

THE ROGUE FACTION

written by

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OVER BLACK

A MAN SCREAMS.

THE CRUNCHING OF HUMAN BONES pronounce his swift but most violent demise.

A moment of silence.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Noooooo!

A CACOPHONY OF JUMBLED POLICE SIRENS.

RAWLEY (V.O.)

They say everyone has a dark side.
And at some point in life you
reach a breaking point. The moment
that dark side is exposed.

A crew of police cars simultaneously stomp their brakes.
Doors open and slam shut.

FADE IN:

EXT. RAUL'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

A GIANT EYEBALL. Pupil fixed and dilated.

We ever so slowly PULL AWAY to reveal the bloodied face and mangled body of RAUL ORTEGA.

SUPER: MOUNT PLEASANT, MICHIGAN 2013

Raul lay on a sidewalk. A small pool of blood oozes from beneath his jaw. Snow flurries drift slowly to the lawn before him.

RAWLEY (V.O.)

Mine went public about twelve years ago. The second Raul Ortega's face hit the pavement.

POLICEMEN move in on Raul, charge the building, storm a steep flight of white-capped apartment stairs. While the remaining officers fix their gaze three stories up. Stopping on the rage-fueled, stone cold mug of...

RAWLEY NINER (30s), disheveled tan sport coat, loose tie and a deep cut on his forehead. He stands on a balcony, stares down, observes his handy work with little remorse. A gleam of realized vengeance.

RAWLEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

From there, the city did their best to make an example of me. To assassinate my character. And to prove that there was something broken inside of me. Something that disregarded the basic human decency that comes with being an officer of the law.

Staring into the crowd below, Rawley spots a DARK HAired MAN IN A LEATHER JACKET brazenly move through the growing maze of UNIFORM COPS and CURIOUS TENANTS. It's none other than BOBBY VAN DEN KEMP.

RAWLEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Ironically enough, it was because of that broken part that I was able to lie and cheat my way out of trouble.

Rawley turns around, stares down, spots a heartbroken JUSTINE HERRERA squatted on Raul's living room carpet, head between her knees, balling her eyes out.

RAWLEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

My old T.O. Danny Pyle told me my first day on the job. There are two types of cop. One who always plays by the rules and does the right thing. Or one that makes arrests. But there was no middle line.

EXT. BUSINESS DISTRICT - NIGHT

SUPER: EAST SIDE DETROIT 2005

A late model Crown Vic marked DETROIT POLICE sits at the curb before the barely operable screen door to MOTOR CITY LIQUORS AND CHECK CASHING, a decayed corner market with boarded up windows and chipped paint.

THE TWO COPS in the squad car keep a careful eye on...

A SMALL PATCH OF WOODS that sit just beyond the chain linked fences of a neighborhood basketball court. A good hundred yards of distance between them.

A couple of LOCAL TEENS shoot hoops, talk trash, trade some brutal insults. THREE OTHERS chill in the bleachers, laugh, taunt the players.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Riding shotgun is a very young RAWLEY NINER (20s), a freshly groomed, green as can be rookie with a proper military cut and tailored police uniform. He pokes a long flashlight out his car window...

...runs the BRIGHT BEAM across the trees, searching for any signs of life unaccounted for.

Behind the wheel sits Rawley's training officer DANNY PYLE (40s), a tense faced, bulbous nosed burn out with a real penchant for drinking on the job and violating the rights of his brown-skinned prey.

Danny grows annoyed with Rawley's flashlight.

RAWLEY (V.O.)

To tell you the truth, as a wide eyed rookie cop, I thought old Danny had put a few too many years in and lost the plot. But my eyes were about to be opened to the realities of the job.

Danny slaps Rawley in the chest.

DANNY

Hey turd brain. You wanna quit paintin' a bullseye on those trees.

Rawley, nervous, unsure of himself, nods in agreement, rests the flashlight on his lap.

RAWLEY (V.O.)

There are some that say tossing Raul off that balcony was the beginning of the end for me. The moment all hope was lost. Truth is, that happened the moment I met Sergeant Danny Pyle.

Danny chugs what's left of his beer, crushes the can and tosses it at Rawley's feet with the rest of his trash. Including a nest of fast food bags, candy wrappers, old cigarette boxes.

Rawley rolls his eyes.

RAWLEY

You know, there is a trash can right outside.

DANNY

Don't even think about it. Not gonna lose this guy cause you wanna go dumpster diving.

Rawley smirks, shakes his head.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Speaking of, how's sister soldier doing these days? You still trying to tame the wild beast?

Rawley cracks a halfhearted grin, fights the urge to deck his new racist partner.

RAWLEY

If you mean Tatiana, things are real good, thanks.

DANNY

You know I'm just messin with you, right? Ain't nuthin wrong with breaking off a piece of chocolate every once in awhile. We all got a sweet tooth.

Rawley takes a deep breath, swallows his pride, along with some strong words.

RAWLEY

Yeah, well, it's more than a once in awhile thing. So maybe take it easy, okay?

Danny reads Rawley's ever increasing impatience, cracks a smug grin and doubles down.

DANNY

What is it, Rawley? You gettin all diverse? That what they taught you back in that conversion camp?

RAWLEY

For the hundredth time. It wasn't a conversion camp or a sex cult or commune. It was a retreat.

DANNY

Yeah yeah. For shitty kids. You told me.

RAWLEY

My folks thought it would do me some good.

DANNY

Like how to be more culturally sensitive and inclusive?

RAWLEY

Like how to stop being a prick. You might wanna look into it.

Danny laughs.

DANNY

Ouch.

Rawley refocuses his attention on the woods. Still no movement from the trees.

RAWLEY

How you so sure he's coming through the park? Wouldn't that be pretty stupid considering he just took a shot at a cop less than three blocks away?

Danny nods to one of the young men on the court, who is busy looking over his shoulder, checking for passing cars, staring into the woods.

DANNY

You see this guy? What he's doing?

Rawley observes.

DANNY (CONT'D)

He knows our shooter's waiting in those woods.

RAWLEY

How's he know that?

DANNY

I don't know. Maybe he called him or something. Gave him a head's up. All I know is...that guy's wrong.

Danny rolls down his window, looks thoughtfully into his side view mirror, dips his head out, staring down the street behind them.

Rawley follows his look.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 Any second now, a black and white
 is gonna cruise by and flip these
 guys. Run their sheets.

Danny points to the trees.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 When they check out, our shooter is
 gonna come strolling out of those
 woods and join our friends for some
 three on three. Bam. Free as a
 bird.

RAWLEY
 Almost too easy.

Rawley thinks it all over as he quietly observes the young
 man's increasingly suspicious behavior. And then, without
 warning...the young man stops in his tracks...stares back
 at them.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)
 I think our friend just made us.

DANNY
 Dammit.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
 Hey L13. You guys alive out there?

Danny snags the transponder.

DANNY
 (to Dipatch)
 Yeah we're here. Talk to me.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
 We got reports of a domestic
 disturbance at Twenty Nine
 McCormick Avenue with shots fired.
 Are you guys available?

RAWLEY
 Shots fired. Could be our guy.

Danny unconvinced.

DANNY
 (to Dispatch)
 That's a negative. We're sitting
 on something here, home base. Get
 somebody else.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
 Caller was asking for you, Sarge.

Danny's stomach sinks.

DANNY
 (to Rawley)
 Twenty Nine McCormick. It's
 Shanice.

RAWLEY
 Who?

DANNY
 Shanice Brown. She's an informant.
 Dickhead boyfriend's beating the
 shit out of her again. Perfect
 timing.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
 L13. Do you copy?

Danny takes a breath.

DANNY
 (to Dispatch)
 Uh, that's a ten four, home base.
 L13 on route.

Danny re hooks the transponder, pulls a hot u turn and their
 off to McCormick Avenue.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Danny and Rawley are hauling ass down the mostly deserted and
 decayed neighborhood streets. Old brick buildings, fifty
 year old homes, factories and processing plants either torn
 down, inoperable or left in ruins.

In an almost post apocalyptic landscape...every square inch
 of these streets are peppered with mounds of broken cinder
 block, chipped roof tile, shattered glass, wire, rebar, and
 an indecipherable mess of garbage and debris.

In the distance, short bursts of ORANGE FLAMES CRACKLE AND
 POP from the bellies of rusted out oil drums.

HOMELESS warms themselves around the homemade fires.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Rawley is hypnotized by the sight of it all. As if he's seeing it for the first time.

EXT. SHANICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Danny and Rawley's squad car drifts to a stop in the middle of the street. Their attention quickly drawn to a MAN CURSING AND SCREAMING. It's coming from inside the home. A WOMAN CRIES FOR HELP.

JEWELL (18), Shanice's daughter, sweat pants, bare foot, rushes to the driver's side.

JEWELL
Officer Danny?

DANNY
Hey baby doll. Your Mom and Dex gettin into it again?

JEWELL
Yes, sir.

DANNY
Can you tell me what happened?

JEWELL
I don't know. It's like they be talkin in the kitchen and all the sudden he just go crazy. Be tryin to choke her. Sayin she be cheatin on him with his homeboy. But she didn't do nuthin.

The YELLING and ARGUING intensifies. Rawley squirms in his seat, grows anxious, ready to take action.

DANNY
I heard there was shooting. He pull a gun on your Mom?

JEWELL
Yes! He be shootin' all over the place. Sayin' how she better talk or she be next. But I swear she don't even know what he talkin' about.

Rawley overhears all havoc being wreaked inside. Cabinets SLAM! Dishes CRASH!

RAWLEY

(to Danny)

Sounds like things are getting heated in there, Sarge. Are we doing this or what?

DANNY

Relax. I know this prick. He ain't gonna do shit.

Rawley huffs with frustration.

DANNY (CONT'D)

(to Jewell)

You got somewhere you can go, like a girlfriend's or something?

JEWELL

Yes, sir.

DANNY

Get out of here.

Jewell darts off.

Danny turns to Rawley.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Alright. So this guy's expecting me. I'll be coming through the front door alone. You take the back in case he bolts.

Rawley reaches for a dash-mounted twelve gauge.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Leave the cannon. Unless you wanna kill the hostage.

RAWLEY

Right. Good call.

DANNY

And watch your ass. Our shooter's still out there.

Danny dips out of the car. Rawley follows behind.

EXT. SHANICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Danny moves with a certain cool stride and learned confidence from his years on the streets. He takes his time as he approaches the door.

With the front room drapes slightly drawn...Rawley stays as low as possible, races around the home.

Danny throws a glance through the front window, taps on the glass, as if to announce his arrival, and finally dips through the open front door.

INT. SHANICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Standing in the kitchen is the aggressor of this whole mess DEXTER "DEX" WATERS, an enraged drug-fueled psychotic who holds a thirty two revolver to the temple of girlfriend SHANICE BROWN, dressed in a skimpy bathrobe, her hair wet from a shower.

DEX

Welcome to the party, cop. Just in time. I want you to see this.

Dex jams the muzzle into Shanice's neck. She SHRIEKS in an outright panic.

DEX (CONT'D)

I want your cop boyfriend to see me paint this wall here with this snitch ass bitch's brains!

SHANICE

Do something.

DANNY

Come on now. If you were gonna do that, you would've done it already. No need for this. Me and Shanice go back a long time. Long before you. Just a cop helping a girl in trouble.

SHANICE

(to Dex)
Listen to him.

DANNY

Shut up, bitch!

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. SHANICE'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT

Rawley attempts to open the rear door. It's locked.

RAWLEY

Shit.

And just behind Rawley, about twenty yards away, the tin metal door of a filthy tool and maintenance shed slides shut on its own.

Rawley spins around, aims his weapon and flashlight at the barely standing tin barn.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. SHANICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Danny keeps his palms up - in plain view of Dex.

DANNY

I don't want you or your homeboys or any of your crew. This is about keeping food in these kids bellies. My only concern.

DEX

She still trickin' and you lettin' her, cop!

DANNY

You're right. What I need to do is get DCS on the horn and get these kids out of here and her into rehab. But that's a whole new pile of shit reigning down on this house you don't want. Believe me.

Danny slowly moves in on Dex and Shanice.

DEX

Stay back!

DANNY

Alright. What I'm gonna do is very slowly...take out my gun and lay it on the counter here. Because I trust you. I know you don't really wanna hurt Shanice. You love her. I know that.

Danny keeps eye contact with Dex, and with great caution, moves for his weapon.

A panicked Dex hides behind Shanice, gun pressed to the back of her skull.

DEX
I'll blow her head off!

Danny very carefully pops open his holster, and with his left hand, draws his weapon and sets it on the kitchen counter to Dex's right side.

DANNY
There. Now we can talk like gentlemen.

EXT. SHANICE'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT

Rawley is right on top of the tool shed, ready to throw open the flimsy tin door. His feet shimmy and his rookie hands tremble at the thought.

RAWLEY
Police! Very slowly open the door and let me see those hands!

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. SHANICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dex is distracted by RAWLEY'S VOICE, turns and stares through the rear kitchen window. All the while keeping his gun on the back of Shanice's head.

DANNY
Don't get nervous. It's just my partner.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. SHANICE'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT

Rawley slides open the tin door, gun and flashlight aimed into the dark belly of the cobwebbed tool shed.

RAWLEY
Let me see your hands!

An unidentified human leg knocks over a shovel.

Rawley unloads three tightly grouped shots from his forty caliber service weapon.

WHITE FLASH TO:

INT. SHANICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (LATER)

A CRIME SCENE UNIT investigates the aftermath.

Shanice's brains blown against the wall. She lay just feet from Dex...shot multiple times center mass.

The front window drapes are all the way drawn as the RED and BLUE LIGHTS of multiple squad cars light up the faces of the ON-SCENE OFFICERS, as well as the kitchen walls.

LT. ROLAND GIBSON (50s), a gruff trench coat fitted Internal Affairs field officer, head of the shooting board, takes Danny's statement for the record.

DANNY

There were reports of shots fired. Rawley and I took the call. Upon arrival at the residence...I instructed Officer Niner to cover the back while I entered through the front door. I kept my hands raised. Being this wasn't the first time I'd dealt with Dex Waters. I immediately noticed the suspect in the kitchen holding a gun to Miss Brown. Screaming about...she's stealing. That little bitch is stealing from me. So I made the connection he caught Shanice taking cash. Or maybe she was hiding money from him on the sly.

Danny wipes a single tear from his eye.

LT. GIBSON

And? Then what happened?

DANNY

Before I know what's happening...I hear my partner in the back yard scream "He killed her." Sonofabitch killed her."

Danny's lips quiver with regret. His nerves frazzled.

DANNY (CONT'D)

At that point I went for my weapon. The suspect must've known he was going down no matter what. So he pulled the trigger. Blew her head off. I immediately opened fire.

Danny shakes his head with disgust.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Poor dumb kid was sneaking money from this prick's dresser drawer for weeks. Just so her and her sister could get out. Get away from this mess.

Danny wipes a few more tears.

DANNY (CONT'D)

She got out alright. Ten years old. Chases her into the shed and...this animal leaves her there like nothing.

Lt. Gibson doesn't hide his obvious disdain for Danny as he throws him an unconvinced stare.

LT. GIBSON

Well then. I guess we're all done here. For now. Where's your partner?

EXT. SHANICE'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Rawley sits on a rusted metal chair near the front door, eyes and face swollen red. He watches a pair of CORONERS load a four foot body bag into a meat wagon. The body of Shanice's youngest daughter.

Jewell, the older sister, is an absolute mess as TWO UNIFORM COPS attempt to console her. She collapses in their arms, screaming, sobbing, drops to her knees.

Rawley shuts his eyes. It's all too much.

Lt. Gibson steps onto the porch and witnesses Jewell's emotional collapse.

He looks down, spots Rawley in the chair, and, with a razor sharp stare that could cut glass, hovers over him like an angry father.

LT. GIBSON

Open your eyes. And listen very closely.

Rawley looks up. Like a puppy who got caught shitting on the living room carpet.

LT. GIBSON (CONT'D)

That little tale your partner just spun is officially on record. That means from here on out, unless you're sitting before an IAD review board or under a court order, you don't talk. Not to the press. Your Momma or Dadda. The department shrink or your priest.

RAWLEY

What happens now?

LT. GIBSON

You see? You're talking. Don't talk. Don't speak.

Rawley gives up, leans back in his chair.

LT. GIBSON (CONT'D)

We all know when ballistics comes back on that little girl, the truth is gonna come out. One way or the other.

Rawley looks down in shame.

LT. GIBSON (CONT'D)

So here's what's gonna happen next, Mister Niner.

Rawley spots Danny on the front steps, popping in a new cigarette and lighting up.

LT. GIBSON (CONT'D)

You're gonna take a temporary leave of absence. Until all the smoke clears and this case officially closes. When it does, you're gonna resign. Quietly. And you're gonna leave the city. And you're never gonna speak of this again.

Rawley fights the urge to burst into tears.

LT. GIBSON (CONT'D)

Go home.

Lt. Gibson steps off the porch, bumps shoulders with Danny, who drops and stomps his half-smoked butt, watches Rawley with concern.

RAWLEY (V.O.)

Three weeks on the job and I shoot a kid. Explains a lot, doesn't it? It was a secret me and Danny Pyle would carry for the next twenty years. Letting it fester inside of us like some kind of cancer, taking another piece of our souls with every passing year we got away with it. What I learned over the years is that there wasn't enough coke or bourbon or pills in the world to numb that kind of pain. It simply becomes a part of you.

Danny's face morphs into an older, slightly heavier and greyer version...sitting at a packed and popular bar on a busy Friday night.

INT. LUCKY LEPRECHAUN BAR - NIGHT

SUPER: DETROIT - 2025

DANNY PYLE (50s), slovenly shirt, scruffy beard and tired eyes, enjoys a boilermaker, ignores the lively crowd of patrons around him while getting a greater sense of amusement staring at his phone.

A GIF of RAWLEY getting perp walked from his home by a pair of cops and him cursing and spitting at the camera. The titles read SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL POLICE.

Danny has a good laugh but his attention is quickly diverted by a live television broadcast. He focuses on a large flat screen hanging above the bar.

NEWS ANCHOR

And here is footage of Demar Jefferson being escorted into Wayne County Jail early yesterday morning for his role in the shooting death of police officer Joshua Butler. Just three short hours later, Jefferson's lawyer DeShaun Gates, a known civil rights attorney who represented Demar's own father almost thirty years earlier, released this shocking statement. Let's listen...

DeShaun Gates stands before a row of field reporters and hot microphones. The newly constructed criminal justice center known as "Wayne County Jail" behind him.

GATES

It was almost twenty years ago to the date. Decarlo Jefferson, in the midst of a car jacking gone terribly wrong, shot off duty police officer Phil Grecco in the back. This occurred when Officer Grecco reached for his weapon...securely tucked away in the glove box. The bullet fired from Jefferson's gun struck Grecco's spine...causing him to be paralyzed for what will be the remainder of his life.

Danny grows angry all over again.

DANNY

Piece of shit.

GATES

My client's father, Decarlo Jefferson, as most of you know, was never apprehended. In the weeks following Officer Grecco's shooting...law enforcement agencies across the state united in a joint effort in what would become the biggest manhunt in the history of the state. They would fail in these efforts. As many of you have heard, Officer Grecco has finally lost his battle. And has recently passed on.

The BARTENDER grabs a tv remote from the bar, attempts to turn the channel. But not before...

DANNY

(to Bartender)

Hey, wait a second. Turn this up, would ya?

The Bartender ups the volume, hands Danny the remote.

GATES

It is our theory. That is, to say, the theory of myself, and my client, Demar Jefferson. That the Detroit Police Department is framing him in an effort to bring his father Decarlo out of hiding. One cop killer in exchange for another.

(MORE)

GATES (CONT'D)

Given Officer Grecco's recent passing, the timing couldn't be better.

DANNY

Nice try, Demar. He's got his old man's balls. I'll give em that.

Danny hits the mute button on Gates, hands the remote back to the Bartender.

BARTENDER

Let it go, Danny. You're gonna give yourself another ulcer.

Danny refocuses on a nearby table full of good looking twenty-somethings, celebrating a birthday.

CRAY MACKELWAY leads the pack. He is a boyishly handsome and sharply-dressed African-American with a perfectly manicured beard and overtly wild clothes. From his crazy hair, loud mouth and fashion sense, you get the idea Cray is a real attention hog.

Joining Cray is his secret crush and wanna be girlfriend NATASHA APPELBY (20s), a confident, low key beauty and co host of Cray's podcast "The Urban Jungle".

Across the table from Natasha is Cray's long time best bud and cameraman TUCKER WHITE (20s), a well put together stud with tight dreadlocks and a simple muscle shirt. He's the true object of Natasha's affection.

Last but not least, CLIFFORD MAYS, a meek but quick-witted nerdy type with thick glasses and a fast mouth. The one true smart ass of the bunch.

CRAY

Yo, check this out. They got Jefferson. In custody. Why they don't charge him yet? All I'm saying.

NATASHA

You actually believe him? That after twenty years Decarlo Jefferson is gonna come out of hiding and turn himself in to save a kid he never bothered to raise in the first place.

Danny eavesdrops on their convo, cracks a knowing grin.

CRAY

I'm not saying I believe him. I'm just saying I don't not believe him. I don't get you guys. We get our next story practically knocking us over the head and you guys don't wanna touch it.

Cray's friends share a laugh at his expense.

CLIFFORD

You know you're my boy and we agree on most things but, from what I see with this Jefferson kid, the apple don't fall far from the tree. And you're not seeing the forest for the trees, my friend.

TUCKER

That's right.

CRAY

Man, what does that even mean? Check this. His old man shot a cop. Put a decorated war hero in a wheelchair and never got caught. You don't think PD still ain't holding a grudge?

TUCKER

Or maybe he's just lying through his teeth cause his lawyer knows he don't have a leg to stand on.

Clifford points two fingers at Tucker. Cray rolls his eyes.

CLIFFORD

And there you have it. Thank you.

A WAITRESS greets them all with a full tray of bourbon shooters.

WAITRESS

Another round. Compliments of the gentleman at the bar.

They all turn to Danny, who smiles, holds up his drink.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)

(to Natasha)

He'd like to wish you a happy birthday.

Natasha offers Danny a warm, thankful smile.

NATASHA
 (to Danny)
 Thank you!

Cray and Tucker politely nod back.

CRAY
 (to Natasha)
 Who is this white dude?

NATASHA
 Probably drunk. So just smile and
 drink your drink, okay?

Cray gets possessive, hovers behind Natasha's chair and
 throws Danny a dirty look.

CRAY
 Yeah, so anyways. Before we were
 so rudely interrupted. What were
 we talking about?

CLIFFORD
 How you were wrong.

Natasha almost spit takes her drink.

CRAY
 Yeah, thanks. Almost forgot.

TUCKER
 It's this simple. He shot at a
 cop. He got caught. Now they're
 playing the blue versus black card.
 Same old same old.

NATASHA
 (to Cray)
 Look, just cause they haven't
 charged him doesn't mean anything.
 They're probably still working out
 a plea deal. I think you're
 letting your overactive producer's
 brain cloud your judgement.

CLIFFORD
 Not that that's a bad thing. Kind
 of why we all fell in love with you
 in the first place.

Natasha smiles, hugs Cray's leg, winks up at him.

Danny approaches the table, snags one of their birthday
 bourbon shots from the tray.

DANNY
 (to all)
 Excuse me. But I couldn't help but
 overhear your conversation.

CRAY
 Yeah, I noticed.

DANNY
 (to Cray)
 I think maybe your friends are on
 the right track with this one.

Danny downs his shot.

CRAY
 Is that right?

DANNY
 That's right.

CRAY
 What makes you say that? Were you
 there?

Danny smiles.

DANNY
 No. I just think you're all
 overlooking the obvious.

CRAY
 What's that?

DANNY
 Decarlo Jefferson paralyzed a
 decorated war hero and was never
 heard from again, right?

TUCKER
 Yeah, so?

DANNY
 So. Sounds to me like PD took care
 of him a long time ago.

Cray, Natasha, Clifford and Tucker all share a look of pure
 shock and surprise. As if they've never considered this
 theory as a possibility.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 You know. If you ask me. But good
 luck with your program.

Danny stuffs a folded napkin in his empty shot glass, rests the glass in front of Cray, locks eyes with him and heads for the door.

Cray pulls the napkin from the glass, unfolds it. In blue pen it reads...NORTHWAY.

EXT. LUCKY LEPRECHAUN BAR - NIGHT

Cray races through the door, onto the sidewalk, checks both directions for Danny. He's long gone.

Meantime...

Parked at a curb across the street, Danny watches him from behind the wheel of his car.

Cray, disappointed, gives up, returns to the bar.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Danny stands before a most impressive selection of vodkas, incessantly flipping the lid of his stainless zippo. He throws in a smoke, about to spark up, but fixes his attention on a convex security mirror in the upper corner of the market.

In rush TWO STICK UP GUYS in long coats. One moves to the end of a long checkout line. The other roams the aisles in search of heroes.

Danny easily glides behind an end cap.

STICK UP GUY #2 decides the coast is clear, returns to the front where only a single WOMAN is left in line. He gives his partner the nod.

STICK UP GUY #1 unveils his sawed off shotgun to a pair of FEMALE CHECKOUT CLERKS.

STICK UP GUY #1
Alright, girls, lets see those
hands! In the air!

STICK UP GUY #2 presses his shotgun in the small of the remaining customer's back.

STICK UP GUY #2
Don't get nervous. We do this for
a living.

Both CLERKS raise their hands.

STICK UP GUY #1
Open the registers or my partner
does her.

DANNY (V.O.)
Best be careful. They keep a piece
in the register here.

STICK UP GUY #1 spins around, aims his shotgun in the
direction of Danny's voice. He spots Danny holding a
gun to the back of his partner's head.

CLERK #1 draws a nickel plated thirty two. Aims it at the
armed felon before her.

CLERK #1
Don't you move!

DANNY
I told you.

STICK UP GUY #2
Now what?

STICK UP GUY #1 hears the hammer click...spins back
around...open fires at the armed clerk.

BOOM!

Clerk #1 dives for cover.

The window behind her SHATTERS. A shelf of lottery tickets
are ripped to shreds as minuscule paper bits cast a WHITE
FOG over the front end.

Meantime, CLERK #1 holds up under the register.

CLERK #1
SHIT!

CLERK #2, also under her register.

CLERK #2
Stay down!

Danny turns his gun on STICK UP GUY #1.

STICK UP GUY #2 elbows him in the jaw...quickly sending Danny
sliding across the floor.

The female hostage SCREAMS...blocks stick up guy's view of

DANNY...rolling under a floor display topped with a thick
linen table cloth.

STICK UP GUY #2 fends off the hysterical woman attempting to claw his eyes out, shoves her aside, open fires on the clothed table display. Three full racks of shells tear the display to pieces.

Meanwhile, STICK UP GUY #1 checks the convex mirror, spots Danny coming up another aisle.

STICK UP GUY #1
Come on, badass!

He rushes to the end of the aisle...surprises Danny who dives for cover, barely dodges a SHOTGUN BLAST.

Dozens of bottles are SHATTERED as glass and booze spill all around a cowering Danny.

STICK UP GUY #1 ejects his spent shell. Danny quickly aims and unloads some tightly grouped shots.

Down he goes. Deceased.

Danny tucks his weapon into his belt, snags the shotgun from the ground, re racks. He simply stands and waits, checking both ends of the aisle.

STICK UP GUY #2 appears at the opposite end...frantically open fires...hitting the bottles and shelves all around a calm and stoic Danny.

Danny fires from the hip, destroys his target's kneecap. He collapses.

STICK UP GUY #2
You motherfucker!

Danny drops the shotgun, draws his handgun, walks calmly to the front end registers.

CLERK #1
Are they dead?

DANNY
Well. At least one of them is. I think.

CLERK #1
Should we call an ambulance?

DANNY
Sure. You call an ambulance. Meantime.

Danny aims his gun at Clerk #2.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 You can finish emptying that drawer
 and putting it in a paper bag.

CLERK #2
 What?

DANNY
 The money. All of it. In a bag.

Both Clerks stand perplexed.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 Today's lesson. Nothing comes free
 in this world.
 (beat)
 Hurry up!

Clerk #2 very nervously empties her drawer, stuffs it in a brown paper bag as instructed.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 Keep your hands where I can see
 them and go over there with your
 friend. Don't get nervous. I used
 to do this for a living.

Clerk #2 joins her coworker, both with hands held in the air as Danny holsters his gun.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 Well girls. You have a nice
 evening.

He stops...looks to the security camera...flashes one finger from his left hand and all five with his right.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

A slick DODGE CHARGER, all blacked out with tinted windows, wastes little time as it dodges and maneuvers through a slew of COP CARS jamming up the lot.

It stops directly in front of the door, all but pronouncing the importance of his arrival. Out jumps...

DETECTIVE JACKO (40s), Italian-American, eight hundred dollar snake skin jacket, silk shirt, undercover narco cop. His walk is slick and assured as he all but runs over a crew of UNIFORM COPS watching the door.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Jacko spots one of the injured gunmen being wheeled out on a stretcher. His kneecap blown off. He turns, stares up at the curved mirror hanging in the corner. And then...

The two cameras behind the register.

DETECTIVE GREEN (50s), the on-scene homicide cop, steps out from behind an end cap, greets Jacko.

DET. GREEN

Why is it whenever there's a mess,
I see your greasy mug?

JACKO

I'm like that movie. Everywhere,
all the time. In your face.

Jacko steps closer. He points to the cops by the door, standing in the outer lot.

JACKO (CONT'D)

Because these uniforms you got
blocking the door know I got their
backs when the time comes.
Something goes down, I hear about
it first. That's the deal.

Det. Green looks over Jacko's shoulder...toward the front door, spots a creepy cop in all black, donning leather driving gloves. His beady eyes all but disappear under a pair of prescription eye goggles that hug his perfectly chiseled face.

His name unknown. His rank and division unknown. He will be known as BLONDIE.

DET. GREEN

Yeah, well, I never made that deal.
So why don't you take your fancy
little coat and your flash money
and go buy a hooker or something.
Leave the police work to us old
timers.

UNIFORM COP (O.S.)

Hey, Jacko.

They turn around, spot a UNIFORM COP standing at the cracked open door that leads into to the front office and video surveillance room.

UNIFORM COP (CONT'D)
I got that footage you wanted
pulled up and ready.

Det. Green and Jacko head into the office.

Blondie keeps a close eye on both of them.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - FRONT OFFICE - NIGHT

Det. Green, Jacko, the Uniform Cop and both female clerks observe the front end video footage of DANNY, taking his bag of money, heading for the door. He stares up at the camera, flashes a single finger, followed by all five fingers, heads out the door.

JACKO
Danny Pyle. I heard about you.

Det. Green squints back at Jacko.

DET. GREEN
Pyle? You're shitting me. What
did he lose his mind?

He leans in closer to the monitor.

DET. GREEN (CONT'D)
What is that? That thing he did
with his hand? Go back.

One of the clerks hits rewind on the digital machine. Danny moves backward, back to the register as he grabs the paper bag full of cash.

DET. GREEN (CONT'D)
Right there.

The clerk hits play. Danny heads for the door, flashes a single finger, followed by all five.

JACKO
The one five.

DET. GREEN
I don't get it.

JACKO
Yeah, I'm sure you don't.

Jacko grins at Danny's image paused on the monitor, and without warning, dips out of the office.

DET. GREEN
Now wait a second.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Jacko hurries for the door, now on a mission. One he hasn't shared with the others. He's stopped in his tracks by the sound of the store's phone RINGING.

He stares over the counter, spots the blinking RED LIGHT. Thinks it all over. A knowing grin.

Jacko reaches behind the register, snags up the receiver and answers.

JACKO
Yeah, it's the police. What do you want?

DANNY (V.O.)
Do you know who this is?

Jacko takes a moment.

JACKO
Yeah, I know who it is. Danny Pyle from the One Five. From what I hear, you're the stuff of legends.

Blondie stands just on the outside of the front door, keeps the citizens off the crime scene. More importantly, he listens in on Jacko's conversation.

DANNY (V.O.)
That's right. And if you're who I think you are, then you'll know who to give this message. Tell the old man I want my money for services rendered. Or me and Jefferson's attorney are gonna have us a nice little sit down.

Jacko, now nervous, runs his hand through his greasy hair, stumbles a bit. Det. Green quietly observes his behavior from across the room.

JACKO
I'm sorry, sir. I don't know what it is that you're referring.

DANNY (V.O.)
Sure you do. It's all over the news. The story of the hour.
(MORE)

DANNY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 America's headline. You just be a
 good little delivery boy and relay
 the message. I'll be in touch.

A dial tone. Jacko grins, hangs up.

JACKO
 Yeah. That we will, cop. That we
 will indeed.

INT. RAWLEY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

THERESA "TIA" PARKER (20s), Abby's ex roommate and reformed
 drug addict, lay a sweaty mess on Rawley's pull out couch.
 She has apparently fallen off the wagon since her most
 recent stint in rehab.

RAWLEY NINER (45) wrings out a fresh kitchen towel and rests
 the damp rag on Tia's brow. In the middle of a cold turkey
 detox, Tia's severe heroin withdrawals cause her to twist
 and contort in agony.

RAWLEY
 Are there any towels left in the
 cupboard?

IN THE KITCHEN

ABBY SAMMS (30), barely recognizable with bronze skin and a
 full head of braided hair down to her well fed bottom,
 randomly sifts through Rawley's drawers, cabinets and
 cupboards.

ABBY
 No. But it would help if I knew
 where you kept them in the first
 place.

Rawley sighs with frustration.

RAWLEY
 Never mind. Just bring me that pot
 of hot water.

Abby snags a steel pot from the stove, walks it into the
 living room.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)
 Just set it on the end table.

Abby sets the pot on a table next to Rawley's couch. She
 folds her arms in protest, observes Rawley's overly
 attentive behavior as he tends to a helpless Tia.

ABBY

You know, she should really be in a hospital.

RAWLEY

Yeah. Tried that once or twice.

ABBY

Maybe that's the problem.

Rawley uses a paper towel to soak up the dripping water from Tia's forehead. As he disposes of the wet paper and wrings out his kitchen towel, he stares up at Abby.

RAWLEY

Meaning?

ABBY

Meaning you can't just go bail her out every time she gets into trouble. If she's gonna do this, she has to do it alone. For herself. Not for you.

Rawley soaks the towel in the pot of hot water. He wrings it out, rests the fresh rag on Tia's forehead.

RAWLEY

She doesn't need a room full of doctors and drug addicts constantly reminding her that her life sucks and she's doomed to fail. What she needs is a friend.

ABBY

You sure we're still talking about Tia?

An exhausted Rawley sighs, presses his hand against the mattress, stands himself upright.

RAWLEY

What the hell does that mean?

ABBY

I don't know. Just seems you've been playing this dudley do right act for awhile now. Like maybe Tia being dependent on you gives you some kind of meaning or purpose.

RAWLEY

I have purpose. I have a lot of purpose.

Rawley heads to a nearby reclining chair, snags up a shoulder holster weighed down by a laser fitted nine mil. He throws it on his wrinkled undershirt.

ABBY

Yeah. You babysit your nephew a few nights out of the year. Have an occasional dinner or two with your sister. But I know you're still empty inside.

Rawley dips into the...

BATHROOM

...and unzips for a quick leak. Abby stands in the door frame with no shame or embarrassment. As if she's been through this routine once or twice before.

ABBY (CONT'D)

I forgave you, Rawley. A long time ago. But you still haven't forgiven yourself.

Rawley finishes, lassos it up, zips and flushes. He stops at the mirror to check his teeth.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Yes you need to brush them.

Rawley reaches for his toothbrush.

ABBY (CONT'D)

After you wash your hands. And tell me I'm wrong.

RAWLEY

You're right.

Abby cracks a hopeful grin.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)

I really should start washing my hands. Childhood habit.

Rawley presses both hands on the frame above Abby's head. They simply watch each other - standing in uncomfortable silence.

ABBY

I mean the other thing. About you still feeling guilty. You know. About me.

Rawley sighs. Too tired to get into it.

RAWLEY
We're past all that.

ABBY
Are we?

RAWLEY
Way past it.

Abby isn't so sure.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)
I'll be back later. As soon as I
can.

Rawley pushes through her. Abby left standing defeated in the door frame. Her face full of frustration, and still without answers.

ABBY
Yeah. Where have I heard that
before?

EXT. BOWLING ALLEY - DAY

Rawley's car finds a spot near the front of this barely operating bowling alley and billiards hall in the middle of the afternoon. A few cars here and there. He snags a large gift from the passenger seat, wrapped in a young child's colorful paper, and steps out.

He half rushes for the door. Late again.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - DAY

Rawley follows the sound of loud and rambunctious children to the final three lanes. About a dozen or so adults chaperon the event, take score, help the kids with their light weight custom made balls. Rawley's nephew GRANT (5), blonde moppet, is busy chasing a pig tailed GIRL under the tables that overlook the lanes.

Seated at one of the tables is ANGIE BURGESS (40s), Rawley's inebriated younger sister. Her face red and flushed. Her overall spirit exhausted. Her forty-something friends, DOTTIE and LORNA, help her crush a pitcher of beer.

ANGIE
 (to Grant)
 For the billionth time, stop
 bumping into my chair.

Rawley sneaks up behind her, wraps his arm around her waist.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
 Could that be my brother? Can't
 be. And only forty five minutes
 late.

Rawley sets Grant's gift on a lone table, steals his sister's
 plastic cup of draft beer, sets it out of reach.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
 Hey, that's mine. Get your own.

RAWLEY
 How many has she had?

Dottie and Lorna don't hide their dislike for Rawley --
 eyeing him up and down.

DOTTIE
 Don't worry, big brother. She's in
 good hands.

RAWLEY
 Yeah, I see that.

LORNA
 Speaking of. How's your new
 girlfriend?

RAWLEY
 She's not my girlfriend, Lorna.
 Neither was the one before her.

DOTTIE
 Or the one before her.

LORNA
 Or the one before her.

Rawley grins. The girls have a chuckle.

ANGIE
 That's right. They're Rawley's
 special projects. He's dedicating
 all his time now to saving the
 world.

(MORE)

ANGIE (CONT'D)

It's what he does at night instead of watching his nephew for a couple hours so I can get some sleep.

RAWLEY

Are we really gonna do this now? I'm here. Just like I said I was gonna be. I'm gonna get you some coffee.

Rawley stands up.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)

Extra cream, extra sugar?

ANGIE

You do this to me, Rawley. You. Just like every man ever in my life. Just keep me waiting. Drop it all on my shoulders while you're off doing something else.

Rawley grins.

RAWLEY

That's it. Let's go get some air.

Rawley tries to pull her off the bar stool. Angie shrugs him off, pulls her arm away.

ANGIE

I got it. I can walk all by myself, Rawley. Been doing it for years now.

Angie stumbles off her stool. The concerned chaperons all watch with disgusted looks on their faces.

CHAPERON #1

Kids. Kids here.

Rawley gives him a thumbs up.

RAWLEY

We're good, thanks.

LORNA

(to Dottie)

Yeah, shut up, Robert. Just drink your root beer like a good little simp.

The two friends have a laugh. Angie slowly shuffles her way toward the ladies room.

RAWLEY
 (to Dottie)
 How long's she been in a mood?

DOTTIE
 Oh. I'd say about forty five
 minutes.

Rawley rolls his eyes. He follows after Angie.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - MEN'S ROOM - DAY

Rawley leans on a restroom stall, lets an unlit cigarette dangle from his lips while Angie pukes up a rainbow of beer into a commode.

RAWLEY
 Smells like Budweiser.

Angie hugs the bowl. She slowly catches her breath, stares up at Rawley.

ANGIE
 They have the same birthday,
 Rawley. The
 same...fucking...birthday.

Rawley almost lights his smoke but, last minute, decides against. A real sickened look about him. He yanks the cigarette from his lips, tosses it aside.

RAWLEY
 Yeah, I know, sweetie. It sucks.
 You got a raw deal.

Angie gets upright, walks to the sink, splashes cold water in her face and eyes.

ANGIE
 I love my son, Rawley. I really
 do. But sometimes I wonder what
 things would be like if he was
 still alive.

Rawley squints, confused.

RAWLEY
 Who? Grant's Dad?

ANGIE
 No. Chris.

Angie stares into the mirror. Back at Rawley, still leaning on the stall door.

Rawley nods. A sore subject for him.

RAWLEY

Oh.

ANGIE

Did you know that you're the only other one who knew Chris and I were a thing?

RAWLEY

I didn't know that.

ANGIE

He never told his wife. Kept it a secret all the way until the end.

RAWLEY

Well. In his defense, I'm sure he wasn't planning on dying.

Angie cracks a halfhearted chuckle.

ANGIE

Yeah. Probably not.

RAWLEY

Does that make you mad? That he never told her about you guys?

ANGIE

It's just that I...stood by and watched the entire department offer her their condolences. Like she was the only one that was suffering. Truth is, I was the one who still loved him. I was the real mess.

Rawley sighs.

RAWLEY

It was a long time ago, Ange. I didn't know this stuff still bothered you.

ANGIE

Not all the time. Just when I consume large amounts of alcohol in the middle of the afternoon. Birthdays. Times like that.

Angie wipes her hands and face clean.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

I can't lose anyone else, Rawley.
I need you to promise me. As long
as you're still wearing that gun,
you stay alive and you make it
home.

Angie tears up again. Rawley walks up behind her, wraps his arm around her waist. The two of them stare back at their own images in the mirror.

RAWLEY

I promise.

ANGIE

Because I'll kill you if you don't.

INT. POLICE BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

On a large white screen, a mounted digital projector plays an uncut episode of THE URBAN JUNGLE with co-hosts Cray Mackelway and Natasha Abbelby. They are standing before the graffiti covered remains of Northway Mall. The shattered windows and front doors of the mall's entrance have been shabbily boarded up.

All but one window...which has been broken into. Shards of razor sharp glass dangle from their frames. Natasha's flashlight illuminates the narrow hole.

CRAY

Here we are...coming at you live at what was once considered the hottest, most crazy busy shopping center in the entire state of Michigan. If not the entire midwest. The once bustling and now abandoned Northway Mall here in East Detroit. A place that many consider their childhood. A happy memory. The happiest of memories. But as urban legend has it, a place that's also fueled a lot of nightmares.

Sitting in an almost pitch dark room is Cray. He sits at the helm of a long conference table...reviewing his latest podcast on the big screen.

CRAY (CONT'D)

Over the years, witnesses who've dared to enter the abandoned floors of Northway claim to not only have heard the cries but even encountered the ghostly image of Decarlo Jefferson. Yes. That Decarlo Jefferson.

The podcast cuts to the fuzzy TRAFFIC CAMERA FOOTAGE of one DECARLO JEFFERSON firing his weapon into the driver's side window of Officer Grecco's car. A jumbled burst of FLASHING WHITE LIGHT seen through the windshield. Jefferson bolts through the idle traffic on foot.

CRAY (V.O.)

The same man who shot and paralyzed a Detroit police officer twenty years ago and has since mysteriously disappeared into thin air.

A mugshot of a grinning but sinister looking Decarlo holding a number before his chest. No shame. No regret. Just a vessel for senseless violence.

CRAY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

A crazy story you say. That's just what we thought. Until an ex Detroit police officer contacted yours truly with the exclusive.

The podcast cuts back to NATASHA roaming the basement floors of Northway...shining a flashlight over the bare and paint-chipped walls of an abandoned store front. Her and Cray enter the empty retail space. The camera spotlights remnants of plastic baggies, used needles, drug paraphernalia.

NATASHA

Look at all this.

CRAY

Just stay close. Don't go wandering too far. We're definitely not alone.

Cray aims his flashlight through what was once the front window of the storefront...into the dark abyss of what used to be a rustling food court.

Footsteps are faintly heard.

CRAY (CONT'D)

You guys hear that?

The empty shell of the mall seems to go on forever. DARK FIGURES are caught roaming the halls. Homeless, drug addicts, gang bangers.

BANGER #1
Watchu doin here, money?!

TUCKER (V.O.)
Shit. Turn off your lights.

Cray and Natasha switch off their flashlights. The CAMERA SHUTS DOWN.

Later...

Natasha leans against a flimsy piece of dry wall. She knocks on the smooth surface as dust spills into the air and all over the floor.

CRAY (V.O.)
This cop, whose name has yet to be identified, claims that Decarlo Jefferson was not only shot and left to die in the abandoned floors of the Northway Mall, but was also buried here. Hidden away in one of the several thousand walls of this three story shopping center.

NATASHA
He could be in any one of these.

CRAY (V.O.)
Walls that he claims are not only hiding the remains of Decarlo Jefferson...but are filled with the bodies of dozens of other criminals. Murdered at the hands of the Detroit Police Department.

Natasha continues to search the rubble and debris with her flashlight. She eventually crosses beams with a pair of UNIFORM COPS, toting flashlights of their own, securing the building, keeping out the kids.

NATASHA
(to Cops)
Oh my God, you scared me.

UNIFORM COP
You guys can't be in here like this. We've asked you once already. Time to go.

The camera SWISH PANS to Cray, shaking his head in disgust. He talks back to his audience.

CRAY

You hear that? The cops want us to leave. Imagine that.

UNIFORM COP

(to Tucker)

Let's go guys. Cut the camera.

The podcast cuts to Cray and Natasha walking away from the Northway Mall as a pair of POLICE CARS guard the front entrance.

CRAY

Here we are. Two in the morning. Cops got nothing to do but guard a mall that's been abandoned for almost twenty years.

TUCKER (V.O.)

Wonder why.

CRAY

You telling me there's nothing weird about that? But that's okay. We'll be back. And not just the four of us. I'm talking about anybody and everybody still looking for answers. They daddy. They cousin. They little brother. Your baby boy. They've been missing for too long. Gone without a trace. The cops don't know nuthin. Ain't nobody know nuthin. We might just have the answers you've been looking for. The truth will come out. We'll be back. Y'all better be ready.

Cray throws up two fingers.

CRAY (CONT'D)

Peace.

The podcast ends and the white projector screen turns a bright royal blue.

LIGHTS COME ON.

Seated at a sectional conference table in this white brick room are CRAY and homicide detectives SHELDON "SHELLY" FITZROY (50s), a sloppy, easily annoyed pot bellied veteran, and old partner turned division commander CAPTAIN THOM WELLMAN (50s), a true by the book tight wad with a starched white shirt and a proper blue blazer.

FITZROY

Now that's some serious bullshit if you don't mind me saying.

CRAY

If you say so. You're entitled to your opinion.

CAPT. WELLMAN

Fine. So it's all true. PD murdered Jefferson. So you won't mind giving us your source so we can properly investigate. As you say...give the people what they deserve. The truth.

FITZROY

After all, the truth will set you free.

Cray cracks a smug grin, has a good chuckle.

CRAY

Don't tell me our little ghost story struck an actual nerve with you cops. I don't know, fellas. Sounds like you got some explaining to do.

FITZROY

Nah. We know bullshit when we smell it. But here lies the problem. Demar Jefferson's mother got wind of your little broadcast at Northway. Now she's demanding not only the city excavate the building, but launch an official investigation into the disappearance of her baby daddy Decarlo.

CRAY

Yeah. I heard a little something about that.

FITZROY

Yeah I bet you did. Something tells me Demar's momma ain't a regular subscriber. Unless of course you emailed her and her boy's lawyer an advanced copy of your show.

Cray defiantly folds his arms in protest, shifts in his seat, away from Fitzroy, facing Capt. Wellman.

CAPT. WELLMAN

(to Fitzroy)

Hey partner, why don't you give me and Mister Mackelway a minute alone.

FITZROY

Yeah. Whatever.

Fitzroy jerks himself backward, screeches his chair legs on a squeaky floor, finds the nearest door.

CAPT. WELLMAN

It must be tough.

CRAY

What's that?

CAPT. WELLMAN

Being a young black man in your position. Successful. Nice rags. Good car. A few bucks in your pocket. Watching the streets you grew up in continue to decay into a wasteland of filth and violence.

CRAY

Yes it does.

CAPT. WELLMAN

Meanwhile, you and your friends trying to walk that fine line between social responsibility and likes and subscribes. Finding stories of cultural significance that are also entertaining. Gotta be taxing. Mentally, I mean.

Cray loses his slick grin.

Capt. Wellman stands, walks closer, rests his butt on the table, never breaking eye contact with Cray.

CAPT. WELLMAN (CONT'D)
 Or maybe I was right about you.
 Maybe you just don't care. About
 your community or anyone in it.
 And you're just in this for the
 show. Turn The Jeffersons into
 martyrs while you and your friends
 continue to build your brand.

CRAY
 You don't know what you're talking
 about.

CAPT. WELLMAN
 Prove me wrong.

CRAY
 What do y'all want from me? I told
 you I don't know the guy, alright?
 You cops know as much as I do.
 What am I even doing here?

Capt. Wellman leans in closer, reads Cray's eyes, makes him
 clearly uncomfortable.

CRAY (CONT'D)
 What, man?

CAPT. WELLMAN
 I believe you. But if you're
 serious about helping Demar and his
 mother, and finding the
 truth...you're gonna need our help.
 Just as badly as we need yours.

Cray thinks it all over, nods in agreement.

EXT. WARREN CITY POLICE STATION - NIGHT

The US and Michigan state flags are both backlit as they hang
 proudly from the side of this landmark hotel turned downtown
 police precinct.

An understated but polished black LEXUS parks in a visitor's
 lot near the front. From the driver's side drops an equally
 polished Italian loafer. Out steps A.D.A. ALAN MARQUETTE
 (20s), baby faced, fitted three piece suit. Marquette snags
 a briefcase from the backseat, and in a moment prompted by
 blind inexperience and all around insecurity, adjusts his
 already perfect knot.

He heads inside.

INT. WARREN CITY POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - NIGHT

Rawley leans back in his rocking swivel chair, pretends to listen to MR. JENNINGS, an angry local business proprietor registering a complaint.

MR. JENNINGS

Every day it's the same with these two. Instead of just dropping her off and leaving, he follows her into work. Arguing about money. Who gets the car that day. This kinda crap. And he's telling the customers stuff like...by the way...don't eat here cause my girl's got hepatitis.

Rawley grimaces.

RAWLEY

Does she?

MR. JENNINGS

Judging by her taste in men, I wouldn't put it past her.

Rawley leans back in his chair a moment, one hand behind his head, the other rubs his bloodshot eyes.

MR. JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Am I boring you?

Rawley spots Abby dip into the squad room and pop a squat on a wooden bench near the door. A sort of waiting area for handcuffed prisoners who haven't been processed.

Rawley squints, confused, surprised. He refocuses.

RAWLEY

Sorry. Go ahead.

Rawley leans forward, does his best to play interested.

MR. JENNINGS

Two weeks go by and it's the same deal. Every morning. They come flying through the door thirty minutes late going at it like cats and dogs. Irritating the customers. One even told him to shut up and take it outside. Eff you, he says. Go eff yourself and tell your mother I said hi. This kinda filth.

Rawley notices Abby drift off, asleep. Her arms folded and rested on her belly. Her babysitting duties have left her exhausted.

RAWLEY

You try trespassing him?

MR. JENNINGS

I tried that. Believe me I tried.

RAWLEY

What happened?

MR. JENNINGS

Every time I threaten to call the cops, the sneaky little bastard leaves on me. How do you like that?

Rawley squints -- confused.

RAWLEY

You're mad because he's leaving before you get a chance to throw him out?

MR. JENNINGS

Please. What am I gonna do with this kid? He's killing my business.

Rawley grows frustrated, flips his pen upside down on his mess of a desktop.

RAWLEY

Why don't you just fire this girl? She sounds like a real drag.

MR. JENNINGS

Are you kidding? She's my best employee. She's practically the only one who shows up.

Rawley draws a blank.

Into the squad room walks LT. GEOFF WADDLE (50s), coat off, sleeves rolled up, what's left of his salt and pepper hair slicked back. Following behind him is Marquette with his briefcase gripped in one hand. The other stuffed in his pocket. He just screams lawyer.

Rawley and Marquette exchange glances.

LT. WADDLE

Rawley, when you get a sec. My office.

Lt. Waddle secretly rolls his eyes as he dips into his glass encased corner office. Rawley conceals a grin as Marquette follows behind.

Abby awakens from her power nap, rubs her eyes.

INT. WARREN CITY POLICE STATION - OUTER HALLWAY - NIGHT

Abby paces back and forth. Her eyes are black from a sheer lack of sleep. Swinging open the squad room door, joining Abby in the hall is Rawley.

RAWLEY

What're you doing here? Where's Tia?

ABBY

She's fine. She's having some ice cream and watching a Maury marathon. What do you, DVR those things or what?

RAWLEY

You left her alone.

ABBY

Yes. Because I have a job. Just like you. One that I have to be at very early in the morning. Just letting you know so you're not out all night playing cop.

Rawley sighs. A bit upset. He lets it go.

RAWLEY

Yeah. Okay. Thanks.

Abby looks put off.

ABBY

Yeah. Really heartfelt, Rawley. Appreciate it. I guess I'll see you next time.

Disappointed and pissed, Abby heads off. Rawley regroupes and grabs her arm.

RAWLEY

I don't mean it like that. I mean...thank you. Yes. I do appreciate you. Everything you've done in helping me with Tia this week. One of these days real soon I'll make it up to you.

Abby doesn't buy it but smiles just the same.

ABBY

I won't hold my breath. But you know you can call me from time to time. Just because you want to. It doesn't have to be so formal.

Lt. Waddle cracks open the door, dips his head out.

LT. WADDLE

Rawley. Now. Not when you feel like it.

He dips back inside.

RAWLEY

Gotta go.

ABBY

Yeah. Me too.

Abby waves goodbye and heads for the stairs. Rawley watches her leave, saddened, wanting to stop her. He halfheartedly heads back inside.

INT. LT. WADDLE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Lt. Waddle blows on his piping hot cup of coffee from behind his desk while Marquette stands with his hands stuffed awkwardly in his pockets. His briefcase rested in a chair before Waddle's desk.

In walks Rawley. He shuts the door behind him.

LT. WADDLE

Rawley, meet Alan Marquette from the Wayne County DA's office. He's come to our perfectly sleepy little burg to ask you some questions. Isn't that nice?

Rawley scans the overly dressed, snot nose hot shot with real suspicion. An over confident Marquette smiles and offers his hand to a reluctant Rawley.

MARQUETTE

Rawley Niner. Wow. It's really you.

RAWLEY

It's really me.

Marquette cracks a real phony laugh. Rawley shares an annoyed exchange with Lt. Waddle.

MARQUETTE

Sorry if I seem a bit star struck. Your trial was one of my case studies back at UM. Man have I got some questions I'd like to ask you.

LT. WADDLE

Don't we all?

Rawley grins at Lt. Waddle.

RAWLEY

Yeah, well. That's all in the past.

Marquette nods.

MARQUETTE

Yes that it is.

Marquette and Rawley share a long and most awkward stare down. Marquette finally breaks the ice and turns to Lt. Waddle behind his desk.

MARQUETTE (CONT'D)

Excuse me, Lieutenant. You think I could have a minute alone with your Sergeant?

LT. WADDLE

You're kicking me out of my own office?

MARQUETTE

We could go somewhere a little more quiet if you'd prefer?

Beat.

LT. WADDLE

No no. It's fine.

Lt. Waddle collects his coffee and danish, heads for the door, throws Rawley the side eye on his way out.

Marquette shuts the door behind him. He stares out into the almost barren squad room.

MARQUETTE

It's quiet here.

Rawley pops a squat.

RAWLEY

That's the idea.

MARQUETTE

Kind of a change for you, isn't it?
The quiet I mean.

RAWLEY

Yeah. A much needed one. What can I do for you?

MARQUETTE

I assume you've been following this whole Demar Jefferson ordeal fairly closely?

RAWLEY

About as close as anyone else.
It's all over tv.

MARQUETTE

Well. As you may have heard. Over the last several days, Detroit PD has fallen under some fairly heavy media scrutiny. Public outcry is even worse. In fact, it's so bad that the DA's Office and the powers that be over at city hall have opened an official inquiry surrounding the disappearance of Decarlo Jefferson.

Rawley scoffs at the thought, shakes his head in amusement.

RAWLEY

I can't believe they're taking this kid's story seriously.

MARQUETTE

Oh they're taking it more than seriously. As far as the public's concerned, a young black man's life and very fate is at stake here. As you well know, even the whiff of impropriety on our part can lead to some pretty dire consequences.

Rawley tries to get a read on Marquette.

RAWLEY

Why don't you skip to the part where you tell me what this has to do with me.

MARQUETTE

Well. Since last Thursday, to be exact, we've been compiling lists. Every cop from your old district who was on duty the night Jefferson disappeared. Being this was almost twenty years ago, this took some digging. But wouldn't you know it, if you and your partner's names weren't at the very top of that list.

Rawley slowly cracks a grin.

RAWLEY

Okay. I'm listening.

MARQUETTE

You were on a stakeout. Scoping the courts on Fletcher Avenue. Your partner figured Jefferson was holding up in the woods behind Fletcher Park. Until you two got pulled off to take a domestic less than two blocks away.

Memories of that fateful night hit Rawley hard. He shifts uncomfortably in his seat. Marquette steps closer, moves like an interrogator breaking his suspect.

MARQUETTE (CONT'D)

A kid was shot. Next thing you know, you're requesting a personal leave, pending a psyche eval. And then comes you handing in your badge less than two months out of the academy. And you never stepped foot in the city again.

RAWLEY

Yeah well. It was a long time ago.

MARQUETTE

I'd be willing to bet, no other cop in Detroit remembers that night more vividly than you and Danny Pyle.

Rawley looks truly sad.

RAWLEY

Yeah.

Marquette watches Rawley almost break. He shifts gears, changes the subject.

MARQUETTE

I pulled the case file on Phil Grecco's shooting. Turns out every traffic camera within a five block radius of Grecco's car had been disabled. Every one.

RAWLEY

That's definitely a red flag.

MARQUETTE

Yes it is. If this kid Mackelway's source really is a badge, and he is telling the truth, it means Jefferson never made it past Fletcher Avenue alive. Can't help but find that coincidence a bit alarming.

Rawley doesn't follow.

MARQUETTE (CONT'D)

There's something I wanna show you.

Marquette snags his briefcase from the chair, pulls out his laptop and boots up on Lt. Waddle's desk. A video quickly plays on full screen mode. DANNY PYLE sits under an umbrella canopy before a delicatessen. CRAY MACKELWAY in a chair across from him, publicly meeting with his previously unidentified cop for the first time.

Rawley has trouble recognizing the two fuzzy images on screen. He leans in closer.

MARQUETTE (CONT'D)

This footage was pulled from a security camera near Langley's Delicatessen in Bricktown. It's by the L tracks. This was around Two Thirty yesterday afternoon.

Marquette points at Cray.

MARQUETTE (CONT'D)

This one here is none other than Cray Mackelway. Host of The Urban Jungle.

He points at Danny.

MARQUETTE (CONT'D)

And seated across from him is your old partner in crime Danny Pyle.

Rawley's jaw nearly hits the desk. A few moments pass and a panicked Danny rises to his feet, stares across the court in front of him. Out of curiosity, Cray, still seated, also turns and looks.

Danny grabs Cray by the shirt, jerks him to his feet, holds a pistol to his chest as the two walk backwards, away from the scene, out of view of the cameras.

TWO PLAIN CLOTHES COPS, with guns drawn, move in on them. All four men fall out of view of the cameras.

MARQUETTE (CONT'D)

As you can see here, their meeting quickly went south.

RAWLEY

What is this? What was he doing there?

MARQUETTE

Your old partner? I'd assume sharing more dirt on the murder of Decarlo Jefferson with his new pen pal Mackelway.

Marquette shuts down and closes his laptop.

MARQUETTE (CONT'D)

The two cops closing in. It's Thom Wellman and Shelly Fitzroy. From your old precinct. They had Cray set up a meet with Danny. And apparently, they got made pretty fast.

RAWLEY

Where is he?

MARQUETTE

Pyle?

Marquette shrugs.

MARQUETTE (CONT'D)

Your guess is as good as mine.

RAWLEY

What does that mean? They lost him?

MARQUETTE

Well, Rawley. We were hoping you could help us out with that.

RAWLEY

Why would I know where he is? I haven't seen him in twenty years.

MARQUETTE

There's some back in Detroit that say you might still owe Danny. Those same people think he could be heading your way ready to cash in that favor.

Rawley's demeanor switches gears to defensive.

RAWLEY

I don't owe Danny Pyle a thing.

Marquette grins.

MARQUETTE

You sure about that, Rawley?

RAWLEY

Positive.

Marquette gives him a moment. The two just sit in silence. Neither caving to the pressure.

MARQUETTE

Well then. Just in case you do hear from him.

Marquette hands him his card. He collects his briefcase and stands to leave.

MARQUETTE (CONT'D)

Ya know, you sure have been through the ringer, Sergeant. That much is true.

Marquette heads for the door, but stops.

MARQUETTE (CONT'D)
You know what I think?

RAWLEY
No.

MARQUETTE
I think you've been carrying around
a lot for a long long time. Maybe
it's time you finally gave yourself
a break.

Marquette aims at the card in Rawley's hand.

MARQUETTE (CONT'D)
You can call any time. Even if you
just wanna talk. Take care of
yourself, Sergeant Niner.

Marquette dips out. Rawley thinks it over, stuffs the card
in his shirt pocket.

A DETECTIVE pops his head in.

DETECTIVE
Rawley. You got a call on line
two. This guy's driving me nuts
already.

The Detective goes about his business.

Rawley rushes out, back to his desk.

INT. WARREN CITY POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Rawley snags a portable phone from his desktop, presses the
blinking white button.

RAWLEY
Sergeant Niner.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. DANNY'S CAR - NIGHT

Danny sits behind the wheel of his car, stares up at the open
side windows of the Warren Police Station. As if he's
searching for Rawley inside.

DANNY
Long time old partner. Do me a
favor and don't speak.
(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)
 Just listen. Listen very carefully
 like your ass and the asses of
 everyone you care about depended on
 it. Deal?

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. WARREN CITY POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - NIGHT

Rawley stands in shock.

RAWLEY
 Deal.

DANNY (V.O.)
 I'm gonna give you a number. And I
 want you to call me back from an
 outside line. Somewhere
 untraceable.

Rawley snags a pen and notepad from his desk.

RAWLEY
 Give me the number.

EXT. CRAY'S APARTMENT - STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Cray hosts a booming little gathering of sorts as a good mix
 of scantily-clad, flashy looking FEMALE TWENTY-SOMETHINGS
 pass on the stairs with drinks in hand.

MUSIC bumps. Some of the local uninvited MALE TENANTS are
 drawn in by the impressive ladies pouring in and out of
 Cray's apartment.

Tucker and Natasha flirt, get cozy on Cray's balcony as...

CRAY

Watches from the bottom of the steps. Despite him being
 surrounded by friends and his party being an overall
 success, he is sad and withdrawn.

Tucker whispers in Natasha's ear. She bursts into hysterics,
 only further fueling Cray's anger.

Cray lets it go, takes a generous pull off his thirty two
 ounce imported beer, wanders the lot in front of the
 staircase.

Clifford finishes with some friends, shakes hands, a few hugs exchanged. He joins his moping friend Cray, roaming about the front parking lot.

CLIFFORD

I see that look in your eyes.
Forget about it.

Cray stares up at Natasha.

CRAY

What? That? I ain't even worried
about that.

CLIFFORD

Yeah. First of all. Bullshit.

Cray rolls his eyes.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

But I ain't even talkin about your
love life. That's another
discussion for another day. I'm
talking about this thing with the
cop. It's dead. It's as dead
as...Decarlo Jefferson. Let it go.

CRAY

And you know that how?

CLIFFORD

You burned your source. Just be
happy the cops ain't broadcasting
that shit on every channel. We'd
be lucky to still have four
subscribers. We all know snitches
get stitches.

Cray walks in circles, clearly upset by it all.

CRAY

Yeah. The cops got this guy
holding a gun to my head and they
bury that shit too. Why ain't he
in custody? I'm telling you, we
got these cops nervous. Like we're
onto something.

CLIFFORD

So what are we gonna do, man? It's
not like that cop's gonna say shit
now. You set him up. So where's
your story?

Cray thinks it all over. He spills.

CRAY
I got his name.

Clifford squints, a bit shocked.

CLIFFORD
What? How? When? And why didn't
you say something to the rest of
us?

CRAY
Because these cracker ass cops told
me not to.

CLIFFORD
Shit. You do everything the cops
tell you to do?

CRAY
They got him, man. The cops got
him. His name. His face. Why
haven't they released that shit to
the press? Tell me that.

Clifford shakes his head, dumbfounded.

CLIFFORD
So what are we doing?

CRAY
The way I see it is this. He don't
wanna talk to us. So we give him a
real simple choice. Talk to us or
talk to the press.

CLIFFORD
Yeah, that's great. Only problem
is, you already burned him once.
What makes you think he gonna trust
you this time?

CRAY
I'm not asking him to trust anyone.
I'm telling him how it's gonna be.
Us or them. You want your name to
stay clean, you give us what we
want. What we want is Jefferson.
Those cops blasted that fool. I
know it.

Clifford lets out a tired sigh, already stressed about the
direction this is all headed.

CLIFFORD

Alright. Fuck it. Let's go break
the internet.

CRAY

Me and you.

Clifford and Cray bro shake, sealing the deal.

A BLACKED OUT CHEVY CAMARO rolls past the complex like a creeper...avoiding the crowd of party people walking to and from their vehicles.

A tinted window cracks open. Blondie, in his strangely fitted eye goggles, takes a good look at Cray and Clifford as they head up the stairs, back to the booming party still in session.

The window closes. Blondie drives off.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE ROOFTOP - NIGHT

LT. GIBSON (70s), ex IAD pit bull that ran Rawley out of town twenty years earlier, is a bit balder, grayer, and even more bloated than the last we've seen of him. He stands by a guard rail overlooking the city below. His Mercedes parked near the wall.

Standing with him is Capt. Wellman. A proper jacket and tie. Always professional.

Onto the rooftop rolls a crew of UNMARKED BLACK CHEVY CAMAROS as well as some marked PATROL UNITS. It's Jacko's personal hit squad of cops gone wrong.

Lt. Gibson turns, watches as they all form a tight circle around him. A protective wall of sorts. They all shut down their lights in unison.

Stepping from his personal Dodge Charger is the leader of the pack...JACKO. He dons a flashy black trench coat and dark undershirt.

LT. GIBSON

You bring enough guys? What
happened to doing things quietly?

JACKO

Yeah, well, I called in a few
favors. Being we got a missing cop
on our hands. We all know how
crafty they can be when they put
their minds to it.

LT. GIBSON

Yeah I know. All too well. It's how we got into this mess in the first place. All those holes we dug. Turns out we've been digging our own grave this whole time and didn't even know it.

Lt. Gibson catches a chill, clenches his coat tighter.

JACKO

Yeah, it's all so ironic. So, about Pyle. I called in some reinforcements. Just in case. I wasn't sure how you wanted to handle this.

CAPT. WELLMAN

How we always handle it. Quietly.

JACKO

Yeah I saw how you quietly tried to fill Pyle full of holes yesterday. How'd that work out for ya?

Capt. Wellman just grins and lets it go. Not his style to engage in pointless conversation. He steps away for a few moments, gives Jacko his space.

Lt. Gibson isn't so sure as he stares out...into the bright city landscape.

LT. GIBSON

Pyle knows we're gonna be closing ranks over this Jefferson mess. He's not stupid. It's a preemptive strike. He's covering his ass, pure and simple.

Jacko joins Lt. Gibson by the wall.

JACKO

Be that as it may, sir. You still haven't answered my question. What do we do with Pyle?

Lt. Gibson gives Jacko a long, suggestive look that speaks louder than any possible words.

JACKO (CONT'D)

Understood.

Jacko turns around, locks eyes with...

BLONDIE

...leaning on his Camaro, gloves on, arms crossed.

EXT. LUCKY STRIKES BILLIARDS - LATE NIGHT

SUPER: MOUNT PLEASANT

Rawley parks a safe distance down the street. Not a car or a soul in sight. He is super cautious as he steps out, begins toward the bar with his nine mil gripped in both hands.

As he passes between two store fronts, he aims his weapon into the dark and thin alley way. A red laser light inspects the passage.

Rawley reaches a long rusted out fire escape on the side of the billiards hall. He yanks down the ladder, begins up, keeps an eye on things below.

INT. LUCKY STRIKES BILLIARDS - SECOND FLOOR - LATE NIGHT

Rawley roams about the second floor of his not so profitable side business, gifted to him by Abby. He leans over the wooden guard rail and stares down at the dozen or so pool tables below. The room is dark, if not for a small area near the corner of the hall.

The sound of balls being struck by a cue.

Rawley heads down a short flight of steps.

INT. LUCKY STRIKES BILLIARDS - FIRST FLOOR - LATE NIGHT

In the very back of this pool hall is Danny, shooting a quick round by himself. A fluorescent bar lamp shines down over the table and general area.

Rawley grips his pistol tightly, moves in on him.

DANNY

Don't shoot. You'll mess up my shot.

Danny makes a slick bounce shot, sinking two balls. Rawley holsters his piece.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Were you followed?

RAWLEY

No. It's three in the morning.
Whatever this is about, get to it.

DANNY

You got somewhere to be, Rawley?

RAWLEY

Yeah. Sleeping.

DANNY

Don't be silly, Rawley. You don't
sleep.

Danny chugs what's left of his beer bottle, sets up for another fancy shot. He strikes the cue ball hard... pummeling a cluster of balls in the corner. He's lined up perfectly with the eight ball.

Rawley snags it from the table.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I made some coffee. Behind the bar
if you want some.

Rawley follows the smell of freshly brewed coffee to a pot just under the bar. He snags his usual mug from a dirty dish rack and pours himself a tall one.

DANNY (CONT'D)

How did you get this place,
anyways?

RAWLEY

It's a long story.

DANNY

Yeah, I bet. You've been a busy
boy over the years. One mess after
the next. Suspensions, IAD review
boards. And you still kept your
badge.

Rawley chugs his coffee, comes out from behind the bar.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Let me guess. That have something
to do with Ross's daughter and that
whole thing with the DA's office a
few years back?

Rawley isn't interested in this history lesson as he continues to chug his coffee.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Yeah I heard. About all of it. We
all have blood on our hands,
Rawley. Not just you.

Danny tosses a couple balls into a side pocket, grabs the cue ball, playfully spins it on the green felt. He's truly wired and can't stand still.

DANNY (CONT'D)

We all have secrets.

RAWLEY

Like Decarlo Jefferson?

DANNY

We had him. He was hiding in those trees, just like I said. But as it turns out, PD had different plans for our friend Decarlo.

Danny has trouble facing Rawley, turns his back as he tosses the cue ball into a corner and sinks it.

Rawley steps around the table, his eyes wide and tense, insists on Danny's undivided attention.

RAWLEY

What are you telling me?

DANNY

Shanice Brown. Dex Waters. That whole thing was a diversion. Waters got the call from PD. He starts belting Shanice around, fires off a few rounds. And we get pulled off our stakeout.

RAWLEY

While the cops are busy putting one in the back of Jefferson's skull.

Rawley shakes his head in disgust.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)

We weren't supposed to be there.

DANNY

That little girl getting shot. You're not the only one who's been taking that to bed for the last twenty years. She was a casualty in an otherwise perfect plan.

(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)

When you fired off that shot in the backyard, Waters panicked. Blew Shanice's brains all over the wall. I had no choice but to put him down too. Because that's how it had to be.

Rawley paces the floor with hands behind his head, sucks in deep breaths, a near panic attack.

DANNY (CONT'D)

When Demar's lawyer started poking around in the Jefferson case, I knew it was a matter of time. Either they kill me, or I take them down first.

RAWLEY

Who is they, exactly? And why would they want you?

DANNY

A long long time ago. Your good buddy Lieutenant Gibson's daughter and some other cop's kids were out on the town, coming out of this after hours club on the wrong side of the tracks. Got caught in the crossfire of some gangland territorial shit. No witnesses. A dozen different kinds of brass left on the pavement. It was a mess.

RAWLEY

So what?

DANNY

So Gibson, along with a lot of higher ups in the department, came up with a plan. There was a list of cops under investigation. Some looking at indictments. Suspensions. They became Gibson's own personal hit squad.

Danny walks to a corner round table, snags up some thick papers and hands them to Rawley.

DANNY (CONT'D)

This guy here. Thom Wellman. Tight ass, pencil pushing yes man. Did everything right. Never colored outside the lines.

(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)

Good Christian, church on Sunday, a wad of cash in the plate. Until he got caught belting his wife around and keeping a couple hookers on retainer. He was the ring leader.

Rawley flips through the several sheets. Capt. Wellman's extensive arrest record. Along with clippings of the many news headlines pulled from his cases.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Whenever Wellman got the call, he'd be there. And all too happy to take the reins. He was kind of old testament that way.

RAWLEY

He'd be where?

DANNY

Northway. This special room in the basement. Called it The Confessional. Even nicknamed Wellman The Exorcist. When he was done doing his thing, you were speaking in tongues.

RAWLEY

They were torturing suspects?

Danny nods.

DANNY

They never did get the shooters. At least not Gibson's daughter. But their little secret operation grew. And grew. Until it became bigger than them.

Rawley drops the papers on the table, rubs his sore temple.

RAWLEY

How big?

DANNY

Jefferson wasn't a special one in a million case. He was just another job. Another body to dispose of.

Rawley leans his tired body over the pool table.

RAWLEY

How many are involved?

DANNY

All of them. Whether they know it or not. Just like you, Rawley. The night you shot that kid. You were involved and didn't know it.

RAWLEY

Twenty years, Danny. Twenty years. You let me live with this.

DANNY

Killing that poor little girl didn't go without consequences, Rawley. Even for me. Gibson looked in my eyes and saw I was on the verge of breaking. Spilling all of it. They were gonna need some reassurance that wouldn't happen.

RAWLEY

What kind?

DANNY

Like ridding of Jefferson's body. Someplace only I knew about. Their way of keeping their claws in me. They controlled the department. Only now, the department controls them.

RAWLEY

So why are you telling me all this now?

DANNY

With the whole city looking into Jefferson's case, they're gonna be covering their tracks. Starting with me. They're gonna expect I told you. Which means they'll be coming for you too. And anyone else in your life.

Rawley spins in an anxious circle, sick to his stomach.

RAWLEY

How do you know that?

DANNY

You can always stick around and find out if I'm wrong.

Danny gets right in Rawley's mug. A sincere look in his eye.

DANNY (CONT'D)
But what if I'm right, Rawley?

Rawley thinks it all over.

RAWLEY
I take it you have a plan.

Danny grins.

DANNY
Oh I got a plan alright.

INT. MANUFACTURING WAREHOUSE - LOFT - DAY

Jacko, and two of his crew, ride an older style freight elevator to the top of this old city landmark food manufacturer.

The mechanical exterior doors open. Jacko and his men step off...entering a well furnished loft apartment with an overhead skylight.

The morning rays of light paint a bullseye on...

ALVIN RIGGLES (30s), professional counterfeiter, career criminal, Danny's personal informant. He's handcuffed, sprawled out on an imported leather chair and placed dead center of his hardwood floor.

He's surrounded on all sides by COPS.

Standing with the cops is WILLIAM, a recently bonded out police snitch on an undercover op.

Jacko drops a wad of cash into William's shirt pocket and circles Alvin like a shark. Alvin bends his neck, tries to keep place of him.

ALVIN
What is all this?

JACKO
Bad news, Alvin. You were just caught on audio taking a payment for a service you claim to no longer perform.

ALVIN
(to William)
Bitch ass snitch.

William keeps his shameful eyes on the floor.

JACKO

First you're caught cutting phony flash money for your buddies in the DEA and now fake IDs for convicts like our friend William here. Looking to jump bail with a brand new area code. Landlord lets you crash up here rent free for a piece of the action. Pretty nice deal.

ALVIN

So what, man? You want in too? Crooked ass cops. Well get in line behind your friends.

Jacko kicks Alvin in the face - breaks open his nose as he spits up blood.

JACKO

The only reason you and those DE assholes aren't rotting in federal prison right now is because of Danny Pyle. Because of us.

Jacko leans in nice and close.

JACKO (CONT'D)

The po-leece. You know what that means?

ALVIN

Nah, man.

JACKO

It means I get to kick the shit out of you and get away with it.

Alvin leans his head back, attempts to stop the blood.

JACKO (CONT'D)

I know you owe him. And I know he was here. So start talking.

ALVIN

What do you want?

JACKO

Driver's license. Passports. Credit cards. The whole bit. Fuck you think I want?

Alvin spits and snorts blood.

ALVIN

Could somebody wipe my nose so I
can breathe, please?

Jacko kneels before him.

JACKO

I don't think you're hearing me. I
want the name Pyle is using now.
And everything he walked out of
here with. And I want it five
minutes ago. Or you're gonna be
wiping blood from more than your
nose.

ALVIN

Reece. Donald Reece. It's all
filed away on the computer. I
don't know where he's going. I
didn't ask.

Jacko smiles, taps him on the cheek.

JACKO

Well I suggest you get online and
start running some of those credit
card numbers of yours and figure it
out real quick like. You know.
Like your ass depended on it.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Rawley, along with Angie and her son Grant, await in line to
board a greyhound bound for somewhere. It's a substantial
line and just starting to inch along.

GRANT

Mom, where are we going again?

ANGIE

According to Uncle Rawley, anywhere
but here, apparently.

Angie spots a tired, washed out looking Tia behind the crowd,
squatted on a bench with her own bags packed, ready to board
another bus.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Look who it is. You taking your
girlfriend with you on your little
field trip?

RAWLEY

Don't worry about her. Just remember what I said. No calls. I'll call you. Only when I know it's safe.

ANGIE

I don't get it, Rawley. Why don't you just turn him in? I think Danny Pyle's done you enough favors.

RAWLEY

It's not that simple.

ANGIE

Yeah right. And I suppose you don't wanna talk about it?

Angie shakes her head. Rawley finally breaks.

RAWLEY

I shot a kid.

Angie turns, stares into Rawley's eyes. In total shock and utter disbelief.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)

A long time ago. Pretty much ruined my life. So turning him in isn't really an option.

The BUS DRIVER stands by the open door, waits for Angie to snap out of her stupor.

BUS DRIVER

Ma'am we're boarding. Tickets please.

Angie hands the man hers and Grant's ticket. She stares back at Rawley, still in shock, unable to find the words.

RAWLEY

It's a lot to get into. We can talk about it later. They're waiting on you.

Angie pats Grant on the butt.

ANGIE

Go on. Say goodbye to Uncle Rawley.

GRANT
Bye, Uncle Rawley.

Grant boards the bus. Angie pinches Rawley's cheek.

ANGIE
Remember what I said.

RAWLEY
Yeah yeah. If I die, you'll kill me. Get out of here. Tell the gang I said hi.

ANGIE
I will. I'll just leave out the part where they ask what you've been up to.

RAWLEY
Good idea.

Angie offers him a warm smile and boards the bus. Rawley pushes through a crowd, joins Tia on the bench.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)
You look good. Like you're well rested.

Tia rubs her cold arms, still a bit out of it.

TIA
I haven't seen her in three years. I don't want her to see me like this.

RAWLEY
I know you don't. But it's time. It's time for both of us to stop running and face reality.

Tia doesn't follow.

TIA
Am I ever gonna see you again?

RAWLEY
No. Probably not.

Tia fights her sadness, nods with understanding.

TIA
Okay. Just thought I'd ask. I wasn't sure.

RAWLEY

This isn't the end, Tia. It's just a little misstep on a really long journey. Don't do like I did and keep the past all bottled up inside like some kind of...ever constant reminder that you aren't good enough.

TIA

You're in trouble again, aren't you?

Rawley reaches around her neck, rubs her shoulder.

RAWLEY

Tia. I'm always in trouble.

EXT. LITTLE JOE'S RODEO AND COWBOY SHOW - DAY

A young female HORSE TRAINER and her gorgeous stallion leap the white jumps of an obstacle course. The surrounding bleachers are empty. A giant press box that reads "Little Joe's Rodeo and Cowboy Show" sits atop of the stands.

A most impressive roofed HORSE ARENA for training horses and for private lessons sits just to the outside of this rodeo. And in the steep hills and grassy fields that surround the property sit dozens of live-in motor homes.

One of these homes belongs to Abby.

INT. ABBY'S MOTOR HOME - DAY

Abby frantically packs her belongings into a large suitcase as an impatient Rawley takes turns huffing and puffing and peeking through the cheap blinds.

ABBY

Why would they want me? I didn't even know you twenty years ago. I was still playing with barbies.

Abby quickly brushes her teeth, in about half the usual time, spits up some back wash on her carpet.

RAWLEY

Because. They're gonna suspect I told you.

Abby, still brushing, rolls her eyes.

ABBY
(a mouthful)
Yeah. And thanks for that, by the way.

RAWLEY
Even if I didn't tell you, they're gonna think I did. So let's try to get this show on the road.

Abby rinses out her brush, angrily shoves it into a plastic ziploc bag with her other toiletries.

ABBY
Look, I know this all might not look like much to you. But it's my home. I'm at peace here. You had to come mess that up.

RAWLEY
I know. I promised I'd give you that space. What can I say. I missed you.

Abby takes a moment, lets that sink in.

ABBY
Like missed me how?

RAWLEY
What do you mean?

ABBY
I mean like a person misses their dog, or like...another way.

Rawley stalls.

RAWLEY
I don't know. I guess I'm not real sure.

ABBY
It's a simple question. I'm not a kid anymore, Rawley.

Abby cracks a playful grin, gets right in Rawley's space.

ABBY (CONT'D)
If you want me so bad, just say so.

Rawley grows uncomfortable, backs away from her.

RAWLEY

Let's just...get going please.

Abby loses her sly smirk.

ABBY

I don't get it, Rawley. Maybe one day you can explain what it is you want from me.

Abby bends down to grab her bags. Rawley gets himself an eyeful but hates himself for it.

RAWLEY

Come on.

Rawley snags one of her bags, helps her out the door.

EXT. ABBY'S MOTOR HOME - DAY

Rawley heaves the heavy luggage onto the grassy field with little regard for Abby's stuff.

ABBY

That's it, Rawley. Just throw my stuff in the dirt.

Rawley snags her by the arm, hurries her along.

RAWLEY

We gotta book. Let's go.

Rawley pops the trunk of his car. He is distracted by the sight of THREE BLACK SUVs coming down the hill toward the motor home park.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)

Start running.

ABBY

What?

RAWLEY

Right now. Run!

Rawley snags Abby by the arm as they chase away from the motor homes and toward a nearby horse stable.

INT. HORSE STABLE - DAY

Rawley and Abby climb a wooden ladder and into a hay loft. They rush to the opened space overlooking the property and watch as the BLACK SUVS surround Abby's motor home.

A crew of kevlar fitted, heavily armed SWAT OFFICERS dressed in all black and wearing cloths around their faces to disguise their identity, take aim.

And Abby's motor home is quickly ripped to shreds.

Abby shrieks. Rawley covers her mouth.

EXT. ABBY'S MOTOR HOME - DAY

The rapid gunfire finds a propane tank. The home EXPLODES, setting one of the officers on fire. Uniform ablaze, he tumbles down a hill.

The rolling on the grass pats out the flames. He lay motionless, stunned. One of the other officers helps him to his feet. They all stand in awe of the tall and impressive fire.

SWAT #1

Well. That's that.

SWAT #2

Copy that.

INT. HORSE STABLE - DAY

Abby breaks down in tears. Rawley holds her close.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK - MOVING - DAY

Rawley behind the wheel. Abby sits quietly beside him. All the color gone from her face. All the life gone from her soulless eyes.

RAWLEY

Look at it this way. It's gonna take them hours before they find out we we're still alive. The way I see it, our friends back there just bought us some time.

ABBY

That was everything I had. The money. Everything I own.

(MORE)

ABBY (CONT'D)

It all just got incinerated. And I'm supposed to be thankful?

RAWLEY

Could be worse. You could be dead.

ABBY

Or maybe better off.

Abby stares out the window, truly empty inside. Rawley watches with concern.

RAWLEY

I know you don't mean that.

ABBY

Maybe I do, maybe I don't. Where are we going?

Rawley is a bit hesitant.

RAWLEY

Not gonna lie to you. We're gonna go hurt some people. Maybe even fracture or snap a few bones in the process.

Abby isn't fazed in the slightest.

ABBY

Okay. Before we do all that, you think we can we grab a burger or something?

Rawley cracks up.

RAWLEY

Sure.

INT. ROLLING ACRES COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

Lt. Gibson sits with his WIFE, Captain Wellman, and a few other distinguished members of the Detroit Police Department's 15th Precinct.

They enjoy a nice Sunday brunch buffet as if this was their regular weekly routine.

Jacko comes bouncing in like he owns the place. He helps himself to a couple shrimp from the shellfish bar, wipes his hands dry as he closes in on Lt. Gibson's table.

Capt. Wellman spots him coming. He gives the nod to Lt. Gibson, who, almost in a panic, turns around.

JACKO

Good afternoon, important people.
If I could steal your Lieutenant
for a brief moment or two.

Jacko draws a few disgusted looks from the surrounding police brass and city officials enjoying their brunch.

JACKO (CONT'D)

Whoa. Gotta say. Not exactly
feeling the love.

Lt. Gibson drops his napkin, heads for the door. Jacko follows behind. He smugly waves goodbye to the stuffy crowd keeping a close eye on him.

EXT. ROLLING HILLS COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

Lt. Gibson rushes out the door, hopping mad. Jacko trails behind as the two men step away from the ballroom for a moment alone.

LT. GIBSON

You really are a cocky sonofabitch.
Hell are you doing here?

JACKO

I've got some updates. Thought
you'd wanna hear first hand.

LT. GIBSON

What is it?

JACKO

Just got off the horn with our
friends in Warren. Niner and his
little buddy Abby Samms are
officially toast. Roasting like a
couple marshmallows from what I
hear.

Lt. Gibson isn't exactly enthusiastic by this news. His face is stoic, unflinching.

JACKO (CONT'D)

That just leaves Mackelway and the
man of the hour.

LT. GIBSON

Speaking of. I thought that was taken care of. What the hell happened?

JACKO

Turns out Pyle rented a room just outside of Warren under the name Donald Reece. Motel manager said he hasn't seen or heard from him in two days. Looks like he got wise we were onto him and ditched. But don't worry. It will all come together.

LT. GIBSON

That right? It's all under control. Just like that.

JACKO

Meantime I got someone on Mackelway's friends. Something nice and clean. Something that should shut down his little podcast indefinitely.

LT. GIBSON

I told you I don't want that kid harmed.

JACKO

Relax. He won't be. I got it all worked out.

Lt. Gibson, clearly uneasy, pops himself a heart pill, and growing a bit nervous by the crowd by the door, steps further away from the ballroom.

JACKO (CONT'D)

Why so nervous? You know how many badges we got on the street working around the clock?

LT. GIBSON

I'll tell you what I'm nervous about.

Lt. Gibson grabs Jacko's arm, walks him further down the hallway.

LT. GIBSON (CONT'D)

It goes back about twenty years. The first time I looked into that kid's eyes.

JACKO

Who? Niner?

LT. GIBSON

That's right. You know what I saw?

JACKO

No.

LT. GIBSON

Nothing. I saw nothing. He's stone cold. A bad seed. Fresh out of the womb with a taste for violence.

Jacko laughs this off, not buying into it.

LT. GIBSON (CONT'D)

You laugh. You think he threw that Puerto Rican out of a window because of his partner? He did it because he likes it. Because he wanted to. He's the kind of bad you can't contain.

Jacko loses interest, stuffs his hands in his pocket.

LT. GIBSON (CONT'D)

So when I tell you I wanna see his body, that's not just a metaphor. It means I want you to personally drag his burned corpse into the lab and cross check his dental records. Are we clear on that?

JACKO

Clear as a bell.

LT. GIBSON

This thing could take us all down. So if I were you, I'd lose the grin, get my ass down there personally, find Pyle and get it done.

Lt. Gibson heads back. Jacko finally loses his cocky swagger and gets serious.

JACKO

Yes, sir.

EXT. STRIP MALL - DAY

Rawley parks his borrowed pick up truck in front of a takeout pizza and pasta shop. Abby sits confused, tired and not in the mood for any more surprises.

ABBY

I was kidding about the burger.
What're we doing here?

RAWLEY

How much money you got on you?

ABBY

Are you kidding me? You just ruined my life and you're asking me for lunch money?

Rawley pops the glove box, ruffles through a mess of papers and other junk. He comes up with a wallet.

RAWLEY

Bingo. Rednecks are predictable.

Rawley unzips the billfold, snags a fat wad of cash.

ABBY

Hey, you can't use that. That belongs to Hank. You know. The guy who loaned you his truck with no questions asked.

RAWLEY

I'll reimburse him. Sit tight.

Rawley dips out...heads into the pizza shop.

ABBY

Hey! What're we...

Abby slumps in defeat.

ABBY (CONT'D)

I'm so confused right now.

INT. ANGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Fitzroy, Wellman's old partner, flushes, steps out of a guest bathroom and returns to Angie's living room. Another PLAIN CLOTHES DETECTIVE watches the front window. A SECOND DETECTIVE sits at a dining room table and finishes a loaded up sandwich with pickle on the side. His gun rested on the table near his plate.

FITZROY

(to Detective #2)

What did I tell you about that gun?
We're here to ask questions. Not
kill kids. Put it away.

Detective #2 grins, chews his sandwich, re holsters his gun.

DETECTIVE #1

Nobody said anything about killing
the kid. Or the woman. So settle
down. If this doesn't bring Niner
and Pyle out of hiding, nothing
will.

A cellphone RINGS. Detective #2 wipes his hands on a napkin,
picks up the phone, answers.

DETECTIVE #2

Talk to me.

He listens.

DETECTIVE #2 (CONT'D)

Yeah. Understood.

He hangs up.

DETECTIVE #2 (CONT'D)

Niner and the girl are still
kicking. It's official.

Fitzroy conceals a grin. Almost relieved and happy for
Rawley and Abby.

DETECTIVE #1

If you ask me, Niner's long gone.
The sister too. One thing's for
sure, he'd be crazy to come back
here. We're wasting time.

DETECTIVE #2

You wanna split?

Detective #1 spots a PIZZA DELIVERY TRUCK with MUSIC BUMPING
practically fly into the driveway.

DETECTIVE #1

What the hell is this?

FITZROY

What?

DETECTIVE #1
We got company. Looks like a pizza
delivery guy.

Fitzroy and the Detective simultaneously stare back at
Detective #2 licking mustard from his fingers.

DETECTIVE #2
Don't look at me.

Detective #1 holds a CB radio to his mouth, presses the side
talk button.

DETECTIVE #1
There's a truck in the driveway.
You guys are killing me out there.
A little heads up next time.

RADIO (V.O.)
Roger that.

Detective #1 watches ABBY step out of the truck and head for
the door. She's dressed in a red pizza delivery get up with
matching visor, carrying a stack of pizzas in a giant red
leather bag.

DETECTIVE #1
I got this. Everybody stay calm.

Detective #1 answers the door.

ABBY
Hey. Extra large supreme and
garlic knots?

DETECTIVE #1
I think you got the wrong house.

Abby plays stupid.

ABBY
Oh.

She checks her receipt.

ABBY (CONT'D)
Isn't this Twenty Eleven Kaufman
Street?

Abby stands back, reads the number on the side of the house.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Yeah. This is the place. I'd leave but if I bring back another pizza undelivered I'm fired. Boss's exact words. Maybe you could just...help a girl out.

Abby reaches out her hand, palm up, wanting her payment.

ABBY (CONT'D)

I'm seriously gonna be fired. Could you maybe take up a collection or something?

Abby tries to look inside. Fitzroy grows anxious.

FITZROY

God sakes. Just pay her and get her out of here.

Detective #1 digs deep into his pocket, comes up with a twenty dollar bill.

DETECTIVE #1

Here. Keep the change. Now do me a favor and get lost.

INT. ANGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Rawley sneaks in the back door, quietly letting the door close behind him. He sneaks up on the three cops in the living room...distracted by the girl at the door.

Detective #2 spots Rawley out of the corner of his eye, attempts to draw his gun...

POW!

Rawley puts one in his chest as his chair tumbles over.

Fitzroy reaches for his gun. Rawley presses his nine mil into the side of his fat gut.

Detective #1 spins around, draws down on Rawley.

DETECTIVE #1

Hold it right there, Niner.

Abby unzips her pizza bag, pulls out a six shooter, cocks the hammer back, steps into the home.

ABBY

You first. Drop the gun.

Detective #1 laughs.

DETECTIVE #1
Abby Samms I presume.

ABBY
That's the rumor.

RAWLEY
Drop the piece and get on your
knees.

He drops the gun, slowly kneels down with hands raised. The
CB radio still in hand.

DETECTIVE #1
What now? You wanna blow job,
Rawley?

RAWLEY
Hands behind your head. You know
the drill.

He drops the radio, places his hands behind his head. Rawley
tosses Abby his personal handcuffs.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)
Careful. He flinches, you blow his
porch light.

Abby very awkwardly cuffs his hands while still pressed
behind his head.

FITZROY
(to Rawley)
You know I didn't want this, kid.

RAWLEY
Yeah, I know. Nothing personal,
right, fat man?

FITZROY
It never is.

DETECTIVE #1
You gonna kill us, Niner? You
already killed one cop today. How
long you think you'll last out
there?

RAWLEY
I guess we'll find out.

Rawley's attention drawn to the front lawn...where a pair of COPS IN BLACK rush a battering ram to the front window.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)
Heads up, Abby.

They swing it back...and then...CRASH! The ram all but obliterates the glass.

Detective #1 tumbles over, face first. Abby also stumbles, drops her gun. It slides across the floor.

One by one...grenades are tossed into the living room.

ABBY
What are those?

Rawley and Fitzroy almost shit their pants.

RAWLEY
Run!

Rawley and Fitzroy bolt.

Abby, still on the floor, stares at the grenades. It suddenly all sinks in.

ABBY
Oh shit.

She goes full track star for the back door.

EXT. ANGIE'S HOUSE - POOL AREA - DAY

Fitzroy stumbles face first onto the outside deck.

Rawley and Abby chase out of the home just in time. The grenades ignite..lighting up the inside of the home and causing the rear sliding door to shatter into a thousand little pieces.

Rawley and Abby dive for cover into the deep end as fragments of glass tear at their skin.

SPLASH!

UNDER WATER

Abby grabs her bloodied arm in pain...SCREAMS OUT. But her screams are silenced by the water.

EXT. ANGIE'S HOUSE - POOL AREA - DAY

Abby comes up for air, swims toward a ladder, grabs the metal steps for a moment of rest.

ABBY

Rawley!

Abby looks up. An armed COP IN BLACK aims the red laser light of his assault rifle at Abby's skull.

Fitzroy, still on the ground, pulls out a gun from under his large belly, empties it in the cop's direction.

The cop is hit with rapid gunfire...stumbles onto the deck. He attempts to sit up.

A drenched Rawley, dripping with pool water and blood from deep cuts on his head and back, presses a gun to the side of the cop's head, squeezes the trigger.

POP!

Fitzroy manages to stand upright. He can barely catch his breath as he gives the nod to Rawley.

Rawley grins, nods back.

Abby crawls out of the pool. Rawley's attention now fixed on her and not on Fitzroy.

While he's not looking...

A second COP IN BLACK sneaks up on Fitzroy...puts THREE SHOTS into his back as the veteran falls.

Rawley spots him, empties his clip.

POW POW POW!

The kevlar fitted cop is hard to kill. He stumbles onto a deck chair...briefly. He struggles to find his bearings, manages to get up.

With lightning fast proficiency, Rawley drops a spent magazine, reloads, rushes the cop head on, before he can snag his weapon.

He unloads a whole fresh clip of bullets. The final kill shot striking the cop in the brain. His dead, limp body crashes through a simple wood fence.

...stumbles off the deck, down a short hill and into a sprawling rear lawn.

Rawley stares down at him. Abby, holding her injured arm dripping with blood, joins him by the fence.

RAWLEY

You okay?

ABBY

No. I'm bleeding. I'm soaked and I really wish things would stop blowing up.

RAWLEY

Yeah. Me too. You got the keys to the truck?

Abby checks her pockets.

ABBY

I think I left them in the ignition.

RAWLEY

We gotta move. They'll be here soon.

ABBY

Who?

RAWLEY

The Harlem Globetrotters. More bad guys! Who the fuck else?!

Abby spots Fitzroy's body on the deck. She lets out a long and tired sigh.

ABBY

Right.

INT. BASEMENT LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

Blondie watches as a GUN DEALER unzips a bulky gym bag and places the deadly contents onto a folding table. One hand gun at a time. A three eighty. A thirty eight snub. A couple of nine millimeters.

GUN DEALER

They're all clean. Never been fired and no serials like you asked.

Blondie runs his fingers over the selection, undecided. He finally picks up the thirty eight snub.

BLONDIE
You got shells?

Gun dealer grins.

GUN DEALER
Oh I see. This is one of those cases. Anything special I should know up front?

BLONDIE
You'll be paid a visit sometime in the next day or two. By a couple of cops. You'll look at some photos.

Blondie hands the dealer a white envelope. He unfolds, spots a fat wad of cash, along with a social media pic of Cray pulled from the internet.

BLONDIE (CONT'D)
One of them is gonna look a lot like our friend here.

Gun dealer nods and smiles.

GUN DEALER
Understood.

Blondie grips the pistol with both hands, aims at the space in front of him, yanks back the hammer, clicks it back into position.

BLONDIE
That hot shit lawyer Gates comes asking questions, you be sure to call me first.

GUN DEALER
Gates, huh? Oh I don't know. Something tells me those ACLU lawyers pay better than cops. I might be looking at an early retirement plan. Guess that's all gonna be up for negotiation.

Blondie gets inches from his face.

BLONDIE
I don't negotiate.

Gun dealer reads his serious eyes. He's scared shit less with a lump in his throat.

GUN DEALER

Don't get nervous, cop. I'm only
half serious.

Gun dealer collects his weapons, bags them up. Blondie
seizes his wrist.

BLONDIE

You forgot the shells.

INT. NATASHA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Natasha and Tucker engage in post coital conversation under
some disheveled sheets. Tucker shirtless. Natasha without
bottoms...wearing Tucker's shirt.

NATASHA

Are we really going through with
this?

TUCKER

You always wanted to fight the
power. Now's your big chance.

Tucker puffs on a cigarillo.

NATASHA

Yeah. Fight the power. Not
blackmail cops. We don't even know
this guy. Or if he's even telling
the truth.

TUCKER

Well. What do you wanna do? Tell
Cray we're out?

NATASHA

This whole thing feels wrong.
Something's not right.

Natasha heads to the bathroom, fills a plastic cup with some
cold faucet water.

TUCKER

You're not telling me something.

Natasha returns with cup in hand. She stands near the bed
while Tucker waits for an answer.

NATASHA

I didn't wanna say anything before.
I didn't want you freaking out.

TUCKER

What is it?

NATASHA

This cop's been following me. All day today. Like trying to intimidate us or something.

Tucker sits up, his interest piqued.

TUCKER

A cop? How you know it's a cop?

NATASHA

He was in uniform. With his gun in plain view. I'm telling you they want us to back off.

TUCKER

Where was this?

NATASHA

Everywhere. At work. Coming out of the bank. In my rear view mirror.

Tucker rests his legs on the side of the mattress, grabs Natasha's hips, pulls her closer.

TUCKER

You sure it's the same guy?

NATASHA

I don't know. Maybe it's a bunch of cops. Who knows? Who cares? All I know is it scares the shit out of me.

Natasha pulls away from him, heads into the bathroom.

TUCKER

Where are you going now?

NATASHA

Getting a shower. And then I wanna go to Cray's. Tell him I'm done. I'm out.

Tucker rubs his bald scalp, weighs his options. He isn't thrilled with her decision.

TUCKER

Alright. Then it's done. We're out. Both of us.

Natasha dips into the bathroom, leaves the door cracked open.

Tucker collapses on the bed, disappointed. He listens as Natasha runs the shower.

A KNOCK at the door.

Tucker sits up.

TUCKER (CONT'D)
Wonderful.

Tucker heads for the living room.

LIVING ROOM

Tucker shuffles his feet on the hard wood floor as he unchains the door and opens.

BLONDIE

On the other side. In his jet black uniform. Emotionless. Silent. He sticks a silenced THIRTY EIGHT into Tucker's gut and squeezes off a shot.

Tucker stumbles backward, knocks over a bar stool seated near the kitchen counter top. He drops to the floor.

Blondie hovers over him...fires one more into the rear of Tucker's skull. ZIP!

He hears the RUNNING WATERS of a shower. Follows the sound into Natasha's...

BEDROOM

And finds the disheveled bed.

INT. NATASHA'S APARTMENT - SHOWER - DAY

Natasha finishes her shower, shuts off the faucet. The shadow of Blondie on the other side.

NATASHA
Just give me a minute, baby. Not
right now.

Natasha jerks the curtain back. Blondie grabs her by the throat, jerks her out of the tub and slams her head into the bathroom mirror...cracking it.

Blondie very calmly releases her. Natasha drops to her knees, one hand on the floor, one around her neck as she gasps for air.

Natasha manages to crawl out of the bathroom...back into...

THE BEDROOM

...as Blondie calmly steps around her.

He picks her up, throws her down on the mattress, climbs on top of her and squeezes what's left of the life from Natasha's body.

She passes on.

Blondie stands. No emotion. No feeling. He simply leaves the room.

INT. CRAY'S APARTMENT - DAY

A restless Cray paces back and forth on his carpet. A phone to his ear as he waits.

CRAY

Come on, y'all. Where the hell are you guys?

Clifford and his two hundred dollar sneakers sprawled out on Cray's leather couch, watching a movie.

CLIFFORD

You're wearing a hole in the floor. Why don't you sit down.

CRAY

We got work to do. I still haven't gotten a final answer from either one of them.

CLIFFORD

We're not doing this tonight. You already know where she is. I don't know why you keep doing this to yourself.

CRAY

I told you. This ain't about that.

Clifford gives him the look. His eyebrows raised.

CLIFFORD

Mmm hmm.

And before they know what's happening...

CRASH!

The front door lock and the wood framing surrounding it are blown off the hinges by a battering ram as ARMED UNIFORM COPS rush the apartment.

UNIFORM COP #1
On the ground! Hands! Let's see
those hands!

Cray panics, raises his hands and drops to his knees. He's quickly cuffed with a knee to his back.

Clifford is yanked from the couch and thrown to the floor like a wet dishrag.

UNIFORM COP #2
Hands on your head! Right now!

Clifford lay face down on the carpet. He rests his hands on the back of his head.

CLIFFORD
Y'all be cool!

The armed cops pull Cray from the floor, handcuffed. They rush him from the apartment. The remaining cops file out...one at a time.

Clifford left face down on the carpet.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)
Officer, sir?! Hello?!

EXT. ANGIE'S HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

The fire at Angie's house has grown stronger, and bigger, as members of the Warren Fire Department walk a fire hose onto the property and inspect the damage.

Lt. Waddle stands in the street, phone to his ear, touching base with Rawley on the other line.

LT. WADDLE
So basically I should expect World
War Three to break out on my
streets at any second?

RAWLEY (V.O.)
We know they're in town. How many,
I don't know.

(MORE)

RAWLEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 All I know is...without any backup,
 we'll never make it out alive. I'm
 gonna need a chaperon. At least a
 couple of cars.

LT. WADDLE
 Alright, I'm on it. Where are we
 doing this?

INT. PIZZA DELIVERY TRUCK - MOVING - NIGHT

Rawley, his head still bleeding, keeps a careful eye on his immediate surroundings. Abby rides shotgun and winces in pain from the shower of obliterated glass she took from the explosion.

RAWLEY
 (into phone)
 How about the parking garage on
 Downey? Next to the mall. Third
 level in ten minutes.

LT. WADDLE (V.O.)
 Ten minutes. Don't be late.

RAWLEY
 We won't.

Rawley hangs up.

EXT. ANGIE'S HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

Lt. Waddle walks to his police issue sedan, snags up his transponder and gives the call.

LT. WADDLE
 This is Lieutenant Waddle. I need
 an all available at the Lake Pointe
 Mall parking garage, third level.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. KAUFMAN AVENUE - NIGHT

Jacko, behind the wheel of his Charger, inches past a stop sign, stares down the street and watches the commotion in front of Angie's house. He listens in on his open channel police scanner.

LT. WADDLE (V.O.)
That's an all available at the Lake
Pointe Mall garage. Third Level.
Does someone out there copy?

COP #1 (V.O.)
That's a copy. Unit Twelve en
route.

COP #2 (V.O.)
Unit Ten en route.

Jacko cracks a giant grin. He bolts out of there.

INT. PIZZA DELIVERY TRUCK - MOVING - NIGHT

Abby still stroking her scabbed up arm.

ABBY
Pretty sure I'm bleeding to death.

She gawks at Rawley's busted forehead.

ABBY (CONT'D)
You're not doing a whole lot
better.

RAWLEY
I'm fine. I'm used to it.

ABBY
I'm not. We need to stop.

RAWLEY
Yeah, we'll stop. When we're a
hundred miles away from here, we'll
stop.

Abby isn't down with that.

ABBY
What if I have to pee?

RAWLEY
Pee yourself.

Abby scrunches her eyes, mouth agape.

ABBY
What if I have to...

RAWLEY
Do you mind? I'm trying to think.

ABBY

Was that your boss on the phone?

RAWLEY

We're meeting my Lieutenant and some friendly faces about three blocks from here. They're gonna give us a personal escort out of town.

ABBY

To where?

RAWLEY

To The Wayne County DA's Office. A guy named Marquette is gonna put you in protective custody.

ABBY

Put me in protective custody. What about you?

RAWLEY

I'm gonna finish what I started.

ABBY

You mean get killed.

RAWLEY

If that's my fate then I'll accept it.

Abby reads Rawley's eyes. And they're restless and full of distraught.

ABBY

God, Rawley. What does this guy Pyle have on you?

RAWLEY

It's a lot to get into right now. Let's just say it wasn't all his fault.

ABBY

What wasn't his fault? Exactly how many people have you hurt, Rawley? I mean I knew you were a little bent and skirted the law from time to time but you were just a kid back then. Barely on the force.

RAWLEY

Like I said, we're a little busy right now for this.

ABBY

I thought I knew just about everything there is to know about Rawley Niner. But it isn't everything. Is it?

Rawley ignores her.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Maybe they were right about you. All those people back in Mount Pleasant who said you were a murderer. Could be I don't know you at all.

Rawley sighs.

ABBY (CONT'D)

And that's what scares you the most. That one day I'll find out the truth. About who and where you came from. What made you this way. Tell me I'm wrong.

RAWLEY

Abby. If we make it out of this alive, I'll tell you everything. I promise.

ABBY

Good. Well you just make sure we live then. I don't think I could stand any more suspense.

Rawley smirks, shakes his head.

RAWLEY

I'll do my best.

INT. LAKE POINTE MALL PARKING GARAGE - THIRD LEVEL - NIGHT

A crew of TWO BLACK CAMAROS cruise up the third level ramp and it is strangely quiet and without the first squad car or cop of any kind.

A third car...Jacko's DODGE CHARGER...pulls up behind the other two Camaros. The crew of DIRTY COPS all throw their cars in park...step out...confused looks.

JACKO
Where the hell is everyone?

DIRTY COP #1
You got the right address?

JACKO
This is the place.

Rawley makes a grand entrance as he pops up from behind a parked car, at the bottom of the third level, and walks right out into the open.

Jacko and the dirty cops all spot him.

JACKO (CONT'D)
The other man of the hour.

But the dirty cops are in for a surprise. About half a dozen WARREN CITY COPS pop up from behind the parked cars with twelve gauges rocked and ready.

WARREN COP #1
Drop it!

RAWLEY
(to Jacko)
Uh oh!

Jacko rests his hand on his piece, stuffed in the front of his four hundred dollar slacks.

JACKO
Gotta hand it to you, Niner! You got me!

Rawley folds his arms and grins.

Jacko looks behind him, to his right side, spots an empty parking spot with a wide enough space in between levels to barely squeeze through.

He makes a run for it.

WARREN COP #1
HOLD IT!

The dozen or so armed cops exchange a barrage of gunfire that LIGHTS UP an otherwise dark corridor. FLASHES OF WHITE LIGHT and BODIES DROPPING left and right. It's all out war.

LEVEL TWO

Jacko dips in between the cars, staying low. He spots a short walkway that enters into the second level of the outside shopping center.

He heads toward it. But he's immediately met with a gun to his temple. Rawley's gun. Abby just behind him.

RAWLEY

Guess who.

JACKO

Let me guess. My worst nightmare?

RAWLEY

Something like that. Start walking.

Rawley gives him a good swat on the head with his nine mil. Jacko winces in pain, rubs the sore spot.

JACKO

They were right about you. You got a real streak in you.

RAWLEY

Just keep walking until I tell you to stop.

Abby checks behind her. All clear.

Jacko leads the way as they cross over a short bridge that separates the garage from the mall's second level.

Jacko stares over the side.

JACKO

You gonna chuck me over the side for old time's sake, Rawley? Get the juices flowing again.

Rawley angrily presses his gun into the already sore spot on Jacko's head.

RAWLEY

Don't tempt me.

ABBY

Yeah. Don't tempt him. He's right on the edge.

RAWLEY

(to Abby)

I got this. You just keep your eyes peeled.

Abby looks down, spots a TRIO OF GUNMEN on the first level, aiming their assault rifles.

ABBY
Rawley, look out!

Rawley and Abby take cover as Jacko is riddled with multiple shots and thrown to the ground.

Scared to death, Abby desperately holds both hands over her ears and stays as low as possible.

Jacko is hurt and bleeding but still kicking.

ABBY (CONT'D)
I kept my eyes peeled, Rawley! Now get us out of this!

RAWLEY
(to Abby)
When I tell you to...run as fast as you can for the theater. I'll cover you.

Rawley grabs Jacko, pulls him to his feet and holds him as a protective shield. He walks him out of view of the three gunmen on the first level.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)
Go Abby!

Abby stays low but hauls ass toward a movie theater on the other side of the courtyard.

Rawley holds a wounded Jacko upright as ONE of the three gunmen comes up an escalator.

JACKO
Get us out of here or we're both dead, asshole.

Rawley walks backward, toward a small coin pond and decorative water fountain.

RAWLEY
Stand back!

The gunman pays Jacko no mind and puts three in his chest.

Rawley stumbles backward, into the water. SPLASH!

Jacko drops like cement. The gunman puts one more between his eyes for good measure.

Rawley rolls out of the coin pond, barely escaping another barrage of rapid gunfire.

Bullets take chunks out of the red brick foundation.

People SCREAM and run for cover.

The gunman steps around the coin pond and fountain, attempts to load another magazine. He spots Rawley...now squatted behind a circular center rest area with hand carved wooden benches.

Rawley looks to his left, finds a SCARED TEEN GIRL squatted behind a mobile junk jewelry cart.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)
Get out of here! And call the
cops!

SCARED TEEN GIRL
I thought you were the cops!

WARREN COP #3 (V.O.)
Freeze!

The gunman spins around, loaded magazine still in hand, faces an armed WARREN COP in uniform.

The gunman attempts to reload.

WARREN COP #3
Hold it!

Warren Cop #3 drops him.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - BOX OFFICE - NIGHT

Abby is in full panic mode as she pushes through a screaming crowd running back and forth near concessions, and makes a run for the restrooms.

A SECOND GUNMAN enters the theater. The THEATER GUESTS gasp and shriek at the sight of the assault rifle. They scatter like cockroaches.

The second gunman finds the restroom area, checks for onlookers, dips into the ladies room.

Abby is hidden just behind a curved wall that leads into the men's room. She stays quiet, waits.

The second gunman steps back out. He checks the lobby.

Abby bravely steps out, into the wide open.

ABBY
Looking for me?

The second gunman takes aim. Rawley steps up behind him and fires a bullet through his skull.

Down he goes.

Abby breathes a sigh of relief. She runs into Rawley's arms.

EXT. LAKE POINT MALL SECOND LEVEL - NIGHT

Rawley and Abby rest on the courtyard benches as a couple EMTs fix them up with long overdue bandages.

Lt. Waddle hovers over them.

LT. WADDLE
We lost one of ours. Another three in the ER all busted up and shot to shit. Thank God for kevlar or it could've been worse. That's six folded flags counting all the badges from out of town we put on the pavement.

Rawley leans forward, buries his face in his hands. Abby rubs his tired shoulders.

LT. WADDLE (CONT'D)
Those tv crew people are on their way and I don't have the foggiest what I'm supposed to tell them. You promised me you'd stop making these messes, Rawley. That was our deal.

ABBY
He's not real good with deals. Not really his thing.

Rawley gives her a dumb look.

ABBY (CONT'D)
Well you aren't.

LT. WADDLE
You got anything to add, Rawley? Or should I just wait for the official report on the eleven o'clock news?

RAWLEY

You don't happen to have an
excedrin handy?

Lt. Waddle throws him the thousand yard stare. But eventually cracks up laughing.

LT. WADDLE

You are a cutie pie, Niner. I'll
give you that.

(to Abby)

I save his ass. Again. And do I
get a thank you?

A very whipped Rawley and Abby share a look. And then stare back up at Lt. Waddle.

RAWLEY

Thanks.

ABBY

Thanks.

Lt. Waddle shakes his head.

LT. WADDLE

Okay, kids. The bus is waiting.

RAWLEY

Where?

LT. WADDLE

The garage. First level.

Rawley and Abby stand, dump their bottles of water in a trash bin near the bench.

LT. WADDLE (CONT'D)

You think you can make it to the
courthouse without getting into
another gunfight, Rawley?

RAWLEY

Can't promise anything but we'll
try.

LT. WADDLE

I'd appreciate that.

Rawley and Abby head that direction. Lt. Waddle spots members of the press pushing their way up the stairs with camera crew on stand by.

LT. WADDLE (CONT'D)

Perfect timing. Maybe I'll just
shoot him myself.

INT. POLICE PLAZA - INTERROGATION - NIGHT

The room is claustrophobic and as large as a storage closet. Cray sits alone at a simple but very scratched up and tarnished oak table. A dim lamp dangles overhead. A shabby file cabinet sits in the corner.

Cray fixes his gaze on a video camera rested on a tripod...aimed down at his face.

He rocks back and forth. Nervous. Sick. Broken.

A one-way mirror carved into the faded brick wall.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Capt. Wellman, arms folded, stares back at Cray. A large coffee rested on the inside frame of the one-way mirror before him.

Lt. Gibson enters the room.

LT. GIBSON
Where's his lawyer?

CAPT. WELLMAN
Hasn't called him yet.

Capt. Wellman keeps his focus on Cray. Lt. Gibson walks to the mirror, leans against the glass.

LT. GIBSON
You give him his phone call?

CAPT. WELLMAN
I'm letting him sweat.

LT. GIBSON
We're losing time.

CAPT. WELLMAN
The press is on their way.

Cray rubs his hands together as he rocks in place and takes huge panicked breaths.

CAPT. WELLMAN (CONT'D)
If the charges stick or not, he's still done.

LT. GIBSON
If they stick? What is that? This is supposed to be a done deal.

Capt. Wellman, without moving a muscle, fixes his eyes on a worked up and worried Lt. Gibson.

CAPT. WELLMAN

All that matters is the court of public opinion. After tonight, no one will remember Decarlo Jefferson nor will they care. One murderer making up stories about another.

Capt. Wellman leaves. Lt. Gibson turns around, faces Cray seated at the table. In walks Capt. Wellman.

INT. POLICE PLAZA - INTERROGATION - NIGHT

Capt. Wellman grabs the chair across from Cray...moves it as close to Cray as possible and takes a seat.

CAPT. WELLMAN

You know why you're here?

CRAY

Yeah. I got too close.

CAPT. WELLMAN

Oh yeah. That's right. I forgot. You're being framed like your friend Jefferson. I'm afraid you're gonna have to do better than that, son.

CRAY

I'm not your son, cop.

Cray spits in his face. Capt. Wellman pulls a proper handkerchief from his coat pocket, wipes his face and hands clean.

CAPT. WELLMAN

I see you're still a little worked up over your girlfriend.

CRAY

Kiss my ass. I want my phone call.

In rushes Alan Marquette in another sharp suit and with his briefcase in hand.

MARQUETTE

That won't be necessary.

Capt. Wellman sits in shock. As if he recognizes the slick young lawyer from uptown.

MARQUETTE (CONT'D)

Captain. If you don't mind, I'd like a word with Mister Mackelway. Alone please.

Capt. Wellman stares back at the one-way mirror.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Lt. Gibson's jaw drops at the sight of Marquette interrupting his interrogation.

Capt. Wellman gives Lt. Gibson a dead pan stare. Their big play just got a rewrite. After a few brief moments, he turns his attention to Marquette.

CAPT. WELLMAN

Yeah, sure.

Capt. Wellman excuses himself.

LT. GIBSON

Sonofabitch. What's he doing?

INT. POLICE PLAZA - INTERROGATION - NIGHT

Marquette smiles, grabs the chair and places it back where it belongs. Across the table from Cray.

MARQUETTE

Mister Mackelway, have you been made aware of your rights?

CRAY

No. I was not.

MARQUETTE

What about a phone call?

CRAY

No. Nothing.

MARQUETTE

That's what I figured.

Marquette opens his briefcase. But before he pulls any contents from inside, he turns...stares back at the two cops on the other side of the mirror.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Marquette throws them a slick, knowing grin that suggests he's onto their scheme.

LT. GIBSON

What the hell's he doing?

Marquette pulls out a notepad and pen. Jots down a simple phone number onto the paper, slides it across the table and offers it to Cray.

Capt. Wellman steps closer to the mirror...fights to get a look at what's on the paper.

INT. POLICE PLAZA - INTERROGATION - NIGHT

MARQUETTE

Not gonna lie to you. You're in some pretty deep shit. If I were you I'd call someone.

Cray stares down at the paper: Danny Pyle. 313-656-8789

CRAY

What is this?

MARQUETTE

It's exactly what it says. Don't worry, Mister Mackelway. You'll be out of here in no time. Just sit tight and enjoy the show.

He smiles, raps his knuckles on the surface of the oak wood table for luck. Cray still lost but nods just the same.

Marquette closes his briefcase and dips out.

Lt. Gibson rushes in. Just as Cray folds the paper and stuffs in his shirt pocket.

CRAY

I'm gonna be wanting that phone call.

INT. POLICE PLAZA - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Cray uses a wall mounted pay phone to dial Danny's number. He quickly answers on the other line.

DANNY (V.O.)
 How you holding up in there,
 partner? Good I hope.

Cray is shocked to hear from Danny.

CRAY
 What am I doing in here, cop? You
 gotta get me out of this.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. DANNY'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Danny cruises the eerily dark back roads of the Highland Park projects...dotted with abandoned buildings painted in graffiti and surrounded by wide open fields of dead grass.

DANNY
 Don't worry. You're exactly where
 I need you to be. I got some
 friends of yours with me. Wanna
 say hello?

Clifford rides shotgun and gives Cray a shout out.

CLIFFORD
 It's going down, baby! You ready
 to be famous?

Abby pokes her head out from the backseat.

ABBY
 Hi. You don't know me at all but
 I'm rooting for you. Woohoo!

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. POLICE PLAZA - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Cray cracks a hopeful grin.

CRAY
 (to Clifford)
 What're you doin, man? You crazy?
 Who was that?

DANNY (V.O.)
 Hang tight in there for a couple
 more hours. Because me and you are
 about to make history. Be sure to
 give Thom Wellman my regards.

Danny hangs up. Cray's smile is ear to ear. He hangs up the receiver as a CORRECTIONS OFFICER walks him back to his holding cell.

EXT. HIGHLAND PARK PROJECTS - NIGHT

Danny walks side by side with Abby as they approach the entrance to a hundred year old underground railroad tunnel, peppered with graffiti. The outskirts of this circular tube are practically hidden beneath years of natural vegetation.

Clifford behind them, camera fitted on a slick shoulder rig with expensive mat box and LED light. It's just bright enough to illuminate the terrain. He's filming the official next episode of "The Urban Jungle".

Danny and Abby turn on their flashlights...about to brave the dark and mysterious tunnel.

DANNY

Watch out for rats. And drug addicts.

ABBY

After today, I'm ready for anything.

They begin inside. Clifford follows.

INT. POLICE PLAZA - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Capt. Wellman enters. He is taken aback by the sight of Rawley seated on one side of the table. His feet kicked up and most comfortable.

Capt. Wellman turns his attention to...

The white projector screen at the front of the room. A LIVE VIDEO FEED of Danny and Abby walking through the dark underground tunnel with their flashlights.

RAWLEY

Come on in. Pull up a chair. You haven't missed anything. The Lieutenant's running late but he's on his way.

CAPT. WELLMAN

Mister Niner, you're supposed to be dead. You disappoint me.

Rawley has a good laugh.

RAWLEY

You could still shoot me. Just you and me here. No cameras. But I think we're past all that. You know. Considering.

Rawley aims his thumb at the white screen. Capt. Wellman watches as Danny and Abby exit the dark tunnel and enter a small wooded area.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)

Should be any minute now. The public will have their proof about Jefferson and we can all move on. Won't that be nice?

Rawley pops open a bag of ruffles. Gets himself a big mouthful.

Capt. Wellman steps in front of the table, directly in front of the screen, gets a closer look.

He watches as Abby explores the insides of the underground tunnel with her flashlight. She is clearly creeped out uncomfortable.

DANNY

It won't be long now. It's right on the other side of here. Someplace no one would dare enter. Let alone explore on their own. It was the perfect spot to bury all our secrets.

CAPT. WELLMAN

You crazy sonofabitch, Danny.

RAWLEY

Do you mind? I can't see.

CAPT. WELLMAN

Where are they?

RAWLEY

You mean exactly? Not sure. Somewhere in Highland Park from what Danny told me.

CAPT. WELLMAN

There were never any bodies buried at Northway. At least none I could account for.

RAWLEY

No there certainly were not. You'd know that better than anyone. Danny figured it would make for a better cover story. With Northway scheduled for demolition. Throw everyone at City Hall into a panic. Pretty smart if you ask me.

CAPT. WELLMAN

All he had to do was keep his mouth shut. Play along. Danny always was a bit paranoid.

RAWLEY

You pulled us off of Jefferson that night. And you made Danny clean up your mess.

CAPT. WELLMAN

Can't take credit for that. That was all Gibson.

RAWLEY

Yeah. Maybe. But Gibson didn't plug Jefferson. You did. Didn't you?

Capt. Wellman won't spill. His mind going in a million different directions. He turns to Rawley.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)

It had to be. Or you wouldn't be standing here.

CAPT. WELLMAN

What I did was save about half a dozen lives. Maybe more. Depending how long that parasite managed to keep himself alive on the street. Not unlike what you did to Ortega. Or Van Den Kemp or all those other pieces of shit bottom feeders you kicked the truth out of behind closed doors.

DANNY (O.S.)

This is the spot.

Capt. Wellman returns to the screen. Now on the other side of the tunnel and in a small patch of woods, Danny and Abby stop near a clearing in the trees. An ORANGE NEON CLOTH wrapped around a thin branch.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Right through here.

Danny leads them into the marked path. Abby turns to the camera...

ABBY

This is it. Here we go. I don't think I'm ready for this.

Abby takes one last breath, follows behind Danny. The camera follows behind her. Capt. Wellman turns back, eyes back on Rawley seated in his chair.

CAPT. WELLMAN

The only difference between you and me is...I had permission. I was following orders. So to answer your question. If it's between losing my family and dropping Decarlo Jefferson. I choose the latter.

Lt. Gibson pops his head in. The door closes shut behind him.

LT. GIBSON

It's over, Thom.

CAPT. WELLMAN

Not yet.

Capt. Wellman pulls a gun from his holster. Rawley grows visibly nervous.

LT. GIBSON

Don't do anything stupid.

Lt. Gibson finds Danny on the screen, grabbing a shovel from the ground, staring back at the camera one last time before beginning his dig.

LT. GIBSON (CONT'D)

Nothing can stop what's about to happen. You're just complicating the situation.

CAPT. WELLMAN

Just taking out the garbage one last time. For old time's sake. What's the harm in that?

RAWLEY

Before you kill me. Just do me one last favor.

CAPT. WELLMAN
What's that?

RAWLEY
Smile for the camera.

Rawley aims at a tripod and camera in the far corner of the room, aimed directly at the table.

Capt. Wellman stares straight into it.

DANNY
Hello, Thom.

Capt. Wellman stares at the video screen. Danny appears to be talking back to him. The shovel still gripped in both hands and a hole only partially dug.

DANNY (CONT'D)
If you're hearing this, it probably means you've been caught. And right about now Rawley is showing you the wire under his shirt.

Rawley stands, yanks up his shirt to reveal a digital recording device tapped to his belly.

CAPT. WELLMAN
What the hell is this?

DANNY
Hate to disappoint you but we won't be unearthing Mister Jefferson this evening. Thing is...I lied.

Danny shrugs his shoulders.

DANNY (CONT'D)
See you in the funny papers, Captain.

Abby waves goodbye.

ABBY
Bye! Good luck in jail! I hear they love cops!

Clifford turns the camera on himself. A huge belly laugh.

Capt. Wellman boils over with rage. Lt. Gibson steps closer, reaches out his hand.

LT. GIBSON

Give me the gun, Thom. We're gonna deal with this. Danny's not stupid. We've still got him by the balls too. Jefferson. Remember Jefferson. We can fix this. Like we always do.

RAWLEY

Keep going. This thing is still rolling.

LT. GIBSON

(to Rawley)

We got you too, asshole. Don't forget it.

Rawley loses his grin.

CAPT. WELLMAN

What do you think, Rawley? Like the man said. We can still fix this.

Capt. Wellman, without flinching, fires two shots into Lt. Gibson's belly. He drops to the carpet.

Rawley dives for cover, dips out a side door as bullets strike all around him.

Capt. Wellman rushes out the other door.

INT. POLICE PLAZA - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Rawley chases down the steps.

INT. POLICE PLAZA - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Capt. Wellman racks his twelve gauge, roams about the halls in search of Rawley. A slew of PLAIN CLOTHES OFFICERS and UNIFORM COPS dip in and out of offices. Wellman holds the shotgun to his side, plays it cool. They pay him little mind as he's just another cop.

He steps onto an elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Capt. Wellman spots a smear of blood on the numbered buttons. Particularly on the "L" for lobby.

RAWLEY

I don't know about that. I think when all the smoke clears, the city's gonna be looking to Danny for answers. Including taking the cops to Jefferson's body. You helped do a good thing here.

Cray stops for a moment of reflection. A growing smile.

CRAY

Yeah. I did, didn't I?

RAWLEY

If anyone asks. You and Danny were a team on this thing from the beginning. They won't know the difference.

CRAY

Are you suggesting that I blatantly lie just to up my online status?

RAWLEY

Yes.

CRAY

I'm good with that.

Cray walks with a pep in his step as he approaches the popping flashbulbs and hot microphones. They are on him like white on rice.

Cray stares back at Rawley, gives him a sly wink.

Rawley refocuses his attention on Abby coming up the other side of the steps. She's whipped. But still able to muster up a proud smile.

The two meet halfway.

ABBY

What a day, huh?

RAWLEY

I've had worse.

ABBY

Yeah. Me too. The whole dead family thing.

RAWLEY

Yeah, I remember.

ABBY

Gee, Rawley. You just never cease to surprise me. Can't wait to see what's next.

Rawley stares at her a good moment. And before she knows what's happening, he's kissing her. A nice, long kiss. He lets her go.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Yeah. Didn't see that coming. You did it again.

RAWLEY

You're welcome.

ABBY

So. Where to? I just realized I'm kind of homeless. My house exploded.

RAWLEY

Yeah, I remember.

Clifford jogs up the steps, greets the two of them.

CLIFFORD

So I hear you two might need a place to lay your head for the night. As long as you promise I won't be woke up by some crooked ass white people busting into my house with guns.

RAWLEY

I think we're good.

Clifford watches Cray entertain a crowd of reporters.

CLIFFORD

Don't know what he's so proud of. He didn't do nuthin.

RAWLEY

You guys did plenty. Come on. Before I fall over.

Rawley throws an arm around Abby. The three of them leave Cray to his fifteen minutes.

INT. CLIFFORD'S APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRS - LATE NIGHT

Clifford digs for his apartment key while Abby and Rawley wait on the stairs. Abby slowly turns, stares down at Rawley with puppy dog eyes.

ABBY

So. Are we gonna talk about what happened?

RAWLEY

Yeah. Later. I promise. Right now I gotta go see how Danny's doing. Talk to the cops. Answer a few...thousand questions. Stuff like that.

Abby awkwardly nods, as if she's just been brushed off.

CLIFFORD

You mean to tell me you're still going out? Like, out there?

RAWLEY

Just for a while. I've been up four days running. Why stop now?

CLIFFORD

Sleep. A cold beer.

RAWLEY

Don't tempt me. Give us a minute here, would ya?

Clifford ducks inside.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)

Looks like Gibson's gonna pull through. Things are about to get ugly. Real ugly. Not just for Danny.

ABBY

This have anything to do with that big secret you can't tell me?

Rawley shifts his feet, unable to stand still, fighting the urge to spill.

ABBY (CONT'D)

No one knows living with guilt better than me. Just ask anyone.

(MORE)

ABBY (CONT'D)

But one thing I've learned...is to not let other people determine who I am. Or how I should feel about myself. It doesn't change the truth. Only you know what's true and what isn't. It's how we move forward that determines who we really are. A friend told me that once a long time ago.

Rawley soaks it all in.

RAWLEY

Go get some sleep. It's been a long day.

ABBY

I get it. We'll talk about it later, right?

RAWLEY

Yeah. Later.

ABBY

You promise?

RAWLEY

I promise. For real this time.

Abby smiles and heads inside.

Rawley grins like a school boy, heads back down the staircase.

INT. CLIFFORD'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Abby enters. It's pitch black. Just the light of the outer hallway to brighten things up.

ABBY

Hello?

CLIFFORD

I know, it's dark. Blew a circuit or something. Gimme a sec.

Clifford rummages through some kitchen drawers, comes up with a box of matches. He glides across the room, strikes one and lights a candle rested on a corner nightstand.

The burning flame shines a glow on the face of...

BLONDIE

...seated in a leather chair.

Clifford jumps. He steps backward, joins a startled Abby, still by the front door.

BLONDIE
Shut the door.

Abby closes the door behind her.

BLONDIE (CONT'D)
I can see it now. People will be dancing in the streets like they won the lottery. Celebrating some sort of...great personal victory. Celebrating the memory of a cop killer. A murderer.

Clifford holds Abby close to his side.

BLONDIE (CONT'D)
Because people need heroes. Now more than ever. They're desperate for leaders like you and your friends, bucking the system that swore to protect them. All they see is death. The systematic deterioration of their world. With a pair of blinders permanently glued to both sides of their faces. Only seeing what they choose to see. Not seeing the truth.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. CLIFFORD'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATE NIGHT

Rawley steps away from the building. He's stopped in his tracks by the sight of A BLACK CAMARO.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CLIFFORD'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

BLONDIE
The truth isn't always about black versus white. Or right and wrong. People live. People die. Most of the time we don't have a choice how we go. But there has to be balance. All we're doing is keeping score.
(MORE)

BLONDIE (CONT'D)
 Keeping it a fair fight. Keeping
 people like you and your friends
 safe.

CLIFFORD
 That's funny. I don't feel too
 safe right now.

Blondie grins.

INT. CLIFFORD'S APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRS - LATE NIGHT

Rawley, gun drawn, stealthily glides up the steps as only he can do, quiet and smooth, stopping near the top. He looks to the bottom of the steps. A curious TENANT with a man bun and toting a back pack records him with his phone.

Rawley waves him back.

RAWLEY
 (whispers)
 Not now. Get out of here. Go eat
 some granola.

TENANT
 Yeah. Nothing to see here.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CLIFFORD'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Clifford, from the corner of his eye, spots some shadowy movement on the other side of his door. He backs up a bit...attempts to block Blondie's view of the light creeping under the door frame.

ABBY
 He's coming back, you know?

Blondie sets his gun on the table, near the candle's flame. In plain view. Abby and Clifford are petrified.

BLONDIE
 You two. You think you did a good
 thing here tonight. Jefferson's
 kid will probably get acquitted,
 citing a conspiracy. And a cop's
 murder will go unpunished. I can't
 help but feel compelled to do
 something about that. But I'll
 tell you what we're gonna do.

CLIFFORD

What?

BLONDIE

You give me Niner. And you two
live to see another day.

Clifford and Abby contemplate their decision. Blondie takes
hold of his hand gun.

CLIFFORD

Yeah. We could do that. But you
forgot about option number two.

BLONDIE

What's that?

Rawley bursts open the door, tucks and rolls into the
darkness.

Clifford and Abby drop to the floor.

Blondie snags a second gun. An automatic machine pistol --
sprays the door frame...rips it to pieces.

He bolts for the bedroom.

ABBY

Rawley!

Rawley checks on her.

RAWLEY

You good?

ABBY

I don't know. I can't tell. Do I
got any holes?

CLIFFORD

We're good. Go get his ass.

Rawley bolts into the bedroom.

INT. CLIFFORD'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Blondie shoots out the window and crawls out onto an
emergency fire escape.

Rawley open fires, barely missing him.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - LATE NIGHT

Blondie stares down, spots a dozen or so POLICE CARS blocking off the street and a crew of UNIFORM COPS waiting at the bottom of the ladder.

He heads for the roof.

EXT. ROOFTOP - LATE NIGHT

Blondie spots a helicopter circling the building. A bright SPOTLIGHT beams down on his face. He gives up, stops, presses his hands over his head.

Rawley steps onto the roof.

Blondie turns, faces him. A giant grin.

BLONDIE

Go ahead, Niner! The whole world's watching! Do what you do best!

Rawley draws closer and closer. His gun gripped in both hands.

BLONDIE (CONT'D)

But you won't!

RAWLEY

Oh yeah? Why's that?

BLONDIE

Because you can't afford to!
Because I got the names! I've got what they want! And I'll be more useful to them than you've ever dreamed of being on the street! You think they're gonna let you get away with killing me?!

Rawley stares up at the chopper, still circling overhead. It manages to keep a steady hold.

RAWLEY

No, they probably wouldn't.

BLONDIE

We all got an expiration date, Rawley! You finally wore out your welcome! Now's your chance! I can make you famous again! Respectable!

RAWLEY

Well. We can agree on one thing.
We all got an expiration date.

Rawley nods to the chopper overhead.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)

And that's not a news chopper.

Blondie loses his cocky grin.

A sharpshooter in the chopper gets Blondie in his crosshairs,
ready to put him down and silence him for good.

Rawley lowers his gun.

RAWLEY (CONT'D)

Your number's up.

Rawley turns and walks off. Blondie reaches for his pistol,
draws it and aims at Rawley's back.

CRACK! A rifle shot takes him out. He drops dead.

Rawley keeps his back turned, gently raises his hands high in
the air, presses them on his head. A sly grin.

CUT TO BLACK

OVER BLACK

Lt. Roland Gibson and Detective Danny Pyle's grand jury testimony would lead to the indictments and prosecution of over two dozen high ranking city officials and over one hundred members of the Detroit Police Department.

In the months following, Alan Marquette was promoted to lead prosecutor for The Wayne County District Attorney's Office. He would later resign and is now an assistant defense counsel for The American Civil Liberties Union. His work with The Innocence Project has led to the release of five death row inmates and counting.

Demar Jefferson was acquitted on all charges for his role in the shooting death of Officer Joshua Butler. The jury's verdict was unanimous.

Cray Mackelway would go on to become one of the most followed and recognizable online voices in recent time - with his weekly podcast The Urban Jungle gaining an impressive 1.5 million subscribers in its first year of infancy.

Two years after leaving Warren and returning home, Theresa "Tia" Parker sobered up and gave birth to a baby girl.

After a long and exhaustive process, newlyweds Rawley and Abby became her legal guardians...

...naming her Carly.

And that's that.

THE END