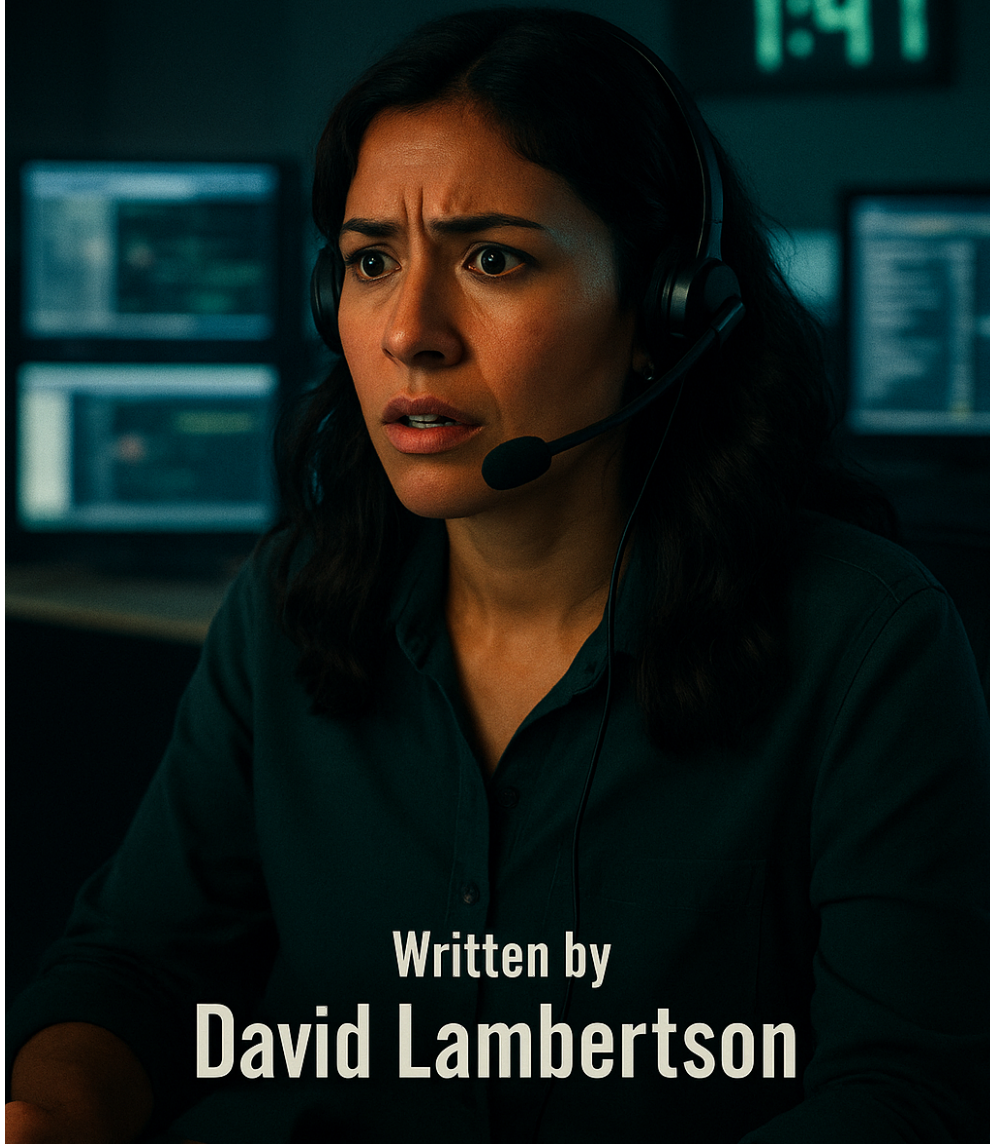


WHAT'S YOUR EMERGENCY...?



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INT. NEW ORLEANS 9-1-1 DISPATCH CENTER - NIGHT

The blue glow of a computer screen illuminates the face of ZOEY MARTÍNEZ, (43) - Spanish/Black mix - Creole roots.

Clad in simple dark clothes - no nonsense. A HEADSET rests atop her hair, pulled back in a tight pony tail.

Her eyes are laser-focused on the screen. Her face, emotionless - no fear, no panic... Just total control.

She's in the middle of a call.

We can always hear what she hears in her headset....

ZOEY

It's pretty cold outside. You got to be freezing.

Zoey's fingers fly over the keyboard. On her display: *MALE, 20s, T-SHIRT, BALL CAP.*

ZOEY

Abel, are you still with me?

ABEL (V.O.)

(slurred, distraught)

I swear to fucking God... I'm going to walk in front of the next semi-truck I --

ZOEY

Abel, don't do that.

ABEL (V.O.)

It's over! Why not!?

ZOEY

Because I'm just getting to know you, baby. Do me a favor, can you see any road signs?

ABEL (V.O.)

What the fuck do you think!?

ZOEY

C'mon, be a friend...

The HONK of a semi-truck and a rush of air emanating from Abel's phone.... An agonizing moment passes.

ZOEY

Abel...?

ABEL (V.O.)
 Claiborne Avenue, one mile... I
 think I'm going to be sick.

Zoey's works the keyboard. On her display: *I-10 EAST, NEAR
 CLAIBORNE RAMP... SUICIDAL.*

Just as she completes typing that, across the bullpen at --

RADIO DISPATCH CONSOLE

Dispatcher LIAM GUIDRY (30), ripped biceps straining the
 sleeves of his tight polo shirt, scanning Zoey's entries.

LIAM (INTO MIC)
 Unit 22, we now have him on the
 shoulder, I-10 East near Claiborne
 ramp. Repeat, White male, twenties,
 ball cap.

ZOEY'S STATION

ZOEY
 Were you drinking tonight, Abel?

ABEL (V.O.)
 No... I did some coke maybe.

On the keyboard: *HIGH. PROBABLY COCAINE...*

RADIO DISPATCH CONSOLE

LIAM (INTO MIC)
 Be advised, caller admits cocaine
 use.

ZOEY'S STATION

ZOEY's eyes land on A REAL TIME MAP display on her screen. It
 has one CALLER ICON to reflect Abel's approximate location
 and another NEW ORLEANS POLICE DEPARTMENT (NOPD) RESPONSE
 ICON to reflect the location of the patrol cars.

The space between ABEL'S ICON and the NOPD RESPONSE ICON is
 closing fast... They're almost there.

ABEL (V.O.)
 I need to die! No one's gonna give
 a fucking shit anyway.

ZOEY
 I would. You know that... We're
 friends now.

MORE HONKS AND SOUNDS OF TRAFFIC...

ZOEY

Hey, darling - do me a favor. I need you to walk back to the shoulder...

(just the roar of traffic)

Abel, are you there...?

An anxious pause.... Then --

LIAM (O.S.)

They're on scene.

ABEL (V.O.)

You called the fucking cops on me!?

NOPD OFFICER (V.O.)

I need ya to step back a few feet.

ABEL (V.O.)

You fucking bitch!

NOPD OFFICER

We got him.

ABEL (V.O.)

(distant/away from phone)

Bitch!

Zoey taps the side of her headset, removes it and sets it on her console - exhales.

She turns, looks across the bullpen at Liam - shoots him a *thumbs up*. Then turns towards the station next to her. There -

Rookie operator AMELIA BROUSSARD (25) swivels nervously - first day on the job jitters.

AMELIA

You make it look so easy.

ZOEY

You'll get used to it.

Zoey returns her focus to her screen.

AMELIA

You called him darling.

ZOEY

And...?

AMELIA

In training, they always said to use terms of respect. Like Sir or --

ZOEY

They're wrong... You can call em Sir, cocksucker, honey pie, dickhead - whatever. Just pick the right one.

AMELIA

I'm lost.

ZOEY

(points at monitor)

In that moment, Abel didn't need to feel respected. He needed to feel cared for. He didn't need a sir. He needed a darling. Got it?

Amelia nods - *she gets it*. She scans the room, a dozen or so 9-1-1 stations. All manned by someone, either perched in their chair or chatting with a co-worker. AND --

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS scattered about - that time of year.

AMELIA

Is it always this quiet?

OPERATOR #1

Rook bitch said the Q word!

OPERATOR #2

Oh, for fuck's sake.

CONNIE THIBODEAUX (50) - huge, thick - built like a linebacker, lumbers over, sticks a meaty paw out.

CONNIE

Hey, rook - I'm the shift supervisor.

Amelia nervously takes Connie's hand.

AMELIA

Amelia...

Connie smiles - one of those thousand watt smiles - a perfectly sculpted row of glimmering white teeth.

Then that smile fades...

CONNIE

You ever say the Q word again
during a shift, I'm goin have to
break ya neck... We good?

Amelia swallows, nods meekly. Connie strolls away.

AMELIA

(to Zoey)

What's that about?

ZOEY

People think saying the Q word out
loud is a jinx. Like calls will
start flooding in all of a sudden.

AMELIA

Now they all hate me?

ZOEY

No.... Just the boss.

The dispatch center suddenly grows busier. CHIRPS and BUZZES
and more eyes on screens as call volume picks up.

Accusatory glares from other OPERATORS towards Amelia.

AMELIA

Was your first day like this?

Zoey puts her headset back on... anticipating a call.

ZOEY

No.

AMELIA

Lucky you.

ZOEY

My first day was Katrina.

AMELIA

Fuck...

ZOEY'S STATION - JUST AFTER MIDNIGHT

Zoey adjusts her headset - taps the keyboard

ZOEY

9-1-1. What's your emergency?

Zoey flinches as an eerie, crackly STATIC CRACKLE bleeds into her headset. It sounds like it's overlaid on a faint, dusty whisper - nearly undiscernible.

EERIE STATIC (V.O.)
Zzz...use...zzzzzzzz...gift...zzz.

ZOEY
Hello...?

Zoey's monitor glitches - FLASH OFF - FLASH ON.

The digital clock on the screen freezes: 12:14:07.

ZOEY
(muttering)
What the fuck...?

Zoey whacks the side of her monitor. Now -

The screen reflects a cell phone ping off a 9th Ward tower.

The crackle clears... Dead silence. Then -

ZOEY
9-1-1. What's your emergency?

BOY (V.O.)
Is this the lady who helps people?

Zoey breathes a sigh of relief - things seem to be working.

ZOEY
Hey, sweetie. Are you in danger?

BOY (V.O.)
No... I don't think so.

ZOEY
What's your name?

BOY (V.O.)
Danny.

ZOEY
Nice to meet you, Danny? Can you tell me how old you are?

BOY (V.O.)
Six.

Zoey works the keyboard: *CHILD IN DANGER, DANNY - AGE 6*

ZOEY
Where are you?

BOY (V.O.)
Outside... My house.

ZOEY
Do you know your address, Danny?

BOY (V.O.)
2555.

ZOEY
Wow, you're smart. How about your
street name?

BOY (V.O.)
Fwanklin.

Zoey works the keyboard: *9TH WARD. 2555 FRANKLIN.... CHILD
POSSIBILY IN DANGER... THREAT UNKNOWN.*

RADIO DISPATCH CONSOLE

Liam scans Zoey's entry.

LIAM (INTO MIC)
All units in the area of 2555
Franklin be advised, Child in
danger. Unattended.

ZOEY'S STATION

ZOEY
Why are you outside, Danny?

BOY
My Daddy won't wake up. Mommy gave
me her phone and said to run
outside and talk to you... Just
before she feel asleep she said bad
air.

Zoey works the keyboard: *CARBON MONOXIDE IN HOUSE...?*

LIAM (O.S.)
Be advised possible CO2 exposure in
house. Dispatching paramedics.

ZOEY'S STATION

BOY (V.O.)
I'm cold. Can I go in now?

ZOEY

No - no - no, Danny. We have some nice people on the way to help.

BOY (V.O.)

But I'm cold.

Zoey taps her head - Thinks....

The REAL TIME MAP display on a nearby screen shows the NOPD RESPONSE ICON closing in on the LOCATION.

ZOEY (V.O.)

Why don't you tell me what you want Santa to bring you for Christmas.

BOY (V.O.)

I got a bike. Santa already came.

ZOEY

Why would Santa have already -- ?

BOY (V.O.)

I'm going back in. Bye.

ZOEY

Danny, no!

(line goes dead)

Danny...?

Zoey looks at her screen - NOPD not quite there yet.

ZOEY

God damn it!

INT. DANNY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Danny, his DAD and MOM together on the sofa and --

QUITE ALIVE...

Two New Orleans POLICE OFFICER'S loom over them.

OFFICER #1

You're positive about that?

DAD

(yawning)

Nobody called 9-1-1.

Officer #1 looks suspiciously at Mom.

OFFICER #1

Nobody?

MOM

I swear. I was reading. They were both asleep on the sofa.

OFFICER #2

Can I check your cell phones?

Mom hands her phone over.

MOM

We only have the one.

The Officer scrolls through recent calls - No 9-1-1. He hands the phone back. Looks at Officer #1, shakes his head.

Officer #1 snatches his HAND RADIO from its harness.

OFFICER #1

Need a confirmation on dispatch address. We have 2555 Franklin.

LIAM (V.O.)

(filtered thru radio)

Confirmed. Dispatch address is correct.