

THE MISSING PUPPY

WRITTEN BY MAY LI

Script and Story Analysis - Instructor: Daniel T. Green

Based on Picasso idea: The Missing Puppy

LOGLINE: An old lady finds a puppy toy that turns out to be the key evidence of a missing case 20 years ago, and big secrets begin to surface while the identity of the old lady is becoming suspicious.

Protagonist: MRS. STONEBRIDGE, appearing to be in her late 60s, the mother of the missing girl.

(Nancy: 30, a single woman working as a backstage assistant at Minskoff Theatre, somehow involved in the investigation.)

GENRE: Mystery

ACT I

INT. NYPD HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

A COLD WINTER NIGHT.

MARTIN HUNTER, 50, a senior NYPD officer, is tinkering with the coffee machine. DAVID HUDSON, 32, Martin's junior partner, rushes into the office.

MARTIN

What's the news?

DAVID

A puppy toy.

(handing out a photo)

An old lady named Mrs. Stonebridge found it. I remember her name appeared on the archive of a weird missing case about a ten-year-old girl.

Martin turns off the coffee machine, grabs the photo, and takes a quick look.

MARTIN

So it is THAT puppy, huh?

DAVID

You were in charge of that case, right?

MARTIN

Yeah, a tough one. No remains, no other clues. And the girl is still missing.

DAVID

After 20 years... Hope we can make some progress this time.

Martin puts down his mug, staring outside the window.

EXT. 42ND STREET & BROADWAY - NIGHT

MIDTOWN night view. Dazzling billboards. Noisy crowds are gathering on Broadway. Camera switches to 42nd Street.

The street corner is cordoned off and several officers are on the scene rummaging through the trash pile.

Three young ladies come out from the back door of Minskoff theater. The youngest one is RACHEL, 25, an intern who recently became a New Yorker, and still keeps getting

startled by everything in the city. She notices the unusual corner.

RACHEL

What happened there? A murder?

JESSICA, 32, a beautiful lady who is always bearing a gentle smile, softly holds Rachel's arm.

JESSICA

Don't worry. David told me they found a puppy toy.

RACHEL

A puppy toy?

(shocked, then turns on the phone camera towards the scene)

Damn it New York. I can't believe people will call 911 for a puppy toy.

JESSICA

No, no. He said something about a missing person case.

Jessica turns to her colleague NANCY, 30, a silent-looking woman with glasses. She looks distracted.

JESSICA

Nancy, are you feeling ok?

NANCY

(quickly shaking her head)

Just tired. It's getting late, we should go.

RACHEL

Yeah, let's go grab some food. I'm starving.

Rachel walks forward, Jessica smiles and follows. Nancy glances back into 42nd street, wraps her coat tighter, then picks up her pace with the two ladies.

INT. NYPD HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Martin is staring at the photo of the toy on the board. It is a handmade, dated toy, but seems to have been carefully stored for a long time with not many stains on it. David comes in, holding a stack of paper.

DAVID

They sent back the CCTV record on 42nd street. The puppy was on the ground after the janitor dumped the garbage into the truck and was picked up by Mrs. Stonebridge an hour later.

MARTIN

(frowning)

Is she living on 42nd?

DAVID

No. She lives in uptown, but happened to be around that area.

MARTIN

Coincidence?

DAVID

You mean somebody placed it there for her on purpose? The CCTV didn't catch any suspicious activity.

MARTIN

Well, Mrs. Stonebridge is in the meeting room right now. Let's see what we can find out.

THE MEETING ROOM. A petite old lady (appearing to be in her late 60s) is sitting silently, facing the window while holding a paper cup with tea. The two officers approach.

MARTIN

Mrs. Stonebridge.

The old lady turns. She is wearing a brown beret and a pair of sunglasses covering her face.

MRS. STONEBRIDGE

(slowly taking off the sunglasses)

Good to see you again, officer Hunter.

MARTIN

It's been a long time.

(David steps forward)

This is David, my partner.

DAVID

Mrs. Stonebridge, I'm...(being interrupted)

MRS. STONEBRIDGE

(A little choked up in her voice)
Finally, fate starts to favor me and
my daughter. She's still alive, isn't
she?

Martin exchanges a glance with David. The young officer looks
a bit awkward.

MARTIN

Calm down, Mrs. Stonebridge. We're
here to help you. But first, we need
you to answer a few questions.

The two officers sit down. David takes out his notebook.

MARTIN

Can you tell us what your plans for
that evening were? It seems that you
don't come to midtown very often.

MRS. STONEBRIDGE

I was watching The Lion King. You
know, the musical. Somebody left a
ticket in my mailbox last week and
invited me to the show.

DAVID

So you were at...the Minskoff Theatre?

MRS. STONEBRIDGE

Yes, the one on the 45th. I wrote down
the address because it is easy to get
lost in the theater district.

David looks up and starts smiling.

DAVID

My girlfriend works at that theatre.
Did you enjoy the show?

MARTIN

(frowning)
Any idea who gave you the ticket?

MRS. STONEBRIDGE

No, officer. No signature on the
envelope. Just a note I guess. I might
have it with me right now.

Mrs. Stonebridge opens her small handbag, rummages for a

while, and takes out a beige envelope. It is unsealed. Martin opens it; there is a theater ticket and a small card with black marker handwriting: *Please come, you will never regret it.*

MARTIN

If you don't mind, we'd like to test the fingerprint on it. The identity of this messenger might be an essential clue.

MRS. STONEBRIDGE

Sure. Please take it.

Martin closes the envelope and hands it to David.

DAVID

Mrs. Stonebridge, I want to know more about the puppy. It was a birthday gift, right?

MRS. STONEBRIDGE

Officer Hunter should have told you, he knew exactly what it is. My little girl would never go without it...

(sobbing)

...even on the day she went missing.

She takes out her handkerchief and starts wiping the tears. David closes the notebook.

MARTIN

Thank you, Mrs. Stonebridge. That's enough for today.

(to David)

Send the envelope, then meet me at the gate.

DAVID

Copy that, sir.

NOTES FOR DAN:

This script starts from the beginning of ACT I.

The truth is, the "Mrs. Stonebridge" that appears in the police station is actually Nancy in disguise. Nancy is the girl who went missing 20 years ago, and the real Mrs. Stonebridge was her mother, who died recently.

The missing case was in fact an escape. Nancy and her mom were abused by her violent father, and they were planning to escape. To make sure that the father would never find them again, Mrs. Stonebridge came up with the idea to fake a murder, frame it on him, and let "Nancy" totally disappear.

Martin was in charge of the case and refused to convict the man. He insisted to file the case as missing, and the man was totally innocent.

At that time, Nancy was 10 years old and knew nothing about her mother's plan. She successfully escaped, but Mrs. Stonebridge didn't.

20 years later, Mrs. Stonebridge died and left a letter to Nancy that revealed all her secrets and suffering.

So this time, Nancy is back for her revenge on Martin.

SOME EXTRA INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHARACTERS:

MARTIN HUNTER (ANTAGONIST): 48, a senior NYPD officer who was in charge of the missing case 20 years ago.

DAVID HUDSON: 32, a younger NYPD officer, Martin's junior partner.

JESSICA: 32, Nancy's co-worker at Minskoff Theatre, David's girlfriend.

RACHEL: 25, Nancy's intern at Minskoff Theatre.