

ACT I  
SCENE 1

*At rise, a crime scene outdoors in downtown Savannah, Georgia. Whether seen, suggested, or neither, we're at the bottom of a parking structure. CSI OPAL MONTGOMERY takes photographs of the crime scene.*

*Detective ISABELLE ELLIS enters.*

MONTGOMERY

Mornin', Ellis.

ISABELLE

Always pleasant, Montgomery. What do we got?

MONTGOMERY

White male, late teens or early twenties, smashed into mashed potatoes with a heavy helping of blood gravy down here. Took a while for the call to come in. Cops said something about mice, so had to go chasin' the grubby little sonbitches. Was actually a bit of fun. Caught one myself. Not often there's something excitin' to be done.

ISABELLE

Sounds like you has a pleasant morning.

MONTGOMERY

This can barely be called morning, and you know it.

ISABELLE

You said it first. Was it Colby?

MONTGOMERY

No ID on him. Coroner took the body and my mouse a little bit before your slow ass finally pulled in. THEY'll have to call in his parents or do some DNA matchin' to get a positive ID, but, yeah, it was him. I hope they don't bring in the family. Need to let a mortician do some reconstruction first. That fall di a mighty hard job.

ISABELLE

Fall?

MONTGOMERY

We got people scouring the parking structure for any potential evidence, and I'm no M.E., but you don't get a body contorted like that without droppin' it from some height. All sharp angles and jutting bones.

ISABELLE

There cameras in there?

MONTGOMERY

I haven't been inside, so I couldn't tell ya.

ISABELLE

Let's hope there are.

MONTGOMERY

Ellis?

ISABELLE

Yes?

MONTGOMERY

Get that look outta your eyes.

ISABELLE

Not a look. Just a hangover.

MONTGOMERY

Neither of... Suit yourself.

ISABELLE

You have photos of the body? Before they moved it.

MONTGOMERY

You know it. You didn't eat anything, did ya?

ISABELLE

Quit mothering me. We've seen worse. Jesus. Bent like an accordion.

MONTGOMERY

I warned you. You can sit through as many desensitizing courses and walk through as many cadaver forests as you want, some things just take your breath away.

I always forget how young seventeen-year-olds look. Baby-faced, all of 'em. No wonder all those old shows stuck twenty-somethings in. That boy didn't look like an adult. Well. With him, barely looks human. An inhuman baby. Cougars are all sorts of fucked.

ISABELLE

We've seen worse. Where's the first-responder?

MONTGOMERY

Officer Gilley. He's somewhere in there.

ISABELLE

Thanks.

MONTGOMERY

Isabelle.

ISABELLE

I'm good.

MONTGOMERY

Need my camera back.

ISABELLE

Right.

MONTGOMERY

Might be hard to see on this tiny screen, but ask the coroner about his back.

ISABELLE

Not much to ask. Looked bent in half.

MONTGOMERY

Two long slits on the back of his shirt. Weird placement. I'd have to take a second look, but.... Didn't seem to be a reason for them. Weren't tears, either.

ISABELLE

Whereabouts?

MONTGOMERY

Mid back, maybe?

ISABELLE

Right. I'll keep that in mind. Thanks. Mail me those photos when you get a chance. I'm going to see if they found anything inside.

MONTGOMERY

You shoulda brought a coffee. For the hangover.

ISABELLE

Coffee's not my thing.

## SCENE 2

*A school assembly. CHESTER GRAVES speaks to the students.*

## GRAVES

Here's the thing: we're all alone. Up here. When we're in bed, doesn't matter if someone else is with us, those last thoughts before we drift off, no one's going to hear them. No one else can think them. It's easy to agree with that, right? You hear it, from someone older, handsome fella like Mr. Graves, and it's easy to just simmer in it. And I'm not wrong. Here's the thing: we all think we're alone. I was in a dark place before I started teaching ehre. I'd go home and a, a, a box of Cheerios, that would be my dinner. And my roommate would be there asking me about my day. I'd mumble, milk spilling out all gross like, but I wouldn't see him. I couldn't look around and actually see anyone. I bought into it. I thought I was alone. Truly alone, up here, because no one could penetrate this chrome dome. But here's the thing: I wasn't alone. And sure, no one could crack open my skull and go poking around with that tiny dentist mirror, looking for those thoughts popping around my brain. I was alone in thinking my thoughts, but thoughts are only ever alone if you keep them that way. You gotta speak them. The bad thoughts are like birthday wishes when you're a kid. Their magic powers go away when you start jabbering about them. Yeah, it's hard. So maybe you talk to things that can't talk back at first. I was a pediatric nurse. We had stuffed animals in the office, and when no one was around, I'd tell them what was going on. Speaking it pur me out there, out in the ether. Where others are. So alone as you might feel, we're here for you. We understand what it's like, even if we don't. You gotta speak. You gotta. You gotta.

SCENE 3

*A small living room in a house in Savannah. On the couch, perhaps partially hidden by a blanket, are two high school seniors in the midst of an act of pleasure: JAMES ELLIS and ASTRA ALLEN.*

JAMES

Goddamn. You're good at this.

ASTRA

Yeah?

JAMES

Definitely.

*A door opens off-stage.*

JAMES

Shit.

*The boys scramble up and make as if nothing happened. ISABELLE enters.*

JAMES

Hey, Izzy.

ASTRA

Hey, Ms. Ellis.

ISABELLE

You have a room, James.

JAMES

We weren't doing anything.

ISABELLE

You're never doing anything. You two do your homework or just fool around on my couch?

JAMES

You mean my couch. Pretty sure mom left it to me.

ASTRA

No homework, on account of everything with Colby and all.

JAMES

Poor dude. That's why you're late, isn't it?

ISABELLE

Does your mom know you're here?

ASTRA

Yes, ma'am.

JAMES

Don't "ma'am" my sister. Come on, dude. It's been a while. Call her Izzy.

ASTRA

I don't think I will.

ISABELLE

Good. Hate that fucking nickname. That was the mascot back when Atlanta hosted the Olympics. A terrifying monster. I had nightmares about it.

ASTRA

When did Georgia do the Olympics?

JAMES

Before our time, that's when. You okay?

ISABELLE

I'm fine. The school shouldn't have said anything. What did they say?

JAMES

You know Coach Graves?

ISABELLE

What's he coach?

JAMES

Softball.

ASTRA

It's gold. He coaches gold.

ISABELLE

We have a golf team?

JAMES

That's pretty bougie of us. Guess someone has to train the next generation of middling middle class pricks.

ASTRA

A nurse turned biology teacher; I'm not sure how bougie that can make you.

ISABELLE

So he's playing at it. Nothing wrong with that. I'd play at it too if I had the energy.

JAMES

Long day, then.

ISABELLE

What did the chino-wearing golf man say?

JAMES

What are chinos? Anyway. We had a sort of assembly type deal. They told us Colby's dead. Well. They said he was no long missing, right? Yeah, they didn't say he was dead, but he wasn't missing anymore before launching into a thing about mental health and asking for help, yada yada. You know, the normal nonsense teachers peddle. Pretend like they'll help. So they never said he was dead. We just sort of connected the dots. They said, "He's no longer missing. Come to us if you're struggling." Ipso facto, he killed himself.

ASTRA

Does that mean that?

JAMES

You said the same thing.

ASTRA  
I meant the “ipso facto” thing.

ISABELLE  
We haven’t ruled it a suicide.

ASTRA  
He got killed?

JAMES  
Oh damn.

ASTRA  
That’s kind of scary.

JAMES  
Kind of?

ASTRA  
I mean, it’s not like sitting in the car when you’re driving and we get pulled over and you’re like “This is gonna be fun.” It’s never fun.

ISABELLE  
Pulled over?

JAMES  
Ask your cop buddies.

ISABELLE  
Excuse me?

JAMES  
I don’t know. They find it funny. I keep asking them to stop. I do. So I don’t know why you’re being pissy with me about it. I joke when it happens but I know you don’t like it. So I ask them to stop.

ASTRA  
I never heard that.

JAMES  
You’re too busy crying.

ASTRA  
What?

JAMES  
Okay, maybe you don't cry.

ISABELLE  
I didn't say Colby was murdered.

ASTRA  
That's good.

JAMES  
But you think he was.

ISABELLE  
Stop assuming things.

JAMES  
Then what do you think?

ISABELLE  
When I come home, I don't w... I think I'm hungry. I think I'm going to bed after I eat. I think you should take Astra home, and if you get pulled over for doing it in your car, I'm not going to bail you out.

JAMES  
You think about my sex life a lot. Maybe getting one of your own would make you less pissy.

ISABELLE  
James Dean Ellis. Do not test me.

JAMES  
Jeez.

ASTRA  
Goodnight, ma'am.

JAMES  
Aw, c'mon. Don't just give in like that. I'm gonna take him out to dinner, so don't make extra for me.