

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

by

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EXT. QUEENS COLLEGE, FLUSHING QUEENS - ESTAB SHOT - DAY

INT. CLASSROOM, QUEENS COLLEGE, QUEENS NY - 12:30 PM

25 students, seated facing a green blackboard (subject written there; INTERMEDIATE STATISTICS) as the Professor walks the aisles passing out graded exams.

These kids are from the U.S., Asia, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, all young and open-faced; working/middle class sons and daughters of immigrant strivers, light on irony.

No one seems too happy about their grades.

INT. STUDENT CENTER, QUEENS COLLEGE - 1:00 PM

Around a messy table in the food court area, sit 4 kids from the class - NASIR (NAZ) KHAN (19), AMIR FARIK (19), MIRYAM STOLPER (18) and HENRY POWELL (20) 2 Pakistanis, a Russian-Jew and a Trinidadian black.

They hold their exams like poker hands.

AMIR
(dropping his on table)
74.

HENRY
(doing the same)
72.

MIRYAM
(same)
76.

NAZ
(hesitating, then...)
80.
(grinning)
Oh yaaasss...

INT. QUEENS COLLEGE BASKETBALL COURT - 2:00 PM

Varsity team - the DUTCHMEN (average height 6'3"), predominately black with a sprinkling of white and Hispanic - are drilling, working through plays, the squitter and squeak of stop-start sneakers on the hardwood.

A player almost goes down on a wet spot and Naz, in gym shorts and a tee shirt, goes racing out onto the court with a dry sponge mop to clean it up.

Taking advantage of the time out, Amir also comes racing out with an armload of face towels.

As the 5'9" equipment managers, Amir and Naz look Lilliputian compared to the heavily breathing varsity players.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - 3:00 PM

As the players shower and change, Naz and Amir collect towels and jerseys, once again dwarfed by their charges.

ROLAND
 (22, Af-Am point guard; to
 Naz, Amir)
 You guys want to party with us
 tonight? We're going over to my ex-
 fiancée's crib in the city, gonna be
 bookoo females.

ON NAZ

Holy cow.

HECTOR
 (21, Latino, power
 forward, eyes rolling)
 Roland, man...

ON AMIR - CATCHING HECTOR'S EXPRESSION

Gets it; they're not really wanted.

ROLAND
 Naw, man, there gonna be plenty for
 everybody.
 (to Naz)
 I'll write you the address.

EXT. CHELSEA PIERS SPORTS COMPLEX - NYC - ON THE HUDSON

Estab shot.

INT. CHELSEA PIERS BASKETBALL COURTS - 5:30 PM

8 full courts running parallel in a hangar-sized space.

CENTER COURT

Amir and Naz' turn to play - their team the PAK-MEN (4 Pakistanis, one African American) vs. HI-LINERS (5 white guys).

It's an amateur league game - just for fun - and no one on either team is better than Playground Good.

ELECTRONIC SCOREBOARD

HI-LINERS 63 - PAK-MEN 60 - Time left, 44 seconds.

Amir, muscling under the boards, lays up 2 (63-62)

ANGLE - SMALL ROLL OUT BLEACHERS

A few girlfriends and parents there going crazy, including SALIM KHAN (46, Naz's father).

ON COURT - HI-LINERS

taking it out, killing the clock. A Pak-Man (MAHMOUD, 18) intercepts a pass.

ANGLE - FOUL LINE

NAZ

(takes a blindingly quick,
practiced hit of asthma
spray then hands high for
the ball)

Yo Yo!

ANGLE - BLEACHERS

SALIM

(pacing, shouting)
Moud! Kick it back! Kick it back!

ANGLE - MAHMOUD,

firing a pass to Naz at the line.

Tall Hi-Liner in Naz' face, Naz going up for a jump shot, the ball arcing then circling the rim, messing with everybody's head for a second before dropping in.

PAK-MEN win it.

ANGLE - BLEACHERS

Salim exploding with joy.

ANGLE - PAK-MEN MOBBING NAZ

Naz high as a kite.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CHELSEA PIERS - 6:00 PM

Players going home, Nazir walking with his father Salim to a cab, calling out to Amir walking to his own car.

NAZ
Come pick me up at nine, OK?

AMIR
(doesn't really want to
go)
Naz...

NAZ
Amir. It's Friday night, OK?

EXT/INT. TAXI - NORTHERN BLVD (QUEENS) - 6:30 PM

Salim is driving (it's his cab), his son in the passenger seat next to him.

NAZ
80's not bad.

SALIM
Not bad is not good enough.

NAZ
Baba, its Statistics 2, do you have any idea how hard that is?

SALIM
You're off the Dean's List.

NAZ
Sophomore slump. I'll be back on next term.

SALIM
You should drive this thing [taxi] for a week. That'll get you back on overnight.

NAZ' POV - OUT THE WINDOW, JACKSON HEIGHTS

Row after row of small modest houses like crowded teeth, heavily third world, his families world, American Dreamers for the most part, hustlers all.

Naz smiles, he likes it here.

NAZ
Baba, you worry too much.

EXT. KURTA PALACE - 74TH STREET, JACKSON HEIGHTS - 6:30 PM

A small Indo-Pak women's clothing store on the main commercial drag of the Heights; the windows filled with

traditional wear; Kurtas [tunics] Salwars [loose pants] and Dupattas [scarves].

Salim's taxi pulls in front. Naz (reluctantly) gets out. Heads inside.

INT. KURTA PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Cramped store, the walls lined with shelves of the stuff featured in the window plus more western wear; jeans, bras, sunglasses, etc.

There are a half dozen women in here, older, maternal; hard to tell who's a customer, who's working, including SAFAR (44), Naz' mother.

The air is a lilting aviary of dialects and languages; Urdu, Pashto, Punjabi, Sindh, English.

As soon as Naz enters, the deadpan teasing commences.

WOMAN

Bachelor number one.

SAFAR

(to woman)

Leave him alone.

WOMAN2

Nazir, Miss Lahore came in here this morning looking for you. When we told her you were still in school she left in tears.

SAFAR

What did I just tell you?

WOMAN3

Look, he's blushing...

SAFAR

Your father...

NAZ

He's outside.

Safar starts gathering up various small plastic bags from behind the counter.

WOMAN2

Nazir, my nephew from Karachi is coming to the city next week. Could you show him around?

NAZ

Sure.

WOMAN1

His name is Ayesha.

More of that strangely deadpan laughter.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Naz carries his mother's plastic bags to the taxi.

NAZ

Ami [Mom], you should have seen it.
We won at the buzzer.

SAFAR

Won what?

EXT. KHAN HOME - ESTAB SHOT

Narrow, needs a paint job, situated on a street with other beat-up but house-proud homes, all facing multi-laned Northern Boulevard, more a highway than a boulevard, which gives the houses an extra layer of vulnerability and fragility.

Salim's taxi is parked in the miniscule driveway.

INT. KHAN HOME - 8:00

It's cramped but tidy; a little gaudy in its décor; bright colored velour couch and easy chairs; small chandeliers; family photos in gold and silver frames everywhere. And one photo of the Ka'aba, the Holy Shrine in Mecca, on the wall, an adjoining arrow indicating the direction in which it stands vis a vis this house.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nazir, Salim, Safar, and brother HASAN (12, who's wearing Nazir's Pak-Men jersey) eating dinner.

Another mini-chandelier over the table, more framed family photos on the walls.

SALIM

Where are you headed tonight?

NAZ

I got invited to a team party
downtown.

SALIM
The Pak-Men?

NAZ
(proudly)
Nope. The Dutchmen.

SAFAR
(not liking this)
The Dutchmen...

SALIM
I don't like you driving in
Manhattan.

NAZ
I'm not. Amin's picking me up.

SALIM
It's Friday night. People are
crazy.

NAZ
It's a full moon too. Whoa.

SAFAR
When do you hear about the summer
internship?

NAZ
Before the summer I hope.

SAFAR
What kind of answer is that?

NAZ
Ami, it's March.

SAFAR
Which becomes April then May
then...

HASAN
(hyper kid, goofing)
...June then July then September...

NAZ
September comes after July?

HASAN
August! August! August!

Hasan takes his fork and mimes stabbing himself, falling on
the floor and going through cartoon death throes.

ON NAZ

Laughing at his brother's antics.

SAFAR
 (fingers to temples, to
 husband)
 Salim...

SALIM
 (to Hasan)
 Enough, get up.

NAZ
 (re: his little brother)
 Was I like that?

SAFAR
 Worse.

HASAN
 (imitating his brother's
 jump shot)
 Nazzie shoots! It's up! It's in!
 It's good!

SAFAR
 (to Naz)
 I want you to go to the internship
 office first thing Monday morning.
 I want you to stay on top of it.

Naz shrugs; he's not a worrier.

INT. NAZ AND HASAN'S SHARED BEDROOM - 9:00 PM

Walls plastered with NBA basketball stars.

Hasan, still wearing his brother's Pak-Men jersey watches a Knicks game on a small TV, the soundtrack competing with HIP-HOP blasting on a speaker-mounted IPOD.

Naz, in a great mood, is moving to the beat as he prints out a Mapquest for the address of the party.

CLOSE ON - STARTING FROM - 37-07 74TH ST. QUEENS. GOING TO -
 155 STANTON STREET, NYC

He is half dressed. Shirtless he looks younger than his nineteen years; xylophone ribbed, as if everything he eats instantly converts to energy.

Salim, wincing at the volume, enters his son's room just as a Knick hits a three-pointer on the TV.

NAZ/HASAN

Oh! Oh!

SALIM

(studying his manchild
son, then...)

Nazir... Do your mother a favor and
see the internship people on
Monday, OK?

NAZ

(into the game)

What? Sure. No problem, no problem.

Another three pointer on TV; the boys start pounding on each
other...

SALIM

(deep breath)

Ami and me. We nag and worry.
That's our job.

NAZ

(not really listening)

Yeah, sure. Absolutely.

Salim stands there staring at Nazir; something's eating at
him but he can't figure out what it is.

SALIM

(giving up)

Don't forget your [asthma] spray
tonight.

NAZ

(like AMEX)

Don't leave home without it.

EXT. KHAN HOME - 9:45 PM

Naz dressed for the evening in dry-cleaned jeans and a crisp
white shirt. Walking out the door, talking to Amir on his
cell.

NAZ

You're kidding me. So borrow your
brother's car. Why not?... C'mon,
bro', this is the party.

(beat)

No, there won't be any other
parties... This is the last party
on earth...

(beat)

No, I don't want to come over and

(MORE)

NAZ (CONT'D)
 watch the Khalid fight... Why?
 Because it's Friday night... C'mon,
 don't be a punk.
 (dejected beat)
 All right, all right, all right...
 See you tomorrow.

Naz hangs up pissed, disappointed - all dressed up and no place to go. He begins to step inside, stops, backtracks and eyes his father's taxi.

NAZ' POV - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM WINDOWS; DARKENED

NAZ' POV, TURNING - A GREAT STREAM OF CARS ON NORTHERN BLVD,
 all heading into the city.

NAZ' POV - THAT BECKONING TAXI

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENT LATER

All is still. A hand snakes in through the barely open front door. Fishes out a key ring from a bowl in the small vestibule.

EXT/INT. SALIM'S TAXI ON NORTHERN BLVD - 10:15 PM

Naz at the wheel, part of the great city-bound Friday night stream. Radio is set to hip-hop r'n'b station; Naz a little bouncy, happy. He has the Mapquest printout of the party address in his hand. As he glances at it he wanders a little out of his lane, gets honked.

The directions get blown out the window.

AERIAL SHOT - STREAMING CITY-BOUND CARS

A piece of white paper like a butterfly fluttering out of a taxi window.

EXT/INT. NAZ' TAXI - COMING OUT OF THE MIDTOWN TUNNEL - 10:35 PM

NAZ' POV - NYPD BARRIER

that narrows the incoming tunnel traffic into two lanes so anti-terror cops can peer into the vehicles as they enter the city.

NAZ' POV - A FEW SUVs AND TRUCKS

have been pulled over and are being searched.

NAZ' POV - BLACK NYPD COP

is staring at his Pakistani face hard as he inches past the barrier; eyes into eyes.

But Nazir isn't stopped; breathes easier.

EXT/INT. NAZ' TAXI - FDR DRIVE DOWNTOWN BOUND - 10:50 PM

NAZ fishes out the original handwritten address of the party; he'll find it.

EXT/INT. TAXI - HOUSTON ST LIGHT - 11:00 PM

NAZ' POV - 4 PEOPLE

running to the cab, gesticulating wildly

Naz is at first startled, then realizes he's driving a taxi.

Flustered, he locks all doors and pulls away from them.

NAZ' POV - VIA REARVIEW MIRROR

All four giving him the finger.

Naz laughs.

EXT. DELANCEY STREET - LOWER EAST SIDE - CONTINUOUS

Naz driving looking for the address, people still trying to flag him down which is both freaky and funny to him.

SHUNNED PASSENGER

Then turn on your off-duty light,
asshole!

EXT. ELDRIDGE STREET WALKUP - SAME

A tenement front three blocks away.

Dead quiet for a beat, then the tenement door flies open and a young, well-dressed, light-skinned black woman (ANDREA CORNISH, 22) comes flying out into the street.

Andrea looks scared, wild of eye. She looks at the building and kind of racewalks down the street, occasionally glancing back with a fearful expression until she disappears into the crowd.

EXT. ATTORNEY STREET - L.E.S. - 11:15 PM

Naz outside the cab, trying to figure out how to turn on the off duty light.

He hears the back door slam, peers in; two drunk yuppies.

YUPPIE
74th and Madison.

NAZ
I can't. It's not my...

YUPPIE 2
Just drive.

NAZ
(anxious)
Look, I'm not a...

Another cab pulls abreast. But it's not a cab. There are four anti-crime cops inside. All big white guys in sweatshirts and flat-tops.

ON NAZ - SPOOKED

by the potential shit he's getting into.

ANTI-CRIMER
What's up there, Captain Bubba...

NAZ
(holding his breath)
I'm off duty and these two guys
won't get out.

ANTI-CRIMER
(bored, sighing, rising,
to passengers)
Alright gents, subway time...

YUPPIE
What the hell...

ANTI-CRIMER
(holding plastic cuffs)
Subway time or overtime. I could
use the money.

As the two drunks stumble out of the cab, Nazir gets back inside.

NAZ
Officer, where's Stanton Street?

ANTI-CRIMER
You're driving a cab down here and
you don't know where Stanton Street
is?

NAZ' POV - HIS FATHER'S HACK LICENSE IN PLAIN SIGHT

So obvious that this cab isn't his.

NAZ
(sweating)
It's my first week.

INT/EXT. TAXI - ESSEX STREET, L.E.S. - 11:25 PM

Nazir following cops' instructions.

Despite the off-duty sign, people keep flagging him down while he waves them off. What a hassle.

He stops at a light.

Somebody else gets in back.

Fed up, he slowly turns to give them the boot and sees...

ANDREA,

and she's so pretty to him that his heart stops.

NAZ
I'm off-duty.

ON ANDREA,

distracted, jittery, her head on a turret.

NAZ (CONT'D)
This isn't even my taxi.

ANDREA
(finally)
What?

NAZ
I was on my way to a party.

ANDREA
A what? A party?

NAZ
This party...
(after another beat,
studying her via
rearview)
Where do you need to go?

ANDREA
What do you mean?

NAZ
 You jumped in the cab. Where would
 you like me to take you?

Andrea slowly comes back to earth, considers the question,
 then finally smiles.

ANDREA
 The beach.

NAZ
 Seriously?

ANDREA
 (leaning forward, so
 beautiful)
 Seriously.

NAZ
 (never happened to him
 before)
 We're in Manhattan. How about a
 riverside?

ANDREA
 A riverside would be good.
 (then quickly, darker)
 But not around here, go uptown.

NAZ
 Yes m'am.

ANDREA
 (amused)
 Yes m'am...

NAZ
 (nervous)
 Look, the meter's off, so... Do you
 want to sit up front?

ANDREA
 Not yet.

Naz grins/blushes - the promise of "not yet".

ANDREA (CONT'D)
 But I'd really like to get going.

INT/EXT. TAXI - WEST SIDE HIGHWAY - 11:35 PM

Nazir driving uptown alongside the Hudson, Andrea in the
 back.

They're not talking.

He keeps stealing glances at her through the rear view; she seems placid one moment then drops briefly into darkness. When she catches him looking at her though, she always smiles, which makes him slightly goofy.

She lights up a cigarette.

Naz' first impulse is to tell her to put it out, his father will smell it tomorrow, but he lets it be.

EXT. GAS STATION, WEST HARLEM - 11:50 PM

Naz, outside the car, is gassing up.

A hearse is gassing up at the only other occupied pump.

Andrea rolls down the backseat window and tosses out a cigarette butt.

Naz flinches at the danger, reaches for it, but the hearse driver picks it up first.

He is a jet-black man, with a turtle waxed dome and giant sunglasses, his movements slow and purposeful.

He knocks on the rear window.

CLOSE ON - ANDREA

The knock makes her jump; near-gasp.

ANDREA'S POV - THE BLACK MAN,

unreadable, ebonite skull and oversized shades, holding up her smoldering cigarette butt.

HEARSE DRIVER
(gesturing to hearse)
You want to be my next passenger?

He crushes the lit butt in his hand and walks away.

Andrea looks rattled.

NAZ
(still pumping gas,
awkward)
Thanks, thank you..

ANGLE - NAZ REPLACING GAS PUMP HANDLE

Opens the car door. Sees Andrea is gone.

NAZ' POV - THE MINI CONVENIENCE STORE

attached to the pumps.

Andrea in there, perusing snacks.

Nazir, relieved, moves to enter the mini-shop.

The hearse driver, whom he didn't notice was inside too, exits at the same time, brushing Naz' shoulder - just this side of pugnacious.

Rattled, Naz stares after him.

Then Andrea exits with two bottles of water, hands one to him.

EXT. RIVERSIDE PARK ALONG THE HUDSON AT 135TH ST. - 12:15 AM

It's a half-developed riverside café area like a poor man's High Line further downtown in Chelsea.

Andrea and Naz stand by a Coco Helado ices stand, in a small line of customers, yuppies and locals.

ANDREA

So whose cab is it?

NAZ

My father's. Actually one third my father's. He owns it with two other guys.

ANDREA

Three men own one taxi?

NAZ

An owner's medallion costs two hundred thousand dollars.

ANDREA

And you just use it whenever?

NAZ

Yeah.

(beat)

Well, no. Just this once.

ANDREA

Without telling him.

NAZ

Just this once.

ANDREA
Why tonight?

NAZ
There was this party I didn't want
to miss.

ANDREA
But you're missing it.

NAZ
(looking at her)
Yeah.
(they take their ices)
I don't know, it's OK... I feel
pretty good, actually...

ANDREA
You say it like you don't feel that
way very often.

NAZ
No, well, yeah, I mean, usually I
just feel, you know, like, just do
what you have to do, what everybody
wants you to do and everything will
be OK, mainly OK...

ANDREA
(amused)
OK.

NAZ
But tonight's like, special... I
don't know why.

ANDREA
(flirting)
No idea?

Naz, can't believe his luck, then...

ANDREA (CONT'D)
(softly)
Run.

NAZ
What?

ANDREA
Run!

She takes off towards the river's edge and Naz has no choice
but to chase after her.

Oh, this mercurial girl is calling the shots this evening...
But he doesn't mind.

EXT. RIVERSIDE - HARLEM - 12:45 AM

Nazir and Andrea sit on a concrete embankment overlooking the Hudson, the raw Palisades of New Jersey directly across from them, the delicately elliptical lights of the George Washington bridge directly north.

NAZ

You know at my senior prom, I thought I'd show off for my date so I hailed a cab from the dance to her house. We get in, and it's my father behind the wheel. My date didn't know and me and him, we tried to keep straight faces but then she wanted to fool around in back and I had to like, hold her off all the way. I thought I'd die.

ANDREA

Are you close to him?

NAZ

My dad? Pretty much.

ANDREA

Is he a good dad?

NAZ

He thought the whole prom cab thing was hysterical. That's pretty good, isn't it?

ANDREA

My father came home early one day when I was 16 and caught me in bed with a boy. He stood in my doorway for a second staring at me then walked away.

NAZ

And?

ANDREA

And that was 6 years ago.

(beat)

I'm still waiting for him to say something about it.

NAZ

Huh.

Lost in their thoughts for a moment, then...

ANDREA

Friday night. Full moon, the river.
This is wonderful.

NAZ

It was hard to arrange, but...

Andrea opens her purse and takes out two pills (Ecstasy? We'll never know.) She offers one to Naz who politely rears back.

ANDREA

The thing about wonderful? A
situation can be wonderful... or it
can be very wonderful.
(eyes into eyes)
Now me, I prefer very wonderful.

She offers him the pills again. This time he impulsively partakes, she joins him; each washing them down with the water bottles she bought in the gas station for just this purpose.

They stare across the broad river to the prehistoric-looking Palisades.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

Did you ever wish you could just
transport yourself by will?
Something bad happens here. Snap.
You're re-atomized over there.

Still staring, the pill coming on, Naz remains silent.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

I can't be alone tonight...

NAZ

(high, slowly turning to
her)

No.

ANGLE - THE TWO OF THEM, IN SILHOUETTE,

rising against the distant elliptical lights of the George Washington Bridge, walking off hand in hand.

EXT. BROWNSTONE ROW (88TH ST.) UPPER WEST SIDE - 1:30 AM

Mellow high, Naz and Andrea walk hip to hip, gently knocking into each other. As they arrive at 140 W 88th St., two young

black men, TREVOR (21) and DUANE (22), cross their paths going in the opposite direction.

TREVOR
See, brothers dyin' in Afghanistan
and shit, sister-girl here still
goes for the terror-head type.

Nazir stops in his tracks, turns to them.

ANDREA
(to Naz)
Don't.

TREVOR
(challenging)
What...

But Nazir is not a fighter, barely manages...

NAZ
I'm as American as you.

ON DUANE,

staring at Andrea, at the house.

Andrea stares brazenly back as she hustles Nazir up the exterior stairs of the brownstone.

DUANE
(quietly)
Let's go...

INT. BROWNSTONE - 1:45 AM

Naz wandering the main floor of Andrea's home. Art and books everywhere; vibe of louche cultured careless money. So different from his own home. He's never seen the like and it's transporting. (Plus he's high)

NAZ
(rapt)
Books...

ANDREA
(gentle mockery)
Books...

NAZ' POV - FAMILY PHOTO

Andrea, her black mother, white father, and half and half younger brother - all on a river bank, whitewater rapids in the b.g; so NYC cum All-American. So hip. So foreign to him.

INT. KITCHEN - 2:00 AM

Andrea and Naz sit at a round oak table in a comfortable oaken eat-in kitchen.

They have tall shot glasses of Vodka before them.

A bottle and a few uncut lemons complete the still-life.

NAZ
Where your parents?

ANDREA
Berlin.

NAZ
Doing...

ANDREA
Teaching.

NAZ
Both?

ANDREA
Both.

NAZ
How about you?

ANDREA
Me? I'm here.

NAZ
What's your name?

ANDREA
I didn't tell you?

NAZ
(after a beat)
Do you want to know mine?

ANDREA
(after a beat)
Does that happen to you a lot?

NAZ
What.

ANDREA
Those two guys out there.

NAZ
(shrugging)
Now and then.

ANDREA
Got a girlfriend?

NAZ
No. Do you?

ANDREA
No. Not a boyfriend either.
(vodka and pills giggles)
Although I'd probably be in less
trouble if I leaned the first way.

NAZ
Girls? Why do you say that?

ANDREA
Open the kitchen drawer there.

Naz rises, pulls the drawer open.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
The big knife...

Naz brings it back to the table. Andrea slices a lemon,
refills the glasses.

NAZ
Why would you be better off with a
girlfriend?

ANDREA
Does that turn you on?

NAZ
(furiously blushing)
What? No!

Andrea drains her shot glass, grabs the knife and blindly
brings the point down between her splayed fingers into the
oak table.

They both gasp, Andrea jazzed; Naz freaked.

ANDREA
Now you.

NAZ
(laughing)
No. No no no no no.

ANDREA
Yes. Yes yes yes yes.

Her flashing maddeningly beautiful eyes, the pills, the vodka...

ANDREA (CONT'D)
Don't you do what everyone tells
you?

Naz throws back his long shot, bellows and brings down the knife between his own fingers twice as hard as she did.

Victory. He laughs, anarchy taking over his soul.

NAZ
Am I really here?

Dazzle eyed, Andrea extends another pill towards him.

Naz shakes his head No.

ANDREA
(soft hiss)
Yes.

NAZ
No. No. No more, no way.

ANDREA
(soft hiss)
Yes.
(soft, erotic)
Yes...

Naz takes the pill drains it with another double, raises the knife and plunges it down.

Dead silence.

They stare at each other in astonishment.

Then they both look down.

Naz has stabbed her through the palm.

SMASHCUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL LEADING UP TO THE SECOND FLOOR

They are mashing mouths, trying to undress as they tumble upwards like a two-headed double-backed beast, their coordination that of young inexperienced lovers, especially Naz.

Her bloody palm paints the white banister.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Illuminated by a small bedside lamp, they fumble furiously to get naked, elbows knees eyes averted but so urgent.

Naz, on all fours (still wearing boxers) between her legs, stops to take a hit of asthma spray.

She blindly bats it away and pulls him on top of her, yanking down his boxers and clawing his back (but avoiding his kisses).

Naz is a stumbly overeager puppy of a lover, unsure what to do except to stick it in, and Andrea is no help, lost in her own urgencies and behind-the-eyelids compulsions.

In her flailing she knocks the lamp to the floor; the room reduced to moonlight.

Naz can barely contain himself, and the whole shooting match is over in less than a minute.

INT. KITCHEN - 2:30 AM

Naz stumbles back down to the drinking table. Naked, once again he seems years younger than 19, a skinned chicken.

Stoned, drunk, fucked, he drains whatever vodka is left in one of the shot glasses.

Then he jerkily sits down, lowers his head to his crossed arms...

CUT TO:

SAME TABLE - 30 MINUTES LATER - 3:00 AM

Naz coming to, slowly raising his astonishingly throbbing head ever so slightly from his crossed arms. The first thing he focuses on is those now revolting shot glasses.

The second is the knife.

Somehow that knife is jarring to him, although it seems to be right where they left it.

He rises to his feet, his head a soft-boiled egg.

INT. STAIRWELL LEADING TO SECOND FLOOR

Naz slowly climbing, too out of it to notice the blood-smearred banister, the blood spattered carpet.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BEDROOM

Naked Naz, stumbling to the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He feels around for his pants, hops a leg in.

Sees Andrea in silhouette on the bed.

NAZ
(half-whisper)
Hey, I have to go.
(pulls up pants)
I'm going now...

He moves towards the bed, gently touches her face.

NAZ (CONT'D)
I have to go...

No response. Sensing something off, he picks up the fallen lamp, turns on the light.

CLOSE ON - ANDREA,

nude to the waist, staring off lifeless. There's a deep plunging stab wound between her breasts, much blood.

Staggering backwards, Naz knocks the light over again, Andrea returning to silhouette again.

Blinking furiously he turns the light on again, confirms what he saw. Turns off the light.

He's gasping, shivering, in shock. Starts wheezing asthmatically but can't find his spray.

NAZ
(turning in place, hands
clapped to his head)
Oh... oh... what...

Whirling in disorientation he's leaving bloody handprints everywhere.

Scrabbles through his clothes, feeling for his asthma spray, no luck.

CLOSE ON - CARPETED STAIRCASE

Naz, wheezing, as he rushes down in unlaced sneakers.

CLOSE ON - BLOODY HANDPRINTS ON THE STAIRCASE WALLS

Everything he does leaves blood, leaves his signature.

EXT. BROWNSTONE - CONTINUOUS

Naz bursting out into the street, almost mowing down a pre-dawn drunk.

DRUNK

Whoa, whoa!

Naz running half a block to his illegally parked taxi, now festooned with parking tickets (time-records of his dalliance).

EXT/INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

Naz wheezing, trembling, trying to start the cab, can't stop shaking long enough to get the key in the ignition; radio goes on, inane hip-hop.

Naz roaring out of the space, cutting off a car, the driver honking cursing.

Naz driving and near-weeping, comes to a red light at the corner of 86th and Broadway.

The cut-off car pulls abreast.

DRIVER

You got a fucking death wish? Don't take me with you, asshole!

Naz can't look at him. The light changes. The other car roars off. Naz stays. Then his eyes bloat with horror as he stares at the blood on his palms.

AERIAL - NAZ' TAXI

making a wild u-turn on Broadway, roaring back to 88th St.

EXT. BROWNSTONE FRONT - 3:20 AM

Naz double parking, flying up the steps.

The door is locked. He smashes a glass doorpane with his elbow, reaches inside, cutting himself. Opens the lock, bolts inside.

ANGLE - NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR,

drawn by the sound of the breaking glass gets to his bedroom window just after Naz disappears inside.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Naz grabbing his jacket, having a hell of a time getting his rubbery arms to slide into the sleeves.

NAZ' POV- THE BLOOD,

everywhere; cupboards, shot glasses, the tabletop, the kitchen counter...

He frantically starts to clean up with paper towels, but it's desperately half-assed; more spreading the blood than eliminating it. And the entire time he's shivering, snot-weepy, in shock.

Just as he's about to bolt again he freezes - remembering the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM

CLOSE ON - ANDREA,

open-eyed in bed, blood pooled between her breasts, dribbling down to the white sheets.

Naz enters the room quickly without seeing her, then remembers she's there and comes to a cringing dead stop.

Then, without looking at her he repeats the desperate and desultory cleaning job, pushing the blood around the dresser, the doorjamb...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Naz coming down the stairs, heading for the door then seeing a single blood drop on a white surface.

He applies himself to cleaning it with fury, then just stops and briefly breaks down; weeping, dumbstruck, in fear for his life.

NAZ' POV - THE KNIFE,

laying there between the shot glasses.

He grabs it and bolts the house, leaving the front door slightly ajar.

EXT. BROWNSTONE - CONTINUOUS - 3:30 AM

Naz flying to the double parked taxi, stumbles on his still-unlaced sneakers.

NEIGHBOR'S POV - FROM HIS WINDOW, NAZ,

seen from the rear (no facial ID), getting in the taxi and taking off.

EXT/INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

Naz at a light on Amsterdam Ave. and 85th. A patrol car pulls up alongside, the cops looking straight ahead.

NAZ' POV - THE BLOODY KNIFE,

in plain view on top of the dashboard.

Aghast, he slowly slides it out of view, into his lap.

The light changes and the patrol car moves on.

Naz stays where he is, clumsily trying to stow the knife inside his jacket.

A 16-wheeler directly behind him makes him levitate out of his seat with a pneumatic blast of its airhorn.

Naz takes off, makes the first turn off Amsterdam, his head still turned back to the monstrous rig...

And he DRIVES AT A SLANT into a parked car, BOOM... Then silence...

FADE TO:

PATROL CAR FLASHERS FILTERED THROUGH INTERIOR OF THE TAXI -
30 MINUTES LATER - 4:00 AM

Naz, forehead on steering wheel, comes upright in the presence of two uniformed cops, one Latino male (MALDONADO, 25) other Af-Am female (WIGGINS, 27).

A Mag-lite flashlight blinds him.

MALDONADO
(opening door)
You OK there, pal?

Naz carefully slides out, steps into the street.

MALDONADO (CONT'D)
Took a little power nap?

Blinkered, disoriented, Naz looks at the damage to his father's taxi, tries to gather his wits.

WIGGINS
How much you drink tonight?

NAZ
What? No.

Maldonado produces a portable breathalyzer, which looks like a cross between a harmonica and an occarina.

MALDONADO
How about you play us maybe two bars of "Little Brown Jug".

NAZ
What? No. I don't want to.

MALDONADO
See, that right there, is a mistake.

NAZ
(confused, panicked)
I have asthma...

WIGGINS
(receives a transmission)
Hey Sarge... But we just... Hold on...
(writing down an address, then, to Maldonado)
We got a break-in three blocks from here. We got to go.

NAZ
(panicking)
There's a break-in? Where's the break-in?

MALDONADO
(to Naz)
Easy there, podner...
(to Wiggins)
What about Davis and Michaels?

WIGGINS
That family smackdown in the Tafts [public houses].

MALDONADO
And him?

WIGGINS
Comes with us. We call impound for the cab.

NAZ
No, you can't, my father...

WIGGINS
Get in the back please?

Uncuffed, Naz is steered into the backseat of the cruiser by Maldonado.

NAZ
Are we going to a break-in?

MALDONADO
What are you, Jimmy Olsen?
(then)
Hold on.

NAZ' POV - THE BATTERED CAB,

slid into a parked car... Maldonado collecting the accumulated parking tickets on the cabs window.

EXT. 140 WEST 88TH - 4:15 AM

Cruiser pulls up to the front. The neighbor who called it in is waiting for them.

INT/EXT. CRUISER

Wiggins and Maldonado exiting, Naz shaking like a leaf in back.

WIGGINS
(sticking her head in the rear window)
Sit tight.

NAZ
(trembling)
What's in there?

WIGGINS
(stares, then...)
I said, sit, tight.

CLOSE ON - ELBOW SMASHED FRONT DOOR PANE

Naz' blood on the jagged shards. Door ajar.

ANGLE - WIGGINS

talking to the neighbor who's gesticulates like he's directing traffic.

ANGLE - NAZ,

freaking in the back seat, Maldonado standing ten feet away one eye on him, one on the scene.

ANGLE - WIGGINS AND THE NEIGHBOR

WIGGINS (CONT'D)
How about race?

NEIGHBOR
Just saw him from the back. Could have been Latino.

WIGGINS
Any kind of clothes?

NEIGHBOR
Yeah, he wore clothes..
(off stare)
Dark maybe. I'm sorry.

WIGGINS
And he took a cab...

NEIGHBOR
Yeah, a cab.

WIGGINS
(reaching for shoulder
mike)
Hold on...

ANGLE - POLICE CRUISER

ON NAZ - EYEING THE SCENE,

Maldonado alongside the car.

Neighbors passersby, dogwalkers, the crowd growing.

Maldonado steps forward to shoo people away so that Naz is now behind him, out of his sightlines.

He studies his bloody hands, which have been unnoticed by the cops as of yet, then starts to agonize over making a run for it.

He reaches for the door.

But then another squad car pulls up directly behind the first, cutting off all hopes of escape.

PATROL SGT. KLEIN (41) and his driver, BILL DENNEHY (36) step out, Wiggins and Maldonado greeting Klein with curt deference.

WIGGINS (CONT'D)
How you doin', boss.

KLEIN
Been better. What you got.

WIGGINS
Break-in, one eye wit sees male undetermined race, smash a glass pane in the door, comes out about 15 minutes later, running to a cab and taking off.

KLEIN
Anyone inside?

WIGGINS
Waitin' on you.

KLEIN
Let's go.

Starts moving to the house then...

KLEIN POV - NAZ,

like a trapped animal seen through the rear window of the cruiser.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
Who's this guy?

MALDONADO
A DU...

He gets elbowed by Wiggins; she doesn't want a DUI, too much paperwork

WIGGINS
Picked him up for Reckless Driving just as the call came in.

KLEIN
Well, I don't want him here.
(to Dennehy)
Get a unit to take him to the house.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS - 4:25 AM

Maldonado, Wiggins and Klein easing in.

KLEIN
Hello, Police...

WIGGINS POV - BLOOD ON THE WALLS, SMEARED UP THE BANISTER

Quietly gestures to the others; guns slip out of holsters, held down legs.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
NYPD, anybody here?

INT/EXT. BACKSEAT OF CRUISER - 4:30 AM

NAZ' POV - GROWING NEIGHBORHOOD PRESENCE

Also first signs of a dawning media presence -

GUY on a bicycle with a police scanner strapped to his basket.

SECOND GUY with a video camera shooting the crowd.

Naz takes his cell phone out of his pocket, stares at it wanting/dreading to call home.

He puts it back in his pocket. Then his face goes white.

He feels the knife still inside his jacket.

A harsh rap at the window.

Naz jumps looks up.

DENNEHY
(outside the cruiser)
What happened to your hands?

Naz looks down on his bloody palms, balls them into fists.

Dennehy gets called away.

ANGLE - WIGGINS, KLEIN AND MALDONADO

exit the house, Maldonado gagging.

KLEIN
(on the radio to the
precinct Duty Sergeant)
Gerry, Teddy Klein. I'm at that
break-in on 88th? I need
(MORE)

KLEIN (CONT'D)
 additional units, Night Watch, CSU
 and the M. E.

(to Maldonado)
 Are you puking? Tell me your not
 puking.

MALDONADO
 I'm gagging, not puking.

KLEIN
 (re: Naz)
 Is this guy still here?
 (to Maldonado)
 Safeguard the door.

Three cruisers pull up, from different directions; Klein starts marshalling his manpower.

KLEIN (CONT'D)
 You two tape me off a perimeter,
 that tree to that, you two start
 canvassing the crowd you two take
 this guy back to the house and park
 him.

INT. 22ND PRECINCT - 4:30 AM

CLOSE ON - DUTY SARGEANT GERRY MILANO (39),

on the phone to the Night Watch, the standing detective pool
 of 8 who cover all felonies in the borough of Manhattan from
 1am to 8am.

MILANO
 Yeah hey, this is Sargeant Milano
 over in the two two, we got a
 suspicious DOA indoors at 140 West
 88th St. . . . What's suspicious
 about it?

INT. NYPD NIGHT WATCH OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

DISPATCHER
 (AKA "The Wheel", Af-Am,
 45, sedentary, obese;
 taking down info)
 Huge, fatal, knife wound, in heart.
 (beat)
 So like no way could this wait for
 the day tour, huh?

EXT/INT. PATROL CAR - CONTINUOUS

The two cops transporting Naz to the 22.

COP1
What he [Naz] do?

COP2
I think he's just a witness.

COP1
(peering at Naz via the
rearview)
Yeah? What you see?

NAZ
I crashed my father's car. That's
all. I swear.

COP2
(losing interest,
laughing)
You hear Maldonado upchucked all
over the body?

Naz sits frozen in the back, that knife red hot against his
ribs.

INT. NIGHT WATCH OFFICE - CONTINUOUS - 4:35 AM

Windowless office of LT. DANNY LING, (44, Chinese) supervisor
of the unit.

The Dispatcher/Wheel knocks, enters.

WHEEL
Loo, we got a stabbing homicide,
female, early 20s, in the 22.

LING
(wincing)
Indoors or out.

WHEEL
In bed. In a brownstone.

LING
Is it a circus?

WHEEL
(shrugging)
Will be if it ain't already.

LING
Alright, who's here.

WHEEL

You.

(beat)

Everybody's up at Harlem hospital
or over at the 32.

(off stare)

Those Agg Assaults off the gang
beef.

LING

Pull Mason and Sheehan off that for
this.

(beat)

And I don't want to hear any shit
about life is cheap above 96th St.

WHEEL

We're cool. The vic on this is
black too.

Ling rises, pulls on his sports jacket, takes his service
piece from a drawer, his steno pad, heads for the door, then
hesitates.

He makes a call on his cell.

LING

Hey Dennis? Danny Ling from Night
Watch. Sorry to wake you but I
think you might want to pull your
pants on for this.

INT. DARKENED BEDROOM OF HOMICIDE SGT. DENNIS BOX (45) -
STUYVESANT TOWN (MANHATTAN) - CONTINUOUS - 4:45 AM

BOX

(head on pillow, hand over
eyes, no wife)

What do you got.

INT. 22ND PRECINCT - 4:50 AM

Beneath fluorescent overheads, the ground floor is divided
into three sections; in the center, a barren area lined with
vending machines and bowling alley style plastic chairs for
visitors and supplicants . This grim Monsanto-tiled indoor
wasteland faces a high wooden desk the length of the room
behind which hangs a massive American flag bordered by bas
relief plaques of cops who have died in the line of duty from
1898 to the present, including three from 9/11.

And behind the barren center space is an even grimmer
section; a benchless prisoner's holding area lined with hip-
high restraining bars like ballet barres; this area separated

from the rest of the room by a floor to ceiling filmy Plexiglas partition.

Naz is ushered into the barren middle space by his transporters.

MILANO

(skipping the desk)

Hey, did Maldonado really puke on a body?

COP1

He must've had bad clams.

(laughter, then to Naz,
pointing to a plastic
chair)

Cop a squat.

Naz, big-eyed, does as he's told, his back to the filmy Plexiglas wall behind which three prisoners pace in cuffs.

His transporters head back out into the street.

Then the door blows open almost instantly as a powerfully-built squat handcuffed LATINO, still trailing Taser streamers like a gored bull, is muscled inside by three plainclothes anti-crimers, the guy cursing and roaring.

ON NAZ - EYES THE SIZE OF SILVER DOLLARS

The anticrimers get the guy belly down in the middle of the room and plastic-tie his ankles like steer wranglers.

MILANO

(irritated)

Intox or ED [Emotionally
Disturbed]?

ANTI-CRIMER

Tweakin' [Meth].

MILANO

And where the hell am I supposed to park him? Get his ass to St. Luke's.

ON NAZ

Watching the cops haul the Tweaker out the way he came.

His asthma returns; he reflexively keeps turning to the prisoners behind the Plexiglas until one notices him staring.

He quickly turns back around.

Naz is alone; uncuffed, invisible.

Gingerly avoiding the knife, he takes his cell phone out of his pocket and with trembling fingers dials home.

SMASHCUT TO:

INT. KHAN LIVINGROOM - 4:55 AM

Dead quiet at this hour.

The phone rings once. No more.

No one wakes.

RETURN TO:

NAZ,

cutting the call, shrinking into himself.

He turns to the Plexiglas again just as the prisoner who caught his eye RAMS the glass with his forehead.

EXT. BROWNSTONE - 5:10 AM

Uniforms, neighbors, Patrol Sergeant Klein, Lt. Ling and two other Night Watch detectives.

A few more early morning freelance videotapers.

ANGLE - A CRIME SCENE UNIT SUV PULLS UP,

three (forensic) detectives joining the party, each giving their name and shield number to Maldonado before heading indoors.

And then an anonymous-looking sedan; Detective Sgt. Dennis Box stepping out.

He's an innocuously-built graying middle-aged man who looks like he was just pulled out of bed, but calm and alert and decently dressed in a modest suit for all that.

He takes in the municipal block party and steps to the yellow tape strung from tree to tree.

Heading for Danny Ling he's intercepted by Maldonado.

MALDONADO
(with steno pad)
How you doing, boss.

BOX
Detective Sergeant Dennis Box,
Manhattan North Homicide.

He holds up his shield so that Maldonado can record the number.

LING
(shaking hands)
Hey Denny... Sorry for the wake up,
just thought you might want to get
in on it from the jump.

BOX
I do.
(to Klein)
Sarge...
(looking around)
Any cameras?

LING
One up the street, not sure about
the angle but were pulling the film
now.

BOX
911 calls?

LING
Just the neighbor over there.

BOX
Got a canvass going?

LING
Yeah, but were a little light on
manpower.

BOX
Call over to the 22 squad, wake up
some of the locals. And can you get
him [the neighbor/witness] over to
the house?
(deep breath beat)
So.

INT. 22 PRECINCT - CONTINUOUS - 5:30 AM

Naz still on the bench.

He's been there nearly an hour.

Duty Sergeant Milano stares at him then seems to lose interest.

This is insane.

Two cops and a civilian wander out of the reception area and into the street.

It would be so easy to get up and leave. But he can't summon the will.

The neighbor/witness is escorted into the station house. Steered to a plastic seat opposite Naz.

They stare at each other without recognition.

INT. BROWNSTONE GROUND FLOOR - 5:30 AM

Box enters with Ling, both of them in clear disposable jumpsuits and gloves.

BOX POV - THE BLOOD, THE SHOT GLASSES, THE SMEARED BANISTER, all being photographed and dusted, the CSU techs overwhelmed by the chores before them.

ON BOX - EYES LIKE CAMERAS

behind a soberly impassive visage.

He heads for the stairs.

CSU TECH
(harried)
Be careful up there. We're still
down here.

INT. THE KHAN HOME - NAZ' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS - 5:45 AM

Hasan wakes up to go to the bathroom, passes his older brother's empty bed; where is he?

INT. SALIM AND SAFAR'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hasan enters, stares at his sleeping parents.

SAFAR
(waking, in Punjabi)
What is it?

INT. BROWNSTONE - ANDREA'S BEDROOM - 5:45 AM

CLOSE ON - ANDREA,

laying there sightless.

REVERSE - BOX,

impassively staring down at her.

LING
Nice-looking kid.

Box gently holds up Andrea's hand, sees the stab wound through the palm from the drinking game.

BOX
Have the techs bag her hands.

The Medical Examiner stands in the doorway.

M.E.
Knock knock.

Box gestures for the M.E. to come and get to work.

As the M.E. starts his examination, Box strolls the room, strolls her life; photos on the dresser, with family, childhood pictures, graduation, friends, diploma, silly keepsakes, junk; his eyes both dispassionate and empathetic. He is starting to dedicate himself to her.

INT. 22 PRECINCT - 5:50 AM

Two of the prisoners behind the Plexiglas are arguing basketball.

PRISONER 1
Fuck Lebron, he can shit MVP trophy out his ass year in year out, he ain't never gonna deliver the rings like Kobe.

PRISONER 2
Kobe ain't got no heart, man. He ain't got no team in him.

ON NAZ

All this NBA jawing, his passion, now feels hellishly perverse.

His cell phone VIBRATES, making him jump.

CLOSE ON SCREEN - READS "HOME"

Naz can't bear to answer it.

EXT. BROWNSTONE - 6:00 AM

Stripping off their forensic jumpers, Ling and Box exit into an increasingly crowded scene.

As Box heads to three freshly arrived still half-asleep LOCAL DETECTIVES from the 22, he stops in his tracks when he hears...

MALE (O.S.)

What happened in there, he kill her
or something?

Box slowly turns to see Trevor, the young black guy who earlier hassled Andrea and Naz on the street. Duane, his silent friend is no longer with him.

[This conversation is just Box and Trevor, everyone else on the scene unawares.]

BOX

(calmly)

Who are you?

TREVOR

(red-eyed high)

I'm just sayin'.

BOX

Who's "he"?

TREVOR

Some Arab dude.

BOX

Describe him.

TREVOR

Arab dude, you know.

BOX

No, I don't.

TREVOR

Look like he work in a deli or
sumshit.

BOX

Try harder.

TREVOR

Short skinny Puerto Rican lookin'
but with them beanie little eyes.

BOX

How do you know he wasn't just Puerto Rican? Was he wearing anything Arabic?

TREVOR

Nah, man, just Friday night go out and party shit but... And I tried to warn her too, you know what I'm sayin'?

BOX

Yeah? How'd you go about doing that?

TREVOR

Just called him out to his face, you know?

BOX

But you didn't know him.

TREVOR

Nope.

BOX

Never saw him before.

TREVOR

Nope, nope.

BOX

Did you know the girl?

TREVOR

Unh-uh.

(beat)

But I knew her type.

BOX

And what type is that?

TREVOR

(nervous laugh)

Nah, see, this ain't coming out right.

BOX

What's your name?

TREVOR

(entre nous)

Hey look, man, just give me your card or something, I'll bang you on

(MORE)

TREVOR (CONT'D)
 this later but talking out in
 public like this? Is sick, so...

BOX
 My card? I'm getting high just
 standing next to you. If I turn you
 upside down how much weed is going
 to fall out?

TREVOR
 Oh, that's how you do? Yeah, see?
 (clucking)
 No good deed goes unturned...

Box gestures for a detective to take Trevor into (at least)
 witness custody.

INT. AMIR'S DARKENED BEDROOM - 6:00 PM

His cell phone shatters the stillness.

His hand fumbles to find it, pull it under the covers.

AMIR
 Who the hell is this...
 (shooting upright)
 Mister Khan...

INT. KHAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Safar and Hasan huddled around Salim on the phone.

SALIM
 Amir, is he with you?
 (beat)
 Nazir, who else!

His face registers the answer. Safar holds a hand to her
 mouth; Hasan is big-eyed mute.

SALIM (CONT'D)
 Then where is he?
 (beat)
 You didn't see him at all?
 (pulling his hair)
 Where was this party.

INT. AMIR'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lights are on now, Amir pacing in his shorts.

AMIR
 Sir, I have no idea. Nazir had the
 address, not me.

INT. 22 PRECINCT - 6:30 AM

The area before the wall length desk is a beehive.

Summoning up the courage to simply walk out, Naz rises, takes two steps towards the door and comes face to face with Box, Maldonado and Wiggins just returning from the crime scene.

He sits back down.

His cell phone vibrates again; reads HOME; freaked, he ignores it.

The three cops head over to the center of the room-length desk, Sergeant Gerry Milano meeting them there.

Wiggins and Maldonado carry arm loads of large brown paper evidence bags.

MALDONADO

(protesting the bags)

Sarge, you had ten thousand gold shields [detectives] on the scene, why do we get stuck with...

BOX

It's called chain of custody, didn't you go to the academy like the other kids? Or were you just out that day.

(to Wiggins, mainly)

And when you log all this, remember, blood stays with blood, hair with hair, photos with photos...

MILANO

(to all, re: Naz)

Can I ask you guys something? Who's my friend over there's been staring at me for like two hours.

MALDONADO

(sees Naz)

Oh shit. He's our collar.

MILANO

(to Naz, come here)

You, sir...

Naz rises and joins them, trembling with fear of the inevitable discovery.

BOX
 (ignoring Naz, to Wiggins)
 And be careful with the inventory
 vouchers.

MILANO
 (re: Naz)
 What was he, DUI?

WIGGINS
 Just Reckless Driving.

MILANO
 Reckless, huh? What's the matter,
 Wiggins, don't you want the
 overtime?

WIGGINS
 (re: evidence bags)
 Does it look like I'm ever getting
 out of here?

MILANO
 (to Naz)
 You're ducking a bullet here kid,
 you know that, right?
 (to Maldonado, Wiggins)
 Alright, get his pedigree, search
 him and put him in a cell until he
 clears warrants.
 (to Box)
 Sarge, DCPI's [NYPD PRESS LIAISON]
 been calling me off the hook, I'm
 like totally in the dark here, can
 you help me out?

Box takes out his steno pad, glances at his notes.

ON WIGGINS,

slipping on gloves to search Naz, whose wheezing, once again,
 becomes more pronounced.

BOX
 (consulting steno pad)
 The victim is one Andrea Cornish...

Wiggins' patdown commences.

MALDONADO
 (to Naz, steno pad)
 Name?

NAZ
Nazir Khan.

Wiggins takes out Naz' wallet.

BOX
...22 years old, African American
and Caucasian descent, stabbing
homicide, found in her bed at 140
West 88th St.

Wiggins takes out Naz' keys, folding cash.

MALDONADO
(to Naz)
DOB?

NAZ
Oct 12 1991.

BOX
Perp is a male, unknown race, seen
leaving the scene at approximately
oh-three-thirty hours.

Wiggins removes Naz' cell phone, which again is vibrating.

MALDONADO
Address?

BOX
Last seen hailing a taxi.

NAZ
37-07 74th St. Queens.

NEIGHBOR/WITNESS (O.S)
I didn't say he hailed a taxi.

The guy has been sitting there since being deposited an hour ago. And now he approaches.

WITNESS
(still doesn't know Naz)
I said he left IN a taxi. It was
HIS taxi.

ON WIGGINS,

hearing that as she continues the patdown; slowing down as she starts to put it together.

BOX
 (irritated at the
 carelessness of just
 dumping the witness)
 Would somebody escort this
 gentleman up to the squadroom?

MILANO
 How many times stabbed, Sarge.

MALDONADO
 Occupation?

BOX
 Twice. One defensive to the right
 palm the other fatal to the heart.

NAZ
 (near tears)
 Student.

Wiggins reaches inside Naz' jacket.

BOX
 M.E. says we're looking for a 4 to
 4 1/2 inch serrated...

Wiggins delicately lifts out the knife, Box staring at it
 distractedly.

BOX (CONT'D)
 ...knife.

Naz is openly weeping now, as Wiggins, stunned, slowly pushes
 him away from her.

Box calmly takes the knife. Milano passes him an evidence
 bag.

MALDONADO
 (oblivious)
 Social Security number?

BOX
 (calmly almost dreamily to
 Wiggins, re: Naz)
 The charge again?

MALDONADO
 Holy shit.

WIGGINS

Reckless...
(correcting)
DUI.

BOX

(staring at Naz)
And where was he picked up?

WIGGINS

Just east of Amsterdam. Crashed his
taxi into a parked car.

NAZ

(weeping)
No, wait. Wait.

The sense of what's going on starts to go around the big
room, all the cops slowly gravitating to the desk.

Naz' confiscated cell phone starts to vibrate again, everyone
ignoring it.

BOX

(staring at Naz)
What time approximately?

WIGGINS

Oh-four-hundred is when we found
him.

NAZ

(eyes tear-swollen, nearly
shut)
No. No, I didn't do it... I
didn't...

BOX

(moving closer, gently)
What's your name, son?

NAZ

(shaking his head "no")
Naz... Nasir Khan. But you don't
understand...

BOX

Wiggins? This one is yours. Arrest
him on suspicion in the death of
Andrea Cornish.

NAZ

(weeping, tear blind)
No, no, you don't...

He starts to push away from Wiggins and Maldonado, from the encircling uniforms pitching in to restrain him.

NAZ (CONT'D)
Please let me go, I didn't... I
have to get home.

As he is easily overwhelmed, the three prisoners behind the Plexiglas start banging and howling, adding to the madhouse vibe.

ANGLE - TREVOR, THE RELUCTANT WITNESS,

is escorted into the precinct by detectives. He sees Naz struggling with the cops.

TREVOR
(shouting, pointing)
See? See? That dude right there!
Right, right, there! Hah!

ON BOX - REMAINS ALOOF FROM THE CHAOS,

his eyes never leaving Naz' face.

ON NAZ' CELL PHONE - VIBRATING

SMASHCUT TO:

INT. KHAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Salim and Safar, dialing and dialing their son.

SAFAR
(breathless, in Punjabi)
Just call the police!

RETURN TO:

INT. 22 PRECINCT - UPSTAIRS DETECTIVES SQUADROOM, SMALL CELL
- 7:00 AM

ON NAZ - HIS FACE PRESSED INTO A CINDERBLOCK WALL

by a latex gloved hand, great panic/struggle.

COP1 (O.S.)
Don't look at me, do not look at
me.

NAZ
I can't breathe!

COP1 (O.S.)
 If you're talkin' you're
 breathin'...

GO WIDE - NAZIR

is being forcibly stripped of his clothes by two cops wearing latex gloves as Box calmly observes from the far wall.

ANGLE -NAZ' SNEAKERS,

swiftly stuffed in one of an orderly line of evidence bags.

Socks into another.

As Nazir tries to keep his limbs together, they wrestle him down on a narrow cot and start to yank his pants off.

Naz is hyperventilating, near-hysterical, pathetic in his struggles.

COP2
 Jesus Christ, kid, man up a little,
 will you?

COP1
 Make it easy here...

BOX
 (calmly)
 You're a crime scene, Nasir, just
 like the house and we need
 everything we can get from a crime
 scene.
 (to cops)
 Boxers...

Belly down, they pull off his shorts, gingerly deposit them into an evidence bag.

BOX POV - ANDREA'S SCRATCH MARKS

on Naz' back.

Naked now, Naz quickly sits up but stays fetal, knees to chin, shivering and sniffing.

BOX (CONT'D)
 (to cops exiting with his
 clothes)
 Two minute [suicide] watch on
 him...

Box then solicitously hands Naz a clean pair of hospital scrubs.

BOX (CONT'D)
Put these on.

Naz stays in his nude crouch, staring wretchedly into the middle distance.

BOX (CONT'D)
One more thing...

A Crime Scene Tech enters the room with a small suitcase.

BOX (CONT'D)
I'd like to take a swab of the blood on your hands, a little bit off those scratches on your back and a swipe under your nails, OK if I do that?

NAZ
(confused)
Is it OK?

BOX
I need your consent. If you don't give it to me, I'll have to get a court order, which won't be a problem except for you because you refused the request, which looks bad to a judge, a jury, so...

NAZ
I didn't do it!

BOX
Well, there you have it. So maybe we should just get it over with, yeah? Your call.
(Naz nods his assent)
Say the words for me, Nazir.

NAZ
Yes.

And the tech gets to work with swabs, scrapers and vials.

BOX
(after a beat)
Andrea Cornish.

NAZ
What?

BOX
Andrea Cornish.
(beat)
You didn't know her name.
(Naz stays mum)
How did you meet?
(mum)
Did she get into your cab?

NAZ
It's my dad's cab.

BOX
Alright, your dad's cab... So what happened.

NAZ
I was supposed to get a ride with my friend but he...

BOX
No, Nazir, what happened with the girl.

NAZ
Nothing.

BOX
You picked her up in the cab?
(mute)
What did she do to you?

NAZ
What?

BOX
She must have done something to you to make you...

NAZ
No, no it wasn't.
(clams up)

BOX
It wasn't...
(Naz stays mum)
I'm trying to help you, kid.
(beat)
Looked like there was a lot of drinking. She clawed the hell out of your back, did you feel like you were being attacked? Did she attack you?

NAZ

No, no...

BOX

It was her home. Did she have the knife first?

Naz hesitates, Box right on it, going for a quick kill.

BOX (CONT'D)

She did, didn't she. Did you feel like your life was in danger? Did you feel like you had to get away from her?

NAZ

(weeping)

No, no, no...

BOX

(entre nous)

You were drunk, high, it wasn't your house, you didn't know how to get away from her...

NAZ

No, you don't...

BOX

(soft, unrelenting)

Listen to me, Nazir, this is good for you, you were struggling to survive. Kill or be killed. Spur of the moment. Basic human reflexes. Sex, alcohol, some girl, things getting crazy, who's on first, what's on second...

NAZ

No, no...

BOX

Look, we both know this isn't you. You're a good decent kid, college boy, you didn't get out of bed this morning saying to yourself, I'm going to stab someone. What were you thinking - I hope I pass the history test? I hope my mother gets off my back about this that or the other. Things, got out, of hand. Are you hearing me? Don't you see how this works? C'mon son, if I'm off, then tell me how it went down,

(MORE)

BOX (CONT'D)
just help me help you here, we'll
never have another chance...

NAZ
(blowing)
NO!
(after a beat)
I can't breathe...

BOX
(pulling back, can't press
this further)
OK. OK.
(beat)
I understand.

NAZ
No you don't. I have asthma.

BOX
Do you have an inhaler?

NAZ
I lost it.

BOX
Do you know where you lost it?
(mute beat)
Do you want to go to the hospital?

NAZ
I want to go home.

INT. KHAN HOME - 7:15 AM

As Safar and Hasan sit big-eyed, Salim is on the phone to the local Queens precinct.

SALIM
(pacing)
Khan... No. K.H.A.N. 19... I know
he's an adult but you don't know
him. He would never... He always...

Getting nowhere, he slaps his thigh in despair...

INT. 22ND PRECINCT - DET. SQUAD HOLDING CELL - 7:30 AM

Nazir wearing the scrubs sits on the cot.

He looks down at his hands, sees the blood still there.

He gets on his knees before the small filthy open toilet and tries to wash the blood off.

COP (O.S.)
What are you doing?

Naz turns and sees the cop on 2 minute suicide monitor.

COP (CONT'D)
Stand up and turn to me.

Naz does as he's told, his hands dripping with toilet water.

COP (CONT'D)
What the hell is wrong with you?

EXT. 22ND PRECINCT - 7:30 AM

Box stands directly outside the precinct doors with INSPECTOR CAFFERTY (51), his immediate superior.

Cafferty is wearing his Inspectors uniform, looks harried.

CAFFERTY
Khan, what is that Arabic?

BOX
Pakistani.

CAFFERTY
Same difference.

BOX
Actually...

CAFFERTY
In the eyes of the press...

BOX
I'm just pointing out...

CAFFERTY
He didn't happen to confess, did he?

BOX
Says he didn't do it.

CAFFERTY
Do what?

BOX
Exactly.

CAFFERTY
But this is a lock?

BOX
 Eye wits, murder weapon, bloody
 clothes, prints, swabs...

CAFFERTY
 From your lips to gods ears?

BOX
 Oh yeah...

CAFFERTY
 Nonetheless...
 (walking away)
 A confession would be dandy.

INT. KHAN HOME - 8:00 AM

The phone rings. Salim and Safar race for it.

INT. 22ND PRECINCT SQUADROOM - CONTINUOUS

NAZ
 (on a landline at a
 detective's desk;
 brokenly)
 Baba... try to listen...

INT. KHAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

SALIM
 (angry, joyous)
 When I get my hands on you after
 what you put us through...

Long beat as we see the story breaking over Naz' father's
 face, confusion, irritation, then dead nightmare.

SAFAR
 (in Punjabi)
 What. What's he saying?

SALIM
 (waving her off, to Naz)
 Wait. Hold on. Hold...

SAFAR
 (panicking)
 What happened! Is he hurt!

SALIM
 (white-faced, to Naz)
 I'll be right there, I'll be right
 there...

INT. 22ND PRECINCT SQUADROOM - CONTINUOUS

NAZ
(sobbing)
Baba, you can't...

EXT. KHAN HOME - JACKSON HEIGHTS - CONTINUOUS

Salim comes flying out of the house half-dressed, races for his taxi - which of course is not there.

Lost, confused, the world crashing down on him, Salim collapses to a seated position in his driveway, legs splayed straight out before him.