

BIG SKY (ABC) EPISODE 301 SYNOPSIS

EPISODE 301

OPEN on three months after the events of season 2. We see a mountain trail in Montana (impossibly green, rolling plains) as a YOUNG BACKPACKER BRO (scruffy) comes to a fork in the path. Before he can decide, he is interrupted by 2 women joggers. After a bit of a chat, they invite him back to their place for beer. Considering his options, he gently refuses their request, instead taking the path marked, 'DEAD MAN'S DROP'. We see him traverse the trail, welcomed to awesome views of the surrounding nature. He checks his phone to see he has no service. He begins to hear strange music while walking, eventually coming across a heart carved into an old tree trunk, painted with what looks like blood. An old cassette player is next to the tree, playing the music. Before he can question further, WALTER (wild hair and beard, wearing camo) steps out of the surrounding woods, holding a knife. He explains to BACKPACKER BRO that he found a deer that fell and put it out of its misery. He urges him to follow, so they can butcher it before it goes to waste. BACKPACKER BRO stammers out an excuse to leave and walks away. We move to a little later on, where BACKPACKER BRO is moving along a narrow ledge. He hears the same music before WALTER is spotted on the trail once again. He begins to approach with a friendly gesture, but BACKPACKER BRO is spooked by his sudden appearance and runs into the woods. We hear him scream in the forest as the title card shows, 'BIG SKY'.

We switch to the main office of CASSIE DEWELL, JENNY HOYT, and DENISE BRISBANE, with the three women discussing the new temporary Sheriff in town. DENISE apologizes for mentioning LINDOR, JENNY seeming to change the subject by stating they are to investigate a missing backpacker. We see the same man from the opening, who we now know as MARK. While they discuss, SHERIFF BEAU ARLEN enters holding an empty casserole dish that DENISE had made for him. They flirt a bit, to the disbelief of CASSIE. They separate with BEAU asking for a ride to the courthouse with JENNY.

We move to a campground to find SUNNY BRICKS and her husband BUCK setting up what a sign reads as, 'SUNNY DAY ADVENTURES'. The couple discusses the event to come, revealing it to be a kind of backcountry luxury retreat. They have a bit of playful banter, looking very much in love. CUT to the interior of JENNY's Bronco, where she checks a property investments sign with a picture of TONYA WALSH. She grows upset, BEAU trying to calm her down. As they discuss the past, they come across a jogger wearing only tighty-whities. They exit the Bronco to confront the man, who breathlessly shows them his badge (HANK MILLER) and explains that he was transporting a prisoner when she escaped and took his gun and car. We switch to a Sheriff's station interview room. HANK has been given clothes, and he sits with JENNY and BEAU. HANK reveals the prisoner as FAITH COLE (30's), that she was being transported for armed robbery, but seems reluctant to discuss details of how she escaped. When pressed, HANK claims that FAITH seduced him. Before they can discuss further, DEPUTY POPPERNAK enters and tips them off that a nearby business is being held up by a woman wearing a prison guard's uniform.

We move to CASSIE as she heads to the campground. She is greeted by SUNNY, revealing to her that she is here to check out the report of the missing hiker, MARK. CASSIE hands her a photo of him to keep her eyes out as SUNNY's son CORMAC (30's) approaches, making light of the man's disappearance ('the bears gotta eat too'). We CUT to a trashed convenience store, where JENNY and BEAU are taking a police report for the owner. He explains that cash is missing, and that the manager, BILL SARKISSIAN, is missing. Switching back to the campground, SUNNY and BUCK welcome the campers that begin to file in. There are several guests that enter, but we first focus on AVERY (40's, Silicon Valley vibes, techy) and his stepdaughter ROSE (15, uncertain, always on her phone). SUNNY checks all the tech gear they have with them, stating they should have left it at home, 'to unplug'. AVERY states to ROSE that

they have cell service, despite their surroundings. We are then introduced to PAIGE (20's, pretty, NYC vibes) and her boyfriend LUKE (18, over it). CORMAC explains to SUNNY that this is for LUKE's birthday. They approach the couple, getting a cool reaction from LUKE and a much warmer one from PAIGE.

We move back to the convenience store to see CCTV footage of FAITH approaching the register, pulling a gun on BILL. JENNY and BEAU watch as she pushes the gun into his back, forcing him into his car as they both enter and speed away. JENNY states that the stakes are raised now that FAITH has a hostage. Switching back to the campground, PAIGE and LUKE have a tense conversation about exes as they hike in the back of a group while following SUNNY. They are interrupted by SUNNY, who starts to explain safety rules of when they are out in the woods. We CUT to the int. of the *Blue Fox Diner* where we see DONNO serving a customer from behind the counter. CASSIE enters, asking to speak with TONYA. CASSIE lays into her a bit about her illegitimacy as a business owner, and her past with the drug cartel. She changes subjects to the reason for her visit – she wants to buy a ranch that TONYA owns, citing it was her father's dream to own it. TONYA resists at first but softens a bit once CASSIE mentions all the past illegal activities that took place there, and that she could disclose it to any potential buyer.

Switching back to the Sheriff's office, we enter a bullpen with JENNY and BEAU, FAITH'S file in hand. As they walk, JENNY explains that BILL is the brother of her ex-boyfriend, who she blames for her conviction. BEAU thinks it might be revenge, but POPPERNAK chimes in to state the ex is currently in prison for something unrelated. He presents an address for BILL, where FAITH might be currently heading. Back at the office of DEWELL & HOYT, DENISE explains to CASSIE that she found another person to go missing at the same trailhead as MARK, back in 1999. She explains that the victim was found dead and mutilated, her heart cut out. CASSIE doesn't yet seem convinced the two cases are related. Before they can discuss further, CASSIE receives a call and we CUT to JENNY's Bronco with her and BEAU on the line. He quickly catches CASSIE up on the events they discovered (FAITH's escape, robbery and hostage situation). As they hang up and approach the address, a massive thud is heard as a body falls from the sky and splats against the hood of the Bronco! JENNY stops the car, quickly realizing it to be BILL. BEAU confirms he is still alive and calls for an ambulance. As he stays with him, JENNY dashes into the apartment building.

We move to an int. hallway with JENNY, gun drawn. She kicks open a door as we push into the living room of an apartment. The place is trashed, but no sign of FAITH. She keeps exploring the rooms, coming across the possessions of a little girl as we CUT to ext., with EMTs rushing to assist BILL. BEAU hears JENNY on his radio that the apartment is clear. She relays her findings of the girl's things, suggesting it's about a child. We move back to the hiking group, with PAIGE and LUKE at the exact same fork we saw MARK come across at the beginning of 301. They are having a bickering fight before discovering a bleeding heart slashed into a tree trunk. We push past the couple further up the trail to see ROSE clocking the two fighting. She hears a noise in the trees around her, prompting her to pull out a knife to find SUNNY leading her back to the trail. We switch back to JENNY's Bronco, where BEAU receives a call from POPPERNAK explaining that the child that was at the apartment is likely MADELYN SARKISSIAN (8), FAITH's ex-boyfriend's child. He explains that the girl isn't FAITH's, but she helped raise her when she was taken away by BILL. JENNY puts two and two together, stating FAITH had taken BILL to get to MADELYN. They are given an address to a hair salon BILL's wife owns.

We CUT to the ext. of the salon, with JENNY's Bronco pulling up. They clock all the blinds drawn, despite the 'OPEN' sign lit. We push to int. as JENNY peers in the window. FAITH is pointing a gun at MADELYN's AUNT MAY (40's). MADELYN steps out from a back room, prompting JENNY and

BEAU to storm inside. There's a tense standoff, FAITH not backing down as her gun continues on MAY. MADELYN breaks the tension by running to FAITH and hugging her protectively. This prompts FAITH to give up, dropping the gun to be kicked away by JENNY. Just as she is about to cart FAITH away, BEAU urges her just another moment with her child, before they arrest her for life. We briefly switch back to *Blue Fox Diner*, closed for the day. CASSIE and TONYA sit at one of the tables, a real estate form between them. TONYA reluctantly signs, the ranch now CASSIE's.

Moving back to the campground, evening, with SUNNY approaching PAIGE to ask where LUKE is. She isn't sure but is frustrated with him and their fight earlier. SUNNY manages to convince her to find him, and we CUT to the nearby woods where PAIGE sees LUKE sitting on a nearby rock. They have a warm conversation, clearly unable to stay mad at each other. As they begin to kiss, they hear the same song we heard with MARK at the beginning of 301. Ignoring it at first, something wet drips onto PAIGE's forehead. She wipes at it and screams as she realizes her hands are covered in blood. We CUT to a little later, where BUCK and SUNNY are trying to comfort PAIGE about the dead deer that had died on the cliffside and dripped blood onto her. LUKE seems to have come around about the trip, joining in on trying to comfort his girlfriend.

We switch to BEAU's house ext., nighttime, to see BEAU and CASSIE sitting in lawn chairs preparing to watch a movie. JENNY joins them, BEAU taking a moment to call someone as we CUT back to the campground to see ROSE's phone vibrating. AVERY urges her to answer, but she texts her dad instead. Moving back to BEAU's house, he explains that his daughter is currently on a trip with her stepdad. He seems saddened by this, the two women trying to cheer him up. Switching back to the campground, everyone is asleep except for SUNNY. She takes out the picture of MARK and tosses it into the coals, makes a s'more, and heads out into the woods. She places the treat on a rock, singing that same song to herself as WALTER emerges to a smiling SUNNY.

END OF EPISODE 301