

COVERAGE

TITLE: In Good Hands **AUTHOR:** Benjamin David Hoffman
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LOGLINE: A detective investigates the preventable death of a child and her missing brother, all while she is investigated for the death of her own husband and child.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN:

STACY RICHER: (42) – Sister-in-law of LUCY HARLOW. Seeking vengeance for her brother and niece’s deaths, which she blames LUCY for.

LUCY HARLOW: (44) – Hardened but dedicated detective investigating the death of a toddler and her missing brother. Her own husband and daughter died six months ago in a car crash, a fact that drives her to solve this case. She is dealing with her own grief, which is why she is so angered over this preventable death. A recovering alcoholic, Harlow comes across tough, but cares deeply about what and who she is fighting for.

ANTHONY: (41) – Deceased. HARLOW’s husband. Anthony was having an affair and wanted a divorce before he died. An alcoholic, he didn’t want to get sober like his wife.

PAULINA: (9) – Deceased. HARLOW’s daughter.

POLICE CHIEF DUNN: (61) – Stern but caring. Dunn is close to HARLOW, and seems to protect her in any way he can.

OFFICER CALLAHAN: (51) – HARLOW’s ex-partner, retired. He was a transfer a week before he retired, which was denied. Callahan was involved in a misfire incident with HARLOW.

FARRIS GREYSON: (45) – Wife of ROBERT, and mother to the Greyson children. Religious, but seems to follow her husband's orders. She appears to care deeply about her children, but sacrifices their wellbeing to follow her husband's religious beliefs.

ROBERT GREYSON: (50) – Husband of FARRIS, and father to the Greyson children. Robert is extremely religious and strict with his children. He refuses to bring his daughter EVE to the hospital, which eventually ends in her death. He does not regret his decision, because he believes in God's greater plan. He is the leader of the house, and holds power over his wife and children. He is convicted of criminal mistreatment, and gets only two months in prison.

DONNA GREYSON: (18) – Eldest Greyson daughter. Soft, and affected by the death of her baby sister. She is the only child to speak to the police about what happened the night of EVE's death.

BOBBY GREYSON: (16) – Eldest Greyson son. Rebel of the family. Bobby wants to take EVE to the hospital, and is furious when his parents fight against him. He is missing for most of the investigation, and is eventually found at a cabin where he escaped his family. He eventually takes a restraining order against his parents and leaves the family.

TIMMY GREYSON: (14) – Obedient son, idolizes his father.

KEITH GREYSON: (9) – A Greyson son.

KIM GREYSON: (7) – A Greyson daughter.

KATIE GREYSON: (4) – A Greyson daughter.

EVE GREYSON: (15 months) – Deceased. Caught pneumonia, was not taken to the hospital, and died.

CARL PRINCE: (37) – Social worker, kind and compassionate. Carl is sleeping with HARLOW, but it appears he has deeper feelings for her than she does for him.

MICHELLE: (45) – Internal Affairs investigator. Believes HARLOW is guilty of drunk driving the night of the car crash.

TODD: (33) – Internal Affairs investigator.

PASTOR KEVIN: (51) – Pastor at the Greyson's church. Gathers the congregation to pray for EVE's return to health. Supports the Greyson's at their trial.

BETH: (42) – FARRIS' friend. Takes care of the Greyson children when the parents are arrested.

ALEXANDER: (50) – BETH’s husband.

OFFICER WILLIAM HEART: (42) – Friendly officer, a friend of HARLOW’s. Takes over the BOBBY GREYSON investigation when HARLOW goes on voluntary leave.

SYNOPSIS:

Open on STACY writing to the governer, seeking justice for the death of her brother and niece. They died in a drunk driving accident in which LUCY HARLOW, her sister-in-law and a life long alcoholic, was driving. Stacy claims that there was no investigation or justice, and states that the fact that Harlow is a detective does not place her above the law.

Cut to Harlow, who is conducting a briefing at the police precinct. She is interrupted by CHIEF DUNN, who asks her to follow him into his office. Dunn informs her that internal affairs have reopened her case in response to Stacy’s letter. He assures her that the police are on her side. All except one – CALLAHAN. Dunn tells Harlow that he’ll handle speak with Callahan.

Cut to a funeral service. A casket the size of a toddler is adorned with flowers, and a PASTOR addresses a congregation of two hundred people. The family includes parents FARRIS and ROBERT GREYSON and their six children.

At the Greyson house, the family sits down for dinner silently. They say a blessing. EVE’s high-chair sits at the table, empty. The eldest son, BOBBY, is missing.

Outside, eight police cars pull up, lights off. The squad moves to surround the house as Robert continues the blessing in voiceover. When the prayer is finished, there is a knock at the door. Robert opens it to find Harlow, who arrests him and Farris for the murder of their daughter Eve.

In the Internal Affairs office, MICHELLE and TODD question CALLAHAN, Harlow’s former partner. They find that six months ago, he requested a transfer which was denied. He then retired a week later. He says that it was always difficult to work with Harlow, but she was changed “to the bone” by the accident.

Meanwhile, Harlow questions Robert. She notes that he doesn’t seem to be too affected by his daughter’s death, and he responds that everything is a part of God’s greater plan. He says they all prayed for her, but it was her time.

Down the hall, Michelle and Todd continue to question Callahan. He hesitates when they ask if the crash was an accident. He reveals that Harlow only stopped drinking a week before the crash, when they were investigating a grand theft auto.

In a flashback, Callahan drives, Harlow in the passenger seat. Harlow takes a sip from her flask. They spot the car they’ve been looking for, and confront the THIEF. Harlow

slurs her words a bit, and Callahan tells her to holster her gun. She refuses, and when he pulls her arm down, the gun goes off and hit's the thief's arm.

Back in the office, Todd asks why there's no record of the incident. Callahan explains that the man didn't press charges, and that they paid for his medical bills and dropped the grand theft auto charge. That's when Callahan requested a transfer, and when Harlow stopped drinking.

Harlow is still questioning Robert, asking what happened the night Eve died. *In a flashback, Farris holds a sickly Eve. Robert rubs olive oil on the child's body – he doesn't believe in modern medicine, even though Eve has pneumonia. Robert calls PASTOR KEVIN, who gathers the congregation outside the Greyson house to pray.*

In the present, Robert says that Eve slept with him and Farris that night. They woke up at 5:00 a.m. to find that Eve had stopped breathing. Harlow asks Robert if he thought prayers would be enough to save his daughter. Yes – he has faith in God.

Out of the children, DONNA was the only one to talk to the police, saying she wished they'd gone to a hospital. They haven't been able to find BOBBY, the eldest son, for questioning. According to Donna, he had argued with his parents the night Eve died, telling them that they should go to the hospital. The parents punish him for questioning God's plan. Since the morning Eve died, he has been missing.

Meanwhile, Michelle and Todd examine the site of Harlow's accident from six months ago. The skid marks are short, which makes it hard to prove that she was drunk.

Back at the station, Harlow questions Farris about Bobby. After prodding, she begins to talk. *In a flashback, the Greyson family is sitting down to dinner. Outside, a truck is starting – Bobby is in the driver's seat, Eve in the passenger's. Robert gives Timmy a rifle, and he shoots the tires of the truck, which skids. Robert takes Eve back inside.*

Farris admits that Robert "spoke" to Bobby in the basement. She heard yelling from Bobby, but maintains that her husband is a good father. *In a flashback, we see each Greyson child laying in bed, listening to Bobby yell that they are all working in God's name but in the Devil's service. Farris never sees Bobby leave the house.*

Harlow drives to the Greyson house. Donna opens the door, and lets her into the basement. Harlow finds a puddle of dried blood – Bobby's, presumably.

Police arrive, and on the phone with Chief Dunn, Harlow reveals that a third of the children in the Greyson's church congregation have died of preventable causes. They open the house as a crime scene.

Flashback: Bobby and Robert arguing in the basement. Robert is grabbing Bobby's arm. He lets go just as Bobby rips his arm free, and Bobby tumbles headfirst onto a pile of pipes. He bleeds profusely, and Robert tries to stop the bleeding with his shirt.

Robert claims that the bleeding stopped after a while. Harlow hypothesizes that instead, Robert hit Bobby a just little too hard. It was an accident, but he died anyways. He dumped the body in a river, or burned him, because two deaths would have been too much. Robert denies this.

Harlow returns home at 1:29 a.m. with CARL PRINCE, the social worker. Harlow reveals that they Greyson's lost a child as a stillborn 10 years ago, but wonders if it was actually a preventable death, too. Carl brings up her deceased husband and daughter, and Harlow shuts him down – they're in a sexual relationship, not an intimate one. Carl leaves. Harlow finds an old doll in her backyard and starts to break down, close to tears.

She returns to the police precinct, bursts into Robert's cell, and tells him forcefully that he is going to pay for what he did to his daughter.

The next day, Harlow inspects Bobby's school locker. A picture of a girl, CAITLIN, falls out of a book. Harlow also questions Bobby's best friend, ALEX SHIN, for leads on Bobby's whereabouts. He has nothing. She continues questioning people in the community – still nothing. Harlow purchases a bottle of Jack, but doesn't drink it.

When she returns to the station, Dunn tells her to go on a "vacation" until the Internal Affairs case is closed – apparently, the priest she questioned told Dunn she smelled of alcohol. OFFICER HEART will continue the Bobby investigation.

Later, Michelle and Todd question Harlow about the night of her accident. *In a flashback, Harlow, her husband ANTHONY and daughter PAULINA are visiting Harlow's mother, CLAIRE, who has since passed from cancer. They leave, and as they're driving, a deer jumps in front of the car. Harlow slams on the breaks, and the SUV barrels into a tree.*

Harlow maintains that she wasn't drunk at the time of the accident.

In a judge's chambers, the PROSECUTOR motions to exume the body of the Greyson's stillborn child. The motion is denied. Later, the Greyson's are put on trial in front of a jury. Robert is found guilty of criminal mistreatment in the second degree – only two months in jail. Farris walks free.

Carl brings Harlow baklava for her birthday – she forgot. He's sweet, and seems to have feelings for her. Harlow holds herself at a distance from him. Suddenly, she realizes she might have a lead on Bobby's disappearance: the photo from his locker.

She heads to Red Eagle Lake, and finds Bobby in a cabin. He's fine, but still shaken by what his parents did to his sister.

Donna visits her father in jail. She apologizes for answering the police officers' questions, and he says she did nothing wrong. The next day, he is released from jail. The church congregation throws him a welcome home party. Farris wants to leave – she

admits to Robert that she's thought about it, and they should have taken Eve to the doctor. Robert is shocked.

Harlow arrives with Bobby in her car, and informs the Greyson parents that he's taken out a restraining order against them. He wants to speak with Farris only. He tells her that he can't forgive her for taking his father back. He wants to take Katie with him, but Farris refuses. She says she almost took Eve to the doctor that night, but felt "chained" to her husband. Bobby leaves. Robert finally breaks down about Eve's death.

Michelle and Todd question an EMT who was present the night of Harlow's accident. He says Harlow was sober. Michelle is convinced he's lying, but they can't do anything about it.

Harlow goes to Carl's apartment. In a moment of vulnerability, she tells him about the night of the accident. *In a flashback, Harlow and Anthony scream at each other; Anthony has been having an affair and wants a divorce.*

In the car, Anthony drives. Paulina and Harlow fall asleep. Anthony pulls out a bottle of whiskey and drinks as he drives. Harlow awakens to Paulina yelling, and realizes that Anthony is drunk. A deer jumps out in front of the car. A crash. When Harlow comes to, Paulina is dead and Anthony is moaning. She calls 911.

When the cops arrive, Dunn tells Harlow to say she was driving. If Anthony survives, he'll be charged with manslaughter, and she'll lose him too.

Cut to Harlow telling Stacy the same story. She doesn't believe her.

Six months later, Harlow drives with Donna in the passenger seat. Donna gets out of the car at a diner, and meets with Bobby, a busboy. They smile at Harlow through the window, and she smiles back.

COMMENTS:

Overall, I found this script very compelling. The characters were well-developed, and the two simultaneous investigations worked to move the plot forward at an even pace.

Having Harlow as an unreliable detective added an element of intrigue to the story. One can see that she is determined to solve the Greyson case, but at the same time she can't be entirely trusted due to the fact that she herself is under investigation. Her relationships with other character like Captain Dunn and Callahan also add drama to the mystery surrounding her accident. Flipping between trusting her and questioning her made her an interesting protagonist to follow.

The Greyson family dynamic was also compelling. Their hyper-religious nature and lack of regret over Eve's death is perplexing and fascinating. The fact that Farris and Robert both eventually break down over Eve's death was rewarding after a lack of emotion from the two of them.

The use of flashbacks was done well. There are many throughout the script, and they slowly reveal the true story bit by bit. I especially enjoyed the “false” flashbacks, such as when Farris talks about the fight between Robert and Bobby and leaves out the fact that Timmy shot the wheels of the truck, which we see in a second, corrected flashback. The story continues to evolve on both timelines, and keeps the plot moving forward in a nonlinear way.

We know from the beginning that Eve’s death was probably preventable, but Robert barely gets any jailtime for it. We think that Bobby might have been murdered, but he really just ran away. The lack of climax would feel unrewarding, but the reactions of the parents at the end feel impactful. They were so grounded in their beliefs, but they finally have a moment of humanity, and that feels gratifying.

I’m not sure what to make of the truth of Harlow’s story, or how it ultimately connects to the Greyson case. Maybe it’s that they both covered up the truth in protection of their loved ones? What do they each learn from this experience? The end is a little ambiguous.

I enjoyed this script, and would recommend it for production. Although the ultimate moral is a little unclear, I think that the interesting characters and double investigation leads to a really compelling and intriguing story