

Breaking News

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SANTA FE PLAZA - DAY

It's late afternoon on a brisk October day.

The plaza's packed: campaign volunteers, tourists, journalists, curious locals.

VIP guests on stage, behind a podium bristling with mics. The backdrop's hung with a green and white banner:

"KATE BRODY - INDEPENDENT"

Supporters carry signs. Some are homemade and have slogans like "Kate the Great!" "I (heart) Kate," "New Mexico's FAVORITE DAUGHTER!" "A CEO for the USA," and "This country needs an INDEPENDENT President!"

A Mariachi band under the gazebo plays an uplifting pop tune - - the campaign's theme song.

Santa Fe police are on duty, along with armed private security guards -- all x-large and intimidating.

The crowd CHEERS and surges forward as a convoy of hybrid SUVs pulls up.

SENATOR KATE BRODY gets out of the lead car and waves to the crowd. She's 49 and photogenic, radiating charisma.

Security guards clear a path; the candidate shakes hands along the way.

Brody's campaign manager, LEO DiMARTINI, 40s, waits by the car, eying the crowd, lean and hungry.

He turns slightly, and looks annoyed.

LEO
(directly to the camera)
Would you mind getting that outta
my face?

ELSEWHERE AT THE RALLY

Leo's face fills an iPad screen, shot by a handheld video camera at close range.

JENNI (O.S.)
Ask him about the poll results.

OLIVIA (V.O.)
Do you have a comment on the latest
poll results?

LEO
(on screen)
Yes, I do. And I just gave it to
the New York Times. Now if you'll
excuse me...

On the iPad screen, he turns his back to the camera.

JENNI COPLEY, 21, looks up from her lime-green iPad to scan the crowd. She's a cute preppy with the soul of a German Field Marshall, wearing a wireless headset and a press pass.

She spots OLIVIA near Leo. Olivia's also 21, with a snarky Goth vibe, wearing the same headset and press pass and carrying a tiny hi-def video camera.

JENNI
(into headset mic)
OK, forget about Leo. Head for the
stage.

She looks toward the stage, and sees a NETWORK REPORTER touching up her makeup. The woman's incredibly good-looking and polished.

Jenni stares at her enviously, then shakes it off and taps the iPad screen.

Now there are FOUR QUADRANTS:

One shows the guests on stage and the others show the candidate and crowd from various angles.

Jenni taps on the quadrant showing the stage, and it expands to fill the screen.

JENNI
(into headset mic)
Chu Ni? Could you get me a better
view of the guests?

On the iPad, the image zooms to the faces of the guests, then pans slowly across them.

Face recognition software makes little yellow boxes around each face, freezes the images, then brings up a name, bio, campaign contributions, and relevant news stories.

One of the guests is a Native American in a business suit, with the notation:

"Brody campaign donation: \$2,500"

Jenni touches one of the headlines:

"CASINO CEO SEEKS FEDERAL LAND USE APPROVAL"

She skims an article that starts "The US Senate Committee on Indian Affairs today heard testimony..."

JENNI
 (to herself)
 Bingo...

She calls up a number for "Andrea" on the iPad and listens to the phone RING through her headset.

ANDREA (V.O.)
 (older woman)
 Yes?

JENNI
 (into headset mic)
 Hi, it's Jenni. There's a donor on stage who appeared before the Senator's committee --

She taps the iPad screen.

JENNI
 I'm sending it over now.

She waits, scanning the crowd, looking for her team.

She spots CHU NI, 21, near the stage -- the "Tiger Mom's" first-born daughter.

Doggedly trailing the candidate through the crowd is serious, dark-eyed DAVID, 21.

Jenni cranes her neck, then finally spots ELVIS, 21, a good ol' boy with a gymnast's physique, shinnying up a light pole as a security guard waves at him to get down.

ANDREA (V.O.)
 Is that all you have?

JENNI
 Well, I haven't had a chance to--

ANDREA (V.O.)
 You've got a lot on your plate already. It's not like in the movies -- you don't have time to chase down every clue, hoping it'll turn into some big conspiracy.

JENNI
 I just thought--

ANDREA (V.O.)
 I've got to go -- sorry.

The line GOES DEAD, leaving Jenni deflated.

She taps the iPad screen. It returns to the four quadrants -- now including Elvis' aerial view.

JENNI
 (into headset mic)
 Very nice, Elvis -- just don't
 break your neck, OK?

KARL NOVAK (O.S.)
 That's quite a set-up you have
 there.

Jenni turns to a handsome, well-dressed man of fifty -- KARL NOVAK.

KARL NOVAK
 (re: the iPad)
 Video editing, face recognition...

He smiles, winningly, and offer his hand.

KARL NOVAK
 Karl Novak. I've seen you at
 several of these events.

Jenni's not sure how to respond -- *is he hitting on her or what?* But the guy doesn't look like a nutcase, and she doesn't want to be rude. She shakes his hand.

JENNI
 Jenni Copley.

KARL NOVAK
 (re: the iPad)
 Some kind of school project?

JENNI
 We're on a student journalism
 fellowship.

KARL NOVAK
 Break any big stories?

JENNI
 Not yet...

KARL NOVAK
 Well... good luck with it.

He walks away, joining two others near the stage: a sleek mixed-race woman in her 20s, and a big guy in his early 30s, with a shaved head and an ex-Marine build.

The three of them reek of money and seem out of place in the casually dressed crowd.

Jenni turns on the iPad's video camera and pans across the crowd, stopping to focus on Karl Novak and his companions as she moves through the crowd and nears the stage.

ON STAGE

Brody steps to the podium and turns on her 1000-watt smile.

SENATOR BRODY
Hello, Santa Fe!

The crowd CHEERS.

SENATOR BRODY
It's so good to be home!

More CHEERS.

CRAAAAAAAK! A SHOT rings out. There's a spray of blood behind the podium and the candidate falls.

More SHOTS -- PING! PING!

IN FRONT OF STAGE

People SCREAM and run and hit the ground.

Jenni turns in the direction of the shots, still holding up her iPad.

PING!

The man in front of her gets shot in the head.

SPLAT!

What's left of the man's face splatters all over Jenni's.

WHOMP!

Someone TACKLES her. Her iPad goes flying.

She lies on the ground, her bloody face pushed into the grass, as people run or crawl past. Someone's on her back, covering her.

MARC (O.S.)
Are you hurt?

JENNI
I don't think so. But that guy--

MARC (O.S.)
I saw. You see the bandstand?

Jenni raises her eyes to see the gazebo...

JENNI

Yeah.

MARC (O.S.)

OK, on three let's make a run for
it. One... two... THREE!

He rolls off her and grabs her hand, dragging her in a running crouch toward the gazebo.

BEHIND THE GAZEBO

People are running and screaming, taking cover, crying, cursing, looking around frantically, calling names.

Police and security guards with drawn weapons scan the rooftops for the shooter, yell orders, and hustle people out of the plaza.

Jenni catches her breath and finally gets a look at her rescuer:

MARC LUCERO (21), a good-looking guy with a warm smile.

MARC

I'm Marc.

JENNI

Jenni. Thanks for jumping on me.

MARC

No problemo. Any time.

He studies her bloody face.

MARC

You got like... brains an' shit all over.

Jenni grimaces and wipes her face with her hands.

Marc takes a bandanna from his back pocket.

MARC

Here, let me....

He wipes her face as she squeezes her eyes shut.

MARC

You should get an H-I-V test.
Coulda got some in your mouth.

Jenni spits at the ground. She wipes her mouth, takes the bandanna from him, and scrubs her face.

MARC

I seen you before -- always starin'
at that screen...

She looks at him, a bit alarmed.

MARC

Not like a stalker or anything. We
been at the same events. You never
noticed?

She shakes her head and takes out her phone.

JENNI

I've gotta check on my team.

She calls up a number for Chu Ni.

CHU NI (V.O.)

(over phone)

Thank God! We're OK. We're over
by the Palace of the Governors.

Jenni looks up to see Chu Ni, Olivia, and Elvis under the
portal (covered porch) that borders the plaza.

JENNI

(into phone)

Did they get the shooter? How many
victims were there? Was the
Senator killed?

CHU NI (V.O.)

I don't know...

JENNI

Well, find out!

She HANGS UP, then puts the phone into video mode and reaches
out to take a panoramic shot of the plaza.

Marc looks at her with admiration.

MARC

Man, you don't give up, do you?

Jenni keeps filming as two paramedics run across the plaza
carrying a stretcher. They pick up the dead guy and hustle
back toward an ambulance parked behind the stage.

POLICE OFFICER (V.O.)

(over bullhorn)

Please clear the area! Attention!
Please clear the area!

Police and security hurry people out of the plaza.

MARC

Come on, we gotta go.

Jenni hands him her phone.

JENNI
Shoot me first.

MARC
What?

JENNI
Get me on video, before they kick
us out.

MARC
(re: her face)
But you still got blood an' shit--

JENNI
I know!

MARC
OK...

He centers her face on the phone's screen.

MARC
Go...

Jenni takes a breath and puts on her best "network reporter"
face.

JENNI
(to phone)
This is Jenni Copley in Santa Fe.
New Mexico Senator Kate Brody has
been shot, and her condition is not
yet known. At least one man near
the stage was killed. So far,
there's no sign of the shooter or
shooters or any indication of a
possible motive.

POLICE OFFICERS in body armor and helmets interrupt.

POLICE OFFICER
Come on, miss -- let's go. You
gotta clear the area! Shooter's
still at large.

Jenni peeks around the gazebo, toward the stage.

JENNI
I want to get my iPad...

MARC
You crazy? It's not worth it.

He takes Jenni's arm and hustles her toward the Palace of the
Governors as she looks back toward the stage.

JENNI

All my footage is on there!

MARC

You wanna die so you can make a movie?

JENNI

I'm on a journalism fellowship -- the Willans Foundation.

Marc looks at her like he smells something bad.

MARC

That means you're, like, Republican?

She give him a "so what if I am?" look.

He grins.

MARC

Never met one your age before. Didn't know they existed.

He shows her the press pass that's tucked inside his shirt.

MARC

Got a news gig myself...

EXT. PALACE OF THE GOVERNORS - DAY

Jenni and Marc meet up with Chu Ni, Olivia, and Elvis.

They look at Jenni's blood-streaked face with horror.

CHU NI

Oh my God... Are you hurt?

JENNI

I'm OK -- it's not my blood.

Olivia grimaces -- *like that's even worse.*

Jenni taps away at her phone.

JENNI

I've gotta get this video up on the site. What've you found out?

Marc sees that she's already forgotten about him.

MARC

I better go find my guys...

He takes out his phone.

MARC

So -- I saved your life. Do I at least get your number?

Jenni gives him a harried smile, then points her infrared port at his port and presses buttons.

JENNI

Sure...

MARC

Cool. I'll be in touch...

He puts his phone away and nods at the others.

MARC

Later...

He leaves them as the police approach, escorting them out of the area.

EXT. SANTA FE - DAY

Jenni and team are herded into a cordoned off area. Police check IDs and take statements. Paramedics treat people for minor injuries.

JENNI

Olivia -- talk to the paramedics. Find out how many were injured.

Olivia gives her an ironic salute and heads off.

JENNI

David -- see what the police know about the shooter. Like, what kind of weapon was used? And I think it was four shots -- can you get that confirmed?

DAVID

(heading off)
Got it...

JENNI

Chu Ni -- go online, see what's already posted. Did the shooter make threats on a Web site, stuff like that.

Chu Ni takes out her phone and taps on it.

JENNI

And Elvis -- ?

She looks around --