

BREAKING NEWS

by

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EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

DALLAS, a high school student is sweating, trembling, motionless. We see police with guns pointing at Dallas from every direction. Dallas is wearing a shirt with blood on it and a camouflage backpack. He is holding something that looks like wires and a button in his hand. Dallas slowly starts to move his trembling arms. A shot rings out.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/STUDIO - DAY

The countenance of on-air anchors JAN and JIM change suddenly. They seem a little frightened and disoriented.

JAN

There are reports of an explosion
or gunshot.

JIM

A loud noise. We learned... There
is apparently... Something is
happening, unfolding now.

INT. DALLAS'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY (EARLIER)

Loud alarm clock goes off. Dallas is in bed motionless.

INT. DALLAS'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

We hear the sound of the alarm clock further away. Dallas's mother AMBER is flitting around scantily clad. She is simultaneously watching TV, preparing breakfast, eating breakfast, drinking coffee. She stops to take a hit of a joint. For a while, we hear low garbled voices from the TV that is tuned to Eagle News. Then we hear morning anchors CATHY and RON.

CATHY (O.S.)

Yesterday congress passed the
"Future Initiative for Growth with
Lower Emissions for America's
Future" bill.

(ad lib)

Wow, that's a mouthful.

(back on script)

Representative Louis Krupp says the
bill has teeth.

REP. LOUIS KRUPP (O.S.)
 We brought the best minds in
 industry together to hammer out
 these recommendations for America's
 future. This bill has teeth. I am
 confident that together we can keep
 America beautiful, continue to
 stoke the engine of growth, and
 give our grandchildren a bright
 green future. God bless America.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/STUDIO - DAY

Now we see Eagle News anchors continuing in studio.

RON
 Well Cathy, I'm all for green, but
 I'm not letting go of my Hummer.
 (shifting to serious)
 The death toll continues to climb
 today in
 (slowly mispronounces)
 Papua New Guinea.
 (back in rhythm)
 Thirty thousand people are reported
 dead or missing from flooding over
 the past two days. America will
 air-lift food and blankets for the
 survivors and has already provided
 local militias with additional
 equipment to keep order.

Image of TOKIO HYATT appears.

CATHY
 (serious)
 Party girl Tokio Hyatt is scheduled
 to check-in to rehab today. This is
 a court-ordered rehab. Eagle News
 correspondent, Rich Pratt, is
 outside Ms. Hyatt's residence and
 will report the event live. Let's
 check-in with Rich now...

INT. DALLAS'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

AMBER
 (to herself)
 What's with that kid?!
 (shouting)
 Turn off that alarm! Dallas, turn
 off your alarm! Turn it off!

(to herself)
That kid.
(shouting)
Turn off the alarm. Dallas!

She walks through hallway to Dallas's bedroom door.

INT. DALLAS'S HOUSE/HALLWAY - DAY

Alarm clock is still ringing. Amber shouts into closed door.

AMBER
Dallas! Turn off the alarm! Turn it
off!
(then)
Close your eyes. I'm coming in to
turn off the alarm. Close your
eyes, I'm not dressed. Dallas,
close your eyes.

INT. DALLAS'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Amber walks into the room, turns off the alarm and lingers
over Dallas who has his eyes closed. She pokes him.

AMBER
Dallas you have to get up for
school your going to be late. Get
up.

DALLAS
(irritated)
Go away.

AMBER
You have to get up, come on, get
up. I'm making breakfast. You want
eggs?

DALLAS
No! Go away, I'll get up.

AMBER
You have to eat something. Fuel for
school, kiddo.

Amber exits. Dallas gets up.

The walls of his room are covered with close-up photos of
body parts and military gear including guns and explosives.

One photo collage shows DEBBI, a senior in Dallas's high school. The collage shows overlapping parts of Debbi's face and body parts.

He picks up an anime cartoon sketch he drew of Debbi. In the drawing, he is depicted as a warrior with weapons carrying Debbi. He rolls up the drawing and puts it in his backpack.

We see him loading a backpack for school. He puts on a choker necklace with something that looks like an eyeball.

INT. DALLAS'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Amber continues to flit about. She takes a hit of a joint, puts it out, and puts it away. Then her eyes lock on to the TV while she continues to drink coffee. Her face is very expressive as she reacts to each element of the news story.

RON (O.S.)

Dog is man's best friend, but we
have a story of a girl and her dog,
united again.

Amber giggles.

CATHY (O.S.)

Nine-year-old, Mary Lee Connors
lost her puppy at the Texas Red
Poppy Festival.

Amber reacts empathetically as if seeing a poster of a missing puppy.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/STUDIO - DAY

We see Cathy, Ron, and an image of the girl with her puppy.

CATHY

Three days and twenty miles later,
Fluffy found her way back to Mary
Lee.

RON

Correspondent, Andrew Moore, has
the story...

INT. DEBBI'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Debbi is partially dressed for school. She walks to her open laptop and pulls out a flash drive. She drops the flash drive into her handbag then walks out the door.

INT. DEBBI'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

We see a framed photo collection with "I heart travel" at the top. All photos include Debbi's mother at exotic locations. Some include a man, but not the same man twice. Debbi is not in any photo. Debbi opens the refrigerator which is mostly empty. She closes it without taking anything out. She walks out of the kitchen.

INT. DEBBI'S HOUSE/BATHROOM - DAY

Debbi is standing in front of the sink and mirror. She looks at herself, then picks up a razor blade. She lifts her arm and cuts herself under the armpit where there are a few other cut marks. A tear appears in her eye. She grabs a cotton makeup applicator pad, dabs the tear, then the blood. She takes a deep breath and exhales a sigh of relief.

INT. JC'S APARTMENT - DAY

JC is sitting on his couch playing a video game in front of a very large TV. His laptop is open on the coffee table in front of him showing the Eagle News feed. He occasionally glances at his laptop and phone. His studio apartment is sparsely populated with IKEA furniture. There isn't anything hanging on walls. He gets up from the couch, opens the refrigerator which contains a few packaged microwavable items, orange juice, and a few beers. He takes out a container of orange juice and pours it into a glass that is already on the counter and has been previously used. He walks back to the couch and sits. He switches the TV to porn.

INT. BISTRO - DAY

CINDY is having breakfast with her friend BEV. Cindy has a bowl of granola with yogurt and fruit in front of her. She is drinking out of an espresso cup. Bev is eating Eggs Benedict with a regular cup of coffee.

CINDY

You know you're going to get a
heart attack eating that.

BEV

You're going to get a heart attack
if you if you don't get some
hoochie coochie soon.

CINDY

I can take care of myself for a
while.

BEV
It's not the same.

CINDY
I'm on a mission.

BEV
How is that mission going?

CINDY
I can't talk about it.

BEV
Exciting. Tell me more.

CINDY
I really shouldn't. It isn't all
... Some aspects are, strictly
speaking, not completely kosher.

BEV
I'm not kosher. I'm eating ham and
eggs with dairy.

CINDY
You really can't repeat anything.

BEV
I'll take it to my early grave.

CINDY
I'm working with a few people to
investigate illegal and unethical
behavior in the organization. At
the highest levels within the news
division.

BEV
Oh, I wondered why you stayed after
the merger. They're not exactly the
cream of the crop of the fourth
estate. More like the rancid Reddi
Wip.

CINDY
I haven't found a single Eagle
person who has a journalism degree.
Not even one from a tier two
university. It's a news
organization without any interest
in journalism.

BEV

"Tier two university". You pretentious bitch. I hope you don't say shit like that to other people.

CINDY

I don't look down on anyone. They pretend to be a fucking news organization and have no journalists.

BEV

Is what's his face still mesmerized by your breasts?... You could do him.

CINDY

JC? The boy wonder. Seriously, does he sound like someone I would do?

BEV

He's kind of cute. You're not planning to stay at Eagle very long. Get a little hoochie coochie.

CINDY

What's with the hoochie coochie?

BEV

It's on my slang word of the day calendar.

CINDY

I wouldn't have anything to talk to him about outside of work.

BEV

I'm not talking about talking. You don't need to talk to him. Just bump and run.

CINDY

His breast obsession creeps me out.

BEV

At some point that becomes sexual harassment.

CINDY

Oh, JC's tame. I don't know if he even realizes he is staring. Our boss, Angus, is the real pervert. He called to welcome me.

He did this stupid thing where he pretended to say his door is open and he said, "my drawers are open".

BEV

That right there is sexual harassment. It must be really pervasive there if he's being so blatant.

CINDY

I think so.

BEV

Oh, I just got a flashback. Six months into my first job, my boss told me how great I was. Then he said I could fast track my career if we had a relationship or I could linger at my level for years busting my ass for small incremental advances.

CINDY

Did you kick him in the nuts?

BEV

No, I fucked him.

CINDY

Really?

BEV

No. I pretty much kicked him in the nuts, but he had the standard issue titanium jock strap. I reported him, and nothing happened, so I left.

CINDY

That's fucked.

BEV

I told a girlfriend the story and she said, "oh my god, me too, the exact same thing happened".

CINDY

How is it still so systemic?

BEV

Why don't you expose that story? I bet almost everyone woman has a story to tell.

CINDY
Sexual harassment will never be a
big story.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/CINDY'S DESK

Cindy walks up to her desk. She continues to stand while taking things out of her bag including her laptop. Her cell phone rings. Her father, GEORGE, is calling.

CINDY
What's up Dad?

GEORGE (O.S.)
How are you darling?

CINDY
Trying to get my sea legs on this
ship of fools. I fear I will be
thrown overboard and lost at sea.

GEORGE (O.S.)
It is always our self we find at
sea.

CINDY
Well, perhaps that will be my
salvation.

GEORGE (O.S.)
We're having a gathering at the
farm this weekend. We'd love to see
you, and you may find some of the
guests useful, or at least
entertaining.

CINDY
Let me get back to you.

GEORGE (O.S.)
Sure. Are you okay? Really?

CINDY
Yes, yes, I'm fine, just being a
bit dramatic.

GEORGE (O.S.)
Let me know if you need anything.
Anything! You know I'll tear
someone's limbs off if necessary.

CINDY

Oh, I'm sure you say that to all
your damsels, distressed or
otherwise.

GEORGE (O.S.)

No, I reserve dismemberment as a
punishment only for those who
imperil my loved ones.

CINDY

I love you to daddy but I like a
good knife fight myself.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/NEWSROOM - DAY

JC is on the phone. He is also looking at a laptop screen,
wall-mounted TV monitors, and sometimes staring at Cindy's
breast. He motions for Cindy to wait as he listens to ANGUS.

ANGUS (O.S.)

...She's a good girl,

(aside)

and quite a nice little package.

(more serious)

You keep an eye on her, JC. Those
National News folks can be too
damned earnest, but we need to keep
a few around. Feel her out, son.
See if she's willing to get on
board with us.

JC

(auto-response)

Yes, sir

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/ANGUS'S OFFICE - DAY

ANGUS

See if you can wrap her up in
something, get her excited about
what we do. She's a bright girl so
you'll need to use some finesse.

JC (O.S.)

Yes sir.

ANGUS

Good boy.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/NEWSROOM - DAY

JC clicks off the phone.

JC
(to Cindy)
I'm not running that story. It's too complicated. It's flat and it would kick up a lot of dust.

CINDY
You spineless limp dick. Man up JC. Take --

JC
(cutting her off)
Nobody cares if crap gets dumped in a hole somewhere.

CINDY
People are getting sick from the contaminated groundwater.

JC
People get sick. There's no energy in that story. There's nothing to show. What do you show? There is nothing to show. That's my point.

CINDY
You're afraid.

JC
Nobody is talking about this story. The company denies the charges. Why expose Eagle to litigation?

CINDY
History isn't kind to weaklings JC. If the meek inherit the earth it will be because it's uninhabitable. Everyone else will have gone to another planet. Leave the meek to die a horrific, excruciating slow death.

JC
Ouch.

CINDY
We're journalists! We could break this story. We almost broke it before the merger.

JC

Maybe that's why National lost.

CINDY

Lost! The game is not over my friend. Our boss' bosses are just sharpening their knives. There will be blood in the boardrooms.

JC

(sexually)

Are you into that? Knives, cutting? I've heard ivy leaguers are kink--

CINDY

You have zero shot here. So, keep your pecker in your pocket and move along little boy.

JC

(shifts conversation)

Just watch me for a while. I'm supposed to teach you --

CINDY

Teach! I'm supposed to watch how the hot shot reality television producer does journalism? That'll be like watching a headless chicken do brain surgery.

JC

(a bit angry)

Whatever. I'm supposed to show you what we do here. Look, National Network News doesn't exist anymore. You all lost. People preferred our product.

CINDY

And by people you mean politicians and corporations.

JC

(smiling)

Politicians and corporations are people too.

(dismissive)

Don't get your panties in a bunch. It's just business.

(instructive)

People don't watch TV for news. We're in the entertainment business.

People want to be entertained. They want to escape, root for people, watch fuck-ups fuck-up.

CINDY

You believe that shit coming out of your mouth?

JC

It's true...

(changing subject)

Cindy --

(interrupting himself)

Can I call you Cin? It's sexier.

CINDY

You are such a dick.

(then)

I told you, I'm recording all of our conversations, right?

JC

Right. I'd love to be in your book. Record anything you want, record everything. I have nothing to hide. It kind of turns me on... Anyway, Cin, what we do is the ultimate reality TV show. A few billion people on a planet, a few rules, see what happens. Nobody knows what is going to happen next. That's the drama. And it's real --

CINDY

Every once in a while, can you look at me, instead of my breasts?

JC

(chastened, but building)

We get to show what happens next, and we need to make it compelling. We keep it moving, we mix it up, pull their heart strings, love, hate, violence, sex...

CINDY

Don't wet your pants.

JC

(serious)

We're in the storytelling business, Cin. I'm here to tell stories, pick the right characters, scenes... write the narrative.

The truth is not in the facts.
Truth is in the emotion.

CINDY
(sarcastic)
Thank you. It's astounding how much
I've learned during my commencement
here.

JC
(wanting validation)
I'm good at this. Really. It might
not be your thing, but people like
it and I'm really good at it.

Cindy's phone rings. She pauses looking at JC slightly
apologetic, slightly pitying. She opens her mouth to say
something but doesn't speak. She gestures toward the phone.
Cindy takes the call.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/ANGUS'S OFFICE - DAY

Angus is talking into speakerphone.

ANGUS
Cindy, I just want to welcome you
aboard again. I have a great deal
of respect for your work. You all
had a fine network. Some nice
journalism now and then.
(subtly laugh)
JC will show you how we do what we
do here. He's a good boy. Not the
sharpest tack in our drawer, but he
gets the job done. If you're
willing to play ball you got a good
shot at his job.
(changes tone)
And I want you to know my door is
always open. We don't have a lot of
hierarchy at Eagle.
(fake Freudian slip)
My drawers are always open for you.

INT. DALLAS'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Amber with Dallas. Dallas is eating cereal out of the box.

AMBER
I don't understand why you have so
much trouble getting up. I have to
get you up almost every day.

I saw some pills on the news. I'm going to call Dr. Romer to see if we can get you some.

(changing subject)

Do you want me to make you some breakfast? How can you eat it dry like that? It's like a bird. Let me give you some milk.

DALLAS

No! I'm fine. I don't like milk. I have a Red Bull.

AMBER

(perky)

Did you ask her out?

DALLAS

No. Mom, you're not like my life coach!

AMBER

I am your life coach. I want you to be happy. You like that girl. I want you to have her. You're cute. You're cool. You're smart. Girls like that, it's sexy.

DALLAS

I'm not cool. I'm shy. Girls don't know who I am.

AMBER

You don't even know how cool you are. You're awesome. Seriously, don't think girls really like the jocks. Jocks are just the only boys to ask-out pretty girls. I know. I was the pretty girl. And it hasn't changed. Boys haven't changed. I see those boys at your school...

(reading Dallas)

What?

(pause)

What?

DALLAS

I don't know. I don't even know if I like her. What if?... She doesn't even know I exist. Nobody knows I exist. Kids think I'm weird. I hate them all.

AMBER

You like her some. Did you finish that drawing of her? You're such a good artist. You should ask her out. It's good practice anyway.

(excited for him)

Give it to her today. Can I see it?

(catches herself)

No, sorry. Your life. I'm staying out of it.

(overwhelming love)

I love you so much.

EXT. SCHOOL/PARKING LOT - DAY

Dallas gets off the bus. Kids are in clusters outside the school. We see Dallas alone in the middle of everyone. Dallas is futzing with something, looking down to something that looks like a remote control in his hand. The bell rings and kids slowly walk toward the entrance. In the distance, we see Debbi walking and talking with her best friend CAT. Dallas walks toward Debbi.

EXT. SCHOOL/PARKING LOT - DAY

DEBBI

(to Cat)

I have to go talk to my "agent".

They laugh. Dallas approaches Debbi as she walks away. When Debbi turns, a kid named REGGIE almost knocks into her but lurches away. Reggie trips, stumbles off the curb and is hit by a car just pulling out from dropping off another kid. Debbi sees it happen and continues walking away. Cat runs to help Reggie who is not hurt badly.

CAT

(to Reggie)

Oh my God! Are you okay, Reggie?

Dallas walks to Reggie and stands over him without emotion. We see Reggie from Dallas's perspective.

EXT. SCHOOL/PARKING LOT - DAY

Debbi approaches an immaculate, black Range Rover.

INT. AMIR'S SUV - DAY

AMIR is a slick high school senior. He is talking into a headset and typing on his phone. When Debbi gets in, Amir smiles and nods to her. He gestures "one minute".

Debbi digs into her bag and pulls out a flash drive labeled "\$". Amir is still distracted, but he takes the flash drive and plugs it into his laptop. A video starts to play with the sound off. We see them both looking at the video.

AMIR
(into phone)
No, no, no. Cash...

INT. DEBBI'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Debbi is getting dressed. She's flirting with the camera. Turning away, changing clothes.

INT. AMIR'S SUV - DAY

Amir looks at Debbi. Shaking his head yes. He's still on the phone and typing. Amir pushes fast forward.

AMIR
(into phone)
No, you need me. Don't waste my
time.

INT. DEBBI'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

We see Debbi flirting and undressing in fast forward.

INT. AMIR'S SUV - DAY

The video gets to the end. Amir rewinds a bit then plays it at regular speed. He clicks off his phone and turns up the sound on the video.

INT. DEBBI'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Debbi is looking off screen.

DEBBI
(girlie)
Oh! I'll be late for school.

She offers a submissive giggle and a girlish wave.

DEBBI

Bye, bye.

INT. AMIR'S SUV - DAY

DEBBI

Is that good enough for those dirty
old perverts?

AMIR

Sweet. I'm a little worried for
you. This is too good.
(giving advice)
It's time to stop. It's easy money,
but it could hurt your career.

DEBBI

There's also an audition video for
"Kitchen Bitchin'" on it.

AMIR

The show with the psycho chef? You
want to be on that show?
(skeptically)
You can cook?

DEBBI

(smiling defensively)
What? How hard is it to cook? It
will take me like a day to learn
how to cook. I told them I cook for
my five brothers and sisters. I
paid my delinquent little
neighborhood kids to be in it.

Amir is shaking his head no in mild disbelief while
appreciating her doggedness.

DEBBI

(almost laughing)
What? Are they going to kick me off
the show? I'll still get exposure.
I'll sex it up. Even one episode
would be something.
(moving on)
Have you heard from MTV?

AMIR

(quickly)
You didn't get --

DEBBI

(angry)

When the fuck where you going to
tell me?

Debbi leaves slamming the door on exit. Amir is not fazed. He lowers window and shouts out.

AMIR

I am working on something. I will
talk to you at lunch.

Amir's phone rings, he raises the window and picks up the call.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/NEWSROOM -DAY

Cindy is in a quiet corner on the phone with JOSH, a hacker/journalist, who she is working with to get material to takedown Eagle News.

CINDY

(speaking softly)

Have you picked up anything? I'm
not sure how much longer I can
stay. It takes a lot of mental
energy to play my part.

INT. JOSH'S TECH ROOM - DAY

Josh is alone in a room surrounded by computers with blinking LEDs, wiring, monitors which are showing various displays of scrolling text, highlighted text, graphic charts, video feeds with captioned dialogue, and more. Josh is talking while typing and occasionally looking away toward another screen.

JOSH

We're into the phone system and
network, so we pretty much have all
their communication. Some of it is
encrypted, but weakly.

CINDY (O.S.)

(raising her voice a bit)

Don't tell me about anything that
may be illegal.

JOSH

Well, the bugs you planted in the
conference rooms and JC's office
aren't legal.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/NEWSROOM -DAY

CINDY

Could you just -- What did we agree too!

JOSH (O.S.)

Chill out. Our calls are encrypted.

(concerned)

You didn't mess with the encryption I installed right?

(to self)

No, I would have gotten an alert.

(back to Cindy)

You still need to get Angus's office. Seems like he's a hub.

CINDY

I'm afraid to go there. He's got a strong rapey vibe.

INT. JOSH'S TECH ROOM - DAY

JOSH

We all take risks.

CINDY (O.S.)

Fuck you, Joshua.

JOSH

Well, even if your not willing to be raped for the cause we're getting insight.

CINDY (O.S.)

Like?

JOSH

The encryption slows the process down some even though it's weak. As you can imagine there's also a lot of noise -- chit chat. Too much to listen to. We're tweaking the AI to filter for the juicy bits.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/NEWSROOM -DAY

CINDY

What are the juicy bits?

JOSH (O.S.)

I guess that depends who's asking. You know, none of us are getting paid. So I've had some challenges steering a few from the more salacious -- there is a surprising amount of sexual content for instance.

CINDY

Seriously? Why'd they volunteer? They can get porn anywhere.

JOSH (O.S.)

Some are just hacking for sport. The salacious material will probably get the most play in the end, maybe even for criminal offenses. Seems to be more than a fair bit of sexual coercion.

CINDY

Right. Well the target is political coercion.

JOSH (O.S.)

Yeah, I don't even know yet how we target those conversations. We're seeing a lot of what I would call insider looting, self-dealing, pay-to-play promotion. They might thank us after the takedown.

CINDY

Doesn't sound like we are anywhere near a takedown.

INT. JOSH'S TECH ROOM - DAY

JOSH

Well, breakthroughs happen when you least expect them. Give us any words or phrases you think are relevant. Anything that sounds like it could be a code word.

(soothing)

It's helpful to have you there. We're getting deeper context of the players.

INT. CAFÉ - DAY

JC and Cindy are walking up to the counter to order.

CINDY

(discreetly)

We have been working on a story
about high school kids posting
amateur porn?

JC

That works. Underage sex is sexy.

(mock celebratory)

See Cin, we can find common ground.

(then, quickly)

Are kids really doing that? Are
they good-looking kids? What age?
Where is this happening?

CINDY

I can produce a half hour segment
on this. It's not just about the
kids. We traced some of the visitor
traffic. It includes a few high-
profile people.

JC

(incredulous, scared)

You can't trace visitor traffic to
specific people. Is that possible?

CINDY

I know people who do it, but it's a
legal grey area. We don't know what
we can publish.

JC

High profile people, like celebrity
or high profile like, politician?
Not everyone is fair game.

At the counter with the BARISTA.

BARISTA

What can we get you today?

CINDY

I'll have a Doppio Macchiato.

JC

Seriously? That's your order?

(mocking)

Doppio Macchiato.

CINDY

What?

JC

(to barista)

Large non-fat, vanilla, caramel,
latte, light on the whipped cream.

Cindy's eyes express disdain, but she continues conversation.

CINDY

(animated)

Why? Why isn't everyone fair game?
Why can't we speak truth to power?

JC

(mild disdain)

Says the the privileged rich girl.
(almost lecturing)

You need to pick your targets
carefully in this business.

CINDY

(disdain)

So, you just show a bunch of puff-
ball shit.

(defensive)

And I worked my ass off to get here.

JC

(dismissive)

Pfff.

(joking resentment)

I, yeah, you look like a survivor.

A moment of silence. Then JC shakes it off.

JC

I love what I do. Everyday we cover
what happens in the world.

CINDY

(ashamed)

I'm sorry. I'm not, I didn't mean
to put you down personally.

JC

I'm bulletproof. Don't apologize to
me.

CINDY

(auto-response)

I'm sorry.

(catches herself)

Oh, I'm sorry.
 (self-flagellating)
 Fuck! I can't turn it off.

BARISTA
 (loud)
 Doppio Macchiato

Cindy grabs her drink.

JC
 (admiring, sexually)
 Anyway, I like you all... charged
 up. Hey, we should get dinner
 tonight. My treat.

CINDY
 (collecting herself)
 You're a fucking dick

BARISTA
 (loud)
 Large non-fat, vanilla, caramel,
 latte, light whip.

INT. SCHOOL/LUNCHROOM - DAY

The lunchroom is noisy with teenage chatter. Dallas is sitting with JAMIE. Dallas is nervously fidgeting with something under the table while looking around the room. We see Dallas's view of kids with a focus on body parts.

JAMIE (O.S)
 (enthusiastic)
 Did you see that clip on LiveLeak?
 Holy shit. This Apache throws a
 Hellfire missile at a truck on a
 bridge. There are like three
 explosions. Pieces of the truck are
 flying everywhere. They blow a big
 hole in the bridge and everyone is
 like "Hell yeah! Woooooo!"

INT. SCHOOL/LUNCHROOM - DAY

Amir is sitting with mischievous looking kids including SCOTT, PETER, and RAY. They are all looking at each other smiling, waiting for someone to speak. We see the group, then each face. Stop at Ray.

RAY
 Okay, I'll do it for twenty bucks.

INT. SCHOOL/LUNCHROOM - DAY

Debbi is sipping a drink, sitting with a few friends.

DEBBI

It doesn't matter if I have a chance of getting on the show. The more audition clips you send the more exposure you get. That's how it works. No pain no fame... You make your own luck.

CAT

(to others at table)
She got the Hamlet part at GirlsPlay.

(shakespearian)
Will she be, or not she be,
sluttress of reality TV?

Debbi gathers herself and stands with drink in hand.

DEBBI

Well, I love you all but I have to go.

INT. SCHOOL/LUNCHROOM - DAY

Dallas sees Debbi getting up from her table not far across the room. His eyes are fixed on Debbi except for an occasional peek down at his hand that is holding something that looks like a complicated wired device with a big red button that looks like a remote control detonator.

DALLAS

(distant, mechanical)
I'm going now.

JAMIE

"Call of Duty" at my house after school? Payback time. I figured out how to blow away the guys in the Mosque.

DALLAS

(distant, soft)
Um, no, I...

Dallas walks toward Debbi. Just as Dallas approaches Debbi. We hear a loud, pop, pop, pop. Debbi is startled. She spills her drink and slips. She falls hitting her head on the floor. She is dazed, almost unconscious. We see blood on the side of her head.

SCOTT

Shooter! He has a gun!

Total chaos erupts. Kids are screaming and running in all directions. Some kids saw Debbi fall to the floor hard. Debbi reaches her hand to her head. Peter sees blood smeared on her hands.

PETER

She's bleeding! She's shot!

Cat panics and dashes to the nearest door which is a storeroom. Dallas sees blood on Debbi's hand and head. Dallas is frightened at first then calmly picks Debbi up in his arms like his drawing with her. Carrying Debbi with her handbag, Dallas runs into the same room as Cat.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

The storeroom is large with boxes in different sections. The room has a handyman workshop area. There is a little sawdust on the floor, tools on shelves, and a few pieces of furniture in various states of being repaired.

We see BO, a handyman maintenance worker, sitting next to an exhaust fan vent smoking a joint. He is in an area of the storeroom that is his unsanctioned make-do break area. There is a TV, old comfy chair and an old couch.

He is startled when they enter and burns his arm with the joint. He flails around holding his arm, putting out joint.

BO

(calmly befuddled)

Damn! What the hell...

Bo starts covering things in his break area with tarps and boxes.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

In another area of the storeroom, Dallas lays Debbi down on boxes that look comfortable. Debbi is in a haze still almost unconscious. Dallas is calm but concerned about Debbi. Cat is freaked out, frantically running around the room looking for the door out.

DALLAS

(to Debbi)

Are you okay?

Debbi slowly nods her head yes.

DEBBI
 (barely audible)
 I think so.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

Near Bo's break area Cat is searching for a way out.

CAT
 (frantic)
 Oh my god, oh my god, what just
 happened? We have to get out of
 here.
 (screaming)
 Oh my god we're trapped!
 (desperate to Bo)
 How do we get out of here? Someone
 just like shot up the lunchroom.

BO
 (calm, confused, high)
 What the hell are you saying?
 Little girl you need to relax. You
 scared the crap out of me.
 (slightly scolding)
 I'm on my break here.
 (rambling to himself)
 I can't get five minutes without
 somebody calling me to fix
 something or change a goddamn light
 bulb, you can get a goddamn monkey
 to change a light bulb, teachers
 have all that education, can't
 change a light bulb. I'm a goddamn
 handyman, I got ten years carpentry
 experience, I'm changing light
 bulbs here.

Cat pulls herself together a bit. She walks to Bo who is now
 sitting. Squats to be at his eye level and talks slowly as if
 to a child who doesn't speak English.

CAT
 (slowly to Bo)
 Listen. Something very bad just
 happened in the lunchroom. There is
 a bad boy going around shooting
 people. We need to get out of this
 room.
 (increasing intensity)
 Where is the freaking door?!

BO
 (as if awakened)
 Oh. The door?
 (stoner pause)
 Didn't you come in through the
 door?
 (baffled)
 How did you get in here?

CAT
 (losing cool loudly)
 Dude! The door to outside! Is there
 a door to the outside? A way to get
 out!

BO
 (not liking her tone)
 That is not cool. I don't respond
 to that kind of verbal discourse,
 the whole shouting thing. I don't
 like that.
 (pause)
 Now, there are two doors.
 (instructing)
 There's the door I think you came
 in from which I thought was locked,
 and there's a door over there
 behind those boxes that's screwed
 shut.
 (pause)
 The lock is broken so I had to --

CAT
 (surrendering)
 Oh my God we're going to die here.

Cat turns sees Debbi and runs toward her.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

Approaching Debbi, Cat sees blood on Debbi's hands and head.

CAT
 (high pitched scream)

DEBBI
 (high pitched scream)

CAT
 You got shot.

Debbi looks at her hands.

DEBBI
(in shock, panicky)
Am I okay? Am I okay? What
happened? Am I okay?

CAT
You were shot!

DEBBI
Shot!

DALLAS
(eerie calm)
No, no you just slipped. You hit
your head. I think you're okay.

CAT
What are you a doctor? She's
bleeding out of her ears.

DEBBI
What!

DALLAS
No, there's just a little blood but
it got smeared all over. I think
your earring cut you.

Dallas takes off his shirt. He starts dabbing the blood on
Debbi's head. Then he gets a bottle of water from his
backpack. He wets his shirt and uses it to wipe off the blood
from her ear, neck, and fingers. He's being very sensual
without knowing it. Everyone calms down a bit.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

A few police arrive hyped up, frightened, perversely thrilled
in the moment. Kids are talking in rapid succession to
SERGEANT MILLS. Over the din we hear KID 1 and KID 2.

KID 1 (O.S.)
A kid shot a girl.

SERGEANT MILLS
Can you --

KID 2 (O.S.)
It was Dallas, Dallas Stone.

SERGEANT MILLS
What --

KID 2 (O.S.)
It was Debbi. He shot Debbi.

SERGEANT MILLS
Who --

Scott and Peter who initiated the shooting rumor step up.

SCOTT
I saw the gun.

PETER
He got her in the head, I saw
blood. Then, he dragged her
(pointing)
into that room.

SCOTT
I think he maybe has a bomb too.

SERGEANT MILLS
(commanding)
Whoa! Stop. Let's slow down a bit.
(points to Scott)
You saw a gun. Did you see him
shoot it? What kind of gun was it?

SCOTT
(off guard, tripping)
Hmmm, I, not sure. Big.
(hands foot apart)
Like this?
(hands closer, farther)
Maybe?

Two other kids, ETHAN and JONATHAN, are walking by and
overhear Scott.

SERGEANT MILLS
You saw him shoot it?

SCOTT
Hmmm, I heard the pops.

SERGEANT MILLS
Pops? How many?

SCOTT
Hmmm, I don't know, maybe.

SERGEANT MILLS
More than one though?

SCOTT
Ummm, yeah, yeah, more than one.

SERGEANT MILLS
How far away where you from the
shooter?

SCOTT
(nervously, fidgeting)
I, I, not sure.

SERGEANT MILLS
Two feet? Five feet? Ten feet?
Thirty feet?

SCOTT
Not sure, I, I guess, five?

SERGEANT MILLS
So you could almost touch him?

SCOTT
(stumbling)
No, maybe ten, thirty?

SERGEANT MILLS
So from hear to that tree?

SCOTT
(flustered)
No, I don't know.

ETHAN
He's making shit up. There weren't
any shots. Some kid set off
firecrackers. He's telling this
story to everyone.

SERGEANT MILLS
(to Ethan)
Now wait.
(looks toward Peter)
You saw something?

Peter looks really nervous, shrugs shoulders, nods head to
indicate maybe.

SERGEANT MILLS
I'm gonna give you two a chance to
think about it. Giving a false
police report is a crime. You both
just think a minute.
(to Ethan)
What did you see?

ETHAN

I saw that idiot Ray
(points to Ray)
throw some firecrackers.

We see an animated Ray in the distance talking to other kids and laughing. Sergeant Mills makes eye contact with nearby officer, points toward Ray.

SERGEANT MILLS

(to nearby officer)
You're looking for a kid named Ray.

ETHAN

Debbi was on the other side of the room.

SERGEANT MILLS

Did you see Dallas and the girl?

ETHAN

No. I was near the firecrackers.

Jonathan steps up.

JONATHAN

I saw her. I was about ten feet away. Dallas was walking toward her with his hands in his pockets when the firecrackers went off. She spilled her drink and slipped. I thought there were shots at first. I ducked and I saw Dallas pick her up and carry her to the storeroom. It looked like she could have been bleeding.

SERGEANT MILLS

So you thought you heard shots?

JONATHAN

At first, but the more I thought about it I realized that sound pattern was more erratic than gunshots and no echoes. A basic handgun wouldn't make that sound and nobody is talking about an automatic gunfire. But, I can't say one hundred percent that it wasn't some kind of gunfire.

SERGEANT MILLS

Can you tell me where in the lunchroom you saw Debbi slip?

Jonathan turns to orient himself as if in the lunchroom.

JONATHAN

(using his hands)

So if you are standing with your back to the kitchen area. She was along the right side and near the back.

Sergeant Mills turns toward an officer who is listening in.

SERGEANT MILLS

Check that area if you can get to the lunchroom. See if there is any blood near a wet spot. And check for spent firecrackers around the room.

(points to Ethan)

Ask him where he thinks the firecrackers went off. Let me know immediately if you find any casings.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Police activity builds surrounding the building. A group of police are gathered behind their cars across a large open area facing the storeroom.

We see RANDY arrive and get out of his police chief vehicle. He's a little rattled. Walking while talking on a cell phone to his campaign manager, ED. Randy is running for mayor.

RANDY

(methodically)

... shots fired... in the lunchroom of the high school.

INT. ED'S OFFICE - DAY

We see Ed at his desk. Behind him we see campaign posters that have a picture of Randy, with his name, "Randy Fox" and the slogan, "Strength & Faith We Can Trust". We also see bumper stickers and other campaign material on ED's desk.

ED

(hyped, commanding)

Be calm. Be decisive. Take charge!

(calmly instructive)

Stay on point. This is an opportunity.

"Strength & Faith We Can Trust".
I'll be there in ten minutes.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Randy clicks off his cell phone. Walking while talking into his police radio, he barks out orders and questions without waiting for responses.

RANDY
(commanding)
Do we know how many shots? What is he holding? Where is the shooter? Seal the perimeter. Nobody leaves the area. I want a list of everyone who was in the school. Get an emergency warrant for the shooter's house.

Sergeant Mills approaches Randy. They walk together toward a cluster of officers. Randy is looking around not paying attention to Sergeant Mills.

SERGEANT MILLS
(earnest)
Sir, we don't really know what happened. We have conflicting reports from kids. Some say the pops were firecrackers not gunshots. Some say a girl was shot, taken hostage, and the kid has a bomb. Others say a girl fell and another kid carried her out of the lunchroom. No shots fired since we arrived. Contact team is deployed and report no active shooter.
(points)
We are monitoring that room. We heard two girls scream. That could be the room some have mentioned where the alleged shooter went with the girl.
(pause)
I'm checking SWAT team ETA.

RANDY
(macho)
We don't need the damn SWAT team.
Let's make contact.

SERGEANT MILLS
(timid advisory)
Shouldn't we, at least wait for a
negotiator, sir?

RANDY
(cocky)
I'm not going to let this thing
spin out of control.

Randy grabs a megaphone that is laying on a police car.

(through megaphone)
We have the building surrounded,
kid. Step outside with your hands
in the air.

Officers nearby cringe at his lack of subtly.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

We see Debbi sitting up with Dallas standing next to her. Cat
is slowly pacing nearby.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM BREAK AREA - DAY

Bo has a screw gun in his hand. Bo heard the megaphone but
didn't hear what was said. He gets up and walks toward the
windows. The blinds near Bo are not open. Before he looks out
the window, he turns toward Dallas, Debbi, and Cat.

BO
(loud)
Don't think you all are going to
have sex here or any of that kind
of thing.
(to himself)
Goddamn, I thought I locked that
door.

At the window, Bo lifts a slat of the blinds slightly using
the hand that has the screw gun.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

We see lots of police outside.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

Bo is still looking out window.

BO
 (sedated stoner shock)
 What the fuuuuuck! What is going
 on? Holy fffffffuuuu.
 (slow, deliberate)
 That is a serious posse of lawmen.
 (growing paranoia)
 ... big guns in hand,
 (pause)
 Pointed this way.
 (loud)
 Hey little girl. What did you say
 is going on here? This looks like
 some serious shit.
 (incredulous)
 You want to go out there?
 (almost mumbling)
 I'll unscrew the door but I
 wouldn't go out there with those
 hyped-up, trigger-happy mother
 fuckers...

Bo starts to walk toward the boarded door.

EXT. SCHOOL/POLICE BARRICADE - DAY

Sergeant Mills is looking through binoculars.

SERGEANT MILLS
 (hyped)
 Sir, sir, I saw someone at the
 window. Adult male.
 (pause)
 He had something, looked like
 maybe, a handgun.

RANDY
 I thought shooter was a kid.
 (to Sergeant Mills)
 What's the kid's name?

SERGEANT MILLS
 Dallas Stone.

RANDY
 (into megaphone)
 Dallas nobody else needs to get
 hurt here. Let us send someone in
 to get the wounded girl.

Randy puts down the megaphone and turns to officers around
 him.

RANDY
(instructive)
See I'm feeling him out. Let's see
who we're dealing with here.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

Debbi is out of her haze now. Cat is still a little frazzled. Dallas hears the megaphone and calmly walks to peek out a window. Dallas sees the police activity.

DALLAS
(intrigued, subdued)
Cool.

Bo runs toward Dallas who is still at the window. Bo bangs his leg into the corner of a table before he reaches Dallas. Bo continues to flail toward Dallas. Bo is winching with pain and dragging his leg.

BO
(panicked)
Down! Get down Kid! They're going
to start shooting.

Dallas moves to avoid Bo who falls on the floor near Dallas.

BO
(wincing)
Is your name Dallas kid?

DALLAS
(concerned)
Yeah. Are you okay?

Dallas helps Bo up.

BO
They were about to start shooting.

EXT. SCHOOL/POLICE BARRICADE - DAY

RANDY
(into megaphone)
Dallas. Do you have the girl who
was shot? Let us get her to a
hospital son. You don't want to
make this any worse than it already
is now.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

Debbi and Cat hear the megaphone. Debbi and Cat are far enough away from Dallas and Bo to talk without being overheard. Debbi's cell phone rings. She clicks it on.

DEBBI

Amir. What's happening out there?

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Amir is off to the side of a crowd. He has a view of the storeroom.

AMIR

Where are you? Are you okay?

DEBBI (O.S.)

Accept for my bloody head I'm fine.

AMIR

(concerned)

What happened? Do you need help?

DEBBI (O.S.)

I'm fine. I just slipped when I heard the noise. I'm in some disgusting room with Cat, a janitor, and some other kid.

AMIR

So you are in that room.

(pause)

A bunch of kids are saying Dallas shot you?

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

Debbi is now animated.

DEBBI

(delighted)

Wait, wait, they think I was shot?

AMIR (O.S.)

It's crazy out here. There's a whole story that Dallas is holding you hostage. And some of the police believe it.

DEBBI

So who was the shooter?

AMIR (O.S.)

There weren't any shots. It was firecrackers. I have video of the whole thing.

DEBBI

I think the kid I'm with is Dallas. They think he is a shooter?

CAT

(loud whisper)

How do you know he isn't?

(revived panic)

Okay, let's get out of here.

AMIR (O.S.)

It's this big dramatic scene out here.

DEBBI

Wait.

(growing excitement)

I'm in it.

(more excited)

I'm in the scene.

(plotting)

Is the TV news out there?

CAT

(incredulous panic)

What are you talking about? Oh my god you're delirious! Are you delirious?! Oh my god we are so going to die.

AMIR (O.S.)

I don't see any cameras yet, but they will definitely be here. This is huge. I've never seen this many cops. It's a crazy scene.

DEBBI

I could get on TV if we set it up right. Call me when the TV people get here.

Debbi hangs up the phone.

DEBBI

(to Cat, determined)

We can't leave now. It's a school shooting, a fucking tragedy. I'm the star.

(scheming)

I need to figure this out. Is there
a TV in here?
(shouting)
Hey, janitor dude! Is there a TV in
here?

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM EXIT - DAY

Bo is unscrewing and removing boards covering the storeroom door.

BO
(muttering)
...then the Fire Marshal will come
in and arrest my ass...
(slightly irritated)
Now they want to watch TV?

Bo hastily finishes removing boards, ripping the final one off and throwing it down. He turns toward Debby.

BO
First of all, little girl number
two, I'm not a janitor. I'm a
Maintenance Engineer, or you could
say I'm a Handyman or a --

His speech is interrupted when he steps on the board he ripped off which has a partially protruding screw that pushes into his foot.

BO
(screaming)
Shit, Motherfucker, Son of a bitch,
Cocksucker, God damn, Ass licker

We see a board stuck to the bottom of his foot.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/NEWSROOM - DAY

JC is standing. He looks like he is relishing his power controlling the team and creating urgency. He seems to multitask as a way to demonstrate his importance. He constantly switches attention from his phone to his laptop to TV monitors, to looking around the room. JC turns in a different direction.

(commanding)
Tell Tokio we're ready in fifteen.

He turns in another direction.

(barking)
What do we have after Tokio?

CRYSTAL a production assistant is sitting nearby.

CRYSTAL
JC, we just got a possible school
shooting.

JC
(automatic response)
See who we have in the area?

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/STUDIO - DAY

Jim and Jan are on camera.

JIM
We're expecting Tokio Hyatt to exit
the building any minute now.

JAN
I'm anxious to see what she'll be
wearing. What do you wear to rehab?

JIM
Knowing Tokio, I'm sure it won't be
much.

They chuckle.

JAN
Well, I'm sure she'll have
something from her line of Tokio
Hyatt signature accessories. She
has the cutest bags. I bought two.
(guilty giggle)
Let's take a look at some of the
designer's Tokio has worn recently.

We see a screen with multiple windows showing Tokio Hyatt in
different clothes, each window has a title with the designer
name including a designer named LUCIANO.

INT. TOKIO HYATT'S HOUSE - DAY

Tokio Hyatt is sitting, holding a small dog, as hair and
makeup stylists, RITA and GOTTO work on her. A TV off to the
side is tuned to Eagle News. Throughout the scene she
interacts with various staff including JANNINE, NIKKI, and
SHAWNA.

TOKIO HYATT

Why are they showing those looks?
We don't even have a contract with
Luciano.

(calm, but frustrated)

Jannine, our contract with Eagle
includes a clause that allows us to
curate images. Get them some images
that will drive traffic to us,
including our TK handbag line.

JANNINE

Yes, sorry, that should have been
handled.

TOKIO HYATT

Oh, and get me the reports from our
morning meeting. I especially want
to see the inventory trendline
weeklies, um, and with the raw
numbers.

(to Rita and Gotto)

Too put together. More careless.
The narrative is unwilling trip to
rehab. A bit angry, a bit
tormented, fuck it all, a nod to
contrite. I can 'face' some of that
intention, but the look needs to
compliment.

GOTTO

(making a change)

Like?

TOKIO HYATT

Right. More.

Nikki walks up with blue swatches that look almost identical
to show Tokio.

NIKKI

For the Sansa line.

TOKIO HYATT

(holding one)

Oh, this one yes? I love this
color. Rita isn't this special?

RITA

Gorg.

GOTTO

Fab.

Nikki walks away. Cell phone rings. Tokio takes call with Shawna.

TOKIO HYATT

What's up?

SHAWNA (O.S.)

We had Hannah Hetch on the sched today. How do you want me to push?

TOKIO HYATT

Oh, tell her she's my rock star BFF, but rehab was re-sched for today. Fit her in next PM open. Let's get her some paparazzi with me.

(afterthought)

And tell her I got the Malibu beach house. She's such a beach house ho.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Police are still talking with kids outside the building. Ed is talking with Randy away from other police.

ED

It doesn't matter what happened. Whether there is a shooter. What matters is people think a shooter is in that room. There is a sense of crisis. A TV crew is coming. They want a story. This is a big opportunity for your campaign. I can't make this happen again. This is great exposure. You need to drag this thing out a bit. At least get a news conference where you can put out your message.

RANDY

Well, so far, it doesn't seem like we have a shooter.

ED

(as if to child)

Randy, it's great that there is no shooter.

RANDY

Well, we don't know that for sure, but in the lunchroom, we don't see any evidence of shooting.

ED

(getting frustrated)

There was no shooter! Do you get that? It's why this opportunity is so great. We're safe to do whatever we want without anyone getting hurt.

RANDY

Well, we don't know --

ED

(irritated, mocking)

Well, well, well

(scolding)

Do you want to be mayor? Because you told me you want to be mayor. Tell me now if you don't want to be mayor. I'll just walk away and you can just stay police chief then go retire in Arizona and twiddle your thumbs until you die.

RANDY

Well, I, I was just, I want to make sure everyone is safe. What if we have a crazy kid
(points to storeroom door)
in there.

ED

(definitive, selling)

Nothing happened!

RANDY

(confused)

You know that for sure?

ED

(definitive)

I know.

RANDY

For sure?

ED

(all knowing)

One hundred percent.

RANDY

How do you know?

ED
 (all knowing)
 I have operatives everywhere.
 (hesitantly clandestine)
 I can't control everything, but
 this opportunity didn't just
 magically drop in your lap.

RANDY
 (bewildered)
 Huh

ED
 Nevermind. For get that. Just trust
 me.

ED
 (accepting)
 Yeah, well, it sounds like you did
 some investigating yourself.
 (lighting it up)
 Well, I guess you'd make a pretty
 good detective.

ED
 An even better campaign manager.

Randy chuckles.

ED
 Keep it real out here. It's the
 perfect situation. You're on safe
 ground. This is a leadership
 moment. "Strength and Faith We Can
 Trust".

RANDY
 (onboard)
 Yeah, we'll do a rescue.

ED
 Yeah, that's a great idea. Take a
 hard line. No negotiation.

RANDY
 Well, I already --

ED
 Maybe you lead the rescue operation
 yourself. How fucking great is
 that? You can be the fearless hero.
 You'll take mayor in a landslide.
 Hell, we can run with that story
 all the way to state senate.

RANDY
(dreamy)
Maybe Governor.

EXT. SCHOOL/PARKING LOT - DAY

We see local television news crew arrive.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

Debbi's phone rings and she clicks it on.

AMIR (O.S.)
They're here.

Debbi peaks out the window and sees the TV news crew. She turns to Cat.

DEBBI
(to Cat)
They're here! They're here!
(to herself)
Okay breathe.
(into phone)
Hold on a second.

She turns toward Bo.

DEBBI
Hey, handyman dude. Where is the TV remote?

Bo points to the TV remote which is in plain view by the couch in his "secret" break area.

DEBBI
Oh! Great. Do you have cable?

We see Bo nod yes as he shuffles to the couch.

BO
"Satellite dish actually."

Debbi talks softly into the phone to Amir.

DEBBI
I thought of a great scene. I go out the door with Dallas close behind me as if he has a gun or something. When we get out, I flip around, do some ninja move and push him to the ground.

(pumped)
That's badass. Right? And, I'll sex
it up. I'll be like that Charlie's
Angels movie.

AMIR (O.S.)
Do you know jujutsu?

DEBBI
I'm an actor. I'll make some moves.

Debbi makes a martial art like gesture while walking back to
peak out the window. She peaks out.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Amir is smiling and rolling his eyes at Debbi's bravado.

AMIR
Hey, that is good. People get
excited when you look out the
window.

DEBBI (O.S.)
Oh, right, I need to stay in
character. Was I smiling? I want to
look like a hostage but not
desperate.

AMIR
Remember, everyone thinks you were
shot. Just give them a few teasers
for now.

DEBBI (O.S.)
Right, maybe I should be a little
weak, a little desperate at the
beginning. That will show my range.
(almost panicking)
I need time to rehearse.

AMIR
I'll call you when the TV crew is
setup.

EXT. SCHOOL/TV CREW AREA - DAY

Kids are hovering around the TV van hoping to get picked to
be on TV. Scott and Peter from the lunchroom scene are in the
group. Amir is talking to the person handling the camera.
Reporter, SUSAN SHARP, is talking to JANICE, an assistant
producer.

SUSAN

(eager, rushed)

Okay, we want the best-looking kids. No disgusting zit-faced kids. We want one distraught sobbing girl, and a kid that can confidently talk.

JANICE

Yes, I'm on it.

SUSAN

Call Eagle, we should have video in ten, ready to go live in twenty.

JANICE

Who am I calling?

SUSAN

I don't have a name. Call this number.

Susan hands Janice a piece of paper with a phone number. Amir walks from behind to alongside Janice and looks to get the phone number. We follow Janice as she starts weaving through the crowd of kids. She punches in the phone number then starts looking at kids. Some kids, including Ethan and Jonathan, are try to talk to Janice as she walks. She ignores them because they don't fit the criteria to be on camera.

ETHAN

It's a mistake. There weren't any shots.

JONATHAN

That girl slipped.

Janice spots a handsome kid, JEFF, with macho swagger. She approaches him.

JANICE

(to Jeff)

Can you tell me what happened?

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/STUDIO - DAY

We see Jim and two guests on a split-screen behind him. Jim interrupts guests, GORDON and CHARLES. We see Charles speaking without hearing words. Jim is serious, but not alarmed.

JIM

I'm sorry I need to cut you off
right there.

He turns directly to camera, but occasionally looks away to get direction. He struggles to relay information he gets in real-time.

JIM

We have some breaking news. This is just coming in. There appears to have been what may be a mass, a shooting at a high school.

(slowly reading)

At Pittsfield High School in New Jersey.

(struggling to relay)

We learned a girl... was apparently shot by a younger classmate. The shooter may be holding hostages... may have an explosive.

(in regular rhythm)

Our sister station, W.P.U.F, is on the scene and we should be getting more information shortly. Again, we have just learned about a shooting at Pittsfield High School, in Pittsfield, New Jersey. We will track this story for you as it develops.

Jim turns back to Gordon, one of the guests.

JIM

What do you make of this? Will it ever stop? Gordon do we need to let everyone carry a gun? Will that stop these tragedies?

GORDON

Absolutely. I don't have the details of this particular incident but the kid is not going on a rampage if he knows everyone is armed. Let me just say this? I grew up on a farm. I knew how to handle a gun before I was six years old. When you deny individuals the right to bear arms it is a death sentence. Everyone is a sitting duck except the crazy people. If kids at that school carried guns this would not have happened.

CHARLES

How can you say that? You can't say that?

GORDON

I just did.

CHARLES

How are more guns going to stop a shooting?

GORDON

Simple. As soon as that crazy kid pulls his weapon. Bam! He's out. In these cases, there is always enough time after the assailant pulls his weapon before he starts shooting. Go back. Go back. Look at the final reports of all the other incidents. Have you looked at those reports?

CHARLES

No.

GORDON

Look at those reports. Plenty of time for someone to shoot the shooter.

CHARLES

But this is just one type of case. If nobody has a gun the kid throws a punch instead of a bullet.

GORDON

Oh, so then it's okay to beat a girl!

CHARLES

That's not what I said.

GORDON

That is exactly what you said.

CHARLES

I said... my point was... you can't kill someone with a punch. And, if everyone has a gun and shoots when someone pulls a gun wouldn't the shooter shooting the shooter get shot?

GORDON

You think if guns are banned,
criminals will stop carrying guns
because they are illegal?

CHARLES

No, I think with fewer guns around
there will be fewer spontaneous
shootings.

GORDON

You are in lala land. Have you ever
owned a gun? Have you ever had a
gun pointed in your face? Have you
ever even been in a fist fight? No!
You grew up in a cushy apartment in
Manhattan reading your New York
Times. Way far away from the bad
guys. You don't know what it's like
on the streets.

CHARLES

Actually, I grew up in east L.A.
where I saw my cousin murdered in a
gang war.

GORDON

Oh, you grew up in L.A. where
people are even more out of touch
with reality.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/NEWSROOM - DAY

JC and Cindy are both on cell phones. JC is motioning with
his hands for Cindy to talk. Cindy covers the phone mic and
turns toward JC.

CINDY

The police haven't given us any
details. They haven't even
confirmed there was a shooting.
There are contradicting statements.
Hell, this could be a prank to get
out of school.

JC

(shouting off screen)

I want titles coming in from the
next commercial set. Get someone on
titles... And keep feeding me. I
want everything on the storyboard.
(to Cindy)

Watch. I feel like we can make a good story here.

Cindy is still on the phone and walks away. JC walks toward Crystal who is on the phone with a headset and at a laptop. She cups the mouthpiece to talk to JC.

CRYSTAL

Local is ready for go-live in ten minutes.

(into phone)

Hold on, let me check.

(to JC)

I have a kid on the phone who has some juicy details and says he can give us access to the girl held hostage.

JC

(automatic)

Get it. Get anything, everything.

(alerted)

Wait, what?

CRYSTAL

He wants to negotiate his fee. His name is Amir --

JC

Do you think he is legit?

She nods yes, and hands the headset to JC with Amir on the line.

JC

(to Amir)

Why should we pay you?

JC is listening and starts to smile. He covers mouthpiece and speaks to Crystal.

JC

(to Crystal)

I love this kid. Did you check if the mother was really a porn star?

She shakes her head yes, turns her laptop toward JC, and switches to a photo of Amber. JC shows excitement but doesn't let Amir on.

JC

(professional to Amir)

We have a standard rate for material.

(lightly confrontational)
We can get this all ourselves.
You're just saving us time.

JC smiles, continues to look around room, looks at Crystal, gives her thumbs up.

JC
(to Amir)
I can give you a twenty percent premium, but I need to talk to the girl before we send any contract.

JC mouths "contract" to Crystal and motions for her to hurry up.

JC
(to Amir)
No. We just need to confirm it is Debbi. Okay, that works.

JC hands the headset back to Crystal.

CRYSTAL
(to Amir)
Hold a minute.

She hits mute and cups the mouthpiece to get instruction from JC.

JC
I want everything he has. And let me know when we can work directly with Debbi.
(excited, to himself)
I have a good feeling about this. We can make something happen.
(to Crystal)
What about the Police Chief? Did you feel him out?

CRYSTAL
Yes, he's on board. He's running for Mayor. We're dealing with his campaign manager. He wants a live twenty minute news conference before we start.

JC
That's ridiculous. He has nothing to talk about. I won't give him more than a thirty second clip until we see what he brings.

CRYSTAL

They also have a plan for a rescue.

JC

No. No. He'll do what we tell him to do. We decide how this thing ends. And we haven't made any decisions yet. That is not negotiable. Otherwise the deal is off. We'll pull the cameras.

JC turns and starts to walk away, then turns back.

JC

And if Amir's window shot of the girl is any good, I want it looped continuous. We need to start the draw.

CRYSTAL

Done.

JC

That's my girl.

INT. HOMES AND PUBLIC PLACES - DAY

The general public is drawn to the breaking news. We see people drawn to televisions at places like airports, diners, lobbies, and senior citizen assisted living communities.

INT. SERENITY NOW - DAY

ROGER walks into his mother GRACE's small living unit in an assisted living facility. She is sitting in front of the TV which is tuned to Eagle News. We see the TV which is showing the anchor Jim with a window showing a sexy photo of Amber and another window with a loop of police running around school grounds.

JIM (O.S.)

... Eagle News has just learned the shooter's mother is a former porn star.

Roger immediately grabs the TV remote and hits mute.

ROGER

Mom! Why are you always watching that? It's rotting your brain.

Roger sees the TV headline.

ROGER

Oh my God, another shooting!

Roger sits staring at the TV.

GRACE

Hello son. Did you bring the Saltines?

ROGER

Oh my God. Wait, who is she?

GRACE

Nobody. Saltines?

(to herself)

You have to smuggle salt into this place.

(to Roger)

It's nothing! She's nobody!

ROGER

It's another shooting.

GRACE

Fake!

ROGER

Mom, it's not fake, it's the news. They have cameras there. Police are running around.

GRACE

Fake! They are making it all up.

ROGER

They don't make up shootings mom.

GRACE

They make up everything. Then they have people argue about it. They had you and your father arguing about guns earlier.

ROGER

(shifting focus,
concerned)

Mom, you know dad passed, right?

GRACE

Stupid. I broke my hip. I'm not dementia'ed.

ROGER

Well, you're sounding kind of crazy.

GRACE

I'm bored out of my mind. I can't read. I'm drugged up. I just have this stupid TV.

ROGER

Have you made any friends here yet?

GRACE

Most of the people here are either comatose or Democrats.

ROGER

Well, isn't there something else you can watch that would be more engaging like --

GRACE

Game shows? Soaps? It's all stupid. This is at least sometimes entertaining, even when it is fake.

ROGER

Why are you saying it's fake?

GRACE

I can tell. They have formulas and I can tell when the people are acting.

ROGER

Mom, that's crazy.

GRACE

Did you bring the Saltines?

EXT. SCHOOL/TV CREW AREA - DAY

Janice presents Jeff to Susan. Other kids swarm around including Scott and Peter who initiated the shooting rumor. Susan expresses her approval to Janice.

SUSAN

Great.

JANICE

He has the headline, but he needs help with details. He's pretty good with color commentary.

Janice points to Scott.

JANICE
He has the story.

Susan smiles at Scott and directs him toward Jeff.

SUSAN
Great. Just step to the side of
him. Great. Perfect.
(points to Peter)
And him.

Scott and Peter show animated excitement.

JEFF
(to Scott and Peter)
Idiots. You can't smile. You have
to look sad or angry.

Susan motions for Janice to shoo all the other kids away.

SUSAN
(to crew)
We need to deliver this in five
minutes.
(turns to Jeff)
Just relax. We'll do a few takes.
If you don't know the answer...
(points to Scott)
he can whisper it to you. Great.
(turns to cameraman)
Go.

Susan looks into the camera while walking back to Jeff.

SUSAN
I'm standing here with one student
who was touched by this terrible
tragedy. Can you tell us what
happened?

We see Susan holding a microphone in front of Jeff. Alongside Jeff are Scott and Peter, one sad the other angry. Jeff has a great TV presence. He is animated without moving off camera.

JEFF
(fake emotion)
It was horrible. It happened so
fast. He had several weapons. A
friend of mine saw the bomb
strapped to his back.

Scott and Peter nod yes.

JEFF

It was crazy... we never thought something like this could happen at Pittsfield High School.

SUSAN

I know this is hard for everyone here. Can you describe the scene of the shooting?

Jeff looks down and nudges Scott.

SCOTT

(whispering)

It happened in the lunchroom, there were three shots. He took hostages to the storeroom.

Jeff takes a deep breath, looks at the camera, faking emotion to cover the pause.

JEFF

(emotional)

Sorry. It's just hard.

(gathering himself)

We were in the lunchroom and pop, pop, pop, three shots, someone saw the bomb, so everyone ran out quick. The shooter took hostages into a side room and bolted the door.

SUSAN

We can't imagine how scary that must have been.

JEFF

We weren't scared. Our first reaction was to disarm him but he ran out too quickly and bolted the door, and the bomb. The police wanted everyone out. The police were here in like ten seconds. I just want to say how much we appreciate our police.

Susan stops on camera interview and preps Jeff for the next questions.

SUSAN

Great. Great. Now I'm going to ask you about the shooter and the victim.

SCOTT
Dallas Stone and...

SUSAN
(snaps)
Don't say their names.
(guiding)
Tell me what are they like, is she
a good student, cheerleader? Is he
an outcast?

Susan motions to cameraman, gets into character, and resumes
on camera interview.

SUSAN
Can you describe the shooter?

JEFF
(hint of somber)
He was a loner. He seemed a little
weird but...

SCOTT
(whispering)
He's into military games and
hardware.

JEFF
I guess you never know. He played a
lot of shooter type video games.

SUSAN
And the girl taken hostage?

JEFF
She was, is special. Great student,
a cheerleader.

Susan stops.

SUSAN
Great. That was great.
(to crew)
I think that's good enough for now.
Get a few more girls crying with
boys consoling them, then send it
to Eagle.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/STUDIO - DAY

We see a screen coming out of commercials with the headline,
"Tragedy At Pittsfield High".

Then a multi-window screen with separate images of Jan, DOCTOR KROUSE, and a loop of scenes at the school.

JAN

With me via satellite is Dr. Julia Krouse, an expert on child violence. She recently authored, "Your Son Is A Killer".

We see the book cover in one window of the screen replacing loop of school scenes.

JAN

Doctor Krouse, what do you make of all this? A fifteen-year-old boy shooting a female classmate?

DOCTOR KROUSE

Well, this incident doesn't surprise me. In my book, "Your Son Is A Killer", I explain that boys are genetically predisposed to kill,

(incoherent rambling)

Violence, drugs, video games, broken homes, single mothers...

JAN

(interrupting)

Oh, we should remind our audience we learned the alleged shooter's mother is Amber Stone, a single parent and former porn star.

One window on the screen switches to show a sexy picture of Amber when she was a porn star.

DOCTOR KROUSE

(interjecting)

An environment with sex, drugs, who knows...

JAN

Ms. Stone was a porn star ten years ago. Are you saying porn stars shouldn't ever have children, or that single parents should give up their children?

DOCTOR KROUSE

(defensive)

I'm not saying anything...

We see more of the studio now and see Doctor Krouse who is in another part of the studio, not "via satellite".

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/NEWSROOM - DAY

JC is on the phone walking through the newsroom with Cindy. In the background we see on-air images and the banner that reads, "Welcome, National News Network associates, together we are the news".

JC
(into phone)
I want to drive this into evening news. This story has a lot of potential. We have great leverage. I want at least three scenarios for the ending.

Cindy overhears this and looks incredulous. She briefly stops walking, then catches up to JC.

JC
(into phone)
I'm on my way.

JC clicks off the phone.

CINDY
What's happening?

JC
You should come to this. You can help us keep it real.

CINDY
Wait, wait. Stop!

She grabs his arm.

CINDY
What's happening? Scenarios for the ending? You prep for different endings? Maybe you should put some effort into finding out what the fuck is going on. Which, so far, is nothing. I'm pretty sure this is a prank.

JC
(condescending)
Cin, Cin, why are you being so old school? I want to show you the future, my special sauce.

You should come. I want you to come. See me work my magic.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

Dallas is looking down at and fidgeting with his cell phone. We see that his phone cover looks like a complicated wired device with a big red button that looks like a remote control detonator. Debbi is pleading intensely for Dallas to go along with her plan. Her hand is not innocently on his leg.

DEBBI

(sexy pleading)

Please, oh, please, I need you. Nothing bad can happen. I really want this. You can give me what I want most. I will soooo love you for this.

CAT (O.S)

Hey, get your hand off his leg girl. He's a minor.

DALLAS

Can't they arrest us for false... for making up a story?

DEBBI

No, no, we didn't, they... we're just going along with it. The cops are cool with it. Everybody wants this to happen. It's great TV.

Dallas's phone screen is facing up. Debbi notices her face live on Dallas's cell phone.

DEBBI

What is that? How are you getting live video of me?

Dallas touches his necklace that has what looks like an eyeball.

DALLAS

(nerdy excitement)

It's an app for this remote camera that has a one-point-five-millimeter lens with three millimeter piezoelectric gyroscopic sensors for stabilization. I can see the image, zoom, and redirect the lens.

DEBBI

So, you have like lots of video of me? I want to see what you have.

Debbi looks off screen, sees something she doesn't like and she turns angry. We see the TV with Eagle News. There is a looping video clip in the background. It shows Debbi when she made an appearance at the window. Debbi's face is pixelated. Debbi walks toward TV.

DEBBI

Why aren't they showing my face?
Why aren't they showing my face?

Bo is on the couch with his leg propped up on a box. There are some first aid supplies on an adjacent box.

BO

Maybe it's one of those deals where they need to notify your parents before they can show who you --

DEBBI

Fuck! My fucking mother! She's fucking in Maui with her cell phone off.

BO

You got some mouth on you honey.

DEBBI

Screw you.

BO

Do the flirty little girl thing. I like that girl better.

Debbi picks up her phone and talks before even dialing.

DEBBI

Amir you need to fix this shit!

BO

Amir! I love that cunning kid. He's going to be president someday. No, he'll be the president's puppet master.

Dallas walks up. Bo's leg turns slightly.

BO

(wincing)
Motherfucker.

DALLAS

(to Bo)

You have to let me put a bandage on your foot.

BO

Okay kid. Let's do this thing.

Bo reaches for first aid kit then turns toward TV and his eyes widen. He raises his hand for Dallas to stop. Bo shakes his head exasperated but not surprised by what he sees.

BO

Wait. Hold on kid. Fuck me. Here we go.

Bo pulls a small bag of weed out of this pocket.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/STUDIO - DAY

We see a split screen with Jan on one side and a picture of Bo looking like a criminal with the subtitle "Perpetrator or hostage?".

JAN

Again, we just learned that one of the people previously thought to be hostage has a criminal record. The man, Booker T. Randolph, is a school janitor.

Very little information has come from the scene of this tragic event, but we have boots on the ground now and we are filling in the details.

We have a live report from our sister station, W.P.U.F. Susan Sharp is standing by, Susan.

We see Susan in a window on screen nodding her head.

EXT. SCHOOL/TV CREW AREA - DAY

Susan speaks to camera.

SUSAN

Jan, earlier today, a fifteen-year-old student drew a small handgun and shot a female classmate.

The incident took place in the
school lunchroom just after noon
at,

(points to school)

Pittsfield High School. The shooter
then proceeded to take a number of
hostages and threatened to explode
a bomb. Police are keeping quiet
about details but they say,
(looks down at notes)
they consider the student a
terrorist and they will not
negotiate under any circumstance.

JAN (O.S.)

So there's a standoff. What about
the girl who was shot?

SUSAN

That's right Jan, the situation
now, here, is a standoff.

(slight pause)

We do not have confirmation on the
condition of the girl. Our sources
indicate she may have been shot in
the head before being taken
hostage. We've seen her at the
window, but are unsure of her
condition. Students and parents are
stunned.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

We see the pre-recorded video of good looking kids crying and
comforting each other, then.

JEFF

We were in the lunchroom then pop,
pop, pop, three shots.

EXT. SCHOOL/TV CREW AREA - DAY

JAN (O.S.)

Thanks Susan, for that update.

SUSAN

This is Susan Sharp reporting live
from Pittsfield, New Jersey.

Susan indicates recording stopped.

SUSAN

I rocked. That was great. I nailed it. Live. On the big stage. Woooo!

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/STUDIO - DAY

We see a split screen with Jan and a video loop showing various images including, police running, pixelated Debbi, Bo titled "Perpetrator or hostage?", Amber titled "Porn Star mom of shooter". Then Doctor Krouse appears in a window on screen.

JAN

Let's get back to Doctor Krouse.
Doctor, I interrupted you earlier.
You were talking about how broken homes fuel this kind of violence.

We see Doctor Krouse in a frame holding up her book.

DOCTOR KROUSE

Well, in my book, "Your Son Is A Killer", I explain it is not so much that the home fuels violence. The violence is innate. The problem with the broken home, a single mother, without a father, the boy can't be terminally threatened. A chemical change occurs in the brain when a young boy is terrified by a man in the house, and that has a dampening effect on the boy's violent tendencies. Violence quells violence. We all know that.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The conference room is glassed in with a view to the studio and newsroom. JC is in the room with two of his staff, JESSIE and BRUCE who are both wearing telephone headsets and typing on laptops. JC is standing in the room and talking to Jessie and Bruce.

JC

(hyped up, scolding)

We've been ready with live shot for over an hour and we haven't made anything happened. We're still on act one. We're going to lose the audience. What's after Krouse? Do you have Debbi on the phone yet?

Bruce sheepishly nods yes, presses a few keys, to put Debbi on speaker phone.

JC
Debbi?

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

DEBBI
(excited)
Yes.

JC (O.S.)
Hi this is JC. I'm sure Amir told
you who I am.

Amir is conferenced in.

AMIR (O.S.)
Yes, yes. We're waiting on the
phone ten minutes for you.

JC (O.S.)
(surprised)
Amir? We agreed I would have direct
contact with Debbi.

AMIR (O.S.)
Yes. You may talk directly. I'm
just here to... chaperone.

DEBBI
Amir is my agent.

JC (O.S.)
Okay, whatever. Debbi, I want to do
a little teasing now. Are you ready
for that?

DEBBI
What do you want me to do?

AMIR (O.S.)
First, now that you have direct
contact with Debbi, we want to see
her face without the pixelation.
She's eighteen, you don't need
parental permission.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

JC
(slightly irritated)
Right, right. They are doing that
now.

JC gestures to Bruce who gestures back that he is on it.

JC
So, in the meantime, let's go over
what I want you to do for the
teaser.

DEBBI (O.S.)
I'm ready for anything.

JC
Okay, good. I want you to mix some
kind of red liquid that looks like
blood.

DEBBI (O.S.)
Oh, that's easy I can use my own
blood.

JC
Good, good. It just needs to look
realistic. You don't need to draw
much blood. You can mix it with
water.

DEBBI (O.S.)
No, no, my head is bloody. I can
use that.

JC
Whatever you're comfortable with. I
want you to go to the window and
write something in blood with your
fingers. Maybe wipe the window
first so it's more legible. No,
don't wipe. It'll be better to
smear the dirt.

DEBBI (O.S.)
Oh, that's good, I like that. What
should I write? I don't want to
write help. I don't want to seem
helpless.

JC
(scolding)
You'll do what I want...

(apologetic)
no, no, I don't want you to be
helpless.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

JC (O.S.)
Let's... How about? No, no, I just
want you to write, "he has a bomb".
That's too long, just "bomb". No
better, "he has a" then leave the
window. That would be great!

AMIR (O.S.)
Okay Debbi, they're showing the
clip of you without a pixelated
face.

JC (O.S.)
Okay Debbi. Go to the window now.

DEBBI
I need to get the blood.

JC (O.S.)
First, just go flash your face. I
want to pull audience in. We'll
call you soon with more
instruction.

Debbi walks toward the window. She turns to Cat.

DEBBI
(to Cat)
Get some water and some of the
bloody tissues or Dallas's shirt.
Then stand behind me with it.

Debbi approaches the window.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Crowd reacts when they see something at the window.

CROWD
Ooooh, look. It's the girl.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/STUDIO - DAY

Jim and Jan look toward the live shot monitor.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

We see a live image of Debbi at the window. She appears and disappears.

JIM (O.S.)
Apparently...we think...this is the
girl who was shot. She appears to
be okay.

JAN (O.S.)
She must be terrified.

JIM (O.S.)
I'm sure. Certainly.

JAN (O.S.)
She seems to be writing something
now. We want to remind viewers that
this is live, we don't know what is
going to happen next.

JIM (O.S.)
We believe...we learned she is
writing with what appears to be
blood... her own blood.

JAN (O.S.)
Can you make out the words Jim?

JIM (O.S.)
Seems like... I can't quite...
(reading)
he... has... a...

Debbi stops and pulls away from window.

JAN (O.S.)
She's crying out for help.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

JC
This is awesome! Half the TV's in
the country will tune-in to see
this.
(giddy)
Young, pretty girl writing in
blood. I'm a fucking genius.
(to Bruce)
Okay, call and tell the chief we're
going to him right after this.
(to Jessie)

Are you ready to show me something yet?

JESSIE

Yes, we have three scenarios depending on who you want to be the lead: standard police rescue, shooter's mother breaks through police line to stop her boy, Debby's boyfriend jumps through the skylight to rescue her.

JC

Did we get the mother on board?

JESSIE

Not exactly. Police are holding her. She's like a wild cougar. We would just let her go. She'll go straight for the door.

JC

It doesn't work. There aren't any good follow stories.

(condescending)

And she's saving the shooter. Nobody wants the shooter saved. And why would the chief let her make him look incompetent?

(ridiculing)

Didn't think that one through, did you? Good thing you're cute.

(pause)

But, the mother running. We want to see the mother running at some point. Let's have her bounce toward the hand-cuffed boy at the end. Two cameras, front and side. Then maybe the police pin her.

(scolding)

Why do I have to come up with all the good ideas?

(pause)

What else?

JESSIE

The chief wants to lead --

JC

The chief! Who gives a flying fuck what the chief wants. What does he know about drama!?

(arrogant)

Everyone thinks they can make a good story.

BRUCE

I like the boyfriend rescue idea best.

JESSIE

Me too. Then we have great follow stories with Debbi and the boyfriend. That could almost be a weekly segment. We could have people hassle them, boyfriend defends her, gets arrested... alcohol, sex...

JC

Yeah that's pretty good stuff. The first thing off the top of my head. Get on the phone with Amir. Don't give him the whole story. Just tell him that we need a boyfriend. See if he can cast that good-looking kid we used earlier. We need someone with good instincts. The boyfriend will be the star.

BRUCE

Our agreement with Amir is that Debbi is the star.

JC

You say what you need to say, when you need to say it.

(to Jessie)

Can you handle Amir?

We see Cindy through the glass walking toward the conference room.

JC

Don't give the story to Cin yet.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/STUDIO - DAY

Commercial break. Anchors Jim and Jan are talking off camera.

JAN

Seems like we jumped the shark with the blood writing.

JIM

I think it worked. I felt the emotion. How was my pacing?

JAN

Hey, I have an idea. Maybe in the next segment you just turn and shoot me in the head.

JIM

Jan?

JAN

Seriously, think about the ratings, follow-up stories. You could write a book, movie rights.

JIM

I'd be in prison.

JAN

Jim, think of how much more famous you would be. You're already in prison. You'd be a prison king. You could have any man you want.

JIM

Um, I'm doing okay. It's a decent gig. Don't bum my high. We got the fame and the money baby! I'm riding this bull until it throws me.

EXT. SCHOOL/NEWS CONFERENCE AREA - DAY

We see people setting up for a news conference. Someone is mounting an American flag on a tree behind a podium. Randy is near the podium with his campaign manager Ed. The podium has Randy's campaign poster tacked on the front. Ed turns and shouts at someone then walks away from Randy.

ED

Can we get a few more microphones setup? Just a couple more would be fine. And we want a flurry of flashes as he walks up to the podium. Let's test the flashes.

We see bars of flashes mounted on tripods. Then we see a flurry of flashes. Randy raises his hand to shield his eyes from the flashes. Ed turns back to Randy.

ED

Okay, we're almost ready, get in position.

Randy walks to the front of the microphones. Someone comes in view and places another stand with more microphones.

ED

(to Randy)

No, no, you walk up to the podium just after we go live. You start over there.

Randy looks around, confused, he's not sure if Ed is talking to him. Finally, Randy points to himself to confirm Ed is talking to him. Randy nods his head to indicate he understands and walks away from the podium. Janice, the TV assistant producer, approaches Ed who nods his head yes. Janice gives a signal to the TV crew and shouts.

JANICE

Live in ... three... two... one.

Randy didn't hear his cue. He turns and stands in ready position off camera. Two of his officers are next to him. They nudge him to go. Randy resists, looks toward his campaign manager who is waving like crazy for Randy to walk up to the podium. Randy collects himself and goes into macho character. He approaches the podium very self-assured. Two officers follow him and stand behind him.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

JC, Bruce, and Jessie are turned toward a TV that is in the room.

JC

The set design looks nice. Okay, let's see what he's got.

EXT. SCHOOL/NEWS CONFERENCE AREA - DAY

RANDY

... in control here on the scene. People have put a great deal of faith in me to resolve this tragedy. I can assure everyone I have the strength to see this through so every man, woman, and child is safely brought home...

I will not negotiate but will
capture the assailant so that
justice will be done. God, willing
--

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

We hear Randy's garbled voice in the background.

JC

What's happening here? He's off
script... I want to start before he
tries to jump us with his own
rescue scene. Jes, get Amir on the
phone, we're going early.

JC

(barking to Bruce)

I want to start with a wide shot.
Then let's have Jim or Jan notice
something on the roof like, "What's
that, did you see something", one
of them asks for a zoom in on roof.
Boyfriend appears then drops down.
More chatting "what was that,
someone is on roof, dot dot dot".

(aside)

Oh, somebody needs to make sure
chief Randy has control of his
forces. We don't want anyone
shooting our hero.

JESSIE

Got it.

RANDY (O.S.)

...I put my faith in God so that
the citizens of Pittsfield may put
their faith in me, and rely on my
strength to deliver us...

BRUCE

JC, Tokio Hyatt has called a bunch
of times. She's pissed we're
holding her.

JC

She can't see we're covering a
crisis? Jesus. The world doesn't
revolve around her sweet ass. Tell
her we may bump rehab to tomorrow
but keep the cameras on location.

If this school thing runs out of juice later we may want to follow her to a club tonight.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

They are all watching Eagle News. Debbi and Cat are standing. Bo and Dallas are on the couch watching.

RANDY (O.S.)
... Thank you. God bless America.

BO
(to Debbi)
I don't get why you want to be on TV so bad. Trust me. No point being famous if you're not rich. It's just a big hassle. People come --

DEBBI
Well, you know what. Nobody wants to look at a big loser janitor. So maybe it doesn't matter what you think.

BO
See now, that's just mean. That's what happens to people if they don't keep their head. It gets worse when you get more famous. That girl Tokio Hyatt, now she's all messed up on drugs.

DEBBI
Well you know what. Everybody loves "That Girl". People want to see her, want to be her. People follow her. People do what she does. People love her.

BO
Well, it don't always work that way. Someone put a video of me on that tube site. They catch you doing something stupid then everyone is like, "hey, you're the stoned dude who...".
(directly to Debbi)
And, little girl number two, plenty of people want to look at me. That video got like fifty thousand lookers.

EXT. SCHOOL/NEWS CONFERENCE AREA - DAY

Randy and Ed are talking.

ED

(to Randy)

...yeah, no, I think it went really well. We'll fix a few things for the next spot. That will be longer. We'll have the whole rescue to cover.

RANDY

Yeah, for the rescue, I don't like the boyfriend on the roof thing.

ED

No, don't worry. We're going to preempt that. Eagle will be live so we can do whatever we want.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

Debbi's phone rings from Amir. We follow Debbi who walks away to take the call.

DEBBI

Boyfriend? What?

(emphatic)

No, no, no! A boyfriend rescue would make him the star.

AMIR (O.S.)

It's a role. You're the damsel in distress.

DEBBI

No! This is my chance for a breakout performance. I don't want to get pigeonholed into being the helpless girl.

(pause, listening)

It will be a live shot, right?

(pause, listening)

Okay then it doesn't matter. We can agree to anything. I'll do whatever I want. That's perfect.

(pause, listening)

I need to get ready.

Debbi clicks off the phone and smiles.

EXT. SCHOOL/POLICE BARRICADE - DAY

Police attention seems to be heightened in preparation for some kind of action. Randy is directing his troops into position. Ed walks up to Randy and they begin to talk and walk away from other police.

ED

...That's right. Good, sounds like you got it down. So Eagle will be live again in a few minutes. They asked us to get the boyfriend in position.

RANDY

Who is the boyfriend? Where is he?

ED

We're holding him so he can't get on the roof.

RANDY

What if they got another boyfriend?

ED

(frustrated)

Don't worry about the boyfriend. How are they going to get a kid on the roof without us?

RANDY

Yeah, I guess. Good point. We'll just fire some warning shots if someone gets up there.

ED

Anyway, I think this is a good time to start. Let's start in the next five minutes.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

Dallas is sitting on the couch next to Bo. Dallas occasionally looks away toward Debbi who is looking at herself in the mirror, mouthing words and applying makeup.

DALLAS

(to Bo)

How's your foot? Do you need anything?

BO

I'm fine.

(philosophical)

Another couple hundred years and no
one will remember any of this shit.

Bo pulls out a partially smoked joint, lights it, takes a hit
then instinctively offers some to Dallas.

BO

(apologizing)

Sorry kid, I should have offered
some earlier.

DALLAS

No thanks. I don't smoke.

BO

Yeah, you're a good kid...

Bo begins a rambling stoner monologue.

BO

(philosophical)

Another hundred thousand years and
they'll look back to us like we
were monkeys.

(whispers)

So I noticed the way you've been
looking at that girl. Seems like
you got the hots for her. She's a
little tiger. You sure you want to
go there?

Dallas looks uncomfortable with the conversation.

BO

I guess she's a hottie. If I were
your age I'd go crazy if I could
get a shot at that.

(revelation)

You know what? She's looks kind
of... right? I get it... She's your
mother... They say we're all after
someone like our mother. It's some
crazy psychological shit.

(emphasis)

And your mother is hot.

Dallas shows more discomfort.

BO

No, sorry, forget that. I don't
want to make it weird for you.

Anyway, you should go for it.
(fatherly)
You should go ask her out now
before all the action, before she
gets famous. She owes you one. Go
for it.

DALLAS
I don't know. Maybe when it's over.

BO
Kid, there is never a good time. If
you asked her this morning you
might not be sitting in this shit
hole surrounded by the Pittsfield
gun club... Just go do it. What's
the worst that could happen?

Dallas tentatively walks to his backpack and pulls out his
drawing of Debbi.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

JC is in the room with Bruce and Jessie.

BRUCE
Go time.

They all turn to watch the TV.

JC
This is going to be my masterpiece.
(to the world)
I love my job!

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

Debbi is looking at herself in the mirror applying finishing
touches of makeup and styling hair. We see her phone and hear
Amir on speaker. Cat is sitting next to Debbi.

AMIR (O.S.)
You have a few minutes if you want
to do your own thing. I don't like
what is happening. What's your
plan?

DEBBI
Aren't you excited for me?

AMIR (O.S.)
I'm a little frightened of you.

DEBBI
(laughing)
What? I got this. It's my show.

Dallas approaches Debbi without knowing Debbi is on the phone with Amir. Cat tugs on Debbi.

CAT
Your co-star is here.

Debbi turns toward Dallas.

DEBBI
I need a few more minutes, but this is what we're going to do... I walk out with you right behind me. Then just follow my lead. I'm going to turn around, then you hit the ground.

Dallas nods yes.

DALLAS
(awkward)
So, I, before this all happened, I was about to, in the lunchroom, I was coming over to ask you if you would, sometime, want to do something, and I drew this for you.

Dallas hands the drawing to Debbi. Cat is nearby and pushes in to see the drawing as Debbi looks.

CAT
Ooooooh, that is so cute. What is that you and Debbi? Debbi you are like so warrior queen...

Debbi hands the drawing back to Dallas. Then turns to look in the mirror.

DEBBI
(belittling)
What are you like twelve?
(self-absorbed)
Can you ask Bo if he has any bottled water? I don't think he likes me.

Dallas is humiliated, crushed. Paralyzed at first, then almost cries, then becomes angry. He walks toward his backpack. Debbi continues talking to Amir.

AMIR (O.S.)
What was that?

DEBBI
Nothing. We're almost ready.

AMIR (O.S.)
JC is calling. I'm going to
conference him in.

Dallas puts on his shirt and backpack, then heads toward the exit door. Bo sees him.

BO
(loud, concerned)
Hey, kid you're not thinking of
going out there?

Bo jumps up and starts toward the door. Dallas turns toward Bo.

DALLAS
I don't care anymore.

Debbi realizes Dallas is trying to leave. She's dazed as if her mind has been taken over and she no longer has control. She reaches into her hand bag, pulls out a small gun, and points it shakily at Dallas.

DEBBI
(possessed)
You're not going anywhere! I need
you to do this.

CAT
Oh, my God Debbi, you have a gun!

AMIR (O.S.)
Gun!

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Amir runs toward storeroom door. Police nearby are taken off guard, scared, not sure how to respond.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

Debbi is shaking with the gun pointed at Dallas. Cat is paralyzed in fear. Bo holds his hands up toward Debbi.

BO
(calming)
Hey, little girl. It's okay...
Nobody is trying to mess with
your... with whatever you need.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM EXIT - DAY

Dallas still has his hand on the door. Amir bangs on the door, bursts in, and shuts the door. Amir gives a fierce look to Debbi.

AMIR
(firm)
Debbi, you've lost your mind. Put
the gun down.

JC (O.S.)
Gun? What's happening? Someone has
an actual gun? I need to know the
story.

AMIR
(briefly lifting phone)
Shut up JC. It's over. The whole
thing is over.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

JC is in the room with Bruce and Jessie. He put the speaker phone on mute and talks to the room.

JC
They are going rogue. We need a
different angle.

BRUCE
Girls aren't shooters. Can girls be
shooters? Is that sexy?

JESSIE
We have footage of Amir running to
the door and in. Could be an
Islamic terrorism angle.

BRUCE
His family is Christian. I checked
earlier.

JC
That doesn't matter he looks
Muslim. I don't know.

Let's cue up some Jihadi clips in
case we want them later.
(to self)
Could there be a girl shooter?
Bonnie Parker. Amy Fisher. I'm not
sure how that plays out.

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

DEBBI
It's not like I'm going to kill
anyone... I will shoot though.

AMIR
Have you ever shot a gun before?

CAT
You might accidentally kill
someone?

DEBBI
I'll just point at a leg or arm.
I'm not going to miss.

DALLAS
She'll probably miss low and to her
right.

Cat shifts a little to Debbi's left. Dallas turns to the
door.

DALLAS
I'm leaving.

BO
No! Kid don't go out there!

Bo chases, but gets there just after Dallas exits.

EXT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

Dallas is frozen. We see the opening scene. Dallas is
sweating, trembling, motionless. We see police with guns
pointing at Dallas from every direction. Dallas is wearing
his shirt with blood on it and his camouflage backpack. He is
holding his cell phone with a case that makes it look like
some kind of wired device with a button. Dallas slowly starts
to move his trembling arms. A shot rings out.

EXT. SCHOOL/POLICE BARRICADE - DAY

Randy is looking around confused.

RANDY
What the heck?
(shouting)
Hold fire! Hold fire! Stand down!

Randy looks at Ed who shrugs his shoulders to indicate he doesn't know what is happening. Further down the barricade Amber breaks free and runs toward Dallas.

AMBER
(crazed, fierce)
No, no, don't shoot my boy! Don't shoot!

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/STUDIO ON AIR - DAY

We see the same scene as we saw when the movie opened with Eagle News on air.

JAN
There are reports of an explosion or gunshot.

JIM
A loud noise. We learned - There is apparently - Something is happening, unfolding now.

EXT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

Police with guns drawn, slowly and deliberately move toward Dallas. Amber stops in front of Dallas. She doesn't put her hands in the air. She points at the police and moves toward them.

AMBER
Stop, right their fuckers. I'll rip your lungs out if you get any closer.

The police stop. Some are looking at each other not sure what to do.

EXT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

Bo was shot in the arm. He is struggling to keep his injured arm in the air by propping it up against the doorway.

BO
 Goddamn trigger-happy son's-a-bitches!

INT. SCHOOL/STOREROOM - DAY

Debbi is crying.

DEBBI
 What did I do? What's wrong with me? What's wrong with me?

Amir takes the gun from Debbi and rubs it with a nearby towel to wipe off fingerprints, then hides it.

CAT
 (calming)
 It's okay. You're just a selfish bitch and lost your mind. Hey, you didn't hurt anyone. You didn't shoot the gun. It's all okay... I think... I'm pretty sure... You didn't shoot.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

JC is shaking a little, scared and pissed. Bruce and Jessie are stunned.

JC
 Was that a shot? Where did that come from? What the hell happened?!
 (defensive)
 That's not on me.

JC sees Cindy angry, walking toward the conference room. Cindy enters.

CINDY
 Shut it down! Get out!
 (to Bruce)
 Tell them to drop live shot now!
 (to herself)
 I'm done. I can't. I'm done.

Bruce is frightened by Cindy and follows her command.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Later, police are calmly walking around the scene and trying to clear spectators. Randy's campaign manager Ed is handing election material to spectators.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Amir, Debbi, and Cat are together.

DEBBI

I must look like terrible.

AMIR

Yes, not so good, but dramatic.
Maybe keep it. I may have an
interview setup.

DEBBI

I need to look good.

AMIR

You need to be memorable. You can
look good for a follow-up
interview.

DEBBI

Oh, right, it will show range...
You're a good manager.

AMIR

Also, you need to apologize to
Dallas.

CAT

Yes, you should do that now. He's
over there with his mother.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Amber is hugging Dallas. Walking toward them is Bo in handcuffs being led by Sergeant Mills. Bo is still limping, and his arm is bandaged. Bo smiles when he sees Dallas and Amber. He stops.

BO

Hey, miss. That's a good boy you
got.

DALLAS

Are you okay? What happened? Why
are you in handcuffs?

BO

Oh, I'll be fine. They just found a little bag of weed.

Bo turns his shot arm toward Dallas

BO

Trigger-happy motherfuckers shot me.

Amber touches his arm.

AMBER

Oh, you poor man.

BO

It's okay, I'm going to sue the shit out of these bastards.

Sergeant Mills stops and is smiling like an idiot while admiring Amber.

SERGEANT MILLS

Ma'am. Sorry about the mix up with your boy.

BO

(to Dallas)

Hey, don't get all messed up about that girl. She can't appreciate you yet. She's got a lot of stuff to work out... It's just a speck of time. Our whole life is a speck on a billion years of universe.

Sergeant Mills nudges Bo to move on. Ambers looks toward Bo as he is led away.

AMBER

He seems like a nice man.

Debbi, Amir and Cat walk up to Amber and Dallas.

DEBBI

(apologetic)

Dallas. I'm really sorry. I was just so stressed. You're so sweet. And I really like your drawing. I want it.

CAT

(very enthusiastic)

Me too!

DEBBI
 I'm performing at GirlsPlay
 Saturday night. I can get you a
 seat in the first row.

Dallas is silent.

AMBER
 (to Debbi)
 That's so nice.
 (covering for Dallas)
 I think we're all a little out of
 it right now.

DEBBI
 Whew. Yeah, I'm still spinning.
 (abrupt)
 Oh, Mrs. Stone I didn't know you
 were in show business. Can I talk
 with you sometime about how you
 broke through?

Amir is alarmed that Debbi is treading on inappropriate
 conversation.

AMIR
 Debbi, we need to go. You have an
 interview.
 (to Amber)
 Nice to meet you Ms. Stone. You are
 truly a beautiful woman. Even more
 beautiful in person.

Amir starts to lead Debbi away by the arm. Debbi turns back
 toward Dallas.

DEBBI
 I mean it Dallas. I want you to
 come Saturday. We can hang out
 after. Bring your drawings. And I
 want to get the video from today.

DALLAS
 (to Amber)
 I want to go home.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/JC'S OFFICE - DAY

JC is at his desk. Cindy walks in just as he closes his
 laptop and stands.

CINDY

You know JC, today was really interesting.

JC

I thought so. Right? I thought we did okay under the circumstances.

CINDY

No. It was sad. I thought you all were bad journalists, but you all are not even trying.

JC

(laughs)

Journalists! God no. I told you we're in the entertainment business.

CINDY

What was interesting about today is that the,

(finger quotes)

"school shooting" was completely covered by people on the scene. The kid you almost killed wears a video camera. Your cunning co-conspirator, Amir, is getting me video of what really happened in the lunchroom.

JC

Good stuff, I can do something with that.

CINDY

Kids are posting images, video, experiences. And I have audio of your sham storyline. That's interesting don't you think? It's the real story from every perspective. I think that's interesting.

JC

(barely acknowledging)

Yeah.

(shifting)

Hey, do you want to get a drink later?

Cindy turns and starts to walk away. Then turns back.

CINDY
I'm on my way to tell Angus I'm
quitting.

JC
Is he going to be in your book?

CINDY
(exasperate)
I'm not writing a book.

Cindy starts to walk away.

JC
I'm leaving Eagle too.

Cindy turns back.

CINDY
(surprised)
You? Leaving Eagle? Why are you
quitting?

JC
(matter of fact)
Fired.

CINDY
Really? I thought you were the
golden boy.

JC
It's a cutthroat business. I saw it
coming when the merger happened. I
thought you were maybe gunning for
me.

CINDY
Not you specifically. You are a
dick, but you're not, I don't think
you are corrupt, well, not corrupt,
corrupt, just unconsciously
corrupt. I'm mean, I can see you
believe in what you are doing and
you don't think you are doing harm.
Hell, maybe it is what your
audience wants.
(kind of consoling)
You'll be okay.
(gibe)
You're cute, you'll land somewhere.

JC
 I'll land. I always land. I've been
 taking care of myself since I was
 fifteen. I'm bulletproof.

Cindy turns to walk away. Then turns back.

CINDY
 Sure. Let's have a drink. To
 celebrate our exits.

JC smiles.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/OUTSIDE ANGUS'S OFFICE - DAY

Cindy walks toward Angus's office. There is an admin desk outside the office, but nobody is there. The office door is open and Angus is not there. Cindy realizes this is an opportunity to plant a bug in Angus's office. She walks into the office.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/ANGUS'S OFFICE - DAY

Cindy pulls the bug out of her pocket and starts looking for a location to place it. She considers the top of a framed poster, the side of a file cabinet, then under the desk. She drops the bug under the desk while trying to place it. Angus's admin DANI walks in.

DANI
 Are you getting into blowjob
 position?

Cindy is startled and hits her head on the desk.

CINDY
 Ow! Oh, ah, I'm, I.

DANI
 You don't look like the blowjob
 type.

CINDY
 No, I'm, I dropped my, um, and it
 rolled under the desk.

DANI
 (sarcastically)
 Oh, then let me help you.

CINDY
 No. Got it.

Cindy pulls a pen out of her pocket and holds it up.

DANI
Were you searching his drawers?

CINDY
(feebly)
No. Just the pen.

DANI
Oh, because you look like you were
up in his business.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/OUTSIDE ANGUS'S OFFICE - DAY

Cindy walks out of Angus's office. Dani follows and notices
the bug that Cindy is nervously fiddling with in her hand.

DANI
Oh, your trying to bug the office.
Awesome!

CINDY
What! No! What are you talking
about? I'm just waiting to talk to
Angus.
(professionally)
Do you know when he is expected
back?

DANI
(putting it together)
I know who you are. Your that new
chick. You're up to something.
(warning)
Angus really wants to bone you.

CINDY
(off balance)
No. I just need to talk --
(busted)
Fuck!

DANI
(reaching her hand)
Dani Dubois.

CINDY
Cindy --

DANI
Yes, I know you.

CINDY

I can come another time. I was just walking by and thought I'd stop by.

DANI

Don't worry about the bug. I've got the room bugged.

CINDY

(still a bit defensive)

What? No. I --

DANI

I can get you whatever you need to take this fucker down.

CINDY

So, are you with --

DANI

I'm just me. I'm tired of sucking the old fuck's dick.

CINDY

(taken aback)

What? What are you saying? Is he --

DANI

He has me by the balls. I reported him and they threatened to fire me. I tried to quit and he threatened to setup a bogus story about me stealing. I'm trapped.

(almost breaking down)

I can't take it anymore. I feel like a circus animal jumping through hoops of fire every day.

(shifting, directing)

You're going to get me out!

CINDY

(stricken, empathic)

Oh, I am so sorry. So sorry.

DANI

I don't need for you to be sorry. I just need some kind of protection.

CINDY

(engaging)

Yes. Anything I can do.

DANI

Your father is some big shot lawyer right?

CINDY

My father? Yes.

DANI

I need for him to protect me. I have a shit ton of recordings of Angus. Not just him abusing me, with others too, but he is more degrading with me.

CINDY

(summoning power)

I got you. Me, my father, anyone you need.

(lightning bolt, fierce)

This is over!

(animated)

We're going to take him down and all the other bastards doing this to women. Everywhere!

DANI

Whoa! You've got a ferocious side.

CINDY

(empowered)

I can, I have to do something. I'm a privileged rich bitch and this is something where I can make change happen.

DANI

(calming)

Okay, but you need to be cool for now. Don't give him any heads up until all the ducks are lined up and we are ready to pounce. He's a powerful dude and I'm toast if he slithers away.

CINDY

(realization)

I got it. This is why I'm here. This is my --

DANI

Raison d'être.

CINDY
(enlightened)
Right.

We see Angus walking toward them. He unconsciously taps his thigh and crotch.

ANGUS
(from a distance)
Cindy, glad you came. Let's get to
know other.

Angus walks closer, puts his hand on Cindy's back and starts to lead her to his office. She resists a bit at first, fearful, but with rising subdued rage. He grabs her arm and continues to walk her into his office.

ANGUS
Come.
(turns to Dani)
No interruptions.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/ANGUS'S OFFICE - DAY

Angus closes the door. Cindy is nervous, losing her empowered feeling, a little shaky with the swirl of emotions.

CINDY
I just have a minute. I just
stopped by to --

Angus leads Cindy to sit on a couch. Then walks to the other side of the office.

ANGUS
Make yourself comfortable. Can I
get you anything?

CINDY
No, I really just stopped --

ANGUS
Relax. You seem a little nervous. I
understand. This is a stressful
business and even more so with the
recent upheaval. Nobody is on sure-
footing.

Angus opens a cabinet filled with liquor.

ANGUS

Are you a scotch girl? I have a
leathery thirty six year old
Balvenie if you're into that.

CINDY

(almost to self)

Did I drop into a Mad Men episode?

ANGUS

What's that?

Angus finishes pouring himself a drink and walks toward
Cindy. It becomes increasingly clear throughout the scene
that Angus is already drunk.

CINDY

I, I don't typically drink at work.
And by that I mean, I don't ever
get drunk when someone is paying me
to do a job. Which brings --

ANGUS

Well, that almost sounds like a
judgement. Do you think I'm not
performing well?

(almost scolding)

Because I built the number one news
organization in America!

Angus menacingly stands over Cindy.

CINDY

I suppose it's not for me to say
whether you are performing well.

ANGUS

I built the number one news
organization. That's a fact!

CINDY

You have had a leadership position
in a number one something. I'll
give you that.

Angus turns away.

ANGUS

Let me tell you a secret. The
secret!

CINDY

The Secret. Like the film? The Law
of Attraction pseudoscience?

ANGUS

(ignoring her comment)

You're a clever girl. You're ambitious. But, you haven't found your power. You're caught up in doing the right thing. The belief that there is a right thing.

Angus walks around the room during the following oration.

ANGUS

When I was a fledgling in the business. I was ambitious. Really ambitious like yourself. I was earnest. For years I outworked everyone around me. After years, I was still where I started. I saw others with less than half my talent move up. I was confounded. How could I get passed up, I was more talented, I worked harder, I couldn't see what was staring me in the face. What did these others have that I didn't have?

(leaning forward)

They played ball. Hardball when necessary. They knew how to curry favor. They knew who held power to propel them. They knew what those people in power craved and how to give it to them.

(leaning back)

I learned that craft. I became expert. It propelled me to my current position of power.

(walking again)

Along the way I learned that power needs to be fed. A person's deepest desires must be expressed. And a person can't be propelled by substitutes regardless of how society may view what that person desires.

Angus sits on the couch next to Cindy.

ANGUS

(sincere)

This is the secret. The secret to success. In anything. The path to power and fulfillment. You may already have some sense of this. You may have come to me with this understanding.

Cindy shakes her head no. Angus stands, turns, picks up an item on his desk to fidget and turns back, trying to read Cindy's reaction.

ANGUS

Do you know your innermost desire?

CINDY

(fumbling)

I, I, I'm not sure what you're asking.

ANGUS

I think you do. I think you have suppressed that desire. For whatever reason. Maybe you don't think you deserve it. Maybe you are ashamed.

(lecturing)

Shame is a disease. You must never give in to shame.

CINDY

(getting footing)

So you are shameless?

ANGUS

Yes! Emphatically.

CINDY

You have no boundaries?

ANGUS

There are no boundaries, but what our mind constructs.

CINDY

You would rape or murder someone if you felt like it, without regard for the humanity of another or for the repercussions?

ANGUS

(chuckling)

You assume I might get caught.

(lecturing)

Men have raped since the beginning of time. Powerful men have always claimed what they need.

CINDY

Arrogance.

ANGUS

Yes, clever girl. From the latin arrogare, "to claim". And I find that most women are wildly attracted to arrogance.

CINDY

(increasing power)
I'm not a fan.

ANGUS

(sensing resistance)
Well, that is a noble position.
Naive for a person with your ambition.

CINDY

(defiant)
You don't know me!

ANGUS

(maniacal)
Well, then let's get to know each other. Let me lay it out for you.

Angus, still standing, moves to Cindy.

ANGUS

(angry)
Let me spell it out! If you want to be in this business you need to play ball.

CINDY

And what does that mean?

ANGUS

I think you know what I need. I think you know that an attractive woman like yourself can make her way easily with strategic relationships.

CINDY

(exasperated)
Really?

ANGUS

Listen. I don't know if you are playing games with me or are truly naive, but it is making me really hard. And I like it.

(shifting)
But let me say this.

If you are not willing to put out,
you'll find an adversary like you
could never have imagined.

(piercing)

I will destroy you.

Cindy stands defiantly. Angus pushes her down. Cindy is frightened at first.

ANGUS

So how do you want it?

CINDY

(building rage)

I don't want any part of it! You
need to back off. I've leaving.

Angus continues to stand in front of her menacingly, blocking her from getting up.

ANGUS

So you just came to tease me? Who
has the power here?

Cindy lurches up and knees Angus in the crotch. Angus collapses to the floor writhing in pain. Cindy stands over him.

CINDY

I'm going to destroy you and all
the other filth like you. I'm going
to put in action a force that will
flip the earth's axis and women
will claim their power.

Cindy walks out.

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/OUTSIDE ANGUS'S OFFICE - DAY

As Cindy walks out, Dani is by the door where she was listening. We can still hear Angus moaning. Dani quickly peaks her head through the door to see Angus, then pops back.

DANI

Oh my. An Angus puddle. You opened
a can of whoop-ass on him. He's not
going to like that.

CINDY

(powerful)

He's just a bully who got his pants
pulled down.

When I'm done with him he'll be
crying in a corner like the bratty
little boy he never grew out of.

Cindy starts to walk away.

DANI
I'm going with you, warrior queen.

BLACK SCREEN

INT. EAGLE NEWS HQ/STUDIO - DAY

We see a multi-window display. In one window we see a helicopter view tracking a pink limo. In another window we see a loop of Tokio Hyatt getting into the limo. In another we see news anchor, RITA. There is a story title, "Journey To Rehab?".

RITA
If you are just tuning in, we have
breaking news. Party girl, Tokio
Hyatt, may be on her way to rehab.
Eagle News has exclusive coverage
of Ms. Hyatt's journey to rehab.

INT. TOKIO HYATT'S LIMO - DAY

Tokio Hyatt is looking at her phone.

TOKIO HYATT
Jannine, we're tracking eighteen
percent above projection. With the
Sansa line I think we'll push next
quarter revenue over two hundred
mil.

FADE OUT.

THE END