

GOODBETTER
EPISODE 1

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Small, low-rent office suite with thrift-store furniture. Cheap sofa. Nobody sits at the clunky old reception desk.

The door jingles and BRADLEY HESS, a confident executive in a sharp suit, steps inside like he owns the place. He takes off his sunglasses and looks around with amused disapproval, wondering what he's gotten himself into.

The deep, gruff voice of private detective MIKE SAWYER yells from his personal office in the next room.

MIKE

My assistant's late, but park your ass down and I'll get to you in a minute.

Bradley smirks, not accustomed to being talked to like that. He doesn't sit, but idly inspects the photos on the wall of Mike Sawyer posing with various celebrities.

He sidesteps along the wall and looks at two framed certificates on the wall: California private investigator licenses for "Michael Percival Sawyer" and "Genevieve Elizabeth Calhoun."

He glances around and notices the sign on the wall reading "GoodBetter," with "Investigation Services" underneath it. He cocks his head.

BRADLEY

(to the next room)

What's the story with the name?
"GoodBetter"? Why not "Best"?

Mike emerges from his private office. He's a tough character, middle-aged but in great shape.

MIKE

Mark Twain said, "Supposing is good, but finding out is better."
That's where the name's from. We find things out.

BRADLEY

Who's Mark Twain?

MIKE

(extending his hand)

No idea. I'm Mike Sawyer. I call the shots around here.

BRADLEY
 (shaking hands briefly)
 Bradley Hess. Can I get a water?

MIKE
 We don't do water bottles here.
 There's a tap in the bathroom sink
 if you need it. Step into my
 office. Let's talk.

Bradley is taken aback but amused in a condescending sort of way. He's skeptical but playing along for now.

They step into Mike's private office, a dimly lit room with a cheap desk covered in scattered file folders and a fast food bag from yesterday. Mike eats a leftover fry from the bottom of the bag and throws the crumpled remainder in the wastebasket.

Bradley sits on a squeaky guest chair facing the desk.

MIKE
 So, Mr. Hess--

The front door jingles again, and a moment later JENNY CALHOUN--a young woman in her late 20s in a bridesmaid's dress with her hair up and makeup impeccable--bursts into Mike's office. An incongruous leather satchel hangs from her shoulder.

JENNY
 Mr. Sawyer, I'm so sorry. The
 audition went over and I got stuck
 in traffic and--

Bradley raises an eyebrow. Mike gives a deadpan look.

MIKE
 Mr. Hess, this is my assistant
 investigator, Jenny Calhoun. She
 wants to be an actress. Can't say I
 blame her. I wouldn't want to work
 for me either.
 (turns to Jenny)
 Who were you pretending to be
 today?

Jenny sighs, annoyed at Mike's tone.

JENNY
 Bridesmaid #3. I thought renting a
 dress might help my chances.

BRADLEY
 Calhoun? I saw a license out there
 with that name on it.

MIKE

Yeah, I got her licensed so she can handle more of the fieldwork for me. She did some investigations for an insurance company before I brought her on. Comes in handy.

(to Jenny)

Might ruin our first impression here, but sit down and try not to be too distracting, would ya?

JENNY

Yes, sir.

She sits down in a chair in the corner and fumbles with her bag, pulling out a well-worn notebook and a pen.

Mike leans forward, unflappable, uncaring, taking back control of the moment.

MIKE

So, Mr. Hess, what brings you to us today?

Bradley inhales, momentarily debating whether to spill his guts at this clown show, but decides what the hell.

BRADLEY

Do you want the short version or the long version?

MIKE

Short version's fine while we dance our little courtship dance here. We can grill you for details later. Right now we're just finding out if we can do business together.

Bradley smiles, appreciating the straightforwardness.

BRADLEY

Okay, the short version is that I'm getting divorced soon--

MIKE

Congratulations.

BRADLEY

--and I want to minimize my financial exposure. I suspect my wife is cheating on me, and according to the terms of our prenup, that would disqualify her from receiving much in the divorce.

(MORE)

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

If that's actually happening, I'd like to have solid evidence I can take to court.

MIKE

Anything else I should know going in? Financial stuff, business issues, anything she could use against you?

BRADLEY

(beat)

No. It's a clean situation. Just the infidelity angle.

Mike nods sagely, and opens his desk drawer to pull out a folder.

MIKE

Easy. Bread and butter case. It'll cost you \$2,500 and probably take about four weeks to gather solid evidence, maybe a little longer if she's a clever one.

He turns the folder around so the contract faces Bradley. He removes the lid from a cheap pen and lays it alongside it.

MIKE

All we need you to do is sign here to let us get started.

Bradley leans back.

BRADLEY

Well, you're the first agency I've talked to. I haven't made a decision yet.

MIKE

Oh. Sorry. You seemed like the kind of guy who knows what he wants and gets it right the first time.

BRADLEY

Flattering. But, you know, due diligence....

Mike sighs, deciding how he wants to play this. He looks around the office.

MIKE

You're not used to a place like this, are you? Cheap office.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

Secondhand furniture. Some sketchy guy with a fake bridesmaid taking notes in the corner. You're probably looking for some agency with fancy cars in the parking lot and a Ken doll in a pressed white shirt kissing your ass. But that's not us. Detective work ain't about kissing ass, Mr. Hess. It's about wallowing in the mud, doing crap work nobody else wants to do, and coming away with a beautiful little bundle of admissible evidence. That's what we do here.

BRADLEY

I can see that.

MIKE

You wanna know why I'm not a cop anymore?

BRADLEY

Why's that?

MIKE

Because sometimes good cops get cut for doing what needs done. Department needed a scapegoat. I took one for the team. Now, you want some retired desk jockey playing detective, there's plenty of those guys out there. But if you want the real thing, that's me. You sign here and give me a check, this situation's handled. Mrs. Hess is out there playing Twister with the pool boy, I'll give you an evidence file that'll make her divorce attorney weep. Real tears. But I need to know if we're actually doing this, or if you need a few weeks reading Yelp reviews to find the agency with the best bottled water.

Bradley likes this guy but doesn't want to make it too easy on him, so he makes a show of being contemplative.

BRADLEY

Alright, you make a compelling case....

Mike doesn't respond, just raises his eyebrows.

Bradley considers for a few more moments, then takes a proper pen out of his suit jacket because he's not about to use the fifty-cent piece of crap Mike gave him. He scribbles his signature on the contract.

BRADLEY

Okay, why not? It's only twenty-five hundred. I'll have my assistant wire you the down payment.

MIKE

Good.

BRADLEY

What do you need to get started?

MIKE

Details about your wife. Her schedule, who she interacts with, any specific people you think she might be having an affair with, recent credit card transactions, that sort of thing.

BRADLEY

Alright. I'll email you all that later today.

(quietly, leaning in)

Does the bridesmaid come with the deal?

MIKE

Eh, you wouldn't want her. Ice cold, that one. Trust me.

Mike laughs and they shake hands.

BRADLEY

Alright, I'm trusting you here. Don't let me down.

MIKE

We don't disappoint, Mr. Hess. Jenny, walk the gentleman to the door, would you?

Jenny tucks her notebook back in her satchel and hops to her feet gracefully, despite the long dress.

JENNY

Yes, sir!

She hurries over to Bradley and escorts him to the front door.

JENNY

Thanks for coming, Mr. Hess. We look forward to working on your case.

He gives a sly smile.

BRADLEY

Yes, I look forward to seeing more of you.

Jenny returns a polite smile, ignoring the comment.

The bell on the door jingles as Bradley leaves.

A moment passes.

MIKE

(from the other room)

Is he gone?

She peers through the window blinds for a moment, then returns to Mike's office.

JENNY

He's gone!

Mike jumps up and rounds the desk toward Jenny, arms flapping. The tough-guy persona has completely vanished. He's now an enthusiastic teddy bear with a higher-pitched voice.

MIKE

Oh, my god!

Jenny matches his excitement, bouncing in place with a goofy grin, clapping her hands together.

JENNY

First client! We did it!

Mike picks her up, spinning and shaking her around as she laughs.

MIKE

We're getting paid! We're actual detectives!

JENNY

GoodBetter is officially in business!

MIKE

(suddenly worried)

How did I do? Was that okay?

JENNY

You were amazing. Your character
backstory leaked out a bit...

Mike winces.

JENNY

...but you were amazing, Mike.
Seriously.

MIKE

I just got lost in the flow, you
know? It's not quite as compelling
to say I quit my highway patrol
career to become an actor and then
took this job when I couldn't make
rent.

JENNY

I'm totally gonna tell Miss
Mendoza. She's going to want you to
do that scene for the whole class.

MIKE

Really? You think?

JENNY

Hundred percent. I'm so glad I
hired you. You're way more
convincing than I was. You should
have seen how my first client
meetings went.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

2 INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

2

Jenny and a prospective client sit at a small table in a coffee
shop.

CLIENT

(incredulous)

You're a detective?

JENNY

Yep, that's right! Just got my
license.

CLIENT

Are you, you know...qualified to be
a detective?

JENNY

Definitely!

(MORE)

JENNY (CONT'D)

I spent three years working as a claims investigator for my uncle's insurance company back in Omaha, and I was really good at it.

CLIENT

Is, uh...is anyone else from your firm joining us today?

JENNY

(confused)

No. No, it's just me.

CLIENT

Ah.

The client frowns, sighs, then gets up and walks out.

MONTAGE:

- Another client stares at Jenny in confusion for an uncomfortable beat, then leaves.

- Another client starts explaining his problem, trails off mid-sentence as he really looks at her, then leaves.

- Another client sits down, opens his mouth to say something, then just stands back up and walks out without a word.

Jenny sits alone at the table, two untouched coffees in front of her. She thinks for a moment, then pulls out her phone and texts: "Hey, think you can play a detective?"

END FLASHBACK

3 INT. GOODBETTER OFFICE - DAY (CONTINUED)

3

Back to Jenny and Mike at the office.

MIKE

Eh, you would have figured it out on your own eventually.

Jenny gestures to herself and her bridesmaid dress.

JENNY

I'm not really the private detective experience people are looking for.

Mike puts his hands up.

MIKE

Listen, I'm not about to argue myself out of a paying job. I'll do whatever you want.

Jenny picks up Bradley's file from the desk and flips it open.

JENNY

Now that we can actually afford coffee, why don't you go grab us some to celebrate. I'll stay here and figure out how we catch a cheating wife.

4 EXT./INT. JENNY'S CAR IN FRONT OF HESS HOUSE - DAY 4

Jenny and Mike sit in the front seat of a compact car parked on the side of the street in a fancy residential neighborhood. They're both visibly upset. Mike holds a bunch of papers in his hand.

JENNY

I don't know what you're talking about!

MIKE

I have the email right here. I saw it on your laptop.

JENNY

I swear I didn't do anything! Whatever you think you're seeing, you're wrong about me.

Mike crosses his arms.

MIKE

I literally can't trust anything you say anymore.

JENNY

Can't you see this is Vanessa's doing? She's trying to destroy my reputation before the championship.

MIKE

Would you like me to read your own words to you, so you can remember what you said about her?

JENNY

Whatever it is, I swear on my life I would never--

MIKE

(quoting from the papers)
 "Bethany's ass looks like a bag of potatoes. She's barely qualified to be the cheer squad's water girl."

JENNY

Bethany, I never said that!

MIKE

I can't believe I ever trusted you.

Jenny freezes, then frowns.

JENNY

Crap, I lost it. What's the line?

Mike looks at the papers.

MIKE

Uhhh..."I would never betray your trust. We swore to be sisters forever."

JENNY

Gah! Okay, let's try again from--

Mike nods toward something off screen.

MIKE

Hold that thought. Target acquired.

A few houses away, LARISSA HESS, a well-dressed woman in an expensive car, backs out of the garage of an expensive house.

JENNY

Finally! According to Bradley's email, she's got lunch at some place called Dibley's. Let's do this.

She starts the car and they pull out.

5 **EXT./INT. JENNY'S CAR IN FRONT OF DIBLEY'S BISTRO - DAY** 5

Jenny and Mike pull up to a parking spot near a restaurant with outdoor seating and watch as Larissa Hess walks up to a HANDSOME MAN already seated at a table for two. He gets up and gives her a hug. It's obvious they're well-acquainted.

MIKE

You think they're doing it?

JENNY

Eh, hard to tell. He didn't kiss her.

MIKE

If they're having an affair, he might not want to broadcast it. Just in case a pair of really attractive PIs happen to be watching.

JENNY

Maybe. There's a table next to them. Should we go in?

MIKE

Can we even afford that place?

JENNY

Business expense. It'll be a tax write-off.

MIKE

That doesn't make it free.

JENNY

It's our first case. We've gotta do something.

MIKE

Yeah, you're probably right.

JENNY

Okay, so how should we play this?

6 INT. RESTAURANT LOBBY - DAY

6

Mike and Jenny stand with the HOSTESS at the entrance to the outdoor seating area.

MIKE

(as a proud father)
...so I told her, if she graduates with a 4.0, I'd take her out to lunch anywhere she wants to go, and this is where she picked.

HOSTESS

Well, your daughter has excellent taste!

JENNY

You guys have chicken nuggets here, right?

HOSTESS
(grabbing menus)
I'm sure we can find something on
the menu you'll love.

She escorts them back and seats them at a table near Larissa and Sebastian. They get settled in.

HOSTESS
Your server will be right with you.
Enjoy!

Mike and Jenny smile their thanks. Jenny picks up a menu, then goes wide-eyed.

JENNY
Wow, this was a mistake.

Mike looks at the menu to see what she's talking about.

MIKE
Sweet baby Jesus. The side salad is
fourteen dollars?

JENNY
Yeah, change of plans. We'll split
an appetizer and get Taco Bell
later.

MIKE
Good, because I don't even know
what half this stuff is.

JENNY
Is eating bison even legal? Aren't
they endangered or something?

Mike pulls out his phone.

MIKE
Alright, time for the proud father
to take some pictures of his
favorite daughter.

Jenny adjusts her posture and smiles perkily for the camera, knowing that Mike's actually zooming in and taking a photo of Larissa and Sebastian, who are sitting behind her.

Sebastian glances over just as he takes the shot.

Mike looks at the photo and raises his eyebrows when he sees it. He slides her phone over to Jenny, who picks it up and glances at it, also reacting with surprise.

INSERT: Photo on phone of Sebastian glancing suspiciously.

JENNY

Ew, I don't love how I look here.
You'll have to take it again.

She hands the phone back as the SERVER arrives at the table.

SERVER

Hi, welcome to Dibley's. Do you
have any questions about the menu?

MIKE

Nope, no questions. We'll take two
glasses of water and your cheapest
appetizer, please.

SERVER

You got it! A bread basket and two
waters. I'll get that in for you
right now.

The server marches away briskly.

MIKE

(quietly)

Can you hear them?

Jenny leans back in her seat and tries to make out what Larissa
and Sebastian are saying, but they're speaking quietly.
Intimately. She leans forward and shakes her head.

Mike points to her phone.

MIKE

Record?

JENNY

(also quietly)

I don't know if we legally can.

MIKE

We're in public.

JENNY

But they're talking quietly. If a
judge decides that's reasonably
confidential, then it's
eavesdropping. That could be a
felony charge for us.

MIKE

There's an exception if we're
gathering evidence of a crime.

JENNY

Getting railed isn't a crime.

(MORE)

JENNY (CONT'D)
It only matters because of their
prenup.

The server comes back with a bread basket featuring a comically small mini-loaf and some butter, and two small glasses of water.

SERVER
Is there anything else I can do for
you right now?

MIKE
(as Jenny's dad)
You want anything else, sweetie?

JENNY
(to the server)
No, thanks, I'm on a diet. Just the
carbs for now.

SERVER
Great, I'll come check on you
later. Enjoy!

Jenny grabs the mini-loaf and poses goofily with it. Mike grabs his phone and takes some more pictures of her--and of Larissa and Sebastian behind her.

7 EXT./INT. JENNY'S CAR IN FRONT OF DIBLEY'S BISTRO - DAY 7

Jenny and Mike pile back into her car.

MIKE
Okay, do we follow the wife or her
mystery man?

JENNY
Mystery man. We need to figure out
who he is.

Her phone sounds a new message alert. She looks at the screen and grimaces.

MIKE
What? What's the face?

JENNY
Ehhh, dating app.

MIKE
Rejected?

JENNY

No, he wants to go out tonight.

MIKE

Usually that's a good thing.

Jenny looks out off camera toward Sebastian, checking on him.

INSERT: Sebastian standing next to his car, talking on the phone.

JENNY

I don't know, I'm just nervous. I'm fine being anyone else, but the second I have to be me, I freeze up.

Mike frowns.

MIKE

You're literally an actor. I've seen you improvise. You're amazing.

JENNY

Yeah, but...I don't know. It's just different.

MIKE

Well, you matched with the guy, so just tell him you'll go. You'll figure it out. Don't worry about it.

Jenny nods in Sebastian's direction.

JENNY

Here we go.

INSERT: Sebastian getting into his car and pulling out.

Jenny hands her phone to Mike.

JENNY

Here, write him back for me.

Mike types a reply and hands the phone back. She pockets it, starts the car, and they drive after Sebastian, following his car at a distance.

8 **EXT./INT. JENNY'S CAR AT SEBASTIAN'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON**

8

Jenny's car comes to a stop along a street in a residential neighborhood, and she kills the lights.

MIKE

(looking out the window)
 Oh my god, he's actually going home. I was starting to think he was just going to run errands all night long. Is this really what detectives do, just follow people around through their daily routines?

INSERT: Sebastian's car pulling into the garage of a modest house.

JENNY

Yeah, that's a lot of it. Will you search the house on the County Assessor's website?
 (squinting at the house)
 One nine four five Mirren Lane.

MIKE

(pulling out phone)
 On it.

Jenny reaches into the backseat and pulls her notebook out of her satchel, and opens it up to start taking notes.

JENNY

Okay, let's recap what we've learned today and see if we can profile this guy.

MIKE

(on his phone)
 He's boring as hell, for one thing.

FLASHBACK: Jenny and Mike at a department store casually browsing men's underwear while watching Sebastian select chinos from a rack in the distance.

JENNY

After lunch, he went to a department store and bought chinos that look exactly like the ones he was already wearing, so he's probably methodical. Orderly. Creature of habit. Likes to keep life simple.

MIKE

(on his phone)
 Right, right.

FLASHBACK: Jenny and Mike waiting in the car near a dental office. Jenny's bopping to some music. Mike checks his watch.

JENNY

Then he had a dentist appointment. He was in there for about thirty minutes, so it was probably a routine cleaning and they didn't have much work to do.

MIKE

Imagine actually going to the dentist when you're supposed to.

FLASHBACK: Jenny stuck at a red light, craning her neck to watch Sebastian's car disappear around a corner in the distance. Mike throws his hands up.

JENNY

We lost him for a bit after that.

MIKE

The good news is we're so bad at following him that he probably won't even spot us.

JENNY

That is not good news.

FLASHBACK: Mike on the treadmill at the gym getting sweaty while keeping an eye on Sebastian working his legs on a weight machine in the distance.

JENNY

But we picked him back up at the gym.

MIKE

(still on his phone)
He actually did leg day.

JENNY

You still stink, by the way.

MIKE

I know, I know.

JENNY

So, generally speaking, we've learned...

MIKE

...that this guy is a cyborg sent from the future to bore us to death.

Jenny nods.

JENNY
Very possibly.

Mike's face lights up.

MIKE
Got it! The house at nineteen
fourty five Mirren Lane is owned by
one Sebastian Prince.

Jenny frowns and pulls out her own phone.

JENNY
I swear I know that name. How do I
know that name?

She searches for a moment, then her mouth falls open.

JENNY
Oh, no....

MIKE
What? What is it?

JENNY
(reading from her phone)
"Sebastian Prince is the founder
and CEO of Prince Investigations."

MIKE
(frowning)
So...wait. He's what, her PI?

JENNY
She's investigating her husband.

MIKE
Where's the trust?

Jenny gives him a look, then stares out the windshield,
processing what this means.

JENNY
This changes everything.

9 INT. PIZZA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

9

Jenny sits in a cozy booth across from KYLE, the guy she
matched in the dating app. There's a pizza and drinks on the
table, and slices on their plates. Their postures hint that
it's a little awkward still.

JENNY
So, uh...what do you do for work?

KYLE
(swallowing a bite)
Electrician.

Jenny nods, trying to come up with a follow-up question on a subject she knows nothing about.

JENNY
So like...do you work on houses and stuff?

KYLE
Mostly new commercial construction. Power outlets, lighting. Working on a strip mall right now. Lots of outlets. Lots of lighting.

JENNY
(nodding)
Cool, cool.

She takes a bite. She knows she's bombing.

KYLE
Um...so, your profile said you're really into biking? I've been doing competitive mountain bike racing for the last few years. Getting pretty good at it. I've got a cross country race in Temecula next weekend.

Jenny frowns.

JENNY
That...sounds awesome.

KYLE
What kind of riding do you do?

Jenny takes a drink from her cup, stalling. She swallows slowly.

JENNY
Actually, I think it was...I think I had "hiking" in my profile.

Kyle pauses, then nods.

KYLE
Ohhh. Oh, okay.

JENNY
Yeah, I like to hike. Mountains. And stuff.

KYLE

No, uh...no biking, then.

She freezes for a moment, then sighs almost imperceptibly. She tucks her hair behind her ear, and just like that, she's someone else. Her posture softens, her expression relaxes, and the frown is smoothly replaced with an eager smile.

JENNY

Well, not yet, anyway. I've actually always wanted to get into mountain biking.

KYLE

(perking up)

Really?

JENNY

Yeah, totally. I was thinking of getting a bike eventually. Maybe you can help me figure out what kind I should get?

KYLE

Yeah, totally. I'd love to do that. What kind of biking were you thinking?

JENNY

Oh, I don't know. Nothing too crazy to start with, just want to get out there and ride, you know?

KYLE

Totally.

JENNY

Totally.

KYLE

Awesome.

Jenny smiles, but it flickers for just a second before she holds it.

JENNY

Awesome.

10 INT. GOODBETTER OFFICE - DAY (MORNING)

10

It's dark inside. Keys jangle at the door. The lock turns and Jenny enters, along with the morning sunlight. Her leather satchel hanging from her shoulder.

She flips the light switch on and there's a loud groan from the sofa. She yelps and jumps backwards, dropping her satchel.

Mike is curled up on the sofa with a jacket over him, using a roll of paper towels as a pillow. His bare legs kick around in annoyance. He rolls over, grimacing, eyes closed.

MIKE

Turn it offfffff...!

JENNY

Mike, what the hell are you doing!?

MIKE

I was sleeping. It was a better time. I miss it already.

She looks up at dozens of post-it notes stuck to the wall with random notes about Sebastian Prince and Larissa Hess.

JENNY

Were you here all night?

He hauls himself to a sitting position, his face still twisted in tired annoyance.

MIKE

My roommate's girlfriend is in town so I came here to crash, but then I couldn't sleep because I kept wondering what the deal was with Sebastian Prince, so I spent most of the night applying my considerable brainpower to that problem.

JENNY

Huh. Did you figure anything out?

Long pause.

MIKE

No.

JENNY

Mike, are you not wearing pants?

MIKE

I can't sleep with my pants on.

JENNY

Well, I can't live in a world where your pants are off, so, you know, take care of that, please.

MIKE
Yeah, fine, fine.

Pause. Jenny watches for him to move, but he doesn't.

JENNY
Our one and only client, Mr.
Bradley Hess, is going to be here
in about six minutes. Maybe you
want to...get ready or something?

Mike scratches his face, then slowly stands and stumbles toward the private office, covering himself with the long jacket he'd been using as a blanket.

MIKE
(grumbling)
I'm always ready.

Jenny peeks through the blinds, looking for Bradley.

JENNY
Do we tell him about Sebastian
Prince? It feels like we should,
but something about this whole
thing doesn't sit right with me.

MIKE
(from the other room)
We picked our team when we cashed
his check.

Jenny sighs.

JENNY
Yeah, you're right.

The front door opens with a jangling chime and a statuesque, professionally-dressed young woman (REBECCA KIRBY) enters and smiles at Jenny. She holds out a folder.

REBECCA
You must be Jenny. Mr. Hess asked
me to bring over the additional
documentation you asked for.

Jenny takes the folder and flips through it.

JENNY
Oh. Thanks. We were expecting to
meet with Mr. Hess directly.

REBECCA
Mr. Hess doesn't do follow-ups.
That's what I'm for.

Mike emerges from the private office, now somehow fully dressed and looking sharp. He's deep in his tough-guy detective persona. He reaches out to shake Rebecca's hand.

MIKE

I'm Mike Sawyer. Thanks for delivering this information to us. I'm sorry, I didn't catch your name.

REBECCA

(shaking hands)

Rebecca Kirby. I'm Mr. Hess's executive assistant.

Their handshake lingers just a moment too long.

MIKE

Pleasure, Rebecca. We were expecting Mr. Hess himself to come, but maybe it's fate that you came instead. How much are you aware of the case we're working on?

REBECCA

I manage his calendar, his finances, his correspondence, and most of his personal life. So yes, I'm up to speed.

MIKE

That's good. I'll bet you have some perspective that could be vital to this investigation. May I ask you a few questions about Bradley's wife?

Rebecca hesitates but then nods. She has a few things to say about the wife...and maybe feels drawn to Mike's macho persona.

REBECCA

(staring into his eyes)

Yeah, okay. I can spare a few minutes.

MIKE

(staring back)

Thank you, Rebecca.

He motions to Jenny.

MIKE

Jenny, come in and take notes, would ya?

JENNY
 (grabbing her notebook)
 You got it, boss.

11 INT. GOODBETTER OFFICE - LATE MORNING

11

Rebecca shakes hands and says goodbye to Jenny and Mike--lingering a little bit with Mike--then leaves the office and walks toward her car, a fancy thing that's not the kind of car an executive assistant should be driving.

MIKE
 (back to normal)
 Oh, my god, did you feel her skin?
 It felt like a baby's whisper on a
 summer breeze. I need you to ask
 what kind of lotion she uses.

JENNY
 They're definitely doing it, right?

MIKE
 Oh, yeah. She wouldn't be driving
 that car if they weren't doing it.
 And she sure didn't have anything
 nice to say about Mrs. Hess.

JENNY
 So...he's trying to cut his wife
 out so he can be with his hot
 assistant. And the wife's onto him,
 so she's hired an investigator to
 prove it. And we're about to mess
 all that up by telling him about
 it. I really don't love our place
 in this.

Mike nods.

MIKE
 We can't solve everyone's
 relationship problems. He hired us
 to find out if she's cheating. I
 say we just put our heads down and
 do the job. If she's not, great.
 He's got nothing, and she'll get
 her cut in the divorce.

JENNY
 Yeah, maybe.

Jenny walks over to the post-it wall and stares at it for a moment.

MIKE

Hey, how'd the date go last night?

Jenny shakes her head and shrugs.

JENNY

Fine, I guess. He liked me. Or at least who I pretended to be. We're going mountain bike riding this weekend.

MIKE

Jenny, you gotta just be yourself.

JENNY

You know, everyone says that, but it hasn't actually been great advice in my experience.

MIKE

Are you looking forward to mountain biking this weekend?

JENNY

(beat)

No.

MIKE

You pretend to be someone else, you wind up with someone else's life. It's just not worth it. Trust me, of all people, I would know.

JENNY

Says the guy who pretends to be a detective every morning.

Mike opens his mouth, then closes it.

JENNY

I don't know. I can put myself in other people's shoes, but my own never seem to fit right.

Mike glances at his watch.

MIKE

Don't you have a shoot this morning?

JENNY

(checking her phone)

Oh, sh...

12 EXT./INT. SHORT FILM SET GARAGE - MIDDAY

12

Jenny walks up to a thoroughly amateurish green screen video setup in a garage. She looks around, concerned.

The sketchy-looking DIRECTOR is the only other person there. He turns when he notices her.

DIRECTOR

Hi. You made it.

JENNY

Yeah, sorry, got stuck at work.

DIRECTOR

What's your name again?

JENNY

Jenny Calhoun.

DIRECTOR

(consulting his notes)

Okay, yeah. Captain Nikita Bellamy of the starship Oberon. In this scene, you say, uh, "I'm the captain of this ship, and I'll be damned if I'm going to let some space zombies stop us from completing our mission." And then the zombie eats you.

JENNY

Okay, who's playing the zombie?

DIRECTOR

Todd here.

Jenny jumps and yelps when she realizes there's a ZOMBIE looming behind her.

ZOMBIE

Hi.

JENNY

(calming herself)

Okay, okay, yeah, and you said you had wardrobe for me?

DIRECTOR

Yep, got it ready right here.

The director holds up a weird, too-skimpy sci-fi costume on a hanger. Jenny gives a deadpan look.

JENNY

Fine. Where do I change?

DIRECTOR

You can just do it here. It won't bother us.

JENNY

Or...?

DIRECTOR

Or, um, you can go in the house. Bathroom's on the right.

JENNY

Great.

13 INT. BATHROOM - MIDDAY

13

Jenny fumbles with the costume, grumbling to herself.

JENNY

Can't believe I'm doing this.

Her phone chimes. She checks it.

INSERT: Text message from Bradley Hess: "I'd like to take you out to dinner and get to know you more. Does tonight or tomorrow night work better?"

She frowns, then taps her phone to call Mike.

MIKE (PHONE)

Hey, you okay?

JENNY

Yeah, so far. It's not that. I just got a text from Bradley Hess. He says, "I'd like to take you out to dinner and get to know you more. Does tonight or tomorrow night work better?"

MIKE

You can't see me, but I'm rolling my eyes.

JENNY

What do I do with it?

MIKE

Just ignore him. Delete the text.

JENNY

He's probably going to corner me
and ask me in person next time.

MIKE

I'll make sure he doesn't. If he
asks, tell him you're on set. Let's
just finish this case up and be
done with this creep.

JENNY

Okay. Thanks, Mike.

She resumes fumbling with the costume.

14 EXT./INT. SHORT FILM SET GARAGE - MIDDAY

14

She comes back wearing the costume. The director nods
approvingly.

He motions for her to stand in front of the green screen, and
she does. He touches her shoulders, moving her into position.
She tries to stay professional but recoils involuntarily at his
touch.

He goes back to the camera and sits down, pushing buttons and
adjusting the lens.

DIRECTOR

We're rolling. Aaaand...action!

Jenny takes some time to drop into character. Her posture and
expression gradually shift, and she transforms into another
person entirely. Despite her ridiculous costume and situation,
she really is a pissed-off spaceship captain now.

She looks up at the imaginary zombies approaching her.

JENNY

(Oscar-worthily)

I'm the captain of this ship, and
I'll be damned if I'm going to let
some space zombies stop us from
completing our mission.

The zombie actor growls and jumps on her from the side,
knocking her down off-camera.

JENNY (O.S.)

(as herself)

Ow! Get the hell off me!

The director nods enthusiastically.

DIRECTOR

Oh, that was perfect. Let's do it again.

Jenny shoves the zombie off of her and makes a disgusted expression.

JENNY

I'd like to thank the Academy...

15 EXT. PARKING GARAGE - EARLY EVENING

15

Jenny's compact car emerges onto the top level of an empty parking garage and comes to a stop near the edge, overlooking a neighboring office building.

Jenny and Mike emerge from the car and approach the edge a little sneakily, not wanting to draw attention to themselves.

MIKE

What do you suppose she's doing in there?

Jenny pulls her phone out.

JENNY

I don't know. Let's see what's in that building.

MIKE

I will say, it's a lot more fun following Mrs. Hess around than her private investigator.

JENNY

You did seem to enjoy her lunch with her girlfriends.

MIKE

Rich people really are more beautiful, aren't they?

JENNY

(looking at her phone)
Okay, here we go. Looks like this building has...an insurance company, another insurance company, an aircraft rental company, a financial planner, a law firm...oh.

MIKE

What?

JENNY

Ohhhh.

MIKE

What??

JENNY

Prince Investigations is in this building.

MIKE

Aw, this is going to be really boring, isn't it?

JENNY

It's pretty late. Why would she be meeting with Sebastian Prince after hours?

MIKE

Can we see the office from here?

JENNY

(on her phone again)

It looks like it's on this side of the building, on the...

MIKE

Fourth floor.

JENNY

(still on her phone)

Fourth floor. How'd you know?

MIKE

(pointing)

Because Sebastian Prince is doing it with Larissa Hess in that office down there.

Jenny's eyes go wide and she looks around.

JENNY

Where!?

MIKE

You shouldn't be seeing stuff like that. I've been married. I'm allowed.

She scans the building a moment longer, then her eyes go even wider.

They both stare for a moment.

JENNY

Is that really what people look like when they're having sex?

MIKE

No, not really. He's definitely got his own style.

JENNY

That's weird.

MIKE

She seems to be enjoying it, I guess.

Jenny shakes her head.

JENNY

Aw, why'd you do it, Larissa? Now we have to tell him.

A large man, EZEKIEL WYATT, approaches from the shadows behind them.

EZEKIEL

You might want to reconsider that.

Mike and Jenny both jump, then Mike quickly moves between Jenny and Ezekiel.

MIKE

Hey, pal, what's up?

EZEKIEL

I'm not going to hurt you. I just wanted to advise you that I've taken several photos of you actively spying on my employer.

JENNY

Who's your employer?

EZEKIEL

I'm head of security for Prince Investigations.

JENNY

Yeah, well, we're just up here talking and looking around. That's not a crime.

EZEKIEL

I've overheard enough to know you're surveilling them, so don't bother pretending you're not.

(MORE)

EZEKIEL (CONT'D)

Monitoring my employer in his office violates his reasonable expectation of privacy.

MIKE

We're in a public place. We just happened to see it.

EZEKIEL

His blinds are closed, but you can see through them at this particular angle, which certainly makes it appear that you're trying to circumvent his privacy protections. Invasion of privacy is a misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail and a fine of \$2,000.

MIKE

Penal code six-four-seven-jay-one only applies if we're using binoculars or a camera or something. We were just standing here looking with our own two eyes. Er, four eyes.

EZEKIEL

I'm gonna call the police. We'll let the courts sort this one out. I should warn you, though. Our lawyer tends to be pretty aggressive.

JENNY

Hey, can we just talk about this for a minute?

Ezekiel pauses to consider.

EZEKIEL

Okay. You come back to our office, explain exactly what you're doing to Mr. Prince, and then we'll see.

JENNY

And then you call the cops anyway, this time with a confession?

EZEKIEL

Mr. Prince will decide what happens to you after that.

Mike and Jenny look at each other. Mike shrugs. Jenny sighs.

JENNY

Fine.

16 INT. PRINCE INVESTIGATIONS OFFICE - NIGHT

16

Mike and Jenny sit in the waiting area of the office. Ezekiel stands imposingly with his arms crossed, making sure they don't run for it.

MIKE

How are they still going?

EZEKIEL

Mr. Prince is a remarkable man in many ways.

A moment passes. Faint sounds of a consensual struggle come from a nearby room.

JENNY

It seems like it would get uncomfortable after a while.

More seconds pass. It's awkward.

Finally, through the wall, Sebastian Prince emits a strange sound, something like an "uhhyyyup!" to signal the completion of his heroic endeavor.

Mike and Jenny exchange glances.

A few moments later, Larissa Hess and Sebastian Prince emerge from the room, straightening their clothes and hair. Larissa starts when she sees Jenny and Mike sitting there. Sebastian, however, barely reacts.

SEBASTIAN

What's this?

EZEKIEL

These two were in the parking garage spying on you.

Larissa's jaw drops. She's afraid of what this means.

SEBASTIAN

Photos? Video?

EZEKIEL

No, sir.

Sebastian considers them for a moment.

SEBASTIAN

Ah, from the restaurant. Are you really father and daughter or was that an act?

MIKE

She's my boss.

SEBASTIAN

Shame. A family of detectives would have been a cute marketing gimmick. You are private investigators, I assume?

JENNY

If we were, you'd understand that the California Association of Licensed Investigators Code of Ethics states that we have to protect the privacy and confidentiality of our client, and it would be inappropriate for you to press us to divulge those details.

Sebastian scoffs.

SEBASTIAN

There's not much you could offer me that I can't figure out on my own, the way you two are bumbling around. I assume Bradley hired you to catch Larissa here violating the terms of her prenuptial agreement so he can give up even less when he files for divorce. Is that right?

Jenny and Mike say nothing.

SEBASTIAN

There's a lot you don't know about Bradley Hess, not the least of which is that he's repeatedly violated that preup himself.

JENNY

(shrugging)

What are we doing here?

Sebastian turns to Larissa, who's still a little stunned at the situation.

SEBASTIAN

Larissa, I can't share details about your case without your permission, of course, but I think it would be in your best interest here. Do you want to give them some context?

Larissa takes a deep breath to steady herself and considers.

LARISSA

You sure?

Sebastian nods.

LARISSA

Uh, okay. Yeah. So, uh...Bradley's been hiding money from me. Millions of dollars. Tens of millions. He tucks it away into little side companies that he controls but technically doesn't own. The house, the cars, all of it. They're not in our name. His companies own them. He's been planning to screw me over in the divorce. I hired Sebastian to help me gather evidence so I can at least get my fair share when he finally throws me out. Do you know about Rebecca? His assistant?

Jenny looks at Sebastian and gives him a "you know we can't admit that" shrug.

SEBASTIAN

They can't confirm or deny it, but they know about her. Go on.

LARISSA

I found out her salary is half a million dollars a year. For being an executive assistant. And half the business trips they've gone on are just vacations. They left this morning for a "conference" in Arizona. They're just staying at a resort and playing golf. We have photos of it all. That's the man you're working for. That's the man you're trying to help screw me over in this divorce.

MIKE

To be fair, the two of you were also...you know.

SEBASTIAN

(measured)

Yes, through his cheating and efforts to cut her out, Bradley did alienate Larissa, pushing her into a situation where she was emotionally vulnerable. I was the one person actually looking out for her. Things developed from there. I'm sure the courts won't fault her much for that, given his own history.

JENNY

Even if we don't like what he's doing, you know we can't ethically withhold this information from our client.

SEBASTIAN

Oh, we're not asking you to withhold anything. You should call him and tell him everything you've learned. I just think you should cross the state line before you do it.

Jenny and Mike frown in confusion. Larissa does, too.

INTERCUT - EXT. FANCY RESORT IN ARIZONA / EXT. ARIZONA STATE LINE - DAY

Jenny's car cruises past the "Welcome to Arizona" sign at dawn, coffee cups on the dash.

Bradley lounges beside the pool with Rebecca snuggled up next to him, her leg over his. He answers his ringing phone.

BRADLEY

Mike, you have something for me?

Mike and Jenny stand beside their car, pulled off to the side of the road. Mike's holding a phone, set on speaker so Jenny can hear as well. He's deep in his tough-guy detective persona.

MIKE

We got her. Your wife's cheating on you.

BRADLEY

I knew it! Who is it?

MIKE

Well, you've got a little situation on your hands.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

She's actually having an affair with a detective she hired to investigate you.

BRADLEY

Huh. Okay. Well, I can't say that's too surprising. But you do have evidence?

MIKE

They were doing it in his office. Saw it myself through the window. We couldn't legally take photos, but you have an eyewitness now.

BRADLEY

Good enough! Great work, Mike. I'm definitely going to have more jobs for you in the future.

MIKE

Listen, Mr. Hess. I don't like that she's got an investigator working against you. Divorce courts can be brutal. You didn't hear this from me, but if I were in your position, I'd be looking for some creative ways to protect my assets, you know what I mean?

BRADLEY

Why are you asking me about my finances?

MIKE

Because I'm going through a divorce myself and I could use some pointers from a guy who clearly knows what he's doing.

BRADLEY

(warming back up)

Mike, I didn't get this successful by being sloppy with money. Don't you worry about me.

MIKE

You've already taken appropriate measures?

BRADLEY

Honestly, you probably own more than I do at this point.

(MORE)

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

I've buried everything away in LLCs where nobody can get at it. I control it but on paper none of it actually belongs to me.

MIKE

Genius. So, you get all the benefits of wealth but there's nothing she can take in the divorce. I'm honestly impressed. I'm going to need to pick your brain sometime because I've still got an ex-wife bleeding me dry.

BRADLEY

My father always taught me that if the IRS, the FBI, or your wife comes after you, you've gotta make sure they leave empty-handed. I've already survived two of those, and I'm about to survive the third.

MIKE

Sometimes you have to bend a few laws to get the job done.

BRADLEY

That's right, Mike. You want to make it in this world? Do what's right for you. Everyone else can fend for themselves. It's the only way.

Rebecca smiles and snuggles closer to Bradley.

MIKE

Well, hopefully our evidence seals the deal so Mrs. Hess comes away with your two cents and not much more. I'll prepare an affidavit with all the evidence and have it ready for you later this week. Congratulations, Mr. Hess. You've won.

(beat)

Yep. Pleasure doing business.

Bradley smiles, puts his phone down, and leans back to relax with Rebecca.

Jenny presses the stop button on her phone's audio recording app.

MIKE
(back to normal)
We get it?

Jenny hits the play button, then scrubs forward to the part where Bradley says "I've buried everything away in LLCs where nobody can get at it."

JENNY
We got it.

MIKE
And we're sure this is legal?

JENNY
Arizona's a one-party consent state, so we can record without telling him. And now we have a recording of him admitting to criminal fraud against his wife, so we have an ethical responsibility to report it to the authorities. It's still a mess, but at least Larissa Hess will have a shot at a fair divorce against her jerk-ass husband.

MIKE
And I thought my divorce was a mess. Fortunately, you and I, we're never going to have rich people problems like those two.

There's a notification chime on Jenny's phone. She checks it.

JENNY
He just sent us the second half of our payment.

MIKE
Nice.

JENNY
Do we keep it?

MIKE
We did what he paid us for.

JENNY
I know, it just feels...

MIKE
When we have a little money saved up, we'll cut him a check.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)
 Until then, let's go home and pay
 our rent.

Jenny nods. Mike puts his hand up and they high-five.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 That was a weird case. I hope our
 next one is simpler.

17 EXT. BONFIRE CULT RITUAL - NIGHT

17

Jenny is covered in white face paint with ancient runic symbols. Firelight flickers on her face. There's rhythmic chanting and drums.

Mike, seated a few spots down in the circle from Jenny, his face also painted, glances toward her with confusion and concern. She gives a subtle shrug.

A group of cult members surrounds a large bonfire. The CULT CHIEFTAIN, wearing a strange outfit and an antler headdress, stands before the fire and raises his arms.

The chanting stops and the drumming gets softer.

CULT CHIEFTAIN
 Brothers and sisters, it's time for
 us to welcome our new initiates,
 Maurice and Penny. Please arise,
 all, and present yourselves.

Everyone stands up and turns around, then bends over. Jenny and Mike, also standing, look around confused. Mike walks over to stand next to Jenny.

CULT CHIEFTAIN
 In memory of the god Ma'alatha's
 punishment given to the oracle
 Engaku, we now present ourselves to
 you, brave initiates. As he blessed
 the oracle with wisdom through
 punishment, we now ask you to bless
 us by the power of your hand.

Jenny looks around helplessly at the ring of cult members surrounding the bonfire, all now bending over.

She looks at one of the other leaders, the CULT ASSISTANT, who illustrates a spanking motion with her hand.

JENNY
(whispering to Mike)
Maybe you were right about not
taking this case.

Mike makes a "no kidding" expression, then Jenny gives a "well, I guess we're doing this" shrug and walks over to the nearest cult member and raises her hand to spank them.

END OF EPISODE