

Willing to throw the ball around as long as you don't ask about my taste in men.

Ellie snickers. Rosa drops the softball as Ellie throws her a hardball -- like a pro.

ELLIE

Your words, not mine.

Rosa catches and throws the hardball back with less force and poorer accuracy.

ROSA

You know what I mean. And don't discuss your stupid idea that Cecil was killed. It was a stray bullet! Let sleeping dogs lie.

ELLIE

Some lying dogs don't get much sleep!

Rosa smirks. They play catch. Clearly, Ellie can play ball.

ROSA

Why did you quit our softball team after one season?

ELLIE

Baseball is my game. Played all the way up through high school on boys' teams. Every coach resented me.

ROSA

For being a girl?

ELLIE

For being the best on the team. I played on a few international teams in Canada and Australia, but I wanted to go to college and catch bad guys.

Ellie smiles. Rosa doesn't smile.

ROSA

You think Cecil was murdered?

ELLIE

How did he get to the mine? Who did he meet? Who was he going to bring by the museum the morning after he met him or her at the mine, and why?

ROSA

I don't know any of those answers, and I don't want to talk about it. Cecil was my friend!

ELLIE

Fine. But I think we have a killer on the loose, and I'm worried about you in that museum!

Rosa is angered, but she keeps playing catch.

ROSA

You saw that mess of a storage room. I can't think of anything in there valuable enough to murder somebody!

ELLIE

I learned today that silly baseball cards, bought for a few cents, can be worth thousands.

Rosa snickers.

ROSA

Must have seen Delano's private collection. Did he make a pass at you?

ELLIE

No. I don't know. Sort of.

ROSA

That's how he is. I clean his house only if he's not there.

ELLIE

He trusts you?

Rosa laughs.

ROSA

Hell no. Cameras are everywhere. You're never off the case! I'm going home.

Ellie races up to Rosa.

ELLIE

Rosa, I don't think you've done anything wrong, but if you're protecting someone...

Rosa tosses the ball down hard. She's furious.

ROSA

We had our best softball season when you played last year. This year, we stunk up the place!

Rosa takes a swing at Ellie, but Ellie dodges the punch, then dives at Rosa and tackles her to the ground.

ELLIE

I told you before. It was baseball or nothing! Stop this, now!

ROSA

You don't care about hurting some people with all your questions all around town.

They wrestle, but no one is landing punches.

ELLIE

It's my job!

Ellie lets Rosa up. She dusts herself off and starts to stomp back to her car.

ROSA

Well, you're gonna get yourself
killed 'cause of it!

Rosa drives away.

Seconds later, TRAPPER JACKSON/HOMER SAMSON (35), in street clothes and without a long beard, steps out from behind the same tree Delano was hiding behind earlier that day. Ellie recognizes him immediately. He has a rolled-up old-style baseball glove tucked into the back of his belt.

ELLIE

Trapper Jackson. Bit more handsome
without the beard.

TRAPPER

I play as Homer Samsom now.

ELLIE

Saw you practice today.

Trapper picks up the ball and motions with his arm that he'd like to play catch.

TRAPPER

Saw you practice tonight. Bit more
beautiful when you're not fighting.

They laugh and play catch.

ELLIE

What was it like...fame?

TRAPPER

Like living in a fishbowl.

ELLIE

That's why you quit? Heard you had
some run-ins with the law.

TRAPPER

I worked my way into that fishbowl
my whole life.

(MORE)

TRAPPER (CONT'D)

Then I was shooting my way out of that fishbowl for eleven years. I wasn't perfect. I was a kid with a lot of money.

ELLIE

Sorry.

TRAPPER

Like you said, 'Baseball or nothing.' I chose nothing. At least you gotta job.

ELLIE

Mine isn't making people too happy around here lately.

TRAPPER

You got like twenty people to make happy? Try making a manager, two dozen teammates, and millions of fans happy every day!

Ellie holds the ball. She smiles at Trapper, but Trapper looks worried.

ELLIE

What's the matter, Trapper?

TRAPPER

Nothing, I guess.

ELLIE

Something worrying you? The game tomorrow?

TRAPPER

No.

ELLIE

What then?

TRAPPER

Delano Green.

ELLIE

Told me he paid you a little extra to play with the old-timers.

Trapper tosses the ball back, and takes off his old glove. He shoves it in his back belt.

TRAPPER
It ain't that. Everybody knows
that.

ELLIE
What then?

TRAPPER
Can't say. Promised.

ELLIE
Then don't say.

Trapper starts to walk away.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Good luck tomorrow.

TRAPPER
Luck doesn't exist. Genetics and
preparation exist. Not luck.

As he walks away slowly, Ellie tries to cheer him up.

ELLIE
Delano told me you were the second
greatest center fielder to ever
play the game, behind Willie Mays.

Trapper turns angry. He turns back towards Ellie, who sees
his angry face, and takes a step back.

TRAPPER
He lied. He always lies. Otis
Mathews was the greatest center
fielder to play the game! Trouble
was, it was 1885 to 1888.
Newspapers said he ran so fast, he
was a blur to people who watched
him!

Trapper gets more agitated as he speaks, scaring Ellie.

TRAPPER (CONT'D)
Said he could hit the ball into the
next county! Said he'd catch every
ball hit anywhere in the outfield,
including foul territory. Even his
teammates hated him.

ELLIE
What? What happened to Otis
Mathews? Why did he play just four
years?

Trapper yells in anguish.

TRAPPER

Died mysteriously here in Haven,
Colorado, after a barnstorming
baseball game against local gold
miners in 1888!

Trapper turns and walks for a few steps. Ellie yells.

ELLIE

1888? Who told you that?

Trapper starts to run.

TRAPPER

Delano Green.

Ellie shakes her head, puzzled as she walks off the field.

INT. DONUT SHOP - DAY

Dawn breaks. Ellie and Doc get donuts and coffee to go from an unhappy Derrick. Ellie wears her uniform pants and hat, but has on a T-shirt that reads, "Sheriff's Department" instead of her uniform shirt. At a back table, Hank, Delano, and Tony (with a small bandage wrapped around his leg) take turns looking back and glaring at Ellie. Doc whispers to Ellie.

DOC

Finally! You're less welcome than
me today!

ELLIE

You'd think I stopped the Founder's
Day Picnic today. You think it's
all because I'm investigating the
shootings?

Derrick leans in and whispers.

DERRICK

Coach Hank still can't find a
shortstop to play for the townies.

DOC

Where's your daughter, Derrick? You
have to work the register?

DERRICK

Rita demanded a day off! Imagine that? I never got no day off when I was fifteen!

ELLIE

She's taking an online class in calculus. Told me yesterday.

DOC

She must be very intelligent. You must be very proud, Derrick.

DERRICK

When her Ma was alive and handled the register, I was proud. Now, I'm overworked.

Ellie glances over at her boss, Hank, drinking coffee and laughing. Ellie mumbles.

ELLIE

Know how ya feel.

EXT. DONUT SHOP - DAY

Ellie and Doc exit with coffee and donuts.

DOC

You didn't go over and ask Delano and Tony any questions?

ELLIE

I ran out, but I'm sure I'll have more after we revisit the mine. Thanks for volunteering to come along.

DOC

Got a few questions of my own.

They drive off in the patrol car.

INT. PATROL CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ellie looks at the time on her phone.

ELLIE

Go!

Ellie drives like a race car driver to the mine. Doc holds on for dear life.

DOC
What are you doing?

ELLIE
Driving like a shooter.

The patrol car crosses lanes and flies over potholes.

DOC
That's why we got donuts this morning?

ELLIE
Exactly. And I love donuts!

Ellie races around turns and straightens a few out, staring at her phone from time to time.

She takes a hard left turn onto the steep dirt road to the mine, creating a dust storm behind her. Doc bumps up and down in the car until Ellie slams on the brakes.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Fourteen minutes. Can't do it much faster.

DOC
Not with me in the car!

Ellie hops out of the patrol car as the dust settles.

EXT. OLD MINE - CONTINUOUS

Ellie takes out her coffee cup and the bag of donuts. Doc, still shaken, slowly exits the car.

DOC
What was all that about?

Ellie chews a donut, takes a swig of coffee, and points to the mine.

ELLIE
From town to the base of the mine is fourteen minutes.

DOC
Give or take a heart attack.

ELLIE
But scrambling up the talus slope is another five to seven minutes, even if you're in great shape.

DOC
And you've got the elevation, and
lower oxygen against you.

ELLIE
Right. Damn!

DOC
What?

ELLIE
Delano was in the donut shop with
Hank until 7:45 as usual. Witnesses
galore.

DOC
So.

ELLIE
So, he couldn't have killed Cecil
with the gunshot we heard at eight
AM.

She points to the mine upslope.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Cecil was way up there, five to
seven minutes away. Can't even see
him from here or anywhere 'til you
get to the top.

DOC
Right about that.

ELLIE
Tony and Derrick were outside the
donut shop at eight, when we heard
the shot.

Ellie drops her head.

DOC
That was your suspect list?

ELLIE
There's Rosa, but she idolized the
man.

DOC
What about the strangers in town?
The old-timers' baseball team?

ELLIE

I'll really piss Hank off if I go interviewing the team before the big game this afternoon! Besides, Hank told me they have a team breakfast at the lodge from seven to nine AM, and they were all there, except Trapper Jackson.

DOC

Any proof?

ELLIE

Lodge has security cameras in the lobby, dining area, and pool. Guess I could check more on Trapper. He's had run-ins with the law.

They eat donuts and drink coffee.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I need to see where the body was found.

They scramble up the rocks to the opening of the mine.

Ellie stands at the opening of the mine where the body was found. She looks around 180 degrees of forest and mountains.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Shot could have come from anywhere.

Doc nudges her out of the way to take in the same view.

DOC

We were wide open, depending on the way he faced. Body landed in the sun right here, with warm clothing on warm rocks. No body-cooling yet.

ELLIE

Anything else?

DOC

Not much blood. Don't know what to make of that! Slowing bullet from a stray shot a long way off is a real possibility.

Doc turns left and right. Ellie sounds disappointed.

ELLIE

Gray sports jacket and gray jeans
would have blended in with the
rocks.

DOC

How would you know if elk were
around?

Ellie points to a pile of elk droppings.

ELLIE

Fresh elk poop everywhere.

DOC

I'm sorry. What now?

Doc and Ellie start scrambling down the slope.

ELLIE

I need to check the hills around
Cecil's place to see where Tony and
I might have been shot from. Want
to go?

DOC

I'm on call for the picnic and ball
game today, in case someone
swallows a chicken bone or gets
poked in the eye by a soda straw.

ELLIE

I'll drop you back at your office.

DOC

Will you be driving slower on the
way back?

ELLIE

Ha! Yeah. I'll drive slowly. Don't
want to kill the only friend I got
in this town!

INT. PATROL CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ellie drives slowly as she makes her way back to town. She
pays particular attention to occasional spur roads off the
main road. Doc notices Ellie's wandering eye.

DOC

What are you looking for now?

Ellie is almost in a depression.

ELLIE
A way out of town.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

Ellie drives along the ridge road, looking down to the right. She stops at a pullout, gets out of the patrol car, and looks over the edge. She's still depressed.

ELLIE
No view of Cecil's place from here.

She returns to the car and drives further up the road. She's alarmed to see Sheriff Hank's patrol car at the next pullout. Ellie hops out to see Hank pretending to shoot a rifle at a bottle on a log twenty yards downslope.

HANK
Just about to call you. And, where
is your uniform shirt?!

ELLIE
What about? Shirt got a mustard
stain. Getting it cleaned.

Ellie looks down at the bottle on the log, and further downslope, where there is a heavily obstructed view of the front of Cecil's house, because of the trees.

HANK
Hate to shatter another wild theory
of yours.

ELLIE
Bet you do.

HANK
From this angle, kids could have
been shooting bottles and cans,
overshot a little, and sprayed a
few bullets, with one hitting Tony.

Ellie looks closely from Hank's angle. Her mood sours even more.

ELLIE
Just a coincidence? Two stray
bullets hit two locals in two days.

HANK
Hunting season brings out the
strays. What did you find at the
mine this morning?

ELLIE
Same story. Probably a stray
bullet, but I'm not giving up.

HANK
Why?

ELLIE
I don't believe in coincidences!

INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Ellie knocks, but there is no answer.

ELLIE (O.S.)
Winnie, open up. It's Sheriff Ellie
May. Winnie, are you okay?

Ellie storms in to find Winnie passed out on the couch, with
three empty bottles of port around her. Ellie grabs Winnie
and scolds her like a school child.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Winnie, are you trying to kill
yourself? It's not ten AM?

Winnie is groggy, but alive, and angry.

WINNIE
I need my rest!

ELLIE
You need a rest home! Where someone
can keep an eye on you.

WINNIE
Won't go, and you can't force me.

ELLIE
Leave ya for dead, then? Let the
bears and raccoons eat ya? They
will, ya know!

Winnie perks up surprisingly quickly.

WINNIE
Don't let 'em eat me.

ELLIE
Then drink less port, so you can
see 'em coming!

Winnie scans the room with a watchful eye. Then she glares at Ellie.

WINNIE
Find my brother's killer yet?

Ellie looks down and away in sadness.

ELLIE
No, Ma'am. And all the evidence
points to a stray bullet from
hundreds of yards away.

Winnie looks away.

WINNIE
You didn't look like the type who
was so easily fooled.

ELLIE
The most probable suspects all have
airtight alibis.

WINNIE
Then you're breathing rotten air!

ELLIE
The physical evidence, too. We got
nothing.

Winnie glares at Ellie.

WINNIE
Then, you're no use to me.

ELLIE
I haven't given up, Winnie. I just
haven't gotta clue. I'm sorry.

Ellie slowly backs away. The pain in her face says it all.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Do you need a lift to the Founder's
Day Picnic?

WINNIE
The ski bum's gonna drive me.

ELLIE
Tony?

WINNIE

Says he can walk on his shot-up leg. Wants me to permit him to use Cecil's main house.

ELLIE

You gonna let him?

WINNIE

Cecil had one key, and I have the other.

Winnie pulls a chain from around her neck with two keys on it.

WINNIE (CONT'D)

Over my dead body.

ELLIE

That's what I'm afraid of. Did your brother lock up every time he left?

WINNIE

Yep! Never trusted the ski bum.

ELLIE

I'll pick you up in an hour or so.

WINNIE

Hate that ski bum. Don't care for you much either.

ELLIE

But I want to see you live to tell about it! I need to borrow Cecil's key again.

Winnie reluctantly hands over the key. Ellie backs out more, and waves as she exits the house. She hears a wine bottle shatter against the door. We barely hear Ellie mumble sarcastically from the other side of the door.

ELLIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Such a sweet old lady.

WINNIE

I heard that!

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

Ellie drives in the direction of the mine. She pulls off onto a dirt spur road and stops.

She hops out and removes a metal detector from her back seat. She walks to the first curve in the road, where she can barely see the main road.

She plugs in the earphones, turns on the metal detector, examines the road for tire tracks, and begins to sweep the area.

She goes up one side of the road, and down the other like a tracker hunting game.

She finds a broken branch, follows it, and finds a wad of toilet paper.

ELLIE

Shit!

She returns to her patrol car and heads up the main road to the next dirt spur road. She pulls off, drives to the dirt turn, and stops.

She gets out to see if she can still see the main road. She can.

She breaks out the metal detector and repeats the process.

After a moment or two searching, Ellie gets a phone call from Doc. Ellie rips off the earplugs and takes the call.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

What is it, Doc?

Ellie paces and looks around as she listens.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I don't care what the Sheriff says.
They can't have Cecil until
midnight!

Ellie is fuming mad.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Tell them something! Tell them
anything! Tell them you have to
complete your examination.

Ellie softens.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Doc, did Cecil have a house key on
him?

Ellie smirks.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I know why his one pants pocket was turned inside out. I'll see you at the picnic.

Ellie ends the call. She continues searching with the metal detector, while keeping a close eye on her smartphone clock.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

There are red, white, and blue balloons all along the baseball field fences. An Announcer (60), an elderly male in an 1890s suit and top hat, sets up a portable PA system with two large speakers. The Old-Timers Team (in old 1890s uniforms) is warming up in left field, while the Townies Team (modern uniforms that say Haven), including Hank, Delano, Derrick, Tony, and four other Male Townies (various ages and types), warm up on the right-field side. Twenty Spectators (townspeople and tourists; all ages and types) begin to take their seats.

From a distance, we see Delano whispering back and forth with Homer Samson.

Hank looks worried as he assesses his team.

BACK TO:

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

Ellie looks totally frustrated as she tosses the metal detector in the back of her patrol car. Ellie races off.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Ellie approaches Cecil's house like a drag racer on a last lap.

She races to the door and opens it. It looks just as it did the day before, except one book is on the floor under one of the tables that wasn't there the previous day.

Ellie removes her pistol and tiptoes to the study, not knowing if she is alone.

She examines the envelopes on the desk as she did before. She notices one of the envelopes is missing (the one from Delano Green).

She returns the other envelopes and walks out, depressed.

ELLIE

My word against his. No evidence. I forgot to take a photo of the letter. Son of a bitch got away with it!

Ellie stomps out and locks the door.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Ellie arrives at the field wearing her nice workout suit, carrying a glove in one hand, and guiding Winnie to the stands with her other hand. Now, 90-100 Spectators (various ages and types) fill the stands.

Doc waves to Ellie because she is saving a seat for Winnie and Winnie's giant purse.

Hank, Tony, Delano, Derrick, and Homer Samson each notice Ellie's arrival with glaring looks. Hank yells to Ellie.

HANK

You're on duty! Where's your uniform?

ELLIE

Hot dog for lunch. Catsup everywhere!

Hank yells back, but he's swamped out by the Announcer introducing the visiting team. Ellie waves and chuckles at Hank, making him angrier.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my honor to welcome you to the 130th annual Haven, Colorado, Founder's Day Picnic, and fifteenth annual historic baseball reenactment made possible by the generous annual donation of Mr. Delano Green.

The Spectators go wild as Delano tips his baseball cap.

Winnie sneaks a sip of port from her purse.

Ellie pulls Hank aside for a frank discussion, while the Announcer fades out.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Starting players for the Old-Timers, who are fourteen-and-oh here in Haven are...

ELLIE

They're fourteen-and-oh, you've got only eight players, and you had to move Tony to first 'cause he can't run fast or move laterally.

HANK

So?

ELLIE

So, put me in at short. I'm rusty, but I won't let you down.

HANK

A woman? A softball player? You keep the scorebook!

ELLIE

Rosa can keep the scorebook! I played baseball for seven years, softball for one season. Remember, I've seen all of you guys play, and you'll have a huge hole in the infield if I don't fill it. Even if I just knock 'em down, I can save you a few runs. Think like a coach, will ya, Hank?

Hank looks away, then back as we see and hear the announcer.

ANNOUNCER

Playing center field, and batting clean-up, Homer Samson.

The Spectators erupt with applause. Homer doesn't tip his hat or acknowledge the crowd.

Hank wanders back to the dugout.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Now, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, taking the field, let's hear it for your home team, the Haven Townies!

The crowd erupts again. The team takes the field, minus a shortstop. Then, from the women's bathroom, in a way oversized uniform shirt, cap, and workout pants, Ellie runs onto the field. Doc cheers loudly.

We see Rosa keeping the scorebook.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

And a late line-up addition,
batting ninth, and playing
shortstop for your Haven Townies,
Deputy Sheriff Ellie May Lyons.

The Spectators applaud lightly and with reservation, as Ellie takes the field. The crowd whispers to each other as Doc cheers loudly.

Winnie sneaks a sip of port from her purse.

Tony, at first base, throws a practice grounder to Ellie as the crowd, Hank, and all the locals look on.

Ellie fields the grounder expertly and zips a hard throw to Tony, who feels it burn his hand.

The crowd erupts with cheers. Homer Samson looks on with a half-smile. Hank, the catcher, is elated. Delano, the pitcher, growls and continues his warm-up tosses.

Derrick in left field nervously pounds his glove.

DOC

She said she could play.

WINNIE

Played a little baseball in my day,
too.

Winnie and Doc smile.

The game moves along, despite the pitchers pitching underhand. Soon, Homer Samson steps to the plate with a runner on first. Homer sends the first pitch from Delano high in the air to left field. Homer begins his home run trot.

Delano throws his glove at the ground in disgust. Derrick runs to the left-field fence, watching the ball tower over the fence for a home run. The crowd cheers wildly.

The scoreboard shows the visitors with a two-to-nothing lead after one and two innings.

Rita, Derrick's daughter, coaches first base when Haven is up. Rosa coaches third, while Hank keeps the scorebook.

Ellie comes to the plate. She sends a deep drive to the left-center gap, but Homer takes off running like a cheetah and tracks it down with a spectacular catch on one bounce.

ANNOUNCER

That's an out according to the rules before 1885, and it's an out here today for that reason. A ball caught on one hop is an out!

The spectators cheer for Homer.

The scoreboard shows the same two-to-nothing lead after six innings, as Ellie sends a weak grounder to shortstop for the third out. Everyone grumbles at Ellie!

While running from the dugout to her shortstop position, Ellie stops to whisper privately with Tony.

ELLIE

You'll never get Cecil's place.

TONY

Maybe we were, ya know, intimate. Ya know, common law partners only take six months at the same address!

ELLIE

Intimate? Doc said he was loaded with diseases. Better get tested!

Tony is horrified, as Ellie runs to her position. He looks at Doc and Winnie, who are both waving at him. Ellie tips her cap to Doc.

The first batter for the Old-timers sends an easy grounder to Ellie at short. She fields it and throws a strike to Tony at first, who muffs the catch, and the runner is safe.

ANNOUNCER

He should have had that one, folks. Score an error on Tony White.

Hank and Delano are furious. Tony runs to the mound to settle Delano down, but Hank and Ellie join them, so they aren't free to talk. The conversation on the mound is brief.

DELANO

Come on, Tony!

HANK

Gotta catch those!

TONY

My fault. My leg is killing me.

ELLIE
Killing you? Really?

The umpire starts walking to the mound to hurry the game along.

DELANO
Let's go! Play to win!

ELLIE
You always do, Delano. Do you think
Cecil's property is still worth
three thousand dollars an acre?

Hank shrugs his shoulders, not understanding Ellie's snide remark, but Delano glares back at her at shortstop.

The next batter for the Old-Timers grounds to Ellie next to second base. Ellie races and tags the runner going to second, and throws the ball as hard as she can at the runner on his way to first, and pegs him on the hip.

ANNOUNCER
That's a double-play. Under the old-
timer rules, you could peg a runner
for an out! Now batting for the Old-
timers once again is Homer Samson.

Delano pitches underhand, and Homer watches it for a called strike. Homer raises one finger.

Delano pitches a second called strike. Homer raises two fingers.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
I haven't seen this since Casey at
the Bat.

Delano gets the location from Hank. Hank holds his catcher's mitt way outside-and-high for the target.

The crowd sees this, and gasps.

Delano pitches it way outside, and way high, but Homer swings and we hear the loud crack of the bat. The ball sails way over the right-field fence.

The crowd erupts in cheers, and Homer slowly rounds the bases.

As Homer passes Ellie at short, she speaks to him as she pounds her glove angrily.

ELLIE

You're not telling me everything!

There is fear in Homer's eyes as he rounds third. His teammates surround the plate to congratulate him, but he brushes them rudely aside as he returns to the dugout.

The Spectators see this, and they cease to cheer for Homer.

LATER

It's the bottom of the ninth inning, with the Old-timers clinging to a three-to-nothing lead.

Homer Samson struts in from centerfield, takes the ball from the pitcher's glove, and motions for him to play center.

ANNOUNCER

Batting fourth for Haven, Sheriff
Hank Porter!

Homer tosses three good pitches, but Hank over-swings on each for a quick strikeout.

Hank trudges to the dugout. Rosa is right behind him.

HANK

Rosa, you're the third-base coach.

ROSA

We don't need one.

ANNOUNCER

Next up, Derrick Franklin!

The crowd cheers politely.

As Derrick heads out of the dugout, Ellie stops him and whispers.

ELLIE

You lied to me about leaving the
donut shop yesterday morning!

Derrick looks terrified.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I want to know why!

Derrick strikes out at the plate.

Homer intentionally walks the next two batters.

Tony, in the on-deck circle, limps to the plate, as Ellie steps into the on-deck circle.

ANNOUNCER

Now batting, Tony White.

Tony glares at Ellie, and Hank sees it.

On the way to the on-deck circle, Ellie passes Rosa with Delano on one side of her, and Derrick on the other. Ellie whispers to Delano, Rosa, and Derrick, as she cracks peanuts and eats them.

ELLIE

What's this? A three-way? A triple play? Anybody get caught cheating?

Delano, Rosa, and Derrick charge the dugout fence as Ellie steps into the on-deck circle. Hank sees the anger in his bench-mates, but he focuses on the plate and the game.

HANK

What the hell is he doing? He brought the tying run to the plate.

DELANO

Yeah, but it's the gimp!

Tony hears Delano, and glares at him.

Ellie glares at Delano.

ELLIE

That wasn't very kind, Delano.

HANK

Are you trying to distract your teammates, Ellie?

DELANO

Tony's oh-for-three with three strikeouts. He's a distraction to the game of baseball.

Homer stares into the catcher, and pitches very high and outside for ball one.

HANK

What the hell?

Delano glares at Ellie in the on-deck circle, then stands and yells at Homer.

DELANO
Pitch to him, you bum!
(to Hank)
This is bullshit! He wants to pitch
to a girl!

Ellie glares at Delano, but Hank stands up to him.

HANK
She's a woman. She's played better
than anyone else today, so lay off,
Delano!

ANNOUNCER
Ball four! Next up, Deputy Sheriff
Ellie May Lyons. The potential
winning run steps to the plate.

Homer stares in for the sign. Ellie steps out of the box.

Hank calls time to whisper to Ellie.

HANK
You can do this, Ellie.

ELLIE
If I win one, I want one extra day
to solve the case.

HANK
You got it.

Hank returns to the dugout. Ellie tips her cap to the crowd
and steps back in the box. She scratches her crotch and turns
her head to spit like male baseball players do.

The crowd roars with laughter, led by Doc and Winnie, who is
now drunk. The crowd stands and cheers.

ALL
Ellie, Ellie, Ellie.

Hank and the other teammates join in the cheering.

Delano yells out to Homer.

DELANO
It's the last time I'm paying you
to play, Trapper Johnson!

The crowd gasps. There's a lot of whispering in the crowd
before they return to chanting for Ellie, who digs into the
box.

The first two pitches are belt-high, in the center of the plate. Each time, Ellie is timing the perfect swing.

ALL
Ellie, Ellie, Ellie.

Homer/Trapper stares in, and shakes off a location sign for low and outside. He grins behind the fake beard.

ELLIE (V.O.)
Girls can play baseball. Girls can
play baseball.

Homer/Trapper pitches the same pitch. This time, Ellie loads her hands and swings through the zone like a pro.

The CRACK sound from the wooden bat is deafening. The ball is sent high and deep to centerfield.

Ellie takes off running to first. Tony starts limping to second. Everyone is either running or looking up. The center fielder races to the fence and looks up. It's gone.

The Spectators erupt with cheers, especially Doc.

Winnie sneaks a sip of port from her purse.

Delano, Derrick, and Rosa stare from the dugout, as the rest of the team, led by Hank, surrounds home plate.

Haven teammates' hats go flying, as Ellie patiently waits for Tony to hobble around the bases.

Ellie is greeted like a champion.

Ellie turns to look for Homer/Trapper, but he's gone. The other Old-timers shake hands with the Haven Townies, but Ellie keeps looking for Homer/Trapper.

Doc runs up to Ellie with a frantic look.

DOC
Ellie, Ellie. The mortuary took
Cecil's body.

Hank is nearby. He looks away.

ELLIE
What?

HANK
I'm sorry, Ellie. The meat locker
wanted him out of there. I had no
other choice.

DOC

He was cremated thirty minutes ago.

Delano, Tony, Derrick, and Rosa turn their back as they walk away.

DELANO

Picnic time, everyone. Beers are on me.

Both teams, including Hank, crowd around Delano and hoot and holler. Doc and Ellie look over at the stands to see Winnie leaning back, drunk as a skunk.

DOC

Sorry, Ellie.

Ellie stares at Delano, surrounded at a picnic table, toasting beers, and laughing.

ELLIE

He got away with murder. I don't know how, but he got away with murder!

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Ellie, in full uniform for once, wanders onto the lighted field, as an elderly groundskeeper, Charley (70), finishes chalking and raking the field.

ELLIE

I'll get the lights, Charlie.

Charlie waves okay, and exits.

Ellie paces around the pitcher's mound, talking to herself.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Pops? If you're listening? I made a mess of things. Accusations without evidence. Turned friends into suspects without proof. Made promises to a little old lady -- a drunk, but a nice old lady. Well, not nice, but she is old, and promised to find her brother's killer, and her cat -- a gold nugget missing for a hundred and thirty years?

Ellie kicks the dirt, and looks up to the sky.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Pops, you might have been a great Sheriff, but you made promises to Ma and me that you didn't keep. You promised to love, honor, and obey Ma, but you went oh-for-three on those vows. You promised to walk me down the aisle someday, but you got yourself shot. You told me never to act on hunches! Only evidence! Hunches, you said, were for fortune tellers and stock brokers. I'm beginning to see what you mean.

Ellie walks to home plate.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Haven, Colorado is my home.

She starts walking to first base.

ELLIE (CONT'D (CONT'D)

I promised to protect and serve my community, and I've got nothing!

She reaches first base.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Tony was my first suspect. Said he was Cecil's common-law partner to inherit the ranch. He lies the most. But he was with me when we heard the gunshot at eight AM. I'm his alibi.

Ellie walks to second base.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Next, Derrick lied to me about not leaving the donut shop that morning, then Rosa tells me he delivered donuts to her at 6:45 or 7 AM. He's screwing Rosa, that's for sure. But he came out of the kitchen and talked to Hank and Delano at 7:45. Hank is his alibi.

Ellie shakes her head and walks to third base.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Rosa said she doesn't have an alibi, but I saw her face in the museum window at 8:01 AM. I'm her alibi.

Ellie walks slowly to home plate.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

And Delano, who Winnie the wino calls a snake, was with my boss at 7:45 with a giant coffee stain on his shirt. As much as I despise him, he couldn't have driven to the mine for fourteen minutes, scrambled up the rocks for five to seven minutes, killed Cecil, scrambled down the rocks, driven home to change his shirt, and shown up at the bank by nine, where he's all over the security cameras. Hank, distance, and time are his alibis.

Ellie collapses at home plate, and puts her hands over her face.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Can't be any of them! And all the evidence points to a stray bullet from a far distance! I got nothing!

Trapper steps out from behind the tree, startling Ellie.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

How long have you been there?

TRAPPER

Long enough.

He wanders down to the light-switch box and turns off the lights. Ellie stares at the handsome man in street clothes as he walks to Ellie and extends an arm to help her up. They are close enough to kiss, and they share a moment.

ELLIE

Thought you left town.

TRAPPER

Guess we both have unfinished business.

Ellie pushes Trapper back a step.

ELLIE

You pitched me the identical pitch three times in a row.

TRAPPER

You hit my best pitch.

ELLIE

You let me time it twice. You pitched it belt-high over the middle of the plate!

TRAPPER

You hit my best pitch.

ELLIE

Middle of the plate! You don't let your kids play in the middle of the street!

TRAPPER

You know that old saying?

Ellie turns, embarrassed and humble.

ELLIE

You let us win.

TRAPPER

You hit my best pitch. Nobody else did. Leave it at that.

Ellie takes a step closer to him, kissing close.

ELLIE

Why'd you come back?

TRAPPER

You were right. I didn't tell you everything.

Trapper gazes into her eyes.

ELLIE

What?

TRAPPER

Delano set me up to shoot those bottles and cans.

ELLIE

Figured as much.

TRAPPER

Didn't know a ranch was down there.

ELLIE

Thanks for telling me.

TRAPPER

Delano's an asshole, but I doubt
he's a killer. Has too much to
lose, not as much to gain.

ELLIE

Suppose you're right. Everybody
else is desperate for money.

Trapper nods.

TRAPPER

Also came back to tell you that
Tony White is smarter than you
think. Look into his little
greenhouse operation.

ELLIE

I knew he sells organic veggies to
some fine restaurants in town.

TRAPPER

The best weed in the state, medical
and otherwise, from what our
players said.

ELLIE

Grown here? Sure! On Cecil's
Langley's ranch! That's why he
wants the land! That's a bigger
motive!

TRAPPER

Now, I can go.

ELLIE

Thanks, Trapper!

TRAPPER

For the tip?

ELLIE

And for the fat pitch down the
middle. I owe you one!

Ellie goes to kiss Trapper on the cheek, but he turns his
lips to hers, and they lock in a deep, loving kiss under the
stars.

INT. PATROL CAR - NIGHT

Ellie calls Hank, who answers on the first ring.

ELLIE

Hank?

HANK (O.S.)

Quite a game today, Ellie...

ELLIE

I'm heading to Cecil's later tonight to check out certain crops grown by Tony.

HANK (O.S.)

Organic veggies?

ELLIE

Maybe more. Just letting you know. Also need you and Doc at the old Pritchard Mine at six-forty-five AM. And I need two of those car tracking devices.

HANK (O.S.)

(sarcastic)

Anything else, slugger?

ELLIE

I need you to keep your morning meeting with Delano at seven-fifteen to seven-forty-five.

HANK (O.S.)

Hope you know what you're doing.

ELLIE

Not yet. I gotta borrow Rosa first for an evening at the Museum.

HANK (O.S.)

What's all this about?

ELLIE

Been going about this all wrong. I know who did it. I need to know when, how, and why. I think I have it. All I need is proof. Lots of proof.

HANK (O.S.)

Is that all?

ELLIE

I've asked Doc to sleep at Winnie's tonight for safekeeping. Doc's got Winnie's shotgun.

HANK (O.S.)
If she fires it, there will be hell
to pay.

ELLIE
Put it on my tab!

Ellie ends the call.

EXT./INT. MUSEUM - NIGHT

Rosa unlocks the back door, and Ellie forces Rosa into the museum in the dark.

ELLIE
Don't turn on the lights.

ROSA
Are you going to tell me what this
is all about?

ELLIE
When we get in the storage room,
and after we shut the door.

Rosa leads Ellie in the dark to the storage room. They enter, and Ellie shuts the door and feels for the light switch. The lighting is good in the windowless room.

ROSA
Okay, what's this about?

ELLIE
While we're talking, help me find
anything that belonged to Martha
Carter or Ingrid Langley, Winnie's
grandma and Ma.

ROSA
Why?

Rosa instinctively begins searching shelves and piles of books.

ELLIE
It has to do with Winnie's lost
cat. Just look for a book the
curator at the Canon City Museum
sent from the penitentiary.

ROSA
The penitentiary! From the empty
wooden crate! I remember.

Ellie begins search.

ELLIE

The penitentiary would not have mailed an empty crate. You told me two partial truths yesterday morning, and I'm trying to keep you from going to prison for three to five years.

Rosa freezes.

ROSA

Three to five years?

ELLIE

Accessory to the murder of Cecil Langley. You could be as guilty as the person who pulled the trigger.

Rosa's eyes open widely.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Serving as a false alibi for someone is enough to put you away. You told me Derrick brought you coffee and donuts. I saw the coffee cup, but not the donut bag that morning, and it wasn't in the trash.

ROSA

Maybe we ate them?

ELLIE

The bag too? I'll give you a do-over. What time did he arrive, and how long did he stay, exactly?

ROSA

He arrived before six-forty-five, and stayed thirty seconds.

ELLIE

Ah, good. Did he take the donuts with him?

Rosa drops her head.

ROSA

Yes, and they were apple fritters.

Ellie finds two books with Martha Carter's name in them. Her printing, in pencil, is childlike but clear.

ELLIE

Look at this? Huckleberry Finn,
1885! Martha Carter, Colorado State
Penitentiary.

Rosa gets excited.

ROSA

A first edition. Worth a couple
thousand dollars!

ELLIE

You love your work. You wouldn't
like prison.

Ellie hands Rosa the copy. They smile, as Ellie examines the
bible.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Look at this! M. Carter, Colorado
State Penitentiary. Much sloppier
writing. 1889. She'd been in for
one year, and was already learning
to write.

ROSA

Driven to learn. That's right! She
had a baby in prison. The big box
from the prison contained an old
wooden cradle and pillow too. Same
writing on it: "M. Carter." Cecil
said he took it to Winnie that same
day.

Ellie sees how the notes in the margins improved from the
beginning to the end of the bible. Then, Ellie turns to the
blank page and binding at the end.

ELLIE

Oh, my God!

Ellie snaps the bible shut.

ROSA

What?

ELLIE

The lost cat! Making more sense
now. See you at seven-forty-five at
the donut shop.

Ellie gets in Rosa's face.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Here's the deal. If you tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth tomorrow, I'll get you off with a warning. One tiny lie, and you're going away for three to five! Got it?

Rosa nods 'yes.'

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Don't answer the door or your phone until then. Got it?

Ellie holds the bible tightly.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I'll hang on to this.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Ellie parks up the driveway to arrive unseen and unheard. She sees a light on in the barn. She snoops around the ranch house with a flashlight, peeking in the windows. She sees everything is thrown around.

ELLIE

(whispers)

Somebody was looking for something valuable.

Ellie continues walking out back. Behind the barn, she sees a greenhouse in the distance with the lights on.

She slowly approaches the greenhouse, turns off the flashlight, and turns on her body cam.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Testing one, two, three. This is Ellie at Cecil's. It's almost midnight.

Ellie sneaks in closer. She sees Tony tending organic vegetables.

Ellie's cell phone buzzes with a text message.

Tony stops and looks around, as if he hears someone.

Ellie ducks and reads it: "Somebody's poking around Winnie's! Hurry!"

At the far end of the greenhouse, another man comes into view. It's Derrick. They go back to work.

Ellie sees that some of the crops look like marijuana.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
(whispers)
A bit more valuable crop than
donuts these days.

She tiptoes back to her patrol car quickly, and drives off without her headlights on.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Ellie arrives to see Doc sitting in the rocking chair in the dark with Winnie's shotgun.

ELLIE
Came as soon as I could.

DOC
Winnie's sound asleep. I heard
noises like someone snooping
around.

ELLIE
Probably saw your car and left.

DOC
Creepy feeling, like somebody's
watching you.

ELLIE
They're looking for an old cradle.

DOC
It was in Winnie's room when I
helped her in bed.

ELLIE
Go home and get some sleep. I need
you to come to the mine where Cecil
was killed at six-forty-five.

DOC
Pretty early. I'll sleep on the
couch.

ELLIE
I'll buy you donuts after. I almost
have both cases solved.

DOC
Both cases?

ELLIE
(laughs)
Winnie's missing cat! I'll sleep in
the car to ward off intruders. We
need to take Winnie and the old
cradle with us for her safety.

EXT. OLD MINE - DAY

Ellie, in uniform but without a hat, sets down a rifle
carrier and an old tweed jacket where Cecil died, as Doc and
Hank watch her slip a thermometer inside the jacket.

HANK
Where's your uniform hat?!

ELLIE
Left it at Winnie's.

HANK
You just gonna leave Winnie in the
car?

DOC
She's guarding her Ma's cradle.

ELLIE
Here's how it happened.

HANK
You're speculation?

ELLIE
We'll have our killers by eight-
fifteen this morning.

Hank laughs.

HANK
This I gotta see.

Ellie acts like the first-rate detective she is.

ELLIE
We heard the gunshot at eight. All
the suspects have us as alibis.
Cecil is found at eight-ten by
three hunters who never fired a
shot.

HANK

So, the stray bullet theory is right!

ELLIE

Wrong. Cecil could have been shot one hour earlier! Doc, Cecil wore a gray-wool jacket, which could have kept his body from cooling after death.

Ellie grabs the thermometer from the inside of the wool jacket. Doc examines it.

DOC

Yes, this would have delayed the body's cooling by a couple degrees.

ELLIE

Sunrise was at six-forty. He had to be shot after sunrise to have maintained his body temperature. The time of death was between sunrise, six-forty, and eight-ten, when the body was discovered.

HANK

So, when I felt him, he was still warm?

ELLIE

Exactly.

HANK

Why didn't we hear a shot earlier?

Ellie opens the rifle carrier and removes a suppressed CVA muzzleloader with a silencer on it.

ELLIE

This is a standard 45 magnum, but with only thirty grains of smokeless black powder in the cartridge.

Ellie fires the shot, which is surprisingly quiet.

Ellie waits for the rifle and silencer to cool down. Hank and Doc are getting excited.

HANK

Wouldn't have as much power!

DOC

That's why the bullet didn't do as much damage!

Ellie removes the silencer and reloads the rifle.

ELLIE

This next load has a full load of regular black powder.

Doc plugs her ears, as Ellie fires a shot with an incredible BOOM!

ELLIE (CONT'D)

That's what we heard in town at precisely eight AM!

Hank and Doc are impressed, as Ellie cools the rifle down and returns it to the carrying case.

DOC

Who drove Cecil to the mine?

ELLIE

His two killers. I'll explain over donuts.

Ellie picks up the rifle carrier and the jacket, and they scramble down the rocky slope.

INT. DONUT SHOP - DAY

RITA (18), Derrick's daughter, works the register. The back half of the store is devoid of customers, except for Tony, Rosa, and Delano.

Hank and Doc enter the front door and buy donuts and coffee.

Ellie enters through the back door, winking at Hank and Doc. Winnie clings to one of Ellie's arms. Ellie's other arm carries an antique wooden cradle with a sewn-in pillow. Martha Carter's bible rests in the cradle.

Derrick enters from the kitchen, wiping his hands on a towel tucked into his apron strings.

ELLIE

Hi, everyone. Thanks for coming.

All eyes turn to Ellie and Winnie. Ellie sits Winnie down and tucks the cradle under the table.

DELANO
Somebody having a baby?

Tony, Derrick, and Delano laugh. Winnie looks away and refuses to look at Delano.

HANK
Okay, settle down. Let's listen to what Ellie has to say.

DERRICK
Are we listening to a Deputy Sheriff instead of a Sheriff, now?

Rita glares at her father from the register. Rosa looks down sadly.

Hank delivers a giant jelly donut and cup of coffee to Ellie.

HANK
Yes, Derrick, we are!

Ellie moves next to Delano to speak. She smiles and takes a bite of the jelly roll before speaking.

ELLIE
Two days ago, we received a call from Winnie Hanson about a lost cat.

TONY
What's this got to do with us?

ELLIE
You'll see, Tony. Cecil Langley, Winnie's brother, was also shot and killed that morning, and I've come to learn that these cases are connected.

DERRICK
Stray bullet kill the cat, too?

ELLIE
No, Derrick. My story doesn't involve stray bullets.

Winnie snickers, making Delano twitch uncomfortably.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
My story begins one-hundred-thirty years ago...

CUT TO:

EXT. OLD MINE - DAY

In Black and white, we SEE Martha Carter (16) in ragged clothes, watching from behind a rock as her father, Linus Carter (32), is bludgeoned to death by Otis Mathews (35; a clone of Homer Samson), as Rexford Green (45), a clone of Delano Green, steals the large gold nugget.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Martha Carter was Winnie Hanson's grandma. She couldn't speak 'cause of a birth defect, and she couldn't read or write, so the Sheriff didn't believe her when she pointed and screamed at Otis Mathews and Rexford Green, Delano Green's great-grandfather, accusing him of murder.

BACK TO:

INT. DONUT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Everyone gasps, except Delano, who stands and points at Ellie in anger.

DELANO

That's a lie!

ELLIE

This is a really good jelly roll. You see, Rex and Otis said they were playing baseball at the time of the murder, and witnesses saw them at the game.

DELANO

Ya see! Martha Carter was lying!

ELLIE

Somebody was. That's for sure. All Martha had to prove her case was a pencil drawing she did that night.

Ellie removes the wrinkled, yellowing pencil drawing depicting a miner who found a large nugget. She shows it around.

DELANO

Proves nothing.

ELLIE

I know, it's torn in half, of poor quality, and without a name. She couldn't write then.

DOC

How did it get torn in half?

ELLIE

I'm getting to that. So later that night...

CUT TO:

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

In black and white (in what could be the back of Cecil's ranch house), Martha Carter crawls like a serpent into Rex Green's bedroom while he sleeps. Under his bed is a shotgun, a bloody baseball bat, and a canvas bag.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Martha admits to sneaking into Rex Green's house and stealing the gold nugget back. It belonged to her father! And she stole back this crumpled-up piece of her drawing.

BACK TO:

INT. DONUT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

DELANO

She was a liar and a thief.

ROSA

Not if Rex Green killed her father and stole it first!

DELANO

You stay out of this, Rosa!

Ellie holds up Martha Carter's bible, and flips through the drawings and two pages of printing, in pencil, in the back of the bible.

ELLIE

The whole story is right here. She stole the gold, and paid the price. She claims Rex hunted her down and beat her silly 'cause she wouldn't tell him where the gold was. Then he raped her before getting the Sheriff.

TONY
That ain't right.

Delano and Derrick glare at Tony.

TONY (CONT'D)
Well, it ain't.

HANK
Tell 'em why Linus was killed.

ELLIE
Linus found the second largest gold nugget ever to come from a Colorado mine, just over ten pounds.

ROSA
Second only to Tom's Baby, a thirteen-pound nugget discovered in a Breckenridge mine one year earlier. Baseball teams used to barnstorm by train through western cities to make a few extra bucks, playing miners and townies, like our re-enactments at the picnic every year.

Derrick stares coldly at Rosa.

ELLIE
Thanks, Rosa. But Otis Mathews, some say the greatest center fielder to play the game, didn't act alone. The sheriff investigated, and found dirt and flakes of gold under Martha's fingernails, and Rex had the same flakes of gold in his empty canvas bag.

ROSA
It was a rare type of gold called wire gold, so the assay officer said it was the same.

ELLIE
Martha Carter was three months pregnant by the time the judge gave her twenty years in the State Penitentiary in Canon City. Martha's younger brother made her a cradle for the baby, and her sister stitched her a pillow for it, sewn into the cradle. It's pretty heavy.

Ellie lifts the cradle with the attached pillow.

WINNIE

That was for my mother, born 1889
and died 1982 at the age of ninety-
three.

DELANO

Ancient history! What does any of
this have to do with the stray
bullet that killed Cecil?!

ELLIE

I'm getting to that. Two days
before Cecil died, a wooden crate
arrived at the museum. Cecil found
two books and the cradle inside.
Probably examined the materials and
brought the cradle to Winnie, since
it was her mother's.

HANK

The right thing to do.

ELLIE

But Cecil now knew the whole story,
because the bible contained a
completed copy of the same drawing
she made the night her father was
killed. And, she learned how to
write in the penitentiary, so she
added the names: Linus, Rex, and
Otis.

Ellie shows how the wrinkled drawing matches half of the
drawing in the bible perfectly. Delano stands and begins to
leave.

DELANO

They're all dead for a hundred
years. Doesn't matter! I'm going to
work!

HANK

Sit down, Delano!

Delano sits.

ELLIE

'Little inconsistencies, and little
lies, tell big stories,' my Pops
always said.

Hank is excited for Ellie.

HANK
Here it comes!

ELLIE
Two mornings ago, just before eight
A.M., I was tagging tires on Main
Street when Tony and Derrick came
out of the donut shop, like
clockwork...

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

We replay the scene of that morning with a V.O. from Ellie.

ELLIE (V.O.)
Tony, carrying a to-go bag, Derrick
with a delivery box, and I heard
the shot from the mine. Then I saw
Rosa's face in the museum window.

DERRICK (V.O.)
Couldn't have been us, so quit
insinuating...

ELLIE (V.O.)
But things were strange that
morning. When I asked Rita
yesterday if she remembered what
Tony purchased that morning, she
said two cinnamon rolls, not apple
fritters. Cecil loved his apple
fritters.

BACK TO:

Tony's eyes open widely. Rita nods 'yes' from the cash
register.

ELLIE
Poor Cecil wasn't going to get his
daily apple fritter. Then, three
hunters find his dead body at eight-
ten, so he won't need his apple
fritter now.

Derrick chimes in confidently.

DERRICK
But we were with you on Main
Street.

ELLIE

And you had a busy morning,
Derrick. You told me you hadn't
left the donut shop until that
eight AM delivery, but Rosa tells
me you delivered coffee and donuts
to her at six-forty.

Rosa looks away.

DERRICK

Guess I forgot.

ELLIE

You remembered to drop off the
coffee, but you kept the donut bag,
which, my guess is, contained
Cecil's apple fritter to lure him
to the mine.

Derrick rips off his apron in anger, as Tony plays dumb.

TONY

'Cause Cecil was killed by a stray
bullet?

DERRICK

I don't have to listen to this.

HANK

Yes, you do! Sit down!

ELLIE

Cecil didn't like going out. He
went to the museum and back. That's
it! So why did he go to the old
mine? And who drove him there, and
when did he arrive? Who did he
intend to meet there to bring back
to the museum?

DELANO

Why ask those questions? Poor Cecil
was killed by a stray bullet at
eight AM. Sheriff and Doc said so.
End of story!

HANK

Until Ellie showed us he could have
been killed an hour earlier!

Delano, Derrick, and Tony instinctively turn toward Hank.

TONY
But everyone heard the gunshot.

ELLIE
A gunshot. Maybe not the gunshot.

DERRICK
If he was shot earlier, we would have heard it.

ELLIE
Not necessarily! What I think happened...

CUT TO:

EXT. OLD MINE - DAY

We SEE Tony and Derrick helping Cecil up the rocky slope.

TONY (V.O.)
Muzzleloading elk season today, Cecil, so I brought a rifle in case we see one.

DERRICK (V.O.)
I brought the apple fritters.

Once they reach the mine, they turn Cecil where he'll fall in the sunshine.

TONY (V.O.)
Where is the stuff the penitentiary sent you from Martha Carter's cell?

DERRICK (V.O.)
Where's her letters and books?

ELLIE (V.O.)
If the gunman used a silencer, and no more than thirty grains of smokeless black powder, there's no way we'd hear that in town.

DELANO (V.O.)
Sheriff said the body was warm.

ELLIE (V.O.)
He wore warm, dark wool clothes, absorbed the sun's rays.

BACK TO:

INT. DONUT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

DOC

Actual time of death could have
been anywhere from six-forty-five
to eight AM.

ELLIE

I'm guessing it was around seven.

DELANO

(smirks)

Guessing!

ELLIE

That's right! Guessing! If I'm
right, that changes everything.

Tony, Derrick, and Delano sit up attentively.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

And it all starts with a motive.
Who had a motive to kill Cecil?

TONY

Not me.

ELLIE

Because you think you and Cecil
were common-law partners after
freeloading off his generosity,
sleeping in his barn for twenty
years?

TONY

I paid rent when I could.

ELLIE

Did he ever let you in his house?

TONY

No!

ELLIE

And why did he always lock his
door?

TONY

He was a private guy.

ELLIE

He was your landlord, nothing more.

Tony looks away.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

You're not entitled to any of his estate. Ask a lawyer, Mr. Green?

DELANO

Not unless his will mentions Tony specifically.

ELLIE

Right. And the only next-of-kin is Winnie Hanson.

Winnie smiles.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

But Tony and Derrick have a major greenhouse operation on Cecil's land.

Tony gets defensive, as does Derrick.

TONY

A few organic vegetables and herbs for restaurants in town. That's all?

DERRICK

That greenhouse is no concern of yours.

HANK

No permits or business license, no IRS payments, and your herbs include marijuana.

TONY

Legal in the state.

HANK

If you have a license to sell, and follow all the guidelines, and you report all sales to the state and the IRS.

Tony is fuming mad, and Derrick turns sad.

DERRICK

I see where this is going.

ELLIE

And you kept the whole operation from Cecil by bringing him fresh vegetables.

Tony realizes he's caught red-handed.

TONY
Farm to table?

HANK
Farm to jail.

Rita goes to hug her dad.

ELLIE
Everything was rolling along fine,
until Cecil got that bug in his
head to find Winnie's missing cat,
the gold nugget, and clear Martha
Carter's name. She was no thief!

WINNIE
Read her notes, Ellie!

Ellie turns to the last page of the bible where Martha's
quotes are written in pencil. Ellie reads:

ELLIE
So help me God, I saw Rex Green
hold my Pa, Linus Carter, down, den
Otis Mathews kilt him with a
baseball bat. Rex stole the gold
nugget that looks like a cat. Pa
said he was given it to me. Den I
stole it back from Rex dat night,
and my brother and sister and me
done buried it. Den, Rex beat the
hell out a me, and raped me, and my
brother and sister run off to live
with Uncle Lester in Denver. Rex
tore my drawing, and the sheriff
put me in jail. Den I went to
prison. My baby Ingrid is his baby.
I never tell her dat. Ain't never
comin' back here no how. Swear to
God dis is true.

Ellie looks up. Delano is speechless.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
It's signed Martha Carter, July 19,
1893. That was after four years in
prison, sharing her cell with her
daughter for three and a half
years.

DELANO

We can't believe a thief and a
liar!

Delano is so nervous, he spills coffee on his shirt. It makes
a huge stain like the other morning.

ELLIE

A simple DNA test on the hair on
the pillow in the cradle should
show a match if it's the truth. I'm
betting on the DNA!

HANK

Delano, such a tiny scandal a
hundred and thirty years ago
couldn't hurt a powerful
businessman such as yourself.

DELANO

Means nothing.

ELLIE

Except your chance to buy Cecil's
ranch for thirty thousand dollars
an acre. Isn't that right, Delano?
I saw your offer on Cecil's desk,
and the next day, POOF, it was
gone!

DELANO

Don't know anything about that!

ELLIE

Cecil had two keys to his house.
Winnie had one, and Cecil kept his
in his pocket at all times.

DOC

Cecil's key was gone when we picked
up his body.

Derrick and Tony look away.

ELLIE

If a stray bullet killed Cecil, who
took his key? And why?

(to Delano)

To erase an ancestor's sordid past?

Delano looks away. Ellie turns sad.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Doesn't matter. There's no proof. The murder weapon that killed Cecil hasn't been found. The person who fired the loud gunshot from somewhere up by the mine hasn't been found, and that weapon hasn't been found.

Hank and Ellie notice that Tony, Derrick, and Delano slightly sigh from relief.

HANK

We'll still need to get official statements from Tony and Derrick.

ELLIE

Just routine. I'm sure you understand!

HANK

Just to clear up a few inconsistent statements made earlier.

Hank's phone RINGS.

HANK (CONT'D)

Sheriff Hank Porter. Thanks for coming up later this afternoon. We could use the help. One hour, ya say? We can wait.

Hank walks off into a corner and listens.

ELLIE

I had this strange idea that murderer or murderers might have dumped or buried the rifle or rifles not too far in on one of the dirt spur roads on the way up to the mine, so I went up there and poked around yesterday with a metal detector.

Doc smiles and chimes in, as if on cue.

DOC

What did you find?

ELLIE

I found a few hotspots where the metal detector went crazy, so Hank asked the Forensics Team from Denver to take a look later today.

(MORE)

ELLIE (CONT'D)

They like to take special care when recovering evidence to save every little skin cell for DNA testing.

Hank wanders back.

HANK

Let's get these two processed, Ellie. Why don't Derrick and Tony come with us for one interview each? The rest of you can go.

DOC

I'll take Winnie home.

DERRICK

(To his daughter)
Home in an hour, Rita.

Hank escorts Derrick out.

ELLIE

Let's go, Tony.

Ellie escorts Tony out.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Maybe two hours, boys. We have to notify the State and Federal license and tax folks.

Delano sits patiently for a few minutes. As the patrol cars leave, Delano leaves quietly out the back of the donut store.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

A few blocks up the street, Ellie and Hank pull over. Ellie takes Tony to Hank's patrol car and sits him in the back with Derrick.

HANK

Give Ellie your phones, boys.

They hand them over.

Ellie handcuffs Tony and Derrick to the inside of the patrol car. She sits up front with Hank and checks her smartphone.

ELLIE

Worked like a charm. Toward the old mine. Give 'em room, Hank.

HANK

Will do.

Hank pulls out.

INT. PATROL CAR - DAY

Ellie turns to face Tony and Derrick.

ELLIE

Tony and Derrick, I know you did it, and I know how you did it. I'm arresting you both for the murder of Cecil Langley. You have the right to remain silent. You killed Cecil at seven with a silencer on a black powder rifle, and a small amount of smokeless powder. You hid the gun down the road, and went back to the donut shop.

DERRICK

But...

ELLIE

Don't speak. I know Tony pulled the trigger. He had the least to lose. You have a daughter. Then, Delano left Hank at seven-forty-five with a coffee-stained shirt, raced up near the mine, shot a loud muzzleloader, picked up your rifle, and stopped on a spur road to ditch or bury the rifles.

HANK

She's pretty smart, don't ya think?

ELLIE

I didn't know where he hid them, so we set up that display this morning, so Delano would lead us to them.

Ellie looks at the map on her phone.

Derrick looks at Tony in terror. They break down.

HANK

Everyone's prints, fibers, and DNA will be all over those rifles.

DERRICK

It was Delano's idea. I owed him a ton of money.

ELLIE

Next right turn.

TONY

He paid for the greenhouse. I never made enough to pay him back. He always wanted more.

ELLIE

His car stopped. Give him time to get 'em.

DERRICK

All his idea. The whole schedule. To make it look like it couldn't be us. You two as our alibis!

Hank stops quietly.

ELLIE

I know. Tell it to the judge.

HANK

You boys stay real quiet, ya hear?

They nod 'yes,' shaking in fear.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Hank and Ellie have their service revolvers pulled as they turn a corner to see Delano digging with a shovel on the side of the road next to his parked Jeep.

HANK

Put the shovel down, and hands in the air, Delano.

ELLIE

It's over. Tony and Derrick confessed everything. You have the right to remain silent...

Hank pulls the double rifle bag up from a shallow grave.

DELANO

They shot him; I didn't.

ELLIE

You came up at eight AM after Cecil was shot, fired a noisy muzzleloader, which we all heard from town...

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

We see Ellie, Derrick, and Tony react to the gunshot at eight AM.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

Delano, with a coffee-stained shirt, loads two rifles into a two-rifle carrying case, and races off in the jeep to the dirt road.

ELLIE (V.O.)

You shoved the two rifles into a carrying case, raced down the road, and pulled off on this dirt spur road.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Delano digs a hole on the side of the road to bury the rifles.

ELLIE (V.O.)

You buried the rifles, changed shirts -- you packed a spare shirt and a shovel, which shows it was all premeditated -- and you headed off to work. Your own surveillance cameras will prove you didn't go home to change.

BACK TO:

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Hank handcuffs Delano. He takes the transmitter off Delano's Jeep. Delano is livid.

ELLIE

You led us right to the murder weapon. Bet you don't have a spare shirt with you today!

HANK
I have an orange jumpsuit for you.
Let's go, Delano!

ELLIE
Should I notify his next-of-kin?
Winnie?

Hank and Ellie laugh.

INT./EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Ellie, Doc, and Winnie drink a cup of tea, staring at Martha Carter's writing and drawings in the bible.

WINNIE
She learned to read and write so
fast and so well, they made her a
teacher at the penitentiary.

Ellie stares at the cradle.

ELLIE
Can I borrow a knife?

DOC
I agree, an operation is in order.

Ellie grabs a sharp knife, and she slices open the pillow
sewn into the cradle. Wrapped in a raggedy old shirt, is the
Cat: the ten-pound gold nugget.

They all laugh.

Winnie pulls out a bottle of port wine from her purse, and
pours it into her teacup.

They all laugh again.

Ellie's smartphone rings. It's Hank. Ellie answers.

ELLIE
Hank?

HANK (O.S.)
(distressed)
Ellie, got some bad news.

ELLIE
What is it, Hank?

HANK (O.S.)
My patrol car. Trunk got busted
into sometime last night.

Ellie collapses on the couch. Doc and Winnie stare.

ELLIE
No! Don't tell me...

HANK (O.S.)
The rifles and shovel are gone. You
should have put 'em in the evidence
locker.

Ellie's face shows terror.

ELLIE
Got video?

HANK (O.S.)
Not at my house. This ain't never
happened before!

Sad pause.

ELLIE
Long gone by now.

HANK (O.S.)
DA will never prosecute this one.
I'm sorry.

Ellie ends the call.

A new black Cadillac Escalade with heavily tinted windows
rolls up to Winnie's house. The ladies all peek out the
window. Trapper Jackson steps out of the car in a nice suit
and carrying a dozen red roses. Ellie is disgusted.

ELLIE
Better hide the cat!

FADE OUT.

THE END