

THE BRIDGE

By

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August 4th, 2012

Shine America/FX Productions

FADE IN:

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICAS - NIGHT

Steel and concrete vein connecting El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. The Rio Grande little more than a boxed in, trash strewn trickle on this moonless Bordertown night. Past the gleaming lights of the two cities severed by the border wall lies a vast and unforgiving desert hiding secrets best left buried...

Tonight the CAMERA FINDS a black ESCALADE creeping across the bridge as WE PUSH IN.

INT. CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

The DRIVER a mere shadow behind the wheel. We never see his face, just sense the whorl of his presence, a hand here, shirt collar. He checks his watch and we see he's wearing surgical gloves. We see what he sees -- the red border light flashing green as he pulls onto the center of the bridge, a cruddy, weathered sign:

"WELCOME TO MEXICO/BIENVENIDOS A MEXICO"

Now El Paso is in his rear view mirror, the messy heart's blood sprawl of Ciudad Juarez through his windshield, Murder City, ground zero for the narco war.

At this hour there are few cars on the bridge. He checks his watch again and then it happens...

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICAS -- NIGHT

One by one the lights suddenly go out, PLUNGING the bridge into DARKNESS, save the sweep of a few motorists' headlights.

INT. CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Our mysterious Driver kills his headlights, pulls to the side of the bridge and EXITS the car, moving with purpose...

BORDER TECH #1
(Prelap)
Lights are out on the bridge...

INT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICA'S SURVEILLANCE ROOM -- NIGHT

A pair of American BORDER TECHS hunched over computer monitors as alarms sound and their CAMERA FEEDS blink to static.

BORDER TECH #2
Cameras too. Hell's goin' on?

His partner rises to check something --

BORDER TECH #1
 Auxiliary's down too. Call the
 Commander, we got a code three...

As they spring into action we cut back to...

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICA'S -- NIGHT

QUICK HANDHELD SHOTS of our Driver pulling something from
 the trunk of the car, dragging it into the road.

TIGHT ON his watch as he checks the time and then ducks away
 from the headlights of a car crossing on the other side of
 the bridge... He scurries back to his car and takes off.

INT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICA'S SURVEILLANCE ROOM -- NIGHT

Tech #2's talking frantically to his supervisor on the phone:

BORDER TECH #2
 ...It just happened. Mexicans don't
 know shit, water and power don't
 know shit, everything's just black,
 sir.

Border Tech #1 leans into his screen and whattya know the
 lights begin to magically POP ON, the CAMERA FEEDS shudder
 back on line...

BORDER TECH #1
 ... We've got juice!

BORDER TECH #2
 (into phone)
 They just went back on -- how the
 hell should I know...

As he hunkers to check the VARIOUS CAMERAS winking back to
 life. Tech #1 STOPS WHEN he sees a horrible sight...

BORDER TECH #1
 Holy shit. Shut the border.

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICAS - NIGHT

OVERHEAD SHOT of a WOMAN'S BODY resting smack in the middle
 of the bridge. She's white, blond. Her dead eyes stare up
 at the stars smeared in the sky... as we SMASH TO THE

MAIN TITLES: **THE BRIDGE.**

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. STREET NEAR BRIDGE, CIUDAD JUAREZ -- NIGHT

TIGHT ON a SHADOWY FIGURE watching the flashing lights of approaching police cars streaming onto the bridge from both the US and Mexican side of the border. This is STEVEN LINDER, 30's, white, a wolf of a man dressed in a too tight leather jacket, no stranger to the dark and jumbled chaos of Juarez. He takes a drag on his cigarette. He's been waiting for this night a long time. And now here it is, moonless, alive with possibility...

A BEAT as he crushes the half smoked cigarette under his boot and then retrieves the stub, pockets it carefully. This is a man who leaves no trace. He takes one last look at the red and white flash of the police cruisers on the bridge and turns to a sudden gust of wind blowing in off the desert. It's time...

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICAS - NIGHT

Both sides of the bridge are closed to traffic. In the center we see a crush of Crime Techs, Border Patrol Agents and uniform officers from both sides of the border. A car pulls up from the Mexican side. Out steps a man. This is Mexican State Homicide Investigator MARCO RUIZ, (40s) still rubbing the sleep from his eyes as he flashes his badge to the uniforms and swings under the crime tape.

Marco finds El Paso homicide detective SONYA NORTH, (30s) unkempt hair blowing about her face, leather pants, calf boots...

They meet over the body. It is literally on the line that divides the U.S. and Mexico. The head on Sonya's side, the feet on Marco's. Sonya eyes Marco --

SONYA

Who are you?

A BEAT as Sonya stares at him. She's there but not there, a distant ship on the horizon, not cold but something else... However tonight she's focused on the body perfectly straddling the border. Marco smiles warmly, fishes in his pocket and shows his BADGE, lightly accented English...

MARCO

Marco Ruiz, State Police.

SONYA

Sonya North, El Paso Homicide.

He puts a hand out to shake but she just looks at him, lets him dangle.

MARCO
Do you know who she is?

SONYA
(nods)
She's American.

MARCO
Okay.

SONYA
Lorraine Cross, the judge.

The name means nothing to him. He has his own dead.

A UNI crosses to Sonya...

UNI
There's a gal asking to talk to the
cop in charge.

They spot CHARLOTTE MILLWRIGHT, (40s) wealthy ranch wife -- with the hair, clothes, all that -- straining against several officers. Sonya stays on point with Marco --

SONYA
She's American, the car came from El
Paso. It's ours.

Marco gestures -- it's all yours.

Sonya crosses to Charlotte who's frantic behind the crime scene tape. Sonya fixes her with that faraway stare a beat...

SONYA (CONT'D)
Detective Sonya North. You have
information?

CHARLOTTE
Information?

SONYA
On the crime.

CHARLOTTE
(confused)
No. We need to cross the bridge...

SONYA
You'll have to wait.

CHARLOTTE

We can't wait, my husband's having a heart attack...

She points to an AMBULANCE from Mexico, stopped on the Mexican side of the bridge --

SONYA

This is a crime scene.

CHARLOTTE

We're American. We need a hospital --

SONYA

The bridge is closed.

CHARLOTTE

I can pay you.
(then)
To let us cross.

She fishes out her fancy wallet from her fancy purse. Sonya is blank. Charlotte offers a clutch of BILLS --

SONYA

No one crosses.

Sonya turns her back on the woman, walks past Marco who has been watching all this with interest. As Sonya returns to the body, Charlotte looks at Marco, eyes pleading...

CHARLOTTE

Please.

MARCO

Why were you in Mexico? Don't you know the danger?

CHARLOTTE

We were looking at some horses...

Her tears take her over. Marco watches as Charlotte runs back to the ambulance. He waits a beat, ducks back under the crime scene tape and follows her, sees her get in the back with her unconscious husband, KARL (60s)...

Marco crosses to the PARAMEDIC behind the wheel, motions for him to roll the window down...

MARCO

¿Qué tiene?

PARAMEDIC

(points to his heart)
El corazon...

MARCO

¿Es muy grave?

Off the Paramedic's nod, we CUT BACK TO:

CENTER OF BRIDGE. Sonya stands over the body, questioning SAMUELS, a BORDER AGENT who was on duty when the killer's Escalade crossed --

SONYA

What kind of car?

SAMUELS

Don't know.

SONYA

It's your job to know.

SAMUELS

Our job is border security and interdiction, not dead bodies, Ma'am.

SONYA

The car would have crossed over into Juarez.

SAMUELS

That makes it Mexico's problem.

Before she can continue the Ambulance starts moving, drives slowly past the body and crosses over into America --

SONYA

Stop!

She chases after the ambulance, but it's too late. She grabs one of the Unis who have just allowed the ambulance to pass.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Who authorized that?

Marco steps out of the crowd, faces a furious Sonya...

MARCO

I did.

SONYA

You compromised my scene.

MARCO

Her husband's very sick.

SONYA

What's your name again?

MARCO

Marco Ruiz.

SONYA

Badge number?

MARCO

He needed a hospital.

SONYA

There are hospitals in Mexico.

MARCO

You ever been to one in Juarez?

SONYA

Why does that matter?

MARCO

Here.

He holds his badge out for her to inspect again. She takes down the number --

SONYA

My body. My scene. You had no right.

MARCO

I don't need your body.

(off look)

Just this morning I got nine heads in the parking lot of City Hall...

SONYA

Why tell me that?

MARCO

We have our own dead.

She studies him a beat. Then:

SONYA

How do you let that happen?

Judgmental, yes. Like most other El Paso law enforcement, she thinks very little of the Mexican cops. But her tone is matter-of-fact... she really doesn't understand.

Sonya moves off to the body again. Marco shakes off the remark, crosses to his car where several other Juarez police officers stand waiting on his word.

MARCO

Americans are taking it. I'm going back to sleep.

As they disperse --

EXT. JUAREZ -- NIGHT

CAMERA PANS across a dark mountainside where we can just make out the words "LEA LA BIBLIA - ES LA VERDAD" painted in massive white print as we...

EXT. JUAREZ -- NIGHT

SWOOP into the city, past blocks of squat bunker-like houses behind high concrete walls topped with razor wire. The walls of course tagged with petty street gang poetry. A pack of wild dogs roam looking for trash, pause under a BRIGHT PINK CROSS standing in an abandoned lot, plastic flowers crucified over the name of one of the lost girls of Juarez as we...

EXT. STREETS, JUAREZ -- NIGHT

What passes for a nice neighborhood in Juarez, gaudy narco tecture houses with their golden domes, iron gates -- monuments to the spoils of the drug war.

CAMERA FINDS Linder as he crosses down a street filled with SUV'S parked outside night club. The door opens briefly to reveal a few drunken SICARIOS (narco soldiers) parting to make way for EVA, (20s) a hot mess all jeweled and tarted up, the girlfriend of a narco. Her two girlfriends follow her out.

AS THE DOOR to the club opens we glimpse a BOY in a RED and BLACK SHIRT -- 18, a baby face, somehow different than the jaded narcos and clubbers he's hanging with. The girls shut the door and he's gone, but remember him.

And linger outside the club. At first girl's chatter looks light, but with a closer look -- Eva is wiping tears. As her make-up washes away, we also see BRUISES on her face.

Linder presses himself into the shadows, watching Eva. She kisses her friends goodbye, then slips away into the night...

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Linder follows her down an alley. She hears his footsteps; turns and sees him. He approaches, holding out a bandana. In Spanish:

LINDER

For your tears.

Eva is frozen as he hands her the bandana. She looks at it like it's some kind of signal... which it is.

EVA
Are you the one... ?

She starts to shake.

LINDER
Yes. I am the one. Now come.

She stiffens as he grabs her elbow, leading her...

LINDER (CONT'D)
Where is your car?

A beat as she points to a Honda parked on an empty side street. He pushes her across to the car.

LINDER (CONT'D)
The keys.

She fishes in her purse, hands him the keys. Instead of opening the door, he pops the trunk.

EVA
No.

LINDER
Si.

Eva hesitates, looks around. The street is totally fucking empty, the din of the club faraway and faint...

EVA
Por favor...

She looks around -- she's gonna run. Before she can, he GRABS HER and throws her in the trunk of the car. Stifles her cry. Takes her purse and then presses his face close to hers and puts a finger to his lips --

LINDER
Shhh....

He SLAMS THE TRUNK shut as we...

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE AMERICAS -- NIGHT

It's just Sonya now with the dead woman. She kneels, finishing up her notes. She motions to MORGUE ATTENDANTS --

SONYA
I'm done.

Two Morgue Attendants close in. One grabs the shoulders, the other the feet...

Sonya pulls out her cellphone to call her Lieutenant when she hears the morgue attendants react...

MORGUE ATTENDANT

Shit...

She turns in time to see the dead woman's body CLEAVE IN TWO, perfectly vivisected. She strides over and stares at the two halves -- what the fuck is going on?

INT. UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER OF EL PASO -- NIGHT

Charlotte hopping out of the ambulance as paramedics wheel her unconscious husband into an operating room, nurses working feverishly on his vitals, threading catheters, trying to stabilize him... Charlotte peels away, sees a man standing there. This is DR. BARNES and he's dressed in a jacket, string tie and boots -- not scrubs...

DR. BARNES

Charlotte, I came as fast as I could --

CHARLOTTE

Will you operate?

DR. BARNES

I was at a wedding. Had too much to drink...

(off look)

Doctor McGrann will do the bypass.

CHARLOTTE

You're his doctor.

DR. BARNES

I'll be here to consult. It's a routine procedure...

CHARLOTTE

I'll pay you.

DR. BARNES

Come on now...

CHARLOTTE

I'll fund that heart clinic you've been lobbying the board of directors for. We'll build a whole new wing --

She stops as several nurses come RUSHING out of the room. She reads the doctor's face -- this is not good.

INT. EL PASO PD, ENTRANCE -- NIGHT

...Catch LT. HANK WADE (50s) possessing a weathered cowboy swagger even at this hour as he ENTERS the HQ, talking with Sonya on his cell. INTERCUT WITH SONYA DRIVING AS NEEDED.

HANK

You sure it's Judge Cross?

SONYA

In two pieces.

HANK

Well damn.

INT. SONYA'S TRUCK (MOVING) -- NIGHT

Sonya driving fast as she talks to Hank...

SONYA

The Mexicans didn't want the body.

Hank shrugs, not surprised.

HANK

The Feds?

SONYA

They don't know yet.

INT. EL PASO PD, BULLPEN -- NIGHT

Hank moves into the nearly empty bullpen, phone pressed to his ear. He goes to the coffee maker, entirely befuddled by it. Presses a few buttons here and there --

HANK

(into phone)

They will. Morning light will bring those boys, Border Patrol, DEA, ICE. Everybody'll wanna piece of this.

SONYA

It's mine.

HANK

How do you work this damn thing?

SONYA

What?

He means the coffee pot. Starts striding through the halls, looking for someone to help him --

HANK

Lorraine Cross on the Bridge of the Americas. Someone's sending a message.

SONYA

What do you mean? What is the message?

HANK

She's an anti-immigration nut. Believes in the wall, anti-Dream Act, all that.

He spots KITTY, middle-aged civilian clerk, working her curves and orange lipstick, just arriving for work. He signals for her to follow him. She does, back to the coffee pot --

HANK (CONT'D)

Have you told the family?

SONYA

I'm on my way now.

HANK

It's the middle of the night, Sonya. There are children there.

SONYA

I know.

HANK

Tread lightly.

SONYA

Their mother was murdered. There is no other way to say it.

HANK

Why don't I join you?

SONYA

Hank. No.

She hangs up. He does too, sighing. Kitty's waiting patiently. He points to the coffee maker --

KITTY

Good morning, Lieutenant.

HANK

Do you know how to do this?

KITTY
 (shakes head)
 I just go to Starbucks.

HANK
 Aw damn.

Off which --

EXT. JUDGE CROSS'S HOUSE, WEST SIDE EL PASO -- NIGHT

Nice neighborhood in the foothills of the Franklin mountains. The CAMERA PUSHES PAST a child's bike abandoned in the front yard to find a light in the living room as we PRELAP MIKE CROSS'S VOICE:

MIKE
 (prelap)
 She was on her way to a conference
 in Austin...

INT. JUDGE CROSS'S HOUSE, WEST SIDE EL PASO -- NIGHT

Sonya with Judge Cross's husband, MIKE (40s) numb with grief and the shock of what she has just told him. Sonya remains unmoved. She has not tread lightly.

SONYA
 Flying?

MIKE
 She drove. I called her before I
 went to bed...

SONYA
 What time?

MIKE
 Eleven, but she didn't answer.

SONYA
 She was dead by then. I'll need
 your phone. And computer...

MIKE
 Right now?

She nods. He hands her the phone, too lost in grief to protest --

SONYA
 Why didn't she fly?

MIKE
 She liked to drive.

She thinks for a beat --

SONYA
 Maybe an affair.
 (off look)
 People have needs.

MIKE
 There was no affair.

SONYA
 Well you wouldn't know. She would
 keep it secret. You have secrets.

It's matter-of-fact, not cruel. At least not intended to be
 cruel. But of course Mike is reeling --

SONYA (CONT'D)
 Were there any recent threats?

MIKE
 She put a lot of bad people away...

SONYA
 So, yes?

MIKE
 Nothing lately.

SONYA
 What was the conference she was going
 to?

MIKE
 Secure Our Border.

SONYA
 Secure it from what?

MIKE
 Spillover violence. Illegals. She
 was the keynote speaker.

Sonya stares at him, considering this. Then --

SONYA
 Did she use drugs?

MIKE
 Drugs? Lorraine? She was a mother
 for christ sake.

Sonya waits, blank. He's had it.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I'd like you to leave now.

Off this --

EXT. MARCO RUIZ'S HOUSE, JUAREZ -- NIGHT

Marco pulls through the gate in his crappy Taurus. Pauses to make sure the gate shuts behind him. He looks up at his house, sees a light on the basement, frowns...

INT. MARCO RUIZ'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

He enters, the cozy mess of a house full of children, navigating in the half dark toward the basement door.

INT. RUIZ HOUSE, BASEMENT -- NIGHT

Marco pauses outside a door, listening. He knocks -- no answer and then ENTERS.

Sitting in front of a Playstation is an 18-year-old in a BLACK AND RED SHIRT -- same kid we glimpsed at that club. He turns -- yup, same baby face. This is Marco's oldest son, AGUSTINE, GUS for short. Headphones on, deeply absorbed in *Call of Duty*, his character stalking a digital Cuba in search of Castro.

Marco watches his son maneuver, killing without pause. Life here means nothing.

MARCO

Gus?

No answer. He taps him --

GUS

What?

He takes off the headphones.

MARCO

I can smell it.

GUS

What?

MARCO

The dope.

No response --

MARCO (CONT'D)

Where'd you get it?

GUS

Tico at school.

MARCO

You know who Tico's uncle is?

(off look)

Aurelio Guetta, soldier for the Zetas.
That's where your dope comes from.

GUS

It was just a joint.

MARCO

And now you owe him. Maybe his uncle
wants you to make a delivery for
him. Drive him someplace.

GUS

That's not how it is --

MARCO

That is how it is. That's how you
get caught up. These narcos will
reach out and grab you like that.

He snaps his fingers.

GUS

Fine.

He puts on his headphones, tuning Marco out.

MARCO

You go across for classes, you come
right back. No parties, no Tico.

Gus doesn't respond. Doesn't even look at his dad. Marco
moves out --

INT. RUIZ HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marco ENTERS and sees his wife ALMA (30s), beautiful and
bathed in the blue glow of the alarm clock next to the bed.

He undresses, sets his gun and phone on the nightstand.

A BEAT as he pulls his pants off and winces as he moves slowly
to the bed, pulls the covers back only to find one of his
daughter's stuffed bears on his pillow. He smiles, sets the
bear on the floor and a big breath as he crawls into bed,
obviously in pain, but from what?

ALMA

Were you on the bridge?

MARCO

Yes.

ALMA

What happened?

MARCO

A body. The Americans took it.

ALMA

Did you check on Gus?

MARCO

Yes.

ALMA

Is he asleep?

MARCO

Yes.

ALMA

He didn't come home til ten.

MARCO

Maybe he had a night class.

ALMA

He didn't.

MARCO

I'll talk to him.

ALMA

Maybe he should stay in El Paso.
With my sister.

MARCO

I like him here.

Marco rolls away, lets out a pained gasp.

ALMA

Does it hurt?

MARCO

Yes...

Marco stares at the ceiling having one of those moments...

INT. EL PASO MORGUE - NIGHT

Sonya enters the morgue to find Judge Cross's body inhabiting two slabs -- one for her torso, the other for her legs. MONITORS on the wall display photos of the wounds.

Gory but Sonya seems not to notice. Nor does M.E. CHIP RODRIGUEZ (30s), smiles like he's got a secret, like he's smarter than most...

CHIP

You're going to like this.

She looks at him. Doesn't engage in the playfulness.

SONYA

Cause of death?

He shrugs, points to a photo of a nasty puncture wound at the base of the victim's skull.

CHIP

Some heavy gauge needle. Entered the base of the spine, then the brain cavity where it wiped out motor function. Quick, neat and almost painless.

A beat as Sonya studies the entry wound.

CHIP (CONT'D)

But even better...

Chip holds out surgical gloves. Sonya snaps them on and pulls back the sheet to reveal the severed torso in all it's grisly glory. She studies the torso, probes the puncture wound, the crosscut abdomen as Chip watches, waiting for her to puzzle it out.

SONYA

No petechial hemorrhaging.

She palpates the skin, notes an INCISION at the neck artery...

SONYA (CONT'D)

She was bled out and then cut in half...

CHIP

Probably made the bisection less messy.

(then)

And the other half?

Sonya crosses to the other slab, pulls back the sheet on the lower half of the body.

SONYA

The lower half is much darker...

Chip nods. Sonya notes what looks like a burn on the thigh.

SONYA (CONT'D)
... Is this frostbite?

CHIP
Freezer burn. Post mortem.
(off look)
For at least a year.

SONYA
That's impossible.

CHIP
The legs don't belong to Lorraine
Cross.
(then)
This victim is a Hispanic female.
I'm guessing late teens to early
twenties.

Sonya snaps the gloves off. WTF is going on?

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. ZAROGOSA BRIDGE, US/MEXICO BORDER -- NIGHT

We see Linder driving across the bridge in Eva's Honda. Faint WHIMPERS from the trunk. He passes under a sign welcoming him to the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. There's barely any traffic at this hour and only two inspection lanes are open. He chooses one, pulls to the gate arm only to have a BORDER AGENT wave him up for a little chat.

That's when he notices Eva's PURSE on the seat next to him and quickly shoves it under the seat, masking his movement by turning the radio up.

BORDER AGENT

Passport?

Linder reaches into his pocket, hands him the passport.

BORDER AGENT (CONT'D)

How long were you in Mexico?

LINDER

Three hours.

BORDER AGENT

What did you bring back from Mexico?

LINDER

Just a smile, officer...

The guy looks at him. Stops with the rote questioning --

BORDER AGENT

What were ya doin' in Juarez?

LINDER

Seeing a friend.

The Border Agent smells bullshit --

BORDER AGENT

I got a friend in Juarez. Haven't visited him in six years. Not worth the risk...

Linder looks at him, sheepish. Confiding --

LINDER

Okay. I went over for the Senioritas.

The Border Agent gives him a conspiratorial smile -- the man had a need.

BORDER AGENT
Anything good?

LINDER
Definetely worth the visit.

The agent grins, hands the passport back...

BORDER AGENT
Have a good night.

He signals Linder through into America with his secret cargo, radio masking her trapped whimpers as we...

INT. UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER OF EL PASO -- NIGHT

TIGHT ON Charlotte pacing in the purgatory of a hospital waiting room, plastic flowers in a plastic vase, ancient Time Magazines, the blur of nurses, the old man combing the Bible for answers.

DR. Barnes ENTERS with a SURGEON in scrubs behind him. They have that 1,000 yard stare, the bearers of bad news...

DR. BARNES
Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE
How is he?

Dr. Barnes shakes his head. She stares. Then pure animal grief as she knows. Her husband is dead. Gone.

INT. RUIZ HOUSE, BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Marco's cellphone BUZZES on the night stand. He reaches out, SILENCES it. It immediately buzzes again. He answers. INTERCUT WITH SONYA IN THE MORGUE.

MARCO
Bueno?

SONYA (O.S.)
Is this Marco Ruiz?

MARCO
Si. Yes...

INT. EL PASO MORGUE - NIGHT

Sonya on the phone with Marco...

SONYA
Sonya North, El Paso PD.

MARCO
The one in charge, I remember.

His crack met with silence, then...

SONYA
Were you sleeping?

MARCO
I do that at night.

SONYA
There were two women on the bridge.

MARCO
You found another one?

SONYA
No. The victim was two bodies. An upper half and lower half. Two different women.

MARCO
Chingame...

SONYA
Have you found half a body in Juarez?
(then)
Hispanic, late teens to twenty.
You'd have the top half.

Marco sits up in bed, groans with pain.

SONYA (CONT'D)
Something wrong?

MARCO
No. I'm listening. Cut in half?

SONYA
Yes. Do you have a girl matching this description?

MARCO
I don't know. We have lots of bodies, parts of bodies, bones...

SONYA
It could be a year old. The legs were frozen. Can you look into it?

MARCO

Yeah. I'll check in the morning.

SONYA

Who can I call to look into it now?

Marco pulls the phone away from his ear -- later is not an option for this woman.

MARCO

I'll do it. I'll call you back.

SONYA

When?

CLICK. Marco hangs up. Sonya stares at the phone...

INT. RUIZ HOUSE, BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Marco drags himself out of bed clumsily. Alma watches...

ALMA

What is it?

MARCO

This El Paso detective. I can't tell if she's crazy or just American.

ALMA

Maybe both.

He leans over and kisses Alma.

MARCO

I'll be back.

EXT. JUAREZ POLICE STATION -- NIGHT

Marco exiting his car, gingerly, enters the building...

INT. JUAREZ POLICE STATION, FILE ROOM -- NIGHT

Marco sits with CELIA (30s), plump, mischievous eyes. Got dragged out of bed to help Marco, but he's lucky. She likes him. Maybe they even had an affair...

CELIA

Missing female, fifteen to twenty years old? We get five of those a week, Marco.

MARCO

I know. Go back a year. Only the ones with partial remains.

CELIA
We talking top half, or bottom?

MARCO
Top. The Americans found the legs.

As Celia feeds this into the database. Then waiting --

CELIA
Things okay at home?

MARCO
Fine. You?

CELIA
Same.

MARCO
That's good.

Some unspoken thing between them. Playful --

CELIA
So you'll be firing blanks, now?

A beat as Marco shoots her a look.

MARCO
Was my procedure in the bureau
minutes?

CELIA
(ball busting smile)
Is everything working?

MARCO
It will be.

CELIA
And that's it? Now you're fixed?

MARCO
What do you mean?

CELIA
You heard about the castrated toms?
(off look)
Tomcats.

MARCO
No...

CELIA
My brother's a vet.
(MORE)

CELIA (CONT'D)

He says the first thing that happens is they gain weight, then they sleep all day.

(snaps her fingers)

A wild predator turns into a fat sleepy pussy just like that...

MARCO

They're castrated. That's not the same thing.

Celia looks at him, clearly enjoying this, part flirtation, part payback.

CELIA

Okay...

Celia punches a button, sorting the search results. Turns to him with a tart smile.

CELIA (CONT'D)

You got lucky tonight.

(points to screen)

Cristina Fuentes.

The photo of CRISTINA FUENTES, 16, dark hair and dark eyes stares at us. Off Marco as we...

EXT. STREET, JUAREZ -- NIGHT

Marco pulls up to a massive, gaudy house, domed roof, ornate stone work, polished gold lions, crossed guns over bandoliers, and the visage of Jesus Malverde adorn the high brick wall surrounding the property. Behind the walls we can see and hear a party going full tilt, the rhythmic oompah pa of a narcorrido reverberating.

All along the street are pimped out SUV's with bullet proof glass, rims, BODYGUARD & DRIVERS sit waiting in the vehicles.

Marco pulls up and exits his car (a tin can compared to all the vehicles around him). He crosses to one of the SUV's and knocks. The window rolls down to reveal HUGO (30s) an off duty cop. A flash of disappointment in Marco's eyes --

THE FOLLOWING IN SPANISH, SUBTITLED...

MARCO

You too, Hugo?

Hugo's thrown, then defensive --

HUGO

You come here to judge?

MARCO

I need to see the Captain.

HUGO

He's not here.

MARCO

I need to see him, so pick up that radio.

A beat as Hugo grabs a two-way off the seat, says something we can't hear.

A second later the large wrought iron gate rolls open. Hugo, trying to explain himself as Marco heads into the house --

HUGO

Natalie's pregnant again.

MARCO

Mm hm.

HUGO

We need the money...

Marco just keeps going --

EXT. GALVAN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Marco enters a courtyard strung with paper lanterns, littered with party goers, some paired off with señoritas in skimpy dresses and stripper heels, others sitting and watching Narcoriddo band sing the glories of a bloody showdown through the dope and cigar smoke. We see flashes of gang tattoos, gaudy jewelry, a nickel plated nine dangling from a holsters under five thousand dollar suits.

On either side of the courtyard stand two large cages. Inside one cage is a motherfucking LION and in the other a PANTHER.

The men all stop to note Marco's entrance, making him instantly for a cop. Marco gives it right back.

As he passes the caged panther he stops to watch a drunk narco SOLDIER blow dope smoke into the cage. The panther hisses, backs into the corner of the cage. If not for the bars...

MARCO

(Spanish)

You're making a dangerous enemy.

The SOLDIER eye fucks Marco, lifts his guayabera to reveal a gun. Marco holds his gaze and then pushes past into the house.

INT. GALVAN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Dark wood paneled room. Several men sit playing cards. Among them CAPTAIN ROBLES (40s) drunk. FAUSTO GALVAN (40s) dark black suit, long black braided ponytail slinking down his back and a diamond encrusted Movado. He's flanked by two of his men.

Fausto gives his back to Marco. Fausto is the presence and menace in the room, all the men, even Captain Robles watch him, equal parts awe and fear.

A BEAT as Marco studies Fausto, notes the flashy watch. Not exactly the best of company for his police captain to be keeping.

IN SPANISH, SUBTITLED...

CAPTAIN ROBLES

Marco...

MARCO

Sorry to bother you.

CAPTAIN ROBLES

Isn't it past your bed time?

The men laugh, Marco just smiles. No need for him to make dangerous enemies. He sees but doesn't see what's going on.

CAPTAIN ROBLES (CONT'D)

What's so important that you interrupt our card game?

MARCO

There were two bodies on the bridge.

CAPTAIN ROBLES

Two now?

MARCO

One is from Juarez.

CAPTAIN ROBLES

Let the Americans take it.

(off look)

Sit down have a drink, play some cards with us.

MARCO

I'm not here to play cards. I need your permission to work the case. That's procedure, right?

FAUSTO

Bet's to you, Captain...

Fausto pushes a stack of chips to the center of the table, turns and stares at Marco a long time, taking his measure.

FAUSTO (CONT'D)

He's dedicated. It's a good thing to have men like that...

CAPTAIN ROBLES

(to Marco)

Go on.

Off Marco as we...

INT. EL PASO PD - CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS (CAP) -- NIGHT

Sonya pacing as she discusses the case with her boss, Hank --

HANK

New Mexico or Arizona have any missing girls?

SONYA

Nothing that matches our half.

HANK

Sheriff's boys are looking for the Judge's BMW. I guess by daylight it turns up.

SONYA

And by daylight the FBI's gonna be here, trying to take my case.

HANK

You're going to have a task force situation, Sonya.

SONYA

Well, I want to lead it.

HANK

You sure about that? 'Cause a case like this can change you. Scratch your soul. Invade your dreams...

SONYA

I don't dream.

Sonya's cell rings. She looks at the number, puzzled, and then answers.

SONYA (CONT'D)

Sonya North.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MARCO'S CAR -- NIGHT

Marco pulled over to the side of the road, reading from a file, downloading Sonya...

MARCO

Cristina Fuentes, sixteen. Went missing from a *maquiladora*.

(then)

She got on the bus in the morning, never came home. Partial remains discovered in a death house.

SONYA

Death house?

MARCO

Abandoned house where the Sicarios dump bodies. They fill one up, find another.

SONYA

When was she found?

Hank sips coffee, watches Sonya as she talks --

MARCO

A year and a half ago. It fits.

SONYA

Can you send the file?

MARCO

It's better if I come to you. She's one of the dead girls of Juarez.

(then)

Give me half an hour.

SONYA

It's not necessary. It's my case --

He hangs up before she can say another word, drops the car into drive and heads north towards the gleam of El Paso.

STAY WITH Sonya, still with the phone to her ear...

SONYA (CONT'D)

Hello?

(to Hank)

He's coming here.

HANK

Good.

SONYA

Why is that good?

HANK

He's got a body too, right?

SONYA

He doesn't care about his.

HANK

(checks watch)

He called you at 4 a.m. with her name.

SONYA

Right. Fine.

HANK

We have two bodies placed directly on an international border. This case is gonna take us down south. And last I checked that badge on your hip don't mean shit in Juarez.

Sonya smells her armpit, then reaches into her desk drawer and pulls out a fresh shirt.

Hank has seen this before; he looks away as she pulls her shirt off, oblivious to her state of undress, and slides the fresh one on --

EXT. EAST EL PASO -- NIGHT

Past the sprawl of El Paso into the hard pan desert of the foothills we see a car snaking up a washed out road, headlights illuminating jack rabbits, moths, the occasional trailer surrounded by broken down trucks and cars.

It's the Honda. Linder driving. He stops at a metal bar gate. Exits the car, unlocks the gate. Looks around and gets back in the car.

The road snakes behind a mesa and in the sweep of the headlight beam stands a small white TRAILER.

He pulls to the trailer, parks and opens the trunk to reveal Eva freaked the fuck out. She jumps out and starts to run. Linder quietly reaches in and KILLS THE HEADLIGHTS plunging the place into darkness. Instead of chasing after he simply watches her stumbling over rocks, falling...

LINDER
 Watch for rattle snakes. They come
 out at night.

She falls and doesn't rise...

LINDER (CONT'D)
 Scream if you have to. There's nobody
 for miles.

EVA
Ayudame...

She crumples to the ground, crying. He goes to her. Slings
 her over his shoulder and crosses to the trailer, opens it
 and flicks a light on...

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

Linder sets Eva down on a mattress with clean sheets, sees
 that she's scraped her knee.

LINDER
 You've hurt yourself.

EVA
Donde estamos?

LINDER
 A safe place.

Linder finds a First Aid Kit, takes out some iodine and gently
 cleans the wound. Eva recoils at his touch. Linder fixes
 her with his unblinking gaze...

LINDER (CONT'D)
 Hold still, please.

He dabs the wound clean, presses a bandage to it and then
 rises.

LINDER (CONT'D)
 You must be tired. *Duermes tu.*

Eva pushes herself back on the bed, away from him.

LINDER (CONT'D)
 I'll be back.

He steps out of the trailer. We stay with Eva as she hears
 Linder throw a LATCH and snap a PADLOCK over it.

She runs to the door, tries to open it. No way out. As she
 panics, screams again --

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER OF EL PASO -- NIGHT

Charlotte looking out the hospital window, black mountains, her own numb reflection -- and when she turns, the still figure of her husband, Karl lying dead behind her.

She crosses to him, touches his cold arm and recoils. This is not her husband. She pulls at the WEDDING BAND on his finger. She can't get it off.

A NURSE enters...

NURSE

Would you like more time?

Charlotte turns, disoriented.

CHARLOTTE

No.

The nurse hands Charlotte a pamphlet.

NURSE

The hospital provides non-denominational grief counseling.

Charlotte waves away the pamphlet. Then:

CHARLOTTE

I don't... know how to do this.

NURSE

Of course not.

Charlotte turns back to Karl, tugs at the wedding ring again. The nurse offers some Vaseline. Together they accomplish the task; off comes the ring. Charlotte grips it tight.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Is there someone I can call?

CHARLOTTE

Me. I'm the person to call. His wife.

NURSE

Do you have children?

CHARLOTTE

A daughter. She's not...

(MORE)

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
 (tries to recover)
 So, what happens now?

NURSE
 Someone from the hospital will contact
 you about a funeral home.

CHARLOTTE
 I... leave him here?

The nurse nods. Hands her a PLASTIC BAG from a table.

NURSE
 Your husband's clothes and personal
 items.

Charlotte clutches the bag. Takes one last look at her
 husband and walks past the nurse --

INT. EL PASO PD - ENTRANCE - DAWN

Marco waits, holding a bakery bag, case file tucked under
 his other arm. A Clerk ignoring him. Sonya joins him from
 behind secure double doors.

SONYA
 Email would have been quicker.

MARCO
 But not as pleasant. I brought some
 breakfast...

He offers her the bakery bag --

SONYA
 Where's the file?

He hands her the case file and she opens it, walking briskly
 back to the doors, only to stop when she sees that he's
 following her --

SONYA (CONT'D)
 Where are you going?

MARCO
 With you.

SONYA
 Why?

MARCO
 You've got my file.

Sonya faces the inevitable --

SONYA

My boss says there's gonna be a task force.

MARCO

Probably.

SONYA

And you want to be on it?

MARCO

Cristina Fuentes was found six blocks from my house. She went to the school my girls will go to.

(then)

Of course I do.

Sonya indicates to the clerk that it's okay; waves Marco through. He follows her --

INT. EL PASO PD -- CAP -- CONTINUOUS

Marco follows Sonya into their offices. A sign indicates "CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS" --

SONYA

This is CAP. Crimes Against Persons. We do homicides.

They find bulldog Kitty behind her desk --

MARCO

Good morning...
(reading nameplate)
Kitty.

SONYA

He needs a day pass.

Sonya moves over to her desk. Marco lingers with Kitty who takes an instant shine to him --

MARCO

It might be more than a day.

KITTY

And who are you, Hon?

He badges her --

MARCO

Marco Ruiz, Chihuahua State Police. I'll be assisting Detective North in an investigation.

KITTY
That ought to be interesting.

MARCO
Why is that?

KITTY
Sonya's... on the odd side.

MARCO
I noticed. Would you like a *pan dulce*?

He opens the bakery bag.

MARCO (CONT'D)
The ones with walnuts are good...

She smiles, takes one, can't help but be charmed.

KITTY
I do like those Mexican pastries.
Here ya go...

She hands him a PD pass -- throws some flirt, winks.

MARCO
See you later Kitty.

KITTY
Hope so.

Marco finds Sonya at her desk sitting and staring into space, the file in front of her.

AS BEAT as she sees him.

SONYA
May we begin?

MARCO
Yes...

Sonya opens the file and is instantly absorbed as Marco PACES uncomfortably. She looks up --

SONYA
Did you get the pass?

He shows it to her. She goes back to the file. He continues to pace, annoying her.

MARCO
Need me to translate for you?

SONYA
No.

MARCO
Hablas Espanol?

SONYA
Bastante.

MARCO
Good.

SONYA
Can you sit?

MARCO
Actually I can't.

SONYA
You're irritating me.

MARCO
I'll stand still.

SONYA
Why can't you sit?

MARCO
I had a procedure.
(beat)
A vasectomy, yesterday.

Sonya looks at him, blank --

MARCO (CONT'D)
I have five kids with three different
women. It was time.
(off look)
You have children?

SONYA
No. Why would I want to?

MARCO
I've never heard anyone say that.

SONYA
More people should.
(re: the case)
Evidence was collected, but never
processed.

MARCO
Yes.

Marco paces. Sonya can't stand it.

SONYA
You drove here, right?
(off nod)
Pretend that chair is a car.

MARCO
Okay, I'll try.

Marco eases himself into a chair with considerable pain.

SONYA
Much better.
(off look)
How was she killed?

MARCO
I don't know.

SONYA
Your name is on this report.

MARCO
My name is on a lot of reports.

SONYA
There are no interviews. Not even
with her parents.

MARCO
There's a saying we have in Juarez.
Desde el plato a la boca, la sopa se cae.
(then)
From the bowl to the mouth, the soup
falls.

SONYA
What does that have to do with the
case?

MARCO
Cristina Fuentes was one of two
hundred and fifty girls who
disappeared last year. They go
missing from the buses, the factories.
Always 15 to twenty years old, dark
hair, beautiful.

SONYA
So you have a serial killer.

MARCO
No one knows.

SONYA
And no one cares?

MARCO
There are so many bodies. And the
chiefs... don't really want us to
investigate.

Sonya stares; understands this not at all. Hank comes from
his office. Shaking hands --

HANK
Morning. Lieutenant Wade.

MARCO
Mucho gusto. Marco Ruiz.

SONYA
His name is on the report for Cristina
Fuentes. But he didn't investigate
at all.

Marco, piqued, starts to say something; but stops himself.
Hank observes this; gives him a break --

HANK
Well now he's got a second chance.
Sheriff's Department found Judge
Cross' car.

SONYA
Where?

HANK
Interstate 10, outside of Van Horn.

Sonya grabs her keys, heads out --

MARCO
I guess she's driving.

HANK
Little piece of advice.
(off look)
Buckle up, amigo...

Marco follows her out --

EXT. MILLWRIGHT RANCH, OUTSIDE OF EL PASO - MORNING

A town car drives Charlotte through the gates of her sprawling
ranch, down a drive lined with live oaks, the fields green
and full of shimmering quarter horses...

EXT. MILLWRIGHT RANCH -- MORNING

Charlotte looks out the window as the car continues up to the main house, a testament to old Texas money and the rewards of being a gentleman rancher.

The car stops. Charlotte alights, and sees CESAR (50s) the ranch caretaker and her late husband's right hand man waiting for her.

He removes his hat, pokes a tear from his cheek --

CESAR

I heard about *Senor* Karl...

CHARLOTTE

Have you told the rest of the staff?

Cesar nods.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Good. I don't want to be disturbed.

CESAR

Si.

Charlotte grabs the plastic bag of her husband's clothes and enters the house...

INT. MILLWRIGHT HOUSE, BEDROOM - MORNING

Charlotte searching her drawers, finally finds that pack of cigarettes she's stashed. She pulls one out, lights it and stands at the window looking out at the field of horses cantering in a nearby paddock.

On a desk in the corner are dozens of photos of her and Karl standing at horse shows, vacations in far flung places -- a life together in carefully framed photos. She sweeps her arm across the desk, sending the photos crashing.

She slumps into a chair, takes another drag of the cigarette and lets the tears come...

A BEAT as she spots her husband's clothes in the bag. She rises and dumps them out on the bed -- wallet, some loose change, watch and TWO CELLPHONES. She opens one phone and sees on the home screen a photo of the two of them on the ranch. But the other cell phone is locked -- a security code required. Why would her husband have two cell phones?

Suspicious, she does a thorough search of his wallet -- the usual stuff, that is until she finds a SINGLE KEY hidden in one of the folds. Seems old Karl had some secrets...

EXT. HIGHWAY, TEXAS -- DAY

A highway cuts across the parched Texas scrub land, the sky an impossible lonesome cowboy blue as the CAMERA FINDS a truck barreling down the road...

INT. SONYA'S TRUCK (MOVING) - MORNING

Sonya's got a tough, tricked out, green pick-up truck. She speeds and Marco rides shotgun --

MARCO
Have you slept?

SONYA
No.

MARCO
'Cause I haven't slept.

No answer. She doesn't seem to need conversation.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Nice truck.

SONYA
Yes.

MARCO
American police must pay well.

SONYA
It was my sister's.

MARCO
Your sister has good taste.

SONYA
Had.
(off look)
She died.

An uncomfortable beat. They pass a cheesy fast food place named Whataburger --

MARCO
Now they make a good breakfast burrito...

She doesn't take the hint, flies by the joint. Fine. He figures he'll try to catch some sleep, but then:

SONYA
Did you take money from that woman?

MARCO

What woman?

SONYA

On the bridge. To let her pass.

MARCO

No.

SONYA

They say you're all corrupt. Mexican police. You all take bribes.

MARCO

Not all.

She nods. Hard to tell if she believes him.

MARCO (CONT'D)

The cartels threaten us --

SONYA

I thought they gave you money. So you won't do police work.

MARCO

No. They tell us, *plata o plomo*.
(explains)
Take our silver or take our lead.

SONYA

So you just let girls die.

MARCO

I do all I can. But the situation is *todo chingado*.

Which means all fucked up. His face tight.

SONYA

You should try harder.

Marco gives up; looks out the window --

INT. MILLWRIGHT HOUSE, BEDROOM -- DAY

Charlotte sitting on the bed, punching security code after security code into her husband's locked cell phone.

CHARLOTTE

(sotto)

Shit, shit, shit...

She tries another code. Another. Frustrated she tosses it aside, only to have it start RINGING. It's a BLOCKED NUMBER.

She answers. Silence and then a woman's voice...

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Bueno?
(then)
Karl?

CHARLOTTE

Who is this?

The line goes dead.

EXT. SIDE OF HIGHWAY -- DAY

Long desolate strip of the Texas interstate. A SHERIFF'S CRUISER parked in front of a silver BMW on the side of the road.

Sonya's truck approaches, pulls over; Sonya and Marco alight. Clock the BMW. The driver's side is open.

A Sheriff's Deputy, MANNY STOKES, 30s, with braces on his teeth, tips his hat. To Sonya --

STOKES

Ma'am, you may not want to look.

Sonya badges him, moves to the car with Marco.

PULL TO REVEAL the bloodless and severed legs of JUDGE CROSS, still in heels, in the driver's seat. Marco notes some surgical tubing leading from the body out the car to a small lake of blood soaking into the dry earth.

MARCO

We dealing with a doctor?

SONYA

Where's her purse?

STOKES

Passenger seat. Everything's there.
Cash, credit cards, what have you...

Sonya gloves up, goes to the passenger side. Rifles through the purse. Opens the wallet. An EMPTY SPACE where the judge's ID would be.

SONYA

Did you pull her ID?

STOKES

No ma'am.

SONYA
Then it's missing.

MARCO
Maybe that's his trophy.

SONYA
Did Cristina have her ID?

MARCO
I don't remember.

SONYA
Her mother would know. We'll go to
Juarez, ask her.

Marco laughs. Gives her a look up and down; the pants, boots --

MARCO
You gonna wear a hoodie?

SONYA
Why?

MARCO
Tie back your hair? 'Cause you can't
go to Juarez looking like that.
(then)
It's not a good place. Not anymore.

Some sadness about that. Sonya looks back at the body; then --

SONYA
You want to write the scene?

MARCO
Go ahead.

But, he notes the generosity. For the first time from her.
She pulls out a pad and pen, kneels next to the pool of blood --

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. TRAILER -- DAY

TIGHT ON Linder as he strips the sheets off the bed, puts them in a garbage bag. Eva nowhere in sight.

We see him pull off his shirt, stuff it in the garbage too. As he reaches for a fresh shirt, we see a LONG SERPENTINE SCAR running the length of his left forearm... he fingers the scar, before he pulls on a tee shirt.

He turns and finds EVA'S PURSE on the floor. He rifles through it, pulls EVA'S ID from the wallet, studies it. Then he notices a PHOTO OF A SMALL CHILD in the wallet. Pulls it out, too.

A BEAT as turns it over, an idea slithering. Possibilities...

INT. EL PASO PD - CAP - DAY

Hank with DETECTIVE TIM COOPER (30s), brash cowboy charmer. He's looped into the case. Looking at crime scene photos of the two bodies on the bridge --

COOPER

Judge Cross. She needed bent over a couch, bad.

HANK

Well she got worse. Half of her's in the Pecos morgue.

COOPER

(incredulous)
And the Mexicans want in on this?

HANK

Their half was one of those missing Juarez girls.

COOPER

Puttin' up them pink crosses sure as shit ain't working. This fella know about Sonya?

HANK

Know what?

COOPER

That she's a whackjob. You see what she keeps in that bottom drawer of her desk?

HANK

No I have not. Nor do I care, Timmy.

Sonya ENTERS with Marco. Cooper shuts up; knows she might have overheard. Then --

SONYA

This is Marco Ruiz. Tim Cooper.

COOPER

(busting balls)
Buenas Dias.

MARCO

Howdy partner.

Cooper smiles, likes this guy already.

SONYA

You have the footage from the bridge?

COOPER

Went a few rounds with those Homeland Security boys, but yeah, I got it.

HANK

(to Sonya)
You come with me.

Cooper takes Marco to his computer; Sonya follows Hank to his office --

INT. HANK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Hank ushers her in, toes the door shut. Picks up a report --

HANK

What's this?

SONYA

I filed a report on Marco with the Mexican State Police.

HANK

I see that.

SONYA

He compromised my crime scene. Let an ambulance drive through it.

HANK

Because a man was having a heart attack.

SONYA

Yes.

HANK

I woulda done the same thing. No evidence was compromised.

SONYA

How do you know?

HANK

Sonya, you have to work with Marco.

SONYA

I know.

HANK

Filing this report will affect your ability to do that.

SONYA

Why?

HANK

People don't like being ratted out to their bosses.

SONYA

Then they should follow procedure.

HANK

Sonya, trust me. You don't want to file this.

Before she can respond Marco taps at the door, enters --

MARCO

Got something...

Sonya and Hank move out --

INT. EL PASO PD - CAP - CONTINUOUS

They gather at Cooper's computer running footage of the bridge traffic... he stops on a BLACK ESCALADE passing by the camera.

COOPER

Sonofabitch knew there were cameras.

HE PUNCHES in and we see a SHADOWY FIGURE behind the wheel, baseball hat pulled over his face, impossible to ID.

SONYA

We sure it's him?

COOPER
Timing is spot on. Woulda been the
only car on the bridge at the time.

HANK
Plate on the car?

COOPER
Just a partial, which I ran.

He hands a sheet of paper to Sonya. She's thrown --

SONYA
Daniel Fuller?

Hank is surprised too.

MARCO
Who's Daniel Fuller?

COOPER
Dickwad reporter. El Paso Times.

Off this we...

EXT. MILLWRIGHT RANCH, BARN - DAY

Charlotte ENTERS the barn to find Cesar stacking feed bags
next to the grain bin. He straightens when he sees Charlotte
standing there.

CESAR
Nobody has bothered you, have they?

CHARLOTTE
No.

She holds out her husband's cell phone.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
This was in Karl's pocket. Have you
seen it before?

Cesar shakes his head slowly -- not sure what the hell she's
up to.

CESAR
No. Why?

CHARLOTTE
A woman called for Karl.
(off look)
He's gone, Cesar. You answer to me
now.

CESAR

Si.

CHARLOTTE

Who is she?

CESAR

I don't know.

Charlotte flinches, but doesn't want to give Cesar the satisfaction of seeing her vulnerable. She pulls out the KEY she found hidden in Karl's wallet.

CHARLOTTE

What about this?

(off look)

I found it in his wallet.

CESAR

Miss Charlotte, I don't know...

CHARLOTTE

You're lying to me, Cesar. What is it?

Cesar holds her gaze a long beat, realizes she's the boss.

CESAR

It's better I show you. Come.

Off Charlotte as we...

INT. EL PASO TIMES - NEWSROOM/KITCHEN AREA -- DAY

El Paso Times REPORTER, DANIEL FULLER (30s), wrecked from no sleep and some serious partying, searches through the refrigerator in the kitchen area of the news room. He finds a bottle of beer in the back -- helps himself, then takes two pills from his pocket. Pops them, washes them down with the beer. He wipes his face and hair, then moves into the --

INT. EL PASO TIMES - NEWSROOM - CONTINUOUS

It's almost empty, save a young, diligent reporter named ADRIANA PEREZ, (20s) who is at her computer already. Daniel's desk isn't far away. As he approaches --

DANIEL

You're here early.

ADRIANA

I have to be in Juarez by 8.

DANIEL
That's more like 9 or 10, Mexican
time.

Adriana smiles, polite, but not engaging.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
You're wasting your life on that
beat. You know that?

ADRIANA
I'm wasting my life, huh?

It's a subtle dig that he doesn't catch. He's an addict,
fallen from grace when the Houston Chronicle fired him for
substance abuse. He's no cleaner, a year later. He guzzles
his beer --

DANIEL
So what're you doing across the
bridge?

ADRIANA
Meeting a woman who helps pregnant
girls over the border. Anchor babies,
you know --

DANIEL
(interrupts)
I don't know, Adriana, and I
desperately don't care. And guess
what, neither do our readers.

ADRIANA
I care.

He finishes his beer. He hands her the dead soldier, starts
to head out --

ADRIANA (CONT'D)
Denise was looking for you last night.
You had a deadline.

DANIEL
Denise can fuck off.

ADRIANA
Where were you?

DANIEL
Down the street, reporting.

ADRIANA
So, you were at the bar all night.

DANIEL
Are you my mother, Adriana?

ADRIANA
No.

He gets nasty now --

DANIEL
No. You're just a little cub
reporter. And I've written for the
Houston Chronicle, New York Times...

ADRIANA
I know --

DANIEL
So don't tell me how to deal with my
fucking editor.

ADRIANA
Fine.

DANIEL
Good luck chasing the Mexicans. Try
not to get shot.

He smirks to himself, moves out --

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK (MOVING) - DAY

Cesar driving across the ranch with Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE
Where are we going?

CESAR
Just a little farther.

He turns past an outbuilding on the ranch, down a two-track
road and they come to a small cabin tucked behind some trees.

CHARLOTTE
I've never seen this part of the
ranch before.

CESAR
Come.

He parks --

EXT. EL PASO TIMES, PARKING LOT -- DAY

Fuller crosses the lot and finds his car. He clicks the
remote as we...

INT. FULLER'S ESCALADE - DAY

He sits behind the wheel, shuts the door when CLICK. The doors LOCK suddenly. He snaps awake, tries a door and shit it won't open. Same with the windows. It seems he's locked in his own car. What the fuck is happening?

He sees a WIRE running from the rear view mirror -- what the hell is that doing there?

FULLER

What the...

He pulls on the wire, sees that it runs to something behind his seat. That's when he hears the TICKING and sees a digital clock mounted to two VIALS OF BINARY EXPLOSIVES, ammonium nitrate. It's a bomb. The clock reads 20 MINUTES and our cocky asshole reporter is trapped inside his car.

EXT. CABIN, MILLWRIGHT RANCH - DAY

Charlotte follows Cesar up to the door of the cabin.

CHARLOTTE

I don't understand. Is this what the key's for?

CESAR

Please, I show you.

Charlotte watches as Cesar pulls a ring of keys from his jacket, finds the key and opens a door.

He motions her inside...

INT. CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Charlotte follows Cesar into the cabin. There's not much inside except some empty PIZZA BOXES, dozens of empty FAST FOOD BAGS. She notes the windows have been blacked out.

Cesar opens a door and clicks on a light, revealing a staircase leading into a basement.

CESAR

Down there.

CHARLOTTE

God damn it, Cesar, I don't like this...

CESAR

It's okay *Senora*. Come.

Charlotte follows Cesar down the staircase and finds an empty basement. At the far end there is a large WOODEN DOOR with a crossbar and lock. Cesar points to lock on the door bar.

CESAR (CONT'D)

There.

CHARLOTTE

Is that what the key's for?

CESAR

Si...

A BEAT as Charlotte tries to absorb all this. Then she removes the KEY, hands trembling, and approaches the locked door.

CHARLOTTE

What's in there?

He just indicates she should open it. A beat, then she slides the key into the lock...

INT. SONYA'S TRUCK (MOVING) -- DAY

Sonya ripping through the streets. Marco sits shotgun, worried as she takes her eyes off the road to stare at her cell phone --

SONYA

Daniel Fuller's not answering.

He puts a hand out for her cell --

MARCO

You drive, I'll call.

He takes the phone --

SONYA

He's a pill head. Been arrested for battery.

MARCO

He organized enough to freeze a girl for a year? Slice this judge in half so elegantly?

SONYA

It was his car on the bridge.

MARCO

No answer...

SONYA
We're here anyway.

She swings a tight turn onto San Antonio Street --

EXT. EL PASO TIMES, PARKING LOT - DAY

TIGHT ON a BOMB SQUAD TECH pulling on the heavy bomb suit.
We pull back to reveal uniform officers pushing back traffic
and onlookers.

WE FOLLOW the Bomb Tech as he joins several other men in the
bulky suits walking with their bomb gear to Daniel Fuller's
car.

Sonya pulls up in the Truck and is brought to a halt by a
phalanx of police and bomb squad support members.

OFFICER
Fall back behind the perimeter!

Sonya and Marco exit the car and badge one of the Bomb Techs.

SONYA
Detective North...

BOMB TECH
You're gonna have to vacate the area.

MARCO
What's going on?

BOMB TECH
There's a car rigged with a bomb in
that lot.

SONYA
A black Escalade?

BOMB TECH
Affirmative. Now fall back please --

SONYA
-- It belongs to Daniel Fuller.
He's wanted in connection with a
double homicide.

BOMB TECH
Well ma'am, he's the one called it
in. He's trapped in there.
(then)
And he's gonna be scattered all over
this block if you don't let us assess
the situation and do our jobs.

Sonya watches the Bomb Tech cross the barricade, frustrated --

INT. FULLER'S ESCALADE -- DAY

WE HEAR THE STEADY BEEP of minutes ticking away on the timer. Fuller's like a caged animal, windows fogged up from his hyper ventilating, trying the door to see if it will somehow magically open. It does not.

Finally he sees the apocalyptic image of FOUR BOMB TECHS walking slowly toward him in their bulky suits.

He pounds at the window.

FULLER
Help! Get me out!

The first Bomb Tech reaches the car, looks inside. Fuller points to the TIMER DEVICE behind him.

BOMB TECH #1
Stay calm. Don't move.

A Tech slides a SNAKE CAMERA through the windshield/door gap. We hear CHATTER...

BOMB TECH #2
Binary solution... digital timer...

FULLER
What the fuck!

BOMB TECH #1
Eight minutes, forty seconds. Windows wired in...

EXT. STREET - DAY

A block outside the parking lot sit Sonya and Marco just outside the police tape, waiting, helpless...

MARCO
Call him again.
(off look)
Fuller, call him.

Off Sonya with her cell...

INT. FULLER'S ESCALADE -- DAY

A hole saw whirs through the windshield. It stops and we hear the steady BEEP of the countdown. A BOMB TECH carefully attaches a suction cup to the windshield and pulls a disc of glass free.

Fuller checks the timer -- FOUR MINUTES AND COUNTING.

His PHONE SUDDENLY RINGS. He answers --

FULLER

Help me!

SONYA (O.S.)

Daniel, this is Detective Sonya North.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. STREET -- SAME

Sonya on the phone as Marco watches...

SONYA

Were you on the Bridge of the Americas
last night?

FULLER

What?

SONYA

Were you on the bridge? Yes or no?

FULLER

(losing his shit)

No -- I was here all night. How is
this going to get me out?

SONYA

Do you know Judge Cross?

FULLER

What?

SONYA

Judge Lorraine Cross.

FULLER

Just -- from her cases.

SONYA

What cases?

BEEP, BEEP, BEEP...

FULLER

Oh god...

SONYA

How about Cristina Fuentes?

Fuller, despairing --

FULLER
I am fucked. So fucked...

SONYA
Daniel! This is important.

FULLER
Important? I'm going to die!

SONYA
Have you written about Judge Cross?

FULLER
I don't remember. Maybe...

SONYA
When?

FULLER
Oh god. I'm such an asshole. I've
fucked everything up...

One of the Bomb Techs reaches through the hole in the windshield -- but he can't quite reach the bomb. Daniel sees the guys exchanging worried expressions --

SONYA
Daniel listen to me.

He looks back at the timer as it reaches 3 MINUTES and then it fucking skips a minute -- HE'S GOT TWO MINUTES LEFT.

FULLER
It skipped a minute! It skipped a
fucking minute!

Bomb Tech #2 looks inside, confirms that the timer has indeed slipped below two minutes.

EXT. PARKING LOT -- DAY

And then something happens: One by one the Bomb Techs trade looks and step away from the car, signaling that they have precious little time to make it to safety.

BOMB TECH #1
Fall back...

SONYA
Daniel.

The men retreat, leaving Fuller to the last minutes of his life...

FULLER

No. Come back! Where are you going?

He pounds on the window as the men fall back and he's left with the steady BEEP of the timer...

One of the Bomb Techs turns and raises his hands up in a futile gesture, sorry...

EXT. STREET -- DAY

ON MARCO and SONYA. Marco sees the first of the bomb techs retreating. He motions to Sonya...

MARCO

That's enough. Let him die in peace.

SONYA

He needs to focus.

MARCO

He's sitting on a bomb. They can't help him.

SONYA

So he'll tell me the truth.

Now Daniel hears the flat calm of Sonya's voice...

SONYA (CONT'D)

Daniel, you must talk to me.

INT. FULLER'S ESCALADE -- CONTINUOUS

Fuller eyes the timer -- one minute, thirty five seconds, a strange calm settles over him. This is the end...

FULLER

Yes.

He whimpers, closes his eyes, trying to will away the fucking beeping.

SONYA

Everything will just stop. The body will feel no pain...

He looks out the window and sees the police, firemen and bomb support running away from the impending blast...

FULLER

Are you sure?

SONYA

Don't look at the clock.

FULLER

Okay...

Waiting for the next soothing word --

SONYA

Did you know your car was used to
dump two bodies on the bridge?

FULLER

(broken)
No...

SONYA

Focus. Who would do this to you?

FULLER

I've fucked with so many people.

SONYA

Who? Recently?

FULLER

This can't be it. No way, I've got
so much to fix...

SONYA

Daniel?

A LONG BEEP FILLED BEAT...

SONYA (CONT'D)

Don't look at the timer.

But he does and he watches the seconds stream by 8,7,6,5,4,
3, 2, 1 ... The final second ticks away and there is nothing
but SILENCE for moment. Fuller squints, braces for kingdom
come.

Instead there's a CLICK. And the DOOR LOCKS POP OPEN and
the STEREO SPITS OUT A CD...

SONYA (CONT'D)

Daniel, are you still there?

He pulls open the door, races away from the car and falls to
his knees and VOMITS as we TIME CUT:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Bomb Tech #1 approaches Sonya and Martin and hands them the
CD in a clear evidence bag...

BOMB TECH #1

It's clean.

Sonya examines the CD. She and Marco get inside the Truck.

INT. SONYA'S TRUCK -- MOMENTS LATER

Sonya slides the CD into the stereo. WE HEAR A MALE, ALTERED VOICE:

VOICE

Four thousand, three hundred twenty-one. Such a tidy number -- 4321. Lorraine and Cristina are just two. Two drops in a bucket. Two stars in the multitudes. You will see. We have some interesting times ahead of us... this is only the beginning.

And that's it. CD pops back out. Marco and Sonya trade looks as we...

FADE OUT.

END PILOT