

American Crime

by

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PINK Production Draft

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ACT ONE

OVER BLACK WE HEAR A STARK EXCHANGE BETWEEN A 911 DISPATCHER AND A MALE CALLER:

911 DISPATCHER (V.O.)
 Nine-One-One. Police, fire or
 medical?

CALLER (V.O.)
 I don't know...I don't know what...
 My...my neighbor is dead!

911 DISPATCHER (V.O.)
 Dead how?

CALLER (V.O.)
 They shot him. They shot Matt, I
 don't know where Gwen is.

911 DISPATCHER (V.O.)
 What's the...sir, what's the
 address of the shooting?

CALLER (V.O.)
 Three-thirty-eight Slauson.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
 Police are on their way.

1 INT. WALMART - DAY (DAY ONE) 1

IN A VERY SHORT SCENE we meet **RUSS SKOKIE** who's working as a clerk at Walmart, or some other fairly nondescript big box store. The location itself is not as important as the image conveyed: That of a middle aged man working an honest, but average job the same as millions of other Americans.

At the moment he's in the process of displaying a LAWN SPRINKLER HEAD to a CUSTOMER.

2 INT. APPLEBEE'S RESTAURANT - EVENING (DAY ONE) 2

Again, the location isn't as essential as the image created: Russ, with A FEW FRIENDS OF SIMILAR AGE, eating and discussing how the Cardinals haven't been the same since they lost Kurt Warner. It should be just enough to underscore the fact that Russ's life is the height of normalcy.

3 INT. APARTMENT/BEDROOM - EARLY NIGHT (DAY ONE) 3

Hours later. We are in the bedroom of a very modest apartment. Russ is in bed, asleep, when the PHONE RINGS. It rings and rings, and rather than answer it himself, Russ lets the ANSWERING MACHINE PICK UP.

RUSS (V.O.)

This is Russ. I can't come to the phone. Please leave a message.

WE HEAR THE TONE FROM THE MACHINE, THEN A VOICE:

PALMER (V.O.)

Mr. Skokie, this is Chuck Palmer with the City of Modesto Robbery/Homicide division. I'm going to leave you a number, and if you could please give me a call back as soon--

By this time Russ has stirred, turned on a light and picked up the phone.

As he speaks WE CAN ONLY HEAR RUSS'S SIDE OF THE CONVERSATION.

RUSS

Hello. This is Russ.

(beat)

Yes.

(beat)

Yes I do.

(beat)

What does that, what does that mean: "you think he's been--"

(beat)

I would have to fly. I don't know how soon I can--

(beat)

Wait...

Russ rummages around for a PEN, and some SCRAP PAPER to write on. Back into the phone:

RUSS (CONT'D)

Okay...

Russ writes something down.

RUSS (CONT'D)

I'll call you when I know.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: 3

Russ hangs up the phone. And then he sits. He just sits.

4 EXT. MODESTO - NIGHT (DAY ONE) 4

As a means of transition WE SEE EVENING EXTERIOR SHOTS OF THE CITY OF MODESTO. We get a sense of the size of the city, of its modesty relative to its major urban neighbors. OVER THE SHOTS WE HEAR AUDIO FROM NEWS RADIO BROADCASTS. For the most part what we hear is rather innocuous: traffic, weather, a bit of news. It all underscores the rather regular nature of the city.

5 INT. GUTIÉRREZ HOME - NIGHT (DAY ONE) 5

WITH THE RADIO NOW PLAYING AS SOURCE, we come in on **JENNY GUTIÉRREZ**, a girl about 17 years old. She sits on the family couch with her boyfriend **CARLOS** who is about 17 or 18 as well. Carlos is dressed in baggies, a hoodie. The guy isn't necessarily a straight up thug, but he's also - by appearance - not exactly the guy daddy wants his little girl home alone with. Though, Jenny isn't exactly alone. As she sits on the couch making out with Carlos - in a very dry "Kids"-like fashion - her brother **TONY** is in the adjoining kitchen fixing something to eat.

There comes the unmistakable sound of KEYS IN A LOCK. Jenny and Carlos straighten up, Jenny more than Carlos who seems to care only vaguely about propriety.

A moment later **ALONZO GUTIÉRREZ** enters. Alonzo is in his early forties. He is the very definition of a middle-class dad. In some ways just another version of Russ.

The moment Alonzo spots Carlos with Jenny his displeasure becomes evident. Jenny tries to stay casual as Tony, in the kitchen, remains a witness.

JENNY

Hi, papi.

Alonzo gives a dry look to Carlos.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Me and Carlos were doing homework.

ALONZO

You're done? You're done, then he can go.

To Jenny, like he really doesn't care one way or the other:

(CONTINUED)

5

CONTINUED:

5

CARLOS

See ya at school, *aiite*?

Alonzo keeps his eye on Carlos long after he's out the door.

JENNY

Why you have to be rude?

ALONZO

You're not supposed to have people over during the week.

JENNY

We were doing homework.

ALONZO

You were doing homework, where are your books?

JENNY

We finished.

ALONZO

No you didn't finish. Don't tell me that. Go get cleaned up. And if you can't follow the rules, then you don't need to go to that party, or whatever you were supposed to this weekend.

Jenny lightly utters an expletive.

ALONZO (CONT'D)

Go get cleaned up.

Jenny heads off. Alonzo moves into the kitchen and turns his attention to Tony.

TONY

Papi.

ALONZO

How was your day?

*

TONY

Good.

Tony moves to the table, sits to eat.

ALONZO

You know that boy from school?

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2)

5

TONY

Not really.

ALONZO

Does he get in trouble a lot?

TONY

I don't know him.

ALONZO

What was Jenny doing with him?

TONY

Homework. And then you came in.

(beat)

That's it.

*
*
*

Tony says the previous without giving his father eye contact. Alonzo doesn't comment, nor does he give the impression of taking Tony at his word.

6 INT. AIRPORT - MORNING (DAY TWO)

6

We are in a concourse, just beyond a jetway door. The door is opened by a GROUND CREW member. PASSENGERS begin exiting from the jetway into the concourse. Among them is Russ. As Russ travels, he's met by **DETECTIVE CHUCK PALMER**, a white man in his mid-forties.

PALMER

Mr. Skokie? Chuck Palmer.

7 INT. MODESTO COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE - MORNING (DAY TWO) 7

Russ is escorted down a hallway by Palmer. They arrive to the window of a room, the shade drawn from the inside.

PALMER

Mr. Skokie, someone inside the room is going to pull back the blind. You're going to see a table with a body on it. I need you to tell me if the body you see is your son. You let me know when you're ready.

Russ goes a moment without saying anything.

PALMER (CONT'D)

Mr. Skokie...?

RUSS

...Okay...

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

Palmer picks up a PHONE ON THE WALL, presses a button, and waits just a beat.

PALMER

Go ahead.

THE BLIND IS LIFTED. WE CANNOT SEE INTO THE ROOM. We see all we need in Russ's expression as the emotion drains from him. With a high degree of detachment from the moment:

RUSS

That's Matt. That's him.

Palmer gives a signal. THE SHADE IS LOWERED.

PALMER

Let's go sit down where we can--

RUSS

Can I...is there a restroom here?

8 INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER (DAY TWO)

8

WE MAKE A HARD CUT TO Russ sitting on a rubbish bin at the end of a row of sinks. Russ lets his emotions flow. There's no more painful sight than a father who's lost his child.

9 EXT. MODESTO COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE - LATER (DAY TWO)

9

Russ sits with Palmer who walks Russ through the situation.

PALMER

We took a call from one of your son's neighbors. Officers responded to your son's home where they found two victims.

*

Russ just then realizes:

RUSS

Gwen? Gwen's dead?

PALMER

Gwen's at the hospital. She's in critical condition. I have to be honest, Mr. Skokie, it's not real hopeful. We're still investigating what happened, but we haven't been able to locate a wallet, credit cards, ID for your son at the scene. It's possible the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

9

CONTINUED:

9

PALMER (CONT'D)

motivation was robbery, but we're not ruling anything out. Mr. Skokie, I can't go into specifics, but your son's wife; there are indications she was sexually assaulted.

RUSS

...Christ... Aw, Christ...

PALMER

We have some leads we're following. We have a very strong description of a vehicle of interest that was in the vicinity of the shooting. The driver we're looking for is a young, Hispanic male.

RUSS

Can I see Gwen? Is Gwen going to be alright?

PALMER

She's in critical condition, Mr. Skokie. I honestly don't know right now. But we want to catch the person who did this. And if you can help us in any way... Did your son ever tell you about anyone that he was having problems with, anyone who might--

RUSS

No. Matt... I don't--

PALMER

When was the last time you talked to him, Mr. Skokie?

RUSS

Sunday morning. We talk every... That's when it happened, isn't it? Sunday?

(beat)

Have you called his mother yet?

PALMER

No, sir. We had your number. We contacted you for a positive ID. Would you like to call his mother?

That's a question Russ can't answer.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: (2)

9

PALMER (CONT'D)
Would you like to call her, Mr.
Skokie?

10 INT. RADIO SHACK-TYPE STORE - DAY (DAY TWO)

10

We see **HECTOR TONTZ**, a young Hispanic guy in his late twenties. He's got the tats, the baggies... He's got the look of a guy who, if he's not banging, he's for sure into the culture.

Hector's out buying some small electronics. Headphones, Ear buds, iPhone case... He takes the items to the check out counter where he's serviced by a DERRICK who is clearly not working for much other than the sake of working.

DERRICK
That's it for you?

HECTOR
Yeah.

DERRICK
These are sick, man. Trying to get me a pair of these. It's gonna be two-thirty-five, thirty-five.

Hector hands over a credit card for Derrick to swipe. There's just a moment before the receipt is printed. Derrick puts it before Hector to sign, which Hector does. Derrick gives perfunctory look to the signature, then hands the card back to Hector.

DERRICK (CONT'D)
All right, Mr. Skokie. Enjoy those, man.

Hector takes his items and heads off.

11 EXT. HOTEL - EVENING (DAY TWO)

11

We see Russ waiting outside of the hotel as a cab pulls up. From the cab steps **BARB HANLON**, **RUSS**'s ex-wife. While the CABBIE pulls Barb's luggage from the trunk, Russ and Barb stand opposite each other. Wordless. Barb seemingly resolute - though regarding what we can't tell. Russ seems unsure of how to greet her. Finally, Russ goes to Barb, takes her in arms and holds her. Not very tightly. It's a rather formal hug. Barb puts ONE HAND to Russ's back. She most assuredly does not fully embrace him. If anything she is just one, cool step removed from completely rejecting him.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

RUSS (V.O.)

I couldn't hardly recognize him.
The detective said the gun was
probably right in front of his face
when he was...

12 INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - EVENING (DAY TWO)

12

Russ and Barb sit over coffee as Russ relates the
circumstances. Throughout, Barb remains to-the-point.

BARB

What are the police doing?

RUSS

They have...a description of a car.

BARB

When was Matt Killed? Sunday? All
they have is a description of a
car? It's Tuesday, and that's all
they have?

RUSS

And they said...they think it might
be a Hispanic kid.

BARB

Some illegal?

RUSS

I... Just Hispanic.

BARB

God.

(beat)

Why did they call you?

RUSS

They think maybe Gwen was raped.

BARB

I don't understand why they called
you.

RUSS

...I'm his father...

BARB

I don't understand why they called
you *first*.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

RUSS

They just...they found my number
and they called me.

BARB

What about Mark?

RUSS

I wanted to talk to you before I--

BARB

You haven't called Mark? Oh, my
God, Russ.

RUSS

I thought we should call him
together.

BARB

I'll call him.

RUSS

He's my son, too.

BARB

I - will - call - him.

RUSS

Barb, we need to be a family. For
both our boys, right now, we need
to be a family.

BARB

I need to talk to the police. I
need to know why they're not doing
anything.

*

13 EXT. MODESTO - NIGHT (DAY TWO)

13

We again see shots of the city of Modesto. Different from
the more pastoral shots we previously saw, THESE ARE MORE
"URBAN." MUCH ROUGHER. SIMULTANEOUSLY, WE AGAIN HEAR TALK
RADIO NEWS REPORTS. They focus on rising crime in the city
and the link to drug trafficking and addiction.

14 EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT (DAY TWO)

14

WITH THE PREVIOUS AUDIO STILL PLAYING THROUGH, we arrive to a
"Twitter" party. The joint very much has an "urban" vibe to

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

it. An authentic vibe. This isn't the kind of place where people come to get table service. It's **BROTHERS** checking out **SISTERS**, smoking some blunts and rollin' up on each other. In this space there is a couple who very much stand out from the others. **CARTER NIX**, a black guy in his mid-twenties, and his girl **AUBRY TAYLOR** who clocks in at right about 20 years old and is very much a white girl.

Aubry and Carter are very much into each other as they roll, get lit.

As Aubry gets up and heads into the structure to go to the bathroom.

15 INT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER (DAY TWO)

15

Now inside the structure, Aubry presses her way through a mass of people to get to a bathroom. As she does, she catches some serious eye from other patrons. Serious, serious eye from a COUPLE OF BLACK GIRLS who clock Aubry.

16 INT. HOUSE/BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER (DAY TWO)

16

Aubry is looking in the mirror. Hard to tell if she's looking at what little make up she's got on, or is just lost in her own gaze. She only has a moment to trip on herself. The black girls snake into the space. One stand's next to the door operating as something of a "look out." The other girl gets right up in Aubry's grill. Aubry doesn't bolt, or try to get away. She stands her ground.

*

LEAH

What's up? You carrying?

Gripping at the wash basin:

AUBRY

No.

LEAH

Bitch, I am not playing. Don't bring your Barbie doll ass in here, and lie to me.

Aubry can read plainly in the eyes of the girls they are not playing around. Equally, we should be able to see in Aubry's eyes that she knows she's about to become a victim. But rather than give herself over to fear:

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

AUBRY

Know what? Fuck off!

Real quick Aubry takes a swing for Leah.

And with that it's on. The girls lay a VICIOUS, VICIOUS BEAT DOWN ON AUBRY. They go at her with their fists and their feet. They tear flesh and spill blood, ALL THE WHILE HURLING SLURS ABOUT AUBRY BEING A "WHITE BITCH" A "SKANK, TRYING TO GET OFF ON A BROTHER." They literally RIP OFF HER POCKETS to get at the sad little bit of drugs she's carrying. IT'S PLAYED OUT AS A VERY ROUGH SCENE.

17 INT. HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS (DAY TWO)

17

Carter, hazed, perks up enough just as he sees the GIRLS BUSTING FROM THE BATHROOM. He can tell by the way they're hustling that the shit isn't right. CARTER MOVES FOR THE BATHROOM, pushes his way inside and finds Aubry bleeding on the floor. He grabs her up, starts cradling her as blood flows from her nose and a gash around her eye.

Carter does everything he can to collect Aubry and get her away from the scene. He calls for help, BUT THE RELENTLESS BEAT OF THE MUSIC DROWNS OUT HIS VOICE.

*
*
*

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

18 EXT. MODESTO - MORNING (DAY THREE) 18

WE AGAIN SEE EXTERIOR SHOTS OF MODESTO, AND WE AGAIN HEAR NEWS RADIO. Among what we hear, we get snippets of STRAIGHT REPORTING on a shooting that occurred, what appears to have been a home invasion robbery that has left one dead and one injured.

19 INT. APARTMENT - MORNING (DAY THREE) 19

It's the kind of joint built way too close to a freeway off ramp. The kind of place where those who are just one step removed from actually being homeless would find themselves.

Despite the averageness of it all, there is taped to a wall SEVERAL MAGAZINE ADS which have as a running theme of happy and emotionally engaged couples. The majority of the couples are of mixed race.

Despite the rawness of the environment, we come in on a very tender moment. IN A JUMBLE OF CUTS, WE SEE: Aubry's in the bathtub, obviously in a very bad way. Carter is washing her, washing the blood from her face as best he can using a PLASTIC CUP FROM A TACO BELL TAKE OUT DRINK TO POUR WATER OVER HER. He puts BAND-AIDS on her cuts which are wholly inappropriate for her wounds. But, he's trying, right? This scene is short, and PURPOSEFULLY WORDLESS. It is meant to be experiential as we observe a moment of unexpected tenderness, affection and the surprisingly caring nature that Carter has for his girl.

WE PRE-LAP THE SOUNDS OF AN ARGUMENT.

20 INT. APARTMENT - MORNING (DAY THREE) 20

WE MAKE A HARD CUT TO Carter searching feverishly through his and Aubry's meager belongings as Aubry sits on the floor. Having made a hard turn from the previous scene, both he and Aubry are crashing badly, but the scene is less about one or the other in desperate need of a hit. It's more about the typical confusing bullshit that goes on between two people in a relationship predicated on the constant battle to determine who is the bigger idiot. There is no right or wrong between them. Just a whole lot of nonsense. The two literally talk past each other.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

AUBRY
 Look in my bag. There's a
 hit in my bag! I know it's
 in there. You took it!
 Don't steal from me!

CARTER
 There's nothing in your bag.
 There's nothing. Been
 feeding you that crap all
 day. There's nothing left.

CARTER (CONT'D)
 Why you let those bitches jump you?
 Huh? Now we've got nothing. Why
 you let them jump you?

AUBRY
 Why'd you let them jump me? Why'd
you let them do it?

That hits a hard pause for Carter.

AUBRY (CONT'D)
 Why'd you let them put me on the
 floor like that? That wasn't me.
 I was never going to let that
 happen again, was never going to be
 somebody's...

Aubry's ire rises, so does her blood pressure. The cut along
 her brow once sealed, now reopens and trickles of red begin
 to make their way down the side of her face.

CARTER
 ...Shit...

21 INT. CARTER AND AUBRY'S PLACE - MOMENTS LATER (DAY THREE) 21

It is just moments on from the previous scene. Carter, again
 demonstrating great tenderness for his girl, again cleans and
 attaches fresh band aids to the wound.

As Carter fixes up Aubry, Aubry makes a quiet, determined,
 but unfortunately somewhat delusional statement:

AUBRY
 I'm gonna do better, 'k? I'm gonna
 start helping out more. I'm gonna
 get us paid.

22 EXT. ALONZO'S GARAGE - LATE MORNING (DAY THREE)

22

It's a street lined with independent auto repair and auto
 body and consignment auto sale lots. Among them is Alonzo's
 garage. Among a small group of EMPLOYEES is Tony who works
 on a car; a burnt orange CROWN VIC.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

At the moment Tony is turning over the engine. It runs, but there's a distinct "gurgling" sound coming from the motor.

Also on the lot are A COUPLE OF GUYS unloading some parts from a truck. One of the two guys who's doing most of the physical work is sporting more than a few tats. *

To Tony:

ALONZO

Turn it off. Turn it off.

Tony does as instructed, turning off the engine.

ALONZO (CONT'D)

Tomorrow, I need you to take this out, blow out the soot. Okay?

TONY

Okay.

Tony works his way around to saying:

TONY (CONT'D)

You should let Jenny go to her party this weekend.

ALONZO

Your sister wants to go to parties, she can follow rules.

TONY

You always freak out about everything.

Remaining fairly light, but still lecturing his son:

ALONZO

I freak out? I walk in the door, she's sitting on the couch with some guy... And don't tell me they were doing homework. I know you don't believe it, I know you don't, but I used to be a teenager, okay? I know how you all think.

One of his WORKERS calls to Alonzo to come sign for the delivery.

WORKER

Alonzo...

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (2)

22

ALONZO

One day you're going to have a daughter, and trust me, you're going to be the same way.

TONY

No, 'cause when I have kids I'm not going to freak out all the time about everything.

As Alonzo looks over paperwork with the guy handling the delivery - MIGUEL - he eyes the tattooed worker.

ALONZO

Tell your boss, next time he sends parts, don't send them with "chunts."

MIGUEL

What?

ALONZO

I don't want those gang tattoos around.

MIGUEL

That's not no gang tat.

ALONZO

I don't want that around my business.

*

Alonzo hands back the paperwork. As Miguel heads away:

MIGUEL

Estás como una perra blanca.

ALONZO

Tell him that, or tell him I'll take my business somewhere else.

All the preceding was not lost under Tony's watchful eye.

23 EXT. BRUNO'S JOINT - AFTERNOON (DAY THREE)

23

There are a couple of guys - JONAS among them - who are clocking outside of Bruno's joint - as Hector approaches with his bag of swag.

24 INT. BRUNO'S JOINT - AFTERNOON (DAY THREE)

24

Not much of a joint. A shitty apartment. We've got BRUNO, a roughneck at a table, measuring out weed into baggies while TV PLAYS IN THE BG. Bruno's for real, but at the same time he's one of those dudes who's such a badass he really doesn't have to act like a badass 'cause he knows nobody's going to fuck with him. Another guy, JONAS, steps into the room.

JONAS

Es Hector. ¿Quieres hablar con él?

Bruno gives a shrug as if to say "Whatever." Hector enters. He sits at the table. Sets out his merchandise "purchased" from the store. Bruno looks it over, gives a disapproving shake of his head.

BRUNO

Tu no eres nada grande. ¿No estas cansado de ser chiquitito?

HECTOR

Yo vivo bien.

BRUNO

Like a bitch. This something I'm gonna use? Huh?

He picks up a jeweled, sparkley and girly iPhone case, holds it to his ear like he's using the phone:

BRUNO (CONT'D)

Hey, what's up? It's me; I'm a bitch. Who's this?

Tossing aside the case:

BRUNO (CONT'D)

Cuando quieres hacer dinero real, huh? I'll hook you up with some opportunities.

HECTOR

...Opportunities...

BRUNO

Yeah, Bracero. What the hell you sneak across the border for if you ain't gonna be somebody?

HECTOR

Be like you? Living in a rat-hole rolling other people's weed. Buy
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

HECTOR (CONT'D)

some stolen crap 'cause you're too
lazy to steal yourself.

Bruno slows his work. For the first time he gives a cool and truly threatening stare to Hector. Friend or not, clearly Hector has said too much. For a beat it's just the TV filling a nasty quiet. Then, making his point very clearly:

BRUNO

This is *my* weed. This is *my* joint.
I own my shit. You better watch
your mouth, or I'll own your ass.
Fifty for the headphones. Want
cash or weed?

HECTOR

Money.

Bruno very easily peels off some cash and tosses it on the table in front of Hector. Bruno tosses the phone at him:

BRUNO

Perra, take your phone!

25 INT. HOTEL/HALLWAY - NIGHT (DAY THREE)

25

We see a solitary HOUSEKEEPER running a VACUUM CLEANER over stretches of the hallway.

26 INT. HOTEL/GUEST ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS (DAY THREE)

26

With the SOUND OF THE VACUUM CLEANER bleeding through the wall, Barb is on the phone with MARK, their other son. WE DO NOT SEE MARK. WE ONLY HEAR HIM IN VOICE OVER. Moment by moment we can feel the emotion rising in both mother and son.

BARB

I haven't seen the body yet. I
don't want to see it. I'm not
going to remember him like that.

MARK (V.O.)

Remember him how you have to.

BARB

I don't want to be one of
those...sit and look through scrap
books crying. Now is when Matt
needs me. I have always been there
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

BARB (CONT'D)
for you two when you needed me. *

MARK (V.O.)
How's dad taking it?

BARB
And the police are doing *nothing*.

MARK (V.O.)
What's "nothing?"

BARB
Russ says they're looking for a Mexican.

MARK (V.O.)
How's dad?

BARB
He hasn't fallen apart yet, if that's what you mean. He hasn't run off yet. The police called him first. I know he loves that.

MARK (V.O.)
Well...

BARB
I just...really need you here. I need you to get here, Mark.

MARK (V.O.)
I have to talk to my commanding officer, get a leave worked out... I'll fly back as soon as I can.

BARB
I need somebody else here.

27 EXT. ALONZO'S GARAGE - NIGHT (DAY THREE)

27

Tony's back at his father's garage, alone. He sits on a chair at the front of the shop, checking his cell phone.

MARK (V.O.)
God.... I can't... Aah, Matt...

BARB (V.O.)
I know.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

MARK (V.O.)

Made it through the whole war.
Nothing. Not a scratch.

BARB (V.O.)

I know, baby. I know. Just,
please, get here soon as you can.

MARK (V.O.)

I will. I love you, mom.

*

Shortly we see Hector walking toward Tony. Hector hands Tony cash, and in exchange Tony hands car keys to Hector. Nothing said between the two. Clearly what's going on is routine. Hector crosses to the Crown Vic, and drives off.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

28 INT. HOSPITAL DAY/EXAMINING ROOM - MORNING (DAY FOUR) 28

We come in tight on a HANDS quickly shoving a series of MRI images onto a LIGHTBOX. As the action takes place WE HEAR:

SURGEON (V.O.)

Gwen has suffered a penetrating injury from a bullet to the head. We found a single entrance wound in the left posterior aspect of her skull.

29 INT. HOSPITAL/LOBBY - MORNING (DAY FOUR) 29

We have Russ, Barb, Tom and Eve assembled together. **TOM** and **EVE** being Gwen's parents. They are white, and roughly the same ages as Barb and Russ. The two look emotionally shattered as they accept hugs from Russ and Barb. As this happens, we hear in voice over:

SURGEON (V.O.)

The bullet entered her occipital lobe. The CT scan revealed a skull fracture and large intracerebral hematoma. She underwent emergent craniotomy with wound debridement and clot evacuation.

30 INT. HOSPITAL/RECOVERY - MORNING (DAY FOUR) 30

We see **GWEN SKOKIE** in a critical care recovery bed. It is not a pretty sight. She has a bandaged, but clearly traumatic wound to the head. All manner of tubes run from her body to life-sustaining machines.

Tom and Eve are in the room visiting with Gwen, if one can call it "visiting." Russ and Barb are near, but they stand just a bit off giving Gwen's family the close proximity to their daughter. WE CONTINUE TO HEAR:

SURGEON (V.O.)

During her surgery we were unable to extract the bullet or parts of her shattered skull. Those foreign bodies remain a concern, but we were able to stabilize your daughter.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: 30

We see Eve reach out, give a halting and tentative TOUCH TO HER DAUGHTER'S FINGERS.

31 INT. HOSPITAL/EXAMINING ROOM - MORNING (DAY FOUR) 31

Tom and Eve sit in the room as a SURGEON explains Gwen's condition. He indicates to some X-RAYS which are of Gwen's skull and her corresponding wound.

SURGEON

At this time we have no way of accurately predicting her level of recovery, and there is still a chance she will not survive.

(beat)

Are you alright to continue?

TOM

...Yes...

SURGEON

Okay. We need to discuss your daughter having been sexually assaulted.

32 INT. HOSPITAL/LOWER LOBBY - MORNING (DAY FOUR) 32

Among those who sit and eat - both VISITORS and HOSPITAL STAFF - we have Eve and Tom with Russ and Barb. Tom and Eve are cathartically speaking to their emotional trauma.

EVE

I didn't think I could do it. I didn't think I could take seeing her like that. I just prayed, God give me strength to walk in that room. That's your baby girl, and she needs you. Her hand was so warm. There's life in her.

EVE (CONT'D)

I know there's still life in her.

TOM

She's gonna get through.
She's gonna survive.

This hangs for a moment.

BARB

There's a reporter who would like to do an interview with us...

Barb takes a CARD from her purse, hands it to Tom.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

BARB (CONT'D)

I think we should do it. I think it's very important for people to know who our children were, and what happened to them. And we have to keep what happened present. That's just...that's a reality. And if we don't keep talking about it, in a week or two weeks people will have moved on.

Tom considers the card he's holding.

TOM

We wouldn't feel comfortable doing that right now.

BARB

All you have to do is talk about her. Eve, just say what you said about holding her hand.

TOM

I think when the...when the time is appropriate we might make a statement, or something. An interview...that's just not something for us right now.

Tom lays the card down on the table as if to signify the finality of his decision. There's an awkward beat of quiet between the two families.

33 INT. CDSS OFFICE - MORNING (DAY FOUR)

33

We are in an office of the California Department of Social Services. Think DMV, only more depressing. There are a WHOLE LOT OF PEOPLE at the end of their respective ropes looking for whatever help they can find.

We see Aubry at a window talking to CDSS OFFICER, a white woman.

CDSS OFFICER

Did you serve in the military during the last 18 months?

AUBRY

No.

(CONTINUED)

CDSS OFFICER

Did you work for an agency of the federal government during the last 18 months?

AUBRY

No.

CDSS OFFICER

Are you currently present in California?

AUBRY

What the hell? Am I what?

CDSS OFFICER

Ma'am...

AUBRY

Am I currently present in...

Aubry gives a WTF look around. It's returned by a very dry look from the officer. Aubry, relenting:

AUBRY (CONT'D)

Yes.

CDSS OFFICER

Have you filed an Unemployment Insurance Claim in California in the last 12 months?

AUBRY

No.

The officer hands over a DE 1101I claim form to Aubry. It's 12 pages long and, as one might expect, rather legalistic and intimidating.

CDSS OFFICER

Fill this out and bring it back.

AUBRY

How long before I would get money?

CDSS OFFICER

You'd get your first check six to eight weeks after your claim is processed. If the claim is approved.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: (2)

33

Aubry stares at the paperwork, begins to dip into a haze. She looks back to Carter. Noting Aubry's cuts and bruises, then following her gaze across the space to carter:

CDSS OFFICER (CONT'D)

Do you need me to call the police?

AUBRY

Are they going to bring some money,
'cause I need some money.

*

CDSS OFFICER

First thing you've gotta do, you've
got to fill that out.

Aubry takes the form BACK ACROSS THE SPACE to where Carter is waiting. She sits next to him, starts to go through the paperwork. Moment by moment the task begins to overwhelm her to the point even the concept of potentially getting "free money" isn't enough to keep her going. Aubry sets aside the paperwork. She and Carter make their way from the office.

34 EXT. MODESTO - MORNING (DAY FOUR)

34

As previously, in TRANSITION, we see images of the city of Modesto.

35 EXT. COURTYARD - DAY (YEARS PREVIOUS)

35

We are in a nearly idyllic courtyard on a sunny day. We see a BRIDE and GROOM; a young, handsome man. A girl who is "next door" pretty. Together they are seemingly the personification of Holy matrimony. WE "PULL OUT" FROM THE IMAGE and see a CRAWL and a BUG ON THE SCREEN. We realize the image is HOME VIDEO that is being played during a news broadcast. We hear a NEWS READER describing "new details" in the SUNDAY NIGHT SHOOTING. The names of the vics are IDed, and there's mention of Gwen being in critical condition.

36 EXT. STREET - MORNING (DAY FOUR)

36

THE AUDIO OF THE NEWS CARRIES US OVER INTO THE SCENE. We come in on Tony in the Crown Vic pulled over at the side of the road. A bit of anxiety creeps into him as TWO OFFICERS approach the car. One takes up a strategic position as the other approaches the driver's side of the car. Tony lowers the window.

PATROL OFFICER

Is this your car?

(CONTINUED)

36

CONTINUED:

36

TONY

It's my dad's. His garage's--

PATROL OFFICER

Can I see your license and registration?

As he hands over his license:

TONY

I don't have registration. My dad just wanted me to drive it some, blow out the--

PATROL OFFICER

This your current address?

TONY

Yes, sir.

PATROL OFFICER

Just stay in your car, please.

Tony sits in the car as the officer returns to his. Tony endures that fairly interminable wait as the officer runs Tony's info. As Tony waits, ANOTHER PATROL CAR PULLS UP and does so with urgency. TWO MORE OFFICERS get out, and basically stand watch over the waiting Tony. Now Tony starts to edge up.

The first officer heads back to the car.

PATROL OFFICER (CONT'D)

Tony Gutiérrez?

TONY

...Yes...

*

PATROL OFFICER

We have some other officers who'd like to talk with you. Can we get you to go talk to them?

TONY

Go where?

PATROL OFFICER

They'd like you to come to the PD and speak with them.

TONY

What for?

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (2)

36

PATROL OFFICER

They just have some questions they want to ask you. You can leave your car right here. This officer will take care of it. Can you come with us?

Tony hesitates, not sure what he should say.

37 INT. MODESTO PD/OFFICE SPACE - LATE MORNING (DAY FOUR) 37

The lightness of the space belies the seriousness of the situation. It's something of a misdirect by the police. Tony sits alone in the space looking very scared.

Palmer enters carrying some paperwork. Palmer is very neutral in his approach. He's more of a salesman than a policeman. Another Detective's with Palmer; SANDERSON.

PALMER

Tony? I'm Chuck Palmer with the Modesto Police Department. This is John Sanderson. He works with me.

Tony kinda mutters a "hi."

PALMER (CONT'D)

Now, Tony, I want you to know your father's already been contacted and he's on his way down here. While we're waiting, I was hoping to ask you a few questions. There are a couple of things we were hoping you could help us with.

TONY

What things?

PALMER

(lightly insistent:)

Is it okay if we ask you a few questions?

TONY

...Yes, sir...

*

PALMER

Okay. Great.

Palmer starts to look through the papers he has.

(CONTINUED)

PALMER (CONT'D)

So... The car you were driving when the police pulled over; that's in possession of your father's garage?

TONY

Me and my dad, we work on it. It's like a hobby.

PALMER

But it's not currently registered for street legal use.

TONY

I just had to blow out the soot. I know I'm not supposed to be on the road with it.

*

PALMER

Are you and your father--

TONY (CONT'D)

Am I going to get in trouble?

PALMER (CONT'D)

Besides the two of you, does anyone else have access to the vehicle?

TONY

No.

PALMER

Nobody else over the last few days?

TONY

No.

PALMER

What about Sunday night?

TONY

Nobody drove it Sunday.

PALMER

What did you do Sunday night?

TONY

I was at home.

PALMER

Did you watch football? Was it a good game? Did you watch it with your family?

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (2)

37

TONY

It's just my dad and my sister.
That's it.

PALMER

You watched the game with them?

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (3)

37

TONY

I was at the garage, so I didn't really watch the game.

PALMER

You were at the garage from when to when?

TONY

I don't know for sure.

PALMER

About. From when to when?

TONY

Is my dad coming?

Turning to Sanderson.

PALMER

Do you want to go check on...

Sanderson exits.

PALMER (CONT'D)

As soon as your dad gets here, he's going to let us know. Why don't we keep talking, okay? You're being really helpful.

TONY

Okay.

PALMER

You're in school, right? What kind of friends do you have in school? Who do you hang out with?

TONY

Am I going to be in trouble?

38 INT. BAR - DAY (DAY FOUR)

38

It is a dump. It is a dive of a place where people go to get fucked up in the middle of the day. To that end, Aubry and Carter enter. They've got enough cash to buy ONE BEER that they share between them. They take up a booth in back of the joint where they may wallow in a little booze and a lot of darkness.

As they do, Aubry notices a GUY looking at her, and doing so with straight lasciviousness. Aubry takes Carter's hand, gives it a good squeeze as if to communicate to him that

(CONTINUED)

38

CONTINUED:

38

everything's going to be all right. She gets up and goes to the guy, sits... They kinda talk a little. After that, taking the guy's hand, Aubry leads him for the bathroom.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (2)

38

Carter watches knowing full well what's about to go down. He can't do it. He can't let Aubry do it.

Carter rushes to Aubry, pulls her away from the guy and hustles her out of the club.

39 EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS (DAY FOUR)

39

Carter is pulling Aubry out onto the street. He's not angry with her, but he is protective.

CARTER
Not gonna do it.

AUBRY
It doesn't matter.

CARTER
Uh-uh.

AUBRY
I don't care. He was gonna pay.

CARTER
You think I'm gonna let you do that? Huh? That what you think? Nah. Not gonna happen like that. You ain't doing that.

The reality of just how bad things are start to wash over Aubry. She starts to emotionally collapse on herself. Carter, showing some supreme tenderness, holds onto his girl.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Whatever I gotta do, I'll handle it. Not letting you do that.

We should get the sense, messed up as these two are, what they do have is each other.

The moment is broken up as the bartender - NELSON, a white guy - comes storming out of the bar looking every inch like he means business:

NELSON
Hey! Get off her!

AUBRY
He's not doing anything.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

NELSON

Get the hell away from her, or I'm calling the cops!

AUBRY

He's not doing anything asshole. Go the hell back inside!

NELSON

Don't come back, don't bring your pimp back.

*

40 INT. BALLROOM - DAY (DAY FOUR)

40

In the largest space available in Barb's hotel - which at the moment also turns out to be the most private as well as neutral - Russ and Barb sit down with GRELL, a local reporter. As they talk, Barb speaks very much from the heart. Whatever coldness she may have previously possessed is not in evidence as she recollects her lost child.

BARB

It's not real to me yet. My phone rings, I expect it to be Matt. It's people giving me condolences, but I can't take them. He's not...I don't feel like Matt's gone, so I don't know how to take other people's grief.

GRELL

Mr. Skokie, when you got the call from the police, what was your first reaction?

RUSS

They weren't even sure it was him. I had to fly out--

GRELL

You live in Arizona?

RUSS

In Chandler. That's just outside of Phoenix. But they didn't know it was Matt, so I was just... I was hopeful. Whole trip over, it's just a mistake. That's what I kept telling myself; that it was just...

Russ gets too choked up to go on.

(CONTINUED)

GRELL

The things I was able to find out about your son, he seemed like a good young man. He was in the military. Is that right?

BARB

He enlisted right after 9/11. He wanted to do his service. He was in Iraq, and he...he did what was right for people. Married a beautiful young girl. Married his sweetheart.

GRELL

She was a beauty queen, right? She was literally--

BARB

Gwen was Miss...she was the runner up for Miss Modesto six or seven years ago. After Matt's service, right when they moved out here.

Giving a laugh over the stereotypical nature of the phrase:

BARB (CONT'D)

"Perfect couple." Matt loved Gwen so much. That's why she entered the pageant. He would tell her "you're the most beautiful girl in Modesto." He signed her up just to prove it. Gwen, she went along with it. Came in second. He would tease her about that. "Well, if you were the *most* beautiful you wouldn't have married me." He cared, and he was happy. Nevermind he didn't have it easy growing up.

GRELL

(tactfully)

You and your husband are separated?

BARB

(bluntly)

We're divorced. We did not have a lot of money when the boys were young. We didn't have any money. It was hard for me to provide. But Matt, his brother... Matt's brother, Mark, he's in the military too. He's serving right now. They

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: (2)

40

BARB (CONT'D)

both grew up knowing they had to be responsible. And for something like this to happen to Matt...

GRELL

What are the police telling you?

BARB

Nothing. And they're not doing much of anything. That's, what... Off the record, I guess. I know the one person they're looking for is an illegal, or something. It just sort of...it figures, right? My son goes off to another country to fight. Then he comes home to America and gets killed by somebody from another country.

*

GRELL

You said you were telling me that "off the record." "Off the record" means you don't want it published. Did you...did you want to tell me that on background?

BARB

What's the difference?

GRELL

On background I won't quote you, but I can print the information.

Barb gives just a moment's consideration.

BARB

Do that one; background.

41 I/E. CAR - DAY (DAY FOUR)

41

Russ drives as Barb rides. Russ is a bit agitated.

RUSS

You don't have to say things like that.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

Barb just gives a look to Russ which begs explanation.

RUSS (CONT'D)

You didn't have to tell him we're divorced, that you didn't have any money when the boys were young...

BARB

Did I say something that wasn't true?

RUSS

It's not what you say, Barb. It's how you say things. It's how you--

BARB

I really don't care.

RUSS

You say it...you say it with happiness.

BARB

I was proud that I was able to take care of my children--

RUSS

Our children. They're--

BARB

That I was able to take care of them when you couldn't. When you *wouldn't*. I'm trying to get people to find out who killed our son. And you sit there and you...you worry about you?

*

As though so disgusted she can no longer tolerate being in the same vehicle:

*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (2)

41

BARB (CONT'D)

Stop the car!

No matter Russ is still driving, BARB OPENS THE PASSENGER DOOR as if to immediately step from the car. Russ stops hard. Barb is up and out of the car, and keeps moving.

Russ gets out of the car and follows:

RUSS

Barb.... Goddamn it, Barb, don't you walk away from me. Twenty years ago; I'm not that same guy.

*
*
*

BARB

I'm not here for you.

*
*

RUSS

I admit I had problems...

*
*

BARB

Say what you did. Say what you did. You gambled away everything we had, then you went and stole so you could gamble some more.

RUSS

It was an illness.

BARB

You were off in Vegas or Reno, throwing away our money.

CHUCK

It was an addiction. I got myself help. I'm...I'm recovered.

BARB (CONT'D)

We had nothing. Raising those boys, by myself in public housing. Do you have any idea what it was like? A white mother and her two white kids. Do you know what they did to us? Day after day, do you know how those people treated my boys?

RUSS

Barb--

BARB

I am trying to do what I can for Matt, and your feelings are hurt over what I say to a reporter?

*
*

RUSS

Barb--

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (3)

41

BARB

Stop saying my name! Now is easy
to be a father, Russ. It's easy
when all you have to do is stand in
front of people and be sad.

RUSS

You think this is easy for me? You
have no idea how hard I worked
(MORE)

*

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (4)

41

RUSS (CONT'D)

to earn back the love, the...the
trust of our boys. Our boys.

*

Russ lets that land, then heading to the car:

RUSS (CONT'D)

Get in. Or walk if you want.
Honest to God, I don't care.

*

*

Riding Russ's unexpected, assertive nature we GO TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

42 INT. MODESTO PD/INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY (DAY FOUR) 42

Tony and Palmer remain in place - Tony looking tired, worn out - as Alonzo is walked in by Sanderson. Alonzo is exceptionally deferential to Palmer.

PALMER

Mr. Gutiérrez? Detective Chuck Palmer. Have a seat.

Alonzo does as invited.

PALMER (CONT'D)

Mr. Gutiérrez, we appreciate you coming in. Now, your son is not under arrest, okay? Tony agreed to come in and speak with us. And he agreed to answer questions outside of your presence. Okay?

ALONZO

Yes.

PALMER

There're a few more questions we have. Could we get you to help answer a few more questions for us?

ALONZO

Yes, sir.

Sliding a photo over to Alonzo.

PALMER

Now, your son was stopped driving this car. Is that car in the possession of your garage?

ALONZO

I tell him to drive that around the block if he has to, but he knows he's not supposed to be on the street with that.

PALMER

And do you recall personally operating that vehicle outside of your property this past Sunday?

(CONTINUED)

42

CONTINUED:

42

ALONZO

Sunday? No.

PALMER

Would anyone else have had access
to the car? *

ALONZO

We have the keys. Nobody else.

PALMER

Mr. Gutiérrez, we have a
description and partial license
plate, matching this car, given to
us by a witness on Sunday night.

ALONZO

Witness to what?

PALMER

There was an incident that we're
trying to clear up, and we have
witnesses who can put your car in
the vicinity. Your son says that
he wasn't at home on Sunday night.
Do you recall if Tony was home with
you?

ALONZO

No.

PALMER

No, you don't remember, or--

ALONZO

He wasn't at home.

PALMER

Mr. Gutiérrez, do you know where
your son was?

ALONZO

He told me he was working on the
car.

PALMER

Tony, were you working on the car,
or were you out driving it around?

Tony says nothing. Turning to Alonzo:

(CONTINUED)

PALMER (CONT'D)

Tony was telling us it's just you at home, is that right? My wife and I, we separated. I know how hard it is--

*

ALONZO

It was different. We didn't... Roberta had...

Alonzo can't bring himself to speak it, but puts his right hand near his chest. His point is rather self-evident.

PALMER

I'm very sorry about that. And I know it's not easy; single parent and all. You want to be there for your kids, want to do right by them. And, Tony, I know you want to do right, too. Mr. Gutiérrez, we need your son to tell us what's going on. If he tells us what happened, if he tells us the truth, then that's that. If he lies to us, that's going to be a problem.

*

TONY

Papi, yo no he hecho nada malo!

ALONZO

Nuh-uh. Not like that. You have something to say, say it. Are you lying? Are you lying to them?

TONY

...No...

ALONZO

That wasn't our car?

TONY

I don't know.

ALONZO

What about everything he's saying? That wasn't our car?

TONY

No hice nada!

(CONTINUED)

ALONZO

Stop it! Stop lying! You want to go to jail? Huh? You want to be another Cholo in jail?

TONY

I want to go home.

ALONZO

Tell the truth. Tell them what happened! What happened?

TONY

I don't know.

ALONZO

What did you do!?

TONY

Nothing! You never *let us* do anything. Never!

ALONZO

You blame me? You're going to blame me? You're sitting in here like a thug and that's my fault?

TONY (CONT'D)

I just wanted to make money for myself. I wanted to do something for myself.

ALONZO (CONT'D)

Was that our car?

TONY

...Yes...

The truth does nothing to soften Alonzo's edge. To Palmer, partly accusing his own son while he simultaneously excuses himself:

ALONZO

We always told him, we told him and his sister: you stay away from gangs, you stay away from drugs... Me and Roberta, we came to the country the right way. Okay? And we tell our children to do things the right way.

PALMER

Yes, sir.

ALONZO

So, he'll tell you whatever. Whatever he has to, he'll tell you.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: (4)

42

BLACK

The blackness is lessened as Eve pulls back a curtain to reveal that we are:

43 INT. APARTMENT - DAY (DAY FOUR)

43

We have Tom being shown around an apartment by TARA - who is the apartment manager - as Eve moves around the space clearly in her own thoughts.

TARA

The views are really nice. A lot of light. Paint the walls any color you want. We have furnished and unfurnished apartments. With every unit, you get access to our fitness center, swimming pool, tennis courts...

TOM

I don't think we'd use any of that.

TARA

Okay. Well, they're there. Now, we've got a couple of move-in specials we can offer. How long we're you looking to rent for?

TOM

We don't know ...Our daughter's in the hospital.

*

TARA

Oh. Oh, my god. I'm so sorry.

TOM

No, I just meant...

Politely, but resolute:

EVE

We're here as long as we need to be here.

*

*

44 EXT. LOT - DAY (DAY FOUR)

44

It's a deserted lot overgrown with weeds. Carter moves through it with both determination and anxiety. He's constantly looking over his shoulder. Carter finds a spot in the ground and starts digging through the dirt with his hands. In a short bit he pulls out something wrapped in some

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: 44

plastic bags. He unwraps the bags revealing a gun, which he pockets before moving on.

45 INT. MODESTO PD/INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY (DAY FOUR) 45

As Alonzo watches, Palmer continues interviewing Tony.

TONY

Adam was the first one.

PALMER

Adam is...?

TONY

He's just this kid at school. I'm showing him the car one day. He starts going off: "That's so bad, that's bad. I wanna take a ride in that." I tell him no, you can't drive it. Then he pulls out twenty dollars. Twenty dollars, just to take a ride. I'm like, shoot. Take it. Week later, couple of weeks later, he comes around. He's got this girl. Another twenty dollars just to take her out riding. So...it just got to be a thing. He had friends and stuff. They want to go joyriding... I started renting it.

PALMER

Let's talk about Sunday night.

TONY

One time Adam he comes to me, he knows this guy, looking for a car he can have for the night. And he's gonna front fifty dollars. Fifty dollars? I'm cool with that.

ALONZO

What do you need money for? What do you need you don't have?

PALMER

I want to know about this other guy...

TONY

He shows up, he's for real. Know what I'm saying?

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

PALMER

He was in a gang?

TONY

He was scary, that's all I know. He gave me the money, he took the car. I thought he was going to steal it. But he came back. After that, he started texting me sometimes. Looking for a car. Fifty dollars every time.

PALMER

You have the phone you were texting him from?

TONY

I erased them.

PALMER

I still need the phone.

Tony takes out the phone, puts it on the table. Palmer hands it off to Sanderson who takes the phone from the room as Alonzo watches, wounded to his core.

46 EXT. HOUSE - DAY (DAY FOUR)

46

A rundown and slightly isolated joint. Carter moves through the yard arriving to the door of the house. STEVIE, a stringy white guy in his late thirties cautiously opens the door.

STEVIE

What?

CARTER

It's Carter. You don't remember? We hung out a few times. Sean brought us around. Me and my girl Aubry? Remember her? Remember you were digging on her?

STEVIE

Yeah. Where she at?

CARTER

She wants to come party some. Later. She's not feeling it right now. Needs a little helping out.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

46

STEVIE

Nah, I got nothing.

CARTER

I don't want nothing for nothing.
Just gonna buy a little now, then
Aubry wants to come back and get
serious.

Stevie remains wary, but the invite to party with Aubry seems to be just enticing enough for him to let down his guard.

47 INT. STEVIE'S PLACE - MOMENTS LATER (DAY FOUR)

47

WE MAKE A JUMP CUT inside of the joint. It's a mess. The guy lives like a pack rat. LOTS OF OLD MAGAZINES LAYING AROUND. Clearly the shut-in type.

STEVIE

You want something to eat? I got
Chinese in the kitchen.

*

CARTER

Just want to do business.

STEVIE

Yeah. Yeah. Hang out for a sec.

As Stevie's off in another room, Carter has himself a quick look around. He leafs through a MAGAZINE, one of many strewn about. Something in it catches his eye. He stares at it for a bit, TEARS OUT THE PAGE

Stevie comes from the other room carrying a small bit of SOMETHING IN BAGGIES.

STEVIE (CONT'D)

This is all I got right now.

CARTER

That's cool.

STEVIE

And Aubry's gonna come back later?

CARTER

You know; if she's feeling it.

STEVIE

It's gonna be forty for this.

*

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

CARTER

I'ma bring Aubry back. She wants to party with you.

STEVIE

Yeah. Yeah, man. Still forty.

Carter makes no move to retrieve any money. His lack of action speaks to how things are going to go. Stevie can tell he's about to get ripped off and displays his disgust with the inevitability.

STEVIE (CONT'D)

Damn, man... Seriously?

CARTER

Just give it to me.

STEVIE

You asshole! You gonna do this over forty dollars? Asshole!

Carter doesn't say anything. He reaches into his coat pocket. Maybe he's getting money... Instead he takes out the GUN. Not a particularly big one, but a gun is a gun.

Knowing what's coming next, Stevie starts to bolt. He doesn't get real far before Carter snatches him back. The two struggle for a moment, awkward and inelegantly. In other words, quite realistically. Carter gets the upper hand, then starts to BEAT STEVIE INTO SUBMISSION WITH THE GUN. Carter deals each blow to the rhythm of:

CARTER

White bitch! Why you gotta be a stupid, white bitch!? Gimmie the shit! Give it to me!

The moment playing very real and very brutally. Several blows later, Stevie is left on the floor bloody and moaning. Carter grabs up the drugs and hustles himself out of the space.

48 INT. APARTMENT - DAY (DAY FOUR)

48

IN A SERIES OF CUTS WE SEE CARTER PREPPING A COUPLE OF HITS OF METH. Carter shotguns a hit with Aubry. It's such very, very potent stuff. Both Carter and Aubry sink like Sid and Nancy and ride it out. As they do, Carter takes from his pocket the PAGE HE TOOK FROM THE MAGAZINE. It's an ad pitching some kind of clothing. Think Gap. It's a shot of a good looking mixed race couple arm in arm, striding down a

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

street. Such a good looking pair, and so happy. It's a little hint of aspiration that Carter lays out for him and Aubry to trip on.

OVER THIS WE HEAR AUDIO. IT'S A TALK RADIO HOST WHO'S DELIVERING TO HIS AUDIENCE MORE OPINION THAN NEWS. HE SPEAKS SPECIFICALLY ABOUT THE MURDERS, ABOUT HOW A WAR VET AND MISS MODESTO COULD BE KILLED IN THEIR OWN HOME, AND WHAT THAT MEANS FOR THE REST OF "US."

49 INT. STORE - DAY (DAY FOUR)

49

WITH THE AUDIO NOW PLAYING AS SOURCE, we see Hector attempting a purchase with Matt's credit card. He stands at the counter with a couple of boxes of shoes as both he and the clerk - JAY - just kinda stands around for a minute. Then, with a bit of forced casualness:

JAY

The computer should be back up in a minute. You mind, uh, just waiting for a little bit more?

The two wait...wait... A STORE MANAGER eases into the background over Hector's shoulder. Hector can "feel" him and the feeling isn't good. Fronting some casualness of his own:

HECTOR

I'ma go get my phone real quick.

Hector starts to make his way back through the store and OUT INTO THE PARKING LOT.

50 EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS (DAY FOUR)

50

As Hector walks on, behind him, we can make out Jay and the Manager flagging down AN ARRIVING POLICE CAR and pointing toward Hector. The OFFICERS get out of their car, start yelling for Hector to stop where he is. At that point, Hector starts running at a serious clip. Before he can get very far, ONE OF THE OFFICERS FIRES OFF SEVERAL SHOTS. One hits Hector in the thigh. THIS IS A VERY PAINFUL, SERIOUS WOUND THAT DROPS HECTOR TO THE PAVEMENT. He rolls, screams for help. Despite his wailing, the Officers who first arrive to him are clearly far more interested in the act of arresting Hector - "Stay down! Stay down, asshole!" - than they are in aiding him. As far as they care, they have a potential killer on their hands.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

51 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY (DAY FOUR) 51

IN A SERIES OF CUTS WE SEE HECTOR'S LEG BEING OPERATED ON. WE SHOULD SEE FOOTAGE FROM A REAL SURGICAL PROCEDURE. TRUE TO LIFE AND JUST *SLIGHTLY* GRAPHIC.

52 INT. HOSPITAL/RECOVERY - EARLY EVENING (DAY FOUR) 52

Hector is in bed, recovering from surgery. He's light headed, but getting his bearings. The door opens. Palmer enters. No matter Hector is wounded, Palmer is looking for some answers. As he sits:

PALMER

Hector. You hear me?

Hector gives a nod.

PALMER (CONT'D)

Let me tell you where we are:
We've got a witness who can put a car on the scene of a homicide.
We've got somebody who can put you in that car. We've got ID and credit card belonging to the Vic in your possession.

HECTOR

I didn't kill nobody.

PALMER

Who did?

HECTOR

Why they gotta shoot me?

PALMER

Who did?

Hector says nothing.

PALMER (CONT'D)

We're pulling your jacket. What are we going to find? Robbery? Assault?

HECTOR

I don't do nothing violent.

(CONTINUED)

PALMER

Then there's no problem. What's this car thing about?

HECTOR

Just needed wheels. Needed to be mobile.

PALMER

For what? Some hustling? Deal some drugs?

Hector doesn't respond. Palmer asks again:

PALMER (CONT'D)

It's on somebody else, or it's on you.

HECTOR

There's this black dude. Him and his girl; a couple methheads. He's always looking to buy. He comes to me Sunday. I get him some, he starts rolling. He wants more, but he's broke. I tell him I can't do nothing for him. Then he starts getting hyped up, talking about how he's owed. How he needs to settle up a score; this white guy that owes him. So he tells me he can get me paid after.

PALMER

After what?

HECTOR

After shit that don't matter to me, so I don't know nothing about it. All I gotta do is run him over to Slauson. Why they gotta shoot me!

PALMER

What address?

HECTOR

I'm not going nowhere I don't know with a methhead. I take him over to this mini-mall and hang out. He goes off.

(MORE)

*

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (2)

52

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Dude comes back; cash, cards... I don't know how he got it. I didn't ask.

PALMER

You know where to find this guy?

Hector considers his options. Fact is he doesn't have any.

HECTOR

You know why you shoot me? 'Cause you don't give a shit about me.

(beat)

Yeah, I know where's at.

53 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT (DAY FOUR)

53

We come back in on Carter and Aubry chilling, coming down off their high.

Through his haze, Carter hears something at the door. Before he can even react, TAC COPS COME BUSTING INTO THE JOINT - guns at the ready - and arrest both Carter and Aubry in rather spectacular fashion.

54 INT. MODESTO PD/BREAK AREA - NIGHT (DAY FOUR)

54

Tony's sitting with his father. Not a word spoken between them. Tony is looking worn to the core. His ordeal has now been stretching on for hours. Alonzo has still got much bitterness that he's hanging onto.

ALONZO

Why did you erase those texts? The one's on your phone. You knew you were doing something wrong? You knew you were--

TONY

I always erase my texts. I know you go through my phone.

ALONZO

I'm your father. I want to know what's going on in your life.

TONY

You don't trust me.

ALONZO

No. No, no...

(CONTINUED)

54

CONTINUED:

54

TONY

Me, Jenny; you don't ever
trust us. Always checking up
on us...

ALONZO (CONT'D)

You don't talk to me. You
never tell me anything--

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: (2)

54

Both assertions are broken off as Palmer enters with Sanderson.

PALMER

Tony, can you stand up for me?

TONY

Why?

PALMER

Stand up, put your hands behind your back.

Tony looks to his father, who says nothing. Tony does as instructed.

PALMER (CONT'D)

You're under arrest for murder.

Real quickly abject fear takes hold of Tony. Alonzo is stunned, at that moment just realizing the magnitude of what his son is facing. As Sanderson begins to cuff Tony:

ALONZO

...Murder? Wait...

TONY

I didn't kill anybody.

ALONZO

No, no!

PALMER

Sir, you need to sit down.

ALONZO

He, he took the car out, that's all. You never said "murder!" You never said that!

TONY

Papi... Papi!

The cops are not listening. Sanderson just starts hauling Tony away.

ALONZO

(pleading to the cops)
He took the car. That's it.
That's all he did. Tony... Tony!!

55 EXT. MODESTO - MORNING (DAY FIVE)

55

OVER SHOTS OF THE CITY WE HEAR AUDIO FROM TALK RADIO. Where previously we just heard bits of straight reportage, now we're starting to hear OPINION and SPECULATION. The meme that is beginning to creep into the conversation revolves around the reported race of the accused vs. that the victims in what's being called the "PERFECT COUPLE MURDER." A PUNDIT is riffing with his SIDEKICK:

PUNDIT (V.O.)

You know, when a black gets killed by somebody white, first thing they do, they call it a hate crime.

SIDEKICK (V.O.)

Always. Every time.

PUNDIT (V.O.)

If it's a white person who gets killed by a minority: oh, too bad. That's just what happens.

SIDEKICK (V.O.)

Never call it what it is.

56 INT. HOSPITAL/ER - MORNING (DAY FIVE)

56

Aubry is sitting on an examining table. A handcuff runs from her wrist to a handle on the table. An ATTENDING NURSE dresses the lacerations on Aubry's face.

As the nurse works, Aubry is questioned by QUINN, a detective.

QUINN

You can talk to us. You can help us.

*

Aubry says nothing. Re: her cuts and bruises:

QUINN (CONT'D)

Did he do that to you?

Aubry continues to maintain her silence.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

56

QUINN (CONT'D)

You don't have to protect him. Not any more. You need to start thinking about yourself, not him.

Aubry gives a bitter smile, and a spiteful shake of her head. This man doesn't even begin to get it. *

57 INT. MODESTO PD - MORNING (DAY FIVE)

57

Palmer is sitting down with Russ and Barb.

PALMER

We have four suspects in custody; two who facilitated, one who we believe is the shooter. We're going to be transferring him over to jail for booking.

RUSS

Did he say why he did it?

PALMER

He won't talk.

RUSS

But he did it?

PALMER

A gun was recovered. We're confident we can make the case.

BARB

I read where, with the appeals and everything, it takes, maybe, twelve years to execute somebody. At least. Is it true?

PALMER

We've got a long way to go before we even get there.

BARB

I want to see him. I want to see...him.

Palmer isn't sure what to say. But by this point he knows that Barb isn't the kind of woman who is easily denied. As Palmer considers his response WE HEAR:

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

57

TOM (V.O.)

After this we're done? After this
you quit calling us all the time?

58 EXT. HOSPITAL/PARKING - MORNING (DAY FIVE)

58

Tom is just outside of their apartment. Grell stands across from him. Tom's posture says he's warding Grell off.

GRELL

I've called you twice, sir.

TOM

I tell you something, and you'll
leave us alone?

GRELL

People just want to know how you
feel.

Tom gives thought to the best course of action. Measuring his words carefully:

TOM

My wife and I; we're thankful the
police've made arrests.

59 INT. MODESTO PD/HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER (DAY FIVE)

59

Palmer - ALONG WITH A UNIFORMED OFFICER - positions Barb in the hallway. He's got her in an innocuous spot waiting for Carter to be escorted for a waiting DOC van.

TOM (V.O.)

That's not going to change what
happened to our daughter and Matt.
But we feel...we feel better
knowing they got the people who did
it.

Prior to Carter's departure, Sanderson - who stands with another detective, CHRIS THOMPSON, A WOMAN OF COLOR - signals to Palmer. Palmer crosses over, and Thompson presents Palmer with a file which Palmer begins to look through. His expression highlights the curious nature of what he's reading. Palmer and Thompson move away leaving Barb with the Uniformed Officer.

There is a bit of a commotion, and then it happens: UNIFORMED OFFICERS escort Carter from a LOCKED ROOM through the hallway and right passed Barb. Strangers to each other,

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: 59

Carter and Barb exchange just a passing look. Though Carter has no idea who Barb is, it's clear from the expression in her eyes that Barb wishes Carter nothing but badness.

60 EXT. MODESTO PD - CONTINUOUS (DAY FIVE) 60

Outside the station, Carter is hustled into the SHERIFF'S VAN. Seated alone, shackled, the doors of the van are closed DROPPING CARTER INTO DARKNESS. It is both a punctuation, and a statement on where Carter is headed from here. It is all the badness Barb wished on him.

TOM (V.O.)

Everything else, that's for the court and juries, and that's right where things need to be.

61 EXT. HOSPITAL/PARKING - CONTINUOUS (DAY FIVE) 61

Tom concludes with Grell.

TOM

The only other thing I ask is that people pray for our daughter, and respect our privacy.

(beat)

We're done.

Making the point, Tom turns for his apartment. Grell, calling out one last question.

GRELL

The suspects were black and Hispanic. Does that--

TOM

We're done.

62 INT. MODESTO PD/ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS (DAY FIVE) 62

We have Russ sitting down with Palmer and with Thompson.

PALMER

Mr. Skokie, this is Chris Thompson; one of our investigators. She has a couple of things she'd like to ask you. Is that alright?

RUSS

Okay.

(CONTINUED)

THOMPSON

Mr. Skokie, you had a good relationship with your son. You talked to him regularly?

RUSS

We talked every Sunday. At least.

THOMPSON

Did he ever discuss aspects of his lifestyle with you? Or, did you ever get the sense that he wasn't always forthcoming; that he was hiding things from you?

RUSS

Matt never hid anything from me. We talked all the time, we talked about... We talked about his job, I know he was happy with Gwen.

THOMPSON

Did you ever get the sense that he was involved with drugs?

RUSS

Matt? No, no, no. No. I would know if he were on drugs.

THOMPSON

Mr. Skokie--

RUSS

That's just not... I would know. If my son was having problems I would know about it.

PALMER

We don't know that your son had personal problems with drugs. What we've found--

THOMPSON

In our search of his property we've recovered a large quantity of crystallized methamphetamine and cannabis. The amount and the way it is packaged and the way it was securely hidden indicate that it was not all for his own use. Do you understand what I'm saying?

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED: (2)

62

Russ can't even begin to process what he's being told. He says again, insists:

RUSS

We were close. I would know.
Something like that... Matt would
have told me.

THOMPSON

Mr. Skokie, would your son have
told you if he were a drug dealer?

The expression on Russ's face says it all: The man has just been gutted.

END ACT FIVE