

LAKE HOUSE MURDERS

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FADE IN:

EXT. LAKE TAHOE BEACH - DUSK

SAL BELLINI (30s), a long-haired hippie with a metal detector scans a private beach at the Thunderbird Lodge on the east shore of the Lake.

SUPER: "Summer 1965, Lake Tahoe"

We hear the sweet voice of ANGELA MESTAS (23), a sultry, streetwise rental manager and housekeeper.

ANGELA (V.O.)

Envy is like gold fever. It's a fire fanned by greed that burns and tarnishes us all.

(beat)

Sal Bellini made a killing when metal detectors were first sold in 1965. I blame him for the modern-day gold rush that changed me.

Sal finds a ring and a few coins in the sand.

ANGELA (V.O.)

He was not only trespassing on private property, he was stealing the gold, silver, and coins he discovered.

Sal looks up to the vacant estate.

ANGELA (V.O.)

When the beaches were tapped out, he began casing joints for his nightly job as a cat burglar.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - MORNING

SUPER: "Present day"

A winter storm approaches. Snowflakes hit a For Sale sign outside a picturesque home on the shores of Lake Tahoe. The sign reads: "For Sale -- Perfect home or vacation rental, By Appointment Only." A "SALE PENDING" sign covers a corner of the sign.

ANGELA

I do know that in 1970, he bought this house on the north shore with five 400-ounce gold bars worth \$70,000.

(MORE)

ANGELA (CONT'D)

That's what he told my parents when his mind started taking vacations more frequently. Where did he get the gold bars, you ask?

Behind a large bay window, Angela holds a hardwood floor duster and glares at the sign. She is dressed like a gypsy in colorful, uncoordinated sweater and sweatpants, rainbow scarf, and bright skullcap with EarPods poking out.

ANGELA (V.O.)

(bitter)

Don't ask me. I'm just the property manager and housecleaner, whose lived in the lock-off apartment behind the house her entire life.

(angry)

A trust manager, who I've never met, is selling my house to another trust manager I'll never meet.

(sad)

Who knows if I'll have a job or a place to live next week after the last pre-sale survey of electric, water, and gas lines is completed today.

INT. LAKE HOUSE, FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She fights back tears.

ANGELA

I'm not gonna miss being the cleaning lady for spoiled rich fucks! That's for sure!

A silent large-screen TV in the background warns of the approaching storm. We see the words, "Atmospheric river could bring several feet of snow."

She trudges to the open kitchen where a clock reads, "8:17." On a dining room table nearby sits a book titled, "Cybersecurity Programming." She flips to a bookmark near the end, scans the page, and continues to mop the floor with a smile and a Latin dance step.

INT. BMW SUV - SAME TIME

Handsome BRANDON STEELE (28), wearing fashionable winter clothes, boots, and driving gloves, drives in the pouring rain with his beautiful blonde wife, KAYLA STEELE (28), who is equally well-dressed and with perfect cleavage and makeup.

The ski rack sports one pair of skis, as the rain changes to snow.

BRANDON
It sounds like we'll beat the
heaviest of the snow, Kayla.

KAYLA
I hate reunions, Brandon. I told
you...

BRANDON
(interrupting)
One weekend with a few old friends
from high school. It'll be fun.

KAYLA
You're doing this to make them
jealous, and I don't ski.

Kayla reaches over and grabs Brandon's upper thigh.

BRANDON
I confess. I like showing you off.
Who wouldn't? Besides, I've stayed
in great shape too! I was second-
string in football, but first-
string in L-O-V-E!

Kayla smiles at Brandon and keeps rubbing him.

KAYLA
You think Shane or Huan give a shit
how we turned out?

Brandon glares back.

BRANDON
It's not Huan, anymore. She legally
changed her name to Taylor.

Kayla suddenly pulls her hand away, which frustrates Brandon.

KAYLA
I hope Shane changed his
personality. He disgusts me!

Brandon grabs Kayla's hand and returns it to his crotch.

BRANDON
Don't let him get to you like high
school, baby. Make him jealous he
didn't get you! Tease the hell out
of him!

Kayla smiles, fondles Brandon, then looks away.

CUT TO:

INT. JEEP - SAME

In a muddy older Jeep, SHANE MCKINNEY (28), a serious cop in blue jeans, leather jacket, and baseball cap drives his unhappy Asian wife, HUAN "TAYLOR" HUI (28), through heavy snow over Donner Pass.

SHANE

We'll beat them all there in this storm.

TAYLOR

It's not a race.

(looks out at the snow)

I hope the Donner Party didn't order out for Chinese.

BACK TO:

INT. BMW SUV - SAME

The snow is heavier further down the mountain.

BRANDON

I agree, Shane was a bit of a bully in high school. Running backs had to be. But it was his idea to invite Matty and Everett.

KAYLA

To atone for his sins?

BRANDON

Who knows? We all got along as teammates back then. We'll do fine now. And Matty's rich history professor partner is renting the place for us, so we'll try to like him.

KAYLA

Is he richer than me?

BRANDON

Nobody's richer than you.
(laughs)
Or me for marrying you!

Kayla rolls her eyes in disgust.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK - SAME

In a late-model four-wheel-drive truck, EVERETT JACKSON (30s), a tall, thin African American history professor is dressed in urban chic with the truck's heater on high. Next to him is MATTY O'HARA (28), a muscular football player-type with flowing hair and wearing an athletic warm-up suit, and high-top tennis shoes.

MATTY

Thanks for doing this, Ev. I need to bring closure.

Everett bursts out laughing.

EVERETT

Closure? Star quarterback pretends to be straight, joins the seminary and becomes a priest, then comes out as gay, and goes into seclusion as my stay-at-home investment strategist? What part are you bringing to closure?

MATTY

You know what I mean. They know I'm gay! We all stayed in touch on social media.

Everett laughs again.

EVERETT

Matty, Matty, Matty! Nobody stays in touch on social media! They purposely stay out of touch, post old photos to look younger, and selectively lie about their lives. They ought to call it Two-FacedBook! Never find a history professor on that shit!

Matty laughs.

EVERETT (CONT'D)

I can't wait to see their faces when we tell them we're adopting!

Matty spins and glares at Everett.

MATTY

God says children are for men and women! I think it's wrong, and I don't think Shane and Taylor want kids.

EVERETT

Maybe his cop pistol shoots blanks.

Matty slaps Everett's arm angrily.

MATTY

Don't bring up kids! Shane was insanely jealous in high school, and I'd consider him forearmed and dangerous, especially after he sees Kayla again!

EVERETT

Even you said you'd kill for her great skin.

MATTY

I think Shane would kill for her. Kayla wasn't much to look at in high school. Then, one year of cheerleading in college, and POW!

EVERETT

This I gotta see! But it's you I want to go POW!

They giggle and drive on in light snow.

BACK TO:

INT. LAKE HOUSE, BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Angela cleans the toilet in a large bathroom with an open window. She doesn't see a creepy middle-aged bum of a man, GLEN CHAPMAN (50s), in a snow jacket with the emblem "Tahoe City Public Utility District," sneak up behind her. He holds a new Utility Line Locator like a lance. He has a large nose with an ugly wart on it.

Angela stands and turns to see the man's nose, jumps back with a SCREAM, and falls back on the commode.

Angela holds out the toilet brush in defense.

The man is frightened and steps back pointing to the emblem on his jacket.

MR. CHAPMAN
Glen Chapman with the Tahoe City
Public Utility District.

Angela lowers the toilet brush and removes an EarBud.

ANGELA
Mr. Chapman, what the hell are you
doing inside the house?

MR. CHAPMAN
I... I... I have to complete my
inspection before the sale. I was
mapping the utility lines, gas, and
water as directed by the buyers!
(points at the window)
And you got cold air coming through
your window.

Angela interrupts Mr. Chapman, grabs his jacket by the
sleeve, and yanks him out to the kitchen.

ANGELA
The window doesn't fully close or
lock, and the house is rented for
the weekend. You'll have to come
back next week.

Mr. Chapman stops and pulls away angrily and takes a tablet
computer from the back of his belt and reads it.

MR. CHAPMAN
I'm sorry, Ms. Mestas, but I have
to submit my report online by
midnight night. I have full access
to the property and a key!

Angela glares at the textbook on the table.

ANGELA
Call me Angela.

MR. CHAPMAN
I'm sorry, Angela. The buyers told
me all about you. Your lease with
an option to buy bid as a property
manager and housekeeper couldn't
compete with cash buyers who bid
way over the asking price, and the
Tahoe City bank knows you didn't
have another long-term job lined
up! I know you coveted the place
you've been working. Nice studio
apartment in the back.

(MORE)

MR. CHAPMAN (CONT'D)
Steady pay and tips from the
renters. But you gotta be out by
next week!

Angela looks sadly at the textbook, closes it, and slams it
down on the table.

ANGELA
Timing is everything.
(turns angry)
But your sale is just pending...

MR. CHAPMAN
(interrupts, angry)
Pending my utility mapping, so back
off or I'll call the sheriff.

ANGELA
And what? Evict me a week early!
Big fucking deal! Come back Monday
or I'll claim you barged in and
tried to rape me.

MR. CHAPMAN
You wouldn't dare!

Mr. Chapman sees tears are forming in Angela's eyes, and he
softens.

MR. CHAPMAN (CONT'D)
I'll quickly map the gas, water,
and electric lines on the property
and get out of your hair before
we're hit with four feet of snow
tonight.

ANGELA
Four-feet?

MR. CHAPMAN
(angrily as he exits)
Maybe six. Atmospheric river, they
said. That's why I gotta get this
inspection done, damn it!

ANGELA
But this has been my home for 23
years, and five years since my
parents...

Mr. Chapman swings open the door and steps out with his
tablet computer before he interrupts.

MR. CHAPMAN

The buyers want you out of here
before the remodel team comes in!
It's a business!

Mr. Chapman doesn't shut the door. He turns and waits for Angela to race to the door to shut it.

MR. CHAPMAN (CONT'D)

Mark my words, Ms. Mestas. Know
your station in life! Envy festers
into greed, and greed leads a good
person to do very bad things...

Angela slams the door in Mr. Chapman's face.

She peeks out the window to see Mr. Chapman surveying the property with his utility finder (metal detector).

She collapses to the floor and covers her face.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Brandon drives up in heavier snow. He and Kayla exit the car and step in a few inches of fresh snow. Brandon is elated looking up, and Kayla is upset and staring down at her shoes.

BRANDON

Our high school is just down the
road. Isn't this great! Smell the
fire?

KAYLA

Get me inside, damnit! I'm ruining
my hair, not to mention \$300 shoes!

Brandon stomps around the car and guides Kayla to the door.

BRANDON

You wore your best shoes to a ski
weekend?

KAYLA

I'm staying by the fire with my
wine! I left this frozen wasteland
after high school for a reason!

Brandon glares at his wife and mutters, just as Angela opens the front door.

BRANDON

You were pregnant!

Angela hears the comment, but smiles and yells.

ANGELA

I'm Angela. Property manager and housekeeper. Welcome to the lake house. I've got a fire going and brandy waiting!

KAYLA

Help with the bags, will ya?

Angela half-smiles and shuts the door.

INT. LAKE HOUSE, FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Angela puts on snow boots and a jacket as Brandon and Kayla enter.

ANGELA

I'm happy to help with the bags but my real job is to collect the rent and clean up after you're gone.

BRANDON

I'll get the bags.

Kayla sees six short glasses of brandy on a tray in the kitchen counter and glares at Brandon.

KAYLA

You'll get my wine first!

Kayla takes off her long coat revealing a deep V-neck black satin blouse and matching pants.

Angela's eyes open wide at the stunning beauty.

They hear Shane's jeep drive up.

ANGELA

I'll greet the other guests.

Angela looks happy to leave, as Brandon glares at Kayla who is warming her hands by the fire.

Brandon follows Angela out the door.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Shane and Taylor hurry to unpack the car as the snowfall grows more intense. They see Angela and Brandon advancing to help.

ANGELA

I'm Angela the property manager...

Angela is interrupted by the old teammates Brandon and Shane grunting with a celebration dance like they just scored a touchdown.

BRANDON

How's the star running back been?

SHANE

Almost as good as you ended up!

Taylor squeezes in for a hug with Brandon.

BRANDON

Huan, I mean, Taylor, great to see you again.

Taylor smiles, as Angela helps with the bags.

SHANE

It's a dollar for every slip-up.

They all laugh as Matty and Everett drive up.

Matty jumps out and the football grunts and dance begins again.

Everett slowly exits the car and tries to introduce himself but only Taylor is listening.

EVERETT

I'm Everett Jackson. Matty's husband. Did I miss the touchdown?

TAYLOR

I'm Shane's wife, Taylor.

Shane races over to shake hands with Everett, stepping in front of Taylor.

MATTY

I should have introduced...

BRANDON

(interrupting)

Welcome to the team, Everett. I'm Brandon and the brute is Shane.

Angela yells from the front door.

ANGELA

A warm fire and brandy await. I'll need a credit card for incidentals.

EVERETT

Is my card still okay from the reservation? History professors don't make bank.

ANGELA

That's fine.

BRANDON

We'll pay our fair share.

SHANE

We will too!

EVERETT

(laughs)

Great, because my card is tapped out buying that truck to make it up here -- twenty minutes from where the Donner Party ate that unfortunate member of the party named Stu!

Everyone laughs and immediately likes Everett.

INT. LAKE HOUSE, FAMILY ROOM - AFTERNOON

Alcoholic beverages are being heavily consumed by Taylor (red wine), Kayla (white wine), and Shane (whiskey), moderately consumed by Everett and Matty (brandy); and with Brandon drinking sparkling water. The heavy drinkers are already drunk.

Angela points to bedrooms as she speaks, but no one can take their eyes off Kayla who looks like a sexy movie star.

ANGELA

Welcome to the lake house. The master suite is downstairs, with two bedrooms upstairs, and a private studio and bath across the courtyard.

KAYLA

We've already claimed the master suite.

BRANDON

We got here first.

KAYLA
(sexy voice)
I hope you don't mind.

The men nod 'yes' like zombies.

Everett whispers to Matty.

EVERETT
Her skin is to die for.
(loud to everyone)
We'll take the private studio
across the courtyard.

Shane drools over Kayla, which Taylor sees.

SHANE
Wow, Kayla, you haven't changed a
bit.
(points to Taylor)
You remember... Huan, I mean,
Taylor. She changed her name to
sound more American. I'll be right
upstairs tonight...

Taylor glares at Shane and interrupts him angrily.

TAYLOR
I am a fifth-generation San
Franciscan.

Brandon steps between Shane and Kayla.

BRANDON
It's settled. Shane and Taylor are
upstairs and Matty and his friend
are in the private studio.

Everett gets defensive.

EVERETT
Friend? Husband, actually.

MATTY
Well, the Church doesn't
recognize...

Shane interrupts Matty with a loud laugh.

SHANE
I just got used to calling you
Father Matthew when I heard...

Silence.

EVERETT

He left a church that enslaved
Native Americans to build missions
and turned an eye to the slave
trade. I'm glad Matty left the
Church.

(laughs)

Especially for a lifestyle they
don't exactly approve of.

Everyone laughs again and toasts Matty, who smiles weakly.

Matty picks up his suitcase and meekly heads to the suite.

SHANE

(sarcastic)

Sure, Matty! The tiny upstairs
bedroom is fine with us!

Everett glares at Shane.

EVERETT

I won't let you bully Matty. I
advanced the money for the rental.

Angela, who has been quietly observing from the kitchen,
speaks up. They all turn to her.

ANGELA

Rent is a thousand dollars a night
for two nights, Friday and
Saturday. Checkout is at noon on
Sunday.

Angela points out the bay window to heavy snow falling.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

But if the storm keeps you here
longer you'll be expected to pay in
advance Sunday morning. And there's
one more thing...

Everyone but Angela sees Glen Chapman, the inspector, covered
with snow and carrying a hand ax creep up behind her in the
kitchen.

Macho Shane yells and leaps to save Angela.

SHANE

Lookout! Behind you!

Angela spins to see Glen, who drops the ax.

ANGELA

Hold it! It's just Glen Chapman a utility inspector who has free reign of the place.

Glen shakes the snow off his shoulders and cap and picks up the ax. He speaks in an eerie voice directly to Kayla.

MR. CHAPMAN

Found the ax out by the woodpile. Thought you'd need it in here. Snow was about to cover it up.

Shane steps back.

SHANE

Utility inspector?

ANGELA

He is charged with completing a map and inspection for the county assessor by tonight.

Glen picks up the ax and lumbers past the guests to place it by the fire without taking his eyes off Kayla.

MR. CHAPMAN

You'll hardly know I'm around.

Kayla turns away, disgusted by Glen.

BRANDON

What? We rented the place!

EVERETT

(to Brandon)

I rented the place. You haven't chipped in yet!

ANGELA

It's written in your rental agreement, and we're not going anywhere in this snow.

(snarls at Glen)

But your inspection is about something else, isn't it Mr. Chapman?

Glen spins and leaps across the room to choke Angela, but Shane and Matty grab and restrain him.

MR. CHAPMAN

You told them about the gold? Idiot!

Angela points at Glen, then to the door.

ANGELA

There is no gold. Just a million
rumors and one crazy old man
looking for it! Finish your
inspection and leave us all alone!

Glen shakes free of Shane and Matty and stomps out the front door yelling.

MR. CHAPMAN

You'll see! You'll all see!

Glen slams the door.

BRANDON

What gold?

ANGELA

The first owner of the house, Sal Bellini, was a hippie with a metal detector, finding rings and coins in the beaches surrounding Lake Tahoe in the 1960s. He snuck onto rich people's land every day.

Angela pauses and looks around to see that everyone is riveted to her story.

EVERETT

Go on.

ANGELA

By night, he was a cat burglar, sneaking into summer homes and winter chateaus when they were vacant. Rumors spread that he struck gold on multimillionaire George Whittell's Thunderbird Lodge after he moved back to California in 1954 and before he died in April 1989.

EVERETT

George Whittell was the real deal. Played poker with Howard Hughes and Ty Cobb at his lodge. Hated banks. Just the kind of guy who would stash a few gold bars around.

Everyone's eyes light up as Everett speaks.

Shane, Kayla, Matty, and Taylor reach for their smartphones.

SHANE

I heard those rumors in high school, something about a gold bar worth tens of thousands of dollars. Whittell distrusted banks and kept money in tunnels beneath his house. Easy target!

ANGELA

Exactly! And Mr. Bellini paid cash for this house in 1970, and my immigrant parents became his property manager and housekeeper after he went to prison. The mob came after him for burglary of their houses around the lake.

TAYLOR

He got what he deserved?

ANGELA

He died in prison five years ago, just before my parents died. The Sheriff said all of Bellini's stolen goods were hocked immediately and concluded no gold bars were stolen from Whittell or anybody else.

Everyone looks around as Matty enters the room.

SHANE

Maybe the Sheriff wanted the gold!

BRANDON

I bet every board has been torn into here.

ANGELA

Yes! This house has sold three times since as a vacation rental. Every buyer had heard the gold rumors. The place has been torn apart and remodeled after every sale, and nothing has been found. The new buyer arriving Tuesday will do the same.

MATTY

You lose your job as property manager and housekeeper?

ANGELA

On Tuesday, so if you hear of any openings...

KAYLA

Fascinating, but I have clothes to hang before they wrinkle.

SHANE

I need a shower.

Everyone begins to exit to bedrooms, but Shane and Angela.

SHANE (CONT'D)

How did your parents die?

ANGELA

Froze to death in their car in a huge snowstorm, a lot like this one. I was eighteen and told to stay safe at home while they went out. An Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent found them three days later, their car buried in snow. He was going to deport them if they were alive. Asshole!

Shane, drunk, tries to hug Angela, but she pushes him away, fighting back tears.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Don't ever touch me! Remember my friend, Mary Thursten?

SHANE

It was my word against hers!

ANGELA

She was seventeen!

Angela storms away as Shane slurs his words.

SHANE

About your parents. Sorry for your loss.

(beat)

Loshes.

(beat)

Guess I'll take my shower.

Shane glances out the bay window to Glen using a fancy metal detector in heavy snow.

He stumbles off to the shower.

INT. LAKE HOUSE, FAMILY ROOM - EVENING

Everyone but Angela stands around the kitchen table eating appetizers and continues drinking and staring at their smartphones.

The power goes out and the room is dark except for the light of the fire.

Angela races in the backdoor.

ANGELA

Power's out, save your smartphones
for an emergency.

SHANE

This is an emergency!

EVERETT

Reading glasses in the car! Be
right back.

Everett tosses on a coat, but still wears urban dress shoes, and races out the door.

Moments later, he charges in the door with snow on his coat.

EVERETT (CONT'D)

Call 9-1-1. That inspector is out
cold by the woodpile. I shook his
arm and nothing! He looks hurt!

SHANE

Did you see if he was breathing or
had a pulse?

Before Everett can answer Shane is out the door into the freezing cold without a coat, gloves, or skull cap.

EVERETT

Big coat on. How can you tell?

Panic sets in as everyone freezes.

SHANE (O.C.)

Taylor, get Angela to call the
power company. Brandon and Matty,
come with me!

Brandon and Matty throw on coats and race outside.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Shane's cold fingers tremble on Glen's cold neck, as Brandon and Matty race to his side. Glen's navy blue knit skull cap oozes blood.

MATTY

Feel a pulse?

SHANE

I can't even feel my fingers.

Shane wipes the snow off Glen's thick jacket before putting an ear to Glen's chest. The wind howls.

BRANDON

Hear anything?

Shane stands.

SHANE

Can't see or hear anything out here. I'll call 9-1-1.

(while racing to the house)

Brandon, get him a blanket. Matty, make him comfortable and keep talking to him.

Brandon follows Shane. Matty positions his knees by Glen's head and lifts his head to see the blood oozing from the back of Glen's skull cap to the snow beneath him.

Matty looks up to the bay window of the house in fright to see Kayla staring down at him with an uncaring look changing to a half-smile.

Brandon leaps from the front of the house with a blanket.

Matty is speechless in shock as Brandon spots the blood and panics.

BRANDON

We got to get him inside for first aid!

Angela races up from the back apartment, as Brandon takes Glen's feet and Matty tries to lift Glen by the shoulders.

We see the two men struggling to get their feet planted and balanced for carrying Glen, and the many footprints in the snow as the snow continues to fall.

ANGELA
Is he okay?

Angela grabs Glen's torso and tries to help carry Glen.

BRANDON
We'll know more when we get him
inside. When will the power be back
up?

ANGELA
They don't know!

MATTY
We can take him to our suite in the
back, I saw candles in the
bathroom, but there's so much
blood!

Angela sees the blood dripping from Glen's skull cap.

ANGELA
Are you sure we should be moving
him?

BRANDON
He'll freeze to death out here!
Shane's calling 9-1-1.

Angela sounds disheartened.

ANGELA
The ambulance came 22 hours after
my folks' accident. Sheriff has to
come from South Lake Tahoe! In this
snow, it could take longer!

Shane races out of the house with Taylor, and Shane screams
like a madman.

SHANE
What are you doing moving the body?

Angela freezes and takes her arms off of Glen's torso, as
Shane races to the site of the accident.

ANGELA
You mean he's dead?

BRANDON
I thought he was just injured.

Shane sees a muddle of footprints and bloodstains are
everywhere.

MATTY

Me too!

ANGELA

I just got here?

SHANE

Did anyone find a pulse?

MATTY

My fingers were too cold.

Angela feels for a pulse on Glen's neck.

SHANE

Sign of breathing?

BRANDON

Couldn't tell. Heavy jacket.

SHANE

I was treating it like an assault.

ANGELA

No pulse. We need a hard surface
for CPR.

Shane shakes and cusses in frustration then grabs Glen's torso and tugs Glen's body toward Matty's suite.

We barely see Taylor in the bay window recording video of the operation on her iPhone.

INT. LAKE HOUSE, MATTY'S SUITE - NIGHT

Three candles are lit providing minimal light. Shane, exhausted, completes CPR on Glen and checks for a pulse. Taylor is filming on her iPhone as Brandon checks his watch.

Kayla and Everett watch from the far doorway leading to the family room. The mood is dreary and silent.

BRANDON

Thirty minutes, and nothing!

Matty looks at all the blood by Glen's skull cap.

Shane shakes his head 'no.'

Angela sneaks in with two more blankets and covers Glen's body and face.

Shane looks around suspiciously at everyone.

SHANE

I'll need a flashlight and a snow shovel. Go to the family room and don't move a muscle until I study the crime scene.

Taylor stops filming.

TAYLOR

Crime scene? He could have slipped and bumped his head on the woodpile!

SHANE

(angry)

We have to treat it like a crime scene until the Sheriff gets here! Angela, call the coroner too.

ANGELA

It's a small town! The Sheriff is also the coroner. Takes the bodies to Nevada City.

(beat)

If he can get over Donner Summit, which might be in three days given the snowstorm.

Heads drop, but Shane marches on as Matty hands him a snow shovel and Everett hands him a flashlight.

Shane stomps out the door as the others stare at the body.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Shane struggles in knee-deep snow making it out to the woodpile.

He sees new snow has covered the site with six inches of new snow. The outline of Glen's body has disappeared and all the footprints are filled in. There is no sight of blood.

He looks at the woodpile to see fresh snow has covered the top pieces of firewood making it impossible to see blood.

He digs up snow around the general area of Glen's body. He gets more furious with each shovel of snow picked up and moved to the side.

He angrily stomps to the front door of the house.

INT. LAKE HOUSE, FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Shane storms into the family room to see everyone drinking brandy, wine, or whiskey, except Angela who drinks black coffee.

SHANE
Where the hell is it?

TAYLOR
What?

SHANE
The goddamn metal detector?

Everyone looks around, baffled until Everett speaks up.

EVERETT
We gotta dead guy in our room and you care about a metal detector?

SHANE
Did the Sheriff call?

ANGELA
On his way, but stuck on the west side, and may have to go back and take the east side.

SHANE
That could take hours! Can I get some coffee with three sugars?

ANGELA
Refined white sugar? Yuck! Get it yourself.

Matty puts an arm around Shane's shoulders.

MATTY
Not much more we can do for Mr. Chapman.

Kayla shrugs.

KAYLA
He was creeping me out anyway!

Everyone glares at Kayla as Taylor gets in her face.

TAYLOR
If it was you, you'd want us to care!

KAYLA

If it was me, I would've stayed
home and not with you losers!

Brandon looks over at Kayla, embarrassed for her.

Angela turns to leave.

ANGELA

I'll be in my apartment.

Shane stops her by grabbing her shoulders.

SHANE

You're not going anywhere.

The others are shocked.

Angela forcefully pulls away.

ANGELA

I know my rights. You have no
jurisdiction here! You can't stop
me. That would be detaining someone
against their will or possible
kidnapping!

Matty and Brandon try to calm Shane down but he gets more
agitated.

SHANE

One of us may be a killer and
you're a stranger to us all. I'd
like to keep an eye on you!

Shane grabs her arm and squeezes.

Angela winces in pain.

ANGELA

You mean, keep a hand on me,
pervert! I saw you lusting for me
(point to Kayla)
And the underwear model over there!

KAYLA

Bikinis!

Taylor glares at Shane.

TAYLOR

Let her go, Shane. She's right, and
you're going crazy again!

Shane points at Angela.

SHANE

We were all in here drinking for an hour before Mr. Chapman was injured! Where was she? Nobody knows!

Everyone glares at Angela.

ANGELA

How many of you went out for firewood during that hour?

Everett, Taylor, Matty, Brandon, and finally Shane, raise hands.

EVERETT

But I found him like that, so you can't blame me?

ANGELA

It would only take a second to slip and fall on the other side of the woodpile and only Everett was tall enough to look over the woodpile and see Mr. Chapman!

Shane spins to Everett in a threatening manner.

SHANE

And tall enough to club him with a thick piece of firewood, before running back in here!

Matty jumps between Shane and Everett.

Matty throws a punch at Shane, but he turns his head to minimize the effect.

MATTY

Speculator general, judge, and jury? Where do you come off, Shane?

Shane regains balance and punches Matty in the throat.

Everett tackles Shane and pins him to the ground, but Taylor, who is still tipsy, uses a roundhouse taekwondo kick to send Everett flying off Shane.

Taylor's surprise second kick is to Shane's gut and he folds over and screams. He can barely speak.

SHANE

You broke a rib this time, you...

Taylor straddles Shane looks down on him with a threatening look that shuts him up.

Matty regains his ability to breathe as he listens to Taylor lay into Shane.

TAYLOR

You've flown off the handle one too many times, crazy hothead! That's it. I used to think it was the stress of being a cop in the City, but now you're just nuts. I'm calling a limo to pick me up.

Shane scoffs at Taylor.

SHANE

You'll never get back to San Francisco in this mess!

TAYLOR

San Francisco? Hell, I'm going to Reno to divorce your ass!

She kicks Shane between the legs and he howls.

As she exits the room, Taylor glares back at Shane.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

My niece is only fifteen! She sent me photos. This time, you're going to prison.

Shane covers his crotch and rolls around on the floor of the family room as the others congregate in the kitchen.

EVERETT

That's some bad shit for a cop.

Brandon looks down at his old friend with disgust.

BRANDON

Is it true?

SHANE

My word against hers. I'm a cop! Who do you think they'll believe?

Angela begins to exit.

ANGELA
Hers, after I file my report with
the Sheriff!

Shane yells to Angela.

SHANE
My drunkard wife needs to sleep it
off, that's all.

Everyone shakes their heads in disgust at Shane.

LATER

Shane mopes alone in the family room, with Kayla, Brandon, Everett and Matty eating bowls of hot clam chowder with sourdough french bread by candlelight at the dining room table.

BRANDON
Then what do you make of the
disappearing metal detector?

KAYLA
Could be buried under the snow.

EVERETT
(laughs)
We'd need another metal detector to
find it!

Shane yells from the family room.

SHANE
The killer has it! And he or she
will be out searching for the
buried gold the minute we turn our
backs!

Matty spins angrily at Shane.

MATTY
I thought the gold bar was in the
house?

SHANE
They tore this house apart several
times while I grew up a block away
under the guise of remodels every
few years while I was growing up.
Every wall was ripped open. Every
floorboard. Hell, I snuck in dozens
of times with a metal detector too!

BRANDON

You never told me, and I was your best friend!

SHANE

I knew it was illegal.

MATTY

Bullshit! You didn't want to share if you found it! You didn't want to share the glory in football either!

Silence.

SHANE

I just know, that's all! That's why that inspector spent more time outside than inside. He knew it was buried on the property somewhere, and after the place is sold, you can bet there will be a chainlink fence surrounding the property 'til they find it.

Matty and Brandon creep toward Shane.

MATTY

Unless...

BRANDON

We find it first!

Everyone's eyes widen.

SHANE

We got one snow shovel. I say we take shifts looking for the metal detector!

BRANDON

Gotta be by the woodpile.

SHANE

I couldn't look everywhere!

Taylor steps in from the hallway.

TAYLOR

I've been listening in to hear what my asshole husband had to say about me. He couldn't look everywhere for the metal detector because he didn't ask for our help.

Everyone nods in agreement.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
I'm in, if Shane's out!

Again, the group nods in agreement as Shane launches into a tirade.

SHANE
I set us up. I put together the clues. You idiots would have never figured it out!

They all glare at Shane.

BRANDON
Sorry, buddy. You brought this on yourself!

MATTY
You don't deserve our trust!

Everett throws on a jacket, gloves, and cap.

EVERETT
I'll go first. Concentric circles around the woodpile.

MATTY
I'll go next.

KAYLA
I'm not going out there, but I'll keep the candles lit, the soup and bread warm, and make Hot Toddies when you finish your shifts.

Everyone but Shane smiles at Kayla.

TAYLOR
Sounds like a plan. I'll take a shift and keep the asshole in line!

Shane paces in anger, as Everett exits with a snow shovel.

SHANE
You can't do this! You'll destroy the crime scene...

Taylor violently pushes Shane down into a chair.

TAYLOR
Not another word out of you or your alimony will skyrocket!

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - LATER

Everett trudges to the door exhausted as Matty exits to take the snow shovel.

They kiss and hug briefly.

EVERETT

It's slow going out there. Watch
for signs of frostbite.

MATTY

I'm excited to be in a buried
treasure story with you.

Everett laughs.

EVERETT

To tell our children?

Matty laughs as he heads to the woodpile.

LATER

Taylor is digging snow with Shane glaring out from the bay window.

A Placer County Sheriff's extra-long van that reads, "Sheriff and Coroner" slows to a stop in front of the lake house.

Taylor stops shoveling when she sees JIMMY SHEA (26), a boyish, unabashed, perpetually smiling Deputy Sheriff, steps out of the car in full uniform and winter coat. Jimmy yells to Taylor who is covered in snow.

JIMMY

This the lake house that reported
the injury?

TAYLOR

Yes. Inside. I'll join you.

JIMMY

Cool. You own this place?

Jimmy curiously watches Taylor shovel snow behind the woodpile.

TAYLOR

Friends and I rented it for the...

JIMMY
(interrupts, laughs)
Most people shovel their driveways
before the forest.

Taylor puts down the shovel and guides Jimmy toward the front door.

TAYLOR
We lost something.

JIMMY
I'm Jimmy Shea, the Deputy Sheriff!

Taylor stops to stare at Jimmy's face.

TAYLOR
Jimmy Shea? From high school? Two
years behind us?

Jimmy giggles as he stares at Taylor.

JIMMY
Huan? Huan Hui?

TAYLOR
It's Taylor Hui McKinney now.

JIMMY
McKinney? You married the bully?

Taylor laughs and grabs Jimmy's arm.

TAYLOR
You are in for the high school
reunion of a lifetime!
(beat)
I'll show you to the body!

Jimmy's eyes open wide as Taylor opens the front door and gently pushes him in.

INT. LAKE HOUSE, FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy enters the family room with his flashlight on to see an alcoholic beverage in the hands of Everett, Matty, Shane, and Kayla, and apprehension on everyone's face.

Taylor opens a palm to present Jimmy, who looks at each of them with his flashlight.

TAYLOR

Matty, Brandon, and Kayla, you remember Jimmy Shea from high school. Jimmy is now the deputy sheriff.

(point to Shane)

Jimmy, you remember the class bully and temporarily my asshole husband, Shane. And over there, is Everett, Matty's husband.

Jimmy laughs as he shakes everyone's hand.

JIMMY

You all look like celebrities on one of them reality TV shows, but I see here, one of you wasn't a survivor.

Shane looks at Jimmy in disbelief, as Angela enters with a bright candle, and takes Jimmy's breath away.

ANGELA

Jimmy?

JIMMY

Angela?

(gulps)

Angela Mestas?

Angela smiles and they share a moment.

ANGELA

Jimmy Shea? You were the easiest person in the world to talk to. You used to walk me to Junior High.

JIMMY

From the apartment out back. Your mom asked me to keep an eye on you. I remember the outside of your apartment very well.

Shane smirks.

SHANE

Not the inside?

Jimmy smiles, then frowns as he kids with Shane.

JIMMY

You called me Jimmy Shits every time you shoved me into a locker.

SHANE

You made smart-ass comments to everyone all day long.

Matty puts out a hand to shake.

MATTY

You did lack social skills, but who didn't?

Kayla cuts off Matty and moves in for a hug.

KAYLA

I was voted the least likely to succeed.

BRANDON

That was before the boob job!

Brandon plops on the couch, knees apart, and holds out his arms to Kayla.

Kayla glances at Shane and smiles wryly before throwing herself on Brandon like a sex maniac. She straddles him and fondles his crotch as she kisses his neck. Shane goes crazy with excitement. He inches closer for a better view of the frisky couple.

Taylor tries to pull him away, but he breaks loose.

Jimmy tries to separate them but can't.

JIMMY

You two can knock it off. I have an investigation...

MATTY

(smiles)

They did this right after they arrived too. I think they might be perverts with a problem.

Everett laughs and smiles wryly at Matty.

EVERETT

I think they have the solution.

The others try to look away but can't.

ANGELA

I had to throw water on them.

Brandon explodes in joy and Kayla laughs as she rolls off him.

Jimmy shakes his head bewildered as he turns his attention back to Angela.

JIMMY

Where's the dead guy, Mr. Chapman?

Angela points to Matty's suite.

ANGELA

In the back suite. I'll show you.

Jimmy leaps toward Angela to follow her.

JIMMY

I'll take a look at him first. Then
I'll need statements from each of
you.

Angela and Jimmy exit.

TAYLOR

I thought he was funny in high
school.

Everyone glares at Taylor.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

In a Dave Chappell kind of way.

BEGIN MONTAGE - NIGHT

-- INT. MATTY'S SUITE, Jimmy smiles as he puts gloves on to inspect the body, while he speaks with Angela. Jimmy peeks under one side of Glen's bloody knit cap Jimmy makes notes in his notebook as Angela holds his flashlight.

-- EXT. LAKE HOUSE, Jimmy motions for Everett to stay back from the woodpile as he interviews him. Everett points to the approximate location of the body, but he looks to be uncertain. Jimmy shrugs and takes notes.

-- EXT. LAKE HOUSE, Several feet from the woodpile, Jimmy interviews Shane and Brandon. Shane points to the front door. Brandon motions to the body's location then lifting the head and seeing blood gushing out. Jimmy looks back at the disturbed accident scene in disgust. Jimmy makes notes in his notebook.

-- EXT. LAKE HOUSE, Several feet from the woodpile, Jimmy interviews Brandon and Matty, who reenact lifting the body and carrying in toward the backdoor to Matty's suite. Jimmy hits his palm to his head, perplexed, as he stares at the accident scene. Jimmy makes notes in his notebook.

-- EXT. LAKE HOUSE, Several feet from the backdoor, Jimmy interviews Brandon, Matty, and Angela who reenact carrying the body into Matty's suite. Jimmy shakes his head in disbelief again then makes notes in his notebook.

-- INT. LAKE HOUSE, FAMILY ROOM, Jimmy interviews Kayla and Everett at the bay window looking out toward the woodpile. Jimmy makes notes in his notebook, as he turns to everyone in the group with a shrug and grin that says, "I don't know."

-- EXT. LAKE HOUSE, Jimmy points the way with his flashlight as Shane, Matty, Everett, and Brandon carry a body bag to Jimmy's van.

END MONTAGE

INT. LAKE HOUSE, FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Jimmy stands and flips through his notebook with a boyish grin as everyone takes a seat in silence.

JIMMY

I got three things going against me right now so bear with me. First, most of you knew me in high school when I was a bit of a screw-up. I hated high school when everyone else seemed to love it, and Brandon was right when he said I had no filter, and Matty was right when he said I had no social skills. Hell, I don't have many more now!

Matty and Brandon look away.

MATTY

Sorry for saying that.

BRANDON

Me too.

JIMMY

It's okay. You were right, and I was a smart-ass. The second thing is I joined the job market long after most of you. I'm only three months on the job, so I'm learning as I go.

SHANE

(sarcastic)

Great! They sent a rookie!

Jimmy ignores the comment.

JIMMY

Third thing is, this is my first investigation of a death. Mostly it's been traffic stops and lost pets.

Everyone's eyes open wide, stunned.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

My minimal EMT and coroner training came in handy looking at Mr. Chapman's head. He could have slipped and fallen against the firewood like you each said, but we can't tell without forensics, and you all turned my death scene into a real shit-show with your gold fever!

Everyone looks around at each other suspiciously.

EVERETT

In the Gold Rush of 1849, gold fever led to more than 370 massacres of unarmed Native Americans including women, children, and prisoners, and thousands of murders of miners. Gold fever makes people crazy!

Jimmy leads them all to the bay window to look out at the woodpile as he speaks.

JIMMY

Everyone but Kayla and Angela went to the woodpile before Mr. Chapman was found by Everett.

SHANE

How do you know Angela didn't go to the woodpile?

JIMMY

She told me so, and I believe her.

Jimmy glances at Shane, Brandon, Matty, Taylor, and Everett, then points to the woodpile.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

The only other person here with EMT training is Shane, and he couldn't find a pulse or lack of one.

SHANE

It was freezing cold...

JIMMY

(interrupts)

And he leaves the injured person to make the 9-1-1 call, leaving emergency medical care to Brandon and Matty who had no training.

Jimmy glares at Shane.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Instead of sending one of them to make the 9-1-1 call! Come on, Shane. Rookie mistake.

Jimmy glances at Matty and Brandon.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

They assume Mr. Chapman is injured and rush to get him inside, contaminating the death scene.

Jimmy sighs at Angela.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Angela rushes up to help, also assuming Mr. Chapman slipped and fell, which he might have done.

BRANDON

Assuming!

JIMMY

Amazing nobody saw it happen.

(beat)

But, everyone has his blood on their clothes and shoes, even Kayla, because you all came in for soup, coffee, and drinks while taking turns shoveling for the metal detector, and completely destroying the scene of the accident.

Everyone hangs their head in guilt.

ANGELA

I didn't shovel snow looking for the metal detector.

JIMMY

No, but you have a separate entrance to your apartment, and everyone else here was going back and forth to the woodpile, and yet no one saw Mr. Chapman's accident!

Angela looks stunned, and the others glare at her.

ANGELA

It was dark and snowing heavily!

JIMMY

I understand that! Driving here was a bitch!

SHANE

This is bullshit. A passerby could have seen him laying in the snow, and stolen his metal detector.

Jimmy pulls out a wallet.

JIMMY

That's what I thought at first too. But I don't think robbery played a role. Mr. Chapman had over a thousand dollars on him, and two debit cards, but no driver's license or ID. I've got a call into the utility company, but their circuits are busy with the power outage.

ANGELA

Mr. Chapman had a new tablet computer too? Where is that?

JIMMY

Good question. I have that one in my notebook too.

BRANDON

Easiest explanation is he was out there using his metal detector and tablet computer and somebody saw him slip and hit his head, and then they stole his equipment.

JIMMY

Possible, but no other footprints or tire tracks are leading away from here.

SHANE

Snow could have covered them up.

Jimmy looks out at the falling snow.

JIMMY

That's certainly another possibility. We may know more tomorrow after sunrise, or after the snow melts in a few days or weeks.

Everyone shakes their heads in disgust.

KAYLA

I'm not staying another night with these lunatics.

TAYLOR

And I need to get to Reno to divorce my louse of a husband!

Jimmy turns to Kayla and Taylor but addresses them all.

JIMMY

You're all staying here until I get to the bottom of this. But first, I have to call in a few questions to my dispatch officer.

Shane, drinking whiskey, gets in Jimmy's face and slurs his words.

SHANE

It's two A.M. No power, cell phone service, TV or Wi-Fi, we can't leave because of all this damn snow, and we need some shleep!

Taylor snickers at Shane.

TAYLOR

I'll give you a dozen of my shleeping pills, asshole.

Shane angrily leaps at Taylor, but Jimmy steps between them and laughs to lighten the mood.

JIMMY

Get some sleep. All of you. We'll pick this up in the morning. I'll be in my van if you need me.

ANGELA

Thanks, Jimmy, for all you've done.
I've got a couch or blankets in my
apartment if...

JIMMY

(interrupts)

My van will be fine. I've got to go
over my notes, search Mr. Chapman's
car, and run background checks on
each of you.

Everyone looks shocked at Jimmy.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Because I have that kind of power!
(laughs)
Just kidding.

Angela and Jimmy smile and share a moment as Matty, Everett,
Brandon, and Kayla exit. Taylor glares back at Shane as she
climbs the stairs.

TAYLOR

Asshole can sleep out here on the
couch.

Shane throws his arms up in disgust as Jimmy exits via the
front door.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - NIGHT

Heavy snow continues to fall. Jimmy grabs a bigger "MOVO"
flashlight from his van and retraces his steps and reads his
notebook from the woodpile to the back of the house. The main
house and Matty's suite are pitch dark, but a candle burns in
Angela's apartment.

Jimmy sees one set of fresh footprints leading to Angela's
door, and another set of footprints leading to a clearing in
the trees behind the house. Jimmy looks puzzled.

He examines Glen Chapman's snow-covered car from the outside
and looks puzzled at the tires.

He opens the unlocked door and peeks in.

His eyes open wide as his light shines on a RENTAL CAR
ENVELOPE.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - DAWN

Jimmy is asleep in the driver's seat when Angela knocks on his passenger side door. Jimmy wears two big jackets, a wool cap, and gloves and has difficulty seeing Angela through the steamed-up window.

He uses his glove to wipe condensation from the window and smiles when he sees it's Angela.

He has trouble unlocking the door with the switch because of the gloves, so he leans over and opens the door. She wears a snowboarding outfit.

Angela smiles in a sexy way and leans into the van with a thermos of coffee and a loaf of warm cinnamon bread.

ANGELA

You must be frozen stiff! Coffee?

JIMMY

Y... Y... Yes. But I take it with sugar.

ANGELA

Refined white sugar like Shane?

They are interrupted by a SCREAM from inside the main house.

The front door opens and Kayla, wearing a short white robe, SCREAMS to Jimmy who is trudging through the snow toward the front door. Angela follows with the thermos and bread.

KAYLA

It's Shane! I think he's mostly dead!

Jimmy and Angela's eyes open widely as they bolt to the door.

INT. LAKE HOUSE, FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy races in to see Shane laying on his back in the middle of the room surrounded by Brandon (black silk pajama shirt), Taylor (red silk nightshirt), Matty (powder blue flannel pajamas), Everett (white jockey shorts and v-neck T-shirt), and Kayla. They are all staring, wide-eyed at Shane's lifeless body in navy sweatpants and matching sweatshirt, and with an obvious erection.

JIMMY

Stand aside, please.

Jimmy races in and feels for a pulse, and shakes his head
'no.'

KAYLA

I came down for coffee and found
him just like that!

Brandon snickers and points at Shane's erection.

BRANDON

Are you sure he didn't see you
dressed like that and keel over?

Jimmy ignores the comment and puts his head to Shane's chest
and listens for breathing.

TAYLOR

He knocked on my locked door last
night and asked me for a sleeping
pill. I told him to fuck off.

He puts his hand on Shane's forehead.

EVERETT

(snickers)
Looks like he did.

JIMMY

No pulse. No breathing. Cold.
(sadly)
He's been dead for a while.

MATTY

(pointing at the erection)
But...

JIMMY

Priapism: post-mortem erection,
previously seen in men who have
been executed, but sometimes caused
by erectile dysfunction meds.

TAYLOR

He ate them like candy.

JIMMY

Get a blanket to cover him.

Brandon glares at Kayla then scoffs at Jimmy.

BRANDON

To make a tent?

Jimmy stands and gently pushes away Brandon as he takes out his phone to take PHOTOS.

JIMMY

I'll ask the questions here. I'll need statements from each of you!

Taylor collapses on the couch.

TAYLOR

I was about to leave and divorce the cheating bastard, but I didn't kill him!

JIMMY

What happened after you refused him the sleeping pill? What was his mood?

TAYLOR

He said, "Fuck you," like he said all the time.

JIMMY

His mood? Desperate? Depressed?

TAYLOR

Drunk, as usual. Earlier in the night, I told him I was turning him in for fucking my 15-year-old niece, and it didn't phase him.

Brandon sits next to Taylor on the couch.

BRANDON

You were smart to lock your door.

Jimmy shakes his head in disbelief and looks around the kitchen for whiskey bottles.

JIMMY

He could have pushed open that door in an instant. He drank whiskey. I smelled it on his breath.

He finds two empty bottles of whiskey.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Who else drank whiskey last night?

Everyone shakes their head 'no.' Taylor looks away,

TAYLOR

He attempted suicide twice before,
but he told me he'd kill me if I
reported him to his sergeant.

JIMMY

How long ago, and by what method?

TAYLOR

One year ago and three years ago,
and by drinking and pills.

Matty joins Taylor on the couch.

MATTY

I get that, Taylor. So sorry.

Jimmy looks around.

JIMMY

Where's his bath bag?

Everyone looks around.

ANGELA

Check the bathroom down the hall to
the right.

Jimmy goes down the hall and retrieves a black leather bath
bag.

He dumps it out on the table and uses his pen to move and
read three prescription pill bottles, and a package of
erectile dysfunction pills. All the pill bottles contain some
pills.

JIMMY

Antidepressants, blood pressure,
and one more...

TAYLOR

For Hepatitis C. He found out last
month.

BRANDON

(sadly)

Must be why he wanted to get
everybody together for a ski
weekend.

Jimmy looks uncomfortable looking at the meds.

JIMMY

Hep-C? Liver damage? The last thing you want to do is add alcohol and anti-depressants to that mix! Could be what killed him.

Jimmy moves in awkwardly to console Taylor.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

You knew, but too bad you couldn't stop him, huh?

Taylor breaks down and cries. Matty and Brandon glare at Jimmy before hugging Taylor.

TAYLOR

I was done with his abuse of me and everyone else. Everyone! That's why I took self-defense classes. That's why I was finally leaving him. I couldn't take it. But this doesn't make sense!

Jimmy squats down to look into Taylor's eyes.

JIMMY

What doesn't make sense?

TAYLOR

All the way up here, all he talked about was the gold bar. He wanted to find it and give 'em to me. He brought two shovels up to dig.

Jimmy looks out the bay window to the Jeep.

JIMMY

So all he needed was a metal detector. Can I take a look in your Jeep?

TAYLOR

Go ahead. Never locked it. He's a cop... was a cop.

Jimmy exits quickly to the jeep as everyone leaps to the bay window and watches him. The snow is heavier.

Jimmy opens the back of the Jeep, moves some blankets and roadside tool kits around and sees the two shovels.

Everyone sees Jimmy hold up the two shovels and shrug.

Everyone glares at each other suspiciously, as Jimmy returns.

Jimmy trudges to his van shaking his head in disbelief. He retrieves a second body bag.

Jimmy enters the room with the body bag.

Everyone turns to see Shane's erection has dissipated.

JIMMY

I'll need some help getting Shane
to the van.

BRANDON

Will you be able to run one of
those toxicology tests we see on
TV?

Jimmy looks at Brandon sadly.

JIMMY

This isn't TV! But yes. As long as
I keep the body cold until I can
get him to the Nevada City morgue,
the tox tests should tell us
everything.

Taylor sobs.

TAYLOR

I'm so sorry. I should have told
you about the shovels.

Taylor looks around suspiciously and stops and glares at
Angela, who gets angry.

ANGELA

Two dead bodies, one missing metal
detector, tablet computer, and...

JIMMY

(interrupts)

I didn't say anything looked
suspicious.

Angela shrugs at Jimmy.

ANGELA

You know as well as me, I've lived
here 23 years with zero dead bodies
in the house and now there's two!

Angela points and counts the people in the room.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Up to seven suspects, realizing the Deputy Sheriff wasn't here for the first suspicious death.

Jimmy gets upset with Angela but stays calm.

JIMMY

There was nothing suspicious...

ANGELA

(interrupts)

What local utility inspector arrives in a rental car with a gold detector?

JIMMY

I can't get through to the utility company in the power outage to find out...

ANGELA

What I already know. He was an imposter!

Everyone glares at Angela, who shrugs philosophically.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Hey, don't shoot the messenger. That would make three bodies and six suspects.

Jimmy finishes zipping up the body bag, stands, and yells at Angela.

JIMMY

That's enough Angela! Nobody leaves this room until I say so!

EVERETT

(sarcastic)

I think Professor Plumb Crazy did with Viagra in the family room!

Jimmy gets in Everett's face, but Angela steps between them.

ANGELA

How many of you heard rumors about the gold bar on the property?

Angela proudly raises her hand. Taylor slowly raises her hand.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

How many of you came up here with
finding gold as your top priority?

Slowly, other arms go up: Matty, Kayla, Brandon, Everett,
then Jimmy.

Jimmy puts his arm down quickly.

JIMMY

I get it! Shane and Mr. Chapman
would be raising their arms too.

ANGELA

If they could!

Everyone puts their arms down.

JIMMY

After I load Shane in the van, with
a little help, just to put you all
at ease, I'll begin a search of the
main house, suite, and apartment. I
have no warrant so you'll have to
agree to it with at least one other
person accompanying me.

BRANDON

Who?

JIMMY

Angela, because she knows the
property, and each of you in your
private bedrooms. But you will not
be allowed to touch anything until
I bag evidence if I find anything
at all!

TAYLOR

Like what?

JIMMY

The pill bottles, any metal
detector we might find. I don't
know. I'm new at this, remember?!

KAYLA

Can we change out of our jammies?

BRANDON

You're not wearing any!

Everyone turns to Kayla, who glares at Brandon.

KAYLA
You know what I mean!

JIMMY
Not yet. Angela, do you think the
two of us can carry Shane to the
van?

MATTY
I'll throw on a coat and snow
boots, too.

JIMMY
Great.

Jimmy, Angela, and Matty put on snow gloves and lift Shane as
Brandon gets the door.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
The rest of you, stay put for a few
minutes!

They exit with the body bag. Everyone else looks out the bay
window as they load Shane into the Sheriff's van.

BRANDON
I gotta take a dump. Be right back!

Kayla grabs his arm.

KAYLA
The Sheriff said not to move!

Brandon shakes free.

BRANDON
Nobody tells me when I can shit!

Jimmy is searching Matty and Everett's truck, as Matty and
Angela look on.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy doesn't find anything suspicious in the truck.

JIMMY
Matty, would you mind fetching
Brandon and Kayla's keys for me.

MATTY
Will do.

Matty trudges through the deep snow back to the house.

Jimmy smiles at Angela. They have their backs to the bay window.

JIMMY

Sorry if I sounded rough and tough
in there. I want to appear like I
know what I'm doing.

Angela returns a smile so the others can't see it.

ANGELA

Maintaining control. I get it.

Jimmy point to Glen Chapman's car.

JIMMY

I spotted the rental agreement from
the Reno Airport last night, so you
raised a good question. Why does
our local utility inspector, Glen
Chapman, arrive in a rental car
with a powerful metal detector?

Angela looks puzzled as Jimmy laughs.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

He might have needed a stronger
metal detector to do his utility
mapping in heavy snow. But why no
company truck?

Angela looks partially convinced.

ANGELA

And why was he driving a rental car
with front-wheel drive, and no snow
chains? He wasn't planning on
staying!

JIMMY

I agree. I don't think he works for
the local utility company. But I
can't get through to prove it
because their lines are jammed with
the power outage.

Jimmy turns to see Taylor, Everett, and Kayla looking out the window.

ANGELA

I'll tell you why! Mr. Chapman
wasn't staying here long.

(MORE)

ANGELA (CONT'D)

He thought he could find the buried gold fast and get out of here!

JIMMY

And the missing metal detector and his tablet computer are still missing.

ANGELA

They could be under the snow.

JIMMY

Or stolen by someone else who is after the gold!

ANGELA

Do you think the rumors of the gold bar are true?

JIMMY

True or not, envy leads to greed, and greed leads to very bad things.

Brandon trudges out the front door with a coat and snow boots on covering most of his pajamas.

BRANDON

I was taking a crap, okay?

JIMMY

(laughs)

I'd just like to take a look in your nice BMW. I'm thinking of getting one when I find the gold.

Brandon shakes his head in disgust and unlocks the car with a touch of the keys as Angela peaks into the tinted windows in the back.

BRANDON

Cut the crap, Jimmy.

ANGELA

Wow, something shiny in the back of Brandon's new car, detective. Maybe you want to ask him about it.

JIMMY

The back hatch, Brandon?

Brandon is flustered and frightened and presses the hatch button.

Jimmy and Angela peek inside as the hatch slowly opens!

ANGELA
What's this, Brandon!

Jimmy has gloves on when as he lifts the metal detector out of the back of the BMW.

Brandon glances back at the bay window to see that Kayla looks horrified, and everyone else's eyes are wide open.

BRANDON
Okay! Okay! I went out to get firewood and saw Mr. Chapman's fancy metal detector leaning against a tree in the forest, and I put it in my car to keep it dry!

ANGELA
Gold fever?

Jimmy glances at Angela then glares at Brandon.

JIMMY
I'll ask the questions here.
Brandon, gold fever?

Brandon lunges at Angela and pushes her down in the snow.

They hear Kayla pounding on the bay window and turn to see her angry face.

Jimmy violently pulls Brandon back, then helps Angela up as Brandon points at her and yells.

BRANDON
Shane was right! He told me you killed the inspector and stole his tablet computer with the map on it! You wanted the gold for yourself to solve all your money, job, and housing problems.

Angela, back on her feet, kicks Brandon in the crotch with her heavy snow boot, and he yelps and hunches over in pain.

ANGELA
Touch me again, and I'll kill you!

Jimmy leaps between Angela and Brandon as he struggles to his feet. Jimmy glances at Angela before turning to Brandon.

JIMMY
I'm sure she meant she'd press charges for assault!

Jimmy pushes Brandon and Angela toward the front door and puts the metal detector in the passenger seat area of his van. Jimmy laughs as he trudges to the front door.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

What a great fucking high school reunion!

INT. LAKE HOUSE, FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kayla slaps Brandon in the face as he enters the door. Angela and Jimmy are behind Brandon.

KAYLA

Don't you ever hit a woman, even if she killed that inspector!

ANGELA

I guess Shane talked to everybody.

Kayla turns on Angela.

KAYLA

You were the only one none of us could see leaving your apartment back there. You probably stole his computer thingy too. The one with the map!

Angela lunges at Kayla and they wrestle. Jimmy pauses just long enough to admire the two women before he breaks them apart.

TAYLOR

She didn't do it!

Everyone freezes and stares at Taylor.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

I found Mr. Chapman's tablet computer when I was digging away the snow from the woodpile, just as the Deputy Sheriff's van rolled up.

JIMMY

Why didn't you tell anyone?

TAYLOR

I half-believed that Shane would come around again like he always did, apologize, and find me the gold like he said he would.

Everyone looks upon Taylor with pity.

MATTY
Wishful thinking?

EVERETT
Stockholm Syndrome?

ANGELA
Love.

JIMMY
It's still theft. Go get it,
please.

Taylor trudges upstairs to her bedroom as Jimmy races out to his van to retrieve the metal detector.

Taylor trudges downstairs with a tablet computer in a plastic bag filled with rice, and Jimmy returns with the metal detector.

TAYLOR
Okay! I stole the rice and plastic
bag from the kitchen, too!

JIMMY
But you may have saved the data on
the device, and I might be able to
learn more about Glen Chapman!

Jimmy puts on latex gloves and takes the tablet computer in the plastic bag from Taylor.

Jimmy turns it on but it's passcode protected with a six-number code so he sets it aside.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Passcode protected. Six digits. A
million possibilities.

ANGELA
Not really. My online classes in
cybersecurity say you have a one in
five chance to break into it.

The others look upon Angela in awe as Jimmy examines the metal detector closely and looks like he's not listening.

EVERETT
How's that, Angela? Six digits,
zero to nine?

ANGELA

It's because most idiots have stupid passcodes like the numbers one through 6, all ones, all twos, and so on.

MATTY

That blows my cover.

ANGELA

Easier than you think!

Jimmy stands up, excited.

JIMMY

Shit! This is a gold detector.

TAYLOR

Metal detector?

JIMMY

No, this is a high-end gold detector that is specifically made for buried gold, as small as a gold ring buried two feet!

The others gasp as Jimmy glances around the room.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

That's odd. You all seen more interested in this equipment than the lives of Mr. Chapman and Shane McKinney!

KAYLA

I'm not interested in the gold. I've got plenty of money, it's Brandon who needs a job!

Kayla glares at Brandon, who looks away.

MATTY

What? The new BMW. The fancy clothes?

BRANDON

I got laid off three months ago, right after I bought the car. I remembered the stories about the gold and jumped at the chance to have one last look for it.

JIMMY

(to Brandon)

This gold finder is worth over \$1,300. That makes it grand theft! Up to one year in the county jail and a \$1,000 fine. The assault on Ms. Mestas will add to it.

(to Taylor)

Petty theft for the tablet computer. First-time offender, probably probation.

(to everyone)

What worries me is that both deaths seem a bit more suspicious, and I'm worried that the misguided interest in rumors of that gold bar may have turned someone into a murderer!

Everyone looks suspiciously at the others until Angela has an epiphany.

ANGELA

What if Shane killed Mr. Chapman for his gold finder, then, riddled with guilt, committed suicide?!

EVERETT

Cases closed, is that it?

JIMMY

According to your statements, Shane didn't want the "accident scene" around Mr. Chapman's body disturbed at first. Why?

MATTY

He got gold fever later. He whispered to me that he needed the gold finder to tell him where to dig. He wasn't suicidal. He was driven!

Jimmy looks sadly at Taylor.

JIMMY

And he only wanted the gold for Taylor. Maybe to ask forgiveness for being an asshole and a bully.

ANGELA

Shane's death could be an accidental overdose, like with all those opioid deaths.

JIMMY

I'll know more after the tox report on Shane and the COD, cause of death, on both of them. But lots can change by the time the pass opens up and I can get the bodies to Nevada City.

ANGELA

I thought you said as long as you kept the body cold...

JIMMY

(interrupts)

Determining the exact cause of death becomes more difficult with time. The tox reports are okay days after death for most drugs and alcohol, but some poisons, for example, dissipate with time.

Taylor is angry and defiant.

TAYLOR

Poisons?

Jimmy looks away sad and depressed.

JIMMY

I didn't say he was poisoned! I just said...

ANGELA

You think he was poisoned?

Jimmy slowly glances at each of them sadly.

JIMMY

I've been worried about a few things since I arrived.

MATTY

Like what?

JIMMY

Everyone must have known about the big storm on the way. The atmospheric river! The bomb cyclone they called it on all the news channels, but you all drove up here anyway!

Jimmy pauses, then hangs his head.

EVERETT

So?

JIMMY

Then I learned all of you knew
about the rumors of the gold bar
before arriving!

KAYLA

They admitted that!

Jimmy glares at Brandon and Taylor.

JIMMY

I trusted everyone when I arrived,
but two of you turned out to be
thieves, and I can no longer assume
what you said in your interview
statements are true.

He looks around at the others.

TAYLOR

I'm so sorry...

BRANDON

(interrupts)
Me too.

Jimmy ignores the apologies and goes on.

JIMMY

I have no choice but to reexamine
the bodies with the possibility of
suspicious circumstances.

Angela angrily objects.

ANGELA

Can't you do that later in the
morgue? You can't do that here in
the house!

Jimmy looks back at the dining room table.

JIMMY

Got no other choice. I can't get
over the pass, or to Reno, or back
to the Sheriff's Office in this
storm. Roads are closed!

BRANDON

You can't be serious?

JIMMY

Angela, could you see if there's a plastic tarp, like a painting tarp, or an old sheet I could cover the table with?

Angela is still angry.

ANGELA

This is insane!

JIMMY

And could Matty, Everett, and Brandon help me carry Mr. Chapman back in the house. You can all be excused to your rooms until I've completed my examination, except Angela.

ANGELA

What now?

Jimmy smiles at Angela with his boyish grin.

JIMMY

I need someone to hold my flashlight...

Kayla rolls her eyes looking down at her short robe.

KAYLA

Gross! I'll be in my room.

Kayla and Taylor race to their rooms.

LATER

Jimmy stands beside Glen Chapman's body bag on the dining room table. Angela is opposite him holding his flashlight. Both wear LATEX GLOVES. Jimmy has a few sterilized CLAMPS, SCALPELS, SCISSORS, and TWEEZERS on a gauze napkin beside him. He also has a small INK PAD and FINGERPRINT FORM at the end of the table. He smiles at Angela.

Jimmy hands Angela his smartphone and opens the camera for video.

JIMMY

You've got to video and aim the flashlight. Are you sure you're okay with this?

ANGELA

I'll tell you when I'm not.

JIMMY

Okay then, here we go. Video on.
(takes a deep breath)
Deputy Sheriff Jimmy Shea here with
Ms. Angela Mestas at her lake
house. The power is out but I
needed another look at Mr. Glen
Chapman's head injury to better
establish COD.

ANGELA

COD?

JIMMY

Cause of death.

Jimmy slowly unzips the body bag and opens it to get a better look at Glen's head. His knitted skullcap is caked in cold, clotted blood.

Angela's hands shake and the flashlight beam is unsteady.

Jimmy is troubled as he carefully turns Glen's head to the left and peeks under the cap.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

When I first looked at Mr. Chapman
last night, I lifted only this
corner of the cap, most of the
blood oozed from the lower-right
back of his skull, consistent with
slipping and falling back against
the woodpile.

Brandon creeps up behind Angela and her hands shake more.

BRANDON

Just curious. I've never...

Jimmy puts a finger to his lips for Brandon to be quiet, when
Matty and Everett sneak in from the back with looks of
concern and curiosity.

JIMMY

I'm now removing Mr. Chapman's cap
to better examine the extent of the
injury.

Jimmy removes the skull cap and we see a deep gash in the
lower right side of Glen's skull.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
We have signs of rigor mortis
consistent with TOD and cold
conditions, but the contusion on
the lower right side is deeper and
more extensive than I would expect
with a fall...

Taylor SCREAMS from behind Brandon and startles everyone,
especially Angela.

Jimmy puts a finger to his lips for everyone to be quiet, as
Kayla reluctantly creeps behind Taylor.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Continuing the exam.

Jimmy carefully turns Glen's head to the right, and he is
stunned to see a second contusion. His voice quivers.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
I see a second contusion... as deep
and extensive suggesting...

Jimmy freezes and hangs his head. Angela's hand shakes more.

ANGELA
Suggesting what?

Jimmy looks up to see everyone staring at him, frightened.
Silence.

JIMMY
Mr. Chapman was struck in the back
of the head twice sustaining
extensive injuries and death. This
completes my exam.

Jimmy turns to Angela.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
End the recording.

Angela turns off the video, shuts off the flashlight.

EVERETT
(smirks)
I think Professor Plumb Crazy did
it with the ax by the woodpile.

Everyone glares at Everett.

EVERETT (CONT'D)
(innocently)
Too soon?

Angela sounds like a frightened little girl.

ANGELA
What are we going to do?

JIMMY
I'm going to call for backup. You
all get dressed in warm clothes and
come back to the family room with
blankets, pillows, candles, a
flashlight if you have one.

ANGELA
What about our phones?

JIMMY
Yes. I've got an emergency battery
charger in the van. We'll keep a
few phones charged in case the
Internet and Wi-Fi are restored.
I've got to send in this video as
soon as possible. My last report
said Mr. Chapman slipped and fell.

BRANDON
So we'll stay together in one room?

Brandon reaches for Kayla's hand, but she resists.

KAYLA
To keep an eye on each other.

JIMMY
Until help arrives.

Jimmy zips up the body bag.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
I'll need help getting Mr. Chapman
back in the van.

Matty, Everett, and Brandon step up to carry the body.

The women exit the family room in a dark mood.

LATER

Everyone returns in a sullen mood to the family room with the
requested items, and Jimmy starts a fire and brought in extra
firewood.

As everyone finds a seat, Jimmy pokes at the fire and stares into it. Jimmy is clearly thinking aloud, unfiltered.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Sure as shit, Mr. Chapman was murdered.

Everyone's eyes open wide.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Since I arrived here, I assumed everyone was being honest with me. I began to suspect Mr. Chapman wasn't who he said he was, by arriving in a rental car with a gold detector.

(glares at everyone.)

Then, all the talk about gold fever by everyone, and the equipment thefts by Brandon and Taylor, I had to ask myself what kind of people I was dealing with, and I had to question that assumption of honesty.

Taylor and Brandon look away. Jimmy is sad.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Whether or not Mr. Chapman was who he said he was, working for the utility company, he didn't deserve to be killed. Nobody does.

Angela speaks softly.

ANGELA

You think it was Shane?

Jimmy turns to Angela, angry.

JIMMY

That's harmful speculation!

KAYLA

(testy)

She's just saying what we're all thinking...

JIMMY

(interrupts, to Kayla)

That it would be easier and convenient to believe he did it.

Brandon stands defiantly.

BRANDON

He was a bully with anger issues.
He drank heavily. He was pissed at
his wife...

Taylor attacks Brandon with her fists and interrupts him.

TAYLOR

My husband wasn't a murderer! He
wanted to find me that gold!

Jimmy separates them and turns on Brandon.

JIMMY

Shane isn't here to defend himself.
All of you have to stay calm.

Jimmy and Angela both eye Kayla in a dark corner of the room.
She sits on the floor with her knees up with one arm around
her knees and her other arm behind her back. She rocks back
and forth like she's losing her mind.

Matty stands and confronts Jimmy.

MATTY

Stay calm! Easy for you to say.

EVERETT

Got that right.

Jimmy turns to Matty and Everett and yells.

JIMMY

I get it, okay?! It's easier to
blame a dead man than it is to
think you're sharing a house with a
cold-blooded killer!

Silence.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I called for backup, but the
roads...

Jimmy stares into the fire.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Until now, Shane's death looked
like accidental overdose or
suicide.

TAYLOR

Until now?

Jimmy turns to Taylor sadly.

JIMMY

I don't know what to think anymore.
Greed is a powerful motive. One of
the most common! Dishonesty fans
the flames.

TAYLOR

Yes, but...

JIMMY

Let's not speculate, or accuse, or
defend anyone right now. Let's wait
for my backup, and electricity!

Kayla cries like a madwoman. She pulls out a kitchen knife
from behind her back, stands, and yells.

KAYLA

Everyone better stay away from me!

Brandon steps toward her, but Kayla brandishes the knife at
him and screams.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

You too, Brandon! You only took me
here to show me off! All your talk
about the gold! You're as crazy as
the rest of these losers, and one
of you is a murderer!

Brandon shrugs and foolishly moves toward Kayla and yells.

BRANDON

Come on, Honey! Calm down!

Kayla is angrier by the second.

KAYLA

Don't tell me to calm down! Thirty
is the new dead for lingerie and
bathing suit models.

Brandon takes a slow step toward Kayla as Jimmy creeps closer
to Kayla.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

You're the poorest one here, except
for the ugly maid! You said if you
didn't get the gold, nobody would!

Angela glares at Kayla, as Brandon moves in.

Kayla instinctively lunges at Brandon and stabs him in the thigh, sticking the knife in his femur. Brandon screams and falls on his butt in severe pain.

Kayla's hand shakes, and Jimmy leaps to disarm her.

Brandon continues screaming, and reaches to pull the knife out.

JIMMY

Don't touch that knife. You can cut a major artery on the way out. Matty, lay him down. Everett, keep his feet from moving. Angela, get a towel, place it around the knife, and press on the wound to control the bleeding. I'll call in a medevac, and fetch the first aid kit from the van. Taylor, watch Kayla, restrain her if you have to.

Jimmy races to the door, while Kayla weeps uncontrollably.

KAYLA

I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry!

MATTY

Stay calm, Brandon.

EVERETT

Hang on, Brandon.

LATER

Jimmy returns to see Angela with a first aid kit open next to Brandon. Angela stabilizes the knife with thick gauze pads on both sides of the knife, before wrapping long gauze carefully around Brandon's leg.

Matty rubs Brandon's head like a massage, and Everett hums a soothing gospel tune.

Jimmy turns to the dining table to see Taylor and Kayla drinking tea.

JIMMY

Geez, how long was I gone?

Taylor glances at her smartwatch.

TAYLOR

Seven minutes, twenty-six seconds.

Jimmy rushes to Brandon's side and admires Angela's first aid skills.

JIMMY

That's how long it took me to
request the medevac. They'll come
on a sled with a bucket.

Everett looks puzzled, so Angela turns to him.

ANGELA

Like taking a skier with a broken
leg off the mountain.

JIMMY

Wow, great job, Angela! Couldn't
have done it better myself.

Brandon has calmed down.

BRANDON

Thanks, Angela, and everyone else.

Jimmy stands and glares at Kayla, then everyone else.

JIMMY

There will be no more accidents or
injuries until I get my backup!
(looks around, yells)
Is that clear?

Everyone nods 'yes' and takes a seat.

Jimmy makes eye contact with Kayla, who glares back.

KAYLA

One of them is still a murderer!
Maybe more than one of them.

Everyone looks suspiciously around the room, as the sky
darkens.

INT. LAKE HOUSE, FAMILY ROOM - DAWN

Jimmy is gone. Everyone else is asleep. Matty and Everett
sandwich Brandon in the middle of the floor. Brandon winces
with the slightest movement.

Kayla is stuck in a corner with Taylor next to her.

Angela is restless on the couch, but her eyes remain closed.

Angela springs up, fully dressed, spots Jimmy's empty sleeping bag by the door, and leaps to the bay window to see beautiful blue skies and Jimmy carefully examining the woodpile area, taking photos, and writing notes in his notebook.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - SAME

Jimmy eyes the woodpile, which has a V-shape in the sunlight.

He stands with his back to the woodpile and turns his head in both directions.

Angela races out the door toward the woodpile pulling her jacket closed and fumbling to put on her knit cap.

Jimmy smiles at her and they share a moment.

ANGELA

Morning, Jimmy. I just put on coffee. Why the smile?

JIMMY

Because you just put on the coffee.
No, because the medevac will be here any minute to transport Brandon.

Angela flirts with Jimmy.

ANGELA

Your only reason to smile?

JIMMY

That, and I solved the case.

Angela pauses with a forced smile.

ANGELA

You did? Great.

Jimmy happily reenacts Glen falling in the inside corner of the "V."

JIMMY

You see, if he was standing here, slipped, and fell back first hitting the tall side of the "V," his head could have ricocheted this way and hit the other side before slumping down and crawling a few feet before he died.

(MORE)

JIMMY (CONT'D)
(points)
Just there where Everett saw him.

Angela tries to sound convinced.

ANGELA
Accidental death.

JIMMY
I think so. Explains the two
contusions.
(laughs)
Glad I couldn't send in the video
we took. Embarrassing now.

The loud road of a snowmobile approaches down the road. The driver, an EMT (30s, female) wears a white Medical ski patrol uniform, and the snowmobile drags a basket-stretcher.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Go tell Brandon that help has
arrived.

INT. LAKE HOUSE, FAMILY ROOM - LATER

Brandon is being strapped into the basket by the EMT, and Kayla kisses him profusely. The EMT can't keep her eyes off Kayla cleavage.

BRANDON
Jimmy, I'm not pressing charges.

Jimmy makes a face of disbelief.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Just an accident. I ran into the
knife.

KAYLA
An accident. Like he said.

EMT
Lucky man, is all I've got to say.
Help me lift him to my sled.
Ambulance is waiting at in Tahoe
City.

Jimmy and the others are startled.

JIMMY
The roads are cleared?

EMT

One lane from Tahoe City to the
Truckee hospital, and one lane each
way over the pass.

KAYLA

Can I hitch a ride to the hospital?

The EMT chuckles.

EMT

You'll have to hold on tight around
my chest.

BRANDON

Matty, when the roads open can you
take our car to the hospital for
us?

MATTY

You bet!

EVERETT

Our pleasure. We'll lead Taylor
back to the Bay Area too, unless
she wants to stop at Sutter's Mill
and look for gold.

TAYLOR

(laughs)

Thanks, guys. I think, not.

Taylor hugs them.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - LATER

Jimmy, Angela, Taylor, Matty and Everett wave goodbye to the
snowmobile as the EMT smiles and Kayla looks back worriedly
at Brandon who smiles like he's drugged up.

JIMMY

That's the painkillers talking.

MATTY

Jimmy, since Mr. Chapman's death is
now an accident, are we free to go?

Jimmy glares at Brandon and Taylor for a second, then smiles.

JIMMY

I guess I don't have to report the
incidents involving the metal
detector and the tablet computer.

Matty, Everett, and Taylor jump for joy and hug.

Taylor hugs Jimmy.

TAYLOR
Thanks, Jimmy.

JIMMY
I'm still very sorry about Shane.
We'll be in touch after the autopsy
in Nevada City.

Taylor sadly looks into Jimmy's eyes.

TAYLOR
I'm still angry at Shane for taking
the coward's way out, but
appreciate everything you did for
us. He was very troubled.

Jimmy hugs her again.

Matty and Everett hug Taylor too.

They turn to see the lights go on in the house.

They all jump for joy and whip out their phones.

MATTY
I got Wi-Fi.

EVERETT
Check the road conditions.

They hear the roar of snowplows in the distance.

ANGELA
(smiles big)
I hear snowplows. That makes me
happy even if I can't drive, you
can!

Jimmy stares at his phone.

JIMMY
Better hurry, the second half of
the big storm is on the way!

Matty, Everett, and Taylor race inside to pack.

Jimmy and Angela trade-off shoveling the driveway and
clearing snow off the cars as they talk.

ANGELA

Next storm won't be this bad, will it?

JIMMY

(laughs)

We'll know in about four hours.

ANGELA

Those renters better get their butts over the pass or we'll have another Donner Party on our hands.

They hear a snowplow coming their way, and cheer and briefly hug. They share another moment as Matty, Everett exit with two suitcases each.

EVERETT

We heard a plow.

TAYLOR

We're loading up.

MATTY

(sarcastic)

Wish we could have stayed longer.

EVERETT

I'm happy to wash my hands of gold fever forever!

The snowplow comes down the street and everyone cheers.

LATER

Angela and Jimmy wave as Matty, Taylor, and Everett slowly drive off.

Jimmy steps toward his van.

JIMMY

More snow in the way, I'd better get these bodies over the pass and into the morgue.

Angela pulls him back and kisses him hard on the lips.

Angela seduces Jimmy with her eyes.

ANGELA

Time for a hot cup of coffee before you go?

She starts to pull Jimmy to the front door, but he stops her.

JIMMY

(smiles)

I'd better take a rain check, or
snow check in this case.

ANGELA

Look, I held the flashlight for
you, and let you stay here rent-
free! The least you could do is...

Jimmy interrupts her by kissing her.

JIMMY

One cup of coffee.

Angela giggles as she pulls him to the house.

INT. LAKE HOUSE, FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The fire is blazing, the blankets and pillows are all over
the floor, and the heat is on in more ways than one.

Jimmy and Angela laugh, giggle, and fondle each other as they
kiss and roll around.

Angela stops him in a serious moment.

ANGELA

Take me slowly. Very slowly.

Jimmy smiles and does as he's told. They make passionate
love.

LATER

They hug among the blankets and pillows. Jimmy turns his head
to see five shiny bars of gold by the fire.

Angela leans over Jimmy to admire the sight of them.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Wow. Five gold bars! Who knew?
Thanks for letting me use the gold
detector to locate the bars.

She kisses his chest and caresses him under the blankets.

JIMMY

I'm amazed you found them so
quickly.

ANGELA

Just lucky, I guess.

Angela rolls on top of Jimmy and pins his arms down.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Be honest, Jimmy. You act like you never cared about the gold! Why?

JIMMY

It might be nice to have for a little fun, but I seek to find gold in a true friend's heart!

ANGELA

(sadly)

Maybe we are a little different.

Jimmy rolls her so he is pinning her arms down. He bends to kiss her, then stops.

JIMMY

And since the gold is probably stolen, I'll have to bring it with me.

Angela pulls out from under him angrily.

ANGELA

But I found it!

Jimmy hugs her to calm her down.

JIMMY

That's \$3.6 Million right there. Nobody is going to report them missing in the next six weeks. Just wait it out, and offer the new homebuyers more than they paid.

Jimmy cannot see Angela's face which is solid anger, but she quickly hides it.

ANGELA

You're right, Jimmy. I'll be patient.

JIMMY

Good girl!

Angela pouts.

ANGELA

It's not fair.

JIMMY

I know, I know.

They separate.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
I've gotta get dressed and go to
beat the storm. Can you make
coffee?

ANGELA
You bet. How do you like it?

JIMMY
Brown and sweet, of course.

LATER

It's late afternoon, and storm clouds darken the sky. Jimmy is dressed in his uniform, but Angela is in a sexy nightshirt and serves him coffee in a mug.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Everything is loaded up.

Jimmy stares at the mug of coffee as she brings him a carton of milk and small (16 oz) box of sugar that is open and half-full.

Angela wraps her arms around Jimmy and distracts him with kisses on his neck and ears.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
I'll just take the coffee in my
travel mug if you don't mind.

ANGELA
(kisses and moans)
I don't want you to go.

Jimmy slowly stands and breaks off Angela's advances.

JIMMY
Gotta get over the pass to the
morgue before it closes again.
Sorry.

Jimmy pours the coffee into his travel mug and adds milk. Angela slowly grabs the box of sugar and pours in two or three teaspoons from the box's spout.

ANGELA
Brown and sweet, like you...

JIMMY
Like my coffee?

She presses her body against his while he giggles and struggles to put on the top of his travel mug.

Angela reluctantly takes one step back.

ANGELA
Drive safely, and text me when you
get there.

JIMMY
Will do.

Jimmy pulls Angela close for one last kiss.

Jimmy heads to the door slowly glancing back at Angela.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Thanks for everything, and I mean
everything! I'll call you tonight.

Angela smiles and begins to exit with him until the cold air hits in her short nightshirt.

ANGELA
Bye, Jimmy. So great to connect
again after all these years.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy heads to his van with his jacket unzipped.

ANGELA
Jimmy! Wait! Can you put the box of
sugar in the bear-proof garbage can
for me?

Angela pulls the box of sugar from behind her back and flirts with him.

ANGELA (CONT'D)
Please!

Jimmy smiles and returns to get the box of sugar, stopping for one last kiss.

Angela waves and watches Jimmy take the box to the bear-proof can and it looks like he drops it in.

JIMMY
You'll call the rental company and
have them come for Glen's car?

ANGELA

I got the keys, and I promise not
to drive it!

JIMMY

No license. I remember.

Jimmy takes a sip of coffee as he walks to his van and gets
in.

Once inside, he rolls down the window and waves goodbye.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Jimmy sits in his van, idle on the side of the road and
partially in a snowbank. Snow is falling heavily around him.
His phone is plugged into a USB port. His travel mug rests in
a cupholder. He is bundled up his jacket and gloves, with a
blanket wrapped over him. He tries his radio.

JIMMY

Dispatch, this is Deputy Sheriff,
Jimmy Shea, same location.
(sadly)
Still waiting, over.

A female DISPATCHER (30s-40s) replies in a monotone.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)

Copy that, Jimmy. Help is on the
way. Be patient. It's a mess out
there.

Jimmy looks and sounds disgusted.

JIMMY

Copy that.

He glares at his travel mug before he dozes off.

LATER

The snow is heavier. We HEAR the faint rumbling of a
snowmobile heading down the road.

The RUMBLING gets louder.

Finally, Angela, in all-black snow gear and helmet rides up,
keeps it running, but dismounts. She slips off her helmet and
sets it on the front of the seat.

She leaps to Jimmy's van and stares into the frosty driver's
door.

Jimmy looks dead. Angela opens the door then rips off one glove, feels for a pulse at Jimmy's neck.

She shakes her cold hand and feels for a pulse again.

She reaches over Jimmy and grabs his travel mug and rips off the lid.

She pours the last remaining few drops of coffee into the snow.

She quickly rinses the travel mug with the snow at her feet and puts the travel mug into one of her coat pockets.

She reaches into past Jimmy and disconnects his smartphone from the USB, and puts the phone in her other coat pocket.

She puts on her glove and shuts the door, and races to the back of the van, and opens the double doors.

She smiles and begins to transfer the gold bars one at a time to the storage box under the seat of the snowmobile.

When the last bar is loaded up, Jimmy springs out of the van with his MOVO flashlight (combination flashlight and video recorder).

Angela turns to Jimmy and half-smiles, stunned.

ANGELA

Jimmy, you're alive. I came to save you.

Jimmy smiles weakly then turns sad.

JIMMY

I was hoping you wouldn't.

ANGELA

(surprised)

But I didn't find a pulse!

JIMMY

I learned in my short course for coroners that only two in three people can quickly detect a pulse of the carotid artery, made more difficult in extreme cold, and made more difficult because I held my breath, tightened my neck muscles, and lowered my chin like rigor mortis had set in. Only one in three can detect a pulse under those conditions.

Angela angrily tilts her head defiantly.

ANGELA

I was just going to use your phone
to call for help!

JIMMY

Don't say anything more...

ANGELA

(interrupts)

Jimmy, you have to believe me! I
came to bring you and the gold back
to my house until your backup
arrives!

JIMMY

Angela Mestas, I'm arresting you
for possession of stolen police
property. Anything you say can and
will be used against you in a court
of law...

ANGELA

(angry)

What?

JIMMY

My travel mug and my smartphone.

She takes them out of her pockets with her gloved hands and
tosses them to Jimmy's feet (and by the van's door).

ANGELA

They fell out of your vehicle when
you jumped out.

Angela smiles wryly.

JIMMY

Really? That's my other travel mug.

Angela's eyes open widely as Jimmy shines his flashlight on
the travel mug.

Jimmy bends to pick up his phone out of the snow.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

(laughs)

But I may have to put my phone in a
bag of rice.

Angela glares at Jimmy without speaking.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I know what you're thinking. You can always claim you were heading to the police station to turn the gold into "Lost and Found" so the only thing I'd get you for was stealing my travel mug and my phone, which you pinged to find me here. Clever girl with all that cybersecurity knowledge!

Jimmy points his flashlight into the van for a second.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

My other travel mug is heading to a lab in Reno along with the small box of sugar you had me put in your bear-proof garbage can.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Jimmy, holding the sugar box, pulls open the lid to the bear-proof garbage can, but slides the box inside his coat and under his arm instead.

END FLASHBACK

Angela glares at Jimmy.

JIMMY

Who knows what they'll find?

Angela remains stoic.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Did you know that some poisons, like deadly nightshade, can't be detected in a human body after 24 hours? They might not have found me for two days after this next record-breaking storm!

Jimmy takes a step toward Angela but she takes a step back close to the snowmobile.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

This is about where they found your parents five years ago. Frozen to death. Didn't find them for two days after that last huge storm.

Angela glares at Jimmy and takes another step closer to the snowmobile.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Don't worry, Angela, they can't prove anything now. But I figure your parents had something you wanted: your house.

Angela grinds her teeth.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Maybe they wanted to move away, and you refused. Who knows?

(beat)

Do you want to know what I think happened to Glen Chapman? Though we'll never know for sure because there were no witnesses and he could have slipped, but I doubt it!

Angela remains stoic as Jimmy continues.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Glen didn't work for the local utility company. He was just a gold hunter like the rest of your renters. Any moron could have figured that out. But how did he end up looking for the gold on this particular weekend?

(beat)

That puzzled me. Maybe somebody called him. Shane McKinney? Maybe you saw them talking at one point like old buddies?

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

The snow falls heavily, and Glen Chapman is searching the property with his gold finder in the backyard.

Angela's apartment behind the house looks quiet. We see a horseshoe for luck nailed atop her doorway. From Angela's POV, we see her spying on Glen.

She then sees Shane sneak out of the downstairs bathroom window of the main house to whisper to Glen, then sneak back in through the bathroom window.

END FLASHBACK

JIMMY

All I know is Glen and Shane stood
in the way of you finding the gold.
We're checking both their phone
call records now.

Angela smiles and shrugs.

ANGELA

Proves nothing except, Glen and
Shane were conspiring to steal the
gold.

JIMMY

(shrugs)

Shane brought up two shovels and
Glen had the gold detector. I know.
It doesn't prove anything.

(beat)

Oh, but when my backup met me here
and took my travel mug and the
sugar box away, they also drew
blood from Shane and Glen.

Angela glances back at the purring snowmobile.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

It was odd when we found that
horseshoe above the spot we dug and
found the gold.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - NIGHT

We see Jimmy with his same MOVO flashlight examining the
footprints in the snow and seeing the horseshoe.

END FLASHBACK

Jimmy shrugs and takes another step toward Angela, as he
points to the snowmobile.

JIMMY

A lot of circumstantial evidence,
so the only thing I can book you on
tonight is grand theft for the
gold, but it was all captured on
video with my new MOVO flashlight
and video recorder. I had you use
my smartphone for the Chapman
autopsy so you wouldn't know about
this technological wonder.

Jimmy looks down at his flashlight proudly.

When he looks up, he sees Angela stepping toward him with a can of pepper spray.

She sprays it empty as Jimmy drops the flashlight and covers his eyes.

Angela picks up the flashlight, conks Jimmy on the head, steals the flashlight, throws on her helmet, and takes off on the snowmobile.

We HEAR another snowmobile start up down the road and race up toward Jimmy who moans, rolls in the snow, and rubs his face with snow.

The SHERIFF (50s; female) rides up in a uniform winter coat and snowsuit and helmet, and hops off her snowmobile. She's angry.

SHERIFF

No problem, you said! You were supposed to step out before she took the gold. I hope you got that video!

She helps Jimmy up, who can see her, but she's very blurry to him.

JIMMY

No. My bad! I thought she'd turn herself in. I got this, Sheriff. Can borrow your sled. I know the area, went to high school here.

SHERIFF

Sure she didn't get your eyes?

Jimmy tries to see down the road and it's blurry and he holds his sore head.

JIMMY

She must have missed me. Can I borrow your helmet?

The Sheriff reluctantly loans Jimmy the snowmobile, and he takes off. The Sheriff yells.

SHERIFF

I'll follow you in the van.

The Sheriff starts the van, but the wheels spin in the snow. She's furious and gets on the radio.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)
Dispatch, put an APB out for a 23-
year-old female traveling eastbound
on Lake Forest Boulevard.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Copy that! Jesus, Jimmy!

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Angela's snowmobile races down the road. Her sled is burdened slightly by the weight of the gold.

Jimmy is in hot pursuit but drives with blurred vision.

Angela turns to see a snowmobile behind her in the distance.

Angela skids and turns off the road onto a narrow forested trail.

Jimmy follows, still blurry from the pepper spray, but the race is on.

Angela and Jimmy are swiped by tree branches as they ride.

Finally, a tree branch that Jimmy didn't see coming, knocks him off his sled.

Angela looks back and laughs.

EXT. ROAD PULLOUT - SAME

The Sheriff, in the van, skids in the snow. She's angry.

SHERIFF
This is why I went to high school
and university in Phoenix!

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - LATER

Angela skids and stops by Glen's rental car.

She transfers the gold to the trunk of Glen's rental car, slams the trunk, and hops into the driver's seat, which is set too far back and too low. She adjusts too quickly so she's too close to the steering wheel, but she HEARS a snowmobile approaching and guns the motor to back up into the snowy street.

She skids sideways and corrects awkwardly, but takes off forward, and slides from side to side on the street with the front-wheel-drive sedan.

She HEARS a snowmobile behind her and drives slowly ahead, sliding and spinning but gaining speed.

Jimmy pulls closer and sees the blurry car ahead of him gaining speed and making a left turn up the street.

He takes a diagonal across through the forest in hopes of cutting Angela off.

Jimmy gains speed to see a snowbank ahead of him created by a snowplow, so he speeds up to jump the snowbank as Angela approaches from the right, gaining speed.

They are on a collision course if Jimmy can jump the snowbank.

Jimmy speeds up, jumps the snowbank, and is launched high into the air.

He is thrown off the sled onto the snowy road as the sled careens into the front side of Glen's rental car plunging it into the snowbank on the far side of the road.

Angela's airbag deploys with brute force crushing her chest in the car, she can't breathe well and there are lacerations on her face and head.

Jimmy struggles to get up, and trudges over to the car.

Angela is helpless and moans in great pain as Jimmy slowly opens her door.

He's sees Angela is struggling to breath, so he takes off his glove and checks for a pulse on her neck.

JIMMY

Good news is, I found a pulse. Bad news is, it's dropping fast. I learned a lot at Coroner school.

(smiles wryly)

License and registration, please.

Angela moans louder.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I know what you're thinking. It's not too late. We can drive to Mexico with the gold and live happily ever after.

(laughs)

(MORE)

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Or 'til the next time I ordered
coffee.

Angela glares at Jimmy, then coughs, struggling even more to breathe.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
I knew something was up after your
snooty comment sounding like Shane
and I were the only ones stupid
enough to put refined white sugar
in our coffee. It's well known that
serial killers often use the same
M.O., or modus operandi, until
they're caught.

Jimmy leans in and pops the trunk.

Angela can't turn around and is fading quickly as she hears something being thrown into the forest.

Jimmy returns to face Angela one last time before she rests her head on the airbag and expires.

Jimmy hears a siren approaching in the distance.

He struggles to get to the far side of the snowmobile, and lays down.

The Sheriff approaches slowly down the road with RED LIGHTS and SIREN blaring.

She skids to a stop and exits the van with her MOVO flashlight and video recorder on.

She rushes to Jimmy.

SHERIFF
Jimmy? Are you okay?

Jimmy moans and groans but struggles to his feet with her help.

JIMMY
Oh my, God. What happened?

SHERIFF
Must have crashed into her,
preventing her escape. Brilliant!

The Sheriff and Jimmy follow the flashlight beam to the car to see Angela is dead. The Sheriff searches the car with the light.

JIMMY

Poor thing!

(beat)

My MOVO flashlight! The evidence?
Where is it?

SHERIFF

Forget that, Jimmy! Where's the
gold?

Jimmy struggles to reach in to pop the trunk.

JIMMY

(sounding unsure)

Maybe the trunk?

They both go to the trunk, where we SEE Jimmy's flashlight,
travel mug, smartphone, and one bar of gold.

SHERIFF

You captured a killer and found the
gold, Jimmy! You're a hero!

JIMMY

All in a day's work, Sheriff.

SHERIFF

What do you think that one bar is
worth?

JIMMY

Three-quarters of a million
dollars, I hear.

The Sheriff grabs the bar of gold, and Jimmy takes his travel
mug, smartphone, and flashlight as they slowly walk past
Angela to the van.

SHERIFF

I'll get it to lost and found, but
you might be in for a ten percent
reward if no one claims it.

Jimmy smiles.

JIMMY

I look for gold in a true friend's
heart, Sheriff. But I would like to
be able to afford a house in Lake
Tahoe someday.

The Sheriff smiles.

SHERIFF
Copy that!

FADE OUT.

THE END