

# **CRYPTO HEIST**

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FADE IN:

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

It's a bitterly cold Christmas scene at the "Soaring Red-Tail Ranch," which includes a large guest house and a huge "barn" blanketed in snow.

An ambulance is parked in the snow outside a huge modern barn built for social events rather than for lodging horses and farm animals. The lights on the ambulance shine and blink brightly.

The big red doors of the barn open up only enough for two EMTs (mid-20s) to cart out ADDISON WEST/WHITE (28) on a gurney. She is a beautiful but unconscious blonde wearing a gorgeous white wedding dress. The EMTs wear heavy winter coats, gloves, and surgical masks as they race to load Addison into the back of the ambulance.

LUPE MARTINEZ (30), a Deputy Sheriff in uniform, steps out of the barn and shuts the big red door. She looks sadly at Addison and the ambulance.

LUPE (V.O.)

You may never have heard the story  
of the biggest cryptocurrency heist  
on United States soil, and not  
because it was flawlessly executed,

(beat)

But because the story was buried by  
the couple who was robbed!

EMT #1 puts an oxygen mask on Addison and covers her with a blanket while EMT #2 hops in the driver's seat, turns on the SIREN, and RACES away.

LUPE (V.O.)

It all started when I conducted a  
wedding at this snowy ranch soon  
after Christmas.

(beat)

I'm sure it was my training as a  
Deputy Sheriff, but everyone and  
everything about the evening seemed  
deranged and a little suspicious.

Lupe looks worried as she reenters the barn.

INT. BARN - EARLY EVENING

SUPER: "Two hours earlier."

Red double doors of the barn opened effortlessly for Lupe.

Three tables with six chairs each are decorated for a festive wedding reception with white linen tablecloths, elegant china, and far too many pieces of shining silverware. Party lights crisscross the rafters.

Wireless speakers spew country-western love songs from a bygone era.

The barn has Christmas wreaths and a lighted Christmas tree in the corner.

LUPE (V.O.)

I'm a Deputy Sheriff Lupe Martinez.  
On weekends, I'm also a Justice of  
the Peace offering cheap wedding  
services to supplement my meager  
income in a county filled with  
ranches like this one that rich  
city folk own as second or third  
homes. I usually get to eat great  
food after every wedding I perform,  
but the caterer's helicopter got  
grounded because of the weather, so  
this crap is from our local diner.

She sighs and turns her face to the catering table to hide her disappointment.

The caterer's table contains seven serving trays labeled as Steak in Gravy, Trout Almandine, Veggies and Cheese, Twice-stuffed Potatoes, and Salad.

LUPE (V.O.)

Every dish looked covered in  
cheese. If I told them I was vegan,  
I might have gotten shot before all  
that cheese could clog my arteries.

The dessert table contains a small wedding cake and a 50-cup coffee dispenser. A horse trough contains ice and 36 bottles of Champagne.

Lupe turns her attention to the server in a rented black suit, SANJAY DANI (25), who opens a bottle of Champagne.

LUPE (V.O.)

That's Sanjay Dani, a friend of  
mine from town.  
(snickers)  
(MORE)

LUPE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He's putting his Master's Degree in Philosophy to its highest calling, waiting tables at the Country Club and picking up catering gigs like this one. He says he's only dating me until he hooks a millionaire's daughter...

(laughs)

Or son. He isn't picky and makes me laugh.

Lupe gets a text message that reads, "We're on our way down from the house."

LUPE

Sanjay, wait in the bathroom during the ceremony.

SANJAY

Why?

LUPE

They don't want anyone to see the wedding ceremony. Even the parents have to wait in the house.

SANJAY

Their parents aren't invited? Why?

LUPE

I didn't ask.

Sanjay is filling a single Champagne glass and sipping it. We see a rental tag on the back collar of the black suit.

Lupe races to Sanjay and rips the glass out of his hand.

LUPE (CONT'D)

What the Hell are you doing, Sanjay?

Lupe removes the rental tag from Sanjay's coat. She pockets it.

SANJAY

(laughs)

I gotta make sure it's good enough for the guests. It's quantity control.

Lupe glares at him as she wipes the glass clean with a towel.

LUPE

I think you mean quality control.  
If the groom catches you drinking,  
you'll be fired!

SANJAY

I thought I was working for Mr.  
West, the oil dude from Texas.

LUPE

Normally, the bride's parents flip  
the bill for the wedding, but the  
groom insisted.

Lupe wanders past the catering table again.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Did you check the food too?

SANJAY

It's all from our favorite Ptomaine  
Diner.

LUPE

That's Romain Diner.

SANJAY

If you say so. I work there.

LUPE

The caterer that Mr. White  
contracted with couldn't copter the  
food and staff here because of the  
storm. You'll make a caterer's  
salary tonight. How was the food?

SANJAY

I tried the gravy-covered meat  
slabs posing as steak, trout caked  
in crusty batter, the veggie  
options smothered in cheese, twice-  
stuffed potatoes, and salad with  
more cheese, but as a Buddhist, I  
mostly had the vegetable medley  
because animals are...

(burps)

Sacred.

Lupe gets in Sanjay's face.

LUPE

Were they edible?

SANJAY

That's exactly how I would describe them... before discussing health insurance options.

LUPE

Alcohol also violates your Buddhist code of ethics because it can disrupt mindfulness and impede one's progress in the Noble Eightfold Path.

Sanjay gazes into Lupe's eyes.

SANJAY

Buddha gave me the night off in case you want to take advantage of me later tonight.

Lupe pushes him away.

LUPE

Keep every glass but yours filled, and serve the cake after the bride and groom cut it.

Lupe walks around the cake, examining it.

In the back of the cake, she spots a tiny sliver of cake missing, with frosting hastily covering the gap.

She glares at Sanjay who looks away with a guilty look.

SANJAY

Eggs. I know. I suck as a vegan, but I'll be good the rest of the night in case you take me home.

Lupe laughs.

LUPE

It's a small town, but it ain't that small. After the wedding, start filling the Champagne glasses.

SANJAY

I'm off to the bathroom. I'll remember to wash my hands.

Sanjay laughs and trudges to the bathroom, as Lupe leaps to the barn door.

EXT./INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Lupe taps the body cam on her belt.

LUPE (V.O.)

And, the photographer was a no-show because of the snowstorm. I told the bride and groom that I'd send them the footage, and they laughed like hell and said they'd quadruple my \$100 fee for marrying them.

(laughs)

They wanted a five-minute ceremony and a four-hour reception, with me invited. Fine with me, I said!

Lupe turns quickly to see the Christmas tree and Christmas lights.

LUPE (V.O.)

It's after Christmas, but they wanted to pretend this was a Christmas wedding. These two families don't travel over the Christmas holidays because they say it's too dangerous.

Lupe swings open the door of the barn and steps out into the cold; it's a harbinger of the rapidly approaching storm.

The wedding party trudges down from the main house.

JAWAN WHITE (30), a highly successful black businessman, reaches Lupe first. He wears a black tuxedo with a matching long coat. He doesn't extend an arm for a handshake.

JAWAN

I'm Jawan White, the lucky groom.  
You must be the Justice of the Peace.

Lupe puts her hand out, and then slowly takes it back.

LUPE

And Deputy Sheriff. Thanks for sharing the guest list and the bad news about the catering helicopter.

JAWAN

As long as the marriage is legal.  
We'll be out of here tomorrow morning.

WEI LI (35), an Asian businessman in a tailored gray suit covered by a matching long coat. He extends his arm to Lupe.

WEI

I'm Wei Li, Jawan's best friend,  
best man, and CFO. That's Chief...

LUPE

Financial Officer. I know.

Jawan, perturbed, turns to Wei.

JAWAN

I had you send her the guest list  
and the cancelation from the  
caterers that was accidentally sent  
to me.

Wei isn't listening as he focuses on the bride-to-be coming up behind them. Addison looks stunningly beautiful but cold in a wedding gown with a long white fur coat draped over her shoulders.

Jawan opens one arm for Addison to join him under his coat.

JAWAN (CONT'D)

This is Addison West, soon to be  
White.

Addison doesn't acknowledge Lupe.

CHRYSTAL WEST (30), who is dressed like a fancy country-western singer, with a long leather coat, joins the group last.

CHRYSTAL

Let's get this over with; I'm  
freezing.

JAWAN

That's Chrystal, Addison's older  
sister and maid of honor.

Addison takes the fur coat off her shoulders and hands it to Wei.

ADDISON

Wei, hang up our coats in the barn  
for the wedding.

CHRYSTAL

Why can't we wear our coats?



ADDISON

It will be a short ceremony. Tough  
it out! We're on a body camera!

JAWAN

Our photographer bailed because of  
the storm, so the Justice of the  
Peace offered to film the wedding  
from her body cam. We gotta look  
our very best.

Wei takes the coats into the barn.

LUPE

You all look so beautiful. The snow  
in the background will be a  
wonderful memory.

Chrystal snarls at Lupe.

CHRYSTAL

Make it quick! We gotta be done  
before our parents make it down  
here!

JAWAN

We haven't got all day.

LUPE

Let's jump to the vows.

Wei returns and stands beside Wei, but he can't take his eyes  
off Addison.

The bride and groom hold hands and expose elegant gold  
watches to Lupe, whose eyes open wide.

Lupe sees Addison struggling to speak.

Addison coughs and wheezes during her vows.

ADDISON

I (cough) Addison West, promise to  
love and (wheeze) you...

JAWAN

(interrupts, smiles)

Come on, baby. I promised you clean  
air, and you booked your sister's  
ranch where you wouldn't cough and  
wheeze!

LUPE

You both picked the perfect location for a wedding. Air doesn't come any cleaner than out here! When we miss the big city, we have to suck on a tailpipe. Right, Chrystal?

Addison coughs.

CHRYSTAL

If the air is so clean, why is Addie coughin'?

Addison glares at her sister.

ADDISON

It's nerves, damn it! I get nervous when I get married or when I'm freezing to death.

Addison coughs, wheezes, and slaps Jawan's arm.

JAWAN

We also picked the ranch to deter our extended family and friends from joining us.

Addison smiles at Lupe.

ADDISON

We wanted to keep it small.

Jawan leans toward Lupe and winks.

JAWAN

We love our families to death but we think they're clinically ill-behaved snobs.

Addison turns to her sister and laughs.

ADDISON

Present company included.

Chrystal pulls at her sister's dress.

CHRYSTAL

It's my ranch, bitch.

JAWAN

(winks at Lupe)  
See what we mean?

LUPE  
(to Chrystal)  
Nice digs. If you ever need a house  
sitter...

CHRYSTAL  
Get on with the wedding before the  
real assholes show up.

Jawan glares at Chrystal.

JAWAN  
I hope you're not referring to my  
family!

LUPE  
Your vows, Jawan?

JAWAN  
I promise to honor, cherish, and  
obey.  
(shakes in the cold)  
God, it's cold. Move it along.

Lupe's eyes open wide as she turns to Wei.

LUPE  
May we have the rings?

Wei hands Jawan his ring (a simple gold band) but struggles  
to take Addison's ring off his finger. Addison's ring has a  
diamond the size of an ice cube.

WEI  
My finger swelled in the cold.

CHRYSTAL  
Don't they shrink in the cold?

Jawan and Chrystal glare at Wei.

WEI  
I didn't want to lose it.

CHRYSTAL  
Cut off his finger.

Lupe's eyes open wider.

Wei hands Addison's ring to Jawan as Addison and Jawan shake  
their heads in disgust.

Anxiety causes Addison to wheeze and cough.

Jawan turns to Lupe.

JAWAN  
Better hurry. We don't know how  
long she has.

CHRYSTAL  
Cut the crap, Jawan.

Addison turns angry and goes to slap Jawan, but then she  
looks into the body cam and pulls her hand back.

LUPE  
Do you take each other in marriage?

ADDISON	JAWAN
I do.	I do... not.

Lupe's eyes and Chrystal's eyes open wide in shock.

Jawan laughs and ducks as Addison slaps his shoulder.

JAWAN (CONT'D)	ADDISON (CONT'D)
I do. I do. Forever and ever. That was a joke!	It's a good thing our families didn't see this.

CHRYSTAL  
Daddy would have shot you!

JAWAN  
My dad would have whacked me upside  
the head. I hope I'm there when he  
watches the body cam video.

Lupe shakes her head and continues undaunted.

LUPE  
By the powers invested in me, blah,  
blah, blah.

Jawan and Addison laugh as Wei and Chrystal snarl.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
You may now kiss each other.

They kiss wildly and passionately for a long time.

Wei looks away as Chrystal shakes her head in disgust.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
Why were your families invited to  
the reception but not the wedding?

Chrystal stomps into the barn.

WEI

You'll see.

Addison laughs and coughs as Jawan hugs Wei.

ADDISON

My nerves are shot already. I'd better fetch my inhaler from our room.

JAWAN

I'll get it for you, baby.

WEI

You lovebirds get in there, get warm, and beat Chrystal to the Champagne. I'll fetch the inhaler.

Wei races off.

INT. BARN - LATER

The guests are eating dinner and competing for speaking time. The mood is tense as everyone tries to be "in charge."

Lupe stands in the back of the barn by the caterer's table. Sanjay serves Champagne to the guests. He also serves a little to himself from time to time.

Suddenly, Jawan falls out of his seat and onto the floor convulsing and holding his neck with both hands.

ADDISON

(yells)

Help! Jawan's choking!

Lupe races to Jawan's aid and lies him on his back as the guests panic and gather around.

LUPE

Back up. Give him air.

CHRYSTAL

I'm calling 9-1-1.

She turns and makes a phone call.

Lupe checks his airway and sees nothing.

LUPE

Stand him up. Bend him over.

Bertrand and Wei help him up while Lupe uses a flat hand to pound Jawan's back four times.

Nothing comes out.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
Stand him up for the Heimlich  
maneuver.

Lupe performs the Heimlich maneuver.

Jawan GROANS, and they lay him on the floor.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
Food poisoning?

Lupe turns Jawan's face to the side and forces her index and middle fingers into Jawan's throat to trigger vomiting.

Jawan vomits.

Seconds later, he groans in relief.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
Does anyone else feel sick?

She looks around as everyone shakes their heads, 'No.'

WEI  
It must have been too much  
Champagne!

Jawan regains some strength and is helped to his feet while Sanjay grabs three hand towels and a plastic bag from the catering table, wipes up the vomit, and places the towels in the plastic bag.

JAWAN  
I'm okay. I'm fine. Maybe water  
from now on.

Everyone is relieved. Jawan turns to Lupe.

JAWAN (CONT'D)  
Thank you for that.

LUPE  
I'm glad my first-aid training came  
in handy.  
(to Sanjay)  
Thanks for the clean-up.

Addison guides Jawan back to his seat.

LUPE (V.O.)  
It was the fastest and strangest  
wedding I had ever performed. And  
now, this!

Lupe smiles at the bride, Addison, in her gorgeous white wedding dress. Addison eats a tiny slice of wedding cake and glares at her new husband.

ADDISON  
A small romantic Christmas wedding  
at a remote country estate, you  
said!

Jawan laughs innocently.

JAWAN  
Can't get much more remote!

Addison leans into Jawan.

ADDISON  
Or less-romantic! This is a  
freakin' barn.

JAWAN  
It's your sister's barn. Blame her.

INT. BARN - LATER

Lupe looks at the small crowd and smiles weakly.

Lupe rests her full but untouched dinner plate on the caterer's table, sips coffee, and observes the guests.

Sanjay circles to the maid of honor.

Chrystal glares at Sanjay by winking and pointing at her two half-empty glasses thinking she's flirting. He fills her drink glasses and rolls his eyes in disgust.

LUPE (V.O.)  
That made Chrystal dislike Sanjay  
more. In the one minute I talked to  
her after the wedding, she confided  
in me that her music career got  
swiftly booted downstream with the  
meteoric rise of Taylor Swift.  
Chrystal said she wasn't bitter but  
showed me her conceal-and-carry  
permit and her pink nine-millimeter  
Glock in her Gucci purse, which  
made me uncomfortable.

(MORE)

LUPE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 "Cryptocurrency needs protection,"  
 she said. I had to Google  
 cryptocurrency to find out what it  
 was.

In the back of the barn, Lupe puts on EarBuds and looks up  
 'cryptocurrency' on YouTube. She whispers to herself, but  
 Sanjay wanders close to her to eavesdrop. Lupe smiles.

LUPE  
 Decentralized and unregulated.  
 (beat)  
 Offers electronic transfer of funds  
 without banks to individuals around  
 the globe.  
 (frowns with questions)  
 Its value is impossible to  
 determine, and it fluctuates  
 wildly? Cartels and criminals use  
 it to launder money? It may be used  
 in tax evasion schemes?

Lupe sees Sanjay listening in, and she glares at him.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
 Cryptocurrency is outlawed in over  
 a dozen countries, including China,  
 India, Saudi Arabia, and Russia.

Wei stares at his oversized smartphone while gulping  
 Champagne.

Wei stands abruptly and points at Jawan while reading from  
 his phone.

WEI  
 I'm honored to give the customary  
 speech about my best friend and  
 business partner, Jawan, on the  
 occasion of his wedding to our best  
 friend, Addison.  
 (smiles at Addison)  
 We both met Addison on the same  
 night.  
 (to the crowd)  
 But she fell for the guy with the  
 most money and the biggest... car.

Addison and Jawan chuckle politely, but the joke falls flat  
 on the other guests who look perplexed.

Lupe studies Wei as his speech drifts off...



INT. BARN - LATER

Wei concludes his remarks.

WEI

... so, join me by raising a glass  
and wishing Addison and Jawan happy  
and long lives... or for however  
long they stick it out!

Everyone raises a glass, laughs, and cheers.

Wei steals glances at Addison as he pats Jawan on the back.

LUPE (V.O.)

Wei told me that he had the two  
rings for the ceremony, but he  
didn't tell me that he met Addison  
the same night Jawan did, about a  
year ago. His expression and body  
language told me it was love at  
first sight and the best man didn't  
win.

Lupe glances at the bride's family's table to see TATUM WEST  
(60), a Texas oilman in a Western version of a tuxedo, next  
to a much younger, Native American woman, DAKOTA WEST (35).

Tatum half-smiles at Jawan, while Dakota glances around at  
the strange barn. There are three extra seats at the table.

LUPE (V.O.)

Addison's father, Tatum West, is an  
oil baron and CEO of MidTex  
Petroleum who balked at the  
marriage. He introduced Dakota to  
me as "his third wife, part  
Comanche." He walked away when I  
asked Dakota, "Which part?" Dakota  
smiled politely even after I  
apologized for my unthinking  
comment. She's the CEO of Tatum's  
cattle ranching operations.

Lupe turns toward the groom's family's table to see BERTRAND  
WHITE (55), a Black lawyer in a black suit, and GILLIAN WHITE  
(40) a stoic-looking black woman. They barely speak. Again,  
there are three extra seats at the table.

LUPE (V.O.)  
 Rounding out the family of the groom are Bertrand White, the CEO of a successful law firm specializing in divorce cases, and his second ex-wife, Gillian, who is the self-proclaimed CEO of their marriage.

Lupe holds Bertrand's business card in front of her body cam.

LUPE (V.O.)  
 Even I had to laugh at Mr. White's business card.

INSERT Business Card which reads, "Bertrand White Esq., Divorce Attorney, "My first wife got nothin'!"

Sanjay wanders back to Lupe to grab another bottle of Champagne. They whisper as Lupe puts away Bertrand's business card.

LUPE  
 No one's ordering the coffee after what happened to Jawan earlier.

SANJAY  
 It's decaf! I think they'd rather sleep.

LUPE  
 I drank the coffee. It was weak but not deadly.

SANJAY  
 (glances at the crowd)  
 I heard when a coyote's paw gets stuck in a bear trap, it will chew the leg off to get away.

Lupe looks toward the guests and smiles weakly.

LUPE  
 Everyone here has all four paws caught in a trap. There is no escape, and we're surrounded by clinically ill-behaved snobs!

Sanjay grabs two cold bottles of Champagne.

Addison suddenly has difficulty breathing.

All eyes are on Addison but no one moves.

Jawan stays calm and hands Addison a tall glass of water.

JAWAN  
Have some water.

Wei angrily pushes an inhaler toward her.

WEI  
She needs her inhaler, idiot! Every  
30 seconds!

Addison continues wheezing and everyone gathers around her.

Jawan turns on Wei as they all hear a SIREN in the distance.

JAWAN  
Water thins mucus! And the inhaler!

TATUM  
She shouldn't be drinking alcohol.

Chrystal yells at Tatum.

CHRYSTAL  
It's her wedding day, Daddy!

Addison continues wheezing. Bertrand panics.

BERTRAND  
Should she lie down?

Jawan yells at his dad.

JAWAN  
She needs to sit up. Panic worsens  
the symptoms.

The SIREN is louder.

LUPE  
I forgot to cancel the ambulance  
for Jawan. Good thing, we'll have  
EMTs here soon.

Addison continues wheezing and begins to convulse.

JAWAN  
(worried)  
I've never seen her this bad.

Wei puts an arm around Jawan, but he pushes it off.

CHRYSTAL

This is more than asthma! More like  
emphysema or somethin' worse.

Lupe's eyes open wide as she studies Chrystal.

LUPE

What are you suggesting?

CHRYSTAL

Don't look at me! I'm not a doctor.

TATUM

You're not much of a singer,  
neither!

We HEAR the Ambulance arrive with clanging snow chains.

Two EMTs (mid-20s) race into the barn to assess Addison. They wear thick winter coats, gloves, and surgical masks. One takes Addison's pulse, and the other checks her airway and uses Addison's inhaler on her.

LUPE

This is Addison White. She's  
asthmatic, she was nervous about  
the wedding, and she's been  
drinking.

EMT #1

We have a weak pulse.

(to Lupe)

We were responding to an  
unconscious 30-year-old male who  
had swallowed something.

JAWAN

That was me. I'm fine now.

EMT #2

(to Lupe)

You failed to cancel that call.

LUPE

My bad, but good thing, huh?

TATUM

It's her wedding day, Goddamn it!  
Do something!

EMT #1

(to Lupe)

Maybe she ate or drank the same  
thing as the first guy.

The two EMTs attend to Addison, who is non-responsive.

EMT #2

We'd better put her on O-2 and get  
her to County!

Lupe bends over Addison to smell her breath.

JAWAN

The hospital?

BERTRAND

Is she dying?

EMT #1

Might be an asthmatic shock. I'm  
sorry.

Lupe pulls EMT #2 to the side and whispers.

LUPE

I smelled bitter almonds on her  
breath.

EMT #2 nods to Lupe as though he understands.

EMT #2

We'll bring her into the ER for a  
quick check.

Lupe races back to the caterer's table, finds the plastic bag  
containing the towels with vomit, sniffs the bag, and RACES  
to the EMTs who load Addison onto a gurney.

Jawan pleads with the EMTs as Chrystal places Addison's SMALL  
PURSE on top of her on the gurney.

JAWAN

I'm coming with you.

Lupe stands at the doors to the barn and yells.

LUPE

I'm afraid no one's leaving.

TATUM

Why the hell not?

LUPE

Jawan's food poisoning and  
Addison's asthma attack may not  
have been accidental or  
coincidental. I've got questions  
for everyone!

(MORE)

LUPE (CONT'D)  
(glares at Jawan)  
That includes you!

The crowd is angry and combative. Tatum pushes Lupe.

TATUM  
I don't know what's going on here,  
but I'm going to find out!

LUPE  
No, I'm going to find out.

Jawan pushes Tatum.

JAWAN  
We all need to settle down.

Chrystal pushes Wei.

CHRYSTAL  
You wanted Addison for yourself,  
Creep!

Lupe separates Wei and Chrystal.

WEI  
Are you telling me you didn't have  
the hots for Jawan?

CHRYSTAL  
You're such an idiot!

LUPE  
Everyone, chill! I agree it looks  
suspicious when a bride and groom  
have accidents on the wedding  
night!

BERTRAND  
I'll say! You are the worst  
security guard ever!

LUPE  
I'm not a security guard! I'm a  
Deputy Sheriff and it's my sworn  
duty to ask you all some questions  
to find out if something else is  
going on here! So take your goddamn  
seats!

The EMTs roll Addison to the ambulance as Lupe pulls Jawan  
aside.

LUPE (CONT'D)

You can go to the hospital and pick her up after my investigation and after the Champagne wears off.

JAWAN

What do you mean, investigation?

Lupe steps outside and shuts the barn doors behind her.

Lupe pauses to think.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

We fast-forward through the opening scene.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Lupe reenters the barn and shuts the doors.

She sadly addresses the crowd.

LUPE

I smelled bitter almonds on Addison's breath and on the towels that were used to wipe up Jawan's vomit. Sometimes, only sometimes, that could indicate cyanide poisoning, but one of the dishes served tonight was Trout Almandine from our local diner, so it could be food poisoning.

DAKOTA

Poisoning!?

LUPE

I don't know. I'm new to this sort of thing. I usually deal with speeding tickets, DIUs, and pets off a leash, but I'm bound by law to investigate and file a report that involves an ambulance. That's what I'm going to do.

GILLIAN

Surely you can't think any of us poisoned them?

LUPE

I'll have to rule out external sources like rat poison in the area, harmful chemicals, and the food, water, drinks, and medicines you're each taking.

(beat)

Stay calm, obey my instructions, and don't, I repeat, don't impede my investigation when I interview you. No more Champagne or alcohol tonight.

Tatum sits down and calmly opens his coat to reveal a shoulder holster with a pistol. Everyone sees this.

TATUM

I got a permit for this.

Lupe eyes the pistol, smiles at Tatum, and meanders slowly to his table.

The others look on worriedly.

Dakota stands and glares at Tatum.

DAKOTA

You will not disrupt your daughter's tragic evening. You have no idea if she's still alive!

Dakota points to the floor under the table where Addison was sitting.

DAKOTA (CONT'D)

There's her phone on the floor.

Jawan panics as he goes to pick up her phone.

JAWAN

How am I supposed to call her to check on her?

Jawan paces angrily.

DAKOTA

The ambulance can call me on the radio or my phone.

Tatum looks up at Dakota and sounds cranky.

TATUM

Something smells wrong here, alright, and it ain't me.



CHRYSTAL

Jesus, Daddy. This ain't about you!

LUPE

We'll keep this civil, or I'll  
arrest you all for impeding!

Tatum takes out a flask, unscrews the top, takes a swig, and  
glares at Lupe.

Lupe glares back and pulls out a notebook.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Jawan, what did you have to eat and  
drink tonight?

JAWAN

The meat-whatever-it-was, potatoes,  
and dinner rolls, cake, and  
Champagne.

TATUM

(yells at Jawan)

I ate the same thing, and I didn't  
toss my cookies!

Lupe glares at Tatum.

LUPE

Jawan, what did Addison eat?

Jawan looks away.

JAWAN

She had the trout and cheesy  
veggies, with a double dose of  
Champagne.

LUPE

That explains the almond smell of  
her breath.

Dakota points angrily at Jawan.

DAKOTA

Or he could have slipped her the  
cyanide.

Lupe gets in Dakota's face.

LUPE

Mrs. West, there is no evidence of  
cyanide. That takes a specialized  
test to detect...

Wei, staring at his phone, interrupts her.

WEI

The Lee and Jones test uses sodium hydroxide, iron sulfate, and hydrochloric acid on her stomach contents.

Everyone glares at Wei, who holds up and shakes his phone.

WEI (CONT'D)

It's the AI connection on the phone. Don't look at me that way!

SILENCE

Lupe paces as she yells.

LUPE

They'll test her at the ER. We have to assume that no one here is psychotic enough to target a bride and groom on their wedding night.

BERTRAND

I sure the Hell hope not!

Bertrand takes out a flask from his coat pocket, glares at Tatum, toasts him, and takes a swig.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)

This was my grandfather's from Prohibition days in Georgia.

Tatum glares back at Bertrand.

TATUM

We got a word for that!

Lupe stands between them and threatens them both.

LUPE

You're both close to obstruction charges. Knock it off!

(points to the back of the barn)

Let me hold my interviews back there. Sanjay will bring you coffee, soft drinks, or water if you ask nicely and behave yourselves.

SANJAY

Yes, Massa, anything you say,  
Massa.

Chrystal is the only one who laughs.

LUPE

I'm sorry. Sanjay was born with a  
sharp tongue and no filter.

SANJAY

I'm sorry. Don't bite the foot and  
mouth that feeds you.

Lupe shakes her head in disgust.

LUPE

I'll randomize the order of the  
interviews by putting your names on  
pieces of paper and drawing them  
from a bowl. Your side comments  
will not be appreciated.

She holds up her phone and points to her body camera.

LUPE (CONT'D)

However, the first thing I'll do is  
watch the video I was asked to take  
by Addison and Jawan from earlier  
today.

Bertrand stands angrily.

BERTRAND

I never granted permission to be  
taped.

JAWAN

Dad?

LUPE

It's a wedding. You have to expect  
to be taped. I'm sorry, Mr. White.

JAWAN

Sit down and be respectful, Dad.  
Please.

Chrystal holds up a key on a ring with a dozen other keys on  
it.

CHRYSTAL

Hey, Deputy, you can use the tack  
room for questioning your suspects.

Lupe politely accepts the key.

LUPE  
I thought that was a locked  
backdoor.

She glares at the group.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
My deputy, Sanjay, will be keeping  
a close eye on you.

SANJAY  
Deputy? That better mean another  
paycheck.

INT. BARN, TACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lupe enters the tack room, a large, empty room with plumbing for a kitchenette, bathroom, and separate locked entrance. It contains a twin bed and a small table with two chairs.

Lupe brings in another chair before taking a seat.

She pulls out her smartphone, takes out two Earbuds, and places them in her ears.

She pushes a few buttons and picks up the start of the video.

INSERT VIDEO

INT. BARN - EARLY EVENING

Lupe and Sanjay are alone in the barn.

Sanjay fills Champagne glasses while Lupe looks down the road.

SANJAY  
How was the wedding ceremony, Miss  
Injustice of the Peace?

LUPE  
(not turning to him)  
I told you not to call me that. It  
sounds bad. I do it for extra money  
like you do catering.

SANJAY  
I know your trailer.

LUPE

It will be a house someday and a ranch after that.

(excited)

Here they come.

SANJAY

(whispers)

What are they like?

Lupe looks back at Sanjay.

LUPE

Expensive bling and threads. They all look like they've never been hugged.

(beat)

They weren't invited to the ceremony.

SANJAY

Neither was I. You forced me to wait in the restroom.

LUPE

They demanded a short ceremony with the best man and maid of honor. I had to finish before their parents arrived.

SANJAY

That's odd.

LUPE

His folks came from New York, and her folks from Austin, and they wouldn't let them observe the nuptials. They said I'd understand after I met them.

END VIDEO

Lupe holds her smartphone close to her (the screen can't be seen by anyone else). She taps away and reads a short webpage in a few seconds.

Lupe turns away from her phone, removes one of her EarBuds, and exits the tack room.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Lupe addresses the group.

LUPE

I'll start my interviews with you,  
Chrystal, so that I may thank you  
for the use of your tack room.

Chrystal shakes her head in disgust and trudges back to Lupe  
and into the tack room.

INT. BARN, TACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lupe locks the door and looks around before sitting across  
from Chrystal.

LUPE

Do you mind if I record this?

CHRYSTAL

What have I got to lose?

LUPE

You tell me.

Chrystal looks away.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Can you state your full name?

CHRYSTAL

Chrystal Ophelia West. I legally  
dropped Ophelia in middle school  
for obvious reasons. My real mom  
understood.

LUPE

Was your father okay with that?

CHRYSTAL

He signed the form after signing  
his first divorce papers.

LUPE

That must have been tough.

CHRYSTAL

You don't know me!

LUPE

I know that your county music  
career didn't tank... it never got  
off the ground.

Chrystal turns to glare at Lupe.

CHRYSTAL

You're not exactly a big-city detective.

LUPE

I know that the white skin on your wrists, chest, and ears suggests you've been hocking your jewelry.

CHRYSTAL

Or more likely, it's improper to wear more bling than the bride on her wedding day!

Chrystal confidently displays her wrists to Lupe.

CHRYSTAL (CONT'D)

They wanna see her ring, not my bling, Sherlock!

Lupe looks away.

LUPE

Maybe you're right. Sorry. But, your keychain is more fitting for an estate caretaker than an owner.

CHRYSTAL

I bought the place a few months ago as a second home. I haven't hired my staff yet, which is something you'll never understand. Have you got any real questions?

Chrystal glares at Lupe. Lupe turns to glare back.

LUPE

How do you get along with your sister?

CHRYSTAL

She asked me to be her maid of honor at her tiny wedding.

LUPE

How well do you get along with your parents?

Chrystal laughs.

CHRYSTAL

Wealthy children are born to disappoint their parents. My dad calls me his "Gailure."

(MORE)

CHRYSTAL (CONT'D)

(beat)

His "Gay Failure" because of the choices I've made, turning away from the Baptist Church, becoming gay, and not working for him as a rigger in his oil fields. I'd sooner work for my stepmom branding cattle, but she hates me too.

LUPE

Do you know any reason why anyone would want to hurt your sister or brother-in-law?

Chrystal stares at Lupe with a perplexed look.

CHRYSTAL

It's their wedding day! Are you freaking mental? We may not be the best family in the world, but we're not the worst! The Whites are the worst!

Lupe looks away and mutters.

LUPE

You're telling me.

CHRYSTAL

What was that?

Chrystal stands and stomps to the door, cussing under her breath.

LUPE

I said, send in Wei Li!

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Chrystal stomps up to Wei as the others gather around them.

CHRYSTAL

That loser deputy in there thinks one of you tried to kill Jawan and Addie on their wedding day.

Everyone gasps in anger.

BERTRAND

She won't get away with this!

TATUM

Hell no!



CHRYSTAL

Wei, she wants to interrogate you next.

Wei steps back, worried and afraid.

WEI

I didn't do anything.

CHRYSTAL

You've seen those cop shows!  
Anything you say can and will be  
used against you in a court of law!

Wei trudges toward the tack room.

JAWAN

Court of law? Nobody tried to do  
anything. Addison had an asthma  
attack.

Chrystal turns and whispers to Wei.

CHRYSTAL

Don't say nothin'! Got it?

LUPE (O.C.)

I heard all that!

Wei glances back at the group before trudging in like a lamb  
to slaughter.

INT. BARN, TACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wei silently takes a seat.

LUPE

Mind if I record this?

WEI

Am I a suspect or person of  
interest?

LUPE

You watch too many cop shows. This  
is an interview for my report.

Wei snickers.

WEI

Sure, you can record. You won't get  
anything from me.

Lupe looks curiously at the best man.

LUPE  
State your full name.

WEI  
Wei Li.

LUPE  
Is that a common name in China?

WEI  
You'll be able to search that  
easily with AI.

Lupe stands and paces.

LUPE  
You're not being fully cooperative.

WEI  
I'm not sure how to cooperate with  
you after two minor and unrelated  
health incidents.

Lupe stops pacing and stares at Wei.

LUPE  
That's what we call speculation,  
Mr. Li. How well do you know Jawan  
White?

WEI  
Business partners, best friends,  
best man. What more can I say?

LUPE  
Does he treat you well?

WEI  
He made me a rich man.

Lupe gets in Wei's face.

LUPE  
I'll take that as a 'no.' Did he  
steal the woman of your dreams?

WEI  
I was joking out there.

LUPE  
Huh.

Lupe paces.

WEI  
I couldn't be happier for them  
both, except to wish for them to  
adopt better families.

Wei laughs, but Lupe doesn't.

LUPE  
Do you know any reason why anyone  
would want to hurt Addison or  
Jawan?

Wei pauses and then glares at Lupe.

WEI  
Do you realize how sick and twisted  
that sounds? Tonight of all nights?

Wei stands calmly with a look of disappointment at Lupe.

WEI (CONT'D)  
You're turning what would have been  
the most joyous night ever into a  
nightmare.

LUPE  
I'm sorry that you feel that way,  
but I have to do my job. Please  
send in Mr. and Mrs. White.

WEI  
Together?

LUPE  
It's an interview, not a trial.

Wei stomps out and shuts the door.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Sanjay is clearing plates and glasses from the tables, while  
everyone else whispers.

Wei leaps over to the whispering group.

He doesn't see that Lupe followed him out of the tack room.

WEI  
She wants to see Mr. and Mrs. White  
next. She's snooping into  
everyone...

LUPE

(interrupts)

I have to submit a report whenever an ambulance is called to a scene. I'm collecting basic information for my report.

(beat)

Sanjay, would you please search the bathroom, kitchen area, and storage closet for any rodent activity, rat poison, or chemicals of any kind? I'd like to rule out sources of contamination.

SANJAY

Better check the food from the diner, Chief.

Lupe sharply corrects Sanjay.

LUPE

'Chief' is considered a derogatory term when used by non-indigenous people.

Dakota glares at Tatum.

DAKOTA

Yes, it is.

TATUM

Don't get your knickers in a twist, Chief.

LUPE

I'd like to interview Tatum and Dakota next if you don't mind.

WEI

I thought you wanted to interview the Whites next.

Lupe turns and strides back to the tack room.

LUPE

I changed my mind.

Tatum and Dakota glare at each other.

INT. BARN, TACK ROOM - NIGHT

The interview is in progress with Tatum being defensive.

TATUM

I knowed we shouldn't have come!

DAKOTA

Nobody in their right mind would want to hurt that couple, Deputy! 'Course, nobody out there has a right mind.

Lupe smiles at Tatum.

LUPE

Why did you come, Mr. West?

Tatum looks away.

TATUM

Who don't wanna see their daughter married?

LUPE

You weren't invited to the ceremony.

(beat)

And, I'll ask the questions.

(beat)

Why weren't you and your wife invited to the wedding ceremony?

They HEAR a shot fired from the barn. BAM!

Lupe pulls out her service pistol and glares at the Wests.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Stay here and keep your heads down.

She exits into the barn.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Lupe races into the barn to see three guests pointing pistols at each other. Chrystal is aiming at Wei, Bertrand is aiming at Chrystal, and Gillian is aiming at Bertrand.

Jawan stands with both arms and hands raised like he's surrendering.

Sanjay hides under the food table.

Lupe yells.

LUPE

On the floor, everyone!

Everyone dives to the floor.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Slide those pistols away from you.

Bertrand and Gillian slide their pistols away from themselves. Chrystal does not.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Now, Chrystal!

Lupe turns around to see Tatum and Dakota on the ground, but Tatum is holding his pistol.

LUPE (CONT'D)

You too, Mr. West! You two were supposed to stay in the tack room!

Chrystal and Tatum push their pistols in front of them.

Lupe looks around. She yells.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Sanjay?

Sanjay slowly exits from under the food table. His hands are shaking.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Sanjay, dump the basket of cheesy rolls and go pick up all the pistols! And someone better tell me who fired that shot and what the Hell is going on around here!

Chrystal, Bertrand, Gillian, and Jawan start yelling loudly all at once as Sanjay collects the weapons.

BERTRAND

Nothing happened!

CHRYSTAL

Oh, something happened alright!

WEI

She was gonna kill me!

Jawan points toward the coat rack.

JAWAN

My stepmom shot my best coat!

LUPE

Chrystal, why were you aiming at Wei?

CHRYSTAL

I think he poisoned Jawan.

LUPE

Bertrand, why were you aiming at Chrystal?

BERTRAND

Because she was aiming at my son's business partner.

LUPE

And, Gillian, why were you aiming at your husband?

GILLIAN

I was aiming at the coats. I don't see well without my glasses.

Sanjay holds the basket of pistols. His hands still shake.

SANJAY

I got 'em, Lupe.

Sanjay sets the basket back on the food table.

SANJAY (CONT'D)

But I'm going home now.

Lupe holds her pistol in the air.

LUPE

Nobody is going anywhere.

(beat)

Get back in your seats! All of you.

Lupe moves to inspect the coats.

She sees a bullet hole in the chest of Jawan's fancy coat.

She stomps over to Gillian and gets in her face.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Did you discharge a weapon in a crowded barn?

Gillian looks away.

GILLIAN  
We were humiliated! Mmmm. Mmmm.  
After all my husband did for that  
spoiled, ungrateful boy.

Gillian glares at Jawan.

LUPE  
Did you shoot his coat?

Gillian glares at Lupe.

GILLIAN  
He wasn't in it!

Lupe is furious.

LUPE  
Shooting a gun in a public place is  
a crime even if nobody sustains  
injuries from the gunfire. In our  
state, it's prosecuted as a  
misdemeanor but carries up to six  
months in jail and up to \$1,000 in  
fines!

Bertrand glances casually at his wife.

BERTRAND  
I'll miss you, baby!

Gillian leans over to choke Bertrand but stops herself.

BERTRAND (CONT'D) JAWAN  
The prenup! The prenup?

BERTRAND (CONT'D)  
I warned you, Jawan!

Lupe waves her pistol again.

LUPE  
Stop this nonsense right now!

Gillian collapses in her chair clenching her fists.

BERTRAND  
I have witnesses.

Gillian glares at Bertrand like he's a dead man. Then she  
glares at Jawan.



GILLIAN

You're dead to me, too. You'll  
never set foot in my house again.  
(glances at Bertrand)  
Prenup.

Bertrand slams his fist on the table.

BERTRAND

That house is worth...

Lupe glances around and yells.

LUPE

I need you all to act like adults  
while I complete my interviews.  
(to Gillian)  
We'll be speaking soon.

Chrystal snickers.

LUPE (CONT'D)

As for Chrystal, Bertrand, and  
Gillian, it's a gross misdemeanor  
to aim a gun toward another human  
being, which in this state carries  
up to \$2,000 in fines and up to a  
year in jail.

The guests fold their hands like scolded schoolchildren.

Lupe pulls at the sleeves of Tatum and Dakota and guides them  
back to the tack room while shaking her head in disgust.

INT. BARN, TACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tatum and Dakota sink into chairs as Lupe shuts the door.

LUPE

It's such a wonder why the parents  
weren't invited to the wedding  
ceremony. I'm sure stuff like this  
happens at Thanksgiving, Christmas,  
hell, even Ground Hog Day in Texas!

Tatum and Dakota look away in opposite directions.

LUPE (CONT'D)

I'll ask you once more. Do you know  
why anyone would like to harm the  
newlyweds?

TATUM

It don't take no rocket scientist  
to know that the Asian was in love  
with our daughter!

Dakota glares at Tatum.

DAKOTA

That's your daughter, and that was  
a racial slur, you fat, pale-faced  
bastard.

Tatum raises his hand to slap Dakota but Lupe slaps his hand  
away.

LUPE

Are you insane? I'm right here as a  
witness, and assault and battery  
charges could come with a fine of  
up to \$2,000 and another six months  
in jail.

TATUM

Another six months?

LUPE

I can also file charges of impeding  
an investigation for adding to the  
chaos out there. Did you point your  
pistol at anyone tonight?

Tatum is silent, but Dakota whispers to Lupe loud enough for  
Tatum to hear.

DAKOTA

Chrystal.

TATUM

I was horsing around, and so was  
she.

LUPE

You people are nuts. Those are  
loaded weapons!

TATUM

Dakota never liked my only  
daughter.

DAKOTA

You have two daughters who hate  
you.

Lupe rolls her eyes in disgust.



LUPE  
It's only an interview.

GILLIAN  
I don't give interviews.

LUPE  
Fine. I'll talk. You listen.

Lupe shuts the door and paces while she speaks.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
Your only son invited you to his wedding...

GILLIAN  
Reception.

LUPE  
Fine. You should both be happy he found the love of his life.

BERTRAND  
That would be 'the money of his life.'

Lupe gets in Bertrand's face.

LUPE  
Do you think he married Addison for her money?

Gillian laughs.

GILLIAN  
It isn't even real money! It's that cryptocurrency shit.

Bertrand laughs.

BERTRAND  
Dumb-ass kid, but at least he avoids all that crypto shit.

LUPE  
Which is what Addison's entire life is all about.

BERTRAND  
It made her a bigger target for bank robbers.

LUPE  
What are you talking about?

GILLIAN

When you buy cryptocurrency as an individual, you become your own bank.

Lupe steps back, stunned.

BERTRAND

That's right. With a non-custodial wallet, you have sole access to your funds, which are protected by passcodes that only you can set.

GILLIAN

It's called DeFi for Decentralized Financing.

BERTRAND

If someone gets your access codes, you can be robbed by anyone!

GILLIAN

I'm sure you heard about the Florida gang that conducted home invasions and tortured victims into giving up their crypto passcodes.

BERTRAND

They caught the St. Felix gang a year ago. They stole \$3.5 million between 2020 and 2024.

LUPE

Never heard about them. Am I the only one in the world who knows nothing about cryptocurrency?

Bertrand and Gillian nod, 'Yes.'

LUPE (CONT'D)

Do you think Addison is an evil mastermind?

Bertrand and Gillian look away in opposite directions.

LUPE (CONT'D)

How much money is she worth?

BERTRAND

You can't find out. It's not as easy as looking her up on Whats-your-networth-dot-com.

GILLIAN  
It's all secret.

LUPE  
So it could be millions.

BERTRAND  
You don't go to these lengths not  
to be seen for a few million  
dollars. I'd guess billions.

GILLIAN  
They don't own traceable houses or  
fancy cars.

BERTRAND  
They take private jets everywhere  
on random schedules.

GILLIAN  
Who says, "Absolutely no gifts" on  
a wedding invitation?

BERTRAND  
They were asking for crypto!  
Untraceable, tax-free, crypto.

Lupe collapses into her chair.

LUPE  
That's why everyone here acts like  
a CEO. You are CEOs and multi-  
millionaires. That's why Addison  
and Jawan didn't allow you all to  
bring your personal assistants,  
bodyguards, or security. They  
didn't trust them.  
(looks away)  
It's why you are all packing heat.

Bertrand and Gillian nod, 'Yes.'

BERTRAND  
Gillian dabbled in crypto DeFi for  
years before getting robbed.

LUPE  
(to Gillian)  
You were robbed?

GILLIAN  
Forty million dollars worth of  
crypto, two years ago. I can't talk  
about it.

BERTRAND

That would be worth twice that now!

(beat)

The biggest cash heist in U.S. history was when six men stole \$18.9 Million from the Dunbar Armored trucking company in Los Angeles in 1997. Our robbery took two guys ten minutes.

LUPE

Crime does pay! How did the criminals get your secret key codes?

BERTRAND

One man put a gun to my head from the backseat of my car, and the other said he'd cut her toes off one at a time unless...

GILLIAN

I gave them everything they wanted.

BERTRAND

They would have shot us both.

LUPE

Why didn't they?

BERTRAND

So they could come back for more anytime.

GILLIAN

We are never safe. None of us are. That's why I quit.

BERTRAND

In 2022, the five top crypto robberies netted \$1.48 billion, all involving DeFi.

Lupe paces.

LUPE

That's why Addison and Jawan had cold feet about getting married. They'd be sitting ducks and so would all of you.

(beat)

If those same bad guys were able to follow any of you here, they could do the same thing to...

Lupe turns her back to make a call on her radio.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
This is Deputy Martinez at the  
Soaring Red-Tail Ranch out County  
Road 289. Over.

We hear the crackly voice of a friendly female DISPATCH OFFICER.

DISPATCH OFFICER (V.O.)  
Come in, Lupe. This is Sheryl.  
Watch out when you come back to  
town. The storm is...

LUPE  
Sheryl, can you confirm that the  
ambulance dropped off Ms. Addison  
West or Addison White at the county  
hospital? Over.

DISPATCH OFFICER (V.O.)  
I'll confirm. Hold on. Over.

Lupe paces anxiously, and Bertrand and Gillian look scared.

TENSE MOMENTS

DISPATCH OFFICER (V.O.)  
Lupe, I'm sorry. County has no  
record of an ambulance being called  
tonight. It's being serviced at the  
gas station.

Lupe looks toward the barn in fright.

LUPE  
Dispatch put an APB out for an  
ambulance or any van heading west  
on County Road 289 and beyond. They  
have a forty-minute head start on  
us.

Lupe turns to the camera (fourth wall) in horror.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
The ambulance drivers have Addison.

Lupe races out with Bertrand and Gillian behind her.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Everyone is seated but fidgeting nervously.



Lupe is calm but deadly serious.

LUPE  
How many of you are trading in  
cryptocurrency the Decentralized  
Financing way?

All but Jawan and Sanjay raise their hands.

Lupe looks around and is shocked to see Gillian's hand go up.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
Gillian, I thought you quit.

JAWAN  
So did I.

Lupe glares around the room.

LUPE  
Teach me everything you can about  
ways to avoid being robbed of your  
cryptocurrency.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST ROAD - SAME TIME

The back door of the ambulance is cracked open a few inches.

Inside the parked ambulance, we HEAR Addison SCREAM.

INT. AMBULANCE - CONTINUOUS

The two EMTs sit beside Addison whose hands and feet are tied spread-eagle to the stretcher, in her wedding dress but covered by a thin sheet. The EMTs wear ski masks and their voices are distorted by mechanisms imbedded in their masks. EMT #1 holds an EpiPen. They are videotaping her from the waist up. She's screaming.

Addison SHAKES in fear.

She SCREAMS again.

EMT #1  
Scream all you want. There's no one  
around for miles.

EMT #2  
We don't want to hurt you.

Addison SCREAMS again.

ADDISON  
What do you want with me?

EMT #1  
We were after your new husband.

ADDISON  
You knew about the wedding?

EMT #2  
Our boss knows everything!

EMT #1 dumps out the contents of Addison's purse between her legs covered by a thin sheet.

EMT #1  
Inhaler, lipstick, and lace handkerchief. Where is your goddamn phone?

ADDISON  
I don't know. I must have left it in the barn.

EMT #2 holds out a binder with photos of all the guests in the barn taken with a body cam, but everyone is fuzzy.

EMT #2  
Who's the cop?

ADDISON  
Lupe something. I don't know. Deputy Sheriff or something.

EMT #1  
Who is the caterer guy?

Addison yells.

ADDISON  
He's staff! I didn't pay him any attention.

EMT #2 shows Addison a photo of Tatum West.

EMT #2  
Who is this guy?

Addison looks away.

EMT #2 (CONT'D)  
He's packing heat!

ADDISON  
He's an old friend of my husband's.  
I don't know him.

Addison glares at the crooks.

EMT #1 slaps Addison across the mouth.

ADDISON (CONT'D)  
You went there to take my husband,  
but you got me instead!

The EMTs stare at each other.

EMT #1  
You'll do. We'd like you to give  
him a call.

EMT #1 holds a BURNER PHONE next to Addison's ear.

EMT #1 (CONT'D)  
What's his number?

Addison looks away.

EMT #1 holds up bolt cutters.

EMT #1 (CONT'D)  
Pick a toe.

Addison quickly responds.

ADDISON  
203-555-1745.

EMT #1 punches in the number.

EMT #2  
Tell him we want him to deposit \$10  
million in Crypto into our holding  
account in two hours.

ADDISON  
He deals in stocks and securities,  
not Crypto.

The EMTs stare at each other, worried.

EMT #1  
I hope this isn't a repeat of  
Florida

EMT #2 yells.

EMT #2

Tell your new husband that you'll  
be tortured until he turns over his  
cold wallet!

Addison shakes in fear.

EMT #1 shows a REMOTE CONTROL DEVICE to Addison.

EMT #1

We placed enough explosives around  
the barn to level it and burn it to  
the ground. You'll tell the cop to  
report that you've been safely  
returned to the ranch or you die a  
slow, painful death. No more cops  
involved or everyone in the barn  
dies. Got it?

EMT #1 turns on the remote control device which lights up  
like a Christmas Tree.

Addison's hands shake as she HEARS Jawan's phone RING.

EMT #2

No one leaves the barn! Got it?

BACK TO:

INT. BARN - SAME TIME

Lupe is busy writing notes on her phone when Jawan's phone  
RINGS.

JAWAN

Unknown number. Probably a robocall  
again.

Lupe races to his side.

LUPE

Answer it! Stay calm.

Lupe bends her ear to the phone

JAWAN

Hello?

ADDISON (V.O.)

It's me.

Jawan panics and yells as Lupe tries to calm him down.

JAWAN

Oh my God. Are you okay?

The others race to Jawan to listen in.

JAWAN (CONT'D)

Where are you? Are you safe?

ADDISON (V.O.)

I'm in danger. I was kidnapped for ransom.

Everyone but Lupe GASPS and gives away that the crowd is listening in.

Lupe pushes the crowd back and glares at them.

JAWAN

What do we do?

ADDISON (V.O.)

First, no one can leave the barn or it will blow up.

Everyone but Lupe GASPS.

Lupe stares at them angrily.

JAWAN

Okay. No one leaves. Got it.

ADDISON (V.O.)

Tell the cop to report that I was returned safely to the ranch and not to involve any more cops or the FBI, or I'll be killed and the barn will blow up.

JAWAN

What about the ransom?

ADDISON (V.O.)

They want access to your cold wallet and crypto passcode thingies in two hours.

Jawan is angry.

JAWAN

It's in securities! Stocks and bonds! \$10 million! That could take days to sell and move. It's the holidays for Christ's sake! The market's closed!

ADDISON (V.O.)

They don't want your stocks, they want all of your cryptocurrency like the two in Florida! Or they'll cut off my toes!

We HEAR Addison's face being SLAPPED.

CLICK. The call ends. Jawan jumps up and down.

JAWAN

We got this. They're rookies! They were after only \$10 million. They have no idea what Addison and I are worth.

Everyone stares at Jawan with sad, perplexed faces, until Lupe, Bertrand, and Tatum turn angry.

LUPE

They have your wife hostage. And there she was giving us clues.

CHRYSTAL

What clues?

LUPE

She emphasized FBI, the number two, toes, and Florida.

Bertrand panics and paces in the barn.

BERTRAND

They rigged the barn to blow up.

WEI

They hung up on you, idiot! You don't know how to get her back!

Jawan collapses into a chair.

He holds his head with his hands.

TATUM

What do we do now?

LUPE

First, I let dispatch know we have a hostage situation. They'll give the FBI my contact info. I use my body cam to get photos of the perps to them.

CHRYSTAL  
Wait! They said no FBI.

LUPE  
I'm in charge. Got it?  
(pats Jawan)  
Addison and I are in charge now.

Chrystal looks away.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
We'll plan what we're going to tell  
the perps when they call you back.

JAWAN  
How do you know they'll call back?

LUPE  
Because they haven't been paid yet.  
Sanjay, get me a list of everyone's  
Social Security numbers. First  
thing the FBI is going to ask for.  
And Jawan...

JAWAN  
7:19 PM Mountain Standard Time from  
an unknown number. Duration of  
call, approximately two minutes.

Lupe paces.

LUPE  
It's good that they don't know  
about Addison's crypto, but she's  
in a very dangerous situation. We  
have the exact time of the call, so  
I'll have the FBI ping all phone  
calls in the county at that time.  
It's doubtful they've left the  
county.

BERTRAND  
Good thinking. But what about the  
crypto funds the kidnappers want?

JAWAN  
They're going to be very  
disappointed.

LUPE  
We're stalling, but they can't know  
that.

(MORE)

LUPE (CONT'D)

I need each of you to prepare a list of your crypto holdings and the various passcodes to reach them.

They take out their phones and pull up "Notes," but they all pause and look around suspiciously.

No one is typing into their Notes.

Lupe texts the Dispatch Officer. The text reads, "Kidnap for ransom in progress. Patch me to FBI on JusticeConnect."

Lupe addresses the group.

LUPE (CONT'D)

I'll use the tack room as my incident command center. If the door is closed, you may not enter without knocking. I'll keep you informed but will not share details. Jawan, text me the exact time of the first call. Nobody looks outside or tries to leave!

Lupe's phone receives a CALL with a special FBI RINGTONE.

INT. BARN, TACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lupe answers the video call from AGENT COLLINS (40s), a stern woman in a dark blue suit.

AGENT COLLINS

This is Agent Deshaun Collins of the FBI badge number 85472. To whom am I speaking?

LUPE

Deputy Sheriff Lupe Martinez Badge Number 43981. I'm at...

AGENT COLLINS

We've got eyes on you, but the imagery is poor due to the storm. I'll need everyone's Social.

LUPE

I'm on it. The victim's name is Addison West or White.

AGENT COLLINS

Too common. Text me the Socials when you...



LUPE

Yes, Ma'am. The perps are demanding the husband's cold wallet for his cryptocurrency, or they'll start cutting toes, but Jawan, the groom, doesn't own crypto, and Addison emphasized four words on the ransom call: FBI, the number two, toes, and Florida.

SILENCE

AGENT COLLINS

I'm running crypto, kidnap, the number two, toes, and Florida in our system now.

There is a KNOCK at the door.

LUPE

I'll call you back, Ma'am.

The Agent is abrupt.

AGENT COLLINS

Please don't call me ma'am. It's Deshaun or Agent Collins.

CLICK

The Agent ends the call.

Lupe opens the door to see Sanjay looking worried.

LUPE

Did you get everyone's Social?

Sanjay shows Lupe his phone with names and Social Security numbers. Sanjay's name has a '?' after it.

SANJAY

Almost?

LUPE

You don't know your Social Security number?

SANJAY

I forgot it.

LUPE

Forgot it?

SANJAY  
I don't have one. Yet.

LUPE  
Green card?

SANJAY  
Not exactly.

Lupe rolls her eyes in disgust.

LUPE  
Airdrop me your list.

Lupe pushes Sanjay out the door. She shuts and locks it.

She texts the list to Agent Collins.

Lupe video-calls Agent Collins.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
This is Deputy...

AGENT COLLINS  
This is a video call, remember?  
I've got some bad news.

Lupe looks stunned and puzzled.

AGENT COLLINS (CONT'D)  
I searched our database for the  
clues your victim gave us, and AI  
indicates ties to a similar crypto  
heist on August 18, 2024. A  
Washington, D.C., resident was  
robbed of \$230 million in  
cryptocurrency.

LUPE  
I never read anything...

AGENT COLLINS  
It was the largest crypto robbery  
in US history. To date, over \$100  
million in Bitcoin remains  
unaccounted for.

LUPE  
That could fund a lot of crime  
sprees.

AGENT COLLINS

Exactly. There was also a botched kidnapping of a Connecticut couple and a plot to demand ransom from their son – who was likely involved in the crypto heist.

LUPE

Like our kidnapping!

AGENT COLLINS

The crooks slipped up when they neglected to use a VPN when setting up the drop-off bank account.

(beat)

They won't make that mistake again.

LUPE

Were they apprehended?

AGENT COLLINS

The kidnappers were caught, but never tied to the crypto heist suggesting organized crime. We finally caught the two of the perps responsible for the heist, but there could have been more. One of them still had \$20 million of Bitcoin on his phone when he was apprehended.

Lupe looks back at the door.

LUPE

Addison's phone was left behind when the ambulance took her away.

There's a loud KNOCK at the door.

JAWAN (O.S.)

They cut off her toe! They cut off her toe!

Lupe races to open the door. Agent Collins can see the terror in Jawan's face.

LUPE

Oh, my God!

JAWAN

They sent the video of her screaming. Then, they sent a photo of her severed toe. What do we do?

Jawan shows them the POOR-QUALITY PHOTO of the severed toe with blood on it.

AGENT COLLINS

Deputy Martinez, send me that video and photo immediately. I need to complete my risk assessment before we assign agents to your case. And our conversations are strictly confidential.

Agent Collins ends the video call.

Lupe holds Jawan's arm as they exit to the barn.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Lupe stands in the middle of the group.

LUPE

I'm not at liberty to discuss my conversations with the FBI. I can tell you they are taking this situation very seriously.

JAWAN

How many agents are they assigning to this case?

LUPE

Agent Collins has not completed her risk assessment, and the weather will undoubtedly hinder their initial response. We do have the support of drone aircraft and their ongoing investigation back at headquarters, whatever that means.

JAWAN

So, zero agents.

Sanjay disappears to go to the restroom.

Lupe calmly turns to Chrystal.

LUPE

Is there a way to the roof?

CHRYSTAL

There's a fake hay loft above the tack room.

Lupe snickers.

LUPE

Of course, there is.

(beat)

I'm going up to see if any devices were left at the base of the barn. You stay seated inside this room in case they have motion detectors. No one, I repeat, no one is to open any doors or windows to peak out! Got it? I'm going to peek over the roof to spot any improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, or to see if the perps are lying to us.

Lupe exits to the tack room.

EXT. BARN, ROOF - NIGHT

It's a howling wind with sleet-like snow when Lupe crawls onto the roof in her winter jacket.

Footing us slippery as Lupe makes her way along the roofline.

TENSE MOMENTS

Lupe slowly leans her head over the edge of the roof to look down.

She sees a blinking red light on a 1-cubic-foot-sized metal box.

She shakes her head in disgust and crawls slowly to the opposite side of the roofline.

TENSE MOMENTS

Lupe slowly leans her head over the edge of the roof to see a second blinking red light on a 1-cubic-foot metal box.

She shakes her head in disgust and crawls back.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Lupe dusts snow off her jacket and looks around.

LUPE

Where's Jawan?

SANJAY

Restroom.

Lupe speaks softly to the group.

LUPE  
I spotted boxes with what may be  
bombs at both doors.

CHRYSTAL  
We're trapped like rats.

Lupe gets a video call from Agent Collins.

LUPE  
I'll take this in the tack room.  
Let's hope reinforcements are on  
the way.

INT. BARN, TACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lupe shuts and locks the door before taking the call.

AGENT COLLINS  
We have a situation. Three wedding  
guests spilled the beans about the  
wedding on social media.

LUPE  
Chrystal, Wei, and Bertrand?

AGENT COLLINS  
Ms. Chrystal West, Wei Li, and Ms.  
Gillian White.

LUPE  
Gillian, but she was a crypto  
robbery victim herself.

AGENT COLLINS  
Even stranger, the IRS informed me  
of two crypto transactions of  
\$50,000 each to Mr. Tatum West and  
Ms. Dakota West. The Whites were  
paid a day later.

LUPE  
I didn't know the IRS could track  
Cryptocurrency transactions.

AGENT COLLINS  
They are always on the alert for  
tax evasion and money laundering.

LUPE  
Who sent them the crypto?

AGENT COLLINS  
Their daughter. A few days ago.  
Recklessly, if you ask me.

Lupe pauses to think.

LUPE  
That should have been unnecessary.  
What made it reckless?

AGENT COLLINS  
Direct transactions to personal  
accounts can be easily traced by  
the IRS which has experienced some  
leaks revealing information on the  
locations of individuals with  
crypto stashes.

LUPE  
Did one of those leaks lead to the  
Washington, D.C., crypto heist?

AGENT COLLINS  
Very likely, and our records show  
that your current situation is far  
worse.

LUPE  
How so?

AGENT COLLINS  
The combined crypto holdings in  
that barn are twice that of the  
Washington job, and we're assuming  
Ms. Addison hasn't confessed to  
owning more crypto than everyone  
else in the barn combined!

Lupe looks back to the door.

AGENT COLLINS (CONT'D)  
Sit tight, but be ready for  
anything. We'll talk soon.

Agent Collins ends the video call.

Lupe trudges toward the door.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Lupe trudges to the group.

LUPE  
We have to talk.

CUT TO:

INT. AMBULANCE - SAME TIME

The EMTs hover over Addison.

EMT #1  
We got a text from our boss that  
you've been holding out on us.

ADDISON  
I don't know what you're talking  
about.

EMT #1 opens and closes the bolt cutters.

EMT #1  
That will cost you a toe.

Addison shakes and SCREAMS.

BACK TO:

INT. BARN - SAME TIME

Lupe paces with a worried look.

Jawan's phone RINGS with a text message.

His hands shake.

JAWAN  
I got a video and a message.

He holds the phone out to show the group.

We SEE and HEAR Addison SCREAM. The message reads: "All the  
crypto from everyone in the barn in two hours deposited into  
our account."

Everyone gasps and sobs.

LUPE  
I'll need to send that video to the  
FBI.

Jawan yells.



JAWAN

A lot of good that will do. She'll  
be dead before they can get here!

Lupe is stern and reassuring.

LUPE

The smartest thing we can do is to  
follow protocol.

Jawan's phone RINGS again.

His hands shake too badly to answer it.

Lupe answers the phone to see a photo of a REMOTE CONTROL  
DEVICE. The note reads, "If you don't comply, you all will  
die!"

LUPE (CONT'D)

They're reminding us of the  
explosive devices behind the doors.

Lupe forwards the two messages to the FBI while speaking.

LUPE (CONT'D)

I now think of this barn as a bank  
with a lot of money and zero  
security.

CHRYSTAL

Give us our guns back.

Tatum leads the others in grumbling and nodding, 'Yes.'

Lupe turns to Sanjay.

LUPE

No weapons! You're too  
irresponsible! I'll send the FBI an  
urgent call for backup.

Lupe sends the messages to Agent Collins.

WEI

We don't feel safe.

LUPE

Too bad! The last thing the  
kidnappers want is a shootout or to  
blow us all up. Once you're dead,  
you can no longer divulge your cold  
wallet locations and crypto  
passcodes.

Lupe points to Gillian's foot.

LUPE (CONT'D)

That's why they cut off toes  
instead of killing anyone. They see  
you all as returning customers.  
They can come back to you at any  
time.

Gillian is defensive.

GILLIAN

They didn't know I'd be here!

JAWAN

The Hell they didn't. You posted on  
social media you decided to come to  
our wedding. And I can't believe  
you reinvested in crypto after  
thieves cut off your toe!

Bertrand charges Jawan.

BERTRAND

You leave your stepmother out of  
this.

JAWAN

They could have followed her here  
to get to Addison and me.

LUPE

We don't know that, Jawan. They  
could have followed any of you  
here.

Wei gets in Jawan's face.

WEI

I warned you this wedding was a bad  
idea!

Chrystal gets in Wei's face.

CHRYSTAL

Because you wanted Addison for  
yourself.

Tatum glares at Dakota.

TATUM

She posted our plans to attend the  
wedding after she said would never  
come.

DAKOTA

My stubborn husband said he wasn't coming either.

Lupe stares at them suspiciously.

LUPE

But something changed your mind, didn't it?

The guests look around suspiciously.

LUPE (CONT'D)

The thing is, they know you're all here now and we've got to stick together.

Lupe receives an URGENT TEXT MESSAGE from Agent Collins.

Lupe turns to read the text privately. It reads: "Real-time phone records show you have a traitor in your midst. The kidnappers now know Ms. Addison owns a lot of crypto. CONFISCATE ALL PHONES NOW!"

Lupe remains calm.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Agent Collins asked me to collect your phones.

Everyone protests as Sanjay collects the phones in the same basket as the pistols.

BERTRAND

They are our only protection.

Lupe is louder and more stern.

LUPE

That's an order!

JAWAN

What if the kidnappers call?

LUPE

I'll take your phone.

Jawan reluctantly hands his phone to Lupe.

TATUM

What's this about?

LUPE

The FBI is concerned that someone here is tipping off the kidnappers.

Everyone is angry.

TATUM

That's ridiculous! Maybe they're filming us.

LUPE

I checked the barn. No bugs.

BERTRAND

This is absurd!

They glare at each other suspiciously.

Lupe yells.

LUPE

The FBI has under two hours to find and rescue Addison. Within that time, you all need to divulge your cryptocurrency cold wallets and passcodes, or Addison may be killed, and we might be blown to smithereens.

Jawan looks away.

JAWAN

Addison never confided in me about her accounts. But if she's smart, she'll tell the kidnappers everything!

The mood sinks to a new low.

LUPE

You do have Addison's phone, don't you?

Jawan reaches into his back pocket and pulls out Addison's phone. He stares at it sadly.

JAWAN

It's facial recognition or passcode-protected.

Chrystal looks away with a tear in her eye.

CHRYSTAL  
Try 1-8-7-8-5-8. 1-TRU-LV. One true  
love.

Lupe steps to comfort Chrystal with a hug.

Wei points to Sanjay.

WEI  
The traitor has to be the Indian!  
It's not going to be the deputy,  
and who else could it be?

Jawan agrees and also points at Sanjay who looks frightened.

JAWAN  
It's not going to be a family  
member.

Sanjay points at Wei.

SANJAY  
He's not a family member, is he?

WEI  
When he was taking everyone's  
Social Security number, he didn't  
write down his own!

Lupe steps over to Sanjay to protect him.

LUPE  
It's true. He doesn't have a Social  
Security number, but he has no  
motive. He met you all today, and  
he knows nothing about  
cryptocurrency.

CHRYSTAL  
You don't have to know about  
cryptocurrency to be a thief or a  
kidnapper.

Everyone eyes Sanjay with suspicion.

EXT. BARN - SAME

In a field well away from the barn, a BLACK FBI HELICOPTER  
lands under stormy skies.

Two members of the FBI bomb squad step out of the helicopter  
and walk very slowly towards the barn.

INT. BARN - SAME

Lupe gets an URGENT TEXT MESSAGE. It reads, "We're here to defuse the bombs. Move everyone into the restroom NOW!"

LUPE  
Everyone must move to the restroom  
immediately.

Lupe escorts everyone to the restroom.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
The FBI is outside. They're going  
to diffuse the bombs.

Chrystal is first in line to get into the restroom. Lupe is last.

INT. BARN, RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Everyone crams into the restroom. They crouch in fear.

LUPE  
We're going to be okay.

TENSE MOMENTS

They hear an EXPLOSION that sounds like fireworks rather than dynamite. The building shakes a little bit, but everyone is okay.

Agent Collins opens up the restroom door.

AGENT COLLINS  
I'm Agent Deshaun Collins of the  
FBI. You're safe now, but we still  
have the matter of Ms. Addison  
White. Come take your seats in the  
barn.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Agent Collins and Lupe remain standing while everyone else takes a seat.

LUPE  
What was that explosion?

AGENT COLLINS  
The explosion you heard was when  
one of the devices was accidentally  
activated.  
(MORE)

AGENT COLLINS (CONT'D)

It was a harmless firework and our agents are fine. Where are their phones?

SANJAY

In the basket. I'll get them.

AGENT COLLINS

Who might you be?

SANJAY

Sanjay Dani, the caterer.

WEI

The help, you mean.

Lupe glares at Wei.

Sanjay delivers the basket of pistols and phones to Agent Collins.

Agent Collins glares at Lupe.

AGENT COLLINS

You're holding up a rescue. Ms. Addison's life is in danger.

Lupe speaks up confidently.

LUPE

I don't think it is.

Everyone is astonished.

JAWAN

But we only have less than two hours to pay the ransom.

LUPE

No one's paying any ransom. The family refused to offer up their crypto accounts for the kidnappers!

The parents look away with guilty expressions.

JAWAN

I have to get my wife back!

AGENT COLLINS

What's this about, Deputy?

All eyes are on Lupe.

Lupe paces as she speaks.

LUPE

Your new wife is not in any real danger. Please let me explain the events of this evening.

AGENT COLLINS

You'd better be right about this, Deputy.

JAWAN

My wife's life is at stake!

Agent Collins gets in Lupe's face.

AGENT COLLINS

The lives of my agents and both our jobs are at stake!

LUPE

Jawan knew the catering helicopter wouldn't fly in bad weather, so sent me a copy of the guest list so we could order food from the local diner. And that meant hiring Sanjay from the diner.

SANJAY

We apologize in advance for any intestinal parasites...

LUPE

They were closed for the Christmas holiday, so Sanjay volunteered to help the cook.

WEI

So he poisoned Jawan?

Lupe circles Sanjay.

LUPE

No. I'm getting to that!

(beat)

My friend, Sanjay, might be seen as a perfect suspect. He is a poor immigrant without a green card or Social Security number. He lives a meager existence on a cash or trade economy. He works hard for everything he has, which isn't much.



TATUM

He had the most to gain from the heist.

GILLIAN

Yes, he did!

LUPE

Except I read that ninety percent of heists are an inside job, and Sanjay couldn't be more of an outsider. He knew nothing about any of you and your elegant lifestyles.

(beat)

Sanjay has an old flip phone and no Internet service.

Wei makes a crinkled face toward toward Sanjay.

WEI

That's sad!

LUPE

He has none of the tools to be a crypto mastermind. He's got a Masters degree in philosophy which won't buy him a cup of coffee.

CHRYSTAL

Idiot!

LUPE

Quite the opposite of the wedding party.

Lupe shows them a WEDDING PHOTO on her phone of Addison, Jawan, Wei, and Chrystal.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Before the wedding, I had time to Google the guests to see what we had in store. I saw that Jawan and Addison had virtually no presence on social media. How do rich people do that?

(beat)

They pay people known as "Erasers" to keep them out of the spotlight. I couldn't find addresses, phone numbers, or even parking tickets.

JAWAN

That was an accurate but irrelevant assessment, Deputy. You have kidnappers to catch!

BERTRAND

Even we don't have addresses for the kids.

Lupe strolls around to Wei.

LUPE

It was a different story when I Googled Wei Li.

WEI

I know it looks bad...

LUPE

Jawan and Addison were living like reclusive billionaires. That's because Wei secured the short-term home rentals, and purchased their airplane tickets...

WEI

Private jet rentals.

LUPE

Sorry, yes, and you rented their limos and bought their clothes, food, and supplies. They have no paper trail. That's hard to do.

WEI

That's what a Chief Financial Officer does!

LUPE

No, that's what a glorified Personal Assistant does. But, they pay you as well as a CFO, so you weren't complaining.

(beat)

Until that is, he proposed to Addison. It was clear from the wedding you were extremely jealous.

Lupe smiles at Wei.

LUPE (CONT'D)

But because you loved Addison, it proves you didn't do it!

Lupe smiles at Jawan.

LUPE (CONT'D)

And you weren't involved in the  
heist for the same reason.

Lupe glances around the room.

LUPE (CONT'D)

But someone here tried to poison  
you, not enough to kill you, but  
enough to request an ambulance.

Everyone looks around suspiciously.

LUPE (CONT'D)

I'll come back to that in a minute  
because that is what we call a red  
herring.

SANJAY

Or the Trout Almandine.

JAWAN

No, I had the meat-whatever-it-was.  
Addison had the trout.

Lupe is loud but stern.

LUPE

Neither were poisoned. But I found  
two servings of the trout mixed in  
with the meat-whatever-it-was and  
that's why everyone's breath  
smelled like almonds which is an  
indicator of cyanide poisoning.

(beat)

No one was poisoned! It was just  
lousy diner food.

Lupe paces.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Back to the wedding!

(beat)

It was equally clear that neither  
Jawan nor Addison were looking  
forward to having the entire family  
at the reception.

Lupe walks slowly behind the parents.

LUPE (CONT'D)

At first, I thought it was because  
you all were high maintenance.

The parents grumble and glare at Lupe.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Later I realized you were all part  
of a well-thought-out plan for  
revenge.

Everyone looks around suspiciously.

LUPE (CONT'D)

Addison will tell us the truth when  
she gets here.

JAWAN

What do you mean, when she gets  
here?

Lupe gets in Jawan's face.

LUPE

I'm getting to that, Jawan. Be  
patient. But I'm guessing you  
didn't know your dad and stepmom,  
and Addison's dad and stepmom did  
not intend to attend your wedding.

TATUM

Why is that little lady?

Lupe pats Tatum on the shoulders.

LUPE

Google Finance says MidTex  
Petroleum makes far more money on  
wind than oil but that the grass  
production is doomed by climate  
change and can no longer feed your  
wife's cattle.

(beat)

I bet your real money is in crypto!

Dakota snickers at Tatum.

DAKOTA

Stealing oil from the Earth to  
pollute our air and water. And  
cattle are a poor man's buffalo  
anyway.

TATUM

You always hated my cattle so I gave them to you.

DAKOTA

I wanted your land, not your cattle!

CHRYSTAL

I knew it!

LUPE

You two are probably rolling in cryptocurrency that you've been hoarding for decades. Maybe you came to the wedding to squeeze more from the newlyweds.

BERTRAND

Sounds like a motive for the heist.

Lupe pats Bertrand and Gillian on the back.

LUPE

But that's not what was stopping you from wanting to attend, was it, Mr. and Mrs. White?

GILLIAN

That's none of your business.

Jawan is upset.

JAWAN

What is she talking about?

LUPE

Jawan, your stepmom never told you she was the victim of a crypto robbery because she didn't want you to worry about Addison.

Jawan is shocked.

JAWAN

Robbery?

BERTRAND

We should have told you both. The thieves held a gun to my head and cut off Gillian's toe.

Jawan looks away.

JAWAN  
Just like Addison?

LUPE  
Not exactly.

Lupe shows everyone a PHOTO on her phone that shows a severed pale white toe with blood on it. Everyone GASPS.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
This isn't Addison's toe.

AGENT COLLINS  
It's not?

LUPE  
I'll get back to this in a minute.  
(to Jawan)  
Who advised Addison to send the  
four parents the funds to come to  
the wedding?

JAWAN  
Chrystal handled the wedding  
arrangements.

All eyes turn to Chrystal.

CHRYSTAL  
I provided my house and barn.  
That's all.

LUPE  
I don't think so, Chrystal.

Lupe gets in Chrystal's face.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
You meticulously planned this  
wedding. You had a more nefarious  
reason for getting your sister to  
send your parents and new in-laws  
\$50,000 in cryptocurrency each.

Everyone glares at Chrystal and the parents.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
It wasn't to get them to attend the  
wedding. It was to alert the IRS of  
crypto being transferred at a level  
that would attract their attention.  
(MORE)

LUPE (CONT'D)

It also set up what would have been the largest cryptocurrency heist in U.S. history with you pulling the strings.

Chrystal is defensive.

CHRYSTAL

That's ridiculous!

Agent Collins searches through the phones in the basket.

LUPE

The phone you're looking for won't be in the basket. It will be a burner phone concealed by one of the guests.

Lupe makes her way around the room, passing by Sanjay and each of the guests before stopping at Chrystal.

LUPE (CONT'D)

You're burner phone, please, Chrystal.

Chrystal is defiant.

CHRYSTAL

I don't know what you're talking about.

The others are appalled and upset.

TATUM

Her sister would never do such a thing.

DAKOTA

Like hell, she wouldn't.

Lupe puts handcuffs on Chrystal.

LUPE

Chrystal West, I'm arresting you on suspicion of kidnapping, extortion, and grand theft. You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to talk to a lawyer for advice before we ask you any questions. You have the right to have a lawyer with you during questioning.

(MORE)

LUPE (CONT'D)

However, you must now surrender  
your other phone.

CHRYSTAL

I don't know what you're talking  
about! I want my lawyer.

BERTRAND

That isn't me!

DAKOTA

You better not have laid a finger  
on her or I'll skin you like a  
buffalo.

TATUM

And I'll shoot you afterward.

LUPE

I'm sure she's unhurt. Those toes  
we saw were pale white like they  
were off a cadaver or 3-D printer.

Chrystal looks away.

CHRYSTAL

3-D printer. They never get the  
flesh tones right!

Everyone breathes a sigh of relief.

LUPE

No nail polish either. Rookie  
mistake. Your sister is going to be  
so pissed!

CHRYSTAL

She always got all the attention.

Lupe finds a burner phone held by a garter belt under  
Chrystal's western skirt.

CHRYSTAL (CONT'D)

That's illegal search and seizure.

LUPE

We have probable cause. Not facial  
ID or password protected. That's  
another rookie mistake.

Lupe calls the number on speakerphone. "That number has been  
disconnected or is no longer in service."

Chrystal's eyes open wide.



Jawan gets in Chrystal's face.

JAWAN  
Addison better be okay!

The barn door opens, and Addison staggers in, shocking everyone. She's cold but elated to see everyone. She shivers in her wedding dress.

Jawan yells in joy as he grabs Addison's coat.

JAWAN (CONT'D)  
Addison! You're okay.

ADDISON  
The EMTs didn't hurt me.

LUPE  
They threatened to cut off your toes.

ADDISON  
Yes, but they didn't!

Wei and the parents gather around Addison with cheers and smiles. They see Addison has her big diamond wedding ring on.

JAWAN  
They didn't take your ring!

ADDISON  
That's not what they were after.

WEI  
Thank God you're okay!  
(looks down)  
How are your toes?

ADDISON  
My toes are fine. I'm fine. I'm annoyed all this happened on my wedding day, but I'm fine.

TATUM  
We were worried sick about ya!

DAKOTA  
We felt so helpless.

BERTRAND  
They let you go?

ADDISON

They pointed me to the barn before  
returning the ambulance to town.  
They paid in advance for the oil  
change and gave them a big cash tip  
for a test drive.

Lupe and Agent Collins begin to make calls on their radios,  
but Addison races up to stop them.

ADDISON (CONT'D)

They saved my life with that  
EpiPen! It was the worst asthma  
attack I ever had in my life! Let  
'em go, Miss Security Guards.

Lupe and Agent Collins contain their anger.

LUPE

I'm the Deputy...

ADDISON

I have to discuss family matters  
with my husband.  
(glares at Sanjay)  
Can we get a couple of cold waters  
over here now? I've been in  
captivity, ya know.

Agent Collins yells.

AGENT COLLINS

Kidnapping and false imprisonment  
are felonies!

BERTRAND

My clients aren't pressing charges.

LUPE

Wasn't there a robbery of some  
sort?

Addison pulls Jawan to the Christmas tree in the corner of  
the barn as the parents return to their tables and they look  
on with curiosity.

Addison glances to the back of the room and sees Chrystal  
handcuffed in a chair by the food table, with Lupe now  
standing beside her.

Addison begins to whisper but stops as Sanjay delivers two  
bottled waters to them.

Addison and Jawan don't make eye contact with Sanjay.

Sanjay returns to the food table.

ADDISON

I gave them everything they asked for. They took it all from me.

Jawan's eyes open wide.

JAWAN

All of it!

Addison slaps Jawan's hand playfully.

ADDISON

Only the onshore Crypto. And only that new vanity coin by your favorite billionaire. I didn't tell them about the offshore accounts and the other coins. And, it's not like it's real money!

JAWAN

You were so brave!

ADDISON

Those kidnappers were that stupid!

Addison smiles weakly as she glares at Chrystal.

Jawan glares at Chrystal.

JAWAN

It was her. She had a burner phone.

ADDISON

Everyone does. But she was the only one I told about my new Crypto, other than you, and that was only to get the parents here to our wedding.

Jawan and Addison hug and look into each other's eyes.

ADDISON (CONT'D)

You know what we have to do.

Lupe sneaks close to listen in to them.

JAWAN

Bury the story or our other crypto values will tank.

ADDISON

Exactly! If this gets out, we'll also be targets of kidnappers, extortionists, and robbers from around the globe.

JAWAN

We should never have come here without our private security detail.

ADDISON

That was our mistake. They scared me at first, but I was never in real danger if I cooperated.

Jawan hugs Addison.

JAWAN

We won't make that mistake again.

Addison leads Jawan back to Wei and the parents where they are kissed and hugged again.

TATUM

We were worried sick!

GILLIAN

I'll say!

DAKOTA

Everyone's safe now!

BERTRAND

Can we get our pistols back? We have a right to defend ourselves if those idiots come back.

AGENT COLLINS

No!

LUPE

No!

Sanjay serves a glass of Champagne to all but Chrystal.

As Addison lifts a Champagne glass this time, she looks Sanjay in the eyes and smiles.

ADDISON

Thank you, whatever your name is, for your service tonight.

(to Lupe)

and thank you, Justice of the Peace, for marrying us.

Sanjay smiles weakly and continues serving Champagne as Lupe glares at Addison.

The group with Champagne glasses turns and raises their glasses to her.

Agent Collins points to Lupe in the back of the room.

AGENT COLLINS  
Deputy Sheriff Lupe Martinez  
deserves all the credit. She's the  
one who cracked the case.

The group with Champagne glasses turns to Lupe and raises their glasses to her. They CHEER.

Addison finally makes eye contact with Chrystal. At first, we see a cold, hard stare from Addison.

However, Addison begins to smile as she slowly walks to Chrystal. The group with Champagne glasses follows behind.

ADDISON  
We're not pressing charges.

Chrystal is stunned.

ADDISON (CONT'D)  
Jawan said the same thing.

Lupe and Agent Collins shake their heads in disbelief.

Addison bends down and gets in Chrystal's face.

ADDISON (CONT'D)  
It's our wedding day and we won't  
let anything or anyone spoil it.

Agent Collins gets in Chrystal's face.

AGENT COLLINS  
Neither of those two men you hired  
to steal the ambulance that was in  
for repairs, had any medical  
training whatsoever! They  
imprisoned your sister for two  
hours! They threatened her!

JAWAN  
(laughs)  
We'll get them the best lawyers  
money can buy -- if you ever catch  
them!

LUPE

Chrystal, did you poison the bride and groom?

CHRYSTAL

Not a lot! And it was my idea for the EMTs to use the EpiPen.

LUPE

If either needed real medical attention, they could have died.

CHRYSTAL

Jawan heaved it up, and Addison knew she was having an asthma attack. She's had hundreds of them before I knew she was gonna be okay. I did it to make them appreciate each other more than worthless cryptocurrency!

JAWAN

(gazes at Addison)

I hate to admit it, Chrystal, but it worked.

TATUM

That don't make it right! But we would also like to keep all this out of the news.

BERTRAND

Damn right. Or the rest of our crypto could drop precipitously.

DAKOTA

(laughs)

There's nothing to see here!

Chrystal turns on Tatum, Dakota, Bertrand, and Gilliam.

CHRYSTAL

I knew you wouldn't stay mad at me for long.

Agent Collins and Lupe pace back and forth in anger.

BERTRAND

It's too dangerous when we all get together.

GILLIAN

We're like one giant bank, begging to be robbed.

Addison hugs her sister long and hard.

ADDISON

Poor Chrystal. That's why you did it, isn't it? To teach us all an important lesson. Cryptocurrency is for con men, not for us! And you saved my life with that EpiPen idea of yours! The EMTs said I felt better in twenty minutes!

Lupe glares at Addison and Agent Collins is angry.

AGENT COLLINS

They weren't EMTs.

LUPE

They were kidnappers.

Chrystal stands with a tear in her eye and looks sorrowfully at Addison.

CHRYSTAL

When my music career bottomed out, the only thing I had to look forward to was being your wedding planner.

Sanjay turns and chuckles as he sips Champagne.

SANJAY

Sounds like a promising second career.

Addison hugs her sister briefly with a weak smile.

ADDISON

We both wanted to get the family together again.

JAWAN

Even if it was risky.

CHRYSTAL

Things were better when we were poor.

Chrystal catches herself.

CHRYSTAL (CONT'D)

Not poor, poor, like the busboy or  
the cops, just rich enough not to  
draw the attention of crypto  
robbers, paparazzi, or charitable  
organizations.

Addison nods approvingly.

ADDISON

You wanted us to be a normal  
family.

Lupe, Agent Collins, and Sanjay roll their eyes.

LUPE

You broke a dozen laws here  
tonight!

AGENT COLLINS

Somebody's going to pay.

ADDISON

It's not gonna be Jawan or me.  
We've done nothing wrong.

JAWAN

(winks at Wei)

We don't have a paper trail, do we,  
Wei?

Wei smiles.

WEI

No, sir! And no digital trail  
either!

AGENT COLLINS

You won't get away with this.

ADDISON

Yes, we will because crypto makes  
us too much money.

WEI

And it's a great tax shelter.

ADDISON

Yes, but we may be donating to more  
charities.

JAWAN

Like high-end charter schools.



Addison hugs Jawan.

ADDISON

In case Jawan Junior comes along  
someday.

The parents hug each other.

JAWAN

Maybe even rejoining social media.

ADDISON

By that, we mean, Zoom meetings.

Jawan turns to Wei.

JAWAN

Schedule family Zoom meetings to  
keep us all in touch.

WEI

Weekly?

JAWAN

Quarterly. Fifteen minutes.

LUPE

Kidnapping, extortion, false  
imprisonment, terrorist bombing  
attempts, bad country music...

ADDISON

There won't be a trial. Uncuff her,  
Deputy.

Jawan laughs.

JAWAN

That's what Presidential pardons  
are for.

Agent Collins shakes her head in disgust.

AGENT COLLINS

My team worked all night and the  
only thing I have to report is an  
Indian with an expired student  
visa.

The wedding guests turn to glare at Sanjay.

AGENT COLLINS (CONT'D)

I'll be investigating large crypto  
transactions from everyone here.

(MORE)

AGENT COLLINS (CONT'D)

If I suspect anything unusual, I'll have the FBI, Justice Department, and IRS close you down entirely!

(yells at Lupe)

I want to see your full report and all your videos on my desk by tomorrow morning.

(on her radio)

Crew, get the chopper ready. We have to beat that ambulance into town. Over.

We HEAR a response from a male PILOT (40).

PILOT

Sorry, Ma'am. We're grounded due to the storm.

Agent Collins stomps out of the barn, leaving the door open.

Sanjay runs to shut the barn door.

Lupe is angry as she uncuffs Chrystal.

Tatum snickers and leans and whispers to Chrystal.

TATUM

Those boys never intended to include you when dividing the loot! You got played like a western fiddle.

Chrystal ignores her dad and hugs Addison. They smile into each other's eyes.

LUPE

You can't sweep the biggest crypto heist on U.S. soil under the rug. Over \$300 million by earlier estimates.

Wei, Bertrand, Gillian, Tatum, and Dakota look away with guilty expressions.

Jawan turns to Wei enthusiastically.

JAWAN

You know the routine.

WEI

Deny, deny, deny, Sir.

Lupe glances at Sanjay.

LUPE  
Come on, Sanjay. I'll take you home  
to my trailer.

Lupe whispers to Sanjay as they exit.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
I overheard Addison and Jawan say  
that if this story gets out, crypto  
values will tank, and they'd all be  
targets of kidnappers,  
extortionists, and robbers from  
around the globe.

SANJAY  
So?

LUPE  
I'll leak the entire story and  
video out to every social media  
platform tonight.

They giggle as they turn to snicker at the rich people.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
I don't get mad. I get even!

They laugh their way out of the barn and slam the door.

Jawan reaches into his back pocket and hands Addison her  
phone.

JAWAN  
Addison keeps extra crypto and cash  
in her phone wallet for these  
situations. We'll call for a  
snowcat and get us out of here. I'm  
thinking of Belize!

Addison holds up her phone.

The bride and groom, Wei and Chrystal, and the parents lift  
Champagne glasses.

Addison winks into the camera (fourth wall).

ADDISON  
Here's to selling our crypto before  
the values crash. Cheers!

FADE OUT.

**THE END**