

CRIME CRACKERS

(formerly the
UNITITLED PODCAST-KILLER PROJECT)

Written by

Glenn Gers

August 19, 2022

**THIS IS A ROUGH DRAFT, OFFERED FOR
EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY!**

**(It's a MESS! To demonstrate the MESSY
progress of creative work.)**

INT. GEORGE'S STUDIO - DAY

Darkness. In a pool of light: **GEORGE ROIZMAN** -- 50, gray-haired, ragged black *Richard Hell & The Voidoids* t-shirt, many fading tattoos.

He sifts HANDWRITTEN PAGES on his disaster-area of a work-table. Over-stuffed folders, aged xeroxed news clippings, worn TRUE-CRIME PAPERBACKS bristling with Post-its, a half-eaten bowl of TABOULEH SALAD, a bag of flaming-hot CHIPS.

He switches on his PODCASTING SOFTWARE, adjusts the swivel-arm microphone, and begins to read -- intent, like an old FM radio midnight-shift DJ:

GEORGE

Good evening, and welcome to
"Catching The Chemistry Set Killer"
-- Episode 5. Our halfway mark.

He impulsively sets the paper aside and recites from memory:

GEORGE

"In the middle of the journey of
this life, I found myself in a dark
wood, where the path was lost."

(beat)

Look it up.

(beat)

No one is listening to this
podcast. I know that. I have 14
subscribers, and ten of them are
from the cold-case web-sleuth
forums. Shout-out to all you Crime
Crackers.

(beat)

No one else cares. But in five
weeks, that's all going to change.
Five more episodes. And then I
will reveal new evidence,
identifying the Chemistry Set
Killer.

(beat)

Spread the word, kids. Tell your
friends. We're gonna get him.

He SWIGS some COFFEE, goes back to READING:

GEORGE

I was nine years old in 1981, when
C.S.K. was national news.

(beat)

My first serial killer. The first
time I became aware of human evil.

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

People were panicked. Everyone suddenly afraid of their own pantries and refrigerators.

He frowns. He's dizzy. Tingling, breathless. George SHAKES IT OFF, pushing on:

GEORGE

Ten victims in two years. In different states, different ages, races, socio-economic groups.

His tongue feels fuzzy, thick. Slurring:

GEORGE

Socio-economic.

(beat)

The poison itself -- the only thing in common. A unique mixture of plant toxins. C.S.K.'s "signature."

(beat)

And then he just -- stopped. Vanished.

He frowns, scrunches up his face -- because it's going numb. Touches it...but his fingers cannot feel.

GEORGE

Vann...ishh...td.

George STARES at his COFFEE MUG, his BOWL OF SALAD. He's frightened -- aware that something insidious is creeping into his nerve endings.

GEORGE

Oh no. No no no.

But it sounds like "nuh nuh nuh" because his throat is closing up. He's wheezing. Gasping. The room spins.

George LUNGES out of his chair, KNOCKING OVER his coffee -- FUMBLING with a switch on the wall.

With a GRINDING noise, a garage-door-opener LIFTS one wall of the "studio"...REVEALING it is George's SHABBY TWO-CAR GARAGE.

Light floods in, exposing unfinished walls and rafters, metal shelving jammed with file-boxes, canned goods, bottled water.

GEORGE

Hep! Eph!

George STUMBLES out into his weed-strewn BACKYARD -- takes a few convulsive steps along the cracked, weed-strewn driveway - - trying to get to his run-down clap-board house...and then SPRAWLS face-down in the dirt.

Coffee drips off his table. On the laptop screen, the website: **CRIME CRACKERS**.

George TWITCHES and DIES, helpless, alone.

INT. MADELYN'S OFFICE - 5 O'CLOCK PM

A clean, sparse corporate workplace. A handful of desks in a bland, safe, well-lit "open plan."

MADELYN MORRISON, a Supervising Data Analyst in her early 50s, shuts down for the day. It's rather marvelous to watch: she's got it down to a few quick, simple gestures. She has been doing this for a long time.

The FOUR OTHER DATA ANALYSTS -- all younger, sloppier and nerdier -- glance up from their work:

DATA ANALYST

Is it five?

DATA ANALYST 2

There she goes.

She's already heading for the door.

MADELYN

See you tomorrow, kids. Good work today.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - ELEVATORS - SOON AFTER

BRENDA is already going down when Madelyn gets in. Both face forward, but Brenda wrestles in the silence -- until:

BRENDA

We have a meeting tomorrow.

MADELYNS

(startled)

Human Resources?

BRENDA

Yes! I'm not supposed to tell you yet -- but:

(can't resist:)

You're getting a promotion!

(MORE)

BRENDA (CONT'D)
 Director Of Analyst Services! Four-
 percent raise, plus your own
 office! With a door. That you can
 close.

DING! The elevator doors OPEN, revealing the LOBBY.

MADELYN
 I'm sorry?

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Brenda steers Madelyn out of the flow of departing corporate
 drones heading for the revolving doors, so she can share:

BRENDA
 I'm sorry, I couldn't help it! I
 just love it when a promotion is...
 righteous. 24 years. Worked your
 way up. First woman in your
 department. First female
 supervisor. You go, girl!

Madelyn tries to process all this.

MADELYN
 Do I have to?

BRENDA
 What do you mean?

MADELYN
 Could I say no?

BRENDA
 Why would you say no?

MADELYN
 I don't know. More meetings,
 right? More pressure? Less
 actually doing the thing.

BRENDA
 But -- Director. With a door.

Other WORKERS hurry past. This has suddenly become awkward.

MADELYN
 Can I get the money and the door
 without changing what I do all day?

BRENDA
 No.

MADELYN

Then no. I'm good. I like the work. I like my team. I like my desk.

(beat)

Are you -- okay?

Brenda looks like she might cry. As she tries to pull it together, MADELYN'S PHONE RINGS. Mad frowns, checking it:

MADELYN

I'm sorry: I have to -- it's the police.

BRENDA

Police?!

Madelyn nods, distracted -- as she takes the call:

MADELYN

Hello? Yes it is. Yes. That was a long --

(listens)

What?! Oh my God -- when? How?!

Brenda watches, concerned. Madelyn turns away slightly, wrapped up in terrible news.

MADELYN

No -- we -- I didn't even know where he...

(listens)

Yes -- of course I can. I'm sorry: where is this, exactly?

(nodding)

Yes. I'll be there tomorrow.

She disconnects. Stunned:

MADELYN

My husband is dead. He was murdered.

BRENDA

Oh my God, I'm so sorry.

(beat)

You're not married.

Madelyn looks at Brenda -- shaken, baffled:

MADELYN

I was. Thirty years ago.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

DET. LEWIS ELMES -- a tough, chunky, middle-aged white guy in UNIFORM -- sits at George's desk, listening:

GEORGE (ON SPEAKER)

The first thing Murray Simpson felt on August 9th, 1981, when the poison entered his bloodstream was his tongue thickening, his throat going numb. There was a buzzing in his ears, pins and needles on his skin. The room began to spin.

The garage door is up, so Elmes can WATCH MADELYN ducking the CRIME SCENE tape and dragging her wheeled carry-on past a CSI wagon and a LOCAL NEWS van.

GEORGE (ON SPEAKER)

He was frightened -- fully aware something insidious was creeping into his nerve endings... but unable to move or speak. His paralyzed lungs no longer getting oxygen to his brain.

Madelyn's suitcase SNAGS on the cracked, weed-strewn driveway -- she looks down to free it, sees the CHALK OUTLINE -- FLINCHES with a GASP and BACKS AWAY, dropping the case.

ELMES

You all right?

She turns, struggling to see him in the dim garage.

MADELYN

Not even a little bit.

ELMES

You're Morrison? The ex?

Elmes stays where he is. Holding up his badge, he waits for her to walk, uneasily, into the garage.

ELMES

Elmes. I'm sorry: the paperwork in his desk didn't give us any living relatives -- so you were it.

Madelyn nods, looking around, eyes adjusting -- sad:

MADELYN

He had paperwork in his desk: George grew up.

ELMES

When was the last time you spoke to Mr. Roizman?

Madelyn takes Elmes in.

MADELYN

1992. Outside CBGB's, in New York. We had a gig -- George played keyboards, I was the singer. We were called The Utter Destruction Of Everything. We had a screaming fight on stage and I walked off and everything else was handled by lawyers through the mail.

Elmes nods, disappointed but not surprised.

ELMES

So then I guess you don't know where he put the evidence.

MADELYN

Evidence of what?

Elmes grimly indicates George's conspiracy-theory-corkboard, the messy stacks of file-boxes:

ELMES

Mr. Roizman was podcasting that he had new evidence, identifying The Chemistry Set Killer -- a serial killer from the 1980s.

(sighs)

Dumb shit.

MADELYN

George...was the dumb shit?

ELMES

Instead of going to the police, he made himself a target on the internet -- so he could be a "Crime Cracker."

MADELYN

A what?

Madelyn's phone rings: caller ID -- **ZENA MORANO**. Not a name she knows, so she turns the phone off during:

ELMES

Crime Crackers: it's a website about unsolved cases. Bulletin

(MORE)

ELMES (CONT'D)

boards, chat rooms. People with nothing to do, so they do my job -- badly.

(with distaste)

"Web sleuths."

MADELYN

Okay, yeah...that just sounds bad.

ELMES

We've turned this place upside down. And the house.

MADELYN

Maybe he took it: the killer. If it was about him.

Elmes shakes his head, frustrated:

ELMES

CSK's been cold for forty years. If he's even alive, he's like seventy. I think your husband was stirring the pot and he stirred-up a copycat.

(beat)

But I hope it is CSK, because then the FBI will take this mess off my hands.

MADELYN

And if it's not?

Elmes sighs. This whole case is already a mess and a pain.

ELMES

Everybody liked George. He tended bar at the Kaleidoscope for fifteen years. But maybe he owed somebody money, or slept with somebody's wife -- nothing to do with the podcast, perp just wanted to make it look like a geriatric serial killer.

(beat)

But it's usually the spouse.

MADELYN

Ex. Spouse.

It's her turn to look around at the shabby garage-studio. Sighs, shaking her head.

MADELYN

Dumb shit.

(beat)

I'm sorry: this is a lot for me. A man I haven't seen in thirty years has made me responsible for all of his crap -- including his murder.

(beat)

I don't know this guy. I didn't ask for this. And I can't help you.

Elmes sighs, hands her his business card.

ELMES

Yeah. All right.

(beat)

Be here a few days?

MADELYN

No, I need to go home tomorrow. I'll be at the Ramada in Hillsville tonight.

She watches Elmes nod and walk away.

Left alone, looking at her dead ex-husband's house...she checks her phone: 12 NOTIFICATIONS.

MADELYN

Who the hell is Zena Morano?

INT. ZENA'S HOUSE - THE SAME TIME

ZENA MORANO: failed influencer, early-20s, trapped within her many filters. Staring at her phone, sprawled and moping in Southern California luxury.

ZENA

Answer your damn messages, bitch.

She makes a DECISION, gets up and STORMS through the living room -- passing **LORINDA MORANO**, her equally-made-over mom:

LORINDA

Z, fish for dinner?

ZENA

Goin' out. Back in a few days.

LORINDA

A few days?!

ZENA
Guy I know died.

LORINDA
Oh my God! Who?!

But Zena's phone rings -- and she's hyped by the Caller ID:

ZENA
Nobody, shut up --
(into phone, joyous:)
Madelyn!!

INTERCUT:

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - THE SAME TIME

ZENA
I am SO sorry for your loss. I
can't imagine what you're feeling.
He was such a beautiful soul. What
are the police doing?

Madelyn, startled by Zena's gushing friendliness, hesitates.

MADELYN
Who are you?

ZENA
Zena Morano. I was friends with
George.

MADELYN
And how do you know...my number?

ZENA
I knew your name. Of course. From
George. So I searched for all the
Madelyn Morrisons, and I broke that
down by age -- so then there really
weren't that many -- and then I
started to look for images, because
he has that picture of you on his
bookshelf --

Madelyn looks around: there IS a framed photo of George and
Madelyn in New York, back in 1992.

ZENA
-- and there's a software that can
age or de-age photos, they use it
for victim-profiling and missing
persons -- so I ran the different
(MORE)

ZENA (CONT'D)

Madelyn Morrisons -- there were seven possible -- and one was you! At a company fundraising picnic.

(beat)

It is you, right? You are George's wife?

MADELYN

Ex.

ZENA

How are you? Are you okay?

MADELYN

I don't know.

ZENA

We are all here for you. The whole Corkboard crew.

MADELYN

...on the cardboard ship?

ZENA

"Corkboard, Yarn and Pins" -- it's a community of home-based detectives. We meet online in the Crime Cracker forums to solve cold cases. That's where I met George.

MADELYN

Ah. Crime Crackers.

ZENA

I loved George, he was a doll.

(hastily)

But we just worked together. On cases.

(beat)

And now -- he's a case.

(beat)

He would have loved that. If it wasn't him.

Awkward silence. Madelyn suddenly feels very alone.

MADELYN

Do you think he did it? This killer, the one George was hunting in his podcast?

ZENA

I do. One hundred percent. George was gonna get him. That's why we

(MORE)

ZENA (CONT'D)

need to pick up where he left off.
Have the police -- found anything?
Like, evidence?

MADELYN

No. Do you know where it is?

ZENA

You poor thing. Are you all alone?
Who's doing crime-scene cleanup? I
can be there tomorrow.

MADELYN

Don't you have, like: work? Or
school?

ZENA

No, I'm an Influencer. I can tell
you all about it when I see you.

MADELYN

No. Thank you, that's very kind --
but no.

ZENA

What if I just showed up? No
pressure, no obligations.

MADELYN

That would be creepy.

Zena grimaces, punches a sofa pillow, then throws it -
SMASHING a shelf of expensive bric-a-brac.

ZENA

Okay. But I'm here for you.

LINDA, a middle-aged housekeeper, rushes in, concerned -- but
backs out hastily when Zena GLARES.

ZENA

I am speaking for a whole community
who knew George and loved him and
want to help. Call or text any
time, okay? I feel like we have a
special connection.

(beat)

It's gonna hit you, when you hang
up. The loss. And when that
happens: I'm here for you.

(beat)

Will you call me tomorrow?

Madelyn has absolutely no intention of calling Zena.

MADELYN

Yes. Sure.

ZENA

Love you.

Madelyn hangs up and looks around.

Zena was right. It hits her. The loss.

INT. THE SPACEBAR CAFE - AKRON, OH - LATE AFTERNOON

A hipster-ish cafe which also services obsolete technology: vinyl record-players, 8-track decks, analog clocks.

NORMAN MURCH, nearing 60, watches a bearded-and-monocled **REPAIRISTA** inspecting his battered IBM SELECTRIC typewriter.

Norman is, alas, a cliché: a newspaper journalist, fighting to make sense of a world that's left him behind.

REPAIRISTA

Gonna take three weeks. And cost you more than just buying a laptop.

NORMAN

I have a laptop. I'm only using this for my book. It's about the death-spiral of civilization in the 21st Century.

(getting out his phone)

So it feels right to bang it out on a machine I bought when I worked in D.C...at The Post. You take Apple Pay?

REPAIRISTA

Cash only.

As the Repairista starts to write out a receipt, Norman notices the shop's many CLOCKS -- all broken, stopped at different times -- and then checks his phone:

NORMAN

Wait: is it three?!

REPAIRISTA

Dunno.

NORMAN

Crap -- I've got a thing. Can we...?

...hurry? The Repairista is using a pencil and an ancient order-pad that requires the slow careful fitting of a carbon-paper slip between sheets.

Frustrated, Norman fumbles an earbud into one ear as he turns away and opens Zoom on his phone --

INTERCUT:

INT. FULL SCREEN: ZOOM MEETING - CONTINUOUS

Norman's hand-held window joins an ARRAY OF FACES -- the CORKBOARD, YARN & PINS CRIME-CRACKER GROUP:

CARL DUNDOSKI, mid-30s, full-on-biker-style METH DEALER, speaking from a decrepit riverfront warehouse.

ARVIN MCLEAN, early-20s, a first-year Wall Street trader, at his desk in a row of desks, walled-in by multiple MONITORS.

NURSE SHRIMPTON, 40s, a NURSE, still in her scrubs but at home with her feet up.

TED, a full-time conspiracy theorist in his 30s, glitchy unsteady signal from his cluttered RV parked under a freeway.

CAMERON, a non-binary suburban High School senior who idolizes Zena, from her darkened bedroom.

And ZENA at home, perfectly-filtered, HOSTING the meeting.

(DURING ZOOMS we intercut these windows with the characters live LOCATIONS -- so we are also WITH THEM in their LIVES:)

ZENA

-- tried to convince her to let me help, but she was NOT having it.

SHRIMPTON

Well, the woman is bereaved.

ZENA

She didn't care about George! She hadn't seen him in thirty years.

MCLEAN

Then why didn't you just ask her to give you the tape?

ZENA

If I tell her George left a secret tape identifying CSK in his attic, and she doesn't want to help us --

(MORE)

ZENA (CONT'D)

which she clearly does NOT: then she'll tell the police, and game over!

TED

The cops would bury it.

SHRIMPTON

Why would they bury it?!

TED

Somebody let this guy get away thirty years ago.

NORMAN

What are we talking about?

DUNDOSKI

George is dead.

NORMAN

George?!

SHRIMPTON

Poisoned.

TED

Maloxidine: CSK's toxin-of-choice!

CAMERON

George was getting too close. He had new evidence.

DUNDOSKI

And now it's in his attic. But this bitch won't let Zena get it.

ZENA

George's ex. "Madelyn Morrison", this office-manager from New Jersey with a stick up her butt.

DUNDOSKI

This her?

Dundoski screen-shares a "Madelyn Morrison" image-search: an etching of a 15th-century Nun, a 1930s wedding photo...and the MADELYN we know, on her company's website.

INTERCUT:

INT. NORMAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Norman is getting into his car, magnet-ing his phone into a hands-free dashboard rig:

NORMAN

Why not just ask her to give it to the police?

ZENA

No! We're not giving it to anyone! This is a unicorn. This is ours. We need to take over George's podcast and finish this, the way he wanted to.

DUNDOSKI

I'll go get the tape.

SHRIMPTON

What makes you think she'll give it to you?!

DUNDOSKI

I didn't say she'd give it. I said I would get it.

Terrible silence.

MCLEAN

Whoa.

NORMAN

Wait a second, nobody is "getting anything" from this woman --

ZENA

Well, wait -- I don't know. Let's not get trapped in old perceptions.
(tentatively)
Carl...how do you want to get it?

DUNDOSKI

I could -- I don't know, convince her.

ZENA

I'm not comfortable with that.

DUNDOSKI

No worries, then. I'll break in.

Carl starts to grab equipment and put them into a saddle-bag:

ZENA
When she's not there.

DUNDOSKI
Well -- duh. No witnesses.

ZENA
Please don't say it like that.

DUNDOSKI
She's at George's house?

Norman grimaces, distracted, driving badly --

NORMAN
Nope! Nope! You cannot let him go
to that house!

ZENA
You know what, I hear you all -- I
really do. But I think we can set
up some guidelines for Carl.

NORMAN
Carl is a meth dealer!

DUNDOSKI
Just because somebody makes their
living outside the traditional
economy doesn't mean I can't have a
desire for justice.

MCLEAN
Got a point.

ZENA
Carl has been a really-involved
member of our community.

NORMAN
He's a METH DEALER.

SHRIMPSON
Gotta say: I'm with Norman on this.

ZENA
I think we're facing a generational
issue here.

SHRIMPSON
I'm sorry, no: I like to pretend
we're detectives and all, but I
can't be involved in this. This is
effed-up. I'm out.

Shrimpton DISCONNECTS.

NORMAN

Seriously, you cannot allow --

Zena MUTES Norman.

ZENA

Hey guys, I don't think it's productive to have everybody talking at once. Carl: will you promise not to harm George's ex-wife while you're getting the evidence?

As he checks an ammo clip and snaps it decisively into a very large pistol:

DUNDOSKI

Absolutely.

Zena forces a big encouraging smile and ENDS THE MEETING.

INT. NORMAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Norman sits back and sighs, frustrated.

A CAR HORN blares behind him: he's blocking a turning lane.

Reluctantly, he starts up the car.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dundoski steps out, carrying his saddle-bag -- and FLIPS OUT, shouting back into the warehouse:

DUNDOSKI

Holy fucking shit Marcus, HOW MANY times do I have to tell you not to block me in?!

-- drawing his gun and FIRING REPEATEDLY into Marcus' Range Rover, which is parked blocking Dundoski's Corvette.

Dundoski grimaces, annoyed at himself.

DUNDOSKI

Damn it.

He turns and heads for a beat-up CARGO VAN, shouting:

DUNDOSKI
I'm taking the van.

INT. NORMAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Norman drives, fretting. Impulsively:

NORMAN
Hey, Siri: Call George Roizman.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - THE SAME TIME

Madelyn sits alone. Daylight fading out the windows, but she hasn't turned on the lights.

George's phone RINGS. She glances at it. It's not her phone. Lets it go to voicemail.

INT. NORMAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

NORMAN
(into phone, voicemail)
Um, hi -- you don't know me, my name is Norman Murch, and -- it's about George -- and his stuff.
(winces)
Please call me.

Norman disconnects. Sighs.

NORMAN
Siri: rewind time two minutes and erase.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SOON AFTER

Madelyn takes a deep, decisive breath and stands up. Goes to turn on the lights.

Her eye is snagged by a REEL-TO-REEL TAPE PLAYER, part of George's elaborate SOUND SYSTEM. Next to it, a SHELF OF OLD AUDIOTAPES in hand-labelled boxes from a studio recording session: **The Utter Destruction Of Everything.**

She stares at them -- then turns away, ventures into the rest of the house.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - THE SAME TIME

Madelyn is walking through the house, turning on lights.

She comes upon George's DESK: cluttered with papers. She sighs, sits, and begins to SIFT THROUGH IT.

INT. NORMAN'S APT. - LATER

A one-bedroom in a boring, boxy apartment building. Well-organized books on shelves going up to the ceiling, file cabinets by a sturdy wooden desk, where the Selectric Typewriter should be.

It's getting dark out. Norman sits on worn sofa, with a bourbon on the rocks. Not his first.

His laptop is open on the cluttered coffee table, and he is looking at **MADELYN'S PHOTO**, from the Corporate Website.

He drinks. Re-dials a number on his phone, without bothering to pick it up. Also not his first. On speaker, the voicemail picks up:

GEORGE (ON TAPE)
This is George Roizman and (NAME OF
PODCAST). Leave a message.

Norman disconnects as it beeps. Finishes his bourbon.

NORMAN
Oh...hell.

INT. NORMAN'S CAR - DUSK

Norman drives up a ramp onto a highway.

Through the windshield: a sign indicating he is heading to Pennsylvania.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - SOON AFTER

Madelyn opens a closet and takes in George's CLOTHING.

That hits her hard. He's not going to be wearing them any more. She suddenly YELLS at them:

MADELYN
Screw you, George! I have a life!
I'm not staying here to clean up
your mess. What were you thinking,
(MORE)

MADELYN (CONT'D)

calling out a serial killer?! Your whole damn life was gestures, George! Didn't you get tired?!

(beat)

Oh no. Was THAT what this was?

(beat)

A way out -- with a bang?

(beat)

Please tell me you didn't want this.

The DOORBELL rings.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - SOON AFTER

Madelyn opens it, revealing:

Carl Dundoski, biker/meth dealer. Big, intimidating, hairy...and polite. He's got plastic zip-tie cuffs sticking out of his back pocket, but Madelyn can't see that.

DUNDOSKI

Hey. I know this is a little weird, but -- I grew up in this house. Back when. I was up in the attic. With my brother Theo. He's a radiologist now. So my sisters could have the nice bedrooms. One of them became a nun. Anyway I was on my way through town, and I thought - maybe I could just come in and walk around a little. You know: memory lane.

Madelyn takes him in. The past 24 hours have been so weird, she doesn't even really try and make sense of this.

MADELYN

I'm sorry, it's not a great time.

Dundoski considers this. Long enough that it's awkward.

DUNDOSKI

No worries. You have a blessed day.

He backs away. Madelyn shuts the door, shaking off the weirdness.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - OTHER ROOM - SOON AFTER

She's got her earbuds in, sorting through George's papers as she talks to her office:

MADELYN

No, I'll be back tomorrow. I can't let this take over my life. It's a whole -- house. I'm gonna have to get people to come box it all up.

(listens)

I don't know, I don't even know what "probate" is. Have you submitted the **(work stuff)**?

The doorbell rings.

MADELYN

Oh, hey: my dinner's here, I've gotta go.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - FOYER - SOON AFTER

She opens the front door, revealing **KYLE**: late teens, wearing a local shop's LOGO-printed APRON, carrying a plastic bag with a TAKE-OUT DINNER.

KYLE

Ziggy's Sandwiches.

MADELYN

Yes -- thank you! Cash all right?

KYLE

Cash works. Nineteen oh five.

As Madelyn takes the money from her wallet, Kyle checks the place out. She notes his gaze. He shrugs, busted:

KYLE

This is where that guy got serial-killed.

Madelyn controls the urge to correct him. Or hit him.

MADELYN

Yeah.

KYLE

Poisoned, right?

Madelyn nods, trading the bag for the cash. She can't blame the kid.

MADELYN

Thus: take-out.

Now it's a bit awkward, because: he could leave. But instead:

KYLE

Are you his...mom?

MADELYN

Ex-wife.

KYLE

Oh -- wow. You must be...

MADELYN

I'm not.

KYLE

...pissed.

MADELYN

Oh. Maybe. No. I'm not.

(beat)

I don't know what I am.

KYLE

Sucks.

MADELYN

It's what he was like. Chaos.
Chaos in cheap sneakers.

Kyle doesn't quite manage to leave yet. She waits.

KYLE

Drugs?

MADELYN

(sighs)

Yeah. I mean: I don't know. When we were together, yes.

Slight beat.

KYLE

I meant do you want some?

MADELYN

Oh!

KYLE

I sell some stuff that's not on the menu. If you know what I mean.

MADELYN
I do. Understand.

KYLE
I just thought: you know -- take
the edge off.

MADELYN
What makes you think there's an
edge?

Kyle doesn't even bother to answer. She realizes it. Sighs.

KYLE
Edibles? Xanax? X?

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

MUSIC BLASTING on the excellent sound system: MADELYN &
GEORGE and their punk/grunge band. Hand-scrawled on the reel-
to-reel tape's box: **THE DEATH OF MUSIC AS WE KNOW IT.**

Lit only by a LAVA LAMP, Madelyn -- seriously stoned -- SINGS
AS LOUD AS SHE CAN along with her 20-year-old self.

INT. DUNDOSKI'S PICKUP - CONTINUOUS

Dundoski, parked across the street in the dark, watches the
house. He frowns, rolls down his window:

The blasting music drifts in.

DUNDOSKI
...the hell?

EXT. GEORGE'S STREET - CONTINUOUS

Dundoski gets out of his truck, wary. Walking closer, trying
to glimpse the party in this house of grief.

He doesn't notice HEADLIGHTS slowly approaching down the
street. They stop a block away, and GO OUT.

INT. NORMAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Norman studies the lit-up house and the BIG LURKING FIGURE.
It moves into the dark, heading to the back of the house.

NORMAN
...uh-oh.

He dials **9-1-1** on speaker.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The SCREAMING-LOUD SONG ends. In the sudden silence, Madelyn takes a sweaty, happy bow to an imaginary audience.

EXT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Dundoski freezes, hand on the doorknob. Listening. Steps back.

INT. NORMAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

911 (ON PHONE)
 ...please choose from the following
 options: for fire, press 2. For
 medical emergency, press 3. For
 police, press 4 --

Norman hastily presses 4, eyes on the house.

911 (ON PHONE)
 Thank you for calling Oakdale
 County Sheriff Services. Please
 listen carefully, because our menu
 has changed --

NORMAN
 AAARGH!

He hangs up and gets out of the car.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Madelyn finishes THREADING A NEW TAPE into the machine and flips a CLUNKY OLD LEVER. Tape hiss.

Behind her, outside the dark window: Dundoski PEERS IN.

ENGINEER (ON TAPE)
**[Band name, song title, take
 number.]**

Murmurs of the band counting down -- then MUSIC BANGS OUT of the speakers.

Dundoski backs away.

EXT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN DOOR - CONTINUOUS

He moves swiftly to the kitchen door. Produces a MASSIVE HUNTING KNIFE and easily POPS the LOCK.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Madelyn THRASHES and DANCES as she SINGS into an imaginary MICROPHONE -- facing an imaginary dark, crowded club full of sweaty GRUNGE-PUNK NEW YORKERS.

Behind her, Dundoski appears in the KITCHEN DOORWAY.

Watches her, staying still.

Dundoski SEES -- past Madelyn: a TRAP DOOR in the hallway ceiling. The way up to the ATTIC, where George's evidence waits. His OBJECTIVE.

Madelyn has no idea he's there, gone full-Joplin.

Dundoski grimaces and retreats back into the kitchen.

INT. GEORGE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He opens drawers -- considers a ball of KITCHEN TWINE, keeps looking -- now trying the GLASS-FRONT CABINETS --

-- as, behind him, NORMAN PUSHES OPEN the KITCHEN DOOR.

Norman FREEZES.

Paralyzed with fear. Trying to think. MUSIC BLASTING.

Dundoski CLOSES the CABINET...sees NORMAN reflected in its glass.

Norman TURNS to FLEE --

-- Dundoski LUNGES, pushing the door SHUT as Norman tries to open it, SLAMMING Norman into it.

NORMAN

Ooof!!

Dundoski GRABS him by the collar and SWINGS HIM AROUND --

-- Norman GRABBING a CAN OF COFFEE from the counter as he SWOOSHES past it --

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - THE SAME TIME

Madelyn, lost in her performance, WANDERS the room -- TURNING AWAY just as --

-- behind her: Dundoski staggers backward, the coffee can clattering off his forehead, choking on a cloud of GROUND COFFEE.

Norman RUSHES PAST him, into the living room --

-- SCARING the hell out of Madelyn, who SHRIEKS as he lunges for the shelves, FRANTICALLY looking for a weapon or a phone or --

-- Dundoski stomps in, COMING AFTER HIM --

-- Norman GRABS the LAVA LAMP, HOT orange blobs in a glowing-yellow liquid -- and WHIRLS, swinging it as hard as he can --

-- hitting Dundoski's head with a LOUD, HOLLOW CLONK. The lamp GOES OUT -- its GLASS-CONE CORE flying out of its metal shell and bouncing off a wall.

Dundoski DOUBLES OVER, turning away, clutching his head.

MADELYN

What the--?!

Norman can't explain, eyes on Dundoski, wary -- no sound in the DARKENED ROOM except everyone's HEAVY BREATHING -- and the LAVA LAMP, ROLLING UNSTEADILY across the wooden floor.

Dundoski and draws the HUGE HUNTING KNIFE.

NORMAN

Oh, crap.

MADELYN

NO!

Lost in rage, Dundoski STARTS toward Norman --

DUNDOSKI

Mother fucker!

-- who BACKS UP against the shelves, DEER-IN-HEADLIGHTS --

-- until Dundoski STEPS ON THE LAVA LAMP and FLIPS like a rag doll, LEGS FLYING UP, ARMS FLAILING -- HEAD hitting the wood floor with a frightening THUD.

Norman stares.

Madelyn STEPS on Dundoski's wrist and takes his knife away.

She backs off, holding it, STARING over the moaning meth dealer at Norman.

MADELYN

Who ARE you?! What is HAPPENING?!
What the fuck?!

Norman doesn't have time to answer: Dundoski GROANS, GETTING to his HANDS and KNEES.

NORMAN

PHONE?!

Madelyn POINTS to the LAND-LINE, and Norman snatches it up, dialing 9-1-1 --

Madelyn anxiously HOLDS the knife READY --

-- as Dundoski GETS TO HIS FEET.

OPERATOR (ON PHONE)

9-1-1 Operator, what is your
emergency?

Dundoski considers them. There is no question he could disarm and dismember them both in moments.

He sighs. Shakes his head, and walks out the front door.

Closing it gently behind him.

EXT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dundoski walks to his truck, rubbing the back of his head and dialing his phone. Into it:

DUNDOSKI

Yeah. We got a problem.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Madelyn -- still holding the knife ready to keep Norman back -
- SHUTS OFF THE MUSIC. She is wary, confused and stoned (but trying to conceal that.)

OPERATOR (ON PHONE)

Do you need assistance?

Norman disconnects, looking at her -- leaning in pain and holding one hand to his eye; the brow is bleeding.

NORMAN

I'm sorry: do you want me to call them back?

MADELYN

I don't know.

NORMAN

You've got the knife.

MADELYN

You afraid of me?

NORMAN

Kinda.

MADELYN

Good.

NORMAN

Sorry -- you mind if I just...?

He points at the kitchen and starts cautiously backing toward it, bloody hands raised. Madelyn follows, knife still ready.

INT. GEORGE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Norman takes a bag of frozen vegetables from the freezer, and presses it to his eye.

MADELYN

Here, wait a second.

She goes to the sink, unsteadily.

NORMAN

You okay?

MADELYN

Shut up, I'm helping you. You need to disinfect that.

He shuts up while she squirts dish soap on a washcloth and applies it clumsily to his cut.

NORMAN

Ow! Stings.

MADELYN

That means it's working.

Sudsy water runs down his face and over his clothes. He is trying to be polite, letting her "help." They are intimately close now.

NORMAN

Wow. Your pupils are HUGE.

MADELYN

I'm stoned out of my mind.

NORMAN

Good to know.

She stands pressing the dripping soapy cloth to his face. They are staring at each other.

NORMAN

My name is Norman Murch. I'm sorry I'm here like this. I just didn't want Mr. Dundoski to hurt you.

MADELYN

And...who is Mr. Dundoski, exactly?

NORMAN

He's a meth dealer.

MADELYN

Right. And you know him -- how?

NORMAN

I'm in a...group with him. Online. Crime-solving.

MADELYN

The meth dealer is crime-solving?

NORMAN

He has a very deep sense of justice.

Silence. Standing so close, face to face.

Madelyn steps back.

MADELYN

And what are you? In all this.

NORMAN

A journalist. I'm writing a book about online culture. That's why I'm in the group.

MADELYN

So you're like: spying on them?

She sits at the kitchen table, the drugs and stress overtaking her. Closes her eyes, breathes deeply.

NORMAN

No: I'm "embedded." Because I think something monstrous has happened to our world and we don't even see it. Digital culture is how we see now. Tech philosophy took over the world, because it's making money -- and no one is questioning whether it's a good philosophy. Crowd-sourcing. The abdication of responsibility. The destruction of society by the internet.

Madelyn SNORES. Norman sighs. He goes to gently shake her.

NORMAN

Hey. Let's get you into bed.

Draping her arm around his shoulder and putting his arm around her waist, he helps her to her feet --

MADELYN

Are you driving?

NORMAN

"Driving"?

MADELYN

My bed is in New Jersey.

Holding her up as he walks her out of the kitchen:

NORMAN

No, I'm not driving.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - SOON AFTER

Norman struggles to get them both through the doorway.

MADELYN

I'm not usually like this.

Distracted, trying to figure out how to turn her so she doesn't just flop down face-first on to the bed:

NORMAN
What are you usually like?

MADELYN
I'm dishwasher safe.

NORMAN
Uh-huh.
(turning with her)
All right -- just let's get you
turned --

MADELYN
Whhhooooo -- dangerous maneuver.

He's backing her up to the bed --

NORMAN
And yet: you can say the word
"maneuver."

-- they sit with an ungraceful abruptness. He's still got one arm around her waist, the other hand gripping her wrist, which is around his shoulders.

NORMAN
I'm going to let go of you now.

MADELYN
Are you out of your freaking mind?!

NORMAN
You're safe. Dishwashe--

MADELYN
No, no -- NO. If you let go, I
will instantly go whirling off into
outer space.

NORMAN
I swear that you won't.

MADELYN
Really?! Has ANY part of today
been what you thought would
happen?!

Bested logically, Norman tries to figure out the next maneuver. Still holding her --

NORMAN
Okay, *skootch*. Back, like this --

She wriggles back, making the "truck backing up" sound.

NORMAN
Please don't.

And then they're falling backward onto the pillows, Norman's arm still around her. A bit breathless:

NORMAN
Okay, good. Nice.

He starts to try to extricate himself -- and she SNORES again. Eyes shut. Relaxed. Dead weight on his arm.

NORMAN
Oh, no. No. Seriously.

He tries to move and she SNORTS and clutches his wrist. Norman stares at her. Appalled. Amused. Kind of okay.

He sighs, and gives up. Staring at the dark ceiling.

Madelyn breathes deeply. Safe.

INT. ZENA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Zena hurries out to a waiting Uber, pulling her matched suitcase and carry-on, talking on the phone (earpods) to:

INTERCUT:

INT. CAMERON'S ROOM - THE SAME TIME

Cameron is on their earpods as they pull on some shoes to also head out:

ZENA
I have to get out to George's. I'm taking the red-eye.

Norman showed up and hit Dundoski with a lava lamp.

CAMERON
Are you serious? Why?

ZENA
No time. I need you to do something.

CAMERON
I'm on it -- what is it?

ZENA

Tomorrow is my parents' thirtieth anniversary. I need you to go to that for me. Tell them I can't make it, you're there instead.

CAMERON

Are they going to be okay with that?

ZENA

What are they going to do, fire me?

CAMERON

It's fancy, right? Do they have a problem with gender fluidity?

ZENA

I wouldn't bring it up.

CAMERON

Gotcha.

ZENA

One other thing: you need to sing a song.

CAMERON

No way. Sorry.

ZENA

You want to be a singer, right?

CAMERON

I'm working on that --

ZENA

Into the deep end! Boom! A star is born.

CAMERON

I can't.

ZENA

You have to. It's my gift, to them -- and my gift to you. You can do this. Give one of the waiters your phone and have them video. I want to see this.

Agonized and excited:

CAMERON

What kind of song?

EXT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - NEAR DAWN

Night begins to retreat as sunrise warms the sky in the East and paints the front of George's shabby house.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pale light edges through George's window shades. Norman and Madelyn sleep. She still nestles against his chest, his arm is still around her shoulders.

She opens one eye. Her mouth feels like carpeting...and what exactly is she lying on? She rises up slightly to look at:

Norman -- startled awake by the move.

They stare at each other in the dim, pastel-colored sunrise.

Madelyn's eyes widen as it all -- well, some -- comes flooding back.

Norman watches her: caring, concerned, slightly afraid.

Madelyn checks how dressed she is, trying to calculate her proportions of amusement, shame, gratitude and uncertainty.

NORMAN
(hesitantly)
Nothing hap--

She looks up, putting one finger to his lips.

MADELYN
Nope. Shhh.

Norman stops talking.

She slowly withdraws the finger...and moves to replace it with her mouth. A kiss.

Norman is frozen, wide-eyed, ecstatic -- but then:

NORMAN
No -- wait -- hold on --

MADELYN
Oh: my breath?

NORMAN
What? No! I just --

MADELYN
You don't want to.

NORMAN

Oh no -- I do! I just need...
consent.

Madelyn stares at him.

MADELYN

Do you want me to have my lawyers
draw something up?

NORMAN

No -- no: I just -- are you --
still high?

MADELYN

I am not. I am doing this because
I want to. Although, if we keep
discussing it, that will end.

Norman smiles. Leans in to kiss her, trying to rise up on
one elbow -- which is dead asleep. She frowns, starts to
massage it:

MADELYN

Oh, man, I'm sorry! It was under
me all night, wasn't it?

NORMAN

Thank you, OW! Pins and needles.

Madelyn stops. They look at each other, uncertain. And then
they slowly, gently kiss.

And as she climbs on top of him, we...

FADE OUT.

INT. TRAIN - MORNING

McLean, in a window seat, talks on his phone via earbuds:

MCLEAN

...throwing up all night. Yep.
Praying to the porcelain god. Come
on -- you know me: I work hung-over
all the time. This is different.
I think it was the octopus. Have
ever eaten octopus? Don't eat
octopus.

During this, **BILLY** -- late 20's, gorgeous, wearing shorts and
a beat-up hoodie -- comes past and gestures: *is this seat*

(opposite McLean) *taken?* It's no meaningless move, there's a definite romantic edge.

McLean eagerly gestures: *all yours!* While, into earbuds:

MCLEAN

Yep: tomorrow. If I'm not dead.

Billy meets McLean's eyes, eavesdropping, amused. McLean grins, shrugs.

MCLEAN

I'm turning off my phone and going back to sleep.

McLean WINCES at a loud CHIME from the train's PA speakers -- hastily trying to mute his earbuds during:

CONDUCTOR (ON PA)

All aboard. Penn Station to Pittsburgh, Youngstown and Columbus, doors will be closing.

Billy grins and McLean rolls his eyes as unmutes for:

MCLEAN (INTO PHONE)

That? A movie. Tell Bryan to cover the WindWest short sale.

McLean disconnects and takes the earbuds out.

MCLEAN

I'm feeling better already.

BILLY

You look fine.

McLean meets Billy's gaze, appreciating the boldness. Billy smiles, waiting to hear McLean's opening line.

MCLEAN

Was the accident before or after you left Chicago?

Billy's smile falters. McLean realizes he's freaked Billy out. Apologetic:

MCLEAN

Your knee! You have a scar -- orthoscopic? Maybe ten years ago?

BILLY

Are you a -- doctor?

MCLEAN

No, I'm a hedge fund drone. I just notice things. And put them together. The sweatshirt --

-- Billy looks down: his sweatshirt has a small DePaul University logo. McLean shrugs.

MCLEAN

It's like a habit. Detecting, kind of.

Billy forces a smile as he gets up.

BILLY

I just remembered, I don't like sitting backwards.

Watching him walk away -- regretful:

MCLEAN

You rode a bike to the train. And you don't wear a helmet, because you're vain about your hair. Which is...really nice.

(beat)

But you should wear your helmet.

As he puts his earbuds back in --

INT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

A Chemotherapy Treatment Room. NURSE SHRIMPSON, kind and efficient, attends to a handful of PATIENTS in recliner chairs, plugged into IV drips.

As she checks the drips for MRS. WEITZMAN, an elderly woman in a wig:

SHRIMPSON

How are we today, Mrs. Weitzman?

WEITZMAN

We feel crappy. Take my mind off: how's your detective thing going? Catch anybody yet?

SHRIMPSON

Um: no, I'm taking a break from all that right now.

WEITZMAN

Oh, why?! You liked it so much!
That was all I knew about you:
Shirley Holmes, Nurse Detective!

Shrimpton winces a bit, keeping busy with her work.

SHRIMPTON

Some people get too involved.

WEITZMAN

Ohhh. Drama?

SHRIMPTON

Kind of.

WEITZMAN

Well: you're better off.

SHRIMPTON

I think so.

WEITZMAN

All that looking-up serial killers.
That's not nice. What kind of
people do that? You should get a
nice hobby.

Shrimpton is taken aback. Puts on a smile.

INT. HOSPITAL - NURSE'S STATION - MORNING

Shrimpton sits at her desk, slightly put-out. Tries to shake off the conversation, ready to start her new sleuth-less life...but then she hears an ALERT on her phone

SEES THE ALERT FROM ZENA

Hesitates. Wrestling with it.

Shrimpton puts the phone in her purse. Puts the purse in a drawer, and shuts the drawer.

Goes to a BOX of MAGAZINES and ACTIVITIES for patients: takes out a CROSSWORD PUZZLE book.

She sits back at her desk, gets a pen, and tries to focus on...the clues.

EXT. GEORGE'S STREET - THE SAME TIME

Dundoski's van is parked down the block, a discreet distance from George's house.

He climbs out, stretching and squinting in the morning sun. Slowly raises one foot, hands floating in front of him. A yoga pose. Breathing in through his nose, exhaling slowly through his mouth. Peaceful. Until:

TED'S RV drives past -- wobbly, noisy and spewing gray exhaust. The outside is as shambolic and whacky as the interior: covered in bumper stickers, collaged super-market - tabloid front pages, and messages from Ted that look like graffiti.

It parks across from George's house.

Dundoski tries to maintain his beatific calm, walking over.

TED

Hey! What's the rumpus?

DUNDOSKI

Are you for-real with this?

TED

What.

DUNDOSKI

You just parked a conspiracy-nut billboard outside their house.

TED

It's my home. And my beliefs.
First amendment.

DUNDOSKI

Take your amendment around the corner, now.

Ted is about to get into a spirited intellectual debate -- but then he looks in Dundoski's eyes and just starts the RV.

Dundoski watches Ted's beliefs drive out of sight, then returns to his van.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - THE SAME TIME

Cameron, in a top hat and brightly-colored tuxedo, stands singing to Zena's Mom & Dad. A WAITER -- reluctantly, they have an actual job to do -- holds Cameron's phone, face-timing the scene to Zena.

It's an original anniversary song by Cameron. She writes in a trippy-psychedelic style, so Zena's Mom & Dad are forcing their smiles...baffled.

EXT. AIRPORT - THE SAME TIME

Zena holds her phone, absently watching the performance as she loads her luggage into a taxi one-handed, and --

INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

-- gets in the back. Slamming the door, to the DRIVER:

ZENA
You know a town called
(**Shadyville**)?

DRIVER
Yeah -- that's gonna cost you a
fortune.

Cameron's song ends, scattered applause from other tables:

ZENA
I have a fortune. Go.
(into phone)
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY! I love you
guys!

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MIDDAY

Norman wakes, alone, in a dead stranger's bedroom. Daylight coming around the window blinds.

Checks under the sheets: he is naked. Looking around -- scrambling out of bed (*discreetly blocked from our view*) and hastily checking under it.

His clothes are gone.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SOON AFTER

Madelyn, dressed and presentable, sips coffee while she sorts through the papers in George's desk. Looks up at:

Norman, edging in from the hallway, holding a PILLOW in front of his nakedness.

MADELYN
Oh, hey! Hi.

NORMAN

Hi.

MADELYN

You probably want your clothes.

NORMAN

I kinda do.

MADELYN

I threw 'em in the washer. Should
be done now --

(indicates)

Down the hall.

Norman nods and BACKS OUT. Madelyn watches him go...amused.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - SOON AFTER

Norman steps out of the laundry room, buttoning his shirt.

He follows the SOUND of DISHES clinking and CABINETS opening -

INT. GEORGE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

-- to find Madelyn trying to cook in the unfamiliar kitchen.

NORMAN

Thank you!

MADELYN

Can I make you some breakfast?

NORMAN

I don't want to put you out.

MADELYN

I'm already out. I'm way out,
here. Might as well eat.

Norman smiles. Watching her looking around, uncertain.

MADELYN

You like eggs?

NORMAN

I shouldn't, but I do.

MADELYN

Good. Because I'm making eggs.
He's got to have a frying pan,
right?

Norman thinks, pulls open the oven: the frying pan is there.

MADELYN
Mystery solved.

NORMAN
Is this weird for you?

MADELYN
In every possible way.

NORMAN
I thought maybe it was just me.

MADELYN
Look: I don't -- do this kind of thing.

NORMAN
Breakfast?

MADELYN
Making love -- on the -- first...

Awkward sudden silence. Not sure how to talk about this.

NORMAN
I do. "Make love" -- right away.
(beat)
If -- it...works out. That way.

MADELYN
Really.

NORMAN
I mean: I don't have to.

MADELYN
Wow. Now I feel...icky.

NORMAN
Oh -- God -- no: it wasn't --
(frustrated)
I was just trying to -- tell you --
it wasn't so...

MADELYN
Please don't finish that sentence.

NORMAN
No! No -- it was great.
(firmly)
It wasn't so terrible. That you
did it. It happens.

MADELYN

In my dead ex-husband's crime scene house.

Awkward silence.

NORMAN

We both needed to...connect.

Madelyn sighs. Nods.

MADELYN

Well, we did.

They kind of smile. She begins to cook again.

MADELYN

So you do this a lot.

NORMAN

Eh...kind of burned-out. Or blown-up. They tend to start fast and blow up.

MADELYN

Maybe slow down, next time. Look for lit fuses, ticking.

NORMAN

Now you tell me.

She keeps cooking. Not looking at him. So he opens up.

NORMAN

I think I just gave up a long time ago on the idea that a relationship could not blow up.

(beat)

I just stopped worrying about it. Figured: plunge in, hang on, and try to enjoy the parts that feel like a romantic comedy before you get to the inevitable horror movie.

Madelyn sets a plate of eggs on the table.

MADELYN

So: this is the funny part?

Beat. As he sits:

NORMAN

You're different.

She smiles slightly -- then as he lifts a forkful of eggs to his lips she SCREAMS, LUNGING AT HIM --

MADELYN
NAAAAHHH!

-- grabbing the fork and throwing it across the kitchen.

Norman handles it pretty well.

NORMAN
There we go. Right on time.

MADELYN
He put the poison in George's food.
The serial killer.
(beat)
That's was George's food.

They both take a deep breath.

NORMAN
Wanna maybe go out for brunch?

INT. DINER - LATER

They're in a booth, finishing brunches. It's kind of a date.

NORMAN
(thinking back)
Possessive. Promiscuous.
Dishonest. Kleptomaniac.
Hypochondriac. Neo-fascist.

Madelyn grins, setting aside her silverware.

MADELYN
God: I'm sorry I'm so -- boring.

NORMAN
I don't think you can say last
night was boring.

MADELYN
(with a shy smile)
Or this morning.

He smiles, too. Especially at her shyness. And then:

NORMAN
God, I'm sorry! You're -- in
mourning, and I was just --
blathering about my --

MADELYN

No. I'm not. In shock, maybe.
But George was -- over.

He watches her wrestle with it. Respectful, listening.

MADELYN

It was hard. Leaving him. We were good. It was intense. It was everything I ever wanted.

NORMAN

So why did you?

MADELYN

Because I was nineteen years old. And everything I wanted was crazy. And if I stayed with him I was going to die.

NORMAN

Drugs?

She shakes her head, struggling to capture it:

MADELYN

I mean, yeah -- but: no. George was the drug. He was just fearless. Musically. Emotionally. All in. All or nothing. He would jump off the stage, he would jump off the roof, into a mosh pit. It's like he was missing a part of his brain.

(beat)

Which was incredibly appealing.

(beat)

Until you had to take him to the emergency room.

NORMAN

Or make his funeral arrangements.

Madelyn looks at Norman, startled by the empathy.

Suddenly, decisively, she opens her purse, sets some cash on top of the check and gets up.

EXT. DINER - SOON AFTER

Madelyn hurries out. Norman follows, respectfully watching her thousand-yard-stare at the town's "miracle mile."

NORMAN

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to upset you.

MADELYN

I'm not upset.

NORMAN

You seem upset.

She walks away -- upset. Suddenly turns:

MADELYN

I don't want to hunt serial killers!

NORMAN

(startled)

You...don't have to.

Despite the noise and traffic, it's an intimate moment.

MADELYN

I feel like my life was an airplane, and I was fine -- didn't even have the "seatbelts" sign on -- and all of a sudden, BOOM: the door blows open and I'm...falling.

NORMAN

Maybe you should just get back in, then. To your life. It's still there, right?

MADELYN

It just seems like -- I won't believe in it, any more.

(beat)

Like if I went back to work now, I might just start...screaming.

He knows better than to try to "solve" this. They stand there by the highway, looking at each other.

NORMAN

What are you gonna do?

MADELYN

I don't know!

(beat)

You want to...hang out some more?

EXT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - THE SAME TIME (INSTAGRAM STORY)

Zena, selfie-broadcasting from the sidewalk, the house (and crime-scene-taped garage) behind her:

ZENA

George told me privately that, if anything ever happened to him: he left everything we'd need to know in

No one's home. I'm going in.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - SOON AFTER (INSTAGRAM STORY)

TIME CUT - NEW STORY: Zena hand-held-selfies sneaking through the house...

ZENA

...either there's like a door to a staircase up to the attic or -- wait! Yes:

The TRAP DOOR in the ceiling.

TIME CUT - NEW STORY- HAND-HELD: She has dragged an ottoman in from the living room, and stands on it to PULL DOWN THE DOOR. SPRINGS CREAK eerily. Zena turns to us, eyes wide -- then stares up at the NARROW STAIR-LADDER leading into DARKNESS.

INT. GEORGE'S ATTIC - SOON AFTER (INSTAGRAM STORY)

TIME CUT - NEW STORY - HAND-HELD: Zena searches the dark attic, beneath the crooked angles of the roof. The glare of her phone-flashlight roves over the dusty cobwebbed clutter --

-- moving in on: the (thing) marked (name).

ZENA (V.O.)

Oh my God: it's here. Like he said. Speaking to us from beyond the grave. Crying out for justice.

INT. GEORGE'S ATTIC - SOON AFTER (INSTAGRAM STORY)

TIME CUT - NEW STORY: Zena has set the phone on a tripod, so she can do an "unboxing video." As she opens the **(thing)**:

ZENA

*So excited. Unearthing this LIVE.
George's secret files, where he
kept the evidence identifying the
Chemistry Set Killer...*

*It's EMPTY -- except for a FLASH DRIVE. Zena looks right at
us, awestruck. Grabs her bag and pulls out her laptop.*

INT. GEORGE'S STUDIO - DAY (VIDEO CLIP)

ON ZENA'S LAPTOP: *George speaks to the camera -- simple,
unscripted, confessional.*

GEORGE

*I can't break through. It's going
nowhere.*

(beat)

*I know this case can be cracked.
It's just a matter of going all-in.*

(beat)

*So I'm going to use myself as bait.
Announce I have new evidence, even
though I don't. Really hype it up -
- and get the Killer to come after
me. If I can scare him, or make
him angry, maybe he'll come out of
hiding.*

(beat)

*So I kind of hope someone's
watching this. Because that means
it worked.*

INT. GEORGE'S ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Zena hits the spacebar, staring at the screen.

ZENA

No. No.

She has set up a portable mini-studio in the attic to capture
her "investigation": a collapsible phone tripod, small LED
lights, a mic. But she has forgotten about it, now:

ZENA

NO NO NO NO NO.

Scrubs back a bit in the video, plays it again:

GEORGE (ON SPEAKER)
 -- use myself as bait. Announce I
 have new evidence, even though I
 don't. Really hype it up --

Zena SCREAMS in frustration --

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - FOYER - THE SAME TIME

-- Madelyn, letting Norman in the front door, FREEZES.

They stare at each other.

MADELYN

911.

But as Norman reaches for his phone --

ZENA (O.S.)
 YOU STUPID FAT OLD BOOMER MORON!

INT. GEORGE'S SECRET BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

ZENA

I'm fucked. I'm so fucked.

Zena kicks a random box -- papers go flying.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Madelyn and Norman EDGE into the living room and see the
 ATTIC STAIRS are down. Madelyn grips the FIREPLACE POKER.

NORMAN

Zena?!

Zena appears at the top of the stairs.

ZENA

Norman?

INT. MCLEAN'S RENTAL CAR - THE SAME TIME

McLean, driving a fabulous rented sports car, approaches
 George's street. He sees Ted's Conspiracy-Mobile RV parked
 at the corner --

-- and jauntily honks his horn in greeting as he drives past.

INT. TED'S RV - CONTINUOUS

Startled, Ted takes a second to realize he knows the driver of the bright-red Corvette -- then he hastily starts his engine and pulls out to follow.

INT. DUNDOSKI'S PICKUP - SOON AFTER

Dundoski sighs, exasperated as he watches the Corvette slowing as it cruises past George's house, scouting it. The RV, revving to catch up -- suddenly CLANKS and SPUTTERS --

-- and DIES, rolling to a stop in front of George's house.

DUNDOSKI
Oh fer f*ck's sake.

EXT. GEORGE'S STREET - CONTINUOUS

Dundoski gets out of his pickup and storms toward the stranded RV, as McLean parks and joins them.

DUNDOSKI
Is this what you knuckleheads call
low-profile?!

MCLEAN
I didn't know our profile mattered.

DUNDOSKI
Zena is in there, right now,
getting the evidence!

MCLEAN
Excellent!

Dundoski points at Ted and his dead Conspiracy-Mobile:

DUNDOSKI
NOT excellent!

Ted tries to restart it -- McLean's phone rings. He checks it, and answers a videocall -- CAMERON's on the other end:

MCLEAN
Hey, the gang's all here!

He swivels his phone to show Dundoski lifting the RV's engine-panel.

INT. CAMERON'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

CAMERON

Do you have Zena? She was
livestreaming from in the house!

MCLEAN

Not at the moment. You want me to
go ring the bell?

EXT. GEORGE'S STREET - CONTINUOUS

McLean, focused on his phone, starts for the house --

DUNDOSKI

You touch that bell, we got a
problem.

Freezing, starting back to the RV:

MCLEAN

Maybe we'll just wait on that.

INT. GEORGE'S KITCHEN - SOON AFTER

Madelyn, Norman and Zena sit around the formica-topped table.
A bottle of bourbon and three glasses are set out.

MADELYN

We should tell the police.

ZENA

No!

(beat)

I mean: why?

NORMAN

It's -- evidence?

ZENA

It's evidence that he didn't have
any evidence!

MADELYN

That seems like something they
should know.

ZENA

How does it help? Except now
they'll think George was just a
crackpot. They're really gonna
work on that case.

Beat.

MADELYN

It feels wrong.

ZENA

If you care about George: you want his plan to work. He proved the killer is still out there. Now we have to get him.

NORMAN

That just seems like exactly the police's job.

ZENA

You think the police are going to let us keep provoking the killer, drawing him out, getting him to make a mistake?! They can't -- they have play by the rules.

MADELYN

You are really scary.

ZENA

Yes I am.

Madelyn and Norman exchange looks, trying to decide whether to go along with this.

Zena catches that eye-contact -- and her own eyes widen.

ZENA

Oh my gahd. No freakin' way. Get OUT!

MADELYN

What?

ZENA

You two?! Seriously?! Did you hook up?!

Zena grins, Madelyn and Norman kind of panic -- busted:

NORMAN

No!

MADELYN

That's -- none of your --

ZENA

You did. Ohmigod -- I love it.

NORMAN

We did not -- hook --

ZENA
 (to Madelyn)
 You did, didn't you? And it was
good!

Madelyn blushes and tries not to say -- but Zena holds out her fist. Madelyn can't help but bump it, and smile.

ZENA
 This is so great. This explains
everything. I am SO happy for you
 two. Wait! We have to celebrate
 this.

She pulls out her phone to pose them for a group selfie. Madelyn hastily stands up to stay out of the image.

MADELYN
 Nope!

ZENA
 Okay -- all right: but you know you
 can't keep this secret, right?

NORMAN
 We can if you don't tell.

ZENA
 Are you kidding?! It's visible.
 You're glowing.

Madelyn sits, amused.

MADELYN
 Well, let's let everyone see for
 themselves, then. Yes?
 (kindly)
 And as for George's plan: it's too
 dangerous.

ZENA
 How are you going to stop me?

NORMAN
 Tell the police?

ZENA
 Last I looked, I can say whatever I
 want in my podcast.

MADELYN
 She can. It's really horrible.

NORMAN

You don't have a podcast.

ZENA

I'm taking over George's. I'm not going to let his death be for nothing.

MADELYN

It was for nothing.

ZENA

You can't stop me from doing this!

MADELYN

No. But I can stop you from being in this house.

ZENA

What?

MADELYN

Get out.

ZENA

But --

MADELYN

No, seriously: get out. You want to be the next victim -- great. But not here.

ZENA

I need his materi--

MADELYN

I don't care. Out. Scram. I am not enabling another murder.

Madelyn points to the front door. Zena, aghast, turns to Norman, who shrugs.

Zena grabs up her stuff and HURRIES OUT, fighting tears.

Madelyn takes a deep, slightly-guilty, resolved breath. Norman nods, privately uncertain but committed to her: *you did the right thing.*

They listen to the front door SLAM.

INT. ZOOM GROUP (FULL SCREEN ZOOM MEETING) - SOON AFTER

Zena paces George's front yard, furious. She has gathered the Crime Crackers into an emergency call. (*We INTERCUT FREELY between the Crackers in their homes and workplaces, Zena at George's and the Zoom Window itself.*)

ZENA

I can't just walk away! George got us close. This can work.

CAMERON

Yeah, but -- it is her house. Now.

ZENA

I just need to know if you're all still in. Am I insane? Should I try to do this?

MCLEAN

Well: those are actually two separate questions. But the answer to both is yes.

DUNDOSKI

Hell yes!

ZENA

(tearing up a bit)
Carol?

SHRIMPTON

I'm in -- with one condition.
(beat)
In on the money, too.

ZENA

What money?

SHRIMPTON

You catch this fella: your podcast's gonna hit the big time. Book deal, HBO series. That all goes to you?

ZENA

Because...I risked my life?
(beat)
Okay: sure. You know what? If there's money, and we're not dead, you can have some. Okay?

SHRIMPTON

You all heard that.

DUNDOSKI
Now I feel dirty.

SHRIMPTON
I guess you can afford your
feelings, Carl.

ZENA
Okay, now the question is, how do I
get access to --

MADELYN (O.S.)
Really?! You're doing this here?!

Zena FREEZES, turns -- busted: Madelyn and Norman watch from
the open doorway to the house.

A SHOWDOWN. Eyes locked on each other.

ZENA
I really don't want this to get
ugly.

The landline phone, inside, BEGINS TO RING.

MADELYN
No, you don't.

Norman winces. Trying to de-escalate:

NORMAN
None of us do.

Madelyn never takes her eyes off Zena. To Norman:

MADELYN
Would you get the phone?

As Norman reluctantly goes back inside, Madelyn talks loudly -
- not just to Zena, but to everyone on her Zoom:

MADELYN
I want you all to listen to me.
Because this is very important.
Murder is not fun. It is not a
game. You should not be messing
with serial killers. I am taking
what we found to the police.

ZENA
What I found.

MADELYN
Get off my lawn.

When Zena starts to argue, Madelyn fake-lunges at her:

MADELYN
SCOOT!

Zena backs up, startled -- as is Norman, in the doorway with the landline hand-set:

NORMAN
Mad?
(when she turns)
It's for you.

Madelyn () takes the phone.

MADELYN
Hello?

INTERCUT:

EXT. SMALL TOWN FISHING PIER - THE SAME TIME

A picturesque, even cliché, New England town: fishing boats at a dock, a row of local shops and restaurants.

ELMORE DEAKINS is on a cheap pre-paid phone. In his 70s, wrinkled, weathered, white-haired, in plain but neat clothes: denim, cotton.

DEAKINS
Is this...George Roizman's widow?

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MADELYN
Yes. Ex-widow.

Madelyn goes inside, to focus; Norman and Zena follow.

DEAKINS
I'm sorry. For your loss.

MADELYN
Thank you. Who is this?

DEAKINS
I just wanted to say I didn't do it.

Madelyn's eyes widen, looking at Norman and Zena.

MADELYN
You didn't do...what?

DEAKINS
I didn't kill him.

Madelyn -- in shock -- trying to keep her voice steady:

MADELYN
Are you saying -- this is
the...Chemistry Set Killer?

Norman and Zena's jaws drop. Zena steps back to whisper frantically to her Zoom call:

ZENA
It's CSK! On the phone!

CAMERON
No freakin' way!

SHRIMPSON
What is he saying?!

MCLEAN
I have questions.

DUNDOSKI
Trace it! Trace the call!

Madelyn paces away, focusing on Deakins:

DEAKINS
I never liked that name.

MADELYN
But you are the one that...George
was podcasting about.

DEAKINS
Yes.

Madelyn turns, amazed, to Norman and Zena: *he just said yes!*

MADELYN
And you're calling...to tell me you
didn't kill him?

DEAKINS
Look: I just heard about this, on
the news. And...this is insane.
Someone is taking my private --
issues -- and using them. I don't
even know why.

(MORE)

DEAKINS (CONT'D)

(beat)

I just want you to know: I had nothing to do with this.

(beat)

I stopped. A long time ago. I haven't -- done anything -- in a long time.

Madelyn is riveted. The man seems sincere.

ZENA

(to Madelyn, whispered)

Can I talk to him?

Madelyn paces away from Zena, trying to stay with Deakins.

MADELYN

You should tell the police.

DEAKINS

I can't do that.

MADELYN

You can if you're really innocent.

Zena, frustrated -- goes to the landline-base and puts the call on Speaker:

DEAKINS

I didn't do this. That may not be the end of it, for the police.

Madelyn WHIRLS, startled. But he has no idea he's now broadcasting. Madelyn falls silent -- uncomfortable talking to him further with the whole Zoom Group listening.

Awkward silence.

NORMAN

How do we even know you're the real Chemistry Set Killer?

Deakins FREEZES. Close to disconnecting.

DEAKINS

Who is that?

Madelyn glares at Norman, who shrugs -- only semi-apologetic.

MADELYN

It's some -- people --

NORMAN

I'm a journali--

ZENA
 (over him)
 My name is Zena Morano. I'm
 leading a group of web detectives
 to solve the murder of George
 Roizman.

Madelyn and Norman look at Zena, appalled. She meets their
 gaze, scared she's gone too far.

DEAKINS
 "...web detectives"?

ZENA
 We hunt serial killers. From home.
 And...office.
 (beat)
 I mean: "hunt" is kind of just a --
 way of putting it.
 (beat)
 We also want to hear your side of
 it. Of course.

DEAKINS
 So it's just...a form of
 entertainment? For a bunch of
 bored, lonely people?

ZENA
 We're a community. Crowdsourcing.
 When the authorities give up, we
 don't. We solve cold cases. All
 that stuff you got away with
 because no one was looking... now
 we're looking. And talking to each
 other. And if anything happens to
 one of us -- like it did to George:
 then everyone will know. And we
 all come after you.

On the Zoom, this bold posturing gets thumbs-ups and floating
 hearts. But the silence that follows is unnerving.

DEAKINS
 Have you ever caught one? A serial
 killer?

ZENA
 Not so far. No.

DEAKINS
 Have you thought about what might
 happen if you did?

Chilling pause as the threat sinks in. Zena, for the very first time, is speechless. Norman sees it...and:

NORMAN

You never answered the question:
How do we know you are who you say?

DEAKINS

Why on earth would I call a dead man's house and pretend to be a serial killer?

NORMAN

Maybe you want attention.

DEAKINS

From a bunch of internet "sleuths"?

NORMAN

You didn't know who would pick up the phone.

ZENA

Tell us something only the killer would know. Like: from a crime scene. That the police didn't make public.

DEAKINS

If I tell you something only the killer would know...how will you know if it's true?

Deakins sighs, struggling. Then, warily...but truthfully:

DEAKINS

Everyone thinks I stalked my victims. That I took months to learn everything about them. But the truth is, I would just do something like watch a bus stop and whoever got off, it was them. Follow them home, break in, poison their food and get out.

ZENA

But -- all the profiles said: getting so close was the kick.

DEAKINS

No. I was very strict with myself: no reasoning. Just chance. They didn't matter. I didn't want to know them. Or care.

(MORE)

DEAKINS (CONT'D)

(beat)

It was just me against the universe. That was the point. To make things happen. Because I couldn't stand to live in this meaningless abyss without -- fighting back.

Everyone is kind of stunned. Gently:

NORMAN

Why did you stop?

Deakins hesitates. But it's kind of good to share.

DEAKINS

I fell in love.

(beat)

And then the universe was no longer meaningless.

Norman, Zena and Madelyn look at each other.

MADELYN

We should tell the police it wasn't him.

DEAKINS

Please don't.

MADELYN

Why not?

NORMAN

Because they'll want to know how we know.

DEAKINS

Yes. Exactly.

NORMAN

But if we don't, they'll waste time looking for you.

MADELYN

(to Norman)

But then: do I tell them George didn't have secret evidence?

DEAKINS

I'm sorry: what?

MADELYN

Oh, lord, right: I'm so sorry. He made it all up. He didn't have new evidence. He was just trying to bait you, lure you out of hiding.

(beat)

Kind of a silver lining, I guess, for you.

DEAKINS

Wow. That's -- a lot to process.

Deakins just looks down, thoughtful. In the silence:

ZENA

Is this as weird for you as it is for us?

DEAKINS

I have never spoken about it to anyone.

ZENA

We're like: the only ones who really understand you. I have so many questions.

NORMAN

I have one. But it's a big--

ZENA

Well, hang on: is it okay if I record this part of our conver--

DEAKINS

No. It's not okay.

ZENA

How about this: shoot me your contact info, so I can keep you in the loop as we work on it.

Awkward silence.

NORMAN

If you didn't kill George... who did?

ZENA

Whoa. Right.

DEAKINS

Yeah. I was wondering that.

NORMAN
Somebody pointed the cops right at
you. Who did that, and why?

ZENA
You should team up with us.

DEAKINS
To...catch me?

ZENA
No! To clear your name.

DEAKINS
I don't think so.

ZENA
Then people are going to think
you're a killer.

Awkward beat.

DEAKINS
I just wanted Mrs. Roizman to know.

MADELYN
I understand. And I appreciate it.
Thank you.

DEAKINS
*(you guys go your way and I go mine
- please don't help me*
(beat)
Take care.

Deakins disconnects.

EXT. SMALL TOWN FISHING PIER - CONTINUOUS

Deakins removes the battery and drops the phone into the
water.

Seagulls cry. Waves wash past the pier's barnacle-and-salt-
crusted pillars. It is a beautiful day.

He looks down at his hands. They are trembling slightly.

INT. FULL SCREEN: ZOOM MEETING - CONTINUOUS

CAMERON
Did that really just happen?!

ZENA

Yes it did. And it changes
everything.

SHRIMPSON

Wait: are we seriously not going to
tell the police?

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Madelyn grimaces. Torn.

NORMAN

We have evidence that might help
the police catch a serial killer.

MADELYN

Retired serial killer.

NORMAN

Is there such a thing?

MADELYN

I do believe that he stopped.

DUNDOSKI

Doesn't he still have to pay for
what he did?

EXT. SOAP SHOP - THE SAME TIME

Deakins walks along a street of tourist-y old clapboard and
brick-fronted shops.

He unlocks The Soap Shoppe ("*artisanal soaps, handcrafted
scents*") which jingles with authentic bells as he goes in.

INT. SOAP SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Antique racks, shelves richly-colored soaps in baskets.

Deakins turns off the alarm, turns on the lights and the folk
Americana music. But he is distracted.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - THE SAME TIME

ZENA

What do you even mean by
"evidence"?

NORMAN
The call is evidence.

MCLEAN
It is. They can track where it
came from. Open up new leads.

ZENA
No: we're websleuths. We put it
together. We solve it. Ourselves.
And then we give it to the police.

MADELYN
Just because we can -- doesn't mean
we should.

DUNDOSKI
We should.

ZENA
And we can.

MCLEAN
And he knows that.

Beat.

ZENA
Wait: what?

INT. SOAP SHOP - THE SAME TIME

Deakins stops writing on a "Specials Of The Day" chalkboard
in impeccable calligraphy -- halfway through the word
"lavender"...

...realizing.

MCLEAN (V.O.)
He's going to realize that call was
a mistake.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - THE SAME TIME

MCLEAN
It gave us more reason to hunt him.
And new ways to do it. And he's
not an idiot.

NORMAN
So he's going to want to...erase
that mistake.

SHRIMPSON

Oh...holy hell.

Madelyn looks at them, uneasy. Like she's standing in a river that is suddenly rushing faster -- pulling her in.

MADELYN

Maybe it's really just what he said. Maybe he was just reaching out, as a human being.

TED

That was then, this is now. Also, human beings suck.

MADELYN

What if we just -- walk away?

ZENA

We can't. No way. George wouldn't want us to --

MADELYN

George is DEAD! He GOT that way by messing around with serial killers and cold cases! Did you NOT get the lesson here?! You have to STOP. You are NOT detectives!

Long awkward silence. Norman looks at Madelyn.

MCLEAN

Fair enough. Except for one thing.
(beat)
If we don't get him...he's gonna get us.

ZENA

(eagerly)
That's right.

DUNDOSKI

He knows we know.

MADELYN

What if we tell him we won't -- come after him?!

NORMAN

How?

MADELYN

...in the podcast?

ZENA

Yes. Yes!

Tears well in Zena's eyes as she meet's Madelyn's deer-in-headlights stare.

NORMAN

There's one other thing we have to figure out.

(beat)

Who did kill George. And why.

Zena goes to Madelyn, takes her hands -- reassuring and condescending. Madelyn makes a big effort not to pull away.

ZENA

I know you didn't want to be in this. I know you don't respect us. I know you think we're all losers and fools. And maybe we are.

(beat)

But if we don't work together, he can pick us off one by one. And no one will know, and know one will care.

We're a team.

(beat)

We're all Crime Crackers now.

Zena HUGS Madelyn. Madelyn, over Zena's shoulder, MEETS Norman's eyes. He SHRUGS.

END OF EPISODE 1