

IMPASSE

INT. OFFICE - EL PASO- DAY- PRESENT

BARBARA, an attractive brunette 24-year-old, is sitting at a conference table and two FBI agents wearing suits are sitting on the other side of the table questioning her.

FBI AGENT #1

You were married to Antonio Palermo?

BARBARA

Yes, I was.

FBI AGENT #1

Do you still communicate with him?

BARBARA

On occasion. Rarely.

FBI AGENT #2

Did you know a Christopher Delauder, who was once employed by your former husband?

BARBARA

Yes. I knew him.

FBI AGENT #1

Did you know he was murdered?

Barbara hesitates, squirms and then shakes her head "no".

BARBARA

No...I didn't.

FBI AGENT #1

Do you know why anyone would have wanted him dead?

Barbara stares blankly at the agent, chewing her lip.

FBI AGENT #2

Barbara, do you know why anyone would have wanted to kill him?

Barbara is obviously pondering the question as the two agents are drilling her down with their stares. One is drumming his pencil against the table and the other is clicking his pen as they both anxiously await her answer.

OLDER BARBARA (V.O.)

I didn't know how to answer his question. Not for sure, anyway. I hadn't known Chris, who had been my boss, all that well, though a few things about him did stand out: First of all, he was a retired magician and used to try to impress me with his dexterity...

INT. CLUB-NIGHT

CHRIS DELAUDER, A tall, well dressed man with a goatee, and Barbara are standing next to a bar in a club and Chris is rolling a half dollar across his knuckles as Barbara watches, amused.

OLDER BARBARA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Secondly, he seemed like a kind man when I knew him...

Chris performs the disappearing coin trick, pulling it from behind Barbara's ear, to her delight.

EXT. CLUB-DAY

CHRIS and several ladies, including Barbara, are exiting a building. Chris locks the door before they all walk away.

OLDER BARBARA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...and third, when he closed Tony's business down, even then I knew that he'd underestimated the potential consequences of his actions.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. HONEY'S NIGHTCLUB- HOUSTON- NIGHT- 4 YEARS EARLIER

LOST AND FOUND AND LOST

EXT. STICK SHELTER- SUNRISE

The sun is shining brightly and Barbara seems happy and relieved to have survived the night. She climbs out of the shelter and locates a nearby stream. She drinks and splashes her face then proceeds to hike along the stream, again singing and talking to God out loud.

OLDER BARBARA (V.O.)

That night in the forest was darker than dark, cold and creepy. Not an unfamiliar sensation. But the next morning I was happy to continue my retreat with God. Then, at one point in the day I began to worry about my parents.

BARBARA

(troubled, hesitantly)

Lord, I know that my parents must be really worried. I think I should probably be getting home.

OLDER BARBARA (V.O.)

(chuckles)

I asked as if I had just come for a visit. But, just after asking, this strong impression formed in my mind; they were words, and not my own, "Go up that mountain".

Barbara stops in her tracks and then speaks out loud to the Lord, from Whom she believes came the strong impression.

BARBARA

(disbelievingly)

What? I've been following this stream because I thought that maybe it will lead me back to the camp. Plus, I need the water. But if I go up that mountain, I may *really* get lost.

(pregnant pause, exhales)

Ok. Ok. I'll do it...

Barbara starts trudging up the side of the mountain, which is very dense. As she nears the top she sees a huge clearing. She runs to the clearing and as she reaches it she looks up and sees that a helicopter has just appeared overhead, flying low. She waves her arms frantically but they've already spotted her. A voice calls over a speaker.

HELICOPTER VOICE  
Are you Barbara Watkins?

BARBARA  
(enthusiastically)  
Yes! Yes!

HELICOPTER VOICE  
We've come to take you home. We're going to  
lead you to a search party that have been  
looking for you all day. Okay?

BARBARA  
(with thumbs up)  
Okay! Thank you!

Barbara then looks heavenward and speaks to God lovingly-

BARBARA  
Thank YOU...

Barbara is led by the helicopter flying overhead through the forest to a large search party of Native American men, women and children, who greet her warmly and celebratorily, whom she accompanies down a mountain trail.

MAFIA PRINCESS

INT. GIUSEPPE'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT- LATER THAT NIGHT

Barbara and Tony have just entered Giuseppe's Italian Restaurant. The hostess upon seeing them alerts a waiter who scurries into the main dining room to a table where another couple is seated. The waiter tells the couple something and they get up and leave hastily. Then he returns to the hostess to tell her that the table has been cleared. The hostess then proceeds to escort Tony and Barbara to the table and the waiter pours both a glass of wine. Tony orders for them both and the waiter leaves.

TONY  
(lifting his glass)  
Salute!  
(pronounced, Sa-lu-teh)

BARBARA  
(lifting her glass)  
Salute!

They both take a drink and sit silently for a moment.

BARBARA  
How was your day?

TONY  
Oh, a little of this, a little of that. Not too much. Finally got that stupido...

Tony flicks the back of his fingers outward from under his chin in the Italian gesture meant to rudely dismiss someone.

TONY  
...at the midtown store straightened out. He better not be skimmin, BJ, or I swear...

BARBARA  
You think he is?

TONY  
I don't know. Somethin doesn't feel right. Dave says the count is off.  
(through gritted teeth)  
I hope for the sake of that...  
(collects himself)  
We're watchin him a little closer, that's all...

Barbara nods understandingly and quietly savors another sip of wine.

BARBARA

Tony? Do you know a store owner named Daniel Amato?

TONY

(suddenly irritated)

BJ, why do you gotta be askin me about scumbags like that? How do you even know that bum?

BARBARA

(nervously scrambling)

I, uh, I don't know him. I was watching the news and saw that he was killed last week, that's all. I just wondered if you knew him, since they said that he owned bookstores...

Tony weighs what she says to determine if he's buying it. This is a different Tony all of a sudden. Then he responds coldly-

TONY

Well, I knew him well enough to know that he got what he deserved, the low life bum. I hope he's rotting in hell!

GIUSEPPE, who also cooked for their wedding, is the chef and owner of the restaurant. He has a thick Italian accent. Giuseppe is wearing chef's attire and interrupts as he's brought two Italian dishes, his specialties, Calamari and Linguini and Clams, that he sets before Tony.

GIUSEPPE

Here you are, Mr. Palermo, my specialità. You're gonna love this.

(kisses his fingers)

Buon appetito!

Giuseppe is accompanied by waiters also carrying dishes they proceed to set at the table.

GIUSEPPE

(rushing them)

Come on, rapidamente!

All the staff are very obviously flamboyantly ingratiating to Tony and Barbara. Tony has calmed down and is his charming self again with a very pleased look on his face while Barbara just looks mildly uncomfortable, maybe even embarrassed by all the fuss.