

TOUCH

Written by

Scott Timmins

(Copyrighted 2007)

2306 Highland Ave Drexel Hill PA 19026
(610)731-5570

INT. MORGUE NIGHT

CLOSE UP OF A SET OF HANDS PULLING OPEN A DRAWER

TWO POLICE OFFICERS, off to the right side of the opened drawer, look at the body on display, faces registering looks of sadness at what they see. The MORGUE OPERATOR, standing next to the two officers looks across to the man standing on the right side of the drawer.

CLOSE UP OF THE DEAD PERSON'S RIGHT HAND

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM NIGHT

PASTOR JOHN BARTON quietly exits his daughter's room. As he shuts the door we SEE 14 YEAR-OLD MICHELLE BARTON sitting on her bed, eyes moist, a blank look on her face.

INT. LUTHERAN CHURCH PULPIT MORNING

Pastor Barton stands before his congregation delivering his sermon

PASTOR BARTON

God touches our lives each and every day, in ways we may never recognize. We can do the same. With loved ones, neighbors, a stranger. It could be the simplest of gestures; a smile, a hug, a good deed, listening. Everything we do, directly or indirectly, can touch so many, can be so powerful. Everything we do can touch so many, indirectly and directly. Allow God into your heart, to be God-like. In doing so you can help share His love with one another.

Michelle sits in the front pew, watching her father with a dead, blank stare.

INT. TEACHER'S CONFERENCE ROOM NIGHT

Pastor Barton and his WIFE JOAN sit listening to a teacher.

TEACHER

Michelle's a very bright girl and until this year, a straight A student. But as you know her grades have been gradually slipping. More disturbing, she's become withdrawn and gets easily agitated as the year has progressed. At first I thought maybe the move to high school might have been a reason why, but I think it may be deeper than that. That's why I thought it was important to meet with both of you, to see if you have noticed the difference at home, too. Or if there are any problems at home. I know 14 can be an awkward age.

PASTOR BARTON

We both find this rather surprising. We knew her grades have been suffering a bit her first year in high school but...she's a hard worker, very smart, studies every night, does her homework.

INT. BARTON DINING ROOM NIGHT

Michelle sits and stares at her plate, occasionally poking at the food with her fork with a blank stare. Her father tries not to notice. Her mother, however, looks at her, then at her husband, with a troubled look on her face.

PASTOR BARTON (V.O.)

She hasn't shown any signs at home of being withdrawn...has she, Joan?

INT. TEACHER'S CONFERENCE ROOM NIGHT

Mrs. Barton gently nods her head no, looking uncomfortable. The teacher studies her response.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Michelle slips on headphones and begins listening to TORI AMOS' "Silent All These Years", closes her eyes.

INT. ROB JOHNSON'S HOUSE NIGHT

A party is taking place. Drinking, talking, dancing, making out. 17 year-old Michelle is standing in a corner by herself, holding a red solo cup, watching the partying. She is wearing a red buttoned top and a mid-thigh black skirt. She notices RICK ANDERSON looking at her from across the room, who is standing with his buddies as they talk. He gives her a smile. She returns the smile. Michelle's best friend, STEPHANIE BOWMAN, sees this and walks over to her.

STEPHANIE

Hey, girl, what's going on?

Michelle shrugs her shoulders as she sips from her cup.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Doing the anti-social, she thing again I see. Guys *love* that.

They both laugh.

MICHELLE

Yep. That's my game plan. Works every time.

STEPHANIE

Looks like it's working on Rick.

Steph smiles, Michelle gives her the devil eye.

MICHELLE

He's just hammered and horny. Pickings must be slim if he's checking me out.

STEPHANIE

Please! Give yourself some credit. You're hot and you know it. Plus you got that 'Pastor's Daughter' angle going for you, too.

MICHELLE

Oh yeah! Angel on the outside, wanting to be a devil slut on the inside, just *waiting* for the right guy to tear me away from God.

They both start laughing.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Except, you know, I'm already a slut so that's why he's staring now.

They bring their cups together in a toast as they laugh.

STEPHANIE

Maybe. Maybe. But Rick's a cool
guy. Give him a chance.

Michelle smirks at her as she finishes what's in her cup.

MICHELLE

I'm dry. Need more so I can go home
drunk. It's what my dad doesn't
want.

Steph shakes her disapprovingly.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Need a refill?

STEPHANIE

No, I'm fine, devil slut from hell.

Michelle turns and walks towards the kitchen, turning her
head to Steph, giving her a wink.

MICHELLE

Jealous much?

INT. ROB JOHNSON'S KITCHEN NIGHT

Michelle is pouring some grapefruit juice into her cup as
Rick walks in without her noticing. She puts the juice
container down then walks to the fridge, opens the freezer
and pulls out a bottle of vodka.

RICK

A vodka girl, eh?

Michelle turns and sees him, smiles, then turns back to the
bottle, opens it.

MICHELLE

At Rob's house, yes. His family
only serves the best.

She starts pouring vodka into her cup. A lot of vodka. Rick
watches amused.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Grey Goose gets me every time.
Usually it's Bankers at everyone
else's house.

She finally finishes pouring.

RICK
Would you like some grapefruit
juice with your bottle?

Michelle puts the bottle back into the freezer, turns to him,
smiling.

MICHELLE
Very observant of me tonight, Rick.

Rick looks a little off guard.

RICK
What do you mean?

MICHELLE
You've been checking me out all
night.

Rick smiles.

RICK
Have I?

Michelle chuckles.

MICHELLE
Yeah. I'm pretty observant despite
being anti-social.

RICK
Sorry for being so blatant. I guess
I have to work on my staring
technique.

Michelle smiles, takes a long gulp from her glass.

RICK (CONT'D)
You sure you should be drinking
like that?

MICHELLE
Have you asked other girl's the
same question tonight? Don't guys
like you want girl's drunk?

RICK
I don't operate that way, so no.
I'm asking simply because you're a
pastor's daughter.

MICHELLE
Meaning?

RICK
 Won't you burn in hell, or at least
 get struck by lightning?

MICHELLE
 Living is hell, Rick. Haven't been
 lucky enough to be struck yet. And
 I've been caught before. And yet,
 I'm still here.

RICK
 An anti-social, rebellious
 religious girl with killer legs
 gone bad. If this is hell, I'm
 signing up.

They both laugh. Michelle slowly walks past him, out of the kitchen and into the large living room, where things have quieted down and lots of people have left. Rick follows behind her. Michelle turns, faces him, and chugs her drink to Rick astonishment. Michelle smiles proudly when she's done, then wobbles a bit.

RICK (CONT'D)
 You okay?

MICHELLE
 If the room stops spinning, I'll be
 fine.

Rick grabs her cup and sits in on a table, then takes her hand and leads her to an empty love seat where she sits, him sitting next to her.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
 Thanks.

RICK
 You okay?

MICHELLE
 Yeah, I'm okay.

Rick smiles nervously.

RICK
 Why drink so much tonight?

MICHELLE
 Why not?

They sit there, facing each other closely.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Why?

RICK

Why what?

MICHELLE

Why me? Why tonight?

RICK

Because I like you?

MICHELLE

Rick, we've been going to school together since first grade. We're seniors. It took you 12 years for you to like me?

Rick looks uncomfortable.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Or am I the only remaining single here you haven't been with?

RICK

What do you mean by that? I think you're confusing me with Rob!

Michelle tilts her head not believing.

RICK (CONT'D)

Truth?

MICHELLE

Always.

RICK

I've always liked you, Michelle. I guess I've always been...been

MICHELLE

Been what?

RICK

Intimidated.

Michelle looks shocked.

MICHELLE

Intimidated? By *little old me??*
Why?

RICK

First, your beauty.

Rick starts to turn red. Michelle looks at him at first like he's BSing her, then sees him blush, knows he's telling the truth.

RICK (CONT'D)
Second...as the years have gone by
you *have* become rather...anti-
social. Quiet.

Michelle turns her head down.

RICK (CONT'D)
And the whole 'pastor's daughter'
thing. I guess I've been afraid of
pissing off your dad and God.

Rick laughs. Michelle looks back at him with a serious expression on her face.

MICHELLE
Thank you for being honest. Really.

She smiles warmly at him, and he returns the smile. Then her face grows serious again.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
But you have nothing to fear with
God because he doesn't exist.

Rick laughs, sees she's serious, cuts off the laugh, then backs away from her.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Why did you back up?

RICK
I don't want to get hit with that
lightning bolt that's about to hit
you.

He searches Michelle's face for a smile that never comes.

MICHELLE
And regarding my dad...there's
nothing to fear. He has little
meaning on my life.

Rick looks at her expression and knows this is a sore point. He reaches into his pocket, pulls out a pack of cigarettes.

RICK
Step outside for some fresh air and
smoke in our lungs?

Michelle grabs the pack from him, turns it to read the warning label.

MICHELLE

Good. This pack causes lung and heart disease. I like this pack.

She stands up, wobbling a bit, and walks to the patio door with Rick's cigarettes in her hands.

EXT. PATIO NIGHT LATER

Michelle pulls two cigarettes from Rick's pack and holds out her hand. Rick looks at her and then realizes she needs his lighter. He pulls it from his pack and hands it to her. She places both cigarettes in her mouth and lights them with hands that are shaking a little, which Rick notices. She hands him a cigarette.

MICHELLE

Thank you.

Rick nods his head as they smoke.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

What time is it?

She's nodding towards his left hand. He brings his wrist up and looks at his watch.

RICK

It shall be 11:45. Why? What time do you have to ne home.

MICHELLE

Twelve.

RICK

Can I drive you home?

MICHELLE

How much have you had to drink?

RICK

I'm fine.

MICHELLE

Seriously, Rick. How much have you had to drink?

RICK

I guess about 6 beers.

Michelle shakes her head.

MICHELLE

Promise me. If we have an accident
you only kill us, no one else.

Rick laughs out loud. Michelle stands seriously.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Promise me.

He sees her seriousness.

RICK

Deal.

Michelle finishes her cig and tosses the butt.

MICHELLE

Let's go. And if I'm late...oh
well.

She smiles and walks past Rick, whose smile is huge.

INT. RICK'S CAR NIGHT

Michelle and Rick are parked on a dark, empty street kissing. Rick's left hand slowly travels down Michelle's neck until it finds her right breast. He starts to squeeze it but Michelle brings her hand up to stop him. While still kissing passionately Rick attempts to unbutton Michelle's red top and again she stops him. She stops kissing.

MICHELLE

I'm sorry. I'm not ready for that.

Rick slightly smiles back at her and then leans in and starts kissing her even more passionately. His left hand drops to Michelle's right thigh, his fingers slowly working up between her legs. Irritated, Michelle stops kissing him and pushes his hand off her.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ, Rick, If I'm not
ready to be felt up I'm not ready
to be fingered.

Rick backs off, frustrated. Michelle is breathing heavy with anger, disappointment.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Is that the only reason why you came on to me tonight...to get lucky?

Rick can see how upset she is, moves off of her and back into his seat fully.

RICK

I'm sorry! It's the alcohol.

MICHELLE

Right. There's always a reason for men to act like passive aggressive assholes.

Michelle reaches into Rick's shirt pocket and takes his pack of cigarettes, startling Rick. He quickly gives her his lighter from his pants pocket. Michelle places a cigarette into her mouth, brings the lighter to it. Rick can see her hand is trembling.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Why should you be any different.

She lights her cigarette, hands the lighter back to him, not even looking at him anymore. Michelle takes a long drag and then exhales the smoke. She looks out the front windshield, hand shaking the cigarette, voice quivering, her stare blank.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

What do cattle ranchers do with their steer?

Rick's face shows confusion.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

They brand it.

Before Rick can act, Michelle lifts her skirt up exposing her left thigh and brings the lit end of her cigarette and puts it out on her thigh.

RICK

Fuck! What are you doing???

He reaches and grabs the cigarette from her trembling hand and throws it out his window. Michelle's eyes are filled with tears as she sits, her whole body shivering. Rick reaches across her and opens his glove compartment and pulls out some napkins, then turns to reach for something on the back driver's side floor. It's a water bottle. He quickly opens it and pours some on a bunch of napkins and starts dabbing Michelle's wounded thigh, which is now blistering.

RICK (CONT'D)
Michelle? Why...why did you do
that?

Michelle sits quietly, a single tear coming down her face.
Rick turns his attention back to her thigh.

RICK (CONT'D)
I'm really sorry! I didn't mean to
upset you.

Rick's voice matches his shame and guilt.

RICK (CONT'D)
I'm an asshole.

Michelle sits, blindly staring straight ahead. Without
looking, she reaches a hand down to Rick's on her thigh with
the wet napkin. Touching his hand snaps her out of her
depressed trance. She turns to look at him as she removes his
hand off the napkin.

MICHELLE
It's okay, Rick.

Holding the napkin in her hand, placed on the burn, she turns
to him, her tears drying up.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Can you take me home now?

Rick nods yes and turns on the car.

INT. RICK'S CAR LATER

Rick's car pulls up in front of the BARTON HOUSE, which is
located next to the LUTHERAN CHURCH her father is the pastor
at.

RICK
Are you alright?

Michelle nods yes, not looking at him, looking straight
ahead.

RICK (CONT'D)
Not to make anything worse tonight,
but it's 12:30. Are you going to
get in trouble?

The front porch light turns on as soon as the words escape
his mouth.

RICK (CONT'D)

Shit.

Michelle turns her head towards the porch and can see her dad's silhouette through the front door. She wipes her face with the napkin.

MICHELLE

It doesn't matter.

She lowers her head to look at the blister on her thigh, speaks very low, almost to herself.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Nothing is going to matter anymore.

RICK

Wha...what did you say?

Michelle catches herself, turns to Rick, gives him a fake smile.

MICHELLE

I'm okay, really.

Their eyes connect. What Rick sees in her eyes troubles him.

RICK

Michelle? Are...are you really okay?

Again, Michelle gives him a fake smile that can't hide her sadness.

RICK (CONT'D)

I can tell your dad you being late is my-

MICHELLE

Rick, please stop. Everything is going to be fine now.

With that, another tear comes down her cheek. Rick looks very worried. Michelle pulls down her skirt, which causes her face to grimace in pain. She reaches for the car door handle and opens it. She turns to Rick, sadness in her eyes.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Bye.

She exits the car, Rick opens his door and stands.

RICK

You sure you're going to be okay?

She gives him another fake smile, nods yes.

RICK (CONT'D)
See you Monday?

With the same fake smile on her face, she turns away and starts walking towards the porch and the figure of her dad at the front door.

INT. BARTON LIVING ROOM LATER

Michelle walks in through an already opened front door, past her father as if he's not there. As she approaches the bedroom steps she hears the door slam behind her, causing her to briefly stop.

PASTOR BARTON
Excuse me?

Michelle closes her eyes but doesn't turn around to face him.

PASTOR BARTON (CONT'D)
Your curfew is Midnight. It's quarter to one.

Michelle purses her lips, opens her eyes.

MICHELLE (BARELY AUDIBLE)
Congrats. You can tell time.

PASTOR BARTON
What did you say?

Michelle says nothing, stopped on the first step, her left hand goes into a clench.

PASTOR BARTON (CONT'D)
What did you say, Michelle?

MICHELLE
Nothing. I was talking to myself.

PASTOR BARTON
I'm right here. Talk to me.

This causes Michelle to laugh sarcastically.

PASTOR BARTON (CONT'D)
Did I say something funny? Because there's nothing funny here.

Michelle closes her eyes again.

PASTOR BARTON (CONT'D)
Why are you late?

MICHELLE
I'm sorry. It won't happen again.

Her father doesn't appear angry as much as he looks very disappointed, agitated.

PASTOR BARTON
Why should I believe you?

Again, Michelle laughs sarcastically to herself.

PASTOR BARTON (CONT'D)
What is so funny?

MICHELLE
Nothing.

PASTOR BARTON
Turn and face me when I'm talking to you.

Michelle opens her moistened eyes, takes a deep breath and turns to face her dad. When their eyes connect something is passed between the two of them making both look uncomfortable, Michelle vulnerable as well.

MICHELLE
It won't happen again.

PASTOR BARTON
I want to know why you broke curfew again? Why are you late?

Michelle grows agitated.

MICHELLE
I was with a friend. We were parked. He was fingering me, daddy.

His eyes widen.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Is that too much detail, *dad*? And, yes, I reciprocated by giving him a hand job. We lost track of time because it felt really good, *daddy*.

They stand, staring at each other not knowing what to say or do next.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
 And, yeah, I'm drunk. So was he.
 And he drove me home.

Angry is now both hurt and angry, her father standing not knowing how to respond.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
 Guess we're both sinners...

Michelle turns towards the steps, closes her eyes, breathes deeply, a tear coming down her cheek.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
 Just like you, *dad*.

Michelle opens her eyes, more tears down her face, as she runs up the steps.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM LATER

Michelle slams the door behind her, locks it, and collapses onto the floor in front of the door. Tears are coming down her face, breathing heavily. She hears her dad's angry footsteps approaching the door.

PASTOR BARTON (O.S.)
 We need to talk, Michelle.

MICHELLE
 I'm sorry daddy. I'm sorry for everything.

She begins rocking in place.

PASTOR BARTON
 Open the door. We need to talk.

MICHELLE
 Jesus, dad. There's nothing to talk about. Punish me. It won't matter.

She pauses, wiping the tears from her face.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
 Talking won't solve this.

She puts her hands to her ears, still rocking.

INT. OUTSIDE MICHELLE'S BEDROOM DOOR

Her father looks saddened, almost ashamed.

PASTOR BARTON
I'm trying to understand why-

MICHELLE (O.S.)
Please daddy...just stop.
Just...stop. *Please.*

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Tears are rolling down her face, her ears covered by her hands.

PASTOR BARTON (O.S.)
Well...we'll talk in the morning
before service.

MICHELLE
I'm not going to church. Just hand
out your punishment because it just
doesn't matter anymore.

After a pause that seems forever to Michelle, she hears her father sigh deeply.

PASTOR BARTON (O.S.)
Get some sleep. We *will* talk in the
morning.

When she hears her father walk away she stands up, walks to her mirror on the wall, wiping away tears. She then moves to her bed and sits on it. She begins rocking again but without any tears. She slowly lifts up her skirt, looks at her burn. She lifts the skirt higher and we see X marks cut into the top of her thigh. She brings her left hand down, index finger extended out. She pokes the wound, causing her to wince in pain. She looks again at herself in the mirror while still sitting.

MICHELLE
It just doesn't matter anymore,
daddy.

She turns her attention to her open bedroom window, curtain swaying from an outside breeze. She stands, moves to the window, opens the screen.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
The pain ends tonight.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS NIGHT

We see Michelle walking moonlit streets, emotionless.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS LATER

Michelle comes to an embankment, takes a deep breath, then proceeds down, walking past bushes, litter and trees until she reaches a gravel patch at ground level. She STARES AT TRAINTRACKS. With another deep breath, she walks across the gravel until she reaches the tracks. Closing her eyes, Michelle walks inside the tracks and stops. When she opens her eyes, they are moist with tears. FAR OFF IN THE DISTANCE WE HEAR A TRAIN HORN. Michelle begins walking inside the tracks towards the sound until WE SEE TRAIN LIGHTS OFF IN THE DISTANCE and again hear its horn. She continues walking towards the lights which are getting closer, Michelle's eyes filling with tears.

SUDDENLY, SHE HEARS A CELL PHONE RINGTONE. With the lights getting closer and the horn louder, Michelle looks up the right side embankment and SEES THE GLOW OF A CELL PHONE. The train horn blaring closer.

As in a trance and no longer crying, Michelle steps away from the tracks, the train's lights bearing closer to where she has just left. Michelle follows the glow and sound of the cell. As she reaches the cell phone, the train blasts past her, causing the leaves and litter and brush to swirl and fly, uncovering a DEAD BODY OF A YOUNG GIRL, feet away from the cell phone.

With eyes opened wide, still emotionless, Michelle bends to see the phone, the screen reading "MOM". Michelle stands and moves to the body as the sound of the train is deafening. When she reaches the body she kneels next to it. She sees that the girl's throat is slashed, her skirt lifted high exposing the girls privates but partially covered with leaves and trash.

When the train finally passes by, a eerie silence settles in. Again, the cell begins to ring again, and again it reads "MOM". Michelle swallows deeply and slowly lifts her right hand out.

CLOSE UP OF MICHELLE'S HAND ABOUT TO TOUCH THE DEAD GIRL'S HAND, THE MUSIC OF THE CELL PLAYING DISTINCTIVELY EVANESCENCE'S "WHISPER" AND THE LYRICS "DEATH BEFORE MY EYES, LYING NEXT TO ME I FEAR SHE BECKONS ME SHALL I GIVE IN"

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS LATER

Police car lights can be seen from above the embankment. Dozens of police officers roam or stand about the crime scene, talking, looking searching the crime scene.

DETECTIVE ROBERT SCHMIDT, in his mid thirty's, stands next to the body as the coroner is kneeling, examining the body. He brushes away the liter and leaves from the dead girl's private area. The detective turns away from the horror being displayed. The coroner looks deeply disturbed as well.

CORONER

She's definitely carved up like the girl from last week. Only been dead a few hours.

The coroner covers the body with a sheet.

DET. SCHMIDT

How long have you been the coroner here?

The coroner looks up, gravely.

CORONER

Twenty five years.

DET. SCHMIDT

Thirteen for me. I grew up in this county. Has there ever been a serial killer?

He stands up, faces the detective.

CORONER

I've never seen anything like these two the past two weeks...Has there ever been a serial killer during my time as coroner in this county? No. But it appears we do now.

The coroner lowers his eyes, starts heading up the embankment.

A police officer approaches Schmidt.

DET. SCHMIDT

Where's the girl who discovered the body?

OFFICER

She's with the EMTs.

The officer points up the embankment.

DET. SCHMIDT

Were you first to arrive?

OFFICER

Yes. We called in for help immediately to corner off the entire area until you and forensics could come in.

DET. SCHMIDT

No ID found?

OFFICER

Only her cell phone. Forensics has it to get fingerprints.

DET. SCHMIDT

Thanks.

The officer stares down at the body, clears his throat, visibly upset.

OFFICER

Never seen anything like this. Jesus, who could do such a thing? I have two daughters about her age...

His words run dry as he shakes his head and walks away. The detective looks up the embankment at Michelle, sitting on the ledge of an ambulance, blanket wrapped around her.

EXT. TOP OF EMBANKMENT LATER

Detective Schmidt approaches Michelle, still wrapped in a blanket, visibly shivering.

DET. SCHMIDT

Michelle Barton?

Michelle looks up at the detective, nods.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)

My name is Detective Robert Schmidt. You can call me Robert. Okay?

He forces a smile but Michelle doesn't respond, sitting quietly, shivering.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)

Did you know the victim?

Michelle nods "no".

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
I know what you found
was...disturbing and I can't
imagine how you must be feeling but
I have to ask you a few questions.

Michelle sits silently, blank look on her face. An EMT comes to Michelle with a glass of water and hands it to her, Michelle's hands visibly shaking.

MICHELLE
Thank you.

Michelle takes a drink, clears her throat, looks at the detective.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
<deadpanned> Okay. I'm ready.

Schmidt is caught by surprise by her directness.

DET. SCHMIDT
Are you okay?

MICHELLE
Never better. You?

DET. SCHMIDT
I've had better nights.

He looks down to the crime scene and all of the officers combing the area.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
Your parents are on their way. They
should be here soon.

Michelle lowers her head.

MICHELLE
A perfect ending to a perfect
night.

There is an uncomfortable pause as the detective studies Michelle's body language.

DET. SCHMIDT
Were you out tonight?

Michelle doesn't look at him, doesn't respond.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
Maybe drinking or smoking something
you shouldn't have been smoking?

Michelle raises her eyes to meet his with eyes that say "come on!" but says nothing.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
Michelle? What were you doing on
the train tracks at 1:30 in the
morning?

Michelle quickly turns her eyes away from his, lowers her head. There is another pause. Then Michelle looks up at him.

MICHELLE
Aren't you supposed to be asking me
questions about the girl I found?

DET. SCHMIDT
Yes.

MICHELLE
Then why are you acting like a dad?

DET. SCHMIDT
Because I'm trying to understand
why our witness was standing in the
middle of the train tracks before
she discovered the body.

Michelle looks embarrassed by this, looks down, her body beginning to rock. The detective knows he's hit a nerve.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
I spoke to the train conductor. He
reported a young girl standing in
the middle of the tracks as his
freighter was approaching. He had
to put on his brakes because he
didn't think you were going to
move.

Michelle begins shaking more visibly underneath the blanket, her body rocking more.

MICHELLE
What does this have to do that girl
down there?

DET. SCHMIDT
I don't know. But I have a feeling
had you not discovered her body
when you did, we might putting two
bodies in this ambulance instead of
one.

Michelle slowly looks up at the detective, a guilty, vulnerable look on her face.

MICHELLE

I...I...

Her words stop as she closes her eyes. Schmidt knows there is something troubling Michelle beyond finding the body.

DET. SCHMIDT

Listen. I'm sorry for prying. I'm just trying to understand why you were here...what you were doing in the middle of the train tracks.

He sees her rocking her body more.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)

You've been through enough. The Breathalyzer proves you were drinking. You are not a suspect. When your parents come you can go home with them, but I will tell them I'll need to see you tomorrow for more questions, after you sober up and maybe the shock has worn-

MICHELLE

I...I reached out my hand to touch hers...

Michelle's rocking stops, her eyes close, tears running down her face. As she nervously adjusts herself on the ledge, the blanket falls open, her thigh hiked up exposing the burn mark on her thigh which the detective notices.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

I touched her hand and-

She opens her eyes, stares into the detective's eyes. Her facial expression changes. She looks like a little girl with a big secret she's afraid to tell.

DET. SCHMIDT

What happened, Michelle?

A car door is heard closing behind her as the voice of her mother calls out her name. She doesn't take her eyes off his, pleading with them to get something out of her.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)

Michelle?

Their trance is broken when her parents see her and come running to her. Michelle shakes her head as if she's trying to shoo a fly away.

MICHELLE

Do you believe in Fate, Robert?

He doesn't know how to respond as her parents come to her, her mom embracing her. Schmidt watches as her mother lets go and her dad attempts to put his arms around her. Michelle's body goes stiff, dead, tries to back away. Michelle's eyes looks over at the detective's and they lock on one another.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM LATER

Her mom is sitting on Michelle's bed, tucking her in. She leans in and kisses Michelle on the forehead, tears in her eyes. They look like they want to say something to each other, but can't as the silence takes over the room. Finally, her mom stands, collects herself.

MRS. BARTON

The detective wants us to bring you to the station tomorrow after service-

MICHELLE

I'm not going to service.

Mrs. Barton eyes drop sadly, doesn't look at Michelle.

MRS. BARTON

Whether you go tomorrow or not, that's between you and your father. But afterwards you have to meet up with the detective for more questions.

Her mom turns to face Michelle, a look of shame, guilt displayed on hers. Again, she looks like she wants to say something to her daughter, but she says nothing.

MICHELLE

Mom?

MRS. BARTON

You sleep well tonight. We'll try to get past this night best we can.

Michelle's eyes are pleading with her mom to say something and her mom's show she knows this, but instead, she lowers herself to again kiss Michelle on her forehead.

MRS. BARTON (CONT'D)

I love you.

She turns and as she walks out of the room she turns off the light and closes the door, tears visible in her eyes.

Michelle collapses on her bed, both hands on her forehead, eyes closed tightly. She tries to collect her emotions, both hands slowly going through her hair. Her eyes open as she brings her right hand before her eyes.

MICHELLE (BARELY AUDIBLE)

I was drunk...I was drunk...

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM MORNING

Michelle stands by her window, looking out as she watches her parents walk from their house to the Lutheran church, which is right next door. Michelle's cell phone rings.

STEPHANIE (V.O.)

I see them going to church.

MICHELLE

Cost is clear.

Michelle turns away when she sees her parents enter the church.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Did you get me cigarettes?

STEPHANIE (V.O.)

Yeah, against my better judgment.

MICHELLE

Thanks. The front door is open.

STEPHANIE (V.O.)

Okay.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM LATER

Michelle's bedroom door opens and Stephanie walks in. Michelle stands from her bed and both girls hug deeply.

STEPHANIE

Are you alright?

Michelle nods her head on Steph's shoulder. The embrace ends, Steph holds her at arms length, looks deep into her eyes.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
It's all over the news but they
aren't releasing your name or the
girl's.

MICHELLE
Carla Dunham.

Steph looks surprised at this response.

STEPHANIE
All three stations said they
haven't been able to identify her.

Michelle walks to her bed, sits on the edge.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Did they tell you that last night?

Michelle lowers her head, then nods "no". Steph looks
puzzled.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Did they tell you that this
morning?

Again, with her head down, Michelle nods "no".

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Did you know her?

Michelle repeats the same action. Steph moves closer to
Michelle.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Then how do yo-

MICHELLE
I don't know.

Looking a bit confused herself, Michelle looks up at
Stephanie.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
I can't answer that question,
Steph.

Their eyes lock, Michelle adjusts herself uncomfortably on
the bed. Stephanie knows not to pursue for an answer.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Before you turn on the spotlight to
grill me...did you bring

Before Michelle can finish, Stephanie pulls out a pack of Kool from her jeans pocket and tosses them to her. She reaches back in and pulls out a lighter which she also tosses to Michelle.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Kools! Nice. You remembered!

Steph shakes her head disapprovingly as she watches Michelle open the pack, pulls one out and lights it.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Come on, mom. I just went through an *ordeal*.

Watches Michelle exhale.

STEPHANIE
True. And it *is* better than drinking.

Michelle nods with a smile as she exhales again.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Not worried your parents are going to smell this sure to be chain-smoking when they get home?

Michelle stands, walks to her window, lifts the screen and taps ashes, turning back to Stephanie, chuckling.

MICHELLE
I'm already grounded for the next month until we graduate. What are they going to do, tell me I can't go to Wildwood for the summer with you?

Stephanie walks over to Michelle at the window.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
And, besides, I'll just tell them you were the one smoking.

Smiling, Stephanie pokes Michelle on her arm, then grabs the pack Michelle has placed on the windowsill.

STEPHANIE
Well, in *that* case Lindsay Lohan.

They both laugh as Stephanie lights one up. There is silence. An awkward silence, which Steph breaks as she watches Michelle toss her cigarette out the window and lights up a new one.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Michelle...what happened last
night? I mean, what *really* happened
last night?

Michelle looks into Stephanie's eyes, looks sheepish. She opens her mouth to speak, stops, tosses the barely smoked cigarette out the window and goes to her bed, where she sits down. Steph throws her's out, too, and comes to Michelle, sitting next to her.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
We've been friends forever. And we have a BFF radar. You know when I'm hiding something and I know when you're hiding something. We know when to push for answers and we know when to back off.

Michelle fidgets her position on the bed.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
I know you and your dad were so close up until 4 years ago. And I've respected you not to push as to why, though I have tried. I guess some things are best kept to one's self.

Michelle looks up and Stephanie.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
And you know whenever you're ready to open up, I will always be there.

Michelle's eyes convey gratitude as she nods "yes" slowly.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
But this? Last night? I'm sorry but I'm going to push until I get answers-

MICHELLE
I found a dead girl. What's the big deal about that, other than I found a dead girl?

Michelle uncomfortably laughs hoping Steph will follow, but she doesn't.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Really, I don't know why the concern here, Steph.

Stephanie gives her a hard, I want answers look.

STEPHANIE
This isn't about that poor girl.
It's about...

Steph stands up, exhales deeply.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Why were you on the train tracks
last night after leaving with Rick?

Michelle stands, goes back to her window, pulls out another
smoke and lights up.

MICHELLE
Things didn't go so well with me
and Rick. I guess once you get a
slut rep, it sticks.

Stephanie walks towards Michelle, stops behind her, can see
Michelle's fingers trembling as she smokes.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
When I got home, very late, me and
my dad got into it. I tried to
sleep off everything but couldn't.
So I snuck out and took a walk to
clear my head, try to separate what
was the alcohol and what was me
inside my head.

Stephanie reaches her arms out to Michelle's back, turns her
gently to face her.

STEPHANIE
I buy it all. Especially the slut
part.

They share a much needed laugh.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
What I don't buy is the "walk to
clear my head".

Michelle lowers her eyes and to escape having to face Steph,
she turns back to the window, tosses out her butt and then
grabs another from the pack and lights another, hand visibly
shaking.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Those tracks are on the other side
of town.

(MORE)

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

People don't walk inside the tracks to clear their head, especially when there's a train baring down on them.

Michelle, looking challenged, turns to Stephanie.

MICHELLE

I wasn't walking inside the tracks.

STEPHANIE

One of the advantages of having a police officer as your dad is you get inside information.

This catches Michelle off guard completely. She quickly turns back to the window, flicking ashes.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Come on, 'Chelle. I'm not playing 'concerned mom' or 'pissed-off dad' here. I'm not playing anything. I'm being a very concerned, worried best friend.

Michelle closes her eyes, takes another *long* drag, exhales the smoke outside her window slowly, then turns to face Stephanie.

MICHELLE

In a span of 10 minutes I went from making out with Rick, becoming a victim of my own reputation, to fighting with my dad. All while drunk. I'm sorry I lied to you. I was inside the tracks. I did go there with the possible intention of being smashed into a million pieces.

Michelle takes a deep breath, Stephanie looks horrified.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

But...but I didn't. It was just a thought. A drunken, pissed-off thought. But I'm still here.

She gives a half-smile to Stephanie.

STEPHANIE

But why, 'Chelle? What's going on inside that head of yours?

Michelle, knowing that she's told her best friend a lie, looks away, shrugs her shoulders.

MICHELLE

Steph, it was just a thought.
That's all.

STEPHANIE

A thought that brought you face to
face with a freight train!

Michelle moves for the pack but this time Stephanie stops her.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

You dodged the train. How about you
dodge cancer, too?

Stephanie takes the pack from her hands, walks to the bed where her pocketbook sits, opens it, throws the cigarettes inside and then pulls out a can of Febreze, which elicits a laugh from Michelle.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Always looking out for you, punk!

They both laugh as Steph starts spraying the room. When she's done, they both sit on the bed.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Do I have to worry about you?

Michelle smiles, nods "no".

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I know things have been rough here,
and now you're punished after
finding a dead girl. Fucked up. But
in three weeks, *three*, we're going
to be in Wildwood for the entire
summer. And I promise you, your
head is going to be cleaned,
everything will make sense, we're
going to have the kind of fun human
beings should *never* be allowed to
have.

They share a laugh.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

You're going to make it?

Smiling, Michelle nods "yes".

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
The finish line can be seen,
girlfriend! Once we make it there,
everything will make sense.

Michelle smirks at this.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Okay. Maybe that's pretentious
bullshit, but I'm going to major in
Marketing in September. I need to
hone my BS.

Again, they share a needed laugh. Stephanie then reaches out
to Michelle and they embrace.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
I'm going to leave that here.

Nods to the Febreeze sitting on the windowsill.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
But I'm confiscating these.

She puts the Kools into her pocketbook. Michelle gives her a
sarcastic sad face.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
You can have them back in *three*
weeks!

Michelle starts clapping her hands and barking like a seal.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Okay! That's the 'Chelle I know and
love!

They stand up as Stephanie opens the bedroom door.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
I'll call you tonight to get the
gory details of what you found. If
that's okay, won't send you into a
shock coma.

Michelle starts contorting her face and makes funny sounds.
They both laugh. Steph reaches out and gives Michelle one
more hug.

MICHELLE
Thank you, Steph.

They smile at each other, then Michelle watches her best
friend walk away.

EXT. STREET AFTERNOON

Michelle is walking home alone, carrying her book bag. Rick's car pulls up along side of her. At first she doesn't notice his car as she is in a dreamy state. His passenger side window comes down.

RICK

Hey!

She is startled, turns, smiles when she sees it's Rick.

MICHELLE

You been stalking me?

RICK

Yeah, for about two blocks now.

He gives her a devilish grin. She looks embarrassed.

MICHELLE

I'm sorry. Kinda out of it.

Rick pulls his car up to the curb.

RICK

Can I give you a ride home?

MICHELLE

You sure you want to be seen with a self-abusive, grounded crime scene victim?

RICK

As long as you're not afraid of getting into the car of a perverted dickhead.

This causes Michelle to finally grin. She opens the door and enters his car.

INT. RICK'S CAR LATER

Rick's car is idling half a block from Michelle's house.

RICK

I'm really sorry about Saturday night. I'm not like that, really.

MICHELLE

Apology accepted.

She looks down at her right leg, her skirt long enough to cover the burn mark.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
I'm really sorry, too, for the way
I reacted. I wish I could say
that's not like me but lately?

She looks up, sees Rick looking intently at her.

RICK
No need to apologize, Michelle. I
shouldn't have been such a dick.

Michelle jokingly nods yes, then grins.

RICK (CONT'D)
How's the burn?

MICHELLE
Healing.

They sit in an awkward silence.

RICK
Rough night for you.

Michelle nods slowly "yes".

RICK (CONT'D)
Want to talk about it?

Michelle looks at him with a kind smile but shakes her head "no".

RICK (CONT'D)
Fair enough. But if you ever want
to or need to here's my number.

He reaches for a pen in his car's glove box.

RICK (CONT'D)
Can I have your hand?

She looks at him quizzically but reaches out her left hand, which he takes and with the pen he writes his number on her wrist, then looks into her eyes with a bright smile.

RICK (CONT'D)
This is a much better tattoo than
the one Saturday night.

She almost blushes as she greets his smile with one of her own.

RICK (CONT'D)
I know you must be grounded...

Michelle shakes her head emphatically "yes"

RICK (CONT'D)
But I can offer up Rick's Limo
Service for rides to and from
school each day for the next two
weeks.

Michelle sits silently, Rick getting nervous with her
silence.

RICK (CONT'D)
Or not. I don't want to make you-

MICHELLE
Sounds great. Plus I'm all for
giving "perverted dickheads" a
second chance.

This causes both of them to laugh. Rick then reaches over,
takes Michelle's head in his hands and gives her a gentle
kiss on her lips. When they pull away both are smiling warmly
at each other.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Michelle is sitting on her bed, earphones playing music to
her, as she reads intently the newspaper. She looks pensive
as she reads. When done, she turns off her music, pulls out
her earphones and grabs her cell from her night stand. She
stands, opens the phone to make her call, laying the paper on
the bed.

CLOSE UP of the newspaper

It reads "Carla Durham's Body Identified". Below it, it reads
"Carla Durham's Viewing at McIntyre Funeral Home"

MICHELLE
Steph? Could you do me a big favor?

INT. STEPHANIE'S CAR NIGHT

Rain is pouring down as Stephanie is driving, Michelle in the
passenger seat. They are both quiet, Michelle looking a
little spooked. Stephanie looks over to her when she comes to
a red light.

STEPHANIE

You okay?

Michelle looks over to her, looking sad.

MICHELLE

I honestly don't know.

EXT. MCINTYRE'S FUNERAL HOME PARKING LOT NIGHT

The trees surrounding the parking lot sway from the unrelenting wind and rain. Stephanie is directed by someone with a flashlight to a parking spot.

INT. MCINTYRE'S FUNERAL HOME LATER

The two girls enter the funeral home, Steph closing her umbrella. Michelle's eyes immediately searching for the coffin sitting in the front of the room. It is surrounded by grieving people, the viewing line very long. Lots of crying, whispering. The two girls take their place at the end of the line. They come of picture stand that has many photos of Carla from her life. Michelle reaches her hand out for Stephanie's when they come to the stand with the pictures.

CLOSE UP of the pictures, from birth to present, with family, friends in them and also some of her alone.

Michelle stares at the pictures, almost as if in a trance. The line moves forward but Michelle doesn't notice.

STEPHANIE

'Chelle? You okay?

Michelle breaks from the trance, turns to Steph, nods "yes". They move forward. As they get closer, Steph notices sweat on Michelle's forehead. She also sees Michelle is turning pale.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Michelle? Are you sure you're okay?

Michelle stares at the coffin, at Carla's head, says nothing.

QUICK, DISTURBING IMAGE OF A CRUCIFIX COVERED IN BLOOD

Michelle acts like she's been hit with something, looks at Stephanie, her face pale, eyes wide with fear. Michelle shakes her head no and quickly exits the line.

INT. STEPHANIE'S CAR LATER

Stephanie drives as Michelle sits silently looking out the rain-drenched window. Stephanie keeps looking over, wanting to say something. When the car reaches a red light, Stephanie speaks.

STEPHANIE
Are you okay?

Michelle nods no.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
What happened in there, 'Chelle?

Michelle continues to look out the window, her voice low.

MICHELLE
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry for
dragging you out in this weather. I-

Michelle turns to Stephanie wanting to say more, but can't.

STEPHANIE
'Chelle, you have *nothing* to be
sorry for. I'd do anything for you
and you know that.

The light turns green. Stephanie goes through the intersection, pulls into a dark, empty parking lot of a church, leaves the car on, idling.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
I can't even imagine how I'd be
reacting to finding what you found.
Whatever you're feeling, you have
nothing to apologize for.

Michelle looks down, searching for words

MICHELLE
I...I needed to...to...

Her words run dry as she brings her right hand up, looking at it. Stephanie notices but doesn't know how to proceed.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Do you believe in fate?

STEPHANIE
Honestly, I have no idea what I
believe in when it comes to that
kind of stuff.

Michelle continues to look at her right hand.

MICHELLE

Me, too. But Saturday night...

She closes her hand into a grip, lowers it, sits silently.

STEPHANIE

What about Saturday night and fate?

Michelle closes her eyes, takes a deep breath, opens her eyes, turns to Stephanie.

MICHELLE

I don't know...I was so drunk. My head was so fucked up. I went tonight...needed to go tonight because...

She becomes frustrated, trying to find the right words to say.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

I...had to make sure...

Michelle's eyes turn soft, pleading, saying what her words can't. Stephanie looks deeply concerned.

STEPHANIE

Make sure of what, 'Chelle?

Michelle eyes water, look down at her hands again, Stephanie watching intently at what this all means. Michelle looks back up.

MICHELLE

I just needed to make sure.

With that, Stephanie realizes this is all Michelle can say for now and doesn't push for more answers. She gives her a warm smile.

STEPHANIE

It's okay. You've been through a lot.

Michelle wipes her eyes, Stephanie reaches into her glove box and pulls out some tissues, hands them to her.

MICHELLE

Thank you. I'm turning into a lame rom-com character, without the rom.

This causes much needed chuckles from both.

STEPHANIE

Better get you home before your dad
adds a year to your sentence.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM LATER

Michelle is laying on her bed, holding her cell phone.

RICK (O.S.)

Hello?

MICHELLE

Rick? It's Michelle.

INT RICK'S BEDROOM SAMETIME

Rick, also lying on his bed, immediately sits up, smiling.

RICK

Michelle! Hi.

MICHELLE (O.S.)

Hi. It's not too late is it?

RICK

No way. It's good to hear your
voice. Everything okay? We still on
for me picking you up tomorrow
morning?

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM SAMETIME

MICHELLE

Kinda. You have any objections to
ditching tomorrow?

RICK (O.S.)

Ah...ditching, huh? I don't think
I'll be missing much. I'm sure I
can act sick in the morning.

MICHELLE

What time can you pick me up?

RICK

8:30 instead of 7:30?

Michelle reaches for the box of tissues on the bed next to
her, pulls one out, wipes her eyes.

INT. RICK'S BEDROOM SAMETIME

RICK
Are you alright? Are you crying?

MICHELLE (O.S.)
Yeah, I'm okay. I went to the
girl's viewing tonight.

RICK
Wow. Sorry, I didn't know.

MICHELLE (O.S.)
Can you get us a bottle of vodka?

Rick looks confused.

RICK
My dad's got a giant collection of
alcohol. I'm sure I can handle that
for you?

MICHELLE (O.S.)
Thanks, Rick. I'll see you at 8:30.

RICK
Michelle, you sure-

He hears the phone disconnected.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM SAMETIME

Michelle sits up, places the cell down on her bed. Sitting now, she reaches for her night stand and opens the bottom drawer. Digging deep inside, she finds what she's looking for: a crucifix. Wearing thigh length shorts, she pulls them down, exposing her thighs. We see the burn mark, but further up her right thigh, near her pantie line, we see old cuts in the shape of a cross. Michelle's trembling right hand starts cutting another cross sign with the crucifix, drawing blood.

EXT. STREET CORNER MORNING

Michelle stands wearing a spaghetti-strapped tank top and shorts holding a small pocketbook. Rick's car pulls up to the curb. The passenger side window lowers.

RICK
Hi.

Michelle returns his smile with one of her own as she gets into his car.

MICHELLE
So how sick are you?

Rick starts coughing, brings a hand to his forehead.

RICK
Slight temperature and a cough that
just won't stop!

MICHELLE
And your mom bought that sad
performance?

RICK
Being the youngest of four always
meant I can get away with more. How
about you? How sick are you?

MICHELLE
Not sick.

RICK
Not sick? You're just cutting?

MICHELLE
Rick, stop and think a moment. Both
of my parents are pretty much home
all day long. If I'm sick, I'm home
in bed.

RICK
So I'm contributing to a pastor's
daughter's fall from grace, into
the clutches of...*satan*?

Rick chuckles to himself, Michelle does not.

MICHELLE
I'm already in hell and have been
there awhile. You're just along for
the ride.

Rick sees there is no humor meant by Michelle's words. An
uncomfortable pause is interrupted when Michelle reaches into
Rick's shirt pocket.

RICK
Excuse me. I'm not that kind of
boy!

Michelle comes up empty.

MICHELLE
No cigs?

RICK

Sorry. I only smoke when I'm out drinking.

MICHELLE

And what are we doing today? You do at least have the vodka, right?

RICK

Jesus, Michelle. Slow down. Yeah, I have the vodka, but it's not here. I'm not getting busted for skipping school, underage drinking *and* a D.U.I.

Michelle sits back, looking both frustrated and embarrassed.

MICHELLE

Sorry. I'm just on edge right now.

RICK

Yeah, I can tell.

MICHELLE

Sorry, really...Oh Wait!!

Michelle opens up her purse and pulls out the pack of Kool's Stephanie had bought her.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Thank you, Steph!

She reaches back in and pulls out a lighter. She pulls out a cigarette, nods to him if he wants one.

RICK

No thanks. I only smoke when I drink.

Michelle lights the cigarette and takes a long, slow inhale and then slowly exhales the smoke.

MICHELLE

Speaking of which?

RICK

Michelle, it's 8:30 in the morning.

MICHELLE

And?

RICK

Did you eat?

Michelle nods no and she takes in another long drag from the cigarette.

RICK (CONT'D)

Hungry?

MICHELLE

Not really, but if you are I'll have a little something.

RICK

Yeah, I'm starved. How about we go to Tom Jones'?

MICHELLE

All the way out in Brookhaven?

RICK

It's only 15 minutes.

MICHELLE

You're driving. But I only have a few bucks on me.

RICK

Today's on me.

Michelle smiles, softening up.

MICHELLE

Thank you. Honestly.

INT. DINER LATER

Michelle and Rick sit inside a booth. A waitress begins collecting plates and silverware from their table.

WAITRESS

More coffee?

RICK

Yes, please. Thank you.

MICHELLE

Sure, thanks.

The waitress walks away. Rick turns his attentions to Michelle.

RICK

Feeling a little less on edge?

MICHELLE

A little. That vodka at your house should do the trick. You sure it's safe going back to your house?

RICK

Unless one of my parents suddenly gets sick, yep.

The waitress comes to their table with a coffee pot and refills their mugs.

RICK (CONT'D)

Thanks.

WAITRESS

Sure thing. Are you ready for the check?

RICK

Sure, thanks.

She nods and walks away. Rick turns back to Michelle who sits staring at her coffee.

RICK (CONT'D)

So...

Michelle looks up to Rick.

RICK (CONT'D)

You wanna talk about last night? Or why you needed to take off today and drink?

MICHELLE

Not yet. Not here. Maybe later.

She looks back down to her coffee, Rick sensing he's made her uncomfortable.

RICK

Okay. But I am warning you up front. I'm going to try and talk you out of drinking this early.

MICHELLE

What do you mean? Aren't you drinking, too?

RICK

Michelle, as you stated earlier, think about it. I'm home sick.

(MORE)

RICK (CONT'D)
Mom and dad come home. Mom checks
on me. And I'm drunk.

MICHELLE
Vodka is odorless. She'll just
think you're really sick.

Rick gives her a 'come on' look.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Okay, but I've got to be up-front
with you. I'm going to try and talk
you into drinking with me. And I've
been known to be very persuasive.

She gives Rick a few bashes of her eyelashes, causing Rick to
chuckle.

RICK
I'm counting on it.

INT. RICK'S HOUSE LATER

The two are standing in the living room, Michelle holding a
glass full of grapefruit juice and vodka. They are looking at
his family pictures on the fireplace mantle.

MICHELLE
Happy family.

RICK
Pretty much, yeah.

MICHELLE
How's your sister doing, Donna?
Didn't she start college in
September?

RICK
Donna? She's doing good. She's in
Chambersburg, a satellite of Penn
State. She loves it. Told me the
parties are *incredible*.

MICHELLE
That's always important.

She grins at him. He leads her to the sofa and they both sit.

RICK
You going to college?

MICHELLE

I just go day to day. I don't look for a future.

RICK

Everyone's got to look forward to the future, Michelle. If you don't plan on going to college, what are you going to do when you graduate?

Michelle takes a long drink from her glass.

MICHELLE

Me and Stephanie are living in Wildwood for the summer. Saved every penny from baby-sitting over the years. We have jobs waiting for us at one of the amusement piers. That's the only future I'm sure of. After that...?

She finishes her drink.

RICK

Going to take a break now?

MICHELLE

Hell, I just started!

He shakes his head but stands, takes her glass.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Thank you. This time, though, don't water it down.

She slyly smiles at him, and he returns with the same. He leaves the room. She stands and walks to more family pictures on a side wall.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Happy family.

She sighs, then walks back to the sofa and sits. Rick walks in with two glasses this time, both with grapefruit juice, along with the bottle of vodka. He hands Michelle her glass, and sits next to her.

RICK

So I'm not accused of watering down the drinks. I run an honest bar here, miss.

MICHELLE

Why thank you. Such excellent service.

RICK

Remember that when it comes time to tip.

MICHELLE

I certainly will.

She grins at him, then reaches out for the bottle.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

May I?

RICK

Yes you may.

MICHELLE

I see you're being corrupted, too.

RICK

Just this one. For real. Can't let you drink alone.

Michelle starts pouring the vodka into her glass.

MICHELLE

Sure, sure, sure. You just want to stay sober while I get trashed all so you can take advantage of me. I know all the tricks.

She starts pouring vodka into his glass.

RICK

I learned my lesson. I will be a perfect gentleman. Plus, I don't care much for the smell of burning flesh.

She finishes pouring, looks up at him with a hurt look on her face.

RICK (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I didn't mean that.

She smiles.

MICHELLE

It's okay.

She reaches her glass out to his.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
A toast to your future.

He clangs his glass to her's.

RICK
And your's.

She shakes her head no then starts gulping down her drink as Rick looks on amazed.

MONTAGE OF THEM WATCHING YOUTUBE VIDEOS, LAUGHING HYSTERICALLY, PLAYING COMPUTER GAMES ON A TV IN RICK'S BEDROOM, SMOKING IN THE BACKYARD, MICHELLE CONSTANTLY DRINKING

INT. RICK'S BEDROOM LATER

They are playing a computer game, with Michelle winning the game, her standing up and cheering.

MICHELLE
Oh yeah. I kick ass.

Rick laughs, watching her jump up and down.

RICK
Well, my consolation is getting to watch you jump up and down. Nice.

She stops, realizing what he's talking about.

MICHELLE
Hey!

RICK
Hey what? You can't help if your jigalishish.

MICHELLE
Jigawhatish?

Rick starts to laugh.

RICK
Jig-a-lish-ish. A female having the ability to entertain the male species by jiggling what she has.

Michelle stops to think about what he's said.

MICHELLE
Is that a compliment?

RICK
Oh yes it is. It most *certainly* is.

MICHELLE
Well, since I'm drunk, I'll accept that compliment. Thank you.

She goes to take a bow, but stumbles and nearly falls down. Rick stands and helps her stabilize.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
I think this means I need another drink.

He brings her to his bed and has her sit.

RICK
I think it's proof that you're done.

MICHELLE
No way.

Rick sits next to her.

RICK
Yes way, Michelle. For real.

She acts disappointed, then falls back on the bed.

RICK (CONT'D)
Can I ask you something? And maybe this is the wrong time to be asking

MICHELLE
You want to have sex?

Rick is totally floored by this.

RICK
Um, ah, no, that *wasn't* going to be the question.

She sits up, looks him in the eyes deeply.

MICHELLE
Because I will.

RICK
I'd love to, believe me. But not like this.

Michelle first looks sad, then smiles.

MICHELLE

You really are a true gentleman,
aren't you?

RICK

I think you're forgetting about
Saturday night.

She starts tapping her forehead.

MICHELLE

Ah, yes. It's coming back to me. I
believe you termed it as being a
'perverted dickhead'?

He nods yes.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Well, those Perverted Dickhead
Anonymous classes have really
helped.

This causes them both to laugh, with Michelle falling back
onto the bed.

RICK

Yeah, I'm thinking this isn't the
time to ask.

MICHELLE

Oh go ahead.

RICK

Okay then...Why do you drink so
much?

This stops Michelle in her tracks. She sits up.

MICHELLE

Do you think we pay for our
mistakes? Or worse, do we pay for
someone else's mistakes?

RICK

You mean sins?

MICHELLE

There is no God, Rick. I've told
you this.

RICK
You're a pastor's daughter and yet
you don't believe in God?

She shakes her head no emphatically.

MICHELLE
His vocation has no bearing on my
belief system.

RICK
But why don't you believe?

MICHELLE
The world is too fucked up for me
to believe there's a God running
the show. And if there is a God,
he's a sick, twisted, evil bastard.

Rick looks shocked. Michelle reaches out for her glass on
Rick's computer table, but he beats her to it.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Hey!

RICK
I think you've had too much.

MICHELLE
The amount of alcohol I've consumed
has little bearing on my beliefs,
Rick. If I hadn't had a drink, I'd
still be saying the same things.

RICK
Michelle? What has happened to
cause you to feel this way?

MICHELLE
Do you believe in God?

RICK
Yes.

MICHELLE
Why?

RICK
Because I believe He created
everything and gave us His son to
die for our sins.

MICHELLE

Because that's what you and I and all of us were taught when we were little kids.

She grabs his left hand in her's.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

We're brainwashed at an early age. It's no different than a cult.

He looks down at their hands.

RICK

I'm not going to get into a theological discussion with a pastor's daughter.

MICHELLE

Cop out, Rick. What if everything is bullshit?

Rick sits, refusing to go any further.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

You didn't answer my question.

RICK

You didn't answer mine.

Michelle looks frustrated.

MICHELLE

You answer first, then I will answer your's.

RICK

Do I believe we pay for our sins or other's sins? I think I did answer that. God gave us His son, who died for our sins. So, no, I don't think we pay for our's or others sins as long as we believe in our hearts of God and Jesus' love for us.

Michelle lets go of his hand, starts laughing.

MICHELLE

The reason why I drink so much? To escape the reality that there is no one looking out for us. We're all alone.

(MORE)

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

There is no God, Rick, because a loving God wouldn't allow Holocausts, famines, AIDS or teenagers like Carla to die the way she did, and fathers who...who...

Michelle stops speaking, shoulders slumping, lowers her head. Rick looks dismayed, not knowing what to say. Michelle catches herself.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

What in the world did someone like Carla do to die the way she did? She barely started living life. No, she paid for someone else's mistake.

RICK

Mistake?

MICHELLE

You're not born evil. Not to take blame away from the sick fuck, but it's like a pitbull. Pitbulls are as kind and loving as any dog. Treat it with love and you'll have man's best friend. Treat the dog with cruelty and you end up with Cujo.

Michelle lowers her eyes to the floor.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Think about it. Events that happened many years ago, probably long before she was born, led to her death. And if there is a God, he just sat back and let it happen.

Michelle grows quiet as Rick looks on, not knowing what to say or do. Michelle reaches out her right hand as if she's touching an imaginary hand. Her hand begins to tremble as tears start to come down her face.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Why?

Rick reaches his hand to her's, breaking her trance. She looks up into his eyes, then pulls him in with her left hand, kissing him deeply. When the kiss ends, she looks longingly in his eyes.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Please...

This time Rick leans in and takes her in his arms as they begin to kiss. She takes his hand and places it on her breast. Michelle's body language no longer shows fear but now is replaced by a deeper need to escape more than she's ever needed to escape. Rick pulls down the spaghetti straps of her shirt and lowers it, exposing her bra as they continue to kiss. His hands reach for the front hook of her bra. As he unsnaps it, Rick stops kissing her. As her breasts are exposed she trembles. Rick leans back in and starts kissing her deeply. She reaches her hand down to the front of his jeans and starts rubbing him. He stops kissing.

RICK

I don't have any protection.

MICHELLE

Use your mouth.

He lays her on the bed and starts kissing her neck, slowly working his way down to her breasts. He gently kisses them as Michelle arches her back. He takes a nipple in her mouth and she moans. He slowly kisses down her stomach, to her belly button, then to her skirt. He reaches both hands to the hemline and pulls off her skirt. He brings his hands to her panties and as he does, he notices the cross scars on both thighs. His eyes open wide but he continues, his head disappearing between her thighs.

CLOSE UP OF MICHELLE'S FACE AS SHE CUMS, A TEAR TRICKLING DOWN HER CHEEK

INT. RICK'S BEDROOM LATER

While Michelle is asleep in his arms, Rick brings his eyes down to Michelle's thighs, sees all of the scars from cutting herself. He also sees more on the inside of her upper left arm, a look of concern on his face. He turns his attention to his alarm clock on his night stand. It reads 3:29. When it hits 3:30 the alarm goes off with music playing, which awakens the slightly drunk Michelle. He reaches over and turns off the alarm as Michelle stretches.

MICHELLE

Are we late for school?

Rick chuckles to himself.

RICK

No. I set the alarm in case I fell asleep with you.

(MORE)

RICK (CONT'D)

My mom gets home around 4:30 so I wanted to make sure I got you home, and me back here, before she shows up.

Wiping her eyes, Michelle looks up to him, smiling sleepily.

MICHELLE

Hi.

Rick smiles back.

RICK

Hi.

She gives him a hug, and then both sit up, music still playing on the radio.

RICK (CONT'D)

This may sound strange for a guy to be asking, but I need to know because I don't want you regretting today...

She turns to him, smiling.

MICHELLE

No regrets, Rick.

They embrace and kiss as the music stops playing on the radio.

RADIO DJ (O.S.)

We have a breaking story from our newsroom. We have Candace Meehan live in Delaware County.

Michelle ends the kiss to listen to the radio.

CANDACE MEEHAN (O.S.)

Thanks, Pierre. I'm here in Brookhaven, Delaware County, where the body of another young girl was found murdered, possibly the third victim of a serial killer...

Michelle's eyes open wide with fear. She stands and searches for her clothes frantically.

MICHELLE

I need to get there.

Rick is startled by Michelle's rush to get dressed.

RICK

Michelle-

She turns to him with a look of urgency on her face.

MICHELLE

Can you please drive me there?

EXT. WOODED AREA CRIME SCENE LATE AFTERNOON

Officers and investigators mill about behind yellow crime scene tape. On the ground, a sheet covers a body. Detective Schmidt, talking with the coroner, is approached by an officer. Schmidt nods, turns and sees Michelle being led to him by another officer. Her hair is tussled and she looks pale.

DET. SCHMIDT

Michelle?

She looks into his eyes, not responding. He nods to the officer to leave her with him, the officer walks away. His attentions back to Michelle who is staring at the body under the sheet. Schmidt's partner walks over to the two of them.

DET. JANSEN

What's she doing here, Bob?

DET. SCHMIDT

I don't know.

Michelle doesn't react, eyes focused on the sheet looking like she's going into shock.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)

Michelle, what are you doing here?

She says nothing, but does walk over to the body. She finally breaks her trance, looks at the detective.

MICHELLE

I need to hold her hand.

Both detectives and the coroner look puzzled, watch her go to her knees. She takes a deep breath then reaches out a trembling hand.

CLOSE UP OF MICHELLE'S HAND REACHING INSIDE THE SHEET,
TOUCHING HANDS WITH THE VICTIM

FLASHBACK

EXT. HIGHWAY SHOULDER NIGHT

We see a car sitting on the side of a highway off ramp, rain pouring down from the skies, steam rising from inside the hood of her car.

INT. VICTIM'S CAR SAMETIME

A young girl, approximately 17 years old, sits in her car, tears in her eyes, shaking her cell phone which is dark.

TEEN

Shit. Shit! I can't believe this!
What am I going to do? Dad's going
to kill me!

She opens the back of the cell, removes the battery, wipes it on her jeans, then places back in the phone. She hits the on button but nothing happens.

TEEN (CONT'D)

Shit!

WE SEE A VAN WITH BRIGHT HEAD LIGHTS PULL UP BEHIND HER.

The lights temporarily blind her through her rearview mirror. She quickly locks her door.

TEEN (CONT'D)

Fuck. Who is this??

She continue to looks at her mirror hoping to see who might be behind her when suddenly there is a knock on her window, causing her to scream.

MAN

Sorry for startling you.

The girl catches her breath but is still freaked out.

MAN (CONT'D)

Are you having car problems, Miss?

She looks at the figure standing outside her car but can't see a face.

TEEN

Yes. I'm trying to reach my dad but
my cell is dead. I have Triple A
but I can't reach them, either.

MAN

Miss, I am with Triple A. I tow cars for them. I'm off duty but I saw you here and thought you might be having problems.

He reaches into his pocket, pulls out his wallet, searches until he finds his Triple A card. He shows it to her but because of the rain she can't see it.

TEEN

I can't read it. Can you bring it closer to my window?

He steps closer and brings the card right next to the closed window. She can see what's on the card. She breathes a little easier.

MAN

See?

TEEN

Yes, thanks.

MAN

Would you like a ride home?

She's still looking up to him but can't make out his face. This question makes her nervous again as she doesn't answer.

MAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. That was a dumb question. How about I go back and get my cell and bring it to you so you can call your dad and Triple A?

She smiles.

TEEN

I'd appreciate that. Thank you.

MAN

Be right back.

She watches him walk away, tries to look in her mirror for him going to his van but the lights are too bright.

TEEN

Jesus, what is wrong with me?

She keeps trying to turn on her phone when again she is startled by his hand knocking on her window.

MAN

Sorry.

She laughs nervously.

TEEN

It's not you, it's me. This is my first time driving on my own. My dad is going to kill me.

She looks up hoping to see a smile but she still can not make out his face in the darkness and weather. He holds out his cell. She rolls down her window a few inches.

MAN

Miss, that's not a big enough space.

The teen's hand is trembling when she rolls down the window a little further.

MAN (CONT'D)

Miss, I promise I'm not going to hurt you.

She rolls the window down a little further. He extends his arm out. As she reaches out her window for the phone, a GLOVED HAND grabs her hand and arm with great force and slams her against the window. He does it again. She falls against the steering wheel, bloodied, stunned. We SEE the gloved hand reach inside to unlock the door.

EXT. WOODED AREA CRIME SCENE SAME TIME

Michelle holding the victim's hand, shaking, eyes closed as we see the three men standing, watching intently.

FLASHBACK CONTINUES

INT. BASEMENT NIGHT

The teen is tied in a crucifix position to a large, long wooden table.

CUT TO

Michelle's breathing is very heavy, her hand tightening on the victim's hand.

INT. BASEMENT CONTINUING

The teen is gagged. She awakens, eyes searching her environment, sees a dark figure wearing a ski mask approaching. She frantically tries to break her bondage, screaming hopelessly into her gag.

EXT. WOODED AREA CRIME SCENE SAME TIME

Michelle's body is visibly trembling, eyes still closed.

MICHELLE
She's so scared.

Detective Schmidt's eyes opening wider watching Michelle.

INT. BASEMENT CONTINUING

The teen watches the hooded figure grab a metal table, rolls it next to her. A sheet that is covering the table is removed. The girl screams into her gag when she sees all kinds of knives on the table, as well as a Bible. Her panicked eyes watch as the man grabs a long serrated knife from the table. He approaches her. He brings the knife to the front of her shirt. She struggles with her restraints. He watches her fear and through the mask his eyes seem to be smiling. This causes her to scream more. Before she can react, the knife slices through the buttons of her shirt. His hands reach in, spreads her top open. He slowly brings the knife to the front of her bra, begins teasing her by running it over her breasts. Then, in one quick move, he slices open the bra, causing her to scream again into her gag, tears streaming down her face.

EXT. WOODED AREA CRIME SCENE SAME TIME

MICHELLE
So helpless. Please stop.

Tears start falling from her closed eyes.

INT. BASEMENT CONTINUING

The man is now holding a pair of scissors. He starts cutting off her sweatpants. When he is done, he pulls the material away. He stands back to watch her fear, then brings his hand down to the front of his jeans. He touches himself, but just briefly. He goes back to the table and adjusts the restraints, allowing him to pull her legs apart, the girl struggling, screaming hysterically into her gag.

He walks back to the table, his eyes searching. The girl looks over to the table, too, sees so many different knives, the Bible. She now can see crucifixes as well. He grabs one of the crucifixes as well as a small knife. He turns back to look at the girl, his eyes seemingly dancing. He approaches her, extends his hand out with the knife and cuts off her panties. He places the crucifix just above her pubic region, then turns back to the table. He puts down that knife and grabs a very nasty looking, deeply serrated knife. He turns back and walks to the girl, bringing the knife to her throat.

MAN

Forgive me father for I am a sinner.

The girl's eyes are wide open with fear as she watches the knife come to her throat.

EXT. WOODED AREA CRIME SCENE SAME TIME

MICHELLE

No!!!!

The three man are watching with different expressions on their faces. Schmidt looks terrified, the coroner confused, Schmidt's partner skeptical.

Michelle brings her hands to her neck, tears flowing down her face. She then doubles up in pain, her hands between her legs. Finally, she falls to the ground. Schmidt runs to her.

DET. SCHMIDT

Michelle??

He reaches down for her. His touch seems to awaken Michelle from her trance. She looks up at him, eyes bloodshot, confused. He helps bring her to her feet. Her eyes dance around the area, dazed. When she finally seems to know where she is, she turns to Schmidt.

MICHELLE

Her name is Rachel.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM LATER

Michelle sits alone at a long table, holding a coffee cup. Detective Schmidt enters the room, sits across from her.

DET. SCHMIDT

Are you okay?

With sad, defeated eyes, Michelle nods no.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
The Breathalyzer says you're over
the legal limit for alcohol
consumption.

Michelle looks down at the table, shrugs her shoulders.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
I've now been in your presence
twice. Both times intoxicated. One
time after discovering a murder
victim, the second with you coming
to be with the victim.

Michelle continues to sit, slightly slumped, staring at the
table.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
Are you an alcoholic, Michelle?

This brings Michelle to life. She sits up, focuses on
Schmidt's face.

MICHELLE
What does that have to do with
three dead girls?

DET. SCHMIDT
I don't know, Michelle. But you're
batting a 1,000. I'm trying to
figure you out.

MICHELLE
Maybe you should figure out who's
killing young girls, Bob, instead
of psychoanalyzing me.

DET. SCHMIDT
Until I find out what's going on,
you're part of the investigation.
You came to *us*, Michelle.

This causes Michelle to look away, slightly slumping again.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
Usually people in your condition
want to avoid the police.

Michelle fidgets in her chair.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
And while under the influence,
underage and cutting school, you're
able to ID the victim without ever
looking at her face!

Michelle stops fidgeting but continues to look at the table.

MICHELLE
Do you like your job?

This catches Schmidt off guard.

DET. SCHMIDT
I don't enjoy the reason for my
job, but yes, I do like my job.

MICHELLE
You don't like it because innocent
people are murdered?

DET. SCHMIDT
For the most part, yes, the victims
are usually innocent.

MICHELLE
And you like it because you catch
the killers and have them pay for
their crimes?

DET. SCHMIDT
Yes.

Michelle looks up.

MICHELLE
What made you decide to become a
cop, a detective?

DET. SCHMIDT
I wanted to make a difference. I
wanted to help protect society.

Michelle sits up.

MICHELLE
And it was your choice to enter
this line of work?

DET. SCHMIDT
Yes, of course.

MICHELLE
I haven't been given that choice.

Frustrated, Michelle again looks away from the detective.

DET. SCHMIDT
What do you mean?

Michelle sits silently, looking uncomfortable.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
What happened when you held
Rachel's hand?

Michelle lowers her eyes to her hands, resting on her legs.

MICHELLE
If there is a God, don't you think
He should protect children?

DET. SCHMIDT
I don't know how to answer that?

MICHELLE
Why?

DET. SCHMIDT
Because God is a mystery.

Michelle sits back up, looks at the detective.

MICHELLE
God works in mysterious ways,
right?

She sarcastically laughs.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
So we're just supposed to believe
He exists. And when children are
murdered, or entire cities are
wiped out by tsunamis or a disease
like AIDS wipes out millions or
talentless media whores like the
Kardashians make millions we're
just supposed to accept it because
"God works in mysterious ways"?

Schmidt looks on, not knowing how to respond.

DET. SCHMIDT
Being the daughter of a-

MICHELLE
So, because he's a man of God, I'm
supposed to just fall in line and
believe in God?

Schmidt doesn't respond.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

We all have parents, right? And when we were little boys and girls they sold us the story of Santa Claus. If we're good he'll bring us presents on Christmas eve. "He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. He knows if you've been good or bad so be good for goodness sake". And if we acted up during the year, especially when it was closer to Christmas, we'd be told that Santa can see us being bad and if we don't behave he won't bring us presents.

Michelle reaches out for her coffee, hands trembling as she takes a sip. She takes a deep sigh.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

And we believe our parents, especially Christmas morning when we see the presents he brought us. Later on, we all find out it's a great big lie but no one ever seems to be upset that we we're lied to because we're told the lie doesn't matter, what matters is the spirit of Christmas, the birth of Jesus.

Agitated, Michelle stands up, starts pacing.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

What if God is nothing more than another lie? He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. He knows when you've been good or bad, and if you're bad you better pray to Him to be forgiven. If you don't repent, your soul will burn in hell for eternity...What if God is nothing more than Santa Claus for grown ups, except with bigger stakes? We're expected to buy the lie, to keep us in line. And in the end, since the stakes are bigger, instead of presents we are promised Heaven.

She stops pacing, looks down and into the detective's eyes.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

When I look at this world and all of the suffering I see no proof of a God. At least with Santa, I saw the payoff of being good: presents.

The two look into each others eyes. Michelle's angry eyes soften as they begin to fill with tears. She turns away, wiping them with the sleeve of her shirt. She walks over to the two-way mirror.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

This isn't the ramblings of a drunk person. You want to know what I saw when I held her hand, when I held Carla's hand. You want to doubt me, pass it off as a drunken crazy troubled pastor's daughter.

She turns her back to the mirror looks at Schmidt.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

What I experienced was real. I wish it wasn't because I'm fucking pissed. I don't want this. This isn't my job. I'm so fucked.

Tears come down her face again as she looks at Schmidt.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

And what pisses me off even more is that whoever is behind this-

She turns and points at the mirror.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Thinks I'm a liar.

She looks directly into the mirror, crying harder.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Fuck you! I don't want this. But to prove to you this is real, God's ultimate joke on me...

She tries to regain her composure.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Both girls were raped with a crucifix.

INT. ON OTHER SIDE OF TWO-WAY MIRROR SAMETIME

Schmidt's partner, the D.A. and another person gasp.

DET. JANSEN
How the hell does she know that?

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM SAMETIME

She turns from the mirror, walks over to her chair, sits, dejected, exhausted, looks at Schmidt, who looks at her with a combination of surprise and compassion.

MICHELLE
And he left them inside each girl.

INT. OTHER SIDE OF MIRROR-INTERROGATION ROOM LATER

Schmidt enters looking confounded. His partner stands at the mirror, studying Michelle, who sits in the chair wiping her eyes with a tissue.

DET. JANSEN
Wow.

Schmidt comes to the mirror to look at Michelle, too.

DET. JANSEN (CONT'D)
Do you believe her?

Schmidt turns to his partner.

DET. SCHMIDT
Yes. Yes, I do.

DET. JANSEN
So we have a troubled, intoxicated teenager who claims that when she's held the hand of the last two victims she's been able to witness their murders. But she can't ID the perp because she claims he wears a ski mask when he murders them.

Schmidt turns his attention back to Michelle.

DET. JANSEN (CONT'D)
What can we even do with that?

DET. SCHMIDT

I think I need to wait until she's sober, not so upset about what's happening. Maybe she can remember, or see, more details that might help us ID the killer.

DET. JANSEN

The press is going to have a field day with this.

Schmidt turns back to his partner.

DET. SCHMIDT

We're not going to give them anything.

DET. JANSEN

She was seen at the crime scene. I'm sure whoever was there was able to see her touching the victim's hand, her reaction. They saw us bring her in for questioning.

DET. SCHMIDT

I don't care. This isn't going to become a circus and I'm not going to allow her to become the freak show she's already afraid she's becoming.

They both look back at her, her tears have stopped. She brings her elbows to the table and places her hands on each side of her face.

DET. JANSEN

Then what do we tell them?

DET. SCHMIDT

Nothing. I'll handle the press.

INT. POLICE STATION HALLWAY LATER

The detective leads Michelle out of the interrogation room and they begin walking down the hall.

DET. SCHMIDT

Your father is here.

She stops walking, slumps against the wall. He notices she's stopped, turns to her, sees her reaction.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
I briefed him when he came in. He was very upset, wanting to know why you came to the body, what your link is to both girls.

She lowers her head.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
I told him you were concerned Rachel might be another victim of the same killer and you felt you had to be here.

Rachel stares at the floor.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
I'm handling the press the same way. At this point no one needs to know what you've been experiencing. And I'm sure you and your parents don't want the press hounding you.

She looks at him with sad eyes.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
I didn't tell him about your drinking.

Her eyes open wider in appreciation.

MICHELLE
Thank you.

DET. SCHMIDT
As a father, I'm going against my better judgment.

She looks down again.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
Besides all of this...your actions have me very concerned.

She looks up again.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
Something other than these murders is troubling you. I still think that had you not found Carla the coroner would have been there. For you.

She bites her lower lip, starts to fidget as she lowers her eyes, not wanting to make eye contact with him.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
And the drinking? I'm not going to press you about what's going on in your life. Your private life is your private life. But Michelle...Michelle?

She raises her head, eyes locked on his.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
Human to human here. If there's anything you need to talk about, I'm willing to listen.

Her eyes go soft, she looks vulnerable, her mouth opens as if she is going to spill something but she remains silent. The detective knows she's in emotional pain but doesn't push the issue.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
Or I can give you the number of a professional who can listen, help.

MICHELLE
Thank you.

He smiles and then starts walking down the hall with her walking next to him. They stop before they reach a room with a closed door.

DET. SCHMIDT
Like I said earlier, I want to bring you back for more questioning regarding what you saw with both victims. Maybe we can jog your memory to see things the victims saw that might help us ID the killer.

She nods her head okay.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
How about Sunday morning?

She nods yes again.

MICHELLE
I promise to be sober for a change.

They both laugh.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
I just hope there isn't another
hand between now and then.

He nods in agreement.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Is he in there?

DET. SCHMIDT
Yes. You ready to see him?

She doesn't answer but her body language, which has changed, tells him the answer is no. The detective walks to the door and opens it. Her father, standing, looks outside the door and sees his daughter. He moves quickly to her.

PASTOR BARTON
Michelle!

He takes her in his arms and gives her a big hug. The detective watches as Michelle's body goes rigid, her face cold. When he releases her, Michelle moves away from him. Her father sees Schmidt.

PASTOR BARTON (CONT'D)
Detective Schmidt, thank you for
looking after her, taking care of
her.

Michelle starts walking down the hallway slowly.

DET. SCHMIDT
You have a very troubled girl
there, pastor. Is everything okay
at home.

Michelle stops in her tracks, tilts her head back to listen.

PASTOR BARTON
Everything at home is fine,
detective. Why do you ask.

Schmidt glances over the pastor's shoulder, sees Michelle has stopped walking, head tilted to listen. But Schmidt doesn't proceed on the subject.

DET. SCHMIDT
I'm going to give your daughter a
few days to recover from this but I
am going to need to bring her back
in for more questions.

PASTOR BARTON
If you think it's necessary.

DET. SCHMIDT
I discussed with your daughter and I think Sunday would be best. I will come and get her after service?

PASTOR BARTON
Sure, that's fine.

DET. SCHMIDT
Would you mind if I sat in on the service?

Michelle turns her head around to look at him now.

PASTOR BARTON
All are welcome at our church, Detective Schmidt.

DET. SCHMIDT
Bob. You can call me Bob.

PASTOR BARTON
We'll see you Sunday at church.

The pastor extends his hand out to the detective's.

CLOSE UP OF THEIR HANDSHAKE

As they shake hands, Schmidt again looks over the pastor's shoulder and sees her standing there, blank look on her face.

INT. PASTOR BARTON'S CAR NIGHT

Michelle stares out her front seat passenger's side window, blank look on her face. Her father drives. There is an awkward silence as only the sound of the car's windshield wipers is heard as it is raining. Finally, pastor Barton ends the silence.

PASTOR BARTON
I'm trying to understand what's going on, Michelle.

No reaction.

PASTOR BARTON (CONT'D)
Why did you feel the need to go to the crime scene?

Still no reaction.

PASTOR BARTON (CONT'D)

I know we have drifted apart these past few years. I'm still trying to understand why.

As if slapped in the face, Michelle's head swivels, eyes angry. They stare at each other. The stare down ends when her father turns his attention back to driving. Michelle turns away, looking out her window at the rain pelting the car.

MICHELLE

If you don't know the answer to that, you're incapable of understanding this.

Her father looks uncomfortable as he continues to drive.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Michelle sits on her bed, twirling her hair nervously with one hand as she holds her cell phone to her ear with the other.

RICK (O.S.)

Michelle?

MICHELLE

Hi.

RICK (O.S.)

Are you okay?

Michelle clears her throat.

MICHELLE

I'm okay.

RICK (O.S.)

What happened? The story is all over the news.

Michelle says nothing, twirling her hair faster.

RICK (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Are you the mystery person they are talking about?

Her eyes close, stops twirling her hair, her hand going to her forehead.

RICK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Michelle? Are you there?

MICHELLE
Yes, I'm here.

RICK (O.S.)
What happened? Why did you have me
drive you there. Talk to me.
Please.

Michelle sighs, removes her hand from her forehead, opens her eyes. She looks very sad.

MICHELLE
I don't...I don't know...

She grows quiet.

INT. RICK'S BEDROOM SAMETIME

Rick sits on his bed looking very concerned.

RICK
Tell me, Michelle. You can trust
me.

He hears her sigh, then more silence.

RICK (CONT'D)
Michelle?

MICHELLE (O.S.)
Remember our conversation today?

RICK
Yes, why?

MICHELLE (O.S.)
I'm paying for someone else's sin.

Rick stands up, looks confused.

RICK
What? Why?? Who, Michelle? I don't
understand.

He can hear her starting to cry.

RICK (CONT'D)
Michelle, please, talk to me.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM SAMETIME

Michelle is now laying on her bed in a fetal position.

MICHELLE

Rick. I want to thank you for today. It was very important to feel close to someone. And...and I want to thank you for taking me to the crime scene. I hope you didn't get in any trouble with your parents.

INT. RICK'S BEDROOM SAMETIME

RICK

I'm not in any trouble. Don't worry about me. And you don't have to thank me for today. It was very special for me, too. I really like you.

He can hear Michelle sniffing.

RICK (CONT'D)

What do you mean you're paying for someone else's sin?

MICHELLE (O.S.)

I'm really tired. It's been a long day and I've been enough of a burden on you today.

RICK

Burden? You haven't been-

MICHELLE (O.S.)

I really need to go. Thank you, Rick. See you at school Monday.

RICK

Michelle! Wait!

His phone goes dead. He stands looking confused, concerned, frustrated.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM SAMETIME

Michelle is seen pulling up the covers of her bed over her head while lying in a fetal position, weeping quietly.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM MORNING

Michelle and Stephanie are sitting across from each other, cross-legged, talking. Stephanie's eyes are open wide in disbelief.

STEPHANIE
Holy shit, Michelle!

Michelle uncomfortably nods her head yes.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Is that why we went to that girl's viewing?

Michelle again nods yes.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
But you couldn't go through with it because...because you were afraid?

MICHELLE
I was afraid it was real, that it didn't happen just because I was drunk, angry, sad.

Michelle looks down at her hands. Stephanie does as well.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
And I was afraid if I did nothing would have happened, and if that happened then I would have been afraid I was crazy.

Michelle looks back up into Stephanie's eyes.

STEPHANIE
Michelle? We already know you're crazy.

This causes a much needed laugh between the two of them.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Wow, Michelle. Just...wow!

Steph brings her eyes down to Michelle's hands.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
So you just reached out and touched both of their hands and saw how they died.

Michelle nods yes, sees Steph is staring at her hands.

MICHELLE
Don't worry, Steph.

Stephanie looks up, taking her eyes off Michelle's hands.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
You're safe. I can't see the
future.

STEPHANIE
So, like, all the times we've held
hands before and, you know, since,
you haven't seen me dying?

MICHELLE
No, okay?

Stephanie takes a deep breath, then reaches her right hand
out and takes Michelle's right hand into it. Michelle looks
up into Stephanie's eyes.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
See? Nothing.

Stephanie releases her hand, first looking relieved, ten
pissed.

STEPHANIE
At least you could have made up
something good, like you see me
marrying Hunter Pence.

They share a much needed laugh. Michelle gets off the bed,
looks at Stephanie.

MICHELLE
I appreciate you coming over. But
I'm really exhausted, just mentally
out of it.

Stephanie gets off the bed as well.

STEPHANIE
I'm sure you are.

Steph walks over to Michelle's computer table and grabs her
pocketbook, turns back to Michelle.

MICHELLE
I feel like I'm kicking you out.

STEPHANIE
Please stop. I can't even imagine
how you must feel. I get it, okay?

MICHELLE

Thank you.

Stephanie reaches out her hands and gives Michelle a big hug.

STEPHANIE

Two more weeks. Just two more weeks.

When Stephanie releases Michelle from her hug she sees Michelle standing with a look of fear in her eyes.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Oh shit! What??

Michelle slowly brings her eyes to meet Steph's, the look of fear still in her eyes.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

What??

MICHELLE

Oh my God, I just saw you marrying Ray J and you two getting an E! show where the talented Kardashians come visit to give you tips on being a media whore.

Stephanie's fear is replaced by disgust.

STEPHANIE

You bitch! That's worse than death!

Michelle starts grinning.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Just please tell me a sex tape isn't involved.

INT. CHURCH MORNING

Michelle sits in the front pew next to her mom. Pastor is walking to the pulpit to read his sermon. Detective Schmidt enters the church, sits in the last pew unnoticed.

PASTOR BARTON

Forgiveness. Such a tricky word and even trickier human condition. We find it easier to forgive celebrities we like but don't know personally. Michael Vick and what he did to those dogs.

(MORE)

PASTOR BARTON (CONT'D)
President Bill Clinton and his
adulteress acts. Mel Gibson and his
anti-Semite rants. Singer Chris
Brown and beating his girlfriend.
But when it's a spouse, a son, a
daughter, a wife or a father-

He looks directly at Michelle, who turns away from him
instantly.

PASTOR BARTON (CONT'D)
We find it much harder to forgive,
to accept the faults of our loved
ones, to not allow the mistakes us
humans make that hurt one another.

He continues to look at his daughter, who sits there. We SEE
her fists clenching. The detective sees that Pastor Barton
has focused his attention to his daughter but he can not see
her reaction.

PASTOR BARTON (CONT'D)
God gave his Son's life for our
sins. Jesus sacrificed his life to
cast away our sins. We take solace
in the knowledge that if we keep
Jesus' love in our hearts we will
be forgiven.

Pastor Barton turns his eyes away from Michelle, whose face
is red, breathing heavier.

PASTOR BARTON (CONT'D)
"Forgive us as we forgive those who
trespass against us". We speak
these words every Sunday but are
they just words, taught to us at an
early age, we recite out of habit?
If Jesus can forgive the sinner,
and we know we're all sinners, even
me-

He turns his eyes back to Michelle's. This time she looks
back at him, her eyes wide.

PASTOR BARTON (CONT'D)
If we know we're all sinners, that
none of us are perfect...why do we
find it so hard to forgive those we
love when they may hurt us?

Michelle breaks eye contact, stands, brushes past her mom and
exits the pew. She starts slowly down the aisle.

PASTOR BARTON (CONT'D)
Why is forgiveness so hard to give
to one's we love?

She begins walking very fast now. As she gets to the end of the aisle she is startled to see Detective Schmidt standing in the last pew. Their eyes meet. The detective nods to her. He leaves the pew, puts his arm around Michelle and the two leave as pastor Barton stares from the pulpit.

INT. DETECTIVE SCHMIDT'S CAR MORNING

They sit in his car as he drives, silently. Michelle appears hurt, agitated. Finally, when he pulls up to a red light, Schmidt turns to her and breaks the silence.

DET. SCHMIDT
Didn't care for the sermon?

MICHELLE
I knew we were meeting today. Had I stayed any longer I would have done a shot of wine and I promised to be sober.

A slow smile comes across her face as she turns to face the detective who, too, is smiling. The light turns green and Schmidt begins driving.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
I don't know why you needed to see me again today. I told you everything I saw.

DET. SCHMIDT
I'm hoping maybe you'll remember more details, little things that might mean something.

MICHELLE
So you still believe me?

DET. SCHMIDT
I don't see any reason why you'd be making any of this up. Plus, you gave us a detail that hadn't been reported to anyone. Not even the families of the deceased. So, yes, I believe you.

Michelle appears more relaxed as Schmidt continues to drive.

INT. DET. SCHMIDT'S OFFICE LATER

CLOSE UP of the detective's crime scene wall, covered with grisly photos of all three victims and their crime scenes. Michelle stands, looking at them, then has to turn away. Schmidt walks in with two cups of water. He sees that Michelle has been staring at the photos.

DET. SCHMIDT
I'm sorry if this is too much for
you.

MICHELLE
I think you forget what I've
already seen.

He gives her a knowing smile, hands her her cup.

DET. SCHMIDT
Please have a seat.

Michelle sits in a chair across his desk, places the water on it. The detective sits as well. Michelle is looking at the items on his desk top.

MICHELLE
Are you married, Bob?

DET. SCHMIDT
Was. I'm divorced now.

MICHELLE
Any children?

DET. SCHMIDT
We had one, a daughter named Sara.

MICHELLE
Had?

DET. SCHMIDT
She died three years ago. She was
killed by a drunk driver. She was
fifteen. She'd be your age now.

MICHELLE
I'm sorry.

DET. SCHMIDT
It's okay. You didn't know.

There's a small pause as Schmidt looks at Michelle.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
I see a lot of her in you.

MICHELLE
Really? Like what?

DET. SCHMIDT
Smart. Quiet but spoke her own
mind. Pretty.

MICHELLE
Thank you for the compliments. But
I hope she wasn't anyway like me.

She laughs to herself.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Why did you get divorced?

DET. SCHMIDT
The strain of losing a child can be
unbearable. Our relationship, I
guess, wasn't strong enough to
survive the loss.

Michelle comes across a picture of a young girl on his desk,
picks it up.

MICHELLE
Is this Sara?

DET. SCHMIDT
Yes.

MICHELLE
Did you love her?

DET. SCHMIDT
More than anything.

Michelle studies the picture a little bit longer, than places
it back on his desk.

MICHELLE
Your daughter paid for someone
else's mistake. A person drinks too
much. Maybe because he got a
promotion at work, or because he
didn't want to go home to face his
family, or maybe because he was out
of work and angry.
(MORE)

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Whatever the reason, this person gets in his car drunk and takes the life of an innocent girl whose only mistake was being at the wrong place at the wrong time. How can you believe in a God that allows such a thing?

DET. SCHMIDT

We're all sinners, Michelle. We all make mistakes. The man who took her life, he didn't plan to do so when he woke up that morning.

MICHELLE

So you've forgiven him, just like my father says we should?

DET. SCHMIDT

I was very angry at him at the time and, yes, I was angry at God, too. But he made a mistake. No amount of hate towards him was going to bring back Sara, to undo his mistake. So, yes, I've forgiven him.

MICHELLE

I wouldn't have forgiven him. And I wouldn't forgive God, either.

DET. SCHMIDT

We're all sinners, Michelle. All of us.

MICHELLE

At age fifteen, what sins do you think your daughter committed to justify her dying at the hands of a drunk driver?

Schmidt sits back, looking frustrated.

DET. SCHMIDT

Things happen, Michelle. We can't control them. If you think otherwise, it will drive you insane.

MICHELLE

If there's a God, he should be able to control such things. He's supposed to be perfect, all-knowing, omnipresent.

(MORE)

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

He's responsible for your daughters death.

DET. SCHMIDT

Why do you believe that?

MICHELLE

God created us in His image, right?

DET. SCHMIDT

Yes.

MICHELLE

Adam and Eve were created perfect, in His image. But they weren't perfect. He gave them free will, and with that will Eve did the one thing they were told not to do. She ate the apple. The first sin. I think God has been pissed at us ever since. But instead of taking it out on innocent people like your daughter or the young girls who have been tortured and murdered, He should be taking it out on Himself because He's not perfect. We are a reflection of Him. And it's He who sins every single day, with every murder, earthquake, disease, terrorist attack. It wasn't Adam and Eve who failed God. It was God who failed us.

Schmidt sits back in his chair, not knowing what to say.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

If there is a God, He's angry and vengeful and uncaring. We are in this alone. Believing in Him is futile.

DET. SCHMIDT

I was angry like you, Michelle. I don't know why God works the way He does. Trying to make sense of what happens in this world will make you crazy. After Sara's death I searched for answers. In the end I had to trust that He took her from us for a reason.

Michelle stands up, walks back to the crime scene photo wall.

MICHELLE

There is no reason for your daughter's death. There's no reason that little babies are born crack addicts. There's no reason why three year girls are raped. There's no reason for this.

She points to the wall.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

There's no reason for fathers...

She turns to the wall, her words dried up. Schmidt can see she wants to say more, but he doesn't pursue. Michelle catches herself, turns back to him.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

I don't want to be a part of this. He wants me to do his job for him, to stop this killer. I can't. I can't do this.

She walks back to her chair, slumps into it. She raises her eyes to his.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

The rest of my life. I will be a sideshow freak. Every parent whose child has been murdered and the killer uncaught will come to me, begging me to hold that child's hand.

Her eyes appear to be pleading.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

I can't do this, Bob. He won't fuck up my life anymore.

She lowers her gaze to the floor, looking tired, defeated.

DET. SCHMIDT

What if you took God out of the equation? If there really isn't a God? Imagine the good this gift could do.

She doesn't look up.

MICHELLE

Fate.

DET. SCHMIDT
What about fate?

MICHELLE
What if it was fate that's brought
me here?

DET. SCHMIDT
And who created your fate?

MICHELLE
No idea how fate works.

DET. SCHMIDT
God maybe?

MICHELLE
Please!

DET. SCHMIDT
Maybe God knew what you were
planning to do to yourself that
night.

Michelle looks hurt by this.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
His love for you saved your life
that night.

MICHELLE
So you're telling me it was Carla's
fate to be tortured and murdered
all to save *my life*?

DET. SCHMIDT
Her fate, your fate, my fate can't
be changed. Her fate was to die
that night. It was your fate to *not*
end yours so you could discover
this special gift He's given you.

MICHELLE
Fuck Him! I will NOT do his job for
Him.

She begins crying quietly, trying to hold back the tears.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Do you hear me, Bob? Fuck. HIM and
His fucking gift.

He hands her a tissue which she uses to dry her tears.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
I'm done with this.

Her crying continues.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
He's done enough to fuck up my
life, my head.

Schmidt looks on, wanting to ask what she means but he doesn't.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
There's one thing the killer and I
have in common.

DET. SCHMIDT
What's that?

MICHELLE
We've both lost our faith in
religion.

DET. SCHMIDT
What made you lose your's,
Michelle?

Her swollen eyes look into his, expressing thoughts that Michelle's lips will not say. She breaks her look, reaches for her water cup, takes a long drink.

MICHELLE
I'm tired. You brought me here for
a reason. If you want to hear what
I saw when I held Carla's hand, I'm
ready. Turn that tape recorder on.
If not, I'm out of here.

DET. SCHMIDT
You remember everything you saw?

MICHELLE
Yes. As long as I'm alive I will
never forget what I saw.

Schmidt reaches to the recorder, hits record.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
When I held her hand...

INT. BARTON STUDY DAY

Pastor Barton sits in his study, jotting notes on a note pad. Behind him we see Michelle appear in the doorway, watching him work.

FLASHBACKS

EXT. PLAYGROUND DAY

Six-year-old Michelle, smiling and laughing, is sitting on a swing, her happy father pushing her higher and higher.

INT. BARTON LIVING ROOM DAY

The three family members playing Candyland, laughing, having a great time.

INT. BARTON LIVING ROOM DAY

Eight-year-old Michelle opening a Christmas gift then running into her father's arms to thank him.

INT. GYM NIGHT

Nine-year-old Michelle is being handed a trophy by a school teacher. When she accepts it, with a huge smile on her face, she searches the audience until she sees her dad. When she does, she starts waving to him. He waves back as he's recording the event with a camcorder.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Pastor Barton knocks on her door.

PASTOR BARTON
Can I come in?

MICHELLE
Sure, daddy!

She is sitting on her bed, holding and admiring her trophy. He walks in, closes the door behind him and sits next to her.

PASTOR BARTON
We're so proud of you, Michelle.

MICHELLE
Thanks, daddy.

He reaches out his right hand and starts touching her hair.

PASTOR BARTON
I love you so much, dear.

MICHELLE
I love you, too, daddy.

They smile at each other.

CLOSE UP of his hand dropping from her hair to her neck.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. BARTON STUDY DAY

Michelle turns to leave, banks her elbow slightly against the doorway. Pastor Barton turns to see what caused the noise, sees the doorway empty.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Michelle lays on her bed, staring at the ceiling.

INT. DET. SCHMIDT'S OFFICE SAMETIME

The detective turns on the tape recorder.

MICHELLE (V.O.)
She was upset. She had a fight
earlier with her boyfriend.

DET. SCHMIDT (V.O.)
About what?

MICHELLE (V.O.)
He pressured her to have sex with
him. When she didn't give in he got
pissed at her, called her names.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM SAMETIME

She sits up, opens her nightstand and reaches inside.

INT. DET. SCHMIDT'S OFFICE SAMETIME

The detective is jotting notes as he listens.

MICHELLE (V.O.)
He called her a stuck up bitch.
Nice last words to hear. Poor girl.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM SAMETIME

She's standing, holding the 4th grade trophy we saw her win,,
staring at it.

MICHELLE (V.O.)
She left the party she had been at
with him. She went to a park to get
away.

DET. SCHMIDT (V.O.)
Which park?

MICHELLE (V.O.)
Davis Park in Brookhaven. She was
on a swing, crying, when he
approached her. Fate.

DET. SCHMIDT (V.O.)
What about fate?

MICHELLE (V.O.)
Had she just given in, she would be
alive.

DET. SCHMIDT (V.O.)
You don't know that. We don't think
he picks randomly. He had already
picked her out.

MICHELLE (V.O.)
She wouldn't have died that night.

Michelle sits with the trophy in her hand, places it on the
bed, reaches back inside her night stand, rummaging deep into
it. She pulls out a vile with a white substance in it.

INT. DET. SCHMIDT'S OFFICE SAMETIME

He continues to listen.

MICHELLE (V.O.)
She's crying. It's very dark. She
hears footsteps, then a voice. An
older man's voice.

DET. SCHMIDT (V.O.)
How much older?

MICHELLE (V.O.)
How old are you?

DET. SCHMIDT (V.O.)
43.

MICHELLE (V.O.)
It's tough to say. I think younger
than yours? But I can't be sure of
that.

DET. SCHMIDT (V.O.)
Okay.

MICHELLE (V.O.)
He asks her if she's okay. At first
she's startled, scared but
something about his voice makes her
feel safe somehow.

DET. SCHMIDT (V.O.)
Can she see his face?

MICHELLE (V.O.)
She can not see his face because of
the darkness. She tells him she's
okay, just had a little fight with
her boyfriend. He asks if he is
here. She says no. He asks her if
there is anything he can do for
her. She said no, but thanks.

Detective Schmidt looks over at the picture of his daughter
on his desk.

MICHELLE (V.O.)
He then says to her, "You're much
too pretty to be so upset. God
takes care of the pretty ones.
You'll be alright". She smiles,
thanks him and watches him
disappear into the darkness of the
park.

Schmidt reaches for the frame and takes it in his hand.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

She stays on the swings for a few minutes then gets up and starts walking for the exit of the park. She walks by a very big tree. That's when she feels her hair being pulled, head snapping back. Before she can scream or run away a white cloth is placed over her face. Whatever is on it knocks her out.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM SAMETIME

Michelle sits on her bed, trophy flat on her lap, staring at the vile of white powder she holds in her right hand.

INT. DET. SCHMIDT'S OFFICE SAMETIME

Schmidt looks at his daughter smiling back at him from the picture he holds.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

She wakes up. She tries to move but can't. She's tied up to a table in a crucifix position, just like Rachel, in the same basement. She's so scared. She tries to scream but can't because she is gagged.

DET. SCHMIDT (V.O.)

Could you see anything about the basement that stands out?

MICHELLE (V.O.)

I could only see what she saw, feel what she felt. She was too consumed with fear to look around the room. There's a swinging light above her head. And next to the table is the same metal table covered in a white cloth.

We can hear Michelle fidget in her seat, her breathing becoming more noticeable on the recording.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

He killed Carla more violently than Rachel.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM SAMETIME

White powder lays on the trophy's surface in a mound. A playing card is in her hand. She brings it to the mound and starts cutting it into six lines.

INT. DET. SCHMIDT'S OFFICE SAMETIME

Schmidt still holds his daughter's picture as the tape continues.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

He starts cutting crosses into her breasts, then her belly. Her pain is overshadowed by her fear. Even with his face covered she can see his eyes smiling.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

You sick fuck.

Schmidt is staring into his daughter's eyes.

DET. SCHMIDT (V.O.)

Do you need to stop?

MICHELLE (V.O.)

Each cut, each flinch, each line of blood...He's getting off on her fear, her helplessness.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM SAMETIME

Michelle takes a dollar bill and rolls it up. She takes a deep breath, closes her eyes. A tear comes down her cheek.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

Jesus, she can see his erection. He's sexually excited by torturing her.

Her sniffing can be heard.

DET. SCHMIDT (V.O.)

We think because of the brutality he may have known her.

Michelle brings the rolled up bill to her nose.

MICHELLE (V.O.)
After cutting off her panties he
adjusts the ropes on her feet so he
can spread her legs open wider.

We can hear Michelle openly crying now on the tape. With
tears cascading down her face, she bends her body to the
trophy.

MICHELLE (V.O.)
He...he...fuck! He starts raping
her with the crucifix. Three. Four.
Five. Six times, hard and deep.

MICHELLE
Fuck you, God.

She snorts a line of the white powder.

INT. DET. SCHMIDT'S OFFICE SAMETIME

Tears are now in the detective's eyes as he places the
picture back down on his desk.

MICHELLE (V.O.)
The pain with each deep
thrust...she's in so much pain.

We can hear what sounds like her standing or possibly rocking
in her chair.

MICHELLE (V.O.)
After the final thrust he sees
that's she going into shock.
There's a bottle of water on the
table. He takes it, opens it. He
throws some water on her face to
snap her back to consciousness.
When he sees her eyes open fully
and on his he pours water onto the
crucifix. He says, "Holy Water.
Let's see if God saves you" His
last thrust...Fuck! You sick fuck!

Tears come down the detective's face.

DET. SCHMIDT (V.O.)
Do you want to-

MICHELLE (V.O.)

He pulls a long, ugly serrated knife from the table, watches her eyes closely, sees the fear in them. He places the tip on her belly. Then he stops and says "Forgive me Father. I'm a sinner and I'm evil" Then he pushes the knife into her belly.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM SAMETIME

Michelle finishes the last line on the trophy, lifts her head. Her eyes are red from both crying and the drugs. Wobbly, she takes both the empty vile and the trophy and puts them back into her night stand. She lies back on her bed, closes her eyes.

INT. DET. SCHMIDT'S OFFICE SAMETIME

Schmidt, arms crossed on his desk, is seen leaning forward, face resting on his arms.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

She's starting to go into shock again...there's no more pain. She's dying, she knows it. Carla. Why? Why?

Schmidt lifts his head. He is visibly upset.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

He knows he's about to lose her. He calls out her name. He sees her eyes flicker, looking at him. She can't lift her head any longer. He raises his hands up. Fuck. FUCK!

We hear Michelle hysterically crying.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

He is showing her...her...fuck. It's her intestines.

Schmidt reaches his hand to the recorder.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

He drops them because he can see she's about to die. He won't let her without seeing the knife coming to her throat. You fucking motherfucker!

He hits the stop button. As he pulls his hand away we see what he has written on his note pad: "knew her name", "claims to have had holy water".

INT. DET. SCHMIDT'S OFFICE MORNING

Schmidt, Jensen and a woman wearing an FBI jacket, a profiler, sit in his office.

FBI PROFILER

From the crime scene photos and investigation, we don't have much to go on. No tire tracks were found. The lack of blood at each scene shows the victims were killed somewhere else. No evidence was found at each scene. If he had been stalking his victims the places where he left the bodies are probably not where he had been stalking them. The testimony from the so-called witness, if true, does however give us some important information we can work off of. The van fits the profile of serial killers. The religious nature of the crimes probably means his father or mother, or both, were deeply religious. When they punished him they may have used physical force but that abuse didn't turn him into what he is today. They used religion, God as a weapon. And that has deeply affected him. His confessions to the victims, a prayer to God to forgive him because he's a sinner shows he knows what he's doing is wrong but he's killing to spite God while also, in his mind, bringing him closer to a God he doesn't understand. I suspect at some point in his life he tried to become a member of the clergy and was rejected. This would add fuel to a religious fire his parents had already started. If the witness is correct in guessing that his voice sounded younger than yours, he will be between 30-35 years of age.

(MORE)

FBI PROFILER (CONT'D)

We're going to need to check clergy records for the past 10 years of men in this age group who were denied becoming a clergyman. This rejection, I believe, would have been rather recent and may have been the final humiliation, the trigger that made him become God-like in his mind, with the power to take lives.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM NIGHT

We see Michelle writing on a piece of notebook paper.

DET. SCHMIDT (V.O.)

It's been two weeks since his last murder. The first three happened in a span of 10 days.

FBI PROFILER (V.O.)

We don't know he hasn't killed in the past two weeks. He may have and the body or bodies just haven't been discovered yet. But, his first three victims were left in areas where the bodies were easily discovered. The probability he's now hiding them in more secluded areas doesn't fit this profile.

We see Michelle folding the finished letter and placing it in an envelope, then placing a stamp on it.

DET. SCHMIDT (V.O.)

Assuming the profile is correct, why would he suddenly stop killing?

EXT. STREET CORNER NIGHT

We see Michelle, standing in front of a mailbox. She looks around to make sure no one is watching.

FBI PROFILER (V.O.)

Serial killers do not stop once they start. They either continue until they're caught, get arrested for some other crime or kill themselves because of the guilt they feel over what they've been doing.

(MORE)

FBI PROFILER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The later, if the killings are indeed over, is the strongest reason why he's stopped.

Michelle opens the mailbox, closes her eyes briefly, then places the envelope inside.

DET. SCHMIDT (V.O.)

What makes you think that?

FBI PROFILER (V.O.)

The ski mask. He's hiding his identity but not from his victims. He's hiding his identity from God because even though the act of killing, of spiting God, excites him he still knows what he's doing is wrong and he feels shame.

Michelle walks away from the mailbox.

EXT. PARK DAY

Michelle sits on a park bench watching a young girl, alone, shooting hoops on a park's basketball court. The young girl, named Stacy, is struggling a bit with her shot. Michelle stands and approaches the girl. The girl holds up her next shot when she sees Michelle walk onto the court.

MICHELLE

You have a nice jump shot.

STACY

I'm working on it. I think I'm far from having a nice jump shot, but thanks.

MICHELLE

Practice makes perfect, right?

STACY

I hope so.

MICHELLE

Hi, I'm Michelle.

STACY

Hi, I'm Stacy.

Michelle holds up her hands, asking for the ball. Stacy gives her a bounce pass. Michelle dribbles, turns and takes a shot that swishes through the nylon net.

STACY (CONT'D)
Nice shot! You play?

Stacy retrieves the ball, gives Michelle another bounce pass.

MICHELLE
Thanks. Used to. Stopped when I was
about your age.

Michelle takes another shot and this one swishes, too.

STACY
Why did you stop?

MICHELLE
Daddy issues.

Stacy bounces another pass to Michelle. She dribbles between her legs, stops and pops another swish through the net.

STACY
Wow, you're good.

Michelle is smiling, looking amazed at her accuracy. Stacy retrieves and bounces another pass to Michelle.

MICHELLE
Just luck.

STACY
If that's luck, I need some of it.

Michelle bounces a pass back to Stacy. Stacy takes it, dribbles, stops and pops but her shot bounces off the back of the rim. She chases down the missed shot.

STACY (CONT'D)
See?

MICHELLE
Season's been over for two months.
You doing this for fun or practice
for next year?

STACY
For next year. Coach wants me to
practice my jump shot throughout
the summer to be ready for next
season.

Stacy rises up, takes another shot and swishes it.

STACY (CONT'D)

I'm good at stationary jumpers but not so good when I'm coming off a dribble or a screen.

MICHELLE

Is this for JV?

STACY

Yes. Coach wants me to make the varsity next year. It's a big step since I'll be in tenth next year.

MICHELLE

If you want some help, I can come here a couple times a week the next two weeks, help with your jumper.

STACY

Really? I'd appreciate that.

Stacy takes another stationary jumper and nails it.

STACY (CONT'D)

Are you from around here? You go to Sun Valley?

MICHELLE

Actually, no. I'm from Ridley.

STACY

Ridley? I hope you drove here!

MICHELLE

No, I walked.

STACY

Why here?

MICHELLE

Had a bad day at school and decided to walk it off. Ended up here.

STACY

That's a long walk, Michelle. I guess you must have had a really bad day.

Stacy smiles, which causes Michelle to smile, too.

MICHELLE

Plus, I'm grounded. So I'm sure I'll be in trouble when I finally get home.

STACY
Grounded? Why, if I can ask.

MICHELLE
Long story. But I graduate in two weeks so I'm not sweating it.

STACY
You sure you can come here over the next two weeks?

Michelle turns her head, looks into the woods surrounding the court.

MICHELLE
I'm sure.

She turns back to Stacy, smiling. She holds out her hands for the ball. Stacy delivers a bounce pass.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Let's get to work on your game.

TITLE CARD- "June 22, 2012"

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD DAY

Students mill about, wearing their cap and gowns. Parents and family are beginning to take their seats in the football stands. Michelle stands alone amongst her classmates, watching their excitement. Stephanie sees her, calls out her name. Michelle smiles, waves. Stephanie comes bouncing over to her.

STEPHANIE
Michelle!

When she reaches Michelle, they embrace.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Can you believe it? We are DONE with this place!

MICHELLE
I can barely hold in my excitement.

Michelle laughs to herself sarcastically.

STEPHANIE

What's wrong, girl? In an hour we are officially moving on with the rest of our lives. Meaning Wildwood for the summer!!

Michelle looks melancholy. Steph finally catches on.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I know you've been going through a lot. I don't know what you've been doing with yourself after school for the past two weeks but I've given you your space. But, Michelle? It's time to try and move on from the past and go running into the future.

MICHELLE

You sound like a cliché from a reality show.

Michelle smiles, Steph nudges her shoulder.

STEPHANIE

I will *force* you to have fun, beginning with Rob Johnson's party tonight. You are going, right?

MICHELLE

As if I need a reason to get trashed! Of course.

STEPHANIE

Don't forget to bring your suitcase with you because we're leaving straight from the party for the shore tonight. Are your parents here?

Michelle turns, points to the bleachers where they are sitting. Stephanie waves to them, and they wave back. Steph turns to look Michelle directly.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

No cliché. Our future has started and it's going to be awesome.

Michelle forces a smile.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

See you after commencements so I can say bye to your parents before we leave, reassure them once again their darling daughter will be safe with me this summer.

MICHELLE

In other words, lie to them.

Stephanie gives her a devilish smile.

STEPHANIE

Hell yeah!

Stephanie and her enthusiasm bounce away. An announcement is heard over the field's PA system.

PA SPEAKER (O.S.)

Class of 2012 please take your places!

There is some cheering and yelling as the students and their families begin to separate. Michelle turns to walk to her place on the field when Rick steps in front of her.

RICK

Hey stranger!

MICHELLE

Hi, Rick.

RICK

You've been avoiding me the last two weeks?

MICHELLE

Hey, I'm sorry. It's nothing like that.

RICK

Where have you been after school? Your manservant waits everyday after school to deliver you safely to your palace.

He chuckles, Michelle forces a smile.

RICK (CONT'D)

Seriously, you okay? What have you been doing the past two weeks after school if it's okay to ask?

MICHELLE

I've been helping out someone who needed my help.

Rick looks at her, waiting for more information to come, then realizes it's not coming.

RICK

Okay, gotcha, it's a secret.

They look at one another, an awkward pause.

MICHELLE

I'm sorry if you think I've been avoiding you since that day together.

RICK

Think? At least twice you saw me walking towards you in the halls and both times you turned around!

MICHELLE

I'm sorry. Really sorry, Rick. It isn't you. It's me. My head's fucked up right now.

RICK

I know. It's alright, 'Chelle. Really. I just wanted to make sure we're okay with each other. Because I really like you. That day was incredible.

Michelle gives him an actual real smile.

RICK (CONT'D)

I just want to make sure I'm not a piece of meat that needs to be branded.

He gives her a sarcastic grin, which she returns.

MICHELLE

Clever turn there, Rick.

The voice over the PA makes the same announcement.

RICK

Time to make it official.

MICHELLE

Yep.

RICK
Are you going to Rob's tonight?

MICHELLE
I'll be there.

RICK
Cool. So will I. Can I look for
you?

Michelle gives him a warm smile.

MICHELLE
I'd like that.

They stand smiling at each other.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
K. See you tonight.

RICK
Yes you will.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM DUSK

Michelle finishes closing her suitcase. She stands in the middle of her room, taking a long look at everything there is to see from her life there. She takes a deep sigh, grabs her suitcase and walks outside the room. She again takes another long look, then turns out the light.

INT. BARTON MASTER BEDROOM LATER

Michelle looks inside, sees her mother sitting on a chair, looking sadly out the window. When Michelle places her suitcase on the floor she turns around.

MRS. BARTON
All ready?

Michelle nods yes. Her mom waves for her to come across from her on the edge of the bed. Michelle comes, sits facing her mom. Both look incredibly sad.

MRS. BARTON (CONT'D)
We're so incredibly proud of you,
Michelle.

MICHELLE
Thanks, mom.

They look into each other's eyes, wanting to say more but they are unable to.

MRS. BARTON

I won't nag you again about calling us every night while you're at the shore this summer. But-

MICHELLE

I will call, every night, promise.

This gets a smile from her mom. Again, an awkward pause.

MRS. BARTON

I know you've waited a long time to leave here.

MICHELLE

Leave him, mom. Leave *him*.

Her mom looks uncomfortable.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

I don't know what to say, mom. I love you very much.

They stare at one another, tears in both of their eyes, the sadness remaining.

MRS. BARTON

He loves you very much, Michelle.

Michelle lowers her eyes, says nothing. Her mom's face takes on a look of shame.

MRS. BARTON (CONT'D)

I don't know what caused you two to drift apart these last few-

MICHELLE

I think you did, mom.

Michelle brings her eyes to her mom's. Her mom looks hurt.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

What's done is done. It can never be erased.

Michelle reaches out and embraces her mom. When done she stands, turns, grabs her suitcase and leaves the room, her mom bawling watching her daughter leave her.

INT. BARTON LIVING ROOM LATER

Michelle stands at the front door, turns around, looks closely at everything in the room. Her father enters. They look at each other awkwardly.

PASTOR BARTON
You weren't leaving without saying
goodbye were you?

Michelle slowly nods her head no. There is an unbearable silence.

PASTOR BARTON (CONT'D)
Did you say goodbye to your mom?

Again, Michelle slowly nods yes without making eye contact with her dad.

PASTOR BARTON (CONT'D)
When are you leaving for the shore?

Michelle speaks, her voice low, cracking from pent up emotion.

MICHELLE
Right after we leave the party.

PASTOR BARTON
Stephanie won't be drinking at the-

MICHELLE
No, she won't.

Again, another awkward silence.

PASTOR BARTON
Well, I, uh, hope you two have a
great time-

MICHELLE
Remember when you used to push me
on the swing out back?

He's caught off guard by her interruption, her question. Michelle is now looking at him, directly into his eyes. He nods yes.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
And how scared I was at first to go
too high?

PASTOR BARTON
Yes.

His body language looks like he's being interrogated for a crime.

MICHELLE

You would always reassure me I'd be safe, that you'd never let anything happen to me.

His eyes lower.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

I trusted you. You were my hero, my everything.

Michelle says nothing more until her father gathers the courage to look back up at her.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

I trusted you.

Their eyes lock, tears starting to form in hers.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

God may forgive. But I don't have to.

With that, she picks up her suitcase, turns and walks out the front door, leaving her father, slumped against the wall, head down.

EXT. FRONT SIDEWALK BARTON HOUSE LATER

Michelle places down her suitcase, wipes her eyes, then picks up the suitcase and begins walking down the street, never looking back

EXT. BACK OF A STORE NIGHT

Michelle stands in front of a big dumpster, looks around to see if anyone is watching. She then opens the dumpster's lid, throws her suitcase into it, followed by her pocketbook.

EXT. ROB JOHNSON'S HOUSE NIGHT

Michelle enters the backyard, which is full of her classmates, talking, dancing, drinking. She looks around, doesn't see Stephanie or Rick but she spots the keg. She walks over, grabs a big red cup and taps the keg. When the cup is full, she brings it to her lips and starts gulping the beer. She turns and Stephanie is standing right behind her, surprising Michelle.

STEPHANIE

Hey!

Michelle has some beer drip from her mouth.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Oops! Forgot you have a drinking problem.

Stephanie laughs loudly.

MICHELLE

You're not drunk, are you?

STEPHANIE

No way! Had one. I'm just high on life!

Stephanie again laughs. She then looks around Michelle on the ground.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Where's your suitcase?

MICHELLE

Everything is inside on his porch.

STEPHANIE

You didn't walk all this way with your stuff, did you?

MICHELLE

No, my dad drove me.

STEPHANIE

Really? Nice! See you two still have a chance to patch whatever's wrong!

Michelle gulps down the rest of her beer, goes back to the keg to fill up.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

You okay, 'Chelle? You seem a little...intense?

Michelle brings the cup to her lips and starts chugging again.

MICHELLE

I'm great. I guess maybe the reality of leaving is hitting.

STEPHANIE

Yeah. We've been waiting for this for like ever! No need to be sad. Plus, we'll be back after summer is over.

Michelle takes in her words, then chugs her beer.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Slow down there, Sparky!

MICHELLE

Have you seen Rick?

STEPHANIE

Last I saw of him, he was in the basement playing Call of Duty with Pete Sizemore.

Michelle finishes her drink, places the cup under the keg and refills.

MICHELLE

Thanks. Think I'm going to go find him.

STEPHANIE

Cool. You two kids have fun. Come find me when you're ready to leave. F'ing Wildwood, girlfriend!

Stephanie is all smiles but Michelle looks distant, giving a fake smile, then turning to find Rick.

INT. JOHNSON'S BASEMENT LATER

Michelle sees Rick across the basement, by the TV, where a group of kids are watching/playing a video game. Rick senses he's being watched, turns his head and looks, sees Michelle. He gives her a big smile. He begins walking towards her, she towards him, until they meet.

RICK

Hey, great, you made it.

He reaches in to kiss her, she turns her head, and his kiss lands on her cheek.

RICK (CONT'D)

Whoa, sorry.

MICHELLE

It's okay, Rick. I'm just not there right now.

He looks at her, sees that she looks tense.

RICK

You okay?

She looks into his eyes, says nothing, breaks the look by chugging her beer.

RICK (CONT'D)

Michelle? We're done. Done! It's supposed to be a time to celebrate.

MICHELLE

I know. I'm trying.

She downs the rest of her beer.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

This is helping.

RICK

Need a refill?

She nods yes. He takes her cup from her.

RICK (CONT'D)

Be right back.

MICHELLE

Can you meet me upstairs, maybe in one of the bedrooms? I have to find Steph. If I'm late, please wait for me.

Rick smiles slyly. Michelle doesn't react, turns and walks towards the basement steps.

INT. JOHNSON BEDROOM LATER

Michelle stands looking at the floor looking sad outside of a bedroom. Rick reaches the top of the steps turns his head to the right and sees Michelle, walks towards her.

RICK

As you requested.

He hands her a red cup filled with beer. She takes it and immediately starts downing the liquid. Rick watches with a smirk.

RICK (CONT'D)

Whoa there.

She completes half the beer, looks at Rick who has a huge smile on his face.

MICHELLE

I'm sorry, but you're not getting lucky tonight.

Rick's eyes widen, surprised.

RICK

I could change your mind?

She grabs Rick by the hand and leads him inside the bedroom. A night light is on so they can see each other after she shuts the door. Rick stands looking confused. Michelle looks into his eyes, brings the cup to her lips and finishes the rest of her beer. She grabs Rick's cup in her free hand and places both on a night table. She looks up into his eyes again, sadness in her eyes.

RICK (CONT'D)

What's going on, Michelle?

MICHELLE

I...I just need...I just need to be held.

His demeanor changes as he knows there's something wrong.

RICK

Held?

MICHELLE

Yeah. A real hug. Not one out of sympathy. Or after you have sex. Or when you're greeting someone.

He studies her eyes.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

I need to be held like it's the last hug you'll ever get.

Rick continues studying her eyes, knows she really needs that kind of hug, reaches out and takes her in his arms and she melts inside those arms. She frees her arms and wraps them around his waist, head buried in his upper torso.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

(Whispers) I'm so tired.

INT. JOHNSON BEDROOM LATER

Michelle lies in Rick's arms on a bed, wide awake. Rick wakes up.

RICK

Wow, we passed out. What time is it?

MICHELLE

Time for me to go. Steph is downstairs waiting for me. We're going to the shore tonight.

Rick sits up in bed, sees the alarm clock. It reads 1:10. Michelle sits up, too. Takes a deep breath, then stands. Rick stands as well.

RICK

You're not going to rush out on me, are you?

MICHELLE

Steph is waiting, probably pissed because I made her wait this whole time.

Rick comes to her, she looks up into his eyes.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Thank you.

RICK

Why do you look so....sad?

MICHELLE

I guess because I'm leaving here for good.

RICK

For good? It's just for the summer, right?

Michelle gives him a fake, comforting smile.

RICK (CONT'D)

And you told me I can come visit anytime. That's still on, right?

She reaches up, takes him into her arms and gives him a long kiss goodbye. She slowly releases him, turns and walks out of the room, Rick watching dumbfounded.

EXT. SHORE HOUSE EARLY MORNING

It is very foggy outside as Rick stands at a front door, knocking. The sound of seagulls can be heard. The door is opened by Stephanie, looking very groggy.

STEPHANIE

Hey Rick. Did she forget her key?

Steph slumbers from the door into the kitchen. Rick walks in looking confused. Steph grabs a coke from the fridge and sits at the kitchen table, turns and sees Rick just standing there.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Can't you at least be a gentleman and carry her luggage in?

Rick looks even more confused.

RICK

Who are you talking about?

STEPHANIE

Michelle? Duh!

RICK

I don't understand what you're saying. Why would I be helping her carry her luggage in when she came her with you, like, 5 hours ago?

Stephanie puts her coke down hard on the table, causing it to bubble over.

STEPHANIE

She told me last night she was staying later with you and you'd be driving her here this morning.

They look at each other.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Shit!

Stephanie bolts from her chair and runs into the living room, grabs her purse and pulls out her cell and taps it.

RICK

You mean she's not here?

STEPHANIE

No!

Stephanie holds the phone anxiously.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
 Fuck. She's not ans- MICHELLE! It's Steph. You better call me as soon as you turn your cell on and call me back or I'm going to kick your ass. You hear me? I'm not kidding around. You have me scared shitless. Call me!!

She shuts her phone, looks up at Rick.

INT. DET. SCHMIDT'S OFFICE MORNING

The detective sits at his desk with a far off look on his eyes when his partner walks in.

DET. JANSEN
 Guess you heard?

His look disappears when he hears his partner's voice, looks up at him.

DET. SCHMIDT
 That her suitcase was found last night in Chang's dumpster? Yeah, I did.

DET. JANSEN
 There goes our only supposed witness.

Schmidt looks up angrily.

DET. JANSEN (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry. I didn't mean it that way.

Schmidt calms down.

DET. JANSEN (CONT'D)
 Listen, I know you care about the girl. But this is Missing Persons now. We're in the middle of a homicide case.

Schmidt shakes his head.

DET. JANSEN (CONT'D)
 She's a runaway. She'll turn up safe and sound.

DET. SCHMIDT

It makes no sense. She was going to the shore for the entire summer. She already *was* running away.

Jensen shrugs his shoulders, turns to leave the office.

DET. JANSEN

Try and stay focused, Bob. It's only been three days. She's going to turn up, either back at home or at the shore house.

Schmidt gives his partner a "I hope so" look.

EXT. DETECTIVE SCHMIDT'S CAR NIGHT

Schmidt drives his car past people camped out on streets, some holding little American flags, others with lit sparklers.

INT. DETECTIVE SCHMIDT'S HOME LATER

The detective is standing silently in his daughter's bedroom. We can see posters on the walls, plaques on shelves etc. He walks over to a desk in the corner. His eyes take in all the books that are there. He reaches out and grabs a book that says "Sara's Life". He looks up, pondering, then lays the book back down.

EXT. DARK STREET NIGHT

Michelle is standing by a very large tree on a street corner. She is smoking a cigarette, her hand visibly shaking. When she tosses the butt to the ground we see at least a dozen more right around her feet. She turns and looks at the house she's standing in front of. It is surrounded by unkempt shrubbery, the grass is long overdue for a cutting. She lights another cigarette and begins pacing, eyes never leaving the front door of the house. After only a few drags, she tosses it to the ground. Taking a deep breath, she walks past the shrubbery, up a cement walkway till she reaches steps. She climbs up the steps and knocks on the door. Her eyes are open wide. The door slightly opens.

EXT. DETECTIVE SCHMIDT'S CAR NIGHT

We see Schmidt driving in his car, the sounds of fireworks can be heard and seen in the dark sky.

EXT. HOUSE NIGHT

Michelle stands tense at the front door, looking at the opening. She seems to jump when she hears a voice.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Yes?

MICHELLE

It's me.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Yes?

MICHELLE

I...I told you I'd be here tonight.

There is silence.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

You...you know why I'm here.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

No. No I don't.

MICHELLE

I'm not...I'm not fucking around here. You know why I'm here and if you don't let me in I'll start screaming.

There is a brief pause and then the door opens slowly, the light from inside the house illuminates Michelle's face, making her look angelic in spite of her fear.

INT. DETECTIVE SCHMIDT'S CAR NIGHT

We see the detective pull up in front of the Barton house.

INT. HOUSE NIGHT

Michelle cautiously enters the house, eyes dancing everywhere. She doesn't see anyone but the house is a disheveled mess.

MICHELLE

Where are you?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

I'm in the living room, to your right.

Michelle swallows hard and starts walking to the right.

EXT. BARTON HOUSE NIGHT

The detective is walking up a walkway to the front door, the sound of fireworks can still be heard.

INT. HOUSE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

The living room is bathed in jittery light coming from a dozen or so candles. Michelle looks around and sees pictures of Jesus on the wall, some hanging upside down. She also sees crucifixes hanging on the walls, all of which are hanging upside down. She is startled by a voice behind her.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Why are you here?

Michelle quickly turns and sees a medium sized man with a beard standing about 15 feet from her. His eyes are wild yet strangely calm. When he sees the panic in Michelle's eyes he smiles. He moves one step towards her, she backs up one step.

MICHELLE

I know who you are and what you have done.

EXT. BARTON FRONT DOOR NIGHT

The detective knocks on the front door.

INT. HOME LIVING ROOM NIGHT

MALE VOICE

Who am...I?

MICHELLE

Your name is Joseph Zderic.

His smile disappears.

JOE

How do you know my name?

Michelle says nothing, watching him closely as he walks over to a desk. He reaches and picks up two envelopes, holds them up.

JOE (CONT'D)

How do you know my name?

INT. BARTON LIVING ROOM NIGHT

The detective is standing with Michelle's mom.

DET. SCHMIDT
I wanted to thank you for allowing
me to come on such short notice.

MRS. BARTON
It's no bother at all. I'm just a
little confused. I didn't think you
were working her case.

DET. SCHMIDT
I'm not. I honestly don't know why
I'm here. I guess it's just a
hunch. I was in my daughter's room
tonight and, well, I don't know.

MRS. BARTON
You have a daughter?

DET. SCHMIDT
I did. She died a few years ago.

MRS. BARTON
I'm sorry.

DET. SCHMIDT
It's okay, you couldn't have known.

There is a brief uncomfortable pause.

DET. SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
If it's okay, can I see Michelle's
room?

MRS. BARTON
Of course. The police have been
here before but if you think you
can find something that helps us
find our daughter...

She grows quiet as she tries to fight back tears.

MRS. BARTON (CONT'D)
I'll take you up.

INT. HOME LIVING ROOM NIGHT

Michelle stands as Zderic holds two letters in his hands.

MICHELLE
Your Triple A card.

Zderic's eyes open wide as he looks at her in disbelief.

JOE ZDERIC
How...

MICHELLE
You held it up to the window of
Rachel's car when her car broke
down.

Zderic's eyes show confusion as he looks at the letters in
his hands. He tries to say something but can't. Michelle
seems to grow in confidence.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
I couldn't see your face but I
could see the name on the card.

He looks into her eyes, studying her closely.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
It's amazing what you can do with
Google Search, especially with a
last name like yours.

Zderic becomes agitated.

JOE ZDERIC
Who are you?

She says nothing. He grows angrier.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)
Who are you with?

MICHELLE
No one. I think my letters clearly
stated I have not told the police
anything or we wouldn't be having
this conversation.

Zderic begins pacing, thinking to himself, stops looks her
directly in the eyes, his eyebrows rising up with menace. He
stares her down.

JOE ZDERIC
Boo!

Michelle jumps back, scared. He smiles at her with the devil
in his eyes. He paces again, thinking, stops.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)
It's obvious you're scared. But how
do I know you're telling the truth?

MICHELLE
(Voice Cracking) Because I'm here.
And I do not lie.

He looks back into her eyes.

JOE ZDERIC
I don't know what you're talking
about.

Michelle stares him back down.

MICHELLE
Let's cut to the chase. You killed
those girls, you sick fuck.

This causes Zderic to smirk at Michelle.

JOE ZDERIC
I still don't know-

MICHELLE
Please forgive me Father. I'm a
sinner...and I'm evil.

The letters fall from his hands to the floor.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
I held all of the victims hands.
And when I did I could see what
kind of twisted monster you are.

He looks at her in almost a shock.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
What kind of fucking monster rapes
little girls with crucifixes?

INT. BARTON HOME NIGHT

Mrs. Barton leads the detective to Michelle's room.

MRS. BARTON
We're here.

She turns on the bedroom light.

MRS. BARTON (CONT'D)
I'm sorry her father couldn't be here but he's at the hospital. One of our parishioners is dying and he's there to give Last Rites and comfort the family.

She smiles uncomfortably as she walks into the room, with the detective right behind her

INT. HOME LIVING ROOM NIGHT

MICHELLE
I'm not here to absolve you or to condemn you. I don't know you but in a way, we're both alike.

He tilts his head.

JOE ZDERIC
How?

MICHELLE
Our loss of faith have driven us both to this moment.

Joe looks at her, confused.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
My father is a Lutheran pastor. I know what it's like to have your faith taken away by those you trust, love.

Joe's eyes soften.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
I didn't tell the police because...because...

He can see her visibly shaking.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
I wrote the letters to get you to stop killing.

JOE ZDERIC
You say you don't lie but I don't know who you are. It sounds like a lie to me saying you could see the murders of those poor girls simply by touching their hands.

He's getting his mental well being back. He steps towards Michelle.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)

You said you couldn't see the murderers face. Anyone could find a lost card and say it's theirs. If you are so sure I'm the killer, why send letters? Why not go to the police?

He steps even closer to her, she moves back two steps.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)

Why would you come face to face with someone you think is a monster?

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM NIGHT

MRS. BARTON

Everything is as she left it, and the police before you.

DET. SCHMIDT

Thank you.

MRS. BARTON

I hope you find what you're looking for, especially if it helps find where are daughter is.

He smiles at her, then she turns and leaves the room. He starts walking inside, eyes searching its contents.

INT. HOME LIVING ROOM NIGHT

Zderic takes another step closer to Michelle, she backs up one more. He senses her fear, causing his breathing to become noticeably heavier.

JOE ZDERIC

Answer the fucking question. Why wouldn't you call the police? Why are you standing before someone you believe is a killer?

Michelle is now visibly shaking. He takes one step closer, Michelle steps back one more but now her back is up against a wall. He's within 10 feet of her. Joe's eyes are dancing.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)
Take off your clothes.

MICHELLE
What?

JOE ZDERIC
To make sure you're not wearing a wire.

MICHELLE
You come into my house late at night after you sent those menacing letters, telling me some bullshit story of how you 'witnessed' the murders, accusing me of being a serial killer. If you have nothing to hide, take off your fucking clothes now. Or leave.

Michelle lowers her eyes and starts removing her clothes.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Schmidt walks around her room, taking it all in. His eyes are drawn to a Bible sitting on her book shelf. He pulls it out from the other books, studies it closely.

INT. HOME LIVING ROOM NIGHT

Michelle stands, quivering in the corner of the room, wearing only her bra and panties. His eyes are soaking in her body. Michelle tries not to look at him. Sweat starts beading on his forehead as his eyes travel down her body. They stop when he sees her thighs.

JOE ZDERIC
What are those from?

She sees where his eyes on concentrating on. She doesn't answer. His demeanor seems to change in a blink of an eye.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)
I have the same.

He unbuttons his jeans, pulls down the zipper, then pulls his pants down enough to expose the tops of his thighs. Michelle looks and sees crosses cut into his skin.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)
Those are from me.

He turns, pulls down his boxers to expose his ass. They are covered in ugly, cruel scars resembling crosses.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)
And these are from my mom.

He pulls up his pants and zipper, turns back to her.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)
For your sake, I hope yours are self-inflicted.

Michelle stands silently, quivering.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)
Now turn around slowly.

Slowly she starts turning around in a circle. When she's done she looks at him.

MICHELLE
No wires.

He smiles.

JOE ZDERIC
So far no lies. Now the biggie, the one you haven't answered yet. Why are you here?

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Schmidt begins leafing through the Bible. Half way through a small booklet falls out from the hollowed out quarter of the Bible when it was hiding. He picks it up, starts reading it.

MICHELLE (V.O.)
I know who he is.

INT. HOME LIVING ROOM NIGHT

JOE ZDERIC
Why. Are. You. *Here*?

Her eyes are looking down.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)
Look at me and answer the fucking question.

INT. MICHELLE BARTON'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Schmidt's eyes open in horror as he reads some more of Michelle's diary.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

I sent the killer two letters in hopes he'd stop killing. I didn't do this because God wanted me to. I had my own reasons for sending the letters.

INT. HOME LIVING ROOM NIGHT

He stands before her. He lowers his right hand to his crotch and starts rubbing himself.

MICHELLE

You sick fuck.

JOE ZDERIC

Answer the God damn questions. Why didn't you go to the police and why are you here?

MICHELLE

I didn't tell the police because...I'm here because I'm your next victim.

Zderic falls back as if struck with a punch, stunned.

INT. BARTON HOUSE NIGHT

Schmidt closes the Bible, places in his jacket pocket and runs out of the room.

INT. HOME LIVING ROOM NIGHT

JOE ZDERIC

You *want* to die?

MICHELLE

Yes.

He backs away from her. He runs his hands through his hair trying to figure out what's going on.

JOE ZDERIC

This is a set up.

He stops, looks at her, then approaches her quickly. Michelle cowers a little.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)

This is a fucking set up.

Michelle gathers some strength, leans towards him.

MICHELLE

Listen you fuck, this isn't a set up. Kill me or I run from this house dressed like this screaming rape. The police *will* be here, and when they are, I'm sure they will find interesting things is the basement.

He leans his body towards hers, their eyes locking. He backs off first, turning, then pacing around the room, talking to himself. Michelle can not make out what he's saying.

INT. DETECTIVE SCHMIDT'S CAR NIGHT

Schmidt is driving, sounds of fireworks can be heard.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

I'm not doing this for God. I'm doing this to *spite* him. His 'gift' dies with me. I'm his next victim. His name is Joseph Zderic and he lives at-

INT. HOME LIVING ROOM NIGHT

Michelle watches Zderic pace about the room, talking to himself. Without notice, he rushes her, grabs her by the shoulders and throws her against the wall.

JOE ZDERIC

You want to die, huh? Dying will cleanse you, release you? This is your cross to bear?

Face to face with her, eyes boring into her's. Suddenly he grabs her hair and pulls her away from the wall.

INT. DETECTIVE SCHMIDT'S CAR NIGHT

Schmidt is seen hanging up the car's radio, car speeding through streets, siren blaring.

INT. HOUSE BASEMENT NIGHT

Zderic drags her by her hair down the steps. She doesn't scream or yell for help.

JOE ZDERIC

The pain you're about to experience
will last an eternity, bitch.

He throws her on top of the table, then quickly fastens the restraints to her wrists and ankles. Michelle does not resist.

INT. DETECTIVE SCHMIDT'S CAR NIGHT

We see him in his car, racing to Zderic's house.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

You have a daughter. I knew you'd find my diary, or someone would. I hope it's you, Bob. I'm sorry if I've disappointed you. I'm sorry if you think I'm a coward or selfish. I'm not strong enough to handle all of this. I can't live in a world where my father harmed me beyond words, where a God can watch innocent people die. I will not live my life using God's gift. My letters have got Zderic to stop. I hope you find this in time to stop him from taking another victim after me. You're a good person. Sara was lucky to have a father like you.

INT. HOUSE BASEMENT NIGHT

Michelle lies still on the table, strapped and gagged. Zderic's back is facing Michelle. She can see him place a ski mask over his head. When he turns his eyes appear to be black, cold. In his right hand is a long, serrated knife.

JOE ZDERIC

This is what you wanted? You have no idea what you're about to experience. I'm going to make this last a very long time.

His eyes seem to be smiling as the knife to her abdomen. He watches her eyes as he slowly pushes the tip of the knife into her skin. She does not flinch from the pain. Instead, she looks sad, a tear forming in her right eye.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)
I'm going to make you suffer.

He pulls the knife out, watching her, waiting for a scream through gag. Nothing. His eyes look angry. He turns, grabs another knife from the metal tray, turns back to her. He brings close to her face, his breathing heavy. She shows no signs of fear.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)
Think you're brave?

He takes the knife to the front part of her bra and slices it open. His left hand grabs her left nipple, pulls it out as far as he can then brings the knife to it.

CLOSE UP OF MICHELLE'S EYES FILL WITH TEARS

INT. DETECTIVE SCHMIDT'S CAR NIGHT

His car makes a quick right then comes to a stop on the curb where Michelle had been smoking before knocking on Zderic's front door. Two other cop cars come up behind his.

INT. HOUSE BASEMENT NIGHT

Zderic stands back, eyes blinking inside his mask, studying Michelle's face, eyes. He steps back, body language showing disappointment. He takes the same knife, brings it to her lower belly and plunges it in deep. Michelle's body flinches as he pulls it out slowly, blood dripping from the knife. He again looks deeply in her eyes. Again, she shows no fear, no fight. He stumbles back.

JOE ZDERIC
Jesus Christ.

His eyes look confused as he plunges the knife into her left arm. He waits for a scream that never comes.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)
God sent you here, didn't he?
You're an angel.

Michelle shakes her head no.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)
Oh my God! What have I done?

He looks at her bloodied body with horror in his eyes.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)
What have I done? God, please
forgive me. I'm a sinner and I'm
evil.

He looks her in her eyes.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

He takes a crucifix off the table and lays it on her belly,
next to one of her gaping wounds.

JOE ZDERIC (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry.

With the knife in hand, he leaves Michelle and climbs the
basement steps. She begins struggling with her restraints as
we HEAR sirens.

EXT. HOUSE NIGHT

Schmidt and four officers go up the front steps, Schmidt
kicking open the door.

INT. BASEMENT NIGHT

We can barely see Michelle's right arm strapped to the table
as we HEAR a door being kicked in.

INT. HOME LIVING ROOM NIGHT

Schmidt and the four officers, guns drawn, enter the house.

DET. SCHMIDT
Michelle?

They slowly search the house. Schmidt sees a light coming
from around a corner. He and another officer slowly walk
towards the light. A look of disgust comes over the officers
face.

OFFICER
What the hell is that smell?

Schmidt jumps into the room, gun drawn. The officer follows behind him. CLOSE UP of their faces as we see what they are looking at.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ!

Schmidt walks over to the body of Joe Zderic, slumped over in a chair, flies buzzing about him. His face is decomposing, blood caked and dried all over the floor. Both of Zderic's wrists are cut deeply. A panicked look overcomes Schmidt's face.

DET. SCHMIDT
Michelle!!

INT. HOUSE BASEMENT NIGHT

Schmidt is seen running down the basement steps. He stops when he sees a body tied to a table. He runs to it. Michelle lies, decomposing, eyes closed.

DET. SCHMIDT
Oh my God, no!

He frantically searches for a pulse that isn't there. With tears in his eyes, he unties her hands from the table.

INT. MORGUE OPENING SCENE

CLOSE UP of a hand reaching out to touch the hand of a dead body lying on the cold slab in the morgue. It is Pastor Barton's hand, touching Michelle's. He begins crying.

INT. DET. SCHMIDT'S OFFICE NIGHT

An officer walks into Schmidt's office.

OFFICER
Hey Bob. The coroner found this
inside Miss Barton's shorts pocket.

CLOSE UP of the paper going into Schmidt's hand.

When the officer leaves, Schmidt opens it.

EXT. PLAYGROUND DAY

We see Stacy talking to Michelle after Stacy is done playing basketball.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

His name is Joseph Zderic. He lives at 343 Baylor Drive in Wallingford. If you're reading this, I'm dead and my pain is over. If there is a God maybe I will find out why he allows so much suffering in a world He created. I believed in Him once. I hope you catch the killer. I don't want another innocent life taken. Hopefully, I helped save a young girl's life.

We see Stacy smiling as she walks away from Michelle. Michelle stares off into woods.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

Maybe she will get to know God's love for her.

POV- MICHELLE

We see what Michelle was looking at in her scene with Stacy. It is Joe Zderic behind a tree, watching Stacy walk away.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

I pray that for her.

CLOSE UP OF STACY'S SMILING FACE AS SHE WALKS AWAY FROM MICHELLE

FADE TO BLACK

(Copyrighted Sept 2009)

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

