

The Wire

A Continuing Series for HBO

"THE TARGET"

Episode #01

"When It's Not Your Turn"

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**Story by
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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. STREET CORNER/WEST BALTIMORE - NIGHT

Ghetto crime scene. Boarded-up rowhomes, yellow police tape, emergency vehicles, UNIFORMED COPS, BYSTANDERS -- all of them black -- signifying from the periphery. CLOSE ON BODY of a young black male, bloodied and supine at curbside. POV is ground level, tracking from .22 shell casing to a rivulet of blood, to another casing, to the face of the victim, eyes locked in sudden comprehension. Then onward to more casings, more blood, street trash, and, near the victim's feet, a crumpled ten dollar bill. Onward past a few more casings and then the feet of bored UNIFORM, standing around. And all the while we are listening to a DETECTIVE (MCARDLE), obviously white, questioning a WITNESS, obviously black.

MCARDLE (o.c.)
So your boy's name is what?

WITNESS (o.c.)
Snot.

MCARDLE (o.c.)
Snot.

WITNESS (o.c.)
Huh.

MCARDLE (o.c.)
You called this guy Snot?

WITNESS (o.c.)
Snotboogie, yeah.

MCARDLE (o.c.)
Snotboogie.

CAMERA finally finishes its low-angle scan of the terrain to reveal HOMICIDE DET. JIMMY MCARDLE, white, mid-thirties, Irish, notepad in hand, questioning the WITNESS, black, early twenties. They are sitting, MCARDLE casually and the WITNESS nervously, on the steps of a vacant rowhouse.

MCARDLE (cont.)
He like the name?

WITNESS
What?

MCARDLE
Snotboogie.

WITNESS shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

MCARDLE (cont.)

(off BODY)

This kid, whose mama went to the trouble to christen him...

(checks notepad)

...Omar Elijah Davis, he comes out of the house one day, maybe six or seven years old, and, ah, you know, he forgets his jacket. And so his nose starts running. And some asshole, instead of handing him a Kleenex, he calls him Snot.

WITNESS

Huh.

MCARDLE

So he's Snot forever.

(pause)

Doesn't seem fair.

WITNESS

Life be that way, I guess.

MCARDLE sighs, agrees. Both pause as they watch the MORGUE ATTENDANTS roll Snotboogie's wrecked BODY. WITNESS winces at the sight.

MCARDLE

So...

(pause)

Who shot Snot?

WITNESS shoots MCARDLE a look.

MCARDLE (cont.)

C'mon.

WITNESS

I didn't see it, man.

MCARDLE

You liked him, didn't you? You kinda liked the guy.

WITNESS

Snot was awright.

MCARDLE

And you hung around, even after the rollers and the ambo got here. You were still here waiting 'cause you got something to tell me, right?

WITNESS

I ain't going no court.

MCARDLE stares at him, waiting.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

WITNESS (cont.)

Motherfucker did not have to put a cap in his ass.

MCARDLE

Definitely not.

WITNESS

He coulda just whipped his ass, like we always whip his ass.

MCARDLE

No doubt.

WITNESS

He gonna kill Snot when Snot been doing the same shit since I dunno how long.

MCARDLE

I agree with you.

WITNESS

Kill a man over bullshit.

MCARDLE

Bullshit, huh?

WITNESS

I'm saying every Friday we in the alley behind the cut-rate. We roll bones, you know? All the boys from 'round the way. We roll 'til late.

MCARDLE

(who gives a shit)
Alley crap game, right.

WITNESS

And like every time, Snot, he would fade a few shooters, you know. Play it out until the pot's deep. Then he would snatch and run, you see what I'm saying?

MCARDLE

Every time?

WITNESS

Couldn't help himself.

MCARDLE

Lemme understand this. Every Friday night, you and your boys would shoot crap. And every Friday night, your pal Snotboogie would wait until there was some cash on the ground. Then he would grab the money and run away.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

WITNESS nods.

MCARDLE (cont.)
You let him do this?

WITNESS
Naw, man. We catch him and kick his
ass. But ain't nobody going past
that to shoot the nigger.

MCARDLE stands, turns and watches as the BODY, now bagged,
is hauled into the back of the MORGUE WAGON.

MCARDLE
I got to ask you. If every time,
Snotboogie would grab the money and
run away -- if he did that every
time -- why did you even let him
into the game?

WITNESS
Huh?

MCARDLE
If Snot always stole the money, why
did you let him play?

WITNESS looks at MCARDLE like he's an idiot.

WITNESS
Got to.
(pause)
This America, man.

The WITNESS looks away, oblivious to the poetry of it.
MCARDLE turns around, takes in the scope of the tragedy that
is Baltimore. On our DETECTIVE, delighted with life,

FADE TO:

MAIN TITLES

FADE IN:

INT. OUTER LOBBY/FBI FIELD OFFICE - DAY

MCARDLE enters a sterile federal lobby, replete with American
flag, framed pictures of George W. Bush, John Ashcroft and
Louis Freeh. He walks to a bullet-proof glass frontage,
speaks to the RECEPTIONIST through the glass.

MCARDLE
McArdle. City Homicide.

The RECEPTIONIST eyes him as if he is contagious.

RECEPTIONIST
Is anyone expecting you?

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

MCARDLE

Special Agent Fitzhugh. Squad Five.
(nods at locked door)
He's expecting me. Can I...?

RECEPTIONIST

Not without an escort.

On MCARDLE, made to feel less than trustworthy,

CUT TO:

INT. GHETTO WALK-UP - DAY

Five MEN, all black, all twenties, sit at a battered dining table, listening to MUSIC from a portable tape player. All are working diligently, wearing masks. PAN DOWN to reveal perhaps five or six pounds of raw coke being based into rock.

BASER #1

...So like he talkin' like he got
somekind record deal, you know?

BASER #2

Man, please. That just shit you say
to get the pussy.

ALL LAUGH.

BASER #1

True dat, man.

As THEY work on,

CUT TO:

INT. OUTER LOBBY/FBI FIELD OFFICE - DAY

AGENT FITZHUGH, white, thirties, better dressed than MCARDLE, emerges from behind the locked door. He looks over, sees the RECEPTIONIST eyefucking MCARDLE.

FITZHUGH

Hey, bunky.

MCARDLE

Hey, Fitz.

off RECEPTIONIST:

She knows a bad one when see sees
it.

FITZHUGH, awkward, gestures for MCARDLE to follow him.

FITZHUGH

Don't take it personal. You know
how they get with security 'round
here.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

MCARDLE

I know how they get with locals,
yeah.

FITZHUGH smiles weakly. THEY pass through lobby door.

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE - DAY

FITZHUGH and MCARDLE glide through a clean, sterile office of well-funded, well-organized law enforcement. Well-heeled AGENTS and CLERICAL WORKERS abound. MCARDLE looks like a bad relation in contrast.

MCARDLE

So what's up?

FITZHUGH

Good shit, brother. Good shit.

MCARDLE

Yeah?

FITZHUGH

Your man gave us a helluva case.

MCARDLE

He did, huh?

FITZHUGH

Comes to informants, you can pick 'em. I swear, Jimmy, he's about the best C.I. I ever worked.

MCARDLE

You up on a Title III?

FITZHUGH

That and more.

On MCARDLE, curious,

CUT TO:

INT. GHETTO WALK-UP - DAY

The BASERS continue to work. BASER #1 pulls down his mask, uses an exacto knife to push a small pile of powder to the edge of the table.

BASER #1

Coffee break, yo.

BASER #1 put his head down, starts to snort. As OTHERS laugh,

CUT TO:

INT. WIRETAP ROOM - DAY

With HEADPHONES on, MCARDLE watches on a black-and-white screen as BASER #1 finishes his snort. The BASERS are seated around their table, caught on film talking bullshit with a couple million dollars of coke on the table in front of them. The scene is clear, but with a pronounced fish-eye perspective. MCARDLE and FITZHUGH are in the company of TECHNICIANS and other AGENTS, monitoring the transmission.

MCARDLE

Jesus Christ.

FITZHUGH

Pretty fucking great, huh?

MCARDLE

How'd you get this on tape?

FITZHUGH

That's not tape.

MCARDLE looks at him.

FITZHUGH (cont.)

That's live, brother.

MCARDLE

Live?

FITZHUGH

Live from some shithole walkup on
Homer Avenue in the bottoms of
Pimlico.

MCARDLE

(Holy shit)

This is going on right now.

FITZHUGH

As we speak.

MCARDLE

How?

FITZHUGH

Fiber-optic lensing. Camera's behind
a hole in the drywall so small that
it looks like a nail mighta made it.

MCARDLE

Where's the mike? These motherfuckers
sound great.

FITZHUGH

No mike. There's not enough in that
room to hide one.

MCARDLE

No mike?

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

FITZHUGH
Parabolics. One on the roof. One
in the apartment below.

MCARDLE shakes his head in amazement.

FITZHUGH (cont.)
That's about three K's of coke on
the table today. We followed it all
the way from New York.

MCARDLE
You're up in New York on this?

FITZHUGH
Fuck yes. We're backing into some
Dominicans up there. Gonna get a
wire on them soon.

MCARDLE watches the monitor, wistful.

FITZHUGH (cont.)
You give great case, bunky. Wish
you coulda worked it with us.

On MCARDLE, seeing it from a dark hole,

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY/CIRCUIT COURTHOUSE - DAY

MCARDLE, and his partner, WILLIAM "BUNK" MORELAND, black,
early forties, wiry and possessing of dry wit, move toward
the metal detector at security checkpoint. BUNK has a brown
sealed evidence bag.

MCARDLE
So guess what he says?

BUNK
Hmm.

MCARDLE
"Gotta let him play. This America."

BUNK
(laughing)
No fucking way.

MCARDLE
Could I make that up?

The TWO badge their way around the detector.

BUNK
He give you the shooter?

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

MCARDLE

Three Newports and a grape Nehi and
he's grand juried. It's down, Bunk.

MCARDLE turns to the SHERIFF'S DEPUTY.

MCARDLE (cont.)

Barksdale's in Part Twelve, right?

DEPUTY

Huh?

MCARDLE

Project murder. Westside.

DEPUTY

Which one now?

MCARDLE

Never mind.

(to BUNK)

Gonna sit in on it for a bit. Where
you gonna be?

BUNK

(off evidence bag)

I'm just dropping this on Nathan and
going back to the office.

MCARDLE

Yeah? Don't answer no phones, Bunk.

BUNK grunts. As the TWO head in separate directions,

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM/CIRCUIT COURTHOUSE - DAY

MCARDLE enters Courtroom of JUDGE CLIFFORD WATKINS as a murder
trial is in progress. Defendant is D'ANGELO BARKSDALE, black,
early twenties, open-faced and nervous next to his diminutive,
ruffled and quite Jewish, defense attorney, MORRIS LEVY, 60.
The prosecutor, COLLEEN HANSEN, white, female, thirties and
ambitious, finishes her exam of a state's witness, WILLIAM
GANT, black, forty, working-class. JUDGE WATKINS, black,
fifty, presides.

HANSEN

...And is that your signature on the
bottom of that photo array card.

GANT

Yes.

HANSEN

And those are your initials as well
next to the photo you identified.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

GANT

Yes.

MCARDLE sits, looks around at the half-empty courtroom. He notices a well-dressed, but hardened looking male SPECTATOR #1, black, twenties, at one end of the gallery. He notices #2, sitting a row apart. And, finally, a black male, SPECTATOR #3 (STRINGER BELL), who looks almost professorial, with a briefcase, eyeglasses, legal pad and pen akimbo. MCARDLE stares at BELL as the questioning continues.

HANSEN

Mr. Gant, do you see the man you identified from that photo array sitting in the courtroom today?

CU on photo array, with a police ident photo of D'Angelo Barksdale initialed. GANT looks up from the array and across to BARKSDALE. He glances over at BELL for a moment, who stares back blandly.

GANT

He's right there.

HANSEN

For the record, the witness has identified the defendant, Mr. Barksdale.

(to LEVY)

Your witness.

LEVY

(studies GANT a beat)

Just one question, Mr. Gant. Have you ever seen this young man before the day in question?

GANT

No.

LEVY

Thank you. Your Honor, no further questions.

JUDGE WATKINS

(to HANSEN)

Call your next witness.

HANSEN

The state calls Rita Lyles, Your Honor.

As GANT steps down, a SHERIFF'S DEPUTY goes to door, summons RITA LYLES, black and twenty-six, who enters and takes the stand. We note JURORS, mostly black, clearly worried, as they note not only LYLES' entrance but that of two more black male SPECTATORS, mid-twenties, well-dressed, who sit near BELL.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

As LYLES takes the stand and HANSEN asks the preliminaries, MCARDLE stands and moves to a seat behind STRINGER BELL. BELL stops writing on legal pad, eyes a FEMALE JUROR, continues to write. MCARDLE leans over BELL's shoulder, notes that BELL has nearly completed drawing a He-Man action figure. As MCARDLE admires this, BELL draws a conversation bubble from the action figure's mouth and writes in the bubble, "Fuck you, Detective." He holds legal pad up for CARDLE to see it clearly. MCARDLE sits back in seat.

MCARDLE

Cute.

BELL ignores him, takes in the testimony.

HANSEN

Ms. Lyles, what is your occupation?

LYLES

I'm a security guard.

HANSEN

And were you employed as a security guard on May fourth, two-thousand-one, the day of the shooting?

LYLES

Uh-huh.

HANSEN

What were your duties on that date?

LYLES

I was in the booth of two-two-one.

HANSEN

Is that the guard booth in the lobby of the Fremont Avenue highrise?

LYLES

Yes.

HANSEN

And you are behind bullet-proof glass, with a clear view of the lobby?

LYLES

Ah, yeah.

HANSEN

Good, Ms. Lyles, now I know this is difficult for you, but can you tell us what you saw?

RITA LYLES looks at STRINGER BELL.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

LYLES

A man, he's waiting for the elevator when another man starts beating on him, like, and the one man, he got knocked down...

HANSEN

The victim got knocked down?

LYLES

No, the man with the gun.

HANSEN

The man who was knocked down had a gun. And do you see that man here in the courtroom?

LYLES

Nope.

HANSEN double-takes. JURORS notice.

HANSEN

Excuse me?

LYLES

He ain't here.

HANSEN looks to JUDGE for help. Nothing doing.

HANSEN

You don't... You testified...

Clearly flustered, HANSEN picks up court file, removes photo array and hands it to LYLES.

HANSEN (cont.)

Ms. Lyles, remember when Detective Barlow showed you this photo array?

LYLES

Yeah.

HANSEN

Good. I call your attention to your initials that identify the defendant as the man who shot Mr. Blanchard. Did you write your initials above the photograph of Mr. Barksdale?

LYLES

He ain't the one who did the shooting.

HANSEN

But you identified him.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

LYLES

That's 'cause he looked like the boy who did it. But the one who did the shooting, I saw him come in the building like a week later.

PICK UP BELL, with a slight smile and MCARDLE behind him, knowing and wearied.

HANSEN

You saw another person who you thought did the shooting?

LYLES

Right. A week later.

HANSEN

Ms. Lyles, when you talked with the detectives, you never said anything about another...

LYLES

I tried. I called Detective...

RITA LYLES pulls a day-minder, turns to marked page, reads.

LYLES (cont.)

...Barlow on May thirteen at two o'clock, but he didn't call back.

HANSEN

You called Detective Barlow?

RITA LYLES lifts the day-minder, displays it.

LYLES

Twice. I wrote it down in the log book we keep at the booth.

MCARDLE stands, leans over to STRINGER BELL.

MCARDLE

Nicely done. Very subtle.

MCARDLE exits. As STRINGER BELL watches blandly,

CUT TO:

INT. VIOLENT CRIMES/STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

MCARDLE walks into office, greets SECRETARY.

MCARDLE

Where's Barlow at?

SECRETARY gestures to back offices. MCARDLE walks around corner, encounters DET. FRED BARLOW, white, heavy, on phone.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

BARLOW
(into PHONE)
...But that's not pressure-treated,
right? I need a price for pressure-
treated...
(pause)
...That's your price. That's the
price that you are going to quote
me?

Disgusted, BARLOW puts the receiver to his crotch.

BARLOW (cont.)
...You feel that, Mikey? You feel
that? I swear to God that's my dick
in your ear.

BARLOW turns to MCARDLE, raises an eyebrow.

BARLOW (cont.)
Hold on, you fucking thief.
(to MCARDLE)
What's up?

MCARDLE
You been down the hall lately?

BARLOW
What?

MCARDLE
Your case just hit the wall.

BARLOW
Huh?

MCARDLE
The Barksdale crew in Part Twelve.
They turned it.

BARLOW
Two eyewitnesses and a statement.
No fucking way, pal.

MCARDLE shrugs, smiles, walks toward the door. As BARLOW
away, continues phone conversation,

CUT TO:

EXT. DRUG CORNER/EAST BALTIMORE - DAY

Two FEMALES in parked car watching drug activity on corner.
The driver, NARCOTICS DET. SHAKIMA GREGGS, twenty-eight,
attractive, well-groomed, serious, dressed in street clothing.
TIFFANY, her companion, thirties, is a rail-thin addict.

TIFFANY
Use my got damn car to chauffeur
that dusty bitch around.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

GREGGS

Ease up.

TIFFANY

You don't understand. I did for
that man and he do this.

GREGGS

Getting heated up won't change it.

A hand-held radio SQUAWKS. GREGGS grabs it.

HERC (o.c.)

Hey Greggs, we've been in on this
for over an hour. What's your bird
saying?

GREGGS

It ain't what she says. It's what I
say.

HERC (o.c.)

Yeah? And what do you say?

GREGGS

We wait.

Disgusted, GREGGS drops the radio.

GREGGS (cont.)

Shithead.

An older Mercedes, with a little shine left in the paint and
a little hum in the motor, pulls to drug corner. TIFFANY
nearly goes through the window.

TIFFANY

That him.

GREGGS reaches across to restrain TIFFANY.

GREGGS

Easy, girl.
(grabs radio)
Herc, you got him?

HERC (o.c.)

Yeah, we're on him.

GREGGS

You got the uniforms on the horn?

HERC (o.c.)

They're on hold.

A DRUG RUNNER, black and teenaged, comes from an alley to
the passenger side of Mercedes, and leans in.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

TIFFANY

That Ghost.

GREGGS

That's good, Tiff. Tell me, girl,
what I'm seeing.

TIFFANY

He gonna get little Mike.

The RUNNER leaves the car and goes into alley.

GREGGS

Good. What next?

TIFFANY

Mike come back with the money.

GREGGS

(into radio)

We're going to wait for the drop.
Take the Benz when it's deep in the
block. I don't want a foot chase.

HERC

Copy.

A second BLACK MALE, older, twenties, comes out of alley and goes to Mercedes, leaning into the passenger side.

HERC (cont.)

Got it.

Car tires SQUEAL. The Mercedes is surrounded and blocked by an unmarked Cavalier and two radio cars. UNIFORMS and two plainclothes NARCOTICS COPS jump out. HERC, white, muscular, late twenties, and CARVER, black, late twenties, short, stocky, a hydrant build. The BLACK MALE making the drop races away, two UNIFORMS chasing. HERC and CARVER race to Mercedes, guns drawn. Along with two other UNIFORMS, they have the OCCUPANTS out and on the ground next to Mercedes, which idles with car doors splayed open. PULL BACK to GREGGS' POV in surveillance car. We SEE HERC put a semiauto pistol -- recovered from beneath the driver's seat -- on roof of car, then high-five and bump chests with CARVER. GREGGS frowns.

GREGGS

(weary; to herself)

Two, Herc. Two.

TIFFANY

Why he just throw that gun on my car
like that? Shit gonna scratch the
paint.

All pumped up, HERC kicks the door of Mercedes, gives CARVER another dap with his fist. TIFFANY pissed, tries to get out of surveillance vehicle. GREGGS yanks her back.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

TIFFANY (cont.)

Tell him to leave my car be.

GREGGS gets out, walks down the block. Arrives to find HERC and CARVER, bullshitting with the UNIFORMS as everyone waits for the jail wagon, SUSPECTS on the ground.

CARVER

Shoulda seen how that motherfucker
looked at me, Kima.

HERC

Ugly little fucker nearly shit himself
he was so scared.

(turns to SUSPECT)

Y'all didn't shit yerself, didja?

SUSPECT says nothing. GREGGS sighs, tired.

GREGGS

Two guns? Remember?

GREGGS walks back to Mercedes, roots around in rear seat, comes out with a sawed-off pump shotgun. She puts it gently on roof of car, along with pistol, looks at her CONFEDERATES.

HERC

Whatever.

CARVER

It's all good, Kima. Ease up.

On GREGGS, for whom good help is hard to find,

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM/CIRCUIT COURTHOUSE - DAY

A day later. Same PLAYERS in the same courtroom drama. MCARDLE enters, sits in back next to BARLOW and watches as JURORS enter from a sidedoor and file into their seats. JUDGE WATKINS enters from chambers.

DEPUTY

All rise. Part Twelve of the Circuit
Court for Baltimore City is now in
session.

MCARDLE rises along with the rest of the GALLERY, sits as WATKINS addresses the JURY FOREWOMAN.

JUDGE WATKINS

Madame forelady. You have a unanimous
verdict?

FOREWOMAN rises, nods. MCARDLE takes in the defendant, who is scared. He also notices BELL and the other black male SPECTATORS, all arrayed in the courtroom.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

CLERK

As to the defendant D'Angelo
Barksdale: How say you to the charge
of murder in the first-degree.

FOREWOMAN

Not guilty.

Cautious reaction.

CLERK

How say you to the charge of murder
in the second-degree?

FOREWOMAN

Not guilty.

Courtroom ERUPTS. BARKSDALE embraces his ATTORNEY.
Prosecutor HANSEN slumps, disgusted. BELL and the other
SPECTATORS high-five. JUDGE WATKINS, clearly concerned but
dispassionate, GAVELS the noise down. He spots MCARDLE in
the gallery, watches as MCARDLE turns to BARLOW, who has his
practiced who-gives-a-shit face.

MCARDLE

At least you made 'em work for it.

BARLOW

Fuck 'em all.

The JUDGE has already dismissed the JURORS and ordered
D'ANGELO released from custody. Now, WATKINS motions to his
CLERK, gestures toward MCARDLE and says something. Then, as
celebration and general hubbub continues, he heads to
chambers. With D'ANGELO in tow, BELL finds himself crossing
MCARDLE and BARLOW. D'ANGELO averts his eyes, but BELL
actually smiles.

BARLOW (cont.)

(to D'ANGELO)

Think I give a fuck? I'll be chalking
you off one night.

BELL

Have a nice day.

On MCARDLE, who saw it coming,

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY/CIRCUIT COURTHOUSE - DAY

MCARDLE exits Courtroom, walking toward stairs. The Judge's
CLERK calls to him.

CLERK

Detective?

MCARDLE pauses.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

CLERK (cont.)

Judge asked to speak with you.

MCARDLE gives a look. As CLERK shrugs, unknowing,

CUT TO:

INT. CHAMBERS/CIRCUIT COURTHOUSE - DAY

JUDGE WATKINS sits behind his desk surrounded by the paraphernalia of a connected legal career. He extends his hand, but does not rise, when MCARDLE enters.

MCARDLE

Judge?

JUDGE WATKINS

(gestures to chair)

What the hell happened out there?

MCARDLE

(dry)

We lost.

JUDGE WATKINS

Were you on this?

MCARDLE's pager goes OFF. He grabs at it.

MCARDLE

The case? No. It was Barlow, with an assist from McLarney.

JUDGE WATKINS

Why were you in court on it?

MCARDLE looks at pager readout, frowns.

MCARDLE

No reason.

JUDGE WATKINS

You just like coming to court on murders you didn't even work. Just for a thrill.

MCARDLE smiles, caught.

JUDGE WATKINS (cont.)

I knew an old whore once who said . . . when you start cumming with the customers, it's time to get out of the business.

MCARDLE

That Barksdale kid -- he's a cousin to Aaron Barksdale.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE WATKINS

Who?

MCARDLE

Aaron Barksdale. Stringer Bell.
The whole crew that's been running
Latrobe Homes for a year.

JUDGE WATKINS

Stringer Bell?

MCARDLE

That was him in court. With the
legal pad. Scaring the living shit
out of every witness he can.

JUDGE WATKINS

I saw him.

MCARDLE

And all the rest. Savino, Peanut,
Brother Lee -- all of 'em were there,
showing the flag.

JUDGE WATKINS

I saw them.

MCARDLE

You think about clearing the court?

JUDGE WATKINS

On what basis? It's an open court
in a free nation of laws.

MCARDLE

No shit. I thought this was
Baltimore.

Even WATKINS has to laugh.

MCARDLE (cont.)

(with a shrug)

Barksdale has five of the seven towers
in Latrobe. That's ten stairwells
in five high-rises, going twenty-
four-seven for dope and coke. And
that's just the towers. The low-
rises and the Avenue corners are
his, too.

JUDGE WATKINS

How do you know this?

MCARDLE

Everyone knows it.

JUDGE WATKINS

Everyone?

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

MCARDLE

Everyone on the Westside. Barksdale and Bell are the new power. Have been for like a year, Judge. I mean, they've dropped ten or twelve bodies in as many months. Beat three cases in court doing the same shit they just did to you.

JUDGE WATKINS

Who's working them?

MCARDLE

In the department? No one, really. We're a little busy making street rips, you know? Community policing and all that.

JUDGE WATKINS

So if it's not your case, why do you care?

MCARDLE looks at the JUDGE for a beat.

MCARDLE

Who said I did?

On MCARDLE, sensing he may have said too much,

CUT TO:

INT. NARCOTICS OFFICE/POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

GREGGS types her arrest reports in the background. LIEUTENANT GERARD DANIELS, a narcotics shift commander, black, suit-wearing, forty-five, hovers nearby. HERC and CARVER have now abdicated on the case; they are about street, they are not about paperwork. They play catch with a tennis ball, feet on their desks.

GREGGS

You got E.C.U. numbers?

HERC

Nope.

GREGGS

Get 'em.

HERC

Why me?

GREGGS

You want the collar? Do the submissions.

HERC shares a look with CARVER. He is delighted.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

HERC
You giving me the stat?

GREGGS
It's your turn.

HERC wings tennis ball at CARVER, jumps up, laughing. CARVER fires the tennis ball back. HERC catches it.

HERC
What's the number for E.C.U.?

CARVER
Motherfucker, do I look like a phone book?

CARVER gives a small pout, walks over to bulletin-board and checks an extension list, hunting for number. DANIELS moves toward GREGGS.

DANIELS
Nice rip.

GREGGS
You know how it goes. A police is only as good as her snitch.

The office phone BLEATS. CARVER picks it up, even as HERC is dialing evidence control on another line.

DANIELS
We taking the Benz?

GREGGS
Naw. I promised my girl. Car's in her name.

DANIELS nods.

CARVER
Lieutenant. Deputy Ops on line two.

DANIELS
(picks up phone)
Narcotics. Daniels.

DANIELS listens. HERC hangs up holding notepad page with numbers, sidles over to GREGGS, who is still pecking on the old typewriter. HERC hands her note.

HERC
Here you go.

GREGGS
Fuck me. I cannot type.

GREGGS reaches for correction fluid.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

CARVER
Who the fuck can?

GREGGS
Millennium been an' gone and we still
messin' with Smith-Corona.

HERC
We need computers.

CARVER
What the fuck would an ass-ignorant
motherfucker like you do with a
computer?

HERC
Dunno. Trade stocks and shit.

GREGGS
Jerk off, you mean.

CARVER laughs. HERC throws tennis ball at his head, misses.

CARVER
We get a computer up in here, Herc'll
be deep into some porn sites and
Kima still be pecking out her twenty-
fours on that old piece of shit.

This time GREGGS smiles. DANIELS hangs up, looks pensive.

GREGGS
What's up?

DANIELS
Gotta go upstairs. Deputy is throwing
some kinda piss-fit.

GREGGS
What about?

DANIELS
How the fuck should I know?

DANIELS starts for door.

GREGGS
Captain know?

DANIELS
He's up there now.

DANIELS exits.

CARVER
With a mouthful of piss, probably.

GREGGS
Nice talk.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

HERC

Like our Captain don't know what it tastes like. Chain-of-command, baby. The shit always rolls downhill.

CARVER

Motherfucker, we talking about piss.

HERC

Piss does too. Think about it.

CARVER

Shit rolls, piss trickles.

GREGGS actually stops typing long enough to absorb this level of stupidity.

HERC

Downhill, though.

CARVER

You don't know that for sure. Have you ever actually seen piss on a hill? You can't just say...

GREGGS

(off notepad)

Not to change the subject on you two charmers, but why are there only two E.C.U. numbers?

HERC

Dope and guns.

GREGGS

Two guns. That's three, right?

HERC

Aw, fuck it, Kima. You want a job done right, you need to do the shit yer ownself.

CARVER laughs at this. GREGGS shakes her head.

CARVER

What he means to say is that we are effective deterrents in the war on drugs when we are on the street.

HERC

Fucking motherfuckers up.

CARVER

Indeed.

HERC

Fuck the paperwork. Bodies must be collected. Heads must be split.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

CARVER

Split wide.

HERC

The Western District way.

HERC and CARVER high-five again.

GREGGS

You heroic motherfuckers. Winning
the war on drugs, one brutality case
at a time.

HERC and CARVER crack up.

CARVER

Girl, you can't even call this shit
a war.

HERC

Why not?

CARVER

Wars end.

A beat until HERC gets it. He smiles, laughs, is joined by
CARVER. On GREGGS, who, despite herself, has to appreciate
the pitch-perfect cynicism,

CUT TO:

INT. VACANT APARTMENT/HOUSING PROJECT - DAY

MCARDLE passes through a couple UNIFORMS, arrives at low-
rent crime scene. Cigar lit, BUNK is squatting over a
decomped BODY of a black male.

MCARDLE

How happy am I to see my pager go
off with your call number?

BUNK pulls a second cigar and tosses it to MCARDLE.

BUNK

Smoke 'em if you got 'em.
Motherfucker is as ripe as they get.

MCARDLE

We aren't even up. Lehmann's squad
is up.

BUNK

Yep.

MCARDLE

But you had to answer the fucking
phone, didn't you?

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

BUNK

Got to pay down the credit cards.

MCARDLE

Not off him, you ain't.

BUNK nods, puffs.

MCARDLE (cont.)

Motherfucker, I leave you alone for
a minute or two and what do you do?

BUNK

Awright. I heard you.

MCARDLE

Say the words, Bunk.

BUNK

C'mon, man.

MCARDLE

Speak to me.

BUNK

You gonna cut and run on The Bunk?
Shit ain't right, Jimmy.

MCARDLE stares forlornly at his partner.

BUNK (cont.)

Awright, then. My case. My file.
If this comes back a murder, you
ain't got to do shit but stand there
and laugh at me. You happy now,
bitch?

MCARDLE

(rises; lights cigar)
This'll teach you to give a fuck
when it ain't your turn to give a
fuck.

BUNK

Ain't even gonna be a murder.
Motherfucker probably came in here
to take a shit or something and just
fell out. I bet you there ain't
nothing to it.

MCARDLE

You hope.

MCARDLE heads for door.

BUNK

Where you going?

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

MCARDLE

Back to the office, where I belong.

MCARDLE leaves. BUNK glares at the decomped BODY.

BUNK

(points cigar at BODY)
You mouldering motherfucker. Don't
you even think about coming back a
murder. Don't even think that shit.

On BODY, hideous and silent,

CUT TO:

INT. NARCOTICS OFFICE/POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DUSK

Evidence from the drug bust is gone. So are HERC and CARVER,
leaving only GREGGS, still typing as the workday is all but
over. In b.g., DANIELS and NARCOTICS CAPTAIN FRANK FOERSTER
enter. FOERSTER, white and forties, looks dour, pissed as
he gestures at DANIELS, who nods. FOERSTER exits to his
office, leaving DANIELS to contemplate whatever the problem
is. PULL BACK to REVEAL GREGGS taking this in. DANIELS
notices her, walks over, sits.

GREGGS

Captain's pissed.

DANIELS

Should be. He didn't have answers
for the Deputy's questions.

GREGGS

About what?

DANIELS

Aaron Barksdale.

GREGGS

Who?

DANIELS

That's what I said.

GREGGS

Who the fuck is Aaron Barksdale?

DANIELS

According to the Right Honorable
Judge Watkins, a major Westside
player, who apparently indulges in
the occasional murder. Now, I never
heard of Mr. Barksdale, but by
tomorrow, I plan to be the world's
foremost authority on the man.

They share a look, then GREGGS flips open her notebook.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

GREGGS

What do we know?

DANIELS

According to the judge, he runs the Westside high-rises. Latrobe mostly.

GREGGS

Sounds like bullshit, boss.

DANIELS

Maybe so.

GREGGS

Has to be tonight?

DANIELS

Captain needs the file by morning. Call Andrews over at DEA. See what they have on this mope.

GREGGS

What about Homicide? If the guy's doing murders...

DANIELS

Homicide captain was in the same meeting. His people will be scrambling to put something on paper, too. I doubt they're willing to share, but you can try.

GREGGS takes this in. She will not be going home.

GREGGS

(jotting note)
Barksdale, Aaron. We got a DOB?

DANIELS

Naw.

DANIELS gets up, gives her a quick look of pity, exits. On GREGGS, alone in the office as night falls,

CUT TO:

INT. HOMICIDE OFFICE/POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

MCARDLE enters, checks mailbox, phone messages, prepares to leave at the end of his shift. He's spotted by his sergeant, JOE LANDSMAN, white and mid-thirties.

LANDSMAN

Where the fuck you been all day?

MCARDLE

Drinking. Crack smoking. Whoring myself on the streets of Baltimore.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

LANDSMAN

Well, okay. Just so you have an excuse. But your fuck of a partner picked up the phone, caught a call.

MCARDLE

Saw him out there.

LANDSMAN

Yeah? What'd he get?

MCARDLE

Decomp in a vacant apartment.

LANDSMAN

Fuck. Lehmann's shift was up. That one should be theirs.

MCARDLE

Hey, it's a decomp. Maybe it comes back a natural death.

LANDSMAN

(hopeful)
You think?

MCARDLE

In the high-rises. No fucking way.

MCARDLE heads for door.

LANDSMAN

Hold up. Captain wants to talk to you before you roll out.

MCARDLE

What about?

LANDSMAN

Fuck should I know. I'm only your sergeant.

MCARDLE heads toward Rawls's Office. On LANDSMAN, curious,

CUT TO:

INT. RAWL'S OFFICE/POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Homicide Captain WILLIAM A. RAWLS, white, fifty, an empty suit who has reached as high as the departmental Peter Principle can allow, is behind desk, trying his best to look imperial. In front of him are several stacks of 3x5 cards, each with info on a recent murder. A KNOCK, MCARDLE enters.

RAWLS

Sit the fuck down, Detective.

MCARDLE

Something wrong?

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

RAWLS

Put your ass in the chair.

MCARDLE sits. RAWLS gives him the finger with both hands.

RAWLS (cont.)

See these, McArdle? See 'em? These are for you. These are for you for as long as it takes me to get even...

MCARDLE

Captain...

RAWLS

...No... don't Captain me you backstabbing smartass piece of shit. What the fuck are you doing over at the courthouse anyway? Why the fuck are you talking to some shitbag judge?

RAWLS gives him two fingers again, for emphasis.

RAWLS (cont.)

These are for you, McArdle. This one over here...

(a nod to finger left)

...is going up your narrow Irish ass. And this bad boy over here...

(a nod to finger right)

...is in your fucking eye. I'm upstairs answering questions about some project nigger I never heard of who's supposed to have beat my unit out of ten murders.

MCARDLE

Three. They only beat three in court.

RAWLS

I got the deputy asking about ten.

MCARDLE

They did ten. We only charged them with three.

RAWLS

You're full of shit.

MCARDLE

Captain, you can check the files. Maurice Scroggins, Torean Boyd, Ronald Leggett, whatshername, the girl they found in the stairwell on Saratoga, Collette something or other... I mean, Captain, these guys are real. They beat me up on the Gerard Washington case just like they did Barlow.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

MCARDLE (cont.)

Bought off a witness, then came into court as a crew to scare the living shit out everyone else.

RAWLS

(rifles index cards)

Scroggins? I don't have a Scroggins as an H-file.

MCARDLE

He was last year. Summer. Dead in the low-rise courtyard. Two to the back of the head.

RAWLS

Let me understand something. You are having the Deputy bust my balls over a prior-year case? Is this what you think I need from you, you insubordinate little fuck?

MCARDLE

Captain, I'm sorry. Really. Watkins calls me into chambers and asks what I know about the crew in his court. I didn't mean to cross you up.

RAWLS

I had to go upstairs, knowing nothing, and explain to the Deputy Ops why he's getting calls from some judge about murders that don't mean a shit to anyone up here.

MCARDLE

Look, Captain. This judge -- he fucks me on this. He asks me a question and I answer. I don't know he's gonna call anyone about anything.

RAWLS glares at MCARDLE for a beat, raises both fingers.

RAWLS

Right now, you have my attention, Detective. You have my complete, undivided attention.

MCARDLE

Yes, sir.

RAWLS lowers his fingers. MCARDLE gets up to leave.

RAWLS

Where you going?

MCARDLE

I'm eight-to-four.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

RAWLS gets up, goes to coatrack, grabs overcoat.

RAWLS
No. You're typing.

MCARDLE
Sir?

RAWLS
Deputy wants a report on all this
bullshit on his desk at oh-eight-
hundred.

MCARDLE
A report?

RAWLS
Clean, no typos. Make it look right,
then put my name on it.

MCARDLE
You want to reference all of the
murders? Or should I soft-pedal
that.

RAWLS
Fucking horse is out the barn door,
right? Let's try not to make me
look stupid twice. And when you
list the case, use those little dots
next to each. Deputy like dots.

MCARDLE
I'm sorry, Captain. Really.

RAWLS ignores him, exits. On MCARDLE, self-fucked,

CUT TO:

INT. CHEVY BLAZER/DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

D'ANGELO sits in the passenger seat of a 4x4 driven by a man
first seen as SPECTATOR #2, who is now identified as an
enforcer for the crew named WEE-BEY, black, twenties, fierce.

D'ANGELO
Niggers in there crazy, yo. Eastside,
Westside. Everybody beefin'.

WEE-BEY
You ain't have no problem, right?

D'ANGELO
Naw. We deep in there.

WEE-BEY
Hum.

They drive in silence for a few beats.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

D'ANGELO

Y'all deep at the courthouse, too.

WEE-BEY ignores him.

D'ANGELO (cont.)

I didn't know what the fuck was gonna happen. I'm wondering how y'all gonna make it happen for me, you know. Lawyer doesn't say shit, you know. But that was slick the way y'all got to that security lady.

WEE-BEY turns on the car radio, cranks it, pulls to the curb.

WEE-BEY

Let's walk.

D'ANGELO looks at him, chagrined. WEE-BEY gets out of the car. D'ANGELO follows reluctantly.

EXT. STREET/DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

D'ANGELO follows WEE-BEY across the sidewalk. WEE-BEY looks around before speaking.

WEE-BEY

What's the rule?

D'ANGELO

I know.

WEE-BEY

Say it.

D'ANGELO

Don't talk in a car.

WEE-BEY just looks at him, waiting.

D'ANGELO (cont.)

Or on the phone. Or in any place that ain't ours. And don't say shit to anybody who ain't us.

WEE-BEY nods, starts back toward the truck.

D'ANGELO (cont.)

But it was just you, yo. And it's your truck.

WEE-BEY glares at him. D'ANGELO relents.

D'ANGELO (cont.)

Don't talk in a car.

WEE-BEY walks away. On D'ANGELO, embarrassed,

CUT TO:

INT. ORLANDO'S STRIP CLUB/HOWARD STREET - NIGHT

A private party underway. BELL and the rest of the CREW, including the SPECTATORS seen in court, are at ease, some drinking, some talking, some dancing, some messing with DANCERS and B-GIRLS, most of them black. At a corner booth, AARON BARKSDALE, maybe thirty, with a commanding air and professional ease, holds court. BARKSDALE is not drinking, nor is he messing with any of the women. He is flanked by another enforcer, previously SPECTATOR #3, who is known as STINKUM, and ORLANDO, thirties, the club owner. BELL pulls a drink from the bar and joins them, nods toward the door where a couple PLAYERS, obviously not tried-and-true members of the crew, are made to walk through a metal detector and then frisked. One of the DOORMEN looks to STINKUM, who taps BARKSDALE. BARKSDALE takes in the new faces and nods.

BELL
You invite Marcel?

BARKSDALE
No.

ORLANDO
You want him out?

BARKSDALE
I don't give a shit. Make him pay
for his drinks, though.

BELL laughs. BARKSDALE smiles at MARCEL without smiling.

BELL
You remember the police that tried
to pin Gerard on Little Kevin?

BARKSDALE
Which one?

BELL
Blond detective. The one who was
knocking on all the doors.

BARKSDALE
What about him?

BELL
Came to court to watch.

BARKSDALE
He say anything.

BELL
Naw. Sat in the back.

BARKSDALE nods, notices D'ANGELO and WEE-BEY entering. D'ANGELO is congratulated by CREW MEMBERS and one or two of the GIRLS. He tries to play it off, but still looks sheepish. BARKSDALE watches D'ANGELO until their eyes meet. D'ANGELO then makes a beeline for the corner booth.

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D'ANGELO

Hey.

BELL looks at BARKSDALE, then gets up, walks off. BARKSDALE looks at ORLANDO, who gets the message, leaves with his drink.

BARKSDALE

Must feel good.

D'ANGELO

Well, you know how that go.

BARKSDALE

Say what?

D'ANGELO

I mean, jail ain't no joke.

BARKSDALE

I wouldn't know and I don't plan to know. You want to talk shit about jail, you can sit down next to Marcel over there. He just came home.

D'ANGELO looks over at MARCEL, who is paying the BARTENDER.

D'ANGELO

You right.

BARKSDALE

So?

D'ANGELO shifts and bobs.

BARKSDALE (cont.)

Sit your ass down.

D'ANGELO

(sits in booth)

I know it didn't go so good. But Pooch, he caught me off guard. Came at me like he crazy and all.

BARKSDALE

So you shoot the motherfucker.

D'ANGELO

I'm sayin' he was jumpin' bad.

BARKSDALE

You in our building. You got people in both stairs. You got more people out in the court. And you got a gun. So how the fuck you end up shootin' a nigger in front of the security booth and all them people?

D'ANGELO

He was...

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

BARKSDALE

It ain't about him. Soon as he touched you, he was dead. It's about you, Dee. You can't play him out of that lobby. You can't take a beating neither. First thing you do, you get all emotional, pull the gun, do some dumb shit we have to work around.

D'ANGELO

I know.

BARKSDALE

You ain't begun to say what I want to hear.

D'ANGELO

You right.

BARKSDALE looks at his nephew, partially sated.

D'ANGELO (cont.)

I got to start thinking. You saying that all the time and you right.

BARKSDALE shares a look with STINKUM.

D'ANGELO (cont.)

But I'm saying, unc, what y'all pulled with that security lady. That was tight. I mean, damn. The lady lawyer -- I never seen a white lady turn that red. She was off the hook.

BARKSDALE smiles, despite himself.

BARKSDALE

You family, Dee. But that shit cost money. Time and money. You know?

D'ANGELO

Huh.

BARKSDALE

So you gonna make that right?

D'ANGELO

You gonna see. I get back to that tower, I'm gonna push them niggers.

D'ANGELO gives his uncle a little dap of the hand. As HE gets up to go party,

CUT TO:

INT. HOMICIDE OFFICE/POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

MCARDLE at his desk, typing the report.

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(CONTINUED)

He reaches down and picks up an open case folder from several that are spread out on the floor. A midnight-shift detective, RAY COLE, is tucked into a chair, a pillow supports his head, his shoeless feet are stretched out on the desk.

COLE

Type quieter.

MCARDLE throws a look, then continues typing. BUNK comes in looking beat, carrying two evidence bags. He drops them on the desk across from MCARDLE.

BUNK

You didn't have to wait up, love?

MCARDLE

Your boy didn't have a heart attack?

BUNK

I went that way, but Doc Frazier didn't bite when this popped up.

BUNK takes a plastic cylinder that contains a small piece of lead from his pocket.

MCARDLE

Bad luck. Any leads?

BUNK gingerly empties the first bag, a couple of beer cans and a box of KFC -- all of it destined for the print lab.

BUNK

Right now, this is all I got.

BUNK looks forlornly at one of the beer cans, then drops it into a small paper bag.

MCARDLE

Then you seriously fucked.

BUNK

Speaking of fucked, why you here?

MCARDLE

I did bad, Bunk.

BUNK

Huh?

MCARDLE

It wasn't my fault.

BUNK stops bagging evidence and gives MCARDLE a look. From down the hall, we hear the BELL of the elevator doors opening.

MCARDLE (cont.)

No really.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

MCARDLE (cont.)

Judge Watkins pulled me up after the jury let the Barksdale kid go. So him being a judge and all, I told him what was up.

BUNK

He raise a stink?

MCARDLE

Captain got busted and I gotta have a report by morning.

BUNK

There you go, giving a fuck when it ain't your turn to give a fuck.

MCARDLE smiles sheepishly, his own lesson run back on him. LANDSMAN walks in, early relief for midnight shift. He spots his two detectives and addresses COLE who is decamping, tucking his pillow into a desk drawer.

LANDSMAN

Look at 'em, Cole. Doesn't it make your dick pump purple piss to be in the same room with two such noble, selfless public servants. I know I'm proud.

COLE doesn't give a fuck, exits. LANDSMAN addresses BUNK.

LANDSMAN (cont.)

Tell me you put this one down.

BUNK shrugs.

LANDSMAN (cont.)

'Course not. And of course your partner here has to go over to the courthouse and lay our business in front of Watkins. Are you stone stupid?

MCARDLE

So you heard.

LANDSMAN

Captain calls me at home last night, tells me to get in early and read over your shoulder.

MCARDLE shows him the face sheet of the report. Points to the bulleted list of murders.

MCARDLE

It's got dots. Deputy loves dots.

LANDSMAN

Fuck you and your dots.

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(CONTINUED)

MCARDLE

Look, all I did was answer the man's questions. He's a fucking judge.

LANDSMAN

And the Deputy is the fucking Deputy, dipshit. And he, not the judge, holds what's left of your beshitted career in his hot little hands.

MCARDLE

Gimme a break.

LANDSMAN

He says so, you're in the Western tomorrow.

MCARDLE

Fuck it. I came from Western.

LANDSMAN

Well, where don't you want to go, asshole? Evidence Control? Personnel? Headquarters Security?

MCARDLE

(beat; smiles)
The boat.

BUNK

Marine Unit?

MCARDLE

Can't swim.

LANDSMAN pulls out a twenty dollar bill.

LANDSMAN

Keep it up. I'll go this against a ten that you ride the boat; midnight shift.

MCARDLE smiles. LANDSMAN looks at BUNK, shakes his head, pockets bill, exits. MCARDLE looks at his partner.

BUNK

Listen to the man, Jimmy.

On MCARDLE, doubtful,

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD/LATROBE HIGH-RISES - DAY

D'ANGELO gets off city bus, zips his jacket and strides into the projects. On perimeter of courtyard, he passes young LOOKOUTS who greet him with a nod and a grunt. WEE-BEY, the enforcer, standing by one of the benches, with BELL seated, waves D'ANGELO over.

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(CONTINUED)

In b.g., other CREW MEMBERS are touting, bringing in early BUYERS, who turn over crumpled bills and head for high-rises.

BELL
You here early.

D'ANGELO
On my game, today.

BELL
Good.

D'ANGELO
Eggy put testers out?

BELL nods and D'ANGELO starts for the high-rise.

BELL
Dee.

D'ANGELO turns.

BELL (cont.)
New deal today.

D'ANGELO
Huh?

BELL
You going out on point, picking up
the business in the pit.

D'ANGELO
What?

BELL
You the man in the low-rises.

D'ANGELO
The low-rises. You got Ronnie Mo
in the pit.

BELL
Ronnie Mo got eight-fifty-one this
morning. You in the pit.

D'ANGELO
Why?

BELL
Why what?

D'ANGELO
Why you giving me the low-rises when
I had a tower since summer?

BELL
You had a tower.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

BELL (cont.)

You might have a tower again if you
keep your mind to shit.

D'ANGELO

Naw. That's fucked up.

BELL

You show us you can run the pit, you
be back uptown soon enough.

D'ANGELO

My uncle know about this?

BELL

What do you think?

D'ANGELO takes this in.

BELL (cont.)

(to WEE-BEY)

Yo, Bey. Give little cousin a ride
down the way.

WEE-BEY nods, straightens. D'ANGELO, pouting, looks over at
the tower then back at BELL. As BELL looks away,

CUT TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR/POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Captain RAWLS of Homicide and Captain FOERSTER of Narcotics
exit a door marked "Deputy Commissioner for Operations",
each carrying a file folder, with RAWLS having the fatter
file. They move silently toward the elevator.

FOERSTER

Have your people deal with Daniels.

RAWLS

Right.

The elevator arrives. THEY get on.

INT. ELEVATOR/POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Two CAPTAINS ride in silence.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS CORRIDOR/POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Elevator OPENS, CAPTAINS exit and are about to part ways.

FOERSTER

You gonna send your man McArdle?

RAWLS turns, nods.

FOERSTER (cont.)

Tell him about the chain-of-command.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

RAWLS

Tell him yourself. He's dead to me.

On RAWLS, almost amused at the idea,

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD/LOW-RISES - DAY

D'ANGELO walks up to be greeted by a much YOUNGER, more rag-tag collection of DEALER, TOUTS and LOOKOUTS. He takes in the surroundings of a drug market inferior to the towers. Two fifteen-year-old DEALERS, a lanky, sharp-eyed kid named BODIE and a listless tag-a-long, WALLACE, stroll over.

BODIE

You lookin' for Ronnie Mo? He uptown.

D'ANGELO

I know.

BODIE

You Dee?

D'ANGELO nods.

BODIE (cont.)

You was in the towers.

D'ANGELO

Yeah.

WALLACE

Why they put you down here then?
You mess up the count or something?

D'ANGELO gives his hardest glare.

D'ANGELO

I killed a nigger.

WALLACE is chastened, but BODIE is not entirely impressed. On D'ANGELO, taking in his new digs,

CUT TO:

INT. FOERSTER'S OFFICE/POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Captain FOERSTER of Narcotics waits with a thin file on his desk. A KNOCK. DANIELS enters.

DANIELS

Captain?

FOERSTER

(holding file)
Counting what the DEA gave us, how
much did we have on this guy?

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

DANIELS

Sir?

FOERSTER

In my hot little hand, I am holding
how many pages, Lieutenant?

DANIELS

Four. Sir.

FOERSTER

Rawls had a fucking phone book.

DANIELS

What can I tell you? You can pull a
pretty big rabbit out of ten open
murder files. If we had ten shots
at this guy, we'd have more than a
fat file.

FOERSTER

I made that point upstairs.

DANIELS

They can't put this guy down for a
murder or two, so they're getting us
to do their work.

FOERSTER

They got us. They got you, in fact.

DANIELS

Excuse me, Captain?

FOERSTER

Dawson has the York and Cator case,
so that leaves you. Set something
up for this afternoon with Homicide
and whoever else you want from your
squads.

DANIELS

State's Attorney?

FOERSTER

Call them, too.

DANIELS nods, exits into...

INT. NARCOTICS OFFICE/POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

DANIELS leaves Foerster's Office and is immediately summoned
by CARVER.

CARVER

Lieutenant, line three.

DANIELS goes to pick it up.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

CARVER (cont.)

Deputy Ops.

DANIELS' hand hesitates above the receiver for a moment. He seems visibly pained. He picks up.

DANIELS

Daniels. Narcotics.

On DANIELS, listening as the rest of the OFFICE watches,

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

BUBBLES, late thirties and gaunt, stands in alley, eyeing street, waiting. JOHNNY, a pimpled scrawny white kid, twenties, appears at mouth of alley.

BUBBLES

Hey. How'd you do?

JOHNNY

Went to the library. Ten cents a copy.

JOHNNY takes out couple of sheets of papers and hands it to BUBBLES. The sheets contain photostats of a ten dollar bill.

BUBBLES

You didn't cut them up?

JOHNNY

Um...

BUBBLES moves to back step of vacant house where he takes out a small pen knife and cuts the bills from the sheet. He inspects one of the counterfeit bills, checking both sides, then crumbles it in his hands, then picks up a small styrofoam cup with coffee and pours it on paper. Then he crumbles it again, drying it slowly in his hands.

BUBBLES

Leastways, you got it on both sides this time.

JOHNNY

Yeah. Both sides.

BUBBLES holds out his hand. JOHNNY goes into his front pocket and hands BUBBLES a real tenspot. BUBBLES folds the real ten dollar bill over two phony bills, then pockets money.

JOHNNY (cont.)

Whoa, why we spending real money?

BUBBLES

We ain't gaming no Lemmon Street chumps here. You feel me?

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

I'm down.

On JOHNNY, as down as he can manage,

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD/LOW-RISES - DAY

D'ANGELO sits on a stoop, surveying his reduced kingdom. TOUTS are working Fayette Street under WALLACE's watch. From a distance, we watch BUBBLES talking up a TOUT, while JOHNNY hangs back. The TOUT directs him to a young HOPPER, who takes the money from BUBBLES. The HOPPER runs over and gives the money to WALLACE, while HOPPER #2 runs out of a vacant unit to serve BUBBLES.

D'ANGELO

Yo, Wallace.

WALLACE jogs over to the bench.

D'ANGELO (cont.)

This how Ronnie Mo set it up?

WALLACE

Yeah.

D'ANGELO

It's fucked up, yo.

WALLACE

Yeah.

D'ANGELO

I'm saying you can't serve your customers straight up after taking their money. Somebody snapping pictures, they got the whole thing. See what I'm saying, you get paid you send them off around the building, yo. Then you serve.

BODIE

(joins them)

What up?

D'ANGELO

We got to tighten up, man. Can't be taking no short cuts.

BODIE

(to WALLACE)

What's your count?

WALLACE reaches into his pocket and takes out a wad of bills.

WALLACE

I'm up two-seventy.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

WALLACE hands the wad to D'ANGELO who starts to put it in his pocket.

BODIE
You want to check it?

D'ANGELO hesitates.

BODIE (cont.)
I don't know how it work in the towers. But down here, you want to check it.

D'ANGELO hesitates, turns into doorway, starts to count bills.

D'ANGELO
Y'all been burnt.

Turning back to the two dealers, BODIE and WALLACE, D'ANGELO holds out three phony bills.

WALLACE
Huh?

D'ANGELO
Huh? That what you got to say.
Huh? This look like money, motherfucker? Huh? Money be green. Money feel like money. Does that look money green to you?

D'ANGELO throws fake bills at WALLACE, who picks them up.

WALLACE
It got a dead-ass president on it.

D'ANGELO stands up, furious, or as close to it as he can.

D'ANGELO
I don't give a fuck about the president. It ain't no money.

BODIE
He ain't no president.

D'ANGELO
What you mean?

BODIE
Hamilton. He ain't no president.

D'ANGELO and WALLACE both stare at him, speechless.

BODIE (cont.)
No president.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

D'ANGELO

(recovers)

Nigger, are you crazy? Ain't no ugly-ass white man get his face on no legal motherfucking tender 'cept he president.

(turns to WALLACE)

This shit happen again, you off the money. You hear me? You ain't even gonna be serving. You be out down the bottom end of Stockton sucking a forty and yelling Five-Oh.

WALLACE turns away, his feelings hurt. BODIE looks at D'ANGELO, sizing up the new boss and his seeming non-violence.

BODIE

That it?

D'ANGELO

Huh?

On BODIE, dubious,

CUT TO:

INT. BURRITT'S OFFICE/POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

DANIELS sits, a little out of his element, across the wide, regal desk of Deputy Commissioner RONALD H. BURRITT, who seems to have had his picture taken with every mayor, congressman, governor and president who ever set foot in Baltimore. BURRITT, fifty and black, is a man who knows how to use every last trapping of power.

BURRITT

In and out. Street rips, buy-bust.

DANIELS

Yes, sir.

BURRITT

No long surveillances, no Kel recorders, no DNRs. And, of course, no Title IIIs. I want to get in and out as quickly as possible.

DANIELS

That makes sense.

BURRITT

It's a matter of meeting expectations. Watkins isn't just a judge, he's a political entity that requires our attention. He asks for something, I want to give it to him. For the department's sake.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

DANIELS

Why is he asking about this Barksdale?

BURRITT

He watched a State's Attorney get
beat up in his court this week.
Lost a murder case to this bunch.

DANIELS

We lose cases all the time.

BURRITT

True. But as I said, a judge happens
to be asking about this one. So we
deliver Mr. Barksdale, as quickly
and as cleanly as we can.

DANIELS

I understand.

BURRITT

Who are you using?

DANIELS

Lead detective? Greggs. She's my
best, right now.

BURRITT

Do I know her?

DANIELS

C.I.D. for four months. Came over
from Eastern D.E.U.

BURRITT can't place her, but nods anyway.

DANIELS (cont.)

Who is Homicide sending?

BURRITT

That's up to Captain Rawls. I
wouldn't be surprised if you get
McArdle though. Do you know McArdle?

DANIELS

No. Not really.

BURRITT

He was the one who mouthed off to
the judge in the first place. But
now you're in the box, he also seems
to know a little something about
what's been happening over on the
Westside.

DANIELS

He talked to the judge.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

BURRITT

That's my understanding. So if he comes over on this, you need to watch your back.

DANIELS nods.

BURRITT (cont.)

(pointedly)

I'll watch yours.

DANIELS

Yes, sir.

BURRITT

I'm serious, Lieutenant. Your captain volunteered you for this -- and not just because he believes you to be his most capable shift supervisor.

DANIELS

You're saying the buck has been passed.

BURRITT

If you make this go away quick, you've done everyone a good turn. But if it drags, or if we can't ease the judge's mind, then your captain has it in mind to back up on you like a bad stretch of sewer pipe.

DANIELS looks at BURRITT pointedly, assessing the Deputy's offer of protection at face value.

BURRITT (cont.)

You need anything, you ask me. I'll give you all the help I can.

DANIELS

Thank you, sir.

BURRITT

But no surprises. Keep me briefed.

DANIELS gets up to go. On BURRITT, having struck a bargain,

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD/LOW-RISES - DAY

White boy JOHNNY cruises up, trying to look as casual as a white boy in the projects can. He grips a roll of three seeming tenspots in one hand, watches the foot traffic and waits while WALLACE and another young runner, POOTIE, are in a rush to serve an all-at-one crowd of three other ADDICTS. JOHNNY puts the roll into WALLACE's left hand even as WALLACE is trying to make change for another ADDICT.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY

Two and two.

WALLACE

Hold up. Hold up.

JOHNNY

What? Two and two.

WALLACE tries to regroup, make change for the other ADDICT.

WALLACE

You gave me how much?

ADDICT

Twenty. For one and a short three.

WALLACE

So you get...?

WALLACE is literally counting on fingers.

ADDICT

Seven, yo. I get seven back.

JOHNNY

I'm two and two.

WALLACE

Hold up. You fuckin' me up here.

WALLACE drops the roll in his left hand. The bad bills float free from the good one and begin to blow off in the wind. JOHNNY looks down, decides to creep away. BODIE looks over from his perch on a nearby stoop, spots the bad money and then, JOHNNY, walking sideways to get away.

BODIE

Yo, he the motherfucker.

WALLACE

What?

BODIE

The white boy. There.

WALLACE

Huh?

BODIE jumps off the stoop, shouts to POOTIE.

POOTIE

Pootie, man, get the white boy.

JOHNNY starts to run. POOTIE and two other YOUNGSTERS chase him into alley. BODIE catches up to the bad bills, still floating across courtyard in the wind.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

He reaches down and is still examining them, as FOOTIE and the OTHERS emerge from the alley with JOHNNY, who is now bleeding from one eye and crying. BODIE turns to WALLACE.

BODIE

Yo. Get Dee.

WALLACE jogs off. BODIE, pleased with himself, walks over to JOHNNY, who is ill and tired and scared, all at once.

JOHNNY

What? Why you fucking with me?

BODIE

You think you slick. You ain't.

D'ANGELO walks up, with WALLACE in tow.

BODIE

This the motherfucker with the make-believe money.

BODIE hands the bills to D'ANGELO, who examines them, then sizes up the wreck that is JOHNNY.

BODIE

I seen him drop that shit when he copped.

JOHNNY

Wadn't me.

BODIE cracks him across the face with a round-house, a blow so hard that it knocks JOHNNY and FOOTIE both to the ground. BODIE kicks JOHNNY again for emphasis.

JOHNNY (cont.)

Sorry. I'm sorry.

BODIE

Burnt us for thirty already. We need to take his ass up to Franklin Street and throw his ass onto the expressway.

D'ANGELO

(ignores BODIE)

What you got on you?

JOHNNY

Just ten I dropped. The real ten.

D'ANGELO

You give that up and you gonna come back tomorrow with twenty more. 'Til then, motherfucker, you cut off. You hear me?

JOHNNY takes this in. So do all the YOUNG TURKS.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

D'ANGELO is holding off on the expected beating. D'ANGELO turns to his CREW.

D'ANGELO (cont.)
Ya'll heard me. He's cut off until
he brings twenty.

D'ANGELO walks away. JOHNNY gets up slowly and is shoved roughly down street by FOOTIE. WALLACE throws a bottle to shoo him on his way. As BODIE watches D'ANGELO, amazed,

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL CONFERENCE ROOM/POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

DANIELS, GREGGS, HERC, CARVER and MCARDLE sit across from each other for first time, the two Barksdale reports in front of them. They are joined by Assistant State's Attorney RHONDA PEARLMAN, white, Jewish, thirties, and Homicide Det. FRANCIS SANTANGELO, white, forties. SANTANGELO is clearly bored by it all, aloof. DANIELS enters, breaks the silence.

DANIELS
For now, we'll work out of Narcotics,
with Kima keeping the file, and
copying everything to Ronnie at the
courthouse.

SANTANGELO
Fine with us.

MCARDLE shoots SANTANGELO a look.

DANIELS
McArdle and Santangelo will begin by
working back on some of the unsolved
murders, seeing if anything can be
manufactured there. Kima and my
people will start doing some hand-to-
hand stuff in Latrobe. Buy-bust.
Quick and dirty.

PEARLMAN
I'll make sure to bump those cases
out of District Court as fast as you
give them to me.

DANIELS
Exactly. We put some years over top
of some of these low-level people,
and we'll roll a few no problem.

MCARDLE
We aren't going to get close to Aaron
Barksdale, or Stringer Bell, or anyone
else above the street. Not by doing
buy-bust.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

DANIELS

You don't know that.

MCARDLE

Lieutenant, these guys are good. They're deep, they're organized and they've got everyone in those projects running scared.

DANIELS

What do you suggest?

MCARDLE

Surveillance teams, DNRs, assets investigations. Keep gathering string on until we can find a way in.

SANTANGELO

A way in?

MCARDLE

Either a wired CI or a Title III. That's what makes this case.

DANIELS

That what you told the judge?

MCARDLE

Okay, so I'm an asshole for that. But I'm right about this much.

DANIELS

No Kel-mikes. No wires. We do this fast and clean and simple.

MCARDLE

Then you don't do it at all.

PEARLMAN

Seems to me you all could've had this fight amongst yourselves before calling in the State's Attorney's Office.

MCARDLE

(turns to GREGGS)
Let me ask something: What do we know about Aaron Barksdale?

GREGGS

What do we know?

MCARDLE

The man's owned all of Latrobe for almost a year. So what do we have on him right now? A DOB? A sheet? A B-of-I photo? We don't even have a fucking photo of the guy.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

CARVER

So what?

MCARDLE

So it's a rare sonofabitch who can take over the most lucrative drug market in the city and not leave behind so much as a sheet.

SANTANGELO

Gimme a break, Jimmy. Two days ago no one on this fucking floor knew this mope's name. Now he's some kinda criminal mastermind.

HERC

I say we go over Latrobe and fuck some people up.

CARVER laughs. PEARLMAN, irritated, gets up to go.

PEARLMAN

You all don't need a prosecutor, you need a fucking referee. When you know how you're playing this, give a yell.

She goes to door.

DANIELS

We know how we're playing it. My people are going down to Latrobe to do some hand-to-hands. Detectives McCardle and Santangelo are going back down the hall to review any old murder files and try to manufacture a fresh prosecution. As things heat up, I'll go to the Deputy and get us more manpower, but this case is not going to sprawl. We're getting in and out as fast as possible.

DANIELS eyefucks MCARDLE pointedly, then nods to PEARLMAN.

PEARLMAN

Fine. Bring me your hand-to-hands, and you can take anything on the murders to Ilene Nathan in violent crimes. I'll clue her in.

PEARLMAN exits.

DANIELS

Anything else?

MCARDLE is shut down. The meeting starts to break up.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

DANIELS (cont.)

One last thing: No one does anything at all on the street without me knowing about it first.

(looks at MCARDLE)

Chain-of-command, Detective. That's how we do things down this end of the hall.

On MCARDLE, with tiremarks on his back,

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD/LOW-RISES - EVENING

A tester line of DOPE FIENDS forms in side alley. BUBBLES and JOHNNY race to get there in time for free samples of a fresh package. POOTIE and an OLD TOUT are handing off.

JOHNNY

Timed it right, Subs.

BUBBLES

Yes, Lawd.

POOTIE eyes the line of FIENDS, ensuring each gets one only.

POOTIE

One a customer. Keep movin'

BUBBLES and JOHNNY are each handed a pink-topped vial.

BUBBLES

These pinks weren't much last week.

POOTIE

Fuck last week. Pinks the shit today.

BUBBLES grunts, pockets the vial. Starts out of alley with JOHNNY trailing. BODIE appears at the mouth of alley with WEE-BEY, STINKUM and one other ENFORCER. Two of them carry baseball bats. BODIE nods in JOHNNY's direction.

BODIE

Him.

As the FIENDS scatter, JOHNNY is beaten to the edge of death. On BUBBLES, who watches weakly, horrified,

CUT TO:

INT. MURPHY'S IRISH PUB - NIGHT

MCARDLE and BUNK drink; MCARDLE has Jameson, BUNK has Glenlivet. BUNK is only black man in sight. They are lit.

BUNK

If she fucking you on visitation,
take her ass to court.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

MCARDLE

Not that simple, Bunk. Judge gives me three weekends out of four, I still need her to cooperate, you know. Move it around, so when I have to work through a weekend, she switches with me. So the judge gives me three weekends but no flex. I still lose.

BUNK

You two can't talk this through?

MCARDLE downs a shot of Jameson, shakes his head.

MCARDLE

I just want to see my fucking kids, you know? I mean, what the fuck.

BUNK finishes his scotch, checks his watch.

MCARDLE (cont.)

You know Daniels? From Narcotics?

BUNK

What about him?

MCARDLE

He's running this detail.

BUNK

Watch your ass then.

MCARDLE

He a snake?

BUNK

Naw. He ain't that. But he's a company man, you know? A prospect. Grapevine says the next district to open up is his.

MCARDLE

Short list for Major?

BUNK

He's black, he's still young, he hasn't pissed anyone off. Shit, he's even got a law degree.

MCARDLE

No shit.

BUNK

University of Baltimore.

MCARDLE contemplates his empty glass.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

MCARDLE

Well, he's gonna fuck this Barksdale thing up.

BUNK

How's that?

MCARDLE

Buy-bust. He's pissin' in the wind.

BUNK

You already fucked it up, Jimmy.
You made it happen.

MCARDLE

(laughs at truth)
I feel like that motherfucker at the end of "Bridge on the River Kwai", you know. What the fuck did I do?

BUNK

The bridge of what?

MCARDLE

You ain't seen that movie?

BUNK shakes his head, checks his watch again.

MCARDLE (cont.)

I am fucked. Fucked is me.

BUNK

Goddammit. You gonna make me go another round.

On BUNK, weary, motioning for the BARKEEP,

CUT TO:

INT. ORLANDO'S STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

D'ANGELO, nursing a rum and coke, sits at the bar with BELL.

D'ANGELO

It was only a couple dollars.

BELL

It ain't the money.

D'ANGELO

Y'all fucked him up so bad.

BELL

It's the message, Dee. You show that kind of weakness, you lose everything that comes after.

D'ANGELO

Still, man. I mean, damn.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

BELL gets up, disgusted, taking his drink with him.

D'ANGELO (cont.)

Yo, String... Stringy...

BELL ignores him. Alone, D'ANGELO contemplates his drink. A few stools away, a DANCER, black, twenties, grandly near-sighted, puts on thick glasses to spec him. Then, vainly, she puts the glasses back in her purse. Call her SHARDENE.

SHARDENE

You ain't touched that drink.

D'ANGELO looks over.

SHARDENE (cont.)

You want some company?

D'ANGELO

I ain't no john.

SHARDENE

Good, 'cause I ain't no whore.

D'ANGELO

I mean, I ain't a regular customer. I'm with Stringer. I work with Stringer.

SHARDENE

He pay you, right? C'mon, honey. Buy me a drink.

D'ANGELO

How much?

SHARDENE

Twenty.

D'ANGELO winces at the hustle.

SHARDENE (cont.)

But I drink slow.

D'ANGELO

Maybe another time.

SHARDENE nods, manages a small smile. She catches the eye of another CUSTOMER beyond D'ANGELO, gets up, moves toward him to begin her hustle. On D'ANGELO, to himself,

CUT TO:

INT. GREGG'S APARTMENT/WOODLAWN - NIGHT

GREGGS rushes in, begins pulling off police gear as soon as she hits the door.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

GREGGS

Hey. Where you at?

No answer. She looks down the hall, hears the shower, moves to the kitchen, where she checks the frig and liberates some leftovers. She goes to the dining room table, where textbooks and notepads are already sprawled. She sits amid the schoolwork, looking at the leftovers. Her female ROOMMATE, white, twenties, close-cropped hair comes out of the bathroom in a towel. Call her TARYN.

GREGGS (cont.)

You late for work?

TARYN

A little.

(off schoolwork)

How much do you have left?

GREGGS

Ten pages and all the footnotes.

TARYN

When is it due?

GREGGS

Beginning of class tomorrow.

TARYN

Long night for you.

GREGGS

Long night for me.

TARYN leans over, kisses GREGGS. More than a friendly kiss. TARYN goes back toward the bedroom.

TARYN

I'll bring home coffee anyway.

GREGGS exhales, turns a page, tries to orient herself. A pager goes off. She checks hers, noting the readout curiously. She looks at the schoolwork, frowns, hesitates. As SHE reaches for the phone,

CUT TO:

EXT. CALVERTON ROAD/WEST BALTIMORE - NIGHT

Early morning. BUNK and MCARDLE, very drunk, finish a bottle at the end of a street that ends at the Amtrak railbed.

BUNK

...So I drive all the way down Liberty Road at two in the damn morning, on a midnight shift with two murders and a police shooting going down, to do what?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

BUNK (cont.)

To get a got-damn mouse out my wife's bedroom closet. You imagine that?

MCARDLE

What did you do?

BUNK

What the fuck you think? I got the mouse fast as I could and drove back to work. Couldn't do nothing else. Nadine out of her mind over this tiny-ass field mouse. I mean, she up on a chair and shit when I come, like some got-damn cartoon.

BUNK tosses the empty Jameson bottle into the brush.

MCARDLE

I mean, how'd you catch the mouse?

BUNK

Catch him? I lit his ass up.

MCARDLE

(incredulous)

You shot the mouse?

BUNK

Uh-huh.

MCARDLE

With your nine?

BUNK

First shot killed my wife's dress shoe. Got him with the second.

MCARDLE cracks up.

BUNK (cont.)

What?

MCARDLE

You shot a mouse with your service weapon. What did you do with the carcass?

BUNK

Cleaned it up.

MCARDLE shakes his head, walks over toward the railbed.

BUNK (cont.)

But I thought about leavin' the motherfucker there as a warning to others.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

MCARDLE steadies himself against "Do Not Trespass" sign, steps through the brush to the railbed. From up the track we HEAR a distant Metroliner HORN. BUNK checks his watch.

BUNK (cont.)

Fuck me. It's four-thirty and I'm supposed to be early relief.

MCARDLE is taking a piss on the rails.

BUNK (cont.)

Jimmy, man. I gotta change clothes at least. C'mon...

MCARDLE zips his pants, stares up the track.

MCARDLE

I'm gonna do this case.

BUNK

What?

MCARDLE

I'm gonna do this case.

BUNK shakes his head. The train can be HEARD approaching.

MCARDLE (cont.)

The way it should be done.

BUNK

Buy-bust, Jimmy. Get in, get out.

MCARDLE

Naw, fuck that.

MCARDLE stares at the now-visible train, its whistle WAILING. He hesitates just long enough so that BUNK, though intoxicated, nervously 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 Metroliner wails by. BUNK looks at MCARDLE.

MCARDLE (cont.)

Let's call it a night.

On MCARDLE, set,

CUT TO:

INT. TRIAGE AREA/SHOCK-TRAUMA UNIT - NIGHT

GREGGS arrives to find BUBBLES sitting on a stool next to an unconscious and intubated JOHNNY, who is on full monitor.

GREGGS

Hey, Bubs.

BUBBLES looks over, red-eyed.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

GREGGS (cont.)
Thought you was still locked up.

BUBBLES
Naw.

GREGGS
When you come home?

BUBBLES
Been three months.

GREGGS nods, looks over at JOHNNY.

GREGGS
Who's he?

BUBBLES
Friend.

GREGGS
He gonna make it?

BUBBLES shrugs, looks away.

GREGGS (cont.)
So what's the deal?

BUBBLES
You still working drugs?

GREGGS
Downtown, yeah.

BUBBLES
I got something for you.

On GREGGS and her old informant, renewing acquaintances,

CUT TO:

INT. HOMICIDE OFFICE/POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Hungover, BUNK nurses coffee at his desk. LANDSMAN is on the phone, writing on an index card. He turns to look over at BUNK, then hangs up, gets up and walks over with the card.

LANDSMAN
Found body. Two hundred block Amity.

BUNK
I'm a little thin today, boss.

LANDSMAN
Squad's a little thin remember.
We're down a man since your partner
got himself detailed.

(CONTINUED)

7/26/01

(CONTINUED)

BUNK looks up at LANDSMAN, who is enjoying the moment. As he takes the card, grabs his gun, coat, starts to leave,

CUT TO:

EXT. AMITY STREET/WEST BALTIMORE - MORNING

CRIME SCENE PERSONNEL and UNIFORMS hover over BODY of middle-aged black man, shot in back of head. LOCALS and CORNER BOYS hover behind yellow scene tape. BUNK arrives at scene in an unmarked unit, gets out and walks over to a UNIFORM.

UNIFORM

One or two in the back of the head.
No witnesses. No suspects. You got
a .380 casing on the ground there.

BUNK

Who called it in?

UNIFORM

No one. Twenty-one post found him.
(checks license)
He is a William Gant, forty-two, no,
forty-three years. Address on
Schroeder.

BUNK

M.E. here? Let's roll 'im if we got
pictures.

Two M.E. ATTENDANTS straddle BODY and roll it, revealing face of GANT, the state's witness, who testified against D'Angelo Barksdale in court.

BUNK (cont.)

He don't look like a player.

UNIFORM

Naw. Just played.

PULL BACK to REVEAL D'ANGELO BARKSDALE in CROWD on other side of crime scene tape. From D'ANGELO's POV, we watch BUNK and the OTHERS work scene. He recognizes victim, slips from CROWD, walks back to his perch in nearby low-rises. On D'ANGELO, head in hands, brooding,

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END