

DOMESTIC OPS

"Homeland Insecurity"

by

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PROLOGUE

FADE IN:

INT. WAREHOUSE - AFTERNOON

HER EYE has a single bead of sweat threatening to drop from the top lashes.

SPECIAL AGENT ABBOTT HALSTON is perspiring. Hard. Droplets cover her face, and she's trying so very hard not to blink.

But gravity at last takes over, and the drop of sweat falls thirty feet, landing in front of a MAN in the ASSEMBLY LINE below who packs disassembled guns and ammunition into crates that are then loaded in a semi-truck.

If the Man saw the drop, he is instead distracted by a TEENAGE GANG that enters the warehouse to pick up the firepower.

In her thirties, Agent Abby Halston is so shocked at the Gang's age, average sixteen, that she blinks hard to see them more clearly - and two more drops of perspiration plop before the Man. He looks up, and in another language he screams.

ABBY
(into a voice tube mic)
It's on.

Abby hurls over the rafter she's been hugging from below. Bullets zip by her as, catlike, she leaps one beam to the next.

DIRECTOR BREKEN (O.S.)
F.B.I.! You are surrounded!

The sound of a helicopter punctuates the panic, disorienting the Men in their storm of gunfire and allowing Abby to fling herself through a window.

OUTSIDE

Abby lands on the overhang of the loading dock as FBI AGENTS storm the warehouse. The LEADER of the Teen Gang runs for the cab of the idling semi now loaded with guns while several other Teens avoid fire and dive into its trailer.

The truck nearly jackknives as it takes off, causing Abby, who has jumped on its top, to fly off the back, over the roll-top door.

She grabs a chain at the top of the door, but her weight causes the door to roll down, and four Teens have guns drawn.

As sirens blare behind her, a Teen fires, and Abby swings herself to the side the truck, allowing the back door to close as her fingertips cling to the top. She climbs back up to the roof of the truck and crawls toward the cab as they speed down the two-lane hilly blacktop.

Abby scales down the front of the trailer, between it and the cab, and steps across the weight distribution hitch that connects the cab and the trailer. She opens the cab's rear window and plants her gun hard on the Teen Leader's head.

ABBY

So I was thinking...

She steadies him long enough to slither into the cab and take the passenger seat, gun still aimed.

INTERCUT - INSIDE THE TRUCK CAB / DIRECTOR BRECKEN IN THE CAR BEHIND / THE HELICOPTER PILOT / ALL VOICES TRANSMITTING THROUGH ABBY'S WIRELESS EARPIECE HEADSET AND MIC

ABBY (CONT'D)

...maybe you didn't notice. But you are really young and in way over that babyface head of yours. Your mom should have really tried spanking. Pull the truck over now.

LEADER

You're crazy, lady. Get outta here!

ABBY

Can't.

LEADER

Why not?!

ABBY

I'm F.B.I. Counterterrorism, and you and your Pop Warner league here are driving a shipment of firepower we've traced to al-Qaeda.

LEADER

So maybe it's you who's in over your head.

ABBY

You know where these guns come from, don't you, genius? What are you, twelve? Where's the war?!

IN THE HELICOPTER

The HELICOPTER PILOT sees the curve coming - and the cliff.

IN THE SEMI

PILOT
(through Abby's earpiece)
Switchback mile ahead. No time.

LEADER
You're blind, lady. The war's all
around you!

ABBY
Whatever, tough guy. You'll have to
show me sometime. But for now just
stop the truck. And I mean now!

LEADER
Can't.

DIRECTOR BRECKEN
Halston, control that vehicle or
abort.

ABBY
(to the Teen)
You leave me no choice.

She puts on her seatbelt.

LEADER
What are you do...

Abby grabs the large steering wheel and turns it sharply. The truck swerves violently, but the Teen struggles, and they stay on the road.

IN THE TRAILER

The other Gang members are tossed crazily.

IN THE OFFICIAL VEHICLE CLOSEST IN THE CHASE

Through the windshield of the car jockeying for position behind the semi, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR BREKEN and AGENT HALL watch as Abby and the Teen wrestle for the steering wheel.

She socks him across the jaw, gaining control, but the curve is coming too fast, and they hit the embankment hard, forcing the cab up and over, crashing over the side.

DIRECTOR BREKEN

Oh hell no!

Pulling closer, he and Agent Hall can see that the trailer remains on the side toward the road, but the cab that holds Abby and the Teen Gang Leader dangles precariously off the other side of the embankment, right above the canyon.

IN THE HELICOPTER

The Pilot steadies his lights on the crash site, the depth of the canyon further than the reach of the light.

He watches Breken and Hall try to maneuver their car closer to the accident, but the embankment proves too steep. At last they get out of the car and start climbing, but gigantic boulders and sliding rocks impede their progress.

INT. SEMI-TRUCK CAB - CONTINUOUS

Engine stalled, the only sound is the metallic creak of the dangling cab. Abby shakes off the daze faster than the Teen Leader and opens the passenger door slowly, seeing just how far they hang over the canyon.

She turns back to the Teen Leader, now noticing a small tattoo of a headless eagle on the back of his neck.

ABBY

Listen, you've made a big mistake. Take it from me, alright, I know what that looks like. But if you're as tough as you think you are, you'll like a challenge. So take some right steps. It's not like they're inconvenient. They start right here. Come on.

He's visibly torn - and scared - as she climbs out the door.

OUTSIDE

Truck still creaking, Abby scales the side of the cab and slowly lowers herself back onto the weight distribution hitch. She speaks calmly through the open rear cab window.

ABBY

Now just do what I did. Climb over here onto this hitch with me. It'll be too dangerous to try to jump from here, so we'll remove the u-pin, let the cab go and just slide back down the money side of this hill with the trailer.

As she talks, she inspects the king pin that ultimately holds the trailer to the cab's hitch. She grips it tightly.

Inside the cab, the Leader slowly reaches behind his back.

ABBY (CONT'D)

I think that'll be safer than trying to scale the trailer so close to the canyon and...

Looking up, she finds the Teen Leader pointing a shaky gun at her head through the open rear window.

ABBY (CONT'D)

You don't want to do that. There's no way out for you except this.

LEADER

You think you know everything. But there is no way out.

ABBY

That's not true! You're young. You'll see. You haven't even...

EXT. EMBANKMENT - SAME MOMENT

Director Breken and Agent Hall are nearing the semi when they hear the gunshot and watch the cab drop into the canyon.

INT. FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

His homework spread around him on the living room couch, a FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD BOY studies by lamplight.

UPSTAIRS

A THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD BOY pinches a dollop of liquid into a vial, shakes it, watches it turn blue then sets it into a compact, personal fridge sitting under his desk.

EXT. FAMILY HOME - SAME MOMENT

Footsteps crunch on the driveway. A subjective point of view moves close to a front window where, through a partially open curtain, the fifteen-year-old boy is watched as he studies.

This POV quickly turns to a trellis, climbing it to a window where the thirteen-year-old boy can be seen working on another vial.

A gloved hand reaches for a nearby window and tries to open.

INSIDE

Instantly the lamps in the upstairs bedroom and living room dim and then brighten. Both boys freeze what they're doing.

INT. FAMILY HOME - SECONDS LATER

The older boy bursts into the upstairs bedroom where a nod sends the younger one diving in his closet for two handguns.

The older boy shakes his head "no," and the younger boy instead retrieves two baseball bats, two bad-ass knives, flashlights, and pepper spray.

EXT. FAMILY HOME - SECONDS LATER

The POV has descended to ground level. Its gloved hand tries the front doorknob, but it's locked. The gloves then nimbly slip a credit card between the door and the jamb. Click.

INSIDE

From the dark foyer, the older boy hears the click of the lock giving way and shakes his head in a way that says, "Oh, shit." He drops the bat and, silently motioning to the other boy to join him, hurries to plant his back up against the door.

The door starts to open, but the boys strain against it. The gloves release pressure, causing the leaning boys to lose their balance. Then one more push from outside, and the kids go sprawling.

The figure bursts through the door. Shadows tip around the room, and all is confusion - until the gloved hand reaches for the light switch and turns it on.

And standing there just inside the doorway is F.B.I. Special Agent Abby Halston.

ABBY

You both are so dead.

The younger boy, LUTE HALSTON, immediately stands and runs to hug her tightly.

ABBY (CONT'D)

I see someone's happy to see me.

VAN HALSTON, the older boy, dusts himself off.

VAN

Check back on my deep-seated joy
when you learn to use your key.

ABBY

From the looks of things, someone
has to keep you sharp.

VAN

For your information, we totally
backed off just now. Otherwise, you
might be the one picking herself
off the floor.

Letting Van rant, Abby kisses Lute on his forehead, and the scarf she's been wearing tightly around her neck and lower face starts to loosen. Lute sees this and removes the sunglasses she's wearing at night as well as the loosened scarf. Scared, he pulls her hair back - and that's when the extent of the damage is fully visible.

A large, deep scrape nearly covers one side of her face. Her lip is cut, and a bandage covers her eyebrow. She tries to force her hair forward again with a forearm bound in medical wrap.

VAN (CONT'D)

Mom!!

ABBY

It's okay, nothing vital.

But both boys are descending on her fast.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Come on, don't be silly.

She now starts to use sign language for some things she says, but it's obvious that Lute reads her lips perfectly.

ABBY (CONT'D)

What you two should be worried about is your sucky self-defense skills.

VAN

Just let me see it.

Sagging, Abby gives up and allows the inspection.

LUTE

Some of these are combat. But you fell too, didn't you?

Deaf since birth, Lute's voice is different, but it's clear enough, and Abby's starting to squirm.

ABBY

Yeah, I guess you could say that.

VAN

Well, you could say that except you didn't just fall. You crashed.

He pulls a piece of glass from her hair, and then grass.

LUTE

You were propelled away from the vehicle.

ABBY

Couldn't you guys just ignore me? Or how 'bout locking yourselves in your room with incense and death metal like normal boys? Go on.

VAN

Let me see, was that an option?

Van now follows a shallow trench of skin where the bullet grazed along Abby's temple. He trembles just slightly, and she can't look at him.

ABBY

I think you just heard how I was able to pick that front lock again. How many times do I have to tell you to get that thing fixed?

VAN

So that's how it's gonna be? Fine. Good night.

He stomps toward the stairs.

ABBY

Come on, Van, I just got here. We don't have to do this. We could mix it up a little - you know, have blueberry pancakes or something before we start stepping on each other's toes. It'd be like a first course before the main event.

VAN

We need to get to bed. I've got an exam tomorrow, and Lute's got an early science club meeting. You might know that if you dropped by once in a while.

He turns away again and starts climbing the steps.

LUTE

It's only pancakes.

VAN

(signing simultaneously)
Then you two shouldn't have a hard time getting stuffed.

ABBY

Oh, yeah?

LUTE

Did you hear that?

ABBY

Clearly. But you know what, Lute? You gotta like our odds.

Lute grins, and together they bolt toward the stairs after Van who now high steps it, trying not to smile.

VAN

Stay away from me! I'm tired, and I want to go to b...

But Abby lightly tackles him, pinning him down.

VAN (CONT'D)

I said get away from me!

ABBY

Yes, but alas your words are weightless next to my most secret of weapons.

VAN
No!

LUTE
Yeah!

ABBY
Feared by interstate criminals and
disrespectful boys alike.

VAN
Then it's not a secret! You missed
the whole point!

ABBY
Can I help it that its sheer and
awesome power could not be held
under wraps?

VAN
It's not sheer and awesome! It's
just immense!

ABBY
Yup, that's the one! Butt bomb!!!

She sits on him, and now he can't stop himself from laughing.

VAN
Get off of me!

LUTE
Why should she? You just said she
had a big ass!

ABBY
Vengeful boy, that's my son.

VAN
You just added another year to the
future therapy I'm gonna need!

ABBY
See, it's important to have long
term goals. You have your mother to
thank for making you strong. Now
what's it gonna be?

Van continues to struggle underneath her.

VAN
You don't need any more pancakes,
take my word for it!

ABBY

Problem is nothing says quality
time quite like blueberry pancakes.

VAN

What about my early morning
tomorrow?

ABBY

That's simple. If we start now, we
won't be done eating till at least
the A.M. That means when you go to
bed, you'll have already had your
breakfast. It's only obvious that
translates to an advantage on your
day - and hence an advantage on the
test.

VAN

The problem with thinking outside
the box is you have no idea when
you turn a corner.

ABBY

That's your job.

VAN

That's my burden.

ABBY

You gotta love a family with
clearly defined roles.

INT. HALSTON FAMILY HOME, KITCHEN - LATER

Van flips pancakes dotted with blueberries and stirs a small
pot with more blueberries stewing. Lute applies bandages and
creams to his mother's numerous facial wounds.

Despite the violent ravages to her face, Abby is a stunning
woman, even as she sits holding a bag of frozen blueberries
to her aching head.

LUTE

(signing intermittently)
Any tattoos or other personal body
markings?

ABBY

Yeah, actually, a headless eagle on
the back of his neck. Kinda creepy.

LUTE
When's debriefing?

ABBY
0900 tomorrow. Here, you're
probably ready for these, aren't
you?

She extends the bag of frozen blueberries toward Van.

VAN
Nope. Picked up fresh at the store
today.

ABBY
Wait a second, you didn't know I
was coming tonight.

LUTE
He's been picking them up every day
for a week and a half now.

Abby's breath hitches. Van turns angrily to his brother.

VAN
It hasn't exactly been every day,
buttwipe.

Abby steps to Van at the stove and cradles his face in her
hands before she hugs him hard. And he hugs back.

Lute watches then silently sets the table.

Trying to hide his tears, Van brings the breakfast to the
table as Abby assists.

With only the sounds of knives and forks clinking on dishes,
the little family relishes their midnight breakfast.

FADE OUT

END OF PILOT PROLOGUE