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Title:	Clarice	Submitted to:	MGM Studios/CBS Studios/Secret Hideout
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Format:	Teleplay	Analyst:	Veronica Carr
Draft:	First	Date:	1/14/20
Setting/Time:	1993 Washington D.C., one year after the events of "Silence of the Lambs"		
Genre:	Crime/Mystery	Recommendation:	CONSIDER

Logline: "Clarice" offers an in-depth look at FBI Agent Clarice Starling as she returns to the field in 1993, one year after the event of "The Silence of the Lambs." Struggling both mentally and professionally, we follow her as she chases serial killers through the fast-paced political space of Washington D.C.

Rating Box:

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>
<u>Premise</u>		x		
<u>Characterization</u>			x	
<u>Plot</u>	x			
<u>Writing Ability</u>	x			



SYNOPSIS:

CLARICE STARLING (26, reserved, intelligent, curious) is an FBI agent who has been the talk of the town since the events of “The Silence of the Lambs.” After catching Buffalo Bill, her first case right out of academy graduation, she’s clearly struggling. We are introduced to her as she claws her way through paparazzi, exiting from the Department of Justice. This has been her life since the events that occurred a year ago, and the media is making no attempts to lighten up.

Clarice is speaking to her FBI-mandated THERAPIST, who is clearly frustrated with her for not opening up to them. He tries to get her to open up by talking about the headlines, the media attention, and the fact that she’s on the cover of every magazine in town. She deflects every time, and the audience gets more of an understanding of who she is and how this has taken a toll on her. Through this interaction, we also see that Clarice has been on desk duty for the past year. She isn’t trusted to go back into the field by her superiors, and she doesn’t really believe she is either.

The therapist probes her with questions, trying to get a reaction out of her – trying to get anything out of her. He asks her about Catherine Martin, the woman she saved. She goes right back to that moment in Buffalo Bill’s house. She’s having nightmares, but she’s too traumatized to tell anyone. The therapist is fed up, telling her that if she doesn’t open up, then he can’t recommend her to go back into the field. Just as she gets this news, a RECEPTIONIST (20s, inexperienced) comes in with AGENT MOHR (30s-40s, stoic).

We find out that the reason this agent is here is because Ruth Martin, Attorney General of the United States, has called for Clarice. It is very clear – she doesn’t have a choice. Therapist sign off or not, she has to go to Washington, D.C. She’s back. Clarice and Agent Mohr are almost running through the halls of the Department of Justice. It’s fitting – fast paced, like the politics in D.C. We’re rushing to catch up just like Clarice is, and none of us know what this mission is.

We are brought right outside the door of RUTH MARTIN (late 50’s-early 60’s, blunt, dominating, quick-witted) and Clarice remembers the first time she saw the woman; right outside of Buffalo Bill’s apartment. The two women respect each other; that much is clear. Clarice is now in the War Room, and there are photos of Ruby Ridge, Waco, the first WTC bombings. She understands that she’s in the big leagues now.

Ruth is with her CHIEF OF STAFF, MICHAEL AYRES (40’s), and JEN TALLY (30’s). They follow her around like puppies, so we instantly know how powerful Ruth is. She and Clarice cordially catch up with each other, and Ruth tells her that she is to be the face of VICAP, a new task force, and that she needs her expertise to know if this killer is serial or not. Clarice is not sure of this, but again, she has no choice.

Clarice goes to the crime scene of the previous victim, and is not warmly greeted by PAUL KRENDLER (40’s, head of VICAP Fly Team), TOM ESQUIVEL (Cuban American, Late 20’s), and EMIN GRIGORIYAN (50’s). Esquivel is told by Krendler to keep an eye on Clarice, but he’s clearly uncomfortable with this.

Clarice follows a lead into the drainage pipe, and she tells Krendler that she can’t positively say that this



is a serial killer. He's annoyed, and tells her that in front of the media, she needs to say whatever he wants her to. Clarice hates this, but she follows along. She tells the media that this is a serial killer, even though she doesn't believe it.

Act two kicks off with us meeting ARDELIA MAPP (mid-20's, Special Asst. U.S. Attorney), a friend of Clarice's from Quantico. We instantly know she is trustworthy, because Clarice is so comfortable staying in her home. Clarice is frustrated by her first day, but Ardelia pushes her to trust her instincts. Clarice gets a spark, and she knows that she needs to push ahead with this case.

In the D.C. FBI field office, Clarice and Tom are working to get evidentiary information about the victims. Clarice reaches for the handle on her desk, only for it to be covered in white goo. She thinks it's semen, but the cackles from the team make her realize it is lotion. She's frustrated, and Tom begins to try making a connection. They decide that they will go question one of the victims' husbands again.

They meet MR. FRANK BIRD (Angela's husband, late 20's) and he is struggling with two kids. Clarice helps him change diapers and they find out that the older child is autistic. They leave, and in the car they decide to go visit the other victim's next of kin – a daughter who lives in a crack neighborhood. They knock on the door, and a woman jumps from the fire escape and starts running. Clarice and Tom pursue, even though Clarice gets knocked over by a man on a bike and CASEY LAUGHTY (20's, strung-out) cuts Tom's hand with a broken bottle. Clarice pins her down, and through questioning her they find out that her son, the victim's grandson, is autistic as well. A connection between the victims. Clarice pushes ahead.

Clarice and Tom get back to the office, and there's been a third victim. This time, however, Clarice is put on desk duty by Krendler. She is frustrated, but she does not contest. At the crime scene, Krendler asks Tom about his surveillance efforts. Krendler gives Tom an ultimatum; keep surveilling Clarice or he'll find someone else. Back in the bullpen, Clarice tries to call Ruth Martin but CATHERINE MARTIN (young, Buffalo Bill victim). Their conversation triggers Clarice, and we see the other side of the trauma she's been enduring. Catherine is an emaciated anorexic. At the crime scene, Tom notices a photo of newborn footprints. He takes the photo and rushes to the neighbor's house, asking questions. Tom calls Clarice and tells her that the third victim had a child who was autistic. Another connection.

Clarice and Tom go back to Mr. Bird's house and find out that the first victim was a whistle blower for a clinical trial that resulted in autistic newborns. In the car, Ardelia Mapp tells them about a reporter, Rebecca Clarke Sherman, who wrote exposés. Clarice and Tom figure out that all the victims were whistleblowers. They go to Rebecca Clark-Sherman's home, when a man opens the door. He tells them he's her boyfriend named GUY (50's, menschy looking). They go in to wait, but quickly feel like something is off. Tom goes upstairs and finds REBECCA with her wrists slit in the bathtub. "GUY" is behind Tom, and they start fighting. Tom is saved by Clarice, who keeps in struggle with Guy while Tom takes care of Rebecca. Clarice shoots Guy, and handcuffs him. She tries to get him to confess, but he wants a deal.

Later at the crime scene, Clarice and Tom try to convince Krendler that is not a serial killer, but something bigger. Krendler tells him that if they can't prove it, it's useless. It's a serial killer because



they need it to be. In front of the crime scene, Clarice tells the media that they caught the guy. She emphasizes that the victims are more important than the killer, that this wasn't the work of a serial killer. Krendler is pissed, but she doesn't care anymore. She tells the media that she is here to stay until they officially close the book.

COMMENTS:

CLARICE is a well written crime and mystery drama that unfolds after the events of one of the most popular psychological thriller films of the 20th century. It gives us more in-depth information about Clarice Starling, which is intriguing and exciting for fans of the book and the film. The script moves fast with purposeful dialogue between characters, and the setting of Washington D.C. is perfect for the characters and the conflict. The audience is constantly trying to catch up; this fits so perfectly because it feels like we are right next to Clarice the entire time. This script would benefit from an edit or two, but nothing that can't be remedied.

The titular hero, Clarice Starling, is artfully placed into the world of murder and politics in Washington D.C. Her arc in this pilot goes from reserved and uncertain to confident and resilient, which helps the audience root for her even more. The audience gets glimpses of who she was before the FBI, and this gives the character a lot more depth and intrigue. Due to the fact that her history is so extensive (not including the events of "The Silence of the Lambs"), it gives the character a lot of room to grow and explore. Flashback sequences throughout the pilot show that not only has Clarice not healed from the events a year ago, but her childhood as well. By the end of the pilot, however, Clarice is determined and more confident than we've seen her yet.

The scenes between Clarice and Tom, while interesting, don't always feel necessary. The scene in the bullpen with the lotion seemed a bit forced, while the conversations between them in the car were organic and interesting. The support of characters like Tom and Ardelia help soften Clarice, and give the audience more insight into her psyche. The second act moves a little slow, but with the removal of that scene it would move a lot faster and smoother. One character that could benefit from some more work is Agent Emin Grigoriyan. He's in act one, and then disappears into the back for the rest of the episode. There's something there in this character; it just needs to be explored.

The plot is very well done. It doesn't seem like a cheap sequel because it almost stands alone from the film. It moves quickly without being confusing, which is rare in many crime shows on television right now. The pilot gives you satisfaction at the end, but also makes you hope for more. This author is good at placing breadcrumbs about both the plot and the characters throughout that make you want to keep reading/watching. It's near perfect, and gives much opportunity for future episodes. It's original enough to garner new fans who also watch shows

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like “Criminal Minds” or “Law and Order: SVU” and well-written enough to get older fans of the book and film to keep watching. I believe that it is original and exciting enough to compete in today’s market, which is why “CLARICE” is an overall CONSIDER.