

UNTAMED HORSES

"Pilot"

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**TEASER**

INT. NONDESCRIPT ROOM - NIGHT

We OPEN ON an oil painting of horsemen driving cattle. A middle-aged woman narrates, pack-a-day coarsening her voice.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Had this one guy skip bail outta  
Arizona, chased him clear up to  
Palo Duro.

We cycle through more paintings, the next depicting a mesa towering above a desert.

WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Wasn't exactly a Bonnie and Clyde  
situation. I caught him in the  
fishing section of a Walmart.

A cowboy picks a guitar, bathed in firelight.

WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

But, being up there, figured I'd  
take my time. Sun goes down, it  
huddles over those canyons, like  
it's set on staying a while.

The final painting shows a group of Comanche, sagebrush grazing their horses' knees, lances penetrating the sky.

WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Times like those, feels like you  
can hear the sound of spurs carried  
down the wind, you know? Swinging  
saloon doors, all that. Like  
there's old times waiting.

From a REVERSE, we see JANICE THRASH studying the paintings, having recited all this. She's mid-fifties, small-statured.

JANICE

At least in West Texas, anyway.

The Old West decor clashes against the seedy room. Faint MOANS and GRUNTS quaver throughout the hallway -- we're in a country brothel.

VANESSA (early 20s) stares at her phone in the background.

VANESSA

Three days, you don't shut up.

JANICE  
Paid ya, didn't I? And you haven't  
had to undo a single buckle.

VANESSA  
Oh, here it comes. Here comes the  
guilt trip.

JANICE  
I don't care what your job is.  
Worries me is how you gotta numb  
yourself to keep doing on it.

VANESSA  
See any needles anywhere?

JANICE  
Yeah, wait till Burl Ives gets in  
here, fresh off his trucking route.  
See what kinda potion you brew up  
then.

A door OPENS and SHUTS O.S. Janice peers through the hung  
drapes. In the lobby, a MAN (VINCENT) has entered, wearing a  
security outfit. He's porcine, balding.

JANICE (CONT'D)  
That's him, ain't it?

VANESSA  
Yeah, that's him.

Janice yanks a shotgun out from under the bed.

VANESSA (CONT'D)  
You gonna kill him? I don't wanna  
see that.

JANICE  
I don't get paid in corpses. But  
it'll keep him from running.

Janice flattens herself near the doorway.

JANICE (CONT'D)  
What's the distress signal again?

Vanessa produces a GUTTURAL BRAY.

JANICE (CONT'D)  
Jesus. You in heat?

VANESSA

Does it sound like a noise I'd normally make?

JANICE

Go 'head when you're ready.

Vanessa shakes her head, projects the CALL.

VINCENT (O.S.)

You need something, 'Ness? Who's in there with you--?

Vincent glides through the curtain. Sees the shotgun held on him. Reacts like it's not his first time--

VINCENT (CONT'D)

I need to get the sheriff?

JANICE

Oh, I'm sure he's worked out an accommodation. No, I'm here for you, Vincent. You skipped bail outta Lubbock.

VINCENT

What, the larceny thing? I can get you that outta the vending machine.

JANICE

(to Vanessa)

You tag those cuffs for me, sweetheart.

VINCENT

(to Vanessa, menacing)

No, now hold on now. You think about that. You think what'd that mean.

JANICE

Don't listen to him. He--

VINCENT

(to Vanessa)

-- They don't look under the floorboards in these places. Hear me? I can make that happen.

JANICE

Vanessa, just do like we talked about...

Vanessa recoils, nerve dismantled. The cuffs dangle by her side.

VINCENT

(to Janice)

I know you're not spraying buckshot over a larceny.

JANICE

(sighs, then, to Vanessa)

You toss me those, honey?

VINCENT

What, expect me to sit still for you?

Hand trembling, Vanessa pitches the handcuffs. As Vincent swivels his gaze, Janice swings her shotgun barrel, CRACKING the skip in the back. He folds, and she cuffs his wrist.

JANICE

This job, I don't put much stock in expectations.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Vincent sits in a truck, door open, cuffed to the steering wheel. Janice stands nearby, dragging on a cigarette.

JANICE

I see that girl on the evening news, I'll come back.

VINCENT

How much she sell me for?

JANICE

Three-fifty. Was here all through the weekend. Guess your morals recognize the Sabbath.

VINCENT

How much you making? From the bondsman? Not too late to have a decent day at the track here.

JANICE

Three-twenty, three-fifteen. Something like that.

VINCENT

Wait, you're taking a loss on this?  
(scoffs)  
Gonna have to explain that one.

JANICE

You'll figure it out in your jail  
cell. They say you can hear spurs  
from in there. Saloon doors, all  
that. At least in West Texas,  
anyway.

**END OF TEASER**

ACT ONE

INT. ACE BAIL BONDS - MORNING

One of Lubbock's five bail bond offices, conveniently located a block from county jail.

Janice scrutinizes a pack of blurry "Wanted" posters. Speaks to a clerk, ROBERTA (30s), half-asleep at her desk.

JANICE  
(re: posters)  
Who's job was it to clean the Xerox?

ROBERTA  
I help you, ma'am?

JANICE  
(approaching desk)  
I'll just settle for payment.

ROBERTA  
I can't without Brandi. We got a system.

JANICE  
Well, where is she?

ROBERTA  
Only I knew.

JANICE  
(donning)  
Shoot, was she finalizing her divorce today? I forgot to send flowers.

Roberta holds her deadpan stare.

JANICE (CONT'D)  
Well, that's alright. Can you assign me a case then?

ROBERTA  
Not without Brandi.

JANICE  
Are you working off cue cards or what?

ROBERTA  
You're welcome to come back later.

JANICE  
And Brandi'll be here then?

ROBERTA  
I don't know. Maybe.

Janice throws her arms up in exasperation. As she heads for the exit:

JANICE  
Why don't I just give Brandi a call then? Tell her to stop having the night watchman working the day shift.

EXT. ACE BAIL BONDS - CONTINUOUS

Exiting now, Janice nearly collides with a WOMAN (60s) pacing the sidewalk. Anxiety brewing, the woman MUMBLES to herself, flicking cigarette ashes.

JANICE  
Oh. Sorry, ma'am.

ANXIOUS WOMAN  
Got you too, didn't they? Few days from taking the law into my own hands.

JANICE  
You co-sign for somebody?

ANXIOUS WOMAN  
(nods)  
Put in money-wise a home. Niece went missing. Here I am, trying to find answers outta somebody.

INT. ACE BAIL BONDS - MOMENTS LATER

Janice leans back in--

JANICE  
(to Roberta, re: anxious woman)  
I'm taking Ms. Diana's case here.

A long beat, then:



ROBERTA

Okay.

INT. TOW TRUCK GARAGE - NIGHT

SEAGER SANCHEZ (late 20s; half-white, half-Mexican) pulls his rig in, lumbers out. His boss, MR. HALPERT (50s), clacks away in an office.

SEAGER

Productive day, eh, Mr. Halpert?

His boss GRUNTS in reply.

SEAGER (CONT'D)

You say so. I'm punching out.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Seager hunches over a tire, sat beneath a flaring streetlight. He produces a bag of ketamine, RAILS a line. BREATHES deep, serene.

Begins to tap his FOOT compulsively. Divvies another. As he blinks clear the black dots, his phone BUZZES. He declines, prompting a second call.

Pulling himself together, he answers, and we hear:

MR. HALPERT (V.O.)

Seager, need ya back here. There's a wreck off 25.

SEAGER

Well-- see, no, I can't, Mr. Halpert. I'm home already.

As Seager stands, we see the logo of the tow truck company painted behind him (he's moved mere feet).

MR. HALPERT (V.O.)

Highway needs it picked up. Glass and shit all over the place.

SEAGER

Well, I mean, Jeremy's been saying he needs extra hours.

MR. HALPERT (V.O.)

Nah, not gonna wake him up. You're the only one I got on-call.

SEAGER

I know, it's just-- well, I can't  
is all--

MR. HALPERT (V.O.)

-- Not gonna tell you again. I'm  
serious, Seager. You get back  
here, or I'm gonna have to let you  
walk.

SEAGER

That's-- I mean, maybe I don't even  
like this job.

MR. HALPERT (V.O.)

Fine. Good luck finding another  
that doesn't require backgrounds.

Seager SWALLOWS hard. Considers his trembling hand.

SEAGER

Okay. Okay, Mr. Halpert. You win.  
You win, I'll swing back by.

Seager tries to blink his way toward sobriety. CUT TO:

EXT. DITCH - EARLY MORNING

Police lights strobe off the pavement. Wind HOWLS, laying  
windrows in the snowy Santa Fe peaks.

Two COPS look upon the wreckage of a capsized tow truck.

COP #1

How the fuck do you tow a tow  
truck?

COP #2

You got any patches of blood by  
you?

COP #1

Nah. It's all black ice.

We PAN DOWN as their conversation is buried in the wind.  
Eventually, we find Seager hidden in a gully, shivering,  
creosote billowing.

INT. CHARLEY B'S - NIGHT

A line dancing hall - scuffling boots and cheap beer under the glare of neon lights. Janice and BRANDI (50s) occupy the bar.

JANICE  
(re: Roberta)  
Girl you got working the front desk  
needs a software update.

BRANDI  
She's used to dealing with liars  
all day. Can't blame her.

Janice lights a cigarette.

JANICE  
So how'd it go with the lawyers?

BRANDI  
Gained sole ownership of Ace Bail  
Bonds today. It goes right atop  
the ashes of a failed married.

JANICE  
You know what I'm gonna ask.

BRANDI  
You're doing good work as it is.

JANICE  
I know, but I need a red jacket  
case. Please, Brandi. Please.  
I'm on a road set to nowhere. My  
mother tracked Thelma and Louise  
for God's sake.

BRANDI  
The high-end stuff, it's a  
different operation. You don't  
want that, trust me. You don't  
want the ones who've vowed they'll  
never go back to prison.

JANICE  
That's on me to find out then. The  
other bondsman, they only hire  
their good ol' boys.

BRANDI  
It's not just them, Janice.  
Lubbock PD doesn't you working  
these cases.

(MORE)

BRANDI (CONT'D)

You'd admit you're not the best at involving everybody, and they want somebody on strings.

JANICE

I can be better.

BRANDI

Ten years in? You're gonna change?

JANICE

(sudden outburst)

Well, how am I ever supposed to get taken serious then?! Tell me that! And how's my mother supposed to know I could this?! You know I'm plenty capable. Plenty. It was Thelma and Louise for God's sake.

Brandi takes a beat, considering the appeal--

BRANDI

Alright, look, how 'bout this: I may have something for you. It's a step up, but it'd be a team effort -- no silencing your radio. Okay? You get one shot at this.

JANICE

That's all I ask. Yes, ma'am.

Brandi pushes back her chair, gathers her things.

BRANDI

Come by for the file in the morning then.

JANICE

I will. Thank you, Brandi. Really.

BRANDI

Wasn't Daryl meeting you?

JANICE

Yeah, well, uh... (checks phone) Suppose he's running late.

BRANDI

Sure he is. I'll see you, Janice.

Janice sends a text. As she reaches for a beer, her phone BUZZES. She reads, then, to a neighboring PATRON:

JANICE  
People always text back quickest  
when they're turning down plans.  
You notice that?

The patron ignores her. Janice taps out another cigarette, rises.

JANICE (CONT'D)  
Got work to do, anyway.

INT. JANICE'S PICKUP - NIGHT

Windows down, Waylon Jennings' "You Ask Me To" crackles over the radio. On the passenger seat is a picture of Ms. Diana's niece, Clarissa. Janice grips the wheel, ravening focus.

Up ahead is a Greyhound Station. Before it, some poor soul's been relegated to a bus bench, tucked out of light's reach. Something in their posture causes Janice to pull over.

EXT. BUDDY HOLLY AVENUE - CONTINUOUS

Crossing the red brick, Janice confirms the identity:

JANICE  
Seager? What are you doing out  
here, honey?

Duffel bag at his feet, dark circles mar Seager's face.

SEAGER  
How'd ya know it was me?

JANICE  
Thought you were in Andrews?

SEAGER  
Ah, the roughneck thing outgrew me.  
Or I outgrew it -- one of the two.

JANICE  
You're back for good then?

SEAGER  
Yes, Janice, for good. It was the  
sulfur smell that got to me.

JANICE  
Why didn't you call or anything?

SEAGER

You know I hate to bother.

JANICE

Bother-- it's-- no, you being out here in this cold. That's the bother. Let's get you home. Come on.

SEAGER

Yeah? You mean it?

JANICE

Of course I mean it. Come here.

SEAGER

Well, okay.

(getting to feet)

This sure is nice of you, Janice.

He slings the bag over his shoulder and trudges into her embrace.

JANICE

You know you can call me "mom," don't you?

As they head for her truck:

SEAGER

Yeah, I know. We get home, I'll see how I feel about it.

**END OF ACT ONE**

ACT TWO

INT. JANICE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

A spartan place - absent a TV, couch. A foldout table dominates the room, where Janice sits before a laptop.

Seager plods in, rubbing his eyes.

JANICE

Hey, morning. Sleep all right?

SEAGER

Oh yeah. Comes easy without the creak of a derrick.

He sifts through the pantry - unimpressed with the supply.

JANICE

Sorry about that. I usually just eat in the truck.

SEAGER

No, it's fine. Can't picture you in the cereal aisle.

JANICE

(tactful)

So what made you come home, honey?  
Oil camps that bad?

Seager pours himself coffee. His speech contains the vial of nervous energy that comes with lying to your parents--

SEAGER

Oh, no, I liked it all right. It's just-- tell you the truth, Janice, I could use a different job. I'm trying to get this server up and everything.

JANICE

The camps weren't good money?

SEAGER

No, sure. It's not that. I just-- well, you know, I like to stay light on my feet. I'm an entrepreneur and coder all rolled into one. So, you hear of anything...

She closes her laptop.

JANICE

I'll think on it. I gotta get with Mr. Pringle now though. We play Jeopardy over at the Walmart. There's where you could apply.

SEAGER

(sly smile)

Think I got what it takes, do ya? Thanks, Janice. I'll keep that in mind.

INT. WALMART MCDONALD'S - DAY

GARY PRINGLE (60s, straw Stetson) orders from a high school EMPLOYEE.

GARY

Every time I try and make peace with this decade, it puts up a fight.

The kid stares back.

GARY (CONT'D)

Week ago, coffee was eighty-nine cents. So why do I come in and see a buck-o-nine?

EMPLOYEE

(shrugs)

Inflation.

GARY

*Infla--*

Janice enters behind him, tugging at his sleeve--

JANICE

(to kid)

Sorry about him.

(to Gary)

Come on. He ain't on your lawn.

GARY

(as he walks away, to kid)

Don't sell me on inflation. I did a year at West Texas State.

JANICE

West Texas? Where's that?



GARY

It don't exist anymore. Guess  
that's how bad I did.

They take their place in a booth. Gary produces a can of  
Starbucks coffee from his pocket.

JANICE

What-- you weren't gonna order a  
coffee anyway?

GARY

Not for no dollar.

Janice dumps a file on the table.

JANICE

Brandi assigned me a skip --  
aggravated. Out on eighty-  
thousand.

GARY

(gesturing with head)  
Aisle three, cartridge boxes.

JANICE

You gonna help me or what?

Gary unfolds reading glasses, scans the file.

GARY

Last name "Retrepo," huh? Too bad.  
(passes back file)  
Probably running for office in Old  
Mexico.

JANICE

I called Border Patrol. They got  
his picture and everything.

GARY

Well, I'd hate to question the  
effort of men making twelve an  
hour.

JANICE

Daryl's getting his ping data.  
(then)  
Oh, and Seager's back home.

GARY

Oh, yeah? Remodel at the casino?

JANICE  
I gotta see--

As she closes her folder, the sight of Clarissa's picture reminds her--

JANICE (CONT'D)  
Shoot.  
(thinks)  
You do me a favor?

CUT TO:

INT. GARY'S PICKUP - NEXT DAY

Wheel in one hand, Gary CRACKS a Lone Star with the other. He SIPS, retires the beer to a cupholder. Seager, riding shotgun, packs a Zyn.

GARY  
Hey, I get one of those?

Seager dangles the tin. Gary chucks it out the window.

GARY (CONT'D)  
Only real tobacco in this truck.

SEAGER  
You couldn't of just asked?

GARY  
So what you been up to, ol' buddy?

SEAGER  
I don't know. Playing some Xbox.

GARY  
Man of the soil, huh?

SEAGER  
I thought Janice said you retired.

GARY  
She asked me to do this. Plus, me and Mrs. Diana, we've gone to church together a long time.

SEAGER  
This doesn't seem like a job you can really quit, anyway.

Gary glances over, surprised by the insight.

GARY

Mentally, you might be right. But I'm too old to cut a trail anymore. Won't be long till I buy my last dog.

(takes swig of beer)

Forget my last dog.

The pickup slides past a northbound sign.

SEAGER

Where'd you say we were headed?

GARY

Her boyfriend lives out near the airport. Trey something.

Seager taps through his phone screen.

SEAGER

(off phone)

Huh. No, it looks like she got rid of him. The guy she tagged isn't Trey.

Seager displays an Instagram story on his phone - it shows the missing girl, Clarissa, sitting on the lap of a MAN in his early 30s.

GARY

I know that boy -- Shemar. Doper. Know his mother, too.

SEAGER

So, what? Should we head to this new guy's place then, right?

GARY

Your generation loves offering opinions.

SEAGER

You're right, I'm sure you know social media better than me.

Gary railroads ahead for a beat. Finally, reluctance fades, and he threads through traffic, sending them east.

GARY

Look... We find this girl, need you to promise me something.

SEAGER

You're the boss, it seems.

GARY

You do this one time, then get on  
with your computers or whatever.  
Don't make this a family business.

SEAGER

Can make decent money at it.

GARY

That ain't the point. A priest's  
got a better chance at a family  
than a bounty hunter.

SEAGER

Never found the right bouquet, or  
what?

GARY

I was married once. Five days,  
lying in a cotton field, I came  
home. She tells me, "I'm leaving."  
Ask her to pick up some smokes  
while she's out. Woke up, all my  
clothes set afire in the yard.

SEAGER

No shit? What'd you do?

GARY

(shrugs)  
Watched it go to embers.  
(then)  
But that's the other thing, y'know,  
this makes for a hard life.  
There's some things no person  
should ever see. I believe that.  
And this work...  
(beat; solemn reflection)  
Abolishes your soul, and stains  
your heart. And once it's done,  
ain't never gonna be pure again.

Beat, then:

SEAGER

You ever do any preaching, Mr.  
Gary?

GARY

Not professionally, anyway.