

GOODBETTER

Episode 1 ("Pilot")

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ACT ONE

**INT. GOODBETTER OFFICE - DAY**

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 shaking hands with past clients or posing with 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 (CONT'D)  
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  
and 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

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

MIKE

Might ruin ours here, but let's see if we can salvage this meeting. 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 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 (CONT'D)

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 being in a place like this, are you? Cheap office. Secondhand furniture. Talking to some sketchy ex-cop with a fake bridesmaid taking notes in the corner. Guy like you's probably looking for some agency you walk in and it looks like a lawyer's office. Fancy cars in the parking lot. Fancy books on the wall. Fancy music playing in the background.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

Fancy prick in white shirt kissing your ass and telling you all about how professional they are. If you want that kind of agency, it's out there for you. But that's not us.

BRADLEY

I can see that.

MIKE

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 making sure you don't get caught doing it. It's about dancing on the edge and coming away from it with a beautiful little bundle of admissible evidence. That's what we do here.

BRADLEY

I understand, it's just 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 to bring criminals to justice. Sometimes the department needs a scapegoat to make the heat go away. It was my turn, and I took one for the team. Now, if you want some retired desk jockey to do your dirty work for you, there's plenty of those guys playing detective out there. But if you want the real thing, that's me. You sign here and give me a check, this situation's handled. If Mrs. Hess is out there playing Twister with the soccer coach, I'll give you an evidence file that'll make her divorce attorney weep. And I'm talking real tears.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

But I need to know if we're actually doing this, or if you need to spend a few weeks reading Yelp reviews so you can find the investigation 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 (CONT'D)

Okay, why not? It's only \$2,500. 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 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. She's a prude, you know what I mean?

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 (CONT'D)

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. It's obvious they're close friends, but platonic.

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 (CONT'D)

...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:

**INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY**

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! I spent two summers 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 in confusion, then leaves.
- Another client laughs, then leaves.
- Another client shakes his head, then leaves.
- Jenny frowns in consternation

END FLASHBACK

**INT. GOODBETTER OFFICE - DAY (CONTINUED)**

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

Anyway, now that we can actually  
afford coffee, why don't you go  
grab us some to celebrate, and I'll  
stay here and figure out how we  
start our first case.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

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

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?

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 a expensive house.

JENNY

Finally! Let's do this.

She starts the car and they pull out.

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

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 mystery man (whom we'll later know as SEBASTIAN PRINCE) 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 there's a pair of really attractive private investigators sitting in a car outside the restaurant.

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?

**INT. RESTAURANT LOBBY - DAY**

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 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 (CONT'D)

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 drive-thru on the way back.

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 his 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 (CONT'D)

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

Taking a trip to pound town isn't a crime. 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.

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

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 not great on dates. I never know what to say.

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 (CONT'D)

Here, write him back for me.

She starts the car and they drive after Sebastian, following his car at a distance.

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

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.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

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 (V.O.)

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 (V.O.)

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 (V.O.)

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 (V.O.)

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

FLASHBACK: Jenny sitting in a car dealership waiting room,  
flipping through a car magazine without looking at the pages.

JENNY (V.O.)

Then the car dealership for an oil  
change. That took forever.

MIKE (V.O.)

How long has your maintenance light  
been on by the way?

JENNY (V.O.)

Just a couple months. I think it's  
still good.

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 (V.O.)

Annd...then he went to the gym.

MIKE (V.O.)

He actually did leg day.

JENNY (V.O.)

You still stink, by the way.

MIKE (V.O.)

I know, I know.

Back to them in the car. Mike's still search the address on  
his phone.

JENNY

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

MIKE

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

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 (CONT'D)  
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...

JENNY  
This guy isn't her lover. He's her  
private detective.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

**INT. PIZZA RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

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. Lights 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 realizes that being herself isn't working, so she turns on "charming Jenny." Her expression relaxes and her 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 gives a complex smile, knowing she's winning the title of "great date" but loathes herself for doing it.

JENNY

Awesome.

**INT. GOODBETTER OFFICE - DAY (MORNING)**

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, almost 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

I'm still a little fuzzy on our ethical obligations here. It seems like we should tell him his wife has hired a private investigator, but that would disrupt the investigation of one of our industry peers. And besides, it's outside the scope of our own investigation, since we're just trying to determine whether Larissa's cheating on him.

MIKE

(from the other room)  
Our first responsibility is to our client. His wife hiring an investigator is obviously pertinent information. We've gotta tell him.

JENNY

I know, I just...I don't know.

MIKE

You're wondering if he's up to something.

JENNY

Yeah.

MIKE

I don't like the guy either, but we picked our team when we cashed his check.

Jenny sighs.

JENNY

Yeah, you're right, 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. So, um, Mr. Hess won't be coming himself today?

REBECCA

No, he's a very busy man.

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 know about everything Mr. Hess  
does.

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 (CONT'D)  
Jenny, come in and take notes,  
would ya?

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

**INT. GOODBETTER OFFICE - LATE MORNING**

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

She wouldn't be driving that car if  
they weren't. And she sure didn't  
have anything nice to say about the  
wife.

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.

MIKE

Hey, how'd the date go last night?

Jenny shakes her head and shrugs.

JENNY

Fine, I guess. He liked who I was  
pretending to be. We're going  
mountain biking 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...excited to go 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

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...

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

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

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 TODD THE ZOMBIE is looming behind her.

TODD THE 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.

**INT. BATHROOM - MIDDAY**

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.

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

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, pressing buttons.

DIRECTOR

Camera speeding, sound speeding,  
aaaand...action!

Jenny takes a moment 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 Todd growls and jumps on her from the side, knocking her down off-camera.

JENNY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
(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  
(to herself)  
I'd like to thank the Academy...

**EXT. PARKING GARAGE - EARLY EVENING**

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 him 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 Mrs. 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 gotta 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. 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.

**INT. PRINCE INVESTIGATIONS OFFICE - NIGHT**

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 "uhhyyyyup!" 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 (CONT'D)

There's a lot you don't know about Bradley Hess, not the least of which is that he's repeatedly violated that prenup 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 (CONT'D)

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

Her salary is half a million dollars a year.

(MORE)

LARISSA (CONT'D)

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

Yes, through his cheating and efforts to cut her out, Bradley did alienate Larissa, pushing her into a situation where she was emotionally vulnerable. We happened to build a strong connection together and one thing led to another. 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, we still have to tell him what we saw.

SEBASTIAN

So tell him.

Jenny pauses.

JENNY

Why would you want...? Ohhh, you want us to get him to confess so we have to report him for fraud.

SEBASTIAN

I think you there's a way.

JENNY

That's not a good look, getting our clients arrested.

SEBASTIAN

You want more clients like him?

MIKE

So report it yourself.

SEBASTIAN

We've got some evidence, but a confession beats all. He trusts you. You play this right, he just lays it all out there.

JENNY

We'd need to record it, but we can't do it without disclosing to him that we're recording.

SEBASTIAN

Except--

JENNY

Except. Yeah, okay.  
(to Mike)  
C'mon. Road trip.

Mike frown in confusion. Larissa does, too.

Jenny turns and leaves, Mike following her.

SEBASTIAN

She might make a decent investigator some day.

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

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 near the "Welcome to Arizona" sign. 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. 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 court can be brutal. You didn't hear this from me, but if I were in your position, I'd been looking for some creative ways to protect my assets, you know what I mean?

BRADLEY

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. 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.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

I'm going to need to pick your brains 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, you 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 (CONT'D)

(back to normal)

We got 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 recording's okay as long as one party on the call is aware of it, and that's us. 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 rough. 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. Looks like we're paying rent this month.

Mike puts his hand up and they high-five.

MIKE

That was a weird case. I hope our next one is simpler.

END OF ACT FOUR

## EPILOGUE

### **EXT. BONFIRE CULT RITUAL - NIGHT**

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 (CONT'D)

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