

The Waterpark Murders

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EXT. SPLASH TOWN WATERPARK - DAY

We FADE IN on gentle waves lapping against worn concrete.

CASEY (V.O.)

It's not every day you find your best friend dead, floating in the kiddie pool. For me, it was a Wednesday.

A cloud of BLOOD blossoms across the surface of the water.

CUT TO:

A BIRD'S-EYE-VIEW of the aging waterpark, complete with a LAZY RIVER, LAP POOLS, KIDS section, and SNACK SHACKS.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)

The place was Splash Town Waterpark. You might look around and think "that looks like a good place to get overpriced funnel cake and a third degree sunburn." And you'd be right, but you'd be missing the big picture.

LAP POOL

A LIFEGUARD walks the edge of the pool. She spots three MIDDLE SCHOOLERS as they make a break for it.

CASEY (V.O.)

Inside the flimsy chain-link fence and faded stucco walls lies a society ruled by the ultimate symbol of authority: the lifeguard whistle.

Lifeguard blows her whistle -- but too late. The kids each CANNONBALL with a splash.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)

No running. No diving. If you break the rules, you risk being banned from the park and, by extension ostracized from all of civilized teen-dom.

Lifeguard grabs one of the kids by the hair and drags him out of the pool. The others reluctantly follow.

LAZY RIVER

Two GIRLS recline on beach chairs as they watch the steady stream of patrons bob down the river.

CASEY (V.O.)

Everyone you know works here. And anyone who doesn't spends all their time here anyway. I'm the latter.

CASEY CARTER (16) wears a one-piece swimsuit and can't stop adjusting it. She drapes a towel over her legs and seems satisfied. Beside her, JILL LABELLE (17) soaks up the sun in a bikini. She has enough confidence for both of them.

JILL

You're supposed to be tanning.

CASEY

My body doesn't do that.

JILL

Because you wear all that sunscreen.

(then)

Shades down, nine o'clock.

They flip their sunglasses down as TANNER HILL (19), a sun-kissed lifeguard in red short-shorts approaches.

CASEY (V.O.)

Jill had Wednesdays off, and she always invited me to come tanning. Really, it was an invitation to ogle Tanner Hill in his extra tight swim trunks, but who was I to argue with the natural order of things?

Tanner slows his pace as he passes the girls.

JILL

It's a hot one, Tanner.

He looks at her, then surveys the area, ever aloof.

TANNER

Always is this time of year. I like your necklace.

Tanner nods at Jill's ANCHOR-SHAPED SILVER NECKLACE.

CASEY (V.O.)

You like her cleavage, which happens to be near a necklace.

JILL

I thought it went with my outfit.

Tanner smirks. Casey examines a loose thread on her towel.

TANNER

I should go. If I stay in one place too long someone might drown.

JILL

Go be a hero.

Tanner nods and walks off. Jill stares after him.

JILL (cont'd)

He's got such a great ass.

CASEY (V.O.)

The powers that be figured out that libido is a stronger motivator than money for teenagers. They'll gladly accept minimum wage to clean out the showers as long as they can feel each other up on their lunch breaks.

Jill turns to Casey.

JILL

Do you ever get bored of this?

CASEY

Staring at Tanner's butt?

JILL

Work, the pool, life. All of it.

CASEY

We could go see a movie.

JILL

That's just another distraction.

CASEY

From what?

JILL

I don't know...

CASEY (V.O.)

Jill got like this sometimes. She called it her "happy sadness." A trained professional might've called it "clinical depression."

A SHADOW CASTS over Casey. STEPH WALKER (22) stands over her. She wears a company polo and manages to be menacing at five-foot-two.

STEPH
What are you staring at, freeloader?

JILL
Oh my god, Steph. What is it now?

STEPH
You can't talk to me like that.

JILL
I'm off today. I can do what I want.

STEPH
Keep talking and you'll be off forever. By the way, you need to go help out at the Smoothie Shack. Jose called out sick and Pete's slammed.

Jill opens her mouth to argue, then stops herself.

JILL
I want time and a half.

STEPH
Time and a quarter. Just go!

Steph and Casey watch Jill leave. When she's gone, Steph crouches beside Casey and lowers her sunglasses.

STEPH (cont'd)
I don't like you.

CASEY (V.O.)
Some things don't need to be said.

STEPH
You're a freeloading Guest Passer, the lowest of the low.

CASEY (V.O.)
Let it all out, Steph.

STEPH
Each time you swipe that little pass you're taking money out of my pocket.

CASEY
Why don't you get rid of them?

STEPH
Ownership thinks these kids need incentives. I think they should be grateful to get lunch breaks.

Steph straightens up, gazes around the waterpark. A call comes in over her walkie.

EMPLOYEE (ON WALKIE)
Got a code Bryce in the lap pool.

STEPH
How much diarrhea can one kid have?!
(then, exasperated)
You break one rule and I'm shredding that pass. Walk a little too fast to the bathroom and it's over for you.

With that, Steph marches off. Casey watches as Steph yells at a FIVE YEAR OLD BOY holding a balloon.

CASEY (V.O.)
You learn not to take Steph too personally. She's worked here since she was fourteen, and it's gotta suck coming back after college and bossing around people who remind you your best years are behind you.

Steph grabs the balloon and POPS IT. The boy bawls.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)
Then again, some people were born for middle management.

Casey settles back down in her chair and lowers her shades. Soon her head lolls to one side. She's fast asleep.

FADE TO:

EXT. LAZY RIVER - LATER

An eerie orange glow tells us that it's late afternoon.

Casey, hair messy and sunglasses askew, stirs awake as--

A SCREAM CUTS THROUGH THE PARK.

Casey throws her sunglasses off and bolts to her feet.

CASEY (V.O.)
Somehow I knew something was wrong.

Casey starts running in the direction of the Smoothie Shack.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)
Maybe it was because the scream came from the direction of the Smoothie Shack. Maybe it was because nobody yelled at me for running.

Casey rounds a corner. A crowd gathers around the--

SMOOTHIE SHACK

Casey pushes through the crowd. As she does, the faces turn to her with looks of shock, then pity.

CASEY (V.O.)
Or maybe when something like this happens, when part of your soul is ripped away, you can feel it.

At the front, Steph stares into a small kiddie pool beside the shack. Casey follows her gaze. Cups a hand to her mouth.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)
When someone you love dies, you can process it in a million different ways. You might cry, scream, punch something or someone.

Jill's body floats face-up, eyes closed, peacefully bobbing. Blood spreads around her head like a grisly halo.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)
But as I stared down at the lifeless body of my best friend, all I could think was: who took her necklace?

REVEAL: Jill's ANCHOR NECKLACE is nowhere to be seen.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Rain pelts DOZENS OF PEOPLE huddled around a fresh grave. A BRIGHT WHITE CASKET is lowered into the ground.

CASEY (V.O.)
It rained every day for a week after Jill died. Police ruled her death a "slip and fall and bash your own head open." A missing necklace was of no concern to Signal Hill's finest.

Casey stands near the casket, eyes cold and focused.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Rain pours as a beige STATION WAGON cruises along.

INT. STATION WAGON - SAME

Casey scowls out the back seat window. Her parents SAMANTHA and WALT (both 40s) sit up front, Samantha driving.

CASEY
I can't get over it.

WALT
That's perfectly natural, hon--

CASEY
Last time I saw Jill, she was wearing that anchor necklace. But it wasn't on her body, it wasn't in the pool, it wasn't in the stuff her parents got from the park. Why doesn't anyone else find that weird?

Samantha and Walt share a concerned glance.

SAMANTHA
I'm sure if it were a big deal the police would've said so.

CASEY (V.O.)
Typical civilian response. Blindly trust the system. Otherwise, what hope is there for the rest of us?

Casey turns back to staring out the window.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)
If I wanted the truth I'd have to find it myself.

EXT. SPLASH TOWN WATERPARK - ADMISSIONS - DAY

Casey faces the park, stopped cold with trepidation.

CASEY (V.O.)
Soon as the storm broke, the park opened. As if it wasn't the place where the whole world fell apart.

Casey nods, she can do this. She marches to the admissions counter. MICHAELA (16) greets her with a sad smile.

MICHAELA

Casey. I didn't expect to see you.

CASEY

I heard you were open so I wanted to come by. Be around friends, you know.

Michaela gives a confused nod -- *does Casey have friends?*
Casey slides over her GUEST PASS.

MICHAELA

This was Jill's. I don't think...

(beat)

I mean, she doesn't really work here anymore...

She once-overs Casey's outfit: black jeans, black button down. Casey leans on the counter, lowers her voice.

CASEY

I'm actually here to pick up some of... some of her things.

MICHAELA

I thought her parents did that?

CASEY

They missed some stuff from her locker. I didn't want it to get thrown out. You know how Steph is.

Michaela considers. Checks around, then leans forward.

MICHAELA

Okay, but you can't let her see you. She's on break for another ten.

Casey reaches for the pass but Michaela withholds it.

MICHAELA (cont'd)

I should hang onto this.

Casey gives a polite smile. She nods and heads through the blue-tiled tunnel and out into the main walkway.

CASEY (V.O.)

I should've realized that without Jill I was back to being an outsider. A weirdo. Fine, I could use that. Without Jill, I could be invisible.

LAZY RIVER

A light day at the park. No crowds, not much whooping. Almost peaceful. Casey stares at two beach chairs facing the river. The last place she saw Jill alive.

CASEY (V.O.)

It's not like I expected them to shut it down forever. I thought maybe they'd have one of those wooden crosses with all the flowers, or a little photo of her or something.

She turns away and heads around the corner of the main building. Down the left side, a door labeled EMPLOYEES ONLY.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)

Instead, Steph took down her employee of the month plaque.

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY

A ratty pool table is the room's centerpiece, surrounded by a wall of lockers and old couches where EMPLOYEES lounge.

Casey passes the spot where a plaque clearly used to hang beside an overstuffed bulletin board. She goes to Jill's old locker and dials in the combination. She pops the door open.

CASEY (V.O.)

Part of me hoped the necklace would be sitting there, a little medallion of closure handed to me on a sterling silver platter. But deep down, I knew it wouldn't be that easy.

REVEAL: the locker is EMPTY.

A hand taps Casey on the shoulder, jolting her. She spins around to face ABIGAIL EVANS (17, fashionable, oblivious).

CASEY

I was just--

ABIGAIL

You were Jill's friend, right? You were pretty close?

CASEY

Um. Yeah.

CASEY (V.O.)
Here it comes. The pitying look, the awkward condolences. The thought is nice, but it gets pretty--

ABIGAIL
 Could I have her locker?

What? CASEY (V.O.) What? CASEY

ABIGAIL
 I mean like, would her spirit be mad?
 I feel like she'd want it to be used.

Casey blinks at her.

ABIGAIL (cont'd)
 Do you have the combination? You can just write it down.

Abigail holds out her phone.

CASEY (V.O.)
I wanted to chuck her phone down the Double Danger water slide, but this was no time to be making enemies.

Casey takes Abigail's phone and types. Hands it back to her.

CASEY
 Can I ask you something? Do you really think it was an accident?

ABIGAIL
 Of course. So tragic.
 (then, lower)
 But I'd stay away from Noah Taylor. I'm not saying he had anything to do with it... but he's a creeper.

CASEY
 The cute emo guy?

ABIGAIL
 One hundo. He only works, like, part-part-time. And he never hangs out here when he's not working.

CASEY
 Oh, total weirdo.

ABIGAIL

Right? Not saying it's his fault. But like, if somebody did it...

BENJAMINA (16) pushes her way into the conversation.

BENJAMINA

My money's on Noah. He's definitely hot enough to be a killer, like Ted Bundy. Dangerously hot.

JORGE (17) pipes up from the couch he's lounging on.

JORGE

That dude's real quiet, too. Like, you'll say something, and he just stands there, doesn't say a word.

Casey nods, her wheels turning.

CASEY (V.O.)

And just like that, I had my first lead. Maybe it wouldn't hold water, but it was somewhere to start.

Jorge gives her a weird look before turning back around.

EXT. LAP POOL - DAY

NOAH TAYLOR (17, tall, lanky, brooding) fishes around the lap pool with a leaf skimmer. Casey approaches.

CASEY

Noah Taylor, right?

NOAH

My mom's the only one who calls my full name, and only if she's pissed.

CASEY

Well, I'm neither.

Noah looks over his shoulder at her.

CASEY (cont'd)

...Not your mom, or pissed at you.

(then)

Casey Carter. Now we're even.

NOAH

I've seen you around. Usually with... You were friends with Jill.

CASEY
They'll put that on my tombstone.

NOAH
Better than "quiet weirdo."

CASEY
You clearly don't know me.

He stops and fully faces her. Leans on the skimmer.

NOAH
Did you want something?

CASEY (V.O.)
I had to tread carefully here. Noah was dark, mysterious, and incredibly my type. I couldn't let him smolder me into getting tongue-tied.

CASEY
You're part-time, right?

NOAH
Boring question. Try again.

Casey fiddles with her glasses, a little off-put.

CASEY
Oookay. How come you don't ever hang out here when you're not working?

NOAH
Asks the girl wearing jeans to a waterpark.

CASEY
You're deflecting. Are you hiding something? Running from something?

NOAH
I could ask you the same thing.

CASEY
Psh. That would be stupid.

NOAH
What do you really wanna ask me, Casey Carter?

Casey lowers her notepad. Folds her arms.

CASEY

Where were you last Wednesday, at approximately 4:07pm? When Jill was... when she died.

NOAH

Wasn't that an accident?

CASEY

That's one interpretation.

NOAH

You think I... killed your friend?

CASEY

I think you're dodging the question.

NOAH

I wasn't here. Where I was is my business.

He walks to the far side of the pool and continues skimming.

NOAH (cont'd)

'Sides, if there was foul play wouldn't it be on the security tapes?

CASEY

I thought the police took those.

NOAH

Steph makes copies of everything, keeps 'em in her office.

CASEY

How do you know what's in Steph's office?

NOAH

Nothing stays secret here. Like the fact that if you jiggle the handle and smack the doorframe, her office door pops right open. Kids do that to skim her Adderall pills.

CASEY

You know a lot about breaking the law for someone who's innocent.

NOAH

Like I said, word spreads. Just be careful digging around. You might not like what you find.

EXT. SPLASH TOWN WATERPARK - WALKWAY - DAY

Casey winds down the walkway, dodging dripping teens and unwieldy strollers.

CASEY (V.O.)
"Careful digging around," why was Noah being so seductively cryptic? Was it genuine concern or was he trying to hide something?

She passes the lazy river and stops a few yards away from the MANAGER'S OFFICE. Steph stands guard in front of the bright blue door, barking at rowdy kids as they pass.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)
If he'd meant to deter me, he'd failed. I was getting into that office one way or another. All I needed was a distraction.

EXT. KIDZ PLACE - PIRATE SHIP - DAY

A big plastic pirate ship in the middle of a shallow pool.

BRYCE (10, the world's biggest ten-year-old) clambers to the ship's steering wheel and shoves a toddler out of the way. He spins the wheel as violently as his arms allow.

Casey stands at the edge of the pool and calls to him.

CASEY
 Are you Bryce?

He stops his flailing but doesn't look at her.

BRYCE
 Who's asking?

CASEY
 Someone who's got a job for you.

Bryce turns to face her. Casey holds up a funnel cake.

CASEY (cont'd)
 I can pay.

EXT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Casey crouches behind a rack of towels near Steph's office. She watches as Bryce casually struts around the lazy river.

CASEY
(under her breath)
Just hurry up.

Bryce finds his target. He waits for Tanner, on patrol, to lock eyes with him, before CANON BALLING into the river.

Tanner blows his whistle and rushes over.

TANNER
No diving! No canon--

The bubbles dissipate, revealing a BROWN CLOUD around Bryce.

TANNER (cont'd)
Oh hell no. Everybody, out of the pool!

Steph dashes out of the office, taking care to shut the door behind her. She rushes over to Tanner.

STEPH
What's going on?

TANNER
See for yourself.

Steph looks down at Bryce.

BRYCE
I... I had an accident.

STEPH
Oh, god. Get him out of there.

TANNER
I ain't touching him.

BRYCE
I've got food poisoning!

Steph crouches down.

STEPH
Whoa, hey, whoa, let's not throw those words around. Just calm down.

BRYCE
I want two hot dogs, a large fry, and a banana malt milkshake.

STEPH
What? No. Absolutely not.

BRYCE
We could tell my mom...

STEPH
Tanner, take this kid--

BRYCE
No! I want you to get it!

Steph's eyes bulge as she contemplates the consequences of strangling a ten-year-old. Finally, she caves.

STEPH
I'll be right back.
(to Tanner)
Get him cleaned up.

CASEY (V.O.)
If she looked closer, she might've noticed that was \$7 worth of chocolate Dip'n Dots floating in the lazy river. Luckily, Steph wasn't the type to get her hands dirty.

Steph marches off. Casey waits until Steph's out of sight before she dashes to the office door. She jiggles the handle and smacks the doorframe and -- it pops open!

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Cramped but neat, the office has a desk with a TV/VCR combo, payroll binders neatly stacked on a shelf, and not so much as a candy wrapper out of place.

CASEY (V.O.)
I'd crossed from harmless questions to breaking and entering and it felt like at any moment the cold, steel clasps of justice would chain me to the spot. Fortunately, reality is less dramatic than my imagination.

Casey browses a shelf of VHS tapes labeled with recent dates. She finds what she's looking for.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)
There it was. The final moments of Jill's life contained on a few dozen feet of magnetic tape.

Casey pushes the tape into the VCR and takes a seat.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)
*I hadn't done the psychological
inventory necessary to know if I was
ready to see this, but there was no
turning back.*

A four way split screen of security footage. One angle shows customers in line for the smoothie shack. Another shows the lazy river, where Steph confronts Casey and Jill.

Jill storms off. Casey watches as Jill walks out of one screen and into the one facing the smoothie shack. She waves to someone out of sight then disappears behind the shack.

Casey leans close to the screen. Waits to see her emerge.

She doesn't.

Casey fast-forwards. There's no sign of Jill. Another angle that catches one corner of the kiddie pool draws her attention. A cloud of blood spreads into the edge of frame.

Casey pauses the tape. Stares at it.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)
*It happened in a blind spot. But
something felt wrong...*

Casey grabs the tape from the day before Jill's death and plays it. The angle is the same.

She tries another tape: the same.

One more tape, from a week before the incident.

Now, that angle is a full wide shot of the kiddie pool.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)
*Someone changed the camera angle a
week before "the accident," and it
just so happened to be the exact
place Jill dies.*

Casey stares at the screen, jaw hanging open.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)
This was cold blooded murder.

INT. CARTER'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Carters eat takeout and watch *The Thin Man* on TV. Casey sits cross-legged on the floor, staring into space.

SAMANTHA

You were at the waterpark today?

CASEY

Face your fears and all that.

SAMANTHA

I don't think you should hang around there anymore, Casey.

CASEY

Drowning's not contagious.

Samantha gasps. Walt's eyes go wide.

WALT

Honey, that's... don't say things like that.

CASEY

Don't worry about me. I'm not fragile.

Casey turns back to face the TV.

CASEY (V.O.)

I'm angry.

EXT. SPLASH TOWN WATERPARK - TIKI BAR - DAY

Next day. It's a sparse day at the TIKI BAR. A handwritten addition to the sign reads "NON-ALCOHOLIC!!!"

PETE BELTZ (17, short and chubby, unflappable) leans on the counter, cleaning a glass with a rag.

CASEY (V.O.)

Pete Beltz. He lives with his mom behind the waterpark, which means he's always around and knows everything that happens here.

Casey, wearing a one piece and shorts, sidles up to the bar.

PETE

Casey Carter. I take it you're not here for a virgin daiquiri.

CASEY

Not unless they're served with a dollop of justice.

Pete sets down the glass, flips the rag over his shoulder.

PETE

I'm sorry about Jill. Really.

CASEY

Hard to believe you were one of the last people to see her alive.

PETE

If I knew what would happen I never would've asked for help.

CASEY

Can you tell me what you remember?

PETE

I was slammed. I asked her to get another crate of bananas from storage and then a few minutes later, I heard that scream.

(then)

Been kind of avoiding the Smoothie Shack ever since.

CASEY

And you didn't see anything suspicious?

PETE

Like what?

CASEY

People slip at water parks all the time. Most of them don't end up dead with no witnesses.

PETE

You think someone killed her?

CASEY (V.O.)

Maybe I should've kept things closer to my chest, but I felt alone and in need of allies. In hindsight, I wish I'd kept Pete out of it.

CASEY

I checked the security footage. It's unusable. Intentionally unusable.

Pete raises an eyebrow.

PETE

Then you know how easy it is to get into Steph's office. Doesn't narrow things down.

CASEY

What I can't figure out is a motive. Everybody loved Jill. Well, except Steph. But is she really a murderer?

PETE

Interesting that you say that--

Someone GRABS Casey, SPINS her around. Steph glares at her.

STEPH

I've had enough of you running around being weird and morbid and harassing my employees. And by the way, I wanna see a receipt for your entrance pass.

But Casey isn't listening to her. Instead, Casey stares at the ANCHOR NECKLACE DANGLING FROM STEPH'S NECK.

CASEY (V.O.)

I couldn't believe it. She was wearing Jill's necklace like a sick trophy. I wanted to rip it off her neck, but I had to play it cool.

CASEY

That necklace looks familiar. Is that new?

Steph reflexively touches it.

STEPH

(off balance)

Oh, this? I... found it in one of the collecting filters. Nobody claimed it from Lost and Found.

CASEY (V.O.)

It's really hard to claim something when you're DEAD.

Steph tucks the necklace inside her shirt.

STEPH

I'm warning you, the grieving friend grace period is over. No more talking about this Jill thing or you're getting a lifetime ban.

Steph storms off. Casey clenches her fists. Pete comes around the outside of the tiki bar and touches her shoulder.

PETE

Come with me. I've got an ice cold
Capri Sun and a fried bologna
sandwich with your name on 'em.

Casey lets Pete steer her toward the exit.

EXT. PETE'S CUL-DE-SAC - DAY

Pete leads Casey down the sidewalk. The fenced edge of Splash Town disappears behind a row of narrow townhouses.

CASEY

Steph is the absolute worst and I
hate her and she's 100% guilty.

PETE

She's awful, but a killer?

CASEY

She's wearing Jill's necklace! I bet
she snatched it before the body was
even cold.

PETE

Steph didn't steal that necklace.
Tanner gave it to her.

Casey stops in her tracks and cocks her head at him.

CASEY

No, Tanner gave it to Jill cuz they
were kind of a thing.

PETE

Steph and Tanner are also a thing.
They've been making out on the
regular, maybe even a little over-
the-polo action. But it's against
company policy for Steph to date a
subordinate so they have to keep it
on the DL.

CASEY

So Tanner took it from the crime
scene and re-gifted it?

PETE

That I don't know. But I saw him give it to Steph a few days ago when we had the meeting about reopening.

Casey turns around and heads back to the waterpark.

CASEY

Thanks for the dish, Pete.

PETE

What about that drink?

CASEY

Rain check!

Casey sprints down the sidewalk, a woman on a mission. Pete stares after her, a little deflated.

EXT. SPLASH TOWN WATERPARK - TWIN WATER SLIDES - DAY

Tanner leans against a the warped wooden railing, staring down at the lazy river as kids jostle to go down the towering water slides behind him.

CASEY (V.O.)

Tanner was too beautiful and dumb to be a murderer, right? Maybe Steph put him up to it but why would he agree?

Casey squeezes through the throng of pushy kids.

CASEY

Mind on the past, Tanner?

He half turns to see who it is.

TANNER

More like on the boredom. I hate watching the slides.

A TEEN barrels through the line of kids and dives headfirst down one of the slides. Tanner doesn't notice.

CASEY

Listen, I need to ask you some... sensitive questions. Think we could go somewhere private?

TANNER

I got nothing to hide. 'Sides, Steph would kill me if I left.

CASEY

You and Jill were an item. You gave her that anchor necklace, right?

TANNER

Yeah. And I'm super bummed. I've never kissed a girl that died before.

CASEY

Not so bummed that you couldn't go running into Steph's open arms.

TANNER

That's kinda not your business.

CASEY

It became my business when you gave Steph a dead girl's missing necklace.

TANNER

Whoa, chill. That's not Jill's, I gave Steph one too. We've been sorta seeing each other for a while.

CASEY

You were dating both of them?

TANNER

I can't help that everybody wants me.

CASEY

So, wait... there's two necklaces?

TANNER

I buy those in bulk so I can give 'em to any girl I wanna mack on. I got more if you're interested...

CASEY

No! I'm in mourning.

TANNER

Hey, me too. We can mourn together.

CASEY

I can't believe I thought your butt was cute.

Casey shakes her head. Pushes her way back downstairs.

TANNER

It is cute.

EXT. SPLASH TOWN WATERPARK - SLIDE STAIRCASE - DAY

Casey maneuvers down through the endless line of kids.

CASEY (V.O.)

That turned me off to Tanner specifically and men as a concept, but it still didn't add up to murder. He could be lying about the necklaces, but it made sense that they were a cheap trinket rather than the smoking gun of a complicated murder plot.

Casey reaches the bottom of the stairs. From her vantage, she watches a line of customers sweating in front of the Smoothie Shack and beside it, the now-covered kiddie pool.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)

Were the police right? Was it just a terrible accident? Did I just hope there was some deeper mystery so I could put off dealing with the tragic death of the only person who actually liked me?

CASEY

Woof.

As Casey steps off the stairway, A BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM rings out through the park!

She instinctively looks towards the Smoothie Shack, but everyone else stares towards the far corner of the park.

EXT. KIDZ PLACE - PIRATE SHIP - DAY

Casey dashes down the walkways and almost skids to a stop to avoid crashing into the circle of people blocking her view.

CASEY (V.O.)

At first I worried that on the other side of that crowd I'd somehow find Jill dead all over again.

She eases past them to see the scene: in a shaded area behind the pirate ship, a black and white photo of Steph's face with the eyes crossed out lies surrounded by writing in blood-red liquid. "I KNOW WHAT YOU DID, STEPHANIE."

Casey approaches, bends down, and sticks a finger in the red substance. She holds it to her nose, then tastes it.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)
*Sno-cone syrup. Cherry Cherry
 Christmas to be exact. But who would
 want to threaten Steph?*

STEPH (O.C.)
 What did you do, you freak?!

Casey spins around to find Steph standing over her.

CASEY
 I was just--

STEPH
 You're coming with me.

Steph GRABS Casey's arm, yanks her up, and drags her away.

EXT. SPLASH TOWN - WALKWAY - SAME

Steph still drags Casey past onlookers towards her office.

STEPH
 First, I'm gonna prove that you did
 that act of terrorism. Then I'm
 calling the cops. And, obviously,
 you're banned for life.

CASEY
 Steph, this wasn't me!

STEPH
 You keep running around hounding
 people about Jill, all the while
 pointing the finger at me.

CASEY
 I'm just trying to find the truth.

STEPH
 Okay, here's the truth: Jill was a
 bitch and nobody besides you even
 liked her.

CASEY (V.O.)
*I couldn't believe my ears. Had Steph
 lost it? Had her own cruelty made her
 that delusional?*

STEPH

I'm not gonna pretend like she was a saint just because she killed herself. She could've had the decency not to do it in my park.

Steph resumes dragging Casey along.

CASEY (V.O.)

Now, I'm not the punching type. When I was twelve I tried to angrily punch a wall and I ended up bruising my hand so bad I couldn't hold a pencil for a week. Didn't even chip paint.

(then)

That said, I was about to let Steph have all of what I could muster.

CASEY

You... SUCK! You're the freaking WORST PERSON EVER!

CASEY (V.O.)

This may not seem impressive, but that's an eleven on the Casey scale.

Steph cocks her head and lets out an insane cackle.

STEPH

How are you even real?

They approach her office to find the door ajar.

STEPH (cont'd)

I didn't leave this open...

INT. STEPH'S OFFICE - DAY

It's been ransacked. Papers and supplies are strewn about, furniture's been jostled, and the security system has been totally destroyed. Steph rounds on Casey.

CASEY

I swear this wasn't me. I was with Tanner — ask him!

This only makes Steph madder.

STEPH

I'm gonna kill you, Casey Carter.

CASEY
Like you killed Jill?!

STEPH
That's it!

Steph raises a fist. Casey almost trips over herself as she flees the office.

EXT. SPLASH TOWN WATERPARK - DAY

Casey runs blindly, dodging families and food stands.

CASEY (V.O.)
I was scared, I was angry, but most of all I was alone. I needed to see a friendly face.

EXT. PETE'S HOUSE - DAY

Pete opens the door, revealing Casey on the front step.

CASEY
How about that fried bologna?

INT. PETE'S HOUSE - DAY

Casey sits at a small table among not-quite-hoarder but definitely unhealthy levels of clutter. Pete enters from the adjoining kitchen and hands her a glass of orange juice.

PETE
She really said those words? "I'm gonna kill you?"

CASEY
She practically *hissed* them.

PETE
Well, that's bad but it's not exactly a confession.

CASEY
At the very least she's guilty of being a psychotic a-hole.

Pete nods and returns to the kitchen, working the stove.

CASEY (cont'd)
 But that message... there's no way she did that herself. So either she had a partner who's double crossing her, or someone else is on the case.

PETE (O.S.)
 (from the kitchen)
 Could be someone trying to frame her.

As Casey ponders this, she absent-mindedly paces around the living room, inspecting trinkets and photos.

CASEY
 Framing her would be easy. I mean, she basically admitted she wanted Jill dead.

Casey wanders towards a nearby bedroom. Something on the floor catches her eye.

PETE (O.S.)
 It could be someone playing a prank. A sick, twisted prank, but certainly effective... Casey?

But Casey isn't paying attention. She kneels and picks up a scrap of paper off the bedroom floor -- a PHOTO OF JILL.

She turns the picture over in her hands, then glances at the closet, its door slightly ajar.

PETE (O.S.) (cont'd)
 Hey, Casey, the house is kind of a mess so you really shouldn't--

Casey opens the closet door to find DOZENS of framed pictures of Jill, a lock of hair, and poems scribbled on notepaper. It's a shrine to Jill. Pete appears behind her.

PETE
 It's not what you think.

CASEY
 You? Did you...?

PETE
 No! Casey, please. I loved Jill. I'd never want to hurt her. You know me!

CASEY
 Don't say that.

Casey pushes past Pete, beelines for the door.

PETE

Just wait, please-- let me explain!

Casey's heard enough. She slams the door behind her.

EXT. PETE'S CUL-DE-SAC - NIGHT

Casey power walks back towards Splash Town, her face screwed up in anger.

CASEY (V.O.)

This was the price of trusting people. Eventually you learn that the only person worth trusting is yourself. And even that's debatable.

Casey stops to watch two LITTLE GIRLS (8 and 9) playing on a small swing set.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)

Was Pete a murderer? Steph? Tanner? I felt like the only truth I'd exposed was that people are messy, selfish, and disappointing.

An OLDER MAN calls the girls in for dinner. They run inside, leaving the swing to rock gently in their absence.

EXT. SPLASH TOWN - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Casey wanders through the near-empty parking lot.

CASEY (V.O.)

I'd been wandering for God knows how long and of course I ended up back there. The only place to end up. That stucco prison that's trapped us so well we don't even know we're incarcerated.

Casey spots Noah leaning on the chain link fence, vaping.

NOAH

Casey Carter. You've been making things interesting around here.

CASEY

Never knew how much I prefer boring.

Noah takes a long drag and offers the vape to Casey.

CASEY (cont'd)
Do you ever get bored of this? Work,
the pool, life... all of it?

NOAH
There's more to life than this place.

CASEY
God, I hope so. I hate it here.

She takes the vape and stares at it.

NOAH
Wanna get out of here? Grab a bite?

She steps closer. Stares deeply into his eyes. Finally, she gives a sad smile.

CASEY
I gotta see this through.

NOAH
If you change your mind, you know
where to find me.

CASEY
Only part-part-time.

NOAH
I bet you could track me down.

He smiles and takes the vape back.

LOUD POLICE SIRENS startle them. They look towards the treeline that borders the parking lot. Past it is a busy highway where SIX police cruisers barrel down the road.

NOAH (cont'd)
Know what that's about?

CASEY
That one's not my problem.

CASEY (V.O.)
*But you were wrong, Casey. That was
only the beginning of your problems.
You'd find out soon enough.*

EXT. PETE'S CUL-DE-SAC - NIGHT

Red and blue light reflect off the rusted metal of the neighborhood swing set.

CASEY (V.O.)

Despite what I learned about Pete, I still regret bringing him into all this. Nobody should die like that.

An OFFICER wraps police tape around the base of the swing set. We see FEET dangling as she does.

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)

Makes me wonder: if I hadn't started asking questions, would he be alive? Would any of this have happened?

We CRANE UP to see Pete hanging from the crossbeam, strung up with the metal chain of the swing. Dead.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF PILOT.