SEX, LIES
& HANDWRITING

"Baptism"

Written by
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INT. NOB HILL CAFE - MORNING

TODD WEST (V.O.)
(laughs)
No, seriously, Kara. I never expected to get together. I had to e-mail you five times before you responded.

As the CAMERA PANS through the well-heeled crowd to find TODD WEST (30s). Affable square-jawed venture capitalist with a Crunch Gym physique. He’s with KARA DRISCOLL (30s). Blonde, piercing blue eyes, gorgeous. Her trademark effervescence tinged with a hint of wistfulness this morning...

KARA DRISCOLL
Sorry. I don’t check the site much.

TODD WEST
Figured. Especially since you didn’t finish your profile. I don’t even know what you do.

Todd signs the check, as Kara clocks his SIGNATURE. Brushes a curl from her forehead. (A visual cue we will become very familiar with.) Her half-smile fading.

KARA DRISCOLL
Ah. Well, I’m a behavioral psychologist-- private practice for years-- just switched jobs-- And...
(sighs; closes her eyes)
This is pointless. The clothes. The food. I just can’t.

TODD WEST
Sorry?

KARA DRISCOLL
Your tie-- the creases tell me you kept redoing your Windsor knot. That’s a trigger warning for O-C-D.

Todd glances at his tie.

KARA DRISCOLL (CONT’D)

Todd glances at his food. Yup. A veritable smorgasbord.
KARA DRISCOLL
And there. Over-deliberation’s a hallmark of, well, liars.

TODD WEST
This is... a joke, right?

KARA DRISCOLL
I wish. Normally, a guy as hot as you, I’d look past the red flags for months. But the other stuff...

TODD WEST
(reeling now)
Other stuff?

KARA DRISCOLL
(re: signed check)
Your signature slants left then right. Up then down. That means mood swings. Bad ones. And your cursive-- the sharp angular loops. You have serious anger issues. Good news is, I can give you a name if you want to see someone. I mean, you should see someone. Today.

TODD WEST
(evenly)
Must be great to be so insightful.

Todd walks away. Kara reaches for his bacon. Resigned:

KARA DRISCOLL
It’s good if you like breakfast.

EXT. NOB HILL CAFE - MORNING

As a subdued Todd hands his keys to the VALET.

TODD WEST
It’s the Tesla.

The VALET pauses to consult with a SECOND VALET. Suddenly (and out of character from the even-tempered guy we’ve met):

TODD WEST (CONT’D)
NOW!!!

Todd SLAMS his FIST through the valet box’s GLASS DOOR...
EXT. BRAMSON MANSION - DAY

A palatial home along the Ocean Beach stretch of the Great Highway. Now a crime scene. Black-and-whites out front. As an out-of-breath Kara—now in a smart pants suit—hurries to the door... and is intercepted by a UNIFORM standing sentry.

KARA DRISCOLL
I’m Detective Driscoll.

UNIFORM
Shield?

KARA DRISCOLL
Right, sorry.

Kara pulls out her badge. Still SHRINK-WRAPPED in plastic. She hastily removes it. Nervous enthusiasm:

KARA DRISCOLL (CONT’D)
First day. I wasn’t supposed to start till Monday but I got the call.

The unsmiling Uniform just stares at her.

KARA DRISCOLL (CONT’D)
Which one’s Castro?

The Uniform indicates, stands aside. Kara enters—

INT. BRAMSON MANSION - FOYER/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Abuzz with the usual activity and personnel that attends a murder scene. At the center of it all stands OSCAR CASTRO (40ish). Tall. Ruggedly handsome. Meticulously dressed. Permanent five o’clock shadow. Acerbic.

Kara appraises him as he commands the room, giving marching orders to techs, unis, junior detectives. This guy clearly knows what he’s doing. Kara approaches—

KARA DRISCOLL
Castro, right? I’m your new--

OSCAR CASTRO
--Dr. Driscoll. Yeah, C.O. filled me in.

Kara follows Oscar. Walk-and-talk.

KARA DRISCOLL
Actually, I go by Detective now.
They stop in front of a body. STEPHANIE BRAMSON (mid-30s). A pool of blood around her head. Beautiful even in death.

OSCAR CASTRO (CONT’D)
Stephanie Bramson. Hedge fund manager. One to the back of the head. No sign of forced entry. Place hasn’t been tossed.

KARA DRISCOLL
Witnesses?

OSCAR CASTRO
Nope. House across the street’s got an old surveillance camera pointed in this general direction. May or may not be working. We’re trying to track the owner down.

KARA DRISCOLL
Husband?

OSCAR CASTRO
Insurance executive overnighting in Sacramento on business. Locals down there made the notification.

KARA DRISCOLL
Who called it in?

OSCAR CASTRO
Next-door neighbor. Agon Mirsky.

Oscar leads her over to a rattled AGON MIRSKY (40ish). Short unprepossessing shlub. Bad hair. Bathrobe and sandals. Minded by a cop out of eyeshot of the body.

OSCAR CASTRO (CONT’D)
I’m Detective Castro. This is my... (hard to summon the words) Tell us what happened.

AGON MIRSKY
I was doing laps in my pool. That’s when I heard it.

OSCAR CASTRO
The gunshot?
AGON MIRSKY
I didn’t know what it was. But when I came over to check out this major ruckus, front door was wide open. That’s when I found her.

Mirsky pinches his nostrils, blows.

AGON MIRSKY (CONT’D)
Sorry. I get water in my ears.

KARA DRISCOLL
How well did you know her?

Kara looks to Oscar. He’s not looking back. Good. Her maiden overture went well.

AGON MIRSKY
Not well. They were workaholics. Kept to themselves. What are you doing about this?

OSCAR CASTRO
Investigating it.

AGON MIRSKY
Tax dollars I pay-- she paid-- I want your best people on the job. I know the police commissioner.

Mirsky blows his nose. Tries to shake water out of his ears.

OSCAR CASTRO
Glad one of us does.

Oscar and Kara move off.

KARA DRISCOLL
Didn’t seem particularly interested in answering questions.

OSCAR CASTRO
They never are. We’re the help.

KARA DRISCOLL
It’s more than that. Average person’s eyes blink 15, 20 times a minute. His were double that. It’s a sign of rampant anxiety.

OSCAR CASTRO
Murder next door means his house just depreciated a million bucks.

(MORE)
Kara shrugs, heads up the spiral staircase. Off Oscar...

OSCAR CASTRO (CONT'D)
You actually count how many times someone’s eyes blink?

Kara shrugs, heads up the spiral staircase. Off Oscar...

INT. BRAMSON MANSION - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Oscar enters to find Kara rummaging through a closet. Oscar hangs up his cell.

OSCAR CASTRO
Victim ran a half a billion dollar portfolio. Forensic accounting’s going through her books to see if anything hinky jumps out.

The sound of Kara thrashing about.

OSCAR CASTRO (CONT’D)
Crime scene’s already been through.

KARA DRISCOLL
They’re not looking for what I am.

OSCAR CASTRO
And what exactly--

KARA DRISCOLL
A bad marriage. Which we have.

OSCAR CASTRO
How would you--

KARA DRISCOLL
(indicates)
The closet-- his and hers sides. His is lived in. Hers has dresses in plastic. Shoes in boxes. It’s storage. Means they kept separate bedrooms. Let’s find hers.

Kara heads out, leaving Oscar in her wake, playing catch-up.

INT. BRAMSON MANSION - STEPHANIE’S BEDROOM - DAY

Oscar enters as Kara triumphantly displays a SEXY RED DRESS.

KARA DRISCOLL
She was having an affair.

OSCAR CASTRO
Huh?
KARA DRISCOLL
Her wardrobe’s conservative top to bottom. The do-me dress is a tell.

OSCAR CASTRO
One dress doesn’t mean she was stepping out.

KARA DRISCOLL
Was is right. It was over.

Oscar. Frustrated at trying to keep up with this whirlwind.

OSCAR CASTRO
Kara. I’ve been hit on the head a lot. So treat me like a German shepherd.

KARA DRISCOLL
Good. That’s the smartest breed.
See that vase?

She indicates a vase filled with wilted roses.

KARA DRISCOLL (CONT’D)
Roses have been dead a few weeks.
But room’s immaculate. Our vic’s a woman who didn’t suffer a mess.
(hurried aside)
(Oscar rolls his eyes)
Point is, if she’s keeping dead roses, they meant something.

OSCAR CASTRO
Wait. Just ‘cause--

KARA DRISCOLL
Chocolate on the dresser. Shades drawn. She was broken-hearted.
Just not about the guy whose bed she didn’t want to share. Let’s check the cupboard.

Kara exits. Off Oscar, who is this woman?--

INT. C.R.U.S.H. SQUAD - BULLPEN - DAY

The nerve center of the “Crime Response Unit to Stop Homicide”, a/k/a CRUSH, an elite SFPD division. Nothing elite about the environs, though. Open floor plan.
Desks piled one on top of the other. Detectives, unis, complainants, P.D.s-- most of whom we'll never meet-- mill about in a layout that enforces anonymity not camaraderie.

LIEUTENANT NANCY BALASSIE (50s, seen it all, black, high cheek bones but tired eyes, could be beautiful if she cared) walks Kara to her desk in the fishbowl.

NANCY BALASSIE
Heard you hit the ground running.
Any questions?

KARA DRISCOLL
Lots.

NANCY BALASSIE
Good. Oscar’s your guy. Knows his way around here better than anyone.

KARA DRISCOLL
(hesitant)
Lieutenant, his last partner-- any leads yet on who killed him?

NANCY BALASSIE
No.

KARA DRISCOLL
Should I say something?

NANCY BALASSIE
No.

Balassie moves off. Kara sits. Suddenly a touch self-conscious. A gum-chewing detective across the room named TROY GILMAN (40ish; aging frat boy) is looking her way, talking to his partner. They laugh. About her? She’s not sure.

She examines the desk to her right. Neat. STACK OF FILES in one corner. Kara apes the layout. Even moves files to the corner of her desk. She relaxes a bit. Fitting in. Until...

...A male FILE CLERK with a ROLLING CART moves past, scooping up Kara's files. Kara jumps up.

KARA DRISCOLL
Excuse me! I need those.

FILE CLERK
Then why’d you put them where the closed case files go?

KARA DRISCOLL
No one-- I mean, my bad!
Kara reaches into the cart, but her files are now commingled with everyone else’s. She pulls out a random stack, drops them on her desk. The File Clerk shakes his head, moves off, crossing a passing Oscar, who raps his knuckles on her desk.

OSCAR CASTRO
Vic’s husband’s here.
(Kara catches up)
Ballistics says Bramson was killed by a nine millimeter. Unregistered. And that guy you just dissed is Irwin. Make nice or he’ll send your paperwork to Alameda. And mine.

KARA DRISCOLL
Got it. Listen, I was hoping we could huddle up before I started.

OSCAR CASTRO
Uh-huh.

KARA DRISCOLL
A successful partnership’s founded on mutual empathy. And we only met for a few seconds when I was hired.

OSCAR CASTRO
It’s okay. I get the drift.

KARA DRISCOLL
What drift?

They stop outside of the Interview Room. Matter-of-fact:

OSCAR CASTRO
You’re a shrink who consulted on a few cases a year. Under the radar till you helped solve the Richmond killings. Parlayed your 15 minutes into a shield. And when you’re done lugging it and your identity crisis around, you’ll be outta here so fast, you’ll get whiplash.

(then)
You can watch. Get a feel for how I like to work.

Before Kara can object, Oscar disappears into the room, shutting the door on her. Off Kara, welcome to the job...

END OF TEASER
ACT ONE

INT. C.R.U.S.H. SQUAD - INTERVIEW ROOM - MOMENTS LATER


LARRY BRAMSON
Stephanie and I were high-school sweethearts. She used to say her dream house was a place on Ocean Beach. And we made it happen.

OSCAR CASTRO
You two getting along?

Larry pauses. Appraises Oscar for a beat. Then:

LARRY BRAMSON
Ups and downs like everyone else. The kid thing never took, so we focussed on our careers.

INTERCUT:

INT. C.R.U.S.H. SQUAD - OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Kara watching the interview through the two-way mirror.

OSCAR CASTRO
Sir, I gotta ask the question. Was your wife having an affair?

LARRY BRAMSON
What? No!

OSCAR CASTRO
‘Cause nothing was stolen. No sign of a struggle. Which suggests she could have known the assailant.

LARRY BRAMSON
Look, Stephanie wasn’t like that, okay? We were in a phase, yes. But we were working it out.

Kara mutes the intercom and just watches for a beat.

KARA’S POV: His freshly STARCHED SHIRT. She keeps looking at it. Analyzing it. Kara brushes a curl from her forehead.
Then suddenly BURSTS into the interview room.

    KARA DRISCOLL
    You’re lying!

    LARRY BRAMSON
    What?

    KARA DRISCOLL
    You weren’t working anything out. You couldn’t have. Because you
    loved your wife but she was in love with someone else.

    OSCAR CASTRO
    ‘Scuse us.

Oscar grabs his files and nods to Kara. Leading her into--

10   INT. C.R.U.S.H. SQUAD - BULLPEN - DAY

    OSCAR CASTRO
    What the hell are you doing?

    KARA DRISCOLL
    This is just like therapy. Never give a patient time to obfuscate.

    OSCAR CASTRO
    You see a couch in there? Tell you what-- I wanna read an ink blot,
    I’ll run it past you. You wanna game a suspect, you run it past me.

    KARA DRISCOLL
    Good idea. Run it past you. Oh, wait, I can’t. Because I’m out here
    and you’re in there.

Oscar thinks it over. She’s right. He sighs.

    KARA DRISCOLL (CONT’D)
    I have proof he’s not being straight with us.

    OSCAR CASTRO
    You mean like this?

He reaches into his file. Pulls out a CRIME SCENE PHOTO of Stephanie Bramson’s body. Her HAND is circled.
OSCAR CASTRO (CONT’D)
He’s wearing a wedding ring. His wife wasn’t. No ring. Or tan line. Means he’s carrying a torch.

KARA DRISCOLL
(impressed)
Yeah, that works.

OSCAR CASTRO
Idea is to tie a guy to his story and then unload. But now you’ve got us out over our skis.

KARA DRISCOLL
Look, I can bring him around.

OSCAR CASTRO
With that witchcraft about red dresses and candy? Forget it.

KARA DRISCOLL
Just give me a chance, okay? I blow it, I’ll take a vow of silence.

Oscar looks at her. Not much he can say to that. As he reluctantly leads Kara into--

INT. C.R.U.S.H. SQUAD – INTERVIEW ROOM – DAY

LARRY BRAMSON
My wife is murdered and you treat me like this? I’ll sue you both!

KARA DRISCOLL
Sir, why are you sitting there?

LARRY BRAMSON
What?

KARA DRISCOLL
That chair-- why did you pick it?

LARRY BRAMSON
(Huh?)
Officer told me to take a seat.

KARA DRISCOLL
And you chose the one farthest from the door so you’d have your back to the wall. Couldn’t be surrounded. It’s called avoidance behavior.
LARRY BRAMSON
I don’t--

KARA DRISCOLL
You change before coming in? Put on a crisp white shirt.

LARRY BRAMSON
So?

KARA DRISCOLL
Because your previous shirt had a pattern, right? People who don’t want to be read avoid designs. It’s a deflecting mechanism.

Larry shifts uneasily in his chair. Uncomfortable now.

KARA DRISCOLL (CONT’D)
Your wife takes the guest room and you can’t even move her stuff out of your closet? You’re keeping secrets. But that makes you look like a suspect not a grieving husband. Which we know you are.

Larry considers, then crumbles.

LARRY BRAMSON
She was cheating on me.

OSCAR CASTRO
For how long?

LARRY BRAMSON
I don’t know. But a few weeks back she was in the shower. Her phone beeped. Text. Unlisted number.

(growing bitterness)
Guy said he’d meet her at Florio’s. Steph comes out, checks her phone, tells me she’s gotta go to the office to catch up on work.

Oscar glances at Kara. Right on the money.

KARA DRISCOLL
You confront her?

LARRY BRAMSON
No.

Larry fidgets with his ring. A broken man.
LARRY BRAMSON (CONT’D)
I said we should move to Marin.
Get a fresh start. She agreed.
Said we should put the house on the
market. But I was waiting for her
to serve me with papers.

OSCAR CASTRO
If you want to find your wife’s
killer, why’d you play hard to get?

LARRY BRAMSON
Steph has friends. A mom.
(choked up)
How does dragging her name through
the mud bring her back?

INT. FLORIO’S – DAY

A crowded blue-collar North Beach Italian dive. Kara and
Oscar buttonhole RUDY (50s), grizzled brick shithouse. More
bouncer than maitre d’. Been there longer then the fixtures.

RUDY
Look, if this is about serving
underage kids, we proof everyone
now--

OSCAR CASTRO
Why don’t we start with you telling
us about your clientele.

RUDY
Locals. Truckers.

OSCAR CASTRO
How about rich folk?

RUDY
Not unless they’re lost.

KARA DRISCOLL
What’s on your menu?

Oscar shoots a puzzled look at Kara.

RUDY
We don’t got one. People come here
for the garlic clams.

Two BIKERS are facing off on the other side of the
restaurant. Shoving each other.
RUDY (CONT'D)

'Scuse me.

As Rudy hurries over to play peacemaker:

KARA DRISCOLL
It was a date, it wasn't going anywhere.

OSCAR CASTRO
And you know this how?

KARA DRISCOLL
Do you have sex after consuming large quantities of garlic?
(off Oscar)
Never mind.

Rudy returns. Oscar shows him a photo of Stephanie Bramson.

OSCAR CASTRO
This woman was in a few weeks ago. You recognize her?

RUDY
Only 'cause we don't get her kind much. She tried to order Prosecco. Didn't look like she was getting on with the guy she was with.

KARA DRISCOLL
Why do you say that?

RUDY
'Cause they were arguing.

OSCAR CASTRO
About what?

LUCAS
Probably the way he kept clearing his sinuses. Annoying as hell.

Kara and Oscar share a look.

KARA DRISCOLL
Next-door neighbor.

Oscar heads out, Kara on his heels.

END ACT ONE
ACT TWO

INT. MIRSKY MANSION - LIVING ROOM - DAY

An expensive designer aesthetic. Modernist artwork lines the walls. A panoramic view of the beach. As Oscar and Kara, who are still finding their rhythm, press an annoyed Mirsky--

OSCAR CASTRO
So you didn’t think we’d be remotely interested in the fact you and Stephanie were sneaking around?

AGON MIRSKY
We weren’t.

OSCAR CASTRO
Secret rendez-vous at a restaurant your kind wouldn’t go anywhere near unless you were foreclosing on it. (to Kara) What’s that sound like?

KARA DRISCOLL
Sneaking around.

AGON MIRSKY
Look, I was advising her, okay?

OSCAR CASTRO
About what?

AGON MIRSKY
Her marriage. It was on the rocks and she needed an ear.

OSCAR CASTRO
Yeah, “Dear Agon”. I read your column.

AGON MIRSKY
See, I knew I’d get this reaction. We were tennis pals. We confided in each other.

OSCAR CASTRO
Or maybe what happened is she said she didn’t want to see you anymore, and you took it personal.

AGON MIRSKY
We weren’t involved.
OSCAR CASTRO
Last chance to get in front of this, Mr. Mirsky. While we can still help you explain things.

AGON MIRSKY
I think I’ve already done that.

KARA DRISCOLL
(indicates a painting)
That’s a Blassie. His Berlin period, right?

AGON MIRSKY
Yeah. Now you don’t mind, I’m not interested in show and tell with people who accuse me of murder.

Oscar looks through the rear glass doors. Sees surfers congregated on the shore behind the house.

OSCAR CASTRO
Don’t leave town.

EXT. OCEAN BEACH - DAY

As Oscar and Kara approach the surfers.

KARA DRISCOLL
They weren’t dating, Oscar.

OSCAR CASTRO
Hey, you’re the one who said she was stepping out.

KARA DRISCOLL
But not with him. They both had money, so she wasn’t attracted to his success. And he’s not exactly a pheromone machine.

OSCAR CASTRO
So he wasn’t lying about banging her. He’s still full of it.

KARA DRISCOLL
Do tell.

OSCAR CASTRO
Signature on the Blassie was top right. He hung it upside down. Means he knows jack about it. Tip-off he’s laundering money.
KARA DRISCOLL
Smart. Plus Blassie never had a Berlin period. He went from London to Oslo then settled in Taos.

OSCAR CASTRO
How do you know so much about art?

KARA DRISCOLL

OSCAR CASTRO
What about your behavior?

KARA DRISCOLL
Sorry?

OSCAR CASTRO
Trading money and prestige for a lousy pension and flat feet? It doesn’t figure.

KARA DRISCOLL
I thought you already had me pegged.

OSCAR CASTRO
I’m piecing it together. You got a practical side too. You scoping out material for a new book? Or did your cardiologist tell you to get off your ass.

KARA DRISCOLL
Why does it matter?

OSCAR CASTRO
‘Cause this is my job, not my Plan B. And I don’t trust anyone riding shotgun who doesn’t have the right reason for being here.

KARA DRISCOLL
Which is?

OSCAR CASTRO
You want to be a cop.

KARA DRISCOLL
Actually, what I want is to know the point of this beach crawl.
And that’s that. Oscar’s not getting anything out of her.

OSCAR CASTRO
These surfers— they got a bird’s-eye view of this dirtbag.

As they FIND a young woman with a clipboard and a “BAY SURFING” cap. C.J. DEVLIN (fit, freckled, attractive, composed, 27). She’s huddled with her younger brother FREDDY DEVLIN (buff, taciturn, tan, 25). Our Detectives badge them.

OSCAR CASTRO (CONT’D)
This your troupe?

C.J DEVLIN
Yeah. We’re teaching a class.

OSCAR CASTRO
You usually teach it here?

FREDDY DEVLIN
(chesty)
It’s a public beach, pal.

C.J DEVLIN
Freddy-- get everyone back in the water, will you?

Freddy glares at our cops and move off.

OSCAR CASTRO
Friendly guy. He house-trained?

C.J DEVLIN
My brother doesn’t mean anything. Homeowners roust us. It gets old.

OSCAR CASTRO
So you’re here a lot.

C.J DEVLIN
Yeah. Break’s mellow in this spot. Good for beginners.

OSCAR CASTRO
You know the guy who lives there?

C.J DEVLIN
No.

OSCAR CASTRO
Never met him? Had any contact? I mean, if you’re here a lot—
C.J. DEVLIN

Sorry.

Oscar looks to Kara for help.

KARA DRISCOLL
Your pupils are dilating. Your ears are red. And your galvanic skin response is hyper-reactive. All of which suggest you’re lying.

OSCAR CASTRO
What she said.

C.J. tightens, suddenly self-conscious.

KARA DRISCOLL
We just want information. We’re not looking to get you involved.

C.J. appraises Kara, decides not to try her.

C.J. DEVLIN
He’s a dealer. Sells frank to college kids. The club crowd. Makes this a good place to troll for students.

KARA DRISCOLL
Frank?

OSCAR CASTRO
Mephedrone. Synthetic next-gen meth. Cheap and addictive.

C.J. DEVLIN
I’ve seen cops around here most of the day. Is he in trouble?

OSCAR CASTRO
Not yet.

As Oscar and Kara move off--

OSCAR CASTRO (CONT’D)
That stuff you pointed out-- those really indicators of lying?

KARA DRISCOLL
Yup. And of spending a lot of time in the water. Or eating Thai food.

Oscar nods. It’s as much of a compliment as he’s going to pay Kara now, and she knows it.
KARA DRISCOLL (CONT’D)
What’s next?

OSCAR CASTRO
We need to find out how big a player Mirsky is. I got a connect.

15 INT. UNMARKED CAR - DAY
Oscar and Kara pull up to a street in the barrio.

OSCAR CASTRO
Guy’s a little touchy about strangers. If we spook him--

KARA DRISCOLL
Yes, I’ll stay in the car.

16 EXT. OAKLAND BARRIO - DAY
A bad neighborhood. Latino bangers on street corners shoot the shit. Oscar’s a fish out of water, and the calls of “five-oh” tell us locals make them immediately. Oscar approaches RAFA (late 30s). A wary, coiled, tatted-up chieftain. Smart enough to have chosen a different path. But he didn’t.

RAFA
Get lost.

Oscar slaps Rafa on the shoulder. A little too loud:

OSCAR CASTRO
Rafa, my man. I owe you a beer.

Rafa darkens. Shrugs Oscar’s hand off his shoulder.

INTERCUT:

17 INT. UNMARKED CAR - DAY
Kara can’t hear anything, but she studies them. Standing there. Together. She brushes a curl from her forehead.

OSCAR CASTRO
I need the 4-1-1 on an Agon Mirsky.

RAFA
Trust fund puta.

OSCAR CASTRO
He a player?
RAFA
Nah, he fell into it. Pays over the odds but still makes bank ’cause demand’s through the roof.

OSCAR CASTRO
You do business?

RAFA
Not with that payaso. Heard he dumped two fifty Gs of frank this week. At a big loss.

OSCAR CASTRO
Why?

RAFA
D-E-A’s cracking down. Lotta busts. Amateurs running scared, trying to ditch their product.

Oscar nods. Moves off. Returns to the car.

OSCAR CASTRO
Mirsky just liquidated his stash. Quarter million worth.

KARA DRISCOLL
Is that your brother?
   (off Oscar’s glare)
   A cop talking to anyone, he’s the alpha male. Squares up to the guy. But you were side-by-side. Means there’s an intimacy. And since smart cops cut their crews loose when they join the force...

Oscar’s cell rings. He takes a call, happy to move on.

OSCAR CASTRO
Castro. Yeah, thanks.
   (hangs up)
Bramson’s fund was flat but legit. She withdrew a two fifty grand management fee last week.

KARA DRISCOLL
Think she was Mirsky’s buyer?

OSCAR CASTRO
Nah. She’s a crook, she’s white collar. That’s why you run a fund.
KARA DRISCOLE
So she sniffs out Mirsky’s flush and talks him into investing. She knows he's dealing, she's got leverage to fleece him.

OSCAR CASTRO
And he takes exception. But you make that weasel for a killer?

KARA DRISCOLE
Drug dealers— you have that transgressive strain in your personality, murder's just a few steps down the continuum.

OSCAR CASTRO
What about our jealous husband? Alibis, but coulda set up a hit.

KARA DRISCOLE
He’s drawn to insurance because he needs to manage risk. If his craving for order had been upended by his wife’s betrayal...

OSCAR CASTRO
So two suspects. We dig into both. Night shift’ll keep tabs. Let us know if anything jumps off.

Oscar keys the ignition. Kara can’t help herself:

KARA DRISCOLE
Look, your brother-- not trying to meddle here. Just saying you must be seriously conflicted and--

OSCAR CASTRO
Let it go.

Kara nods. And the two drive off in uncomfortable silence.

INT. KARA’S CONDO – LIVING ROOM/FOYER – NIGHT

A beautiful Pacific Heights apartment with sweeping 360 degree views of San Francisco.

KARA DRISCOLE (O.S.)
You want it. I know you want it. Show mommy how much you want it.
Under which, the CAMERA FINDS shelves stuffed with BOOKS, PANNING from volumes on art to philosophy to behavioral psychology to psychopathology to the criminal mind to serial killers. Until the CAMERA finally FINDS... the PERSIAN CATS. Two of them. Kara sets out saucers filled with milk.

KARA DRISCOLL (CONT’D)
One for Sigmund. One for Carl.

Kara picks up a glass of red wine.

KARA DRISCOLL (CONT’D)
One for Kara.

But her cell MEOWS. She answers it.

KARA DRISCOLL (CONT’D)
Hello?... Wait, what? Las Vegas?
No, I’ve never been to a strip club named Bouncy’s... Three grand?!...
Of course, I’m disputing it.

Kara hangs up, shaking her head in frustration. As she reaches for her wine, her cell MEOWS again. She answers it.

KARA DRISCOLL (CONT’D)
Look, I’ve never been-- Oh, Oscar.
Sorry... On my way.

EXT. KARA’S CONDO - NIGHT

As Kara hurries out, her neighbor’s door flies open. Bespectacled HARRY GRUBMAN (60s). A pushy, fleshy retiree lying in wait.

HARRY GRUBMAN
Kara, we need to talk.

KARA DRISCOLL
Not a good time, Mr. Grubman.

HARRY GRUBMAN
Do you notice anything interesting about my windowsill?

KARA DRISCOLL
It’s a window. There’s a sill.
Look, can we skip the passive-aggression and just cut to--

HARRY GRUBMAN
My Jerusalem tulips. They’re not there. Why are they not there?
Harry strolls over to Kara’s windowsill. Two pots of Jerusalem tulips enjoying pride of place. With a flourish:

HARRY GRUBMAN (CONT’D)
Busted, missy!

KARA DRISCOLL
I swear, I didn’t...

As Harry grabs the pots and moves them.

KARA DRISCOLL (CONT’D)
Is it possible that maybe you weren’t wearing your glasses and--

HARRY GRUBMAN
Don’t you dare. It’s larceny is what it is. And if it happens again, I call the police!

Harry bangs into his apartment, slams the door. Kara sighs.

KARA DRISCOLL
I am the police.

INT. C.R.U.S.H. SQUAD - BULLPEN - NIGHT

The squad packed with the night shift. Kara hurries in to find workaholic Oscar hunkered over his computer.

KARA DRISCOLL
Sorry, traffic was--

OSCAR CASTRO
Uh-huh.
(then)
Deleted voicemail from the vic’s cell. Five thirty this morning.

Oscar punches a key on his computer. Plays a voicemail.

AGON MIRSKY (ON RECORDING)
(agitated)
Stephanie, Agon. Nobody screws me over. Nobody!

KARA DRISCOLL
That’s what I call a threat.

OSCAR CASTRO
No-- that’s what I call a warrant.

And Oscar heads out, Kara on his heels...
EXT. MIRSKY MANSION - NIGHT

Oscar and Kara approach Mirsky’s door. Knock.

OSCAR CASTRO
Murder police, Mr. Mirsky.

KARA DRISCOLL
Car’s in the driveway.

They knock again. Nothing.

Kara points to the door—slightly AJAR. There are SCRATCHES on the keyhole—evidence it’s been PICKED. They suddenly hear... A GUNSHOT. They draw their pieces. Quickly now...

INT. MIRSKY MANSION - FOYER - NIGHT

They enter the darkened residence to find... Mirsky. DEAD. Blood pooling around his head. Oscar gestures for Kara to go right. He’ll go left. We follow her as she moves quickly...

INT. MIRSKY MANSION - HALLWAY/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

...down a corridor. She hears something. Enters the living room. Sees a FIGURE IN BLACK (average height and weight, indeterminate age and gender), wearing a SKI MASK, jostling the rear glass doors, trying desperately to open them.

KARA DRISCOLL
Freeze!

But the figure wheels. FIRES as Kara ducks behind a pillar.

KARA’S POV: She draws down. Has the killer in her sights. Point-blank. Center mass. Easy. But she hesitates. Then deliberately LOWERS HER GUN. As...

...The suspect shoots out a glass door, SHATTERING it. Then HURTTLES through the gap, disappearing into the night. As...

...Oscar runs in.

OSCAR CASTRO
What happened?

KARA DRISCOLL
He got away.

END ACT TWO
ACT THREE

The San Francisco Chronicle SLIDES across a desk. CLOSE ON a Headline: “Serial Killer Haunting Ocean Beach?”.  

INT. C.R.U.S.H. SQUAD - NANCY BALASSIE’S OFFICE - DAY

An unhappy Balassie points to the headline as Oscar and Kara explain themselves.

NANCY BALASSIE
I send you geniuses out to crack a murder, you bring back another body. Where are we?

OSCAR CASTRO
Ballistics confirms the slug pulled out of Mirsky matches the one that killed Bramson. So lone gunman.

NANCY BALASSIE
The husband?

OSCAR CASTRO
At his mom’s in Tiburon. He’s an eyeshade not a kingpin, so we doubt he’s taking out multiple contracts.

NANCY BALASSIE
Kara, I gotta ask...

KARA DRISCOLL
(ready for it)
The lack of an obvious motive means we can’t rule out a serial killer. But there’s nothing fetishistic about the murders. No signature.

NANCY BALASSIE
You work up a profile?

KARA DRISCOLL
Killings are same day. Means there’s an urgency. So we’re looking for a temporal or emotional trigger. The beach is remote. Means our suspect’s familiar with it.

NANCY BALASSIE
Killer finished?

KARA DRISCOLL
I wouldn’t count on it.
Suspects?

Kara and Oscar exchange a sheepish look. Nope.

First thing, go door-to-door in that neighborhood. I want people taking precautions. A third body drops...

Yeah.

Welcome to Crush, Detective.

Kara nods. As she and Oscar turn to go:

Oscar stays. Balassie waits till Kara closes the door.

New girl pulling her weight?

So far.

So why do you look more miserable than usual.

Oh, I dunno. ‘Cause my new partner’s not a cop?

First in her Academy class.

Where she was ten years older than everyone else.

Did time on patrol.

A three-month stint writing parking tickets? I was a uni six years.
NANCY BALASSIE
Bottom line is, she’s an asset the brass doesn’t want to lose. They say she’s a detective...

OSCAR CASTRO
Fine. Why’d she have to land on my doorstep?

NANCY BALASSIE
You needed a partner for going on a month. She needed to pair up with someone who has chops. Who she could learn from.

OSCAR CASTRO
Who Bryant Street wouldn’t mind running off.

The accusation hangs in the air.

NANCY BALASSIE
You’re the best cop I know. Shoulda had your own command years ago.
   (pointed)
   And we both know why you don’t.

OSCAR CASTRO
(nods)
How long they gonna hold my family against me?

NANCY BALASSIE
Until you cut ties.

Oscar heads out. Off Balassie--

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EXT. GREAT HIGHWAY - DAY

A now barren stretch of the Great Highway, the killings having scared off the usual beachcombers. Deserted except for a handsome sharp-dressed man holding a press conference. He’s D.A. CABOT DRISCOLL (40ish). Perfect smile. Overweening ambition he cuts with a natural politician’s charm.

REPORTER
Mr. Driscoll, what’s the D.A.’s role in this investigation?

CABOT DRISCOLL
We’re working hand-in-glove with the police. Putting every resource of our office at their disposal.
As Oscar and Kara exit their car and approach.

SECOND REPORTER
Is an arrest imminent?

CABOT DRISCOLL
(indicating)
I think you’ll need to direct that question to the Detectives.

The media throng converges on Oscar and Kara. “Is it a serial killer?” “Castro, can we get a statement?” “Any leads?”

OSCAR CASTRO
Get lost, vultures.

As our Detectives push through the media phalanx toward a private driveway, Kara exchanges a furtive glance with Cabot. Oscar clocks it.

OSCAR CASTRO (CONT’D)
Our fearless D.A. Cabot Driscoll.
And you’re Kara Driscoll. Hmmm.

KARA DRISCOLL
Ex-husband. Emphasis on the ex.
And no, the grandstanding prick didn’t get me the job.

OSCAR CASTRO
Uh-huh.

Kara frowns.

INT. CONNER MANSION - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Another palatial estate.

MARSHALL CONNER
You’re saying I’m a target?

Our Detectives with MARSHALL CONNER (late 30s). Slick and moneyed. An arrogant streak he does little to conceal.

OSCAR CASTRO
No, Mr. Conner. We’re saying we don’t know if the suspect’s working his way down the beach. And your house is next in line.

MARSHALL CONNER
It better not be. I oversee the Department’s budget.
OSCAR CASTRO
You a councilman?

MARSHALL CONNER
Twelve years running.

OSCAR CASTRO
Same number of years our budget’s been slashed.

MARSHALL CONNER
Times are tough. We all have to make sacrifices.

OSCAR CASTRO
(surveys the tony digs)
Yup.

KARA DRISCOLL
You know the victims well?

MARSHALL CONNER
No. My neighbors are my constituents. They hit me up when I see them, so I try not to.

Oscar rolls his eyes. This guy’s an a-hole.

MARSHALL CONNER (CONT’D)
Is there a problem, Detective?

OSCAR CASTRO
No, sir. We appreciate your devotion to public service. Anything strike you as unusual about the victims?

MARSHALL CONNER
Yes. They’re dead. What sort of precautions you suggesting?

OSCAR CASTRO
You got another place to stay for a few days?

MARSHALL CONNER
Sure, I can bunk with the Mayor at the Presidio.

KARA DRISCOLL
I think my partner’s suggesting--
MARSHALL CONNER
I get it. Duck and cover. Except a city official runs for the hills, you know how that’ll look? Like I got a yellow streak a mile wide.

Oscar nods. Hands Conner his card.

OSCAR CASTRO
Lights on at night. Doors locked. Call you see anything suspicious.

MARSHALL CONNER
Yeah. I’ll shoot up a flare if there’s a major ruckus.

Kara brushes a curl from her forehead. Oscar clocks it.

EXT. CONNER MANSION – DAY

As Oscar and an excited Kara head back to their car--

OSCAR CASTRO
Okay. Spill it.

KARA DRISCOLL
They know each other!

OSCAR CASTRO
Who does?

KARA DRISCOLL
Mirsky and your new bestie.

OSCAR CASTRO
Yeah. They’re neighbors.

KARA DRISCOLL
No, see, Conner said “ruckus”.

OSCAR CASTRO
German shepherd, Kara.

KARA DRISCOLL
Mirsky used ruckus too. It’s not a common word. Or local dialect. And they used it the exact same way-- “major ruckus”.

OSCAR CASTRO
Meaning what?
KARA DRISCOLL
Linguistic bleed. We adopt elements of someone’s lexicon when we converse frequently with them. Not casually. Especially not if we claim to be avoiding them.

OSCAR CASTRO
Jesus. Is there anyone you don’t dissect?

KARA DRISCOLL
Kinda hard-wired that way.

Kara fidgets with her holster, which is flush against her hip now. Oscar clocks the adjustment.

OSCAR CASTRO
So Conner and Mirsky-- what’s the connection?

KARA DRISCOLL
I don’t know. But--

OSCAR CASTRO
Look out!

In her excitement, Kara has nearly walked off the shoulder onto the highway. Oscar yanks her back as a SPEEDING CAR nearly runs her down, its HORN DOPPLERING as it screams by. A dark, nondescript sedan. Kara tumbles to the ground...

OSCAR CASTRO (CONT’D)
You okay?

Kara nods. Oscar helps her up. She’s a bit dazed.

OSCAR CASTRO (CONT’D)
Try not to get run over. I don’t need the paperwork.

INT. C.R.U.S.H. SQUAD - BULLPEN - DAY

Kara at her desk. Surveying the room. Gilman enters. Puts his car keys on his desk. Takes a load off. Kara thinks on it for a beat, wheels turning. Then approaches.

KARA DRISCOLL
Excuse me, what car do you drive?

TROY GILMAN
Why?
KARA DRISCOLL
You just on the road?

TROY GILMAN
Who wants to know?

OSCAR CASTRO
(waving Kara over)
Kara--

Kara approaches Oscar, at his desk. He hands her a printout.

OSCAR CASTRO (CONT’D)
I ran with your linguistic bleed voodoo. Searched for links between Conner and Mirsky. That’s the agenda for this afternoon’s council meeting. Check out the third item.

KARA DRISCOLL
The extension of a public right of way?

Oscar brings up a graphic on his computer.

OSCAR CASTRO
There’s a stretch of Ocean Beach you can only get to by cutting through private property. Council’s given the public a pathway. Guess who owns the lots it crosses?

KARA DRISCOLL
(reads)
Stephanie Bramson and Agon Mirsky.

OSCAR CASTRO
That’s not the only right of way in Ocean Beach. There are others. But they’ve been dropping left and right. Our pal Conner usually casts the swing vote killing ‘em.

KARA DRISCOLL
You think he’s on the take?

Oscar hands Kara a bank statement.

OSCAR CASTRO
You tell me. A blind trust in the name of Conner’s nephew Louis. Kid died twelve years ago but trust is still active. Conner administers it.
KARA DRISCOLL
He deposited five hundred grand a few weeks ago. Two fifty from Stephanie, two fifty from Mirsky?
(Oscar nods)
But why would someone pay that much just to keep out the hoi-polloi?

OSCAR CASTRO
’Cause homes with private beaches sell at a hefty premium to folks who use words like hoi-polloi.

KARA DRISCOLL
(getting it now)
Larry said Stephanie suggested they sell the house and move.

OSCAR CASTRO
Which is why she was keen on a private beach. Maybe that’s what she and Mirsky were getting into at Florio's. The bribe.

KARA DRISCOLL
Question is, who wanted to stop the public access from being scrapped?

OSCAR CASTRO
Ask and ye shall receive. A group called Save Our Beaches posted this online two days ago.

Oscar cues up a video on his laptop. A crowd of twenty-somethings wearing “Save Our Beaches” t-shirts. The stretch of Ocean Beach we are now familiar with clearly visible in the background. C.J. addresses the camera.

C.J DEVLIN
Beaches belong to everyone. Not just greedy homeowners. Sign our online petition. Tell City Hall.

A boiling Freddy gets close to the camera.

FREDDY DEVLIN
We’ll do anything to protect our birthright!

Oscar and Kara share a look.
INT. “BAY SURFING” SHOP - DAY

Oscar and Kara enter to find C.J. checking invoices, attaching handwritten Post-Its to them, while a nearby Freddy waxes a board. They make a beeline for him.

OSCAR CASTRO
Hey sport. Mind accounting for your whereabouts last night?

FREDDY DEVLIN
Why?

Oscar slaps a “Save Our Beaches” flyer in front of Freddy.

OSCAR CASTRO
’Cause someone’s pickin’ off the Ocean Beach NIMBY patrol. And you’re kinda militant for a wave jockey.

FREDDY DEVLIN
(bristles)
I don’t have to answer--

As C.J. approaches, interceding--

C.J DEVLIN
We were here late. Doing inventory.

OSCAR CASTRO
Sister vouching for a brother-- doesn’t count for much.

Kara’s POV: C.J.-- CAROTID ARTERY POUNDING. HAND CLENCHED so tightly around her pen the skin is BLANCHING.

C.J DEVLIN
A lot of beaches around here have gone private. Last I checked, those homeowners are fine.

OSCAR CASTRO
’Cept this beach is special. Where you take your classes. Plus I got you online ranting how you and Mr. Personality even learned to surf there.

C.J DEVLIN
We were here. Together. Late.

OSCAR CASTRO
Keep your dog on a leash.
As Oscar and Kara head for their car. Walk and talk--

KARA DRISCOLL
Why do you do that?

OSCAR CASTRO
Do what?

KARA DRISCOLL

OSCAR CASTRO
Looking to draw him out. People’s reactions tell you everything. Figured you’d know that, Dr. Freud.

KARA DRISCOLL
Yeah, but your input contaminates their output. That’s why I prefer to observe rather than instigate.

OSCAR CASTRO
Yeah, I observed something too.

Oscar reaches into Kara’s jacket pocket, pulls out a POST-IT she has lifted. She snatches it back.

OSCAR CASTRO (CONT’D)
If you wanted to take a peak at someone’s John Hancock, you shoulda gotten his. He’s the hothead.

KARA DRISCOLL
Exactly. He emotes and it’s over. His sister suppresses everything. She’s the one I’m interested in.

Oscar glances at the Post-It. The word “Hiller”.

OSCAR CASTRO
Hiller. That’s a surfboard.

KARA DRISCOLL
It’s not about what she wrote. It’s how she wrote it. See this? (the signature)
The tight cursive? Means she’s straining to keep control.

OSCAR CASTRO
Of what?
KARA DRISCOLL

Her temper.

(the signature)
This is a tick stroke. A fury symbol. Fury needs an outlet.

OSCAR CASTRO

You can get all that from a few chicken scratches?

KARA DRISCOLL

Handwriting’s the unfiltered expression of our emotions. Reveals us whether we want it to or not.

OSCAR CASTRO

So C.J.’s got a personal attachment to the beach. Her business depends on access. She’s got a temper.

KARA DRISCOLL

And you’re not buying this.

OSCAR CASTRO

Suspect part, maybe. Motive, nah. We’re missing a piece of the puzzle. Maybe the guy you think Stephanie Bramson was banging.

KARA DRISCOLL

Except I don’t know who that is.

OSCAR CASTRO

Pretty enough, coulda been anyone. Mean time, that video? Recognize the house in the background?

Oscar cues up the “Save Our Beaches” video on his I-PHONE. FREEZES it as the camera pivots to reveal a MANSION in the B.G.

KARA DRISCOLL

Conner’s.

OSCAR CASTRO

We need to have another talk with our favorite councilman. Tell him he may have crosshairs on his back.

END ACT THREE
Kara and Oscar with Conner, in his sumptuously appointed office. Brass tacks now:

MARSHALL CONNER
The right of way? What does that have to do with anything?

OSCAR CASTRO
Both victims wanted it gone. And we think some folks took issue.

KARA DRISCOLL
Figured the best way to make their point was to kill the two homeowners opposing it.

OSCAR CASTRO
And maybe the councilman who could cast the swing vote. You.

MARSHALL CONNER
Hold on. That right of way’s been in place for years. Why would I vote against it now?

Oscar picks up an expensive-looking FIGURINE. Examines it.

OSCAR CASTRO
‘Cause Bramson and Mirsky met your asking price.

Conner’s eyes narrow. He sets his jaw. Straight at Oscar:

MARSHALL CONNER
Be very careful, Detective.

OSCAR CASTRO
Here’s the good news. We don’t care if you’re hoovering up bribes. We care about catching a killer.

KARA DRISCOLL
Which is why you need to tell us if you’ve been threatened by anyone in the Save Our Beaches movement.

Conner walks to Oscar. Takes the figurine from him. Puts it carefully back in its place. Wheels turning:
MARSHALL CONNER
I say I was threatened, that’s an admission I was dirty, right?

OSCAR CASTRO
You’re not hearing us--

MARSHALL CONNER
But since the folks who allegedly bribed me are dead, I can just vote to preserve the public access. So I got nothing to worry about.

OSCAR CASTRO
Or maybe you do. The vote’s on today’s council agenda. Our guess, the killer will be watching. You really want to take your chances?

Conner considers. He moves to his desk. Sits.

MARSHALL CONNER
Thanks for stopping by, Detectives.

As Oscar and Kara walk and talk...

OSCAR CASTRO
Told the mook he’s a target. He’s worried about getting caught with his hand in the cookie jar.

KARA DRISCOLL
Personal fearlessness is consistent with narcissistic blindness.

OSCAR CASTRO
English.

KARA DRISCOLL
The sort of guy who takes bribes. Ignores threats to his safety. It’s called bulletproof syndrome.

OSCAR CASTRO
Yeah, I’m pretty sure that ego’s not gonna stop a nine millimeter. (beat)
Wonder if he was the one throwing a hump into Stephanie Bramson.
KARA DRISCOLL
Classy turn of phrase, but no.

OSCAR CASTRO
Good-looking, rich and a jerk.
Catnip for chicks, right?

KARA DRISCOLL
She was in love not lust.
(straight at Oscar)
Nothing lovable about a smug
egomaniac who thinks he doesn’t
need anyone’s help.

OSCAR CASTRO
Takes all kinds.

Kara adjusts her holster, now under her right arm. Oscar
clocks it again, as they arrive at their car. A BANANA
SMASHED on the windshield. Oscar scowls.

OSCAR CASTRO (CONT’D)
Damn kids.

KARA DRISCOLL
(darkens)
Yeah, I don’t think so.

OSCAR CASTRO
Sorry?

KARA DRISCOLL
I start work, my credit card’s
stolen. My neighbor’s tulips are
moved. A car practically runs me
down. And now this?

OSCAR CASTRO
Now what?

KARA DRISCOLL
I’m allergic to bananas. But I’m
guessing you and your little fun
bunch know that, right?

A baffled Oscar stares at Kara for a beat.

OSCAR CASTRO
A, you walked into traffic. I was
there. B, last week someone used my
Visa to buy a plasma in La Paz.
Okay. Fine. But the bananas and tulips...
(off Oscar; Kara frowns)
Never mind.

Oscar’s cell rings--

Castro... Yeah. Thanks.
(hangs up)
Owner of the house across the street from Stephanie’s back from Maui. We got the video.

INT. C.R.U.S.H. SQUAD - BULLPEN - DAY

As Oscar and Kara examine footage on Oscar’s computer.

This is from two nights ago. Ten forty-six p.m. The evening before Stephanie Bramson was murdered.

As we watch a beaten up Mazda pull up on the Great Highway. C.J. gets out of the car. Exits OUT OF FRAME.

That’s our surfer girl.

Casing Bramson’s house?

That’s the smart money. Ran the plate on her Mazda. Comes back to a place in the Sunset District.

Oscar points to his notepad, on which he has scrawled an address. He spies Kara glancing at his handwriting. He tears the note off the pad, stuffs it into his pocket.

I wasn’t--

Let’s go.

Oscar heads out, Kara on his heels. She crosses an N.D. Detective walking past her eating a BANANA. He nods at her. Smiles. She stops. Considers. Puts her fingers in her mouth and WHISTLES, bringing the squad’s usual commotion to a standstill. All eyes on her now.
KARA DRISCOLL
Okay, I get it, haze the new girl,
fun for everyone. But we’re done
now, okay? ENOUGH.

A beat, and then everyone returns to the business at hand,
the din resuming as if the interruption had never happened.

Kara heads out. Off a concerned Balassie, watching her...

INT. SUNSET DISTRICT APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kara and Oscar question C.J.’s unnerved roommate, ALICE MOND.
Oblivious mala-bead-and-muu-muu yogahead who’s overdue for a
haircut.

ALICE MOND
I met C.J. on Apartment-Finders.
She’s only been here a few months.

KARA DRISCOLL
Do you know if she’s gone through
anything difficult recently?

ALICE MOND
Like what?

KARA DRISCOLL
Family tragedy. Loss of a job.

ALICE MOND
Nothing like that. But she did
break up with her girlfriend a few
weeks ago. Big finance type. Said
she couldn’t trust her.

Kara and Oscar exchange a look.

ALICE MOND (CONT’D)
Been pretty down about it. She was
bawling today. Long as her check
clears, I don’t get involved.

OSCAR CASTRO
She pay rent to you?

ALICE MOND
Yeah. My name’s on the lease.

OSCAR CASTRO
Means she has no authority over the
premises. You give us permission to
search her room, we can.
ALICE MOND
Why would you want to do that?

OSCAR CASTRO
‘Cause we’re looking into a murder.

Alice’s eyes widen.

INT. SUNSET DISTRICT APARTMENT – C.J.’S ROOM – DAY

Oscar tosses the room as Kara examines C.J.’s desktop. And PHOTOS of C.J. and Stephanie. They’re moving. Romantic.

KARA DRISCOLL
These women were in love, Oscar.

OSCAR CASTRO
That your way of saying you were right about Stephanie having an affair?

KARA DRISCOLL
No, it’s my way of saying my gaydar sucks. I didn’t figure her secret crush was C.J.

OSCAR CASTRO
Who we’re no closer to grabbing up. No gun. No ammunition.

KARA DRISCOLL
Nothing incriminating on her hard drive either.

OSCAR CASTRO
Wait-- I got something.

Oscar pulls an envelope out of a sock drawer. Extracts a FLASH DRIVE. Which he inserts into the laptop. A WAV file pops up. Kara clicks on the icon. And we hear:

MARSHALL CONNER (ON RECORDING)
I want two fifty each.

STEPHANIE BRAMSON (ON RECORDING)
That’s a bit steep, Marshall.

OSCAR CASTRO
Conner and Stephanie Bramson.

MARSHALL CONNER (ON RECORDING)
You want to keep the public out of your backyard, that’s the price.
STEPHANIE BRAMSON (ON RECORDING)
I’ll think about it.

MARSHALL CONNER (ON RECORDING)
Think fast. Deadline's tomorrow.
We strike a deal by then, or this negotiation is finished.

OSCAR CASTRO
Try this on for size. C.J. finds out Stephanie was bribing Conner.
Breaks up with her.

KARA DRISCOLL
Then offs her and Mirsky?

OSCAR CASTRO
You’re the one who said she had a temper. If she felt betrayed...

KARA DRISCOLL
(nods)
Everything that simmers eventually boils over. Think she shared her secret recording with Conner?

OSCAR CASTRO
One way to find out.

KARA DRISCOLL
(checks her watch)
Council meeting.

As Oscar and Kara hurry out:

INT. S.F. CITY HALL - CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

A City Council meeting in session. Nine councilmen, including Conner, sit on the dais in front of the half-full gallery. The CHAIRMAN (60; reedy, officious lifer) has the floor:

CHAIRMAN
We turn to a measure to extend the public’s right of way to Plot 64-32 on Ocean Beach another five years.
We will proceed by roll call vote, beginning with Councilman Jenkins.

Over the roll call vote: “Yes,” “Yes,” “No,” “Yes,” “No.”
Kara spots C.J. in the back, standing against the wall, arms folded, staring daggers at a calm Conner.
KARA DRISCOLL
She’s unhinged.

Conner pauses. Then, in a loud, clear voice:

MARSHALL CONNER
No.

Oscar and Kara exchange a look: WTF?

CHAIRMAN
By a vote of five-to-four, the measure to extend the public’s right of way on Plot 64-32 is denied. Next item of business...

Oscar and Kara watch an incensed C.J. slip out the back....

KARA DRISCOLL
This guy’s not very smart.

OSCAR CASTRO
Hopefully smart enough to realize we’re all that stands between him and her.

INT. S.F. CITY HALL - CONNER’S OFFICE - DAY

Oscar sits impatiently in Conner’s office. An intent Kara has her headphones on, connected to her cell. CONNER’S ASSISTANT enters.

CONNER’S ASSISTANT
Sorry for the wait, Detectives. Can I get you anything?

OSCAR CASTRO
Yeah, the councilman. Meeting adjourned an hour ago.

CONNER’S ASSISTANT
He’s probably still in conference. (office phone rings) Excuse me.

And she moves off.

OSCAR CASTRO
We lay out she’s a threat, he’ll have to play ball. Kara. KARA.

She pulls her headphones out. Excited. As she brushes a curl from her forehead:
KARA DRISCOLL
There was something about that call between Stephanie and Conner. And I finally got it.

Kara plays the recording:

**MARSHALL CONNER (ON RECORDING)**
Think fast. Deadline's tomorrow.
We strike a deal by then, or this negotiation is finished.

OSCAR CASTRO
Yeah, already heard that. Conner’s squeezing her on the price.

KARA DRISCOLL
No-- his words. Deadline. Strike. Finished. Death imagery. That’s usually a sign someone’s...

OSCAR CASTRO
Capable of murder.

Oscar is studying a PLAQUE on the wall. A picture of Conner posing with a handgun above the engraving: “MARSHALL CONNER, PACIFIC GUN CLUB, FIRST PLACE, SMALL ARMS DIVISION, 2015”.

OSCAR CASTRO (CONT’D)
That’s a Walther. Nine millimeter.

KARA DRISCOLL
Right type of gun.

And they finally put it all together:

OSCAR CASTRO
C.J.’s not the killer. Conner is!

KARA DRISCOLL
He takes his payola. Business as usual. But doesn’t count on Stephanie getting cold feet.

OSCAR CASTRO
She wants C.J. back. So she has to unwind the bribe.

KARA DRISCOLL
But Mirsky wants what he paid for. Voicemail he left Stephanie? He was bitching about her backing out.
OSCAR CASTRO
Meanwhile, Conner’s trapped. Make the beach private, he screws the woman trying to get her girl back. Keep it public, he screws Mirsky. And either could flip on him.

KARA DRISCOLL
So he kills them both.

OSCAR CASTRO
Except C.J.’s got the goods on him too. She swung by Conner’s place the night before Stephanie was killed. Blackmailed him.

KARA DRISCOLL
And probably started him on his killing spree. Now he needs to wack her to close the loop.

OSCAR CASTRO
‘Cept he can’t get to her. Her brother’s lurking. She’s got a roomie. She’s keeping her distance ’cause she knows he’s a killer.

Conner’s Assistant enters.

CONNER’S ASSISTANT
Unfortunately, the Councilman’s taken ill. Left for the day. But you’re welcome to come by tomorrow. (phone rings again; sighs) Never stops around here...

And she vanishes again.

KARA DRISCOLL
Conner’s going home?! He murdered C.J.’s ex. Kicked her off her beach to spite her. He has to know she’s coming for him.

OSCAR CASTRO
He’s counting on it.

As Oscar and Kara hurry out...

END ACT FOUR
ACT FIVE

38 EXTERIOR CONNER MANSION - DAY

A nervous C.J. Gun in hand. Standing by the side of Conner’s house. Deliberating. As we hear a CLICK.

OSCAR CASTRO (O.S.)
Drop it. Right now!

REVERSE to FIND... Oscar and Kara. Guns pointed at C.J.

C.J DEVLIN
It’s my fault she’s dead, you know. My fault he killed her.

KARA DRISCOLL
It’s not.

C.J DEVLIN
(anguished)
It is. And all because of this stupid beach. I let him win, Stephanie dies for nothing.

KARA DRISCOLL
He won’t win. (C.J. hesitates)
Don’t make us do this. Please.

A tearful C.J. drops her gun. Oscar cuffs her to a fence.

OSCAR CASTRO
We’ll be back.

Suddenly, a SHOT rings out, SHATTERING a window.

OSCAR CASTRO (CONT’D)
Down!

As Oscar, Kara and C.J. dive for cover, a BMW screeches out of Conner’s driveway. Oscar and Kara hare for their car...

39 EXTERIOR GREAT HIGHWAY - DAY

A pulse-pounding car chase, Oscar driving, weaving in and out of traffic, closing on Conner’s Beemer. We INTERCUT:
INT. UNMARKED CAR - DAY

A shot SHATTERS the Detectives’ windshield into a spiderweb. Oscar punches out the glass. Kara hangs on for dear life.

KARA DRISCOLL
What do I do?

OSCAR CASTRO
Try not to get shot.

Oscar finally REAR-ENDS the Beemer. Sending it FISHTAILING. CRASHING into a tree. Oscar and Kara screech to a halt. A bloodied Conner exits his car and limps into a wooded cliffside area. Oscar and Kara give chase on foot...

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Oscar sprints into the woods, quickly outpacing Kara, who simply can’t keep up. She stops to catch her breath.

KARA DRISCOLL
Damn yoga.

We FIND Oscar, giving chase. Bullets wing past him, as he darts behind a tree, trading fire with Conner. Until the shooting stops. Conner has emptied his clip.

Oscar continues his pursuit, rushing into a CLEARING. He follows a TRAIL OF BLOOD leading to a TRAILER near the cliff. Cautiously rounds the trailer’s corner. But...

SMACK. The BUTT of Conner’s gun smashes against the back of Oscar’s head. Oscar collapses, gun SKITTERING from his hand.

Conner picks up a large ROCK. He’s about to bring it down on Oscar’s head when... a SHOT RINGS OUT. Hitting Conner in the chest. Conner stumbles backward... and off the cliff. PLUNGING into the water below. And disappearing.

A bleeding Oscar looks up to see... a hyperventilating Kara. GUN in hand. He nods to her.

INT. C.R.U.S.H. SQUAD - BULLPEN - DAY

Kara at her desk. Finishing up some paperwork on a computer. Oscar approaches, a bandage on his head.

OSCAR CASTRO
Cleared your first case. Maybe you’re not gonna be a complete disaster.
KARA DRISCOLL
If that’s thank you for saving your ass, you’re welcome.

OSCAR CASTRO
Yeah, you saved it. This time. Glad there was a this time.

KARA DRISCOLL
Sorry?

OSCAR CASTRO
Wanna tell me why you’ve been fidgeting with your gun all day?

KARA DRISCOLL
I haven’t.

OSCAR CASTRO
You have. Shifting it. Waist. Ankle. Shoulder. Know why?

KARA DRISCOLL
Because guns are hard to accessorize.

OSCAR CASTRO
You botch a shoot, you play with your piece. Every cop does it. We call it trigger fingers.

KARA DRISCOLL
Okay, now I’m the German shepherd.

OSCAR CASTRO
You didn’t unload when Conner got away the first time. So your screw-up must be that you should’ve.

They hold each other’s gaze for a beat, neither blinking.

KARA DRISCOLL
Hey, here’s a thought. Leave the psychoanalysis to me. And you can concentrate on being wrong.

(Oscar nods, moves off)

Oscar... OSCAR.

Oscar turns to look at Kara. Vulnerable for once.

KARA DRISCOLL (CONT’D)
Daniel Prady.
OSCAR CASTRO
Who?

KARA DRISCOLL
Doorbell Dan.

Oscar thinks on it. Then:

OSCAR CASTRO
The psycho who’d sweet-talk his way into people’s houses before strangling them? What does--

KARA DRISCOLL
He was my patient. I helped him cop an insanity rap.

OSCAR CASTRO
Single count of murder, right?

KARA DRISCOLL
Yup. Because when I testified there was only the one body. They found the other seven after he was institutionalized. By then he was incompetent to stand trial.

OSCAR CASTRO
I read he broke outta the looney bin a few months back.

KARA DRISCOLL
Hundred forty-three days ago today, actually.
(building emotion)
And here’s the thing. He wasn’t insane, Oscar. Just evil. And he conned me. Plotted his escape for eighteen months. Killed two nurses on the way out...

OSCAR CASTRO
And you think that’s on you.

KARA DRISCOLL
I know it is. His not being locked away in maximum security? On me.
Those nurses? On me.
(a choke in her voice)
And when he kills again-- and he will...
OSCAR CASTRO
So that’s why you’re here. You figure more bodies are gonna drop. But if you nab a few bad guys, maybe you even the score.

KARA DRISCOLL
I’ll settle for keeping the score close until we catch him.

OSCAR CASTRO
You’re so keen on saving lives, why’d you let Conner go the first time?

KARA DRISCOLL
He was wearing a mask. It was dark. I wasn’t... sure.

OSCAR CASTRO
You didn’t want to make another mistake. I get it. Thing is, in this job, you’re never sure. But you damn well better be certain.

KARA DRISCOLL
Of what?

OSCAR CASTRO
That you want to be a cop. For you, today was that day. But if today was yesterday, I’d be dead.

Oscar goes. Off Kara, digesting this...

INT. SAN QUENTIN PRISON - VISITOR ROOM - NIGHT


OSCAR CASTRO
Been a while. Wanted to check in.

The man just stares straight ahead. Unblinking.

OSCAR CASTRO (CONT’D)
Filled up your commissary, Dad.

He’s GABRIEL CASTRO. Not on good terms with his son.
Heard you saw Rafa. Made him look like a rat in front of his crew.

I was doing my job.

That job include gettin’ your little brother iced?

He wasn’t... it’s not--

Not what? Not WHAT?

Oscar. At a loss for words, as his father fumes across from him.

All that matter’s is family. The only thing I ever tried to teach you. The one thing you never got.

Gabriel stands. Moves off. Raps on the GATE. It opens. A Guard leads him away. Off Oscar, shattered...

As a weary Kara pours herself a glass of wine. Sits on her couch. Ready to drink at last. When she’s interrupted by... DING-DONG. She tenses, a little on edge. Goes to the door, peeks through the peephole. Unlocks the door. Opens it.

Her ex, bouquet in hand.

You’re all over the news. Wanted to congratulate you.

Thanks, but this isn’t a good time.

Why not?

‘Cause I’m exhausted. And we’re divorced. And I don’t like you.
CABOT DRISCOLL  
Brought a peace offering, is all.  
You don’t want it...  

He turns to go. Kara reconsiders. That was a little harsh.  

KARA DRISCOLL  
Wait.  
(takes bouquet)  
Maybe we can do lunch one of these days.  

CABOT DRISCOLL  
That’d be easier to arrange if your squad were closer to my office.  
Commissioner promised me--  

KARA DRISCOLL  
Hold it, you talked to Delmond?!  
(shoves bouquet at him)  
I didn’t ask you to do that.  

CABOT DRISCOLL  
You didn’t have to.  

KARA DRISCOLL  
(Are you kidding me?)  
Ohmigod.  

CABOT DRISCOLL  
Look, you’re my ex-wife. I care.  
And if that means looking out for you--  

KARA DRISCOLL  
By making sure I work nearby?  

CABOT DRISCOLL  
Yes. You’re all alone, Kara. And it’s a big, ugly world.  

KARA DRISCOLL  
Get it straight. You don’t pull my strings. That was the point of the divorce, or didn’t you get the memo? I mean, the complete lack--  

Cabot leans in. KISSES Kara. She pulls back. Stunned. SLAPS him. He nods. Turns to go.  

KARA DRISCOLL (CONT’D)  
Wait.
She grabs him. Pulls him close. KISSES him. This one lasts longer. Steamy. The chemistry undeniable. She finally pulls back. Gazes into his eyes. And SLAPS him again.

**CABOT DRISCOLL**

Eight years, I still don’t get you.

**KARA DRISCOLL**

(grabs the bouquet)

Just go. Please.

A baffled Cabot does. Kara closes the door. Flushed now. Goes to her couch. Sits. Looks at the bouquet.

**KARA DRISCOLL (CONT’D)**

So that was seriously messed up.

(off Sigmund)

Don’t look at me that way. You would’ve done the same thing. I mean, if you were a girl-- and not a cat. And insane.

Kara tosses the bouquet, reaches for the wine. When... DING-DONG. The bell again. She gets up, frustrated now.

**KARA DRISCOLL (CONT’D)**

Cabot, I swear to God...

She opens the door, but no one’s there. Kara looks around, then sees it: a MANILA ENVELOPE on her welcome mat. She reaches down. Opens it. And PALES as she...

Riffles through 8.5 by 11 SURVEILLANCE PHOTOS of herself: on a date with Todd West; arguing with Mr. Grubman about the flowers; dodging the car on the Great Highway; running into the woods with her gun drawn.

There’s a message composed of LETTERS snipped from a mishmash of newspapers and magazines: “ThiS Is OnLy thE BEgiNnING.”

**EXT. KARA’S CONDO - NIGHT**

A frightened Kara steps out into the night. Eyes darting left then right. Searching in vain for her unseen adversary.

The CAMERA PULLS OUT. PULLS OUT AGAIN. And we finally CUT TO: An AERIAL VIEW of Kara. A speck in an urban sprawl. The ultimate watcher being watched...

**END OF SHOW**