

THE LAST WITNESS

Written by

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Address
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INT. SECLUDED CABIN - DAY

ELLIE GREAVES, 27, a young woman with a pale, haunted look, stands motionless in front of a blank canvas, a paintbrush trembling in her hand. The only sound is the faint hum of the TV in the background.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
...And we'll be back shortly with
the verdict for VICTOR CERONE,
accused of running one of the
largest criminal enterprises in the
country.

Ellie exhales shakily. The paintbrush slips from the hand, clattering to the floor. She turns away, rubbing her arms as though trying to shake off the chill in the room.

She glances at her phone on the couch. A missed call notification lingers on the screen, but she doesn't pick it up. Instead, she grabs her keys and jacket and walks out the door.

EXT. SECLUDED CABIN - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Ellie steps into her beat-up sedan, the isolation of her surroundings emphasized by the endless expanses of trees. The engine sputters before roaring to life. She pulls out onto a narrow dirt road.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

A brightly lit supermarket, a stark contrast to Ellie's dim cabin. She wanders the aisles, her cart mostly empty.

CLOSE on her hand as she tosses a BOX OF KRAFT MACARONI into the cart. Her fingers linger on the box for a moment, her gaze unfocused. She pushes the cart down the aisle, her pace slow and mechanical.

INT. SUPERMARKET - CASH REGISTER - DAY

Ellie unloads her cart onto the conveyor belt, her movements distracted.

The CASHIER, a cheerful woman in her 50's, glances at her with mild concern.

CASHIER
Ellie, you doing okay? You seem...
out of it today.

Ellie forces a weak smile, her eyes darting to the groceries as they slide forward.

ELLIE
Yeah. I'm fine.

The cashier chuckles softly, scanning a bag of shallots.

CASHIER
Paper right?

Ellie pauses midovement, her mind clearly elsewhere.

CASHIER (CONT'D)
Paper or plastic?

Ellie blinks, snapping out of it.

ELLIE
Paper. Yeah .

The cashier eyes her with a flicker of concern but says nothing. Ellie finishes loading her cart without another word.

INT. SECLUDED CABIN - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The soft hiss of olive oil in a skillet fills the quiet cabin. Ellie methodically slices a piece of duck prosciutto, her movements percise, almost robotic. She tosses a handful of shallots into the pan, watching them sizzle.

The TV plays in the background, a familiar voice rising above the sound of the cokking.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
We're reporting live from the
courthouse in New York City...

Ellie glances at the screen as she pours a large glass of wine, her hand steady despite the tension buliding in her jaw.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
...where Victor Cerone, alleged mob
boss and orchestrator of dozens of
violent crimes, has just been
acquitted of all charges.

Ellie freezes. The wine glass slips from her hand, shattering on the floor.

Her breath catches in her throat as she stares at the TV, her face a mask of disbelief and rage.

EXT. SECLUDED CABIN - NIGHT

From outside, the cabin glows faintly against the dark woods. Inside, the faint flicker of the TV continues, interrupted only by the crunch of broken glass under Ellie's feet.

FADE OUT.

INT. SECLUDED CABIN - NIGHT

Ellie kneels on the floor, as she sweeps up shards of the wine glass. The faint flicker of the TV casts uneven shadows on the walls.

The NEWS ANCHOR, 36, continues to speak in the background, but Ellie isn't listening. She straightens, dumping the glass into the trash. Her gaze drifts to the sketchbook lying open on the counter.

CLOSE ON THE SKETCHBOOK: fragmented images of Cerone's face, outlines of shady figures are sprawled across the page in thick, jagged lines.

Ellie hesitates, then flips to a fresh page. Her hand trembles as she picks up a pencil and starts to draw. A building takes shape--a vague, looming structure. Her strokes grow faster, more frantic, until the outline of an abandoned warehouse emerges.

She stops suddenly, just staring at the drawing.

She slams the book shut and paces the room, clutching it close to her chest. Her gaze flicks to the burner phone on the couch.

After a long moment, she picks it up, and scrolls through the contact list. Her thumb hovers over a name but doesn't press it. She tosses the phone back onto the couch, her jaw tightening.

EXT. SECLUDED CABIN - NIGHT

The glow of the cabin's windows is the only light in the surrounding darkness. Snow begins to fall, the flakes catching in the faint light.

The sound of the TV fades into the background as the tension lingers in the air.

FADE OUT.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The hum of distant traffic barely reaches this desolate corner of the city. A crumbling warehouse sits against the backdrop of the city.

A convoy of dark SUVs are parked in front of the building, federal agents in tactical gear, backs against the vehicles, as murmurs spew from their radios. They begin to check their weapons.

In the midst of the chaos stands CAL ARCHER, 40's, sharp eyed and rugged. He sports civilian clothes with tactical gear, setting him apart from the rest of the team.

AGENT IN CHARGE (O.S.)
We're live in five. Stay sharp, &
no surprises.

Cal looks onward towards the warehouse.

CAL
It's not their style to show up
quiet. Somethings off.

A beat of silence...

AGENT IN CHARGE
They're not expecting us. We've got
this.

Cal doesn't respond, his jaw tightening as he surveys the scene. A younger agent, JAMES, 36, approaches him.

JAMES
Cal, you good? This feels clean.

CAL
Clean doesn't mean safe, you'll
learn that quickly in this
business. Don't let your guard down.

James smirks, brushing off the warning.

JAMES
Relax. We're the ones holding the
cards.

Cal doesn't reply. His eyes fixed on the warehouse, it's darkness swallowing any movement.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE - SAME TIME

Inside the warehouse, dim lights spill out from flickering overheads. Two men in cheap suits, LOW-LEVEL THUGS, stand near a stack of crates, speaking in low tones. Between them sits a metal case.

A third figure, A HIGHER-UP, leans casually against a forklift, scrolling on his phone.

He looks calm... Too calm.

HIGHER-UP
Right on schedule.

From above, a small RED LIGHT BLINKS. A hidden camera.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The radio crackles to life.

SURVEILLANCE
Visual on the package, three
targets inside.

The Agent in charge nods to his team. He motions to Cal.

AGENT IN CHARGE
You're up, Archer. Let's bring them
in quiet.

Cal hesitates, scanning the perimeter again, something nags at him.

CAL
You're sure there's no chatter? No
lookouts? Nothing...

SURVEILLANCE (V.O.)
Clean, just three inside.

Cal exhales, shaking his head to clear his unease. He motions to for James to follow him.

CAL
Stay on me. We keep it tight.

INT. WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Cal and James make their way inside, flanked by two other agents. Their boots crunch softly against the snow, They fan out, weapons drawn, eyes scanning every corner.

The thugs by the crates freeze when they spot the agents.

CAL
FBI, Hands where I can see them!

The thugs exchanges a glance. One starts to raise his hands-- but the other bolts, disappearing into the shadows.

JAMES
(whispers)
We got a runner.

CAL
Eyes on the package. Dont split up.

James hesitates but obeys, his focus shifting to the crates. Cal steps forward, closing in on the remaining suspects.

CAL (CONT'D)
You want to make it out of here alive? Dont be stupid then!

The suspects look uneasy, their hands twitching. Cal doesnt break eye contact.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - SAME TIME

Outside, the SUVs are suddenly rocked by EXPLOSIONS. The agents stationed there dive for cover as fireballs rip through the convey.

AGENT IN CHARGE
(into radio)
It's a setup! It's a--!

The radio cuts to a static.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The explosion rocks the building. Cal flinches, spinning around.

CAL
Ambush. Move, now!

One of the suspects takes the momentary chaos as a chance to grab the metal case. He runs toward a side door, disappearing into the darkness.

James bolts after him.

CAL (CONT'D)
James! No!

INT. WAREHOUSE - STORAGE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Cal chases after James. He rounds the corner just in time to see James enter a side room- then a spray of gunfire erupts.

Cal dives for cover, shouting into his radio.

CAL
Officer down! Officer down!

He storms forward, firing at the shadowy figure fleeing through the back exit. By the time Cal reaches James, it's too late. James lies on the floor, blood pooling around him...

Cal takes a knee next to him.

CAL (CONT'D)
Damn it...

Cal picks up James' radio, his voice heavy with frustration.

CAL (CONT'D)
(into his radio)
Suspects on foot. Secondary target
is priority. Secure the perimeter.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - LATER

Flashing red and blue lights bathe the warehouse. Cal stands at the edge of the scene, watching as agents carry James' body out on a stretcher.

The Agent in charge approaches, furious.

AGENT IN CHARGE
You had one job, Archer. One Job.

Cal stares blankly at the warehouse, his jaw clenched.

AGENT IN CHARGE(CONT'D)
You've got blood on your hands.
Dont expect to get near another
sting anytime soon.

The Agent in charge walks away. Cal's eyes drift to the burning SUVs and the remnants of the botched sting. His fists tighten.

FADE OUT.

INT. FEDERAL MARSHALS OFFICE - DAY

The confrence room is stark and cold, a glass-walled space. Cal sits across from the DEPUTY DIRECTOR DIRECTOR, 50's, who flips through a thick case file labeled: "Operation Redline - Incident Report"

Cal looks rough-his tie is loosened, and his sleeves are rolled up, exposing a faint scar on his forearm.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR
(reading)
"Botched warehouse raid. Loss of
high-value evidence. Two suspects
escaped custody."

He closes the file, fixing Cal with a sharp look.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR(CONT'D)
You want to explain to me how this
happened on your watch?

CAL
we had intel the goods were moving
that night. I made the call to go
in.

Cal leans back, crossing his arms, taking it in for a beat.

CAL (CONT'D)
We had intel the goods were moving
that night. I made the call to go
in.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR
You decided to make this call
without having backup and without
clearance.

CAL
We didnt have time to wait for
backup. Cerones people were already
clearing out.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR
And now theyre gone. Along with the
evidence we needed to make this
stick.

Cal glares at the table, his jaw clenching. The director
shakes his head, his tone softening slightly.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR(CONT'D)
Look, Archer. No one's questioning
your instincts. Youve been good at
this job for a while now, but
lately...

He gestures to the case file.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR(CONT'D)
Youve been reckless. And its
costing us.

Cal doesnt respond, his posture stiffening.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR(CONT'D)
If it were up to me, you'd be out.
But...

He pulls a slim folder from his briefcase and slides it
across the table.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR(CONT'D)
This landed on my desk. Eleanor
Greaves. Youre reassigned to
witness protection.

Cal eyebrows raise slightly, but he doesnt touch the file.

CAL
Babysitting.

The director nods, unapologetic.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR
 Babysitting, think of it as...
 Keeping you out of trouble and in
 the force.

Cal smirks faintly, though theres no humor in it.

CAL
 And if I say no?

DEPUTY DIRECTOR
 Then you can turn in your badge on
 the way out.

A long beat of silence.

Cal finally picks up the file, flipping it open. Inside ia a
 photo of Ellie Greaves, her hollowed face staring back at
 him.

CAL
 Isnt this that one painter? She
 used to be around Ceroness crew?

DEPUTY DIRECTOR
 Yeah, shes an artist, low profile,
 she did used to work with him, but
 now shes hiding in the middle of
 nowhere, hoping he wont remember
 she exist.

Cal thumbs through the pages, pausing on Victor Ceroness
 Mugshot. His expression darkens.

CAL
 And im supposed to do what?

DEPUTY DIRECTOR
 Keep her alive, keep her hidden,
 and keep your head down for once.

Cal takes the file from the table and stands, his movements
 sharp.

CAL
 Fine.

The director watches him for a long moment before leaning
 back in the chair.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR
 Archer.

Cal pauses at the door but doesnt turn around.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
This is your last shot. Don't screw
this up.

Cal doesn't respond. He walks out, the file tucked under his arm.

FADE OUT.

EXT. SECLUDED CABIN - NIGHT

The cabin sits at the edge of the woods, isolated and dark. Inside, Ellie is surrounded by her art work. The room is dimly lit by a single desk lamp.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The room is cluttered with canvases, brushes, and jars of paint. Ellie's latest work- dark and abstract- is in progress as she lays raw and frantic strokes across it. Fragmented and sinister shapes begin to form--- she pauses, staring at it with unease.

A NEW BROADCAST plays faintly on a small TV.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
We will have more information on
Vicotr Cerone who walked away free
today after a mistrial in the
highly publicized case against
him...

Ellie glances at the screen. Cerone's face fills the frame, smiling confidently as reporters swarm him. Her hands tighten around her paintbrush, her breathing shallow. She quickly turns off the TV.

The silence feels heavy--

EXT. CABIN - SAME TIME

The cabin is quiet, surrounded by dense trees. In the distance, headlights flicker between the branches, growing closer. A dark SUV rolls to a stop just outside the clearing, its engine humming.

From the SUV, TWO MEN IN BLACK emerge, armed and moving with precision. They exchange a silent nod before approaching the cabin, their boots crunching against the gravel.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Ellie senses something. Her hands stills, and she turns her head slightly, listening. The faint crunch of footsteps outside break the silence.

Her eyes dart to the window, but the forest beyond is pitch black.

She, stands, moving to the kitchen counter, where a BURNER PHONE rests. She hesitates, then picks it up and dials a number.

CUT TO:

INT. CALS APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Cal, in a tank top and sweatpants, sits at his kitchen table, drinking whiskey from the bottle. His apartment is sparsely furnished. A half empty pizza box sits on the counter. His FEDERAL MARSHAL BADGE rests on the table beside his phone.

The phone buzzes, and Cal squints at it, groaning. He answers reluctantly.

CAL

Yeah.

ELLIE

(whispering)

They're coming.

Cal straightens, his tone sharpens.

CAL

Ellie? What are you talking about?

ELLIE

I don't know how, but they found me.
I saw- someones out there.

Cal grabs his badge, already moving.

CAL

Listen to me. Lock the doors. Don't
hang up.

EXT. CABIN - SAME TIME

The men in black approach the cabin, one signals towards the other, he moves towards the back entrance while the first man tests the front door--- It's locked.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Ellie moves to the window, her breath fogging the glass as she peers out. Her hands shake as she tightens her grip on the phone.

Suddenly, the FRONT DOOR HANDLE JIGGLES. Ellie freezes.

CAL
Ellie? Ellie, whats happening?

Before she can answer the FRONT DOOR BURST OPEN, the lock splintering, Ellie lets out a scream, dropping the phone as she backs away.

The first man enters, scanning the room with a gun raised. He spots the burner phone on the floor, stepping on it as he moves towards Ellie.

Ellie's POINT OF VIEW: As the man approaches, his flashlight sweeps across her paintings. Fragments of shapes emerge-- Cerone's face, his mansion.

The man pauses, his eyes narrowing as he notices the details.

MAN IN BLACK
Destroy it all.

The second man enters from the back, he nods to the first.

MAN IN BLACK 2
Handle her first.

Ellie stumbles backwards, her eyes darting to the kitchen. She grabs a KNIFE from the counter, clutching it tightly.

The second man continues to destroy the paintings, his focus on the evidence. Ellie sees her chance and makes a break towards the back door.

The first man turns.

MAN IN BLACK
Stop her!

EXT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Ellie sprints into the woods. branches slapping against her face as she runs. Behind her, the men give chase, their flashlights cutting through the darkness.

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Ellie runs blindly, her breathing ragged. The flashlight beams flicker behind her, closing in.

Suddenly, she trips over a root, crashing to the ground. She scrambles up, only to be face to face with one of the men.

MAN IN BLACK

It's over!

Ellie stabs wildly with the knife, catching him in the arm. He yells in pain as she bolts again, disappearing into the woods.

EXT. CABIN - LATER

From the treeline, Ellie watches as the cabin burns. Flames consume her lifes work, the glow reflecting off her wide, tear-filled eyes.

Her burner phone lies smashed on the ground, the call long disconnected from Cal.

I/E. CALS CAR - CONTINUOUS

Cal's phone buzzes a number, but the line is silent. He curses under his breath, slamming his fist on the steering wheel as he pushes the car faster.

CAL

Hang on Ellie.

FADE OUT.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The room is cramped and dim, the hum of the neon motel sign flickers through the blinds. Ellie sits on the edge of the bed, clutching her SKETCHBOOK tightly. Her face is pale, her hands are trembling. Across the room, Cal leans against the wall, arms crossed, his expression is stern.

Ellie flips open the sketchbook, revealing pages filled with fragmented images:

ELLIE

This... this is what they're after.

Cal's eyes flick to the sketches, unimpressed.