

LOVELESS: Season 1, Episode 1: Disturbing the Peace

By

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LOVELESS: DISTURBING THE PEACE

FADE IN:

BEGIN TEASER

1 EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Outside the gate, a few vehicles are parked by the side of the road. Among them is a truck with monster tires with a distinctive tread pattern.

Inside, not far from the gate, sits a circle of teenagers, ages 14-18: the high school's Fraidycats Club. They're holding lit candles and passing beer bottles around, and taking selfies and photographs of each other posing with interesting-looking headstones.

ZACH passes a Ouija board to TRENTON, who is gazing moonstruck at KYLIE.

ZACH

Your turn, Trenton.

TRENTON

I pick ... Kylie...

BETHANY

Ain't that a surprise.

TRENTON

What's your question for the spirits tonight, Kylie?

KYLIE

(being dramatic)

Spirits who see all, who will I marry?

Kylie moves closer to Trenton and the Ouija board. They both rest their fingertips on the stylus, and it moves, spelling T-R-E-N...

KYLIE

Bullshit, Trenton, you're pushing it. And I already told you, I don't like you that way.

TRENTON

It wasn't me, I swear!

BETHANY

Give it a rest and pass the Ouija board, Trent.

Sulkily, Trenton passes the Ouija board to STELLA, who is a black Seminole.

WE HEAR an owl hooting, but not the usual "who, who" owl call. This is more of a "who-wooo, who-wooo," like an owl crossed with a ghost.

STELLA

Shit! We'd better get out of here, y'all.

BETHANY

(winking at Matt)

Why's that, sweetie?

STELLA

'Cause that wasn't an owl.

MATT

Yeah? So what was it if you're so smart?

STELLA

I can't say the name ... but it's a monster my people tell stories about. It's bad news. I'm serious, let's go.

MATT

Aw, com'on and stay. I'll protect ya.

STELLA

Not from that you won't.

Stella stands up, holds out a hand to Bethany. Bethany looks at Stella's hand, then at Matt's face, then back again at Stella.

STELLA

Come on, babe.

BETHANY

Matt said he'd protect us. And I want to hear more stories.

STELLA

Well, I'm leaving.

MATT

"Who, who" cares?

They all laugh at Stella, who flips them off and starts walking toward the gate.

WE HEAR the ghostly owl again: who-wooo, who-wooo...

Stella shifts into high gear, clearing the gate and taking off running down the road.

Back in the graveyard, the rest of the Fraidycats look around at each other. Most are unnerved, but trying not to show it.

MATT

Hey Bethany, let's go for a walk. I want to tell you somethin'.

ZACH

I think I'm gonna go catch Stella, offer her a ride home...

KYLIE

(grabbing bag)
I'll come with you.

MATT

Fraidycats is just the club name. Don't tell me y'all are really scared.

TRENTON

Stella was. And we don't know the stories she's heard. I don't think we shoulda laughed at her...

BETHANY

Stella is a wimp. I oughtta know.
(cuddling Matt)
I've got my own pussy, I don't need to date one.

Laughing and clinging to each other, Matt and Bethany walk into the woods adjoining the cemetery, pausing only to take a "new couple" selfie before vanishing in the trees.

Zach grabs the Ouija board. Kylie and the others collect beer bottles, stowing them all in their backpacks.

Again WE HEAR the ghostly owl: who-wooo, who-wooo...

The Fraidycats rush to their cars and trucks and peel out down the road. Monster truck sits alone outside the gate.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Matt and Bethany are both half-undressed and wildly engaged in foreplay.

WE HEAR the ghostly owl's who-wooo, who-wooo ... and it sounds very near.

MATT

That owl is gettin' on my last nerve.

BETHANY

Ignore it. Here, let me distract you.

An owl buzzes them. It lands at their feet ... and transforms into a young woman, whom we see only from behind.

BETHANY

(recognizing the woman)
Ohmygod... You...? How...

OWL WITCH

Three's a crowd. Get lost, little boy.

MATT

Let us go.

OWL WITCH

Fantastic. A hero.

Owl Witch approaches Matt, gets in his face.

OWL WITCH

[speaking Seminole] You will sleep until sunrise.

Matt collapses.

BETHANY

Please... Please, don't hurt me.

OWL WITCH

Oh, but I need to. I promise you'll like it, though.

Owl Witch pulls Bethany into a tight embrace and kisses her. Bethany moans, finally gasps for air. They sink to the ground, entwined.

Owl Witch ... sprouts fangs ... and sinks them into Bethany's thigh.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. WOODS - MORNING

Matt awakens. He's alone. There's no sign of Bethany.

He gets mostly dressed, carries his shirt as he hurries back toward his truck.

4 EXT. GRAVEYARD - MORNING

CLOSE UP: Grave of Hannah Kaye Osborne. The soil has been turned, and there are blood, owl feathers, and bird droppings on the headstone.

Matt stops and stares at the defiled grave in shock for a moment. Then he runs like hell.

END TEASER

BEGIN ACT 1

CUT TO:

5 INT. L.A.P.D. - DAY

Office is decorated for the going-away party for MICKY, a very fit African/Korean-American in her mid-40s. She's in civilian clothing.

It's not a festive gathering. All the personnel are ... awkward. They talk among themselves, casting furtive looks at Micky.

Chief of Police CURTIS--a slim and balding white man also in his 40s--approaches Micky. He's carrying a cup of punch for himself and another cup for her.

C.O.P. CURTIS
I know I said it already, Micky,
but I hate to see you go.

MICKY
If it helps, I don't hate to leave.

C.O.P. CURTIS
The sheriff over in Loveless still
hasn't called me to get a reference
for you.

MICKY
Maybe he doesn't call for
references until after the job
interview.

Nearby stands a FELLOW DETECTIVE, a 30-something white male, who turns to join the conversation.

FELLOW DETECTIVE
Did I hear that right? You're
moving and you don't even know if
you've got the job?

MICKY
Correct.

C.O.P. CURTIS
She bought a house, too. Our Micky
is very sure of herself.
(wistful)
It's just hit me... I can't call
her our Micky anymore.

FELLOW DETECTIVE

When did you have time to go all the way to Georgia and check out a house?

MICKY

I didn't have to go anywhere. There's this awesome tool called the Internet.

Curtis quickly suppresses the grin that momentarily sneaks onto his face.

Fellow Detective equally quickly suppresses the glare he at first flashes at Micky.

FELLOW DETECTIVE

Well, good luck with all that, is all I can say.

Fellow Detective wanders off to join a group of cops. They dart glances at Micky as Fellow Detective gossips about what he's just learned.

MICKY

There goes a happy man. He's finally rid of me, and he's got fresh gossip to spread about Madwoman Micky.

C.O.P. CURTIS

Listen, Micky, I admit it would take a bit of bootlicking, but I can stop the paperwork and you could stay. I wish you would.

MICKY

Chief, if there's one thing I'm sure of, it's that I can't stay here anymore.

C.O.P. CURTIS

They'd forget about it, if you give it time.

MICKY

Maybe that's the best reason to go. Nobody should ever forget about wrongs that need to be put right ... somehow.

Micky sets her empty cup near the punch bowl and walks into a barren cubicle. A hush falls over the room.

She lays her service weapon and badge on the desk in the cubicle. Looks at them lying there.

Briskly, she emerges from the cubicle and glances around.

MICKY

Well, thanks, everyone. I'll be going now.

Curtis begins singing "For She's A Jolly Good Fellow." Slowly, the rest of the L.A.P.D. personnel present join in.

Micky flings one hand up in a wave ... or a "talk to the hand." She lets herself out the door and doesn't look back.

CUT TO:

6 EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Micky stands at the back of a Uhaul hitched to a 2012 Mazda MX-5 Miata convertible with its top down. She alternates between reading from an e-tablet and glancing at the items packed in the Uhaul.

MICKY

All ready...

She tucks the tablet into a backpack in the back seat. In the front passenger seat sits HAMLET, a male Great Dane.

Micky pauses to scratch her canine buddy's ears.

MICKY

Ready to roll, Hamlet my friend?

Hamlet hangs his head and whines, but doesn't take his eyes off Micky's face.

MICKY

Oh, don't worry, you big baby. I remembered that godawful toy raccoon you can't live without. It's in the Uhaul.

Hamlet turns his head to look back at the Uhaul.

MICKY

No, you can't have it in the car with you. If you chase that thing around in here, we'll end up splattered all over the road somewhere.

Hamlet whines again.

MICKY

You can have it when we stop for the night. Keep me awake all night long, if you want.

HAMLET

(happy)

Woof!

MICKY

Okay. Let's do this thing.

Micky gets behind the wheel, fires up the engine, sets a Motown radio station playing, and drives away...

7 MONTAGE

--Micky drives through Arizona desert as afternoon turns to night.

--Late at night, Micky rents a motel room in Albuquerque NM.

--Early morning, she gets coffee and two breakfast sandwiches from a McDonald's drive-through. She drives on, munching one sandwich and giving the other to Hamlet.

--Noon finds Micky and Hamlet crossing the border from Texas to Louisiana.

--Twilight makes the boundary sign for Loveless County, Georgia almost unreadable.

8 EXT. ROAD - EVENING

Micky pulls over to the side of the road. She lets the Mazda idle as she dials a number on her Android.

WE SEE lightning flash in the darkening sky. It's mid-spring, a stormy season in the South.

MICKY

Hi, Denise, it's Micky. I'm in Loveless now. What's the address?

She listens, jots a note.

MICKY

Okay, I just passed the boundary sign on Post Road. How long will it take me to get there?

(listens)
See you shortly, then.

Micky ends the call, speaks to her GPS.

MICKY
Destination: 1201 Cypress Lane.

The GPS confirms "Calculating," then advises "Go straight 11.8 miles."

She drives on. Lightning flashes, and now WE HEAR thunder.

Micky puts the top up on the convertible.

Rain starts falling as the GPS advises "In 100 feet, turn right."

Micky turns onto a long dirt driveway rapidly turning muddy. She peers into the dark, going slow as the rain falls harder.

9 EXT. MICKY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

WE SEE, not very well, a small raised house. Even in the murk it looks at least a century old.

An all-wheel-drive sedan is parked near the front door, its headlights on. From it emerges DENISE, a white woman in her mid-30s wearing business attire, cringing beneath an umbrella.

Micky parks, gets out to meet the woman.

MICKY
Thanks for meeting me in this mess.

DENISE
Customer is always right. Here's your key ... and here's a spare. But...

MICKY
Is there a problem?

DENISE
It's just... I feel weird about this. It's the first time I've ever sold a house to a buyer who didn't see it first.

MICKY

Well, this is the first time I've moved into a place without seeing it before I signed anything. I guess we're having a new experience together.

Denise casts a troubled look at the house, then turns an equally troubled look at Micky.

MICKY

I realize I'm doing things in an unusual way, but I have my reasons. My check cleared, didn't it?

DENISE

Yes...

MICKY

My lawyer and your lawyer both approved all the paperwork, didn't they?

DENISE

Yes.

MICKY

Everything is in order, then, and I'm getting drenched. If you'll excuse me, I'd like to go inside my new home.

DENISE

Oh, yes, I'm sorry. Good luck to you, Ms. Lee.

MICKY

Thanks again.

Denise hurries inside her sedan and drives away, a little fast for the weather.

Micky shakes her head at the vanishing vehicle as she grabs a suitcase and the backpack from the Mazda's back seat. She opens the passenger door, Hamlet jumps out, and the two jog to the front door of the house.

A crack of lightning makes Micky and Hamlet jump.

MICKY

Damn. That sounded close.

Hamlet whines.

She unlocks the door, they hurry in.

10 INT. MICKY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Micky explores her new home.

Hamlet sticks close to Micky's side.

The front door opens into a living room bare of any furnishings. She moves on, peeking into the kitchen and seeing that one of the cupboard doors hangs slightly askew.

Last she inspects the master bedroom. A steady drip is falling from the leaky ceiling.

MICKY

This is homeownership, Hamlet.
We're living the American Dream
now.

CUT TO:

11 INT. MICKY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Micky tosses and turns in her sleeping bag on the bedroom floor. Hamlet is curled next to her on a blanket.

WE HEAR the drip.

DISSOLVE TO:

BEGIN FLASHBACK--"Micky's Police Brutality Incident"
[excerpt]

12 EXT. HOLLYWOOD FOREVER CEMETERY - NIGHT

July 4, 2014, 9 p.m.: Tomb of Douglas Fairbanks.

...CAMERA slowly spins, looking down on Micky sprawled unconscious on the grass.

WE HEAR Delta Rae finish to thunderous applause again. They begin to play "I Will Never Die."

Micky groans and struggles to sit up.

She looks down and sees blood on her hands and sleeves. Patting herself down, she discovers her head is bleeding.

Looking around, she sees two dead men and a dead boy.

MICKY

Oh my God... What the hell happened here?

Unsteadily she gets to her feet. She searches for her phone, but she can't find it.

MICKY

Bitch of a time to lose my phone.

Clumsy with exhaustion and head injuries, Micky trudges to the concert area.

As she approaches one edge of the crowd, audience members begin to notice her. They take in the bloodstains and some rush to help her, some scream, some get on their phones, some take pictures--an uproar spreads and the band stops playing.

MICKY

Please... Somebody call 911...

Micky slumps to the ground.

END FLASHBACK

DISSOLVE TO:

13 INT. MICKY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Light through Micky's bedroom window indicates it's early sunrise.

On the bedroom floor, Micky continues slumbering in her sleeping bag. Hamlet, who has been sleeping on a blanket, wakes and barks at her.

MICKY

Five more minutes...

HAMLET

Woof woof woof!

MICKY

Oh, all right.

Micky gets up lets Hamlet out the front door. She leaves the door standing open while she goes into the kitchen, plugs in her coffeemaker, and starts a pot brewing.

WE HEAR Hamlet break into frenzied barking.

MICKY

Now what?

She goes outside.

14 EXT. MICKY'S HOUSE - MORNING

In the morning light we can see there's a house next-door to Micky's. It too is raised. Though old like Micky's, it appears better cared for.

In their front yard, the Tiger family--TOMTOM, D.J., and NICOLE--are engaged in "morning tobacco prayers."

Tomtom is a Seminole in his 60s. D.J. and Nicole are part-Seminole, he about 30 and she in her early 20s.

Hamlet runs to Micky, barks emphatically, races to the back yard. Micky follows.

There's an alligator sunning itself on a fallen cypress tree. Hamlet charges at it, stops short when the gator opens its mouth slightly, backs off barking frantically.

MICKY

Hamlet, heel!

Hamlet obeys, but stands whining by Micky's side.

The Tiger family, having finished their prayers, are gathered at the border between Micky's back yard and theirs.

TOMTOM

Sister Alligator means no harm.

MICKY

She's a predator on my property. If I had a gun, I'm the one who'd mean harm.

D.J.

It's illegal to shoot an alligator unless it's hunting season and you've got a permit.

MICKY

Understood, but I'm guessing I still have a right to self-defense. If Sister Alligator hunts me or my dog, it's open season as far as I'm concerned.

Tomtom approaches the alligator.

TOMTOM
 [speaking Seminole] You must go
 back into the swamp now, sister.

Slowly, the alligator crawls off the felled cypress and
 shambles away into the trees and reeds.

NICOLE
 Around here it's wise not to let
 pets go outside unsupervised.

Hamlet suddenly growls at Nicole, startling Micky.

MICKY
 Hamlet, peace!

Hamlet whimpers, edges closer to Micky but doesn't drop his
 guard.

MICKY
 I'm really sorry. Hamlet is a good
 dog. The alligator probably just
 made him nervous.

NICOLE
 (locking eyes with Hamlet)
 I'm sure it did.

MICKY
 Well, I'm Micaela Lee, but everyone
 calls me Micky. Nice to meet you
 all.

TOMTOM
 Micaela Lee, I am Tomtom Tiger.
 These are my grandchildren, D.J.
 and Nicole.

MICKY
 (shaking hands all around)
 I've got to go get ready for a job
 interview now, but when we're
 settled in Hamlet and I would love
 to have you join us for dinner
 sometime.

NICOLE
 (still in a staring match with
 Hamlet)
 We'd love that too.

Hamlet growls again.

MICKY
Hamlet, peace!

Hamlet goes quiet, but his stare is fixed on Nicole.

MICKY
Must be the alligator. It shook me
up a little too. We've never seen
one of those before, have we boy?

Micky tries to stroke Hamlet's head, but Hamlet jumps and
yips.

MICKY
I'd better get him inside and
calmed down.

TOMTOM
Good luck to you, Micaela Lee, and
welcome.

CUT TO:

15 INT. LOVELESS HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

Locker area. Kids are putting away books they won't need for
a while, putting others in their backpacks. There's the
chatter of numerous conversations.

Stella stands by a locker, anxiously scanning all the faces
that come and go.

STELLA
Kylie! Got a minute?

KYLIE
(looks up from her phone)
Hey, sure, what's up?

STELLA
Bethany.

KYLIE
What about her?

STELLA
Have you heard from her since
Friday night?

KYLIE
I texted her.

STELLA

And?

KYLIE

She didn't text me back. Not a big deal though, she flakes on me all the time.

STELLA

(troubled)

Yeah, but... I haven't seen any Instagrams or Snapchats from her, either, and she hasn't even updated her Facebook.

KYLIE

Listen, Stell, I hate to be the one to tell you this, but... She and Matt took a walk, and the rest of us went home.

STELLA

Oh.

KYLIE

And, uh... As much as I hate to say this, I think you two are over.

STELLA

Yeah, I figured. I just... I need to talk to her.

KYLIE

Then keep texting her. I don't know what else to tell you.

STELLA

Okay. Well... Thanks, Ky.

Kylie goes on her way. Stella keeps searching the crowd for Bethany.

The bell for first period class rings. Stella walks to class, slow, still looking around. No Bethany.

As she settles into her desk she texts: "Seriously Beth, where are you?"

CUT TO:

16 EXT. MICKY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Dressed in slacks, blouse, and dress loafers, Micky seats herself behind the wheel of the Mazda.

She turns the key in the ignition. Nothing happens.

MICKY

Oh hell no.

Micky presses the gas pedal to the floor and holds it there, and tries the ignition again. But again, nothing happens.

From the Tiger house, D.J. emerges in jeans and button-down shirt. He pauses halfway to his truck and watches Micky trying to start her car.

D.J.

Need a ride?

MICKY

Looks that way.

D.J.

I'm going out for groceries, but I can take you to your interview and pick you up after.

MICKY

Thank you, so much!

Micky jogs over to D.J.'s truck. She slows as she rounds the front ... CLOSE UP on a strange symbol hand-painted on the hood.

D.J. doesn't seem to notice the peculiar look Micky gives the symbol and then him. He settles behind the wheel and fires up the engine.

Micky climbs into the passenger seat, and D.J. drives the truck up the muddy driveway.

17 INT. D.J.'S TRUCK - MORNING

D.J.

Where to?

MICKY

Sheriff's department. With any luck I'll soon be Loveless County's newest deputy.

D.J. casts a piercing glance at Micky.

MICKY
Is something wrong?

D.J.
I just ... would've thought you'd
be finished working in law
enforcement.
(hesitates)
I've seen you in the news.

MICKY
Oh.

Silence hangs between them, briefly.

MICKY
I don't want to quit being a cop.
Loveless has a lot less violent
crime than L.A. This should be ...
a safer place to work.

D.J.
You think so?
(casts a hard look at her)
But ... safer for who?

CUT TO:

18 INT. LOVELESS SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - MORNING

D.J. holds the front door open for Micky, then follows her
inside.

VIVIAN, a white woman in her late 30s, looks up from the
front desk and smiles broadly.

VIVIAN
Well howdy D.J.! I didn't think
we'd see you 'til this afternoon.

D.J.
This is my new neighbor--

MICKY
(interrupting)
Micaela Lee. I have a 9 a.m.
interview scheduled with Sheriff
Boyd.

VIVIAN
Yes'm, I saw that on the daily
planner. Sheriff Boyd is expecting
(MORE)

VIVIAN (cont'd)
 you. D.J. honey, you want to show
 Ms. Lee the way, or do you need to
 run along?

D.J.
 I'll be glad to show Micky where to
 go.

D.J. leads the way to the private office of the Sheriff.
 Outside the sheriff's door, Micky stops and turns to D.J.

MICKY
 Why didn't you tell me you work
 here?

D.J.
 You didn't ask. And you really
 didn't tell me why you want to work
 here--of all places.

MICKY
 I told you I thought it would be
 safer in Loveless than in L.A.

D.J.
 That's what you told me, but that
 doesn't mean you were being
 straight with me.

MICKY
 Is everyone in Loveless as pleasant
 as you?

Inside his office, visible through a small center glass pane
 in the door, is SHERIFF BOYD. He's a white man in his late
 60s, sitting in a high-backed chair and reading from a file
 folder.

SHERIFF BOYD
 (calls out)
 Somebody wanna come in here, or
 y'all just wanna stand outside my
 door yakking all day?

Micky opens the door.

D.J.
 I'll pick you up in an hour.

SHERIFF BOYD
 No need, Tiger, this won't take
 long.

Sheriff Boyd waves D.J. away, then gestures to Micky to help herself to one of the two chairs across the desk from him.

Micky glances from Sheriff Boyd to D.J., who is now grinning like a cat that just ate a bird.

She shuts the door in D.J.'s face.

19 INT. SHERIFF BOYD'S OFFICE - DAY

Micky starts to offer her hand to Sheriff Boyd, to shake hands with him.

But Sheriff Boyd has kept his seat. He's studying a printout, even though there's a computer on his desk.

SHERIFF BOYD
Why don't you sit down.

MICKY
Thank you.

Micky takes a seat.

Sheriff Boyd keeps a spartan office. Micky watches him sift through sheets of paper.

SHERIFF BOYD
Twenty-three years with the Los Angeles police, eighteen of 'em as homicide detective. Excellent record 'til...

MICKY
I completed six months of psychiatric treatment. My latest tests showed me fitter for duty than ever.

SHERIFF BOYD
So I see. But you still don't remember what happened.

MICKY
That's true.

SHERIFF BOYD
I heard you bought a house over in the Bottoms.

MICKY

The what?

SHERIFF BOYD

Swamp end of Post Road.

MICKY

Oh. Yes, I did.

SHERIFF BOYD

I'm wondering. If you don't get this job, what will you do?

Micky briefly studies Boyd without speaking. He studies her right back.

MICKY

The truth is, I'm here for an investigation anyway. My best friend grew up in Loveless. She was murdered in November 1990. Her case was never solved. I'm here to get justice for her.

SHERIFF BOYD

You mean Hannah Osborne, I reckon.

MICKY

Yes, sir.

SHERIFF BOYD

She was killed in Los Angeles. How you goin' to solve her murder in Georgia?

MICKY

I don't know yet. But that's the only thing nobody has tried.

Sheriff Boyd stands up.

By the time he's finished speaking, he's walked past Micky and opened his office door.

SHERIFF BOYD

I s'pose you'll need to eat, and I need a deputy. Vivian will take your measurements for a uniform. You'll have to pass an equiv'lency of trainin' exam, firearms qual'fication, couple other things.

Sheriff Boyd puts his head out the door to shout.

SHERIFF BOYD
Tiger! Where you at, deputy?

D.J. reappears just outside the sheriff's office door.

SHERIFF BOYD
I need ya to run Ms. Lee here to
Doc Green for her phys'cal.

D.J.
(stunned)
You hired her?

SHERIFF BOYD
Nah, I just thought she may be due
for her shots. Of course I hired
her, Tiger, she's got nearly as
much 'xperience as the rest of my
deputies put together. Just run
along and take Ms. Lee to get her
phys'cal done.

MICKY
(equally stunned)
Please... Call me Micky.

END ACT 1

BEGIN ACT 2

CUT TO:

20 EXT. DOC GREENE'S OFFICE - MORNING

D.J. parks his vehicle in the dirt lot outside a red brick building.

D.J.
You'll be a while, so I'll just get the groceries my wife wants and come back for you.

MICKY
Okay.

Micky starts to get out, reads the plaque on the building's front door, turns a disbelieving look to D.J.

MICKY
Is this your idea of a joke?

D.J.
(startled)
What?

MICKY
I'm not a fool. I know what "DVM" means.

D.J.
Oh, that. Yeah. Doc started out as a family doctor, but he hated it. Went to vet school, so now he works with animals. He's also county coroner.
(beat)
And he has morning clinics for people, for "just in case."

MICKY
Why doesn't his plaque also say "M.D.," then?

D.J.
I don't know.
(shrugs)
Not as proud of that degree, I guess. See you in about an hour.

D.J. reaches across to close his passenger door, before turning the truck around and driving away.

Micky stares at the "DVM" plaque for a moment, then opens the door and enters with visible reluctance.

21 INT. DOC GREENE'S OFFICE - MORNING

Office is equipped for a veterinarian's uses. WE HEAR two dogs barking and a cat yowling, somewhere in the back of the building.

Micky looks around, holding the door open as if tempted to run.

CECILIA, the receptionist, a tall African-American in her 30s, fixes an unimpressed look on Micky.

CECILIA

You're a grown woman, not a scared puppy. Close the door and sit down, Ms. Lee.

MICKY

How do you know my name?

CECILIA

Two reasons. One, Sheriff Boyd called and said you were on your way. Two, I watch the news on TV every night.

Cecilia watches Micky until she takes a seat. Then Cecilia goes back to doing data entry on her computer.

A bathroom door opens and DOC GREENE emerges, fanning his nose. He's a very fit white man in his mid-50s.

DOC GREENE

(to Cecilia)

Remind me to tell Helen to stop cooking so many damn beans.

(to Micky)

New deputy, huh. Come on, let's get this exam done.

When Micky gets close to him, Doc Greene gestures toward the scales. The kind meant for dogs and cats.

DOC GREENE

First let's check your weight.

MICKY

On this?

DOC GREENE

Yep.

MICKY

But it's for animals.

DOC GREENE

I use it for animals and people
both. It don't know the difference.
Step on.

MICKY

I don't believe this...

Micky steps on the scales. Doc Greene scribbles a note on a clipboard.

22 MONTAGE

--Doc Greene checks Micky's pulse.

--She jogs in place, then he checks her pulse again.

--Blood pressure check.

--Temperature check, followed by "Say ah" throat exam.

--Doc Greene listens to Micky's chest with a stethoscope.

--Reflexes test.

--She gives him a urine sample.

--He takes a blood sample from her.

23 INT. DOC GREENE'S OFFICE - NOON

Doc Greene walks Micky out.

DOC GREENE

(to Cecilia)

Invoice the sheriff.

(to Micky)

You're in fine health, for a human.

MICKY

My neighbor, D.J. Tiger, said you
hold morning clinics for people
with minor problems.

DOC GREENE

Yep.

MICKY

What kinds of problems should I come to you with?

DOC GREENE

(to Micky)

Well... If you get shot or stabbed, go to the hospital. If you get a snakebite, go to the hospital. If you sprain an ankle use RICE--rest, ice, compression, and elevation. If you strain a muscle or run a low fever, take a couple aspirin. If you catch a cold, that's a virus, a doctor can't help you, just take it easy and drink lots of fluids.

(to Cecilia)

I'm goin' to the house to eat lunch, be back at 1.

MICKY

I still don't understand what problems to come to you for.

DOC GREENE

Nothin' really. But I'm coroner, so if you die I'll come to you. Take care now.

Doc Greene holds the door open for Micky, follows her outside.

24 EXT. DOC GREENE'S OFFICE - NOON

Doc Greene saunters off toward a cottage about a hundred feet away.

From the cottage's back door emerges Doc Greene's wife, HELEN. She's a white woman, also mid-50s, holding a bucket and a bowl.

HELEN

Velvet! Toffee! Jeremiah!

A reddish-brown mare, a caramel-brown mare, and a naked man around age 30, all trot to the back door of the cottage.

Helen pours the bucket's contents into a trough for the horses, and puts the bowl on the ground for the man. The man bends down and drinks from the bowl like an animal.

Micky is oblivious to Cecilia stepping outside.

MICKY
What the hell?

CECILIA
Oh, him? That's Horse Man.

MICKY
He's naked...

CECILIA
Well of course he is. You don't put
clothes on a horse.

MICKY
But he's not a horse, he's a man!

CECILIA
That's not what he thinks. Don't
bother him, he's happy.

Cecilia goes to her car.

D.J.'s truck pulls into the driveway, and Micky sucks in a
breath of relief.

MICKY
Amazing. I'm actually glad to see
my neighbor again.

CUT TO:

25 INT. LOVELESS HIGH SCHOOL - NOON

Cafeteria. Stella enters with a throng of other students.

While the other students get in line to get lunch, Stella
stands just inside the door, scanning the faces.

Stella sees Matt and three of his buddies just sitting down
with their lunch trays. She makes her way through the crowd
to confront him.

STELLA
Matt, when's the last time you saw
Bethany?

MATT
Whoa, slow down. It was Friday
night. You know, you were there.

STELLA

But I left. Kylie says you and Bethany went for a walk, and everyone else went home. Nobody has seen her or talked to her since, and she doesn't answer my texts. No Facebook updates either.

MATT

Maybe you should take a hint.

STELLA

Maybe you should tell someone what happened.

MATT

Maybe you should take a sex ed class.

Matt and his three friends look at each other and snicker.

Stella gets in Matt's face.

STELLA

Did you hurt her, asshole? 'Cause I swear if you did--

Matt hesitates, just a second. He can't look Stella in the eyes.

MATT

Back off, bulldog. We had some fun, then we split up. How would I know what she did after that?

STELLA

I mean it, damn you! If I find out you did anything to her...

MATT

What? You gonna beat my ass, lezzie?

Stella glares at Matt, her hands clenched in fists.

Abruptly she walks out of the cafeteria, taking her phone out and looking at it again. She wipes the back of her hand across her eyes.

CUT TO:

26

INT. D.J.'S TRUCK - AFTERNOON

D.J.

...All I'm saying is, Horse Man isn't bad at all. Sure, he's crazy, but he's harmless. Lets little kids ride him. We all love the guy.

MICKY

How did he get like that, anyway?

D.J.

Nobody is really sure. He did two tours in Iraq and one in Afghanistan. Seemed fine when he came home. Then he ran screaming from the fireworks at a Fourth of July celebration, and when they found him he was behaving like a horse.

Micky winces at mention of the Fourth of July.

MICKY

Well, I can understand that. Fourth of July is bad luck for some of us, I suppose.

D.J.

Oh, yeah, that's when you--

MICKY

(interrupts)

Yes.

(pauses for thought)

Why isn't Horse Man in a hospital?

D.J.

His family can't afford it. Veterans Administration kept screwing up his paperwork. Finally his family just said, look, he's happy as a horse and he isn't hurting anybody. So Doc Greene takes care of him, along with his mares.

Micky stares out the window at the scenery they're passing. There is an uncomfortable silence between them.

MICKY

I've been to Savannah a few times ... back when my friend Hannah was

(MORE)

MICKY (cont'd)
 still alive. I never met anybody in Savannah half as weird as they were in the movie *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. But your Horse Man here in Loveless tops all the crazy people from that movie, combined.

D.J.
 Savannah's weirdos are just talented amateurs. For professional level crazies, come to Loveless.
 (points)
 Look...

There are about a dozen cabins DJ is driving toward.

As the truck gets closer, there's an enormous marble statue of a human eye apparently trying to look inside itself.

Weeding a vegetable patch are two blindfolded women. A blindfolded man is sawing a felled tree into firewood-sized logs.

D.J.
 Those folks are the Order of the In-Turned Oculus.

MICKY
 I'm sorry, say again?

D.J.
 Religious cult. Also harmless ... except to themselves. They take an oath to live blindfolded the rest of their lives. Causes them to have a lot of accidents.

MICKY
 Is it something in the water? What do I need to do to avoid catching the crazy?

D.J.
 (smirks)
 If we're lucky, when we drive past the Post Office I can show you the Rebel Scot.

MICKY
 I'm not going to ask. If you want me to know, you'll just have to tell me.

D.J.

His name is Clarence MacDougall.
He's always writing to the royal
family, Parliament, the President,
Congress, newspapers, demanding
Scotland be made an independent
country again.

Micky says nothing, just stares ahead with a "what have I
got myself into" look on her face.

D.J. is getting into a cheerful mood.

D.J.

After we get your new car battery,
I'll drive you home and we can stop
to visit Helmet Lady.

Still Micky says nothing.

D.J. (CONT)

She's cobbled together a kind of
platemail helmet. It's to keep
aliens from reading her mind. She
says people are wrong about tin
foil doing the job, it's not thick
enough.

MICKY

(sharply facing him)

You know what? I've got this. I'll
be just fine. I worked 23 years as
a cop in Los Angeles. I've seen
plenty of crazy. Loveless just has
more than its fair share for its
population size.

D.J.

You talk a good game, but do you
really have the guts to work here?

Micky casts a sour glance at D.J.

D.J. laughs as he turns on the radio. He sings along,
grinning.

CUT TO:

27 EXT. LOVELESS HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

School buses are lining up to carry students back home.

Stella looks from one bus to another, hesitant.

She takes out her phone and rapidly punches in a number.

STELLA

Hi, is Joe Weber there today?

(listens)

No, I don't need to talk to him now, I'll talk to him when I bring my car in. I just wanted to find out if he's there, thanks.

She ends the call and climbs aboard the second bus she was considering.

BUS DRIVER

You goin' to Bethany's house today?

STELLA

Yeah.

BUS DRIVER

Did you check with her folks? She didn't take the bus to school this mornin'.

STELLA

I know, I'm going to tell her what she missed in class. Easier in person than phone or email.

BUS DRIVER

Okay, find yourself a seat.

Stella sits near the front, fidgeting.

CUT TO:

28 INT. SHELL STATION - AFTERNOON

Office.

WE HEAR the sounds of automotive repair machinery from the adjacent shop.

JOE stands behind the cash register. He's a big brute of a white male in his late 40s.

Two white men who look to be father and son, mid-20s and 50-ish respectively, are standing chatting with Joe. The younger man holds a case of motor oil.

CUSTOMER SR.

...Long about the first of October
I'm gonna try to take my family to
the mountains. Wife likes to see
the leaves changin', and my boys
and I love to go fishin'.

JOE

I like deer huntin', but it's hard
to get away from work to go.
Where--

Micky and D.J. enter the office. All eyes take them in as they come through the door, and Joe's eyes squint for a moment.

D.J.

Hey Joe, how are things?

JOE

Could be better, could be worse.
Whatcha need, deputy?

D.J.

Nothing for me this time, but Ms.
Lee here needs a new car battery.

Micky steps up to the cash register. D.J. hangs back behind her.

Joe presses an intercom button.

JOE

Chris, come to the office please,
customer needs a car battery.

A young man in his early 20s, wearing a mechanic's jumpsuit, opens the door from the shop to the office.

JOE

What ya drivin'?

MICKY

2012 Mazda MX-5 Miata.

The young man retreats into the shop, closing the door behind him.

JOE
Gonna be \$250.38.

D.J. is startled. He casts a piercing look at Joe.

MICKY
Wow. It's been a few years since I
bought a car battery, but that's a
lot more pricey than the last one I
got.

JOE
Not much demand for stuff for Jap
cars around here.

The young man in mechanic's jumpsuit returns with the car battery for Micky. He puts it on the counter, waits to see if anything else is needed.

MICKY
Okay, whatever.

Micky hands Joe a Mastercard. He swipes it, looks a little surprised.

Joe quickly regains his composure, however. When he speaks again, he talks slow--the way some people do when talking to someone they believe to be stupid. He points out the signature line on the charge slip like he doubts Micky has ever seen one before.

JOE
Just sign on this line, right here.

Micky gives Joe a hard look for a few seconds. She glances around at Customer Sr. and his son, who are placidly watching this transaction.

Looking back at Joe again, Micky signs the charge slip and takes her Mastercard back. She picks up her new battery.

MICKY
I'd like to say it's been a
pleasure doing business with you.

She turns toward the door and adds:

MICKY
But I'd be lying through my teeth
if I did.

With that, Micky carries the battery out to D.J.'s truck.

D.J. lingers in the office.

D.J.

What's going on, Joe? I wouldn't have thought that battery would cost more than \$200 at most.

Joe shrugs.

JOE

What can I tell you? I never seen her before an' I really don't like the looks of her. Besides, I can't be giving her the police discount now, can I?

DJ

Well, actually, yeah. Sheriff Boyd hired her today.

JOE

Shoulda told me sooner. Can't take it back now.

DJ says nothing more. He flicks a doubtful look at Joe, then exits.

CUT TO:

29 EXT. WEBER HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Stella hops off the bus, trots to the Weber family's front door, rings the doorbell.

MRS. WEBER, looking haggard, opens the door.

MRS. WEBER

You better get outta here, Stella. If Joe comes home and sees you--

STELLA

I know, and I'm not staying long. I just want to know if Bethany is okay.

Mrs. Weber shakes her head, starts to shut the door in Stella's face. Then she hesitates.

MRS. WEBER

We ain't seen her since Friday afternoon.

Mrs. Weber's face has a haunted expression as she quickly closes the door.

Stella gazes down the road, but the bus is out of sight. She draws a deep breath, adjusts her backpack, and sets out down the road at a jog.

CUT TO:

30 INT. LOVELESS SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Micky is seated behind a desk barren of anything except a phone and a desktop computer.

Sheriff Boyd stands next to her, handing her equipment to her.

SHERIFF BOYD

Vivian says your uniform'll be a couple days, we gotta get one altered to fit ya. But right here's your deputy's badge, and here's your service pistol. Sign into your computer and your account shows your schedule for the week.

MICKY

Do you sign me up for the equivalency exam and so forth, or do I take care of that myself?

SHERIFF BOYD

I'm leavin' that to you, 'cause you may have 'pointments and stuff I don't know about. One other thing, you got a patrol car assigned to you, number 8. But for your first week you'll ride with another deputy, to help you learn your way around Loveless.

MICKY

Sounds good.

Panting for breath, Stella jogs into the office. Vivian hurries in after her.

VIVIAN

You just turn yourself right around and get out of here, young lady. The sheriff doesn't have time for foolishness.

STELLA

It isn't foolishness! I'm here
about a missing person.

Stella looks around, sees a new face and rushes to Micky's desk.

STELLA

Please, ma'am, nobody's seen my
friend since Friday night, and I'm
worried about her.

SHERIFF BOYD

If you mean who I think you do, you
oughtta do like Vivian told you.
Turn around and get your butt home,
Stella Joney.

Vivian leaves the office, going back to the front desk.

MICKY

Stella. Who's your friend you're
worried about?

STELLA

Her name is Bethany Weber. She goes
to high school with me.

SHERIFF BOYD

She done more than that with you,
way I heard it. Ain't right.

MICKY

Excuse me, Sheriff, but it doesn't
matter if the girl goes
horse-riding in downtown Savannah
as naked as Lady Godiva and
prostitutes herself. She's still a
person, and she has rights.

SHERIFF BOYD

You're new here, so you don't know
about this girl. She's been runnin'
away from home ever since she grew
tits. If nobody knows where she's
at, it just means she's run off
again.

MICKY

If a child keeps running away from
home, that almost always means
they've got something to run away
from. You got any idea what that
might be, Sheriff?

STELLA

Her dad beats her. Real bad.

Micky powers up her desktop computer, taps a few keys.

SHERIFF BOYD

No he don't. Her dad spanks her
when she's done wrong.

STELLA

I've seen how bad he hurts her!

SHERIFF BOYD

The law says--

MICKY

(still using computer)

I know this isn't California, but I
feel sure the law in Georgia says
the same thing, which is that a
minor who goes missing needs to be
found.

SHERIFF BOYD

I'm tellin' you, deputy, the girl's
just run off. She'll be back,
soon's she gets picked up in
Savannah or Macon or wherever she's
gone.

MICKY

Well, I see my schedule says my
first shift is tomorrow. I'm on my
own time for now, is that right?

SHERIFF BOYD

Yeah. You're on your own time.

MICKY

As long as I don't break any laws,
I can do whatever I want on my own
time. Right?

SHERIFF BOYD

You wanna waste your time lookin'
for the Weber girl, you go ahead.

MICKY

Thanks. I think I will.

Nicole saunters into the office, carrying a laptop in a
waterproof case.

NICOLE
 Afternoon, Sheriff Boyd. Vivian
 said I could have a minute with the
 new deputy here.

MICKY
 For what?

NICOLE
 I work for the county newspaper. I
 thought our readers would like to
 see an interview with you. Help
 them get to know you.

MICKY
 Not interested.

Micky gathers her badge and gun, stands.

NICOLE
 I'm not going to ask about what
 happened in L.A., if that's the
 problem.

MICKY
 The problem is that I'm busy. Come
 on, Stella, tell me more about this
 missing friend of yours.

NICOLE
 Someone's missing? Who?

Stella looks sharply at Nicole, then gives her head a shake
 and follows Micky, who is on her way out.

MICKY
 I'll see you around, Nicole.

Nicole trails after Micky and Stella.

31 EXT. LOVELESS SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Micky opens her Mazda's passenger door for Stella, then goes
 to the driver's door and gets in. She starts the engine and
 drives away.

D.J.'s truck pulls into the parking lot. Nicole drifts over
 to join her brother. He gets out of the truck, in uniform
 for work.

NICOLE
Our new neighbor is the new deputy.

D.J.
(sighing)
Yeah. I know.

NICOLE
Is she going to have a patrol car?

D.J.
She'll have to.

Nicole looks at the line of parked patrol cars.

NICOLE
I wonder which will be hers.

D.J.
Have to be 8. Others are all
assigned already. What are you here
for, anyway, sis?

NICOLE
I tried to get an interview with
Deputy Micky, but she said no.

D.J.
That's too bad. Look, I gotta go
clock in. See ya tonight, kid.

D.J. goes inside.

Nicole goes to her car, an Audi Coupe, and puts her gear
inside. She then strolls over to patrol car 8, with her keys
still in her hand.

NICOLE
Hi number 8. I don't think my
brother likes your new driver.
Neither do I.

She looks around. Nobody is in sight, and there aren't any
security cameras monitoring deputy patrol cars.

Using quick, precise strokes, Nicole keys a drawing into the
paint on the patrol car's hood. As she walks away, back to
her own car, her lips move as she murmurs something in the
Seminole language.

For a second, the sky darkens as if clouds block the sun.
Then all goes back to normal.

END ACT 2

BEGIN ACT 3

CUT TO:

32 EXT. GRAVEYARD - AFTERNOON

Micky parks the Mazda a good hundred feet away from the cemetery gate. She pops the trunk and gets out, and she retrieves a large duffel bag as Stella gets out and joins her.

MICKY

Okay, show me where everyone parked Friday. Especially this Matt guy.

They walk on the paving until they reach the area where the Fraidycats parked Friday night.

STELLA

Here's where Matt parked. These tracks that still have rain puddles in them.

MICKY

That's perfect. Give me a minute.

Micky unzips the duffel, takes out a quick-setting cast kit. She mixes plaster to make a cast of Matt's truck tire impressions.

MICKY

It'll take a few minutes for that to finish setting.

Taking a slow, careful look around, Micky uses her phone's camera function to snap pics of the few faint tread marks not totally destroyed by the rain.

SERIES OF SHOTS

--As Micky begins examining the area, sun's position is late afternoon.

--Stella shows Micky where the kids were sitting Friday night.

--Micky photographs shoe and boot prints.

--Kneeling, Micky picks up fibers and hairs with tweezers, dropping them into ziplock plastic baggies.

--When Micky finishes, sun's position is early sunset.

Micky carefully lifts the plaster cast of Matt's tire prints. She packs it safely, and puts away her forensics duffel in the Mazda's truck.

MICKY

Okay, Stella, let's get you home now. And then I'm going to pay Matt a visit.

CUT TO:

33

EXT. TRAILER - SUNSET

No. 29 in a trailer park.

Matt's truck with its monster tires is parked alongside a battered old minivan. Micky pauses to photograph the tires.

Then Micky knocks on the trailer's front door. It opens to reveal MRS. MARTIN, a tense-looking white woman in her 40s.

MRS. MARTIN

Hi, how can I help you?

Micky shows her deputy badge.

MICKY

Is Matt Martin home?

MRS. MARTIN

Oh God. Is my boy in trouble?

MICKY

No, ma'am. I think he may have seen something to do with a case I'm working. Can I just ask him a few questions?

MRS. MARTIN

(relieved)

Sure, come on in.

MICKY

I'd rather talk to him out here. When kids have to watch their language around their mothers, they get nervous and forget things.

MRS. MARTIN

I understand.

(turns inside)

Matthew! Come here, son!

Matt appears in the doorway behind his mother.

MATT

Who are you?

MRS. MARTIN

She's a Loveless County deputy, so just you mind your manners. Go on out, she wants to ask about something you've seen.

Mrs. Martin prods her son outside and shuts the door.

MATT

That damn lesbian.

MICKY

I'm guessing you don't mean your mother.

MATT

No. Stella Joney. She sent you after me, didn't she?

MICKY

If you mean, did she tell me you were the last person to see a girl who's gone missing, yes she did.

MATT

She really thinks I did something to hurt Bethany.

MICKY

Did you?

MATT

No! Why would I?

Micky studies Matt for a moment or two.

MICKY

Come on, I want to show you something.

She leads him to the Mazda's trunk, opens it, takes out her duffel bag of forensics supplies. Handling it carefully, she takes out the plaster cast of the tire print and shows it to him.

MICKY

If I take a cast from your truck's tires, over there, and send that

(MORE)

MICKY (cont'd)
cast and this one to a lab, you and
I both know they'll match. That
means I can physically prove you've
been to the cemetery.

Micky pauses, watching Matt's face. He stares at the cast
and doesn't speak.

MICKY
Stella says a bunch of kids were at
the cemetery Friday night. One of
them says they all left, but you
and Bethany stayed. That means I
can get witnesses to testify you're
the last person known to have
contact with Bethany. And that,
kid, makes you a suspect for some
kind of foul play. You following
me?

Still, Matt is silent.

MICKY
I don't want to put you in an
interrogation room to talk about
this, Matt. But I will, if I've got
to. Why don't you tell me what
happened after the other kids left
the cemetery.

MATT
I'm telling you, I didn't hurt her.

MICKY
Tell me whatever you know.

MATT
Me and Bethany went into the woods.
To--you know--do it.

MICKY
Okay, then what?

Matt hesitates. He can't look Micky in the face.

MATT
I dunno. Something knocked me
out... When I woke up, Bethany was
gone.

Silence hangs heavy between them as Micky stares at Matt,
and he looks anywhere but at her.

MICKY
Something knocked you out.

MATT
Yeah.

MICKY
And when you woke up, Bethany
wasn't there?

MATT
Yeah.

MICKY
This something that knocked you
out. Does he or she have a name?

MATT
I told you--I don't know.

MICKY
Okay. I believe you, mostly. You
didn't hurt Bethany.

Relieved, Matt finally looks Micky in the face.

MICKY
Something about whatever or whoever
knocked you out embarrasses you.
I'm not new to being a cop, you
know. I can read your face like a
book, kid. But whatever is
embarrassing you, I can see you
can't put a name to it.

MATT
So I can go?

MICKY
Nope.

MATT
But you just said you believe me.

MICKY
I do, but only you can show me
where in the woods you and Bethany
went. So go tell your mother I need
you to show me where an incident
I'm investigating happened.

Unhappy, Matt moves toward the trailer's front door.

MICKY

And on the way to the cemetery,
you're going to tell me whatever
you saw when you woke up that's got
you scared.

Matt, stunned, looks back at Micky.

As Matt opens the door and talks to Mrs. Martin, Micky takes
out her Android and keys in a number.

MICKY

Vivian? Micky Lee here. Can you put
me through to D.J. Tiger?...
Thanks.

(waits)

D.J., Micky. I'm going to search
the cemetery for Bethany Weber. She
was last seen there. I don't know
what I might run into, so I'd like
some backup.

D.J. (V.O.)

I'm on patrol 'til 11.

MICKY

Fine. Stay safe in your patrol car.
Me and the teenage boy who last saw
Bethany will search the cemetery
all by ourselves.

D.J. (V.O.)

All right, damn it, I'll help you.
Not for your sake, for the boy's.

MICKY

Meet you outside the gate.

Micky hangs up with a small, satisfied smile.

CUT TO:

34 EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Micky parks her Mazda just outside the cemetery gate. She
and Matt get out, and Micky takes a flashlight and her
forensics duffel out of the trunk once again.

D.J. parks his patrol car next to the Mazda and gets out.
He's wearing knee boots, and holding a flashlight of his
own.

CLOSE UP of an owl flying over the gate and perching in a tree, in the woods adjoining the cemetery. In only a couple of seconds, as we watch, the owl blends in with the tree like a chameleon.

MATT

Where do you want to start, Ms. Lee?

MICKY

First show me where you and Bethany walked in the woods. Maybe there's something there to indicate what happened to her.

MATT

I didn't see anything like that.

MICKY

But you're not a cop.

Matt looks at D.J., who shrugs. The three of them enter the cemetery, and Matt leads the way into the woods.

35 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Fog begins to obscure the ground--in fact the fog seems to come from the ground.

D.J.

This is really weird.

MICKY

What's weird?

D.J.

This fog. We had clear skies all day.

MICKY

Yeah, well, weather changes.

Matt slips and almost falls.

MATT

Shit! Can't we do this another time? I can't see where I'm stepping.

D.J. kneels and brushes his fingertips over the ground. It's muddy.

D.J.

This land has very good drainage.
It shouldn't be this wet a whole
day after a rain.

MICKY

Well, there's nothing we can do
about the conditions, and Bethany
is out in them somewhere.

They move on, going slow, D.J. and Micky shining their
flashlights all around. Micky and Matt are both slipping in
the mud frequently.

D.J.

Maybe we should take Matt back
home. Let him change into some
boots... You should change into
boots too, Micky, the ground seems
to be getting wetter.

MICKY

(not looking up)
I don't own any boots.

D.J.

Better go to Richards Square and
get some boots from the shoe store.
You can live or die by what you've
got on your feet, around here.
Especially if you have to go into
the swamp.

MICKY

(addressing DJ directly)
I'm not going anywhere until I've
searched every inch of the cemetery
and the surrounding area for
Bethany Weber.

D.J.

(muttering)
You're gonna have a hell of a time
searching if you break your neck...

Suddenly Micky slips and falls, with a yelp and a splash.
Her head is barely visible in the fog.

D.J. shines his flashlight on Micky. She's hip-deep in...

D.J.

Quicksand? What the hell, there's
never been quicksand anywhere near
here before.

MATT

Shit. What do we do?!

MICKY

For a start, you could grab the flashlight I dropped.

Matt scurries to do that.

D.J.

(disbelieving)

Good drainage is one of the reasons this land was chosen for the cemetery!

MICKY

D.J., I'm ass deep in mud. I'm really not interested in why somebody chose to put a cemetery here.

D.J. goes down on his knees as close to Micky as he can get without falling into the quicksand himself--about three feet away from her. He reaches out to her.

D.J.

Grab my hand.

MICKY

No.

D.J.

Are you crazy? If I don't pull you out, you'll drown!

MICKY

I've sunk as far as I can, already. A human body isn't as dense as quicksand. We float. But quicksand has a lot of viscosity. To pull me out, you'd need to use so much force you'd rip me in half.

MATT

You mean you can't get out?

MICKY

What I mean is, I've got to get myself out. Very slowly.

D.J.

How?

MICKY

I've just got to keep moving my legs. Very slowly. That lets water through to loosen the sand or clay.

SERIES OF SHOTS as Micky carefully moves to the edge of the quicksand, and gradually hauls herself out. When she's free she rolls onto her back and rests for a bit.

D.J.

Are you okay?

MICKY

Yeah. Just really tired.

MATT

Damn. How'd you know how to get out that crap?

MICKY

Physics classes.

D.J. and Matt exchange puzzled looks.

MICKY

I wasn't always planning to be a cop. I was interested in computers, but back then there were no such things as college degrees in computer science. So I majored in Cybernetics at UCLA, with a computers concentration. Cybernetics required a lot of physics and biology classes.

The two guys stare at her. Both look unnerved.

MICKY

What, you two think a Cybernetics degree means I'm some model of Terminator?

She gets to her feet and turns back toward the cemetery.

D.J.

(whispers to Matt)

That actually wouldn't surprise me much.

MICKY

I heard that. Come on, Matt, show
me the grave somebody messed with.

Matt catches up with Micky and leads the way to...

END ACT 3

BEGIN ACT 4

36 EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

...Hannah Osborne's grave.

CLOSE UP on the disturbed soil ... the owl feathers ... the blood not fully washed away by the rain.

Stricken, Micky reaches a trembling hand toward the bloodstained headstone.

DISSOLVE TO:

BEGIN FLASHBACK: "The Calculus of Burritos"

37 INT. DORM HALL - NIGHT

YOUNG MICKY and HANNAH sit across a table from each other. Calculus textbooks, pencils, and notepads are scattered all over the table.

Micky drops her pencil on her notepad and rubs her eyes.

YOUNG MICKY
Ugh. What time is it?

Hannah glances at her watch.

HANNAH
3 a.m.

YOUNG MICKY
I'm getting really hungry.

HANNAH
Me too. But the dining halls don't open 'til 6.

YOUNG MICKY
Let's go get burritos.

HANNAH
You realize every time we study for calculus exams together, we end up going out for burritos?

YOUNG MICKY
I can't help it. Something about derivatives and integrals makes me crave Mexican food.

Laughing, Hannah begins dividing her materials from Micky's.

HANNAH

That makes no sense. But ... me
too.

END FLASHBACK

DISSOLVE TO:

WE HEAR the call of the ghostly owl heard previously in the
TEASER: who-wooo, who-wooo...

Matt yips like a bitten puppy and hides behind D.J. His
actions startle Micky, who shakes her head just once to
clear it.

Micky trails the glow of her flashlight all over the grave
and the surrounding area, using her phone's camera function
to take photographs.

MICKY

Come here, Matt.

Matt edges closer to Micky, casting anxious glances around.

Micky switches her phone to record video and audio. She
holds it out toward Matt to be sure of capturing his words.

MICKY

Take a good look at the grave of
Hannah Osborne. On the way to the
cemetery you told me that on
Saturday morning you noticed one of
the graves had been desecrated, is
that correct?

MATT

I... What does "desecrated" mean?

D.J.

It means somebody messed it up.

MATT

(nods)
Oh. Yeah.

MICKY

Is the grave of Hannah Osborne the
one you saw "messed up" Saturday
morning?

MATT

Yes, ma'am.

MICKY

It is now Monday night. I find that the grave soil has been turned over, there are numerous feathers scattered around the headstone, and the headstone is stained with what appears to be blood. Are these the conditions you observed Saturday morning, Matt?

MATT

Yes, ma'am.

MICKY

Thank you for your statement. At a future date I will ask you to sign a written copy of what you have testified to here.

Micky moves away from Hannah's grave, examining one grave after another.

SERIES OF SHOTS as Micky scrutinizes all the graves between Hannah's and the cemetery gate, then backtracks and searches the area from Hannah's grave up the gentle slope to the area where the oldest graves and crypts are located. D.J. and Matt follow her at a slight distance.

As Micky reaches the enormous crypt where county founder Richard Loveless and the first few generations of his family are interred, WE HEAR again the ghostly owl: who-wooo, who-wooo...

Matt drops to his knees and begins to cry.

MATT

Oh God, please, don't let it get me...

MICKY

What? Don't let what get you?

MATT

Her... The woman who's an owl. Or an owl who's a woman. I don't know, I don't know...

Micky looks from Matt to D.J., who is obviously disturbed.

MICKY

D.J., you got any idea what all
this means?

D.J. swallows hard and shakes his head--maybe a little too
quickly.

MICKY

Okay...

Micky now turns her attention to the Loveless family crypt.
As she plays her flashlight's beam over the ground at the
vault's door, CLOSE UP of owl feathers strewn all around.

MICKY

Well, would you look at that.

She videos the feathers around the crypt's door.

CLOSE UP of the door itself, streaked with owl guano and
bloodstains.

Micky knocks on the stone door with the side of her fist.

MICKY

Bethany? Are you in here?

They all three listen for a response ... but they don't get
one.

Micky inspects the padlock on the door. It is old and rusty,
but when she pulls on it the lock stays shut.

MICKY

Damn it. Will you try it, D.J.?

D.J.

Not unless we get a warrant. I
don't want the cemetery management
or the Loveless family upset at the
Sheriff's Department.

MICKY

You're joking, I hope.

D.J.

I sure am not.

MICKY

Either Bethany Weber is inside this
vault, or a grave vandal who
probably knows what's happened to
her has been inside there. And

(MORE)

MICKY (cont'd)
 you're telling me a girl's life is
 less important than keeping
 everybody happy with the Sheriff's
 Department?

D.J.
 You've got no reason to believe the
 girl is in there. Or the rest of
 what you said either.

MICKY
 I beg to differ with you.

Careful not to disturb anything, Micky kneels in front of
 the door. She shines her flashlight on the crack between the
 door and the crypt floor.

CLOSE UP on two owl feathers partially protruding from the
 vault's interior.

D.J.
 I'll be damned...

MICKY
 Quite possibly, but that's a topic
 for a different conversation. Who
 manages this cemetery?

D.J.
 Uh... Blessed Rest.

Nodding, Micky taps keys on the Android. She taps the
 screen, then holds the phone to her ear.

MICKY
 (after a pause)
 Nobody is answering the phone.

D.J.
 It's probably an office number.
 There wouldn't be anybody there in
 the middle of the night.

MICKY
 Fine, so who owns Blessed Rest?

But she's not asking D.J., she's ended the call and she's
 tapping keys as she searches the Internet.

MICKY

Okay, now to wake somebody up...

(pause)

I'm with the Loveless County Sheriff's Department--my name is Micky Lee. I need someone to come to the cemetery and unlock a vault.

(listens)

The name over the door is Loveless, just like the county.

(listens)

What do you mean I'm out of luck?!

(listens)

I'm trying to find a missing girl. I don't give a trapeze act's flying fuck about anybody's last will and testament.

(listens)

Plan on replacing the padlock, then.

Furious, Micky ends the call. She puts down her duffel bag and inspects its contents by flashlight.

MICKY

Shit. D.J., have you got a tire iron in your car?

D.J.

Yeah.

MICKY

How about bringing it here?

D.J.

I really think we should get a w--

MICKY

Never mind. I'll be back in a minute.

Micky sprints back to the Mazda, opens the trunk, removes the tire iron and a mallet, sprints back to the Loveless family crypt.

She inserts the business end of the tire iron as far inside the lock as she can get it. Then she hammers it in until the lock breaks.

However ... when Micky tries to open the door, it's stuck.

She wedges the business end of the tire iron between the frame and the door's edge. Levering with all her might, she barely manages to budge the door a tiny fraction of an inch. Again she tries, and again, perspiring with her exertions, but progress is achingly slow.

Matt looks from Micky to D.J., then back again.

MATT

Here, ma'am, let me give it a try.

Matt and Micky trade places. With a mighty heave that makes his muscles stand out in his arms, Matt pries the door ajar. He and Micky then work together to open it wide enough for Micky to slip inside.

END ACT 4

BEGIN TAG

It is, as mentioned previously, an enormous crypt. Micky proceeds slowly, playing her flashlight's beam over every step before she moves forward, inspecting the name on each sarcophagus as she goes.

WE HEAR faint, furtive sounds ... a draft of air circulating through the halls? rats or insects scuttling about? ... whispers of the dead...?

Finally the beam of Micky's flashlight finds flesh:

Bethany Weber lies face-up on top of a sarcophagus, on which is engraved the name "Anna Loveless."

Micky takes the girl's hand and feels her wrist for a pulse.

She taps keys on her phone, squinting in the glow of the flashlight.

MICKY

D.J., I've found Bethany. She's
alive ... but unconscious,
unresponsive. We're going to need
emergency medical and crime scene
analysts.

D.J. (V.O.)

I'll call it in now.

CLOSE UP of Bethany. Lying catatonic upon the top of the sarcophagus, she looks like a beautiful young corpse.

END TAG

FADE OUT