ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. THE SCHUYLKILL RIVER, PHILADELPHIA, PA. - MORNING

Early morning light blazes across the water and heats up the west side of the river. We hear FOOTFALLS on gravel. Heavy but controlled BREATHING. And then ANGELA SWANSON races by.

At age 36, she's attractive, fit and driven. No mere jogger. Six minute miles? No problem. She sips from a bottle of GATORADE as the gravel path she's running on angles towards Strawberry Mansion Bridge.

EXT. FAIRMONT PARK - MORNING

On the hill overlooking the river A MAN LOITERS, white, mid 30's, wearing a hoodie, watching joggers run along the banks of the river below. We get the feeling he's on the lookout for someone. And then Angela appears in the distance. He starts for Strawberry Mansion Bridge.

EXT. STRAWBERRY MANSION BRIDGE - MORNING

Shadows gather under the bridge. Angela kicks it into high gear. Into darkness she goes. And suddenly --

ANGELA'S POV -

The CAMERA VEERS WILDLY as we are suddenly sent careening off the path and plunging into the river.

IN THE WATER

BLOOD PLUMES AROUND ANGELA'S HEAD. Her eyes roll. She struggles for breath, and chokes on the water pouring into her mouth instead. She's drowning. She fights it. But slowly, inexorably, the river claims her....

EXT. STRAWBERRY MANSION BRIDGE - MORNING

All is still and quiet as Angela's inert body floats out from under the bridge and rides the current towards Center City and the Delaware River beyond.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL - MORNING

CLOSE UP ON A WOMAN'S FACE. Her eyes are closed, but not in repose. A thin red horizontal beam of light passes over her face, accompanied by the mechanical sound of something moving overhead. The magnetic ring of a CT scanner, to be exact.
We PULL BACK to take in a woman in her mid 30's, wearing a hospital gown, lying on her back in the bed of the scanner. She is DR. MEGAN HUNT. Just old enough to be on her second medical career, brilliant enough to have done both in half the time. We hear a BEEP. Her eyes open. And frown as a cheery, sing-song female voice comes over a loudspeaker.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Okay dokey, Dr. Hunt, one more pass and we'll have you out of there in a jiffy.

MEGAN
(miserable)
Super duper.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - MORNING

Megan stands at a mirror reattaching an earring and otherwise checking her appearance for flaws. Of which there are none. Her beauty, like everything else about her, is intimidating. She wears the latest fashion and wears it well. Her style, clothes and accessories will always be a cut above everyone else's.

MEGAN
A whole hour listening to that ding dong technician. Since when does a CT take that long?

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
I told them to scan you twice.

Megan turns to regard her neurologist, DR. SIMON BRUCE, age 43. He studies two sets of pictures laid out on his desk. He looks up to meet Megan's gaze.

DR. BRUCE
To save you from making me do it again when we didn't find anything.

Megan walks over and takes a look for herself.

DR. BRUCE
No damage to the cervical vertebrae. Just like last year.

MEGAN
What about another nerve conduction study?

DR. BRUCE
No thanks. You punched me during the last one.
She gives a little 'Who me?' smile. He takes her hands and inspects them.

    DR. BRUCE
    No change in symptoms?

    MEGAN
    Occasional numbness. Same as usual.

    DR. BRUCE
    Well, your circulation's good, you're not diabetic or malnourished. And every test we've done has come up negative. It's been four years since your car accident yet there's been no improvement in your paresthesia. Even if you could get reinstated there's not an insurance company in the world that would cover you stepping into an OR again.
    (beat)
    Your career as a neurosurgeon is over, Megan. Maybe it's time you accepted that.

She gives him a look as she pulls her hands back.

    MEGAN
    You think I'm trying to get back into the OR?

    DR. BRUCE
    Well aren't you?

A beat. Is she?

    DR. BRUCE
    You've got a whole new career -- most people would count their blessings.

    MEGAN
    I'm not most people.

From inside Megan's Gucci handbag a cell phone starts to ring. She digs it out, checks the number, and answers --

    MEGAN
    (into phone)
    Megan Hunt, Medical Examiner's Office.
EXT. THE SCHUYLKILL RIVER - BOAT HOUSE ROW - MORNING

Philadelphia's iconic Boat House Row sits on the east side of the river. In the middle of the row is the U of Penn Boat House with its big blue "P" painted on the landing dock. Lying on that "P" is A BODY COVERED BY A SHEET.

Among the patrol cops and the Penn rowers being questioned we pick out Medical Investigator PETER MAXWELL, age 36, an employee of the Medical Examiner's Office. He's tall with rough good looks and still maintains the body of the professional football player he once was. He looks up from his notes as Megan emerges from the Boat House. They meet over the body.

PETER
Thought you had a doctor's appointment.

MEGAN
Waste of time. What do we have?

Peter consults his notes as Megan pulls the sheet off the body and beholds --

PETER
Angela Swanson, 36. Bumped into the Penn Heavyweight Eight as they were pushing off the dock. She's got trauma to the back of the head and traces of foam in her mouth. CSU is up river searching for where she went in. Liver temp 93.2.

MEGAN
Water temp?

PETER
64.

She makes a quick calculation in her head.

MEGAN
Two hours.

Two more new arrivals emerge from the Boat House, gold shields clipped to their lapels. Detectives BUD MORRIS, age 42, and SAMANTHA BAKER, age 37. Morris is the senior of the two and among the details we won't draw attention to until later is a fresh shaving cut on his chin and an impression on his ring finger where a wedding band used to be. Samantha is eager and bright but used to taking the back seat.
DET. MORRIS
Hey, Pete.

PETER
Bud.

DET. MORRIS
Who do you like on Sunday?

PETER
Not the Eagles.

DET. MORRIS
Traitor.

They're clearly familiar with Peter. And not with Megan.

PETER
Detective Morris, this is Dr. Megan Hunt. I take it you haven't pulled her on a case before.

Detectives Morris and Baker both react to the name. Not in a good way.

DET. MORRIS
It must be our lucky day.

Megan just smiles.

MEGAN
Look at that. Already we agree on something.

Det. Morris blinks like someone whose sarcasm has just boomeranged on him --

MEGAN
Our victim has blunt force trauma to the back of the head and preliminary indications of drowning. No scrapes or abrasions that indicate she tried to break her fall. She went into the river clean after being hit on the back of the head. I'm calling it a presumed homicide. Liver temp puts it about two hours ago.

DET. MORRIS
That's it? You mean you haven't caught the murderer yet?
There, Det. Morris thinks, that ought to ruffle her feathers. But Megan just smiles again.

MEGAN
No, Detective, have you? By the way, you can tell CSU whoever attacked her did it on the west side of the river.

A beat. This is news even to Peter.

DET. BAKER
How do you know that?

MEGAN
She got some sun this morning.

They all look at Angela's face.

DET. MORRIS
So?

Peter gets it.

PETER
So two hours ago the east side of the river was in shadow.

As Detectives Morris and Baker chew on this --

MEGAN
Autopsy in two hours. See you there, Detectives.

Megan turns and starts back towards the boat house. She feels their eyes on her. She stops and looks back at Det. Morris.

MEGAN
One more thing. Don't believe everything you've heard about me. The truth is much worse.

With what might be called a "mischievous smile" she resumes her exit through the Boat House.

INT. MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE - MORNING

The Medical Examiner's Office of a major metropolitan city is a world unto itself, with departments and staff to handle the hundreds of autopsies of homicides, suicides and John Does, as well as the more mundane functions like issuing death certificates and the many other matters involved in processing the dead.
The directory at the front desk lists Intake & Processing, IT, Records, Storage, Examination Rooms and Laboratory, to name a few, as well as the names and office numbers of the Chief and Deputy MEs and a dozen other MEs and Assistant MEs.

This is the directory Megan blows right by as she returns to the office. Administrative staff hustle and bustle but at the sight of Megan they part like the Red Sea. Deferential nods and mumbled "hello's" follow her down the hall towards the Bullpen, a long row of ME offices....

....from out of which various MEs jump out and follow for a few paces bending Megan's ear. We get immediately that Megan is their go-to diagnostician.

ASSISTANT ME #1
Five year old boy choked to death during a seizure but had no hippocampal lesions.

MEGAN
Check for Alexander disease.

Assistant ME #1 peels off and is replaced by --

ASSISTANT ME #2
Twenty three year old man, jaundiced, anemia and liver failure but no cirrhosis or history of Hepatitis B or C.

MEGAN
What are his copper levels?

A blank look. Assistant ME #2 has no idea. He peels off and is replaced by --

DR. ELLIOT GROSS, age 33. He's boyish, geeky in an endearing way, and utterly non-threatening. Even Megan lightens up around him, not in word so much as tone, like giving your little brother a hard time. They walk side by side until -- *

MEGAN
What do you want?

ELLIOT
Nothing.

MEGAN
Oh.

A few more steps --
ELLIOT
But since you're asking, I got a female, age 32, died in a sauna of apparent heat stroke, but urine came back normal for hydration.

MEGAN
What are her electrolytes?

ELLIOT
Um, they're these things in the body that contain free ions --

Off her look --

ELLIOT
Wait. I know. You're thinking *hyponatremia?*

MEGAN
I'm thinking you should go now.

He does so. She watches him go with mild amusement, then *walks into her office.***

INT. MEGAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Megan walks in and closes the door. She drops her handbag, sits down at her desk and takes a moment to decompress. Or rather, try to. She holds her hands out in front of her, inspecting them like they belonged to someone else, like they were once trusted friends who have since betrayed her.

We take in the office. Multiple degrees and certifications. Photographs of Megan with various dignitaries. These take a back seat, however, to photographs of her daughter LACEY, age 12, as well as a photograph of Megan as a girl POSEING WITH HER FATHER IN FRONT OF A TOOL SHED IN THEIR BACKYARD.

When we return to Megan she is consulting Lacey's class schedule. It's pinned up on the wall with all the free periods highlighted. Megan checks her watch, picks up the phone and dials.

INT. OFFICE OF MIKE FLEMING - MORNING

MIKE FLEMING, age 42, stands at the window of his law office dictating into a recorder when the pink, sequined cell phone in his briefcase starts buzzing. He grabs it, reads the number and picks up the call. We INTERCUT --

MIKE
I thought I told you not to call Lacey at school.
MEGAN
What are YOU doing at Lacey's school?

MIKE
I'm not at her school, I'm at the office. I had to confiscate her cell phone.

MEGAN
Why?

MIKE
She's not supposed to be on the phone at school, that's why.

MEGAN
Like I have any other option? You screen my calls to the house.

MIKE
She's not a crutch for you to lean on whenever you want to feel better.

MEGAN
That's not why I call and you know it.

MIKE
Megan, I have work to do.

MEGAN
I want to come to Lacey's birthday party.

MIKE
We've been over this. You're not invited.

MEGAN
Mike, please let me talk to her.

MIKE
You know how many times she tried to call you and you palmed her off on some assistant?

MEGAN
I haven't had an assistant in four years.
MIKE
And maybe she still hasn't gotten over it. I'm sorry, Megan, but I have to go now.

He hangs up the phone. On his face we glimpse an old wound opened once again. Briefly. He picks up his recorder and resumes his dictation.

INT. MEGAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Megan stares at her phone. The wound is deeper on her face. And it lingers. She hangs up the phone and stares at a picture of her daughter.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM #1 - LATER THAT MORNING

Angela Swanson's body lies on the examination table. Detectives Morris and Baker stand off to one side, observing. Megan and Peter are in scrubs and smocks, wearing latex gloves. A microphone hangs overhead recording everything.

MEGAN
This is Dr. Megan Hunt, Medical Examiner, assisted by Peter Maxwell, Medical Investigator, Philadelphia Medical Examiner's Office, performing an autopsy on Angela Swanson, age 36, Open Homicide Case File Number -- Peter, you'll fill in the number along with the date and time. Observing are Detectives Morris and Baker. Say hello, Detectives.

Detectives Morris and Baker mumble "hello's" as Megan begins her visual inspection of Angela's body.

MEGAN
You find her entry point into the river?

DET. MORRIS
Strawberry Mansion Bridge.

She waits for it --

DET. MORRIS
West side.

-- and smiles in inverse proportion to Det. Morris' frown.

MEGAN
So what do we know about this girl?
DET. BAKER
She's local. Grew up in Fishtown. Central High, scholarship to Brown, senior associate at Whitney, Howell & Walker. Apartment in Mount Airy, single no boyfriend. Colleagues say she was a workaholic who pretty much lived at the office.


MEGAN
She's obviously in excellent physical condition. Callouses on her feet, a few minor scars here and there, healed puncture marks on the left forearm both anterior and posterior, made by an animal's incisors, probably canine. Fingernails are trimmed short, chewed in places --

DET. MORRIS
Any DNA under them?

MEGAN
All in good time, Detective.
(continuing to the head and mouth)
Looks like she ground her teeth. Another stress indicator. Was she up for partner?

The Detectives exchange another look.

DET. BAKER
That's right.

Like everything else, Megan files this away --

MEGAN
Scarring on the skull above the hairline. Peter, check for any prior head injuries in her medical files.
(continuing)
Now this is interesting.

DET. MORRIS
What?
MEGAN
A small growth at the base of her neck. Some kind of nodule or neoplasm. Peter, make sure you get a sample to the lab --

An impatient sigh escapes Det. Morris' mouth.

MEGAN
Yes, Detective Morris?

DET. MORRIS
She got her head bashed in. Can we get to the murder weapon already?

Megan pauses from her examination to look at him.

MEGAN
There are over 100 trillion cells in the human body, 60,000 miles of arteries, veins and capillaries, 208 bones, 40 plus organs and dozens of life sustaining systems from cardiovascular to respiratory and at any given moment anything can go wrong with any one of them. When the range of possibilities is infinite I abide by one rule and one rule only: the body is the evidence. It will tell us everything we need to know, if we have the patience to look.

DET. MORRIS
You could have told us that before you called us in here.

MEGAN
If it's going to be good for you it has to be good for me too, okay Detective?

Det. Morris' jaw drops.

DET. MORRIS
You're something else.

MEGAN
I know.

DET. MORRIS
I'm gonna get some coffee.
Det. Morris heads for the door. Megan turns Angela's head around to inspect the wound. As she speaks, Det. Morris slows to a stop.

MEGAN
The skull has collapsed into the occipital lobe in a V-shaped depression. Extensive tissue and hair loss and flecks of rust throughout. The murder weapon was something heavy, maybe cast iron, and square with a dull edge, possibly a large plumber's wrench or some kind of mallet. And Detective?

DET. MORRIS
Yeah?

MEGAN
I take mine with cream, no sugar.

A beat. Det. Morris shakes his head and pushes his way out the door. All of which Det. Baker has secretly enjoyed. No one, we get the feeling, talks to her partner this way, including her.

DET. BAKER
I heard you were some big neurosurgeon a few years back.

Megan heads to a work table and a tray of instruments. She picks up a scalpel. For just a moment, she stares at it. It used to feel like an extension of her hand. But no more.

MEGAN
That's right.

DET. BAKER
So why are you working here?

Megan turns back to the examination table. She positions the scalpel at Angela's right shoulder, angled towards the base of the sternum --

MEGAN
You can't kill someone when they're already dead.

-- and begins to cut.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. MEGAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Megan leans against her desk staring at her computer screen as she talks on the phone --

MEGAN
(into phone)
This is Dr. Hunt. Calling about the Crystal Ball. Is it in yet?
(pause)
Great. I'll be by later.

She hangs up. And finds Peter staring at her from the doorway.

PETER
I always knew you were a witch.

Unlike Elliot, Peter is a man's man. On whom Megan must have the upper hand, lest he have it on her.

MEGAN
Then you should watch yourself, shouldn't you.

He shrugs this off with a smile as he enters. He peers at her computer screen.

MEGAN
It's a handbag.

PETER
Does it come with a broom?

MEGAN
Are you here just to annoy me?

PETER
I put Angela's stomach contents in storage. That liquid we found was Gatorade. And the tissue sample from her neck is at the lab.

MEGAN
So is her diaphragm, right?

PETER
Yeah, that too.
(beat)
About that....
MEGAN
Yes?

PETER
Why does a woman wear a diaphragm on her morning run?

MEGAN
Either she had or was planning on having sex this morning, or...?

She waits. He has no idea.

MEGAN
The diaphragm was stained with old blood. Some women use them as a menstrual barrier before getting their period.

PETER
I didn't know that.

MEGAN
Clearly. You find out about that scar above her hairline?

PETER
I've got calls in to her primary physician and two specialists we know about, but it'll take time.

MEGAN
Then let's find out for ourselves.

Megan heads for the door. Peter knows what this means.

PETER
Brain dissection. Cool.

INT. ME'S OFFICE - MORNING

As Megan and Peter head down the hallway Megan is intercepted by Deputy Chief Medical Examiner DR. SEMO SOLOMONA, age 41. Semo is a Samoan man whose girth brings new meaning to 'throwing his weight around the office.'

SEMO
Dr. Hunt.

MEGAN
Semo.

SEMO
I'm a doctor too, you know.
MEGAN
And yet no one calls you that.
Strange.

He bristles.

SEMO
You ordered an ANA panel on a suicide?

MEGAN
So?

SEMO
So he blew his brains out. What are you doing ordering a thousand dollar autoimmune test?

MEGAN
Do you know why he committed suicide?

SEMO
No.

MEGAN
Neither do I. But now we both know it had nothing to do with his immune system.

SEMO
Cause of death. That's our job. The what, when and how, not the why.

MEGAN
Semo, have you ever heard of "going the extra mile"?

She throws a look at his waistline. Apparently not. Semo bristles some more.

SEMO
I'm the Deputy Chief Medical Examiner. The entire budget of this office is on my shoulders. You keep pulling this crap I don't care how many friends you have.

MEGAN
What makes you think I have friends?

Peter pipes up.
PETER

It's true. She doesn't have any.

Semo turns. He glares at Peter, then marches back down the hallway. Peter smiles at Megan. She gives him a look.

PETER

What? You do have friends?

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM #2 – MORNING

Elliot walks into Examination Room #2 with a LAB TECH trailing behind him. He flips through a lab file, searching for a particular result --

ELLIOT

Tox screen negative for drugs and alcohol. And -- here we are -- her electrolytes are... (deflated) ...within the normal range. So much for hyponatremia.

He walks to the examination table where A WOMAN'S BODY lies covered by a sheet. He pulls it down to reveal the face. A woman around Elliot's age. They both stare at her.

ELLIOT

(beat)

You know, I never stop expecting their eyes to pop open right about now.

A beat. They both wait for it.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM #1 – MORNING

Peter carries a cross-section of brain to a work table where it joins a series of others laid out in a row. Megan walks the length of the table studying them with a magnifying glass.

MEGAN

Mild depression and hemosiderin staining in the frontal lobe... (moving to the next cross-section) ...and the classic coup-contrecoup pattern of prior brain trauma... (moving to the next cross-section) ...causing a unilateral lesion of the amygdala.
PETER
What does all that mean?

MEGAN
It means our girl's been hit on the head before. And I have friends, thank you very much.

PETER
Yeah, like who?

She ignores the question --

MEGAN
The amygdala regulates emotional learning and fear conditioning and plays a significant role in sexual arousal. A lesion like this would throw normal activity on its head. I've seen at least one study showing a lesioned amygdala can result in loss of fear or hyperemotionality or even hypersexuality....

Her voice trails off as she processes what this might mean. Peter meanwhile still thinks they're having a conversation.

PETER
Seriously, name one friend.

MEGAN
Call the lab. Tell them to rush those diaphragm results.

He looks at her. She looks at him. So much for conversation. He heads for the wall-mounted phone but before he gets there it starts ringing.

PETER
(answering)
Room 1, this is Maxwell...?

INT. CAR - MORNING

Megan flips through various pages of a file stamped "Thomas Jefferson Hospital" as Peter drives.

MEGAN
She was admitted two years ago with severe head trauma and spent twelve days in a coma. Thrown down a flight of stairs by her boyfriend.
PETER
The guy's name is Tom Burris. Det. Morris pulled his jacket. He was paroled three weeks ago and lives in a halfway house in Overbrook. Morris says we can only come if we keep quiet.

MEGAN
Like that's going to happen.

INT. HALFWAY HOUSE - MORNING

TOM BURRIS sits on a cot facing Detectives Morris and Baker as Megan and Peter hang back by the door. Burris is white, mid 30's, and we should recognize him. He's the man in our opening scene loitering by the river, wearing a hoodie.

BURRIS
I was picking up trash around City Hall this morning. It's part of my work release.

DET. MORRIS
City Hall's a two minute cab ride from the Park.

BURRIS
I've known Angela since high school, okay? I didn't kill her, I loved her. I would never hurt her.

DET. BAKER
What do you call throwing her down a flight of stairs?

BURRIS
I didn't do that either. We got into a fight. The neighbors heard us yelling at each other but they didn't see her fall all by herself. I got screwed, man.

DET. MORRIS
Then why didn't Angela back up your story?

MEGAN
She couldn't. Post coma memory loss.

BURRIS
Yeah, that's right.
Det. Morris stares at Megan. She smiles helpfully.

MEGAN
It's consistent with the autopsy.

Then, to Burris --

MEGAN
I don't suppose you two had sex this morning, did you?

EXT. HALFWAY HOUSE - MORNING

Detectives Morris and Baker, Megan and Peter.

DET. MORRIS
Here's how this is supposed to work. We ask the questions, you tell us what you know, and WE catch the bad guy, okay?

MEGAN
So this morning you weren't serious, you were just mocking me.

Det. Morris takes another verbal jab to the chin. Once again * we catch Det. Baker admiring Megan's pluck. *

DET. MORRIS
Even if Angela fell down the stairs accidentally, that's all the more reason for Burris to hold a grudge against Angela when he got out of prison.

MEGAN
Okay. Let's say he did hold a grudge. Angela was hit on the back of the head as she ran under the bridge. If Burris killed her, don't you think he'd want her to see him, to know it was him paying her back for sending him to prison? But there were no defensive wounds on Angela. She didn't put up a fight because she never saw it coming. Burris didn't do it.

DET. MORRIS
So what's your theory? She calls him up for some ex-con sex? Under a bridge on her morning run? Here's a real theory. He bashed her over the head and killed her.
Det. Morris turns his unhappy gaze to Peter.

DET. MORRIS
Next time you want to come along, forget it.

Detectives Morris heads for the car. Det. Baker trails after. Peter looks at Megan. She is serenely unfazed.

MEGAN
We need to know more about Angela.

EXT. SWANSON HOUSE - DAY

Fishtown. The docklands at the eastern edge of the city. Narrow row houses inhabited by white working class poor. In front of one row house a WHITE SEDAN with the Philadelphia ME Office logo pulls up. Peter and Megan emerge.

INT. SWANSON HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Megan stands at the mantle looking at photographs several rows deep. Everything from Angela's baby pictures to her law school graduation. Many of Angela on cross country teams. Many of her posing with a black Labrador Retriever.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
We've already spoken to the police.

Megan turns. Behind her stand MR. AND MRS. SWANSON, early 60's. They're clearly in the midst of the worst day of their lives. Peter hangs by the door.

MEGAN
I know, and I know this is difficult for you but it helps me fill in the picture of your daughter. So if it's okay, when did you last talk to her?

MRS. SWANSON
About a week ago. She'd just finished a trial.

MEGAN
What did you talk about?

MRS. SWANSON
Just a hello. She was going to bed. She had a sore throat.

That's news to Megan. She cocks an eyebrow at Peter.
PETER
It was strep.

MEGAN
And you were planning on telling me when?

PETER
(oops)
Now?

MEGAN
What was she taking for it?

A blank look. He whips out his cell phone and steps out the front door. Megan returns to the photographs.

MEGAN
Did Angela's dog ever bite her?

MR. SWANSON
You mean the scars on her arm? No. Buddy was killed by a pit bull. Angela tried to stop it.

Another piece of information filed away.

MEGAN
I see a lot of pictures of Angela alone. Did she have any friends?

MR. SWANSON
Not many. Angela was all about her grades in school, all about her career thereafter.

Megan can relate. The door opens again. Peter returns with the answer --

PETER
She was taking Erythromycin.

This too Megan files away. She takes a final look at Angela's photographs.

MEGAN
How did Tom Burris fit in?

MR. SWANSON
* He didn't. Angela didn't have time for a real relationship. Tom's only virtue was she was in no danger of falling in love with him. We always knew he was no good.
MEGAN
And there was no one else? No one she was seeing recently?

MR. SWANSON
No. No one.

MEGAN
One last question. After the coma, did you notice any change in Angela's behavior?

At this, Mrs. Swanson stifles a sob. She exits the room, leaving her husband to explain --

MR. SWANSON
Understand we've always loved our daughter, but in her teens Angela became a hard, driven girl. All she wanted was to get out of Fishtown, and when she did there were times we wouldn't hear from her for months. After the coma, it was like she came back to us. Our little girl. She'd drop in once a week. She'd call just to say hello.

Mr. Swanson stifles a sob of his own.

* 

EXT. SWANSON HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Peter leads Megan back to the car, shaking his head.

PETER
I've heard of someone getting some sense knocked into them, but feelings? That's a new one.

MEGAN
I'd throw my ex down the stairs if I thought it'd get the same result.

Peter gives her a look, but Megan is already on to her next thought.

MEGAN
Let's swing by midtown on our way back.

PETER
But midtown's in the opposite direction.
MEGAN
(a look)
It was a figure of speech.

INT. HANDBAG SHOP - DAY

A high end boutique. Peter follows Megan inside. The female OWNER disappears into the back and returns with a box which she sets before Megan on the counter.

OWNER
I haven't let anyone else see it, much less touch it.

Off comes the top. Megan beholds a handbag about the size and shape of a flattened softball, covered in blue sequins.

OWNER
The Devi Kroell Crystal Disco Ball Handbag. Isn't it stunning?

PETER
It looks like a kindergarten project gone wrong.

Megan and the Owner exchange a 'What a Neanderthal' look.

MEGAN
My daughter turns twelve tomorrow and I want to get her something nice, okay?

Peter meanwhile moves on to the price tag.

PETER
Yeah? For eleven hundred dollars?

Megan stares at him. Then at the price tag. Apparently this is a problem.

OWNER
You wanted the limited edition, didn't you?

MEGAN
Yes, but... I don't want her to think I'm buying her affection.

PETER
You don't want her to think you're insane. Which is what anybody is who pays that much for a handbag.
OWNER
You don't know much about handbags, do you.

Peter takes Megan by the arm and steers her out of earshot of the Owner.

PETER
Getting your daughter that bag is a bad idea.

MEGAN
And what could you possibly know about my daughter?

That stops him cold.

PETER
You know something? You're absolutely right. How could I know anything about your daughter?

He heads for the door. She watches him go.

INT. CAR - DAY

All is quiet as they head back to the office. Megan glances over at Peter. He stares straight ahead. Finally --

MEGAN
Lacey lives with her dad. We divorced five years ago. He got sole custody.

Peter glances over at her.

MEGAN
He got it because a woman who works 18 hours a day is an absentee mother but a man who works the same hours is a provider. Do you have any idea what it takes to be a practicing neurosurgeon at 28 and run your own department at 33?

PETER
I spent my entire 20's in a weight room.

She stares at him.

MEGAN
Did you really just compare neurosurgery to football?
PETER

Um....

MEGAN
I saved lives. And I was damn good at it. And yes I missed play dates and phone calls and for that I'm sorry. But I was under the bizarre impression my husband had my back. Instead he was building a case against me. I can still hear the judge. "I find it in the best interests of the child...."

Megan takes a moment to stare down at her hands.

MEGAN
I lost my daughter to my career. And then I lost my career. All because of that god damn car accident. My hands still go numb.

Silence.

PETER
I still don't get the handbag.

MEGAN
What else am I supposed to do? Hire a sky writer? "Lacey, I'm sorry?" I pay for summer camp and dance classes and everything else, but no matter what I do Mike tells her I'm just trying to make myself feel better.

PETER
Which... you're not...?

MEGAN
I'm trying to have a relationship with my daughter, okay? For all the good it's done.

PETER
Maybe you should just try having some fun with her.

She looks at him, then stares out the window.

MEGAN
Forget we had this conversation.
INT. ME'S OFFICE - DAY

Megan and Peter come through the entrance and sail past the front desk. The RECEPTIONIST does his best to flag Megan down --

    RECEPTIONIST
    Dr. Hunt, the Chief wants to see you.

They disappear down the hallway. The Receptionist stares after her. Did she hear him? Does she give a damn?

    PETER
    That would be the Chief as in our boss.

    MEGAN
    I'm still not talking to you.

    PETER
    Or the Chief, apparently. A career strategy that always works for me.

    MEGAN
    I'll handle the Chief. You light a fire under somebody's ass. I want those diaphragm results.

He peels off and heads for the lab. Megan turns down the hall and practically bumps into Elliot. They walk side by side until --

    MEGAN
    What do you want now?

    ELLIOT
    Nothing.

    MEGAN
    Elliot, I'm really not in the mood.

    ELLIOT
    You know that female heat stroke victim I mentioned? Her electrolytes were normal. Negative tox for drugs and alcohol too.

    MEGAN
    Any psychological problems? Depression, paranoia?

    ELLIOT
    Um..., why?
Off her look --

ELLIO T
I'll find out. But what do I do if there were?

MEGAN
Order an ANA panel.

Megan heads for the Examination Rooms. Elliot stares after her.

ELLIO T
Isn't that the test that got you in trouble with Semo?

She throws a look back with that same mischievous smile.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM #1 - DAY TO NIGHT

Megan walks her magnifying glass over to Angela's body and begins a CLOSEUP inspection. AT SKIN LEVEL. WE WATCH VARIOUS CROSS FADES OVER TIME as Megan covers the entire body and comes, at last, to a discovery. At the side of Angela's head, on her scalp hidden by hair and the edges of Angela's head wound, a faint BRUISE IN THE SHAPE OF A FINGER.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM #1 - NIGHT

Megan has by now mapped the bruises on Angela's scalp onto a piece of paper. They are unmistakably the fingerprints of a man's hand. Megan now stands behind Angela combing out strands of hair against a piece of white cardboard. What she sees among the other hairs are a few that appear clipped short, standing out against the rest.

Megan cuts one off and walks it to the Examination Room's microscope. That's when she notices Peter standing inside the door.

MEGAN
Do you want something or are you just skulking?

PETER
I didn't know if you were talking to me again.

Peter enters. He notes the fingerprints mapped out on Megan's piece of paper.
MEGAN
Vascular density of the scalp is greater than any other part of the body by several orders of magnitude. Add to that compression against the skull is almost instantaneous and all it takes is a passionate embrace to leave those finger marks that were obscured by her head wound.

PETER
Made by who?

MEGAN
Someone Angela couldn't tell her parents about.

Megan peers into her microscope at the magnified tip of a hair shaft.

MEGAN
I found damaged hair shafts in the same location. If they were torn as a result of her head wound the edges would be rough and fractured. These are uniform and intact. But they're also compressed. So either this strand of hair was cut with a dull pair of scissors or it got caught in something and clipped. A watchband, or bracelet, or maybe one of those interlocking wedding rings. Have a look.

PETER
Don't need to.

She looks at him. And she sees the folder in his hand --

MEGAN
You got the diaphragm results?

PETER
They found trace amounts of semen. DNA tests will take a while but one thing's for sure. There were no spermatozoa. The guy had a vasectomy.

She grabs the results and studies them for herself.
MEGAN
Do you know any bachelors who'd get
their tubes snipped instead of
using a condom?

PETER
Not one.

Megan looks back at Angela's body, now more sure than ever.

MEGAN
She was sleeping with a married
man.

END OF ACT TWO
FADE IN:

INT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL RESTAURANT - MORNING (DAY 2)

Megan sits across from DR. HOWARD KARASUNIS, age 52. They converse over coffee.

MEGAN
The police say she pretty much lived at the office. If she was having an affair, then someone at Whitney, Howell & Walker would be a natural candidate.

DR. KARASUNIS
So why ask me?

MEGAN
He had a vasectomy. And you're the number one ball cutter in all of Philadelphia.

DR. KARASUNIS
I thought you held that title.

They exchange the smile of old colleagues.

DR. KARASUNIS
We go way back, Megan. But now you're asking me to betray doctor-patient privilege, and you know I won't do that.

MEGAN
I'm not asking for me, I'm asking for a woman who was murdered.

He ponders this. And his old colleague.

DR. KARASUNIS
Tell me something. This new you -- Megan Hunt, M.E. -- who raced through forensic pathology faster than she did a neurosurgery residency, and who seems to care more about dead people than she ever did about her patients -- is she for real, or just working off her guilt after killing a patient on the operating table?

Megan stares at him for a beat.
MEGAN

Both.

He ponders this. Then fishes out his Blackberry and enters a few keystrokes.

DR. KARASUNIS

Have you seen the new Blackberry? I find it indispensable.

He sets it on the table and rises to his feet.

DR. KARASUNIS

If you'll excuse me, I need to use the rest room.

He leaves the dining room. As soon as he's gone Megan picks up the Blackberry and looks at the screen.

INSERT - BLACKBERRY SCREEN

The work and home addresses for Raymond Whitney, Managing Partner, Whitney, Howell & Walker.

INT. MEGAN'S OFFICE - MORNING (DAY 2)

Detectives Morris and Baker turn as Megan walks in.

DET. MORRIS

You never heard of the phone?

MEGAN

I missed your piquant blend of irritation and after shave.


DET. MORRIS

Burris was picking up garbage yesterday morning -- until he went AWOL for half an hour. And you know what they use on the job? A stick with a squared-off handle reinforced with cast iron L-brackets.

MEGAN

Attached with bolts?

DET. MORRIS

That's right.
MEGAN
No bolt impressions on the head wound. But I am curious. When you spoke to Angela's colleagues, was one of them Raymond Whitney?

Det. Morris is still adjusting to Megan's shut down of his L-bracket theory --

DET. BAKER
The head of the firm? No, why?

MEGAN
Because Angela was having an affair with him.

Det. Baker looks at Det. Morris. Off their mutual surprise -- *

INT. LAW FIRM - MORNING (DAY 2) *

RAYMOND WHITNEY, age 54, the silver haired Managing Partner of Whitney, Howell & Walker, greets his three visitors -- Detectives Morris and Baker, and Megan.

WHITNEY
Raymond Whitney. Please come in.

DET. MORRIS
Detective Morris, my partner Det. Baker, and this is Dr. Hunt from the Medical Examiner's Office.

As Whitney shakes their hands, Megan casually notes his TWO RING INTERLOCKING WEDDING BAND. From this she abruptly turns away and starts inspecting Whitney's office as if she has no interest in the conversation that unfolds in the background.

DET. MORRIS
Can you tell us where you were around 7 a.m. yesterday morning?

WHITNEY
Why?

Like Megan's own office there are the requisite plaques, awards, certificates, etc. on the walls --

DET. MORRIS
Just accounting for everybody's whereabouts.

There are also photos. Whitney posing with his smiling wife. Whitney's two pre-adolescent sons on various sports teams, etc. --
WHITNEY
I was at home. Working out in our gym.

And finally Megan studies a wall of photos taken at various charity events. The Philadelphia AIDS walk. An inner city vaccination drive sponsored by the boys' middle school. We see WHITNEY'S WIFE JILL in a school nurse's uniform administering vaccinations to the city's great unwashed.

DET. MORRIS
Can anyone back that up?

WHITNEY
No. My wife Jill takes our sons in early to school. She's the school nurse.

Megan has finally satisfied her curiosity. She turns back to the conversation in progress --

WHITNEY
Detective, I don't mean to tell you your business but it's preposterous that you would think --

MEGAN
You're head of the Partnership Committee, aren't you?

Det. Morris shoots Megan a look. What is she doing?

WHITNEY
Yes?

MEGAN
Angela was a seventh year associate. That's the cut off year. If you don't make partner you never will.

WHITNEY
So?

MEGAN
So how long were you sleeping with her?

Whitney, startled --

WHITNEY
What?
MEGAN
She had sex yesterday morning with a man who had a vasectomy. Despite the lack of spermatozoa we can still match for DNA. Care to give me a swab?

She holds up a Q-tip in a plastic tube. Whitney recoils.

MEGAN
Didn't think so. That's okay, there's plenty of time for that later. And it'll only tell me what I already know anyway. She was sleeping with you to make partner --

WHITNEY
No --

MEGAN
-- or you were sexually harassing her. Whichever it was, --

WHITNEY
That's not true!

MEGAN
-- she was in a position to end your marriage and sue your firm if she didn't get what she wanted. But you couldn't make her partner without violating your own ethics rules which would have really had you over a barrel, --

WHITNEY
I refuse to listen to this --!

MEGAN
-- so you followed her from your house, waited for her under Strawberry Mansion Bridge, bashed her over the head and threw her in the river!

Megan watches him closely, something calculated behind her heated accusations --

WHITNEY
Get out of my office!

DET. MORRIS
Okay, that's it! Megan, wait outside!
EXT. STREET - MORNING (DAY 2)

Megan stands on the sidewalk outside the office building she just exited. If the previous scene affected her in any way you wouldn't know it. She looks bored. She checks her reflection in the front windows. And notices a pair of UNIFORMED SCHOOL GIRLS pass by behind her. She takes out her cell phone and dials a number.

MEGAN
(into phone)
I just wanted to remind you it's Lacey's birthday today. You're going to call her, right?

INT. PHILADELPHIA COMMON PLEAS COURT - CONTINUOUS (DAY 2)

JUDGE JEAN HUNT, age 62, sits at her desk scanning a document for her signature as an Assistant District Attorney waits impatiently. We INTERCUT --

JUDGE JEAN
I already did. First thing this morning.

MEGAN
Oh. Did she say anything?

JUDGE JEAN
You mean about you?

MEGAN
Well?

JUDGE JEAN
No.

Megan's face falls.

MEGAN
What did you get her?

JUDGE JEAN
The same thing I always get her. A contribution to her college fund. What did you get her?

MEGAN
I haven't decided.

JUDGE JEAN
That doesn't sound like you.
MEGAN
No? Why not?

JUDGE JEAN
My daughter Megan? Who had her whole life planned out by the time she was ten?

MEGAN
YOU had my whole life planned out by the time I was ten.

JUDGE JEAN
And look how well you turned out.

EXT. STREET - MORNING (DAY 2)
Megan stares at her reflection in the window glass. How well indeed. Detectives Morris and Baker exit the building. She shakes off the thought with a quick --

MEGAN
Goodbye, Mother.

-- as Detectives Morris and Baker walk up.

DET. MORRIS
You want to tell me what the hell you were doing up there?

MEGAN
A little good cop bad cop. I riled him up, you calmed him down. So what else did he tell you?

Det. Morris can't believe it --

DET. MORRIS
You know what the problem with that is? You're not a cop! And you know what else? You're off this case! I know plenty of ME's and none of them are as big a pain in the ass as you are!

MEGAN
They're also not as good as I am.

DET. MORRIS
You like to think that, don't you.

MEGAN
How long ago did she kick you out, Detective?
Morris stares at her.

MEGAN
You have an impression on your ring finger where a wedding band was recently removed. And that cut on your chin? It's from a double bladed razor, probably disposable. What happened? When your wife kicked you out she didn't let you take your own razor?


MEGAN
Every body tells a story. Bring me in or don't. But I want justice for Angela just as much as you do.

A long beat as Det. Morris decides what to do.

DET. MORRIS
Okay. You want in? Whitney denied everything. The last time he saw Angela was at the firm's Annual Dinner Sunday night. Angela was at his table but she didn't stay long. She had a sore throat.

MEGAN
He's lying.

DET. MORRIS
About the sex, maybe. But that doesn't make him a murderer. And Burris had motive.

MEGAN
So did Whitney if she was blackmailing him to make partner.


DET. BAKER
Angela didn't have to. She already made partner. She was at Whitney's table as a reward. She won a big lawsuit last week. It wasn't public yet but the Partnership Committee had already voted.
DET. MORRIS
And there goes your theory.

Det. Morris savors the sight of Megan having to swallow her blown theory. But Megan is nothing if not resilient.

MEGAN
What was the lawsuit about?

DET. BAKER
* A boy mauled by a dog in Fairmont Park.

This rings a bell in Megan's head.

MEGAN
Angela was mauled by a dog when she was a teenager.

DET. MORRIS
So?

MEGAN
So what's she doing defending a case like that?

DET. MORRIS (re: Det. Baker)
* Didn't you hear her? She was making partner.

DET. BAKER
The dog was owned by the Roberts family. Old Philadelphia money. One of the firm's biggest clients.

Megan takes out her cell phone and speed dials --

MEGAN (into phone)
Peter, got a pen? I want you to run down an address for me.

As she waits, Det. Morris looms in front of her.

DET. MORRIS
Where do you think you're going?

MEGAN
Why? You don't think I'll actually catch the killer, do you?

END OF ACT THREE
ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. NORTH PHILADELPHIA - DAY (DAY 2)

Blocks of tattered apartment buildings, bulldozed lots, graffitied walls and weeds growing chest high out of the pavement. They call this area the "Badlands."

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY (DAY 2)

Peter leans against the hood of his car outside an apartment building. He watches as another car pulls up and Megan and Detectives Morris and Baker emerge. Peter hides a smile as they approach.

PETER
Hey, Bud. How's it going?

Det. Morris just scowls at him.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY (DAY 2)

Det. Morris knocks. The door opens on a chain. Staring out at them is CARL RIVERS, age 38. Det. Morris shows his badge.

DET. MORRIS
Carl Rivers, I'm Detective Morris. We need to talk to you, Sir.

INT. CARL RIVERS' APARTMENT - DAY (DAY 2)

Rivers sits at the kitchen table with Detectives Morris and Baker standing before him, Megan and Peter hanging by the door. Rivers' ADOLESCENT SON plays a video game on the tv in the living room. His back is to them.

DET. MORRIS
You filed a lawsuit a year and a half ago after a dog attacked your son in Fairmont park.

RIVERS
So what?

DET. MORRIS
You lost. And Angela Swanson was murdered yesterday morning.

Rivers stares at him, then notices Megan. She's staring into the living room at his son.
RIVERS
He hasn't said a word since the trial. Bad enough getting attacked by a dog. But attacked by a human being? That bitch put him on the stand and blamed him for everything.

DET. MORRIS
And how did that make you feel?

RIVERS
Like killing her, how would it make you feel?

DET. MORRIS
Where were you yesterday morning at 7 a.m.?

RIVERS
At work. Alone. I'm a janitor at Community College of Philadelphia.

DET. BAKER
Did anyone see you there?

RIVERS
I said I was alone, didn't I?

DET. MORRIS
(beat)
Where was your son?

Rivers' face darkens. He rises to his feet.

RIVERS
Get the hell out of my house.

Before Det. Morris can respond, Megan interjects --

MEGAN
Mr. Rivers, did you know Angela was attacked by a pit bull when she was a teenager?

Rivers stares at her. So do the others. What does that matter?

MEGAN
I'm sure the trial was hard. I'm sure you hated Angela for how she treated your son. But what I don't understand is how she wound up on the other side of your lawsuit.

(MORE)
Unless she wasn't on the other side.

More confused looks all around. Except for Rivers and Megan. They are locked in a stare. Rivers breaks it off with a nervous glance at the Detectives --

MEGAN
Don't worry about them, they're Homicide. They won't care.

DET. MORRIS
Care about what? What are you talking about?

Rivers stares at Megan for another beat. And his whole demeanor changes. Like she's broken through. He heads to a cabinet --

RIVERS
Angela came here the day after the trial. She told me about her dog. Showed me her scars. She said that's why she wanted on the case. Not to win it but to convince the Roberts family to settle out of court. Only she was overruled. If she wanted to make partner she had to win and that meant going after my kid. That's why she came. To apologize. And to give me this.

He removes an 8 x 12 envelope and hands it to Megan. She pulls out various documents.

DET. MORRIS
What are those?

RIVERS
My grounds for appeal. Information withheld by the firm. The dog that mauled my son was an attack dog trained to do exactly that.

MEGAN
Mr. Rivers, do you know who overruled Angela over settling out of court?

RIVERS
The lead counsel. Raymond Whitney.

Megan throws a look at Det. Morris.
EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER (DAY 2)

Megan, Peter and Detectives Morris and Baker huddle up outside Rivers' building.

DET. MORRIS
So you think Whitney found out she betrayed him?

Megan looks at him. A breakthrough. He's taking her seriously.

MEGAN
It's a theory.

DET. BAKER
I don't get it. She takes a case to settle it and when that backfires she hands over privileged information that will reverse the case she just won?

PETER
You're forgetting her unilaterally lesioned amygdala.

Blank looks from the Detectives. And a rather amused one from Megan.

DET. BAKER
You want to try English, please?

MEGAN
He means Angela's old head injury. After her coma she went back to work and four things happened: she took a case for ulterior motives, she had an affair, she violated attorney-client privilege, and she started calling her mother just to say hello. Four things I guarantee you pre-head injury she wouldn't have done.

DET. MORRIS
Well, it looks like we'll be talking to Whitney again. Without you, if you don't mind.

Said to Megan not with his usual scorn, but rather with deference. Another breakthrough.

MEGAN
I don't mind at all.
INT. ME'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON (DAY 2)

Megan cruises past the front desk. Once again the RECEPTIONIST does his best to flag her down --

RECEPTIONIST
Dr. Hunt, the Chief really needs to see you.

Once again, Megan ignores him. Until, that is, Philadelphia's first female Chief Medical Examiner, DR. PADMA KRISHNAMURTHY NOORI, age 47, cuts her off in the hallway. Megan paints on a smile.

MEGAN
Hello, Chief.

PADMA
Let's have a talk, shall we?

INT. PADMA'S OFFICE - DAY (DAY 2)

Elliot sits on the couch practically hidden from view by Semo standing in front of him. They both watch Megan follow Padma in. Padma closes the door and circles to her desk where all the offending paperwork awaits. She addresses Megan --

PADMA
Elliot tells me he ordered an ANA panel on your recommendation.

Elliot meekly mouths "Sorry" at Megan. But Megan isn't mad at him. On the contrary, she invited this confrontation.

MEGAN
So?

PADMA
So you've been rather profligate with our lab budget lately. An ANA panel on a suicide. And now an ANA panel on a heat stroke victim?

MEGAN
The suicide left no note. And he had a family history of Lou Gehrig's disease. If he thought he was symptomatic it would explain why he took his own life.

PADMA
We're not interested in the why.
MEGAN
Maybe you're not. Maybe no one else around here is. But I am, and if I'm going to understand what happened to my patients I need the latitude to order any test I deem necessary. If you don't like it, fire me.

A stare down.

PADMA
What about the heat stroke victim?

MEGAN
She didn't die of heat stroke.

A double take from Elliot.

ELLIOT
What?

MEGAN
She exhibited psychological symptoms like depression, paranoia?

ELLIOT
Yeah. Just like you said.

MEGAN
Then given normal hydration and electrolytes her ANA panel in all likelihood shows elevated anticardiolipin immunoglobulin G levels.

Padma can't help herself. She glances at the lab sheet.

MEGAN
Which if it does, means she died of multiple microinfarcts that were mistaken for heat stroke but were in fact due to her being hypercoaguable. Combine that with depression and paranoia and we have a diagnosis of what, Semo?

Semo shifts uncomfortably. He has no clue.

ELLIOT
Can I see that?

Elliot approaches Padma's desk. She hands over the lab sheet. He studies it for a beat. And his eyes light up.
ELLIOT
Lupus!

He lowers the sheet to find Padma, Semo and Megan all staring at him.

ELLIOT
I would've gotten that eventually.

Megan gives him a droll look.

MEGAN
Really?

ELLIOT
Eventually.

Elliot takes his cue from the room and leaves. Megan looks back at Padma.

MEGAN
If there's nothing else, I have my own case to attend to.

A beat. Padma nods for her to go. Megan exits the office. Semo stares at the empty doorway.

SEMO
That's it? That's all you're going to do?

PADMA
I'll deal with Dr. Hunt in my own way. Anything else?

SEMO
Yeah. You could tell people to start calling me "Doctor" around here.

She gives him a look --

PADMA
That will be all, Semo.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM #1 - AFTERNOON (DAY 2)

Megan stands at the microscope. We see what she sees. A purple-hued slide containing the tissue removed from the base of Angela's neck. One of several waiting to be examined. Peter looks on from a few paces away.
Detective Morris says Whitney was shocked. Had no idea Angela went behind his back to Rivers.

Megan's attention never wavers from her slides.

Megan
Did you expect anything different?

PETER
The point is Bud's zeroed in on Whitney now. That's what you wanted, isn't it?

Megan
What I want is to know what happened and why. Like this slide. It's a Geisma stain of the tissue from Angela's neck. The purple cells are mast cells. They're degranulated. Degranulation happens with physical trauma but this tissue didn't come from her head wound. So why would the mast cells of a benign neoplasm be degranulated?

As she pauses to ponder her own question --

PETER
How about a bicycle?

A beat. She looks at him.

Megan
What?

PETER
For your daughter.

Megan
I don't think so.

PETER
Nothing says fun like a bicycle.

Megan
Do you see me working here?

PETER
I see you all right. I see someone who reminds me an awful lot of Angela Swanson.
That finally gets Megan's full attention.

PETER
Workaholic. No friends. Just her career to keep her company. But then a miracle happens. She falls down a flight of stairs and discovers emotion. And empathy. Enough to risk everything for a kid screwed out of a settlement she thought he deserved. You had this high-flying life, and now you're here, and you're still pissed at the car accident that made it happen. But maybe that car accident was your own fall down the stairs. And you're just too scared to let the benefits kick in.

MEGAN
What the hell are you talking about?

PETER
You talk about your daughter like you're stuck with only one card to play, but you're not stuck at all. You're scared of being hurt. But if you really want to connect with her you'll forget about handbags and give her something that comes from your heart. Because nobody gives a shit about a handbag.

Megan is, for once, at a loss for words. Then the wall phone goes off. Peter walks over and grabs it.

PETER
(answering)
Room 1, this is Maxwell...?

He listens for a beat, then hangs up.

PETER
The police just made an arrest.

MEGAN
Whitney?

PETER
No. Tom Burris.

END OF ACT FOUR
ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - AFTERNOON (DAY 2) *

Detectives Morris and Baker give Burris the third degree.

BURRIS
I already told you I had nothing to do with it!

DET. MORRIS
We have the records from the pay phone in front of your halfway house. You've been trying to call her since you got out. And now we have a witness who puts you in the park at 6:45 a.m. heading for Strawberry Mansion Bridge!

INT. OUTER CORRIDOR - AFTERNOON (DAY 2) *

Megan and Peter watch the interview through the two-way mirror.

BURRIS
Okay, yes, I was there. That doesn't make me a murderer.

DET. MORRIS
It makes you a liar.

BURRIS
I did two years for something I didn't do, and she won't even answer my calls? I went there to talk to her, not to kill her.

DET. BAKER
Then what did happen?

BURRIS
Nothing. I swear. By the time I got to the bridge she was gone.

An answer that invites more verbal abuse from Det. Morris....

PETER
You believe him?

MEGAN
Yeah, I do.
Detectives Morris and Baker emerge from their interview to find Megan and Peter waiting.

**DET. MORRIS**
Whatever it is, I don't want to hear it. We got our guy.

**MEGAN**
I thought you were zeroed in on Whitney.

**DET. MORRIS**
Yeah. Until we got our guy.

**MEGAN**
I told you Burris didn't do it.

Det. Morris gives Megan a long look.

**DET. MORRIS**
What is it with you? You can't just be a regular ME, you have to be the Smocked Crusader? Why don't you do us all a favor and go back to being whatever it was you were before.

**MEGAN**
I can't. I killed someone.

Megan turns and walks out the door. Detectives Morris and Baker both stare after her.

**INT. CAR - AFTERNOON (DAY 2)**

Another quiet ride as they head back to the ME's office. This time it's Peter who breaks the silence.

**PETER**
Hasn't every surgeon lost a patient?

**MEGAN**
Not every surgeon loses control of her hands in the middle of an operation.

**PETER**
Would you go back if you could?

**MEGAN**
What are you, my shrink now?
PETER
You just told Morris you killed somebody but I don't get an answer?

A beat. She stares at her hands.

MEGAN
There was an autopsy as part of the inquest. It was the first one I'd seen since med school. All those hours I'd spent rehearsing the operation, studying the scans and reviewing my patient's medical history, and I never knew she had a broken heart tattoo on her ankle because of an old boyfriend, or that she fractured her arm horseback riding when she was a kid, or a dozen other things her body revealed in a way our consults never had.

Silence.

PETER
That still doesn't answer my question.

She looks over at him.

MEGAN
Yes it does.

INT. ME'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON (DAY 2)

Megan and Peter return to the office. Approaching the Bullpen they come upon the tail end of one of those impromptu office birthday parties for one of the secretaries. Peter and Megan take note as they circle around --

PETER
Don't you have a birthday party to go to?

MEGAN
I still don't have a present. And don't you dare say bicycle.

PETER
I don't believe you. Are you seriously telling me you can't think of one thing that was important to you as a kid that you'd want your daughter to have?
She stops in her tracks. She stares at him. A look of revelation on her face.

PETER
Aha. Finally. So what is it?

Meanwhile, a group of MEs and Assistant MEs pick over what's left of a chocolate cake with crushed walnuts packed around the base.

ASSISTANT ME #1
Hey Peter, want a piece?

He glances over --

PETER
No thanks.

MEGAN
When I was a kid -- Lacey's age, in fact -- my father had this tool

ASSISTANT ME #2
Come on, it's going to waste.

PETER
Sorry, nut allergy. One bite and --

He clutches his throat and MAKES A CHOKING SOUND. His point made, he looks back at Megan --

PETER
Yeah? Your father had a tool

She's stopped talking, however. She stares at him with eyes as big as silver dollars.

PETER
What?

MEGAN
An allergic reaction. Of course.

And she rushes down the hall.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - AFTERNOON (DAY 2)

A dozen storage refrigerators stand side by side. Megan pulls out a tray from one and retrieves a bag marked with Angela's name, case number and the words "stomach contents."
Peter enters the room as Megan loads a syringe with the liquid Peter previously identified as Gatorade.

MEGAN
Get this to the lab and have them run a tox screen for prescription drugs.

PETER
That'll take a couple hours.

MEGAN
Tell them they have one.

PETER
Oh-kay. Can I tell them why?

MEGAN
The degranulation in her tissue sample. It wasn't caused by trauma, it was caused by anaphylaxis.

And back out the door she goes. He stares after her.

EXT. MIKE FLEMING'S HOUSE - EARLY EVENING (DAY 2)

Megan comes up the walk approaching the front door. She can see and hear a birthday party going on inside. She's about to ring the bell, then catches a glimpse of her daughter Lacey in the window.

ON MEGAN
She circles around the back of the house, straddling bushes and soiling her shoes as she does so, following Lacey through the windows. Finally Lacey is close enough to the kitchen door for Megan to tap on the window.

The door opens. Lacey steps out. Mother and daughter regard each other. Lacey presents as a twelve year old going on twenty. Mature, sophisticated, and just as emotionally on guard as her mother.

MEGAN
Happy birthday.

LACEY
Dad said you couldn't come.

MEGAN
Dad says a lot of things.
LACEY
You mean that aren't true?

Megan has been here all of ten seconds and already she's in dangerous territory.

MEGAN
That maybe tell only his side of the story.

LACEY
What would be your side?

MEGAN
I'm here, aren't I?

Megan smiles, trying to diffuse the tension.

MEGAN
How's the party?

LACEY
It's okay.

MEGAN
Did I miss the cake?

LACEY
Like you'd ever eat cake.

MEGAN
Try me sometime.

A flicker of a smile on Lacey's face.

MEGAN
I got you a present. I hope you like it.

She hands Lacey a blue Tiffany jewelry box. Lacey opens it and pulls out a key on a silver chain. She stares at it, then at Megan, curious.

MEGAN
You remember that picture of me and grandpa in front of his tool shed?

LACEY
Yeah?

MEGAN
That shed was his sanctuary. The one place he could hide from the world. Nobody got in there.

(MORE)
MEGAN (CONT'D)
And I mean nobody. For years and years I tried. And then one day, when I was about your age, he gave me the key.
(re: Lacey's present)
That's the key to my apartment. Where you'll always be welcome. A sanctuary. An escape whenever you need one. Whatever you want it to be.

Megan smiles nervously. This is new territory for her. And for Lacey too. She looks at her mother, processing this gesture, not sure she fully understands it --

INT. ME'S OFFICE - EVENING (DAY 2)

Megan walks down the hallway and sees Peter coming from the opposite direction, lab test in his hand.

PETER
There's something wrong here. Your test came back positive for Amoxicillin.

Megan scans the results herself.

MEGAN
Why would you think something was wrong?

PETER
Angela wasn't taking Amoxicillin, she was taking Erythromycin.

MEGAN
Exactly. Call Detective Morris. Tell him to get a search warrant for Whitney's house and meet us there as soon as he can.

EXT. WHITNEY HOUSE - EVENING (DAY 2)

Megan and Peter stand on the doorstep. Megan has already rung the bell. The door opens and Whitney looks out. He's none too happy to see Megan again.

WHITNEY
What do you want?

MEGAN
Did you love Angela?
Whitney has no time to react. It's dinner time. His wife Jill calls out to him from inside the house.

JILL (O.S.)
Raymond, who is it?

WHITNEY
In a minute!

MEGAN
Did you love her? Because if you did, then help me find her killer and tell me the truth. She was here yesterday morning, wasn't she.

WHITNEY
Yes, all right?

MEGAN
And you didn't know she slipped privileged information to Carl Rivers.

WHITNEY
Like I told the Detectives, no.

JILL (O.S.)
Raymond? Who's out there?

WHITNEY
Just a second!

He closes the door behind him.

WHITNEY
Look, I'll tell you everything you want to know. But just don't let my wife find out, okay?

MEGAN
Mr. Whitney, I owe you an apology. I thought you had more than one reason to kill Angela, but it turns out all you're guilty of is falling in love with her.

The door opens and JILL WHITNEY, age 45, looks out at her guests.

JILL
What's going on?
This is Dr. Hunt from the Medical Examiner's Office. She's looking into Angela's death.

Mrs. Whitney, Sunday night at the firm's annual dinner, did Angela mention she had strep throat?

Yes.

And what she was taking for it?

Jill goes cautiously silent.

I'm guessing she did. In fact I'm positive she told you she was taking Erythromycin for an infection of Beta Streptococcus Group A.

Now Jill looks downright worried. Megan turns to Whitney.

Have your sons had strep throat recently?

Don't answer that, Raymond.

I'll consider that a yes. The interesting thing about Beta Group A is that it's rare in adults UNLESS they contract it from their children. You didn't know it, Mr. Whitney, but you got it from your sons and passed it on to Angela. And that's how your wife knew the two of you were having an affair.

Whitney cringes. But his concerns about his affair being revealed are trumped by the arrival of Detectives Morris and Baker in a sedan, and two UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICERS in a SQUAD CAR. All four approach the house.

What are they doing here?
Det. Morris answers this question by producing a piece of paper.

DET. MORRIS
Mr. Whitney, this is a warrant to search your house. Officers?

The two Uniforms proceed inside as Whitney scans the document.

WHITNEY
You're looking for drugs?

MEGAN
Amoxicillin, to be exact.

At the word, Jill sags. As if she knew the gig was up.

MEGAN
Not only did your wife know you gave Angela strep throat, she also knew Erythromycin is prescribed for strep throat to people severely allergic to penicillin and its derivatives, the most common of which is Amoxicillin. She dropped your sons off at school yesterday morning, then came back here and found you and Angela having sex. Instead of confronting you she spiked Angela's Gatorade with, I'm willing to bet, the same Amoxicillin your sons were prescribed for their strep throat.

CUT TO:

EXT. STRAWBERRY MANSION BRIDGE - MORNING - FLASHBACK

We're back to Angela's morning run at the beginning of our story. She sips from a bottle of GATORADE as the gravel path she's running on angles towards Strawberry Mansion Bridge.

MEGAN (V.O.)
Angela left your house around 6:45 a.m. yesterday morning. She made it all the way to the river before she went into anaphylactic shock -- a fatal allergic reaction affecting every system in her body.

Angela kicks it into high gear as she goes under the bridge. We HOLD ON ANGELA as, suddenly, she staggers to a stop AND CLUTCHES HER THROAT CHOKING --
MEGAN (V.O.)
She became dizzy. Her airways stopped working due to bronchoconstriction. And then she lost her balance.

ANGELA FALLS INTO THE RIVER. AND CRACKS HER HEAD ON AN IRON BEAM -- HEAVY, METAL AND SQUARE WITH A DULL EDGE -- DUMPED IN THE RIVER LONG AGO AND LYING JUST BELOW THE SURFACE.

MEGAN (V.O.)
Foam in the mouth is often seen in drowning cases but is also a product of anaphylaxis. Angela wasn't hit by her killer on the back of the head. The back of her head hit something when she fell into the water.

Blood plumes around Angela's head. Her eyes roll. She struggles for breath. We watched it before, we watch it again, as slowly, inexorably, the river claims her....

BACK TO:

EXT. WHITNEY HOUSE - EVENING (DAY 2)

The two Uniforms return. One holds up a prescription bottle in an evidence bag. Megan takes it and shows the label to Jill. It reads all too clearly: "Liquid Amoxicillin."

MEGAN
Liquid Amoxicillin. When this matches the formulation we found in Angela's stomach, that will be all for you. Anything you want to say?

Whitney stares at his wife in horror. She looks back at him, then at Megan, Peter and Detectives Morris and Baker --

JILL
I want a lawyer.

Megan smiles with grim satisfaction as Det. Morris brings out the cuffs.

DET. MORRIS
Jill Whitney, you're under arrest for the murder of Angela Swanson. You have the right to remain silent....
EXT. WHITNEY HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER (DAY 2)


DET. MORRIS
I guess I'll see you at trial.

MEGAN
Yes you will.

DET. MORRIS
Well then, thanks. Doctor.

MEGAN
You're welcome. Detective.


Megan turns to find Peter regarding her with a smile.

MEGAN
What are you smiling at?

PETER
It's not like you not to rub it in.

MEGAN
Get in the car.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM #1 - NIGHT (DAY 2)

Megan stands at the examination table looking down at Angela's body covered in a sheet up to her neck. Megan doesn't notice Padma slip through the door behind her. Until, that is --

PADMA
I got a lot of calls about you before I hired you. She's brilliant and driven. She throws elbows but gets results. I didn't think it was possible they were underselling you but they were. In one year you've managed to get even City Hall to notice us.

MEGAN
You're welcome.
PADMA
But the knives will come out the minute you screw up, and even I won't be able to help you.

As Megan ponders this --

PADMA
I may never have a resume like yours but I do know something you don't. You let this job get too personal and you'll burn yourself out.

MEGAN
You let me worry about that, okay?

Padma ponders her brilliant, driven, puzzle of a Medical Examiner.

PADMA
Do you have any friends?

MEGAN
Why?

PADMA
Get some. You can't fight everybody, everywhere, all the time, alone.

And with that, Padma leaves. Megan looks at Angela for the last time, and pulls the sheet up over her head.

INT. MEGAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Megan walks in. Her expression is heavy, as if Padma's words had somehow weighed her down. She drops her keys, carries her handbag into the kitchen and sets it on the kitchen island. And then she freezes.

There's something else waiting for her on the island. A PIECE OF BIRTHDAY CAKE. And a note in her daughter's handwriting. "Happy My Birthday, Lacey."

Megan's whole demeanor lifts. As if sun had broken through clouds. As if she weren't alone after all. She reaches for a fork and takes a bite as we....

FADE OUT.

END OF PILOT