

# HANGMAN

by

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DARKNESS --

An authoritative female voice floats over the blackness.

CHIEF WATSON (O.C.)  
The suspect was last seen in a  
blue, four door, Plymouth Reliant--

SOUNDS of RUFFLING --

CHIEF WATSON (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Everything okay back there?

LENS CAP is removed, finally blasting us with some light, and  
a beautiful shot of -- SHOES.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Just give me a second.

CAMERA SPINS for a REVERSE SHOT - on CHRIS DAVIES, 30's the  
camera operator, staring back at us. He's boyish, and  
slightly overweight.

He resets the positioning of the camera to reveal our  
location as...

INT. POLICE STATION - ROLL CALL - DAY

The frame bounces for a beat while the chief continues

CHIEF WATSON (O.C.)  
...with possible damage to both the  
right and rear side of the vehicle.

The CAMERA PANS to reveal a room filled with POLICE OFFICERS  
in the midst of their morning roll call.

Eventually we land on CHIEF LISA WATSON, 40's, seated behind  
a table at the front, and powerfully holding court.

CHIEF WATSON (CONT'D)  
(To camera)  
Are we good?

A HAND with a THUMBS UP from Chris pops into frame.

CHIEF WATSON (CONT'D)  
Okay, as some of you may or may not  
know, Fort Wayne has been chosen as  
one of the cities participating in  
the filming of a new television  
series called...

Checking her notes --

CHIEF WATSON (CONT'D)  
I'm not sure on...

She awkwardly looks back up at the camera.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
The tentative title of the show is  
"Excessive Force".

Some of the OFFICERS groan, turn to face the camera. The Chief stares back in disbelief.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
I'm just kidding. We... don't have  
a working title at the moment.

CHIEF WATSON  
(Not amused)  
Okay, now that you've all met one  
of the producers and camera man of  
the show...Detectives Archer and  
Ruiney.

The CAMERA PANS through the OFFICERS before landing on two.

RAY ARCHER, late 40's, gives little more than a bland nod  
with an accompanying hand gesture towards the camera.

His partner, WILL RUINEY, mid 30's, smiles towards the lens.  
He's bursting with both good looks, and a great deal of  
confidence.

CHIEF WATSON (CONT'D)  
Archer and Ruiney will be the lucky  
detectives being shadowed for the  
next few days for the show.

APPLAUSE followed by some hooting and hollering from their  
fellow officers fills the room.

The camera ZOOMS to catch Detective Archer uncomfortably  
doing his best to redirect the ball busting with a coy smile.

Ruiney is eating it up like some reigning champ making his  
way to the ring.

CHIEF WATSON (CONT'D)  
Okay, pipe down.  
(beat)  
Mr. Davies, come up, the floor is  
yours.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Thanks.

Chris awkwardly puts the camera down, leaving it on so that we get an ASKEW SHOT of him addressing the room.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Hi, everyone, my name is Chris Davies. Thanks for having me, and for participating in the show. I'm going to do my best to not affect how any of you do your day to day. In fact, this works best if you all act as if I'm not even here whenever possible.

(beat)

Any questions?

No one bites.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Okay, thank you.

Stepping down, Chris makes his way back to his camera as the Chief starts up again.

CHIEF WATSON

Okay, everyone... here's my obligatory warning about being on your best behavior. And I mean everyone. Just keep things professional. The mayor made it painfully clear that he is looking to this as an opportunity to really portray our department and our city in a new and positive light.

(beat)

Everyone clear?

Murmurs of confirmation from the crowd, as Chris picks the CAMERA UP and starts to film the room again.

CHIEF WATSON (CONT'D)

Okay, that's it. As always, I wish I was going out there with all of you.

(sincere)

Stay safe out there.

As the cops begin to head out...

CAMERA ZOOMS in on Chief Watson as she wheels herself out from behind the table, revealing that these days, she is bound to a life in a WHEEL CHAIR.

CUTS TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - ARCHER'S DESK - LATER

Detective Archer at his desk, Chris is half in the frame. He reaches over to the camera.

CAMERA ZOOMS IN - CROPPING Chris completely out.

Nursing a CUP OF COFFEE, Archer looks utterly exhausted.

ARCHER  
(this is painful for him)  
Is the microphone on?

CHRIS (O.C.)  
You're good.

ARCHER  
So, do I answer looking at you or  
right into the -- ?

Chris' HAND comes in to frame pointing back in to the LENS.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Right at the camera. Just relax.  
Try to be yourself.  
(beat)  
So, Detective, tell us a little  
about yourself.

Archer clears his throat, tries to adjust to looking right back at us.

ARCHER  
I... I thought it was just going to  
be the camera following us.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
That's the idea. First we just  
want to get some testimonial from  
you and your partner for our  
opening segment. You know, let the  
audience know a little bit about  
you.

Archer nervously fidgets with his wedding ring.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Are you married?

ARCHER  
I am. Married to the same beautiful  
woman for eighteen years now.

CHRIS (O.C.)

And how does she feel about you being on the job?

ARCHER

Well, she...

(sighing)

Ya know what? I'd really rather not talk about my personal life right now if that's alright?

CHRIS (O.C.)

Sure. No problem. We'll come back to that later. How long have you been on the job?

ARCHER

About fifteen years, give or take. Nine of those with homicide. I've seen a lot of fucked --

(catches himself)

Can I say fucked up?

CHRIS (O.C.)

We can edit it out later. But try to keep the cursing to a minimum. Um... your partner, Ruiney, how long have you two been working together?

ARCHER

Just under two years. He's a good cop.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Care to elaborate?

ARCHER

Right.

(beat)

Well, he picks things up quickly, and I don't have to worry about watching my back with him. My last partner --

Archer's cell phone vibrates on the desk. Noticing the caller ID, he quickly reaches for it.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Give me a sec.

Archer gets up and takes the phone call a few feet away.

ARCHER (CONT'D)  
 (into phone)  
 Hey, honey.  
 (beat)  
 What do you mean you can't make it?  
 (beat)  
 You don't think I'm busy too? I  
 worked all night last night... I  
 could lose my job for moonlighting,  
 Rebecca.  
 (beat)  
 We can't keep rescheduling this. We  
 need to --

Archer turns, sees Chris is still filming. He looks pissed.

ARCHER (CONT'D)  
 Do you fucking mind? This is a  
 private conversation.

Chris fumbles with the camera. We're now looking at the  
 floor.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
 Sorry. Sorry about that.

ARCHER (O.C.)  
 Asshole.  
 (beat)  
 Edit *that* out.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - RUINEY'S DESK - LATER

Same UPCUT, only now we're with Ruiney.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
 Okay, just look directly at the  
 camera, relax and --

RUINEY  
 Yeah, I think I got it.

Ruiney flashes a smile made for Hollywood to the camera  
 before continuing.

RUINEY (CONT'D)  
 Hi, I'm Detective Will Ruiney with  
 the Fort Wayne Homicide Division.  
 I've been on the force for about  
 five years.  
 (beat)  
 What else do you want to know?

CHRIS (O.C.)  
How about your personal life? Are you married? Have any kids?

RUINEY  
I'm a single parent with a son.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
That must be hard... especially with the job you do.

RUINEY  
Raising my son can be a handful. Work keeps me from home a little more than I'd like.  
(beat)  
How about you? Married? Kids?

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Not anymore. But my daughter--

He doesn't get to finish, as Archer quickly comes in to the frame.

ARCHER  
We caught a case.

He doesn't have to tell Ruiney twice, who is up and following Archer to the door.

Chris has a hard time keeping up, most of the shot tracks his feet before POWERING DOWN.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - LATER

CAMERA COMES UP:

Hitting the SIRENS, Ruiney rides shotgun as Archer lays on the gas -- shaking up Chris and the camera.

ARCHER  
Buckle up. It's the law.

Chris settles in, positioning the camera. CATCHING THE SCENERY OUTSIDE as they whip and weave through the streets.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Detectives, can you turn to the camera and say something about the call we're on?

CAMERA FALLS on Archer. He's not saying a word.

PANNING TO Ruiney - He looks to Archer for the okay, but doesn't get anything.

RUINEY

Just stay close and be careful.

(beat)

The last thing I need is to worry about you out there when the shit hits the fan.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Got it.

(beat)

So where'd you say we were headed?

Archer glares at him through the rearview mirror.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)

(mutters to himself)

Okay, I got it.

Chris PANS THE CAMERA outside to see the scenery flying by for a beat before returning it to the interior of the car.

CLOSE SHOT of the backseat reveals it's littered with dozens of LOTTERY SCRATCH TICKETS.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Hey, so who's the big -- ?

The car slows, causing the CAMERA TO JERK UPWARDS and outside to see their destination.

ARCHER (O.C.)

Let's go.

Everyone exits the car.

EXT. ABANDONED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

We're now in front of an old and tired building, riddled with various acts of vandalism and decay. It has definitely seen better days.

Flashing lights from numerous police cruisers bouncing off brick walls. YELLOW TAPE barely keeps a growing crowd of onlookers at bay. It's a scene.

Chris and the CAMERA FOLLOW as Archer and Ruiney make their way under the tape. A UNIFORM OFFICER, a polished boot fresh out of the academy, stops the camera's progress.

UNIFORM OFFICER

Whoa! Hold up. Get behind the tape.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
I'm with --

Ruiney to the rescue --

RUINEY  
He's with us.

UNIFORM OFFICER  
(to Chris)  
Go ahead.

They move toward a playground in the back of the schoolyard.

CAMERA PANS - quickly taking in as much as possible; crowd, police officers, the detectives, and then finally...

A DEAD BODY - Nude, female, hanging from a noose and dangling from a tree. The moonlight casts an eerie shadow of her lifeless body, only adding to the horror of the whole scene.

Archer proceeds to the body. Ruiney and the CAMERA follow.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Suicide?

Archer ignores him.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Real desperate cry for attention  
killing yourself at a school.

Still nothing from Archer. Camera follows him as he examines the ground around the body.

RUINEY  
School's been abandoned for years.

Archer stands, carefully SPINS THE BODY AROUND to expose her front revealing...

A CRUDE LETTER "B" CARVED INTO HER CHEST.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Holy shit.

RUINEY (O.C.)  
Come here!

The CAMERA PANS to Ruiney. He is yelling for the CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHER, newly arrived on the scene.

RUINEY (CONT'D)  
Make sure you get shots of  
everything, and I mean everything.  
(MORE)

RUINEY (CONT'D)

(beat)

Don't forget the crowd.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Okay, I got it. Not my first crime scene.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Why do you need shots of the crowd?

RUINEY

Sometimes perps come back to the scene of the crime. Some of them like to watch.

CHRIS (O.C.)

So, you're saying it's not a suicide?

No answer from Ruiney. Instead, he makes his way back toward his partner and the body.

CAMERA FOLLOWS - The gravity of the situation has sunk in, and is noticeably weighing on Archer.

ARCHER

(barely audible)

Shut the camera off.

CHRIS (O.C.)

It's okay, we can blur her out.

ARCHER

Show some damn respect. Shut the camera off!

Archer snaps and RIPS THE CAMERA from Chris as we...

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLS- LATER

CAMERA COMES UP as Ruiney, Archer, and a small group of UNIFORMED OFFICERS make their way through the dilapidated school halls.

The group's FLASHLIGHTS, along with the light from the camera, dimly illuminate the unnerving place.

ARCHER

(quietly)

Okay, split up and check every room. Holler if you find anything.

(to the camera)

Stay close to me.

The group splits, the uniformed officers proceed through the school.

Archer and Ruiney make their way into the nearest room.

INT. FIRST CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

It's empty except for a few deteriorating desks pushed to the middle of the room. This doesn't stop Archer and Ruiney from checking every square inch...

Or Chris from quickly losing interest.

Despite the orders, Chris and the camera move toward the door leading to the adjacent room.

His HAND COMES IN TO FRAME, turning the knob, as he slowly makes his way inside.

INT. ADJACENT CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

The CAMERA QUICKLY PANS from right to left through a room filled with desks, before JERKING to a stop.

Catching a glimpse of something toward the front --

CHRIS (O.C.)  
What the... ?

CAMERA SLOWLY PANS BACK to reveal...

TWO FIGURES SITTING in desks with their backs to us.

The SOUND OF CHRIS' BREATHING grows as he slowly makes his way toward the two figures.

They don't move, or display any indication that they know Chris is even in the room.

Chris is close now. Really close.

His HAND ONCE AGAIN COMES IN TO FRAME...

REACHING toward one of the figure's shoulder.

His fingers just about to touch --

ARCHER (O.C.)  
What the hell are you doing?

Archer rushes in to frame, grabbing Chris. Nearly giving him a heart attack.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
 Jesus, you scared the shit out of  
 me!

ARCHER (O.C.)  
 I told you to stay close!

CHRIS (O.C.)  
 I was just --

ARCHER  
 Don't touch anything!

Chris and the CAMERA move to the front of the class,  
 revealing the identity of the two figures --

They're KID-SIZED MANNEQUINS.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
 What the fuck?

ARCHER  
 Give me some more light up here.

Chris does as he's told. The light from the camera turns to  
 reveal writing on the chalkboard:

"394.3 G634"

ARCHER (CONT'D)  
 Huh.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
 What is it?

ARCHER  
 Not sure. Can't tell if this is  
 recent or if it's been up here for  
 a while. Could be nothing.  
 (calls to Ruiney)  
 Get that photographer in here.

CUT TO:

INT. AUTOPSY ROOM - NEXT MORNING

The CAMERA COMES UP on DOCTOR WESTLIN, 30's, FEMALE, a  
 stunning beauty rocking a lab coat.

The FRAME WIDENS to include Archer and Ruiney, standing over  
 the FEMALE VICTIM lying on the slab.

Archer reads from a file.

ARCHER

Got a hit on her prints from DMV records. Kerry Cooper, twenty-four. College student, with no criminal record. Parents filed a missing persons report three days ago.

CAMERA ZOOMS in on her lifeless eyes before the Doctor purposely blocks the shot.

WESTLIN

Excuse me. Is this absolutely necessary?

CAMERA ZOOMS back to the WIDE SHOT.

ARCHER

Sorry, Doc. Mayor's pet project.

RUINEY

What can you tell us about her?

She shares a moment with Ruiney before answering. There's something there, that isn't missed by the camera.

WESTLIN

Cause of death was asphyxiation, which isn't all that surprising. What is, however, is the time of death.

ARCHER

What do you got?

WESTLIN

She's been dead for a little over twenty-four hours. I'd say she was killed sometime around eight in the morning yesterday.

RUINEY

No way she was hanging there that long without being seen. Had to have been killed somewhere else and then moved.

WESTLIN

And, I can tell you that she was alive...

She pulls the sheet back to once again reveal the "B" crassly carved into her torso.

WESTLIN (CONT'D)  
 ...when this happened. See the  
 uneven strokes? She struggled.

The painful silence in the room says it all.

ARCHER  
 Any idea what was used?

WESTLIN  
 Large knife. Box cutter maybe?  
 Can't be sure until I have  
 something to compare it to.  
 (beat)  
 Also looks like Ms. Cooper has seen  
 her share of the inside of the ER.

On Archer's perplexed look...

WESTLIN (CONT'D)  
 She's had everything from a broken  
 wrist to several broken ribs.  
 They've healed, but they were all  
 fairly recent.

RUINEY  
 Domestic abuse?

WESTLIN  
 Perhaps.

ARCHER  
 Okay. Thanks, Doc.

Archer and Ruiney start to leave. Ruiney stops, turns back to  
 the good Doctor. He has his back to us, but whatever he did  
 made her smile.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
 Where to now, Detectives?

Ruiney turns back to the camera.

RUINEY  
 The girl's apartment.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

CAMERA UPCUTS: We're in front of a luxury apartment building.

RUINEY  
 We're looking for unit twelve.

Archer leads us down a small path.

ARCHER

Back here.

We stop in front of UNIT 12. Archer tries the door. It's unlocked.

INT. KERRY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

We cautiously follow the detectives into the residence. The small apartment is cozy, and meticulously organized.

The detectives walk through the tiny space looking for anything out of the ordinary.

ARCHER

Clean, for a college student's place.

CHRIS (O.C.)

What are we looking for exactly?

ARCHER

Not sure yet.

Archer points to Ruiney to take the bedroom. Ruiney nods and heads in.

Meanwhile, Archer makes his way in to the bathroom with Chris and the camera following.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Archer makes his way to the sink.

ARCHER

Here we go.

CHRIS (O.C.)

What?

Archer gestures to a couple of toothbrushes by the sink.

ARCHER

She has a boyfriend.

CAMERA SPINS to reveal Ruiney, now wearing LATEX GLOVES, has joined them. He looks like he's seen a ghost.

RUINEY

You're... you're not going to believe what I found in the bedroom.

Following Ruiney to the back --

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door is slightly ajar. Ruiney takes a deep breath before slowly open the door, revealing...

The bedroom is COVERED IN BLOOD. Sprayed from floor to ceiling, nothing is left untouched.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Jesus Christ!

The CAMERA PANS from wall to wall, before slowly falling on a large lump hidden under the sheets of the bed.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Oh, shit.

Ruiney whips the blankets off the bed, uncovering --

THE HEADLESS AND MUTILATED BODY OF A LARGE PIG.

The whole scene is horrific and hard to stomach... literally for some.

Chris gags, beginning to dry heave. He's about to lose his lunch.

Archer lunges for the camera.

ARCHER  
Not in here! Not in the house!

Archer now holds the camera as we witness Chris BOLT down the hall and out the front door. We hear him VOMITING from outside.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - LATER

We UPCUT right into Ruiney on a PHONE CALL, as Archer speeds down the road.

RUINEY  
(on the phone)  
Okay, got it. Thanks.

Ends the call.

RUINEY (CONT'D)  
So, her parents confirmed she was dating someone named Joey Truman.  
(MORE)

RUINEY (CONT'D)  
They never met him, and he has no  
criminal record.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
So she never reported him?

ARCHER  
Most domestic abuse goes unreported  
until...

Archer clenches his jaw in disgust.

RUINEY  
DMV has his last known address less  
than two blocks away from the  
school.

Archer puts the pedal to the floor, as Ruiney and Chris brace  
themselves.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
What's next?

RUINEY  
We pick this asshole up.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
And then?

ARCHER  
We talk to him.

The look on Archer's face suggests he's looking to do a whole  
lot more than talking, as Ruiney calmly scans the passing  
houses.

RUINEY  
We're looking for 2215. Should be  
right up here.

Archer starts to slow the car as the CAMERA QUICKLY PANS to  
get the street and houses outside.

The CAMERA FALLS on A STUNNING WOMAN, sitting on the porch  
smoking.

RUINEY (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Right here.

PAN back to the Detectives.

ARCHER  
Looks like the piece of shit didn't  
waste any time finding his next  
punching bag.  
(MORE)

ARCHER (cont'd)  
 (to Chris)  
 Stay out of the way.

They both quickly exit the vehicle, with the CAMERA FOLLOWING.

STUNNING WOMAN  
 Help you with something?

ARCHER  
 Looking for Joey Truman. Seen him?

STUNNING WOMAN  
 What do you want with Joey?

ARCHER  
 We just have to talk to him.

STUNNING WOMAN  
 Knock yourself out. He's inside.

The Detectives make their way toward the front door --

STUNNING WOMAN (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
 Baby, the cops are here!

RUINEY  
 Shit!

CAMERA catches movement inside the place.

ARCHER  
 Police! Don't move!

They go bursting through the front door with Chris right behind them.

INT. JOEY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The MAN quickly pushes through the house toward the bathroom in the back. He begins FLUSHING DRUGS down the toilet when Archer grabs him by the shoulder.

The MAN quickly FLUSHES the evidence, and PUSHES Archer off. He tries to exit the bathroom, but is quickly KNOCKED TO THE GROUND by Ruiney.

RUINEY  
 Stay down!

MAN  
 Get the fuck off of me! I didn't do anything!

RUINEY  
Shut the fuck up!

Ruiney slaps the cuffs on him, as Archer checks the drug residue on the nearby toilet.

MAN  
I barely know that bitch!

ARCHER  
I said shut up, Joey.

MAN  
You gotta be kidding me?

The man starts to laugh.

ARCHER  
Something funny?

MAN  
I'm not Joey, man. Joey's the bitch outside. I just met her a few hours ago. Should have known she was bad news with a body like that.

Archer and Ruiney catch each other's eye. Ruiney quickly pulls the man's wallet out and checks his ID.

RUINEY  
(reads ID)  
Peter Rorick.  
(beat)  
Shit!

All three quickly make their way out the front door.

The CAMERA FOLLOWS to reveal JOEY TRUMAN, the stunning woman aka the victims GIRLFRIEND, halfway down the street.

RUINEY (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Got her! You get the car!

They both sprint from the house, leaving the MAN still handcuffed on the floor.

MAN (O.C.)  
Hey, what about me?!

EXT. STREETS - FOOT CHASE - CONTINUOUS

Ruiney quickly moves in hot pursuit with Chris and the CAMERA ALONG FOR THE CHASE.

Joey cuts through a neighbor's yard, effortlessly hurdling a fence, and darts out of sight.

Ruiney does the same - only a few seconds behind.

The BOUNCING SHOT manages to catch all of the action, but Chris is sucking wind hard, and the gap is quickly growing between him and the players in this footrace.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Damn it!

The perp darts out in to the street, nearly avoiding getting hit. The brief obstacle has Ruiney closing the gap.

CAMERA CAPTURES neighbors as they come out to see the commotion.

Ruiney flashes his badge.

RUINEY

Get out of the way!

BACK TO the neighborhood yards --

Joey comes up on a cluttered lawn, with an eclectic collection of oddities and eyesores.

She tears over and through a pink plastic flamingo before turning to see she's still being chased. She rips up several of the lawn's plastic inhabitants, hurling them at Ruiney.

Ruiney effortlessly deflects them.

Chris and the camera have managed to surprisingly keep up, as Joey and Ruiney push forward.

Joey takes a SHARP LEFT towards and RIGHT THROUGH a GLASS DOOR, and in to a home. Ruiney pursues.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Holy shit!

SCREECHING TIRES cause Chris and the CAMERA TO SPIN back toward the street to Archer in the car.

Chris runs to the vehicle.

ARCHER

Where'd they go?!

CHRIS (O.C.)

Through the house. Hey, I can't keep up. I'm exhausted, let me get in the --

Chris' HAND REACHES INTO FRAME for the car door handle.

Archer peers around Chris, spots something, and peels away. Leaving Chris behind.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Damn it!

Chris PANS to see Joey, with Ruiney closing in, making their way out the other side of the house.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)

This is bullshit!

He sucks it up and starts down the street, trying desperately to cut them off.

As he moves down the street, we see them SPRINTING through YARDS on the street parallel to his. He manages to keep the CAMERA AIMED in their direction, catching them for a brief moment in between each house until --

They disappear.

He waits for a beat, but they don't follow the pattern, and don't come by the next gap between the homes.

He's lost them.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Shit!

He SPINS THE CAMERA in every direction, attempting to get a bead on them, and turns --

RIGHT IN TO JOEY!

BOOM! Chris and the camera are knocked to the ground.

Still down but pulling himself together, he manages to capture a shot of Joey and Ruiney darting into traffic.

Chris scrapes himself off the ground, gives chase.

Joey bobs and weaves in between the cars. She's starting to put some space between herself and Ruiney when...

BANG!

A CAR DOOR SWINGS OPEN - SMASHING Joey in her pretty face, and sending her reeling to the ground.

As Ruiney, Chris, and the camera come up on the scene, we see that Archer and his car door have put an abrupt stop to this chase.

RUINEY  
What the hell took you so long?

ARCHER  
I thought you and Tubby here could  
use the exercise.

Chris is breathing so heavy now, he's wheezing. It's almost hard to hear anything else at this point.

CUT TO:

EXT. INTERROGATION ROOM/BEHIND MIRROR - LATER

From behind the two way mirror, we observe Joey sitting in the interrogation room. She appears cool, collected. Rests her head on the table.

Archer and Ruiney watch her, studying their suspect.

RUINEY  
The abuse wasn't the only thing  
Kerry was hiding from her parents.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
She doesn't look worried.

RUINEY  
She also didn't ask why she was  
brought in.

Archer's seen enough.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Through the glass we see - Archer enter the interrogation room. Slams the door behind him. Joey jolts up.

Tossing the case file on the table --

ARCHER  
Wakey, wakey.

JOEY  
What the hell, man? I didn't do  
anything.

ARCHER  
You're right Joey, we go around  
arresting innocent people.

JOEY  
Okay, look, I'm sorry I ran. I got  
nervous. I was scared.

Archer pulls his chair closer to Joey. He places his hand on hers, faking sympathy.

ARCHER

Look, Joey, sometimes accidents happen. I know you didn't mean to hurt anybody. Things just got out of hand, right? You lost control. It happens to all of us.

JOEY

What are you talking about?

ARCHER

I'm talking about Kerry.

JOEY

Is that what this is about?

(beat)

I lost my temper. I love her. I apologized like crazy. We were gonna work things out.

ARCHER

I'm not talking about the last time you choked out your girlfriend. I'm talking about this time.

JOEY

This time? I... Kerry's fine... I didn't --

ARCHER

When was the last time you saw her?

JOEY

I... I saw her last week. Dropped her off at work... at the day care center. She said she would call, but I didn't hear back from her.

(beat)

Just call her, you'll see. I didn't hurt her. I swear!

Archer opens the case file.

ARCHER

That's funny. The crime scene photos tell a different story.

Archer flings several GRUESOME photos of Kerry's lifeless body at Joey.

JOEY

What the... is this Kerry?! Where  
is she? What happened?

She peers up at Archer.

JOEY (CONT'D)

She's dead?

Archer stares at her. JOEY begins to lose it. She's bawling  
like a baby.

Archer actually looks conflicted as to what to do next.

ARCHER

Where were you yesterday morning,  
Ms. Truman?

JOEY

(barely audible)  
I don't... I don't know.

ARCHER

You don't know? You'd better think  
about that answer.

JOEY

Can... can I get something to  
drink? A soda?

After a beat, contemplating in silence...

ARCHER

Yeah.

Archer leaves the room.

Joey, now alone, looks completely devastated and distraught.

After a beat, Archer re-enters, and places a can of soda in  
front of Joey.

She quickly DOWNS it as he sits down next to her.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Now... where were you yesterday  
around eight in the morning?

They watch as Joey nervously begins to twist the empty soda  
can.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Come on, Joey. Where were you  
yesterday morning?

JOEY  
I... I think I want a lawyer.

ARCHER  
Of course you do.

Archer shakes his head before leaving the room.

EXT. INTERROGATION ROOM/BEHIND MIRROR - LATER

He rejoins Ruiney and Chris on the other side of the glass.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
You think she did it?

CAMERA PANS from the glass to the two detectives.

RUINEY  
We know she beat her. It's not a huge leap from domestic abuse to murder. We've seen it before.

ARCHER  
Innocent people don't need to lawyer up.  
(beat)  
Any news from forensics on the blood.

RUINEY  
They're running it now. Won't get back to us until tomorrow.

Chris PANS THE CAMERA through the glass.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Detectives!

They turn to see Joey has JAMMED A CHAIR into the door handle, preventing entry.

ARCHER (O.C.)  
Damn it!

CAMERA SPINS to see the Detectives quickly moving to regain access to the room

As soon as they've left him, CAMERA PANS BACK to the interrogation room to reveal...

Joey has taken half of the soda can and made a makeshift razor blade, SLICING her wrists vertically, and cutting her carotid artery on the side of her neck.

The interrogation room is now a BLOODY MESS.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Oh, my god!

Ruiney and Archer slam their weight on the door. Slowly inching it open.

Eventually, they kick the door in, and quickly move to scoop up the nearly unconscious girl. Several uniformed officers arrive.

ARCHER

(screaming)

Call a fucking ambulance!

They carry Joey from the room, but Chris and the CAMERA stay on the now empty room, fixated on Joey's BLOOD pooling on the floor...

CHRIS (O.C.)

(emotionally drained)

Fuck.

The commotion from everyone trying to help Joey can be heard just outside of camera view.

Chris slowly lowers the camera to the floor before sinking down next to it for a beat. Eventually reaching over and SHUTTING IT OFF.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

CAMERA COMES UP to reveal Ruiney sitting at his desk. He's not doing much of anything, but his BLOOD SOAKED shirt still screams of their ordeal just a short time ago.

After a beat Archer comes in to frame, his shirt also COVERED IN BLOOD, carrying flowers.

Ruiney looks at him.

RUINEY

How is she?

Archer shakes his head 'NO'. Ruiney slump in his chair.

ARCHER

I'll see you in the morning.

RUINEY

Where you headed?

Archer holds up the FLOWERS.

RUINEY (CONT'D)  
Good luck.

ARCHER  
Thanks.

As soon as he's gone, Ruiney stands up. He starts to leave, but turns to Chris and the camera.

RUINEY  
I'm going to find a clean shirt  
then get a drink. You in?

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Uh... sure.

Chris starts to get up with the camera.

RUINEY  
No camera though.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Got it.

Chris puts the CAMERA DOWN and reaches over and POWERS IT DOWN.

INT. CAR - MORNING

CAMERA POWERS ON -

To reveal we're in the backseat with Ruiney at the wheel of the parked car.

RUINEY  
-- and how old is she?

CHRIS (O.C.)  
She'll be 12 next month

RUINEY  
You get to see her very often?

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Depends on what kind of mood my ex  
wife is in.

After a beat, the front passenger door opens and Archer, coffee in hand, gets in. He looks like he hasn't slept.

RUINEY  
Good morning.

ARCHER  
Yeah? What's so good about it?

As Archer closes the door, Ruiney pulls the car away from the curb.

RUINEY  
Take it the flowers weren't a hit.

ARCHER  
You could say that.

Archer turns to the camera and hands Chris a PILE OF SCRATCH TICKETS.

ARCHER (CONT'D)  
Make yourself useful, kid.

Chris' HAND COMES IN TO FRAME and takes the tickets. He puts the camera on the seat, giving us a shot of his lap as he scratches the tickets.

RUINEY (O.C.)  
You should take it easy with those things.

ARCHER (O.C.)  
Or what? I'm going to blow all of my savings and pension? Don't worry about me.

Chris quickly picks the CAMERA UP and focuses it back on the two Detectives.

Ruiney is now biting his lip, noticeably uncomfortable.

RUINEY  
Look, I didn't mean --

ARCHER  
It's fine. Just change the fucking subject.

They drive in awkward silence for a beat before Ruiney's CELL PHONE RINGS.

RUINEY  
(into the phone)  
Ruiney.  
(beat)  
Damn it. Where is he now?  
(beat)  
No, I'll be there in five minutes.

Ruiney hangs up the phone, and puts his foot on the pedal, jolting Chris and the camera.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Everything alright?

RUINEY  
Yeah... it's my son.  
(back to Chris)  
Any winners?

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Ummm...

Chris puts the CAMERA BACK DOWN and hurries to scratch the rest of the tickets.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
You won a free ticket.

ARCHER (O.C.)  
Lucky me.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUSPECT LINEUP ROOM - LATER

UPCUT: From behind the glass. We see several teenagers are standing in a row holding numbers in front of their chests.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Which one is he?

RUINEY (O.C.)  
Number five.

We pan through the glass and ZOOM IN on Ruiney's son, JUSTIN, 14 years old.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Oh yeah, he looks like you.

RUINEY (O.C.)  
What happened?

CAMERA PANS to reveal Ruiney, Archer, and Chris are joined by Chief Watson.

CHIEF WATSON  
He and some other boys were caught shoplifting. You're lucky one of the responding officers recognized him and brought him here instead of taking him straight to Juvenile Hall.  
(Smiling to Ruiney)  
(MORE)

CHIEF WATSON (cont'd)  
I thought I'd throw him in the lineup, maybe scare him straight a little.

RUINEY  
I'm starting to run out of ideas with him. I've half tempted to let him stay the night in holding. He needs to learn that there are consequences to his actions.

CHRIS (O.C)  
I went through the same thing with my daughter when her mother and I divorced. He'll grow out of it, eventually.

Ruiney nods in appreciation to Chris. Then he takes a second look at one of the boys in the lineup.

RUINEY  
Is number three who I think it is?

Chief Watson rolls her chair up close to the glass.

CHIEF WATSON  
(wanting to laugh)  
Yes, it is.

CAMERA PANS and ZOOMS in on the young boy holding up the number three.

RUINEY (O.C.)  
Great. She's going to be pissed.

CHIEF WATSON  
I'll do you a favor and wait until you're gone before I tell her.

Archer's PHONE RINGS.

ARCHER  
(into the phone)  
This is Archer.  
(beat)  
Great.

He motions for a pen. Ruiney hands one to him, and he quickly starts to jot down the information being relayed to him.

ARCHER (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
Okay, yeah. I got it. Thanks.

He hangs up the phone.

ARCHER (CONT'D)  
We got to go.

Ruiney looks back toward the lineup.

CHIEF WATSON  
Go on. I'll take care of them.

His face pained with the conflicting situations in need of his time.

CHIEF WATSON (CONT'D)  
I've raised three boys, Ruiney.  
(beat)  
At some point you have to accept  
who they are.

Ruiney reluctantly nods in acceptance before approaching the camera, which is too close for comfort.

RUINEY  
Come on, man. Get it out of my  
face.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

UPCUT to Archer quickly navigating the car down the road. Ruiney, still looking lost, stares out the passenger side window.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Care to fill us in, Detectives?

ARCHER  
We found traces of human blood in Kerry's bedroom. We got a DNA hit off of it.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
It's not Julie Truman's?

ARCHER  
No. Convicted felon, though. David Green.

They pull up to SACRED HEART, a Gothic and gaudy looking CHURCH.

ARCHER (CONT'D)  
This can't be right.

Archer looks down at the information he jotted on the piece of paper.

ARCHER (CONT'D)  
Great. Another asshole goes to  
prison and then finds Jesus. Give  
me a break.

They exit the car.

EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

They both check their weapons and head for the front door.

ARCHER  
(to Ruiney)  
You okay to do this?

RUINEY  
I'm fine.

They carefully and quietly make their way inside.

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

OVER DARKNESS - IN HUSHED TONES -

ARCHER (O.C.)  
Anything?

RUINEY (O.C.)  
No.

ARCHER (O.C.)  
Where the hell are the lights in  
this place.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Hold on.

We hear RUFFLING SOUNDS for a beat before A BEAM that throws  
just enough light for them to see comes up from the camera.

They move in to the main section of the church where the  
light from the camera, and numerous lit candles throughout  
the place, really set the tone.

This place is CREEPY.

ARCHER  
(whispering)  
God, I hated going to church as a  
kid.

A NOISE causes them to stop in their tracks. FOOTSTEPS.  
They're faint, but unmistakable.

Archer motions for Ruiney to take point while he covers him. They move in unison, pushing forward in the direction of the FOOTSTEPS.

They stop to listen. SILENCE for a beat before... the return of the FOOTSTEPS. They're closer now, but the cavernous makeup of the church makes pinpointing their exact location difficult.

It almost sounds like the FOOTSTEPS are coming from everywhere!

Archer and Ruiney are quick to spin their GUNS in each direction as the sound bounces off the walls.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Damn it.

RUINEY

How many are there?

ARCHER

Can't tell. Could be two, three... maybe just one. Sound is bouncing off the walls.

SILENCE again before...

Both Ruiney and Archer spin out from against the wall and into the center of the room.

Tension builds as they spin back-to-back looking for something... someone... anyone. Finding --

NOTHING.

Suddenly, a SOUND draws their line of sight upwards. CAMERA ANGLES to reveal a BALCONY above their heads.

The CAMERA LIGHT falls on a LARGE DARK OBJECT SWOOPING down towards them.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Watch it!

Archer SHOVES Ruiney out of the way as the large object comes SWINGING down, HITTING Archer.

Archer's body is THROWN backwards crashing into the church alter, knocking it over.

RUINEY

Archer!

We PAN OVER and see exactly what came at the detectives.

SWINGING in the middle of the church is a large CRUCIFIX.

In place of the usual Jesus figure, is now A DEAD BODY, wearing the bloody head of a SLAUGHTERED PIG.

A BLOODY letter "N" on his chest.

RUINEY(O.C.) (CONT'D)

What the fuck!

CAMERA PANS TO Ruiney, almost in shock, staring up at the abomination from the floor.

SOUNDS OF FOOTSTEPS NEARBY. CAMERA SPINS REVEALING --

A SHADOWED FIGURE standing toward the back of the church, dressed all in black. His face hidden by a hood.

Ruiney leaps up, now partially in our frame, with his GUN DRAWN on the suspect.

RUINEY (CONT'D)

Don't fucking move, asshole!

The suspect slowly raises his arms. His head never lifting enough to see his face.

Without taking his eyes off of the SUSPECT.

RUINEY (CONT'D)

Chris, check on Archer.

Chris hesitates. Moves the camera back and forth from Ruiney and the suspect.

RUINEY (CONT'D)

Now, Chris!

Chris runs over, giving us a shot of the side of Archer's face. He's got a pretty bad injury to his head.

CHRIS (O.C)

He doesn't look good.

We look towards Ruiney as he takes a second to turn towards his partner. Instantly, the suspect takes off RUNNING.

RUINEY

Hey!

He's fleeing, and Ruiney is torn between giving chase, and returning to his partner.

RUINEY (CONT'D)

Shit!

Ruiney cuts his loses and comes back toward us, and eventually down to Archer's side. The large alter pins Archer to the floor.

Ruiney tries lifting the marble slab, but it's too heavy. He turns to Chris.

RUINEY (CONT'D)  
Turn that fucking thing off and help me!

Chris fumbles with the camera. Ruiney hollers into his radio.

RUINEY (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Officer down! I repeat...

Chris quickly places the camera on the floor.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH - LATER

UPCUT: on the church, now swarming with cops, paramedics, and the crime scene techs.

CAMERA SPINS for CLOSE SHOT of --

Ruiney and...

A very much alive, but extremely agitated Archer. He dabs his bloody head with a bandage as they sit in a nearby pew.

ARCHER  
Don't suppose you got a look at the perp?

RUINEY  
Never saw his face.

ARCHER  
You know what this means, don't you?

Ruiney nods.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
What... what does this mean?

The detectives turn back to the camera for a beat, saying nothing before returning their attention to the "N" victim, still hanging from the cross.

The body FLASHES, being lit up with each crime scene photo, highlighting the gruesomeness of the scene.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
 Detectives... come on.

Archer reluctantly nods his approval to his partner.

RUINEY  
 (quietly)  
 This is now a serial killer case.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
 Shit.

ARCHER  
 A real fucking creative one, too.

A UNIFORMED OFFICER comes into frame. He checks his notes.

UNIFORMED OFFICER  
 Detectives, the victim was Gene  
 Wilson. The night janitor for the  
 church.

The Detectives slowly get to their feet.

ARCHER  
 Get a BOLO out on David Green.

UNIFORMED OFFICER  
 No need to, Detective. He's right  
 over there.

PAN TO REVEAL --

REVEREND DAVID GREEN, 40's, his hard exterior slightly  
 softened by the collar he now wears.

Holding a tiny BLACK DUFFLE BAG, he looks overwhelmed by his  
 surroundings.

CAMERA FOLLOWS Archer and Ruiney as they make their way to  
 the man.

ARCHER  
 Green? David Green?

REVEREND GREEN  
 Yes... yes, that's... I'm David  
 Green.

ARCHER  
 Is there somewhere quiet we can  
 talk?

REVEREND GREEN  
 Yes, of course. The rectory.

He starts to move to a nearby doorway with the Detectives trailing close behind.

CAMERA PANS AWAY and ZOOMS IN ON THE "N" VICTIM for a beat before...

CHRIS' HAND comes in to frame, SHUTTING OFF THE CAMERA.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH RECTORY - LATER

CAMERA COMES UP, PANS AROUND the small living quarters.

The space is plain. Practically barren outside of a tiny bed, a small dresser, and a table with a CHESS GAME on it.

ARCHER (O.C.)

I love what you've done with the place.

CAMERA PULLS back to reveal the reverend and the two detectives.

REVEREND GREEN

In my past life, Detectives, I had all the material things you could imagine... and I'm guessing you're well aware of where it got me.

He places the DUFFLE BAG on the bed.

ARCHER

Going somewhere?

REVEREND GREEN

Just got back actually.

ARCHER

How convenient.

RUINEY

Did you know the victim? Gene Wilson?

REVEREND GREEN

Only in passing.

(beat)

Detectives, I was out of town all week, giving guest sermons in several different parishes across the state in front of hundreds of people. I didn't do...

(MORE)

REVEREND GREEN (cont'd)  
(disgusted with the  
thought)  
that

ARCHER  
How did you know Kerry Cooper?

REVEREND GREEN  
Cooper? I... I don't believe I do.

Archer picks up a piece on the chess board, moves it.

ARCHER  
Then explain how your blood ended  
up in her apartment.

REVEREND GREEN  
My blood? No, I have no...

Slowly something comes to him, causing his face to grow  
visibly pale.

RUINEY  
What is it?

REVEREND GREEN  
You're not going to believe this.  
Frankly, I still don't understand  
it myself. But... a few months  
ago... this is crazy...

Reverend Green is visibly struggling to come to grips with  
what he's about to say, causing Archer to quickly lose his  
patience.

He leans in close to the reverend.

ARCHER  
Look, I don't buy your reformed, "I  
found the light" bullshit. Collar  
or not, if you keep wasting my  
time, I promise that I'll show you  
a whole new perspective of hell.

The Reverend swallows hard. He can see Archer isn't messing  
around.

REVEREND GREEN  
I woke up one night and... and  
someone was standing over me... I  
struggled... but they put  
something... over my face. I  
eventually passed out.

Archer and Ruiney can only stare at Reverend Green.

REVEREND GREEN (CONT'D)  
 When I woke up there was a bandage  
 on my arm.

ARCHER  
 You're right, I don't believe you.  
 You're coming with us.

Archer grabs the Reverend by the arm, lifting him to his feet. He hauls him out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

UPCUT: Archer and Ruiney now sit at their desks. Both look worn out and frustrated.

Scattered CRIME SCENE PHOTOS are on both of their desks.

Archer pours himself another cup of coffee as Ruiney types away on his computer.

RUINEY  
 Found it.

Archer approaches Ruiney and reads over his shoulder from the computer screen.

RUINEY (CONT'D)  
 Reverend Green wasn't lying. Here's his report from three months ago. No items were reported missing from his home.

ARCHER  
 What the hell was there to take?

RUINEY  
 That means the intruder was after him. He went to the hospital and traces of chloroform were found in his system.

ARCHER  
 His blood was kept for months, just to be planted at Kerry's apartment?

RUINEY  
 He wanted us to find it. Wanted us to go to that church.  
 (beat)  
 Jesus, this is getting crazy.

ARCHER

Shit.

Archer looks at his watch.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

I was supposed to meet Rebecca for dinner an hour ago.

(beat)

Sometimes I wonder... if it's even worth...

(sighs)

Pick this up tomorrow?

Ruiney nods.

RUINEY

Go ahead. I'll have someone cut the Reverend loose.

ARCHER

Thanks.

Archer starts to head for the door.

RUINEY

You'll work it out. Call if you need anything.

Archer gives a departing and thankful nod to his partner and exits.

Ruiney sorts through the various crime scene photos with Chris over his shoulder.

CHRIS (O.C.)

What are you looking for, Detective?

RUINEY

Now that we know the two crimes are related... I don't know.

He stops and looks at the photo of the TWO DUMMIES in the classroom.

CHRIS (O.C.)

That's just creepy.

He flips to the photo of the numbers on the chalk board.

"394.3 G634"

RUINEY

We're missing something.

He puts the picture down and looks down at his watch before standing and taking a much needed stretch.

RUINEY (CONT'D)  
I'll give you a ride back to the hotel.

He grabs his jacket and case files.

CHRIS (O.C)  
I appreciate it.

Chris follows Ruiney through the station and out into the...

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The duo chit chat on the way to the car.

RUINEY  
How they treating you over there at... you're at the Marriott, right?

CHRIS (O.C)  
It's not too bad. It's nicer than I thought it would be. Big pool, room service.

RUINEY  
You get all the movie channels?

CHRIS (O.C)  
I think so. I'm actually not much of a TV person to be honest. I'd much rather relax with a good book.

Chris' words stop Ruiney in his tracks.

RUINEY  
(to himself)  
A book. Shit, why didn't I think of that before?

CHRIS (O.C)  
What?

RUINEY  
Get in.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - LATER

UPCUT: Chris and Ruiney exit the car and slowly begin to approach the old school. Ruiney carries his trusty MAG LIGHT.

Chris uses the camera light to navigate through the pitch black field.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
What are we doing here?

RUINEY  
I thought the numbers in this school looked familiar. I just couldn't place them. I worked in a library for a summer when I was younger. I think those numbers are the Dewey Decimal System.

The pair reaches the dusty old doors of the school. The place is quiet, eerie as hell.

They carefully enter the school.

INT. ABANDONED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Chris stays on Ruiney's heels.

The camera jerks left to right, at every little noise, every little creak.

He stops, looks in to the empty classroom with the dummies from earlier. When he turns back to Ruiney...

He's gone.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Detective Ruiney?

There's no answer.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Hel... hello?

Still no answer.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Shit.

Chris slowly moves forward down the dark and creepy halls, still JERKING THE CAMERA back and forth at the slightest sound.

Suddenly... Ruiney grabs Chris, causing him to nearly jump out of his skin.

RUINEY  
Come on. I found what I was looking for.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Christ! Don't do that!

The two make their way to a room nearby.

Ruiney forces the broken doors open and heads inside. We follow him, but not before the camera gets a CLOSE SHOT of the door. It's labeled "LIBRARY".

INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

The place looks like a bomb went off. Books lay scattered all over the floor. Pages torn out, shelves broken and toppled over.

CAMERA FOLLOWS Ruiney down the book aisles, scanning the shelves with his flash light.

A BATTERY SYMBOL appears in the corner of the frame, signifying the camera BATTERY LIFE IS LOW.

Ruiney finally finds what he's looking for. He pulls a BOOK from the shelves.

RUINEY  
Here we go.

He shows the book to us. "TRADITIONAL GAMES" is the title. Ruiney flips through the book. Until finally stopping on...

A BOOKMARK has been set on one particular section. Ruiney pulls out the bookmark.

RUINEY (CONT'D)  
You gotta be fucking kidding me.

Ruiney shows us the section marked in the book. The chapter title is "Birds, Beasts and Fish".

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Nice. Can we please get the hell out of here now?! Running the camera light is killing my battery.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE BRIEFING ROOM - LATER

CAMERA COMES UP --

We watch as Ruiney excitedly reveals his findings to the room, which now has Archer and Chief Watson sitting in.

Crime scene photos from both murders are posted on a Dry Erase Board in front of the room.

RUINEY

The numbers from the photo matched  
this book in the school library.  
This chapter was book marked.

Ruiney has made photo copies of the chapters. He slides one  
to Archer and Chief Watson.

CHIEF WATSON

What is this? "Birds, Beasts, and  
Fish?" What am I missing?

Archer stares intently at the crime scene photos in front on  
the board.

RUINEY

According to the book "Traditional  
Games," the object was to guess  
letters to spell out a type of one  
of them.

CHIEF WATSON

The object of what, Ruiney?

RUINEY

Birds, Beasts, and Fish was the  
name of the game, before it  
eventually became --

ARCHER

Hangman.

Archer stands at the board, holding two different pictures.  
He puts them together to form...

The HANGMAN GAME, drawn in chalk on the playground blacktop  
from Kerry Cooper's crime scene.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Son of a bitch. Can't believe we  
missed that.

The hangman game has NINE SPACES with the letter "B" just  
above it.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Nine spaces. Two deaths. Two  
letters.

RUINEY

(to Chief Watson)  
He's going to keep killing. At  
least seven more.

The Chief looks torn for a moment, then it's back to business.

CHIEF WATSON

This information doesn't leave this room.

(beat)

I want this guy caught immediately. I'll get you whatever resources you guys need. I'll keep the press out of this for as long as I can. And as for this...

(points at us, at Chris)

It stops now!

CHRIS (O.C.)

What?

CHIEF WATSON

I can't have this on film. A serial killer running around Fort Wayne. The Mayor will have my ass.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Now wait a minute! I was promised full cooperation from this department. I have a contract signed by the Mayor. The last thing I want to do is get my legal team involved, but believe me I will if I have to.

Chief Watson looks pissed. We watch as she quickly exits the room.

CHIEF WATSON

Just catch this guy, now!

We turn back to Archer who's already heading for the door.

RUINEY

Where we heading?

ARCHER

The church.

CUT TO:

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH - LATER

CAMERA COMES UP - The place is still roped off with crimes scene tape. Archer and Ruiney search for any signs of a clue.

RUINEY

What are we even looking for?

ARCHER

We'll know it when we find it.

The alter still lays on the floor. One side propped up on a piece of rubble. Archer shines his flashlight all around it.

He bends down and shines the light on the underside of the sacred marble slab. He notices something.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Here.

Ruiney bends down and joins his partner on the floor.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Give me a hand with this.

Both detectives rise and grab each end of the alter. With one giant shove the men flip the large alter over and toss it to the floor.

It slides across the floor a few feet and stops right in front of Chris.

We PAN DOWN and see, on the underside of the alter is another HANGMAN GAME, written in BLOOD. All nine spaces are there, along with the letters "B" and "N".

ARCHER (CONT'D)

I hate it when I'm right.

CUT TO:

INT. AUTOPSY ROOM - NEXT DAY

UPCUT: We watch Ruiney from across the room. The case files in front of him. He stares at the crime scene photos. He appears exhausted, the case taking its toll on him.

Archer enters the room and takes a seat next to his partner. Hands Ruiney a cup of coffee.

They stand over the body of the "N" victim, who now lies on the slab. His chest open, exposed. The pig head he once wore now sits on a second table nearby.

ARCHER

How you holding up, kid?

RUINEY

What if we don't catch him by the ninth letter? What do you think will happen?

ARCHER

Your guess is as good as mine. One of a couple things maybe. Either this guy starts over with a new word, or, he skips town and we never hear a fucking peep from him again. The case will go cold.

Doctor Westin enters. She glares at Ruiney. He notices, and bites his lip in discomfort.

She opens her notes, all business.

WESTIN

Same pattern as previous victim. Ruptured blood vessels in the eyes, ligature marks around the neck. Cause of death was asphyxiation.

ARCHER

Lab said it was his blood used on the alter. You notice anything out of the ordinary.

WESTIN

Other than the fact that this guy was hung from a cross in the middle of a church with a pig's head over his own. No, nothing out of the ordinary.

Archer approaches the pig head. He slaps on some gloves and begins to examine it.

When he turns it over he notices several numbers stamped on the cheek of the pig. Pointing it out to Ruiney --

ARCHER

Check this out.

Ruiney takes a picture of the stamp.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Animals are given serial numbers by the FDA so that cuts of meat are easier to track in case of contamination.

RUINEY

Okay, let's see if we can track where it came from.

The detectives head for the door. Doctor Westin pulls Ruiney aside.

WESTIN

Ruiney.

Ruiney turns to Archer.

RUINEY

Give me a minute?

Archer nods. He can see this conversation is not going to end well.

ARCHER

I'll be in the car.

Archer exits. Chris lingers behind, never taking the camera off of the pair.

RUINEY

Hey, look, I'm really sorry about the other day. Things with Justin have been... rough lately. I'm sorry that he got Alex involved. I hope he wasn't in too much trouble.

WESTIN

He's been grounded for a couple weeks. Nothing he can't handle. But his grades are starting to slip, and he's been ignoring his curfew. Ever since he started hanging out with Justin...

RUINEY

Oh... I'm sorry. I had no idea. I'll talk to Justin.

WESTIN

It's just... I have enough on my plate right now to be worrying about my son and...

Westin notices Chris filming them. Her face sours. Ruiney turns. He looks pissed. He shoves the camera down. Chris struggles to control the camera.

CHRIS (O.C)

Sorry, sorry, I was just --

RUINEY

Do not film this. C'mon man, what are you --

The camera points at the floor as Chris quickly turns it off.

CUT TO:

INT. ARCHER'S CAR - LATER

UPCUT: We sit in the car with Ruiney and Archer as they eyeball a large slaughterhouse on the edge of town.

It's after hours, the parking lot is empty. The lights are off.

CHRIS (O.C)

This is where the pig's head came from?

ARCHER

According to its FDA tag.

RUINEY

Place is probably locked tight. Might have to come back in the morning. Talk to a supervisor.

ARCHER

It's worth a look.

All three exit the car.

EXT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

We follow Archer and Ruiney as they make their way to the slaughterhouse loading dock doors. They do their best to look into the blackened windows.

Ruiney tries an office door on the side of the building. The door handle turns.

He pulls his weapon, turns to his partner.

RUINEY

(hushed)

It's open.

Archer pulls his gun as well. They slowly make their way inside.

INT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The interior of the building is dark. We hear the three men searching for a light.

ARCHER

(to Chris)

Help us out, Chris.

CHRIS (O.C)

One sec.

We hear the sound of the Chris ruffling around with the camera. Suddenly, we're seeing green. NIGHT VISION.

Chris scans the room. He notices a light switch on the wall within Ruiney's reach.

CHRIS (O.C) (CONT'D)  
Switch on the wall to your right,  
Ruiney.

Ruiney locates it and lights the place up. Chris' hand enters the frame and switches us back to regular vision.

We follow the detectives to the office window. We're now looking down onto the KILLING FLOOR. Rows and rows of giant slabs of raw meat hang from hooks.

RUINEY  
(not thrilled at all)  
Great.

CUT TO:

INT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE / KILLING FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

We UPCUT already on the killing floor. Archer and Ruiney, guns still drawn, cautiously look around.

Both detectives turn to the camera.

RUINEY  
(to Chris)  
We're going to have to split up.  
Stay here.  
(deadly serious)  
I mean it. Don't move.

CHRIS (O.C)  
What? Why can't I --

RUINEY  
Don't fucking move!

Ruiney turns to Archer.

RUINEY (CONT'D)  
Take the left. I'm going right.

Archer nods. We watch as the two detectives head off in different directions. Chris is left standing in between rows of dead animal carcasses.

Chris pans left to right searching the depressing building.

Suddenly, the deafening sound of an ENGINE KICKS on.

The slabs of meat on the hook begin to move. Each row travelling in opposite directions.

The slaughterhouse is coming to life!

CHRIS (O.C)  
What the hell! Did you guys do that?!

We hear Archer and Ruiney trying to shout over the sound, but we can't make out what they're saying.

RUINEY  
(barely audible)  
Someone's here! He's here!

Large racks of beef fly by Chris. He continues panning side to side. Just as a side of meat passes Chris, we catch the image of a FIGURE, a PERSON standing two rows away.

He's dressed in BLACK, a HOOD covers his face. It's the SUSPECT from the church. The camera begins to slightly SHAKE; we suddenly realize it's from Chris TREMBLING with fear.

CHRIS (O.C)  
Oh, shit! Oh, my god. Fuck me.

The MAN IN BLACK stands frozen, but then, slowly lifts his head. In between beef, we catch a glimpse of his face. It appears to be painted or perhaps tattooed... resembling a SKELETON!

Now scared shitless, Chris quickly backs up, screaming.

CHRIS (O.C) (CONT'D)  
Detectives! Over here! He's right here!

The MAN IN BLACK stares at Chris. Chris quickly turns, desperately trying to push through the drifting slabs.

The whole scene is disorienting, and soon we, along with Chris, have no idea where the killer was just moments before.

The CAMERA FRANTICALLY spins around. Nothing but animal carcasses in all directions.

Chris turns back around and is CLOBBERED, not by dangling cow flesh, but rather by A DEAD BODY hanging from a hook!

He's thrown to the ground, causing the camera to spin. We watch as Chris slams to the floor.

We see the body pass by over him. It's the body of a man. A large letter "Y" carved into its back.

Chris quickly crawls across the bloodied floor, scrambling for the camera. Spinning it around in every direction --

Still no sign of the detectives. Or the killer.

ARCHER (O.C)  
Jesus Christ!

Archer and Ruiney quickly appear. They help Chris to his feet.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Where the hell were you guys!

Before either of them can answer a single DROP OF BLOOD LANDS on the lens from above.

CAMERA PANS DOWN. Chris removes a tissue and cleans the lens. Once it's clear he turns the camera UP to see...

Written in BLOOD on the ceiling above them is the HANGMAN GAME. The letters "B", "N", and "Y" appear below the nine blank spaces.

CHRIS (O.C) (CONT'D)  
Get me the fuck out of here!

The camera cuts out.

CUT TO:

INT. 87 N. MAIN STREET - LATER

CAMERA COMES ON --

ZOOMED IN TIGHT - as a pair of latex gloves are put on.

ZOOM OUT, revealing -

The detectives are GLOVED UP and combing through the ordinary and uninspired apartment. Nothing is worth reporting until...

RUINEY  
You have to be kidding me! Look at this!

Archer and the CAMERA practically kill themselves to get a look at what Ruiney sees.

CLOSE SHOT of a CALENDAR with a WOMAN ALMOST COMPLETELY NUDE as the model.

ARCHER  
What am I looking at?

RUINEY

Chris?

CHRIS (O.C.)

Got me. She's hot, but --

RUINEY

This is a P.E.T.A. calendar!

Archer still doesn't follow.

RUINEY (CONT'D)

People for the ethical treatment of animals? Our last vic was hanging in a slaughter house.

(beat)

Hello... sweet irony?

ARCHER

You're an idiot.

Archer starts to walk away but stops.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

You hear that?

Everyone freezes. It's quiet for a beat before what sounds like a faint AIR HORN, goes off somewhere in the near distance.

RUINEY

What is that?

ARCHER

Shhhh!

Archer moves through the place, trying to find the source. We hear it again. Archer looks up.

ZOOM IN - to reveal...

The outline of a drop down ladder in the ceiling.

BACK TO WIDE SHOT -

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Get me that chair over there.

Ruiney hands him the chair and Archer climbs up. He moves his finger around the indented grooves but nothing happens.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

How the hell do you --

BOOM! The ceiling piece MOVES and a LADDER COMES CRASHING DOWN nearly knocking Archer to the ground.

One by one, they make their way up.

INT. ATTIC SPACE - CONTINUOUS

It's a decent size, and surprisingly as nice, if not even nicer than the main space below.

If the victim is plain and boring on the surface, he sure is a kid at heart up here.

The space has a classic PINBALL MACHINE, and AIR HOCKEY TABLE, a FULL BAR complete with beer taps, A FLAT SCREEN complete with a BLUE RAY PLAYER and every VIDEO GAME known to man.

But the most intriguing piece is the model train set, complete with a fully replicated Fort Wayne and surrounding areas. It's impressive.

CLOSE SHOT of the tiny, FUNCTIONING TRAIN, the source of the HORN we've been hearing, as it moves around the track.

ARCHER (O.C.)

I think we know where to look for our next victim.

It picks up steam, let's out another blast from the horn, and heads down the track towards an intersection, where we see exactly what Archer meant.

ZOOM IN to reveal, a doll, dangling from a make-shift gallows, that the train HITS as it continues on down the track.

RUINEY (O.C.)

Let's go, Chris! Move your ass!

CAMERA PULLS back to reveal Archer is long gone, and Ruiney is already descending down the ladder.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Shit.

The CAMERA POINTS down to the floor and then we...

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - LATER

CAMERA comes back up and we're in the back seat of the car, SIREN WAILING, blazing down the streets.

Ruiney barks into this phone.

RUINEY

It's the NS/FOSTORIA LINE at  
Columbia and Harrison.

(beat)

This is an emergency! Shut any  
trains down that are going to pass  
through there! No, don't... don't  
put me on... hold. Fuck!

Archer LAYS ON THE HORN, driving like a bat out of hell.  
Swerving hard to the right, he nearly avoiding crashing into  
another vehicle.

We stay focused through the front windshield as he continues  
to weave in and out of lanes, almost crashing and taking out  
several pedestrians before --

The CAMERA SLOWLY PANS RIGHT -

Out the back side window we see the dilapidated, empty  
buildings. The former site of industry and job opportunities  
tells us, we're in downtown Fort Wayne.

We speed past the courthouse and large office buildings.

Red lights mean nothing as Archer blows through them.

RUINEY (CONT'D)

The body on the model was on the  
tracks just off Columbia Street.

Archer takes a hard left. We slide with Chris to the other  
side of the car hitting the window hard.

The camera view JUMPS, fills with STATIC, LOSES FOCUS, before  
becoming clear once again.

Archer finally comes to a SCREECHING halt on the street. Just  
in front of the elevated train tracks.

Looking out the window, we see a BODY HANGING above the  
tracks.

ARCHER

There he is!

Suddenly, a THUNDEROUS train whistle breaks the tension in  
the car.

We PAN OUT the side window and see a TRAIN BARRELLING down  
the tracks, right towards the body.

RUINEY  
The train will destroy the body.

ARCHER  
Shit! We need to get that letter  
before --

Before Archer can even finish, the passenger side door is nearly ripped off its hinges as Ruiney leaps out the vehicle.

ARCHER (CONT'D)  
Will! Get back here!

Chris and Archer exit the car as we watch Ruiney sprint to the side staircase leading up to the tracks.

Chris takes off after him. Running as fast as he can. Trying to make up ground.

ARCHER (CONT'D)  
(yelling to Ruiney)  
You'll never make it, Ruiney. Stop!

A man on a mission, Ruiney makes his way up the stairs. Chris trails, not too far behind.

Reaching the tracks, we watch as Ruiney arrives at the body. It swings just a few feet above the ground.

RUINEY  
I can't see the letter.

This scene is different than the others. The body isn't nude. The man is wearing a dress shirt.

As Ruiney starts to unbutton the man's shirt, looking for the letter, the man's EYES OPEN!

RUINEY (CONT'D)  
(startled)  
Oh, shit!

Ruiney momentarily stumbles back as the man GASPS, struggling for air.

RUINEY (CONT'D)  
This guy's still alive!

Ruiney removes his gun, points it at the rope. But it isn't braided fiber this time.

ZOOMING IN TIGHT - the body is hanging from METAL WIRE.

RUINEY (CONT'D)  
Goddamn it!

The train races forward, closer every second.

Blowing a warning whistle, it's DEAFENING. Jarring us right out of the TIGHT ZOOM, and back into a WIDE SHOT.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
There's no time! Ruiney, get off  
the tracks!

Ruiney sees the locomotive BARRELLING down on him.

The man CLAWS at the wire around his throat. His BULGING EYES pleading with Ruiney to save him.

RUINEY  
I... I can't.

Ruiney gets under the man's legs, tries lifting him up. Relieving the tension.

The train pushes closer.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
You can't save him, Ruiney!

Ruiney doesn't listen. Instead, he lets go of the man's legs and pulls his gun. He UNLOADS his CLIP on the wire. No use.

RUINEY  
Shit!

Grabbing HANDFULS of the man's shirt, Ruiney looks him dead in the eyes.

RUINEY (CONT'D)  
(practically in tears)  
I won't leave you.

He says more, but the WHISTLE drowns it completely out, as ARCHER'S ARMS firmly wrap around Ruiney's waist.

Archer PULLS at Ruiney, desperately trying to free him from impending doom. Ruiney does his best to resist, but Archer wins.

With one last PULL, Ruiney is yanked from the dangling man, taking most of the man's shirt with him, and sending both detectives falling backwards onto the tracks.

Now SHIRTLESS, the man's body SPINS uncontrollably from the force. The man's legs flail for a beat before going LIMP.

Both Ruiney and Archer watch in horror as the train is seconds away from OBLITERATING the body.

RUINEY (CONT'D)

No!

He tries to get up to return to the man, but Archer won't let him.

The body slows down from its wild spin, but remains with its back facing the detectives. They aren't going to see the letter!

The body takes ONE LAST SLOW TURN revealing the letter "D". The train SMASHES the body to bits. Ruiney and Archer roll themselves off the tracks just in time, as the train passes by them.

As it passes, they stand on opposite sides of the track, emotions bubbling over, screaming at one another, but are drowned out by the train.

We watch as the train speeds by us. As the last car passes, we see the familiar HANGMAN GAME spray painted on the back of the last car. The letters "B, N, Y, D," are visible.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Look!

CAMERA ZOOMS in close on the GAME and stays on it until the train moves around a bend.

RUINEY (O.C.)

You mother fucker!

CAMERA PANS just in time to see Ruiney lunging at his partner.

RUINEY (CONT'D)

I could have saved him!

ARCHER

You were going to get yourself killed, kid!

They have it out with one another like two brothers, both exchanging and receiving their equal share of blows.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Come on, guys.

(beat)

Shit.

ARCHER

You're in over your head!

RUINEY

Fuck you!

Chris reluctantly races over to break up the fight. During all the flailing, someone's arm SMASHES into the CAMERA.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION- TACTICAL ROOM - LATER

We watch as Ruiney and Archer stare at the torn shirt, now in a plastic evidence bag.

Unbelievably - outside of a few cuts and bruises, any and all signs of their recent fist fight seem to be missing completely now.

RUINEY

I don't get it. I had the lab run every known test on that shirt. They all came up empty.

ARCHER

So, unless our killer is Calvin Klein, we've got nothing?

RUINEY

Every scene has had some clue to lead us to the next victim. He wants us to find them, he wants an audience.

Archer snatches the shirt from Ruiney. Examining it, he holds it up the light, desperately searching for anything resembling a clue.

ARCHER

Not a God damn thing.

Archer tosses the shirt on the table out of frustration.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

What do we know about the vic?

Ruiney looks over the file for a beat, before --

CHRIS (O.C.)

Okay, I gotta ask? How the hell are you guys acting like nothing happened between you?

Archer and Ruiney look at one another.

ARCHER

We had it out. Said what needed to be said, and moved on.

RUINEY

It's over.

ARCHER

We're partners. Shit happens, but we have a case to solve.

An officer delivers a case file to Ruiney.

UNIFORMED OFFICER

Here's the file you requested.

Ruiney quickly opens it. He reads the train victim's info.

RUINEY

Guy had a record. Peter Shine, forty-six years old, did seven years for aggravated DUI resulting in bodily harm. Hit another vehicle, crippling... oh, shit!

ARCHER

What?

Ruiney looks like he's going to be sick.

RUINEY

Woman he hit had a partially severed spine.

The look on Archer's face suggests he's figured it out.

RUINEY (CONT'D)

(thinking)

Have you seen her today?

ARCHER

Fuck. Let's go!

Chris and the CAMERA struggle to keep up with them as they bolt from the room.

CHRIS (O.C.)

What the hell is going on?

RUINEY

Last vic hit Chief Watson six years ago. Put her in the wheelchair.

Archer quickly pulls his radio.

ARCHER

(into radio)

This is Detective Archer.

(MORE)

ARCHER (cont'd)  
I need the closest available unit  
to 1325 Maple. Possible officer in  
need of immediate assistance.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Oh, shit.

CAMERA BOUNCES for a bit before...

CUT TO:

EXT. CHIEF'S HOUSE - LATER

CAMERA UPCUTS just as we exit the car at the Chief's house.  
Not a single light is on in the place.

A POLICE CRUISER is parked out front with it's LIGHTS  
flashing.

Both Detectives, GUNS DRAWN, quickly make their way toward  
the cruiser. They quickly look in through the car's windows  
to reveal...

It's empty.

They push on toward an open GARAGE DOOR. Too dark to see  
inside.

ARCHER  
Chris, put that camera light on.

Chris does as he's told, the light from the camera  
illuminating the garage to reveal...

Someone sitting motionless in her wheelchair with their back  
to us. Head slumped to one side.

ARCHER (CONT'D)  
Chief! Can you hear me?

There's no response whatsoever. They push closer --

ARCHER (CONT'D)  
Lisa!

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

He motions for Ruiney to flank to his left, covering both  
sides as they continue to slowly approach.

ARCHER (O.C.)  
Lisa, move your head if you can  
hear me!

Still no answer... or movement.

Archer is almost close enough to reach her. He slowly reaches out his hand in an effort to grab the back of the chair and turn it toward him.

Then in one swift motion he SPINS it to reveal...

It's not Chief Watson. It's a DEAD Police Officer.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Shit!

They both turn their attention to the door leading in to the house from the garage, as the SOUNDS OF SIRENS can be heard off in the distance.

Archer reaches for the handle, nodding to his partner to cover before quickly opening it.

CAMERA LIGHT FLASHES INSIDE -

Revealing a long hallway.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

What is that?

CAMERA ZOOMS and AUTO FOCUSES to reveal -

A BODY on the floor. It's Chief Watson!

She's at the far end of the hallway slowly CRAWLING toward them. She squints at the light in her face, straining to speak but nothing is audible.

RUINEY

Let's go!

Something gleams, reflecting the light back at the camera. Before it's clear exactly what it is, the detectives move inside.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Detectives! Wait!

It's too late. The gleaming object was a thin TRIP WIRE that they've just hit causing...

...a NOOSE around Chief Watson's neck to tighten and YANK UPWARDS in one swift and jolting motion, hanging her by her throat.

INT. CHIEF'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

All three run into the home.

ARCHER

Chief!

They both quickly move to try to free her from the NOOSE round her neck, but the high ceilings in the place are complicating their efforts.

The GURGLING coming from her as she struggles for life is hard to hear and witness.

They desperately try to support her legs to take off some of the pressure from her neck, as the GURGLING gets more intense.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Shoot the fucking thing, Ruiney!

Ruiney backs away, draws his gun, and fires a SINGLE SHOT, hitting the NOOSE, and freeing the chief.

Her body crumbles downwards, supported by Archer, as she gasps for air.

CAMERA ZOOMS IN on the letter "O" written on the front of her shirt.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

She's alive.

RUINEY

(into his radio)

This is Detective Ruiney. Officers down at my location. We need immediate assistance.

SOUND OF A DOOR SLAMMING SHUT from inside the house catches everyone's attention.

She grabs a hold of Archer's shirt, pulling him closer.

CHIEF WATSON

(barely audible)

Stop him!

A MOTORCYCLE ENGINE ROARS TO LIFE outside. Archer hesitates to leave her.

CHIEF WATSON (CONT'D)

Go!

The trio BOLT from the hallway.

The CAMERA BOUNCES as we FLY out the door, after the two detectives.

EXT. CHIEF'S HOUSE- CONTINUOUS

As soon as we're outside, we SWING to the right and see the KILLER speed off on the Motorcycle.

ARCHER

Get in the fucking car!

Chris and Ruiney don't waste any time.

INT. ARCHER'S CAR- CONTINUOUS

We jump in the back seat as Archer SLAMS on the gas. We're thrown backwards from the force.

SIRENS ROARING, Archer swings the car around and gives chase. We see that the motorcycle has a good sized lead. Archer FLOORS it.

RUINEY

Stay with him, Archer!

The bike begins to run into heavy traffic. We're catching up. The killer turns, sees us coming.

He abruptly turns into a PARK. We quickly follow.

From inside the car, we watch as people that were out enjoying the day are now LEAPING for their lives out of the way from the oncoming chaos.

Archer BLARES the horn. Ruiney screams out the window.

RUINEY (CONT'D)

(screaming)

Move! Move! Police! Outta the way!

The killer turns into a connecting GOLF COURSE. He SHREDS the greens, speeding past the elderly golfers.

We stay on the park road and parallel with the killer as we watch him regain a large lead.

ARCHER

The course is fenced in just ahead.

Archer swings the wheel HARD. We're cutting across the golf course towards the fences.

RUINEY

He's not going to make it!

We watch as the killer quickly approaches the 12 foot fence.

ARCHER  
We've got him!

Suddenly, the killer lays the bike down on its side. He rolls off as the motorcycle crashes into the fence knocking it down.

The killer is now on foot, running through the neighborhood.

Archer follows the killer's path out the fence. We're now back on the street.

BOOM!

Out of no where, A CAR SIDE SWIPES us.

Archer loses control. All three men are tossed about.

THUD!

The car hits a ditch HARD, and ROLLS. The last thing we see is all three men being thrown around the vehicle.

The camera instantly CUTS OUT.

INT. ARCHER'S CAR - LATER

DARKNESS --

Ruffling and movement is heard through the blackness, followed by painful moans.

ARCHER (O.C.)  
Everyone alright? Ruiney, how you holding up?

Ruiney, in obvious pain, half out of it and half joking.

RUINEY (O.C.)  
Did we get him?

ARCHER (O.C.)  
Chris, you alive?

More ruffling sounds, when suddenly, the camera view returns. The lens is broken.

We're looking right at Chris' BLOODY FACE, as he examines the camera lens.

CHRIS  
I'm... I'm okay... I guess.

Chris places the camera down as they crawl out of the car.

ONLOOKERS appear in the frame, assisting the men out of the mangled wreck.

ONLOOKER  
You guys okay?

ARCHER  
What do you think?

The CAMERA CUTS in and OUT for a moment before SHUTTING DOWN COMPLETELY.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER

STATIC - followed by several loud THUDS as Chris hits the side of the camera.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Come on, damn it!

The camera PICTURE finally COMES UP, and we see Chris. He's a little worse for wear from the accident.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
(into camera)  
So, I'm here in... um... Parkview Hospital. They wanted to keep us overnight for observation.

He raises the camera, showing the damage to his face.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Some of the glass got me pretty good. But a few stitches later and we're all good. Chicks dig scars, right?

Chris notices a nurse walk in. He moves the camera to his front. She doesn't look happy.

NURSE  
What did I tell you about that?

CHRIS  
I'm a journalist. This is my job.

NURSE  
Don't make me call security.

Chris moves the camera down. The nurse's face is no longer in frame.

NURSE (CONT'D)  
 Thank you. Now, you're being  
 discharged. Just check out with the  
 nurse at the desk.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
 And my friends?

Chris begins to gather his belongings.

NURSE  
 They're outside waiting for you.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - LATER

Archer is in the lobby getting some last minute instructions from a nurse. A large BANDAGE covers his left ear. She hands him a bottle of medication.

Ruiney approaches and turns to FRAME, his face bruised and a little banged up as well.

RUINEY  
 Nice battle wounds. How you holding  
 up?

CHRIS (O.C.)  
 A couple stitches, no big deal. You  
 guys?

RUINEY  
 A few scrapes, but we're good.  
 (motions to Archer)  
 Just waiting on the old man.

Chris ZOOMS IN on Archer.

NURSE  
 Take one every six hours for the  
 next four days for the pain. Any  
 problems, just call the number on  
 the bottle.

The nurse leaves and we meet up with Archer. Ruiney starts in on him.

RUINEY  
 Viagra?

Archer is not in a good mood.

ARCHER

Don't even. I'll put you in here permanently. I swear to Christ.

Ruiney silently laughs at the camera.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Let's go.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Where are we going?

Ruiney turns to the camera.

RUINEY

Chief was brought to this hospital. She's in a room just down the hall. The only survivor of the Hangman. We need to question her.

CHRIS (O.C.)

How's she doing?

Suddenly, hospital SECURITY approaches Chris.

SECURITY

Excuse me, sir. You can't have that camera in here. You're going to have to shut it off.

CHRIS (O.C.)

What? No! I have --

SECURITY

No exceptions. I'm sorry.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Dude, I have permission from the Mayor.

SECURITY

I said turn it off now!

The security guard GRABS for the camera. Chris and the guard struggle with it. Our view shifts, SPINNING.

ARCHER (O.C.)

Turn it off, Chris.

RUINEY (O.C)

Come on, guys.

Our dizzying view suddenly CUTS OUT.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - LATER

The CAMERA TURNS ON.

Archer and Ruiney look frustrated as they walk to the car.

RUINEY

She didn't get a look at the perp.  
Just remembers someone jumping her  
from behind when she got home.

ARCHER

I hope she put up a hell of a  
fight.

CHRIS (O.C.)

In a wheel chair?

ARCHER

We went to the academy together,  
before the accident. Wheelchair or  
not --

Archer's cell phone rings. He quickly lifts it and BANGS his bad ear. Hollering in pain, Archer slams the phone in Ruiney's chest.

Ruiney laughs, answers the phone.

RUINEY

(into phone)  
Archer's phone.  
(beat)  
Yeah. Give me the address.  
(beat)  
Got it.

Ruiney hands the phone to Archer. His face drops. He doesn't even have to say it. His partner already knows.

ARCHER

God damn it.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNDER BRIDGE / RIVER'S EDGE - LATER

We're under a small bridge over the river.

A HUGE HANGMAN GAME is plastered under the bridge in graffiti.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Jesus. Subtlety truly is a lost  
art.

As we move under the bridge, a young MAN HANGS from the bridge above. His face is bloodied and battered.

Chris ZOOMS in on his chest. The letter "E" is visible.

We PULL OUT, and PAN OVER to Archer and Ruiney. A female officer approaches.

OFFICER

I.D. was in his wallet. Peter Rorick.

Ruiney and Archer recognize the name.

ARCHER

(To Archer)

The guy from Joey's place.

Ruiney looks like he's going to be sick.

RUINEY

Fuck!

Visibly distraught, Ruiney begins to walk away.

ARCHER

Ruiney! Calm down.

RUINEY

He's been watching us. Knows we picked this guy up...

Ruiney motions toward the dead body.

RUINEY (CONT'D)

...we did this.

Ruiney leaves the crime scene.

ARCHER

Ruiney! Come back. If it wasn't him, it would have been the Chief. We can't save everybody. The sooner you learn that, the better.

Ruiney shakes his head, and keeps going.

FEMALE OFFICER

Anything I can do to help?

ARCHER

Canvas the area.

FEMALE OFFICER  
Consider it done.

ARCHER  
Thanks.

Archer turns, notices he's been in FRAME this whole time.

ARCHER (CONT'D)  
Shut it off, Chris.

Putting up no resistance, Chris does as he's told.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

The once simple and compact tactical space has EXPLODED to a full fledged and functioning machine, complete with an army of officers working around the clock on the case.

The tip line RINGS excessively in the background.

CAMERA ZOOMS on to Archer as he stands, staring at the DRY ERASE BOARD.

PULL BACK to reveal it's grown considerably with CRIME SCENE PHOTOS and the Hangman Game clues.

There are several attempted versions of the game with letters plugged in to the 9 spaces. "BEYOND" is the start of one noticeable possibility.

Ruiney enters the FRAME.

RUINEY  
There were no clues leading to the bridge since we saved the Chief. It appears Peter Rorick was killed as a last minute "fuck you" to us.

ARCHER  
We've been playing this prick's game by his rules. We messed with his plans, so now there's no telling what he'll do next.

RUINEY  
So we just think outside the game perimeters. We have to find a way to get ahead of him.

ARCHER  
Easier said than done.  
(beat)  
Any luck with the tip lines?

RUINEY  
Seems like everyone thinks they  
know who the killer is.

ARCHER  
Happens every time.  
(beat)  
Some woman doesn't like the way her  
landlord looked at her, or some guy  
thinks the guy bagging his  
groceries looks suspicious. You  
name it, every idiot in the city  
finds the need to call us.

WIDE SHOT of them both taking in the evidence. Archer moves  
to pictures of the MODEL TRAIN SET. Something occurs to him.

ARCHER (CONT'D)  
How'd he know this guy had a train  
set?

RUINEY  
What? You think he picked the guy  
because he knew he had the set, or  
he picked where to hang the next  
victim based on seeing the train  
set?

ARCHER  
Our guy's too smart and calculated  
to leave anything to chance. Must  
have known he had it.

RUINEY  
I'll see if the forensic  
accountants have had any luck.

Ruiney leaves the shot.

ARCHER  
(to himself)  
What's the connection?

RUINEY (O.C.)  
It's Detective Ruiney.

CAMERA PANS to Ruiney talking on the phone.

RUINEY (CONT'D)

(on phone)

I need you to look in to a purchase for a large model train in Eric Peterson's financial records.

(beat)

Put a rush on it.

(beat)

Thanks.

He hangs up the phone, returns to his partner and the board.

ARCHER

So, if the train connects the killer to Peterson... what about the other victims?

Ruiney thinks.

RUINEY

You know... most serial killers usually know their first victim. There's a connection.

Archer turns to Ruiney.

ARCHER

You and your big brain learn that at your prestigious college?

Ruiney grabs his coat and starts toward the door.

RUINEY

No... I remember it from watching *Silence of the Lambs*. You coming?

CUT TO:

INT. DAY CARE CENTER - LATER

We're in the middle of a conversation with one of the day care center employees, LAURA BOND.

ARCHER

So, how well did you know Kerry?

LAURA

We only hung out a couple of times outside of work. She spent most of her free time with her new boyfriend.

ARCHER

Girlfriend.

LAURA

What?

RUINEY

Never mind.

(beat)

Did Kerry have any problems with anyone? Coworkers, or any of the kids' parents maybe?

LAURA

Not that I can think of. Everyone really liked her. She held weekly story groups with the kids.

(beat)

They really miss her.

Archer, frustrated, glances around the space. We PAN to follow his gaze.

A huge picture of a cartoon TRAIN hangs on the wall. He glances down and sees two kids playing with a CHESS BOARD. It looks similar to the one Reverend Green owns.

Just behind the kids is a shelf stacked with a variety of board games, and toys.

Archer quickly turns back to Laura.

ARCHER

Where do you guys get all these toys and games here?

LAURA

Most are bought at thrift shops or donated by the children's parents.

(beat)

Come to think of it, most of these were donated by one guy. He used to always ask for Kerry. I think he had a little crush on her. Kind of creepy.

RUINEY

Remember what he looked like?

LAURA

Not really. Late 20's, early 30's maybe. I'm not sure.

RUINEY

Has he been around lately?

LAURA

Not since Kerry died.

CHIRP - We hear a noise, a quick beep, barely audible or noticed.

ARCHER

Do you keep a record of places that donate items?

LAURA

Not officially, but if they ask for a receipt for tax purposes we'll have the carbon copy.

CHIRP - That sound again. Accompanied by a LOW BATTERY SIGNAL in the bottom corner of the FRAME.

ARCHER

Do you remember if this guy asked for a receipt?

LAURA

You know what, I think he did. For his boss or something.

(beat)

I'll get it for you. Just give me a sec.

She walks in the back.

CHRIS (O.C.)

I have to change my battery.

CAMERA DOWN and then...

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION/TACTICAL ROOM - LATER

CAMERA BACK UP - The room is buzzing with activity. It's so loud we can hardly hear the detectives speaking.

The FORENSIC ACCOUNTANT hands Archer a file. We PULL CLOSER to the detectives.

FORENSIC ACCOUNTANT

I checked every place in the state where that train set could have been purchased from. Here's the list.

Ruiney pulls the DAY CARE DONATION RECEIPTS from off the board.

ARCHER  
(to Ruiney)  
Any of them match the donation  
list?

The two quickly cross reference both lists. After a beat...

RUINEY  
We've got "Toys and More" on both  
lists.

Archer and Ruiney grab their jackets.

ARCHER  
Get Reverend Green on the phone.  
(beat)  
I'll give you one guess where he  
bought that chess board.

Ruiney pulls out his cell phone as we follow the two out of  
the room.

CUT TO:

INT. TOYS N MORE STORE - LATER

UPCUT: We follow the Detectives inside of the shop, and are  
greeted with a LOUD and DISTURBING CLOWN WHISTLE announcing  
their entrance.

The place looks like the bastard child of an antique store  
and some twisted Willy Wonka fantasy. Nothing about it  
suggests warm and inviting for children. It's creepy.

ARCHER  
What are the odds our guy drives  
around in a van with no windows?

RUINEY  
(shouting out)  
Hello? Anyone home?

No answer.

The CAMERA SLOW PANS - the shelves are overflowing with  
strange oddities, sprinkled in and around the usual suspects  
that one might find at a toy store.

CAMERA ZOOMS in on a JACK IN THE BOX.

CHRIS' HAND comes in to frame to crank the handle. MUSIC  
plays with each turn. It's just about to pop when...

ZOOMS OUT... we see an OLD MAN standing right in front of us.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Shit!

OLD MAN

Can I help you boys with anything?

With the question the man slowly sets to moving through the store, with the trio following.

Ruiney has his hand on HIS GUN ready to use it if need be. Archer notices and motions for him to cool it.

Ruiney looks confused. Archer points to his own hand, nods towards the old man.

CAMERA ZOOMS IN on the old man's hands. They are CRIPPLED and GNARLED from arthritis.

ARCHER

(quietly)

No way he's our guy.

RUINEY

(to Old Man)

Yes, we're Detectives Archer and Ruiney.

The Old Man stops and turns to them.

OLD MAN

Okay. Can I help you detectives with anything?

Archer shows him a PICTURE of the MODEL TRAIN SET.

ARCHER

You sold this to a man named Eric Peterson.

The old man takes a two second look at it.

OLD MAN

Is that so?

ARCHER

We also have evidence that you donated a bunch of toys to a local Day Care Center.

OLD MAN

Really?

ARCHER

Afraid so. These items are connected to a murder.

OLD MAN

Oh, my.

ARCHER

You don't seem that surprised.

OLD MAN

Don't I?

Archer is clearly getting frustrated.

ARCHER

We don't have time for this!

RUINEY

(to Old Man)

You the only one who works here?

OLD MAN

Nope.

RUINEY

Okay, now we're getting somewhere.  
We are going to need a list of  
names and addresses for all  
employees.

The Old Man lets out a cackled laugh, followed by a coughing fit.

OLD MAN

Look around you boys... can't  
really afford to keep on a lot of  
staff these days.

He opens a draw at the front desk, pulls out a piece of paper, and writes on it as he continues.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

It's just me and Christian.

He hands the sheet to Ruiney.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

He sold the train and donated the  
toys, Detectives. But I haven't  
seen him in a few days.

Ruiney checks the address.

RUINEY

Other side of town. We have to  
move.

(to Old Man)

Thank you.

Ruiney dials his phone as he sprints toward the exit.

Archer doesn't feel like being so cordial. He leans in to the Old Man.

ARCHER

Your place is fucking creepy.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - LATER

CAMERA COMES up to see the SCENERY whipping by as the car races down the road. SIRENS WAIL.

RUINEY (O.C.)

SWAT has just arrived on scene.

ANGLE LEFT and move to WIDE SHOT to catch the two Detectives and the action out the front windshield.

The darting in and out of traffic at excessive speed is exhilarating, but bordering on nauseating.

CHRIS (O.C.)

You think this is our guy?

FLASHING LIGHTS and a ROAD BLOCK up ahead signal they've reached their destination.

ARCHER

We'll find out soon enough.

He's barely finished the statement before he's thrown the car in park, and leaped out.

We follow.

EXT. SUSPECT'S PLACE - CONTINUOUS

A run down home in a middle class neighborhood.

The place is swarming with cops, the likes of which the city has never seen or needed before.

Organized chaos.

SWAT TEAM deploy from their van, quickly moving to surround the home from all angles.

RUINEY

Get this on.

A BULLETPROOF VEST is tossed DIRECTLY AT US, nearly knocking the CAMERA from Chris' hand.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Got it.

The CAMERA is down for a beat, before returning to reveal Ruiney and Archer suited up to join in behind SWAT.

The whole ordeal is happening so fast, the CAMERA frantically SPINNING to catch as much of it as possible.

Finally it lands on the SWAT MEMBER on point. We start to PULL IN towards the dramatic entrance when...

WE'RE YANKED HARD TO THE RIGHT so that we're looking right at Archer.

ARCHER

Stay behind us, keep your head down, and most importantly stay out of the way!

CHRIS (O.C.)

I got it. I got it.

BOOM!

CAMERA QUICKLY PANS to reveal the front door has just been BASHED in... we just missed the beginning of the raid.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Shit!

SHOUTING - YELLING

SWAT MEMBER 1

POLICE!

INT. SUSPECT'S PLACE - CONTINUOUS

Chris moves to stay with the flow, the CAMERA BOUNCING as we frantically move through the dimly lit place.

As we move through the location, tailing Ruiney and Archer, whipping through hallways, from room to room.

One by one, from different nearby rooms we hear --

SWAT MEMBER 2 (O.C.)

Clear!

SWAT MEMBER 3 (O.C.)

Clear!

SWAT MEMBER 4 (O.C.)

Clear!

SWAT TEAM LEADER  
Okay everyone... we're clear!

And with that - a giant breath of relief. The adrenaline rush subsides just as quickly as it started until...

SWAT MEMBER 2  
Get a medic in here!

WE PUSH towards, and past the team leader into a back room to see why --

INT. BACK BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A DEAD BODY slumped over in a chair with HALF OF ITS FACE BLOWN OFF. A SHOTGUN leans against the deceased.

CAMERA ZOOMS in on the EXIT WOUND.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Oh, my God.

RUINEY (O.C.)  
Forget the medic. Call the fucking coroner.

ARCHER (O.C.)  
Bastard knew we were coming and took the easy way out.

CAMERA WIDENS and PANS to Ruiney. He's conflicted.

ARCHER (CONT'D)  
(to SWAT)  
Thanks, guys. We'll take it from here.  
(to Ruiney)  
Not how I thought this was going to end.

Ruiney soaks the scene in. Thinks hard.

RUINEY (CONT)  
(to Archer)  
Something seems... off. This make any sense to you?

ARCHER  
Makes perfect sense. The guy felt the heat and blew his brains all over his comic books. End of story.

Ruiney looks unsure.

RUINEY

This doesn't fit the profile. This guy wouldn't kill himself before the end of the game.

ARCHER

And yet there he is, with a hole in his head the size of a grapefruit. The hell with the profile.

SWAT begins to file out...

CHRIS (O.C.)

(beat)

So, it's over?

ARCHER

We need to process the scene. Look for an ID. Make sure we got our guy.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Seems anticlimactic.

ARCHER

Sorry to disappoint, but this ain't the movies.

We FOLLOW Archer and Ruiney as they begin to process the scene.

Sadly, a dead guy with half of his face missing doesn't seem all that much out of place here. The apartment, much like the toy store, is unnerving.

The wallpaper throughout most of the place looks like it should be in a nine-year-old boy's bedroom: various cartoon characters, astronauts, cowboys, baseball players, etc.

They move toward the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

More of the same. If the killer is a grown man, he sure doesn't live like it.

Crude child-like drawings hang on the wall.

ARCHER

Jesus.

We PAN UP to follow Archer's eyes to reveal GLOW IN THE DARK STAR STICKERS pasted on the ceiling.

RUINEY (O.C.)  
You seeing this?

PAN DOWN to Ruiney, who stands in front of an open closet. It's filled with costumes: clowns, cowboys, a wizard, a policeman, a fireman, and various Halloween costumes.

Not all of them are for a male, either. Ruiney holds up a PRINCESS COSTUME.

RUINEY (CONT'D)  
Something was really off in this  
guy's head.

ARCHER  
You think?

Ruiney holds up a BLACK HOODED SWEATSHIRT. He turns to a Crime Scene Tech. She carries an evidence bag.

RUINEY  
Bag this.

Archer makes his way to a cheap fold up ROOM DIVIDER and moves it to the side to reveal the real gem in the room, and in the investigation: the killer's tactical space.

SURVEILLANCE PHOTOS OF VICTIMS, strategic MAPS for locations and their routines are plastered on the wall.

ZOOM IN on various DRAWINGS OF THE HANGMAN GAME. Not a single one of them is filled out.

ARCHER (O.C.)  
Of course. Why would he tell us the  
answer to the stupid game?

RUINEY (O.C.)  
Any letters or victims we don't  
have?

WE PAN from victim to victim... we've seen them all.

ARCHER (O.C.)  
No. Guess we got to him before he  
could finish.

WE PULL BACK to a WIDE SHOT.

Ruiney opens the door to a nearby bathroom, stepping in and out of the SHOT.

RUINEY (O.C.)  
Toothbrush in here.

ARCHER  
 Bag it. We can lift the DNA off of  
 it to match to this guy.  
 (beat)  
 Let's keep moving.

Ruiney returns from the bathroom, and they head in to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

It's relatively "normal" considering what we've seen so far. Archer reaches for the refrigerator door, opens it.

ARCHER  
 Beer.

RUINEY  
 Really? Wouldn't have taken him  
 for the type.

ARCHER  
 No, he's not the type.

He moves out of the way to reveal the refrigerator is filled with hundreds of containers of PLAY-DOH.

ARCHER (CONT'D)  
 I mean I could use a beer.

RUINEY  
 That makes two of us.

ARCHER  
 You have an expense account, Chris?

CHRIS (O.C.)  
 What? Ummm... yeah. But I'm only  
 supposed to use it for --

ARCHER  
 Good. You're buying.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
 Are you serious?

Archer looks at Ruiney, who in turn pats Chris on the arm.

RUINEY  
 Come on! You got yourself some  
 golden footage, right?

CHRIS (O.C.)  
 Yeah.

RUINEY  
Okay then. Let's get pissed.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - LATER

We PAN across the bar. Several patrons sit drinking behind us. They notice the camera.

We PAN OVER to Ruiney and Archer sitting at the bar next to us.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
Well, Archer, you were not lying.  
You said it would be an adrenaline  
rush.

ARCHER  
(sarcastic as hell)  
Yeah, it was a real hoot.

Ruiney looks a little frustrated. He's not as chipper as his friends. Archer notices.

ARCHER (CONT'D)  
(to Ruiney)  
What's eating you, kid?

RUINEY  
I don't know. I mean... there's  
still a lot of unanswered  
questions. This guy went to extreme  
lengths to get our attention.  
Wanted us to find every clue, every  
victim.

ARCHER  
So?

RUINEY  
So why off yourself before the game  
is finished? It doesn't make sense.

ARCHER  
Don't even go there. It's done.  
Relax.

Ruiney continues to look frustrated. He notices the camera pointing at him.

RUINEY  
Give that fucking thing a rest.

CHRIS (O.C.)

I don't stop filming until I leave town. Which won't be soon enough. I gotta tell you guys, this has been the most fucked up experience of my life.

ARCHER

We're right there with you.

Archer gets the bartender's attention.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

First round is on me.

RUINEY

Really?

Archer gives him a "fuck off" look.

RUINEY (CONT'D)

(with his hands up)

Okay.

Ruiney turns to Chris and the camera.

RUINEY (CONT'D)

So what are the odds of this ever making it on TV?

CHRIS (O.C.)

To be honest, at first I didn't really think we had a chance in hell. But I just got off the phone with a couple of the other producers, and because of this case, the show has already been green lit for two seasons.

(beat)

My luck, I'll be assigned to follow you two around for a few more episodes.

RUINEY

(rolls his eyes)

Can't wait.

CAMERA PANS to the door of the bar. A man slowly enters through the doorway. He's dressed in a BLACK HOOD, his face hidden.

He appears to be SCANNING the bar. Looking for someone.

The camera suddenly begins to TREMBLE once again. Chris is afraid. His breathing increases.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Guys --

The Hooded Figure stops on the trio. He quickly RUNS up behind the detectives.

CHRIS (O.C) (CONT'D)

(Shouts)

Watch out!

The HOODED FIGURE GRABS Archer's shoulder.

HOODED FIGURE

Raymond Archer.

As soon as the man's hand lands on Archer's shoulder, the seasoned veteran TWISTS it, quickly SPINNING out of his seat.

He REVERSES the hold, SLAMMING the man's face first on the bar.

ARCHER

What the fuck?

The man writhes in pain.

HOODED FIGURE

Wait! Wait! Ahhh!

ARCHER

What the hell are you doing?

HOODED FIGURE

I'm looking... Ahhh... for Raymond Archer.

Archer twists the man's arm harder.

ARCHER

Well, you found him.

The man quickly hands Archer some PAPERS

HOODED FIGURE

You've been served.

Archer releases the man and examines the papers. Once free, the man BOLTS for the door and out of the bar.

Chris ZOOMS IN, catches a shot of the papers. The word DIVORCE appears at the top of one of the pages.

ARCHER

Rebecca is leaving me.

Archer stands in a daze for a moment. Ruiney places his hand on his partner's shoulder.

CHRIS (O.C.)

Oh, man. I'm sorry.

RUINEY

I'm sorry too, buddy. Look, we can always do this another time. If you want, we can call it a night.

(beat)

Shit. I'm not sure what to say here. You sure you're okay?

Archer thinks about the question. He takes a deep breath and then... SMILES.

ARCHER

Surprisingly... yes. This was a long time coming. I think... we're both better off.

(beat)

I'm good.

The bartender awkwardly places three beers in front of the guys. Archer jumps back into celebration mode.

He picks up one of the glasses, raises it in the air.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Alright fuckers, put that damn camera down and raise a glass.

Chris places the camera on the bar. It's still on and recording the trio.

Ruiney and Chris raise their drinks.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Here's to none of us getting killed, and to that sick fuck eating a bullet and saving us from a shit load of grief and paperwork.

RUINEY

May he rot in hell.

CHRIS

Here here.

The boys take a huge chug. We can see the walls of stress and frustration crumbling, and being replaced with relief and camaraderie.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Doesn't it bother you that we'll never figure out what that message was?

RUINEY

Absolutely!

ARCHER

NO!

Archer and Ruiney share a look. Ruiney looks puzzled.

RUINEY

How can you not be curious about this? I don't get it?

ARCHER

Here we go. Why should I be curious, college boy?

RUINEY

This guy's psychological profile was just... amazingly fucked up. I really think people are going to be talking about this case, long after we are gone. Say what you want about Bundy, Gacy, hell, even Jack the Ripper, but they all had motive. This guy --

ARCHER

This guy was just some nut that stopped taking his meds. Shit, for all we know his uncle touched him one too many times. He was just another perp. Nothing special about him. Have you watched the news lately? The world is a fucking mess. No one knows why people do the sick and twisted things they do. I say "who gives a fuck"? He's dead, fuck'em. Next case.

CHRIS

Yeah, but the message --

ARCHER

That word could have been anything. The name of his fucking dog. The name of some twat that rejected him in high school. Fucking gibberish.

RUINEY

Yeah... I guess. Why lose sleep over it, right? Fuck him. We're here, he's not.

ARCHER

Now you're talking. Who's got next round?

Chris pulls his wallet out.

CHRIS

Allow me, gentlemen. It's the least I can do for you not getting me killed.

Chris leans in to hand the bartender his credit card.

ARCHER

(to bartender)  
And keep it open!

Archer leans behind him, gives the middle finger to THE CAMERA, and then unbeknownst to Chris, SHUTS IT OFF.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

We switch from darkness back into the light of a dingy hotel room.

Chris' face is in frame. His eyes are glassy, he sways. He's drunk.

CHRIS

(to himself)  
There we go.

He places the camera down on the desk. He takes a seat on the bed in the frame.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

This concludes the pilot episode of the show. My flight leaves tomorrow afternoon. I can't wait to get the fuck outta this town.

(beat)  
See you guys on TV.

Chris leans in and SHUTS THE CAMERA OFF.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

OVER BLACK - we hear the familiar sound of RUFFLING and MOVEMENT. The lens cap on the camera is slowly removed.

But... we still can't see very clearly. Only a little bit of light from the window is visible, telling us the lights in the hotel room are off.

Suddenly, the camera switches to NIGHT VISION. Our world is now BRIGHT GREEN.

We're now moving around the room very slowly.

We ZOOM IN on luggage bags. ZOOM OUT and see clothing on a small pile on the floor next to the bed.

We PAN UP to the top of the bed. Someone is sleeping in it. We see the outline of their feet under the covers.

We now SLOWLY PAN UP their body, playfully ZOOMING in and out, before finally stopping on their face.

Suddenly, we see, Chris is NOT the one HOLDING the camera. He's SLEEPING in bed!

A finger enters the frame and lightly touches Chris' nose. He remains asleep, brushing the finger away. He turns over, away from us.

The finger enters the frame again. It lightly plays with his earlobe.

Chris snorts and slowly wakes up. He brushes his ear. Then, almost as if Chris senses us watching him. He slowly turns his head toward us.

He squints in the darkness as we QUICKLY ZOOM IN on him. Chris screams as we...

CUT TO:

INT. UNKNOWN ROOM - LATER

The CAMERA SWITCHES ON. We're still in Chris' face, and still in night vision. He's unconscious.

After a minute, Chris starts to come to. He tries to move his head, but quickly realizes it's STRAPPED to something.

CHRIS  
What the fuck!?

Chris picks up the camera, we go along for the ride. We are held just under Chris' chin as he sweeps the camera from ear to ear, trying to get a shot of what he's strapped to.

We see it. A large leather strap is around his neck and bolted to a wall behind him.

Chris brings the camera back down to his face.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
I can't see shit!  
(under his breath)  
Where the hell is the rewind?

ZZZSHHHZZZ -- the screen suddenly FREEZES - REWINDS - we see the strap around Chris' chin bolted to the wall again. He's watching the footage now.

ZZZSHHHZZZ -- The screen FREEZES once more -- and CUTS BACK:

We're in Chris' face once again - REAL TIME. He squints as he tries to look around the room. He fiddles with the camera.  
"CLICK"

Suddenly, we're out of night vision, and back into REGULAR VISION. Chris turns the camera, points us into the darkness of the room.

Another "CLICK." The camera LIGHT SWITCHES ON.

The beam cuts through the darkness, and that's when we see it --

A BODY HANGING in the room with Chris. Its hands bound behind its back.

The letter "I" is painted on the body's shirt. A black hood covers the victim's head.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Hello? Can you... are you alive?

We can hear Chris struggling with the strap around his neck.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Jesus Christ!  
(screaming)  
Someone help me! Someone, Please!

Suddenly, we hear a noise coming from the next room. Chris points us, and the light, in that direction.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
(scared shitless)  
Oh, Jesus.

Someone is there, in the shadows. They're moving CLOSER!  
Chris is almost in tears.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Hel... hello?

Suddenly, the figure breaks through the darkness and is right in our faces. It's DETECTIVE RUINEY, closely followed by ARCHER.

RUINEY  
Chris! What the fuck happened? Who did this to you?

Ruiney works on the strap holding Chris to the wall.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
I don't know! I was in bed in my hotel room... someone was there. I woke up here.

RUINEY  
Hold still.

We hear the sound of the strap releasing. Chris takes a deep breath. He slowly gets to his feet.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
I'm not alone, guys.

Chris points us, and the light, to the body swaying nearby. Archer and Ruiney cautiously approach the body.

ARCHER  
Shit!

CHRIS (O.C.)  
What's going on? The killer is dead. Who is this?

Archer and Ruiney move towards the body... but just before they get to it...

The camera light breaks through the darkness. We notice something written on the wall just past the body.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Look! On the wall!

Archer and Ruiney move to the wall.

Ruiney pulls the cord to a light dangling above, turning on a dim BLACKLIGHT to reveal...

The HANGMAN'S GAME on the wall.

But this one is different. Instead of the letters being above the spaces, most of the letters are filled in their CORRECT SPOTS.

The message reads: B-E-(space)-(space)-N-D Y-O-(space).

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
What the fuck?!

Both detectives turn towards us and Chris.

ARCHER  
What?

CHRIS (O.C.)  
You both have letters on your backs.

They both turn back around.

CLOSE SHOT reveals each detective has the last two letters on their backs.

Ruiney the "H", and Archer the "U".

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Behind you! It says behind you!

Ruiney and Archer look at each other, and then ever so slowly, they turn back towards us.

ARCHER  
You.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
What?

ARCHER  
You're behind us. You've been behind us this whole time, Chris.

RUINEY  
And none of this started happening until you showed up. You wanted a show.

Archer and Ruiney slowly move towards us, their hands by their holsters.

CHRIS (O.C.)  
What? Yeah, I've been behind... Are you guys fucking crazy? I didn't kill anyone!

Ruiney and Archer slowly unstrap their GUNS.

ARCHER

We need to have a serious talk,  
Chris. Time to put the camera down.  
(beat)  
Just stay calm.

CHRIS (O.C.)

I didn't do anything! I just woke  
up here when you guys found me!  
(beat)  
I... wait... how did you find me?

Chris starts to back away.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)

I... didn't call you. It's... it's  
you guys! You're the killers!

His HAND COME IN TO FRAME motioning for them to STOP.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Just... please. Stay back.

RUINEY

We're not the killers, Chris. We  
got a text message from you, giving  
us this location.

CHRIS (O.C.)

I... I didn't text you! I... hold  
on!

The CAMERA BOUNCES and POINTS DOWN towards Chris' pants. He  
empties his pockets.

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)

I don't even have my cell phone!  
Whoever took me from the hotel has  
it! Call it!

Ruiney pulls out his cell phone and dials Chris' phone. After  
a second, we hear the phone RINGING. It's muffled.

By the time the detectives realize where it's coming from  
it's already too late.

The "I" victim grabs a bar just above his head and LIFTS  
himself up. Revealing a hook on his back. The "HANGING" was a  
fake.

He SLOWLY LOWERS HIMSELF DOWN so that he's standing directly  
behind the unsuspecting detectives.

He raises both his hands, and JAMS TWO TASER GUNS into Ruiney  
and Archer's necks.

Their bodies jolt and stiffen up. After a second, they fall to the floor, out cold.

Chris backs into the wall, scared shitless. Screaming!

CHRIS (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
No! No! Stay away!

The "I" Victim removes his hood, his shirt. His face along with his entire body, has been tattooed. He resembles a living SKELETON. A real life GRIM REAPER.

The killer RUSHES right at us - KNOCKING US OVER AND TO THE FLOOR AS CHRIS CONTINUES TO SCREAM.

From our TILTED FRAME we see Chris struggling. The Killer lies behind him on the floor, with his arms around Chris' neck.

As Chris struggles to breath, his legs FLAIL ABOUT and suddenly SMASH IN TO THE CAMERA, causing us to...

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - TACTICAL ROOM.

We PULL BACK from the footage, and now see that we were watching it all on a TELEVISION SCREEN.

We PULL BACK even further, and we see the room is filled with uniformed cops, detectives, Police Chief Watson, and a MAN IN A DARK SUIT.

They all watch as the screen goes BLACK. They sit motionless, speechless, in shock.

Finally, the stillness is broken, as Chief Watson wheels herself to the front of the room.

CHIEF WATSON  
This footage was mailed to the station late last night. Chris Davis...

Her voice begins to break.

CHIEF WATSON (CONT'D)  
Detectives Raymond Archer, and William Ruiney have not been heard from in three days.  
(beat)  
There is no evidence that they're...

Chief Watson chokes up. She does her best to stay strong.

CHIEF WATSON (CONT'D)  
I'm not giving up on them. No one  
in this room should either. Their  
loved ones are counting on us to  
bring them home.

Chief Watson motions to the man in the dark suit.

CHIEF WATSON (CONT'D)  
Now, this is Special Agent Parker  
with the FBI. He's here to help us  
track down the Hangman Killer, and  
find our detectives.

The man in the dark suit, AGENT PARKER, nods and moves to the  
front of the room.

AGENT PARKER  
Thank you, Chief Watson. We have  
reason to believe that the Hangman  
is still in the area. We're  
mobilizing --

Suddenly, a female officer enters the room. She whispers in  
Chief Watson's ear, and hands her an envelope.

She opens the envelope and removes a PICTURE. Her face drops.

CHIEF WATSON  
They found Chris Davies.

She hands the picture to Agent Parker. We get our first look  
at it.

It's CHRIS HANGING DEAD FROM A NOOSE, in a very public area.

At the top, a message: "I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU AGENT  
PARKER".

Agent Parker stares at the message for a beat. We get a sense  
that there is obviously a history here.

AGENT PARKER  
(to everyone)  
Let's get started.

CUT TO BLACK: