

FADE IN:

INT. SPINELLI RESIDENCE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

A pair of red silk panties lay on top of the king sized bed. Small clouds of smoke hover over the bright panties. Sniffing is heard.

Two bodies sit on either side of the bed. Male and female. They are DETECTIVE JAMES SPINELLI, 40s, a husky bull of a man and his lovely wife, ROSE, 40s, the type of woman who still looks beautiful even without make-up. At the moment she is an emotional wreck.

The source of the smoke is the cigar that hangs out of Spinelli's mouth. The sniffles come from Rose. They never look at each other while talking.

ROSE
How long?

DET. SPINELLI
I broke it off a month ago.

ROSE
(angrily)
How long? How long?

Spinelli realizes what she means. He sighs.

DET. SPINELLI
Six months. Off and on.

Rose shakes her head in disbelief.

DET. SPINELLI
I couldn't deal with the guilt anymore.

ROSE
Was she pretty?

Spinelli is reluctant to answer.

DET. SPINELLI
Yeah.

Rose breaks down.

Spinelli crosses over to her side of the bed and tries to grab her arm. She pulls it away.

DET. SPINELLI

No one is as pretty as you, Rose. I love you.

Rose slaps him in the face without even letting a millisecond pass after hearing those three dreadful words. Spinelli is caught by surprise.

ROSE

You don't get to say that to me.

DET. SPINELLI

It was a mistake.

ROSE

It's not the first time, James. But it is the last... with me.

DET. SPINELLI

What in the hell is that supposed to mean?

ROSE

I want a divorce.

DET. SPINELLI

You can't be serious. A divorce?

The cellphone on Spinelli's hip rings.

Rose hurries into the bathroom.

DET. SPINELLI

Honey.

She slams the door behind her.

DET. SPINELLI

For Pete's sake.

He answers the phone.

DET. SPINELLI

Detective Spinelli speaking.
(puffs his cigar)
A body? Go on.

Spinelli's face is stricken with fear.

DET. SPINELLI

A question mark?

INT. UNMARKED VEHICLE - NIGHT

Spinelli drives with a look as if his mind is else where -- which it is. A cigar hangs from him mouth. He cuts the radio on and slaps his fingertips on the steering wheel to the rhythm of the music. That doesn't last long. He sighs and cuts the music back off.

In the passenger's seat sits a portable police light. He grabs it and slams it on the hood of the car. The red and blue lights shine. He doesn't bother with the siren.

Spinelli is approaching a crime scene with an array of patrol cars, a coroner's van and EMT near an alleyway. Lights flashing. A host of cops, coroners and crime scene investigators are scattered about on foot. The crime scene is marked off by yellow tape.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Spinelli parks and exits his vehicle wearing his tan colored trench coat. He meets up with his partner, DET. JOE CARRUTHERS, a slim thirty year old man of reliance.

DET. CARRUTHERS

It's an exceptionally grim sight.

Carruthers has two flashlights. He hands one to Spinelli.

DET. SPINELLI

Exceptional... aren't they all?
Where is it?

Carruthers leads his partner towards the alleyway.

DET. CARRUTHERS

How's things at home with Rose?

DET. SPINELLI

Well, Carruthers, I no longer have to walk around with the sword of Damocles suspended above my head. I can honestly say I'm a little relieved.

DET. CARRUTHERS

Christ, Jimmy. She busted you?

DET. SPINELLI

Sniffing around like a bloodhound. She's the real detective at home. I'm just the perp.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Spinelli and Carruthers enter the alley. CSIs are equipped with flashlights, sweeping the alley for possible traces of evidence. OFFICER #1 approaches the two detectives.

OFFICER #1
It's real fucked up, detectives.
Whoever did this is a fucking
monster.

The officer shines his flashlight at the grizzly scene.

The corpse of a woman is tossed like a rag doll over the fire escape above. Her body is cut up beyond recognition. Camera's flash, taking shots of the dead body. A ladder is propped against the building next to the body.

DET. SPINELLI
We got a name?

OFFICER #1
No ID was found on the body.

DET. SPINELLI
Who called it in?

Officer #1 looks at his note pad.

OFFICER #1
A Christy Taylor.

DET. SPINELLI
Where is she?

OFFICER #1
I sent her home.

DET. SPINELLI
Did you get her statement?

OFFICER #1
I got her name.

Spinelli gives officer #1 an annoyed grimace.

DET. SPINELLI
That's it? Well did you at least
get her address?

Officer #1 realizes his error.

OFFICER #1
Oh shit.

DET. CARRUTHERS
Jesus. You must be the rook.

OFFICER #1
Anything else you need me to do?

DET. SPINELLI
I passed a cafe on the way here. I believe it's still open. Make yourself useful and grab a couple of coffees.

OFFICER #1
Donuts too?

Spinelli doesn't answer that.

OFFICER #1
Right. Coffee, coming right up.

Officer #1 splits. The detectives shake their heads.

DET. CARRUTHERS
Too much ignorance?

DET. SPINELLI
Too much television.

DET. CARRUTHERS
There's a couple of other officer's canvassing the area.

Spinelli pulls his cell phone out and makes a call. He listens for a few seconds before sighing then hanging up. Carruthers notices this.

DET. CARRUTHERS
Just gotta let her blow it of,
Jimmy. Could help.

DET. SPINELLI
Yeah.

Spinelli climbs the ladder near the body. He shines his flashlight on it, searching until he finds what he is looking for.

DET. SPINELLI
There it is.

Spinelli's flashlight shines on a question mark carved into the corpse's back.

Carruthers watches from below.

DET. CARRUTHERS
What's the deal with the question
mark anyway?

DET. SPINELLI
It's a signature.

DET. CARRUTHERS
Signature... from who?

Spinelli sighs then looks dead at his partner.

DET. SPINELLI
The Strategy Game Killer.

Spinelli descends the ladder.

DET. SPINELLI
Fifteen years ago on a hot August
night was the blooming of a very
grim string of murders. Off and on
for a decade. The killer struck
once a year. That's ten bodies
which means ten different reasons
for panic in the streets.

Spinelli pulls his badge out.

DET. SPINELLI
Ten reasons to have a love and hate
relationship with the badge.

Spinelli rubs his thumb over the shiny shield, caught in a
moment of reflection. He snaps out of it then returns the
badge to his coat pocket.

DET. SPINELLI
Anyway, the cool down period lasted
longer. Five years to be exact,
which brings us to tonight.

DET. CARRUTHERS
Were there ever any leads?

DET. SPINELLI
Yeah. All fruitless. Unreliable
witnesses, hearsay, mishandling of
evidence yada yada yada. The case
is still open thankfully.

DET. CARRUTHERS
We'll catch the prick.

DET. SPINELLI

Easier said than done. We're not dealing with a serial killer with only one method of murder. We're talking strangulation, stabbing, chopping, shooting, bludgeoning. If there's a method to use then this killer's adopted it. These are the worst kinds.

Spinelli smirks.

DET. SPINELLI

Sometimes I wonder if the supplemental meaning of the signature is a question to us asking "will you ever catch me."

DET. CARRUTHERS

What's the initial meaning?

CSI #1 yells from the back of the alley.

CSI #1

Dicks, you better come see this.

BACK OF ALLEYWAY

Two CSIs, including the summoner, stand over something. They all look perplexed. The two detectives join them.

DET. SPINELLI

This here is the initial reason for the question mark. This is why the media coined the name, "The Strategy Game Killer."

What causes the clueless facial expressions is a bloodstained piece of paper with a strategy game on it. The letters are made up of cut out letters from different magazines. The paper reads: "Strategy Game #11. My digs. It's a favored syrup. Independence was our greatest manifesto. 10 blocks."

CSI #1

Fuck's that, voodoo shit?

DET. SPINELLI

I never was good at these. Let's think here.

Spinelli scratches his head.

DET. SPINELLI
Favored syrup...

CSI #2
My favorite is buttermilk.

CSI #1
What? No -- blueberry.

CSI #2
Fucking gross.

DET. SPINELLI
My digs...

Carruthers shakes his head.

DET. CARRUTHERS
Digs is another word for residence.
This is where the killer lives.

CSI #2
What the hell does syrup have to do
with a residence?

They all think for a second.

DET. SPINELLI
Maple... as in street.

DET. CARRUTHERS
Ten blocks.

Spinelli looks shocked.

DET. SPINELLI
That was simple.

DET. CARRUTHERS
Is that strange?

DET. SPINELLI
According to the previous murders,
either the killer has reached the
point of sloppiness or we're being
led into a trap. If there's
anything the principles of
detection taught me it's to always
expect the worst which is why I'm
going with the latter.

Spinelli sparks up a cigar.

DET. SPINELLI
 Call SWAT. Does anybody have a
 street map?

EXT. ALLEYWAY - LATER

The SWAT team has arrived on the scene.

Spinelli, Carruthers and JONES, the SWAT team leader, surround the hood of a vehicle looking over a map of the streets. Spinelli traces his finger along the map as he instructs.

DET. SPINELLI
 Okay so we're focusing on a ten
 block radius from this point. I
 know for a fact there's a Maple
 street.

JONES
 Yeah. It's the most common fucking
 street in the nation besides Main.

DET. SPINELLI
 (focusing on map)
 Is it ten blocks from here is the
 question.

Spinelli taps the map with his finger.

DET. SPINELLI
 Got it. Maple street

DET. CARRUTHERS
 Independence was our greatest
 manifesto. What the fuck does that
 mean?

JONES
 What are the synonyms for
 manifesto?

They all think.

DET. CARRUTHERS
 Proclamation.

JONES
 Some sort of statement.

DET. CARRUTHERS
 Declaration. Independence was our
 greatest declaration.

DET. SPINELLI
The Declaration of Independence.

DET. CARRUTHERS
God bless America. We're going to nab this prick because of his dumb strategy puzzle -- quiz or whatever the fuck it is.

DET. SPINELLI
Yeah and I bet you my shitty annual excuse for a salary that the house numbers run in the seventeen hundreds over there.

Jones pulls out a cell phone and begins to type on it. Spinelli and Carruthers both watch while holding their breaths.

Jones stops.

INSERT - CELL PHONE

The screen has an address pulled up on the GPS. It reads, "1776 Maple St."

BACK TO SCENE

Jones throws the detectives a smile that suggests a moment of success.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - LATER

The POLICE CAPTAIN, a heavy set man in his late fifties, takes up a makeshift podium. He seems exhausted after a hard day's work back at the office. Needless to say he still speaks with eagerness as he lays out the plan for the detectives and SWAT team.

POLICE CAPTAIN
Alright listen up. I know what some of you guys wish. Trust me I'd like to kick this heartless, lowlife degenerate up and down the street as well. Pain -- fifteen years worth. I'm talking payback. Unfortunately it's important we make this capture as smooth as a baby's ass. We've been after this son of a bitch for a long time and tonight's the night we succeed.

Somebody shouts, "fuckin' right" then "payback."

POLICE CAPTAIN

Quiet. We have the address thanks to the killer's misjudgment of our problem solving skills. Will the killer be at that address when you arrive? Maybe, maybe not. If not then it's not a huge loss. Hopefully there's something in that house that is sufficient to our investigation, but if the killer is there, well, we'd be ridding the city of one of the henchmen doing the devil's work...

Spinelli, not really listening to the Captain, tries calling his wife again only to receive the same fruitless result.

POLICE CAPTAIN

... now go catch this diabolical creep. Good luck.

INT. UNMARKED VEHICLE - NIGHT

The interior of the car is being hot boxed by the cigar Spinelli puffs on. Carruthers is in the passenger's seat trying to deal with it. He rolls down the window. Both men look determined to catch a killer tonight. Spinelli has his phone out.

DET. CARRUTHERS

You know second hand smoking is just as bad, right?

DET. SPINELLI

Sorry. These help me focus.

(beat)

It's been hours, Joe. Hours. Why hasn't she called. I've called. I've sent texts. Still no answers. No replies.

DET. CARRUTHERS

Listen, Jimmy, I think the best thing you can do right now is focus your mind elsewhere. This isn't coming from a partner, it's coming from a friend.

Spinelli takes the advice, exhausting his efforts to call his wife. He shoves the phone back in his coat pocket.

DET. SPINELLI

I don't know about this. This is the fastest a strategy game has ever been solved. It usually takes a good week or two. Not to mention the answer leading to a house. That's a first. They usually lead to some open field where all we retrieve are the victims belongings. Purse, ID, a pair of stockings. It can't be this easy.

DET. CARRUTHERS

Maybe the killer's exhausted.

DET. SPINELLI

They never get exhausted.

INT. KILLER'S HOME - NIGHT

The front door is busted to smithereens via batter ram. The SWAT team, Jones, ANDREWS, BUCKMAN and two other guys, rush inside equipped with submachine guns and flashlights.

Andrews is some shit kicker from Texas who has spent entirely too much time in the Army before joining SWAT. Buckman is a new kid still wet behind the ears.

They clear every room. The house is dark. Flashlights shine on areas of disgust. The house is a pig sty. Flies swarm old food that's been sitting out for weeks in the kitchen.

BUCKMAN

Jesus Christ it stinks.

BATHROOM

The door flies open. Buckman quickly enters with his gun drawn only to be stopped by an unpleasant sight. He looks sick.

BUCKMAN

Detectives.

Spinelli and Carruthers cautiously enter the house with their Colt Detective .38 Specials drawn. They head straight for the bathroom where all of the other SWAT team members have already arrived. They all look disgusted by the sight.

There's a corpse inside the bathtub. It's decomposed so severely that it's hard to make out what is what.

The only sound heard is the crawling of the little black bugs that infest it.

BUCKMAN

What the fuck is that?

Andrews speech is a cross between a cowboy and a soldier. His cheek is full of chewing tobacco.

ANDREWS

Hide beetles... they eat the dead.

Buckman turns away and vomits.

ANDREWS

I've seen worse.

Andrews spits out brown tobacco juice.

Spinelli shines his flashlight above the body. A telephone number is painted on the wall in some unknown liquid.

Spinelli dials the number then puts his phone on speaker. After a few rings a soft spoken male voice answers. It's the killer.

KILLER

Hi, detectives. SWAT. I assume these are the people present at the moment.

DET. SPINELLI

And I assume you know how all of this works.

KILLER

I'm no fool. Which detective do I have the pleasure of speaking with?

DET. SPINELLI

You have the displeasure of speaking with Detective Spinelli.

KILLER

You're exactly the one I seek. I know the others are listening, but that doesn't matter.

The others just listen anxiously. Spinelli gets right into it.

DET. SPINELLI

I had a feeling you wouldn't be present so why did you bring us here?

KILLER

That's right. I did bring you here. I wanted to be present, detective.

DET. SPINELLI

Care to elaborate?

KILLER

I made an error. While I knew the SWAT team would be involved, I didn't take in account their approachable methods. It's safe to say my front entrance door is kicked in.

Spinelli sighs at the killer's correct prediction.

DET. SPINELLI

Your front door is no more.

KILLER

I thought so. The thought prompted me to switch locations.

DET. SPINELLI

Why does it matter how you are apprehended?

KILLER

That would ruin our chance to talk.

DET. SPINELLI

Talk? About what?

KILLER

In time, detective. That's why you will meet me at a new address. You're welcomed to bring your buddies along though my welcoming doesn't really matter. I know the procedure.

DET. SPINELLI

What's the new address?

KILLER

I don't know. What is the new address?

Carruthers kicks a pile of junk on the dirty floor.

DET. CARRUTHERS
Fucking Christ. Don't tell me
another strategy game.

DET. SPINELLI
Calm down.

Carruthers composes himself.

KILLER
Strategy game number twelve. An
easy one. Imagine yourself in a
room with no doors or no windows.
In fact no opening of any kind. How
do you get out? Call me back with
the answer.

The other end hangs up. Everyone in the room puts their heads
together.

BUCKMAN
A room with no doors or windows?
The fireplace to the chimney.

JONES
Did you listen at all? He said no
opening of any kind.

ANDREWS
Do what the POWs do and try and dig
your way out. Chew at the walls if
you have to.

Everyone looks at Andrews like he's deranged.

DET. CARRUTHERS
I seriously doubt that's the
solution.

Spinelli departs from the band of problem solvers. He's deep
in thought.

DET. CARRUTHERS
We've got to break down the
sentence from word to word.

BUCKMAN
I did. I can't figure out the
fucking thing.

DET. SPINELLI
Imagine.

Everyone turns to Spinelli.

DET. SPINELLI

You imagine yourself inside a room
with no doors or windows so you
imagine yourself out.

Spinelli calls the number back.

KILLER

Faster than expected. What have you
got?

DET. SPINELLI

You imagine yourself out.

KILLER

Five seven five six Waverly Lane.
And tell your boys not to get
excited with the batter ram. Keep a
good distance. You wouldn't want to
test me on that.

The line goes dead.

DET. SPINELLI

Next and hopefully the final stop,
Waverly Lane.

EXT. STREET, WAVERLY LANE - NIGHT

The unmarked vehicle carrying the two detectives arrive to a gated house. The SWAT vans and patrol cars are right behind them. The mailbox in front of the house reads "5756."

Spinelli and Carruthers exit the vehicle and take cover behind it. The SWAT team members start pouring out of the vans ready for action. Submachine guns and shields drawn.

Snipers post up on building rooftops across and down the street. There's one sniper posted in a window behind some books "JFK assassination conspiracy theory" style.

Jones throws hand signals to the other members. He instructs Andrews to go around the back of the house. Andrews tosses the cigarette from his mouth and nods.

Andrews stealthily approaches the house. He hops the gate.

BACKYARD

Andrews is like a cheetah ready to pounce on a gazelle. Forget SWAT. He's a soldier at war again on a mission to capture a threatful target.

He makes it to the back door then slowly reaches for the doorknob. No noise once so ever.

Out of nowhere Andrews' head damn near explodes. This compels him to let loose with his submachine gun, spraying bullets every which way, knocking out windows and such.

FRONT OF HOUSE

Everyone goes ape shit.

DET. CARRUTHERS
We've got shots fired.

JONES
Andrews.

There is no response.

JONES
God damn it I'm going in. Buckman,
cover me!

Jones starts towards the house.

DET. SPINELLI
Jones, get back here!

Spinelli draws his piece. Carruthers does the same.

Jones approaches the gate with no stealth once so ever. Still, all the excitement doesn't distract his defence as he carries his shield out in front of him. Shots ricochet off of the shield. He screams in pain and falls to the ground.

Shots follow him as he limps back to the squad cars and dives for cover. He holds the back of his leg to try and stop the blood flow.

JONES
Son of a bitch shot me in the ass.

Buckman assists him.

BUCKMAN
Jones is hit. Call a medic.

A SNIPER up on the roof moves to get a better shot.

SNIPER

I can't see a fucking thing from here. Where are the shots coming from?

Spinelli does a visual search of the house's exterior. From his vantage point he sees surveillance cameras propped on the corner's of the roof. There is also a loud speaker. He realizes this is now a real life Mexican standoff. Guns pose a threat from both sides. Anyone outside isn't getting in and the killer inside isn't coming out -- willingly.

DET. SPINELLI

Everybody stand down.
(to Carruthers)
Pass me the bullhorn.

Carruthers hands Spinelli a shiny bullhorn. He speaks through it with poise in his voice. He only says these words through the bullhorn because he is trained to say them.

DET. SPINELLI

Alright, you. This is Detective Spinelli. I'm going to need you to step out with your hands held high. I think you've done enough damage.

After a few seconds the loudspeaker on the house kicks on. The killer sounds just as calm. From this point on the conversation between Spinelli and the killer will be through the bullhorn and from the loudspeaker.

KILLER

Detective, I thought I made it very clear about the excitement.

DET. SPINELLI

That wasn't necessary.

KILLER

Sure it was. Your men were going to come in, guns blazing.

DET. SPINELLI

Guns drawn. It's called procedure. You know all about that, remember?

Neighbors exit their homes to see what the hell is going on. Carruthers instructs them to go back inside.

KILLER

I think it's time for the final strategy game.

DET. SPINELLI

Can't wait.

KILLER

In holy matrimony. Twenty-three, nine, six, five.

Spinelli thinks hard.

KILLER

I'll speed things up with a hint... the alphabet.

After a few seconds Spinelli puts his head down, rubbing the bridge of his nose with his thumb and index finger.

DET. SPINELLI

The numbers... they represent the letters' placement in the alphabet. It spells wife.

KILLER

Congratulations.

DET. SPINELLI

I don't see what she has to do with this. You'll be apprehended before you even get a chance to get to her.

The killer laughs.

Spinelli receives a text message.

INSERT - PHONE

The screen says "Call me." It's a text from Rose.

BACK TO SCENE

Spinelli laughs now.

DET. SPINELLI

You see, that's her now. You know, I almost got scared. There's no way in hell I'm letting you near my wife you pathetic piece of shit. Now excuse me while I take this.

Spinelli dials the phone. The sound of a ring tone plays out of the killer's loud speaker for everyone to hear. His wife, Rose's, ring tone.

Spinelli is frozen as stiff as one of Medusa's victims. The phone is still gripped in his cold dead fingers as the ring tone continues to play. It goes to Rose's voice mail briefly before cutting off.

ROSE'S VOICEMAIL

Hi, you've reached Rose Spinelli.
Sorry I missed...

KILLER

You were saying, detective.

Spinelli's calm disposition takes a sharp turn into fury. White heat shines in his eyes. Smoke blows from his nose like a bull. All of the events that has happened up to this point don't mean a thing. Shit just got real.

DET. SPINELLI

Why is my wife in there? Tell me now and without the stupid fucking strategy games.

KILLER

Your wife is fine for now.

DET. SPINELLI

Prove it to me. I want to speak to her.

After a few seconds --

ROSE

James.

DET. SPINELLI

Rose, Sweetie. How are you holding?

INT. HOUSE, BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rose is in the corner bound by duct tape. She trembles. Her face is smeared with tears. The killer's hand holds a microphone out for her. His face is never seen. It is hard to tell where they actually are in the house. It's dark and vague.

INTERCUT - WAVERLY LANE/HOUSE, BACK ROOM

ROSE
I'm scared.

DET. SPINELLI
Don't worry, honey. I'm going to
get you out of there. Just hang
tight. Are you hurt?

ROSE
I don't know. No. I'm just...

KILLER
Alive and well, detective. For now.

DET. SPINELLI
What's this "for now" business? Why
is she in there?

Carruthers steps to Spinelli.

DET. CARRUTHERS
How do you want us to handle this
thing, Jimmy? Should we call a
trained negotiator?

DET. SPINELLI
No.

DET. CARRUTHERS
This is personal. We can't let your
emotions flood the situation.

KILLER
Kimberly Smith.

Spinelli wears a look of dread after hearing that name.

DET. SPINELLI
I -- what does she have to do with
this?

KILLER
She has everything to do with this.

DET. SPINELLI
Alright spit it out.

Spinelli is growing impatient and agitated.

KILLER
I know all about your extramarital
affairs with Miss Kimberly Smith.
(MORE)

KILLER (CONT'D)

Normally these things would be no business of mine, but in this case their lies a dilemma. I was in love with her. She didn't know it yet, but she could have. You ruined everything.

DET. SPINELLI

Ruined what?

KILLER

The night at the bar a year ago. She was drunk. I was going to make my move then you stepped in. Years of building up confidence to approach this girl only to be met with cock blockery.

DET. SPINELLI

That's irritating.

KILLER

I concur.

DET. SPINELLI

I mean the fact that we've crossed paths.

KILLER

I followed you for months to motels. Once to her house. You could call it voyeurism. Heated sex. I know about the panties. I never keep trophies. That's where you and I differ.

Rose looks hurt after hearing these explicit facts.

DET. SPINELLI

I'd appreciate it if you spared the details with my wife present.

KILLER

You broke it off a month ago. I still believed I had a chance. Denial perhaps. Then another road block places it's self in front of me. She moves's out of the country. Now my chances are at an end. Your wife...

DET. SPINELLI

The point emerges.

KILLER
Your wife, detective, will
represent the Exodus twenty-one
twenty four scripture in the bible.

For the first time Spinelli shows despair.

DET. SPINELLI
Eye for eye, tooth for tooth . . .

KILLER
Now you understand.

Spinelli sighs.

DET. SPINELLI
Yeah... I do. You don't have to do
this. Take me instead.

DET. CARRUTHERS
We've got to do something, Jimmy.

KILLER
This outcome is inevitable.

DET. SPINELLI
Now wait a minute.

KILLER
Sorry, detective.

Spinelli is getting restless. He turns to Carruthers. Neither know what to do. After a moment of contemplation Spinelli removes his trench coat and suit jacket. He then removes his gun holster and loosens his tie.

DET. CARRUTHERS
What are you doing?

DET. SPINELLI
I'm going in.

Carruthers looks at his partner like he's sniffing coke.

DET. CARRUTHERS
What? He'll kill you before you
even make it inside.

DET. SPINELLI
That's my wife in there. I'm going
in.

DET. CARRUTHERS
Let's think about this.

DET. SPINELLI

I don't have time to think. You heard what he said. He's going to kill her.

(to killer)

Why don't you let me come in. You seem to know all about the feeling of loss. Imagine you knew beforehand that Kimberley was on her way out of the country. You have the time to strike up a chance to be with her before she goes. I know you'd take that chance.

Rose can't stop crying. She's overwhelmed with fear and love.

DET. SPINELLI

You know you'll be put away for this. How about doing one thing nice before your capture. Let me be with her one last time. I won't try anything. It'll be me alone -- unarmed. Even if I were to try anything she's dead anyway, right? What would it hurt?

There is a long silence.

KILLER

Come on in. Hands held high. I'm watching you.

TIME CUT:

EXT. STREET, WAVERLY LANE - NIGHT

Carruthers is just getting off of the phone.

DET. CARRUTHERS

(into phone)

Sure thing, Sir.

He hangs up then meets back up with Spinelli who is getting suited up in a bulletproof vest.

DET. CARRUTHERS

The captain doesn't necessarily approve of you going in alone, but he can't stop you. I'm not going to ask you what your plan is...

DET. SPINELLI

Good because I don't have one.

DET. CARRUTHERS (CONT'D)
... but whatever you come up with
it's important you handle this with
smarts. I don't want this thing
going sour. I don't want you coming
back out of that house in a body
bag.

DET. SPINELLI
I won't -- the same goes for Rose.
(to killer)
I'm coming in.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is dark. The front door slowly creaks open ajar. Spinelli peaks inside before shoving the door all the way open. His hands are held high. He looks around the well kept house. Though the dark makes things obscure, it's still easy to tell that whoever lives here is pretty wealthy. Nothing but nice things.

HALLWAY

A flickering light shines from beneath a door at the end of the hall. As he moves closer the sound of comedy is heard coming from a TV accompanied by laughter. Now at the door, he goes to knock then stops.

DET. SPINELLI
I'm outside. My hands are up.

INT. HOUSE, BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Spinelli slowly opens the door with his hands up. The first thing he sees is Rose sitting between the KILLER'S legs, steadily panting behind a blade to her neck held by him.

The second thing he sees is stand-up comedy playing on an old, small television set, but only because the killer seems to have his full attention on it as he continues to laugh at the jokes. The killer doesn't look deranged at all. He's a clean shaven man dressed like a working professional. Blood stains ruin his attire.

The third thing Spinelli sees is a surveillance monitor with a screen split into four squares displaying the perimeter of the house. He notices the police action on the square displaying the front of the house and the body of Andrews on the square displaying the backyard.

The killer laughs at a joke on TV.

KILLER

You know, detective, there's nothing like a little comedy after a hard day's work.

DET. SPINELLI

It's a little contrasting, no?

Propped up against the TV is a sniper rifle.

DET. SPINELLI

So now you're a sniper all of the sudden?

The killer doesn't answer. In fact he still hasn't even looked at Spinelli yet. He just laughs at the comedian on TV. Spinelli shifts his focus back on his wife.

DET. SPINELLI

How are you doing, love?

ROSE

I -- I -- he...

Rose starts crying.

DET. SPINELLI

It's going to be okay.

Spinelli takes a step inside the room.

KILLER

That's far enough.

Spinelli looks to the side of the room to see the bloody corpse of a man sitting against the wall -- he's holding his own head in his lap.

DET. SPINELLI

Jesus Christ. I take it that's the owner of this house.

KILLER

I wanted to use his house. He resisted. I had to kill.

DET. SPINELLI

That's overkill.

ROSE

He made me watch. Oh it was horrible.

DET. SPINELLI
 Try not to think about it, Hon'.
 Don't even look at it.
 (to killer)
 I can't think of anything more
 cruel.

The killer looks at Spinelli for the first time.

KILLER
 You have three minutes.

DET. SPINELLI
 Where to start?
 (looks at Rose)
 Rose, honey, it seems we're both
 put in a tough spot.

Spinelli is at a loss for words. He looks around at random things in proximity. Things in reach that are useful.

Rose starts to cry.

DET. SPINELLI
 I uh...
 (sighs)
 I don't know what to say. I...

Something catches Spinelli's eye. He focuses on;

THE BLADE

It's single-edged. The killer is oblivious of the fact that the blunt edge is against Rose's neck. The worst that could happen to her neck is a streak mark. This makes Spinelli feel better.

DET. SPINELLI
 (to killer)
 Mind if I smoke a cigar?

KILLER
 Smoking kills. Killing is bad.

Spinelli looks at this murderous hypocrite like he's a retard for saying that.

The killer keeps a close eye on Spinelli's movements. Spinelli brings one hand down to pull a cigar and lighter out of his shirt pocket. He moves slowly. After lighting it he puts his hand back up with the other.

He manipulates the killer's screw up to save his wife.

DET. SPINELLI

(to Rose)

I know I hurt you. Besides the fear of your safety the only feeling I have at the moment is regret. I love no one but you. I'm sorry.

Rose seems to take this in.

DET. SPINELLI

(to killer)

And as for you I'm sorry as well. It seems your whole "eye for eye" plan has made an unexpected turn. Me and my wife are leaving this house exactly the same way we came in -- alive. I guess you're not to bright after all.

Spinelli starts to walk towards the killer.

KILLER

Get back. I'm warning you.

The killer slides the knife across Rose's neck. She screams for nothing. The knife never leaves a mark.

KILLER

What? No.

Spinelli brings a hand down and flicks the hot cigar cherry into the killer's eyes. The killer reacts. As soon as he opens his eyes Spinelli slams the killer in the nose forcing him to fall back. Rose runs to a corner of the room and cowers.

Spinelli releases all of the rage he had built up all over the killer's face. He throws curse words at him as he does so. If that's not enough, Spinelli pulls out the cigar gripped in his teeth.

DET. SPINELLI

Here, have a smoke with me you motherless fuck.

He smashes the lit end into the killer's forehead. The killer screams like the bitch he is as he tries to stop Spinelli from burning him, but Spinelli's strength is too great. Spinelli then stuffs the cigar into the killer's mouth.

Rose watches in horror. She's never seen this side of her husband before.

The killer knees Spinelli in the groin prompting him to fall to his knees in pain. The killer spits out the ball of cigar then grabs the knife. Spinelli charges after the killer who does the same in return. Spinelli meets the killer with a blow to his stomach, the killer with the knife through Spinelli's hand. Spinelli hollers.

ROSE

James.

Spinelli is out of it. He tries to pull the knife out of his hand. While doing so, the killer stares sinisterly at Rose. Rose hops up and runs out of the door. The killer goes after her. Spinelli tries to trip him but misses.

HALLWAY

Rose runs with the killer close on her heels.

BACK TO SPINELLI

Spinelli gets to his feet. He staggers after them.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Rose runs out of the house. Every gun is trained on her. She screeches to a halt.

ROSE

Don't shoot.

The killer hops out of the house and onto Rose. They fall to the ground. After a struggle Rose manages to kick him off of her. He moves in on her again. A gunshot to the head stops him in his tracks. He's dead before he even hits the ground.

Carruthers holds the smoking gun.

Spinelli finally stumbles out of the house. He's out of breath and in pain. He glances at the dead killer then goes to console his wife. They hug tightly as she cries.

Carruthers approaches them.

DET. CARRUTHERS

How is she?

DET. SPINELLI

Physically okay. Mentally...?

DET. CARRUTHERS
We'll get her to the hospital,
Jimmy. Mental help too. The best.

Carruthers notices Spinelli's hand.

DET. CARRUTHERS
Jesus.

DET. SPINELLI
I'm fine. There's a body in there.
Take care of that. The same for
Andrews out back.

DET. CARRUTHERS
Where are you going?

DET. SPINELLI
I'm staying with my wife.

Rose rests her head on Spinelli.

DET. SPINELLI
Let's get out of here.

They walk towards the car.

Three OFFICERS stand over the dead killer who lies on his
back.

OFFICER #2
So that's what he looks like.
(to officer #3)
What's that you got there?

OFFICER #3
(holding an ID)
It's the killer's ID, my friend. A
Mason Hill. Age thirty six. Looks
like an office employee or
something.

OFFICER #4
Just a regular Joe, huh? Strategy
Game Killer my ass.

They all shake their heads and walk away continuing their
commentary of the killer.

OFFICER #2
I tell you, that Spinelli is one
bad motherfucker...

The body just lies there with a bullet to the head. Red and blue lights flashing over it. If not eerie enough, it almost looks as if the dead killer is smiling.

FADE OUT.