

RAINMAKER

one-hour drama series episode #101

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RAINMAKER

Episode 101: Seeds in the Clouds

TEASER

FADE IN:

We SEE the backsides of a Spanish-American farmer, SAM (spry 40; in overalls, straw hat) and his daughter, MARIA (10; jeans, blue shirt; long brown hair) with hoes on their shoulders, walking across rows of lush, tall, waving corn. With every few steps, the girl grows, the farmer ages, and crops get shorter, browner, and drier.

SUPER: "1994, 1995 ... to 2014" with the passage of a few steps by the farmer and his daughter.

Stubs of crumbling corn stalks remain by 2024. Sam (now 60, worn with age and despair) and Maria (30; gorgeous but worried) follow their long, DRY IRRIGATION DITCH past a DEAD COW with his TONGUE OUT, and past brown, DYING TREES to a DRY RIVERBED. Sam and Maria are paralyzed in SHOCK.

SUPER: "A few very dry years into the future..."

We PULL BACK for a broader view with AERIAL VIEWS from A DRONE, including a DRY RESERVOIR, WITHERED CROPS for miles around, and HIGHWAYS CHOKED WITH FLEEING FAMILIES. As the drone's camera ZOOMS IN on Maria RIPPING down a dusty trail on a mountain bike, we HEAR a determined 14-year-old girl, the NARRATOR.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

California, the Golden State, was
burning. Grapes to raisins. Raisins
to dust. Millions just left. The
rest had their reasons for staying,
like my grandparents who were
powerless. Some stayed to profit
from the poor. One stayed to teach.

Maria SKIDS to a stop outside a classroom at Sierra College in Rocklin, California. She pulls off her backpack and RACES into the building.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Only 8 students (18-22; various types) in a vacuous lecture hall listen to a beautiful, super-smart Latina, Assistant Professor, MARIA RAMOS (30), displaying her nerd glasses, athletic clothes, and superb body.

She bravely drinks UNFILTERED WATER from a tall glass, then shows a SLIDE of the MAP of the drought.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Grandpa says she had a short fuse. Grandma called her "fuegos artificiales en constante explosión," ever-exploding fireworks. I knew her as the one voice of reason. The one voice of hope. She didn't have a cape or wear a mask like other heroes. She saw the world, not as it was, but as it should be. She was my mother.

Maria exhibits a slide of "RAINMAKING PLOYS" (a cannon, long funnels).

MARIA

Banging drums, World War One cannons, psychics, and cloud seeding won't work?

Maria projects a slide of CLOUD SEEDING FROM A PLANE.

STUDENT #1

But silver iodide spread from Hollyfield jets--

MARIA

Won't work. Never has. Never will. Even a rich company like Hollyfield can't deny the science.

STUDENT #2

But the news said...

MARIA

Sorry. The scientific studies don't support their claims. Your generation deserves real reasons for hope!

Three other students: DAX GREEN, a handsome young black male (20), HUAN ZOU, an meek-looking Asian woman (20), and PARKER Has No Horse, a businessman-looking Native American (20) male are noticeably QUIET in the back of the room.

STUDENT #3

Dr. Ramos, how can you stop our politicians and Hollyfield from selling us false hopes?

MARIA

By changing one mind at a time with
scientific evidence.

Grumpy voice of the DEAN (middle-aged woman) over the public
address system in the room.

DEAN (O.S.)

Dr. Ramos, I need to see you
immediately.

MARIA

Not again? Class dismissed. Again!

Disgruntled students exit. Maria starts to EXIT without her
laptop computer.

DEAN (O.S.)

Please bring the college's computer
with you.

Maria STARES at the tiny SECURITY CAMERA behind her.

She reluctantly TOSSES the laptop in her backpack, and STOMPS
out.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Some people stayed for vengeance,
others out of habit. Even our
President was no match for Mother
Nature.

INT. OVAL OFFICE, WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

We see the PRESIDENT's (58) small back and gray hair, with
massive COLONEL QUINTON SHIELDS (62) in a heavily decorated
Army uniform, leaning his knuckles on the desk, and looking
over his dark-rimmed glasses.

COLONEL SHIELDS

Give me the power we need!

PRESIDENT

More drones? More rifles? What?

COLONEL SHIELDS

Only if you want your country back.

PRESIDENT

It's just a drought. It'll end.

COLONEL SHIELDS

With all due respect, Sir, we've been saying that for twenty years.

PRESIDENT

With all due respect means the opposite. Cut the crap, Shields. You've got people so poor they beg for water; rich government contractors and shysters; thieving Water Pirates; and armed militia who make sheriffs' departments look like boy scouts!

COLONEL SHIELDS

Let Devlin over at Hollyfield weed out the Water Pirates, Sir. He's got the capabilities.

PRESIDENT

Our largest defense contractor using drones and wire-tapping our own people? I won't stand for it.

COLONEL SHIELDS

They're catching water thieves and traitors, and they're leading our cloud seeding program. Think of the polls.

PRESIDENT

I don't like this.

INT. COLLEGE DEAN'S OFFICE - DAY

The unsympathetic DEAN, a 50-year-old woman in a gray business suit IMPATIENTLY PACES behind her desk as Maria reluctantly hands over her laptop.

DEAN

Hollyfield is the college's biggest donor. I'm afraid I have to place you on administrative leave.

MARIA

For how long? I'm teaching three classes: range management, ecological forecasting, and critical thinking. Why?

DEAN

Sorry. I'm not at liberty to say.

MARIA

Seems liberty is in short supply
these days.

DEAN

That mouthy attitude is your worst
enemy. That's why Stanford let you
go. I have to do what's best for
the college.

The Dean's cell phone RINGS. She turns her back to Maria,
WHISPERING.

MARIA

Somehow, I doubt that.

The dean glances briefly to Maria.

DEAN

We'll notify you when you may
return.

The Dean turns her back and WHISPERS in the phone. Maria
defiantly takes her laptop, SHOVES it in her backpack and
exits.

EXT. CALIFORNIA BIKE TRAIL - DAY

Maria Ramos SPEEDS toward home, a small mountain cabin with
solar panels, a windmill, and wood stove. She LEANS her bike
against her cabin, reaches in the door, grabs a roll of
toilet paper and heads into the woods. Her BACKPACK is still
on her back.

A "Hollyfield Inc." DRONE launches a ROCKET which BLOWS UP
her cabin. Maria, SQUATTING, GRABS her phone and gets a short
video clip.

MARIA

Bastards! They'll regret that!

She RACES away.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Many people are intimidated by
bullies. My mom wasn't one of them.

EXT. SIERRA COLLEGE - NIGHT

Maria hides behind trees as two muscular, uniformed men from
Campus Security (40s) load five students from Maria's class
into a van.

Meanwhile, the three other attendees from her class, Dax Green, Huan Zou, and Parker Has No Horse, SNEAK UP behind Maria, WHISPERING.

DAX
Shhh. Dr. Ramos. It's us.

MARIA
(startled)
Us, who?

DAX
I'm Dax Green, this is Huan Zou and that's Parker Has No Horse.

MARIA
What are you doing here?

HUAN
We might ask you the same thing.

MARIA
Lost my job today. Came to get some files from my office.

PARKER
You nuts? Hollyfield has cameras everywhere.

DAX
If you didn't turn off your computer, I can get the files.

MARIA
Why are you helping me? You'll get into even more trouble.

HUAN
We need your help too.

MARIA
Maybe I'm heading to Canada?

PARKER
Like the other environmentalists? Don't think so.

DAX
They'd expect that. You'll disappear like the others.

MARIA
You don't believe those rumors.

DAX
They're not rumors. We used to work
for Hollyfield. We quit.

HUAN
Didn't like what they were doing.

PARKER
And no dental plan.

DAX
But you have to help us in return.

MARIA
Help you? Do what? Save the world?

Dax, Huan, and Parker literally JUMP FOR JOY.

MARIA (CONT'D)
That's it, isn't it. You expect me
to save the world.

Dax opens a LAPTOP computer and breaks into Maria's computer.

He transfers files.

MARIA (CONT'D)
Didn't need my user name or twenty-
character password?

DAX
Child's play.

MARIA
The four of us are supposed to
change the Dust Bowl Two?

DAX
There are more of us out there.

HUAN
And we'll change the military, the
politicians, and the farmers and
ranchers -- everyone.

PARKER
It's easy.

MARIA
Yeah? How?

DAX
One mind at a time.

Maria CHUCKLES.

MARIA

You're right! It's like the drought
in critical thinking skills is
worse than the water drought.

PARKER

For that thinking drought, we gotta
a nickname for ya.

MARIA

What's that?

HUAN

We call you, The Rainmaker.

MARIA

Let's go change some minds. Wait!
Can I trust you?

DAX

More than most.

Maria READS their INNOCENT-LOOKING faces.

MARIA

What the hell. Let's go save the
world!

End Teaser

ACT ONE

EXT./INT. LAKE TAHOE ESTATE - DAY

A massive gated estate is surrounded by vast green lawns being WATERED with large sprinklers, and green trees. Looks like a mobster's house. Two heavily armed BODYGUARDS (40s) patrol the grounds. Inside a huge glass-walled mansion, we see the back of the head of Chief Executive Officer, RODERICK DEVLIN III (60), an overstuffed high-powered businessman in a tailored suit, answer his telephone call from his SECRETARY (female, O.S.).

DEVLIN
What is it now?

SECRETARY (O.S.)
Colonel Shields, Sir.

DEVLIN
Patch him through. Scrambled.

SECRETARY (O.S.)
Right away, Sir.

Devlin waits impatiently.

NARRATOR (O.S.)
How do people get so greedy? My mom used to call greed an undiagnosed cancer of the heart.

DEVLIN
Quinton?

COLONEL SHIELDS (O.S.)
Intel says you're in your Sacramento office.

DEVLIN
(snickers; overlooking the Lake)
Never leave the place. Security reasons. The cloud-seeding?

COLONEL SHIELDS
It's a 'go'.

DEVLIN
For what we're paying, it better be.

COLONEL SHIELDS

We want you to test the waters as they say. Get it?

Devlin is not amused.

COLONEL SHIELDS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

In Auburn, outside Sacramento. Sell your cloud seeding program to those idiot ranchers and farmers or the deal's off.

DEVLIN

After twenty years of drought, I could sell them a wishing well.

COLONEL SHIELDS (O.S.)

Selling them on a new tax might be a little tougher. Don't underestimate those shit-kickers.

DEVLIN

I'll win that cloud seeding contact of yours. I never lose.

COLONEL SHIELDS (O.S.)

One of the places hardest hit by the Dust Bowl Two: Auburn, California.

EXT. AUBURN, CALIFORNIA - NIGHT

Maria, Dax, and Huan sit LOW in the back seat of a BLUE FORD F-150 as Parker approaches the town on a DUSTY farm road. They see two WATER GUARDS (30 and 60; heavy-set, in overalls) patrolling the river.

PARKER

Water guards. Stay low.

MARIA

Water guards?

HUAN

Wow. You have been cooped up in universities for a while.

DAX

Water Guards, authorized by the sheriff to protect primary water rights.

PARKER
Usually their own. Illegal militia,
if you ask me.

MARIA
What's that?

Maria POINTS to a boy (RICKY; 16, Latino) and girl (SHANNON;
16, white) (both in sunglasses, caps pulled low) HIDING in
tall vegetation. They CARRY twelve empty plastic water jugs.

DAX
Just stealing a little water.

PARKER
They'll be shot as water pirates if
they get caught.

MARIA
We gotta help them.

HUAN
We have a bigger mission here. The
bogus cloud-seeding.

PARKER
And the new bogus water tax.

MARIA
But that doesn't work.

DAX
That's why we're here.

The Water Guards turn their backs, and the teenagers BREAK
for the river.

MARIA
Pop the hood and let me out.

PARKER
Too risky.

Maria FORCES her way out of the Blue Ford F-150 truck. Parker
POPS the hood. The Water Guards MARCH over, while the teens
STEAL water. Maria PRETENDS to work on the engine.

WATER GUARD #1
What's your business here?

PARKER
In town for the Water Meeting.

DAX
Come from upriver.

MARIA
Barking Spider Ranch in the Gold
Country on the American River.

WATER GUARD #2
The headwaters? You got primary
water rights then?

MARIA
One-hundred-fifty years worth.
These are my ranch hands.

DAX
(laughing)
Yup! And you must be protectin'
some of our water.

The Water Guards HEAR the teenagers and COCK their rifles.

WATER GUARD #1
Water Pirates. Shoot 'em.

MARIA
Wait. They're with us. My truck
needs water.

WATER GUARD #2
Once your water runs downstream, it
ours. Shoot 'em.

PARKER
Wait. Can't we settle this at the
Water Meeting? We mean no harm.

MARIA
If we meant harm, we'd be blowing
up the Lake Tahoe dam.

WATER GUARD #2
Sorry. Rules is rules.

Maria PULLS their rifles down and SCREAMS.

MARIA
Legally, that's my water! I didn't
irrigate my alfalfa pasture, which
created a water banking of one-
acre-foot of water! Do the math!

The Water Guard gains control of his rifle and POINTS it at
Maria.

WATER GUARD #1
You do the math. Got a calculator?

MARIA
Sure. It's in my backpack.

WATER GUARD #2
Nice and slow, Sister.

Maria captures their attention with a new TABLET COMPUTER. She initiates the calculator app. Dax, Parker, and Huan SURROUND the guards, obstructing their view. Meanwhile, the teenagers ESCAPE with their stolen water.

MARIA
One acre-foot of water equals one-foot of water in a one-acre field. That's two-hundred-six feet times two-hundred-six feet.

HUAN
Then seven-point-four-eight gallons per cubic foot.

PARKER
Rounding off, of course. You fellas are round. You understand.

MARIA
That makes three-hundred-twenty-six-thousand gallons. What could those kid carry? Six gallons?

The Water Guards turn to see the teenagers escaping. They FIRE their weapons too high. Parker starts up the truck.

PARKER
She's cooled down, ready to go.

MARIA
Wish we could stay. See you boys at the Water Meeting?

Parker RACES away.

WATER GUARD #1
Environ-mentalists, I bet.

WATER GUARD #2
Better tell the sheriff.

INT. AUBURN SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

SHERIFF STANLEY DALTON (60) is a former high school football player and gun enthusiast. He's all the justice the town needs. He answers an antiquated office phone.

SHERIFF DALTON

Dalton.

The sheriff listens to the two Water Guards babble.

SHERIFF DALTON (CONT'D)

Uh huh.

He listens some more.

SHERIFF DALTON (CONT'D)

Should stand out like sore thumbs in my town. Thanks for the tip boys, but you shouldn't have let them pirates get away.

The Sheriff SLAMS down the phone. Good-looking, tall, DEPUTY WALT HANSON (35) strolls in reading the morning newspaper.

DEPUTY HANSON

I know why ya like them old phones. You can slam 'em down. Look at my antique cell phone.

Deputy Hanson flips open cell phone quietly.

SHERIFF DALTON

A smartphone would just be wasted on you. We're looking for four strangers: a Mexican female, Black male...

DEPUTY HANSON

Blackmail? Like extortion? I don't like the sound of that.

SHERIFF DALTON

Itty-bitty Asian woman, and a male Indian, they think.

DEPUTY HANSON

Do you mean Native American, or a person of Indian descent?

SHERIFF DALTON

Just get your butt rolling and take a look around town, and beef up security at the Courthouse.

DEPUTY HANSON

For the Water Meeting? I was thinking of bringing my bomb-sniffing dogs.

SHERIFF DALTON

You got butt-sniffing dogs, and one's near dead.

DEPUTY HANSON

What about today's paper? A chopper flying in from the Air Force base. Somebody important?

SHERIFF DALTON

Some brass from Washington. They want to use the cloud seeding as a model for the country.

DEPUTY HANSON

They bringing their own security?

SHERIFF DALTON

They're like the freakin' Air Force, Walt. They're our security.

DEPUTY HANSON

Right, Stanley. I'll be patrolling for those blackmailers.

Sheriff Dalton PICKS up the phone handle and SLAMS it down. He smiles. Then, he looks ANGRY.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Huan is PUMPING the gas, while Parker WASHES the windows. Dax is in the back seat of the truck. They are all WHISPERING on their NEW SMARTPHONES.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

My mom used to say, 'Secrets are magic. They can turn an ordinary rope into a hangman's noose.'

HUAN

What's taking you so long, Dax?

DAX

I got it. Four-one-seven-one, two-two-one-six, three-eight-zero-zero, two-nine-nine-two.

Huan GIGGLES as she pumps the gas.

MARIA

What's that about?

DAX

The gas is courtesy of the local sheriff. Stanley Dalton, of East County Road Thirty-five, Auburn.

MARIA

Isn't that against the law?

DAX

We pay our taxes.

PARKER

I wonder if he'll buy us lunch?

HUAN AND DAX

A-T-M.

Maria wonders what she's gotten herself into.

MARIA

Look, group, this isn't right.

DAX

We'll pay it all back tomorrow with a wire transfer, with interest.

He heads to the ATM and takes out forty dollars.

HUAN

We just can't risk leaving a record, while we're in the town.

PARKER

It all works out. Trust us.

MARIA

We'd better split up for lunch. We shouldn't be seen together before the Water Meeting at two P.M.

Dax returns and HANDS each of the team TEN BUCKS.

DAX

That's the spirit. Here's ten bucks. We're on a tight budget.

HUAN

That's forty for gas and forty for lunch we owe the kind sheriff.

PARKER

Good idea splitting up. I'm going
for Mexican. Anybody?

HUAN

I'm in.

DAX

Me too.

MARIA

(defiantly)

You people are nuts. I'm going
across the street.

Maria crosses the street to *Mary Belle's Restaurant*. The
others take the truck to the *Tio Pepe Mexican Restaurant*.

EXT. FANNY BRIDGE, LAKE TAHOE - DAY

A short, former military, heavily tattooed Sarg (40), and a
second Water Pirate, Michelle (28, gorgeous female) STARE at
the dam from Fanny Bridge, and WHISPER. Two ARMED MILITIA
(30) vigilantly GUARD the dam.

MICHELLE

Why blow the dam now?

SARG

Got a tip. Everyone is pre-occupied
with a Water Meeting in Auburn.

MICHELLE

Only two guards.

SARG

Civilians. Ha! Easy water.

MICHELLE

Reno sure needs it.

SARG

The billionaire's treasured oasis
might drop twenty feet.

MICHELLE

Their boat docks and private water
pumps will be useless.

SARG

Real shame!

INT. TIO PEPE MEXICAN RESTAURANT - DAY

Dax, Huan, and Parker are HUDDLED in a booth WHISPERING.

DAX

Ramos seems like such a smart,
enthusiastic professor.

HUAN

Hard to believe she's so
mistreated.

PARKER

And under-appreciated. We should
help her a lot.

DAX

Her only crime was not being
politically correct.

PARKER

Universities are supposed to be
places of higher learning. Free
from political assassination.

HUAN

Not these days.

DAX

We know she can help us. But how
can we help her?

PARKER

We can get her job back.

HUAN

And make those jerks who bombed her
cabin pay through the nose.

DAX

Time to hack Hollyfield?

Dax takes out a small *TABLET COMPUTER*.

PARKER

Send a memo from Devlin. Drop the
search for Maria Ramos.

HUAN

Have Devlin fund a new diversity
hiring program in her name.

DAX

And let's upload that video of the
attack on Maria's cabin.
Hollyfield's name's on the drone.

They CHUCKLE as DAX types on the computer and they munch on
the Chili California. They SNICKER.

DAX (CONT'D)

When do we tell her our real story?

HUAN

That will have to wait for later.

PARKER

Much later.

They gobble on their chili.

INT. MARY BELLE'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Maria takes a seat at the restaurant bar, packed with ten
locals (40-80; farmers, ranchers) talking about the weather.

LOCAL #1

This summer's going to be so hot,
I'll be selling popcorn.

LOCAL #2

And so dry, my watermelons will
look like grapes.

LOCAL #3

You mean raisins.

LOCAL #4

Those are rabbit turds.

LOCAL #1

Do rabbits eat popcorn?

A smiling waitress, MILLIE (45, hefty), AMBLES up to Maria.

MILLIE

Don't pay 'em any attention,
Dearie. They'd all have water on
the brain if we had any. Coffee?

MARIA

Great. Got anything for under ten
bucks? Plus tip?

MILLIE
You'll want the special.

MARIA
What's the special?

MILLIE
(yells)
One special, Harlan!
(to Maria)
I've delivered two of them to
tables. Chicken-fried-somethin' and
gravy. Not quite sure what.

MARIA
And water, with ice would be nice.

MILLIE
(snickers)
You said you only got ten bucks.

The locals LAUGH. Millie turns to the kitchen, as Deputy
Hanson, enters, taking the open seat next to Maria.

DEPUTY HANSON
(yells)
Another special, Harlan!

MILLIE
Well, if it isn't the Environ-
mentalist Deputy Hound.

The locals SNICKER and SNEER, and then become strangely
quiet. Maria sips her coffee.

DEPUTY HANSON
(to Maria)
You must be new in town. You didn't
snicker and sneer.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Mom used to say, 'Never trust a man
who wears a badge, or a man who
doesn't.' But she was the first to
lie. Ha!

MARIA
I'm -- Nancy. Just going to the
Water Meeting later, is all.

DEPUTY HANSON
Don't look like a Nancy. Nancy
Drew? Nancy Grace? Nancy Pelosi?
(MORE)

DEPUTY HANSON (CONT'D)
 Anyway, these folks here are like
 killer bees on a swarm about this
 drought.

MARIA
 You're not worried?

DEPUTY HANSON
 Worried. Not crazy. Weather
 changes. It'll rain soon enough.

MARIA
 Smart man.

DEPUTY HANSON
 Walt Hanson -- Nancy. And today's
 the hot tomato around here.

MARIA
 The heat?

DEPUTY HANSON
 No. The Water Meeting. Some big-
 shot is making a grand entrance
 from Washington in a chopper.

MARIA
 Wow. Why?

DEPUTY HANSON
 To sell their idea for cloud
 seeding and the new water tax.

MARIA
 And you're suspicious?

DEPUTY HANSON
 We're from Washington --

MARIA & DEPUTY HANSON
 (in unison)
 And we're here to help you.

A BRICK FLIES through the restaurant window. The locals DIVE
 to the floor. Maria turns to look as Deputy Hanson RACES to
 the door. He returns seconds later DISGUSTED.

DEPUTY HANSON
 They got away. Nobody saw them.
 Imagine that.

MARIA
 What's going on, Walt?

DEPUTY HANSON

Radical elements in town are a little disappointed in me for not taking a harder line on environmentalists.

MARIA

You think they should be free to push for water conservation?

DEPUTY HANSON

As long as they don't hurt anything or anyone. Free country.

Millie comes back, SNEERS at the Deputy, and drops off two ugly plates of chicken-fried-somethin' and gravy to Maria and the Deputy, who are speechless.

MILLIE

You're cleaning that up, Deputy.
(to Maria)
And if you're with him, no water.

They GIGGLE and WHISPER while eating. There is a spark between them. Maria starts to leave her ten bucks. Deputy Hanson magnanimously pushes it back to her.

DEPUTY HANSON

No. This is on me. Not everyone in this town is insane.

MARIA

Thanks, Walt, but you picking up my tab would be -- redundant.

Walt doesn't get the joke, but he SMILES nonetheless.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Maybe I'll see you at the Courthouse Water Meeting.

She WINKS at him, leaves the ten bucks, and EXITS.

EXT. MARY BELLE'S RESTAURANT STREET - DAY

Across the street are Dax and Huan, but no sign of Parker. The Deputy exits the diner, TIPS his hat to Maria, and drives off. Dax and Huan RACE OVER to Maria.

DAX

The sheriff busted into the Tio Pepe, and took Parker away in cuffs.

MARIA

For what?

HUAN

Being a Native American. We gotta
do something.

End Act One

(More)

ACT TWO

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Parker sits across the sheriff's desk IN HANDCUFFS looking vacantly out the window.

SHERIFF DALTON

Nothing else, I can hold you on vagrancy 'til your DNA tests come back.

PARKER

When's that? Never?

SHERIFF DALTON

Six weeks.

PARKER

That's never. How's the food?

SHERIFF DALTON

I hope you like the special at Mary Belle's.

PARKER

What is it?

SHERIFF DALTON

I can't tell. Chicken-fried-somethin' and gravy. But you'll spill your guts after eating it.

PARKER

I told you. I'm a Native American, but not a terrorist, alarmist, environ-mentalist, or any ist.

SHERIFF DALTON

Why are you here?

PARKER

To claim our ancestral rights to all your water, of course. I'm a Miwok. Been here thousand of years. That water's ours.

SHERIFF DALTON

You're a conquered people. You have no rights 'cept them we give ya.

PARKER

We'll see about that! I have an attorney named 'Bulldog'.

Deputy Hanson strolls in WHISTLING the cool theme from "The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly."

DEPUTY HANSON

What do we have here, Sheriff?

SHERIFF DALTON

Get this. Parker Has-No-Horse, a Miwok Indian claiming our water.

DEPUTY HANSON

The Miwok and Maidu did occupy the headwaters for thousands of years.

SHERIFF DALTON

I think he's one of the strangers who helped the Water Pirates escape.

PARKER

We had truck trouble. Better since we got gas.

DEPUTY HANSON

I'm not sure we have enough to hold him.

SHERIFF DALTON

I'm running background and doing a DNA test.

PARKER

He doesn't believe me.

DEPUTY HANSON

DNA test?

SHERIFF DALTON

If he's not a quarter Indian, we can ignore him.

PARKER

You can ignore me now. Why wait?

SHERIFF DALTON

I think your environment-terrorist partners may drop by to spring you, and I like greeting strangers in my town. Where are they?

PARKER

I'll never talk. You can cut my fingernails off with obsidian blades, quarter me with horses, burn my feet with hot coals--

SHERIFF DALTON

Walt, call Mary Belle's and have 'em send over three of their chicken-fried-somethin' and gravy specials. He'll talk!

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Maria, Dax, and Huan sit on a park bench, WATCHING folks walk by. The park is as brown and dry as kindling. Maria sees two teenagers PLAYING Frisbee. (It's Ricky and Shannon, the Water Pirates she saw earlier). Maria walks up to them.

MARIA

Don't I know you?

SHANNON

We were wondering how long it would take you to notice us.

RICKY

Thanks for helping us at the river.

MARIA

Maybe you could help us. The sheriff is holding our friend, and we need to spring him.

SHANNON

Why? What did he do?

DAX

He's just a stranger in town. Fact is, they don't get much stranger.

HUAN

Something about potentially disrupting the peace.

SHANNON

Potentially? Uh oh.

RICKY

We need the element of surprise. The sheriff can spot strangers from a mile away.

MARIA

We don't have much time. We want to go the Water Meeting in an hour.

SHANNON

You'll need disguises. Stand out like sore thumbs in city clothes.

RICKY & SHANNON

The Majestyk Treasures thrift store.

INT. MAJESTYK TREASURES THRIFT SHOP - DAY

Dax, Huan, and Maria TRY ON old farm clothes and hats, while Ricky and Shannon GIGGLE.

MARIA

Why were you stealing water?

RICKY

You won't believe us.

DAX

The black market?

HUAN

Making moonshine?

SHANNON

(mumbles)

Our science class experiment.

RICKY

We're geeks. We're going to flash our results at the Water Meeting.

MARIA

Good for you. I'm teach ecology. What's your science project?

SHANNON

Comparing flood irrigation to drip irrigation in four washtubs, two tubs each.

RICKY

They need a lot of water.

SHANNON

So, you're a professor. My dad's not gonna like that!

HUAN

Who's your dad?

SHANNON

The sheriff, as in Support Your Local Sheriff. He hates environ-mentalists. I have to hide my science project from him.

RICKY

And sneak water for it. I'm her boyfriend. That's a secret too.

DAX

Wow. Like Romeo and Joliet.

HUAN

Joliet's a prison.

SHANNON

That's where he'll send me if he finds out I'm a --

MARIA

Environ-mentalist. How do we look?

RICKY

Better wear your hats low.

SHANNON

I sure hope they let you speak at the Water Meeting.

RICKY

If the corporate honcho lets you. They might not let us share our science results if the Sheriff runs the meeting.

MARIA

I kind of like that Deputy, Walt.

SHANNON

If Deputy Hanson ran the meeting, that would be wonderful. He's the second nicest man in town.

Shannon SWOONS at Ricky.

MARIA

I'm sure we'll all get to speak, if I have anything to say about it. How do we spring Parker?

Dax is PAYING for the clothes when he spots Deputy Hanson TACKING Wanted Posters on telephone poles outside the Majestyk Treasures Thrift Store. The posters depict Maria.

DAX

Uh-oh. That might not be easy.

They all look out the window to VIEW the posters: "Maria Ramos, Wanted for Questioning."

SHANNON

Since my mom died, my dad never comes home from work early. You can hide at our place until the Water Meeting.

RICKY

Quick. The back door. Follow me.

They RACE out the back door and disappear.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

The Ford F150 truck parks behind a ranch house. Maria, Dax, Huan, Ricky, and Shannon exit. Shannon HUGS Maria's arm as she guides her to see her science project (four large washtubs filled with tomato plants, and a water-evaporation pan nearby. The TOMATOES in the two drip-irrigation tubs are HUGE, the others nearly dead.)

SHANNON

You have to see our science project. Killer Tomatoes!

RICKY

What do you think?

MARIA

I think it's fantastic.

DAX

Wow. I grew herbs as a teenager.

HUAN

Dax!

SHANNON

Each tub got the same amount of water, but we just poured the water on the flood-tubs.

RICKY

But for drip-irrigation the water
was delivered below the surface
with hoses filled with holes.

Shannon POINTS to three hoses which POKE UP from each of the
drip irrigation tubs.

SHANNON

Our Killer Tomato plants were twice
as big on half the water.

Ricky and Shannon POINT OUT the evaporation pan.

RICKY

We also poured the same amount of
water in the pan and measured
evaporation.

SHANNON

Half the water with regular flood
irrigation was lost to the sun in
evaporation.

MARIA

Brilliant. You're sure to get an A-
plus. You should be very proud.

RICKY

All our measurements are on
Shannon's computer.

SHANNON

And I'll ask to give a slide show
at the Water Meetings.

MARIA

I'm so impressed. Now, how do we
spring Parker from jail.

HUAN

Dax and I better do that.

DAX

You stay out of sight, Maria. The
cops want you for questioning.

MARIA

(desperate)

I've got to speak at that Water
Meeting. Cloud seeding is a waste
of money and resources. Won't work.

HUAN

We'll take the truck and see if we
can spring Parker.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Parker devours the third plate of the chicken-fried-somethin'
and gravy, BURPING a lot, in an unlocked jail cell, while
PLAYING CHECKERS with Sheriff Dalton.

PARKER

See Sheriff, the real issue is
taxation without representation.
BURP!

SHERIFF DALTON

How do you figure?

PARKER

Everybody will be forced to pay the
tax for a government sponsored
cloud seeding effort, without
voting for the tax.

SHERIFF DALTON

But if it rains -- and rains a lot,
everybody benefits.

PARKER

Checkmate.

SHERIFF DALTON

We're playing checkers, you idiot.

PARKER

Oh. Yeah.

SHERIFF DALTON

The problem with you environ-
mentalists is that you believe all
those highfalutin science studies.

PARKER

That's a problem?

SHERIFF DALTON

I don't see any rain. Do you? What
good has all that science done?

PARKER

I see your point. Science should cure cancer, create world peace, and end the drought, or it ain't no good for nothin'.

SHERIFF DALTON

Exactly. What? I didn't say that.

PARKER

Tell me this, Sheriff. What if the cloud seeding doesn't work?

SHERIFF DALTON

They'll try it again and again until it does work.

PARKER

So the people pay the taxes each time, but it might not rain?

SHERIFF DALTON

It'll rain. You gotta have faith.

PARKER

But if it don't rain, is it called taxation without representation or taxation without precipitation?

The sheriff IS PERTURBED. He GRABS the checkers game.

SHERIFF DALTON

You've just lost your checkers privileges, Mister. Checkermate!

The Sheriff's old phone RINGS. Professor Peyton Moore's ASSISTANT is on the line. Parker can hear everything.

SHERIFF DALTON (CONT'D)

Dalton.

ASSISTANT (O.S.)

This is Peyton Moore's assistant. The professor is driving, but will be only a few minutes late.

SHERIFF DALTON

What kind of car should I look for?

ASSISTANT (O.S.)

A university van, of course. Well marked, just a little late.

SHERIFF DALTON

Long as the professor shows up. I told Colonel Shields that a respected scientist would have his back.

ASSISTANT (O.S.)

The professor has written over one-hundred scientific publications. I assure you--

SHERIFF DALTON

Just get the professor here.

CLICK! The Sheriff LOOKS CONCERNED.

PARKER

This professor, is he or she, a strong proponent of cloud seeding?

SHERIFF DALTON

He or she? The assistant didn't exactly say.

PARKER

Peyton is a man's name and a woman's name.

SHERIFF DALTON

Never met the guy -- or gal. Don't care as long as the professor goes along with the program.

PARKER

'Cause you promised a Colonel.

SHERIFF DALTON

Exactly.

Deputy Hanson RUNS in.

DEPUTY HANSON

We got two positive ID's on that 'Wanted' Maria Ramos person right from Mary Belle's Restaurant.

SHERIFF DALTON

Who ID'd the 'wanted' gal?

DEPUTY HANSON

Your friend, Millie, the waitress. And, me. That was before she was 'wanted.' Tried to buy her lunch.

PARKER
That was redundant.

Deputy Hanson STARES at Parker.

DEPUTY HANSON
Why do people keep saying that?

SHERIFF DALTON
You keep an eye on the prisoner. I
got to race home and change my
shirt for the Water Meetings.

DEPUTY HANSON
Perspiration stains?

SHERIFF DALTON
Gravy stains. I'll swing 'round
Mary Belle's on my way home and
look for that Ramos gal.

DEPUTY HANSON
Should encourage Shannon to go to
the Water Meeting. High schoolers
should get more involved.

SHERIFF DALTON
Funny you mention it. She wants to
go. Might do her right to meet a
real Colonel.

DEPUTY HANSON
Good for her. Hey, Shannon will be
surprised to see you go home in the
middle of the day.

SHERIFF DALTON
Yep. She'll be surprised.

The sheriff RACES OUT.

End Act Two

(More)

ACT THREE

INT. MARY BELLE'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Sheriff Dalton, WAVING a 'Wanted Poster', RACES into the restaurant and right to Millie.

SHERIFF DALTON
Heard you saw this wanted woman.

Millie EXAMINES the poster.

MILLIE
What's she done? Kill her cheatin'
husband? That ain't wrong.

SHERIFF DALTON
No. Somebody just wants her to keep
her trap shut.

MILLIE
Nobody keeps their traps shut.
Besides, maybe you otta ask Walt.
He's sweet on her.

SHERIFF DALTON
What? That's crazy talk.

MILLIE
I was right here. They ate the
special, and they weren't gigglin'
and cavortin' about the chicken-
fried somethin' and gravy!

SHERIFF DALTON
Walt ain't had a gal for years.

MILLIE
It's no secret I don't care for the
man. He don't seem to care about
the Dust Bowl Two. He might not be
right in the head.

SHERIFF DALTON
About the 'Wanted Poster' and the
lady you served today?

MILLIE
Something else you should know, not
that I talk out of school.

SHERIFF DALTON
What, Millie? Spit it out.

MILLIE

Bobby and the boys saw your daughter in the park today.

SHERIFF DALTON

I know, with that Ricky fella. He seems harmless enough. A bookworm.

MILLIE

It ain't that, Sheriff. Bobby said they was talking to your Deputy's new girlfriend, and the same lady on your Wanted Poster.

SHERIFF DALTON

My little girl!

He STORMS OUT of the restaurant, yelling.

SHERIFF DALTON (CONT'D)

I'll get to the bottom of this!

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Deputy Hanson PLAYS checkers with Parker when Dax and Huan STUMBLE in wearing their old farmer overalls.

DAX

Well don't that beat all. There he sits, playing checkers, while we do all his chores.

DEPUTY HANSON

May I help you?

HUAN

(mumbles)

Milkin' the chickens, rustlin' the cow-folks, all that garden stuff?

PARKER

And I thought you didn't love me no more. Can I go now, Deputy?

DAX

What's he being held for?

DEPUTY HANSON

He's being held until the Water Meeting is over. Sheriff doesn't want strangers messing it up.

DAX
Just need him back for chores.

HUAN
(mumbles)
Skinnin' the mules, white-washin'
the barbed-wire fences --

DAX
He don't have time for no meetings,
'cept his regular Hey-Hey meetings.

DEPUTY HANSON
Long as you get him far, far away.
Wait. Have you seen this woman?

Deputy Hanson shows each of them the Wanted Poster of Maria.

DAX
I've never seen anyone this thin.

HUAN
And, just a big head? Poor thing?

PARKER
And so pale?

Deputy Hanson STARES at the Wanted Poster with LOVELORN eyes.

DEPUTY HANSON
Just wanted to see her again.
Something about her.

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - SAME

Dax, Parker, and Huan RACE to the BLUE FORD F-150 TRUCK.

DAX
Huan? Milking the chickens? White-
washin' barbed-wire fences?

HUAN
I was a computer science major.
Never been on a farm.

DAX
And you, Parker? Don't get caught
again.

PARKER
I was getting the inside scoop. I
know how we can help Maria.

DAX

How?

PARKER

We have to intercept Professor Peyton Moore, who's coming to the Water Meetings.

DAX

Why?

PARKER

He's going to support the Hollyfield plan for cloud seeding.

HUAN

We can't just kidnap him.

PARKER

Huan and I will delay him, while you impersonate him at the Meeting. The Sheriff hasn't seen him.

DAX

Suppose he's not black? Suppose somebody knows Professor Peyton Moore? I don't know anything about cloud seeding.

PARKER

(begging Dax)

Then you can ask Maria to speak on your behalf. She informs the crowd, and our work is done.

DAX

Where's he driving from? What's he driving? What's he look like?

HUAN

Maria probably knows him? They both study the same things.

DAX

She's out at Shannon's house with Ricky.

PARKER

Uh-oh! Sheriff Dalton was heading home to change shirts. If he finds Maria, we're dead.

They RACE AWAY in the blue truck.

EXT. SMALL AIRFIELD - SAME

A fancy private jet lands at a small, dusty airfield. The same two massive BODYGUARDS (40s) exit first and scope out the area. One of the guards MOTIONS to the other one to turn off their radios. They turn them off.

BODYGUARD #1

The boss is pissed. Colonel's not coming. Wants Devlin to handle it.

BODYGUARD #2

What a dump. Why didn't Devlin send someone?

BODYGUARD #1

There's big money in it.

BODYGUARD #2

He wants the credit?

BODYGUARD #1

He wants the money.

BODYGUARD #2

What about that thing?

BODYGUARD #1

Intel doesn't know what it is.

BODYGUARD #2

So we gotta find out.

BODYGUARD #1

So we gotta destroy it, you idiot.

BODYGUARD #2

I knew that.

BODYGUARD #1

I hear the chopper. Turn on communications.

The two guards TURN ON their radios. A Hollyfield Inc. helicopter HOVERS and creates an enormous CLOUD OF DUST and LANDS fifty feet from the jet.

The dust settles. Angry Roderick Devlin III exits the jet and STOMPS OVER to the chopper, and enters it with the bodyguards. The chopper TAKES OFF.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Maria, Shannon, and Ricky LAUGH around the kitchen table, drinking iced tea.

MARIA

This iced tea is great. Thanks.

SHANNON

Ricky stole the water.

RICKY

I did not.

She AFFECTIONATELY TOUCHES his arm, and he blushes.

SHANNON

Just kidding. But we couldn't do the science project without -- borrowing water.

RICKY

We know it was wrong. If we empty water out upstream, somebody doesn't get it downstream.

MARIA

Same with cloud seeding. If they steal the moisture here, they may not get it downstream.

SHANNON

Has it ever worked? Cloud seeding?

MARIA

Maybe a little. It may add five or ten percent, but it's so hard to measure it everywhere in a region.

RICKY

So it might be stealing, or it might not.

MARIA

That's it. There's no real proof.

SHANNON

Did you hear something?

RICKY

No.

SHANNON

Our experiment. Let's go.

Shannon, Ricky, and Maria RACE OUT to the field to the science project. A helicopter RACES AWAY in the distance.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sheriff Dalton arrives home to find it empty. He ANGRILY searches the house, and yells for his daughter.

SHERIFF DALTON
Shannon! Shannon, where are you?!

The sheriff RACES OUT the back door and sees THREE FIGURES toward the back of the property. He GRABS his shotgun and RACES toward them, then POINTS his rifle at Maria.

SHERIFF DALTON (CONT'D)
Maria Ramos. Hold it right there.

Shannon is WEEPING, Ricky is ANGRY, and Maria is SAD. The tubs are OVERTURNED, the plants SCATTERED, and the field notebook RIPPED UP into tiny pieces.

SHANNON
Daddy, don't you see what's going on here?

SHERIFF DALTON
This eco-terrorist, Ramos, tore up something?

RICKY
Our science class project.

SHANNON
No, Professor Ramos didn't do it.

MARIA
I'm Maria. What am I wanted for?
Trying to save my life?

Sheriff Dalton INVESTIGATES the damage.

SHERIFF DALTON
(to Maria)
You're wanted for questioning for anti-American activities.

SHANNON
Teaching science is anti-American?

SHERIFF DALTON
That's all I know. I sure didn't know about this science project.

SHANNON
I knew you'd get mad.

SHERIFF DALTON
Where'd you get the water?

RICKY
I stole it from the river.

SHERIFF DALTON
(to Ricky)
You're a bad influence. I don't
want you hanging around my
daughter. Go on, git!

Sheriff Dalton WAVES his rifle to send Ricky off.

RICKY
Don't worry, Shannon, I have the
photographs backed up on a memory
stick for the Water Meetings.

Ricky STOMPS AWAY DEJECTEDLY.

SHANNON
See you at the meeting.

SHERIFF DALTON
(yelling)
There will be no meeting for the
three of you!

MARIA
The kids put a lot of time and
effort into this great project.

SHERIFF DALTON
I'll do the parenting.

SHANNON
No, you do the policing.

SHERIFF DALTON
What happened here?

SHANNON
We were in the house. Heard a
helicopter. Looked outside and we
saw the copter flying away.

MARIA
It was a Hollyfield chopper.

SHERIFF DALTON

Hollyfield? Their CEO is speaking today at the Water Meeting. They're a multi-billion-dollar company. Why would they hurt this two-bit science project?

MARIA

How would they know to blow up my cabin in the woods? They intimidate people for industrial gain.

Maria SHOWS the Sheriff her *Samsung Galaxy smartphone* video of a missile hitting her cabin.

SHERIFF DALTON

Maybe it was an accident?

SHANNON

Like this was an accident?

SHERIFF DALTON

We'll sort this out later. I have a job to do.

The sheriff MARCHES Maria back to the house at gunpoint.

End Act Three

(More)

ACT FOUR

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Hollyfield, Inc. CEO, Roderick Devlin III, an overstuffed high-powered business man in a tailored suit, is sandwiched between his Two Bodyguards wearing dark sunglasses. Devlin whispers to his bodyguards, as town folks (mixed ages, people from Mary Belle's Restaurant and City Park earlier).

DEVLIN

Where the hell is that sheriff?

Deputy Hanson enters looking around for Maria.

DEVLIN (CONT'D)

You Sheriff Dalton?

DEPUTY HANSON

No, but you must be the big shot from Washington. The sheriff was surprised you were coming.

Deputy Hanson cordially EXTENDS his hand for a shake. Devlin RELUCTANTLY shakes.

DEVLIN

Roderick Devlin the Third.

DEPUTY HANSON

Walt Hanson. Deputy Walt

DEVLIN

I was supposed to be introduced by Colonel Shields or the Sheriff, not a Deputy.

DEPUTY HANSON

Sheriff will be here soon.

DEVLIN

And what about that professor? Peyton Moore or whoever?

DEPUTY HANSON

He or she should be arriving soon.

DEVLIN

He or she?

DEPUTY HANSON

Peyton is a unisex name, like Sandy, Jordan, and Taylor.

DEVLIN

This meeting was supposed to start three minutes ago. Am I the only dignitary here?

DEPUTY HANSON

No, there's Millie from the restaurant.

Millie SNEERS at Hanson, but Devlin thinks it is meant for him. Devlin reaches into his coat pocket for an envelope of one-hundred dollar bills.

DEVLIN

Where the hell is that professor?

EXT. MARY BELLE'S RESTAURANT STREET - DAY

Dax looks down the street and describes his plan to Huan, Parker, and Ricky.

DAX

When the professor drives down the street, Huan fakes like she's hit by the car. Parker claims to be a lawyer and plans to sue.

PARKER

Then Huan and I take him into the restaurant to reach a settlement.

DAX

I'll drive his car to the Water Meeting, and I'll introduce Maria, if she shows up at all.

RICKY

If the sheriff don't release her?

DAX

Then what you've told us about Shannon isn't true. She doesn't give up easily. You said so.

RICKY

But what if she --

HUAN

Never doubt a strong woman.

PARKER

Uh uh. Never do that!

A "University of California" vehicle is coming down the street. Dax's plan goes wrong. Huan SLOWLY crosses the street forcing the professor to slow. Parker RACES into the street to DISTRACT Professor Moore, who is EYEING Huan. So Parker SLAMS his hand on the car and falls down. Huan is CONFUSED. The professor, a gray-haired female (60), SLAMS on the brakes and hops out of the car. All are ALARMED the professor is female. Ricky LAUGHS.

PROFESSOR MOORE

You all right? I didn't mean it. I was looking at the pretty woman.

PARKER

You hit me. She's the attorney, now. You should've hit her.
(points to Huan)
Could cost you your license.

PROFESSOR MOORE

Maybe we could work something out?

Parker RISES PAINFULLY and WOBBLY from the street.

HUAN

We can talk.

PARKER

There's a restaurant right here.

PROFESSOR MOORE

But I'm supposed to be at a --

Parker SCREAMS.

PROFESSOR MOORE (CONT'D)

Okay, okay. Let's talk.

Dax looks WORRIED. He WHISPERS to Ricky.

DAX

I can't impersonate a woman.

RICKY

Especially that old woman.

DAX

Change of plans. Maria and Shannon may not make it to the Water Meeting. You have to present the science report for Shannon.

RICKY

Uh oh! I have a fear of public speaking.

DAX

Glossophobia?

RICKY

A fear of glossy photographs? No. I can't speak to large groups.

DAX

Look, Ricky, it's up to us.

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

One Bodyguard WHISPERS to Devlin. He WHISPERS back.

DEVLIN

I don't care if the professor's a woman. Just as long as she gets here, supports our cloud seeding plan, takes her money and goes.

The other Bodyguard WHISPERS to Devlin, who grows impatient.

DEVLIN (CONT'D)

You should have gone before we left home. Where the hell is that Sheriff?

INT. RANCH HOUSE - SAME

Livid Sheriff Dalton PACES in his living room. Maria and Shannon sit on the couch like SCOLDED children.

SHERIFF DALTON

Nonsense! Nobody loses their job as a professor and gets their house blown up for no-good reason.

MARIA

The facts say differently. You called my Dean. What did she say?

SHERIFF DALTON

She suspended you for a few days for upsetting a big donor.

SHANNON

Hollyfield. The same name on the helicopter that destroyed my science project.

SHERIFF DALTON

(to Maria)

Your Dean said your cabin exploded from a propane gas leak.

MARIA

I used wind and solar energy. No gas. Check the gas company.

SHERIFF DALTON

I did. You're not a customer.

SHANNON

See, she's telling the truth.

SHERIFF DALTON

What gets me is them coming into my county and ruining my daughter's science project without my permission.

MARIA

You would've given them permission?

SHERIFF DALTON

No. Never.

SHANNON

Daddy, don't let that greedy corporation push us around.

The Sheriff PACES. Maria CHECKS a message on her smartphone.

SHERIFF DALTON

What about the anti-American activities? Don't want to lose my job.

SHANNON

I don't want to lose my personal freedoms and my right to pursue a career in science.

MARIA

Sheriff, your daughter doesn't want to lose you.

The sheriff protectively HUGS his daughter.

SHERIFF DALTON

Forgive me, Shannon. I've been such a fool. Let's get you to that Water Meeting.

EXT./INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

The Sheriff SKIDS to a stop outside the Courthouse. He exits with Shannon and Maria.

SHERIFF DALTON

You'd better get out of here quick, Professor Ramos. Pretend you never stopped in this town.

MARIA

Thanks, Sheriff, but I'd like to listen in from the back if it's all the same to you.

SHANNON

Free country, right Daddy?

SHERIFF DALTON

I hear this Roderick Devlin guy means business. I still don't want any trouble from you two.

Dax sees Maria exit the sheriff's car and WAVES her to the side of the building.

DAX

Psst. Maria, you have to go on as Professor Peyton Moore. She got -- delayed.

MARIA

She's over thirty years my senior, and we don't agree on anything.

DAX

Perfect. I have glasses and a gray wig from the thrift store.

MARIA

I don't like the sound of this.

The Water Meeting is packed with CITIZENS (thirty town folk we had met earlier, all ages). Roderick Devlin is presenting an evangelical slide show on the virtues of cloud seeding.

DEVLIN

It sounds simple, because it is simple. The rain droplets form around our tiny silver iodide crystals, and you get rain.

RICKY

Excuse me, Sir. What happens downstream? Do they get less rain?

DEVLIN

(angrily)

What happens downstream is of no concern of yours. If they want rain, they can pay the revenues like everyone else.

DEPUTY HANSON

Revenues? Don't you mean taxes?

DEVLIN

Same difference. In summary, the Hollyfield cloud seeding program is the only viable solution to end twenty years of drought.

The citizens LOOK CONVINCED, but Deputy Hanson and Ricky on the other side of the room look UNCONVINCED. The Sheriff and Shannon ENTER the back of the Courthouse.

DEPUTY HANSON

What about the tax increase to subsidize this pipe dream? Do these fine people get their money back if it doesn't work?

DEVLIN

Our engineers assure me this will work, as I'm sure Professor Peyton Moore from the university will tell you too, if she ever shows up.

SHERIFF DALTON

(yells from the back)

What about water conservation?! Can we hear from my daughter and her friend who did a science project for school?!

The citizens APPLAUD. Devlin steps aside from the podium and the town's laptop computer. Shannon and Ricky step up. Ricky inserts a USB-MEMORY-DRIVE into the laptop.

DEVLIN

This is no place for a school
science project.

SHERIFF DALTON

Let the town decide that.

Shannon PROJECTS a slide of the experiment (before it was
destroyed).

SHANNON

My boyfriend and I...

Ricky BLUSHES. The Sheriff CRINGES.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

Proved that drip irrigation could
grow twice the crops with half the
water compared to pivot and flood
irrigation used today.

RICKY

We can stop wasting water and grow
more food with water conservation.
We have the data to prove it.

Shannon SHOWS a slide of the destroyed experiment.

SHANNON

But someone destroyed our
experiment today. Someone with a
helicopter.

Shannon and Ricky GLARE at Devlin.

Dax POKES his head in from the front-side door.

DAX

I found Professor Peyton Moore
wandering around town.

Maria steps in, wearing a business jacket, slacks, a GRAY
WIG, and thick glasses, and holding a briefcase. Devlin RACES
over to her and casually SLIPS an envelope of one-hundred
dollar bills into her business jacket. Deputy Hanson
recognizes her from the Wanted Posters, but Sheriff Dalton
HOLDS his arm and smiles.

DEVLIN

(whispering)

You look well-preserved for sixty.

MARIA

Yoga. And Tofu. Tofu-yoga.

DEVLIN

You'd better be worth the money
you're getting.

Maria SLIPS a memory stick into the laptop computer. She has only one slide SHOWING the cover of the National Academy of Sciences report on cloud seeding with a web-link below it.

MARIA

Hollyfield Incorporated has proposed a nationwide Cloud Seeding program to give this country what it desperately needs -- more rain.

The crowd CHEERS.

DEVLIN

Listen to the professor!

MARIA

They ask for a hefty revenue increase, a tax, if you will, to support their noble cause.

DEVLIN

Pennies a day.

MARIA

In Two-thousand-three, the National Academy of Science researched dozens of published studies on cloud seeding.

DEVLIN

(mumbles)
Uh oh!

MARIA

They found no evidence that cloud seeding works. Zero. Nada. Goose-egg. Zilch!

The crowd GASPS. Devlin is FUMING with anger.

MARIA (CONT'D)

None. No proof. Go on-line and read the report for yourself.

Devlin turns and WHISPERS to his Bodyguards.

DEVLIN

Bury that report, now. And get her off the stage.

The two Bodyguards approach Maria. Devlin's phone BUZZES. He receives an urgent text message from his headquarters: "Our computers were hacked at lunchtime. You're not going to like the memos you sent." Devlin is FURIOUS as he reads further.

MARIA

Don't be duped by every snake-oil salesman and rainmaker full of empty promises. Use your critical thinking skills. Demand solid, scientific evidence.

The Bodyguards are INTERCEPTED by Sheriff Dalton and Deputy Hanson. Maria WHIPS OFF her wig, and TOSSES Devlin's envelope on the floor.

MARIA (CONT'D)

My name is Dr. Maria Ramos. Water conservation, like drip irrigation, controlled use of aquifers, and wise water use at home are needed.

Dax PULLS Maria out the side door.

MARIA (CONT'D)

(yelling)

Listen to Shannon and Ricky, and the wise youth of today!

Huan and Parker DRIVE UP in the BLUE FORD TRUCK. Dax gets in first. As Maria gets in, Deputy Hanson RACES OUT the side door and RUNS up to the truck.

DEPUTY HANSON

Maria, you were wonderful. They're cheering you on like crazy in there.

MARIA

I didn't do anything.

DEPUTY HANSON

You made them think. They call Devlin the devil, and you the Rainmaker.

Deputy Hanson looks puzzled.

DAX

We may have primed the pump on the nicknames.

PARKER

Shannon and Ricky Tweeted the nicknames far and wide.

MARIA

I knew the town wouldn't be swayed by Mr. Devlin.

DEPUTY HANSON

And Shannon and Ricky are local heroes.

MARIA

They're great kids, and the next generation of scientists.

DEPUTY HANSON

What I mean to say is, will I see you again?

MARIA

You can bet on it.

She LEANS OUT the truck window and KISSES him. Clouds gather and it starts to RAIN lightly, but at least it's rain.

DEPUTY HANSON

Hey, it's raining! It's a miracle!

MARIA

It's an orographic coincidence.

Dax, Huan, and Parker CHEER. Citizens EXIT the Courthouse CHEERING.

DEPUTY HANSON

I guess you're right. You'd better get out of here.

Huan steps on the gas and RACES AWAY as people WAVE happily.

End Act Four

(More)

TAG

EXT. FANNY BRIDGE, LAKE TAHOE - NIGHT

Six Water Pirates in SKI MASKS, including Sarg and Michelle, carry BACKPACKS along the Truckee River toward Fanny Bridge watching the same two civilian Water Guards RESTING aside the dam. But as Sarg advances, a dozen well-armed, official, uniformed Water Police (30s-40s) MARCH up to defend the dam.

MICHELLE

How did they know?

SARG

We have a leak.

Sarg STARES SUSPICIOUSLY at each of the masked Water Pirates, before STOMPING away down the riverside. They HEAR an automatic rifle: BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM. A Water Pirate falls dead. Is it Sarg? Is it Michelle?

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Just outside of town, there's NO RAIN in sight. Dax drives fast, with Maria, Dax, Huan, and Parker in good humor as they SWERVE down a dark, dirt farm road.

DAX

Nice work, back there, Professor.

MARIA

You weren't so bad yourselves, for being a bunch of computer geeks fired from Hollyfield.

Dax, Parker, and Huan GLANCE UNCOMFORTABLY at each other.

PARKER

How do you know we were fired?

MARIA

Nobody quits a high-paying job in a recession.

HUAN

If Hollyfield wasn't after you before, they will be now. You may need a few geeks to keep you out of prison.

MARIA

I haven't done anything wrong.

PARKER

You poisoned the youth of Auburn
with science.

DAX

You educated the townies pretty
quickly.

HUAN

You called Roderick Devlin the
Third, the C-E-O of a multi-billion-
dollar company, a liar.

MARIA

He was trying to dupe those poor,
defenseless people in a time of
crisis.

PARKER

You left that nice Deputy Walt
Hanson high and dry, so to speak.

MARIA

He was so sweet. I like him.

DAX

That reminds me, we owe Sheriff
Dalton's account eighty-five bucks.

Dax takes Devlin's ENVELOPE out of his back pocket.

DAX (CONT'D)

Devlin couldn't pick up the
envelope with all those people
looking, so I did.

MARIA

Professor Peyton Moore couldn't
report it missing.

HUAN

We'll repay the sheriff's account
at our next stop.

MARIA

Our next stop? No way. I'm going
home to straighten out this mess
and get on with my life.

DAX

I'm afraid that's impossible.

PARKER

We need you at our next stop, and you can't go home yet.

MARIA

Why?

HUAN

One, it's not safe. Two, you're not a legend yet. Once you're a legend, you'll be home free.

Maria thinks about it for a moment.

MARIA

Where's our next stop?

DAX

Need to save the National Forest.

MARIA

From loggers?

HUAN

No, from a poison salesman.

Huan hands Maria a newspaper with a vicious-looking BARK BEETLE on the front page. The newspaper reads: "DDT Needed to Stop Massive Bark Beetle Outbreak."

MARIA

DDT has been banned for decades!

PARKER

That's why they need the Rainmaker.

DAX

The legend grows.

Maria STARES out of the truck window.

MARIA

Rainmaker. Ha!

She shakes her head in disbelief, then SMILES TRIUMPHANTLY.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

My mom used to say, 'A few trustworthy friends can defeat an army of powerful enemies.' But her new friends had secrets that were forming a noose, her enemies were more powerful than she had imagined, and the drought was getting worse. My mom's troubles were just beginning.

FADE OUT:

END OF PILOT