

The Wire
A Dramatic Series for HBO

Written By
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101 - when it's
NOT YOUR
TURN

102 YOU CAN'T
LOSE IF
YOU DON'T
PLAY

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HEAVY
WEAR

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OVERVIEW

THE WIRE
A one-hour drama for HBO

The Wire is a drama that offers multiple meanings and arguments. It will be, in the strictest sense, a police procedural set in the drug culture of an American rust-belt city, a cops-and-players story that exists within the same vernacular as other television fare.

But as with the best HBO series, The Wire will be far more than a cop show, and to the extent that it breaks new ground, it will do so because of larger, universal themes that have more to do with the human condition, the nature of the American city and, indeed, the national culture.

The Sopranos becomes art when it stands as more than a mob story, but as a treatise on the American family. Oz is at its best when it rises beyond the framework of a prison story and finds commonalities between that environment and our own, external world. So, too, should The Wire be judged not merely as a descendant of Homicide or NYPD Blue, but as a vehicle for making statements about the American city and even the American experiment.

The grand theme here is, nothing less than a national existentialism: It is a police story set amid the dysfunction and indifference of an urban department -- one that has failed to come to terms with the permanent nature of urban drug culture, one in which thinking cops, and thinking street players, must make their way independent of simple explanations.

In this sense, The Wire extends the cop-drama universe beyond the us-against-them heroics of NYPD Blue, even past the flawed-but-still-viable family of the Homicide squad room. Visually, this drama will be the next generation in what has become classic American television fare, and as such, it will be hard for other police procedurals to ignore the implications.

Structurally, each season of The Wire -- be it nine or thirteen episodes -- exists as a stand-alone journey. Some characters may progress to the following season for continuity; most others will have their stories resolved in a single season (a design that allows for greater latitude in casting). Each story arc must provide episodes that stand alone as dramatic television, but at the same time the whole must make a cogent argument about the national condition, using the streets and stories of one city as a microcosm.

Each story arc ultimately gravitates toward one common feature, a prolonged wiretap/surveillance effort (hence the title) that reveals intricacies and connections in the urban landscape that would ordinarily pass as unseen to even the best street-cops. And each wiretap ultimately proves as discomfiting to the authorities as it does to those targeted. This is a world in which knowledge is always a double-edged sword.

The style of the show can be called hyper-realism. It should be shot 16mm and hand-held, though the coming video technologies may argue for something even more experimental. But more than just visually, The Wire -- by using precise geography, a fully conceptualized city and police bureaucracy, and story developments culled from actual casework -- should present itself as something so clearly real that the traditional conceits of police melodrama are seen as such. Nothing should happen on screen that hasn't in some fashion happened on the streets, and the show will utilize a series of veteran detectives and Baltimore street-figures-for-story-lines and

technical assistance. As The Corner is to every other inner-city melodrama, so should The Wire be to any other presentation of police work.

But more than an exercise in realism for its own sake, the verisimilitude of The Wire exists to serve something larger. In the first story-arc, the episodes begin what would seem to be the straight-forward, albeit protracted, pursuit of a violent drug crew that controls a high-rise housing project. But within a brief span of time, the officers who undertake the pursuit are forced to acknowledge truths about their department, their role, the drug-war and the city as a whole. In the end, the cost to all sides begins to suggest not so much the dogged police pursuit of the bad guys, but rather a Greek tragedy. At the end of thirteen episodes, the reward for the viewer -- who has been lured all this way by a well-constructed police show -- is not the simple gratification of hearing handcuffs click. Instead, the conclusion is something that Euripides or O'Neill might recognize: an America, at every level at war with itself.

What follows is careful description of the setting, followed by a roll of major first-season characters, some of which can continue into a second story-arc. After that, the first season episodes are charted in some detail. Because this show relies on the singular spine of one wiretap case to link every episode and propel the story, more advance work has been done on the beats than might otherwise be necessary with another drama

SETTING

An Eastern rust-belt city, majority black-but with white ethnic elements still clinging to certain quadrants as well as parts of the power structure. An incumbent black mayor and police commissioner signal the arrival of the city's black voting block, but other bureaucrats -- deputy commissioners, prosecutors, and many line officers and firefighters remain white.

The city is poor, under-educated, and struggling with a huge heroin and cocaine problem. The architecture is of the red-brick and Formstone federal-style rowhouses and townhomes. But in better quadrants of the city, there are Victorians and ranchers with lawns and tall oaks. There is a sense that much of the population is gone, fled to the suburbs. Vacant houses often seem to outnumber occupied rowhomes in the worst parts of the city.

The downtown locales are better, more vibrant, but even there we have a sense that this is a city that has not seen its share of post-industrial investment. Factories and warehouses stand empty, and the tourism and information-age companies that are viable do not extend much past the center of the city.

With the exception of the downtown courthouse, a beautifully ornate turn-of-the-century edifice, most of the city buildings, including police headquarters, are either block, red-brick functional, circa 1955 or square glass monstrosities of the mid-1970s ilk.

Winters are cold, summers hot. And despite all the problems inherent, there is a deep if peculiar affection for the city felt, though rarely expressed, by its residents. The past is always present here, unlike the new metropolises of the West. We are in a remnant of old America as it struggles to make itself into part of the new.

CHARACTERS

THE STATIONHOUSE

1) MCARDLE -- Irish homicide detective, 35-45; very good at his job, arrogant but with just enough charm to carry it. His offhand comments to a city judge begin our journey. In the end, his unyielding commitment to police work as a personal enterprise will bring him and others. Divorced, iconoclastic and indifferent to the caprices of authority, he unmakes what remains of his police career even as he builds the case.

2) GREGGS -- Black female narcotics detective, 25-35; unschooled in sophisticated investigations but a very quick learner. She is the main and unintended casualty of McArdle's capacity for misadventure. But she is willing to follow him, having sensed her own aptitude for the game. A protégé, of our third main character, Lieutenant DANIELS, she is drawn more into McArdle's orbit as the case progresses. To McArdle's personal chagrin, she is a lesbian.

3) DANIELS -- Black male narcotics lieutenant, 40-50, he is GREGGS' supervisor and mentor and once dragged into McArdle's mess, he reaches out to bring her with him. He is politically adept and will one day be a captain or major, but this will only occur if he does nothing to cause pain to his superiors in the department, who are even more sensitive to political inevitabilities than he is. Married to an ambitious professional, who makes twice his salary and feels he is wasted in the department, Daniels is under considerable personal pressure to avoid any crusades.

4) HERC -- White, muscular narcotics detective, 25-30, dumb as a box of rocks and an anabolic steroid addict to boot, Herc lives to do street-level drug rips and nothing more. He is in love with the physicality of the job, with his small authority and with the chance to fuck people up when they give him half a chance. He listens to GREGGS because she keeps him out of trouble, but resents the fact that he does.

5) GARVER -- Black narcotics detective and HERC's partner, 25-30, short and stock, a fire-hydrant build. Slightly brighter than his partner, CARVER nonetheless shares his disdain for thinking police work. Interrogation, paperwork, warrants, subpoenas, intelligence-gathering -- all of it pales next to the chance to go into battle.

6) LESTER -- Black detective, pawn-shop unit, 50-55, is seemingly an empty suit gliding toward his pension, working in a paper unit with stacks of 3 x 5 cards. He's dumped on DANIELS and MCARDLE when they ask for additional manpower and they regard him as fairly useless until he gradually and gently begins to show them that he is an extremely adept cop who has, for political reasons, been dumped into hibernation by the department -- for once having attempted to do police work as McArdle is now trying. Lester is quiet, taciturn and oddly gracious in his actions. He says as little as possible, but always produces. He is widowed, with a quiet eye for whatever women stray near.

7) THE BUNK -- Black homicide detective, 35-45, McArdle's partner before he catches

this long investigation and is transferred from homicide. THE BUNK is so named because he weighs close to 300 pounds, a heart attack waiting for the right moment. He is a good, steady hand and knows how to gauge trouble. When McArdle begins to take risks and alienate bosses, BUNK tries to get him to put hands back on the wheel and steer. Failing that, he can only stand by and watch the train wreck.

8) SANTANGELO -- White Homicide detective; 50-55, who, as the saying goes, couldn't track a bleeding elephant through fresh snow. A guy coasting for overtime only, he's dragged into McArdle's case unwillingly, deposited there by the Homicide Captain, who wants an inside ear on whatever is going on in the investigation. From the earliest moment, SANTANGELO shows signs of a gambling addiction, and is constantly checking box-scores and calling bookies.

9) DEPUTY COMMISSIONER -- The man in charge of day-to-day operations. Where the police commissioner runs the department as a political figurehead, the DEPUTY, white, 50, is the man with his hands on every report, utilizing and obliterating information as suits his interests. He is not corrupt, though we may doubt this at times. Instead, he is dedicated not only to his own ambitions, but to preserving allies willing to support and underwrite his poor, undermanned department. He is a servant of the prevailing political power, assuming that to be anything else can only bring harm. A more congenial Martin Borman, to be exact.

THE COURTHOUSE

1) JUDGE WATKINS -- Presiding over a murder trial that implodes when a West Baltimore drug crew succeeds in intimidating witnesses, Watkins makes inquiries of McArdle and then, of the police commissioner, that provoke this investigation. He plays at being McArdle's patron, but when the going gets tough, he will evaporate.

2) PEARLMAN -- White, female, 30-35, a ten-year veteran of the State's Attorney's office. She oversees the case, providing legal guidance when asked. But she is no leader, and she has no pull when politics raises its head. She will take what the cops give her, but that pretty much ends it.

THE STREET

1) D'ANGELO BARKSDALE -- black, early twenties, a mid-level supervisor of a street crew selling heroin and cocaine for his uncle, Aaron Barksdale, in the less-profitable quadrants of the projects. D'Angelo is a product of nepotism only, and can produce neither respect from his bosses, nor fear from his underlings. As the police investigation heats up, he will be caught in a psychological crossfire and eventually, reluctantly, turned. Slowly, almost by default, MCARDLE will become the center of his world, rather than his uncle. He has a casual girlfriend, a fixation for expensive footwear and no clue as to how to operate in a world for which he is not at all suited.

2) AARON BARKSDALE -- black, early thirties, he controls the westside project drug trade and has for the last five years. He touches no drugs himself, does no overt violence and communicates, if at all, with only trusted lieutenants. He doesn't know what to do with the money coming on, but has started investing in real estate and seeking political favors for a run at some legitimate development projects. His personal life, whereabouts, addresses are veiled. He owns nothing in his own name and shows little flash as do most television drug dealers. Instead, he wants only the smallest profile, knowing his reputation already precedes him in places that matter. He has structured an operation that runs as much on fear as loyalty, so that violence often exceeds the need for it.

3) STRINGY-BELL -- black, early forties, he is BARKSDALE's most trusted lieutenant, supervising virtually every aspect of the organization. He is older than BARKSDALE, and much more direct in his way, but nonetheless he is the No. 2. He has BARKSDALE's brutal sense of the world, but not his polish. BELL is bright, but clearly a child of the projects he now controls.

4) BUBBLES - sixty, black, a heroin addict and AIDS case who quickly becomes a willing informant when a compadre is brutalized over a few dollars by Barksdale's people. He is a simple but valuable source of basic, street-level info. He is slowly dying.

5) OMAR - a stickup boy, black, 30, an independent soul who willingly begins helping McARDLE when the Barksdale organization kills his young partner in retaliation for a drug-corner robbery. He is stupid fearless, having robbed dealers for the last ten years and lived to keep at it. He will ultimately be the key player who risks himself to bring the case to BARKSDALE's doorstep.

6) BODIE - black, 15-16, a rising star who works for D'ANGELO in his low-rise crew of drug slingers. BODIE is made for the game in a way that D'ANGELO is not. He will ultimately surpass and eventually supplant D'ANGELO in the low-rises.

BIBLE

EPISODE 101

1 Baltimore Circuit Court, Pt 23: A jury trial in progress, a drug-involved homicide case Judge Clifford Watkins, black, middle-aged, vaguely wearied, presiding as a young prosecutor struggles to keep witnesses from backing up on their grand jury testimony. The second row of seats in the half-empty courtroom is filled with some rough-looking characters, all staring intently at the prosecution witnesses, who are clearly frightened. One of those in the second-row -- Stringy-Bell¹ -- is better-dressed, more studious-looking. He writes on a legal pad as each witness answers questions. The defendant is young, black, trying to look hard but clearly nervous. The jury is mostly black, as is the prosecutor. In the back of the room, a rumped, worn Irish face stares at the proceedings impassively.

Prosecutor. "Mr. Mitchell, did you or did you not tell the grand jury.. "

Witness "I can't remember now. I don't know that I told anyone anything.. "

The witness looks up at the Bell twenty feet away Bell eyefucks him coolly, writes something on his pad. The rumped Irishman exhales, gets up, leaves. On Judge Watkins, watching him go.

2 State's attorney's office, Violent Crimes Unit. We follow the Irishman into the office He greets the secretaries, moving toward the rear offices as if he owns the place. He sees another cop, also white, on the phone, his feet up on a prosecutor's desk. The Irishman nods, listens. His fellow detective is arguing with a contractor about the cost of pressure-treated lumber

The Irishman sits. His pager goes off. He scans the number, frowns

The other detective hangs up, looks to the Irishman

"Fucking thieves."

"You putting a deck up?"

"Not for eight thousand I'm not. Fucking thieves."

The detective picks up the phone again, ready to do battle. The Irishman interrupts him.

"You talked to Hansen lately?"

"I'm with Hansen in Part 23 right now. The Marando Bennett case "

"I know that I was just in there."

"Yeah?" asks the detective, not really giving a shit.

"Yeah. Your case is falling apart."

"The fuck it is "

The Irishman shrugs "Last two witnesses just backed all the way up."

"The fuck you say."

"You got Stringy Bell and his crew sitting in the second row staring them down They're backin' up like bad sewer pipe."

"What's Hansen doing?"

The Irishman shrugs. The detective mulls the news over for a second, picks up the phone, calls a second contractor, seeking another estimate

3. Baltimore Circuit Court, Pt. 23. Jury foreman rises, pronounces the defendant not guilty on all counts. High-fives from the crew in the second-row. Worn visage of disgust on the face of Warren Hansen, the prosecutor. Judge Watkins coldly thanks the jury, dismisses court. Sheriff's deputies pocket their cuffs as the defendant and his attorney embrace. The judge leans back in his chair, looking to the rear row, where the Irishman sits watching the uproar, sort of half bemused. As the judge motions to his clerk.

4 Courthouse hallway The Irishman leaves the courtroom only to be approached by the clerk: Judge Watkins wants to see him. Cut to the judge's chambers: What, his honor asks, just happened out there

Our Irish soul, very dryly: "We lost "

But the judge is pissed. Asks if the Irishman had anything to do with the case. No, nothing. Then why are you in my court today.

The detective explains. That murder came from the Barksdale crew -- Aaron Barksdale, Stringy Bell, the rest of the pack. They now own five of the seven towers of the Latrobe Courts. Ten stairwells in five high-rises, going twenty-four seven for dope and coke.

"That was Stringy in the second row, with the notepad, scaring the living shit out the state witnesses." The judge takes this in. How, he asks, do you know all this?

"Everyone knows it "

"Everyone?"

"Everyone in the Latrobe Courts Barksdale and Bell are the power. Have been for a year. They've dropped about ten bodies in as many months. Beat three cases in court already doing the same shit they did today."

And why do you care if it isn't your case.

Irishman loses his smile. "Who said I did?"

5. Five Mile House, nightclub: A celebration of the acquittal. Stringy, now less studious that he's out of court, and Barksdale, older and lethal, hold court. Our defendant, D'Angelo Barksdale, still looks hard, but now, in the company of so many other genuine players, we get a sense that he was in over his head, that if his elder uncle hadn't mobilized the crew to throw hard looks at the witnesses, if he had been in court alone, he might have crumbled.

Aaron Barksdale pulls his nephew aside playfully, congratulating him on having beat the charge. But alone he is more judgmental. "You fucked the dog on me." D'Angelo Barksdale is told that the murder was poorly handled and that great effort was required to make sure that the state's case imploded. He is told that he's being pulled out of the towers -- the money territory for the crew -- and given the low-rise courtyard in the Douglass Homes. A demotion.

6 Our Irish-faced detective, call him Jimmy McArdle, arrives at a crime scene, finds his partner, a 320-pound black detective known only as The Bunk, in a basement room, smoking a cigar against the odors of a summer decomp.

McArdle: "How happy am I to see my beeper go off?"

Bunk: "What the fuck. A call's a call."

McArdle: "Landsman's squad was up today. Why are you even picking up the phone on

anything?

Bunk: "Got bored. Need some overtime to pay down the credit cards, man."

Off the body: "Who be dead?"

Bunk, morosely. "No ID. Dead a week or so."

McArdle half-heartedly offers to help, but The Bunk shakes him off.

"Ain't even gonna be a murder. Motherfucker just fell out on his own and then went all ripe and shit. My fault for catching calls, brother."

As the bloated body is rolled, McArdle frowns at the smell and backs out.

7. Homicide office: McArdle walks in

A detective sergeant looks up. "What the Bunk get?"

"Decomp. Probably a natural."

The sergeant grunts. Adding, as afterthought: "Captain wants you."

"What for?"

Sergeant shrugs. "You did something somewhere. He looked pissed."

McArdle walks to the captain's office, knocks. The captain, a starched suit and little more, glares up at him from behind a government-metal desk. "Close the door."

The detective barely has the door shut when his commander begins to let shit fly. "What the fuck were you doing at the courthouse? Why the fuck are you talking to some shitbag judge? And fuck you, you little insubordinate prick, if you think you can go around telling people we've got people in this town beating ten murders on us."

"Three. They only beat three in court."

"I got the deputy asking me questions about ten."

"They did ten. We only charged them with three."

"What the fuck are you talking about, ten?"

Captain doesn't want to hear this, but McArdle lays it out. "Every body that has hit the ground for the last year in the Latrobe. And all of them coming back to Barksdale and Bell and their crew. As McArdle drops the names of cases, the captain tries to keep up with index cards -- 3x5 memory aids alphabetized by victim names."

Captain: "Slow down. You're all over the map here. I don't even have a Terrell Davis in my cards."

McArdle, eyeing him sadly: "He got killed in '99."

Captain looks up, furious. "You're busting my balls with a city judge over a '99 file?"

McArdle gets up, hoping to leave. "I'm not busting anyone's balls, sir. The judge called me into chambers and asked what I knew about the crew he had in court."

"And you told him."

McArdle knows he fucked up here. He crossed his own captain up.

"I got to go upstairs and explain to the Commissioner why he's getting calls from some judge about murders that don't mean shit to anyone up here."

"Look, captain. This judge fucked me too on this. He asks me a question and I answer. I don't know he's gonna call anyone about anything."

"Fuck you, McArdle. You better remember where you work."

8. Douglass Homes projects, low-rise courtyard

D'Angelo contemplates his new assignment. Less lucrative territory. Less competent understudies and employees. He'll now have to work harder to make less money. To succeed, he'll have to become what he has no capacity to become. A serious drug-dealer.

He instructs his teenage minions in what he expects

Fifteen-year-old in response: "Why they put you down here if you used to be in the towers?"

"What?"

"You fuck up or something?"

"I killed a nigger."

That silences them for the moment.

9. Drug Corner, East Baltimore.

A black female narcotics detective, late twenties, undercover, sits in a surveillance car with her informant -- also black and female, but sick and wrath-like. The informant is angry. Her boyfriend has dumped her; she's now ready to dump him back.

"He's coming," she assures the detective.

"I know. I believe you "

"I'm saying, he comes by here every day this time."

"Right."

"Same time. They do the drop every day like that."

"You said that. I believe you."

The informant is hungrier than the cop. Two or three corner boys pull up in a ragged Audi. Informant points them out: "Don't forget that car is in my name. I get the car, right "

"Uh huh "

"You ain't taking the car."

"You get the car."

"I'm saying "

Detective Kima Greggs (short for Shakima; her mother being at the head of that generation that put poetry to work in the maternity wards) gets on the radio. Jump-out ensues. Four other male plainclothesmen rush up, pin the car from both sides, guns drawn. They pull the three out, have them on the sidewalk. Greggs has to hold the informant back in her car; the woman wants to rush out and rub it in her ex-boyfriend's face. Two of the four, one of them white and particularly muscular, nicknamed Herc, and the other, Carver, short and black, a fire-hydrant build, deal roughly with both the suspects and the car. The white cop finds a sawed-off shotgun and slams it roughly on the roof the car. His partner pulls a large bag of pre-vailed coke from under the seat and tosses that up as well.

From down the block, Greggs has to fight to keep the informant in the car. She's furious that the police might damage her car. "You stay here."

"Tell them that's my car "

"Stay here."

She gets out, walks to the scene. Suspects are cuffed and the plainclothesmen are calling for the wagon. Cops in a celebratory mood. Herc and his partner are banging chests like its an

end-zone celebration.

Greggs sighs, points to the roof of the car. "Two guns. Remember?"

Other cops look at her blankly, or ignore her.

She gets in the Audi, roots around for a minute or two. Pulls a semiauto from the crack of the rear seat. She pulls it out, checks it, puts it lightly on the roof of the car.

White cop: "Okay. Whatever."

On Greggs, not entirely comfortable with her confederates.

10. Money-scam Bubbles and Johnny, a salt-and-pepper team of street junkies, prepare their caper, which involves the color xeroxing of a couple ten dollar bills. Bubbles runs it on D'Angelo's crew, who serve them oblivious, taking the xerox paper for chlorophyll. Pick up with the money coming back to D'Angelo, who discovers the bad bill. Best he can do is yell.

11. Captain coming back from Commissioner. Calls McArdle into his office. Tells him it's now officially a clusterfuck. Commissioner has ordered up a report by 2 p.m. Wants to know about this all these alleged murders and shootings.

I'm sorry, says McArdle

Fuck you. Fuck your apology. I will pay you back in my own way.

Captain orders McArdle to start typing report.

12. Our detective pushing files. The Bunk, his partner, comes back in from decomp. Bunk amused at his expense. Gives him back the same speech he took just a couple hours earlier, the one about not stepping up and taking calls when it ain't your turn.

McArdle laughs weakly. Bunk is right.

13. C.I.D. Narcotics Office. In the background Greggs is typing a report. Lieutenant Daniels, straight-laced in a suit, is called into the office of the narcotic commander. Ripples from McArdle's foolish candor with the judge are now reaching other units.

Commander: "We got a bit of a situation. A very pissed off Judge Watkins has put a buzz in the commissioner's ear about some shitbag dealer named Barksdale. Seems that some fuckin' mope from Homicide.

The police commissioner has called a meeting at 2.00 P.M. Us, Homicide, Michelle Reese from the States Attorney. I want you there with me."

"Yes sir "

"Put together a file. Call Andrews at DEA, see what they got "

"Do we have a first name?"

The captain pushes a sheet of paper across the desk. Daniels waits

"That's all. Lieutenant "

14. In the outer office, Greggs is working on the report while Herc and Carver sit idle.

"You got the evidence control numbers?" Greggs asks Herc

"No "

"Get 'em "

"Why me," asks the white guy, pouting.

"You want the collar. You get the numbers "

"You giving me the stat?"

"It's your turn."

Herc smiles, launches into a computation of how much he'll get paid in overtime, pre-trial prep time and court pay. A laughfest insues, with narcotics veterans chiming in about just how lucrative the drug war has become. Gonna go out this afternoon and make my boat payment -- comments like that.

"You can't even call it a war," says Carver.

"Why not?"

"Wars end."

A pause until the white guy gets it. Then, cynical laughter.

On Greggs, who has to admit it's true and goes back to typing, as Lieutenant Daniels pulls her into his office: She's told about the meeting. He needs a sergeant and she's going with him Find out what we have on this guy Barksdale. As the shit rolls slowly downhill...

Phone rings Daniels is being called to the Deputy Commissioner for Operations. Immediately.

15. Daniels meets the Deputy Commissioner of Operations, the real day-to-day power in the department, and a man who takes great discomfort in any act of police work that interferes with the pleasures and concerns of the department's political patrons The Deputy warns Daniels that by volunteering for this clusterfuck, his captain is putting Daniels' neck on the line The Deputy points out something that Daniels knows to be inherently true: Long investigations go in unwanted directions Wiretaps and Kel-mikes let you hear things that you wish you never knew And even if this thing doesn't take an ugly turn in that sense, the sheer amount of manpower required to properly and legally manage any surveillance means the department and C I D will run overbudget for the rest of the year. Try to contain this thing, the Deputy urges. Do this Barksdale on whatever you can and get out, fast. One last thing The Deputy wants to be fully briefed on all developments. He's putting himself in the loop and Daniels is his man

16. Open-air drug market White-boy Johnny tries to run his game with the xeroxed money, the same way that Bubbles taught him.. He's caught by D'Angelo's charges and brought to D'Angelo, who fronts fiercely, but in fact, shies away from beating the gaunt addict. Grateful, Johnny gives up the six dollars in his pocket and promises to make the rest right. He owes D'Angelo thirty-four dollars, the scam having been run successfully on three other occasions. Until he pays, D'Angelo tells the younger boys, he's cut off No sales The boys take this in, realizing on some level that D'Angelo is weak.

17 In the eighth-floor hallway outside the Commissioner's office, the captains of Homicide and Narcotics emerge, looking a little worse for wear-and-tear. The captains both expend themselves cursing McArdle's name as they elevator down two floors, where they part ways. Lt Daniels watches as his superior comes down the hall. It's everything Deputy told him would happen Plus, the narcotics report on Barksdale had much less in it than what Homicide presented So

they are humiliated for not knowing shit about a major westside trafficker. So to begin with, now Daniels dislikes McArdle as well.

18. Homicide Unit. Detective McArdle hears it from his own lieutenant:

"You did it this time, shitbag."

"Did what?"

Lieutenant just laughs.

"All I did was answer the man's fucking questions. The man is a judge."

Lieutenant asks McArdle where, in the entire realm of the Baltimore Police Department, he would least like to serve. "Western District?"

McArdle shakes his head. "I came up in Western. I could hack it."

"Eastern?"

McArdle smiles. "The boat. I hate boats. I can't swim."

Lieutenant shows him twenty dollars. "This against a ten says you finish the year in the marine unit. Midnight shift." The lieutenant laughs again, walks away.

On McArdle, doubtful, even amused.

19 Meeting of Lt Daniels, his detectives, including Greggs, and the prosecutor, an ambitious young woman named Janelle Pearlman, an assistant in the State's Attorney's narcotics division. From homicide, McArdle and another white detective, Santangelo, who clearly wants to be elsewhere. Meeting is chaired by the Narcotics Captain, who quickly turns it over to Daniels -- so quickly that we get a sense that he is, at best, an empty suit. Daniels acknowledges that at this point they don't even have a photo of the guy. Just a juvenile rap sheet. No adult charges. Herc and Carver: Fuck it. Let's get out on the street and fuck some people up. Real thinking police, these two. But the captain nods, urges quick results and leaves. Daniels, referring to McArdle's memo referencing all the unsolved murders by Barksdale, asks what might be in the Homicide case folders that they could use. McArdle for the first time starts to talk and it's clear he knows the target a little better than anyone at the table, but there is such a reservoir of pissed-offedness for McArdle's having started the shit, that he immediately takes flak. The recriminations swell until Daniels shuts it down, brings them down to business.

Game plan for a quick bust: More manpower will be requested. They will work directly out of the prosecutor's office and under Pearlman. And Daniels tells them, you all do nothing without me knowing first.

20 Two of D'Angelo's workers point out Johnny to some of the big boys who work for Barksdale in the high-rises. This is the first team down in the low-rises, come to show the minor leaguers how it's done. They snatch Johnny, shake him down for three dollars and change. I told your man, he cries. I'ma pay you all back. No, they explain, you're not. They beat Johnny to within an inch of his life. Bubbles is across the way watching, helpless to stop it. Johnny is headed for the shock-trauma unit at University over thirty-four dollars.

21. McArdle and Bunk at a bar, getting drunk. McArdle: I feel like that motherfucker at the end of Bridge Over the River Kwai. I have fucked myself. I am fucked. Fucked is me.

Bunk: "You gonna make me go another round, aren't you."

22. Orlando's. A strip joint, just off Baltimore's Block Barksdale's lieutenant, Stringy Bell, who once looked so studious with his legal pad in court, is now holding court in the club he owns as a front. Bell berates D'Angelo, letting him know he's weak and a fool. D'Angelo tries to protest that it was only a few dollars. But, no, you show that kind of weakness on a corner, you lose everything that comes after.

Bell walks away. D'Angelo turns to a B-girl dancer who is at the bar. She smiles sympathetically, tells him he needs a drink. D'Angelo nods. Bell takes this in and as an afterthought, shouts to the bartender. "He pays. Today, he ain't sliding on shit."

Things are tough all over conversation between D'Angelo and the dancer, who will feature later in the investigation. Right now what we notice is that she can't see anything without her glasses and she is self-conscious about wearing them. As she finishes her drink, thanks D'Angelo and gets up to hustle a real customer...

23. We go home with Greggs and meet...the girlfriend. She is gay, which in a backhanded way explains why she is able to get through a day on the sixth floor of the headquarters building without being hit on several hundred times. Most of her coworkers have figured it out, at least. Her friend is getting ready to go to work as a waitress. Greggs rushes to turn around her day, head off to night school. But as she does, her pager goes off.

24. Bunk and McArdle drunk off their ass, drinking beer at five in the morning on Calverton Road, a dead-end by the Amtrak rail bed. Bunk is telling the story about the time he used his snub-nose to kill a mouse in his wife's bedroom closet.

"Had to pick up all them little bitty pieces," he recalls. "Thought about leaving 'em there as a warning to others, but naw, the shit had to go."

McArdle, who has heard the story before, is standing on the northbound lines, pissing. He turns to Bunk, abruptly. "I'm gonna do this case. Bunk shakes his head, says only "buy-bust." No, McArdle says, fuck buy-bust. Get in, get out, Bunk says. Fuck that, says McArdle, get in, stay in.

From down the tracks, the Metroliner from Washington, whistle wailing.

McArdle stares at the oncoming train, hesitating just long enough that Bunk, though intoxicated, nervously gets to his feet and takes a step toward his partner. McArdle looks at the train a moment more and steps off the track, walks toward Bunk. A few seconds later the train wails by in background.

Bunk looks at McArdle, worried.

McArdle: "Let's call it a night."

25. Greggs is back in the office, helping Bubbles, an old informant, pick out people from B of I photos. On Bubbles, hurt and determined.

26. Bunk is in the office, hung over. Sergeant throws a found-body call on him. We're a man short, he's told. A reference to the fact that McArdle is now on the special detail and therefore

the rest of the squad is shorthanded. So, of course, punishment goes first to the offender's partner.

Cut to the crime scene. It's the witness, the only one we saw who was backing up on his testimony in D'Angelo's murder trial. Bunk begins to go through the motions, no recognition of any connection to his partner's investigation. But behind the crime scene tape, we see D'Angelo watching. He looks down at the victim. Knows. He walks back to his perch in the low-rises, sits, broods.

END EPISODE 101

EPISODE 102

1 Narcotics unit, State's Attorney's office Daniels, McArdle and the prosecutor on the case, Pearlman, take in a room full of waste. Having asked for more manpower, Daniels is rewarded by having every commander in C.I.D. dump his worst detectives on the detail. For the first time, perhaps, in the history of television, we begin to get a sense that most police are career civil servants, capable of only the most basic functions, and that actual investigation requires talent that in any major urban department is in rare supply. Moreover, we get a sense of the turf wars that go on to keep talent, so that the commanders ordered to give Daniels a man or two for the Barksdale probe make a point of dumping their laziest and most incompetent detectives. McArdle, Pearlman take stock. There isn't a worthwhile acquisition in the bunch. Daniels, livid, goes back to the other commanders, demanding better. He's denied at all turns, except for the fugitive lieutenant, who agrees to give him a known worker, provided Daniels keeps Shea and Varitek

"I don't need Shea and Varitek. They're drunks."

"I don't need them either." the fugitive lieutenant replies.

"I need people who can do surveillance in West Baltimore. Shea and Varitek couldn't find West Baltimore and they're white besides."

Lieutenant smiles "I'll give you Sydnor, if you take Shea and Varitek."

Sydnor is a good cop, young, black, with Western District experience.

"So," says Daniels. "I have to take three to get one "

"That's the deal."

"Shea, Varitek. They're that bad?"

Lieutenant smiles faintly. "You have no idea."

2. Daniels goes back to the meeting, tries to integrate the new half dozen fuckheads with his existing detail. Two brutal thugs, one from the warrants squad, the other from vice, Shea and Varitek, two pug-nosed old-timers running on empty and already half lit at eleven in the morning and an old, broke-down black detective named Lester Weeks, who has spent the last eight years shuffling index cards in the pawn-shop unit. We get a real sense of how unwieldy this much accumulated incompetence can be. McArdle to him afterward: We don't need all these bodies. We got dead weight and cowboys here. We need to take the time to see what we've got.

Daniels disagrees. Things are going to happen fast

That's what he promised the Deputy Commissioner anyway

3 McArdle sees the name of Bunk's victim, photos from crime scene, recognizes him as the witness who was backing up in court that day. But why kill a witness who you already made back off? And why kill him after the trial?

Bunk goes with the obvious answer: Guy probably wasn't killed by Barksdale's crew. Guy probably got killed over fucking some man's dog somewhere. Who knows?

4. McArdle rereads trial testimony. Sure enough, the guy backed up just enough to get

the D'Angelo kid off on the murder. And his testimony was key. Told you, says Bunk. But McArdle still thinks it's connected.

5. Bunk and McArdle snatch up D'Angelo, who turns out to be weaker than they thought. Although every hard drug player knows to say nothing in an interrogation box, D'Angelo rambles on, though all the while protesting innocence in the killing of the witness. Clearly he is upset about that. On the other hand, he very nearly manages to re-implicate himself in the original murder before a drug organization lawyer shows up and the interview is shut down. Detectives also learn for the first time that this is Barksdale's nephew. McArdle: A weak link, this one. We get a chance to really press him, who knows?

6. Conversation between McArdle and Daniels. Our first real sense that these two are the brains of the case, that they are both proud, smart, and that Daniels, a lieutenant slated for further promotion, is much more politically astute and cautious than McArdle. McArdle wants to let the case sprawl, to pick up everything they can on Barksdale and his crew and see where it leads. Daniels needs arrests now. McArdle seizes on the dead witness: We give that to the newspaper and they have to let us run wild. The bosses have to respond if witnesses are being killed. Anything less than total commitment under that circumstance is bad for police business. Daniels: No fucking way. No grandstanding. No red balls. We get in, we get out. And Daniels points out: You don't know who killed the witness or why.

7. Greggs, Sydnor and Bubbles work Bubbles on the street. They do the red-hat routine, in which Bubbles sells hats on a Barksdale-run drug corner. Anyone he lets try on the red hat is a street-level Barksdale player. The red hat goes on a guy, Greggs snaps his picture.

8. After his encounter with the detectives, D'Angelo goes to Bell. He immediately relates everything with the detectives, all the questions they were asking, how they knew Bell's name and Barksdale's too. It's clear that D'Angelo believes that Bell is responsible for the murder of the witness on his own. And D'Angelo sees no point in killing anyone once the murder case had already imploded. Bell: What did we say yesterday? What does it cost you to be weak? Unsatisfied, D'Angelo goes to his uncle and the conversation turns from why we did it, to what did you say to the police. The lawyer says you didn't shut up like even an idiot knows to shut up. D'Angelo chastened, more fearful than before.

9. Back at the office, Greggs is assembling her collection of red-hat photographs. Bubbles is telling her who's who. Herc and Carver watch this, dismissive. All they've done is take pictures of assholes. When do they ask us to start fucking somebody up.
They point to Bubbles. Let's wire him up, send him in, make a buy.
Shut up, she explains.

10. On his own, McArdle tips the judge about the dead witness. Sure enough, it goes to the next day's editions of the Baltimore Sun. Bosses go apeshit. Witnesses being killed in the newspaper? They're reading this in the fucking newspaper? Shit flows downhill to Daniels, who

confronts McArdle, who lamely denies telling anyone. The bosses make Bunk their point man in knocking down the story, having Bunk tell reporters that there's no evidence the witness was killed by anyone connected to the earlier case.

11 Frustrated, Herc and Carver, along with the two thugs dumped in the unit from warrants and vice decide to do it their way. They go charging into the projects, come up with shit. We get a sense of just how organized Barksdale has his people, how the cops are spotted blocks away and how shop closes and opens as they pass. Angry, humiliated, they walk back to their cars, find a black teenager sitting on the hood of one, eating a sno-cone.

"Off the car, shitbag."

And when the kid is a half-second slow, Carver clocks him. A second kid, seeing this, calls the cops assholes. Herc grabs that kid and another throws a rock. Instant clusterfuck. Our four heroes calling for backup. They beat a couple kids senseless, even as others smash the windshields of both cars with rocks and bottles. By the time other Western marked units arrive, it's a pretty good riot.

12. Daniels, having put out the one fire over the newspaper story, now has to bail Herc and Carver out of a brutality complaint. We watch him get hold of his boys before they talk to IID, help these idiots shape their stories to keep them from catching a bad number. We see his distaste in this, even moreso when he realizes that one of the black teenagers is in the hospital.

13. Santangelo, the other Homicide appointee to the detail, meets privately with the Homicide captain. Fuck McArdle. Fuck Daniels. Fuck this nowhere case. He wants to come home. Captain won't let him, explains that he's the captain's man inside. I want to hear it from McArdle, I'll read it in the goddamn newspaper. Captain wants to know everything that Daniels, McArdle and the others have going. You cover me in this, the Captain assures him, I'll cover you later. Santangelo is mollified.

14 McArdle tries to check the public housing authority to see if they have a photo on file of Barksdale -- days into the investigation and they still don't know what their target looks like. He sends Shea and Varitek, the drunks, to run the check. Simple job, but Shea and Varitek stop at a couple bars along the way, get the case names confused. They come back with an eight-year-old picture of Bubbles, their own informant. As aging white cops, they can't tell one black face from another anymore and so, they offer it to McArdle and start to punch out.

McArdle shows the picture to Greggs, who shakes her head, looks at Bubbles, who sits in the corner eating a cheese sandwich.

Bubbles "What? What I do?"

15 Next day, additional desks, a few supplies and a computer that appears to run on punch-cards it is so old arrive at the prosecutor's office. No Kel-mikes, no undercover cars. Just crap. The department (and the Deputy) sending a signal. Wrap this shit up and be gone. Our boys move into their desks. Lester Weeks, the quiet old black guy from pawn shop unit, appropriates the window desk and neatly arranges his stuff, which includes magazines and materials for his

hobby, which is constructing and displaying miniature doll-house size furniture and furnishings. He is presently at work on a tiny, Louis XIV divan. So far, he has yet to show any remote interest or connection to the police work at hand

McArdle tries to give them all fresh stuff to run down, mostly leads that weren't followed in the earlier H-files. Herc and Carter resist. Tell McArdle he doesn't rank them Daniels hears this and still pissed about the riot, tells them to do what McArdle says and further, that the next time they fuck up on their own, he's cutting them loose. This leaves the two younger narcotics guys hurt and petulant.

16. Bar scene: The young turks, Herc and Carver and their two thugs in tow. Drinking at a county strip joint out on North Point Boulevard A discussion of who is really about police work. Computers, notepads, write this down, write that down -- fuck that.

Police work is rough and tumble, they tell themselves. And where is McArdle, or even Daniels in that? If we were running this case..

17 Sydnor, Greggs and McArdle talking in the office. McArdle slowly realizing that this young black female is uncommonly smart and competent. Some attraction, too, with McArdle slow to pick up on what every one else seems to already know. They talk about Barksdale, their target How does a guy come through all these years without an arrest, without even leaving a photo around for pursuing detectives? They talk about who they're working with Stupid criminals make for stupid cops But you get a smart one, well, says McArdle, that's the job right there, isn't it? That's what makes this fun.

Greggs sees it, agrees, opens her notebook and goes through what she knows

Barksdale seems to have almost all of the westside high-rise trade and he came from nowhere No flash or profile to the guy's existence. No cars in his name. No license No kids No address on the mother. No DSS since age seventeen. No tax info to fuck with. They've chased this guy a week and all they know is that he's big. One juvenile arrest for loitering, and a crosscheck on the kid he was arrested with at the time is cold -- that kid is six years dead. They've heard he has a girlfriend in New York and he stays somewhere out in the county maybe, but no one knows where Exercise buff and liked to box.

Lester, reading his hobby magazine, looks up at this last bit of info. He puts down the magazine, gets up slowly, leaves Greggs and McArdle watch him go McArdle nods at Greggs' notebook.

"You write everything down?"

"Everything "

McArdle approvingly "That's police work "

Greggs nodding. She knows They both know A real connection.

18 D'Angelo talking shit to his boys in the low-rises, trying to make himself sound fierce He tells the story of an earlier murder A true story in which Barksdale killed an ex-girlfriend, who, spurned, began talking about how she was going to tell the police about Barksdale's business. In the true story, D'Angelo was used as a kind of lure. Early morning hours, they walked him up to the back sliding glass doors of her garden apartment, had him tap on the glass until she came in

her nightgown. She knew D'Angelo because he often ran errands for Barksdale. And as she walks toward the door to ask why in hell he's at her place at two in the morning, Stringy Bell steps up with a four-five and fires one shot through the glass, killing her at close range. In truth, D'Angelo wasn't even told they were going to kill her. Stringy sent him up to the back door saying he had to pick something up for Barksdale. The gun goes off and D'Angelo, then all of seventeen, jumps out of his skin. But now, to his charges, D'Angelo makes himself the cold-hearted shooter.

"How many bodies you caught so far?" asks one of the kids.

"I tell you that, I got to kill you," says D'Angelo.

The others crack up. But the kid, street handle of Bodie, doesn't even smile. He seems to see through D'Angelo. Bodie was the one who told the high-rise boys when D'Angelo let Johnny, the white addict, skate on the fake ten. He knows his crew boss is weak and he is, even at fifteen, ambitious. And D'Angelo knows enough to be wary of this kid.

19. Lester Weeks arrives at Mac Lewis' gym on the eastside. Sparring rings, faded posters, Mac Lewis sitting in shorts and T-shirt, sweating and watching two middleweights flail at each other. They begin a nice conversation, as acquaintances who have not seen each other in a long while

20. Greggs, with Santangelo in her shadow, have assembled a wall-size chart showing the Barksdale organization, or as much of it as is now visible to them. Most of the photos of players, D'Angelo's for example, are mug shots. A few are the red-hat shots added by Bubbles. They have built a food chain with Barksdale nearly to the top. Above him is only an empty space, with the phrase "Supply?" written above it. Clearly, their knowledge extends only so far as Barksdale, which means only to the high end of the distribution chain in the West Baltimore projects. Below Barksdale is Stringy Bell and two or three other lieutenants, each with a piece of a Baltimore map book cut out and adjacent, indicating territory handled in West Baltimore.

Santangelo: "Now that we know who they are, we can stand here with our dicks in our hands admiring the pretty pictures." He shakes his head, walks away. Again, no patience for what is actually required.

Bubbles is there, though, a great informant. He's explaining what he knows of the street-level players

Greggs, off one red-hat picture still unidentified: "Who is he?"

Bubbles frowns, struggles with it. "Ain't sure what he about. He mostly hang with him. But he workin' for the senator, too."

The senator?

"That one from westside. Light-skinned one."

Greggs looks at him: "Dawkins. This guy works for Dawkins."

Yes, indeed

21. Greggs and McArdle to Annapolis, where they pull employment files and pay stubs for state Senator James L. Dawkins. They come back with a list of names, about half with West Baltimore addresses and about half of those male. Bubbles doesn't know the name, only that he goes by "Day-Day" on the street. There is one name -- Damian Davies -- that could make for

such a street handle. They take it back to the city B of I computer and come up with a record. Drug stuff, petty shit, one weapons charge. A player, but seemingly not a heavy. No arrests in four years. He's playing in the straight world, on the senator's staff.

One old arrest jumps out at McArdle, however. Day-Day was arrested with the listed owner of Orlando's, the strip club that is really owned by Stringy Bell. The two were charged by State Police with trying to bribe a worker at the Bureau of Vital Statistics for blank birth certificates (This is a common scam, because with a blank certificate, you can create identities and get passports for convicted felons, who otherwise can't go overseas.) They call the troopers who made the case and learn that while the worker would testify against the front man at Orlando's, he wouldn't give up Day-Day. Guy took a contempt of court rather than go there.

22 Greggs and McArdle take this connection to Daniels, who seems less than happy. What, he asks McArdle, are you trying to do to us. What? McArdle is offended. Shit, Greggs did more to pull this guy to the surface than he did. Daniels looks at Greggs, who doesn't get it. And Daniels doesn't have the heart to explain the ugly back-end of things to her, that investigations are supposed to limit themselves, that some things are easier and safer left unfucked with by street cops.

Daniels: "We don't even know if he's any more than a hanger on. We see him tout or deal or cop?"

No. No one has him touching drugs. But with the vital stats case....

"He's probably hanging with his boys now and then. Old-time sake."

McArdle and Greggs share a look. They just brought in a good nugget of something and Daniels doesn't want to look hard at it. He admits as much. Dawkins is the reigning legislative power from West Baltimore. Huge fundraiser. Democratic power on the Senate Budget Committee and a vice chair of the Black Caucus. He's treasurer of the sitting Baltimore mayor's reelection effort.

23 D'Angelo takes his girl to Sabatino's. This is where my uncle comes all the time, he brags Nice restaurant. Open late. He's trying to blend. But they bring the dessert cart and he makes the mistake of trying to grab the sample. You can take a kid out of the projects, but...

He is embarrassed, furious at himself.

All the money he can spend, white linens on the table, and what is he?

24 Daniels debriefing the Deputy Commissioner, unable to report light at the end of the tunnel. Deputy tolerant, but wants arrests soon. Daniels brings up the surfaced connection between the drug organization and the aide to Sen. Dawkins. Deputy shows mild surprise but plays it off. This aide -- he's into the drugs. No. Past arrests show a link and he's been seen hanging with a few of the mid-level players.

Deputy is unimpressed. Show me stats. Buy-bust. Dope on the table.

"Give me something to get this judge off my ass," says the Deputy.

Daniels agrees, chastened.

25. Lester Weeks walks in, drops a photo of Barksdale on the desk in front of Greggs and

McArdle It's an old Golden Gloves poster of Barksdale when he was in his late teens, but it is a photo nonetheless.

"How'd you come by this."

Weeks ignores McArdle, goes back to his doll-house magazines.

26. Daniels has lunch with his wife, who is an attorney, politically adroit. She thinks outside the police box and sees a better career for her husband than spending the next decade making captain. He's smart, black, competent. We learn he even has a law degree from night school. She wants him to let loose some ambition.

He tells her about the case, about the Deputy.

She makes it clear to him that it's his job to take himself off the target as quickly as possible

27 Bunk has developed a witness in his murder of the murder-trial witness. He and McArdle go into the interrogation room, work the guy almost to the edge, but no, he expresses fear about being killed himself.

"We won't let that happen."

Sheeet. We're talking about what you let happen right here

McArdle: "You saying he was killed because he was a witness?"

It's what McArdle always suspected. And sure enough.

"Why you think, fool?"

"But he backed up on his testimony."

"He backed up 'cause they promised him \$100,000 "

"And they didn't pay?"

"What you think, fool. Paid the motherfucker off with a bullet."

"How do you know this?"

Fuck you, says the witness. I'm done talking. No sale.

They exit the box, talk. McArdle is beginning to see how fierce, how coordinated Barksdale's world is. "These guys are real. This guy, Barksdale, he's very real."

28. Meeting with Greggs, McArdle, Daniels and the prosecutor shepherding the case, Pearlman. McArdle talking about how everyone is scared shitless of this organization, how even if they make lower-level buy-busts, they won't roll anyone upwards. "This all goes to elimination." He's spoken a word anaethma to Daniels. To get a wiretap, you have to "eliminate" over investigative avenues through active effort. Only then will a court consider electronic surveillance.

Daniels: "No taps. No bugs, no taps. We buy-bust and we roll 'em up."

"Won't work."

"What the fuck do you know."

"You're wasting time."

Daniels storms out. Greggs looks at McArdle, who looks at the prosecutor.

"We want Barksdale, we're going to a tap. The guy is too good, too insulated to get him any other way. We don't want 'im -- someone should say that now."

Pearlman shrugs She's not going to ask for the manpower to do a wire without the police department behind it.

On Greggs and McArdle, alone and vulnerable

END EPISODE 102

EPISODE 103

1. Sydnor, the competent black detective offered by fugitive unit (so long as Varitek and Shea were taken as well) is sent undercover into the projects, time and again, to make drug purchases from street-level players. He does so. In fact, he's quite a good undercover. Greggs, McArdle and others, at times, monitor the buys as best they can from a surveillance van.

But McArdle makes it clear that he thinks this will go nowhere.

2 Daniels meeting with the Deputy. Informing him of controlled buys They're going to put some arrests on the table soon. Good. The Deputy is pleased.

3. After work: McArdle gets a bite with Greggs, explores their histories a bit.

He's divorced. Two kids, ten and seven. Sees them every other weekend and one evening a week. Who's fault, she asks. Mine, he answers. Honest, at least.

And you? She lets him know as gently as possible, amazed that he hadn't heard it already on the sixth floor. He realizes he probably did hear talk when she first transferred up to narcotics, but didn't know or care who the talk was about.

"You're not gonna change your mind?"

She shakes her head They talk about the job. I only knew one other female police who was as good as you are now. In the Western, McArdle remembers

"Was she a lesbian?"

A strange question, but not. McArdle concedes she was

Greggs talks about one of the unspoken things that she long ago noticed. "In the beginning, you're in a radio car, alone, working a post. Most women won't get out of the car. Not without other units there Most woman are physically intimidated."

"But you weren't?"

"I was scared at first But just regular out-of-the-academy scared I wasn't going to stay scared."

"And you were willing to fight?"

"I'd scuffle, yeah. I'd lose sometimes, but I'd scuffle."

"You think 'cause you're gay."

"Shit. I don't know. I just know I liked the job "

McArdle smiles Whatever else, he found a real police on this detail.

4 Raids. Every man in the detail is aboard as they bum-rush the projects to pick up two dozen bit players implicated through Sydnor's recent buy-busts It is a fierce showing of the flag, in which, for one day at least, the Baltimore Police Department owns the real estate Bodies are hauled into wagons, deposited in interrogation rooms and debriefed. Deals are offered by Pearlman in exchange for cooperation, but none are taken One of those scooped up is Bodie, who makes the mistake of knocking down Varitek with a baseball bat at the moment of arrest Varitek to the hospital, with a million-dollar wound for a half-assed alcoholic has-been. He'll get to soak the pension board on the injury, go out early on a 66 2/3-percent disability But

hitting the old detective gets Bodie's ass kicked badly by the other officers on the street. By the time he's debriefed in an interrogation room, he's one big welt. When McArdle tries to talk with him, we get a glimpse of just how hard a fifteen year old can be.

"Send me to Hickey," he tells them. "I ain't saying shit."

McArdle looks at him and knows at that moment that he's Barksdale in ten years. And that the war can't be won

5. Raids haven't nailed anyone above street level, but Deputy is pleased. Calls a press conference, announces the seizure of drugs, weapons, 27 arrests and says a violent drug gang in the westside high-rises has been broken. He makes Daniels the front for this bullshit and Daniels allows it to occur.

6 McArdle and Greggs go back-door to the Judge, let him know the raids are a dead end. They do this knowing he will not allow the pressure he's putting on the department to diminish.

7 An evening celebration of the raids at a cop bar. For the first time, we see Herc purchase steroids in quantity from another street cop. They are all pumped up from the street rips and the street fighting. Carver, Herc, the other young cops, stagger out of the bar and see a black guy looking into a car window in the parking lot across the street, using a wire hanger to fuck with the door lock

"Hey!"

The man turns, starts to explain and is suddenly being pummeled by the younger thugs Herc, wild-eyed joins in. Carver gets a few shots, too, and soon the guy is unconscious. Fuck it.

That's what you get for trying to break into someone's car. But as they calm down they realize that the car is running, its exhaust burning fumes. Carver looks inside the car and notices for the first time, that the keys are in the ignition. Guy probably locked himself out of his own car

"Aw shit."

All four look at each other.

"Anybody show a badge to this guy."

They shake their heads. And then, they run away.

8 Scene with McArdle, his kids, his ex-wife. A sense of how truncated his life has become and further, a sense of why losing himself in the job would hold such appeal.

9. Daniels, Greggs and McArdle meet in the wake of the raids, which fooled many, but not the Judge or the Police Commissioner. Both are inquiring about whether or not they are any closer to an arrest on Barksdale

McArdle resists the I-told-you-so

Daniels suggests they go back and review all the old homicide folders -- the ones in McArdle's memo. Maybe there's a way into this guy through one of the old murders

As the meeting breaks up, Daniels pulls McArdle aside, thanks him for his restraint, acknowledges that Barksdale is a heavier player and that more work will be required. But not, he says pointedly, a wiretap

McArdle shrugs. He's willing to let the string play out.

10. They review the folders, look for connections to the organization that they now know a little something about. Greggs makes a connection from something said by a witness in a statement that is buried in the file of a three-year-old drug murder. Something about Barksdale's girl having been killed out in the county.

They work back to that witness and connect it to the murder of a Charlene Parham, shot in her garden apartment. Never solved. Detective assigned was Santangelo, the useless fuck who is the captain's earpiece on the detail.

Santangelo remembers the case, yeah. She's shot in her robe in the early morning hours. Someone who had access because no forced entry.

"You recover a bullet?" asks McArdle. He's thinking maybe the bullet will match to some of the other murders in which the Barksdale crew is suspected. No bullet. It was something big, a .45, and it went through the girl and out through the window of the sliding glass door. Santangelo: "She had woods and undergrowth behind her apartment complex so we never recovered a spent slug."

"What about a casing?" asks McArdle.

"Casing?"

"You said it was a four-five. You musta found a casing in the room."

"Shit, I don't remember. We never pulled up a suspect, so, you know, I don't remember all that much about the case."

McArdle nods. Santangelo was never much of a detective.

11. McArdle reviews Santangelo's casefile. There isn't much, but one of the victim's girlfriends had been living with her six months prior and there wasn't anything in her statement about the victim's personal life. Obviously, she could be pressed.

12. Greggs and McArdle locate the girlfriend, who tells them all about Barksdale, about the relationship, the falling out, Parham's threats to go to the police. Most important, she says she was on the phone with the victim at about two in the morning the night she got killed. She told her she'd call back because Angelo was there.

"Angelo?"

He was one of Barksdale's people. He used to bring her coke and run errands for Barksdale. Things like that.

Angelo. McArdle knows only D'Angelo, Barksdale's weak-ass nephew.

Intrigued, McArdle and Gregg revisit the apartment -- now rented to someone else -- taking with them the crime scene photos. Walking the ground, McArdle notices that the trajectory for the bullet striking Parham in the chest and then going out the window is all wrong.

"He shot her from outside."

"What?" Greggs is good, but no death investigator.

"She went to the window and they shot her through the window."

McArdle goes to the opposite wall, checking the wallboard paint and repairs. Down near the baseboard, he finds an abraded area, pulls a pen knife and begins to dig into the drywall. He

finds, first, a repaired hole, and second, a spent .45 caliber slug

"Fucking Santangelo. He fucked this all up."

Outside, fifteen feet from the sliding doors, he finds the rusting casing, also .45 caliber Great, so we've got a bullet, says Greggs So what? No gun, no suspect.

McArdle shrugs. You never know about these things.

13. McArdle meets with Daniels, tells him about the Parham murder and most especially, how D'Angelo Barksdale's name surfaced again. This kid beat one murder in court, may have had something to do with a witness in that case getting set up or killed, and may have been in on the Parham killing.

"So he's one of Barksdale's shooters. So what?"

That's the thing When McArdle and Bunk went at D'Angelo in the interrogation room, he seemed soft. Like he was trying to carry more weight than he could. Maybe this kid's a weak link. Maybe he's in the life only because he's related to Barksdale.

14 Daniels and Sydnor go to visit the Western District drug enforcement unit. They ask for special pressure on D'Angelo and the low-rises. See if they can get the kid riled or scared. DEU sergeant takes the photo and info, says he'll try.

15 Herc at the gym, talking pro wrestling with pals He believes in the shit. Seriously. We follow him as he sells some steroids to a gym acquaintance.

16. D'Angelo and his crew are now clearly being marked by a surveillance team Three young black guys. Cool, calm, professional. We presume they are the Western DEU boys, put out there by Daniels and Sydnor They are being watched by people who are chronicling their whole distribution process.

The dialogue from these guys is cop-like, restrained. But a bit more street, and a bit off from what we've heard from our regular cops.

Meanwhile, Bodie, still battered and bruised from getting wailed by the cops, returns to work. "Ain't you locked up?" D'Angelo asks him

"They sent me to Boy's Village," he tells him

"So why ain't you in Boy's Village."

"I walked away."

"You walked away?"

"Way back from breakfast. I walked past my cottage and down to the fence Climbed over, went down to the road and started walkin' "

Even the other boys are now impressed Silent It's like a contest between D'Angelo and this prodigy

D'Angelo "You sayin' you walked all the way back from P G County "

"Naw, motherfucker I drove back from P.G "

D'Angelo looks at him Bodie goes into his pocket and pulls out the keys to a Nissan Maxima. Tosses them at D'Angelo, who lets them fall to the pavement.

"Shit be parked around the corner."

The boys all crack up D'Angelo and Bodie share a look
Pull back to reveal our mystery surveillance team watching this interchange.

17. Bored with all this arcane investigation effort, Herc and Carver decide to take things into their own hands. They take Bubbles out on their own, drive over to the State's Attorney's office and convince a junior prosecutor that they are authorized to wire him up Bubbles himself is dubious, but they assure him that Greggs knows what they're doing and that he won't have to testify to anything in court.

18 Taking Bubbles into the projects, they actually use him to make a strong connection so that Carver is able to buy from a Barksdale organization dealer of greater stature than anyone arrested in the earlier raids, for felony weight. Not wanting to risk their buy money, they bust the guy right away -- an unfortunate thing. Now, it's likely that the guy will suspect Bubbles of setting him up. Especially if Bubbles has to be identified as the confidential informant. Bubbles, of course, can't see any of that now He just wants to be paid for the day's effort. The usual going rate of \$50. You get your money from Greggs they tell him.

19. Carver, Herc and Bubbles return triumphant. They've made a good case -- even McArdle has to say so. With felony weight over someone high up in the organization -- someone, who, it turns out, is already backing up ten years on an earlier parole -- they have a shot at rolling someone up the hill.

20. The boys staking out D'Angelo's crew were not the DEU. It is a stick-up crew and they take down everyone in D'Angelo's little confederation, getting the equivalent of \$8,000 in coke and \$16,000 in cash by hitting the crew right at the re-up. The stickup is so smooth that until they're all against the wall, D'Angelo's confederation thinks its the police. The only hitch is that the youngest of the three stickup boys uses the name of a confederate: "Omar "

21 Bubbles on the street gets the tag on the stickup car. He calls Greggs. Gives her the plate number, then asks when he gets paid for making that buy?

What the fuck are you talking about? He tells her about Herc and Carver and how she's supposed to pay him.

Greggs calls communications from home, puts out teletype. Car is spotted in Carroll Park abandoned Stolen hours earlier. Plates were stolen on the east side. McArdle gets there first, calls for a crime lab. Bored lab tech shows up, argues about pulling latents off a stolen car.

"We don't do unauthorized use It's not even a felony "

McArdle goes off "Dust this fucking car."

22. Greggs into the office late, finds Herc. Verbally, and almost physically, beats the shit out of him for using her informant that way He's not going to testify. It's not going to court. You fucked up.

Herc "We did good It was a good buy."

"You're gonna get him killed "

"He's a mope. Fuck it and fuck you."

McArdle arrives, catches the end of it. Talks with Greggs, who is now wholly in his corner. The deadwood in this investigation, she tells him, they got to go.

McArdle tells her about the car. They pulled a bunch of prints, just in case. Nothing else to do on it except to be impressed that someone had the balls to rob one of Barksdale's project crews.

23. Stringy berates D'Angelo for losing \$24,000 to a stick-up crew. His uncle, he tells him, has been humiliated. D'Angelo will have to make it up \$3,000 a week for 8 weeks. D'Angelo complains: "I'm only netting seven a week down here."

"And that's another thing .."

Worse still, D'Angelo can give his superior no good info on who robbed them.

24. D'Angelo back out the next morning, weary but ready to start selling. Instead, the Western District DEU is all over the low-rises. The sergeant sidles up to him.

"Shop's closed today."

D'Angelo says nothing.

"What did you do?" the sergeant asks him.

"I didn't do nothing."

"You pissed someone off downtown. They're asking for you by name."

D'Angelo freaked. Who's asking about him downtown?

25. Greggs with prosecutor, gets Bubbles' buy case killed. We get a sense of how much she actually cares for the old informant. Bubbles, thanking her profusely now that he realizes he would have had to testify in open court, politely mentions that he still hasn't been paid.

"I can't pay for a buy that won't go to court. Department regs."

Bubbles nods, not quite understanding.

Greggs stops, disgusted with herself. She goes into her own wallet. Pulls out a twenty.

26. Stringy makes the rounds of the low-rises, sizing up business.

Asks D'Angelo. "Any sign of that stickup crew."

"Naw. They must not be from 'round the way."

Stringy looks at him sharply.

Bodie, the young up-and-comer in Angelo's group, tells Stringy about the stickup boy using the name Omar. D'Angelo readily agrees, remembering.

"Why you ain't say shit about Omar before?"

"Forgot."

Stringy looks at Bodie, then back at D'Angelo.

27. Western DEU bum-rushes the low-rises, jacks everyone up but gets little. Sergeant again smiles at D'Angelo, as D'Angelo, clean, is cut loose.

"What?"

"You da man."

28. D'Angelo at home. We get a sense of what he cares about. His elderly grandmother raising two small great grandchildren, abandoned by D'Angelo's sister. D'Angelo's room has a few remaining vestiges of adolescence, but mostly sports gear, clothes, and a collection of the most expensive footwear in West Baltimore. Thirty or forty new pairs of athletic shoes, Timberlands, Italian loafers, Australian boots, all lovingly arrayed.

D'Angelo's grandmother calls him into the kitchen, asks for help with the BG&E bill. He dutifully gives her eighty. She asks how the job is going "Fine "

She asks more questions. It becomes clear she thinks he works construction.

D'Angelo lies as best he can, retreats to the small safety of his room.

END EPISODE 103

EPISODE 104

1. McArdle, Greggs and Sydnor on a daytime surveillance. McArdle, being white, is in the back of the surveillance van. They watch as Stringy Bell makes the rounds of the high-rises. Lookouts and touts deferring. Bell meeting and greeting, but of course, never going near the drugs. McArdle talking about how professional these guys are

2. Cut to Bell, talking to one tall, lanky kid -- obviously an athlete -- greeting him like he's something special. But the talk isn't about drugs, it's about basketball. And this kid, Damien Trellis, is the star on Barksdale's sponsored league for the high-rise projects. Bell is asking him if he's ready for Saturday. Damien, who doesn't have the grades for junior college, and is grateful to be playing any kind of organized ball, says he's ready. He'll be at practice that afternoon. Reed is interrupted as his pager goes off. He goes immediately toward a payphone, even though he has a cellphone on him.

3. Cut back to the surveillance van. Look at that: He gets a page, and because it's probably drug-related, he doesn't even use his cellphone. He goes to the corner pay phone. Fucking aces, these guys are. Greggs: I'd like to know who he's talking to. McArdle and her share a look

4. McArdle and Greggs in the office late at night, typing and collating their probable cause. They're going to get a subpoena for pagers and then clone those pagers that are being used by Bell, Barksdale and others. They won't be able to listen to conversations, but they'll be able to know who is talking to who. McArdle explains what might be gained and Greggs, smart as ever, sees it.

"We need to tell Daniels."

McArdle shakes his head. Cloning the beepers will get them the numbers of phones -- maybe even pay phones, if these guys are that careful -- that can be wiretapped. And Daniels has said all along that he wants no part of a wiretap. "We tell him and he shuts it down."

Greggs: "We don't tell him and it's my ass. I work in narcotics, remember?"

McArdle looks at her, leans back in his chair

"I'm just saying the man's my boss."

"Do you want this case? Or not?"

She looks at him, beaten. She will keep the secret for the time being.

5. Daniels and a C.I.D. IRS investigator, going through land records, assessment filings, tax info. Corporation names -- at least three of them -- are tied to Barksdale. They've bought up at least \$15 million in westside real estate, some of it in areas slated for redevelopment. They run a towing company with a AAA-contract. Orlando's and two other nightclubs. A funeral home. A construction company. Even a charitable 501c3 that runs a recreation program in the westside projects. And matching those corporations to the campaign finance reports that Greggs and McArdle pulled from Annapolis, it's clear that the Barksdale crew is a major backer of the mayor's reelection campaign. Everyone from corporation officers to Barksdale's ten-year-old

niece is giving the reelection effort the maximum \$2,000 contribution. At least fifty thousand in the last two months alone.

But Barksdale is careful to draw only a modest salary as an officer. The rest of the money is carefully shielded, and the IRS man explains that without getting into the books of these companies, there's no way to prove that the money is laundered drug funds. "You make a case, we get the money. You don't, we can't touch any of this."

On Daniels, brooding.

6. Basketball practice.

Barksdale himself comes down to the courts to watch his team work out. Trellis, the new ringer, is tearing up the court. He's the last piece in a point of pride for Barksdale, who's team has been beaten every year by that of a rival westside dealer, Doughboy, who runs the corners in Edmondson Village. This year, though, will be different.

Barksdale delighted, tells Bell that this is their year in the westside rec leagues.

A middle-aged woman, world weary comes up to him with a hardluck tale. Barksdale knows her from the project and they commiserate over her family problems. She's down so long that BG&E is looking to cut her off for non-payment. Barksdale goes into his own pocket, gives her \$500 and embraces her.

Robin Hood. And the project world notices.

7. Subpoenas served on the pager companies.

From Bubbles and other informants, they have the numbers for two pagers of mid-level project dealers. They start with those and get cloned pagers, so that every time those two dealers get paged, the beepers that the cops are holding go off and display the same numbers. Gregg carries one pager on her hip, McArdle the other. Montage as they monitor the traffic and record the phone numbers. When they get a lot of traffic from a particular number, they note it and serve another subpoena to find out where that phone is and who is being called from that phone. When they see calls to an unknown number on a pager company exchange, they, in turn, serve another subpoena and clone another pager. Soon, they're each holding a half dozen pagers, monitoring the traffic. They have beeper logs, flow charts, numbers out the ass.

"We're looking over the lip of the cup," McArdle says hopefully.

The crew uses the beepers and then, for drug-related calls off the pages, certain pay phones. But which beeper belongs to Stringy Bell. And which to Barksdale? They only know the two beepers that Bubbles gave them -- for the original two dealers. Everything else is a guess.

8. Daniels to see the Deputy.

Tells him how much money is moving through Barksdale.

Deputy indifferent. Mention of the political connections. Deputy angry.

"What the fuck does that have to do with anything?"

Daniels defensive. "It's part of the investigation, sir."

Deputy loses his temper for the first time. Drug arrests. Buy-bust. Buy-bust. Dope on the table for the television cameras. He berates Daniels for losing sight of the mission.

Daniels apologizes. leaves chastened.

9 Basketball game, Barksdale, Doughboy, Bell and other westside players all on the courts for the challenge. Barksdale hides his ringer until all the available money seems to have been bet. Barksdale's squad jumps out to a fat lead. Even Doughboy is impressed on being introduced to Trellis for the first time.

Barksdale smug.

10. Cut to surveillance van, parked a block away from the courts. Greggs and Sydnor watching through binoculars. In the back, McArdle on a cellphone begins dialing the mystery pager numbers. No, no, no. Yes -- a Bell lieutenant reaches for his hip. They've matched a beeper to a player. Another hit -- this time on our boy D'Angelo, who reaches for his pager after McArdle has dialed the number. And finally, Stringy Bell checks his pager, looking curiously at a page in which no return number is entered. They're onto Bell's pager. It's the first step into a wiretap.

11. Back to the game. Barksdale sublime.

Doughboy walks over, compliments him on his ringer. Not your year, Barksdale tells him. Seems to be, Doughboy agrees, but you never know. Sheeet, says Barksdale, looking at a twelve point lead. Doughboy offers to go double or nothing, noting that it's still only the first half. Barksdale nods. Doughboy walks away, nodding to his own team's coach. A short, stubby kid -- Spud Webb all over again -- pulls off his jersey and goes to sub in. Barksdale looks at Doughboy, who shrugs smiling.

All of 5-foot-5, the fresh sub begins tearing through Barksdale's team.

"Who the fuck is that?"

Stringy Bell wanders off, comes back with the answer.

"Demetrius Haskins. Kid from Philly who played two years at UNLV."

Barksdale looks over at Doughboy, and incredibly, manages to swallow his anger. He smiles, laughs even. Under his breath: "Thieving motherfucker." But to the world, at this point, all the self-control in the world.

12 Omar's young assistant, the kid who invoked the lead stickup boy's name when they took off D'Angelo's crew is banging on a video game in a subshop. Doesn't notice when two guys in sweatsuits enter, go to the plexiglass and order sandwiches. The two look over at the young kid, nod to each other and tighten the hoods on their sweatshirts to make an ID less likely. They walk up, pull semiautos and light the kid up. Then they walk out, leaving the Korean counterman terrified.

13 Greggs at home. Domestic scene with girlfriend.

Phone rings. Bubbles with the backstory on the fresh murder. It's out on the streets and all through the projects that Barksdale got one of the boys who robbed his crew.

Greggs and McArdle downtown to the crime scene. Talking with the homicide detectives who caught it. Perfect drug execution. They get the kid's name and go to the address on his sheet. Mother breaks down crying, gives them nothing. Greggs comforting her while McArdle works a stunned sister. She tells him where the kid was living.

14 Greggs and McArdle go to that door, knock again Omar's voice. Long delay in which Omar goes to an upstairs window, pulls back the drapes and assures himself it really is the police. He comes back out on the steps to talk, but locks the door behind him.

McArdle tells him the kid is dead Omar seems to react angrily for a second, then swallows his reaction Kid was a friend, but I don't know shit about shit.

"You mind taking a ride with us downtown. I mean, just to see if anything you know can help." Omar, reluctant but can't see any way not to.

15. Santangelo, the useless Homicide man stuck on the detail, creeps back to the Homicide captain Tells him that they're cloning pagers and serving subpoena on the phone company. Captain glad for the info.

"Daniels is going to wiretap on this?"

"Daniels doesn't know. McArdle wrote the subpoenas himself."

On the captain, seeing a get-even.

16. Omar in the Box with Greggs, McArdle and one of the detectives working the kid's murder. Now they've got Omar's sheet and it's ripe with handgun and armed robbery charges. You in on this thing?

"What?"

"Taking off one of Barksdale's crew in the low-rises."

Omar shakes off the accusation.

McArdle tells him they couldn't give a shit. At least someone's getting to Barksdale and his people. Omar grunts a half-laugh But if they came back on your boy...

Omar proud. I still don't know shit about shit, but if anyone hurt one of my peoples, it don't end there.

McArdle: Let's talk about this motherfucker Barksdale

Omar reluctant, with Omar talking about himself mostly. Omar is a lone wolf. He fears no one and plays by his own code They give it up now and then, I got no problems They come back at me, I handle that too.

A lab tech from Fingerprints shows up. Sure enough, they've got Omar's prints inside the car that was abandoned after the stuck up On the right passenger door and interior of the passenger door window.

Omar looks at him, shrugs.

"You gonna lock me, do it?"

For what: "Stolen car? That's chickenshit. I can't charge you with a robbery if I got no complainant? You think Barksdale's people are gonna complain cause someone fucked them up for a package?"

Omar laughs Greggs smiles. So does McArdle.

McArdle "You hungry? You must be hungry?"

On Omar, willing to talk.

17. Montage of Herc, Carver and Sydnor testifying in court as all the low-level players busted by

Sydnor's undercovers come to arraignment, plea or trial. Our female prosecutor is pushing to try to roll them, but it's clear that no one is going to roll back on Barksdale and Bell. Case after case becomes a court battleground as the most ragged project players are represented by the best attorneys money can buy

Montage culminates in a strategy session Daniels, McArdle, Greggs, Herc and Carver, the prosecutor -- All of that got us no higher than the street No one rolled.

McArdle "You can't buy-bust your way to Barksdale. You can't even get to Stringy Bell that way."

Daniels, fresh from his reaming by the deputy, goes off on McArdle. Storms out.

Prosecutor: "What the fuck is that all about?"

18 McArdle find Daniels at a cop bar, drinking.

Daniels, still angry, won't let him even buy a round.

McArdle: "What the fuck? I'm just trying to make this case."

Daniels says nothing

McArdle: "I mean, I don't know what else to do?"

Daniels, softening, reveals how much pressure he's under. How this case can't go to a wiretap.

"Why not?"

Daniels explains what McArdle should know. "You ever work a tap?"

"No."

Daniels tells a story about the one DEA tap he worked on years ago. How it went all over the place Prominent motherfuckers. Politicians. Connected people. Not so much the drugs, but the money The money goes everywhere You start listening in on what people in this city are really up to, you're fucked You don't want to know.

McArdle tries to be pollyanna. But Daniels, gently, tells him that he's going to wreck their careers You stirred this shit up and now there's no way out

McArdle and Daniels drinking at the bar, McArdle slowly beginning to sense what is at stake. He confesses to Daniels that he and Greggs have gone ahead with the cloned beepers.

Daniels at first angry, is curious, despite himself. What have they learned?

McArdle tells him that they're monitoring beeper communications all the way up to Stringy Bell

"You get a beeper number for Barksdale?"

"Not yet "

"You seen him with a beeper?"

"Yeah "

Daniels takes this in He sees where the case is going.

McArdle tells him he was wrong to go ahead without Daniels' approval He agrees that it's too dangerous without the department backing them up.

"We'll shut it down."

Daniels finishes his drink

"Not yet," he tells McArdle. "Fuck it. We'll figure a way around this."

19 Omar is in the surveillance van with McArdle, Greggs. Nighttime and he gives them the

full tour of everything he knows about the geography and terrain of the projects, who's who in the Barksdale organization. Some of it they know. But certain things, like the location of stash houses, they hadn't yet learned.

Omar, being a stickup artist who takes off dealers, knows so much.

McArdle thanks him, gives him a card with his number. Tells him to call if he hears anything or needs a favor.

"So we even know."

Yeah. The stolen car charge disappears

20 Daytime raids. Everyone is there to hit the stash houses ID'd by Omar

But just as they're assembling, the cloned Beeper for Stringy Bell goes off with the following code on it "1257-911-911" They're about to hit the house at 1257 Edmondson. Holy shit. Someone just tipped the Barksdale crew off to the raid. Omar? Or someone on the inside? Jesus Christ. McArdle, Daniels and Greggs race over to the house in time to see half a dozen people scatter out, all of them carrying green trash bags. Standing in the vestibule, fretful, is the same woman who took the \$500 from Barksdale, her house now a stash. Furious, the three police jump out and a chase ensues through the alleys. Daniels is winded and outdistanced by a kid half his age. McArdle plays cat-and-mouse with his and finds him in the basement of a vacant rowhouse, but no trash bag, nothing other than the kid himself.

"Why were you running?"

Kid says nothing.

"What was in the bag?"

"Ain't no bag."

Only Greggs catches her man dirty and he turns to fight her, if only to escape. We see that it is Trellis, the basketball ringer. They battle. She goes for a slapjack but Trellis knocks it away, knocks the shit out of her. He picks up a piece of pipe and flails at her, drawing blood from her head. On the ground, she pulls her gun and aims up. A moment of pause and recognition. The guy drops the pipe and starts backing out of the alley.

"I will shoot you and not think twice, motherfucker."

He keeps backing up and she racks the semiauto. He turns and runs. She puts the gun down, winded and bleeding.

21 University Hospital. Greggs being stitched. She has the green trash bag, seventeen ounces of raw and two pounds of mannitol. They definitely hit the stash house.

Daniels: "Can you ID the fucker who clocked you?"

Greggs: "Only for the rest of my natural life."

Daniels is angry

Greggs: "How did they know?"

No answers

"From the inside?"

Could it be? Someone in the department.

"Might be Omar."

"Why? Why would he give us the stash house and then tip them?"

"No reason "

"From the inside then."

They hate to believe it. But they have a leak

22 Deputy shows up at the hospital, solicitous about an injured officer. But she's okay. He commends her effort, pulls Daniels off to the side

Daniels is still pumped and angry. Deputy asks about the cloned beepers. He knows that its been done and wants to know why he wasn't informed. "I thought we had an understanding "

"I didn't think.. "

The Deputy interrupts: "Unless this was done without your knowledge or approval.. "

The Deputy Commissioner giving him the out All he has to do is give up McArdle and he can save himself. He looks at McArdle, tending to Greggs as she is stitched

"No sir, I authorized it."

Long silence Deputy says nothing, just stares at Daniels.

"There's no other way to make this case "

Deputy puts on his hat, walks away as if Daniels is dead to him He goes to thank Greggs and glad hands McArdle as well, then leaves

McArdle to Daniels: "What was that about?"

Daniels "Nothing No problem."

23 Greggs and McArdle at a late diner, eating, talking.

McArdle revealing how little he understands beyond the job His marriage. His kids. Admits to having a college degree. What in? Philosophy. She cracks up.

She's studying criminology to make rank Practical Connected

Philosophy? McArdle makes fun of himself. She is charmed.

24 D'Angelo and another mid-level player drive Trellis to the train station, putting him on a southbound departure for Carolina. Down there to lay low.

While waiting on the platform, Trellis talks about how all he wanted to do was play ball How he couldn't hack junior college and so when Barksdale offered to hook him up...

So why, D'Angelo asks him, did you come in on the other end? Working the stash isn't ballyard shit.

Trellis shrugs I didn't really decide to get in, you know?

D'Angelo looks at him.

"It's like, I just didn't decide not to "

Trellis gets on the train, leaves D'Angelo watches him go, thinking.

25 D'Angelo returns to the corner to find that Bodie has put a package out without his being there to supervise Presumptuous little fucker. And yet despite D'Angelo's absence, all is running smoothly

"Be cool," Bodie tells him. "Ain't no thing."

D'Angelo's pager goes off. He looks at the number, frowns

26 Orlando's strip joint. D'Angelo arrives, walks over to Bell who waves him away. D'Angelo

goes to the bar, shares a drink with the same near-sighted dancer, commiserating about how things are going. He runs at the mouth and she strokes him until Bell waves him over.

"We're going two shifts in the low-rises."

"Two?"

"Yeah. Two shifts, two packages. ."

"We ain't doing that kind of traffic."

"We could be."

D'Angelo shrugs

Bell: "Gonna give your boy Bodie the daytime. You come on at night."

The little shit is getting the better hours.

"Why I got the night shift?"

"The boy sharp but he still a boy. Can't give him the nighttime."

"So I gotta go out there til when."

"Til the package runs out."

D'Angelo looks at Bell. It's like a demotion.

Bell: "What? You want to cry to your uncle about this?"

"Naw. Didn't say that."

"Cause he the one told me."

Bell moves off and D'Angelo is alone, crestfallen. The dancer gives him a smile to no avail. D'Angelo tries to smile back, can't. The dancer nods to the bartender who sets D'Angelo up. On our winner, at the bar with his friend.

27 The low-rises Bodie acting like The Man, carrying it.

Up comes Omar, no hoody, no ski mask, willing to be known. Bodie looks around, surprised at the boldness of the play.

Omar pulls out a four-four, pistol-whips one boy and then points the weapon at Bodie.

Omar: "Y'all need some better lookouts."

Bodie: "Tell me 'bout it."

Omar: "Give it up."

Bodie nods to another kid, who throws Omar a couple bundle of vials.

Omar: "And the cash."

Bodie: "Naw."

Omar pistol whips Bodie, who is knocked to the group. Omar cocks the revolver. Bodie does nothing but look at the others in the crew, shake his head. Omar fires a shot that goes off the rowhouse wall directly by Bodie's head. The others race away. Omar cocks the gun again.

Bodie: "No cash. Just the vials."

Omar is impressed with the kid's heart.

"You tell your peoples that Omar say it's personal." He backs away. On Bodie, getting up slowly, tasting his blood. With Omar gone, his boys come racing back, one of them with a semiauto, late to the party.

"Where he at?"

Bodie looks at the kid with the gun. "You supposed to be lookin' out. You ain't shit, motherfucker."

On Bodie, his ego bruised, harrying his minions, cursing them, trying to instill some respect. For on the corner, good help is always hard to find As the shop opens again and vials are served to and fro ..

END EPISODE 104

EPISODE 105

1. Lester ambles into the squadroom with a transsexual, impeccably attired, striking in that hard, cross-dressed way. Half the detectives look up, incredulous. "What the fuck?"

Lester guides her to an interrogation room with a hand on his/her arm, as if a date. He is scrupulously gracious. As soon as the sound-proof door is closed, Herc and Carver and others begin to hoot and holler. They are taken by the show, and by the fact that Lester has brought such a creature past escorted, as if he/she's a woman.

"Lester, man. I don't know how to tell you this..."

Lester ignores them, gestures to McArdle, who follows him into the interrogation room, not even knowing why.

Lester begins chatting with the transsexual about his/her eyes, fashion, etc. Small talk and flattery. As if he/she is the most beautiful creature he's laid eyes on in a long while. He/she starts to eat this up. McArdle gets it. This creature knows something and Lester is doing all the right things to learn it.

From conversation, it's clear that Lester knows her and has used her for information in the past. The talk turns to the transsexual's line of business: She steals. Part of a crew that works the East Coast, doing bolt-and-runs from the most expensive clothing and jewelry shops in every city. Stealing only the designer stuff. Been operating for ten years, with the transsexuals keeping what they love or reselling what they don't. Most of the Baltimore gangster are tapped into them -- like players in half a dozen cities -- and get Pierre Cardin or Hugo Boss or whoever at rock bottom cash-only prices.

Charming as all out, Lester shows the transsexual the boxing sheet photo of Barksdale. She nods. A customer for the last four years. She goes through everything he's bought, what he likes, what he doesn't like, what he gets for his women...

"How do you get in touch with him when you got what he likes?"

He/she smiles, pulls out a little black phone book. Gives them Barksdale's pager number. Like that -- they have it. McArdle looks at Lester, amazed.

2. McArdle to Bunk, his old partner in homicide. All right, already -- who the fuck is Lester and where did he learn to do police work.

Bunk looks at him curiously.

"The guy is some half-dead mope from pawn shop unit, three years from a pension."

Bunk smiles.

"Or is he?"

Bunk tells Lester's story. How he was once in Homicide, back in the early eighties. One of the good ones. Good talker, good in the Box. Read a crime scene real well.

"What happened?"

Bunk tells him about a string of homosexual murders in '86. Four of 'em all connected to a predatory little crew of street hustlers. Case started to creep toward some public figures -- not as suspects, but as witnesses. One was a politically connected lawyer. Big, downtown firm.

Word came down not to present any case to the state's attorney that had this guy on a witness list Lester had a case, but only if everyone was willing to testify.

"So what did he do?"

"What do you think? You think guy's go into the pawn unit because they love 3-by-5 index cards?"

"He , at the murders down "

"Two of 'em Three convictions."

And then the department, who lost the support of the connected lawyer and his political patrons, sent Lester to one of the small circles of hell reserved for anyone who presumes that police work is some kind of justification. He sits there for fourteen years, reading his hobby magazines, until his sergeant is asked to give a man to McArdle's detail. And now, slowly, like Lazarus...

"I thought he was a hump "

Bunk shakes his head. "Best street detective I ever knew..."

3. The pager number from the he/she matches a number that floats through the beeper logs. Contacted most often by Stringy Bell, his chief lieutenant. But again, the pattern: Contacted by beeper -- even at home or at Orlando's club or anywhere else where a phone is handy -- they won't use the phones where they are. They go to pay phones to discuss their business

4. McArdle and Greggs go to prosecutor How do we wiretap a pay phone?

Problematic, she explains. First of all, you have to be able to show that a certain pay phone is used consistently by someone for something illegal. Then, if you have that much for the affidavit, you have to actually have the pay phone in sight and only activate the tap when you see the suspect in question using it. If you make the mistake of tapping other conversations by others using the phone, you invalidate the Title III.

Jesus Christ.

Prosecutor Are these guys really that good?

McArdle. Best I've seen.

5 Back to the beeper logs. Which pay phones are which guys always using? Some are easy to spot. But in others, the beeper logs show numbers that don't correspond to existing payphones, or any working phone numbers at all for that matter. They're using codes. Jesus Christ

6 Greggs and Sydnor on surveillance. They watch D'Angelo get a page, and they look down at their cloned beeper. The number is there. They watch D'Angelo go past a couple nearby pay phones to one two blocks away. He drops in a quarter and makes a call, hangs up. Sydnor gets out of the van and goes to the phone, checks the number. Sure enough, it's something different from what had been on D'Angelo's pager. Before they can get to tapping the pay phones, they have to break the beeper codes

7 Daniels at home, with wife, knowing he has fucked himself in the department. A heartfelt discussion about why he did it. She almost understands, and yet..

- 8 Omar and three new confederates hit one of Barksdale's stash houses. They get about \$40,000 in raw and humiliate the crew inside, taking their personal cash, jewelry, etc.
9. Quiet office while cops struggle to figure the codes. Some break easy. But the one used by Barksdale in his calls with Stringy seems to defy logic. It's Gregg who figures it out. The "5" code, with substitutions. She shows McArdle and Daniels. They're in.
- 10 McArdle typing a two-hundred page affidavit for taps on four key pay phones. Daniels reading after him. Has to acknowledge that this is the best police work he's ever been involved with. McArdle: What are you going to tell the Deputy? Daniels admits that the Deputy is no longer in communication with him.
11. Attempted ambush of Omar at his girlfriend's house. They've tracked him. But Omar fights and flees his way free. The house itself is near destroyed by the running gun battle. Girlfriend slightly wounded. Police arrive, uniforms mostly. No one knows anything, saw anything.
- 12 Gregg needed on unrelated narcotics case. White boy cocaine case out in Anne Arundel County. DEA undercover needs a black female police to pose as girlfriend of his informant. Has to be black female, because the white suspects are hunky and won't take the informant into anything good if he's accompanied by other guys. Daniels reluctantly gives her up for a week.
- 13 D'Angelo working the night shift. One of his younger kids comes up light. D'Angelo loses his temper. He's working bad hours, on a weak corner because everyone around him fucks up and he never does anything about it. Fuck it. Enough is enough. He calls Stringy. Gives the young kid up. After all, it's either the kid's bad count or it's D'Angelo's. And why should D'Angelo take the weight.
14. Gregg and the DEA informant meet the white boys, who are hilarious fuck-ups, but nervous and coked, just the same. The trick is to get these morons to bring them to their supplier for a buy-bust.
- 15 Bubbles comes into the office, looking for Gregg. Finds McArdle instead. Tells him about the war between Omar and Stringy's people. Tells them about the gunfight. McArdle checks the computer and finds the incident report. He goes to talk to girlfriend. Tells her to tell Omar to call him. Leaves his pager number.
- 16 McArdle and Daniels, and the prosecutor, carry their massive affidavit to a city judge, who reads it at his dining room table, impressed with the logic and methodology. Says so. Sure to sign off. Phone rings. It's for Daniels. The Deputy.
"No tap."
Daniels tries to argue. Deputy cuts him off. If that thing comes back with a signature on it, you are working a permanent midnight footpost in the southern reaches of Philadelphia.

Daniels looks at McArdle, shakes his head.

"You're shutting me .."

On Daniels, gathering up all the documents and apologizing to the confused judge

17. White boys, convinced, decide to take the informant and Greggs to their supplier. They drive into Baltimore city in the white boys' van. Greggs, at least glad to be back in her element.

18. Muscle comes down from the high-rises and D'Angelo gives up his wayward charge, who is maybe fifteen years old. D'Angelo thinks they'll just put the fear of god into him. Instead they begin beating the living shit out of the poor kid. D'Angelo is sickened -- at least until he gets some blood splatter on his Timberlands. He goes apeshit at that and his focus changes from the victim to the victimizers, who have just ruined his \$250 boots.

19 White boys pull up at Orlando's Head inside. Greggs knows that she's been made for police by some of the people in Barksdale's world, but shit, there's nothing to do now but play out the string. Inside Orlando's, it's mostly empty of gangsters, except for D'Angelo and his near-sighted dancer friend, who is telling him how blood won't come out of leather. D'Angelo scrubbing the boot nonetheless, oblivious. Greggs knows that she encountered D'Angelo to his face at least once: When McArdle had him downtown, going at him in the Box over the murdered murder-case witness. She moves to the other side of white boys, trying to move sideways through the scene.

White Boy: "Where's Charles?"

"Slim Charles?"

Yeah. A runner goes upstairs to the offices.

The fattest human being possible comes down the stairs, greets the white boys. Tells them to come on up. As they pass, D'Angelo looks up, sees Greggs, but shows no recognition.

20 Daniels and McArdle in the Deputy's office. Silence. Deputy slowly reading the affidavit. Page after page after page. Finally: "Not convincing."

McArdle nearly spit takes. Daniels holds him off.

"Sir," he begins. "You gave me this case. You told me the target was Barksdale..."

Deputy, angrily points to McArdle. No. He gave us this case. He told us the target was Barksdale.

McArdle, defensively, "A judge asked me. "

"And you answered, didn't you?"

"You want Barksdale. There's no other way than a tap. You don't want Barksdale, fine. Let us go home."

Deputy regains composure. Brings it back to the real reason for his opposition. You get up into people's private conversations and you don't know what you hear. Some things that are true. Some things that aren't. Some things you wish you never heard.

McArdle "We're not interested in the money."

Deputy and Daniels share a look. McArdle being direct: "The political money. The contributions to Dawkins and the mayor and all that. We don't give a shit. We're trying to make

a case against a drug dealer who's killing people. You want us to look the other way on the money, we'll do that."

Deputy shakes his head. It's not what I want, he tells them. It's what's good for the department, for the city. Dawkins runs appropriations out of Annapolis. He has the mayor's ear. This department, poor as it is, survives by the goodwill of its political patrons.

McArdle: "Couldn't agree more. We let the money lie."

He's trying to strike a deal. Deputy thinks for a moment, shakes his head again. Suppose the money comes up on the tapes. Suppose it gets talked about. Suppose someone connected to Dawkins is caught on the tap talking shut. Then what?

"We erase it."

And if it's in the middle of the conversations you need. If out of one side of his mouth Barksdale implicates himself in the drug conspiracy, then mentions Dawkins out of the other? And even if you want to keep that out of court, even if you don't use it in court -- all the tapes are going to go to defense lawyers for discovery. All of them No. It can't be done.

Find some other way, the Deputy tells them. No wiretaps. No electronic surveillance. Buy-bust. Roll people up. That kind of thing

McArdle makes an impassioned argument. Explaining that Barksdale is too insulated. That his people won't collapse like that. You want him, you give us the tools we need. You don't want him, say so. Almost impertinent.

Deputy holds his temper, but doesn't yield. Find another way

21. Daniels and McArdle leave. McArdle follows Daniels into bathroom, where Daniels vomits His career, his life's effort hanging by a thread McArdle only angry. Daniels walks away, wants nothing to do with him. He can't even believe McArdle has the balls to talk like that in front of the Deputy Commissioner

"You're dead to me," he tells McArdle. "Get the fuck away from me."

22 DEA surveillance van. They're monitoring drug conversation between Slim Charles, two of Charles' confederates, the white boys, their informant and Greggs on the upper floor of the nightclub. The wire is on the informant's chest. There's no dope on the table Not at Orlando's. But price is being negotiated. It sounds good, a go.

23. McArdle's pager rings Omar calling. He calls back, agrees to meet.

24 The group files back downstairs This time, D'Angelo spots Greggs, spit-takes He calls Charles over, whispers to him. Greggs sees this, but still she stays with the front. She doesn't want to fuck the case until she's sure it is about her Charles plays it perfectly, laughs as if D'Angelo told him a joke They all head for the door, until at the last minute, Charles tells the white boys, "My car round back I'll meet you down the way "

White boys and DEA informant look at him, confused

"Where we said. You know The place from before Ten minutes. And she gonna ride with me, you know, 'cause she prettier than you "

They laugh, leave. Greggs doesn't know what to do Neither does the informant

25. Outside, DEA surveillance team sees their informant come out without Greggs. What do they do They fucked up. Brought no backup vehicle. They thought the deal was gonna go down at the first location. DEA Agent gets on the radio, starts to call for a backup unit. Too late. Fuck it. Follow the white boys. Everyone is going to same place anyway. Two agents jump out, wait for the second vehicle to arrive. The van pulls off.

26 Inside the club, Greggs is back upstairs, being beaten, stripped in the search for a microphone She tells them the DEA is outside watching. They believe her and consequently drag her to a door on the side of the club that opens into a storage area, through the storage area to a door that opens into the next building on the block, a vacant. And from there, out the back alley halfway down the block.

Charles and his two muscle boys freaked. What the fuck we gonna do? She's a cop. What the fuck? Jesus Christ. One of them, half-sane: "Charles, man We can't do her. She a cop."

Greggs reaches down, pulls a lockblade from an ankle holder. The only backup she could conceal She stabs one of the three, slices Charles in the arm, but the third punches her hard, blind-side and grabs the arm Greggs screams loudly enough that the DEA man on foot hears it, turns and looks into the darkness a block away But no, she's still inside. He stands there, watching the club, useless

27 Daniels at home. Call from DEA supervisor.

It's a clusterfuck Deal didn't go down. Informant and Greggs got separated. Where is she? Can't find her What? We thought she was still in the club. After an hour, when they realized no deal was going down, they kicked the door in. No one. Not the girl. Just customers and dancers Daniels getting dressed, upset. He pauses to call McArdle, who wakes up as well

28 Orlando's. No one there, but some customers, some dancers, a few employees All of them detained and being debriefed by DEA. No one knows shit McArdle arrives, as does Daniels. Angry. Where is she? How did she lose her backup? DEA supervisor defensive.

McArdle notices the near-sighted dancer, more freaked than she should be. He pulls her to the side and she insists she knows nothing That she was just sitting and talking with a guy and people were coming in and out. Name the guy: "Angelo "

McArdle winces, describes D'Angelo "You know him?"

Shit. She was definitely made. Daniels drags the dancer upstairs to the room where the deal was going down Nothing. Where else could they go? Back door? No. It's bolted. And she never left through the front "That's the only way I know "

Storage door: "What's here?"

"That's where they keep the beer."

They force the door, draw guns, step through Struggle past cases of beer and wine and other crap Moving about half a block through the storage space to find the door on the other side, a jar. They move through, exiting in the side alley, where McArdle notices the blood spray, as if something caught an artery He finds first the muscle stabbed by Greggs, then Greggs

herself. Both dead

Daniels breaks down. McArdle slumps against the alley wall.

END OF EPISODE 105

EPISODE 106

1. Funeral for Greggs Full departmental honors. The mayor, the Police Commissioner -- a political figurehead -- and the Deputy, all paying respects. Daniels, McArdle stricken. A brief moment of awkwardness when the city officials and department brass don't quite know how to handle the presence of Gregg's partner. When they start to balk, McArdle, offended, escorts her behind the coffin.
2. Door of D'Angelo's mother's house comes crashing in. All the police in the world on him. The rage that follows the death of a cop D'Angelo dragged out to an unmarked car as his mother screams.
3. Other doors come crashing in: The search for Orlando, Stringy Bell, anyone else with anything to do with that nightclub Herc, Carver and the other hotheads are in their element here. They are actually useful in their brutality All bodies being hauled into Homicide unit, including the near-sighted dancer and every other employee Montage of detectives sorting through witnesses and statements, culminating in McArdle and Bunk, going at D'Angelo, who asks for a lawyer. McArdle punches that idea out of him while Bunk goes for a cigarette.
4. Bunk in the hallway learns from a sergeant that Slim Charles is at a hospital outside of Washington with a bad cut on his forearm, claiming that he got it in an argument at a card-game Prince George's County police are holding him there for questioning
5. Bunk goes back to McArdle, who is now pouring a soda for D'Angelo, comforting him Good cop and bad cop all in the same one-man session. Bunk sits, waits Slowly, D'Angelo acknowledges only that he recognized Greggs as a cop and that he said something to the people at the bar. Who was at the bar? He hesitates. They ask about Bell and Barksdale No, no Not them. The shit that went bad had nothing to do with them They don't want to believe him, but he insists. Slim Charles, he says. Slim Charles had his own thing going that night. He works his own packages and Orlando lets him hang at the club because they're old rap buddies Check it out, he tells the detectives, Orlando did a couple years at Hagerstown with that fat motherfucker. They rap buddies.
- 6 Bunk and McArdle exit, consult with Daniels. Bunk leaves with Santangelo to go take Slim Charles into custody McArdle tells Daniels that he doesn't believe D'Angelo, that it goes past Slim Charles to Bell and Barksdale
7. Bunk and Santangelo at the hospital with Slim Charles and Charles' other muscle The two are cuffed, arrested. A nurse objects that Charles' is still under treatment. Santangelo points to the other beefy cop "That's Dr. Bunk He's a specialist " They drag the two back to Baltimore
8. Stringy Bell comes down to Homicide voluntarily, accompanied by the same lawyers who represented D'Angelo in the murder case earlier. They do all the talking, telling the prosecutor

on duty that they want to help in this investigation, provided they can speak frankly at an off-the-record proffer session. Prosecutor agrees. Daniels and McArdle sit in. Having not been given a Miranda, Bell speaks openly. This had nothing to do with him or Barksdale or even Orlando, except for the fact that Orlando let Charles hang at the club. Charles was working a separate package and he fucked himself on this. Bell gives up the names of Charles confederates, promises that if employees or patrons at Orlando's aren't cooperating and ID'ing the rightful suspects, they soon will. Ain't nobody I do business with stupid enough to kill a police. And if they are stupid enough, I got no use for 'em

9 Hallway outside McArdle reluctantly having to acknowledge that maybe this was a rogue drug deal gone bad. No one -- not the white boys, not the DEA informant, not anyone at the club can put Bell or Barksdale or anyone other than D'Angelo in the club. But, points out Daniels, notice that these guys are willing to send Slim Charles -- a major player in his own right -- over. That shows how big they are; that they can do something like that and get everyone to fall in line behind them.

10. McArdle goes into interrogation room where Sydnor and Bunk are taking a statement from the near-sighted dancer, who is very upset. But she confirms that D'Angelo wasn't really interacting with Slim Charles or the white boys. He was in the club buying her drinks and fretting about his boots. What's with the boots.

There was blood on them. McArdle and Bunk share a look. McArdle goes into another interrogation room and looks down at D'Angelo's footwear. He yanks the boots off and has them sent down to the lab to make sure the blood isn't Greggs.

11. The dancer, her statement finished, is deposited at Lester's desk. He sits as well and, having a moment of peace, pulls out one of his hobby mags. She notices the mag, and a tiny kitchenette and divan that he has on his desk and makes polite conversation. She had a dollhouse when she was little. But not anything as nice as that. Lester looks up, smiles. A connection

12. Leuco test on the boots. It's blood. Lab tech runs it through further tests for blood type.

13 McArdle goes back upstairs. Jumps on D'Angelo's shit. His boots are downstairs, getting tested. He better be telling the truth. I am, insists D'Angelo. I wouldn't have even said she was police if I thought they was gonna do anything crazy. No? Swear, he tells McArdle. I don't like violence. I'm a peaceful cat.

McArdle works on this. Talks about how D'Angelo did the one murder that he beat earlier this year in court. Talks about how the witness in that case was then murdered even though he backed up on his grand jury testimony in court. And -- here's the surprise -- he tells D'Angelo he knows all about his role in the murder of the Parham woman -- Barksdale's girlfriend -- years earlier. And from having worked back on the crime scene with Greggs that day, he gives a near perfect account of it all. The lure to the patio glass doors, the gunshot through the glass. Forty-five caliber. One shot to the head. We watch as D'Angelo sits stunned. As if they already have him.

McArdle talks about the bodies. How many bodies are landing all around D'Angelo. If you're such a peaceful cat, why are all these bodies here?

D'Angelo cracks. It's confession time.

14. Bunk returns, dumps Slim Charles and his confederate into separate interrogation rooms and is told that the case against these two is already strong. He finds McArdle, sympathetic with a grieving wounded D'Angelo, who is talking. Bunk sits slowly, pulls out pen and paper, starts writing.

D'Angelo pleads self-defense on the murder earlier this year. He was in the high-rises, working for his uncle, selling out of the 221 building, and this guy kept robbing him. Barksdale gave him the gun, told him to take care of business. He pulls it on the guy, tells him to get the fuck away. But the stickup boy just laughs at him, takes a step toward him. He fires twice and the guy falls. He was terrified.

Second murder? The witness? He doesn't know anything about it. But Bell and his uncle were involved. How do you know? I just know. Did they give you any details? No. It didn't make sense. The case was over. The guy even backed up. But it was like they wanted to send a message, that he shouldn't have even been talking in the first place.

Who was there when Parham got shot?

Stringy Bell did that one himself. Didn't even tell D'Angelo he was gonna do that. Just told D'Angelo to tap on the glass and get Parham to come close.

What did you think was gonna happen?

I didn't think about it. I really didn't.

Who else was there? No one. D'Angelo again pleads that he never wanted to kill anyone, that except for the stickup boy in the projects, who terrified him, he never has. He is utterly believable.

Who's blood is on your shoes.

D'Angelo tells them about the beating of the kid who had a short count. How he didn't even want to give the kid up, but had to because the short count would have come back on him.

Bunk and McArdle exit, confer with Daniels and prosecutor. Lab tech comes up and confirms that the blood isn't Greggs, as D'Angelo claimed. It's great stuff. A good break in the case. But there is no murder they can charge to Bell or Barksdale. The kid has only hearsay and no corroboration. No physical evidence, no weapon to link Barksdale and Bell.

What to do? Get him grand juried and on the record. Then, maybe, wire him up. But, adds Daniels, we do it secretly. No reports. No talk in the squad room. They have a leak somewhere. Remember the beeper warnings on the morning of the search-and-seizure raids. D'Angelo's status stays within a small circle of knowledge.

15. Press conference announcing arrests in the death of Officer Greggs. Slim Charles and his confederate only. Additional arrests expected? No, says the Deputy, all relevant suspects are in custody. The case is down.

16. Deputy meets with Daniels, commends the work in the wake of Greggs' death. A good, strong case against two copkillers. Daniels nods, still wary of the Deputy.

Deputy shows no hostility, however. Instead, he laments the loss of Greggs and, that the drug war isn't worth the cost. A fine young woman killed. And for what? It just goes on.

Daniels has to agree with that much.

Deputy says it gently, but with meaning: You believe too much in fixing the world, the world fixes you. Daniels nods.

Deputy comes around to the Barksdale probe. Anything new? No sir. The beeper logs are sufficient probable cause for a Title III wiretap, but seeing as the department doesn't want to go there, we have no other way in. He purposely doesn't mention D'Angelo's status.

Well, says the Deputy blandly, do your best.

Daniels gets up, asks again if a wiretap is completely out of the question. Talk to me after the election, says the Deputy. So it really is about the drug money going into the political arena. Deputy looks at him pointedly.

"Sir, respectfully, I have to say that we can't make this case with one hand behind our back."

"Some cases aren't meant to be made, I guess."

"What about the judge?"

"I haven't heard from Judge Watkins in weeks. Have you?"

17. Daniels and McArdle at the judge's home. Meeting with him privately. Judge is gracious, listens to what they tell him about the Deputy thwarting the probe.

And what happens to you both when I bring this up? Daniels admits he doesn't even want to think about it. But without some external pressure the case dies.

And with more pressure, you two get your throats cut.

Judge lays it out. If the reluctance stems from the election money coming from drug organizations, he can't very well go to the mayor or Dawkins or anyone else in the political realm. The Deputy is doing their bidding.

"You could threaten to go public. Say you have sources telling you of possible corruption, obstructing of a narcotics investigation."

But, the judge points out, if he names names, Barksdale and Bell will be alerted in any event and a wiretap will be useless when their whole organization is in a crouch. And if he doesn't cite chapter and verse, he's just a crank judge who doesn't know what he's talking about.

"You're telling us to quit."

"I'm telling you it's bigger than the three of us."

And, he says, I'll be frank. Even Circuit Court judges have to stand for election. My seat on the bench is up in five years. I may not be taking any drug money for my war chest, but I'm not looking forward to standing for reelection with the mayor, Dawkins and the police department against me.

Daniels and McArdle look at each other. They no longer even have the remnant of a political patron.

18. Herc, Carver and Santangelo hanging around office. They notice that D'Angelo walks through with Daniels and McArdle.

Santangelo "What's he doing here?"

"Full statement for the Greggs case."

They exit.

Carver to Santangelo: "I thought they got a full statement from that mope the other night."

19 Lester and his new dancer friend. He shows her his doll-house. Fixes her a tuna sandwich. Nothing sexual, just a little reaching out. He's turning her into an informant.

20. Omar and McArdle meet. Omar's relationship with the young kid who got killed behind the robbery is sussed out. We get a sense that Omar and the kid were lovers. That Omar is taking Barksdale's comeback on the kid very personal. McArdle plays on that, talking about Greggs murder. A shared sense of outrage between them.

McArdle: "How long you been sticking up dealers?"

Omar: Twelve years off and on.

McArdle: "Not the easiest work."

Omar: "Easier than you think. Most just write it off to a little spillage."

McArdle: "But some come back on you."

Omar: "Some. But they got to know I can always roll back on them."

McArdle: All about reputation, huh...

Omar: "Most definitely."

McArdle asks if Omar needs help. Omar shakes him off. He got sloppy the other night. Stayed put for a little too long. He'll be more careful where he lays his head for a while. McArdle tells him to call if he needs something. Omar responds in kind.

"If you workin' Barksdale, you lemme know what I can do. I'm sick of that motherfucker"

McArdle nods, leaves.

21 McArdle drives D'Angelo out to state police headquarters in Pikesville to have a trooper do a polygraph. Make sure the kid is telling the truth before they wire him up.

D'Angelo passes with flying colors.

On the way back, McArdle realizes he's late for his kid's soccer game. Has to go there with D'Angelo.

D'Angelo in the suburbs. Glimpses of a world he can never acquire. McArdle with his oldest kid. Ex-wife respectful since the kids are there and the moment bittersweet.

Driving back downtown with D'Angelo. A conversation about the boundaries of race and money. D'Angelo sad. McArdle, strangely, is sad for him.

22 Santangelo with the Homicide Captain, telling him he thinks that Daniels and McArdle have rolled D'Angelo. What are they going to do with him, asks the Captain. Wire him. Santangelo checked with ISD and found out that Daniels requisitioned a Kel recorder and body mike. For a buy-bust, according to the paperwork. But Sydnor's our main surveillance guy, and they haven't told him they got any buy-bust working. Captain pleased with his spy.

23. D'Angelo goes back down to the low-rises, discovers that Bodie, the boy wonder, has been running both shifts in his absence. Bodie greets him matter-of-factly, gives a report on how things are going.

Points down to D'Angelo's boots.

"You still wearing them shits? Motherfuckers all stained and shit."

A casual insult. D'Angelo looks down at the blood Bodie walks away indifferently.

24. Cut to surveillance van McArdle smiles at Daniels: You remember that kid? Boy we sent down to the Village and he walked away, right back in it slinging. Kid's hard as nails. We'll be chasing him in two years.

Daniels. "Shit Our careers ain't gonna last that long."

25. D'Angelo covers his shift until Bell and muscle pull up Order him into a car D'Angelo, nervous, goes and the car pulls off. Surveillance van tries to stay close, monitoring Bell asking about what the cops learned from him D'Angelo acknowledging that he gave Slim Charles up, that he had to. He's gonna have to testify that he ID'd the lady cop and started all the ruckus. Bell nods, agreeable Slim Charles got to go. That's all there is too it What else did they ask about? Nothing. Nothing? They wanted to know if you or my uncle was a part of it. I told 'em that wasn't the play They didn't ask about drugs or nothing like that.

26. Hard cut to Daniels, McArdle and the prosecutor Pearlman listening to the tape a day later in the State's Attorney's office He's in and they still trust him. But the tape doesn't offer anything evidentiary.

Pearlman: "He's got to get him talking about drugs or murders specifically."

They know They're just getting started.

27. Daniels back at office, called to Captain of Narcotics office. An empty suit who hasn't been heard from since the investigation began. Give him the name of the informant that they are wiring up

Daniels stunned. How in the hell does everything leak so fast? Daniels hems, haws Department regulations do not require an officer to name a CI unless the commander asking for such information has a legitimate need to know.

Captain agrees with him, says its awkward but this directive comes straight from the Deputy. Captain has been told to charge Daniels with insubordination and relieve him from duty if the name of the informant is not forthcoming

Daniels, trapped, gives up D'Angelo

28 D'Angelo again sent in to talk to Bell, but this time Bell acts as if he knows what's what Won't talk about drugs or murders. In fact, he acts as if he barely knows of such things or, for that matter, barely knows D'Angelo. What the fuck? McArdle tells Daniels that something's fucked Daniels tells McArdle he's right.

29 Daniels, Pearlman, McArdle meet at an out-of-the-way bar. There's nothing they can do inside their own department They're totally compromised. What can we do? Pearlman can't

help. Her bosses work for the city. The city belongs to the mayor, just like their department. McArdle convinces Daniels that the only thing they can do is go to the feds for help.

30 D'Angelo goes to his shift in the low-rises. Bodie, suddenly belligerent, kicks his ass, calls him a snitch. D'Angelo looks around for allies. But all his minions are now Bodie's crew. He stumbles home to find "snitch" and "whore" spray painted all over his mother's porch.

31. Daniels, McArdle lay it out for an FBI ASAC and the 1st Deputy U.S. Attorney. When they get to the part about the departmental interference and the political money tree, the feds get very interested. They look over the beeper logs. Good police work. Hell yes. They'll take this case to a Title III wire. Thank you very much.

32. Daniels and McArdle at a late night bar. Discussing what they've done. When it gets out they went back door on their department and the Deputy, they're done. Unless they can bring in a winner of a case. A high-profile thing like that could make them untouchable. Or not. Who knows? They're rightfully scared.

33, McArdle's pager goes off. He goes to meet D'Angelo, who is all alone, crying. What do I do now? McArdle has no answers. Where do I go? McArdle, feeling guilty, brings D'Angelo home to sleep on his sofa. On McArdle, the good shepherd, we end.

END OF EPISODE 106

EPISODE 107

1. U.S. Attorney's Office comes to see Police Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner. They want the Barksdale probe for a federal wiretap. Deputy senses immediately that he's being outmaneuvered.

2. Deputy to Daniels: You did this. Daniels doesn't deny it.

Deputy talks of having been betrayed. Daniels blows up finally, telling him he's tired of playing games. You stuck me with this case. You tied my hands and sent me out. What the fuck do you expect. Deputy: I trusted in your honor. I relied on it.

Daniels: You can rely on it now. You want to pull me off, do it. You want to transfer me to some midnight posting, do it. I don't give a shit. But don't ask me to turn my back on a case where a good police got killed. That's too fucked even for me.

Deputy broods on this. Finally, he asks, if I give you the tap, do we keep this case in house?

Why? We have a leak in the case already. He tells the deputy about the beeper warning before the raids, about D'Angelo being made useless as an informant.

Deputy acts surprised. Who do you think?

I have no fucking idea. Maybe you.

Deputy offended. Why not? You were in the loop. Anything we tried to do proactive on this case, it leaked. Why not you as the leak. Deputy tells him he'd never compromise an investigation.

No? No. Not one of these motherfuckers -- not the mayor, not Dawkins, not the police commissioner, not any of them -- is worth my pension. "I'm not going to jail for anyone."

Daniels wants to believe him.

Deputy tells him he can handpick the people he wants on the wiretap, get rid of anyone he doesn't trust. Guarantee of no interference.

What's the catch?

"You stay on the drugs. You stay off the money as best you can. You keep it as straight and as narrow as you can?"

Deputy knows. The feds care only about the money. Fuck heroin. Fuck cocaine. Fuck West Baltimore. Fuck all except for the possibility of running a good wire into some political corruption. That's the headline the feds would be after.

"And are they wrong?"

Deputy smiles. "I have to live in this department, in this city. I don't live in the federal building. I live in this motherfucker right here.. So do you."

It's Daniels choice. If it goes to the federals, he's giving up the case anyway. It'll be worked by FBI agents and an AUSA. And his career is over. Or.

"What are you gonna tell the feds?"

"That we don't need any help. That we're going to do the case ourselves."

"They'll be pissed off."

"You're pissed off. I'm pissed off. The whole city is pissed off."

3 Meeting of Daniels, Lester, McArdle, Sydnor, Herc, Carver. These six only. The rest are given the boot, sent back to their units. Santangelo carrying his shit out in a box, happy to go but sensing that he will not be missed. Shea and a couple of the head-bashing street cops follow him.

McArdle to Santangelo: "Say hey to the captain for me."

Santangelo belches, walks out.

4 Daniels briefs them about the coming wire, what it will require, what is at stake. Anyone ever work a tap before? Only Daniels, years ago. And McArdle. They begin to explain the complications. And with Greggs dead, Carver or Herc are going to have to go on the affidavit for expertise in narcotics. Daniels chooses Carver, briefs him on what is required.

Sydnor: "Why didn't this go federal?"

Daniels just looks at him.

Sydnor: "Never mind."

5. D'Angelo goes home to his mother's house with McArdle escorting him, picks up clothes and about a half dozen fresh shoes. Mother asks where he's going.

"I don't know."

6. D'Angelo eating a chicken box with McArdle at the harbor.

So what happens now? Now we take you in front of the grand jury and you tell your story. Then we do some more investigation. Make a case against Bell, Barksdale and the rest. Corroborate as much of what you told us as we can.

What happens then?

"Everyone goes down."

"What happens to me?"

"You get a bye."

"A bye?"

"Get out of jail free."

"But where do I go?"

The question hangs

7 Daniels to McArdle, as D'Angelo sleeps on a courthouse office sofa. What the fuck do we do with him? No money in the city for witness protection. If it had gone federal... McArdle looks at Daniels, who shakes his head. If it goes federal, you and I are buried. Foot patrols, midnight shift, Khartoum precinct.

McArdle: "What guarantee do we have that we're not fucked in any case."

"The Deputy "

"The Deputy?"

"He gave me his word."

McArdle looks at him, laughs. Daniels turns away, angry. He doesn't even want to think about that

"You don't think he wanted to keep the case for another reason?"

"He's not the leak "

"I guess he told you that too."

"Fuck you."

"Yep. Fuck me."

8. Female ASA prosecutor takes D'Angelo into grand jury. He tells everything true. The dealing Bell, Barksdale. The murders. On the grand jurors, transfixed.

9. Judge signing Title III, shaking hands with McArdle, Daniels and Lester. "That's the best affidavit I've seen in twenty years on the bench. Good hunting."

10. Montage. McArdle showing Herc and Sydnor how to set up on a pay phone booth, then relay for the wiretap. What's required.

Lester at another pay phone booth, explaining the process to Carver. McArdle and Daniels back in the wiretap room with the departmental electronics expert, starting to roll tape.

11. First calls. Talk in code, careful, but clearly about drugs. Reups. Arguments over short packages. They're slowly pulling back the veil. Our cops, elated.

12. McArdle going home at night with D'Angelo in tow, putting D'Angelo in the guest room. D'Angelo spends his days on the courthouse sofa, eating fast food, his nights with McArdle or when McArdle is manning the wire, on the couch in the narcotics unit. He's bored to death, scared and listless all at once.

13. First blood. Stringy Bell gets paged by a stash house. Told that a package is stepped on. Argument over a pay phone, coded, but still obvious. Talk on, motherfucker.

14. Second blood. Herc and Carver cracking up, listening to another mid-level dealer having phone sex with his girl. Lester walks over and pulls the plug, explains: You can only monitor calls that are drug related or have the chance of being that.

15. Finally, Barksdale's pager goes off with Stringy's code. Sydnor is on Barksdale, sees him go for a tapped pay phone around the corner from his girl's apartment.

Our guys, transfixed, listening to the high-end of the drug conspiracy, talking business.

Elation. Their case, making itself in front of their eyes.

Bell brings up "the other thing?"

"Say what?"

"You know. What D say?"

"Oh yeah. The other thing."

And what unfolds is the discussion of a bribe that will be paid to get Barksdale a HUD redevelopment loan for an apartment complex he bought three years ago off Hilton. Daniels recognizes the reference right away from when he looked at assets.

"D a motherfucker, man."

"Yeah."

"He sayin' one hundred thousand for a loan that would be worth like \$2 million "

"One hundred?"

"Not all up front Fifty now. Fifty when the loan comes."

"Why he need fifty up front?"

"He says there's lots of people downtown who got to be got "

McArdle open-mouthed Lester smiling like he expected as much. Daniels sick to his stomach. They're listening to bribery, influence peddling, extortion. The conversation ends.

McArdle, in imitation: "They got to be got."

Lester. "Who's D?"

"Dawkins?"

"You think Dawkins is gonna actually get in a room with these guys and a briefcase full of cash? No fucking way?"

But they're gonna find out.

"Fuck the money. Stay on the drugs "

Daniels talking, of course. But McArdle too curious.

16 McArdle, Lester and Sydnor do surveillance on Barksdale, who does all kinds of countersurveillance shit, and only with the helicopter do they manage to stay with him. Barksdale drives not to see Dawkins, but to see Damien Davies, the guy who Bubbles' ID'd as being the senator's aide. Barksdale meets Davies at a fast food place, leaves with him, carrying a small gym bag. Davies then drops Barksdale at a bar in Northwest. They note, Barksdale exists without the gym bag

"That was a drop right there."

They send Sydnor into the bar. He confirms that Davies sits at the bar drinking with state Senator Dawkins. So what do they have? Money going to Dawkins? Already they had the above-the-line shakedowns of Barksdale's political contributions to Dawkins and the mayor. Now they've got cash toward a chance at a HUD loan Jesus Christ.

17 McArdle briefs Daniels, who can only tell him of his deal with the devil. Okay, says McArdle, we stay on the drugs. But we feed the political juice to the feds. They want it, fine. They don't -- at least we did our job. Daniels shakes his head. I gave my word, okay. You can't go around my back on this one

Fine. McArdle pissed, but in agreement. As long as you don't brief the deputy on this. You want to let a sleeping dog lie, fine. But let it lie then

18 McArdle goes home, finds D'Angelo, bored, who asks McArdle for money to go to the movies McArdle gives it to him, but tells him he has to go down the road to the York

"You can't go in the city alone "

"Why not? Sick of all this leave-it-to-Beaverland shit out here. Soccer-mom looking women, lawnmowers and little blue mailboxes and shit..

McArdle laughs.

Tell you what tomorrow, I'm off.

19. McArdle takes D'Angelo and his kids down to DC for the day D'Angelo in the other world, happy to be out. Lincoln Memorial Capitol Reflecting pool.

D'Angelo talking about life, about what he had imagined for himself Finally, how's it going?

"What?"

"The case."

"They're done "

"Who?"

"Barksdale, Bell, all of them..."

"Yeah?"

"Between you testifying and what we're getting off the street now, they're done."

"And then what?"

"What do you mean?"

"Where do I go then? What do I do?"

"Um .."

"I mean, you ain't gonna adopt me or nothing."

McArdle laughing lightly, but nothing is really funny

20 Montage More wiretap evidence. Our guys picking up drug conversation after drug conversation. Following the mid-level dealers, the stash houses. They hear about a mule carrying \$400,000 in raw on an Amtrak train and they arrange for the railroad police to pick up the mule.

21 Lester and Sydnor flip the mule, confiscate the drugs and have her drop what looks to be the raw heroin with Barksdale's people And then: Our guys monitoring the wiretap as the bad shit is on the street and the complaints fly back. Everything they touch is now turning to gold

22. Deputy calls Daniels upstairs, asks how things are going Daniels tells him the case is going, finally. Deputy acknowledges this. Any unforeseen problems.

"Some "

Deputy looks at him.

Daniels "Do you need to know?"

Deputy "You tell me "

On Daniels, who is too scared not to tell him

23 McArdle looking up the land records and corporation records on the apartment complex that Barksdale is looking to renovate with that HUD loan, finds his partners are two other westside dealers, including Doughboy Willis The project, if it goes, is worth about \$5 million when completed With that kind of show, you can launder half the drug money in Baltimore

24 Lester to City Housing and Development Bureau. Looking up the loan application to see who is working on that Names of bureaucrats. They do an assets investigation, but nothing -- no large deposits for these guys, nothing to indicate they've been bribed. Letters in the file from

Dawkins, the mayor and others supporting the application, but nothing overtly improper.

25 Wire talk about covering their ass on both sides Barksdale says this to Bell What's that mean? They follow Barksdale to a meeting with a key political supporter of the challenger running against the mayor. Sure enough, Barksdale leaves the meeting and another minion enters with a gym bag.

McArdle to Lester: "You know what?"

"What?"

"I dunno who the fuck I'm gonna vote for "

Lester laughing.

26. Last montage of wiretap yielding one great conversation after another, the tapes spinning, our guys typing, photographing, and typing some more. Until finally, one morning, McArdle enters to find Herc and Carver asleep in the wire room. He gets angry What the fuck have we missed while you two slept?

Nothing, they insist. There were no calls. All night No reups. No side traffic. Nothing from Bells beeper after early evening Nothing on Barksdale's beeper at all

McArdle checks. Sure enough.

"Huh "

27 Two days later No beeper traffic None. No use of the tapped pay phones. None.

28 McArdle, Daniels They know that Barksdale has been tipped.

Once again, the leak McArdle to Daniels: You told the Deputy about the money, about Dawkins Daniels denies it

29 Daniels, McArdle and Lester closing a bar, trying to think it through. If not the Deputy, then who? Could be anyone. Could be someone down at the courthouse, a clerk, a judge's secretary, who fucking knows? No The leaks on the raids and informants, too. That came out of headquarters. Someone on the sixth floor

30 McArdle grabs the beeper logs going back two months, carries them up to planning and research, pulling the pages from the days before the raid leaks, before D'Angelo was outted and again, before the wire went dead How long it will take to run the recorded numbers of the logs against every departmental extension, cell phone or pager.

Computer geek: "you out your mind? That's two massive databases. That's one mainframe for half a day "

"Is that bad?"

"We're two months behind on crime stats I don't have time for this."

"Yeah You do Deputy Commissioner needs this by the end of the day "

"Fuck me "

"Fecal gravity, bunky."

31. Daniels with the Deputy

Deputy. "Everything? Dead?"

All phones. The pagers too.

Deputy looks at Daniels, curious. Daniels tries to assess the Deputy, can't.

32 McArdle returning to planning and research.

Computer geek. "Five hits. All to a pager."

On McArdle, looking at the number of their Judas

END EPISODE 107

EPISODE 108

1. Deputy Commissioner's office. A long, Mamet-like silence. The Deputy is lost in thought. Pull back to reveal Daniels, McArdle waiting on him.

Deputy, finally: "You're sure?"

McArdle explains the beeper logs again. The discovery of the contact with Stringy Bell. The fact that the pager number is listed as departmental and specifically assigned.

"Another explanation for it, maybe."

No

Deputy snaps into gear: "What can I do then?"

McArdle and Daniels share a look. We're left to believe that perhaps it was the Deputy all along.

2. Cut to detail office, where Santangelo and Shea, both worthless, are returning to the investigation. Santangelo a little smug about it. Wish you guys would make up your mind, is his general attitude. Cocky

"How'd the tap go?"

"Great. We got what we needed before it died out on us."

"It died?"

"Yeah. They stopped using their pagers and the tapped pays "

"Huh .."

"So why'd you bring us back?"

McArdle. "Babysitting "

Santangelo looks at him curiously

3 Motel Six, Baltimore County. Santangelo and Shea sit, trapped on a twelve hour night-shift with D'Angelo, guarding him while this case ostensibly waits for trial. D'Angelo and Santangelo interacting in a way that we get a sense of the cop's contempt and barely reconstructed racism

4 Exterior, motel six. Daniels and Lester sit, watching the motel room

Lester "He always was a piece of shit. But I'm amazed he went all the way over."

McArdle explains it, and at first we think he's talking about the Deputy, the rationalizations, the temptations to use information. But then we realize, the payoff wasn't power or self-interest, which goes to the Deputy. No, they're talking about someone else. It's money, pure and simple.

Lester "How much was he down?"

Resorts has him tapped for \$45,000 at Paradise Island, another thirty in Atlantic City "

Lester whistles "That's two years salary, without the OT "

"Yeah "

"You ready?"

Lester nods, they exit car, head for motel.

5 Motel room: Relief is here. Santangelo and Shea get ready to leave. Complaints that they've left the room a sty. D'Angelo talks to McArdle and Lester. He doesn't like the other cops. They

don't like him. But he likes the motel Better than McArdle's pull-out sleep sofa. He likes having cable TV.

Lester: "You ain't got cable?"

McArdle: "Fuck no."

Lester: "Cheap motherfucker."

6. Shea and Santangelo exit, go to separate cars. Santangelo drives off and we pick up Sydnor and Carver, sitting in a non-departmental, following Santangelo to a pay phone, making a call As Sydnor keys his radio.

7 Meeting with Prosecutor Pearlman Daniels, McArdle explain the play. D'Angelo is their best witness and with what they got from the now-aborted wire, his testimony is corroborated enough to put together a drug case on Bell and everyone lower. Nothing on any of the murders, since none of that was ever caught on the wire. And Barksdale's conversations about drugs were so careful and coded that charging him in a drug conspiracy won't be easy.

But the beauty of it is that neither Barksdale nor Bell can know exactly what we did or didn't hear. And the story we're putting out is that D'Angelo warrants a hotel and round-the-clock security because his testimony, coupled with the wire, gives us Barksdale on a plate.

And he believes that?

Sure he does. This department wouldn't un-ass a dollar for a hotel room and full security otherwise. He knows that much And furthermore, he wasn't around for the wiretap. He doesn't know what we have or don't have, call by call.

Sydnor walks in drops a Bell Atlantic readout on the table. Last night's log from the pay phone on Milford Mill Road. Call to Stringy's pager

Pearlman: "He got smarter. Stopped using his own pager, anyway."

"Bawlmer's finest."

"So," asks Pearlman. "Who's with D'Angelo right now "

"No one "

"He's alone at the Motel Six."

"No. He's at my house "

On Pearlman, a step behind.

8. On Lester, laughing softly, Herc and a lab tech with him in a surveillance van, watching from a distance as Barksdale's muscle arrives, kicks in the door of a Motel Six room and then, frustrated at the emptiness, hustles away The lab tech snapping photographs all the time.

9. Santangelo arrives in the office to begin his shift, asks who's out at the hotel He's told Herc and Sydnor Santangelo seems to think about this for a moment.

Lester and McArdle watch him

"You heard from them lately?"

"No "

"Maybe they want early relief Or a food run or something?"

"You worried about them "

"I'm just sayin'. It's a long time to be closeted with that asshole."

Lester and McArdle say nothing. Santangelo sits, awkward

"Fuck it then."

"Yeah Fuck it then."

Santangelo looks at McArdle, who looks blandly back.

Daniels enters, sighs, says the Deputy has looked at the budget. They can't afford to keep the detail afloat much longer with this much manpower. He looks at Santangelo: "You and Shea are going home. I already talked to your captain."

"Geez, make up yer fuckin' minds, already."

Santangelo starts packing. Daniels adds that the Deputy busted his balls over the motel room and full-on security. So he moved D'Angelo overnight.

McArdle: "Yeah? Where to?"

"Some relative of his, over on the Eastside."

"Huh "

As Santangelo continues to pack his shit.

10 McArdle, Lester with Bubbles in the surveillance van The old informant is wrath-like now. End stage AIDS Still on his feet but just barely

One last journey. Bubbles can't stop talking about Greggs, how good she was too him How he doesn't know what he's gonna do without her.

McArdle telling him that this was her last case. That this matters to her.

Bubbles nods, mentions that the thing is "scratching at my balls."

Lester. "But ain't no one gonna grab you there, right?"

Bubbles "Not in some time, no."

He takes thirty dollars from McArdle and slides out of the van, walking off.

12. Four blocks away, in the high-rises. We watch Bubbles cop from a street dealer and say something The dealer looks at him, nods, tells Bubbles to wait on the bench. Pull back to reveal Carver and Sydnor in a vacant rowhouse down the block, photographing as Bubbles is met by Stringy Bell himself, who comes up to talk. As the camera clicks, cut to the surveillance van where Lester and McArdle listen in via the body mike. Bubbles raps on about how he knows a man who knows some woman who knows his aunt and some boy who the knockers have testifying against Bell and Barksdale and everyone else in West Baltimore is staying somewhere over on Milton Avenue with his aunt

Bell tries to size up Bubbles He sits next to him on the bench, tells him he doesn't know exactly who Bubbles is talking about Bubbles says he was just trying to be helpful, hoped that me might pull a free blast or two from Bell's package, just for his trouble.

Bell: "Where on Milton this boy supposed to be at?"

"I never heard that part "

"I mean Milton a long fucking street, right?"

"Yeah. But I ain't heard."

Bell looks at Bubbles, who looks perfectly credible And, he knows it matches what Santangelo told him hours earlier.

"You gonna hook me up "

Bell looks to the street dealer, nods at Bubbles, holds up three fingers

"Next three on me "

"You a good man."

Back in the van McArdle pulls off headphones, smiles at Lester.

The motherfuckers ain't nibbling at shit. They're leaping on to 'the hook.

- 13 Herc at the gym. Busted by DEA agents investigating illegal steroids.
Tells them he's a city cop, like that's gonna help

14 McArdle and Lester outside Orlando's, which has been renamed Odell's after Greggs' death and a quick change of ownership and liquor license. They're in the van again, testing a Kel mike, which we assume is on Omar. With them is Omar, the stickup boy who has sworn revenge on Bell, Barksdale

Omar: "Used to be called Orlando's."

McArdle nods.

"Changed it when the lady cop got kilt, huh."

Lester lights a cigarette.

Tech nods. The mike is clear, the tech tells them. We're picking up good sound.

McArdle looks at Omar, who in some way he genuinely admires, if for nothing else his balls

Omar bums one from Lester, lights up.

"So tell me again why they don't light my ass up 'for I get a word out "

McArdle explains that after Greggs got killed and Orlando got tangled up with Slim Charles in that drug deal gone bad, Barksdale had to go through all kinds of trouble to change paper owners, keep the liquor license and stop a padlock from going on the doors

"After what happened with the cop, he needs that club to stay clean if he wants to keep it.

He whacks you anywhere else but in there "

Omar nods

McArdle, after a pause "Or he loses his temper and he whacks you before you get a word out "

Omar actually smiles

"You don't have to do this. You worked off whatever I ever had on you."

No, he knows. But this is for his boy. His peoples.

"Get even time "

Omar, stubs out cigarette, exits.

15 Omar walks inside, sits at bar. The near-sighted dancer comes over and Omar smiles at her, puts money on the bar. She sits next to him, makes a show of introducing herself. Tells bartender to tell Barksdale that Omar is here

Bartender. "Omar who?"

"Omar who takes his shit and bitchslaps his niggers."

Bartender moves off, talks to the bouncer. Bouncer leaves

Back out to the van. McArdle listening, amazed at Omar's bravado

16. Stringy Bell pulling up with muscle, going inside the strip club, photographed by the cops. Stringy goes right to Omar, glares at him

"I asked for Barksdale."

"You got me, motherfucker."

"You 'ookin' for the boy D'Angelo Or you should be."

"What the fuck you know about anything?"

"I know where the motherfucker hiding."

Bell feigns indifference. Omar tells him he will only talk to Barksdale

"Naw, motherfucker. You ain't gonna talk shit."

Omar nods. "Whatever."

But Bell is clearly hungry He has the muscle grab Omar and drag him into the backroom. Out in the van, McArdle and Lester hear this Do they go in? Not yet. Wait. Wait. The sound fades on the mike. What the fuck are they doing to him?

Back in the club's back office, Omar is shoved against a wall and ordered to strip. They're looking for the mike. Omar acts ignorant but complies. No mike Not anywhere. Not under his scrotum Not no how.

"Get dressed, nigger "

17 Daniels dealing with fallout from Herc's arrest, trying to get the DEA to ditch the case. Herc's name is on the wiretap affidavit, possibly tainting that evidence. DEA loath to let go of a good headline case. The case agent worked six months on this steroid thing

18 Barksdale himself arrives at the club, goes to the back office, looks at Bell who nods He glares at Omar.

"You out your fucking mind?"

"Man, fuck you You the one made it personal "

"You robbed my people."

"That's what I do, motherfucker. I take off corners Your corners, Doughboy's corners, Petey Dixon's. Ain't no thing. Ain't like none of you can't afford to go a little light now and then. But you got to go and get personal, raise up on my boy like that "

Barksdale has to laugh at the effrontery

"So what the fuck you sayin' bout my nephew."

"Look here, motherfucker. Half hour ago, I was smoking a Newport, sippin' some of your watered-down gin and rubbin' up against some girl's titty. Now you want to bring all that shit back to me, I might be ready to help you out on that."

Barksdale looks at Bell, who has to laugh Omar is Omar

19. Back in the van, we hear more than bar sounds We hear Omar's voice again.

McArdle: "He's back We're up "

20 Cut to the bar, where Omar is again sitting with the Dancer, who is nervous in Barksdale's presence, but sits calmly, stroking Omar's thigh. Omar tells Barksdale he knows where

D'Angelo is hold up on the eastside Barksdale tells him he knows this already

Fuck you do, or he'd be got.

"I ain't need to get shit."

Omar laughs, says its all over the street that the cops have a case and that D'Angelo is the main stem. Else why would a westside boy, and Barksdale's nephew at that, be creeping along Milton Avenue. At the mention of the street name, Barksdale sees Omar as immediately credible

Omar offers the deal. He's tired of running Tired of the fight. Either Barksdale's gonna get him or he's gonna get Barksdale.

"Fuck it. You took my shit."

"Fuck it. I take out your nephew, we more than even."

Omar and Barksdale share a long look.

"You gonna do my nephew?"

"Fuck it. He ain't my nephew "

Barksdale ponders this. Asks how Omar knows that even if he does this favor for Barksdale and Bell, they won't come back on him afterward. Now, look here, Omar tells him. All your people and all your muscle and it's Omar who has to solve this problem for you. Now why would a smart motherfucker like you even think of hurting Omar after that.

"I'm a good friend I'm a motherfucker otherwise "

Barksdale smiles at this.

"Say the word and your nephew is dead today. Not tomorrow, today."

"Word."

Back in the van: It's down. Barksdale's down.

21 Daniels at DEA headquarters, pleading with the ASAC. Best they can do is charge Herc with misdemeanor possession, lose the distribution charges and the felony weight. And Herc will have to testify in grand jury

"You're gonna fuck up my case."

"Who's your case?"

"Barksdale Stringy Bell."

DEA ASAC: "Who the fuck are they?"

Daniels, incredulous

22 Elation back at the office Omar regaling Sydnor, Carver with his tale of the adventure as Bubbles sits in the corner, a ghost breathing softly McArdle is typing an arrest warrant furiously Enter Lester, escorting the dancer, who is wearing a trenchcoat

All applaud her entrance. She tries to smile but it's clear she's still terrified

She goes to a chair, takes off her coat, revealing her dancer's bikini

"You didn't even get dressed?"

"I wanted to get out of there I was shaking I told the manager my mother was sick "

Indifferent to the moment, she starts to reach down into her bikini bottom.

"Y'all need to take this shit off me "

Sydnor, Carver jump up immediately "You need some help with that?"

Lester takes her by the arm, points her to the adjacent office and some privacy. As the door closes, he turns to frown at the younger man.

"Shhheet," wails Carver. "Ain't the first bug she seen down there."

Even Bubbles laughs. The Dancer exits, holding the Kel mike. She drops it on a desk, puts her trenchcoat back on and asks where a ladies' room is. Sydnor points her down the hall.

Carver, off the mike: "Go on, Lester. Sniff the motherfucker..."

Daniels enters to all this elation, goes immediately to McArdle. "We got a problem."

23. Deputy Commissioner, McArdle and Daniels in the Deputy's office with Pearlman, the prosecutor. Herc's arrest. The tainting of the wiretap affidavit. What do we have if the wiretap's been thrown out? Jesus Christ. McArdle livid. All that work and now half the case gutted. No fucking way.

Pearlman saying it's just a worst case scenario. There are four affiants on the paperwork. Most likely, the case will stand and no city judge will toss it. But just in case...

Well, they've got Barksdale dead to rights on conspiracy to murder. They've got the buy-bust cases they did on the lower-rung dealers, most of which still have to get to court. And if they charge Santangelo and are able to roll him, they might get Bell for conspiracy for murder in the earlier attempt to get at D'Angelo at the Motel Six.

Also, adds McArdle, we get D'Angelo to testify about the earlier murder of Barksdale's girlfriend, they can produce some corroboration via ballistics -- D'Angelo ID'd the type of weapon used by Bell and McArdle and Greggs recovered a spent round and casing. But then again, chain of custody is a problem as the bullet and casing weren't found until months later.

And, of course, all of the evidence of illegal political contributions, extortion and influence peddling on the HUD loan -- all of the City Hall stuff is lost. Even as Pearlman acknowledges this, McArdle realizes that the Deputy is right where he wants to be. They share a look. The Deputy actually smiles at him blandly.

24. Leaving the meeting, McArdle tells Daniels that the fix is in. Daniels doesn't believe it. The DEA ASAC told him they'd been working the steroid case for six months.

25. McArdle goes down to the FOP union office, talks to one of the shop stewards. Finds out who in the last six months has been subjected to random piss tests. In Baltimore, all narcotics officers are required to submit to random urinalysis. Sure enough, Herc and Carver had both been piss tested a month prior, when the wire was going forward. Results? They don't tell us unless they're going to give a guy a number and charge it internally.

26. Montage of arrest warrants being typed and signed by commissioners, arsenal being opened. Our entire detail, and two dozen other detectives mounting up for a series of arrests and raids. Santangelo pulled right out of the homicide unit, cuffed and led down the hallway as CID veterans crowd around. Then on the street as the entire Barksdale-Bell organization is sent to the wagons. All the way up to and including Bell. The raids conclude without them locating Barksdale however.

27 Aftermath, arrests being prosecuted. Bell in an interrogation room, making no statement. No idea where Barksdale is. McArdle tells Daniels that the Deputy had Herc and Carver piss tested after Greggs was killed and their names were put on the affidavit.

How did he know?

McArdle checked with a doctor in the medical unit. Herc had already had one fuzzy return on a piss test two years earlier. To avoid disciplinary action, he voluntarily accepted substance abuse counseling without prejudice. Daniels never knew. Herc transferred to CID narcotics from a district drug unit after that incident. But the deputy knew. He went fishing and he got lucky. Then he called DEA because if he'd tried to do it in house, word would have leaked to Daniels. The DEA ASAC made up the bullshit about a six-month probe to take the stink away from the deputy. A favor between bureaucrats.

Daniels, stung

Off the record, says the steward, Herc came back with a positive on anabolics and the union lawyer asked department counsel if they were going to charge it internally. But no answer from the Deputy.

28 More raids, more locations. Looking for Barksdale.

Cops at a loss. Standing in Barksdale's mother's living room. Finally, McArdle frustrated, says "what the hell."

He goes to a phone and dials a pager number, then punches in his own number. They wait a minute. Barksdale himself calls.

"Who's this?"

"Detective McArdle."

"What's up?"

"Looking to arrest you."

"I know."

"You coming down, or do we keep kicking in doors?"

"I'll be down."

"Promise?"

Barksdale laughs. "I'm just waiting for the lawyer to pick me up."

"You're coming in with your lawyer, huh?"

"I think so."

"That's not very sporting, is it?"

Barksdale laughs again.

"One hour. Downtown. After that all the police in Baltimore come to your mama's house to drink beer and piss on the furniture."

Barksdale clicks off. McArdle to Daniels: "Cocky motherfucker."

29 Back at the office, Lester and Sydnor get a few minutes alone with Santangelo, who was willing to set them up to be killed at the motel. They take his cuffs off, walk him into the men's room and kick his ass.

30. Barksdale arrives with lawyer. Miranda'd, his lawyer says he has nothing to say
McArdle "I'd like to make a statement."

Everyone looks over curious. McArdle, gently, almost sympathetically, begins to explain why they are hear today. Not because of the drugs. That war is lost. Been lost for twenty years now. Barksdale could have sold drugs twenty-four seven in the westside projects until he was old and grey, and if he was careful as he was, he'd have never gone down. Fuck the drugs. Drugs are fucking legal in Baltimore when you get to be as good as Barksdale

But what about the bodies?

McArdle, as if he's genuinely curious, wondering why Barksdale couldn't do it without the bodies, the violence. That's what got the judge worked up, that's what brought the heat Why does it matter to you that you need to be more than rich, more than connected? That you can get politicians, and liquor inspectors and everyone else on the phone isn't enough? You have to be feared. Why? What's in that? Why can't a man like yourself just sell this shit and make your millions and be happy? Why did all these people -- and McArdle names them -- have to die for you to feel right in this world? McArdle, looking at Barksdale as if he's genuinely interested, as if Barksdale's pathology is interesting.

Barksdale, of course, says nothing.

McArdle to lawyer: "Well, that's my statement."

Daniels pulls out handcuffs. Greggs' name is still on them, stenciled into the metal.

"These belonged to a girl I knew."

Barksdale is cuffed to the table Lawyer clicks briefcase, tells his client he'll be at the bail review hearing on Monday, leaves. McArdle shows him out. Daniels sits, looking at his prize in quiet contentment

Barksdale, finally uncomfortable. "What?"

Daniels: "Nothing."

Barksdale: "What the fuck you lookin' at?"

Daniels reaches out, touches Barksdale's cheek: "You're just so beautiful to me right now " He glances down at the cuffs, smiles. "Don't ever change."

Daniels walks outside, meets McArdle. They stare through the wire-mesh window of the interrogation room door for a long moment, then walk away.

END EPISODE 108

EPISODE 109

1. Some months later.

A hearing in front of Judge Watkins, who originally started this whole mess and now proves remarkably malleable politically. Although Herc was only one name of four on the wiretap affidavit, the judge interestingly takes testimony from Herc, who knows he will soon be himself convicted of the steroid charge and fired, hears arguments from Pearlman and lawyers for Barksdale-Bell and then rules the wiretap to be inadmissible.

McArdle, Daniels, Lester watch, knowing It is only a coincidence that Watkins, who must soon stand for reelection for a full 15-year term on the circuit court has received the financial support of the Dawkins/Mayoral machine

2. Meeting with the Deputy Daniels alone

The Deputy, showing croc tears over the lost wiretap, which of course, benefits Dawkins more than anyone. Still, he is effusive and congratulatory in his praise for what remains of the case. The conspiracy to murder charge against Barksdale and the two-year-old murder charge on Bell, as well as the buy-busts at the lower rungs of the organization Remarks that a captaincy is opening up in Property Division when McAuliffe retires

Daniels asks what's to be done with the info on the wire if it's suppressed

Deputy. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, whatever else, we've got these connections between a state Senator and a drug dealer. The mayor's reelection effort getting money from .."

Deputy cuts him off. Sees right where he's going. And for the first time, shows real fangs.

"You go to the feds with that crap, I'll cut your fucking heart out "

Daniels shocked, but backs up quickly, swallowing pride

Deputy calms down "What about McArdle?"

"What about him?"

"Is he gonna jaw with his friends over at the federal building?"

"I don't think so." A weak lie

"You don't think so?"

"Jimmy's his own man " Daniels pauses, tries to help "A good man "

Deputy brooding

3 Goodbye party for Herc, who is being allowed to resign in exchange for a probation before judgment on the steroid charge. Carver finds that he's fourth on the sergeant's list One up, one down

4 McArdle and Pearlman in a proffer session with Barksdale and his attorneys Attorneys arguing entrapment, but they've since been able to fully corroborate the earlier attempt to kill D'Angelo when he was at the Motel Six

McArdle How do you entrap a guy who's already committing overt acts

Pearlman presses Barksdale to roll. Not only on his own organization, but on Dawkins and whoever else he has tied up politically That would be a career case for her. McArdle hungry as well. Still looking for a way to expand his shrinking case.

Lawyers: What would his deal be. Pearlman is only authorized to go down to 25 years, which in the state system, means about 10-12 in. Barksdale laughs Fuck no With his lack of priors, he's not exposed to much more than that under sentencing guidelines and his lawyers know this.

Twenty, says Pearlman. I can't take less than twenty for attempting to kill a state's witness My boss won't allow it

No. Barksdale would rather take his chances without a deal. Keep his rep for being stand up. Keep his political contacts. Who knows who might be helpful a few years from now The state parole commission is a patronage post

Barksdale "You saying I could do twenty with no friends. I'm saying I'll take thirty in with the friends I got. We'll see what gets me home faster "

4. Bubbles in the AIDS ward at Bon Secours McArdle makes a last visit, thanks him

5. Courthouse montage:

Barksdale trial. D'Angelo testifying

Mid-level players on trial. D'Angelo testifying, Sydnor and Carver too

Bell trial McArdle testifying, the found bullet and casing going into evidence

6. Lester and our near-sighted dancer, dressed more demurely. Bag lunch at the harbor.

The unlikely couple. She frets over his diet, surprises him with a new-piece for his dollhouse.

7 Barksdale found guilty Elation for Daniels, McArdle, Lester et al Their final hurrah

The party over at the Sidebar, across from the courthouse

Watkins sets sentencing date

8 McArdle back to the hospital to tell Bubbles. Empty bed. Gone

9 Bell trial concludes. Not guilty verdict McArdle, furious, polls the jurors, who didn't believe that he could have recovered the bullet and casing after so long a time Believed he planted it

Henson, the homicide prosecutor "Chain-of-custody problem I was lucky to get it into evidence at all."

10 D'Angelo, used, now to be dumped.

Lester and McArdle drive him to the train station Buy him a ticket to where?

D'Angelo has no idea I have an aunt in Atlanta, he says

Okay, when's the next train to Atlanta?

"Shouldn't I call and tell her I'm coming "

"I dunno. Maybe it's just best to show up "

D'Angelo, a lost puppy Our guys, guilty, go into their wallets Give him a couple hundred. He looks at the small sendoff. And then at McArdle.

McArdle: Fuck it, there's got to be a bank machine in here somewhere.

11 Party for Daniels as his captain's bars are pinned. He's been promoted.

12 McArdle drops the wire evidence into the lap of his FBI contact -- the same one he had originally tried to feed the wire to "Merry fucking Christmas."

13. Bodie in the low-rises, now running D'Angelo's crew Having matured Harder, smarter than before The future. We see a new face or two making the rounds, doing Stringy's old job It's a replacement worker world

14. McArdle called to see the Deputy

He goes up, sees Dawkins arrayed with his lawyer in the Deputy's office

The Deputy again congratulates him on the Barksdale conviction Gently brings the meeting to where Dawkins tells McArdle that there were no payoffs, that this was drug dealer braggart shit.

"What was in the briefcases?"

"The briefcases?"

"Damien Davies The deliveries we got photos off "

"Plans for the redevelopment effort No money "

Dawkins charming, flippant Yes, he knew of Barksdale's past. But redemption is a viable theme in the black community, detective. This man had property he wanted to develop off North Avenue and the city needs that neighborhood redeveloped. As far as I knew, Barksdale had turned a corner. The murders, the drugs -- I had no idea

"Why are you telling me?"

"I wanted to reassure you "

"It's too late "

"What do you mean?"

"The feds They know "

"What do they know?"

"Everything I got on my wire "

"How?" The Deputy, leaning forward

"I told them "

McArdle, smiling, perversely at the very idea of being punished for all of this, calm, as if a fever has passed

15 Orlando's, long since renamed, with Stringy Bell holding court, new dancers, new faces around the throne But the net effect is that the game goes on No matter what the government does or doesn't do, the game remains Bell is now Barksdale

16 A floater in the harbor. Grappling hooks reach out and pull the body close to the boat. It is an old drunk, someone who has been in the water for days. The body is slowly hauled aboard as crabs scamper away. Pull back to reveal McArdle, in his marine gear, retching overboard in a long, ugly heave.

17 Boat heads back to dock. Waiting there are Bunk and Lester, now partnered in homicide. Bunk the same as ever, Lester resurrected from his sojourn on the Barksdale case. They've caught the call on the floater, but since that's an old drunk who died natural, they soon put business aside. They are amused to see McArdle, even more amused when they see how green he is. Aside from seasickness, McArdle is in good spirits.

He asks about his girl. "How she doing?"

"She a secretary now."

"Yeah?"

"She says she's done with the dancing."

"How's that working out?"

"Oh. She types about four, five words a minute."

Laughter.

"So how you likin' the boat?"

McArdle wonders aloud how they knew. I mean, I would've taken any foot post any district. I'd've shuffled papers, been a house cat, work a desk. Shit, I'd've gone down to the morgue and not cared.

Bunk explains to Lester: McArdle hates the water. Hates boats.

"How did they fucking know?"

Lester, smiling. "Man, it's what they do."

Laughter.

They ask what McArdle's heard from the FBI and US Attorney. Not much. They raided the city development and housing offices for documents, but so far nothing. Dawkins certainly isn't running scared. Mayor is ahead by ten points in the polls. Judge Watkins gave Barksdale twenty-two in. Not even the maximum, but enough to make it look respectable. Stringy Bell has the high-rise drug trade sewed up.

"On paper, wasn't worth it."

"Never is."

But McArdle explains that he's happier for having done it, like something in him that had to come out. Except for the occasional three-foot swell, he's okay with the boat, with giving up the job, really. He sees his kids now. Shit, his ex says she's willing to go to counseling, maybe.

"Ya'll see much of Daniels?"

Sure. They tell him. He took over Property.

"Tell him I said congrats on making Captain."

They look at him.

"I'm serious. I gave that man some hell."

"You don't think he sold you out?"

"Sold myself. I'm glad he didn't go with me. I'm glad no one else went with me."

They all think for a moment Remembering Greggs

"Except. "

"Yeah "

18 Atlanta, the ghetto

D'Angelo, on another corner in another city, starting over in the only game he knows, selling someone else's vials. Alone

Seque in a vast panorama of the drug game: Corners, cell blocks, prison tiers, roll call rooms, stairwells, murder scenes, courtrooms, morgues, the game going on and on and on and nothing ever reaching a conclusion. A grand sense of the human cost involved. Finally pull up on D'Angelo's old corner, where a new kid, a new face touts Stringy Bell's latest package

He turns and a four-four is pressed against his cheek

"Smile, bitch "

Pull back to reveal Omar, taking him off.

The road goes on forever On Omar, with his big gun, getting paid, timeless and forever, we fade and end

END FIRST CASE