

SUSPECT ZERO

Screenplay by

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1998 Draft

"SUSPECT ZERO"

CREDITS

Intercut male faces from all around America: mostly white, mostly 20-35. These are the killers in our midst.

Varying film stocks and formats: video, telephoto, digitized -
- some anecdotal, some subliminal.

Over the images a montage of speech synthesized voices from Internet chat rooms: "Got a nice package," "...the look in her eyes -- the wild look that says please, I'll do anything," "Friday is my day," "item's fingernails had cyanotic hue," "nylon sports pants," "screaming like a little piggie."

END CREDITS

EXT. NUEVO AMERICAN DINER MAGIC HOUR

A gas station/diner combo on a deserted stretch of US 54. Bluish fluorescents over the pumps contrast with incandescent light from within the diner interior. Cars and pickups with Texas and New Mexico plates and bumper stickers ("I'm Texican and Proud of It") parked outside.

CUT TO:

INT. NUEVO AMERICAN MAGIC HOUR

HAROLD SPECK, 35, a fleshy man in a tired brown suit, sits in an orange vinyl booth sipping coffee, poking at a piece of coffee cake. A large salesman's case rests on the seat beside him.

Harold's POV: JANITA, a thirties waitress stands by the cash register, looks at her watch, looks at the clock (7:30), looks back at her watch. An older couple sits in a booth away from Speck; a solo trucker at the counter motions to Janita. She refills his coffee.

A poster, "Rattlesnakes of the Southwest," hangs beside community notices and "For Sale" advertisements.

A slouching man, 45-55, wearing soiled Sears work clothes and an orange hard hat, slips into the seat across from Speck. At the moment his name is unknown to us; later we will discover he is RICHARD LOW.

Harold looks up, startled:

HAROLD

Jesus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOW

Hi. What's in the case?

Speck glances around; there are plenty of open tables.

HAROLD

You... surprised me.

LOW

Sorry. I've seen you in here.
Always lugging that case around.

(Harold nods)

Whatja sell?

HAROLD

Ah... restaurant supplies. I didn't
get your name.

LOW

You must travel a lot, huh?

HAROLD

Yeah.

LOW

Whole country or just hereabouts?

HAROLD

I don't mean to be rude, but...

LOW

Just gettin' a jolt of java before
headin' on home?

(beat)

How does your wife feel about it?

HAROLD

What?

LOW

About your being away all the time.
Must get lonely.

HAROLD

Look...

LOW

You must get lonely. You ever think
about, you know...

(winks)

HAROLD

Excuse me?

LOW

You know, you ever think about
other women?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Talking, Low reaches into his right pocket, pulls out 3x5 photographs, places them on the table. Low's fingertips have a waxy sheen.

HAROLD

What are you...?

LOW

Fucking. I'm talking about fucking,
Harold. You ever think of fucking
other women?

Speck, fixed on the photos of naked women, glances up at the sound of his name: how did he know that?

HAROLD

Look, mister...

LOW

Take a look, Harold. Tell me if you
see anything you want. You do like
to look, don't you?

Low points to a particularly explicit photo, all the while reaching with his other hand into his left pocket.

LOW (CONT'D)

You like? If not, I've got these.

Low places a second collection of snapshots on the table. The top picture, difficult to make out, shows something far more graphic than the others. Speck goes white:

HAROLD

My God.

LOW

Not bad, huh?

HAROLD

(eyes on photos)

You're a... you're sick.

LOW

What's wrong with me?

Low reaches for Speck's hand. Harold, pulling his arm back, knocks over his coffee. Low quickly collects the pictures (one falls to the seat), gets up, walks out. Harold, turning his head, spots Janita.

She steps over, her eyes asking: "What's going on?"

HAROLD

(about coffee)

Sorry.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HAROLD (CONT'D)
(looks back)
Could I have the check?

CUT TO:

EXT. NUEVO AMERICAN DINER MAGIC HOUR

Speck places his sales case into the front seat of a 1996 Riviera, slides in beside, starts the car and drives off.

CUT TO:

INT. HAROLD'S CAR NIGHT

Speck, back on the highway, breathes a sigh of relief. Headlights hit a sign in the black landscape: "Texas Stateline Miles."

Harold, reaching for the radio dial, looks into the rear-view mirror:

HAROLD
OhmyGod...

In the mirror: Richard Low, hard hat exchanged for a full head of graying hair, sits up in the back seat.

Harold involuntarily swerves the wheel; Low, reaching across Speck, steadies the car. He wears latex gloves.

LOW
Calm down, Harold.
(Harold catches breath)
Okay, here's what we're going to do, Harold: there's a pull off up ahead, we're going to stop there.

HAROLD
Oh God, mister, please leave me alone.

LOW
(glancing out window)
You're going to miss it. Pay attention.

HAROLD
What do you want from me?

Low reaches forward, grasps Harold's right eyelid between his thumb and forefinger.

LOW
How'd you like it if I tore off your eyelid, Harold?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOW (CONT'D)
(tugs at eyelid: Harold
winces)
You can't blink, you gotta keep
your eyes open all the time. You
know how painful that is?
(beat)
Here's the rest stop. Pull over.

Harold, panic-stricken, obeys.

CUT TO:

EXT. TURN-AROUND NIGHT

The "rest stop" is little more than an extended shoulder.
Speck pulls the Riviera to a stop, cuts the engine; the
headlights go dark.

CUT TO:

INT. HAROLD'S CAR NIGHT

Harold's hand is on the headlight switch when he feels a
nylon cord tighten around his neck. He tugs at it; Low chokes
tighter.

LOW
Relax, Harold.

Speck does; Low loosens the garrote.

LOW (CONT'D)
I've been looking for you.

HAROLD
Why me? What do you want from me!?

Low tightens the noose, leans into Harold's ear, whispers:

LOW
Murman.

Speck's eyes widen as he gasps for air.

CUT TO:

EXT. FEDERAL BLDG/EL PASO DAY

A seven-story red-brick and glass building on East San
Antonio Avenue, home of the FBI Field Office.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI OFFICE DAY

The seventh floor elevator opens directly onto a large bullpen. The FBI seal is featured prominently on a wall leading to private offices.

THOMAS MACKELWAY, 28, sports jacket and tie, works at a computer terminal in one of a half-dozen cubicles. The Bureau is a button-down world, even in sun-drenched downtown El Paso, a half mile from Mexico.

The elevator opens: CHUCK SALINAS, 40, the Supervisory Agent in Charge, enters, carry-on bag over his shoulder. Seated agents look up, stop what they're doing. AGENT JOHN DUNCAN steps over:

DUNCAN

Welcome back, sir. How was the vacation?

SALINAS

Takes four days to chill, then its time to come back.

(looking around, spots Mack)

Is that...?

DUNCAN

Yeah.

Mack stands as Salinas approaches. His voice and demeanor reflect an East Coast upbringing:

MACKELWAY

Good morning, sir. Agent Salinas, sir.

SALINAS

So you're the new meat?

MACKELWAY

Yes, sir.

SALINAS

What did you do to end up here?

MACKELWAY

I believe it's in my file, sir.

SALINAS

(to Duncan)

Johnny, get this man's file. Mackelway, right?

MACKELWAY

Thomas Mackelway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SALINAS

Hot enough for you, Agent Mackelway? Hell's doorknob. What they got you doing?

MACKELWAY

Updating the condition of all Bureau- owned vehicles in the southwest sector, sir.

SALINAS

Sounds like fun.

Duncan hands him a manila file; Salinas opens it.

SALINAS (CONT'D)

"Computer Investigation and Infrastructure Assessment Center." Quantico out of MIT -- you're a techie?

(Mack nods)

Okay, you screwed up once. So did half the guys here. That's why they're here.

MACKELWAY

I screwed up twice, sir.

SALINAS

I see that. Washington to Philadelphia to here. Philly's a nice station. How many agents?

MACKELWAY

Four hundred and sixty, sir.

SALINAS

"Attitude Adjustment Issues" -- what the fuck is that supposed to mean?

MACKELWAY

I wished to be reinstated at Computer Crimes. I was undiplomatic in my request.

SALINAS

(reading)

This is a first. You criticized the Deputy Director to his face and you still have a badge? You must have some one-of-a-kind skills.

(Mackelway doesn't answer)

Why don't you just quit? I mean, you're not going to get promoted, not wearing this jacket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MACKELWAY

I like working for the Bureau, sir.
I like catching bad guys. It's all
I care about.

SALINAS

Jesus, just what I need, another
blue flamer.

(turns to leave)

Johnny, get this boy some sun
screen.

Salinas heads for his office. Mackelway, deflated, plops down
in his chair.

CUT TO:

INT. MACK'S CUBICLE DAY

TIMECUT: a list of FBI 4-wheel Arizona plate vehicles scrolls
on the screen.

Mackelway, bored, bored, bored, sips cold coffee, stretches
his shoulders, takes notes. His jacket is hung over his
chair, his sleeves rolled up. He glances at his watch.

Salinas enters the bullpen area, calls to Duncan:

SALINAS

Agent Duncan, there's an interstate
issue up on 54, run out there.

DUNCAN

I'm babysitting the DEA guys this
afternoon, Casio and I. You said
that was top priority.

Salinas nods, looks around. He spots Mack's eager eyes. Mack,
unrolling his sleeves, buttons his cuffs.

SALINAS

(calls)

Agent Mackelway, you want to get
off your ass and do something for a
change?

MACKELWAY

(stands)

Yes, sir.

SALINAS

(walks over)

Got a vehicle?

(Mack nods)

Head north on 54. When you get to
New Mexico you've gone too far.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mack takes his gun and shoulder holster out of a drawer as Salinas hands him a slip of paper.

SALINAS (CONT'D)
And Mackelway, when you're dealing
with the locals, talk slow.

CUT TO:

EXT. US 54 AFTERNOON

Mackelway drives his Bureau-issue sedan past stretches of sand and mobile homes. He fiddles with the radio dial, goes from one Spanish language station to a second, turns it off.

How did he end up here?

CUT TO:

EXT. TURN-AROUND AFTERNOON

The same "rest stop" as earlier, except now filled with Highway Patrol and Police cars from Texas and New Mexico.

Mack, flashing his FBI ID, walks to a cluster of cops. HARRY DYLAN, 50, wearing cowboy boots and hat, steps over:

DYLAN
Agent Mackelway? Salinas said he
was sending someone new. Harry
Dylan.
(they shake)
This is my county. This way...

They approach a tow truck backed up to an arroyo, passing, as they go, a sign reading "Welcome to New Mexico."

MACKELWAY
You run the plates?

DYLAN
Fella's name is Harold Speck,
travelin' man out of Roswell.

MACKELWAY
Excuse me, a salesman gets done in
his car and you call the FBI?

DYLAN
Well, the victim was killed at the
turn-around over there, then his
car was pushed over here...
(points to sign)
...right across the state line.
That makes it Federal.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DYLAN (CONT'D)

This is Officer Wallace, he's out
of Alamogordo.

Mack shakes hands with New Mexico State Trooper WALLACE, walks past the tow truck, looks into the steep ravine where Speck's Riviera rests balanced precariously on its front bumper. GRANGER, a New Mexico cop, sipping coffee from a take-out cup, steps onto the tire tracks. Mack motions him away; Granger doesn't budge.

MACKELWAY

Am I talking to myself? This is a
crime scene.

Granger looks down, steps back.

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Trooper Wallace turns to JUMBO, the heavy-set tow-truck operator:

WALLACE

All right, Jumbo, Feds are here.

The operator activates the winch.

MACKELWAY

Hold it, hold it!

Jumbo cuts off the winch. Mack removes his jacket, loosens his tie:

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)

I'd better have a look.

Dylan turns to his fellow cops:

DYLAN

Sure. I wouldn't trust those
rednecks either.

They snicker as Mackelway slips down the ravine.

SPECK'S CAR: in the bottom of the ravine, Mack, putting on latex gloves, climbs through the passenger window. He braces his foot against the dash, the force of which unbalances the car: it suddenly SLIPS.

Mack tumbles forward, BANGING the rear view mirror, CUTTING his forehead. Harold's body pitches forward against the steering wheel: the horn lets out a continuous BLEAT.

AT THE TOW TRUCK: Jumbo, dropping his coffee, grabs for the winch controls:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JUMBO

Shit!

Sheriff Dylan looks over the side:

DYLAN

You okay?

INSIDE SPECK'S CAR: Mackelway uprights himself, wipes blood from his forehead.

MACKELWAY

Yeah, I'm --

The horn blots out his voice. Mackelway would have stopped speaking in any case -- something has caught his attention. He gingerly pulls back Harold's head.

Dried blood streaks from Speck's eye -- his eyelids have been TORN OFF. His neck is striated by a black-and-blue welt.

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)

Jesus.

Mack takes a deep breath, takes a quick look around. He spots pocket change and a slip of paper by Harold's feet. Reaching down, Mack retrieves it: it's a receipt from the Nuevo American Diner.

CUT TO:

EXT. TURN-AROUND LATE DAY

TIMECUT: Mackelway leans against the tow truck. Speck's Riviera rests upright on level ground.

Wallace smacks an instant ice pack against the side of the truck, hands it to Mackelway.

JUMBO

Sorry about that. It's an old truck.

Mackelway presses the ice pack to his swelling forehead:

MACKELWAY

Where's the Nuevo American Diner?

DYLAN

Ten miles back on the Texas side.

WALLACE

I'd go to Pulski's. She makes this fabulous fried chicken.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACKELWAY

Speck had a coffee there last
night. 7:40.

(to Dylan)

This is no robbery.

Mackelway takes the keys from the Riviera's ignition, walks
around the trunk, unlocks it.

GRANGER

(to Wallace)

What's he doing?

Mack pops the trunk, looks inside. Dylan, Wallace, Granger
and Jumbo join him. Mack notices white powder amid dark
stains. He judges the texture of the powder with a ball-point
pen.

Granger wets his finger, touches the white powder, puts his
finger to his lips.

MACKELWAY

(grabs Granger's arm)

Hey!

GRANGER

I was going to see if...

MACKELWAY

Don't put nothing in your mouth.
That's just for TV shows. It could
be poison for all you know.

GRANGER

(cowed)

It ain't cocaine.

MACKELWAY

I know. It's lime.

DYLAN

Lime?

GRANGER

What are those stains?

MACKELWAY

You say Speck lived in Roswell?

Dylan nods, Mack turns to Wallace:

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)

You got a judge on the hook? We'll
need a search warrant pronto.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WALLACE
(nods)
In the morning.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPECK HOUSE DAY

Title card: "Roswell, New Mexico." A suburban ranch-style home: all seems normal, even banal, until the front door opens --

And TWO EMS WORKERS wearing facemasks emerge carrying a green body bag. They navigate the front steps, step past a Huffy bike with training wheels, place the body bag next to four others on the front lawn.

Hudspeth County Police and EMS vehicles ring the house. Onlookers and press are ringed off by a yellow crime scene cordon.

A Honda Civic turns onto the street, glides past neighbors on porches, police cars, drives up to the yellow tape.

A fortiesish WOMAN gets out of the front seat lugging a Wal-Mart bag topped off with light bulbs. She walks toward the house as though, with all this commotion, she's not even sure it's hers.

Two CHILDREN, eight and four, trail behind her. They can tell something is wrong -- a feeling exacerbated when the Woman DROPS HER BAG, bulbs popping against the sidewalk, and walks ever quicker to the front door.

She RUNS till she sees the body bags, slows, connections filling her mind: the extra miles on the car, the strange women's clothing, that strange smell downstairs...

WOMAN
Harold! Haarroolldd!

Trooper Wallace, approaching, motions to two cops who swoop in, GRAB the kids, now screaming too, as the Woman runs inside.

CUT TO:

INT. SPECK HOUSE DAY

The Woman, screaming all the while, runs past police and EMS personnel, stopping at the cellar steps, looking down at the shadowy figures amid work lights and seeing Harold's computer bench, seeing partially uncovered graves, SEEING limed desiccated bodies.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Something, some word gurgles in her throat, and then she vomits, her stomach buckling. Tom Mackelway, RUSHING OVER, grabs her.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPECK HOUSE DAY

Later. The last of the body bags is loaded into the EMS vehicle. Mack stands watching with Agent Duncan and Trooper Wallace. They turn as an unmarked government car is let through the police cordon. Salinas cuts the engine, exits, walks over to them:

SALINAS
Agents Duncan, Mackelway.
(they nod)
Anything new?

DUNCAN
Just mopping up. Nine bodies in all.

SALINAS
(looks at news crews)
Anybody talk to the press?

DUNCAN
No, sir.

SALINAS
(to Mack)
The diner?

MACKELWAY
(checks watch)
Headed there now. The same shift will be on at noon.

SALINAS
This case has sent bells and alarms ringing all the way to Washington. Your old boss is coming out.

MACKELWAY
Koessler?

SALINAS
The same.

A muffled BOOM and YELP comes from inside the house.

SALINAS (CONT'D)
Wha -- ?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They head over. An INJURED AGENT wearing blue "FBI" jacket emerges holding a bloodied hand. The press reacts as a medic rushes over to him.

SALINAS (CONT'D)

What happened?

INJURED AGENT

The computer in the basement. It musta been booby-trapped. I was unplugging it, the hard drive exploded.

The medic takes the Injured Agent's hand.

CUT TO:

INT. NUEVO AMERICAN DINER AFTERNOON

Mack and Dylan speak with Janita. A black mother and hyperactive kids sit in the booth the older couple occupied the night before.

JANITA

Harold, he was a regular. Came in late nights. Didn't talk much. Something happen to him?

DYLAN

Got himself killed, Jan.

JANITA

Sweet Jesus on the Cross.

MACKELWAY

The man who was with him, he was a construction worker?

JANITA

Yes.

MACKELWAY

What did he look like?

JANITA

I didn't wait on him. Fifty or so, white, regular build, needed a shave -- that's all I remember.

MACKELWAY

How did you know he was a construction worker?

JANITA

He had an orange hat on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dylan chuckles.

MACKELWAY

I hope that wasn't a joke because I can assure you, from personal experience, the FBI does not have a sense of humor.

DYLAN

That's right, Jan.

Mack smiles, gestures to a booth:

MACKELWAY

He was sitting here?

JANITA

It's been wiped down a hundred times since then.

Mack walks over to the booth, crouches, runs his ball-point along the floor.

JANITA (CONT'D)

There was a car in the lot when we closed. Gone today.

MACKELWAY

What kind?

JANITA

An old junker. Like a reservation car. Blue, side door with brown, you know, primer paint. New Mexico plates. A Ford or ah, yeah, a Ford.

MACKELWAY

(to Dylan)

Put a BOLO out on that.

Mack reaches out, grabs the orange vinyl booth cushion, yanks it out.

Looking under the seat, Mackelway finds a predictable assortment of dustballs, coins, paper napkins, dead roaches -- and the snapshot.

JANITA

Yeah, I remember. He had some pictures.

Mack turns the photo over: it shows, splayed on a concrete floor, a nude female TORSO, minus head, hands and feet -- breasts excised.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JANITA (CONT'D)

My God!

CUT TO:

EXT. DINER AFTERNOON

Mack and Sheriff Dylan walk to their cars.

DYLAN

Nine bodies in Roswell, now this --
it's getting a little hairy, huh?

MACKELWAY

I'd appreciate it if you kept this
to yourself.

DYLAN

I know how the Feds like to sit on
information. I got something in the
car to show you.

They step over to Dylan's police car. Dylan removes a folder,
hands it to Mack. It's a Missing Persons Report: a photo of
KAREN SUMPTER, 15, pretty young girl wearing a bright red T-
shirt with the South Park slogan, "Oh My God, They Killed
Kenny!"

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Her name is Karen Sumpter, from
near Dell City. Just disappeared a
couple weeks back. Vanished.

MACKELWAY

You're thinking...?

DYLAN

Who knows.

MACKELWAY

This isn't in our database?

DYLAN

I just assumed she ran away.
Happens a lot around here. Look
around. This place is an invitation
to run away.

CUT TO:

INT. EL PASO MORGUE EVENING

Harold Speck and his victims have transformed the autopsy
examination room into a ghoulish assembly line. M.E.
personnel work on the mixed-race female victims;

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

some bodies retain their features, some don't. The leg of a foreground victim has been severed at the ankle; a single stem rose tattoo cut in half.

In the distance Salinas and Mackelway stand with GEORGE EAGLEFOOT, the Native American Medical Examiner. He motions to the naked body of Harold Speck.

EAGLEFOOT

Ligature strangulation, just like his victims. A cord, nylon, you can tell by the indentation signature -- again, like his victims.

(points to Speck's penis)

Look at that little thing and look at all the trouble it got him in. Should have cut it off.

SALINAS

I'm not in the mood for Native American wisdom.

EAGLEFOOT

We had to bring staff in from the whole county to handle this.

SALINAS

I appreciate it, doctor. You know how it is, press screaming for answers, Washington's all over me.

(to Mack)

Ever handle a serial case?

MACKELWAY

No.

SALINAS

Hope you never do. At first it feels like a sauna, by the time you hit victim four it's a fucking burning shirt factory.

Eaglefoot looks up at the sound of an opening door. Deputy Director DAVID KOESSLER, 50, and JAIME KULOK, 26, enter exuding eau de FBI.

KOESSLER

Chuck, hello.

(shake hands)

This is Agent Kulok. She has a background in medical forensics.

KULOK

(off Eaglefoot's reaction)

Just an observer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EAGLEFOOT

Be my guest, Agent Kulok, scrub suits are in the back.

SALINAS

This is Agent Mackelway.

Mack's attempt to greet Koessler is cut short:

KOESSLER

I know who he is.

(to Kulok)

That's the guy who won't take "fuck you" for an answer.

(to Eaglefoot)

This Speck?

(Eaglefoot grunts)

What we got?

Mack sneaks a second look at Kulok: she's the sort that triggers a second look.

SALINAS

Speck's the killer all right. We got box loads of evidence. Did 'em all the same way: torture, strangulation. Prostitutes. I don't think we'll be able to write off any outstandings on him -- this is probably the full body count.

KOESSLER

What about his killer?

SALINAS

Nada. Vague description, that's all. Fine-tooth-combed Speck's car, the diner: no fingerprints, no trace evidence.

KOESSLER

What's with the eyelids?

EAGLEFOOT

Ripped off. By hand, my guess. Perimortal: victim was alive at the time, there's blood on his throat.

SALINAS

That's the thing. Don't know if it connects, but Harold here had a thing about eyes. Two of the victims had their eyes gouged out, another punctured. Took polaroids after.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KOESSLER

You have the photo from the diner?

SALINAS

At the field office.

KOESSLER

Let's take a look at it.

(to Kulok)

Drop off my stuff at the hotel
after you're done here.

Koessler walks off with Salinas, shooting a look back at
Mackelway as he goes.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT MACK'S CAR DAY

Mackelway drives Agent Kulok through the downtown area. Her
and Koessler's carry-on bags flopped in back.

KULOK

Thanks for the ride.

MACKELWAY

They sort of got me on shit detail,
no offense.

KULOK

None taken.

MACKELWAY

Maybe I shouldn't put it that way.
I'm on my best behavior. I've got
to watch what I say.

KULOK

You used to be in the Behavioral
Science Unit, right?

MACKELWAY

(nods)

The Academy, then CIIAC.

KULOK

I read your white paper. It's sort
of like the Bible for what they're
trying to do in Computer Crime.

MACKELWAY

How long have you been downtown?

KULOK

Five months. I love it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Beat.

MACKELWAY

You work with Koessler?

KULOK

Not especially.

MACKELWAY

Why did he come out here? What's going on?

KULOK

Beats me. He just asked me to come along, double-check the forensics.

(beat)

What did you do to piss him off?

He looks at Jaime, smiles -- better block that thought, he thinks. So does she.

KULOK (CONT'D)

This is a sexy case.

MACKELWAY

Yeah, you know the vic's car, he was killed this side of the state line, the car then pushed across the border. This by an Unknown Subject, presumably the killer, who left no fucking evidence except the snapshot, which may or may not have been accidental.

KULOK

Doesn't fit.

MACKELWAY

This is no random killing, no one shot deal. The UNSUB has killed before; he's good at it. So what do we have?

(beat)

We have someone who has killed before who kills someone who kills: a serial killer of a serial killer - and who wants the FBI to know he exists.

KULOK

And who kills in the manner of his victim.

MACKELWAY

That information's being withheld from the media.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KULOK
(thinks)
A very sexy case.

CUT TO:

INT. MACK'S ROOM NIGHT

Mackelway, wearing jeans and a T-shirt, paces the spare condo. Unopened Bekins boxes stacked against a wall. The furnishings are uniformly rental, right down to the framed print of Van Gogh's Sunflowers. Lou Reed plays on a newly unpacked stereo.

He has something on his mind, a thought keeps running around his head. He looks out the window, looks over to the kitchen table where his laptop sits open, resumes pacing.

On the computer screen: "Chat Room" folder icons listed by time and date. Mack steps over, double clicks an icon: a conversation from eight months before appears on the screen. The chat room correspondents have screennames like "Troll," "MyDick," "Zin," "Murman."

Mack turns off the stereo, goes to the phone and dials. A HOTEL OPERATOR answers:

OPERATOR (O.S.)
Marriott El Paso.

MACKELWAY
David Koessler, please.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
Just a moment.

Mack paces, phone in hand.

OPERATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
There's a Do Not Disturb on that line. Would you like voice mail?

MACKELWAY
Yes, please.

Mack waits for the tone, leave message:

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)
Deputy Director Koessler, this is Thomas Mackelway. I'm sorry to bother you like this, I must speak with you. I realize you may not be comfortable with this, but it's extremely important. I've become aware of something and I must speak to you about it.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)
When you see the red light on your
phone, please call.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOMEWHERE NIGHT

Ominous music from previous scene plays over dark suburban street.

A FIFTEEN YEAR-OLD GIRL, wearing a lacrosse shirt, rides her bike around a corner, yellow headphones on her ears. She bobs her head to an unheard beat.

Suddenly, without warning, her body is GRABBED in motion by a dark figure (SUSPECT ZERO) wearing navy-colored vinyl. He CONKS her on the head before she can scream.

CUT TO:

EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING DAY

A federal deputy stands watch -- a consequence of the Oklahoma City bombing.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI OFFICES DAY

Mackelway, sports jacket and tie, exits the elevator carrying his briefcase. He steps past the bullpen, walk toward Salinas' office. Through the glass door he can see Salinas inside speaking with Koessler and Kulok.

Their conversation can be faintly heard:

KOESSLER
We didn't know Speck was a serial,
the police didn't know, his wife
didn't know -- so how did the
killer know?

KULOK
Maybe cause he's smart.

KOESSLER
Smarter than us.

Mack hesitates, goes back to his cubicle, places his briefcase on the desktop. He sits, activates his computer screen. He cannot get the image of Koessler about to go to the airport out of his mind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He stands, determined, strides to Salinas' office. Steeling himself, he twists the knob, opens the door --

CUT TO:

INT. SALINAS' OFFICE DAY

Koessler, Salinas and Kulok turn, stare as Mack enters. This is a big no-no, a breach of protocol, not to mention etiquette:

MACKELWAY

(eyes going to Koessler)

Look, sorry. Don't say a word.

(gathers breath)

I know this is improper. I've been trying to speak with Deputy Director Koessler. I left a message. I must speak with you before you go back to Washington.

KOESSLER

This better be important.

SALINAS

(to Mack)

Agent, return to your station.

Kulok looks at Mack, wishing somehow this wasn't happening.

MACKELWAY

I think I talked to him.

KOESSLER

Who?

MACKELWAY

Speck. Harold Speck.

KOESSLER

From the grave?

MACKELWAY

MyDick.

SALINAS

"MyDick?"

MACKELWAY

MyDick. As in my dick. That was his screen name.

SALINAS

I don't...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACKELWAY

Eight, nine months ago. When I was at Computer Crime. I got into a chat room with someone named MyDick. I'd talked to him before. Everything I saw yesterday, everything in the autopsies, it's identical. The forensics are dead on. MyDick's fantasies involved a hog-tie rig, nylon cord, torture with pliers, rip the nipples -- when the "item" screams, she chokes. He had a thing about eyes, always the eyes -- stab their eyes. It's the same guy. Speck was MyDick.

SALINAS

Speck is dead.

MACKELWAY

I talked to him.

KOESSLER

I'll relay this to CIIAC.

MACKELWAY

They don't know how to crack these secret chat rooms --

KOESSLER

I might point out, Agent Mackelway, the reason we haven't been able to crack those rooms is that you refused to share that information with us -- which is also why you were reassigned.

MACKELWAY

I had gotten their trust. We were sharing fantasies. I couldn't risk it.

KOESSLER

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is not based on personal preference. We share information.

MACKELWAY

Let some by-the-book J. Edgar Agents go into the chat room, spook these guys with stupid questions, blow my cover? -- no way.

KOESSLER

You refused to comply with a direct order.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MACKELWAY

I was lucky to find, much less crack, the address code -- no way to be sure I could have done it again.

KOESSLER

Its called insubordination.

MACKELWAY

Then why do I still have a badge?

Koessler doesn't answer that question; Mack was too valuable to be dismissed -- Koessler decided instead to teach him a lesson, hoped he would come around.

KOESSLER

I appreciate the information, Agent Mackelway -- but if you think this is going to get you back to Computer Crime, dream on.

(to Salinas)

Now, where were we?

Mack steps back. He has been dismissed.

CUT TO:

INT. MACK'S CUBICLE DAY

LATER. Mackelway, jacket off, absent-mindedly stares at his computer screen. He looks up, sees Koessler and Kulok leaving with carry-on bags. Jaime shrugs, shoots Mack a sympathetic look as if to say: I wish I could have been of some help.

Mack's phone extension rings; he answers:

MACKELWAY

Agent Mackelway.

DYLAN (O.S.)

Mack, this is Sheriff Dylan.

MACKELWAY

Oh Jesus, Sheriff, I am sorry. I meant to call you -- I got distracted -- the Sumpter girl was not one of Speck's victims. That's the good news.

DYLAN (O.S.)

What's the bad news?

MACKELWAY

You tell me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DYLAN (O.S.)

No bad news. You know the Be On the LookOut you asked me to send on the diner car -- we got a hit on it. A little town on the border, Socorro. We got it staked out -- you interested?

MACKELWAY

I'm on my way.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOCORRO DAIRY QUEEN LATE DAY

Mackelway's sedan pulls up beside Dylan's Sheriff vehicle. The Dairy Queen being the town's most thriving enterprise. In the distance, makeshift housing and dump zones.

Mack gets out, walks over to Dylan.

MACKELWAY

(sits)

Hey, Sheriff.

DYLAN

Down the road a piece is the Golden Sunset, the no-tell motel, Socorro's contribution to international relations. The car's just sitting there, no activity. I've had a couple Hispanic officers casing it all day. Want to take a look?

MACKELWAY

What does the Manager say?

DYLAN

I sent a female in. The room in question was rented by an Anglo, cash; since then, nothing -- no activity, no phone response.

MACKELWAY

Let's take a look.

CUT TO:

EXT. GOLDEN SUNSET LATE DAY

The suspect vehicle sits outside Room 8: 1985 blue Ford, brown primer door, New Mexico plates. One other vehicle, a pickup, parked several spaces away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dylan parks a discreet distance from the motel. Mack turns to the Sheriff:

MACKELWAY
(removing tie)
I'm going to take a little walk.

Mack tosses his jacket on the seat as he heads toward the Golden Sunset. He stops at the soda machine, looks around, continues. His trained eyes spot Dylan's undercover Hispanics -- one "sleeping" across the way, another "repairing" a flat tire.

Mackelway, feigning nonchalance, walks past the parked Ford. He looks inside: the motel room key lies on the front seat.

LONG LENS POV: someone is watching Mack as he looks inside the parked Ford.

CUT TO:

EXT. DAIRY QUEEN EVENING

Mack rejoins Dylan:

MACKELWAY
The room key's in the car. On the seat.

DYLAN
And it's getting dark. I'm not going to run this into the night.
(clicks walkie)
Eddie, we're walking in. Everything covered?

EDDIE (O.S.)
No problemo.

CUT TO:

EXT. GOLDEN SUNSET DUSK

Dylan and Mack, wearing latex gloves, approach the door. Dylan's Hispanic undercover cops watch their backs. Dylan, holding his pistol to his side, opens door #8 with a master key. Music leads the way: he and Mack enter.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM DUSK

They step inside; the room is pristine. Nothing has been used, nothing touched -- the aroma of disinfectant hangs in the air.

Dylan edges to the bathroom, looks inside. He keys his walkie:

DYLAN

Show's over, boys. Nobody home.

MACKELWAY

Tape it off, we'll want to fine-tooth- comb it. My guess is that the UNSUB is having us on. He checks in, pays, picks up the key, but never walks inside. Tell me if I'm wrong.

DYLAN

(looks around)

Got a sister like this, what they call it, anal? That's her.

LONG LENS POV THROUGH WINDOW: Mack answers Dylan.

CUT TO:

EXT. GOLDEN SUNSET NIGHT

Mack, scrounging his car keys from his pocket, walks to his sedan. Music underscores the mood. Mack hears a CLANK from the motel, turns abruptly to look: one of Dylan's deputies has knocked over a metal barrier. Mack continues toward the car.

He opens the door, plops inside. Placing the keys in the ignition, he hears something behind him...

Turning to look, frightened: the last thing he sees, the last thing he remembers, is a BLURRED FACE and the feel and smell of a chloroform RAG pressed against his nose and mouth.

CUT TO:

INT. LIMBO NIGHT

Mackelway comes to in darkness, hog-tied and blindfolded. A white nylon cord, tied around his neck, stretches across his back, through his bound hands around his bent legs. It is a painful position.

Smelling something rancid, Mack sniffs: where is he? A garbage dump?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Richard Low, wearing a burgundy turtleneck, scrunches atop Mack, speaks softly:

LOW

Scared, Agent Mackelway?

(Mack says nothing)

It's a terrible feeling, isn't it?
Alone. Trapped. Knowing you're
going to die. The terror of dying
is much worse than death itself.

Mackelway attempts to stretch his cramping muscles; the noose tightens around his neck, choking him. Mack resumes the original position.

LOW (CONT'D)

This is how Speck tied his victims.
Imagine what that was like, for
those girls in his car. Imagine the
ride tied in his trunk. He's
already raped you. Maybe he's cut
you. Maybe he's cut you inside.

Mack struggles to turn his head in the direction of Low's voice.

LOW (CONT'D)

As you sit there listening to the
road, feeling all the places you're
bleeding, you wonder -- is it over?
Will he just kill me? Please?

Low reaches down, TWISTS Mack's nipple: Mackelway buckles in pain, choking.

LOW (CONT'D)

But he doesn't. He's only begun, he
rapes you again, twists your skin
with pliers, all the time looking
at your eyes, into your eyes like
he's never seen anything like them
before, holding a knife -- then, if
you're not dead already, only then
does he take those eyes out.

Low leans into Mack's ear, whispers darkly:

LOW (CONT'D)

Tell me, Agent Mackelway, does that
man deserve to live? Does he have
the right to exist one more day,
one more hour? You have the
temerity to hunt me for killing
such a man?

Mack, holding back his fear, asks in a steady voice:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MACKELWAY

How did you know Speck was a
killer?

LOW

The little piggie speaks.

Low twists Mack's nipple again -- harder this time. Gagging,
Mack asks:

MACKELWAY

Who are you?

LOW

I'll give you a little hint. You're
a smart guy, figure it out.

Low unfolds a razor-sharp jack knife, cuts open the upper arm
of Mackelway's shirt, SLASHES three strokes across Mack's
bicep.

Reacting to the pain, Mack twists his torso, begins to
seriously choke; Low pulls at the nylon cord, exacerbating
Mack's condition.

As Mackelway passes out, Low cuts the nylon cord with his
knife. Screen goes black.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM DAY

Thomas Mackelway opens his eyes, sees the DOCTOR tapping his
shoulder:

DOCTOR

You've got company.

Mack, rubbing the rope marks on his neck, looks around:
Koessler, Salinas and Kulok stand around the bed.

KOESSLER

How do you feel, Agent

MACKELWAY

Pretty embarrassed, to be honest. I
had him.

KOESSLER

Agent Kulok and I were in O'Hare
when we heard.

MACKELWAY

He got away. I had him. He got
away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOESSLER

Do you think he singled you out?

MACKELWAY

No, just coincidence. He knew who I was, of course. He had my ID -- did he keep it?

KULOK

(points)

It's here.

Mack opens his wallet, reacts to the aroma.

KULOK (CONT'D)

Some kids found you in a garbage dump.

MACKELWAY

Where's my watch? It's gone.

KOESSLER

The cut on your arm -- mind if we remove the bandage?

MACKELWAY

Go ahead.

Koessler motions to the Doctor, who cuts the white gauze off Mack's bicep, revealing three fresh congealed slashes forming a "Z."

KOESSLER

Thank you, doctor.

The Doctor, taking the hint, excuses himself.

KOESSLER (CONT'D)

He said it was a clue?

SALINAS

(looking closer)

Maybe something to do with Zorro.

KOESSLER

Don't say that. Don't even think that. The next thing we'll be hearing about "Zorro Killer" in the media -- this hasn't gotten out, has it?

SALINAS

Just hospital talk. Nothing that connects to Speck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KOESSLER

This could all be a coincidence, but, you know something, I don't believe in coincidences. That's why I came back.

(to Mack)

Do you think the UNSUB -- we're not going to mention the word Zorro -- met Harold Speck online?

MACKELWAY

Yes I do.

KULOK

It explains a lot.

SALINAS

But why attack an Agent?

MACKELWAY

He wants us to know he's out there, what he's doing. It's not enough just to kill somebody like Speck, he wants us to know he did it.

KOESSLER

(thinks)

Agent Mackelway, you're going to get your wish. You're going back to Washington. I want you back in Computer Crimes. Fire up those chat rooms.

MACKELWAY

This time, sir, if I may be so bold, would it be possible to set up my equipment outside CIIAC, perhaps in military housing at Quantico? I didn't get along very well with the other members of the Division. We thought differently.

KOESSLER

You didn't like anyone looking over your shoulder -- why was that? What were you doing?

MACKELWAY

(ignoring question)

If my Reporting Agent could be someone outside Computer Crimes, perhaps Agent Kulok?

Koessler looks at Jaime, his mind running scenarios:

KOESSLER

I'll take it into consideration.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MACKELWAY

What I do requires confidentiality.

KOESSLER

I always meant to ask, what is it that makes you so special? Why is it you have this special rapport with multiple killers? Why you?

MACKELWAY

They like my stories. They like the way I think. They're into fantasy. I turn them on.

All in all, quite an astounding statement -- it just hangs there. No one responds.

CUT TO:

EXT. QUANTICO EVENING

Aerial view of a sprawl of office buildings and military facilities in a green wooded landscape. Subtitle reads: "FBI Academy, Quantico, Virginia."

CUT TO:

EXT. MACK'S APARTMENT EVENING

A van sits outside a red brick barracks-style Officers Housing unit.

CUT TO:

MACK'S APARTMENT EVENING

Mackelway, dressed casually, instructs young FBI techies installing a shitload of Dell computer equipment: computer towers, mainframe, digital analyzers, scanners, printers, voice actualizer, etc.

Mack has duct-taped the windows with aluminum foil, blocking exterior light. The room is assuming a life of it's own. An interior life. He flips lights on and off as the techies work, testing light schemes.

MACKELWAY

Download whatever punters you find.

TECHIE #1

Don't worry, sir, we learned from the best.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACKELWAY

Who's that?

TECHIE #1

We learned from the people you taught.

MACKELWAY

They remember me?

TECHIE #2

Yes, sir, they do.

Jaime Kulok, passing the sterile living room, tiptoes into the computer space. Mack turns:

MACKELWAY

Jaime. Boys, this is Agent Kulok.

The Techies deferentially greet her.

KULOK

Relax.

(to Mack)

J. Edgar's greatest fear: a female with a badge.

MACKELWAY

The man knew how to dress.

KULOK

Don't even go there. What's up?

MACKELWAY

Setting up. Technically, anyone in a chat room can be traced back to a screen address. But, by using punters, a correspondent literally punts his address around the world, through computers in countries that have no communication treaties. The correspondent becomes "ghosted," invisible.

KULOK

What about the chat rooms themselves?

MACKELWAY

That's the beauty of the system. This is a fugitive chat room. It moves from place to place, chat rooms that are normally empty at certain hours: a gardening website, Chaucer buffs, a dating service.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)

A pre- arranged code shows up in one of fifty porn rooms -- that's where I stumbled across it -- notifying "friends" to meet at a certain time, usually midnight to three Eastern Standard, at a certain website -- a deserted chat room, say, "How to Plant Perennials." Come Tuesday, twelve a.m., bingo, these like-minded deviates log on and start yakking it up: explicit sex crime gossip, who did what to whom, who wants to do what, when, why and how.

KULOK

That's part of the reason I dropped by. I need to learn this stuff.

MACKELWAY

The other reason?

KULOK

(looks at watch)

You want to have dinner?

CUT TO:

EXT. RED LOBSTER NIGHT

A chain restaurant with prices pegged to a government employee's budget.

CUT TO:

INT. RED LOBSTER NIGHT

Mackelway and Kulok sit in a booth eating salads, sipping white wine.

MACKELWAY

Working the net isn't that different from ordinary undercover work. You go into the community, walk their walk, talk their talk, gain their confidence.

KULOK

They're all criminals?

MACKELWAY

No, no, no, most of them -- I used to think all of them -- are just fantasists, guys who get off telling degrading stories.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)

When I came across this fugitive chat room, listened in, I started to think some might actually be real, that they'd gone live. The challenge was to figure out which was which. Then I had my disagreement with Koessler.

KULOK

"Gone live?"

MACKELWAY

Chat jargon for moving from fantasy to real victims: "I went live last month."

KULOK

This is some serious shit.

MACKELWAY

Taking a Stryker saw, cutting off the top of someone's cranium, pulling the brain out -- what's that, a day in Spring?

KULOK

(laughs)

You got a point there.

MACKELWAY

People end up in occupations for a reason. They may think not, but they do: occupations define us.

KULOK

I was going to be a physician, I am a physician, but I kept drifting over to criminal psych. This seems to be the best of both. My parents still haven't forgiven me.

MACKELWAY

I was interested in two things: computers and crime. They sort of came together.

KULOK

And one other thing.

MACKELWAY

What's that?

KULOK

Sex.

He smiles; so does she. He likes this girl. A WAITRESS removes their salad plates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MACKELWAY

Once you get in the mind set,
though, it can take you over.

Mack motions to a young UPS DELIVERY MAN drinking coffee,
then to an OVERWEIGHT middle-aged man wearing a Tazmanian
Devil T-shirt, Chicago Bulls jacket and Disney World baseball
cap.

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)

Look at this fellow... or this one.

KULOK

Grown man dressed like a clown.
Does he really think he looks good?

MACKELWAY

He thinks he looks young.

KULOK

What's this country coming to?

MACKELWAY

Take it to the next level. What are
his fantasies, what turns him on,
what kind of pornography does he
like? If he could act out his
fantasies, what would he do?
Imagine yourself one of his
victims, realizing your life is in
his hands. What is he thinking?

KULOK

My guess: he's wondering whether to
get more fries or go straight to
the chocolate sundae.

Mack laughs as the Waitress returns with two fish plates:

WAITRESS

(about wine glasses)
Another round?

MACKELWAY AND KULOK

Yes, please.

They smile at the synchronicity of their response. His smile
turns inward:

MACKELWAY

Every cop has a story and every
story has a girl. The girl in my
story was fifteen years-old. She
wore a pink angora sweater -- I can
still see it -- one day, she
disappeared.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)

I told the police she wouldn't run away, I told them who to look for, but I was just a kid. I sat in the police station crying and crying. My parents took me home. The girl was my cousin and the man who abducted her was a teacher I'd had. He kept her alive a week before he killed her. The police could have saved her. Every time I see a photo of a victim I see her. That's what I want to do. I want to save her.

KULOK

Me too.

(sips from empty glass)

Make any headway with "Zorro"?

MACKELWAY

None. Can't find a thing. Nothing on file, nothing online. It's not a part of any known killer's signature.

KULOK

I was thinking, maybe we should ask Professor Daitz. Nobody knows this stuff better.

MACKELWAY

That's because he's a fucking wacko. Never met a self-promotion scheme he didn't like. What's he doing now?

KULOK

He's a consultant to a network TV program on Profilers. He gets a check every episode.

Mack shakes his head, looks at the Overweight Man: the Waitress brings him a double scoop chocolate sundae.

CUT TO:

INT. MACK'S APARTMENT NIGHT

Late night: camera drifts through Mackelway's pre-furnished Quantico apartment, approaches his computer room. Sound of a modem dialing, connection grows LOUDER.

Mack has designed the room as an emotional as well as functional environment: ambient blue light, white noise air conditioner, scanner, printer, horizontal racks of hard drive memory, modems, U-shaped table featuring three monitors, all active. Wall clocks feature time zones around the world.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pinned to the back wall are crime scene reports, VICAP forms, and photos, among them, Harold Speck, his "Z" slash, Karen Sumpster, the Dell City runaway in the South Park T-shirt.

Mackelway, enveloped in a womb of computer screen glow, types a website address on the center keyboard. The monitor brings up a "Fresh Water Fishing" chat room.

Atop the monitor sits a speech synthesizer. It allows Mack to listen as well as read chat conversations: a metallic voice "actualizes" the printed copy.

Mack looks at the East Coast time zone clock: the second hand signals twelve a. m. The chat room comes ALIVE. One by one correspondents log on: Troll, Ripper, BelaKiss, Murman, Imelda, Lickme, Zin, Mack enters his name: "Lionheart."

Mack speaks into a voice box atop the computer. It transforms his words into text.

Screenwriter's note: the metallic voices do not indicate the name of the speaker. That can be indicated, if necessary, by the computer screen. Metallic voices are indicated by [].

TROLL (O.S.)

[Hello, had to rush over. Was tying up some loose ends.]

RIPPER (O.S.)

[You wish.]

TROLL (O.S.)

[Any word on Battick? He's a cool dude.]

MURMAN (O.S.)

[Fantasy time, girls, give it up, give it up.]

MACKELWAY

Lionheart here. I'm back. Sorry about the absence. I had to do some therapy at the crossbar hotel.

RIPPER (O.S.)

[What happened?]

MACKELWAY

Fucking cops can't take a joke.

ZIN (O.S.)

[Welcome back.]

TROLL (O.S.)

[How many times does thirty go into nine?]

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MURMAN (O.S.)
[What facility, Lionheart?]

TROLL (O.S.)
[Three, if she's tied up.]

MACKELWAY
I'd have to make the conversation
personal to divulge that.

IMEDLA (O.S.)
[Tee Hee.]

MURMAN (O.S.)
[I could have sent you some
goodies.]

LICKME (O.S.)
[Battick declared sane as rain. He
goes to trial.]

RIPPER (O.S.)
[Boring, boring, boring.]

MURMAN (O.S.)
[Play time. Somebody turn me on.]

TROLL (O.S.)
[Okay: I come home from work, been
thinking about it all day long.
Cute little colored girl. She's
still there, in the basement, tied
up. She's shit all over herself...]

CUT TO:

INT. ZERO KILL SPACE NIGHT

Camera pans across a dark small space. The white fifteen year-old abducted earlier lies unmoving, white-faced on some sort of grid. Dried blood covers the front of her lacrosse shirt.

Troll's metallic voice fantasy continues as camera pans to a jackhammer whose drill has been welded to a shovel spade, hung on a rough-hewn wall. Next to it hangs a conventional shovel.

TROLL (O.S.)
[...Her eyes go wide when she sees
me. I've got an erection like a
piece of rebar -- I could stick it
in her mouth and crack open the
back of her head.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TROLL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I tell her I went to the hardware
store, picked up a little present
for her.]

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA DAY

Red-bricked campus at Charlottesville.

CUT TO:

INT. DAITZ OFFICE DAY

A wall of framed (some signed) photos of Lloyd Daitz posing with famous serial killers, national politicians, film celebrities and talk show hosts. A nearby bookshelf features multicopies of books authored by Daitz, books with titles like "Index of Serial Killers," "In the Mind of the Multiple Killer," "A Pictorial History of Serial Killers."

LLOYD DAITZ, 55, wears a tweed sports jacket, his university look offset by accessories picked up in Hollywood: razor-cut hair, tassled loafers, designer eyeglasses. A Mercedes brochure lies on his desk. Mackelway and Kulok peruse his photo wall with appropriate awe.

DAITZ

Of course I remember you. Pretty girl fixated on extreme criminal behavior. Always wondered, what were the underlying factors?

KULOK

(to Mack)

That was the name of Professor Daitz's course, "Underlying Factors in Criminal Behavior." You still teach, Professor?

DAITZ

(jokes)

You know the saying, those who can't do, teach. Besides: it keeps me honest.

MACKELWAY

Have you had a chance to think about --

DAITZ

Zorro. Yes, ran it through my files, even asked around: came up completely blank.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAITZ (CONT'D)

Thought there might be a Mexico connection, El Paso and all, but nothing. Fooled around with the letter "Z," turned it on it's side, got "N" -- there Ng, he's Vietnamese. The only thing that came to mind was zero, not Zorro. Remember Suspect Zero?

MACKELWAY

No.

DAITZ

Before your time. It was Richard Low's brainchild, or, lack-of-brain child. The Behavioral Sciences Unit at Quantico is essentially the product of three men: David Koessler, Dick Low and myself. Low was a field agent, Koessler administrative, I was teaching criminology. Low came up with the concept of a serial killer's signature. He invented profiling. Everything we know about profiling started with Richard Low...

As he speaks, camera goes to photo of a younger Lloyd Daitz, Richard Low and David Koessler, arm-in-arm at Bureau Headquarters. (We realize the UNSUB and Low are one and the same: screenwriters note: this is an optional reveal.)

DAITZ (CONT'D)

...well, there was some friction: I wanted to write up my work, educate the public, but Koessler wouldn't allow it. Low felt Koessler was more interested in career advancement than catching killers. Koessler had Low reassigned to the Pacific Northwest, Seattle. You know when they say, stick it where the sun don't shine? That's where they stuck Dick Low.

MACKELWAY

Pacific Northwest is a hotbed for serials.

DAITZ

You got that right. Low became obsessed with the Green River murders, the case had been inactive for ten years at that point.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAITZ (CONT'D)

He argued the Green River Killer had actually become Suspect Zero, this master murderer who killed without pattern, killed literally hundreds of victims -- male, female, old, young, straight, gay -- and who was still killing, even though there were no bodies. It went against everything we knew. Low became increasingly paranoid. Every suspect was potentially Suspect Zero. Anybody tried to talk sense into him, he'd accuse them of being out to get him. Deputy Director Koessler was "out to get him." The decision was made to relieve him.

KULOK

But they didn't.

DAITZ

Fortunately, from a Bureau point of view, Richard Low was killed in a small plane crash about that time. A convenient conclusion. The end of Low, the end of Zero.

MACKELWAY

Does Koessler know about the Suspect Zero theory?

DAITZ

Of course. He knows everything about Dick Low.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA DAY

Mack and Kulok stroll the bucolic campus toward their government issue car. Two coeds pass, gossiping and laughing.

MACKELWAY

(about Daitz)

I ever get like that, just take me out in back and shoot me.

KULOK

Don't be too harsh.

MACKELWAY

I saw him on a talk show once, talking about these killers like they were his friends.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)

Not the victims, not the families of the victims, he doesn't talk about them. Blood money, that's what it is.

(they walk a few steps)

Did he hit on you?

KULOK

Huh?

MACKELWAY

When you were his student? Did he come on to you?

KULOK

Of course he did. He came on to every attractive student. Which bothers you most: that he exploits suffering or that he came on to me?

MACKELWAY

You must really think I'm a square, a computer nerd.

KULOK

No, Mack, I do not think you're a square and definitely not a nerd.

She runs her hand along his back as she crosses to get in the passenger seat. Her touch is electric.

CUT TO:

INT. MACK'S CAR DAY

Mack puts the key in the ignition, turns to Jaime:

MACKELWAY

Why did Koessler assign you as my liaison?

KULOK

Because you asked him to, stupid.

MACKELWAY

(chuckles)

Oh yeah, I forgot.

Mackelway doesn't start the car. He just looks at Jaime. He feels a desire to kiss her -- here and now. She feels a desire to be kissed.

KULOK

There are Agency regulations about this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACKELWAY

"Intra-Agency fraternizing."

KULOK

It's a no-no.

MACKELWAY

(touches her cheek)

I know.

KULOK

I've been thinking about this.

MACKELWAY

Does Koessler ask about me?

KULOK

He's called a couple times.

MACKELWAY

What did you tell him?

KULOK

Just routine stuff.

MACKELWAY

Not about coming to see Daitz?

KULOK

Not yet. Not about this, either.

She leans over and kisses him. He reaches over, kissing her, holding her. Over their embrace the metallic voices of Mack's chat pals pre-lap:

TROLL (O.S.)

[Roses are red, Violets are blue,
I'd love to jam a golf club, Inside
you.]

ZIN (O.S.)

[No time for poetry, no time for
images. Images deceive. Only
reality satisfies.]

MURMAN (O.S.)

[Reality very risky.]

MACKELWAY (O.S.)

Whatever happened to MyDick?

ZIN (O.S.)

[I want to be live. A live. Have a
package of my very own.]

CUT TO:

EXT. MAILBOXES USA DAY

Title: "Tampa, Florida." ROBERT TESTA, 26, scraggly beard obscuring acne scars, jeans, lumberjack shirt with cut-off sleeves, walks furtively into the P.O. Box outlet, looking side to side.

We view him LONG LENS, from the POV of a hidden viewer.

Testa goes to a P.O. Box, unlocks it, retrieves a small package. He looks around, tucks it into his waistband, walks outside to his dinged-up blue van.

MURMAN (O.S.)
[MyDick's limp.]

LICKME (O.S.)
[I have WAV goodies.]

TROLL (O.S.)
[What are the three best things
about anal sex?]

MACKELWAY
What limped him?

TROLL (O.S.)
[Location, location, location.]

LICKME (O.S.)
[The crux of it all.]

ZIN (O.S.)
[Want to take it more personal?]

MURMAN (O.S.)
[Here's the lowdown: he was a fool.
MyDick didn't know dick.]

LICKME (O.S.)
[Free to all: a little recording I
made for my friends.]

CUT TO:

INT. MACK'S COMPUTER ROOM NIGHT

Mack, bathed in computer light, watches LickMe's audio download complete. He clicks "Play."

MURMAN (O.S.)
[Didn't see it coming.]

A miniature digital polaroid of a naked girl tied to a bench appears onscreen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The recording downloads, then plays: a girl PLEADS for her life, says her parents are expecting her, says the police will come, says she'll do anything, begs that he not hurt her again and screams, screams, screams.

Mackelway, shaking, sinks his head into his hands: this is it, the black soul of humankind, the Pit, evil itself. The audio recording may be real; it may be fake -- either way, Mack is face to face with the reality of role playing.

Sickened, Mack logs off, rushes out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM NIGHT

Tom Mackelway, ripping his clothes off as he enters, turns on the shower faucets. Still wearing slacks and shoes, Mack steps into the shower, THRUSTS his face into the water stream. Grabs bath gel, rubs it all over him.

MACKELWAY
(to himself)
Damn you, goddamn you.

CUT TO:

EXT. FBI HEADQUARTERS DAY

The J. Edgar Hoover Building, brutalist architecture, Pennsylvania Ave. at 10th.

CUT TO:

INT. KOESSLER'S OFFICE DAY

Deputy Director has assembled representatives of various divisions to go over the Harold Speck case: Mackelway, Asst. Deputy Director for CIIAC (aka Computer Crimes) LEMAR RYAN, Special Agent SPIVAK, Agent DUNLEVY. Koessler's office features the appurtenances of power, in an understated in-your-face sort of way.

KOESSLER
You feeling okay, Agent Mackelway?

MACKELWAY
(nods)
Had trouble sleeping last night, sir.

KOESSLER
Okay, Harold Speck: who goes first?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPIVAK

The UNSUB's car, the Ford, and the motel room, as expected, came up empty. Whistle clean. The waitress was right, it was a reservation car -- a stolen reservation car.

Koessler turns to Dunlevy.

DUNLEVY

VICAP kicked out the Ron "Slice and Dice" Rice killing, another serial killer killed in the manner of his victims. Nothing else on Rice cross-checks, weapon, timing, signature -- there is no signature. He uses the M.O. of his victims.

KOESSLER

Think it's the same UNSUB?

DUNLEVY

Maybe. It's a stretch.

KOESSLER

Assistant Deputy Ryan?

RYAN

CIIAC has nothing. I can't speak for Agent Mackelway, however, since he's off campus.

KOESSLER

(reacts to Ryan's implied criticism)

We've been over this.

(to Mack)

Agent Mackelway?

MACKELWAY

Nothing concrete. Nothing I'd... well, nothing.

KOESSLER

I don't believe this.

MACKELWAY

I'm hesitant to...

KOESSLER

Mack the Mouth at a loss for words.

They wait.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MACKELWAY

Okay, here it is. I've been talking in a ghosted chat room with someone named Murman. This Murman seemed to know MyDick -- Harold Speck -- was out of the picture, he said MyDick could no longer "see." Okay, but here's where it gets squirrely.

Mackelway pulls out a piece of paper, reads:

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)

"MyDick didn't know dick." "The lowdown." "Lowballed." "Too rich for me." "Lower than zero."

RYAN

I don't get it.

MACKELWAY

I think this guy, Murman, he seems to have a thing about former Assistant Deputy Director Richard Low. It would explain the cutting; not Zorro, Zero. Perhaps they once had contact. We should go through Low's old cases. It's almost like he is Richard Low.

(to Koessler: snide)

I mean, Assistant Deputy Director Low is dead, isn't he?

Ryan and Dunlevy react to Mack's tone of voice. Koessler, the disciplinarian, turns to the others:

KOESSLER

Would you excuse us? I'd like to speak to Agent Mackelway.

The others file out giving Mack looks: he's gonna catch Hell now.

Koessler closes the door, takes a deep breath, turns to Mack:

KOESSLER (CONT'D)

He may not be.

CUT TO:

EXT. FT. MYERS DAY

Robert Testa's van slows to a halt in a warehouse district. CANDY, nom de street, blond high school dropout in red vinyl skirt, steps to the passenger window as he lowers it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TESTA
Wanna ride?

CANDY
Where you going?

TESTA
Fifty dollars.

CANDY
Always wanted to go there.

Candy opens the door, gets in. The van drives away.

CUT TO:

INT. TESTA'S VAN DAY

Candy looking out the window as the van turns into an alley:

CANDY
Is this your --

POW! Testa reaches over, HITS the back of her head with a short club. Candy bounces off the window.

Testa, jamming the van into park, reaching over, turning Candy around, handcuffs her, opens a camouflaged door to the rear of the van, DRAGS Candy by her wrists -- blond wig falling from her head.

Candy, coming to, looking around, seeing Testa's mobile chamber of horrors, SCREAMING:

CANDY (CONT'D)
Please, please don't hurt me.

TESTA
That's exactly what I got in mind.
I'm gonna hurt you, little girl,
places you've never been hurt
before.

Candy sees a crowbar and a chain saw in a wooden box. Testa has soundproofed the van with furniture pads and styrofoam.

TESTA (CONT'D)
Scream all you want. Get used to
it.

An arm reaches over, grabs Testa's shoulder: Richard Low, dressed like a homeless person.

LOW
Robert Testa?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TESTA

Wha -- ?

Low PUNCHES his face with steel knuckles; Testa's head jerks back. Blood drips from his nose. Eyes on Testa, Low barks at Candy:

LOW

Get out. Get out, now!

Candy, still handcuffed, awkwardly SCRAMBLES into the front seat, out the passenger door. Low leaning over Testa, PINNING him to the floor of the van, pulling out his own pair of handcuffs, turning Testa over, shutting the soundproof door:

LOW (CONT'D)

Scream all you want.

Robert Testa, face down now, handcuffed, scared shitless, twists his head to see his attacker. Low, breathing heavy, feeling good, reaches for the chainsaw. Knees on Testa's back, Low prepares to start the chainsaw:

LOW (CONT'D)

Welcome to my fantasy.

Richard Low jerk-starts the chain SAW and, holding it at arm's length, leans over, whispers into Testa's ear:

LOW (CONT'D)

Murman.

CUT TO:

INT. KOESSLER'S OFFICE DAY

Conversation between Mack and Koessler continues:

KOESSLER

"Murman" was the alter identity of William Heirens, the original "Catch Me Before I Kill Again" killer. Short for "Murder Man." It was the case that got Richard Low and I started in this field.

MACKELWAY

I spoke with Lloyd Daitz.

KOESSLER

That gasbag. I can imagine what he said. I'm not ashamed to admit that most of what I know about criminal profiling started with Richard Low.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOESSLER (CONT'D)

I have also, over the years, I admit, taken credit for many of his accomplishments. He was the most brilliant law enforcement individual I ever met.

MACKELWAY

"Was?"

KOESSLER

We had every reason to believe he was on that plane. He was supposed to be on the plane. Everything was incinerated, it was two weeks before we reached the crash site. We, the Director and I, decided it was in everyone's best interest to declare Dick Low dead. That way he could exit a hero.

MACKELWAY

You suspected all along, suspected he was alive. That's why you came to El Paso.

KOESSLER

(nods)

Dunlevy said there was another case, Ron Rice. In fact, there were two earlier cases where serials were murdered. The second was George Sheldon. I didn't enter it into VICAP -- I'll get you the file.

MACKELWAY

How long ago?

KOESSLER

Both in the last year. I suspected only someone as brilliant as Dick Low could find these guys.

(beat)

Look, whatever Daitz told you, nobody wanted to strip Richard of his badge. You have to get close to be good at what he did, the trick is not to get too close.

MACKELWAY

You knew the arm slash was not "Zorro."

KOESSLER

I suspected, but you were the one Low contacted. That's why I brought you back here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MACKELWAY

What did you think of the Suspect
Zero theory?

KOESSLER

It was neither a valid concept nor
a valid fact. Suspect Zero came to
represent every killer Dick Low had
not caught. The idea took root in
his head like a wild irrational
vine. For someone like Low, there
would always be a Suspect Zero. We
couldn't let Richard go where that
idea was taking him.

KNOCK on the door; Koessler opens it -- Jaime Kulok sticks
her head in:

KULOK

Sorry to interrupt you, sir, but I
thought you'd like to know.

KOESSLER

What?

KULOK

We have another one.

KOESSLER

Another what?

KULOK

Serial killer killed. In Ft. Myers.
Cut up in his van. And this time we
got a witness.

CUT TO:

EXT. FT. MYERS POLICE STATION DAY

Florida patrol cars out front.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM DAY

Candy, dressed like a proper young lady, rubbing her sore
wrists, sits across from Mackelway and a local detective.

CANDY

I wasn't thinking about
identification. I got out of there
as fast as I could.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mack shows her Richard Low's FBI file mug shot: a serious man with a short haircut, dark suit and bad tie.

MACKELWAY

Was this him?

CANDY

(looks)

Um... he was older.

MACKELWAY

Besides that.

CANDY

To be honest, when I'm working, I don't look at faces much. He knew the guy's name.

MACKELWAY

Testa?

CANDY

The bearded guy, the creep. Oh, one other thing. Testa, if that's his name, he kept mentioning my feet. Said I had very pretty feet.

CUT TO:

INT. FT. MYERS MORGUE DAY

Robert Testa's legs, now severed stumps, on the autopsy table. His feet have been cut off at the ankles. Testa's throat is ripped open like a bloody smile.

Jaime Kulok greets Mackelway as he steps over. The M.E. looks up, goes back to work.

MACKELWAY

Find the feet?

KULOK

No. Cut off while he was still alive, look at his wrists, damn near ripped his hands off trying to get free. Must have been screaming real loud when the killer chain-sawed his throat. Unfortunately, he'd soundproofed his van.

MACKELWAY

We got an UNSUB walking around with four feet?

KULOK

We did find these, however.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kulok walks over to a refrigerated case, opens it: a row of female feet in various stages of decay stand in a line.

MACKELWAY

Jesus.

KULOK

We're trying to match them with
dump site bodies.

(points out a foot)

This we know is Carol Delview from
Tampa, found her last Spring. This
one --

Mack looks at the next, a small, relatively fresh foot: a long rose tattoo is severed in half.

MACKELWAY

The tattoo?

KULOK

Sue Ann Hanson.

MACKELWAY

You mean --

KULOK

You found the body. She was one of
Harold Speck's victims. In El Paso.

(lets this sink in)

They're not just talking to each
other, Mack, they're trading
souvenirs.

Mack closes the refrigerated case, walks several steps,
turns:

MACKELWAY

Did they disconnect Testa's
computer?

KULOK

Not yet. This time they're waiting
for you.

Jaime looks at the refrigerated case, thinks about the
victims. Her composure slips a little. Mack walks over,
discreetly, touches her hand:

MACKELWAY

I know.

Jaime nods.

CUT TO:

INT. KOESSLER'S OFFICE DAY

Deputy Director Koessler looks through a folder: Testa's autopsy photos, crime scene diagrams and a montage of severed feet. Mackelway and Kulok bring him up to speed:

MACKELWAY

I got a look in Testa's computer. His screen name was "Imelda." Have to give him that, had a sense of humor.

KOESSLER

Collected shoes too?

KULOK

You should have seen the store manager at Parade of Shoes. She was inconsolable.

MACKELWAY

Murman and Imelda had been slipping into a private chat room. Low had poor old Testa drooling on the keyboard. Abduction fantasies, voyeurism, mutilation, teasing him with fetish elements. He is very good. I think it's safe to say Richard Low is Murman.

KOESSLER

We're waiting for trace evidence results on the Rice killing.

MACKELWAY

We need to put out an NCIC inquiry.

KOESSLER

How do you send out an APB on a dead man?

MACKELWAY

Huh?, sir.

KOESSLER

I want to catch Dick Low, more than you can imagine, but I cannot risk going public. What happens when the media finds out that a former FBI Special Agent, a founder of the Behavioral Sciences Unit, is not dead, but instead alive and killing people, not ordinary people, but, even worse, serial killers, making him some sort of white knight vigilante?

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOESSLER (CONT'D)
You keep at it. We'll find him,
we'll find him in our own way.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI PARKING STRUCTURE DAY

Mack and Jaime walk and talk past rows of similar cars. He says something; she laughs. He waits for her to get in her car, walks on.

Over we hear his voice pre-lap from a late night chat room session:

MACKELWAY (O.S.)
There was something about her. She was the one. She was checking at WalMart, just going about her business, giving everyone a big smile in that cute I'm-so-perfect-and-you're- such-a-loser way, her full titties popping around in her bra...

CUT TO:

EXT. MALL PARKING LOT NIGHT

Night in a northern climate: snow falls on a HIGH SCHOOL COUPLE, the last to leave the closing suburban mall. Carrying shopping bags, they walk toward their parked car.

SUSPECT ZERO steps down into frame. We see his face: a square-shouldered mid-thirties white male in navy vinyl jacket. He watches the couple. The BOY glances at him, looks away as if seeing nothing unusual.

Zero's POV approaches:

ZERO (O.S.)
Is the mall closed already?

The GIRL senses something, sees something. She starts to run. The Boy, dropping his bag, confronts Zero. HIT with a heavy object, the Boy staggers back, FALLS to the ground, his mouth bleeding.

The Girl runs. Zero's POV chases the screaming girl, looking back as she runs, still carrying her shopping bag. Ahead, through the snow, is a three-lane road; car lights flash past. The Girl, screaming for attention, SLIPS in the snow, falls. Gets up, FALLS again. Looks up.

Zero's POV: he has her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Chat room dialogue continues over:

RIPPER (O.S.)
[Fuck her. Fuck her.]

MURMAN (O.S.)
[Shut up.]

MACKELWAY (O.S.)
Little Miss Perfect, clean hair,
clean teeth, clean mind, not a
fucking care in the world. Pink
sweater with her name on her
WalMart tit. Cindy...

CUT TO:

INT. MACK'S COMPUTER ROOM NIGHT

Mack, aka Lionheart, seated, speaks into the microphone above the computer screen. Murman, Zin, Ripper, All4You, BelaKiss, Berzerkr and Daemon are logged on in an Incan Architecture room. The Eastern Standard clock reads 12:45.

Mackelway has installed a corkboard featuring Missing Persons reports of young females. Karen Sumpter smiles from a sea of lost persons. Beneath, professional and pop books on the criminal mind and serial killers are stacked beside assorted violent pornography.

MACKELWAY
She never had to go without or beg
for anything, got whatever she
wanted. Well, she was begging
now...

Agent Mackelway, seated, speaks, bathed in computer glow. He's lost in the moment, given over to an escalating fantasy. He's good at it.

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)
I grabbed her from behind when she
walked in, put an arm lock on her
throat, double duct-taped her hands
and mouth. She actually put up a
good fight for someone so small.
When she saw the scissors, her eyes
just grew big. She couldn't
breathe. Let me help you, I said,
cut open her T-shirt and bra as her
titties came out. She was mine now.
Cut off her panties, little orange
and blue flowers, bought them right
there, at the department store...

CUT TO:

INT. MACKELWAY'S APT NIGHT

Jaime, dressed casually, pushes open the door, calls:

KULOK
Mack? Mack?

She hears his voice in the distance, sees light coming from under the door to his computer room. He voice grows clearer:

MACKELWAY (O.S.)
I played with her awhile till I got hard. Took myself out, played with myself -- made her watch, put her face in it. Afraid? -- I'll teach you fear. Turn over, bitch. That hurts, huh? Take the pain, take the pain!...

Jaime silently opens the door to the computer room, SEES --

CUT TO:

INT. COMPUTER ROOM NIGHT

Mack, sweat glistening on the back of his neck, rapt in cyberspace, deep in fantasy, speaking to the screen:

MACKELWAY
What am I gonna do? I'm gonna cut you open, bitch. Kill you then cut your titties off.

Mackelway senses Kulok's presence, turns and sees her. Livid, frightened, trembling, he turns off the voice actualizer, YELLS like Dr. Jekyll caught holding Hyde's vial:

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)
Don't ever come in here! How dare you come in here! Get out!

Jaime, speechless, bolts and runs away.

Mackelway, suddenly aware, overcome with remorse, calls:

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)
Jaime, Jaime.

He YANKS out the voice actualizer, THROWS it to the floor, switches off the mainframe: the screens go black.

Mack, alone, lit by blue glow, listens as the front door closes.

CUT TO:

INT. KULOK'S APT NIGHT

Mackelway, wearing a sports jacket, rings apartment doorbell.

MACKELWAY

Jaime, open up. It's me, Mack.

(no response)

Jaime.

Kulok opens the door, stands by the jamb:

KULOK

Mack, I'm sorry. I apologize. I should have called. I had no right to sneak in on you like that.

MACKELWAY

No, Jaime, I apologize. I didn't... I had no right to speak to you like that.

KULOK

I came over because I couldn't sleep and was lonely. I wanted to see you. I thought I'd surprise you.

MACKELWAY

(sardonic)

You did.

He reaches for her waist. She reluctantly accepts his touch.

KULOK

Maybe we should back off a bit.

MACKELWAY

I can't. They trust me, they accept me. I've got their confidence.

KULOK

No, I mean maybe we should back off a bit, you and me.

MACKELWAY

Oh.

Mack withdraws his hands.

KULOK

There's the Agency issue. I think Koessler may suspect something already. We're not on the best footing with him as it is.

MACKELWAY

That's true.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KULOK

Then there's the other issue.

MACKELWAY

What's that?

KULOK

You need time to think. About the case, about you and me.

MACKELWAY

I found a peephole into Deviant World. I'm gonna reach in and yank some of those creeps out.

KULOK

And nobody else can do that?

MACKELWAY

Not the way I can.

KULOK

That's my point. Remember, you're a cop pretending to be a deviant. It's not the other way around.

MACKELWAY

Don't confuse what we do with who we are.

KULOK

I just need to go a little slow.

He nods.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY DAY

Title: "Winona, Minnesota." Spring rains have sent the Mississippi River over its banks.

Volunteer crews and Army Corps Engineers sandbag the river at the base of a hill in the local cemetery.

A worker atop a backhoe spots something, calls to fellow workers. The Supervisor walks over, followed by two volunteers. The backhoe driver steps down. Together they look at what the river has washed up:

The BODY of Karen Sumpter, Dell City, Texas, still wearing her "Oh No, They Killed Kenny!" T-shirt, lies nude from the waist down in muck. The remnants of her pantyhose are wrapped around her neck. Maggots and their larvae crawl from her mouth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A chat room conversation plays over:

MURMAN (O.S.)
[Lionheart, what happened?]

MACKELWAY (O.S.)
Something came up, Murman, my man.

RIPPER (O.S.)
[But did something come out?]

MACKELWAY (O.S.)
It took both hands to handle it.

RIPPER (O.S.)
[I came just thinking about it.]

CUT TO:

INT. MACK'S COMPUTER ROOM NIGHT

Mack, back in his lair, paces in front of his computer screen. He wears a white T-shirt and jeans, towel around his neck:

MACKELWAY
I'm on the move my friends, moving
here and there in this great land,
man with a mission, man with a
transmission, looking in your town,
looking all around: I want to go
live.

RIPPER (O.S.)
[I am the Ripper, you are the
Lipper.]

MURMAN (O.S.)
[You want to talk, Lionheart, or
you want to take this a little more
personal?]

MACKELWAY
Lead the way, Murman.

MURMAN (O.S.)
[Follow me.]

Mack moves his mouse, clicks, enters a private chat room.
Murman's waiting:

MURMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
[Chicago's a lively town.]

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY DAY

Title: "Omaha, Nebraska." LONG LENS POV: LESLIE REICH, 25, khaki slacks and a lavender polo shirt, wanders through a local library, enters the stacks. One of those fellows who looks absolutely ordinary -- at first glance.

Reich, running his eyes along Dewey Decimal codes, peruses a row of art books. He finds the number he is looking for ("Fauvres"), takes the coffee table book from the shelf.

He opens it: there, inside, as promised, is a Polaroid of a dead, partially dressed young woman and, around it, a department store gold chain. Reich pockets the photo and chain, replaces the illustrated book to the shelf.

Chat room conversation continues over:

MACKELWAY (O.S.)

I've been to Chicago.

MURMAN (O.S.)

[Not this way. Call it a little favor, call it a little thing I'm going to do for you. I'm going to make Chicago come alive for you. You'll owe me one.]

MACKELWAY (O.S.)

If I owe, I will go.

MURMAN (O.S.)

[The address is 147 South Rane. It's a lively address. You got a problem with dark meat?]

MACKELWAY (O.S.)

Haven't had any, but I'm willing to try.

MURMAN (O.S.)

[Ask for Leslie. Eight days from tonight, exactly one a.m. Be there if you dare. You cannot fool the Murman.]

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL 6 NIGHT

Title: "Chicago, Illinois." A budget two-story motel in a less than desirable part of town. Letter sign reads: "Spend a Night, Not a Fortune!"

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL 6 NIGHT

Tom Mackelway, wearing a loose black leather jacket, jeans and navy polo, opens his carry-on suitcase. A Chicago map lies on the bed.

He places his FBI ID and wallet inside. He removes a snub-nosed .38 and an ankle holster. He straps on the gun, checks his pocket for folding cash.

Mack goes over to the desk and, placing his hands on it, looks at himself in the mirror: he's crossing a line here. He's come to Chicago undercover, without authorization, to procure a criminal act.

CUT TO:

EXT. INNER CITY NIGHT

Quarter to one: Mack drives a rental car through Chicago's decaying South Side. He looks at the street sign: "Rane." Homeboys pass in a BMW, rap blasting over foreboding underscore, give him the eye.

He parks the car at the curb, locks his phone and beeper in the glove compartment, checks his gun, gets out.

Checking the house numbers, he walks to a single family residence with chain-linked front yard and barred windows.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO HOUSE NIGHT

Mack cautiously opens the gate, walks toward the porch. Discarded children's toys and junk are strewn in the moonlight. He steps onto the porch, looks at the curtained front window.

How did he get here?

He steels himself, presses the doorbell.

CUT TO:

REICH HOUSE NIGHT

Leslie Reich opens the door. Television plays in manicured middle-class living room behind.

Richard Low, now clean shaven, wearing a dark suit and latex gloves, speaks to Reich:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOW
Leslie Reich?

REICH
What is it?

LOW
I'm from the FBI. My name is
Murman. Agent George Murman.

Reich, at the sound of Murman's name, turns and BOLTS through the house.

Low charges after Reich, CHASES him through the living room and dining area.

Low TACKLES Reich in the kitchen; they roll across the linoleum into the cabinets. Low BANGS Reich's head against the floor, pulling a pair of handcuffs from behind his back. Low handcuffs Reich, flips him onto his back, stands over him. Richard Low pulls up his pant leg, removes a lethal K-bar knife strapped to his leg.

LOW (CONT'D)
Now, Ripper, let's see those home
movies you've been talking about.
Where did you say you kept them, oh
yes, the broom closet.

REICH
What are you going to do to me?

Low snaps the broom closet lock with the K-bar knife: inside are neatly arranged shoe box cubicles, each containing a labeled VHS tape and some "souvenirs" -- panties, a purse, necklace, etc.

LOW
My, my.

Low takes a tape, reads the label: "JEW-ith Gross." Reich watches in growing fear as Low takes a plastic apron from the refrigerator handle, puts it on.

REICH
(pleading)
I don't know how that got there. I
don't even live here.

LOW
(kneeling over him)
At least you could have spelled her
name right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Low rips open Reich's shirt, raises the K-bar, thrusts downward.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO HOUSE NIGHT

A LARGE BLACK WOMAN opens the door, looks at Mack:

BLACK WOMAN
What you want?

MACKELWAY
I want to speak to Leslie. Murman
sent me.

BLACK WOMAN
Are you crazy?

MACKELWAY
There's no Leslie here?

BLACK WOMAN
Does this look like a "Leslie"
house to you?

The Black Woman's HUSBAND approaches wearing his underwear:

HUSBAND
Who the fuck is this?

BLACK WOMAN
The white boy is looking for some
ho' called Leslie.

HUSBAND
Get the fuck out.

MACKELWAY
I'm sorry, there must have been a
mistake.

The Husband slams the door in his face. Mack looks around, heads down the steps. He's been had, sent on a wild goose chase.

CUT TO:

EXT. INNER CITY NIGHT

Mack unlocks his rental car, gets in. He removes his beeper and phone from the glove compartment; there's a message.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He starts the engine, drives off. Riding through the empty streets, he phones a 402 area code number. Kulok's sleepy voice answers:

KULOK (O.S.)

Hello?

MACKELWAY

Jaime? Where are you?

KULOK (O.S.)

Where are you? Everybody's looking for you.

MACKELWAY

What's up?

KULOK (O.S.)

I'm in Omaha. Get to the airport. There's been another one.

CUT TO:

INT. OMAHA MORGUE DAY

Mackelway and Kulok walk down a corridor to the examination room. She hands him an 8x10 of the Reich crime scene: Leslie Reich, wearing only pants, lies face up on his bed. His upper torso has been ripped open from sternum to pubis. Around Reich's body are arranged VHS tapes and "souvenirs." One is the gold chain he got in the library.

KULOK

The videos were home movies, kills of girls that had been gutted, dumped here, Iowa, Kansas.

They enter the examination room, step to the table where DR. ZABRISKIE, the Medical Examiner, waits beside Reich's body.

KULOK (CONT'D)

Dr. Zabriskie, this is Agent Mackelway.

They greet.

ZABRISKIE

A fairly straightforward job. A clean surgical incision to the heart, down through the diaphragm.

MACKELWAY

In other words --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZABRISKIE

The victim bled out. The heart at some point was removed.

KULOK

But I can see it. It's still there.

ZABRISKIE

It was put back in.

MACKELWAY

Why?

ZABRISKIE

Good question. Maybe because of this. We found it underneath the heart.

Dr. Zabriskie walks over to counter, picks up a red-stained baggie, holds it up. Inside the baggie is a man's wristwatch.

Mack pales: it's his wristwatch, stolen by Low in Socorro.

MACKELWAY

That bastard.

Mack turns, walks a few steps.

ZABRISKIE

What?

KULOK

It's complicated.

She steps beside Mackelway.

MACKELWAY

My watch. He toyed with me. He sent me to Chicago.

KULOK

You want to get him? Find something he wants. Get him to come to you.

MACKELWAY

Start killing people for real?

KULOK

Suspect Zero.

MACKELWAY

That's a crackpot theory. Everybody says so.

KULOK

But he believes in it. That's all that matters.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KULOK (CONT'D)
He toyed with you, you toy with
him. Convince him you've got a lead
on Suspect Zero. Use Zero, you'll
find Low.

Mack looks at Reich's body.

MURMAN (O.S.)
[Sorry about Chi-town,
Lionheart...]

CUT TO:

INT. MACK'S COMPUTER ROOM NIGHT

A "Needlepoint" chat room: Mack back online with his cybersex
buddies--Zin, Murman, Troll, All4You, BelaKiss.

MURMAN (O.S.)
[If you wanted a good steak, you
should have gone to Omaha.]

MACKELWAY
Let's go someplace private, Murman,
I have something for you.

TROLL (O.S.)
[Haven't you forgotten something?]

ZIN (O.S.)
[Yeah, us.]

MURMAN (O.S.)
[Follow me, Lionheart.]

Mack moves his mouse, clicks it: he's alone in a PRIVATE ROOM
with Murman.

MACKELWAY
Let's talk about Zero.

MURMAN (O.S.)
[Hello, Agent Mackelway. How's the
watch? Maybe you can do one of
those TV commercials, I found my
watch under a serial killer's heart
and it was still ticking.]

MACKELWAY
I want to help you.

MURMAN (O.S.)
[Not the heart, the watch.]

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mack stands, looks at the corkboard as he speaks. He has added an internal FBI evaluation of Low, old Green River documents, a clipping about Low's plane crash.

MACKELWAY

I've located the Suspect Zero file.
Did you know there was one?
Koessler ordered it as part of your
evaluation.

MURMAN (O.S.)

[Don't jerk a jerk-off. There's
nothing in the Bureau mainframe.]

MACKELWAY

Not everything is imputed to
memory. The most confidential stuff
is kept top secret hard copy. Why
would the Zero file be kept secret?

MURMAN (O.S.)

[You tell me.]

MACKELWAY

George Sheldon? The second serial
killer killed in the manner of his
killings. The crime scene profile
was never entered into VICAP. At
whose request? David Koessler.

MURMAN (O.S.)

[What does the file say?]

MACKELWAY

I want to go live with you.

MURMAN (O.S.)

[And I want to go back to
Needlepoint.]

MACKELWAY

Leave this room, I'll go back with
you, blow your cover.

MURMAN (O.S.)

[I don't think so. We want the same
thing. See ya.]

Murman types in a happy face [:-)], logs off private chat.
Mack's alone in the room.

CUT TO:

INT. KOESSLER'S OFFICE DAY

Mack, in suit and tie, has been "called on the carpet."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOESSLER

Why did you go to Chicago?

MACKELWAY

I was visiting an old college friend.

KOESSLER

You didn't tell anyone where you were?

MACKELWAY

An oversight, sir, I apologize. I felt I needed to get away for a day. The pressure. Paid for my own ticket.

KOESSLER

I'm told you've asked for a Bureau cross-check of flight records to and from El Paso, Ft. Myers, Omaha, the Murman murder time frames.

MACKELWAY

I was looking for a pattern.

KOESSLER

That breaks my confidentiality stipulation.

MACKELWAY

I didn't use Low's name.

KOESSLER

There was talk of a file photo.

MACKELWAY

In Ft. Myers before your instruction. Nowhere else, sir.

Mack has violated no stipulations; Koessler knows this. What Koessler has on his mind is less official, more personal:

KOESSLER

Watch out for Dick Low, he's a liar; he has his own world. There was a Junior Agent in Seattle, not unlike you, an Agent who fell under Dick's spell. He'd have done anything for Agent Low. Richard got this Agent to take a suspect to the crime scene, beat him up, force a confession -- all unauthorized, all illegal.

(beat)

The Agent died that night, killed by the suspect.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KOESSLER (CONT'D)

Richard Low got him killed. Worst of all, we had to hush it up, let the suspect go. The suspect was George Sheldon, the second man Richard killed.

MACKELWAY

I understand.

KOESSLER

As far as the public knows, Richard Low is dead. And he will stay dead until we kill him.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE DAY

Mack's cell phone rings as he enters his car. He answers:

LOW (O.S.)

Agent Mackelway?

MACKELWAY

Yes.

LOW (O.S.)

This is Richard Low. Stay on the phone. Do not disconnect. I'm watching you. I will instruct you where to drive.

MACKELWAY

(looking around)

Yes, sir.

LOW (O.S.)

When you exit, head east on 10th.

Mackelway pulls out, drives toward the parking attendant booth.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. DAY

Mackelway's sedan drives past the Jefferson Memorial, crosses the George Mason Bridge headed south.

LOW (O.S.)

Follow the signs to Arlington.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARLINGTON DAY

Mack's sedan weaves its way along the asphalt roads. Low has selected Arlington for an obvious reason: a 360 degree panorama makes it possible to see anyone coming.

LOW (O.S.)
Pull to the side and wait.

Mack does as instructed.

LOW (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Kill the engine. Drop the keys
outside the window.

He does.

LOW (O.S.) (CONT'D)
All right, get out of the vehicle,
leave your weapon on the front
seat. Place your arms atop the
vehicle, spread your legs.

Mackelway complies. As he stands there, a green pickup drives up. Low, wearing work clothes, stops, speaks out the open passenger window:

LOW (CONT'D)
Don't move.

Low gets out, frisks Mackelway: he's clean.

LOW (CONT'D)
Get in.

Mack sits in the passenger seat; Low gets behind the wheel, drives off.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. LOW'S PICKUP DAY

Richard Low drives through rolling fields of white military tombstones. An automatic weapon hangs in Low's side holster.

LOW
Dave Koessler must have you jumping
through hoops.

MACKELWAY
I believe it is you, sir, who has
us jumping through hoops.

LOW
How's the arm?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACKELWAY

I've been reading, hearing about you. I spoke to Koessler, Professor Daitz.

LOW

He couldn't break an egg with a hammer. He still writing those crime porn books?

MACKELWAY

He's moved on to TV.

LOW

He always had a weakness in that area. I saw it the first time I met him. We all had our weaknesses, I guess. Daitz wanted the money. With Dave it was the glory. Koessler saw the Behavioral Sciences Unit as a stepping stone to bigger and better bureaucratic things. He had his eye on the Director's job, even then. Catching killers was a means to an end for them.

Low slows to a stop, parks the pickup under an oak tree. Throughout the ensuing conversation, his eyes roam from the rear view to the side mirrors.

MACKELWAY

What was your weakness, sir?

LOW

I'm not sure, exactly. I had monsters on the brain. I wanted to get these guys, every one of them. I got obsessive.

MACKELWAY

Suspect Zero?

LOW

Deputy Director Koessler opposed the theory because it meant pressing the legal envelope, risking high-profile failure. Better to get rid of me. Then he could be Mr. Serial Killer, Mr. Authority on Deviant Behavior -- no embarrassing questions about the contribution of one Richard Low. Do you really think that plane crashed by accident? Do you really think I wasn't on it by accident? I've always had a good sense of intuition.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MACKELWAY

So you went underground?

LOW

Was I afraid of Dave Koessler? Not likely. I told you, I'd gotten a bit obsessive. It was an opportunity to back off, think things through.

(beat)

Where's the file?

MACKELWAY

I don't carry it with me.

LOW

You're a smart guy. Tell me what it says.

MACKELWAY

"Agent Low's theory of Suspect Zero, the undetected serial killer, is delusional, the product of good intentions, paranoia and obsession..."

Low mimics playing a violin:

LOW

Hum a tune and I'll sing to it.

MACKELWAY

The file, however, was kept open after your death. NPE disappearances, No Plausible Explanation, were sometimes filed there, deleted if the bodies were found.

Low reaches under the seat, removes an 8x10 envelope, hands it to Mack.

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)

What's this?

Mack's hand reaches too far, almost bumps into Richard Low. Low responds by SNAPPING out his automatic in an eye flash, PRESSING the barrel against Mackelway's cheek. His head is squeezed against the back of the truck. Mack is suddenly reminded what a dangerous situation this is; he apologizes with a nod. Low backs off.

Or is this just a manipulation on Low's part, playing Mack like he does that imaginary violin?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LOW

(holsters pistol)
It's my master list of missing persons: men, boys, girls, children over the last ten years. Two hundred and eighty-five names. A pool of possible victims.

MACKELWAY

Zero killed them all?

LOW

Of course not. They're possibles. I've checked them against Bureau records, check them against your file. How did you get it?

MACKELWAY

Daitz hinted it existed. It was a matter of forming the request in the proper terms.

Low smiles knowingly: Bureauese. Knows it well.

LOW

After my hiatus, after I got my priorities readjusted, I drifted online, started tracking porn chat rooms, looking for Zero. Got accepted, came across these boys swapping stories, pictures, downloads. Never found Zero, but I did come across some Class A scumbags.

MACKELWAY

How do you know who's real and who's not?

LOW

And who else did I find? Agent Thomas Mackelway, crackerjack FBI techie. I was greatly disappointed when you were re-assigned.

MACKELWAY

You knew it was me all along?

LOW

Please. You can't hide from me, sonny. I invented the questionnaire. I can tell those who talk from those who do it in the time it takes you to fart.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Mack has opened Low's master list. He goes through the names and the pictures. Some are those he has on his corkboard. In the S's he finds Karen Sumpter, Dell City, Texas.

LOW (CONT'D)

There's someone out there, Mack, I know, some man killing for the fun of it, sniffing human glue, without regard to age or sex, without predicable M.O. Someone who has a way to dispose of the bodies. You have access, you can call up local authorities, check morgues, conduct interviews. Be my man.

MACKELWAY

I already have an employer.

LOW

If you won't do it for me, do it for your cousin, Nadine, right? The girl in the pink sweater.

MACKELWAY

Who told you about her?

LOW

You did. You were with her when she disappeared, right? She took you to the mall or the movies, you turn around and she's gone.

MACKELWAY

It was the mall.

LOW

I know you, Lionheart. I watched your mind work, heard your dirty thoughts --

MACKELWAY

(defensive)

Those were just fantasies.

Low smirks, as if to say: "My point exactly":

LOW

We're alike. We are hunters. We have the gift. It's ancient times all over again. We stand between order and chaos. I need help. I can't carry on alone.

MACKELWAY

Maybe you should back off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

LOW

This guy, Zero, he drifts around,
that's how they all start, drifting
around, their minds filling up with
fantasies. He thinks he's real
smart, laughs at us, laughs at his
victims. But he has left a trail,
and the trail is somewhere in those
names. You know how to reach me.

(starts engine)

Take my advice, when dealing with
these FBI tight-asses, go by the
book. That's what I did.

MACKELWAY

You? You went by the book?

LOW

Yeah, problem was, I had the only
copy. See ya.

Mack, holding the envelope, gets out. Richard Low drives off.

CUT TO:

INT. MACK'S COMPUTER ROOM DAY

It's daytime in Mackelway's lair, but how would you know it?

Mack has reorganized his bulletin board. Low's master list is
tacked across the wall. Below, faxed photos of possible
victims correspond to Low's list. Karen Sumpter's "Oh No,
They Killed Kenny!" picture is tacked over her Missing
Persons form.

Mack thinks, dials phone. An official voice answers:

OFFICER (O.S.)

Hudspeth County Police.

MACKELWAY

Sheriff Dylan, please.

Mack, looking at the bulletin board, waits. Dylan picks up
the phone:

DYLAN (O.S.)

Dylan here.

MACKELWAY

Sheriff Dylan, this is FBI Agent
Thomas Mackelway. Remember me?

DYLAN (O.S.)

Hi there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACKELWAY

I want to talk about the Karen
Sumpter case.

DYLAN (O.S.)

You heard?

MACKELWAY

What?

DYLAN (O.S.)

Her body turned up. In a Minnesota
cemetery. They brought her back.

Mack looks at several newly received autopsy photos of
desiccated corpses. Their names match three of those on Low's
list.

MACKELWAY

You have the body?

DYLAN (O.S.)

She's buried.

MACKELWAY

I want the autopsy report, where is
it, Minnesota?

DYLAN (O.S.)

Winona.

CUT TO:

INT. SHOOTING RANGE DAY

BANG, BANG, BANG. Mack, wearing sound muffler earphones,
squeezes off a half-dozen rounds from an automatic pistol,
piercing a unisex cardboard target.

Setting the gun down, he turns, sees Kulok waiting for him.
Jaime starts to speak. He gestures for her to watch what she
says.

KULOK

This feels like something out of a
spy novel.

MACKELWAY

I guess I'm a little paranoid.

KULOK

What's going on?

He hands in his pistol and headset. They step outside.

CUT TO:

EXT. FBI ACADEMY/QUANTICO DAY

They exit the shooting range, walk through the campus-like setting.

MACKELWAY

I met with Richard Low.

(hands her envelope)

These are names of missing persons he has flagged. I'm double-checking every case, but I don't want to be too obvious about it. I marked the ones I'd like you to work on.

KULOK

Slow down a second, you met with Low --

MACKELWAY

You were right. He found me.

KULOK

And you're working with him?

MACKELWAY

I need something tangible. To hook him. I told him I'd found the confidential file on the Suspect Zero theory.

KULOK

Does one exist?

MACKELWAY

Probably. I told him Koessler had ordered the report, kept it secret.

KULOK

Koessler doesn't know any of this?

MACKELWAY

I've decided to investigate Low's plane crash. While I'm at it, I thought I'd look at the cases Koessler worked with Low.

Jaime lets out a long exhale:

KULOK

I'd be real careful if I were you.

MACKELWAY

It's too late for that. I've gone ahead of the curve on this one. There's no turning back.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)

When this is over, Koessler is going to be right or Low is going to be right or I'm going to be right, but not all of us.

KULOK

It's okay to be wrong, just don't be dead wrong.

MACKELWAY

They say Richard Low is wrong, but because of him, women, innocent women, are alive who would be dead.

KULOK

You're putting me in a difficult position.

MACKELWAY

I got an autopsy report from El Paso that doesn't seem right. A girl on Low's list. Karen Sumpter. We're getting a court order to exhume to body. I'd like you to come and look at it.

(off her look)

Don't worry, I've cleared it.

Kulok agrees.

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)

Jaime, do you think, when this is all over, when we're in different divisions, you think maybe you and me, we could try again?

KULOK

(touched but uncertain)

Mack, I'm just trying to keep up with now.

He nods. They continue.

CUT TO:

INT. ZERO KILL SPACE NIGHT

Camera frame shakes as it approaches the Girl from the snowy mall parking lot, partially nude, dead, eyes and mouth open, lying on a metal box-like grid. Her skin is blue.

Camera continues: seated on the floor, also dead, is her boyfriend. His head jumps; the body is yanked to the floor.

Suspect Zero stands over him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Chat room conversation plays over -- with a difference. Murman's voice is the natural voice of Richard Low; Mackelway's voice is metallic.

TROLL (O.S.)
[Where is the Ripper? Maybe on a tripper.]

MACKELWAY AKA LIONHEART (O.S.)
[Lionheart on a tripper. Something dead has come up. Will return with goodies.]

TROLL (O.S.)
[I feel the need, the need to bleed.]

MURMAN AKA LOW
I have come across some photos,
photos I have not seen before...

CUT TO:

INT. LOW'S COMPUTER ROOM NIGHT

We are in Richard Low's lair: dim, sinister. It vibes fear and death.

Low hunches over a computer screen in what appears to be a basement. A second screen permanently monitors communications to and from the FBI's NCIC mainframe in Washington D.C. The only light comes from the monitors. He types, speaks:

MURMAN AKA LOW
You will benefit from my many years
of selfless research into a subject
that interests us all...

Low double-clicks the scanner icon, places a photo into his scanner. The first is a polaroid of a naked girl, face down, her back cut open.

MURMAN AKA LOW (CONT'D)
These pictures may even bring back
pleasant memories.

The image begins to download.

CUT TO:

INT. EL PASO MORGUE DAY

Title: "El Paso, Texas." George Eaglefoot, the El Paso M.E., stands with Mack and Kulok as an attendant wheels out Karen Sumpter's body.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EAGLEFOOT

The family has gone through a lot.
Their daughter missing, the search,
her body found, the funeral -- then
this order to exhume the corpse.

MACKELWAY

I'm sorry. This won't take long.

EAGLEFOOT

The body was embalmed. I don't
understand --

MACKELWAY

Turn the body over. There was
something in the autopsy report,
yes, here.
(to Kulok)
These burn marks.

EAGLEFOOT

A grill pattern.

MACKELWAY

(growing excitement)
We need to run this through VICAP,
search for similar burns.

KULOK

That's not going to help. This
Minnesota autopsy report, either
the guy was in a hurry or he didn't
know his ass from his elbow. It's
not a regular burn. There's
crystallization in the capillaries.
Blood didn't clot --
(points to Sumpter's
thigh)
It's a freezer burn.

EAGLEFOOT

Must get pretty cold in Minnesota.

They look at him like he just wandered in from the
reservation.

MACKELWAY

But why this pattern?

KULOK

Could be a lot of things. Depends
on the freezer.
(snaps off gloves)
I'm sorry, Mack, but I don't think
this is the answer.

CUT TO:

INT. MCDONALDS DAY

Mackelway and Kulok sit in silence, sipping diet sodas, nibbling at Chicken McNuggets. A gaggle of high school girls gossip and laugh at nearby tables.

Outside the sky is overcast, threatening rain.

KULOK

Tom, you okay?

MACKELWAY

Hardly anyone calls me Tom.
Everybody calls me Mack. I always
liked that.

KULOK

You okay?

MACKELWAY

Yeah, of course.

KULOK

What's going on?

Mack opens his briefcase on an adjoining table, hands her several autopsy photos.

MACKELWAY

These two were on Low's lists, like
Karen Sumpter. Two bodies which had
been buried, discovered. North
Carolina, Utah. This victim...

Mack slips an autopsy photo of a skeletonized figure beneath Kulok's fries.

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)

...dead three years. They were
digging a basement. Disappears in
Iowa, buried in North Carolina.

(shows another photo)

This boy, Evans, like Sumpter, was
brought up by flooding -- the
body's better preserved.

Mack's eyes go from the grizzly photo to the nearby high schoolers.

KULOK

It's quite advanced.

MACKELWAY

Burn marks. The original M.E.
listed it as "burn residue." Same
place, the outer thigh, as Karen
Sumpter.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)

The UNSUB is able to abduct, kill,
transport and bury without
detection.

KULOK

All the same killer?

MACKELWAY

Low calls him Suspect Zero.

KULOK

Suspect Zero is a crackpot theory.
You said so.

MACKELWAY

That's what Koessler wants us to
believe. To discredit Low.

KULOK

You're assigned, we're assigned, to
apprehend Richard Low, not Suspect
Zero. I have to tell you, Mack, I'm
not comfortable where you're going.

MACKELWAY

But it was your idea: "use Zero,"
you said, use Zero to get Low.

Kulok's voice is quiet, the implication clear:

KULOK

If you've changed the focus of this
investigation, I'll have to report
it.

Mack fidgets, upset:

MACKELWAY

I haven't changed anything.
(shoves photos into
briefcase)
Damn.

KULOK

I...

MACKELWAY

(stands)
I've got to take a piss.

She watches as he walks to the restrooms. Mack notices
someone watching from outside, someone SUSPICIOUS. Is he
watching the high school girls?

CUT TO:

INT. MEN'S ROOM DAY

A father speaks to his son in a stall as Mack zips, steps away from the urinal, exits.

CUT TO:

INT. MCDONALDS DAY

Leaving the men's room, Mack again looks out the window. The suspicious man has moved on. Across the parking area, a REFRIGERATED TRACTOR-TRAILER is unloading crates of fruits and vegetables at the rear of a supermarket.

Why hadn't he thought of it before?

He looks for Kulok: out of her seat, she stands by the window watching the truck.

Excited, he joins her:

MACKELWAY

Jaime --

KULOK

(shares his excitement)

It's a truck. A refrigerated truck.

MACKELWAY

Zero abducts victims all over the country, kills them, keeps them refrigerated for days, weeks, even months, then buries them hundreds, thousands of miles away. Karen Sumpter was buried, washed up in a flood. Evans was buried. When we get Zero, we'll find boneyards all across the country.

KULOK

How are we going to find him?

MACKELWAY

Get the routes of all refrigerated trucks over the last ten years. We've got three disappearance cities and dates, three parallel discovery cities. Get into the mainframe, let it crunch this information.

Mack, grabbing his briefcase, is already on the move. Kulok hurries to catch up.

CUT TO:

EXT. INTERSTATE DAY

An enormous eighteen-wheeler. The Peterbuilt cab, belching smoke, is all glistening chrome: wheels, grillwork, mirrors.

Coming up the side of the moving cab, past the "Ever Frost" logo, Suspect Zero sits behind the wheel. Zero, a thirty-plus white man with a blank expression and bad teeth, bobs his head to a mixture of CB, police band and radio rock.

CUT TO:

INT. LOADING DOCK DAY

A side of BEEF shunts forward, smacking into another side of beef. Then another one. A domino chain of frozen bloody carcasses. Sides of beef are being loaded by dock workers into the rear of Zero's semi. Cold steamy air pours from the open truck, mixes with overcast sky.

Zero stands with the DOCK FOREMAN, female, 40. Watching the workers, she checks the trucker's log:

FOREMAN

There seems to be a discrepancy.

ZERO

Not a discrepancy, an error. My capacity is 5.5 tons, not 6.

FOREMAN

I have 6 tons.

ZERO

Mam, it's my truck. I know my own capacity.

FOREMAN

You can't imagine how many men have told me that.

ZERO

(toothy laugh)

It's been customized for sleeping capacity.

FOREMAN

Oh yes, I see. You must get asked this a lot.

ZERO

Not as much as you'd think.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI OFFICE DAY

The elevator opens directly onto the El Paso bullpen; an Agent enters. Mackelway, Kulok and SAC Salinas stand around a monitor in one of the cubicles. John Duncan and other Agents watch from their work stations.

Thunder rolls in the distance; it has begun to rain.

Mack, intent, types his seven digit code followed by screen commands. The computer responds.

Masses of information flash across the monitor screen. Mack highlights the disappearance and discovery cities (and accompanying dates) on a US road grid. He superimposes still downloading delivery routes from every trucking company with refrigerated trucks, then cross-checks the grids.

If he gets a sufficient number of hits from a certain company, he goes back, isolates the refrigerated trucks. From there he checks individual deliveries.

The room buzzes with word of mouth accounts of Mackelway's search. Duncan, using his seven digit personal code, accesses the information on Mack's screen -- APPEARS ON DUNCAN'S SCREEN. Other Agents follow suit.

One company, one truck, one license plate, one driver comes up repeatedly. Mack isolates the truck and driver, flips to the road map grid. Mack gets a hit, then another, then another, FASTER AND FASTER -- 37 in all. The driver's name is Darryl Hawkins.

Hawkins has been in 37 of Low's disappearance cities on the dates of disappearances. He has also been in the three body recovery cities.

Mack requests a DMV search on Darryl Hawkins. His Nebraska driver's license appears on the screen: Hawkins is Suspect Zero. Hawkins' license simultaneously appears on other bullpen monitors.

Mackelway speaks as he types:

MACKELWAY

All right, Mr. Hawkins, where are you headed?

The computer brings up Hawkins' schedule. Tonight he will be in Amarillo.

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)

How far is Amarillo?

SALINAS

350 miles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACKELWAY

(to screen)

Now, Mr. Hawkins, when last in
Amarillo, where did you get gas?

Screen processes requests, returns with a refueling time and date and amount at the Lone Star Truck Rest.

The date simultaneously appears on Duncan's screen.

CUT TO:

INT. LOW'S COMPUTER ROOM DAY

As it does on Richard Low's second monitor, the one permanently connected to the FBI NCIC mainframe. The screen indicates he's tracking requests made through Mack's seven digit code.

Low, wearing a sleeveless T-shirt, scans the details of Darryl Hawkins' Lone Star fueling stop.

On his second computer: Low enters a request for flight schedules.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI OFFICE DAY

Mack turns to Salinas:

MACKELWAY

Locate a jet, we're going to
Amarillo.

SALINAS

Excuse me, Agent Mackelway?

MACKELWAY

This man, Hawkins, has killed
dozens of people. Suspect Zero.

Salinas, walking toward his office, looks back:

SALINAS

First, the regional field Agent can
cover it. Second, it's highly
speculative. Third, I don't like
your tone of voice. Fourth, I need
authorization to commandeer a
plane.

Mack, enthusiasm getting the better of his judgment, presses
on:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACKELWAY

(calls)

You're the SAC. You pick up the phone, you say I want a jet.

Mackelway starts to follow; Kulok tugs at his sleeve:

KULOK

Mack.

Duncan stands to impede Mack's path. Mack brushes past him, enters Salinas' office. Salinas is speaking on the phone.

MACKELWAY

I don't think you understand.

SALINAS

(withering)

What is it exactly I don't understand, Agent Mackelway?

MACKELWAY

Deputy Director Koessler doesn't want Zero. All he cares about is Low.

SALINAS

Perhaps you can explain it to him.

(into phone)

It's Agent Mackelway.

Salinas extends the phone. Mack puts the receiver to his ear.

KOESSLER (O.S.)

He's got you believing in Zero now too.

MACKELWAY

I need to get to Amarillo immediately.

KOESSLER (O.S.)

Have you told Richard Low about Amarillo?

MACKELWAY

I can't. The chat room isn't open for another five days.

KOESSLER (O.S.)

We'll wait. Get online with Low, inform him of Zero's route -- we'll set a trap for him.

MACKELWAY

What about Zero, Darryl Hawkins?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KOESSLER (O.S.)
Hawkins isn't the target, Richard
Low's the target.

MACKELWAY
There's a killer out there -- we
know who he is. He could be
stalking now.

KOESSLER
Dick Low's a killer too.

MACKELWAY
You're as crazy as he is! He's
right! You don't give a damn about
saving lives at all! Fuck you!

Mack slams down the phone, turns to Salinas:

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)
You too.

Mackelway leaves Salinas' office, passes Kulok and Duncan as
he exits.

KULOK
What happened?

MACKELWAY
I'm going to Amarillo.

Mack walks to the elevator, intentionally not looking back.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONE STAR TRUCK REST NIGHT

Gusts of horizontal rain lash the truck stop. A lightning
FLASH silhouettes parked tractor-trailers.

The flash recedes, leaving an "Ever Frost" logo illuminated
by passing headlights. Zero's truck.

CUT TO:

INT. LONE STAR COFFEE SHOP NIGHT

Zero, aka Darryl Hawkins, sips coffee at a booth by the
window. He looks outside, turns his eyes back to the counter.
A THIRTIESH MOTHER sits with her TEN YEAR-OLD BOY wearing a
Bulls T-shirt.

WAITRESS stops at his table:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WAITRESS
More coffee?

ZERO
No thank you, I'm fine.

WAITRESS
(looking out the window)
I don't know how you fellas do it.

ZERO
Mam, just the way you do. One
paycheck at a time.

WAITRESS
(laughs)
You got that right.

She walks back to the kitchen. Her walk takes Zero's eyes
back to the Mother and Son.

MOTHER
Finish your sandwich.

BOY
Mom, I have to go.

MOTHER
(to Waitress)
Where are the toilets?

WAITRESS
Around the side. The door's open.

MOTHER
I'll take you.

BOY
I can go myself.
(softer, urgent)
I gotta do number two.

MOTHER
I'll walk you over. You can come
back by yourself.

The Boy grabs her hand, leads her out the front door.

Zero watches as they SCOOT around the covered corner of the
building. A second later, the Mother, alone, rushes back,
glad to be inside.

Zero, leaving a tip, passes the Mother on his way out.

CUT TO:

EXT. INTERSTATE 27 NIGHT

Rain shrouded headlights move slowly north.

Rain splashes against Mackelway's windshield, water drops pelt the exterior. Mack, leaning forward, watches the road between strokes of the overworked wipers. The police band crackles with static.

Lightning flash illuminates a sign: "Amarillo 11 miles."

CUT TO:

INT. RESTROOM NIGHT

Floor level POV: two small feet, pants around the ankles, dangle over the edge of the toilet.

Zero silently stands, looks around. The room is deserted. He leans, looks down the hall past a sign reading "Showers/Lockers." Nothing.

He touches his penis absent-mindedly, the way someone else might bite his lip. He steps over to two wall-mounted hand dryers, activates them. The dryers create white noise.

He steps toward the Boy's stall. Removes an eight-inch lead-filled pipe from his pocket, slips it into waistband.

Zero pauses. Something, intuition, a sixth sense born of experience, stops him.

Camera glides over stall partition to see what Zero suspects: Richard Low, soaking wet, sits atop the toilet bowl. He has one arm around the Boy's chest, the other clamped over his mouth. He listens.

Outside the stall, Zero walks to the door, opens, closes it.

Inside the stall, Low, gun in hand, leans forward, unlocks the stall door, sticks his head out --

CRACK! Zero whacks Low's protruding head with the lead pipe. Low, astonished, spins as he falls, watching Zero wide-eyed. His head BANGS against the tile floor. He's out cold.

Zero turns to the terrified Boy:

ZERO

Did that man scare you?

The Boy shakes his frightened head "yes."

ZERO (CONT'D)

I ain't gonna hurt you. Let's go back to your Momma.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Boy nods as Zero takes his hand.

CUT TO:

INT. HELICOPTER NIGHT

Agents Salinas and Kulok, riding in back of a four seat military chopper, look out the windows, straining to see through the rainy night.

Salinas, speaking over the headset, points out something to Kulok: another helicopter headed toward them.

The two choppers swing in line, head in the same direction.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONE STAR NIGHT

Mackelway, seeing the exit sign, activates his turn signal. The eye of the thunderstorm has passed, leaving in its wake heavy rain.

Mack, pulling off the interstate, sees the glowing Lone Star Truck Rest sign.

Looking around, preparing to stop, he notices a refrigerated tractor-trailer pulling away. He looks at the Nebraska license plate: it's Hawkins' truck.

Mack follows.

CUT TO:

INT. MEN'S ROOM NIGHT

Richard Low, woozy, regains consciousness. He looks across the bathroom floor, realizes where he is. He feels the cut on his head, reaches for his pistol, gets up.

Low staggers from the stall, composes himself, looks around: not a soul. That's odd.

He pushes open the door --

CUT TO:

EXT. MEN'S ROOM NIGHT

And is greeted by two patrol car SPOTLIGHTS. Squinting through the glare and rain, he sees four Texas Rangers, their guns aimed at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANGER

Put down your weapon! Now!

Low complies.

RANGER (CONT'D)

Raise your arms, get on the ground,
spread your arms and legs.

Low raises his arms. Hearing a sound, he looks up: two large helicopters approach in the distance.

Turning to get on all fours, he sees the frantic Mother going from one policeman to another:

MOTHER

Have you seen a boy, ten years old?
Wearing a Chicago Bulls T-shirt?

The police are too preoccupied with the arrest of Richard Low to give her their full attention.

Low spread-eagles on the ground. Police rush over.

CUT TO:

INT. ZERO CAB NIGHT

Zero, riding high in his big rig, listens to the police band.

Reports of a successful apprehension at the truck stop crackle from one walkie to the next.

CUT TO:

EXT. REST STOP NIGHT

Salinas and Kulok, wearing FBI rain slickers and plastic covered caps, join up with David Koessler and a subordinate Agent, also dressed for rain, walking from the second helicopter.

They greet; Salinas points out the Rangers. They walk to where Rangers hold Low, drenched, open cut on his head. Low turns to Deputy Director Koessler:

LOW

Miss me, Dave?

KOESSLER

(to Rangers)

Thank you, Rangers.

(to Salinas and
subordinate Agent)

Put this man in the unmarked.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Salinas and the Agent escort Low. The frantic Mother, going from officer to officer, catches Jaime's attention.

Salinas opens the rear door of the unmarked, prepares to put Low inside. Low turns to Koessler:

LOW
I hope you're wearing a
prophylactic, Dave, cause you just
fucked yourself.

Koessler grabs Low's head, BANGS it against the top of the car, RAMS him inside, SLAMS the door.

KOESSLER
(to Kulok)
I'll drive.
(to Salinas)
Arrange a lead and follow car.

CUT TO:

INT. MACK'S CAR NIGHT

Mackelway, following Zero's eighteen wheeler, listens to the police band: suspect taken into custody at rest stop, is being transported to Amarillo.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. UNMARKED CAR NIGHT

Three pairs of headlights drive a two-lane road toward Amarillo; the unmarked car flanked by two police vehicles.

Inside, Koessler drives; Kulok rides shotgun. In the back, Low, handcuffed, winces. Watery blood drips into his eyes.

LOW
(to Kulok)
Agent...

KULOK
Kulok.

LOW
Agent Kulok, could you wipe my
face?

KOESSLER
(stern)
Don't you touch him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOW

(to Koessler)

You better hope the Director
doesn't stop abruptly one day,
David, you might break your nose.

KOESSLER

You're a disgrace to law
enforcement, to the Bureau -- and
to me.

LOW

How did a girl like me end up in a
place like this?

(to Kulok)

The Deputy Director here, he
believes in Tough Love. A cop's
cop. Shape up or ship out, righto?
Agent Kulok, when you get a chance
you might want to check the victims
of the recent serials. You'll find
that some of them have been
credited to other killers, some
years ago. That's a Dave Koessler
trick, find a pliant sociopath,
preferably a dead one, attribute to
him unsolved cases, clean up the
backlog--looks great in the yearly
report.

Koessler has to restrain himself to keep from reaching over
the seat and hitting Low again:

KOESSLER

You are so fucked up.

LOW

Suspect Zero, now there's an idea
that doesn't look good on paper --

Koessler speaks into the two-way:

KOESSLER

Agent Salinas, you can proceed to
Amarillo. Instruct the lead car to
follow you.

Kulok, concerned, looks at Koessler: what's going on? There's
a beat before Salinas responds:

SALINAS (O.S.)

Yes, sir.

LOW

Shot trying to escape. How
convenient.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Koessler watches as the lead and follow cars pull out, proceed ahead without them.

LOW (CONT'D)

When I was at the rest stop, there was a young boy, maybe ten, and his mother. Darryl Hawkins, Zero, abducted the boy in the men's room. I tried to stop him. He cold-cocked me --

KOESSLER

Listen to this guy? Can you believe this? He'll never change. Born a liar, first word out of his mouth was a lie. Make up a story, always a story, any goddamn story, to save his ass.

Low, realizing he has a more sympathetic listener in Jaime, directs his comments to her:

LOW

Agent Kulok, that boy, as we speak, is in Hawkins' truck, probably still alive, in a dark refrigerated compartment, shivering in just a T-shirt: put yourself in his mind, freezing, terrified, wanting his mother. Put yourself in his mother's place, desperate, imagining the worst is happening as she pleads, back there at the rest stop, for someone, anyone, to listen to her. This is not hypothetical, this is real. It is happening now and you can do something about it.

KOESSLER

Shut the fuck up or I'll shut you up.

LOW

(to Kulok)

You have to save this boy. Good exists in this world. I can prove it because you can, in your life, save this one person.

Koessler's had as much of this as he can take. He pulls to the side of the road.

Koessler puts the car into park; his left hand opens the jacket covering his shoulder holster. If Jaime is to act, it must be now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

She removes her automatic, POINTS it at her boss:

KULOK
Deputy Director, get out, sir.

KOESSLER
What are you doing?

KULOK
Please.

Koessler looks at her gun, realizes she is serious:

KOESSLER
Mackelway, I could understand. He is over-emotional by nature, but you, Agent Kulok, you had a shining career in front of you.

KULOK
Just step outside, sir. Now. Keep your hands where I can see them.

Koessler looks from Low to Kulok to Low.

KULOK (CONT'D)
If you're wondering, yes, I will use this weapon if necessary.

Koessler has no choice. Keeping his hands visible, he opens the door, steps out. He turns to Low:

KOESSLER
Dick, you may fool this girl here, you may fool Mackelway, but you'll never fool me.

Koessler exits. Jaime, sliding behind the wheel, locks the door. She drops the car into gear, PULLS AWAY, leaving Koessler alone in the rain.

Richard Low, watching Koessler, acting like he's suddenly in charge:

LOW
Okay, swing this thing around. Put a BOLO out on Hawkins. Peterbuilt 18 wheeler, Nebraska license number TRV437. He'll be headed west on I-40.

Kulok slows, does a 180. She turns on the red flashing dash light, hits the siren.

LOW (CONT'D)
Unlock these cuffs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

KULOK

Sit back.

She accelerates west.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. ZERO AND MACK NIGHT

Zero, listening to the police band, listens to Kulok's "Be On the LookOut" regarding his Peterbuilt. He decides to exit.

Mackelway watches as Zero's turn signals flash. He follows the huge truck down the Exit 29 ramp.

Mack keys his walkie:

MACKELWAY

This is Officer Tom. Urgent communication for Dr. Kulok: zero-x-two-inner...

Zero, listening, doesn't pick up on the code.

CUT TO:

INT. ZERO KILL SPACE NIGHT

The Boy, hands bound, lies in a ball on the floor, trying to conserve the little body heat that remains. He blue lips tremble.

MACKELWAY (O.S.)

...repeat, zero-x-two-niner.

Across the dark space, barely visible, the frozen carcasses of the High School Couple hang against the wall.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. KULOK AND LOW NIGHT

Listening to Mack's message.

LOW

Zero's exiting at Exit 29.

Kulok responds on the radio:

KULOK

Ten four. En route with Low.

She puts down the radio mike.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KULOK (CONT'D)

Mack must think Zero has a police band.

LOW

Of course he does. Now get the key, get these things off me.

(she ignores him)

Unhook me.

Jaime watches a passing sign: "Exit 28, 1 mile. Exit 29, 21 miles."

A flash of HOSTILITY colors Low's voice:

LOW (CONT'D)

Uncuff me. What's wrong with you? Don't you want to save the boy?

KULOK

I want to protect the boy. I also want to protect Suspect Zero -- from you.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATE ROAD NIGHT

Zero slows his truck on an empty highway, turns onto a deserted access road. He climbs out of the cab carrying a flashlight, walks through the rain to the back of the eighteen wheeler.

Stretching the key from his belt, Zero unlocks the padlock, opens the rear of the truck. Cold air flows into the humid night.

He steps up between hung beef carcasses.

CUT TO:

EXT. MACK'S CAR NIGHT

Mackelway cuts the headlights, drives cautiously toward the rear lights of Zero's truck.

He parks his sedan, cuts the engine.

CUT TO:

INT. ZERO'S KILL SPACE NIGHT

Pushing aside slabs of beef, Zero uses the flashlight to illuminate a hidden entrance at the far end of the freezer compartment. He unlocks it; the door opens to his kill space.

The terrified Boy looks into Zero's flashlight beam.

ZERO
You all right?

Zero pulls a killing knife from his boot.

ZERO (CONT'D)
You ever cut up animals, son? Watch
'em bleed, watch the life flow out
of them?

CUT TO:

EXT. TRUCK NIGHT

Mackelway, gun in hand, walks toward the open rear doors of Zero's Peterbuilt. A work light silhouettes the carcasses.

Mack wipes the rain from his eyes, approaches the truck. Looking, listening, he climbs inside.

He steps between slabs of beef, inches forward. He can see a moving shadow behind the partially open door at the far end.

He hears Zero's voice:

ZERO (O.S.)
This is gonna hurt.

Mack, gun leading the way, inches toward the kill space. Bracing himself, he KICKS open the door, aims the gun at Zero:

MACKELWAY
Put the knife down, Hawkins.
(Zero hesitates)
Put the knife down!

Zero reluctantly lowers the blade to the floor.

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)
(to the Boy)
Son, can you hear me? Do you
understand what I'm saying?
(Boy nods)
Good. Come this way, past me, get
out of this truck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Boy seizes the opportunity. He RUNS away from Zero, straight into Mack, BUMPING him as he struggles to exit the kill space.

Mackelway, spun back by the Boy, doesn't see Zero coming.

Zero CHOPS Mack's wrist. His gun falls as the Boy escapes.

Zero powerfully wrenches Mack's hands behind him, yanks him backward, reaches for his knife.

Mack breaks free, turns around. Zero, knife in hand, has him CORNERED. Mack's gun is out of reach. Mack speaks to Zero:

MACKELWAY (CONT'D)

I'm Agent Thomas Mackelway, FBI.
There is no way you will escape.
Assistant Deputy Director Richard
Low is en route with another Agent.

(Zero doesn't react)

You may know Low by another name.
You may know him by the name
Murman. I am Lionheart.

ZERO

(disdain)

Murman!

MACKELWAY

He's a brilliant man. Brilliant
enough to catch you.

ZERO

Brilliant? You think he caught any
of them because he was brilliant?
Hardboy? MyDick? Imelda? Ripper?
Think about it, how did he locate
them?

(Mack has no answer)

He found them as Murman. And how
did Murder Man find them? With
sweet talk and brains? No. He did
it with souvenirs. He took them
into private rooms, swapped
goodies: pictures, panties,
jewelry, body parts. Snuff
downloads. As bait. That's why I
never exchanged with him. He killed
girls, oh yeah, harvested them. He
had the best stuff. Richard Low is
Murman and Murman is one of us.

The realization hits Mack: of course.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATE ROAD NIGHT

Low leans over Kulok's shoulder as she takes Exit 29, drives down the dark road. They see something through the windshield:

The Boy stands in the center of the road, JUMPING up and down in the rain.

Jaime stops beside the Boy, jumps out, embraces him, unties him.

LOW

Where is he? Where is he?

The Boy POINTS to distant access road; red lights glow from the back of Zero's truck.

KULOK

(to Boy)

Keep walking toward the highway.
Wait there.

She jumps behind the wheel, cuts the headlights, drives toward the access road.

CUT TO:

EXT. INTERSTATE NIGHT

David Koessler, rain-soaked, manages to flag down a passing patrol car.

Holding up his ID, he speaks to the patrolman.

CUT TO:

INT. ZERO'S KILL SPACE NIGHT

Zero, killing blade held high, approaches Mackelway:

ZERO

You want to get into my head,
Lionheart? Well, come on in!

Zero makes slow slicing motion; Mack tenses.

ZERO (CONT'D)

You want to "profile" me? Find out
what makes me "tick"? Write about
me, go on a talk show, give me a
nickname?

MACKELWAY

It's over for you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZERO
Take your shirt off.

Mack, playing for time, loosens his tie.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRUCK NIGHT

Kulok pulls near Zero's Peterbuilt, puts the unmarked vehicle in park.

Richard Low, sensing she is going to leave him in the car, grows increasingly agitated:

LOW
Uncuff me! You can't go alone!

Kulok unholsters her weapon, checks it.

Low, so close to the quarry he has stalked for so long, THRASHES like a dog in heat:

LOW (CONT'D)
I'll do anything! I'll turn myself in! You can't go without me!

Jaime, realizing he will break the windows if necessary to get out, improvises a strategy:

KULOK
Okay, I'll unhook you. No weapon.

LOW
No weapon.

KULOK
Turn around. Stretch your arms over the seat.

Low, turning, complies. He grimaces, thrusts his manacled wrists over the seat.

KULOK (CONT'D)
A little more.

Low grunts, pushes his arms. Jaime takes a second pair of handcuffs from her belt, CLIPS one cuff to the steering wheel, the other to the chain between Low's wrists. He's chained back first to the steering wheel. The cuffs snap like an echo inside Low's head:

LOW
Bitch! Cunt! Please, please, please don't do this, Agent Kulok. You need me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KULOK
I'll be back.

She gets out, slams the door. Low, shackled inside, presses his face to the window, watches her, like a caged animal.

CUT TO:

INT. ZERO'S KILL SPACE NIGHT

Mackelway, clammy in the freezing air, now bare-chested. Zero presses the tip of his knife into Mack's nipple.

ZERO
Can you feel that? Good, huh? Make your move. Make your fucking move, Agent Mackelway.

Zero TIPS the blade in. Mack grimaces.

CUT TO:

INT. UNMARKED CAR NIGHT

Richard Low, watching Kulok walk away, cannot abide the possibility that he will be a spectator to the event he has pursued for so long.

Seeing the mounted shotgun, Low SWINGS his legs around, presses the soles of his shoes against the windshield.

In pain, he positions himself so that the chain linking his handcuffs together is flat against the opening of the shotgun barrel.

Now all he has to do is contort his body, wheel his head down, activate the trigger with his tongue and teeth.

He does: the ensuing BLAST rocks the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRUCK NIGHT

Kulok, hearing the shotgun blast, wheels around.

CUT TO:

INT. ZERO'S KILL SPACE NIGHT

Zero hears the shotgun blast.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRUCK NIGHT

Kulok is greeted by a horrific sight:

Richard Low tumbles out the passenger door, struggles to his feet: his left hand is blown away, his arm a bleeding stump. The handcuffs hang from his right hand. The shotgun blast has seared his side and arm.

Low uses his bleeding stump to PUMP the shotgun.

Kulok, stunned, FIRES as she raises her automatic.

CUT TO:

ZERO'S KILL SPACE NIGHT

Simultaneous actions: Mack catches the distracted Zero by surprise, WHIRLS him around, placing him in a CHOKE HOLD. Wrestling Zero's knife from his hand, Mack puts the knife to Zero's throat.

CUT TO:

TRUCK NIGHT

Low's smile tells Kulok she missed. He fires the pump shotgun
--

The BLAST hits her mid-chest, sends her flying backwards, hitting the ground with a SPLASH.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK NIGHT

Pushing Zero forward betwixt the hung slabs of beef, Mack reacts to the shotgun blast. Zero, trying to escape, THROWS an elbow.

Mack squeezes Zero's neck tighter, the knife bringing a LINE OF BLOOD above his collar bone.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRUCK NIGHT

Kulok, on her back, cranes her neck to view the rear of the truck. Blurry figures move in the rain.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRUCK NIGHT

Appearing at the rear of the refrigerated truck, Mack and Zero see the same sight:

Richard Low, bleeding profusely, stepping over Kulok's body, pointing a shotgun at them with a manacled right hand. Low steadies his aim.

MACKELWAY

No!

Low fires: blood BLOSSOMS across Zero's side, knocking both him and Mack off the back of the truck. Arms flailing, they SPLAT to the ground.

The blast knocks Low backward; he FALLS to the ground.

Zero, bleeding, struggles to his feet, staggers away. Mack grabbing Zero's knife, steps to Jaime, checks her pulse: she's alive.

Mack, picking up speed, tracks Zero.

Low, watching Zero stagger off, whines like a chained animal. He attempts to stand, cannot.

Turning onto his side, he attempts to pump the shotgun.

Running now, Mack pursues Zero. About to be jumped from behind, Zero turns, CHOP BLOCKS Mackelway to the ground, climbs ATOP of him.

They wrestle in the muddy rocks. Mack, gaining the upper hand, grabs Zero's hand and the knife it holds, FORCES IT INTO THE SIDE OF HIS FACE. Zero is finally dead.

Mack pulls himself up, retraces his steps.

Reaching Jaime, he lifts her, carries her to shelter under Zero's semi. He looks at her: he seems changed by these events, changed in a way he cannot yet articulate.

Looking toward her headlights, he sees Richard Low attempting to stand.

Mackelway stands, heads toward Low. Kulok's gun lies in the mud where she fell; Mack stoops to pick it up.

Low, drenched through with blood and mud, has righted himself on his knees. Mack approaches. They exchange looks.

Low slowly RAISES the pumped shotgun, points it at Thomas Mackelway.

Mackelway FIRES Kulok's automatic. The bullet HITS Low in the chest. He FALLS a final time. Mack walks over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Low looks up at Mack:

LOW
You know what that's called?
(Mack doesn't answer)
Suicide by cop.

Mack kicks away the shotgun.

LOW (CONT'D)
Is he dead?

MACKELWAY
Yeah.

LOW
The boy's okay. I saw him...

Low gestures with his head: come closer. Mack drops to his knees, bends closer to Low.

LOW (CONT'D)
Was it Zero?

MACKELWAY
Yeah.

Low tries to speak; his voice is barely audible. Mack leans his ear closer:

LOW
(guttural)
I have something for you. Just for
you.

Mack, lifting Low's head, leans his ear to his mouth.

LOW (CONT'D)
In my right pocket. 1242 East Storm
Street, Marshalltown, Iowa. Oh
fuck, it hurts.

Low, shivering, dies.

Mackelway reaches into Low's right pocket, retrieves house keys.

Hearing a distant sound, Mack looks up: a HELICOPTER approaches in the distance. Its spotlight rakes the landscape.

Mack, holding Jaime's gun, pocketing Low's keys, runs from the scene -- past Zero's truck, past Zero's body, into the dark Texas night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The approaching helicopter finds nothing but bodies.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. MARSHALLTOWN DAY

FADE IN: another day, perhaps months hence.

Thomas Mackelway, beard growth on his face, wearing farm clothes, steps out of a compact car.

He checks the address, walks up to 1242 East Storm. A normal house on a normal street in as normal a town as one could imagine.

Mack, looking side to side, uses Low's keys to open the front door.

CUT TO:

INT. LOW'S HOUSE DAY

The house is, on the surface, unexceptional. Everything is as one would expect.

Mack drifts from room to room until he finds a locked door. Using a second key, he opens it.

It leads to a cellar.

CUT TO:

INT. LOW'S COMPUTER ROOM NIGHT

Mack flips on the light, steps down the stairs: Low's secret life stands revealed. Mackelway crosses to Low's work station, looks at the still active screen monitors.

Continuing on, he comes to the source, the soul, the core of Richard Low's depravity: a killing table soaked dark red with stains, photos of murder victims -- his own and others. He opens a refrigerator: inside are body parts -- ears, eyes, noses, breasts. Robert Testa's foot. Each identified by name and date.

Mackelway approaches an extended bulletin board. There, under the rubric "Suspect Zero," are Missing Persons reports and photos of victims, among them Karen Sumpter.

Below this, yet ANOTHER lineup under the words "Suspect Zero #2" -- more pictures, more Missing Persons.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And below: "Suspect Zero #3." More photos, more possibilities.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS STATION DAY

America: any town, anywhere.

Tom Mackelway, dressed as a security guard, watches travelers come and go, all the while keeping track of one area, the area of his attention: a bank of lockers.

A man, a white man, a furtive man, a fucking loser, enters, checking a locker number on a piece of paper, looking this way and that, all the while inching closer to a particular locker.

Mack watches him, waits. Over we hear a metallic voice:

MACKELWAY (O.S.)
[This is Lionheart. Sorry for the
abrupt departure. Glad to be back.
I missed you guys.]

THE END