

MISSING

"PUZZLE BOX"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. STREET - WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY 1

Five year-old ALICE YEE toddles down the busy sidewalk. She's so completely engrossed in her current tasks -- not stepping on any cracks while eating a blue Slurpee ice treat -- * she doesn't notice her extremely pregnant mother LUCY YEE, 30s, is getting ahead of her... especially since Lucy is completely engrossed in her own current task, barking into her cell phone. *

LUCY

This vote is going to define every Senator's position on national security. Does your boss really want to be on the wrong side of that?

She breaks off, suddenly aware she's alone. She looks behind her and sees her daughter heading in the opposite direction, intrigued by A TOY IN A DISPLAY WINDOW.

LUCY

Alice!
(into phone:)
Hold on.

Lucy charges down the street -- as much as a woman this pregnant can charge -- and grabs her daughter's hand.

LUCY

What did Mommy say? Always stay beside me. We're late for Junior Genius as it is.

Lucy pulls her along for a bit, then gets caught up in her call again.

LUCY

Look, you know how I hate to be blunt, Hal, I'm just not that kind of person, but let me be blunt here, okay? If your guy votes against Senator Bane on this, you can French-kiss your farm subsidies one last time, because they will be dead very soon.

Alice wanders off towards something else...a VIDEO CAMERA in a DISPLAY WINDOW, aimed at the street. She sees herself on TV. *

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

She waves at herself. And then she sees AN OLD CHINESE LADY standing behind her, SMILING and WAVING... Alice smiles and waves back. Further up the street, Lucy is still on her cell.

LUCY

Blackmail is an ugly word, Hal.
This is just the marketplace of human interest. And you've made a smart purchase here, because you're a smart guy. I've always said that about you, Hal. Even when others didn't.

She flips the phone shut and turns back to her daughter.

LUCY

Okay, honey, we've really got to --

She looks down the street -- and sees, half a block away, ALICE'S Slurpee treat on the sidewalk, melting... *

LUCY

Alice?

Frantic, she starts to run towards the slurpee, looking desperately in doorways, pushing past pedestrians. And then she SEES, nearly a BLOCK further down the sidewalk... her daughter, Alice, holding hands with an ANCIENT CHINESE LADY and walking quickly, very quickly, away... towards a PARK. *

LUCY

She's got my daughter! Stop her!

Lucy tries to run, but she is very pregnant and she can't move fast. She is pushing and pulling people out of her way, trying to close the gap. She COLLIDES with a man going the opposite direction, and she is knocked to the ground. Getting up in her condition isn't easy, but she is desperate, struggling to her feet, brushing off the people trying to help her.

LUCY

She's got my *daughter*!

THE OLD LADY walks faster and faster, pulling little Alice along. Alice has to trot, almost run, to keep up.

LUCY has struggled up, and takes off in pursuit.

LUCY

Somebody stop her!

But before anyone can react...

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2)

1

THE OLD LADY steps off the curb into traffic -- AGAINST THE LIGHT.

LUCY sees this, and yells in desperation...

LUCY

Alice!

And she dives into the street herself, in the middle of the block, and she is IMMEDIATELY in front of a car that screeches to a halt, nearly running into her. Lucy ignores her danger, yells again...

LUCY

Alice!

But the OLD LADY is far away now, a block at least, still in the middle of the busy street, and a WHITE VAN screeches to a stop, swerving sideways, cutting the old woman and the little girl off from Lucy's view. Lucy runs -- as much as she can run, eight and a half months pregnant -- around the car that nearly hit her, frantically trying to reach the van, but it rights itself from the swerving stop and tears away, revealing that the old lady and Alice are GONE.

LUCY is alone in the street, stunned, the tears starting to come, staring into the loss of her little girl.

LUCY

Alice...

2 INT. FBI HQ - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

2

JESS sits at the table in the conference room, absorbed in the FBI Manual when POLLOCK enters from behind her like a hurricane was at his back.

POLLOCK

Where's Agent Scott?

JESS

On the witness list for the Goldman case.

POLLOCK

Come.

And he literally PULLS her out of her chair as he motors past her. The FBI manual crashes to the floor.

POLLOCK

Cortez!

Antonio peers out from his work area. Pollock is still propelling Jess along with him.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

ANTONIO

What's up?

POLLOCK

What does it look like?

He just keeps moving, taking Jess with him. Antonio follows instantly, throwing his jacket on as he half-runs to keep up. Pollock pulls a cell phone from his jacket, hands it to Jess.

POLLOCK

Find your partner.

JESS

And tell her what?

POLLOCK

Someone snatched a kid in Georgetown.
We'll meet at Wisonsin and M Street.

ANTONIO

Isn't this local police?

Pollock suddenly stops, making Antonio nearly collide with him.

POLLOCK

The kid belongs to Lucy Yee. Lucy
Yee belongs to Senator Bane, chairman
of the Foreign Relations Committee.
Senior policy aide. Any questions?

No. Pollock, Jess, and Antonio continue out as fast as they can go.

3 EXT. GEORGETOWN STREET - DAY

3

Right where Alice was taken by the old woman. It's now a crime scene, cordoned off with yellow tape, with UNIFORMED COPS manning the line. Pollock's BLACK SUBURBAN screeches up and he leaps out, barking orders at the cops and the FBI agents on scene.

POLLOCK

I want this street shut down. No
traffic in or out. Give me a command
center there.

Antonio is jumping out of the Suburban right behind Pollock, who turns to him, pointing at the sidewalk.

POLLOCK

Any dirt, gum, or dandruff you find
here, I want to know who left it.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

ANTONIO

Yes, sir.

Dismissed, Antonio goes to marshall his men. Pollock strides across the street to the entrance to a small PARK, where uniformed police sergeant FINBAR meets him.

FINBAR

Ralph Finbar. I've held the scene for you.

Pollock doesn't say anything. He just grabs a roll of crime scene tape, ties it around a nearby tree, and walks off towards the next tree. Finbar rushes after him.

POLLOCK

You want to be useful, find me the van the kidnapper got away in.

FINBAR

All we know is, it's white.

POLLOCK

Then you're done. Just pull over every white van in the city till you find the right one.

He winds the tape around a tree, moves off in a new direction.

FINBAR

We don't have anywhere near the manpower for that.

POLLOCK

Pull them out of vice. Homicide. Parking enforcement. Until we find that girl, this is the only case in the city.

(hands him the tape)

And be a lamb, and loop this around the whole park for me.

(off his hesitation)

Now would preserve your career.

And Finbar, defeated, takes the tape and and we SLAM CUT TO:

4 EXT. THE PARK - DAY

4

With Pollock walking to Jess and Nicole.

POLLOCK

Make me happy.

(CONTINUED)

JESS

All the witnesses saw the same thing.
Old Chinese lady snatched the kid,
ran into traffic, white van, no
details.

POLLOCK

Little old lady. Is it a disguise?

NICOLE

Couple of people saw the woman in
the park before the kidnapping. She
was wandering around, ranting and
raving.

POLLOCK

How many is a couple?

NICOLE

Three.

POLLOCK

I'll re-interview them personally.

JESS

They've been here over an hour.
They've missed meetings, haven't
been able to pick up their kids...

POLLOCK

All right. Get the name of everyone
who wants to leave.

JESS

And...

POLLOCK

Arrest them.

NICOLE

What for?

POLLOCK

They don't want to talk to me, they're
suspects.

NICOLE

Man. You get kidnapped in this town,
it's good to know someone with juice.

POLLOCK

This is not a kidnapping, Agent.
This is an attack on our government.
And we're going to show people what
happens when you do that.

(CONTINUED)

NICOLE

You're sure this is political?

POLLOCK

Yes, as a matter of fact. I am.

Jess looks over at the bench where Lucy sits, fighting back tears.

JESS

It isn't political for her. It's just her little girl.

And on her concern:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

5 EXT. PARK - DAY

5

Normandy Beach on D-Day, except most of the soldiers here are wearing FBI windbreakers. SENATOR JACKSON BANE, lean, good looking, good suit, approaches Nicole, who is directing agents.

BANE

Where do I find Deputy Director Pollock?

NICOLE

You are?

BANE

Senator Jackson Bane.

NICOLE

I'm honored to meet you, sir. But I wish you weren't here.

BANE

The daughter of my senior aide has been kidnapped. I have to do something.

NICOLE

And if she was kidnapped to get you out here, you've done exactly what they wanted.

(off his look:)

Follow me, sir.

ACROSS THE PARK, Lucy Yee sits on a bench, Jess standing over her. She's doing her best not to break down.

LUCY

I saw her slurpee on the sidewalk and I thought, what a good girl, she's not even crying. And then I saw that old woman leading her away. They won't hurt her, will they? She's just a little girl.

*

JESS

It's not about her. It's about you.

ACROSS THE PARK, Pollock is talking to Senator Bane.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

BANE

The Alien One-Strike bill means that any foreign national convicted of a crime on our soil will be deported immediately.

POLLOCK

And the opposition to it is intense.

Bane looks over at Lucy Yee, sitting with Jess.

BANE

Is that what this is about?

POLLOCK

It could be a coincidence.

BANE

But...

Pollock just looks at him. Bane sighs.

BANE

I'll postpone the vote until the little girl is recovered.

POLLOCK

I don't think you should do that.

BANE

(sharply)
You don't think?

POLLOCK

Senator... when kidnappers get what they want... they no longer have a motive to keep the victim alive.

ACROSS THE PARK, Nicole and Jess continue to talk to Lucy Yee.

LUCY

It was a white van, like a million other white vans.

NICOLE

Did you see the plates?

LUCY

I was *panicking*, alright? My daughter was being kidnapped.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2)

5

JESS

Sometimes we see things we're not even aware of. Just the tiniest detail could help.

Lucy tries to remember, wracking her brain.

LUCY

I'm sorry. I just don't have it.

ANTONIO (O.S.)

That's okay. I do.

And we REVEAL Antonio coming up behind them, intense, carrying a small tablet computer. He holds it up to Lucy.

ANTONIO

Is this the van?

An INSERT on the screen shows us the WHITE VAN, slightly blurred, in grey-scale image, but recognizable.

LUCY

It looks like it.

NICOLE

(to Antonio)

How'd you score that?

ANTONIO

Traffic camera, east of here at M and Pennsylvania.

(to Lucy)

Which way was the van moving?

LUCY

I don't know. Right to left.

ANTONIO

You were on the south side of the street... so it was driving west.

(to Nicole)

That fits with the camera. Time code lines up with the time of abduction, too.

NICOLE

Could you read the plates?

ANTONIO

Oh yes, I read 'em. DC cops have the APB right now.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (3)

5

NICOLE

(to Jess)

We could break this before you have
time for a vision.

And Jess goes to answer, but she's distracted by A YOUNG CHINESE WOMAN, SHROUDED (burial shroud, head wrap, gloves and shoes), who pushes past her carrying a flaming torch.

*
*

JESS

Hey, you can't --

But the woman keeps walking. Jess looks after her... it's a WAKING VISION. Reality mixed with illusion. The park is dotted with literally a DOZEN SHROUDED FIGURES -- male, female, young, old, each chained, carrying a flame... their faces twisted in unbelievable agony. A YOUNG CHINESE MAN, eyes rolled back into his head, points a long crooked accusatory finger, directly at her. Jess blinks, and POOF -- THE FIGURES VAPORIZE into thin air and we're BACK TO REALITY. Nicole is staring at her.

*

NICOLE

Did I speak too soon?

JESS

Yeah... but I don't know what it means.

Nicole's PHONE rings. She answers it.

NICOLE

Scott. ...Okay. We'll come back.
...Sure. If that's the way you want
it.

(to Jess)

They found the van. The driver's
back at headquarters. I'll stay
here with the locals, you go back.

JESS

Am I gonna question him?

NICOLE

I think Pollock's gonna want to handle
that.

Nicole crosses to where LUCY YEE is waiting.

LUCY

Did you find her?

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (4)

5

NICOLE

We're close, Ms Yee. We have the driver.

LUCY

Oh, god... where's my little girl?

NICOLE

The assumption is... he's about to tell us that.

And we CUT TO:

6 INT. FBI - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

6

MAL OSWALD, 20s, tattooed and long-haired, aggressive and confrontational, sits in the interrogation room, handcuffed. Jess and John Pollock are in the room with him.

(CONTINUED)

POLLOCK

Where is she?

OSWALD

Where's who?

POLLOCK

The little girl.

OSWALD

I don't know a little girl.

POLLOCK

You know how long it's been since I
shot anyone? Long enough that I
feel *nostalgic*.

Pollock turns to Jess.

POLLOCK

Agent... you see that camera?

He gestures to the wall, where a CAMERA records everything
that is said and done in this room.

JESS

Yes, sir.

POLLOCK

Turn it off.

JESS

I can't, sir.

POLLOCK

The panel's on the wall outside.

JESS

I know.

POLLOCK

So...

JESS

It's against the rules. Sir.

POLLOCK

Don't screw with me, Agent. Go turn
it off.

Jess is silent. Pollock rolls his eyes.

POLLOCK

All right, come here.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (2)

6

He pulls Jess DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF ONE OF THE CAMERAS, SQUARES HER SHOULDERS, STRAIGHTENS HER HAIR. He lines her up against the lens carefully, so that they can both be seen on film.

POLLOCK

This angle work for you? Sort of three quarters. This your good side?

JESS

It's fine, sir.

He looks up at the camera, then back at Jess.

POLLOCK

Okay. I, John Pollock, Assistant Director of the FBI, order you to turn this camera off and leave me alone with the suspect.

JESS

Sir, it's against regulations. And it compromises the suspect's rights.

POLLOCK

What rights?

JESS

Those in the Constitution. Sir.

She is still standing there, not cooperating. Pollock shrugs.

POLLOCK

So we'll do it the old-fashioned way.

And he takes his suit coat off and HANGS IT OVER THE CAMERA. Oswald reacts to this. It doesn't seem to be good for him. Pollock turns back to Jess.

POLLOCK

(to Jess)
Get out.

JESS

Yes, sir. I'll be outside.

POLLOCK

Fine.

JESS

Observing. Sir.

There is a pause after that. Pollock might possibly murder Jess where she stands. But she doesn't flinch. So...

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (3)

6

POLLOCK
Knock yourself out.

Jess goes. Pollock turns back to Oswald.

POLLOCK
Okay, where were we? Right. The
kid's meal in your van.

He puts a CHILDREN'S MEAL on the table in front of Oswald,
opens the bag, spills out the contents: a LITTLE TOY, a BOX
COVERED WITH CARTOON CHARACTERS, the CHICKEN STARS AND FRIES
skittering across the table.

POLLOCK
You get this to feed her?

OSWALD
I collect the toys and sell 'em on e-
bay. Doesn't mean I snatch children.
I'm an innocent man.

POLLOCK
That's not gonna stop me.

OSWALD
I want a lawyer.

POLLOCK
Lawyers are for criminals. You're
an enemy combatant.

OSWALD
I'm a *what*?

POLLOCK
You remember those guys we caught in
Afghanistan? They wear orange jump
suits now... live in steel cages.

OSWALD
You can't do that to me.

POLLOCK
If you grabbed this girl to get at
Senator Bane... you'll die thirty
years from now in a steel cage just
like them. Now... you want to talk
to me, or not?

7 INT. FBI HQ - OBSERVATION - DAY

7

Jess is watching the interrogation as Antonio enters. She
is upset.

(CONTINUED)

7

CONTINUED:

7

JESS

He's out of control.

ANTONIO

You sound like you just noticed.

JESS

He turned the camera off.

ANTONIO

Yeah, it scares the hell out of people when he does that.

JESS

It's illegal.

ANTONIO

It *would* be illegal, if there wasn't a second camera, far side of the room.

*

JESS

There is?

ANTONIO

Yeah, a mini one, about four inches long. He put it in himself.

And he gives Jess a beat to absorb how she has just been used as part of John Pollock's theater, and then he moves on to...

ANTONIO

So, look... you had a vision, right?

JESS

Yeah. But we don't seem to need it now.

ANTONIO

What was it?

JESS

A bunch of people... all Chinese. They were shrouded, head to foot, and carrying torches. It was almost religious.

*

(this means nothing to him)

You find anything in the van?

ANTONIO

No. That's why I'm asking about the vision. Nothing in the van links to the little girl or the old woman or the park.

*

7A INT. FBI - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

7A

Pollock leans into Oswald.

POLLOCK

A dozen witnesses saw you fishtail
to a stop to pick up the old lady
and the little girl.

Oswald stares at him, some light dawning in his eyes.

OSWALD

That's the girl you're talking about?
The old bat ran in front of me. I
nearly went through the windshield
trying not to hit her.

POLLOCK

So you threw her in the back of the
van to teach her a lesson.

OSWALD

No. Last I saw, she and the kid
were running off into the park.

7B INT. FBI - OBSERVATION - DAY

7B

JESS's cell phone is ringing. She answers it.

JESS

Mastriani.

And we INTERCUT...

8 EXT. PARK - DAY

8

Nicole is at an Slurpee STAND. *

NICOLE

I got a guy here says he sold the
little girl a blue Slurpee. *

JESS

I know. She dropped it on the
sidewalk. *

NICOLE

That was on the street, two blocks
away. She got *this* one in the *park*.
And the little girl was with an old
woman. *

JESS

So they never got in the van?

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

NICOLE

Couldn't have. They were here in the park. The slurpee guy says the old woman paid with a twenty dollar bill, shouting in Chinese. Wouldn't take any change. Just walked off with the girl and the slurpee.

*
*
*

JESS

When was this?

NICOLE

Half an hour ago. They could still be here...

NICOLE is scanning the park. And she SEES...

THE OLD WOMAN AND THE LITTLE GIRL, across the street, coming out of a THEATER. The little girl now has a bag of POPCORN in her hand, and is laughing. The old woman, weary, talks to herself in Chinese.

NICOLE

Well... yes. They are still here.

And she snaps the phone shut and starts to move.

9 INT. FBI - OUTSIDE THE INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

9

JESS also closes her phone.

ANTONIO

What's up?

JESS

We might have been wrong about this. Really wrong.

10 EXT. PARK - DAY

10

Nicole is moving smoothly, quickly towards the little girl and the old woman. The woman senses something wrong and stands up, and Nicole is authoritative.

*
*
*

NICOLE

FBI, Ma'am. Don't move.

*

OLD LADY

Mai Ling!

Nicole bends down and scoops the little girl into her arms.

*

NICOLE

It's okay, sweetie. You're gonna be fine.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

OLD LADY

No! Mai Ling! Leave my grand-
daughter alone!

And THAT'S a surprising thing for her to say. And off
Nicole's reaction we CUT TO...

*
*

11 INT. FBI HQ - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

11

The old lady sits in a chair, looking lost and confused. We
PULL BACK to see that Nicole is watching her thoughtfully
from across the room. Jess enters, moving to her.

JESS

I called the number on her medic
alert bracelet. It's a managed care
facility. She had a stroke last
year and suffers from mild dementia.

NICOLE

But they were relieved we'd found
their patient.

JESS

Not really. They're in Colorado
Springs.

NICOLE

That's a long way to wander.

JESS

She didn't wander. She flew. They
put her on a plane last Thursday.
She was coming to live with her
granddaughter.

NICOLE

Mai Ling.

JESS

Who is 25 years-old and lives here
in Washington. She was supposed to
pick up her grandmother two days
ago. I assume Mai Ling didn't show
up... and Mrs. Ling wandered off.

NICOLE

Looking for her grand-daughter.

Nicole turns back to look at Mrs. Ling. Mystery solved.

12 INT. FBI HQ POLLOCK'S OFFICE - DAY

12

Lucy Yee smothers her daughter with kisses, then gets up to
meet Pollock.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

LUCY

Thank you for bringing her back to me.

POLLOCK

I'm just happy it ended so well.

LUCY

That poor old woman. What's going to happen to her?

POLLOCK

We're searching for a relative. Until then, social services will care for her.

Lucy picks up her daughter.

LUCY

Thanks again. If there's ever anything I can do...

POLLOCK

I'm not shy.

Lucy goes, Alice in her arms, as Nicole and Jess come up to him.

POLLOCK

Mastriani, great work with those visions. You really blew this one open.

JESS

Well, actually, we never needed the visions because --
(off his look)
-- Right. We didn't need them.
I'll shut up now.

POLLOCK

Not a minute too soon.

And he walks off.

JESS

Why's he in such a bad mood? The mother has her child back, and he got a big win with Senator Bane.

NICOLE

Sticker shock.
(off Jess's look)
It cost him more than he thought it would.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (2)

12

JESS

What did it cost him? *

NICOLE

He was wrong about this case... in front of everybody. He mobilized 200 federal agents and half the D.C. police force for six hours... and the answer was found wandering around the crime scene.

JESS

Ouch.

(beat)

There's something we haven't finished up, though... right?

NICOLE

Yeah. There is.

JESS

Who doesn't pick up their grandmother at the airport?

And we CUT TO:

13 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING CORRIDOR - DAY

13

Nicole and Jess stop outside a door marked 3B. Nicole pounds on the door.

JESS

Mai Ling? FBI.

There's no answer. Then there's a pause.

NICOLE

You hear that?

JESS

No. I distinctly did *not* hear a cry for help from inside this apartment.

Too late. Nicole KICKS THE DOOR OPEN.

NICOLE

Sorry, I couldn't hear you over those cries for help.

14 INT. MAI LING'S APARTMENT - DAY

14

It's a tiny, but clean and perfectly well kept. There's a BOX OF TOYS in the corner.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

NICOLE

No one's been here in a while. The plants are all drying out.

JESS

That explains the cries for help.

Jess notices a DAY PLANNER.

JESS

Her calendar's open to last week -- and her grandmother's flight information is circled.

Nicole checks the refrigerator and quickly shuts it.

NICOLE

Mold on everything, including the styrofoam.

JESS

Her wallet's here, too. Driver's license, credit cards...

Nicole checks out the box of toys.

NICOLE

She's got a kid. How often you think she forgets to pick him up from school?

Jess notices a FRAMED PICTURE of a YOUNG CHINESE WOMAN and LITTLE CHINESE BOY. Jess stares at it and FLASHES TO:

THE VISION

of the young Chinese woman, shrouded -- SHE'S THE WOMAN IN THE PHOTOGRAPH. *

BACK TO SCENE

Jess stares at the picture, realizing.

JESS

Mai Ling is the woman in my vision. She and her little boy are missing.

And on her realization we FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

15 INT. FBI HQ - POLLOCK'S OFFICE - DAY

15

Antonio and Jess brief Pollock.

ANTONIO

I just got back from tossing Mai Ling's apartment. Most of the mother's clothes are there, but there's no socks or underwear in the kid's dresser.

POLLOCK

Maybe he's a free spirit.

JESS

No, sir. Someone packed up his stuff.

POLLOCK

So they went on vacation and left the grandmother to die. I've done worse.

JESS

Sir, they're missing. I know it. Mai Ling was in my vision.

POLLOCK

That doesn't replace a missing persons report. Or evidence. Or a reason to follow up on any of this.

JESS

Sir, I just thought--

POLLOCK

(interrupting)
Thinking isn't your forte, Mastriani.

JESS

(pressing ahead)
...I was thinking that after we, uh, missed on the front part of this case today, sir...

Pollock's look is withering. Jess falters. But swallows hard and goes on.

JESS

I mean, *all* of us missed, sir, and we know it, and so does everyone
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

JESS (CONT'D)

else. And I just thought... it might be helpful to you... to have a successful investigation start immediately after a... well, a missed one. Sir.

There is a pause. Pollock is looking at her hard.

POLLOCK

You know, Mastriani, every once in a while... there's a glimmer of hope for you.

(to Antonio)

So Mai Ling and the kid are gone. Where do you start?

ANTONIO

With the father.

JESS

He's here in D.C. His name is Nelson Tong.

ANTONIO

Mai Ling divorced him two years ago. They both wanted custody. She won.

POLLOCK

And maybe he was a sore loser. I get it.

(beat)

You know, I feel less... *irritated* than usual. Where's Agent Scott?

ANTONIO

On her way to the husband.

JESS

In case you approved of the investigation. Sir.

POLLOCK

(beat)

Okay. Tell her she's unleashed.

16 EXT. NELSON'S HOUSE - DAY

16

It's in a swank neighborhood. There's a BMW parked out front. Nicole gets out of their car, approaches the house. And suddenly we hear a SCREAM and a child's CRIES FOR HELP. Nicole draws her weapon and rushes into the backyard, where she SEES...

17 EXT. NELSON'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

17

NELSON TONG, 20s, on the ground, arms around AN EIGHT YEAR OLD BOY who is SHRIEKING as Nicole rounds the corner and...

NICOLE

FBI! Put the boy down!

...except that the little boy has been shrieking with DELIGHT at being CAPTURED AND TICKLED. It's the BOY IN MAI LING'S PICTURES. Nelson grabs his son protectively and scrambles to his feet.

NELSON

FBI? Are you joking?

Nicole holds up, then lowers her weapon. The kid is clutching Nelson for safety...it's clear the boy is not the least bit afraid of the man.

NICOLE

FBI, Mr Tong. Special Agent Nicole Scott. Sorry if I startled you. I heard screams.

NELSON

And tickling your son is a Federal offense?

NICOLE

We're looking for Mai Ling.

Nelson puts his kid down.

NELSON

She's in Colorado Springs, pulling her grandmother out of a nursing home and bringing her back here.

(then, concerned:)

Why? What happened?

NICOLE

Is there somewhere we can talk?

And on his look, we CUT TO:

18 EXT. NELSON'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - LATER

18

Nicole and Nelson sit at a picnic table while the kid plays in the b.g.

NELSON

Mai asked me to take Jimmy for a few weeks while she picked up her

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

NELSON (CONT'D)

grandmother and got her settled into
her apartment. I was surprised, but
glad to help.

NICOLE

Why surprised?

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

Mai isn't big on family. Her job comes first. When she isn't writing, she's out looking for the next big break.

NICOLE

She's a writer? Who for?

NELSON

Anybody who pays. Most of the time it's the Baltimore Gazette. She sold an article to Glamour once. "Twelve New Awesome Lip Shades Every Bride Should Know."

NICOLE

Mai Ling didn't go to Colorado, Mr. Tong. She sent her grandmother a plane ticket to DC... but nobody was there to pick her up. The woman ended up wandering the streets.

Nelson looks stunned.

NELSON

Then where is Mai Ling?

NICOLE

We were hoping you could tell us. When was the last time you heard from her?

NELSON

She called a few days ago. Sunday, I think. From the road, a motel some place.

NICOLE

Did she say where?

NELSON

Armpit, Nebraska. Her words, not mine. She said driving with her Grandmother was going slowly, that it might be another week before she was ready to pick Jimmy up.

(glances at Jimmy:)

I said take your time. He can stay as long as you like.

And on his loving look at his son, playing happily, we CUT TO:

19 EXT. DAILY GAZETTE - DAY - ESTABLISHING 19

A SUPER burns in to tell us we are in **BALTIMORE, MARYLAND.**

SHEPHARD

I haven't heard from Mai Ling in a couple weeks...

20 INT. DAILY GAZETTE - EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY 20

Nicole and Jess meet with TIM SHEPHARD, 30s, in his office, which is decorated with newspaper front pages and covers with manuscripts, magazines, print-outs, newspapers. It's a mess. And so is he.

SHEPHARD

But that's not unusual with freelancers.

NICOLE

Was she working on anything?

SHEPHARD

Not for me.

JESS

Any past stories she might have been following up on?

SHEPHARD

This was her last piece for us. We published it about two weeks ago.

He hands her a newspaper, Jess reads the headline.

JESS

"Pigeon Droppings Erode Statue."

NICOLE

Has she covered anything that might have made someone mad enough to hurt her?

SHEPHARD

She's not big enough. She wants to break into hard-edged stuff, but I've got writers stacked outside my door.

(a shrug)

She's one more young woman with a dream.

JESS

We'll need to see everything she's written.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: 20

And we DISSOLVE TO:

21 INT. DAILY GAZETTE - MORGUE - NIGHT 21

Jess and Nicole sit at computer terminals, scrolling through Mai Ling's stories. Antonio has joined them, but works on his own laptop at another desk.

NICOLE *

(to Antonio)

You know, we brought you down here
to help research Mai Ling, not to
play Tetris all night. *

ANTONIO *

Just found the husband's phone
records. Mai Ling didn't call him
from Nebraska.

NICOLE

Don't toy with me, Antonio.

ANTONIO

That's not what you used to say.
Quite the opposite, in fact.

NICOLE

You wanna take a guess how many ways
I know to kill you?

ANTONIO

Tianjin.

NICOLE

Excuse me?

ANTONIO

That's where Mai Ling called from.
(MORE)

21 CONTINUED:

21

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

A pay phone in Tianjin Province...
in the People's Republic of China.

NICOLE

Mai Ling called from *China*?

Hearing this, Jess types something on the computer in front of her.

ANTONIO

Yeah. So I checked airline records.
She bought a ticket to Beijing two
weeks ago... same day she dropped
off her son with his father.

*

*

JESS

(looking at the screen)
And right after she wrote a story
with a Chinese connection.

*

*

Antonio crosses to her, reading off the screen.

ANTONIO

"The body of an Asian man in his
early 20s was found beaten to death
Tuesday morning in an alley off Boston
Street. The victim had no ID and
authorities suspect he was an illegal
immigrant."

*

*

*

(then:)

It could be related...

NICOLE

Sure. As a trigger for her to go to
China. But do you two notice anything
here?

JESS

Like what?

NICOLE

Like this is no longer a case.

JESS

I had a vision.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (2)

21

NICOLE

About a missing woman and her son.
We found her son with his father,
and we found the woman in China. So
why are we still in Baltimore, instead
of having drinks in DC?

JESS

We don't know exactly where Mai Ling
is.

NICOLE

But we can't search China for her.
This is the end of the line. We've
earned a Cosmopolitan.

*

ANTONIO

So what's she doing there?

NICOLE

(impatient)

What do you care what she's doing?
Mai Ling left her senile grandma at
the *airport*, let her walk around the
streets two days before she snatched
a *kid*. Oh, yeah, she also dumped
her *own* kid on her ex, who she can't
stand, and lied to him about where
she was going. This woman isn't
missing. She's *toxic*.

She is gathering up her things, getting ready to leave.

ANTONIO

This has to do with immigration.

NICOLE

How?

ANTONIO

Mai Ling writes about a murdered
immigrant, and she wants to find out
more. So she goes to China.

NICOLE

To advance her career...

ANTONIO

Yeah, I bet she was working on a
story. There's *huge* abuses in illegal
immigration. These people are victims
waiting to happen. My grandfather
walked over the border, nearly died.
1948.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (3)

21

NICOLE

I know what goes on in immigration. That's why we have the INS. But we are FBI, Missing Persons. And this woman, Mai Ling, isn't missing. She's a journalist, looking for a break. It's not a crime.

ANTONIO

I want to stay on it. Maybe come up with something more for the INS.

NICOLE

Fine.
(to Jess)
You coming?

Jess looks to Antonio, then back to Nicole.

JESS

You go. I'll meet you there.

And Nicole is gone. Jess looks at Antonio.

JESS

You really think there's something wrong in all this?

ANTONIO

Yeah, I don't know... I just *feel* it.

JESS

Oh, good. You be the psychic for a while. I'm getting tired of it.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (4)

21

And instantly, Jess is ENVELOPED in a VISION. The room around them is filled with SHROUDED FIGURES, CHAINED, lurching towards her, faces stretched in a hideous, silent scream. Each holding a HANDFUL OF BURNING PAPER. Once again, A YOUNG CHINESE MAN, points an accusatory finger at her. Only this time we see he's HORRIBLY BRUISED.

*

Jess snaps out of it find Antonio staring at her.

ANTONIO

You take a trip?

JESS

Yeah. More dead people. Only they were holding burning paper. And that same dead guy was pointing at me. But he wasn't just dead. He'd been beaten horribly... like the immigrant in Mai Ling's story.

Antonio takes out his cell phone.

ANTONIO

Okay, that's it. If this guy's in your dream, this is a real case. You coming back to the office with me?

*

*

*

JESS

Now what kind of a question is that?

*

*

And we CUT TO:

*

22 EXT. FBI REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS - DAY - ESTABLISHING

22*

POLLOCK (O.S.)

What are you two doing?

23 INT. FBI HQ - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

23

Jess and Antonio are surrounded by books and papers and fast food containers. They look exhausted. John Pollock walks in. He seems normally Pollock-like at first, but he is in fact absolutely furious under a civilized veneer... although this will take a few moments to register.

JESS

We found that my vision is an ancient Chinese legend.

*
*

ANTONIO

Men who die with no one to bury them wander the underworld, vengeful and angry.

*

POLLOCK

And one night a year, the Night of the Ravenous Dead, the gates of Hell open and the hungry, angry dead walk the earth. You pay them hell money to appease them.

JESS

How did you know?

POLLOCK

Cause it's just like my life.

JESS

I think the hell money is the burning paper in my vision. It fits.

ANTONIO

We just don't know what it means.

POLLOCK

(anger rising)

Then let me tell you.

He gestures into the room a sharply-tailored woman in her late 30s.

POLLOCK

Meet Cynthia Blaylock, from the State Department. It seems somebody under my command asked our Embassy in Beijing to track down a vacationing U.S. citizen.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

ANTONIO

I just asked if they could find out what Mai Ling was up to, if she was safe. I didn't think it was a big deal.

BLAYLOCK

Our relations with the Chinese government are at a very delicate stage right now, Agent. And you've embarrassed them.

*
*

JESS

How?

*

BLAYLOCK

By shoving this in their faces.

She holds up A PIECE OF PAPER WRITTEN IN CHINESE.

POLLOCK

The embassy sent an officer to see Mai Ling's family this morning. The family had this note.

*
*
*
*

ANTONIO

What does it say?

*

POLLOCK

That Mai Ling paid 80 thousand Chinese Yuan to get herself smuggled into the United States. And the people she paid are holding her prisoner.

*
*

23 CONTINUED: (2)

23

BLAYLOCK

They want another 80 thousand in
five days... or they'll kill her.

JESS

That's the hell money in my vision.

ANTONIO

Why would she have to be smuggled
back into the U.S? She's an American
citizen.

POLLOCK

Don't know, don't care. Got problems
of my own, specifically this -- Mai
Ling is now being held in the United
States, with other Chinese nationals.
It's embarrassing to China, and
embarrassing to us.

*
*
*
*

JESS

When did the family get this note?

*
*

BLAYLOCK

Three days ago.

ANTONIO

And the deadline was five days. So
we have 48 hours to find Mai Ling or
she's dead.

BLAYLOCK

That is the *least* of your worries.

(to Pollock)

I trust you'll get your people under
control, Assistant Director... with
an eye towards the broader
implications?

POLLOCK

Count on it, Madam Undersecretary.

Blaylock marches out. Pollock turns to Antonio and Jess.

POLLOCK

What have I ever done to you?

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (3)

23

JESS

You mean lately?

POLLOCK

(almost roaring)

I don't want to hear it.

He grabs at a chair, his fingers squeezing hard into the back of it to keep himself under control. He swallows hard, and spits it out...

POLLOCK

We looked like amateurs yesterday.

JESS

Sir, it was just a mistake...

POLLOCK

(almost yelling again)

I don't make mistakes.

(beat)

In front of everybody. A Senator, the public, the DC cops, for god's sake... we closed the city, we nearly killed a guy in questioning, and the kid turns up with a face full of blue Slurpee in a park, and none of you dug me out of it.

(a breath)

And now the State Department. Imagine my mood.

(to Antonio)

You called the embassy in Beijing?

ANTONIO

Yes, sir.

POLLOCK

Then you made all this. Fix it. Quickly, cleanly, and very, very quietly.

(simple:)

Or you're out.

And he turns and leaves. And on Jess and Antonio, looking at each other, we FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

24 EXT. DAILY GAZETTE - DAY - ESTABLISHING 24

JESS (O.S.)

Mai Ling writes an item for you about the murder of an illegal Chinese immigrant.

25 INT. DAILY GAZETTE - EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY 25

Nicole and Jess are grilling Shephard, Mai Ling's editor. They are angry and unhappy.

NICOLE

A few days later, she goes to China to have herself smuggled back into the United States.

JESS

You told us she wanted to break into hard-news... you didn't tell us how far she was willing to go to do it.

NICOLE

(leaning in on him)

Mister Shephard... I hate, I mean I just can't *stand*, people who lie to me.

SHEPHARD

I was protecting her investigation.

JESS

You were missing the *point*. Twenty thousand people are smuggled into the United States each year.

NICOLE

A lot of them women and children.

JESS

They come for a better life and they end up as slaves. There's violence, blackmail, prostitution...

SHEPHARD

And Mai Ling is going to expose that from the inside. It'll make her career.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

NICOLE

I don't care about her career, I care about those *people*. You needed to tell us all this *yesterday*, Mister Shephard.

SHEPHARD

So you could shut me down before she got the story? Right.

JESS

What about Mai Ling? Weren't you afraid for her?

SHEPHARD

She's a journalist.

NICOLE

And that makes her, what... smart? Handsome? Good?

SHEPHARD

This is her break. I didn't think she was in danger.

NICOLE

They're gonna kill her on Monday unless there's \$10,000.

SHEPHARD

Oh, my God...

JESS

How did Mai Ling find the smugglers?

SHEPHARD

She kept her sources to herself. It was her big break.

NICOLE

So it was her idea to fly to China and go undercover as an immigrant?

SHEPHARD

(beat)

I, uh... I might have suggested it.

NICOLE

How come I don't look surprised?

SHEPHARD

But I did it for her. The story just needed one more thing, just a bit of edge... and we're talking Pulitzer heat.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (2)

25

JESS

And selling more papers.

NICOLE

Tell you what. You're giving me the ten grand for her ransom.

SHEPHARD

The paper won't do it.

NICOLE

(to Jess)

Did I say the *newspaper* was giving me ten?

JESS

No. You did not.

NICOLE

No. I did not.

(grabbing him)

You're giving me ten thousand dollars to get her back with, from your personal savings, and in return... I won't hang you out that window.

And SHE SHOVES HIS ROLLING CHAIR ACROSS THE ROOM, so that it smacks into the window, hard, and then she pursues him to it and lifts him right out of the chair.

NICOLE

I'm not asking too much... am I?

And on Nicole's disgust, we CUT TO:

26 INT. THE GAZETTE - CORRIDOR - DAY

26

As Nicole and Jess are on the move away from Shephard's office.

JESS

We're not actually taking his money, right? *

NICOLE

Course not.

JESS

So...

NICOLE

(a shrug)

I don't know. I just wanted to penalize that guy. He got Mai Ling into this. *

*

*

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

JESS

And we know what she did... but we
don't know where she is. Where do
we start?

*
*

NICOLE

The same place she did... the dead
immigrant.

(she sighs)

I haven't had a Saturday off in two
months.

*
*

JESS

(beat)

Pollock won't fire Antonio.

NICOLE

You got way too much confidence in
people.

And they are walking off as we HEAR...

*

ANTONIO (O.S.)

This is the dead man in the alley.

27 INT. FBI - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

27

Nicole and Jess watch as Antonio reviews the Analog Board.

ANTONIO

Beaten to death, and suffering from
malnutrition, too.

Jess looks over her shoulder and, FOR AN INSTANT, sees THE
SHROUDED YOUNG MAN POINTING AT HER... and then he's gone.

JESS

He's the guy pointing at me in my
visions.

ANTONIO

There's shackle burns on his ankles...
and hand scars consistent with
sweatshop injuries.

NICOLE

The guy was probably too weak to
work... so they beat him to death.

JESS

Who's they?

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

ANTONIO

Snakeheads.

(off her look)

Chinese crime gangs run the smuggling business. The on-site guys are mid-level in the gang, trying to move up. They're called snakeheads.

NICOLE

At least they got a name. More than the victims do.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (2)

27

ANTONIO

Right. The police have nothing on this dead guy. His prints and picture aren't on any databases. He's a ghost.

Jess glances back at where she saw the vision.

JESS

And he's haunting me.

NICOLE

So let's go.

JESS

Where?

NICOLE

Mai Ling must have worked Chinatown. So will we.

ANTONIO

None of us speak Chinese.

NICOLE

But we know someone who does... and she owes us a favor.

And we CUT TO:

28 EXT. CHINATOWN STREET - DAY

28

As Nicole, Jess and LUCY YEE, the Senator's aide, talk to SHOPKEEPERS and PEOPLE ON THE STREET... showing them PHOTOGRAPHS of MAI LING and one of THE DEAD IMMIGRANT.

LUCY

Wrestling the US Senate is a breeze compared to these people.

They approach a butcher, standing in front of his window, which is filled with DUCKS HANGING FROM HOOKS. Lucy holds up a picture of Mai Ling and speaks to the butcher in Chinese.

LUCY

(in Chinese)

Have you seen this young woman?
It's very important.

The man speaks back to her in Chinese. Lucy turns to Nicole and Jess.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

LUCY

*

She was here a month ago and asked
him about the dead immigrant.

Nicole and Jess share a look. Finally a lead.

LUCY

(in Chinese)

What did you tell her?

The man answers.

LUCY

He stole some food from him and ran
away.

NICOLE

Where to?

LUCY

(in Chinese:)

Did you see where he went?

Again, translating his answer...

LUCY

Into that door over there.

Nicole and Jess share a look. Then:

NICOLE

Stay here.

They march across the street.

29 INT. SWEAT SHOP - DAY

29*

As Nicole and Jess come in. Before they can say a word, the
Chinese man behind the counter takes one look at them and
DASHES behind the curtain, YELLING something in CHINESE.

*

*

CHINESE MAN

(in Chinese:)

Immigration police! Immigration
police!

NICOLE

Damn.

They draw their guns and RUN AFTER HIM.

30 INT. CORRIDOR - DAY 30

They enter carefully, guns drawn, in time to see him, STILL YELLING, round a corner. They hurry after him.

31 INT. LARGE ROOM - DAY 31

They enter a LARGE ROOM FILLED WITH SEWING MACHINES as IMMIGRANTS SCATTER LIKE BEETLES towards NUMEROUS EXITS. Nicole manages to TACKLE ONE IMMIGRANT. The man, in his early 30s, looks terrified.

NICOLE

It's okay -- we're FBI. You're safe now. We just want to ask you some questions.

And we CUT TO:

32 INT. FBI - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT 32

As the THE IMMIGRANT sits at a table, hungrily devouring a HAMBURGER as Nicole, Jess and Lucy look on. *

LUCY *

I'm not sure I have all the details right... I'm speaking Cantonese, he speaks Mandarin... but basically, it sounds like a horrible story. *

NICOLE *

What is it? *

LUCY *

He came here three years ago from Wuhan to support his family. But he was betrayed by the people he paid to bring him here. *

JESS

Just like Mai Ling.

LUCY *

They held him in chains, forced him to work until his family paid a ransom. *

NICOLE *

He doesn't look like a captive to me.

LUCY *

He's not. He's free, but he's still here illegally. The only work he can get is from his captors. *

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

JESS

So he's still a prisoner.

NICOLE

Does he know anything about these people?

Lucy asks in CHINESE, then translates as his replies.

LUCY

The sweatshop was run by a cruel man they called Captain America.

(off Jess's look)

He wears a red, white and blue baseball cap. I've heard of him. His name came up while we were researching our Alien One Strike bill.

NICOLE

Captain America is that big?

LUCY

He's infamous in the Chinese communities. He smuggles thousands of immigrants into America, then slaves them out. He holds them in safe houses in seven states.

JESS

Seven states? Mai Ling could be in any of them.

Nicole shows the immigrant MAI LING's PICTURE.

NICOLE

Ask him if he's see her before. Her name is Mai Ling. She's a reporter, maybe he heard her asking questions.

Lucy translates, but the frightened man talks desperately in Chinese, a pleading look in his eyes. Lucy translates.

LUCY

He says he's never seen her... he's pleading for you to let him go...he doesn't want to be sent to prison.

NICOLE

Tell him we wish we could let him walk, but we have to turn him over to the INS. He won't go to prison... but he'll probably be sent back home.

Lucy translates. The man's face falls. He says something.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: (2)

32

LUCY

He says... all my suffering was for
nothing.

And on her look, we CUT TO:

33 INT. FBI HQ - LATER

33

Nicole, Jess and Antonio are in the bullpen, in front of the
analog board.

*
*

ANTONIO

Captain America has operations in
San Francisco, New York, Miami,
Houston, Seattle and D.C. Mai Ling
could be in any of those cities...

*

JESS

And some time tomorrow she'll die
there.

NICOLE

And all we we got is your visions.

*
*

33 CONTINUED:

33

JESS

And that's not much. The dead guy pointing at me. It hasn't changed.

NICOLE

Maybe we're misinterpreting.

Nicole goes to a computer and starts typing.

*

ANTONIO

Is he pointing the same way in every vision?

JESS

Same dead guy. Same finger. Still pointing at me.

ANTONIO

There's got to be a meaning.

Nicole looks up triumphantly.

NICOLE

The Dead Man's Point.

ANTONIO

Yes, that's what we're trying to get at. Thank you for the helpful reminder.

NICOLE

Sometimes it's simple. I cross-referenced dead man pointing with all the cities where Captain America operates. There's only one match. Dead Man's Point is in Marin County, across from San Francisco.

JESS

That's where Mai Ling is...

And on her look, we CUT TO:

34 INT. FBI HQ - POLLOCK'S OFFICE - LATER

34

Nicole has just finished explaining everything they know.

NICOLE

...and that's what we'd like to do.

POLLOCK

But what you're *going* to do is hand everything you have to Immigration.

NICOLE

But it's our case.

POLLOCK

Which is our problem. I want any embarrassment arising out of this to land on the INS.

*
*

NICOLE

And not on you.

POLLOCK

You're learning.

NICOLE

You're wrong.

POLLOCK

It hasn't been a very good couple of days, Agent. Don't make it worse.

NICOLE

They'll bury this case, sir.

POLLOCK

If they're smart.

NICOLE

And Mai Ling will die.

POLLOCK

A journalist trying to make her bones?
Hot tears course down my tender cheeks.

NICOLE

We need to go to San Francisco tonight.

POLLOCK

What happens to this woman is not our concern.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

NICOLE

It's mine.

POLLOCK

Then wring your hands in anguish,
burn candles in her name, but you're
staying in D.C. She's outside our
jurisdiction. That's the law. End
of story.

NICOLE

And Antonio?

POLLOCK

I'm still thinking.

Nicole looks at him a moment, then walks out of the office,
flipping open her cell phone and dialing as soon as she's
out of earshot.

NICOLE

(into phone:)

Senator Bane, please.

*

And on her look, we CUT TO:

35 INT. FBI HQ - LATER

35

Antonio drops off a THICK FILE on Nicole's desk where Nicole
sits, her attention on her computer screen.

ANTONIO

Here's my Mai Ling file for the INS
pouch.

NICOLE

Uh-huh.

Jess comes up, dropping her file on Nicole's desk.

JESS

Here's my report and all my notes,
too.

NICOLE

Uh-huh.

Antonio looks over her shoulder.

ANTONIO

You're booking a flight to San
Francisco.

NICOLE

Uh-huh.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

Now Jess looks over her shoulder.

JESS

For me, too... are you insane?
Pollock ordered us to turn the case
over to the I.N.S.

That's when Pollock walks in, hard as stone.

POLLOCK

Scott. Mastriani. The FBI jet is
on the runway, waiting to take you
to San Francisco. Go.

Nicole deletes the image on her screen, tries to hide her
smug smile.

NICOLE

Yes, sir.

Jess shoots Nicole a confused look, but doesn't wait for an
explanation. She hurries past Pollock. As Nicole goes past
him, he grabs her firmly by the upper arm.

POLLOCK

I have a meeting in the morning with
the Director of the FBI. Would you
like to know why, Agent Scott?

She glances at his hand, gripping her arm.

NICOLE

Sure.

POLLOCK

The Director got a call from the
Chairman of the Senate Foreign
Relations Committee demanding to
know why we were neglecting a case
vital to national security. The
Director was caught off guard and
unprepared. He was embarrassed.

NICOLE

I'm sorry to hear that.

POLLOCK

Not as sorry as I am.
(to Antonio)
You, dark and handsome, are staying
here.

ANTONIO

What for?

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED: (2)

35

POLLOCK

It increases the chance that Scott
will get killed.

He looks her right in the eye for a long moment, then walks
away.

35A INT. FBI HQ - POLLOCK'S OFFICE - DAY

35A

With Antonio entering to find Pollock just sitting down at
his desk.

ANTONIO

Sir, I want to go with them.

POLLOCK

And I want a pony, Agent. So what?

ANTONIO

So... you'll have to shoot me to
stop me.

Pollock responds by opening a desk drawer and searching it.
Nothing. Opens another one. Nothing.

POLLOCK

You're in luck. My gun's out getting
cleaned.

ANTONIO

It's my case, sir.

POLLOCK

And it's my *ass*, Agent, *because* it's
your case, and you work for *me*. And
if the three of you go in alone and
get yourselves shot dead, my problems
turn to clover. So close the door
on your way out.

ANTONIO

We could break the case, sir.

POLLOCK

Either way, Agent. Win or die.
Either way.

And off Pollock turning back to his work Antonio leaves, and
we are at the...

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

36 EXT. DEAD MAN'S POINT - MARIN COUNTY, CA - NIGHT

36

A SEDAN pulls up to a curb-less street and Nicole, Jess and Antonio get out.

JESS

Nice neighborhood for the slave trade.

*

*

NICOLE

Come on. We'll be less conspicuous on foot. Just two girlfriends out for a walk.

*

ANTONIO

What does that make me?

JESS

You could be our stalker.

NICOLE

I've been *through* that phase with him.

ANTONIO

What are you talking about? You stalked *me*.

Nicole is walking down the street, carefully checking the houses as she goes. Jess and Antonio go with her.

NICOLE

You should do something about that memory of yours.

JESS

You know, I figure if I just keep getting into dangerous situations with you two long enough, I'll find out what really happened between you.

NICOLE

Better if you don't.

ANTONIO

You couldn't stand it.

They stop in front of a house set back from the road and surrounded by towering trees that form a sort of high hedge.

NICOLE

What you thinking?

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

JESS

It's pretty hidden from view...

Antonio steps up to the narrow opening and peers inside. A DELIVERY VAN is parked in the driveway.

(CONTINUED)

It says LUCKY FUTURE NOVELTIES on the side, in English and Chinese.

ANTONIO

Chinese business parked outside.

NICOLE

Doesn't feel like the rest of the neighborhood...

JESS

There's five garbage cans. Everyone else has two or three.

Good point. Nicole checks to make sure no one's looking, then walks casually over to one of the garbage cans, opens the lid... recoils at the smell. She lifts out a COTTON BAG -- WHITE RICE, 25 POUNDS -- then drops it back in and goes back over to Jess.

ANTONIO

Nothing like the smell of fish heads.

JESS

Rice and fish, standard diet of a Chinese peasant. Or slave.

NICOLE

So we got two choices -- wait to see what goes down, or go in guns blazing.

JESS

(to Antonio)

So this is where I say we should wait, but she's already kicked in the door.

ANTONIO

Except she's still here.

JESS

She's thinking about it. We have no back-up here... Local field office can't spare the manpower.

NICOLE

Maybe Pollock gave them a call. If we get killed... his problems are over.

JESS

You don't believe he'd actually--

But Nicole interrupts her, pointing to the arrival of...

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (3)

36

A BLACK SEDAN that glides down the street and turns into the driveway of the house. It parks behind the delivery van. Nicole, Jess and Antonio duck behind a hedge as a man in an ARMANI SUIT gets out, his back to Nicole and Jess. He reaches back into the car, takes out a RED, WHITE AND BLUE BASEBALL CAP and puts it on his head.

(CONTINUED)

JESS
It's Captain America.

NICOLE
Now we got enough.

But Jess is staring at Captain America. Nicole follows her gaze and sees him turning towards them, seeing his face for the first time.

FLASHBACK

to Nicole, Jess and Lucy questioning the immigrant they caught in the sweatshop. IT'S THE SAME MAN!

BACK TO SCENE

NICOLE
Son of a bitch. We had Captain America. Grabbed him in his own sweatshop.

ANTONIO
We should have known. He spoke two languages.

FLASHBACK TO

Lucy Yee, talking tot he immigrant.

LUCY
I'm speaking Cantonese, he speaks Mandarin...

BACK TO SCENE

ANTONIO
No Chinese peasant speaks Mandarin *and* Cantonese.

JESS
We should have caught it. Instead, we turned him over to Immigration...

NICOLE
Who released him, cause he was lying to us... he's not illegal. So they couldn't hold him. I bet he hasn't stopped laughing since.

JESS
And we told him he had a reporter in his slave pens. That's why he's here.

(CONTINUED)

ANTONIO
Guess we're going in.

NICOLE
Oh, yeah.

Captain America disappears into the house by the side door.

NICOLE
I'll follow him.

*

ANTONIO
I got front.

*

JESS
I'm back.

And they pulls their guns and take off.

37 INT. SLAVE HOUSE - NIGHT

37

The house is upscale, lavish furniture. We can HEAR indistinct, haunting noises from somewhere. Nicole advances slowly, gun out. The SOUNDS are coming from a flight of stairs down to the basement, light from down there throwing a stark shaft up towards us.

JESS comes in from the other direction, also with her gun out. Antonio joins them. NICOLE nods towards the basement stairs, and they creep towards them.

38 INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

38

Nicole, Jess and Antonio slip down the first few stairs and stop, staring in disbelief, at...

A SLAVE PEN, like a modern-day "Amistad". A dozen Chinese people lie on the floor, shackled together, obviously underfed, unwashed, in utter misery. Two GUARDS in good suits stand at either end of the room... and CAPTAIN AMERICA walks between them, talking to his prisoners.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

You see I'm speaking English. Most of you can't understand me, of course... except the reporter.

The CAMERA MOVES along the prisoners as Captain America talks. The hunger, sadness, fear in their faces. Mai Ling in among them. She is terrified.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

(in Chinese)

This reporter wants to take away your chance for happiness... for success... by handing me to the government.

(in English)

I ask her to show herself... for the good of all. Mai Ling, come out.

There's no sound. Captain America starts to pace again.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

(in Chinese)

I can shoot all of you, of course...

JESS and NICOLE slip down another stair, guns ready. They freeze, looking at the GUARDS and their guns.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

(in Chinese)

But you are valuable to me, and I don't want to.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

MAI LING looks at another captive, two people away from her... a young man... who nods back at her, faintly. Captain America is making his way back towards them.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

(in English)

So come out Mai Ling, and all will be...

WHAM! Captain America is pulled off his feet because MAI LING has used her shackles as a rope, tripping him. IN a FLASH the young man is on top of CAPTAIN AMERICA, beating him with his shackled fists, and the GUARDS are YELLING in Chinese, firing ROUNDS INTO THE CEILING, as THE OTHER PRISONERS are diving on to Captain America, beating him with their manacled hands, and the GUARDS take up SHOOTING POSITION, about to EMPTY THEIR GUNS into the prisoners when...

BLAM, BLAM! They are taken off their feet by NICOLE and ANTONIO, who are standing on the stairs, SIG 9s SMOKING.

*

*

NICOLE

Did we say "FBI"?

*

JESS

Not yet.

ANTONIO

(yelling)

FBI! Drop your weapons!

*

*

But the two GUARDS can only GROAN, shot in the legs and shoulders as they are. We now also hear the FURIOUS MOANS AND WHIMPERING coming from the pile of human rage that covers CAPTAIN AMERICA. Nicole and Antonio run towards the pile as Jess covers them, and Nicole is yelling, with amazing authority...

NICOLE

Ting! Yi chi dow ping ang! Nee may see la! Nee may see la!

And the pile STOPS BEATING ON THE HELPLESS CAPTAIN AMERICA.

NICOLE

Ting! Nee may see la!

And she starts pulling people off the pile until she finds Captain America on the bottom. He is beaten and bloody but he manages to get up to his knees and croak to Nicole...

CAPTAIN AMERICA

Thank you...

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (2)

38

ANTONIO
You're very welcome.

And he LACES HIM ONE IN THE HEAD, stretching him out on the floor.

JESS has run to Mai Ling, helping her up.

JESS
Are you all right?

MAI LING
Yeah. Just scared...

JESS
(to Nicole)
Was that *Chinese*?

NICOLE
(a shrug)
Told them they could stop, they were safe.

ANTONIO
How did you do that?

NICOLE
Read a phrase book on the flight.

The PRISONERS are crowding all around them now, all talking at once in Chinese, smiling and laughing and hugging Jess, Nicole and Antonio in happiness. Nicole looks over at her partners, beaming.

*
*
*

NICOLE
I'm guessing this translates as "thank you"...

And we DISSOLVE TO...

39 EXT. SLAVE HOUSE - LATER

39

Marin PD are there in force, cutting the manacles and chains off, assisting people, administering first aid. We FIND Jess with Mai Ling, who watches the rescued people with sorrow.

MAI LING
What's going to happen to them?

JESS
They'll be clothed, fed... and then probably sent back to China.

MAI LING
Deported? After all this?

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

JESS

They're alive. They'll see their families again.

MAI LING

Until the same miserable conditions kick them back here.

*

JESS

(she has had enough)

You know what? End world poverty with your next story. Be glad you survived this one.

And she walks off, having had enough of journalists for the day, and we PAN ACROSS to find Nicole and Antonio nearby.

ANTONIO

Okay, we better call in. Let Pollock know what happened.

NICOLE

You do it.

ANTONIO

Me?

NICOLE

We couldn't have found these people without you. It's your case, your bust. Step out and take it.

He is very, very pleased.

ANTONIO

That's large, Agent Scott.

NICOLE

You were large, Agent Cortez.

ANTONIO

Thanks for your help on this one. It really meant a lot to me.

NICOLE

Anytime, Agent.

*

And he moves off. Nicole is left alone. She starts to walk off, but her foot catches on something. She looks down at the ground... sees a length of bright nickel-steel chain, a manacle at one end of it. Picks it up... looks at it, very slow and thoughtfully, and we DISSOLVE TO...

*

40 INT. FBI HQ - POLLOCK'S OFFICE - DAY

40

Nicole stands with Antonio, facing Pollock. She puts a letter on his desk.

POLLOCK

What's that?

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

40

NICOLE

My resignation. Hope you're not hurt if I don't put you down as a reference.

Antonio puts a similar letter on his desk.

ANTONIO

Mine, too.

POLLOCK

Good. I spoke to the Director about this mess. I told him there was a breakdown in my department that led one of my agents to create a diplomatic incident with China, and another to improperly contact a US senator. My department, my agents, my fault.

(looks up at them)

So it was my resignation.

NICOLE

But we're the ones who --

(then:)

He didn't accept... did he?

POLLOCK

What, are you kidding me? I know everything about him... and he wants to be on the Supreme Court someday.

(then:)

We're a team. You didn't believe that before.

NICOLE

No, sir. I did not.

POLLOCK

Now you do. So no more excuses. Burn me or any member of this team again and I will destroy you.

NICOLE

Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

They start to go, but:

POLLOCK

Scott... Cortez.

They turn. He holds up their letters of resignation.

POLLOCK

Take your trash off my desk.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: (2)

40

They grab them, tear them in half.

POLLOCK

(not looking up)

And if you're going to hug, take it outside. You know how human contact makes me feel.

So they leave.

41 INT. FBI CORRIDOR - DAY

41

With Jess picking up Nicole and Antonio as they leave the office.

JESS

You're still here.

NICOLE

And kicking.

Jess takes a letter from her jacket.

JESS

So I don't have to give him this.

ANTONIO

Save it for the next time. Trouble's gonna follow us around.

NICOLE

Then it can follow me to the nearest bar.

(to Jess)

You remember those Cosmopolitans I fed you last time?

JESS

No, I don't. And there's a reason.

They step into the elevator.

NICOLE

Come on. I'm buying.

ANTONIO

No Cosmopolitans. I need something manlier.

NICOLE

You're too much man as it is.

*

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

Antonio begins to push insistently on the elevator button to close the door.

*

NICOLE

It doesn't work like that.

Jess and Nicole share a look as the door closes, and we FADE OUT.

*

END OF ACT FOUR