

Labyrinth

By

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Based on the book *Labyrinth*
by Randall Sullivan

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BLACK. A ferocious BASS LINE hits us. Drops us into --

EXT. THE BRONX - DAY

STOCK FOOTAGE of THE BRONX establishes the rougher areas of New York's roughest borough in the 1960s and 70s.

SULLIVAN (V.O.)
*The time can't be pinpointed. The
place can: The History of Hip Hop
began in the Bronx.*

Dilapidated APARTMENTS loom over a bumping PARTY on a --

BASKETBALL COURT

KRS-ONE (V.O.)
Ghetto kids ain't got no money for
no instruments, for no music
lessons. Shit, you lucky if you
got a record player.

The crowd crams close to the center of attention -- a
track-suited **DJ** -- spinning records on a turntable.

KRS-ONE (V.O.)
Two records, two songs, cued to
their musical interlude. Or what's
called a "break". Switching from
one break to the other, we'd get --

The percussive BREAK "loops", repeating itself. You can't
help but shake your head. Everyone makes way for DANCERS.

They pop, lock and spin on a CARDBOARD dance floor. The
DJ fist-pumps the air, rocks the party --

DJ
Somebody say *ho-ho ho-ho-ha!*
(everyone does)
Somebody say *yeah you's a suckah!*

The party goes *nuts*, echoing the DJ and bouncing to his
breaks. We CLOSE on the swaying mass until we're in a --

NIGHT CLUB

SULLIVAN (V.O.)
*Club DJ's started spinning breaks
with a Mic Controller up front --
an MC -- to pump the party. They
did so with little rhymes. Always
boastful. Like Muhammad Ali.*

An MC swaggers to the STAGE, "challenging" everyone --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MCA

If you ain't down with MCA you got a problem, because I'm knocking out all bums, I'm knocking out all bums, you see!

SULLIVAN (V.O.)

Rhymes about how amazing they were at everything from rapping, to dancing, to rocking a party.

DANCE FLOOR -- Among the crowd, find a Kangol-wearing YOUNG RAPPER, watching. Waiting...

KRS-ONE (V.O.)

But another MC would watch like, yeah yeah, he's alright. But I'm pretty fly too. So I'll outdo him.

YOUNG RAPPER, struts on stage. Snatches a microphone --

YOUNG MAN

(rapping)

Hold on Busy Bee, I don't mean to be bold / But put that "baw wit da baw" bullshit on hold.

ICE CUBE (V.O.)

You can't have two people in the same room, both saying they The Best, you know what I'm saying?

But -- CUT to the YOUNG RAPPER and MC now on stage together, laughing. Hugging. It's all good.

SHOTS of "Crews" of MC's battling against each other in the BRONX. Now, **QUEENS**. Now, rap's spread to **BROOKLYN**.

KRS-ONE (V.O.)

It was our way of talking to each other. "Yo, we representing Queens. What's up with Brooklyn?"

THE UNITED STATES spins from NYC. Drops us in --

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DAY

A series **SHOTS** now establish LOS ANGELES. The rougher hoods of its roughest areas in 1980s.

SULLIVAN (V.O.)

When rap made its way West, there wasn't a night club-Hip Hop scene for it to flourish in.

(beat)

There was a gang scene.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANGBANGERS flaunt their chrome gats. Their dope. Their scars from bullet and stab wounds worn like badges of honor. A GANGSTER RAPPER talks to camera --

MAC-10

We talk about money, dope, ho's, cars, guns, what else? That's reality. There's violence everywhere. California streets is full of all that shit.

G-RIDES -- Convertibles on hydraulics bounce barely-clad girls down the boulevard. Past a sign for CRENSHAW --

SULLIVAN (V.O.)

And aside from other gangster MCs, the main antagonist of West Coast rappers... was the Police.

Straight Outta Compton -- N.W.A.'s VIDEO blasts at full, furious, volume. In it the young, black, rappers are hounded by a relentless antagonist: The LAPD.

SULLIVAN (V.O.)

Not dancing, not rocking a party -- gangster rap emphasized skills on the street. It told tales of Inner City survival and struggle. But in 1988, when NWA's Straight Outta Compton sold three million albums, over 80% of those sales... were to White America.

SUBURBAN MALL KIDS in NWA hats. Queuing in record stores.

SULLIVAN (V.O.)

Music labels were making money hand over fist.

DAN QUAYLE -- with awkward, Vice Presidential indignation, makes a speech. LAPD OFFICERS stand stoically behind him.

DAN QUAYLE

Here is a very influential corporation, Time Warner, supporting and making money off a record that suggests it's OK to kill cops. I find that outrageous.

ICE-T talks to camera:

ICE-T

You know what mother fucker...

STOCK FOOTAGE -- LAPD strangling, dragging and hitting BLACK YOUTHS. A WATER CANNON blows a child off her feet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ICE-T (V.O.)

*The average kid from the ghetto
has never been helped by no cop. I
ain't never seen no cop help a cat
down from a tree. I get my car
searched, my body searched with no
probable cause. Why? Cos Police
are the biggest gang there is.*

The **BEATING OF RODNEY KING** plays in excruciating slow-motion. Four WHITE COPS over a prone body. Batons, boots and body blows. We feel every crack and kick.

ICE-T (V.O.)

*Rodney King. That shit was the
confirmation, the exposure, of
everything we'd been rapping
about. This is what it's like to
be black in LA.*

(beat)

So fuck the police.

AN INTERVIEW: LAPD Chief BERNARD PARKS (50), black, distinguished in his dress blues, speaks incredulously --

PARKS

*I talked to many white officers
who told me they felt their
colleagues were justified in using
that level of force. I was...*

A NEW INTERVIEW: A CLEAN-CUT COP. White. Young but serious -- frowns at the interviewer.

CLEAN-CUT COP

*If they want to kill themselves we
should just let them kill
themselves. I mean who cares?
Less work for us, really.*

SULLIVAN (V.O.)

*But the LAPD was about to have
more work than it could handle.*

The FOUR COPS who beat Rodney King stand in COURT.

FOREMAN

*We the jury, find the Defendants
Not Guilty...*

CLOSE UP of ICE CUBE.

ICE CUBE

Boom.

THE LOS ANGELES RIOTS. A SERIES of SHOTS show days of mayhem, murder and rage exploding across the city.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SULLIVAN (V.O.)

The 1992 LA Riots would last for four days.

A PHALANX of COPS retreat from an angry MOB.

SULLIVAN (V.O.)

It wasn't until the Army, National Guard and Marines were brought in, that LA returned to its natural, simmering, state. Though black communities had joined together in venting their communal rage, the riots did not bring the West Coast's most notorious rappers closer together.

SUGE KNIGHT. An enormous, black bear of a man, dwarfs the musician next to him -- DR. DRE.

SULLIVAN (V.O.)

Producer Dr. Dre, left NWA to join Suge Knight's Death Row Records. Knight was determined to wrest creative and financial control of rap from white run music industry.

SHOTS of SUGE with his cadre of gangster rappers -- SNOOP DOGG. The D.O.C. And finally... **TUPAC SHAKUR.**

SULLIVAN (V.O.)

He succeeded. Death Row grew to be one of music's most powerful labels. Not just in gangster rap, not just hip hop, but all of music. The Rap Universe epicenter shifted from New York to Los Angeles. It shifted to a label many felt was more gangster than musician. But Death Row's throne atop a Billion dollar industry was unchallenged.

(beat)

Until New York rose again.

SEAN "P-DIDDY" COMBS. WITH his cadre of rappers: MARY J. BLIGE. MASE. And finally... **THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.**

SULLIVAN (V.O.)

BAD BOY RECORDS. Rap now had two labels in the same room both saying they were the Best. But this wasn't a party. It wasn't a Hip Hop battle from the 80s...

Hit 'em Up. TUPAC'S video. Its antagonists are lampooned versions of P-DIDDY and THE NOTORIOUS BIG.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

TUPAC

(rapping)

*First all, fuck your bitch and the
clique you claim / West Side, when
we ride come equipped with game /
You claim to be a player but I
fucked your wife / We bust on Bad
Boys niggers fucked for life.*

Hit 'em Up sound-tracks FOOTAGE of skirmishes between DEATH ROW and BAD BOY entourages at award shows and concerts.

ICE-T (V.O.)

*You got these thug elements in
every crew that have no way to
prove their value to the rapper
other than by thugging: beating
cameramen, interviewers, haters.
They want their stripes. They want
to prove they belong, they want to
prove this ain't just a show, they
want to prove they actually would --*

GUNSHOTS smash-cut us to a **BULLET-RIDDLED CAR**. A TV REPORTER announces Tupac--

TV REPORTER

*--Shakur died from complications
from several bullet wounds. He was
twenty-five years old. The car was
driven by Marion "Suge" Knight,
the head of Death Row Records.*

SULLIVAN (V.O.)

*In September of 1996, The
Notorious B.I.G. paid gang members
\$1 million to kill Tupac Shakur.*

GUNSHOTS smash-cut us to a **BULLET-RIDDLED SUV**.

SULLIVAN (V.O.)

*Six months later, Biggie dared to
venture West. There, thug elements
devoted to Shakur exacted revenge.*

The IMAGE of Biggie's SUV freezes --

INT. ABC NEWS - SULLIVAN'S DESK - TODAY

-- PULL-BACK from the image on a computer screen. An INTERN (20) sits at a makeshift editing suite with the narrator of the previous footage -- **SULLIVAN**. He's cocksure. Greying -- maybe 45 -- but in a handsome way that says he owns the place.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

An EMMY, that foot-high golden statuette, that symbol of excellence, sits in pride of place.

SULLIVAN

Hold here a frame longer. And cut the racist cop.

INTERN

Doesn't he give a current audience context for the '96 LAPD?

SULLIVAN

Rodney King does that.

BELSHER (O.C.)

Hell of another day in paradise.

BELSHER (50), erstwhile New Yorker, slumps behind his desk across from Sullivan's in the open ABC NEW BULLPEN.

BELSHER

See the show last night?

SULLIVAN

Yeah, tough break. Sorry, man. Nobody watches the D-Block.

BELSHER

God, I love it you're an asshole.

SULLIVAN

I can't hear you behind my Emmy.

BELSHER

I said you're a one-hit wonder who's done nothing of note for 20 years.

SULLIVAN

Hell of a hit, though. Which is why ABC News wants me to do a 20 Year look-back.

BELSHER

Sure about that?

SULLIVAN

Yeah, where you been, Belsh? Oh, that's right: down in the Basement typing articles from the 1920s in the Story Database.

BELSHER

I got a story I can break for you: a 20 Year look-back on your one claim to fame...? Edwards gave it to Harrison.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SULLIVAN

You come back at me with Harrison?

BELSHER

He's been on it for two weeks.

INT. ABC NEWS - EDITING FLOOR - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

SULLIVAN tears down the corridor, jabbing his head into various EDITING SUITES. He grabs a STAFFER.

SULLIVAN

You seen Harrison?

STAFFER

He's in Edit Bay 1.

That slows Sullivan -- *because Edit Bay 1 is...*

INT. EDIT BAY 1 - MOMENTS LATER

...all the bells and whistles. Where ABC edits its important segments. **HARRISON** (45, intense) oversees veteran EDITORS at banks of sound-boards and SCREENS.

ON THE SCREENS: *Hip Hop* footage -- being diced, spliced and cut.

FIND **SULLIVAN** watching -- seething.

INT. ABC NEWS - ROSE ROOM - DAY

A roomful of bright eyes and 22-YEAR OLDS stare up at EDWARDS(68), the silver-haired Editor-in-Chief of ABC News and a veteran of the Old School.

EDWARDS

You went to Yale, Columbia, UNC.
You're a hundred thousand dollars
in debt and now you want to work
for free. For me. You're liberal,
you're conservative, you don't give
a shit, well neither do I. I have
only two journalistic creeds. One:
there is no bias in facts.

SULLIVAN bursts in.

SULLIVAN

I need a word. Now.

EDWARDS

(speaking of Sullivan)
Some of you may get very lucky.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDWARDS (CONT'D)

And find success while you're still a kid, which would be too soon, because you wouldn't learn procedure, protocol or patience.

SULLIVAN

See what he did there, kids? That's called *alliteration*. A rhetorical element Editors use to make you swallow their bullshit.

EDWARDS -- a cool, elder, statesmen --

EDWARDS

You are aware, in the years since your documentary, new information has come to light which dispels important sections of its content.

SULLIVAN

Who told you that?

EDWARDS

The LAPD.

SULLIVAN

Of course the LAPD says that. They never solved the god damned case!

EDWARDS

It's the FBI's position, too.

(a practiced statement)

This is ours: *"the impending 20th Anniversary of the unsolved murders of Tupac Shakur and Christopher Wallace has caused us to re-evaluate our celebrated documentary on the subject. This re-evaluation has revealed several inaccuracies which will be corrected in an upcoming retrospective"*.

(beat)

We're distancing ourselves from your documentary. You can't be the face of how we do that.

SULLIVAN rooted there. Pole-axed, but covering it in front of their audience.

EDWARDS

Besides, you're too big for a music retrospective.

SULLIVAN

See what he did there, kids...? He flattered me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He slides out, his wounded pride doesn't shut the door.
EDWARDS does. He turns back to his INTERNS.

EDWARDS

And two: *Your emotions are the
enemy of facts.*

INT. ABC NEWS BULLPEN - SULLIVAN'S DESK - MOMENTS LATER

SULLIVAN shoves his shit into a briefcase -- ignoring
BELSHER, smirking a few feet away.

BELSHER

Sully, is there one "m" or two in
"Emmy"?

INT. ABC NEWS - RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER

SULLIVAN storms through the lobby. Word travels fast. Or
he was last to know. All eyes on him.

PRE LAP: TUPAC'S *All Eyez on Me*

EXT. ABC NEWS - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

SULLIVAN smokes on the hood of a 4-door family sedan. A
deep breath and a flush of humiliation that's quickly
banished. Mind racing. He hops down from the SEDAN...

...and gets into his car. A 911 PORSCHE BOXSTER.

EXT. THE GETTY VILLA - NIGHT

Car-lights stream under the dark cliffs of Malibu.

The expansive GETTY CENTER towers over them, glowing
tonight with black-tie importance.

INT. GETTY VILLA - BALLROOM - LATER

An epic GALA of LA POWER PLAYERS rubbing shoulders with
CELEBRITIES, POLITICIANS and ATHLETES.

BAR

-- HARRISON. Talking to JESSICA (42). She's flame-haired
and razor-sharp. One of *The LA Times'* youngest editors.

Sullivan waits for Harrison's exit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULLIVAN

This is why I love the Getty Ball.
Such a mix of high and low brows.

JESSICA

Why is Harrison asking me about
Tupac Shakur and Biggie Smalls?

SULLIVAN

Did he say what he's focusing on?

JESSICA

Retraction.

She lets the word lie heavy between them. A wave of anger
colors Sullivan's face.

SULLIVAN

You want to paint me with that
condescending brush for something
I did 20 years ago -- fine. If
some elements of my documentary
have been disproved -- fine.
Story's evolve. But I earned the
chance to remind the world this
story still exists.

JESSICA

Ha. You want to remind the world
that you still exist.

SULLIVAN

You know everything don't you?

JESSICA

And if they retract the only story
you hang your hat on, well, where
will you hang your hat?

SULLIVAN

Is that an invitation? These guys
were failed...

JESSICA

Sully, Sully. I don't know
everything but I was your college
girlfriend so I know what you look
like when you're full of shit.
You look like you. So don't stand
here and tell me you care about
Tupac Shakur or Christopher
Wallace and their unsolved
murders.

SULLIVAN

I do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JESSICA

Then who shot them?

Sullivan, ready with the easy retort but nothing comes --

EXT. GETTY CENTER - BALCONY - LATER

SULLIVAN, cell phone pressed to his ear.

SULLIVAN (ON PHONE)

Max. It's Sullivan -- wait, wait,
don't hang up -- Just, listen to
me. I need the name of your guy
at the FBI. Just 5 minutes with
him. Max...?

Snaps the phone shut.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

Asshole.

He looks over the turbulent Pacific. Calculating.

EXT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Two FLAGPOLES. The STARS and STRIPES on one. On the
other: The Great Seal of the Los Angeles Police
Department. *To protect and serve.*

SULLIVAN heads past them to the glass, chrome and
concrete headquarters of the LAPD.

INT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER

SULLIVAN strolls charmingly, confidently, up to a greying
DESK SERGEANT (55).

SULLIVAN

Afternoon. I'm here to see, hold
on...

He makes a show of rifling through his pockets and
briefcase.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

What was his name? I'm here to see
Officer... shit, I can't find his
card.. He's in charge of the
Christopher Wallace investigation?

The SERGEANT makes a show of crossing his arms, unmoved.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

I had a meet with him. I'm John Rogers from the Governor's office.

SERGEANT

For a reporter, you sure are a shit actor.

SULLIVAN

Sorry?

SERGEANT

You should have said you were with a Councilman's office. I was a detective for thirty years.

SULLIVAN

You must not have been any good.

SERGEANT

Good enough to notice you walking into *ABC News* every morning.

SULLIVAN

That was a gimme.

SERGEANT

Talk to Russell Poole.

The name snaps Sullivan to attention.

SULLIVAN

Russell Poole was lead on the case when we had the *Raiders*. I need to talk to the guy on it now.

SERGEANT

There's another reason I know you're not from the Governor's Office.

It takes a second to dawn on Sullivan --

SULLIVAN

You mean the LAPD's got nobody...?

The SERGEANT scribbles down an address.

SERGEANT

Talk to Poole.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - INTERSTATE 10 - DAY

Sullivan's PORSCHE zips through mid day traffic, heading East from downtown. Toward LA's satellite ex-burbs...

EXT. TRAILER PARK COMPLEX - LATER

A cluster of single-wide TRAILER HOMES rust in the desert sun. SULLIVAN'S PORSCHE creeps hesitantly toward them. Stops at a lonely one -- its every window tin-foiled over.

He steps out and looks over the neighborhood. American flags fly over the strewn car parts in every yard.

SULLIVAN

I've come sixty miles for a yard sale.

He knocks on the flimsy door. Waits. Realizes a man -- a NEIGHBOR -- is watching him.

NEIGHBOR

He's in there.

SULLIVAN

I just knocked.

NEIGHBOR

Go on in. We don't lock nothing around here.

Sullivan waits a beat. Would rather not stand with this guy so he nudges the door. It opens. Sullivan stops... can't help but point his keys and remote *lock his car*.

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - MOMENTS LATER

SULLIVAN pushes in. Squints into the dark. A cone of lamp-light glows on a table. SULLIVAN steps in.

SULLIVAN

Russell Poole?

Sullivan peers into the dim, eyes adjusting. As they do... holy shit.

A **WAR ROOM** comes into focus: CRIME SCENE PHOTOS of **Biggie Smalls** and **Tupac Shakur** on CORKBOARDS. MAPS of LA crisscrossed with colored yarn.

FILE CABINETS and a TIMELINE of EVENTS line the walls.

He steps further in, toward the table top lamp. Under it: an AUTOPSY DRAWING of TUPAC SHAKUR. The floor creaks.

Sullivan stiffens at the sound someone approaching...

RUSSELL POOLE emerges slowly from the dark. He's twenty years past being running fit. Thinning on top, expanding in the middle. A sad limp gaits his walk, but some bitter fury propels him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His glare at Sullivan is colored with contempt.

SULLIVAN

I knocked. I'm Sullivan.

POOLE

I recognize you.

(beat)

Your documentary was a pile of shit.

SULLIVAN

The Emmy's would disagree with you.

POOLE keeps the death stare.

POOLE

You misquoted me.

SULLIVAN

Impossible to do in a documentary.

POOLE steps forward. Cocked like he might take a swing.

SULLIVAN

Hey, I was doing a job.

POOLE

You wouldn't know how to do a job.

SULLIVAN

Can you just tell me who shot The Notorious B.I.G.?

Just like that. Poole, incredulous, stops in his tracks.

POOLE

You came all the way out here for some click-bait quote? You got some balls.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

I'm not a blogger. And you're shelled up in here like a mad, donut-eating, scientist. You're telling me you're not dying to give me a name?

POOLE

What I'm dying to do is punch you in your god damned mouth.

SULLIVAN

Well. I'd call the police, detective.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

POOLE

And you trust they'd come, right?
Trust they'd do their job.

SULLIVAN

I know how to do my job.

POOLE

A white guy shoots and kills a
black guy. Who's at fault?

Sullivan shrugs like *Christ, what is this?*

SULLIVAN

Is that a riddle?

Poole's silence says it isn't.

SULLIVAN

(this is stupid)
I don't know.

POOLE

White guy's a cop.

SULLIVAN

You want me to say the white guy?

Poole waits.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

What does this have to do with
Biggie --

POOLE

Who's at fault?

Sullivan sighs. Looks at this limping, lonely, crank.
Not getting anywhere with this idiot.

SULLIVAN

(leaving)
Good to see you again, detective.

POOLE

Just what I thought.

EXT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - MOMENTS LATER

SULLIVAN unlocks his PORSCHE. He opens the door but
stops with sudden realization. A smug smile...

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - MOMENTS LATER

...SULLIVAN doesn't knock. Re-enters, proud, theatrical --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULLIVAN

The answer is... 'neither'.

POOLE takes a heavy step forward. Face flushed with anger.

POOLE

The answer is: *ask more questions.*

(beat)

Ask more questions you'd learn the black guy was also a cop. You'd learn he was a dirty cop cited repeatedly for off-duty road-rage incidents including two where he brandished a firearm.

Poole tears out a FILE and flips rap-sheets out like he's dealing furious cards --

POOLE (CONT'D)

Reprimand for unnecessary force.
Domestic violence. Disorderly
conduct. One for theft.

SULLIVAN

This has to do with *what*?

POOLE rounds the table, closes on Sullivan, and gets right in his face --

POOLE

The answer is: *you don't know how to do your job.* So I repeat: go fuck yourself.

Sullivan avoids Poole's eyes. Inches his way out before it gets out of hand...

INT. DELMONICO'S STEAK HOUSE - DAY

EDWARDS red wine and fine dines with other venerable editors and several blue-uniformed, grey-haired, LAPD BRASS. One of them, Commander **FASULO** (70), holds court --

FASULO

You got this little fucker -- young guy -- and he's hounding me, saying, overall, crime was up and what did I have to say about that. I said the past administration was too weak. He said -- smarmy like -- overall, rape was down. Was that due the past administration, too? I said, no, it's because the good looking girls have moved East.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A few groans amongst laughter. EDWARDS is distracted by SULLIVAN drinking in his eye-line at the bar.

EDWARDS (CONT'D)

Excuse me, gentlemen.

BAR

SULLIVAN studies the swirls in his scotch. EDWARDS sighing his way over.

SULLIVAN

You know who Russell Poole is?

EDWARDS

I don't suspect he was happy to see you.

SULLIVAN

He has anger issues.

EDWARDS

If he did to you, what you did to him...

SULLIVAN

He's still on the Wallace case. As a citizen. Has a war room with evidence all tacked up. It's sad.

EDWARDS

It can happen when a person rests their reputation on a single case.

Sully pretends that didn't sting. Sips his scotch.

SULLIVAN

He knows who killed Christopher Wallace.

EDWARDS

He told you this.

SULLIVAN

He told me a riddle.

EDWARDS

Well, solving them is investigative journalism. What do you want?

SULLIVAN

I'm going to get it out of him.

Edwards casts an impatient glance back at his table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDWARDS

You know what we call a journalist
with two strikes against him?

(beat)

A plumber.

Edwards lets it hang.

EDWARDS (CONT'D)

Look. I need a guy on the D-Block.

Sullivan looks aghast at the mention of that purgatory --

SULLIVAN

I put this division on the map and
you want to drop me to JV?

Sullivan doubles down --

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

I will get you the name,
corroborated sources...

EDWARDS

Christ, you get the shooter you'll
get your own program.

EDWARDS drops a \$20 on the bar top, paying for Sully's
scotch.

EDWARDS (CONT'D)

But, look -- Poole had some X-Files
theory the LAPD discounted. If he
had proof he would be sat at that
table over there. Not in a trailer
park.

ON SCREEN

RUSSELL POOLE. Younger. Being interviewed. Recognize him
as the CLEAN-CUT COP from the *History of Hip Hop* who said --

YOUNG POOLE

*If they want to kill themselves we
should just let them kill
themselves. I mean who cares?
Less work for us, really.*

PULL BACK to find SULLIVAN watching. Scotch in one hand,
a remote control in the other -- rewind...

YOUNG POOLE (ON TV)

*If they want to kill themselves we
should just let them kill
themselves. I mean who cares?
Less work for us, really.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*Rewind -- but further than the length of the sound bite.
Poole said more than just that...*

Poole's image clicks off, replaced with Sullivan's silhouette in the screen.

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - MORNING

POOLE dabs a note onto one of his corkboard MUGSHOTS.

POOLE
(to someone outside)
There you are.

On cue -- SULLIVAN shuffles back in. Neither too happy to see the other.

SULLIVAN
You expecting me?

POOLE
You insulted me. Probably do that to everybody, to maintain your self-image. That you're in control. Just need a few minutes in the Box with a guy to see his buttons. Then you push. You're the loudest voice in a room. You don't listen, you just wait to speak. You're preoccupied with yourself, with your past. And you can't accept being wrong.
(his verdict)
Narcissistic personality disorder.

SULLIVAN
You're a fucking psychiatrist.

POOLE
I'm a fucking conspiracy theorist. And you're back because you think you're going to outsmart something out of me.

Sullivan takes a rebuttal-preparing deep breath, but...

SULLIVAN
Fuck, that was pretty good.

LATER --

SULLIVAN browses the chaotic wall-paper of CLUES.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULLIVAN

How do you make sense of this
shit? You need to get organized.

POOLE

I'm not writing a book. And you
are literally the last asshole on
Earth I'll take advice from.

POOLE studies a spread newspaper -- columns of NUMBERS
and DECIMALS.

SULLIVAN

You into stocks?

POOLE

Baseball.

A long beat. Poole, still barely suppressed rage. Until
he can't help but say --

POOLE (CONT'D)

My son plays shortstop for
Northridge. They got Santa Cruz on
Thursday.

SULLIVAN stops at a shelf of FRAMED PHOTOS. Faded. Of a
BOY. The boy's SOCCER TEAM. The boy's TROPHIES.

SULLIVAN

Look, far be it for me to insult a
man in his castle, but, the LAPD
did refute your theory.

POOLE

Doesn't mean it wasn't right.

SULLIVAN

OK, then tell me who shot Biggie?

POOLE just glares up at Sullivan.

SULLIVAN

Come on man, I don't want me here
any more than you want me here.
Tell me what's what and I'll stop
bothering you. Who killed him?

SULLIVAN

You don't misquote me, complicate
my life, then show up twenty years
later asking favors.

He pushes back from his paper. Stands...

SULLIVAN

Let's not do this again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

POOLE

Then get out.

SULLIVAN

Don't you want the public to remember this case!

POOLE

Of course I do.

SULLIVAN

Well I'm the only one asking the question: who shot Biggie!

POOLE

I don't know.

SULLIVAN

You -- *what?* You're in a dank mobile-home twenty years after the fact on "*I don't know*"?

POOLE

A fool, a child, a hack like you, says they know things. A detective, like me, says "*I don't know*" until he has proof. I had a suspect.

SULLIVAN

What was his name?

POOLE

I wasn't allowed to meet him.

(takes in the Room)

All this *unorganized shit*... are dots. And I was good at connecting dots into a theory and a suspect.

Sullivan steels himself. *Fuck. This could take a while.*

PRE-LAP: *the notorious baseline to Biggie's Going Back to Cali -*

EXT. PETERSON AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM - MARCH 9, 1997

-- *rumbles us from the present to 1997* --

Where a CONVOY of SUVs idle among a hail of flashbulbs and screams. Fans saying the only thing fans do --

FANS

Biggie! BIG!! Biggie!

And it is him: the 300 pound rapper, CHRISTOPHER WALLACE aka THE NOTORIOUS BIG aka BIGGIE SMALLS, waves to his fans. Heaves his massive body into the convoy's middle vehicle -- a green CHEVY SUBURBAN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Among the crowd, we find an afro'd kid, TYRELL (18), staring star-struck and frozen. It's his POV watching --

BIGGIE'S CONVOY pulling away, their car speakers bumping *Going Back to Cali*.

EXT. FAIRFAX & WILSHIRE BLVD INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS - 1997

Just fifty meters gone, BIGGIE'S ride slows for a red light. B.I.G. seen laughing through his open window.

TYRELL sees a chance for an autograph. He runs for it --

-- but is cut off by --

A **BLACK CHEVY IMPALA**. It rolls up to BIG's door side.

Impala's **DRIVER** (30) -- a medium-complected black man with a fade haircut -- looks Nation of Islam, wearing a light blue SUIT & BOW-TIE.

He studies B.I.G. for a beat. Then braces a chrome plated **9mm PISTOL** and empties its clip into him.

The assassin's IMPALA screeches away.

Off TYRELL -- ten feet away -- the murder of Christopher Wallace burned in his memory.

INT. POOLE'S GARAGE-OFFICE -- TODAY

Sullivan, pen tapping on a notepad, waiting for more...

SULLIVAN

I covered that in my film.

(by rote)

Suge Knight and Death Row Records were the prime suspects.

POOLE

Good for you. You got something right.

SULLIVAN

Can you just let it go?

Poole stares a twenty year dagger at him.

SULLIVAN

Don't answer that. How long until you got to Biggie's scene?

POOLE

A month.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE holds Sullivan's stare. Testing him. Sullivan knows it. Decides to play ball --

SULLIVAN
Detective, what context led to
your involvement?

Now POOLE leans forward and through gritted teeth --

POOLE
A white cop shot a black cop.

EXT. BEHIND AM-PM MINI MART - DAY - 1997

A beige-uniformed CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY COP unfurls a map, an OLD CHINESE WOMAN at his side.

CHIP OFFICER
(on the map)
This is Cahuenga Blvd. It's right
there behind us --

A GUNSHOT RINGS OUT.

CHIP OFFICER
Get down, get down.

ANOTHER GUNSHOT POPS... the sound of a CRASH.

COP unholsters his GUN, creeps along the wall to the front of the mini-mart where --

A SCRUFFY WHITE MAN (35) jams his gun at the MITSUBISHI MONTERO crashed into the mini-mart.

CHIP OFFICER
Police! Drop your weapon! Now!

The WHITE MAN turns. He has a Fu-Manchu beard, a hat with a MARIJUANA LEAF. He slowly, deliberately, lifts a necklace from under his shirt to reveal an LAPD BADGE.

INT. POOLE'S GARAGE-OFFICE - TODAY

POOLE yanks Sullivan's pen from its hurried note-taking.

POOLE
Who was at fault?

SULLIVAN
What are we doing? Give me my
fucking pen.

POOLE
Who's at fault?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sullivan holds eye contact.

SULLIVAN

Who started it?

POOLE

It doesn't matter.

EXT. AM-PM MINI MART PARKING LOT - DAY - 1997

LAPD sirens swirl blue light around the crowd of gawkers, cordoned back by yellow police tape. LAPD BRASS confer in a huddle. They part to allow a CAR past.

POOLE (V.O.)

The specter of Rodney King still loomed over the city so there was only one way it was going to end.

Nervous LAPD eyes follow the car as it parks under a billboard for *The Raiders* -- Just Win, Baby.

POOLE (V.O.)

I was the only idiot to think otherwise.

The DRIVER steps out. He's 20-years-younger **RUSSELL POOLE**. Athletic. Sharp. Clean cut like a 30 year-old Boy Scout.

POOLE (V.O.)

1997. Everyone thought the LAPD was filled with only one thing: racist cops. But it wasn't.

(beat)

It also had politicians...

A Lieutenant, CONMAY (50) peels from the pack of Brass.

CONMAY

Got yourself a genuine cluster of fuck, Russ. Two LAPD went Wild West. In daylight.

POOLE

Witnesses?

CONMAY

Got too god damn many.

Conmay leads him to the smashed MONTERO...

ANGLE ON - **KEVIN GAINES**. Slumped dead over the steering wheel. His eyes open. A stream of blood coagulates from a head shot. A patch of blood stains his chest. He's black.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONMAY

Cross the T's and dot the I's. We
can't have any part of this coming
back murky. The fuck went on here?

POOLE, already memorizing the scene.

Inches his way to the back of the vehicle. Slides a
finger along the truck bed. Brings it back dusted in
WHITE RESIDUE.

POOLE

(into walkie talkie)
Nora 6-2.

DISPATCH (ON WALKIE TALKIE)

Go ahead, Poole.

POOLE

Need a 20 on a green Mitsubishi
Montero.

QUICK CUTS show Poole in his element, working with
autistic focus. We don't know what the hell he's doing --
but we know he's excellent at it.

-- Snapping PHOTOS.

-- Taking MEASUREMENTS.

-- Interviewing WITNESSES.

-- He points out CCTV CAMERAS canvassing the vicinity.

LATER--

POOLE stands with the scruffy white shooter, FRANK LYGA.

LYGA

We're at a light, made eye
contact, like you do, and he asked
what the fuck I was looking at.

POOLE

Did you identify yourself?

LYGA

What, I'm gonna drop three years
cover for some road rage bullshit?

LYGA lights an angry cigarette.

POOLE

Did he identify himself?

Lyga curls his hand in gang sign language to form a b.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LYGA

Yeah. By flashing fucking Blood B's at me and screaming he was going to cap my white ass. I drove away, ask my crew! And he chased me, man. He caught up and pulled. I shot in defense. That motherfucker is not LAPD, he was a straight-up gangster I shit you not.

DISPATCH (ON WALKIE TALKIE)

Detective Poole, we have your 20.

Poole steps from Lyga and toward Gaines' SUV.

POOLE (V.O.)

It was seven days after The Notorious B.I.G. cap and not one arrest. But everyone knew who the prime suspect was...

DISPATCH (ON WALKIE TALKIE)

Vehicle belongs to a business in Tarzana.

POOLE

Advise.

DISPATCH (ON WALKIE TALKIE)

Officer Gaines' vehicle registered to Death Row Records.

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - TODAY

SULLIVAN sifts through a messy stack of PHOTOS -- finds KEVIN GAINES, smiling in his LAPD graduation blues.

SULLIVAN

(a friendly tact)

You know what I think, man? They shouldn't pay you guys shit if they don't want you to moonlight!

POOLE

What is that? You trying to be my friend? I tell you a cop's riding dirty and you say you *understand*? What school taught you journalism? Or ethics? Don't answer that.

SULLIVAN singles out PHOTOS of GAINES.

POOLE (CONT'D)

A detective thinks: the LAPD are prohibited from working for Death Row Records -- something's up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sullivan files the PHOTOS, sullenly, into their own pile.

SULLIVAN

(the photos)

There's no system to any of this.

(beat)

Why's LAPD barred from Death Row?

POOLE

There was an incident.

(beat)

Put. My photos. Down.

Sullivan complies with a sigh. Poole struggles with inner debate to either throw Sullivan out, or...

POOLE (CONT'D)

At the time the FBI had infiltrated and were investigating Death Row for laundering, gun running. And murder.

EXT. KEVIN GAINES' HOUSE - NIGHT - 1997

POOLE parks outside GAINES' modest house.

POOLE (V.O.)

Lyga. Gaines. That shooting cracked a door open. Like an idiot, I looked inside.

He walks past three CARS glistening on the middle-class driveway: a BMW, a FORD EXPLORER and a MERCEDES 420 SEL.

INT. KEVIN GAINES' HOUSE - NIGHT - 1997

Recognize KEVIN GAINES in a wedding PHOTO with GEORGIA GAINES. She sits across from POOLE, numb, but poised. Far from a hysterical widow.

POOLE

I'm sorry, Mrs. Gaines to be the bearer of this news.

GEORGIA GAINES

Please. You ain't give a shit. Just another nigger dead to you is all.

(beat)

Suge Knight's people kill him?

POOLE has a detective's poker face. Gives nothing away --

POOLE

What would make you think that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGIA GAINES

He be hanging around them too much.

POOLE

In what capacity?

GEORGIA GAINES

He do like security work for them. Maybe he saw something.

POOLE

I don't think that was the case, here, but what might he have seen?

She shrugs.

GEORGIA GAINES

You the detective.

Off POOLE.

INT. SOUTH BUREAU HOMICIDE - BULLPEN - 1997

DOZENS of DESKS cram into the office-space. TV SCREENS throughout all show some version of NEWS REPORTS of the BIGGIE SMALLS MURDER.

REPORTER (ON TV)

...still no closer to naming a suspect in the city's highest profile murder since Nicole Brown Simpson...

POOLE heads through, toward his desk, but spots CONMAY summoning him --

INT. SOUTH BUREAU HOMICIDE - CONMAY'S OFFICE - 1997

CONMAY sits behind his desk. It's well ordered, marked of middle management. POOLE follows him in.

CONMAY

What we got?

POOLE

Forensics, every eye witness, laws of Physics, all corroborate Lyga. If that's not enough, I have his radio comm: it's consistent. And CCTV footage. This was on Gaines.

CONMAY

God damn it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE

What were you hoping for?

CONMAY

Bad fucking time for the optics.

(then)

Fuck it. Just close it.

Poole nods, begins to head out, but --

POOLE

Gaines had a quarter million worth of cars in his driveway.

CONMAY

If he was alive, we'd alert IA.
He's not alive.

POOLE

Feds got a Task Force staking
Death Row for drug trafficking.
Maybe he...

POOLE trails off as CONMAY stands and goes to his door.
He shuts it.

CONMAY

Gaines had a reputation.

Poole takes a pen, opens his NOTEPAD -- Conmay shuts it.

CONMAY

Let's just say it wasn't his first
run-in. We don't need to tell the
Shooting Board something they
already know.

POOLE

They know a cop's moonlighting for
a blacklisted organization the
Feds are investigating for drug
dealing and gun running?

Conmay settles back in his seat. Doesn't answer that.

CONMAY

What's it like out there for you,
Russ? With the Negros. Not good,
nowadays, is it?

POOLE

Since when did we start playing
chess?

CONMAY

Since four white cops beat Rodney
King. Look Big Picture.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CONMAY (CONT'D)

Gaines was a violent hot-head -- a lot of them are -- and he was dirty. But we include that it'll look like we're piling on to cover our asses. Gaines buried himself, no need for us to dig for more dirt.

Poole sets his notepad in his coat pocket. OK...

POOLE

What's the word on B.I.G.? How we doing?

CONMAY

Everyone knows what the word is, and that word is our friend at Death Row.

POOLE

I was thinking...

CONMAY warns him with a passive aggressive glare.

POOLE

...that I should drop it.

EXT. DEATH ROW RECORDS - NIGHT - 1997

The DEATH ROW LOGO -- a hooded man, strapped to an electric chair -- painted onto the walls outside an otherwise nondescript STUDIO.

A crowd of YOUNG BLACK MEN mill about in a cloud of marijuana smoke and jacked up G-Rides. Bone-rattling base thunders from car speakers. A KID, maybe 15, looks up --

KID

Yo! 5-0! 5-0 running up!

POOLE -- very much not dropping it -- strolls to the studio door. Locked.

DREADLOCKS

You looking for a record deal?

A DREADLOCKED GANGSTER (28, rippled muscle on muscle) swaggers through the gathering, taunting, crowd.

POOLE

Yeah, I'm a baritone.

DREADLOCKS

Too bad business hours is closed.

He blows smoke into Poole's face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE

Anybody know Kevin Gaines?

The crowd of men tighten on Poole. A rising aggression. DREADLOCKS gets nose-to-nose but POOLE stays cool.

DREADLOCKS

The fuck is it to you?

POOLE

Just a couple questions.

DREADLOCKS

Yo, niggers inside hear a white cop out here they might be fixed to take the law into their own hands, you feel me?

He steps up into Poole's face, growls with menace --

DREADLOCKS

So get. The fuck. Out.

Poole nods. Hands up in faux surrender. He walks off through catcalls and jeers.

EXT. PINKS HOT DOGS - PARKING LOT - NIGHT - 1997

A dark, private, spot. POOLE sits on his car, munching a hot dog. A thug-shaped shadow creeps up behind him...

Poole turns, face to face with the DREADLOCKED GANGSTER.

POOLE

Hot dog?

LATER --

DREADLOCKS speaks with studied calm and FBI diction.

DREADLOCKS

I've barely made it to the outer rim, so I hear only the odd rumor. But everyone knows Suge has Police in his Inner Circle. Gaines advised on protocol, like a lookout, how to coordinate with radios, walkie-talkies, frequency scanners when they rode dirty.

He leans back into shadow as a group of men pass.

DREADLOCKS

It's nothing I'd risk cover for but they're saying: *We got Biggie.*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DREADLOCKS (CONT'D)

(beat)

Officer Gaines was an accessory.

On POOLE, staring straight ahead but with one foot down the rabbit hole...

LYGA (RECORDING)

Where the hell are you guys...?

Listen, I've got a problem...

INT. OFFICER INVOLVED SHOOTING UNIT BOARD - DAY - 1997

FRANK LYGA sits with his LAWYER at a conference table. Across him are several CAPTAINS, a CLERK -- and POOLE.

A TAPE RECORDER plays Lyga's frantic radio communication.

LYGA (RECORDING)

There's a black guy in a green

Jeep on my ass. I need you guys...

Oh God. I think he's got a gun!

Where are you guys?

A moment of indecipherable static.

LYGA (RECORDING)

I JUST SHOT SOMEBODY! I NEED HELP!

POOLE clicks off the recording.

POOLE

At this point Officer Blake of the Highway Patrol secured the scene.

CAPTAIN

Thank you, Detective. For the record do you have any additional facts to refute or strengthen any testimony given today?

Poole's jaw tightens as he wrestles with his conscience.

POOLE

Nothing as yet I can prove.

CAPTAIN

(there's more?)

Detective?

CONMAY nails him a *what-the-fuck-are-you-doing?* glare.

POOLE

Sir, I have nothing for the record.

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - TODAY

SULLIVAN takes the stack of GAINES PHOTOS and sets them under a CORKBOARD labelled DEATH ROW RECORDS.

SULLIVAN

Why'd you give a shit?

POOLE

Guy like you wouldn't understand.

SULLIVAN

Try me.

Again, Poole struggles his detest of Sullivan against wanting to share things such as --

POOLE

Bobby Kennedy said: *every society gets the kind of criminal it deserves--*

SULLIVAN

--and every community gets the kind of law enforcement it insists on.

POOLE looks up, surprised by Sullivan. If he's impressed he quickly hides it.

POOLE

We used to call each other Brother Officer. When I came on the Force.

Poole stops himself from going there. Changes tact.

POOLE

You ever raised a child?

SULLIVAN

Fuck no.

POOLE

You ever sworn a vow to be faithful to something?

SULLIVAN

OK, you're breaking my heart.

POOLE

Like I said. A guy like you.

SULLIVAN

Here's a better question: why'd Conmay care?

POOLE takes a beat. Sits with Sullivan's expensive suit and bankrupt code. Everything he hates. Finally --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE

The LAPD's a public institution.
Reports become public record. And
no PD in the world wants public
that they got dirty cops...

INT. SOUTH BUREAU HOMICIDE - CONMAY'S OFFICE - DAY - 1997

CONMAY paces red-faced behind his desk.

CONMAY

What the fuck was that!

POOLE

Gaines might have been into more --

CONMAY

-- I don't give a fucking shit,
Columbo! We're not Internal
Affairs. What you want to do?
Arrest him?

POOLE

We're looking away?

CONMAY

Drop the Boy Scout bullshit, Russ.
I asked you not to complicate a
simple case. Lyga's cleared, he's
home having a fucking martini. But
you're fucked off because I didn't
give you a soap box to wax lyrical
about the Shield. Instead you kept
your mouth shut and protected it.
What do you want?

INT. PARKER CENTER - LOBBY - DAY - 1997

POOLE

Detective Russell Poole reporting
for Robbery-Homicide.

A portly desk sergeant, REESE (55), looks up.

REESE

Welcome to the Club.

The glass/steel headquarters is the heart, brain and
central nervous system of the LAPD. It's the Big Time...

As if to drive this point home **CHIEF BERNARD PARKS** (52,
black, senatorial) strides through the lobby with a
retinue of CAPTAINS and LIEUTENANTS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE swallows hard. Stands an inch prouder. He almost salutes.

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - TODAY

SULLIVAN eyes Poole with a growing, smug, recognition...

SULLIVAN

You scammed your way up.

POOLE

What? I don't scam.

SULLIVAN

I do. And that's how it works.

POOLE

Next time you suggest we're anything alike you're calling 911 because I'm knocking you out. After the Shooting Board I had a bad taste in my mouth.

SULLIVAN

Nothing like a promotion to wash it out.

INT. ROBBERY-HOMICIDE - HALLWAY - DAY - 1997

POOLE shakes hands with MILLER (58), portly, the last of his hair greying.

MILLER

Detective Poole you come highly recommended.

POOLE

Thank you, sir.

MILLER

Nope: Fred or Miller. This is Parker Center. We get the high profile cases but we don't act like the Marines.

INT. ROBBERY-HOMICIDE - WALLACE WAR ROOM - DAY - 1997

MILLER leads POOLE through the WAR ROOM. It's not unlike a more organized version of Poole's garage.

POOLE (V.O.)

Every detective in LA wants on Robbery-Homicide, I was no different, but you don't scam in.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*You get in by being the best at
 one thing: solving murders...*

MILLER guides POOLE through the CRIME SCENE PHOTOS and FORENSIC EVIDENCE. Detectives in their element. An AUTOPSY DRAWING of the deceased --

MILLER
 Four gunshots. Fourth one was the kill shot striking the liver, left lung and heart. Shooter popped him with Gecko 9mms.

MILLER pulls a plastic bag with expelled BULLET CASINGS.

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - TODAY

POOLE pounds ENLARGED PHOTOS of BULLETS onto the table. He scatters FOUR REAL ONES.

POOLE
 Geckos are only manufactured in Germany.

INT. ROBBERY-HOMICIDE - WALLACE WAR ROOM - DAY - 1997

MILLER takes the plastic bag.

MILLER
*They're rare.
 (another PHOTO)
 Vehicle was a Chevy Impala SS.
 Black. No plates.*

POOLE studies the PHOTO --

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - TODAY

POOLE slaps down COLOR PHOTOS of a BLACK CHEVY IMPALA SS.

INT. ROBBERY-HOMICIDE - WALLACE WAR ROOM - DAY - 1997

MILLER stops at a life-sized black & white DRAWING --

MILLER
 Seven eye witnesses gave us this composite.

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - TODAY

POOLE unfurls the large SKETCH. It resembles perfectly the SHOOTER we saw.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE

Our shooter.

ON SULLIVAN. Face to face with the suspect. *Just needs his name...*

INT. ROBBERY-HOMICIDE - WALLACE WAR ROOM - DAY - 1997

POOLE opens a large VOLUME -- THE MURDER BOOK -- full of every photo, drawing and statement the case has compiled.

MILLER

We got a \$50,000 reward for information that's landed us exactly jack-credible-shit.

POOLE looks up. *What the fuck?*

MILLER

Silence. You ever heard of that? Not a peep.

POOLE

I've flipped cases for 500 bucks.

MILLER

Which is how we know this wasn't gang-bang. There's no bragging, nobody getting inked. It was professional, coordinated and silent. Thoughts?

We might see a tell in Poole's eyes, but --

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - TODAY

SULLIVAN gauges POOLE dubiously --

SULLIVAN

You were *promoted* to the biggest case in your career -- because you're the best and everything -- but you didn't tell him what you heard about Death Row having Gaines and other cops?

POOLE

No. Asshole. Because you know what we called a cop that accused another cop of being dirty? A piece of shit. Because it's a stink that ruins you until you die. At that point I didn't know how Miller would react.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULLIVAN

You told Conmay.

POOLE

I told Conmay I thought something was up, smart ass. You know how that went. And we were about to meet one of Miller's informants, a "closer" -- the kind that solves cases -- who was in the same lock up as Suge. I knew if the Gaines tip was legit it'd come up again.

INT. TWIN TOWERS CORRECTIONAL FACILITY, INTERROGATION
ROOM - 1997

A door UNBOLTS open. Two SHERIFFS usher in the informant, MICHAEL "Psycho Mike" ROBINSON. He's black, and gangster-lean. Could pass for 20, could be 40.

MILLER

Psycho, you piling on pounds?

MILLER and POOLE already waiting in the white room. Three chairs around a TABLE.

MILLER

Can we uncuff the man? He's among friends.

A SHERIFF uncuffs ROBINSON and they all sit. Miller proffers a cigarette. ROBINSON snatches it, eyes Poole.

ROBINSON

Who the fuck this?

MILLER

He's Detective Poole. He's new, so he's nobody, but he's delighted.

ROBINSON

Still waiting to hear how reduced my sister's sentence gonna get.

A silence as the men stare each other down. Miller not giving an inch.

ROBINSON

Guys see me get called in here, they get suspicious, you know?

MILLER

(to Poole)

We're not even here, are we?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE

And I'm nobody.

MILLER

How's Suge settling in?

Robinson takes a deep drag. Shifts in his seat.

ROBINSON

He saying "We hit 'em up. And BIG took it like a fat bitch".

POOLE

How was it coordinated?

ROBINSON

Motherfucker, eat a dick, who is talking to you?

(to Miller)

You better tell you're boy.

MILLER

It's not a bad question.

ROBINSON

You think he be drawing it up in the Yard?

(beat)

Every Blood saying Biggie put the hit out on Suge and Tupac. Bad Boy got Pac. This was some straight up eye-for-an-eye shit. But Suge didn't have no thugs ride on it.

(to Poole)

Because thugs talk about how they coordinate.

(beat)

You got a sketch?

MILLER takes out the COMPOSITE DRAWING but Robinson waves it away. Don't need to look at it --

ROBINSON (CONT'D)

He's clean cut, a fade hair-do. Medium complexion. Suit and bow-tie like a Louis Farrakhan Muslim.

That's EXACTLY what he looks like. POOLE and MILLER share poker faces.

ROBINSON

He a contract hitter. Real quiet. His name's Amir Muhammad.

MILLER

Suge called it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROBINSON

Think Suge pop off at the mouth
like that? He at the top of the
food chain. Insulated. Some
other nigger called it. A *Mob*
Piru Blood. His name D-Mack.

POOLE writes these name in his notepad --

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - TODAY

SULLIVAN writes these names in his notepad --

D-Mack. Amir Muhammad.

-- folds it up and gathers his things. Triumph. Relief.

POOLE

Sit down.

SULLIVAN

Now you want to talk. I got what
I need.

POOLE

No. You didn't.

SULLIVAN

I saw the composite sketch. And I
got his name.

POOLE

Run with it, see what happens.

SULLIVAN

Something you're not telling me?

POOLE

Asshole, there is a whole *book* of
things I'm not telling you.

SULLIVAN

You don't think you can trust me.

POOLE

I know I can't trust you.

SULLIVAN

Because I reported something *that*
you just told me?

POOLE

Christopher Wallace had nothing to
do with Tupac's murder. Every
minute we spent with that bullshit
was a minute we didn't spend --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULLIVAN

-- Miller's informant said it.

POOLE

He was misinformed.

SULLIVAN

A misinformed informant!
Beautiful. Maybe he was misinformed
about the shooter. Maybe your Fed
was misinformed about Gaines.

POOLE

There were LAPD inside Death Row.

SULLIVAN

Why does every sad sack ex-cop
have a Conspiracy Theory?

POOLE

Why does every journalist have a
personal agenda?

Sullivan's done with this. Heads for the door...

SULLIVAN

I'll say an "unnamed source".

POOLE

Amir Muhammad has never been
arrested -- let alone *charged* --
with a crime. He was interviewed
and cleared by the *LA Times*.

(beat)

Name him and you risk a libel suit.

SULLIVAN turns, exasperation turning angry --

SULLIVAN

Do you hear how much you fuck
yourself! An "Ultra reliable
informant was right about this,
but misinformed about that.
Here's the shooter but he's
actually a law-abiding citizen!"

POOLE

Yeah. It's a mess.

SULLIVAN

You're a fucking mess. Jesus
Christ! Look at this place. Look
at yourself -- surrounded by this
shit -- what the fuck are you
doing in here!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

POOLE

I'm looking for the smoking gun.

SULLIVAN

I tell you what: when you find it --
do yourself a favor -- and put it
in your mouth.

He tears out of the rickety trailer.

POOLE (O.S.)

Stanley Kirk Burrell.

Sullivan turns back.

SULLIVAN

What?

POOLE

You're right when you say I don't
want the public to forget. You
want the name? You're a piece of
shit but... Stanley Kirk Burrell.

EXT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - MOMENTS LATER

SULLIVAN unlocks his PORSCHE. Catching his breath. *He did it.* He gets in and --

INT. ABC NEWS - SULLIVAN'S DESK - DAY

SULLIVAN drops into his desk chair and fires up his computer. BELSHER across from him two-fingers jabbing his keyboard.

SULLIVAN

Two "m's".

BELSHER

How's that?

SULLIVAN

In *Emmy*.

BELSHER

Oh, come on, man. You dish it out.

SULLIVAN

Easy to do when you're on top.
I've got myself back re-hired.

BELSHER

Are you serious? How?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULLIVAN

Stanley Kirk Burrell.

(off Belsher)

I just scooped the name of
Biggie's shooter.

BELSHER is stock still and extremely *serious*. He types quickly into his computer. Nods with a somber discovery.

BELSHER

My God... Sully. Look. It's
Stanley Kirk Burrell...

He rotates his screen -- playing a YouTube clip...
of MC HAMMER. *Can't Touch This*.

Sullivan, almost hearing Poole laughing at him.

INT. SULLIVAN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

BIGGIE'S *Hypnotize* bumps loud and thick from bedside Bose speakers. A bottle of scotch rattles precariously.

SULLIVAN furiously shags a long-limbed brunette, PETRA (25) from behind. He comes. Collapses. Petra rolls over and lights her compensation cigarette.

PETRA

(Eastern European)

Bad day at your office?

SULLIVAN just glares at the ceiling.

PETRA (CONT'D)

That's how you fuck when you're
angry.

SULLIVAN

Edwards. Is my boss. And he knew
I was going hit a dead end today.

PETRA

With what?

He lights a cigarette, drinks from the bottle.

SULLIVAN

With some hermit telling me he
knows who killed Biggie Smalls.

PETRA

Who's he?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULLIVAN

He's my career. And I get to hang onto it if I can find out who killed him.

He smokes pensively. Can't let it go.

SULLIVAN

This guy. I just need to get him drunk. Loosen him up. He's the closed door and the key.

Petra laughs.

PETRA

What a silly thing to say. You are not some great Ernest Hemingway.

SULLIVAN

What is it you think I do?

PETRA

I don't care, really.

SULLIVAN

You have poor bedside manner.

PETRA

OK. Tell me something about me.

SULLIVAN

You are from the Czech Republic.

PETRA

Estonia.

SULLIVAN

Same thing, smart ass, tell me something about me.

PETRA

You are self absorbed and lazy. You have no patience. Even with fucking you just hurry to finish.

SULLIVAN

We should qualify our roles here.

PETRA

On my job -- on a weekly basis -- I work with guys like you. *Daddy never listened, the boss is an idiot, that guy is a hermit.*

SULLIVAN

You make too much money to talk to me like this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PETRA

I don't make enough to be a therapist, too. But I give this to you for free: you don't listen, you're the idiot. And you think going to parties means you're not a hermit.

With that, PETRA gets up, takes her wages -- three crisp Benjamins -- off Sullivan's Bose speakers.

EXT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - DAY

SULLIVAN alone in his Porsche. Trying to bring himself to go in. The world mocking him. He loathes everything. Even himself, a little.

The NEIGHBOR scratches on the window --

NEIGHBOR

Today's baseball.

SULLIVAN

Of course it is.

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM - CAL STATE FULLERTON - LATER

Final Inning. SULLIVAN slides into a seat, craning around for Poole. Only a few clusters of fans, but there's no sign of him.

Sullivan flips through his NOTEPAD. Studies its crisscross of names and facts when --

STADIUM ANNOUNCER

Now batting: number two, Russell Poole Jr.

A small cheering section goes crazy. A handsome WOMAN (50) leading them. Jr. waves. Obviously his family but no POOLE among them.

Then Sullivan spots him. Clapping for his son. Alone. Up in the cheap seats.

His son doesn't look up there. SULLIVAN watches the family tragedy play slowly out.

EXT. TRAILER PARK COMPLEX - LATER

POOLE, and his crappy SEDAN, park at his home. Finds SULLIVAN and his Porsche already there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULLIVAN
How'd your son play?

POOLE
My family's not something I'll
discuss with you.

SULLIVAN
That's fair.

POOLE
How's MC Hammer?

SULLIVAN
He can dance, man. And I deserved
that.

Poole's shoulders relax the tiniest bit. A sense of
catharsis. He cracks a smile.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)
I just want to discuss the case
with you. Calmly. I promise.

He leads the way. Can't help but be a proud father --

POOLE
He went 4 for 5 with a sac fly.

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - MOMENTS LATER

SULLIVAN watches Poole limp to the desk.

SULLIVAN
You know I was thinking, I owe you
a few beers.

POOLE
I don't drink.

SULLIVAN
What. Why?

Poole just busies himself with CRIME PHOTOS.

SULLIVAN
Do you golf?

EXT. PUTTING GREEN - DAY

POOLE lines up a putt. Taps the ball with precision. It
rolls...

...toward a ridiculous WINDMILL. At a MINIATURE GOLF
COURSE. Poole's shot rims into the hole.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULLIVAN

Banked it off the fence. Nice.

POOLE

You want to get to the trial? Or
when we arrested --

SULLIVAN

Tell it however you want to tell
it. Talk me from the next dot.

Poole retrieves his ball, thinks on it.

POOLE

The motive to kill Biggie.

EXT. MCCARRAN AIRPORT - LAS VEGAS - DAY -1997

An AIRBUS 319 glides into landing. Even in daylight, the
LAS VEGAS STRIP glows in the desert background.

I/E. RENTAL CAR - VEGAS STRIP - DAY - 1997

MILLER drives, POOLE riding shotgun. The Vegas Strip
reflects in his window. Poole sifts through FILES and
PHOTOS, still getting up to speed on the case.

MILLER

America's playground, this city.
Fucking cesspool is what it is.
How many years you got, Poole?

POOLE

Eighteen. Started in Southwest
Division.

MILLER

Southwest, god damn. Academy
doesn't teach you how to be a
white cop in the hood does it?

POOLE

Some things you learn on the job.

MILLER

That's for fucking sure. I meant
how many years you got to
retirement?

POOLE

Oh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MILLER

Never too early to start planning.
I got one. Smooth sailing after
that.

MILLER rolls his window down. The MGM GRAND HOTEL passes
and we go to --

VIDEO FOOTAGE - INT. MGM GRAND HOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

September 7, 1996. 20:49 PM. A gang of WELL-DRESSED BLACK
MEN stomp, kick and punch a prone body on the floor.

VARNEY (O.C.)

Guy getting the shit kicked out of
him is Orlando Anderson. Street
name: Baby Lane.

The picture ZOOMS onto one of the ASSAILANTS.

VARNEY (O.C.)

That's Tupac Shakur, who started
this fight. That's Tupac's
bodyguard Kevin Hackie. And this...

ZOOM onto a massive BEAR-SIZED ATTACKER.

VARNEY (O.C.)

...is Suge Knight.

Video Footage: multiple cameras track TUPAC, SUGE, HACKIE
and their ENTOURAGE fleeing the scene.

VARNEY (O.C.)

Mr. Knight just violated terms of
his parole. Which is why you find
him in a Federal penitentiary.

INT. MGM GRAND HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY - 1997

Detective VARNEY (55, tanned and slick) stands with POOLE
and MILLER at the MGM's bank of SECURITY CCTV MONITORS.

VARNEY

Baby Lane was a South Side Compton
Crip and...

MILLER

Was a Crip?

VARNEY

Too dead to be one now. Blue
versus Red, and so it goes.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VARNEY (CONT'D)

Baby Lane was beaten by a Death
Row Blood -- Tupac Shakur -- and
two hours later...

EXT. FLAMINGO ROAD/KOVAL LANE - NIGHT - SEPTEMBER 7, 1996

SUGE KNIGHT drives his black BMW to a stop at a red light.
TUPAC SHAKUR sits in the passenger seat.

VARNEY (V.O.)

Crips retaliate.

A four-door white CADILLAC rolls up alongside Suge's BMW.

The Cadillac's back WINDOW rolls down and FOUR GUNS jut
out, open fire at TUPAC SHAKUR and SUGE KNIGHT.

**EXT. MGM GRAND HOTEL - LAS VEGAS BLVD - MOMENTS LATER -
1997**

The trio of DETECTIVES exit onto the Strip. Across from
them, the "skyscrapers" of NEW YORK, NEW YORK CASINO --

VARNEY

Lane was our primary, until he got
capped in Compton. So it goes.
Street justice. Kind of admire
it's swiftness.

POOLE

You found ties between him and
Christopher Wallace?

VARNEY

Ah. The *Notorious-B.I.G-had-Tupac-*
killed Theory. It's bunk.

MILLER

We heard otherwise.

VARNEY

Us too. Wallace checked out. That
was a smokescreen motive. Not that
Wallace wasn't blamed for Tupac
anyway. So some Tupac-worshipping
Blood got him, no?

MILLER

We might have a contract hitter.

VARNEY

Good luck finding him. We had *four*
shooters and heard zero chatter.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VARNEY (CONT'D)

Suge put up a \$100,000 reward for
info and... nothing. Ever heard
the street go so quiet?

EXT. GOLF-N-STUFF MINIATURE GOLF COURSE - DAY

SULLIVAN doesn't line up his shot, just smacks his ball
into a MAZE and hopes for the best.

SULLIVAN

A smokescreen motive?

POOLE

Putting plausible word on the
street that someone's guilty of
your crime. That word spreads far
and wide enough-- even the media
will report it.

ON SULLIVAN -- yeah, he fell for exactly that.

EXT. SPANISH TRAIL COUNTRY CLUB, GOLF COURSE - DAY - 1997

MILLER tees off, his ball arcing high and right.

MILLER

Sliced it.

VARNEY

Good distance though.

They set off. Miller hands his driver to POOLE like he's
his caddy --

MILLER

Hand me that 7-iron would you?

On POOLE, frustrated, looking around like *what the hell
are we doing here?*

MILLER (CONT'D)

How many years you got, Varney?

VARNEY

Three. I'm counting the days.
Moving to Montana. You?

MILLER

One. Home stretch. Can't be much
golf in Montana?

VARNEY

I have a little girl. You raise a
girl in this city, they become a
woman in this city.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VARNEY (CONT'D)

No father wants his daughter to grow up and be Las Vegas.

POOLE

(impatient)

Have you come across the name D-Mack?

VARNEY

No.

POOLE

Amir Muhammad?

VARNEY

Never heard it.

POOLE

Tell us about Kevin Hackie.

VARNEY

There's a piece of work. Ex-LAPD.

POOLE

Shakur's bodyguard was LAPD?

VARNEY

Ex. Death Row pays better than fifty-five and benefits.

POOLE

Does he still do work for them?

VARNEY

They had a falling after Shakur's demise. He's in Vegas. We popped him for a trunk full of AK's -- you believe that shit?

POOLE

Where's he incarcerated?

VARNEY

He's out, lives off the Blackjack tables, but Hackie's a brick wall. Don't waste your time.

MILLER nears his ball.

VARNEY (CONT'D)

Truth be told our powers-that-be don't want us to close Tupac. It'd make for a goddamn circus trial. Keep that shit in LA.

MILLER

How's that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VARNEY

I'll show you our Murder Book.
Every page is a sworn statement
from an eye witness, that
contradicts a sworn statement from
another eye witness. We bring a
suspect to trial his attorney
would have a field day with it and
we'd be left holding our dicks.

(beat)

Like those LAPD dicks with OJ.

MILLER steps to his ball and adjusts his stance. Seems
unsatisfied with its lay. Stands up straight --

MILLER

You know what, go fuck yourself.

VARNEY laughs. Then -- sees Miller's serious.

VARNEY

Come again?

MILLER

You heard me. You Crisco-oiled
piece of shit.

VARNEY

(to Poole)

He serious?

POOLE doesn't know.

MILLER

Guys got royally fucked for having
the audacity to pin a murder on
the wrong man -- who happened to
be guilty -- but was lucky enough
to be black after Rodney King and
have Cochran just hinting they
were racists --

VARNEY

-- we all heard the Fuhrman tape --

MILLER

I'm talking solid guys. Lifetime
guys who've been painted with that
brush and had their retirements
ruined. Ruined. Because they had
the balls to do their job.

POOLE watches MILLER. Growing respect.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MILLER (CONT'D)

And here you are, you gutless
fucking wonder, talking about cops
you will never -- in your career --
do the police work they did on
their lunch break. And let me
tell you something else, fuck
Fuhrman. You remind me of him.

He chucks his seven-iron at Varney's feet.

MILLER

And fuck your city.

I/E. RENTAL CAR - VEGAS STRIP - DAY - 1997

POOLE drives. MILLER, riding shotgun, stares at the
passing cess pool.

EXT. FLAMINGO ROAD/KOVAL LANE - EVENING - 1997

The rental car blocks the inner lane of traffic, its
tiny, portable, blue siren detouring cars around.

POOLE in the median making notes and taking photos of the
spot Tupac was shot.

We see his autistic focus again. See him recreating
crimes behind his steely eyes.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT - 1997

POOLE watches the Vegas Strip recede into Nevada black.
A FLIGHT ATTENDANT approaches him and Miller.

MILLER

(to the Attendant)

I'll take a beer, please. Poole
what you having? It's my dime.

POOLE

Coke's fine, thanks.

MILLER

Poole, clock out. Have a beer.

POOLE

OK. I appreciate it.

The attendant serves two bottles of *Bud*. Miller pays and
the detectives sip in silence.

MILLER

Didn't mean to lose my shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Poole smirks, so does Miller. Miller laughs and Poole joins in, breaking the new partnership ice.

MILLER

I didn't think you laughed.

POOLE

I could work on my people skills.

MILLER

Don't take tips from me.

POOLE

I appreciate what you said.

MILLER

Well. You come up idolizing guys ahead of you in the force. Tom Lange, Phil Vannatter. They were Old School. And they got fucked. By the very system they propped up. But you know the worst part?

(beat)

Cochran was right.

POOLE

They were racist?

MILLER

No, god no. But that question was enough. The *bending of the truth*, just a little, was enough. That's Justice in America: just win. Lange, Vannatter, me, you -- how many cases have we cracked or crooks have we sent away by bending the truth *just a little*? Getting an informant's sister out of jail -- or saying you're going to -- threatening something here to get some good there. Justice is a game of inches, but the point is to win. And Cochran won.

(beat)

So us? We have to stick together.

POOLE

(almost blurts)

Kevin Gaines was dirty.

Miller eyes him.

MILLER

I'm listening.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

POOLE

He may have been in on the Biggie
hit. He worked for Death Row.

MILLER shifts in his seat, leans in. *Whoa, whoa...*

POOLE

I got chatter.

MILLER

Chatter from who?

POOLE

Feds got a deep swimmer inside
Death Row.

MILLER

If you're about to say what I
think you're about to say lemme
get another beer.

Poole, knows it's a Rubicon but --

POOLE

There's LAPD inside Death Row that
are loyal to Suge Knight.

EXT. GOLF-N-STUFF MINIATURE GOLF COURSE - PATIO - DAY

SULLIVAN with a beer, POOLE with a Coke and the
scorecards.

SULLIVAN

I take it accusing a Brother
officer of murder isn't a fast way
to make friends.

POOLE

In 1997? A white detective
accusing a black officer of murder
was the fast-track to meet Johnnie
Cochran.

POOLE frowns at the SCORE CARDS.

POOLE

You got a 7 on Hole Eight.

SULLIVAN

OK.

POOLE

You put a 5.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULLIVAN

The Drawbridge? I banked it off
the portcullis.

POOLE

Your first shot fell in the moat.

SULLIVAN

Then my drop shot went -- *who
gives a shit about the golf score!*
-- You said Miller was on side...

INT. ROBBERY-HOMICIDE - WALLACE WAR ROOM - DAY - 1997

POOLE moves evidence CAR ICONS across a whiteboard.

POOLE (V.O.)

Miller was on side. For a night.

MILLER listens, taking it all in.

POOLE

12:33. Wallace exits the Peterson
and gets in his SUV. It pulls
away. 40 seconds later, witnesses
all say the Impala arrives on
scene, pulls alongside Wallace.

MILLER

It wasn't waiting.

POOLE

How'd our shooter know -- to the
exact second -- when to pull up
next to the exact right car?

MILLER

Tower's got nothing on cellular.

POOLE

Walkie-talkie.

Miller stands. *That makes sense...*

INT. ROBBERY-HOMICIDE - WALLACE WAR ROOM - DAY - 1997

MILLER and POOLE, still in their clothes from last night,
pore over cellular records. A YOUNG COP pops his head in --

YOUNG COP

Holy shit, you sleep here?

MILLER

Two coffees. Now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG COP

You guys hear about Officer Gaines?

POOLE

What?

YOUNG COP

Turn on Six.

Poole clicks on the TV. Staring back at him -- and Miller -- is JOHNNIE COCHRAN.

ON TV - *Kingly in his element, Cochran stands at a podium surrounded by the family of Kevin Gaines. Including his previously indifferent wife, GEORGIA.*

JOHNNIE COCHRAN

A good man is dead. A servant of this city, is dead. Shot dead by a racist, out-of-control cop, with a history of violence. Of course the LAPD's internal investigation found him innocent. Where have we seen that before? Since they haven't done their job, I will. And we will see them in court.

EXT. GOLF-N-STUFF MINIATURE GOLF COURSE - DAY

SULLIVAN and POOLE now with pizza. Poole munches, speaks between bites. A growing comfort with Sullivan.

POOLE

\$125 million dollar civil suit.
That's bankrupt-the-LAPD money.

SULLIVAN

Complicates simultaneously
investigating Gaines connection to
Death Row.

Poole looks sideways at Sullivan.

SULLIVAN

What?

POOLE

You're thinking like a good
journalist.

SULLIVAN

Don't be a dick. What was Miller
thinking like?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE

Like a man who wanted to protect
his pension.

INT. ROBBERY-HOMICIDE - HALLWAY - DAY - 1997

POOLE clips down the hallway toward the Wallace War Room.

POOLE (V.O.)

*Everyone in LAPD knew Gaines was
dirty, but as soon as Cochran was
in his family's corner...*

The War Room door is locked.

Poole looks through its window. *MILLER'S inside with
CONMAY.*

EXT. GOLF-N-STUFF MINIATURE GOLF COURSE - DAY

Sullivan scribbles notes. Trying to keep up with the
increasingly talkative Poole.

SULLIVAN

Are closed door meetings with the
brass unusual? He was the Senior
Detective.

POOLE

And I was the Second. On LA's
highest profile murder case. You
want a private cuddle with the
Brass -- it's unusual. You want
to fly to New York to interview
Biggie's entourage and leave me
behind? They were fencing me off.

SULLIVAN

He told Conmay your cop Theory.

POOLE shrugs, like *What else?*

POOLE

They didn't want word spreading
through the Department or Media
that we were thinking, let alone
looking in-house. They hoped to
slow walk it until a suspect
emerged.

SULLIVAN

Hoping for a gangbanger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE

And that's what we got.

(beat)

We caught D-Mack.

INT. BANK OF AMERICA - DAY - 1997

CCTV FOOTAGE shows a stack of BENJAMINS flicking through manicured fingers. We POV through the footage into REAL TIME --

Behind the counter of the bank, nearly empty in the late afternoon lull, is ERROLYN ROMERO (19, and voluptuous).

A BLACK MAN enters, dressed in a three-piece gray suit. He wears sunglasses, has a tweed beret, and a TEC-9.

He's an instant menace. This is D-MACK --

MACK

All you bitches step the fuck back
from the counter!

MACK jabs his semi-automatic into the ROMERO'S face. She shrinks back, hands in the air.

TWO THUGS accompany Mack. They have the ubiquitous pantyhose over their faces and race in to assume positions.

MACK (CONT'D)

Who's Fredrick? Who the fuck is
Frederick!

After a silent beat, a BESPECTACLED MAN raises his timid hand.

MACK

Why you gotta make me ask twice,
Frederick?

FREDRICK

I don't want anyone to get hurt.

MACK

You right, there, Fredrick. You
don't want nobody getting hurt.
What you got for me?

FREDRICK

I'm sorry?

MACK

What you got! What came in one
hour ago? It's still in a bag.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FREDRICK blinks with terror. Trying to do his job in the presence of a loaded Tec-9 --

MACK

Oh you don't wanna say in front of everyone, I got you. You gonna take me there, right?

Fredrick trembles, nods.

MACK

You my nigga Fredrick. Let's move.

FREDRICK leads MACK into the BANK VAULT. The THUGS sweep their guns over the cowering crowd, keeping a close eye.

MACK returns with a bulging SACK in one hand, FREDRICK by the scruff in the other.

MACK

You doing fine, boy. Just keep calm, we almost through.

The TWO THUGS move as one toward the door. One tears through, the other holds it open as MACK --

-- shoves FREDRICK to the ground and disappears outside.

Fredrick lands with a thud. He turns just as a white van and a BLACK CHEVY IMPALA speed across the door frame.

POOLE (V.O.)

Twenty three eye witnesses. But the FBI only needed one.

Find and hold on the teller -- ERROLYN ROMERO...

INT. FBI INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY - 1997

...ERROLYN wipes her nose and adds the wad of tissue to several already crumpled up on the table.

FBI Special Agent TYNDALL (34, sharp, Black) sits across from her.

TYNDALL

So, this is what we have. Nine days ago, a surplus order of \$700,000 was made. By you. That cash was delivered and signed for. By you. Eleven minutes later, your bank is held up.

ERROLYN

I got nothing to say.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TYNDALL

Then let's talk about something else, Errollyn, do you want children? I mean you're nineteen, that may sound crazy, but, you're going to be too old to have them when you get out of prison.

She freezes with instant fear and instant tears.

TYNDALL

Unless.

ERROLYN

What if, what if I can talk to him? What if I can convince him to give the money back?

TYNDALL

Who?

ERROLYN

Would I still be in trouble?

TYNDALL

Who?

ERROLYN

My boyfriend.

TYNDALL

Are you scared of him?

ERROLYN

Yes! He a Blood with the *Mob Piru*.
Oh God, he gonna kill me...

She chokes back a sob. TYNDALL places a calming hand over hers.

TYNDALL

You're going to be fine. Let's just start with his name.

She takes a BUSINESS CARD from her purse and slides it to Tyndall. It reads:

Los Angeles Police Department

OFFICER DAVID MACK

EXT. MACK'S BACKYARD - DAY - 1997

POOLE and MILLER, among a platoon of FBI AGENTS creep on Mack's property. POOLE takes point.

EXT. MACK'S BACKYARD - BACK DOOR - DAY - 1997

POOLE peers in -- just as Mack's SON zooms from the house toward him on a new scooter.

The boy freezes when he sees Poole. Poole puts a finger to his lips.

The kid stands frozen for an interminable moment...

Then screams.

And with that -- CHAOS. FEDS burst through the front door. WINDOWS shatter. Men scream and shout.

POOLE

Hold fire, we got kids!

POOLE grabs the boy, pulls him to one side.

POOLE

It's OK, buddy. I got you. We're OK, we're gonna go over here.

Poole takes him behind a SWING SET, keeps an eye on the house. Sounds of chaos inside. Then --

POOLE'S POV -- a WINDOW creaks open and DAVID MACK slips out, about to sprint to freedom.

POOLE

Officer Mack.

MACK turns. Sees POOLE holding his boy. He slows enough for a huddle of FEDS to appear and tighten around him.

FEDS

Down, down! Hands! Let me see your hands!

TYNDALL flexi-cuffs Mack.

TYNDALL

I'm Special Agent Tyndall.

MACK scoffs, laughs with gangster brash and bravado.

TYNDALL

You know why we're here. You don't have to speak to me, but if you do, we can use it against you in a court of law.

MACK

Nigger, look at you, all fucking Uncle Tommed up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TYNDALL

Do you understand your rights?

MACK

I understand you a fucking bitch.
Get the fuck off me, faggot. You
know who the fuck I know?

TYNDALL

You're about to meet a lot of
people, so clear you're calendar.

MACK

Yeah, good, nigga, good. You take
your best shot.

MACK spits at everyone in range.

INT. DAVID MACK'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - 1997

POOLE slides through the hive of activity in a kind of
slow motion daze.

Glares at the framed PHOTO of MACK in his Academy blues.

INT. MACK'S BEDROOM - LATER - 1997

POOLE pushes through the crowd of FEDS, to the CLOSET.
He spots something inside -- pulls on rubber gloves --
and removes an ORANGE BOX... of BULLETS.

He lifts the bullets out. They are --

GECKO ARMOR-PIERCING 9mm.

Poole hands MILLER the box of rare German manufactured
Geckos. Poole hurries out...

Another thought --

INT. DAVID MACK'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - 1997

POOLE pushes open a door into the GARAGE to find --

INT. MACK'S GARAGE - CONTINUOUS - 1997

-- A **BLACK CHEVROLET IMPALA SS.**

Poole's laser focus in control now. He crouches,
inspects the IMPALA'S driver side door.

Poole flips open his CELL PHONE. Speed dials.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE (ON PHONE)

Get me forensics.

(waits)

1849 Magnolia, west of Oleander.

We need a truck to haul a Chevy

Impala to lab. Copy.

Poole hangs up and walks to a CURTAIN on the other side of the Impala. He peeks behind it. Turns to MILLER.

Poole tears down the curtain, revealing--

A SHRINE TO TUPAC SHAKUR.

Posters, memorabilia, even candles. A *Tupac-worshipping Blood*.

INT. UPSCALE BAR - TONIGHT

SULLIVAN enters, excited, smiling, a bounce in his step. He passes tables of JOURNALISTS and couldn't care less that they eye him with disdain.

He plops down in a booth. Across from JESSICA.

JESSICA

Sully.

SULLIVAN

You miss me?

JESSICA

Like you wouldn't believe. Why so smug? Word on the press is your dark days are here.

SULLIVAN

What's three days in a cave if you come out Jesus? Edwards promised me prodigal son status for what I'm getting.

JESSICA

I'm dying to know.

SULLIVAN

The usual Greek tragedy of rap murders and corruptions.

JESSICA

Most people try and distance themselves from their mistakes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULLIVAN

No, no, that way salvation lies.
I'm deep drilling the mind of
Detective Russell Poole.

JESSICA

Are you shitting me? The cop you
gaffed out-of-context?

SULLIVAN

God, that again. I needed an LAPD
voice and it's a contact sport.
He knew what I was doing.

JESSICA

I don't think he did.

SULLIVAN

Then why didn't he sue me for
libel? Either way, I'm about to
break him big. You'll want to
save me an Op-Ed.

JESSICA

Once upon a time. I would have
given you an Op-Ed in an instant.
You had the gift. Now you're just a
salesman. You went up the mountain,
came down Lindsay Lohan.

SULLIVAN

I'm not selling anything.

JESSICA

It's the only thing you're capable
of doing: selling. Yourself.

SULLIVAN

Oh boo hoo. I get it. I come in a
place like this, I see the looks,
don't think I don't.

JESSICA

Let me ask you something, and it
might sound random.

SULLIVAN

OK.

JESSICA

Seventy-one. That number mean
anything to you?

SULLIVAN

Not at all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JESSICA

Try again.

SULLIVAN

The number of documentary Emmy winners.

JESSICA

The number of journalists that died in the field last year.

(beat)

Nobody in here thinks you're a piece of shit because you're not risking limbs in Iraq. They think you're a piece of shit because you don't know the difference. They think you're a piece of shit because to them their life isn't measured in success, but integrity.

SULLIVAN

I'm the one with hubris.

JESSICA

No. You're a clown.

INT. SULLIVAN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

PETRA, the Estonian call-girl, once again bored with her job. Tonight it's watching a drunk clown drink himself to sleep --

-- SULLIVAN. His face lit by the TV screen image of --

YOUNG RUSSELL POOLE. Raw Footage from *History of Hip Hop*.

YOUNG POOLE (ON TV)

There are elements in any police force who are categorically wrong in their approach to crime in the Inner Cities. I couldn't disagree more vehemently when those elements say "We should just let them kill themselves. I mean who cares, really?"

(beat)

I care. We care. We do.

Sullivan freezes on Poole's image.

EXT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - MORNING

POOLE stirs himself a cup of instant coffee. A KNOCK at his door. He limps to it, opens it -- his NEIGHBOR.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He thumbs to the car parked in Poole's yard.

Sullivan's PORSCHE.

Poole heads over. The car's filthy, unwashed in weeks. He cleans a dirty window and peers through --

SULLIVAN -- snoring in the passenger seat. Poole taps on the glass, startling Sullivan awake.

EXT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - MOMENTS LATER

POOLE hands SULLIVAN his cup of coffee.

POOLE
Late night with the guys?

Sullivan doesn't answer.

POOLE
What time you get here?

SULLIVAN
Night time.

POOLE sits across from SULLIVAN like he's about to interrogate him --

POOLE
Were you drinking?

SULLIVAN
You want to give me a
Breathalyzer?

POOLE
You shouldn't drink and drive,
Sully.

SULLIVAN
We on a first name basis now?
Russ?

POOLE
You could have hurt somebody.

Sullivan's pent up frustrations explode --

SULLIVAN
How about for one day nobody tells
me what a fuck up I am? All right?
God damn it. Give me a pass. I'm
here, OK? I'm here to listen. I'm
here to work. I'm not a joke!

OK. Poole leaves it alone. Goes to make another cup.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE

Drink your coffee.

SULLIVAN

(sips the coffee)

This tastes like ass.

INT. FBI INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY - 1997

DAVID MACK, handcuffed but smoking, sips his coffee. Not a care in the world. POOLE studies him from behind 2-way glass as FBI agent TYNDALL enters the box --

TYNDALL

How's the coffee, Mack?

MACK

What up Tom? It's black and strong. Like your nigger.

Tyndall sits across from Mack.

TYNDALL

Yeah, you my nigga, Officer Mack. Or you want me calling you D-Mack M.O.B.?

(beat)

We know bank robbery isn't your only extra-curricular activity. Why don't you make this easier on yourself and help me out. We found some interesting items in your house. What you been up to?

MACK

What kind of no-backbone-having nigger is you?

TYNDALL

I'm not in handcuffs, for a start. I know you're not that bright, Mack. You're thinking the thug talk is going to reach down into my inner nigger and find a way to rattle its sense of manhood. Let's cut that bullshit.

MACK

Special Agent, where do we start?

TYNDALL

Give me a name of somebody that I guarantee would roll over on you if they were sat were you are.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACK

What I'm looking at?

TYNDALL

Unless you talk, unless you tell me
where the money is, fifteen years.

Mack blinks as this sinks in...

MACK

Fuck. Fifteen...? Years?

(huge smile)

That ain't shit. Look, I know you
ain't street, Tom. I know you
think jail time is the worse thing
can happen to a nigger. And that's
because: you a faggot. I came from
the gutter. The fuck prison going
to do to me? Gimme twenty years.

TYNDALL smiles, almost impressed. He stands to leave.

MACK (CONT'D)

Hey. When I get out, big mountain
of cheddar be waiting on me, Tom.
Where I send your postcard?

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME

On the bottom of Sullivan's notes he writes *M.O.B.*?
POOLE sets a glass of water down for Sullivan --

POOLE

"Member of Bloods". It's how he
referred to himself in jail. And
here he is at a Death Row Party.

Poole lays out a PHOTO of DAVID MACK with two MEN. Mack
wears a suit -- *Blood red* from head to toe -- and flashes
a '*b*'. Poole points out that one of the other men is --

POOLE

Kevin Gaines. And D-Mack. Two
LAPD. Both connected to Death Row.
Both named as involved in Biggie's
shooting. Both untouchable.

SULLIVAN

I'll fucking talk to Mack.

POOLE

Yeah. Find him on a beach.

Sullivan looks up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE

He spent 12 years eating three meals a day and trying to choose a yacht. His \$700,000 was never recovered. He was cool, man. But the LAPD lost their shit.

INT. ROBBERY-HOMICIDE - BULLPEN - DAY - 1997

POOLE watches a hive of frantic -- bureaucratic -- activity swarm around him. Captains and Commanders shove in and out of meetings.

POOLE (V.O.)

If a Los Angeles Police officer was involved in Biggie's Murder a lawsuit brought by the Wallace Family wouldn't break the Department. It'd break the City!

Poole cranes his neck as a LIEUTENANT and a COMMANDER scream at each other in a glassed office.

POOLE (V.O.)

Fights over how to keep a lid on this very public information. Fights over shit I couldn't grasp because I'd never dealt with something like it. But Miller had.

MILLER pales, sweats, watching the Brass argument rage on.

POOLE (V.O.)

He could see this -- and us -- heading straight to a Johnnie Cochran cross-examination. Lucky for him -- he wasn't the only one shitting himself.

INT. CONMAY'S OFFICE - DAY - 1997

CONMAY stands across from a shell-shocked POOLE.

CONMAY

We just don't have enough to get into a jurisdictional pissing match with the FBI. Mack's their guy right now.

POOLE

They can have him. Let me test his Impala for Gecko residue.

CONMAY

It was a getaway vehicle in a Federal crime.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE

But first it possibly was the
getaway vehicle in a murder.

CONMAY

It's bad timing.

POOLE

Are we complicating a simple case,
sir?

CONMAY

Don't get cute. Get me evidence I
can't look away from and you can
have Mack. If it's a simple case
it should be easy to do.

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME

POOLE in the kitchen. SULLIVAN, sobering up, sets a new
STACK of PHOTOS -- these of DAVID MACK -- next to the
ones of KEVIN GAINES.

POOLE

You know on TV how the Police is
always itching to fight the Feds
for jurisdiction?

SULLIVAN

Yeah.

POOLE

It's true. Not this time, though.

(beat)

So I went to breakfast.

He sets down a plate of scrambled eggs for Sullivan.

INT. WAFFLE HOUSE - DAY - 1997

TYRELL, the Afro-sporting Biggie fan, sits in a booth
inspecting PHOTOS and MUG-SHOTS spread out before him.

TYRELL

Yo man, I already told your boys
everything I know.

POOLE

We've had developments.

TYRELL

Ain't you got an office?

POOLE

I don't have pancakes in my office.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Poole holds up a photo of KEVIN GAINES.

POOLE
You recognize this guy?

TYRELL
He got capped by that racist cop.
Saw it on TV. I'm telling you,
Biggie's shooter -- he right here.

He taps the COMPOSITE SKETCH of BIGGIE'S SHOOTER --

TYRELL (CONT'D)
When y'all gonna find *this*
motherfucker? Was like last year
and shit.

POOLE
Then I hope you have a good
memory.

TYRELL
Couple brothers get shot, nobody
really give a fuck do they?

Poole looks up, stifles his anger --

TYRELL
Please. Garth Brooks gets shot
y'all would declare martial law.
And you wonder why black folk
don't trust police.

Poole slides MACK'S MUGSHOT across the table. Tyrell's
cocky demeanor shifts instantly...

TYRELL (CONT'D)
Whoa, whoa, whoa, hold up. Hold
the fuck up. This guy. This
motherfucker was at the Peterson
that night. I saw him. I thought
he was security, you know, like
the president gets, all secret and
shit. He was on a walkie-talkie.

FLASH TO: **EXT. PETERSON AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM - NIGHT**

*TYRELL standing among the crowd as Biggie and his
entourage get into their SUVs.*

*As TYRELL'S eyes are on Biggie he walks into a man...
it's **DAVID MACK**. Mack scowls down at him, about to say
something but --*

*A hail of screams and flashbulbs announce that BIGGIE'S
CONVOY is leaving.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mack hurries away. From Tyrell's POV, it looks like Mack's speaking into a device in his hand...

Seconds later -- the BLACK IMPALA slithers out of a side street and rolls up to Biggie's SUV.

BANG. BANG. BANG. BANG.

I/E. SULLIVAN'S PORSCHE / I-10 - TODAY

SULLIVAN tears ass through traffic. POOLE riding shotgun. Sully shoulders his cell phone to his ear --

SULLIVAN (ON PHONE)

Max! It's Sully -- do not hang up -- please. I need your help.

POOLE

Slow down.

SULLIVAN (ON PHONE)

You're right. I'll get it to you.

POOLE

Eyes on the road, man.

SULLIVAN

Hey. Off my back for the day.

(on phone)

I need an FOI. Los Angeles Police Department.

(listens)

Three weeks are you serious! You know what. Fine. Just get me the paperwork.

POOLE

What are we doing?

SULLIVAN

LAPD's a public institution and their reports become public record.

EXT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - LATER

Poole stares up at the LAPD Building. His former home.

SULLIVAN

You coming?

POOLE

No. No. You go on, I'll wait.

(beat)

All you got is blank paperwork.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sullivan, with a REAM of PAPERWORK, opens the door --

SULLIVAN
And my people skills.

INT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - RECEPTION - LATER

SULLIVAN strolls charmingly, confidently, up to the greying DESK SERGEANT.

SERGEANT
He's back. Who you playing today?

Sullivan spreads his stack of FOI DOCUMENTS on the DESK --

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
You find Poole?

SULLIVAN
Good guy, sends his regards. I need to see the Wallace case Murder Book.

SERGEANT
The Wallace case 'Murder Book'? Someone's practicing lingo.

SULLIVAN stands his ground, gives the journalist glare.

SERGEANT
It's not going to be as easy as you think.

SULLIVAN
This is a Freedom of Information Act injunction. Mandates this Department to make available documents pertinent to the Wallace case.

SERGEANT
Jesus Christ, son, you didn't need an FOI. It's public record. I just meant there's a lot of it.

EXT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - PARKING LOT - LATER

SULLIVAN rams a final volume of the MURDER BOOK into his tiny PORSCHE TRUNK.

POOLE goes to sit in the car but stops short. The front seat's crammed with volumes of the Murder Book.

POOLE
Where am I sitting?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULLIVAN

You're not. Meet me across the street.

Sullivan's lost home -- the ABC NEWS BUILDING -- looms a hundred meters away.

SULLIVAN drives off leaving POOLE and the parking lot.

POOLE cuts a lonely figure. Doesn't look back at LAPD'S HEADQUARTERS. He limps after Sullivan.

INT. ABC NEWS - CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

SULLIVAN heaves the last of the MURDER BOOK onto the conference table. POOLE takes in their new War Room: all 21st century steel and glass. The open plan allows every passing JOURNALIST to see them inside.

POOLE'S POV -- In the BULLPEN, assorted REPORTERS point and laugh at Sullivan.

A passing JOURNALIST tacks an editorial CARTOON on the glass -- SULLIVAN as MAJOR KONG riding an EMMY.

Sullivan's doesn't notice. A focus we haven't seen...

SULLIVAN

Every society gets the kind of criminal it deserves? Well, "news" is something somebody wants to suppress.

POOLE

Who said that?

SULLIVAN

No idea.

Sully opens the 1st VOLUME of the Murder Book. As he does we **SMASH CUT** --

To **SHOTS** and **SEQUENCES** that play the **INFO** visually:

-- TUPAC SHAKUR raps about killing Biggie.

-- A CADILLAC slides next to TUPAC on the VEGAS STRIP.

-- The BLACK IMPALA slides next to BIGGIE'S SUV.

-- A SKETCH ARTIST draws the "Nation of Islam" SHOOTER.

-- BULLETS. GECKO 9mms spin on the asphalt.

POOLE screeches us back to real time--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE

Kelly Jamerson.

SULLIVAN

Who?

POOLE

Exactly. There's no Kelly Jamerson.

He leafs through a VOLUME, a troubled look...

POOLE

I told you there was an incident -- in the 90s.

Sullivan sets aside his documents, all ears.

POOLE

A Crip was killed at a Death Row party -- beaten to death. The security at the party were off-duty LAPD. And they did nothing to stop it. Then they fled the scene.

SULLIVAN

Not flattering info.

POOLE

No. After that Death Row was blacklisted. We were barred, on or off-duty, from associating with them. Redact the Jamerson incident...

SULLIVAN

...you redact proof the LAPD had a history of working for Suge Knight.

SULLIVAN is bit with sudden inspiration. He darts for the door -- stops himself. Looks at Poole dubiously.

SULLIVAN

Wait. This isn't another MC Hammer, is it? You're being honest about this?

POOLE

Yes, sir. This is truth.

Sullivan tosses Poole his keys.

SULLIVAN

Take my car home. I'll get to you in the morning.

Poole catches the keys.

INT. DELMONICO'S STEAK HOUSE - NIGHT

EDWARDS looks with the familiar set of grey hairs and top LAPD Brass.

EDWARDS

He asked why we only focus on Bad News, why don't we focus on uplifting stories, inspirational stories? I said to him: *I'm sorry who are you?* And he said, very indignantly, *"I'm the Pope"*.

SULLIVAN marches up.

EDWARDS

If you'll excuse me.

SULLIVAN

I'm not here for you.

Sullivan points to FASULO.

SULLIVAN

Care to answer a couple questions? On the record.

EDWARDS

Commander, this is Sullivan.

SULLIVAN

(to Fasulo)

The Wallace Murder Book has redacted LAPD connections to Death Row Records.

FASULO

I can't comment on an open case.

SULLIVAN

The case is open? Wow. Who's the lead? Does he have a suspect?

FASULO

I cannot comment on an open case.

EDWARDS

Sullivan's been spending time with Russell Poole.

FASULO breathes a smug sigh. Ah...

FASULO

Let me guess: Kevin Gaines drove David Mack's Impala to the Grassy Knoll where they popped Kennedy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The table erupts in laughter. Everyone's heard of Poole.

SULLIVAN

Is an unsolved murder funny?

FASULO

No. You thinking you're spending time with the man who'll solve it is. Is he still on the Impala? It's all been debunked. He's a lunatic. What's he giving you, the Captain America routine? Stars and Stripes and the Shield on his sleeve. Ask about his suspension. Ask where his wife was when he was suspended for an affair while on duty. The man's a professional disgrace and liar. Which is why the Wallace Civil Case based on his theory was tossed.

(with sympathy)

The guy's lonely. He just wants a warm body to talk to. Happens to a lot of cops when they retire.

Sullivan frozen there. Edwards' look saying *strike two*.

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - NEXT MORNING

POOLE in a back room with two volumes of the MURDER BOOK spread out. He hears SULLIVAN shuffling in.

POOLE

Back here.

Sullivan appears in the door frame.

POOLE

Hey. There's more redactions. One is Gaines' Montero...

SULLIVAN

Tell me about your suspension.

Poole stiffens.

SULLIVAN

Or start with your affair.

POOLE

We're not talking about that.

Poole's rooted, refusing to defend himself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULLIVAN

Are you getting me back? Again?
For gaffing you? You got me, man.

POOLE

(re: The Murder Book)
Will you look at this?

SULLIVAN

We talk about this dirty cop and
that dirty cop but never a *mention*
about the one who gets suspended!
How do I trust a single, tin-
foiled, word that comes out of
your fucking mouth?

POOLE

Look at these walls.

Sullivan with a derisory glance. Framed AWARDS and ACADEMY
PHOTOS. An ancient one of POOLE'S FATHER: in uniform.

POOLE

These are my commendations. My
service awards. And these...

A well-preserved FILE

POOLE (CONT'D)

...are my supervisor reports.

SULLIVAN

This is what I mean -- Who the fuck
hangs on to this kind of shit!

POOLE

Same kind of guy that keeps a Emmy
on his desk.

(beat)

Those are A-plus reports, every one.
Look at them. I never took Family
Illness leave -- not once -- but
I'll tell you who did: David Mack.

SULLIVAN

Russ. Stop. Stop it.

POOLE

He took F.I. March 7 to March 10 --
the weekend Biggie was killed.
While incarcerated he had only one
visitor --

SULLIVAN

Chief Bernard Parks?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

POOLE

No, it was --

SULLIVAN

This is why you're wife left you
and your son doesn't talk...

-- Like that, POOLE has SULLIVAN up against a wall. Long
buried strength and anger culminating in a vise grip.

SULLIVAN

You going to knock me out?

SULLIVAN, just as angry. Jaw tight, eyes locked.

POOLE calms. SULLIVAN snatches his CAR KEYS off the table--

EXT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - MOMENTS LATER

SULLIVAN charges out. Stops short at the sight of his
Porsche. Shining there. Washed and waxed. By Poole.

A moment.

But then Sullivan's inside, tearing ass away.

I/E. SULLIVAN'S PORSCHE / I-10 - DAY

SULLIVAN -- and his car -- race at 100 mph through
traffic. Screaming past honking motorists. A week's
worth, maybe a lifetime, of mistakes play on his face.

And then: flashing lights in the rear-view. Christ...

EXT. SULLIVAN'S PORSCHE / I-10 - CONTINUOUS

A POLICE OFFICER at the driver-side window.

OFFICER

License and registration please.

SULLIVAN

Don't you have a fucking robbery
or murder you should be stopping?

OFFICER

I never heard that one, sir. That's
pretty original.

Sullivan throws him the paperwork.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFICER (CONT'D)

If only we didn't spend so much time distracted by people like yourself. You're registration's expired. Step out of the vehicle.

SULLIVAN

If I step out of the vehicle someone's getting their ass kicked.

INT. JAIL - DAY

SULLIVAN at the pay phone. Receiver pressed to his ear.

SULLIVAN (ON PHONE)

Hey. It's me. Can you pick me up?

(beat)

And bring bail.

I/E. CAR - THE 405 - DAY

PETRA drives in silence.

PETRA

You hang onto your career?

SULLIVAN in the passenger seat. A host of failures swirl in his eyes. Then a subtle shift. A *thought*...

POOLE

Not yet.

PETRA

Where do I take you?

EXT. FRED MILLER'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Poole's long ago partner **FRED MILLER** -- greyer, fatter -- nurses a pool-side beer. Sullivan with a Coke. Nine happy grandchildren scream and splash around.

MILLER

Christopher Wallace. Big Papa. What is it you want to know?

SULLIVAN

Just looking for insight.

MILLER

You're not a lawyer are you?

SULLIVAN

Journalist.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MILLER

This ain't for the record, is it?

SULLIVAN

No. Just background color for a twenty-year look back piece.

MILLER

I had one foot in retirement, truth be told. I don't remember much. Too many god damned leads.

SULLIVAN

Too many? Oh, I heard a name. Wondering if you came across it. Amir Muhammad.

MILLER takes a swig from his beer. Stifles an agitation.

MILLER

What's this for again?

SULLIVAN

(nothing at all)
Like an MTV music thing.

MILLER

He was a possible shooter, but, we never caught up with him.

SULLIVAN

Would you use that name today?

MILLER

No.

Sullivan deflates.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Everyone had a shooter. Or a theory. My partner asked on to the case because he had a theory. Russell Poole.

SULLIVAN pretends to write down the name.

SULLIVAN

Good detective?

MILLER

He was. But we had different theories, he and I.

SULLIVAN

Who did you think shot Biggie?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MILLER

No I meant about law enforcement.
You spoken to Poole?

SULLIVAN

Never met him.

MILLER

Young guy but... from some older
School than even I came from. Put
in an honest shift, but lacked
nuance. He followed rules to the
point of insubordination.

SULLIVAN

Well, if cops start bending the
rules where does that leave us?

MILLER

Christ, he'd say the same thing.
Sure you haven't met?

(suddenly)

Becky! Don't dunk your brother.

(back to Sullivan)

I'm not saying we should be on the
take -- invest your pension right,
you'll be OK -- I'm saying don't
be obsessed. Think Big Picture.

SULLIVAN

Do you know what's become of him?

MILLER

No idea. They split us up. There
was a cop, dirty, can't remember
his name. Bank robber. One theory
was maybe he was involved in
killing Biggie. Brass put Poole in
charge of an STF looking into it.

Sullivan's poker face slips.

SULLIVAN

Poole was given a Special Task
Force on David Mack?

MILLER

Mack! That was it. Yeah. Poole and
I never saw each other when he
left to lead it. But if I remember
right, nothing came of it.

Sullivan makes a cursory note.

SULLIVAN

How can cops have different
theories of law enforcement?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MILLER

How to follow Chain-of-command.
How to keep unified. How to fight
bad guys and not each other. Poole
wasn't cut from that cloth. He
couldn't accept winning a war
meant losing some battles.

SULLIVAN

What war was waged on the LAPD?

MILLER

In the 90s? Public perception.

Sullivan smirks for show. *Funny.* Stands to leave.

SULLIVAN

Well I thank you for your time.

MILLER

You know something always struck
me about that David Mack.

Sullivan feigns pedantic interest.

MILLER (CONT'D)

In prison, he only got one
visitor. Amir Muhammad.

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM - CAL STATE FULLERTON - NIGHT

POOLE hands his ticket to a turnstile attendant. Enters
the mezzanine but slows to avoid being seen by --

-- Jr.'s "cheering section" making their excited way
through. POOLE watches them pass. The handsome WOMAN
among them. The *was-it-worth-it* lump in his throat.

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM - CAL STATE FULLERTON - NIGHT

POOLE makes his way to his empty section of the cheap
seats. There's another SPECTATOR today.

SULLIVAN.

SULLIVAN

Why does the LAPD give a
substandard officer his own
Special Task Force?

POOLE

You don't get to come here.

SULLIVAN

It's a free country. Somehow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE sits a row in front of SULLIVAN. Caught out. They watch the game in silence. Until --

POOLE
You better root for the Titans.

The CRACK of a baseball bat takes us to --

INT. SPECIAL TASK FORCE - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY - 1997

POOLE slaps a PHOTO of DAVID MACK onto a huge WHITEBOARD. He turns to his group of YOUNG DETECTIVES. He's in charge and you know it.

POOLE (CONT'D)
A Lieutenant of Suge Knight,
Officer David Mack, currently
incarcerated for bank robbery,
contracted a hit on Christopher
Wallace. He's been identified at
the scene and is a known associate
of a man named as the shooter...

Tacks up the familiar COMPOSITE SKETCH.

POOLE (CONT'D)
...and an associate of another
officer named as an accessory.
Officer Kevin Gaines -- recently
deceased.

GAINES' handsome ACADEMY PHOTO tacks up --

POOLE
Both officers and their possible
roles in the murder lead to one
place: Death Row Records.

He tacks up a photo of SUGE KNIGHT.

POOLE (CONT'D)
To convict a guy like Suge Knight
of murder, we'll have to go from
the bottom up. We'll have to
catch someone riding dirty, and
lean on him until he rolls.

POOLE squares up to his young task force.

POOLE (CONT'D)
Our theory is this: Suge Knight
has other cops in his employ. And
we're going to catch them.

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM - CAL STATE FULLERTON - NIGHT

JR. turns a double play. His cheering section does their bit. Even Sullivan claps for the Titans. But Poole, one row up and face hidden, sits dejected.

POOLE

Why does LAPD give a substandard officer his own Special Task Force? Because they know he's too naive to recognize misdirection.

INT. SPECIAL TASK FORCE - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY - 1997

POOLE and DETECTIVE AMBER CARTER (28, pretty) look up as CONMAY marches in.

CONMAY

Listen up. Everyone. Please.

Poole's Task Force gather around Conmay.

CONMAY (CONT'D)

We're changing direction.

Poole, stoic with disbelief.

CONMAY

Russ, we got a live one. And we need you to shift focus.

POOLE

We're on a live one right now.

Conmay motions them to a private corner.

LT. CONMAY

You need to drop the Death Row pursuit. We got six pounds of cocaine in evidence turns out to be baking soda. Same cop signed out every package. He's probably selling on the street.

POOLE waits for it --

CONMAY

It's not good news, Russ.

(beat)

It's Frank Lyga.

On POOLE -- wind knocked out of him. Turning to the whiteboard where a photo of KEVIN GAINES stares at him.

EXT. CATHEDRAL STEPS - DAY - 1997**KEVIN GAINES' FUNERAL.**

The full LAPD pageantry. Crisp blue uniforms. An AMERICAN FLAG draped COFFIN gets one hundred salutes as it's carried with reverence to the hearse.

REPORTER (V.O.)

The LAPD buried one of their own today. Kevin Gaines, shot dead by a fellow officer.

CHIEF PARKS among the saluting mourners...

REPORTER (V.O.)

The facts of his murder are still unsettled, casting a further pall over a Police Force trying to distance itself from recent scandals.

Shoulder to shoulder with PARKS stands JOHNNIE COCHRAN.

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM - CAL STATE FULLERTON - NIGHT

SULLIVAN and POOLE sit shoulder to shoulder now.

SULLIVAN

Lyga was dirty?

POOLE

Lyga was being framed. Which was easy to do for two reasons. One, evidence control was a joke. And two: he and Gaines drove a racial wedge through the Force.

INT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY - 1997

WHITE and BLACK DETECTIVES sit on opposite sides. Two sets of suspicion and distrust.

Two BLACK DETECTIVES eye POOLE. CONMAY sits stoically by CHIEF BERNARD PARKS as MILLER wraps up...

MILLER

And our strongest lead is that the trigger may have been pulled by an individual named Stanley Kirk Burrell. Gang affiliation unknown.

The BLACK DETECTIVES laugh derisively.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLACK DETECTIVE
Stanley Burrell?

MILLER
That's what we're hearing.

The BLACK DETECTIVES roar with laughter. The WHITE ones watch uncomfortably.

MILLER
The fuck's so funny?

CONMAY
Gentlemen, that will be all.

The DETECTIVES file out, keep jabbing each other down the hall:

BLACK DETECTIVE
That's good police work, Miller.

MILLER
The fuck's with you, Jackson?

BLACK DETECTIVE
You looked into Michael Jordan?

POOLE -- an eyesore to his superiors -- lingers at the door. Summoning his courage to --

POOLE
Chief Parks?

PARKS doesn't look up.

POOLE
Permission to speak freely?

CONMAY
Go away, Poole.

POOLE
We think we're avoiding negative publicity by suppressing it but in the long run there'll be a price. We'll pay for it in public trust. We're looking any way that points where we don't want to look -- not because my suspects were cops -- but because they're black cops. Because we're afraid to self inflict. But it won't look nearly as bad as the LAPD will if we're twenty years down the line and this case is unsolved.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

POOLE (CONT'D)

If you really want the Wallace
murder closed -- you got to give
it back to me. And me alone.

PARKS bores a look into POOLE. They stay like that for
several, silent, moments. PARKS stands. Walks over...

...and past POOLE.

CONMAY

Poole you insubordinate shit, what
you need to do is suck it up, do
your rip, and come off the soap
box. If you have a problem with
that, or you have a better idea on
how to police this city, there's
the fucking door!

EXT. TEMPLE STREET - DAY - 1997

POOLE sits on a bench, looking up to the iconic CITY HALL
of Los Angeles.

POOLE (V.O.)

*When I was first on the Beat I got
caught wrong place, wrong time. I
called for back-up. There were
four guys. Beating me. I was just
trying to keep my gun from them
and stay conscious. And one
thought kept me awake-- kept me
alive: that my brother officers
would save me. If I could just
hang on, they'd come for me. And
I clung to that hope until I heard
it. The sirens. Growing louder,
getting nearer.*

POOLE turns from City Hall and heads into the BUILDING
behind him.

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

*That was the sweetest sound I have
ever heard in my life.*

POOLE walks into the office of the DISTRICT ATTORNEY.

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM - CAL STATE FULLERTON - NIGHT

Game over. Titans won. Jr. and the family cluster near
the dugout celebrating.

POOLE and SULLIVAN in their cheap seats.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE

(beat)

I filed a complaint against the
LAPD.

SULLIVAN just sits, listening.

POOLE

You ever loved something so much,
you just...

INT. SPECIAL TASK FORCE BRIEFING ROOM - DAY - 1997

POOLE almost walks past his desk -- but a sheet of PAPER
draws him back.

POOLE (V.O.)

...tried too hard? To hold on to
it? To make it work?

It's a DRAWING. A PIECE OF SHIT in a TOILET. An arrow
next to it with the handwriting:

-----> *You*

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM - CAL STATE FULLERTON - NIGHT

SULLIVAN looks over the empty field.

SULLIVAN

No.

INT. LIEUTENANT CONMAY'S OFFICE - 1997

POOLE sits across from CONMAY.

CONMAY

I have to send you home, Russ.

Poole looks Conmay in the eye, discomfiting him.

CONMAY

Simms' retirement.

On POOLE, stoic, silent. Not surprised by this.

CONMAY

I got reports you kissed Detective
Carter. Breaks regulations.

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM - CAL STATE FULLERTON - NIGHT

Stadium lights powering down. Poole and Sullivan still in their darkening seats.

POOLE

Carter. Amber. Good detective.

SULLIVAN

Pretty?

POOLE

Yes. I'd already lost my wife.
Which was my fault, I own that.
Same old story. She took our son.
Neither's forgiven me, for choosing
a case over them.

(beat)

A case I never closed.

(beat)

Anyway, it was who Amber lined up
Mack's FI's with Biggie's murder. I
was so certain that was our break I
kissed her. On the cheek. And
there was my on-duty affair.

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Empty but for POOLE and SULLIVAN beside Poole's car.

POOLE

Where's your car?
(off his silence)
You need a ride?

SULLIVAN

I'll get a taxi.
(beat)
Why didn't you sue me?

POOLE

At the time I had other shit going
on. Then... it never occurred to
me that was something I could do.
Let's call it a night.

He gets in his car.

EXT. UPSCALE BAR - PARKING LOT - NIGHT - LATER

SULLIVAN, in the back of an idling TAXI.

His POV: Through the Bar's window -- JESSICA with other
JOURNALISTS. Laughing. Animated conversation. A team.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sullivan's jealous. Alone and he knows it.

TAXI DRIVER

Yo man, you getting out or what?

INT. POOLE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - 1997

POOLE sits on his bed. The CLOSET DOORS open. Half of it stripped bare -- all signs of his wife -- gone.

He's alone and he knows it.

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - LATER

POOLE sits at his desk. Just him and the case. Then --

SULLIVAN (O.S.)

Death Row had two cops in their
Inner Circle -- Gaines was dead.
Mack wouldn't talk.

Poole looks up. They're both pleased to see the other.

POOLE

Wrong.

SULLIVAN

How?

POOLE (CONT'D)

Suge Knight had three cops in his
Inner Circle. And the third one...
didn't shut the fuck up.

INT. MGM GRAND CASINO FLOOR - BLACKJACK TABLE - DAY - 1997

Pecs and biceps stretch the shirt of KEVIN HACKIE (40). Two other GAMBLERS at his table. Then POOLE sits next to him.

HACKIE

(a beat)

Yo, man. You think I can't tell
you're a cop?

POOLE

Technically I'm suspended.

HACKIE

I ain't got nothing to say. Not to
Vegas PD, not --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE

-- Vegas police don't have your
LAPD arrest records. I do.

That lands. HACKIE shifts.

POOLE (CONT'D)

Least I think I do -- I made a few
copies, don't know where I left
them. I been in some Crip
neighborhoods lately... You were
Tupac's bodyguard, let's talk
about that.

(sees Hackie's hand)

Double down on those.

INT. MGM GRAND CASINO FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER - 1997

HACKIE strolls through the crowded floor. POOLE one step
behind. They do an good job masking this conversation --

HACKIE

Suge got nobody, I mean nobody, on
his roster he ain't got dirt on.

POOLE

That include you?

HACKIE

What you think?

POOLE

You were a cop. I think you left
law enforcement to work for a
gangster.

Hackie laughs.

HACKIE

Law enforcement. No such thing as
Law. There's human nature. Men
love two things. Pussy and power.
Suge's is maintained through the
strongest thing there is: man's
weakness. So yes, he got dirt on
me. A cop ain't nothing but a man.

INT. MGM GRAND HOTEL - LOBBY - 1997

The familiar spot in the lobby --

HACKIE

You know what went on right here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE
Tupac beat Baby Lane.

HACKIE
Shit was staged.
(off Poole)
He just took it. No fight back.
Just hit the floor. Why?

Poole adds it up.

POOLE
Crips have a motive for revenge.

HACKIE
Looked that way didn't it?

Video Footage: TUPAC, his ENTOURAGE and SUGE flee the scene of the beaten Crip.

ONE CAMERA on SUGE KNIGHT as he exits the lobby --

EXT. MGM GRAND HOTEL - LOBBY - 1997

-- HACKIE leads POOLE. They exit the lobby like Suge --
and stop at a TELEPHONE BOOTH.

HACKIE
Suge stopped here and made a call.
On a pay phone. Not long later --

FLASH: *A WHITE CADILLAC screeches parallel to Suge's BMW.*

-- Glockes jut out and sprays bullets at Tupac and Suge.

HACKIE (CONT'D)
Who you think he called?

POOLE
I don't buy he'd call hitters to
come take aim at him.

HACKIE
That's 'cos every report say the
Caddy pulled alongside. It didn't.

FLASH: HACKIE in a TRAILING VEHICLE.

HACKIE'S POV: *The Cadillac pulls AHEAD of Suge's BMW.*

-- Glockes jut out and sprays bullets BACK. At only TUPAC.

HACKIE (CONT'D)
From that angle they'd be certain
not to hit Suge.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HACKIE (CONT'D)

Cos they was doing what Suge called them to do: save him \$10 million. Everybody know Pac was creeping for the door but would be coming for his royalties. Some artists worth more dead, you know?

HACKIE let's that linger, lights a cigarette.

HACKIE (CONT'D)

Biggie gets got because Suge be damned if he gonna let Bad Boy rise up. Pussy and Power. You hear what I'm saying? Suge got 'em both.

Poole absorbs this. No notepad. Just the implications.

POOLE

How many LAPD are loyal to him?

HACKIE

Shit... There's the periphery look-away cops he pay off for parking tickets all the way up to his Inner Circle. Straight up mobster shit. Snatch and roll one of them maybe you got a chance to touch Suge.

POOLE

Gaines and Mack aren't rolling over.

HACKIE

Yeah, they was tight with Suge. But even deeper than them was --

INT. POOLE'S GARAGE-OFFICE - TONIGHT

POOLE slams down the PHOTO of MACK and GAINES at the Death Row party. The third man in the photo is --

POOLE

RAFA PEREZ.

SULLIVAN

Why do I know that name?

POOLE

You know it because I was taken off my Task Force to catch Frank Lyga stealing cocaine.

(beat)

But ended up starting the greatest scandal in LAPD history. Rampart.

INT. LAPD EVIDENCE CONTROL UNIT, FRONT DESK - DAY - 1997

A RECEPTIONIST speaks on the phone and skims a magazine.
POOLE arrives.

POOLE
I'm Detective Poole. Need to look
at the Class A inventory.

RECEPTIONIST
(still the phone)
Yah. Here's your duffel --

She sets a RED DUFFEL BAG. Thumbs him toward double-doors.

RECEPTIONIST
Just go on through.

Poole starts for the doors. Stops himself.

POOLE
Don't you want to see my ID?

RECEPTIONIST
I'm sure you ain't gonna to rob
the place.

POOLE cases the place. No locks on the doors...

INT. LAPD EVIDENCE - WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - 1997

Rows of SHELVES spread endlessly like a CostCo for the
underworld. Impounded guns. Packages of drugs.

Poole studies assorted bags of COCAINE and HEROIN.

Takes a 2 kilo bag. Up CLOSE we see the bags are
WATERMARKED with the LAPD SEAL.

INT. LAPD EVIDENCE CONTROL UNIT, FRONT DESK - DAY - 1997

POOLE sets watermarked cocaine on the desk.

POOLE
I need to check this out.

RECEPTIONIST
Name and badge number.

POOLE
I told you my name.

RECEPTIONIST
Gimme a break, huh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE

My name's Frank Lyga.

She writes it down.

RECEPTIONIST

Your badge number?

The RECEPTIONIST looks up. Bag's there. But POOLE'S GONE.

EXT. POOLE'S CAR - DAY - 1997

POOLE checks his notepad: *3013 West Bayleaf = Rafa Perez.*

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - TONIGHT

Sullivan checks his notepad. *Gaines. Mack. Perez...*

POOLE

LAPD evidence control was lax.
The *Department* was. Just waiting
for the wrong person to game it.

INT. SPECIAL TASK FORCE BRIEFING ROOM - DAY - 1997

POOLE and his Task Force pore over documents. Photos of FRANK LYGA loom over them.

POOLE (V.O.)

*So I spent my days "investigating"
Lyga for stealing cocaine.*

I/E. POOLE'S CAR / PEREZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT - 1997

POOLE creeps past *3013 West Bayleaf*. A red FORD EXPEDITION SUV -- probably 60 grand -- glitters in the driveway.

POOLE (V.O.)

*And my night's following my
instinct of where it actually was.*

INT. SPECIAL TASK FORCE BRIEFING ROOM - DAY - 1997

AMBER CARTER gives Poole a document --

POOLE (V.O.)

Day.

I/E. POOLE'S CAR / PEREZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT - 1997

-- Poole, one eye on the document. The other on the SUV.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE (V.O.)

And night.

INT. SPECIAL TASK FORCE BRIEFING ROOM - DAY - 1997

Poole blinks back drowsiness. Drinks coffee.

POOLE (V.O.)

Over and over.

EXT. PEREZ'S HOUSE - 3013 WEST BAYLEAF - NIGHT - 1997

POOLE, his laser focus drooping. Sleep deprived.

POOLE (V.O.)

Until...

RAFA PEREZ (30) comes out. Model-handsome. Athletic. With a red duffel bag. He tosses it into the Expedition.

I/E. POOLE'S CAR - LA CIENEGA BLVD - NIGHT - 1997

POOLE tails PEREZ'S EXPEDITION. Shakes his head awake.

Even from a distance we hear Tupac bumping from Perez's sub woofers. *Ambitionz Az A Ridah*.

EXT. POOLE'S CAR - I-5 - NIGHT - 1997

POOLE'S sedan follows the EXPEDITION along the on-ramp. Into the stream of highway traffic.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT - 1997

POOLE'S car passes the EXPEDITION as it rolls to a stop outside an abandoned FACTORY.

EXT. POOLE'S CAR - WAREHOUSE CAMPUS - NIGHT - 1997

POOLE parks his car. Checks his sidearm.

INT. WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - 1997

POOLE inches his way through the dark. A dimly lit alcove looming ahead...

Two BLOODS watch PEREZ inventory a tabletop of RADIOS and WALKIE-TALKIES. Perez sets the LAPD cocaine down --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEREZ

Y'all need to start cutting this
shit, up our profit, feel me? I
ain't want no business-is-slow
shit neither, you hear?

A FREQUENCY SCANNER on the table squawks.

RADIOS

*Roger that Officer Poole. 217
Alondra. Old battery factory.*

PEREZ

Mother fucker.

He reaches for the RED DUFFLE BAG but --

POOLE (O.S.)

I'm right here.

POOLE creeps out of the dark. Gun raised.

POOLE (CONT'D)

Hands on your head.

PEREZ

You gonna shoot us all?

Poole's all gritted teeth and suppressed anger now.

POOLE

I hope so.

PEREZ

Nah, bitch, you one of them goody--

POOLE shoots a bag of coke. The Bloods flinch as a mist
of powder clouds the room.

POOLE

Next one's in your throat. I won't
miss. On your knees. Now.

The two BLOODS kneel. Perez doesn't. Poole, keeping his
gun trained, cuffs the bangers' wrists to their ankles.

POOLE (CONT'D)

Where's you're badge?

PEREZ'S grin says *fuck you*.

POOLE (CONT'D)

Put it on the table.

PEREZ

You want it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

POOLE

Yes.

PEREZ

Shoot me.

He kicks the table, blinding POOLE with coke dust. He sprints outside. POOLE gathers himself, races after him --

EXT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS - 1997

The EXPEDITION zooms off. POOLE shoots for the tires.

And hits one. The rim bites street and showers sparks.

I/E. POOLE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS - 1997

Poole jumps in, jams into gear. He floors it after Perez.

POOLE (ON RADIO)

Nora fifteen, ten-eight.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

Nora fifteen, ten-twenty.

POOLE (ON RADIO)

I am in pursuit of a red Ford Expedition in the warehouse campus. Suspect heading north.

Poole catches the Expedition out the corner of his eye.

POOLE (CONT'D)

Negative, suspect heading South.

Poole whips into a U-Turn and tears after the Expedition.

POOLE (ON RADIO) (CONT'D)

Suspect is black male 6'2". Officer Rafa Perez. Advise ETA on back-up?

DISPATCH (V.O.)

Ten twenty, that's a---

SMASH!! - THE EXPEDITION SLAMS INTO POOLE'S CAR.

Glass and steel shower Poole as the SUV rams his SEDAN.

POOLE, punch drunk from the collision and air bag reaches for his gun -- but PEREZ yanks him out from the wreckage.

PEREZ

Now it's one or the other, bitch. You wanna set traps? Where's your back-up, now, fool?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He smacks Poole in the face. Sends him reeling. But Russ scrambles to his feet with pent up, animalistic, rage.

POOLE

Come on!

PEREZ

Oh you got heart detective? Come on, then! Run up, bitch.

Poole charges Perez. Holy shit-- he can fight. He tackles Perez to the ground and rains punches onto his head --

-- but Perez twists him off and pops to his feet. He's huge. He kicks a vicious boot into Poole. PEREZ finds a METAL PIPE -- swings it in a homicidal arc...

POOLE moves just in time, but it crushes his knee. Poole lays there. Sound of sirens far off. *Maybe too far...*

PEREZ dives into Poole's car and rifles for the GUN.

POOLE staggers to his feet just as PEREZ turns with the sidearm. He smiles. A victorious exhale --

PEREZ (CONT'D)

I fought the Law, bitch. Guess who won...?

-- FLOODLIGHTS BLIND HIM --

COPS

Drop it! Drop it! Put the fucking gun down! Let me see your hands!

Perez squints into the lights, he can make out a platoon of cop-shaped silhouettes aiming guns at him. He laughs.

PEREZ

My set be rolling. Wassup, niggas?

He drops the gun. Puts his hands on his head. And flashes a respectful smile toward Poole.

PEREZ (CONT'D)

Damn, boy. I guess you did it.

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - NIGHT

SULLIVAN sets coffee to brew. Watches POOLE and his limp make their way to get cups.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - 1997

PARKS. CONMAY. POOLE and cops watch PEREZ through two-way glass. Handcuffed to a table across City Attorney HAHN (44, bookish but no pushover).

HAHN

Officer Perez. This is a critical intersection of history and future, for both the LAPD and yourself. You have the option to do a great good for this Department, to the Shield and to the citizens you swore to protect and serve. We have an array of evidence against you that suggests you are effectively a lieutenant in a criminal organization...

Hahn stops. Because unlike David Mack... PEREZ is crying.

PEREZ

I'll help.

HAHN stiffens, *this was unexpected*. Outside, POOLE takes optimistic breath. *This may be easy...*

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER - 1997

PEREZ

I was accepted into the Academy in 1989. In '94, I joined the CRASH unit. Rampart...

INT. POLYGRAPH TESTING ROOM - 1997

PEREZ, strapped to a LIE DETECTOR.

TECHNICIAN

As a Rampart officer, did you perpetrate illegal activities including but not limited to: robbery, drug dealing and murder?

PEREZ

Yes.

TECHNICIAN

Were other LAPD members involved?

PEREZ

Yes.

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - TODAY

SULLIVAN rapt. No note-taking. Just the story...

SULLIVAN
Holy shit, he's rolling over.

POOLE
No. He was that person who'd game
the Department.

INT. GRAND JURY DEPOSITION ROOM - 1997

PEREZ sits, handsome in a suit and tie.

PEREZ
We were a criminal organization.
We shot unarmed suspects then
planted weapons on them. We
robbed drug dealers.

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - TODAY

SULLIVAN face to face with PEREZ' ACADEMY PHOTO.

POOLE
Sounds like he's talking about
Death Row, doesn't it?

INT. GRAND JURY DEPOSITION ROOM - 1997

PEREZ
We dealt drugs. We eliminated
enemies and competition.

POOLE (V.O.)
He's not.

INT. HAHN'S OFFICE - DAY - 1997

YOUNG POOLE sits in a mahogany OFFICE in suit and tie.

POOLE (V.O.)
*Meanwhile, the Gaines case against
the LAPD was starting. I rehearsed
my testimony as State's Witness,
knowing we faced Johnnie Cochran.*

City Attorney HAHN circles POOLE --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POOLE

I have twenty-two years as a Detective and in my professional opinion, Kevin Gaines instigated, pursued and escalated the conflict. Frank Lyga acted in self-defense.

INT. GRAND JURY DEPOSITION ROOM - DAY - 1997

PEREZ

We worked for no outside entity. Only ourselves. For each other.

INT. POOLE'S GARAGE-OFFICE

POOLE grimaces as he swallows his coffee.

POOLE

The more he talked the more I knew he wasn't going to bring up ties to Death Row. So there was only one way the public would know the LAPD had dirty cops connected to Suge Knight...

INT. HAHN'S OFFICE - DAY - 1997

POOLE (V.O.)

...My testimony against Gaines.

POOLE clears his throat --

POOLE

Gaines was a known associate of incarcerated Officers David Mack and Rafa Perez. My belief is these individuals were in part or in total responsible for the planning, execution, and cover-up of the murder of Christopher Wallace.

INT. GRAND JURY DEPOSITION ROOM - DAY - 1997

PEREZ frowns at a question HAHN just posed to him.

PEREZ

David Mack? He robbed a bank?

HAHN

You know that he's currently incarcerated for bank robbery. What can you tell us about him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEREZ

Nothing. I'm surprised by that.
'Cos Officer Mack was straight.

INT. HAHN'S OFFICE - LATER - 1997

POOLE soldiers on...

POOLE

David Mack owned a black Chevy
Impala and possessed rare, German
made, Gecko 9mm bullets. Mack had
only one visitor in jail. A man
named by an ultra-reliable
informant as the Wallace shooter.

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME

SULLIVAN studies the Death Row Party Photo --

GAINES. MACK. PEREZ. Together. All dressed like Bloods.

INT. DEPOSITION ROOM - 1997

Tie undone, PEREZ works the room of rapt investigators.
There's a sense of teamwork. Of *friendship*.

PEREZ

Here's a list of every Rampart
officer that was In the Loop.

INVESTIGATOR

What's that mean, Ray?

PEREZ

Plant evidence, then back it up by
lying in court? You in the loop.

The investigator leafs through dozens of officer reports.

PEREZ (CONT'D)

And it was a big loop!

Laughter. Perez flashes his 1000 watt smile. The
INVESTIGATORS can't believe their luck...

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY - 1997

PEREZ sits in the witness stand. Choking back sobs.

INVESTIGATOR

You want a drink of water, Ray?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A JURYWOMAN'S face falls with pity. POOLE -- in the public gallery -- watching this. Horrified.

PEREZ

I just want to apologize for what I've done. Atrocities that I and my fellow officers have committed were the result of an "us against them" ethos. And I'm so sorry...

Perez, worked up now. Chest heaving, tears dripping. He doubles over, weeping. The JUDGE considers his state...

JUDGE

Let's reconvene in one hour.

He bangs his gavel.

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME

SULLIVAN and POOLE share a silent beat.

SULLIVAN

He was offering 70 dirty cops and countless crimes. That makes 3 Death Row cops and a dead rapper an afterthought. I know which scandal I'd prefer.

POOLE

You weren't the only one.

REPORTER (V.O.)

A sudden deal was reached between the City of Los Angeles against Rafael Perez...

EXT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT - 1997

The REPORTER, glare lit by her camera lights --

REPORTER

...in which the former officer has pled guilty to cocaine theft and accepted a sentencing of five years. Minus time served.

INT. HAHN'S OFFICE - 1997

POOLE sits. LYGA there. Hahn circles, reciting his closing argument --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAHN

Russell Poole protected his reputation the only way he knew how. By doing his job. But Poole found his investigations blocked by criminals with badges in a Department where the appearance of Justice mattered more than its actual execution.

Hahn takes a deep breath. Pleased.

HAHN (CONT'D)

Bring on Johnnie Cochran.

INT. POOLE'S GARAGE-OFFICE

POOLE

I was ready for him...

INT. CITY HALL, LOBBY - DAY - 1997

POOLE and LYGA walk across the marbled floor.

POOLE (V.O.)

...And the City and Brass... knew it.

INT. ELEVATOR - 1997

POOLE and LYGA with their thoughts. Until the DOORS OPEN.

Poole's reflection replaced by a very real BERNARD PARKS.

PARKS stands between POOLE and LYGA for the remaining, silent, trip. The doors open and Parks exits. Poole and Lyga look at each other and know --

Something's up.

INT. POOLE'S GARAGE-OFFICE

POOLE

Gaines Family got a quarter million dollars and Lyga was 'not guilty' of murder. That was the deal.

INT. CITY HALL, LOBBY - DAY - 1997

LYGA can't maintain his composure. HAHN there, apologetic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LYGA

I get called a racist. Every day.
In the papers. To my face. And when
we're going to air the facts, the
truth, you shut the door on me.
THIS IS MY LIFE! It's been ruined.

POOLE trudges away from Lyga's tirade. We follow him to --

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY - 1997

The cavernous, empty, court of law. POOLE enters. Alone.
Just him and the blindfolded LADY OF JUSTICE.

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - TONIGHT

A silent moment. POOLE forlorn. Winded, still angry, at
the memory.

POOLE

My dad died in the line of duty.
(beat)
I resigned. A silent protest at
being silenced. It went unnoticed.
(beat)
And here I am.

INT. ABC NEWS - SULLIVAN'S DESK - NIGHT

SULLIVAN and his EMMY stare at each other in long,
wordless, debate.

INT. ABC NEWS - CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

SULLIVAN stands amidst the ninety-two VOLUMES of the
Biggie Smalls MURDER BOOK.

He studies the COMPOSITE SKETCH of the Biggie Shooter.
He sets it down.

The door opens. BELSHER enters.

BELSHER

Hell of another day in Paradise
isn't it, Sully?

SULLIVAN

Belsh. You here to gloat?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BELSHER

Nobody likes a gloater. Just
needed to see this myself. You.
Here. At three in the morning.

SULLIVAN

What are you on?

BELSHER

Slumming in the basement.

Something dawns on SULLIVAN. He looks to BELSHER --

SULLIVAN

Take me down there.

INT. ABC NEWS - BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

BELSHER and SULLIVAN stand before mall-sized CATACOMBS of
SHELVES and FILES.

BELSHER

Every story and interview we ever
filed, since 1886.

(a team player)

There's coffee, man. Want a cup?

SULLIVAN

I would. Thanks.

INT. ABC NEWS - BASEMENT - LATER

SULLIVAN, bleary eyed but coffee-wired sits on the floor
surrounded by FILES and REPORTS.

He collects and collates different files. Scans different
reports, until...

He's has something.

He sits. Fires up his LAPTOP -- and starts typing...

INT. LA TIMES - EDITORIAL DESK - MORNING

JESSICA jabs at her keyboard -- but her attention is
drawn by the approaching SULLIVAN.

JESSICA

Christ, I thought you looked like
shit, last time I saw you.

SULLIVAN

I've never felt better.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He drops a document on her desk.

JESSICA
Do I want to know?

SULLIVAN
You were right about me. What you
said the other night.

JESSICA
Lindsay Lohan?

SULLIVAN
No, about me having the gift. I am
pretty talented.

JESSICA
You're so full of shit.

SULLIVAN
I am that too.
(re: the document)
You're going to want that.

JESSICA
Why?

SULLIVAN
Because it's about me.

JESSICA
And you wonder why we never made
it.

SULLIVAN
No.
(then - the report)
Verbatim. I don't want you
paraphrasing, or omitting, a word.
There's 1,534. I counted.

JESSICA
If it's good, we'll look at it. And
I don't paraphrase. I have ethics.

SULLIVAN smiles. The first genuine smile we've seen.

SULLIVAN
That's why we never made it.

INT. RECEPTION TO EDWARDS' OFFICE - ABC NEWS - DAY

Sullivan waits to be seen. Patiently. In a suit and tie
like he's going to something ceremonious.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SECRETARY

He'll see you now.

INT. EDWARDS' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

EDWARDS, imperious behind his mahogany desk eyes Sullivan as he enters and sets a DOCUMENT down.

EDWARDS

You get a name?

SULLIVAN

You get a name. *Mine* -- on a resignation.

Edwards looks it over, then up to his former star. Something paternal about Edwards. Almost forgiving.

EDWARDS

Sully, don't think you're too good to work on the D-Block.

SULLIVAN

I know. I used to think I was too good for it. But now...

Sully grins. His old cockiness back --

SULLIVAN

Now, I know I am.

He offers his hand. And Edwards shakes it. *Godspeed.*

INT. POOLE'S TRAILER HOME - MORNING

SUNLIGHT glaring in. POOLE squints his way down the creaky hall to find the tin foil off his windows and --

SULLIVAN taking down mugshots and photos. Dismantling.

SULLIVAN

A cop spends twenty years trying to solve the case he lost his family to. Who's at fault...?

POOLE

The hell you doing!

SULLIVAN

...it's your fault.

POOLE stops short. Flushing.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

It's your fault, Russ.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

If that's bait, Poole doesn't take it. Just starts tacking evidence back up.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

But I found someone.

I/E. SULLIVAN'S PORSCHE - INTERSTATE 10 / LA - LATER

Sullivan drives with purpose -- within the speed limit -- but one eye on the clock. Top down, wind whipping. Poole rides shotgun, his face a mask of stoic anticipation.

SULLIVAN

I believed the Brass when they said you were a crank because the Wallace Family Civil Case was dismissed in open court.

POOLE

Prosecution had to prove Mack was involved before they could try the LAPD for covering it up.

SULLIVAN

Not an easy case to prove when Death Row's intimidating witnesses and Cop Charisma's telling the City its purge of dirty cops is actually over *there*... How many did Perez put on the altar?

POOLE

Seventy. Where are we going?

SULLIVAN

How many lie detectors did he take?

POOLE

Five. Sully?

SULLIVAN holds up a DOCUMENT.

SULLIVAN

He failed every one.

Poole snatches for the document, desperate, like it's a smoking gun. But Sullivan lets it *fly into the wind*.

POOLE

Are you fucking crazy! What are you doing!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULLIVAN

Live with it. You're going to have to live with *you did the best you could and it wasn't enough!*

POOLE

You came to me remember? You want off? Let me out! I'm solving this.

SULLIVAN

It's solved. 1000 people would have pulled the trigger for pussy or power. Shit I would have pulled it. But who did? Death Row? Suge Knight? The answer is: we don't care. None of us. Parks and Conmay didn't care because they were trying to save a Department. Miller, was trying to save his pension. The City was trying to save itself from bankruptcy. What were you trying to save?

Poole's had enough. Dismisses Sullivan with a wave.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

No? OK, you want out?

EXT. CORONA PARK BATTING CAGES - DAY

SULLIVAN parks outside a building that fronts a complex of connected nets. Batting cages.

SULLIVAN

Just see this first. This guy's here every Saturday. 7am sharp. Never misses a session.

And right on cue -- A CAR PULLS UP. Some way off but --

-- RUSSELL POOLE JR. gets out.

POOLE instinctively crouches, not wanting to be seen as his son walks past. He seethes. His old fury returned.

POOLE

You god damn bastard!

He storms out. But Sullivan steps out to face him.

POOLE (CONT'D)

You don't have the right...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULLIVAN

I'm trying to make amends.

POOLE

Then get out of my life!

SULLIVAN

Only if -- at his next game -- you save me one up in the Cheap Seats. Huh, Russ? Up there? Where you wallow in penance. Because this is how it ends up.

Now it's SULLIVAN who steps to POOLE with rising anger.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

You close a case, you get a promotion, you get the shiny object then you think you are the shiny object so you close another case. And when you get one you can't close, suddenly you aren't who you thought you are -- someone worth respect -- so you lock yourself in a god damned cave and never have a beer because...

POOLE JR. (O.C.)

Dad?

Poole freezes. His face quivers with two decades of conflicting emotion. Won't face his 20 year old boy.

POOLE

Hey, Russ. Give me a minute?

POOLE JR.

What are you doing here?

SULLIVAN

He's here to see you, man.

POOLE JR.

Who the hell you?

SULLIVAN

I'm nobody, but it's a pleasure to meet you, I got you something.

He hands him a folded NEWSPAPER.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

You should read it. The writing is excellent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

POOLE

Sorry to disturb your practice,
Russ. Go on. We're just leaving.

Jr. stands for an uncertain beat. He trudges away.
Poole's now beyond anger and fury. He's spent --

POOLE (CONT'D)

Guess we both beat each other up
pretty good, Sully. I'm done.

SULLIVAN

You tried to save yourself from a
case you were never going to win.

(beat)

You tried for so long your son's
surprised to see you. So come
down from the Cheap Seats and look
him in the fucking face and say
you're sorry.

POOLE hasn't moved.

POOLE

What are you, a psychiatrist?

SULLIVAN

No, I'm a hack. A hack who doesn't
know how to do the right thing. So
let me tell you the wrong thing to
do -- stay on the case.

(beat)

It makes your son think that's all
you care about.

Poole stands at the crossroads. A long beat. Then -- he
walks toward his son. And finds him...

THE CAGES --

... reading *The LA Times*.

He holds it up for POOLE --

Our Forgotten Hero

RUSSELL POOLE: *A Cop We Should Insist On.*

Poole blinks at the Front Page op-ed.

POOLE

(Sullivan)

You son of a bitch...

SULLIVAN'S POV --

On the hood of his car, Sullivan watches a private atonement between father and son. Watches them enter the Batting Cages.

He allows himself a sad smile and goodbye wave to Poole.