

Waterloo

Episode 101:
"Pilot"

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FADE IN:

TEASER

EXT. IOWA - WATERLOO - DAY

A retiring sun dissipates into the golden chiffon sky. The Cedar River flows through the center of this innocuous round little Midwestern city in the center of a square county in a rectangular state.

You would never guess this is present day by the VARIOUS SHOTS of Waterloo's citizens--trapped between the infestation of cheap a la Target and Walmart in outskirts and downtown haberdasheries became as old as that word.

EXT. WEST HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Rather large home to Waterloo West's Wahawks; a red-faced Indian mascot doesn't offend people here--political correctness deferred to outsiders.

INT. WEST HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

AARON, 17, corn-fed, clean-cut, bull-legged from too many hockey games, the shoulder patch stitched onto his jersey designates an All-State Championship win.

He leads the herd of STUDENTS, all done for the day, back to their lockers. Gossip and schoolbooks are shared among them.

MELANIE, 16, is all text messages and trendy mass-produced teen attire--a notch above to include haute online couture. Her fair skin highlights her long ginger-blonde hair. She stands beside Aaron, who takes his hockey stick from the tall locker.

Melanie pecks away at her phone.

AARON

Should I keep swiping left on
Tinder until I catch you?

MELANIE

I'm sticking to our no apps
agreement, promise. Just texting my
ride.

Aaron's phone vibrates. He lifts it, reading Melanie's text:
"Taking me home?"

AARON

Funny, Mel.

EXT. "THE EDGE" - DAY

A highway divides the single-family streets and chain-stores from the corn fields circling Waterloo's "urban" center.

The Sebring passes by Grace of God Lutheran Church. A marquee reads "God allows U-turns."

MELANIE (V.O.)
(in mid-argument)
You can't get out of it?!

The car rolls onto the paved artery into the countryside.

EXT. KIMBALL ROAD - DAY

The Sebring speeds along. ABBA's "Waterloo" comes on the radio.

AARON
Yeah, that'll work with the crew,
"Guys, listen, I know it's the
starting game and all, but my
girlfriend's in Little Women.

MELANIE
Opening night.

AARON
Community theater, babe.

Melanie's scowling.

AARON
You wanted a hockey player, so now
you got one! I'll be there
Saturday, promise.

The words don't register with Melanie, because she's about to scream at something ahead of the car.

MELANIE
AARON! Watch out!

A train roars past the Sebring in a flashing blurb of freight; even out here the roads are dangerous. The song continues for a moment.

EXT. OSTMANN FARM POND - ROWBOAT - DAY

SETH OSTMANN, 65, wears a weathered face as he sits alone in a rowboat. The water shimmers with sequined faded gold.

A rustic small dock is along the bank. Seth hypnotically rocks with the tiny waves in the center of the lake. He is uniformed in his retired Brooks Brothers suit. A Lincoln Towncar is parked close by.

INT. SEBRING - DAY

The train has passed; the red signals and bells have stopped. Melanie and Aaron collect themselves.

AARON
Are you okay?

Melanie takes a selfie.

MELANIE
Yeah, you?

Aaron nods.

MELANIE
Sorry.

AARON
Mind if we pull over? Let's chill a moment. I know a pond near by.

MELANIE
That's Ostmann's land, Aaron.

AARON
And?

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD - DAY

Aaron and Melanie abandon their car and run into the cornfields. The teens' laughter floats up in unison with the mating calls of locusts permeating the breezy air.

EXT. OSTMANN FARM POND - ROWBOAT - DAY

A shotgun lies at Seth's feet.

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

Aaron trips over his feet, falls onto the ground. Melanie gasps, but calms at Aaron's randy smile. He reaches out a hand.

She grabs it and he pulls her into his arms. They start making out, their passion increases.

EXT. OSTMANN FARM POND - ROWBOAT - DAY

Seth stands in the rowboat, shotgun in hand, looks off towards the fields as if he's heard something. He loses his balance for a moment, then steadies himself like an acrobat walking a tightrope. There's a CREAKING sound.

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

The creaking disrupts the heavy petting.

MELANIE

What's that? Someone's out there.

EXT. OSTMANN FARM POND - DAY

Seth contemplates his blurred image in the surface of the pond. He lifts the shotgun.

EXT. FIELDS - SAME

BAM! The gunshot ECHOES with flapping birds.

The teens divide the dying stalks of corn. Melanie is the first to notice Mr. Ostmann's body float to the surface.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - HUDSON YARDS - DAY

Towering Midtown condo along the Hudson.

INT. HIGH RISE CONDO - SAME

A bedroom door opens and BOBBY, mid-20's, walks across to a bar to the kitchen. Makes coffee.

JARETT, 35, unshaven with bed-head, wakes on the couch. They exchange looks. Jarett crashes his head back with a sigh.

Two male wedding rings on the bar. Bobby looks at them.

BOBBY

Should I take them back?

Jarett sits up, looks over at the glass windows as tall as two men, and watches a freighter come down the Hudson.

JARETT

I always wanted this.

BOBBY

You didn't last night.

JARETT

(gaping through the
glass)

The view. This right here.

Bobby hands Jarett a cup of coffee.

BOBBY

We're now into our avoiding-the-
subject routine.

Bobby walks to the windows and looks outward. Jarett sips.

JARETT

Bobby, finishing school doesn't
mean you can snap your fingers and
we're married. It's too soon.

BOBBY

Ten years isn't too soon. I've-
we've--worked hard for this.

JARETT

Let's not rerun last night.

Jarett looks over at the floor. REVEAL broken picture frame of Bobby and Jarett out at a Fire Island beach circuit party from days long-passed. Bobby goes to pick it up, shaking the glass from it.

JARETT

I'm sorry about the freak out last night.

Jarett walks into the hallway and into the bathroom, flips the light on. The shower blasts away as he closes the door.

BOBBY

I'm used to it.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - FIFTH AVENUE - NIGHT

Dusk. The towering GM building shadows the APPLE STORE's GLASS CUBE entrance.

A line of horse-and-buggies await gullible wallets. Steam wafts from a HOT DOG cart beneath a high-rise tinted window.

INT. BLOOM! COSMETICS CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

51st floor. The conference room is stiletto heels and Cavalli black. With every seat taken, SEVERAL EXECUTIVE WOMEN AND MEN watch a PowerPoint presentation. There's an amazing view through the glass northern walls of the room, but nobody seems to care.

WOMAN EXECUTIVE 1

So, it's been three weeks since the recall.

WOMAN EXECUTIVE 2

But sales are down. Still worried over this.

A SCREEN projects a TEEN GIRL's RASH break out on her face.

MAN EXECUTIVE 3

We're going to need an answer to the board--before we see anymore investor fallout.

All the heads turn to the head of the table where Jarett reads a text message on his phone. He's cleaned up well, but obviously not engaged in the meeting. He's on GRINDR. Phone screen reads:

MUSCLD!k4U: MEET ME AT THE WALDORF?

JARETT: Not this time. Hot water with the boyfriend.

MUSCLD!k4U: Take an early lunch, toss salad.

Sets the phone aside.

JARETT

Investors we can't do anything about. We've lost forty-five percent of our market cap, those still around are holding out to see it come back. Get the top fifty teen bloggers--and set up a basket of free samples to some trendy girl-girls on Tumblr, Instagram, Snapchat, whatever, and bribe--encourage--them for hype. Rename the face wash from Clear Shine to "Free Bright"--

MAN EXECUTIVE 3

Like that. Sunny, freedom--

WOMAN EXECUTIVE 1

Renaming a product will take weeks. We need to test it in focus groups.

JARETT

You can wait a month to get twelve teen age girls in the room to tell you what you want to hear--or create millions from free advertising with social.

(gets up and heads out
the door)

Excuse me, I have an early lunch.

Jarett's gone.

WOMAN EXECUTIVE 2

He's right.

WOMAN EXECUTIVE 1

Would it hurt for him to have some tact?

MAN EXECUTIVE 3

You should have seen him before he was Chief Marketing Officer.

INT. BLOOM! COSMETICS BULLPEN - DAY

Jarett gets a regular text. Screen reads:

BOBBY: Get off Grindr.

JARETT: Clearing messages.

BOBBY: Tourist season.

JARETT: I guess we need to talk. After work?

SALLY MAY, 22, frantically approaches Jarett. Her blonde-ish split ends wave about as they walk towards his office. The walls are plastered in cosmetic swatches.

SALLY MAY

Glad I caught you. There's a guy who keeps calling and --

JARETT

Whoever it is, Sally, it'll have to wait.

SALLY MAY

Says it's urgent.

Jarett snatches the paper. Reads.

JARETT

Ask him to e-mail-- Oh.

Jarett gulps, but he's always able to collect himself on cue. He snatches his coat from his glass office. Sally follows and hovers.

JARETT

What did he want?

SALLY MAY

Your personal cell phone number. I know better.

Jarett emerges from his office.

JARETT

I can't call him now, I've got that meeting with Chu.

SALLY MAY

Who is this guy? Where is area code 319, anyway?

JARETT

Waterloo.

SALLY MAY

Waterloo? Like Abba or something?

JARETT

Iowa.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - FIFTH AVENUE - NIGHT

Jarett, designer briefcase in hand, walks along the steps and smiles at HOT SUIT GUY passing by.

A DRIVER opens the Mercedes door for Jarett. He hops in.

INT. MERCEDES - DAY

Jarett cuddles his cell.

JARETT

Tom Stockard, please...

Hi, Mister Stock--uh, Tom. It's
Jarett.

INT. THOMAS STOCKARD OFFICE - DAY

Seated at a cherry-wood desk is THOMAS STOCKARD, 58. His body frame suggests a former high school quarterback. His face and eyes conceal a calculating heart.

A framed print of William Sadler's BATTLE OF WATERLOO hangs above him.

Thomas twirls the phone cord.

INTERCUT: THOMAS AND JARETT

THOMAS STOCKARD

Jarett, it's your uncle.

Jarett attempts to stifle a sigh.

THOMAS STOCKARD

Listen, he's--well, it's just
unfortunate, Jare--he's passed on.

JARETT

Jarett.

THOMAS STOCKARD

Yes. Apologies for being too
chummy. I know it's been years.
Anyway, the will. He's left you--

JARETT

(dismissive)

E-mail me whatever, I can look into

--

THOMAS STOCKARD

But you need to come here.
Remember, Jarett, your uncle was
there for you, time to return the
favor. Plus, we know someone who'd
like to see you--I think you'd
agree it's been too long.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - DAY

Sunset. A car pulls up.

LITTLE JARETT, 8, stares out at his Iowan home from the
passenger side. The porch appears to be a scene from an Ed
Hopper painting. Uncle Seth parks the car.

INT. CAR - DAY

Jarett's face can't hide the concern.

SETH OSTMANN

That flick was something else, eh,
Jarett? Those kids sliding around
in those caves. Oh...worried about
what's going on in there, eh,
kiddo?

EIGHT-YEAR-OLD JARETT

Uncle Seth, why do they have to
yell at each other so much?

SETH OSTMANN

Yeah, well, people fight sometimes
when they love each other and they
feel like the other person isn't
listening.

EIGHT-YEAR-OLD JARETT

But they don't fight sometimes,
Uncle Seth... They fight all of the
time.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. HIGH RISE CONDO - NIGHT

Jarett is pacing about trying to frantically pack. Bobby
cracks ice for an evening cocktail--vodka, soda, cherries.

BOBBY

You're fucking kidding me.

JARETT
I'm not making it up.

BOBBY
You can't leave like this.

Jarett sees the rings are still there.

BOBBY
I'll take them back.

Jarett's eyes darts from Bobby to the rings and back.

JARETT
Don't.

BOBBY
What?! Really? Does this--

JARETT
No. But, after five years, maybe we should delete the apps and get hitched. Just let me get through what's going on in Iowa and we'll sort this out.

Jarett grabs his boyfriend and hugs him.

BOBBY
Don't forget the meds.

EXT. WATERLOO - SAME

Iowan skyline, nondescript except for the flowing Cedar River cutting up downtown with EAST and WEST. The West Side harbors the community theater, the remodeled storefronts, but on the EAST SIDE more worn down and forgotten. And there, REVEAL...

EXT. VAN WAGONER OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Humble two-story, harking from a gone Prohibition-era boom. Light comes from the top floor.

INT. VAN WAGONER OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

VANESSA CAPLAN, black, 40, sits at her desk surrounded by mounds of paper. She wears an "IOWA LAW SCHOOL" hoodie and wears her glasses like an attractive librarian.

A knock on the door. RYAN, 16, scrawny, lanky, doesn't wash his face enough, stands at the unhinged door frame.

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