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THE LITTLE THINGS

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BLUE DRAFT

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. WEST HOLLYWOOD - SOMEONE'S POV - A PAN - NIGHT 1

SUPERIMPOSE: LOS ANGELES, 1990

We HOLD ON a dark corner in a good neighborhood in the Hollywood foothills. WE HEAR POUNDING FOOTSTEPS, and, in the distance, TWO JOGGERS appear, running down the street.

NEW ANGLE

ON the JOGGERS, a GUY and a GIRL. The girl is RONDA RATHBUN and she's memorably cute, 22 or so, a brunette we won't be able to shake from our memory.

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

RONDA
Go again on Wednesday?

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

RONDA
Three blocks. I'll be fine.

The GUY smiles, waves, and disappears up a block. RONDA continues on down the street. We FOLLOW her as she runs.

We notice a RED BARRETTE holding her hair in a ponytail. And then WE HOLD as she runs away FROM us, passes the glow of a streetlight, and disappears into blackness.

POV FROM A CAR (MOVING) - RONDA

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

NEW ANGLE

A DARK SEDAN, we can't really make it out, follows her along the dark street, then passes her and disappears. Then, far in the distance WE SEE the sedan's BRAKE LIGHTS flash and fade.

WE HOLD for a few seconds, then BOOM UP, HIGH ABOVE the block.

2 LOS ANGELES - NIGHT TO DAWN (INTERVALOMETER) 2

City lights. Hollywood, and in the distance, downtown on one side and Century City on the other. A dot, then a flicker, then a stream of light begins to change everything. Hookers off their corners, cockroaches bedded down, rats in their holes. Dawn.

CUT TO:

3 CLOSEUP - A SPOT OF RED 3

on pavement, surrounded by broken glass.

A FINGER touches it.

DEKE (O.S.)

That's blood.

BURNS (O.S.)

Good. I hope they bleed to death.

WE PAN FROM the finger TO its owner: DEKE. His Christian name's JOE DEACON and he wears a sheriff's deputy uniform plus the toilsome demeanor of someone who's seen 100 years' worth of this world. Too bad he's only 50.

EXT. BLACK ANGUS RESTAURANT (BAKERSFIELD) - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: BAKERSFIELD

The restaurant manager, BURNS, short, bald, livid, stands over Deacon.

BURNS

Third time in two months. There's 47 bulbs in the letter 'G.' \$3.10 a pop. \$145.70 every time. That's 13 additional dinners I gotta sell to float. Not counting lost business. Are you listening to me?

Deke stands, nods.

BURNS

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

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

(CONTINUED)

3

CONTINUED:

3

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

DEKE

Not exactly a Happy Meal.

4

INT. KERN COUNTY SHERIFF'S - DAY

4

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

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, Deke?...

5

INT. CAPTAIN DAVIS' OFFICE - DAY

5

HENRY DAVIS is 60, soft; the foreman of the shop. Deke
looks in.

DAVIS

Remember a punk named JJ
Kendricks?

While Deke rummages through his brain...

DAVIS

Robbed the Kwik-mart on Yaupon;
shot and killed the owner? We've
got a witness who I.D.'ed him, but
she's gettin' the guilts; can't be
absolutely, positively sure he's
the guy. All she knows for
certain is he was wearing a really
nice pair of boots. Fancy
stitching. 'Unforgettable,' she
says.

DEKE

(remembers)

What about the .38 he used?

DAVIS

Ah, the fog lifts? Two searches --
his apartment here and Granny's in
L.A. Nada. But, they came up
with a pair of 'unforgettable'
bloodstained boots. Crime lab ran
an ABO. Both Kendricks and the
vic were eliminated but Kendricks
is a suspect in a robbery down
there.

(CONTINUED)

DEKE

Is this headed somewhere?

DAVIS

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

Deke grimaces at the prospect.

DEKE

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

DAVIS

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

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

DEKE

Please...?

Davis considers the odd plea, then shrugs...

DAVIS

I got nobody else.

... and hands the file to Deke.

EXT. DEKE'S HOUSE (HIGH DESERT) - DAY

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

Deke, carrying the file, exits the house and locks the door. A CUR DOG trots down a dusty ridge and up to him.

DEKE

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

The dog rubs against Deke's pants leg. He lifts a boot and scratches the hound's back, sending the pooch to Heaven. Then Deke walks to the Bronco, reaches in, and finds a bone; tosses it to the hound.

DEKE

See ya tonight.

7 EXT. "TWIN TOWERS" - DAY (ESTABLISHING) 7

Reporters, civilians, and law enforcement officials move in and out of the huge building.

8 INT. COUNTY SHERIFF'S - HOMICIDE - DAY 8

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

SGT. JIM BAXTER, 35, lean, handsome, appears in his doorway.

BAXTER

Whattaya need, Cap?

FARRIS

I scheduled a press conference for 5 today. Give an update -- leads are being followed, suspects questioned, progress, etcetera.

BAXTER

I just did one three days ago.

FARRIS

Four dead girls, Jimmy. Haven't been under this much scrutiny since the Night Stalker.

(beat)

There's talk.

Baxter doesn't know how to take this.

FARRIS

Sheriff hinted we might consider reaching out to the feds for help. At some point.

BAXTER

Are you kidding me?!

FARRIS

'At some point,' Jimmy. 'At some point.' Not today. Today you're gonna work the case and do this press conference. That's why I scheduled it. To keep you front and center.

Baxter grimaces but takes it.

(CONTINUED)

FARRIS

I know it's a hustle, but if anyone can put the right spin on this, it's you.

BAXTER

(on exit)

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

INT. HOMICIDE - BULLPEN - DAY

Baxter enters the bullpen -- a large area with a multitude of desks, charts, and coffee machines.

SAL RIZOLI, 45, (but he's looked 45 for 20 years), spots Baxter and whistles to JAMIE ESTRADA, 30, the youngest and most attractive (though she tries to hide it) of this group of detectives.

Baxter points to Rizoli as he approaches.

RIZOLI

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

BAXTER

(to Jamie)

Re-interview Nichols' landlord.

JAMIE

Re-re-interview?

BAXTER

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

SAL

Yeah, but twice?

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

10 INT./EXT. DEKE'S BRONCO - FREEWAY - DAY 10

As the radio plays a love song, Deke drives, his eyes on...

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

DEKE

City of Angels. No sweat. In and out.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

In our top story, sheriff's officials have confirmed that the rash of killings that have occurred over the past two months are, in fact, connected. The fourth victim --

Deke turns off the radio.

11 EXT. EVIDENCE LAB (DOWNTOWN) - PARKING LOT - DAY 11

Deke pulls into the small parking lot. No empty spaces. He stifles a curse, pulls directly behind an unmarked vehicle, blocking it, parks, and gets out.

12 INT. SEROLOGY LAB - DAY 12

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

BAXTER sits across from AMY ANDERS, 30, a serologist, as she hands over packages filled with bloodstained clothing.

ANDERS

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

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

DEKE enters. He and Baxter lock eyes.

DEKE

(proffering form)

Here to pick up seized evidence.
Property said it was here.

(CONTINUED)

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

BAXTER

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

Anders gives a half-hearted nod.

BAXTER

(under his breath)

I need this, Amy. I really need this.

She sighs and reaches for one of the packages.

ANDERS

So... we screen 'em again.

BAXTER

Thank you.

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

ANDERS

Yo, Kern County?

Deke hands over the form. Anders hurries away. Deke gingerly opens the paper evidence bag and fingers the blood-soaked sundress.

CLOSEUP - DEKE

transformed to another place and time...

CLOSEUP - THE SUNDRESS

"tie-dyed" in blood.

FLASH TO:

12pt

ANOTHER BLOOD-SOAKED DRESS

12pt

A HAND fingers it gingerly.

ANDERS (O.S.)

Hands off.

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

(CONTINUED)

12pt

CONTINUED:

12pt

ANDERS

The evidence is here but it's not leaving without a signature.

Deke reaches in his breast pocket for a pen.

ANDERS

Not yours. I need authorization from Homicide to release.

DEKE

There's a prelim tomorrow...

ANDERS

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

DEKE

It's already been tested...

ANDERS

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

DEKE

So I hear.

ANDERS

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

13

EXT. EVIDENCE LAB (DOWNTOWN) - PARKING LOT - DAY

13

DEKE walks out the door and spots...

BAXTER watching as a TOW TRUCK DRIVER hooks his crane to the back of Deke's Bronco.

DEKE

Hey!... Hey!

BAXTER

This yours?

DEKE

(to tow driver)
Unhook it.

The driver sighs and does so.

(CONTINUED)

13

CONTINUED:

13

BAXTER

You blocked me in.

DEKE

Why not just ask me to move it?

BAXTER

Because I don't have time. You want special treatment, go back to Kern County.

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

14

INT. L.A. SHERIFF'S - PRESS ROOM - DAY (LATER)

14

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

BAXTER

Sorry, I'm late...

15

INT. LASD - HALLWAY - DAY

15

Deke walks past uniforms and plainclothes cops. A few recognize him. He ventures a nod now and again as he spots Baxter at the podium. Deke settles in at Farris' door.

Farris looks up and almost groans. The two men share a look. These guys have a history.

DEKE

(re: verse on wall)

I see Brother Love's salvation show's still in operation.

FARRIS

Everybody needs a little faith. Even you, Deacon.

DEKE

(re: Baxter)

Got yourself a new disciple?

FARRIS

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

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

(CONTINUED)

FARRIS

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

DEKE

Why? You wanna take me to dinner?

FARRIS

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

DEKE

No. Tomorrow's no good...

FARRIS

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

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

FARRIS

(sarcastic)

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

DEKE

Nice seein' you, too... Captain.

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

ROGERS

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

DEKE

Still paddin' your overtime, Rogers?

ROGERS

That's Sergeant Rogers now, Deacon.

16

CONTINUED:

16

DEKE
(sarcastic as hell)
Couldn't happen to a nicer guy.

Rogers walks away, grumbling...

17

INT. PRESS ROOM - DAY

17

BAXTER
(at the podium)
... and I'm pleased to report
we're making good progress...

His attention drifts to...

THROUGH THE GLASS -- IN THE HALL -- DEKE stands watching.
Then he walks through the door and into the press room.

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

DEKE leans against the wall. A REPORTER, FLANDERS,
slides in next to him. Baxter continues in the b.g.

FLANDERS
Niceta see ya, Deke.
(re: Baxter)
He's good, huh? Camera ready.

BAXTER, mid-answer, still eyes Deke, who whispers
something to Flanders. Flanders raises his hand. Baxter
notices but continues...

BAXTER
It's a complicated case with
multiple crime scenes and a
surplus of evidence, which will
hopefully lead us to the killer.
We're being both methodical and
light on our feet in our efforts.
(points to Flanders)
Yes?

FLANDERS
So, correct me if I'm wrong, but
what I'm hearing is: After two
months and four victims you don't
have a suspect.

BAXTER
(holding anger)
None that I can discuss.

(CONTINUED)

17

CONTINUED:

17

DEKE smiles, shakes his head, and exits.

18

EXT. TWIN TOWERS - NIGHT

18

Deacon exits the building.

VOICE (O.S.)

Sonofabitch!!

Deke looks up to see SAL RIZOLI approaching. Deke smiles, offers his hand.

DEKE

Hey, Sal. You still hanging around?

SAL

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

DEKE

Don't ask, don't tell.

SAL

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

Deke weighs the offer.

SAL

Come on. What's one cup of coffee?

19

INT. TWIN TOWERS - NIGHT

19

Glassed-in stairwell looking out on the parking lot. Baxter descends with DENNIS WILLIAMS, another detective.

WILLIAMS

You wanna grab a bite?

BAXTER

Naw, I'm gonna surprise Ana and come home for once.

(beat; out the window)

Who's that Kern patrol dep talkin' to Sal?

WILLIAMS

That's Joe Deacon...

(CONTINUED)

19

CONTINUED:

19

BAXTER

Joe Deacon? You're kidding?

20

INT. NICK'S - NIGHT

20

Sal and Deke...

SAL

... a bunch of Nancies. End of shift, I have to beg for somebody to grab a beer with. They got no soul, these new guys. They weeded all the heart outta the place. But then, you know that better than anybody.

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

SAL

Hey, Sarge. You know Joe Deacon?

Baxter nods a less-than-generous greeting. Deke gives it right back to him. Sal watches nervously.

BAXTER

You get what you came for?

DEKE

I will.

BAXTER

And you've got nothing better to do than bust my balls in the meantime?

SAL

Nuthin' personal. Deke busts everybody's balls.

DEKE

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

Baxter just glares.

DEKE

But, hey, it's your shift.

BAXTER

Yes, it is.

(CONTINUED)

DEKE

I hear you're a good cop.

BAXTER

I hear things, too.

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

Baxter's pager goes off just as there's a TAP on the window. JAMIE motions to Baxter.

BAXTER

Excuse me.

And he walks to the entrance and meets Jamie.

SAL

(to Deke)

He is a good cop, Deke. College boy and he's a bit of a Holy Roller, but, hey, I've been thinkin' about joinin' myself. Get on the fast track for a promotion.

Deke sips his coffee. Baxter finishes with Jamie and turns, stares at Deke and Sal...

SAL

Looks like 'next time' is here.

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

SAL

Wanna stay with me and the wife tonight?

DEKE

No, but thanks.

SAL

Okay, well, good seein' ya, Deke.

Deke nods, but his eyes are on Baxter... and Baxter's on his. They turn to walk away, then Baxter stops, turns...

He and Deke lock eyes. After a beat...

BAXTER

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

That does it.

21 EXT. JULIE BROCK'S APT. - NIGHT

21

Seedy. Two radio cars are out front alongside a white utility truck. Cones and police tape. Everyone's outside waiting.

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

SAL

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

The "first officer," HENDERSON, 25, green, scared, walks up, notepad in hand. He writes down --

BAXTER

Baxter. 362071. What's everybody waiting around for?

HENDERSON

Power's off in the victim's building.

BAXTER

You call Edison?

HENDERSON

They're workin' on it now.

BAXTER

You been inside?

Henderson gulps and nods.

BAXTER

How big's the place?

HENDERSON

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

SAL

(a thought)

We got generators in the truck.

BAXTER

Let's let the Wazoo boys go to work.

(CONTINUED)

21

CONTINUED:

21

SAL

You wanna superglue the whole apartment?

BAXTER

Why not? We're dead in the water until the power comes on.

CUT TO:

22

THREE MEN

22

emerge from the back of the white truck.

The "Ghoul Squad." They are dressed in "moon suits" -- covered head-to-toe in plastic. Carrying various tools of their trade, they make haste to the apartment.

BAXTER walks over to Deke and smiles.

BAXTER

You familiar with all this?

DEKE

No.

BAXTER

They fume it up with cyanoacrylate -- superglue. Everything shows up under black light -- fingerprints, blood, hair, sole prints... to the wazoo.

(beat)

Things have probably changed a lot since you left.

DEKE

You still gotta catch him, right?

BAXTER

Yeah.

DEKE

Nothing's changed.

23

INT. DARK APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT (LATER)

23

Deke, Baxter, Sal, and Jamie stand in the dark. Flashlights on.

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

(CONTINUED)

SAL

Anybody wanna menthol?

THE MOON-SUITED WAZOO BOYS exit through the adjacent apartment and nod to Baxter.

MOON SUIT

Everyone eat?

Deke just glares. Baxter flicks on his flashlight and heads through...

The adjacent apartment door, past the APARTMENT'S OCCUPANTS -- an Hispanic couple and three grandkids -- all sitting at a kitchen table, watching the procession of cops in the dark.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE OUTSIDE THE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Baxter exits the "adjacent apartment" window, steps onto the fire escape, walks "next door," pulls plastic off the window, and climbs through, followed by Sal and Deke.

INT. THE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dark, save a little moonlight creeping through the window.

BAXTER

Lights off.

Off go the flashlights. Baxter switches on the black light and the room...

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

DEKE, SAL, BAXTER -- eyes peeled as the black light...

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

BAXTER

Jesus.

Then, all at once, ELECTRICITY COMES ON -- LIGHTS, an electric fan, a clock radio -- sensory deprivation to overload.

(CONTINUED)

25

CONTINUED:

25

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

DEKE, BAXTER, SAL, JAMIE -- squint from the light, too numb to comment.

26

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

26

The room is now fully lit and all the CRIMINALISTS are hard at work. BAXTER stands in the middle, the ringmaster.

BAXTER

Alright, everyone, you know the drill, hands in pockets, eyes on the floor, moving clockwise. We're all drinking from the same well here, so be careful, be courteous, be patient. She's dead; let's not murder the crime scene.

*
*
*

As Baxter turns in place, eyeing -- blood on the wall in the pattern of a sound wave --

BAXTER

(almost to himself)
Arterial wound -- pulse, pulse, pulse...

A puddle of blood in the middle of the bedroom.

BAXTER

Stab wound, body cavity... another stab wound...

*
*

Bloody hand and footprints leading into the kitchen.

BAXTER

Crawled to here... This is where she died.

(beat)

So why... is she there?

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

DEKE

(sotto; to Sal)
Did they lift the prints from this window?

*

(CONTINUED)

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

SAL

Hey, Jimmy, they dust this ledge yet?

*
*
*

BAXTER

You got to be kidding me... Hey, get me the first officer now?!

*
*

A PHOTOGRAPHER/LATENT PRINTS MAN moves slowly around the room, TAKING SHOTS of anything and everything --

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

A WOMAN with a doctor bag, the coroner's assistant, FLO DUNIGAN, steps through the window. She's 45, carries a few extra pounds plus a ton of likable attitude, and will never understand why she's not a prize catch in the dating market.

DEKE

Still makin' house calls, Flo?

*
*

FLO

Good lawd.

*

DEKE

How are you?

*
*

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

FLO

You in town for awhile?

DEKE

No.

FLO

Stick around till I'm finished?

Deke nods and Flo goes immediately to the body. With medical precision she lifts the victim's arm at the elbow to check for rigor.

FLO

You can rule out suicide.

*

Baxter doesn't laugh.

(CONTINUED)

SAL slides in next to Deke, nods to the corpse, and reads from the first's notes. *

SAL

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

(beat)

This job sucks.

SAL walks away, crossing BAXTER, who points to the ledge as he confronts Henderson.

BAXTER

Hey. Our killer exited the same way we came in. It's your responsibility to secure and protect the premises; from anyone who might spoil it. From the moment she expired to the time I cuff whoever did this, she belongs to me! (ALT: We work for her.) You got that?! Get out of here. *

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

Deke watches Baxter, appreciating that they are of like minds.

FLO makes a liver incision and sticks a thermometer in. Then she checks for rigor in the fingers, toes... None.

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

Two other TECHS stare at the POOL OF DRIED BLOOD and play a game of "Geographical Rorschach."

TECH #1

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

TECH #2

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

BAXTER

That's enough. *

(CONTINUED)

SAL opens the fridge, checks the contents, makes a note.

SAL
This been dusted?

TECH #1
Yeah, but it's broken; the stuff's rotten.

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

SAL
Not all of it.

BAXTER walks over to Sal.

BAXTER
(re: Deke)
So when is Columbo going to break my case for me?

*

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

QUICK SHOTS -- evidence brown-bagged, numbered; a tech removes the dust bag from a vacuum cleaner; another swabs the residue from the kitchen drain.

FLO makes notes, checks wounds, opens gaping holes, peers in, over and around the body of the once pretty, but now very much dead, Julie Brock.

Baxter walks over and squats down. His eyes go from a large dried bloodstain in the center of the room to the dead body.

FLO
She assumed room temperature 2, 3 days ago. Know more when we take her in. Probably the knife instead the bag.

*

BAXTER
Lean her forward.

Flo doubles the body over forward. Julie's hands are tied with electrician's cord. Her back has several purplish spots on it.

BAXTER
Postmortem lividity. She died on her back. She was moved.

(CONTINUED)

FLO

Bingo. Anybody relocate her? The landlady, the 'first'?...

(beat)

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

Baxter mulls this over.

FLO

You ready for the unveiling?

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

Julie Brock. Mouth and eyes open. Purplish bite marks cover her face and neck.

DEKE stares for several seconds, then, when he blinks...
WE --

CUT TO:

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

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

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

SAL

We got two under the bridge.
Fresh. Real fresh.

DEKE

Call in backup; set a perimeter.
Suspect might still be here.

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

*

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

(CONTINUED)

28

CONTINUED:

28

AN ABANDONED BUILDING across the alley.

29

EXT. ALLEY/BUILDING - NIGHT (MINUTES LATER)

29

Deke walks slowly across the alley, his eyes up on the abandoned building.

He carefully makes his way up a rickety side stairwell.

30

INT. THE ABANDONED APARTMENT - NIGHT

30

Deke enters the dark apartment. He points the flashlight and... A DOZEN OVERSIZED RATS scurry for cover.

DEKE takes in the room... empty save a kitchen chair, lying toppled in the middle of the room.

31

INT. BROCK APARTMENT - NIGHT

31

Baxter, in the midst of the crime scene, watches... THE FLASHLIGHT moving to and fro in the abandoned building.

32

INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT - NIGHT

32

Deke walks over to the window and pushes the ratty shades open. A streetlamp throws a BEAM OF LIGHT 15 or so feet into the room. He walks alongside the beam and stops, stares at...

The chair, in the dark, just beyond the light. Deke lifts the chair, takes a seat and smiles... because he's looking at...

A direct view of the BROCK APARTMENT. Julie, the belle of the ball, sits dead center.

33

EXT. STREET - NIGHT (LATER)

33

Deke walks over to the dejected first officer, Henderson.

DEKE

Reamed you pretty good, huh?

HENDERSON

Yeah.

DEKE

Wanna make it up to him?

Henderson, confused, looks at Deke.

34

EXT. FRONT OF APARTMENT HOUSE - NIGHT (LATER)

34

SAL AND JAMIE watch as the body is taken out. Show's over.

SAL

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

JAMIE

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

SAL

You got a maid?!

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

BAXTER

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

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

BAXTER

What's going on?

Henderson points to the abandoned building across the street.

HENDERSON

I spotted an abandoned apartment across the alley. When I inspected, I recognized it as a possible viewing point of the victim's domicile.

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

Baxter eyes Henderson, then spots... DEKE standing by himself, 20 yards or so away.

BAXTER turns on Henderson.

(CONTINUED)

BAXTER

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

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

HENDERSON

Thanks a lot.

Baxter drives and gives Jamie notes while Deke sits in the backseat.

BAXTER

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

JAMIE

They get anything across the street?

BAXTER

Lifted a print. Tested stains on the floor for semen. All negative. Oh, and pull files on any known sex offenders in the area; Peeping Toms; neighborhood arrests; transients included. Cross-reference traits against prior vics; lean on the lab for prints...

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

BAXTER

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

DEKE

Your other girls have bites?

JAMIE

Carrie Holland.

BAXTER

One of 'em. Why?

(CONTINUED)

35

CONTINUED:

35

DEKE

Similar to a case... up north.

36

EXT. TWIN TOWERS - NIGHT

36

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

BAXTER

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

DEKE

Why I wanna buy you breakfast?

BAXTER

Okay, I buy. Nick's. 0800.

DEKE

If I'm still here...

Deke shuts the door.

37

EXT./INT. DEKE'S BRONCO - NIGHT

37

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

CUT TO:

38

FLASHBACK - EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE - NIGHT

38

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

Farris off to the side. Sal walks up with a notepad.

SAL

Fillin' out my report here and...

They hold a look for several seconds.

SAL

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

(CONTINUED)

38

CONTINUED:

38

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

Deke, sitting on a big, flat rock, staring into space, holding a bloody dress.

39

EXT. A 24-HOUR COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT (PRESENT)

39

THROUGH THE WINDOW WE SEE DEKE, sitting, the only customer. A WORKER vacuums around him; A WAITRESS fills salt shakers.

40

INT. LASD INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

40

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

A41

INT. INTERROGATION OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

A41

Sal watches Peters, then exits.

41

INT. HOMICIDE - DAY

41

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

BAXTER

He fall asleep yet?

SAL

Nah. Nervous. Like an innocent man.

The phone RINGS. Jamie picks it up.

JAMIE

Homicide.

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

JAMIE

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

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

BAXTER

It's yours.

(CONTINUED)

41

CONTINUED:

41

Jamie is startled, then regroups and speaks into the phone.

JAMIE

I'll be there in 15 minutes.
Estrada. E-S-T-R-A-D-A.

As she hangs up, Sal and other detectives raise a cheer.

SAL

Gentlemen, raise your mug to
Jamie, who just got her first
primary.

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

SAL

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

BAXTER

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

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

42

EXT. NICK'S DINER - DAY

42

As Baxter enters, he spots...

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

BAXTER stares at the poster for a moment.

43

INT. NICK'S - DAY

43

A clear bag containing A PAIR OF BLACK, BLOODSTAINED BOOTS, sits on the counter. WE PAN TO DEKE, haggard, in the midst of a conversation at a nearby pay phone.

(CONTINUED)

DAVIS (V.O.)

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

DEKE

What do I do with the 'unforgettable' boots?

DAVIS (V.O.)

Forget 'em. Don't need 'em. I'll see you tomorrow.

Deke hangs up, sees Baxter sitting at the counter next to the boots. A waitress delivers Baxter a cup of coffee.

BAXTER

Morning.

DEKE

Morning.

BAXTER

Look, I know it was you that spotted the observatory across the street last night. Might have missed it without you.

Deke's look says, "you're welcome."

BAXTER

When you taking off?

DEKE

Now.

Deke tosses money on the counter.

BAXTER

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

Deke's face shows a hint of recognition.

BAXTER

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

(noticing)

Nice boots.

44 INT. STATION - OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY 44

Deke sits alone, staring THROUGH the one-way glass at... STAN PETERS. Baxter enters with a file.

45 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY 45

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

PETERS

Where's my lawyer?

BAXTER

In the building. It takes awhile.

46 EXT. HALLWAY - DAY 46

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

PUBLIC DEFENDER

He's already 'requested' and I've been standing here for 20 minutes.

SAL

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

47 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY 47

Peters and Baxter...

BAXTER

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

PETERS

Like I said before, I was takin' a piss, and I was in the alley, and this girl... this girl...

BAXTER

Teenage girl, Stan.

PETERS

She was just walking by!

(CONTINUED)

47

CONTINUED:

47

BAXTER

Four other complaints, one other
arrest...

PETERS

You gotta believe me! I got
nuthin' to do with this!

BAXTER

KSO -- that's what it says in
the file. I dunno, Stan...

Peters gulps nervously. Baxter stares him down.

48

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

48

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

49

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

49

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

BAXTER

The name Mary Roberts ring a bell?

Peters face falls into anguish.

PETERS

What?!...

BAXTER

Mary Roberts?

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

50

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

50

Deke sits calmly as Peters places hands on the glass, a
distraught look on his face. He knows who's behind it.

51

EXT. TWIN TOWERS - DAY

51

Deke and Baxter walk and talk.

BAXTER

Mary Roberts? Stan Peters?

DEKE

A dead girl and a suspect.

(CONTINUED)

BAXTER

Was he your boy?

DEKE

You never know.

(beat)

Just sayin' hello to an old pal.

BAXTER

Your 'pal' says you broke his jaw once.

DEKE

You gotta kiss a lotta frogs to find your prince.

Captain Farris walks up, spots Deke.

FARRIS

What are you still doing here?

DEKE

Just leaving.

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

BAXTER

Sal said you and Deacon were partners.

Farris nods, then grimaces and walks back inside.

Baxter walks up to Jamie's desk.

BAXTER

Order up the 'poor boy' on a 'Mary Roberts.' I'm goin' for a sandwich. Want anything?

JAMIE

The Rathbuns are waiting.

BAXTER

Rathbun?

JAMIE

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

52

CONTINUED:

52

BAXTER

We got a corpse?

(shakes her head)

Then it's still Missing Persons.

He looks up and spots...

BILL AND PHYLLIS RATHBUN, twenty feet away. If they've had a night of sleep in the past days it doesn't show..

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

53

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

53

Deke's Bronco enters the freeway, leaving town.

54

INT. BRONCO - DAY

54

Deke smiles, happy to be on the road. A car pulls up alongside. Inside the car are two teenage girls, laughing and listening to loud music.

They feel Deke's eyes on them and the girl on the passenger side looks at him for a long moment, mouthing the word "Hi" before the car speeds up, leaving him behind.

Deke sighs. Smile gone.

55

EXT. A HILLSIDE - DAY

55

The Bronco sits on a knoll. We BOOM UP TO REVEAL the 20'-tall Cahuenga Cross. At its base sits Deke, staring out upon the congested freeway as it feeds down into Hollywood and, in the distance, downtown. Deke seems a small, insignificant figure in comparison with the cross and the teeming city below.

56

INT. CORONER'S - NIGHT

56

The place is empty, save Flo who stands over a body covered by a sheet.

DEKE (O.S.)

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

She looks up, spots Deke standing in the doorway.

(CONTINUED)

FLO

Could ask you the same. What's this all about, Joe?

DEKE

We got a similar case up north.

Flo nods and turns on a light, focused on the gurney.

DEKE

Thanks for doing this for me.

FLO

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

Deke pulls a tall stool alongside the gurney and sits. Flo pulls back the sheet covering the body. Julie Brock.

FLO

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

DEKE

'Came back'?

FLO

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

Deke mentally chews on this bite of information.

FLO

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

(beat)

Hey, you wanna turn that up?

He points to a radio. Deke reaches over, adjusts the volume knob... an old, mellow LOVE SONG.

FLO

Ah, nice. KHRT -- love songs from the '50s and '60s.

(CONTINUED)

DEKE

You get a 'dental' on the bites?

FLO

Yeah, put a rush on it.
Inconclusive but could be the same
as we found on the Holland girl.
More sucking than biting.

DEKE

They look like hickeys, love
bites.

FLO

Brings back memories.

DEKE

Any saliva samples?

FLO

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

DEKE

What's that?

FLO

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

DEKE

You're kidding?

FLO

Nope. See, he nicked her. No
blood.

DEKE

What was in her D-tract?

FLO

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

DEKE

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

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

(CONTINUED)

FLO

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

Deke just stares at her.

FLO

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

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

DEKE

You knew him. Or at least he knew you. That's why he did that to your face. You let him in, huh? Did he make conversation? Seem like an okay guy? Not your type but could be a friend; can't have enough of them, right? You had that one little feeling -- 'what if?' -- but you waved it away; thought 'what the hell,' life's too short. Well, it is, Julie. It is too short. You shoulda listened to that little feeling. You shoulda listened; just like I'm listenin' now. You can talk to me... I'm all the friend you got.

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

FLO

Who you talkin' to?

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

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

ANOTHER SET OF HEADLIGHTS appears behind her, out of nowhere. She watches in her rearview, expecting the car to pass.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

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

THE GUY IN THE DARK SEDAN -- baseball cap, glasses; Peters?... it's hard to get a good look, but he's staring right at her.

TINA slows and the dark sedan steps on the gas and disappears over a hill. We STAY WITH her as she takes a deep breath and continues on.

When she crests the hill she sees...

A hundred yards ahead. The dark sedan is stopped, not off to the side, but in the right lane.

She gasps a bit and makes a decision. Keeps driving, approaching him, and then, when she's close...

She steps on the gas and races around and past him. He does the same, following behind her at a safe distance, this time.

Tina is shaking as she drives. There is no one around. In the distance she sees a lit-up gas station and she floors it.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

No cars around. Tina drives in, comes to a screeching halt, jumps out, and runs for the front door. It's locked. She spots a cashier window and runs over. It's shut. She bangs on it.

TINA

Help! Is anyone here?!

TINA turns to go back to her car and freezes when she sees --

THE DARK SEDAN parked 20 feet behind her car.

TINA takes a deep breath and runs, racing around the corner of the station and out into the field behind it. It's pitch black and she stumbles forward in the dark. After she's run 75 yards, she crumbles to the ground and dares to look back --

(CONTINUED)

59

CONTINUED:

59

THE SEDAN DRIVER methodically opens his trunk. He calmly reaches in and carefully puts on a pair of plastic gloves. Then he grabs a duffel, closes the trunk, and starts toward --

60

IN THE FIELD

60

TINA, hand over her mouth, hides, lying flat between unplanted rows of dirt. The beam of a flashlight approaches.

Every few seconds the sedan driver WHISTLES a "bobwhite's call," almost as if he's expecting a return whistle.

TINA says a silent prayer as the driver gets closer and closer, the flashlight beam moving back and forth. Then she sees something else -- on the horizon.

The lights of an 18-WHEELER, cresting the ridge.

TINA takes a breath and runs like hell for the --

ROAD

Never looking back, she jumps the culvert and races into the middle of the blacktop, playing a game of chicken with the oncoming truck.

THE 18-WHEELER honks, then comes to a stop in front of her.

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

TRUCK DRIVER

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

TINA

This guy, he's following me. He was chasing me, then I stopped and he stopped, too. He got out with a flashlight and --

TRUCK DRIVER

-- What guy? What guy?

Tina ventures her first look back. The dark sedan is gone.

61 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

61

Flo and Deke are finished eating.

FLO

Hooker dies, nobody misses a wink of sleep. A non-pro? Different story. Times 5 in two months -- Ka-boom. The squib becomes a column, becomes a lead, becomes front page. Above the fold. Suddenly, it's not just bodies; we got a serial killer and TV movie producers are buyin' rights and tryin' to figure out who's gonna play Jim Baxter. He's got a cute tushie, huh?

Deke smiles. Flo's demeanor turns serious.

FLO

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

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

FLO

A daily reminder of what I did...
For what we did.

When Deke doesn't respond, she re-pockets the keys.

FLO

You think you're going to puff out your chest and fix this, don't ya? Make *everything* right.

(almost to herself)

Men...

(to Deke)

Listen to Mick, okay? You can't always get what you want, but sometimes you get what you need.

They share a look. A BUSBOY clears the plates.

(CONTINUED)

61

CONTINUED:

61

FLO

And I needed this. Haven't been out to a restaurant since I went on nights. Usually cook a little something and bring it in but my stove's broken. Three days before they can get a guy out to fix it. Can you believe that?

DEKE

Three days?...

Deke's gears are turning.

62

INT. A DARK APT. - NIGHT

62

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

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

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

VOICE (O.S.)

I thought you guys were finished?

Deke jumps a bit and turns to see the LANDLADY.

DEKE

How long has this been broken?

LANDLADY

I don't know, a week maybe.

DEKE

You responsible for repairs?

LANDLADY

Thinkin' about movin' in?

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

(CONTINUED)

62

CONTINUED:

62

LANDLADY

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

DEKE

Who'd ya call?

LANDLADY

Place around the corner. ABC Appliance, something like that.

DEKE

The stuff in the fridge was rotten?

LANDLADY

Yeah.

CUT TO:

63

FLASHBACK - INT. APT. - BROCK CRIME SCENE - NIGHT

63

Sal opens the carton of milk and pours some down.

64

BACK TO SCENE (PRESENT)

64

DEKE

Except the milk, right?

LANDLADY

My kid drank it; so cuff me.

DEKE

Anything else?

LANDLADY

Beer. 3 left, why?

DEKE

I'll need it for evidence.

LANDLADY

I bet you will.

She shakes her head and leaves the room. Deke finds a seat on the edge of the bed, still bloodstained.

(CONTINUED)

64

CONTINUED:

64

He stares at... the bloody mattress, the floor, the spattered walls, the door...

CUT TO:

65

FLASHBACK - INT. APT. - CRIME SCENE - NIGHT

65

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

CUT TO:

66

INT. BROCK APT. - NIGHT (PRESENT)

66

Deke stares straight ahead. Lost in memories.

CUT TO:

67

FLASHBACK - EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE - NIGHT

67

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

ANGLE ON A LARGE, FLAT ROCK

around which are positioned two nude girls. Their arms are folded and their heads are resting on the rock. Several knife wounds are evident. On their heads are plastic bags.

LANDLADY (V.O.)

How do you get used to it?

CUT TO:

68

INT. BROCK APT. - NIGHT (PRESENT)

68

The Landlady stands in the doorway, holding three Schlitz beers in their plastic noose.

LANDLADY

The smell?

DEKE

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

She hands over the beer and heads for the door.

(CONTINUED)

68

CONTINUED:

68

LANDLADY

Close it when you're finished...
ya creep.

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

69

EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD. (HOLLYWOOD) - NIGHT

69

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

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

It's Deke, staring right back.

Peters, more nervous than ever, stumbles away.

70

INT. STAN PETERS' APT. - HALLWAY - NIGHT

70

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

WE HOLD and then start to PULL BACK. After several seconds... a single GUNBLAST sounds.

71

EXT. ST. AGNES HOTEL - NIGHT (ESTABLISHING)

71

A flophouse on Hollywood Blvd. A gaggle of HOOKERS ply their trade out front, trying to wave down horny motorists. Deke walks past them and into --

72

INT. ST. AGNES - LOBBY - NIGHT

72

Two couches, pay phone, and a caged desk, behind which sits the MANAGER. You know what he looks like.

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

MANAGER

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

(CONTINUED)

DEKE

A room.

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

MANAGER

20 a night. 100 a week.

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

MANAGER

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

(beat)

Don't worry, the sheets are clean.

Deke starts to walk up the stairs.

MANAGER

Hey, you want some company?

Deke doesn't answer, just continues his climb.

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

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

A FEW CLOTHES hang on a rack. If this was all the guy had, he didn't have much. Deke sizes up one of the shirts. Too small, hangs it back up and slides the hangers deep into the closet.

DEKE unbuttons and removes his outer shirt, hangs it up, walks to the bed, and sits down.

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

WE MOVE CLOSER and can't help but stare at the large surgical scar on Deke's chest.

(CONTINUED)

73

CONTINUED:

73

He rubs it with a finger and stares at the photos as the lights, TRAFFIC SOUNDS, AND HOOKER CATCALLS of Hollywood drift through a breezy, open window.

74

INT. BAXTER HOUSE - DAUGHTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

74

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

BAXTER

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

JENNIFER

If they do, hit 'em with a shoe --

CHLOE

If they holler, give 'em a dollar --

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

BAXTER

If they plea, hit 'em in the knee.

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

JENNIFER

If they cry, hit 'em in the eye.

CHLOE

(running low on
ideas)

Um, if they fight, squeeze 'em...
hard.

75

INT. BAXTER MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

75

Baxter enters and sees his wife, ANA, in the bathroom, brushing her hair. She feels his eyes and turns to him and smiles. Baxter walks up behind her and rubs her shoulders.

BAXTER

How was your day?

ANA

It was good. You remember the
little girl, Luisa, in homeroom?

BAXTER

The one who never talks.

(CONTINUED)

ANA

Now she does.

BAXTER

Really?

ANA

For weeks I've been trying to break through. Nothing. End of the day yesterday, I'm doing lesson plans and I look up and she's standing there, staring at me, and she hands me that.

Taped to the mirror is a second grade drawing of a young girl and Ana, holding hands, with a rainbow behind them.

ANA

And she said, 'You make the world okay.'

(off his smile)

We talked, actually talked, and today when she came in, it was better, not perfect but better.

BAXTER

That's wonderful.

She looks at his reflection. His sad eyes.

ANA

I'm sorry, I shouldn't have... I mean, I can't imagine what you're...

Baxter kisses the top of her head.

BAXTER

Shhh. I needed to hear that.

He walks away.

ANA

Did you turn on the alarm?

He stops, looks at her, and nods.

CLOSEUP -- A PHOTO -- MARY ROBERTS, lit by the beam of a flashlight in the dark. Cute. Innocent. Dead.

WE MOVE WITH the beam of light as it PANS TO another shot, another dead girl, PAIGE CALLAHAN.

(CONTINUED)

And then PAST a few crime scene shots TO the third victim, TAMARA EWING. All the photos are taped to a wall.

DEKE

shirt off, lies on the bed, flashlight in hand, moving the light over the photos like an usher at a midnight horror movie. He lowers the light, pointing it at...

HIS POV

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

DEKE

watching her work; staring as if she's performing an amazing act.

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

MARY

It's gonna be okay.

DEKE listens like a scared child -- nodding with his eyes... A light comes on and he turns to see --

AT THE SINK -- Two other girls, PAIGE CALLAHAN and TAMARA EWING, standing at the sink, staring at the mirror -- amazed by their lack of reflection. Their movements, like Mary's, are slow, almost lyrical. They turn in unison and smile...

TAMARA

Penny for your thoughts.

PAIGE

Always good to see you, Joe.

Deke turns, once again, to Mary.

MARY

(a whisper)

I've forgiven you, Joe.

(beat)

It's over...

(CONTINUED)

76

CONTINUED: (2)

76

DEKE forces his eyes closed.

JOE
(a whisper)
It's never over.

77

POV THROUGH DEKE'S WINDOW - SAME TIME - NIGHT (REALITY)

77

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

78

INT. COUNTY HOMICIDE - CAPT. FARRIS' OFFICE - DAY

78

The zoo of homicide, as Baxter walks by.

FARRIS
Jimmy!

Baxter stops at the door.

BAXTER
Yeah?

Farris motions for him to enter.

FARRIS
Close it.

Baxter enters and closes the door.

BAXTER
What?

FARRIS
Stan Peters.

BAXTER
What about him.

FARRIS
Killed himself last night.

Baxter is stunned.

BAXTER
... Damn...

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

(CONTINUED)

BAXTER

-- I'll handle the press. It's on me.

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

FARRIS

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

BAXTER

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

FARRIS

You didn't answer my question.

BAXTER

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

FARRIS

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

BAXTER

Bits and pieces. Great homicide cop has a heart attack, leaves town for a post in the sticks.

Farris shakes his head.

FARRIS

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

BAXTER

A tad dramatic.

FARRIS

When he left we moved you up from Robbery.

BAXTER

You're saying I took his spot?

(CONTINUED)

FARRIS

In a manner of speaking, yes.

BAXTER

Am I the man, Carl? Am I the primary?

FARRIS

Yeah.

BAXTER

Let me work my case my way.

Farris nods, settling Baxter down.

FARRIS

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

BAXTER

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

FARRIS

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

BAXTER

Yeah, so what?

FARRIS

He strike you as the kinda guy to play golf?

Baxter ponders this then starts for the door.

FARRIS

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

Deke exits the door, wearing "new" secondhand clothes and carrying his bundled uniform in his arms.

80 INT. ABC APPLIANCE - DAY 80

Deke talks to the OWNER. He tosses a notebook to Deke.

OWNER

Nothing. See for yourself.

81 EXT. ABC APPLIANCE - DAY (LATER) 81

Deke emerges and shields his eyes from the morning sun.

82 EXT. STREET - DAY 82

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

A SIGN -- down the block -- "AAA APPLIANCE -- Sales and Service."

83 INT. AAA APPLIANCE - DAY 83

The OWNER, 50, shows a customer the finer points of a used refrigerator. DEKE walks in. His eyes rest on... A SASH OF ELECTRICIAN'S CORD hanging on the wall.

The Owner spots Deke and finishes up with the customer.

OWNER

What can I do you for?

Deke, wasting no time, flashes his badge.

DEKE

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

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

DEKE ambles to the rear of the sales room. He pulls open a door and stares at...

HIS POV

A large area where 5 EMPLOYEES, repairmen, sit at a makeshift washing machine table and eat sandwiches.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BACK TO SCENE

OWNER (O.S.)

Here they are...

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

Deke scours the pages, looking for Julie's address. Bingo.

DEKE

This one's crossed out.

OWNER

Cancellation. The blue number is the order date -- the 11th, the red is the cancellation -- the 15th; before I could get a man out.

DEKE

It always take that long?

OWNER

Hey, we're busy.

DEKE

(re: work area)

Yeah, I see. Who fills these out?

OWNER

I do... or whoever answers the phone.

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

SOMEONE'S POV

as Deke exits the store. Whose?

BACK TO SCENE

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

INT. SEROLOGY LAB - DAY

Baxter is mid-conversation with AMY ANDERS.

(CONTINUED)

84

CONTINUED:

84

BAXTER

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

ANDERS

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

85

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE IDENT LAB - DAY

85

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

86

INT. IDENT LAB - DAY

86

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

BAXTER

You looked at my print from the Brock apartment?

FELIX

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

BAXTER

What exactly is it you guys do?

FELIX

We make you look good in court.

87

INT. IDENT LAB HALLWAY - DAY

87

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

(CONTINUED)

THE LITTLE THINGS - 9/23/19 (Full Blue) 55.
87 CONTINUED: 87

A "Have you seen this girl" POSTER of Ronda Rathbun, on the bulletin board.

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

88 EXT. MIDDLE-CLASS HOUSE (WEST HOLLYWOOD) - DAY 88

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

CUT TO:

89 A HOME VIDEO 89

RONDA RATHBUN GOOFING IN THE POOL WITH FRIENDS. SHE LOOKS DIRECTLY AT THE CAMERA AND SMILES.

A90 INT. RATHBUN HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY A90

Baxter sits on the couch with MR. and MRS. RATHBUN watching the video on the television. Three somber faces.

90 INT. RATHBUN HOME - RONDA'S BEDROOM - DAY (LATER) 90

Mr. Rathbun hands Baxter a photo of Ronda. Baxter looks at it and takes in the room.

A WALL OF PHOTOS -- graduation shots, family outings, a cheerleader photo. A smiling Ronda Rathbun in each.

MR. RATHBUN
The night she disappeared she was wearing gray jogging pants, socks, shoes, a blue sweat top.

BAXTER
Anything else? Jewelry, maybe?

MRS. RATHBUN
(comes to mind)
A red barrette. Called it her lucky charm. When she ran, she always wore a red barrette to hold her hair back.

Baxter nods, taking note of this.

(CONTINUED)

MRS. RATHBUN

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

MR. RATHBUN

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

*
*

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

BAXTER

Jim, please.

*
*

MR. RATHBUN

Do you have a daughter?

*

BAXTER

Two. I have two.

*

MR. RATHBUN

Jim, would your daughters run
away?/Then you know how it feels.

*

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

BAXTER

I'll call when I have something.

He shakes Mr. Rathbun's hand to leave. Then he remembers
the photo and offers it back to the grieving father.

MR. RATHBUN

No, that's for you. To keep.

91 EXT./INT. BAXTER'S CAR - DAY

91

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

92 INT. DEKE'S BRONCO - NIGHT

92

Deke comes to a stop at a light, scanning the radio dial
until he finds the old love-song station. AN ODE to
youthful aphrodisia brings a slight smile to his face.
Then...

Two radio cars and a coroner's van -- no emergency lights
on -- roll through the intersection.

93

EXT. LAKE HOLLYWOOD DAM - SHORELINE - NIGHT

93

The concrete bridge is lit up and a spotlight is scouring the water below for evidence. A helicopter hovers overhead.

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

Deke standing nearby, taking it all in.

BAXTER

Really? This how you spend your time off? How did you?...

DEKE

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

BAXTER

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

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

BAXTER

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

DEKE

She a floater?

BAXTER

Yeah, but they dumped overflow in here a few days back. I'm bettin' there's mud in her cavities. Shallow grave, most likely... You ready to tell me about Mary Roberts?

No reply.

BAXTER

Stan Peters swallowed a .12-gauge late last night.

Still nothing from Deke.

(CONTINUED)

93

CONTINUED:

93

ALONGSIDE THE BANK

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

SAL

Hey, Jimmy, come give a look!

Deke and Baxter walk over and eye the flannel cloth as a criminalist plucks and bags it.

94

OMITTED

94

95

FLASHBACK - INT. JULIE BROCK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

95

The criminalist picks up the bloody flannel shirt.

96

BACK TO SCENE (PRESENT)

96

BAXTER

(to Jamie)

Have the lab do a comparison for a match to the Brock crime scene.

She nods and leaves.

SAL

Think it belongs to our boy?

BAXTER

Doubtful. He's red-flagging.

DEKE

Doesn't want a copycat takin' credit for his handiwork.

A96

EXT. ON TOP OF DAM - NIGHT (LATER)

A96

The crime scene is below, lit with work lights and criminalist's flashlights.

Deke leans on the dam, watching the show.

BAXTER

From up here, if you didn't know any better, you might say it's beautiful.

*
*
*

Deke shakes his head. Baxter leans in next to him.

(CONTINUED)

DEKE

Sal says you went to bat for me with Farris. That's not a wise career move.

*

BAXTER

You're not exactly a department favorite.

Deke pulls a list out of his jacket.

DEKE

Maybe I can make it up to you. You might want to run these names for possibles. Employees of two appliance stores in the Julie Brock neighborhood. Long shot but...

*

BAXTER

-- aren't they all... Something I gotta know. How does a guy with the best clearance rate in the department work fifteen years without a promotion?

DEKE

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

Baxter smiles at the dig.

BAXTER

You believe in God, Joe?

A beat, before...

DEKE

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

Several seconds of silence, then...

BAXTER

I still owe you a breakfast.

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

98

INT. BAXTER KITCHEN - DAY

98

An uncomfortable Deke sits at a table, sipping coffee. Baxter, working in the kitchen with Ana, carries two plates from the counter and sets them down.

DEKE

This is great, thank you.

*

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

BAXTER

(to Ana)

Joe's in Kern County now.

*

ANA

Your wife drag you away?

DEKE

I'm divorced.

ANA

Oh... I'd like to get out of the city but Jim won't leave. You work homicide there, too?

*

*

DEKE

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

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

CHLOE

Hi.

DEKE

Hi.

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

ANA

That's Mr. Deacon, Chloe.

CHLOE

How do you do?

DEKE

(taken with her)

Very well, thank you./Fine.

*

(CONTINUED)

ANA

You have any kids, Joe?

DEKE

Two girls. They're grown up now.

Jennifer walks in with her backpack.

JENNIFER

I'm gonna be late.

ANA

(to Chloe)

We ready to take Jen to school?

CHLOE

Yeah.

BAXTER

What do you say?

CHLOE

Yes, ma'am.

BAXTER

That's my girl.

*

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

ANA

I've got parent/teacher conferences until five so the girls are staying at Mom's until dinner.

BAXTER

Gotcha.

ANA

(to the girls)

Okay, let's go.

(to Deke)

Nice to meet you, Joe.

DEKE

You, too.

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

(CONTINUED)

DEKE

She's beautiful. They all are.

*

BAXTER

Yeah.

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

DEKE

(explaining)

Too many meals on the run.

BAXTER

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

DEKE

The St. Agnes. Hollywood
Boulevard.

BAXTER

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

DEKE

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

BAXTER

It's my case.

DEKE

There's a bar near Argyle and
Hollywood.

Baxter nods. Deke stands and leaves. Baxter stares after him.

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

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

DEKE

You look good, Marsha.

(CONTINUED)

MARSHA

You look like hell, Joe.

DEKE

Yeah.

MARSHA

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

DEKE

I gotta get going, anyway.

MARSHA

Hold on, lemme grab my purse.

He looks at the yard, nudges a sprinkler head with his foot. She closes, locks the door.

DEKE

House looks good. I'm glad you kept it. Lawn, too.

MARSHA

Yeah. Tom's a whiz with the yard.

DEKE

Better than I was...

MARSHA

You never had time for that kinda thing.

DEKE

How are the girls?

MARSHA

Good. Trish passed her CPA. Sue's met a guy; seems like a good kid. You should give 'em a call.

DEKE

Yeah, I should.

MARSHA

You okay?

DEKE

You know me.

MARSHA

Yeah. I know you.

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

(CONTINUED)

99

CONTINUED: (2)

99

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

100

INT. TWIN TOWERS - HOMICIDE - DAY

100

Baxter furiously types the Brock report on a typewriter. Jamie walks up and dumps three files on Baxter's desk.

JAMIE

Mary Roberts... Paige Callahan,
Tamara Ewing.

BAXTER

I just asked for --

JAMIE

-- With three you get egg roll.
All the victims were hookers --
all found drugged and stabbed to
death at the same location on the
same night.

BAXTER

You're kidding?

101

INT. A DIVE BAR - NIGHT

101

Deke sits by himself, drinking a beer. He gets a dirty look from A GRUNGE KID at the bar. BAXTER sneaks in next to Deke.

BAXTER

Never figured you to be so hip.

DEKE

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

Baxter smiles, points to Deke's beer.

DEKE

Where are you from? Originally.

Baxter sizes up the question before...

BAXTER

The Valley. Where are you from?
(beat)
Originally.

Deke almost smiles.

(CONTINUED)

DEKE

Birmingham, Alabama. Family moved
here when I was 15/teenager.

*
*

The beer arrives. Baxter raises his bottle to toast.

BAXTER

Here's to being from somewhere.

They clink bottles and drink.

BAXTER

Last night's victim -- Candace
Jacobson is her name -- lived in
Sun Valley. Disappeared three
days ago. So we got six now.
One, Julie Brock, never left home.
Three were from north county,
bodies dumped here. Two from
here, bodies dumped in north
county.

*
*

*
*

DEKE

And they say busing doesn't work?

BAXTER

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

DEKE

Why what?

BAXTER

First. Geography?...

DEKE

The guy's a shark. He stops, he
dies. He likes to drive, has a
decent car, maybe two. High
mileage. He starts in the
neighborhood, keeps at it till
opportunity knocks.

BAXTER

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

DEKE

It turns him on.

(CONTINUED)

BAXTER

No rape, no sodomy, no genital mutilation.

DEKE

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

BAXTER

Was Peters our boy?

DEKE

(without thinking)

God, I hope not.

Baxter stares at Deke, half-understanding the statement.

BAXTER

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

DEKE

He's got balls, I'll give him that. He goes back to Julie's place -- after he killed her. He moved her body, shaved her legs, posed her. He brought food, some milk, some beer. Threw himself a little party.

*
*
*

BAXTER

They found partially-digested meat in her stomach. But she was a vegan. Strict vegetarian. Same as Ana. She'd never touch it.

*

DEKE

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

Baxter stops and leans against Deke's Bronco.

BAXTER

One last 'why.' Why are you trying to solve a 5-year-old case that everyone else has forgotten about?

*

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

103 EXT. BRIDGE (SILVER LAKE) - NIGHT

103

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

DEKE'S BRONCO pulls to a stop and the two cops get out.

DEKE

Farris and I were a coupla miles away. We heard a call over the radio. Screams reported. Sal was the first on the scene.

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

DEKE

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

Deke turns his attention to a nearby house and points.

DEKE

See that lady watchin' us in the window?

THE NEARBY HOUSE. A head is silhouetted in the lit window.

DEKE

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

BAXTER

So what'd she have to say?

DEKE

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

BAXTER

Embarrassed about what?

(CONTINUED)

103

CONTINUED:

103

DEKE

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

Baxter has to chuckle.

DEKE

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

104

EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE - NIGHT (MINUTES LATER)

104

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

DEKE

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

Deke points his flashlight to a large rock.

CUT TO:

105

FLASHBACK - EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE - NIGHT

105

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

DEKE (V.O.)

Two of the victims were against that rock. Drugged elsewhere, brought here, stabbed to death, then posed facin' each other, heads bagged, laid down, like the rock was a table.

CUT TO:

106

BACK TO SCENE (PRESENT)

106

Deke squats down and stares at the rock.

DEKE

A tea party where the guests fell asleep.

CUT TO:

107 FLASHBACK - EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE - NIGHT

107

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

FARRIS

Warm. This just went down!

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

BAXTER (V.O.)

Where was the third victim?

CUT TO:

108 BACK TO SCENE (PRESENT)

108

Deke continues to stare at the rock.

DEKE

Close by.

Baxter squats down, too, staring at Deke.

DEKE

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

BAXTER

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

DEKE

I wanna finish the job... Just like you.

109 INT. DEKE'S CAR (HOLLYWOOD) - NIGHT

109

Deke drives Baxter back to his car.

BAXTER

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

DEKE

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

BAXTER

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

DEKE

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

BAXTER

(re: his car)

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

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

BAXTER

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

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

BAXTER

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

DEKE

Then why the interest?

(CONTINUED)

BAXTER

You wanna clear your conscience,
that's your problem. But, if you
gotta solve my case to solve
yours, who am I to moan?... But
you piss on my leg and call it
rain and we're through.

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

DEKE

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

BAXTER

Roast beef, I think. Why?

DEKE

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

Baxter watches as Deke drives away.

A YOUNG WOMAN jogs in the street TOWARD us. Coming up
behind her we see the headlights of an approaching car.
Strangely reminiscent of Ronda Rathbun's abduction.

The car slows to move alongside the jogger.

It's Baxter driving...

BAXTER

Hey!

The Girl notices him, shakes her head, and keeps jogging.

BAXTER

You shouldn't be out here by
yourself.

JOGGING GIRL

Leave me alone, you perv.

She turns down a street and disappears in the dark.
Baxter sighs and drives away.

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

(CONTINUED)

ANA

Hey. Where have you been?

BAXTER

Just going over some stuff. *

ANA

Were you out with Deacon?

BAXTER

Yeah.

Baxter unloads his pockets -- keys, change, pager. She stares back at him. *

ANA

I'm not sure I like him, Jimmy. *

Baxter smiles, sits on the edge of the bed.

BAXTER

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

ANA

It's more than that.

BAXTER

What do you mean?

ANA

It's something about the way you look at him. *

BAXTER

The way I look at him?

ANA

I understand it. There's something about his eyes that give him away. They're deep. They're dark. Like he hasn't slept in years. He's damaged. He's damaged. *

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

113 EXT. SMALL CARPORT - NIGHT

113

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

A LICENSE PLATE on a dark sedan, parked in the shadows...

DEKE

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

ON THE GROUND... a homemade CAR FOR SALE sign and a # to call.

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

THE TIRES... good. THE TRUNK... locked. THE INTERIOR... plain but clean. THE ODOMETER... 202,733 miles.

VOICE (O.S.)

Can I help you?

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

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

DEKE

Saw the 'for sale' sign.

SPARMA

That was for another car.

DEKE

Got a lot of miles. You a salesman?

SPARMA

No.

DEKE

How's the trunk space?

SPARMA

Standard, but...

DEKE

Can I have a look?

Sparma hesitates...

SPARMA

It's not for sale.

(CONTINUED)

DEKE

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

SPARMA

-- I said it's not for sale.

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

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

INT. ST. AGNES - LOBBY - NIGHT

DEKE enters, carrying the TRASH BAG. He stops at the pay phone, dumps the bag, and dials.

THE MANAGER takes note of the bag.

MANAGER

What the hell's that?

DEKE

Takeout.
(into phone)
Sal Rizoli.

The Manager shakes his head and retreats to his desk.

DEKE

(into phone)
Sal, hey, wanna do me a favor?
Run a DMV check on Albert Leonard
Sparma -- S-P-A-R-M-A. See if he
sold a car in the last few months.

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

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

A RAG... no blood... into the discard pile. CHICKEN BONES... discard. NEWSPAPER... discard. JUNK MAIL... discard. MILK CARTON... the keeper pile. A SCHLITZ CAN... keeper. PIZZA BOX... open... one slice left, half-eaten.

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

116 INT. CORONER'S OFFICE - DAY

116

Flo, with a small metal device, tries to measure the bite on the slice of pizza. After a few seconds, she tosses the tool, looks at the crime scene closeups, then up at...

DEKE -- staring, waiting...

FLO

Inconclusive. But there are similarities to both Brock and Ewing. See? A partial of an incisor on Ewing's cheek.

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

FLO

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

DEKE

What about Brock?

FLO

A partial on a bicuspid. Something else...

DEKE

What's that?

FLO

He's from back east. Folds his pie.

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

FLO

One thing's for sure... He's a sick puppy.

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

FLO

Double anchovies.

117 EXT. AJAX RENT-A-CAR - DAY

117

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

(CONTINUED)

117

CONTINUED:

117

WE FOLLOW HIM around the corner, out of sight from the rent-a-car establishment. He stops, parks.

118

INT./EXT. THE CAR - DAY

118

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

CUT TO:

DEKE

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

CUT TO:

DEKE

steps out, opens the door, and a single "BELL" sounds.

He pulls another fuse, reopens the door. No bell.

119

EXT. AAA APPLIANCE - DAY

119

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

120

INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY

120

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

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

DISSOLVE TO:

121

INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY (LATER)

121

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

122 EXT. AAA APPLIANCE - DAY 122

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

123 INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY 123

Deke methodically starts his car and settles in to follow.

124 EXT. 101 FREEWAY - DAY 124

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

125 INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY 125

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

DEKE

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

126 EXT. "THE ZOO" - DAY 126

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

127 INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY 127

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

DEKE

(to himself)

We got roast beef. We got strippers.

CUT TO:

128 FLASHBACK - EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE - NIGHT 128

Deke shines his flashlight around the crime scene. Then he HEARS A SOUND, a RUSTLING SOUND -- movement from the brush -- and he takes a cautious step toward the ravine.

CUT TO:

129 INT./EXT. DEKE'S CAR/"THE ZOO" - NIGHT (PRESENT) 129

IN THE MIRROR, Sparma exits, heads to his car, gets in, and drives off.

130 INT. DEKE'S CAR - NIGHT 130

Deke watches for a few seconds, then follows.

131 EXT. BURGER JOINT - NIGHT (LATER) 131

SPARMA gets his order from the drive-through and exits, passing... DEKE, parked near the exit driveway.

Just as Deke puts his car in drive, he sees...

Sparma's car pulls over by some hookers hanging nearby.

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

DEKE

We got roast beef. We got strippers. We got Big Macs. We got hookers. I'm up to my neck in your ass, Albert.

HIS POV

Sparma's car pulls out and drives away from the hookers.

BACK TO SCENE

DEKE

Come on. It's a school night.

132 INT. BAXTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 132

THE NIGHTSTAND CLOCK reads 4:05... and counting. Ana, half-asleep, rolls over and feels for Baxter.

(CONTINUED)

THE LITTLE THINGS - 9/23/19 (Full Blue) 79.
132 CONTINUED: 132

He's not there. She squints, looks at the clock, and gets out of bed.

133 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT 133

Ana, now in a robe, searches. She stops cold when she sees...

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

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

134 EXT. NORTH COUNTY - DAY 134

MAGIC MOUNTAIN in the distance. Sparma's car crests a hill. WE HOLD. Twenty seconds later, Deke's car follows.

135 INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY 135

As he crests a hill, he sees...

HIS POV

Sparma parked on the roadside just over the crest.

BACK TO SCENE

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

136 EXT. ROAD - DAY 136

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

137 INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY 137

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

138 EXT. BACK OF DEKE'S CAR - DAY 138

The reverse lights come on as Deke backs up.

139 INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY 139

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

HIS MIRROR POV

No Sparma. Disappeared.

BACK TO SCENE

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

HIS POV

The opposite side of the highway -- where sits...
SPARMA'S CAR, facing the opposite traffic direction.

140 INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY 140

Deke sits, stares.

DEKE

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

141 EXT. THE HIGHWAY 141

Deke sticks the car in drive and takes the exit underpass to go to the other side.

142 INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY 142

As he enters the opposite side of the freeway.

No Sparma.

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

Sparma -- on the opposite side of the highway -- parked in the exact spot where Deke last parked.

DEKE just stares; settles in to sit it out.

- 143 EXT. THE HIGHWAY - HIGH ABOVE 143
The standoff continues. Then Sparma's car starts forward, disappearing down the exit.
- 144 INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY 144
DEKE sits, waiting. He checks his rearview mirror.

REARVIEW POV
The underpass. Nothing. Then Sparma's car drifts slowly INTO VIEW and approaches. Closer. Closer...
- 145 WIDE SHOT - DAY 145
Sparma's car pulls up next to Deke on the driver's side. So close he can't open his door.
- 146 INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY 146
Deke turns and stares at...
SPARMA, who swivels slowly, stares at Deke for several seconds... then laughs.
- 147 EXT. THE HIGHWAY FEEDER - WIDE SHOT - DAY 147
Lots of land. Hills. Desolate highway. Two lonely cars and the echoing LAUGHTER of Sparma.
- 148 INT. DEKE'S CAR - DAY 148
Deke continues the stare-down. Sparma shakes his head, puts the car in drive, and wheels away. Deke just watches.
- A148 INT. COUNTY HOMICIDE - DAY A148
Baxter picks up the phone.

BAXTER
Baxter.

149 EXT. A HIGHWAY PHONE - WIDE SHOT - DAY

149

In the distance, we see Deke on the callbox. We hear the conversation...

INTERCUT DEKE AND BAXTER:

DEKE

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

BAXTER

A couple hundred yards off the
126.

DEKE

Did you leak that to the press?

BAXTER

No.

DEKE

You sure?

BAXTER

It went out over dispatch but it
was never given to the press.
Why?

DEKE

What was the nearest mile marker?

BAXTER

Hold on...

WE PAN until Deke is on ONE SIDE of the FRAME and the
MILE MARKER is on the OTHER.

BAXTER (V.O.)

Here it is. The nearest mile
marker was 467. 4-6-7.

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

150 INT. HOMICIDE - DAY

150

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

SAL

There's this guy Deke asked me to
run a vehicle check on...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

150

CONTINUED:

150

SAL (CONT'D)

(checks sheet)

Sparma? Seems that Topanga Tow
has a car registered to him.
Found it abandoned two weeks ago.

BAXTER

Reported stolen?

SAL

Nope.

BAXTER

Well, tow that sucker in.

151 INT. CAPT. FARRIS' OFFICE - DAY

151

Deke stands outside while Baxter makes his case...

BAXTER

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

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

FARRIS

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

BAXTER

I wanna put him on notice. Maybe
he'll try to cover his tracks and
give us something.

Farris mulls it over, then nods.

BAXTER

And I want Deacon there when we
pick him up.

FARRIS

Come on, Jimmy. The guy has no
jurisdiction here.

BAXTER

I can't be there, I'm racing to
the lab.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

151

CONTINUED:

151

BAXTER (CONT'D)

If, and I say if, Sparma lets us
in his apartment, name another set
of eyes you'd rather have in
there.

152

INT. HOMICIDE - DAY

152

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

BAXTER

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

JAMIE

What about Tina Salvatore?... The
possible witness?

She motions to Tina, who sits on a nearby bench --

BAXTER

Get her a magazine.

153

INT./EXT. SQUAD CAR - DAY

153

The car is parked near Sparma's house. A DEPUTY at the
wheel. Jamie sits passenger, Deke in back.

JAMIE

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

DEKE

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

154

INT. IDENT LAB - DAY

154

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

FELIX

11 identifiers. County requires
18 for I.D. LAPD requires 12.

(CONTINUED)

BAXTER

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

FELIX

It says you're 7 short.

BAXTER

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

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

FELIX

This other fella, let's call him Mr. X. He's got 9 identifiers. Only two less than Sparma. Maybe he's the killer?

BAXTER

Who...

Felix inks and holds up his own thumb.

155 EXT. STREET NEAR SPARMA'S APT. (HOLLYWOOD) - DAY 155

Deke and Jamie watch SPARMA make his way up the stairwell to his door.

156 EXT. COUNTY IMPOUND PARKING LOT - DAY 156

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

LAB COAT dabs a sterile swab in a solution bottle and touches it to... A RED STAIN on the carpet trunk. Baxter nervously awaits the result...

LAB COAT

Wine, most likely.

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

SAL

Squeaky clean. 22,000 miles.

BAXTER

A roll back?

(CONTINUED)

156

CONTINUED:

156

SAL

Definitely.

BAXTER

(on exit)

Keep at it. Let me know.

157

EXT. SPARMA'S APARTMENT - DAY

157

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

SPARMA

We ready to go?

Deke sighs.

158

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

158

Tina Salvatore sits nervously, talking to Baxter.

TINA

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

BAXTER

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

TINA

Maybe. Probably not.

JAMIE enters. She leans over and whispers to Baxter.

JAMIE

It was like he was expecting us.

Baxter turns to Tina.

BAXTER

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

TINA

I guess not.

(CONTINUED)

158

CONTINUED:

158

BAXTER

Thanks. You go with Detective Estrada here, okay?

Tina nods, rises, Baxter pulls Jamie aside.

BAXTER

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

159

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

159

Tina and Jamie exit and walk toward Homicide.

TINA

I need to use the restroom.

JAMIE

It's right there. I'll wait.

TINA

It's okay. I know how to get back to your office.

JAMIE

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

TINA

Diet anything.

JAMIE

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

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

160

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

160

Baxter stands, waiting. Sal walks in.

SAL

The Harvester was clean as a whistle.

Deke walks in carrying a wind-up alarm clock. Deke winds the clock and sets it on the end of the table.

DEKE

Got this off your desk, Sal.

(CONTINUED)

Sal, leaning against the wall, nods, smiles.

BAXTER

Don't hesitate to pick up the phone.

Deke exits, leaving Sal and Baxter in the room. Tick. Tock. Baxter nods to Sal who walks to the door, eyes...

THE HALL. Empty, except a single UNIFORMED OFFICER, JERRY, that stands against a wall.

SAL

All clear.

BAXTER

Bring him in.

SAL

(to uniform)

Okay, Jerry.

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

She hears steps coming, looks up to see...

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

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

Sparma is led in.

BAXTER

We won't need those.

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

SPARMA

Where's Joe Friday?

BAXTER

My name's Detective Baxter.

SPARMA

I know. You're famous. On TV, in the papers all the time. I'm kind of a crime buff.

BAXTER

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

SPARMA

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

Baxter looks to Sal then back to Sparma.

SPARMA

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

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

163 INT. BAXTER'S DESK - DAY (LATER)

163

A nervous Tina Salvatore sits at the desk.

164 INT. INTERROGATION OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

164

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

165 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

165

The interview continues...

SPARMA

Look, Jimmy...

BAXTER

-- Detective Baxter.

SPARMA

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

(CONTINUED)

165

CONTINUED:

165

BAXTER

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

SPARMA

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

166

INT. BAXTER'S DESK - DAY (LATER)

166

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

JAMIE

Shouldn't be much longer.

167

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

167

Sparma looks at a graduation photo of Julie Brock.

SPARMA

Cute li'l thing... wasn't she?

Baxter takes the photo back.

BAXTER

Who said she's dead?

SPARMA

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

BAXTER

Do you wanna be?

SPARMA

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

A167

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - SAME TIME - DAY

A167

Deke picks up the phone. It buzzes and Baxter picks it
up.

BAXTER

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

A167

CONTINUED:

A167

DEKE

You get the feeling he's enjoying this?

168 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

168

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

DEKE enters the room, carrying a paper bag.

SPARMA

Cavalry's here.

(to Baxter)

We day-trip together sometimes.

Deke sits down directly in front of Sparma.

SPARMA

Where we going next? 'Cause I know a cute little spot for a picnic.

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

Baxter nods to Sal, who leaves the room. Baxter slides back against the rear wall to watch.

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

SPARMA

Whatta ya got there?

Deke nods to Sparma and then to the envelope.

169 INT. INTERROGATION OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

169

Sal watches.

SAL

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

170 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

170

Sparma chuckles nonchalantly, reaches out, and unclasps the envelope.

(CONTINUED)

170

CONTINUED:

170

He takes a glance inside (not as long a glance as he wants to), then drops the envelope back on the table.

Deke stares at Sparma, then relaxes down in his chair.

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

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

Sparma waits a second longer, then shrugs ("Okay, no big deal, I'll look"), reaches out, and takes the envelope.

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

171

INT. INTERROGATION OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY (LATER)

171

Sal watches, eyes glued to...

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

172

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

172

Baxter, lying back, watches --

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

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

SPARMA

Uh... yeah. That's it.

Deke hands it to Sparma. Deke moves closer, sitting on the edge of the table, his eyes on Sparma. Sparma lasers in on the photo -- his glazed eyes flutter a bit. The clock TICKS...

Then Deke knocks the photo away and grabs Sparma's crotch with one hand and his neck with the other, pushing the man and chair backwards. He gets in Sparma's face.

DEKE

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

Baxter jumps forward --

173 INT. INTERROGATION OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY 173

Sal races from the room. WE PAN AND HOLD OUR VIEW THROUGH THE ONE-WAY MIRROR.

Baxter and Sal pull Deke away.

Sparma starts a WHEEZING CHUCKLE.

174 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY 174

Sal and Baxter pull Deke off Sparma.

BAXTER

What the hell was that?

DEKE

Guy got hard just looking.

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

DEKE

(calmly)

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

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

SPARMA

How about you? You want some?

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

175 INT. THE HALL OUTSIDE - DAY 175

Baxter exits the room, mad, frustrated. Jamie approaches.

BAXTER

Where's Deacon?

JAMIE

I think he left. You ready for her?

176 INT. BAXTER'S DESK - DAY

176

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

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

Tina turns another page. It's Sparma. A five-year-old mug shot. Tina hesitates.

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

SAL (O.S.)
Jimmy. It's your wife.

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

BAXTER
Whattaya think?

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

BAXTER
(puzzled)
Whattaya mean, a better look?

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

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

177 INT. HALLWAY - DAY (SECONDS LATER)

177

Jamie hurries to catches up to Baxter...

JAMIE
Look, I'm sorry. What about a line-up?

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

And he storms away, leaving Jamie staring.

178 INT. FARRIS' OFFICE - DAY

178

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

FARRIS

I told you! I warned you...

BAXTER

I take the heat. I'm the primary!

FARRIS

For now.

BAXTER

What the hell does that mean?

FARRIS

It means I've got 6 bodies, no witnesses, no evidence, and no killer. Two guys questioned. And why are they suspects? One, who later sucks on a .12 gauge, for malicious unzipping, the other for carrying a concealed hard-on. Whattaya want the D.A. to do, feel him up on the stand?

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

FARRIS

Sheriff's calling in the feds, filling out the behavioral science paperwork now. They got a guy coming in Monday. At that point, we take a step back... revamp.

BAXTER

Revamp?

FARRIS

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

Baxter bites his tongue, turns to leave.

FARRIS

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

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

(CONTINUED)

ROGERS

Wasn't in the computer but old paperwork says he walked in, spent ten hours going through the thing, signed a confession. We cut him loose the next morning --

BAXTER

Why?

ROGERS

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

Rogers smiles smugly. Baxter turns to Farris...

BAXTER

So I've got two days?

Farris nods slowly. Baxter turns to go.

ROGERS

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

Baxter holds his ground, staring at Rogers.

ROGERS

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

179 EXT. ST. AGNES - NIGHT

179

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

180 INT. ST. AGNES - HALLWAY - NIGHT

180

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

BAXTER

Deacon?!...

181 INT. DEKE'S ROOM - NIGHT

181

Baxter enters, dark except for a nightstand light. He takes in the room and gulps when he sees... THE WALL OF PHOTOS. GRUESOME.

(CONTINUED)

BAXTER stares, trying hard to understand the demons signified. The look on his face mixes disgust and reverence.

DEKE

Boo.

Baxter jumps, spins, sees --

DEKE sits in a dark corner, in a chair, he's wearing the boots and drinking from a bottle of Scotch.

BAXTER

What is all this?

DEKE (O.S.)

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

Baxter charges over and... throttles Deke with a hard shove to the chest, pinning him against the wall. The bottle clatters to the floor as Baxter shoves him again. Deke offers no resistance, just takes the punishment.

Baxter buttonholes Deke against the wall.

BAXTER

What the hell are you tryin' to do to me?!

Baxter releases his hold and Deke slumps to the ground.

DEKE

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

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

BAXTER

This is sick. You need to get some help.

DEKE

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

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

DEKE

A toast.

BAXTER

A toast to what?!

(CONTINUED)

DEKE

We've got a suspect, my friend.

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

BAXTER

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

DEKE

So?

BAXTER

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

DEKE

You got the same ache in your gut as me. We got something, maybe we just don't know what it is yet... I get inside his place for five minutes and I know.

BAXTER

We don't have enough for a warrant... Know what?

DEKE

If Sparma's our boy...

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

BAXTER

We'll catch a break.

DEKE

What is it you want from this?

BAXTER

I wanna nail the bastard.

DEKE

For who?

BAXTER

For the girls he killed... and --

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

(CONTINUED)

181

CONTINUED: (3)

181

BAXTER

For Ronda Rathbun, wherever she
is.

DEKE

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

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

DEKE

Five minutes.

182

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

182

Baxter dials, then...

SPARMA (V.O.)

(through phone)

Hello.

BAXTER

Hey, Al.

SPARMA (V.O.)

Who's this?

BAXTER

A guy with something to show you.

SPARMA (V.O.)

Oh, yeah, what's that?

BAXTER

Something you left behind.
Something cops would like to see.
Meet me at Pikes. Near your
house, on the 'bully.'

When Baxter hangs up he notices... A "Have you seen this
girl" POSTER with Ronda Rathbun's photo on it. Someone's
drawn a mustache and goatee on the girl's face.

183

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

183

Deke sits, watching the window and back, upstairs door.
Baxter gets in, closes the door. Deke gives him a look
and Baxter shrugs --

BAXTER

We'll see.

(CONTINUED)

183

CONTINUED:

183

They both notice a light going off in Sparma's apartment and watch as Sparma exits, walks down the stairway.

184

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

184

THROUGH the front car window we see Sparma emerge from under a streetlight, look around, and cross the street.

Baxter and Deke share a look. "Are we going to do this?" Deke answers by opening his door.

185

EXT. SPARMA'S APT. - HALLWAY - NIGHT

185

Deke walks to Sparma's door. He opens a burglar's kit, but when he touches the lock, the door squeaks open.

186

INT. SPARMA'S APT. - NIGHT

186

Deke enters, closing the door behind him. He puts on his gloves then opens the door and wipes the handle. *

He eyes the kitchen. *

Deke opens the fridge -- milk, beer, no leftovers. Deke opens the freezer, shines the light on it... Not much there. *

Deke walks to the sink, a can of Lysol sits on the counter. He spots a LONG, STURDY KNIFE in the drying sink, picks it up, shines the light on it... serrated edges. *

CLOSEUP - THE TIP *

only the very tip, is... missing. *

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

A POLICE SCANNER. A DISPATCHER'S VOICE comes through the airwaves, calling out instructions to a radio car.

187

INT. DEKE'S CAR - NIGHT

187

Baxter sits inside, waiting, watching Sparma's window.

- 188 INT. SPARMA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 188 *
- THE LIVING ROOM -- very neat, very clean and organized. *
- The flashlight fixes on... *
- THE TV -- a rerun -- sound down. *
- THE BEDROOM *
- THE BED -- made. THE DRESSER -- a few knick-knacks on *
- it... *
- A BOOKSHELF -- a few hardbound, a few paperbacks -- all *
- on crime: forensics, whodunits?, serial killers... *
- 189 EXT./INT. PIKE'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT 189
- Not too busy. Sparma enters, looks around -- two guys at the bar, a few folks eating dinner. SPARMA sits at the bar, checks his watch, looks around for a few seconds, then nods to the bartender.
- SPARMA
- Gotta phone?
- 190 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT 190
- Deke enters, shines the light and sees clear liquid in the bathtub. Water? Deke turns on the bathroom light and --
- The room turns red. He's using it as a dark room. Deke notices a DENTAL BRIDGE in the bottom of a glass of water.
- Deke picks up the two-tooth bridge. He thinks for a second, grabs a bar of motel soap from the sink, wets it, and firmly plants the bridge on the bar. A solid imprint on the bridge appears on the soap. He pockets the bar.
- 191 INT. DEKE'S CAR - NIGHT 191
- Baxter's eyes dart between Sparma's window and the street.

192 INT. SPARMA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 192 *

Deke reenters the living room/bedroom, notices a slide projector on a small table. His eyes go to the bare wall with a single nail it's aimed at.

Deke flicks it on and a light hits the wall. Nearby is a case of slides. He takes one out, slides it in the projector and the image is projected on the wall --

It's an old family photo -- nothing too interesting.

Deke stares at it for a second, then walks to the wall, bends down and picks up an empty picture frame, attaches it to the nail on the wall and --

It perfectly frames the projected image. He turns off the projector, replaces the slide and --

He walks -- feeling with his feet for irregularities. He kicks over a throw rug, hits his knees, and knocks on the wood. Hollow. He slips a pocketknife blade into the wood, turns it slightly and lifts the board. Inside, in a 2' by 2' cavity...

is a BOX. A lockbox.

193 INT. DEKE'S CAR - NIGHT 193

Baxter checks his watch, looks around, then gets out of the car and starts walking toward the nearest busy street.

194 INT. SPARMA'S APT. - NIGHT 194

Deke opens the box. *

195 INT. SPARMA'S APT. - NIGHT 195

Deke takes a deep breath. Inside... *

THE BOX is chock full -- letters, papers, postcards, clippings. Deke stares at the yellowed clippings...

They're all articles and police beat photos from murder scenes. There must be 20 of them. He stares at one...

THE CLIPPING -- Shakespeare's Bridge newspaper crime photo.

CUT TO:

196 FLASHBACK - EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE - NIGHT 196

Deke holds his revolver over his flashlight as he takes one cautious step after another. The guy's a hunter, in his element as he stalks whatever is out there in the brush.

197 BACK TO SCENE (PRESENT) 197

Deke is lost in memories, until...

 SCANNER VOICE (V.O.)

 All units. Officer needs help.
 Officer down. Repeat. Officer
 down. 10929 San Marino Street.

198 EXT. STREET - NIGHT 198

Baxter walks up to Pike's and looks in the window -- Sparma's not there.

Two LAPD SQUAD CARS, lights flashing, blast past him on the way to Sparma's. Baxter races back toward Sparma's.

199 INT. SPARMA'S APT. - NIGHT 199

Two cops kick open the door, flashlights and guns in hand. One cop tries the light switch. No light.

 COP #1

 Anybody in here?!

One cop tries to turn on the light -- nothing.

200 EXT. SPARMA'S APT. BUILDING - NIGHT 200

Baxter runs up, showing his badge. An LAPD OFFICER, steps in front of him.

 BAXTER

 What's goin' on?

 COP #3

 Officer down. Two guys inside
 now.

Baxter moves ahead. The Cop stops him.

(CONTINUED)

200

CONTINUED:

200

COP #3

All respect, Detective, your
jurisdiction doesn't start for
another twenty blocks.

Baxter sighs and steps back, his eyes on Sparma's window.
And then he starts to run for the phone booth by Deke's
car. When he gets there, he throws in a coin, hurriedly
dials. When someone answers --

VOICE (V.O.)

(on phone)

Sheriff's.

BAXTER

Baxter. 362071.

And then he pauses, what can he say?

VOICE (V.O.)

(on phone)

Detective Baxter?... Detective
Baxter?

To say anything would give himself up. He hangs up and
makes his way back toward Sparma's apartment.

201 INT./EXT. THE APARTMENT - NIGHT

201

One cop shines his flashlight up at the bare bulb above
them and screws it back in. The bulb lights up. Deke
unscrewed them.

Outside the back door we see Deke standing. He looks
down -- a cop with a flashlight is right below him and an
LAPD cruiser is nearby.

He starts to move slowly down the exterior hall toward
the front/side of the building.

A201 EXT. THE PARKING LOT BELOW - SAME TIME - NIGHT

A201

An LAPD cop moves and shines his light.

202 EXT. REAR OF APARTMENT - SAME TIME - NIGHT

202

Deke makes his way to a corner, then climbs up on the
railing and lifts himself to the roof.

203 EXT. STREET - NIGHT 203

Baxter eyes the apartment.

204 INT. SPARMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 204

COP #2
There's nothin' here.

They hear FOOTSTEPS above them and grab for their radios.

205 EXT. STREET - SAME TIME 205

A nearby cop's radio blares --

VOICE (V.O.)
(on radio)
6 Adam 67; show a Code 4. No
officer down. Advise that we have
a possible prowler suspect fleeing
the location.

Baxter's eyes find --

HIS POV

DEKE slowly walking on the slanted roof to the opposite
side of the building.

BACK TO SCENE

Baxter sees a cop exit Sparma's back door and look
around. The cop goes down the steps and looks to the
roof, shining a flashlight to and fro.

Baxter hears laughter and spins to see --

Sparma, sitting on a short wall, not twenty feet away,
watching the disturbance he's created. He's eating chips
from the restaurant.

Baxter jumps in Deke's car and pulls away.

206 EXT. ROOF - NIGHT 206

Deke squats down to avoid the light beam, then moves
quietly to the edge of the building and takes a look
down. Too far to jump. The flashlight moves past him,
getting closer.

(CONTINUED)

206

CONTINUED:

206

He sees a vertical water spout, turns around, and, feet first, climbs down. He has to drop the last six feet or so, hitting the ground hard.

207

INT. DEKE'S CAR - NIGHT

207

Baxter, driving, looks to and fro. Suddenly, Deke appears and jumps into the car. Baxter throws it in reverse, does a three-point turn and drives away as Deke shakes a pill from a bottle and sticks it under his tongue.

BAXTER

Sparma called in an 'Officer down.'

DEKE

Wily sonofabitch, huh?

BAXTER

Wily enough to keep his apartment clean?

DEKE

Not that wily. He's definitely top of the list. Guy's got a box of clippings, knickknacks. Souvenirs.

BAXTER

By any chance you see a red barrette?

DEKE

Red barrette?

BAXTER

Ronda Rathbun was wearing one when she disappeared.

DEKE

Maybe. I dunno. It was stuffed full... If I had five more minutes.

He looks to Baxter. A plea.

BAXTER

You're out of your fucking mind.

208

INT. LASD - CORONER'S - NIGHT

208

CLOSEUP -- A SERIES OF CORONER'S X-RAYS OF ALL VICTIMS.

(CONTINUED)

BAXTER (O.S.)
Would a metal knife tip
absolutely, positively show up?

FLO DUNIGAN

sitting at her desk, analyzing the soap bridge mold,
speaks without looking up.

FLO
Absolutely, positively.

BAXTER pulls the X-rays off the viewing light.

BAXTER
So, it's somewhere else. All the
more reason to find Ronda.

Flo puts away her measuring instrument, tosses the soap
bar back to Baxter, and shakes her head.

BAXTER
How come the only time physical
evidence is conclusive is when I
have two eyewitnesses and a
confession?!

DEKE
We work the case. It'll happen.

FLO
The voice of experience. Besides,
Detective, I could ask how you got
that bar of soap.

209 INT. BAXTER'S OFFICE - DAY

209

Sal, Jamie, Dennis Williams hover around Baxter's desk.

BAXTER
Okay, we focus on Sparma. Jamie,
I want you to re-canvass the areas
within a mile of where each of the
north county bodies were found.
Talk to anybody, everybody. Show
'em this 'six-pack.'

Baxter hands over a manila sheet with six photos, one-of
whom is Sparma. The others look nothing like him.

JAMIE
Two of 'em are Latino. Won't this
taint any possible I.D.?

(CONTINUED)

BAXTER

If they pick him, we'll rehabilitate with a line-up. Sal, you take the in-town sites. Dennis, work the files. I want names of anybody who knew the guy, dated, fed, or hated the guy. Sparma's got a scanner, so stay off frequency. I'll check in, but you got my beeper and here's the pay phone number near the apartment... We've got two days...

They nod, stand, and stare at him.

BAXTER

So, what we waiting for?

They leave. Baxter spots Rogers, at his desk, smiling. Baxter swallows a comment, grabs his coat, and leaves.

Jamie catches up to Baxter...

JAMIE

I think I've got a lead on the Watkins case. A dealer, pretty skittish, says he thinks he can I.D. the shooter.

BAXTER

So?

JAMIE

So, I was gonna bring him in today.

BAXTER

That guy's not going anywhere.

JAMIE

Yeah, but, Jim...

BAXTER

-- You got your detail.

Baxter walks to his car.

JAMIE

I know you're under the gun. But, my dead guy is just as important to me as your dead girls are to you.

(CONTINUED)

Baxter stops, turns, gets in her face.

BAXTER

A Lynwood banger gets blown away
and you expect me to give a shit?

JAMIE

Yeah. You used to...

Baxter is stung by this. Without answering, he walks away.

Deke parks, gets out, negotiates his way through the front yard -- past a '72 Chevy up on blocks -- and to the door of a house. He KNOCKS and waits. KNOCKS again. He walks to... THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE, to a rickety fence, and peers over.

A WOMAN, 45, on her hands and knees, digging in a 7' by 7' garden full of dead and dying tomatoes.

WOMAN

What do you want?

DEKE leans against the fence.

DEKE

Mrs. Roberts, you probably don't
remember me. I'm...

MRS. ROBERTS (WOMAN)

-- I remember you.

This takes him back a bit. She doesn't even look up, just keeps working. Finally she plucks a golf ball-sized spotted tomato, and holds it in her hand, examining it.

MRS. ROBERTS

Tell me, Detective. I water, I
shade, I spray, and still they
die. Why do they die?

She tosses the worthless tomato aside.

MRS. ROBERTS

What do you want?

DEKE

I wanted to bring you up to date
on your daughter's murder.

MRS. ROBERTS

Bring me up to date? She's five years dead and buried.

DEKE

I've got a good suspect. I wanna send the guy away; put this thing to rest.

Mrs. Roberts stares at Deke and shakes her head.

MRS. ROBERTS

It is at rest. I'm at rest. Poor Mary, she's at rest. Five years of peace and quiet. Five years with no tears, no worries about where she is, if she's okay, if she's even alive. She's dead, she doesn't hurt anymore, and I've only got to drive three miles to sit and talk to her. We never talked much before she...

She wipes a tear, an angry look on her face.

MRS. ROBERTS

Five years since I've cried over her. God knows I wept when it happened, but He also knows I stopped a day later. God gave me peace, Detective. Ask Him. He'll give it to you.

Deke is dumbfounded. He starts to mumble something, then finds his shoes with his eyes. She stares at him hard.

DEKE

I'm gonna... I'm gonna nail this guy.

MRS. ROBERTS

I'm sorry. I got no medals for you.

And she goes back to work. Deke stands for a moment, then slowly walks away. After he's gone, she breaks down sobbing.

Baxter on the nearby phone.

BAXTER

Got it.

(CONTINUED)

212

CONTINUED:

212

He hangs up and walks and gets into --

A213

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - SAME TIME

A213

Where Deke sits in the passenger side. He's staring at Sparma's apartment.

BAXTER

Bad news first. Sparma did file a 'stolen' on the wagon. Lost in the computer or something. The good? Sparma left town less than six weeks after your murders. He moved back five months ago.

DEKE

Where was he?

BAXTER

Detroit.

DEKE

Any unsolved bodies up there?

BAXTER

Detroit?!... We're checkin'.

DEKE

He knows we're here. He knows we're watching him.

BAXTER

Good.

Baxter holds up a box of Taco Bell.

BAXTER

Cold taco?

(as Deke doesn't
answer)

You okay?

DEKE

You ever think maybe it's not worth it? Sitting, watching. Spending your time in another guy's shadow...

BAXTER

One, wherever he goes, I mark it for search warrants. Two, he does it again, I catch him in the act. Three, when I'm with him, nobody dies. Nobody dies on my shift.

(CONTINUED)

A213

CONTINUED:

A213

DEKE

And how long's your shift?

BAXTER

As long as it takes.

Deke looks at Baxter, seeing himself in the younger man's eyes. The mantle has passed.

213

EXT. SPARMA'S STREET - DAY (LATER)

213

Sparma exits, walks down the street, buys a Sunday paper from a newspaper machine, and sits down on a bus bench.

214

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - DAY

214

BAXTER

What the hell's he doing?

Deke turns on the radio.

BAXTER

How can you listen to sappy love songs 24 hours a day?

DEKE

Reminds me of being 16 in the backseat with Marsha McConnell.

BAXTER

High school sweetheart?

DEKE

Ex-wife.

215

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

215

Sparma stands with another person -- Waiting for... A BUS pulls up. Sparma gets in.

216

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - DAY

216

Baxter shakes his head and starts his car.

BAXTER

The bus? The guy's got a car and he's takin' the bus?

217 EXT. STREET - DAY 217

Slow traffic. THE BUS inches forward.

A few cars back, DEKE AND BAXTER sit and wait, stuck in the same traffic. "I WILL FOLLOW HIM" by Little Peggy March comes on the radio. Deke smiles at the irony.

218 EXT. BUSY STREET (NORTH HOLLYWOOD) - DAY 218

A DIFFERENT BUS stops at a corner and Sparma gets out.

219 INT. BAXTER'S CAR - DAY 219

The game is wearing very thin.

BAXTER

Lived here all this time and had no idea how many buses it took to get to the Valley. This is fucking comical.

Deke smiles, a bit surprised by Baxter's strong language.

BAXTER

We're runnin' out of sand and the guy's takin' public transportation.

SPARMA starts a lazy walk up the block.

DEKE

We could offer him a ride.

220 EXT. "THE ZOO" STRIP JOINT - DAY 220

Sparma walks in.

DEKE (V.O.)

Did you 'run' this place?

BAXTER (V.O.)

Yeah, no connection.

221 INT. BAXTER'S CAR - DAY 221

They park, side-view mirror covering the entrance.

BAXTER

Let's say you're Sparma. You're a killer. Can't live without it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

221

CONTINUED:

221

BAXTER (CONT'D)

It's your day off. Been a whole week without the good stuff. What do you do? Do you take a bus to a strip joint in the Valley? Sure, you get to look at naked women, but the closest you get to blood is the color their fingernails.

222

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT (TWO HOURS LATER)

222

Absolute quiet. Baxter sits up straight when he spots...

223

EXT. THE ZOO STRIP JOINT - NIGHT

223

Sparma saunters out.

224

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

224

Back to business. Baxter starts the car.

225

EXT. STREET NEAR SPARMA'S - NIGHT (LATER)

225

A bus stops at a corner and Sparma gets off. He stretches his arms and walks AROUND THE CORNER to his apartment stairwell. After a few seconds, the blue light of the TV comes on.

226

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - SAME TIME - NIGHT

226

Baxter, parked, bangs the dashboard in frustration.

DEKE

Hey, Jimmy... Jimmy!

Baxter calms only a little, his eyes on fire.

DEKE

Look, you work the case. That's all you can do. It's like fishing. You go days without a bump, then bam! You get a strike. If you're impatient, you come home with nuthin' for the skillet.

Baxter sighs, looks up at a streetlight.

BAXTER

(a plea; a prayer)
I'm dyin' here...

(CONTINUED)

226

CONTINUED:

226

DEKE

Go home. I'll put him to bed.

BAXTER

Fuck you.

227

OMITTED

227

228

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT (LATER)

228

And again they sit and wait. Deke shakes his watch. Not working. He looks up, spots...

DOWN THE STREET -- A 24-hour MINI-MART.

DEKE

Whattaya think? They got watch batteries over there?

BAXTER

Maybe. Bring me a black coffee --

Deke gets out and walks away. Baxter stares at...

SPARMA'S WINDOW -- still coated in television blue --

Baxter, a bundle of nerves, sits. Then we hear a phone RING.

Baxter looks down the street at the pay phone on the corner.

Baxter makes a decision, gets out of the car. RING. RING. He arrives, picks it up --

BAXTER

Yeah?

Only the sound of a LOUD TV coming through the receiver.

BAXTER

Hello...

Baxter's eyes find the poster of Ronda Rathbun, still taped to the kiosk. Then, he feels eyes on him and spins to see...

Sparma, standing five feet away, smiling.

SPARMA

Must be a wrong number.

(CONTINUED)

Baxter hangs up, pulls his gun. *

BAXTER *

Put your hands in the air. Walk
to the gate. Do it now. Hands on
your head. Interlace your
fingers. Point your fingers to
the sky now. Spread your legs. *

Then, in a flash, Baxter is all over Sparma -- throws him
against a wall, frisks him for a weapon. *

SPARMA

I'd think twice. I mean,
everybody saw what happened at the
station.

Baxter takes away the knife. *

BAXTER *

Spread your legs. You have any
more weapons on you? *

SPARMA

Just a California lawn snake in my
pocket. *

Baxter shows him Ronda Rathbun photo. *

BAXTER *

Where is she? *

SPARMA

The original. How'd you wrangle
that?

Baxter turns him around. *

SPARMA *

You don't wanna rough me up; you
wanna kill me don't ya? Trust me,
ya don't have it in you. *

Baxter shows photo of Ronda Rathbun again. *

BAXTER

Where is she?

Sparma just smiles.

SPARMA

Dairy Queen? You don't wanna
know. Not really. *

Baxter slams Sparma against the wall. *

(CONTINUED)

228

CONTINUED: (2)

228

SPARMA

Okay, okay, you win. I'll take
you to her. Come on.

*
*

And he walks away. Baxter hesitates, then follows a few
steps behind Sparma as they walk toward the carport.

229

OMITTED

229

230

INT. MINI-MART - NIGHT

230

Deke waits in line behind a BUM buying a blistered hot
dog.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORNER -- TWO DELINQUENTS play a video game. DING.
DING.

DEKE watches them play, then tosses a coffee, the watch
battery, and a bill on the counter. DING. DING. DING.

IN THE CORNER -- The game ends. An amplified, sinister,
deep DRACONIC VIDEO VOICE announces...

DRACONIC VIDEO VOICE (V.O.)

The game is over!

KID #1

Aw, man. That sucks!

CLOSEUP - DEKE

VOICES in his head as he grabs his change and stumbles
out of the store.

MARY (V.O.)

It's over...

EXT. CARPORT - NIGHT

Sparma gets in his car, starts it, and backs up alongside
Baxter. They look at each other for a moment, then
Sparma rolls down the window --

SPARMA

Coming?...

Baxter hesitates, checks the street for any sign of Deke.

SPARMA

Tryin' to figure if you could get
back to your car in time to tail
me? You can't. Come on, get in.
We've got a drive ahead of us and
I've got to go to work tomorrow.

Sparma whistles a few bars of "FINAL JEOPARDY" THEME
MUSIC as Baxter hesitates. Then...

SPARMA

Ya already felt me up. You're
armed and I'm not. What are ya
scared of?

Baxter takes one last look down the street and gets in.

SPARMA

Buckle up.

- 232 OUTSIDE THE STORE 232
- Deke looks up, spots... SPARMA'S CAR exit the alley, with Baxter in the passenger seat (they don't see Deke). He drops the coffee and runs toward Baxter's car.
- 233 INT. SPARMA'S CAR - NIGHT 233
- Silence as Sparma moves through light traffic, looking over at Baxter every so often.
- 234 EXT. STREET - NIGHT 234
- Deke jumps in Baxter's car and takes off.
- 235 INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT 235
- Deke's eyes dance all over the place looking for... Far ahead. In the distance -- SPARMA'S CAR enters the freeway.
- 236 INT. SPARMA'S CAR - NIGHT 236
- SPARMA
Excited? Got that little tingly
feelin'?
- Baxter keeps one eye on Sparma, the other on their journey. Sparma puts on his blinker and crosses lanes of traffic.
- 237 INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT 237
- Deke spots Sparma change lanes to exit onto the 170.
- 238 INT. SPARMA'S CAR - NIGHT 238
- Sparma, enjoying this, can't take his eyes off Baxter.
- BAXTER
Just where is it we're going?
- SPARMA
Ronda Rathbun?

- 239 INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT 239
Deke. Determined to catch up. We hear WHISPERS, but we can't make out what the voices are saying.
- 240 EXT. 170 AT I-5 - NIGHT 240
Sparma's car takes the I-5 and continues onward.
- 241 INT. SPARMA'S CAR - NIGHT 241
Sparma puts on his blinker. THE HIGHWAY SIGN -- 14 EXIT -- moving right over them.
- SPARMA
Let's recap for the fans at home.
101 north, 170, I-5 north, 14.
Daddy, Daddy, how much longer?
- 242 INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT 242
Deke spots the I-5 freeway and blasts onto it. He steps on the gas and realizes he has a decision to make when he sees -- the highway splits 3 ways, the 14 on the right.
- 243 EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT 243
Deke slows down and comes to a stop on the overpass shoulder. Then he jumps out and climbs on the roof of the car.
- HIS POV
- the three different highways. On the third he spots AND WE ZOOM TO, in the distance, THE ERRATIC BLINKER...
- 244 INT. SPARMA'S CAR - NIGHT 244
Sparma changes lanes, exiting the 14 freeway and making an immediate right, heading toward the dark stillness of the Antelope valley. Their headlights beat a path down a gravel road, sending the occasional roadrunner fleeing for cover.

245 INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT 245

Driving along 14 -- Eyes everywhere. Deke spots -- far in the distance -- a single pair of headlights beating a dusty path through the darkness.

246 EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - NIGHT 246

Sparma's car slows and turns onto a dirt road blocked by a locked, swinging gate and cattle guard.

247 INT. SPARMA'S CAR - NIGHT 247

Sparma holds up a single key, hands it to Baxter. Baxter mulls it over, gets out, unlocks, and swings open the gate.

Sparma drives through, past Baxter's grim stare, and stops.

248 EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT 248

Baxter swings the gate closed. He hangs the lock on it and gets back in the car. WE HOLD as the car drives on, on, on into the dark. Then several hundred yards away, it stops and the brake and headlights die, leaving only the darkness.

249 EXT. IN A FIELD - NIGHT 249

Sparma's car sits, engine still thumping as it cools in the night air. Sparma steps out and leans on the hood. Baxter gets out, stands by the door.

SPARMA

I knew a guy had a hunting lease here 5 years or so back. Nice spot, huh? And we got the moon tonight.

BAXTER

Where is she?

SPARMA

All business. I tell you what. You start walkin' that way.

Baxter hesitates, then starts walking into the moonlit pasture. After 20 or so yards he veers left.

(CONTINUED)

SPARMA

Chilly.

Baxter, not understanding, turns and looks at Sparma.

SPARMA

Come on, you remember the game,
don't you. *

Baxter keeps walking left.

SPARMA

Chilly. Chillier. Chilliest. *
You really suck at this game. *Baxter sighs and walks right. Baxter continues to walk
slowly, deliberately... *

SPARMA

Warm. Warmer. Warmiest. Hot. *
Hotter. Bingo! Now look *
down at the ground... *

SPARMA

... and say... 'Hello, Ronda.'

BAXTER

Fuck you. *

BAXTER'S EYES slowly lift and he stares at the smiling
Sparma, who chuckles then goes to the trunk, opens it,
grabs a military shovel, and walks toward Baxter.

Baxter quietly unbuckles his holster strap.

SPARMA

You're going to need this. *

He tosses the shovel to...

Baxter, who grabs it midair without blinking. He holds
it, looks at it, casts his eyes on the ground, then
tosses the shovel back, pulls out his gun, and points it
at Sparma.

BAXTER

You dig.

SPARMA

Devil's in the details, ya know?
Fingerprints, witnesses, physical
evidence. You'd have to get rid
of my body, get rid of my car. A
lot to consider.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

249

CONTINUED: (2)

249

SPARMA (CONT'D)

And besides, like I said: You
don't have it in you.

Sparma hands the shovel to Baxter, who grimaces, slowly
re-holsters his weapon, and starts to dig.

*

250

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

250

Deke drives down the road -- looking left, right.
Nothing.

MARY (V.O.)

It's over...

251

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - NIGHT

251

Baxter's car goes past the gravel road gate and continues
on.

252

EXT. IN THE FIELD - NIGHT

252

Baxter digs, digs, digs. He stops for a second, takes
off his jacket, tosses it aside, and goes back to work.

THE HOLE -- a couple of feet deep and growing. SPARMA
leans in for a closer look.

SPARMA

You know, come to think of it,
this doesn't look that familiar.

Baxter stops digging, glares at Sparma, who walks 10 or
so feet away. He spits on the ground.

SPARMA

But this spot here; this looks
very promising.

BAXTER

What did you say?

*

SPARMA

This spot here; this looks a lot
more promising.

*

*

*

Sparma shrugs an "up to you."

BAXTER

This spot looks promising? Well,
I better get digging.

*

*

*

(CONTINUED)

252

CONTINUED:

252

Baxter takes the shovel, walks over, glares at Sparma,
then begins digging anew.

253

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

253

Deke mutters a curse as the gravel road essentially ends.
Blocking the road is a huge piece of farm equipment.

PAIGE (V.O.)

Always nice to see you, Joe.

(CONTINUED)

MRS. ROBERTS (V.O.)

It is at rest.

MARY (V.O.)

I forgive you, Joe. It's over...

DEKE throws the car in reverse.

Baxter, sweating, continues to dig. Sparma watches with mock fascination as each spade of dirt is removed.

Sparma's smile drops and he shakes his head.

SPARMA

Hmmm...

Baxter stops and stares at Sparma, who shakes his head and walks a few more yards away.

SPARMA

(whispers; singsong)

Ronda? Ron-da?...

Then he cups his ear and leans down --

SPARMA

(whispered mimic)

I'm... down... here...

He picks up a stick and makes a grand gesture of drawing an X in the dirt. Then he squats like a coach and waits.

SPARMA

X marks the spot. Come on, Jimmy.
Third time's a charm.

Sparma motions "come on" with one finger.

BAXTER

Cut the bullshit!

SPARMA

Okay, you want the truth? I never
killed anybody in my whole life.
Do you believe me?

Baxter's hatred shows in his eyes.

SPARMA

I can tell from your face that you don't; that you think I did all those horrible things to those girls. The ones you've found... and the ones you haven't. Well, what you think is out of my control. If you believe me, we can get in the car and drive home. If you don't...

And he points once again to the spot of dirt. Baxter's face tells us he's about to crack. He spits and stares at the "X."

SPARMA

Say, what if this guy just quit killing? Cold turkey. Fell back into his life. Nine to five. Maybe gets a girlfriend. He can have any woman he wants, you know? I mean, if he did that, you'd be fucked, wouldn't you? 'Cause you'd have nothing.

Baxter just stares down at Sparma.

SPARMA

Hell, he prolly wouldn't even have to stop. He could do it over and over and over again. Because he's smarter than you. He doesn't even have a high school diploma, but he's forgotten more than you'll ever know. That's gotta be frustrating, huh? To be that powerless?

Baxter's face hardens, his squinting eyes shooting darts. Sparma's smile drops and he stares back. A face-off.

SPARMA

What are you, five, six deep, and no end in sight? I saw a picture of your lovely family.

Baxter takes this in with a scowl.

SPARMA

Probably shoulda stayed outta the public eye.

(beat)

What kind of father are you?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SPARMA (CONT'D)

How can you protect those two beautiful daughters when you can't even begin to help one of those poor girls or their families? You're insignificant. You don't matter. This will go on and on and on.

Sparma grins lasciviously, then starts to chuckle. And the chuckle turns into a loud, resounding CACKLE.

SPARMA

(an evil clown)

And there's nuthin' you can do about it!

Baxter, in an instant rage, suddenly no longer a cop but an outraged father, grabs the shovel like a bat and...

BRUTALLY WHACKS Sparma's head. The CACKLE stops on a dime and the next and only sound we hear is the THUD of Sparma's body hitting the ground, echoing in the still night air.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - NIGHT

As Deke retraces the gravel road, he stops at...

THE GATE AND CATTLE GUARD. He pulls onto the road, nudges the front bumper against the fence... and it swings open.

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT

The headlights move along the swirling dust. Deke spots -- in the distance, SPARMA'S CAR.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE - NIGHT

Deke freezes as he hears more RUSTLING. Then he COCKS his revolver and continues forward. One foot in front of the other, eyes never blinking, a coiled spring.

He uses the flashlight to avoid a branch and --

A GUTTURAL HUMAN SOUND -- releases Deke's spring. He fires into the dark and spins the flashlight to see what's gone down.

(CONTINUED)

257

CONTINUED:

257

IN THE FLASHLIGHT BEAM -- A GIRL with long, blonde hair, MARY ROBERTS, on her knees, partially nude, bleeding from stab wounds. She glances at the fresh bullet wound in her chest then up at Deke, a puzzled look on her face. She holds out her arms to him and falls, face first, on the ground.

Deke is frozen. A lifetime crystallized in a single, defining moment.

CUT TO:

258

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT (PRESENT)

258

The car comes to a stop. Deke stares straight ahead into the darkness.

CUT TO:

259

FLASHBACK - EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE - NIGHT

259

Farris, on the run, having heard the gunshot, pushes past brush then stops dead in his tracks. Sal, not far behind, freezes when he sees...

SAL

(stunned)

Oh, Jesus...

Deke, kneeling over the body of Mary Roberts.

MARY (V.O.)

It's over...

CUT TO:

260

INT. BAXTER'S CAR - NIGHT (PRESENT)

260

Deke, still staring. He closes his eyes, hoping the sight before him will go away.

It won't. He opens them and stares at...

HIS POV

The headlights illuminate Baxter, kneeling over the crumpled body of Albert Sparma.

DEKE (V.O.)

(whispers)

It's never over...

(CONTINUED)

260

CONTINUED:

260

CLOSEUP - DEKE

His face...

FADE TO:

261

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT (LATER)

261

CLOSEUP -- BAXTER, in shock. He leans against the hood of the car and stares, numb. The two have become one.

WIDER ANGLE

DEKE rolls Sparma's body over and fishes in his pocket for his keys. The guy is deader than dead.

Deke finds the keys, walks over to Baxter.

BAXTER

(edgy; nervous)

It was him. We got him. He was our boy. He as much as told me.

*

DEKE

Nothing we can do about it now.

*

Baxter gives Deke a look of pure fear.

BAXTER

We gotta call somebody... What am I gonna say?

DEKE

Nothing... Stick him in a hole. Pick one. At least four feet deep.

Deke's proposal hits Baxter, who just stares.

DEKE

I'll be back in a few hours. Just stay put, all right?/Just sit tight, all right?

*

*

Baxter is too shocked to nod.

262

INT. SPARMA'S CAR - NIGHT

262

Deke drives it along the freeway, his mind racing.

263 INT. SPARMA'S APT. - NIGHT 263

The door opens and Deke enters. He gives himself a second to think then...

264 SERIES OF QUICK CUTS 264

1) Deke, hands in plastic gloves, puts trash bags in different spots. *

2) On the easy chair. Over the projector. On top of the stack of tapes. On the kitchen counter. *

3) Slides trash bags across the bed. *

4) Deke takes the clothes out of the closet. *

DISSOLVE TO:

265 ANOTHER ANGLE 265

SLOW, LANGUID PAN FROM ONE SIDE OF THE ROOM TO THE OTHER. DAMN NEAR EVERYTHING IN THE APARTMENT IS IN GARBAGE BAGS. WE HOLD ON DEKE, SITTING ON THE FLOOR, STARING AT...

THE THROW RUG in the center of the main room.

HE'S put this off till last. Deke slowly rises, walks over and, with one foot, he rolls it aside.

DEKE

Be there. Still be there.

He kneels, opens the floorboard and stares into the hole.

THE LOCKBOX still sits there.

DEKE pulls it out, opens it, staring for several seconds at contents we can't see. Then he sets it aside.

266 EXT. SEEDY STREET - NIGHT 266

Somewhat industrial area. A group of tough-looking Latinos sit on cars, smoking and talking. This is their jurisdiction. DEKE drives past them and parks Sparma's car alongside the curb and gets out.

The toughs stop talking and stare as he walks toward them.

(CONTINUED)

THE LITTLE THINGS - 9/23/19 (Full Blue) 129.
266 CONTINUED: 266

There's something about his look that gives them pause. When he's close, Deke tosses the car keys to one of the toughs and walks into the night.

267 INT. DEKE'S BRONCO - DAWN 267

Deke drives, focused but dead tired -- a long night behind him, but miles to go before he sleeps.

The back end of the Bronco is filled with trash bags.

268 EXT. DIRT ROAD - GATE - DAY 268

Deke's Bronco drives slowly through the gate.

269 INT. DEKE'S BRONCO - DAY 269

Deke peers ahead, driving back to the mess he left only a few hours ago.

Then he slows and brings the Bronco to a stop. The look on his face says what he's looking at is something he wishes he didn't have to see. He rubs his tired face with one dirty hand, looks up again. Still the same.

270 EXT. THE FIELD - DAY 270

The bloody, still very dead face of Albert Sparma -- in the same position as we left him. In the b.g. we hear DIGGING NOISES. WE BOOM UP to reveal... the first two holes Baxter dug... three more holes... And finally, from a view HIGH ABOVE we see...

A FIELD OF HOLES, at least 20 of them. Baxter, shirt off, still digging, searching...

271 EXT. FIELD - DAY (AN HOUR LATER) 271

Deke tosses dirt on a pile. A grave. He wipes his brow and takes one last look at the field.

All holes filled.

272 INT. DEKE'S BRONCO - DAY 272

Baxter, stupefied, sits shotgun, staring blankly.

DEKE walks to the Bronco, tosses the shovel in the back.

(CONTINUED)

BAXTER

(mumbling)

He was our boy, right, Joe? I think he was our boy...

And then he starts to cry. Deke watches a few seconds, then pulls Baxter out, jacking him up against the truck.

DEKE

Nobody's gonna give a damn. I've taken care of this. You listenin' to me? You go back, tell Farris that Sparma was a wash and you need a break. A coupla weeks. You tell him I left town on Saturday and you went home. You hear me?!

It's all too much for Baxter to comprehend.

DEKE

It's history. Forgotten. He's rotting in the ground and the only thing he can do to you now is what you let him. Don't ever go back to his place, don't ever pull his file, don't ever let his name cross your lips. 'Cause if you do, he's gonna rise right up outta that dirt and do ya in.

(beat)

It's the little things, Jimmy. It's the little things that rip you apart. It's the little things that get ya caught.

Baxter, still numb, offers a slight nod. Deke pats his cheek.

DEKE

That's my boy.

The irony of the phrase gives Baxter pause. He looks up into Deke's eyes with a mixture of hatred and trust.

HIGH ABOVE. Now with one more secret to hide?

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

274 INT. ST. AGNES - HALLWAY - DAY 274

The Manager and a maid walk to Deke's door, push it open.

275 INT. DEKE'S ROOM - DAY 275

Empty. He left in a hurry. The Manager steps in, looks around and shakes his head. Deke's Salvation Army clothes are on the floor. He also sees --

A PILE OF TRASH... the photos of Paige Callahan, Tamera Ewing, and Mary Roberts.

MANAGER

They leave clothes I can't wear;
pictures of girls I don't know.

The Manager bends over, picks up -- a grisly crime scene shot -- and tosses it, a look of grim displeasure on his face.

MANAGER

I gotta get outta this town.

Near Deke's thrift shop clothes sit the unforgettable boots.

276 INT. DEKE'S BRONCO - DAY 276

As Deke, in his sheriff's uniform, leaves Los Angeles far, far behind, the radio station's last LOVE SONG plays.

DJ (V.O.)

And that brings to an end the
world as we know it. Thanks for
listening for all these many
years... It's 12 o'clock.

There's a long pause -- DEAD AIR on the radio. And then...

DIFFERENT DJ (V.O.)

It's noon, El-Lay. This is Bobby
Saunders and I'm sayin' welcome to
the new KKNG, the king of talk
radio, where what you have to say
matters.

Deke's eyes gaze at... the WHITE CAHUENGA PASS CROSS, perched high above him.

(CONTINUED)

276

CONTINUED:

276

Then he looks at LOS ANGELES IN HIS REARVIEW MIRROR, reaches down, and turns off the radio.

277

INT. HOMICIDE AREA - DAY

277

GREG ALBERTS, 45, handsome, an FBI behavioral specialist, addresses the Homicide unit in front of a large blackboard. On the chalkboard is a profile list of traits.

ALBERTS

... A white male between the ages of 25 and 40. He is of above average intelligence; socially competent; works as a skilled laborer; probably firstborn or an only child; follows the crimes in the media...

CUT TO:

278

EXT. SEEDY STREET (HOLLYWOOD) - DAY

278

Sparma's car, sans wheels and seats, sits up on blocks. When night falls, the vultures will come back and pick the bones.

ALBERTS (V.O.)

... He has at least one car in good condition, maybe two...

CUT TO:

279

INT. SPARMA'S APT. - DAY

279

Empty. A stick of furniture here, a pile of trash there.

ALBERTS (V.O.)

... has a propensity for changing jobs; picking up, leaving at a moment's notice.

CUT TO:

280

INT. HOMICIDE AREA - DAY

280

ALBERTS

That, ladies and gentlemen, is the guy we're looking for.

(CONTINUED)

280

CONTINUED:

280

SAL

What about the leads we're following?

ALBERTS

I think it's safe to say we're at square one on this operation. One thing I can promise you... we'll get the bastard.

281

INT. PRESS ROOM - DAY

281

Captain Farris is at the microphone. Behind him stand Alberts and Rogers.

FARRIS

With Agent Alberts and the FBI's help, we hope to stop this killer. I'll take a few questions.

REPORTER

What will Detective Baxter's role be in the revamped investigation?

FARRIS

Detective Sergeant Baxter has done a fine job as the primary on this case. But, under our new task force configuration, Detective Sergeant Rogers will be acting in concert with Federal Agent Alberts.

Rogers takes a tiny step forward and nods.

FLANDERS (REPORTER)

Isn't it unusual to change primaries mid-stream?

FARRIS

Detective Baxter is on a self-requested, open-ended leave of absence.

282

INT. BAXTER HOUSE - DAY

282

Ana stands at the kitchen window and looks out at... THE GIRLS playing in the pool. BAXTER sits nearby, staring into space. The doorbell RINGS.

Ana walks to the door, opens it. There stands Sal, holding a package envelope.

(CONTINUED)

282

CONTINUED:

282

SAL

Hey, Ana.

ANA

Hi, Sal, come in.

SAL

Nah, I gotta get goin'. He okay?

Ana just looks at him. What can she say?

SAL

Yeah, well, we miss him already.
Joe Deacon gimme this, said it was
for Jimmy.

He hands her the envelope. She takes it, stares at it.

283

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

283

Baxter sits in a pool chair under a table umbrella,
staring at his daughters playing in the pool. The girls
stop splashing for a moment and stare at their father,
very aware of his uncomfortable state.

CLOSEUP - BAXTER

In a world of his own.

CUT TO:

284

VIDEO FOOTAGE

284

OF RONDA RATHBUN GOOFING IN THE BACKYARD POOL WITH HER
FRIENDS. SHE LOOKS DIRECTLY AT THE CAMERA AND SMILES.

ANA (V.O.)

Jimmy?...

285

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

285

Ana kisses Baxter and sets the envelope on the table.

ANA

Sal brought this by.

Baxter doesn't even look at her.

ANA

He said it was from Joe Deacon.

(CONTINUED)

285

CONTINUED:

285

Ana walks back into the house. Baxter stares at the envelope on the table, then slowly reaches over and slides it across. He quietly opens it and pulls out the contents...

A NOTE. It reads: NO ANGELS.

BAXTER sets the note down and turns the envelope upside down. Out falls A SMALL OBJECT. Baxter takes it and stares at...

A RED BARRETTE.

BAXTER grips the barrette like it's a St. Christopher and looks once again at his beautiful daughters in his beautiful pool in his beautiful yard.

JENNIFER AND CHLOE -- watching him back.

286

EXT. DEKE'S HOUSE (DESERT) - DUSK

286

Deke takes the last trash bag to a 55-gallon drum fire and dumps it in. The flames engulf it.

Deke returns to the Bronco, reaches in, and grabs the lockbox. He opens it again, hoping for a different result but...

It's still VERY EMPTY.

CUT TO:

287

FLASHBACK - INT. CORONER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

287

After hours. The place is empty. FLO DUNIGAN is performing a hush-hush autopsy.

In a chair, emotionally drained, sits DEKE, eyeing the floor. Behind him stands Farris, wearing a grimace --

Flo uses a large set of tweezers to dig into the subject's chest. She fishes for, extracts, and holds up...

A bullet, flattened. The one that ended up on Flo's keychain.

The three share a look -- a shattering, hideous moment that defines them forever. Flo sighs and looks to Deke.

FLO

Cause of death -- massive stab wounds.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

287

CONTINUED:

287

FLO (CONT'D)

That's what I'm puttin' down...
Chances are she woulda died
anyway, Deke.

Deke slowly turns to Farris. The two men stare at one another, then Farris, hating himself, nods and walks out of the room.

Flo drops the bullet in a metal pan and she, too, walks away.

Deke just sits, staring at the body of Mary Roberts. He doesn't even flinch when...

her head slowly turns toward him... and she smiles, ever so slightly.

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EXT. DEKE'S HOUSE - DUSK (PRESENT)

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The fire still blazes. Deke walks to the front passenger door of his Bronco, opens it, takes out a small grocery sack, reaches in, and pulls out...

A CARDBOARD BARRETTE PACKAGE -- price tag still on -- several barrettes pinned to cardboard backing. One missing. The red one.

He tosses it into the flame, then senses someone coming...

Over the ridge -- THE CUR DOG -- returning home. The mutt wanders up next to his leg and Deke obliges with a boot back scratch.

THE FLAMES engulf Sparma's belongings. All of them. And the barrettes, too.

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ANGLE HIGH ABOVE

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Deke walks into the house, followed by his sometimes pet.

... as... WE HEAR a BOBWHITE'S LONELY CALL split the desert air...

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END

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