

THE UTAH MURDER PROJECT

screenplay by

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FADE IN:

An unidentifiable DARKNESS consumes the frame. A thinning spiral of BLUE SMOKE twists into the otherwise black space. As the thin, white stream slowly disbands - another spiral of SMOKE SHOOTS INTO FRAME.

An aging, hairy set of KNUCKLES rest on a very colorful and expensive pair of silk slacks. Each knuckle adorned with a different GOLD RING.

The older, chiseled face of RUDY DE LE PENA (60s) -- latino gangster, is creepily silhouetted by the streak of sunlight seeping in through an open CAR WINDOW.

The source of the smoke is none other than his fifty dollar CUBANO, clenched tightly in his gnarled and hairy mouth. He has a cool and even temperament.

The frightened face of CHARLIE DE SANTIS (30s) - baby faced handsome, Italian-American, stares back at the intimidating figure from an adjacent seat.

The car window lowers as the BRIGHT SUNLIGHT pours into the darkness like a flood of WHITE ENERGY.

Rudy and De Santis sit in the backseat of a limousine - TWO THUGS sit on each side of their helpless captive. De Santis is cuffed at the wrists.

RUDY

A young man sees only one thing on the street. His family on one side. Cops on the other. Everyone else is somewhere in between. They see cops turn their own people against each other. Until he don't trust no one. Not even his family.

Rudy taps his cigar against the car window as a long trail of ash falls from the burning tip.

RUDY

They do what they do to survive. And they don't think about consequences. But when you spend half your life in prison - separated from your family, the world. You got time to think. You know what I learned, cop?

RUDY

When you grow older - have a family of your own - you want the best for them. But when you look around, all you see is the nightmare you helped create. The families you helped destroy. That shit starts to fuck with you. All you can do is ask God for forgiveness.

The blue cigar smoke finds its way into De Santis face. He has a good cough as Rudy tosses the cigar out the window.

RUDY

I made a promise to God when I was locked up. That if he let me out and let me see my family. I'd make these streets safe again. Now your faggot brother comes in here and turns my streets into a war-zone. My people want justice.

DE SANTIS

Don't do anything stupid. I'll be the least of your worries.

Thug #1 catches De Santis with a right hook -- WHAP!

De Santis spits a stream of BLOOD onto the leather seat.

RUDY

I got a hundred pigs beating down my doors, asking about your brother. I don't need any more trigger happy motherfuckers out looking for you.

(beat)

But sooner or later, you're gonna run out of money and I'm gonna run out of answers.

DE SANTIS

There's fifty grand in that envelope. I can get you more.

Rudy checks with Thug #2. He slides a stack of CASH from a manila envelope, fans through the hundred dollar bills.

RUDY

Next time, you'll need more than money. The kind of problem I got, well, there's only one thing that can make it go away. You know what you got to do.

Thug #1 opens the door, snatches up De Santis by his shirt collar and drags him across the expensive leather.

EXT. RUDY'S LIMOUSINE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

De Santis - still cuffed - is thrown from the limo like a piece of garbage. Thug #1 slams the door in his face and tosses a set of KEYS on the pavement.

The limo SPEEDS OFF -- kicking up a WHIRLWIND OF DIRT AND RUBBLE INTO THE AIR. It disappears down a side street.

De Santis surveys the area - looks completely lost. In the near distance sits a fenced-in basketball court. Four GUYS play some two-on-two under the basket. They turn and stare at the suited detective, cuffed at the wrists.

De Santis spots the KEYS on the pavement as he struggles to stand up. He grabs them, unlocks his hands just as he looks up and notices --

A PORSCHE 930 TURBO

Defaced with graffiti. GANG SIGNS and other colorful words have been spray-painted in bold-faced detail on every inch of this classic frame. All four wheels have been stolen as the car rests on CINDER BLOCKS.

INT. TAXI - DAY

De Santis rides in the back - face swollen from his earlier beating. A CAB DRIVER (40s) spies on him from his rearview mirror.

DRIVER

Didn't I see your picture in the paper?

DE SANTIS

No.

DRIVER

Sure I did. Saw you on TV too. You're that cop. You shot that kid out in Boyle Heights. A crack deal, right?

DE SANTIS

You got me mixed up with someone else, friend.

The DRIVER smiles. He's not buying this.

DRIVER
Could have sworn it was you.

De Santis grows tired of the driver's annoying persistence and stares out the window.

DRIVER
Don't worry. I'm on your side. You're one of the good guys. And don't listen to what the papers are saying either. It was an accident.

De Santis faces the driver - cracks a smile.

DRIVER
That kid knew better. He was on the wrong side of the tracks doing wrong and he knew it. If it wasn't you that day it would be some other banger.
(beat)
The way I see it, you play with fire long enough, sooner or later you get burned. Yep. Live by the sword man. That's how I see it.

De Santis stares aimlessly out the window -- processing the driver's words. His look suggests he is somehow affected by them.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - WEST L.A. - DAY

De Santis follows a gimpish LANDLORD up a flight of stairs. The landlord looks to be a hundred as he nurses a bad leg.

LANDLORD
He called here, I'd say a week or two following the shooting. He said he'd be leaving for awhile. On some special deep cover assignment. He gave me real specific instructions.
(beat)
Don't talk to anyone but you.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - SECOND FLOOR - DAY

The landlord opens an aging metal door as they begin down the second floor halls -- toward an apartment crossed off with yellow CRIME SCENE TAPE.

De Santis, a bit on edge, cautiously stares over his left shoulder - down the opposite end of the hall.

DE SANTIS
Besides the cops, has anyone come by to
see him?

LANDLORD
There was this girl.

DE SANTIS
A girl?

The landlord stops - thinks back.

LANDLORD
Stopped by to drop off the rent. Three
months worth. She says compliments of
Mister De Santis.

DE SANTIS
You recognize her?

LANDLORD
I didn't know her. But I wish I did,
if you know what I mean. From what I
could tell, she was a real piece.

DE SANTIS
How do you mean, from what you could
tell?

LANDLORD
You could tell she was very attractive.
But she was all covered up. A baseball
cap. These big black shades. A lot of
heavy makeup too.

DE SANTIS
Like a disguise?

LANDLORD
If you ask me, it looked like someone
popped her a couple good ones. If you
know what I mean?

DE SANTIS
Yeah. I know what you mean.

The two men continue towards the apartment. The landlord
motions to the busted lock and split frame under the torn
yellow tape.

LANDLORD
What the hell. This wasn't like this
before.

De Santis pulls his FORTY-FIVE from a shoulder holster and helps himself inside.

DE SANTIS
Wait here.

INT. CHRIS DE SANTIS APARTMENT - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

De Santis stands by the door in shock. The entire place has been ransacked -- torn apart by intruders.

The furniture ripped open with a sharpened blade. The FOAM STUFFING projects from the couch - blankets the surrounding floor.

Several decorative pictures have been shattered - destroyed as their frames hang limp from a single hook on the wall.

De Santis moves further in - as the landlord remains at the front door, taken aback by the disaster before him.

LANDLORD
I'm no cop - but if you ask me...I
think whoever was here was looking
for something.

De Santis pulls a pair of blue crime scene gloves from his coat pocket - puts them on.

DE SANTIS
Would you mind waiting in the hall?

LANDLORD
I get it. Official police business.
I'll be outside if you need me.

The landlord reluctantly steps out while De Santis moves for the kitchen. A small table is covered with scads of old newspapers, open mail and other various paperwork.

De Santis takes a seat - searches through the busy debris for anything that might catch his eye. Some unpaid bills, an auto trader magazine and a yellow note-pad with random numbers jotted down.

He opens the car mag - sifts through the pages. He notices a few sports car ads circled with RED MARKER.

De Santis tosses the car mag down, picks up the note-pad.
A list of numbers added up: 46,000, 4,500, 3,000, 10,000,
500, 800 = 72,000

He spots a stack of NEWSPAPERS, sifts through them. Some
of the headlines read --

"NARCOTICS OFFICER INVESTIGATED IN BOYLE HEIGHTS SHOOTING"

"COP FACES MANSLAUGHTER CHARGES"

"FAMILY OF SLAIN TEEN DEMAND JUSTICE"

"UNDERCOVER COP UNDER FIRE"

De Santis speed reads the last article --

"drug test confirms that De Santis was under the influence
of cocaine at the time of shooting..."

De Santis sets the papers aside, grabs a magazine resting
in the debris -- ENTERTAINMENT MONTHLY -- Actress BROOKE
BAYNES graces the cover. Before he can read further --

A RINGTONE

Emanates from a nearby CELL PHONE. The loud and obnoxious
sound of a reggaeton beat commands his attention.

De Santis grabs his forty-five, moves for an open door near
the back of the room. The MUSIC quickly grows LOUDER as he
draws closer to its source.

He pushes the door open a bit, moves inside with his weapon
drawn.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

De Santis stands in awe of yet another disaster area.

-- A lamp knocked to the floor.

-- Furniture flipped over.

-- The bed ripped open by a knife.

-- Drawers and cabinets opened.

-- Clothes strewn about the room.

The RINGTONE comes from the corner closet. As De Santis moves for the closet - he notices there are WHITE PILLOW FEATHERS gathered on the carpet. He opens the door --

A DEAD LATINO

Curled up in the corner. A single BULLET TO THE HEAD and a pillow rested in his lap.

De Santis picks up the pillow - notices a LARGE HOLE shot through the center. He bends down, grabs the ringing CELL from the dead man's coat pocket.

INSERT PHONE

It says RUDY on the caller ID. It stops ringing.

BACK TO SCENE

De Santis pockets the cell, calmly rests on the edge of his brother's mattress and takes a moment. He carefully reviews the scene and pieces it all together.

INT. CHRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

De Santis has a seat at his brother's computer. He notices a SINGLE WHITE SHEET resting in the printer, takes a better look at the paper.

It is an otherwise completely blank page, but at the bottom it says page 2 of 2. A web address on the left side reads www.travelguide.com

LATER

De Santis searches the site TRAVELGUIDE.COM. The USERNAME and PASSWORD saved on the computer. He selects the log-in option and pulls up a full itinerary on "Sandra Burton".

INSERT - ITINERARY

A flight dated APRIL 18, 2009 departing Salt Lake City, UT and arriving in LAS VEGAS, NV.

He selects PRINT.

INT. LEASING OFFICE - APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

De Santis and Chris's landlord patiently wait while a DMV COPY of Sandra Burton's driver's license is FAXED IN.

Her face slowly appears on the tray of the fax machine. She is an attractive dark haired woman in her mid twenties.

De Santis hands the printed sheet to the landlord who takes a nice, long look. He squints a bit - unsure.

LANDLORD

I think it's her. The picture's not so good.

DE SANTIS

Take another look.

The landlord squints as he holds the photo before his beady eyes. He nods with assurance.

LANDLORD

Yeah, that's her.

DE SANTIS

You sure?

LANDLORD

Probably.

DE SANTIS

So you're not sure?

LANDLORD

I mean, it looks like her.

DE SANTIS

But you're not absolutely positive that this is the girl you saw?

LANDLORD

No.

(beat)

But I'm not absolutely positive it's not her either.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

De Santis walks through the door and immediately heads for the news rack - picks up today's edition of THE L.A. TIMES.

The headline reads WHERE IS BROOKE BAYNES? -- a full color picture of an attractive starlett (20s) beautiful, wearing a thousand dollar evening gown.

Just below the article on Brooke is a side story. It reads KILLER COP EVADES AUTHORITIES, with a black and white photo of CHRIS DE SANTIS (30s) blocking his face from view.

INT. CHARLIE DE SANTIS APARTMENT - NIGHT

De Santis adds another cut-out PHOTOGRAPH to a full wall of other NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS and ARTICLES. He tapes a PHOTO of BROOKE BAYNES next to a TIMELINE following the days leading to her widely reported disappearance.

APRIL 3 - phone call to mother

APRIL 4 - spotted at LA Fitness

APRIL 5 - Ralph's Grocery (3:55 PM)

LANDLORD (V.O.)

He called here. I'd say a week or two following the shooting. Said he'd be leaving for awhile...

On the opposite end of the wall are NEWS ARTICLES, PHOTOS OF CHRIS being arrested, walking to and from court, etc.

Next to a larger, full color PHOTO OF CHRIS is yet another TIMELINE - following his brother's sudden disappearance.

MARCH 27 - B.H. shooting

APRIL 2 - I.A. hearing

APRIL 3 - officially charged

APRIL 5 - arraignment/fails to appear

De Santis stands back, gives the wall a good look.

A tabloid news program plays on his large FLAT SCREEN TV. The story of the hour is "Where is Brooke Baynes?" Host SHEILA GRAY (20s) reports from a soundstage.

SHEILA

Welcome back to Inside Story. It's the top of the hour and we've got the inside scoop on what's become the number one question in America...

(beat)

Where is Brooke Baynes?

De Santis paces back and forth on his hard-wood floor with a baseball bat stretched across his back - watching TV.

SHEILA

Television's baddest bad girl of KBC's Thursday night drama Beverly Manor made headline news two weeks ago when she reportedly failed to appear at a scheduled taping of the prime time soap's special two hour finale.

(beat)

KBC spokesperson Della Gruber says that this year's final episode will find Brooke's Hanna Greene facing off in a final and truly memorable confrontation with an old enemy.

De Santis nervously taps the fat end of the bat on the edge of the couch. His wheels spinning.

SHEILA

There are rumors circulating that the network has been unable to reach Brooke for days and that there may even be a legal battle in the works with Brooke and the producers of Beverly Manor.

(beat)

Executive Producer and co-creator Dean Blair denies such reports, claiming that Brooke's absence is nothing more than a scheduling mix-up and is promising that Brooke as well as a few other faces from seasons past will be appearing in this year's final episode.

EXT. LONE DESERT HIGHWAY - SAFARI INN MOTEL - NIGHT

A small, dusty motel in the middle of nowhere. A NEON VACANCY SIGN FLICKERS.

A total of two cars in the lot. The night is quiet. A slight WIND is barely audible.

SUPERIMPOSE:

BAIRD CITY, UTAH - APRIL 7, 2009

The long stretch of open highway sits empty, making this lonely little motel feel that much lonelier. Then --

TWO BRIGHT HEADLIGHTS

are seen in the distance. They grow BRIGHTER and BRIGHTER as the car draws near.

A RUSTY PICK-UP WITH A DIRT BIKE STRAPPED TO THE CAB turns into the barren lot.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

The pick-up finds an empty spot and parks. Out steps a man in BLUE JEANS AND SNAKE SKIN BOOTS -- THE COWBOY. He steps to the truck's rear, pulls a large AREA RUG from the cab.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The cowboy enters -- leaving the door wide open. His hands don a pair of yellow RUBBER GLOVES as he unrolls the rug in front of the bathroom door.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- A HOT PINK BLOUSE/BLUE JEANS lay on an un-made bed. The cowboy stuffs them into a garbage bag.

-- A PICTURE MISSING. A HOOK ON THE WALL.

-- SHARDS OF BROKEN GLASS ON THE CARPET.

-- A SHATTERED PICTURE/FRAME. A hand picks up the frame and tosses it into the garbage bag.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The cowboy grabs the WHITE SHOWER CURTAIN and yanks it from its rings, stripping it off and revealing --

A BLOODY HANDPRINT

On the shower wall. The small and delicate print of a young woman. Only the FOREFINGER IS MISSING.

As the MUSIC BUILDS, the WALL suddenly turns JET BLACK. The BLOODY HANDPRINT now a shockingly BRIGHT NEON RED as we --

ROLL TITLES:

THE UTAH MURDER PROJECT

END TITLES

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

A late model Chevy truck with extended cab barrels down the lone, desert road. The black paint is clean - un-phased by the dust and dirt of the surrounding terrain.

It slowly disappears into an orangish-purple horizon as DAY gives way to NIGHT.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - MOTOR LODGE INN - NIGHT

The Chevy truck slows to a halt -- turns into the dusty lot where a single CAR is parked by the front office.

It parks next to the car, cuts the engine and lights.

INT. MOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

De Santis RINGS A SERVICE BELL. A roly-polly DESK CLERK steps out from a back room - still buttoning his fly and fixing his greasy hair.

DESK CLERK
Ah-ah-ah-about ta-ta-time to be
gettin' off the rah-rah-road.

De Santis smiles.

DE SANTIS
Yes, sir, it is.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

De Santis enters. No bags, nothing with him. He tosses his keys on a nightstand and plops himself into bed. He stares at the ceiling - then his watch.

INSERT - WATCH

9:55 PM

BACK TO SCENE

He slowly drifts off, into a peaceful sleep. Before he can catch one minute of rest --

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR

Awakens him. He quickly sits up.

INT. MOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

The desk clerk stands at the front counter. He is reading a magazine and drinking a soda when he hears --

A GUNSHOT IN THE PARKING LOT

And he spastically knocks over his drink, spilling it all over the counter. He runs for the door --

EXT. MOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The desk clerk spots a rusted BLUE STATION WAGON leaving the scene - kicking up RED DIRT in its wake.

He just about chokes on the dusty cloud as he tries to get a better look at the license tag. But before he can catch a glimpse of the tag --

THE WAGON SPEEDS OFF

-- down the highway, out of sight.

The desk clerk makes for De Santis room. His door sits wide open with a LIGHT ON inside.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The desk clerk pushes open the door a bit. No real signs of life. De Santis is gone.

EXT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The desk clerk stands next to Baird City POLICE CHIEF TERRY TUCKER (50s) hard-ass, rough complexion and an even nastier disposition. They stand near the Chevy truck.

Two police issue FORD BRONCOS at the scene.

CHIEF TUCKER

Now isn't that a fancy truck? Don't make sense you'd leave such a truck behind. Does it, Mick?

DESK CLERK

Nah-nah-no, sir. It d-d-don't...

CHIEF TUCKER

Don't hurt yourself, Mick.

A second officer arrives on the scene - note pad in hand. This is SERGEANT DENNIS PIKER (40s) a big, burly hulk of a man. A full beard and too much apple pie.

PIKER

The truck's registered to a Frontier rental, based out of Los Angeles. It rolled off the lot less than forty - eight hours ago.

CHIEF TUCKER

So who's our driver?

PIKER

Truck was rented to a...

(checks notes)

...Charlie De Santis.

(to desk clerk)

That the fella's name that rented the room, Mick?

CHIEF TUCKER

He don't know.

PIKER

How's that?

CHIEF TUCKER

Paid in cash. Never put his name in the registry.

A third officer, BOBBY JO CLAY (20s) walks up. Long hair, pretty boy looks. He cracks open a soda just bought from a vending machine - not adding much but dead weight.

BOBBY JO

De Santis, De Santis...

(beat)

I know that name from somewhere.

Piker rolls his eyes.

PIKER

You never heard it before. You're just making shit up. Didn't I tell you to stop doing that?

Bobby Jo smiles, flips him the bird.

CHIEF TUCKER

Whoever he was, he didn't stay long.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

OFFICER HARPER GRACE (20s), blonde, pretty in a down home sort of way - carefully surveys the place. Her confusion is evident, as if something is amiss.

BATHROOM

Harper peeks her head in, checks the floor. Nothing on the tile. The towels are hanging neatly on a rack. Everything is where it was before the cop's arrival.

Harper dips out - heads for the door.

EXT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Harper steps outside - joins the others. Bobby Jo still standing around, gulping down his soda.

BOBBY JO

You still jerkin' off that man's room?

HARPER

You're the only one here jerkin' off, Bobby Jo.

Harper nearly walks over Bobby Jo to get to the truck. The KEYS still in the passenger door. She opens it, pulls out a heavy SUITCASE from the back seat.

HARPER

Looks like he went for his bag when our man surprised him. The keys are still in the door.

Harper snags up the keys - shows them to the others. Chief Tucker is intrigued and Bobby Jo doesn't like it.

CHIEF TUCKER

So you're thinking they had a scuffle type deal by the car there and a gun went off?

HARPER

Only thing that makes any sense.

BOBBY JO

He left his bag in the car. So what? He could've been getting laid as far as we know.

PIKER
I thought your girl was working,
Bobby.

BOBBY JO
Screw yourself, fat man.

CHIEF TUCKER
Knock it off!

HARPER
Okay. Let's say he wasn't staying
the night. What about leaving his
keys in the door?

BOBBY JO
He forget them. I do it all the time.

HARPER
In the passenger door? I don't think
so.

PIKER
What do you think, Chief?

CHIEF TUCKER
I think we should see what this guy
has in his bag.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAWN

The same rusted BLUE STATION WAGON from the night before is now parked safely behind a large BILLBOARD, out of sight of the passing traffic.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAWN

De Santis slowly awakens from the driver's seat. He squints his eyes - his head throbbing. BLOOD streaked from his hair onto his forehead. He grabs his head in pain - struggles to place his surroundings.

The KEYS are still in the ignition.

De Santis starts the engine - kicks up a bit of dirt as the wagon pulls away from the ditch and enters the highway.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAWN

The blue wagon descends into the horizon.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY

De Santis rubs his sore head -- touching some sticky blood still caught in his hair. He checks his rearview mirror.

A POLICE ISSUE BRONCO

barrels toward him at high speed. LIGHTS and SIRENS.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

De Santis pulls the wagon to the curb. The Bronco comes to an abrupt stop behind the wagon. Piker, Bobby Jo step from the vehicle with their GUNS DRAWN.

PIKER

You in the car! Step out of the vehicle!

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY

De Santis slowly removes his hands from the wheel -- raises them in the air.

INT. BAIRD CITY POLICE STATION - HOLDING ROOM - DAY

De Santis, now cuffed, sits in an all white brick room with the paint starting to chip from the walls. A cheap folding table before him.

Piker sits across from him, eyeballs him good. Chief Tucker passively chews on a stick of gum in a corner. His arms are folded up, leaned against the wall.

PIKER

You wanna tell me what you were doing in that station wagon?

De Santis checks with Chief Tucker, still watching him like a hawk. His eyes are piercing, serious, and unflinching.

PIKER

Why'd you leave you truck at the motel? You shoot someone? Is that why you're here?

De Santis keeps his eyes down. He is unsure, nervous.

PIKER

Tell me something.

PIKER

You're just making this harder on yourself. You want me to call your Captain? Ask him what you're doing out here? You want us to help you, you got to help us.

DE SANTIS

Like I told you. I don't know how I got in the wagon. After he hit me in the head, he must've slipped me something.

(beat)

I don't know. While I was passed out, he must've put me in the front seat. I didn't wake up until this morning. I was on my way to see you guys when you pulled me over.

Chief Tucker and Piker share a look.

PIKER

Okay then. Where did this guy go? The one with the cowboy hat.

(beat)

You had the wagon. Your Chevy was parked at the motel. This guy ride off into the desert like Pale Rider?

DE SANTIS

I don't know. Like I said, I was asleep.

INT. TWO-WAY MIRROR - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Bobby Jo, Harper, and two attractive twenty-something WOMEN watch all the action from the other side of the wall.

CASEY BRENNER (27), tall, lean, classically beautiful young woman with gorgeous brown hair, and a pair of haunting eyes that could melt your heart. Standing next to her is --

LEANNE BOWMAN (25) sassy, more provocative of the two girls. She has wild, red hair, cut short on the neck. She sports some flashy earrings, a low-cut top and some tight jeans.

BOBBY JO

How about it? You ever see this guy before?

CASEY

No.

LEANNE

I never forget a face.

A gleam of hope on Harper's face.

LEANNE

I don't know him.

Harper rolls her eyes in defeat. Chief Tucker steps in, quickly shuts the door.

BOBBY JO

They don't know him, Chief.

Without hesitation, Chief Tucker steps back out, shuts the door behind him and returns to the holding room.

INT. HOLDING ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Chief Tucker steps in, shuts the door.

Piker still going at De Santis.

PIKER

As you can see, this story of yours just don't add up.

Chief Tucker steps to the table, reaches into the back of his pants and pulls out a FORTY FIVE in a leather casing. He places the weapon before De Santis.

CHIEF TUCKER

We're not gonna ask you again. What are you doing here? And don't tell me you were just passing through.

De Santis looks away, unable to answer.

DE SANTIS

I can't tell you that, Chief.

CHIEF TUCKER

We got a waitress over at Barnhills Diner, about two or so miles from the Motor Lodge. Said this woman's car broke down around two weeks ago.

De Santis stares up at Chief Tucker - a more sincere look. Piker notices an overall change in his demeanor.

CHIEF TUCKER

She said she was asking for a ride to the motel. And she was gonna have a mechanic take a look at her car the next morning. Now this waitress says she got a lift from someone in a beat up, blue piece of shit station wagon. Just like yours. The only problem is, she never made it to the motel.

The severity of the situation hits De Santis like a sack of bricks. He stares back and forth between the two cops.

DE SANTIS

Sorry to hear that.

Chief Tucker places a photo of Brooke Baynes on the table. De Santis eyes grow wide. A bit shocked. Piker notices.

PIKER

You know that girl?

De Santis checks with Chief Tucker.

DE SANTIS

She looks familiar. Why do you ask?

INT. TWO-WAY MIRROR - DAY

Bobby Jo leans in closer, gets a better look at De Santis.

BOBBY JO

Wait a minute. I know this guy.

Harper, Casey and Leanne turn to him. Harper simply shakes her head. Not this again.

INT. HOLDING ROOM - DAY

Chief Tucker still hovered over De Santis.

CHIEF TUCKER

Her name is Brooke. She was picked up a little under two weeks ago. Abducted right off the side of the highway. A guy in a station wagon.

PIKER

Right in front of her two friends.

CHIEF TUCKER

Turns out she was from your neck of the woods.

DE SANTIS

Who is she?

CHIEF TUCKER

Her friends are here. They recognize your face - we're gonna have us some problems.

(beat)

You sure you don't wanna tell me why you're here?

De Santis thinks it over, stays strangely quiet. Piker and Chief Tucker share a quick look.

INT. HOLDING CELL - DAY

De Santis paces back and forth in confinement -- still rubs at his sore, aching head. The SOUND OF KEYS UNLOCKING THE OUTER DOOR startle him. In walks --

Chief Tucker, manila file in hand. He pulls a single white sheet from the file and studies it as he moves for the bars

CHIEF TUCKER

Got some good news and some bad news, De Santis.

(beat)

Good news is, the girl's friends don't know you. Bad news is, my deputy does. Did a little background check.

Chief Tucker presses the white page against the cell door. A printed news article on Chris De Santis.

CHIEF TUCKER

Your brother got himself into some hot water out in LA. Facing some pretty big charges. They're saying it's even possible he even up and left the city.

(beat)

A man as resourceful as him could very easily disappear. No one would be the wiser. Except maybe his brother. Or --

Chief Tucker pulls a second page from the file. A computer printout of Sandra Burton's flight itinerary.

CHIEF TUCKER

(reads)

Miss Burton. Sandra Burton.

De Santis stops pacing, faces Chief Tucker. He's just been busted and he knows it.

CHIEF TUCKER

Got a room at the Radisson in Salt Lake. Nice place to lay low awhile. Well whadd'ya know!

DE SANTIS

Okay, Chief. What do you want?

CHIEF TUCKER

I've been asked by this girls friends to let you take a look at some evidence. Get a fresh perspective. You being a real seasoned homicide man and all. Being they got the crazy notion you might be helpful.

DE SANTIS

If I don't...?

CHIEF TUCKER

I can always pick up the phone and tell your superiors where you're headed. Add a conspiracy charge into the mix. Aiding and abetting. That's not just trouble for your brother. That's a whole brand new pile of shit you don't want any part of. Believe you me.

De Santis looks sick to his stomach. A sitting duck.

CHIEF TUCKER

I don't wanna make it sound like you have no options here, De Santis.

(beat)

Whatever choice you make, we're behind you a hundred percent.

(checks his watch)

Well then. About time for lunch. See you around.

Chief Tucker heads out, fighting a sly grin. He slams the heavy door behind him.

De Santis also smiles.

INT. POLICE IMPOUND LOT - GARAGE - NIGHT

A dark, damp and gloomy garage is dimly lit by the DIM BULB dangling from the ceiling. De Santis and Chief Tucker look over the BLUE STATION WAGON.

CHIEF TUCKER

No tags. No registration and not one visible VIN on the entire car.

Chief Tucker moves for the driver's side. De Santis follow his lead. There appears to be LONG STREAKS OF BLOOD dripped down the side of the door.

CHIEF TUCKER

Red paint. It's all over the interior.

De Santis peeks inside, as he takes in the carefully staged crime scene. Fake BLOOD is spattered on the steering wheel headrest, dashboard and windshield.

CHIEF TUCKER

To the untrained eye, this might look a helluva lot like a gunshot wound to the head. Close range.

De Santis pulls his head out - faces Chief Tucker.

CHIEF TUCKER

And just when she figures him for dead, she opens the door to check his I.D. and off he goes.

DE SANTIS

I.D.?

Chief Tucker hands him a black wallet.

CHIEF TUCKER

Found it in the back seat, along with a mess of stolen credit cards. No cash. The cards were scattered everywhere. All over the upholstery. I'm thinking Brooke got in to get a closer look.

DE SANTIS

It's a set-up. He makes it so he got shot by some drifter who snagged his cash.

CHIEF TUCKER

You don't go through that kind of mess unless you've been planning it awhile. As in this was a premeditated crime.

DE SANTIS

So our guy knew Brooke Baynes?

CHIEF TUCKER

The way I see it, these TV actors always got some different nut job sending them flowers and letters. Maybe this one was a little more careful than most.

DE SANTIS

What about this woman at the diner? The waitress?

CHIEF TUCKER

What about her?

DE SANTIS

She said for sure that it was this car she left in?

CHIEF TUCKER

Yep. Occasionally shit happens around here, but it don't happen twice in one month.

DE SANTIS

What about this woman's car that broke down?

CHIEF TUCKER

We found plenty of cars up and down the interstate. Ditched on the side of the road. Only problem is, this lady never gave her name.

DE SANTIS

You run all the tags through DMV?

CHIEF TUCKER

We searched every abandoned car within thirty miles of here. Had DMV fax over some photos. According to our waitress none of them matched our girl.

DE SANTIS

I don't know, Chief. Brooke Baynes just doesn't fit, does she?

CHIEF TUCKER

The woman at the diner was just passing through town, looking for a ride. He didn't pick up on Brooke and her friends until after she left her cell phone at the grocery store.

(beat)

That much we do know.

DE SANTIS

Cell phone?

INT. BAIRD CITY POLICE STATION - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

De Santis sits across from Casey and Leanne, who hold each other tight, comforting one another. Chief Tucker, Piker, Harper and Bobby Jo lean on different parts of the wall.

CASEY

He called twice. Once last week and once yesterday. He called from Brooke's cell both times.

DE SANTIS

Around what time did you get the first call?

CASEY

Real early. I'd say around five or so in the morning. Maybe five thirty.

DE SANTIS

What did he have to say?

CASEY

He said he just wanted to let us know what a great time him and Brooke were having. When we asked to speak with her, he said she couldn't come to the phone. She was getting all cleaned up from their long, hot night. He was disgusting.

DE SANTIS

And what about this second call?

CASEY

He called yesterday around two o'clock. A little bit after. This time Chief Tucker was here. When I told him The Chief wanted to talk to Brooke - he hung up. I guess he panicked.

LEANNE

She's dead, isn't she?

DE SANTIS

I don't know.

Leanne wipes her tears. Casey squeezes her hand in support. She rubs the back of her neck.

DE SANTIS

I need to ask you a few things about Brooke. Things that might upset you.

Casey and Leanne nod in agreement.

DE SANTIS

I did a little checking up on Brooke. Turns out this wasn't the first time she's disappeared. She ran away from home twice. Once when she was just fourteen. The other when she was six teen. In both incidents, she was gone for weeks. I also hear she's a manic depressive and a recovering alcoholic.

LEANNE

What does that have to do with any of this? She was picked up in broad day -light in front of two witnesses!

DE SANTIS

Like I said. I need you to keep an open mind. If you want us to find her it's important we know everything. If she was having problems with drinking, or work and family, or her love life. Anything and everything. The more we know, the faster we can find her.

Casey and Leanne share a look. Leanne still reluctant.

CASEY

Okay. We got it.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL SIDEWALK - SANTA MONICA, CA - DAY

It's a typically sunny day in southern California as BROOKE BAYNES (20s), drop dead gorgeous, jogs down a sidewalk in her quiet, affluent neighborhood. She moves with the grace and confidence of a born star.

SUPERIMPOSE:

SANTA MONICA, CA - TWO WEEKS AGO

Brooke finishes her jog, begins up a spiral staircase which leads to her three thousand a month duplex.

INT. BROOKE'S CONDO - DAY

Brooke enters, heads straight for the kitchen. She opens up her stainless steel fridge and grabs one of several dozen bottles of mineral water - chugs it down like a mad woman.

LIVING ROOM

Brooke is sprawled out on the floor - stretching her legs after a long, hard jog. In a full split.

A PHONE RINGS. She reaches behind her, but can't quite get there. She quickly sits up, snatches it from the receiver.

BROOKE
(answers)
Hello?

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE - KBC STUDIOS - DAY

Brooke sits across from Beverly Manor creator and executive producer ALICIA NEWMAN (50s). An attractive, but somewhat frigid woman with an "all business" attitude and matching suit.

ALICIA
I don't know the best way to tell
you this, Brooke, so I'll just say
it.

BROOKE
What is it?

Alicia nervously taps her fingernails on her desk. A very apprehensive look on her face.

ALICIA
How rude of me.
(beat)
Would you like a drink?

Alicia heads for a corner liquor cabinet.

BROOKE
Umm...Yes. Thank you.

Alicia pours Brooke a good double-shot of scotch. She hands Brooke her drink and takes a seat on the edge of her desk.

ALICIA
We've been making provisions to re-write Jennifer's character back into the show. We're gonna be bringing her back for next season.

BROOKE
I don't understand. She died in an explosion. I killed her. I mean, how can she -- ?

ALICIA
I know. But the fans miss her, Brooke. All the latest polls say the same thing. Kill the spin off and bring Kristen back. Let's face it. It isn't exactly taking off the way we expected. It's a matter of time before the network cancels.

BROOKE
It takes time for any new show to --

ALICIA
No. I'm afraid our problems run deeper than that, Brooke.

Alicia chugs down her double scotch, paces around the room, finding the best way to break the inevitable to Brooke.

Brooke watches - nervous and unsure.

ALICIA
We've talked it over with Jennifer. She can easily make the transition back to Beverly Manor. Make a surprise appearance on the season finale and our ratings will go through the roof.

Brooke is totally confused.

BROOKE

But we already wrapped for this season.

ALICIA

We're gonna be re-shooting the last two episodes. It's the majority opinion that in order to get us back in the race, our last episode should be more of a cliff - hanger. With focusing the storyline on Kristen, it could be our best year ever.

Brooke grows more and more nervous.

BROOKE

I see.

ALICIA

It seems the only logical way of bringing Kristen back this season is if she exacts her much awaited revenge on Hannah.

(beat)

Unfortunately, that would mean --

BROOKE

-- Killing me off.

Brooke's eyes instantly tear up. She gazes at the floor in a state of shock. Alicia takes a seat on her desk, stares down at Brooke with all the fake compassion she can muster.

ALICIA

It's a ratings war, Brooke. And we're losing fast. In the end, I'm afraid it all comes down to the numbers.

INT. BROOKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A drunken Brooke is sprawled out on her couch -- nursing a gin and tonic. She swirls her ice cubes - stares aimlessly at the ceiling. She reaches for a cordless phone resting on her designer coffee table. Dials.

CASEY (V.O.)

Hello?

BROOKE

What're you up to?

CASEY (V.O.)
Nothing exciting. Just laundry. How about you?

BROOKE
Nothing really. Just called to talk.

CASEY (V.O.)
Yeah, right. Something is wrong. You know I can always tell. What happened?

BROOKE
Nothing. Just the worst day of my life.

CASEY (V.O.)
Poor baby. You wanna come over?

BROOKE
I was thinking more of a change of scenery.

CASEY (V.O.)
Oh, really? Like what?

BROOKE
I don't know yet. Somewhere away from here. What are you doing this weekend?

INT. BAIRD CITY POLICE STATION - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

De Santis and the girls still at the table. Harper, Piker, Bobby Jo and Chief Tucker still leaning on the wall. They hang on every word.

CASEY
And that was pretty much it. She asked if I wanted to go to Park City for the weekend. Go shopping, see some shows. So I called Leanne and we left that Friday.

DE SANTIS
She didn't tell you what happened with work?

CASEY
Not yet. But I could tell something was wrong by the way she was acting. I could hear her trying not to cry. It was obvious she didn't wanna talk about it, so I didn't push.

CASEY (CONT'D)

You could tell she just wanted to get the hell out of LA for a few days. She didn't tell us about the show until we were on the road.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

A red SUV barrels down the dusty two-lane blacktop. It is surrounded by the bright RED LANDSCAPE.

INT. BROOKE'S SUV - DAY

Brooke behind the wheel. Casey up front and Leanne in the back with one ear plug in, the other dangling on her shirt. She pops her gum and grooves to the dance mix on her IPOD.

LEANNE

So, Brooke. I hear you got some whack job stalker living across the hall?

Brooke gives Casey a dirty stare.

BROOKE

(to Casey)

What did you say to her?

Casey shrugs her shoulders - plays dumb.

CASEY

Nothing.

BROOKE

Uh-huh.

Leanne leans in closer and grabs at both Casey and Brooke's chairs while popping her gum.

LEANNE

So what's his deal? Is he like, leaving dead flowers on your door step? Maybe signed with a special poem written in his own blood?

BROOKE

It's not like that. He's harmless. He's an actor and he's new in the building. He's just a little star struck. Once he finds out I'm out of a job, he'll get over it.

LEANNE

Casey said that you said he was
stalking you or something.

CASEY

Was stalking her. Not anymore.
(to Brooke)
Isn't that right, Brooke?

Brooke quickly smacks Casey on the arm as Casey laughs her
ass off. Leanne's jaw drops as she slowly figures it out.
Not the sharpest tool in the box.

LEANNE

Oh God! You slept with him!
(beat)
You skank!

Brooke fights a bashful smile. Casey and Leanne share a big
laugh at their friend's expense.

BROOKE

Give me a break, okay.
(to Casey)
Why did you tell her?

LEANNE

I see. You could tell her you porked
some weird stalker dude you barely know,
but you can't tell me?

BROOKE

Maybe it's because I knew you'd freak
out and call me pretty names like Ho
and Skank.

LEANNE

I'm sorry, Brooke, but I'm not the one
who's constantly breaking our pact.

CASEY

There's a pact? Now who's keeping the
secrets?

LEANNE

Brooke and I decided that the next
relationship we were in, we'd hold
out on our guy for at least three
months. The idea being that any man
that can last more than three months
is in it for more than sex.

CASEY

Or he's really lame and desperate.

LEANNE

So now I go with desperate guys? That the only guy who could ever possibly be interested in Leanne's fat ass is some reject loser?

BROOKE

(to Leanne)

And how many times exactly did you and Roger go out before he climbed the great peaks of Mount Leanne?

CASEY

Yeah, right. It couldn't have been more than twice.

LEANNE

Yeah, but it was over a span of three months, so it doesn't count.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

The SUV quickly disappears over a steep hill, out of sight.

EXT. GAS STATION - BAIRD CITY, UTAH - DAY

Brooke and the girls pull into an old, worn down gas station and park by an ancient looking pump. Brooke, Leanne and Casey step out.

They do a little stretching. It's been a long and hard journey from LA.

INT. GAS STATION/STORE - DAY

A man's gruff, dirty FINGERS grip a girly magazine. He sifts through a few pages. It's THE COWBOY.

THE BACK OF A STETSON HAT

As he stares at the girls through the front window. Brooke begins for the store - Casey and Leanne hang by the truck.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Casey fills the tank while Leanne kicks a few rocks around the oil-slicked pavement.

CASEY

Great going, Leanne. I should've known better telling you anything.

LEANNE

Excuse me if I wanna know what's going on in her life once and awhile.

(beat)

Besides. You brought it up.

CASEY

You're right. I did. Now let's both drop it because it's obviously a sore subject.

INT. GAS STATION/STORE - DAY

Brooke sets down a few items -- some chips, sodas, snacks, onto the counter, as a CASHIER rings them, one at a time.

CASHIER

Twelve fifty three, please.

Brooke sets her iphone down as she digs through her wallet. She pulls out a twenty and pays. The cashier hands her the change.

She dumps her wallet in the grocery bag, heads for the door and mistakenly leaving her iphone on the counter.

The CASHIER gets an eyeful as she leaves. The Cowboy steps to the counter - face hidden - and slams down a forty ounce slurpee next to the iphone.

The Cashier rings it.

CASHIER

Two thirty one, please.

The Cowboy picks up Brooke's iphone - flips it open. He rummages through the contacts. The first name is "CASEY"

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Casey finishes pumping the gas. Leanne and Brooke crawl back in the truck. Casey hangs up the pump, jumps in the back seat.

The SUV speeds from the lot - back onto the open highway.

THE COWBOY

Steps to the edge of the lot, his face hidden by the brim of his hat. He watches as the SUV turns a bend and slowly disappears from view.

INT. MOTEL LOUNGE - NIGHT

Brooke, Casey and Leanne are just a few of the remaining patrons still bellied up at the bar. Brooke is the ring leader - setting them up with another shot of tequila.

LEANNE

I can't believe that ass hole stole your phone. That cashier was sure he didn't know the guy?

BROOKE

He never saw him before.

LEANNE

Yeah, right. The old fart probably stole it. Whacking his wrinkled up pole to our pictures.

Brooke and Casey grimace.

CASEY

Ewww!

BROOKE

Nice image, Leanne.

CASEY

You want me to call again? It's not too late.

BROOKE

Forget it. If he didn't call by now, he's not going to.

Brooke throws down another shot of Cuervo, quickly refills. Casey and Leanne share a look of concern. Brooke raises her shot glass.

BROOKE

I propose a toast.

Casey and Leanne halfheartedly raise their glass.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
Here's to Jennifer and her triumphant
but all too soon return to "Beverly
Manor".

The three friends tap their shot glasses together, about to throw down another one, but Leanne stops. Brooke and Casey notice her reluctance.

LEANNE
Wait a second. The other day, didn't
you say you wanted to rip this chick's
face off and shove it in her boney ass?

Casey raises an eyebrow - checks with Brooke.

Brooke rolls her eyes. A sly grin.

BROOKE
So maybe it's not the most sincere
of toasts. I'm trying to be a good
sport here. Give me a break.

LEANNE
Sorry. Here's to Jennifer and her
boney ass.

Leanne taps the others glasses as they all throw down a shot. Brooke barely has hers swallowed before she pours herself another.

BROOKE
Now we're talking good times.

INT. MOTEL ROOM BATHROOM - NIGHT

Brooke is on her knees, puking her guts out as Casey holds back her hair. In walks Leanne with a few cans of ginger ale. She pours one into a plastic cup and rests it on the sink.

LEANNE
How's she doing?

BROOKE
Oh, God! Please let me die!

LEANNE
Better.

Casey stares up at Leanne as she keeps Brooke's head from dropping into the toilet water.

CASEY
You wanna turn down her bed while
I try to move her?

Leanne steps out - back into the main room.

Brooke tosses a few more good-sized chunks into the toilet. Casey dares to take a quick peek.

CASEY
What-is-THAT??

MOTEL BEDS - SAME

Leanne turns down the sheets on one of the two queen sized beds. She just so happens to glance up and notice --

THE COWBOY

Staring between the drapes and into their room. He quickly backs away.

LEANNE
Casey...?!

Leanne hurries for the door and deadbolts it. She quietly walks to the drapes and peeks through the cracks.

LEANNE'S POV

No one outside. A grim looking swimming pool sits in the near distance.

BACK TO SCENE

Leanne backs away from the window.

CASEY (O.S.)
What is it?

Leanne stalls. A bit confused.

LEANNE
Nothing. Never mind.

LATER THAT NIGHT

The girls are all sleeping peacefully. All of a sudden --

CASEY'S IPHONE RINGS

On the night stand.

Casey cracks her eyes open - gazes at an ALARM CLOCK. It reads 3:39 AM.

She reaches for her iphone, stares at the caller ID. It reads BROOKE'S CELL.

Brooke and Leanne slowly awaken to the RINGING PHONE.

BROOKE
What's going on?

CASEY
I think it's your friend from the
gas station calling back.

Casey hands the phone to Brooke. Leanne quickly sits up and hovers over the caller ID.

LEANNE
Now?

BROOKE
(answers phone)
Hello?

MAN (V.O.)
(filtered)
Please --
(beat)
Don't.
(beat)
Just take the money and leave!

BROOKE
Oh my God.

Casey and Leanne lean in closer. Brooke puts the phone on speaker and rests it on the mattress. The girls relax as they stare down at the iphone.

MAN (V.O.)
(filtered)
Oh, God. You don't have to do this.
Please! Just listen to me! PLEASE!

The three girls are in utter shock. The most eerie, creepy as hell giggle you've ever heard is faintly heard over the speaker.

MAN (V.O.)
(filtered)
Please! Oh, God! NO!!!

BAM! - The loud GUNSHOT causes all three girls to let out a horrible SHRIEK.

Leanne and Brooke both cover their mouths in horror. Casey picks up the iphone, holds it closer.

The three girls listen closely. The terrified voice of the panicked man is now gone. Then, another eerie GIGGLE. It's much louder this time.

The other end hangs up. A DIAL TONE.

The three friends stare back at one another. No one really knowing what to say. All of them still in shock.

INT. BROOKE'S SUV - MORNING

Casey in the driver's seat. A hung over Brooke riding shotgun. Leanne in the back.

BROOKE
Leanne, do you have those directions
to the police station?

Leanne hands them over to Brooke. A computer printout is folded up. Brooke reads from the directions.

CASEY
We already called them once and they
didn't do anything. The fucking cops
never even showed up to check on us.

BROOKE
Somebody's using my phone to do
weird shit and I wanna know why.
(beat)
What's your problem?

CASEY
My problem is just that. Some weird
shit's happened since we stopped in
this town and I think it's best that
we push on before things get weirder.

Brooke and Casey turn their attention to a mysterious BLUE STATION WAGON parked on the edge of the soft shoulder.

Casey taps the breaks - gets a better look at the passing vehicle. The driver's side window is down - A MAN'S HEAD sits rested on the door. The BLOOD IN HIS HAIR streaking down the exterior door.

Casey ignores the scene and pushes on. Brooke's jaw just about drops at the sight of the presumably dead passenger in the wagon.

BROOKE

Wait a second! What're you doing?
Go back!

CASEY

Why? Did you forget something?

BROOKE

No! That guy in the car! You saw him too, so stop playing like you didn't and go back!

CASEY

Forget it, Brooke! We're leaving!

LEANNE

Somebody could be hurt, Casey.

BROOKE

(to Casey)

It's my truck and I'm telling you to turn around!

CASEY

No way! Forget it!

Brooke forcefully grabs the wheel. Jerks it to the right and forcing them from the road and onto the soft shoulder.

Casey quickly stomps the brakes as they come to an abrupt stop.

CASEY (CONT'D)

What the hell, Brooke! Do you wanna kill us?

BROOKE

Turn around right now or get out of the truck.

Casey checks with Leanne in the rearview mirror. The two girls share a truly conflicted look.

CASEY

Okay, Brooke. We'll go back.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

Casey pulls a quick u-turn, heads back to the idle station wagon. They stay a hundred feet or so behind the wagon and park just to the side of the road.

Brooke steps out - begins toward the wagon.

INT. BROOKE'S SUV - DAY

Casey and Leanne watch in suspense as Brooke draws closer to the idle car. Leanne chews at her fingernails. Casey bites at her bottom lip.

EXT. STATION WAGON - DAY

Brooke peeks through the rear windshield at the man behind the wheel. He isn't moving. She moves a bit slower -- more cautious.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY

From the interior of the vehicle, we notice Brooke as she approaches the passenger door and peeks inside. Startled by something in the car - Brooke steps back.

EXT. STATION WAGON - DAY

Brooke stares back at her two girlfriends in the truck. A not so sure look about her.

INT. BROOKE'S SUV - DAY

Casey and Leanne both watch as Brooke stares back at them with a sense of panicked urgency.

BROOKE

(to girls)

He isn't moving! I'm gonna check
his pulse!

Casey nervously strokes her hair. Leanne chews her nails.

LEANNE
I've seen enough horror movies to
know this isn't good.

CASEY
You're the one that wanted to stop.

LEANNE
I changed my mind. We should go get
her.

CASEY
Let me guess. You want me to do it?

LEANNE
You're closer.

Casey shrugs in disgust as she steps out. Leanne sighs in relief. She goes back to biting off her nails.

EXT. BROOKE'S SUV - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Casey begins toward Brooke and the station wagon. She moves slowly and with caution, spooked by this mystery car on the side of the road.

CASEY
Brooke! Let's go!

BROOKE
There's blood all over the place!
I think this guy's dead!

CASEY
Then let's call an ambulance and get
the hell out of here!

Brooke peeks through the rear window and into the backseat. Something catches her attention.

BROOKE'S POV - WINDSHIELD

The man's WALLET SITS OPEN ON THE UPHOLSTERY. CREDIT CARDS and PHOTOS scattered everywhere. It appears as if somebody has taken his money.

Brooke's IPHONE also sits opened on the seat.

BROOKE
What the hell...?

Casey watches as Brooke opens the rear door.

CASEY

Brooke?

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY

Leanne on the edge of her seat - grips the driver's seat with both hands.

LEANNE

What is she doing?

EXT. STATION WAGON - DAY

Casey steps even closer to the wagon as Brooke starts to dig around in the back seat.

CASEY

I'm serious! Let's go!

Brooke crawls all the way in.

INT. STATION WAGON - BACK SEAT - DAY

Brooke picks up the wallet from the seat. She opens it up. It's completely empty.

Suddenly --

THE DRIVER

Sits up and STRIKES BROOKE OVER THE HEAD with a large flash light - knocking her unconscious. He starts the engine and DARTS OFF.

EXT. STATION WAGON - DAY

Casey watches in horror as the WAGON BOLTS OFF.

The wagon pulls a quick u-turn -- pulls up next to Brooke's SUV. Casey watches THE DRIVER POINT A FORTY FIVE PISTOL out the window - aiming at their truck.

INT. BROOKE'S SUV - DAY

Leanne ducks down in her seat just as THE DRIVER SHOOTS OUT THE FRONT AND REAR TIRES.

LEANNE
SHIT!!!

THE DRIVER BLOWS OUT THE FRONT AND REAR WINDOWS

As Leanne is showered with smaller fragments of shattered glass. She holds her hands to her ears as she ducks down

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

The station wagon SPEEDS OFF - leaving Casey and Leanne to themselves and TWO FLAT TIRES.

Leanne jumps from the truck - checks on Casey, who is still lying still in the dirt, covering herself from harm.

LEANNE
Casey!

Casey sits up - trembling with fear and crying. Leanne is in absolute panic mode as she pulls out her cell phone and dials 911.

LEANNE
There's no reception!

LATER

Casey and Leanne are on foot - running as fast as they can towards a small diner in the near distance.

EXT. BARNHILLS DINER - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Casey and Leanne run toward a pay phone by the front door. They are out of breath and wholly exhausted by their run. Casey picks up the receiver and quickly dials 911.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
911. What's your emergency?

CASEY
I'd like to report a kidnapping!

INT. BAIRD CITY POLICE STATION - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

De Santis still talking with Casey and Leanne. Harper and a very bored looking Bobby Jo have both taken a seat at the table. Harper's fist rested under her chin and Bobby Jo's hands pressed against the back of his head.

Chief Tucker still leaning against the wall. Piker steps in with two large cups of coffee. He hands one to The Chief.

CASEY

That was the last we saw of her.

De Santis nods appreciatively - stares up at Chief Tucker who looks anything but confident in finding Brooke alive.

LEANNE

Promise us you'll get her back.

De Santis is at a loss for words. He just stares down at the surface of the table -- catching a glimpse of his own reflection staring back at him.

Chief Tucker's CELL PHONE RINGS.

CHIEF TUCKER

(answers)

Yeah?

(listens)

You're kidding me?

(listens)

Alright. I'll be there in fifteen.

He hangs up and whispers something to Piker, who ducks out of the room with no explanation. De Santis watches with confusion.

CHIEF TUCKER

(to girls)

Okay. You girls can head back to your motel. We'll call if we need anything else.

Casey and Leanne head for the door. De Santis awaits some sort of answer from Chief Tucker.

CHIEF TUCKER

(to Harper)

Why don't you run the detective over to the Safari Inn. Let him take a look around.

Harper and De Santis share a smile.

HARPER

Sure, Chief.

Chief Tucker all but ignores De Santis as he heads for the door. De Santis shakes his head in disgust. Harper notices.

HARPER

Don't sweat it. It's nothing personal.
It's just how he is.

De Santis turns to Harper as she stands to leave.

HARPER

He don't tell me anything and I've
worked here for two years.

De Santis cracks a truly phony smile as Harper heads for the door, paperwork in hand.

HARPER

Come on.

De Santis collects his notes and follows her out.

EXT. SAFARI INN MOTEL - NIGHT

A Police-issue Bronco parks near the front office. And out steps Harper and De Santis. They head down a sidewalk.

HARPER

It only makes sense he'd bring her
here. This particular motel sits
on the county line. Figures he'll
let us fret over jurisdiction while
he makes his getaway.

They approach ROOM 113. Harper opens the door, ducks under the crime scene tape. De Santis follows.

INT. ROOM 113 - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

De Santis instantly notices the SMALL DROPLETS OF BLOOD ON THE CARPET - LEADING INTO THE BATHROOM.

He checks inside - spots the BLOODY HANDPRINT on the SHOWER WALL. No curtain.

De Santis and Harper move further into the room. He notices the barren HOOK on the wall where a picture once hung.

HARPER

Chief thinks they started fighting
right about here.

Harper stands near the center of the room where the picture fell from the wall.

De Santis stares at the carpet and notices SMALL PIECES OF BROKEN GLASS AND A BLOODY RIGHT HANDPRINT. The print of a young woman.

About a foot or two behind the right print - A BLOODY STAIN DROPLETS seemed to have collected on the floor. As if it dripped from a flesh wound.

HARPER

After they started fighting, he throws her into the wall - then knocks the picture down and she shatters the frame. So the Chief says that's how she cut herself.
(points at floor)
Falls right here and bleeds out.

De Santis notices A SMALL TABLE in the corner - walks to it and barely notices a small BLOOD SMEAR on the edge.

To the right of this table - TWO MORE BLOODY HANDPRINTS on the carpet. One is a tad bit bloodier than the other. He stands back a bit - taking it all in.

DE SANTIS

I know what the Chief thinks.
What about what you think?

HARPER

I think he's a good man. A smart cop. Smart enough to know he got into something bigger than he can handle. Never saw him give up so much power before. Must've made some impression.

De Santis motions to the bed. The sheets and comforter have been stripped and taken into evidence.

DE SANTIS

Forensics? Hair and fibers?

HARPER

They pulled a blonde hair from the sheets and crossed it with a sample from Brooke's hair brush.

DE SANTIS

And...?

HARPER

No match.

DE SANTIS

She never touched the bed.

HARPER

Doesn't look like it.

De Santis surveys the room - connects the dots in his head. He moves for the bathroom.

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

De Santis kneels at the tub - takes a peek. Harper hovers behind him. De Santis spots THREE BLOODY FINGERTIPS on the edge of the tub.

HARPER

Notice anything missing?

DE SANTIS

No shower curtain.

HARPER

He used it to wrap up the body.

DE SANTIS

There's three print smears on the edge, plus the handprint. But the rest of the shower is immaculate. It's like he cleaned around it.

HARPER

She regains consciousness and tries to crawl out.

DE SANTIS

Is that what the Chief thinks or what you think?

HARPER

The handprint's too high up the wall. If Brooke was flat on her back, there was no way she'd reach.

DE SANTIS

Very good. But what do you think?

HARPER

I think it's a plant. A message of some sort.

DE SANTIS

Yeah. But what does it mean?

INT. SMILEY'S GROCERY - NIGHT

Bobby Jo walks in - heads straight for the snack aisle. He gives a quick nod to FREDDY (30s), behind the register. He is sitting down - playing some XBOX on a small FLAT SCREEN.

FREDDY

Whad'ya know, Bobby Jo?

Bobby Jo - from the snack aisle.

BOBBY JO

No more than yesterday, Freddy!

FREDDY

Now that's a damn shame.

Bobby Jo searches the potato chips and spots --

LEANNE

Standing near the beverage coolers, listening to her IPOD and doing a stripper dance. She seems to be checking out her own reflection in the glass.

Bobby Jo smiles - goes about his business.

Leanne grows impatient and grabs a bottle of soda from the fridge - heads for the front counter.

LEANNE

(to Freddy)

Hey, buddy? Where's your beer?

Leanne still hopping to her music. Freddy smiles - gives her a good once over.

FREDDY

Sorry. We don't sell alcoholic beverages in here. But if you see Officer Clay --

Freddy points to Bobby Jo with a bag of cheese puffs in his hands. He quickly looks away - pretends not to notice her.

Leanne smiles.

FREDDY

He may be able to help you.

Leanne struts her stuff as she heads over to say hello.

Freddy's smile is ear to ear.

Leanne walks up to Bobby Jo - still acting oblivious - and taps his shoulder. He acts surprised.

BOBBY JO

Oh. Hey there. Didn't recognize you.

LEANNE

Yeah, I just saw that. Maybe if you were looking at my face, you might've figured it out.

Bobby Jo laughs - nervous. His face turns bright red.

LEANNE

Officer Bobby have the munchies this evening?

BOBBY JO

Who? Me?

(laughs)

These aren't for me. They're for The Chief. I never touch the stuff. Bad for you and all.

(beat)

I'm more of a fruit and veggies guy. You gotta stay hard.

Leanne smiles.

BOBBY JO

I mean...not hard in the sense that you *think* I meant...

LEANNE

(plays offended)

Is that what I was thinking? What kind of girl do you take me for?

BOBBY JO
(nervous)
I don't know. I didn't mean it like
that. I just meant that...

LEANNE
It's okay, Bobby. You can relax now.
I could smell you all the way across
the store.

Bobby Jo grows nervous - stares up at Freddy, pretending to
read a magazine at the counter. He smiles at Bobby Jo and
chuckles under his breath.

LEANNE
Smells like good shit.

BOBBY JO
(whispers)
You wanna keep your voice down?

LEANNE
That depends.

BOBBY JO
(confused)
On what?

Leanne grows a very mischievous smile.

INT. BARNHILLS DINER - NIGHT

Chief Tucker steps in - spots Piker and a weathered looking
older WOMAN in uniform at a corner table. He makes his way
over, joins them.

Piker sees him coming and stands.

PIKER
Chief, you remember Roxanne?

Chief Tucker politely removes his hat - gives her a nod.

CHIEF TUCKER
Roxanne, how are you?

Roxanne returns with a smile.

ROXANNE
 Hell, I can always complain, Terry.
 But who the hell would listen?

Chief Tucker pulls up a chair - sits across from Roxanne.

PIKER
 Roxanne here just got back from
 Texas. She was out visiting her
 daughter in "San Antone".
 (beat)
 Turns out she's got some info on
 our man in the station wagon.

CHIEF TUCKER
 Is that right? You know, that
 would be real nice.

ROXANNE
 I just heard what happened. The
 girls told me. That's crazy. I
 remember serving that woman.
 (beat)
 I mean...I sort of served her.

CHIEF TUCKER
 How do you mean?

ROXANNE
 I mean I must've come to her table
 four or five times, asking if she
 was ready to order. She says "no
 thanks". She was just waiting on
 someone...

Chief Tucker raises a quizzical eyebrow. Piker smiles with
 assurance. Their case is coming together.

INT. BARNHILLS DINER - CORNER BOOTHE (FLASHBACK)

A YOUNG WOMAN (30s) awaits in a far corner - eagerly gazing
 out the large window in a far too anxious manner. Roxanne
 refills a whole table of drinks from across the room while
 curiously observing the woman's strange behavior.

ROXANNE (V.O.)
 She just sat there for what must've
 been half an hour or so, staring out
 the window...

Roxanne heads over to her table - pitchers of tea and soda in hand. The young woman still gawking out the window.

ROXANNE (V.O.)
So finally I come back awhile later
to check on her...

The young woman notices Roxanne's REFLECTION in the GLASS. She turns - faces her. A nervous smile.

ROXANNE (V.O.)
She just asks for a glass of water.
(beat)
Just water.

CUT TO:

INT. BARNHILLS DINER - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

Chief Tucker and Piker share a brief look. Roxanne pulls a smoke from a pack of cigarettes - sparks up.

ROXANNE
By that time, it was going on my
dinner break. Claire come over
and took over my table. While I
walked to my car, that's when I
noticed this station wagon the
girls all told me about.

EXT. BARNHILLS DINER - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Roxanne pops a smoke in her mouth - lights up as she stroll to her car. She looks over and catches eyes with THE DRIVER of the BLUE STATION WAGON glaring suspiciously through the glass - into the dining room.

CLOSE-UP - DRIVER'S EYES

But we don't get a better look at his face. Only the eyes. They are beady, ugly, and sinister. He watches the inside of the restaurant, as if looking for someone particular.

DRIVER'S POV - ON ROXANNE

As she stares through the front windshield of the STATION WAGON. He slowly cruises past Roxanne. She watches him like a hawk.

CLOSE-UP - DRIVER'S EYES

Staring up at Roxanne.

ROXANNE (V.O.)

I thought it kind of strange the way he was circling the lot. And he kept staring inside the window, like he was waiting on someone to leave.

INT. BARNHILLS DINER - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

Chief Tucker hanging on every word. Piker notices. He just sits - passively watching his reactions to Roxanne's story. Roxanne nervously puffs away on her smoke. She's re-living her face to face with the strange man.

ROXANNE

I'll tell you. He scared the piss out of me. I didn't exactly stick around to ask what he wanted. To tell you the truth, I didn't come to find out until later that this woman's car broke down and was looking for a ride.

CHIEF TUCKER

What about this guy, Roxanne? You get a good look at him?

ROXANNE

Are you kidding? I see this guy's face in my sleep.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. BARNHILLS DINER - NIGHT

The Cowboy - draped over a DUCATI and donning a jet black racing jacket and DARK HELMET - peers through the window at Chief Tucker, Piker and Roxanne, sitting at a table.

His face hidden by his helmet's BLACK FACE SHIELD.

He REVS the throttle on his racing bike.

COWBOY'S POV - ON PIKER

As he excuses himself to the bathroom. We follow his look back to the table, where Chief Tucker and Roxanne are now standing, shaking hands. She walks him to the door.

BACK TO SCENE

The Ducati races out of the lot - back on the open highway. The beautiful HUM OF THE RACING BIKE fills the quiet night air as it quickly descends into the blackness.

FRONT DOOR - CHIEF TUCKER AND PIKER

Step out, begin toward their respective vehicles.

PIKER

You know, I thought something was wrong the first time I heard this story, Chief.

CHIEF TUCKER

How's that?

PIKER

If this girl's car broke down up the road and hiked it all the way here, she'd be --

CHIEF TUCKER

-- Chugging down water like it's going out of style?

PIKER

You know it.

CHIEF TUCKER

None of this makes much sense, does it?

PIKER

No, it sure don't.

CHIEF TUCKER

Go home and get some rest. I'll give Cheryl a call. See if we can get started on a sketch of this guy. Show his face around. Maybe we can break this thing loose.

Piker nods - heads to his truck. Chief Tucker crawls in his Bronco and cranks the engine.

INT. BOBBY JO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bobby Jo leans back in a reclining computer chair, smokes a fat joint as a worked up, blasted Leanne straddles his lap.

Some loud TECHNO MUSIC blares from a set of cheap speakers.

Leanne chugs what's left of her beer and tosses the can on Bobby Jo's messy, laundry ridden floor. She strokes him to the beat of the music.

Bobby Jo puts the joint in her mouth as she takes a small toke. Leanne BLOWS THE SMOKE back in his mouth - laughing uncontrollably.

INT. DE SANTIS CHEVY TRUCK - NIGHT

De Santis and Harper make their way back to the station as Harper gazes out the window. De Santis turns - watches her every few seconds, checking her out.

DE SANTIS

Is there a Mister Grace at home?

HARPER

Who? Me? Nothing right now. I'm just trying to concentrate on my work. Don't really have much time for much else. You know how it is. A cop's life. Always busy.

DE SANTIS

(sarcastic)

Yeah, I can see what a hot bed of activity this place must be.

Harper fights back a growing smile.

HARPER

Okay, so I was seeing someone.

DE SANTIS

Was?

HARPER

He was a little younger. A lot more immature. It just didn't work out.

De Santis fights a smile.

DE SANTIS

I see.

(beat)

So how long were you and Bobby Jo an item?

Harper rolls her eyes - fights an even bigger smile.

HARPER
That obvious, huh?

DE SANTIS
A little bit.

HARPER
You know, he tries so hard making me look bad, sometimes he forgets to do his job. Almost like me and him are competing for The Chief's attention.

DE SANTIS
He's scared of you.

HARPER
You think?

DE SANTIS
He thinks you're a good cop. Maybe he thinks you dumped him because he's not a good cop. So he tries to one up you every chance he gets. Prove how wrong you were about him.

Harper is impressed.

HARPER
Wow. Pretty observant.

DE SANTIS
That's what they pay me the big bucks for.

They share a smile.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Piker's Bronco slows a bit as it approaches a quaint little country home. As he pulls into the driveway - we can't help but notice his WIFE'S SUV still parked outside of the wide open GARAGE - the DRIVER'S DOOR STILL OPEN.

The LIGHT IN THE GARAGE is also ON.

Spray painted on the wall, in BIG BOLD RED --

I LIKE KILLING
IT'S AS EASY AS
1-2-3

PIKER

Jumps from the truck - GUN DRAWN. He runs closer to his wife's SUV and inspects the inside. She is nowhere to be found.

He turns his attention into the GARAGE. He walks closer to the bloody-looking GRAFITTI all over the white brick wall. A sense of true panic on his face.

PIKER
(quietly)
Sonofabitch.

From around the corner of the garage walks THE COWBOY. He is still donning his racing leathers and BLACK HELMET. He is branding a 375 WILDEY MAGNUM WITH LASER SIGHTING.

Aims at Piker - BEAMING RED LIGHT ON HIS BACK.

Piker senses someone behind him - quickly spins around. Only THE COWBOY IS NOW GONE.

Piker ever so cautiously moves for the utility room door as he makes his way into the home.

INT. PIKER'S HOME - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Piker carefully turns a corner with his weapon drawn. He stares across the living room - into the kitchen area. He notices a rear SLIDING GLASS DOOR sitting WIDE OPEN.

Piker surveys the room as he slowly makes his way towards the kitchen - one small step at a time.

PIKER'S POV - SLIDING GLASS DOOR

As he moves toward it. He spots a trail of MUDDY FOOTSTEPS leading in from the outside - leaving some perfectly formed tracks on the tile floor.

BACK TO SCENE

Piker follows the tracks across the kitchen floor and into a corner broom closet. But before he can get to the door -

THE COWBOY

Stands - hiding behind a marbled center-piece countertop.
TASER GUN IN HAND.

Piker spots him --

The Cowboy ZAPS HIM in the center-mass of his chest with a long stream of ELECTRICAL CURRENT.

Down he goes.

The Cowboy hovers over him - the black face mask hiding his identity.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. BOBBY JO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bobby Jo is sound asleep - basking in the afterglow of his encounter with Leanne.

A SHOWER RUNS in a nearby bathroom.

Leanne's bright RED PANTIES hang on a chair near Bobby Jo's computer.

A CELL PHONE RINGS.

Bobby Jo sits up - glances around the room for Leanne. He hears the SHOWER RUNNING and slowly lays back down. Shuts his eyes. However --

The CELL PHONE continues to RING.

Bobby Jo finally forces himself out of bed - searches for the RINGING PHONE.

He picks up Leanne's jeans from the carpet and reaches in the pocket. He pulls out Leanne's CELL PHONE.

The name BROOKE on the CALLER ID.

Bobby Jo flips open the phone - slowly, ever so cautiously puts it to his ear.

BOBBY JO

Hello?

Nothing but static on the other line. HANGS UP.

Leanne TURNS OFF THE SHOWER.

Bobby Jo quickly puts the phone back in Leanne's pants and lays back down - pretends to sleep.

Enter Leanne - wearing only Bobby Jo's t-shirt.

LEANNE
You awake?

Bobby Jo slowly rolls over - rubs his weary eyes.

BOBBY JO
Oh, hey there. It's you again.

LEANNE
I should go.

BOBBY JO
So soon?

Leanne pulls her jeans from the floor - puts them on.

LEANNE
Casey's probably flipping out. You know? After what happened and all? I just don't want her freaking and calling The Chief or something.

BOBBY JO
Good point.

Leanne leans in - gives Bobby Jo a kiss on the cheek.

LEANNE
Thanks. You don't know how much I needed that.

Leanne begins out.

BOBBY JO
Aren't you forgetting something?

Bobby Jo motions to the red panties hanging from his chair.

Leanne grabs them, gives Bobby Jo a quick wink on her way out. Bobby Jo immediately reaches for his phone - dials and waits.

HARPER (V.O.)
Yeah, Bobby? What is it?

BOBBY JO
Throw some clothes on and be at my
place in ten minutes.

HARPER (V.O.)
Is that supposed to be a joke? It's
really late, Bobby.

BOBBY JO
Will you shut up and listen! I'm
serious! I gotta talk to you right
away!

INT. PIKER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Piker, now handcuffed to an oak wood chair, slowly comes around. His sight is a bit blurry - but is able to make out THE COWBOY standing before him.

Next to The Cowboy is a large FLAT SCREEN TV - playing a video he's recently recorded. The footage is of the very same kitchen, just an hour or so earlier.

PIKER'S WIFE

Is bound and gagged on the floor. A giant plastic throw sheet underneath her. From the shaky cam movement - you can tell The Cowboy is doing the recording.

He points the camera at the marble countertop - where an entire array of various weapons are spread out on an old newspaper.

A thirty-eight special, butcher's knife, sawed-off shotgun and a large straight-saw and trademark WILDEY MAGNUM.

He reaches for the thirty-eight.

Piker cries out - scared for his helpless wife.

The Cowboy opens the chamber on the gun - checks for shells

He shuts the chamber and points the weapon at Mrs. Piker.

The Cowboy pauses the footage - just before Piker witnesses his wife's shooting.

Piker squirms in his chair - attempts to break free.

PIKER
You sonofabitch! I'll kill you!

The Cowboy un-pauses the footage. He squeezes off the first shot. It CLICKS. Mrs. Piker turns her head - side to side frightened out of her mind. The camera follows his hands as he once again pulls the hammer back.

The Cowboy pauses the footage. Piker now completely enraged and ready to break free of the chair.

The Cowboy hovers over Piker - puts his iphone close to his face. A short video of Piker, Chief Tucker and Roxanne back at the diner - talking over the case.

PIKER
She's nothing. We were having
coffee.
(beat)
What do you want from me?!

The Cowboy slowly walks around Piker's chair -- pulls out a jagged steak knife from his pocket and swipes it across the back of Piker's hand. A nice, deep cut.

Piker SCREAMS OUT.

The Cowboy walks around, faces Piker. He strikes him across the mouth. Piker spits up some blood on the carpet.

The Cowboy plays another clip of the video.

We follow the camera as The Cowboy lays it on the center of the countertop - picks up Mrs. Piker and bends her over the side of the marble. Her face now inches from the camera.

The Cowboy's face hidden, picks up the steak knife from the countertop, pulls back her hair and holds it to her neck.

And the picture turns to SNOW.

Piker, now madder than ever before, struggles to break free of the chair. The Cowboy grabs his right arm and pulls up. Piker cries out in pain.

PIKER
ROXANNE! HER NAME IS ROXANNE!
(beat)
SHE SAW YOU! SHE SAW YOUR FACE!

The Cowboy releases him. He walks to the broom closet and grabs Piker's wife - still bound and gagged - throws her to the tile floor.

PIKER
It's okay, baby! I'm here!

Mrs. Piker cries out through the gag in her mouth.

The Cowboy reaches into his coat pocket and pulls out a set of KEYS for the cuffs on Piker's wrists. He dangles them in the air and tosses them to the tile floor as he hurries out the sliding glass door.

INT. CASEY AND LEANNE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Casey flips through some channels on the TV - bored out of her mind. She checks her watch.

11:15

She picks up her phone - speed dials LEANNE. It rings a few times on the other end. She grows frustrated and hangs up.

CASEY
Where the hell are you?

Casey snags up an ICE BUCKET from a night stand on her way out the door - stops and grabs a few bucks from her coat pocket.

EXT. CASEY AND LEANNE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Casey locks up the room - carefully surveys the immediate area, as if she's expecting trouble. The night is eerily quiet. She begins up the sidewalk toward the ice machine and soda vendor.

SODA MACHINE

Casey puts in a five dollar bill, buys a soda. Her change comes pouring out in quarters, as she quickly refills the machine with change and buys more sodas. She stuffs cans into the ice bucket.

She heads back to her room - stops when she notices room 107 in the near distance. She reluctantly begins toward it but still cautious of her surroundings.

CHIEF TUCKER

Surprises her from an adjacent hall. He grabs her shoulder and scares the ever-loving hell out of her.

CASEY
FUCK ME!

CHIEF TUCKER
Excuse me. Didn't mean to startle you.

Casey grabs her chest. She just about spits her heart out her mouth as she attempts to catch her breath.

CASEY
You did a good job.

She finally calms herself.

CASEY
What're you doing out so late?

CHIEF TUCKER
I was about to ask you the same thing. It's probably not a good idea you walking around. Not now. Not this time of night. And not without an escort.

CASEY
You're right. I was just --
(stalls)
-- getting a drink.

CHIEF TUCKER
You looking for De Santis?

CASEY
Me? No.

CHIEF TUCKER
It looks like you were headed for his room. Thought maybe you were looking for him.

Casey can't quite seem to find the words.

CASEY
No. Not really. I guess I just needed someone to talk to. Some assurance. I guess I'm pretty scared for Brooke.

Chief Tucker senses her strange demeanor as he just nods in agreement. He hides his discernment with a comforting smile

CHIEF TUCKER
Well he's at my place tonight.
Going over a few things.

Casey nods understandably.

An awkward silence.

CASEY
So what're you doing here?

CHIEF TUCKER
A waitress over at Barnhills. She
got a positive ID on our guy.

CASEY
No kidding?

Chief Tucker hands over the police sketch of their suspect. A thinly shaved, slightly elongated head - sharp nose and very cold and beady eyes.

Casey takes a good look.

CHIEF TUCKER
Turns out she saw him real good.
Up close and personal. She was
on her way to lunch when she
spotted him in the parking lot.

CASEY
That's crazy. This is definitely
the guy?

CHIEF TUCKER
I was hoping you could tell me.

CASEY
I don't know. Brooke and Leanne
got a lot better look at him than
I did. I guess you'll have to ask
her.

Chief Tucker watches Casey with suspicion.

CHIEF TUCKER
Is she in her room?

Casey stalls.

CASEY

Umm --

(beat)

The last I checked, she was in the shower.

(beat)

Look, I'm real tired. Today was a bit rough. Going through that whole thing all over again. If you could give us a couple hours? Come back in the morning...?

CHIEF TUCKER

I understand. Just promise me you get back inside and lock your door. I don't wanna have to worry about you girls.

Casey smiles.

INT. CHIEF TUCKER'S HOUSE - PRIVATE DEN - NIGHT

De Santis at the Chief's home work desk - reviewing some eight by ten PHOTOS OF THE SAFARI INN CRIME SCENE.

-- broken glass on the carpet.

-- handprints on the floor and in the shower.

De Santis looks up at the desktop - spots a nice PHOTO OF THE CHIEF ON THE FRONT PAGE OF A NEWSPAPER. He's standing in front of a complicated looking chemistry set. The kind used for cooking "meth" and other synthetic drugs.

The headline reads --

"BAIRD CITY LAWMAN FOILS DRUG OPERATION"

De Santis speed reads a small portion of the article --

DE SANTIS POV - NEWS ARTICLE

"...Special Agent Klein, lead investigator with the Drug Enforcement Administration, estimates a street value in excess of three million dollars..."

Another part of the article reads --

"...although no money was recovered from the Baird City compound..."

De Santis spots a couple more news articles - framed and hanging from the wall. Chief Tucker's face prominent in both stories. The headlines read --

"AIRLINE BUSTED IN DRUG RING"

"THE FALL OF COLTON AVIATION"

In walks Chief Tucker with a cup of coffee and a thick file in hand. This startles De Santis, who is still busy reading the articles on the wall.

Chief Tucker places the files in front of De Santis - plops himself down in a swivel chair.

CHIEF TUCKER

These were taken in the desert,
off highway nineteen, around
two months ago.

De Santis flips open the file.

A FULL SHOT of a DEAD WOMAN IN THE SAND - Her LEFT ARM lay fully extended and exposed. Her RIGHT ARM carefully placed behind her back.

CHIEF TUCKER

She was this local hooker. Janet Cooney. She drifts into town a few years back. She got a usual crowd of regulars. Used to turn tricks off a highway fifteen.

(beat)

Up until one of her "john boy's" drug her in the desert and snaps her neck.

(motions to photo)

You see the cut on her hand?

DE SANTIS

Yeah?

CHIEF TUCKER

I figured he was getting kind of rough with her and pulls a knife. The examiner said its most likely a defensive wound.

DE SANTIS

Okay, Chief. I don't see the connection.

CHIEF TUCKER

This Janet was found a quarter mile from her place. That was usually where she partied. It don't really make sense they'd be fooling around right there by the highway. Not with her place being so close.

(beat)

That is, not unless he wanted a quickie for the road.

DE SANTIS

Which means he probably isn't local.

CHIEF TUCKER

A local would find a hundred better hiding places for that body than in the open desert in plain view of the road.

(beat)

This guy obviously panicked.

DE SANTIS

Unless he wanted you to find her body.

CHIEF TUCKER

Yep. Unless that.

De Santis picks up another CRIME SCENE PHOTO from the desk and takes a look. It's the BLOODY HANDPRINT OF BROOKE'S LEFT HAND on the SHOWER WALL.

He lays the photo down and picks up another. This one is of the BLOODY RIGHT HANDPRINT ON THE MOTEL ROOM CARPET - after Brooke is violently thrown to the floor.

De Santis spots something important.

DE SANTIS

Wait a second.

(beat)

There's only one print on the carpet.

Chief Tucker squints in confusion. He sits up.

CHIEF TUCKER

So...?

DE SANTIS

So if Brooke cut both her hands on the glass, why is there only a right hand print on the floor?

CHIEF TUCKER

Simple. Her left hand never touched the floor.

DE SANTIS

But it did. Right here --

De Santis points out the photo of BROOKE'S BLOODY RIGHT AND LEFT PRINT - staining the carpet near the table.

DE SANTIS

So what happened here?

CHIEF TUCKER

I don't know. You're the expert.

DE SANTIS

This Cooney woman's arm was found behind her back. Almost like she was being restrained. Like your guy walked her in the desert first. Before he killed her.

CHIEF TUCKER

Could be. Not necessarily.

DE SANTIS

Then he wraps her arm around her back. Listens to her scream out. Beg for her life. You know what I think, Chief?

CHIEF TUCKER

What's that?

DE SANTIS

I think he did the same thing to Brooke.

The wheels begin to turn in Chief Tucker's eyes.

DE SANTIS (CONT'D)
He pulls Brooke's arm behind her
back. Just like Cooney.

Chief Tucker sits up - sifts through the crime scene photos

INT. SAFARI INN - ROOM 113 - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A blurred and grainy - almost surreal vision of Brooke's
attack. She is forced to her knees as "The Cowboy" pulls
her left arm behind her back.

Brooke SCREAMS OUT in pain.

DE SANTIS (V.O.)
He takes a knife and cuts her left
hand. A deep cut --

The Cowboy flips out a JAGGED POCKET KNIFE and slowly cuts
the inside of Brooke's palm as RED BLOOD GUSHES OUT.

DE SANTIS (V.O.)
Lets the blood collect on the carpet.

Droplets of BLOOD FALL FROM HER PALM, dripping all over the
floor. DRIP-DRIP-DRIP.

INT. CHIEF TUCKER'S HOUSE - PRIVATE DEN (PRESENT DAY)

De Santis points out the collection of BLOOD DROPLETS just
behind the RIGHT HAND PRINT.

DE SANTIS
Then picks her up and throws her
across the room. Knocking her in
the table and leaving the smear.

De Santis pulls another photo. A CLOSE-UP OF A BLOOD SMEAR
on the edge of the table.

CHIEF TUCKER
She tries to stand up and puts
both prints on the carpet.

Chief Tucker motions toward the TWO BLOODY HANDPRINTS ON
THE CARPET.

DE SANTIS
Look at all the blood in the left
print. See how perfect it is?

Chief Tucker points out the much redder - much bloodier
LEFT HAND PRINT.

CHIEF TUCKER

One print's fuller than the other.

DE SANTIS

When he's done, he puts her left
hand print in the shower to make
sure he's got our full attention.

(beat)

He was sending a message.

De Santis picks up the photo of Cooney's LEFT HAND - it is
severely wounded from a knife.

CHIEF TUCKER

Sometimes I hate it when I'm right.

DE SANTIS

Tell me about it.

A KNOCK at the door startles Chief Tucker. He heads out.

De Santis focusing on each of the photos.

EXT. CHIEF TUCKER'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Harper, Chief Tucker and Bobby Jo stand on the porch. The
Chief looking the most distraught. He paces on the oakwood
floor - in deep thought.

BOBBY JO

You have to admit, Chief. This
whole thing is weird. All three
of them just so happen to pass
through town like that._

CHIEF TUCKER

(to Harper)

What do you think?

HARPER

I think we really have a lot of
unanswered questions as far as
these people go.

(beat)

They say Brooke's parents are in
Europe for the next three weeks,
but have we even tried to contact
them?

INT. CHIEF TUCKER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT (SAME)

De Santis walks in and pours a half-drunken bottle of water down the sink. He peeks through a kitchen window and spots the three cops standing on the porch - talking quietly.

De Santis grows visibly worried.

HARPER

They don't want us to call. Once they get involved, it's FBI, state police, TV, you name it. No one's even suggested calling the FBI.

Bobby Jo checks with Chief Tucker. He rubs his face as he thinks it all over.

HARPER

These two are supposed to be her best friends. What the hell are they waiting for?

De Santis hides himself behind the drapes.

CHIEF TUCKER

(to Bobby Jo)

Where did she go after she left your place?

De Santis face quickly turns angry.

BOBBY JO

I don't know. Two seconds after she split, I was on the phone with Harper.

HARPER

Think about it. If she got a call from Brooke's phone tonight, don't you think she'd be on her way to the station right now? Why hasn't she told anyone? It doesn't make sense.

De Santis ducks away from the window - before he's caught.

INT. PIKER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Piker and his wife now resting comfortably on their couch as they hug one another - hold each other closely.

His wife still in tears.

De Santis surveys the scene - notices the dining room chair still parked on the kitchen tile - THE CUFFS still dangling from its left leg.

Chief Tucker finishes on the phone. De Santis continues to walk aimlessly around the home, investigating the scene.

CHIEF TUCKER

(on phone)

Yeah, they should be fine. Just a little worked up. Luckily they weren't hurt. But you just do as I said and try to stay put until I can send someone there.

(listens)

You'll be fine - just as long as you keep everyone there and keep the doors locked up.

DE SANTIS

Is that Casey?

CHIEF TUCKER

Roxanne.

De Santis nods understandably. He checks with The Pikers still hugging on the couch. Piker throws him a strangely nasty look. De Santis feels his animosity and looks away.

CHIEF TUCKER

(into phone)

Just don't go anywhere or open the door for anyone that don't need to be there. Not until we say so. Got it?

(listens)

Okay. See you then.

DE SANTIS

Looks like our guy's getting nervous. We better check in with the girls.

CHIEF TUCKER

Do that. We'll regroup and meet back at the station in an hour. I wanna put this waitress into protective custody.

(beat)

Looks like our guy means business.

DE SANTIS

Got it.

De Santis takes one last peek at the scene on his way out. Harper and Bobby Jo bump elbows with him as they step in. Bobby Jo also throws him an ugly stare.

HARPER

(to Mrs. Piker)

Hey. You okay?

MRS. PIKER

No. I'm far from okay, Harper. Thank God the kids were at my mothers. If they would've been here --

She tears up at the thought.

PIKER

(to Chief Tucker)

This guy knew where I lived. And he knew about Roxanne. You know he was at the diner tonight? He was watching from outside.

(beat)

What's going on, boss?

Chief Tucker watches through the front window as De Santis and his truck take off like a bolt of lightning - down the street and into the night.

CHIEF TUCKER

(still watching)

I'm not sure.

BOBBY JO

(to Piker)

You get a good look at this guy?

PIKER

No. He was wearing a helmet and covering his face. Sonofabitch was behind me the whole time.

BOBBY JO

(to Piker)

Never thought I'd be so happy to see you in one piece, Sarge.

PIKER
I wish I could say the same.

Bobby Jo smiles.

BOBBY JO
(to Chief Tucker)
You see, Chief? He's fine.

Piker's PHONE RINGS in Chief's hand.

CHIEF TUCKER
(answers)
Piker residence.

COWBOY (V.O.)
You get my message?

Chief Tucker gives Harper and the others a quick heads up. Their man is on the other line. Harper and Bobby Jo step closer to the phone - listening in.

Chief Tucker holds a finger to his mouth - signals him to shut up. Harper pushes Bobby Jo out of the way. Bobby Jo gives her a nasty look.

CHIEF TUCKER
We got your message.

COWBOY (V.O.)
Good. Then you know what I'm capable of. What I can do if I'm pushed too far.

CHIEF TUCKER
How about Janet Cooney? Did she push you too far?

Piker checks with Bobby Jo. He shrugs his shoulders and plays stupid. Harper nervously bites her bottom lip.

COWBOY (V.O.)
She was more of what I would call an accident. But I can promise you that what I do to the blonde...
(beat)
...the coroner will have to piece her back together for the autopsy.
(laughs)
Although I have to admit...that would be quite the waste.

COWBOY (V.O.)

Even more beautiful in person.

(beat)

Almost too beautiful for her own good. I bet her little girlfriend Casey and...what's the other one?

(beat)

Leanne...? I bet they're almost hoping she turns up in a ditch. Then they could finally come out from behind the shadow of their best friend's celebrity.

Chief Tucker nervously paces on the carpet. Bobby Jo and Harper follow behind like a couple nosy kids.

COWBOY (V.O.)

Have their own moment in the spotlight as the TV reporters ask what really happened to Brooke in the sleepy little town no one knows.

(beat)

But not you, Chief. You have your reputation to maintain. All those big stories about you and the airline. How you and all your staff personally put a stop to the drug trafficking in Baird City.

Chief Tucker stops in his tracks as Bobby Jo bumps straight into him. Chief Tucker puts his arm out - annoyed with his officers. He signals for them to keep their distance.

Harper and Bobby Jo give him his space.

CHIEF TUCKER

What do you want?

COWBOY (V.O.)

What everyone wants, Chief. The American dream. And you're gonna give it to me. You're gonna give me every dollar's worth.

(beat)

You want the blonde, I want that three million in drug money you claim wasn't there after busting up that warehouse.

CHIEF TUCKER

There's no money. Don't you read the papers?

COWBOY (V.O.)

I know what you told those feds.
They couldn't prove you stole it.
I guess now's the real moment of
truth. How about it, Chief? Is
that money worth her life?

Chief Tucker watches the others - truly embarrassed. They all stare back at him. His guilt written all over his face.

Piker senses something wrong with him. He stares over at Bobby Jo - his arms folded, waiting for some response from Chief Tucker. Harper also on the edge as she chews away at her fingernails.

CHIEF TUCKER

So that's what this is all about?
Money?

COWBOY (V.O.)

Come on, Chief. Don't you read the
papers? Money is no object. Brooke
Baynes is a very important person.

(beat)

You're gonna be remembered after
tonight. Isn't that exciting?

CHIEF TUCKER

What if I were to tell you there
was no money. Are you ready to
kill her?

COWBOY (V.O.)

That's too bad, Chief. I thought
you wanted to play hero. Get your
name back in the papers. Be the
man who got Brooke Baynes back
alive...

Chief Tucker shuts his eyes - wipes his brow. He's ready for a full blown heart attack. He continues pacing on the floor.

COWBOY (V.O.)

Tell you what. I'll call back with
the details. Give you some time to
remember what you did with the cash.
I hope you and the staff aren't too
tired, Chief. We're in for a long
night.

The Cowboy hangs up.

Chief Tucker stares back at each of the anxious faces all watching and waiting. He also hangs up. A look of true defeat on his face.

INT. BAIRD CITY POLICE STATION - CHIEF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Chief Tucker, Piker and De Santis all gather by his desk. The Chief pours them all a good belt of whiskey. He puts the bottle back in his desk drawer.

Piker stares down at his drink - anxious. He gives Chief Tucker a discerning look.

Chief Tucker sighs out loud before chugging down his double shot of Jack. Piker and De Santis also take a drink.

CHIEF TUCKER
I guess it's confession time.

He rests his glass on the desk and paces the carpet. Piker and De Santis are equally confused.

CHIEF TUCKER
A few months ago Bobby comes to me and says a heavy supply of crystal meth has been making the rounds at the high school. Some loser punk by the name of Darren Worley was doing some dealing in the student lot...

Piker takes another belt of his drink. He hands his empty glass to Chief Tucker - he sets it down.

CHIEF TUCKER
So Bobby sets up a sting operation at the school and busts this prick selling to a couple juniors. And we've got him for at least a five year stint. We asked him where a low level player like him was all of a sudden getting such a steady supply of stash...

(beat)

He tells us he found it. It was in a plane that crashed just short of Benyon Pointe. In exchange for his release...he would take us to the crash site and show us the bodies.

DE SANTIS
What else did you find?

CHIEF TUCKER
Nothing yet. Just the bodies of two pilots. It turns out this plane was owned by Henry Colton. As in owner of Colton Aviation.
(beat)
After doing some sniffing around, we come to find out that planes aint all this guy deals.

DE SANTIS
I know. I remember reading about it in The Times.

CHIEF TUCKER
So a few days after my men and I raided the airfield and found the compound, the DEA got wind of the bust and flew out the next day.

PIKER
(to De Santis)
Their first question was "where is the money?"

DE SANTIS
(to Piker)
I also remember hearing something about no money being found at the compound.
(at Chief Tucker)
They never did find where they were hiding the cash.
(an accusatory tone)
Did they, Chief?

Chief Tucker stares down at his feet - humiliated.

INT. CHIEF TUCKER'S HOUSE - HOBBY ROOM - NIGHT

Chief Tucker and Piker pick up the POOL TABLE and move it a few feet to the right. A hardwood floor awaits underneath.

De Santis watches the two officers pry open loose pieces of ply wood from the floor. Piker takes out a good five blocks and throws them aside. He reaches into a pit in the ground and pulls out several METAL BOXES OF CASH.

Chief Tucker takes a seat on the floor -- looks sick to his stomach as he stares blankly at the wall. Feelings of guilt consume his tired face.

De Santis gives him a look of total disdain.

EXT. TWO-LANE BLACKTOP - BAIRD CITY - NIGHT

Chief Tucker's BRONCO charges down the road at high speed. It's out of the desert - in a more business-like district. A few strip malls here and there. The heart of downtown Baird City in all of its boring splendor.

INT. CHIEF TUCKER'S BRONCO - NIGHT

Chief Tucker behind the wheel. De Santis cowers down on the back seat floor. A high-powered rifle in hand. He spots a few open fast food and potato chip bags.

DE SANTIS

When was the last time you cleaned this thing?

CHIEF TUCKER

Bobby was supposed to give it a clean. Then again - you can't really count on Bobby.

DE SANTIS

But you still love him.

CHIEF TUCKER

Yeah. I suppose I do.

DE SANTIS

You were gonna do something good with that money. I know you were.

Chief Tucker thinks it over. He's not so sure.

CHIEF TUCKER

I decided I deserved a reward. And everything would be okay if I just split up the money evenly with Piker and the others. I had to wait until the coast was clear and the DEA got off our back. I couldn't risk just handing over that kind of money and hoping they be smart with it.

DE SANTIS
Did you explain that to them?

CHIEF TUCKER
They didn't even know about the money
until tonight.
(shakes his head)
I was just waiting for the right time
to split it up. I'm not sure they'd
ever believe a word of that.

DE SANTIS
Don't worry about what they think. It
doesn't matter.
(beat)
All that matters now is getting Brooke
back alive. You wanna redeem yourself?
(beat)
Now's the time.

Chief Tucker seems affected by his words. A tear runs down
his eye. His CELL PHONE RINGS.

CHIEF TUCKER
(answers)
Yeah? Tucker here.

COWBOY (V.O.)
You almost there, Chief?

CHIEF TUCKER
Just passed Rutger's Pointe. About two
miles out.

COWBOY (V.O.)
Good. In a few minutes, this will all
be over. Brooke will be safe. And you
can go back to being broke and just as
miserable as before and I'll be three
million dollars richer.

His trademark GIGGLE.

COWBOY (V.O.)
Don't mind me, Chief. Just rubbing it
in. In case you were having second
thoughts about that cash.

CHIEF TUCKER
I don't kill for money.

COWBOY (V.O.)

That's very noble of you, Chief. I can just see your headstone now.

(beat)

Here lies the great Chief Tucker. He died a broke and miserable man, but at least he never offed anyone.

Another eerie GIGGLE.

COWBOY (V.O.)

But enough fuckin' jokes. I'll see you at the playground, Chief. No tricks or I hang the bitch by her own intestines.

(beat)

You got that, Mister Chief of Police?

CHIEF TUCKER

I got it.

The Cowboy HANGS UP.

CHIEF TUCKER

(to De Santis)

Here we go.

De Santis takes one last deep breath as he locks and loads his rifle.

EXT. BAIRD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NIGHT

Chief Tucker's Bronco kills the headlights as they slowly approach the school property and park near a bicycle rack.

Out steps Chief Tucker with a large duffel bag in hand. He shuts his door and begins toward a children's playground in the near distance.

THE PLAYGROUND

Consists of a chained TIRE SWING, MONKEY BARS, A FIREMAN'S POLE and a couple of METAL TUBE SLIDES. Somewhere in the middle of this busy play yard is the body of a young WOMAN.

She is curled up like a baby - her long blonde hair covers her face as she lay presumably unconscious. Her hands are somewhere behind her back. Most likely tied to a piece of wood, or some other post.

CHIEF TUCKER
I got eyes on the girl.

DE SANTIS (V.O.)
(faintly)
I'm in position.

De Santis is belly down on the roof of one of the buildings with his rifle kicked up - aimed and ready. Chief Tucker gets a call on his CELL.

CHIEF TUCKER
(answers)
Yeah?

COWBOY (V.O.)
That bag looks pretty full. I'm glad you decided not to fuck around.

Chief Tucker glances around the property - searches for The Cowboy. He's nowhere to be seen.

COWBOY (V.O.)
You can't see me. But I see you.

Chief Tucker rolls his eyes in defeat.

COWBOY (V.O.)
Alright. So far so good. This is how this is gonna work. I want you to drop the bag where you stand.
(beat)
You're gonna take off that faggot coat, then turn around and let me see you. Real slow-like and with your hands in the air.

Chief Tucker bites down on his cell phone as he removes his coat. He drops it on the ground - grabs the phone and puts it back to his ear.

COWBOY (V.O.)
Turn around. Let's see that ass.

Chief Tucker spins around - his hands suspended in the air.

COWBOY (V.O.)
Good work. Now you're gonna keep your hands in the air and walk real slowly to the playground. There's somebody here who wants to see you.

ON THE ROOF - DE SANTIS

Points his rifle in all different directions.

DE SANTIS POV - RIFLE SCOPE

As he surveys the area. No sign of The Cowboy.

BACK TO SCENE

De Santis looks down at Chief Tucker as he walks toward the playground - hands still in the air.

THE PLAYGROUND

Chief Tucker draws close to a presumably unconscious Brooke curled up in the middle of this complicated jungle gym.

He stops in his tracks.

COWBOY (V.O.)

I didn't tell you to stop. If you
want the girl - go get her.

Chief Tucker turns - faces his truck at the top of the hill and notices THE COWBOY - BLACK LEATHER AND WEARING HIS DARK HELMET. He's gripping his 375 WILDEY MAGNUM and holding the black duffel bag in hand.

Chief Tucker crawls up a kid's ladder - into the middle of the jungle gym. He stares down at Brooke, still not moving and curled up like a baby.

All of a sudden --

A MAN'S FACE looks up - smiles. He reaches his arms around and is holding a SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN. He yanks the blonde wig from his head and tosses it aside.

Before Chief Tucker can pull his back-up pistol, he is SHOT IN THE CHEST and BLOWN CLEAR OFF the jungle gym.

His body flung onto the surrounding beach sand.

The armed gunman stares down at Chief Tucker's body. His lifeless eyes staring back at him.

Before we know what's going on - a SINGLE RIFLE SHOT RINGS INTO THE NIGHT AIR - knocks the gun man clear off his feet and into the center of the jungle gym.

Chief Tucker is barely alive as his eyes and mouth twitch. He begins to choke on his own blood.

The armed gunman also spitting his last few breathes as he attempts to crawl away. He grabs onto a FIREMAN'S POLE and tries to slide down but falls flat on his face in the sand below.

CHIEF TUCKER'S POV - THE SKY ABOVE

And then DE SANTIS walks into view - rifle still in hand. He stares down at his wounded partner. A truly blank and emotionless look.

BACK TO SCENE

De Santis stares back at the truck on the hill. There is no one in sight. The Cowboy in black now gone. He smiles as he makes his way to the dead gunman on the other side of the jungle gym.

His dead, cold eyes staring back at De Santis. These eyes looking at him in judgment. De Santis takes a few moments to watch the man's strange expression.

INT. BAIRD CITY POLICE STATION - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Bobby Jo sits at his desk, staring blankly at some random paperwork. He breaks into tears. Harper steps up behind him, grabs him around the neck and comforts him. She is also very emotional.

Piker sits at his desk with a bottle of whiskey resting on the surface. In walks De Santis. He throws a BLACK WALLET onto Piker's desk.

DE SANTIS

Found that in his glove box. It's Darren Worley.

BOBBY JO

Worley did this? What the hell are you talking about? The guy's a two bit dealer.

DE SANTIS

He was also smart enough to know The Chief was holding three million in stolen drug money. So sure was he that he put together this elaborate plan to steal it.

BOBBY JO
I know this guy. There is nothing
"elaborate" about him.

DE SANTIS
What do we know about Worley?

BOBBY JO
He's a sack of shit.

DE SANTIS
That may be, but he's not a killer.
At least nothing in his record has
ever indicated he's killed before.
(beat)
So what does that tell us?

BOBBY JO
What're you doing?

DE SANTIS
What did he tell us on the phone?
He took credit for Cooney woman's
murder. But only after The Chief
mentioned her name.

BOBBY JO
Of course he killed her.
(motions to Piker)
Did you look at Piker's hand? He
even cut him the same way.

Piker raises his hand in the air - wrapped in white gauze.
De Santis turns, stares at the hand.

DE SANTIS
He saw it on the news. Or he read
about it in the paper. It doesn't
mean he did it.

BOBBY JO
Sure it does.

Harper, now irritated, smacks Bobby Jo in the back of his
head. He swipes her hand away.

DE SANTIS
And what do we know about the woman
over at Barnhills who hitched a ride
with him?

PIKER

Nothing.

DE SANTIS

That's right. Nothing at all. She disappeared. Why is that?

BOBBY JO

She's dead!

DE SANTIS

You're right. Why did he kill her? Because she was plan A. Worley was gonna hold her for ransom. He knew Chief was holding that money and he has been laying in wait for five months for the perfect chance to get his hands on it.

HARPER

But he didn't hold her for ransom. He used Brooke.

DE SANTIS

That's right. He realized something the day he ran into Brooke and her friends at the supermarket. No one was gonna pay out three million bucks for some random woman's life. But for Brooke Baynes? - It was a no-brainer.

PIKER

So he kills the other woman and moves on to plan B.

BOBBY JO

And he ditches her body in the desert and forgets all about her. Then puts all his efforts into Brooke?

PIKER

I still don't see the relevance to any of this now. It still doesn't tell us where Brooke is.

DE SANTIS

Odds are she's still alive. I think our chances of finding her in one piece are good.

HARPER

Wait. What do you mean? What about the Safari? All that blood? The evidence?

DE SANTIS

He manufactures the evidence. Basically to make us think we're hunting for a cold-blooded serial killer. He knew about the Cooney woman's murder. The condition she was found. The cuts on her hand. He was a little smarter than Chief ever gave him credit for.

BOBBY JO

So this whole thing was about the money?

DE SANTIS

Exactly.

PIKER

Does anybody in this room know where the hell this girl is?

They all stare at one another in silence. Bobby Jo stares at the black duffel bag - still sitting on Harper's desk. He shakes his head in disgust.

INT. CASEY AND LEANNE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Casey stares in front of a large mirror - pops a couple of XANEX with a sprite.

A SHOWER RUNS in the bathroom. The water SHUTS OFF.

Casey puts her prescription back in her purse - chugs the rest of her soda. She hears a KNOCK AT THE DOOR and heads over to answer --

De Santis charges in - hopping mad.

DE SANTIS

Where is she?

He spots a wet, toweled Leanne coming out of the bathroom. Her hair is still wet. De Santis charges after her.

Leanne quickly covers herself.

DE SANTIS

Have a good time tonight?

Leanne steps back a bit - backing into a corner.

LEANNE

What...?

De Santis grabs her by the throat - squeezes her windpipe.

DE SANTIS

You and the cop have a real good
time?

Leanne gasps for air.

DE SANTIS

You just couldn't keep your fucking
little legs shut, could you? Dirty
little bitch!

CARLA (CASEY)

Let her go, Charlie.

DE SANTIS

Stay out of this, Carla. She's not
one of your girls. You got nothing
to say about it.

Leanne's face slowly turns red - still gasping for air.

DE SANTIS

What did I tell you, Danita? I gave
you real simple instructions. I said
stay put until I tell you to move.

(beat)

Keep your mouth shut until I tell you
to speak. Maybe since you can't listen
I'll just put you back in the slam
where I found you.

DANITA

I didn't tell him any-thing! I swear!
Please! I didn't do anything!

DE SANTIS

That's your problem, Danita! You never
do anything! Nothing's ever your fault!

CARLA

She can't breathe, Charlie! Let her go!

De Santis pulls away from her - unhooking her throat as she
slides to the floor in tears and hyperventilating.

DE SANTIS

We're pulling out first thing in the morning. Once Brooke is out of the picture, I meet Chris to split up the cash. The three of us meet back here to cut up the rest. Now do you think the two of you can stay put and keep your mouths shut for a few hours?

Carla and Danita nod appropriately.

DE SANTIS

Great. Good to hear.

De Santis storms out - slamming the door behind him.

Carla stares down at Danita, still choking on the floor.

INT. BAIRD CITY POLICE STATION - EVIDENCE LOCKER - NIGHT

Harper, Piker and Bobby Jo gather at a rusty old evidence table. The black duffel bag full of money lay unzipped as Piker holds a hundred dollar bill to a bright light.

HARPER

Well? The suspense is killing me over here, Dennis.

PIKER

I don't know. I can't tell.

BOBBY JO

I thought you said you were good at this.

PIKER

I am. I wasn't always a cop. I used to tend bar. Got real good at picking out a phony.

HARPER

And you're a hundred percent sure this is the exact amount Chief took out of his floor?

PIKER

It was supposed to be a little under three million. That's what Chief said.

HARPER
(irritated)
And you don't know?

PIKER
I never counted it. Be my guest.

Piker switches the bill around - checks the other side.

BOBBY JO
If we counted this money, it would
take all night. We don't have all
night.

PIKER
I just can't be sure. If this is
counterfeit, it's the best I've
ever seen._

HARPER
It doesn't make sense De Santis would
just return the money. If he set up
Chief, it's for a reason.

PIKER
It could be De Santis is telling the
truth. It could be he has nothing to
do with any of this. And maybe Darren
"dipshit" Worley actually set up this
whole thing himself.

All three share a look.

BOBBY JO
No way. He's dirty. I don't buy it.

HARPER
Me either.

PIKER
Yeah. Me either.

HARPER
Well then. I guess there's only one
way to find out if this money's phony.

BOBBY JO
What're we gonna do? Call the Treasury
Department? They'll be gone by sunrise.

HARPER
That's not what I had in mind.

INT. BAIRD CITY POLICE STATION - MAIN FLOOR - NIGHT

Harper sits at her desk and stares down at the wrinkled up computer printout of Sandra M. Burton's flight ITINERARY. The same one taken from De Santis luggage.

A FAX

Comes through on the edge of her desk. It's a DMV driver's license IMAGE of one SANDRA M. BURTON.

Harper pulls it out - gives it a quick glance.

INT. ROXANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Harper and Bobby Jo watch Roxanne as she carefully reviews a police composite SKETCH OF THE WOMAN AT BARNHILLS - it's identical to Sandra Burton's DMV PHOTO in her other hand.

ROXANNE
Yeah. No doubt about it. That's her. Her hair's a different color but that's her.

Harper shows her another photo - Darren Worley.

HARPER
How about this man? See him before?

Roxanne grabs at the photo - leans in nice and close.

Harper and Bobby Jo share an impatient look.

ROXANNE
No. Don't know him.

Harper hands her another photo - Chris De Santis.

ROXANNE
Speak of the devil. That's him.

Roxanne pokes her finger at the photo.

ROXANNE
The one I saw in the wagon. That rat-faced sonofabitch. It's him. I never forget a face.

BOBBY JO
Are you sure?

Roxanne gives him a "who is this dumbass" look.

ROXANNE
(to Harper)
The cute one's are always dense.

Harper smiles - retrieves the photos from Roxanne.

EXT. ROXANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Harper and Bobby Jo head for the car. Harper quickly dials a number on her cell. She waits.

PIKER (V.O.)
So what's the word?

HARPER
Roxanne ID'd Chris's photo. Burton's too.

PIKER (V.O.)
I just checked the girls room. No answer. I'm thinking they stepped out to get a bite. Mary Belle's is open late. I'm headed over there now. Check things out.

HARPER
Good. Bobby Jo and I are headed to the motel. See what De Santis has in his bags.

PIKER (V.O.)
You just be careful.

Harper hangs up. Her and Bobby Jo jump in his Bronco.

EXT. MOTOR LODGE INN - NIGHT

De Santis steps from his room with a large suitcase. He begins down the hallway - headed for the parking lot.

EXT. MOTOR LODGE PARKING LOT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

De Santis heads for his Chevy truck with luggage in tow. He tosses the hefty bag in the back seat. Then heads back to his room.

BOBBY JO'S BRONCO

Sits about fifty yards away. Bobby Jo and Harper watching De Santis closely.

INT. BOBBY JO'S BRONCO - NIGHT

Bobby Jo behind the wheel. Harper rides shotgun.

HARPER

Okay. I'll go to his room and distract him. You check his bags.

BOBBY JO

No. I don't want you going in there alone. I'll do it.

Harper turns to Bobby Jo - surprised by this very sincere gesture. It's very unlike him.

Bobby Jo feels her eyes on him.

BOBBY JO

I mean --

(beat)

-- I know what to say to him. I should go.

Harper rolls her eyes. The tender moment is ruined.

HARPER

Whatever. You distract him. I'll check his bags. But we gotta go now. Deal?

BOBBY JO

Deal.

Harper and Bobby Jo step out --

EXT. MOTOR LODGE PARKING LOT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Bobby Jo heads for De Santis room. Harper heads for the Chevy.

INT. DE SANTIS ROOM - NIGHT

De Santis places his toothbrush and other toiletries into a zipper bag. He hears a KNOCK at the door. He walks over and answers.

Bobby Jo on the other side.

BOBBY JO

Hey.

De Santis is a bit surprised.

DE SANTIS

Hey. How're you holding up?

BOBBY JO

Okay, I guess. Sorry to bother you.
I thought maybe you and me could talk
a few minutes. If you're not too busy,
that is.

De Santis takes a quick peek outside. Casey ducks back in her room - going unnoticed by Bobby Jo.

DE SANTIS

Of course not. Come on inside.

Bobby Jo steps inside. The two men stand awkwardly in the middle of the room.

De Santis waits patiently as Bobby Jo struggles to find the right words.

BOBBY JO

I uh --

(stalls)

-- Just wanted to say sorry.

DE SANTIS

For what?

BOBBY JO

For not completely trusting you.
To be honest, there was a time
where none of us were real sure
about you.

DE SANTIS

Really?

BOBBY JO

You just drifting into town out
of nowhere. Us picking you up in
that station wagon. For awhile
there - things looked a tad bit
suspicious on your end.

DE SANTIS

Yeah, I suppose they did, didn't they?

BOBBY JO

I mean, here you are from LA. And Brooke Baynes is from LA. You got a brother in trouble with the law.

(beat)

A brother who just happens to be a cop.

De Santis grows more suspicious by the second.

BOBBY JO

You could see how someone in our shoes might get the wrong idea.

INT. DE SANTIS TRUCK - NIGHT

Harper finds what looks to be close to three million in the large suitcase. She quickly packs it back in the bag and zips it up.

INT. DE SANTIS ROOM - NIGHT

Bobby Jo and De Santis still talking.

BOBBY JO

Anyways. I just wanted to say thank you. For your help. I know you did what you could for Chief. I didn't want you going back and blaming your-self for what happened out there.

(beat)

Cops hold onto things awhile.

(beat)

Guilt and what not.

DE SANTIS

I appreciate that. For what it's worth, I'm sorry too.

BOBBY JO

I guess if you're a cop long enough, something like this is bound to happen. Just didn't think it could happen around here.

Bobby Jo gives De Santis the stink eye. They just stare at one another. Neither saying a word.

BOBBY JO
Well then. I guess I'm off.

Bobby Jo extends his hand to De Santis - he takes it. The two briefly shake hands.

BOBBY JO
You have a safe trip back to LA.

Bobby Jo lets himself out.

DE SANTIS
Hey, Bobby Jo --

Bobby Jo turns back.

DE SANTIS
(in a southern accent)
You take care of ya'self. Ya here?

He smiles. Bobby Jo doesn't get it. He slowly comes around and cracks a small grin.

BOBBY JO
In the Heat of the Night. I get it.

Bobby Jo dips out.

EXT. MOTOR LODGE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Bobby Jo begins back to his car. He crawls in the driver's seat. The passenger seat empty. No Harper.

BOBBY JO
Tell me you found something.

INT. BOBBY JO'S BRONCO - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Bobby Jo turns - notices that Harper is gone. He turns to the CHEVY TRUCK and spots De Santis headed towards it. But where is Harper?

De Santis jumps in, heads out of the lot. Harper presumably hiding in the back seat.

BOBBY JO
Oh shit!

Bobby Jo nervously fumbles with the keys and starts up the engine. He pulls away from the lot a little too quickly.

EXT. BOBBY JO'S BRONCO - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

On his LEFT REAR TIRE - as he runs over a NAIL.

The tire BLOWS OUT.

The Bronco slowly pulls to the soft shoulder. Out steps a hopping mad Bobby Jo.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CHEVY TRUCK - NIGHT

Harper cowers on the back seat floor - hiding behind this large duffel bag full of cash. She curls up like a baby, scared to death.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARY BELLE'S DINER - NIGHT

Carla and Danita (Casey and Leanne) leave the diner with a couple of takeout bags in hand. Piker's Bronco pulls to the scene and parks.

The girls take notice - a worried look on their faces.

DANITA

What does he want?

CARLA

Nothing. He's just hungry.

DANITA

His boss was just shot less than two hours ago. I'm doubting he's got the munchies.

CARLA

Just shut up and play cool.

Piker steps out - approaches the girls.

CARLA

Sergeant Piker. Hello.

PIKER
You getting your appetite back?

CARLA
Yeah, well. Barely eaten anything
in two days. I guess it's just nice
to know Brooke might still be alive.
Considering the circumstances.

PIKER
It looks that way.

Piker stares back and forth - between the two girls. His
suspicion of them is obvious.

CARLA
By the way, we're sorry about Chief
Tucker. I know how close you were
with him. I'm sorry for your loss.

Piker cracks a coy smile.

PIKER
I sure do appreciate that.

Carla couldn't be more nervous. Danita breaks the awkward
silence.

DANITA
Yeah. And I'm sorry too.

Piker just stares her - gives her a very stern look.

Danita checks with Carla.

PIKER
About Brooke. Would you two mind
bringing that with to the station?
I've got some questions I wanna
ask you.

CARLA
Right now?

PIKER
It is important.

CARLA
I don't know what to tell you, Sarge.
I'm as surprised by all this as you.
We told you all we know.

Danita watches Carla closely. Piker notices. She notices him noticing her. She finally speaks up.

DANITA

Yeah. We just don't know how much else we can help.

PIKER

It's okay. I understand. If you remember anything else we need to know, give me a call.

Carla grabs Danita's arm - drags her toward the truck.

CARLA

Good night.

And the girls head for Brooke's SUV.

PIKER

Just one more thing.

The girls stop in their tracks - Danita with the passenger door already open.

PIKER

Both of you girls break out some ID.

Carla and Danita share a look.

CARLA

I'm sorry...?

PIKER

(to Carla)

I wanna see your driver's license.

(to both)

Both of you.

Danita checks with Carla - who returns her nervous stare. They both turn to Piker.

Piker's look has suddenly turned deadly serious.

CARLA

Sorry, Sarge. I must've left it back at the motel.

DANITA

Me too.

Piker gives them the stink eye. And then - a smug smile.

PIKER

Right. I guess I'll just have to swing by your room in the morning then.

DANITA

Okay. Yeah. Whatever you need, Sarge.

Danita quickly crawls in the truck. Carla follows her lead.

Brooke's SUV charges out of the lot - down the highway and out of sight. Piker just stands in the lot with a sinister grin on his face.

PIKER

Yeah. See you in the morning.

CUT TO:

EXT. RADISSON HOTEL - SALT LAKE CITY, UT - MORNING

The black CHEVY TRUCK parks in a small lot in front of the high-rise hotel. Out steps De Santis as he heads for the front lobby.

INT. CHEVY TRUCK - BACK SEAT - MORNING

Harper peeks her head up - spots De Santis walking toward the hotel lobby. She quietly reaches for the door - steps out without being noticed. She ever so gently shuts this door and heads for the hotel.

INT. RADISSON HOTEL - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Harper heads inside this swank, high-dollar resort hotel and walks straight to reception. LINDA (20s) behind the counter.

HARPER

Excuse me.

Linda looks up from her desk top PC.

LINDA

Yes?

Harper flashes her badge - must to the surprise of Linda.

HARPER
I need to know what room Sandra
Burton is staying.

LINDA
Yes, ma'm.

Linda types it into her computer.

LINDA
Miss Burton is in room Four-Eleven.
(beat)
May I ask what the problem is?

HARPER
I need you to call 911. Tell them
you need all available units for
back up. Apprehending a kidnapping
suspect in room Four-Eleven.

LINDA
Oh, dear God...

Harper heads for the elevator. As she passes - we notice De Santis taking a seat at a far table in the hotel's bar while sitting across from him, with her back to us, is an unidentified BLONDE WOMAN.

INT. RADISSON HOTEL - FOURTH FLOOR - DAY

Harper awaits in front of the door. She's staring down the far end of the hall and notices several armed-to-the-teeth POLICE OFFICERS heading her direction.

One of them carries a loaded twelve-gauge.

Walking with them is a ROOM STEWARD. In her hand is a card key to room four-eleven.

HARPER
It's this one.

One of the Officers bangs on the door.

COP #1
Police! Open the door!

They wait a moment - the officer gives the room steward the go ahead. She unlocks the door as all of the OFFICERS STORM the room.

INT. ROOM FOUR-ELEVEN - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

As the Officers sweep the area - closets, bathroom, balcony Harper slowly makes her way in. De Santis, Sandra and Chris are nowhere to be found.

The bed is unmade, appears that a couple have shared this king sized mattress. One of the Officers picks up a black wallet rested next to the television. Without us knowing the identity of the person it belongs - the officer flips it open and takes a look.

Harper takes notice and approaches him.

HARPER
(to Officer)
What is it?

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. RADISSON HOTEL BAR - DAY

De Santis sits across from the unidentified young blonde woman. Her back still turned to us. They have a couple of drinks and lay low. De Santis nervously checks his watch.

The woman's soft voice speaks:

WOMAN (O.S.)
I forgot my wallet. I'll be right
back.

The woman grabs the ROOM KEY from atop the cocktail table and heads out. We never do get a good look at her face.

INT. RADISSON HOTEL - FOURTH FLOOR - DAY

Harper awaits in the hall while the officers finish up in the room. She folds her arms and paces nervously down the carpet. She looks up and notices the surprised face of a YOUNG BLONDE at the far end of the hall.

Neither of them making a move. They just stare back at one another. We still can't make out the blonde under all the hair and glasses.

HARPER
Brooke...?

Harper slowly walks toward her. The young blonde storms off down the hall. Harper chases after her.

She turns a sharp corner and notices the elevator doors are closing. The blonde most likely on it. She nervously scans the hallway for the stairs.

Finds them.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Harper charges into the stairwell and runs like crazy down the steps. She pulls her gun from a holster and trips down a couple of steps. She pulls herself together - continues.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. RADISSON HOTEL BAR - DAY

De Santis watches the lobby as random POLICE OFFICERS ROAM ABOUT THE ROOM. He pays special attention to an ELEVATOR DOOR OPENING and the young blonde running out.

She makes eye contact with De Santis - who quickly gathers his things and heads out. We're still not sure who this blonde person is as we can't get a clear shot of her face.

INT. RADISSON HOTEL LOBBY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

De Santis runs out and grabs the blonde's arm - walking her towards the front exit. Her back to us.

DE SANTIS
What happened?

WOMAN (O.S.)
They found us.

A couple of officers take notice of their all too strange behavior. De Santis notices another pair of UNIFORM COPS awaiting outside, guarding the perimeter and blocking off all exits.

He and the blonde head back to the bar where it's safe and no cops in sight. He catches eyes with --

HARPER

As she RUNS INTO THE ROOM with her gun drawn.

HARPER
Charlie De Santis!

She draws down on him. Several of the surrounding officers take notice of the stand-off.

De Santis panics - reaches into his coat, pulls and holds a gun to the young woman's head. His CAR KEYS falling to the marble floor below. The woman's dark shades fall from her face. We now see that it is none other than SANDRA BURTON disguised as Brooke.

DE SANTIS
(to Harper)
You couldn't let it go, could you?

The few officers have quickly turned into nine or ten cops. They all help Harper box De Santis in. He moves to the bar with the gun still to Sandra's head.

Harper follows.

HARPER
(to officers)
Don't shoot him! He knows where she is!

DE SANTIS
Call my brother! You gotta call it off!

HARPER
What?!

COP
PUT THE GUN DOWN!

DE SANTIS
(to Harper)
I'm sorry. It wasn't supposed to go down like this.

Harper feels the sincerity in his voice. They almost share a special moment - despite their situation.

COP #2
GET ON THE GROUND!

HARPER
(to Cop #2)
Don't shoot him!

Sandra elbows him in the gut and ducks.

HARPER
NOOOO!!!!

The surrounding cops unload on De Santis - BLASTING HIM THROUGH A GLASS DOOR and onto the pool deck outside.

He is killed almost instantly. His dead corpse staring back at Harper.

She stands in shock as the other officers rush outside to check on the body.

HARPER
Check his pockets for a phone!

The cops dig through his suit jacket - coming up with a bunch of loose cash.

COP #3
No phone!

Harper surveys the room - notices De Santis iphone still sitting at the corner table. She races over and turns it on. There is one UNREAD MESSAGE.

"Be there in ten"

She checks the SENT MESSAGES.

"Motor Lodge Inn. Room 104"

A look of pure dread on her face.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. TWO-LANE BLACKTOP - BAIRD CITY - DAY

The Cowboy's DUCATI whips down the two-lane highway at high speed. On his way to complete the mission. His trademark racing leathers and BLACK HELMET.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. RADISSON HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Harper types a text to CHRIS DE SANTIS from his brother's phone. It says "Abort Mission". She presses send as the message loads.

EXT. MOTOR LODGE INN - DAY

Piker's Bronco sits in the near empty lot. Piker and Bobby Jo watch the front office - waiting for Carla and Danita to make their move.

INT. CARLA AND DANITA'S ROOM - DAY

Piker and Bobby Jo, armed, hold the two accomplices against their will. Carla and Danita laying in bed - watching TV.

BOBBY JO

I'm sick of all this waiting around
shit. We should be doing something.

PIKER

He'll be here. They got to split
the cash up first.

BOBBY JO

He's got Harper! And he's done God
knows what to her!

PIKER

First of all, you don't even know if
she's with him. She could've made it
out of the truck and got the money to
a safe place.

(beat)

If I was her, I'd be getting the cash
as far away from here as possible.

BOBBY JO

So where the hell is she? She hasn't
called us!

Piker grabs a random CELL from the dresser - Harper's.

PIKER

She can't call! She left her cell in
your truck! She's probably somewhere
meeting with the Feds!

Piker sets the phone down - next to the television.

Bobby Jo takes a seat by the air conditioner. A helpless look on his face. Carla nervously rubs her cold arms and rocks back and forth - in dying need of a fix.

PIKER
(to Danita)
What's her problem?

DANITA
She's going to jail for about
ten years. You figure it out.

Carla defiantly jumps from the bed and heads to the sink where her prescription XANEX are waiting. She snags them up. Piker grabs her by the arm.

PIKER
Where are you going?

CARLA
I'm getting my pills.
(beat)
Do you mind?

He lets her go. She snags up the prescription bottle and scans the room. There are empty soda cans everywhere.

CARLA
I need something to take it with.

PIKER
Take a drink of water.

CARLA
The water tastes like shit and you
guys drank all the soda.

Piker smiles. He turns to Bobby Jo.

PIKER
(to Bobby Jo)
Take the redhead and get some sodas.
Come right back.

Bobby Jo and Danita head out.

PIKER
I'm keeping my eye on you.

Carla pushes him out of the way and plops down on the bed.

Piker just laughs at her as he pops a stick of chewing gum in his mouth.

EXT. TWO-LANE BLACKTOP - DAY

The Ducati still races down the street. The desert terrain now moving into a more lived-in part of town. A few shops here and there. A couple DINERS and an older MOVIE PALACE are just some of the standouts of downtown Baird.

The speeding bike weaves in and out of this slower traffic trudging through the main avenues of the business district. Cars HONK as the bike barely misses a series of collisions.

INT. CARLA AND DANITA'S ROOM - DAY

Danita watches television from one bed, while Piker awaits in a corner chair. On one side of the TV sits a CELL PHONE. It lights up RED, but makes no noise in silent mode.

Harper's phone.

Danita notices the RED LIGHT emanating from the phone, but stays quiet. She slowly stares over at Piker - who doesn't notice the phone from his angle.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. RADISSON HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Harper paces back and forth while she awaits an answer from the other line.

HARPER
Come on, you guys. Pick up.
(beat)
Where are you?

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. MOTOR LODGE INN - HALLWAY - DAY

Bobby Jo walks Danita to the soda machine. She puts in some change as Bobby Jo acts as the lookout man. He stares off into the distance - into the front parking lot. He notices a BLACK DUCATI RACING BIKE parked in the dirt lot.

BOBBY JO
(to himself)
Shit.

Bobby Jo quickly turns as Danita reaches down and grabs an orange soda from the machine. But before she can crack it open --

THE COWBOY (CHRIS DE SANTIS)

Aims his LASER SIGHTED WILDEY MAGNUM at her BACK and fires a SINGLE ROUND.

The SHOT BLOWS STRAIGHT THROUGH THE SODA CAN still in her hand. The ORANGE SODA SHOOTS onto the pavement as Danita falls to the ground.

Bobby Jo runs for cover behind the corner wall - The Cowboy fires a SECOND SHOT in his direction, barely missing him.

INT. CARLA AND DANITA'S ROOM - DAY

Piker hears the GUNPLAY outside and runs for the drapes as he peers through the window.

Meanwhile, Carla pulls a thirty eight revolver from her bag and aims at Piker's back. She FIRES TWO SHOTS.

BAM-BAM!

Piker falls to the carpet.

Carla grabs his CAR KEYS from a night stand and makes a run for it. She slams the door behind her.

EXT. MOTOR LODGE INN - PARKING LOT - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Carla runs for Piker's Bronco in the distance. She spots the Ducati racing bike in the far reaches of the lot. She makes it to the Bronco and jumps in.

INT. PIKER'S BRONCO - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Carla puts the keys in the ignition and cranks it over. She looks through the windshield - spots THE COWBOY holding his Wildey Magnum.

She smiles with peaceful assurance. The Cowboy raises his weapon and takes aim. The RED LASER LIGHT BEAMING INTO THE WINDSHIELD.

Carla loses her bright smile. Her face consumed with fear.

EXT. MOTOR LODGE INN - PARKING LOT - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The Cowboy fires A SINGLE SHOT INTO THE WINDSHIELD - almost blowing it to pieces. The impact of the large shell casing is echoed in the otherwise quiet air.

The Cowboy makes his way back into the halls of the motel.

EXT. MOTOR LODGE INN - HALLWAY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The Cowboy stops in his tracks - drops a magazine from his gun and reloads. As he is reloading --

BOBBY JO

jumps from the roof above and tackles him to the ground.

The WILDEY MAGNUM drops onto the lawn as these two have a knockdown, full-on fist fight.

Bobby Jo punches his face mask - unsuccessfully. He grabs his hand and winces in pain as The Cowboy knees him in the stomach, snags him up by the shirt - throws him face first into a steel pole.

Bobby Jo falls onto the sidewalk and attempts to stand, but The Cowboy kicks him repeatedly in the stomach. He attempts another kick but --

Bobby Jo GRABS HIS LEG - PUNCHES HIM IN THE CROTCH as hard as he can. The Cowboy falls to the pavement and squirms in pain.

Bobby Jo notices that his forty five has also fallen onto the grass. But the WILDEY MAGNUM is missing.

He looks up and spots --

PIKER

Holding the weapon on The Cowboy's back.

The Cowboy slowly stands upright. He moves for Bobby Jo as he notices the young cop staring up at Piker behind him.

The Cowboy turns - faces Piker. He reaches in his pants for a back-up piece but Piker is too fast. He fires --

BAM!

The first shot goes THROUGH COWBOY'S BODY.

Piker fires another round --

BAM!

The second shot AIMED AT HIS HEAD. The BLACK HELMET FLIES into what must be a hundred pieces. Remnants of plastic and the face of Chris De Santis splattered onto the pavement.

His dead, limp body drops to his knees - face first onto the sidewalk.

A thick and HEAVY SMOKE fills the air.

Bobby Jo smiles - gives Piker a thumbs up.

Piker drops the heavy gun and slowly slides to the ground below. He's exhausted and bleeding pretty badly.

INT. RADISSON HOTEL - POOL AREA - DAY

Harper is on the phone as she watches a couple of CORONERS zip up the body of Charlie De Santis and haul him away. A whole group of UNIFORM COPS, DETECTIVES and NEWS PERSONNEL at the scene.

A plain-clothes Detective questions Sandra Burton from one of the beach chairs. She is in tears - still shaken from all the gunplay.

HARPER
(into phone)
...So he's gonna be okay?

BOBBY JO (V.O.)
He's too stubborn to die. He gets
two shots in the back and we still
can't get rid of him.

Harper smiles.

HARPER
Listen. Give Denny a kiss for me
and I'll see you guys tonight.

BOBBY JO (V.O.)
What about me?

HARPER
We tried that once. Didn't work.

BOBBY JO (V.O.)
Fine. We can just base it on sex
then.

Harper rolls her eyes.

Bobby Jo laughs.

BOBBY JO (V.O.)
Just heard some very interesting
things about brothers De Santis.
(beat)
Brooke Baynes was arrested on a
possession charge less than two
weeks ago. Five hits of ecstasy.
She was making a buy and was
busted by an undercover. Guess
who the arresting officer was?

HARPER
I give up.

BOBBY JO (V.O.)
One Christopher De Santis. He
cuts a deal with her to pull a
fake ransom drop and she don't
see one day of jail.

Harper takes a nice, long look at Sandra Burton. Her dyed
blonde hair and movie star looks are a perfect match for
Brooke Baynes.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MOTOR LODGE INN - FRONT OFFICE - DAY

Bobby Jo stands at the lobby desk - stares down at a laptop
monitor and reviews a front page LA TIMES ARTICLE -- DARREN
WORLEY'S arrest and key testimony on Colton Aviation.

BOBBY JO (CONT'D)
Also found some interesting reading
on Carla, aka Casey's, laptop. Our
boy Worley made The LA Times.

In the b.g., a couple of EMTs load a wounded Piker into the
back of an ambulance.

BOBBY JO (CONT'D)

Chris De Santis cuts him into a deal blackmailing Chief out of three mil in drug money. He lures big brother Charlie into town, pulls his strings while we're all looking for a killer.

HARPER (V.O.)

What did they say about the money?

BOBBY JO

According to I.A. - when Chris shot a project kid in East LA - him and Charlie were getting death threats from a local gangster named Rudy De La Pena. All of a sudden, over four mil in counterfeit bills disappears from an evidence locker.

(beat)

I.A. was looking at big brother for the job. Thinking he was planning on using the funny money to pay off Rudy. I guess they came up with an even better plan.

HARPER (V.O.)

Good job, you guys.

BOBBY JO

I guess there's only one piece of the puzzle still missing, isn't there?

INT. RADISSON HOTEL - ROOM FOUR-ELEVEN - DAY

Harper does one last walk-through of the high dollar hotel room. She notices an EIGHT BY TEN PHOTO OF SANDRA BURTON stuck to a mirror. Her hair is just as long as Brooke's, but much darker. It's almost jet black

INT. BATHROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Harper hurries inside and dumps a small wicker wastebasket onto the tile floor. An empty box of BLACK HAIR DYE sits amongst the garbage.

She picks it up - smiles.

EXT. RADISSON HOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY

A young woman with JET BLACK HAIR keeps her head low as a whole slew of UNIFORM COPS make their way toward the hotel

She stops at De Santis CHEVY TRUCK - clumsily attempts to unlock the driver's door. She drops the KEYS.

As she bends down to pick them up - she notices THE SHADOW of HARPER standing over her. A box of black hair dye is tossed on the ground before her. She looks up. We see --

It's BROOKE BAYNES with black hair.

Harper stands before her - dangling a set of cuffs in her hand. An ear to ear smile.

HARPER
Going somewhere?

CUT TO BLACK

THE END