

SLEEP WHEN YOU'RE DEAD

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Based on the novel by
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EXT. UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-GREEN BAY CAMPUS - NIGHT

CICADAS BUZZ

Darkness. From it comes a MAN (35) in a mask made from the skull and antlers of a deer, painted black, into faint light. Black and brown feathers hang from antlers via thin strips of leather.

He wheels a dolly carrying a vertical object covered by a black cloak. He places it at the entrance to campus.

There's one street light and a sign that reads University of Wisconsin-Green Bay with a phoenix logo.

He grabs the black cloak as if he *thinks* he's performing; but there's no audience - other than the cicadas.

He PULLS the sheet to unveil: A statue? A woman?

He sweats.

A young woman stands motionless. She doesn't sweat; simply gazes over her shoulder, wearing a black velvet dress with a sweetheart neckline and skinny silver straps.

OMINOUS, SPARSE PIANO MUSIC begins...

The man in the deer mask talks to the statue.

MAN IN MASK

You look resplendent, Madame X.
Around 90,000 people vanish each
year in America, never seen again.
But not you. Your family will have
closure. You'll be awake forever.

He stares at her, BREATHES IN, EXHALES.

He pivots, walks back into the darkness... and disappears.

We see Madame X left behind under the street light.

A COUPLE (early 20s) approaches from the woods, holding hands. They enter the light.

MALE STUDENT

(to girlfriend)

They say if you make out at the
entrance, you'll be together forev-

They halt, surprised to see Madame X.

FEMALE STUDENT
(to Madame X)
Hi, are you okay?

PIANO NOTES CONTINUE...

Madame X doesn't respond, move or blink.

MALE STUDENT
Hello? Are you pranking us?

FEMALE STUDENT
Is she... a statue?

MALE STUDENT
She's too real to be -

OMINOUS PIANO MUSIC BUILDS. The coed gets closer to Madame X.

FEMALE STUDENT
Is she... an A.I. bot?

He sees a red mark from a needle on Madame X's neck -

MALE STUDENT
That's no robot. She's dead.

We view the area from overhead: Female Student SCREAMS!

Music ENDS on a LOW PIANO NOTE.

EXT./INT. CASEY THREAD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A modest apartment.

CASEY THREAD (34), thin, leans back on a recliner, his eyes closed.

LEILA THREAD (32) stands next to him. She has long blonde hair, except for one thin streak of hair dyed light green.

She shakes him awake.

LEILA
Hey - I'm talking to you.

CASEY
I'm tired, and I can listen with my eyes closed.

LEILA

You're always tired. Trauma recovery is like the world's longest roller coaster.

He begrudgingly opens his eyes.

CASEY

I hear that. I'm so sorry.

LEILA

For letting me down, but low-key you let yourself down.

CASEY

You know I know that.

LEILA

I'm doing my work, dealing better with people who don't know what to say to me about what happened.

CASEY

Can't we talk about this at pickleball?

LEILA

No, you need to do your own work to heal. I made your appointment for...

(checks phone)

a minute from now.

She holds out a piece of paper with the note:

BestHelp 800-BEST-HLP.

CASEY

Ugh, really?

LEILA

(shrugs)

It's called confidence - learn some.

Casey snatches the scrap paper from Leila and retreats into his bedroom. She follows.

LEILA (CONT'D)

I'm coming with you -

Door SLAMS in her face.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Rude!

CASEY (O.S.)

Earned!

LEILA

You could say "thank you."

CASEY (O.S.)

No thank you. Leave.

Leila folds her arms.

LEILA

Do it for your only sister. Please?

INT. CASEY THREAD'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Casey SIGHS, looks at the scrap paper, DIALS, places the call.

TERESA (O.S.)

This is BestHelp, I'm Teresa, with whom am I speaking?

CASEY

Casey Thread, I have an appointment.

TERESA (O.S.)

Yes, hello, one moment...

TYPING - FAINT TALKING in the background.

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

Leila Thread pre-paid for you. What are we talking about today, Casey?

CASEY

It's not fair - she knows I'll do anything for her.

TERESA

Why'd she insist?

CASEY

Sometimes, I collapse. I don't know why.

TERESA (O.S.)

What happens before you collapse?

CASEY

I just collapse, like a marionette doll.

TERESA (O.S.)

Do you pass out?

CASEY

I have passed out. Usually, I'm awake. Like being imprisoned temporarily by my own body.

TERESA (O.S.)

Do you feel it coming on?

CASEY

Generally, no. Sometimes, I'm emotional. Sometimes, I'm eating or just ate.

TERESA (O.S.)

Sounds like it could be vasovagal. When did this start?

CASEY

I'm 34, it started when I was 28.

TERESA (O.S.)

And you're just addressing it now?

CASEY

I ignored it and regret it like a tattoo of my ex.

TERESA (O.S.)

Do you have a tattoo of your ex?

Casey pulls up one short sleeve, peers at the image of a young female teen on his upper arm:

CASEY

No.

He releases the sleeve, gets another call.

CASEY (CONT'D)

Hey, Teresa, my boss is calling. I appreciate you.

Casey switches to the other call. Opens the bedroom door.

INT. CASEY THREAD'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

He rushes out the bedroom door. Leila startles, looks at him with anticipation. Casey speaks into his phone.

CASEY
Pistol Pete! You saved me.

PETER (O.S.)
We have a homicide at the university. Need you there 10 minutes ago.

CASEY
You're nothing if not reasonable.

PETER (O.S.)
Crime scene is located at the entrance to campus. Can't miss it.

Casey ends the call. Grabs wallet and keys from the table.

LEILA
Where you going?

CASEY
Work.

LEILA
How was therapy?

He frowns at her, opens the door to leave.

LEILA (CONT'D)
(quickly before he leaves)
Don't forget we have pickleball today and dinner at mom's tomorrow.

CASEY
Yep.

He leaves - DOOR CLOSES.

LEILA
Good talk.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-GREEN BAY CAMPUS - NIGHT

Casey parks his light blue Chevy Bolt Electric Utility Vehicle (EUV) near the entrance to campus, near TV news trucks.

He walks about a block toward the crime scene:

- Bright lights set up by police mimic daylight.
- Patrol cars flash red and blue lights.
- Large huddle of uniforms, detectives, people in navy blue jackets with "F.B.I." in large yellow letters, crime scene analysts.
- Casey tries to wiggle through them all -
- until SPECIAL AGENT NELL JENNER (32), ligature scar running across her neck just below her chin, hair in a pony tail, turns and presses her palm to the middle of Casey's chest.

NELL

Stop.

He does.

She's wearing a blue jacket with yellow letters spelling F.B.I.

NELL (CONT'D)

Who the hell are you?

CASEY

Casey Thread.

NELL

And?

CASEY

I'm a reporter who's about to identify the killer.

NELL

You make this statue?

CASEY

No.

NELL

You know who did it?

CASEY

Not yet.

NELL

Then get the hell off this crime scene.

Casey suffers an attack - collapses completely to the ground, bangs his head on it.

NELL (CONT'D)

Holy -

Nell bends down, tilts her head at him; we see his eyes are open but he doesn't move.

NELL (CONT'D)

Hey, Clark Kent, you okay?

She shakes his shoulders.

NELL (CONT'D)

Casey? Talk to me.

Casey AWAKENS with a start.

CASEY

Sorry, sorry. I have a condition.

NELL

You should get that checked out.

CASEY

So I've heard.

NELL

(nonchalantly)

I love when people seek help.

Casey gets to his feet, BRUSHES himself off.

CASEY

You do?

NELL

Yes.

CASEY

Oh, well, I've totally been doing that.

NELL

Have you?

CASEY

YES. For years!

NELL

Uh-huh.

CASEY

Do we know cause of death? Victim's name?

Casey surreptitiously snaps a picture of the statue/victim with his phone as Nell turns to flag a colleague:

NELL
(to a colleague)
Les?

CASEY
I want to focus on the victim, her
life, not the killer.

SPECIAL AGENT LES PRIMUS (30s), built like a sequoia, GRABS Casey, escorts him away from the yellow crime scene tape.

LES
Okay. You're done.

Les pushes him back toward the TV crew, points at Casey.

LES (CONT'D)
Stay.

Les returns to the crime scene.

CASEY
I'm just trying to do right by her!

Casey takes another picture of the entire scene. He looks at the close-up photo of the statue.

CASEY (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Is that... Madame X?

Casey opens his social media account, posts the pictures of Madame X and the entire crime scene, along with the headline:

Killer Leaves Victim Posed on Campus

EXT. PARK - NEXT DAY

A yellow pickleball hits a paddle - WHACK!

The plastic ball flies over the net to Casey who lobs it back over the net towards Leila - WHOP!

Leila SLAMS it down on his side - Casey doesn't stand a chance.

LEILA
Point! Game. Yes!

She pumps her fist. Casey puts his hands on his hips.

CASEY

And here I thought we were playing
for fun.

LEILA

We are, but I like to beat my
brother.

CASEY

Love you, too.

LEILA

You know I love you.

CASEY

As much as winning?

She tilts her head.

LEILA

(high pitched)
Well...

They both break smiles as they walk off the court, grab water
bottles.

LEILA (CONT'D)

You gonna call BestHelp back?

CASEY

(resigned)
Yes, yes I will.

She throws her arms up.

LEILA

I win again!

As Casey drinks water, he rolls his eyes.

EXT. GREEN BAY RESIDENTIAL HOME - DAY

ELENA ORTEGA (33) leaves a house, turns to waive goodbye.

ELENA

Thanks again for hosting!

She carries a large bag marked "Mary Kay" cosmetics in one
hand and a money box in the other.

She walks to a sedan with an Uber light in the windshield.
The trunk pops. She places her items into the trunk.

A man in a COVID-19 mask and an old black baseball cap gets out, closes the trunk for her.

UBER DRIVER
You Elena?

ELENA
Yes.

UBER DRIVER
Going to Lambeau Field?

They get in the car.

ELENA
Yes, I'm doing free facials for the wives of Packers players - they're my best customers.

He drives the Uber onto the road.

UBER DRIVER
You sell Mary Kay?

ELENA
Yes, we have a wonderful 2-in-1 facial cleanser for men. Softens your skin.

UBER DRIVER
I might have to check that out.

He drives past a main drag.

ELENA
Hey, that was our turn.

UBER DRIVER
Do you have a lubricant for men?

ELENA
Um, we're going the wrong way.

OMINOUS, SPARSE PIANO MUSIC begins...

The driver says nothing.

ELENA (CONT'D)
Hey - turn around. The stadium is back there -

The doors LOCK.

PIANO MUSIC INTENSIFIES

Elena urgently tries to open the rear doors, but the child locks won't budge.

UBER DRIVER

You didn't answer - about the lubricant.

The car speeds along. She tries defiance.

ELENA

Hey, stop the car - let me out!

She makes a fist, POUNDS ON THE DOOR.

EXT. UBER - DAY

The Uber keeps going. Over a hill, out of sight.

OMINOUS PIANO MUSIC CLIMAXES

ELENA (O.S.)

LET ME OUT!

PIANO MUSIC ABRUPTLY ENDS ON A LOW CHORD

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - APPLETON, WI - DAY

An upper-middle class home in the burbs.

INT. HOME OF THE MILLERS - CONTINUOUS

Living room. TOM and GINNIE MILLER (50s) sit on their couch. Just over their heads are framed pictures. Ginnie holds a box of Kleenex.

Reveal Casey sits in a chair opposite them.

GINNIE

Tess loved volleyball and fantasy novels. She was a good girl.

She sniffs, wipes her eyes.

TOM

I don't understand why someone would do this. Can't you just make a normal statue?

CASEY

We'll try to find answers. She seems like she was a wonderful person.

GINNIE

She was. I can't sleep, I can't eat. Please find who did this.

EXT. GREEN BAY PRESS-GAZETTE - DAY

An old stone building bears the name of the news outlet.

PRE-LAP: CLATTER OF TYPING

INT. GREEN BAY PRESS-GAZETTE

News room with open floor plan, work desks with computers.

Casey TYPES on his laptop. Stops, swivels in his chair.

PETER SCHROEDER (52) approaches. He's balding, out of shape, wears a weathered collared shirt with armpit stains.

PETER

Casey, you got the story on the victim?

CASEY

Yeah, Tess Miller, a sophomore at U.W.-Green Bay.

We see on his computer a picture of Tess Miller, happy, with her parents.

CASEY (V.O.)

Spoke with her parents, they of course are devastated.

PETER

And the perp?

CASEY

Has the hallmarks of a serial killer.

PETER

There's only one body.

CASEY

That we know of. Why would the feds be there if this were some standard homicide?

PETER

You're the crime reporter.

CASEY

Because the F.B.I. gets called in if a crime crosses state lines, is uniquely bizarre, or is serial in nature.

PETER

Definitely checks uniquely bizarre.

CASEY

But doesn't rule out the others.

PETER

EASY, big guy. How 'bout we focus on getting the facts right on this homicide first?

CASEY

Fine. But think about it: Who goes through all that trouble to kill Tess, pose her in a public setting like a famous painting -

PETER

Famous painting?

He holds up a paper with the printout of the "Portrait of Madame X."

CASEY (V.O.)

Yeah, by John Singer Sargent.

PETER

Holy crap - it's just like her.

CASEY

You really think this sicko won't seek that high again?

Casey stares at Peter a BEAT -

PETER

(deadpan)

That your confession?

PETER (CONT'D)

There's got to be a professor of sculptures at U.W.G.B., right?

CASEY

One would think. I'll ask A.I.

PETER

Talk to them. See if they taught any whack jobs.

EXT. DEER STAND IN WOODS - DAY

A wooden deer blind - featuring plywood walls, 6 feet x 10 feet with windows, stands on metal posts 8 feet in the air.

INT. DEER STAND - DAY

Inside the deer stand, we see:

- The deer skull mask hanging on the wall.
- Art supplies.
- A man from behind. He's reading something on his phone: The Press-Gazette article by Casey Thread on the Madame X murder. We don't see his face.
- He finishes reading the article, clicks a link to Casey's social media feed.
- On the social feed is a video of Casey Thread reporting from the news room. The man clicks to watch:

CASEY (VIDEO)

A source at the coroner's office said the identity of the victim is Tess Miller, a grad student. Her roommate, Jill Poblanski, said she was a kind, lovely person.

The video cuts to Casey's interview with JILL POBLANSKI (19).

JILL (VIDEO)

The bastard who killed him will never take the memories of my roommate away from me. Tess was smart - she got Wordle in 2 or 3 on the regular and kicked my butt in Scrabble. We'd hit raves and had each other's backs.

(MORE)

JILL (VIDEO) (CONT'D)
We loved to watch Bridgerton and
gossip - she had a votive candle of
Jonathon Bailey. I loved her.

CASEY (VIDEO)
Neither the F.B.I. nor the Green
Bay PD have said whether they have
any suspects. A candlelight vigil
will be held near the site of the
statue tonight.

Video ends. We see the man's hands on the keyboard.

MAN IN MASK (O.S.)
Casey Thread...

EXT. STUDIO ARTS BUILDING, U.W.-GREEN BAY CAMPUS - DAY

A brick brutalist building.

INT. STUDIO ARTS BUILDING, U.W.-GREEN BAY CAMPUS - DAY

Casey walks down a hallway to the office of Professor Linda
Muskie.

KNOCKS

The door opens - and there stands Special Agent Nell Jenner.

CASEY
You?

NELL
You!

Behind Agent Jenner is:

PROFESSOR LINDA MUSKIE (55), the sculpture professor, red
glasses and long silver hair.

CASEY
See? I'm gonna find him.

NELL
Notice who beat you here?

PROF. MUSKIE
I'm suddenly quite popular.

NELL
(to Casey)
You stayed on your feet this time.

CASEY
I have a condition.

NELL
Any other personal secrets?

CASEY
It's 15 inches.

PROF. MUSKIE
Oh my.

Professor Muskie clutches her necklace with tumbled turquoise.

CASEY
Do you have any suspects?

NELL
Now you want to copy the answers off my paper? Not very "Pulitzer" of you, Casey Thread.

CASEY
You know my name?

NELL
It's my job to read the coverage of my case.

Casey straightens, flushes and grins with pride.

CASEY
I'm flattered.

NELL
(shrugs)
You could be the killer, returning to the scene of his crimes.

Casey's countenance falls. Professor Muskie SNORTS, looks down at her work, STIFLES A CHUCKLE.

CASEY
Any idea on the suspect's name or M.O.?

NELL
Yes.

BEAT - she forces a grin. He forces one back.

CASEY
And?

NELL

And we're reserving that information to help us identify him.

CASEY

Him?

She tilts her head and shrugs a shoulder.

NELL

Likely.

Casey nods.

CASEY

Nice seeing you again Agent...?

PROF. MUSKIE

Nell Jenner.

Nell turns toward Professor Muskie, frowns at her. Prof. Muskie winks at Casey.

CASEY

Nell Jenner. He writes that down in his notepad.

NELL

(tersely)

Have a nice chat.

Nell departs. Casey thumbs in Nell's direction and asks Professor Muskie:

CASEY

Do you have her phone number?

Nell responds as she walks away without turning around.

NELL

Nope! She doesn't.

With Nell out of view, Casey enters the professor's office.

INT. OFFICE OF PROFESSOR MUSKIE - DAY

Prof. Muskie has sculptures of all shapes, sizes, species and kinds around her office, on shelves, hanging on walls.

PROF. MUSKIE

What can I do for you, Casey?

CASEY

Have you seen the statue -

PROF. MUSKIE

The one left at the entrance to campus?

CASEY

That's the one.

PROF. MUSKIE

Yes. Hard to un-see it.

CASEY

Your website says you teach Sculpture 503. Does that include hyperrealism?

PROF. MUSKIE

(spooked)

Yeah. But not with murder victims.

CASEY

Have you had any students come through here who ended up as hyperrealist sculptors?

PROF. MUSKIE

A few. There was one two years ago. But she moved back to India and is successful there.

CASEY

Anyone else?

FLASH TO:

INT. MUSEUMS

We see a montage of hyperrealist statues while she says:

PROF. MUSKIE (O.S.)

About ten years ago, there was one. I remember he was obsessed with statues by John De Andrea, Duane Hanson and Carol Feuerman.

RETURN TO SCENE: INT. OFFICE OF PROFESSOR LINDA MUSKIE

CASEY

What became of him?

PROF. MUSKIE
Dropped out.

CASEY
Why?

PROF. MUSKIE
Not for lack of talent.

CASEY
Really?

PROF. MUSKIE
I heard it had to do with his
mother.

CASEY
Like she pulled his funding?

PROF. MUSKIE
Sounded more... ominous.

CASEY
Ominous? Like what?

PROF. MUSKIE
Don't know.

CASEY
Why not?

PROF. MUSKIE
Not much for gossip. Besides, once
he dropped out, he wasn't my
responsibility.

CASEY
Know his name?

PROF. MUSKIE
I just showed Agent Jenner. Where
did I put that?

She looks around to get her bearings, turns, opens a drawer
of files.

PROF. MUSKIE (CONT'D)
Was it Brad? Or Brandon...

Professor Muskie pulls a folder out of a file.

She pages through papers.

PROF. MUSKIE (CONT'D)
Here. Brandon Meintz.

CASEY
Ever hear what became of him?

PROF. MUSKIE
Actually yeah.

CUT TO:

INT. VARIOUS CORPORATE LOBBIES AND OFFICES

MONTAGE: We see hyperrealist statues of CEOs in corporate settings.

PROF. MUSKIE (V.O.)
He sells statues to corporations.

CASEY (V.O.)
Like for decoration?

PROF. MUSKIE (V.O.)
Tributes to their CEOs and founders.

CASEY (V.O.)
Creepy. Any good?

PROF. MUSKIE (V.O.)
Stunning. They've had problems with people talking to the sculptures and getting mad when they don't respond.

CASEY (V.O.)
Do you remember what material he used?

FLASHBACK: U.W.-GREEN BAY SCULPTURE STUDIOS - DAY

MONTAGE: A YOUNG BRANDON MEINTZ (19) works on his hyperrealism statue as the professor explains:

PROF. MUSKIE (V.O.)
He makes a plaster mold, then a hollow figure from fiberglass. He paints it and adds found materials.

- He makes a plaster mold from a model.
- Creates hollow figure from resin-soaked fiberglass.

- Meintz hand-paints the figure, accessorized with found materials.

RETURN TO SCENE: OFFICE OF PROFESSOR MUSKIE - CONTINUOUS

Casey stands in her office; Prof. Muskie sits at her desk.

CASEY

How'd he get it to stay in place?

PROF. MUSKIE

At first, he'd use the mold with fishing twine, then epoxy to coat the statue and epoxy hardener to fix it in place.

CASEY

How strong is the hardener?

Professor Muskie raises her brows, leans in.

PROF. MUSKIE

Two to six times harder than cement.

EXT./INT. GREEN BAY PRESS-GAZETTE - DAY

News room. Casey Thread types at his desk.

Cell RINGTONE: "No Sleep Till Brooklyn" by the Beastie Boys

He answers.

CASEY

Casey Thread.

ELENA'S MOM (O.S.)

Are you that reporter?

CASEY

I'm - a - reporter.

ELENA'S MOM (O.S.)

The one writing about the murders?

CASEY

That's me.

ELENA'S MOM (O.S.)

My daughter's missing.

Casey sits straighter.

CASEY

Oh no - so sorry to hear that.
What's her name?

ELENA'S MOM (O.S.)

Elena Ortega.

He types the name.

CASEY

What age?

ELENA'S MOM (O.S.)

(scared)
My baby just turned 30.

CASEY

When did she go missing?

ELENA'S MOM (O.S.)

She took an Uber last night to go
to the Packer Pro Shop and never
made it there.

CASEY

So sorry - may I ask, how do you
know?

ELENA'S MOM (O.S.)

She told me about her appointment.
She sells cosmetics at parties. I'm
her Uber safe ride contact, and I
got a text when the driver went off
the path to get there. She never
arrived.

CASEY

Did you get the name of the driver?

ELENA'S MOM (O.S.)

Yes, it's Brandon Meintz.

Casey opens his eyes wider.

ELENA'S MOM (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hello?

CASEY

Sorry, yes, did you call the
police?

ELENA'S MOM (O.S.)

I don't trust them. Plus I thought
you could get the word out better.

CASEY

Thank you for trusting me. Can you email a photo of her so our readers can help look for her?

ELENA'S MOM (O.S.)

Yes, I'll do that right away. Should I use the email listed with your byline?

CASEY

Yes. And who is calling?

ELENA'S MOM

Isabel Ortega.

CASEY

We'll find your daughter, Isabel. Hang in there.

ELENA'S MOM (O.S.)

Bless you.

CASEY

Bye.

Casey ends the call, pivots in his chair to face Peter's desk nearby.

CASEY (CONT'D)

Pistol Pete! Got a hot tip.

Peter looks at him.

PETER

Yeah?

CASEY

Missing person, and it might link back to the statue killer.

PETER

(skeptically)
Here we go.

CASEY

The art professor you wanted me to meet? She had a student a few years back obsessed with creating hyperrealist statues. Name of Brandon Meintz.

PETER

Okay...?

CASEY

Mother of the new missing person
just called me, daughter
disappeared in an Uber and you'll
never guess the driver's name...

PETER

Rhymes with Brandon Meintz?

CASEY

Let's go, Petey!

PETER

Take it easy. Got an address for
this Brandon Meintz?

CASEY

A cabin up north.

PETER

Nothing local?

CASEY

No, but some criminals purposely
operate out of town to avoid
detection.

PETER

Can your new-agey car get you there
and back?

CASEY

There are more e-car charging
stations than people think.

PETER

Off you go, then.

EXT./INT. DEER STAND - DAY

The man in the deer skull mask stares at us.

Reveal he's actually examining Elena. She is cuffed to a
metal ring anchored to the wood flooring of the deer stand.

She TUGS at it, terrified, but it's no use.

ELENA

Please, let me call *mi mami*. She'll
be worried sick.

The mask tilts at her.

MAN IN MASK

You'll be my perfect Frida Kahlo.

ELENA

What? No no - I'm Elena. I sell cosmetics. This is a misunderstanding. If you just let me -

MAN IN MASK

Shh...

He reaches out to touch her face with the back of his fingers - but she recoils.

ELENA

(in Spanish)
Cobarde!

MAN IN MASK

What?

ELENA

COWARD! Hiding behind a mask.

MAN IN MASK

(offended, hurt)
My father and I made this mask out of a buck we shot.

Elena looks confused.

ELENA

You learned this from your father?

The mask nods.

MAN IN MASK

When I was young.

FLASH TO:

INT. GARAGE - FLASHBACK - DAY

A dead deer on a makeshift table in a garage. A YOUNG BOY (11) and his FATHER use large, serrated hunting knives to carve it.

Posters line the walls featuring busty women in bikinis.

The father slaps the boy on the back of the head -

WHACK!

FATHER
You're doing it wrong, idiot!

RETURN TO SCENE - DEER STAND - PRESENT DAY

Through the deer skull mask, he looks down at two syringes, one red, one blue, on his desk. Grabs the blue one. Injects himself.

He throws his head back, eyes closed, DEEP INHALE.

Exchanges the needles. Brings the red one to her.

Her terror turns to resignation.

ELENA
Please, please don't.

The man in the mask sticks the needle in her neck, pushes the red plunger.

ELENA (CONT'D)
What - what did you do?

Elena becomes dizzy, confused - collapses.

EXT./INT. GREEN BAY PRESS-GAZETTE - DAY

Casey types on his laptop, submits his story to his editor.

EXT./INT. DEER STAND - DAY

Elena's asleep in the corner, still cuffed.

We see the man in the mask reading his phone:

It's an article by Casey featuring a picture he took of Prof. Muskie and her quotes about her former student, Brandon Meintz.

MAN IN MASK
Smells like rotten muskie.

EXT./INT. CHEVY BOLT EUV - DUSK

The blue Bolt rolls down a highway. Casey places a call.

TERESA (O.S.)
Casey! So glad you made a second appointment.

CASEY

Thanks for putting up with me,
Teresa. Sorry about last time.

TERESA (O.S.)

You're good. What's your mood on a
scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is the
best?

CASEY

Well, maybe a 7.

TERESA (O.S.)

A 7! What makes you feel like a 7?

CASEY

I got a lead on an important story
I'm writing for the newspaper.

TERESA (O.S.)

You've got a lead, that's
promising.

CASEY

Yes, if I can stay awake long
enough to follow it.

TERESA (O.S.)

Need caffeine?

CASEY

Well, I collapsed in front of an
F.B.I. agent at the crime scene.

TERESA (O.S.)

Crime scene?

CASEY

I cover the crime beat for the
paper. Passed out.

TERESA (O.S.)

Had you just eaten?

CASEY

No.

TERESA (O.S.)

Were you overheated?

CASEY

No.

TERESA (O.S.)

Are you okay?

CASEY

Hurts, but my *Polska* mom raised me to be tough.

TERESA (O.S.)

She applied pressure, your mom?

CASEY

You could say that. I try to get time with my mom in small doses with hard outs.

TERESA (O.S.)

Did your strong Polish mother have anything to do with why your sister signed you up for this?

CASEY

You'd have to ask her, but we have the same mother, similar baggage.

TERESA (O.S.)

What happened to your sister that led us to this?

CASEY

How did you know something happened to her?

TERESA (O.S.)

Because people generally don't sign up a sibling at your age unless it affects them personally.

CASEY

Damn you're good.

Teresa LAUGHS

TERESA (O.S.)

So, Mr. "Anderson Cooper," report what happened to Leila, give me the headline.

CASEY

I really can't.

TERESA (O.S.)

You can. You'll feel better.

CASEY

No, I won't! I WON'T, OKAY?!

TERESA (O.S.)

Casey, you've taken a big step today.

CASEY

Yeah right.

TERESA (O.S.)

Right. Do you feel sleepy often?

CASEY

Only all the time.

TERESA (O.S.)

I believe you have a form of narcolepsy called cataplexy. Now, I'd like to refer you to a psychiatrist to prescribe you medication.

CASEY

I hate meds.

TERESA (O.S.)

Why?

CASEY

I had a really bad reaction to a new med when I was six, almost died.

FLASH TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Clinicians run as they wheel a stretcher with a YOUNG CASEY (6) down the hallway to the ER.

RETURN TO SCENE: INT. CHEVY BOLT EUV - DUSK

Casey drives his car, continues talking to his therapist via his phone through the car stereo.

TERESA (O.S.)

I'll refer you, they'll check your file.

CASEY

I hate this.

TERESA (O.S.)

Casey, you're on the right track.
You'll get the safe meds you need
and deserve.

He turns his car right into a gravel driveway.

GPS

Arriving at your destination.

EXT. BRANDON MEINTZ'S CABIN - NIGHT

A wooden sign nailed to a tree has 8008 carved into it, the numbers painted blue, illuminated by the car's headlights.

Casey parks the car, turns it off.

All goes dark.

He gets out, uses the flashlight from his phone.

Old birch trees.

An abandoned wooden cart overflows with rusted chairs, poles, and grills. The cart looks ready to buckle under the weight.

RUSTLING behind him.

He turns -

A pair of yellow eyes appear deep in the woods. Wolf HOWLS.

Casey EXHALES.

He trudges toward the cabin. Faded green paint flakes peel from the cottage walls.

A black pickup parked to the side. Empty.

The wooden door features three horizontal windows stacked vertically, draped by old cream-colored curtains.

Casey KNOCKS on the door.

BEAT

Drapes pull back - revealing eyes.

Casey startles.

Door OPENS.

STEVE MEINTZ (20s) stands at the door, very tall.

STEVE MEINTZ

What?

CASEY

Brandon Meintz?

STEVE MEINTZ

He's my uncle.

CASEY

Who are you?

STEVE MEINTZ

Steve Meintz. Who're you?

CASEY

Casey Thread. Where's your uncle?

STEVE MEINTZ

I look like his nanny?

CASEY

I'm a reporter.

STEVE MEINTZ

Don't like reporters.

CASEY

I'm looking for a missing woman,
Elena Ortega.

STEVE MEINTZ

Never heard of her.

CASEY

Her mother is distraught. Last
known whereabouts are in an Uber
with your uncle.

STEVE MEINTZ

Well, he drives Uber, so...

He starts to close the door -

- Casey blocks it with his foot.

CASEY

Can I ask...?

Steve towers over Casey.

STEVE MEINTZ

(annoyed)

Leave!

Casey's head and shoulders slump.

STEVE MEINTZ (CONT'D)

What the - ?

He pushes Casey, pushes him again, Casey tumbles backward - falls to the ground.

WOMP

This brings him out of it. He scrambles to his feet.

Steve SHUTS the DOOR. LOCKS it.

Casey POUNDS on the DOOR:

CASEY

I'm writing the article either way!
You can have your say - or not...

BEAT

CASEY (CONT'D)

Okay, I'll write it without you.

Steve OPENS the door, aiming a rifle at Casey's chest.

Casey holds up his hands.

CASEY (CONT'D)

Whoa, whoa - I have cataplexy - or
vasovagal.

STEVE MEINTZ

(confused)

Vasovagal - is that one of *them*
fake burgers?

CASEY

When was the last time you saw your
uncle?

STEVE MEINTZ

Couple days ago, came up to fish.
Got supplies.

CASEY

Supplies? From where?

STEVE MEINTZ

Ace.

CASEY

What did he buy?

STEVE MEINTZ

Wanna die, er no?

Casey, hands still up, backs up as he says:

CASEY

Nope, sure don't - but a woman died
and another is missing.

STEVE MEINTZ

If you lie about this in the paper,
I'll find you.

Casey continues slowly backing up.

CASEY

Deal. Remember what he bought at
Ace?

STEVE MEINTZ

Jugs of liquid.

CASEY

Epoxy hardener?

STEVE MEINTZ

I don't know, man. But my uncle?
He's not your guy.

Casey backs away, hands up, turns and jogs toward his car.

As Casey gets in, behind him we see Steve Meintz setting down
the rifle.

A light glows from Steve's phone as he texts.

INT. CASEY'S CAR - NIGHT

Casey sits in the driver's seat.

RINGTONE - "No Sleep Till Brooklyn" - he answers.

CASEY

Pistol Pete - you'll never believe
what -

PETER (O.S.)

There's another statue.

CASEY

Oh, no...

EXT. MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, MILWAUKEE - NIGHT

Casey strides up Wisconsin Avenue outside Raynor Library sipping his coffee to go.

He sees the crime scene cordoned off by yellow police tape in a rectangle around the second statue.

Police and F.B.I. agents investigate the scene inside the tape. Six bystanders look on.

Casey moves to see the statue.

It's Elena Ortega, posed as half of the famous 1939 self-portrait by Frida Kahlo known as "The Two Fridas."

Casey looks away, holds his head, looks back:

The killer posed her with meticulous detail - the black hair up in a bun, the unibrow, the purple blouse with yellow trim, the olive dress with white lace at the bottom, the human heart and ventricles painted on the blouse.

CASEY

Oh no... poor Isabel.

Casey spots Nell talking to other law-enforcement officials near the yellow tape.

He approaches her anyway.

CASEY (CONT'D)

Agent Jenner -

Nell turns toward him.

NELL

Well, look who decided to join us.

CASEY

Cause of death?

NELL

Appears same as the first statue.

CASEY

And that is?

Nell SCOFFS

NELL

I'm not telling you.

CASEY

I know the victim's name. Trade?

NELL

How would you know?

CASEY

Her mother called me and reported her missing.

NELL

Show me yours, I'll show you mine.

CASEY

That's Elena Ortega of Green Bay. Mother's name is Isabel Ortega.

We see Elena posed as Frida Kahlo.

NELL

Okay. Got a number for Isabel?

CASEY

Show me yours first.

NELL

We found hydrocyanic acid in Madame X's bloodstream.

CASEY

Injected?

NELL

Likely into a major artery. She didn't suffer long.

Casey writes something down, rips off a piece of paper, hands it to Nell.

CASEY

Isabel's number. Is Brandon Meintz a person of interest?

NELL

We have a few people of interest. We'll canvas the neighborhood for video footage.

Casey reaches out to hand her a business card:

CASEY

Can you keep me posted?

NELL

No.

She snatches the card anyway.

CASEY

Can I at least have your phone
number?

Nell grins, turns and walks toward the statue. Casey sneaks a picture of Elena as the Frida Kahlo statue, posts to his social media accounts with the headline:

Second Beloved Victim Succumbs to Killer

INT. CHEVY BOLT EUV - NIGHT

A block from the crime scene, Casey sits in the back seat of his car, typing on his laptop.

He finishes, reads the draft of his story aloud:

CASEY

An apparent serial killer took the life of a second victim, this time Elena Ortega of Green Bay, posing her in the form of a painting by Frida Kahlo on the Marquette campus. "Please, if anyone saw him take my daughter, tell the police or F.B.I.," said Isabel Ortega, the victim's mother. "Remember my daughter. She was kind and talented and I love her." If you have information that can help, visit FBItips.gov.

INT. GREEN BAY PRESS-GAZETTE - NEXT DAY

Casey sits at his desk. He hasn't showered, shaved or slept. Meanwhile, Peter, bright and well groomed, approaches Casey in a state of flabbergasted nirvana.

PETER

Casey! Your coverage of
"Murderangelo" is blowing up our
website - shut it down twice today;
Sales are buzzing!

(laughs)

IT'S INCREDIBLE!

CASEY

Not for the victims. But it's good for their families. Maybe someone will see it and leave a tip at the F.B.I. website. You're including that, right?

PETER

Absolutely. Nancy says she loves the "Murderangelo" moniker.

CASEY

Of course the publisher likes it. Who dubbed him that anyway?

PETER

Not to brag, but it was my headline. I wonder if I'll get a raise...

CASEY

Listen, I'm beat, I gotta get to my ma's -

PETER

Go - you deserve it, pal. But don't check out too long; you're writing history!

Peter lofts his fists in celebration.

Casey shakes his head at that, grabs his backpack, coffee Thermos and departs.

EXT. ELZBIETA THREAD'S HOUSE - DAY

Suburban Green Bay. A modest white ranch house.

Casey drives his car into the driveway, parks. Gets out.

Casey KNOCKS on the front door.

ELZBIETA THREAD (62) answers.

ELZBIETA

Well, count me surprised.

CASEY

I'm here every week.

He enters.

INT. ELZBIETA THREAD'S HOUSE

They walk through the living room.

ELZBIETA

For our weekly dinners. But god forbid you come another time.

CASEY

Ma, I'm busy with work.

ELZBIETA

You have time for work, but not to shave?

CASEY

I worked late -

ELZBIETA

And still no grandchildren. I shouldn't be surprised, you've let this family down for years.

They enter the kitchen.

CASEY

O-kay. Where's Leila?

ELZBIETA

Expected her an hour ago.

CASEY

She was the one pestering me to come.

ELZBIETA

So you didn't want to come?

CASEY

Ma, I'll call her.

He presses a button on his phone that auto-dials his sister.

Phone RINGS. No answer.

CASEY (CONT'D)

Straight to voice mail. Maybe she's working?

ELZBIETA

She's off today. Coffee?

She grabs the Italian coffee pot on the stove.

CASEY

Yes, please.

ELZBIETA

If she's not here by the hour, can
you check on her?

EXT. LEILA THREAD'S APARTMENT - DAY

We see an apartment building along Oneida Street in Green Bay.

Lambeau Field towers in the background.

All apartment doors face the exterior (along Oneida Street). There are two floors. The doors are forest green, the numbers white and outlined with yellow, representing colors of the Green Bay Packers football team.

He POUNDS on door number 15.

CASEY

LEI?
LEILA!
LEI!

He calls her phone - it RINGS and he can hear it through the apartment wall. Looks in the window -

We see Leila's phone lighting up on the floor and buzzing with Casey's name and photo on its screen.

But there's no answer. He backs up, steps toward the door and tries to give it a round-house KICK - but the door doesn't budge.

Casey winces in pain. Grips his hip.

CASEY (CONT'D)

Ow, damnit.

EXT. LEILA THREAD'S APARTMENT/INT. 9 1 1 - INTERCUT

Casey collects himself. Dials 9 1 1. He holds his phone to his ear with one hand; chews on a pen he has in the other.

A DISPATCHER answers the call in front of several computer screens and monitors.

DISPATCH

9 1 1 what's your emergency?

CASEY
My sister is missing.

DISPATCH
Who's calling?

CASEY
This is Casey Thread.

DISPATCH
"Murderangelo" Casey Thread?

CASEY
Just Casey Thread.

DISPATCH
Where are you?

CASEY
At my sister's. I called her cell,
can hear it ringing in her
apartment but she's not answering.

DISPATCH
How long has she been missing?

CASEY
A few hours.

DISPATCH
Maybe she forgot?

CASEY
She missed a dinner that she
organized.

DISPATCH
Usually, we wait 24 to 48 hours to
consider her missing.

CASEY
This isn't like her. And it
wouldn't surprise me if
Murderangelo is reading my stories.

DISPATCH
I'll send a car to meet you. Where
are you?

CASEY
2032 Oneida Street.

DISPATCH
Stay there.

CASEY

Listen, can you contact the lead
F.B.I. agent working the
Murderangelo case?

DISPATCH

Got a name?

CASEY

Special Agent Nell Jenner.

Casey gets another call; we see it's Elzbieta Thread.

DISPATCH

I'll tell her; we'll have units
there shortly.

Casey switches to his mother's call.

ELZBIETA (O.S.)

Kid, find your sister?

CASEY

No. She's not home.

ELZBIETA (O.S.)

You find people for your stories,
but you can't find your sister?

CASEY

I'm literally at her place, looking
for her.

ELZBIETA (O.S.)

Well, she's not there, is she?
You're the Fozzy Bear of reporters.

CASEY

More like the Swedish Chef, trying
to cook but throwing his utensils
in frustration.

ELZBIETA

I can't deal with her being hurt
again.

CASEY

Me neither -

BEEP BEEP - Casey looks at his phone; his mother hung up.

CASEY (CONT'D)

(Swedish Chef voice)

"Bork bork bork!"

He throws his pen over his shoulder in frustration.

EXT. HOUSE IN WOODS - DAY

Woods. A modest home in average condition.

Further into the trees, the large deer blind sits on a metal frame 8 feet in the air.

A deer startles, flees.

INT. HOUSE IN WOODS - DAY

The man in the deer skull mask paces in his studio.

We see art supplies for sculpting and painting.

Black sheets cover what appear to be two forms - mannequins?

Leila Thread sits on a wooden chair and vapes, her ankle is cuffed to a chain, in turn cuffed to a metal loop screwed into the wooden floor.

MAN IN MASK

Do you know who I am?

LEILA

(unimpressed)

Should I?

MAN IN MASK

I created the statues on campuses.

Leila sits up straighter. She points at him with her vape pen:

LEILA

That's you? My brother's reporting -

MAN IN MASK

Your brother did me a favor.

LEILA

A favor?

MAN IN MASK

He called me "Murderangelo."

She squints at him.

LEILA

So?

MAN IN MASK

It will make me famous. And not in a bullshit way like "B.T.K." naming himself.

LEILA

If he did you a favor, why are you doing this?

He walks to a table, grabs a syringe with a blue plunger.

MAN IN MASK

Good question, norepenephrine costs \$200 a bottle.

He injects himself with it. Closes his eyes, INHALES deeply, gets "doll eyes" for a moment, then they return to normal.

Gathers himself.

MAN IN MASK (CONT'D)

But I enjoy the hunt for immortality. Can't sleep until I accomplish that.

She exhales vapor.

LEILA

You mean you like control and attention?

MAN IN MASK

My statues stay awake forever.

Identifying the situation, she changes her tone:

LEILA

You're so right - thank you for sharing your philosophy with me.

MAN IN MASK

You... agree?

Leila takes a hit of her vape.

LEILA

Of course, you're an incredible artist, the BEST!

MAN IN MASK

I wish my mom agreed with you.

LEILA

How do you know she doesn't?

MAN IN MASK

She burnt my old studio to the ground.

LEILA

Jesus. Why?

MAN IN MASK

She wanted me to be a priest and didn't think I could sculpt.

LEILA

Did she need money?

MAN IN MASK

Hell no. She was rich. It was about making her friends jealous. That's why I'm creating a show that would make John De Andrea jealous.

LEILA

Will I get to see it?

MAN IN MASK

Of course. You're in it.

LEILA

I am so so so lucky. I feel like I'm backstage at a rock concert!

MAN IN MASK

You really think so?

LEILA

I do! Where are we, anyway?

The man in the deer skull mask HURRIES into her personal space, BREATHING through the mask.

MAN IN MASK

(sing-song voice)

Where are we? Where's Mary Poppins?
Where do girls go to shower? Where
do gobba-gee-gee-gibble-gabba-goo?

He CACKLES, his brows and eyes flare behind the mask - pupils like black holes.

Leila cowers... he CACKLES a moment, then becomes serious.

INT. CHEVY BOLT EUV - DAY

Casey sits in his parked car on a side street near Lambeau Field.

He searches a paid online phone database for the mobile number of Steve Meintz. He finds it, sends him a text.

CASEY (TEXT)

Steve, it's Casey, the reporter.
Does your uncle own any properties
in Green Bay?

He sets his iPhone in a device on the dash board that holds it.

He drives the car down the street, turns onto Oneida Street near the stadium.

RINGTONE - "No Sleep Till Brooklyn"

On the dashboard, the electronic screen reads "Incoming Call" with a green button marked "Answer."

CAR STEREO

Call from "Unknown caller." Answer
it?

CASEY

Yes - hello?

NELL (O.S.)

Casey: Agent Jenner. Find your
sister?

CASEY

No, what if he has her?

NELL (O.S.)

You checked her place?

CASEY

Nothing - heard her phone ring from
inside, she's not there. Police
entered, no sign of her. Any luck
with surveillance?

NELL (O.S.)

Maybe a black pickup with no
license plate.

Casey gets a call from Steve Meintz.

CASEY

Gotta go.

He switches calls.

STEVE MEINTZ (O.S.)

Stop harassing me!

CASEY

Answer a question and I'll leave you alone: Other than the cabin and his house, what properties does your uncle own?

STEVE MEINTZ (O.S.)

You mean like the deer stand?

CASEY

Where is it?

STEVE MEINTZ (O.S.)

Piss off.

CALL ENDS

Casey drives a moment, gets another call from an unlisted number. He answers.

CASEY

Hello?

UNLISTED NUMBER (O.S.)

It's Murderangelo. Be nice to me in your little stories because I have your sister.

Casey has an episode, passes out - loses control of the wheel - his car SWERVES off the road -

SMASHES into a tree - airbags DEPLOY.

The car HISSES, motionless.

INT. HOME OF ELZBIETA THREAD - DAY

Elzbieta sits in a chair in her living room, smoking and knitting.

KNOCKS

She sets down her cigarette and knitting. Takes a moment to rise (slowly and stiffly).

More KNOCKS

ELZBIETA

Coming. Don't blow the house down.

She lumbers to the door. BREATHES hard from COPD.

OPENS DOOR.

EXT. ELZBIETA THREAD'S HOUSE

In the doorway stands a man in a COVID mask and a black baseball cap. Behind him, a car with an Uber sign alit in the windshield.

MAN IN MASK

Hello, Ms. Thread? I'm your Uber driver. Going to the grocery store?

ELZBIETA

That's right. Will you wait for me and bring me back?

MAN IN MASK

Absolutely.

ELZBIETA

What's with the mask?

MAN IN MASK

For my protection and yours, ma'am. Don't want to spread germs.

ELZBIETA

(SIGHS)

Come in, the air conditioner's on - we're not cooling the whole neighborhood.

The man in the mask enters her house.

EXT. CHEVY BOLT EUV - DAY

A cop's face - blue sky and clouds behind it.

Reveal the cop stands over Casey. Casey lays on a stretcher. Two EMTs - one male, one female, evaluate him.

COP

Casey Thread?

CASEY

That's me.

He sits up. They try to get him to lay back.

FEMALE EMT

Whoa whoa -

CASEY

I'm fine, I'm fine. I think it was just a vasovagal thing.

COP

Have you been drinking?

Cop sniffs Casey's breath.

CASEY

No, no.

COP

I'll have to write you a ticket.

CASEY

I'm tracking that killer -

COP

Who, Murderangelo?

The EMTs - one male, one female - look at the cop.

BOTH EMTS

Murderangelo?!

CASEY

You know who that is?

COP

Focused on little else at the station.

Casey sits up, slides off the stretcher, stands.

The cop holds out a ticket.

COP (CONT'D)

You can appeal - date with the judge is on the back.

Casey takes the ticket, GROANS, looks up at the sky, as if pleading with a higher being:

CASEY

I'm *TRYING!*

The female EMT wheels the stretcher away.

MALE EMT
(to Casey)
Sure you're okay?

Casey places a hand to his head. GROANS.

CASEY
I'm messing up my life, man.

He searches on his phone for a tow truck.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE/INT. PRESS-GAZETTE - INTERCUT

Waiting room. Couches. Magazines.

Casey sits, elbows on knees, hands covering his face.

RING TONE plays "No Sleep Till Brooklyn."

Casey looks at his phone - it reads "Pistol Pete."

Casey hits the green button to Accept.

INTERCUT:

CASEY
Yeah, Pete.

Peter sits at his desk at the Press-Gazette.

PETER
My man! Online subscriptions are
through the roof! "Murderangelo" is
our Zodiac Killer!

CASEY
My sister's missing. And I think he
has her.

PETER
(giggling)
Right - now THAT would get you a
Pulitzer.

CASEY
I'm telling you he called me. He
has her!

PETER
Holy shit - for real?

CASEY
YES, for real!

PETER
If he called, we can track him.

CASEY
The number was unlisted.

PETER
(swallows)
Now what?

CASEY
Now we figure out where the hell
she is.

DR. GIA FIRENZE (38) appears in the waiting room.

DR. FIRENZE
Casey?

Casey stands up to follow her.

PETER
When's your next Murderangelo
story?

Casey presses END CALL.

PETER (CONT'D)
Hello?

INT. DR. FIRENZE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Firenze sits in an overstuffed leather chair, across a
coffee table from a couch where Casey sits.

DR. FIRENZE
What happened right before your
attack in the car?

CASEY
I got a call from Murderangelo -

She frowns, squints.

DR. FIRENZE
Murderangelo?

CASEY
The statue killer, on campuses.

DR. FIRENZE

Oh my god.

CASEY

He has my sister.

DR. FIRENZE

Your sister? Did you report this?

CASEY

Yes, to the feds and police.

DR. FIRENZE

And how does this make you feel?

CASEY

Is crawling out of my skin normal?

DR. FIRENZE

Yes. How are you coping?

CASEY

Coping? Who says I'm coping?

DR. FIRENZE

You're here. That's a big step.

CASEY

I hate it here - no offense.

She grins.

DR. FIRENZE

I get that a lot.

CASEY

I just don't want to let her down again.

DR. FIRENZE

Let her down...?

CASEY

I had an attack - at the worst time, and it hurt her.

DR. FIRENZE

You mean you collapsed?

CASEY

Right, when we were teenagers.

DR. FIRENZE

What caused you to collapse?

CASEY

My sister was walking well ahead of me, I was catching up and, by the time I caught up to her, this guy was attacking her!

DR. FIRENZE

And the surprise caused you to lose consciousness?

CASEY

Couldn't move. So - damn -
FRUSTRATING!

Casey makes fists.

DR. FIRENZE

That's in the past. There is only now.

He GROANS.

DR. FIRENZE (CONT'D)

You couldn't move... what did you do?

CASEY

I really don't want to talk about this.

DR. FIRENZE

You don't want to, I hear that.

Casey rises, walks toward the door.

CASEY

Good. We done?

DR. FIRENZE

Do you feel any better?

He stops at the office door.

CASEY

No.

He turns back to the psychiatrist.

CASEY (CONT'D)

Not until I find her.

DR. FIRENZE

Fair. But it seems you also haven't addressed what has happened.

Casey opens the door to leave.

CASEY

Like I said... I don't want to talk
about it.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

We see products for sculpting and painting around the studio.

Large plastic jugs.

The man in the deer mask stands in front of a middle-aged
woman sitting in a chair.

We see her from behind; can't see her face. She wears only a
shower cap.

He looks at a clock on the wall.

MAN IN MASK

(delighted)

It's Rigor Mortis O'Clock
somewhere... and that somewhere is
here!

INT. OFFICE OF DR. FIRENZE - DAY

Dr. Firenze remains seated, calm, as if she expected all that
had unfolded.

DR. FIRENZE

So when he attacked Leila, what did
you do?

BEAT - still at the door, Casey EXHALES.

CASEY

Had to stare at the sidewalk and
lawn and listen to the whole damn
thing.

DR. FIRENZE

Listen to...?

Casey shuts the door again, answers from across the room:

CASEY

Her wailing... him groaning.

DR. FIRENZE

Did he - rape her?

Casey makes fists, paces, stews.

He nods.

DR. FIRENZE (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry.

CASEY
And it's happening again.

He runs a hand through his hair.

DR. FIRENZE
It's not. You're here.

He turns toward her, bends knees slightly, holds his hands out toward her, fingers splayed:

CASEY
She's MISSING!

DR. FIRENZE
Tap your fingers and toes.

He stares at her like she's crazy.

CASEY
That's NOT going to find her.

She repeatedly taps her fingers on her knees, her toes on the floor.

DR. FIRENZE
You can't find her if you don't focus. Do this, then use your anger to fuel your search.

BEAT - he stares at her, realizes he underestimated her.

DR. FIRENZE (CONT'D)
Try it.

He rejoins her, sits back in the chair.

DR. FIRENZE (CONT'D)
This is a grounding exercise. You are here. Those thoughts are there.

He reluctantly joins her in tapping fingers and toes.

CASEY
Yeah? My thoughts sure *seem* to be here.

DR. FIRENZE

Your feelings are here, but they are not real. They are just thoughts. The past and future don't exist; there is only now. Say it.

CASEY

There - is only now?

DR. FIRENZE

There is only now.

CASEY

There is only now.

DR. FIRENZE

If we take a deep breath, is that a bad plan?

She takes a DEEP BREATH. He thinks a moment.

He takes a DEEP BREATH.

DR. FIRENZE (CONT'D)

Casey, you have narcolepsy type 1.

CASEY

There are more types?

DR. FIRENZE

Type 1 involves cataplexy. When the man attacked your sister, you froze because you have a low level of orexin.

CASEY

Orexin?

DR. FIRENZE

It's a neurotransmitter. Low levels can cause cataplexy and daytime sleepiness. Ring a bell for you?

CASEY

Breaks it, like the Liberty Bell.

DR. FIRENZE

You couldn't help it, and you couldn't have helped her. It wasn't your fault.

CASEY

Yeah, well, here we go again.

Dr. Firenze types in her laptop.

DR. FIRENZE

And according to your file, you took Amoxicillin as a child and went into anaphylaxis?

FLASH TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ER - DAY

From the patient's perspective, we see one clinician giving a shot to a boy's thigh, and another placing oxygen over the patient's mouth.

RETURN TO SCENE: INT. OFFICE OF DR. FIRENZE - DAY

CASEY

Almost died. I hate meds.

DR. FIRENZE

If you're open to taking one, I think I have one that would really help you with your cataplexy.

CASEY

Is it safe?

DR. FIRENZE

Yes, the main side effects are headache and nausea.

CASEY

Still hate meds.

DR. FIRENZE

Do you have any heart or kidney issues?

CASEY

No.

DR. FIRENZE

Great. I'm prescribing you pitolisant.

CASEY

What does it do?

DR. FIRENZE

It's not a cure. But for most patients, it can decrease your daytime sleepiness, help you sleep better overnight, and block most of cataplexy. And, it's not contraindicated with an allergy to amoxicillin.

Casey folds his arms.

CASEY

No way I'm taking it. Never.

DR. FIRENZE

State law reads that, once diagnosed with cataplexy, it must be controlled by treatment or you lose your driving privileges.

EXT. PHARMACY - DAY

Casey stands at a pharmacy checkout counter.

A pharmacy CLERK hands him medication in a white paper bag.

CASEY

Thanks.

Casey steps to the side, opens the bottle of pitolisant, pops one in his mouth, and chases it with a bottle of the Frappuccino he purchased.

INT. HOUSE STUDIO - DAY

The man in the deer skull mask holds shears, CUTS the zip ties that kept the woman sitting in the chair. Due to rigor, she doesn't move.

- He strides to his workbench.

- A two-gallon jug reads "Fast Cure Resin" and a one-gallon jug reads, "Hardener 9000 psi - rock hard."

- He pours the hardener into another jug of epoxy, mixes with a long wooden stick.

- Attaches the jug of mixture to a spray machine.

- Plugs the spray machine into a portable power strip.

- Turns on the power sprayer; it HUMS.

- He sprays the "statue" with the mixture of resin and hardener.
- He coats her entire body.

EXT./INT. FIXATE FACTORY - DUSK

A small coffee shop.

Stereo PLAYS MELLOW BOSSA NOVA as Casey pays for his café au lait.

He walks to the counter where a BARISTA (20) makes his coffee.

CASEY
You work with Leila, right?

BARISTA
Who wants to know?

The barista STEAMS milk.

CASEY
Her brother.

BARISTA
Heard she whapped you in pickleball.

CASEY
It's what she does. Except, now she's missing.

BARISTA
Like she'll miss your next game?

CASEY
No, she's missing - like taken.

BARISTA
Wait, like "dead-on" missing?

CASEY
Have you seen her?

Barista tilts his head, adds the milk to the coffee.

BARISTA
Haven't worked, sorry.

Someone taps Casey on the shoulder.

Casey pivots -

- it's the Man in the COVID Mask! He wears a black baseball cap.

MAN IN MASK
I have your sister.

Casey's eyes flare. He GRABS the masked man by the shirt at his shoulders.

Man in Mask holds up his phone to Casey: We see a red button marked DETONATE.

MAN IN MASK (CONT'D)
Press this button, your sister goes
BOOM!

Casey releases him.

BARISTA
Casey?!

Casey flinches. The barista sets down Casey's drink on the counter.

Casey turns, disregards the drink, pivots back to the masked man.

CASEY
Where is she?

MAN IN MASK
Now, that wouldn't be much fun,
would it?

CASEY
What do you want?

The masked man holds up the phone again - tilts it back and forth.

MAN IN MASK
I want to tell you I also know
where your mother lives.

CASEY
My mother? You have NO idea what
you'd be getting yourself into.

MAN IN MASK
Actually, I've already been in her
house.

CASEY
You son of a -

MAN IN MASK (CONT'D)
You might want to know your
mother will be at Neville
Public Museum. Your sister at
201 N Main in Black Creek.

CASEY (CONT'D)
What? When?

The man looks at his phone.

MAN IN MASK
In 59 minutes, 47 seconds. But
hurry: You can save one - the other
dies.

Casey suffers partial cataplexy, standing straight up, his
head slumped to his chest.

The masked man appears confused. He curiously pokes Casey.

Casey doesn't budge.

MAN IN MASK (CONT'D)
Move, or I'll blow her up.

Casey still doesn't budge. The masked man leans down, looks
up into Casey's eyes, which are wide open. The masked man
GIGGLES.

MAN IN MASK (CONT'D)
Hmm, couldn't have done better
myself.

The masked man happily backs away, then walks out of Fixate
Factory, a pep in his step.

Casey stands frozen in the cafe.

EXT./INT. CAR OF AGENT NELL JENNER - NIGHT

Nell drives, Casey sits in the passenger seat.

NELL
He just... left?

CASEY
I couldn't move, couldn't stop him -
just like when my sister was
attacked.

Casey makes a fist and hits himself on the side of the head
three times.

CASEY (CONT'D)

I can't - do this - anymore.

NELL

You can. We've got 5 minutes to get to the museum.

Casey POUNDS on the inside of the passenger-side door.

CASEY

Cataplexy is BULLSHIT!

NELL

We have police en route to the address he gave for your sister in Black Creek, along with the bomb squad and a chopper overhead.

CASEY

And the museum?

NELL

Two squad cars and SWAT might beat us there.

Casey anxiously runs a hand through his hair.

CASEY

Can't believe I let it happen again.

Casey EXHALES.

NELL

Suck it up buttercup.

He glances at her.

CASEY

Buttercup?

NELL

I've never called someone that before. Jesus.

Casey coyly grins, glances at the clock on the dash.

CASEY

Three minutes.

NELL

We're two minutes away.

EXT. NEVILLE PUBLIC MUSEUM - NIGHT

It's a large brick building with glass doors.

In front, a bronze statue of a mastodon. Two skeletons of dinosaurs.

To the left, a squad car, red and blue lights flashing.

Nell pulls up right in front, doesn't bother to park properly. Casey looks at his phone.

CASEY

One minute left -

Nell and Casey spring out of the car as they gather themselves and race toward the front door.

OFFICER JEAN CARROLL (30s) exits out the front glass door. She raises her hands for them to stop.

They halt just outside the doorway to the museum.

Casey places his hands on his thighs to catch his breath.

Nell holds up her I.D.

NELL

Nell Jenner - F.B.I.

The officer shakes her head.

OFFICER CARROLL

I'm sorry, it's too late.

CASEY

What? No no no. We had a minute -

OFFICER CARROLL

There's another statue.

Casey SCREAMS like an anvil fell on his foot. His fingers curl as if he had just been concussed.

NELL

Casey -

CASEY

We had a minute!

NELL

Wait - who is the statue?

OFFICER CARROLL

I mean, it's an older lady in a rocking chair, black dress?

Casey turns around - horrified.

CASEY

It's my mom. Oh Jesus, ma, no no no.

NELL

Let me see. Show us.

He turns away, runs his hands through his hair, falls to his knees on a patch of grass between the pavement, CRYING.

Officer Carroll waves Nell into the museum.

Nell and the officer enter.

Casey SOBS.

INT. NEVILLE PUBLIC MUSEUM - NIGHT

Nell and the officer stop in the lobby.

It's another statue:

A woman sits in a rocking chair. She wears a floor-length black mourning dress with long sleeves. White lace appears around the collar and cuffs. A matching white lace bonnet features lappets framing her face.

Casey SPRINTS in behind them - suddenly halts.

CASEY

Professor Muskie?

We see it's indeed the late professor.

NELL

We just met her.

CASEY

Oh my god. She's still alive...

He turns away.

We see Prof. Muskie's face as we hear Casey VOMIT off screen.

OFFICER CARROLL

Nah I checked her pulse, she's super dead.

NELL

He means his mother - we thought it was her.

The MUSEUM DOCENT (70s) approaches.

DOCENT

It's a 4D depiction of Whistler's Mother, by James McNeill Whistler.

CASEY

Murderangelo told us my mother would be here.

OFFICER CARROLL

(shrugs)

Hard to believe a murderer would lie.

The docent points at the puke on the tile floor and addresses Casey:

DOCENT

I'll get someone to clean up your Jackson Pollock.

Casey frowns.

EXT. 201 N. MAIN, BLACK CREEK/INT. MUSEUM - INTERCUT

Special Agent LEAH PALMER (33) stands on a gravel driveway in front of a single-family ranch. She wears a blue wind breaker with yellow letters that spell F.B.I.

She talks on an iPhone.

AGENT PALMER

No sign of the suspect or any victims.

INTERCUT:

Nell speaks on her phone in the museum, the statue behind her.

NELL

Wild goose chase?

AGENT PALMER

Owners have no idea why he picked this address.

NELL
Searched the entire place?

AGENT PALMER
Nothing scandalous, unless you
count their cats' litter box.

NELL
Thanks for the quick response, I
owe you.

AGENT PALMER
Again.

NELL
(high-pitched)
Well...

Nell ends the call, turns and approaches Casey. He's taking pictures of the statue.

NELL (CONT'D)
Hey "Ansel Adams!" Delete the
photos or I'll have to take your
phone.

Casey stops, looks at her. He deletes the photos.

NELL (CONT'D)
Show me. I caught heat for your
previous crime scene photos in the
paper.

He shows her. They're deleted from his phone.

NELL (CONT'D)
Heard from the team in Black Creek -
no sign of your sister.

Casey EXHALES, places hands laced behind his head, flexes his knees then straightens his legs.

CASEY
And Murderangelo?

NELL
No sign of him.

CASEY
Son of a - why did he?

NELL

To buy time. To feel in control.
He's devolving though - we're
getting to him.

Casey nods, approaches the docent.

CASEY

(clears throat)
I'm Casey Thread, reporter with the
Press-Gazette.

DOCENT

Oh, I only read the New York Times,
and mostly for Wordle.

CASEY

Can we talk?

INT. NELL'S CAR - NIGHT

Nell drives, Casey rides passenger.

He checks to make sure she's not looking.

ON HIS PHONE: We see he downloads a photo of the Whistler's
Mother statue in the Neville Museum from his Google Photos
Cloud.

NELL

So the docent didn't see who left
the statue?

Casey hides his phone from her view.

CASEY

No, but they had CCTV footage.

FLASH TO:

MUSEUM SECURITY FOOTAGE:

It's black and white video of the Whistler's Mother statue
being wheeled in through the front doors of the museum like a
special delivery. The man wheeling it wears a gray baseball
cap and a white medical mask.

NELL (V.O.)

Was it your guy from Fixate
Factory?

CASEY (V.O.)

Hard to say with the mask, and from that distance. But he looked younger than the guy at Fixate.

VIDEO:

The man leaves the statue, wheels the dolly towards the front door.

RETURN TO SCENE:

Casey and Nell ride in her car.

NELL

So it could be Brandon Meintz, his nephew Steve, or any random guy Meintz hired.

CASEY

You could ask Steve Meintz.

NELL

I'll see if he'll talk, and scour local doorbell cameras to see if we can get video of the unsub.

She rubs her ligature scar; Casey nods at it.

CASEY

So you gonna tell me about that?

BEAT

NELL

I was working a case in Naperville.

FLASH TO:

EXT. DUPAGE RIVERBANK, NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS - NIGHT

A full moon shines brightly, reflects off of the river.

A younger Special Agent Nell Jenner (27) walks along the shore of the river with a younger Special Agent Leah Palmer (28).

NELL (V.O.)

The killer liked to sneak behind women with pigtails along the DuPage Riverbank, strangle them from behind, and dump them in the river.

CASEY (V.O.)

He sounds nice. You worked the
DuPage Strangler case?

NELL (V.O.)

Yes, with my partner, Agent Leah
Palmer. We set up a sting, with me
as bait.

Younger Nell sits on the park bench, hair in pigtails.

Agent Palmer walks along the riverbank.

BEGIN ACTION SEQUENCE:

- The DUPAGE STRANGLER (40s) appears like a dark phantom behind the park bench.
- He CHOKES Nell with a metal wire!
- She grabs his gloved hands, which are wrapped around the ligature.
- Agent Palmer comes to her aid, KICKING the Strangler in the kidney.
- He HOWLS, falls off, releasing Nell.
- Nell COUGHS, rubs her throat.
- He grabs Agent Palmer's leg.
- Agent Palmer staggers away...
- Nell lays on the park bench, BREATHES HARD, tries to recover.
- We see the DuPage Strangler get up. He has red skin around his eyes from eczema.
- He pulls a gun and fires at Agent Palmer: POP! POP!
- Agent Palmer HOWLS, grabs her bleeding leg. Falls.
- He flees behind a line of trees.

RETURN TO SCENE: INT. FIXATE FACTORY - PRESENT DAY

CASEY

What happened?

NELL

He's the one that got away.

CASEY
Never found?

NELL
Still among the most wanted. I
almost quit.

CASEY
But you didn't; you love it.

Nell scrunches her nose.

NELL
My only marketable skill.

The car pulls up in front of Casey's apartment.

CASEY
Thanks for the ride. Where you
going?

NELL
Can't tell you. Try to get some
sleep.

CASEY
Yeah, right. I'm on deadline.

INT. MAN IN THE MASK'S STUDIO - NIGHT

A man in a COVID mask and black ball cap uses his laptop to
log onto the Press-Gazette website.

The headline reads:

Third Beloved Victim Posed as Statue

The masked man clicks on it.

We see the story, by Casey Thread, with a photo of Prof.
Linda Muskie.

He reads from it.

MAN IN MASK (O.S.)
"Professor Linda Muskie, beloved by
her art students, became the third
victim of a devolving serial killer
Thursday. She was posed in the
lobby of the Neville Public Museum.
(MORE)

MAN IN MASK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
'She was so insightful to my work,
helping me bring my vision to
life,' said senior sculpting major
Dorothy Rempart. 'She always would
smile and encourage us.'
Authorities have taken DNA samples
from the statue they hope will give
them a lead."

The masked man SCOFFS.

MAN IN MASK (CONT'D)
They'll find nothing.

The man GIGGLES as he clears his browser history.

EXT. CABIN OF BRANDON MEINTZ, MINOCQUA - NEXT DAY
A cabin. A black pickup parked to the side. Empty.
A hand KNOCKS on the Meintz cabin door.
Steve Meintz answers.
Nell holds up her I.D.

NELL
Agent Nell Jenner; we spoke
earlier?

STEVE MEINTZ
Yeah.

NELL
May I come in?

STEVE MEINTZ
Got nuthin' to hide.

Nell enters.

He is noticeably taller, bigger, like she's in a bear's den;
so she reaches to her Glock side holster and unsnaps the
button, just in case.

NELL
I have a video I need you to see.

STEVE MEINTZ
So you said. How'd you get that
scar?

He nods at her neck.

NELL

Fought a mountain lion.

He looks surprised.

STEVE MEINTZ

Who won?

NELL

Do you see the mountain lion?

He smirks.

She holds up her phone, presses play on the security footage from the museum.

NELL (CONT'D)

Watch this.

VIDEO:

A tall man in a ball cap and mask wheels the statue into the Neville Museum, leaves.

STEVE MEINTZ

What about it?

NELL

Can you identify the man?

STEVE MEINTZ

I mean, he was wearing a hat and a mask so, no.

NELL

We know your uncle drove the Uber for one of the victims at the time she disappeared. We know he drove here that day.

STEVE MEINTZ

So?

NELL

So did you see him that day? Or Elena Ortega?

STEVE MEINTZ

Him, yes. Her? No.

Nell brings up a picture on her phone of Elena as the statue of Frida Kahlo. Shows it to Steve:

Steve looks away, shakes his head.

NELL

We know your uncle was an art student who studied sculpture under Prof. Muskie, the most recent victim left at the Neville Museum in Green Bay. And we know someone walked up to the reporter covering these murders, said he had the reporter's sister, and predicted a statue would show up at the museum and when. But you know what's really weird?

STEVE MEINTZ

It's all really weird.

NELL

What's really weird is, it wasn't your uncle who left that statue in the museum.

Steve suddenly looks at her, seemingly surprised.

STEVE MEINTZ

I... never thought it was.

NELL

The man in that video is too young.

BEAT

STEVE MEINTZ

So?

NELL

So you want to tell me why you did that for him?

Steve and Nell stare each other down. Steve swallows, looks away.

STEVE MEINTZ

Could be a million guys he hired.

NELL

Except a million guys don't drive your black pickup.

STEVE MEINTZ

It illegal to drive around now?

NELL

We have surveillance video of your vehicle driving away from the museum right after the statue was left there. Every law enforcement vehicle has a dashboard cam that identifies license plates. We have images of your black pickup leaving the scene.

STEVE MEINTZ

A pickup like mine?

NELL

The back plate was removed. But it has your bumper sticker. Tell me why you did it and I can help you.

Steve folds his arms, doesn't answer.

Nell looks at the wall - there's a wooden plaque that bears the words, "82nd Airborne Division Veteran" carved into it with "AA" and a bald eagle.

NELL (CONT'D)

You served?

STEVE MEINTZ

Afghanistan, in the mountains.

Nell nods.

NELL

You were a hero there - don't fall short now.

STEVE MEINTZ

You don't know shit.

NELL

I know we got your cell company to triangulate your whereabouts yesterday at the time of this video.

Steve Meintz swallows hard.

EXT./INT. DEER STAND OF THE MASKED MAN - DAY

A ladder leads up to a deer blind.

Inside, the man in the deer skull mask holds a vial and a hypodermic needle with a red plunger. He draws fluid into the needle.

Leila sits on the floor in the corner, in handcuffs, chained to the floor. She recoils.

LEILA

Wait - what are you doing?

MAN IN MASK

It won't hurt a bit, I promise.

We see Elzbieta Thread in the corner opposite Leila, also in handcuffs chained to the floor.

ELZBIETA

No no no - wait. Take me!

MAN IN MASK

That's the idea.

LEILA

You don't have to do this.

MAN IN MASK

But I'm helping her.

LEILA

Helping?

MAN IN MASK

She'll never have to sleep again.

ELZBIETA

But I like sleeping.

The man holds the needle, walks toward Elzbieta.

MAN IN MASK

You'll be awake forever - as my *Old Woman with a Rosary* by Cezanne.

ELZBIETA

Well, I do have a rosary.

Elzbieta reaches into her pocket - pulls out her string of religious beads, smiles.

LEILA

MOM!

ELZBIETA

What? I do.

The masked man squints, smiles under the mask like the Grinch.

He approaches Leila with the syringe, invading her personal space.

MAN IN MASK

She'll fall asleep rather quickly,
and that will be it, *nighty nigh*
nigh night.

ELZBIETA

Take me - release her.

LEILA

No - please.

Leila KICKS him squarely on the kneecap.

He SCREAMS - drops the syringe; it HITS the floor near Leila.

MAN IN MASK

Lil BITCH! I'll kill you!

He PUSHES her backward - she HITS the back of her head on the floor.

LEILA

OW!

The man in the deer mask limps away.

Leila uses the heel of her sneaker to STOMP STOMP STOMP the syringe, breaking it.

INT. CABIN OF STEVE MEINTZ, MINOCQUA - DAY

Steve takes a step closer to Nell.

STEVE MEINTZ

How'd you get my cell number?

NELL

A friend.

STEVE MEINTZ

The reporter.

NELL

Your cell phone pinged off the
tower closest to the Neville Museum
at the time of the video.

Steve Meintz sniffs.

STEVE MEINTZ

So?

NELL

We also have video of your truck.

Steve shifts his weight.

STEVE MEINTZ

Look, my uncle had a rough life.

NELL

Rough how?

STEVE MEINTZ

His dad beat him and his mother
burnt his sculptures to the ground.

NELL

Really. Why?

STEVE MEINTZ

She said it was for his own good.

NELL

She still alive?

STEVE MEINTZ

You know, I heard the F.B.I.
burnout rate is high.

Nell shrugs.

STEVE MEINTZ (CONT'D)

Want to retire early?

NELL

Who wouldn't?

STEVE MEINTZ

How does a million dollars sound?

Nell stares at him a second. She folds her arms across her chest.

NELL

Like you have a million dollars.

Steve grins.

STEVE MEINTZ

My uncle inherited a lot of money
from my great aunt.

NELL

That why you do things for him?

STEVE MEINTZ

You do things for your family?

NELL

He let you live here?

STEVE MEINTZ

Yeah, since I got back from active duty. I take care of the place for him.

NELL

When your uncle goes to jail, they'll come after the inheritance, the land.

STEVE MEINTZ

They can't do that.

NELL

Even if he avoids forfeiture, there will certainly be restitution to the victims' families.

STEVE MEINTZ

If you leave him alone, we'll make you a millionaire.

NELL

What's his mother's name?

STEVE MEINTZ

Why?

NELL

Before I make a deal that could ruin my career and pension, I want to verify your facts.

BEAT - Steve considers.

STEVE MEINTZ

And after you verify?

NELL

You'll have a deal.

He grins. They shake on it.

STEVE MEINTZ

Her name is Holly Lemming.

INT. GREEN BAY PRESS-GAZETTE - DAY

Casey sits at his work desk, opens his bottle of prescription medication.

FLASH TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ER - FLASHBACK

Into a boy's arm, an I.V. drips saline.

RETURN TO SCENE: PRESS-GAZETTE/NELL'S CAR - INTERCUT

Casey stares at the pitolisant pill.

BEAT

He pops the pill in his mouth, chases it with coffee.

His landline phone RINGS. He answers.

CASEY

Casey Thread -

NELL (O.S.)

It's Nell. Any word from your sister?

CASEY

No. Any updates?

INTERCUT: Nell drives her car back from Minocqua.

NELL

Yes, but I can't tell you.

CASEY

Please? He has my sister! My mother!

NELL

I understand it's stressful. But it's an ongoing investigation.

CASEY

HE'S GOING TO KILL THEM!

He BANGS his desk.

NELL

We're doing our best.

CASEY

Did you even talk to the nephew?

NELL

Please keep an open mind -

CASEY

Yeah - great - *keep an open mind.*
Maybe Agent Palmer will save them.

NELL

WHAT - did you just say?

Casey SLAMS down the landline phone.

INT. CABIN/INT. DEER STAND - SPLIT SCREEN

The man in the deer skull mask speaks on the phone in the deer stand.

Steve Meintz talks on the phone in his cabin.

STEVE MEINTZ

The feds were here. At my door!

MAN IN MASK

So? You already talked to that damn reporter.

STEVE MEINTZ

What have you done to me?

MAN IN MASK

To you? Nothing.

STEVE MEINTZ

NOTHING?! We could go to jail!

MAN IN MASK

They have no proof. No proof, no harm.

STEVE MEINTZ

You murdered people while I've been living at your cabin!

MAN IN MASK

You're complaining about a free roof over your head?

STEVE MEINTZ (CONT'D)

I moved things I thought were statues -

MAN IN MASK (CONT'D)

What does it matter what you were moving?

CASEY

Apparently it's a one-way street.

PETER

Most streets in life are. Ever been to Salt Lake City?

CASEY

No, why?

PETER

It has the largest genealogy library in the world. Billions of records.

CASEY

Is it online?

Peter raises his brows.

PETER

And it's free.

Casey TYPES on his keyboard, searches.

EXT. BLACK CREEK RURAL ROAD - DAY

Country farmlands. Rural roads. Two black SUVs and a SWAT truck parked in a field near a farm.

Nell stands in front of Agent Palmer, two uniformed officers, and the SWAT team.

NELL

We're about half a mile from our suspect, Brandon Lemming. Known as Murderangelo, he has killed at least three victims that he posed as statues. We think he has two living victims in captivity, Leila Thread and her mother Elzbieta Thread. We'd love to take him alive but, if he threatens, shoot to -

POP! A tire on the SWAT vehicle HISSES air, goes flat.

The officers scatter, take cover.

POP! An SUV tire goes flat. POP! The last vehicle loses a tire.

AGENT PALMER

Barn window!

SWAT officers OPEN FIRE at the barn.

INT. GREEN BAY PRESS-GAZETTE - DAY

News room. Casey approaches Peter's desk holding a few pages.

CASEY
Pistol Pete!

Peter turns in his chair.

PETER
Find anything?

CASEY
I searched for a family tree for
Brandon Meintz, and the closest one
is in St. Louis. Plus there's no
Steve Meintz listed. It doesn't
fit.

PETER
Is there a "but"? I like big but's.

CASEY
I cannot lie, there is. I ran a
search for a family tree for Steve
Meintz, and there's the one in
Minocqua. He has an uncle named
Brandon.

Peter SMACKS his hands together and makes a fist.

PETER
YES!

CASEY
But Brandon is Steve's uncle by
marriage. His name is Brandon
Lemming.

PETER
(stunned)
Lemming? As in *The Lemmings*?

CASEY
His mother was Holly Lemming.

PETER
The paper mill heiress?

CASEY

The very one. And I ran his addresses.

PETER

Tell me there's one nearby.

Casey holds up the other paper. Smiles.

EXT. BLACK CREEK RURAL ROAD - DAY

A barn. Four SWAT officers march toward it, 40 yards out, automatic rifles ready.

From behind the barn, a black pickup truck ROARS away -

- We see it has a bumper sticker that reads, "82nd Airborne Division Veteran."

- SHOTS FIRED by SWAT!

- The truck turns hastily down the rural road, disappears over a slight hill.

INT. BLACK TRUCK - DAY

Steve Meintz drives the truck. A sniper rifle rests next to him.

He places a call, talks with it on speaker:

STEVE MEINTZ

They're a mile away!

MAN IN MASK (O.S.)

But I'm not finished!

STEVE MEINTZ

I shot their tires.

MAN IN MASK (O.S.)

Good! Defend the inheritance. I'm almost done.

EXT. REFRIGERATOR DRIVE - BLACK CREEK - DUSK

Street sign reads Refrigerator Dr.

Nell, Agent Palmer, police officers and the other eight SWAT members run down Refrigerator Drive.

A car ZOOMS past.

INT. PETER'S CAR - DUSK

Peter drives his old sedan, Casey rides passenger. As they pass the group of officers, Casey sits up, looks out the window:

PETER
Is that Nell?

CASEY
And a SWAT team.

Casey swallows hard.

GPS
Arriving at your destination.

Peter turns onto a gravel driveway - tires SPINNING ROCKS, the car SPINS its end around, barely recovers to ZOOM down the lane.

It's a gravel driveway to a modest house in the woods.

Peter drives really fast.

CASEY
Slow down!

Peter slams the brakes, the car TURNS SIDEWAYS on the gravel, SKIDS to a halt. He pauses then UNBUCKLES.

PETER
Leave a 5-star review.

CASEY
I have narcolepsy, I totaled my car
and now a serial killer has my
family. Yet none of that is as bad
as your driving!

EXT. HOUSE - DUSK

Peter and Casey get out of the car, stand and look around. Everything appears normal.

PETER
(whispers)
So how do these psychos hide?

CASEY

B.T.K. told his daughter he had multiple sides to him.

PETER

Sides?

CASEY

Like a cube; he could rotate 'em. Showed her his "father" side, but he could rotate that to "B.T.K." at any time.

That gets Peter's attention: He looks at Casey.

PETER

Like B.T.K. was always there?

CASEY

Always.

PETER

Well, that's not chilling or anything.

Casey looks directly at Peter.

CASEY

I'm going in.

PETER

We have no weapons - wait for SWAT.

Casey turns and, as he walks away, says:

CASEY

My family's in there. I'll sleep when I'm dead.

Casey sprints to the front door of the house.

PETER

(to himself)

Which may be soon.

Peter stays by the car.

Casey KNOCKS five times.

BEAT

KNOCKS five more.

No answer.

Open windows show nobody inside, nothing suspicious, other than some art supplies in one room.

Casey looks around - spots something - points behind the house in a wooded area.

CASEY

Deer stand!

Peter looks. We see the deer stand on stilts, ladder with eight steps.

Casey runs toward it. Peter remains by the car.

PETER

Shit.

He thinks a BEAT - calls to Casey:

PETER (CONT'D)

(whispered shout)

Take pictures!

The sun sets.

EXT. WOODS WITH DEER STAND - NIGHT

Casey hustles through a wooded area, using his phone as a flashlight, careful where he steps so as not to roll an ankle:

- He TRUDGES through leaves and sticks in the woods.
- Steps on a fallen branch -
- SNAP!
- A beartrap on his right has broken the branch in half, narrowly missing Casey's foot.
- He EXHALES relief.
- Approaches the deer stand.
- Stops, takes a picture of it.
- At its base appears to be a machine.
- Casey looks at his sleeve - burrs cling to it.
- As he approaches, we see the machine is a hydraulic lift.
- He takes a few more pictures.

- THUMP from above in the deer stand -
- Casey quietly climbs the ladder up to the stand -
- He gets to the top of the ladder.

INT. DEER STAND - NIGHT

We peer - just barely up into the deer stand - it's lit by battery-operated lamps.

From behind, we see a man drawing a syringe.

On his right, Leila lays on the floor, eyes closed, her ankle handcuffed to a chain connected to a metal loop anchored in the floor. She sweats.

She opens her eyes, sees Casey - sits up.

He puts one finger to his mouth.

To his left, the man in the deer mask approaches Elzbieta.

ELZBIETA

Please, no.

As Casey begins to climb - the man in the mask inserts the needle with the red plunger into her arm, expels the hydrocyanic acid into Elzbieta's bloodstream.

CASEY

NO!

- The masked man startles.
- Elzbieta GIGGLES, then LAUGHS.
- Casey climbs into the deer stand, confused by her laughter.
- Elzbieta's LAUGHTER fades, then she begins to HEAVE.
- The empty syringe falls out of her arm - RICOCHETS off the floor.
- The masked man reaches to a shelf.
- Casey charges the masked man!
- The masked man grabs a pistol.

LEILA

CASEY!

- The masked man points the gun at Casey.
- Casey halts, **suffers partial cataplexy!** He stands perfectly still with his head and shoulders slouched.
- Elzbieta COLLAPSES with a THUD!

EXT. PROPERTY OF THE MASKED MAN - NIGHT

Agent Nell Jenner, Agent Lea Palmer and the officers march onto the property, 20 yards from the house.

A black truck BARRELS through the front lawn behind them.

SWAT officers FIRE AUTOMATIC WEAPONS at it, to little effect.

A few bullets land in the truck, but it's too late.

They cease fire as the truck disappears behind the house.

NELL

He's going to the roof!

Nell sprints around the house - holding her Glock pistol - disappears from view.

Sure enough, Steve Meintz peeks over the top of the ranch house, aims his sniper rifle - POP!

A bullet hits a SWAT OFFICER in the chest - she's super dead.

SWAT officers OPEN FIRE - a CACOPHONY OF BULLETS!

Meintz falls - or retreats?

Behind the house, we see Nell scale the black pickup, look over the roof line - meets eyes with Steve Meintz!

But before he can lift his rifle and aim, Nell FIRES:

- misses him - he brings his rifle to his face to aim -
- she FIRES again -
- hits Steve Meintz in the forehead.
- Steve ROLLS down the roof -
- Nell jumps off the truck -
- his rifle SLIDES down the shingles -
- Steve's head CLANGS off the truck -

- he THUDS on the ground, deceased.

Nell puts one hand to the side of her mouth - shouts over the roof to her colleagues:

NELL (CONT'D)
SUSPECT DOWN! HOLD - YOUR - FIRE!

INT. DEER STAND - DUSK

Leila's eyes bug out at her mother.

LEILA
MOM!

The man in the deer mask is more interested in Casey, who stands motionless.

MAN IN MASK
Instant statue! I love it.

LEILA
Casey, NO!

The masked man gets very close to Casey, inspecting him, breathing loudly through the deer skull mask.

MAN IN MASK
Couldn't have done it better myself. Just needs a little epoxy.

Leila reaches toward him - but the chain holds.

LEILA
CASEY!

Elzbieta CONVULSES on the floor.

The masked man turns toward her.

Elzbieta stops moving.

MAN IN MASK
Now you're a complete set - the Thread Collection!

LEILA
Mom! No no no...

Leila CRIES

The masked man happily turns back around -

- *but Casey has snuck up behind him!*
- He uses the base of his palm to PUNCH the man right in the Adam's apple.
- Murderangelo falls backward, drops the gun.
- Gun HITS the floor.
- The masked man grasps his neck, GASPS, WHEEZES, CHOKES.

LEILA (CONT'D)

YES!

CASEY

(to Leila)

Where's the key?

She points.

The masked man COUGHS.

LEILA

Shelf, hook on the right.

Casey goes to the shelf, finds the key. Brings it back to her, releases her from the cuffs.

Leila breaks down, CRIES. Casey hugs her.

Leila SNIFFS, wipes tears on her way to Elzbieta.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Mom?

Elzbieta lies motionless on the floor. Leila shakes her.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Mom!

Nell pokes her head up into the deer stand, sees the man in the deer mask on the ground, reaching for the gun. It's inches away...

Nell climbs up into the stand.

The masked man grabs the gun.

Nell KICKS the masked man's hand - the gun flies out of his grasp, tumbles a few feet away. Nell points her weapon at the masked man.

Casey retrieves the masked man's gun, points it at him.

Nell grabs the masked man's wrist, cuffs it, and then cuffs both hands behind his back.

CASEY
He injected my ma!

NELL
EMTs are coming.

Casey checks Elzbieta's neck. Sets down the gun.

CASEY
No pulse.

He tries CPR.

NELL
She has about 30 seconds from
injection. How long has it been?

Casey compresses her chest.

CASEY
Not sure.

NELL
No cataplexy?

Casey continues chest compressions.

CASEY
I'm taking meds - faked an attack.

Nell looks impressed.

Leila checks her mom's wrist.

LEILA
Casey, there's no pulse.

He keeps compressing.

LEILA (CONT'D)
CASEY!

MAN IN MASK
(raspy)
Do you like my show?

Casey stops CPR.

Nell, Leila and Casey share a look of disbelief.

Casey looks at his motionless mother. Looks at Murderangelo.

Casey makes fists, SCREAMS! Until he breaks down in tears.

NELL

(to Murderangelo)

We're surrounded by SWAT. Brandon Lemming, you are under arrest for murder. You have the right to remain silent.

MAN IN MASK

(giddy)

Waived! This is fun.

NELL

Anything you say can be used against you in court.

Nell gruffly yanks him by the handcuffs.

She leans out of the deer stand and yells down:

NELL (CONT'D)

Hold your fire! Unsub arrested!

MAN IN MASK

I'm looking forward to my fans having hybristophilia.

A MECHANICAL NOISE from outside the deer stand...

Nell pushes him to the exit of the deer stand.

NELL

Move!

MECHANICAL NOISE grows...

NELL (CONT'D)

(yelling out of the stand)

COMING OUT!

MECHANICAL NOISE: Reveal it's the hydraulic lift machine outside rising to be level with the deer stand.

EXT. DEER STAND - NIGHT

Agent Palmer stands on the electronic lift next to the deer stand.

Nell stands two feet away with the murderer in cuffs.

AGENT PALMER
(to Nell)
Nice job.

NELL
We even?

AGENT PALMER
Never kept score.

MURDERANGELO
Yeah right. We all do.

NELL
And have the scars to prove it.

Nell smirks, pushes the suspect onto the lift. Agent Palmer frowns. Nell removes the man's deer skull mask.

We see the face of BRANDON LEMMING (42). He's conventionally handsome.

Nell hands the mask to Agent Palmer.

AGENT PALMER
I'll bag it for evidence.

BRANDON LEMMING
I'll bag hot coeds!

NELL
You have a right to an attorney. If you can't afford an attorney, one will be appointed to you.

LIFT WHIRS, contracts down to the ground. Agent Palmer TURNS IT OFF. SWAT surround them.

A SWAT OFFICER grabs the suspect, guides him down onto the ground.

SWAT OFFICER
Don't trip.

He pushes Brandon Lemming forward toward a log. The captive STUMBLES on it but regains footing.

BRANDON LEMMING
They'll think they can fix me,
they'll feel special when I address
them. Some will want me to dominate
them. Don't you wish they'd want
you to dominate them?

SWAT OFFICER

I wish a bird would crap on your
head.

Brandon Lemming kicks one leg with glee, then switches and
kicks the other leg:

BRANDON LEMMING

(singing)

Hy-brist-o-PHI-li-a! Hy-brist-o-PHI-
li-a!

Leila and Casey climb down. They watch his arrest.

LEILA

Even when he loses, he thinks he
won.

CASEY

Like a politician.

LEILA

Mom...

She places her hand over her mouth. Casey has tears. They
hug, LEILA CRIES.

CASEY

I'm so so so sorry.

BEAT - Leila pulls back, wipes tears, places hands on his
shoulders.

LEILA

Hey - look at me. You did all you
could.

CASEY

Not fast enough.

LEILA

I'm still here, aren't I?

Casey, tears in eyes, nods. They hug, rock back and forth,
and cry.

Two cars arrive - one a police squad car and another an
unmarked police car. OFFICERS get out.

The SWAT officer escorts Murderangelo to the back of the
squad car and shoves him so hard the killer hits his head on
the top of the squad car.

SWAT OFFICER
(facetiously)
Oops.

BRANDON LEMMING
OW!

In the distance, an AMBULANCE SIREN.

Tears stream down Casey's face. He SNAPS a picture of Brandon Lemming in the police car.

He wipes tears, posts the picture to social media with the following text:

Justice for Murderangelo victims

Tess Miller, Elena Ortega, Prof. Linda Muskie, Elzbieta Thread. The dignity of their lives won't be overshadowed by the indignity of their end. Love overcomes insanity. Sometimes it just takes too damn long.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON - DAY

The song "FAME" by David Bowie PLAYS.

A Wisconsin Secure Prison Facility in Boscobel, Wisconsin. The building is basically made out of tan rectangles with copious fencing and barbed wire.

CARD: TWO MONTHS LATER

INT. MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON

The song "FAME" by David Bowie CONTINUES.

A prison cell. Photos from young adult fans - some dressed, some undressed, letters of admiration are scattered on the bed.

Taped to the wall: A post card of the American flag with the words, "Made in the U.S.A."

Murderangelo sits alone in his cell.

He holds a permanent marker, crime scene photos of his statues, photos of himself in court, more letters and photos of adoring fans.

Begin MONTAGE as "FAME" PLAYS:

- He autographs some of these items.
 - Colors his thumb with black Sharpie, places a thumb print next to his signature.
 - BLOWS on the signature.
 - Places them into envelopes for mailing.
 - Peels stamps and adheres them to envelopes, grins.
- Song abruptly ends.

EXT./INT. FIXATE FACTORY - DAY

Nell, Leila and Casey have coffee at a table.

CASEY

He's enjoying being famous.

LEILA

In America, even when we utilize the legal system, we often don't get justice.

NELL

His amygdala's a mess. His real punishment is having to live inside it.

LEILA

Nothing can fix what happened to me and Mom. But Mom didn't die for nothing - we got answers for the families.

NELL

We stopped more moms from having to go through that.

LEILA

(to Casey)

I appreciate how you wrote about the difficulty Mom and I had carrying hope and heartbreak at the same time, hour after hour in that deer stand.

CASEY

Hardest article I've ever written.

LEILA

Grover Law Offices is working to prevent him from selling the rights to get rich.

NELL

Proud of you.

LEILA

Would you speak to my survivors group?

Nell touches her ligature scar.

NELL

I will. For you, Tess, Elena, Linda, your mom.

LEILA

She'd have been proud of Casey.

CASEY

She wouldn't have believed it.

LEILA

She'd want the Packers to take it out on the Bears.

CASEY

Wanna watch the game?

She grabs the green streak in her hair.

LEILA

Hell yeah! Then beat you in pickleball.

CASEY

(to Leila)
Love it.
(to Nell)
Got your next case?

NELL

Finishing up paid leave.

LEILA

How's that going?

NELL

It's torture.

Nell holds up her mug.

NELL (CONT'D)
To your mother.

Casey and Leila raise their glasses.

CASEY
Speaking of torture.

Leila WHACKS his arm. Casey and Nell GIGGLE.

CASEY (CONT'D)
Too soon?

LEILA
YES! Yes. NELL

LEILA (CONT'D)
I know you love her.

Tears well in her eyes.

CASEY
Guilt trips and all.

LEILA
She was there for me when I
suffered the first attack. What are
we gonna do?

CASEY
We'll be there for each other.

LEILA
To Mom.

They CLINK MUGS. Drink coffee. Casey CLEARS HIS THROAT.

CASEY
(to Nell)
So! What are you doing with your
free time?

Leila suddenly smiles:

LEILA
Dating apps?

CASEY
Lei!

Nell grins.

NELL
No creepy apps for me.

Casey takes out his bottle of pitolisant pills, opens the lid, pours one into his hand, replaces the lid.

LEILA

What? I know a good match when I see one.

NELL

A good - ?

She looks at Leila - then Casey.

NELL (CONT'D)

Oh.

Leila grins between the two of them.

Casey motions at his neck like Leila should stop.

LEILA

You two are cute together.

NELL

(high pitched)

Are we?

Casey blushes.

LEILA

Yes, and when you're sick of him, do what I do.

NELL

What?

LEILA

Scare him and he'll collapse.

Nell and Leila LAUGH, HIGH FIVE.

Casey takes his med, chases it with his café au lait.

CASEY

I think I need more meds.

NELL

I'll drink to that.

They smile, clink mugs again, drink.

THE END