

**BODY CAM**

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BODY CAM

FADE IN:

EXT./INT. POLICE CAR (DRIVING) - NIGHT

OFFICER KEVIN GANNING, white, early 30's, at the wheel. Cruising some dark, crappy, run-down industrial area in south Los Angeles. Boarded-up windows, graffiti, empty lots.

Ganning turns a corner and something catches his eye.

GANNING'S POV: COMING UP BEHIND A DARK GREEN CHEVY SEDAN. Old, dirty, battered. Moving slowly, weaving a bit.

No license plate.

Ganning unhooks the radio under the dash.

GANNING

Dispatch, this is Eighteen Lincoln Four, over.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

Go ahead Eighteen Lincoln Four.

Ganning checks a street sign.

GANNING

Can you show me Code Six on a traffic stop at East Eleventh and South Dakota. Vehicle's a dark green Chevy four-door with no plates. One visible occupant, possibly an African-American female.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

Roger, Eighteen Lincoln Four. Code Six at East Eleventh and South Dakota, over.

Ganning racks the radio and flips on the flashing overheads. Follows up with a quick *WHOOOP-WHOOOP* from the siren, keeps his eyes locked on the Chevy.

He waits for the reaction.

A moment's delay -- and then the telltale glow from the Chevy's brake lights.

The car pulls over.

Ganning pulls up right behind it. Sets his brake, waits a moment before he turns off his engine.

EXT. STREET - INDUSTRIAL AREA - CONTINUOUS

Ganning opens his car door, steps out. Takes another moment to breathe the air, get a feel for the place. Utterly deserted. The only sounds are the distant hum of the city and the *tick-tick-tick* of the cooling engines. Dust swirling in the bright beam of Ganning's floodlight, bathing the sedan up ahead in its cold white glare.

Ganning adjusts his belt. Pulls his hat down.

Turns on the body camera fixed to his shirt.

Starts walking.

BODY CAM POV: APPROACHING THE SEDAN FROM BEHIND. Drawing up on the left side. THE DRIVER'S HANDS, perched on the wheel:

Female. African-American. Long fingernails. Red nail polish.

Then the driver herself: TANEESHA BRICE, mid-40's. Thin but not skeletal. Pretty. Staring straight ahead.

ON GANNING

He checks the back seat, then the passenger seat.

No one else inside the car.

Ganning stops outside the driver's side door. Taneesha just keeps staring ahead.

GANNING

Ma'am? Can you roll your window down, please?

Taneesha takes a deep breath.

GANNING (CONT'D)

Ma'am?

Taneesha nods to herself, rolls the window down.

GANNING (CONT'D)

How are we doing tonight?

Taneesha raises her eyes, forces herself to meet Ganning's gaze.

TANEESHA

Fine.

She's trying to be cool but she looks scared shitless.

GANNING

Do you know why I pulled you over?

Taneesha's eyes flick back toward the rear of the car, then snap right back to Ganning.

TANEESHA

Um ... Not really ...

GANNING

Well you don't have any license plates.

Taneesha closes her eyes and curses herself.

TANEESHA

That's my bad. I should have checked --

GANNING

And you were weaving a bit back there, have you been drinking at all?

TANEESHA

No, sir.

Ganning thinks it over.

GANNING

Let's see your driver's license and registration, okay?

TANEESHA

Yeah, I, um ... Yeah, right here ...

She reaches for the latch on the glove box. Ganning notes how badly her hands are shaking -- Jesus, the woman can't even open the latch!

And while Taneesha's turned away, Ganning leans through the window to take a look inside.

GANNING'S POV: SCANNING THE INTERIOR

*Uh oh...* DARK SPATTERS on the driver's seat.

On Taneesha's pants, too.

Looks like blood.

Ganning pulls back.

GANNING

Ma'am. Could you step out of the car, please?

Taneesha freezes with her hand still on the latch of the glove box. She doesn't look back.

TANEESHA  
(anguished)  
Officer. Please.

GANNING  
Ma'am. You need to step out of the car. Right now.

Taneesha sits straight up in her car seat, staring straight ahead.

TANEESHA  
You don't need to do this. You don't.  
Just take your hand off the gun.

Ganning frowns, looks down.

GANNING'S POV: HIS HAND ON HIS GUN

But how did the woman know?

TANEESHA (CONT'D)  
Please. Just let me go. Just let me --

Taneesha suddenly looks up into her REAR-VIEW MIRROR -- as if she just spotted something in the back seat.

TANEESHA (CONT'D)  
No! Don't!

Ganning whips his gun out.

GANNING  
Who are you talking to? Who is it?  
Who's back there?

Ganning takes another look but the back seat's still empty.

He steps back from the car, brings up the gun and aims it right at Taneesha's head.

GANNING (CONT'D)  
Ma'am. Out of the car.

He cocks the gun.

GANNING (CONT'D)  
Now.

SMASH CUT:

A FRENZIED PITBULL on a chain, SNAPPING AND SNARLING.

OUT TO REVEAL:

EXT. HOUSE - LOW-INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Weed-strewn front lawn. The dog's reacting to ANOTHER POLICE CAR cruising by out in the street.

ANGLE ON A GROUP OF GANGBANGERS hanging out on the front porch. Tank tops and tattoos. Turning to watch the car with suspicious glares.

EXT./INT. RENEE'S POLICE CAR (DRIVING) - CONTINUOUS

OFFICER RENEE LOMITO-SMITH, 36, Latina, trim, athletic, at the wheel. Notes the dog and the hostile faces on the porch with weary detachment. Been there, done that. A battle-hardened veteran.

Her partner DANNY HOLLEDGE, 29, white, boyish but still street-wise and savvy, doesn't even offer a glance. Just keeps gazing out his side of the car.

DANNY

So how long did it take?

RENEE

How long did what take?

DANNY

You know.

RENEE

No Danny, I don't. Which is why I'm asking.

DANNY

Oh c'mon, Renee!

Danny rolls his eyes, exasperated. Like he doesn't want to say it but Renee's forcing his hand.

DANNY (CONT'D)

To snap back. After you got pregnant.  
How long did it take?

Renee throws him the side eye.

RENEE

Are you fucking kidding me?

DANNY

Oh c'mon!

(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)

Don't act all offended and shit. I mean you got big and fat like everyone else, right? But look at you now. You're like this smokin' fine Latina bitch from some white man's fantasy.

(quickly)

Not *my* fantasy but, you know, somebody's.

They both laugh.

RENEE

Jesus, you're such a pig.

DANNY

Well I mean I'm worried, you know? Michelle's freakin' massive. Like gargantuan. I love her and all but I can't be rollin' with Battlestar Galactica the rest of my life.

RENEE

This is what you're worried about? Not the baby's health or if it's a girl or a boy so you know what color to paint the room? God, I hope you're not dumb enough to say this shit to her face.

DANNY

Oh hell no. Orca would kick my ass.

Renee laughs again, shakes her head.

She spots something in the road up ahead.

RENEE

Hey. Take a look.

RENEE'S POV: A LITTLE BOY wandering around. Right in the middle of the street up ahead. Maybe four or five years old, all by himself.

Renee trades a look with Danny.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Renee pulls over, gets out with Danny. Both of them glance around before approaching the boy.

RENEE

Hey there.

The boy looks back, startled. Dirty and unkempt. Snot running from his nose.

RENEE (CONT'D)

It's okay, sweetie, all right? Don't be scared ... We just want to make sure you're okay. You live around here?

No response. Renee hunkers down next to him.

RENEE (CONT'D)

What are you doing out here? Can you tell us where you live?

No reply. Renee reaches out to touch his arm.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Do you want to come with us --

WOMAN'S VOICE

Get away from him!

Renee and Danny both look back to see a RATTY-LOOKING WOMAN come charging out from a driveway half a block back. Wild-eyed and disheveled, flimsy dress, no bra. Calling out to the other houses.

RATTY-LOOKING WOMAN

Help! Help me, somebody help, they're trying to take him, my baby, they're trying to take him!

RENEE

Whoa easy, Ma'am, no -- we're just trying to make sure he's okay --

But Renee looks around, sees OTHER PEOPLE coming out of their houses to watch. Ratty-Looking Woman steps up and yanks the boy away from her.

RATTY-LOOKING WOMAN

Oh yeah, sure! You just came down here to do us all a big fuckin' favor, right?

RENEE

Ma'am, I've got a son myself --

RATTY-LOOKING WOMAN

Go fuck yourselves ya fuckin' Nazis!

Ratty-Looking Woman heads back with the boy. Renee and Danny just stare after her.

There's a CRACKLE from the CAR RADIO.

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
Dispatch to Eighteen Adam Seven,  
over.

Renee glances around at all the other people watching, some of them recording with their cell phones.

RENEE  
C'mon.

Renee starts back for the car. Danny follows.

DANNY  
Yo, don't we need to check under  
that rock a little more?

RENEE  
Write it up, give it to DCS.

She nods at all the cell phones.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
They're just waiting for us to push  
it here, Danny.

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
Dispatch to Eighteen Adam Seven,  
come in, over.

They get back in the car. Renee grabs the radio.

RENEE  
Eighteen Adam Seven, go ahead.

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
Roger, Eighteen Adam Seven. Code  
Two, East Eleventh and South Dakota.  
Eighteen Lincoln Four, failure to  
respond, went Code Six thirty minutes  
ago.

Danny looks at Renee.

DANNY  
Lincoln Four. That's Ganning.

EXT./INT. RENEE'S POLICE CAR (DRIVING) - MINUTES LATER

Cruising along through that crappy industrial area. The same boarded-up windows and graffiti, the same empty lots.

Renee turns a corner.

RENEE

Oh shit.

RENEE'S POV: UP AHEAD, GANNING'S CRUISER. Not in the same position in which we saw it last, where Ganning had parked it on the side of the road. Now it's out in the middle of the street and angled diagonally across the lane.

It's not in the same condition, either. The front tires have been blown out, the hood crushed in, the windshield shattered.

No sign of the Chevy sedan.

DANNY

What the fuck.

Renee flips on the overheads. Flickering red and blue light fills the street.

RENEE

Call it in.

Danny unhooks the radio.

DANNY

Dispatch, this is Eighteen Adam Seven,  
that's a Code Six-Adam at East  
Eleventh and South Dakota.

EXT. STREET - INDUSTRIAL AREA - CONTINUOUS

Renee pulls up by Ganning's car, stops and gets out. Danny steps out on the other side -- and stops in his tracks, looking down.

He shoots Renee a look of horror.

RENEE

What?

Danny just looks back down again.

Renee sprints around the front of their car, stops as she comes around Danny's side. *Feeling* it before she sees it.

Against her shoe-bottoms.

She looks down.

*Blood.*

All over the road near Ganning's car.

Renee and Danny trade a look.

INT. RENEE'S POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Danny reaches in, grabs the mic again.

DANNY

Dispatch, this is Eighteen Adam Seven,  
Code Three! I've got a wounded  
officer, there's a lot of blood but  
we don't know where he is yet --

EXT. STREET - INDUSTRIAL AREA - CONTINUOUS

Renee shines her FLASHLIGHT, makes a quick sweep around  
Ganning's cruiser.

MORE BLOOD. All over the street, all over the front of the  
car, all over the big dent in the hood and the shattered  
windshield --

Renee spots something else. Something in the front grill of  
Ganning's car.

She hunkers down to take a closer look.

*Teeth.*

Embedded in the front grill like bullets.

Renee stares in horror, processing what she's looking at --  
and a HAND grabs her shoulder from behind.

Renee spins around with a startled gasp.

It's just Danny.

DANNY

Jesus. What happened here?

Renee takes a deep breath. Glances around. Finally nods  
into Ganning's cruiser.

RENEE

The dash cam.  
(off Danny)  
Let's take a look.

INT. GANNING'S POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Renee drops into the driver's seat. Danny gets in from the  
other side, FLIPS UP THE COMPUTER SCREEN.

A couple of quick keystrokes and a window pops up showing  
the LIVE FEED FROM THE DASH CAM. Looking over Ganning's  
hood through the cracked windshield, facing the side of the  
road. TIME and DATE rolling at the top of the screen.

Danny scrolls back, hits play.

RENEE

Too far.

Fast forward a little --

RENEE (CONT'D)

Right there.

Danny hits play again.

INSERT - MONITOR. Following along behind Taneesha's dark green Chevy as the car pulls over on the side of the road.

RENEE (CONT'D)

(first red flag)

No plates.

OVER-MODULATED AUDIO. We hear Ganning set the brake, open his door. Get out.

After a moment, GANNING APPEARS from the left of the screen, walking up to the driver's side of the sedan.

GANNING (ON MONITOR)

Ma'am? Can you roll your window down, please? ... How are we doing tonight?

From the dash cam POV, the driver remains unseen. Can't hear her, either.

GANNING (ON MONITOR) (CONT'D)

Do you know why I pulled you over? ... Well you don't have any license plates.

ON RENEE AND DANNY

Riveted. Covered in cold sweat. Knowing there's going to be a moment when the whole thing goes terribly wrong ...

GANNING (ON MONITOR) (CONT'D)

And you were weaving a bit back there, have you been drinking at all? ... Let's see your driver's license and registration, okay?

Ganning leans forward to take a look through the window -- then quickly pulls back out.

His hand goes right for his gun.

DANNY

Uh oh. What's he see?

GANNING (ON MONITOR)

Ma'am. Could you step out of the car, please? ... Ma'am. You need to step out of the car. Right now --

TANEESHA'S VOICE (ON MONITOR)

No! Don't!

Renee flinches at the sudden sound of the woman's voice, shouting loud enough to get picked up on the recording.

ON THE MONITOR

Ganning whips out his gun.

GANNING (ON MONITOR)

Who are you talking to? Who is it?  
Who's back there?

ON RENEE AND DANNY

They can't pull their eyes away.

ON THE MONITOR

Ganning takes another look in the back seat, steps back from the car. Aims his gun through the window.

GANNING (ON MONITOR) (CONT'D)

Ma'am. Out of the car.

ON RENEE AND DANNY

Holding their breath ...

ON THE MONITOR

Ganning cocks his gun.

GANNING (ON MONITOR) (CONT'D)

Now.

That's when the door OPENS on the other side of the Chevy.

All by itself.

DANNY

Oh shit.

RENEE

Who just opened that?

On the monitor, Ganning sees the door opening, pulls back even further.

GANNING (ON MONITOR)

Who is that?

(alarmed)

Ma'am, don't move, you hear me?

Keep your hands where I can see them,  
don't move!

He cuts around the back of the Chevy, keeping his distance to minimize the risk of getting jumped from someone on the other side.

Crossing in front of his own car -- in front of the camera --

WHAM!! Something SLAMS Ganning's car backwards. SHAKES the whole dash cam image like something in a snow globe, SHATTERING the windshield, SPINNING the car back off the shoulder and out into the middle of the street.

Renee and Danny practically jump out of their skin.

DANNY

Jesus. What the hell was that?

Can't tell. Because now, on the monitor, we're looking through that SPIDER-WEB of cracked glass and facing off towards the side of the road. And the only part of the Chevy sedan that's still visible is the right corner of the trunk at the left edge of the computer screen.

But we can hear Ganning ... somewhere just out of the camera's view ... COUGHING and GASPING from the impact ...

And then he starts SCREAMING.

Horrible, agonized shrieking -- along with sudden THRASHING SOUNDS. Heavy kicking and pounding.

RENEE

Oh my God. Kevin.

Renee looks out her window.

RENEE'S POV: Nothing but the empty road -- but all those horrific sounds coming from the computer echo whatever terrible violence happened there earlier.

Renee can only imagine, tears in her eyes as she listens to the screams ...

And then the screaming stops. Like someone just pulled the plug on a phone conversation.

Renee turns back to the computer. Nothing but that web of shattered glass on the screen, looking off towards the side of the road ... the time readout rolling silently up at the top ...

And then -- WHAM!

Ganning SLAMS down onto the hood of his car, covered in blood, SCREAMING RIGHT INTO THE CAMERA with HALF HIS FACE RIPPED OFF.

Renee and Danny both jerk back in horror, can barely comprehend what they're looking at --

And then something unseen yanks Ganning back out of sight again.

His scream cuts short.

The next instant, blood sprays all over the windshield.

Renee and Danny just stare at the monitor.

DANNY

What. The Fuck.

Renee can only shake her head.

They hear the sound of the Chevy's engine starting up ... and then they watch the rear corner of the car pulling off out of frame ...

Renee turns to look out her window again. Listening to the sound of the Chevy's engine fading off into silence as she watches the empty street ...

EXT. STREET - INDUSTRIAL AREA - LATER

Barricades, flashing lights, a swarm of COPS and DETECTIVES: a crime scene in full bloom.

Follow a MEDICAL EXAMINER holding something out in front of him. Carrying it with great care, a profound sense of respect:

A BLACK PLASTIC BAG with something in it.

He finds CAPTAIN TRASSUP, black, 50's. Talking to Renee and Danny but their conversation ends when they see the bag.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

The other arm.

(MORE)

MEDICAL EXAMINER (CONT'D)

(off their looks)

We found it halfway across the lot  
back there. Still looking for the  
rest of him.

He drops his gaze, offers a quick nod and then heads off.

Renee exchanges a look with Danny and Trassup.

DANNY

Whoever it was, he had to be a  
monster. Like huge. I mean the way  
Ganning was getting tossed around?  
Like a sock in a dryer.

Renee nods.

RENEE

Gotta find his body cam.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP

Yeah, that's probably our best shot  
to make an I.D. right now. But first  
we have to find the rest of the body,  
don't we?

RENEE

And then what the hell hit his car  
like that?

CAPTAIN TRASSUP

Well we have to figure another  
vehicle, right? Another driver.  
Which means at least two perps.

Renee shakes her head.

RENEE

It went backwards.

Captain Trassup looks at her. Renee holds up her hands to  
demonstrate.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Ganning's car, it got knocked  
backwards. So if it was another  
car, it would have been coming at  
him head on. We would have seen it  
on the dash cam. Which we didn't.

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL (O.S.)

Yeah, about that.

They look back, find DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL crossing over from Ganning's car. White, 40's, uptight. Think Marcia Clark.

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL (CONT'D)  
You two first on scene, right?

RENEE  
Yeah, that's right.

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL  
Well which one of you two geniuses was the one screwing around with the dash cam?

RENEE  
'Scuse me?

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL  
The files. They're all corrupted.

DANNY  
What??

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL  
Gone. Fried, history.

RENEE  
Wait a minute. Thirty minutes ago that footage was fine, it was playing fine --

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL  
Well I hope you both took copious notes, then.

DANNY  
She didn't touch it, I'm the one --

Renee's not about to let Danny take the fall for this.

RENEE  
He didn't do anything either. We just took a look --

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL  
What for?  
(off Renee's look)  
It's evidence, Officer. What were you screwing around with it for?

Renee bristles, takes a step towards her.

RENEE  
Because we were first on scene.  
(MORE)

RENEE (CONT'D)

When it was still search and rescue,  
"Detective." When we were still  
hoping for the best.

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL

Take a step back, Officer. Take two  
steps.

RENEE

No, you're coming at us with this  
whole up-in-our-face vibe when we  
were just trying to find out what  
the fuck happened here. To a fellow  
officer. Who we both know. Who we  
both happen to give a major shit  
about.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP

Okay, Renee. Easy --

RENEE

So my partner hit two buttons. Rewind  
and play. In case it might help us,  
you know, save that officer's life  
or something.

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL

Well then how about gracing us with  
a description or two? Since you and  
your partner are the only ones who  
saw the damn thing.

Renee looks at Danny. Danny takes a deep breath. That's a  
cue for Renee to take one, too.

In unison, they both exhale.

Renee nods. *Thanks, I needed that.*

She looks back at Detective Hall.

RENEE

Car was a dark green 4-door Chevy.  
No plates and no one ever got out.  
At least not 'til after Ganning's  
car got hit. After that we don't  
know 'cause after that the camera  
was just pointing over there at  
nothing.

DANNY

'Til Ganning landed on the hood.

RENEE  
Yeah. 'Til then.

They all fall silent for a moment. Detective Hall looks at Danny.

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL  
You got anything else to add?

Danny shakes his head.

DANNY  
What about Kathy?

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL  
Who?

CAPTAIN TRASSUP  
The officer's wife.

DANNY  
What do we ... What do we tell her?

RENEE  
I'll do it. I'll tell her.

DANNY  
Tell her what, exactly?

Renee trades a grim look with Danny and Captain Trassup.

RENEE  
I'll think of something.

EXT. RENEES HOUSE - MORNING

L.A. suburbs, middle-class, single story. Renee drives up in a beat-up HATCHBACK, pulls into the garage next to a middle-aged SUV and kills the engine.

She takes a moment to pull herself together.

INT. RENEES KITCHEN - A MOMENT LATER

Renee comes in from the garage. Finds her husband GARY, white, late 30's, finishing his coffee.

GARY  
Hey babe.

Gary kisses her, rinses his cup, puts it in the dishwasher. Renee goes straight to the fridge and pops a beer.

GARY (CONT'D)  
It's 7:30 in the morning.

RENEE  
 For you it's 7:30. For me it's happy  
 hour.

Gary stops to take a good look at her.

GARY  
 (gently)  
 What happened?

Renee takes a swig from the beer.

RENEE  
 Kevin Ganning.

GARY  
 Oh no.

RENEE  
 Yeah.

GARY  
 How?

RENEE  
 We haven't ... We haven't figured  
 that one out yet.

She takes another swig.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
 I just got back from telling Kathy.  
 She wanted to go see him. I had to  
 tell her there wasn't much to see.

In comes CHRISTOPHER, 13, cheerfully oblivious to the mood.

CHRISTOPHER  
 Hey Mom.

Renee puts on a smile.

RENEE  
 Hey sweetie.

CHRISTOPHER  
 Did you tell her?

RENEE  
 Tell me what?

Gary throws a glare at Christopher, shakes his head.

CHRISTOPHER  
 They'rrrrre baaaaack.

RENEE

Who is?

Gary mouths "NO" but Christopher's too excited to notice/care.

CHRISTOPHER

Here's a hint, okay? They got beady little eyes and they like to jump off sinking ships.

RENEE

Oh no.

CHRISTOPHER

Everyone says they like cheese --

RENEE

Okay Christopher, I get it.

CHRISTOPHER

-- but I think the cheese thing is bullshit because they went straight for the Cheerios again.

RENEE

Watch the language --

Christopher reaches into the trash, pulls out a box of Cheerios with a HOLE chewed in the bottom.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Oh shit, are you kidding me?

CHRISTOPHER

And there's turds all over the place.

Renee bristles at Christopher's gleeful tone.

RENEE

Well great, I like the way you think it's all so funny -- especially since you're the one who keeps throwing out the goddamn welcome mat for them!

CHRISTOPHER

Me?

RENEE

How many times do I have to keep telling you? Stop leaving the open bags of chips and the goddamn candy wrappers all over the place!

CHRISTOPHER

I haven't been leaving anything --

RENEE

I found a half-eaten Three Musketeers  
sticking outta your sneaker yesterday!

Christopher falls silent. Gary reaches out to Renee, tries  
to pull things back a bit.

GARY

Okay, honey, come on --

RENEE

No, two days before that it was M&M's  
all over the place and last week it  
was spilled soda all over the counter  
and a bowl of dried-up Spaghettio's  
crammed under his bed and I didn't  
say a thing about it but now here he  
is laughing his head off about the  
whole thing 'cause it's all so damn  
funny!

CHRISTOPHER

Sorry, I forgot about that --

RENEE

About what? The M&M's or the soda?  
Or the Three Musketeers or the  
Spaghettio's?

CHRISTOPHER

I'm sorry, okay? I made a mistake!

RENEE

A mistake? As in one?

But Christopher's already storming out.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Get back here!

She starts after him. Gary cuts her off.

GARY

Okay, whoa. Whoa. You know he's  
got problems with this --

RENEE

No, Gary, don't pull that. "Poor  
Christopher! He's got that condition,  
he can't remember things! He's less  
than." Bullshit! He's only as less  
as we allow him to be!

GARY

I'll pick up some traps on the way home from work, okay? I'll take care of it, I promise.

Renee glares at him, doesn't know whether to scream or cry.

INT. RENEE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tight, sober routine: Renee removes her gun and holster. Puts them in a locker by the bed. Locks them up.

INT. RENEE'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

RAPID-FIRE:

Renee washes her face.

Brushes her teeth.

Flosses.

Finally, she just stares at her own reflection in the mirror. Squeezes her eyes shut, turns her head away, about to break down in tears --

No. She stifles it, glares back at her reflection again. Angry with herself for that moment of weakness.

That's when she spots Gary watching her from the doorway.

GARY

Why don't we go somewhere this weekend? Just to unwind, what do you think?

RENEE

(bitter sarcasm)

You mean some fun place with crowds? Like Disneyland last time?

GARY

You mis-read that whole thing --

RENEE

Those same people, the ones yucking it up with us when we were standing there in line with them, they would have been spitting on me if they saw me in uniform.

Gary stares back at her. His shoulders slump. Defeated.

GARY

Has it gone that far? Us versus them? That's all that's left?

RENEE

You don't get it, Gary. You're not a cop and you don't get it and that's just part of the deal, I knew it when we got married and I'm okay with it. Hell, it's a relief to come home to. But this probably isn't the best morning to be asking me questions like that.

They judge each other for a moment. Gary nods to himself. Checks his watch.

GARY

Yeah, well. Let me get him off to school. I've got that sales meeting tonight but I'll try to get home before you leave again, okay?  
(on second thought)  
You want me to cancel it?

RENEE

No, I'll be okay.

Gary crosses to her, looks her in the eye. Kisses her.

Then he turns for the door.

GARY

(calling)  
Christopher, let's go!

INT. RENEE'S BEDROOM - MID-MORNING

Renee tosses and turns on the bed, traumatized, unable to sleep.

INT. RENEE'S LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Renee flops onto the couch, grabs the remote. Turns on the TV. LOCAL WEATHERMAN.

Renee doesn't pay much attention, gazes off across the room, lost in thought.

SUDDENLY --

A burst of static from the TV. A scrambled white flare of digital snow. The weatherman disappears --

And then Kevin Ganning is walking up towards the dark green Chevy on the side of the road.

It's the footage from Ganning's dash cam.

Renee sits up. What the fuck? Is she hallucinating?

INSERT - TV. Ganning's talking through the driver side window... brings up his gun, backs away ... the door opening on the passenger side...

Renee grabs the remote, clicks to another channel.

A cooking show. Someone whipping up a souffle or something --

*But then there's another burst of white snow and the dash cam footage pops up again.*

Ganning, crossing around behind the sedan.

Renee clicks again.

And again.

But the dash cam footage keeps popping back up.

BASH! Ganning's car gets slammed backwards.

Renee staring ...

WHAM! Ganning slams down onto the hood of his car. Covered in blood, screaming into the camera with half his face ripped off --

Another burst of snow and we're back to regular programming.

Renee keeps staring. Is she losing her mind?

Sudden *thump!*

Renee looks up sharply. Towards the kitchen. She stares at the open doorway ...

And then there's a slight *scraping* sound.

Another *thump*.

Slowly, Renee gets to her feet.

INT. RENEE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Renee enters. Looks around. No more thumping, no more scraping.

But there's a BOX OF CEREAL laying on the counter.

The top's open. Cereal spilling out ...

Renee crosses over to the counter. Reaches for the box --

*Thump!* A RAT drops out from one of the cabinets, lands on the counter by Renee's hand. Renee screams, jumps back. Staring at the rat.

It's dead.

INT. POLICE STATION - MUSTER ROOM - NIGHT

Roll call. COPS assembling before the night shift. Danny sits down next to Renee. She's pissed, won't even look at him. Danny drops his voice.

DANNY

I'll give you the dead rat, okay?  
But the shit with the TV? C'mon,  
Renee. I had a bunch of fucked up  
dreams today, too. Michelle said I  
was talkin' in my sleep. Who wouldn't  
after the shit we saw last night,  
you know?

All around them, other cops are taking their seats. A LOT OF GRIM FACES. ANGER, RESENTMENT. A FEW TEARS.

Up front, SGT. KESPER, black, 40's, heavysset. He steps up to the PODIUM at center stage.

SGT. KESPER

Okay, let's forgo the standard  
bullshit, shall we? We got an empty  
seat in here that wasn't empty last  
night. So first order of business:  
get the scumbag or scumbags who got  
Kevin Ganning. That's the second  
and third order of business, too.

The assembly answers with a couple of nods, a couple of "damn straight's," "fuckin' A's," and "bet your ass."

Sgt. Kesper gestures at Renee and Danny.

SGT. KESPER (CONT'D)

Lomito-Smith and Holledge were first  
on scene. Officers?

Danny defers. Renee composes herself.

RENEE

Not much to go on.

(MORE)

RENEE (CONT'D)

No plates but it was a dark green Chevy four-door and Ganning called in a single visible occupant, possible African-American female.

(she hesitates)

Possibly a second vehicle with some sort of frontal damage, too ... But we're, uh ... We're not too sure if that really adds up.

OFFICER DARIO PENDA looks back from the row in front of Renee. White, mid-30's. Big and muscled.

DARIO PENDA

Any witnesses?

Renee shakes her head.

RENEE

None so far.

DARIO PENDA

Yeah, of course not.

He laughs at the irony, glances at his partner GABE RUSSO. Also white, mid-30's, more slightly built.

DARIO PENDA (CONT'D)

Gabe and I show up last night to save some woman from getting beat to death by her piece of shit boyfriend and two dozen other pieces of shit show up to whip bottles at our heads. But one of us gets torn to fuckin' pieces? Not one. Not one goddamn witness.

GABE RUSSO

Like cockroaches running for the corners.

A lot of grumbled agreements.

SGT. KESPER

Look, I know there's a lot of bitter feeling in here right now. A sense of being seriously unappreciated. But we're gonna get the bad guys. I promise you that. And you're still going out there tonight to protect and to serve. Honor Kevin Ganning by remembering what it's all about. Remember what he gave his life for.

INT. POLICE STATION - SECURITY CONTROL ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Cops filing by out in the hall on the way out to start their shift. Renee pokes her head in.

RENEE

How's it going, Abby?

REVERSE REVEALS OFFICER ABIGAIL RICKETTS, late 40's, heavysset, sitting in front of a dozen SURVEILLANCE MONITORS showing various shots of the station. BULLPEN, HALLWAYS, FRONT ENTRANCE, PARKING LOT.

ABIGAIL

Safe and sound in here, girl. You just watch your ass out there.

Renee manages a nod and a tight smile. Follows after Danny.

INT. RENEE'S POLICE CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Danny drops in behind the wheel, Renee climbs in on the other side. They look at each other.

In unison, they take a deep breath and exhale.

Danny turns the key and off they go.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Cold white light from overhead florescents. Rows of bags, bottles, and cans. A CLERK, male, 60's, tidies up some items on a couple of shelves, then heads back around the counter. He's the only one in the store and the place has that distinctly lonely, depressing late-night feel ...

Until the LITTLE BELL rings over the door.

The Clerk looks up. In walks a HUNCHED FIGURE IN A LONG DARK COAT.

Collar up. Head down.

BIG WIDE-BRIM HAT hiding the face.

The Figure SNATCHES a basket and heads down an aisle. Starts gathering supplies from the pharmacy section. GAUZE, BANDAGES, PEROXIDE.

The Clerk watches closely. He can't even tell if it's a man or a woman buried under that big hat and coat, but whoever it is, he/she seems really NERVOUS, AGITATED ... Grabbing up the items as quickly as possible ...

The Clerk glances down at the HANDGUN he keeps on a lower shelf behind the counter. Just for reassurance ...

That's when the little bell RINGS again.

In stroll TWO CLEAN-CUT GUYS, early 20's, joking with each other and laughing.

The Clerk relaxes.

1ST CLEAN-CUT GUY  
Hey dude, you got any Lotto tickets?

CLERK  
Sure, how many?

The Clean-Cut Guys take a quick look around the store.

POV: No one else in sight.

No sign of the long-coated Figure.

Nothing but aisles of shelves stacked with merchandise.

The Clean-Cut Guys WHIP OUT GUNS of their own.

1ST CLEAN-CUT GUY  
Fuck the Lotto, old man, give us the fuckin' money!

The Clerk STUMBLES back in surprise. His eyes dropping automatically back down behind the counter. To his gun on that shelf --

1ST CLEAN-CUT GUY (CONT'D)  
What're you lookin' at?

CLERK  
Nothing --

1ST CLEAN-CUT GUY  
Keep your fuckin' hands where we can see 'em and get the fuckin' money out!

CLERK  
Okay, okay!

The Clerk throws a glance back towards the pharmacy section -- where he last saw The Figure -- before turning to the register. FROWNS to himself as he opens the drawer, scrambles to get the cash together ...

A SUDDEN CLATTER.

Everyone freezes. Looking back towards the rear of the store ... and a SINGLE CAN comes ROLLING out across the floor at the other end of the center aisle.

Everyone stares at it.

The 2nd Clean-Cut Guy looks up.

2ND CLEAN-CUT GUY'S POV: A CIRCULAR MIRROR installed in the rear corner of the ceiling, A FISHBOWL REFLECTION showing a reverse angle on the store.

Revealing The Figure crouching behind the corner at the other end of the aisle.

The face is buried in shadow under that big hat but it's clear that The Figure is watching them.

The 2nd Clean-Cut Guy starts down the aisle.

2ND CLEAN-CUT GUY  
Yo bitch, what're you lookin' at?  
We can see you too, you know?

No reply.

The 2nd Clean-Cut Guy keeps his gun out in front of him, watching The Figure's reflection in the mirror until he reaches the end of the aisle, then steps around the corner.

Comes face-to-face with The Figure.

2ND CLEAN-CUT GUY (CONT'D)  
I said what're you lookin' at, huh?  
You think this shit's cable TV or  
somethin'?

The Figure looks up, the wide-brim hat tipping back to REVEAL that it's Taneesha. Her eyes wide and frightened, staring at the clean-cut guy's gun pointing right in her face.

TANEESHA  
No, don't! Please! Please, put it  
down --

2ND CLEAN-CUT GUY  
Put it what? Bitch, you crazy? You  
got a gun in your face, who you think  
you are tellin' me jack shit?

ON THE CLERK

Taking advantage of the distraction, reaching down behind the counter for his gun -- but the 1st Clean-Cut Guy SPOTS

THE MOVEMENT, spins back and sticks his gun in the Clerk's face.

CLERK

No, don't!

1ST CLEAN-CUT GUY

What the fuck you think you're doin', huh? You think I'm stupid?

CLERK

No, no, I'm sorry --

1ST CLEAN-CUT GUY

Where's the fuckin' money??

The Clerk hurries to hand over the cash, the 1st Clean-Cut Guy starts stuffing it into his pockets --

That's when there's a HORRIBLE SCREAMING from the back.

The Clerk and the 1st Clean-Cut Guy both look down the aisle -- just in time to see the 2nd Clean-Cut Guy getting YANKED back around the corner in a SPRAY of blood and items flying off the shelves.

In the overhead mirror, the reflection shows The Figure backing away into the corner, and a glimpse -- JUST A GLIMPSE -- of some HUGE DARK APPARITION with LONG TWISTED ARMS ... RIPPING the 2nd Clean-Cut Guy in half --

And then the overhead lights flicker and go out, PLUNGING the store into darkness.

Light from outside illuminates the terrified disbelief on the face of the 1st Clean-Cut Guy.

1ST CLEAN-CUT GUY (CONT'D)

Yo, Rick!

He starts forward, then ducks as *something* goes flying past him in the dark, SPLATTERS his face with blood. He looks over by the door.

It's a SEVERED ARM. Lying on the floor.

1ST CLEAN-CUT GUY (CONT'D)

What the fuck?

He looks back towards the rear of the store -- and there's a TWISTED, OBSCURED FACE right in front of his eyes. Like someone leering through a plastic bag at him.

SHRIEKING at him.

The 1st Clean-Cut Guy goes FLYING backwards, CRASH! Right into one of the shelves, inventory showering down around him.

He scrambles back to his feet, slipping and tripping over all the cans and bottles. Completely freaking out. Spins with his gun, FIRES off a couple of shots, looking for a target --

BANG! He takes a single shot in the back of the head, drops like a rock.

WHIP to reveal the Clerk with his gun out, aiming down at the body, his chest heaving as he stares at the man he just shot --

Then something else moves again.

Right behind the Clerk.

He spins, brings up his gun.

Finds Taneesha standing right behind him.

She holds her hands up, her eyes pleading.

TANEESHA

No, don't! Please! Please, put it down --

EXT./INT. RENEE'S POLICE CAR (DRIVING) - NIGHT

Danny shakes his head, adamant, still at the wheel. Renee riding shotgun.

DANNY

No. No, all right? I was watching ESPN and I didn't see nothing I wasn't expecting to see. Maybe a few more hockey highlights than usual but that's about it.

RENEE

Well I wasn't dreaming, Danny. It was on my TV.

She looks out her window, ponders.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Maybe someone found a way ...

DANNY

To do what? Hack the computer in Ganning's car?

RENEE

I don't know! I'm thinking out loud, okay? Whatever they did, maybe that's what fried the file when we played it back.

DANNY

And then what? They found a way to zap a clean copy straight into your TV? Just to be assholes?

That's when there's a CRACKLE from the radio.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

Attention all units, Code Three.  
Repeat, Code Three, shots fired --

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

The store's still dark inside. TWO OTHER POLICE CARS already parked out front with their lights flashing. AN OLDER COP talking to a SHAKEN WITNESS.

SCREECH! Danny pulls up, jumps out with Renee. They exchange a quick look with the Older Cop, he nods towards the store.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Renee and Danny enter, stop cold. Staring in horror. No lights but there's enough illumination from the street to get a sense of things. Looks like a bomb went off.

Blood and debris everywhere.

Dario Penda and Gabe Russo approach from the back of the store, pale and shaken.

DANNY

What happened to the lights?

GABE RUSSO

Trust me. We're all better off without 'em.

DARIO PENDA

Got a single body right there.

Penda shines a flashlight, picks out the body of the 1st Clean-Cut Guy lying off to the side.

DARIO PENDA (CONT'D)

Looks like a single shot to the head.  
Forensics gets to play Go Fish when they match up the murder weapon.

He swings the beam over to the clean-cut guy's gun lying nearby. Then the Clerk's.

DARIO PENDA (CONT'D)

After that, things get a little more complicated. Near as I can tell, we got two more people in here. Right after they had mad monkey sex with a land mine.

He shines his light on the dismembered arm off to the side of the door.

DANNY

Jesus.

DARIO PENDA

That's the big piece.

Renee hasn't said a thing. Danny looks at her.

DANNY

What?

RENEE

You know what.

DANNY

Yeah. Just like Ganning's car.

They pull out their flashlights, move to take a look around.

RENEE

You sure there's no one else in here?

DARIO PENDA

Nobody with a pulse.

Renee shines her light on a couple of CLOSED DOORS in the back. SIGNS FOR MALE AND FEMALE.

RENEE

You check the rest rooms?

GABE RUSSO

Yeah, Renee. We checked the rest rooms.

DARIO PENDA

But be my guest to double check and make sure we didn't fuck it up somehow.

ON DANNY

Something *crunches* under his feet. He shines his light.

DANNY

Renee.

Renee crosses over, takes a look where Danny's pointing the light.

POV: *Teeth.*

Some of them driven into the floor like bullets.

Renee and Danny look at each other. "*Just like Ganning's car.*"

Renee spots something over Danny's shoulder. She shines her light up into the corner behind the counter.

RENEE'S POV - The flashlight beam picks out a SECURITY CAMERA hanging from the ceiling.

OFF Renee's look to Danny:

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - BACK ROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Renee and Danny, Penda and Russo. All of them gathered around a TINY MONITOR in the darkened room.

INSERT - MONITOR SCREEN. Shows footage from the security camera overlooking the Clerk at the front counter. Time and date rolling in the corner.

No sound.

Dario Penda points at the Clerk.

DARIO PENDA

Okay. That's a match on the shirt.  
So the Clerk's one of the deceased  
out there.

Renee sits forward when she sees The Figure walk in with the big coat and hat.

DANNY

Who's this?

GABE RUSSO

Whoever it is, he doesn't want us to  
know.

RENEE

It's a woman.

DARIO PENDA  
How can you even tell?

RENEE  
Tip of the nails.

Indeed. Grainy image on the monitor but they can still see THE LONG FINGERNAILS sticking out at the end of one of The Figure's coat sleeves.

The red nail polish.

Renee looks closer.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
Black woman.

Danny looks at her.

DANNY  
"Female African-American."

GABE RUSSO  
You think that's the driver of our dark green Chevy?

Renee's eyes are locked on the screen as the woman grabs a shopping basket and DISAPPEARS OFF CAMERA.

RENEE  
No body parts from a female African-American out there, either.

DANNY  
So she walked.

RENEE  
Again.

On the monitor, in walk the two Clean-Cut Guys.

DARIO PENDA  
Okay. That's the guy with the head shot by the door. The other guy's the one spread all over the place with the clerk.

The Clean-Cut Guys look around, PULL THEIR GUNS.

GABE RUSSO  
Surprise, surprise.

DANNY  
They didn't see her.

The 1st Clean-Cut Guy YELLING at the Clerk -- then everybody FREEZING and looking back toward the rear of the store.

DARIO PENDA

Now they do.

The 2nd Clean-Cut Guy starts shouting and heads towards the back of the store, DISAPPEARS OFF CAMERA.

The Clerk starts reaching down behind the counter but the 1st Clean-Cut Guy spots him, starts shouting again. The Clerk opens the register, starts pulling out the cash --

Then they both react, HEARING SOMETHING at the back of the store. Something off camera.

The lights go out.

Something goes flying past the 1st Clean-Cut Guy.

DARIO PENDA (CONT'D)

That was the fuckin' arm.

DANNY

Jesus Christ.

*Something* streaks through the darkness, hidden in the shadows. Hitting the 1st Clean-Cut Guy and knocking him back into the shelves.

DANNY (CONT'D)

What the hell was that? Play it back --

Renee quickly brings up her hand: *Wait!*

They keep watching.

INSERT - MONITOR. The 1st Clean-Cut Guy gets back up, starts blasting -- until the Clerk shoots him in the back of the head --

And then Taneesha comes up behind the Clerk.

We see her face, illuminated by the lights from outside. The Clerk points his gun at her. We see her pleading with him --

And then, WHOOSH! The Clerk TAKES OFF. Like a rocket -- right into the camera, BASH!

The image on the screen goes black, plunging the room into darkness.

GABE RUSSO

Oh shit!

DARIO PENDA

What the fuck? How'd she do that?

Penda turns on his flashlight.

DARIO PENDA (CONT'D)

Play it back!

Renee sits back in her chair with sudden certainty.

RENEE

We can't.

DARIO PENDA

Bullshit.

(jabbing at Russo)

Go on, rewind it.

Renee stares numbly at the black monitor as Russo hits rewind, then play.

Nothing but digital snow shows up on the screen.

DARIO PENDA (CONT'D)

Yo, what'd you do? Where is it?

GABE RUSSO

I didn't do anything. Hold on.

Russo keeps punching buttons.

GABE RUSSO (CONT'D)

It won't play!

Penda looks at Renee.

DARIO PENDA

What the fuck? What'd you do?

Renee just stares at him for a moment, then turns to Danny.

RENEE

Did you see her face? She was warning him. The clerk, she was warning him.

DARIO PENDA

Warning him? What are you talking about? It looks like she shoved a grenade up his ass out there!

But Renee and Danny aren't even listening to him anymore.

DANNY

Let's find out who the fuck she is.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - SHORTLY THEREAFTER

Renee and Danny stand back, watch the detectives and ME's do their thing.

DANNY

How'd you know the tape wouldn't play back again?

RENEE

Didn't you?  
(off Danny's look)  
Maybe we're the only ones meant to see. Maybe it's part of the rules.

DANNY

The rules? Oh c'mon, enough with all the voodoo bullshit, would ya?

RENEE

What if she's like ... Like a witch or something?

DANNY

Oh Jesus, c'mon!

RENEE

No, I'm serious. We both saw what happened to Ganning. Then the file gets fried so no one else can. 'Til it pops up on the TV in my living room.

She nods at the store.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Now this.

DANNY

We're gonna find her. There's gonna be a reason for this. An explanation. Not a fuckin' broomstick.

INT. RUN-DOWN HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

CAMERA MOVES over dirty, threadbare furnishings, FINDS TANEESHA sitting at the edge of her bed with her face buried in her hands.

Anguished.

TANEESHA

You have to stop this, you hear me?  
You have to stop it!

We HEAR something SHUFFLING around out of our view. Something agitated, GROWLING.

Taneesha looks up across the room, her face streaked with tears.

TANEESHA (CONT'D)

That old man in the store wasn't trying to hurt me! He was just as scared as I was and you just can't keep doing this! They're not all evil threats -- not even the police!

There's a guttural sound like a SNARL from the other side of the room and then a DRESSER DRAWER comes HURTLING right past Taneesha, SLAMS into the far wall.

CRASH! BASH!

Taneesha ducks.

We can't see what's happening across from her but we can hear things SMASHING against the walls. BITS OF DEBRIS flying everywhere.

Someone having one hell of a temper tantrum.

Taneesha looks back up, defiant.

TANEESHA (CONT'D)

That's right, you heard me! That policeman last night wasn't doin' nothing wrong! Nothing!

Sudden silence. The words hang there.

Taneesha waits. Glances around. Suddenly has the look of an outfielder who just lost a fly ball in the spotlights ...

With a ROAR of enraged frustration, a FACE materializes in the darkness right behind her. The same face we saw in the convenience store -- like someone or something screaming through a plastic bag.

Taneesha spins to look as the face twists away from her --

SMASH!! A HUGE HOLE blows right through the wall.

Taneesha ducks again in a shower of debris, the hole looking out into a darkened living room through a haze of swirling dust.

Taneesha doesn't look back up. She just curls up on the bed and starts sobbing ...

INT. POLICE STATION - CAPTAIN TRASSUP'S OFFICE - MORNING

Detective Susan Hall turns to Trassup, red-faced with anger.

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL  
Your people keep fucking up my crime scenes!

Renee and Danny are watching from their chairs in front of Trassup's desk. Trassup sits down across from them, looks up at Hall. Maintains his composure.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP  
You're a detective so I'm sure you're aware of it. But that's a pretty abrasive tone you're sending my way.

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL  
Tampering with evidence. Obstruction of justice --

DANNY  
Oh, gimme a break!

RENEE  
(to Hall)  
That's not what's going on here --

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL  
Really? Two different locations. Two different recordings on two different camera systems. And you two are the one common denominator.

Renee laughs at the absurdity.

RENEE  
Us? We're the *one*?

DANNY  
Nice to see all those razor-sharp detective skills in action.

RENEE  
What about the condition of the bodies? The goddamn wood-chipper somebody put them through? How about the African-American woman?

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL

You mean the one we can't I.D. because you fucked with the evidence at both locations? You're patrol cops, you get to a crime scene, if there's a victim you help him, if there's a bad guy you shoot him. Otherwise tape it off, gather the fuckin' witnesses, and quit dancing all over the goddamn evidence!

Off Renee, steaming:

SMASH CUT:

TIGHT - DEAD RAT IN A TRAP

A BROOM HANDLE reaches in, pulls the trap out from the corner.

OUT TO REVEAL:

INT. RENEE'S GARAGE - MORNING

Gary stoops down with a GLOVED HAND, picks up the trap, holds it up so Renee can see.

GARY

Great hunter, yes?

Renee's exhausted but she smiles.

RENEE

Yes.

GARY

Fine figure of a man, yes?

RENEE

Yes.

GARY

That's all you need to know.

He tosses the trap into the trash, replaces the lid. Pulls the glove off.

GARY (CONT'D)

I'll set another one when I get home tonight. Meantime don't go sticking any fingers or toes behind the fridge.

RENEE

Got it.

GARY  
Or up above the cupboards, either.

RENEE  
How about parking my ass on the  
toilet?

Gary kisses her. Calls into the kitchen through the open doorway.

GARY  
Christopher!

Christopher comes blazing out with his school bag.

CHRISTOPHER  
Right here! Bye, Mom.

RENEE  
Bye.

Christopher pulls up short, looks Renee in the eye.

CHRISTOPHER  
Sorry about yesterday.

RENEE  
Me, too.

She kisses the top of his head.

MOMENTS LATER

Renee's in the kitchen doorway, watching Gary and Christopher drive off in the SUV. She closes the garage door.

INT. RENEES KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Renee enters, closes the door behind her. Looks around.

Judging the feel of the empty house.

INT. RENEES BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The routine: Renee opens the locker by her bed, takes off her gun and holster, locks them up.

INT. RENEES BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Wash.

Brush.

Floss.

INT. TANEESHA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Taneesha's still sleeping where she curled up on the bed last night.

Sudden *THUMP!* from the next room jars her awake.

Taneesha sits up and listens, looking out into the living room through the BIG HOLE IN THE WALL.

Another thump.

Taneesha gets up.

INT. RENEE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Renee grabs the TV remote, drops onto the couch. Stares at the blank screen of the TV like it's a rattlesnake ... Waiting for something to happen.

She finally turns on the power.

INSERT - TV. Local news. Some innocuous human interest story.

ON RENEE

Still waiting.

INT. TANEESHA'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Taneesha crosses to the front door. Hesitates. Looks through the peephole.

*Thump!* Something bangs against the door.

Taneesha jerks back. Takes a moment to gather her wits again, then quickly opens the door.

No one there.

But Taneesha looks down, finds a sloppy BOUQUET lying on the front step. Weeds, grass, sticks, flowers -- tied together in knots.

Despite herself, Taneesha smiles. Touched. She bends down, picks up the bouquet --

NEIGHBOR WAYNE (O.S.)

Hey Taneesha.

Taneesha looks up, startled. Finds a neighbor, WAYNE, black, male, middle-aged, approaching from the next yard over.

NEIGHBOR WAYNE (CONT'D)

You okay? Heard a helluva racket  
comin' outta there last night --

TANEESHA

Yeah, I'm fine! I'm fine, Wayne!  
Just -- just mind your own business!

She quickly retreats back into the house and slams the door behind her. Taking another look through the peephole.

PEEPHOLE POV: Wayne. He just stands there at the edge of Taneesha's yard for a moment, staring at her house. Then he turns and heads back the way he came.

Taneesha falls against the door and sobs.

INT. RENEE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Renee, still focused on the TV. She clicks to another channel.

Then another.

And another.

INT. MIDDLE-SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

A TEACHER, male, 40's, wanders down an aisle between STUDENTS at their desks, handing out GRADED PAPERS.

TEACHER

Here you go ... One for you ... And  
one for you ...

He reaches Christopher. Stops cold.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Nice job, Chris. Really outdid  
yourself on this one.

He hands over the paper.

A big 'F' at the top.

A couple of SNICKERS from other students.

Christopher bristles, glances at the other students as the teacher resumes his trip down the aisle.

Christopher rises to his feet.

CHRISTOPHER

What do you gotta embarrass me like  
that for, huh?

The teacher turns around, startled.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)  
Does that make you feel big and tough  
or something? Calling me out like  
that?

TEACHER  
Sit down, Chris.

Christopher holds up his paper, points at the 'F.'

CHRISTOPHER  
Tell you what. Add U-C-K Y-O-U to  
this.

INT. RENEE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The TV's still on but Renee's sleeping on the couch. Head  
thrown back, mouth wide open.

Her cell phone rings, startles her awake. She grabs the  
phone.

RENEE  
Hello? ... Yes?

She listens. Her face darkens. She throws a glance at the  
TV.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
I'm on the way.

INT. MIDDLE-SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Christopher's in a chair, staring down at his feet. Renee  
glaring at him from the next chair over. The PRINCIPAL,  
female, middle-aged, sitting behind her desk.

PRINCIPAL  
And then what? Would you like to  
tell your mother what you said after  
that? After you knocked your teacher  
to the floor?

Christopher shakes his head. The Principal looks at Renee.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)  
He looked up at the rest of the class  
and he said, "Bet this fucker don't  
talk no more."

Renee looks back at Christopher. If looks could kill.

The Principal clears her throat.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)

You're a police officer, aren't you?

RENEE

Yes.

PRINCIPAL

Well, I'm not sure what he's exposed to at home, but --

RENEE

Oh no, don't worry. We tell him to stay in his room whenever we're beating information out of a suspect.

EXT. MIDDLE-SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Renee and Christopher walk to Renee's car in silence.

They get in without saying a word to each other.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Gary stares at Renee and Christopher in shock.

GARY

Suspended? For a week?

RENEE

We're lucky if that's all he gets. We're lucky nobody's pressing charges yet --

CHRISTOPHER

The hell with them!

Renee and Gary are both silenced by the the fury in Christopher's voice.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

They're all the same! All of them -- that stupid teacher, the principal -- all of them! Just making everyone else feel rotten, putting us down so they can feel like they're better than us -- all of them!

Gary throws an alarmed look at Renee.

INT. RENEЕ'S BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Just Gary and Renee.

GARY

You're making it worse.

Renee's jaw drops.

RENEE

Excuse me?

GARY

This whole attitude of yours. "Us versus them." Look what it's doing to him. It this what you want?

RENEE

Are you fucking kidding me?

GARY

Just listen to him! "All of them! They just want to make us feel rotten so they can feel better than us!" The teachers! Them, they, us! Whatever he's got -- whether the so-called "experts" want to call it Asperger's or not, whether they just want to say it's "somewhere in the spectrum" -- it affects the way he deals with people. The way he interacts, the way he sees the world. And he's picking up on the way you see the world -- and it's poisoning him!

Renee looks like Gary just slapped her.

RENEE

Yeah, well.

(checks her watch)

Guess what? Time for me to get going.

She spins the numbers on the combination lock by her bed, opens the locker. Grabs her gun and holster, throws her holster around her waist. Buckles the belt.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Sure glad I caught all that shut-eye today. Nothing like heading out into that world of mine well-rested, right?

She brushes out past Gary.

EXT./INT. RENEE'S POLICE CAR (DRIVING) - NIGHT

Danny's back at the wheel with Renee riding shotgun again. Danny shakes his head.

DANNY

Oh man. He's blaming you? That's what you get for marrying a civilian.

RENEE

What're you talking about? You married one, too.

DANNY

Well I'm a dude. What am I gonna do? Marry a female cop? They're all fuckin' bat-shit.

RENEE

God, I need a new partner.

HER CELL PHONE CHIRPS. Renee pulls it out, takes a look.

It's a TEXT from Gary: *"It's gone viral."*

With a LINK.

Danny sees the look on Renee's face.

DANNY

You okay?

Renee hesitates.

She clicks on the link.

Up comes an IPHONE VIDEO. A BLURRED IMAGE OF A CLASSROOM labeled "STUDENT FIGHTS TEACHER."

RENEE

Oh no.

Over 130,000 views.

Renee takes a deep breath and hits play.

INSERT - RENEES CELL PHONE. The camera sweeps around, herky-jerky, FINDS CHRISTOPHER squaring off with his teacher.

TEACHER (ON VIDEO)

That's it, you're outta here.

The teacher GRABS Christopher's arm and Christopher throws a punch. BAM! Connecting with the teacher's jaw.

The other students gasp, holler in surprise. The teacher stumbles back, trips, goes down hard.

Christopher steps over him, ready to swing again if the teacher tries to get back up.

CHRISTOPHER (ON VIDEO)  
Yeah, "that's it" all right!

He glances around at the other students.

CHRISTOPHER (ON VIDEO) (CONT'D)  
Bet this fucker don't talk no more,  
huh?

ON RENEE

Horrorified.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lights out. The door opens.

Gary pokes his head into the dark room, finds Christopher sleeping in bed.

He watches for a moment, thinking things over.

Finally, Gary nods to himself, pulls back out into the hallway and closes the door behind him.

Plunging the room back into darkness.

PUSH IN on Christopher, still sleeping. But he scrunches his face up, moves his mouth.

Looks like bad dreams.

CHRISTOPHER  
(mumbling)  
Bet this ... Bet this fucker don't  
talk no more ... Bet this fucker  
don't talk no more ...

INT. RENEE'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Bright new day. Gary walks in, getting ready for work --

SWING TO REVEAL RENEE sitting at the kitchen table.

Gary pulls up short, startled.

GARY  
I didn't ... I didn't hear you come  
in. You're early. Everything okay?

RENEE  
Well no one else died last night, if  
that's the new bar.

Gary nods. Ten feet between them. Feels like a mile.

GARY  
Christopher's still sleeping.

RENEE  
Oh yeah, right. Since he doesn't  
have to go to school today. Now  
that he's a media sensation and all.  
Which is, if I recall, my fault.  
Right?

GARY  
I'm sorry. Okay? I didn't mean it  
like that.

RENEE  
How'd you mean it, Gary?

GARY  
I'm gonna get going.

He hesitates. Crosses the room to Renee, kisses the top of  
her head.

GARY (CONT'D)  
Call me if you need me. And try to  
get some sleep today.  
(off her silence)  
I love you.

Renee nods.

Gary heads out through the kitchen door.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Christopher's still sound asleep.

ON RENEE

Watching Christopher from the doorway.

INT. RENEE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Renee takes off her gun and holster, stores them in her  
locker.

INT. RENEE'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Wash, brush, floss.

INT. RENEE'S KITCHEN - SHORTLY THEREAFTER

Renee's back at the kitchen table with her LAPTOP, types in  
*"Asperger's Syndrome/behavior problems"*

QUICK SCROLL through the links.

Renee slides the cursor, clicks on "Asperger's Children & Behavioral Problems At School"

She starts reading --

SUDDENLY JERKS BACK, stares at the computer.

Ganning's dash cam footage is playing on the screen!

CRASH! Ganning's car SMASHING backwards, SPINNING sideways --

Renee gawks.

WHAM! Ganning SLAMS onto the hood, SHRIEKS into the camera.

Renee rips her eyes away from the screen, looks off through the door and out into the living room.

RENEE  
(sudden realization)  
Christopher.

She jumps up and bolts from the kitchen.

INT. RENEE'S HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She charges straight through the living room and into the hallway --

SKIDS UP SHORT at what she sees.

REVERSE reveals a big, crude, CHILD-LIKE DRAWING on the opposite wall.

It's barely more than a stick figure, depicted lying sideways, drawn with colored markers.

Blue legs. Blue arms. A blue hat, lying off to the side.

It's a cop -- with X's for eyes.

And the arms and legs have been drawn detached from the body.

Lots of red coloring for blood.

CHRISTOPHER (O.S.)  
Bet this fucker don't talk no more.

Renee screams.

She spins to see Christopher staring at her from the other end of the hallway with a DAZED LOOK in his eyes and a FISTFUL OF COLORED MARKERS in each hand.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Renee lays Christopher back into his bed.

He still seems dazed.

CHRISTOPHER

I have to get up ... I have to go to school ...

RENEE

No school today, honey. Remember? You can sleep in. I'll make you breakfast in a little while, okay? Just get a little more sleep.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh yeah. Okay ... I love you, Mom.

RENEE

I love you, too.

He's already passed out again. Renee stands up straight, stares down at her son.

And she looks scared to death.

INT. RENEЕ'S LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Renee grabs her cell phone, clicks through to her list of Favorites.

"Gary" at the top.

Then "Christopher."

Then "Danny."

Renee hesitates -- and then she hits "Danny."

She puts the phone to her ear ...

GANNING (V.O.)

Keep your hands where I can see them!

Renee jerks the phone away, stares at the screen in shock.

Ganning's dash cam footage is playing on the cell phone!

The car getting hit, knocked backwards, spun sideways --

Renee rips the battery out, the screen goes black.

She stands there in the middle of the room, staring at the phone in one hand, clutching the battery with the other --

And then the TV clicks on.

Right behind her.

All by itself.

Renee spins. Gawking.

This time it's not the dash cam footage. It's something else, something new. HYPER-KINETIC AND SHAKY. SOUNDS of someone HUFFING AND PUFFING, FOOTSTEPS pounding on pavement as THE CAMERA RACES THROUGH A DARK ALLEY.

There's A GLIMPSE OF SOMEONE UP AHEAD.

Running.

MAN'S VOICE (ON TV)  
Stop! Police! Stop!

It's footage from a COP'S BODY CAM.

We're chasing a SUSPECT.

Renee can't take her eyes off the screen.

The camera bounces, swings wildly. The UNSEEN OFFICER catches up to the suspect, DIVES AND TACKLES HIM.

Grunts, impacts, rolling. The sounds of struggle.

Camera rears back to REVEAL THE SUSPECT on the pavement. DEMONTE JONES, black, male, 18. Big and strong but winded from running, already bleeding from some previous encounter. COVERS UP as A FLURRY of punches rain down on him.

A 2ND COP ARRIVES, starts SWINGING HIS CLUB, beating Demonte over the head.

We CATCH A GLIMPSE of the 2nd cop's face.

Renee's eyes widen.

It's Dario Penda.

DARIO PENDA (ON TV)  
Stupid motherfucker!

The unseen cop wearing the body cam gets a pair of HANDCUFFS on Demonte but Penda keeps swinging anyway.

BYSTANDER'S VOICE (ON TV)  
Hey, leave him alone!

DARIO PENDA (ON TV)

Fuck.

CAMERA SWINGS to reveal a BYSTANDER, white, 20's, fifty feet back.

Holding up a CELL PHONE.

BYSTANDER (ON TV)

I'm recording the whole thing, you assholes! Can you say six o'clock news?

DARIO PENDA (ON TV)

Shit. Gabe, hold onto him.

Gabe Russo is the one wearing the body cam.

Dario Penda bolts off.

The body cam swings back to Demonte Jones, he looks up into the camera and smiles through blood and broken teeth.

DEMONTE JONES (ON TV)

You're so screwed.

GABE RUSSO'S VOICE (ON TV)

Shut the fuck up.

He punches Demonte in the face.

ON RENEE

She keeps watching, her heart pounding ...

ON THE TV

There's a burst of static, a white flare of snow ... and then the body cam footage resumes with Penda returning.

He crouches down next to Demonte and smiles. Holding up the bystander's cell phone.

Like a trophy.

DARIO PENDA (ON TV)

Take a look.

He plays the CELL PHONE RECORDING back for Demonte: Penda and Russo beating Demonte from the bystander's POV.

DARIO PENDA (ON TV) (CONT'D)

One time only, enjoy it. You're the last one that's ever gonna lay eyes on this shit, dickhead.

Demonte stares in horror at the playback.

DARIO PENDA (ON TV) (CONT'D)  
 Damn. Look at that angle. Dude had  
 a good eye, didn't he? Maybe he  
 could have been the next Spielberg  
 if he wasn't such a nosy ass-wipe.

Penda laughs, turns the video off. Slips the cell phone  
 into his pocket.

DEMONTE JONES (ON TV)  
 You bastards.

DARIO PENDA (ON TV)  
 Yeah.

Penda looks around, GRABS A DIRTY PLASTIC BAG off the pavement --  
and throws it over Demonte's head.

Demonte starts kicking and choking. Open mouth stretched  
 against the plastic, gasping for air.

Penda looks up, smiles into the camera.

DARIO PENDA (ON TV) (CONT'D)  
 Bet this fucker don't talk no more.

ON RENEE

Utter, stunned horror.

Did she hear that right?

She looks back sharply towards Christopher's bedroom, tries  
 to process.

There's ANOTHER BURST of snow and static. Renee looks back  
 at the TV --

The screen's gone black.

Leaving Renee to stare in terrified wonder.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT - DAY

MAD POUNDING at the front door, *Bam-Bam-Bam!*

Danny comes running in his bare feet.

DANNY  
 Okay okay, I'm coming!

Sweat pants, no shirt. Unkempt hair, bloodshot eyes.

He takes a look through the peephole.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
What the fuck?

He opens the door.

There stands Renee. With Christopher.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
What's going on?

Renee pushes Christopher inside, follows after him. Danny closes the door behind them.

Danny's pregnant wife MICHELLE, mid-20's, rises off the couch.

RENEE  
Sorry, Michelle.

MICHELLE  
What's wrong?

Renee turns to Danny, hesitates. Imploring him with her eyes.

Danny looks at Michelle.

DANNY  
Can you hang with Chris for a sec,  
hon?

INT. DANNY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Renee turns to Danny as he closes the door behind them.

RENEE  
Tell me you saw it this time.

DANNY  
Saw what?

Renee rolls her eyes in frustration.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Renee, saw what? What are you doing  
here? What'd you bring Chris for?

RENEE  
I couldn't leave him alone,  
something's going on with him. And  
I couldn't call you, either. I tried  
but I can't use my phone.

DANNY

Why not? What's going on with Chris?

Renee looks Danny in the eye.

RENEE

How many details do you remember about Demonte Jones?

Danny turns ashen.

DANNY

Demonte Jones? Jesus, Renee. What're you bringing up that shit storm for?

RENEE

What do you remember about what they said? About Penda and Russo?

Danny shakes his head.

DANNY

I don't know. Just the basics, pretty much. Penda and Russo were trying to arrest him and he went for Russo's gun.

RENEE

Yeah, that's what the report said... And I don't remember any witnesses ever coming forward to refute it, either.

DANNY

No, there weren't any witnesses. I mean Joe Public didn't buy it but what else is new? IA gave 'em a clean bill of health. Justifiable use of force to protect themselves.

Off Renee's skeptical look:

INT. POLICE STATION - MUSTER ROOM - NIGHT

Sgt. Kesper is back at the podium for roll call.

SGT. KESPER

Services are scheduled for Saturday, 10 am. Forest Lawn. Details for memorial contributions are gonna be up on the board by tomorrow but start making your plans. Meantime, keep it together out there. Protect and serve. Honor Kevin.

Grim murmurs and nods from everyone around the room.

Except for Renee.

She's not even looking at Kesper, her eyes are locked on the two guys at the end of the row in front of her:

Dario Penda and Gabe Russo.

EXT. POLICE STATION PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER

Penda and Russo are heading for their car.

Renee catches up to them, Danny right behind her.

RENEE

Yo Dario! Gabe!

DARIO PENDA

Yo.

RENEE

Mind if I run something by you?

DARIO PENDA

Hey look, Renee. Sorry but I'm married, ya know?

Penda and Russo both laugh.

Renee laughs right along with them.

RENEE

Well if it's anything like my marriage, "you got your options."

GABE RUSSO

Whoa, listen to this one! Didn't know you swung that way.

RENEE

Oh yeah, weekends we got a revolving door at our place.

Off their laughter:

RENEE (CONT'D)

No but seriously, I just ran into someone from Community Affairs, he was asking me how I thought things were going with all that.

DARIO PENDA

With what?

RENEE

With, you know, rebuilding trust and  
shit. With the community.

GABE RUSSO

Ha! Did you tell him pretty much  
fucked?

They all laugh again.

RENEE

Yeah, pretty much. But that thing  
came up, you know? That thing you  
guys had to deal with a couple years  
ago --

DARIO PENDA

What thing?

RENEE

You know, the thing with that kid.  
What was his name?

Gabe Russo stops laughing.

But Dario Penda just smiles. Smooth as silk.

DARIO PENDA

What are we talking about here? And  
who was this again? This someone  
asking these questions, where was he  
from?

RENEE

Community Affairs.

DARIO PENDA

Oh yeah. Community Affairs.

Renee looks at Russo.

RENEE

That kid from a couple years ago.  
The one that went for your gun,  
remember?

Russo looks at Penda uncertainly.

Penda just keeps smiling.

DARIO PENDA

Kinda tough to forget when the whole  
city wants to crucify you just for  
defending yourself. Demonte Jones.  
Real big son of a bitch, too.

RENEE

Yeah, that's right. Demonte Jones.  
What was he, seventeen?

DARIO PENDA

Eighteen.

RENEE

Seems like you're pretty sure on  
that.

DARIO PENDA

Well he wasn't no juvy.

Renee nods.

DARIO PENDA (CONT'D)

So this guy from Community Affairs.  
What was *his* name?

RENEE

You were cleared, right? "Justifiable  
use of force," that's what they said.

Their eyes are locked.

DARIO PENDA

My partner was fighting for his life  
that night. We both were. Big fucker  
just kept coming. Fuck all those  
protesters. I mean what the fuck do  
they know? They weren't there, right?

Danny's picking up on the tension. He grabs Renee's arm,  
starts pulling her away.

DANNY

Renee, c'mon. What are you doing?

INT. POLICE STATION - SECURITY CONTROL ROOM - SAME TIME

The security officer, Abigail, takes notice, sits up in her  
chair in front of the monitors.

Half a dozen angles on the parking lot, but the one that  
just caught Abigail's attention is the one showing Danny  
trying to pull Renee away from Penda and Russo ...

EXT. POLICE STATION PARKING LOT - SAME TIME

Renee yanks her arm out of Danny's grasp, keeps her eyes  
locked on Penda.

RENEE

And I remember you guys, you weren't wearing your body cams that night, right? So there wasn't any footage to back up your story.

DARIO PENDA

We were wearing them. They just weren't on.

RENEE

Oh yeah, that's right. Why was that again?

DARIO PENDA

I don't remember. But the autopsy backed up our statements --

RENEE

What about witnesses?

DARIO PENDA

Witnesses?

Penda glances at Danny. Like, what the fuck is the matter with your partner?

DARIO PENDA (CONT'D)

What are you talking about? It all went down in some shit-hole back alley, there weren't any witnesses. But the autopsy --

RENEE

Really? No witnesses? You sure? Nobody with like, say, a cell phone or something?

Russo looks at Penda again, visibly unsettled.

And Penda's smile finally disappears.

DARIO PENDA

Hey. Lomito.

RENEE

Lomito-Smith. I'm married, remember?

DARIO PENDA

Yeah. Lomito-Smith. You got something you wanna say to us?

Danny grabs Renee's arm again.

DANNY

Hey, come on. What are you doing?

INT. POLICE STATION - SECURITY CONTROL ROOM - SAME TIME

Abigail keeps watching ...

EXT. POLICE STATION PARKING LOT - SAME TIME

Danny starts pulling Renee away but she never takes her eyes off Penda.

RENEE

Maybe when he was doing the autopsy,  
the M.E. wasn't looking for  
asphyxiation.

Penda frowns. Like he didn't hear quite clearly. And he takes a step after her.

DARIO PENDA

What'd you say?

RENEE

Maybe he missed that.

DARIO PENDA

You wanna play fuckin' games here or  
something? Is that what you wanna  
do?

Danny keeps pulling Renee away.

DANNY

She didn't say nothin'.

DARIO PENDA

You oughtta watch your partner there,  
Hollledge. Watch what she goes around  
sayin'.

RENEE

What am I saying, Dario?

Danny drags Renee off towards their car.

DANNY

Yo Renee, c'mon, relax --

DARIO PENDA

Control your partner there!

DANNY

Yeah, yeah! I got it controlled!

INT. POLICE STATION - SECURITY CONTROL ROOM - SAME TIME

Abigail sits back, ponders over what she just witnessed ...

EXT./INT. POLICE CAR (DRIVING) - NIGHT

Danny shakes his head as he drives, glaring over at Renee.

DANNY

What the fuck are you doing?

RENEE

I saw them, Danny. I saw the body cam footage.

DANNY

What body cam footage?

RENEE

They were lying. Both of them -- Russo had his camera on that night. The night they killed Demonte Jones, I saw it, I saw what they did, they murdered him!

DANNY

What? Where? Where'd you see this?

RENEE

On my TV, Danny! Just like the footage from Ganning's dash cam, it just started playing on my TV!

Danny pulls over, hits the brakes. They skid to a stop.

DANNY

Jesus, Renee. You're losing it, okay? You're losing your fuckin' mind! What, Demonte Jones is reaching out to you from the grave?

They sit there staring at each other. But after a moment, Danny BREAKS, looks away. Anguished.

And Renee realizes.

RENEE

You've been lying to me.

DANNY

What? No --

RENEE

You've been lying.  
(MORE)

RENEE (CONT'D)

You've seen it too, haven't you? I know you have. Look at you. You look like shit.

DANNY

Me? Try taking a look in the mirror.

RENEE

When I came by today, you were wide awake. You hadn't been sleeping, had you? Hell, if I hadn't been dealing with so much of my own shit I would have noticed.

Danny closes his eyes, takes a deep breath. Exhausted.

DANNY

I don't know what you're talking about with this whole Demonte Jones thing ...

RENEE

But you've seen the dash cam, haven't you?

Danny looks at her. Hesitates.

Then he opens his car door and gets out.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Danny crosses around in front of the car, shaking his head to himself.

Renee joins him.

Danny can't bring himself to look at her.

Renee takes a deep breath. Holds it -- and Danny finally takes a deep breath, too.

They exhale in unison -- but Danny still won't look at her.

He just nods to himself.

DANNY

Not on my TV.

Renee waits for him to elaborate.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Mirrors.

RENEE

Mirrors.

DANNY

When I wash my face. Comb my hair.  
Jesus Christ, I almost wrecked us  
the other night 'cause I saw it when  
I looked in the rear-view, I almost  
had a heart attack!

RENEE

Why didn't you tell me?

DANNY

Because it's fuckin' insane, Renee!  
Because when you told me and I  
listened to the words coming out of  
your mouth, you sounded like a crazy  
person. And I don't want people  
looking at me like I'm a crazy person,  
okay? I mean Holy Christ, Michelle  
caught me staring into a mug the  
other morning 'cause I saw it playing  
in the reflection off the top of my  
coffee!

He wanders off a few steps, shakes his head.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Why us?

RENEE

I don't know. Maybe just the luck  
of the draw, we were first on scene.  
We're the ones who saw the dash cam  
footage and now we've got some kind  
of connection to this thing ... Some  
weird "residual glow" or something.

DANNY

Like a curse? Or a hex or something?

Danny laughs out loud at the absurdity of his own words.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Oh, man. They're gonna lock us up  
in a looney bin!

RENEE

And now it's following us around.

DANNY

What about the files? Ganning's  
dash cam and the camera at the store?  
(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)

Why'd they fry after we looked at them?

Renee ponders.

RENEE

They murdered him, Danny. They took him down and they got the cuffs on him and then Penda put a bag over his head. I saw it.

Danny looks at her.

RENEE (CONT'D)

And there was a witness.

DANNY

No there wasn't --

RENEE

A guy with a cell phone -- I think Penda killed him, too. He went after the guy and came back with his phone. He played it back for Jones before they killed him.

(pointedly)

And he said, "One time only. You're the last one that's ever gonna lay eyes on this."

The words hang there.

DANNY

"One time only."

RENEE

Right.

DANNY

"You're the last one that's ever gonna lay eyes on this."

RENEE

Right.

DANNY

So you think that's part of it now? If anything gets recorded, it's got some mystical built-in self-destruct switch so it can only play back once? Like the recording on that cell phone?

RENEE

Which probably means Jones isn't the one calling the shots here or trying to reach out to us. Just that, now that we've been exposed, now that we're "in," we can see into his world or whatever.

Silence.

DANNY

That's crazy.

RENEE

Right.

EXT./INT. POLICE CAR (DRIVING) - SHORTLY THEREAFTER

Danny back at the wheel, cruising through the streets again.

DANNY

So what about the woman? The one from the store?

RENEE

The witch?

DANNY

Yeah, the witch.

RENEE

I don't know ... We gotta find her, though. She's the key here, somehow.

A dark look crosses Renee's face.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Something else.

DANNY

What?

RENEE

This "glow" ... Whatever it is, whatever's following us around ... I think it's affecting Christopher.

(off Danny's look)

That's why I brought him along today, I couldn't leave him alone. Whatever he has. Whatever condition --

Asperger's or autism or whatever it is, I don't know, none of the people we've taken him to see want to give it a label.

(MORE)

RENEE (CONT'D)

But whatever it is, maybe it leaves him more ... exposed. Susceptible. And I brought it into our house.

DANNY

(sudden alarm)

Well what about Michelle? I mean she's fuckin' pregnant, Renee. What about our baby?

Off Renee's uncertain look:

EXT./INT. PENDA'S POLICE CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

Dario Penda at the wheel, Gabe Russo in the passenger seat. And Russo's freaking out.

GABE RUSSO

How did she know, huh? How the fuck did she know?

DARIO PENDA

She doesn't know shit, okay? Relax, Gabe!

GABE RUSSO

What're you talking about? It's like she was there! She knew about the guy with the cell phone, the cause of death, she knew about everything!

DARIO PENDA

Just calm down, okay?  
(like ice)  
One way or another, we'll handle it.

EXT./INT. RENEE'S POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Renee and Danny are pulled over on the side of the road, Renee hovering over the computer, types "Demonte Jones" into the search engine.

Danny watches.

A slew of results come up:

*"Death of Demonte Jones," "A Career Thug Meets His End," "Judge Rules Not Enough To Indict Officers," "Protests Follow Judge's Decision," "No Justice For Demonte Jones."*

Renee clicks through PHOTOS OF DEMONTE JONES. Everything from A SMILING HIGH SCHOOL KID IN A CAP AND GOWN to MUG SHOTS.

Photos of Dario Penda.

Gabe Russo.

MARCHING PROTESTORS, WAVING SIGNS: "DOWN WITH POLICE BRUTALITY," "DEMONTE JONES DESERVES JUSTICE," "NO JUSTICE NO PEACE."

Clenched fists in the air --

Renee freezes.

Staring at yet ANOTHER PHOTO of protesters in the street.

Front and center among them: *Taneesha Brice*.

RENEE

Oh my God. That's her -- the woman from the store.

Danny leans forward to take a look.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Read the caption.

DANNY

(reading)

*"Taneesha Brice, MOTHER of Demonte Jones, marching with fellow protesters."*

They look at each other as it clicks.

MOMENTS LATER

They're scrolling through the police database, pulling up TANEESHA'S DRIVER'S LICENSE.

Photo.

Birth date.

Height, weight, hair color, eye color ...

AND HOME ADDRESS.

DANNY (CONT'D)

22741 Los Quintas.

RENEE

That's eight blocks from here.

EXT./INT. RENEE'S POLICE CAR (DRIVING) - MOMENTS LATER

Danny's got the pedal to the metal, floors it around a hairpin turn. Lights flashing, siren screaming.

Renee's on the radio.

RENEE

Eighteen Adam Seven to Dispatch,  
Code Three, requesting backup, 22741  
Los Quintas. That's a registered  
address for one Taneesha Brice, age  
44, African-American female.

She hesitates.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Possible suspect in the death of  
Officer Kevin Ganning.

EXT. TANEESHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Renee's police car skids up in front of Taneesha's house,  
Danny and Renee jump out of the car.

The front door's wide open, everything dark inside.

Renee and Danny rush up onto the porch, guns drawn.

Renee hugs the wall, shouts into the house.

RENEE

Taneesha Brice, it's the police! We  
want to ask you a few questions, can  
you come to the door, please?

Silence.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Hello? Ms. Brice?

Renee throws a quick look at Danny.

He nods.

INT. TANEESHA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Renee enters, feels along the wall. Danny right behind her.

Renee's hand hits the light switch.

A SINGLE LAMP CLICKS on in the far corner, casting ugly yellow  
light and long shadows across the room.

Renee and Danny both freeze at what they see.

REVERSE reveals WEIRD BOUQUETS OF DEAD FLOWERS, WEEDS, AND STICKS all over the walls, hanging from the ceilings.

DANNY

Jesus, you were right. She's a fuckin' witch.

Renee looks down, sees one of the bouquets sticking out of a VASE on an end table.

RENEE

This isn't witchcraft. These are just ... They're gifts, Danny.

DANNY

Gifts? From who?

Renee levels a flat look at him. Spots SOMETHING IN THE SHADOWS at the back of the room.

RENEE

Danny.

Danny follows her gaze.

DANNY

What the fuck.

They cross towards the back of the room, stepping gingerly, guns ready. Approaching the HUGE HOLE in the wall of Taneesha's bedroom. RUBBLE all over the floor.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Looks like a bulldozer went through here.

RENEE

Probably something strong enough to knock a police car around, right?

Danny looks at her uneasily.

They step around the rubble.

Renee PULLS her flashlight and turns it on.

INT. TANEESHA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

They step through the hole in the wall. Renee shines her light around, finds the light switch.

Clicks it on.

Illuminating a series of crude, child-like PICTURES on the walls.

Barely more than stick figures with blue arms and legs -- the exact same style of picture that Christopher drew on the wall in Renee's hallway.

Dead cops with X's for eyes. Detached arms and legs. Lots of red coloring for blood.

And a single word, written in red: "BAD."

DANNY

Jesus.

RENEE

Oh my God. Christopher.

(off Danny's look)

He drew the same thing. On the wall in our home. The exact same thing.

Renee fumbles for her cell phone, makes a beeline back out through the hole in the wall.

RENEE (CONT'D)

I gotta call Gary --

WHAM! Renee runs right into a BIG FIGURE coming around the corner.

She cries out, brings up her gun --

A BIG HAND knocks her arm aside.

Renee stumbles back, looks up.

Finds herself staring right into the face of Dario Penda.

DARIO PENDA

Yo, relax. You called for back-up, didn't you?

Gabe Russo right next to him.

GABE RUSSO

Yeah, we're the good guys here, relax.

Judging by the look on Renee's face, last thing she's about to do right now is relax.

Danny steps out through the hole in the wall, glances back and forth at everybody.

DANNY

Hey. We all good here?

GABE RUSSO

You tell me. What's with all the home improvement?

Renee and Penda still staring each other down --

BACK-UP COP #1 (O.S.)

Holy Christ. Well this is sure enough a bizarre sight in the middle of all this shit.

They all look back, find TWO MORE BACK-UP COPS coming through the front door, glancing around at all the weird bouquets.

Their arrival puts the pin back in the grenade between Renee and Penda -- at least for the moment.

DANNY

(to Renee)

Go make your call. We'll check the rest of the house.

Renee throws one last look at Penda and Russo, brushes past them.

Danny moves on.

Both of their backs to Penda and Russo.

Russo looks at Penda.

SMASH CUT:

A RINGING CELL PHONE

OUT TO REVEAL:

INT. RENEE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gary, STARTLED awake by the phone.

He grabs it off the nightstand.

GARY

Renee?

INTERCUT:

EXT. TANEESHA'S PORCH - SAME TIME

Renee's standing by the front door with her cell phone.

RENEE

Yeah, it's me, honey. I'm fine.

Gary takes a deep breath, relieved.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
Where's Christopher?

Gary checks the bedside clock. 3 AM.

GARY  
He's sleeping, hon.

RENEE  
Go check on him.

Gary hesitates.

GARY  
Is this about what he drew on the wall?

RENEE  
Yeah, I'll explain it to you later.  
Go check on him.

GARY  
Okay.

RENEE  
Right now.

GARY  
Okay.

Gary gets out of bed, heads for the door.

EXT. TANEESHA'S PORCH - SAME TIME

Renee waits.

DOWN THE STREET

Taneesha's dark green Chevy sedan is parked at the curb with the engine off.

INT. TANEESHA'S SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Taneesha is sitting behind the wheel with her eyes locked on Renee ...

INT. RENEE'S HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Click! Gary finds the light switch, turns on the overheads. Heads down to Christopher's bedroom.

He knocks on the door.

GARY

Chris?

No answer. Gary knocks again.

GARY (CONT'D)

Christopher?

EXT. TANEESHA'S PORCH - SAME TIME

Renee's listening.

RENEE

Just go in, Gary.

INT. RENEESHA'S HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Gary puts his hand on the knob. Hesitates before opening the door.

Light from the hallway spills into the dark room.

The bed's empty.

Gary turns on the lights, looks around.

GARY

(into the phone)

He's not here.

EXT. TANEESHA'S PORCH - SAME TIME

RENEE

(fighting panic)

Find him.

INT. RENEESHA'S HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Gary retreats from Christopher's room, heads down the hallway into --

INT. RENEESHA'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gary stops, spotting something at his feet.

He reaches for the switch on the wall and turns on the lights, stares in numb horror.

GARY

Oh my God.

EXT. TANEESHA'S PORCH - SAME TIME

RENEE  
 (almost afraid to ask)  
 What is it, Gary?

INT. RENEE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Gary keeps staring.

REVERSE REVEALS AN ARRAY OF GRASS, WEEDS, AND STICKS -- AND DEAD RATS.

Arranged in a pattern across the floor.

RENEE (V.O.)  
 Gary? Gary, what is it?

Gary takes a step back -- WHAM!

He bumps into someone standing right behind him, SPINS to find himself facing Christopher -- who's choking through a PLASTIC BAG over his head.

GARY  
 Jesus Christ -- Christopher!

EXT. TANEESHA'S PORCH - SAME TIME

RENEE  
 What? What is it?

INT. RENEE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Gary RIPS the plastic bag off Christopher's head.

EXT. TANEESHA'S PORCH - SAME TIME

GARY (V.O.)  
 He had a goddamn bag over his head,  
 Renee.

RENEE  
 What?!

GARY (V.O.)  
 A plastic bag. He put it on over  
 his own head.

Hits Renee like a sledge hammer.

FLASH TO: Demonte Jones in that body cam video, his twisted face choking through the bag that Dario Penda wrapped over his head.

RENEE  
Oh my God. Is he okay?

INT. RENEE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Gary touches his son's face. Christopher's gasping but he still has THE SAME DAZED LOOK IN HIS EYES that Renee saw earlier.

GARY  
Yeah, I think so. But I think it's  
... I think it's like that trance  
you were telling me about before.

Gary looks back at the living room floor.

GARY (CONT'D)  
And he spelled out something on the  
floor.

RENEE (V.O.)  
Spelled out?

GARY  
With weeds and sticks and grass --  
and dead rats, Renee. Dead rats.  
Right in the middle of the living  
room.

EXT. TANEESHA'S PORCH - SAME TIME

Renee keeps her composure.

RENEE  
What'd he spell out?

INT. RENEE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

WIDER over Gary to reveal the arrangement of debris and dead rats on the floor:

It spells out "BAD."

GARY  
Bad. He spelled out "bad."

EXT. TANEESHA'S PORCH - SAME TIME

Renee looks dumbstruck, glances back inside the house.

INT. TANEESHA'S HOUSE - DEMONTE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Danny stares at a PHOTO ON THE WALL: Taneesha and Demonte. Both alive and happy.

Penda and Russo come up behind him. Staring over Danny's shoulder at the photo.

DARIO PENDA  
What are we doing here, Danny?

DANNY  
It's his mother's house.

DARIO PENDA  
I can see that, Danny. But what are we doing here? After all your partner's snide little comments, what are we doing here?

Danny looks at Penda.

Behind Danny, Russo stares daggers at Danny's back, throws a questioning look to Penda -- and nods down at his gun.

Penda considers.

That's when Back-Up Cop #1 pokes his head through the door.

BACK-UP COP #1  
Kitchen's clear, too.

It's an ice-breaker. Danny looks at Penda and Russo.

DANNY  
'Scuse me.

He steps past them, all too-happy to join Back-Up Cop #1 out in the hallway.

EXT. TANEESHA'S PORCH - SAME TIME

Renee's still on the phone with Gary.

RENEE  
Don't take your eyes off him, all right?

GARY (V.O.)  
Okay.

RENEE  
I'll tell you more when I get home. I gotta go, though.

GARY (V.O.)  
Okay ... I love you.

Renee hesitates, gives her response the gravity it deserves:

RENEE

I love you, too.

INT. TANEESHA'S SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Taneesha's been watching the whole time.

TANEESHA'S POV: RENEE ON THE PORCH. Renee hangs up, seems to think something over -- then heads back into Taneesha's house.

ON TANEESHA

She ponders. Finally nods to herself.

Starts the engine and drives off ...

INT. TANEESHA'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Penda, Russo, and the Back-Up Cops are going through Taneesha's personal belongings, examining the bouquets, etc.

Renee has Danny pulled off to the side. They speak in whispers.

DANNY

Jesus. Dead rats?

Renee nods. Danny ponders.

DANNY (CONT'D)

If he ... If Christopher's dialed into Jones this fuckin' tight, maybe we can use that.

Renee bristles.

RENEE

Use my son?

DANNY

To gain some insight. If they've got some kind of a link or something, we could figure out what it wants. Maybe even reach out to it --

RENEE

Reach out to it? Through Christopher? Are you out of your fuckin' mind? Why don't we just use Michelle and your baby?

Danny opens his mouth to say something else, then realizes how fucked up his suggestion was. Holds up his hands.

DANNY

Sorry.

RENEE

"Sorry?"

She scoffs at the inadequacy of the apology. Shakes her head, looks off to make sure none of the others are listening. Penda and Russo are going through Taneesha's mail. The two back-ups are inspecting the hole in the wall.

RENEE (CONT'D)

(to herself)

He already said I was poisoning him...

DANNY

What?

RENEE

Gary. The other night.

DANNY

That's not what he meant --

Renee looks at him, anguished.

RENEE

But what if he's right, now?  
Literally. Poisoning my son with  
whatever's been hanging over us ever  
since we saw that footage -- and it  
seems like it's getting worse. What  
if I shouldn't even be around him  
now?

Danny doesn't know how to answer that.

ON PENDA

He looks up from Taneesha's mail. Casts a cold, stealthy glance at Renee and Danny across the room ...

EXT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

Sun rising over the city. Cops coming and going through the front doors, returning from their shifts or heading out to their cars in the parking lot.

ACROSS THE STREET

Taneesha pulls up in her sedan.

Kills the engine.

INT. TANEESHA'S SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Taneesha sits back to watch the police station. Scanning the parking lot.

Watching the cops as they come and go ...

WUMP! Something bumps the roof sharply in the back of the car, ROCKS the whole vehicle.

TANEESHA

Easy ... Easy, just relax ...

White cops. Hispanic cops. An Asian cop.

Taneesha keeps watching.

Finally, the front doors of the station open and out comes a black cop.

Taneesha sits up.

It's Sgt. Kesper, the cop in charge of the night shift roll call.

Taneesha watches as Kesper heads across the parking lot. There's A SLIGHT, GROWLING RUMBLE, and Taneesha looks up in the REAR-VIEW MIRROR.

TANEESHA'S POV: THAT TWISTED, OBSCURED FACE right behind her, BLAZING EYES locked on Kesper.

TANEESHA (CONT'D)

(soothing)

We're gonna do this, okay? We're gonna do it and everything's gonna be fine, everyone's gonna be cool. Everyone. You too, you hear me? Everyone.

She looks back at Kesper, takes a deep breath.

Opens the door.

EXT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Taneesha steps out. Shuts the door. Starts across the street towards the parking lot.

Eyes locked on Kesper the whole time ...

Behind her, we catch A GLIMPSE OF A DARK, MONSTROUS-LOOKING SHADOW darting out from behind her sedan and disappearing behind another car.

Taneesha keeps walking.

TANEESHA  
Cool as ice, baby ... Cooler than  
the next big thing ...

ON SGT. KESPER

He reaches his car, unlocks it --

TANEESHA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Officer.

Kesper turns around, finds Taneesha ten yards back with her hands in the air. Slowly approaching him.

TANEESHA (CONT'D)  
My name's Taneesha Brice ... I don't  
know if you know that name yet but  
there was a bunch of other cops  
raidin' my house last night so trust  
me, you're looking for me ... I didn't  
turn myself in to them but I'm turning  
myself in to you. You got that?  
I'm turning myself in. But you gotta  
listen to me. There's rules. And  
you gotta be real careful 'bout them,  
awright? Don't call nobody else  
over here. No sudden moves. Don't  
even pull out your handcuffs.

But the more Taneesha talks, the closer she gets, the more  
threatening she seems --

And Sgt. Kesper reaches for his gun.

TANEESHA (CONT'D)  
No! See, don't do that --

SGT. KESPER  
Ma'am, stop moving --

TANEESHA  
Awright, awright! I'm stopping.  
Just don't touch the gun, okay? I'm  
trying to surrender, I don't want  
nobody else gettin' hurt --

Sgt. Kesper touches the gun.

TANEESHA (CONT'D)  
Don't do that! Don't touch it!

WHITE COP #1 (O.S.)  
Yo, Sarge! You okay here?

Taneesha looks back, sees TWO WHITE COPS approaching. She starts backing off. Panicking.

TANEESHA  
Tell them to stay back! Please!

SGT. KESPER  
Ma'am, hold it right there!

Sgt. Kesper takes a step towards her, PULLS his gun --

TANEESHA  
No! Don't!

Too late.

That DARK APPARITION with LONG TWISTED ARMS rises up right behind Kesper in the blink of an eye. Kesper turns in time to see that twisted, obscured face snarling down at him and then HIS WHOLE BODY TWISTS LIKE A WASHCLOTH getting wrung dry, flying apart in a spray of blood and limbs.

TANEESHA (CONT'D)  
Nooooo!!

WHITE COP #1  
Jesus Christ -- !

The White Cops both pull their guns -- but that apparition STREAKS towards them. Impossibly fast. And the two cops suddenly have their heads SLAM TOGETHER in a sickening pink spray.

TANEESHA  
Stop it!!

She's backing away, crying, anguished.

OTHER COPS come running, yanking out their guns.

RUNNING COP  
Hold it! Stop --

Running Cop gets cut off as he goes FLYING back against the wall of the station, BASH! Head-first, skull and brains SPLATTERING off the brick.

ANOTHER COP goes sailing through the air, CRASHES THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD of one of the parked cars. Glass TEARING him open throat to crotch like someone unzipping a tent.

Taneesha sobs, turns and runs.

A BURLY-LOOKING COP rushes up, takes aim.

BURLY-LOOKING COP  
Freeze, goddammit!!

He FIRES and then something RIPS his arm off, GUTS him like a pig. He looks down in horror.

Off the INTESTINES spilling out onto the pavement:

EXT. POLICE STATION - LATER

SCREAMING SIRENS, FLASHING LIGHTS. Renee and Danny pull up in their car, stagger out. Stunned by the mayhem.

Looks like every cop in the city has shown up. Ambulances, paramedics, firemen. News crews. Helicopters overhead.

Renee and Danny find Captain Trassup.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP  
Flanagan and Billings. Rose. Looks like Sergeant Kesper.

DANNY  
Oh, Jesus Christ ...

RENEE  
"Looks like?"

CAPTAIN TRASSUP  
We found his name tag.  
(off their looks)  
It's like the whole thing with Ganning only worse. Still trying to I.D. a couple of the other guys.

Renee's mind is racing.

She looks up towards a corner of the police station roof.

There's a SECURITY CAMERA up there -- AND ANOTHER CAMERA at the other corner.

AND ANOTHER ONE OVER THE FRONT ENTRANCE.

AND TWO MORE MOUNTED ON STEEL POLES at either end of the parking lot.

Renee thinks it over, turns back to Captain Trassup. There's a knowing look in her eyes.

Captain Trassup nods, grim.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP (CONT'D)  
Yeah. All the files from the cameras are fried.

RENEE

So someone already watched.

Trassup judges her carefully. Trades a look with Danny.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP

Both of you. Time to purge your souls. Whatever you know about this. Whatever you think you might be knowing about this. Whatever wild shit you're pulling out of your ass that you're afraid to tell me.

RENEE

(pressing)

Who was watching, Cap?

Trassup hesitates.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP

Abigail.

INT. POLICE STATION - SECURITY CONTROL ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Abigail is sitting with a STUNNED, VACANT LOOK on her face in front of the blank monitors.

Renee takes a seat next to her. Danny and Captain Trassup watch from the door.

DANNY

She watched it all go down live, Renee. All these cameras, all at once. Whatever we got, she just O.D'd on it.

Renee nods.

RENEE

Abby? Can you tell us what you saw?

Abigail's mouth moves. She's sweating. Spittle on her lips. Fresh white hairs on her head.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Take your time.

ABIGAIL

She came up ... She came up behind him ...

RENEE

Came up behind who? Sergeant Kesper?

Abigail nods.

Renee pulls out a photo.

It's the picture of Taneesha that Renee found online.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Was it her?

Abigail looks. She nods again.

ABIGAIL

That's her. She came up behind him.

RENEE

And then what? What did you see?

Abigail looks at her.

ABIGAIL

Satan.

INT. CAPTAIN TRASSUP'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Trassup ushers Renee and Danny into the room, shuts the door behind them.

RENEE

Trust me, it wasn't Satan, Cap.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP

So what was it?

Renee and Danny trade a look. Danny offers a weary nod.

Renee takes a moment to get her thoughts together.

RENEE

There were a ton of cops coming and going out there. But Taneesha Brice waited for Sgt. Kesper. Specifically. She waited for him. She chose him.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP

Why?

RENEE

Because he was black, Captain. I think she thought it would help.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP

Help what?

Renee hesitates.

RENEE

Can I use your computer?

Trassup gestures.

Renee circles around behind the desk, types into the keyboard, navigates with the mouse. She steps back, gestures at the monitor.

Trassup and Danny circle around to take a look.

There's a frightening array of images on the screen. Ghostly phantoms and apparitions.

Trassup reads the headline.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP  
"Vengeful Spirits."

He trades a look with Renee.

DANNY  
(reading)  
"A vengeful ghost or vengeful spirit is said to be the spirit of a deceased person who returns from the afterlife to seek revenge for a cruel, unnatural, or unjust death."

RENEE  
It's not Taneesha Brice, Captain.  
It's her son.  
(measured)  
Demonte Jones.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP  
Demonte Jones??

Trassup knows the name all too well.

RENEE  
Taneesha's his mother. Was. And his ghost, his spirit -- whatever you want to call it -- it's killing off anyone who gets near her. Anyone it perceives as a threat.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP  
Especially cops, I guess.

RENEE  
Especially cops.

Their eyes are locked. Trassup looks at Danny.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP  
You buyin' this shit, too?

DANNY

After what we've seen over the last couple of days? I'll buy anything.  
(sober reflection)  
But yeah. Yeah, I buy it.

Renee nods in solidarity with her partner.

RENEE

We saw Brice on the security camera at that store the other night. She was trying to get the clerk to put his gun down. She was to trying to protect him. Now this. Approaching Kesper. I'm telling you she was trying to turn herself in. Trying to stop it -- but she can't. Because every time she tries, whoever she approaches, they're gonna get killed.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP

So what do we do?

Renee thinks it over. Finally takes the plunge.

RENEE

We help her. We find her and help her.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP

How? How are we supposed to help her if no one can get near her?

Renee thinks about it, glances back at the computer screen.

INSERT - SCREEN. Tight on the last words that Danny read:  
*"... a deceased person who returns from the afterlife to seek revenge for a cruel, unnatural, or unjust death."*

Renee mulls it over. Turns back to Trassup.

RENEE

We gotta take another look at Dario Penda and Gabe Russo.

DANNY

But if he -- it -- Demonte -- If it wants revenge for a wrongful death, why doesn't it just go after them itself?

RENEE

What if it's tied to her?

DANNY

Tied to her? Like what, a dog on a leash?

RENEE

Like a haunted house. Only she's the house. The one connection it still has to this world. So it's mobile, but it only can go where she goes.

They all exchange glances.

RENEE (CONT'D)

That might be a weakness we can use.

EXT. CITY STREET - MORNING

TWO POLICE CARS go blazing by, sirens screaming. Right past an OLD ABANDONED BUILDING with a debris-strewn ALLEY on one side -- where Taneesha's sedan is sitting, hidden from view.

INT. TANEESHA'S SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Taneesha stares after the police cars with wide, frightened eyes, listens to the sirens fading away.

There's the CHIRP of an incoming text. Taneesha pulls out her phone and takes a look.

INSERT - TEXT ON PHONE

***Hi Taneesha, it's Officer Renee Lomito-Smith. I was at your home this morning and we got your number through the phone records, I know you're trying to help.***

Taneesha stares, shocked.

She looks out her window, her mind racing.

FLASH TO: POV of Renee talking on her cell phone, standing on Taneesha's porch last night --

ANOTHER CHIRP. Taneesha looks back at the phone.

***Meet me at my house. 1841 Jameison Ave, Santa Clarita. I know the rules. No guns, no fast movements. I won't have my uniform on.***

Taneesha shakes her head at the proposal. Too risky ...

Another chirp. Another text:

***We can help each other. Woman to woman. Mother to mother.***

That strikes a chord.

Taneesha hesitates, types back: **When?**

She waits -- but not for long.

**Now.**

Taneesha takes a deep breath. Types her answer:

**OK.**

EXT./INT. RENEE'S HATCHBACK (DRIVING) - SAME TIME

Renee tosses her cell phone onto the passenger seat, nods to herself. Weaving through traffic, trying to stay calm. Abruptly grabs the phone again, makes another call.

GARY (V.O.)

Hi, it's Gary. Leave a message and I'll call you back as soon as I can.

BEEP!

RENEE

Honey, it's me, I'm on the way. I've called a couple times but you're not picking up. Call me if you get this, okay? I tried calling Chris but he's not picking up either ... Okay, I love you, see you soon.

She hangs up. Fighting panic.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Renee's car streaks by.

EXT. RENEE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Renee swerves into the driveway with the garage door already going up. Gary's SUV inside.

Renee parks, jumps out. Makes a beeline for the kitchen door.

INT. RENEE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Key in the lock, the door flies open, Renee rushes in -- and draws to a quick stop. Listening.

RENEE

Gary? Christopher?

All quiet.

INT. RENEE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Renee enters, scans the room. The floor's clean, no sign of that arrangement of debris --

Wait.

Renee bends down. Picks something up off the floor.

*A SINGLE BLADE of dead grass.*

Renee's heart catches in her throat. She looks down the hallway toward the bedrooms ...

Finally rising back to her feet, she drops the blade of grass, lets it flutter back to the floor.

TRACK WITH RENEE DOWN THE HALL

She draws up to Christopher's room.

The door's open ... She peers around the corner ...

RENEE'S POV: Looking into Christopher's room. It's empty.

Renee keeps going. Reaching the open doorway of the master bedroom, she looks around the corner -- and out comes Christopher.

Renee almost screams.

RENEE

Christopher!

Christopher looks at her, startled.

CHRISTOPHER

Hey --

RENEE

Where's your father?

Christopher nods into the room.

CHRISTOPHER

Sleepin'.

Renee takes a look. There's Gary, sleeping in a chair in the corner.

Renee lets out a sigh of relief. She grabs Christopher, hugs him tightly. He hesitates, sensing her anxiety, hugs her back --

But then Renee suddenly pulls away from him. Holds him off at arm's length. Like someone who doesn't want to spread a disease.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

(confused)

You okay?

RENEE

Yeah, I ... I was just worried. Why wasn't anyone answering their phone?

CHRISTOPHER

I turned them off.

RENEE

What? Why?

Christopher hesitates. Renee grows uneasy.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Christopher. Why?

CHRISTOPHER

The guy with the plastic bag over his head.

Slow, dawning horror on Renee's face.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

You know who I'm talking about, don't you?

RENEE

What about him?

CHRISTOPHER

He wouldn't shut up.

RENEE

He *called* you?

CHRISTOPHER

No, it was more like ... He was just mumbling to himself. And I could hear him through the phone ...

Renee hesitates.

RENEE

What was he saying?

CHRISTOPHER

He's afraid.

Renee nods to herself.

RENEE  
Of us. The police.

CHRISTOPHER  
Of someone trying to hurt his mother.  
Like, he's scared shitless, he wants  
to protect her.

Renee hesitates. Agonizing over this next:

RENEE  
Can you ... Can he hear you? If you  
reached out to him -- if you asked  
him a question -- could he hear you?

The question hangs there.

GARY (O.S.)  
Renee?

She nearly jumps out of her skin.

INT. RENEE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gary's getting up out of his chair. Renee enters, Christopher  
right behind her.

GARY  
Jesus. What time is it?

RENEE  
Almost ten.

GARY  
Oh shit, sorry -- I was up all night --

RENEE  
No, don't worry, get going. I'll  
take it from here --

GARY  
No way, I'm not going in today.

RENEE  
You sure?

GARY  
Yeah, I already called. No way I'm  
leaving you here dealing with this  
on your own. Whatever it is, we'll  
figure it out together. Maybe take  
him to a doctor or something --

Renee shakes her head.

RENEE  
It's not a medical thing, Gary.

He looks at her, hearing the certainty in her voice.

Renee goes through her routine: opens up the locker, puts the gun and holster inside. Locks them up. Straightens and turns to Christopher.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
Give me a minute with your dad, okay?

CHRISTOPHER  
Serious?

RENEE  
Yeah, serious.

Renee looks back at Gary. Off that look:

INT. RENEE'S LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Renee and Gary, alone on the couch, and Gary's trying to process. Renee watches him and waits.

Gary glances down the hallway to make sure Christopher's not anywhere within earshot.

GARY  
Danny's on board with this?

RENEE  
Yeah, he came around. Captain Trassup, too.  
(off Gary's look)  
It was a slaughterhouse, Gary.

Gary looks over at the TV. It just sits there, dark and silent.

GARY  
Is it on the news?

RENEE  
It's probably on every channel.

GARY  
You think they're saying it's a ghost?

RENEE  
I'll bet it's something more like "unknown assailants" for now.

Gary keeps staring at the TV.

GARY  
Can I turn it on?

Renee hesitates. Picks up the remote. Points and clicks.

The TV comes on.

Sure enough: Aerial shot of the police station. Emergency crews everywhere.

Lower caption reads "Unknown Assailants Attack LAPD."

RENEE  
Let me go talk to Chris.

She gets up. Gary's staring at the TV like it's a ticking bomb.

GARY  
What if it ... freaks out?

RENEE  
You haven't seen anything over the last couple of days, have you?

Gary shakes his head.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
Call me if anything weird happens.  
But I think I'm the only one it's gonna do it for.

Renee heads off down the hall. Gary turns back to the TV, turns up the volume a little.

NEWS REPORTER (ON TV)  
It's all taped off, they're not letting us anywhere near the station but we have unconfirmed reports of at least six fatalities --

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Renee enters. Christopher's sitting on his bed. He turns to her, his face ashen.

RENEE  
What?

Christopher holds up his phone.

CHRISTOPHER  
I heard him again.

RENEE

What?? What'd he say?

CHRISTOPHER

I think he's on his way here.

INT. RENEE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gary's still watching the TV, riveted by the news coverage.

There's a KNOCK at the front door.

Gary jumps, startled. Glances over at the door, composes himself.

He gets up, heads to the door. Takes a look through the peephole -- and pulls back in sudden alarm.

GARY

(calling)

Hey, Renee --

BASH! The door smashes open, throwing Gary backwards onto the floor.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Renee throws a look at Christopher.

RENEE

(fierce whisper)

Stay here!

She bolts out.

INT. RENEE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Renee comes around the corner, finds Gary standing between Dario Penda and Gabe Russo.

Penda's clutching Gary by the collar with one hand, holding a gun to Gary's head with the other.

DARIO PENDA

(mimicking Gary)

"Hey, Renee -- "

He looks at Russo.

DARIO PENDA (CONT'D)

Get the door.

Russo turns to close the door. As he does, Gary brings up his arm, THROWS AN ELBOW back into Penda's face.

Penda spins, recovers, CLUBS Gary over the head with his gun. A VICIOUS SKULL-CRACK that drops Gary in a spray of blood.

Renee BELLOWS in rage as she VAULTS over the back of the couch and dives at Penda --

WHAM! She SLAMS into him, TACKLES him. They roll on the floor. CRASH! SMASH! Crazy hand-to-hand shit, beating at each other, smashing furniture. Renee's way out-sized but she's like a wild banshee, fighting with everything she has.

Gary tries to get up to help her but Russo KICKS him in the ribs, sends him flopping backwards. Turns to Renee, GRABS HER HAIR from behind and YANKS HER HEAD BACK. Pulls her off Penda.

Renee reaches back, CLAWS at Russo's face, goes for his eyes as Russo screams --

Penda gets back up, WHAM! PUNCHES Renee right in the stomach. It's a deal-breaker, and Renee drops, writhing in agony.

Penda looks at Russo, gasping for breath.

DARIO PENDA (CONT'D)  
Check the rest of the house.

Renee looks up sharply as Russo heads for the bedroom hallway --

WHAM! Penda kicks Renee in the face to keep her down.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Russo storms in, looks around.

The room's empty.

But Russo spots the open window --

EXT. RENEE'S HOUSE - OUTSIDE THE WINDOW

Christopher's holding his breath, crouching right below the window sill.

INT. RENEE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Penda slings Renee over next to Gary on the floor. She's choking, gasping.

Russo comes back from the hallway.

GABE RUSSO  
We're all clear.

There's a quick look of puzzled alarm between Renee and Gary.

Penda crouches down next to them, looks at Gary.

DARIO PENDA

You weren't even supposed to be here, motherfucker. This shit didn't have nothin' to do with you. Don't you have a job?

Gary struggles for breath.

GARY

You just ... broke into my house ... attacked my wife ... And it's got nothing to do with me?

DARIO PENDA

Well fuck, if you're gonna be a dick about it and get all hung up on the details, sure. 'Cept now when your kid gets home from school, instead of just finding out his mom's dead, he's gotta find out he's a fuckin' orphan.

RENEE

Why?

Penda looks honestly surprised.

DARIO PENDA

Well you're the one goin' around talking all that shit, you tell me. Makin' waves on smooth fuckin' waters when we're all supposed to be on the same goddamn team! And for what? Demonte Jones? Some piece of lowlife shit? Some career scumbag with a criminal record like a fuckin' phone book?

He shakes his head to himself. Betrayed, hurt, bitter.

DARIO PENDA (CONT'D)

How'd you find out? Huh? How'd you find out about the alley?

Renee can't help but smile.

RENEE

"Can you say six o'clock news?"

Russo looks at Penda as it clicks.

GABE RUSSO

That's what the guy in the alley  
said.

DARIO PENDA

Was it the ghost? Is that how you  
found out?

Now Renee's the one who looks surprised. Penda laughs.

DARIO PENDA (CONT'D)

What, you think you're the only one  
that's been seein' all this weird  
shit? The only one that can put two  
and two together?

RENEE

So now what?

DARIO PENDA

We wait.

RENEE

For what?

DARIO PENDA

For Taneesha Brice.

RENEE

What makes you think she's gonna  
show up here?

DARIO PENDA

I texted her and I said I was you.  
I said we could help each other.

He smiles at the stunned look on Renee's face.

DARIO PENDA (CONT'D)

Gabe, get the kitchen.

INT. RENEE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Russo goes straight to the oven.

Turns on all the gas.

INT. RENEE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Renee just stares at Penda in dazed wonder.

DARIO PENDA

When she shows up, we're gonna light  
this fucker up like the Fourth of  
(MORE)

DARIO PENDA (CONT'D)

July. End of Taneesha Brice. And I'm thinkin' that ends Demonte Jones, too -- any ties he still has to this world, anyway.

(another smile)

And it sure as hell ends *your* ass.

INT. RENEE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Russo's closing the windows. BEHIND HIM, the door opens from the garage ...

In steps Christopher. With a GOLF CLUB in his hands.

He raises it up over his head, ready to strike --

Russo catches the movement out of the corner of his eye.

He turns just as Christopher swings -- BOK! BLOCKING the club with his arm. HOLLERS in pain, the gun flying out of his hand.

Christopher swings again. Russo KNOCKS the club aside and charges, BASH! SLAMMING Christopher back into the cabinets.

INT. RENEE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Everyone hears the commotion, Penda charges for the kitchen --

Gary reaches up from the floor, GRABS PENDA'S FOOT as he goes by. Penda GOES SPRAWLING, hits the floor. Renee dives at him, scratching and clawing, FIGHTING FOR PENDA'S GUN.

Penda knocks her aside and staggers back up to his feet.

DARIO PENDA

Okay, fuck it.

He aims the gun down at Renee's head --

CRASH!

The front door EXPLODES inward!

Penda ducks, covers his face from the flying debris. Looks back up towards the doorway.

There stands Taneesha Brice.

DARIO PENDA (CONT'D)

Oh, fuck.

He brings up his gun to shoot her -- but Renee grabs a shard of BROKEN GLASS from the floor, stabs it down into Penda's foot.

Penda screams.

Russo comes stumbling out from the kitchen.

GABE RUSSO

Dario -- !

Renee turns to look at Taneesha. One last card to play:

RENEE

It's them! They're the ones who  
murdered your son!!

TANEESHA

(like ice)

I know who they are.

(thin smile)

And so does my son.

Russo has his gun up to fire -- but the twisted, obscured face of Demonte Jones SUDDENLY RISES UP right in front of him.

Russo staggers back with a scream.

GNARLED FINGERS close around Russo's forehead and snap his head STRAIGHT BACK at a 90 degree angle.

The gun flies out of his hand, SLIDES across the floor. Renee REACHES for it -- then suddenly has a moment's pause. She looks up.

Right into the DARK PITS of Demonte's eyes.

And Renee carefully pulls her hand back from the gun.

Dario Penda dives at Taneesha, grabs her and spins around behind her. He brings his gun up to her head. Looking down at Renee but now there's no sign of Demonte.

DARIO PENDA

Where is it, where'd it go??

Renee looks around helplessly. No clue.

Penda glances around the room, panicked, twists the barrel of his gun into the side of Taneesha's head.

DARIO PENDA (CONT'D)

She dies, you piece of shit! She dies if you come near me!

He spins around, no idea where Demonte could be coming from -- leaving himself totally exposed to Renee.

She grabs Russo's gun and fires.

The bullet goes right through Penda's head. Taneesha pulls away from him as Penda drops.

Instantly, the ghost of Demonte Jones MATERIALIZES out of everywhere -- the whole room seems to rush together, like a tornado suddenly forming, rushing at Renee in an angry rage.

TANEESHA

Demonte, no!!

Demonte sweeps up right in front of Renee --

And then stops.

Renee pulls back, drops the gun. Gazing right into the blood-mad face of Demonte Jones.

Gary watches, holding his breath.

Christopher comes staggering out from the kitchen, stops cold at the sight of the apparition hovering over his mother.

CHRISTOPHER

Don't hurt her!

Demonte's eyes take in Christopher. Gary. Back to Renee.

TANEESHA

It's done, baby.

Demonte looks back towards his mother. Great sadness in those eyes.

Taneesha nods, tears spilling down her cheeks.

TANEESHA (CONT'D)

It's done.

One final look at Renee -- and then the ghost just DISSIPATES.

Like smoke.

Taneesha sobs.

Christopher rushes to Renee. Gary crawls over. Hugging each other. Renee looks back towards the kitchen.

RENEE

The gas --

CHRISTOPHER

It's off, I got it.

Taneesha watches them. Father, mother, and son, all crying and clinging to each other.

Taneesha's crying, too. She looks around the room.

TANEESHA

He's gone.

Renee staggers to her feet and approaches her.

TANEESHA (CONT'D)

My baby's gone.

Renee reaches out to her. Taneesha sobs again, and steps into Renee's embrace.

They hug tightly, both of them crying, as Gary and Christopher watch from the floor ...

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Crime scene personnel step back, parting like the Red Sea as Renee and Taneesha head across the parking lot towards the front entrance, walking side by side, dried tears still on their cheeks.

Danny follows behind them, keeping a respectful distance.

Not fearful. Just respectful.

They reach the front steps and head upwards.

INT. POLICE STATION - FRONT LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Renee, Taneesha, and Danny enter. Heads turn --

A MURMUR goes through the room. SUDDEN FEAR in a lot of those faces.

Renee holds up her hand to keep things calm.

Captain Trassup edges his way through a couple of other officers, approaches warily.

RENEE

Captain. This is Taneesha Brice.  
(the all-clear)  
Her son's at peace.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP

What about Penda and Russo?

RENEE  
 (pointedly)  
 They're at peace, too.

Trassup looks at Taneesha, nods his respectful understanding.

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL (O.S.)  
 Is this her?

They all look back. Detective Hall pushes her way through the other officers, pulls up in front of Taneesha.

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL (CONT'D)  
 Is this the one?  
 (off their stares)  
 Captain, why isn't this woman in handcuffs?

RENEE  
 What for?

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL  
 What for? Accessory to murder, how's that? On damn near a dozen counts, six of them right out there this morning!

Taneesha looks around, uneasy, starts backing off. Renee looks at her.

RENEE  
 No, don't worry, you're good --

TANEESHA  
 No. Something's wrong.

Renee hears the TONE in Taneesha's voice, suddenly looks around.

That's when the overhead lights FLICKER AND GO OUT. The room comes alive with STARTLED REACTIONS.

A LOW GROWL behind Taneesha. She spins around.

No one there.

TANEESHA (CONT'D)  
 Oh my God.

RENEE  
 What?

TANEESHA  
 It's a trap.  
 (MORE)

TANEESHA (CONT'D)

(she looks at Renee)

He just wanted me to think he was gone. That those two cops were the end of it -- but he just wanted you to bring me in here. So he could get as many of you together in one spot as he could.

Renee stares at her with horrified understanding.

The doors suddenly slam shut.

The windows lock.

And throughout the room, all the computers suddenly fill with an array of all those dash cam, body cam, and security camera images.

Cops spin to look at their monitors. Wild, flickering images, like strobe lights in the darkness.

Taneesha stares at Renee, horrified.

TANEESHA (CONT'D)

I didn't know.

Detective Hall whips out her gun, aims at Taneesha.

DETECTIVE SUSAN HALL

What the fuck are you up to??

RENEE

No, don't -- !!

Demonte Jones rises up behind Hall, envelopes her in those long gnarled arms and rips her apart.

All hell breaks loose.

Cops whipping out their guns, firing, spinning, looking for a target, shouting in panic. Blood and limbs flying everywhere, more guns blasting, bullets flying and hitting everything, everyone.

CAPTAIN TRASSUP

Stop shooting! Stop --

Trassup takes a bullet in the chest, smashes back against the wall.

DANNY

Cap -- !!

Danny scrambles over to him.

Taneesha picks a gun up off the floor, spins to look around the room. Sobbing in anguish.

TANEESHA

(calling out to Demonte)

Why? You had it! Your vengeance,  
you had it! But you so full of hate,  
you gotta just keep killin' -- so  
now it's on you! 'Cause I gotta cut  
the chain!

She turns to Renee. Puts the gun to her own head.

TANEESHA (CONT'D)

I didn't know.

Renee stares up from the floor.

RENEE

Taneesha, don't --

TANEESHA

You watch your boy. My poor baby.  
They turned him into a monster --  
but the madness gotta stop.

RENEE

No!

Renee dives at Taneesha, tackles her to the floor and grabs the gun. Rolls over and looks up, finds herself staring right into the snarling face of Demonte Jones as he hovers above her.

A moment of stark terror -- Renee knows she's about to die. But the next instant, Renee's fear is replaced by sudden rage and defiance.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Is that what you want? Leave her no  
choice except to blow her own brains  
out? Is that what you call protecting  
her??

Danny watching from across the floor, helpless ...

Demonte seems to recalibrate. Judges Renee coldly ... the gun in her hand ...

That's when Taneesha rises to her feet, staring up at her son. Demonte turns his eyes upon her and Taneesha hesitates, finally reaches up toward his face ... Her fingers touching his cheek ...

And the plastic bag slides off his face and into her hand.

Taneesha stares at the bag and sobs.

Renee can't do anything but watch, spellbound.

Taneesha looks back up into Demonte's eyes.

Demonte gazes back at her. Seems to take a couple of deep, soulful breaths ... as if finally able to breathe freely ...

Closes his eyes ... Pain, shame, grief ...

DEMONTE JONES

Bad.

And then he's gone. Leaving Taneesha standing alone amid all the carnage.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TANEESHA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Renee pours fresh paint into a pan. Christopher dips a roller into the pan, spreads the paint across the newly-repaired living room wall.

Gary climbs down from a ladder over in the corner, laughing.

GARY

Easy, easy. Not so much, okay?  
What do you think, you're drizzling  
chocolate on a sundae?

It's a house-painting party in full swing and the room's bustling with activity. Renee, Gary, and Christopher pitching in with Taneesha's NEIGHBORS to help get Taneesha's life back in order, the floor covered by drop cloths, cans of paint, pans, brushes and rollers spread out all over the place.

Taneesha stands back, watching with a smile.

TANEESHA

Go ahead, let it drizzle. You're  
doing fine, Christopher.

Christopher smiles back at her.

Renee notes their warm interaction, can't help but smile herself.

NEIGHBOR WAYNE

Hey, Renee, can you give us a hand?

RENEE

Oh yeah, sure.

Wayne indicates the couch.

NEIGHBOR WAYNE  
Just wanna move it back from the  
wall.

Renee lifts along with Wayne and a couple of the other  
neighbors, moves the couch into the center of the room.

NEIGHBOR WAYNE (CONT'D)  
Thanks.

RENEE  
No prob.

They start spreading a cloth over the couch. Renee turns to  
find Gary standing right next to her. He can't stop smiling.

RENEE (CONT'D)  
What?

GARY  
Nothing.

RENEE  
Yeah right.

GARY  
Just watching you, that's all. I  
mean it's not like you're yucking it  
up with the folks in line at  
Disneyland, but it's a start.

RENEE  
Oh Jeez, gimme a break, would ya?

Sudden commotion at the front door as Danny walks in, loaded  
down with bags of food. Michelle right behind him with their  
new BABY in a carrier.

DANNY  
Lunch has arrived!

CHRISTOPHER  
Awesome, I'm starving! What'd you  
get?

DANNY  
Chicken and ribs, my man! And all  
the fixin's!

CHRISTOPHER  
I'm down with the fixin's!

Christopher bolts over along with Gary, Wayne, and the rest of the neighbors. Mobbing Danny to get the food.

But Taneesha takes advantage of the moment to pull Renee aside.

TANEESHA

I just want you to know, I can't ...  
I can't thank you enough for all  
your help.

RENEE

Oh c'mon. We're the ones who need  
to be thanking you. We lost a lot  
of good people -- including Demonte.  
But you got him to stop.

Taneesha looks baffled for a moment, shakes her head.

TANEESHA

It was you, Renee. You're the one  
who got him to stop. He saw what  
you did. He saw you stop me from  
pulling the trigger. He saw someone  
else protecting me.

They judge each other in silence.

GARY

Hey c'mon, you two. Grab a plate  
before Christopher snarfs everything.

Renee finally nods, and she and Taneesha head over to join the others.

EXT. TANEESHA'S HOUSE - LATER

Gary, Christopher, and Danny are packing up all the painting equipment into the back of Gary's SUV.

Renee and Taneesha walk out from the house together.

RENEE

I mean it. If you ever need anything,  
you call me.

She stops, spotting something on the windshield of the SUV. Crossing over to stare.

It's a little bouquet of weeds, twigs, and dead grass.

Renee glances around. She picks up the bouquet, stunned, holds it out to Taneesha.

But Taneesha just smiles.

TANEESHA

That's not for me. It's for you.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END