

PLAGUE SEASON

By James Ellroy

Revisions by David Ayer

Second Draft - 4 July, 1998
Revisions - 22 December, 1998

Super over a BLACK SCREEN: Monday, April 27, 1992

EXT. AVALON BLVD - SOUTH CENTRAL - SUNSET

A Spring sky glows pink as the evening sun dives into the Western horizon. Evening traffic fills these troubled streets of dingy storefronts a few miles South of downtown.

ANGLE ON

LUCKY LIQUOR a corner store with a battered Buick parked out front. Two men inside, driver, ORCHARD, is black. He pulls on his Newport and flicks it out the window.

Orchard swigs from a pint of vodka and passes it to the passenger, SIDWELL, a white guy. Both are in early 30's and just plain vicious. They watch the street. Check the mirrors. A scanner on the seat monitors LAPD RADIO TRAFFIC.

SIDWELL

They ain't gettin' off. Jury's got motherfuckin' eyes. Rodney King is gettin' his ass whupped.

ORCHARD

Ain't one brother on that jury. Simi Valley. Good decent white folk up there, they suckin' them cop's dicks.

SIDWELL

Should'a had the trial here. Verdict'd be in already. And four cops'ld be selling ass in Tehachape.

ORCHARD

That's why they moved the venue. Cops're protected.

Orchard CLICKS his tongue in disgust and pulls silenced Ruger .22 pistol. And dons a skimask.

SIDWELL

That shit's on tape. You can't fuck with that. They goin' down.

ORCHARD

They go down, I'll buy you some pussy. But if they walk, you spottin' me a ho.

They shake. Both men put on gloves. Orchard exits the car with a heavy canvas bag. Sidwell follows, slipping on a skimask and sunglasses, his own silenced .22 held against his thigh.

INT. LUCKY LIQUOR - SAME

The KOREAN WOMAN tending the till SHRIEKS with surprise as Orchard charges with his autopistol ...

POP-POP-POP-POP -- She swats at the bullets like bees, hands flinging blood, then three in the face drop her like a rock.

Sidwell positions himself just inside the entrance, watches the street, weapon ready.

Orchard vaults the counter. Charges through a bead curtain to stairs in back that lead to the owner's modest apartment.

INT. PARKER CENTER - CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

A warm sunset casts itself across the LAPD Command Staff, five solemn, serious men line a walnut table, among them:

DEPUTY CHIEF BARCOMB, number 2 in LAPD, he's the senior officer present and tapped for Chief when Gates goes. The big Mick cop leafs through reports.

ASSISTANT CHIEF ARTHUR HOLLAND, the only black in the room, is imposing from years of weightlifting. A tough old veteran, he fought his way to the top of a segregated LAPD.

DETECTIVE BOBBY TEDROW, 27, sits before these imposing inquisitors. Dapper and cool, tailored and crisp, he reeks competence and confidence.

BARCOMB

Detective Tedrow. If you had a little time machine and could travel back to the day of the shooting, to that afternoon when you killed Mr. Robertson. If you could do that, I'd like to hear what you'd do differently.

The beautiful STENOGRAPHER's fingers dance across her keys. She trades a look with Tedrow and blushes.

INT. LUCKY LIQUOR - LITTLE GIRL'S BEDROOM - SAME

A 2nd grader per the homework on her walls. Thank God she's not home. Orchard charges in, heaves aside her bed, tears back the carpet. Exposing a FLOOR SAFE. With a crowbar from his bag, Orchard rips away the floorboards around it.

INT. PARKER CENTER - CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME

Tedrow purses his lips in thought.

TEDROW

I would, Chief Barcomb, do everything the same. Mr. Robertson controlled the situation by pointing a firearm at me. His actions determined his fate. I did what I was trained to do. If anything, sir, I should have acted quicker. The last man Robertson pulled a gun on lost his life.

BARCOMB

Thank you, detective.

Holland stares, arms crossed, at this slick little punk.

INT. LUCKY LIQUOR - LITTLE GIRL'S BEDROOM - SAME

The squat safe has been fully exposed. It's secured to a steel beam with four huge bolts. Orchard locks a gunpowder powered boltcutter on the head of a bolt ...

BAM! Shears it clean. KERSHACK! -- He shucks the fired cartridge from the tool, drops in a fresh one.

ANGLE ON

A security monitor in the hall outside the bedroom.

INSERT MONITOR -- A high angle view of the store entrance. A YOUNG WOMAN enters, past Sidwell, aiming at her head ...

OVER: BAM! KERSHACK! Another bolt is cut.

The Young Woman crumples with a slug in her medulla.

INT. PARKER CENTER - CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME

Barcomb gathers papers with finality.

BARCOMB

I think we've kept Detective Tedrow here long enough.

HOLLAND

Chief Barcomb. I have a few questions for the detective.

BARCOMB

Fire away, Chief Holland.

HOLLAND

It's been a long day, and I know too well these chairs aren't padded, so I'll be quick.

INT. LUCKY LIQUOR - SAME

INSERT MONITOR -- Now a Hispanic WOMAN enters. Sidwell aiming at her head. Her DAUGHTER, 7, runs in the store and grabs mommy's hand.

ON ORCHARD

BAM! KERSHACK! The final bolt is sheared. He tears the safe free with gloved hands. Exits the bedroom with his tools and THUDS down the stairs.

INSERT MONITOR -- No one in view. Just three blood trails leading to a pile of feet peeking from an aisle.

EXT. LUCKY LIQUOR - SAME

Orchard runs out, the heavy safe cradled in his arms. Then Sidwell -- His sunglasses fly off his face, he collided with a black OLD MAN with grey hair and beard, overalls. The Old Man lands on his backside, finds himself staring into Sidwell's BLUE EYES ...

POP! -- Sidwell shoots him in the throat. He and Orchard hop in the Buick. And SQUEAL down Avalon.

INT. PARKER CENTER - CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME

Holland smiling at Tedrow, ambiguous.

HOLLAND

Detective Tedrow, how long have you been with the Special Investigations Section?

TEDROW

Three weeks, sir. I was previously assigned to Metro Division, C Platoon.

HOLLAND

This is your first shooting. Lethal or non. Would you say you've proven yourself?

TEDROW

Respectfully, I think this shooting board has to decide that, Chief Holland.

HOLLAND

You and Sergeant Perry had Mr. Robertson bumperlocked for some time prior to the shooting. Why didn't you violate him on a weapons charge?

TEDROW

We didn't have probable cause. The informant who told us he had a gun is listed as highly unreliable.

HOLLAND

You didn't need probable cause. Mr. Robertson was on parole. You and Sergeant Perry followed a dangerous felon around L.A. with a three fifty seven magnum for two days, waiting, hoping, he goes off. Am I correct?

Tedrow is suddenly not so cocksure. The look Barcomb shoots Holland says, "What the hell are you doing?" Holland takes a deep breath, scans the room. He's crossed the line and he's not going back.

HOLLAND

There was no need to ambush and execute him. No man deserves to be gunned down. Not even Mr. Robertson. He'd safely be in custody had you stepped in earlier. Our mandate is to preserve life. What if he killed the bartender--?

BARCOMB

--Thank you, Chief Holland. We have to wrap up here.

(to a Uniform)

Officer Garcia, could you please tell Sergeant Perry to come in?

The UNIFORM steps outside. A beat.

Enter SERGEANT ELDON PERRY JR., 43, in a rumpled JC Penny suit. Third generation LAPD, he's endured a dozen shooting boards and recognizes them for what they are: a joke. Perry stands by Tedrow, silhouetted against the setting sun. Tedrow draws strength from his boss.

BARCOMB

Sergeant Perry, we had you on the spot all morning but we're not quite through beating up on you. I have one final question before we adjourn this board.

PERRY

The time machine, sir?

BARCOMB

Uh, yes. The time machine.

Smirks around the room.

PERRY

Deputy Chief, if I had a time machine, I'd get proactive. Robertson did nine years for the murder of a bar owner on Main. Not bad for California. Folsom sent us tape on Robertson bragging to his cellie how he's gonna go on a spree when he gets out. Sure enough, the guy beelined it downtown with his gate money and copped crack cocaine. That ran out, so he ripped off the nearest bar: Clem's Cocktails. Guy had a one track mind: smoke coke. I wish we could go back a decade and take out G-Rock, his street moniker, before he became a murderer.

BARCOMB

Please, Sergeant. I'm talking about a time machine that can't go back that far. This one can only go back a week, to the day Detective Tedrow used deadly force. What would you change about that day?

PERRY

Nothing. It was textbook. At the end of the day, the bullets were in the badguy, not us.

BARCOMB

Thank you.

(notes are consulted)

I'm sorry, Sergeant. I lied. One more question. This is it. I promise. As a supervisor, what have you learned from this shooting?

PERRY

No matter how long our days get, how many cases we catch, we gotta get in our range time. Detective Tedrow acted with discretion and valor. And he acted with skill. If we aren't better gunfighters than the badguys, it's goodbye.

INSERT PERRY'S LAPEL -- Pinned there is a killpin, the base of a fired cartridge that reads: S&W .38 POLICE SPECIAL.

BARCOMB

We expect department employees to use deadly force only with great skill--

/

PERRY

--and as a last resort. Which it was in this case. Bobby Tedrow's a good cop who made a good call.

BARCOMB

Thank you, Sergeant Perry -- And thank you Detective Tedrow. For your professionalism and candor throughout these proceedings. Gentlemen you are dismissed for the day. We'll issue our report tomorrow at nine A.M. Proceedings closed.

Barcomb stands. Then everyone else, chairs SCRAPE. Perry catches Holland staring at him. Perry makes a gun with his hand and smiles. Holland winks back. These two clearly dislike each other.

As Tedrow walks toward the exit, he brushes by the Stenographer, who slips her phone number into his palm.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKER CENTER - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Perry washing his hands. Tedrow stares in the mirror.

PERRY

Told you, it's all bullshit. You were tits, kid. Outstanding.

TEDROW

You said Holland never opens his mouth at these things.

PERRY

He ask you something? The fuck did that tarbaby ask you?

TEDROW

Why didn't we violate Robertson on a weapons charge.

PERRY

Oh. Someone asks that every board.

Tedrow vomits in the sink.

PERRY

Jesus, Bobby. Fuck's wrong?

Tedrow rinses his mouth, dabs it, fixes his cufflinks.

TEDROW

Eldon, I thought I was talking us into a jail cell. Felt like they could see right through me.

PERRY

Those pagues can't see through an open window. Get your shit together, Bobby, and let's get off this fuckin' floor.

Perry slaps Tedrow's back and opens the door for him.

CUT TO:

Bourbon cascades down ice in a crystal tumbler. Wide to:

INT. VAN METER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Dark and antequely opulent, plaques, awards and deer antlers adorn the walls. Leathery and silverhaired, COMMANDER TOM VAN METER, a living legend who wields immense power from the shadows, pours bourbon for Perry, on a couch with Tedrow.

ON THE T.V. -- News about the Rodney King trial in Simi Valley. The infamous beating video plays.

ANCHORMAN (V.O.)

--as the fifth day of jury deliberations concluded today with no verdict in sight. The fate of four Los Angeles police officers rests in the--

--CLICK. Perry turns it off with his foot.

PERRY

Should'a wasted that worthless nigger's motherfuckin' ass -- Thanks, Tom.

Perry takes his glass. Van Meter pours Tedrow a slug.

VAN METER

Here. Settle your stomach.

TEDROW

Thank you, Tom.

VAN METER

Think Bobby sold those guys?

PERRY

No doubt. He aced it.

TEDROW

Now's the hardest part: waiting. Do I get indicted or come back to work?

PERRY

You go down, I go down. I go down, Tom goes down. And no one's going down. Have some faith in the fuckin' system.

VAN METER

He won't be a believer until he sees the report. You were the same way once.

(sits by Tedrow)

Bobby, lemme tell you what to do so the wait doesn't eat you up all night--

PERRY

--Get a bottle and a broad and hit a hotel.

TEDROW

Oh, I got that taken care of.

PERRY

You do not.

TEDROW

C'mon, Eldon. It's me here. I have a room at the Bonaventure. A bottle of Dom on ice and a lovely young lady to share them with.

PERRY

Bobby cleans up.

Van Meter puts an arm around Tedrow. Fatherly.

VAN METER

Listen, kid. Here's my advice, for what it's worth ... Boo!

Tedrow startles. His drink hits the carpet. Perry laughs his ass off. Van Meter grins. Tedrow, a good sport, picks up his glass and ice.

TEDROW

Never gonna live it down.

VAN METER

Never. You drop another weapon, I'm shovin' a riotgun up your ass.

A KNOCK at the door. Perry crosses, opens it.

PERRY

Holy shit! It's a royal visit. Look
what descended from the seventh floor.

Deputy Chief Barcomb enters, finds a spot on Van Meter's
couch. Tedrow sits at attention. Perry pours a double.

BARCOMB

Thanks, Eldon.

(grabs Tedrow's knee)

How you holding up, son?

TEDROW

Good, sir.

BARCOMB

Tom, this kid. He was outstanding.

(to Tedrow)

Ever thought of doing a tour with Public
Affairs? Department could use a silver
tongued son of a bitch like you like for
a mouthpiece.

VAN METER

He's a good guy, Jimmy. And he's mine.

BARCOMB

I tried ... Tom, the board voted.

Whirling the ice in his glass, Barcomb savors the suspense.
When everyone shows they are duly eager, he proclaims:

BARCOMB

In policy.

Tedrow relaxes visibly. Perry nods knowingly.

BARCOMB(cont'd)

Report comes out tomorrow morning. And
you guys can get back in the field.
Vote was, uh, four to one.

PERRY

What? Who the fuck dissented? Holland?

BARCOMB

Bingo.

PERRY

The hell's going on in his wooly fuckin'
head? He actually said, "out of
policy?"

VAN METER

Fuck Holland. He's leaving. He's been contacting outside agencies for a month. He's going to Cleveland to run their PD. You didn't hear it from me, Jimmy.

BARCOMB

No, of course not, Tom.

PERRY

Fuck Holland. Good riddance.

BARCOMB

Tedrow. Here ...

(fishing in his pocket)

I sprung the casing from evidence and had a killpin made. Welcome to the good shooter's club.

Barcomb pins a killpin on Tedrow's suit -- The base of a fired .40 cal S&W cartridge -- Shakes his hand.

TEDROW

Thank you, sir.

VAN METER

Let's drink a toast to Bobby. Right between the eyes.

Everyone CLINKS glasses.

TEDROW

Thank you, sir. For the chance to prove myself in SIS, the best damn squad in the department. In any department.

PERRY

Amen, Bobby. To the death squad.

More CLINKS. Barcomb empties his glass. Before Perry can refill it ...

VAN METER

Thanks for dropping by, Jimmy. We'll get some drinks this week.

Barcomb takes the hint and stands, a little disappointed.

BARCOMB

Sure, Tom. Anytime -- Eldon, you made Lieutenant.

(off Perry's reaction)

I'm not pulling your dick.

PERRY
(grins irrepressibly)
About fuckin' time. Where's my shield?

BARCOMB
Badge ceremony's Wednesday at the Oxnard
Country Club. Think you can make it?
On time?

PERRY
I'll try and show up, Jimmy.
Barcomb crosses to the door and exits.

VAN METER
That's our next chief.

PERRY
(laughing)
God help us.

TEDROW
Congratulations, Lieutenant.

PERRY
Thanks. Don't wear that around me.
Perry plucks the killpin from Tedrow's lapel and drops it in
Tedrow's breast pocket.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLAND'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Establishing. A big beautiful ranch home in the upscale
black community of Baldwin Hills.

ON THE PATIO

It's a floating deck with a pool and a commanding view of
the L.A. basin. Holland sits at a table, his wife, JANELLE,
next to him. She's a knock-out. Sharing their dinner table
is LESTER BROWN a black L.A. City Councilman. And ISAAC
GOLDEN, a Westside powerbroker and superlawyer.

JANELLE
(re: the food)
There's more if you like.

GOLDEN
No, thank you. It was excellent.

BROWN
No, ma'am. Thank you.

She smiles, stands and gather their plates.

GOLDEN

You have a beautiful home here.

HOLLAND

Thank you. I'm going to miss it. You gentleman want a drink?

GOLDEN

Arthur, if I could, a little glass of Chardonnay would be a delight.

BROWN

Two fingers of scotch and an ice cube, thank you.

HOLLAND

Can do. If ya'll will pardon me.

Holland helps Janelle carry plates into the house.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLLAND'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Holland at his bar, he pours himself a stiff one and downs it. He refills it, catching Janelle watching him.

HOLLAND

What?

Janelle minds her own business.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLAND'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Holland arrives with the drinks and takes a seat.

GOLDEN/BROWN

Thank you.

BROWN

You gotta tell me, why Cleveland? The salary?

HOLLAND

It's not the money, Lester. I had better offers from Detroit and Pittsburgh.

GOLDEN

I'm sure. An African American police administrator with big city experience and moderate politics could have his pick of departments. The walls have come tumbling down since the Christopher Commission report.

Holland winks at Golden, smiles.

HOLLAND

I got a sense from the Cleveland people that they actually trust me to lead their department and not just be an affirmative action front horse.

GOLDEN

My question, Arthur, isn't why Cleveland. It's why not L.A?

HOLLAND

Isaac, I've been an L.A. cop for a quarter century. My church is here, my community. My son's school. It's a lot to walk away from. But I've been rotting in Administrative Services for five years. By all rights I should take over Operations from Jimmy when gets his fourth star. I broached the subject to him. He laughed in my face. There's no place for me in an LAPD run by Jimmy Barcomb.

BROWN

The man's another Daryl Gates. But he can be controlled. How deep is your commitment to Cleveland?

HOLLAND

Right now, not very. Nothing's been signed.

BROWN

City Council loves you, Arthur. If you stick around, we can pressure Barcomb and get you Operations.

HOLLAND

(drains his glass)

Lester, I won't be number two to a number one who doesn't respect me. Know I scored higher on the Chief's exam?

GOLDEN

We heard. It's embarrassing to let another city steal our best and brightest. Arthur, you are exactly the kind of man who should be running the department.

HOLLAND

(chuckles self-effacingly)

Well, thank you, sir. It's kind of you to say that.

BROWN

Lotta council members share that opinion. Enough, I believe, to put you there. Especially after the King beating verdicts come in. No white jury will convict four white policeman of assaulting a black felon.

GOLDEN

If a not guilty Barcomb will be a lot less appealing politically. I can lobby the Mayor and Police Commission to forward your name to the City Council for a vote.

HOLLAND

We all know there is one very serious obstacle to that. Tom Van Meter. Only a man he approves of will ever get the big office on the eight floor.

(goes for the kill)

If you gentleman guarantee me your support. I can guarantee you the removal of that obstacle.

Brown and Golden REACT. Brown leans in close.

BROWN

How?

HOLLAND

I'd rather not discuss the mechanics of what I wanna do. For your safety. But I can do it within the confines of the law. With no blowback. With no mess. Gentlemen?

Brown and Golden trade looks. A beat. They hold out their hands and shake with Holland.

GOLDEN

You have my full support.

BROWN

Arthur, I got your back. Someone should have done this a long, long time ago.

HOLLAND

Please, I'm not being paranoid here. But this can't leave the three of us. And don't discuss this amongst yourselves on the phone. Assume Van Meter has all your calls.

The men nod. Holland gathers their glasses.

BROWN

Four fingers and no ice this time.

HOLLAND

Isaac?

GOLDEN

Could you bring me the bottle?

CUT TO:

INT. FIRE COMPANY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

It used to be an old downtown firestation. Tedrow sits across from BETH, a beautiful black woman, who despite her best efforts can't hide her attraction to him.

BETH

I could of checked you out, Bobby L.N.U. But I didn't.

TEDROW

I know you didn't, Elizabeth. Last Name Unknown.

BETH

We're talking about work. It's the man, not the badge, I wanna get to know.

TEDROW

Maybe all we have in common is the badge.

BETH

Maybe. Ever dated a cop before?

TEDROW

Dated dated? As in multiple outings? One. A girl in my academy class. It's so intense, you get those Elysian Park romances, you know?

BETH

No. I don't know. So how many singular outings have you had?

TEDROW

I think they call those one night stands.

BETH

Gimme a number, ballpark. How many sworn LAPD employees have you slept with?

TEDROW

Um, God. Three dozen.

BETH

As in thirty six?

TEDROW

Yeah. Closer to thirty. You asked for a number.

BETH

Jesus.

TEDROW

It's not like I promise them a ring. Most of the time I get approached.

Beth shakes her head.

TEDROW(cont'd)

Okay. It's my turn. You ever dated a cop?

BETH

Yes. I had a station house fling. A long time ago. That was my first, only, and I vowed, my last cop. You guys think you're such hot shit. A badge and a gun. And you, your four hundred dollar suits. Ray Bans. Wingtips.

TEDROW

It works. Here you are.

BETH

I didn't think you were a cop when I met you. I thought you were some yuppie dude with a brain in your head.

TEDROW

But you didn't run away when you found out. You broke your no cops vow.

BETH

Yeah? Well maybe I'll break another.

CUT TO:

EXT. PERRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Establishing. A middleclass box with a nice lawn, tucked into Simi Valley's soft rolling hills. Next door a church marquee reads: Thank you Officer Joseph Andreeson for 25 years of LAPD service.

CUT TO:

INT. PERRY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The furniture is shabby, unkempt. Easy listening on the stereo. Perry strolls in with a grin, SEES his wife SALLY, on the couch, snuggled up to a liquor cart. She wears an L.A. Sheriff's Department civilian uniform.

PERRY

You're a fuckin' alcoholic.

SALLY

Hi, honey. There's goulash in the crockpot.

PERRY

Not hungry. Sally, I made Lieutenant.

Sally laughs gleefully, grabs a decanter of rye, fills a tumbler. Hands it to Perry as he drops on the couch, puts his cowboy boots on the coffeetable. Perry gulps rye as Sally gives him a proud peck on the cheek.

SALLY

Finally. When's the badge ceremony?

PERRY

Wednesday.

SALLY

Can I get a dress?

PERRY

You got dresses, Sally. Can we afford a new house if you're buying shit all the time? No. You just get home?

Perry slices opens the mail with his Buck knife.

SALLY

Eleven prisoners got released. I had to do their packages.

PERRY

Jesus Christ! Who the fuck's calling nine hundred numbers?

SALLY

If it's anyone, it's you and you don't remember.

He grabs the phone, dials.

PERRY

I got magazines for manual labor. It's the damn kid.

Sally stretches and puts her feet in his lap. Perry listens a beat, hangs up. Relieved.

PERRY

Sorority slut hotline. Pay it. Least he's not a fag.

SALLY

No, Eldon, he's not. The "damn kid" has a girlfriend. Know that, detective?

PERRY

No shit?

SALLY

A very pretty, very sweet girl.

PERRY

Excellent. The boy's finding his dick.

SALLY

I work in a jail, Eldon. I know it's no big deal, but do I have to hear that kind of talk in my home?

Perry is feeling frisky. He throws an arm around her and unbuttons her blouse.

PERRY

Sorry, honey. Hey, what the fuck? Aren't you going to ask me how the shooting board went?

SALLY

Sorry, Eldon. It's hard keeping track of all your shootings and investigations and everything.... How did your shooting board go?

PERRY

In policy.

SALLY

Like it would be anything else.

PERRY

Bobby's strutting around like a little rooster.

SALLY

Honey, you're just jealous of him because he's cute.

PERRY

You are so lost in space. You don't know what the fuck's going on. Jealous? Bobby's a fucking coward. If Van Meter wasn't his Uncle ...

Perry paws her, squeezes her rump.

SALLY

Bobby's no coward.

PERRY

He's not? Lemme tell you how the Robertson case really went down. My gun has to cool 'cause I blasted that freak in Pacoima a month ago. And it's time Bobby gets tested. So we're waiting in the alley when Robertson runs out, almost smacks into Bobby. There they are, eyeballin' each other with their shit out and Robertson says, "boo." Bobby drops his gun and mandingo goes trackstar. Sally, Bobby dropped his fucking gun.

SALLY

I heard you. But, Eldon, I don't want to hear this.

PERRY

(unbuckling her belt)

Listen, this is good. I pick up Bobby's gun and shout "Yo, G-Sock," or whatever the fuck he calls himself.

PERRY(cont'd)
 When he looks: Pow! I drilled his
 fuckin' forehead. Real lucky shot. All
 Bobby did was save himself some
 embarrassment. And me some scrutiny.
 But he's still a coward.

Perry slides down Sally's pants as she stares at him in awe
 and horror.

SALLY
 And you wonder why I drink?

Perry gulps rye with a grin as she undoes his belt.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLAND'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Holland sits all alone in a chair, meditating on the bright
 lights of the big city below.

OVER: A hip-hop baseline begins to THUMP.

HOLLAND
 Godammit.

Holland stands, crosses to his house.

INT. HOLLAND'S HOUSE - SAME

Holland charges past Janelle as she washes dishes.

JANELLE
 Leave him alone, Arthur.
 (following him)
 Leave him alone.

Holland climbs the stairs and throws open a door.

INT. HOLLAND'S HOUSE - RONALD'S ROOM - SAME

RONALD, 19, unpacks books from a knapsack. An easygoing,
 gentle soul, he bewilders his disciplinarian father.

HOLLAND
 When did you sneak in here? Why weren't
 you at dinner? Look at me.

Ronald does. With red, frightened, eyes.

HOLLAND

Are you high? You missed a family dinner because you wanted to get high with your friends?

RONALD

I'm not high. I went swimming at Derrek's house.

HOLLAND

Show me your swimtrunks and towel. If you went swimming you'd have swimtrunks and a towel.

Ronald grabs a swimsuit, a towel off the floor.

RONALD

There, dad. See? They're wet.

Holland snatches the trunks from him. Sniffs them.

HOLLAND

Boy, I don't smell no goddamned chlorine.

RONALD

I showered with them afterwards.

HOLLAND

Ain't you the answerman. Look at you. You look like a street nigger. Don't you know how you look to people? That's your problem. You don't know how you look to others.

RONALD

Dad, I look like me.

Holland about to punch him. Janelle steps between them.

JANELLE

Don't--

HOLLAND

--Shut up, Janelle

JANELLE

This how you gonna run a police department? With your fists?

Holland unclenches his fist. Glares angrily at her. He looks at his son. Ronald takes a breath, the storm has passed. A beat as Holland almost says he's sorry. Then:

HOLLAND

(re: the radio)

Turn that shit off, Ronald.

Ronald does. Holland climbs the stairs.

RONALD

Take a look at yourself, dad.

Janelle shoots Ronald an admonishing look.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A swank one in the Bonaventure. Beyond a wall of glass, the L.A. basin glistens like an open jewelbox, silhouetting Tedrow and Beth, standing before it. Tedrow helps her with her coat, folds it over a chair. She looks around the room, notes the bed, giggles nervously.

BETH

Bed.

They look at each other, then kiss. Tedrow guides her to the bed and they sit down.

TEDROW

It's taken me a lot of work to get you here.

She looks at him, blinks in disbelief.

BETH

You put in work. Now you want to get paid.

TEDROW

I'm sorry. I didn't mean that.

They start to kiss. She pulls back.

BETH

That's really how you feel isn't it?

TEDROW

No.

BETH

You said it. You meant it. You're a tomcat, Bobby.

TEDROW

I say one four letter word and you
totally shut down, just like that?
Don't you think that's kind'a messed up?

Beth just stares with her arms folded.

TEDROW

Now I get the wall?

Tedrow sighs, falls back on the bed. Beth lays next to him,
not touching, they stare at the ceiling.

TEDROW

Beth, I'm sorry.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - PREDAWN

Beth asleep on the bed, still clothed. Nothing happened.
She wakes slowly. And SEES Tedrow propped on one elbow
watching her, smiling.

BETH

What?

TEDROW

Nothing. You're gorgeous.

BETH

I must look like shit. What time is it?

TEDROW

You have to be somewhere?

BETH

Parker Center by seven.

TEDROW

(checks his watch)

It's a quarter to five.

Beth relaxes, yawns. She realizes Tedrow is still watching
her. She pats her face and hair.

BETH

Stop that.

TEDROW

You look good.

She stands, looks in the mirror, crosses to her coat.

BETH
You're a liar. I gotta go.

TEDROW
Do you like horses?

BETH
Horses?

TEDROW
Ever ridden one?

BETH
No. Why?

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK - SUNRISE

The Spring sun burns through the San Gabriel mountains like a welding flame. On a mountain peak are Beth and Tedrow, on horseback.

WHAT THEY SEE

The City of Angels spread before them like butter on bread.

SCENE

TEDROW
This is how I start everyday. Keeps me sane. Listen. Hear that? City's just waking up. Folks getting up. Making coffee. Eating their eggs.

She looks at Tedrow's LAPD saddleblanket.

BETH
You're in Metro, huh? The Equestrian Unit?

TEDROW
We're talking about work.

BETH
You're a 'neck. Know that?

TEDROW
I'm not a 'neck.

BETH
You ride a horse and wear cowboy boots.

TEDROW
I'm not a redneck.

BETH
I don't mind.
(re: her horse)
How do you turn these things around?

TEDROW
Like this.

Tedrow snatches her horse's bridle, pulls the beast closer.
And kisses Beth.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKER CENTER - MORNING

Establishing.

INT.. SIS OFFICES - SAME

Tedrow pours coffee. Perry in a chair reading the paper.
We note two headlines: 4 KILLED IN SOUTH CENTRAL ROBBERY and
KING JURY CONTINUES DELIBERATIONS

PERRY
Morning, Bobby.

TEDROW
Hey, Eldon.

Tedrow grabs the sports page. Takes a seat.

PERRY
Get laid?

TEDROW
Nope.

PERRY
I got laid last night. And you didn't?
This is a first.

TEDROW
We spent the night together but nothing
happened. I kind'a fucked up. I took
her riding with me this morning.

PERRY
You didn't bang her but you introduced
her to your horsey? She bang the horse?

TEDROW

Fuck you, Eldon.

Van Meter enters from the hallway, dressed for tennis, he carries a racketbag.

VAN METER

Off your asses. I'm puttin' you on a fresh blood case. There was a quadruple homicide on Avalon last night. Two colored boys had a heist go sideways.

PERRY

Monkeyshines. Why call us in?

VAN METER

The shit fairy paid me a visit and it's rolling downhill.

PERRY

I hate it when the shit fairy visits.

VAN METER

One of the vics was an LAPD dispatcher. Her seven year old daughter was with her. She's dead too. This Rodney King shit has the department on the ropes. So get these gorillas and show the world LAPD takes care of their own. Eldon, can we do this?

PERRY

Sure. Tom, we can do this.

VAN METER

You're taking it over from South Bureau's finest investigators. Peltz and Sapin -- Bobby, maybe this is the second chance you need.

TEDROW

I hope so, Tom.

CUT TO:

INT. PERRY'S CROWN VIC (MOVING) - MORNING

His shiny, souped-up Ford Crown Victoria rolls down Avalon. Perry lovingly wipes the dash with a handkerchief.

PERRY

Bobby, this is my horse. Where'd you meet this girl?

TEDROW

Couple weeks ago in a sushi place in
Little Tokyo.

PERRY

What's her name?

TEDROW

Beth L.N.U.

PERRY

You've known this broad two weeks and
don't know her last name?

TEDROW

We met. We clicked. We're like little
kids. So why ruin the mystery with the
heavy grown up stuff?

PERRY

What's she do?

TEDROW

I don't know.

PERRY

Bullshit. She a cop? The only boot
blue-suiter who didn't drop her drawers
when you flashed your detective shield
so now you're intrigued?

TEDROW

(laughs)

I'm more than intrigued. Watch this ...

He pulls the Stenographer's phone number from his pocket.
Shows Perry with a grin.

TEDROW(cont'd)

Remember the Stenographer?

PERRY

I hate you.

Tedrow wads the paper and tosses it out the window. Perry
REACTS.

PERRY

No! Bobby, you fucking idiot. You have
no idea how bad you'll regret that when
you're my age.

TEDROW

No regrets, Eldon ... We're here. There it is on the right.

Perry slowrolls past LUCKY LIQUOR.

WHAT THEY SEE

Two dozen KOREANS in suits and dresses pray in a circle out front amidst a sea of candles and flowers. A large portrait of the dead Korean Woman graces the wall.

SCENE

PERRY

Shit. Asshole's released the scene.

TEDROW

They've had fifteen hours to process it.

PERRY

We'll let the family wrap up their buddha-head bullshit before we dig around in there.

TEDROW

Bet they're Methodists. That's a christian service.

PERRY

That's what you get for setting up shop in niggertown. Let's get a drink.

TEDROW

What?

CUT TO:

INT. HOLLAND'S OFFICE - MORNING

Arthur Holland sits at his desk. Contemplating a report on his desk. The shooting board report about Tedrow.

Beth enters, in uniform. Sergeant's stripes on her sleeves. She sets a fresh mug of joe on his desk.

HOLLAND

Thanks.

BETH

Have you signed the shooting board report yet?

He hands it to her.

HOLLAND

Go ahead and forward it without my endorsement. Know what the SIS?

BETH

Yeah, it's like LAPD's CIA. Not even on the organizational chart.

HOLLAND

This was an SIS shooting. By not signing this report, these thirty pages of whitewash, I'm declaring war on Commander Van Meter.

BETH

That's crazy, Arthur.

HOLLAND

What's harder than a diamond, nothing, right? Strike one with a very precise blow. It shatters. Tom Van Meter, the hardest son-of-a-gun around, has a weak spot and can be shattered.

BETH

What?

HOLLAND

Eldon Perry.

BETH

Weak don't come to mind when I think of that psychotic redneck.

HOLLAND

That's right. He's a murderer and I'm going to prove it. Know how many men he's killed?

BETH

Plenty.

HOLLAND

Seven. He's a third generation LAPD gunslinger. His grandfather killed ten back before LA had paved roads, that being the days when they only counted white folk. Colored, Mexicans and Chinamen didn't rank a notch on the ol' six-shooter.

BETH

Omigod.

HOLLAND

Perry's father, Eldon Senior, had eleven kills. Eldon Junior brags about breaking daddy's record.

(re: the report)

I'm going to submit my own report to the Police Commission. And the public. I'm gonna tell them what I told you and a whole lot more. Will you help me do this? It's the only way this department will ever change.

BETH

(eyes him proudly)

You know I will, Arthur. You pull it off, they'll make you Chief.

HOLLAND

You don't say. I want copies of every piece of paper with Perry's name on it. Every parking ticket, every report. Check divisional logs. Payroll, medical, everything. And his partner. Tedrow.

BETH

How do you spell that?

Holland shows her the cover of the shooting report. DETECTIVE ROBERT TEDROW in big letters. Beth doesn't put it together yet. But she will.

HOLLAND

Watch out. This punk is Van Meter's nephew.

BETH

Okay, Arthur ... This is some dangerous shit.

CUT TO:

INT. ONE FOR THE ROAD BAR - MORNING

Dark and dank. Two South Bureau Homicide Detectives, PELTZ and SAPIN knock 'em back in a booth. Perry and Tedrow enter, slide in next to the crusty old timers.

PERRY

Guys gettin' your swerve on?

SAPIN

Eldon!

Sapin puts his arm around Perry.

SAPIN
Hey, baby. How's Sally?

PERRY
Sally? She's my angel.

Sapin shakes Tedrow's hand. Then Peltz.

SAPIN
Hey, shooter.

PELTZ
Good job, son. Good kill.

TEDROW
Thanks.

The BARTENDER, a hulking black ex-con, deals napkins to Perry and Tedrow.

SAPIN
Go ahead. S'my dime.

PERRY
How're your Bloody Mary's?

BARTENDER
Lifesaving.

PERRY
Gimme one and ...

TEDROW
A diet coke.

PERRY
And a diet coke for my little sister.

The Bartender walks off.

SAPIN
What brings you south of King? Please,
tell me Van Meter gave you our case.

PERRY
That he did.

PELTZ
Take it. It's a nightmare. Phone rings
every two minutes with someone asking
for progress reports.

SAPIN

Here's our notes. Good luck finding these guys. They vanished into the jungle.

Sapin slaps a stack of papers on the table.

SAPIN

Eldon, it's dogshit. Crazyman stuff. Dumbasses hotfooted it without tapping the till. They're lice. They wasted a little girl.

Perry and Tedrow's drinks arrive.

PERRY

Any wits?

SAPIN

One. The fifth victim.

PERRY

Interview him?

SAPIN

Nope. He's in surgery.

PERRY

Where?

SAPIN

Drew King. He's an older guy. Might not make it. Through-and-through to the neck.

Perry nods. Tedrow takes notes.

PELTZ

We got the car. Buick Skylark. They incinerated it on Budlong, under an overpass. Car's worthless for evidence. Ran the vin off the block. Stolen from Pico and Vermont.

TEDROW

What was the dispatcher doing in the neighborhood?

PELTZ

Got milk?

SAPIN

Relatives in the area told her to stop off for a carton.

Perry downs his drink and stands.

PERRY

Mount up, Bobby -- Thanks for the drink.

CUT TO:

INT. PERRY'S CROWN VIC (MOVING) - DAY

Perry drives. Tedrow deciphers the notes.

TEDROW

This is ... man. What a mess. These guys are detectives?

PERRY

Those old-timers were hotshit snoopers in their day. They worked with my old man and your uncle. That was the hot crew in the old days. Backbone of the old LAPD. Know they were with my dad the day he died?

TEDROW

No shit? ... How'd he die?

PERRY

His ticker blew up during a cribbage game. Booze. He went the way he wanted. Shitfaced and holding all the cards. I was a kid.

TEDROW

Sorry.

PERRY

I'm not. He was a prick.

Tedrow shows him pictures of the Little Girl. Before and after.

PERRY

Damn.

CUT TO:

EXT. LUCKY LIQUOR - DAY

The prayer ceremony is over. Flowers and candles, pictures of the victims, line the walls. Perry and Tedrow cross to the front door. Perry KNOCKS. MR. JEN KIM, the middleaged, newly bereaved owner opens up.

PERRY

Are you Hyun Jen Kim?

Jen Kim nods, Perry badges him. He lets them in.

PERRY

Sergeant Perry, LAPD. This is Detective Tedrow. Our most heartfelt sympathies.

JEN KIM

Thank you.

INT. LUCKY LIQUOR - SAME

Perry and Tedrow enter. You wouldn't know four people died here last night. Jen Kim has been drinking Crown Royal from a paper cup.

PERRY

How long you been in the neighborhood?

JEN KIM

Five years. Why this happen? We nice to our customers. They not have money. That's okay. They pay later.

Perry notices military pictures on the wall.

PERRY

You serve?

JEN KIM

I was Korean Marine.

PERRY

No shit? I was in the U.S. Marine Corps. I was a machine gunner. We trained with you guys. Hard outfit.

Jen Kim pours him a drink.

PERRY

Thanks. Bobby was a Marine too. He's a war hero. Silver star. Persian Gulf.

Tedrow waves, engrossed by the crime scene photos, getting a feel for what happened. Perry looks at the register.

PERRY

They didn't get a dime?

JEN KIM

No. They crazy. They shoot and run. They like dogs. They have no heart.

PERRY

That's right, sir. They're animals.
Had any problems with anyone in the
neighborhood? Any threats?

Jen Kim shakes his head: no. He pops a Marlboro in his
mouth. Offers one to Perry, who lights the smokes with his
Zippo. Perry notes a security camera.

PERRY

No video?

JEN KIM

Camera not work.

Perry nods, notices the stairs through a curtain.

PERRY

They go back there?

JEN KIM

Nossir.

PERRY

What's upstairs? Apartments?

JEN KIM

Yessir. I live with my daughter. My
... wife.

(looks away with grief)

I married twenty two years.

Perry squeezes his shoulder. Hands him his card.

PERRY

Me and Bobby are gonna get the guys who
did this. Call me if you need anything.
We're here to help.

JEN KIM

Thank you, sir.

Perry heads to the door, where Tedrow stands to the side of
the doorframe. They talk quietly.

PERRY

What?

TEDROW

Gettin' a feel for the scene.

PERRY

How'd it go down, Sherlock?

TEDROW

Mrs. Kim was killed first.
 (shows Perry a diagram)
 One guy ran in and dumped a clip into
 her starting from almost back here. See
 the ejection pattern from his gun?

PERRY

Okay, we'll call him shooter one. He
 caps mama-san. And the other guy?

TEDROW

He stood here. Guarding the door.

PERRY

He's shooter two.

TEDROW

Shooter two pops each vic in the back of
 the head as they walk in. Except the
 little girl. He does mom. Daughter
 looks at him. Bang. In her face.

(a beat, saddened)

Shooter two stacks the bodies there.
 Concealing them. He was expecting to
 stay a few minutes.

Perry looking at Tedrow. Smiling, very impressed.

TEDROW

What?

PERRY

Nothing. Keep going.

EXT. LUCKY LIQUOR - SAME

Perry and Tedrow exit.

TEDROW

Outside, shooter two blows up Mr. Lewis.
 They drive into rush hour traffic.
 Goodbye. This doesn't make any sense.

PERRY

Never does, Bobby.

Perry takes a last drag, flicks his cigarette butt in the
 gutter with a dozen others.

PERRY

Ask papa-san for a broom and bag
 everything in that gutter for the
 printlab.

Tedrow shoots Perry a look, who crosses to his car and settles in to read the paper.

CUT TO:

INT. PERRY'S CROWN VIC (MOVING) - DAY

A Ziploc of cigarette butts on the seat between them.

TEDROW

I really wanna get these guys.

PERRY

So you can work off your coward jacket?

(off Tedrow's look)

We find 'em. They're all yours. Cancel their tickets. Gotta find 'em first. Any ideas, butterfingers?

TEDROW

Hold a seance and ask the vics how it went down?

PERRY

You just want an excuse to hold my hand. I gotta better idea.

TEDROW

What?

PERRY

Word on the street.

Perry pulls a U-ie. Turns down a sidestreet, slaloms to a SCREECHING stop in front of five GANGSTERS occupying a corner. They stare at the cops.

PERRY

Jam these motherfuckers.

Perry and Tedrow burst from the car. Draw their guns.

EXT. STREETCORNER - SAME

The five Gangsters roll their eyes, unimpressed.

PERRY

Yo, shitbags. Turn around. Palms on the bricks. Everyone get their legs way back. Like you're gonna push the wall down.

Four comply. The fifth, MANIAC, a big gangster, mid 20's, just glares at him.

PERRY
You in the black gorilla suit, turn
around.

MANIAC
You ain't about nothin'. We ain't done
shit.

Perry shoves his pistol under his chin.

PERRY
Hook him up, Bobby.
(to Maniac)
You're under arrest.

MANIAC
For what?

PERRY
It's a murder beef. Don't fuck around.

MANIAC
What? Fuck you.

PSSSST! Perry peppersprays him. Maniac SCREAMS. Tedrow
shoves him in the car. Perry climbs in and ... SCREECH!
Pulls out of there. It only took seconds. The remaining
Gangsters trading looks.

CUT TO:

INT. PERRY'S CROWN VIC (MOVING) - DAY

Tedrow breathing through a handkerchief, teary eyed from the
pepper spray.

TEDROW
Why the fuck did you do that?

PERRY
Contempt of cop.

Perry coughing, rolls down his window, sticks his head out.
Maniac, doubled over in back, rubs his eyes on his knee.

MANIAC
Damn. Shit stings.

TEDROW
What's your name?

MANIAC
Maniac. The fuck are you? Homicide?

PERRY

Right. I'm Detective Smith. That's my homeboy, Detective Jones. Someone dropped a dime on you. You robbed a liquor store and dumped four good citizens. Your ass is gettin' gassed.

Maniac sits up, squints at Perry, laughs.

MANIAC

Man, don't even come at me runnin' that bullshit.

Perry grabs his pepperspray. Tedrow grabs his wrist.

TEDROW

Stop. You're killing me with that shit.

PERRY

Okay. I'll find an alley so I can empty the can up his fuckin' nose. This is the really syrupy shit that sticks up in your sinuses.

TEDROW

(to Maniac)

He'll do it. For fun. Believe me. You better spill.

MANIAC

You talkin' about Mr. Kim's. He cool people. Hooks us up with forties. He's a down old dude. We keep an eye out for him. We're trippin' 'cause someone came up in this motherfucker blastin' civilians. Little girls. That's some wrong-ass shit. We was conferencin'. 'Cause we gettin' the niggers what did this. Or you get 'em. It's all good, 'cause if you get 'em, we still get 'em. In County.

PERRY

Shut up. I'm not going to spray you. Who did it? Help us take these guys down and we'll bust a dooper and give you his shit.

MANIAC

All I know is it's two loke-ass niggers who ain't from 'round this motherfucker.

TEDROW

Think they were gangsters?

MANIAC

Yep. You know it. And we'll find 'em. We got our feelers out. People asking questions. Some motherfucker gonna get drunk and brag about this shit. Open his mouth.

PERRY

Nobody brags about popping little girls in their faces.

MANIAC

A motherfucker'll brag about going up against Mr. Kim and doing his wife.

PERRY

Why?

MANIAC

He a player. He got big game.

PERRY

Mr. Kim? What's he play, golf? Speak fucking English.

MANIAC

Man, the wire on him says he gots stripclubs and ladies and whatnot. Brings 'em in from Korea.

Perry whips the car into a trash filled alley. Stops. Threatens Maniac with the can. Tedrow dives out of the car.

PERRY

I have to spray you. You're telling me fuckin' bedtime stories. Hold still. Hurts less without a broken nose.

MANIAC

Fuck you, man. Mr. Kim is a straight gangster. Smooth like that. He a pimp.

Perry grabs his cellphone, dials.

PERRY

Don't fuck with me.

(into phone)

Hey, Bob. It's uh, Detective Smith.

Uh-huh. Can you look a name up?

(beat)

Hyun Jen-Kim. DOB ten fifteen forty one. Asian. Black, black.

(long beat)

Okay. Thanks, Bob.

To Tedrow, who is outside the car:

PERRY

Unhook him.

Tedrow opens the back door, unlocks Maniac's cuffs.

PERRY

Get the fuck outta my car.

MANIAC

Gimme a ride back to my corner.

PERRY

You got two legs. Walk.

Maniac sighs and exits. SLAMS the door. Tedrow and the gangster trade tough guy looks before Maniac moves on. Tedrow gets in and Perry drives away.

PERRY

Mr. Kim's in the gang book. Suspected of loansharking and pandering. Owns a stripclub on Olympic. Let's go look at some girlies.

CUT TO:

EXT. LUCKY SEVEN BAR - DAY

Just off Vermont Avenue in Koreatown. Part of a garish stripmall clad in blinky lights and twisty neon. Perry and Tedrow cross to the door--

PERRY

Getaway car was stolen a block from here.

--blocked by a uniformed GUARD.

GUARD

This private club.

Perry badges him and they enter.

CUT TO:

INT. LUCKY SEVEN BAR - DAY

Disco THUMPS. The decor is pure asian techno-sex. A Korean EXOTIC DANCER grinds a firepole. A dozen Korean BUSINESSMEN smoke, sip whisky and chat with BARGIRLS. All eyes lock on Perry and Tedrow as they find a booth and sit. Perry puts his boots on the table.

TEDROW
Look, Eldon. Korean folkdancing.

BARTENDER
(crossing to them)
Sorry. Private club. You leave now.

PERRY
Set me up a fifth of Jack. Chop-chop.

Perry slaps his badge on the table. The Bartender nods, crosses to the bar. Returns with a fifth and two shotglasses. The Bartender returns to the bar, anxious. The Businessmen give him dirty looks for serving occidentals. Perry pours shots.

PERRY
So, you little sneak. How the hell is it you've been running around with this Elizabeth broad, you've forsaken strange and she ain't giving it to you and you've told me nothing about her?

TEDROW
You're really pretty clueless. You'll fit right in with the rest of the brass. Lieutenant.

Tedrow smirks, knocks back his shot.

PERRY
Okay. I can admit it, Bobby, I get played every now and then.
(refills the glasses)
Because I'm trusting. I try not to judge people. I'm cool with everyone. I don't see skincolor, race. Kumbaya, buddy. You know, we're all the same and all that. On the inside. That's my credo.

TEDROW
(laughs)
You are so full of shit.

PERRY
Anyway, Bobby. I like giving people the benefit of the doubt. But when my trust is abused, it drives me out of my fucking mind. Like I wanna break jaws.

TEDROW
She's black, Eldon. That's why I don't talk about her.

Perry REACTS.

PERRY

You be dating a sista?

Tedrow nods. Knocks back his shot. Perry grins.

PERRY

Didn't know you like coo--

TEDROW

--I don't wanna hear a bunch of nigger jokes. Okay?

PERRY

Yeah, sure. A piece of ass is a piece of ass. I humped some colored girls back when I was a patrolman. Bet I got a few warbabies in the hood. It's no big deal, Bobby. Just get your shit in one bag. Your brain's stuck in chicksville. World don't revolve around homegirl. I was talking about Jen Kim. I fell for his struggling immigrant in South Central tapdance. He's some freakin' gangster kingpin.

TEDROW

Oh, we're working now? Think it was a hit on his wife? The skimasks. Twenty-two automatics. Organized bodies.

PERRY

Wasn't a hit. A hit would'a been in and out. With one or two vics. These guys lingered.

TEDROW

Back to a robbery. But they did not give fuck one about the till.

PERRY

Give that man a drink.

Perry pours Tedrow another shot. Gestures at the Dancer.

PERRY

How much you think a shot of ass goes for?

TEDROW

Fifty. Sixty.

PERRY

Try two hundred.

(points at the customers)

Those boys are flush. Bet this place moves six g's worth'a pussy weekdays. Double that weekends. That's a lot of cash. The shooters were Koreans. Those weren't ski masks. They were ninja hoods. Kung fu Korean samurai ninjas.

TEDROW

I'll watch out for throwing stars. I don't think the shooters were Asian. I don't think it was an inside job.

PERRY

Why?

TEDROW

Too many victims. Calls too much attention to themselves.

PERRY

C'mon, Bobby. We're gonna go on a fishing trip.

Perry grabs the Jack bottle by the neck and crosses to the bar with Tedrow. The Bartender locks eyes with Perry, mildly confrontational.

BARTENDER

What do you want?

PERRY

I wanna take that girl home.

The Bartender looks at Perry, at the Dancer. Plays it safe.

BARTENDER

Sorry. She can't do that.

Perry plucks the killpin from his lapel.

PERRY

So find me one that can. There's eight girls here. You gonna tell me you're not pimping them?

BARTENDER

You go. I no talk to you. You LAPD. You beat Rodney King.

Perry has the killpin palmed and discretely stabs it in the Bartender's hand -- Who swings a punch.

Perry catches his arm, yanks him over the bar and spins him into an exotic armlock.

Perry pulls a leather sap, THWAPS the man's kidneys.

PERRY

You crazy? Assaulting a cop?

Tedrow eyes the horrified clients, his hand on his gun. The Bartender GURGLES in agony as his shoulder stretches apart. Perry THWAPS harder.

PERRY

Listen zipperhead, I'll terrorize you at will. I'll fucking kill you and make up any bullshit story I want. Because I can. You talked shit to the wrong cop. You're gonna piss blood for a week.

THWAP! THWAP! THWAP! Perry cuffs him. Taken aback by Perry's violence, Tedrow, nevertheless, guards his back as they exit with the Bartender.

CUT TO:

INT. PERRY'S CROWN VIC - DAY

Perry tosses the Bartender in back. Gets in front with Tedrow.

PERRY

You take Kim's money? You know where he keeps it? You put on a skimask and go in there take his cash? Kill his wife?

BARTENDER

What? I no do. I no do that. I work for Jen Kim long time. His family like my family. I no steal.

PERRY

I heard they got away with two hundred grand.

BARTENDER

They take safe. But it only have one fifty.

PERRY

They took a safe out of his liquor store?

BARTENDER

Yes, yes. Upstairs. They take safe.

Perry is slick. Tedrow suppresses a grin.

PERRY

Anyone not show up for work? Anyone in your little sewing circle blow town?

BARTENDER

Du Ku not here. He not at home. But he very loyal. Jen Kim people very loyal. He like a father. He loved very much.

PERRY

Everyone loves you when you got money and ladies. What's Du Ku to Jen Kim?

BARTENDER

He carry the monies.

PERRY

His bag man? Where's he live?

BARTENDER

We look for him. Not there.

PERRY

Show me where he lives and I'll cut you loose.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

In a shabby Koreatown. A little old Korean LANDLADY opens an apartment door for Perry and Tedrow. The two cops enter. Close the door behind them.

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

Spartan. Just a futon. Girlie posters for color.

PERRY

This guy doesn't own one stinkin' chair.

Tedrow walks past a closet. Pauses. Sniffs.

PERRY

Why the "I smell shit" face?

TEDROW

I smell shit.

Tedrow reaches for the doorknob. Turns it.

DU KU falls out. He's tied to a chair with coathangers.
He's mangled. Skinless. Peeled apart.

TEDROW

I found a chair.

Perry crosses to the remains. Squats down for a good look.

PERRY

Tortured the shit out of him.

TEDROW

He sang.

PERRY

Oh, this guy hit high-fuckin-C, Bobby.
Start a log, call everybody and note the
time.

Perry tosses Tedrow his cellphone.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKER CENTER - PERSONNEL OFFICE - DAY

Beth crosses the large office with busy CLERKS. She stops
at a steel gate guarded by an old UNIFORM ticking away the
days until his pension kicks in.

UNIFORM

Morning, Sergeant.

BETH

Morning, Ed. I'm going to pull a few
jackets for Chief Holland.

The Uniform BUZZES her in.

INT. PERSONNEL FILE ROOM - SAME

Familiar with the rows of file cabinets, she quickly homes
in on the drawer with Perry's folder and has it in her
hands. She hefts the thick file. Opens the cover -- A bad
photo of Perry stapled inside. Beth laughs.

One more file to pull. She opens another drawer. Reads
through it. Pulls Robert Tedrow's personal file. As Beth
crosses to the gate, she opens Tedrow's file and SEES a
photo of his grinning face.

THWOP! She drops the files. Papers SWOOSH across the
floor.

UNIFORM(O.S.)

Can I help you, ma'am?

BETH

No, thank you. Dropped some files and made a mess. Oops.

She squats to gather the papers as the shock wears off.

CUT TO:

INT. KOREATOWN APARTMENT - DAY

Two female CORONER'S ASSISTANTS load Du Ku on a gurney.

CORONER'S ASSISTANT

Liver's room temperature. I say he died yesterday, mid-morning. Coroner has to say for sure.

PERRY

Thanks, Irene -- Fits our timeline, Bobby. Our badguys got turned onto Jen Kim's business somehow. Snatched the bagman and tortured him to learn where Jen Kim stashes his ducats.

TEDROW

They jack a ride two blocks from here. Stash a second car on Budlong on the way to Lucky Liquor. Kill four people. Wound a fifth. Torch the getaway vehicle. Take off in the second car.

PERRY

A safe. These guys are fuckin' safecrackers.

TEDROW

Why would safecrackers waste a bunch of good people like that?

PERRY

Because they're pieces of shit. They're criminals. Don't give a shit about anything or anybody. That's why.

CUT TO:

INT. LUCKY LIQUOR - DAY

Jen Kim smokes, reads the Korea Times. A couple BIG GUYS in suits with him. Perry and Tedrow enter. Jen Kim stabs out his smoke, been waiting for them.

PERRY

There he is. The Godfather. I was just at your bar on Olympic. Nice place.

JEN KIM

I only have liquor store.

PERRY

I called Immigration. A bus is on the way. Bye-bye girllies.

Jen Kim glares at Perry.

TEDROW

Don't let him jerk your chain. He didn't make the call.

Perry grabs a cowboy killer from Jen Kim's pack. Lights it.

PERRY

I will. If I don't get some serious fucking cooperation right now. Show me where the safe was.

Jen Kim REACTS.

CUT TO:

INT. GIRL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jen Kim pulls back carpet to expose a plywood patch. Jen Kim pries it off with a hammer. Tedrow studies the sheared bolts.

TEDROW

Lookit the toolmarks. Sheared off. These guys knew exactly what they were doing. They didn't just hop in a car and do this.

PERRY

(to Jen Kim)

What hurts you more? Losing a hundred and fifty grand, or your wife? -- Let's roll, Bobby.

Perry and Tedrow exiting the room.

JEN KIM

You go to the devil!

Perry gives him the finger.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOMMY'S - DAY

The famous burger stand on Beverly. Perry and Tedrow eating chiliburgers. Regarding his burger:

PERRY

It's Du Ku's face.

Tedrow reading the headlines in the newspaper machine. Something about the King trail.

TEDROW

The Foothill guys who whacked on Rodney King. Will they get off or will they go down?

PERRY

(belches)

Christ. Bobby, please. I'm eating.

TEDROW

I bet they get acquitted or there's a mistrial. That's my opinion. Ring in with yours. You do about everything else. From dog racing to foreign policy.

PERRY

They're going down and I bet they do prison time. That's what's gonna happen. See why I avoid the subject? Kills me to see the real criminal free while four brother cops eat political shit. Remember a major four-fifteen called the Watts Riots? What started it? A drunk driver bust. People are pissed. You see the dirty looks we get in the hood? Those boys go free and everything south of the Santa Monica Freeway will be briquettes. Trust me. I know how this town ticks.

TEDROW

Twenty says they walk.

They shake. Perry's cell RINGS. Into phone:

PERRY

Hello?

(a beat)

Go ahead.

(a beat)

Thanks.

Perry puts away his cellphone.

PERRY
The wit's conscious.

CUT TO:

INT. DREW KING - HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Perry and Tedrow lean over a bed containing MR. LEWIS, the old man shot by Sidwell. His eyes are closed.

PERRY
Mr. Lewis? Mr. Lewis?

Perry shakes him.

TEDROW
Mr. Lewis? Are you awake, sir?

His eyes open, swivel on Perry's baby blues.

PERRY
There he is -- You're lucky to be alive,
Mr. Lewis. You okay?

Mr. Lewis just stares.

PERRY
Sir? Excuse me? I need to ask you a
couple questions.
(to Tedrow)
He's whacked out on demerol.

NURSE(O.S.)
He can't speak.

NEW ANGLE

A black NURSE stands in the doorframe, filling it just fine.

PERRY
What?

NURSE
He can't speak. His larynx was removed.
The bullet shattered it.

PERRY
Can he write?

NURSE
Ask him that.

PERRY

Can you write?

Mr. Lewis nods. Perry fishes in his pockets, hands him a notepad and pen.

PERRY

Do you remember what happened to you?

Mr. Lewis nods: yes.

PERRY

Did you see who shot you?

Mr. Lewis nods: yes. Makes a ski mask gesture. Then points at Perry's eyes.

TEDROW

You saw his eyes?

Mr. Lewis nods: yes.

TEDROW

Do you know the race of your attackers?
Can you write it down for us?

Mr. Lewis nods: yes. He writes something down. Hands it to Perry. NEGRO AND WHITE

PERRY

One guy was black, and one guy was white?

Mr. Lewis gives him a thumbs up.

PERRY

Okay, sir. Listen carefully. The men who shot you killed three women and a little girl. Did you know that?

Mr. Lewis holds a hand to his mouth in horror, shakes his head: no. Regarding the paper:

PERRY

Are you absolutely positive of this?
Could one of them been asian?

Mr. Lewis shakes his head: no. Gestures for the paper and writes: BLUE EYES

PERRY

Would you swear to that in a court of law?

Mr. Lewis nods: yes. Perry and Tedrow shake his hand.

PERRY

Thanks, Mr. Lewis.

TEDROW

Thank you, sir. We'll get these guys.

The Detectives exit.

CUT TO:

INT. DREW KING - HALLWAY - DAY

Perry and Tedrow walking.

TEDROW

Told you the shooters weren't asian.

PERRY

Shut up. That old porch monkey just cleared this case. I know exactly who these fucks are. Let's go tell Uncle Tom.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKER CENTER - DAY

Beth reads the Tedrow shooting report Holland wouldn't sign at her desk outside Holland's Office. SHOUTING offscreen.

Holland's door bursts and a grim Barcomb stomps out angrily to the hall. Beth enters Holland's office.

Holland his fingers steepled under his chin, he looks angry, his hands shake.

BETH

He tried to talk you out of writing your own report.

HOLLAND

Yep. And I burned my ships. There's no going back. I told him I'm not going to Cleveland.

BETH

(hugs him)

I knew you'd stay.

HOLLAND

This is going to get ugly. I think me and Jimmy Barcomb are now officially political rivals.

BETH

Bet he's scared shitless.

HOLLAND

I'm gonna be Chief. I'm a black man so it's always been a daydream. But, Beth, it's happening, it's unfolding before me. I've been walking around with a strange deja vu these past few days, with this powerful sense of destiny.

He takes her hand in his. She discreetly pulls it away. Smiles weakly.

CUT TO:

INT. TOM VAN METER'S OFFICE - DAY

Jazz on the stereo. Van Meter sorting groups of tile samples and paint chips on his desk.

VAN METER

Julie talked me into remodeling the kitchen. I like this combo.

REVERSE ON

Tedrow and Perry.

PERRY

The other one looks sharp, Tom.

TEDROW

Eldon has bright green shag in his living room.

VAN METER

Right. What do you think, Bobby?

He points at Tom's group.

TEDROW

These. But go darker with the floor. That'll set off the cabinetry.

Van Meter switches tiles, nods his approval.

VAN METER

Hmmm. Lucky Liquor. Brief me. Been getting calls all day. I say my best guys are on it giving it a hundred and ten percent. Tell me you got the suspects in your trunk.

PERRY

I was none to happy when you yoked me with this niggerland mayhem. Thought I'd be chasing hoodrats no one's gonna find unless they get snitched out for a reward. But being the dutiful investigator I am, I persevered.

VAN METER

You get some breaks?

PERRY

Tom, I got compound fractures. I interviewed the K who owns the crime scene. Sniffed him out like this ...
(snaps his fingers)
As a lesser light of the underworld.

Tedrow rolls his eyes.

PERRY

He's got stripclubs. He's pandering. He's a cash businessman. Had a safe with a buck fifty in it. That's what got boosted.

VAN METER

(whistles)

That's real money. You guys found a body. Whose?

PERRY

Mr. Kim's bagman. Our shooters tortured him until he had a heart attack.

TEDROW

Healthy young guy too.

VAN METER

Outstanding. Sounds like your shooters are asian.

PERRY

That's what I thought. Until we interviewed our only wit.

VAN METER

He can't ID 'em. They had ski masks.

PERRY

Pegged their race. It was an oreo team, Tom. A safecracking spook and a bloodthirsty blue eyed peckerwood. Who's that sound like? Fuckin' Orchard and Sidwell.

VAN METER

Sorry. It wasn't Orchard and Sidwell, Eldon. They were doing something for me in San Diego on Monday.

PERRY

Shit.

VAN METER

So you might actually have to work some more. We have to clear Lucky Liquor. Things are reaching critical mass. Holland didn't sign off on Bobby's shooting board report. He's going to issue a minority report.

PERRY

You gotta be fuckin' kidding me. This some affirmative action shit? Cause Holland's a spade, he gets his own report?

VAN METER

No, Eldon. Department manual says any member of a shooting board can issue a separate report. A minority finding.

PERRY

Oh.

VAN METER

Holland nixed his Cleveland deal. Thinks he can vault himself into the big office over this Rodney King thing. It's a power play.

PERRY

Fuck him. He wants to stick the world's nose in SIS's business. I'll double-tap him right now.

TEDROW

Tom. Tom, shit. What's going to happen?

PERRY

Easy. Nobody knows shit.

VAN METER

He's right, Bobby. Holland's working the ambush angle. Doesn't have a clue what really went down. And we are a mean ol' bunch rattlesnakes, aren't we? Step on SIS, it's fatal.

PERRY

Okay. What are we going to do?

VAN METER

You and Bobby are going to do whatever it takes to clear Lucky Liquor. Find a crew that profiles and sell them to Deena Schultz. Do that and you boys will walk on water. You'll be sipping whiskey with the mayor. And Holland will look like a reactionary windbag for coming down on SIS.

PERRY

I can bag the real guys.

VAN METER

Don't bother.

Van Meter pulls a large envelope from his desk and hands it to Perry.

VAN METER

Make sure Holland gets this. Might just shut him down outright. Do what you do. Get hot.

PERRY

Aye-aye, Tom.

Perry and Tedrow cross to the door.

INT. PARKER CENTER - HALLWAY - SAME

Perry and Tedrow exit the office. Tedrow looks upset.

TEDROW

Forget finding the real guys. Did I hear right?

Perry holds his finger to his lips. A couple UNIFORMS walk past them. In a sinister whisper-hiss:

PERRY

We're gonna find a couple assholes that fit and bury them with Lucky Liquor. When Tom says "do what you do," that means carve Case Cleared on their caskets with my Buckknife. That's what I do. What we do. Partner.

Perry enters their office. Tedrow follows, bewildered.

INT. SIS OFFICES - SAME

Perry crosses to a desk, pulls out a bottle of Old Grandad.

PERRY

This'll put a twinkle back in your eye.

He pours a shot for Tedrow, who shakes his head: no.

TEDROW

We can't pin four, shit, five murders on patsies, Eldon. That is seriously not cool. The real shooters need to be taken off the streets.

PERRY

I absolutely, one hundred percent agree with you, Bobby. The vermin should be exterminated.

Perry holds up some reports--

PERRY(cont'd)

There's crime.

--then a mugbook.

PERRY(cont'd)

There's criminals. If you're meticulous, maybe you can make some matches. Whatever. We're in the gettin' shit done business.

TEDROW

How can Tom even suggest this? The hell's he thinking?

Wrong thing to say. Aggression flushes Perry's face.

PERRY

How fucking dare you. Who the fuck are you to question Tom Van Meter? Who the fuck are you to question anything?

Perry pulls an old revolver from a desk drawer--

PERRY

I should kick your fucking ass.

--SLAMS it down in front of Tedrow ... A worn .38 with eleven deep notches in the barrel.

PERRY

That's my daddy's gun. He and Tom were partners. L.A. was their town. They kept it under control. If you fucked around, they'd give you a talkin' to. Or more. See those?

(re: the notches)

Eleven. You know jack, Bobby. You're a fuckin' coward. When zero hour came, you dropped your shit. You were tested and failed. The only reason you got a second fuckin' chance is because Tom Van Meter's your Uncle. To me, Bobby, he's a father. He's a great man.

TEDROW

Okay, okay. Eldon, I'm sorry. You're right. I don't know shit. Ease down. I'm with you, partner. Okay. We're gonna do this.

Perry regards him a beat. They shake. Tedrow downs his shot with trembling hands.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN L.A. - SUNSET

Perry and Tedrow walking to the Superior Courts building. Tedrow grim. Perry has a folder under his arm.

PERRY

I think, I think you're a pretty good cop. On your own right.

They trade sheepish smiles.

TEDROW

Thanks.

CUT TO:

INT. DEENA SCHULTZ'S OFFICE - DAY

A small box in the Superior Courts Building. DEENA SCHULTZ, 30, works at her PC, a cute blonde in a designer pantsuit.

Perry KNOCKS on her open door that reads: LOS ANGELES
COUNTY DEPUTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY DEENA SCHULTZ

DEENA
Eldon. Come in.

He and Tedrow enter.

PERRY
Evening, Deena. You know Bobby, right?

DEENA
No, I don't.

They shake.

TEDROW
Detective Robert Tedrow.

DEENA
Pleased to meet you, Detective.

PERRY
Been with us three weeks. We got him
his detective shield.

DEENA
(eyes Bobby's lapel)
And a cute little stickpin.

TEDROW
Yes, Ma'am.

DEENA
What brings SIS to my office?

PERRY
The quadruple on Avalon and a linked
mayhem homicide in Koreatown. The
dispatcher and all that.

DEENA
Oh, yeah. I know. That yours?

PERRY
Detective Sapin caught it. We took it
from South Bureau. You know Peltz and
Sapin?

DEENA
The Bourbon Brothers.

PERRY
They're good guys.

Perry closes the door and takes a seat.

PERRY

Siddown, Bobby.

Tedrow does. Perry hands the folder to Deena.

PERRY

We found the gentlemen that did it. We want you to file.

DEENA

Let me see what you have.

She looks through the file a beat, gives Perry a look.

PERRY

It's thin. I know. These are some real bad hombres. This guy. Raped an eighty year old woman for six hours. Her guts had to be sewn back together. Read the file.

She skims reports, shaking her head.

DEENA

Calling this circumstantial would be a compliment. I can't file this. A trial judge would laugh me out of court.

PERRY

A trial judge won't see it. C'mon, we're Special Investigations. We don't clear by arrest. We clear by gunfire.

DEENA

That's funny. I've heard that before. I'm sorry. I can't do anything with this. Give me some wits. Anything. And I'll give you five 187 counts and all the enhancements you want.

She tries to hand the file back. Perry doesn't take it, he grins a scary grin.

PERRY

No, Deena. You are going to file charges right fucking now. And by tomorrow morning, those two young bucks will be dressed out and tied to the hood of my Crown Vic. So says the playbook. So do it, Deena.

(winks)

Be a team player.

They have a staring contest. Tedrow can't believe this is happening. Then:

DEENA

... okay ...

PERRY

Thanks, baby.

She glowers as the SIS men exit. She stands on her desk, lights a cigarette with shaky hands and blows smoke into a ceiling vent.

CUT TO:

EXT. HALLWAY - SUPERIOR COURTS BUILDING - SAME

They cross to an elevator. Perry is smirking. Tedrow shakes his head, confused.

TEDROW

I'm lost. What just happened?

INT. ELEVATOR - SAME

They enter, alone. When the doors close:

PERRY

(quietly)

Deena went to USC School of Law. Sorority girl. Dean's list and all that. Sharp gal. But she was a little cokehead. And quite the horndog, into team sports. Or sports teams. Freaky little bitch. Had a thing for gangbangs. Now she's married to some chief financial officer in Century City. He don't know shit and that's the way she likes it.

The elevator doors open. They step out.

TEDROW

Amazing what a few simple threats can do.

FOLLOWING as they cross to the exit.

EXT. SUPERIOR COURT BUILDING - SAME

Perry opening the envelope. Inside are photographs.

PERRY

I'm gonna hit to Metro and muster a raiding party. Sign out a car and paint Enola Gay on it's side because you are going to drop the bomb on Holland ... here.

He hands Tedrow a photo.

INSERT PHOTOS -- Outside a hotsheet hotel. Holland entering a room. Another one shows Beth entering the same room.

TEDROW

Who's the female?

If Tedrow recognizes her, he's playing it, as always, cool.

PERRY

Sergeant Beth Williamson. She's Holland's assistant and hosebag.

TEDROW

Who took these?

PERRY

Me.

TEDROW

Not very damning.

PERRY

This is. I call it "doggy style."

Perry hands Tedrow another photo and he REACTS when he sees it. Perry hands him several more.

PERRY(cont'd)

Here's "girl on top." This is "missionary." And this last one's choice, I call it: "in the bootie."

Tedrow has stopped dead in his tracks.

TEDROW

What do you want me to do with these?

PERRY

Go to Holland's house and put those where he's gonna find them. Then you're free till twenty one hundred when we rally at Metro. That'll give you some sack time. You look like shit, Bobby. Good to go?

TEDROW
Yeah ... good to go.

PERRY
See you tonight, Bobby.

Tedrow gives him a thumbs up. Perry takes off running through an intersection. Tedrow pulls out his cell and dials.

TEDROW
Beth. It's Bobby.

BETH
(filtered)
Good evening, Detective Tedrow. What the hell do you want?

TEDROW
Guess everybody knows who the real players are now. Meet me at our dinner spot in fifteen. Please. Sergeant Williamson.

BETH
(filtered)
Our dinner spot? We share nothing.

TEDROW
We share the same badge, remember?
Please be there. Please.

Tedrow hangs up and hails a cab.

CUT TO:

INT. FIRE COMPANY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Tedrow sits at a back table sipping mineral water. Beth enters in uniform. Crosses to him and sits.

TEDROW
You wore your uniform.

BETH
Public relations. Reminds people not everyone who wears it is like you, Detective Tedrow.

Each regards the other with a deep sense of betrayal.

TEDROW
What are you? A fuckin' Mata Hari for the black peace officer's association?

BETH

You're the goddamn spy. You work for Van Meter not me. When we met, you approached me first.

TEDROW

That's bullshit, I'm no spy.

BETH

I never wanted to know anything about you. Remember? I never asked. Now I know more than I ever wanted to. How's it feel to kill a man in cold blood?

A WAITER brings a basket of bread, hears that and splits.

TEDROW

I trusted you. I liked you. I felt things for you I've never felt for anyone. Tell Holland he's a master pimp. He fuck you before our date last night, tire you out?

BETH

Talk shit to me I will fuck you up. Don't forget this uniform comes with a duty weapon and forty five rounds of hollowpoint ammunition. I don't give a fuck who your Uncle is, whiteboy. I'll put a cap in your brain I feel the slightest bit threatened by you or Perry.

TEDROW

So fucking shoot me. I'll feel better. Because, Beth, I hurt.

Tedrow stabs his finger in his palm.

TEDROW

You had me right here. I was buying your bullshit. Do you deny you're fucking Arthur Holland? Do you deny it?

BETH

Me and you are stuck in the middle of something a lot bigger than us.

TEDROW

Do you deny it? Can I show you something?

He pulls the envelope of photos out of his jacket. Beth figures out what he has.

BETH

Don't. Please.

Tedrow puts back the envelope.

BETH(cont'd)

He was my station house fling. I was a patrol supervisor and I was attracted to him. I thought he was a great man. We had sex twice. Once in a hotel. Once in my house. Then he told me he wasn't leaving his wife. That was three years ago. It's my business and his business and not yours.

TEDROW

And you work for him. You really think I'm a fool, don't you?

BETH

I really thought you were a sweet man hiding behind your wall. Damn, I was wrong. I thank the good Lord I didn't fuck you.

TEDROW

Later, Sergeant.

Tedrow stands and walks away.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLAND'S NEIGHBORHOOD - SUNSET

Tedrow scowls over the wheel of an unmarked sedan. He passes a Cherokee heading the opposite way.

ON THE CHEROKEE

Janelle drives it. She pulls into her driveway. Parks. Janelle gets out. Gets the mail and enters her home.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLLAND'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Holland stands before a dresser, he pins his badge and medals on a fresh uniform. Then he pins his two stars on his starched collars, maybe imagining the complete constellation of the Chief. Janelle enters.

HOLLAND

We're running late.

She begins to undress. Checks out her dresses in the closet. Picks one.

JANELLE

I want out of the marriage, Arthur.

Holland REACTS.

JANELLE

(undressing/dressing)

Listen. Use your ears and listen. I'm glad the time you put in the department is paying off for you. But the time I into you isn't paying off for me. I wanna have a life while I still can. Don't worry, I'm still down for you, baby. I think you'll make a wonderful chief and I'm gonna work hard and do my part to help you make it. Then it's the splits. It doesn't have to be a big scandal. We can move apart quietly and gracefully. Okay, Arthur?

Holland is stunned. A beat.

HOLLAND

Okay, Janelle.

She tosses the sex pictures on the dresser. Works on her hair.

JANELLE

These were in the mailbox. What's the next step for these people? A bullet in the head?

Holland covers the photos with his hand.

HOLLAND

... shit ...

CUT TO:

INT. THE METRO GREENROOM - NIGHT

Eight big scary COPS in black assault gear watch an old cowboy movie, and enjoy coffee and donuts. Most are white, some are black, latino. But that's not important to this bunch, they're all LAPD blue. Perry watches TV with them, munching on a cruller. BILL, who runs this crew, pipes up:

BILL

You're lucky the verdicts didn't come in today, or you wouldn't have us.

Perry GRUNTS. Tedrow enters. Perry squints at his watch.

PERRY

Fuck, Bobby. Thanks for remembering us
-- Bill, this is Bobby Tedrow. My
Number two on this run.

BILL

I know Bobby.

(shakes with Tedrow)

Congratulations on that shooting. Good
kill. Ever get tired of SIS, love to
have you in my platoon.

TEDROW

Thanks, Bill. That's not gonna happen.

Tedrow inspects the donuts.

TEDROW

What's with the fat pills? I thought
you guys were like finely tuned
thoroughbreds.

BILL

We carboload before the hunt.

Tedrow grabs a plain cake.

PERRY

(to Bill)

Saddle 'em up and let's roll out.

Perry turns off the tube. Bill stands. His men lumber to
their feet.

BILL

Everyone check your loadout and secure
your shit. I don't want people getting
stuck in the door. Radios on tac four
and check your mics. Remember your
buddy's positions. Be crossfire
conscious. Don't be shooting each other
through the walls. Think safety.

Cop 1, babyfaced and towheaded, raises his hand.

COP 1

Sir? Are we really putting these guys
down?

Perry hands him mugshots.

INSERT MUGSHOTS -- A black guy and a white guy.

PERRY

These assholes shot a seven year old girl in the face.

BILL

They shot a dispatcher. We're gonna show everyone our people are not to be messed with.

PERRY

Fuckin-A. I want you to obliterate these worms. Make the coroner puke.

The Cops MURMUR agreement, examining the mugshots in turn.

PERRY

Ever put lead in a live one, son?

COP 1

Nossir.

PERRY

Don't fuck up, princess.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIRST JERICHO METHODIST CHURCH - NIGHT

Establishing. In the heart of South Central.

CUT TO:

INT. FIRST JERICHO METHODIST CHURCH - SAME

The black congregation, a big one, belts out a hymnal. Several NEWS CREWS present.

AT THE PULPIT

Leading the song is Janelle, her powerful voice rises above the others in wounded passion. When the music ends, PASTOR DENNIS crosses to her.

PASTOR DENNIS

Thank you, Mrs. Holland, for taking the shepherd's crook a moment and leading us in such a beautiful evocation of spirit and faith in the Lord.

JANELLE

Thank you, Pastor.

She smiles and steps down to a front pew, takes a seat by Holland. Their son Ronald by his side.

PASTOR DENNIS

Please, have a seat folks. I'd like to introduce a member of our congregation who has spoken to us on many other occasions. Today he has an important announcement. Assistant Los Angeles Police Chief Arthur Holland.

Sporadic CLAPPING, MURMURS as Holland stands, crosses to the pulpit, receives a hug from the Pastor.

Holland squares himself in front of the pulpit. Gazes at the congregation. Notes the faces, some skeptical, some angry, all focused on him. This crowd is none too happy about anything LAPD right now.

HOLLAND

Good evening. I asked Pastor Dennis to let me speak a few words tonight. I know everyone here is aware of the problems our police department is having. The problems our city is having. No verdicts yet. I know we'll be talking about the trial all night. I'm up here to talk about something else right now ... Sitting here in this church, this April night. Where I married my wife, where I baptized my children. I remembered a fine Spring day about thirty years ago. I had just graduated from the police academy and I wore my brand new blues to service. It was a real hot and sunny Sunday and there I was listening to song and sermon sweating in all that wool I spent my Saturday night ironing razor sharp. I felt so proud with my new badge on my chest. I shined that nickel and brass until it glowed. Shined my shoes and pistol belt. I remember how everyone came up and hugged me and shook my hand. Some of them folks are here today.

CUTAWAYS of OLDER PEOPLE nodding.

HOLLAND(cont'd)

A few weeks ago some gentlemen from Cleveland gave me a call. They wanted me to move out to Ohio and be the Chief of their police department. Well, that's opportunity knocking mighty loud. And my LAPD badge didn't seem to glow no more, no matter how much I shined it. I wasn't as proud of my blues as I used to

HOLLAND(cont'd)

be. Ya'll know the reasons. Today I called those boys in Ohio and told them, I was gonna stay in L.A. because I have a job to do.

He unpins it and holds it out to the blazing minicam lights.

HOLLAND(cont'd)

I'm gonna to clean my police department like I do my badge. I'm gonna get all the dirt down there in the little nooks and crannies. All that old crusty stuff, I'm going to chip right off. Then I'm gonna buff it and buff it until it glows and I can be as proud of it as that first Sunday I wore it in this church. I stand before you now to declare my goal of being first African-American Los Angeles Police Chief.

Holland is a great speaker. The crowd breaks into thunderous APPLAUSE. Janelle beams.

CUT TO:

INT. PERRY'S CROWN VIC (MOVING) - NIGHT

Tedrow drives south on Central Avenue, following a sinister Suburban. Perry does paperwork for the raid.

TEDROW

Have any of these guys choked when it got real?

PERRY

Don't worry, you're the Picasso of choke artists. No one's competing with you.

TEDROW

Fuck you.

PERRY

People choke all the time. It's not easy to kill a man.

TEDROW

It is for you.

PERRY

No. It's not. I get psyched up first. That's the difference. Killing a man is a big fucking deal.

TEDROW
How do you get psyched up?

PERRY
When I gotta ace a knucklehead; I just take all the hate, rage and pissed-offedness I feel about my fucked up life, my marriage, my kid, my job and blame it on the dirtbag. I pretend the fuckin' piece of shit's the cause of all my troubles. Like the asshole's trickfucking me every time I turn around. Then I look him in the eye. Pull the trigger. And boom. My problems go away.

Tedrow looks at Perry like he doesn't want to be in the car anymore.

PERRY
What? Do that and you'll never drop a gun again.

CUT TO:

EXT. WATTS ALLEY - SUNSET

A long dirt furrow between two rows of houses in the heart of Watts. Perry's Ford and the Suburban roll slowly -- no one talking -- and stop.

ON PERRY

His big handgun in his lap.

TEDROW
I'll go in first.

PERRY
What?

TEDROW
I'll go in first.

PERRY
We're not going in. Metro's securing the premises for us.

TEDROW
What if they take these guys alive?

PERRY
They walk. And we look like assholes. We have zilch case.

TEDROW

I'll go in first. I can pop these guys.

PERRY

No you won't. We've established your record, butterfingers. You'll hand these cheesedicks your roscoe and let them shove it up your ass.

A HOMELESS MAN, swaddled in rags, steps from the shadows and approaches. Perry points his hand cannon at him.

PERRY

Take it easy, nigger, we're cops ... Oh, sorry James, didn't recognize you. You went native on me.

The Homeless man sticks his head in the car.

HOMELESS MAN (JAMES)

Fuck you, Perry.

(to Tedrow)

Plug your ears, Bobby. I'm shooting this hick.

TEDROW

My God, James, last time I saw you, you looked so sharp. Your uniform was smartly pressed, your shoes and belt were shined. This is heartbreaking. Now you're in rags, stinking of malt liquor. Did my LAPD do this to you?

JAMES

It was inevitable, Bobby. It was all the rednecks. They got to me. I snapped and turned to the crackpipe.

PERRY

Shut the fuck up you two -- Aren't you scared walking around in that shit?

James opens his overcoat, reveals body armor, a machine gun.

PERRY

Cute. My guys in there?

JAMES

They're inside. They made a booze run two hours ago. No one's been in or out since. Been drinking all day. They're out of it. We gonna get these shitbags?

PERRY
You know they shot a dispatcher and her
little girl?

JAMES
I know.

PERRY
They won't know what hit them.

JAMES
Shit like this makes me feel good about
being a cop.

CUT TO:

EXT. WATTS HOUSE - SUNSET

James has dumped the rags, he attaches a grappling hook to
the steel security door. He gets out of the way, signals
with his maglite.

INT. PERRY'S CROWN VIC - SAME

Perry dialing a cellphone:

TEDROW
Go, Eldon. Go! Who the fuck are you
calling?

PERRY
The suspects.

TEDROW
Why?

PERRY
Warn them.
(into phone)
Hey, dumbass. The cops are in front of
your house. Look out the window.

Perry hangs up. And peels out ...

SCREECH!

EXT. WATTS HOUSE - SAME

BOOM! The steel security door flies off the frame, spins
through the air.

CRASH! Bill kicks the front door open. COP 1 tosses in two
flashbang grenades.

BANG!-BANG! They explode. The eight Metro Cops pour inside like Entebe Commandos. RAT-AT-AT-AT-AT! Automatic gunfire.

IN PERRY'S CAR

Perry and Tedrow watching the house.

A quiet beat. Then:

The WHITE SUSPECT bolts from around the side of the house. Runs right in front of Perry's car.

PERRY

That's our guy. Get him, Bobby.

Perry and Tedrow explode from the car. Follow him down an alley. Running fast.

They follow the Suspect between two houses. A pit bull rages at the end of its chain.

The Suspect cuts through an empty lot, dodging trash piles. Tedrow cranking, Perry lagging, wheezing.

The Suspect runs along a warehouses. Tedrow closing the distance.

Tedrow loses sight of the Suspect as he runs into a loading dock. Tedrow rounds the corner.

WHAT HE SEES

It's a dead end. The suspect is on his knees. Arms in the air. Giving up.

SCENE

Perry rounds the corner. Stops in his tracks. Stares at the surrendering Suspect.

SUSPECT

Alright. You guys got me.

PERRY

Time to break your cherry.

Perry holds his gun out to Tedrow.

PERRY(cont'd)

Kill him.

Tedrow takes the gun.

TEDROW

Shoot him?

PERRY

Drill him, Bobby. He's armed.

Perry tosses a cheap .22 at the Suspect's knees. The Suspect is freaked, his hands are really up.

SUSPECT

Hey, Bobby. That's not right, man. I don't know you. I never did shit to you. Be cool Bobby, don't blast me.

PERRY

This is the second chance you wanted. Redemption. It's perfect. Do him and I'll take the heat. Like you did with Robertson. We'll be even. Do the right thing.

Tedrow's chest heaves as he stares at the Suspect.

PERRY(cont'd)

Bobby, get your head and ass wired together or you're gonna do something brave and stupid and get yourself killed. Take charge and be a man.

A HELICOPTER approaching O.S.

SUSPECT

(terrified)

Bobby. Bobby. I'm cool people. Don't do me like this.

PERRY

Hurry the fuck up. Goddamn airship's almost on scene.

The HELICOPTER growing louder.

SUSPECT/PERRY

Bobby--!

--BLAM! Tedrow puts a .357 hydroshock between the Suspect's eyes. Making them bulge horribly from his head.

The Suspect's arms drop to his side slowly. He sit-leans back, not completely falling over, staring at Tedrow with bulging dead eyes, crying a torrent of bloody tears. It's creepy as all hell.

PERRY

Fuck ... ruined his day.

Perry takes back his gun.

The Helicopter crests the warehouse and hits them with its Nightsun.

HELICOPTER POV

In a circle of light, Perry and Tedrow stand before the kneeling Suspect. Three METRO COPS run into the loading dock, kick the Suspect to the ground and handcuff him.

SCENE

One of the Metro guys is Bill.

BILL

Good shootin'. Who got him?

PERRY

(raises a hand)

He scores again.

BILL

Jesus. Kill number eight.

PERRY

Three more and I retire, Bill.

BILL

Other one pulled a shotgun on us. New guy split him clean in half with a whole magazine.

PERRY

I'll check it out. Let's get some logs going. You get your guys' statements for me?

BILL

I'm on it, Eldon.

Tedrow looking at the Suspect, handcuffed meat. Perry slaps his back.

PERRY

See, Bobby? It's no big deal.

Tedrow turns and walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKER CENTER - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON the spinning wheels of a tape recorder.

Tedrow with two INVESTIGATORS, he looks tired and drawn. Throughout the interview, Tedrow will compulsively wipe his face and check his hand for blood.

TEDROW

I was giving the suspect commands and he wouldn't comply.

INVESTIGATOR 1

Which commands?

TEDROW

Uh, I dunno. On your knees. Lemme see your hands. All that.

INVESTIGATOR 1

Okay.

TEDROW

Suspect reached into his waistband. I saw a metallic object in his hand. I fired my service weapon one time, striking the suspect in the head.

Investigator 2 turns off the tape recorder.

INVESTIGATOR 1

Sergeant Perry fired his service weapon once.

TEDROW

Right. I'm sorry.

Investigator 2 rewinds the tape recorder.

INVESTIGATOR 1

No problemo. We'll get it right. Just say that last part again.

He rewinds the recorder. Tedrow sighs, picks it up and pushes record, brusquely says into it:

TEDROW

I saw the suspect reach for a metallic object in his waistband. Sergeant Perry fired once. Striking the suspect in his head. Fatally wounding him.

CLICK. He hands the recorder to Investigator 1.

INVESTIGATOR 1

Perfect.

INVESTIGATOR 2

We're all done. Twice through's plenty.

Tedrow stands, crosses to the door.

INVESTIGATOR 2

Detective Tedrow?

Tedrow pauses.

INVESTIGATOR 2

I noticed the guys who get into your squad tend to stay there. I like that. Loyalty. I'd love to get back in the field. That's what I'm about. Not this.

INVESTIGATOR 1

Me too, man. Time to nail the bad guys and not brother cops. I met Commander Van Meter a couple years ago. You guys get any openings, we'd love a shot.

Tedrow smiles weakly--

TEDROW

Sure. I'll look into it.

--and exits the room.

CUT TO:

INT. TOM VAN METER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Chinese takeout on the coffeetable. Tedrow lays on the couch with a thousand yard stare, swirling a glass of booze. Van Meter and Perry sprawled in padded chairs.

PERRY

Tom, Bobby has the steadiest goddamn hands. Couldn't a been a prettier kill. Bobby's an instinctual lifetaker. When he had to, he did it right.

VAN METER

Think you could do it again?

TEDROW

Of course, Tom.

PERRY

He's a natural.

VAN METER

Done with the investigators?

PERRY

They were sucking our dicks.

VAN METER

You boys are heros. Heaven and hell and the whole World in between are very pleased -- Bobby, deliver those pictures?

TEDROW

Yeah. In Holland's mailbox.

VAN METER

Then he hasn't found them yet. He will. His ass is on the mat and he doesn't know it yet.

PERRY

What happened?

VAN METER

He's all over the goddamned news saying he wants to be Chief. When's the last time you called Sally?

PERRY

Oh, shit.

VAN METER

Goddamn it, Eldon. Go home.

Perry stands. Tedrow wipes his face. Stares at his hand.

PERRY

C'mon, Bobby. Give you a ride.

VAN METER

Take tomorrow off guys. Just show up for your badge ceremony.

PERRY

Roger that, big guy.

Perry and Tedrow cross and exit.

CUT TO:

INT. PERRY'S CROWN VIC (MOVING) - NIGHT

Perry driving. Tedrow staring out the window, he SNIFFLES.

PERRY

Really got to you?

TEDROW

I'm getting a cold.

PERRY

I had a face to facer once. Guy begging for his life. Jag-off could kill like a man but couldn't die like one. Turns out he had a wife and kid. I'd slip money in her mailbox holidays. That one really fucked me up. Still get nightmares.

TEDROW

Shut up, Eldon.

PERRY

You'll be fine, Bobby. Little gangster kids are out there killing people. You don't see them sweating it. Shit, you're gonna wanna do it again. You'll see. It's habit forming.

Tedrow looking at Perry with what must be disgust.

CUT TO:

INT. PERRY'S HOUSE - SAME

TIGHT ON Perry, walking through his front door, sorting mail. He enters his living room, tosses the mail on the coffeetable -- It hits the carpet.

Because there is no coffeetable. Perry REACTS.

The living room has been picked clean. He runs from room to room. Everything is gone.

Save for a pile of his clothing on the bedroom floor. And three lifetimes of LAPD pictures and plaques amassed by the Perry family covering a wall.

Sally cleaned him out. Unless ...

PERRY

You crafty little bitch. You bought a house. A new house. It's a surprise. God, I love you.

He crosses to the answering machine -- Where a stickynote reads: PUSH PLAY -- Perry does.

SALLY
(filtered)

Hi, Eldon. You're probably wondering what's going on. I found a place. For me. Not you. It's over. I'm taking the kid with me. Which is good. Because he's terrified of you. Like I used to be. But not anymore. I know you can handle our departure, because you don't give a shit about us. You care more about everyone you hate. I know. Because it's all you talk about.

(she coughs)

You'll find out anyway, so I'm telling you now: I met a man at the jail. But don't start beating up every deputy you see, because he's not a cop. He's an inmate doing ninety days on a drunk driving beef. And don't worry, he's white. So don't freak out there. When he's released, we're going to try and start a new life. And I say try, because I'll always have to look over my shoulder for the wrath of Eldon. If you must kill him, please don't do it in front of me. As far as money, I took most of it. But not all. Because for some fucked up reason, I still care if you eat or not. I know this is abrupt, unless you're good at reading signals. Which you're not. Goodbye, Eldon. Sorry. And thank you for the nineteen years, four months and eleven days.

The machine BEEPS off. Perry sighs. He sits on the carpet. Stunned.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

A SHADOWY MAN in a ballcap and flannel shirt POUNDS the door of a house on the sleeping street.

INT. SOUTH CENTRAL HOUSE - SAME

It's a disaster littered with malt liquor bottles and food wrappers. The only light is from a big new T.V. tuned to a shopping channel hawking cute porcelains.

Orchard gawks emptily at the screen. As does Sidwell. They're zonked out of their skulls on God knows what.

POUNDING at the door. Orchard stirs, picks up a shotgun and crosses to the door.

ORCHARD

Yo! Wassup?

VAN METER (O.S.)

Open this fucking door right now.

Orchard jerks the door open. There stands Tom Van Meter dressed down. He enters. He and Orchard have a staring match for a beat. Orchard's eyes waver, he looks away.

VAN METER

You know why I'm here. Where's the safe you ripped?

Orchard points. Van Meter aims his maglite on the empty husk of the safe, lying on a bed of power tools.

VAN METER

That trash will disappear right now.

Sidwell stirs, SEES Van Meter.

SIDWELL

Aw, shit.

Van Meter blinds him with his maglite. Sidwell squinting.

VAN METER

Where's the money? Gimme all the money or I send you up North back to your cages. Give me all the fucking money. Right. Now.

Sidwell pulls a paperbag from under his cushion.

SIDWELL

Here, man.

Van Meter snatches it. Shoves it under his shirt.

ORCHARD

Uh, what about our half?

VAN METER

I'm keeping your half. You forfeited it because of your inability to control your murderous impulses. Why did you dumbfucks kill so many people?

SIDWELL

We had walk-ins, man. I had to.

VAN METER

Next time, don't. Only through my intervention are you still on the street. You two will kiss my ass your every living breathing day on this Earth. Failure to do so will result in your death or imprisonment. Understand?
(a beat)

Understand?

ORCHARD

Yessir.

SIDWELL

Yessir.

VAN METER

This time you lost your money. Next time you kill without my approval, you lose your lives.

His beam falls on a SLEEPING WOMAN, then a bong on the coffeetable. Van Meter clicks off his maglite.

VAN METER

That straight reefer?

ORCHARD

Uh-huh. The kind.

Orchard proffers him the bong. Lights it for him. Van Meter takes a hit. Exhales like a dragon. He crosses to exit, money tucked under his arm. Pauses to check the Woman's pulse. Shine's a light in her glazed eye.

VAN METER

Your whore's dead. Dump her too.

Van Meter exits. A beat as Orchard and Sidwell trade looks.

ORCHARD

Damn.

SIDWELL

Did that just happen?

ORCHARD

We be workin' our asses off like little smurfs and he comin' in here like Gargamel snatchin' our smurfberries.

SIDWELL
Smoked our shit too.

ORCHARD
Homegirl ain't dead, is she?

CUT TO:

INT. TEDROW'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tedrow sits on his couch in the dark. His eyes in an unwavering stare of anguish.

CUT TO:

INT. ELDON PERRY'S LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Eldon squints at his wall of awards and photos. His gun dangles loosely from his hand. He casually knocks frames off the wall with his gun, one at a time. Glass SHATTERS as milestones rain to the floor.

Perry stoops, pulls a piece of paper from the mess.

It reads: TO OFFICER ELDON PERRY JR. FOR VALOR

He tosses it aside. Grabs a photo.

INSERT PHOTO -- Eldon JR. at 21, the police academy graduate poses with his FATHER, in a Lieutenant's uniform.

PERRY
Thanks for the choice, dad.

Perry takes a hit of vodka. Lights a Marlboro and meditates on the photo.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK - DAWN

Tedrow sits in the saddle, surveying the city below him. A new gravity tugging his soul. The rising sun has a blood red taint. Tedrow kicks his horse and GALLOPS away from it.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S HOUSE - DAWN

A modest bungalow off Crenshaw. Beth in the bathroom getting ready for work. A KNOCK at her door. Grabs her pistol off the counter. She crosses, looks through the peephole.

BETH
Please, go away.

TEDROW(O.S.)
I need to talk to you.

BETH
I need you to go away.

TEDROW(O.S.)
I'm not moving until we talk.

Beth unlocks her door. Opens it. Flashes her gun.

BETH
Is this what you understand? The
trigger and the bullet. You can go on
your own power or they can carry you
away by the handles.

Tedrow snatches the gun from her. Pushes his way into her
home and shuts the door behind him.

BETH
You're a thug, Bobby.

TEDROW
I know.

He hands her gun back.

BETH
What do you want?

TEDROW
I can't eat or sleep or think. I've
been puking all night. And the sunrise
don't look the same.

BETH
What do you want?

TEDROW
I killed a man.

BETH
I know. You've killed a lot of men, war
hero. I read your jacket.

TEDROW
Gulf War stuff was bullshit. Air Force
shot up my tank platoon and gave
everyone medals to cover it up. Beth,
I've never killed anyone in my life

TEDROW(cont'd)
until last night. I blew a guy's eyes
out of his face. Every time I close
mine I see his. Staring at me. Crying
blood.

He drops on her couch. A pathetic wreck.

BETH
Dude, are you high or something? You're
making no sense.

TEDROW
There was another shooting last night.

BETH
I heard. Eldon Perry got his eighth
kill. Good job.

TEDROW
I pulled the trigger. Not Perry. And
the Robertson killing, Holland is right,
it was an execution. But Perry pulled
the trigger on that one, not me. I was
supposed to, but I dropped my gun. Call
Holland. I'll give him Perry. I'll
give him Van Meter. I'll give him me.

A beat. Beth melts, sits next to him. Hugs him tight.

BETH
Why couldn't you give yourself to me?
Beth begins to cry. She breaks away, looks at him.
Meditates on his face a beat. Then:

BETH
Think about it. Just like a bullet, you
can't call it back. Keep your mouth
shut and nothing happens. You don't
have to do this. You'll ruin your life.

TEDROW
I already have. I'm a fuckin' assassin,
Beth. I can't live with that. Fuck
SIS, I've only been in it three weeks.
Make the call. Please.

BETH
Can't trust the phones. Tell him in
person. Lemme get my shit together and
follow me to his house. You're the
bravest son-of-a-bitch I've ever met,
Bobby Tedrow. God help you.

She grabs his face and kisses him hard.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLAND'S HOUSE - MORNING

Holland, Tedrow and Beth, in uniform, sit on the patio. Tedrow has just finished spilling his guts. After a tortured silence:

HOLLAND

Thank you, Robert. Willing to say all that in a court? With Eldon Perry and your Uncle staring at you?

TEDROW

I look forward to it.

HOLLAND

Perry's just a footsoldier. Van Meter's the one I want. I'm gonna hang him with the strings of his own puppet.

ANGLE ON -- An outdoor speaker.

CLOSER

Until we are virtually inside the speaker. It is filled with electronics and a powerful microphone. A discreet antenna runs along the roof of the house.

DISSOLVE TO:

A sinister and complex RADIO RECEIVER. A 1-inch multi-channel tape recorder connected to it. The conversation is being recorded.

HOLLAND(V.O.)

I'm going to Parker Center and going about my day as usual. Where are you supposed to be?

TEDROW(V.O.)

I have off. But I gotta be at Perry's thing tonight.

BACK TO HOLLAND'S PATIO

HOLLAND

Me too. After the ceremony, we'll link up and hide out somewhere safe where I can depose a formal statement from you.

TEDROW

Okay. Whatever you need.

Holland grabs his briefcase and stands.

HOLLAND

For now, cool your heels here. Take a valium and get some sleep. There's a bed in the guest room.

TEDROW

Thank you, sir.

HOLLAND

Stay here. Make sure he gets some rest. It's gonna be a long night.

BETH

Arthur. Good luck.

Holland departs. Beth grabs Tedrow's hand.

TEDROW

Scared?

BETH

Are you?

TEDROW

Terrified.

CUT TO:

INT. TOM VAN METER'S OFFICE - DAY

Van Meter enters with a cup of coffee and the newspaper. He locks his door. Crosses to a closet, unlocks and opens it to expose the surveillance rig we just saw. He SEES there's freshly recorded material. He rewinds the tape as he scans the front page.

It reads: LAPD VETERAN ANNOUNCES BID FOR CHIEF

There's a big photo of Holland waving his badge in church.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLLAND'S HOUSE - DAY

In the guest bedroom, Beth sits on the bed, unbuttoning her uniform blouse. Tedrow slides it from her shoulders. She leans back on the bed and pulls him on top of her.

CUT TO:

INT. ELDON PERRY'S HOUSE - DAY

TRACK THROUGH to show the emptiness. A faint BEEPING.

IN THE KITCHEN

Louder BEEPING. It's the alarm on Perry's watch. He's out cold on the tile, SNORING. Eldon Perry cracks an eye. Sits up. Looks at the time.

PERRY

Shit.

CUT TO:

INT. PERRY'S CROWN VIC (MOVING) - DAY

Stopped at a light in front of Simi Valley Savings, waiting to turn onto the freeway. Perry, clean shaven, drinking a beer, wears his crispest dress uniform, ribbons and medals across his chest. His gunbelt and shoes glow like chrome.

A Simi Valley Police cruiser pulls alongside. Two COPS, cleancut whiteboys, grin at him.

COP 2

Sergeant Perry. That's some fucking shit, huh?

PERRY

Say again?

COP 2

They got off. Every last fuckin' charge. They walked away from the beef Clorox clean.

PERRY

What the fuck are you two redneck psycho's talking about?

COP 2

The Rodney King beef. Jury just read the verdicts. It's all over the radio.

PERRY

They all got off?

COP 1

Even the supervisory element.

PERRY

Out-fuckin-standing.

Perry grins from ear to ear. The light turns green.

PERRY(cont'd)
I'll drink to that.

He salutes them with his beer and drives onto the onramp.

CUT TO:

INT. TOM VAN METER'S OFFICE - DAY

A Pall Mall dangles from Van Meter's lips as he melts a reel of tape into a plastic blob with his Zippo. He drops the mess in the trash. Takes a nip of sour mash and reaches for the phone.

INTERCUT:

INT. PERRY'S CROWN VIC (MOVING) - DAY

Perry blasts a country song. His cellphone RINGS.

PERRY
Hello?

VAN METER
Eldon? What's wrong?

Perry turns downs the music.

PERRY
She left. Sally left.

VAN METER
Not the first time. She'll be back.

PERRY
This was the big one. San Andreas fault. The coast slid into the sea.

VAN METER
Want me to call her?

PERRY
No. Fuck her ... Tom, she thinks. She thinks I'm a monster.

VAN METER
You're no monster, Eldon. Listen, I know you're hurting now, but I have a mission for you.

PERRY
What?

VAN METER

It's Orchard and Sidwell. What you said yesterday.

PERRY

You think they did Lucky Liquor?

VAN METER

I don't know, I honestly don't know.
And I don't like not knowing. Eldon,
they're more trouble than they're worth.

PERRY

(grins)

You want me to ..?

VAN METER

No, nothing like that. Put them on a
bus. I want them out of L.A. Put a
scare in 'em. Make it clear they're not
welcome in my city.

PERRY

Be my pleasure.

VAN METER

Thank you, Eldon. You're a prince. See
you tonight, Eldon. Oxnard.

(a beat)

You forgot didn't you? You made
Lieutenant and you forgot.

PERRY

No, I didn't. I got my goddamn blues
on. Not gonna feel right without Sally.
Shit. Tom, the verdicts. 'Bout time
LAPD gotta break.

VAN METER

Sure is. Tonight we'll get properly
pissed like we used to. To celebrate
and lament.

PERRY

Roger that, Tom.

Perry hangs up.

END INTERCUT

Staying with Van Meter. Who hangs up. Dials again.

INTERCUT:

INT. SOUTH CENTRAL HOUSE - SAME

The phone RINGS. Orchard answers. He and Sidwell smoke a crack pipe.

ORCHARD

Yell-o. Who be it?

VAN METER

Me be it, fuckhead.

ORCHARD

(aside to Sidwell)

It's Gargamel.

(into phone)

Yessuh?

VAN METER

Shut up. Did you dump that shit?

ORCHARD

Yessuh. We did.

VAN METER

A white police officer's coming to your house. He'll be there shortly. Cancel his ticket.

Sidwell hands the pipe back to Orchard. Exhales crack.

ORCHARD

Smoke a cop?

VAN METER

Yes. You know him. He works for me. He is a serious badass. You slip and he won't. Do you know who I'm talking about?

ORCHARD

Yeah, I know.

VAN METER

Leave him breathing and I'll make sure you're not. That is a no-shitter.

ORCHARD

I'll snatch the fool's ass. Get jailhouse nasty.

VAN METER

Just put him away clean. Then leave town. Both of you. L.A.'s too hot. So vanish. I don't care where you go. Vegas or K.C. I can set you up in either place.

ORCHARD

Yeah. Cool. We're gone. Fuck L.A.

Van Meter hangs up.

END INTERCUT

Stay with Orchard and Sidwell.

SIDWELL

Dude, what's going on?

ORCHARD

Gargamel wants us to blast on Eldon Perry. He rollin' on us.

SIDWELL

Good. Hate that motherfucker.

ORCHARD

Me too. Pass the machine, brother.

Sidwell tosses Orchard a MAC-10. Then slips a shotgun from the cushions for himself.

ORCHARD

This shit here's gonna be hummin'. I got mad skills.

SIDWELL

Takin' it to a higher level.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLLAND'S HOUSE - DAY

Tedrow is passed out from exhaustion in Beth's arms. Their nude bodies shrouded by a thin sheet.

Tedrow's BEEPER goes off. He stirs. Grabs it.

BETH

Mmmm. Don't. Sleep.

TEDROW

I always answer my pages. Business as usual.

Beth hands him a cellphone. Tedrow dials.

TEDROW

It's Tedrow.

(listens a long beat)

Hey, buddy, great job. Can you gimme his last known address?

(listens)

Thanks.

Tedrow hangs up. Excited, breathless. He starts getting dressed.

TEDROW

That was the print lab. I gave them a bag of cigarette butts from the gutter outside Lucky Liquor. They found a beautiful right thumbprint on a Newport and matched it to Darren Orchard. When Perry found out it was an oreo team, he locked on Orchard and Sidwell as our offenders. Their fuckin' alibi was Van Meter. They're his snitches. They did Lucky Liquor. And he's protecting them.

BETH

What are you doing?

TEDROW

I'm gonna pick them up and book them into Parker Center jail.

BETH

Alone?

Tedrow straps on his gun.

TEDROW

I can't trust anyone.

BETH

You can trust me. They're stone killers. I'm going with you.

She grabs her uniform and starts getting dressed.

TEDROW

No, Beth. My problem. My responsibility.

He runs out. Beth pulls on her pants, stabs her feet into her boots. Grabs her shirt and gunbelt and runs after him.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLAND'S HOUSE - DAY

Tedrow's sedan is parked out front. He takes the shotgun and a box of ammo from the trunk. Slams it shut. Crosses to the driver's side and gets in.

Beth runs from the house, crosses to the sedan. She reaches for the door handle.

CLUNK. Tedrow hits the powerlock. He looks at her a beat.

SCREECH! Tedrow takes off.

BETH

Bobby! Don't!

Beth runs to her car, a Hyundai, and takes off after him.

CUT TO:

INT.. UNMARKED SEDAN (MOVING) - DAY

Tedrow rolls East on Century into the heart of South Central, getting dirty looks. Lots of PEOPLE on the sidewalk, stepping in and out of the street.

RADIO VOICE 1

Not guilty. All counts but one. And that one was a mistrial.

RADIO VOICE 2

Woo-hoo! Justice is served.

Tedrow shucking rounds into the shotgun on the seat.

ANGLE ON

A young GANGBANGER sees the sedan and WHISTLES.

A bottle sails past the car. Shatters on the street. Tedrow swerves.

TEDROW

Jesus.

NEW ANGLE

Another young GANGBANGER outside a liquor store SEES the narc car and WHISTLES. Tedrow eyes the punk.

TEDROW

Fuckin' homies got me on radar.

INT. BETH'S CAR - SAME TIME

She follows Tedrow, a block behind.

BETH

Oh, whiteboy. You do not wanna be here
right now.

CUT TO:

INT. OREO HOUSE - DAY

Sidwell watching trial coverage on TV, drinking a forty.

Through the front window, Orchard can be seen loading bags
into a Ford Thunderbird. Orchard enters. Sits on the
couch.

SIDWELL

You were right about the cops. Not
guilty.

They hear WHISTLING. And trade looks. They grab their
weapons. Orchard turns up the TV's VOLUME. They run out
the back door and ...

EXT. OREO HOUSE - BACK YARD - SAME

... climb on the roof of their house. The stucco box has a
flat roof with a commanding view of the only approaches, the
street out front, the alley out back. Sidwell spreads a
blanket on the roof.

ORCHARD

What are you doing?

SIDWELL

New clothes, man.

They lay down, out of sight. Sidwell peers at the street
through a rain spout, SEES Tedrow's unmarked sedan.

SIDWELL

Here he come. Eldon Perry. Welcome to
the killzone.

ORCHARD

Wanna see that cat's face when I turn
his ass into a motherfuckin' teabag.

Orchard lays out several magazines for his machine pistol.
Sidwell plays with the safety of his shotgun.

CUT TO:

INT. UNMARKED SEDAN (MOVING) - DAY

Tedrow drives past the Oreo house. He rounds the corner and pulls into the alley behind it. He stops one house away. and kills the engine.

He sits there a beat. Psyching himself up.

Hears tires CRUNCHING gravel. Tedrow REACTS. Beth parks behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. PERRY'S CROWN VIC (MOVING) - SAME

Perry is in the hood. People in the street. Perry HONKS.

PERRY
Outta the stinkin' street!

Perry nearing the Oreo house. Parks in front.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - SAME

Beth crosses to Tedrow, angrily getting out of his car.

TEDROW
Godammit, Beth.

BETH
I got no problem with you putting the cuffs on these fools. My problem is you being tactically stupid. I won't let you pull a John Wayne. Gimme the gage, I'll cover you.

A beat. Tedrow hands her his shotgun. He takes off the tacvest he wears over his shirt.

TEDROW
This too. Take it.

Beth reluctantly puts it on.

BETH
That the house?

Tedrow nods.

THE OREO'S POV

Beth and Tedrow cross to their back fence.

SCENE

SIDWELL

That ain't Perry and homeboy's gotta fine-ass sister with him. She crippin' up here with a boo-yeah, all chill and shit.

ORCHARD

Damn. Gargamel always be talkin' cryptically and shit. These fools gotta be who he mean. They goin' in a box.

SIDWELL

Shhhh. They right here and shit.

NEW ANGLE

They don't see Perry, in uniform, crossing to their front door, deftly twirling a police baton by the strap. The epitome of the LAPD lifer, hashmarks covering a sleeve.

AT THE FRONT DOOR

Perry tests the handle. It's unlocked. He enters.

INT. OREO HOUSE - SAME

The living room is empty. Save for BUZZING flies.

ON THE TV -- Florence and Normandie. A long-haired TRUCKER gets smashed in the head with a brick.

Perry watches transfixed.

PERRY

Holy shit.

EXT. OREO HOUSE - BACK YARD - SAME

Beth and Tedrow hop the low chainlink fence into the backyard.

ON THE ROOF

Orchard and Sidwell fight the giggles as ...

INT. OREO HOUSE - SAME

Perry sees SOMETHING, he spins ...

WHAT PERRY SEES

Through a window, Tedrow and Beth, in the backyard, creeping to the house.

SCENE

Perry watching them a beat, perplexed.

PERRY

Bobby?

Perry HEARS movement above him. He looks up at the ceiling, clumsily draws his gun from the stiff inspection holster, its gunleather CREAKING. And puts two and two together ...

PERRY

It's a fuckin' ambush!

He throws his baton at a back window.

It SHATTERS--

IN THE BACKYARD

--getting Tedrow and Beth's full attention. They dive for cover as ...

ORCHARD AND SIDWELL

Pop up like slices of evil toast and open fire ...

BRRRDDDDT! BOOM! BOOM! BRRRDDDDT!

Buckshot tears into Tedrow's spine, spattering an arc of tissue and bone fragments across the brown grass.

Beth dives to the dirt facedown as ...

BRRRRRDT! Orchard's machinegun stitches across her back. Bullets THUMPING into the tacvest. Harmless but painful. Fired casings rain down on the yard.

SIDWELL

Shoot her in the head!

Orchard reloading.

INT. OREO HOUSE - SAME

Perry runs to a spot he guesses Orchard and Sidwell to be standing above. He aims his magnum at the ceiling.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

EXT. OREO HOUSE - SAME

Orchard and Sidwell jump as bullets erupt from below.

Beth rallies, returns fire with the shotgun.

BOOM!

She turns Orchard's hand into pink mist, his MAC-10 skitters across the roof, and he falls on his butt.

KERSHACK - Beth fires again - BOOM!

Sidwell dives for cover, buckshot ZINGS through his hair, leaving a bloody crease on his scalp, punches a hole in his cheek.

SIDWELL

Let's get the fuck outta here!

He grabs Orchard's collar, drags him away toward the front of the house.

INT. OREO HOUSE - SAME

Perry is having a hell of a time getting the speedloader out of the stiff pouch on his belt.

PERRY

Cocksucker. C'mon. Shit.

WHAT HE SEES

Orchard and Sidwell drop into the front yard and run to their Thunderbird.

SCENE

Perry frees the speedloader, slams six fresh shells into his magnum as he runs to the front door.

EXT. OREO HOUSE - SAME

SCREECH! The Thunderbird peels out of the driveway.

Perry chasing after it. Stops and aims ...

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

... succeeding in doing little more than breaking the car's rear window as it disappears down the street. Perry shakes with frustration. Then runs back into the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. OREO HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Perry stands there, beholding a macabre visage.

WHAT HE SEES

Tedrow lays in a heap, folded in half backwards where his spine was shattered. Beth holds his head in her hands and lightly kisses his cheek.

SCENE

Beth hammers Perry with a searing scowl. Perry ignores her, kneels beside Tedrow.

PERRY

Oh, Bobby.

TEDROW

I snitched you out, Eldon.

Tears rim Perry's eyes. It's shocking to see someone so mangled still alive.

PERRY

It's my fault. Never should'a put my gun in your hand. I'm sorry.

Tedrow COUGHS blood. Looks at Beth. Smiles at her. And dies.

A beat. Perry reaches over to feel his pulse.

BETH

Don't you touch him. Don't you dare touch him.

PERRY

Okay, okay. What the hell is ... Why are you here?

BETH

Because I'm a real cop. Why are you here?

PERRY

Van Meter called me ... he sent me here to ... he sent me here to ...

Perry turns ashen.

BETH

He sent you here to die! They were on the roof waiting for you! Ha! Tom Van Meter sent you into an ambush!

ALL SOUND drops away. Until all we HEAR is the beating of Eldon Perry's heart.

A long beat as Perry's eyes search Beth pleadingly.

FADE UP the sound of Beth LAUGHING.

BETH

Ha! You a fool, a plain fool. Your boss wants you dead. How's it feel killer? You and Van Meter deserve each other. Ya'll are deeply fucked up.

Perry reeling, he has never felt so helpless, so impotent. Beth's laughter becomes tortured sobbing. Perry stands and backs away from her.

BETH

This should be you! Not Bobby. Your blood supposed to spill. Bobby's a hundred times the man you are. This should be your blood! I hope you burn in hell, Eldon Perry, you evil motherfucker!

PERRY

... I'm sorry ...

He turns and runs into the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. OREO HOUSE - DAY

Perry hops in his Crown Vic and guns it. V-8 power launches him away from the curb.

INT. PERRY'S CROWN VIC (MOVING) - SAME

Perry hauling ass.- Tears pour down cheeks, he teeth grinding in a scowl. Perry dodges debris in the street. Narrowly misses a LOOTER carrying a giant package of toilet paper.

WHAM! A newspaper machine hits the hood of his car. Smashing the windshield. Perry uses his magnum to bust a hole in the windshield so he can see.

Perry speeds up. HONKING. Driving insanely fast. PEOPLE dive out of his way.

He drives on the wrong side of the street to blast past a burning car.

SCREEEECH! He slams on the brakes to avoid an intersection blocked with burning cars. Does a bootlegger turn.

Perry backtracking. Swings a hard right. Barrels up the street. His head swiveling searching for ...

Up ahead, Perry SEES the Oreos Thunderbird. Sidwell driving, trying to find a clear freeway onramp to blow town.

Perry floors it. Closing fast. Now on their bumper. Perry aiming his pistol through his missing windshield at Sidwell's head. His finger on the trigger ...

SCREEEECH! Sidwell stomps the brakes.

Perry SMASHES into the Thunderbird. His magnum flies across his hood, across the trunk of the Thunderbird, and into its broken back window.

IN THE STREET

ANGRY MEN blocking it with burning tires. They pelt the Oreos car with rocks and bottles.

ANGRY MEN

... Get the, whiteboy! ...
... Rodney King, motherfucker! ...
... Fuck his white ass up ...

The Men swarm the car. Punch Sidwell through the broken windows. They pull Sidwell out the window. Slam him against the asphalt.

Orchard dives from the car and runs. A shirt tied around his mangled hand.

A TALL RIOTER raises a chunk of concrete ...

SIDWELL

No! No, man, I'm cool!

TALL RIOTER

No, you ain't.

Sidwell's desperate SCREAM is cut short as his head POPS like a pricked balloon.

ELDON PERRY

Savors the sight--

PERRY
Fuck you, Sidwell.

--until a bottle SMASHES against his car.

TALL RIOTER
You next, fool!

Men swarm Perry.

SCREEECH! He throws it in reverse and plows through the crowd, tumbling people like bowling pins.

He whips around a corner. Slams his poor car in gear and races onward. He reaches into a duffle behind his seat and pulls out a chopped shotgun.

ON ORCHARD

Running down the middle of the street. Perry's car races toward him.

SCREEEECH! Slaloms to a stop on his heels.

ELDON PERRY

Sits in his car leveling the shotgun through his windshield at Orchard.

PERRY
You're all I got in this fucking World
and I'm not letting you get away. Get
in!

Perry opens the passenger door for him. Orchard gets in his car. Perry handcuffs his Orchard's good hand to the window stanchion.

RIOTERS IN THE STREET

See Perry doing this and run towards his car.

SCREEECH! Perry hits the gas.

Perry swerves to avoid them. Hits the curb, bypasses them on the sidewalk. Swerves back onto the street. A shower of beerbottles and cans spatter against the street behind him.

Perry pulls onto the Harbor Freeway. Guns it North. Behind him, columns of grey smoke boil into the sky.

He and Orchard trade looks. Perry pulls a smoke from his pack and offers one to his prisoner. Orchard nods. Perry lights it for him, sticks it in Orchard's mouth.

Orchard staring at Perry. Who's crying. Perry wipes his tears with his hashmarked sleeve.

CUT TO:

INT. OXNARD COUNTRY CLUB - AFTERNOON

A banner reads: CONGRATULATIONS LIEUTENANT PERRY

About as far away from the convulsing streets of LA as you can get. Spit and polish and dress uniforms.

White gloved WAITERS serve drinks to banquet tables of COPS. Lots of handshaking and back patting as OFFICERS from various agencies trade hellos.

The room is noticeably segregated. Arthur Holland, Janelle by his side, sits with the BLACK COPS and their WIVES.

ANGLE ON

Tom Van Meter, sitting next to Assistant Chief Barcomb. He and Holland trade looks. Holland glares angrily as Van Meter just grins smugly. An AIDE crosses to Barcomb.

AIDE

Sir, patrol cars are getting rocked and bottled in South Central.

BARCOMB

We're fine. Metro comes on duty at six.

Barcomb waves him away. Van Meter REACTS.

WHAT HE SEES

Sally heads his way in a beautiful dress.

SCENE

Van Meter stands and hugs her.

VAN METER

Sally! Thank you for coming. It's going to mean a lot to Eldon.

SALLY

I owe him this much, Tom. But I'm leaving after the pictures.

Van Meter snatches a drink from a waiter's tray and hands it to her. She smiles. Barcomb checks his watch.

BARCOMB

I specifically told him not to be late.

Van Meter smirks to himself. Then, loud CLAPPING

NEW ANGLE

Perry enters the back of the banquet hall, looking proud, tall and clean cut. He marches through the room.

Tom Van Meter turns white as a ghost.

Holland whispers to a BLACK CAPTAIN. They smile.

CLAPPING following Perry as he crosses to the front table where most of the brass is. Perry SEES Sally, smiles and kisses her on the cheek.

PERRY

Thank you.

Van Meter and Barcomb rise in greeting. Shake his hand. Perry slaps Van Meter on the back.

PERRY

Made it boss. Goddamned riot going on.

Almost lost my ass in the hood.

(to Barcomb)

Ready to do this, sir?

Perry grabs Van Meter's drink, downs it and crosses to the podium amidst WHISTLES, CATCALLS and shouts of "Eldon." He is a hero to these men. Barcomb, followed by his Aide, steps up to the mic.

BARCOMB

I'd like to thank the men and women of the Los Angeles Police Department and other agencies who are here today to witness the promotion of one of our most outstanding officers to the rank of Lieutenant. Sergeant Perry, attention.

Perry at attention. The Aide hands Barcomb a folder. Who opens it and reads:

BARCOMB

This is to certify that under and by virtue of the authority vested in me by Section ninety three, Article nine, of the charter of the City of Los Angeles

BARCOMB(cont'd)

and the ordinances of said City, I do hereby appoint Detective Sergeant Eldon Perry Junior the rank of Lieutenant, this the twenty ninth day of April, nineteen ninety two.

Barcomb unpins the Sergeant's badge from Perry's uniform. And clips on the shiny new Lieutenant's badge as PHOTOGRAPHERS snap away. They shake. A crescendo of CLAPPING.

BARCOMB

Congratulations, Eldon.

Barcomb gestures for Perry to step up to the mic. Perry does with somber sobriety.

PERRY

I'd like to thank everyone here for your support. Law enforcement's taken a lotta dings lately and I'd like to congratulate our four brother officers who were acquitted today.

CLAPPING and WHISTLES. Barcomb returns to his seat.

PERRY(cont'd)

Hell of a job we got. A cop's the last person a citizen wants to see until a shitbag shoves a gun in their face. Then we can't get there quick enough. Law enforcement's been my family's business since Los Angeles was a frontier township. I sat on my grandfather's lap and listened to his stories about chasing horse thieves and rustlers into the Santa Monica Mountains and coming back with the bad guys tied to the back of his appaloosa. By the time my dad got in the business, there were traffic signals and black and whites. But the job didn't change. My dad was a gunslinger just like his dad. He put down eleven men with his service thirty eight. Pimps, murderers and robbers. Dad preyed on the predators that preyed on the city. There was never any doubt I'd be a cop. I was a police explorer at age nine. I was thirteen during the Watts Riots. My dad took me out with him on the second night. A Woolworth's was burning and there were seven looters inside. Every

PERRY(cont'd)

time they tried to run out, my dad would take pot shots at them with a deer rifle he brought from home. He gave me the rifle. A looter ran out and I winged him in the arm. He ran back in and the building collapsed. Guess they all burned up.

VARIOUS SHOTS

Of Cops in the banquet hall who aren't sure they're hearing what they're hearing or how to react. Van Meter senses where this is going. To Barcomb:

VAN METER

Get him down from there. He's drunk.

Barcomb signals his Aide, whispers in his ear.

PERRY

I was raised up to be a killer by a family of killers. I made a career out of going after the worst, most dangerous, parasitic sons of bitches to walk the Earth. I was happier than the devil in hell.

The Aide and six GOON COPS crossing to the stage. Holland REACTS, he whispers to the Captain next him.

PERRY(cont'd)

I'd shoot unarmed men in the back. Fabricate evidence. Lie in reports. Lie to investigators. Lie in court. Me and Tom Van Meter, he's my boss, we had everyone fooled. If anyone messed with us, they'd get muscled or blackmailed. Everyone's gotta secret. Everyone.

The six Goon Cops, moving towards the podium are suddenly blocked by twelve big BLACK COPS who form a protective perimeter around Perry. Perry nods a thank you to Holland. Van Meter is steaming.

PERRY(cont'd)

Van Meter ordered me to pin the Lucky Liquor homicides on two innocent men and kill them. Metro killed one during a raid. They were just doing their job. I made Bobby Tedrow kill the other one in cold blood. You gotta be heartless in my line of work. My partner, Bobby Tedrow, had a good one. It fucked him

PERRY(cont'd)

up. The real Lucky Liquor suspects are Van Meter's snitches. Bobby had to do the right thing. He tried to arrest them. He's dead. He walked into an ambush meant for me. Van Meter wanted me dead 'cause Tedrow spilled to Holland.

Barcomb is fire engine red. Van Meter glares at Perry. Sally gives Van Meter a hateful look. The crowd MURMURS. Perry steps down and crosses to Van Meter. Who stands to face him.

PERRY

You set me up you son of a bitch. I'm slow but I figured it out. You're the criminal, you're the parasite. You've been conning me into doing your shit work for years.

VAN METER

You need psychiatric help. You're ill, Eldon. You're ill.

PERRY

Orchard's in my car. He said you ordered him to hit Lucky Liquor. He's more than happy to rat you out. You're under arrest, Tom.

Perry spins him and cuffs him.

PERRY'S HAND -- Dips into Van Meter's pocket, snatching something small, metallic.

VAN METER

Unhook me! -- Jimmy, Eldon's out of his mind. He's telling you fairy tales.

BARCOMB

(to his Aide)

Gimme your keys.

Barcomb takes the keys, singles out a handcuff key and crosses to Van Meter.

PERRY

Jimmy, don't. I'm pulling the plug. Tom is a sinking ship. It's all going to come out. If you're smart you'll run away from Tom as fast as you can and never look back.

BARCOMB

Get the fuck away from me, Eldon.

PERRY

(whispers)

You're fuckin' scared of him, Jimmy.
He's got the deep, deep dirt on you. I
know what and where it is. Those cuffs
stay on Tom or you're gonna get real
muddy, buddy.

A beat as Barcomb stares at Perry. Then grabs a jacket off
a chair, crosses to Van Meter and covers his cuffed hands.

BARCOMB

Tom. I'm sorry. It looks pretty bad.
I think it's over for you. These are
serious allegations and they need to be
dealt with.

Barcomb can't look him in the eye. Barcomb signals for the
Goon Cops to grab Van Meter.

BARCOMB (cont'd)

Get him outside. Transport him to
headquarters.

Van Meter is escorted outside. Perry stands alone in a
circle of Cops. He holds out his hands to be cuffed.

PERRY

Now who's gonna cuff me?

A beat.

PERRY

Who wants to do it? C'mon. Fuckin'
arrest me! Cuff me! Someone cuff me!

VARIOUS SHOTS

Of stunned cops. No one will.

COP VOICES

... Please, Eldon ...
... Stop, Detective ...
... We can't do that ...

Holland steps forward. Perry holds out his hands.

And Holland places handcuffs on Eldon Perry. The circle of
Cops looking away.

Holland walks Perry to the exit. A blue sea of uniforms parting before them.

An AIDE crosses to Barcomb with a radio set.

AIDE

Sir, it's the Duty Officer, there's a full blown riot. And the Chief isn't taking calls. He's at a Brentwood fundraiser.

BARCOMB

Uh, fine. Call out a tactical alert. We're gonna follow the riot plan in the department manual. Be over in a couple hours. We're LAPD. We can handle anything.

The Aide runs off. Barcomb drains his drink.

CUT TO:

EXT. OXNARD COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

Holland and Perry stand in the parking lot. Orchard is being loaded into a black and white. Perry pulls out a cigarette pack. Offers one to Holland.

HOLLAND

Thank you.

Perry lights their smokes.

PERRY

It's all over. Scariest damn thing I ever did. Get up there and say that.

In the direction of L.A. clouds of black smoke fill the sky.

PERRY

They're gonna burn the whole damn city. We really fucked up.

HOLLAND

I know.

NEW ANGLE

The Black Captain helps Van Meter into an unmarked. His dress jacket covering the cuffs. Van Meter is driven away. Shoots Perry a dirty look.

PERRY

Took balls to go after him.

HOLLAND

Scariest damn thing I ever did.

They trade looks. Perry hands Holland a key ring.

PERRY

Those are Van Meter's keys. All our secret files, twenty one three-drawer cabinets worth, in his basement. That's where he keeps everything. Better send some boys to his house and secure them. Boys you trust.

Holland staring at the keys in disbelief.

HOLLAND

Thank you, Eldon.

PERRY

Jesus Christ, Arthur. Don't ever thank me for anything. Bobby Tedrow got you those keys. Bobby was ... His blood is on all our hands. Don't wash it off. Always remember.

HOLLAND

I will.

Holland crosses to a knot of Cops. Conferences with the Black Captain, hands him the keys.

Perry stands alone, smoking, watching the city burn. He unpins his new badge and pockets it.

THE END