

Meet Cute, Meet Deadly

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A DARK FIGURE walks through a sea of SUV's and sedans.

The sounds of a couple having sex are faintly heard.

The Dark Figure turns to see:

ERIKA SMITH (mid 20s, actor) and JERICHO HARDCASTLE (early 20s, actor) having passionate sex in the front seat of an older, well-maintained Dodge Charger.

She's an All-American blonde.

He's tall, dark and impossibly handsome.

Her hand grabs the car seat tightly.

Jericho finishes loudly.

She looks at him and smiles.

ERIKA

I'm usually not this kind of girl.

JERICHO

That's OK, I'm usually not that kind of girl either.

Erika laughs and kisses him.

He looks at her deeply.

JERICHO (CONT'D)

I wish you could see how beautiful you look in this light.

She smiles.

JERICHO (CONT'D)

Can I give you a ride home?

ERIKA

I'm two blocks from here.

They kiss again.

JERICHO

Text me when you get home, OK?

Erika nods.

EXT. ALLEY - LATER

Rats mill around a dumpster

Erika walks through.

Her phone buzzes with a text from Jericho.

"Tonight was amazing. I'd love to see you again."

She smiles.

Behind her is the Dark Figure.

A large Bowie knife with a cleft point is in their hand.

Erika turns to see the knife plunging into her.

The Dark Figure stabs her to death in brutal fashion.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - LATER

A CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHER takes a photo of Erika's corpse.

She's been stabbed to death, a pool of blood around her.

POLICE OFFICERS stand behind yellow police tape.

Homicide Detective ALAN JAMES (mid 50s) and his rookie partner, DENISE SLATER (mid 30s) look around the scene.

He's tall, thin with a receding hair line.

She's short, curvy with thick glasses.

ALAN

Do you still have that friend
working for the Feds?

DENISE

We were in the same sorority in
college. Why?

ALAN

My training officer said that once
is chance, twice is coincidence and
the third time marks a pattern.

(points to Erika's body)

Welcome to number three.

Denise observes the body.

EXT. SMALL PRODUCTION BUILDING - DAY (TWO WEEKS LATER)

Jericho walks to the front door.

He stops several feet from it.

Jericho looks around and takes a deep breath.

JERICHO

You got this.

His eyes turn to his phone.

He pulls up his messages.

Jericho has message threads from his parents and friends.

A message from his agent, Logan, says "Don't fuck this up."

His eyes focus on a thread from Erika.

It's been two weeks since she texted him back.

He deletes her.

His hand places his phone back into his pocket.

Jericho walks inside.

INT. SMALL PRODUCTION HALLWAY - DAY

A sign says "Audition: Big Moon Entertainment."

Jericho walks into a holding area, several pages of a script in his hands.

A dozen impossibly handsome ACTORS mill about, staring at pages of a script.

Jericho sits down, looks over the script.

A conference room door opens up.

A HANDSOME ACTOR walks out, dejected.

A Producer's ASSISTANT walks out.

ASSISTANT

Marty Edwards?

An ACTOR stands up and walks inside.

INT. SMALL PRODUCTION HALLWAY - LATER

A PRODUCER and his Assistant sit around.

PRODUCER
Who's next?

The Assistant hands him Jericho's head shot.

The Producer looks at it.

PRODUCER (CONT'D)
(puts head shot down)
It's like these guys come out of a
factory or something.

ASSISTANT
If you're going to make up a name,
you can't do much better than that.

PRODUCER
It's better than the last three.

ASSISTANT
Wanna bet?

The Assistant places twenty bucks on the table.

The Producer places twenty bucks on top of it.

The Assistant walks over and opens the door.

Jericho walks in.

PRODUCER
Is Jericho Hardcastle your real
name or your stage name?

Jericho pauses for a moment.

He takes his wallet out.

His fingers quickly take out his driver's license.

Jericho shows it to him.

The Producer laughs and grabs the cash.

Jericho takes a deep breath.

PRODUCER (CONT'D)
Whenever you're ready.

Jericho nods.

INT. DODGE CHARGER - LATER

West Hollywood is visible through the windshield.

Jericho is behind the wheel, AirPods in his ears.

His phone is on the passenger seat, GPS up.

A sealed Door Dash delivery is in the backseat.

Jericho's phone rings.

"Logan" pops up on his caller ID.

He answers.

LOGAN (V.O.)
They fucking loved you!

INT. LOGAN'S OFFICE - DAY

A handful of diplomas and legal awards litter a wall.

In the middle of all of it is a Doctor of Jurisprudence from a prestigious law school.

Under them is a nice leather couch.

Several pieces of Sports Memorabilia from professional sports teams from Florida are all over.

Jericho's Agent LOGAN SMITH (mid 40s) sits behind a massive executive desk.

He's short, bald and in a Tom Ford suit.

JERICHO (V.O.)
They did?

INTERCUT BETWEEN LOGAN AND JERICHO

LOGAN
Even better news: they want you to come back and read for the mother fucking lead villain!

JERICHO
That's the sort of role you take after you're a star, you know?

LOGAN
Do you know why Brad Pitt doesn't do any romantic comedies?

JERICHO
(from memory)
Because no one is going to root for
Brad Pitt to get pussy.

LOGAN
Exactly!

Jericho looks into the rearview mirror.

His eyes focus on the Door Dash meal.

JERICHO
Send me what I need, OK?

LOGAN
This will change your career, I
swear to fucking God.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

A small two bedroom with movie posters on the wall and cheap furniture all over.

A large, empty white board is in a corner.

Screenwriter NIKKI PATEL (mid 20s) types on a laptop covered in Chicago sports stickers.

She's short, rail thin with a movie themed t-shirt on.

Next to her is a laptop covered in anime stickers.

BEN (O.S.)
The line works.

NIKKI
No it doesn't.

Jericho's roommate, screenwriter BEN SANCHEZ (early 20s), walks in with a pair of water bottles.

He's short with an epic beard and a t-shirt with an older anime franchise on it.

BEN
If you say it out loud--

NIKKI
It sounds even worse.

He sits down and hands her a bottle.

BEN
It killed on Reddit.

NIKKI
That's Reddit.

Jericho opens the front door and walks in.

BEN
There's some talented people there.

JERICHO
You're wrong.

Nikki turns to see Jericho.

There's an instant, chemical attraction.

NIKKI
See?

BEN
(to Jericho)
You don't even know what we're
talking about.

JERICHO
Usually you're wrong.

Ben hands Jericho his laptop.

A script is on there.

BEN
You see the fifth line?

Jericho cringes.

BEN (CONT'D)
It works!

JERICHO
(reading)
It smells like rotten beef in here.
Who's been getting it raw?

Nikki cringes.

Jericho hands the laptop back to Ben.

BEN
I don't see the issue.

JERICHO
Is this a sex comedy or--

BEN
It's a hard drama!

Ben's phone buzzes.

He takes it out, looks at it.

JERICHO
Someone important?

BEN
The Door Dash guy refuses to drop
off my order in front of the door.

Ben leaves.

NIKKI
So you must be the Ken doll.

JERICHO
He thinks that's clever.

NIKKI
I'm Nikki.

JERICHO
Jericho.

NIKKI
It's Nicholl season and he thinks
that line works.

Jericho's phone buzzes with a text message from Cinnamon.

He looks at it.

"What are you doing and why isn't it me?"

JERICHO
It's better than some of the shit
I've had to say... but not much.

He texts her: "I'm coming over."

NIKKI
What's been the worst line?

JERICHO

I don't remember the line but it was in a short in college that was a riff on "Waiting for Gadot" called "Waiting for Gal Gadot."

NIKKI

Did Ben write it?

JERICHO

Oh yeah... I got to dress up like Superman and everything.

NIKKI

He hasn't shown me that one.

JERICHO

Ask him about it.

Her phone buzzes.

She takes it out, looks at it.

NIKKI

Are you a fan of the French New Wave? They're doing a revival of "Le Samourai" and my roommate is bailing on me.

JERICHO

Sure... it could be fun.

She tosses him her phone.

He types his number into it and hands it back.

Ben walks in with a large cardboard box.

JERICHO (CONT'D)

(to Nikki)

It was nice meeting you.

Jericho exits.

NIKKI

You heard how it sounded from a real actor, too.

BEN

I just can't.

EXT. SMALL RANCH HOME - DAY

Jericho's Charger parks in front of it.

A luxury SUV is in the driveway.

The license plate reads "CNMN469."

Jericho exits, walks up to the front door.

He knocks.

The door opens, revealing exotic dancer GRETA "CINNAMON" TIPPET (mid 20s).

She's a tall, busty red-head wearing nothing but a bathrobe.

He smiles.

JERICHO
It's been a minute.

CINNAMON
Work.

She grabs him and pulls him close.

They make out passionately.

She pulls him inside.

INT. CINNAMON'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Posh, immaculate.

Cinnamon and Jericho make out passionately.

Clothes come off rapidly as they sprint to the bedroom.

INT. CINNAMON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Everything is matched, pink.

A California King bed with silk sheets dominates the room.

Cinnamon grabs Jericho and throws him onto it.

They have wild, crazy, passionate sex that would make a porn star jealous.

EXT. SMALL RANCH HOME - DAY

The screams of passionate sex pierce the air.

INT. CINNAMON'S BEDROOM - LATER

Six torn condom wrappers are on the floor.

Cinnamon and Jericho are in bed, curled up under the covers.

Her phone buzzes.

She groans.

JERICHO

I'm assuming that's my cue.

CINNAMON

Work calls.

They lightly kiss.

EXT. SMALL RANCH HOME - DAY

Cinnamon and Jericho leave.

She grabs him and they passionately make out for a long moment.

CINNAMON

Call me.

JERICHO

Absolutely.

Jericho walks to his Charger.

Cinnamon walks to her SUV.

The Dark Figure watches them both.

The Charger roars to life and pulls away.

The SUV starts.

Cinnamon adjust her makeup.

The Dark Figure focuses their attention on her.

Cinnamon doesn't notice.

EXT. STRIP CLUB PARKING LOT - NIGHT

An ocean of cars.

Cinnamon walks to her SUV.

She's covered in sweat, her hair and makeup messy.

Her phone buzzes with a text from Jericho.

She takes it out, looks at it.

"I think I pulled something today."

Cinnamon smiles.

Her eyes look at the clock.

Its 4am.

She takes out a cigarette and lights it up.

Cinnamon takes a drag and goes to blows the smoke out.

She can't breathe.

The cigarette hits the ground.

Her hands touch her throat, feeling a large slash across it.

Blood pours out of the wound.

Cinnamon falls to the ground, clutching her throat.

The Dark Figure stabs her to death with a Bowie knife.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ben types on his laptop.

Jericho walks in from his bedroom, freshly showered.

JERICHO

You got twenty bucks I can borrow?

BEN

Depends.

JERICHO

I need some gas for the Charger.

BEN

Just don't check into wherever you are going on Facebook, OK?

JERICHO

That's for my parents.

BEN

They would care about something like that, huh?

JERICHO

I don't want them thinking I am a starving artist, you know?

BEN

You know that's public, right?

JERICHO

I'll stop when the paparazzi show up wherever I go.

BEN

Why then?

JERICHO

Because that's when I know I'll have made it.

Ben reaches into his pocket and hands him some cash.

JERICHO (CONT'D)

My dick thanks you in advance.

BEN

She's my friend.

JERICHO

I'll go back to her place, OK?

BEN

What about Zoe?

JERICHO

That's long over.

BEN

I thought--

JERICHO

I was friends with her on Facebook and they went official. I didn't even know, so I stopped returning her texts.

BEN
You're not mad about it?

JERICHO
I was ok with it when it was just a
sex thing but I refuse to be the
other man, you know?

Jericho looks at his phone.

No new messages.

BEN
You two seemed happy.

JERICHO
She ran hot and cold too much.

Ben doesn't know what he's talking about.

JERICHO (CONT'D)
One day it's--
(mock Zoe voice)
--I want to have your abortion.

Ben noticeably cringes.

JERICHO (CONT'D)
And then the next it's "I never
want to see you again" before I
pray that my tires aren't slashed.

BEN
At least you never have to worry
about that again, right?

JERICHO
I've had two chemistry reads that
went nowhere because of her.

BEN
Seriously?

JERICHO
I told my agent about it but--

BEN
Maybe the third time is the charm.

JERICHO
Hopefully.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Jericho and Nikki walk out.

JERICHO
I wish I could speak French.

She grabs his arm.

NIKKI
It's such a beautiful language.

JERICHO
Having to read the subtitles makes
me feel like I'm missing something.

NIKKI
Watch enough films and you'll get
used to it.

They stop.

He grabs her hands.

NIKKI (CONT'D)
I watched "Waiting for Gal Gadot"
on YouTube this morning.

JERICHO
Oh god.

NIKKI
It's... charming.

JERICHO
That's a nice way of saying it
sucked, don't lie.

They lightly kiss.

NIKKI
Text me.

JERICHO
Drive safe.

She walks away, towards a parking garage in the distance.

He walks towards the Charger in a parking lot.

The Dark Figure follows her.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Nikki walks up to an elevator.

She presses the up button several times.

Her hand opens her purse, taking out her phone.

The phone falls out of her hand, hitting the ground.

She looks down.

The business end of a knife is visible through her stomach.

Nikki falls to the ground, blood pouring out of her.

The Dark Figure viciously stabs her to death.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

An older slow cooker filled with spices and vegetables is on the counter.

Ben slowly cuts up chicken and drops them into it.

Jericho walks in, looks at the food.

JERICHO

It's a little late to start dinner.

BEN

You know how you make this taste as good as it can?

Jericho doesn't know.

BEN (CONT'D)

You let it sit overnight.

Ben stops cutting the chicken, turns to Jericho.

JERICHO

She's perfect.

Ben smiles.

BEN

I'm happy for you.

JERICHO

You ever met someone and you just know you have to see them again?

BEN

Nikki owes me notes for a pilot.

JERICHO

And?

BEN

Your track record.

JERICHO

Wait a second... I thought you were a feature guy.

BEN

I need to write something to get me noticed, and soon.

JERICHO

The guy who wrote the Muppets Great Gatsby got signed, right?

BEN

I don't want to be the latest asshole to write Batman and Robin Go to White Castle.

JERICHO

Maybe not that.

BEN

Then what?

JERICHO

You could do a cool version of Romeo & Juliet. It's public domain, so you can do pretty much what you want with it.

Ben thinks for a moment. It hits him.

BEN

I've got it.

(movie announcer voice)

Johnny Sins and Mandy Muse star in an updated version of Shakespeare's classic for the Pornhub generation.

JERICHO

Oh god.

BEN

Romeo and Juliet get bazork-a-zorked on Planet Alpha-Zed!

JERICHO

No.

BEN

(female British voice)
Romeo, oh Romeo, where art thou my
fair Romeo?

(male British voice)
Jerking off in the bush, m'lady!

Jericho shakes his head, leaves.

Ben cuts the chicken.

INT. AUDITION ROOM - DAY (TWO WEEKS LATER)

The Producer and his Assistant watch Jericho and ZOE WALSH
(early 20s) act out a scene for an audition.

She's short with dark hair... and Jericho's ex-girlfriend.

You could cut the tension between them with a knife.

JERICHO

How's life out in the--

ZOE

I had a great hike this afternoon.

Beat.

JERICHO

Why didn't--

ZOE

I was thinking about something and
needed time to work it out in my
head, you know?

Jericho glares at her, visibly annoyed.

He mouths "slow down" to her.

JERICHO

You want to talk--

ZOE

Not now. When I'm ready.

Jericho takes a deep breath.

JERICHO

This place is so empty I could hear
a mouse fart.

PRODUCER

And... scene.

Jericho and Zoe glare at each other.

PRODUCER (CONT'D)

Thank you guys.

Zoe storms out of the room.

JERICHO

Is there anything I could've done
better?

EXT. PRODUCTION BUILDING - LATER

Zoe stares at the door, waiting.

Jericho exits.

Their eyes connect.

JERICHO

Thanks for stepping all over me,
again.

ZOE

My agent shoved me off onto the new
guy because of you.

JERICHO

I'm trying here but you--

ZOE

Slow down?

JERICHO

You cut off my first two lines!

ZOE

I need this gig to get into SAG.

JERICHO

You're not the only one.

ZOE

It's bad enough you ghosted me but
now you're trying to fuck up my
career, too.

JERICHO
What about Taylor?

ZOE
Don't change the subject.

JERICHO
Why didn't you tell me?

ZOE
Why does it matter?

JERICHO
Because I'm not that kind of guy.

ZOE
Don't act like you didn't cheat on me when we were together.

JERICHO
That's because I didn't.

Jericho's Charger pulls up, a classic rock song blaring out of it.

Ben's behind the wheel.

JERICHO (CONT'D)
Perfect timing.

Jericho gets inside.

Ben meekly waves hi to Zoe and then guns the engine.

Zoe watches the Charger leave the parking lot.

INT. DODGE CHARGER - DAY (DRIVING)

Zoe disappears behind them.

Jericho turns the music off.

BEN
Come on.

JERICHO
Can you listen to something from this century, maybe?

BEN
I don't vibe to that sad boy shit you listen to.

JERICHO
Girls like it.

BEN
If you said you were into Sri
Lankan Death Metal they'd be all
into Genocide Shrines.

Jericho looks at him oddly.

BEN (CONT'D)
That's an actual band, by the way.

JERICHO
All you need to do is shoot your
shot, Ben, and you'll meet someone.

BEN
As soon as you walk into the room
it's like I become Mugsy Bogues and
you're Dikembo Mutombo.

Jericho doesn't know who they are.

JERICHO
Name one time that happened.

BEN
Nikki from my writer's group.

JERICHO
You didn't shoot your shot.

BEN
I never got notes from her, either.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING PARKING LOT - DAY

Older beater cars everywhere.

The Charger pulls in and parks.

Jericho and Ben exit.

JERICHO
She ghosted me too.

BEN
What did you say?

JERICHO
We had fun!

Ben doesn't believe him.

JERICHO (CONT'D)
We had fun and I thought I was
going to see her again.

BEN
Are you sure?

Jericho takes his phone out.

His fingers quickly pull up his text messages.

He pulls up a conversation with Nikki.

The last message was from Jericho several days ago.

JERICHO
She ghosted me.
(beat)
So did Cinnamon.

BEN
Did her parents intentionally hate
her or--

JERICHO
It was her stage name, OK?

BEN
Maybe it's something you're texting
them that's weirding them out.

Ben's eyes look it over.

BEN (CONT'D)
You text that and she smiles. I say
something similar and it's weird.

JERICHO
Must be in the delivery.

Ben thinks for a moment and laughs.

JERICHO (CONT'D)
This isn't funny.

BEN
Everyone gets ghosted, it's normal.

JERICHO
It is?

Ben laughs even harder.

BEN
I should've recorded that.

JERICHO
It's not funny.

BEN
It kind of is.

Jericho's phone buzzes with an email from Logan.

He pulls it up.

"One week and you'll be reading with someone. Stop by the office later and we'll talk."

BEN (CONT'D)
Maybe she met someone else.

JERICHO
I'd hope she'd say something.

Jericho walks over, opens the door.

Alan and Denise are on the other side, badges up.

ALAN
Jericho Hardcastle?

JERICHO
Can I help you?

DENISE
I'm detective Slater and this is
detective James.

ALAN
Can we get a moment of your time?

Jericho motions for them to come in.

Ben looks them over. He closes his laptop.

BEN
I'm going to grab a bite.

Ben leaves.

JERICHO
How can I help you?

DENISE
We're very curious about how you
know Nikki Patel.

JERICHO

We saw a French film a couple of days ago.

ALAN

You were the last person in her phone that she called or texted.

JERICHO

Were?

Alan shows him photos of her dead body.

Jericho is taken aback.

JERICHO (CONT'D)

She was alive the last time I saw her, I swear to God.

ALAN

Can you be more specific?

JERICHO

Mickey's and then the Beverly.

Denise writes it down.

ALAN

Do you know anyone who'd want to hurt her?

JERICHO

I barely knew her.

ALAN

Did she say anything about someone or did you see anyone follow her?

JERICHO

Nothing, I swear.

Alan hands Jericho his card.

ALAN

If you remember anything else, feel free to let us know.

Alan and Denise leave.

Jericho sits down.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Alan and Denise exit, walking towards an unmarked police car.

ALAN
He's the last one to see her.

Beat.

DENISE
This is the part where we see if
there's a connection, right?

He smiles.

ALAN
Now you're learning.

Alan's phone buzzes with a text. He looks at it.

DENISE
Another one?

ALAN
Detective Stanhope has something we
should take a look at.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - LATER

Jericho watches TV.

Ben walks in with fast food.

BEN
Everything OK?

JERICHO
She's dead.

BEN
Who's dead?

JERICHO
Nikki.

BEN
No way.

JERICHO
Grab your laptop.

Ben pulls up an internet search engine.

JERICHO (CONT'D)
They showed me the photos.

Ben types in "Nikki Patel."

Articles about Nikki's murder come up.

Ben's eyes look at the screen.

BEN
Oh my god.

JERICHO
What if that happened to the rest
of them?

BEN
Seriously?

JERICHO
Someone could've killed them--

BEN
Or they just found boyfriends, or
you were too pretty or there's like
a hundred excuses.

Jericho thinks for a long moment.

JERICHO
OK, it is nuts.

BEN
Twenty bucks says you'll see some
handsome dude with his arm around
every woman you went out with and
it'll just be fine.

JERICHO
You're on.
(beat)
Ronda Jenkins. I met her when I
checked out that MMA gym.

Ben types in "Ronda Jenkins, MMA."

A news article comes up.

"MMA fighter found stabbed to death."

BEN
What the fuck?

Jericho walks over and looks at the screen.

Ronda was brutally murdered outside an MMA gym.
The knife wounds look the same as Nikki's.

JERICHO
Holy shit dude.

BEN
So maybe she didn't find a
boyfriend. They can't--

JERICHO
Stephanie Thomas. She was a singer.

Ben types in "Stephanie Thomas, singer."
News articles about her death come up.
Jericho stares at it for a long moment.

JERICHO (CONT'D)
Erika Smith.

Ben types in "Erika Smith, murder."
Nothing.

JERICHO (CONT'D)
I need to warn her.

BEN
What if it's just a coincidence and
she's still alive?

JERICHO
Then she'll have to tell me why she
blew me off.

BEN
Do you know where you're going?

JERICHO
She lived in a row home right by
the bar we went to.

BEN
That's not an address.

Jericho takes his phone out and pulls up a social media app.
He pulls up Erika's profile. Her address is listed in it.
Jericho shows it to Ben.

JERICHO

But that is.

Jericho sprints outside.

EXT. STRIP CLUB PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A MEDICAL EXAMINER takes photos of Cinnamon's body.

Homicide Detective BLAKE STANHOPE (mid 30s) observes.

He's short, overweight with a well-trimmed beard.

Alan and Denise walk up to him.

Alan and Blake embrace.

Blake looks Denise over.

BLAKE

You go through partners like no one
else, I swear.

ALAN

(to Denise)

He was you a couple of years ago.

She nods and looks at the body. Her eyes focus on the stab wounds.

Alan's eyes follow hers.

DENISE

Those look like--

ALAN

Yep.

She turns to him.

DENISE

We can compare the stab wounds to
the others back at the station.

Alan takes his phone out and pulls up one of Nikki's crime scene photos.

He enlarges the stab wound and compares it to Cinnamon's.

ALAN

Or do it here, albeit less
scientifically.

DENISE
I didn't even think of that.

Blake chuckles.

BLAKE
And you wondered why I called you.

ALAN
I think it's our guy.

DENISE
Are you sure?

Alan looks around.

He points to the Strip Club's roof.

No cameras are there.

ALAN
He picked the right spot.

EXT. ROW HOME - DAY

Jericho sprints up to the door.

His hand rapidly knocks on it.

It opens, revealing Erika's roommate ANNIE (mid 20s).

Her eyes are puffy.

ANNIE
Can I help you?

JERICHO
Is Erika in?

ANNIE
Erika's dead.

It hits him like a train.

JERICHO
What?

ANNIE
The police were just here and--

JERICHO
I'm sorry.

ANNIE

They wouldn't tell me anything
about what happened.

JERICHO

I hadn't heard from her in a couple
of days and--

ANNIE

It's ok.

INT. BULLPEN - DAY

A large whiteboard mounted onto the wall lists every homicide
for the last 12 months.

Alan writes Nikki's name on it in red.

Denise places crime scene photos of Nikki on a white board.

A white board near Alan is marked "High Society Killer."

Crime scene photos of six women, including Nikki and Erika,
are taped to it.

A case file is on Alan's desk.

ALAN

Did the rookies get anything out of
the dumpster?

DENISE

Nothing.

He turns, walks over to them.

ALAN

You call the medical examiner?

She thinks.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Come on rookie, this has to be
second nature.

Denise looks around.

DENISE

I have it somewhere around here.

Alan spots the case file and opens it up.

His hands go through the paperwork, finding a medical examiner's report.

ALAN

Did your friend ever call back?

DENISE

I got a list of things that help them determine if it's a serial.

She looks up at Alan.

He motions for her to continue.

DENISE (CONT'D)

It's saved on my phone but the one I remember is that they always visit the crime scene.

ALAN

Why?

DENISE

You know how losers always go back and visit their high school, because they were cool then?

Alan nods.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Apparently it was something similar, like they are reliving the crime all over again.

Alan grabs his keys.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Do you think he's dumb enough to show up?

ALAN

Only if we're lucky.

DENISE

What do we do if he does?

ALAN

We just follow and observe. Maybe he leads us somewhere that we didn't know about.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - LATER

Ben types on his laptop.

Jericho walks in.

BEN

So you met her boyfriend or--

JERICHO

They found her body.

Ben stops in his tracks.

BEN

Seriously?

JERICHO

Her roommate said the cops just told her and--

Ben pulls up an internet browser.

He types in "Erika Smith, murder."

A news story about her death was published ten minutes ago.

BEN

Holy shit.

JERICHO

If it was just one, you know?

BEN

What are you going to do?

JERICHO

I'm going to retrace my steps with Nikki and see--

BEN

That's beyond stupid.

JERICHO

Why?

BEN

What are you going to see that the cops didn't?

JERICHO

I don't know... I have to do more than just wait for someone else to turn up.

BEN
This is a bad idea.

JERICHO
Do you have any good ones?

Ben thinks for a moment, then shrugs.

BEN
Fresh out.

Jericho leaves.

EXT. SPORTS BAR - DAY

An unmarked police car parks.

Alan and Denise exit.

Alan looks inside.

Jericho is at the bar, looking around.

ALAN
Guess who.

Denise looks, spotting Jericho.

DENISE
He could be a regular.

ALAN
Or maybe he's the killer.

DENISE
So we watch him, right?

Alan nods.

The two watch Jericho closely.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Jericho looks around.

Alan and Denise are in the distance, observing him.

Jericho spots the parking garage.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE ENTRANCE - LATER

Jericho looks around.

He spots a chalk outline of Nikki's body.

Jericho takes a deep breath.

His eyes look all over.

A video camera mounted on the wall catches his attention.

Jericho walks over, examining it.

It's a non-functioning dummy camera.

He sighs, leaves.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARKING GARAGE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Alan and Denise look around.

ALAN

He didn't do anything but look.

DENISE

Maybe they had a connection.

ALAN

Or he was reliving it.

DENISE

What kind of sicko does that?

ALAN

Do this long enough and it never surprises you.

She thinks for a moment.

DENISE

Let's see if there's a common connection between this one and the rest. If it's him, you know?

Alan smiles.

ALAN

Keep this up and I'll stop calling you rookie.

INT. RECEPTION - DAY (SEVERAL DAYS LATER)

Movie posters all over.

Logan's RECEPTIONIST is behind her desk.

Twitch streamer VALERIE JANE (mid 20s), Logan behind her.

She's an All-American brunette.

Jericho and Valerie's eyes connect.

She recognizes him, smiles.

VALERIE
Random hot guy.

JERICHO
Pardon?

VALERIE
My stream saw you at Henry's last
Friday and made you into a meme.

LOGAN
Where are my manners?
(points to Jericho)
Valerie Jane, meet the next great
leading man Jericho Hardcastle.
(points to Valerie)
Jericho, this is Twitch's number
one ranked streamer Valerie Jane.

VALERIE
I'm number three right now.

LOGAN
But number one in our hearts.

VALERIE
(to Jericho)
It was nice meeting you.

JERICHO
Likewise.

Valerie leaves.

Logan watches as she leaves.

Jericho sighs.

Both men walk into Logan's office.

INT. LOGAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Logan walks behind his desk.

Jericho sits down across from him.

LOGAN
What do you think?

JERICHO
She seemed nice, I guess.

LOGAN
She's exactly your type.

Jericho shrugs.

Logan opens a drawer.

He takes out a file and puts it in front of Jericho.

Jericho opens it up.

It's a contract offer.

An uncontrollable smile breaks over his face.

JERICHO
What do you think?

LOGAN
We spent about two hours working on
a final number.

Jericho looks at it.

His eyes open wide.

JERICHO
I think that's more than my dad
makes in a year.

LOGAN
And once this hits, you'll be able
to buy him a summer home.

Logan hands him a pen.

Jericho signs it.

JERICHO
If only my dating life would go
this well.

LOGAN

Why do you think I stay married?

JERICHO

Because of community property laws
in the state of California?

LOGAN

Here's some old guy advice: Focus
on the work and then it'll happen.

JERICHO

So what do I do now?

LOGAN

Study up and get ready for the role
of a lifetime.

INT. POLICE SEDAN - DAY (DRIVING)

Traffic on the 405 as far as the eye can see.

Alan is behind the wheel.

Denise close out an email on her phone.

DENISE

My federal friend took a look at
your new friend.

ALAN

What'd she say?

DENISE

Carol said he's a square peg in a
round hole.

ALAN

He has connections to at least one
of them.

DENISE

Serials tend to be short, ugly men.

ALAN

Ted Bundy wasn't.

DENISE

None of the usual criteria fit.

ALAN

Did you get a match on the phone
records?

DENISE
They haven't arrived yet.

ALAN
Did you call Dorothy in cyber?

She hasn't.

DENISE
This is a lot for a guy who doesn't
feel right for it.

ALAN
I've got a gut feeling.

Traffic moves a little.

DENISE
Why don't we just arrest him and
get it out in the box?

ALAN
You can't do that for a case like
this, rookie.

DENISE
Why not?

ALAN
Because once you do, every other
lead that could be out there will
disappear and now you *have* to make
this guy good for it.

DENISE
And if you don't?

ALAN
That's how you get demoted to the
pawn shop division.

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - DAY

Stand up comic COURTNEY (early 20s) carries a large, heavy
box towards the elevator.

She's African-American with bright eyes and an anime-themed
t-shirt on.

Her hands barely grip it.

The box slowly starts to fall out of her hands.

A man's hands grab it.

She looks up to see Jericho holding onto it.

There's an easy attraction.

COURTNEY

Most guys would let me drop it.

JERICHO

It'd be a dick move if I did that.

He grabs it out of her hands.

It's light to him.

COURTNEY

The joys of moving, right?

JERICHO

A year ago it was me and my roommate doing the same thing.

COURTNEY

I'm Courtney.

JERICHO

Jericho.

She looks at him oddly.

JERICHO (CONT'D)

My parents were religious.

COURTNEY

My dad's a big wrestling fan.

Jericho shrugs.

She motions to the elevator.

They both walk into it.

INT. APARTMENT ELEVATOR - DAY

Courtney presses the button for the fifth floor.

JERICHO

So what dream brings you here?

COURTNEY

Who says it's a dream?

JERICHO
It's always a dream.

COURTNEY
I'm a comic.

JERICHO
That's a first.

COURTNEY
Is everyone here an actor?

JERICHO
Or they've got a script.

COURTNEY
I came out here and my agent said I
should start a podcast about it.

JERICHO
It's better than a Twitch stream.

COURTNEY
That was her other suggestion.

JERICHO
I don't get why people want to
watch but to each their own, right?

COURTNEY
There's a lot of money in it if
you're good, allegedly.

JERICHO
I can't see anyone paying to watch
me read lines on camera.

DING!

The doors open up.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Courtney and Jericho exit.

COURTNEY
I told her I had some dignity.

Courtney walks towards her apartment.

Jericho follows her.

JERICHO

I used to think that way and then I tried to make a living as an actor.

COURTNEY

What's the worst part you've ever been offered?

JERICHO

Is it for your act?

COURTNEY

I'm working on a bit about how I'm just one bad set away from an Only Fans but it needs a little color.

Jericho thinks for a moment.

JERICHO

I was in a student film where I had to run into a room and scream "fuck me in the goat ass you sexy beast."

COURTNEY

No way.

JERICHO

It was... experimental.

They arrive at her apartment.

She opens the door.

He places the box inside.

COURTNEY

Thanks.

JERICHO

Ben and I are down the hall.

COURTNEY

I've got a spot tonight at the Comedy Store. You should come down, check it out.

JERICHO

Are you the headliner?

COURTNEY

I'm opening for a really funny guy.
(beat)
Mention my name at the door and I get five bucks for it.

JERICHO

So you need us to help you pay rent
for the month, huh?

COURTNEY

For what I'm paying for a studio
here, I could be renting the whole
floor back in Michigan.

JERICHO

The weather makes it all worth it.

COURTNEY

Where are you from?

JERICHO

A small town in Iowa, so I've had
my fill of snow and cow shit.

COURTNEY

So can I consider you a yes?

JERICHO

I'll drag Ben to it, it'll be fun
and you'll get ten dollars.

COURTNEY

I'll be able to retire with that
sort of money.

JERICHO

Right on.

COURTNEY

Tell the bouncer you're here for me
and they'll handle the rest.

She closes the door.

He smiles and then walks to his apartment.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jericho walks inside.

His phone buzzes with an email from Logan.

He opens it up.

The subject line reads "Background"

"I know this is a little fucked up, but I saw this online and
think it'd give you a leg up."

Attached is generic information about serial killers.
Jericho looks at it and then Ben's laptop.
He grabs the white board and pulls it over.
Jericho pulls up an internet browser.
His fingers pull up an internet history.
His eyes spot the news articles of the murders.
Jericho prints them out.
A laser printer goes off in a bedroom.

INT. BULLPEN - DAY

Stephanie and Erika's names are on the bullpen in red.
Nikki's name is in red several spots above them.
A bulletin board has Stephanie and Erika's headshots on it.
A social media photo of Nikki is next to them.
A line connecting them to Jericho's headshot is on it.
A timeline is underneath them.
Denise is at her desk, staring into her desk phone.

DENISE

I have put in the request.
(beat)
This is urgent and--
(beat)
I understand you're busy but--
(beat)
Hello?

Alan walks in with a bag of fast food.
He reaches in and places a sandwich on Denise's desk.

ALAN

How's Dorothy?

DENISE

She gave me the run around.

Alan sits at his desk and takes out a sandwich.

ALAN
Cyber is at one police plaza, if
you're up for a drive.

She looks at the sandwich and then the white board.

DENISE
You're thinking about this too old
school, Alan.

He places the sandwich down.

ALAN
Enlighten me, rookie.

DENISE
This generation posts their whole
lives on social media.

ALAN
He's not stupid enough to make his
Facebook status--
(mocking Jericho's voice)
--who's got two thumbs and just
killed another girl?

DENISE
But maybe he's connected to them.

ALAN
That's... very tenuous.

DENISE
You get the right status and the
right judge, maybe you can get a
warrant if there's a hint of
probable cause.

Alan looks at his desk phone.

ALAN
Dorothy owes me a favor.

Denise takes a bite of her sandwich.

Alan calls the cyber division.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - LATER

The white board is full of crime scene photos.

Under each photo are details of Jericho and the woman's date.

Pictures of various knives are taped on one side.

Jericho looks at it, staring.

Ben walks in with some fast food.

Ben's eyes look at the white board.

BEN

What's this?

JERICHO

I didn't remember anything when I went back there so I thought maybe if I put it out there then maybe something would jog loose.

BEN

Let the police handle it.

JERICHO

The worst case scenario is I can get into the mind of a serial killer for the role I just took.

BEN

Congratulations.

Jericho points to the board.

JERICHO

Maybe it's one of those types and I'm just a weird common connection.

BEN

And what, you're going to solve the case on your own?

JERICHO

If I can find a little thing to point them in the right direction--

BEN

Let's walk through it, then, and see what you got.

Ben puts the food down and walks up to the board.

JERICHO

Is this a pitch me?

BEN

It couldn't hurt.

JERICHO
Feels weird being on this end.

BEN
You've got a serial killer killing
off all the women you've fucked.

JERICHO
And I'm the only connection.

BEN
If I was that detective, you'd be
the prime suspect too.

Jericho glares at him.

BEN (CONT'D)
Obviously you didn't do it.

JERICHO
Thank you.

BEN
If you Google serial killers, they
tend to be short, ugly loners and
not guys like you.

JERICHO
Gee, thanks.
(thinks)
Isn't that a little sexist?

BEN
Male and female serial killers are
way different.

JERICHO
How so?

BEN
Women tend to be the poisoning
types and guys are more... stabby.

Jericho sighs.

BEN (CONT'D)
Write about enough serial killers
and you can see patterns and levels
of craftsmanship.

JERICHO
Don't say that in public. Ever.

Jericho shakes his head.

His eyes turn to his phone.

JERICHO (CONT'D)

According to this thing, the most likely victims are the homeless and sex workers.

BEN

And obviously an Only Fans isn't quite the same.

JERICHO

Oh... there's a new girl down the hall now.

BEN

I'm tapped, man.

JERICHO

She's more your type, I think.

BEN

So she's ugly.

JERICHO

She's a comic.

BEN

So?

JERICHO

So maybe she has some creative insight that could help you go from unproduced to actually produced.

Ben glares at him.

BEN

Or you're looking to see if this psycho is in the crowd.

JERICHO

Two birds, one stone?

BEN

You know how crazy this sounds to anyone else, right?

JERICHO

It can't be a coincidence.

BEN

What happens if something happens
to her?

JERICHO

What if we can stop it?

Ben groans.

INT. COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

Courtney performs stand up comedy on stage to a mostly full
audience of CUSTOMERS.

She's absolutely killing it.

Ben and Jericho are in the audience, laughing hard.

COURTNEY

I just moved here from Detroit and
I have to say, life out here is a
lot different from what I expected.

(looks around)

The biggest difference I've seen so
far is how lawyers deal with you.

(beat)

It's all about how they warn you
about the dangers of driving drunk.
My California lawyer is like--

(generic nice guy voice)

--If you ever have too much to
drink, just find a cab stand or
download Uber. You don't want to go
through the legal system when it
comes to being charged with driving
under the influence.

(normal voice)

My lawyer in Detroit was more--

(gruff man voice)

--If you're ever thinking of
driving after you're good and
pissed up, find the nearest cop and
just fucking punch him right in the
god-damn dick. One little right
there Fred to his schlong is much
easier to deal with in court than a
fucking Dewey, just saying.

The crowd explodes in cheers.

A white light flashes from the back of the club.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)

Thank you!

Courtney exits.

A HOST walks onto stage.

HOST

Courtney Willis, everybody!

INT. BULLPEN - NIGHT

Alan stares at an LAPD Cyber Division expedited request form on his laptop.

He takes a deep breath.

His eyes turn to Denise's desk.

She's not there.

He turns back to his laptop.

ALAN

(under his breath)

Too old school, huh?

Alan pulls up Jericho's social media.

He sees check-ins at multiple places.

His eyes turn to the white board.

Alan turns back to the laptop.

He's checked at the crime scene locations around the time each of the murders happened.

ALAN (CONT'D)

That's... not a coincidence.

Alan pulls up Jericho's friend list.

He types in "Nikki."

Friend.

Alan types in "Erika."

Six Erika's, including the dead girl.

He types in Stephanie.

A dozen women named Stephanie come up.

His eyes go through them.

ALAN (CONT'D)
 Too old, too young, too--
 (pauses)
 --bingo.

The dead Stephanie is a friend.

INT. COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

Ben, Jericho and Courtney sit at a table.

Mostly empty beers are in front of them.

COURTNEY
 So how do you two know each other?

BEN
 College.

JERICHO
 They paired up the film school
 dorks with us in the theater
 program to make a short and he was
 the only who had something that was
 not... bad.

COURTNEY
 Like how bad?

BEN
 Half of my class was writing a
 short about a guy who wakes up and
 discovers he's gay.

COURTNEY
 Seriously?

BEN
 They all started the same.
 (serious voice)
 Focus on an alarm clock. Actor
 wakes up, hits snooze. He then
 wakes up and goes about his day,
 dealing with veteran mob hitters
 who looked like they just learned
 to shave before declaring to his
 parents that he is in fact gay.

(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)
 (deeper, more serious
 voice)
 So very gay.

She laughs.

COURTNEY
 (points to Ben)
 What was his?

JERICHO
 It was a blatant rip-off of
 "Waiting for Godot" called "Waiting
 for Gal Gadot."

Courtney shakes her head, laughs.

JERICHO (CONT'D)
 It had a lot of physical comedy and
 I can appreciate that.

COURTNEY
 Anyone need another?

Ben and Jericho motion no.

Courtney stands up and walks over to the bar.

JERICHO
 So?

BEN
 She seems nice.

JERICHO
 If you want to ask her out--

BEN
 Oh come on.

JERICHO
 She's your type.

BEN
 And she's been giving you the come
 hither look the entire night.

JERICHO
 I think I'm going to not date for a
 while, man.

Ben takes a drink.

Jericho looks around.

BEN

You can't just look at someone and know if they're a serial killer.

JERICHO

Do they look stabby or--

BEN

Enough research, yo.

JERICHO

What about the Turkish guy?

BEN

This one's more... sellable.

Courtney sits down.

COURTNEY

What's so sellable about what?

JERICHO

Anytime he tells me about something he's writing, I listen to it.

COURTNEY

That sounds fun!

Ben takes a deep breath.

BEN

Horror films on the whole are a bad guy does all sorts of fucked up stuff and then someone survives.

(beat)

Imagine if the final girl of one of these guys turned into a badass who kills evil-doers.

COURTNEY

She sounds fun.

(beat)

Who's the first guy she kills?

BEN

The Red Panty Slasher. He's this degenerate who likes to watch his victims and then beat off right before he kills them.

COURTNEY

I'd see that on opening night.

JERICHO
Seriously?

COURTNEY
Fuck, I'd become an actor just to
try and play that kind of badass.

Jericho shrugs.

COURTNEY (CONT'D)
Tell me about her.

BEN
Seriously?

COURTNEY
Does she have like a battle axe or
some awesome sword?

BEN
She switches weapons every time she
kills someone so she doesn't get
caught by the cops.

COURTNEY
That's clever.

Courtney takes out a pack of cigarettes.

BEN
You know that shit will kill you.

COURTNEY
I'm a comic... if I live to be
forty I'll be shocked.

Courtney leaves.

Jericho spots a lighter on the floor.

He picks it up and puts it on the table.

JERICHO
You should give it to her.

BEN
She couldn't help but look into
your eyes, either.

JERICHO
The shit I do for you.

Jericho leaves.

EXT. COMEDY CLUB ALLEY - NIGHT

Courtney takes a long puff of her cigarette.

We hear footsteps.

She turns to see the Dark Figure.

We don't see him.

The Figure takes out the Bowie knife.

Courtney drops the cigarette, her eyes lit up in fear.

COURTNEY

This isn't funny.

Her eyes focus on the knife.

Sweat comes down her brow.

The Dark Figure stabs her.

Courtney's body hits the ground, bleeding.

The Dark Figure stabs her to death.

JERICHO (O.S.)

What the fuck?

Jericho looks at Courtney.

She's dead.

He looks up.

The Dark Figure sprints into the darkness.

Jericho chases after them.

EXT. COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

A BOUNCER looks around, half asleep.

The Dark Figure sprints past him and across the street.

JERICHO (O.S.)

Stop him!

The Bouncer wakes up.

Jericho sprints past him and onto the street.

His eyes get a glimpse of the Dark Figure.

WHAM!

Jericho is broad sided by an SUV.

His body is flung onto the windshield.

The SUV stops, Jericho's body flung to the concrete.

A CIVILIAN exits, sprinting to Jericho.

Jericho gets up, looks across the street.

The Dark Figure is gone.

INT. BULLPEN - LATER

Alan and Denise sit at desks in front of the bulletin board, laptops in front of them.

DENISE

I don't see it.

ALAN

The last guy to see them alive is usually the one who did it.

DENISE

He doesn't fit the profile.

ALAN

Because he's good-looking?

DENISE

I'll concede he didn't break down in tears, but some people just keep it inside in front of people. It can be pretty toxic, emotionally.

ALAN

Could be guilt, too.

Denise takes a deep breath.

DENISE

Unless something else comes up, I think we're chasing the wrong guy.

ALAN

He checked in at all three places we found a body. It's a taunt.

DENISE

Or he's got a little boomer in him.

Alan glares at her.

DENISE (CONT'D)

My parents do that all the time on Facebook and it drives me crazy.

ALAN

It could be his signature... like he could be the Check-In Killer.

DENISE

Or he could be like my dad and not know how to turn it off. I keep telling him someone will rob their place if he keeps doing it.

ALAN

Or maybe he's leaving crumbs because he wants to get caught.

She rolls her eyes.

Alan pulls up Jericho's social media on his laptop.

He's checked into the comedy club.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Apparently he's going to see Bill Burr tonight.

Alan's desk phone buzzes.

He answers.

ALAN (CONT'D)

This is detective James.

(beat)

We're on it.

(hangs up)

Guess where a body just showed up?

EXT. COMEDY ALLEY - NIGHT

A small crowd of OBSERVERS looks around.

Several UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICERS behind yellow police tape are between them and Courtney's body.

She's on the ground, stabbed to death.

A Crime Scene Photographer takes photos of her corpse.
 Alan and Denise walk through the crowd and towards the body.
 Alan's eyes turn to Courtney's body.
 They focus on the stab wound.
 It's identical to the others.
 Alan looks up.
 His eyes spot a video camera.

ALAN
 (to Denise)
 Go inside and find the manager.

Alan surveys the crowd.
 He spots Ben next to a Uniformed Officer.

ALAN (CONT'D)
 Where's captain handsome?

BEN
 Funny you should ask.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

A NURSE pushes a wheelchair bound Jericho outside.
 Ben stands by a pillar, waiting for him.
 The Charger is parked in the distance.

BEN
 How you feeling?

Jericho stands up and walks over to him.

JERICHO
 This is a nice lesson to never do
 my own stunts.

The two walk to the Charger.

BEN
 Among other things.

JERICHO
 I need a gun.

BEN

Why?

JERICHO

I saw him, his back. If I had a gun, I could've stopped him there.

BEN

Or you should let this go.

JERICHO

Where's the nearest gun store?

BEN

California is an ID state when it comes to firearms.

JERICHO

Growing up I could get Rambo's gun from Shecky's Gun Shop if I had enough money on me.

BEN

Welcome to progressive gun laws.

Jericho's phone buzzes with a text from Logan.

"My office, now."

INT. LOGAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Logan sits behind his desk, typing furiously.

Jericho walks in, his face bandaged up.

JERICHO

This must be serious.

Logan look at him oddly.

JERICHO (CONT'D)

Normally Velma makes me wait.

LOGAN

A pair of detectives paid me a visit yesterday.

Jericho curses under his breath.

JERICHO

I can explain.

LOGAN
You better.

Logan points to a chair.

Jericho sits down.

JERICHO
I'm the last person to see two
girls I went out with.

LOGAN
Did you?

JERICHO
Excuse me?

LOGAN
Come on kid.

JERICHO
Fuck you.

LOGAN
If Big Moon thinks you did it--

JERICHO
This is nothing, I promise.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - LATER

Jericho exits.

ALAN (O.S.)
Mister Hardcastle.

Jericho turns to see Alan and Denise approach him.

ALAN (CONT'D)
We just missed each other last
night, it seems.

JERICHO
Did you get a good look at him? I
almost did but then I had to go to
the hospital.

DENISE
That's what we want to talk about.

JERICHO
Are you traffic detectives?

ALAN

This might be a better chat to have
at the station.

JERICHO

Do I need a lawyer?

ALAN

This is just between us.

DENISE

You want to help us solve this
case, right?

JERICHO

Am I under arrest?

DENISE

Not at all.

JERICHO

I don't feel comfortable--

Alan motions to his handcuffs.

ALAN

Would you be more comfortable in
these, Jericho?

Jericho looks around.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - THREE HOURS LATER

Jericho is at a desk.

A cup of coffee is in front of him.

He yawns, tapping his foot.

INT. POLICE HALLWAY - DAY

Denise and Alan watch Jericho.

DENISE

The manual--

ALAN

Was written by desk jockeys, not
people who do the job.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Denise and Alan walk in.

Denise has a folder in her hands.

Alan has several photos in his hands.

JERICHO

I don't know how many times you
want me to say it but--

Alan smacks the cup of coffee off the desk.

ALAN

That's because it's not the truth.

Denise throws a photo of Erika's crime scene on the table.

JERICHO

We went out once, she was fun and--

DENISE

So she wouldn't sleep with you?

JERICHO

We kissed and--

DENISE

Then you killed her.

Denise throws photos of Stephanie onto the desk.

JERICHO

I didn't do a damn thing to her!

DENISE

You told us you had sex with her.

JERICHO

It was fun but--

ALAN

Did she object and you killed her
after you raped her?

JERICHO

What?

DENISE

What about Nikki Krulov?

JERICHO

We saw a foreign film and--

Denise throws photos of a crime scene onto the desk.

It's Nikki, stabbed to death.

Denise throws more crime scene photos onto the table.

Jericho is mortified.

DENISE

People have a bad habit of dying
after they go out with you.

ALAN

I've got you on video at the scene
of a crime last night.

JERICHO

I was at a comedy club last night.

Denise throws crime scene photos of Courtney on the table.

DENISE

Did she make a joke about you that
you just didn't like?

ALAN

California has the death penalty.

DENISE

Maybe you can cut a deal.

ALAN

It's also the decent thing to do.

Alan tosses photos of Cinnamon's crime scene onto the table.

DENISE

Greta Tippet.

JERICHO

I never knew her real name.

ALAN

Did Cinnamon take you into the
champagne room and take your money
and leave you with your dick in
your hand?

JERICHO

What?

DENISE

My partner has a real soft spot for
women in that industry.

ALAN

I don't like it when guys like you
take advantage of them.

Jericho takes a deep breath, looks around.

JERICHO

Am I under arrest?

DENISE

No.

ALAN

You can leave if you want.

Jericho looks to the door.

DENISE

The moment you walk out is the very
same one we can no longer help you.

JERICHO

I can have a lawyer, right?

ALAN

Do you know who asks for a lawyer?

DENISE

Guilty people.

ALAN

If you confess, we can keep the
needle out of your arm.

DENISE

You lie and we'll make sure you get
an express line to it.

ALAN

You might want the needle, though.
A pretty boy like you would
probably get tossed around in
prison like a hot potato.

Denise turns to Alan.

She motions for him to come over.

DENISE

(hushed)

You saw the memo, right?

ALAN
 (hushed)
 What memo?

Jericho looks around.

Sweat pours off of him.

DENISE
 (hushed)
 The chief said we're not supposed
 to threaten... you know... that.

ALAN
 (hushed)
 That kid will get passed around in
 jail. We should let him know so--

Jericho looks into the mirror. He thinks.

DENISE
 (hushed)
 It's supposed to be--

ALAN
 (hushed)
 The chief is getting soft.

Jericho's eyes light up. *Inspiration.*

JERICHO
 I'm invoking my right to counsel!

The detectives turn and look at him.

ALAN
 Can you repeat that?

JERICHO
 I'm invoking my right to counsel
 and my right to silence.

Beat.

ALAN
 You go down this road and--

JERICHO
 I am invoking my right to counsel
 and I am invoking my right to
 silence, detective.

ALAN
If you go down this road, you know
what happens to you.

JERICHO
Lawyer. Silence.

Someone knocks on the window.

Denise and Alan exit.

INT. POLICE HALLWAY - DAY

Denise and Alan's boss, Captain YANCY ROGERS (mid 40s),
stares at Jericho through the one way mirror.

Denise and Alan exit.

YANCY
(to Alan)
What the shit are you doing?

ALAN
He was about to give it up.

YANCY
And then what?

ALAN
He confesses and--

YANCY
It gets kicked because you kept
questioning him after he asked for
a GOD DAMN lawyer.

ALAN
Sir, this is our guy.

YANCY
(to Denise)
Save your partner from a lawsuit.

Yancy turns and looks at Jericho in the mirror.

DENISE
I trust his judgment.

YANCY
If you think this is your guy, call
Judge Haden and see if you can get
a warrant to toss his place.

ALAN
Then I'm going to slap the
bracelets on him.

YANCY
(turns to Alan)
Kick him for now.

ALAN
Sir--

YANCY
If you find something, I think he
won't be that hard to find.

ALAN
He's right here and--

YANCY
This turns into a circus the moment
you charge him.

ALAN
So?

YANCY
So if he turns out to be the wrong
guy for it, it could be your badge.

Alan grumbles.

YANCY (CONT'D)
If he's the guy, a quick toss of
his place will get you something
you can slap cuffs on him for.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Jericho walks out.

His eyes spot Ben's Charger.

Ben is behind the wheel.

Jericho gets inside.

INT. DODGE CHARGER - DAY (DRIVING)

The streets of Los Angeles casually pass by.

JERICHO
How did you know?

BEN
Your agent called me and said you
walked away with some cops.

JERICHO
They wanted me to confess to four
murders, too.

BEN
I thought it was just three.

JERICHO
Courtney.

The car pulls up to a stop light.

He pulls up an internet search engine and types in "Courtney
comic, dead."

News articles about Courtney's death come up.

BEN
Holy shit.

Jericho looks around.

JERICHO
We might've seen the killer.

BEN
What did you tell the cops?

JERICHO
I remembered that pilot you pitched
me on, the Rittenhouse one.

BEN
It was just inspired by his case.

JERICHO
I remembered the part about asking
for a lawyer and shutting up.

BEN
That's good.

JERICHO
Now I don't know what to do.

BEN
You should get a lawyer.

JERICHO
With what money?

BEN

Maybe they'll take it on some sort
of contingency.

Jericho thinks for a moment.

JERICHO

I should go back and talk to them.
If I just calmly explain every
single thing about this to them,
maybe this all goes away.

The light turns green.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Ben and Jericho walk down the hall.

Jericho spots a POLICE OFFICER in front of his door.

JERICHO

What the hell?

They sprint towards their apartment.

The Officer steps in front of them, a Warrant in his hands.

Jericho grabs it, his eyes scanning it quickly.

Ben looks inside to see:

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Everything is tore up and thrown all over.

Denise and Alan searching it.

JERICHO (O.S.)

What the shit?

Alan turns to see Jericho staring back at him.

ALAN

We'll be done shortly.

JERICHO

This is harassment.

ALAN

You can tell that to judge Haden.

JERICHO
Did you tell them you're going
after an innocent man?

ALAN
If you're going to interfere with--

Ben grabs Jericho's arm.

BEN
Let's just give them space, OK?

Ben and Jericho leave.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Ben lights up a cigarette as he exits.

Jericho looks around, panicked.

Denise and Alan exit the building.

Alan has a box in his hands marked "evidence."

Several POLICE OFFICERS follow them.

JERICHO
You know what this looks like.

BEN
Nothing good.

JERICHO
I'm prime suspect number one.

BEN
You need to go back to Iowa.

JERICHO
Fuck that.

BEN
The next step is them arresting
you, so maybe a lawyer--

JERICHO
I'm going to find out who did it.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Jericho and Ben walk towards their apartment.

BEN
That's beyond stupid.

JERICHO
So I'm going to sit and wait for
them to decide I did it?

They get to their door.

Ben opens it up.

BEN
You could just not go out on a date
for a while.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Everything has been tossed.

Ben walks up to the couch, placing the cushions back in.

Jericho looks around, thinking.

JERICHO
Zoe.

Ben pulls up Zoe's social media.

A long post about her breakup with Taylor comes up.

BEN
She's still with us.

Jericho grabs the white board and pulls it over.

His eyes focus on it.

JERICHO
If they think it's me, I need to
figure out who it really is.

BEN
The cops always ask in the movies
if you have any enemies and---

JERICHO
I'm overlooking the obvious.

Jericho writes "Zoe" on the blackboard.

BEN
No way.

JERICHO

She's the only still alive and she lost her agent because of me.

BEN

That's something you make a nasty Facebook post about, not kill every person they come into contact with.

JERICHO

Present company excluded.

BEN

Her Facebook is just like yours.

Jericho pulls up Zoe's social media.

He scrolls through her feed, coming on a photo of her and her ex-boyfriend TAYLOR WERNER (late 20s) in happier times.

He's tall, handsome and hasn't posted since then.

They're at her place... and a large knife is on his mantle.

Jericho's eyes focus on it.

JERICHO

What if it's him?

BEN

Did he know you were fucking her?

JERICHO

How did you--

BEN

You're a creature of habit.

Silence.

BEN (CONT'D)

If he found out, and he's as crazy as she is--

JERICHO

What, he's killing all these women to make me look bad?

BEN

It isn't *that* plausible.

JERICHO

It's insanelly stupid.

BEN

The DC Sniper killed his ex-wife
and then covered it up by shooting
random people.

JERICHO

Seriously?

BEN

I saw a video on YouTube that went
all in on it.

JERICHO

It makes sense.

BEN

What?

JERICHO

He leaves a stack of bodies that
connect to me and then she's last.

Jericho enlarges the photo of the knife. He shows it to Ben.

BEN

It's a knife, so what?

JERICHO

That's a murder weapon.

BEN

This is stupid.

JERICHO

There has to be blood on it.

BEN

Or you could just tell this to the
cops and let them handle it.

JERICHO

They think I did it and we both
know I didn't.

BEN

What if he didn't do it?

JERICHO

It's clearly him, I just have to
find a piece of evidence to links
him to it.

BEN

Do you hear yourself right now?

Jericho types rapidly on his phone.

BEN (CONT'D)

His business is run out of his home, I think.

Jericho looks to the door and then to Ben.

BEN (CONT'D)

When this blows up in your face, do not act like I didn't warn you.

Jericho leaves.

EXT. ZOE'S TOWN HOME - DAY

Jericho walks up and knocks on the door.

The front door opens, revealing Zoe.

JERICHO

Thank God you're still alive.

ZOE

What?

JERICHO

This is going to sound weird but--

ZOE

My agent fired me because of you.

JERICHO

I'm sorry but there're bigger things to worry about right now.

ZOE

After that audition I went from CAA to someone in the valley.

JERICHO

Someone is--

ZOE

I don't care about your bullshit.

JERICHO

Seriously?

ZOE

Taylor left me, too.

JERICHO
You should've said something.

ZOE
He's nice but--

JERICHO
But that's besides the point.

ZOE
Don't bother me again.

Zoe slams the door in his face.

INT. BULLPEN - DAY

Denise's phone rings.

She answers.

DENISE
Slater.
(beat)
On it.

Denise looks around.

Her eyes spot Alan filling out a form.

DENISE (CONT'D)
This is connected.

Alan stops and jumps to his feet.

EXT. RANCH HOME - DAY

Jericho walks up to the front door.

He looks into the front window.

No one seems to be inside.

Deep breath.

He knocks on the door.

It opens up, revealing Taylor.

Beat.

TAYLOR
Can I help you?

JERICHO
I'm not sure--

TAYLOR
I know who you are.

JERICHO
Oh.

Beat.

TAYLOR
We should do this inside.

Taylor motions inside.

Jericho walks in.

Taylor closes the door behind him.

INT. ZOE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

A PATROLMAN stands guard at the door.

Everything is trashed.

Zoe sits on a couch, clearly in shock.

Denise and Alan walk inside.

The Patrolman approaches them.

ALAN
Run it down, patrolman.

PATROLMAN
Got a call for a forced break in.
Perp was gone when I got here.

The Patrolman motions to the bathroom.

Denise and Alan walk over to it.

Alan's eyes focus on something on the door.

Denise takes her phone out and pulls up one of Erika's crime scene photos.

Her fingers find one with a stab wound.

Denise turns to the door.

Several similar sized knife wounds are in the door.

Alan turns to her.

She hands him the phone.

He holds it up, enhancing the photo.

DENISE
Captain would say it's flimsy.

Alan walks over to Zoe.

ALAN
Ma'am, I'm detective James. This is
detective Slater.

ZOE
My ex was just here, so I thought
maybe he wanted to talk some more,
but then it was another guy.

ALAN
Did you get a good look at him?

ZOE
I saw a knife and just ran into my
bathroom. He kept stabbing the door
and screaming at me. I called 911
and then he ran away.

ALAN
Did you recognize his voice?

She shakes her head no.

ZOE
I just remember he was tall...
taller than me.

DENISE
How much taller?

Zoe holds her hand above her head.

DENISE (CONT'D)
You said your ex came here.

ZOE
His name is Jericho Hardcastle.

Alan hides a smile.

INT. RANCH HOME LIVING ROOM - DAY

Plain, spartan.

A small mini-bar is in the corner.

TAYLOR
You want a drink?

Jericho looks at the bar.

JERICHO
I'll have a glass of the bourbon.

Taylor pours two glasses of bourbon.

TAYLOR
So you heard, huh?

JERICHO
I saw it on Facebook.

Taylor hands Jericho a drink.

They clink glasses and take a drink.

TAYLOR
I really should be thanking you.

JERICHO
I don't know what--

TAYLOR
Her best friend told me about you
and her.

Jericho looks around.

A large Bowie knife made of razor sharp Damascus steel is
mounted on a wall.

JERICHO
We dated and--

TAYLOR
Please don't lie to me.

Jericho takes a drink.

JERICHO
I disconnected her from my social
media after we split. I didn't know
about you two.

Taylor's hand grips his glass tightly.

TAYLOR

I was gonna surprise her on our anniversary and saw you walking in.

JERICHO

I'm sorry.

TAYLOR

And then I heard.

JERICHO

I'm really sorry.

Taylor stands up, walks around.

He's within arm's reach of the Bowie knife.

TAYLOR

I kept thinking why.

Jericho tenses up.

His eyes look around the room.

JERICHO

We had history and--

TAYLOR

I saw her phone.

Jericho gulps.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

She was never that way with me.

JERICHO

You got the nice girlfriend.... she slashed the tires on my car once because she saw me talking to another woman. All the insanely hot, kinky sex in the--

Taylor glares at him.

JERICHO (CONT'D)

Or not.

Taylor's hand relaxes.

JERICHO (CONT'D)
 I broke it off as soon as I found
 out, man. I don't know if that
 helps but--

TAYLOR
 It didn't.

JERICHO
 If I knew, I never would've.

Taylor finishes his drink.

JERICHO (CONT'D)
 For the record, I'm sorry.

TAYLOR
 That doesn't make me feel better.

JERICHO
 Me either.

TAYLOR
 If you wouldn't mind.

JERICHO
 Yeah.

Jericho stands up and leaves.

EXT. ZOE'S TOWN HOME - DAY

Denise and Alan exit.

DENISE
 He's not a home invader.

ALAN
 And?

DENISE
 He was here earlier. Why come back?

ALAN
 Maybe they had an argument she did
 not want to talk about.

DENISE
 It's not his pattern.

Alan motions for her to continue.

DENISE (CONT'D)

You said it's a pattern. Our guy has always attacked when they're alone, at night, in places they didn't know--

ALAN

After a date with him.

DENISE

It just doesn't fit.

ALAN

Maybe she knows something.

DENISE

I'm with you but--

ALAN

The captain would tell us to pick him up.

DENISE

Are you sure?

ALAN

I'd bet my badge on it.

Denise thinks for a long moment.

DENISE

The next step is an all points for that car and then wait for a black and white to find him.

Alan smiles.

INT. DODGE CHARGER - DAY (DRIVING)

Downtown Los Angeles is through the windshield.

Jericho is behind the wheel.

A police siren goes off.

He looks into the rearview.

A police car is behind him, lights on.

Jericho pulls over.

An OFFICER slowly approaches the Charger, gun drawn.

Jericho's hands slowly go onto the wheel.

OFFICER
Turn the vehicle off, slowly!

Jericho slowly turns the Charger off.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
Hands where I can see them!

Jericho raises his hands.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
Now slowly exit the vehicle!

In the distance a PAPARAZZI takes photos.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

Jericho looks around.

He's surrounded by RAPISTS, KILLERS and THIEVES.

His eyes look up to see Alan in front of the bars.

JERICHO
This is harassment!

ALAN
You've got forty-eight hours in
here before I have to charge you.
Have fun!

JERICHO
I didn't do it!

No one believes him.

INT. JAIL CELL - LATER

Jericho sits on a bench, his eyes darting around.

Denise walks up to the bars.

A cup of coffee is in her hands.

She offers it to him.

He takes it and quickly sips from the cup.

JERICHO
I didn't do it and that's all I'm
going to say.

DENISE
My partner is convinced.

JERICHO
He's wrong.

DENISE
Then give me one reason to think
you didn't do it.

Jericho thinks for a long moment.

JERICHO
Taylor Werner.

DENISE
Who's that?

JERICHO
He was dating my ex when--
(sighs)
--the details aren't important. He
has a big-ass knife and hates me.

Denise thinks for a moment and walks away.

INT. BULLPEN - DAY

Denise walks up to her desk and sits down.
She pulls up Taylor's address on her laptop.
Alan looks over.

ALAN
Anything good?

DENISE
He gave me a name.

ALAN
That means he broke his right to
silence and--

DENISE
He did it for a reason.

Denise looks at the address and then her watch.

ALAN
It's a misdirection.

DENISE
What did you tell me on my first
day of training?

Alan sighs.

DENISE (CONT'D)
(from memory)
A bad lead can--

ALAN
Flesh out the good one.

Denise reaches into her desk and takes out her car keys.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY (36 HOURS LATER)

Jericho walks out, a manila folder with all of his
possessions from earlier inside it.

He reaches inside and takes out his phone.

A dozen missed calls from Logan and an equal amount of texts
from Ben come up immediately.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Cheap bottles as far as the eye can see.

Jericho walks to the back.

His eyes look over cheap bottles of whiskey.

VALERIE (O.S.)
They all look terrible.

Jericho looks over and sees Valerie.

A shopping cart full of cheap whiskey is in front of her.

JERICHO
You thirsty or what?

VALERIE
Research.

He looks at her oddly.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

My business manager wants me to have my own brand of liquor so I'm doing market research.

Jericho looks at the bottles.

JERICHO

Couldn't you get good stuff?

VALERIE

It's a volume game; more bottles of trash liquor get sold than bottles of the good stuff.

JERICHO

I never thought of it like that.

She looks around.

VALERIE

I need your help.

JERICHO

Sure.

VALERIE

Big Moon won't cast me unless I do a screen test. I've got everything lined up... I just need someone to act with me.

JERICHO

Why me?

VALERIE

Logan said you got the role so if they see you and me, maybe they think "that's it."

JERICHO

I need to check with Logan first.

VALERIE

He told me to talk to you about it because he thinks it's brilliant.

Jericho looks around.

JERICHO

I've got some stuff going on.

VALERIE

Let's talk about it over dinner.

JERICHO

Sure, I guess.

She motions for his phone.

He hands it to her.

Valerie quickly types her number in.

VALERIE

I'll find a place.

She tosses it back.

JERICHO

I'll talk to you later.

INT. BULLPEN - DAY

Alan watches footage looking into an alleyway.

A handful of DVDs are on Alan's desk.

Denise walks up.

ALAN

Anything?

DENISE

His alibi checked out for every single one of them.

ALAN

What about the knife?

DENISE

I took a picture when he went to the bathroom and compared it to the one forensics said was the one the killer probably used.

ALAN

Let me guess: it was the wrong kind of knife.

DENISE

The one we are looking for has a cleft point. I have no idea how they can tell but Taylor's knife didn't have one.

Alan turns back to the DVDs.

He ejects his current disc and puts another into his laptop.

Footage from the comedy club comes up.

DENISE (CONT'D)

They don't change, you know.

ALAN

There has to be something I missed
on one of these.

DENISE

Are you sure?

ALAN

Nothing else connects them but him.

DENISE

What would the captain say?

ALAN

My gut is always right.

DENISE

And yet.

ALAN

There has to be something that
connects him beyond the obvious.

DENISE

We can go back through everything
if you want but--

ALAN

I'll see if we missed something.

DENISE

What can I do?

ALAN

Go to the morgue and see if George
has the results of the tox screen.

Denise sighs.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Maybe something pops up, OK?

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Jericho walks to the front door, a sixer of beer in his hand.

Logan calls him.

JERICHO
Not a good time.

LOGAN (V.O.)
Two days and nothing.

INT. LOGAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Logan stares out his window.

JERICHO (V.O.)
I was... indisposed.

INTERCUT BETWEEN LOGAN AND JERICHO

LOGAN
You were on TMZ. They saw it.

Jericho unleashes a stream of profanities that would make a sailor blush.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
Big Moon is hiring Miles Teller for
the role of Jimmy Ready.

JERICHO
They can't do that!

LOGAN
They're prepping a statement saying
it's a scheduling issue.

JERICHO
The police--

LOGAN
You said this was nothing.

JERICHO
It is nothing.

LOGAN
Until someone else is arrested for
this, you're radioactive.

JERICHO
What do I do?

LOGAN
Right now... wait until this blows
over. When it does, we'll see.

JERICHO
And if it doesn't?

LOGAN
Then you've got bigger issues than
I know how to deal with.

JERICHO
I'll fix this, tell Big Moon that.

LOGAN
I'm not sure if that'll help.

JERICHO
In a couple of days this will all
blow over, tell them that.

LOGAN
I'll try.

Both men hang up.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ben types on his laptop.

Jericho walks in with a six-pack of beer.

Ben stops typing, looks up.

JERICHO
Why does my life have to be so damn
complicated?

Jericho sits down next to him.

Ben grabs one of the beers.

BEN
So Zoe's magical vagina trapped you
for two days?

JERICHO
What?

BEN
Some people go on benders with coke
and booze, yours is attached to--

JERICHO
They actually arrested me.

BEN

Holy shit!

JERICHO

They were trying to get me to talk by just leaving me with all sorts of fun people, too.

BEN

Why didn't you call someone, I don't know, like me or your agent?

JERICHO

I just panicked and shut up.

BEN

They didn't charge you, right?

JERICHO

I wouldn't be here if they had.

Ben thinks for a moment.

BEN

There's always something else.

JERICHO

Valerie wants to have dinner with me so she can sell me on doing a screen test with her for that big role I'm about to lose.

BEN

Does she know what's going on?

Jericho shrugs.

BEN (CONT'D)

Maybe you should say no. You can do that, you know. I realize pussy has a magnet to you but--

JERICHO

This is the shittiest of timings.

BEN

That's a hell of an understatement.

Jericho thinks for a long moment.

JERICHO

I could fix both of my problems.

BEN

What?

JERICHO

The problem at the comedy club--

BEN

Besides Courtney being stabbed to death, right?

JERICHO

I almost had him, if not for that god-damn SUV.

(beat)

If there's two of us, he can't get away this time.

BEN

This is stupid.

JERICHO

We spot him and then trap him.

BEN

I don't think this woman will appreciate being bait.

JERICHO

She doesn't have to know.

Ben shakes his head.

BEN

Maybe you can hire a professional to look into this.

JERICHO

They'd laugh me out of their office in ten seconds.

Ben thinks for a moment.

Jericho motions to him.

BEN

No.

JERICHO

I'll get you a takeout box.

BEN

What if this guy is armed?

JERICHO

We don't have to fight him. Just take his photo and then call the police to arrest him.

BEN

That's not how it works!

Jericho reaches into his pocket.

He takes his wallet out and pulls out Alan's card.

JERICHO

This cop wants to catch the killer. If we can hand him the guy, he'll give me a medal!

BEN

I've got some cash squirreled away for a rainy day. It's probably enough to get you back to Iowa.

JERICHO

That fucking screams I did it and they'll send the sheriff to my folks place to arrest me.

BEN

You should lock yourself inside your bedroom until--

JERICHO

If this doesn't work, OK?

Ben nods.

INT. BULLPEN - LATER

Alan stares at the white board.

His eyes focus on it for a moment.

Alan's desk phone rings.

ALAN

Detective James.

(beat)

En route.

Alan jumps to his feet and sprints out.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Alan walks toward an unmarked police car.

Sounds of a video stream emanate from his phone.

He looks at it.

Jericho and Valerie are on Valerie's Twitch stream called "Getting to know the meme."

VALERIE (V.O.)

What's the one thing you miss about
small town Iowa, hot actor man?

INT. MID TIER RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Posh, a sort of upscale Olive Garden.

Jericho and Valerie are in a booth.

She points her cell phone at his face

Mostly full drinks are in front of them.

JERICHO

That's a loaded question.

VALERIE

Do you miss anything?

JERICHO

My dog, Raylan.

She motions for him to continue.

JERICHO (CONT'D)

He's my folks' dog but he was
always my guy.

VALERIE

What kind of dog is he?

The Dark Figure is in the very back, watching them.

JERICHO

He's a bearded collie we rescued.

(beat)

The first night we had him, he had
the runs like no one's business. I
remember taking him for a walk and
he just cleaned out, you know?

Valerie shakes her head.

JERICHO (CONT'D)

After a while he just drops the loudest fart possible. He doesn't know what happened, so he starts chasing his tail... and then he just kept farting and sprinting.

She laughs.

JERICHO (CONT'D)

Whenever I Zoom with my parents he tries to assault the computer because he thinks I'm there.

Valerie aims the cell phone at her.

VALERIE

And on that note, I'm signing off. See you tomorrow!

She ends the stream.

A WAITRESS places two large dinners on the table.

JERICHO

That wasn't as weird as I thought.

VALERIE

Once you get used to reading the chat, then it gets easy.

JERICHO

How did you get into streaming?

VALERIE

Would you believe I once held every single world record in the original NES versions of Castlevania?

They eat.

JERICHO

I'm not a gamer.

VALERIE

Growing up I was and in order to get an official world record you had to do it live on Twitch.

JERICHO

So they can make sure you're not cheating, right?

She nods.

VALERIE

I got featured in a Summoning Salt video and then the simps arrived once they stopped paying attention to the games.

He doesn't know what she means.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Guys who just want to watch.

Jericho gets it, cringes.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I mean they pay but--

JERICHO

No one wants to be that.

VALERIE

The worst is the women who encourage that shit.

JERICHO

They're making a lot of money, at least that's what weirdos on the internet say.

VALERIE

But it makes it harder for every other woman trying to stream for a living, you know?

He takes a drink of his beer.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Acting has a bit more dignity than the hot tub meta, just saying.

JERICHO

You haven't been acting that long if you still think that way.

She shakes her head.

Jericho's eyes look to the bar.

Ben drinks a fruity cocktail, his eyes scanning the room.

EXT. MID TIER RESTAURANT - NIGHT

CHAD (mid 20s, simp) observes Valerie and Jericho.
He's short with a neck beard and a dad bod.

INT. RANCH HOME LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Taylor's body is on the floor, stabbed to death.
A pool of blood surrounds it.
First Responders are all over.
Alan walks in, looks around.
His eyes focus on the stab wounds.
A UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICER walks up to Alan.

POLICE OFFICER
Detective James, Right?

ALAN
Traffic was a fucking nightmare,
even with the wailer on.

Alan nods.

The Officer points to the body.

POLICE OFFICER
Taylor Jenkins, he's a low level
producer who was murdered sometime
this afternoon.

ALAN
Have you--

POLICE OFFICER
While I was waiting I knocked on
some doors. An older muscle car was
here earlier.

Alan's eyes perk up.

ALAN
Any clue what kind?

POLICE OFFICER
They said it was the one from a Vin
Diesel movie.

ALAN

Please tell me someone got a
license plate number.

POLICE OFFICER

I don't have one but I've got a
description of the driver.

Alan motions for him to talk.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)

A young Brad Pitt look alike.

Alan takes a deep breath.

INT. MID TIER RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Valerie looks around.

Her eyes spot the bathroom.

VALERIE

If you'll excuse me.

Valerie walks to the bathroom.

Ben's eyes follow her.

He takes his phone out and calls Jericho.

Jericho answers.

BEN

I don't see anyone who has that
sort of stabby type to them.

JERICHO

You do know you could just walk
over here, right?

BEN

What if she comes back?

JERICHO

I ran into my roommate.

BEN

Which is slightly less weird than
you answering a call when your date
is taking a leak.

Jericho looks around.

His eyes spot Chad.

JERICHO
Check out the guy up front.

Ben's eyes turn.

Chad doesn't see either of them.

BEN
That guy kind of looks like he'd
stab someone.

Beat.

JERICHO
Call 911.

BEN
And say what, exactly?

JERICHO
There's a weird guy staring at
people through a window.

BEN
That's probably a low priority.

JERICHO
Unless you want to--

The Waitress walks over to Jericho.

WAITRESS
How is everything?

Jericho puts the phone down.

JERICHO
It's great.
(motions to Chad)
Can you--

WAITRESS
We've already called the police.

JERICHO
And?

WAITRESS
Until he does something, they put
it on their low priority list.

Jericho shrugs.

The Waitress walks away.

Jericho picks up his phone, looks over to the bar.

Ben is gone.

Jericho looks around the restaurant.

His eyes spot Ben walking towards the front entrance.

He goes to follow but stops.

INT. POLICE SEDAN - NIGHT (DRIVING)

Alan is behind the wheel.

His hand fumbles through his caller ID, landing on Denise.

He calls her.

DENISE (V.O.)
Alan, it's my off night.

ALAN
I need you to meet me at O'Keefe's.

DENISE (V.O.)
I'm in Orange County right now.

ALAN
I caught a body and guess who was spotted at the crime scene.

DENISE (V.O.)
I'm on my way.

EXT. MID TIER RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Chad watches as Valerie sits back down.

Ben exits, looking at him.

Chad turns, sees Ben.

BEN
Hey--

Chad sprints away.

Ben sprints after him.

EXT. RESTAURANT ALLEY - NIGHT

Chad runs past a dumpster.

He trips over his feet.

Chad's cell phone hits the ground.

His wallpaper is a photo of Valerie in a seductive pose.

Ben sprints in, looks around.

His eyes spot Chad's phone.

BEN

What the fuck, dude?

Chad looks at his phone and then Ben.

CHAD

I'm in love with her.

BEN

Seriously?

CHAD

I'm part of her fan club and one of the top people on her Only Fans.

Ben points to the exit.

BEN

Get the fuck out of here.

Chad runs away.

INT. MID TIER RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Valerie and Jericho eat.

Jericho's eyes dart between her and the window.

She notices.

VALERIE

Is everything OK?

JERICHO

I thought I saw something outside.

She turns and looks.

Nothing.

Jericho's phone buzzes with a text from Ben.

"Just a weirdo. Got inspired, going home to write."

VALERIE
Anything important?

JERICHO
Just my roommate trying to pitch me
on something.

She looks at him oddly.

JERICHO (CONT'D)
My roommate is a writer and runs
anything he's thinking of past me
first, you know?

VALERIE
It must be nice to have someone
like that nearby.

JERICHO
It is.

Valerie takes a deep breath.

VALERIE
So I had some ideas for how to do
that screen test.

JERICHO
I'd love to hear them.

EXT. MID TIER RESTAURANT - LATER

Jericho and Valerie exit, walking towards her SUV.

VALERIE
I've got a crew already lined up.
All guys with real credits who are
looking to do something cool.

JERICHO
I'm in.

She smiles.

They hug and then lightly kiss.

VALERIE
 I think we should keep this--
 (looks at him)
 --professional.

They make out for a little bit.

JERICHO
 Definitely professional.

They make out a little longer.

VALERIE
 Do you need a ride home?

JERICHO
 I parked a couple blocks over.

VALERIE
 Drive safe.

Alan is in the distance, watching Jericho.

Jericho walks towards an alley.

Valerie drives away.

Alan's eyes follow him.

The Dark Figure follows Jericho into the alley.

A large Bowie knife is in their hand.

Alan's eyes are drawn to the knife.

It reflects in the light.

He takes his gun out

EXT. MID TIER ALLEY - NIGHT

Jericho hears footsteps behind.

He turns to see Zoe approach him, knife in hand.

JERICHO
 What the shit?

ZOE
 Surprised, huh?

JERICHO
 Not in a good way.

ZOE

It wasn't enough that you just had to humiliate me with all of those other women but--

JERICHO

Taylor says hello.

ZOE

--then you tried to ruin my career!

JERICHO

I was trying to help you!

ZOE

Now you're going to help me by making me into the star I should be.

JERICHO

You can just drop this and we can talk it out.

ZOE

You never wanted to talk. You just wanted to fuck.

Jericho gulps.

JERICHO

Why?

ZOE

You ruined my career and then my relationship and then--

JERICHO

I'm not the one who was dating someone and then calling me.

ZOE

He saw you leaving.

JERICHO

How's that my fault?

ZOE

You should've seen Taylor's face when I told him.

JERICHO

He seemed pretty down, like he still gave a shit about you.

Zoe motions to the knife.

Jericho understands.

ZOE

It'll be amazing when the police find a Script Revolution account with a script you wrote about a serial killer.

JERICHO

They can trace that back to you.

ZOE

Once they hear my story, they won't care to check.

Zoe looks at the knife.

JERICHO

Killing me won't make your career.

ZOE

You tried to kill me twice.
(cuts herself with the)
(knife)
I left a message for that ugly cop that I found something of yours on the floor.

JERICHO

It probably came out of my pocket the dozens of times I was--

ZOE

He won't believe you.

JERICHO

I think he's smarter than that.

ZOE

He thinks you did it and this'll be confirming every bias he has.

JERICHO

You need to get some help.

ZOE

You need to accept that your life is about to end.

JERICHO

Then why the rest of them? It'd have been easier to just kill me.

ZOE

One dead woman isn't going to make
the cops ruin your life like you
ruined mine. A bunch? Well, that's
where the fun--

(sees something, sighs)
--begins.

ALAN (O.S)

Don't stop on my account.

Jericho looks, sees Alan.

Alan's gun is pointed right at him.

ALAN (CONT'D)

You're under arrest.

ZOE

You were supposed to be here ten
minutes from now.

Zoe looks at the gun and then at Alan.

She goes to drop the knife... and then charges Jericho.

Bang!

She hits the ground, bleeding out.

Alan walks over, gun pointed at her.

Zoe explodes to her feet.

Alan empties his gun into her, killing Zoe.

INT. LOGAN'S OFFICE - DAY (THREE MONTHS LATER)

Logan reads over a script.

A pen is on his desk.

Jericho watches him closely.

He has a goatee now.

JERICHO

Apparently the phrase "kill some
babies" can be misinterpreted.

LOGAN

Pardon?

JERICHO

Ben told me that when this thing got to around one hundred and thirty pages, so I had the killer drown a pair of babies.

Logan puts the script down and looks at Jericho oddly.

JERICHO (CONT'D)

I didn't know it meant cut some of the stuff you like, OK?

Logan sighs. His eyes turn back to the script. He grabs the pen and crosses something off.

LOGAN

So what did the roommate have to say about all of this?

JERICHO

He suggested the title and then made fun of my taste in women.

LOGAN

I don't like it.

JERICHO

The Script Plunger said it made the theme... pop.

LOGAN

Script Plunger?

JERICHO

He's one of those consultants... he plumbs the depths of your script, to make it as smooth going in as it is going out.

LOGAN

They've all got a gimmick.

JERICHO

So what do you think?

Logan looks at Jericho.

LOGAN

Don't stick your dick in crazy?

JERICHO

It's catchy.

LOGAN

It's going to be changed before it goes out to anyone.

JERICHO

It's a real eye-opener!

LOGAN

Brainstorm a new one. The sooner the better, too.

INT. RECEPTION - LATER

Jericho walks out of Logan's office and over to an elevator.

He presses the down button.

Valerie walks up to it.

She presses the down button several times.

JERICHO

Why is it that everyone does that?

VALERIE

I'd like to think it makes it come here faster.

They look at each other for a moment.

Their attraction is still there.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I was going to call you but--

JERICHO

I get it.

They both chuckle.

VALERIE

It was weird seeing you on the news.

JERICHO

They used my good head shot.

VALERIE

It made me curious about one thing.

JERICHO

It's Biblical.

VALERIE
Your middle name.

The elevator doors open up.

They walk inside.

JERICHO
No one ever asks me that.

VALERIE
That is a surprise.

JERICHO
My mom was religious and my dad
really loved "The Godfather."
(beat)
Sonny's real name is Santino and my
dad was such a fan of James Caan
that he gave all of us middle names
from his movies.

She laughs.

VALERIE
You write something about this?

He nods.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
I'd love to read it.

The doors close.

FADE OUT.