

19482

THE LITTLE THINGS...

An original screenplay by

John Lee Hancock

No portion of this script may be performed, reproduced,
or used by any means, or quoted or published in any
medium without the prior written consent of Warner Bros.

WARNER BROS.
4000 Warner Boulevard
Burbank, California 91522

July 9, 1997
© 1997
WARNER BROS.
All Rights Reserved

FADE IN:

EXT. WEST HOLLYWOOD - PAN SHOT - SOMEONE'S POV - NIGHT

We HOLD, fixed on a dark corner in a good neighborhood in the Hollywood foothills. We hear POUNDING FOOTSTEPS, two sets, and in the distance, two joggers appear, running down the street.

NEW ANGLE

ON the joggers, a GUY and a girl. The girl is RONDA RATHMAN and she's memorably cute, 22 or so, a brunette we won't be able to shake from our memory. They continue to run, breathing heavy, coming to the end of their twice a week, three-mile workout.

When they arrive at a corner, they come to a stop but continue to run in place.

RONDA
Go again on Wednesday?

GUY
Yeah, sure. I'll run you home.

RONDA
Three blocks. I'll be fine.

The Guy smiles, waves and disappears up a block. Ronda continues to run in place.

NEW ANGLE - POV AGAIN

We MOVE DOWN the street, FOLLOWING Ronda as she runs.

NEW ANGLE - RIGHT BEHIND RONDA - FOLLOWING

We notice a red barrette holding her shoulder-length hair in a ponytail. And we HOLD our view as she runs away from us, passes the glow of a streetlight, and disappears into blackness.

MOVING POV - FROM CAR - RONDA

As she runs along the shadowy sidewalk, oblivious to the fact that she's being observed.

NEW ANGLE

A nondescript dark sedan, we can't really make it out, follows her along the dark street and disappears. Then, far in the distance, we see the sedan's brake lights flash and fade.

We CONTINUE TO HOLD for a few seconds more and then we BOOM UP, high above the block.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES - SAME ANGLE - INTERVALOMETER PAN - NIGHT

We can hardly tell we're moving -- across the city lights of Los Angeles. We see the west side, Century City, Hollywood, Capitol Records. A few lights on in buildings in each part of town -- cleaning crews mostly and a few cars on the streets, their red rear hues giving them away. We CONTINUE TO PAN... PAST Mid-Wilshire to downtown, to Silverlake. Just as we REST ON the hills of the east side and the mountains beyond, a dot then a flicker, then a stream of light begins to change everything. Hookers off their corners, cockroaches bedded down, rats in their holes. Dawn.

CUT TO:

CLOSEUP - SPOT OF RED

On pavement, surrounded by broken glass. Illuminated by a flashlight. A finger touches it.

DEKE (O.S.)

That's blood.

BURNS (O.S.)

Good. I hope they bleed to death.

We PAN from the finger TO its owner: DEKE. His Christian name's JOE DEACON and he wears a Sheriff's deputy uniform plus the toilsome demeanor of someone who's seen 100 years worth of this world. Too bad he's only 45.

EXT. BLACK ANGUS RESTAURANT (BAKERSFIELD) - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: BAKERSFIELD.

The restaurant manager, BURNS, short, bald, livid, stands over Deacon, who's mesmerized by the spot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURNS

Third time in the past two months.
There's 47 bulbs in the letter
'G.' \$3.10 a pop. \$145.70 every
time. That's thirteen additional
dinners I gotta sell to float.
Not counting lost business. Are
you listening to me?

Deke stands, nods.

BURNS

Half our take is from the
Interstate. You drive by, look
up... I mean, gastronomically
appealing, it's not.

Deke steps back, takes a look up at...

The sign above the restaurant -- lit bulbs spell out --
BLACK ANUS. The broken glass is the bulbs from the "G."

DEKE

Not exactly a Happy Meal, is it?

INT. KERN COUNTY SHERIFF'S - NIGHT

Deke walks down a hall, unbuckling his holster. End of
shift. He spots a newspaper on a desk. The headline
reads: FOURTH VICTIM FOUND.

DAVIS (V.O.)

Hey, Deke?...

INT. CAPTAIN DAVIS'S OFFICE - NIGHT

DAVIS is 60, soft; the foreman of the shop. He waves
Deke into his office. Deke stops at the open door.

DAVIS

Remember a punk named Jason
Kendricks?

While Deke rummages through his brain...

DAVIS

Robbed the Kwik-mart on Yaupon;
shot and killed the owner?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVIS (CONT'D)

We've got a witness who I.D.'d him, but she's gettin' the guilts: can't be absolutely, positively sure he's the guy. All she knows for certain is, he was wearing a really nice-looking pair of boots. Fancy stitching. 'Unforgettable,' she says.

DEKE

(remembers)

What about the .38 he used?

DAVIS

Ah, the fog lifts? Two searches -- his apartment here and Granny's house in L.A. Nada. But, they came up with a pair of 'unforgettable' blood-stained boots. L.A. Serology ran a spot test and the blood's not Kendricks' and it's not our victims.

DEKE

Is this going somewhere?

DAVIS

Yeah, and so are you. There's a 'pre-trial' day after tomorrow with a motion to dismiss. You drive to L.A. manana, bring back the boots, she I.D.'s them and the judge sets a trial date.

Deke grimaces at the prospect. Somehow, it reads as fear. Deke steps out into the hall and pours himself a cup of coffee.

DEKE

Sounds like the D.A.'s problem to me.

Davis rises from his desk, walks to the door, file in hand.

DAVIS

It's our problem. No evidence, no conviction. Sheriffs with low conviction rates don't get re-elected.

Deke stares, then utters a word that's foreign to him...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEKE

Please...?

Davis considers the odd plea, then shrugs...

DAVIS

I got nobody else.

... and hands the file to Deke.

EXT. HIGH DESERT - DAY

The sun rises on a single adobe house stuck in the middle of the desert. Deke's Bronco is parked out front.

INT. DEKE'S HOUSE - DAY

Spartan. A few pieces of hand-me-down furniture surround a fireplace. A linoleum kitchen table sits in the middle of the main room. On it sits the file Davis handed over. Deke sits, staring at it. Then he takes a deep breath and picks it up.

EXT. DEKE'S HOUSE - DAY

Deke locks the door to his house and walks toward the Bronco. A cur dog trots down a dusty ridge and up to him.

DEKE

Don't look at me like that.
You've been gone for two weeks.

The dog rubs against Deke's pants leg. He lifts a boot and scratches the hound's back, sending the pooch to heaven. Then Deke walks to the truck, leaving the hound staring.

DEKE

See ya tonight.

EXT./INT. LOS ANGELES COUNTY BUILDING - "TWIN TOWERS" - DAY

A madhouse: Reporters trying their best to go beyond a designated area; law enforcement officials, moving through the halls.

INT. COUNTY SHERIFF'S HOMICIDE - DAY

CAPTAIN CARL FARRIS sits behind his desk, staring blankly ahead. On the wall, hangs an embroidered Bible verse. He reaches into his ever-present jar of designer jelly beans.

FARRIS

I scheduled a press conference for three today. Give them an update -- leads are being followed, suspects questioned, progress made, etc. etc.

Across the desk, SGT. JIM BAXTER nods. He's 35, lean, handsome. Could have been a movie star if he'd wanted to. But he's a cop; cream of the crop -- a homicide detective.

FARRIS

Four dead girls, Jimmy. Haven't been under this much scrutiny since the Nightstalker. I know it's a hustle, but if anyone can put the right spin on this thing, it's you.

BAXTER

(on exit)

Yeah, that's me. Three-card Monte.

INT. HOMICIDE - MAIN ROOM - DAY

Baxter enters the room -- a large "bull pen" area with a multitude of desks, charts and coffee machines.

SAL RIZOLI, 45 (but he's looked that old for 20 years), notes Baxter's entrance. He looks up to the desk "next door," and whistles to JAMIE, 30, the youngest and prettiest (though she tries her damndest to hide it) of this group of detectives.

Baxter sits on Rizoli's desk.

SAL

The 'possible' we were looking for has been in Fed lockup for six months; the acting class angle was a wash and the lab called to say the clothing re-test results are the same.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER
(to Jamie)
Re-interview Nichols' landlord.

JAMIE
Re-re-interview?

BAXTER
Yeah. Sal, go back to the first one, Paula Simons. If he slipped up, we'll probably find it there. I'm going to Serology. Mistakes happen.

SAL
Yeah, but twice?

But Baxter is already gone, leaving Sal and Jamie staring.

INT./EXT. DEKE'S BRONCO - FREEWAY - DAY

As the RADIO plays a LOVE SONG, Deke drives, his eyes taking in...

LOS ANGELES - HIS POV

Sprawling. Smog-lidded. Oz for some, hell for others. His eyes rest on the Cahuenga Pass cross -- a huge, white monument high above the freeway.

DEKE (V.O.)
City of Angels. No sweat. In and out.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
In our top story today, Sheriff's Department officials have confirmed that the rash of killings that have occurred over the past two months are, in fact, connected. The fourth victim --

Deke turns OFF the RADIO.

EXT. EVIDENCE LAB - DAY

Not far from downtown. Deke pulls into the small parking lot. No empty spaces. He spots a sign...

"NO DOUBLE PARKING. VIOLATORS WILL BE TOWED."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Deke stifles a curse, pulls directly behind an unmarked vehicle, blocking it, parks and gets out.

INT. SEROLOGY LAB - DAY

An undersized room stuffed to the gills with file cabinets and boxes. A few lab-coat workers move to and fro.

Baxter sits across the desk from AMY ANDERS, 30, a serologist, as she hands over, one by one, packages filled with blood-stained clothing.

ANDERS

Simons... Fineman... Holland. All re-tested. All victim's blood only.

Baxter opens one of the packages, pulls out a blood-soaked sun dress and stares at it.

Deke enters. He and Baxter lock eyes.

DEKE

(proffering form)
Here to pick up seized evidence.

She holds up a finger -- "One sec." Deke moves back a step.

BAXTER

You're promising me, this is absolutely as thorough as you can be?

Anders gives a half-hearted nod.

BAXTER

(under his breath)
I need this, Amy. I really need this.

She sighs and reaches for one of the packages.

ANDERS

So... we run 'em again.

BAXTER

Thank you.

Baxter rises and again locks eyes with Deke on his way out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDERS

Yo, Kern County?

Deke "comes to," and hands over the requisition form. Anders hurries away. Deke walks over to the desk and gingerly handles the blood-soaked sun dress.

CLOSEUP - DEKE

transformed to another place and time...

CLOSEUP - SUN DRESS

"tie-dyed" in blood.

FLASH TO:

ANOTHER BLOOD SOAKED DRESS

A hand fingers it gingerly.

ANDERS (O.S.)

Hands off.

Deke comes to and releases his grip on the dress. Anders hands back the form.

ANDERS

The evidence is here but it ain't leaving without a signature.

Deke reaches in his breast pocket for a pen.

ANDERS

Not yours. I need authorization from Homicide to release.

DEKE

There's a pre-trial...

ANDERS

-- Not my problem. Captain Farris put a lock on this item from testing.

DEKE

It's already been tested...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDERS

Don't I know it. He wants it re-tested. We're up to our ass in dead girls.

DEKE

So I hear.

ANDERS

Look, you get me a signature and you can walk out of here wearing the damn things for all I care.

EXT. EVIDENCE LAB PARKING LOT - DAY

Deke walks out the door and spots...

Baxter watching as a tow truck driver hooks his crane to the back of Deke's truck.

DEKE

Hey!... Hey!

Deke trots over...

BAXTER

This yours?

DEKE

(to tow driver)

Unhook it.

The driver sighs and does so.

BAXTER

You had me blocked in.

DEKE

Why didn't you just ask me to move it?

BAXTER

Because I don't have time.

(points to sign)

Rules are rules. You want special treatment go back to Kern County.

Deke gives Baxter a look, gets in the Bronco and drives away, leaving Baxter standing there, shaking his head.

BAXTER

Jerk.

INT. L.A. SHERIFF'S - PRESS ROOM - DAY

A glassed-in room surrounded by offices. It's full of reporters. Baxter walks in and straight to the podium.

BAXTER

Sorry, I'm late...

INT. L.A.S.D. - HALLWAY - DAY

Deke walks past uniforms and plainclothes cops. A few recognize him. He ventures a nod now and again.

INT. L.A.S.D. - FARRIS' OFFICE - DAY

Deke stands in Farris' door. Farris looks up and almost groans. The two men share a look. These guys have a history.

DEKE

(re: verse
on wall)

I see Brother Love's Salvation
Show's still in operation.

FARRIS

Everybody needs a little faith.
Even you, Deacon.

DEKE

(re: Baxter)

Got yourself a new preacher?

FARRIS

Great Detective. Great guy. You
should listen in; might learn
something on both counts.

Deke, in no mood for this, holds up the requisition form.

FARRIS

The lab called. You leaving town
when you're done?

DEKE

Why? You wanna take me to dinner?

FARRIS

I want ya out of here. They'll
run the tests first thing in the
morning. If there's no match,
you're gone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEKE

No. Tomorrow's no good...

FARRIS

I called your C.O., had a nice chat. He said you should hang till the tests are complete, deliver the evidence tomorrow.

Deke knows he's stuck. He bites his lip and turns to go.

FARRIS

(sarcastic)

Look at it this way: It'll give you a chance to visit all those friends you left behind.

DEKE

Nice seein' you, too... Captain.

INT. L.A.S.D. HALLWAY - DAY

Deke exits Farris' office, stops and watches Baxter -- through the glass -- in the press room. A detective, ROGERS, spots Deke...

ROGERS

Who says bad guys don't return to the scene of the crime? How's it feel to be back in a uniform?

DEKE

Still paddin' your overtime, Rogers?

ROGERS

That's Sergeant Rogers now, Deacon.

DEKE

(sarcastic as hell)

Couldn't happen to a nicer guy.

Rogers walks away, grumbling...

INT. PRESS ROOM - DAY

BAXTER

(at the podium)

... and I'm pleased to report we're making good progress...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His attention drifts to...

THROUGH the glass -- in the hall -- Deke stands watching. Then he walks through the door and into the press room.

BAXTER
... following leads and
interviewing potential
witnesses...

Deke leans against the wall. A reporter, FLANDERS, taps his shoulder. Baxter continues with the press conference in the b.g.

FLANDERS
Gooda see ya, Deacon.

Deke doesn't respond.

FLANDERS
(re: Baxter)
He's good, huh? Got all the
answers.

Baxter, mid-answer, still eyeing Deke: He can't take his eyes off him. Deke stares right back then... raises his hand. Baxter tries to ignore but the reporters, one by one, look to Deke.

BAXTER
(can't avoid it)
You have a question, Deputy?

DEKE
Yeah. Correct me if I'm wrong,
but what I'm hearing is: after
two months and four victims you
don't have a suspect?

BAXTER
(holding anger)
None that I can discuss.

Deke smirks, shakes his head and exits.

Baxter, miffed, follows Deke's exit with his eyes.

EXT. TWIN TOWERS - DAY

Deacon walks to his Bronco, opens the door and crawls in.

VOICE (O.S.)
Sonofabitch!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Deke looks up to see Sal Rizoli, moving across traffic to his open window. Deke smiles, offers his hand.

DEKE

Hey, Sal. You still hanging around?

SAL

No rest for the ugly. What are you doing here?

DEKE

Don't ask, don't tell.

SAL

I was just on my way across the street. Lemme buy you a cup.

Deke weighs the offer.

SAL

Come on. What's one cup of coffee?

EXT. TWIN TOWERS - NIGHT

Baxter exits with BILL WILLIAMS, another detective.

WILLIAMS

You wanna grab a bite?

BAXTER

Naw, I told Jan I'd be home.

Baxter spots Deke across the street, THROUGH the window.

BAXTER

Who's that guy talkin' to, Sal?

WILLIAMS

That's Joe Deacon...

BAXTER

You're kidding?

INT. NICK'S - NIGHT

Sal and Deke...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAL

... a bunch of Nancies. End of shift, I have to beg for somebody to grab a beer with. They got no soul, these new guys. They weeded all the heart outta the place.

(beat)

But then, you know that better than anybody.

Baxter walks in, catches Deke's eye, strolls over.

SAL

Hey, Sarge. You know Joe Deacon?

Baxter nods a greeting, waiting for Deacon to offer his hand. Seeing that it's not forthcoming, he just sits and stares. Deke gives it right back to him. Sal watches nervously.

BAXTER

You get what you came for?

DEKE

I will.

BAXTER

Then why you wanna bust my balls in the meantime?

SAL

Nuthin' personal. He busts everybody's balls. Ain't that right, Deke?

DEKE

You wanna bullshit John Q into thinkin' the worst is over, that's your business. Until the 'next time.'

Baxter just glares.

DEKE

But, hey, it's your shift.

BAXTER

Yes, it is.

DEKE

I hear you're a good cop.

BAXTER

I hear things, too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEKE

I bet you do.

Deke smiles and offers his hand. They shake. Tension lifted. Sal's relief is evident.

A tap on the window. Jamie motions for Baxter to come out.

BAXTER

Excuse me.

And he walks outside.

SAL

(to Deke)

He is a good cop, Deke. Hangs a bit too much with the Holy rollers, but hey, I've been thinkin' about joinin' myself. Get on the fast track for a promotion.

Deke sips his coffee. Baxter finishes his conversation with Jamie and re-enters the restaurant. He stops, stares at Deke...

BAXTER

Looks like 'next time' is here.

Sal tosses a coupla bucks down, rises, shakes Deke's hand.

SAL

Wanna stay with me and the wife tonight?

DEKE

No, thanks.

SAL

Okay, well, good seein' ya.

Deke nods, but his eyes are on Baxter... and Baxter's on his.

They turn to walk away, then Baxter stops, turns...

BAXTER

Wanna tag along?

SAL

Hey, yeah, come on, Deke! Old time's sake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Deke stares at Baxter's almost smug smile.

BAXTER

Ride over with me. Maybe you can
even give a few pointers.

That does it.

EXT. FORMOSA APARTMENT HOUSE - NIGHT

West Hollywood. The seedy part. Two radio cars are
parked out front alongside a white utility truck. Cones
and police tape are strewn everywhere. Everyone's
outside waiting.

A brown unmarked car pulls up and Baxter steps out,
followed by Jamie, and, a few seconds later, by Deke.
Sal strides up.

SAL

Everybody outside, nobody in.
Dollar to a dime it's a 'decomp.'

The "first officer," HENDERSON, 25, green, scared, walks
up, note pad in hand.

BAXTER

Baxter. 66713. What's everybody
waiting around for?

HENDERSON

Power's off in the victim's
apartment.

BAXTER

You call Edison?

HENDERSON

They're workin' on it now.

BAXTER

You been inside?

Henderson gulps and nods. Baxter smiles at the young
cop's very apparent nausea.

BAXTER

How big's the place?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HENDERSON

Two-room efficiency. Due to victim's body position, access is through the adjacent apartment's fire escape.

SAL

(a thought)

We got generators in the truck.

BAXTER

Let's let the wazoo boys go to work while we're waiting for power.

Three MEN emerge from the back of a white truck. The "Ghoul Squad." They are dressed in what one can only describe as "moon suits" -- covered from head to toe in plastic. Carrying various tools of their trade, they make haste to the apartment.

Baxter walks over to Deke and smiles.

BAXTER

You familiar with all this?

DEKE

No.

BAXTER

They fume it up with cyanoacrylate -- Superglue -- then luminol and air it out. Everything shows up under black-lite laser -- fingerprints, blood, hair, sole prints... the wazoo.

(beat)

Things have probably changed a lot since you left.

DEKE

You still gotta catch him, right?

BAXTER

Yeah.

DEKE

Nothing's changed.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT (LATER)

Deke, Baxter, Sal, and a host of technical experts -- criminalists, coroner's assistants, serologists -- stand, waiting.

Sal's nose wriggles at an invading smell. He reaches into his pocket, extracts a pack of Kools, tears the filters off two cigarettes and sticks them in his nose.

SAL

Anybody wanna menthol?

The moon-suited wazoo boys exit through the adjacent apartment and nod to Baxter.

MOON SUIT

Did you eat?

Baxter smiles and turns to Deke.

BAXTER

Not squeamish, are we?

Deke just glares at him. Baxter puts on his mask and goggles, flicks on his hand-held black-lite laser, and heads through...

... the adjacent apartment door, past the apartment's occupants -- a middle-aged Hispanic woman, her husband and three grandkids -- all sitting at a kitchen table, watching the procession of cops.

EXT. LANDING OUTSIDE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Baxter exits the "adjacent apartment" window, steps on the landing, walks "next door" and climbs through the dark window, followed by Sal, Jamie and Deke, all wearing goggles and masks.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dark, save a little moonlight creeping through the window.

Baxter switches on the black-lite and the room...

... literally lights up. Fingerprints, handprints, blood spatters -- on the wall, the floor -- all with a phosphorescent whitish-green hue. The room has transformed into a haunted house of evidence.

Deke, standing against the window wall. Staring, watching.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sal, Jamie, Baxter -- eyes peeled as the black-lite...

... pans across the room -- past and over fingerprints, sole prints, blood spatters -- and finally, rests on, the very dead body of a 22-year-old girl, lit by the veritable light show taking place all over her nude body, which leans, propped against the front door of the apartment, covered in dried blood.

BAXTER

Jesus.

Then, all at once, the electricity comes on -- lights, an electric fan, a clock radio... From sensory deprivation to overload.

We see too much of everything -- the bloody mattress, the blood-stained floor, and... the body. Her name is, was, Julie Brecht -- stabbed to death, caked in blood... a plastic bag over her head.

Deke, Baxter, Sal and the others -- squinting from the light, too numb to comment.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

The room is now fully lit and all the evidence people are hard at work. Baxter stands in the middle, the ringmaster.

BAXTER

Hear ye. Hear ye. To understand the artist you gotta stare at his work. Hands in pockets, eyes on the floor, moving clockwise. We're all drinking from the same trough here so be careful, be courteous, be patient. She's dead; let's not murder the crime scene.

Deke, standing against the wall, stares down at the window ledge -- footprints all over it.

DEKE

(sotto; to Sal)

They lifted this window?

Sal turns, walks up to Baxter, says something and Baxter glances at the ledge, then to Deke, then turns to the room...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER

Where's the first officer?!

A photographer/latent prints man moves slowly around the room, taking shots of anything and everything.

Deke stands against the wall, out of the way, and watches.

HIS POV

MOVING AROUND the room -- the window, the blood on the floor, the spattering of red against one wall, a Schlitz beer can on the dresser, the unmade bed, the tennis shoe near the body and finally, MOVING UP the body of the girl TO the garbage bag pulled tightly over her head.

A man with a doctor bag, the Coroner's assistant, FLO DUNIGAN, steps through the window. He's 45, carries a few extra pounds plus a ton of likable attitude, and will never understand why he's not a prize catch in the dating market. He spots Deke...

DUNIGAN

Joe Deacon? Jesus Christ, it shouldn't be nice to see you but it is.

DEKE

Since when you makin' house calls, Flo?

DUNIGAN

Can't afford any fuck-ups these days.

He spots the dead body, bag still over her head.

DUNIGAN

You in town for awhile?

DEKE

No.

DUNIGAN

Stick around till I'm finished?

Deke nods and Dunigan goes immediately to the body. With medical precision he dons a mask and double checks for pulse. Nada. He turns and catches Baxter's gaze.

DUNIGAN

I'm rulin' out suicide.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Baxter doesn't laugh. Flo drops his smile and places small elastic bags over the girl's hands to preserve evidence.

Sal reenters, followed by Henderson. Sal slides in next to Deke, nods to the corpse and reads from the first's notes.

SAL

Joe Deacon, meet Julie Brecht.
Julie's five-six, a buck twenty
and hails from Manhattan, Kansas.
She's currently working as an ad
agency temp but one day hopes to
fulfill her dream of fronting a
rock band and winning a Grammy.

(beat)

This job sucks.

Sal walks away, crossing Baxter, who points to the ledge as he confronts Henderson.

BAXTER

Our killer exited the same way we
came in. It's your responsibility
to secure the premises; to protect
it from anyone who might spoil it
-- the sheriff, the mayor, the
President or me. You got that?!

Henderson nods and exits through the window, careful this time to step over the ledge.

Dunigan pulls a thermometer and a scalpel, makes a liver incision and sticks the thermometer in. Then he checks for rigor in the fingers, toes... None.

A CRIMINALIST uses a metal rod to lift a bloody flannel shirt from the floor. He places it carefully in a plastic bag.

Two other TECHS stare at the pool of dried blood and play a game of "Geographical Rorschach."

TECH #1

It's startin' to look a lot like
Illinois.

TECH #2

Naw, it's Michigan. See, there's
Cheboygan!

Sal opens the frig, checks the contents, makes a note.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAL
This been dusted?

CRIME TECH
Yeah, but it's broken; the stuff's rotten.

Sal squeezes open the top on a quart of milk, sniffs it, lifts the container and pours some into his open mouth.

SAL
Not all of it.

Deke smiles. Sal's antics never fail to amuse.

Baxter walks over to Sal.

BAXTER
(re: Deke)
So how long before Columbo breaks my case for me?

SAL
Deke's got his own style. He's a 'mudder.' Wins the rainy day races the other horses don't wanna run.

The photographer continues working -- taking shots of the corpse, the floor, the bed, the wall -- closeups, medium shots, wide shots, several of each.

QUICK CUTS - TIGHT SHOTS

evidence being brown-bagged, numbered; a tech removes the dust bag from a vacuum cleaner; another tech scrapes the residue from the kitchen drain into a bag. More evidence, more bags, more tags.

Dunigan makes notes, checking wounds, opening gaping holes, peering in, over and around the body of the once pretty, but now very much dead, Julie Brecht. He turns to an assistant.

DUNIGAN
Edison's crackin' down. Miss a payment deadline and... hey, that's pretty good. A deadline!

Baxter walks over and squats beside them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUNIGAN

She assumed room temperature
three, four, five days ago. Know
more when we take her in.
Probably the knife rather than the
bag. One funny note for a funny
business. She was moved.

(beat)

Check this out.

He turns the body a bit, exposing the victim's hands tied
behind her with electrician's cord. The dead girl's back
has several purplish spots on it.

DUNIGAN

Postmortem lividity. She died on
her back. Anybody relocate her?
The landlady, the 'first'?...

BAXTER

Why?

DUNIGAN

The way this looks she was moved a
long time after she died.

Baxter mulls this over.

DUNIGAN

You ready for the unveiling?

Baxter nods and Dunigan unties and slowly lifts the bag
off the girl's head.

Deke -- staring, watching. Then his eyes tell us he's
looking at something disturbing. A morbid revelation.

The girl, Julie Brecht, bag now off. Her mouth and eyes
open. Purplish bite marks cover her face and neck.

Deke holds his stare for several seconds, then, when he
blinks...

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. SHAKESPEARE'S BRIDGE - NIGHT

A small but ornate bridge lit only by moonlight. It
traverses a cozy hillside neighborhood. An unmarked car
pulls up and stops on the bridge behind a patrol cruiser.

Two detectives step out of the unmarked sedan. As they
walk toward us we can see that it's Deke and Farris.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sal, in the uniform of a patrol deputy, runs up to them, out of breath, scared.

SAL

We got two under the bridge.

Fresh. Real fresh.

DEKE

Put a call in for backup; set a perimeter in case the perp's still around.

Sal races to his cruiser and grabs the radio. Deke and Farris trot to the end of the bridge.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT (LATER) (PRESENT)

While the activity continues behind him, Deke stands on the fire escape, staring into the night.

HIS POV

The lights of Hollywood. PAN TO...

An abandoned building across the street.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT (MINUTES LATER)

Deke, carrying a flashlight, walks slowly across the street, his eyes up on the abandoned building.

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - NIGHT

Deke carefully makes his way up a rickety side wooden stairwell. When he reaches the top, third floor, he reaches out and...

Pushes open the CREAKY, barely attached DOOR.

INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT - NIGHT

Deke enters the apartment. He points the flashlight and...

A dozen oversized rats scurry for cover.

Deke moves forward, shining the light at...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The rest of the room. Empty save a beat-to-hell loveseat, a three-legged table balanced against the wall and a kitchen chair, lying toppled in the middle of the room.

INT. BRECHT APARTMENT - NIGHT

Baxter, in the midst of the crime scene, watches... The flashlight moving to and fro in the abandoned apartment across the street.

INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT - NIGHT

Deke moves to the loveseat, looks at it, then eyes the toppled chair, walks over to the window and pushes the ratted shutters open. A streetlamp throws a beam of light fifteen or so feet into the room. He walks alongside the beam and stops, stares at...

The kitchen chair, in the dark, just beyond the light.

Deke arights the chair, takes a seat and smiles... because what he's looking at is...

A direct view of the Brecht apartment. Julie, the belle of the ball, sits dead center.

EXT. FORMOSA STREET - NIGHT (LATER)

Deke walks over to the dejected first officer, Henderson.

DEKE

Reamed you pretty good, huh?

HENDERSON

Yeah.

DEKE

Wanna make it up to him?

Henderson, confused, looks at Deke.

EXT. FRONT OF APARTMENT HOUSE - NIGHT (LATER)

Sal and Jamie watch as the body is taken out. Show's over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAL

When I was a kid I couldn't sneeze without a neighbor wantin' to quarantine the block. A vicious murder happens down the hall and nobody heard, nobody saw nothin'? Jeezus. The ghoul squad come up with anything?

JAMIE

A 'partial' fingerprint on her thigh. Other than that, nada. My maid should be so thorough.

SAL

You got a maid?!

Baxter, nearby, speaks into a pay phone...

BAXTER

Half an hour or so. The girls asleep?... I love you, too.

He hangs up and moves next to Dunigan who, along with a Tech, is in the middle of a conversation with Henderson.

BAXTER

What's going on?

Henderson points to the apartment house across the street.

HENDERSON

I spotted the abandoned apartment across the street. When I walked up I recognized it as a possible viewing point of the victim's domicile.

Dunigan gives Baxter a look that says he's impressed. Baxter nods to the tech, who grabs a co-worker and heads across the street, evidence bags in hand.

Baxter eyes Henderson then spots... Deke standing by himself, twenty yards or so away.

Baxter turns on Henderson.

BAXTER

When you left your post the crime scene perimeter could have been contaminated. Congrats, Sherlock, you've screwed the pooch twice in one night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Henderson, dejected, nods and walks away, passing...
Deke.

HENDERSON

Thanks a lot.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

Baxter gives Jamie notes while Deke sits in the back seat.

BAXTER

... canvass the block, knock on every door, quiz every hooker, find out the girl's habits, friends, suitors, enemies.

JAMIE

They get anything across the street?

BAXTER

Lifted some prints. Tested stains on the floor for semen. Get me the report in the morning. Oh, and pull files on any known sex offenders in the area; complaints of Peeping Toms; neighborhood arrests; transients included. Cross reference traits against prior victims; lean on the lab for prints...

Baxter scours his mind for other details, then turns to Deke.

BAXTER

Awful quiet back there, Kojak. Am I missing something?

DEKE

Your other girls have bites?

JAMIE

Carrie Holland.

BAXTER

One of 'em. Why?

DEKE

Similar to an old case... up north.

EXT. TWIN TOWERS - NIGHT

Jamie pulls up to Deke's Bronco. Deke slides out.

BAXTER

Sal says you're here overnight.
Why don't you buy me breakfast
tomorrow?

DEKE

Why I wanna buy you breakfast?

BAXTER

Okay, I buy you. Nick's. 0830.

DEKE

If I'm still here...

Deke shuts the door.

BAXTER

And by the way. Thanks for the
help.

INT. DEKE'S BRONCO - NIGHT

As he drives through the streets, eyeing every hooker,
scoping every corner, drinking in the darkness and
shadows.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. UNDER BRIDGE - NIGHT

The crime scene is now several hours old. Criminalists
and cops work the evidence and a large Xenon lights the
whole area.

Farris stands by himself, off to the side. Sal walks up
with a notepad.

SAL

I'm fillin' out my report here
and, uh...

Farris turns, stares at him. They hold their look for
several seconds.

SAL

You make the call, Sarge. But, if
it makes any difference, you
should know I bleed blue. I
mean... I'm a team player... if it
makes any difference.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Farris turns his gaze across the crime scene. Sal follows his look and the two men stare at...

Deke, sitting on the rock, staring into space. As we PUSH IN ON him...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. 24 HOUR COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

THROUGH the window we PUSH IN ON Deke, sitting alone, the only customer. A worker vacuums around him; a waitress fills salt shakers.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. L.A.S.D. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY (PRESENT)

A man, STAN PETERS, 40, sits nervously alone in the yellow room.

THROUGH the door window we see Sal checking the guy out.

INT. HOMICIDE - DAY

The place is a zoo. Baxter works at his desk with a look that says he's been here for while. Sal walks past.

BAXTER

He fall asleep yet?

SAL

Nah. Nervous. Like an innocent man.

The PHONE RINGS. Jamie picks it up.

JAMIE

County Homicide. Sheffield.

She listens for a few seconds, starts jotting notes. Then she turns to Baxter...

JAMIE

Vermont and Imperial. Already I.D.'ed Bobby Watkins. 17 years young. Two small caliber to the head.

Baxter, in the midst of his own problems, turns to Jamie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER

It's yours.

Jamie is startled. Then she regroups and speaks into the phone.

JAMIE

I'll be there in 10 minutes.
Sheffield. S-H-E-F-F-I-E-L-D.

And she hangs up the phone. Sal and Bill Williams, plus a few other detectives raise a cheer.

SAL

Gentlemen and ladies, raise your
mugs to Jamie, who just got her
first primary.

And they all do. Jamie nods, smiles, grabs her coat and exits the room. Then, after a few seconds, she returns, red-faced, opens his drawer, grabs her revolver, and leaves.

The guys share looks and grins.

SAL

A Lynwood Moolie shot in a block
of junkies. Thanks, Jimmy.
Misdemeanor homicides I can live
without.

BAXTER

If she can't close it, nobody
thinks the worse of her. If she
does, you owe her a drink.

Baxter checks his watch, grabs his jacket and races out.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Baxter crosses against traffic. He spots something...

A poster -- on a light pole. It has a picture of pretty young girl with her name -- RONDA RATHMAN -- underneath. We remember her from the first scene. In bold lettering at the top it says: HAVE YOU SEEN THIS GIRL?

Baxter stares at the poster for a moment.

INT. NICK'S - DAY

A clear bag containing a pair of black, blood-stained boots, sits on the counter. We PAN TO Deke, haggard, in the midst of a conversation at a nearby pay phone.

DAVIS (V.O.)

Surprised the D.A., too. She made a second degree offer; Kendricks copped the plea.

DEKE

What do I do with the boots?

DAVIS (V.O.)

We don't need 'em. I'll see you tomorrow.

Deke hangs up, walks to the counter, sits and motions to a passing waitress for more coffee. She ignores.

Baxter strides in, nods to a few patrons, spots Deke and walks over. A cup of coffee is immediately poured for him. The waitress walks away, again without refilling for Deke.

BAXTER

Morning. Sorry I'm late. When you taking off?

DEKE

Why?

BAXTER

Got something you might wanna sit in on. Guy picked up twice for peeping in the victim's neighborhood. Sheet says he's a K.S.O. Stan Peters.

Deke's face shows a hint of recognition.

BAXTER

Picked up this morning on a Ramey warrant. Letting him stew a bit.

(beat)

He wants a mouthpiece.

(noticing...)

Nice boots.

INT. STATION OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Deke sits alone, staring THROUGH the one-way glass at...

STAN PETERS: 45, pudgy, antsy. Baxter enters with a file.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Baxter sits and opens the file to a graduation photo of Julie Brecht. Baxter turns over the photo to the next -- a coroner's shot. Peters' face literally drops.

PETERS

Where's my lawyer?

BAXTER

He's in the building. It takes awhile.

EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

Sal holds back a cheap-suit PUBLIC DEFENDER with one hand.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Sal, he's already 'requested' and I've been standing here for twenty minutes.

SAL

And we've told him you're in the building. But until he makes a demand to see you...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Peters and Baxter...

BAXTER

I gotta tell ya, Stan, this doesn't look so good. A girl from your hood, dead, and you, a known sex offender...

PETERS

Like I said before, I was takin' a piss!

BAXTER

K.S.O. -- that's what it says in the book. I dunno, Stan...

Peters gulps nervously. Baxter stares him down.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Deke picks up the phone, holds it to his ear...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Baxter spots the blinking light on the phone, picks it up, listens, then sets it down. Considers a second, then...

BAXTER

The name Mary Roberts ring a bell?

Peters face falls into anguish.

PETERS

What...?!

BAXTER

Mary Roberts?

Peters looks at the phone then at the one-way glass. He rises, walks to the glass and stares into it.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Deke sits calmly as Peters places both hands on the glass and leans in, a strange look on his face. He knows who's behind it.

INT. TWIN TOWERS - HALLWAY - DAY

Deke and Baxter walk and talk.

BAXTER

Mary Roberts? Stan Peters?

DEKE

A dead girl and a suspect.

BAXTER

Was he your guy?

DEKE

You never know.

(beat)

Just my way of sayin' hello to an old pal.

EXT. TWIN TOWERS - DAY

Baxter and Deke exit and pause on the steps.

BAXTER

Your 'pal' says ya broke his jaw once.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEKE

You gotta kiss a lotta frogs to
find your prince.

Captain Farris walks up the steps, spots Deke.

FARRIS

What are you still doing here?

DEKE

Just leaving.

'And he does. Baxter and Farris watch him walk away.

BAXTER

Sal said you and Deacon were
partners.

Farris nods, taken back to that time. Then he grimaces
and walks back inside.

INT. HOMICIDE - DAY

Baxter walks up to Jamie's deck.

BAXTER

Next time you're in the archives,
order up the 'poor boy' on a Mary
Roberts. I'm goin' across the
street for a hoagie. You want
anything?

JAMIE

You got the Rathmans waiting for
you.

BAXTER

Rathman... where do I know that
name?

JAMIE

Missing person. They think their
daughter's a stat.

BAXTER

We got a corpse?
(as she shakes
her head)
Then it's still Missing Persons.

He looks up and spots.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A middle-aged couple, Bill and Phyllis Rathman, sitting in a glassed-in cubicle twenty feet away. If they've had a night of sleep in the past days it doesn't show. Almost on cue they turn hopefully to their potential savior.

Baxter walks away but can't help but turn for one last look at the grieving parents.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

Deke's Bronco enters the freeway out of town.

INT. BRONCO - DAY

Deke drives, his mind focusing on a dozen things, his soul wrestling with a dozen more. He CHANGES the RADIO CHANNEL once, AGAIN. His foot hits the gas. He CHANGES the CHANNEL again.

He's blasting past traffic, weaving through lanes. Cars HONK, drivers curse.

Deke stares straight ahead, still JAMMING the RADIO BUTTONS. It's all white noise to him.

His foot punches the accelerator to the floor and the Bronco hits warp speed heading north.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

Deke's Bronco changes lanes abruptly and almost hits a station wagon.

INT. BRONCO - DAY

Deke spots children in the back of the station wagon and snaps to. He pulls off the freeway to the feeder road and brings his truck to a halt. He looks at himself in the rearview mirror, sweating, breathing hard.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

The Bronco sits, empty, on a knoll high in the Cahuenga Pass.

EXT. KNOLL'S CREST - DAY (SUNSET)

The twenty foot high cross. At its base sits Deke.

FROM BEHIND AND ABOVE CROSS

The sun sets on a view of the congested 101 freeway as it feeds down into Hollywood and, in the distance, Downtown. Deke seems a small, insignificant figure in comparison with the cross and the teeming city below and beyond.

Deke just stares...

INT. CORONER'S - NIGHT

Flo Dunigan pushes a gurney under a light.

DEKE (O.S.)

Don't you ever get tired of
lookin' at dead bodies?

He looks up, spots Deke standing in the doorway.

DUNIGAN

I could ask you the same question.
What are you doing here, Joe?

DEKE

We got a similar case up north.

Dunigan nods and turns on an overhead light.

DEKE

Thanks for doing this.

DUNIGAN

No problem. She won't see the
knife till tomorrow. Well, she
won't see another knife...

Deke pulls a stool alongside the gurney and sits.
Dunigan rolls back the plastic covering on the body.
Julie Brecht.

DUNIGAN

General proximity, similar pattern
and depth to our other four. The
garbage bag was an adornment,
placed over her head postmortem.
Maybe even when the guy came back.

DEKE

'Came back'?

DUNIGAN

Unless he's a 'babysitter,' he
made a return trip, moved the
girl, propped her against the
door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Deke mentally chews on this bite of information.

DUNIGAN

Lividity, stomach contents, plus
blowfly maggot gestation place her
at room temperature 48 to 72 hours
before she was moved and at least
96 hours before she was
discovered.

(beat)

Hey, you wanna turn that up?

He points to a RADIO. Deke reaches over, ADJUSTS the
VOLUME knob.... an old mellow LOVE SONG.

DUNIGAN

Ah, that's nice. 99.9 -- love
songs from the 50s and 60s. Next
week they're changin' formats to
talk radio. What kind of a world
is this?

DEKE

You get a 'dental' on the bites?

DUNIGAN

Inconclusive. Could be the same
as we found on the Holland girl.
More sucking than biting.

DEKE

They look like hickeys, love
bites.

DUNIGAN

Brings back memories.

DEKE

Any saliva samples?

DUNIGAN

No, but funny you ask. Found
traces of sodium benzoate in the
bites.

DEKE

What's that?

DUNIGAN

Used in mouthwash, toothpaste.
Who wants bad breath when you're
on a hot date, right? Oh, and
check this... He gave her a
postmortem shave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEKE

You're kidding, right?

DUNIGAN

Nope. See, he nicked her here.
No blood.

DEKE

Anything interesting in her
D-tract?

DUNIGAN

One good meal before she died.
Speaking of which, you hungry?

DEKE

Pull your copy of an old file for
me and I'll buy.

Deke writes down a number and hands it to Dunigan.
Dunigan stares at the number, then shoots an agonized
look at Deke.

DUNIGAN

Case up north my ass. What the
fuck are you doin'? Huh?!

Deke just stares at him.

DUNIGAN

I'll give you your fuckin' file
but if anything happens I can't be
there for you again. Capese?

Deke nods. Dunigan sighs and walks out of the room.
Deke stares at the dead girl. He reaches out, touches
her tenderly.

DEKE

You knew him. Or at least he knew
you. That's why he did that to
your face. You let him in, huh?
Did he make conversation? Seem
like an okay guy? Pretty smart,
maybe even funny. Not exactly
your type but could be a friend;
can't have enough of them, right?
So you feel bad, offer him a beer
maybe. You had that one little
feeling -- 'what if?' -- but you
waved it away; thought 'what the
hell,' life's too short.' Well it
is, Julie. It is too short.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEKE (CONT'D)

(beat)

You shoulda listened to that
little feeling. You shoulda
listened; just like I'm listenin'
now. You can talk to me.

(beat)

I'm all the friend you got.

Dunigan returns, carrying a file -- a "poor boy."

DUNIGAN

Who you talkin' to?

EXT. LONELY TWO-LANE BLACKTOP - NIGHT

North San Fernando Valley. Flat, bushy, lit only by the
moon. Deserted except for a single car's headlight.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

TINA SALVATORE, 27. Cute. She likes her MUSIC LOUD when
she drives. She sings along, lost in her thoughts
until...

Another set of headlights appears behind her, out of
nowhere. She watches in her rearview mirror, expecting
the car to pass.

But it doesn't. Instead, it pulls up closer and flashes
its high beams.

Tina rolls down her window and waves the trailing car
around. After a few seconds the trail car, a dark sedan,
does just that, but instead of passing, it pulls up
alongside her.

The guy in the dark sedan -- baseball cap, glasses;
Peters?... maybe -- is hard to get a good look at in the
shadows, but he makes animated, friendly gestures. He
seems to be pointing at the rear of Tina's car...

Tina shrugs a "whattaya talkin' about" and the guy keeps
making gestures. She slows her car to a crawl and the
dark sedan with the FRIENDLY MOTORIST does likewise. His
window is down.

FRIENDLY MOTORIST

Your back tire...!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She comes to a stop and the guy slows and parks behind her. A little frightened, she rolls up her window and watches as the Friendly Motorist exits his sedan, goes to his trunk, grabs a tire iron and walks toward her car. Then he stops, kneels down and starts to work on the rear tire's lug nuts. After a few seconds...

FRIENDLY MOTORIST

That oughta do ya.

She rolls her window down an inch.

TINA

Thanks. Thanks a lot.

The Friendly Motorist nods, moves back to his car, gets in and drives away.

Tina waits to breathe until the sedan disappears over the next ridge. Then she puts her car in drive and slowly pulls ahead.

A few seconds, maybe 30 yards later, her CAR starts to make a god-awful RACKET, shaking back and forth. She comes to a stop, looks around...

Nothing but the black, still night.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Dark. Quiet. Tina, scared to death, gets out, looks around, then goes to her back tire and shudders.

The rear tire is bent almost off the axle and only one lug nut remains intact.

TINA

Oh, Jesus...

She takes a deep breath, retraces the car's path and spots something in the road. A lug nut. She picks it up and moves farther away from her car, searching for, and finding, another nut. A light exposes her. She spins to see...

The sedan's headlights cresting the ridge. Coming back toward her at a snail's pace.

Tina stands, frozen. What to do? Back to the car?

Too late. The dark sedan passes her car and keeps inching toward her -- 20, now ten yards away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tina gasps and starts to run, welling up with tears of horror.

The dark sedan crawls right up behind her, right on her tail. She splits off into the darkness of a field.

FRIENDLY MOTORIST'S POV

The dark sedan's lights trace Tina running into the field until she disappears into darkness.

BACK TO SCENE

The Friendly Motorist methodically gets out and walks, once again, to his trunk. He calmly, smoothly, reaches in and carefully puts on a pair of plastic gloves. Then he grabs a shank of rope, a gag, a flashlight... and a long knife.

IN FIELD

Tina, hand over her mouth, hides, lying flat between unplanted rows of dirt. The light sweeps past a spot near her.

The Friendly Motorist, 20 feet away, keeps walking... casually, step after step. Every few seconds he whistles a "Bob-white's call," almost as if he's expecting a return whistle.

Tina says a silent prayer and "blesses" herself.

The Friendly Motorist continues his orderly hunt.

Tina holds her breath and risks a peek. Her eyes go wide when she spots... An 18 wheeler cresting the ridge.

Tina takes a deep breath and runs like hell for the road. Never looking back, she jumps the culvert and races into the middle of the blacktop, playing a game of chicken with the oncoming truck.

The 18 wheeler HONKS then comes to a stop in front of her.

She runs to the driver's side. The DRIVER steps down from the cab and is immediately grabbed by Tina.

TRUCK DRIVER

It's okay. It's okay. Settle down, honey. What happened?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TINA

This guy, he tore up my tire.
He...

TRUCK DRIVER

-- What guy? What guy?

Tina ventures her first look back. No dark sedan. No Friendly Motorist.

INT. MEXICAN FOOD JOINT - NIGHT

Flo and Deke are finished eating.

DUNIGAN

A hooker dies, nobody misses a
wink of sleep. A non-pro?
Different story. Times five in
two months -- ka-boom. The squib
becomes a column, becomes a lead,
becomes a front page. Above the
fold. Suddenly it's not just
bodies; we got a serial killer on
the loose and TV movie producers
are buyin' rights and tryin' to
figure out who's gonna play Jim
Baxter. He's got a cute tushie,
huh?

Deke smiles. Flo's demeanor turns serious.

DUNIGAN

You know how I look at the world,
Joe? There's good and there's
bad. And every day I try my best
to line up on the right side. It
ain't easy I know, but you gotta
fight it, because, buddy, I look
in your eyes and what I see...
well, it ain't good.

Flo slowly reaches in his pocket and pulls out his key
chain. On it is a smashed bullet fragment.

DUNIGAN

A daily reminder of what I did.
(beat)
For what we did.

Deke nods. Flo repockets the keys. A busboy clears the
plates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUNIGAN

Well, that hit the spot. I ain't been out to a restaurant since I went on graveyards. Usually cook a little something and bring it in but my stove's broken. Three days before they can get a guy to fix it. Can you believe that?

Deke's gears are turning.

INT. DARK APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door opens and Deke enters, turns on the light. Julie Brecht's place. Empty save the blood stains that mark her demise. And another thing: the "super-glue" fumes have caused some of the paint to peel. Deke stares for a moment, drinking it in. Then he closes the door behind him.

After a second, he walks to the refrigerator and opens it. Empty. No interior light. He checks the bulb. Looks fine.

Deke puts a shoulder to the edge of the fridge and slides it halfway around. Then he hits a knee and checks the plug.

VOICE (O.S.)

I thought you guys were finished?

Deke jumps a bit and turns to the LANDLADY -- in the doorway.

DEKE

How long has this been broken?

LANDLADY

I don't know, a week maybe.

DEKE

You responsible for repairs?

LANDLADY

Thinkin' about movin' in?

Deke's face says he's not in the mood for humor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LANDLADY

I called a place to get it fixed but then the girl was killed and suddenly that wasn't such a big deal anymore. I mean, I got blood stains to worry about. Worse than Marinara. Probably have to rip up the carpet.

DEKE

Who'd ya call?

LANDLADY

Place around the corner. A.B.C. Appliance, something like that.

DEKE

The stuff in the fridge was rotten?

LANDLADY

Yeah.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. APARTMENT - BRECHT CRIME SCENE - NIGHT

Sal opens the carton of milk and pours some down.

BACK TO SCENE (PRESENT)

DEKE

Except the milk, right?

LANDLADY

My kid drank it; so cuff me already.

DEKE

Anything else?

LANDLADY

Beer. Three left, why?

DEKE

I'll need it for evidence.

LANDLADY

I bet you will.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She shakes her head and leaves the room. Deke finds a seat on the edge of the bed, still bloodstained. He stares at.... the bloody mattress, the floor, the spattered walls, the door...

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. APARTMENT - CRIME SCENE - NIGHT

Julie Brecht, as the bag is lifted off her head.

CUT TO:

INT. BRECHT APARTMENT - BACK TO SCENE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Deke stares straight ahead. Lost in memories.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. UNDER SHAKESPEARE'S BRIDGE - NIGHT

Deke and Farris carry flashlights as they rush down an embankment to the area below the bridge. Deke's in the lead. When he reaches the bottom he stops, frozen.

ANGLE ON LARGE ROCK

Around which are positioned two nude girls. Their arms are folded and their heads are resting on the flat top of the rock and several knife wounds are evident. On their heads are bags.

LANDLADY (V.O.)

How do you get used to it?

CUT TO:

INT. BRECHT APARTMENT - BACK TO SCENE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

The Landlady reenters, holding three Schlitz beers, still in their plastic noose. She stares at the bloody mattress.

LANDLADY

The smell?

DEKE

If you're lucky... you don't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She hands over the beer and heads for the door.

LANDLADY

Close it when you're finished...
(under her breath)
... ya creep.

And Deke is once again alone. He rips one of the beers from the plastic webbing, pops the top and downs a long drink.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD (HOLLYWOOD) - NIGHT

Stan Peters, looking harried -- hands shaking, sweat pouring from his chin, his face locked in worry -- walks down the street, looking for a place to cross. He looks both ways, then starts to jaywalk. When he reaches the middle of the street...

A TRUCK BRAKES HARD, stopping a few feet away from Peters. Peters starts to curse the driver but is horrified when he looks at him.

It's Deke, staring right back.

Peters, more nervous than ever, stumbles away.

INT. APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Peters, grim-faced, enters the hallway, fumbles with his keys, opens his door, goes in and closes it.

We HOLD ON the hallway for several seconds and then start to PULL BACK. After a few more seconds... a single GUNSHOT sounds.

EXT. ST. FRANCIS HOTEL - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

A run-down flop house on Hollywood Boulevard. A gaggle of hookers ply their trade out front, trying to wave down horny motorists.

INT. ST. FRANCIS LOBBY - NIGHT

Not exactly a lobby -- two couches, pay phone and caged desk, behind which sits the MANAGER. You know what he looks like.

Deke walks in, carrying the files and the bag of boots. The Manager eyes his uniform...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MANAGER

Look, I don't want any trouble. I got no connection to the girls out front.

DEKE

A room.

The Manager sighs, reaches and pulls a key off the wall.

MANAGER

20 a night. 100 a week.

Deke opens his wallet, extracts some bills and tosses them down. The Manager slides the key across the counter.

MANAGER

Upstairs, turn right. There's some stuff in there from the last guy. He stiffed me. Just toss it in the hall unless... He's about your size.

(beat)

Don't worry, the sheets are clean.

Deke starts to walk up the stairs.

MANAGER

Hey, you want some company?

Deke doesn't answer, just continues his climb.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Deke opens the door, flips on the light. A bed, a two drawer dresser, a dusty "nativity scene" print and a Gideon Bible. You get what you pay for.

Deke takes off his coat, opens the closet and stares at...

A few clothes hang above a worn-out trunk. If this was all the guy had, he didn't have much.

Deke hangs up his jacket, closes the closet, unbuttons and removes his shirt, walks to the bed, and sits down.

He slowly opens the file Dunigan gave him and removes the victim's photograph. But, instead of one, there are three. Mary Roberts. Paige Callahan. Tamara Ewing. Not quite as sweet and delicate as the current victims, but just as young.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Deke lines up the photos on the bed. We MOVE CLOSER TO a MEDIUM SHOT, and can't help but stare at the large surgical scar on his chest. He rubs it with a finger and stares at the photos as the lights, TRAFFIC sounds and HOOKER CATCALLS of Hollywood drift through a breezy, open window.

INT. BAXTER HOUSE - DAUGHTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Baxter kisses his daughters good night. The oldest, JENNIFER, 8, lies in the top bunk and the baby, CHLOE, 5, in the lower.

BAXTER

Good night, sleep tight, don't let
the bed bugs bite.

JENNIFER

If they do, hit 'em with a shoe.

CHLOE

If they holler, give 'em a dollar.

Baxter smiles and moves toward the door, "thinking hard."

BAXTER

If they plea, hit 'em in the knee.

Baxter closes the door behind him as he leaves. The girls continue the rhymes in the dark...

JENNIFER

If they cry, hit 'em in the eye.

CHLOE

(running low on ideas)
Um, if they fight, squeeze 'em...
hard.

INT. BAXTER MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Baxter enters and sees his wife, JAN, sitting on the edge of their bed, brushing her hair. She feels his eyes on her and turns to him seductively. Baxter smiles back and closes the door behind him.

INT. ST. FRANCIS - DEKE'S ROOM - CLOSEUP - PHOTO - NIGHT

Mary Roberts, lit by the beam of a flashlight in the dark. Cute. Innocent. Dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We MOVE WITH the beam of light as it PANS TO another shot, another dead girl, Paige Callahan. And then PAST a few crime scene shots TO the third victim, Tamara Ewing.

Deke, shirt off, lies on the bed, flashlight in hand, moving the light to and fro like an usher at a midnight horror movie. He lowers the light, pointing at...

HIS POV - LIVE GIRL

19 or so, with long, stringy hair covering her face. She kneels at the end of the bed and slowly, lovingly removes Deke's shoes. A hooker? Then she starts to rub his feet -- again, slowly, affectionately.

BACK TO SCENE

Deke, watching her work; staring as if she's performing an amazing act. He allows himself a low moan of pleasure.

The girl, hair still covering her face, raises her head and smiles softly, happy that her efforts are pleasing. She seems too gentle, too calm to be a hooker. Then, with both hands, she parts her hair, exposing her adoring face. It's Mary Roberts!

MARY

It's gonna be okay.

Deke smiles like a scared child -- almost whimsical -- nodding with his eyes. He slowly turns and shines the flashlight...

At the sink -- Two other girls, Paige Callahan and Tamara Ewing, standing at the sink, staring at the mirror -- amazed by their lack of reflection. Their movements, like Mary's, are slow, even, almost lyrical. They turn in unison and smile...

PAIGE

Always good to see you, Joe.

Deke turns, once again, to Mary.

MARY

(a whisper)

I've forgiven you, Joe.

(beat)

It's over...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Deke, lying still, gazing back. Then he forces his eyes closed and a tear -- a single perfect tear -- slides down his cheek.

DEKE
(a whisper)
It's never over.

EXT. THROUGH DEKE'S WINDOW - NIGHT

Deke alone, lies on the bed, one hand holding the flashlight.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COUNTY HOMICIDE - CAPTAIN FARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

The zoo of Homicide continues in the b.g., while Baxter and Farris converse...

FARRIS
You bring the guy in, give him the slow shuffle on his lawyer, then, the same day, he offs himself. The press gets wind of this...

BAXTER
-- I can handle the press.

Rogers walks past the glass, makes eye contact with Farris.

FARRIS
Something else. What the hell does this have to do with Kern County?

BAXTER
Don't believe everything Rogers tells ya. He's after both our jobs.

FARRIS
You didn't answer my question.

BAXTER
Deacon watched through the glass. He has a similar case up north; a little inter-agency cooperation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FARRIS

The guy hasn't worked a murder since we ran him off five years ago. He's in a radio car. You know the book on him?

BAXTER

Bits and pieces. Homicide dick has heart attack, leaves town for a post in the sticks.

Farris shakes his head.

FARRIS

The guy worked a case so hard he got a suspension, a divorce and a triple bypass, all in six months. Complete meltdown. Paramedics found him in a flop house on the Boulevard. He's a rush hour train wreck.

BAXTER

Am I the man? Am I the primary?

FARRIS

Yeah.

BAXTER

Then let me work my case my way!

Farris nods, settling Baxter down.

FARRIS

Just personal advice, Jimmy. You got a good thing going here. Anybody asks, 'Who's your best man?' I don't hesitate. It's you. Don't get mixed up with this guy. He's in league with the devil.

BAXTER

The devil? What's the big deal, Carl? He's gone.

FARRIS

His C.O. says he's taking vacation days.

BAXTER

Yeah, so what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FARRIS

He strike you as the kinda guy to
go fishing?

Baxter ponders this then starts for the door.

FARRIS

One thing I'll say for Joe Deacon.
He made me find religion. I owe
him for that. For makin' me see
the evil in myself.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - DAY

A pair of boots -- the boots -- still blood-stained, move
forward with purpose.

INT. ABC APPLIANCE - DAY

Deke, wearing civilian clothes that don't exactly look
new, talks to the OWNER. He tosses a notebook to Deke.

OWNER

Check it yourself. I got work to
do.

EXT. ABC APPLIANCE - DAY (LATER)

Deke emerges and shields his eyes from the morning sun.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Deke walks up to his Bronco, sticks in the key, gets in,
looks back over his shoulder to pull out and sees...

A sign -- down the block -- "AAA APPLIANCE - Sales and
Service." It hangs above another small shop on Hollywood
Boulevard.

INT. AAA APPLIANCE - DAY

The OWNER, 50, shows a customer the finer points of a
used refrigerator. Deke walks in and stands near the
counter. His eyes rest on...

A sash of electrician's cord hanging on the wall.

The Owner spots Deke and finishes up with the customer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWNER

What can I do you for?

Deke, wasting no time, flashes his badge.

DEKE

I need repair orders for the past
two weeks and a list of employees.

The Owner groans, retreats behind his desk and grabs a
clipboard full of paper off a nail on the wall.

Deke ambles to the rear of the sales room. He pulls out
a door and stares at...

HIS POV

a large area where five employees, repairmen, sit at a
makeshift washing machine table and eat sandwiches.

OWNER (O.S.)

Here they are...

BACK TO SCENE

Deke turns around, walks back to the Owner, who shoves
the clipboard across the desk.

Deke scours the pages, looking for the Formosa address.
Bingo.

DEKE

This one's crossed out.

The Owner looks at the page.

OWNER

Cancellation. The blue number is
the order date -- the 14th, the
red is the cancellation -- the
18th; before I could get a man
out.

DEKE

It always take that long?

OWNER

Hey, we're busy.

DEKE

(re: work area)
So I see. Who fills these out?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWNER

I do... or whoever answers the
phone.

Deke nods, tears a sheet from the clipboard and walks
away.

SOMEONE'S POV

as Deke exits the store. Whose?

BACK TO SCENE

A repairman, ALBERT SPARMA, colubrine, early 30s, watches
from the still opened repair room door. After a few
seconds he retreats, closing the door behind him.

INT. SEROLOGY LAB - DAY

Baxter is mid-conversation with Amy Anders.

BAXTER

I bet I've worked a hundred stab-
homicides and 90 percent of the
time there's blood-mixing. Now
you're telling me that we've had
five straight, same butcher, and
he hasn't so much as nicked
himself in the struggle?

ANDERS

So maybe there's no struggle.
Look, Jimmy, it's there or it's
not.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE CRIME LAB - DAY

Baxter pushes on the door marked "Crime Lab" and
enters...

INT. CRIME LAB - DAY

A room with a set-up not unlike the serology lab --
desks, lab coats, microscopes. Baxter walks up to a busy
assistant, a guy named FELIX, pushes aside files and,
much to the organized lab man's chagrin, sits on his
desk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER

You looked at my print from the Brecht apartment?

FELIX

It's no good without one to compare to. The center's missing and the computer can't work without the center. Look on the bright side. The guy finally left a partial.

BAXTER

What exactly is it you guys do?

FELIX

We make you look good in court.

INT. HALL - DAY

Baxter exits the crime lab office and walks down the hall. Something catches his eye and he stops and stares at...

A "Have you seen this girl" poster of Ronda Rathman, on the bulletin board.

Baxter's eyes linger on it, taking in the girl's innocent face.

EXT. HOUSE (WEST HOLLYWOOD) - DAY

Upper middle class. Manicured lawn.

Baxter drives up, checks an address, KILLS the ENGINE, then stares at the house, pulling himself together.

CUT TO:

INSERT - HOME VIDEO - RONDA RATHMAN

goofing in the back yard pool with some of her friends. She looks directly at the camera and smiles.

INT. RATHMAN HOME - RONDA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mr. Rathman TURNS OFF the VIDEO and hands Baxter a wallet size photo of the girl. Baxter looks at it and takes in the nicely-decorated room.

WALL OF PHOTOS

Graduation shots, family outings, a cheerleader still photo. A smiling Ronda Rathman in each.

BACK TO SCENE

MR. RATHMAN

The night she disappeared she was wearing her jogging shorts, socks, shoes, a red tank top.

BAXTER

Anything else? Jewelry, maybe?

MRS. RATHMAN

(comes to mind)

A red barrette. When she ran she wore a red barrette to hold her hair back.

Baxter nods, taking a note of this.

MRS. RATHMAN

They said until they know more they can only assume she ran away. We know better.

MR. RATHMAN

Maybe the same animal that's done this to the other girls... If she's alive we want to find her. If she's not...

Mrs. Rathman sobs. Her husband puts an arm around her shoulder.

MR. RATHMAN

Do you have a daughter, Detective?

BAXTER

Two. Jim, please.

MR. RATHMAN

Jim, would your daughters run away?

No need to answer. He knows exactly how they feel.

BAXTER

I'll call when I have something.

He shakes Mr. Rathman's hand and walks out of the room. Then he remembers the photo and offers it back to the grieving father.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. RATHMAN

No, that's for you. To keep.

EXT./INT. BAXTER'S CAR - DAY

Baxter slides in, closes the door, stares at the photo. His meditation is broken by the sound of his BEEPER GOING OFF. He retrieves it from his waist and stares solemnly at its message.

INT. DEKE'S BRONCO - NIGHT

Deke drives through the dirty streets, SCANNING the RADIO DIAL until he finds the OLD LOVE-SONG STATION. An ODE to youthful aphrodisia brings a slight smile to his face.

Deke stops at a red light and watches as...

Two radio cars and an ambulance -- no emergency lights on -- roll through the intersection when the light changes.

EXT. LAKE HOLLYWOOD DAM - NIGHT

The concrete bridge is lit up and a spot-light is scouring the water below for evidence. A HELICOPTER hovers overhead.

Baxter kneels down to the wet, dead body of a girl. He gently pulls aside a strand of matted hair, pulls out the photo of Ronda Rathman and compares. No go. Baxter stands up, pockets the photo and sighs. He spots...

Deke standing nearby, taking it all in. Baxter walks up.

BAXTER

You killed her, right?

(beat)

Either that or you got a nose for these things.

DEKE

When's the last time you saw two 'hoop-dees' and a meat wagon doing twenty?

BAXTER

They didn't wanna come any more than I did.

(beat)

I thought you went home?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Deke ignores, then squats and stares at the dead girl's body.

BAXTER

Deceased fits the M.O.: stab wounds, maybe a little ligature, killed elsewhere; used to be pretty before some bastard chewed her face up.

DEKE

She a floater?

BAXTER

Yeah, but they dumped overflow in here a few days back. I'm bettin' there's mud in her cavities. Shallow grave most likely.

(beat)

You ready to tell me about Mary Roberts?

No reply.

BAXTER

Stan Peters swallowed a .12 gauge late last night.

Still nothing from Deke.

ALONGSIDE BANK

Sal shines a light on a stick with a shred of cloth on it.

SAL

Hey, Jimmy, come give a look!

EXT. LAKE HOLLYWOOD DAM - DAY (DAWN) (LATER)

Deke holds and stares at the bagged piece of flannel cloth.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. JULIE BRECHT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The Criminalist picks up the bloody flannel shirt.

BACK TO SCENE (PRESENT)

Deke hands the bag back to Baxter, who hands it to Jamie.

BAXTER

Get the lab to run the shirt
again. Might be our boy's.

She nods, leaves. After she's out of earshot...

DEKE

Doubt it's his. He's red-flagging
with the victim's clothing.
Doesn't want a copycat takin'
credit for his handiwork.

Deke leans on the dam, admiring the panorama.

DEKE

Sal says you went to bat for me
with Farris. Not a wise career
move.

BAXTER

You're not exactly an L.A.S.D.
favorite.

Deke pulls a list out of his jacket.

DEKE

Maybe I can make it up to you.
You might want to run these names
for possibles. Long shot, but...

BAXTER

-- aren't they all.

(beat)

Something I gotta know. How does
a guy with the best clearance rate
in the department work fifteen
years without a promotion?

DEKE

I guess I didn't go to the right
church.

Baxter smiles at the dig.

BAXTER

You believe in God, Joe?

DEKE

Yeah.

BAXTER

That's good to know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEKE

I see a sunrise, a thunderstorm,
dew on the ground, and I know
there's a God. I look at all
this... and I think he's long past
giving a shit.

Several seconds of silence, then...

BAXTER

I still owe you a breakfast.

EXT. HANCOCK PARK - DAY

A nice, three bedroom Craftsman on a tree-lined street.
Baxter's unmarked car and Deke's Bronco are parked out
front.

INT. BAXTER KITCHEN - DAY

An uncomfortable Deke sits at a table with Baxter sipping
coffee. Baxter's wife, Jan, carries two plates from the
counter and sets them in front of the two men.

DEKE

This looks great, thanks.

Deke's is fried eggs, bacon and hash browns. Baxter's is
egg whites and a slice of cantaloupe. Deke eyes the
difference...

BAXTER

Jan's worried about my
cholesterol.
(to Jan)
Joe's in Kern County now.

JAN

Your wife drag you away?

DEKE

I'm divorced.

JAN

Oh.

(beat)

I'd do anything to get us out of
here. Jim won't leave though.
You work homicide there, too?

DEKE

No... I'm just a patrol dep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Baxter's daughter, Chloe, still sleepy-eyed, walks in and sits in her dad's lap. She spots Deke.

CHLOE

Hi.

DEKE

Hi.

Deke smiles uneasily at the little girl -- cute as a button.

JAN

That's Mr. Deacon, Chloe.

CHLOE

How do you do?

DEKE

(taken with her)

Very well, thank you.

JAN

You have any kids, Joe?

DEKE

Two girls. They're grown up now.

Jennifer walks in, books in her hand.

JENNIFER

I'm gonna be late.

JAN

(to Chloe)

We ready to take Jen to school?

CHLOE

Yeah.

BAXTER

What do you say?

CHLOE

Yes, ma'am.

BAXTER

That's my girl. Gimme a kiss.

Chloe kisses her father and gives him a hug. Then she climbs off his lap and waits as Jan grabs her purse and keys.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAN

Okay, let's go. Nice to meet you,
Joe.

DEKE

You, too. Thanks.

Chloe watches Deke, who can't take his eyes off her. Then she gives him a quick, very spontaneous hug and leaves. Deke is floored. He follows her exit with his eyes.

DEKE

She's beautiful. Both of 'em are.

BAXTER

Yeah.

Deke wipes his plate clean and rises. Baxter can't believe how fast he finished.

DEKE

(explaining)

Too many meals on the run.

BAXTER

I'll run the names on the list.
Where can I reach you?

DEKE

The St. Francis on Hollywood
Boulevard.

BAXTER

I've heard of living on the beat,
but that's above and beyond. You
wanna meet after shift, compare
notes?

DEKE

And what's the Reverend Captain
gonna say about that?

BAXTER

It's my case.

DEKE

There's a bar at the corner of
Cherokee and Hollywood.

Baxter nods. Deke stands, grabs his jacket and leaves.
Baxter stares after him.

EXT. RESEDA NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Not as nice as Baxter's block. Deke parks, gets out, stands in front of a house. He's not even sure why he's there.

CUT TO:

ON PORCH

The door opens and Deke's ex-wife, MARSHA, stands there. She's 45, prettier than we'd expect, but with the same no-nonsense eyes of her ex. She looks at him long and hard.

DEKE

You look good, Marsha.

MARSHA

You look like hell, Joe.

DEKE

Yeah.

MARSHA

I was just leaving for work. If I'd known you were coming...

DEKE

I gotta get going, anyway.

MARSHA

Hold on, lemme grab my purse.

He walks out into the yard, kicks at a sprinkler head. She closes, locks the door. As they walk to her car...

DEKE

House looks good. I'm glad you kept it.

MARSHA

Yeah. Tom's a whiz with the yard.

DEKE

Better than I was...

MARSHA

You never had time for that kinda thing.

DEKE

How are the girls?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSHA

Good. Trish passed her C.P.A.
Sue's met a guy; seems like a good
kid.

They stop at her car.

MARSHA

You should give 'em a call.

DEKE

Yeah, I should.

MARSHA

You okay?

DEKE

I'm fine.
(beat)
You know me.

MARSHA

Yeah. I know you.

She gives him a quick hug and a kiss on the cheek before
she gets in her car and drives away.

Deke watches her go, then kneels down, plucks a blade of
green grass and stares at it, as if for the first time.

INT. HOMICIDE (TWIN TOWERS) - DAY

Baxter talks on the phone. Jamie walks up and dumps
three files on his desk.

JAMIE

Mary Roberts... Paige Callahan,
Tamara Ewing.

BAXTER

I just asked for --

JAMIE

-- With three you get eggroll.
All the victims were hookers --
all found at the same location on
the same night.

BAXTER

You're kidding?

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Deke sits by himself, drinking a beer. He gets a dirty look from a grungy kid down the bar. Baxter sneaks in next to Deke.

BAXTER

Never figured you to be so hip.

DEKE

Musta changed owners. Whataya want to drink? Don't worry, I won't tell.

Baxter smiles, points to Deke's beer. The bartender delivers.

BAXTER

Last night's victim -- Florence Nicholls is her name -- lived in Sun Valley. Disappeared three days ago. So we got six now, right. One, Julie Brecht, never left home. Two were from the north valley, bodies dumped here. Three from here, bodies dumped in the north valley.

DEKE

And they say busing doesn't work?

BAXTER

Same M.O., with the exception of the last two and their hickeys. All knifed, all gagged, all bound, all very organized killings, not a lot of wasted motion. I got a question... Why?...

Two grunge kids push over Deke's shoulder to order a drink. He gives Baxter a look that says, "Let's get out of here."

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Deke and Baxter walk toward Baxter's car.

BAXTER

First. Geography?...

DEKE

The guy's a shark. He stops, he dies. He likes to drive, has a decent car, maybe two.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEKE (CONT'D)

High mileage. He starts in the neighborhood, keeps at it till opportunity knocks.

BAXTER

Next 'why'? Why the extreme torture, then the love bites?

DEKE

It turns him on.

BAXTER

No rape, no sodomy, no genital mutilation.

DEKE

He kills for sexual pleasure. A few days go by, he needs a fix. If he can't find another victim, he'll return to the scene and jack off.

BAXTER

Was Peters our boy?

DEKE

(without thinking)
God, I hope not.

Baxter stares at Deke, half-understanding the statement.

BAXTER

Okay, back to the living. Our boy?...

DEKE

He's got balls. He came back to Brecht's -- maybe even a day or two after he killed her. He moved her body, shaved her legs, posed her. He brought food, some milk, some beer. Threw himself a little party.

BAXTER

They found partially digested meat in her stomach.

(beat)

She was a Vegan.

DEKE

A what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER

Strict vegetarian. Everybody said so. Same as Jan. She'd never touch meat.

DEKE

Even with a knife to her throat?
(beat)
Nobody likes to eat alone.

Baxter stops and leans against his car.

BAXTER

One last 'why.'
(beat)
Why are you trying to solve a five-year-old dead-hooker-case that everyone's forgotten and no one gives a damn about?

Deke stares hard at Baxter. His cover's blown.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - NIGHT

Deke drives, Baxter rides shotgun. Not a word spoken.

EXT. SHAKESPEARE'S BRIDGE (SILVERLAKE) - NIGHT

An elegant, if short, bridge connecting Hollywood to Silverlake. What it lacks in length it makes up for with an old world architectural style that is out of place with the nearby '50s housing. The street lamps throw gaslight-like vapors over the mist-filled gully the bridge traverses.

Deke's Bronco pulls to a stop and the two cops get out.

DEKE

Farris and I were a coupla miles away. We heard a call for a patrol car over the radio. Screams reported. So we drove over. Sal was the first on the scene.

Baxter and Deke move to the edge and look over. Then Deke turns and points to a bridge street light.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEKE

Lights were out. Switching problem. Guy at Edison told me it happens once a decade or so. Off for one night.

Deke turns his attention to a nearby house and points.

DEKE

See that lady watchin' us in the window?

The nearby house. A head is silhouetted in the lit window.

DEKE

Gladys Fulcher. A spinster. Ugly as homemade soap. She's kinda the eyes and ears of this neighborhood. A pain in the ass to the local cops, but a godsend to a dick.

BAKTER

So what'd she have to say?

DEKE

She was out that night. Lied about it at first out of sheer embarrassment but later came clean.

BAKTER

Embarrassed about what?

DEKE

Her first date in 15 years and she slept at the old guy's house.

Baxter has to chuckle.

DEKE

So the night of the hat trick we had a combination of no lights and Gladys getting laid. Two million-to-ones crossin' the finish line in a dead heat.

EXT. UNDER BRIDGE - NIGHT (MINUTES LATER)

Deke, flashlight in hand, walks down the grassy embankment followed by Baxter. He stops at a tiny creek.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEKE

Third strike. A drought. No water, no mud, no prints. Hard as cement.

Deke points his flashlight to a large rock.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. UNDER BRIDGE - NIGHT

The two girls sit, dead, propped against the rock.

DEKE (V.O.)

Two of the victims were against that rock. Posed facin' each other, heads bagged, laid down, like the rock was a table.

CUT TO:

BACK TO SCENE (PRESENT)

Deke squats down and stares at the rock.

DEKE

A tea party where the guests dozed off.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. UNDER BRIDGE - NIGHT

Farris catches up to Deke and the two men stand there for a moment, horrified by the sight. Deke knows the girls are dead but Farris goes to work, checking for pulses. None.

FARRIS

This jst went down!

He and Deke share a look then Farris makes his way back under the bridge to scour the area.

BAXTER (V.O.)

Where was the third victim?

CUT TO:

BACK TO SCENE (PRESENT)

Deke continues to stare at the rock.

DEKE

Close by.

Baxter squats down, too, staring at Deke.

DEKE

You work the evidence and come up with zeroes. Happens to everybody. Then you draw the black bean. Maybe the victim looks like a kid you picked on in the schoolyard. Maybe their green eyes remind you of your old lady... And maybe it's something else. But for some reason they're your lifelong responsibility. You own 'em. They're wherever they are and you're the Angel; trying like hell to turn the ledger from red to black.

(beat)

Word to the wise, Jimmy. Stay outta the Angel business.

BAXTER

Sounds pretty religious for a guy who claims to be a Deist. Just what is it you're looking for from this?

DEKE

I wanna finish the job.

(beat)

Just like you.

INT. DEKE'S CAR (HOLLYWOOD) - NIGHT

Deke drives Baxter back to his car.

BAXTER

It's not the same boy. Guys that kill 'pros' are a different breed from ones that go after solid citizens.

DEKE

Nobody's this good out of the block. Your boy practiced his trade before all the recent stuff started.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER

But the same guy can't be responsible for both. He's a shark, remember? If he stops, he dies.

DEKE

Who said he stopped? Maybe he took his show on the road...

BAXTER

(re: his car)

There. Gotta be a record. Two hours parked on Cherokee and it's in one piece.

Deke stops the Bronco. Baxter remembers something, pulls a sheet from his jacket and hands it to Deke.

BAXTER

Almost forgot. Two of the five employees have records. One's 55, the other's in his 30s, lives in the neighborhood. Both simple assaults. Looks like a wash to me but you got all the info there.

Deke nods. Baxter gets out, leans in the window.

BAXTER

For the record, your hunch? I don't think it holds water.

DEKE

Then why the interest?

BAXTER

You wanna clear your conscience, that's your problem. But, if you gotta solve my case to solve yours, who am I to moan?

(beat)

You piss on my leg and call it rain and we're through.

Baxter walks to his car. Deke pulls up beside him.

DEKE

Hey! Julie's last supper: What was it?

BAXTER

Roast beef, I think. Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEKE

It's the little things that are
important, Jimmy. It's the little
things that get ya caught.

Baxter watches as Deke drives away.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

As he drives home, he sees a white car in front of him
slow down. He follows for a few seconds, then passes the
guy. He sees...

HIS POV

The white car is slowly pacing a girl jogging.

BAXTER

drives ahead, then parks his car on the street for a
better vantage through the rear-view mirror.

HIS POV - THROUGH MIRROR

The girl slows a bit to converse with whoever's in the
car. She obviously wants no part of what's being
offered. Finally, had enough, she shouts something and
the car pulls away, making a left turn before reaching
Baxter.

Baxter makes a U-turn to follow.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BLVD. - NIGHT

Baxter falls in behind the white car, which has no rear
license plate. The white car slows for a yellow light,
then speeds through a red.

Baxter steps on the gas, avoids a pedestrian and gives
chase.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD McDONALD'S - NIGHT

The white car screeches into the parking lot and straight
into the drive-thru lane.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

Baxter stops his car on the street and watches as... another car pulls into the drive-thru behind the white car.

Baxter waits until the white car pulls up to the window to retrieve an order and --

EXT. McDONALD'S - NIGHT

-- steps on the gas, driving through the exit lane and right up to the white car, which is trapped fore and aft.

Baxter jumps out of the car, pistol drawn.

BAXTER

Freeze! Don't move! Show me your hands!

The drive-thru attendant drops a bag of food and raises her hands. As Baxter approaches the car, finger on trigger, he sees that... two teenage boys are inside. Scared to death.

TEENAGER

What, man?! What'd we do?

Baxter lowers the pistol, takes a breath, walks back to his car and drives away.

The drive-thru attendant still has her hands raised.

INT. BAXTER HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lights out. Baxter walks in, takes off his jacket. Jan turns on the nightstand light.

JAN

Hey. Where have you been?

BAXTER

Just going over some things.

JAN

Were you out with that guy Deacon?

BAXTER

Yeah.

Baxter unloads his pockets -- keys, change, pager and the photo of Ronda Rathman. She stares back at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAN

He gives me the creeps, Jimmy.

Baxter smiles, sits on the edge of the bed.

BAXTER

He's not so scary. Just real 'old school.' Tough. Interesting. And he's good. I don't know why, but I kinda feel sorry for him.

JAN

It's more than that.

BAXTER

What do you mean?

JAN

Something about the way you look at him; watching every move he makes.

Baxter knows it's true.

JAN

It's the eyes that give him away. Looks like he hasn't slept in years.

INT./EXT. DEKE'S CAR - HOLLYWOOD STREET - NIGHT

Deke checks the printout and scours apartments for addresses. He finds what he's looking for and parks.

EXT. SMALL CARPORT - NIGHT

Deke walks along the carport, shining his flashlight on each car, until he sees...

A license plate on the dark sedan, sitting parked in the shadows of the carport...

DEKE

(the license)

One Peter-Henry-Peter-Two-Six-Four.

The ground... a homemade "For Sale" sign and a number to call, lies on the cement...

Deke walks to the car and shines his flashlight on...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The tires... good. The trunk... locked. The interior... plain but clean. The odometer... 202,733 miles.

VOICE (O.S.)

What are you doing?

Deke, cool as a cucumber, turns to see...

ALBERT SPARMA, the appliance repairman, a trash bag of garbage in his hand. Deke returns the stare.

DEKE

Saw the 'for sale' sign.

SPARMA

That was for another car.

DEKE

Got a lot of miles. You a salesman?

SPARMA

No.

DEKE

How's the trunk space?

SPARMA

Standard, but...

DEKE

Can I have a look?

Sparma hesitates...

SPARMA

It's not for sale.

DEKE

I'm in the market. I can give you top dollar, but I'll need to look...

SPARMA

-- I said it's not for sale.

Deke stares a hole through Sparma, then nods, clicks off his flashlight and walks away.

Sparma watches Deke until he gets in his Bronco and drives away, then drops his trash in the garbage can and walks back to his apartment. We HOLD ON the trash bag.

INT. ST. FRANCIS - LOBBY - NIGHT

Deke enters, carrying the trash bag. He stops at the pay phone, dumps the bag and dials.

The Manager takes note of the bag.

MANAGER

What the hell's that?

DEKE

Take-out.

(into phone)

Sal Rizoli...

The Manager shakes his head and retreats to his desk.

DEKE

(into phone)

Sal, hey, look, you wanna do me a favor?... Run a VIN search on

Albert Leonard Sparma --

S-P-A-R-M-A. See if he sold a car in the past coupla months.

INT. ST. FRANCIS - DEKE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Deke rips open the trash bag and dumps its contents onto several sheets of newspaper strewn on the floor. He kneels down and begins picking through the contents...

An old rag... no blood stains... into the discard pile. Chicken bones... discard. A newspaper... discard. Junk mail... discard. A milk carton... into the keeper pile. Cola cans... discard. An empty Schlitz can... keeper. Cigarette butts... discard. Pizza box... open... one slice left, half-eaten.

Deke holds up the half-eaten slice and stares at it.

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE - DAY

Flo Dunigan, with a small metal device, tries to measure the bite on the slice of pizza. After a few seconds he tosses the tool aside, looks at the crime scene close-ups then at...

Deke -- staring, waiting...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUNIGAN

Inconclusive. But there are similarities to both Brecht and Mary Roberts. See here? A partial of an incisor on the Roberts girl's cheek.

Deke looks at the photo from the 5-year-old file.

DUNIGAN

A nice shot. Charlie Frazier had a knack for making those close-ups jump at you, didn't he? God rest his soul.

DEKE

What about Brecht?

DUNIGAN

A partial on a bicuspid. Something else...

DEKE

What's that?

DUNIGAN

He's from back East. Folds his pie.

Dunigan demonstrates with the half-eaten slice. Deke smiles, grabs his jacket and walks to the door.

DUNIGAN

One thing's for sure.

(beat)

He's a sick puppy.

Deke halts his exit, turns to a smiling Dunigan...

DUNIGAN

Double anchovies.

EXT. AJAX RENT A CAR - DAY

Deke emerges from the office with a rental agreement and a set of keys. He gets into a midsize, gray sedan and drives away.

We FOLLOW him AROUND the corner, out of sight from the rent-a-car establishment. He stops, parks.

INT./EXT. CAR - DAY

Deke pulls a screwdriver from his pocket and goes to work on the plate holding the interior overhead light. He pulls it away, tosses it in the back seat and unscrews the bulb.

Deke takes off the interior fuse box cover, pulls three fuses and tosses them in the back seat.

Deke steps out, opens the door and a single BELL sounds. He pulls another fuse, reopens the door. No bell.

EXT. AAA APPLIANCE - DAY

Albert Sparma exits the front of the store and walks... across the street... to a deli.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY

Deke, sitting, watching. He chuckles when he sees...

HIS POV

the sign above the deli -- THE BEST ROAST BEEF IN TOWN!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY (LATER)

Deke looks at his watch. It reads 4:00. But the sweep secondhand isn't moving. He gives it a good shake. It starts ticking again. He mutters a curse and comes to attention when he sees...

EXT. AAA APPLIANCE - DAY

Albert Sparma, coffee thermos in hand, exits and walks to his car -- the one that was parked in the carport -- and drives away.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY

Deke methodically starts his car and settles in to follow.

EXT. 101 FREEWAY - DAY

Sparma's car enters the freeway. Three cars back, so does Deke.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY

He keeps an eye on Sparma.

DEKE'S POV

Sparma puts on his blinker -- it's unusual; blinks too fast -- changes lanes and takes an exit ramp.

BACK TO SCENE

Deke looks over his shoulder, changes lanes and follows, slowing down to let another car get between him and his prey.

EXT. "THE ZOO" - DAY

A strip joint, even though the sign says, "Exotic Dancing." Sparma enters the nondescript doorway.

DOWN AND ACROSS STREET

Deke parks his rent-a-car.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY

Deke adjusts his driver's side mirror to give a FRAMED VIEW of... the entrance to the strip joint.

DEKE

(to himself)

We got roast beef. We got
strippers. I'm on your ass,
Albert. I smell you.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. UNDER BRIDGE - NIGHT

As Farris moves away, Deke shines his flashlight around the crime scene. Then he hears a sound, a RUSTLING sound -- movement from the brush -- and he takes a cautious step toward the ravine.

CUT TO:

BACK TO SCENE - POV IN MIRROR - "THE ZOO" - DUSK
(PRESENT)

Sparma exits lazily and heads to his car. He gets in, STARTS UP and drives off.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - DUSK

Deke watches for a few seconds then follows.

EXT. BURGER JOINT - NIGHT (LATER)

Sparma pulls up to a drive-thru, gets his order and drives off, passing...

Deke, parked near the exit driveway.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - NIGHT

He drives, watching as he... passes Sparma, who turns and hits his brake lights. Deke drives for a hundred yards or so more, then pulls a slow U-turn.

HIS POV

Sparma is parking near a dark corner.

EXT. CORNER - NIGHT (LATER)

Two hookers bullshit their way through another long night, waving and strutting for any car that slows down.

INT. SPARMA'S CAR - NIGHT

Sparma finishes off a French fry and stares at the girls.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - NIGHT

Deke watches stoically. Then he lowers himself in the car.

HIS POV

Sparma's car pulls out and drives away.

DEKE

We got roast beef. We got
strippers. We got Big Macs. We
got hookers. Food and pussy.
Food and pussy...

EXT. BANK CLOCK - NIGHT

The flashing bulbs read 12:45.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - NIGHT

He takes note of the time and keeps driving.

DEKE

Come on, Albert. It's a school
night.

EXT. BAXTER HOME - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

INT. BAXTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The nightstand clock reads 4:05... and counting.

Jan, half-asleep, rolls over and feels for Baxter. He's not there. She squints, looks at the clock and gets out of bed.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Jan, now in a robe, searches for her husband. She stops cold when she spots...

HER POV - THROUGH WINDOW

Baxter sits alone on the patio. Lit by moonlight. Staring into the night. We HOLD. His lips are moving but we hear no words -- Praying for answers to impossible questions.

Jan just stares. Her husband is a million miles away.

EXT. NORTH VALLEY - DAY (DAWN)

We see Magic Mountain in the distance. Sparma's car crests a hill and moves steadily THROUGH the FRAME. We HOLD. Twenty seconds later, Deke's car follows.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY (DAWN)

He wipes his sleepy eyes and continues on. As he crests a hill he sees...

HIS POV

Sparma parked on the roadside just over the crest.

Deke tries his best to stay calm but can't help but sneak a peek as he passes...

HIS POV

Sparma, sitting in his car, staring at him.

EXT. ROAD - DAY (DAWN)

Deke drives on several hundred yards over another hill and comes to a stop in the shoulder.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY (DAWN)

He sits, waits, watching the rearview mirror. No Sparma.

EXT. BACK OF DEKE'S CAR - DAWN

The reverse lights come on as Deke backs up.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY (DAWN)

Deke, looking in his rearview mirror, slowly backing up the crest of the hill.

HIS MIRRORED POV

No Sparma. Disappeared.

BACK TO SCENE

Deke spins in his seat. Nothing. Then he spots...

HIS POV

A lower ridge feeder road that parallels the highway. His eyes follow it past his own car to...

FEEDER

on a ridge -- the opposite side of the highway -- 200 yards ahead of him, where sits... Sparma's car, facing him.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY

Deke sits, stares.

DEKE
Okay, so you made me. Wanna
better look?

EXT. HIGHWAY

Deke reverses his car until he comes to the exit road. He sticks the car in drive and barrels along the feeder until he comes to the underpass where he makes a U-turn.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY

As he enters the opposite feeder.

HIS POV

No Sparma.

BACK TO SCENE

Deke drives up to the spot where Sparma's car was and stops. He grimaces when he sees...

HIS POV

Sparma -- 200 yards down the road -- sitting in the exact spot where Deke last parked.

BACK TO SCENE

Deke just stares; settles in to sit it out.

EXT. HIGHWAY - HIGH ABOVE

The standoff continues. Then Sparma's car starts to reverse.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY

Deke watches... Sparma reverses over the hill, takes the exit and drives along the feeder disappearing...

Deke sits, waiting. He checks his rearview mirror.

POV THROUGH REARVIEW MIRROR

The underpass and the freeway. Nothing. Then Sparma's car drifts slowly INTO VIEW and approaches. Closer. Closer...

EXT. WIDE SHOT - DAY

Sparma's car pulls up next to Deke on the driver's side. So close he can't open his door.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY

Deke turns and looks at...

Sparma, who swivels slowly, stares at Deke for several seconds... then laughs.

Deke just stares -- cold-hearted venom.

EXT. HIGHWAY FEEDER - WIDE SHOT - DAY

Lots of land. Hills. Desolate highway. Two lonely cars and the ECHOING, cacophonous LAUGHTER of Sparma.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY

Deke continues the stare-down. Sparma shakes his head, puts the car in drive and wheels away. Deke just watches.

INT. COUNTY HOMICIDE - DAY

Baxter picks up the phone.

BAXTER

Baxter.

EXT. HIGHWAY PHONE - WIDE SHOT - DAY

In the distance we see Deke on the phone. We hear the conversation...

INTERCUT - DEKE AND BAXTER

DEKE

The second girl, the ditch pitch... Where'd you find the body? Exactly.

BAXTER

A couple hundred yards off the 126.

DEKE

Did you leak that to the press?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER
No.

DEKE
You sure?

BAXTER
Yeah, why?

DEKE
What was the nearest mile marker?

BAXTER
Hold on...

We PAN SLOWLY until Deke is on one side of the frame and the mile marker is on the other.

BAXTER (V.O.)
Here it is. The nearest mile
marker was 467. 4-6-7.

And that's, in fact, what the mile marker says.

INT. HOMICIDE- DAY

Baxter hangs up the phone, staring, thinking. Sal, at the next desk, on the phone. He turns to Baxter...

SAL
There's this guy Deke asked me to
run a vehicle check on...
(checks sheet)
Sparma? Seems that Topanga Tow
has a car registered to him.
Found it abandoned two weeks ago.

BAXTER
Reported stolen?

SAL
Nope.

BAXTER
Well, tow that sucker in.

INT. CAPT. FARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

Deke stands outside while Baxter makes his case...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER

He leads him to an old west
standoff less than 500 yards from
where we found Shari Fineman.
Sparma fits the profile, has a
prior, lives in the neighborhood
and had access to our fifth
victim.

Baxter puts his hands on Farris's desk and leans
forward...

FARRIS

Bring him in now, you pop his
cherry. If he is our guy, he's
gonna know the ropes next time.

BAXTER

I wanna smell him. Put him on
notice. Maybe he'll try to cover
his tracks, give us something.

Farris mulls it over, then nods.

BAXTER

I want Deacon there when we pick
him up.

FARRIS

Absolutely not. The guy has no
jurisdiction here.

BAXTER

If, and I say if, we go to
Sparma's apartment and he leaves
the door open and we get in, name
one set of eyes you'd rather have
in there.

INT. LASD LOBBY - DAY

Tina Salvatore, the disabled motorist, sits in a chair.

INT. HOMICIDE - DAY

Baxter enters the room and gives Jamie a thumbs-up. She
jumps to and hands over Sparma's assault booking sheet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER

Fax his prints to the lab. Tell 'em I'm on my way. Grab Deacon and a patrol dep and pick up Sparma.

JAMIE

What about Tina Salvatore?

(beat)

The possible witness? She's in the lobby.

BAXTER

Get her a magazine.

INT./EXT. SQUAD CAR - DAY

A deputy arrives. Jamie sits passenger, Deke in back.

JAMIE

Why not pick him up at work? What good is his apartment without a warrant?

DEKE

You just keep him busy. Keep him talking. Tell him to take his time, change his clothes; whatever.

INT. CRIME LAB - DAY

Felix shows Baxter his comparison study on the Brecht apartment partial print with Sparma's.

FELIX

Eleven identifiers. County requires 18 for I.D. L.A.P.D. requires 12.

BAXTER

So we're one short of somebody's legal requirements. That says something!

FELIX

It says you're seven short.

BAXTER

Look me in the eye and tell me this isn't my guy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Felix holds up a different print page and shows it to Baxter.

FELIX

This other fella, let's call him
Mr. X. He's got nine identifiers.
Only two less than Sparma. Maybe
he's the killer?

BAXTER

Who...

Felix holds up his own, inked thumb.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND SPARMA'S APT. (HOLLYWOOD) - DAY

Deke and Jamie watch as Sparma makes his way up the stairwell.

EXT. TWIN TOWERS STATION PARKING LOT - DAY

An International Harvester Cruiser Wagon is being ripped apart by a team of detectives and cops. A guy in a LAB COAT is going through the trunk with a fine tooth comb.

Lab Coat dabs a Q-tip in a solution bottle and touches it to... a red stain on the carpet trunk. Baxter nervously awaits the result...

LAB COAT

Wine, most likely.

Baxter nods. Sal walks up, fresh from a front seat search.

SAL

Squeaky clean. 22,000 miles.

BAXTER

A roll back?

SAL

Definitely.

BAXTER

(on exit)

Keep at it. Let me know.

INT. SPARMA'S HALLWAY - DAY

The cop, Deke and Jamie move down the hall. When they arrive at the door, they pause. Deke nods to the cop, who knocks. In the middle of the first knock, the door opens and Sparma, still in his work clothes, stands there, blocking their view.

SPARMA

We ready to go?

Deke sighs.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Tina Salvatore sits nervously, talking to Baxter.

TINA

Just like I told the police. It was dark. He had a hat, glasses...

BAXTER

If I showed you some photos, you think you could identify him?

TINA

Maybe. Probably not.

Jamie enters. She leans over and whispers to Baxter.

JAMIE

It was like he was expecting us.

Baxter turns to Tina.

BAXTER

Okay, Tina, would you mind waiting until we can pull some mugshots to look at?

TINA

I guess not.

BAXTER

Thanks. You go with Jamie here, okay?

Tina nods, rises, Baxter pulls Jamie aside.

BAXTER

Sit her down at my desk, get her something to drink. Don't let her wander around, okay?

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Tina and Jamie exit and walk down the hall toward homicide.

TINA

I need to use the restroom.

JAMIE

It's right there. I'll wait.

TINA

It's okay. I know where to go.
In the big room, right?

JAMIE

All the way to the back. You want
something to drink?

TINA

Diet anything.

JAMIE

Okay, when you're finished, go
straight there, right?

Tina nods and disappears in the restroom. Jamie walks around the corner to grab the soda.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Baxter stands, waiting. Sal walks in and lights a cig.

SAL

Clean as a whistle.

Deke walks in carrying a red-stained phone book and a wind-up alarm clock. He sets the phone book on the table. Baxter eyes it, notices the red stains.

BAXTER

What is this, the Spanish
Inquisition?

SAL

Tomato juice. The power of
suggestion.

Deke winds the clock and sets it on the end of the table.

DEKE

Got this off your desk, Sal.

Sal, leaning against the wall, nods, smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER

Don't hesitate to pick up the
phone.

Deke exits, leaving Sal and Baxter in the room. TICK.
TOCK. Baxter nods to Sal who walks to the door, eyes ...
the hall. Empty, except a single uniformed officer,
Jerry, that stands against a wall.

SAL

All clear.

BAXTER

Bring him in.

SAL

(to uniform)
Okay, Jerry.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Jerry, the uniform, disappears around a corner. A few
seconds later, the bathroom door opens and Tina Salvatore
exits, takes a step, stops to tie her tennis shoe laces.
She hears STEPS coming, looks up to see...

Jerry, with a cuffed Albert Sparma, walking toward her.
Her expression changes and...

They lock eyes for one deadly moment. Then he's past.
She glances back over her shoulder as she walks to
Homicide.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Sparma is led in.

BAXTER

We won't need those.

Jerry uncuffs Sparma, who takes a seat and eyes the phone
book, the clock. Baxter turns on a tape recorder.

SPARMA

Phone book. No bruises, right?
Where's Joe Friday?

BAXTER

My name's Detective Baxter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARMA

I know you. You're famous. On TV, in the papers all the time.

(beat)

I'm kind of a crime buff.

BAXTER

I'm gonna let you in on a secret. If you're innocent, you should talk to me; clear your name. If you got something to hide and you open your mouth, you're one dumb S.O.B...

SPARMA

Okay, I invoke my 5th amendment right against self-incrimination.

Baxter looks to Sal, then back to Sparma.

SPARMA

Just kidding.

(beat)

Where's my rights waiver card? I know I'm not in custody but better safe than sorry, huh, guys?

Baxter reaches in the drawer, pulls out a white card and tosses it on the desk.

INT. BAXTER'S DESK - DAY (LATER)

Jamie sits at the desk, across from Tina Salvatore, who reads a People magazine.

INT. INTERROGATION OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Deke sits alone in the room, focused like a hawk on...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

The interview continues...

SPARMA

Look, Jimmy...

BAXTER

-- Detective Baxter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARMA

Whatever. Like I said, the car was stolen. Thanks for finding it. I'll drive it home.

BAXTER

We'll be keeping it a few days. Why didn't you report the theft?

SPARMA

I did. I don't know about you guys, but I'm ready to get to the juicy stuff.

INT. BAXTER'S DESK - DAY (LATER)

Tina Salvatore finishes thumbing through her fifth magazine, sets it down, looks to Jamie, who walks by...

JAMIE

Shouldn't be much longer.

Tina sighs, slumps in her chair.

INT. INTERROGATION OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Deke sits, watching as the interrogation continues. Sparma looks at a graduation photo of Julie Brecht.

SPARMA

Cute little thing isn't... wasn't she?

Baxter takes the photo back.

BAXTER

Who said she's dead?

SPARMA

I know the drill, Jimmy, but the truth is, I'm not the guy. If you had anything, I'd be under arrest, right?

BAXTER

Do you wanna be?

SPARMA

Yeah. I'd like to get a peek at all this hard evidence you say you got.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Deke picks up the PHONE. It BUZZES and Baxter picks it up.

BAXTER

Yeah.

DEKE

You get the feeling he's enjoying this?

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Baxter listens for a few seconds, then hangs up the phone.

Deke enters the room, carrying a plastic bag. Sparma blows a trumpet call of "Charge!" with his lips.

SPARMA

Calvary's here.

Deke sits down directly in front of Sparma. They lock eyes. No holds barred.

SPARMA

Where we going tomorrow? 'Cause I know a great little spot for a picnic...

Deke sets the plastic bag on the table. It's the bloody flannel shirt taken from the Brecht apartment. Sparma stares at it, then smiles at Deke, who gives Baxter a look.

Baxter and Sal rise and leave the room.

Deke turns off the recorder and opens one of the files. He extracts a manila envelope; drops it on the table.

SPARMA

Whatta ya got there?

Deke nods to Sparma and then to the envelope.

INT. INTERROGATION OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Sal and Baxter take seats and watch.

BAXTER

Go ahead.

SAL

You wanna look, you bastard. You know you wanna look.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Sparma chuckles nonchalantly, reaches out and unclasps the envelope. He takes a glance inside (not as long a glance as he wants to), then drops the envelope back on the table.

Deke just stares at Sparma. Then he relaxes down in his chair.

Sparma tries to do the same but eventually his eyes go to the envelope.

Deke nods to him. ("It's okay. Go ahead.")

Sparma waits a second longer, then shrugs ("Okay, big deal, I'll look."), reaches out and takes the envelope.

He stares right at Deke and turns the envelope upside down. Forty 8 x 10s of the Brecht crime scene paint the tabletop red.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. INTERROGATION OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Sal and Baxter sit and watch, their eyes glued to...

THROUGH the ONE-WAY MIRROR -- Sparma is carefully perusing the photos, which are splayed on the table. Every few seconds he returns to a particular shot and stares hard.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Sparma, totally engrossed, slides a few shots around on the table, looking for a particular favorite.

Deke plucks a hidden one from the pile, holds it up.

SPARMA

Uh... yeah. That's it.

Deke hands it to Sparma, who stares hard at it. Deke moves closer, sitting on the edge of the table, his eyes on Sparma, Sparma's eyes on the photo.

CLOSEUP - SPARMA

His glazed eyes flutter a bit. The CLOCK TICKS...

BACK TO SCENE

Then Deke knocks the photo away and grabs Sparma's crotch, pulling the man and chair backwards. He gets in Sparma's face.

DEKE

What the fuck is this? What do I have in my hand?

INT. INTERROGATION OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

Baxter and Sal jump up and race from the room. We PAN and HOLD our view THROUGH the ONE-WAY MIRROR.

Baxter and Sal enter the interrogation room and pull Deke away.

DEKE

The guy got a woody just listenin' to the shit.

Sparma, staring at Deke and Baxter, starts a wheezing chuckle.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Before he leaves the room, Deke stops to admonish Sparma...

DEKE

(again, calmly)

We know. Me and you. By the balls, you hear me? That's how I got you.

Deke exits. Sparma continues to tauntingly chuckle, looking straight at Baxter. Then he juggles his crotch with one hand.

SPARMA

How about you? You want some?

Baxter's face goes blood red. In an instant of time he kills the guy twenty times... in his mind. Then he walks away.

INT. HALL OUTSIDE - NIGHT

Baxter exits the interrogation room, leans against the wall and covers his face with his hands. He's mad; frustrated. Jamie approaches.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER

Where's Deacon?

JAMIE

I think he left. You ready?

INT. BAXTER'S DESK - NIGHT

Baxter sits while Tina looks at a stack of mugshots. She turns one over. No hint of recognition.

Baxter watches. Jamie's eyes dance between Baxter and Tina.

Tina turns another page. It's Sparma. A five-year-old mugshot with "Assault" stamped above the photo. Tina hesitates.

Baxter, wanting this bad, bites his lip... A PHONE RINGS.

VOICE (O.S.)

Jimmy. It's your wife.

Baxter, annoyed, waves off the call and looks to Tina, who's still looking at the photo.

BAXTER

Whattaya think?

TINA

I dunno. Something about the eyes. Maybe if I could get a better look.

BAXTER

(puzzled)

Whattaya mean, a better look?

TINA

At the guy. You got him here in the station, right?

Baxter looks at Jamie, then slams his fist on the table.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT (MINUTES LATER)

Jamie hurries to catch up to Baxter...

JAMIE

Look, I'm sorry. What about a lineup?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER

We've got no 'cause.' Besides,
the I.D.'s tainted beyond repair.
She saw him in cuffs, for God's
sake.

And he storms away, leaving Jamie staring.

INT. FARRIS'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Rogers sits calmly while Farris and Baxter go at it...

FARRIS

I told you! I warned you...

BAXTER

-- I take responsibility. I'm
the primary!

FARRIS

For now.

BAXTER

What the hell does that mean?

FARRIS

It means I've got six bodies, no
witnesses, no evidence and no
killer. Two guys questioned. And
why are they suspects? One, who
later sucks on a .12 gauge, for
malicious unzipping, the other for
carrying a concealed hard-on.
Whattaya want the D.A. to do, feel
him up on the stand?

Rogers grins. Farris sits down, calms himself...

FARRIS

I put a call in to the Feds,
filled out the behavioral science
paperwork. They got a guy coming
in Monday. At that point we take
a step back... revamp.

BAXTER

Revamp?

FARRIS

We 'task force' the detail and
they take charge.

Baxter bites his tongue, turns to leave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FARRIS

One more thing. Were you aware
that this guy confessed to a
murder eight years ago?

Baxter's face drops. He didn't know.

ROGERS

Walked in, spent ten hours going
through the thing, signed a
confession. We cut him loose the
next morning.

BAXTER

Why?

ROGERS

Because he was lying. He knew all
the details but he wasn't within
ten miles of the killing.

Rogers smiles smugly. Baxter turns to Farris...

BAXTER

So I got three days?

Farris nods slowly. Baxter turns to go.

ROGERS

Hey, you and Deacon, what is it?
You wanna be the one that finds him
after his next heart attack?

Baxter holds his ground, staring at Rogers.

ROGERS

It's his destiny. Don't make it
yours.

Baxter decides to ignore this and leaves the room.

EXT. ST. FRANCIS - NIGHT

Baxter pulls out in front, gets out and slams his door.

INT. ST. FRANCIS - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Baxter walks straight down the hall, finds the room he's
looking for, turns the handle and the door opens.

BAXTER

Deacon?!...

INT. DEKE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Baxter enters the empty room, walks over and turns on the nightstand lamp. He takes in the room and gulps when he sees...

WALL OF PHOTOS

Gruesome.

BAXTER

stares for a long time at the wall, trying hard to understand the demons signified. The look on his face mixes disgust and reverence.

DEKE (O.S.)

It's not much, but I hear it's
goin' co-op...

ANOTHER ANGLE

Deke stands in the doorway, holding a bottle of Scotch. Baxter stares at him, then grits his teeth, walks over and... throttles Deke with a hard shove to the chest, sending him flying against the wall. The BOTTLE SMASHES to the floor as Baxter sends punches across Deke's chin. Deke offers no resistance, just leans against the wall and takes the punishment.

Baxter buttonholes Deke against the wall and gets right in his face.

BAXTER

What the hell are you trying to do
to me?!

Deke smiles a bloody smile. Baxter releases his hold and Deke slumps to the ground.

DEKE

He asked for hard evidence. That
stuff was S.O.P. in the old days.

Baxter takes a look around the room. He kneels down to Deke, still leaning against the wall.

BAXTER

This is sick. You need to get
some help.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEKE

Don't point fingers. I know all the symptoms.

This gives Baxter pause. Deke places a finger in the pool of Scotch and holds it in the air.

DEKE

A toast.

BAXTER

A toast to what?!

DEKE

My friend... we've got a suspect.

Baxter wants to ignore this, but in his heart of hearts, he knows Deke is right. He, too, slumps to the ground. Deke licks his finger.

BAXTER

Did you know Sparma confessed to a murder eight years ago?

DEKE

So?

BAXTER

Made it up. Yanked Rogers' chain for a whole shift. He's a crime buff, said so himself. Walk-in confessors aren't killers. We got nothing on this guy.

DEKE

You got the same ache in your gut that I do. We got something, maybe we just don't know what it is... yet...

(beat)

I get inside his place for five minutes and I know.

BAXTER

We don't have enough for a warrant.

(beat)

Know what?

DEKE

If Sparma's our boy...

Baxter mulls the option for a moment, then dismisses it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER
We'll catch a break.

DEKE
Exactly what is it you want from
this?

BAXTER
I wanna nail the bastard.

DEKE
For who?

BAXTER
For the girls he killed... and --

Baxter reaches in his pocket, pulls out the Rathman
photo.

BAXTER
-- for Ronda Rathman wherever she
is.

DEKE
That's the difference between us,
Jimmy. I wanna nail the bastard,
too. Only I'm doing it for me.

BAXTER
Bull-shit.

The two men stare at one another. From this point on,
they're bonded together, all the way down the chute.

DEKE
Five minutes.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH NEAR SPARMA'S APT. - NIGHT

As Baxter dials, he spots a Mexican restaurant down the
block.

SPARMA (V.O.)
(through phone)
Hello.

BAXTER
Hey, Al.

SPARMA (V.O.)
Who's this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER

A guy with something to show you.

SPARMA (V.O.)

Oh yeah, what's that?

BAXTER

Something you left behind.
Something the cops would like to
see. Meet me at Pancho's. You
know it?...

When Baxter hangs up, he notices... a "Have you seen this girl?" poster with Ronda Rathman's photo on it tacked above the phone. Someone's drawn a mustache and goatee on the girl's face.

Baxter stares at it before walking away.

INT./EXT. DEKE'S CAR - ALLEY BEHIND SPARMA'S APT. - NIGHT

Deke sits, watching the window and back, upstairs door. He slides down in the seat when...

Sparma exits, walks down the stairway and through the alley.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Sparma emerges from under a streetlight, looks around and crosses the street. After he passes, we see Baxter emerge from the shadows and head back for the alley.

INT. SPARMA'S APT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Deke walks down the hallway and up to Sparma's door. He opens a burglar's kit and pulls a pick. But when he touches the lock, the DOOR SQUEAKS open.

INT. SPARMA'S APT. - NIGHT

Deke enters, closing the door behind him. He eyes...

The living room -- The best way to describe it is, it looks like a crazy old woman lives there -- stacks of newspapers, junk everywhere. The flashlight fixes its beam on...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The TV -- A "Three's Company" rerun -- SOUND DOWN. The bed -- made. The floor -- wooden. The dresser -- a few knickknacks on it...

The wall -- a girlie calendar, several perfume ads, lingerie ads, clothing and fashion layouts all torn from magazines and tacked to the wall.

Deke walks over to the wall and takes a quick peek. Nothing grabs him. His eyes light on a bookshelf -- a few hardbound, a few paperback -- they all seem to be on crime: Forensics, whodunits?, serial killers, etc...

Deke takes note. He points the flashlight on the top of the bookshelf -- Several dolls, antiques, dressed up and sitting balanced on the edge, their legs "dangling." Weird.

Deke moves to the dresser, fingers a bottle of Old Spice.

DEKE

You old romantic, you.

He pulls out drawers -- opening them, looking in and behind them and then closing them. Nothing. Then, he almost jumps out of his skin when he hears...

A MUFFLED VOICE behind him. Deke spins and stares at...

A POLICE SCANNER. A dispatcher's voice comes through the airwaves, calling out instructions to a radio car.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - NIGHT

Baxter sits, waiting, watching Sparma's window as well as the alley behind him.

INT. SPARMA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Deke enters. Dark. He opens the fridge. Pretty standard -- milk, beer, cheese, no leftovers.

Deke opens the freezer, shines the light on it...

Not much there. Deke opens the wrapping on a pound of hamburger, then tosses it back inside.

Deke walks to the sink, sticks a hand in the disposal, finds nothing. Then he spots a long, sturdy knife in the drying sink, picks it up, shines the light on it... serrated edges. And...

CLOSEUP - TIP

Only the very tip is... missing.

BACK TO SCENE

Deke puts it back in the sink, kneels and shines the light in the cabinet under the sink. He grabs a can of Lysol, shakes it, sets it back.

INT. PANCHO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Not too busy. Sparma enters, looks around.

HIS POV

Two guys at the bar, a few folks eating dinner.

BACK TO SCENE

Sparma takes a seat at the bar, checks his watch, then nods to the bartender.

SPARMA

Gotta phone?

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Deke enters, shines the light on and opens... the shower curtain. Nothing... The sink... a dental bridge rests in the bottom of a glass of water.

Deke reaches in, grabs the three-tooth bridge and peers at it. He thinks for a second, grabs a bar of motel soap from the sink, wets it and firmly plants the bridge on the bar. He slowly pulls it back. A solid imprint on the bridge appears on the soap. He pockets the bar.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - NIGHT

Baxter sits nervously, eyes darting between the upstairs window and the street.

INT. SPARMA'S APT. - NIGHT

Deke reenters the living room/bedroom, looks under the bed, behind the dresser drawers, eyes the floor from baseboard to baseboard. Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He stands and walks around the room -- feeling with his feet for irregularities. He kicks over a throw rug, hits his knees and knocks on the wood. Hollow. He slips his pocketknife blade into the wood, turns it slightly and lifts the board. Inside, in a 2' by 2' cavity...

Is a box. A lock box.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - NIGHT

Baxter checks his watch, looks around, then starts the car and slides from his parking spot into the street.

INT. SPARMA'S APT. - NIGHT

Deke, using the lock pick, struggles with the lock box. We hear a SIREN in the distance.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Baxter drives toward Pancho's, scouring the street for Sparma. Nowhere to be found. He parks down the street from Pancho's and gets out of the car.

INT. SPARMA'S APT. - NIGHT

Deke twists the lock with the pick and presto... it opens. Deke takes a deep breath and opens it. Inside...

The box is chock full -- letters, papers, knickknacks, a piece of rope, postcards, newspaper clippings.

Deke stares at the yellowed clippings, turning them over...

They're all articles and police beat photos from murder scenes. There must be 20 of them. He stares at one...

CLIPPING

Shakespeare's bridge newspaper crime photo. And still the SIREN'S WAIL wafts in with the breeze.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. UNDER BRIDGE - NIGHT

Deke holds his revolver over his flashlight as he takes one cautious step after another. The guy's a hunter, in his element as he stalks whatever is out there in the brush.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Baxter walks up to Pancho's and looks in the window.

HIS POV

Sparma's not there.

BACK TO SCENE

Baxter takes another look around, then sprints for the car. His POLICE RADIO is barking out a message.

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)

Officer down. Repeat. Officer
down. 5655 Carlton, apartment 3C.

Just as Baxter recognizes the address, three squad cars, lights flashing, blast past him on the way to Sparma's apartment.

INT. SPARMA'S APT. - NIGHT

Two COPS kick open the door, flashlights and guns in hand. One Cop tries the light switch. No light.

COP #1

Is there anybody in here!?

No answer. They slowly move through the room. Behind them, we see Deke, against the wall, close enough to dance.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND SPARMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Baxter drives up, jumps out and races for the stairwell. A uniformed LAPD OFFICER steps in front of him. Baxter whips out his badge.

BAXTER

I heard the call. What'd you
find?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COP

Two guys inside now.

Baxter moves ahead. The Cop stops him.

COP

With all due respect, Detective,
your jurisdiction doesn't start
for another five blocks.

Baxter sighs and steps back, his eyes on Sparma's window.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Cops walk back into the living room from the kitchen. One of them reaches up and tightens the bulb. The bulb lights up. Deke unscrewed them. They walk into...

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

One Cop screws in the bulb. The room's empty. As one checks a closet we PULL OUT OF the WINDOW and TILT UP TO Deke's feet. He's standing on the ledge, climbing a pipe up to the roof.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Baxter, unsure what to do, walks back to Deke's car and eyes the apartment.

HIS POV

Deke shimmies onto the roof and starts trotting to the opposite side of the building.

INT. SPARMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

COP

There's nothin' here.

Then they hear FOOTSTEPS above them and grab for their radios.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Baxter sees a cop make his way up a fire escape to the roof.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Deke, out of breath, takes a look back in time to see the Cop reach the roof. He's stuck, trots to the edge. Nothing but a three-story drop.

The Cop shines his flashlight. Getting closer.

Deke spots a tree but it's on the other side, near the cop. He looks down and spies a skylight.

A SECURITY ALARM WAILS. The Cop reacts to the sound and races over to the skylight. It's smashed open. He shines his light down into the apartment and barks over his radio.

COP

He dropped down into an apartment
in the northeast corner. Top
floor.

EXT. ALLEY - POV SHOT - NIGHT

Baxter stands next to Deke's car, watching the mayhem.
Whose POV?

WIDER ANGLE

Sparma's. He sits on the stairwell of an adjacent apartment building, smiling at the disturbance he's caused.

Baxter feels eyes on him and turns his head to see Sparma sitting above him, grinning. The two men lock eyes. A Cop runs to his patrol radio. Baxter listens in...

COP

4722. No officer down but we have
a suspect on the move. He's not
in the building.

When Baxter turns back, Sparma is gone. Baxter gets in Deke's car and drives away.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Deke's car moves slowly along.

INT. DEKE'S CAR - NIGHT

Baxter looks to and fro. Suddenly, Deke steps out from behind a tree and stumbles to the car and gets in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Baxter drives off as Deke shakes out a pill from a bottle and sticks it under his tongue.

BAXTER
How'd you get away?

DEKE
A tree. Too old for that shit.

BAXTER
Sparma called in an 'Officer down.'

DEKE
Wily sonofabitch, huh?

BAXTER
Wily enough to keep his apartment clean?

DEKE
Not that wily. He's definitely top of the list. Guy's got a box of clippings, knickknacks. Souvenirs.

BAXTER
You see a red barrette?

DEKE
Maybe. I dunno. It was stuffed full.

(beat)
If I had five more minutes.

He looks to Baxter. A plea.

BAXTER
You're out of your fucking mind.

INT. LASD - CORONER'S - CLOSEUP SHOT - SERIES OF CORONER'S X-RAYS OF ALL VICTIMS - NIGHT

BAXTER (O.S.)
Would a metal tip absolutely, positively show up?

Flo Dunigan, sitting at his desk, analyzing the soap bridge mold, speaks without looking up.

DUNIGAN
Absolutely, positively.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Baxter pulls the X-rays off the viewing light.

BAXTER

So, it's somewhere else. All the more reason to find Ronda.

Deke and Baxter turn their attention to Dunigan, awaiting an assessment. He puts away his measuring instrument, tosses the soap bar back to Baxter and shrugs.

BAXTER

How come the only time physical evidence is conclusive is when I have a dunk shot with two eyewitnesses and a confession?!

DEKE

We work the case. It'll happen.

DUNIGAN

The voice of experience. Besides, Detective, I could ask how you got that.

INT. BAXTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Sal, Jamie, Bill Williams hover around Baxter's desk.

BAXTER

Okay, we focus on Sparma. Jamie, I want you to re-canvass the areas within a mile of where each of the north valley bodies were found. Talk to anybody, everybody. Show 'em this 'six pack.'

Baxter hands over a manila sheet with six photos, one of whom is Sparma. The others look nothing like him.

JAMIE

Two of 'em are black. Won't this taint any possible I.D.?

BAXTER

If they pick him, we'll rehabilitate with a line-up. Sal, you take the in-town sites. Billy, work the files. I want names of anybody who knew the guy, dated, fed or hated the guy.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER (CONT'D)

Sparma's got a scanner so stay off frequency. I'll be checking in, but you got my beeper and here's a pay phone number.

(beat)

We've got two days...

They nod, stand and stare at him.

BAXTER

So, what we waiting for?

They leave. Baxter spots Rogers nearby, sitting at his desk, smiling. Baxter swallows a comment, grabs his coat and leaves.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Jamie catches up to Baxter...

JAMIE

I think I've got a lead on the Watkins case. A dealer, pretty skittish, says he thinks he can I.D. the shooter.

BAXTER

So?

JAMIE

So, I was gonna bring him in today.

BAXTER

That guy's not going anywhere.

JAMIE

Yeah, but Jim...

BAXTER

-- You got your detail.

Baxter walks to his car.

JAMIE

I know you're under the gun. But my dead guy is just as important to me as your dead girls are to you.

Baxter stops, turns, gets in her face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER

A Lynwood brother gets blown away
and you expect me to give a shit?

JAMIE

Yeah. You used to...

Baxter is stung by this. Without answering, he walks to his car, gets in and drives away.

EXT. RUN-DOWN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Deke parks, gets out, negotiates his way through the front yard -- past a '72 Chevy up on blocks -- and to the door of a house. He knocks and waits. Knocks again. No answer. He walks around to... The side of the house, to a rickety fence and peers over.

A WOMAN, 45, on her hands and knees, digging in a 7' by 7' garden full of dead and dying tomatoes.

WOMAN

What do you want?

Deke leans against the fence.

DEKE

Mrs. Roberts, you probably don't
remember me. I'm...

MRS. ROBERTS (WOMAN)

-- I remember you.

This takes him back a bit. She doesn't even look up, just keeps working. Finally she plucks a golf ball-sized spotted tomato, and holds it in her hand, examining it.

MRS. ROBERTS

Tell me, Detective. I water, I
shade, I spray, and still they
die. Why do they die?

She tosses the worthless tomato aside.

MRS. ROBERTS

What do you want?

DEKE

I wanted to bring you up to date
on your daughter's murder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. ROBERTS

Bring me up-to-date? She's five years dead and buried.

DEKE

I've got a good suspect. I wanna send the guy away; put this thing to rest.

Mrs. Roberts stares at Deke and shakes her head.

MRS. ROBERTS

It is at rest. I'm at rest. Poor Mary, she's at rest. Five years of peace and quiet. Five years with no tears, no worries about where she is, if she's okay, if she's even alive. She's dead, she doesn't hurt anymore, and I've only got to drive three miles to sit and talk to her. We never talked before she...

She wipes a tear, an angry look on her face.

MRS. ROBERTS

Five years since I've cried over her. God knows I wept when it happened, but He also knows I stopped a day later. God gave me peace, Detective. Ask Him. He'll give it to you.

Deke is dumbfounded. He starts to mumble something, then finds his shoes with his eyes. She stares at him hard.

DEKE

I'm gonna... I'm gonna nail this guy.

MRS. ROBERTS

I'm sorry. I got no medals for you.

And she goes back to work. Deke stands for a moment, then slowly walks away. After he's gone, she breaks down, sobbing.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - HOLLYWOOD STREET - DAY

Baxter sits and watches AAA Appliance. Deke walks up, slides into the car and stares straight ahead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER

Bad news first. Sparma did file a 'stolen' on the Wagon. Lost in the computer or something. The good? Sparma left town less than six weeks after your murders. He moved back five months ago.

DEKE

Where was he?

BAXTER

Detroit.

DEKE

They have any unsolved bodies up there?

BAXTER

Detroit?!... We're checkin'.

Baxter holds up a box of Kentucky Fried Chicken.

BAXTER

Original or extra crispy?

(as Deke shakes
his head)

You okay?

DEKE

Jimmy, you ever think maybe it's not worth it? Sitting, watching. Spending your time in another guy's shadow.

BAXTER

One, wherever he goes, I mark it for search warrants. Two, he does it again, I catch him in the act. Three, when I'm with him, nobody dies. Nobody dies on my shift.

DEKE

And how long's your shift?

BAXTER

As long as it takes.

Deke looks at Baxter, seeing himself in the younger man's eyes. The mantle has passed.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - DAY

Still awake, still staring. Obsession is a powerful stimulant.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BLVD. - DAY

Sparma pays for a Sunday paper and walks down the street.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - DAY

Baxter starts the car. Deke turns ON the RADIO.

BAXTER

Tell me something. How can you
listen to sappy love songs 24
hours a day?

DEKE

It reminds me of being 16 in the
back seat with Marsha McConnell.

BAXTER

High school sweetheart?

DEKE

Ex-wife.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Sparma stands with a few others. Waiting for... A bus
pulls up. Sparma gets in.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - DAY

Baxter shakes his head.

BAXTER

The bus? The guy's got a car and
he's takin' the bus?

EXT. 101 FREEWAY - DAY

Traffic jam. The bus sits, stuck, in the right hand
lane.

A few cars back, Deke and Baxter sit and wait, stuck in
the same traffic. "I WILL FOLLOW HIM" by Little Peggy
March comes on the RADIO. Deke sings along and moves his
shoulders a bit, humored by the irony of the words.
Baxter, far too frustrated to enjoy anything, just looks
at Deke and shakes his head.

EXT. NORTH HOLLYWOOD - BUSY STREET - NIGHT

A different bus stops at a corner and Sparma gets out.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

The game is wearing very thin.

BAXTER

Lived here all this time and had
no idea how many buses it took to
get to the valley. This is
fucking comical.

Deke smiles, a bit surprised by Baxter's strong language.

BAXTER

We're runnin' out of sand and the
guy's takin' public
transportation.

Sparma starts a lazy walk up the block.

BAXTER

And now... he's walking...

DEKE

We could offer him a ride.

BAXTER

Maybe there's something wrong with
his car? Maybe there's a reason
he's not taking it? Maybe knowin'
that reason would help?

DEKE

I know where he's going.

EXT. "THE ZOO" STRIP JOINT - NIGHT

Sparma walks in.

DEKE (V.O.)

Did you 'run' this place?

BAXTER (V.O.)

Yeah, no connection.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

They park and settle in, side view mirror covering the
entrance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER

Let's say you're Sparma. You're a killer. You get off on it. Can't live without it. It's your day off. Been a whole week without the good stuff. What do you do? Do you take a bus to a strip joint in the valley? Sure, you get to look at naked women, but the closest you get to blood-red is the polish on their fingernails.

Deke opens the glove box, pulls out his rental agreement.

BAXTER

What are you doing?

DEKE

Makin' sure I got unlimited mileage.

We...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT (TWO HOURS LATER)

Absolute quiet. Baxter sits up straight when he spots...

EXT. THE ZOO STRIP JOINT - NIGHT

Sparma saunters out.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

Back to business. Baxter starts the car and they inch forward -- slow, steady pursuit.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT (LATER)

A bus stops at a corner and Sparma gets off. He stretches his arms and walks around the corner to his apartment stairwell. After a few seconds, the blue light of the TV comes on.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - SAME TIME - NIGHT

Baxter bangs the dashboard in frustration.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND APARTMENT - NIGHT

Deke and Baxter walk up to the carport. Deke shines a flashlight on... Sparma's car. All four tires okay.

DEKE

Looks fine to me.

Baxter's frustration wells and he rears back and kicks the car. Once, twice, a third time...

DEKE

Hey, Jimmy... Jimmy!

Deke pulls Baxter away from the car and back out...

INTO ALLEY

Baxter shakes free of Deke's grasp.

DEKE

Look, you work the case. That's all you can do. It's like fishing. You go days without a bump, then bam!, you get a strike. If you're impatient, if you're not alert, you come home with nuthin' for the skillet.

Baxter sighs, looks up at a streetlight.

BAXTER

(a plea; a prayer)
I'm dyin' here...

DEKE

Go home. I'll put him to bed.

BAXTER

Fuck you.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT (LATER)

And again they sit and wait. Deke shakes his watch. Not working. He looks up, spots...

Down the street -- a 24-hour mini-mart.

DEKE

Whattaya think? They got watch batteries over there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAXTER

Yeah, sure.

Deke gets out and walks away. Baxter TURNS OFF the RADIO and stares at...

Sparma's window -- still coated in television blue.

EXT. DOWN THE STREET - NIGHT

Deke moves purposefully along the street.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

Baxter, a bundle of nerves, sits, sits, sits. Then we hear a PHONE RING.

Baxter looks down the street at the pay phone on the corner. He hesitates, checks for his beeper. He forgot it.

Baxter makes a decision, gets out of the car and walks toward the phone. RING. RING. RING.

AT PHONE

It RINGS again. Baxter arrives, picks it up.

BAXTER

Yeah?

There is only the sound of a LOUD TV coming through the receiver.

BAXTER

Hello...

Baxter's eyes find the poster of Ronda Rathman, still taped to the kiosk. Then, he feels eyes on him and spins to see...

Sparma, standing five feet away, smiling.

SPARMA

Must be a wrong number.

Baxter hangs up the phone, stares at Sparma. Then, in a flash, Baxter is all over Sparma, buttonholing him and dragging him around the corner into...

DARK ALLEY

Baxter throws Sparma against the wall, frisks him for a weapon, finds none, then spins him around, picks him up by the collar, and gets right in his face.

SPARMA

I'd think twice. I mean,
everybody saw what happened at the
station.

Baxter just stares, breathing heavy.

SPARMA

Whoa. Wait. You don't wanna
rough me up; you wanna kill me,
don't ya?

Sparma shakes off Baxter's hands, straightens his shirt,
reaches in his pocket, grabs a cigarette and a lighter.

SPARMA

Trust me, ya don't have it in you.

Sparma flicks the lighter. Baxter grabs his hands and
pulls out the photo of Ronda Rathman, forcing it near the
flame's light.

SPARMA

Ah, the original. How'd you
wrangle that?

BAXTER

Where is she?

Sparma just smiles.

SPARMA

You don't wanna know. Not really.

Baxter slams Sparma against the wall, but even this
doesn't wipe the smile off Sparma's face.

SPARMA

Okay, you win. Come on.

And he walks away. Baxter hesitates, then follows a few
steps behind Sparma as they walk down the alley toward
the carport.

INT. MINI-MART - NIGHT

Deke waits in line behind a bum buying a two-bit hot dog.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

In the corner -- two delinquents play a VIDEO GAME.
DING. DING.

Deke watches them play, then tosses the watch battery and
a bill on the counter. DING. DING. DING.

In the corner -- the game ends. An amplified, sinister,
deep DRACONIC VIDEO VOICE announces...

DRACONIC VIDEO VOICE (V.O.)

The game is over!

KID #1

Aw, man. That sucks!

CLOSEUP - DEKE

Voices in his head as he grabs his change and stumbles
out of the store.

MARY ROBERTS (V.O.)

It's over...

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The two-man parade continues -- Baxter ten steps behind
Sparma.

When they arrive at the carport, Sparma gets in his car,
starts it and backs up alongside Baxter. They look at
each other for a moment, then Sparma rolls down the
window...

SPARMA

Coming?...

Baxter hesitates, checks the street for any sign of Deke.

SPARMA

You're tryin' to figure if you
could get back to your car in time
to tail me? You can't. Come on,
get in. We've got a drive ahead
of us and I've got to go to work
tomorrow.

Sparma whistles a few bars of "Final Jeopardy" theme
music as Baxter hesitates. Then...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARMA

Ya already felt me up. You're
armed and I'm not. What are ya
scared of?

Baxter takes one last look down the street and gets in.

SPARMA

Buckle up.

DOWN THE STREET

Deke looks up, spots...

Sparma's car exit the alley. Deke breaks into a run.

INT. SPARMA'S CAR - NIGHT

Silence as Sparma moves through light traffic, looking
over at Baxter every so often.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Deke races down the alley, looks around for Baxter,
mutters a curse, then jumps in Baxter's car and takes
off.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Sparma's car heads north on Highland.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

Deke's eyes dance all over the place looking for...

Far ahead. In the distance -- Sparma's car enters the
freeway.

INT. SPARMA'S CAR - NIGHT

SPARMA

Excited? Got that little tingly
feelin'?

Baxter doesn't move, just keeps one eye on Sparma, the
other on their journey. Sparma puts on his blinker and
crosses lanes of traffic.

EXT. FREEWAY - NIGHT

Sparma exits onto the 170 north.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

Deke spots Sparma's move and changes lanes to exit.

INT. SPARMA'S CAR - NIGHT

Sparma, enjoying this, can't take his eyes off Baxter.

BAXTER

Just where is it we're going?

SPARMA

Ronda Rathman?

EXT. 170 - NIGHT

Deke's car enters the freeway.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

Racing along. Determined to catch up. We hear WHISPERS, but we can't make out what the voices are saying.

EXT. 170 AT I-5 - NIGHT

Sparma's car takes the I-5 and continues onward.

INT. SPARMA'S CAR - NIGHT

Sparma puts on his blinker, changes lanes and takes note of...

The highway sign -- I-14 exit -- moving right over them.

Sparma notices Baxter's interest.

SPARMA

Keepin' track? Let's recap for the fans at home. 101 north, 170, I-5 north, I-14. Daddy, Daddy, how much longer?

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

He spots the I-5 freeway and blasts onto it. He steps on the gas and realizes he has a decision to make when he sees...

HIS POV

The highway splits three ways, the I-14 on the right.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Deke slows down and comes to a stop on the overpass shoulder. Then he jumps out and climbs on the roof of the car.

HIS POV - PANNING

Three different highways. On the third he spots and we ZOOM TO, in the distance the erratic blinker...

INT. SPARMA'S CAR - NIGHT

Sparma changes lanes, taking...

EXT. I-14 - NIGHT

A numbered feeder exit. Sparma's car disappears, goes down the ramp and makes an immediate right, heading off toward the dark stillness of the Antelope Valley.

BAXTER'S POV

As headlights beat a path down a grated road, sending the occasional roadrunner fleeing for cover.

Baxter shakes off a creepy feeling.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

Driving along I-14. Eyes everywhere. He spots...

HIS POV

Far in the distance, a single pair of headlights beating a dusty path through the darkness.

Deke changes lanes quickly. On the hunt.

EXT. GRATED ROAD - NIGHT

Sparma's car slows and turns onto a dirt road blocked by a locked, swinging gate and cattle guard.

INT. SPARMA'S CAR - NIGHT

Sparma holds up a single key, hands it to Baxter.

Baxter mulls it over, grabs the key, gets out, unlocks and swings open the gate.

Sparma drives through, passing Baxter's grim stare, and stops.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Baxter swings the gate closed. He hangs the lock on it and walks back to the car. He gets in and we HOLD as the car drives on, on, on into the dark distance. Then several hundred yards away, it stops away and the brake and headlights die, leaving only the darkness.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Sparma's car sits, engine still humming as it cools in the night air. Sparma steps out and leans on the front of the hood. Baxter gets out, stands by the door.

SPARMA

I knew a guy had a hunting lease
here five years or so back. Nice
spot, huh? And we got the moon
tonight.

BAXTER

Where is she?

SPARMA

All business.

(beat)

I tell you what. You start
walkin' that way.

Baxter hesitates, then starts walking into the moon-lit pasture. After 20 or so yards he veers left.

SPARMA

Chilly.

Baxter, not understanding, turns and looks at Sparma.

SPARMA

Come on, you remember the game.

Baxter keeps walking left.

SPARMA

Cold. Ice cold.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Baxter sighs and walks right.

SPARMA

Warmer.

Baxter continues to walk slowly, deliberately...

SPARMA

Warmer... even warmer, hot...
hotter... Stop! Now, look down at
the ground...

Baxter does so.

SPARMA

... and say... 'Hello, Ronda.'

GROUND

A dusty, desert spot with no vegetation.

BACK TO SCENE

Baxter's eyes slowly light and he stares at the smiling Sparma, who chuckles, then walks to the trunk of the car, opens it, grabs a military shovel and walks toward Baxter.

Baxter quietly unbuckles his holster strap.

Sparma stops four or so feet away.

SPARMA

You'll need this.

He tosses the shovel to...

Baxter, who grabs it mid-air without blinking. He holds it, looks at it, casts his eyes on the ground, then tosses the shovel back, pulls out his gun and points it at Sparma.

BAXTER

You dig.

SPARMA

The devil's in the details, ya know? Fingerprints, witnesses, physical evidence. You'd have to get rid of my body, get rid of my car. A lot to consider.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARMA (CONT'D)
And besides, like I said: You
don't have it in you.

Sparma tosses the shovel to Baxter, who grimaces, slowly re-holsters his weapon and starts to dig, a look of pure hatred on his face.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

Deke drives slowly down the gravel road.

HIS POV

looking left, PANNING right. Nothing.

MARY'S VOICE (V.O.)
It's over...

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - NIGHT

Deke's car goes right past the dirt road and continues on.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Baxter digs, digs, digs. He stops for a second, takes off his coat, tosses it aside and goes back to work.

Sparma, squatting like a football coach, puffs on a cig, delighted with the proceedings.

The hole -- a couple of feet deep by the same width, and growing.

Sparma leans in for a closer look.

SPARMA
You know, come to think of it,
this doesn't look that familiar.

Baxter stops digging, glares at Sparma, who stands and walks ten or so feet away. He spits on the ground.

SPARMA
But this spot here; this looks
very promising.

BAXTER
Fuck you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sparma shrugs an "up to you," then points to the spot beneath his feet, moves a few steps away and squats.

Baxter takes the shovel, walks over, glares at Sparma, then begins digging anew.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - DEKE'S POV - NIGHT

The gravel road ends abruptly, turning to barren field.

BACK TO SCENE

Deke comes to a stop, clicks on his high beams...

HIS POV

There's nothing out there.

PAIGE'S VOICE (V.O.)

Always nice to see you, Joe.

MRS. ROBERTS VOICE (V.O.)

It is at rest.

MARY'S VOICE (V.O.)

I forgive you, Joe. It's over...

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Stan Peters' strange expression pressed against the glass.

BAXTER'S VOICE (V.O.)

Peters swallowed a .12 gauge last night.

BAXTER'S VOICE (V.O.)

Was Peters' our boy?

DEKE'S VOICE (V.O.)

God, I hope not.

BACK TO SCENE (BACK TO PRESENT)

Deke blinks away the awful vision and throws the car in reverse.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Baxter, sweating, continues to dig.

Sparma watches with mock fascination, peering farther and farther into the growing hole as each spade full of dirt is removed.

Sparma's smile drops and he shakes his head.

SPARMA

Hmmm...

Baxter stops and stares at Sparma, who shakes his head and walks a few more yards away.

SPARMA

(whispers; sing-song)

Ronda?, Ron-da?...

Then he cups his ear and leans down...

SPARMA

(whispered mimic)

I'm... down... here...

He picks up a stick and makes a grand gesture of making an "X" on a spot of dirt.

SPARMA

'X' marks the spot.

(beat)

Come on, Jimmy. Third time's the
a charm.

Sparma motions "come on" with one finger. Baxter stares down Sparma, who points at the ground and squats.

BAXTER

Cut the bullshit!

SPARMA

Okay, you want the truth? I never
killed anybody in my whole life.
Do you believe me?

Baxter's hatred shows in his eyes.

SPARMA

I can tell from the look on your
face that you don't; that you
think I did all those horrible
things to those girls.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARMA (CONT'D)

The ones you've found... and the ones you haven't. Well, what you think is out of my control. If you believe me, we can get in the car and drive home. If you don't, well...

And he points once again to the spot of dirt. Baxter's face tells us he's about to crack. He spits and stares at the "X."

SPARMA

Say, what if this guy just quit killing? Cold turkey. Fell back into his life. Nine to five. Maybe gets a girlfriend. He can have any woman he wants, you know? I mean, if he did that, you'd be fucked, wouldn't you? 'Cause you'd have nothing.

Baxter just stares at Sparma.

SPARMA

Hell, he prolly wouldn't even have to stop. He could do it over and over and over again. Because he's smarter than you. He doesn't even have a high school diploma, but he's forgotten more than you'll ever know. That's gotta be frustrating, huh? To be that powerless? To be that stupid?

Baxter's face hardens, his squinting eyes shooting darts. Sparma's smile drops and he stares back. A face-off.

SPARMA

I seen a picture of your family. Shoulda stayed outta the public eye. That oldest daughter of yours... tasty. A coupla years down the road...

Sparma grins lasciviously, then starts to chuckle. And the chuckle turns into a loud, resounding cackle.

SPARMA

(an evil clown)

And there's nuthin' you can do about it!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Baxter, in an instant rage, suddenly no longer a cop but an outraged man, grabs the shovel like a bat and...

Brutally whacks Sparma on the head. The cackle stops on a dime and the next and only sound we hear is the THUD of Sparma's body as it hits the ground, ECHOING in the still night air.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - NIGHT

As Deke retraces the gravel road, he stops at...

The gate and cattle guard. He pulls into the dirt road, nudges the front bumper against the fence... and it swings open.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

The headlights move along the swirling dust. In the distance we see Sparma's car.

CLOSEUP - DEKE

staring straight ahead.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. UNDER BRIDGE - NIGHT

Deke freezes as he hears more RUSTLING. Then he cocks his revolver and continues forward. One foot in front of the other, eyes never blinking, a coiled spring.

He uses the flashlight to avoid a branch and --

A GUTTURAL, HUMAN SOUND --

-- releases Deke's spring. He FIRES into the dark and spins the flashlight to see what's gone down. He, too, makes a guttural sound when he sees...

IN FLASHLIGHT BEAM

A girl with long blonde hair, Mary Roberts, on her knees, partially nude, bleeding from stab wounds. She glances at the fresh bullet wound in her chest, then up at Deke, a puzzled look on her face. She holds out her arms to him and falls, face first, on the ground.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Deke is frozen. A lifetime crystallized in a single, defining moment.

CUT TO:

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT (PRESENT)

The car is stopped. Deke stares straight ahead into the darkness.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. UNDER BRIDGE - NIGHT

Farris, on the run, having heard the gunshot, pushes past brush, then stops dead in his tracks. Sal, not far behind, freezes when he sees...

SAL
(stunned)
Oh, sweet Jesus.

Deke, kneeling over the body of Mary Roberts. Lost, he gently fingers her bloody dress.

MARY ROBERTS (V.O.)
It's over...

CUT TO:

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Deke, still staring. He closes his eyes, hoping the sight before him will go away.

It won't. He opens them and stares at...

HIS POV

The headlights illuminate Baxter, kneeling over the crumpled body of Albert Sparma.

DEKE (O.S.)
(whispers)
It's never over...

CLOSEUP - DEKE

His face...

CROSS FADES INTO:

EXT. FIELD - CLOSEUP - BAXTER - NIGHT (LATER)

In shock. He leans against the hood of Deke's car and stares, numb. The two have become one.

BACK TO SCENE

Deke rolls Sparma's body over and fishes in his pocket for his keys. The guy is deader than dead.

Deke finds the keys, walks over to Baxter.

BAXTER

(edgy, nervous)

It was him. He was our boy. He
as much as told me.

DEKE

It doesn't make any difference
now.

Baxter gives Deke a look of pure fear.

BAXTER

We gotta call somebody.

(beat)

What am I gonna say?

DEKE

Nothing.

(beat)

Stick him in a hole. Pick one.
At least four feet deep.

Deke's proposal hits Baxter, who just stares.

DEKE

I'll be back in a few hours. Just
stay put, all right?

Baxter is too shocked to nod.

INT. SPARMA'S CAR - NIGHT

Deke drives along the freeway, his mind racing.

INT. SPARMA'S APT. - NIGHT

The door opens and Deke enters. He gives himself a
second to think, then...

SERIES OF SHOTS

QUICK CUTS all, of...

- A) Deke throws all Sparma's clothes from his dresser and closet into a trash bag.
- B) Deke levels the dresser top with a sweep of an arm.
- C) Deke rips off the bed sheets, tears posters from the walls.
- D) Deke waylays the kitchen with the same maneuver.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SPARMA'S APT. - CONTINUOUS ACTION

SLOW, LANGUID PAN FROM one side of the room TO the other. Damn near everything in the apartment is in garbage bags. We HOLD ON Deke, sitting on the floor, leaning against the wall.

CLOSEUP - DEKE

He looks like hell. His eyes stare at...

BACK TO SCENE

The throw rug in the center of the main room.

He's put this off till last. Deke slowly rises, walks over, and, with one foot, he rolls it aside.

Then kneels, opens the floorboard and stares into the hole.

The lock box still sits there.

Deke pulls it out, opens it, staring for several seconds at contents we can't see. Then he sets it aside.

EXT. CHEROKEE STREET (HOLLYWOOD) - NIGHT

Seediest of the Hollywood streets. We remember it from before.

Deke pulls up and parks Sparma's car alongside the curb. He gets out and looks around...

HIS POV

PANNING ACROSS and DOWN the street. A gang of hoods sit on their stoop, drinking, watching. Along the block easily half the cars have been stripped down to nothing. A boneyard of stolen and ransacked cars. A public, open-air chop shop.

BACK TO SCENE

Deke tosses Sparma's keys into the dark... and walks away.

INT. DEKE'S BRONCO - DAWN

Deke drives, focused but dead tired -- a long night behind him, but miles to go before he sleeps.

The back of the Bronco is filled with trash bags.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - GATE - DAY (DAWN)

Deke peers ahead, driving toward the mess he left only a few short hours ago.

Then he slows and brings the Bronco to a stop. The look on his face says what he's looking at is something he wishes he didn't have to see. He rubs his tired face with one dirty hand, looks up again. Still the same.

EXT. FIELD - DAY (DAWN)

The bloody, still very dead face of Albert Sparma -- in the same position we left him. In the background, we hear DIGGING noises. We slowly BOOM UP to reveal... the first two holes Baxter dug...

Three more holes...

And finally, FROM A VIEW HIGH ABOVE we see...

A field of holes, at least 20 of them. Baxter, shirt off, still digging, searching...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY (HOUR LATER)

Deke tosses dirt on a pile. A grave. He wipes his brow and takes one last look at the field.

All holes filled.

INT. DEKE'S BRONCO - DAY

Baxter, stupefied, sits shotgun, staring blankly.

Deke walks to the Bronco, tosses the shovel in the back and stuffs the rental car keys in Baxter's pocket.

DEKE

You take your car and follow me
back to town.

BAXTER

(mumbling)

He was our boy, right, Joe? I
think he was our boy...

And then he starts to cry. Deke just watches a few seconds, then opens the door and literally pulls Baxter out, jacking him up against the truck.

DEKE

Nobody's gonna give a damn.

(beat)

I've taken care of this. You
listenin' to me, Jimmy? You go
back, tell Farris that Sparma was
a wash and you need a break. A
coupla weeks. You tell him I left
town on Saturday and you went
home. You hear me?!

It's all too much for Baxter to comprehend.

DEKE

It's history. Forgotten. He's
rotting in the ground and the only
thing he can do to you now is what
you let him. Don't ever go back
to his place, don't ever pull his
file, don't ever let his name
cross your lips. 'Cause if you
do, he's gonna rise right up outta
that dirt and do ya in.

(beat)

It's the little things, Jimmy.
It's the little things that rip
you apart. It's the little things
that get ya caught.

Baxter, still numb, offers a slight nod. Deke pats his cheek.

DEKE

That's my boy.

The irony of the phrase gives Baxter pause. He looks up into Deke's eyes with a mixture of hatred and trust.

EXT. FIELD - HIGH ABOVE - DAY

Now with one more secret to hide?

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ST. FRANCIS - HALLWAY - DAY

The Manager walks with a maid to Deke's door. He pushes it open.

INT. DEKE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Empty. He left in a hurry. The Manager steps in, looks around and shakes his head. He spots...

A pile of trash... the photos of Paige Callahan, Tamara Ewing and Mary Roberts, alive and dead.

MANAGER

The last one leaves clothes I
can't wear; this one, pictures of
girls I don't know.

The Manager bends over, picks one up -- a grisly crime scene shot -- and tosses it, a look of grim displeasure on his face.

MANAGER

I gotta get outta this town.

INT. DEKE'S BRONCO - DAY

As he leaves Los Angeles, far, far behind, the radio station's last LOVE SONG PLAYS.

D.J. (V.O.)

And that brings to an end the
world as we know it. Thanks for
listening for all these many
years.

(beat)

It's 12 o'clock.

There's a long pause -- DEAD AIR on the radio. And then...

DIFFERENT D.J. (V.O.)

It's noon, El-Lay. This is Bobby
Saunders and I'm sayin' welcome to
the new K.K.N.G., the king of talk
radio, where what you have to say
matters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Deke's eyes gaze at... the white Cahuenga Pass cross, perched high above him.

Deke stares at it as he passes, then he looks at Los Angeles in his rear view mirror, reaches down and TURNS OFF the RADIO.

INT. HOMICIDE AREA - DAY

GREG ALBERTS, 45, handsome, an FBI behavioral specialist, addresses the homicide unit in front of a large blackboard. On the chalkboard is a profile list.

Back and forth -- Alberts and a SLOW TILT DOWN the list...

ORGANIZED KILLER:	Personalizes victim
Killer -- white male -- 25-40 yrs.	Demands submission
Crime scene reflects control	Aggression prior to death
Body usually hidden or dumped	Weapon -- absent
Socially competent	Average/above average I.Q.
Victim: Targeted stranger	Changes jobs, moves...

ALBERTS

... A white male between the ages of 25 and 40. He is of above average intelligence; socially competent; works as a skilled laborer; probably firstborn or an only child; follows the crimes in the media...

CUT TO:

EXT. CHEROKEE STREET - DAY

Sparma's car, sans wheels and seats, sits up on blocks. When night falls, the vultures will come back and pick the bones.

ALBERTS (V.O.)

... He has at least one car in good condition, maybe two...

CUT TO:

INT. SPARMA'S APT. - DAY

Empty. A stick of furniture here, a pile of trash there.

ALBERTS (V.O.)
... has a propensity for changing
jobs; picking up, leaving at a
moment's notice.

CUT TO:

INT. HOMICIDE AREA - BACK TO SCENE - DAY

ALBERTS
That, ladies and gentlemen, is the
guy we're looking for.

SAL
What about the leads we're
following?

ALBERTS
I think it's safe to say we're at
square one on this operation. One
thing I can promise you... we'll
get the bastard.

INT. PRESS ROOM - DAY

Captain Farris is at the mike, fielding questions from
the press. Behind him stand Alberts and Rogers.

FARRIS
With Agent Alberts and the
F.B.I.'s help, we hope to stop
this killer. I'll take a coupla
questions.

REPORTER
What will Detective Baxter's role
be in the revamped investigation?

FARRIS
Detective Sergeant Baxter has done
a fine job as the primary on this
case. But, under our new task
force configuration, Detective
Sergeant Rogers will be acting in
concert with Federal Agent
Roberts.

Rogers takes a tiny step forward and nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLANDERS (REPORTER)

Isn't it unusual to change
primaries midstream?

FARRIS

Detective Baxter is on a self-
requested, open-ended leave of
absence.

INT. BAXTER HOUSE - DAY

Jan stands at the kitchen window and looks out at... the
girls playing in the pool. Baxter sits nearby, staring
into space. The DOORBELL RINGS.

Jan walks to the door, opens it. There stands Sal,
holding a package envelope.

SAL

Hey, Jan.

JAN

Hi, Sal, come in.

SAL

Nah, I gotta get goin'. He okay?

Jan just looks at him. What can she say?

SAL

Yeah, well, we miss him. Joe
Deacon gimme this, said it was for
Jimmy.

He hands her the envelope. She takes it, stares at it.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Baxter sits in a pool chair under a table umbrella,
staring at his daughters playing in the pool. The girls
stop splashing for a moment and stare at their father,
very aware of his uncomfortable state.

CLOSEUP - BAXTER

In a world of his own.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - VIDEO OF RONDA RATHMAN

goofing around in the back yard pool with her friends.
She looks directly at the camera and smiles.

JAN (V.O.)

Jimmy?...

EXT. BACK YARD - BACK TO SCENE - DAY (PRESENT)

Jan kisses Baxter on the head and sets the envelope on the table.

JAN

Sal brought his by.

Baxter doesn't even look at her.

JAN

He said it was from Joe Deacon.

Jan walks back into the house. Baxter stares at the envelope on the table, then slowly reaches over and slides it across. He quietly opens it and pulls out the contents...

A note. It reads: "No Angels."

Baxter sets the note down and turns the envelope upside-down. Out falls a small object. Baxter takes it and stares at...

A red barrette.

Baxter grips the barrette like it's a St. Christopher and looks once again at his beautiful daughters in his beautiful pool in his beautiful yard.

JENNIFER AND CHLOE

watching him back.

EXT. DESERT - DEKE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (DUSK)

The back end of the Bronco is open and Deke takes the last trash bag, carries it to a 55 gallon drum fire and dumps it in. The flames engulf it.

Deke watches it burn for a second, then returns to the Bronco, reaches in and grabs the lock box. He opens it again, hoping for a different result but...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It's still very empty. Deke tosses it underhand into the fire and stares at the flames.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. CORONER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

After hours. The place is empty. Flo Dunigan is performing a hush-hush autopsy.

In a chair, emotionally drained, sits Deke, eyeing the floor. Behind him stands Farris, wearing a grimace.

Flo uses a large set of tweezers to dig into the subject's chest. He fishes for, extracts and holds up...

A bullet fragment, flattened. The one that ended up on Flo's key chain.

The three men share a look -- a shattering, hideous moment that defines them forever. Flo sighs and looks to Deke.

DUNIGAN

Cause of death -- massive stab wounds. That's what I'm puttin' down.

(beat)

Chances are she woulda died anyway, Deke.

Deke slowly turns to Farris. The two men stare at one another, then Farris, hating himself, nods and walks out of the room.

Flo drops the bullet fragment in a metal pan and he, too, walks away.

Deke just sits, staring at the body of Mary Roberts. He doesn't even flinch when...

Her head slowly turns toward him... and she smiles, ever so slightly.

EXT. DEKE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (DUSK)

The fire still blazes. Deke walks to the front passenger door of his Bronco, opens it, and takes out a small grocery sack, reaches in and pulls out...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A cardboard barrette package -- price tag still on -- several barrettes pinned to cardboard backing. One missing. The red one.

He tosses it into the flame, then senses someone coming...

Over the ridge -- the cur dog -- returning home. The mutt wanders up next to his leg and Deke obliges with a boot back scratch.

The flames engulf Sparma's belongings. All of them. And the barrettes, too.

ANGLE - HIGH ABOVE

Deke walks into the house, followed by his sometimes pet.

FADE TO BLACK.

And...

We hear a BOB WHITE's lonely call split the desert night air...

THE END

THIS SCRIPT WAS PREPARED
BY WARNER BROS.
SCRIPT PROCESSING DEPARTMENT
(818) 954-4632