

GRAVE EXPECTATIONS

Written
by

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Inspired by a wild true story of greed,
capitalism, and dumb people doing dumb shit.

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A PRETEEN'S FACE

Blonde. Lots of makeup. Smiling so hard her mouth twitches.

THE MC (O.S.)
Little Miss Montrose is a proud
cornerstone of the local community.

THE NEXT GIRL

Just as blonde. Just as doll-like. Smiling just as hard.

THE MC (O.S.) (CONT'D)
One lucky young lady will claim the
coveted title along with our grand
prize.

We swiftly pass several other identical little blonde dolls,
smiling just as hard, finally stopping on...

PEYTON HESS (12)

Not close to a doll. Bad cakey makeup. Tacky handmaid dress.
And - in spite of this - smiling harder than ANY of them.

THE MC (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And what a prize it is - a whopping
\$5000 dollars in cash money and the
exquisite Swarovski jewel tiara,
courtesy of our sponsor, Hill Ford.

We PAN to the darkened side of the stage - the stage moms who
look like taller, creepier versions of their daughters, all
standing far away from...

MEGAN HESS (33). A big woman made bigger by big hair, Megan's
the volatile product of motivational business tapes and QVC
order sprees. And she really needs this prize money.

MEGAN
C'mon, Peyton, c'mon...

Her bird-faced mom, **SHIRLEY KOCH (56)**, attempts to keep
things calm, nervously stroking her pet cat, **CATRICK**.

SHIRLEY
She's done such a good job getting
up there. Little Becky Atkins won
the regional!

Megan aggressively shushes her; the MC clears his throat.

THE MC (O.S.)
Our judges have decided.

Megan's hands tremble. Her breath runs short.

THE MC (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And taking home the tiara is...

The tiara is placed. Not on Peyton.

On Little **BECKY ATKINS** (12) who won the fucking regional.

It's as if time itself slows down. Megan sees RED.

MEGAN
FUCK!

There's gasps, stares, quiet.

SHIRLEY
Let's try and stay calm, Meg...

Megan furiously punches a vase off a table. It shatters against the stage. Red roses and water fly everywhere.

MEGAN
This shit is fucking rigged!

Shirley clumsily collects the vase pieces.

SHIRLEY
That'll fix. Just needs glue.

A STAGE MOM stands up to Megan.

STAGE MOM
Act with some dignity, Miss Hess.

MEGAN
Like your husband, Barb? Is he
still sucking dick outside Costco?

SHIRLEY
Megan!

Megan furiously drags Peyton off the stage to the exit. Shirley trails. Mouthing 'sorry' to Barb she goes.

INT. SHIRLEY'S DODGE RAM - DAY

The ride home is silent. Megan hunched over the wheel. Peyton plays on her phone. Shirley in the back, petting Catrick.

SHIRLEY
I think you did great, Peyty.

MEGAN

She lost.

SHIRLEY

Recall you lost a couple--

Megan glares at her mom. Shirley stops talking. For a second.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

I just think making it up there--

Megan slams her big foot on the brake. Everyone jolts.

MEGAN

I've had enough of that bullshit!
'Making it up there' didn't win the
five grand, Mom. 'Making it up
there' don't pay the bills.

Megan furiously hits the gas. Shirley sits there. Like a disciplined child. She sneaks Peyton a glance. Peyton stifles a smile. They share a private giggle. How they survive.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'm just stressed.

SHIRLEY

It's okay, hon.

PEYTON

Seriously. It's fine.

Still silent.

MEGAN

Did I really say Barb Kelly's
husband sucked dick?

Nods.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Well, she'll be checking his breath
for trucker cum tonight.

Peyton bursts into laughter. Shirley hates that she smiles.

SHIRLEY

Megan! Come on!

Everyone's cracking up. A happy family again.

INT. THE KOCH HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Old, creaky. Ducks decorate a tattered tablecloth. Catrick prowls. Shirley serves her husband, **ALAN** (62), blue collar type who embraces stereotypes - hunts, fishes, wears flannel.

ALAN

She made a show of herself again?

SHIRLEY

You know how she gets, Al. Ketchup?

Al nods. Barely any ketchup left. Shirley slams the bottle.

ALAN

That girl's long overdue a kicking.

SHIRLEY

Cut her some slack. The funeral home's not doing too hot.

ALAN

Neither are we. Don't see me busting up vases. Otherwise we'd have nowhere to put wood lilies.

Peyton manifests. Shirley and Alan drop the topic.

SHIRLEY

Gonna have some rabbit, hon?

PEYTON

Ugh. Rabbit again?

Shirley gives her a tap. Much tougher on Peyton than Megan.

SHIRLEY

Count your blessings you're even getting a meal. Lota people going without these days. Where's Mom?

Peyton shrugs, too busy texting. Shirley just sighs.

INT. THE KOCH HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Shirley knocks politely as she opens the door.

SHIRLEY

Coming in! Hope you're decent!

INT. THE KOCH HOUSE - MEGAN'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - NIGHT

More pink than a little girl's birthday. Posters of a pink Cadillac. Megan lays on the frilly bed, numb eyes on the ceiling, smoking a cigarette. Shirley comes in.

MEGAN

Think you have mold.

SHIRLEY

I'll throw some treatment on it.
Brought you up dinner. Dad hunted
rabbit.

MEGAN

Could just be damp.

SHIRLEY

Gotta eat, hon. Can't just smoke.

Shirley sets the plate down beside her. Megan just huffs.

MEGAN

That five grand would've saved my
ass, Mom. Can't even go home right
now. Got debt collectors camped
outside like they're the FBI.

SHIRLEY

Wish I could help, hon. Really do,
but what with the times we're in
and, well... *that* other situation.
Your dad and I aren't doing so hot.

Megan shuts her eyes, tormented by her thoughts.

MEGAN

See people I went to school with.
Still married. Thriving careers.
Even a cousin fucker like JoJo
Cooper has a booming hair salon.

Megan struggles to hold off tears. Shirley pulls her in.

SHIRLEY

Don't go upsetting yourself.

MEGAN

Where did I go so wrong, Mom? How'd
I become *sucha* failure?

SHIRLEY

You're not a failure, hon. You hit
a darn homer on that vase. A-Rod
would be jealous!

Megan laughs in spite of herself. That makes Shirley smile.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

Now get yourself some food and some
rest. Tomorrow's a new day and--

MEGAN
--'a new day offers opportunity.'

SHIRLEY
That's my girl.

A CLASSIC AMERICAN SMALL CITY

You don't get more Americana than this - scenic tract homes, rugged wilderness, clean Alpine air. The butterscotch Dodge Ram plods down Main Street of this picturesque small city.

We might notice 'foreclosure' signs on some places.

Or grocery stores with less stock than the past.

Maybe even the growing amount of homeless.

We might notice. Maybe not. Most don't.

TITLE: Montrose, Colorado - 2009, Post-Recession

EXT. MERCHANT DRIVE ROAD - DAY

The Ram bumps down a cul-de-sac. Diverts by a dull sign.

SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME

A janky-looking funeral home. Could easily mistake it for a third-rate diner or a Mormon Church. Brown plants. Grimy windows. Needs fresh paint and a power wash.

The Ram parks in a spot. There's one other car.

MEGAN
Now who in the hell is that?

SHIRLEY
I don't know...

MEGAN
Does that mean someone's here
looking to collect? I didn't wanna
start the day off with a fight!

SHIRLEY
All good, hon. I'll handle it.

MEGAN
It's not your business!

Shirley's already up and out. Megan struggles with her breathing. She angrily pushes a tape into the player.

DEEPAK CHOPRA (V.O.)

It is time to relax, to breathe--

Megan lights a cigarette. That'll help more.

EXT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Shirley approaches cautiously. A **MAN** (40s) BANGS on the door.

SHIRLEY

Who ya looking for?

The man whirls back. Big glasses and a handlebar mustache, he could easily be a wife killer on a Dateline episode.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

We don't want no trouble.

THE MAN

What?

The Man digs in a blue jean pocket. A weapon? Shirley tenses. Scared. He just takes out an old Polaroid.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

My dad passed away. Figured I'd
come take a look at the facilities.

Shirley breathes a sigh of relief, slaps her forehead.

SHIRLEY

I see. Lemme just grab the owner.

Shirley runs back. Taps on the window. Megan reels it down. Smoke billows out. Deepak's wisdom echoes.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

He's just come for a tour, hon.

Megan retrieves her '80's style Filofax, flicks through.

MEGAN

Ah. Bryan Jones. That's right. Dumb
ass hick. Finally some easy money.

As Megan excitedly gets out, Shirley gets in.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

SHIRLEY
You need me, hon?

MEGAN
Pose as my assistant. Enhances my
image, makes me look successful.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - LOBBY - DAY

Dated, drab. Shirley hastily collects bills (red notices galore) as Megan smoothly guides Bryan through.

MEGAN
Our fine lobby. Where your
attendees will gather before
they're let into the --

CHAPEL

Equally bad. With the addition of dying flowers. Shirley strategically blocks them from view as Megan continues.

MEGAN
-- chapel. This is where the main
service gets cooking. We cater to
every mainline denomination -
Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran. We
even do Jews now!

Bryan smiles tolerably. Megan shows off a pew.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Deluxe cushion lining. This may be
a funeral service, but we like to
save the aching for the hearts -
not the derriere.

Bryan plants himself in the pew. It's filthy with dust.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Sorry, Mr Jones. Our specialist
cleaning unit must have missed a
spot there.

SELECTION ROOM

A lonely lightbulb flickers over dull wooden caskets.

MEGAN
This is where you choose a final
resting place for your loved one.
(MORE)

MEGAN (CONT'D)
 Many options - eco-friendly, high-
 end, traditional.

Megan eyeballs a fly bashing against that lightbulb.

BRYAN JONES
 Mind a question?

MEGAN
 That's what we're here for.

BRYAN JONES
 What's that?

A half-open door reveals a dark stairway. Megan prods Shirley with a look. Shirley springs into action. It won't shut. Rusty hinges. She slams it over and over.

MEGAN
 Our basement facility for
 embalming, cremation. Interment or
 inurnment?

Bryan tugs his ear, strains to hear over the noise.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
 Buried or burned, Mr Jones?

SLAM! The door finally shuts. Alarmingly loud.

LOBBY

Blurry pictures on a cartoony heaven backdrop. Supposedly a tribute. Shirley and Bryan regard it.

BRYAN JONES
 This is nice. To be remembered.

SHIRLEY
 Always tough to lose a loved one.

BRYAN JONES
 Dad used to work 16-hour days to
 put food on our table. A good man.

Shirley puts a sympathetic hand on his shoulder. For the first time on this tour someone seems human. She looks back, sees Megan leering. She quickly removes her hand.

MEGAN
 Should I inform our tribute
 department that we're adding your
 father's picture, Mr Jones?

Bryan scratches his head, unsure about that.

BRYAN JONES
How much we talkin' here?

MEGAN
We offer a range of--

BRYAN JONES
--Miss Hess. Please. How much?

MEGAN
You're looking at a total cost - no
hidden charges or fees - of \$4799.

Bryan pales at the price. Megan escorts him to a seat.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Mr Jones. I'm a business owner. I
know the temperature. It's a global
recession. We have flexible payment
plans in place to make this
experience more affordable.

BRYAN JONES
I just don't know, Miss Hess. Heck
of a lot of money. Even with a
plan.

Shirley sees her daughter panic. Hates to see Megan
struggling like this. She steps in with a smile.

SHIRLEY
Hey, Bry. Hope you won't mind me
asking, but did your dad have big
veins?

BRYAN JONES
Sorry?

SHIRLEY
Big juicy veins make embalming a
breeze, that's all. Probably cuts
the time in half. Sure we could do
a small discount for that.

Bryan's chin recedes into his neck. He can't believe it.
Megan glares at her mom. Stunned by how she fucked up.

CUT TO:

Shirley shows Bryan out. She turns back to see Megan. Slumped
down on a hideous sofa. Sucking on another cigarette.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
I know what you're gonna say...

MEGAN
Big juicy veins? You made us look
like a buncha fucking vampires.

SHIRLEY
You were having a rough time and I
saw something on the Facebook.
Mortician mentioned embalming was a
cakewalk with big juicy veins.

MEGAN
Stop believing everything you see
on fucking Facebook!

Megan rubs out the cigarette, yanks dead flowers from a vase.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Can you drop Peyton at dance? I
have this thing. If we level up her
talent, it might make up for her
weakness in the looks department.

SHIRLEY
Meg. You know I can't today...

Megan glares at her. Shirley makes a face. Sometimes these
two don't need words to communicate. Megan figures it out.

MEGAN
Oh. Shit. That's today?

SHIRLEY
No sweat, hon. You got a lot going
on.

A different side of Megan emerges. Childlike concern. She
starts to ruffle her mother's hair, mess up her blouse.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
The heck you doing?

MEGAN
Gotta look down on your ass, Mom.
Worse you look, worse a judge
feels. Nobody wants a suicide on
their conscience.

Mother and daughter exchange a smile. Megan bowls out with
her Big Bird walk and her dead flowers. Shirley exhales.

INT. MEGAN'S FORD BRONCO - DAY

Megan speeds. A business tape blasts in the background.

BUSINESS TAPE GUY (O.S.)
Every business model MUST have -
NOT a USP, that's over, baby. Every
business must have a **USA** - unique
selling ability, a special way to
bring your product to the consumer
in an oversaturated market.

Megan nods along, soaking this in like it's genius.

MEGAN
USA. Good stuff. Listening back
there?

Peyton gives a thumbs up and taps on her phone. Nope.

INT. WELLS FARGO - DAY

Half the staff that used to be here. A **WELL-MEANING BANKER**.
Those dead flowers now dying on his desk. A gift... if you
can call it that.

WELLS FARGO BANKER
I'm sure we can help out. It's a
recession. Everybody's struggling.

Megan smiles. She's thrown on pearls for the occasion.

MEGAN
That's what I'm hoping. I got a
family to take care of. A little
girl. Elderly parents. I'm ashamed
to even ask if I'm being honest.

WELLS FARGO BANKER
Asking for an extension is nothing
to be ashamed of right now.

They clutch hands in emotional solidarity. Megan is sweet,
humble and - most worrying of all - believable.

WELLS FARGO BANKER (CONT'D)
What was your name again?

MEGAN
Megan Hess. Two s's and a whole lot
of gratitude.

He grins as he types it. Results pop up. His grin fades.

WELLS FARGO BANKER
 You know... I'm unsure what we can
 do today. Given your... history.

Megan barely keeps it together. She grinds her teeth.

MEGAN
 I've been focusing on my USA, my
 unique selling ability. I think
 figuring that out will put my feet
 back on the Ladder of Success.

WELLS FARGO BANKER
 I don't think we can help today.

The desperation emerges. Megan whips out her wallet.

MEGAN
 My kid's dad is a deadbeat. We're
 all on our own. Look at her face.

He won't. Trained. He's experienced this a lot lately.

WELLS FARGO BANKER
 Anything else I can help you with?

Megan stands beside him. Needs this badly. She scans the
 room. No one's looking. She THROWS HERSELF DOWN.

WELLS FARGO BANKER (CONT'D)
 Miss?

MEGAN
 You fucking pushed me!

WELLS FARGO BANKER
 I didn't touch you!

MEGAN
 You fucking abuser!

WELLS FARGO BANKER
 Miss!

MEGAN
 You better do that extension before
 I sue the fuck outta this bank!

The MANAGER walks over, completely unimpressed.

WELLS FARGO REGIONAL MANAGER
 Ma'am. We have security cameras.

He points. They do. She sighs. That didn't work. Fuck.

INT. MEGAN'S FORD BRONCO - DAY

Megan lumbers in. Huffing and puffing. Peyton doesn't react.

PEYTON
Did it go well?

MEGAN
We need to start being nice to
Eddie Church at school.

PEYTON
Gross. He eats dirt.

MEGAN
Don't care if he fucks shoes at the
bowling alley. Jerk him off if he
asks. His dad runs the Wells Fargo
on main. Be smart. Not like me.

Megan stares at her. She means it. Peyton grimaces back.

EXT. MONTROSE COUNTY COURT - DAY

Shirley waits with Catrick. A helmet-haired lawyer, **BOB FORD**
(50s, star of several local billboards), greets her.

BOB FORD
Mrs Koch! How are you feeling?

SHIRLEY
Got about twelve dollars in my bank
account and I'm being sued for a
boatload of money, Bob, so.

Bob awkwardly pats Shirley's pet cat.

BOB FORD
Mrs Koch. You ran a successful
animal rescue business. Some
employee get chomped on by one of
your rabid rescues. That's tough
tomatoes. You can't be blamed. Is
this the cat that bit her?

SHIRLEY
Allegedly. Don't believe it. Had
him since young. Raised him right.

Bob wraps an arm around her.

BOB FORD
Relax. Today will be a breeze.

INT. MONTROSE COUNTY COURT - DAY

A JUDGE peers down his nose at Shirley and Bob Ford.

COUNTY COURT JUDGE

I find in favor of the plaintiff.
I'm ordering the defendant to pay
damages of 15 thousand dollars, as
well as the various court costs.

He smacks down his gavel. Celebrations erupt on the other side. Shirley has a wobble, grips the table for stability.

SHIRLEY

I thought 'today will be a breeze.'

BOB FORD

Relax. There's wiggle room. We cut
that figure in half if we pay
upfront.

SHIRLEY

I don't have the money, Bob!

Her voice rises. The Judge scowls. Shirley slumps down in defeat. The weight of the verdict hitting. She cries.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

I've let 'em down. My whole family.

TWO FAKE TANNED LEGS SPREAD

GREG HUFFER (43) humps away at Megan in the funeral home basement. Grunts, moans. Animalistic sex. With a final thrust, Greg rolls off her, hitches his jeans.

MEGAN

Not so bad, Mr Huffer.

Greg was probably a catch in high school. At least for a small town. Now he's a chubby loser in a tight leather jacket, coasting on the good old days.

GREG HUFFER

Back at you, babe.

He leans back. Palms a corpse on a slab. Jumps.

GREG HUFFER (CONT'D)

Jesus... I don't even know how I
get hard with all the stiffs down
here.

Megan sparks that delicious post-sex cigarette.

MEGAN

Don't panic - they won't join in.

GREG HUFFER

That'd be kinda hot.

Greg pretends to fuck a corpse. Megan covers her modesty.

MEGAN

Can't make rent this month, Greg.

He stops pretending to fuck the corpse.

GREG HUFFER

Fifth goddamn month running, Meg.

MEGAN

Blame my dumb ass mom. She blew a sure thing. Talking shit about juicy veins.

GREG HUFFER

Knew you were fucking me because you needed a favor. Can't believe I fell for that shit again!

Greg angrily re-dresses.

GREG HUFFER (CONT'D)

No more fucking for favors. I'm tryna build a business here!

Greg fishes into a jean pocket. A gold wedding band. Megan zooms in on it. Her jaw juts.

MEGAN

Should be thanking me, Greg. I could ditch birth control and let you knock me up. I'd never have to worry about paying you rent again.

Greg marches up the stairs. Done with this conversation and her. Megan claws for her clothes. The shame hitting.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - LOBBY - DAY

Megan buttons up her stained blouse. **ELLIE MUSGRAVE** (26) grins earnestly. A prim and proper blonde in a pastel Ralph Lauren pantsuit. Megan instantly hates her.

ELLIE MUSGRAVE
FIRSTLY... So sorry I'm late. Don't
kill me. This is, of course, yours.

A stack of bills. Maybe four grand. Enough to renovate this
place and some. Megan's jaw hits the floor.

ELLIE MUSGRAVE (CONT'D)
Your top button's undone.

Megan is too stunned by this sudden windfall to care.

ELLIE MUSGRAVE (CONT'D)
Anywho. SECONDLY. Do you have
everything ready to go OR?

Megan looks blank.

ELLIE MUSGRAVE (CONT'D)
Are you not...?

Ellie plucks a pamphlet from a dusty container.

ELLIE MUSGRAVE (CONT'D)
OH boy. I'm in the wrong place. I'm
still new. I am so sorry. Lemme
just...

Ellie wants the money back. Megan won't let go.

ELLIE MUSGRAVE (CONT'D)
Strong grip, huh? Good for you.

MEGAN
I'm always on the lookout for
exciting new ventures. Would love
to learn more about this.

ELLIE MUSGRAVE
I'm SO sorry. I'm not at liberty to
say. Can you just let go already?

Megan wins the test of strength. Ellie stamps her feet.

ELLIE MUSGRAVE (CONT'D)
I'm with Western Slope Medical
College, okay? We use authentic
human specimens in the educational
process. Can I have that back now?

MEGAN
Do I need a license for this?

ELLIE MUSGRAVE

No! All you need is family consent!

MEGAN

Family consent. That's it?!

ELLIE MUSGRAVE

Yes! How do you think colleges and plastics surgeries obtain resources? We can't just rely on medical donations!

MEGAN

You got a card?

Ellie searches her bag. An exchange happens. The business card for the money. Ellie escapes, completely humiliated.

Megan studies that slick business card -

Ellie Musgrave

Resource Acquisitions for Western Slope Medical College

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - MEGAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Chaotic and full of shit. It's Megan personified. She Googles local plastic surgeons on her clunky Dell computer.

Crystal Creek Cosmetic Surgery

She calls the number. Megan practices as it rings.

MEGAN

Good afternoon! I own a funeral home. No, not funeral home...
Fuck... What's better?

An answer interrupts the rehearsal.

CCCS SECRETARY (V.O.)

Crystal Creek Cosmetic Surgery.

MEGAN

Good afternoon. I run a post-life facility and have some material available. What do you pay?

CCCS SECRETARY (V.O.)

Uh. It depends on the items.

MEGAN

Got legs, arms...?

CCCS SECRETARY (V.O.)
We don't require limbs right now,
but I'll keep you in mind for--

MEGAN
--What do you require?

CCCS SECRETARY (V.O.)
Dr Jacobs needs a cephalic.

Megan googles 'sueferlick' and gets zero results.

MEGAN
Could you spell that for me?

CCCS SECRETARY (V.O.)
Excuse me?

Megan attempts 'cyphalic' and gets autocorrected to the right place - medical jargon for a human head.

MEGAN
OH. I get ya. I've got more heads
here than the Taliban. Ahaha. How
much we talking here?

CCCS SECRETARY (V.O.)
The younger the better, but our
usual price point is a thousand
dollars.

Megan's eyes glaze over. The potential windfall. She resists salivating. Grips the desk. Refocuses herself.

MEGAN
And, uh, ya know how do we get
these... uh... items to you?

CCCS SECRETARY (V.O.)
(annoyed)
Have you even done this before?

MEGAN
All the time. You know what? Fuck
you, lady!

She slams the phone down, then calls right back.

CCCS SECRETARY (V.O.)
Crystal Creek Cosmetic Surgery.

MEGAN
I own my own business. You just
answer phones.

She angrily hangs up again, then jots down the info. She finds a different plastic surgery, dials that number.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Hi there. Hope you're having a blessed day. Calling from Sunset Mesa Post-Life Facility. What's your price point on a cephalic?

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - BASEMENT - DAY

Generators hum repetitively. Refrigeration units join in on the chorus. Megan cautiously comes down those steps. Treads over tangled embalming machine wires, stops at a metal slab.

A waxy corpse of an EMBALMED MAN, modesty covered by a thin sheet. A brick below his neck due to the embalming process. At first glance, you might think he's... alive.

Megan consults her notepad. The prices of various body parts from endless plastic surgeons, colleges, facilities she called. She did her research. She did it well.

PRICES MANIFEST OVER BODY PARTS.

TORSO - \$2000

PELVIS - \$2500

HEAD - \$1000

Megan licks her lips. It's just so easy.

\$500 flashes over his left arm enticingly.

It's right there. In front of her. Just so easy.

She retrieves the power saw. Switches it on. In a daze.

Up high that power saw goes.

- blade spinning at a thousand miles -

She just needs to lower it. Saw off that fucking arm.

It's. Just. So. Easy.

SUDDENLY THE EMBALMED CORPSE SITS UPRIGHT.

JOINTS CLICK. CHEST HEAVES. TURNS TO HER. THIN LIPS PART.

THE CORPSE

I dare you, you fat bitch.

Megan lets out a SCREAM.

Her eyes tightly shut.

When she opens them.

The corpse is lifeless again.

She switches the saw off. Can't do it. Maybe not so easy.

EXT. KOCH HOUSE - NIGHT

A patchy fence encircles the two-story mishmash house. The Ford Bronco squeezes next to the Dodge Ram on the drive.

INT. KOCH HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Wood paneled walls. Patterned sofa. A ceiling fan twirls monotonously. Alan in his trusty armchair, glued to the big TV and some rerun of Colombo. The front door rattles.

MEGAN (O.S.)

Peyton. Get me my big fur!

Megan bowls into the living room.

ALAN

Productive day, Meg?

MEGAN

Yep. How did it go for Mom?

Alan takes a deep breath.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Fuck.

ALAN

20 big ones. Not far off what I bought my first house for if I--

MEGAN

(cutting off the rambling)
--Yeah, yeah. Okay. SBA, Dad.
Solution based approach. What's the angle here?

ALAN

Bankruptcy. Mom's against that.
Still tryna get past her last one.
Would destroy her credit.

Megan absorbs that.

MEGAN
Where is she?

ALAN
You know how your mom gets after bad news. Upstairs eating enough cookie dough ice cream to give herself a brain freeze.

INT. KOCH HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Shirley rummages through drawers. A woman on a mission. A knock on the door. Before Shirley permits, Megan's in.

MEGAN
Visualize with me.

SHIRLEY
Now's not the time, hon. Gotta sell something. Need to make a first payment on this lawsuit, or I'm in real trouble.

MEGAN
Just do it!

Shirley stops and shuts her eyes.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
A harp strums. White puffy clouds. Clear blue sky. Golden fucking gates. Me. Can you see it?

SHIRLEY
Not even a smidge, hon. I'm distracted. It's been a long day.

MEGAN
I am your angel, here to save you.

SHIRLEY
Hon. You're struggling just as bad right now. I ain't about to take a loan from you.

MEGAN
I wasn't offering you a fucking loan. I have an exciting business proposition!

Shirley crawls back into bed, under the covers.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Donor service.

SHIRLEY
Sounds familiar. Might've saw
something on the Facebook. That to
do with blood giving?

MEGAN
I'm deleting that shit off your
computer. Here's my pitch.

Megan stands as if she's giving a class presentation.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
You listening, Mom?

SHIRLEY
I'm listening, hon.

Shirley stretches for some cookie dough ice cream.

MEGAN
Now's not a good time to die.

SHIRLEY
There ever a good time to die?

MEGAN
Stop interrupting and yes. Not
during the worst recession in
modern history. People are forced
to choose between burying the dead
and feeding the living.

SHIRLEY
That's a good line. I like that.

MEGAN
We have the potential to
significantly reduce the costs of
the burial process. Here's our USA.

SHIRLEY
Our USA?

MEGAN
Unique Selling Ability.

SHIRLEY
Where do you come up with this
stuff?

MEGAN

It just came to me. We offer bereaved families a reduced rate on burials and cremations IF they donate a body part. We sell the donated parts for profit.

SHIRLEY

What's sorta money we talking?

Megan moves in close. Shaking with excitement. Feeling the success pumping through her veins already.

MEGAN

Enough to pay off your settlement. Enough to give Peyton a head start in life.

SHIRLEY

(still unsure)
What's Dad said?

MEGAN

I haven't said shit to Dad! This is an opportunity for you and me! To lift you out of Debt City and put you back on the Ladder of Success!

Shirley takes a big old bite of ice cream. Contemplating.

SHIRLEY

I'm interested, Meg. Lord knows I can't file for Chapter 7 again...

Megan detects the 'but' incoming.

MEGAN

It's completely legal if you're about to start panicking. Family consent. All you need. No license. No special equipment. Look it up yourself.

Megan extends her battered Blackberry. Shirley looks at her. She's believable. How can she not trust her own kid?

Shirley groans. Like she's injured. Megan eyes her.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Shit. What's wrong?

SHIRLEY

Cookie dough brain freeze!

MEGAN

I thought you were having a stroke!

Megan playfully hits her. Shirley cracks up and strokes her daughter's hair. They're close. A nice moment.

SHIRLEY

So... What's my part in this? Why do you need your old mom involved? Want me whipping up baked goods for the services?

Megan chews her lip. Eh... Not so much.

INT. SHIRLEY'S DODGE RAM - NIGHT

Megan drives. Shirley watches the Blackberry screen.

SHIRLEY

What's the point in going to the home, hon? The Dales might not get back to us tonight.

MEGAN

Those assholes are broker than a tooth fairy in a meth house.

SHIRLEY

Meg! The language! Come on!

MEGAN

I'm just saying. Cheapest casket, bare bones service. They need this discount. They'll get back to us.

SHIRLEY

How long we waiting for a resp--

PING! The phone interrupts. Megan glances over, excited.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

It's just a 2 for 1 offer from Buckaroos Slices & Scoops.

Megan's excitement isn't dampened.

EXT. BUCKAROOS SLICES & SCOOPS - NIGHT

Megan and Shirley share pizza in the car. Still waiting on that phone. *PING!* A text. Megan lunges for it.

MEGAN

I told you the white trash fuckers
would get back to us!

Megan flashes the phone. Shirley puts on her readers.

'Totally fine. Email the form and we'll fill out!'

EXT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Eerily quiet. Megan lumbers inside. Shirley stops. Squints.

SHIRLEY

Meg. Get a load of this. Vultures.
Must be something dead on the roof.
Remind me to take the hose to 'em.

Megan gesticulates angrily. COME ON. Shirley gets moving.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Shirley faces the embalmed man. The doubt creeps in.

SHIRLEY

Y'know. An idea's one thing. Comes
to doing it. Feels different.

Megan steps out of the shadows. With the power saw.

MEGAN

Mom. You have a strong stomach. You
care for the ugly cat. You ran that
shitty animal rescue for years.

SHIRLEY

Stomach might be strong, hon, but
not so sure about the ol' nozzle.
Burning bone? Cooking flesh?

Megan manifests behind her. Hands on her shoulders.

MEGAN

Start off nice and easy.

SHIRLEY

Okay. Mhm. Nice and breezy.

MEGAN

I said 'easy.'

SHIRLEY

Nice and easy. Okay.

Shirley accepts that power saw. The nerves hitting.

MEGAN

They agreed to donate an arm for a \$250 reduction. Go for his arm.

SHIRLEY

Ain't dealing with an amputee here, hon. He's got more than the one.

MEGAN

They didn't specify.

Megan shuts her eyes.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Uh... Eeny, meeny, miny, moe.

She aims a finger at the left arm.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

That one.

Megan flicks the switch. The power saw fires up. Spinning at a thousand miles a minute. Sound bouncing off the walls.

Shirley raises the power saw. Her hands trembling.

Megan isn't watching her mom or the saw. She's just watching the corpse. Waiting for something to happen--

--THE CORPSE RAISES ITS LEFT ARM.

Megan can't even speak.

THE CORPSE TWISTS ITS WRIST.

AN UNNATURAL CONTORTION. SOMETHING NO HUMAN SHOULD DO.

AND FLIPS MEGAN OFF.

Her mouth falls agape.

THE ARM FALLS OFF.

AS THE POWER SAW SHREDS THE SHOULDER BONE.

Shirley dust off her hands.

SHIRLEY

Easier that I thought it'd be. You okay, hon? Look like you've seen a ghost.

MEGAN

Let's just get it in the cooler.
Whole thing gives me the willies.

SHIRLEY

Alrighty.

Megan shoves her mom.

MEGAN

Put it in the cooler, Mom!

SHIRLEY

Uh. Ya. Sure. Where d'ya keep 'em?

MEGAN

We didn't bring a cooler with us?

Shirley shakes her head. Rage rises in Megan.

SHIRLEY

My fault. I shoulda reminded ya
before I followed through.

Megan paces up and down in panic. Shirley flaps the limb.

MEGAN

We don't have anything to put it
in?! There's nothing in the car?!

SHIRLEY

Uh...

INT. SHIRLEY'S DODGE RAM - NIGHT

Megan drives with a thinly-veiled fury. Shirley sits in the passenger seat. A fluorescent Bud Lite cooler on her lap.

SHIRLEY

I'm sorry, hon...

MEGAN

I don't wanna talk about it!

SHIRLEY

I won't say another word.

Shirley shuts her mouth. Megan can't help herself.

MEGAN

This is textbook sabotage.

SHIRLEY
What are you talking about?

MEGAN
You see me striking gold and you're
already tryna fuck it up!

SHIRLEY
Meg. Hands on the wheel.

MEGAN
You wanna cut my legs off before I
get running!

SHIRLEY
Meg! The road!

MEGAN
You always wanted to be the success
of this family. You can't stand the
idea of me actually--

--a SIREN interrupts her rant.

That stops the bickering.

Panic spreads throughout the car.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Fuck, fuck, fuck.

Shirley snaps into 'mother' mode, forgets her own fear.

SHIRLEY
Everything's fine, hon. Nothing
illegal about this. You said so
yourself. You did the research.

MEGAN
Sure as fuck looks illegal, Mom!
It's an arm in a beer cooler!

Megan notices the cop in the car mirror.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
For fuck's sake. It's that mouth
breather Fisher Dyce.

SHIRLEY
The snitch?

MEGAN
Lemme handle this.

EXT. SHIRLEY'S BRONCO - NIGHT

Patrol boots shuffle on the asphalt. **OFFICER FISHER DYCE** (25) silences his buzzing police radio and approaches the vehicle. Fisher's your typical small town cop, the runt of the litter, takes himself way too seriously, in spite of the 75 IQ.

He raps on the window with a knuckle. Megan reels it down.

MEGAN

Hey there, Fisher. Was I resembling Speedy Gonzales too much there?!

FISHER DYCE

It's Officer Dyce, ma'am. Gotta run my checks. No one likes to do 'em, but law's law, protocol's protocol.

Fisher fumbles with his flashlight, shines it in the car.

Illuminates the empty back seat. Nothing there.

Illuminates Shirley under the beam. She smiles wide.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)

Ma'am. You got food in your teeth. Looks like spinach, but could be arugula. Or another green leaf.

Shirley works on extracting that. CRGGGH. His police radio again. He ignores it again.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)

You were moving wild back there.

MEGAN

I let out a sneeze. You know how Colorado can be for allergies!

Fisher writes her up. Not a ticket. A prescription.

FISHER DYCE

I'd recommend Alaway eye drops. Once a day. In each eye. Bop, bop.

SHIRLEY

Oooo! I saw their infomercial! I've been wanting to give them a try!

Shirley's way too OTT. Megan thumps her in the leg. That's what makes Fisher notice that Bud Lite cooler. He grins.

FISHER DYCE

Crushing a couple cans, huh?

MEGAN
Not me, Officer. Teetotal here.

FISHER DYCE
People shit all over Bud Lite, but
Chief's a fan. Throw one on over.

Shirley freezes. Everyone stares at her.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
C'mon. He'll find it funny!

Megan spins her head. Glares at her mom. Don't fucking do it.
Don't open that fucking cooler. Shirley flusters.

SHIRLEY
Y'know, the thing is, we just
snagged the t-two cans. Enough for
us really.

FISHER DYCE
Your daughter just said she don't
drink.

Uh oh. Suspensions spike. It's just too weird of a lie. Even
for a simpleton like this. He becomes a cop again.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
What's in that cooler, ma'am?

SHIRLEY
I--

FISHER DYCE
Step out of the vehicle please.

SHIRLEY
My arthritis--

Fisher comes round to the side of the car.

Options overwhelm Shirley. She squirms in her seat.

WHOOOOSH! Fisher hastily jumps back as a Volvo BULLETS past.
A bunch of teenagers screaming and shouting over Katy Perry.

FISHER DYCE
HEY! There's a speed limit!

Fisher lollops back to the police cruiser to pursue them.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
GODDAMN horny teenagers!

Megan and Shirley just breathe. Somehow they've survived. Somehow they're okay.

Megan's terror transitions into pure delight.

MEGAN
Shoulda seen your fucking face,
Mom. You looked so scared!

Megan cracks the fuck up as she recreates and mocks that fear. Shirley just lets out the biggest sequel of relief.

EXT. WESTERN SLOPE MEDICAL COLLEGE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Ellie Musgrave taps her foot and crosses her arms. That dirty Dodge Ram finally pulls in, completely incongruous with the glossy Hondas and Volkswagens scattered across the lot.

Out steps Megan with the beer cooler. Shirley behind.

ELLIE MUSGRAVE
Omigosh. So happy you're here. I've
been waiting for, like, forever.

PLOP! Megan drops the cooler in front of her.

ELLIE MUSGRAVE (CONT'D)
This is... In a beer cooler?

MEGAN
We ran out of our usual systems. So
busy nowadays. So in-demand for...

Megan snaps her fingers, trying to remember the term.

SHIRLEY
Donor services.

MEGAN
I was remembering, Mom!

Ellie starts divvying up the money. Shirley watches Megan's reaction. Her eyes light up. Nothing excites Megan like cold, hard cash.

ELLIE MUSGRAVE
Five hundred. All there.

Ellie extends the money. Megan counts it herself.

MEGAN
Let me know when you want more.

ELLIE MUSGRAVE

That's SO sweet, but I actually
don't think we'll need you again. A
supplier just had a shortage, but
it's not expected to last.

With that bomb, Ellie walks away. Megan seethes. Suddenly
this easy process just became harder. Shirley sees her
daughter bubbling.

SHIRLEY

Keep calm, hon. There's tons of
colleges in Colorado...

MEGAN

Ellie!

Ellie turns back. Megan storms over. Shirley tracks.

SHIRLEY

Ain't her fault they got regulars.
Remember your Deepak tapes. Deep
breaths, hon. Deep breaths.

Ellie sees Megan barreling towards her. An intimidating sight
for anyone. She steps backwards, automatically defensive.
What the fuck is this woman going to do to her?

MEGAN

Take this.

Megan gives \$100 back?

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Tell the college we gave you 50
off. Keep 50 for yourself. Whoever
you use now? Nobody cheaper, faster
and kinder than Sunset Mesa.

Megan smiles to really sell it before she lumbers back to the
Dodge Ram. Shirley is astonished. Ellie just holds the money
in disbelief. What the fuck just happened?!

INT. MEGAN'S FORD BRONCO - NIGHT

Nobody says a word. Megan drives and smokes. Shirley just
looks at her. Impressed, astonished, even a little scared.

SHIRLEY

Hon. I don't know if that was the
most ethical...

MEGAN

You don't pay attention to the experts. They all say, 'Sometimes you have to lose money in the short term to gain it in the long.'

Megan bides her time. *PING!* Her Blackberry.

SHIRLEY

Who is that, hon?

MEGAN

You don't need to know everything.

Megan reads. A smile comes. A big one.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

It's just Greg Huffer.

SHIRLEY

I see his wife at church all the time.

Megan audibly huffs. Fun reminder. Throws the Blackberry aside. *PING!* Again. She reads. An even bigger smile now.

MEGAN

It sure as fuck looks like Western Slope just found a new supplier.

Hoots and hollers. Megan smacks the wheel. Shirley tries hard to keep up with her. Operation Body Broker is UNDERWAY.

CUT TO:

TIME FOR A MONTAGE

Over 'SIXTEEN TONS' by Johnny Cash.

- Megan walks the halls with a HOSPITAL DIRECTOR.

MEGAN

I want you to recommend Sunset Mesa to any bereaved families.

He gives a skeptical look. Megan offers a lumpy envelope. Ah.

Title: The Brains

- Shirley snaps on new rubber goggles, lifts up the saw.

Title: The Butcher

- Body parts SEVERE as the saw does its work.

Title: The Body Parts

- Megan delivers cooler after cooler.

- Shirley saws part after part.

- Megan sprawls out in front of a new lightbox sign for SUNSET MESA. The LOCAL MONTROSE MEDIA snaps pictures.

- Shirley serves up steaks for the family. Goodbye rabbit!

- Megan tours a fancy house. With a great kitchen. Peyton trails on her phone. Megan offers the REALTOR cash.

- Shirley stuffs money into an old jam jar. Saving up. Soon one isn't enough. She needs another jar. And another.

OAK DOUBLE DOORS PART INVITINGLY

Entry is granted to the new Sunset Mesa. Fresh white paint and carpet make this place feel clean and modern. Crucifixes and statues make it feel like a spiritual experience.

Megan shows nervy **LITTLE CHARLES CAVETT** (45) inside. She's dolled herself up since we last saw her. White neon pantsuit. Gold crucifix. Even bigger hair. This woman wants to be seen.

MEGAN

Welcome to Sunset Mesa. I'm Megan Hess. Proud custodian of this post-life facility.

LITTLE CHARLES CAVETT

This what?

MEGAN

Funeral home.

Ah. Now he understands. Megan shows him to the glossy front desk. **DOTTIE WILLIAMS** (25) smiles with perfect teeth. Young, attractive. A new look for a new place.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

This is Dottie Williams. Our on-site administrator. I have a big meeting, so I'm going to leave you in her more-than-capable hands.

Megan chuckles good-naturedly and departs. Dottie ventures out from behind the desk. Offers a sympathetic hand.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
I am so sorry for your loss.

LITTLE CHARLES CAVETT
T-t-thank you.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
We've been in regular contact with
the hospital caring for your
mother's body. We just need to
discuss a few details.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - MEGAN'S OFFICE - DAY

A lot may have changed, but this office is still a shit pit.
Megan crunches over a McDonald's cup to get to her security
camera system. She's monitoring EVERYTHING.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
We acknowledge the challenges that
families face during this period.
At Sunset Mesa, we offer solutions
to help carry the financial burden.

Megan runs her finger across a script. She's trained Dottie
absolutely perfectly.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
We extend a range of payment plans.
You can pay in installments across
12, 24 or 36 months.

LITTLE CHARLES CAVETT
We, uh, don't need that.

Megan checks the script. The next dialogue branch.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
I'd also love to tell you about
donor service if you have the time?

Dottie flashes a light blue form.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
We partner with several local
medical research facilities. You
can qualify for our exclusive
reduced rate by simply contributing
a section of your late mother.

LITTLE CHARLES CAVETT
I-- uh-- A section?

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
We're open to a heck of a lot -
appendages, organs, the whole body.

LITTLE CHARLES CAVETT
No, uh, thank you.

Dottie lowers the form. Defeated. Fuck.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
That is, uh, completely
understandable.

Megan fumes in her office. The failure. She clambers up.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - LOBBY - DAY

Megan looms behind Little Charles. She lacerates Dottie with a look. Puts on her fake smile. Taps Little Charles.

MEGAN
Mr Cavett. I'd love to give you a
personal tour of our facilities.

LITTLE CHARLES CAVETT
I-- don't-- What happened to the
meeting?

MEGAN
Fire at the town hall. Maybe we'll
get some business! Please follow.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - BASEMENT - DAY

A state-of-the-art cremator. Specialist storage units. A white plastic chair in the corner. Megan shows Little Charles down the stairs. Trembles for a sec. Doesn't let him see.

MEGAN
This is our basement facility,
where we facilitate preservation,
cremation, preparation. Also donor
service if that interests you.

Megan avoids embalmed bodies like her life depends on it.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
My mom, Shirley, is part of our
team. Some places might put family
on the backburner and skip the
'Merry Christmas,' at Sunset Mesa,
we embrace both with open arms.

Little Charles gulps at the sight of a brown wicker coffin on a conveyor belt. It's weird to be this close to death.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
This is our brand new cremator.
Only one like it in the area. By
activating this button, the coffin
is seamlessly transported into the
cremation chamber--

The chamber door SHUTS on the coffin. Little Charles and Megan gaze through the tiny square window. Flickers of fire IGNITE the wicker. Megan gestures a metal basket.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
--and ashes appear in this basket
underneath. That is, in essence,
the cremation process. Voila!

EXT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - PARKING LOT - DAY

Multiple hearses. One pink. One traditional. One decorated like the Mystery Van from Scooby Doo. Megan taps a white van.

MEGAN
This is one of several vehicles in
our donor service fleet. I'd love
to tell you a little more about--

LITTLE CHARLES CAVETT
--Miss Hess--

MEGAN
--I just had a single mom with
cancer in. Badly needs a kidney--

LITTLE CHARLES CAVETT
--I'm not fucking interested!

He snaps madly. She steps back. Jesus Christ.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - LOBBY - DAY

Megan sulks back to Dottie. Returns the light blue form. Dottie hands her an e-cigarette. Megan takes a puff.

MEGAN
Unsuccess.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
That's a shame, but we're still
doing well, Miss Hess.

MEGAN

Could be doing a lot better.

Dottie eyes a pile of light blue forms, all filled out.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS

Could we? We're barely coping as--

MEGAN

--Have you listened to the tapes I assigned? 'Better to aim high and miss than aim at shit and hit.'

Dottie bites her lip. Completely chastised.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Not a total bust yet. Let's see if we can sell the stuttering prick on a pricey casket.

Megan returns the e-cigarette and gets into the 'selling' headspace. She shows a little cleavage, puts on her big fake smile and strides confidently over to the selection room.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Mr Cavett. I see you like that cardboard casket. I should warn you that's usually what we put the homeless in!

INT. O'HARA'S METAL SERVICES - DAY

Gold bubbles in a furnace. O'HARA (65) pays Shirley.

OLD MAN O'HARA

Pleasure doing business, Mrs Koch.

Shirley happily accepts. Goes to leave. He stops her.

OLD MAN O'HARA (CONT'D)

Mind if I ask where you get all the gold teeth from? Wanna be sure I ain't buying from no graverobber.

Shirley smiles and rolls her eyes. As if.

SHIRLEY

Took a course to learn how to dress a body. The mortician taught us to always extract gold. No use letting it go to waste!

Shirley gleefully pockets that big stack.

INT. BOB FORD'S LAW OFFICE - NIGHT

Between a puppy mill and a Chinese restaurant, Shirley delivers multiple jam jars to her lawyer, Bob Ford.

SHIRLEY

All there. Every penny.

Bob counts with his eyes, then extends a hand.

BOB FORD

Congrats. You no longer have that albatross around your neck.

SHIRLEY

Alba-what?

BOB FORD

Albatross. It's a-- You know what? Never mind. Congratulations again!

Shirley is overjoyed. She wraps her arms around Bob.

SHIRLEY

Can't recall the last time I wasn't knee deep in debt to somebody.

She hugs him so that his wig almost falls off.

INT. KOCH HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Al plays with Catrick. Steaks fry. Shirley cooks.

ALAN

Been looking forward to this all day.

SHIRLEY

Guess what, hon?

ALAN

Didn't burn my cow now, did you?

She flashes a fresh bottle of Al steak sauce.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Just makes me love you more!

He embraces his wife. She giggles and squirms.

SHIRLEY

Better get off or your steer is gonna sear!

He returns to the kitchen table and their cat.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Now we're not outta murky waters
just yet. Still got the court fees
to settle, but we're almost
entirely outta debt too.

He makes a proud face.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
I know, hon. Goes to show how much
working with Meg has worked out.

He looks down. Won't say anything. The mood sours.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Know you feel a ways about the
business, hon, but it's all legal.

ALAN
Dropping a Nuke on Nagasaki was all
legal. Don't make it right, Shirl.

SHIRLEY
Not sure that was legal, hon.

ALAN
Don't know why you both gotta be
involved in all that. Could've just
got a decent job. Maybe a Walmart,
a KMart, somewhere like that. Wake
up at 9. Work 'til 5. Monday to
Friday. Like I do.

Shirley serves up his steak. A hint of resentment.

SHIRLEY
Life's not always as simple as that
now, is it, Al?

ALAN
Oughta be, Shirl. Oughta be.

EXT. COLORADO HIGHWAY - DAY

A long stretch of busy road. Cars frequently zip by. All
there is to see are rocky mountain views and BILLBOARDS - Bob
Ford the lawyer, a 'STAR' dentist, then a desolate spot.

Underneath, Megan walks with **BRAD CHAN** (40). A fashionable
Asian-American with bedazzled glasses and a clipboard.

BRAD CHAN

I'm concerned about the locale.
Research shows multiple billboards
create a sense of visual clutter.

MEGAN

Fuck off, Brad. This road is the
heart of Montrose. Everyone goes
down it at some point. Everyone
I've done business with. Everyone
went to a school with. Everyone
who's fucked me over. Let the dicks
see how successful I've become.

Brad gives up on fighting, looks down at his clipboard.

BRAD CHAN

Okay. Let's talk. What are you
thinking of doing with the space?

MEGAN

Okay. Visualize with me.

BRAD CHAN

Okay. Visualizing with you.

Brad shuts his eyes. He knows this game.

MEGAN

Sunset Mesa in the background. 10
foot high and 3 foot wide. MY face.

Brad shudders.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Did you just shudder?

BRAD CHAN

No!

MEGAN

Keep your eyes shut!

He shuts his eyes again.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

In big block lettering - 'The award-
winning Megan Hess.'

He opens his eyes again.

BRAD CHAN

Problem.

MEGAN
Too fucking good?

BRAD CHAN
YES, but we also can't legitimately
say award-winning unless you're
legitimately award-winning. Are you
legitimately award-winning?

Megan aims a big finger at the other advertisements. 'Award-winning' is plastered all over Bob Ford and that dentist.

MEGAN
What fucking award do a bumfuck
lawyer and an inbred dentist have?

BRAD CHAN
I don't know? Chamber of Commerce?

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - RECEPTION - DAY

Megan bowls back inside. Dottie checks her call log.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
Lotsa calls in, Miss Hess. Lady
called Harper. Guy called Donnie.
Asking for updates on bodies.

MEGAN
You've seen the backlog. We're
fucking busy. That's what you get
when you want a premium service.

Dottie writes that response down.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Anyway. I need to know everything
about the Chamber of Commerce.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
No kidding! My old youth pastor
chairs the committee!

MEGAN
He still around?

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
Kinda. His wife died tragically--

MEGAN
--yeah, yeah. I don't need his
backstory, Dottie. Save it for the
sermon. Still on the committee?

DOTTIE WILLIAMS

Think so.

Megan takes out her leopard-print diary, clicks a pen.

MEGAN

Name?

Dottie suddenly clams up, uncomfortable with divulging.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS

We just used to call him pastor...

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - MEGAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Megan types into her computer. 'Montrose - youth pastor's wife dies.' Results pop up. Finds the name. Vaughn Robinson.

INT. DENVER HILTON - EN SUITE - NIGHT

A jacuzzi froths. Megan ruminates in the water, dipping Dorito chips into beluga caviar. She hears the door open.

GREG HUFFER

In the mood to go crazy tonight. Do something fucking wild. Rock up to the zoo, feed cocaine to lions.

Greg strips, lowers himself into the hot water.

GREG HUFFER (CONT'D)

My balls! My balls!

He takes the plunge. They snuggle in close.

MEGAN

Know anything about Vaughn Robinson? Used to be local.

Greg glares at her.

GREG HUFFER

Is that why you invited me?

MEGAN

It's just a question, Greg.

Greg shakes his head, can't believe he fell for her again.

GREG HUFFER

Yep. Weepy Vaughn. With the dead wife. Know a lot about him. Why?

INT. SOME SHITHOLE HOTEL - FRONT DESK - NIGHT

Megan lurks in the dusty, rural reception. A massive moose skull leers down at her. A creepy image. She overhears the **HOTEL MANAGER** scream at a **TEEN RECEPTIONIST** in the back.

HOTEL MANAGER (O.S.)
Listen up, fuckface. Our business
is circling the drain because every
time you pick up that receiver, you
turn into Forest Gump. Get it
together or get a new gig!

The Teen Receptionist shuffles to the front desk. She's about seventeen. Probably in her first job. Maybe a little 'slow' for her age. She tries not to cry. Megan hones in.

MEGAN
Hey there--

The Receptionist bursts into tears.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Well, fuck.

The poor splutters and stutters. A bad speech impediment.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Heard you get laid into back there.
For what it's worth, you're not the
reason this place is tanking. It
looks like Sarah Palin took a shit.

TEEN RECEPTIONIST
I-i-i-i am not g-g-g-good.

MEGAN
Sure you are. Bet you're better
than you think. Let's test it out.
Got a friend staying here. Vaughn
Robinson. Can't remember his room
number. Can you help me out?

The little dope smiles and searches.

TEEN RECEPTIONIST
Two oh-oh-oh five.

MEGAN
What did I say? You're a genius!

Megan moves on, comes back, more she can get.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
 Wouldn't happen to keep a spare
 key, would you? Would love to
 surprise the weepy old fuck!

INT. SOME SHITHOLE HOTEL - ROOM 205 - NIGHT

A key card swipes. **WEEPY VAUGHN** (50) enters. Megan lays on the bed. Snoring away. He pokes the random woman awake.

MEGAN
 Shit. Fuck. I must've crashed out.

WEEPY VAUGHN
 Who are you?

MEGAN
 Is that the fucking time? Jesus.

WEEPY VAUGHN
 Excuse me, ma'am...

MEGAN
 Look. I need to pick up my kid. No
 time for small talk. I have two
 things on me. An envelope with a
 thousand dollars and a Bud Lite
 beer cooler. I'm leaving one here.

Weepy skeptically eyes that fluorescent Bud Lite cooler.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
 In the beer cooler is a head, by
 the way. A human head.

Weepy almost goes cross-eyed. What the fuck is going on?

MEGAN (CONT'D)
 I need a favor. If you don't agree
 I leave the cooler. If you do
 agree, I'll leave the envelope.

EXT. KOCH HOUSE - NIGHT

The family come out of the house. Hands over their ears.
 Megan smushes her hand on the horn of a garishly pink
 Cadillac, just like the posters on her bedroom wall.

MEGAN
 Look at what I got!

A NEIGHBOR screams something incomprehensible.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Shut the fuck up, Gordo!

Shirley swoops in for a better look. Al stays back.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Visualize this. Me driving around town. People look. They have to. 'How can she afford that? She must be a big deal. She must run the best post-life facility in town.' Subliminal advertising 101!

Megan nudges Peyton, who barely looks up from her phone.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Might let you take it for a spin one day.

PEYTON
Or I could wait until you die and drive it whenever I want.

MEGAN
Maybe this will stop you from choking me when I powernap...

Megan opens the trunk, unveils a new dance costume. It glitters. Peyton stares at her phone. Shirley nudges her.

SHIRLEY
What do we say, Peyty?

PEYTON
I haven't danced in fucking years, Mom. Where's my fucking iPhone?

SHIRLEY
Language, Peyton!

Peyton groans audibly, strops inside. ANYWAY.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
She's a teenager now, hon. You were a pain too.

Megan shakes it off.

MEGAN
I also have something coming for you, Mom. Custom. Takes longer.

SHIRLEY
Meg. How much is this all costing?

MEGAN

Costume was a grand. Your gift was two grand. Cadillac might've been somewhere around sixty?

SHIRLEY

Sixty thousand! You just bought a house. You just went to Disneyland. How are you affording all of this?

MEGAN

It's called success, Mom. What's the point in being a big deal if you don't show it a little?

SHIRLEY

I just bought some Al sauce!

MEGAN

Plus we're celebrating.

Shirley looks down to her daughter's stomach. Megan angrily flares her nostrils and buttons up her garish pantsuit.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Fuck off. The Chamber of Commerce is nominating me for an award!

SHIRLEY

Oh my gosh, Meg!

MEGAN

I'm award-winning, Mom!

Megan turns her attention to her dad. He's kept a distance from her and this ludicrous display. She shuffles over. Very childlike. Verging on shy. Extends an envelope to him.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

That's for you.

Al slowly opens up the paper envelope. Shirley and Megan watch like hawks, invested in his reaction. He peeks inside.

SHIRLEY

What you got, Al?

MEGAN

Tickets to the Donkey's game. Great seats. Right behind the Bronco's bench. Greg Huffer helped out.

SHIRLEY

Greg Huffer?

MEGAN

He's a business associate.

Al lifts his big glasses, wipes away a tear. He holds out his arms. Father and daughter embrace. Shirley fondly watches on.

INT. MONTROSE POLICE DEPARTMENT - BULLPEN - DAY

Fisher Dyce hurries into the bustling, cramped bullpen. He has a clumsy gait and earns snickers as he lollops on by.

FISHER DYCE

Afternoon, partner.

He says to his actual partner on the beat, **LONNIE ACKBOURNE** (30). Lonnie nods back. That's the most you'll get from him.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)

Not this again...

Fisher discovers his cubicle defaced. Local Denver articles plastered with terms like 'RAT' and 'Traitor.' He raises the vandalized evidence, earning even more snickers.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)

Who's responsible today? One more time and I'm putting in a camera!

A DO-GOODER intervenes.

DO-GOODER COP

Fisher is one hundred percent right. This needs to stop now.

Fisher looks grateful. Finally some support.

DO-GOODER COP (CONT'D)

We don't need another officer hanging themselves. Even if it is a dirtbag snitch like Fisher Dyce.

Not support. Just another dig. Fisher sags down into his seat. The punchline of the station. His partner, Lonnie, gives him a pat on the back. It doesn't help.

EXT. MONTROSE POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Fisher and Lonnie head out for the daily beat.

FISHER DYCE

I'm not feeling bagels today, Lon.

Lonnie questions him with a look.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
It's just dough with a hole!

HARPER CARLSON (27) bawls as POLICE OFFICERS gently push her away. Very pregnant. She looks like she's about to pop.

POLICE OFFICER
You're down here every friggin' week with your conspiracies. We can't help you! Only a doctor can!

HARPER CARLSON
They stole my brother!

POLICE OFFICER
Ma'am. Get 100 feet back or I will arrest you, pregnant and all.

Harper cries hysterically and obeys the law.

FISHER DYCE
Can I be of service in any way?

POLICE OFFICER
Sure can, Fisher. You might wanna get her name down.

Fisher takes out his notepad. Lonnie knows what's coming.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)
Girl's name is a funny one. I'll spell it out. E for Echo... A... T for Tango... S... H... I...

Fisher dutifully jots it all down, then realizes the 'eat shit' that's coming. His face reddens.

FISHER DYCE
I could file a complaint!

POLICE OFFICER
For what?

FISHER DYCE
Well, you know, I... Using up my pencil. Waste of federal resources!

The Dick LAUGHS in his face, then walks away. Fisher sighs, tucks his notepad away. The asshole's partner feels bad.

POLICE OFFICER 2

Lady's hormonal, Fisher. Cuckoo for cocoa puffs. Outside of praying for that baby inside of her? Stay away.

Fisher watches Harper. She recedes into the bagel joint opposite. Fisher and Lonnie trade a knowing look.

FISHER DYCE

Guess we're getting bagels with a side of cocoa puffs, Lon.

INT. THE BAGEL SPOT - DAY

A regular spot for cops. Harper Carlson snuffles over a bagel. Fisher draws over. Lonnie tries to hold him back.

FISHER DYCE

Miss. I'm Fisher Dyce. Heard all the jokes. Over there is Lonnie Ackbourne. He's the quiet type. We're just wondering what got you so fired up outside the station.

Harper puts down her bagel, struggling for words.

HARPER CARLSON

Sunset Mesa... funeral home... stole my brother... won't give him back... been calling so much...

FISHER DYCE

Sunset Mesa. The name seems familiar. Is that local?

She produces a screwed-up advertisement. It is local.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)

Let us pay a visit, ma'am. Bet this is just some big misunderstanding.

She touches his hand. So grateful to be heard.

HARPER CARLSON

T-thank you, Officer.

FISHER DYCE

Would that be a turkey bagel with a cream cheese fill? Is it any good?

She nods and smiles.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
 Lonnie. Change mine to a turkey
 bagel with a cream cheese fill!

EXT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - PARKING LOT - DAY

A blistering sun bakes the crowded area in heat. Mourners in black trudge inside, fanning themselves with the program.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - LOBBY - DAY

The AC blasts over a full lobby and tables of chilled drinks. Megan comforts members of the CAVETT FAMILY. Glances to the reception area, sees Dottie argue with **VIOLET CAVETT** (55).

MEGAN
 Could you excuse me?

Megan abandons those weepers and goes over.

THE RECEPTION

Dottie swiftly intros Megan.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
 This is Miss Hess. Our owner. She
 might be better suited to help you.

Violet turns to see Megan. A wine mom with a stern face.

VIOLET CAVETT
 Sorry to do this last minute, but
 we've had a change of heart.

MEGAN
 Hm?

VIOLET CAVETT
 I know you've been dealing with my
 brother, Little Charles, and he
 told you we'd prefer a closed-
 casket, but we really require open.

Megan grows uncomfortable. That big fake smile she wears like armor falters. Her eyes fall down to the hardwood floor.

MEGAN
 It's a little late in the day...

VIOLET CAVETT
 I'm happy to do my mother's makeup.

MEGAN

It's not your typical makeup...

VIOLET CAVETT

Keep her barefaced then. She was a feminist. No make-up, no shaving.

MEGAN

It'll increase costs.

Violet touches Megan on the arm. It's firm. It's alpha.

VIOLET CAVETT

Miss Hess. I love my pastor. He agreed to preside today. He lives in Northglenn. Know how far that is from here?

Megan shakes her head, feeling that grip tighten.

VIOLET CAVETT (CONT'D)

Me neither really. We flew here. He drove. Took him hours. For a woman who didn't even go to his church. Now I really don't wanna interrupt my pastor's speech, but if you're telling me you won't open that casket? I will get up halfway through and open the lid myself.

Violet makes eye contact. Megan struggles to meet it.

VIOLET CAVETT (CONT'D)

I will see my mom's face one last time.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - BASEMENT - DAY

Beside a refrigeration unit that pumps out cool air, Shirley grooms Catrick with a brush. Megan comes in.

SHIRLEY

What you doing down here, hon?
Thought the bodies freaked you out.

Megan rips Catrick out of her hands, puts it its cage.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

What's got you all stirred up?

MEGAN

The Cavetts have changed their mind.

SHIRLEY
About the order of service?

MEGAN
They want an open casket.

SHIRLEY
Ah. Just slap some makeup on the
old girl. Your bag's over there.
Remember what I taught you?
Superglue the lips shut. No one
wants to see an o-face on a corpse.

Megan's feet shuffle, her manner childlike. She becomes a
child when she's cornered and she is acting cornered.

MEGAN
We don't have the body.

SHIRLEY
What you talking about?

MEGAN
Remember Ellie Musgrave?

SHIRLEY
I saw she got married on the
Facebook. Cute guy.

MEGAN
Had an emergency last week. Needed
a part for a class. We shipped her
the torso. Legs and arms went to a
bodyworks display in Glendale.

Shirley stays rooted. She can't move. Her face pales.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
It was an admin error, Mom.

SHIRLEY
An admin error?

MEGAN
You use the computer to see what
parts are donated. That dumb ass
upstairs enters that information
based on the light blue donor
forms. She entered the form all
wrong. I was hoping no one would
fucking notice, but...

Megan cries. Not an adult cry. It's childlike. Shirley
reverts into parent mode. Hauls her daughter close.

SHIRLEY

Come here. It's gonna be alright.

MEGAN

How is it? This will get out!

SHIRLEY

It's not gonna get out, hon.

MEGAN

They're gonna tell everyone. We could go to jail, Mom!

Shirley lets go of her daughter.

SHIRLEY

We?

MEGAN

You cut up the body. They'll say we're criminally negligent. One mistake and we lose everything, Mom. Off of one fucking mistake!

Horror sets in for Shirley. Things she never considered. Cogs in her mind turn. Solutions, answers. Anything to save them.

SHIRLEY

We still have the head.

MEGAN

Are you fucking stupid, Mom? I can't just give them a head!

SHIRLEY

I crossed paths with Annabelle Cavett. Sweet woman... when she was sober. Big build. Hairy all over. Just like Mattie Fae Treadway.

MEGAN

Who the fuck is Mattie Fae Treadway?

SHIRLEY

Mattie Fae lost her life. God rest her soul. Car crash in Grand Junction. Still got her body.

Megan looks at her mother. Is she really saying...?

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

Go back upstairs, Meg. I'll take care of everything, hon. Okay?

Megan sniffles, nods. Tries to regain composure. Stands up. Her legs give way. No strength. Shirley guides her gently to the stairway. Before she goes, Megan glances over her shoulder -- a corpse waves 'goodbye' to her.

Shirley turns around. That freezer in the corner hums.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - LOBBY - DAY

Megan staggers in. Forcing smiles at strangers. Slowly regaining strength. She meets eyes with Violet across the room. Violet's eyes demand an update. Megan gives the nod.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - BASEMENT - DAY

Shirley gently removes the head of Annabelle Cavett from the humming freezer unit. It looks... fine actually?

Now's the hard part. Shirley views the recently embalmed cadaver of **MATTIE FAE TREADWAY** (60s). Crosses herself -

SHIRLEY
Lord forgive me.

- and reaches for her trusty power saw.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - LOBBY - DAY

Respectful chatter before the service. The bleat of that horrific power saw kills conversations dead.

MEGAN
Having some work done. Why don't we
proceed to the chapel? Listen to
your mom's funeral playlist?

Megan aggressively pushes open those doors, ushers guests inside. Violet impatiently taps her Rolex as she passes.

INVISIBLE THREAD

A razor-sharp line pokes through the eye of a sewing needle.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - THE CHAPEL - DAY

Megan turns the glum music up a notch, just in case. She spots two cops - Fisher Dyce and Lonnie - traipse in.

FISHER DYCE
Miss Hess?

Megan gulps nervously. Of all the fucking times.

A SEWING NEEDLE

Struggles to penetrate hardened dead flesh.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - THE CHAPEL - DAY

Megan tries to handle Fisher.

MEGAN
Now's not the best time.

FISHER DYCE
Could we grab you after the
service? We can wait.

THAT SEWING NEEDLE

Stabs at that hard dead flesh. Cannot break through.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - THE CHAPEL - DAY

Megan struggles with Fisher.

MEGAN
No-- I--

FISHER DYCE
--We're just interested in Harper
Carlson and some claims she's made.

MEGAN
Uhm-- Harper?

FISHER DYCE
You okay, ma'am? You're sweating.

THAT SEWING NEEDLE

FINALLY pierces the skin. Binds neck to head.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - THE CHAPEL - DAY

Megan spots Violet make a move. She attempts to follow.

MEGAN

Make an appointment. Excuse me.

Fisher gets in her way. Waves his diary.

FISHER DYCE

Let's pencil it in! When works best for you?

Violet's going for the basement. Megan pushes by him.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)

Mind if we stick around for the service? Baptists love to wail. Always gets me amped up for a day!

Megan tries to beat Violet to the basement.

MEGAN

Mrs Cavett!

CRISSCROSS NECK STITCHES

Fingers apply a globby paste of foundation and moisturizer.

Slowly concealing stitches underneath the thick mixture.

Faint outlines barely visible under the fluorescent lights.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - SELECTION ROOM - DAY

Megan blocks Violet from progressing.

VIOLET CAVETT

This shouldn't be taking this long!

MEGAN

Just waiting on her makeup.

VIOLET CAVETT

I'll do it my goddamn self!

SHIRLEY (O.S.)

Meg. Ready for the final touches.

Megan glances down. Her mother. Her savior.

MEGAN

Mrs Cavett. If you'd take a seat.

Violet regards that stairway. Dark and winding. Not the sort of you place you'd want to go. She sighs and walks away.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - BASEMENT - DAY

Megan and Shirley review the body on the metal slab.

MEGAN

It's like something out of fucking
Frankenstein. Ew... I can see the
stitches, Mom!

SHIRLEY

Should be just fine, hon. Burial
clothes are a turtleneck and a
statement necklace.

Megan pokes the neck curiously.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

Careful.

MEGAN

How did you get the head on?

SHIRLEY

Keep a sewing kit handy. Rigor
mortis kicks in and sometimes
fingers just snap clean off.

Shirley makes a sound. Megan winces. Fetches her makeup bag.

MEGAN

Here goes fucking nothing I guess.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - THE CHAPEL - DAY

The TRAVELLING PASTOR finishes his fervent talk.

TRAVELLING PASTOR

*--Her trials are past. Ring out the
welcome. Annabelle is home at last!*

THE CONGREGATION

Amen!

The cue for the music. Megan misses it. Too in her head.
Shirley steps up. Gently takes the remote, hits a button.

Red curtains begin to slowly PART, revealing a tasteful open
casket display. Mourners rise up as a corny instrumental
cover of 'Wind Beneath My Wings' fills the air.

A CRYING COUSIN approaches first of all. Shirley looks to her
daughter. Megan trembles with fear. Shirley grips her hand.

CRYING COUSIN

You'll be missed, Aunt Annie.

Crying Cousin moves on. Too tearful to see anything. More and more relatives pass. Megan lets out relieved breaths. Maybe they've got away with it. Maybe they've pulled this off.

And then Violet comes. With her brother, Little Charles.

Megan feels her chest tighten. Her breathing gets bad.

MEGAN

I'm gonna have a panic attack.

SHIRLEY

Almost over, almost over...

MEGAN

I need my fucking e-cigarette!

Little Charles narrows his eyes, tilts his head.

LITTLE CHARLES CAVETT

Well, that's not right...

Shit. Shirley and Megan freeze. They see the agitation, the heated discussion. Things are escalating wildly. Even Fisher Dyce and Lonnie Ackbourne notice from the back pews.

SHIRLEY

You gotta go over, Meg.

MEGAN

I can't!

Megan clutches at her mother. Desperate for help. Shirley walks over. Every step an eternity. Breath running short. The ire between Violet and Little Charles spiraling.

SHIRLEY

What seems to be the problem?

Brother and sister spin to face her.

LITTLE CHARLES CAVETT

I did not agree to my mother being
in a black turtleneck. I chose red!

Little Charles lays into her. Shirley just stands there, not hearing a word. They've got away with it. Somehow.

EXT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Shirley presses her hands against the Dodge Ram. Breathes, recovering from the trauma, the adrenaline, the rush.

Keys jangle. Megan stabs them into her pink Cadillac.

MEGAN

Nice work today, Mom.

Shirley straightens up.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

I appreciate you coming through for me. That's what parents are supposed to do.

Dottie passes by.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS

Night, Mrs Koch. Night, Miss Hess.

Megan gives a wave. Shirley is slower to react. Dottie hops in her wagon and drives home.

SHIRLEY

She seems happy.

MEGAN

I didn't fire her in the end.

Shirley's chin recedes into her neck.

SHIRLEY

This ain't just a mix-up in diary dates, Meg. What she put that poor family through, it's criminal.

MEGAN

Bible preaches forgiveness, Mom.

Megan lumbers into the Cadillac, reverses wildly, almost hitting a sign. She speeds off, like a thief in the night. Shirley just watches her go. Brow furrowed. Wondering.

MEGAN'S SMILING FACE

Glamorous, attractive, photoshopped. It's erected onto that billboard space. Megan watches approvingly from below. In a ratty fur. Smoking her e-cigarette. Not resembling it at all.

MEGAN

Don't fuck up my face!

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
It's very you, Miss Hess!

Megan turns back. Ellie Musgraves from Western Slope.

ELLIE MUSGRAVE
Ugh. Thanks so much for that torso.
Literally saved an entire semester.

A wad of money is offered. Megan hesitates - the payment for the fuck-up, the mistake. She shakes it off, takes it.

ELLIE MUSGRAVE (CONT'D)
You're the only home that still has
torsos. So insane. Seems the more
we get away from the recession, the
less parts on the market. Makes you
root for another global crisis.

INT. LUTHERAN CHURCH - DAY

The pews. Shirley next to church-friend, **GRETCH** (40s).

GRETCH FROM CHURCH
Can see Sunset Mesa from my house.
Nice to see you're both *finally*
doing well.

Shirley forces a big smile. Eyes travel across the pews.
Megan throwing down a fifty on the collection plate.

INT. KOCH HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Alan skins a rabbit.

ALAN
You're quiet today, Shirl.

Shirley scaffolds another smile. Looks across the table. Past
Peyton on her phone. Over at Megan chowing down candies.

INT. KOCH HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

A hand presses on an Aveeno moisturizer pump. Shirley creams
her neck at the dresser. Alan watches TV in bed.

SHIRLEY
Al...

Alan doesn't acknowledge her, winces at the TV.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

Al.

He barely looks over.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

Something's not right.

ALAN

With?

SHIRLEY

The Home.

Alan rolls his eyes.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

What's that supposed to mean?

ALAN

Meg's worked hard on this.

SHIRLEY

Since when were you her number one fan? Since you got tickets to the Donkey's?

ALAN

Seem a little jealous, that's all.

Shirley rises. Offended to her core. She storms out.

SHIRLEY

I'll sleep on the couch.

INT. KOCH HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alan limps after his wife. Shirley resists him.

ALAN

Shirl. Stop.

SHIRLEY

Why? More insults to throw my way?

ALAN

Didn't mean it as an insult.

SHIRLEY

When her ex-husband turned out to be no-good? I stepped in. Needed a hand with Sunset Mesa? Me again. I have always supported her and--

ALAN

--Shirl. We've had a lot of failure
between the two of us. A lot.

SHIRLEY

Wouldn't say a lot, Al.

ALAN

Hon. Don't make me bring up that
biting business with your animal
rescue. I don't wanna.

Shirley bristles. A sore subject. Even now.

SHIRLEY

Catrick didn't bite that lady, Al.

Alan straightens his back. Thumbs under his belt.

ALAN

Just wonder if you feel threatened,
that's all. Meg's having the
success you wanted for the animal
rescue. Job of a mother is to be
happy for her; not threatened.

Shirley stays fixed in place. Questioning herself. Maybe
that's true. Maybe that's what this is.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Get back to bed when you're done
feeling sorry for yourself.

EXT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - PARKING LOT - DAY

A police car parks up. Fisher gets out with Lonnie.

FISHER DYCE

Make sure you hit the Owner with
some firm eye contact. Helps you
get a gut feeling on a person. See?

Fisher eyeballs Lonnie. Lonnie just walks onwards.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - RECEPTION - DAY

Fisher lollops to the front desk. Dottie reacts with the
slight hesitation of seeing a police officer in the flesh
before she forces out her big, corporate smile.

FISHER DYCE

Hi there. We have an appointment.

Megan recognizes Fisher, retreats into the shadows.

MEGAN
Not this fucking doofus again.

She releases some cleavage and heads back out there.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - MEGAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Megan tidies as she shows the officers inside. She's warm, kind, engaging. Everything she can be when she wants to be.

MEGAN
Can I get either of you anything?

Fisher shakes his head. Looks to Lonnie. He shakes his head.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Just got a batch of rocky mountain oysters in from the caterer. Fresh fried and sizzling. Are you sure?

Same thing again.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Take a plate home for your wives.

FISHER DYCE
Not married anymore, ma'am.

Awkward. He gets some eye contact. Not for long.

MEGAN
SO. How can I help today?

FISHER DYCE
We've had a complaint from a young woman, Harper Carlson. Says you won't release her brother's body.

MEGAN
NTS.

FISHER DYCE
(guessing)
National... Testing... Syndrome?

MEGAN
Non Trustworthy Source. Harper Carlson lives on a diet of BS and antidepressants. The poor soul needs help. I pray for her.

Megan fetches a light blue form. Shows it to them both.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Before we provide a service, we require next-of-kin to fill out this form. Harper's husband made a mistake. Rick ticked cremation instead of burial. His mom and his aunt are the same person. Think it explains his tendency for errors.

FISHER DYCE

That puts a bow on things, ma'am. I won't take any more of your time.

Fisher stands to go. Lonnie follows. Megan breathes. That was easy. Fisher comes back. Nails her with hard eye contact.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)

One last thing. You still got the form with the error?

MEGAN

Somewhere round here. Can fax it over. When we're finished here.

FISHER DYCE

Look forward to receiving it.

He retains eye contact. A faceoff. She finally breaks it off.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)

Alright. Thank you, ma'am.

They shake hands. That's it. He and Lonnie cut out.

MEGAN

Fucking freak.

EXT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - PARKING LOT - DAY

Fisher and Lonnie head to the car.

FISHER DYCE

Managed about 12 seconds of firm eye contact overall. Not enough.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - RECEPTION - DAY

Dottie works the front desk. Shirley checks her watch.

SHIRLEY
Dottie, hon. How you doing?

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
Today?

SHIRLEY
General. Anything we can do better?
Shirley is fishing. Not subtle. Dottie shrugs.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Gotta be something. Only the Big
Guy upstairs is perfect and even
He's made mistakes. You taken a
good look at an octopus recently?

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
There's one thing I guess.
Shirley swoops around, closer to hear.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
Pay checks are getting less
regular.
Not what Shirley was looking for.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
And lesser than what we agreed.
Tried speaking with Megan. She put
it down to an accounting issue,
said she'll take care of it, but
it's been months...

Shirley processes this.

SHIRLEY
Ask her again, hon. Sure it is some
mix-up. Sure it's all fixed now.
Dottie anxiously jots that down.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
Okay.

SHIRLEY
Now go get your lunch. I'll cover
you on the desk.
Dottie rubs her arm gratefully and sets off for lunch.
Shirley turns. Eyes on that computer at the front desk.

CUT TO:

SHIRLEY ON THAT COMPUTER

She moves the cursor to 'search database.' Types a name.

'Cavett'

'Searching...' flashes, then '0 Records Found.'

SHIRLEY

Huh.

Must be a mistake. She tries again. '0 Records Found.'

MEGAN (O.S.)

Punching out. Shopping trip.

Megan glances over at the desk, expecting Dottie.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

The fuck you doing back there?

Shirley exits the search quickly.

SHIRLEY

Covering for Dottie. Sent her to
get her lunch early. Figured it'd
be nice.

Shirley sees Megan's glare intensify. As if she's trying to
see through her. It feels like it lasts forever.

MEGAN

You must've overheard my tapes.
Supercharging employee morale is a
major key to unlocking the Ladder
of Success.

Shirley nods and smiles, relieved to be believed.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Getting fitted for a pantsuit. For
my award ceremony. Wouldn't hurt
you to buy something new.

SHIRLEY

I'll flip through the catalog when
I get home, hon.

Megan rolls her eyes and lumbers out.

Shirley tiptoes to the window. She tugs the curtains, looks
out. Megan peels off in her Cadillac. With her gone, Shirley
turns around, stares towards the back office, tucked away.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - HALLWAY - DAY

Shirley checks left and right. She's alone. Only the whirl of the ceiling fan. Tries the door handle. Nope. Locked.

EXT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Shirley sneaks around back. Local teens smoke and drink beer.

SHIRLEY

Hey! Is that a beer? Billy Swanson.
I will call your mom!

Teenagers scam away. Abandoning the cigarettes, the beers. Shirley discerns a window, small and... open?

She disappears. Comes back with that Bud Lite Cooler. She props it below, stands on it. Her legs wobble like Jell-O.

She stretches for that oval window. Hands gripping the frame.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

Gosh darn.

Pulls herself up. Biceps bulging. Neck straining.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - MEGAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Shirley wiggles frantically through that tiny window. Squeezing her shoulders inside. She manages to wiggle through, landing on the desk with a sickening bump.

She lays there for a second. Exhausted. Her eyes dart around the crammed office. Messier than ever. A big framed photo of Megan clocks her every move. She turns it the other way.

EXT. MEGAN'S PINK CADILLAC - DAY

Megan drives. Something hits. She grabs at her alligator skin bag. One hand on the wheel. One digging inside.

MEGAN

Shit.

Megan abruptly turns around, earning horns.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Fuck off!

She puts her big foot down, speeding back to Sunset Mesa.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - MEGAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Filing cabinets. Shirley pushes through one. Unorganized chaos. No alphabetical order. Some folders are empty.

She frantically looks for anything relating to Cavett. Her frustration getting to her with every dead end.

EXT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - PARKING LOT - DAY

The pink Cadillac skids across two spots. Megan emerges, flustered and on edge. Dottie is there to greet her.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
Mrs Hess. Can we talk?

MEGAN
Not right now, Dottie.

THE LOBBY

Megan barrels through. Dottie chases her.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
I gotta insist, Mrs. Hess.

Megan notices the front desk empty.

MEGAN
Mom?

MEGAN'S OFFICE

Shirley shoots up in alarm. Clunks her head on a cabinet.

MEGAN (O.S.)
Mom?

Shirley gasps. Her heart smashes against her ribcage. Panic clouds her thoughts. Not helping her think.

MEGAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Where are you?

Shirley lays eyes on a document. BEVERLY LETTS on the front. She stuffs it down her shirt. Climbs back onto that desk.

She claws for the frame. Fuck. It shuts on her fingers.

HALLWAY

Megan takes out her office keys, stabs them at the door.

MEGAN'S OFFICE

Shirley cries silently. Hand throbbing. Hears those keys.

HALLWAY

Megan turns the handle, lets herself in...

MEGAN'S OFFICE

...the office is empty. Megan doesn't notice it's even messier. She just lumbers over for her velvet check book, grabs a half-empty McDonald's cup and heads back out.

Wait. She stops abruptly. Something's awry.

That big framed picture. It's facing the other way.

SHIRLEY (O.S.)

Hi, hon.

Megan rotates. Shirley smiles innocently.

MEGAN

Where were you, in the shitter?

Shirley rubs her tummy.

SHIRLEY

Hit me outta nowhere. Taco Tuesday.

Megan barges by her, still thinking about that picture.

INT. MONTROSE POLICE DEPARTMENT - BULLPEN - NIGHT

Fisher and Lonnie burn the midnight oil and throw back bagels. An ASSHOLE COP waves 'goodnight' to them.

ASSHOLE COP

Night, Lonnie. Night, Snitch.

Fisher shakes his head. Cream cheese drips onto his shirt.

FISHER DYCE

Look what he made me do.

He claws for a tissue, glances over at Lonnie.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
Still no fax from Megan Hess?

Lonnie shakes his head. Fisher scratches his stubble.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
Putting myself in her heels. Say I
get accused of misappropriating a
body. I know I didn't do it. Got
the info to prove so. Why wouldn't
you shoot it over right away?

Fisher pulls Lonnie over by the chair.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
Check this out, Lon. Did some
digging. Megan Hess. Liens against
her home. Total screw-up for years.
Mom's no prize either. Got herself
a misdemeanor for a poorly-run
animal rescue. Animals needed
rescuing from the animal rescue by
the time she was done.

Fisher laughs at his own joke. Lonnie furrows a brow.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
You get the joke, Lon?

Lonnie just looks at him.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
Alright. Cop; not a comedian. Them
not being upstanding citizens
doesn't mean they're breaking laws,
though. Gotta take a look at this.

Fisher displays the Yelp reviews of Sunset Mesa Funeral Home.
Most are positive. Some have similar complaints to Harper.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
Take this name. Throw it into the
town center of modern times. That
would be Facebook, Lon.

Fisher finds JEAN CARTER. He works on a message.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - DAY

Lonnie drives. Fisher shotgun. Slowly they pull into the filthy trailer park - rusting motor homes, roadkill on grills. Lonnie gives Fisher a look. Fisher smiles it off.

FISHER DYCE
 Can't judge a book by its cover,
 Lon. Some of the nicest people
 you'll ever meet are slumming it.

Lonnie gulps down his trepidation, keeps driving.

EXT. TRAILER PARK ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF COLORADO - DAY

Fisher and Lonnie walk across broken crack pipes and leftover needles. They get dirty looks for the car, the uniform.

FISHER DYCE
 Maybe best you stay with---

Lonnie's already back guarding the car.

INT. JEAN CARTER'S MOBILE HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A framed American flag. **JEAN CARTER** (60s) lets Fisher inside. She has grandmother energy and dotes.

JEAN CARTER
 Can I get you anything? Make
 yourself comfy. Kick up your feet
 if you wanna. No judgement here.

Fisher sits down. Notices a photograph. Jean comes back.

JEAN CARTER (CONT'D)
 That's the one. That's my dad.

Jean lifts the picture of her and her dad, **HAROLD** (80s).

JEAN CARTER (CONT'D)
 Good man. Veteran. Korean War.
 Loved helping people. Wanted his
 body donated to the sciences.

FISHER DYCE
 Tell me what happened here, ma'am.

JEAN CARTER
 Desk girl told me it would take two
 years of medicine people studying
 tissue samples.

(MORE)

JEAN CARTER (CONT'D)
Week later Megan calls. Ever met
Megan? Big woman. Big hair. Walks
like Big Bird.

Fisher tries to retain professional composure, but smirks.

JEAN CARTER (CONT'D)
She calls me. Not even a week
later. Says they've done the tests
themselves and I can pick up his
cremains. Knew something weren't
right, then I opened 'em up.

Jean clears the flimsy plastic coffee table with a forearm.

FISHER DYCE
Ma'am. Are you okay?

Jean grips the tacky camo urn.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
What are you doing, ma'am?

Jean tips the urn onto the table - a big puff of ashes.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
Jesus H Christ.

Amongst the cremains are metal scraps, wires, a weird ring?

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
What's this?

JEAN CARTER
Think it's a cock ring. Goes on the
shaft. Increases the pleasure.

Fisher drops that shit fast.

JEAN CARTER (CONT'D)
Whatever it is? Ain't my dad.

Fisher inspects the mess. Turns back. Jean has a crack pipe?

FISHER DYCE
Ma'am. Is that drug paraphernalia?

JEAN CARTER
Shit. Yep. Sorry. Want a hit?

Right. Fisher soaks that sight in. Maybe this woman is nuts.

INT. JEAN CARTER'S MOBILE HOME - HALLWAY - DAY

As Fisher heads out, he hears a soft psst. Jean's camo-wearing husband, **LARSON** (60s). He beckons Fisher in close.

LARSON CARTER

My wife's a mess. Should be on some kinda medication. Please keep her outta whatever this is.

FISHER DYCE

You don't believe her?

LARSON CARTER

Don't know. Think she put that shit in the ashes herself. Helps her keep her dad alive in a weird way.

Fisher nods understandingly. He heads back out.

LARSON CARTER (CONT'D)

Beware the crackheads. Wild out there. Got a theory that the CIA are pumping crack into rural communities to elect Obama again.

Fisher hears that. Maybe they're all fucking nuts.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

The radio hums. Lonnie at the wheel. Fisher gets in.

FISHER DYCE

Gonna ask me if there's something to this story, aren't you, partner?

Lonnie nods. Fisher breathes. Has he been wasting their time?

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)

I just... A drug user and a pregnant woman. Not exactly the perfect witnesses. Maybe if it was some nice guy with a wife and a kid, I'd be more eager to buy.

Lonnie listens keenly.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)

Then again maybe if Megan Hess was some nice guy with a wife and a kid, I wouldn't be so suspicious...

Fisher gives the dash a smack.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
I just don't know!

WOAH. A CRAZED CRACKHEAD sprawls against the windshield. His big tongue licking the glass. They trade a bemused look.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
You got this one?

Lonnie nods, gets out. Fisher remains. His mind churning. Tormented by uncertainty. He scratches his stubble.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
Just goddamn don't know.

He tears down the mirror. Stares at himself. A pep talk.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
What you thinking, Fish? You just gotta trust your gut. Hasn't done you wrong so far.

Suddenly the sounds of a frenzied commotion. Fisher looks left. That CRACKHEAD has a knife. Lonnie on the ground.

EXT. TRAILER PARK ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF MONTROSE - CONTINUOUS

Fisher feels for his gun.

FISHER DYCE
Gonna need you to back off, sir.

Fisher palms his police radio.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
Unit 6. Need back-up at the
Montrose Trailer Park.

Fisher keeps cautiously approaching.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
Just walk on up. It's easy. It's--

--Fisher trips on a bottle.

Fumbles his weapon.

The Crackhead PLUNGES his knife at Lonnie.

Into his shoulder blade.

BANG.

Fisher drops the bastard with a bullet.

He rushes over.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
This is Unit 6. Officer down.

Fisher helps Lonnie lay back.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
Gonna be okay. Come on. Sit back.

Lonnie just looks at him. Wide eyes. No words.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
Don't say that. Some stiches and
some prayers and you'll be back on
your bagel diet. Come on now.

Lonnie bleeds out on the ground. The mud turns red.

INT. MONTROSE POLICE DEPARTMENT - BULLPEN - NIGHT

His shirt bloodstained and his head low, Fisher moves through the morose bullpen. If he was disliked before, he's fucking despised now.

INT. MONTROSE POLICE DEPARTMENT - CHIEF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The **CHIEF** (60) chugs a Bud Lite. He's a big man with a big head. Fisher shuts the door behind, offers up his badge, tries not to be too emotional about it.

FISHER DYCE
On me, Chief. Lon gave me a look.
Warned me to not go. Still went.
That's on me and my stupid gut.

Chief just shakes his big head at this dope.

CHIEF
Your gut, Officer? You pick that up
from a 'Law Enforcement for
Dummies' book?

FISHER DYCE
I did, sir. 2003 edition. When I
first took the police exam.

Chief just shakes his big head again.

CHIEF

Fell down that Jean Carter, Harper
Carlson rabbit hole, huh?

Fisher nods, ashamed now.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

You know how they say, 'Don't stick
your dick in crazy?' Well, they
should've also said not to trust a
word coming out of its mouth.

It takes Fisher a moment to understand. He nods again.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

They hate you out there. Know why?

FISHER DYCE

I informed internal affairs about a
corrupt colleague.

CHIEF

Your own partner.

FISHER DYCE

He was selling drugs, sir.

CHIEF

Your father-in-law.

FISHER DYCE

Blood, stranger. Crime's crime.

Chief just stares at him. Hard to hate someone as earnest as
this. He takes Fisher's badge. For a split second he
considers the trash can, but shoves it in a drawer instead.

CHIEF

30 days suspension. Fuck off.

INT. KOCH HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Pitch-black. A fresh glass of milk. Shirley takes out the
file she stole. Flattens the light blue document. Strains her
eyes to read. Her finger stops on that particular name.

SHIRLEY

Beverly Letts. How do I know ya?

Light suddenly floods the room. Shirley startles. Megan?

Peyton gives a weary wave. Shuffles to the sink. Fills up a
glass with water. Waves again. Shuffles back upstairs.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
 Alrighty...

INT. KOCH HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Shirley dresses for work, still scratching her head.

SHIRLEY
 (still trying to remember)
 Beverly Letts, Beverly Letts...

EXT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - PARKING LOT - DAY

A water hose FIRES up at the sky. Megan aims at those turkey vultures, nesting in the home's roof.

Click, click. The sound stops her dead. She turns her head.

In the distance a PHOTOGRAPHER with a long lens snaps her picture. He sees that he has attention, lowers the lens.

MEGAN
 What in the fuck.

Megan drops the hose. Walks that way. Reaches the road.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
 I didn't fucking consent to--

BEEEEEEEEEEEEEP! A passing Jeep SWERVES to avoid her.

DRIVER
 Get outta the fucking road!

Megan flips off that asshole. Glances back to the photographer. There's no one there. He's gone.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - BASEMENT - DAY

Shirley stews in her plastic chair, mind churning.

SHIRLEY
 Beverly Letts... Beverly Letts...

The door up top. Shirley squints. Megan won't come down.

MEGAN
 Mom. You gotta cover front desk.

SHIRLEY
 Dottie sick?

MEGAN

Fired the bitch. Should've done it
awhile ago. Asked for a raise. Got
real testy when I turned her down.

Shirley furrows her brow. That doesn't add up.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

You working the front desk or not?

Shirley snaps out of her thinking and hurries upstairs.

INT. KOCH HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alan squeezes into a suit. Shirley checks him out. She lifts
Catrick by the scruff. Pretends to speak through her pet.

SHIRLEY

Looking mighty fine, Mr Koch.

ALAN

Meg got me it. Men's Warehouse. Not
bad, huh?

SHIRLEY

Not bad at all.

ALAN

Gotta look good for the award
ceremony. Meg's big day. This suit
cost her an *arm and a leg*.

The phrasing. Something about it. Shirley grabs for something
from the side table. The file of Beverly Letts. She reads it
closely. Every word. Every sentence.

'NO DONOR SERVICE' circled.

She puts her finger on it. Something hitting her.

SHIRLEY

Al. Can you gimme a ride to Sunset
Mesa? Forgot something.

ALAN

Shirl. It's late. Got the Donkey's
game on in fifteen.

SHIRLEY

Alrighty then. You deal with Meg
when she's hollering about her big
day being ruined.

Alan's entire being sags.

ALAN
I'll get my coat.

EXT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - NIGHT

Alan parks up. Shirley hurries to the entryway, fumbling with the keys. *Click, click*. She glances over her shoulder...

...a PHOTOGRAPHER snaps a picture from the distance.

Shirley picks up the pace, jams a key into the door, fumbles them. Shit. She pats around for the dropped keys.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Shirley flicks on a light. She speeds down the stairs. Moves over to a storage unit, unlatches it, throws open the lid.

COLD MIST billows out, like steam from a pipe.

She rifles inside. Removes blueish limbs. Lets them pile up. Looking for something in particular. Finds it. A muscular arm. Tag attached. Strains her eyes to read.

'PROP. BEVERLY LETTS'

Shirley drops the arm. Her mouth falls agape.

'NO DONOR SERVICE' flashes in her mind.

SHIRLEY
Oh my gosh.

INT. MONTROSE MALL - FOOD COURT - DAY

Megan chomps down McDonald's delicious fries. She sees Ellie Musgrave stagger over. Hair a mess. No pantsuit. Disheveled.

MEGAN
You look like a steaming pile of
shit. Haven't you heard
presentation is your ticket to the
Ladder of Success?

ELLIE MUSGRAVE
Thanks for coming, Miss Hess.

Megan sips her Coke, taken aback by the shell of a woman.

ELLIE MUSGRAVE (CONT'D)
We had a call last night.

MEGAN
A call? From who? What sorta call?

ELLIE MUSGRAVE
They didn't identity themselves,
but they asked questions about the
way we obtained our resources. They
heavily implied it wasn't legit!

Megan slams down the Coke. It gushes everywhere.

INT. MONTROSE MALL - CHANGING ROOM - DAY

Megan shoves Ellie into a changing room for privacy.

MEGAN
The fuck has this got to do with
me? Was I mentioned?

ELLIE MUSGRAVE
No--

MEGAN
--Keep my name outta this. You
might be sinking in the fucking
quicksand, but I'm not keeping you
company. Get it? Got it, Ellie?

Megan slams her repeatedly against the wall. Ellie weeps.

ELLIE MUSGRAVE
I'm scared, Miss Hess!

Megan leaves her there, sinking to the ground.

EXT. MONTROSE MALL - DAY

Megan lumbers out. Full of fear, paranoia.

A COP CAR screeches to a halt in front of her. She freezes in
horror. This is IT. This is her done for.

COP 1
You down for Cheesecake Factory?

COP 2
We always get Cheesecake Factory!

They casually walk by. Megan catches her breath.

INT. FISHER'S SAD STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

A sad house plant. Fisher crashes on the bed-couch. There's a knock. Something is slid under the door. Fisher opens up, looks out. No one's there. He picks up that note.

'Mr Ed's at 3am'

INT. MR ED'S DINE & DASH - NIGHT

An empty diner. Worn-out booths and harsh lights. Fisher floats around. Looking for someone, anyone. Sees a face?

FISHER DYCE
Dottie, right?

A WAITRESS pours coffee. Nobody speaks until it's done.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
Read about your partner.

Fisher lowers his eyes, embarrassed about the situation.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
You were right to visit, Officer.
Something's amiss at Sunset Mesa.

Steam emits from the hot coffee mug. Fisher blows on it.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
Starting off with donor service forms. If you agree to the service, you have to fill this out. My job was entering the information into the computer database. Mrs. Koch, her mom, reads the database and... well, she carries out the service.

Fisher looks puzzled. Dottie gestures her plate. She pointedly cuts into a chicken wing. A grisly moment.

FISHER DYCE
AH...

Dottie leans in. Close.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
Why do we need the computer database? Why do we need the middle man?

Fisher looks off into the distance, figuring it out.

FISHER DYCE

Somebody's playing mix-and-match
with facts... Megan's changing up
the information...

Dottie leans in even further, happy he's keeping up.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS

Shirley saws up the bodies without
realizing she's committing a sin
and the home sells what they
shouldn't - for big profits.

FISHER DYCE

Is this what happened to Harper's
brother, to Jean's dad?

DOTTIE WILLIAMS

Wish I knew. So many bodies were
going through the home. The donor
service operates on a global scale.

Fisher slumps. Still no proper answers. Still nothing
concrete. Still nothing real. He calmly stands back up.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Where you going?

FISHER DYCE

Back home. Hearing a lot of 'I
think' and 'I heard,' but not
enough. This is a paper cup. It
just doesn't hold water.

INT. FISHER'S GREEN RENTAL CAR - DAY

Fisher gets in his car. Dottie gets in the other side.

FISHER DYCE

You can't just get in my car!

DOTTIE WILLIAMS

Okay. Maybe you're right. Maybe the
Police don't care. Maybe there's no
law broken. What about the press?

FISHER DYCE

The Denver Chronicle posted my
address once. Got my house egged.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS

This isn't some local hack with a
hit piece! Reuters is involved!

(MORE)

DOTTIE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
They've been calling people! Taking pictures!

FISHER DYCE
Why do you need me?

DOTTIE WILLIAMS
I'm a bitter employee. The victims look crazy. You, however, are an upstanding officer of the law.

FISHER DYCE
Suspended, disgraced, hated...

Dottie is on the brink of tears. Fisher pats her hand.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
Ma'am. My gut's telling me to dive in, back you on this, but I'm not so sure about my gut since it got my partner sliced and diced.

Dottie pleads desperately with her hands. One final plea. Fisher gives her a sad look. She gets out of the car.

INT. FISHER'S RENTAL CAR - NIGHT

Fisher drives off. Away from that situation. His phone rings. Withheld number. He tries to connect it to the Bluetooth.

FISHER DYCE
Hang on a sec. Just connecting on up. Can't get pulled over. Alright. Go ahead.

BONNIE ACKBOURNE
Fisher. It's Lonnie's wife, Bonnie.

FISHER DYCE
Bonnie? Your name's Bonnie?

A crackle. Signal's bad.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
Might lose you here, Bonnie. By the mountains. Always gets rough.

BONNIE ACKBOURNE
Lonnie's outta surgery.

Fisher loses connection. Passes that billboard of Megan Hess.

FISHER DYCE
Well, I'll be damned.

He hits the brakes. Hard. A U-Haul almost rear-ends him. Amidst horns and obscenities, Fisher just climbs out.

EXT. COLORADO HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Fisher stands underneath that billboard of Megan Hess. She might not make eye contact with him in person, but this billboard can't refuse.

He makes firm eye contract with those giant blue eyes.

INT. KOCH HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Shirley on the edge of her bed. A knock on the door.

SHIRLEY
Down in a minute, Al.

The door knob turns. Shirley jumps up. It's Megan.

MEGAN
Never known you to miss takeout.

SHIRLEY
Not feeling hungry.

Shirley tries to look busy, folding up clothes.

MEGAN
Alright... Get any calls, by the way? Unidentified people? Weird questions?

SHIRLEY
What?

MEGAN
Nothing. I just keep getting spam calls. Lowlife scammer losers.

Megan gets in her mom's space.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Remember I said I got you something? Shut your eyes.

SHIRLEY
Not right now, Meg.

MEGAN
Shut your eyes!

Shirley succumbs to the badgering. Shuts her eyes. Megan stands behind her. Shifts some hair out of her neckline.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Open them.

Shirley does. Sees in the mirror. A necklace SPARKLES.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
24 karat yellow gold. Spells 'mom'
in diamonds. Apparently Liz Taylor
had one just like it. Token of my
love. Couldn't have done jackshit
without you, Mom.

In spite of everything, Shirley catches a tear.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Is it the menopause again? Why the
fuck are you crying?

Shirley pulls her daughter into a big hug. Overwhelmed by emotion. Some of it good. Some of it bad.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Alan fills the Dodge up. Shirley just looks at him. They're both dressed to the nines. Even Catrick is in a tuxedo.

SHIRLEY
Al.

He grunts.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
We gotta talk about something.

He nails her with a hard look. A first in their marriage.

ALAN
Tonight's a special night for our
girl. Won't let you ruin it, Shirl.

Shirley stops speaking. Toys with her 'mom' necklace.

EXT. MONTROSE COMMUNAL HALL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Shirley and Alan get out of their Dodge Ram. Shirley squints. Peyton barrels over. Big hair. A pantsuit.

PEYTON

Like it? Mama says, 'Can't climb
the ladder of success, dressed in
the costume of failure.'

Shirley gives a shallow smile. Unsure about that.

INT. MONTROSE COMMUNAL HALL - NIGHT

A faded, overused banner 'Chamber of Commerce' sags over a
lightweight stage and a sad seafood buffet. At a velvet-
covered table with Alan, Shirley receives a tap.

PEYTON

Grandma. Mom wants you.

Shirley gives Alan the tuxedoed Catrick. Gets up.

INT. MONTROSE COMMUNAL HALL - WOMEN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Megan gets ready. Shirley joins her.

SHIRLEY

You okay, hon?

Megan finishes her lipstick. Shirley just loiters.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

There a reason you wanted me here,
hon?

Megan fluffs her hair and spins around. She wears a vibrant
orange pantsuit and a leopard print purse. Her hair somehow
seems bigger than ever. A lot of effort had been made.

MEGAN

How do I look?

SHIRLEY

Beautiful, hon.

Megan feels the 'mom' necklace on Shirley. She smiles wide.

MEGAN

Walk me to the stage, Mom?

Shirley recoils. Touched by the gesture. Takes her arm.

INT. MONTROSE COMMUNAL HALL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Outside the hall. An MC speaks over a janky sound system.

AWARD MC (O.S.)
 That brings me to our next award.
 For Best Personal Care and Service.

Shirley studies her daughter. So conflicted over this award and everything else. Megan doesn't even pick up on it.

AWARD MC (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Working with dead bodies all day?
 This woman sure deserves something.

Chuckles from inside.

AWARD MC (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 The Chamber of Commerce is proud to
 award this to Miss Megan Hess of
 the Sunset Mesa Post-Life Facility.

Applause breaks out. Doors part. Before Megan takes that first step, she turns to Shirley. A fire in her eyes.

MEGAN
 I know you broke into my office.

Shirley turns as white as a sheet.

Megan lets go of her arm and strolls into the adulation.

Shirley could be sick. She staggers in after her. Breath short. Heart thumping. She stays at the back of the hall as the LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER rushes to snap Megan's picture.

Megan takes the stage.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
 This is an honor.

ALAN
 You deserve it!

MEGAN
 Thanks, Dad. Always supported me. I
 don't deserve this, though. I
 don't. If anyone deserves credit
 for what happens at Sunset Mesa,
 it's the brains behind the
 operation - my amazing mom.

Megan points out Shirley at the back. People adjust to get a glimpse. Phones turn to film her. Shirley knows. She isn't getting the credit. She's getting the blame.

INT. MEGAN'S PINK CADILLAC - NIGHT

Megan drives. Shirley in the passenger seat. No radio. No words. The car pulls up. Somewhere dark. The mountain range.

EXT. A QUIET SPOT IN THE MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

Megan gets out. Drifts towards the edge. Sounds of the Uncompahgre River. Dark. Angry. Wild. Shirley approaches.

SHIRLEY
When did it start?

Megan hesitates to answer, tries to use her e-cigarette.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Don't lie to me, Meg.

MEGAN
Fuck. It's outta battery.

SHIRLEY
Megan.

Megan takes a deep breath. No distractions. No escape.

MEGAN
Can't remember. Long time ago.
Probably Harper Carlson's brother.

SHIRLEY
Dan Carlson? That was a year in. We
were making good money. Getting
outta debt. We were successful.

MEGAN
75 grand a year isn't success, Mom.
Nobody stares at the woman making
75 grand, driving a used Bronco,
staying at the fucking Ramada Inn.

SHIRLEY
So you started stealing, huh?

MEGAN
Medical facilities got cheap
resources. Families got reduced
services. I didn't kill anyone,
Mom. I just made a killing. Since
when was that a crime in America?

Shirley notices something amiss.

SHIRLEY
Why you talking in past tense?

Megan remains silent. Eyes on the ground. Shirley grips her.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Why, Megan Marie Hess?!

MEGAN
Before I accepted the award, a
journalist from Reuters called.

SHIRLEY
Do they know?

Megan won't even say it. It's obvious. Shirley loses any
color in her face. Entire being savage with rage.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
I should never have trusted you!

Shirley floors her daughter with a HARD SLAP.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
You lie and you lie and you lie!

Megan cowers in the dirt. Beaten down. Defeated. Shirley
catches her breath. A horrifying realization hits her.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Journalists calling? Won't be long
before authorities come knocking.

Hearing it makes it real. Megan blubbers pathetically.

MEGAN
We're going to lose everything I
visualized. Cars, houses, clothes.
My fucking billboard, Mom!

Shirley stares at her daughter. Astounded. The pure
selfishness. Megan's expression hardens. Tears dry up.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Don't look at me like that.

Megan's back on her feet, back on the attack.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
I grew up. Watching you lose.
Failed businesses. Failed finances.
You couldn't hand down a successful
mom and pop store, could you? All
you gave me was failure.

(MORE)

MEGAN (CONT'D)

You're the reason I have to
succeed. You're the reason I'm in
the shit now.

Shirley steps back. Wounded by the attacks. Reeling.

SHIRLEY

All I do is for the family.

MEGAN

What you gonna do for the family
now? Huh? Nothing. You're gonna
fail like you've always done.

Megan lumbers back to the pink Cadillac. Shirley stays there.
Sinking into a dizzying world of failure. The walls are
closing in. She feels it. She knows it.

Shirley squeezes her phone out a pocket. Makes a quick call.

SHIRLEY

Gretch. It's Shirl. How's the
funeral home holding up? Heard
there's been some break-ins lately.

GRETCH FROM CHURCH (V.O.)

Eh... Looks fine to me, Shirl.

SHIRLEY

No one outside?

GRETCH FROM CHURCH (V.O.)

Only God.

Shirley hangs up. She walks to the pink Cadillac. Tries the
passenger door. It doesn't open. Locked from the inside.

SHIRLEY

FBI ain't there yet.

MEGAN

So?

SHIRLEY

Probably helps our case if they
don't find any records or bodies.

Megan doubletakes at her mother. Is she really saying what
she thinks she is? Megan unlocks the door.

EXT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - NIGHT

Megan and Shirley charge out of the pink Cadillac.

MEGAN
I'll handle the records upstairs.

SHIRLEY
Leave the bodies to me, hon.

Megan stabs keys into the door. Shirley waits for entry.

INT. GRETCH FROM CHURCH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Gretch tugs back the drapes. She can see Sunset Mesa.

GRETCH'S HUSBAND
Gretchen. Come back to the dinner
table. We haven't even said grace.

GRETCH FROM CHURCH
Something's happening over there.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - BASEMENT - NIGHT

The cremator ROARS as it's fired up. Shirley empties out a storage unit - arms, legs, a torso slop on the ground.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - MEGAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Megan drags a heavy filing cabinet.

MEGAN
Come on.

The carpet gets torn to shreds by the weight of it.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Shirley crosses herself quickly.

SHIRLEY
Lord forgive me.

She piles arms and legs into the cremation chamber. As many as it can take. The metal door slams with a clunk.

Flesh bubbles under the intense heat of 800 degrees.

INT. GRETCH FROM CHURCH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Gretch at the table with her FAMILY. Grace is said.

GRETCH'S HUSBAND
Dear God, we thank you for watching
over us throughout the day.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - RECEPTION - NIGHT

Megan feeds files to the shredder. CRGH. The machine swallows the precious evidence with a horrifying growl.

MEGAN
Come the fuck on!!!

Megan furiously thrusts another file in there.

GRETCH'S HUSBAND (V.O.)
May this food restore our strength,
give new thoughts to weary minds,
new energy to tired limbs.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - BASEMENT - NIGHT

The cremation chamber door juts open. Nothing remains.

Shirley rolls heads into the metal abyss next. She presses a button. The cremation door goes to slam shut.

'ERROR' flashes on the machine.

A fucking head is stuck, not letting the door close.

SHIRLEY
Gosh darn.

Shirley jabs the head in with her fingers. Fuck. Her arm gets caught on the red hot chamber wall. She SCREAMS.

GRETCH'S HUSBAND (V.O.)
May everything we do or say be for
your glory Lord.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - RECEPTION

Megan pounds another file in. She sees Shirley running.

MEGAN
Mom?

SHIRLEY
Gotta take over the bodies, Meg!

MEGAN

What, why.

SHIRLEY

I burned my arm! I burned my arm!

MEGAN

I can't, Mom!

SHIRLEY

There's only a few left!

Shirley drags the shredder away with her good arm.

GRETCH'S HUSBAND (V.O.)

May you continue to redeem us
dearly and deliver us from evil

EXT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - NIGHT

Black SUVs silently fill the parking lot.

GRETCH'S HUSBAND (V.O.)

Amen.

FBI AGENTS manifest out of vehicles.

GRETCHEN'S FAMILY (V.O.)

Amen.

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Shirley tries her hardest to multitask -- shredding documents
and running her arm under the furious cold water.

THE LOBBY - INTERCUT

BAM! The lobby doors explode. FBI pour inside. Armed.

FBI AGENT

Hands where I can see them!

Shirley throws her good hand in the air.

She is forced down to her knees, her hands are cuffed.

SHIRLEY

My arm! My arm!

INT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Megan bolts the door. No one can get in. Gripping the banister, she ascends the steps, wobbling with fear.

BANG, BANG, BANG. The door pounds. FBI trying to get in.

Megan sees the body parts strewn everywhere.

BANG, BANG, BANG.

Megan shuts her eyes, blindly pats around for a part.

BANG, BANG, BANG.

She touches something - a head - lifts it by the hair.

THE HEAD

The walls are closing in, bitch.

She drops the head in horror.

It thuds against unforgiving ground.

The skull fractures into a thousand pieces.

BANG, BANG, BANG,

Limbs start to twitch.

BANG, BANG, BANG.

Heads start to roll.

BANG, BANG, BANG.

All of the evidence COMES at her. In a maddening charge.

BANG, BANG, BANG.

The door FLATTENS at the top of the stairs.

FBI AGENTS pile down the stairs.

Guns aimed. Scanning for a woman.

Tactical lights ILLUMINATE dark crevices.

That plastic chair.

A freezer unit.

Some heads.

Finally --

In a corner. Rocking and quivering. Megan peeks out from behind her knees. None of the body parts are moving anymore. They're just piled up, ready to be used as evidence.

EXT. SUNSET MESA FUNERAL HOME - NIGHT

That green rental car crawls by. Fisher peers out. He sees the local police providing crowd control of the crime scene.

FISHER DYCE

No kidding...

He's out and over. Some cops warn him to stay away.

A COP

Sir. This is a crime scene!

FISHER DYCE

I'm an officer-- I know all-- I was investigating--

The Chief sees him.

CHIEF

Fisher!

Fisher gravitates over.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

Come in tomorrow, pal. We'll go over the situation, okay?

FISHER DYCE

Will do, Chief. Will do.

Fisher recedes into the watching crowd. Being kept at bay. Recognizes faces in the bunch. Harper Carlson and her HUSBAND. Little Charles Cavett. Dottie saddles up to him.

DOTTIE WILLIAMS

Reuters was in touch with the FBI the entire time.

FISHER DYCE

Were they really?

DOTTIE WILLIAMS

Your testimony gave us the credibility. Thank you, Officer.

Fisher allows a smile.

FISHER DYCE
Just trusting my gut.

Shirley is escorted to a vehicle. Her head hangs in shame. Her feet drag. She's numb, beaten down. Her burnt arm, flesh bubbled, already turning pink. She looks out. Sees Fisher.

Megan follows. Still fighting. Still furious.

MEGAN
This is all bullshit! Just you
wait! My lawyers will fuck you up!

They're both forced down, loaded into the back of cars.

INT. GRETCH FROM CHURCH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Gretch twitches the drapes, squints at the happenings.

GRETCH FROM CHURCH
Sy! Call Al Koch right now! I think
they're being arrested over there!

INT. KOCH HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alan gently puts the phone down. Takes off his glasses. Massages his temple. Hears the sound of footsteps.

ALAN
Peyty. You want food?

Peyton comes down the stairs on her phone.

PEYTON
Sure.

Alan confiscates the phone. Her eyes widen.

ALAN
Let's have some family time, just
me and you, kiddo. Got the Donkey's
game on.

Alan pretends to hit a touchdown. Pockets her phone. Wants to keep her from the truth. Just a little longer.

INT. MONTROSE REGIONAL HEALTH - LONNIE'S ROOM - DAY

Fisher visits Lonnie with an abundance of bagels. Lonnie doesn't say anything. Of course. Fisher sits down.

FISHER DYCE
Good to see you too, partner.

BONNIE (40) comes in. She holds up a local newspaper
'LOCAL FUNERAL HOME CAUGHT IN BODY SNATCHING PROBE.'

INT. LUTHERAN CHURCH - DAY

The post-church chatter. Gretch speaks with JUDGY MOMS.

JUDGY MOM
Weren't you close to Shirley Koch,
Gretch?

Gretch shakes her head.

GRETCH FROM CHURCH
Saw her here. Didn't know her well.

INT. JEAN CARTER'S MOBILE HOME - DAY

The local morning news covers the story. Jean celebrates wildly at the TV. Hoots and hollers. HAPPY.

As a shot of Megan is shown, Jean flips her off.

JEAN CARTER
Burn in Hell, you Big Bird bitch!

INT. MONTROSE POLICE DEPARTMENT - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Megan. We don't hear questions - just answers.

MEGAN
No comment.

INT. MONTROSE POLICE DEPARTMENT - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Shirley. Same thing.

SHIRLEY
No comment.

INT. MONTROSE COUNTY COURT - DAY

A JUDGE presides. Megan is taken in first.

COUNTY COURT JUDGE
Does your client intend to post
bail?

MEGAN'S LAWYER
She does, Your Honor.

Smack. Gavel. Megan is taken out. Shirley is led in.

COUNTY COURT JUDGE
Does your client intend to post
bail?

BOB FORD
She does, Your Honor.

EXT. HUFFER HOME - NIGHT

Megan smacks her big palm on the fancy oak door. Over and over until she gets an answer. Greg Huffer stares out.

GREG HUFFER
What the fuck are you doing here?

He half-shuts the door behind him. Kids can be heard.

GREG HUFFER (CONT'D)
This is my home. My family is here.

MEGAN
Have you heard?

GREG HUFFER
I'd have to be fucking deaf not to,
Meg. I can't see you right now. I
own the building. My lawyer says I
could be indicted!

MEGAN
I need help, Greg. As much cash as
possible. The scummiest shark fuck-
em-up lawyers. Whatever you've got.

GREG HUFFER
Are you off your fucking meds? I
can't be seen helping you!

Megan looks at him sideways, completely in disbelief.

MEGAN
I'm facing serious time. You might
not see me for ten years.
(MORE)

MEGAN (CONT'D)
You know hard it is to keep a
relationship going inside?

GREG HUFFER
Relationship?

Greg coldly moves back inside.

GREG HUFFER (CONT'D)
We'd fuck when you were wanting out
of rent or needed help. That's no
relationship. That's a transaction.

Megan's lip wobbles. To be reduced to nothing like that. He
shuts the door on her and returns back to his family.

EXT. KOCH HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Shirley walks along. Stops at the sound of crying.

SHIRLEY
Meg?

She knocks on her door. Parental politeness. No answer.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Meg. I'm coming in.

INT. KOCH HOUSE - MEGAN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Megan bawls and aims a gun at her head.

SHIRLEY
Meg!

Shirley makes a desperate play for the weapon. Megan avoids
her. Inconsolable with grief, with devastation.

MEGAN
I'm a fat fucking failure!

SHIRLEY
You're not a failure, hon!

MEGAN
Bank accounts are frozen. They took
my Cadillac, Mom. I loved that
Cadillac. It made people look at
me. It made them know I was
something worth looking at.

Shirley lunges for the gun. They tug and pull - locked together in a brutal brawl for control. Shirley wins. Snatching the weapon away. Unloading the bullets.

Megan falls to her knees, completely defeated.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
I'm going to jail for a long time.

SHIRLEY
We both are, hon. We both are.

She drops down into the fetal position, curled up.

MEGAN
Peyton grows up without a feminine touch. Dad'll try his best, but she's fucked. Straight-up destined to become a junkie, a stripper.

Megan pauses.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Unless...

Shirley looks down at her daughter, intrigued.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Maybe I take the fall for it. That way you get to stay around for her. You were only involved in the coverup, anyway.

SHIRLEY
Meg. You'd do that for us?

Megan nods sadly. A moment passes.

MEGAN
Then again your parents were both dead by sixty five. Heart disease runs in our family. No point me taking that big fall if you're six feet under in a year or two.

Shirley catches on. She knows the game here.

SHIRLEY
This was your business, Meg.

MEGAN
You're right. I was just thinking of the family. What would be best for them all. That's all.

Shirley drifts to a cabinet. A framed photograph of Megan and Peyton at a pageant. So smiley. So happy. A long time ago now. She holds on this photo. Maybe it would be what's best.

INT. MONTROSE POLICE DEPARTMENT - BULLPEN - DAY

Fisher Dyce re-enters the bullpen to a hero's return.

POLICE OFFICER
Welcome back, pal.

POLICE OFFICER 2
Good to see ya, buddy!

FISHER DYCE
Just doing my job. That's all.

The Chief welcomes him back with a back slap.

CHIEF
Proud of you, Officer. I partially credit my gentle encouragement.

FISHER DYCE
Couldn't have done it without you, Chief.

Another back slap.

CHIEF
Hear from Bonnie that Lonnie's healing up nice and good.

FISHER DYCE
I hear the same.

CHIEF
Okay. Get back to work, Officer. Bad guys don't catch themselves.

The Chief walks away.

FISHER DYCE
Not so sure about that, Chief.

CHIEF
Hm?

FISHER DYCE
Think bad guys do catch themselves. Think that's what makes 'em so bad.

Fisher ambles to his cubicle. No abusive words. No brutal articles from the past. Just a print-out of the Reuters write-up with his name circled every time it's mentioned.

Now that's nice. Now that's respect. Fisher absolutely beams.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)
Alright then...

He notices a white card in the bundle -- Alisha Goodacre.

EXT. COLORADO HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Dim moonlight shines down on the quiet highway. Megan lumbers out of her used Bronco. Struggles through the mud and dirt. Gets to where she wants to go, where she needs to be.

Her billboard stands gloriously. Even in the darkness. Her in a vibrant yellow pantsuit with her pink Cadillac. Sunset Mesa in the background. 'The award-winning Megan Hess.'

Megan cries with joy. This is what she needs. This--

--a WRECKING BALL punctures the billboard.

MEGAN
What the fuck?!

BOOM. The image of Sunset Mesa is WIPED OUT.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
What the fuck are you doing?!

BAM. 'Award-winning Megan Hess' is DESTROYED.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Hey! Stop it, stop it!

POW! Her face is next. Her Cadillac. Her image.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Please, please...

Megan crumbles to her knees. In the mud. In the dirt. Devastated. Her marker of success. Gone.

INT. KOCH HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Shirley brushes Catrick. Peyton appears at the door.

SHIRLEY
You okay, hon?

PEYTON
People are talking at school.

Shirley lets that sink in.

SHIRLEY
Wish I knew what to say.

Peyton shrugs. Walks over. Strokes Catrick.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Wanna learn how to hold him?

PEYTON
Why?

SHIRLEY
Gotta learn some time, hon. I might
not always be around.

Shirley gently places Catrick into Peyton's arms.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
There you go. Don't be scared.

PEYTON
Ow. Fuck.

SHIRLEY
Language, Peyty!

PEYTON
He fucking bit me!

Peyton runs to the sink to clean the bite. Shirley just lingers back. Completely flabbergasted at the action. She stares at Catrick. Innocently cleaning himself.

INT. KOCH HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Shirley zips up her coat. Leans into the living room.

SHIRLEY
I'm just heading to Walgreens.
Gotta grab your medication.

Alan just grunts, glued to the game on the big TV.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
You okay, Al?

He just takes off his glasses. Massages his temple.

ALAN
I just don't get it, Shirl.

SHIRLEY
What don't you get?

He opens his mouth to speak, but stops himself cold.

ALAN
Nothing, hon.

SHIRLEY
You sure, Al?

ALAN
I'm sure, hon. I'm sure.

Whatever he wanted to say he doesn't. Shirley leaves him there. Just like that. Alan turns off the TV when she goes. Sees his reflection in the hard black screen. Starts to cry.

EXT. MR ED'S DINE & DASH - NIGHT

Rain powers down. Fisher emerges out of his green rental. Two smartly-dressed young people there to greet him. They look like journalists. **ALISHA LYNCH** (30) and **HUGH FROST** (30).

FISHER DYCE
Nice to meet you both.

They shelter Fisher under their umbrellas, chatting away.

ALISHA LYNCH
Thanks for agreeing to meet us.
Understand this is unconventional.

HUGH FROST
Sorry about the rain, sir. Can
control the venue, not the weather.

INT. MR ED'S DINE & DASH - NIGHT

Fisher bundles inside. No one's here. Not even staff. He glances back at Alisha and Hugh. They usher him onwards.

He keeps going. Still confused. Still unsure. Still wet.

That's when he sees. In a tattered old booth, sipping on a warm cup of hot cocoa, Shirley Koch. She stands awkwardly.

SHIRLEY
Appreciate you coming, Officer.

She gestures for him to sit. He sits. She does.

FISHER DYCE

Ma'am.

She offers a hand. He resists shaking.

SHIRLEY

Okay.

She plops a travel cage on the table. Inside Catrick hisses. Fisher eyes that little critter with suspicion.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

Read that Reuters article. Not the nicest read. Saw your name a lot.

FISHER DYCE

Not many 'Fisher Dycles' running around town I guess, ma'am.

SHIRLEY

Knew about ya before that. What ya did to your dad-in-law. Cost ya your marriage. Got ya hazed.

Fisher nods along. Sees where this is going.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

There's this thing. In us. Our DNA. Our genetics. Something kicks in when it comes to family. Ya cover for ya own. Why didn't you, Officer Dyce?

Fisher takes a deep breath, can't even look at her.

FISHER DYCE

Knew my father-in-law was crooked from the day I set foot in that bullpen. Ignored the signs. Turned a blind eye. Didn't wanna know.

Rain trickles down the window beside them.

FISHER DYCE (CONT'D)

Sometimes we don't wanna see what's right in front of us. Sometimes we wanna pretend it's not there. We can shut our eyes, turn our heads, but it's still there.

A thin smile plays out on Shirley's lips as she absorbs his story. Catrick rattles the cage. Fisher startles.

SHIRLEY
You like cats?

FISHER DYCE
Not in my top ten domestic animals,
but anything's better than a rat.

Shirley doesn't laugh. Her mind elsewhere.

SHIRLEY
Got Catrick here when he was just 3
days old. Almost thirteen now.

Fisher glances back. Alisha ambles over. He waves her off.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Got me sued once. Employee, Missy.
Pretty girl, but dumb. Well, one
day, Missy accuses him of taking a
bite outta her. Claims she almost
lost her arm to infection.

She fixates on that cat in its cage.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Didn't believe it. I taught him
better than that. How could this
thing I raised since 3 days old go
against everything I believed in?

Shirley toys sadly with her 'mom' necklace.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Second he heard about the suing, Al
wanted to dropkick Catrick into the
woods. I fought him tooth and nail.
'Catrick's family,' I said. 'Lemme
handle it. Lemme handle it.'

She lets Catrick out. He lays in her arms like a baby.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Tried to teach him it was wrong.
Laid his cage with Bible quotes, a
newspaper cutting about this kid
who bit another kid.

She strokes that cat.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Don't think he ever got it. Don't
think he ever really understood.

A tear. Shirley wipes it before anyone sees. They see.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
 Maybe I shoulda been more direct.
 Maybe I shoulda just let Al toss
 him into the woods. Too late now I
 guess...

Fisher reaches out and touches her hand. Shirley locks her eyes shut. She knows what she has to do. She knows.

FISHER DYCE
 Want me to invite the FBI officers
 over, Mrs Koch?

She keeps her eyes firmly shut. Just about manages a nod. Tears stream down her tired face. Fisher slips out quietly. FBI agents Alisha Lynch and Hugh Frost replace him.

ALISHA LYNCH
 Mrs Koch. Are you ready?

Shirley sucks in air. The weight of the situation hitting now. She looks up at them both and opens her eyes.

SHIRLEY
 I am responsible for what happened
 at Sunset Mesa Funeral Home.

Silence. A moment passes by. Just when we think Shirley's going to fall on the sword, to take the save her again.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
 But not nearly as much as my
 daughter, Megan Hess.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLES, OVER REAL LIFE IMAGES:

Megan Hess eventually pled guilty for her part in the Sunset Mesa body snatching scheme. Guidelines recommended 12 years in prison. She was sentenced to 20.

Shirley Koch publicly apologized to the victims and took responsibility for her role. She received 15 years.

Sunset Mesa Funeral Home is estimated to have sold over 550 bodies without proper consent.

It is the largest body snatching case in American history.

The majority of victims never discovered what happened to their loved ones.