

UNCOMMONWEALTH

"The Pilot"

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BEGIN TEASER:

EXT. FERN CHARTERS - MORNING

Fern Charters, not much more than a plywood office and a stretch of dock, sticks out into Lake Superior. It's a pink and blue morning.

SUPER: St. Thérèse du Lac, Ontario

MICHAEL FERN (70s) dressed in a worn lumberjack's plaid jacket, totes a coffee thermos as he makes his way down the pier. He's scruffy, red faced and vital.

He smiles at something we can't see -- and then we do:

Tied to the dock, A 1950s DeHavilland Beaver gleams in the sun, liveried in candy red, vivid gold, and creamy white.

An 8-person capacity single prop float plane, is in pristine condition. It bobs gently on its pontoons, pulling at its tie-down line like an eager horse as Michael approaches.

Michael reaches out a hand, gives it an affectionate pat.

He opens the pilot's side door and chucks in his coffee, and a little silver lunch-box. He unties the line, and puts one foot on the strut as he kicks off the dock with the other.

The plane drifts off slightly as he climbs in, and shuts the door. The propeller begins to growl, then accelerates, revving up to a smooth purr.

INT. FLOAT PLANE - DAY

Michael slips on a pair of large headphones. He adjusts the mic, pulls the adjustable yoke over, and noses the aircraft westward.

He reaches down, and flips on a custom car radio above the aviation radio and turns it on a local FM station. He slides on a pair of aviators.

Michael pushes the propeller, which fires into a ROAR LIKE AN ENTIRE ARMY OF HELLS ANGELS. The plane surges forward, and the nose starts to lift.

EXT. FLOAT PLANE - DAY

The Beaver surges into the sky.

EXT. CANADA - US BORDER CROSSING - CONTINUOUS

The plane skirts US airspace over the heads of Canadian Border Services Officer LUKE WONG (40s) and napping crew-cut sporting US Border Patrol Agent KYLE FLYNN (60s) in their respective booths at the boom crossing --

EXT. GOD'S LAND GOLF COURSE - CONTINUOUS

-- just close enough to the mega golf course's SUV-stuffed parking lot. Right on cue - the ALARMS on 20 or so shiny gas guzzlers SQUEAL LIKE AN AMBULANCE CONVENTION.

INT. CANADA CROSSING BOOTH

Luke glances up from his crossword over at Kyle, who struggles into wakefulness in the midst of the cacophony. Luke tries not to grin.

Kyle gazes into his Styrofoam cup of coffee - cold.

KYLE

Hey, Officer Wong. Question for you.

LUKE

Good morning to you too, Agent Flynn.

KYLE

You got that fancy universal health care up there, right?

LUKE

It's pretty fancy.

KYLE

Does it cover Viagra?

Luke hoists an eyebrow.

LUKE

Well, I can't say I've ever --

KYLE

Not for me, smartass.

Kyle nods his chin upward to indicate the float plane above.

Luke grins. Kyle covers his face with his dark glasses, trying to shut out the still BLARING ALARMS.

EXT. FLOAT PLANE - DAY

The Beaver surfs the clouds.

INT. FLOAT PLANE - DAY

Michael juggles a map, the yoke and his coffee. He speaks into his headset, depressing and releasing the transmit button. He has a broad Canadian accent.

MICHAEL

(With full stops)

Yeah, Sky Fin Lodge, looks like about 82 clicks west, bearing south. About an hour. Nah, she's topped off. See you, over and out.

He tosses back his coffee, then shoves the map and the cup over to the co-pilot's seat. He turns the music back up and sings along.

SOUND OVER: "I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)" - The Proclaimers

Michael's yellow Roots-brand boot taps along.

He sings along as he balances the yoke, then reaches for the little silver lunchbox. He glances inside - papers, premium ganja... but no pre-rolled.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Shit.

He grabs a paper and some of the weed, and begins to roll one, glancing up at the windshield... glancing up again...

The music drops down.

EXT./INT. FLOAT PLANE - DAY

The Beaver coasts along effortlessly. In the near distance, a V of Canada geese wings its way north.

The distance, however, shortens quickly, because the plane and the birds are on a collision course.

Michael glances up -- he sees the geese, but doesn't seem to notice they're getting closer, or that they're heading straight towards him. He's almost got his joint rolled.

The geese, now directly in the path of the Beaver, HONK in distress, but being Canada Geese, genetically programmed to expect the right-of-way, stay the course.

Michael finally lights up his joint, and takes a long satisfying drag with his eyes closed. Just as he opens them -- THE LEAD GOOSE COLLIDES WITH THE PROPELLER.

THE PROP SQUEALS AS GOOSE GUTS AND FEATHERS SPLATTER ALL OVER THE WINDSHIELD.

MICHAEL
(North Carolina accent) CHRIST
ALMIGHTY.

DISTRESSED HONKING. Several geese domino into the front of the Beaver, buffeted into back ass-ward tumbles. The tangled prop struggles, SPUTTERS, and fails.

The good news: the sudden drop in airspeed has lowered the plane out of the way of the surviving geese, who wing away in a chorus of indignant HONKING.

The bad news: the Beaver's nose has dipped under the horizon. Lake Superior now fills Michael Fern's vision. The joint still smokes in his fingers.

The Beaver pitches forward. Michael's coffee and stash box fly past him into the the dash. The radio hovers in the air, fully extended on its coil, bouncing on the windshield.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
AW, HELL NO.

He pulls on the yoke, but he can't get out of the dive. The water RUSHES TOWARDS HIM.

EXT. FLOAT PLANE - FLOAT PLANE BITS - DAY

Lake Superior creams the plane.

The pontoons tear off.

The wings shred into fragments.

The tail, propeller and body break apart and skip over the water, disintegrating with each impact.

There is silence, except for the gentle waves.

ANGLE ON

A debris field, half a mile long.

In that field, a plaid jacket floats, blown off Michael's back. The only other sign that remains of him is the joint, floating serenely among the fragments.

The cherry end burns on for an instant... then snuffs out.

SOUND OVER: Tail End of "I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)" - The Proclaimers

END TEASER

OPENING TITLES

ACT 1

EXT. LAURA SECORD HERITAGE CENTRE - DAY

The Laura Secord Heritage Centre is an overgrown family fun has-been. The log cabins are moss-grown, roofs sagging. Weeds have overgrown the "Town Common" - marked by a rusty sign.

The grounds, bounded by tall old growth cedars, are quite beautiful, but the Heritage Centre is a depressing blight of the worst kind: a quaint corpse.

The only sign of human care is a decent sized wood cabin and outbuilding situated at the edge - clearly a functioning home.

INT. ELLIE'S CABIN - KITCHEN - DAY

ELLIE FERN (40s) cradles her mobile phone in one ear as she looks through her kitchen window at the sad sight. She's a little rawboned but pretty and upright, with some extra gray hair.

Around her are many hand-thrown pieces of pottery, all functional, rustic and beautiful. Her old sweater has a few clay stains on it.

On the cluttered window-sill, family photos feature Michael Fern among the various configuration of adult children and grandchildren.

Ellie sniffs, red-eyed, but looks too tired to cry another tear.

ELLIE
 (into the phone)
 When will you get here?

INT. DREW'S TORONTO TOWNHOUSE - DAY

DREW FERN (40s) sits at the wet bar in his fancy open plan kitchen/living room. He's totally gray, massaging his eyes behind his glasses, phone to his ear.

DREW
 I don't know, Sunday? I have to call
 in some favours to get my patients
 covered.

He goes over to the fridge to look at a schedule.

In the background, his son VIJAY (16) and wife ANITA (40s) move through the hall. They are engaging in a screaming fight in a mix of Hindi and English.

DREW (cont'd)
 (into phone)
 Ellie, can you hang on for--

The noise cuts in, and Drew can only watch like a rabbit in the headlights.

VIJAY
 You don't understand! He did it in
 front of everyone. I can't go back.
 You can't make me go back.

ANITA
 (Hinglish)
 Stop being a child. You are going
 back tomorrow. Your grades are in the
 toilet.

VIJAY
 WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO ME?

ANITA
 You are not going to change schools
 just because your one month boyfriend
 dumped you.

Reminded of this, Vijay WAILS, breaks and runs for his room, SLAMMING the door.

INT. ELLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

INTERCUT ELLIE/DREW

ELLIE
What the hell was that?

DREW
Vijay, uh. Boy trouble, I guess.

ELLIE
Maybe some time away will help?

DREW
Depends. You got wifi?

ELLIE
Nope.

DREW
Then yeah, might help.

Ellie's son THEO FERN (17) comes in, also toting some groceries. He gives his mother a side hug, and then unpacks the groceries.

Ellie puts her phone on speaker and holds it up.

ELLIE
Say hi to Uncle Drew.

THEO
Hi to Uncle Drew.

DREW
(filtered)
Hey, Theo. Doing okay?

ELLIE
(into phone)
Listen, I gotta go. Don't forget, the ferry only runs twice on Sunday, so --

DREW
We'll leave early, don't worry. Love you.

ELLIE
Love you too.

She ends the call and sets her phone down. Theo gives her a look -- and she loses it for a moment. He hugs her as she cries it out. Then she pulls herself together.

ELLIE (cont'd)
I'm sorry.

THEO
You want me to go by the station again?

ELLIE
No. They say it'll be some time before anything... surfaces. It's a big lake.

She takes a breath.

ELLIE (cont'd)
I need to go pick up your sister. Can you --?

Theo holds up a rotisserie chicken: he's got it.

ELLIE (cont'd)
Thank god.

She goes towards the door, then pauses and smiles at her son.

ELLIE (cont'd)
It's gonna be hard. Thanks for stepping up.

THEO
Yeah.

EXT. LAURA SECORD HERITAGE CENTRE - EVENING

Theo wanders through the dilapidated park, holding out his phone as he searches for signal. He finds a good spot, overlooking the lake, and sets down.

He sets his phone to speaker and initiates a call. Meanwhile, he rolls a joint -- just the same way Michael did, but with better results.

INSERT: PHONE - CALLING BETHANY

EXT. MEGACHURCH SANCTUARY - EVENING

A brightly lit glass monstrosity looms, encompassed by golf course.

SUPER: Lake Bluffs, Michigan

RAYNE (PRE-LAP)

And God, that great investor, said
unto us, fill the earth and subdue
it.

INT. SANCTUARY - EVENING

Two hundred white people sway with the spirit. RAYNE RICHARDS (50s) preaches with his whole body, evidently describing God's own pyramid scheme to the rapture of the congregation.

BETHANY RICHARDS (18) a pretty, clean cut girl in jeans, listens to the monitor speakers. With a sour smile she mouths along to the words, long since memorized.

RAYNE

(filtered)

He meant not just an investment in
today, but an investment for all
time, glory hallelujah! This is a
blessing you can share with your
descendants, glory hallelujah! Will
you help me build paradise?

CROWD

Glory hallelujah!

Bethany rolls her eyes, disgusted. She turns away, digging through her purse.

EXT. SANCTUARY - NIGHT

Bethany weaves through large American Flag-stickered cars to get to the edge of the parking lot. She surveys the golf course on the other side, watches the sprinklers turning.

She lights a cigarette, just as her phone VIBRATES. She answers the call, checking around for eavesdroppers.

INTERCUT THEO/BETHANY

BETHANY

Kim and Logan have the boat, but I don't want to go without you.

THEO

The memorial's tomorrow. My uncle and cousin and stuff are gonna be here. I can't bail on them.

BETHANY

I don't want you to bail on them.

THEO

Yeah, I know.

BETHANY

It must be awful. I know Michael was like your real dad. It was really nice to him to fly us around all the time.

THEO

Yeah.

Theo takes a drag of his joint, and now he really is tearing up - but he's damned if he's gonna let her hear it.

THEO (cont'd)

(forced casual)

When are you leaving for Ann Arbor?

Bethany glances over her shoulder. Faint POP MUSIC emits from the church. She checks for witnesses, drags on the smoke.

BETHANY

When are we leaving for Ann Arbor. Soon. I just wish it was farther away from here.

THEO

If I get in. My GPA is a joke.

BETHANY

You'll get in. International student revenue, remember?

THEO

(bitter laugh)

Thanks.

Theo sees car lights through the trees. He picks himself up.

BETHANY

Theo?

THEO

I'll talk to you later. Dinnertime.

He puts down the phone, turns to the house - but a RUSTLING catches his eye. He turns around, and - is that A PERSON walking through the woods?

EXT. SANCTUARY - NIGHT

Bethany looks around again, and takes a drag, spots the congregation now exiting the building. She tosses down the cigarette, kicks gravel over it. She pulls out a spray bottle and spritzes herself.

EXT. RAYNE'S ESCALADE - NIGHT

Bethany heads to her father's car. She pauses at the passenger side - a red BROCHURE amidst LEGAL PAPERS draws her eye.

The CRUNCH OF GRAVEL startles her as her father approaches, and unlocks the car.

RAYNE

There you are. We're going to be late.

INT. RAYNE'S ESCALADE - NIGHT

Bethany opens the passenger side, and swings herself into the seat.

RAYNE

You were supposed to wait backstage, kiddo.

BETHANY

I had a call.

RAYNE

I heard about the accident. Tragic. But, you know...

BETHANY

(drones)
"God is the landlord of the soul."

Rayne gives a glossy smile. As he swings the SUV around, the SHUFFLE OF PAPERS spills, Trying to look casual, she steals a glance the back seat:

A red colour brochure sticks out of a manila folder. It includes a promotional photo for Fern Charters, shiny red float plane included. Michael Fern, standing before it, is easily recognizable.

Bethany frowns, side-eyes her father.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Theo follows the sound. It's getting dark, but he knows his way through these woods. He comes to a clearing - and sees a DEER. A six point buck.

It ducks its head at him: *Hi*.

THEO

Hi.

Something unseen spooks it, and it bounds away. Theo smiles, then turns and heads back towards the house.

ANGLE ON

Behind one of the massive old growth cedars hides a DARK FIGURE dressed in hunting camouflage. It waits for Theo to move off, watching him through the gaps in the trees.

The DARK FIGURE lifts a duffle bag - is that a...day-glow orange spray-paint can peeking out?

The Figure disappears into the dark woods.

EXT. ST. THÉRÈSE DU LAC COMMUNITY CENTRE - DAY

A low slung 1980s affair with a mossy roof, the community centre could use a renovation, or perhaps a bulldozing.

ELLIE (PRE-LAP)

Dad didn't talk about himself a lot.

INT. ST. THÉRÈSE DU LAC COMMUNITY CENTRE - GYM - DAY

The old gym is filled with the townsfolk of St. St. Thérèse, eyes forward on the stage. The gym itself is in need of repairs, sporting dusty league banners from the 1970s.

The Thérèseans are dressed in their Sunday best: buckskin, denim, plaid, old leather. They are a weathered people. They are island people. They do not faze easily.

Ellie stands at the podium on a low stage, wearing a violet cardigan with a white rose pinned to it. Her brother, Drew, and his son Vijay are buttoned down. The city slickers.

ELLIE

But he was always willing to listen. He never passed up a chance to give some advice, even if it was the same advice from the day before... and the day before that... and the day before that -- because he never got bored of your problems even if your problems never went away.

A rumble of LAUGHTER from the assembly. Ellie smiles at them. Theo, sitting next to his cousin Vijay, watches his mother.

On his other side, little sister DAWN (5) kicks her legs compulsively until her brother pokes her, and she subsides - for a moment.

ELLIE (cont'd)

Donations for the Amphibious Restoration Society can be made under the name Michael Jacob Fern. I know he'd be grateful.

EXT. ST. THÉRÈSE DU LAC COMMUNITY CENTRE - DAY

The assembly moves through an outdoor buffet, settling at picnic tables. Ellie and Drew mingle with the group, serving food. Theo drifts towards the edges. Vijay sidles up to him.

VIJAY

This blows.

THEO

Yeah. It's pretty awful.

VIJAY

They still don't know what happened? With the plane and all.

Theo shakes his head. As he lingers there, morose with hands in pockets, he notices something odd:

A shiny black Cadillac Escalade navigates through the parked beaters and pickup trucks towards the gathering. Vijay pulls out his phone, oblivious to the interloper.

THEO

Who --

BETHANY (O.S.)

Psssst!

Theo, startled, gasps as she yanks him through the blackberry brambles into a kind of hollow, obscured from view.

Vijay, wandering around for mobile signal, doesn't notice.

Theo shakes off the brambles, touching his scratched arm.

THEO

Ow. Christ, Beth!

BETHANY

Sorry! But your phone is off and they can't see me with you.

THEO

They? Who's they?

EXT. PICNIC AREA - DAY

Drew and Ellie are just about to sit down when two men in business suits approach them. One of them is Reverend Rayne Richards.

The other, an attractive man wearing an expensive black Canada Goose brand jacket navigates the gentle grass slope with long strides. This is ETIENNE DESCHAMP (40s).

Rayne approaches Ellie and Drew with a 24 karat gold plated smile in place.

He extends his hand to Drew first. Confused, Drew balances his plate of mac and cheese salad in order to shake it.

INT. HOLLOW - DAY

Theo turns his attention to the gathering twenty-some yards away.

THEO

Hey, isn't that your dad?

BETHANY

Yeah. I tried to get here earlier.

She indicates her mountain bike, gleaming against a tree. Vijay, drawn by his quest for signal bars, wanders into the sheltered area. He notices Bethany.

VIJAY

This your fancy piece?

BETHANY

Excuse me?

THEO

Bethany, my cousin Vijay. Vijay, Bethany.

Vija, already back on his phone, fails to register this.

THEO (cont'd)

Vij.

VIJAY

Yep, hi.

THEO

(to Bethany)

You were going to explain?

BETHANY

I just know he's interested for some reason.

EXT. PICNIC AREA - DAY

RAYNE

(to Drew)

"Rev" Rayne Richards, Mr. Fern. this is my associate Etienne Deschamp.

Drew shares a confused look with Ellie.

ETIENNE

(Quebec accent)

We were very sorry to hear about your father.

In courteous contrast to Rayne, he directs his words to Ellie.

RAYNE

Amen, amen. That said, before his passing... that is to say I, was in the process of opening negotiations with your father about possible redevelopment of the property.

DREW

Ellie is the one you should be talking to. She inherited the estate.

Rayne, now a little out of court, turns to Ellie. He wipes his hand on his pants before offering it. She signals with a finger: wait - she's chewing a piece of chicken.

She leaves him hanging, puts some extra body English into setting the plate down, wipes her hands off with a napkin. Then finally, she grips his hand. He winces.

Ellie then turns to Etienne. He does not offer his hand.

ELLIE

So sorry, you said something about the estate?

Rayne grows visibly uncomfortable as Ellie pierces him with her wily feminine gaze. He'd much rather be dealing with Drew.

RAYNE

Mr. Fern expressed an interest in --

ELLIE

He never said anything to me about it.

RAYNE

He indicated he had sole proprietorship --

ELLIE

And I've been managing the estate for the last ten years, but you say he's been talking to you about development? That's pretty weird, eh? Is that weird?

She turns to Drew.

DREW

Pretty weird.

Dawn, now hovering by her mother's knees, points at Rayne.

DAWN
You're weird, mister.

Rayne gives an uncomfortable laugh.

RAYNE
Be that as it may. He extended an invitation for us to tour the property.

Etienne's expression darkens. He's about to cut across his incompetent partner, but Ellie's equal to it.

ELLIE
Well, I don't know if you've noticed, but my father is missing, presumed dead. And as he did not make me aware of this invitation, and as I'm now the presumptive sole caretaker of the Second acreage, I've got a business to run, and I've got half again as much property to sort through, I can't be that generous with my time just now.

Dawn tugs at Ellie's sleeve.

DAWN
(stage whisper)
Why is he weird??

Ellie picks her daughter up and balances her on her hip.

ELLIE
Well, Dawnie, he wants to buy our home and he's come to tell us at your granddad's memorial. That's why he's weird.

Rayne drops all hope of making a quick deal. He sighs, gives Dawn a big fake smile that repels her into hiding her face. Then he pulls out a card, and hands it to... Drew.

RAYNE
I wasn't aware the memorial was scheduled for today. They told us in town that we could find you here. I'm sorry to have made a bad impression.

ELLIE
Tell you what, Mr...uh...Reverend.
Come by the park next week.

(MORE)

ELLIE (cont'd)
I'm not promising you anything, but
I'll hear you out. All right?

RAYNE
Thank you, Mrs. --

ELLIE
Ms.

RAYNE
Ms. Fern.

Now getting the death stare from little Dawn, Rayne quits the scene. Etienne lingers. He pulls out a card of his own - it's charcoal grey, silver embossed, and offers it to Ellie.

She takes it, and gives it to Dawn, who examines it, flipping it over, reflecting the silvery light on her mother's freckled cheek.

ETIENNE
When you have questions. Day or
night.

ELLIE
Fine.

ETIENNE
Merci.

He gives her a quick, hard smile. As he turns his back, Dawn chucks the card at him. It flutters to the ground. Drew picks it up and reads:

DREW
Wellspring Industries, Etienne
Deschamp, géologue en chef.

ELLIE
Chief Geologist?

Drew shrugs. He hands the card to Ellie. She glances at it, slips it into her pocket. Together they all walk back towards the gathering.

EXT. HOLLOW - DAY

Bethany and Theo observe this exchange. Theo pulls out his phone, and calls his mother.

EXT. PICNIC AREA - DAY

Ellie's phone rings. She hands a sleepy Dawn over to Drew, who lifts her on to his shoulders. Ellie answers it.

INTERCUT THEO/ELLIE

ELLIE

Theo, where are you?

THEO

We needed some air. Who were those guys?

ELLIE

Some reverend from down south, asking questions about the property.

Bethany, who listens in, frowns at this. Vijay, noticing the sudden tension, finally gives up his text war and edges closer.

THEO

Who were they? Is everything okay?

ELLIE

I don't want you worrying about this stuff right now.

THEO

You want help packing everyone out?

ELLIE

Nah, you've done wonders already. Go catch a break. Just don't be out too late, okay?

THEO

I won't.

He hangs up and looks at Bethany.

THEO (cont'd)

Weird.

She shrugs and gives him a wan smile.

THEO (cont'd)

Why would your dad care about my grandpa's estate? He barely knows who I am and we've been together for... well. Most of our lives.

Vijay looks at the two of them, grins. The awkwardness causes Theo to avert his gaze.

VIJAY

I bet you were the cutest couple in preschool.

BETHANY

I've never been able to figure out if dad really believes he's real estate Moses, or if he's just the world's biggest asshole. He already owns everything on our side of the border.

THEO

Now he wants our side?

She picks up her bike, shrugs, gives him a sad smile.

BETHANY

Come on.

VIJAY

Where are we going?

EXT. LAKE SUPERIOR - EVENING

Bethany, Theo, and KIM (17) and her gorgeous brother LOGAN (19) lounge on a giant pool float attached to a small but sexy speedboat.

Vijay sits in the stern of the boat, trying to engage with Logan, who suns himself, and is difficult to read under a pair of shades.

Kim hangs over the back of the boat.

KIM

So like, what happened to his body?

BETHANY

Kim.

Theo, a bit drunk, gives a Talmudic shrug as he lights a joint.

THEO

What happens to all bodies, Kim? Either they grow old, and sag, and start to smell bad.... or they get eaten by invasive fish species. In this case probably both.

As though to illustrate his point, a fish jumps for one of the hovering mayflies. Theo hoists his beer in sad salute.

Bethany slaps her arm - the mosquitoes are coming out in force.

BETHANY

We should go. I need to sneak back into to Michigan.

Up front in the boat, Vijay tries to make progress with Logan.

VIJAY

I mean, like, I'm not ready to get into another relationship right away.

LOGAN

That's a good idea. Like when I broke up with Kim's best friend Jewel, then I dated her older sister Molly, then, like, her second cousin...first cousin? You're lucky you live in a big city. Small town chicks are low altitude.

Vijay admires Logan's physique.

VIJAY

(not listening)

Lucky. Yeah.

BETHANY

Hey, guys? Maybe we should pack it in.

THEO

Wait.

He peeks over the edge of the float, and squints. Something yellow pops up from the water. Something familiar.

THEO (cont'd)

Beth. Hey Beth. Look over there.

BETHANY

Over where?

Theo shakes off his malaise, does an ungainly roll and falls into the water. He performs an adequate front crawl in the direction of the floating yellow... boot.

As he draws closer, he realizes with us that he's seen it before: it's Michael Fern's yellow Roots boot. And inside:

Theo reaches for it, and swallows. His grandfather's FOOT is still inside, grizzled skin torn at the ankle.

THEO

Oh.

Everyone is on attendance now.

BETHANY

(calling)

What is it?

Appearing from out of nowhere, a border patrol boat sails towards them. It's not yet in hailing distance, but moving fast towards them.

LOGAN

Which side?

VIJAY

What do you mean which side?

BETHANY

America or Canada?

THEO

(waving the boot)

Guys.

The Patrol Boat - A US Patrol Boat, gives a little siren WHOOP. A warning.

BETHANY

Shit.

She offloads the booze, shoving empties and full beers alike into the lake. She takes the cooler and empties it. Some of the beer bottles refuse to sink.

BETHANY (cont'd)

SHIT.

Logan makes an executive decision and guns the engine. He orients the bow northwards, and nudges the boat in that direction.

Theo watches helplessly while his friends sail away as the sun goes down.

THEO

Great.

He treads water as he clings to his the boot with the foot in it. The US Patrol Boat glides through the scattering of beer bottles. They make a gentle CLINKING against the hull.

The boat pulls to a stop. They shine a light on Theo, who blinks, then offers up a weak smile.

INT. MICHIGAN STATE POLICE DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Theo sits in a chair and shivers under a blanket while a detective, ROSEANNA SHAH (30s) lounges nearby.

MACK PAVEL (60s) a scrub-wearing M.E., bends towards Theo with an uncovered swab stick, and flies it towards him like he's feeding apple sauce to a toddler.

MACK

Here comes the airplane.

Theo glares at him as he opens his mouth, and allows Mack to take a sample, which he then sticks into a tube and shuts.

MACK (cont'd)

Sorry, I guess that might be insensitive under the circumstances.

THEO

How long is this gonna take?

MACK

Well, thanks to scientific advances in DNA technology, three to four hours.

THEO

Really?

MACK

Yeah, in Ann Arbor where they have that technology, and depending on their caseload.

SHAH

Look, we know it's your grandfather's foot. This is just a formality. We're not charging you with anything.

THEO

Really?

SHAH

Well, you're going to lose your border privileges until you're 21. But other than that, lots to be grateful for.

THEO

For finding my grandfather's foot?

SHAH

Nah.

THEO

Why?

SHAH

Littering.

She indicates a wet blue recycling bag full of empties being entered into evidence at the desk.

Ellie arrives. She is half rage, half anguish, and all mother bear. She puts her arms around her son -- then gives him a little shake.

ELLIE

Goddamnit, Theo.

THEO

I'm sorry.

She looks at the detective. Shah leads her up to the counter, directs her to paperwork.

SHAH

Sign here. And here. And this one. Oh, we're going to need to get another sample from you.

ELIIE

Sample? Sample for what?

Behind Ellie's back, Mack points to Shah, mimes "phone to the ear" and makes a question mark face.

Shah makes an "oh shit, right" face and shrugs.

Ellie regards both law enforcement professionals in confusion.

No one told her about the foot.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Ellie drives, squeezing the wheel. Theo huddles in the passenger seat. Ahead of them, a state patrol car approaches the border crossing.

Shah leans out the back and speaks to Luke the guard, handing him a sheet of paper.

Ellie pulls to a stop behind it, while the two officials discuss. A long, heavy silence hangs between her and her son.

ELLIE

When they called me... they said
you'd been found in the lake...

Her shoulders slump. She can't stop the tears.

THEO

Mum, I'm okay. It was just a stupid
accident.

ELLIE

You drinking, was that an accident?
You could've drowned. You would've
caught hypothermia if they hadn't
picked you up. You almost got
arrested. For what? A foot? We gonna
have a funeral for a foot? Put it in
a tiny little grave? Burn it and keep
the ashes in dad's favourite ashtray?

THEO

Grandad didn't smoke cigarettes.

ELLIE

He stole it from a bowling alley bar.
It's shaped like boobs.

They have a moment, both grinning. Then Theo sobers.

THEO

So much for school.

ELLIE

What are you going to tell Bethany?

THEO

She knows I'm not getting in. She
just wants me to feel better.

ELLIE
Maybe we can fight it.

Theo doesn't say anything. Ellie looks sadly at him as she moves the car towards the crossing boom.

Theo glances over his shoulder as it closes behind them.

INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

Mack works on an old ceramic embalming table, less than high-tech.

Going by the cabbage rose wallpaper and the stapled Trocar Use and Embalmer's Guide posters, this is a family funeral home embalming room doing double duty as a morgue.

Mack listens to the RADIO on low as he plastic wraps the booted foot like a leftover ham, humming along. He steps out for a moment, and returns with a Miller Light box.

He eyeballs the box, then the foot. Deciding it'll do, he forces the wrapped foot into the box. Then, realizing something's missing, he goes to a door in the wall.

INT. WALK IN FREEZER

Mack shimmies past a couple of zipped, occupied body bags, and grabs some spare ice packs.

INT. MORGUE

Mack tosses the bags in with the foot. He forces the box closed, holding it down while he tapes it. He grabs a Fed-Ex packing label, and the report.

He checks over the report, and pauses.

INSERT: - "remains of the presumed decedent recovered at appx 47.284344, -85.839401.

He lingers over this "appx".

INT. RCMP CONSTABULARY - NIGHT

SERGEANT RAY KNIGHT (50s) snoozes at the front desk. Behind him, the two other desks are empty. The TELEPHONE rings, jerking him awake.

Bleary eyed, he scrambles for the phone.

KNIGHT
RCMP St Thérèse.

INT. MORGUE

INTERCUT MACK/KNIGHT

Mack sets his phone to speaker, laptop now open in front of him.

MACK
Ray. It's Mack Pavel down here in Lake Bluffs. Listen, did you get a copy of the boat report from the Fern crash?

KNIGHT
Oh, yeah, it's here somewhere.

Knight pulls another copy of the report out, slightly bent. He smooths it out and pulls on some glasses.

MACK
You don't happen to have the most recent border survey records, do you?

Knight straightens.

KNIGHT
Not on hand. Did you try --

MACK
Yeah, Luke Wong doesn't have them either. I'm looking at these coordinates on Google Maps, but it's not being precise enough.

Knight pulls up Google and types in the coordinates.

INSERT: Knight zooms in to their island, St. Thérèse du Lac, Ontario to the north, Lake Bluffs, Michigan to the south. As he continues to zoom, the border line disappears.

KNIGHT
I'll be. You worried about jurisdiction?

MACK

It's probably no big deal. This foot is already past date so I'm going to send it on to the lab. If we need to move the investigation up north I'll make sure you get all the necessities.

KNIGHT

(weary)

Right. Appreciate it.

MACK

But get back to me on the border thing, yeah?

KNIGHT

Will do. Cheers, bye.

Knight hangs up, and continues to look through the map. He props up the report. Then he opens another window, and begins typing in a hunt-and-peck fashion.

INT. MORGUE

Mack closes the laptop, pockets the phone. He pulls a ball-point pen from his shirt pocket, and scribbles on top of the box: "THIS SIDE UP".

INT. ELLIE'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Ellie's workshop is half mechanic garage, half pottery studio. Her father's side is filled with disorganized tools, cans of engine grease, airplane manuals.

A yellow model Beaver sits half finished to one side.

Ellie's side is neat, her pottery wheel scrubbed, a stack of logo-embossed boxes waiting to be filled with the rows on rows of beautiful cups, bowls and vases that line the shelves.

In the corner, a kiln burns. Ellie lets herself in the side door to check it. She pauses to stand in her father's side, breathes in the smell.

Then, forcing down her grief, she leaves.

LIVING ROOM

Boxes of Michael's possessions sit stacked, waiting to be sorted. Old record albums. Stacks of aviation magazines. A glass ashtray in the shape of boobs marked Luau Lanes, Olympia WA.

There's a RATTLE from the door. A thick yellow envelop marked EXPEDITED US MAIL appears through the mail slot.

Dawn, spattered in green paint, snatches it up and takes it with her to the pile of boxes that dominate the living room.

Ellie, in the middle of putting on a pair of earrings, breezes past. She's dressed up now, having changed into jeans and a chambray shirt, and brushed out her greying hair. She's too distracted to notice the package.

ELLIE

I want you to stay in the house, okay honey?

DAWN

'Kay.

ELLIE

Did your brother say where he was going?

DAWN

(boreddrawl)

No.

She's way too interested in the package - or the shiny holographic American flag stamps on the package.

INSERT: Dawn tries to pick the stamps off, but they're stuck good.

ELLIE

How does mum look?

Dawn reaches out her hand, eyes still on her prize.

DAWN

Scissors.

Ellie narrows her eyes.

ELLIE

Scissors what?

DAWN

Please.

Ellie hands her a pair of pink safety scissors from the counter.

A KNOCK at the door makes her jump.

EXT. ELLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Etienne and Rayne stand outside on the porch. Rayne is a Home Depot ad in his Carhart jacket, while a cable knit sweater makes Etienne look like Holt Renfrew's idea of rugged.

Without witnesss, these men are cold eyed, no real warmth or friendly affect between them.

Under Etienne's arm is a covered tablet.

RAYNE

I hope you aren't wasting my time,
Etienne.

ETIENNE

(mocking)
Have faith, Reverend.

Ellie opens the door. Rayne flips on the salesman's lightbulb grin.

RAYNE

Ms. Fern. I'm sorry, we're a little early. Thought we'd take a walk around the edge of the property. Very picturesque. Charming.

ELLIE

Sure.

Etienne gives her a long-suffering smile.

INT. ELLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Ellie sticks her head in --

ELLIE

I'll be back soon, Dawnie.

Dawn's too focused on her task to answer. Carefully, she cuts open the edge of the package, and snips around the seam, until she gets to the stamps.

She is meticulous as a surgeon as she begins to extract them.

EXT. LAURA SECORD HERITAGE CENTRE GROUNDS - DAY

Ellie picks her way along through the rusted, rotting old exhibits, Rayne and Etienne to either side of her.

RAYNE

Must have been really something before it closed down.

ELLIE

My mother's parents built it. She kept it going until she died five years ago. The heritage funding wasn't renewed.

RAYNE

Everything happens for a reason, Ms. Fern.

ELLIE

Thanks. Now tell me what you want.

Rayne, put off by this, struggles to find his thread. Etienne steps in, pulls the tablet out from under his arm and holds it out to her. She scrolls through it.

INSERT: Rendered images, golf course, amenities, blue prints, brochures...and a legal document with a eight figure estimate.

Ellie scrutinizes the two men, her face full of suspicion.

ELLIE (cont'd)

There's no way this land is worth that amount of money.

RAYNE

Think of it as a community investment. That's a hundred more jobs for St. Thérèse du Lac, depending on our development options.

ELLIE

Why would you want to overpay by at least...Jesus Christ.

Rayne winces. Etienne takes the iPad from her.

ETIENNE

We consider that to be a fair valuation of the property. And of course, you and your family will have a significant stake. You'll be comfortable for the rest of your life.

ELLIE

I need to speak to my family about this.

Flustered, she runs a hand through her hair.

RAYNE

Of course. You and your son can sit down with my lawyers tomorrow morning.

Ellie turns on him. She opens her mouth, about to give it right to him, but Etienne intervenes.

ETIENNE

Please take all the time you need, Ms. Fern. My Montreal office is always open to you, and we'll remit any negotiating or travel expenses.

RAYNE

We will?

Etienne pauses, gives Rayne a cold look. Rayne's plastic mask melts a little. He's not the alpha here.

ETIENNE

(to Ellie)

Of course.

Etienne smiles at Ellie, not unkindly, but his eyes move past her, looking at something in the direction of the woods. He frowns.

Ellie catches this, is about to look too --

ETIENNE (cont'd)

Excuse us. We're running late for a prior appointment. Do you still have my card?

ELLIE

My five year old has it.

Etienne pulls out another one. She takes it from him.

Red faced, Rayne tries to smile off the moment. He reaches to shake Ellie's hand, but she just looks down her nose at him. He makes a clumsy recovery, waving instead.

He turns, and walks away, clearly fuming.

ETIENNE
(to Ellie)
I'll be in touch, Ms. Fern.

She nods, still a little stunned. She studies the card.

INSERT: Wellspring Industries, Etienne Deschamp, géologue en chef. She flips it over.

Written on it: "My mobile, any time" and a 514 number.

SOUND OF SUV PULLING OUT, DRIVING AWAY.

Head still down, she turns around, facing the woods. Then, startled by the flutter of a bird, she looks up. Then, she scans the woods for whatever Etienne was trying to avoid looking at...

And notices another strange thing: an elbow-height smudge of the same day-glow orange the bark of a pine tree.

BUZZING. Ellie pulls out her phone.

ON SCREEN:

Theo: home in 5.

She texts back: can you make lunch for D?

Theo: [thumbs-up emoji]

Ellie slips the phone back into her pocket. Still holding the card, she moves forward like someone in a trance, into the woods.

INT. ELLIE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Theo lets himself in, a bag of something greasy in his hand. He looks over at Dawn, who's now lovingly mounting the stamps into a picture album.

THEO
Got some new ones, Dawnie?

DAWN

Uh-huh.

He sets the bag on the table, and goes over to look.
Holographic American stamps.

THEO

Where'd these come from?

Dawn points to the now skinned contents of the package:
papers, glossy photos, certificates. Theo sits down, scoots
over to it. The contents slip out as he picks it up.

He grabs for them, but they hit the floor. He reaches for
them, but pauses - there's one item left in his hand.

INSERT: A black and white photograph of younger, but
recognizable Michael Fern, smiling in front of a fighter
plane of some kind. He can't be more than 30.

THEO (cont'd)

Huh.

He turns the image over and reads the back. His curiosity
turns to confusion. Then, his face goes slack with
disbelief. He scrambles to grab the other documents.

EXT. DEEP WOODS - AFTERNOON

Ellie continues through the woods. Hot from walking, she
takes off her coat and hangs it on a tree stump. She pauses,
checks her course.

ELLIE'S POV

She follows a trampled path through the undergrowth. She
catches a glimpse of something through the trees. Something
day-glow orange.

She rises, proceeds slowly towards it. Something is
terribly, terribly wrong.

She presses forward, then stops. She notices one of the
trees, a handsome cedar - spray painted with an orange X.
It's is slightly smudged. Ellie reaches out to touch it.

She her eyes move past it. Horror blooms on her face.

EXT. CLEARING - AFTERNOON

Now in daylight, the clearing Theo followed the trespasser to a week earlier is fully visible. Ellie emerges from the trees, and looks around, appalled.

Orange Xs have been spray-painted on all the surrounding old growth trees. Orange survey flags stick out everywhere, forming a neat grid 40' by 40'.

It is professional, deliberate and sinister.

Ellie crumples the card in her hand.

INT. FERN HOUSE

Theo spreads out the contents of the package on the kitchen table. He closes his eyes, opens them again -- tries to make sense of it.

FROM ABOVE:

- Black and white photographs of a younger Michael.
- Photographs of him in a US Airforce uniform in front of a fighter jet.
- A faded pilots license, circa late 70s.
- A draft card photocopy.
- A draft letter.
- A photocopy of a US Passport, with the face of Michael Fern, and the name "Michael F. Mackenzie".
- An arrest warrant for desertion.

Theo stares at it until he has to blink. He goes to the couch.

THEO

Dawnie, can I see your stamps?

He turns and sees his sister has fallen asleep with her pink scissors still looped around her fingers, her stamp collection sliding slowly off her lap.

Theo scoops it up, and examines the holographic American flag stickers. There's a postmark, but he doesn't recognize the Zip Code: 55415.

Just as Theo pulls out his phone to look it up, he hears Ellie's footsteps outside. Unsure of what to do, he goes to the table and gathers the material into a stack.

He's just slipping it back into the folder as Ellie comes through the door. He's about to hand it to her, but her expression of angry, tearful rage stops him.

THEO (cont'd)

Mum.

Ellie waves him off, blows past him and catches herself on the edge of the sink. She holds it in for a beat, then lets out one enraged sob. Theo goes to her as Dawn rouses.

DAWN

(sleepy)

What's wrong, mum? Why are you sad?

Ellie turns to her children. She goes and scoops Dawn up, then looks at her son, her expression both fierce and tearful.

ELLIE

Come on. We're going for a drive.

A confused Dawn in her arms, Ellie heads out the door. Theo follows, hesitates by the table -- and leaves the file behind.

INT. RCMP CONSTABULARY - EVENING

Sergeant Knight leans back in his chair, contemplating his computer screen with deepening confusion. Behind him, Constable LORELEI BLACKBIRD (Native, 30s) grabs her stuff off her desk.

ON SCREEN: Google map of the island.

Knight compulsively scrolls in, scrolls out, scrolls in. He pauses, switches to satellite -- the border kiosks are visible, but no border.

KNIGHT

Hey, Lorrie. Do you think there's a phone number for those Google folks?

Blackbird pulls her purse down from the coat rack.

LORELEI

What, like customer service?

KNIGHT

Never mind, forget about it. Enjoy your day off.

Blackbird is about to leave, when Ellie, Theo and Dawn come in. Blackbird holds the door open for her.

BLACKBIRD

Hey, Ellie. I'm sorry I wasn't able to make it to the service.

She and Ellie exchange a side hug.

ELLIE

It's fine. We'll see you later for the fundraiser?

Blackbird nods, smiles, and leaves. Ellie approaches the front desk and catches Knight's eye. Knight picks up Ellie's mood immediately, straightens.

INT. RICHARDS HOUSE - DINING ROOM TABLE - EVENING

Bethany joins hands with her two brothers SAMSON (16) and RAYNE JR (17), her father Rayne and his much younger wife JENNIFER (30). The dining room is well appointed.

RAYNE

-- bless our children, and especially our eldest Bethany, and guide her way to virtue as she leaves us for university. Amen.

Muttered "amens". The Richards family digs in.

JENNIFER

(to Beth)

Have you decided on which sorority you want to apply to? I was in DPI when I was an undergraduate.

Beth stares at her 11-years-older step mother with a blank face. Samson and Jr gaze into their plates, both of them holding back a grin.

RAYNE

That's a very good idea, honey. I'm sure there are a lot of Christian chapters.

BETHANY

I want my own place. It's cheaper.
And I don't want all the fuss.

RAYNE

I'd feel better if I knew you were
with other young ladies with a
similar background. I can help you
out with the expense.

BETHANY

I don't need help. Between the
scholarships and mom's bequest --

JENNIFER

Your father and I agreed it would be
better for you to have a more focused
experience.

Jennifer simpers, but it just looks painful . Bethany meets
her step mother's eyes, then spears a potato, scraping her
fork across her plate, making everyone wince.

Her brother Samson snorts, then chokes on his food. Jr
smacks him on the back. Rayne and Jennifer share a sour
look. Bethany eats the potato, smiles.

INT. BETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Bethany goes into her room - it's neat, but not in keeping
with the rest of the family. There are band posters up, a
book shelf filled with various subjects, but mostly law.

She locks the door behind her. She shoves her messy covers
off her single bed and lies down on her stomach. Reaching
underneath, she grabs an iPhone, concealed by a frame slat.

She activates the screen... no messages. She frowns, opens
it.

ON SCREEN: The last message is from Theo, from yesterday --
"meet you at the lake".

Bethany sits up, composes a text. Then, she reaches behind
her night stand and pulls out a University of Michigan
catalogue.

She slides out of it a series of acceptance letters from
NYU, Sarah Lawrence, and Columbia. She fans them out on her
bed, contemplating them.

Decisions, decisions.

EXT. WOODS - SURVEY SITE - NIGHT

Sergeant Knight plays a flashlight over the vandalized trees while Ellie watches. Theo meanwhile makes a circuit of the site, examining the marks more closely.

Ellie shares a glance with Theo, who shrugs. He turns away, he raises a hand to his face and pinches the bridge of his nose.

THEO
(to himself)
What the hell is happening.

ELLIE
(to Knight)
You have any explanation for this?

KNIGHT
I can file a report for vandalism and trespassing, and make some calls in the morning... you sure this isn't just some...

ELLIE
Prank?

THEO
Look.

He shines his mobile phone flashlight at the ground, picking out a row of perfectly lined up marker flags. It stretches out of sight in both directions. He pads along, eyes down.

ELLIE
How far do they go?

Knight, with some effort, bends down and points his flashlight. The flags disappear into the dark where the beam fails.

ELLIE (cont'd)
Jesus.

INT. FERN HOUSE - NIGHT

Ellie and Knight share a cup of tea at the kitchen table. Ellie hasn't touched hers, but Knight refills his cup from a handmade tea pot.

Between them, Knight's notepad filled with notes, question marks, one additional notation: "Border???"

KNIGHT

You don't think... maybe your ex?

ELLIE

Joss still has five more years, mandatory. Mum cosigned the property to me before she died, he doesn't even know it exists.

KNIGHT

Maybe he found out somehow. Maybe he got in touch with these fellas.

ELLIE

Just so they could offer me ten million large on a property worth maybe one eighth of that? I doubt it.

Ellie digs out Etienne's crumpled card. She uncrumples it, smooths it out and looks at the number.

KNIGHT

Bit late, isn't it?

She holds it up for him to see the handwritten note: "My mobile, any time"

Knight shrugs. Ellie takes out her phone and dials, setting it to speaker.

INT. ETIENNE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Etienne and his wife CELESTE (30s) get it on in bed, about to hit their stride when his mobile rings. He lifts his head.

CELESTE

(in French, subtitled)

Can't it wait?

Etienne grimaces, grabs the phone to see the caller. With far too much enthusiasm, he dismounts, ignoring Celeste as her face crunches with irritation.

Etienne goes over to the floor-to-ceiling windows, and gazes out over the Montreal skyline below.

ETIENNE

Ms. Fern. It's very good to hear from you.

CELESTE

Etienne.

He does a one-moment finger to her. Celeste gets up, robes herself and stalks out.

INT. THEO'S ROOM - NIGHT

Theo lies on his bed, riffling through the folder on his grandfather again, going through it slowly as he video chats with Bethany.

BETHANY

(filtered)

No idea who sent it?

INT. BETHANY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Bethany lies on her bed in the same way, her college literature now stacked to the side.

INTERCUT BETHANY AND THEO

THEO

It's a zip code from Minneapolis, but that doesn't mean anything. Beth, you can't tell anyone about this.

BETHANY

What about your mother?

THEO

I just -- god. It's too much. Granddad dies, these guys sniffing around, the trespassing and the paint everywhere. Now this? "Oh, by the way, mum, your dad's been lying to you about his identity for your whole life."

BETHANY

Yeah, I get it. And who knows what that might be doing to the property.

THEO

I didn't even think of that. You think it's related?

BETHANY

Why mail you that file? You should've gotten some kind of legal notice.

Theo heaves a sigh.

THEO

I miss you.

BETHANY

You just saw me, Theo.

Theo's face falls.

THEO

There's something I forgot to tell you.

INT. ETIENNE'S APARTMENT - OFFICE - NIGHT

Etienne, still naked, lounges in his office chair. Everything in here is black lacquer and smoked glass, reflecting his gym-membership body.

ETIENNE

Ms. Fern, there must have been some kind of miscommunication from my team.

EXT. FERN HOUSE - NIGHT

Ellie paces her front porch with her phone in hand, on speaker. Knight leans against the railing and writes on his notepad.

After a moment of pacing, she gets too far out of Knight's hearing, so he grabs her elbow and signals: stay in place.

ELLIE

You must have been damn confident I'd sell if you hired a survey team and --

INTERCUT ELLIE AND ETIENNE

Etienne opens his laptop, scrolls through his emails. Lots of ENERGIE and CANADA and MINISTRY there.

ETIENNE

You misunderstand. Surveys of this nature are performed by a government agency. Perhaps there was some confusion about the disposition of the property in your father's estate documents?

ELLIE

My father's body hasn't even been found yet. I know this is you, and if you think you can intimidate me into selling, calling the government over to deface my home is a very strange way of going about it.

ETIENNE

I have no desire to make you feel intimidated, Ms. Fern. Will it do if I fly out there tomorrow? Full cooperation with any investigation, I promise.

EXT. FERN HOUSE

Ellie closes her phone, and stands there red faced.

ELLIE

None of this makes any sense.

KNIGHT

Could be an honest mistake.

Ellie stares at him.

KNIGHT (cont'd)

Look, there's something hinky going on. Maybe it's bigger than we know, or maybe it's smaller and we're being paranoid.

Ellie mouths the word "paranoid". He holds up a hand.

KNIGHT (cont'd)

I'll write a warrant on Deschamp tonight and phone it through to the judge tomorrow.

ELLIE

And you'll be here when he's...?

Knight smiles, squeezes her shoulder.

KNIGHT

Thanks for the tea. Try to get some sleep.

She watches as he gets in his radio car, and drives off. For a moment, his headlights illuminate the delapidated heritage exhibits that flank the drive.

Ellie sighs. She looks around at the property -- and sees:

**BEGIN
FLASHBACK:**

Green grass. Families enjoy the exhibits. People mill around, dressed up in early 19th century outfits. Her mother SYNTIA (50s) spins wool at one booth, her bald head covered by a beautiful hand made scarf.

Ellie's father MICHAEL (65) younger and physically strong, mows the lawn with an old timey mower.

**END
FLASHBACK**

Ellie returns to the cabin, but heads towards the workshop outbuilding. She returns after a moment with a wheelbarrow full of yardwork supplies.

INT. ETIENNE'S APARTMENT - OFFICE

Etienne, lost in a reverie, looks back to his screen, opens one of the emails. It's encrypted - he types in a password.

The email loads. It's a confirmation of service email from Fern Charters, time stamped over a month ago. There's a header that shows the candy-red float plane, and a smiling Michael Fern slouching next to it.

ON SCREEN:

In the body of the email we catch "Don't usually"... "resource survey contract"... "generous offer".

BEDROOM

Celeste sits up with her laptop, typing hard. Beside her, a glass of scotch.

Etienne, still naked, positions himself at the doorway.

ETIENNE
Where's mine?

CELESTE
In the liquor cabinet.

Etienne moves to the side of the bed, puts on a pout as he nudges up to her.

CELESTE (cont'd)
 You missed your chance. I have a
 deposition in the morning.

ETIENNE
 I won't be gone long.

Celeste regards him, eyebrows raised.

CELESTE
 (English)
 Why don't you just get the province
 to issue the papers? You've said for
 two years this is their remit. But
 now you feel the need to personally
 involve yourself. Why?

ETIENNE
 Don't lawyer me, Celeste.

CELESTE
 The government will recompense the
 Ferns, right?

ETIENNE
 Say the word "government" to these
 people, see how much cooperation you
 get.

Celeste isn't buying it. She types on. Then types more. Then
 stops, and stares at her computer screen.

ETIENNE (cont'd)
 (surprised)
 You hate it.

CELESTE
 Yes.

Etienne watches her with steady affection while she
 studiously ignores him. Then he uses one finger to push down
 the lid of her laptop.

ETIENNE
 What do you want me to do? Tell
 parliament to take back their
 legislation? Tear up my contract and
 pretend like 3 trillion dollars worth
 of crude oil never existed--

CELESTE
 Etienne.

He slides in next to her and takes the laptop.

ETIENNE

I'll email the minister my resignation right now. Or would you prefer I send it to the Globe and Mail?

Celeste jerks the laptop away from him and sets it aside.

CELESTE

You make sure those people get their money. You make sure they get all of it. Understand?

Etienne says nothing. He takes her face in his hands and kisses her. She's unresponsive for a beat, then melts. He turns off the light.

EXT. LAURA SECORD HERITAGE CENTRE GROUNDS - EARLY MORNING

SERIES OF SHOTS:

Ellie --

- Rolls a push-mower across a row of tall grass.
- Repaints a sign.
- Clears out some old rotten plywood
- Replants flowerbeds
- Wrangles a hose, waters the lawns and flowerbeds.

Bethany makes her way closer, pausing to watch as Ellie sands down one of the wooden benches that surrounds the wool-spinning display. She wipes it off, and applies stain.

BETHANY

Morning.

ELLIE

Oh, hey there, Bethany.

Bethany takes in Ellie's slightly manic, hollow eyed expression.

BETHANY

You all right, Ellie?

ELLIE
 Yeah, just...I've really been meaning
 to clean up the park. Just seemed
 like the right time!

BETHANY
 Need some help?

Ellie smiles, shakes her head.

ELLIE
 Thanks anyway.

EXT. WOODS - EARLY MORNING

Theo sits out on the log that overlooks the water. He's about to roll a joint, but has frozen in the act. Beth picks her way over the uneven ground.

THEO
 Hey. I wasn't expecting you.

BETHANY
 Your mom said you'd be out here.

He looks down at the half-rolled joint.

THEO
 She did?

BETHANY
 She's not an idiot.

THEO
 Yeah. Oh...here.

On his other side, a letter from the University of Michigan. It's been opened. He hands it to her. She pulls out the sheet and unfolds it. He's been accepted.

BETHANY
 (a little forced)
 That's great! But...

THEO
 Yep. Is what it is.

BETHANY
 It's my fault.

THEO

No, it's not. It's granddad's fault.
All of this is his fault. He went and
died...and...

Theo heaves a sigh, blinking back tears.

BETHANY

He didn't mean to hurt anyone. You
know that, Theo.

Theo forces himself to snap out of it. He tosses the joint
away, and gets up.

THEO

Come on.

Bethany takes his hand, and they head back towards the
house, passing over the flagged line, which happens to cut
Theo's favourite sitting place out of the property line.

EXT. FERN HOUSE - MORNING

Sergeant Knight and Constable Blackbird hang out next to the
radio car, sharing a thermos of coffee. Ellie stands on the
porch, upright and ready, her eyes on the distant drive
entrance.

Theo and Bethany emerge from the woods, no longer holding
hands. Theo, about to make directly for his mother, comes to
a dead halt as above, a THRUM pounds the air. They all look
up.

An H155 AIRBUS HELICOPTER descends over the driveway, its
rotors blowing back the pine boughs. Knight and Blackbird
look at each other. Ellie makes a bee line for them.

Theo looks at Bethany. She shrugs helplessly.

Etienne disembarks from the chopper, followed by a cadre of
overdressed RCMP kitted up in combat fatigues -- four men
and one woman. They make their way towards the local cops.

Blonde, fit Sergeant-Major BRANDIE LANSING (30s) takes the
lead, her eyes covered by Death's own aviators. She doesn't
take them off, and stands before the two regional officers.

LANSING

Sergreant Knight. Constable
Blackbird.

She waits, her mouth hard. Knight blinks, then suddenly remembers. He salutes. He shoulder nudges Blackbird. She also salutes, her face tight with irritation.

Ellie strides up to Etienne, clearly winding up for a slap. Theo intercepts her, grabs her shoulder.

THEO

Mum, don't.

Ellie raises a hand and points to the chopper.

ELLIE

Get the HELL off my property, and take that thing with you.

Etienne smiles benignly at her.

ETIENNE

Ms. Fern, you know I'm not on your property.

ELLIE

What?

ETIENNE

Your property begins...here.

He moves a few steps forward, and nudges a line in the gravel.

ETIENNE (cont'd)

I'm sure you've seen the flags.

ELLIE

You're full of shit, Mr. Deschamp.

Etienne pulls out a sheaf of papers, offers it to her.

ETIENNE

I never wanted it to come to this, Ms. Fern. Maybe your father planned to tell you the truth before he passed, but it's hardly my fault if he didn't.

Ellie frowns, truly confused now. She opens the folder, and thumbs through the government permits, approving surveying and energy exploration of the area.

Etienne glances at Theo. They lock eyes.

THEO

You knew. You sent the file.

ETIENNE

I have no idea what you're referring to. Sorry.

ELLIE

I thought you said you wanted to develop it. That other guy, Rayne --

ETIENNE

Reverend Richards will be made aware of the situation now that the work orders have been actioned. Prematurely, I admit.

ELLIE

So you're scamming him, too.

Knight sidles up to Ellie.

KNIGHT

I don't know what's going on, Ellie, but that's a full pay on-duty federal unit. Sergeant-Major Lansing ranks me. Maybe we should-- you know, back at the station.

ETIENNE

As I said. I'll cooperate with any investigation you care to make.

THEO

Wait.

He turns, heads for the house.

INT. FERN HOUSE - DAY

Bethany sits next to Dawn, who hides a tearful face in her shoulder. Theo strides in and halts.

THEO

What's wrong?

BETHANY

The noise scared her.

He goes to his sister.

THEO
You okay, Dawnie?

Thumb in mouth, tearstained Dawn nods.

BETHANY
What's happening?

THEO
That guy is saying something insane
about...we're going to the station. I
need to tell mum about the file.

BETHANY
Theo, you can't.

He blinks.

THEO
What?

Bethany shifts Dawn over. Dawn drowses, but watches the two
young adults with vague interest.

BETHANY
I read about this. If you give her
the file you prove she knew about
Michael's... circumstances. If she
doesn't know, she has a good faith
argument and she might be able to
fight for it in court.

THEO
But I can't keep something like this
from her.

Car engines start. Theo glances over his shoulder.

BETHANY
Don't tell her. I know it's hard, but
you have to keep it to yourself until
you talk to a lawyer.

THEO
Yeah? What's your hourly?

Bethany grins, and kisses him.

BETHANY
You won't be able to afford me.

DAWN
(pointing)
Ew. Mouth hug cooties.

Theo's phone RINGS. He answers it. Bethany hovers, listening.

THEO
(into his phone)
Yeah. We'll stay here and look after the ankle biter. Don't let that creep get to you.

INT. ELLIE'S CAR - DAY

Ellie smiles.

ELLIE
(into her phone)
Don't worry. We've got the truth on our side.

She hangs up, and starts her engine.

INT. FERN HOUSE

Theo turns to Bethany, who raises her eyebrows: *see?*

INT. LAKE BLUFFS LIBRARY - DAY

Mack Pavel, wearing exam gloves, pulls broad sheets of thick paper out of wide archival drawers, a frown on his face that looks like it's been there for years.

He uses a full sized DSLR camera with flash to photograph each image. He is methodical, a professional recording evidence, but for what?

A LIBRARIAN wanders past. He nods to her.

MACK
I want everything you've got.

MINUTES LATER

Mack arranges another series of papers, these handwritten in cursive. We catch HUDSONS BAY COMPANY in amongst the scratching.

MACK (cont'd)
(calling)
Hey. You got anything on the old
treaties?

The librarian leans out behind her desk.

LIBRARIAN
The originals are up north. I can
requisition copies for you.

MACK
Nah, I'll take care of it.

INT. MORGUE - DAY

Mack arrives in the exam room, arms full of printed material. An occupied body bag lies on the exam table.

Mack searches for room on his cluttered counters, but no dice. He sets the bundle on the floor.

INT. CADAVER FRIDGE

Mack slides the bagged body on to a rack. He casts around, sees a box of Marie Calender pies on the top shelf and grabs one.

INT. MORGUE

Mack uses the now empty gurney to lay out his photos and notes. The microwave DINGS. He juggles the hot pie, placing it in on the corner of his "desk" to cool.

He takes a red sharpie, and draws a line across the first map on the stack. Then he flips to the next map, and draws another line.

He pauses to take a bite of pie, then continues his work.

INT. CONSTABULARY- CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Ellie sits crossed armed, staring daggers at Etienne, who sits unruffled. Knight sits at the head of the dented table, fingers laced. Blackbird lingers in the corner.

ETIENNE

If I'm under arrest, Sergeant,
shouldn't you be reading me my
rights?

Knight sucks on his teeth and stares with dislike at the
younger man.

KNIGHT

No, sir, you're not under arrest.

Etienne pulls out a silver business card case and flips it
open. He draws one, and slides it towards them.

ETIENNE

My attorney.

He pulls out another.

ETIENNE (cont'd)

The regional intendent.

He slides it forward.

ETIENNE (cont'd)

The Federal secretary for the
Ministry of the Interior, who has
promised to make himself available to
you, as has his US counterpart from
the Department of the Interior. You
should contact them at once.

Two cards slide towards her. Ellie doesn't touch them. She
stares at them, then looks back at him.

ELLIE

The US Department of...why?

Etienne tilts his head, trying to gauge if she's savvy or
not. He doesn't catch Knight's sudden perking up as he sees
the US Department of the Interior card.

ETIENNE

I only want to make you aware of the
appropriate agencies involved in your
situation.

Knight grabs the Ministry card. He hands it to Blackbird. She
turns it over, and then glares at Etienne.

BLACKBIRD

This is resource extraction. That's why you've brought that black ops cammie clowncar along with you. But you're too deep in this not to have some kind of personal stake, and now you've got your thumb on the scale.

(using the card to
point at him)

You've surveyed every inch of this island, but buying up property and then selling it back to the government probably goes against your contract. That's why you've got that American slimeball sniffing around. What did you offer him, Mr. Deschamp?

ETIENNE

Do you have any evidence of that, Constable?

BLACKBIRD

You offered on the Fern property, and then vandalized it with an illegal survey.

ETIENNE

I made an offer in conjunction with Reverend Richards on your behalf, Ms. Fern. I wanted to get you the best possible recompense, and I know the reverend feels the same. The Canadian government wants that land, they will force you off it, and their compensation won't be half as generous.

Ellie and Etienne stare off.

ELLIE

Say I sell you my property. Where does it end? Are you and your generous buddy going to buy up all of St. Thérèse?

ETIENNE

We both know it's not your property, and never was. Not the bulk of it, anyway.

ELLIE

I absolutely do not know that. My father never said anything about you people. I don't have any idea what you're talking about.

She looks at him in slight entreaty, frustrated and confused. He stares back, trying to see inside her head, see if she's bluffing.

ETIENNE

(to Knight)

If this is not an arrest, then I'm free to go, correct?

Knight nods. Etienne puts one finger on his lawyer's card and slides it towards the sergeant.

ETIENNE (cont'd)

Law enforcement can reach me through my attorney. Ms. Fern, my door is open any time you want to discuss the future of the property.

Etienne rises, shoots his cuffs and straightens his collar. He smiles blandly at Blackbird. Knight sighs.

KNIGHT

Run him back to where he came from.

Blackbird says nothing, just walks past.

ETIENNE

Au revoir.

He follows Blackbird out, leaving Ellie and Knight in confused silence.

ELLIE

I don't get it. I've got all of mum's deeds at home. There's nothing wrong with the property.

KNIGHT

Nothing in your dad's will?

ELLIE

He didn't leave one. It's just me and Drew and our kids. I guess it was one of those things... I mean, who likes to think about that, right?

Ellie can't suppress a note of desperation. Knight gives her a weak smile. Then, a BEEP from his phone. He looks at it.

KNIGHT
Mind if I...?

ELLIE
It's fine.

He steps out. Ellie crosses her arms over the table and stares into the middle distance.

EXT. CONSTABULARY - DAY

Knight unlocks his phone. Mack Pavel's left him a text:

ON SCREEN:

Meet me at the pub in an hour.

KNIGHT
Hey, listen, Ellie. Want to get a drink?

Ellie perks up, looks at Knight with a frown.

ELLIE
Uh, Ray, I'm not really...

KNIGHT
Not that kind of drink.

INT. TAP AND TALON PUB - EVENING

The Tap and Talon is a lost original, made of polished logs and hung with artifacts of the fishing and hunting industry of yore, along with a lot of taxidermy.

A line has been painted across the centre of the pub in peeling gold. The indication is clear - it straddles the US - CANADA border.

Mack Pavel fidgets at one of the tables. Under his hand, a folder. Nearby, a half empty glass Diet Coke bottle. He twists it around, not really paying attention.

Ellie and Knight arrive, make a bee-line for the table.

MACK
Ms. Fern. I wasn't expecting to you.

ELIIE
 (to Knight)
 Is this about my father?

MACK
 Only from an incidental standpoint.
 We did identify the foot, Ms. Fern.
 It is your father's. I'm sorry.

ELIIE
 Thank you. Listen, Ray, I think I
 would like that drink. Anything for
 you?

KNIGHT
 Tell 'em the usual, and put it on my
 tab.

Ellie heads to the bar.

Knight nods at the folder. Mack hands it to him, and goes
 back to work on his drink. Knight flips through it.

INSERT: Photographs of old maps, hunting surveys, treaties.
 Each has a red sharpie line drawn in, which wobbles and
 rises, then falls, then rises again.

MACK
 The last one will interest you.

Knight extracts the last image.

INSERT: Two maps, one credited to Canada, another to the US.
 They both show the island of St. Thérèse du Lac - Lake
 Bluffs as belonging to the other nation.

MACK (cont'd)
 The last surveys were done sometime
 in the late 1800s. According to the
 records, there wasn't much
 consultation after the interior
 agencies were fully formed. Neither
 country cared enough about this
 little island to claim it.

KNIGHT
 Huh.

MACK
 I talked to someone at the State
 Department about an hour ago. Said
 they'd call up their Canadian
 opposite number in the morning.

KNIGHT
You've already talked to them?

MACK
We can take the Fern investigation,
it's not a problem.

KNIGHT
The Fern investigation? Oh, the
crash.

Mack smiles at Knight.

MACK
Listen, don't worry about this. It's
one small, kooky historical typo. No
one wants to contest anything. No one
cares that much about us. They'll
just redraw the border, and it'll be
a one day story.

Knight nods reflexively, but he isn't really listening any
more. He looks down at the file, lying halfway across the
painted line.

Over at the bar, Ellie stares off into space as she waits
for her drinks. Her finger unconsciously picks at the same
line.

MICHAEL (O.S.)
It's going to be okay, kiddo.

She glances up hopefully -- sees Michael's red lumberjack
coat -- but it's just the bartender, LUIS (60s). He hands
her a glass of Crown Royal on the rocks, and a pint of
bitter, and smiles.

ELLIE
Thanks.

She takes the drinks back to the table. Luis thumbs the hole
in the painted line, then goes to the shelf, grabs a tin of
gold paint. With practiced ease, he begins to paint over the
hole.

FADE OUT

END TITLES