

KING'S X

(AKA: The Night Watchman)

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FADE IN:

INT. LUDLOW'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - SUNSET

A tract home in Simi Valley. Curtains drawn tight. Happy couple pictures on the wall, man and wife forever. The Alarm BUZZES -- It's 6:00 could be A.M. or P.M. Hungover and alone LUDLOW sits up in his clothes. He slides a hand under his pillow and pulls out a .45 pistol. He swings his legs off the bed and lopes off.

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INT. LUDLOW'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - SUNSET

Ludlow brushing his teeth. His gun on the sink. Ludlow gags. Leans over, pukes in the john. As Ludlow rinses his mouth he catches his own eyes in the mirror. Bloodshot steel, fire and pain. Intimidated by his own feral gaze, Ludlow looks away.

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INT. LUDLOW'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SUNSET

Pizza boxes, take out, assorted trash. Ludlow crosses and exits. SLAMMING the door behind him.

EXT. 210 FREEWAY - SUNSET

A river of headlights pours out of L.A.

CAMERA FINDS: LUDLOW'S CAR among the few cars heading into the city.

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EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Ghetto shabby on Pico. Ludlow's car pulls up. He gets out.

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INT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Cash is traded for three Stoli mini bottles. Ludlow cracks one and sucks it down as he exits.

EXT. OLYMPIC BLVD. - NIGHT

We're deep in Koreatown. Endless neon announces soju and barbecue joints. We could be in Seoul. As Ludlow's car glides by WE SEE him downing a second mini.

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EXT. KOREATOWN - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Behind a restaurant. Two heavy duty Korean Gangsters, KIM 1 *
and KIM 2 lean against a Benz. Smoking Kools and checking *
their gold Rolex's. Ludlow's car pulls in from the alley and *
stops. Ludlow emerges with the focused exertion of a man
coming off a bad drunk.

LUDLOW
Konnichiwa.

KIM 1
What?

LUDLOW
Konnichiwa. Konnichiwa. It means
what's up? What the fuck's up?

KIM 2
We know what it means.

Ludlow flashes a large clear rock of ice.

LUDLOW
Wanna smoke? Read the paper through
this, it's so clean. Couple hits and
you'll be fucking like beasts. For days *
on end. You boy's like pussy, right? *

KIM 1
We look like fuckin' tweakers? You got
the shit or not?

LUDLOW
You?

Kim 2 lifts his shirt to reveal stacks of cash in the
waistband of his dress slacks. Kim 1 nods for Ludlow to pop *
his trunk. Ludlow does, whipping back a blanket to reveal a *
huge .50 caliber belt fed machine gun. The Kims stare at the
commanding machinery.

KIM 2
The fuck is that? We said a machine gun. *

LUDLOW
It is a machine gun.

KIM 1
The kind you can carry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDLOW

Couldn't get none of those. This baby's
got character. Korean war vintage.
Maybe even mowed down your granpapa-san
when he was charging the wire at Inchon.

*
*
*

Kim 2 tries to wedge it from the trunk.

*

KIM 2

It's fucking stuck.

LUDLOW

So take the ride too. For three large.
Vin's clean.

*

KIM 1

Nigga, I drive a Mercedes fucking Benz.
We want your faggot-ass ride, we'll jack
it from you.

Kim 2 flashes a .25 auto for emphasis.

LUDLOW

Cool, don't decide right now.

KIM 2

Konnichiwa's Japanese. It's insulting to
Koreans.

LUDLOW

How'm I supposed to tell if you can't?

KIM 2

The fuck's that supposed to mean,
whiteboy?

*

LUDLOW

It means you got eyes like apostrophes,
dress white, talk black and drive Jew.
So how'm I supposed to know what kind of
zipperhead-dog-munching dinks you are if
you don't?

KIM 1

(stunned, softly)
Do you know who we are?

*
*

LUDLOW

Couple panheads buying guns outta my
trunk.

That's it. They JUMP HIM. It's an epic pounding Tai Kwan Do
style. Ludlow covers up and takes it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Oddly focused amidst the rain of blows. After a final kick, the KEYS are ripped from his hand. *

KIM 1
Dumb fucking tweak.

BOTH CARS take off. Leaving Ludlow gasping. He painfully sits up. Feels his ear. Blood draining out. He needs an ambulance. Instead, he gets to his feet. Combs his hair, smooths his shirt and starts walking. *

EXT. GAS STATION - KOREATOWN - NIGHT

ON A BILLBOARD: The PARK TWINS, two missing teen girls, smile and ask: "Have you seen us?"

TILT DOWN: Ludlow limps past two HOOKERS. Finds a payphone. He drops in a quarter, dials. Someone answers. Then: *

LUDLOW
Where?

EXT. KOREATOWN NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Ludlow walks past a row of shabby craftsmans. Scanning vehicles and addresses. He walks up a driveway...

EXT. KOREATOWN HOUSE - NIGHT

Where his car is parked. He fishes a spare key from the seam of his waistband. Opens the trunk. No machine gun. He lifts the mat. Revealing a holster with a Smith & Wesson .45, spare mags, a worn ballistic vest and a GPS TRACKER. Ludlow eyes the house as he gears up. *

INT. KOREATOWN HOUSE - NIGHT

WHAM! The front door is kicked open. Ludlow follows his gun inside. KIM 2 looks up, a videogame controller in his hands... *

POP-POP! The controller explodes as Kim 2's shattered chest ripples from Ludlow's Hydrashocks...

Now Ludlow spins and kicks open a bathroom door...

Where an OLD MAN sits on the toilet with a sex mag...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POP-POP-POP! Ludlow's hollowpoints tear him and his magazine to shreds...

Now Ludlow whirls toward the kitchen...

As Kim 1 comes charging out with a shotgun...

BOOM! Fires up at Ludlow...

A buckshot THWAPS into the vest under Ludlow's arm, knocking him back...

Ludlow ducks into a doorway...

Moves through a small hallway and suddenly finds himself alongside Kim 1. He strips away his shotgun as he trips him. He THUDS to the floor. Ludlow aims his pistol and...

POP-POP! Shatters Kim 1's spine. Ludlow ejects the mag, feeds in a fresh one. Thumbs the slide closed -- CLACK!

NEW ANGLE -- A bedroom door BANGS open as an older KOREAN THUG charges out in a towel and opens fire with a magnum...

Ludlow ducks behind the wall...

BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM! Slugs rip through the plaster and lathe wall. Then Ludlow steps out as the Korean Thug reloads...

POP-POP-POP! Ludlow drops him. Ludlow realizes Kim 1 is still alive, sucking in his final breaths. Ludlow pulls on a pair of surgical gloves.

LUDLOW

You're not dead yet, you piece'a shit?

KIM 1

Fuck you.

LUDLOW

Fuck me? Fuck you. In three seconds you're dead, asshole.

Ludlow checks his watch. And sure enough. He's right. Only after Kim 1's final gasp does Ludlow crack the last mini of Stoli and down it.

Working fast, Ludlow crosses to Kim 2, takes the .25 auto from his pocket and slaps it in his dead hand. Ludlow aims at the front door. POP-POP!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Now Ludlow crosses to the couch and finds a chrome pistol under the cushions. He hooks a finger through the trigger guard and flings it into the bathroom. Ludlow crosses to the bedroom... *

INT. KOREATOWN HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The machine gun lays on a plastic covered waterbed, amidst sex toys and tubes of Astroglide. A video camera on a tripod and a monitor. Webcams. Masks. Ludlow yanks open the closet. Revealing... *

A chicken wire cage. Inside the fourteen year old PARK TWINS cower in fear. Despite himself, tears well in Ludlow's eyes. *

LUDLOW

It's okay. I'm a cop.

EXT. KOREATOWN NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Awash with blue and red police strobes and an LAPD CHOPPER's Nightsun. Black and whites, fire and rescue and news vans pack the street. Watched over by six NEWS CHOPPERS. *

Two UNIFORMS lift the yellow tape for a shiny department sedan. It glides to a stop in front of the house... *

Out steps CAPTAIN JACK WANDER, a barrel chested hard charging LAPD rockstar. The rare kind of leader men will follow into hell. Wander trades nods with various COPS as he crosses to the house. JULIE FUKASHIMA from Channel 8 intercepts him with her CAMERAMAN. *

JULIE

Captain Wander, congratulations on breaking the case. Can you tell us how you found the twins?

WANDER

Julie, my people turned the city upside down looking for these girls. I made sure they had every resource necessary to bring them home. I couldn't be prouder of my men. *

Wander keeps walking. Julie writes that down.

INT. KOREATOWN HOUSE - NIGHT

Ludlow on the couch riding out his adrenaline crash. With him are DETECTIVES RAMIREZ and DEMILLE, street guys who blend into the hood and DETECTIVE-SERGEANT CLADY, a scary whiteboy going silver upstairs, sending a text from his phone.

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DEMILLE

(re: the videogame)

Yo, I got this game. Look at his score, man. This guy sucks.

*
*

RAMIREZ

(re: the Old Man)

How can you shoot a guy taking a dump? That's sacred. Like shooting a man in church.

*
*

DEMILLE

Or a Dodger game.

CLADY

That's what it takes to be a hero. Anyone anywhere, anytime. Right, Lud?

*
*
*

RAMIREZ

You get a hard-on when you dumped 'em?

*

Ludlow does his best to ignore them.

*

CLADY

You know he did. No hunting like the hunting of man.

*
*

LUDLOW

Hemingway.

Clady REACTS, surprised he knew that. DeMille pokes Kim 2's body with a toe.

*
*

DEMILLE

Damn, I hate these short-eyed kiddie rapin' motherfuckers. At least kidnap grown bitches with some shapes.

*
*

CLADY

Maybe we should check your closet.

RAMIREZ

See all the damn media out there? Watch, Sarge. L.A.

*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

Times front page tomorrow's gonna say,
"LAPD Detective rescues missing twins."
Detective. Singular. As in Ludlow.

*
*
*

DEMILLE

Yep. Like the rest of the unit ain't
done shit the past month.

RAMIREZ

We dig the pool and you get to swim.
Could'a saved some for us.

LUDLOW

So you can see their faces every night?
I did you a solid, Ramirez.

Wander enters, catching his boys off guard.

WANDER

This looks real professional, four
swinging Dicks jawjacking over the dearly
departed. You guys wanna lose the "just
fucked the neighbor's dog" expressions on
your faces? Suppose I walked in with the
Chief? Ramirez, get your ass outside and
find Ted Berman and make sure the crime
scene log's in order.

*

RAMIREZ

Yessir.

Ramirez exits. Wander taking in the carnage.

WANDER

Who's been in here?

DEMILLE

Us. You. That's it, Cap.

WANDER

Who tracked blood everywhere? You
DeMille? Lemme see your shoes.

*

CLADY

It was a couple paramedics who thought
they could raise the dead.

WANDER

God bless 'em. Take DeMille, go back to
the barn and start writing. Get me
something to red pen by midnight. And
send in the SID techs. Bye. Adios.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CLADY

Roger that, Cap.

Clady and DeMille exit. Now it's just Wander and Ludlow.
Wander looks around and grins.

WANDER

This shit is crazy. You fucked them up.
This is beautiful, Tommy. That machine
gun shit was perfect. I know you hated
waiting but it's better this way. You
okay? What's going on?

LUDLOW

I got shot.

WANDER

But you're alright. You okay? I know
you're not tripping about these assholes.
I'll kick one right now. Fuck these
guys. You went toe to toe with these
evil fucks. And won. Saved those girls.
Goddamn good caper. This is lovely.
C'mere. C'mere, man. C'mere. Here.

Ludlow climbs to his feet. Wander hugs him. Ludlow grunts.

LUDLOW

Ribs're tender.

WANDER

You been drinking?

Ludlow looks away. Wander REACTS, sighs.

WANDER (CONT'D)

That thing they say about vodka. How you
can't smell it. That's bullshit. Makes
you slow on the draw. The D.A.'s
shooting team is enroute. And you are
not ready for public consumption. So
let's get you to the hospital. I got
your back, gunfighter. This is my show.

LUDLOW

No shit. Go get pretty for the cameras.

WANDER

Fuck you.

EXT. KOREATOWN NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Wander holds a news conference. He's ice cool under the glare of minicam spotlights. Ludlow hangs back in the shadows watching his boss.

WANDER

The girls are being examined by a physician right now. Both twins are in good health and will be reunited with their family shortly. That's all I have for the moment. Thank you.

He's barraged with adlib QUESTIONS. Holds up his arms.

WANDER (CONT'D)

Further details will be released as they become available. Please be patient.

Wander lives for these moments. He crosses to a DEPUTY CHIEF who shakes his hands and congratulates him. Ludlow watching this. Then...

WASHINGTON, an imposing black officer in immaculate blues approaches Ludlow.

WASHINGTON

If it ain't the LAPD's deadliest whiteboy. Congrats on four more notches for your gunbelt.

LUDLOW

You're on the wrong side of the yellow tape. Go hand out your lollipops and baseball cards and let the real cops work.

WASHINGTON

Oh, so you're a real cop now, Tom?

LUDLOW

Shouldn't you be playing pattycake with the public, pumpkin?

WASHINGTON

(gets in his face)

How come you never killed no whiteboys?

LUDLOW

Fuck you.

As Ludlow turns away...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WASHINGTON

Tom. That a blood clot on your shirt? *

Blood clot. That hits Ludlow like a hammer. Fists clenched,
he gets in Washington's face. They're nose to nose. *

LUDLOW

What'd you say? *

WASHINGTON

What? What'd I say? Talkin' to myself. *

Wander steps between them and pulls Ludlow away. *

WANDER

Stay on point, Washington. *

WASHINGTON

Always, Captain Wander. Always. *

Wander guides Ludlow to an ambulance. *

WANDER

Don't go near that piece'a shit. *

LUDLOW

He's got it coming, Jack. *

WANDER

Don't go near him. Stay away. Far away. *

That's an order. *

Ludlow REACTS to Wander's stern tone. Wander turns to a
PARAMEDIC, shakes his hand. *

WANDER (CONT'D)

How you doing, Mike. Transport him to
Good Sam. And take your time. Stop off
if you have to. *

INT. GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

A busy trauma unit. Ludlow sits on an exam table. A SHOCK
TRAUMA NURSE crosses to him in black scrubs.

LUDLOW

I'm waiting for nurse Garcia. *

The Nurse sees he's serious and scoffs away. SNICK. A
curtain slides back revealing a dapper smiling man, BIGGS, in
a chair by next exam table, shirtsleeves rolled up. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BIGGS

I did the same thing with my wife.

(off Ludlow's look)

She was a waitress at this Jazz club.

I'd sit in her section, wouldn't let

anyone else serve me. She'd change

sections, I'd change tables.

Persistence. That's the key.

Ludlow smiles weakly. Biggs realizes...

BIGGS (CONT'D)

Wait a minute. You're that cop. You're

all over the news. You rescued those

twins in Koreatown.

Ludlow looks at the TV mounted across the room. Sure enough:
 "BREAKING -- PARK TWINS FOUND"

BIGGS (CONT'D)

You alright? You get shot?

LUDLOW

No. Yeah. Who the fuck are you?

BIGGS

Me? I sell insurance, life, auto
 casualty. So... Wow. Wow, man. I mean,
 that's heavy. My son's gonna wanna meet
 you when he gets out of X-ray. That
 cool? So those guys... they shot first,
 right?

LUDLOW

Excuse me?

BIGGS

You're the real deal. A hero. Did you
 know they had guns when you went in
 there? In that house?

Ludlow nods: yes. Biggs seems genuinely fascinated.

BIGGS (CONT'D)

Four guys. Right? One against four,
 those are some tough odds. Glad I'm not
 writing your policies. You know that
 goin' in? There was four of 'em in
 there?

Politeness compels Ludlow...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LUDLOW

When you go through that door you have to be ready for anything. You never know what's on the other side.

BIGGS

Hah! I'll say. That's great. Think they were part of a ring? Like a sex ring. Get 'em all? *

LUDLOW

Can't say.

BIGGS

Neither can they. They had it coming. Were you scared? All alone there. Where was your back up or team or whatever?

Ludlow doesn't answer.

BIGGS (CONT'D)

Whole city was looking for these poor girls. The Amber alerts. And cops knocking on doors. Hell, I'm looking in every car on the way to work. But, uh. How'd you find them? *

LUDLOW

That's my job...

An LAPD SERGEANT approaches.

LAPD SERGEANT

Excuse me.

Ludlow looks up. But he's not there for him. Biggs waves in the Sergeant and he hands Biggs a radio.

LAPD SERGEANT (CONT'D)

Sorry to interrupt, Captain. But Deputy Chief Sorenson's been trying to raise you on simplex.

Ludlow REACTS as CAPTAIN Biggs stands and grabs his jacket from the chair. He hands a card to Ludlow -- CAPTAIN JAMES BIGGS INTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION. Biggs smiles as he adjust his gold LAPD cufflinks. *

BIGGS

Insurance, Tom. I sell insurance. And protection. If you ever need any, and you will. Give me a call.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BIGGS (CONT'D)

No one's gotta know. Not Clady, Not
Wander, no one.

Ludlow's glare says it all...

BIGGS (CONT'D)

Look, for your own good. Don't get so
far out there I can't reel you back.
We'll see you again.

Ludlow watching him go. Rewinding the conversation in his
head. GRACE GARCIA enters, young, tough but fragile, and
smoking hot. She checks his chart. Curt.

GRACE

Who was that?

LUDLOW

A cop who burns cops. Jesus.

GRACE

Who?

LUDLOW

Nobody, Grace. Hi.

GRACE

Hi. You bruised your intercostals.
Lucky they're not fractured. I'm gonna
tape 'em.

LUDLOW

You dirty talking mama.

Grace pulls off his shirt to reveal angry black bruising.

GRACE

You know you can just stop by sometime.
You don't have to get shot when you wanna
see me.

Ludlow pulls her close, hands roaming her body.

LUDLOW

I like it like this. Don't you?

GRACE

No. I don't. And get your fucking hands
off me. I work here. I'm not losing my
license for you.

He silences her with a power kiss.

INT. PARKER CENTER - INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT

A tape recorder rolls as Ludlow sits before two uniformed LAPD CAPTAINS and a female ASSISTANT D.A.

CAPTAIN 1

What lead you to the house?

LUDLOW

I was working an unrelated weapons case. Suspects jumped me and stole my vehicle. There was a GPS tracker in it. Lead me right there.

CAPTAIN 1

Point of entry?

LUDLOW

Front door on the west side of the structure.

CAPTAIN 1

Okay.

ASSISTANT D.A.

Why didn't you call for backup?

LUDLOW

I did.

ASSISTANT D.A.

Why didn't you wait for backup?

LUDLOW

Exigent circumstances. I heard screams emanating from the house and ascertained a crime was in progress.

CAPTAIN 2

That's great.

LUDLOW

I kicked the door after I identified myself as a police officer. Upon entry I was fired upon by a suspect in the living room with a silver automatic. I return fire. He goes down. Then I'm hit in the torso by shotgun fire from a second suspect...

Ludlow winces as he slowly reaches for his coffee. Gets sympathetic looks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

That's when I spin to my right. And see
one of the K's--

*

Pens stop. Heads snap up.

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

Excuse me. I see one of the suspects
exiting the kitchen with a pump shotgun.
I fired twice. Striking him twice...

*

INT. GRACE'S APARTMENT - DAWN

A KNOCK. Grace crosses, excruciatingly cute in a mini-T.
She opens the door for Ludlow. Kisses him and runs back to
the kitchen where a pan smokes.

GRACE

How'd it go?

LUDLOW

They were sucking my dick.

GRACE

I'm jealous. That's my job.

*

Ludlow SEES place settings, wine glasses. Candles.

LUDLOW

Uh, what the fuck is this?

*

GRACE

It's called dinner. It's what normal
people do.

LUDLOW

I'm not here to play house.

GRACE

Our charts mesh, you know. You're a fire
sign. I'm an air sign. I was hoping we
could move past the booty call stage. Or
am I that boring to talk to?

*

*

*

*

*

Ludlow pours a stiff glass of Chianti.

*

GRACE (CONT'D)

You already stink.

LUDLOW

Want me to take a shower?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE
(naughtily)
No.

Ludlow pours another. Grace frowns to herself. Rolls a joint. Now Ludlow frowns.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I gotta prescription, officer.

LUDLOW
For what? Your Doritos aversion?

GRACE
No. For anxiety. Fear. Panic.

LUDLOW
Never heard of 'em.

She lights her spliff, takes a hit.

GRACE
No shit. After you left, some Rampart
guys brought in an O.D. They said you
went in there alone.

Grace locks her big beautiful eyes on him.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Why do you always go alone?

LUDLOW
(he's cornered)
Something goes wrong there's only my
version.

GRACE
Or you're dead and gone.

LUDLOW
Either way.

GRACE
Do you want something to go wrong?

LUDLOW
Stop. Stop asking questions. You're
like a department shrink. Stop cooking.
Stop everything. Just stop.

GRACE
Or what? You're not gonna fuck me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Ludlow grabs his temples in agony. *

LUDLOW
Jesus. God. Fuck. *

GRACE
Wanna Codeine?

LUDLOW
No. I want... I want you to remember how
I like you, Grace. You're not my wife.

Grace absorbs the blow. Then laughs defiantly. *

GRACE
Your wife wasn't even your wife.

Ludlow smolders. Slams down his glass. He grabs his jacket
and exits. SLAMMING the front door behind him. *

EXT. PACIFIC DINING CAR RESTAURANT - DAY

Ludlow crosses groggily to the front door. Where Washington
poses with a YOUNG BOY as his MOM works the camera. Ludlow
brushes right past them...

WASHINGTON
How'd you sleep, gunfighter?

LUDLOW
Like a rock.

WASHINGTON
I didn't. Pulled double duty counseling
the families of your victims.

Ludlow stops, turns to face him.

LUDLOW
They're called suspects. The victims
were the two fourteen year old
schoolgirls the suspects had in a cage
and were selling to chickenhawks to poke,
prod and put on the internet. Suspects,
Washington. According-to-motherfucking-
Hoyle suspects. *

The Mom REACTS, covers her sons ears. With that, Ludlow
enters the restaurant. *

INT. PACIFIC DINING CAR RESTAURANT - DAY

Ludlow heads to the back. Washington follows.

WASHINGTON

Evil as those men were, they had a right to trial. Might be some blowback from the Korean community from this one.

*
*
*

LUDLOW

What do you want? Grow a pair and sound off. You think I'm a racist.

*
*

WASHINGTON

You have another explanation?

LUDLOW

No. I don't. Because if I roll and determine the suspects are black, yellow or brown, I'll blast everything that moves. But if they're white, I'll give 'em a ride home. And you know why, Washington? Because I'm a racist.

*
*
*
*

WASHINGTON

Man. I'd give my right arm to have that on tape.

A beat. Ludlow's eyes narrow. Nose to nose:

*

LUDLOW

What the fuck happened to you, Terrance? You used to be one of us.

With that, Ludlow bursts through a pair of doors into...

INT. PACIFIC DINING CAR RESTAURANT - BACK ROOM - DAY

Full of cops. UNIFORMS, DETECTIVES, some FEMALE CLERKS. The cake on a table is decorated with a badge of icing. Wander, Ramirez and DeMille share a table. Ludlow enters. Then Washington behind him. Cops part for Ludlow and pat him on the back. Wander waves him over.

*
*
*
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*

WANDER

Lud! Get over here. Sit.

Ludlow takes the chair next to Wander. Makes a "drink" motion to a WAITER.

*

WANDER (CONT'D)

Now it's a party.

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAMIREZ

Shit, Cap. Now it's a binge.

Clady holds court at the far end. He has a knot of Detectives in stitches as he roasts SILKY, the day's honoree. *

CLADY

...So Silky cuffs this derelict's wrist to his ankle, asshole's so tanked he shit himself. I'm talking runny bum shit and it's all over him. No, no wait. Listen. Silky's helping me hook up his buddy when I see this stinky wino coming at Silky like this... *

Clady hops on one leg, throwing punches with one arm. The Detectives LAUGH...

CLADY (CONT'D)

Hold on. Hold on. He gets a couple shots in!

His audience HOWLS. Silky just shakes his head. DING-DING-DING. Clady silences the room with a spoon and a glass. With everyone's full attention...

CLADY (CONT'D)

(to Silky)

For being everyone's favorite punching bag and seeing as you gotta split your pension checks with a half dozen ex-wives and babies' mamas-mamas. All the boys, in our infinite mercy, we all threw in to keep you stocked with Bud Lite and Ramen during your well-deserved retirement.

Clady pulls a thick envelope from his pocket. Silky takes it, Hugs Clady. Everyone CLAPS. *

CLADY (CONT'D)

Love you, brother.

ON WANDER AND LUDLOW

The Waiter brings Ludlow a greyhound. Ludlow makes the "keep 'em coming" sign. Wander grinning at Ludlow. *

LUDLOW

What? What's with you? Ramirez give you a happy ending? *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WANDER

Easy, son. That the proper way to address an LAPD Commander?

LUDLOW

No fuckin' way. Get the fuck out of here.

Wander shows Ludlow a message on his Blackberry.

WANDER

That's from Chief Fitzsimons. Badge ceremony's next week.

LUDLOW

Congratulations, boss.

RAMIREZ

You believe that shit? They're crowning him king. We can write our ticket. We'll have the keys to the city.

WANDER

King Wander. I like that. Toast to the King.

Glasses CLINK. Ludlow toasts halfheartedly.

RAMIREZ/DEMILLE

King Wander.

DEMILLE

I'll be a lock for detective supervisor. Could use a pay raise. Get a desk in Homicide Special.

(to Wander)

Yo, boss. Can I be your driver when you make Chief? Shit, when you're Mayor?

Wander smiles at his wayward children, to Ludlow:

WANDER

I owe you big time, Tom. The Park Twin caper gave me the edge. Chief's breaking tradition by promoting me over Biggs. First open commander slot always goes to the head of Internal Affairs.

RAMIREZ

'Cause they got so much dirt on everyone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WANDER

Exactly. I would pay money to see Biggs' face when he finds out.

LUDLOW

Speaking of. Met the man last night.

Ludlow puts Biggs' card on the table and slides it to Wander.

WANDER

Biggs? He gave you this? Hand to hand? Eye to eye? You're kidding me. When?

Clady sits and joins the hushed conversation.

CLADY

Biggs?

Wander nods gravely: yes.

LUDLOW

Sonofabitch was sitting next to me in the exam room at Good Sam last night. You believe that shit? Coming at me like Joe Citizen. Asking tactical and procedural questions.

WANDER

Shit. In the hospital? If you worked days you'd know what he looks like.

LUDLOW

Jack, I couldn't help myself. I told him everything.

WANDER

Typical Biggs' bullshit move. That's his M.O. He will backdoor you every time.

LUDLOW

Why's Internal Affairs up my ass all of the sudden?

RAMIREZ

It's Washington, brother. Poster boy fuck's been snitching to Biggs.

Ludlow REACTS. Wander looks like he could sock Ramirez.

WANDER

Ramirez, look at me. Shut the fuck up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LUDLOW

Holy shit. Talk to me, Jack. *

WANDER

Washington has met with Biggs several times over the last month. You know there's no secrets in this department. So when I became cognizant of the problem I threw a tail on him.

CLADY

We followed him through the Eastside, Westside, Southside. Asshole was clearly up to no good, boxing the compass on us. Next thing we know he's, ringing Biggs's doorbell in Upland. *

LUDLOW

Oh, fuck. Who's he giving up?

A beat. Wander, Ramirez, DeMille trade looks. Then: *

WANDER

You.

LUDLOW

(reacts)

Me? Why me? Why now?

WANDER

Why? Because I shitcanned him from the unit and he's a vindictive fuck. Now he's on a mission to pull the rug from under my best people.

Ludlow glares at Washington, sitting across the room. Ludlow moves to get up.

WANDER (CONT'D)

Whoa, whoa, whoa. You go anywhere near him, I'll rip off your head and shit down your throat.

LUDLOW

I'm just gonna talk to him. *

CLADY

That's your life right there. If you ran two degrees cooler you'd be running this unit, not me. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

WANDER

We're serious, Tom. Do not, repeat, do not hand Washington your badge. Stay on track and focus on your shooting board next week. Just clear that hurdle and get back in the field where I need you. We've been here before, haven't we? When the gates of Hell opened up on you, I took care of you. And I'm taking care of you now. Okay?

*

*

Ludlow sees the reassurance in Wander's eyes.

LUDLOW

Okay.

Ludlow sits back and slams his drink.

EXT. PACIFIC DINING CAR RESTAURANT - DAY

Ludlow crosses to his car. From behind:

*

WASHINGTON

Ludlow. Hold on. Jesus Christ.

*

LUDLOW

Go away.

*

WASHINGTON

You asked what happened to me. Jesus Christ happened to me. I witnessed to my pastor and got rebaptized. You can put all your sins on Him, brother.

*

*

*

*

LUDLOW

Are you fucking kidding me?

WASHINGTON

No one's beyond salvation.

LUDLOW

Yeah. Save me, Washington.

WASHINGTON

Only you can do that for yourself.

LUDLOW

Take your bible and your race cards and shove em' up your ass.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WASHINGTON

You ever ask yourself why everything you
touch dies?

Ludlow REACTS. He gets in his car and watches Washington
walk away.

INT. LUDLOW'S CAR (MOVING) - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY *

Ludlow whiteknuckles the wheel.

Ludlow rolls three mini Stolis on his thigh. *

Ludlow's face. In hunting mode, focused.

Ludlow spins the wheel hard, his tires SCREECH O.S.

The sun slides across the windshield.

Ludlow cracks a mini. Sucks it down.

Ludlow's bloodshot eyes in the rearview.

Rolling two minis on his thigh. *

His foot works the gas, the brakes. *

EXT. BEVERLY BOULEVARD - NEAR DOWNTOWN - DAY *

Washington in traffic, behind the wheel of his Escalade in
civilian clothes.

NEW ANGLE -- Several cars back, Ludlow follows in his car. *
It's Washington he's been hunting.

INT. LUDLOW'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY *

LUDLOW'S POV

Through the windshield, Washington makes a right, into a
parking lot...

SCENE

Ludlow cruises past, takes the next right and parks by a
meter. He cracks the last mini, scowling in Washington's
direction. *

EXT. BEVERLY BOULEVARD - UNION MARKET - DAY *

Washington exits his Escalade and enters the market.

ACROSS THE STREET -- Ludlow exits his car and crosses to the market. He strips off his belt and winds it around his fist. *

EXT. UNION MARKET - DAY *

Fist tight by his side, Ludlow pauses for a BROWN OLDS CUTLASS that RUMBLES past. Inside are two black GANGSTERS with cold yellow eyes wearing BODY ARMOR over their wifebeaters... *

Ludlow REACTS. The belt uncoils from Ludlow's fist and falls to the sidewalk... *

As the Cutlass parks on the far side of the Escalade, Ludlow pulls a .38 from his ankle holster... *

INT. UNION MARKET - DAY *

Ludlow ducks inside, gun in his hand, he rounds the corner of the aisle where Washington shops... *

LUDLOW *

Washington.

Washington turns and REACTS...

SEES Ludlow charging at him with a revolver... *

Washington SWINGS his shopping basket into Ludlow's face like a bag of rocks... *

WHAM! Knocking Ludlow into the shelves, causing an avalanche of canned goods... *

Washington pulls his gun and is on Ludlow before he can rise.

WHAP! Washington pistol-whips Ludlow, knocking him back to the floor...

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

The fuck are you doing?!

Washington stomps Ludlow's gun-hand and grinds his pistol into Ludlow's cheekbone... *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WASHINGTON

Drop it, Tom! Now! Do it! Gonna kill me, partner? Wander's got you twisted.

*
*

LUDLOW

Are you fucking crazy! We gotta two-eleven in progress.

*
*

Washington glowers, about to shoot Ludlow right here, right now, right in the face...

WASHINGTON

I got you. Red handed. I got you and Wander.

*
*
*

LUDLOW

Listen to me you fucking idiot, we got two gangbangers rolling in hot.

*

BRDDDDT! The CLERK, visible up the aisle, is shredded...

Now the Gangsters ENTER FRAME with SUBMACHINE GUNS and red bandannas covering their faces...

Washington REACTS -- Ludlow was telling the truth. But it's too late...

BRDDDDT-BRDDDDDDT! The Gangsters pour bullets into Washington...

Ludlow rolls for cover, Washington an inadvertent SHIELD...

Over the thunderous fire, Ludlow RETURNS FIRE BLINDLY down the aisle...

EVERYTHING AROUND HIM EXPLODES in reply. Ludlow tries to stay small, to weather the storm. A beat. Then the GUNFIRE STOPS. Silence...

ON THE GANGSTERS -- Weapons empty, they trade looks...

*

Ludlow coiled, heart pounding, gun ready, waiting for them to step around the corner and kill him...

*

All that edges around to him is a spreading POOL OF BLOOD.

*

O.S. WE HEAR the Gangsters run out. Ludlow cranes around the corner, SEES Washington. He holsters his gun and hurries to his fellow officer's side...

*

Washington's face is opened up. He breathes in BUBBLING gasps. Ludlow grabs Washington's hand...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

Washington. Jesus, stay with me man.
Don't quit. Don't quit.

Ludlow pulls out his cellphone, about to dial. When Washington's hand tightens on Ludlow's...

WASHINGTON

...I was hoping it'd be you...

*

Washington's breathing climaxes. Then stops...

*

COP 1

Don't move! Lemme see your hands!

NEW ANGLE -- Two young UNIFORMED COPS drawing down on him.

*

Washington's hand slips from his grasp as Ludlow raises his arms.

*

*

LUDLOW

I'm a cop. I'm a cop.

COP 1

Fuck! It's Ludlow.

COP 1 motions for his partner to lower his weapon. SIRENS approach O.S.

*

*

LUDLOW

Put it out. Two black males, dark clothing, automatic weapons in a brown late model Cutlass. And get me an ambulance. Now.

*

COP 2 grabs his radio as Cop 1 SEES Washington's badge.

*

COP 1

Holy shit. He's a cop too?

Two more black and whites SCREECH to a stop outside. A million emotions race through Ludlow as he slumps down by Washington... "Everything he touches..."

EXT. UNION MARKET - DAY

*

The system back in action. Black and whites. Yellow tape. UNIFORMS. Orbiting police choppers. Ludlow leans against a wall by the dumpsters. He tosses away his cigarette as Wander approaches. Wander grabs Ludlow by the back of his neck and pulls his forehead to his. Wander is beyond anger or words. Wander releases Ludlow and nods for him to follow.

*

INT. UNION MARKET - DAY *

Wander and Ludlow step past an ASSISTANT CORONER as she slides a meat thermometer into the dead Clerk's liver. An S.I.D. TECH photographs a RED BANDANNA on the floor. Wander and Ludlow meet Clady in back, he glares at Ludlow. *

WANDER
Where's the video?

Clady leads them to the back office. *

INT. UNION MARKET - BACK OFFICE - DAY *

INSERT MONITOR: A quad view of the four cameras. In one corner Washington idly shops. In another, Ludlow appears, gun out, moving quickly towards Washington. Ludlow gets cold-cocked with the basket. Washington pistol whips him. Now the GANGSTERS enter. Waste the Clerk. Then stitch Washington as Ludlow rolls to cover and returns fire. Weapons empty, the Gangsters run out. *

You could hear a pin drop.

WANDER
Who else has seen this?

CLADY
Just us, boss.

Wander hits eject. Thinks a beat as he studies his reflection in the DVD disc.

LUDLOW
It was a straight two-eleven that went sideways.

WANDER
Don't. Say. Anything.

CLADY
Doesn't matter what it was. It's what it looks like.

LUDLOW
But it's not what it looks like. It's not.

Wander explodes, lunges at Ludlow, grabs his shirt. The Captain hasn't lost his street moves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WANDER

That's all there is, Tom! How it fucking looks. What everybody sees. You know that. And this looks pretty Goddamn bad.

*

Clady pulls Wander off Ludlow.

CLADY

Alright. Alright. We're okay.

(a beat)

Department sees that video, you're not a cop anymore.

Ludlow REACTS. His worst nightmare come true.

WANDER

The Department? The D.A. sees it. He's going to prison.

*

LUDLOW

Why? Because Washington was in the wrong place at the wrong time?

WANDER

Because you were! Washington's problems are over. Yours are just beginning. Try and see two moves ahead for once. Biggs will say you pulled two thugs off the street and went after a cop who was diming you out to Internal Affairs. It writes itself.

LUDLOW

I sure as shit wouldn't need two homeboys if I was gonna dump Washington. Captain, I was just gonna break his jaw.

CLADY

Good answer.

Ludlow stares at the floor.

WANDER

You're on the rubber gun squad with a shooting board pending. You shouldn't be carrying. So why are you on video drawing down on a cop? Gimme your goddamn burner. Now.

Ludlow hands Wander his pistol. A KNOCK on the door. Wander cracks it and DeMille passes through Ludlow's belt. Wander studies it, hanging limply in his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WANDER (CONT'D)

Is this who you are? Huh? You'd take a belt to another cop? Did I not give you a direct order to stay away from him?

Wander tosses Ludlow his belt.

LUDLOW

Tell me what to do. I fucked up. You want my badge? Want me to take my chances with a jury?

WANDER

Won't be a jury of your peers. It'll be a jury of Washington's peers. You wanna put your faith in the system? Or in me?

CLADY

Lud, we all know you don't give fuck-one about yourself. But this is a nightmare for the unit too. Speak up if you disagree.

WANDER

Think about someone else for a change. If you go down, Ad Vice goes down. I earned my stars. I want 'em.

(to Clady)

You ready for the rent-a-cop circuit?

CLADY

Guarding tampons on aisle five?
Negative, Jack.

WANDER

(sighs, truly hurt)

I can't believe you short dicked me like this. How many times have I gone to the mat for you with the Commander and Assistant Chief? To the mat, Tom. For what? What?

(off the DVD)

This? For this?

Wander's disappointment crushes Ludlow. Wander nods for Clady to leave. He does. Now it's just Wander and Ludlow.

WANDER (CONT'D)

Maybe the clerk forgot to put a disc in the recorder today. Maybe you were just driving by when you heard gunfire. Maybe you were first on scene.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WANDER (CONT'D)

And rendered aid to Washington. Maybe
that's what happened.

Wander sets the DVD on the desk in front of Ludlow.

WANDER (CONT'D)

I'm gonna step out and make some calls.

(re: the DVD)

And maybe that won't be there when I come
back. Maybe.

Wander exits. Ludlow looking at that damn disc. After a
life-changing beat, Ludlow pockets it.

EXT. GRACE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Grace crosses to her front door. HEARS a noise behind her.
She grabs the mace from her purse and spins to SEE... *

Ludlow, sitting in the dark, with a bottle of vodka between
his knees. Grace puts away the mace. He offers her a swig. *
She takes a swallow, pours it out the rest. *

GRACE

I almost maced you. Wanna key? I'll
give you a key. What are you doing here?

LUDLOW

I had a goddamn wonderful day and wanna
celebrate. *

GRACE

Yeah, I know all about it. Why do you
crawl in a bottle every time something
goes wrong? *

LUDLOW

'Cause it's warm. *

GRACE

Shut up and get inside. I got neighbors. *

Grace unlocks her door and pushes him inside. *

EXT. GRACE'S APARTMENT - BALCONY - NIGHT *

Grace and Ludlow savor her epic view of the LA basin. *

GRACE

So you were too late to help him. You
can't save everyone. *

(MORE) *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE (CONT'D)

A kid died on me tonight. Convulsed.
His eyes rolled back. That was it. It
happens.

LUDLOW

The man was my partner back in the day.
We were black and white in a black and
white when it was still a big deal.
Grace, can you keep your fuckin' mouth
shut if I tell you something?

GRACE

You gotta soft touch, you know? And,
yeah. You can tell me anything.

LUDLOW

I was with Washington when he got zapped.
I owed him a grade A ass beating for
talking shit to me. But then these
suspects show up and he was my partner
again. I wanted us to dump the fuckers
together. But he thought I was gonna
kill him. We were too busy fighting each
other to take out the bad guys.

GRACE

That is some heavy shit. And I thought
dating a cop would be different from all
the homeboys I grew up with. What do
want me to say? It's not your fault?

LUDLOW

Just say what you think. Why am I
telling you this shit? It's the booze
talking.

GRACE

It's your heart talking. And what do I
think? I think they're gonna roll you
into my work one night with a self
inflicted gunshot wound. That's what I
think.

Ludlow REACTS.

INT. PARKER CENTER - HALLWAY - DAY

Ludlow walks crookedly, no sleep, the weight of this new
world on his shoulders. He begins to be recognized by the
day shift.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PASSING OFFICER
 Attaboy, Lud.

Ludlow cranes back: "What was that about?" A SECOND PASSING OFFICER winks, slaps his back... Now a BLACK OFFICER glares at him. And it dawns on Ludlow. They assume he killed Washington. He ducks into...

INT. WANDER'S OFFICE - DAY

Wander on the phone as he signs a gift basket his assistant SHEILA holds for him.

*
*

WANDER
 (to Sheila)
 Mind grabbing Tom some coffee?
 (to Ludlow)
 Sit down. You look like shit. You sleep?

Ludlow shakes his head: no. Wander hangs up, tosses the L.A. Times at Ludlow, the headline reads: "Hero Cop too Late to Save Officer."

*
*
*

WANDER (CONT'D)
 See that? It's done. Taken care of.
 Look, I'm not trying to give you another dose here. But I gotta bury you in a nice, politically correct spot until your shooting board. Little daylight'll do you good.

*
*

LUDLOW
 You know I don't do the day thing. See all the fuckin' brass walking around here?

WANDER
 You're gonna love this. Gotta set of blues in your locker?

LUDLOW
 No. No, Jack. Not that.

WANDER
 Suit up and report to Lieutenant Van Zandt on the eighth floor.
 (hands him a black band)
 And put this on your badge. You're in mourning.

*
*
*

Ludlow REACTS.

INT. PARKER CENTER - POLICE COMMISSION OFFICES - DAY

Ludlow in uniform, dress shoes, a tie. And no gunbelt. Miserable as a wet cat. LIEUTENANT VAN ZANDT walks him down a row of gaping DESK JOCKEYS.

LIEUTENANT VAN ZANDT

Your job is to conduct follow up interviews of the complainants. If there's a specific allegation against an officer, write it up and forward it to Internal Affairs. The temptation is to be a good brother cop. Don't be. Most of this shit's not going anywhere anyway. Got it?

LUDLOW

Suppose I get a complaint against myself?

LIEUTENANT VAN ZANDT

(sans irony)

Write it up and forward it.

SHORT TIME LATER:

*

Ludlow guzzles coffee, his eyes drift to a poster of a LATINO OFFICER posing with ADMIRING CHILDREN.

WHITE PUNK

Wake up, popo.

Ludlow turns to find a young WHITE PUNK staring at him.
(NOTE: He's the first in a MONTAGE of COMPLAINANTS of all colors and creeds, but all are poor.)

*

*

Ludlow uncaps his pen. Sucks a breath through his teeth...

LUDLOW

You have a complaint?

WHITE PUNK

Dude, I got multiple. Okay? Multiple complaints need addressin'.

BLACK MAN

Motherfucker looked like you. But black. Beat my ass like Rodney King. But there wasn't no video.

ASIAN WOMAN

Pull me over for no reason!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOMEBOY

Pulled me outta of my ride, holmes. With my old lady watching, eh?

BLACK WOMAN

Punk-ass rollers dragged me out my baby-daddy's crib.

WHITE PUNK

With my boys right there. Made me look like a bitch.

HOLD ON LUDLOW -- He reaches in a drawer for a box of tissues and sets it before the stunned White Punk.

RESUME MONTAGE:

LATINO MAN

I know the law. But you don't know that I know.

Ludlow downs a Motrin, makes his "keep going" gesture.

OLDER BLACK MAN

Stop doing that. It's an impertinent gesture.

LUDLOW

You get a badge number? See his nametag?

OLDER BLACK MAN

Not with his boot on my throat.

As Ludlow makes a note on a form SOMEONE sits in his chair. Ludlow looks up and REACTS. There's Captain Biggs, quite the dandy with his tailored suit and polished nails. But clearly troubled and hungover.

*
*
*
*

BIGGS

Wander's got a sense of humor, I'll give him that. You look different. You change something?

LUDLOW

You have a complaint?

BIGGS

Where to begin.

Biggs notes the black mourning band on Ludlow's badge.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BIGGS (CONT'D)

Ah, the black band. Man down. Hurts
right? Losing a colleague. A brother in
blue.

*
*

LUDLOW

I'm sorry he's gone, sir.

BIGGS

You guys worked Ad Vice together.
Rampart together. And Seventy Seventh.
That's where it all started. Right? The
good old days. Couple old lions.

*
*
*

Ludlow ignores him, shuffles paperwork.

BIGGS (CONT'D)

Phonebook Tom, last of the ghetto
gunfighters. Heard you got your best
confession with a ninety-one directory.

*

LUDLOW

Yessir. You know Washington was holding
the asshole down for me?

*

Biggs REACTS. Then:

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

Is this an interview?

BIGGS

Just a little back'n forth.

LUDLOW

Captain, I'm not much of a dancer. So if
there's something you'd like to ask.

A beat, Biggs smiles.

BIGGS

Would you like to have some lunch, Tom?

*

Ludlow REACTS. He's got no choice.

EXT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - PATIO - DAY

Ludlow sits across from Biggs, among the PATRONS. Biggs'
assistant, the LAPD SERGEANT is at a nearby table.

BIGGS

You a law and order man, Tom? That
describe you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDLOW

Sure.

BIGGS

But more order than law, right? At the end of the day, it's order that counts. Why sweat the details? Gotta break a few eggs to make an omelet. Or a few bones to keep the public safe.

LUDLOW

If you say so, sir.

BIGGS

What I'm saying. Tom. What I'm asking, is if you and Wander keep tearing down the law to go after the devil. Then what protection will we have when the devil comes after us?

LUDLOW

What are you talking about? Omelets and devils?

Biggs frowns. Puts a tape recorder on the table.

BIGGS

This is the interview. Regarding yesterday's incident. You were first on scene. Correct?

*
*
*

Ludlow eyes the recorder. Then Ludlow does it... He lies.

*

LUDLOW

Yeah.

BIGGS

Were you alcohol-impaired at the time?

LUDLOW

No.

BIGGS

You saw the shooters? Their vehicle?

LUDLOW

I did. Everything got broadcast.

BIGGS

Three shooters, right?

LUDLOW

Two. Read the report.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BIGGS

I did. What if I told you the pathologist recovered not two, but three different calibers from Terrance Washington's body?

Ludlow gives nothing away.

BIGGS (CONT'D)

Sounds like three shooters to me.

(a beat, quietly)

C'mon. Tell me why you were there, Tom. Why did you do it?

LUDLOW

I was on my way to catch a movie. And heard gunfire.

BIGGS

I interviewed the patrol guys who found you. Nice kids. And they indicated to me they were seconds away. Seconds. They roll up, and there's Tom Ludlow.

*

Ludlow shrugs.

BIGGS (CONT'D)

Thirty officers saw you drinking at Silky's party.

LUDLOW

I was off duty.

BIGGS

Some of them saw you and Washington having words in the parking lot.

LUDLOW

Sure. Words. So? I've known the guy seventeen years. I can't talk to him?

*

BIGGS

What were you fighting about?

LUDLOW

God.

Biggs turns off the tape recorder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BIGGS

You're fighting in a parking lot then two hours later you're standing over his corpse. Tell me what happened. Man to man. Tape's off.

Ludlow can't, won't answer.

BIGGS (CONT'D)

Does it not bother you two cop killers are out on the street, living, laughing, fucking? Doesn't that piss you off? Pisses me off and I didn't know Washington seventeen years. That doesn't bother you, Tom?

*

LUDLOW

Yes. Captain. It bothers me.

BIGGS

Rest assured, Homicide Special's got the best of the best on this. They'll find these men. And that third shooter.

(a beat)

Where's the video from the store?

LUDLOW

What video?

BIGGS

(seething)

Every time you shit the bed, Wander's there to change the sheets. Not this time. You guys think you're the LAPD's CIA. Untouchable. Well, there are things beyond Wander's control. I will pour gas on you. Pour gas on Wander. And everyone in Ad Vice. Then I'm lighting the fucking match. And watching all of you burn. All of you. I tried to save you, Detective Ludlow. You had your chance. So now, guess what. Fuck Wander. And fuck the third shooter. 'Cause I'm gonna find him.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

Wow. Biggs stands abruptly. Motions for his Assistant to follow him out. Ludlow watches them go, bewildered.

INT. PARKER CENTER - AD VICE OFFICES - DAY

Lived in, messy. Packed with espionage gear, radios, maps and live surveillance feeds.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hundreds of polaroids of prostitutes cover the walls. Ludlow enters in uniform. Nods to some DETECTIVES at their desks. He crosses to Ramirez and Demille.

DEMILLE
Oh, that is butch, Ludlow.

RAMIREZ
Am I double parked officer?

LUDLOW
Who's working the Washington shooting?

RAMIREZ
It's under control. Leave it alone.

LUDLOW
I am. Just curious. Who's working the case?

DEMILLE
Diskant.

LUDLOW
Who the hell's Diskant?

RAMIREZ
Nobody knows, homes.

Ludlow turns to exit.

INT. PARKER CENTER - ROBBERY HOMICIDE - DAY

DISKANT, a floppy haired young detective, works quietly at his desk. Ludlow crosses to him. Diskant REACTS, faced with one of LAPD's legendary warriors. *

LUDLOW
You Diskant?

DISKANT
Yeah.

LUDLOW
You working Washington?

DISKANT
Yeah.

Ludlow looks over his shoulder, SEES four gawking DETECTIVES who make no effort to turn away. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDLOW
You know who I am?

DISKANT
Yes. *

LUDLOW
Planning on interviewing me?

DISKANT
Of course. You're on my list. *

He points to a list on the wall that says "INTERVIEWS." *

LUDLOW
So, Diskant. You done a murder before?

DISKANT
I'm two for two.

Ludlow grabs a chair, swings it over to Diskant and sits heavily. Looking over his paperwork:

LUDLOW
You got a ballistics report?

DISKANT
Not yet. Slugs are still at the coroner's.

LUDLOW
But he's giving you updates. He tell you how many different calibers he dug out of Washington?

DISKANT
What do you want?

LUDLOW
How many, Diskant?

DISKANT
Goodbye, Detective. *

Ludlow REACTS. He brusquely stands, crosses to exit. Diskant watches him go, then picks up the phone. *

INT. L.A. COUNTY MORGUE - DAY

Cold white tile and stainless steel. A short old MEXICAN WOMAN sews Washington's corpse closed with black thread.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The PATHOLOGIST looks up from his laptop. Staring at Ludlow through safety glasses. *

LUDLOW
I'm from Ad Vice.

PATHOLOGIST
Tom Ludlow. I know who you are.

LUDLOW
Guess everyone reads the papers.

PATHOLOGIST
Yeah, but no. I handled your wife's autopsy.

LUDLOW
Ah. That was you?

PATHOLOGIST
That was me. *

LUDLOW
Right. The guy who washed away all the hair and fiber evidence. The guy who wouldn't do a vaginal swab. The guy who left me nothing to go on. *

PATHOLOGIST
Okay. There's a big difference between homicide and adultery. One's my job. The other's not. I've told you this before. You'd remember if you called me sober. So... Detective. How can I help you? *

Ludlow notes a collection of bullets in distinctive evidence bags on his desk.

LUDLOW
Pull these out of Washington?

PATHOLOGIST
I did. Serious overkill. Must've really pissed off the shooters.
(from his notes)
Eighteen forty five caliber full metal jackets. Seven nine mil F.M.J.'s. And one thirty eight hollowpoint. That one was mushroomed against his scapula. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Ludlow picks up the .38 slug full well knowing it's from his gun. Diskant suddenly enters, booty wraps over his shoes, eyeing Ludlow.

DISKANT

Get what you're looking for?
(to the Pathologist)
I'm Detective Diskant. We spoke on the phone. I'm here to sign for the ballistic evidence.

The Pathologist hands him a clipboard. Diskant signs.

DISKANT (CONT'D)

When can I expect the report?

PATHOLOGIST

Gimme an hour or so. Still waiting on some labwork.

DISKANT

Thanks, Doc. Can you fax it to my office?

Diskant curtly takes the bullet from Ludlow, drops it in his briefcase and sweeps in the other bullets after it. Diskant crosses to exit. Ludlow watches him go, his fate is in Diskant's briefcase.

*
*

EXT. L.A. COUNTY CORONER - PARKING LOT - DAY

Diskant crossing to his sedan. Ludlow catches up to him.

LUDLOW

Talk to me, Diskant. So you got three different calibers. That means three weapons. What's your thinking on how it went down in that market?

*

DISKANT

Two bad guys come through the door to rob the place. One guy cuts the clerk in half. The other guy sees Washington, who's already drawn his weapon, and empties his clip into him. His buddy joins the party until he runs dry. Then one of em' pulls a two-incher and pumps a final "fuck you" round into Washington's back. They run out. Then you show up. After they were gone.

*
*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDLOW
Got it all figured out.

DISKANT
I got your back here. But you gotta keep
your distance and let me work the case.
Don't worry. No one's finding these
assholes. Okay? Is that what you need
to hear from me?

Ludlow has a horrible realization. Utterly heinous.

LUDLOW
Are you fucking kidding me? The shooters
get a pass? *

DISKANT
You get a pass. They get a pass. That's
the deal, right?

Ludlow is confused, angry.

DISKANT (CONT'D)
Or you want these guys found, so they can
put you in the store before the shooting?

LUDLOW
Sunofabitch.

DISKANT
What's the issue here? Clady, said I was
doing you a favor. He said you were good
to go. Said you were on board. *

LUDLOW
You got a one eight seven on a cop and
you're giving the suspects a pass? That
doesn't piss you off? Two cop killers
walk. Jesus. *

Diskant REACTS, of course hates the idea. Diskant's cell
RINGS. He holds up a finger to Ludlow, answers...

DISKANT
Diskant.
(a beat, listens)
Yeah... Uh-huh. Go ahead...
(writes on a notepad)
I appreciate that. Listen, lemme call
you from my office.
(a beat)
Alright. You too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Diskant hangs up. Ludlow snatches the notepad, SEES two
PENCILED NAMES...

LUDLOW
Fremont and Coates?

DISKANT
The lab found saliva on the bandanna
recovered from the store and a cigarette
butt outside. DNA matches to these
names. *

LUDLOW
Congratulations. You ID'd the shooters.

DISKANT
Yeah. Normally I'd be pretty goddamned
happy.

LUDLOW
Two for three's not so bad, right?

Diskant REACTS. Ludlow hands back the notepad.

EXT. ROSEDALE CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS SHOT - DAY *

SUBJECTIVE CAMERA: Moving through the headstones. Past smog
stained angels with empty eyes. Palm trees WIPING FRAME. *

CAMERA FINDS: An LAPD HONOR GUARD, white gloves holding
rifles. BAM! The LAPD HONOR GUARD fires in salute. *
KERCHACK! They reload... BAM! Fired again... More palms *
WIPE FRAME as: *

CAMERA MOVES TO: Washington's flag draped coffin... *

CAMERA REVERSES ON THE SPECTATORS: Studies the collar
insignia of the brass: CAPTAINS, COMMANDERS, ASSISTANT and *
DEPUTY CHIEFS. Gloved hands in salute. Sunglasses. Mirror
shined shoes. Rank patches. Gunbelts. BAGPIPES... *

CHIEF FITZSIMONS (O.S.) *
...from his time on the streets, to his *
time in your schools and homes.

NOW PAN TO: LAPD CHIEF FITZSIMONS at the podium... *

CHIEF FITZSIMONS (CONT'D)
Detective Washington has been a tireless
ambassador for his church. For his
family. And for this department...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TILT UP: Three CHOPPERS BUZZ over the palms trees in missing man formation like giant metal dragonflies... *

TILT DOWN TO: LINDA WASHINGTON, the luminous widow, sits in pained dignity. *

NOW ON LUDLOW: He studies her with sympathetic eyes... *

FINALLY WE GO WIDE: Ludlow is in closed ranks with the men of Ad Vice: Wander, Ludlow, Clady, Ramirez and DeMille, all in dress blues. Stoic as Swiss Guards. The spires of Downtown behind them in B.G. *

EXT. ROSEDALE CEMETERY - DAY

A LIMOUSINE idles. A procession of MOURNING BLACK WOMEN approach it. Linda Washington, ethereal, poised, at the center. Ludlow sets himself in their path. The Women part around him. Until he and Linda are face to face...

LUDLOW
Mrs. Washington?

Linda considers him through black lace.

LUDLOW (CONT'D)
I'm Tom Ludlow.

LINDA
I know who you are, Detective.

LUDLOW
I was... first on scene.

She stares clear through him, and once her eyes have reduced him to nothing...

LINDA
He spoke of you often.

She brushes past and gets in the limo. Ludlow watches her go, just gutted.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - DAY

The semiofficial reception for Washington. Heroic pictures of him adorn a table. PHOTOGRAPHERS snap photos of a grinning Wander and his WIFE posing with a CITY COUNCILMAN. Ludlow sits in the corner with Ramirez and DeMille. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEMILLE

Fremont and Coates, huh? Fuckin' lovely people.

LUDLOW

You know 'em?

RAMIREZ

Bigtime. Shitfucks sling dope, heroin. Came up from Belize to make a sale and liked the Southland so much they never left.

DEMILLE

Fine gentlemen. We hooked 'em on a rape-mutilation caper. Had a three day hostage-fest with a cute little Guatemalan chick they snatched walking home from dental school.

RAMIREZ

Fremont shoved his whole damn arm up her. Homegirl'll never have kids. Or properly digest a meal.

LUDLOW

And why are they on the streets?

RAMIREZ

They walked from the beef. One of our own felt we violated Mr. Coates and Mr. Fremont's civil rights and told the City Attorney it was a hinky bust.

LUDLOW

(realizes)

Washington dined you out.

RAMIREZ

Yep. Why you think they put the dude in community relations? Done more to help crime than stop it.

*
*

DEMILLE

Least we had 'em long enough to get some DNA samples.

*
*

LUDLOW

You guys are shitting me. Washington kicked loose the very guys that whacked him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DEMILLE

Fucking ironic. Think they recognized his face before they pulped it with a bullet?

*

Ludlow grabs another beer. Clady is right there.

CLADY

Easy, big fella.

LUDLOW

I'm easy, Sarge. Wander know the history of these sick fucks who popped Washington?

CLADY

Of course he does. Everyone knows more than you, Ludlow. Just assume that from now on.

*

LUDLOW

Sarge, we can get these animals.

*

CLADY

No. We can't. Not if you wanna keep your badge. When you took your pass Fremont and Coates got theirs too. Look, they'll take care of themselves. Probably shoot each other or something. This week's suspects, next week's victims. Right?

Wander walks by with his Wife, smiles at Ludlow and pats his back, on his way to talk to a DEPUTY CHIEF.

*

CLADY (CONT'D)

See? Jack's not worried. I'm not worried. But if you keep getting involved, we're gonna get worried. You had your chance to play Christ-on-the-Cross in that fuckin' market. The second you took that video it wasn't just your ass on the line. Now it's Wander's. And mine.

Wander doubles back to Ludlow alone. Quietly:

*

WANDER

When were you planning on telling me about your lunch with Biggs?

LUDLOW

Captain, I can handle him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WANDER

Can you? Man's looking for any chink in the armor right now. Don't be that chink.

Ludlow REACTS as Wander moves on to hug and kiss a COUNCILWOMAN.

INT. GRACE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alone, Ludlow sips a tallcan of Bud, watching the VIDEO from the market...

INSERT TV: Ludlow returns fire blindly. Washington jerks from Ludlow's errant round hitting his shoulder. The video rewinds. Plays again. Rewind. Play.

ON LUDLOW -- He has no doubts he shot Washington. He drains the can and crushes it. He stands and ejects the DVD. Pulls on his pants. Grace exits her bedroom.

GRACE

You ever sleep? It's lonely back there. C'mon, I won't bite. Unless you want me to.

Ludlow straps on his ankle holster.

LUDLOW

See you in a couple days or something.

GRACE

You shouldn't be driving. Wanna end up like my dad? Don't be a pendejo.

He dismisses her with a wave and walks out. Grace sighs.

EXT. WANDER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ludlow POUNDS on the door. Drunk and disheveled. Wander opens the door. Pissed.

WANDER

What the fuck are you doing here?

LUDLOW

Let's talk.

Ludlow holds up a six pack. Wander sighs, lets him in.

INT. WANDER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Picture windows showcase the city lights at night. Wander and Ludlow sit in easy chairs. Ludlow hands Wander a beer. They CLINK bottles.

WANDER

I shouldn't encourage you. This is getting old. How many times have I let you pound on my door in the middle of the night and cry on my shoulder over Karen. And humored your rants about finding the cop she was sleeping with and running him through a wood chipper.

LUDLOW

That still stands.

WANDER

I know it does. And you know I love you, Tommy. But I'm sick of this shit. Same damn song for three fucking years. What's it gonna take to bring you back from Mars? We miss you.

LUDLOW

Have I ever asked you for anything?

WANDER

You ask me for shit all the time.

LUDLOW

Big things, Jack. Important things.

WANDER

What's up, Tom?

LUDLOW

Gimme a green light to take out the assholes who did Washington. I got their names. Torturing rapist dope dealing fucks. Lemme me do it my way. I can make them vanish. C'mon Jack. King's X.

WANDER

What the hell is this? I thought we were clear. Let it go. Just let it go.

LUDLOW

I can lay 'em out like I did those Korean fucks. But off the books. I'm talking shovels and trashbags. Who's gonna know? Who's gonna care?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WANDER

The Koreans? That was business. That was for the team. The department and for those girls. This, this is some crazy bullshit rattling around your drunk ass mind. What, you think these guys were fucking your wife or something?

LUDLOW

Fuck you. What the fuck's your problem? Why do you gotta say that?

WANDER

You're my fuckin' problem. You're not thinking right. You're a mess. You don't know what you're saying. Look at you. You need some sleep. You're eyes are all swolled up. That's the moon out there, not the sun.

LUDLOW

Fuckin' listen. No. No. No. Look. Once upon a time when I was a P-two dog working morning watch I kicked a door on a little house in Watts--

WANDER

Shut-up, Tom.

LUDLOW

I kick a door responding to a screaming woman call and found her dead tied to a chair. And the sick motherfucker who was carving on her with a steak knife was dead on the floor next to her.

WANDER

Stop. Now.

LUDLOW

And there you were. Off duty in soft clothes standing there with a gun in your hand and your bullet in that asshole's heart. Know how that looked, Jack? Pretty fucking bad. A married cop visiting his ghetto mistress for a slice walks in on evil shit in progress and lets his gun do the talking.

Wander looks like his head is about to explode. He grabs another beer. Cracks it and downs half. Hurt. Sad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WANDER

Why? After all these fucking years...

LUDLOW

I had your back. Remember how you begged me to let you walk out of there. So you could keep you wife. And your job. And I did, man. I let you walk. Why? Because I was your fucking friend. There's two people on the whole fucking planet who know that really happened that morning. You and me. Have I ever, ever said a word. About that. Since? In fifteen years. Not a word.

Wander shakes his head: no.

WANDER

Why now?

LUDLOW

I did for you when you were wrong. You gotta do for me. Even if I'm wrong.

WANDER

It's three A.M. You're drunk. You haven't taken a shower in days. And you bring this shit into my house. My living room. With my wife and kids sleeping upstairs. This ain't a bar. And business is business and this isn't business. This is you being crazy. Throwing the past in my face. How fucking dare you. How many bodies have I let you walk away from? When'd you start drinking today? Your little airplane bottles of Vodka. And you fucking drove over here intoxicated like this? You want a second DUI?

LUDLOW

No one's gonna fuck with me. Listen to me, Jack. You're not listening.

WANDER

No you listen. You got much bigger problems right now. You think Biggs is stupid? That motherfucker's got a P.H.D. in catching cops slipping. You know this. You know all this. Hold your fucking mud. Can you do that? Your profile is off the charts right now. In the fuckin' paper every day.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WANDER (CONT'D)

Now it's time to turn the page and close the book. Maybe when you're street legal again we can revisit this chapter. Maybe. Get some fucking sleep. You know where the blankets are.

*
*
*
*
*

Ludlow sighs. Wander is right. Wander pats his knee, gets up, turns out the light and heads for his room.

*
*

INT. PARKER CENTER - HALLWAY - DAY

*

Back in uniform, Ludlow manages a busy hall. Two uniformed GHETTO COPS pass him, gunbelts jammed with equipment. They note his smooth waisted look and smirk. Ludlow is humiliated.

INT. PARKER CENTER - POLICE COMMISSION OFFICES - DAY

Ludlow at his desk. Across from him sit TWO PROSTITUTES.

*

PROSTITUTE 1

This ass worked longer than all y'all cops disrespecting me.

PROSTITUTE 2

And they always do it on a motherfuckin' Friday. So we don't see no judge 'til Tuesday. Costin' us money.

Ludlow stares at them, his mind elsewhere.

EXT. O.P.G. TOW YARD - DAY

Diskant completes a circle around Washington's Escalade. BEEP-BEEP. He pops the back with the remote. Nothing. About to close it, he spots a BARCODE STICKER. He picks it up with a pen. Stares at it.

INT. PARKER CENTER - POLICE COMMISSION OFFICES - DAY

Ludlow listens to an older BLACK MAN over steepled fingers.

BLACK MAN

They took two hundred dollars. That was a lot of money back then. I forgot about it until I saw this.

He shows Ludlow a NEWSPAPER PHOTO of CLADY taken at Washington's reception.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLACK MAN (CONT'D)

This is the man. Right here. Took all my pay. Said it was for the cookie jar.

The steeple drops. Ludlow sits up.

LUDLOW

The cookie jar?

BLACK MAN

That's what the motherfucker said. Look. I ain't expecting my money back. But what about my pride?

Ludlow REACTS.

INT. S.I.D. - PIPER TECH - DAY

The EVIDENCE TECH across the counter examines Diskant's barcode.

EVIDENCE TECH

Yeah, it's an evidence tag.

DISKANT

One of yours?

EVIDENCE TECH

Let's see.

He scans it BEEP. Reads his computer screen.

EVIDENCE TECH (CONT'D)

It corresponds to a kilo of heroin. It's here. In the safe.

DISKANT

Pull it.

EVIDENCE TECH

What?

DISKANT

Pull it.

INT. S.I.D. - PIPER TECH - DAY

Diskant's thumb smashes the glass ampule inside a Nik drug test kit. He shakes it. It's negative. Diskant and the Evidence Tech look at the Nik kit in shock. A kilo of heroin on the counter between them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DISKANT
Didn't turn blue.

Diskant grabs a pinch from the kilo, rolls it in his fingers, *
smells it.

DISKANT (CONT'D)
It's brown sugar. *

EVIDENCE TECH
(mortified)
It was dope when it came in. There goes
my job.

Diskant thinks a beat. Reassuringly:

DISKANT
Put it back and forget I was here.

EVIDENCE TECH
Okay.

INT. PARKER CENTER - POLICE COMMISSION OFFICES - DAY *

Ludlow filling out a form. Looks up. SEES Diskant leaning
in the doorway. He locks eyes with Ludlow then pops out.

INT. PARKER CENTER - HALLWAY - DAY

Ludlow sticks his head into the hall. At the end, Diskant
lets Ludlow spot him, then enters the MEN'S ROOM.

INT. PARKER CENTER - MEN'S ROOM - DAY

Ludlow enters, hesitant. It's empty, save for an anxious
Diskant.

LUDLOW
This is the goddamn faggiest thing I've
ever seen.

DISKANT
So you're a homophobe? On top of
everything else.

LUDLOW
The fuck do you want, Disco?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DISKANT

Washington. He was dirty. He was a piece'a shit.

LUDLOW

And you're telling me this why?

DISKANT

I think you know why.

Ludlow suddenly grabs his throat, kicks his legs apart and brusquely frisks him.

LUDLOW

You recording this? You working for Internal Affairs?

Grabs his cellphone. Pulls out the battery.

DISKANT

What the fuck?

LUDLOW

You made one deal. Maybe you made two.

DISKANT

They were so right about you. You are like out there, man. Forget it. We stay away from each other. It's all good.

Diskant crosses to exit.

LUDLOW

Hold the fuck on. C'mere. So Washington was dirty? Hit me, princess.

Ludlow looks back at the door.

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

Go take a piss.

Diskant reluctantly obliges, facing a urinal in case someone enters. Ludlow moves to the sink.

DISKANT

Couple things. You know we found fifty G's in cash on him in the store?

LUDLOW

No. I didn't. Lotta cash. But not in itself damning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DISKANT

This is: a month ago he signed a kilo of heroin out of evidence. And returned a kilo of sugar. Saw his name in the evidence logs.

*

LUDLOW

Guys who wacked him sell dope. You know Washington got them off a rape beef on a technicality?

*

*

DISKANT

No. Maybe they had business arrangement.

LUDLOW

Maybe it wasn't a robbery.

DISKANT

Maybe a dope deal went sideways.

LUDLOW

Maybe it was a hit.

DISKANT

That would explain the heavy artillery.

A breakthrough. They trade looks.

LUDLOW

I guess Washington deserved it. He was dirty. So fuck him. I feel much better about the suspects walking. And you? You must feel better too. We're doing the right thing.

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

DISKANT

No shame if you wanna take your pass.

*

*

LUDLOW

No shame if you wanna play ball with Clady.

*

*

*

Ludlow sizes up Diskant. And decides he could go to war with this kid.

*

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

It's your career, Disco.

*

*

DISKANT

It's your funeral.

LUDLOW

This has to be you and me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DISKANT

Why do you think we're in the fuckin' bathroom?

LUDLOW

Alright, let's do it.

Diskant grins, holds out his hand to shake. Ludlow scoffs, nods for him to wash it first.

EXT./INT. CENTRAL AVENUE/LUDLOW'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Ludlow cruises the hood, relaxed, arm out the window. Diskant rides shotgun, second-guessing this whole thing. Ludlow's .45 under his thigh. Diskant copies him.

LUDLOW

You ever hear any cops mention "The cookie jar?" Taking money off the street and keeping it. Shakedowns. Bribes. Graft. You know, Serpico shit.

DISKANT

Hey... I'm not interested.

LUDLOW

Not offering. And fuck you if you'd think I'd take money. Never have. Never will. I'm asking if you've heard of it, dumbass.

DISKANT

No, never have. Why?

LUDLOW

Complaint I'm following up on.

DISKANT

I'm new school. I wasn't around for the good old Rampart days.

LUDLOW

Quit sucking your own dick, Linus. You would'a loved the old days. We were fucking kings and we made cases. Every day good people looked us in the eyes, shook our hands and fuckin' thanked us.

Ludlow stops for a red. A DEEP STEREO BASS rattles them as a CREW OF BLOODS pulls alongside. Predatory. Eyeing Ludlow. He stares right back. Until one by one they all look straight ahead. Diskant amazed by that. Then...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ludlow turns to the spooked Bloods...

LUDLOW (CONT'D)
Green light.

The DRIVER reactively hits the gas, then brakes hard when he SEES the light is still red. In the middle of the intersection, the young men bicker: "Go! Just go, Nigga..."

Ludlow turns to Diskant...

LUDLOW (CONT'D)
They know we're cops. Everyone here does. And don't think they're scared of our guns or badges. I ain't shit and you especially ain't shit. They're scared of this...

He holds up his radio.

LUDLOW (CONT'D)
And the nine thousand troops waiting for our call.

Diskant is bemused by his attempt at mentorship.

DISKANT
Wow. Thanks for spitting the knowledge. They only told us that a million times in the academy. But, uh. Thanks for the reminder. Now can you teach me how to shave?

LUDLOW
Fuck you.

EXT. 48TH AND COMPTON - SOUTH CENTRAL - NIGHT

Ludlow's car pulls up to a little house where several MEXICAN KIDS play. Ludlow and Diskant exit.

LUDLOW
This is it. Last known address.

Ludlow waves over a MEXICAN GIRL.

LUDLOW (CONT'D)
Soy policia.
(flashes his badge)
Ustedes viven aqui?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Girl nods: yes. He SEES her MOM peeking out from the front door. Ludlow Waves. She stares back coldly.

LUDLOW (CONT'D)
Desde cuando, hija?

*

GIRL
Tres meses.

LUDLOW
Con quien vives?

GIRL
Mi mama y mi papa. Mis hermanos. Y mi prima Griselda.

*

LUDLOW
Nadie mas?

She shakes her head: no. Ludlow turns to Diskant.

*

LUDLOW (CONT'D)
Family here now. Our boys are long gone.

NEW ANGLE -- A half dozen LATINO HOMEBOYS on a nearby porch share Coronas and weed as they eye the cops.

*

LUDLOW (CONT'D)
Alright, Disco. See those yahoos? I'm gonna jam 'em. And when I do one of them's gonna bolt. He's the one that's dirty.

*

DISKANT
You bored or something?

LUDLOW
This is their hood. Anyone knows Fremont and Coates they do. But no one's gonna talk unless they're facing a serious assfucking LAPD style.

*

Ludlow walks quickly toward the house. Pulls his gun, holds it low along his thigh. Pulls his badge from inside his T-shirt. Sure enough a HOMEBOY takes off running...

*

LUDLOW (CONT'D)
Get 'em.

*

*

Diskant takes off after him. The other Homeboys WHISTLE and CHEER. Ludlow just watches them go.

*

*

DISKANT'S POV

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Running. Down a driveway. Over a fence. Following the Homeboy.

*
*

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL - ALLEY - NIGHT

The Homeboy leaps over discarded couches and appliances. Pitbulls BARK behind fences...

*

Diskant running close behind, pumping his legs. The Homeboy reaches a wooden fence. Vaults over it. Then Diskant...

*
*

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL - BACKYARD - NIGHT

The Homeboy weaves through rusty engine blocks. Pushes over a metal shelf of car parts. Heads for the back door. Kicks it open and runs inside...

*
*

Diskant leap over the shelf and follow him into--

*

INT. SOUTH CENTRAL HOUSE #1 - NIGHT

*

The Homeboy runs through the kitchen, the hall. The living room. Where a BLACK FAMILY eats dinner and watches T.V. The Homeboy runs out the front door. Followed by Diskant...

*
*

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL - HOUSES - NIGHT

The Homeboy runs down a driveway. Through a back yard. Vaults the fence into a second alley. Diskant is right behind. The Homeboy scrambles over a gate into another backyard...

*
*
*
*

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL HOUSE #2 - BACKYARD - NIGHT

*

Cooped chickens squawk as the Homeboy charges into another backdoor...

*
*

INT. SOUTH CENTRAL HOUSE #2 - NIGHT

*

A MEXICAN FAMILY watching T.V. and eating dinner. The Homeboy tears right through followed by Diskant...

*
*

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL - BACKYARD - NIGHT

*

The Homeboy runs down a narrow pathway and scrambles onto a garage roof. Diskant follows...

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ludlow steps out of the shadows with a metal folding chair and whips it with all his strength...

As the Homeboy leaps to another roof the spinning folding chair hits his legs... THWAP! Sending him sprawling into nasty coils of CONCERTINA WIRE...

Ludlow kicks a gate open and saunters into the alley...

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL - ALLEY - NIGHT

The Homeboy is caught in the coils of razorwire. Frozen, terrified to move as the razorwire cuts deeper, blood dripping down his arms. Ludlow stands beneath him. Eyeing his prey. Diskant jumps down from the roof.

DISKANT
I almost had him.

HOMEBOY
It's cutting me. Get me down.

LUDLOW
Why you running, man?

Ludlow SNICKS open his knife. Slices open the pockets of the Homeboy's sags. A cheap automatic and several baggies of meth tumble out.

LUDLOW (CONT'D)
Meth and a gun. I'd run too.

Now that impresses Diskant.

DISKANT
You got fuckin' game.

LUDLOW
Uh, thanks?

The door of a nearby house opens. Spilling out light...

DISKANT
LAPD! Get the fuck back in your house!

The door slams shut.

LUDLOW
Hey. What do they call you?

HOMEBOY
Quicks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDLOW

Quicks? Not quick enough. They should call you Mosca. Waiting for the spider. You want down?

HOMEBOY

Yeah, holmes. Get me down. *

LUDLOW

Fremont and Coates. They used to stay across from the house you were partying at. You know 'em? *

HOMEBOY

Yeah. Fuck those fools. *

LUDLOW

Where they at, Quicks?

HOMEBOY

I don't fuckin' know. I'm a Southsider, ese. I don't kick it with the brothers. *

LUDLOW

They're from Belize. Who knows 'em?

HOMEBOY

This baller on San Pedro. From the Forties. Rolling Forties. Grill. Dude named Grill. He knows 'em. *

LUDLOW

Grill from Rolling Forties?

HOMEBOY

Yep. Now get me the fuck down, eh.

Ludlow pockets the Homeboy's pistol. Grinds the crack into the cement. And walks away. Diskant follows.

DISKANT

What about him?

LUDLOW

What about him? Lucky he's not going to jail.

Diskant shakes his head.

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

Run Grill through Calgang and get me an address.

INT. GRILL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Grill, a hardcore gangbanger watches T.V. in his bathrobe, shoveling kiddie cereal into his mouth. A NOISE outside gets his attention. He grabs his AK, crosses to the front door and opens it...

*
*

CRASH! A window glass breaks to his right. Grill turns...

SEES Diskant aiming at him through a broken pane...

*

DISKANT

LAPD! Drop it or die!

*

WHAM! Almost simultaneously the steel security door pops open. Ludlow drops a crowbar and...

*
*

WHACK! Pistolwhips Grill in the face. He grabs the AK, plants a foot on Grill's chest, and kicks him onto the coffeetable...

*

Ludlow tosses aside the AK and drops both knees on Grill's back and screws his gun into his ear. Grill submits.

GRILL

Ah'ite, one-time. You got me.

Ludlow cuffs him. To Diskant:

LUDLOW

Get your ass in here so I can toss the place.

INT. GRILL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ludlow grabs a beer from the fridge. Cracks it and sips as he searches through every jar and item in the fridge.

INT. GRILL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Grill sits on his couch, Diskant guards him. Ludlow enters. Sets a squeeze bottle of mustard on the coffeetable. Grill looking at it, shrugs. Ludlow tips it over with a finger. Dozens of little balloons of heroin roll out.

LUDLOW

You got two strikes. This is strike three. Twenty five to life.

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRILL

Fuck you, white. Lick my motherfuckin' nutsack. Punk-ass cop. Both y'all's. Your move, trick.

Ludlow REACTS. Spots a phonebook in the corner. Grabs it. Savors its heft. Thumbs through the pages. He stands over Grill, who looks resigned.

WHAP-WHAP-WHAP-WHAP-WHAP! Ludlow lays into him, knocking his head around like a tetherball.

DISKANT

Whoa! Stop! Hold on. What are you doing? Chill.

GRILL

The fuck? Listen to your boy.

Diskant blocks Ludlow. Grill is clearly relieved. Ludlow looking at Diskant like he's the biggest wuss ever.

DISKANT

Aren't you supposed to ask him something then hit him?

GRILL

Dude's right. You ain't asked me shit.

Ludlow REACTS. Oh. Turns to Grill.

LUDLOW

Fremont and Coates. Where they at?

Before Grill can answer, Ludlow cocks back the phonebook and WHAP-WHAP-WHAP-WHAP-WHAP! Lets Grill have it... *

GRILL

Stop! Stop! I'll tell you!

Ludlow stops.

GRILL (CONT'D)

Why you thumpin' on me for them niggas? I wouldn't piss on their heads if their hair was on fire.

LUDLOW

Where they at, Grill?

GRILL

They got straight dismissed from this hood a minute ago.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GRILL (CONT'D)

Low down motherfuckers doing dirt. I catch 'em slippin' I'll bust their domes.

DISKANT

Outstanding. How do we find 'em?

GRILL

All the cats I know what know 'em up in Twin Towers right now. High power module. I can't get at 'em.

Ludlow's eyes light up. Grill regrets saying that.

LUDLOW

I'm gonna book you into County.

(off Grill's look)

Hold on. Listen. Talk to your people and find me Fremont and Coates. You can be out by tomorrow. Otherwise I'm striking you out with the dope and AK.

Grill looking at Ludlow, pained by the choice. Softly:

GRILL

I ain't no snitch.

LUDLOW

I know that. Won't be no jacket. No paper. This is just you and me.

A beat. Grill decides to trust him.

GRILL

Ah'ite, cop. Fuck it.

EXT. TWIN TOWERS - SALLYPORT - NIGHT

Ludlow and Diskant pull Grill out of the car. Two DEPUTIES wait with shackles.

INT. TWIN TOWERS - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The two Deputies, Ludlow and Diskant escort Grill to processing. Four DEPUTIES lead a SKINHEAD in a blue jumpsuit the other way.

SKINHEAD

Ludlow! Can't say hello? Don't know me now? Look at me, you fuck! Turn your back on me! I will fucking end you! End you!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEPUTY
Shut the fuck up!

Diskant looks at Ludlow. Who just shrugs. *

LUDLOW
See, Disco. I got homies in here too. *

They arrive at processing. Ludlow takes his cuffs off Grill. *

LUDLOW (CONT'D)
Do what you have to do. Good luck.

INT. PARKER CENTER - HALLWAY - DAY

Ludlow shuffles along in uniform, severely sleep deprived.
Wander catches up.

WANDER
Tom.

LUDLOW
Hey boss. What's up?

WANDER
How's complaints?

LUDLOW
Sheer fucking hell.

WANDER
Give it another week. Get through the
shooting board. And you're back on
nights.

Wander looks around -- No one in earshot.

WANDER (CONT'D)
I'm hearing things, Tom. Disturbing
things. Stay out of the investigation. *
Let it go. Washington was a dirtbag but
he was buried as a hero. That's how the
Department wants him remembered. The
Chief eulogized the man for God's sake.
That makes his sainthood official. Don't
embarrass the brass with Washington's
sins. Understand?

LUDLOW
Yessir. I understand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Wander smiles, claps his shoulder. Ludlow watches him go.
Checks his watch.

INT. USC DOHENY LIBRARY - DAY

Linda Washington quietly studies. SOMEONE CROSSES FRAME.
She looks up, REACTS. It's Ludlow. Linda tenses,
frightened. Her haunting eyes lock on Ludlow.

LINDA

I get it. Okay? You don't have to say
anything. I'll keep my mouth shut. You
didn't have to come here.

LUDLOW

(reacts)

You think I'm here to threaten you?

*
*

LINDA

Coerce. Remind. Warn. Whatever.
Terrance said you'd come. And that it
would never stop.

LUDLOW

You got my intentions all wrong.

LINDA

Really?

YOUNG STUDENTS looking at them.

LUDLOW

We talk outside?

INT. USC DOHENY LIBRARY - LOBBY - DAY

Ludlow and Linda stand beneath the vaulted stone ceiling and
stained glass.

LUDLOW

Why didn't you speak at the funeral?

LINDA

Speak? Speak on what? That service
wasn't for him. It was for you and the
department. And the cameras. Not him.

*
*
*

LUDLOW

I was with your husband when... Look, I
held his hand as he died.

*
*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

And you should know... Shit. I'm saying that... That I know how not knowing can eat at you...

*
*

LINDA

You apologizing for something?

*

LUDLOW

I'm not apologizing. I'm condoling. I lost my wife. I've been there. Maybe I'm still there. It's just that...

*
*

LINDA

I am sorry the good Lord took your wife. I am. But who took my husband?

*

LUDLOW

The men who killed him were heroin dealers and it's possible they were in business with your husband. He had fifty grand in cash on him. Might be more than just wrong-place-wrong-time.

*
*
*
*

LINDA

Might be? How many people knew he was talking to Internal Affairs? Did you know? No worse enemy than an old friend.

*
*
*

Linda lets her insinuation sink in.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Some people seek the truth and some lead it where they want it to go. My husband had a good heart. And when he started listening to it he became a pariah. He tried to make right what he helped make wrong. His eyes opened. When will your eyes open?

*
*

LUDLOW

What are you talking about?

LINDA

Your friends, Tom. Your friends. Terrance said you were the worst one. 'Cause with all this shit going on around you, you choose not to see.

*
*

LUDLOW

Look, I came here to help you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LINDA

No. Uh-uh. You came for answers. The
fifty thousand? Terrance wasn't stupid.
He knew he had a bullseye on his back the
second he went to Captain Biggs. We were
leaving Friday. To start over in the
Bahamas. Silly of us wasn't it?

*
*
*
*
*

Ludlow REACTS, processing that.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Anything else, Detective?

LUDLOW

No.

Linda turns and walks away. Ludlow watches her go.

EXT. LUDLOW'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ludlow pulls into his driveway. Crossing to his door. A car
pulls in behind his. A man gets out -- Biggs.

BIGGS

Ludlow.

LUDLOW

What the fuck do you want? This is my
house. Don't come here.

*

BIGGS

That a warning? Here's my warning.
Leave her alone.

*

LUDLOW

Goddamn right that's a warning. Leave
who alone?

*

*

BIGGS

Linda Washington.

*

LUDLOW

You like her, don't you? You wipe her
tears and think about holding her?

*

*

*

BIGGS

Shut up, detective. Washington was ten
times the man you are. Ten times. How
dare you jam his widow and besmirch his
reputation. You and Wander have no
fucking shame.

*

*

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDLOW

Wander? Ah... You mean Commander
Wander. That must sting. Wander got
your stars. And now he's out of your
reach. But I'm not. Right, Captain?

*
*
*

BIGGS

No. You're not. None of you are. Stay
away from Linda Washington.

Ludlow cranes for a look into Biggs' car. SEES a SERGEANT
inside. Ludlow waves.

*
*

LUDLOW

Come alone next time.

*
*

BIGGS

Goodnight.

*
*

Biggs crosses to his car. Pauses. Turns back around.

*

BIGGS (CONT'D)

Have you asked yourself if Washington's
dead because he was dirty. Or because he
came clean.

*
*
*
*

Ludlow REACTS. Biggs gets in his car, SLAMS the door.

*

INT. PARKER CENTER - HALLWAY - DAY

Wander stomps along with balled fists, Ludlow tries to keep
up. He barges into a door marked: INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

*

INT. PARKER CENTER - BIGGS' OFFICE - DAY

Biggs is on the phone when his door bursts open, revealing
Wander and Ludlow. Biggs REACTS.

BIGGS

(into phone)

I'll call you back.

Biggs hangs up. Stands. Squaring off with Wander.

BIGGS (CONT'D)

What the fuck are you doing in my office?

WANDER

What the fuck are you doing at my
people's houses? You got a problem with
Ludlow you come to me. To me. Not him.

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BIGGS

Then keep your dog on a leash. We all
know he can't make a move without you.

(to Ludlow)

You cry to daddy?

*
*

WANDER

Stop. Right there. Stop. Tom's a damn
fine cop. He fucking bleeds blue. You
got an open case on him? On Ad Vice? On
me? You formally investigating us?
Answer the question, Jimmy.

*
*
*
*

Biggs just looks away.

*

WANDER (CONT'D)

Ha! This is a fishing expedition.
Because you know if you went to the Chief
for permission to open a case on me or
anyone in my unit, he'd laugh you out of
his office. Am I wrong?

*
*
*

BIGGS

Just because you have the seventh floor
by the balls doesn't mean an outside
agency can't take you down.

WANDER

I knew you were disturbed but you finally
lost it. This department washes its own
laundry. You go outside the family;
you're done. Not me. You. Done. Like
it or not we're family. Never forget
that. Family takes care of family.

*
*
*

BIGGS

I got Washington on tape.

WANDER

So do I. So what? Look at his psyche
package. Borderline delusional with
episodes of mania. He was a dope dealing
cop and the stress was rotting his mind.
He conned you.

BIGGS

Step outside, Detective Ludlow.

*

WANDER

Stay right there, Tom.

Ludlow REACTS, he's in uncharted waters. Biggs glaring at
Wander.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BIGGS

I've watched you bully, intimidate and blackmail your way up the paygrades for twenty plus years. I know exactly who you are. You have no business being a Commander.

A beat, Wander's eyes narrow. He smiles.

WANDER

You like Tom, don't you? Is that why you were at his house? You want him to suck your dick? Like that hooker I caught you with when we were Sergeants. Remember? The one with the big hands and the Adam's apple.

BIGGS

Shut up, Jack.

Ludlow REACTS, looking anywhere but at Biggs.

WANDER

The man in a dress going down on you in your black and white. I know you remember. I do. Especially the expression on your face when I snapped the Polaroid. Does your wife know what a sick fuck you are, Jimmy?

BIGGS

That was the best fucking head I ever had, you piece of shit. Everyone knows you couldn't keep your dick outta the ghetto. How many warbabies you got? Glass houses, asshole.

Biggs opens a drawer and drops a huge file on his desk.

BIGGS (CONT'D)

You don't think I know? This. Is you. The Jack Wander secret fucking file. You don't outrank me yet. Now get the fuck out of my office.

Wander and Biggs trade glares a beat. Then Wander nods for Ludlow to follow him out. At the door:

WANDER

Do the Department a favor and wash your fucking mouth out with buckshot.

Wander and Ludlow exit. Biggs is utterly livid.

INT. PARKER CENTER - HALLWAY - DAY

Ludlow walks with Wander, looking at him in awe. So that's how the big dogs do it.

LUDLOW
Holy shit. What the fuck was that?

WANDER
That was nothing. He won't bother you anymore.

LUDLOW
What about you?

WANDER
Me? Tom, I'm good. We got knives to each other's throats. So what? That's the LAPD way. But once I get my stars, I am throwing his ass under the bus.

(switching gears)
I'm grilling up some ribeyes at my house tonight. Corn fed prime Angus this thick. Come through and we'll have some drinks and some laughs. And bring that little mamacita of yours. About time I met her.

LUDLOW
Sure, Jack. See you tonight.

INT. PARKER CENTER - POLICE COMMISSION OFFICES - DAY

Ludlow at his desk sending Grace a text about the dinner. Clady enters, smiling over his coffee mug. Ludlow SNAPS his cell shut.

CLADY
Lud. What the fuck? How's complaints?

LUDLOW
Your wife was just here.

Clady smiles, sets Ludlow's bullet from Washington's back on his desk. Still in the distinctive evidence bag.

CLADY
We're done with this.

Floored, Ludlow can only gape at the damning object.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDLOW

Is that it?

CLADY

Yep. Keep it. Nice little souvenir.

(then)

We got your back, Tom.

Clady gives him a thumbs up and exits. Ludlow picks up the .38 slug and drops it in his pocket. What a morning. Ludlow's cell VIBRATES, startling him. Ludlow checks the text message: "Look up." Ludlow does and SEES Diskant in the doorway.

*
*

INT. PARKER CENTER - HALLWAY - DAY

Diskant hands Ludlow a rap sheet.

DISKANT

I don't believe it but Grill came through for us. Said this guy here sells dope for Fremont and Coates. I got Metro tailing him right now.

*
*
*
*

LUDLOW

(off the rap sheet)

"Scribble?" Catchy.

*

DISKANT

Let's scoop him up.

*

LUDLOW

I can't. I can't come out and play.

DISKANT

Bullshit. You're Tom Ludlow. Sign out for lunch or something. They gotta let you eat, right? Let's go.

*
*

Ludlow REACTS.

EXT./INT. VERNON/LUDLOW'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

*

Ludlow shoots through a gap in traffic. Cars HONK in protest. Diskant rides shotgun.

*
*

DISKANT

Watch it. Watch it. Jesus. You almost hit that guy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDLOW
You married, Diskant?

DISKANT
Engaged. And I'd like to see her again.

From Ludlow's Nextel:

COP VOICE
We got him. Eastbound on Vernon passing
Fig. Want us to jam him?

LUDLOW
(into Nextel)
That's a negative. Just keep eyes on and
call it out. We're enroute.
(to Diskant)
The money Washington had. The fifty G-
notes. It was get the fuck out of Dodge
money. *

DISKANT
How do you know? Ped in the crosswalk. *

LUDLOW
I talked to Mrs. Washington. They were
punching out of L.A. Running scared to
the Bahamas.

DISKANT
What were they so scared of? Clear
right. *

LUDLOW
Me.

DISKANT
You? That's bullshit. Washington knew
Fremont and Coates were gunning for him.
And didn't wanna tell the little woman he
was dealing. So he put it on you. *

Ludlow looking at Diskant.

DISKANT (CONT'D)
What?

LUDLOW
Maybe you're not a total chowderhead
after all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DISKANT

Thanks. Maybe you're not a total
whatever the fuck you are either.

*
*
*

COP VOICE

Eastbound. Vernon, passing Avalon.

Ludlow scans the traffic ahead. REACTS.

LUDLOW

(into Nextel)

We got eyes on 'em, break off.

COP VOICE

Roger that, Four King Nine.

*

EXT. VERNON AVENUE - DAY

*

A Metro Crown Vic turns off the boulevard. Revealing a
maroon Cadillac. Ludlow slaps a red light on the dash.
Pulls up to the Cadillac's bumper. HONKING loudly. The
Cadillac slowly pulls over. Ludlow and Diskant approach the
Cadillac, guns drawn, badges out. Behind the wheel is
SCRIBBLE, a large black man.

*
*
*
*
*
*

DISKANT

Hands on the fucking wheel, asshole!

*

Ludlow motions for Diskant to relax. Diskant signals Ludlow;
"Check his eyes." Ludlow drops startingly into the
passenger seat. Notes Scribble's shrunken pupils.

*
*

SCRIBBLE

Who the hell are you? Narcs?

*

LUDLOW

Yeah, we're narcs. Lookit your eyes.
Pinned out like a motherfucker. Takin'
some off the top, huh? Maintenance? You
gotta kick that shit. Try Methadone?

*
*

SCRIBBLE

Shit's worse, dog. Look, I gotta lawyer.
Why don't you talk to him?

LUDLOW

Nothing's happened yet. But you got a no
bail warrant out of Newton. We put the
cuffs on now, you're locked up until the
Apocalypse.

*
*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SCRIBBLE

Whatever. Do it. Let's go.

Diskant nervously watches a group of GANGSTERS gather nearby. *

LUDLOW *

(to Diskant) *

Yo, two for two. Watch those jokers. *

Don't let 'em creep up on us. *

(to Scribble) *

Won't be general population. I'll put
you in protective custody so you can't
get your dope. You really wanna kick
heroin in County? Wanna see the judge
all sick, puking and shitting yourself?
That'll look real good. And for what? I
don't want you. You're just a rung on a
ladder I'm climbing. *

SCRIBBLE

What ladder? *

LUDLOW *

How do we find Fremont and Coates? *

SCRIBBLE *

I got no love for them Banana boat
motherfuckers. But those dudes are
straight monsters. They will put my ass
in a box, they think I'm snitching. *

LUDLOW

I'm not asking to finger the guys in open
court. I just wanna find 'em. Once I do
you're out of the mix. *

SCRIBBLE

I ain't seen them in a week.

LUDLOW *

You got a number?

SCRIBBLE

Naw, man. They always dropping phones.
Motherfuckers call me. *

Scribble looks up at Diskant through the side window.

LUDLOW

Look at me. He can't help you. Where
they at? Help me find 'em. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SCRIBBLE

I did a little business with 'em out in
Palmdale once. Little ass house.

*

Bingo. Ludlow trades a look with Diskant. They're close.

*

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - PALMDALE - DAY

Bare desert overlooking Palmdale proper. Ludlow's car is
parked near a solitary cinderblock house. With a propane
tank, abandoned cars out front. It looks quiet.

*

*

Pistol drawn, Ludlow cases the front of the house. Diskant
appears from around the back... "No sign of anyone."

Ludlow throws a rock at the door. Nothing. He throws
another rock through a window. No response. Diskant
covering him as Ludlow kicks the front door...

INT. CINDERBLOCK HOUSE - DAY

It's been ransacked. The fridge open. Cushions slashed.
Drywall peeled open. Diskant notes something.

*

DISKANT

*

Ludlow. Over here.

*

Diskant points down at...

*

A BLOODY DRAG MARK on the tile, feebly scrubbed. They follow
it out the patio door...

EXT. CINDERBLOCK HOUSE - DAY

The concrete patio is also bloodstained. The trail ends
where the sand begins. Ludlow looking around. Notes a
column of FIRE ANTS winding towards Bougainvilleas near a
shed. Ludlow and Diskant follow the ants to a buried
trashbag. Ludlow SNICKS open his knife. Slices open the
bag. Revealing a skull with elaborate gold dental work...

*

*

*

*

*

DISKANT

*

Shit. Another victim. Lemme see that...

*

Diskant takes Ludlow's knife. Gently scrapes away dirt to
reveal a second skull.

*

*

DISKANT (CONT'D)

*

I don't believe this. I'm in way over my
head.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDLOW

Hey. We're in way over our heads. Find me a shovel and pull the murder book from the car. Don't put it out. Not 'till we know what we got. And wash my fucking knife.

Diskant nods and walks away.

EXT. CINDERBLOCK HOUSE - DAY

Ludlow leans on a shovel staring at two TWO BODIES desiccated by the desert air. Diskant holds a mugshot of SEAN FREMONT next to the skull. Identical dental work. No doubt.

DISKANT

This is Fremont.

Diskant peels back the other corpse's shirt. Revealing an elaborate PARROT TATTOO on the chest. He compares it to a booking photo of COATES' chest with the SAME TATTOO.

DISKANT (CONT'D)

And this is Coates.

LUDLOW

We found 'em. Great. Case closed.

DISKANT

These guys have been here a while. No way they killed Washington.

LUDLOW

You think?

DISKANT

Fuck you. So who did?

LUDLOW

Same assholes that smoked these guys and planted their DNA in the market.

DISKANT

Why? Why would our shooters frame two dead guys?

LUDLOW

We're gonna ask 'em.

EXT. CINDERBLOCK HOUSE - LUDLOW'S CAR - SUNSET

*

Long shadows from the setting sun. Ludlow and Diskant cross to the car. Where Scribble waits in back, handcuffed.

*

SCRIBBLE

There's coyotes out here. Y'all been gone a minute. Find something?

*

DISKANT

No. Nothing.

Ludlow hands him the mugshots of Fremont and Coates.

*

LUDLOW

You know these guys?

SCRIBBLE

Naw, man. Never seen 'em.

Ludlow and Diskant trade looks.

*

LUDLOW

Look, if Fremont and Coates call you, set up a meeting. You tell 'em I can do for them what Washington can't do no more. They'll know what you mean.

*

*

SCRIBBLE

Yeah, bet. I'll hook it up.

Ludlow and Diskant get in the car.

*

EXT. WANDER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Grace glides through the pool, silhouetted by underwater lights. She reaches the end and climbs out. Grabs a towel, begins drying off.

*

*

NEW ANGLE

Clady, his WIFE, Ramirez, DeMille and their GIRLFRIENDS all stare. Clady's Wife pinches his arm.

*

*

CLADY'S WIFE

Close your mouth.

Clady does. Ludlow watching Wander turn the steaks. Grace joins them, toweling her hair.

*

GRACE

I love your pool.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WANDER

Thanks. I think the pool likes you.
You're a strong swimmer.

GRACE

I was a city lifeguard after high school.

WANDER

Yeah? When'd you graduate? Yesterday?

CLADY'S WIFE

Ignore him. What do you do now, honey?

GRACE

I'm a nurse. At Good Sam, in the E.R.
Still trying to save people, I guess.

CLADY'S WIFE

(to Ludlow)

Tom, it's good to see you with such a
nice girl. Don't let her get away.

Grace finishes her sangria. Wander refills it from a
pitcher.

WANDER

You need a reload. He taking care of
you?

Grace nods demurely and latches onto Ludlow's arm. Their
first real date.

LUDLOW

Where's your wife?

WANDER

At her mom's with the kids. They're
going to Knott's Berry Farms tomorrow.
Gives me some man-time.

RAMIREZ

How's complaints, Lud?

LUDLOW

Same shit different flies. Rather scrape
up body parts at a traffic collision.

DEMILLE

We're working some good capers. I got a
white slavery case with a Ukrainian
organized crime piece.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RAMIREZ

I'm working a human sex trafficking ring
out of Mexico City. We could use your
expertise. You gotta way with whores.

Ludlow shoots him a look. Grace just laughs.

CLADY'S WIFE

Shootings, slavery, prostitution. Dinner
at Jack's house is better than the eleven
O'Clock news.

WANDER

Hell, we write the news in my office.
And save the world on a nightly basis.

LUDLOW

I miss it. Get me back in the field.

WANDER

Tom falls apart if he's not chasing bad
guys. Always been like that.

(to Ludlow)

Next week. Gonna be all friendly faces
on your shooting board.

CLADY

(to Grace)

Tom was born without the fear gene. I
can tell you some stories.

GRACE

C'mon, let's hear 'em.

WANDER

I got the classic Tom Ludlow story. One
time when he was a rookie in Seventy
Seventh working mid P.M.'s his training
officer was sick so I took him under my
wing for a couple watches. One Friday
night we get this call in Crip City.

GRACE

Crip City?

Grace snuggles up to Ludlow, delighted to hear of his past.

WANDER

Crip City was this dead end street of
second and third generation gangster
families. Everything bad was there.
Dope, shootings, what have you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WANDER (CONT'D)

So it's Friday night and there's this house party. And we got the call to shut it down. You gotta understand, Grace, Tom was the saltiest boot ever. I figured he could use a lesson in humility. So I drop him out front and tell him turn the music down. Tom goes in alone. I'm on my way to rescue him when all hell breaks loose, a full on donnybrook. I see homeboys flying out the doors and windows. I charge in and there's Tom busting heads. He shut the party down. A one man riot. Got twice as cocky after that.

*
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*

LUDLOW

They wouldn't turn the music down.

WANDER

Tom's always been Tom.

Grace smiles, gives Ludlow a proud kiss on the cheek.

*

INT. WANDER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Later. Wander grabs a couple beers from the fridge. Hands one to Tom. They look out the window where Grace LAUGHS with the other Women.

*

WANDER

She's good for you.

LUDLOW

I know.

WANDER

Don't fuck it up.

LUDLOW

I will. You know me.

WANDER

Yeah. You will.

They CLINK beers and share a LAUGH. Then:

LUDLOW

I found Fremont and Coates.

Wander REACTS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WANDER

You did?

LUDLOW

In a hole in Palmdale. Been resting in
peace a good six months. No way they did
Washington.

*
*

WANDER

Who knows this?

LUDLOW

Me and Diskant. It wasn't a robbery it
was an execution. The shooters are
impersonating Fremont and Coates. Over
money, over dope, same thing. The real
killers planted bogus DNA so we'd spin
our wheels. Identity theft on steroids.

*
*
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*

WANDER

They're smarter than the average bear.
They gotta be convicts.

*
*

LUDLOW

Jack, I want them so bad I can taste it.
I got a line on them. I'm running them
down. They're just a phone call away.

*
*
*

WANDER

What is it with you and Washington? He
deserves all this? What are you really
chasing? Were you that close?

*
*
*
*

LUDLOW

Yeah. We were. Back in the day. Jack,
he'd do it for me. And I'd do it for
you.

*
*
*
*

WANDER

(sighs)

Well I give up. I'm done. I should'a
known you'd be you on this thing. Go
huntin'. Have a good time. Do what you
do. But you cannot bring them in. Do it
the old way. Settle it out there.
King's X. You understand?

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

Ludlow looking at Wander and smiles. They hug. Ludlow is
deeply relieved to be finally unfettered.

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LUDLOW

I understand. Jack: thank you. This is
the right move. Their souls are mine.
They are fucking mine.

*
*
*

Wander smiles at Ludlow.

*

INT. GRACE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ludlow watching the video of Washington's murder. Alone in
the dark. Studying his adversaries. Rewind. Play. Rewind.
Play. His cell RINGS. DISKANT on the caller ID.

LUDLOW

What?

DISKANT

I just talked to Scribble. They called
him.

LUDLOW

Who?

DISKANT

Fremont and Coates. Or whoever they are.
They wanna meet us.

LUDLOW

When?

DISKANT

Tonight.

Ludlow REACTS. Checks his watch.

LUDLOW

Let's do this.

INT. GRACE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Grace asleep. Ludlow leans over and gently kisses her
forehead. He's come a long way.

EXT. LINDA WASHINGTON'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Linda opens her door and finds Ludlow there. She makes no
effort to hide the gun in her hand. Packed boxes in B.G. In
Ludlow's hand is the DVD from the market.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDLOW

I know. It's late. I'm sorry. I wanted you to have this.

LINDA

And that is?

LUDLOW

The truth. It's the video of your husband's murder. It shows everything.

Linda REACTS. Doesn't take the disc.

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

I didn't just happen by. I was in the store before the shooting. I followed him there.

LINDA

Think I didn't know that? Why were you following him? *

LUDLOW *

I heard he was giving me up to Internal Affairs and I wanted... I wanted to hurt him. It's that simple. Then I see these gangsters on a mission and tried to warn him. He thought I was gonna kill him and... It's all on the video. It's ugly. *
*
*

Linda reels from his honesty.

LINDA

Why are you doing this?

LUDLOW

My wife had a timebomb in her brain. This blood vessel was expanding like a balloon. A bloodclot formed and it finally burst. When she was with someone. A man. And this man dumped her on the curb outside the emergency room. Left her to die alone on the sidewalk and drove off. In an unmarked department sedan. *

Linda REACTS. He gently places the DVD from his hand. *

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

Take it. Please. The men who killed Terrance. Are going to pay. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LINDA

That won't bring him back. That won't
bring your wife back.

LUDLOW

I don't care.

LINDA

Not in my name. Please. Not in my name.

With that she closes the door. Leaving Ludlow standing
there.

INT. PARKER CENTER - AD VICE OFFICES - NIGHT

The equipment cage is open. Ludlow checks floorplans and
blueprints, checks watch rosters and computer printouts.
Diskant watching this.

DISKANT

Sure we don't wanna roll with some back-
up?

LUDLOW

Fuck back-up.

DISKANT

What..? Why?

LUDLOW

Siddown.

Diskant does.

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

What do you think we're gonna do tonight?
Throw the cuffs on these boys and drag
'em back to the barn? Do you really
think we can do that?

DISKANT

No.

LUDLOW

This is the deal. I'm going out there.
And you're going home. And we're never
ever going to discuss any of this again.
It'll be like Fremont and Coates never
existed. And like we never met.

DISKANT

I can't do that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDLOW

Excuse me?

DISKANT

I'm not going home. Not after all this.
I'm going with you. I have to.

LUDLOW

No. This thing you think you want. You
don't want.

DISKANT

Who are you to judge me. You don't know
who I am. I'm fucking going, Ludlow.

LUDLOW

Well fuck you then. You wanna work off
the books? Off the record? Wanna be a
gunfighter? Then let's go. Let's do it.

Ludlow stands grabs a shotgun and racks it -- KERCHACK!
Diskant REACTS.

INT. PARKER CENTER - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Ludlow and Diskant load weapons and equipment into Ludlow's
car. A sedan pulls up behind them. It's Biggs.

BIGGS

Back on the nightwatch, Tom?
(to Diskant)
It's past your bedtime, son.

Both men ignore him.

BIGGS (CONT'D)

You two keep being seen all over town.

LUDLOW

It's purely social.

BIGGS

You really think I'm gonna do nothing
about you?

LUDLOW

If you're gonna do something, do it now.

Biggs doesn't move.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

Thought so. You fucking need me. Who else is gonna wrestle crackheads in the alleys. Fight the gangbangers and take dope and guns off the street. Who's gonna clean up the needles and baby parts? You? I know you hate me. Shit, I even hate me. But with me gone, could you soft little company men sleep in your soft little beds without the bad guys slitting your throats?

Deep down Biggs knows he's right. Then:

BIGGS

Don't be surprised if you end up like Washington.

(as he drives away)

Don't lose my number, Tom. In case you get caught with your hand in the cookie jar.

Ludlow REACTS, watches Biggs exit the garage. As Diskant just stares at Ludlow in amazement.

INT. LUDLOW'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Ludlow drives. Diskant looks at him. Ludlow reaches over and opens the glovebox. Inside are surgical gloves and a box of ammo.

LUDLOW

Swap out your rounds. We don't want the Coroner pulling department hydrashocks out of these assholes.

Diskant slips on a glove, empties his magazine and begins loading Ludlow's rounds. The gravity of their task is sinking in. Diskant pauses to study a bullet.

DISKANT

Jesus. These are serious manstoppers.

LUDLOW

We're close. Get your mind right.

DISKANT

Yeah. I'm good. We just gonna go in there and kill 'em?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDLOW

No. I'm gonna ask 'em some questions.
Then we're gonna kill 'em.

*

Diskant REACTS.

EXT. WILLIAM MEAD HOMES - NIGHT

Ludlow's car enters the housing projects just North of
downtown. He parks under a flickering streetlight alongside
Scribble's Cadillac. Ludlow and Diskant exit, as does a
nervous Scribble.

*

*

*

LUDLOW

We good?

SCRIBBLE

These is real bad dudes. If they can't
fuck it, rob it or kill it, they don't
want it.

LUDLOW

Make the introduction.

Ludlow turns to Diskant, who is clearly spooked.

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

Maybe you should stay outside.

*

DISKANT

No, this is my show. I'm in. God knows
I won't be part of much else after this.

*

*

*

Ludlow nods for Scribble to lead the way.

INT. APARTMENT STAIRCASE - NIGHT

*

Loud MUSIC O.S. Scribble exhales and KNOCKS on the door.
Ludlow gives Diskant a nod. The DOOR OPENS. Scribble
hesitates than enters. Followed by Ludlow and Diskant.

*

*

*

INT. FREMONT AND COATES APARTMENT - NIGHT

A creepy mixture of wealth and filth. One of Washington's
KILLERS sits on a chair. The OTHER KILLER holds a submachine
gun to Ludlow's temple. They call each other FREMONT and
COATES, as will we.

*

FREMONT

Move to the fucking wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDLOW

What the fuck is this? You know we're
cops. Deal with it.

*

SCRIBBLE

LaShawn. They cool, man.

FREMONT

Shut the fuck up, Scribble.

(to Ludlow)

Get your ass against the motherfuckin'
wall before I put your brains on it.

LUDLOW

(not budging)

We're here to do business. You wanna
feel me up? Fuckin' try it.

A tense staring match. Then Coates starts laughing.

COATES

Oh shit! You wanna feel his shit,
LaShawn? Cause he ain't takin' it out
for you.

(to Ludlow)

Nigga take a seat. Chill the fuck out,
LaShawn. Scribble say they cool.

*

*

Ludlow and Scribble sits on the couch across from Coates.
Diskant stays by the door. Ludlow eyes a large fishtank with
dead sharks rotting in it.

*

*

*

COATES (CONT'D)

That right, Scribs? They cool?

SCRIBBLE

Yeah. They straight, dog.

COATES

Man, got the one-time up in here. The
motherfuckin' po-po. Yo, there any
square cops left? Or is everyone out for
theirs?

*

LUDLOW

Everyone's out for theirs. Way of the
world. Don't shoot me now. Just getting
something from my pocket.

*

*

*

Ludlow cautiously reaches in his pocket and places Grill's
balloons on the table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

This is just a sample. We're all about weight. We can help you transport. Let you know if there's heat. Let you know if your selling to a narc or a snitch. Or bust people and sell you their shit.

*
*

Coates reaches under a cushion. Diskant tenses. Coates produces not a gun, but a kilo of heroin and sets it on the coffeetable. Ludlow REACTS. Scribble is almost drooling.

*
*

COATES

We all about weight too. Lookit that sexy shit. Better'n money. Better'n pussy. Ain't no Mexican tar neither. That's the Worldwide War on Terror's finest. Pure Afghan, Homie.

*
*
*
*

FREMONT

Dude, y'all cops like weeds, know what I'm sayin'? Pull one out, two grow back.

*

LUDLOW

(carefully now)

Well, Washington got greedy.

Ludlow waits... no reaction from either man.

FREMONT

(to Coates)

We know this fool. This that nigga in the store when we pushed Washington's wig back.

*
*

That's the verification Ludlow was waiting for to kill them. Now he waits for the right moment...

*

COATES

Hell yeah. That was you.

SCRIBBLE

C'mon now. We know y'all some badass cats. Let's just get motherfuckin' high. Lemme get a cup full'a that Erk and Jerk.

*
*
*
*

COATES

Shut the fuck up, Scribble.

(to Ludlow)

You up in here trying to get some get back for that sorry ass nigga? Detective Ludlow.

*
*
*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LUDLOW

No. You did me a favor.

Scribble and Diskant are crawling the walls. Ludlow licks his lips, watching their hands...

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

You know who I am. And I know who you're not. If you're not Fremont and Coates, who the fuck are you?

Coates eyes drift to the corner...

NEW ANGLE

THE 50 CAL. MACHINE GUN (from our opening), stands in a corner. A kind of altar, wrapped in small white lights. However it got here, it mesmerizes Ludlow. Coates smiles wickedly and changes his demeanor...

COATES

Who are we, Detective? We're walking, talking exigent circumstances.

That snaps Ludlow out of it...

LUDLOW

What?

DISKANT

Ludlow. I know these guys--

--BLAM! Coates shoots Diskant in the throat. The young detective collapses to the filthy floor...

Ludlow dives behind the couch...

As Fremont opens up with the machine gun...

BRDDDDDDDDDT! Punching out stuffing all around Ludlow...

SCHWAP! A bullet hits Scribble's ample stomach...

POP-POP-POP-POP-POP! Ludlow fires back wildly. Fremont and Coates retreat...

FREMONT ducks into the BATHROOM. COATES heads into the KITCHEN...

As Ludlow reloads as Diskant stares with pleading eyes...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LUDLOW

Hold on, Diskant. Hang on. Hang on.
I'll be right there.

FREMONT

Got your boy. Gonna get you, bitch.

POP-POP-POP-POP-POP-POP! Ludlow opens fire as he dives into a nearby closet...

Crumpled on the floor, Scribble holds his bleeding abdomen. Ludlow, Fremont and Coates can't see each other, but all can see Scribble... *

COATES

Scribble, pick that gun the fuck up and blast that motherfucker!

Scribble SEES Diskant's gun on the floor and ignores it. BLAM! A shot from the kitchen rips into his thigh... *

COATES (CONT'D)

Next one breaks your dome, nigga!

Scribble fumbles for the gun...

LUDLOW

Cedric! Don't fucking do it!

COATES

"Cedric"? What's that? Your slave name? You best fuckin' do it! Cap that whiteboy!

Scribble lowers the gun. He just can't do it. *

BRDDDDDDDDDDDT! Scribble is riddled with bullets from Fremont's machine gun... *

IN A MIRROR Ludlow SEES Fremont toss aside the empty machine gun, pull a Glock and advance toward the him... *

BLAM-BLAM-BLAM! Fremont FIRES, covering Coates as he repositions himself for the kill... *

Ludlow looks at Diskant, scared, dying. Running out of options, Ludlow keys on the overhead light... and takes careful aim... *

POP! He shatters the bulb. Aims at the lamp in the corner... *

BAM! It's dark save for the glowing dead fish tank... *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Ludlow pulls his powerful flashlight and charges toward the bathroom. BLAM! He's WINGED by the shot -- It ruptures the fishtank. Dumping rancid water everywhere. *

Ludlow presses forward. Clicks on his light... *

FREMONT'S POV

Blinded by Ludlow's bright flashlight... Suddenly LUDLOW'S RIGHT THERE. *

SCENE

POP-POP! Fremont's gone. Ludlow moves on... *

Coates is caught reloading in the narrow kitchen when Ludlow aims and FIRES...

CLICK. Ludlow's gun jams...

BLAM-BLAM-BLAM-BLAM! Coates fires as Ludlow ducks behind the fridge... *

Ludlow weathers the shots, the fridge denting, he eyes Diskant on the ground... *

COATES (CONT'D)

You done, Ludlow! I do you like I did him!

Ludlow's temper boils, he's had enough. He PUSHES THE FRIDGE like a linebacker in a football drill...

Driving it right into Coates, pinning him against the wall...

In a heartbeat, Ludlow pulls the snub-nose from his ankle holster. Scales the fridge. And...

POP-POP-POP! FIRES DOWN through Coates' skull. Killing him instantly...

Ludlow slides down the fridge, totally spent...

He crosses to Diskant. Kneels by his side. Looking up at Ludlow, Diskant draws his last breath. Ludlow closes Diskant's eyes. Fold his arms over his chest. Sits by his friend. Looking at his peaceful face, Ludlow smiles. *

LUDLOW

Goodbye, Disco.

EXT. FREMONT AND COATES APARTMENT - BALCONY - NIGHT *

Moments later. Ludlow leans against the rail and dials his cell. He waits for an answer. Then: *

WANDER (V.O.)

Wander.

LUDLOW

It went sideways. I got 'em. But Diskant's gone.

A beat.

WANDER (V.O.)

He shouldn't of been there.

LUDLOW

I know.

WANDER (V.O.)

I'll take care of it. Get out of there. Now. Don't go home. Lay low at your girlfriend's until I call you.

CLICK. Wander hangs up. Ludlow heads for the stairs. SIRENS in the distance...

EXT. GRACE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ludlow limps up the steps, shoulder bleeding. Grace opens the door before he knocks, her face covered in tears.

LUDLOW

Why are you crying?

She almost smiles, helps him inside.

INT. GRACE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Grace inspects him for injuries like an E.R. patient. SEES his wounded shoulder.

GRACE

Sit down.

Ludlow sits on the floor, back against the couch. She grabs a trauma bag from the closet. Grace cuts away his shirt. He pulls away from her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE (CONT'D)

Let me do this.

Grace cleans the wound.

GRACE (CONT'D)

You're gonna be okay. This is nothing.
You're gonna be fine.

*

She wraps his shoulder with gauze.

LUDLOW

(sighs)

It went bad Grace.

GRACE

I know.

LUDLOW

I should'a gone alone. Took a boy to a
gunfight.

*

(realizes)

You were crying when I got here.

*

Grace nods at the TV in B.G. Ludlow grabs the remote. Turns
up the volume...

INSERT TV: BREAKING NEWS. Helicopter shots of the Housing
Project. Superimposed is LUDLOW'S ACADEMY PHOTOGRAPH, his
youthful eyes shine with hope.

REPORTER

Again, the details are just coming in.
Detective Tom Ludlow, an eighteen year
veteran of the Los Angeles police
department, is wanted in connection with
the shooting deaths of two undercover
officers in the early hours of the
morning...

*

*

*

*

Two more Academy photographs replace Ludlow's: A pair of
young, clean-cut BLACK OFFICERS -- The men who called
themselves Fremont and Coates...

*

*

*

ON LUDLOW -- Simply. Devastated.

*

GRACE

Tom. Tom? Don't check out on me.

*

Grace watches Ludlow disintegrate. Her eyes tear up.

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LUDLOW

This is gonna be a nightmare. I should go.

GRACE

Uh-uh. You're not going anywhere. Did you do it?

LUDLOW

I didn't know they were cops. I had no fuckin' idea. But I couldn't see it. I should have.

(then)

Exigent circumstances? What the fuck?

Grace begins hitting him. Furious...

GRACE

You fucking idiot. Que chingados is your problem? What the fuck's wrong with you? Huh? Why do have to shoot everyone? Why can't you have a normal life like everyone else? You're always killing people.

He grabs her wrists. Grace sobs. And pulls away.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Lemme go. Don't touch me.

She stares at him a long beat. Then...

GRACE (CONT'D)

What happens now?

LUDLOW

I turn myself in and go to death row.

GRACE

Of course. Right? Now that we were finally...

LUDLOW

I know. I'm...

Grace hugs him, rocks him like a child.

GRACE

Shhhhh. Don't say nothing. Just listen. I love you. Since I first saw you. You don't have to say it back. I know you feel the same. I can feel it. I felt it before you did.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The shell around Ludlow's heart cracks open right there. He holds on for dear life. Eyes welling, he buries his face in her shoulder.

LUDLOW

Grace, I'm so sorry. I fucked it all up.
You, me. Everything. You need to get
away from me. I'm not a good person.
Everything I touch dies.

GRACE

Shhhhhhh. Don't talk. Listen.

She leans back and holds his face in her hands so she can drink in his eyes. This is her vow:

GRACE (CONT'D)

I don't care what you did. I don't care
what they say you did. 'Cause no one can
take you from me. Because you're mine.
You always have been. And you always
will be. I'll be there for you. Now and
forever.

With that, Ludlow melts. She owns him...

WHAM! The front door is kicked off the hinges...

RAMIREZ AND DEMILLE charge inside in body armor, carrying shotguns...

RAMIREZ/DEMILLE

Down! On the fucking floor! Now!

Ludlow gets on his knees, hands on his head.

LUDLOW

I'm not resisting.

DEMILLE

Shut up!

Ramirez kicks Ludlow to the floor. And cuffs him. They take his guns, knives, keys and cellphone. DeMille turns to Grace. She REACTS to his cold stare.

RAMIREZ

Alright. Get this piece'a shit up and
outta here.

DEMILLE

Ludlow, you really fucked up this time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Grace watches as Ludlow is hauled to his feet. He tries to give her a reassuring look as he's dragged away...

EXT./INT. 101 FREEWAY/DEMILLE'S SEDAN (MOVING) - NIGHT

DeMille drives North out of the city. Ludlow in the backseat.

LUDLOW
Downtown's the other way.

RAMIREZ
We're not going downtown.

Right there Ludlow knows he's a dead man.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)
That bitch of yours is fine. So is
Washington's widow. Fucking 'em both,
right? Which one you like better?

DEMILLE
I like, Linda. Badass brick shithouse.

RAMIREZ
Shouldn't have given her the video, Lud.
Like handing the bitch a death sentence.

LUDLOW
The fuck are you talking about?

DEMILLE
How many times were you told to kick back
and ride it out?

RAMIREZ
(to Demille)
Be cool, holmes. Don't get him going.

DEMILLE
Fuck him. He should know. Smug fuckin'
punk.

(to Ludlow)
You figure it out yet? How Fremont and
Coates made it to the market that day?

LUDLOW
You guys killed them. After Washington
got them kicked loose. You picked 'em
back up. Took 'em to Palmdale and popped
their melons.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAMIREZ

Took some DNA samples first. *

DEMILLE

Ultimate get-outta-jail free card. Gotta
take out a piece'a shit snitch like
Washington? Little hair and saliva.
Fremont and Coates did it.

LUDLOW

Washington wasn't giving me up to Biggs.
He was giving up you clowns. *

Ludlow slowly works a shaved down handcuff key from the seam
of his pants. *

DEMILLE

He had to go. Fuckin' with business.

LUDLOW

Who were they? Washington's killers?
They really cops? *

DEMILLE

Couple rookies from the ghetto having the
time of their lives. They were supposed
to punch your ticket. *

RAMIREZ

But you punched theirs.

DEMILLE

Now we're gonna punch yours.

LUDLOW

In Palmdale.

DEMILLE

In Palmdale.

Ludlow unlocks one cuff. And grips the shank in his hand
like a weapon... *

RAMIREZ

After we take some hair, saliva and
blood. So when they find Washington's
widow tits up in the gutter, guess whose
DNA's gonna be all over the bitch's
corpse? *

DEMILLE

And you know she's getting raped. Gonna
die anyway.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DEMILLE (CONT'D)

So is that little nurse chick of yours.
I'm popping a Viagra and working that
ass.

*
*

Ludlow feels like he's falling into a pit...

RAMIREZ

And what's it gonna look like? Like you
finally snapped just like we all knew you
would.

*
*

Ludlow swings the handcuff shank into DEMILLE'S FACE...

*

He hooks his cheek and pulls. Demille SCREAMS...

*

The sedan swerves. HONKING from other cars...

*

Now Ludlow gets an arm around DeMille's throat. Kicks wildly
at Ramirez's head...

*
*

Demille claws at Ludlow's hands as he is pulled out of his
seat...

*
*

Ramirez grabs the wheel. The sedan stabilizes. Slowing with
DeMille's foot off the gas...

*

Ramirez pulls his gun as he steers...

*

One arm around DeMille's throat, Ludlow reaches for the
radio...

*
*

Ramirez HAMMERS the butt of his pistol into Ludlow's head...

*

WHACK-WHACK! Ramirez hits Ludlow again and again...

Ludlow GROWLS, trying to break Demille's neck, groping for
the police radio...

*
*

SCHWACK! Ramirez's LAST BLOW impacts and we:

*

CUT TO BLACK:

EXT. CINDERBLOCK HOUSE - NIGHT

Ludlow's eyes open slowly. His blood stains the dusty
concrete. He's lying on his cheek. The Bougainvillea
rustles softly in the orange light of a rising full moon.

*
*

DeMille is swabbing saliva from his mouth. Drops the swab in
a vial. He jerks out some hairs, puts them in an evidence
bag. Ludlow coughs, choking on his own blood.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEMILLE

Hi there. Welcome back. Know what your
 problem is? You wouldn't take money.
 That's all you had to do.

Ludlow's eyes dart about, looking for a play, but his body
 won't move. He wilts... It's all over.

Then, a WIND picks up. Rustling the Bougainvillea. Solidly
 handcuffed, Ludlow's breathing rises. His face flushes.
 He's not ready to quit. He begins crawling, still
 handcuffed, towards the Bougainvillea...

DeMille watches this and laughs.

DEMILLE (CONT'D)

Ramirez. Get out here, man. The dude's
 making a run for it.

Ramirez crosses to DeMille, both men draw their guns...

Ludlow crawling. The brush a good fifteen feet away...

BAM! The FIRST SHOT explodes in the sand by his ear.

RAMIREZ

Where you going, Lud? To your grave?

BAM! Another shot impacts near Ludlow's hip...

BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM! Ramirez and DeMille fire over and over,
 toying with Ludlow...

Sand explodes all around Ludlow. A BULLET rips into his
 calf. But he's not done yet. FIVE FEET to the
 Bougainvillea...

DEMILLE

Dude's gonna bury himself.

BAM-BAM-BAM! The shots throw up geysers of sand...

TWO FEET AWAY... Then, drawing from deep down, Ludlow finds
 the strength to scurry into the thick brush...

DeMille looks flustered, but mainly annoyed.

RAMIREZ

Just do him and let's go.

INSIDE THE BRUSH -- Ludlow crawls through SWARMING RED
 ANTS... He crawls into the grave with the corpses of the
 real Fremont and Coates. Just beyond is the SHOVEL.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DeMille finds Ludlow on his back, exhausted, hands over his head. DeMille stands over him...

DEMILLE

This is it, Lud. This is how it ends. *

DeMille raises his gun... *

As Ludlow swings up the shovel... *

CRUNCH! Ludlow sinks the edge of the blade into DeMille's forehead... *

ON RAMIREZ -- He saw that. Runs toward the brush... *

Ludlow pulls DeMille into the grave and grabs his gun... *

Ramirez reaches the grave, FIRING down... BAM-BAM-BAM! *

Using DeMille as cover, Ludlow fires up...

BAM! Killing Ramirez instantly...

Ludlow rolls away DeMille. Summoning all his strength, he LIFTS HIMSELF OUT... Coughing up sand and blood. Back from the dead he crawls out of the grave. *

INT. LINDA WASHINGTON'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Linda weaves through the boxes in her living room. She opens the front door...

And finds Clady on her doorstep, smiling over her door chain.

INT. WANDER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Wander in his robe, sautés scallions. At peace as he cooks. By cutting board are two police radios, and three cellphones. A T.V. is mounted under a cabinet...

INSERT T.V: Ludlow's shooting dominates the airwaves. Julie Fukushima reports live from Parker Center...

JULIE

...The third victim has been identified as Detective Paul Diskant with the Robbery Homicide Division. Apparently this was a sting operation that went bad. (MORE) *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JULIE (CONT'D)

In addition to tonight's murders,
 Detective Ludlow is wanted for
 questioning in the murder of Detective
 Terrance Washington, who was gunned down
 last week in Pico-Union.

*
*
*

ANCHOR

Thank you, Julie. The police
 spokesperson has asked us to remind our
 viewers that Detective Ludlow is still at
 large and to be considered armed and
 dangerous.

CO-ANCHOR

Strange to hear the police use that kind
 of terminology about one of their own.

ON WANDER -- Stirring the pan and wafts the aroma to his nose
 with his hand.

*
*

INT. LINDA WASHINGTON'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Clady SMASHES aside a cabinet as he chases Linda. He traps
 her in a corner, her nose dripping blood...

CLADY

Where's the fucking video?

WHAP! He slaps her viciously with a latex-gloved hand.

CLADY (CONT'D)

Look at you. Getting your nigger whore
 blood all over me.

Linda turns away, imagining herself anywhere else. Clady
 glimpses a DVD player behind a moving box.

CLADY (CONT'D)

That it? Huh?

He lets go. Linda slides down the wall into a heap. Clady
 checks the DVD player. SMASHING it against the wall when he
 finds it empty...

Linda glimpses LUDLOW looking in a window...

Linda's head falls forward, in exhausted, euphoric release.
 Her trial is over...

*
*

None the wiser, Clady returns to her, angrier than ever. He
 picks her up, bemused as she smiles through tears.

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLADY (CONT'D)

You're one tough bitch, aren't you?
Tougher than that sack'a shit husband you
had.

(then)

What's so funny? Huh?

LINDA

Bye-bye now.

CLADY

What--?

One moment Clady is there... The next he's gone as Ludlow
tackles him to the floor, punching his face. He grabs
Clady's arm, bends it into a compliance hold...

SNAP! Breaks his forearm. Clady HOWLS in agony as Ludlow
cuffs him. Dragging to the door; Ludlow turns to Linda...

LUDLOW

You gotta go now, Linda. Wherever it is,
you have to go.

LINDA

(wryly)

I'm already packed.

LUDLOW

I found them. The men who--

LINDA

--I know who you mean. Take care of
yourself, Detective.

Ludlow nods, nothing left to say.

EXT. LINDA WASHINGTON'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Ludlow marches out Clady. BEEP-CLUNK. Pops the trunk of
DeMille's sedan with the remote. And heaves in Clady...

*
*

CLADY

Where're you gonna go, cop killer?

WHAM! Ludlow punches out Clady. And SLAMS the trunk...

EXT. WANDER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ludlow drives over the curb, onto the grass. Gets out
quickly...

*
*

INT. WANDER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ludlow enters cautiously, pistol drawn. Clears the corners.

WANDER (O.S.)
Hell of a parking job.

Ludlow follows the voice, limping into...

INT. WANDER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Wander sits at the kitchen table with two coffees.

LUDLOW
Put your hands on the table.

Wander obliges, nothing up his sleeve.

WANDER
You can sit down and still point that at
me. C'mon. Have a seat.

Ludlow's head swivels, watching his own back.

WANDER (CONT'D)
It's just you and me.

Ludlow sits. Wander sips his coffee.

WANDER (CONT'D)
You alright?

LUDLOW
Lemme see... I killed two cops. Four if
you include Ramirez and DeMille.
Diskant's dead. I'm all over the news.

WANDER
Clady?

LUDLOW
Trunk.

Ludlow puts Clady's badge on the table.

WANDER
I knew something was wrong with those
guys. I could smell it. But I didn't
want to believe that kind of shit was
going on in my own unit.

Ludlow looks at Wander. Amazed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDLOW

Are you fucking kidding me? You didn't know? You knew. All this is you. It's you, Jack. Own it. Fuckin' own it.

Wander realizes pretense won't work.

WANDER

We can fix this. You were never there. You were here sleeping on my couch after the party.

LUDLOW

Did you know they were cops?

WANDER

They were so deep undercover. I didn't know. Did you? Can a cop see a cop? I can. You too drunk to tell?

LUDLOW

You hit Washington?

WANDER

I gotta destiny to fulfill. Fuck him. Fuck Clady. Fuck Ramirez and fuck DeMille. How do we move on? You and me.

LUDLOW

No. I'm taking the fall. And you're falling with me.

Ludlow places DeMille's and Ramirez's badges on the table.

WANDER

Fuck that. What're those? Scalps? Who you trying to save? Huh? There you go with your self-destructive behavior. You wanna destroy yourself? Go ahead. Fuck up your life. Don't fuck up mine.

LUDLOW

I gotta say it? What happened is wrong.

WANDER

What happened? Who cares what happened? There you go revisiting the past. Let's dismiss that shit and take care of this shit. Reality's what you make it. How will ruining our lives solve anything? Tell me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LUDLOW

Some things can't be fixed, Jack.

WANDER

Bullshit. You wanna be a good cop? Then save yourself and start tomorrow. Focus on the living. Taking the fall's gonna cleanse your soul? Everyone's dead, like your wife. She's dead. Now you're treating some other girl bad. Move on. Time to move on.

LUDLOW

So nothing has meaning? Nothing means nothing? There's no right? No wrong?

WANDER

There's only what leads you to the rest of your life. You wanna turn yourself in? Go that way. I'm not with you. It takes courage to move on. It's easy to fall.

LUDLOW

Man... Are you the Devil?

WANDER

Maybe I am.

LUDLOW

You know what? It's not how it looks. It's what it is. There is right. There is wrong. And you are wrong.

WANDER

Fuck you.

LUDLOW

I know you killed that guy in Watts. But that girl. You kill her too? You tie her to the chair? Were you cutting her up? That man tried to stop you, didn't he? That's why you shot him. And I let you walk away. If I had taken you down then. We wouldn't be here now.

WANDER

There you go with the past again.

LUDLOW

And the Park Twins. How'd you know where they were? You didn't get the address from some outside agency. You had it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

You set the whole thing up. To make
Commander. Didn't you? You didn't want
those assholes dead because they were
evil. You wanted them dead because they
had shit on you.

WANDER

Look, none of this was personal. You
simply got in the way. I protected you
as long as I could.

LUDLOW

What did Washington give up to Biggs?

WANDER

Everything. It was us or him. Then you
wouldn't back off and it became us or
you. So what's your next move, Tom? Now
you gonna ruin us both?

LUDLOW

I'm saved, Jack. Even if I'm as fucked
as you are.

Ludlow sets a final badge on the table.

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

This one's Diskant's. And I'm gonna be
that better cop right now.

Ludlow pulls out his handcuffs. Shows Wander.

WANDER

I'm not going through it. Arrest.
Trial. Prison.

Wander taps his forehead.

WANDER (CONT'D)

Right here. Do what you do. Be a man
and go to work, Tom. Go to work.

Ludlow can't, won't. Wander smiles.

WANDER (CONT'D)

I'm going to stand up and get my gun off
that shelf. You're gonna kill me. Or
I'm gonna kill you. I take down a rogue
cop in self defense. Or you make me a
hero like the four other officers you
murdered tonight. Either way I win.

Ludlow tosses aside his gun and charges Wander...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BOOM! They collide like two rams, locking and grappling. *
SOUND DROPS OUT, except for their BREATHING. They SNORT and
GASP as each lands CRUSHING BLOWS...

There's absolutely nothing pretty about it. This is what it
takes to be Ludlow. What nobody wants to know...

Ludlow lands ONE MORE BLOW than his old friend, overpowering
him. He kicks out his knee. Drops him to the floor. Flips
Wander over, and cuffs him...

WANDER (CONT'D) *

No! No! No!

Ludlow catches his breath. Looking at his vanquished boss. *

WANDER (CONT'D) *

It was me by the way. Karen came to me. *
Saying you hit her. Saying she wanted to *
divorce you. You were working as usual. *
We had some drinks. And, uh. We made *
love. When I was driving her to her car, *
she had a seizure. So I took her to the *
hospital and dropped her off. *

(finally) *

I was fucking your wife, Tom. *

Ludlow is utterly devastated by that. He crosses to his gun *
and picks it up. Aims at Wander's head... *

Ludlow tightens his finger on the trigger...

ON WANDER -- Waiting for the end with a smile. This is how *
he wins. *

ON LUDLOW -- He fires... *

BAM-BAM-BAM! Muzzleflash and gunsmoke. Ludlow stands there. *
Looking down at Wander... *

Who is still very much alive. Ludlow holsters his gun and *
slides down the cabinets to sit by Wander. Ludlow LAUGHS to *
himself. At this strange personal victory. *

LUDLOW *

Why Jack? All this carnage. For what? *
What were you protecting? *

WANDER *

It started back in the day in Seventy *
Seventh. I stole a hundred dollars to *
get better body armor. Then the lawsuits *
started. *

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

WANDER (CONT'D)

Cops were getting subpoenaed for doing
 their job. They went after Silky and
 took his house. So we started the cookie
 jar. To protect ourselves. Dropped
 in whore money. Dope money. The suits
 got bigger kept feeding the kitty. We
 preyed on criminals. Sold protection.
 Robbed dealers. Shook down gangbangers.
 We'd pay out here and there. No one's
 buying yachts or summer homes. Just
 braces for their kids, books for college.
 Alimony. Silky's retirement. Just cops
 taking care of cops, a natural correction
 to a flawed system. Tom, if teachers and
 firefighters could do it, they would too.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

Ludlow suddenly looks at Wander intently...

*

LUDLOW

*

Where is it? Tell me where.

WANDER

What?

BAM! Ludlow shoots Wander in the ankle.

*

LUDLOW

You know what. Where is it?

Wander's eyes involuntarily flit to a nearby wall. Ludlow
 stands and crosses to it -- Covered with photos of Wander and
 VIPs, plaques and awards. Ludlow brushes the wall clean,
 frames CRASH to the floor. He grabs a heavy floor lamp and
 swings it into the plaster...

*
*
*

THUD! He swings again and again. Then peels away the
 drywall with his bare hands. Floor to ceiling. When he's
 done Ludlow backs up...

WHAT LUDLOW SEES

Packed between the studs are bricks of cash. The entire wall
 is filled with money. At least a couple million.

SCENE

Ludlow stares in amazement at this discovery. As gypsum dust
 floats through the dawn's first rays. He turns to look at
 Wander. His shame is clear. Nothing needs to be said.

*
*

EXT. WANDER'S HOUSE - DAWN

The sun chases away the darkness. Biggs leans patiently against DeMille's sedan. He watches Ludlow hobble out of Wander's house...

BIGGS

Got the keys? Someone in the trunk I'd like to talk to?

Ludlow tosses him the keys. Points at the house.

LUDLOW

King Wander's in there. Alive.

BIGGS

Rough night?

Ludlow just shrugs.

LUDLOW

First on scene?

BIGGS

Came as soon as you called. I was praying you'd be the one walking out.

LUDLOW

Beautiful plan, Captain. Just sit back and let us all kill each other.

BIGGS

There was no plan. Once your eyes opened there was no other outcome.

LUDLOW

You know Washington's killers were cops?

BIGGS

Wander kept secrets even from me.

LUDLOW

Wander. This is his...

Ludlow tosses Wander's badge on the hood. Then takes his badge from around his neck and offers it to Biggs...

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

And this is mine.

Biggs looks at Ludlow's badge. At Ludlow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BIGGS

Keep it. I like sleeping safe and sound
in my soft little bed.

Ludlow holding his badge. Torn. Pain versus duty. Duty
wins and Ludlow hangs it back around his neck. SIRENS
approach. TWO BLACK AND WHITES pull up, Biggs holds up his
badge, shielding Ludlow...

EXT. PARKER CENTER - DAY

Bedlam. COPS and REPORTERS. News vans. A line of RIOT COPS
and COPS on horses holds back the crowd of ONLOOKERS.

Biggs sedan pulls up escorted by black and whites. Burly IAD
DETECTIVES open the passenger door for Ludlow...

Cameras FLASH. Reporters surge forward. Ludlow is utterly
bewildered...

Biggs helps Ludlow through the crowd. Then...

GRACE

Tom! Tom!

CAMERA FINDS

Grace in her work scrubs, fighting through the surge of
Onlookers. Riot Cops hold her back...

Ludlow SEES her, breaks away from the IAD Detectives...

LUDLOW

Grace!

Ludlow shoves aside the Riot Cops...

LUDLOW (CONT'D)

Let her through!

He embraces Grace and holds on for dear life. Everything
drops away. Now it's just them. Together. Ludlow lets out
a long sigh. Finally safe.

FADE OUT:

THE END