

RISING STAR

Written by

Stephen Hall

shsc21441@gmail.com
07983510775

www.hereandback.co.uk/screenplays

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

It is 1989 and plainclothes detective LOGAN FORD [37] chases PERP [25] on foot through busy street. Crossing the road, they dodge vehicles while the perp pushes aside stunned pedestrians. Logan breathes heavily as he attempts to catch his foe who rushes into the road only to be hit by an oncoming police car.

The perp rolls over the bonnet as Logan arrives at the scene.

The police officers quickly exit the vehicle for POLICE OFFICER #2 [29] to cuff the perp who is writhing in pain, while POLICE OFFICER #1 [31] casually stands by the vehicle watching Logan, who is bent over catching his breath.

POLICE OFFICER #1
You're seriously outta shape,
Logan.

Logan is bent over as he catches his breath.

LOGAN FORD
I'd like to see you run five
blocks.

Police Officer #2 leads the perp towards the vehicle.

POLICE OFFICER #2
(to Logan)
Surprised you made it this far.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Too much sauce man.

Bundling the perp into the back of the car, Police officer #2 looks over at Logan and shakes his head as he studies the detective.

POLICE OFFICER #2
You're a fuckin' mess Logan.

LOGAN FORD
Speak for yourself O'Keefe

Police Officer #1 opens the car door to enter.

POLICE OFFICER #1
We can take it from here.

Police Officer #2 follows suit.

POLICE OFFICER #2
(to Police Officer #1)
He couldn't catch a cold.

The officers laugh as the engine rumbles into action before the vehicle exits the scene with Logan looking disgruntled as pedestrians gawk at the proceedings.

LOGAN FORD
(to passersby)
What are you looking at?

People warily circumvent the detective as he dusts himself down and composes himself before walking away from the scene.

INT. POLICE STATION OFFICE - DAY

The open-plan office is a hive of activity as Logan enters.

Someone fakes sneezing as he passes seated colleagues and advances towards his desk where there is a 'Get Well' card placed prominently amongst piles of folders and documents with the word 'Well' crossed out and the word 'Fit' replaced.

He picks up the card to the sound of chuckles from behind.

POLICE OFFICER #3 (O.S.)
They're showing Catch-22 tonight!

POLICE OFFICER #4 (O.S.)
Nah...it's Marathon Man!

POLICE OFFICER #5 [34] walks up behind him.

POLICE OFFICER #5
You got the papers for that guy
they brought in?

Logan nods and begins rummaging through the paperwork.

POLICE OFFICER #5 (CONT'D)
Christ, you've not lost them?

LOGAN FORD
They're here somewhere.

POLICE OFFICER #5
Jeez Logan. You need to get a
secretary for this place. It's like
a dump.

The detective finds the documents along with a folder. He hands over the documents but retains the folder.

LOGAN FORD
You my mother?

Police Officer #5 pivots and walks away.

POLICE OFFICER #5
Interview Room 2 when you're ready.

Logan turns from his desk and follows in the same direction.

A cassette player is switched on to play Spencer Davis Group's song Keep On Running.

LOGAN FORD
Yeah, very funny.

INT. POLICE STATION/INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

A fluorescent strip light occasionally flickers as the perp sits behind a basic table watched by a middle-aged officer, who is silently leaning against the wall.

Logan enters and sits down opposite and lays a folder on the table next to a solitary ashtray.

The perp reclines in his chair, uninterested and dismissive.

LOGAN FORD
We got the stash you threw away.

Looking up at the ceiling, the young man fakes a yawn.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
There's enough to get you maybe
five years.

PERP
Man...you've got nothin' on me.

The detective stares hard at him.

LOGAN FORD
Darren, how's your mother keeping
these days?

The young man looks confused.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
I hear her ticker's not quite
running like clockwork these days.
(MORE)

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
Not surprising with a kid like you
to keep her on her toes.

PERP
I wanna speak to a lawyer.

LOGAN FORD
You think we'll find anything at
her place?

PERP
(shouts)
I WANT A LAWYER!

Logan grabs the edge of the table and pushes it with full force into the seated perp who is tipped backwards onto the floor. He yells in pain as Logan rises and walks round.

The officer in the background watches, unmoved.

The detective picks up the chair while the perp looks up with frightened eyes.

LOGAN FORD
If I were to find a similar bag in
her place...like in the
kitchen...then I reckon she
wouldn't see out the year.

PERP
You got no fuckin' right!

Logan offers a hand.

LOGAN FORD
I make my own rights.

He leans over while still offering his hand.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
Now either you're gonna talk or
start thinking about a eulogy for
your old dear.

The two remain silent for a moment then the perp picks himself up, swiping away Logan's hand.

As the officer returns to his chair, the perp sits back down.

Logan pulls out a packet of cigarettes from his crumpled jacket and lights one which is offered to the perp, who is hesitant before accepting.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)

Good.

PERP

You'll drop the charges?

LOGAN FORD

Let's just see what you have to offer.

Logan lights a cigarette for himself and exhales. He then pulls out a small cellophane bag from his pocket and lays it on the table. The perp looks at it.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)

They're new.

The perp grinds his jaw in thought.

The detective flicks the ash of his cigarette on the floor and inhales as he waits for a response.

PERP

It's Rising Star. Folks are hitting on it for parties. Makes them feel good...like really fuckin' good.

Logan glances round at the watching officer who shrugs his shoulders then he turns back to face the perp.

LOGAN FORD

Like acid?

PERP

Fuck no man. Like fuckin' Loving Spoonful. Makes you wanna embrace the world and dance till sunrise.

The perp stubs out his cigarette in the ashtray while Logan picks up and studies the contents of the bag.

LOGAN FORD

So who's the source for this?

Squirming uncomfortably in his chair, the criminal winces.

PERP

Man, I don't know. I just get the stuff delivered.

Logan glances around to the other officer.

LOGAN FORD
Tell the desk we'll be charging
him.

The officer makes for the door.

PERP
C'mon man!

LOGAN FORD
(to perp)
Then spill it.

The perp slumps back in resignation.

PERP
Giacomo Pulcinella runs the spot.
That's all I know, man. Some dude
just delivers. That's the god's
honest truth.

The detective sniffs before dropping the cigarette to the floor and rubbing it out with the sole of his shoe before rising from his chair.

LOGAN FORD
You'll get charged with
possession...

PERP
What!

LOGAN FORD
Hey. Consider yourself lucky. I
could push for intent to supply.

Logan picks up the folder from the table and makes for the door while the other officer gestures to the perp to leave.

PERP
You're no better than the donut
patrol, man. As crooked as the
wops.

EXT. LOGAN'S HOME - DAY

The suburban street is lined with a thick foliage of trees, tracking manicured lawns and classic bungalows as Logan's car rolls up outside his home.

His son, CALLUM FORD [9] has his back to his father as he attaches some card with a peg to the rear of his bicycle.

Next-door-neighbour PETER DENTON [36] mows his lawn, unaware of Logan or his son.

LOGAN FORD
Doing a good job there, son.

The boy grabs a pedal and begins rotating it with the card 'rat-a-tatting' against the spokes as his father ruffles his hair as he passes towards the front door.

INT. LOGAN'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Logan passes through the living room where his daughter CHRISTINA [16] sits on a sofa reading a magazine while listening to music on her Walkman cassette player. He acknowledges her, as she glances over to him, before entering the kitchen.

INT. LOGAN'S HOME/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

AUDREY FORD [35], preparing a salad, has her back to Logan as he enters the kitchen. He pecks her on the nape of her neck causing her to stiffen with surprise.

AUDREY FORD
You're early.

He crosses to the fridge and retrieves a beer which he proceeds to drink.

LOGAN FORD
Making up for lost time.

She continues chopping food on a bread board.

AUDREY FORD
Why break the habits of a lifetime
now?

Her husband doesn't take the bait.

LOGAN FORD
Christina done her homework?

AUDREY FORD
Christ Logan, what's brought this
on?

He takes a slug of his beer then peers through the open door to check on his daughter.

LOGAN FORD

You made it abundantly clear I'm
not matching your expectations, so
here I am...making the effort.

Audrey remains silent as she continues preparing the food.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)

Or is that another point of
critique?

His wife stops what she is doing and turns to him.

AUDREY FORD

Well, instead of reaching for a
beer, like the first thing you
always do, how about you set the
table? Now that'd be making the
effort.

Logan places the beer on the worktop and begins retrieving
cutlery and setting the table in the kitchen with restrained
frustration.

AUDREY FORD (CONT'D)

My dad called earlier.

Her husband circles the table placing cutlery for each
family member.

AUDREY FORD (CONT'D)

Put some water and glasses out too.

Logan heeds her instructions.

LOGAN FORD

What was he wanting?

AUDREY FORD

Could we help him with the
electricity bill?

With a large glass jug, he fills it from the tap.

LOGAN FORD

Again?

AUDREY FORD

He's an old man. You know he
struggles.

He places the jug in the middle of the table.

LOGAN FORD

This is why I need to work the overtime. That was the point I was making last night.

Audrey slams the knife down on the bread board.

AUDREY FORD

Ok. I get it. You just don't have to do it every day. There are others they can call on.

Logan goes to a cupboard and retrieves four glasses which he adds to the table as Audrey bundles the salad into a large bowl which gets added to the table.

LOGAN FORD

Right...and I'm trying.

AUDREY FORD

Go get Callum.

LOGAN FORD

I'll go over to your dad's place later and sort it out.

AUDREY FORD

Thanks.

EXT. LOGAN'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Logan steps out into the porch and watches his son cycling up and down the street, the card clacking against the spokes.

He turns to see Peter Denton mowing the grass. He switches off the mower and waves at Logan.

PETER DENTON

How's things?

Logan steps forward onto the garden path.

LOGAN FORD

Hanging in there.

Denton walks towards the boundary between their lawns.

PETER DENTON

I'm Peter. Nice to meet you.

The detective crosses the lawn.

LOGAN FORD
Logan Ford...welcome to the
neighbourhood.

PETER DENTON
You been here long?

LOGAN FORD
Ten years. It's a nice spot. Quiet.

Logan spots Callum returning up the street.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
Callum! Get in.

He glances at Denton.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
Got family?

PETER DENTON
Nah. Just me.

LOGAN FORD
Don't let my wife know. She'll be
scouting for you before you can say
"blind date".

Denton chuckles lightly as Callum heads up the garden path.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
Moved far?

PETER DENTON
Philly.

LOGAN FORD
Change of scenery?

PETER DENTON
Yeah. You could say that.

LOGAN FORD
Happy to share a few beers one
night. Get you up to speed on the
neighbourhood.

PETER DENTON
That'd be nice.

Logan turns to follow his son into the house.

LOGAN FORD
Better go. See ya later.

Denton raises a hand in acknowledgement as the detective walks away.

INT. LOGAN'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - LATER

Audrey is clearing the table, assisted by Christina, as Logan picks up the remote control and turns the television on.

LOGAN FORD
(to Audrey)
You need a hand?

AUDREY FORD
It's all going in the dishwasher.

CALLUM FORD
Dad, coach Bradley says I'll get a run out at the weekend. You gonna come?

Logan grabs a packet of cigarettes from the side table and proceeds to light up. A plume of smoke rises as he flicks through the channels.

LOGAN FORD
Yeah. I'm up for that.

CALLUM FORD
Cool!

His excitement is evident as he leaves the room.

INT. LOGAN'S HOME/KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Audrey is stacking plates in the dishwasher.

AUDREY FORD
(to Christina)
Put the salad in the fridge.

As she takes the salad bowl, she leans out between the kitchen doorway.

CHRISTINA FORD
You want a beer, dad?

Audrey, standing behind her daughter, catches his eye with a questioning look.

LOGAN FORD
Ah, you're ok. Maybe a coffee.

He comes across a news programme and settles to watch.

The name ROBERT SANDERSON [45] is emblazoned along the foot of the screen as the smiling politician stands at the foot of marble steps in front of a Greco-pillared building, surrounded by reporters and support staff during a live interview. On the lapel of his jacket, he wears a small diamond encrusted American flag,

ROBERT SANDERSON

...Now you know my stance on solid family values, home ownership and community policing.

Christina brings him a cup of coffee as Logan leans forward towards the tv screen studiously. He chuckles to himself.

LOGAN FORD

Man of the people? With a badge like that.

His daughter picks up the remote control and presses record.

CHRISTINA FORD

Something's coming on I want to record.

LOGAN FORD

Wonder how much that cost?

EXT. CITY HALL - SAME TIME

ROBERT SANDERSON (CONT'D)
Crime is currently at levels we haven't seen in over ten years, so it should come as no surprise I'll be running on a ticket that includes this very concern among voters come the next election.

REPORTER #1

You are confident you'll have sufficient backing for your candidacy?

ROBERT SANDERSON

It is early days but we can already see where this newly elected government is taking us...and it's not the promised land.

Other reporters frantically shout questions but Sanderson attempts to calm them.

ROBERT SANDERSON (CONT'D)
I'll be making further statements
in due course but that is all for
now. Thank you.

The politician invites his wife to stand by him and have their photo taken before they retreat from the crowd of reporters and are ushered away by his assistant GABBY WISHAW [27] while other staff hold back the press.

GABBY WISHAW
(to Sanderson)
Councillor Wilmot would like to
speak to you.

Sanderson glances over to see the councillor looking in his direction as the politician descends the steps towards a waiting car.

ROBERT SANDERSON
Get a message to him that we can
speak later. I don't have the time
for him just now.

He ushers his wife into the car and follows behind before the vehicle speeds off.

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES/RECEPTION - DAY

LUCIA BLINKLEY [22], with short fair hair, a mole on the left of her lips and a visible tattoo of a small flower below her collarbone, is sitting on a plastic chair in a busy foyer with her four-year-old son who is playing with a toy as RICHARD EVANS [33], her social worker, appears.

RICHARD EVANS
Lucia.

She glances up at him and smiles. Dressed in a two-piece corduroy suit and open-neck shirt, he waves for her to follow him while holding a brown folder containing documents. Lucia and the child follow him along the corridor.

RICHARD EVANS (CONT'D)
Your ex couldn't make it?

They continue along the corridor before entering a vacant interview room to which he invites them in.

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES/INTERVIEW ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A sharp fluorescent light leaves no quarter untouched in the grey-walled room furnished with a simple table and metal chairs on a well-trodden blue carpet. A box of used toys sits in a corner alongside children's plastic chairs.

Lucia shows the box of toys to her son.

RICHARD EVANS
You want a coffee?

She responds affirmatively.

LUCIA BLINKLEY
Black. No sugar.

Evans leaves them to fetch the drinks.

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES/INTERVIEW ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The social worker returns with two plastic cups of coffee and the folder wedged under his arm. He places them on the table while Lucia rises from the floor, where the boy sits playing with the toys, and takes a chair next to the social worker. Behind Richard, she can see people pass in the corridor through the window-panelled door.

RICHARD EVANS
How's things?

He glances over at the pre-occupied child before returning his gaze to the young woman who is wearing denim jeans and an off-the-shoulder t-shirt. From her handbag, she produces a packet of cigarettes and a lighter and proceeds to light up.

LUCIA BLINKLEY
Surviving.

He watches a cloud of smoke rise up as she takes a drink.

RICHARD EVANS
You really should pack them
in...considering.

She isn't impressed by his suggestion as she takes another drag of the cigarette.

LUCIA BLINKLEY
I know, but I've cut down. Baby
steps, yeah?

The social worker opens the folder and looks at the documents.

LUCIA BLINKLEY (CONT'D)
What's there that you don't already know?

RICHARD EVANS
I have to write something.

Lucia chuckles knowingly.

LUCIA BLINKLEY
What about 'extra-curricular care ongoing'?

Their eyes meet. He finds her comment amusing.

RICHARD EVANS
You make it sound...underhand.

The young woman drops the rest of her cigarette into the plastic cup.

LUCIA BLINKLEY
Does that worry you?

It is clearly a conversation he doesn't want to have.

RICHARD EVANS
It's your work that really concerns me. Think I made that clear.

LUCIA BLINKLEY
You gotta do what you gotta do.

Richard sighs.

RICHARD EVANS
Not if it means putting your life in danger. We both know what kinda dirtbags walk the streets.

Just then a member of staff opens the door and leans in.

SOCIAL CARE SUPPORT STAFF
Sorry Richard but we've got an emergency case. Going to need this room.

The social care worker glances over at Lucia.

SOCIAL CARE SUPPORT STAFF (CONT'D)
(to Lucia)
Sorry.

Richard appears resigned as Lucia faces him with an air of stubbornness while the staff member departs.

LUCIA BLINKLEY
When are you coming over?

Richard closes the folder.

RICHARD EVANS
Hopefully this weekend.

He reaches into the inside pocket of his jacket and retrieves his wallet much to the consternation of Lucia.

LUCIA BLINKLEY
No. You don't do that!

RICHARD EVANS
Till you get another job.

The young woman rises and goes to get her son.

RICHARD EVANS (CONT'D)
You deserve better.

She picks up the boy then gathers her bag before making for the door.

LUCIA BLINKLEY
You don't get it all your own way.
Until you can commit, I decide how I live.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

INT. POLICE STATION OFFICE - DAY

Logan enters the busy office. Advancing towards his desk, he can see CAPTAIN HANLEY [51] sitting in his glass panelled office talking to a seated officer who has his back to Logan.

The detective sits down and opens a manilla folder.

CAPTAIN HANLEY
Logan! Over here.

Logan glances over to see Hanley standing at the doorway of his office then proceeds to walk towards his captain and enter the office.

INT. POLICE STATION/HANLEY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The captain takes a seat behind his desk as Logan enters and glances down at plainclothes, black officer MALIK EDWARDS [28], dressed in a sharp suit.

CAPTAIN HANLEY

Logan, this here's Malik Edwards from the 120th Precinct. He'll be joining us.

Logan grunts in acknowledgement.

CAPTAIN HANLEY (CONT'D)
He'll be your new partner.

The experienced detective sighs.

LOGAN FORD
You know I work alone.

CAPTAIN HANLEY

Yeah, well times are changing and you need to beef up your social skills. Who better than someone with a degree in social science.

Logan glances back at the clean-cut detective who forces a smile.

LOGAN FORD
College boy?

MALIK EDWARDS
New Haven University...second degree.

Logan remains unimpressed as he glances back at his captain.

LOGAN FORD
A rookie?

CAPTAIN HANLEY
He's completed two years in uniform...so no.

The unhappy detective turns and looks frustratingly out towards the office and the various staff busy at work.

LOGAN FORD
McArthur's complained about lack of support. He'd be ideal.

CAPTAIN HANLEY
It's you, so quit the griping.
That's an order.

Logan gruffly leaves the office.

CAPTAIN HANLEY (CONT'D)
(to Malik)
Go. He'll soften. Just give him time.

Malik rises and follows Logan.

INT. POLICE STATION OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Logan walks through the aisle between the desks as he advances to exit the office.

POLICE OFFICER #1 (O.S.)
Got a new chaperone there?

The detective ignores the quip as his new sidekick calmly follows the same route.

EXT. POLICE STATION/FRONT ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Logan lights a cigarette and watches police officers come and go as Malik approaches from behind.

MALIK EDWARDS
I'm told you're one of the best around here.

The detective exhales a plume of smoke.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
Hopefully I'll prove worthy of your mentorship.

Logan looks Malik up and down in disbelief.

LOGAN FORD
You look like you're dressed for a prom.

He snorts demeaningly as he inhales the smoke.

MALIK EDWARDS
Is it a colour thing?

Logan turns to face his new partner and grimaces.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
You don't like the idea of
partnering a black college boy?

LOGAN FORD
Bull.

Malik shrugs his shoulders. He talks with a calm, precise demeanor.

MALIK EDWARDS
Then allow me the opportunity to
prove myself.

LOGAN FORD
Just don't expect any hand-holding.

MALIK EDWARDS
Don't you take me for some green
behind the ears frat boy.

LOGAN FORD
Good. We've got an understanding.

INT. ROBERT SANDERSON OFFICE/RECEPTION DESK - DAY

Councillor FRED WILMOT [45], a thin waif of a man, approaches the reception desk where the pristine MARY ERSKINE [27] sits typing.

FRED WILMOT
He in?

Before she can respond, the councillor struts past and enters the politician's office.

INT. ROBERT SANDERSON OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The politician is in the middle of a telephone conversation as he stands at the side of his desk. He watches the councillor barge in and close the door before advancing purposefully.

ROBERT SANDERSON
...Well you need to remember what's
on the line. That funding can
easily be withdrawn if it isn't
completed.

He studies Wilmot, who takes a seat in the chair opposite his desk and calmly wipes his hand across his thigh to remove some unseen fluff from his trouser.

ROBERT SANDERSON (CONT'D)
Get it done before it becomes an
issue...ok...bye.

He places the phone back in the cradle and offers the councillor his attention.

ROBERT SANDERSON (CONT'D)
What brings this honour Fred?

FRED WILMOT
I'm starting to get just a bit
pissed with your friend Pulcinella
and his demands, Robert.

ROBERT SANDERSON
You gotta take the rough with the
smooth. We have an agreement.

Fred Wilmot rises from his chair.

FRED WILMOT
I didn't agree to this incessant
badgering for greenlighting these
plans. It has to go through proper
procedures.

The politician walks past the councillor, patting him
reassuringly on his shoulder as he makes for the drinks
cabinet where he fills two glasses.

ROBERT SANDERSON
It comes with the territory. If you
want the rewards, you need to
accept the demands.

Fred turns his head, his eyes following the politician.

FRED WILMOT
That's the thing. He doesn't pay on
time, like he promised.

Robert closes the drinks cabinet and casually returns
holding two glasses, handing one to the councillor.

FRED WILMOT (CONT'D)
Another two have gone through yet
there's nothing to show for it.

Agitated, he takes a large gulp of his drink as the
politician circles around his desk and sits down.

FRED WILMOT (CONT'D)
You have to let him know. If he
can't pay on time, he can kiss
goodbye to the others. I'm the one
putting my neck on the line.

Robert ponders that comment as he sips his drink.

ROBERT SANDERSON
That's big talk, Fred. You up to
ruffling some feathers?

The two men momentarily sit in silence.

FRED WILMOT
He's your man. Get it sorted...or
I'm out.

Robert leans forward.

ROBERT SANDERSON
Don't worry. I'll speak to him.
He'll make good. I'm sure of that.

He lays his glass down on his desk.

ROBERT SANDERSON (CONT'D)
But just remember this. You come in
here again spouting what you're
gonna do, and not getting paid on
time will be the least of your
problems. Get my drift?

The councillor calms down.

FRED WILMOT
I'm just saying.

Robert leans back and finishes his drink.

ROBERT SANDERSON
Good. Now if you don't mind I have
business to attend.

He gestures towards the door. Fred swallows the last of his
drink and places the glass carefully on the desk before
rising.

EXT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/MAIN STREET - DAY

Uniformed police officers BERNIE HILLCROFT [42] and JIM
KERSHAW [40] pull up in their patrol car outside the
Chelmsford Hotel, a boutique semi-residential building.

They watch a young black guy further along, dealing drugs at the corner of the street.

JIM KERSHAW
Got me a ticket for Acapulco this summer.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
Nice. What about the dog?

JIM KERSHAW
My cousin Ralph is gonna take him.
He's easy going so should be fine.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
Your cousin?

JIM KERSHAW
Nah. The dog.

Kershaw chuckles to himself before opening the car door and stepping out. Hillcroft follows suit.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
That's what I like about dogs.
They're reliable.

The two officers scan the surrounding area as they advance towards the drug dealer who has his back to them.

JIM KERSHAW
Yeah, but they need to know who's boss otherwise they'll go off-piste and start pissing everywhere. Bit like this fucker.

As they approach, the dealer turns and sees them. For a fleeting moment he contemplates fleeing the scene. The two officers place their hands on their holstered guns.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
I wouldn't buddy!

STREET DEALER
I ain't doing nothing officer.

The two officers keep their hands on their guns as Hillcroft pushes the dealer against the wall with one hand.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
Did I say you were?

Kershaw feels the pockets of the dealer and finds a driver's license which the officer studies.

JIM KERSHAW
What you carrying Joshua?

STREET DEALER
I'm clean, man.

Kershaw begins to frisk the dealer who responds in protestation.

Hillcroft retrieves his baton and swings it against the right leg of the dealer whose knee buckles letting out a yell as his hands press against the wall for support.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
You resisting arrest Joshua?

STREET DEALER
No, sir.

Kershaw's hands run down the legs of the dealer till he finds what he's looking for. He raises a trouser leg to find a cellophane bag stuffed in his sock which he retrieves.

Hillcroft glances towards him as Kershaw studies the pills in the bag.

JIM KERSHAW
Rising Star.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
(to Kershaw)
Check his other pockets.

His companion stuffs the bag of pills into his pocket before fumbling inside the front pockets from which he retrieves a wad of notes, while Hillcroft keeps the dealer pressed against the wall.

Hillcroft leans in close to the dealer and whispers in his ear.

BERNIE HILLCROFT (CONT'D)
You're outside your comfort zone
here.

Kershaw takes half the money and stuffs the rest back in the dealer's pocket as Hillcroft steps back.

STREET DEALER
Man, that's my -

JIM KERSHAW
Careful what you say.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
See you within twenty blocks and
your ass is mine. Understand?

The dealer, in obvious pain, nods. Kershaw glances at his partner then steps towards the dealer.

JIM KERSHAW
I'd get the fuck outta here.

Kershaw steps back and allows the dealer to depart, while Hillcroft keeps watch. Satisfied the dealer is gone, Kershaw hands half the money to his partner and the bag of pills.

JIM KERSHAW (CONT'D)

Thankfully, I've got him trained well, so there's never a problem.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
The dog?

JIM KERSHAW
Nah, my cousin.

As the two police officers amble back towards their car, a black saloon car pulls up outside the hotel. A large, heavy-set GIACOMO PULCINELLA [44], with thick bouffant, manicured, hair steps out and, chaperoned by a large heavy PULCINELLA BODYGUARD [35], the mobster walks into the hotel, unaware of the two officers who spot him.

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/FOYER - CONTINUOUS

The Chelmsford Hotel is a boutique establishment that houses an eclectic mix of residents from the bohemian to the druggie.

Although well-kept, it shows signs of age and in need of fresh decor, with cracks showing on the plaster and worn carpeting.

A small, balding HARVEY [58], wearing boiled-washed clothes, sits behind the counter smoking a cigarette as Pulcinella enters. Abruptly, he rises from his seat as the gangster walks authoritatively behind the counter and into the manager's office, followed by the receptionist and Pulcinella's heavy.

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/MANAGER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The windowless office is filled with shelves and cabinets while an orderly desk contains sheaves of paper and stationery.

On a table by the wall sits a number of small screens that security cameras transmit to, while in a corner stands a large safe which Pulcinella walks towards and opens as the heavy leans against the wall by the doorway which the receptionist enters.

HARVEY
A fine morning sir.

Pulcinella remains focused on the safe as he retrieves wads of notes and places them on top of the safe.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
You got a bag or something for
this?

The receptionist scuttles over to the shelves behind the desk and retrieves a canvas sack, which he takes to his boss, while the heavy watches.

Pulcinella takes the bag and stuffs the money in it before locking up the safe.

He turns to face the receptionist.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
Make sure the exec suite is vacant
tonight. We got a guest coming.

HARVEY
Yes, sir.

The gangster walks towards the door.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
And get someone to wash the floor
out there. It's like walking on
gum.

The nervous receptionist nods attentively.

HARVEY
Straight away sir.

The three men head back out into the foyer to find Bernie Hillcroft standing in front of the counter and Jim Kershaw standing by the main door entrance, intermittently glancing out to the street.

Pulcinella is unruffled by the sight of the officers as the receptionist rushes past to find someone to wash the floor.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
What brings the honour of this?

Hillcroft retrieves the bag of pills and places them on the counter.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
Caught some nigger dealing in your
spot.

Pulcinella picks up the bag, briefly looks at it then turns and throws it at his heavy who catches it and places the bag in his jacket pocket.

BERNIE HILLCROFT (CONT'D)
He won't be a problem again.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
Good to know my dough ain't
completely going to waste.

The mobster circles round the counter, briefly glancing down at the floor.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
Unlike this place. Can't get the
fuckin' staff. Look at this.

In the background, the receptionist appears with an older man who has brought a mop and bucket.

HARVEY
(to old man)
All of this.

Pulcinella illustrates to Hillcroft his shoes sticking to the floor.

The police officer glances over to the old man who begins mopping the floor at the other end of the foyer, supervised by the receptionist.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
Looks like you have it in hand.

Pulcinella gestures in frustration.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
You try to run a business and
there's always some schmuck letting
the team down.

He vigorously pats the officer on his upper arm.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
Still...the neighbourhood
appreciates the work you guys do.

He glances over at Kershaw who is looking out into the street, then returns his attention to Hillcroft.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
You getting paid on time?
Everything ok with my boys?

Hillcroft nods and begins to make his way towards the entrance.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
All fine this end. Just wanted you
to have that merch and check in.
Show face, so to speak.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
Wish there were more like you guys.

Pulcinella chuckles.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
Spread a bit of that work ethic
around this place.

He turns to his heavy.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
Ya see what I mean?

The heavy remains emotionless as he nods in agreement.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
(to Hillcroft)
I'll drop a little extra in your
next payday. For your hard work.

Kershaw opens the entrance door and steps out, followed by Hillcroft.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
Have a good day.

Pulcinella watches the officers leave.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
And you!

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

EXT. BERNARDO'S RESTAURANT/STREET - NIGHT

Robert Sanderson sits in the back of a yellow cab as it comes to a halt outside a small Italian restaurant. He steps out and pays the cab driver before advancing towards the restaurant while the cab drives off.

INT. BERNARDO'S RESTAURANT/MAIN AREA - CONTINUOUS

A few couples sit amongst the tables as gentle Italian music plays in the background, while a staff busy themselves behind the counter as a waiter delivers an order to a table.

The politician sees the solitary Pulcinella sitting at the furthest end, eating a meal, and advances.

It's not till he gets up close that the mobster notices him to which he gestures for the politician to take a seat as he takes another mouthful.

Pulcinella grabs the open bottle of wine and pours a drink for Sanderson.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA

You eaten?

ROBERT SANDERSON

I'm fine.

The mobster takes another mouthful of food, watched by Sanderson who calmly takes a drink from his glass.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA

You'll be pleased to know we've acquired the more locations.

Pulcinella lays down his cutlery before wiping his mouth with a napkin.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)

We've got the greenlight to begin development earlier than expected.

ROBERT SANDERSON

Excellent.

The mobster takes a toothpick and works on his teeth.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA

Good to see your councillor keeping up his end.

ROBERT SANDERSON

Yeah, well he's griping about late payments and I don't need him turning up making a scene.

Pulcinella shrugs off the remark.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA

He gets paid on delivery. I ain't buying promises.

He pulls out a cigar and lights up.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)

That said, I'll have one of the boys make sure we're all up-to-date.

ROBERT SANDERSON

Appreciate it.

A plume of smoke smothers the two men as Pulcinella reaches into his jacket and pulls out an envelope which he passes to the politician.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA

Your off-shore account. All the details are there. You're now officially a legit shareholder of Consolidated Construction Enterprise. Congratulations.

Sanderson places the envelope in his jacket.

ROBERT SANDERSON

Your spot on the Development Authority has been authorised.

He raises his glass.

ROBERT SANDERSON (CONT'D)

New Jersey awaits the first of your casinos.

Pulcinella raises his glass.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA

Here's to good business.

The two men drink from their glasses then Pulcinella takes another draw from his cigar.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
And just to top it off, there's a
nice surprise waiting for you at
the Chelmsford. A class act.

Sanderson checks his watch.

ROBERT SANDERSON
Well there's no time like the
present.

Pulcinella grins menacingly.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
I'll have someone drive you over.

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/FOYER - NIGHT

The foyer is quiet as the receptionist is on the phone.

HARVEY
Yes, Mr Pulcinella.

He looks over at the entrance to see Sanderson advancing towards the building.

HARVEY (CONT'D)
That's him arriving. Yes, sir.

He puts down the phone and smiles welcomingly at Sanderson.

HARVEY (CONT'D)
Welcome to the Chelmsford.

The politician surveys the surroundings, unimpressed, as he walks up to the reception desk.

ROBERT SANDERSON
You have a room for me.

The receptionist retrieves a room key and hands it to the guest.

HARVEY
Top floor, sir.

Sanderson takes the key and walks towards the birdcage elevator which he enters.

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Sanderson opens the door of the hotel room and enters.

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/EXEC SUITE - CONTINUOUS

The sound of mellow music wafts through the spacious, plush room as he closes the door and advances. An ice bucket containing a bottle of champagne accompanied with glasses appears on a large round table. Just then, Lucia, dressed sparingly in a negligee appears from the bathroom. She smiles at the politician as she walks towards him.

LUCIA BLINKLEY

I wondered if you were ever going
to make it.

Without invitation, she begins to remove his jacket. He leans in to smell her perfume. The jacket is thrown over an armchair next to where her clothes lie on top of a Persian rug. Next, she begins to loosen his tie.

LUCIA BLINKLEY (CONT'D)

I hear you've been a good boy.

The tie falls to the floor.

ROBERT SANDERSON

A productive day.

She begins to unbutton his shirt.

LUCIA BLINKLEY

Well then, I guess we have
something to celebrate.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/EXEC SUITE - LATER

The ice bucket stands by the side of the bed containing a half empty bottle beside two glasses and an open pill box along with a pack of cigarettes and a lighter. Another two completely empty bottles lie on the floor by the side of the bed.

Lucia sits astride the naked Sanderson, her back arched as she moans in ecstasy to the rhythmic writhing of her body, while his hands run up and down her back, his fingers pressed tightly against her negligee.

The sweating couple grunt encouragements as they reach a climax.

LUCIA BLINKLEY

Oh yes!

ROBERT SANDERSON
Fucking yes!

Breathing heavily, his arms flop to his side as she rolls over to lie beside him, her chest heaving.

For a moment they remain silent as they gather their composure.

Lucia reaches over to the pill box and takes two tablets then places one in the politician's mouth before swallowing the other.

His right hand moves under the bed sheets and he produces the rubber he was using which he discards on the floor.

He sighs while she lights a cigarette.

ROBERT SANDERSON (CONT'D)
Where did they find you?

Lucia chuckles, turns round and caresses his hair back, feeling the sweat on his forehead. She takes a draw of her cigarette and exhales upwards.

LUCIA BLINKLEY
You like?

He takes the cigarette out of her hand and inhales.

ROBERT SANDERSON
This could be addictive.

The sex worker reaches over and takes a drink from one of the glasses then returns it to the side table before kissing him on the lips.

LUCIA BLINKLEY
The night is young.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/EXEC SUITE - LATER

The room is silent as the couple, back-to-back, lie motionless under the sheets in slumber as the night sky glows from the light of the moon.

Sanderson slowly wakens, his head groggy due to his over indulgence. He reaches for his watch on the side table. It's two-thirty in the morning.

He releases a long sigh as he attaches the watch to his wrist before turning to face Lucia.

ROBERT SANDERSON
(softly)
Hey.

He places a hand on her back.

ROBERT SANDERSON (CONT'D)
I should be going.

There is no response from Lucia. He nudges her again.

ROBERT SANDERSON (CONT'D)
Party over.

There is still no response. He leans closer and pulls at her shoulder only for the young woman to flop on her back, her eyes remaining closed. He sees the froth seeping from the corner of her mouth.

ROBERT SANDERSON (CONT'D)
Jesus!

He instinctively jumps up from the bed staring down at the body then gets to his feet as he retreats from where she lies.

ROBERT SANDERSON (CONT'D)
Oh fuck! No. Oh no!

Naked, he paces around the bed. Realising the curtains are open, he thrashes them shut. Disorientated, the politician takes a step towards the bed then thinks better of it and retreats further back.

Circling around to Lucia's side of the bed, he bends down to check her again then pulls back in horror. Unable to take his eyes off her, he begins urgently dressing, his shaking hands struggling to button his shirt. Once dressed, he rushes over to the telephone that sits on a corner table and calls reception.

ROBERT SANDERSON (CONT'D)
Tell Pulcinella we have a problem.

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/EXEC SUITE - LATER

Pulcinella enters the suite with three men. The distraught Sanderson sits in an armchair in the corner, as far from the body as possible.

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/MANAGER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

The receptionist sits in an office chair studying the screen that displays the exec suite and the unfolding scene.

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/EXEC SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Pulcinella advances towards the body while the three men and Sanderson watch.

The mobster studies the body and sighs in disappointment as HENCHMAN #1 [35] walks round the bed towards the window.

ROBERT SANDERSON

I didn't do anything.

HENCHMAN #1 spots the rubber lying on the carpeted floor and delicately picks it up for Pulcinella to see.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA

(to the men)

Fill the bath and wash her down.
Bag everything and have the car
brought to the back.

Pulcinella turns to Sanderson.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)

(to Sanderson)

Hey, don't worry. No-one will be
any the wiser. Get home and go
about your day like nothing
happened.

Sanderson is reassuringly calmed by Pulcinella's words as the mobster walks over to him.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)

C'mon, I'll get you home. This'll
be taken care off.

The politician rises and the mobster places a comforting arm around his shoulder.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)

These things happen.

As he leads Sanderson out, he glances to the two men.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)

(to the men)

You got this?

HENCHMAN #2
Sure boss.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/REAR ENTRANCE - LATER

The sun is just beginning to appear as two of the henchmen place the body in the back of the car where an additional mobster sits behind the wheel.

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/MANAGER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Henchman #1, holding a black bin liner, enters the office where Harvey sits behind his desk drinking a cup of coffee and reading the paper.

HENCHMAN #1
(to Harvey)
The suite needs new bed linen.

The reception bell rings and Harvey rises to attend.

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/FOYER - CONTINUOUS

A female guest stands at the counter as the receptionist appears.

HOTEL FEMALE GUEST
Hi. Can I settle my bill?

The receptionist smiles and takes her key before checking the ledger. The henchman walks past and heads towards the rear entrance, ignored by the others.

EXT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/REAR ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Henchman #1 steps out and advances towards the car where his companions wait. He enters the front passenger seat with the bin liner and the car departs the scene.

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/EXEC SUITE - MOMENTS LATER

Harvey enters the silent room, holding fresh sheets and a bucket containing polish and air freshener. He drops the sheets on the bed and the bucket on the floor before crossing to the windows to let some air in.

He returns to the bucket and takes the polish and cloth then begins wiping the dresser next to the armchair where Sanderson's jacket lay.

As he bends down to polish the dresser something catches his eye.

Lying behind a leg of the dresser lies the diamond encrusted badge belonging to Sanderson. He picks it up.

HARVEY

Nice.

He pins it to his jacket and continues cleaning.

INT. MALIK'S CAR - DAY

Logan sits in the passenger side as his colleague drives the car through the streets of Williamsburg towards the waterfront. Logan gazes out the window, watching the world pass by.

LOGAN FORD

You seen a dead body up close?

MALIK EDWARDS

When I was fourteen, my grandmother collapsed in front of me. Does that count?

Logan turns to his partner and shakes his head ruefully.

LOGAN FORD

You better have a strong stomach.

MALIK EDWARDS

Don't you worry about me.

LOGAN FORD

Take a left up here.

MALIK EDWARDS

Is there anything that doesn't piss you off or is this how you are with everyone?

LOGAN FORD

Only with passengers...and I'm not one to carry them.

MALIK EDWARDS

Hopefully I won't be in your hair for too long. Then you can get back to your lonesome ways.

Logan grunts dismissively.

LOGAN FORD

For now, get used to this face.

He points to himself.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
You might be some high flyer in the captain's eyes, but round here I'm in charge, so if you don't like some straight talkin' I suggest...take a right...you can kiss my ass.

Malik chuckles as the car turns right. Up ahead, the waterfront appears in view. Blue lights indicate they are closing in towards the crime scene.

MALIK EDWARDS
Now you've got that off your chest, you think we can move on?

LOGAN FORD
Yeah, I've said my piece.

MALIK EDWARDS
(mumbles to himself)
Not for the first time.

The car draws up to a parking lot surrounded by an old rusting, industrial site filled with broken windows and overgrown with weeds. Official vehicles are parked around the scene with uniform officers patrolling the vicinity.

The two detectives exit the car and walk towards the crime scene.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL WATERFRONT LAND - CONTINUOUS

As they walk through the industrial site, the Williamsburg Bridge hovers empirically over them. Ahead, they can see officials preparing to remove a body while officers mill around studying the victim. A handful of reporters and a camera crew hover around the taped barrier, watching events unfold.

Logan, followed by Malik, pass a cordon before reaching the crime scene.

LOGAN FORD
(to plains clothed
officer)
What do we have?

He looks down at the cold, tousled body of Lucia Blinkley fully dressed with her matted hair and lifeless face exposed to the elements.

CRIME SCENE #1 OFFICER #1
We're not long here. Single victim.
Nothing's been touched. No obvious
cause of death.

Logan crouches down and studies the body with Malik standing behind him.

LOGAN FORD
Any ID?

The crime scene officer shakes his head.

The detective continues to study the body.

MALIK EDWARDS
No handbag.

His partner rises to his feet.

LOGAN FORD
Yeah. No marks on her. Nails intact. Doesn't look like there was any struggle.

MALIK EDWARDS
Or make-up.

LOGAN FORD
Body's fresh.

Logan notices the tattoo which he reveals to his partner who glances at it before surveying the surrounding area.

MALIK EDWARDS
(to crime scene officer)
Any unclaimed vehicles around?

CRIME SCENE #1 OFFICER #1
No. It's a wasteland round here.
Junkies and red-light is all you'll find.

LOGAN FORD
(to Malik)
Once we id her we can move on. The coroner might glean something.

Logan starts walking back to the car.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
You coming?

INT. MRS BLINKLEY'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Lucia's mother AGNES BLINKLEY [56] feeds Lucia's son while holding a phone on an extension cable.

AGNES BLINKLEY
She should have been back hours ago...Uhuh...Can you get over here?...I'll go down to the station...It's not like her...Be quick.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

EXT. POLICE STATION/MAIN RECEPTION - DAY

The reception area is busy with activity as officers deal with enquiries while an arrested perp is manhandled and allocated a cell as he shouts his innocence.

Logan and Malik enter.

LOGAN FORD
Hopefully the coroner will examine the body as soon as it arrived.

The two detectives make their way through the melee.

INT. POLICE STATION/MAIN RECEPTION DESK - CONTINUOUS

DESK SERGEANT
Logan!

INT. POLICE STATION/MAIN RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

LOGAN FORD
You notice how clean she was?

MALIK EDWARDS
Someone's been thorough.

DESK SERGEANT
LOGAN!

The detective turns in the direction of the Desk Sergeant.

LOGAN FORD
(to Malik)
The coroner should be able to confirm if it's rape.

The two detectives walk towards the Desk Sergeant.

MALIK EDWARDS
I'm doubtful.

LOGAN FORD
Don't make assumptions.

They arrive at the desk.

DESK SERGEANT
There's a woman here says her
daughter is missing. She's waiting
to make a statement. Might be a
coincidence.

The Desk Sergeant points over to Lucia's mother, Agnes, who
is oblivious to the detectives.

LOGAN FORD
What's her name?

DESK SERGEANT
Agnes Blinkley.

LOGAN FORD
Thanks. We'll check it out.

INT. POLICE STATION/MAIN RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

The detectives approach Agnes Blinkley who turns to face
them.

LOGAN FORD
You wanted to file a missing
person?

The woman rises from the chair.

AGNES BLINKLEY
My daughter, Lucia. She never
returned last night.

LOGAN FORD
Could you describe her?

AGNES BLINKLEY
Five-eight. Short fair hair. Brown
eyes. Mole on the left side of her
mouth.

Malik looks knowingly at his partner.

AGNES BLINKLEY (CONT'D)
She has a tattoo of a flower below
her neck.

LOGAN FORD
Pink and green?

The mother's demeanour changes to nervous suspicion.

Logan gestures for her to follow him.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
If we can speak in private?

Agitated, she follows the two detectives towards a room for privacy.

AGNES BLINKLEY
How do you know that? Has something happened?

INT. POLICE STATION/INTERVIEW ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Malik closes the door as they stand inside the empty room, the sounds of activity outside nullified.

LOGAN FORD
I'm afraid we may have found someone who fits your daughter's description.

The woman's legs buckle at receiving this information.

Logan grabs her and guides her over to a chair. Malik studies his partner.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry.

Agnes is inconsolable as she bursts into tears.

AGNES BLINKLEY
My baby! Oh, please no!

LOGAN FORD
We might need you to identify her.

Malik glances quizzically at his partner before returning his attention to the mother.

MALIK EDWARDS
It may not be her.

Logan stares hard at Malik.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
Could you provide a photo of her?

The woman remains in a confused state.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
Mrs Blinkley. A photo?

She begins to fumble about in her handbag.

AGNES BLINKLEY
I...I have...

She retrieves her purse and opens it. A passport photo of Lucia is revealed behind a plastic cover which she extracts and hands to Malik.

LOGAN FORD
Where was she last night? Do you know?

The woman is paying little attention to Logan as she struggles to comprehend while returning the purse into her bag. He bends down and places a reassuring hand on her shoulder.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
It's really important.

Agnes tries to control her emotions as she retrieves a hanky from her handbag.

AGNES BLINKLEY
I don't know. She works nights...but she was so secretive...oh god!

Logan glances at his partner.

LOGAN FORD
Go to the desk and see if we can get some assistance for Mrs Blinkley and take a full statement.

Malik nods and leaves the room. Logan thinks for a moment.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
She works nights. Does she go to work with anyone? Share a cab or bus?

Agnes wipes the tears away.

AGNES BLINKLEY
A black car often collects her. I asked who he was but like I say...

LOGAN FORD

He?

AGNES BLINKLEY

Large man. In a suit. "Never you
mind what I do." she would say.
"It's good money and it's easy."

LOGAN FORD

What did he look like?

AGNES BLINKLEY

I don't know! He was too far away.
He looked like he could've been a
bodyguard. Big.

Logan thinks for a moment then he pulls out a pen and
notepad from inside his jacket and places them on the table.

LOGAN FORD

Would it be possible to visit your
daughter's place?

The woman nods in resignation and with a trembling hand she
writes the address and hands over a key, as Malik returns
with a female officer.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)

This officer will look after you.
Could you try and provide her with
as much information as possible?

Logan rises as Agnes looks at the female officer, who offers
a sympathetic smile.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)

We'll be in touch.

The two detectives exit the room.

INT. ROBERT SANDERSON'S HOME/ENTRANCE HALLWAY - DAY

VERONICA SANDERSON [40], dressed in a cream suit, enters the
house and lays her handbag on a side table before climbing
the stairs.

INT. ROBERT SANDERSON'S HOME/BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She enters the large en suite bedroom and hears running
water from the shower stop flowing as it is turned off.

She looks down at the pile of clothes at the bottom of the
sumptuous double bed.

Her husband appears with a bath towel wrapped around his waist as he dries his hair with another.

VERONICA SANDERSON
Where were you?

He crosses the room towards a walk-in wardrobe, as he dries his upper body and disappears from view.

ROBERT SANDERSON (O.S.)
Chuck needed me to go over some
business for the Development
Authority positions then finalise
those planning applications.

Handling his clothes on the bed, she lifts his shirt and smells it. Her nose twitches as she drops it then turns to face her husband as he re-enters wearing underpants and a fresh shirt while carrying a clean suit.

VERONICA SANDERSON
That's quite an aftershave he's
wearing these days.

Robert begins putting on the suit.

ROBERT SANDERSON
Cathy gave me a hug before I left.

Veronica looks unimpressed.

VERONICA SANDERSON
You've lost your badge.

Robert pulls up his trousers while looking over at the clothes on the bed.

ROBERT SANDERSON
Your kidding?

She walks towards the bedroom doorway.

VERONICA SANDERSON
Maybe Cathy took a fancy to that
too?

Robert's eyes follow Veronica as she exits the room.

INT. CORONERS THEATRE - DAY

Within the tiled walls where the coroner performs the autopsy, ERNST BECKER [52] is in the midst of his work on the body of Lucia, which has been cut open down the middle of her chest exposing the organs, as Logan and Malik enter.

Ernst glances over briefly then returns to his work.

ERNST BECKER
You know you shouldn't be here.

Malike stands near the doorway as Logan wanders around, keeping his distance from the coroner and the body as he studies jars of body parts.

LOGAN FORD
Quite a collection Ernie. You should start a museum.

The coroner removes a kidney and places it in a metal plate.

ERNST BECKER
It might teach you people a few things.

LOGAN FORD
This here is my new partner. Malik Edwards.

The coroner glances over at Malik, who raises a brief salute in the coroner's direction.

ERNST BECKER
What sins did you commit to get stuck with him?

MALIK EDWARDS
Any thoughts on the cause of death?

The coroner pauses and glances between the two detectives.

ERNST BECKER
No wounds or bruising...anywhere. Likelihood is natural causes or drug induced. We'll do toxicology tests.

He looks down at the kidney.

ERNST BECKER (CONT'D)
This kidney is seriously damaged. Analysis should establish the cause but I'm betting it could be paramethoxymethamphetamine.

LOGAN FORD
C'mon. Talk English.

ERNST BECKER
PMMA or PMA. A toxic mix of drugs
purporting to be MDMA. Provides
similar effects but it's Russian
Roulette with this stuff.

MALIK EDWARDS
(to Logan)
You heard of it?

Logan shakes his head.

ERNST BECKER
It's been around since the 1900s
but recently it began to re-surface
in Texas. Could be spreading.

LOGAN FORD
A new kick?

ERNST BECKER
Death would have been around one am
today.

Logan has his arms folded as he listens intently.

ERNST BECKER (CONT'D)
She had been drinking...champagne.

LOGAN FORD
Celebration?...Anything else?

ERNST BECKER
She was in the early stages of
pregnancy. About six weeks.

LOGAN FORD
Jeez.

ERNST BECKER
Not great.

LOGAN FORD
No. Her mother is here. Will she be
able to ID the body today?

ERNST BECKER
Shouldn't be a problem.

The detective advances towards Malik.

LOGAN FORD
You hungry?

MALIK EDWARDS
Seriously?

LOGAN FORD
Get used to it.

INT. FASTFOOD RESTAURANT - LATER

Malik sits alone at a window table in the busy fast-food joint. Logan approaches carrying a tray containing food and drinks. He places the tray down and takes the seat opposite his partner before handing over Malik's order.

LOGAN FORD
Vegetarian for you.

He begins attacking his burger and speaks with his mouth full. Malik eats with more composure.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
How you can eat that shit.

MALIK EDWARDS
Ask that when you have a coronary.

LOGAN FORD
When I do, it'll be with the
knowledge that I've lived a full
life.

MALIK EDWARDS
You any idea the real cost of all
that junk? Not just your health,
but medical resources, carbon...the
planet?

LOGAN FORD
You should've joined a cult.

MALIK EDWARDS
You're already in one of the
biggest.

Logan shakes his head dismissively as he sucks the cola through his straw.

LOGAN FORD
Ok, so what do you think?

MALIK EDWARDS
Drink and drugs...sounds like she
was at a party.

LOGAN FORD
Or a date.

MALIK EDWARDS
A place of importance? A person of
significance?

LOGAN FORD
Something like that.

MALIK EDWARDS
There's that bodyguard as well.

Logan looks up at the skyscrapers that surround the
landscape.

LOGAN FORD
There's a lot of wealthy fuckers
out there. Corporations with money
to burn. Self-indulgent suits who
think the world is for their
convenience.

MALIK EDWARDS
Can't be easy for her mother. You
never expect to plan your child's
funeral.

LOGAN FORD
You got kids?

Malik shakes his head.

MALIK EDWARDS
Single.

LOGAN FORD
Got two. Son and daughter. Losing
either would be like...

He sighs.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
...the end.

MALIK EDWARDS
You'd survive. It's dealing with
the loss. You never get over it.
You just manage the pain.

LOGAN FORD
You talking from experience?

MALIK EDWARDS
Someone very close.

Logan studies his partner.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
He was..

He stops himself from continuing and grabs his soft drink.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
...never mind.

Logan wipes his mouth and scrunches up the food wrapping which he places on the tray.

LOGAN FORD
You ready?

Malik nods and slides across the seat. The detectives rise to their feet and walk towards the exit.

INT. LUCIA'S APARTMENT/ENTRANCE DOOR - LATER

Logan slips the key in the lock and opens the door. The two detectives enter the silent apartment. Malik closes the door.

INT. LUCIA'S APARTMENT/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The hallway, with doors on either side, leads to a living room. The men progress, opening doors and peering in. Malik reaches Lucia's bedroom and enters while Logan enters the kitchen.

INT. LUCIA'S APARTMENT/LUCIAS'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Malik begins searching the organised and tidy bedroom. Clothes lie in a neat pile at the foot of the bed. The detective begins opening drawers to check the contents.

INT. LUCIA'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Logan wanders over to the fridge covered in notes and photos held up by an assortment of magnets. One photo shows Lucia with her son and the boy's father MICHAEL REARDON [32]. The detective keeps a hold of the photo and continues his search as Malik enters holding a black pocket diary which he is thumbing through.

A business card for the Chelmsford Hotel falls to the floor which the detective picks up and studies. It contains the address details and a telephone number for reception.

He hands it to Logan then continues flicking through the pages.

MALIK EDWARDS
There's an entry here for last
night. *CH 8pm.*

Logan hands the business card back to his partner and crosses the room to check a plastic bag sitting on the table.

He pulls out a boxed baby monitor kit and lays it on the table, looking slightly confused at the object, as his partner approaches from behind.

Malik looks inside and retrieves a receipt which contains the name R Smith at the bottom with the card details and time of transaction. He pulls out a notebook and places the receipt between the pages before returning it inside his jacket.

He glances at Logan.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
Could be of use.

The younger detective walks across to the window and looks out into the sedate street where a couple walk past parked vehicles. Malik's thoughts turn to Audrey Blinkley's description of Lucia being picked up by a driver.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE LUCIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Malik's imagination of events from the previous night.

Pulcinella's bodyguard stands by the driver's side of the black car with his back to the apartment block. He turns his head slightly to his left to see Lucia advancing, but his face is not clearly identifiable.

INT. LUCIA'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Malik looks back down at the diary and business card he holds.

MALIK EDWARDS
This hotel?

Logan nods in agreement.

EXT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/MAIN STREET - DAY

The two detectives advance towards the hotel.

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Harvey's wife BETTIE [54], with garish make-up and looking old before her time, sits behind the reception desk smoking a cigarette and reading a magazine as the detectives enter and approach. She glances up at them with indifference as they approach. Logan studies the surroundings as his partner eyes the woman before showing her his badge.

MALIK EDWARDS

We're making some enquiries. You mind answering a few questions?

Bettie sniffs before taking a draw from her cigarette.

BETTIE

Depends on what it's about.

Logan retrieves the photo and places it on the counter then continues looking around, leaving Malik to do the talking who points at Lucia in the photo.

MALIK EDWARDS

The girl. It's possible she was here last night.

The woman draws the photo towards herself while taking a drag from the cigarette, the smoke spreading across the counter. With indifference, she screws her face.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)

You recognise her?

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/MANAGER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Harvey rises from behind his desk and stands out of sight behind the open door, listening.

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/FOYER - CONTINUOUS

BETTIE

I ain't seen her.

She pushes the photo back towards the detective as Logan's attention is drawn to the manager's office.

MALIK EDWARDS

She may have been here sometime after eight. Were you around at that time?

BETTIE

No.

MALIK EDWARDS
Who was on shift?

BETTIE
My husband.

Logan wanders in the direction of the office.

MALIK EDWARDS
He around?

She shakes her head, her eyes following Logan.

BETTIE
You got a warrant?

Logan stops in his tracks and glances at her.

LOGAN FORD
Any other staff around that could assist?

BETTIE
Just me.

At that moment police officers Jim Kershaw and Bernie Hillcroft step into the hotel.

Logan and Malik turn to face them as they approach.

The two pair of officers stare at each other. Bernie approaches the counter while Jim Kershaw hangs back, close to Logan.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
Is Harvey around, Bettie?

BETTIE
His day off.

Bernie holds his gaze on Bettie.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
They bothering you?

The woman momentarily glances at Malik then shakes her head slowly before the detective shows his badge.

MALIK EDWARDS
You familiar with this place?

BERNIE HILLCROFT
It's on our beat.

In the background, Kershaw and Logan size each other up. Malik glances over at Kershaw then returns his gaze at Hillcroft.

MALIK EDWARDS
Taking the time to pay personal visits?

BERNIE HILLCROFT
They call it community policing.
You have a problem with that?

Malik picks up the photo and shows it to the uniformed officer.

MALIK EDWARDS
You seen this girl around here?

Hillcroft takes the photo and studies it before returning it. He shakes his head.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
Is this about the body they found?

The detective nods.

MALIK EDWARDS
She may have been here last night.

Hillcroft glances at Bettie.

BETTIE
(to Malik)
If she's a hooker, she could've passed through. They're constantly hustling the residents.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
Could she have been a guest?

BETTIE
No entries in the ledger.

Hillcroft turns to Malik.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
There's your answer.

The detective places the photo inside his jacket.

MALIK EDWARDS
Thanks for your help, officer...?

BERNIE HILLCROFT
Bernie Hillcroft.

Malik turns to the receptionist.

MALIK EDWARDS
We might be back.

He turns and heads for the exit accompanied by Logan.

The two uniformed wait for the detectives to leave.

BERNIE HILLCROFT
Harvey. You there?

Harvey appears from the manager's office. He is wearing the flag pin on his jacket lapel.

INT. PETER DENTON'S HOUSE/BASEMENT - DAY

A portable television, transmitting the daily news programme, sits on top of a counter below the window in a brightly lit basement. A workbench stands in the middle of the room covered in tools and a marionette that is under construction. Similar completed items sit on a sofa.

NEWSCASTER
This morning, police discovered a body in Williamsburg, formally identified as Lucia Blinkley.

Images are shown of the crime scene surrounded by yellow tape and uniformed officers protecting the area.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)
Captain Hanley of the ninetieth precinct offered the following information.

The screen cuts to Hanley standing behind a podium in a conference room, flanked by officers.

CAPTAIN HANLEY
Investigations are currently ongoing as to the cause of death. Until then, if anyone has information that may help, we would ask them to contact the police.

REPORTER #1
Are you saying there was no evidence of murder?

CAPTAIN HANLEY

There were no visible marks on the body but that does not mean there are no suspicious circumstances. The coroner's report will clarify the situation. Thank you.

The captain leaves the room with cameras flashing and reporters continuing to ask questions.

A man stands in the room, his face unseen as he watches the television, while holding a ball of string and a cross brace for a marionette.

EXT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/MAIN STREET - DAY

The detectives walk towards their car.

INT. LOGAN'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Ford family are sitting around the table eating their evening meal.

AUDREY FORD

You sort that out with my dad?

With a mouthful of food, he nods as he reaches across the table for some bread.

LOGAN FORD

How was school?

CALLUM FORD

Same as yesterday.

CHRISTINA FORD

(to Logan)

Pam Critchley said she saw you on tv at a crime scene.

AUDREY FORD

We don't talk about dad's work at the table. You know that.

LOGAN FORD

(to Audrey)

You can't shelter them from reality.

AUDREY FORD

I'm not trying to shelter them. We're having a meal. We don't need to talk about these things at the table.

CHRISTINA FORD
I don't mind.

AUDREY FORD
Christina!

LOGAN FORD
Your mum's right.

Their daughter spoons coleslaw on to her plate with an air of reserved anger.

CHRISTINA FORD
It'll be on tv so what's the big deal?

AUDREY FORD
Then when you've finished you can watch the news.

There's a moments silence as the foursome eat.

LOGAN FORD
They gave me a new partner.

AUDREY FORD
No shop talk.

Logan silently makes a face at Callum who smiles.

INT. MALIK'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A bright moon shines through the window into a tastefully decorated room as the detective sits at a writing desk. An empty plate lies at one side as he drinks from a bottle of beer while he meticulously reads pages from Lucia's diary. He glances over at a framed photo of himself with his arm around a man with them both smiling.

Malik returns to reading the diary.

INT. BERNIE HILLCROFT'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The officer sits watching a comedy show on the screen with a tv dinner resting on his lap and a half-empty bottle of beer on a small card table by his chair. The light from an ajar kitchen door is disturbed by the flickering screen as he guides his fork to his mouth.

He chuckles at a scene from the show.

INT. BERNIE HILLCROFT'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - SAME TIME

A dark figure uses a card to silently unlock the latch of the window before carefully stepping into the bedroom. Carrying a bag, he places it to one side then slowly closes the window, listening to the sound of the tv show in the room next door.

He opens the bag to retrieve a brown bottle and a cloth which is soaked with the contents of the bottle.

INT. BERNIE HILLCROFT'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The officer is laughing as he places his finished meal next to the bottle which he picks up and drinks from. Behind him appears the dark figure whose face is unseen.

The stranger walks towards Hillcroft who has his back to him. As he reaches the back of the armchair, the officer sees a reflection on the tv screen but as he turns to see who is behind, the soaked cloth is forced over his face as the stranger's free hand reaches around the officer's neck and holds him back.

Hillcroft attempts to fight back but the chloroform quickly subdues him as he sees his surroundings turn to darkness.

INT. BERNIE HILLCROFT'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Hillcroft awakens to find his mouth is securely taped as he instinctively attempts and free himself, but the tape has him strapped securely to the chair. Panic instantly sets in with his breathing increasing as he snorts through his nose, his cheeks expanding and deflating rapidly as his bulging eyes stare at the figure standing before him.

Illuminated by the light from the tv screen, the stranger stands fully covered in a white, paper suit and hood with a filter mask over his mouth and nose and plastic protective goggles covering the eyes. With disposable, rubber gloves on his hands, he bends down to the bag and pulls out a knife, which glints menacingly.

INT. LOGAN'S HOME/KITCHEN - DAY

The following day and Logan is drinking a cup of coffee and watching his wife prepare pack lunches for their kids.

AUDREY FORD
So who's this new partner?

LOGAN FORD
Malik Edwards. Some up-and-coming
protege they wanna fast-track.

He takes a sip from his cup.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
Got a degree. All theory. No
practice.

Audrey places the contents into a plastic box.

AUDREY FORD
Christina! Callum! Your lunches!

She leans against the counter facing her husband.

AUDREY FORD (CONT'D)
Something wrong with that?

LOGAN FORD
Working the streets will teach you
more than a piece of paper.

Audrey chuckles sardonically as their kids enter the kitchen. She offers them their pack lunches before following them out of the kitchen.

AUDREY FORD
The world according to Logan Ford?

Logan watches them advance into the living room.

LOGAN FORD
Is that a criticism?

AUDREY FORD
(to the children)
Get your coats.

The children leave the living room, advancing into the hallway. Audrey turns to face her husband.

AUDREY FORD (CONT'D)
You're a good cop. So much so, it
takes precedence to being a
father...but the kids love you and,
despite our differences, so do I.
So why sound bitter?

Logan puts down the cup and walks towards her.

AUDREY FORD (CONT'D)
You made your choices. This guy is
starting out and probably worked
hard to get to where he is. Give
him a chance.

She steps towards him and pecks him on the lips.

AUDREY FORD (CONT'D)
We can't all be in your mould.

CALLUM FORD (O.S.)
Mom!

Logan's wife walks towards her kids as the doorbell rings.

EXT. LOGAN'S HOME/ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Christina opens the door to reveal Malik.

MALIK EDWARDS
Hi. Your dad around?

Audrey and Logan appear in the hallway.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
(to Logan)
We're needed.

INT. BERNIE HILLCROFT'S APARTMENT/ENTRANCE - DAY

The two detectives reach the top of the stairs in the
apartment block to see a police officer guarding the
doorway.

CRIME SCENE #2 OFFICER #1
Brace yourselves.

A uniformed officer steps out into the stairway to greet the
detectives. Through the dim hallway, they see multiple
flashes of a camera. Further along the stairway landing
another officer interviews a neighbour at their doorway,
while other officers make their way up to the next floor.

CRIME SCENE #2 OFFICER #2
It's fuckin' weird in there.

Logan offers his partner a guiding hand.

LOGAN FORD
You wanna lead the way?

Malik steps into the hallway followed by Logan and proceed towards the source of the flashing camera, passing officers who are removing evidence or searching rooms.

Logan pulls some latex gloves out of his jacket pocket.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)

Here.

Malik turns to his partner and takes the gloves.

INT. BERNIE HILLCROFT'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The detectives step through the open doorway and enter the crime scene then freeze at the sight that beholds them.

Daylight filters through the drawn curtains as Malik places a hand to his mouth to stifle the words he instinctively wants to emit.

Forensic officers dressed in white overalls and gloved-up are delicately removing evidence in the room which is inserted into plastic bags and referenced.

The body of Bernie Hillcroft sits in the armchair with his throat sliced open. Congealing blood covers the body and furniture before reaching the carpet while a blood-stained rag is tied over his eyes. The tape remains over his mouth.

The two detectives edge forward.

MALIK EDWARDS

What the fuck?

Thin cord tied to nails has been inserted in the wrists and above the knees which reaches up to the ceiling where it has been stapled.

One of the walls has been spray painted in red with the words:

I'LL HUFF AND I'LL PUFF

The detectives stare at the writing.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)

What's he trying to tell us?

Logan briefly glances at the body.

LOGAN FORD

That he's a lunatic.

The detectives pivot, as a member of the forensic team approaches. With a pair of tweezers, he begins to remove the tape from the mouth which he places in a plastic bag.

The detectives can see something protruding from the victim's mouth.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
What's that?

The forensic officer retrieves another bag before carefully opening the mouth to reveal a small plastic sachet of familiar pills stuffed inside. The forensic officer delicately places his fingers in and extracts the drugs before placing in an evidence bag which he references with his pen.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
(to Malik)
I've seen something similar.

Logan reaches for the evidence bag which the forensic officer relinquishes. The detective studies the contents then shows Malik.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
Rising Star.

The detective returns the evidence bag to the officer.

CRIME SCENE #2 FORENSIC OFFICER #1
I need to remove the rag.

The forensic officer begins to carefully cut the rag at the back of the head before placing it in an evidence bag to reveal Hillcroft's eyes have been removed.

Malik gasps and takes a step backwards while Logan remains calm.

MALIK EDWARDS
(to Logan)
Someone's gone to a lot of effort
to set this up.

LOGAN FORD
Not for the first time.

Malik turns to his partner in surprise.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
Six years ago in Philly. Throat cut
and eyes removed. Two murders.

Logan walks carefully around the chair, his eyes following the cord up to the ceiling.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
But this is new.

Malik treads carefully in the opposite direction, looking down at the remnants of the tv dinner and near-empty bottle.

MALIK EDWARDS
Random victim or targeted?

CAPTAIN HANLEY (O.S.)
He's one of ours.

The two detectives look in the direction of the voice to see their captain standing at the doorway.

CAPTAIN HANLEY (CONT'D)
Bernie Hillcroft.

MALIK EDWARDS
(to Logan)
The hotel?

Logan nods.

LOGAN FORD
(to Captain Hanley)
This isn't random.

The captain gestures for the detectives to follow him.

INT. BERNIE HILLCROFT'S APARTMENT/ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

The detectives are removing their gloves as they follow the captain across the landing, away from the crime scene.

CAPTAIN HANLEY
A rejuvenated serial killer and now
a cop killer. It'll be all over the
papers.

LOGAN FORD
(to Malik)
The case went cold. Everything drew
a blank. No motive...but this
changes everything.

MALIK EDWARDS
So they thought what? The killer
was dead? In prison?

Logan shrugs his shoulders.

LOGAN FORD

Despite gathering dust, officially
the case is still open. It is now.

CAPTAIN HANLEY

I'll get Mulligan and Tenson on to
this. You two focus on the girl.

LOGAN FORD

She might be related to this.

The captain appears surprised.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)

(to Captain Hanley)

We were at the Chelmsford Hotel
yesterday asking about her.

MALIK EDWARDS

She had an entry in her diary to be
there.

LOGAN FORD

Hillcroft and his partner turned
up.

CAPTAIN HANLEY

What are you suggesting?

LOGAN FORD

Seems very coincidental.

CAPTAIN HANLEY

(defensive)

No-one had a bad thing to say about
him. Kept his nose clean. Look
around. You see any signs of
someone on the take?

LOGAN FORD

Cap, let us check it out. If we
draw a blank we'll move on.

The captain ponders on the suggestion.

CAPTAIN HANLEY

You got two days.

LOGAN FORD

Thanks.

MALIK EDWARDS

Who was his partner?

Just then a police officer walks past and heads down the stairs. The captain and the detectives wait till he is out of earshot.

CAPTAIN HANLEY
Jim Kershaw.

The two detectives begin to depart the scene. Hanley grabs Logan by the shoulder.

CAPTAIN HANLEY (CONT'D)
If you find anything, keep it close
to your chest. Last thing we need
is an internal shit storm.

Logan silently concurs and follows Malik.

INT. DETECTIVE CAR - LATER

With Malik behind the wheel of the car, the two detectives watch the body bag being removed from the building in front of a small group of onlookers that includes some from the press.

LOGAN FORD
We need to split up.

Malik puts the key in the ignition and turns the engine.

MALIK EDWARDS
I found in the diary that she has a
social worker. I was gonna speak to
him.

His partner nods.

LOGAN FORD
Can you drop me at the station?

Malik pulls the car out and they depart the scene.

INT. LITTLE ITALY STREET - DAY

Pulcinella sits outside a cafe with ALFONSO CONTI [37] and ROCCO MARINO [36] talking over a coffee. Pulcinella casually puffs on a cigar.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
(to Alfonso)
A tua madre sono piaciute le feste
di compleanno?

ALFONSO CONTI
Ha trascorso una giornata
fantastica.

Pulcinella sniffs the air with satisfaction before sipping from his cup.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
Eccellente. Mandale i miei migliori
auguri.

A few yards from where they sit, a car pulls up and Pulcinella's main henchman steps out and advances.

HENCHMAN #1
Boss. You're not gonna believe
this.

The mobster casually sips his coffee.

HENCHMAN #1 (CONT'D)
That Hillcroft cop's been found
murdered.

ALFONSO CONTI
Ain't that one of your guys?

Pulcinella shows no sign of concern as he places his cup on the saucer. He wrinkles his nose before puffing on his cigar. He leans over the table towards his two associates and smiles.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
There's more where he came from.

The other two men chuckle as Pulcinella's henchman stands waiting for any instruction.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
The RS shipment is ready to be
moved. The kids are lovin' it.
Can't get enough of the fuckin'
stuff.

ROCCO MARINO
Appreciate your support. You need a
favour. Just let me know.

Pulcinella rises from his chair and offers a hand to shake which Marino accepts.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
Every Friday, it'll be ready.
Arrivederci.

He turns to his henchman.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
Let's go.

EXT. POLICE STATION/FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

Logan closes the passenger door before Malik waves at him as the car heads away. The detective enters the building.

INT. POLICE STATION/ADMIN OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The detective spots the sergeant he is looking for, sitting at a desk in the busy office. Logan advances towards him.

LOGAN FORD
Hey. You got today's roster?

The burly sergeant looks up at Logan from his desk then lifts a clipboard from the top of a pile on his in tray.

SGT KELLOG
Who are you looking for?

LOGAN FORD
Kershaw.

The sergeant thumbs through sheave of paper till he finds what he is looking for.

SGT KELLOG
His shift is about to end. You might just catch him clocking out.

LOGAN FORD
Thanks.

The detective departs the scene.

EXT. POLICE STATION/CAR PARK - MOMENTS LATER

Logan gets into a car opposite the main entrance before rolling down the window and lighting up a cigarette. Patiently he waits.

INT. POLICE STATION/CAR PARK/CAR - MOMENTS LATER

The cigarette is nearly finished as he sees Kershaw, dressed in his civvies, step through the main entrance into the car park and advance towards his car.

Logan winds up the window while watching.

Kershaw's car exits the car park and Logan follows.

INT. LOGAN'S CAR/PULCINELLA OFFICE STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Through the bustling streets, Logan follows Kershaw on a meandering journey that appears aimless but has purpose, until eventually Kershaw arrives at his destination outside a windowless ground floor commercial building.

As Kershaw exits his parked car and advances towards the scarred door, its paint peeling with age, Logan parks unnoticed by the off-duty officer and watches.

Kershaw knocks on the door and waits, glancing around before the door opens for him to enter.

INT. PARKWAY CENTRAL LIBRARY - DAY

Malik is led by a LIBRARIAN [24] to a line of microfiche readers.

LIBRARIAN

You'll find all newspaper articles here.

MALIK EDWARDS

Thanks.

The detective takes a seat and begins trawling through old newspapers to find out about the previous murders. He discovers the victims had criminal backgrounds.

INT. PULCINELLA'S OFFICE/CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Kershaw follows one of Pulcinella's soldiers through a dimly lit corridor and into an office.

INT. PULCINELLA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The mafia boss is sitting behind a desk in a room that resembles a mail office, full of boxes and shelves with documents spread out in front of him.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA

You shouldn't be here.

Kershaw appears nervous and uncomfortable.

JIM KERSHAW

Believe me, I'd rather be elsewhere.

The mafia boss waves his soldier to leave.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
(to Kershaw)
Your partner?

JIM KERSHAW
Fuckin' right. Is this some rival
getting back at you? I mean, do you
know what happened to him?

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
Hey. Calm the fuck down.

Pulcinella leans back in his chair.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
It ain't no fuckin' revenge score.

JIM KERSHAW
Then what the fuck is going on?

The mobster stares hard at the officer.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
My fellas are checking it out.
Maybe your man was into some weird
shit. Who the fuck knows.

Kershaw paces back and forth not knowing whether he's coming or going.

JIM KERSHAW
Well I gotta step outta this. I've
got a family. You understand?

The mobster glares at the officer.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
I understand you got no choice in
this, you fuckhead.

Pulcinella rises to his feet in tandem with his anger.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
You don't just decide when to bail
out you mutherfucker! I run this
show and you'll get in your...

He walks around his desk towards the officer who is palpably in fear for his safety.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
...fuckin' blue and white and do
what we've been fuckin' paying you
to do?

Pulcinella aggressively pokes him in the chest.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
And if you as much as fuckin'
sneeze outta turn, what happened to
your partner will be the least of
your fuckin' problems! Now get
outta my fuckin' office and don't
show your fuckin' face here again!

Kershaw is a broken, quivering man as he scuttles out of the office past the grinning soldier.

EXT. LOGAN'S CAR/PULCINELLA OFFICE STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Logan watches Kershaw stumble out into the street and rush towards his car before departing.

The detective decides to remain at the scene, rather than follow Kershaw.

EXT. PULCINELLA'S OFFICE/STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Pulcinella steps out into the street as a black car approaches for him to enter.

Logan watches the mobster depart.

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES/RICHARD EVANS OFFICE - DAY

In an open-planned office, Richard Evans is typing up a report.

MALIK EDWARDS (O.S.)
Richard Evans?

The social worker turns around to see the detective looking down at him with his badge in his hand.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
Detective Malik Edwards. You got a minute?

RICHARD EVANS
Sure.

Evans rises from his chair and notices a few colleagues silently watching. He leads the detective out of the office.

RICHARD EVANS (CONT'D)
What's this about?

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES/CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Evans leans against the wall facing the detective.

MALIK EDWARDS

You were Lucia Blinkley's social
care worker?

RICHARD EVANS

Were?

MALIK EDWARDS

We found her body yesterday
morning.

Evans is visibly shaken.

RICHARD EVANS

Jesus.

MALIK EDWARDS

Can you offer an insight into her
background...her daily life?

RICHARD EVANS

What can I say? Single mother.
Struggled financially. Work could
be...unpredictable.

MALIK EDWARDS

What did she do?

RICHARD EVANS

Some bar work. Escort. Evenings
mainly.

MALIK EDWARDS

Her ex?

RICHARD EVANS

Michael Reardon. A real deadbeat.
Not what a kid needs to look up to.

MALIK EDWARDS

You aware of her drug taking?

The social worker winces.

RICHARD EVANS

She wasn't hard-core. That's one
thing about her. She wanted the
best for her boy. Dabbled a bit but
mainly at parties. No needles.

MALIK EDWARDS
Recognise the name R Smith?

Evans shakes his head while the detective retrieves his pen and notepad which he hands to Evans.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
Could you write down Reardon's
address?

The social worker scribbles the details.

RICHARD EVANS
This is his last known place.

He hands the pen and notepad back.

MALIK EDWARDS
Thanks. Appreciate your assistance.

RICHARD EVANS
No problem. Tragic. She didn't
deserve it.

The detective nods in agreement before making his way out.

INT. JIM KERSHAW'S HOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

The sound of children laughing is interrupted by the ring of the doorbell.

ANN KERSHAW (O.S.)
Honey, can you get that?

Jim Kershaw advances towards the front door where a figure can be seen on the other side of the frosted window.

JIM KERSHAW
Got it!

He opens the door to see Logan Ford. Instantly, Kershaw's face turns serious and he attempts to close the door but Logan jams the door and pushes it back. For a moment the two policemen struggle to achieve their objective till the full force of the detective's body pushes the door fully open with Kershaw stumbling backwards.

LOGAN FORD
Pulcinella.

ANN KERSHAW (O.S.)
Honey?!

JIM KERSHAW
It's ok. A colleague.

Kershaw looks resigned as he tries to compose himself.

JIM KERSHAW (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Outside.

The policeman steps out and closes the door behind.

LOGAN FORD
You two weren't just happening to
pass the hotel.

JIM KERSHAW
Like we said, it's on our beat.

The detective pulls out the bag of drugs he retrieved from
the perp and shows it to the officer.

LOGAN FORD
Look familiar?

Kershaw recognises them but remains silent.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
They were stuffed in his mouth.

The officer takes a deep breath and stiffens.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
I saw you at Pulcinella's.

Kershaw is stunned.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
The two of you were working for
him?

JIM KERSHAW
(stammers)
It was Bernie. I played no part. I
tried to stop him.

LOGAN FORD
You stood by and watched?

JIM KERSHAW
What could I do?! Report him?

Kershaw laughs.

JIM KERSHAW (CONT'D)
You know how they close ranks? It'd
be the end of my career.

LOGAN FORD
It's already sinking.

JIM KERSHAW
I've done nothing. You can't prove
anything.

LOGAN FORD
What did Pulcinella want from you?

JIM KERSHAW
Sweep the streets of any
competition. Drugs. Anyone step
into his patch and they'd be taken
care of.

Logan waves the bag of drugs in front of Kershaw.

LOGAN FORD
You were dealing this shit?

Kershaw defiantly shakes his head.

JIM KERSHAW
We - He didn't deal. Just handed it
over to Pulcella's men.

The detective grunts sardonically.

LOGAN FORD
At the hotel?

JIM KERSHAW
I think so.

Logan stuffs the bag into his jacket pocket, anger urging to
be let loose.

LOGAN FORD
When you sit at the table with your
kids, you think about a kid who
just lost his mother.

JIM KERSHAW
I -

LOGAN FORD
Fuck you.

The detective turns and walks away.

EXT. MICHAEL REARDON APARTMENT BLOCK/STREET - NIGHT

In a slum area of the city with dilapidated buildings and sporadic street lighting, Malik pulls up in his car outside a block of red brick buildings. Stepping out of the car, he can hear distant shouting. A group of young kids hang out by some nearby steps a hundred yards further along.

The detective advances up towards the building directly opposite the parked car.

INT. MICHAEL REARDON APARTMENT BLOCK/STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

Malik climbs the poorly lit stairway that shows signs of age and neglect with dampness running down the wall. He hears the sound of an argument behind a door as he continues towards his destination.

Eventually he arrives at the door of Reardon's apartment and he knocks. The sound of a door slamming from above echoes through the stairway, causing him to tense as he hears footsteps from the other side. He knocks again.

The sound of the door being unbolted prepares him as he watches the door with trepidation. It slowly opens to reveal a undernourished, poorly looking young man peer out.

DRUG ADDICT

Yeah?

MALIK EDWARDS

I'm looking for Michael Reardon.

The young man eyes the detective suspiciously.

DRUG ADDICT

Who's asking?

Malik pulls out his badge which provides an instant, dismissive response.

DRUG ADDICT (CONT'D)

No-one here of that name, man.

Malik pushes the door open without any resistance and the drug addict steps back against the hallway wall with his hands partially raised.

DRUG ADDICT (CONT'D)

Please yourself.

The detective places his hand on his gun as he steps into the apartment.

INT. MICHAEL REARDON APARTMENT BLOCK/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

MALIK EDWARDS
Where is he?

The addict limply points to a doorway.

A turgid smell irritates the detective's nose as he studies the addict before advancing towards the door. The base beat of reggae music filters from an opposing door.

Malik turns the handle of the door, keeping his other hand firmly on his gun, and opens to the sound of mellow music playing from a ghetto blaster. His head slightly reclines in defence to the smell of smoke emanating from the room.

INT. MICHAEL REARDON APARTMENT BLOCK/ROOM - CONTINUOUS

In the semi-lit room, stoned users are slumped on a double bed and around the floor. Drug paraphernalia lies scattered with ashtrays filled to the brim with a mix of joints and cigarettes. He studies the inert figures.

MALIK EDWARDS
Michael Reardon?

A stoner sits at the corner of the headrest, leaning against the wall. His glazed eyes look in the direction of the detective. He struggles to raise a hand which flops to his side. Malik steps over to the bed before kneeling on it to get closer to the young man. He searches the pockets of Reardon and finds a wallet which he wrenches out and opens to find a driver's license confirming it is Reardon. He forces it back in the pocket.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
I'm here about Lucia.

The addict, his head lolloping, mumbles incoherently. Malik attempts to get a response by slapping him on the face.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
When did you last see her?

Reardon struggles to register.

MICHAEL REARDON
Lucia...Evan...

MALIK EDWARDS
No. Lucia Blinkley...She's
dead...your ex.

DRUG ADDICT
Dead...yeah.

MALIK EDWARDS
Your son...he needs you.

The young is unable to respond. Malik, realising the situation is pointless, rises to his feet, stares in thought for a moment then pivots to leave the room only to face a tall, dreadlocked DRUG DEALER [29] blocking the doorway, holding a pistol down by his side.

DRUG DEALER #2 (O.S.)
You got reason to be here?

MALIK EDWARDS
The mother of his child is dead. He needs to know.

The dealer steps ominously forward.

DRUG DEALER #2
Pigs ain't welcome here.

MALIK EDWARDS
I'm not interested in this.

He gestures to his surroundings.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
Just wanted to speak to the man.

The dealer raises his gun at the detective, who raises his hands in defence.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
Shooting an officer really will bring the heat.

The detective cautiously manoeuvres towards the dealer, the gun's aim fixed at him.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
You wont see me again.

DRUG DEALER #2
Don't -

Before the dealer has a chance to finish his sentence, Malik swiftly grabs the wrist and pushes the arm upwards. As the gun goes off, the detective's other open hand jabs hard into his throat before he twists the arm forcing the gun to fall to the floor. Despite the dealer yelling with pain, not a single person in the room responds.

The dealer bends forward and Malik's knee slams upward against the chin and the dealer keels over on to the floor. The detective picks up the gun and empties the shells, which scatter across the floor, before leaving the writhing dealer and the den.

INT. MICHAEL REARDON APARTMENT BLOCK/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The druggie who had allowed him in leans against the wall, a look of trepidation on his face as the detective hands him the gun and opens the door to leave.

INT. MICHAEL REARDON APARTMENT BLOCK/STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

The door closes and the detective brushes himself down before departing.

INT. LOGAN'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As the sun sets, the Ford family sit around the table with Audrey delivering the food in bowls.

LOGAN FORD
So what's the rule?

CHRISTINA FORD/CALLUM FORD
No shop talk!

LOGAN FORD
Ok.

CALLUM FORD
So does that include school?

LOGAN FORD
I guess so.

Suddenly the doorbell rings.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
I'll get it.

The detective rises and leaves the room.

INT. LOGAN'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Logan reappears with Malik as Audrey enters with the last bowl.

LOGAN FORD
Space for one more?

AUDREY FORD
(to Malik)
Take a seat.

She places the bowl on the table and fetches additional cutlery and a plate.

MALIK EDWARDS
You sure?

AUDREY FORD
Callum. Take Malik's jacket.

LOGAN FORD
(to Audrey)
He's vegetarian.

Malik smiles at the boy as he hands over his jacket to be hung up then takes a seat.

AUDREY FORD
There's nut roast there.

MALIK EDWARDS
That'll do fine.

He glances over at Logan.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
Sorry. I should have waited till tomorrow.

LOGAN FORD
You're fine. Tuck in.

INT. LOGAN'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - LATER

The meal is finished with the kids leaving the room. A couple of bottles of wine are opened with glasses filled.

LOGAN FORD
You got homework?

CHRISTINA FORD/CALLUM FORD
All done.

AUDREY FORD
(to Malik)
Logan says you're quit a prospect in the force?

Malik chuckles lightly.

MALIK EDWARDS
I'm not so sure. I just want to
make a difference.

Logan rises from his seat.

LOGAN FORD
I'll clear up.

He makes for the kitchen.

AUDREY FORD
(to Malik)
Well, he's been round the block a
few times to recognise talent.

MALIK EDWARDS
Thanks.

Audrey takes a drink from her glass.

AUDREY FORD
Where do you call home?

MALIK EDWARDS
Canarsie. Two-bed apartment. A
quiet spot. Needs a bit of work,
but nothing major.

AUDREY FORD
On your own?

Malik forces a smile.

MALIK EDWARDS
For now.

AUDREY FORD
No girl to choose the decor?

The detective thoughtfully takes a sip from his glass.

MALIK EDWARDS
Not for me.

Audrey studies him.

AUDREY FORD
A guy?

There's the briefest moments silence as he drinks more wine.

AUDREY FORD (CONT'D)
(softly)
It's not something to be ashamed
of.

Malik raises an eyebrow, unsure of how to respond.

MALIK EDWARDS
There's still a lot of narrow minds
in the force.

Audrey glances round towards Logan who is humming to himself
as he stacks the dishwasher then turns back to Malik.

AUDREY FORD
Being different always brings
challenges, but if you remain true
to yourself, your conscience is
clear.

MALIK EDWARDS
Would he agree?

AUDREY FORD
Oh yes. A dogged individual if ever
there was. Going against the grain
is in his blood.

MALIK EDWARDS
I've noticed.

AUDREY FORD
So is there someone in your life?

MALIK EDWARDS
Once.

AUDREY FORD
And?

MALIK EDWARDS
Two years ago. Aids.

AUDREY FORD
I'm so sorry.

MALIK EDWARDS
You just have to move on.

Logan suddenly joins them.

LOGAN FORD
Right. That's everything done.

He picks up his glass of wine and takes a drink as Audrey rises from her chair.

AUDREY FORD
I'll leave you two to get on with whatever you need to discuss.

Audrey rises from her chair.

AUDREY FORD (CONT'D)
(to Logan)
You have a good partner here. Don't blow it.

Logan responds with a look of confusion as she takes her glass and leaves, closing the sliding doors that partition the dining area from the living room.

LOGAN FORD
How'd you get on?

MALIK EDWARDS
I found Lucia's social worker, Richard Evans. Through him I got her ex...a lost cause. Smacked up in some den. Just incoherent. We can exclude him.

Logan pulls out a packet of cigarettes. Before lighting up, he checks that his wife is not looking.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
We could be looking for a vigilante.

Logan exhales and flicks the ash in a used cup. Malik watches with slight disgust.

LOGAN FORD
Go on.

MALIK EDWARDS
I drove over to Parkway Central Library to get some background on those previous murders. The victims had records.

LOGAN FORD
I didn't know that.

MALIK EDWARDS
This could be the same with Hillcroft.

LOGAN FORD

He and his partner, Kershaw, were working for Pulcinella. Helping keep the competition at bay.

MALIK EDWARDS

So they are connected?

Logan nods then picks up his glass.

LOGAN FORD

Fuckin' right, they are.

He downs the rest of the glass in one go.

Malik checks his watch.

MALIK EDWARDS

It's late. I should be on my way.

As he rises from his chair, they hear the telephone ringing and see Audrey picking up the phone.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)

Thanks for the hospitality.

LOGAN FORD

Your welcome.

Audrey walks towards them and opens the sliding door.

AUDREY FORD

(to Logan)

It's for you.

LOGAN FORD

(to Audrey)

Could you see Malik to the door?

AUDREY FORD

It's Hanley.

Logan walks over and picks up the phone while Malik and Audrey watch and wait. Logan listens to his captain before returning the phone to its cradle.

LOGAN FORD

There's been another.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

INT. MANHATTEN MUNICIPAL BUILDING/CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Police officers are arranged around the entrance and corridor that leads to Fred Wilmot's office. Captain Hanley stands in front of crime scene tape, his grim face watching the two detectives advance across the cement floor towards him.

In the distance, behind the detectives, a mortuary trolley is being brought to the scene.

CAPTAIN HANLEY
This is turning into a crisis.

LOGAN FORD
Who is it?

CAPTAIN HANLEY
Council employee. Fred Wilmot.

The captain raises the tape for the two detectives who pass underneath, followed by Hanley.

INT. FRED WILMOT OFFICE - NIGHT

Wilmot's office, though not executive, is spacious with framed photos adorning the wall of his achievements while one side of the office offers a panoramic view of the city through large windows for which the base provides a ledge wide enough to sit on.

As Logan and Malik advance, they notice the red, sprayed words on the opposite wall.

THAT'S THE WAY TO DO IT

The walk over to it.

LOGAN FORD
Black humour.

Malik nods.

CAPTAIN HANLEY
We've got a monster on the loose.

The two detectives and their captain manoeuvre towards the dead body, past forensic officers who are dusting and photographing the scene.

Hanley stands back, allowing the men to get a closer look. The detectives study the figure standing on the base of the window ledge with his back to them as he faces out towards the city, the night sky glittering.

Above his shoulder blades, two hooks, attached to cord, pierce through the stretched skin so as to take the weight of the body, while his arms, pinned to cord, are outstretched and his thighs similarly held, with all the supports attached to hooks above the victim.

The bloody words *NO SHOW WITHOUT PUNCH* have been cut into his bare back, the letters dripping down to his underwear.

As Logan carefully moves to the side of the victim, he studies the neck brace holding Wilmot's head upright and notices the eyelids have been removed.

Malik appearing opposite, looks up, then glances at his partner.

Logan stares out the window at the landscape of towering buildings both complete and under construction.

He sighs in thought and shakes his head.

LOGAN FORD
(to Captain Hanley)
What department did this guy work?

CAPTAIN HANLEY (O.S.)
Land and Buildings.

MALIK EDWARDS
Admiring his kingdom?

LOGAN FORD
Something like that.

The detectives step back from the body and approaches their captain.

CAPTAIN HANLEY
You sure you can handle this?

Logan nods then glances back briefly at the victim.

LOGAN FORD
They're all connected. The girl.
The drugs. Him...

CAPTAIN HANLEY
Hillcroft?

Logan nods.

MALIK EDWARDS
He was on the take.

CAPTAIN HANLEY
Jesus. What about the message?

MALIK EDWARDS
Punch was a violent character.
Maybe he's our killer...or maybe
it's our victim. Now he's dead,
there's no show.

CAPTAIN HANLEY
Could this be a gang war?

LOGAN FORD
Too elaborate. This is personal.

CAPTAIN HANLEY
I've got the mayor and the DA on my
back, never mind that the press are
gonna have a field day. The
deadline still holds but we need
him caught...asap.

The captain turns and leaves the scene.

MALIK EDWARDS
(to Logan)
What do you think?

Logan turns and looks at the victim being lowered to the
floor, the cords dangling in the air as paramedics bring in
a trolley to place the bagged body. The detective sighs.

LOGAN FORD
I think there's nothing we can do
till tomorrow.

Malik checks his watch.

MALIK EDWARDS
I'm gonna find out exactly what
this guy did around here.

Logan grunts in disbelief.

LOGAN FORD
You trying to show me up?

His partner chuckles.

MALIK EDWARDS
That wouldn't be hard.

EXT. LOGAN'S HOME/GARDEN PATH - LATER

The detective closes the car door and makes his way towards the house. He looks over to see his neighbour, Peter Denton, sitting on the porch drinking a beer then raising his bottle in the air.

PETER DENTON
You fancy one?

LOGAN FORD
Don't might if I do.

EXT. PETER DENTON'S HOUSE/PORCH - CONTINUOUS

The detective climbs the few steps that lead to the porch as Denton opens a bottle and hands it to Logan who sits down next to his neighbour.

LOGAN FORD
Cheers.

He takes a swig of the bottle then reaches into his pocket and pulls out a pack of cigarettes.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
You mind?

Denton shakes his head.

The detective lays down his bottle and lights up, taking in a long draw and exhaling his stresses into the night air.

PETER DENTON
Tired?

LOGAN FORD
It's never bloody ending.

PETER DENTON
Work?

LOGAN FORD
Yeah. There are days when I feel like that kid with his finger in the dam.

PETER DENTON
Spinning plates?

LOGAN FORD
Or that.

PETER DENTON
What's your job?

Logan looks for somewhere to flick his ash and Denton reaches down and produces a small bucket filled with sand which he places at the feet of Logan.

LOGAN FORD
Homicide.

PETER DENTON
Jeez. It never entered my head
you'd be in the force. Must put a
lot of weight on your shoulders?

LOGAN FORD
Comes with the territory.

PETER DENTON
You must see some crazy things?

Logan nods as he takes a draw from his cigarette.

LOGAN FORD
Tonight's been kinda like that.

He exhales before taking a drink.

PETER DENTON
Some dangerous people out there.
Thing is you'd walk past them in
the street and they'd look as
normal as you and me.

LOGAN FORD
Yeah. They don't come with a
government warning.

Denton laughs.

PETER DENTON
No they don't.

LOGAN FORD
Anyway, what about you? What pays
the bills?

PETER DENTON
Entertainment. Props.

LOGAN FORD
Really?

PETER DENTON
Did an apprenticeship in joinery
many moons ago. Can't go wrong with
a trade.

LOGAN FORD
Definitely. You meet anyone famous?

Denton laughs.

PETER DENTON
My work tends to be completed
before the cast arrive.

LOGAN FORD
Cool all the same.

Logan drops the remnants of his cigarette in the bucket.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
I better get over. Bladder needs
emptied.

PETER DENTON
Feel free to use the bathroom.

He points at his front door.

PETER DENTON (CONT'D)
Upstairs.

He pulls another beer from a crate.

PETER DENTON (CONT'D)
One for the road before you check-
in.

Logan checks his watch then rises and makes for the door.

LOGAN FORD
Why not?

INT. PETER DENTON'S HOUSE/STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

With the light switched on, the detective walks up the stair
and into the bathroom.

INT. PETER DENTON'S HOUSE/BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

The detective unzips and relieves his bladder while looking
around at the cosmetics and toiletries sitting on the shelf.

Finished, he flushes, washes his hands before drying them
then steps out into the landing.

To his left an open door invitingly exposes the interior of a room. He looks down the stairs and can make out the feet of Denton sitting in his chair through the open door.

The detective walks across to the dark room and peers in. A bedroom, it looks like it has never been slept in and doesn't interest Logan. He is about to turn and leave when something catches his attention. He steps further into the room.

On the corner of the bed lies a marionette attached to strings.

Suddenly he hears Denton talking.

PETER DENTON (O.S.)
He's upstairs. I'll let him know
you're here.

Logan rushes out of the room and reaches the top of the stairway as Denton appears.

PETER DENTON (CONT'D)
Your wife is here.

The detective walks down the stairs as Audrey appears behind his neighbour.

AUDREY FORD
I saw the car so assumed you might
be here.

EXT. PETER DENTON'S HOUSE/PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Logan steps out into the porch.

LOGAN FORD
You mind if I take a raincheck on
that?

PETER DENTON
Another time.

LOGAN FORD
Nice talking to you.

PETER DENTON
The same.

The detective and his wife advance towards their house.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

INT. MALIK'S CAR - DAY

The following day and Malik sits behind the steering wheel as Logan enters holding a cardboard tray containing two hot drinks. His partner takes one and removes the lid, allowing the steam to rise as he blows gently.

LOGAN FORD
How'd you get on last night?

MALIK EDWARDS
Wilmot had been a busy man.
Authorising sales and developments
around the city. Consolidated
Construction Enterprise seem to get
the lion's share.

Logan blows on his drink before sipping. It burns his lip.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
I always give it time to cool.

His partner glances at him.

LOGAN FORD
You don't say.

Malik shrugs his shoulders as Logan pulls out his cigarettes.

MALIK EDWARDS
Not in here.

Logan looks at him disdainfully.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
I'm not breathing your shit in
here.

The detective stuffs the packet back in his jacket.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
Guess who's on the board?

LOGAN FORD
Wilmot?

MALIK EDWARDS
No! Pulcinella.

Logan shows interest.

LOGAN FORD
Really?

MALIK EDWARDS

And if you noticed last night,
there's construction work taking
place right across from Wilmot's
office.

LOGAN FORD

Owned by this CCE?

Malik nods before taking a sip from his cup.

MALIK EDWARDS

See. No burnt mouth.

INT. KILLER'S CAR - DAY

A man, wearing a baseball cap and shades sits in a car opposite Pulcinella's office. He listens to the radio transmitter sitting on the passenger seat above a bag of tools for breaking in.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (O.S.)

I'm gonna find out who's behind
this shit, don't you
worry...yeah...the fucker.

There is a moments silence.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

It doesn't change anything...we got
most of it authorised...yeah...ok.
Tonight...Excelsior...top floor. At
nine.

INT. PULCINELLA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The mobster is listening to the other person as he studies photos of Sanderson and Lucia from the hotel room that are spread out across his desk. Among the photos is a large, brown envelope with large, capital letters RS.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA

Just you and me.

The man in the car hears the phone slam down on the cradle.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Johnny! Have someone speak to
Kershaw. Find out what the fuck is
going on!

ROCCO MARINO (O.S.)

Sure boss.

EXT. PULCINELLA'S OFFICE/STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The front door of Pulcinella's office block opens and the mobster enters the street with his cronies before they climb into a line of cars parked outside.

INT. KILLER'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The figure watches the cars leave the scene. Once gone, he opens the driver's door and steps out while carrying a bag.

INT. CORONERS OFFICE - DAY

Ernst Becker sits at his desk eating a sandwich as Logan and Malik enter his office.

ERNST BECKER
I'm on my lunch.

LOGAN FORD
Your report on the girl. Is it
done?

The coroner sighs before reaching over his disorganised desk and retrieving a folder which he offers.

ERNST BECKER
I was right about the drugs. They
were laced.

Logan opens the folder and studies the report.

ERNST BECKER (CONT'D)
Although her body was thoroughly
washed, we found carpet fibres on
her clothing.

He takes a bite from his sandwich.

ERNST BECKER (CONT'D)
Persian rug. Unusual, in that it
was made of goat's wool and a
genuine Iranian one at
that...probably hand-knotted.

Logan hands the report over to his partner.

MALIK EDWARDS
What about the unborn?

ERNST BECKER
Hmm. We're in the process of doing
an RFLP DNA test. I'm waiting on
the results. I'll let you know.

LOGAN FORD
Any info on the male victims?

Becker puts down his sandwich and wipes his hands with a tissue.

ERNST BECKER
We're going as fast as we can.

The coroner takes a drink from a cardboard cup.

ERNST BECKER (CONT'D)
...but given how the second victim
was strung up and the materials
used, this was someone with
knowledge of construction. He had
the tools and know-how to get those
hooks secured to take the weight.

Malik places the folder down on the desk.

ERNST BECKER (CONT'D)
Oh...and chloroform was used on
both. This guy's prepared for all
events.

LOGAN FORD
Appreciate that.

The two detectives make to leave.

ERNST BECKER
Next time call in advance.

The coroner picks up the remainder of his sandwich and bites into it.

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/FOYER - LATER

The two detectives approach the vacant front desk as some guests pass by towards the main entrance.

Malik pings the bell.

HARVEY (O.S.)
Just coming!

LOGAN FORD
(to Malik)
Why set them up like puppets?

MALIK EDWARDS
Marionettes.

Logan glances at him curiously.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
Controlled from above? Puppet
master? Who knows?

Harvey appears from his office wearing Sanderson's flag pin on his lapel. His look changes to one of resignation at the sight of the two men before approaching the desk front.

HARVEY
I got nothing to add.

Malik circles around the counter towards his office.

HARVEY (CONT'D)
Hey, you can't go in there! You got
no fuckin' right.

Logan quickly grabs the receptionist by the lapel and drags him over the counter.

LOGAN FORD
We could have this place shut down
and evacuated, then search every
fuckin' room. You want that?

The shocked receptionist shakes his head vehemently.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
Then let the man do his job.

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/MANAGER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Malik steps inside and notices the screens standing in a row, displaying images of rooms and corridors.

MALIK EDWARDS
Here!

Harvey and Logan appear in the office.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
(to Harvey)
Voyeur paradise?

Logan walks over to the screens.

LOGAN FORD
How many rooms with cameras?

He turns to look at the receptionist.

HARVEY

Only the two penthouses.

MALIK EDWARDS

You have video from the other
night?

Harvey shakes his head.

LOGAN FORD

Your boss got it?

The grim-faced receptionist says nothing.

MALIK EDWARDS

Take us to them.

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/EXEC SUITE - LATER

The door opens and the three men step into the crime scene. The room is immaculately clean as the detectives cross the room.

With Harvey remaining by the doorway, Malik looks down at the Persian rug, watched by his partner, then bends down and feels the material before studying the underside.

MALIK EDWARDS

Hand-made.

As Malik rises to his feet, Logan stares at Harvey before walking over to the phone to make a call. He turns and faces the receptionist after he has dialled then glances at his partner as his call is answered.

LOGAN FORD

Logan Ford. We need forensics over
at the Chelmsford right away. Sure.

MALIK EDWARDS

(to Harvey)

Where's your boss?

HARVEY

Don't know.

LOGAN FORD

(to person on phone)

Thanks. We'll be waiting.

INT. CHELMSFORD HOTEL/FOYER - LATER

The detectives watch as the forensics team, accompanied by uniformed officers enter the foyer. Logan hands the penthouse key to one of the team.

LOGAN FORD
Penthouse. One Four five.

He turns to one of the uniformed police.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
Take him in to custody. He knows more.

Harvey reacts with shock.

HARVEY
What! I ain't done nothing!

The detectives watch as Harvey is handcuffed and led away.

LOGAN FORD
(to Malik)
You notice that pin he was wearing?

Malik shakes his head. The two men stand in silence for a moment in thought.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
(to Malik)
We need to find Pulcinella.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

EXT. PULCINELLA'S OFFICE/STREET - EVENING

Police cars and a SWAT vehicle, their sirens wailing, approach the building along with the detectives in the quiet street.

Screeching to a halt, the SWAT team emerge as uniformed officers raise their weapons around the building.

Captain Hanley appears talking into his walkie-talkie.

POLICE CO-ORDINATOR (O.S.)
Site secure, sir.

CAPTAIN HANLEY
Go for it.

The SWAT team converge around the doorway and an officer produces a battering ram which smashes the door open enabling the team to rush into the building as the captain and the detectives follow behind.

INT. PULCINELLA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The police swarm the building as the detectives enter Pulcinella's office which appears like it's been ransacked.

POLICE BUST OFFICER
(to Captain Hanley)
Place is empty.

CAPTAIN HANLEY
Bag everything.

Logan walks up to an open safe. Looking inside he finds wads of bank notes as Malik approaches from behind.

LOGAN FORD
That's a lot of dough to leave.

CAPTAIN HANLEY
A robbery?

LOGAN FORD
Something else.

EXT. PULCINELLA'S OFFICE/STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The two detectives walk towards their car.

LOGAN FORD
I've got this new neighbour. Just moved in...from Philly.

Malik looks at him strangely.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
Lives alone and he has one of these fuckin' puppets.

The men get into the car.

INT. MALIK'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

MALIK EDWARDS
The odds of winning the lottery would be higher than what you're thinking.

LOGAN FORD
And he lives alone.

Malik chuckles. He starts the engine.

MALIK EDWARDS
Seriously?

Logan looks out the side window towards the building.

LOGAN FORD
People are strange.

The car begins to move.

EXT. LOGAN'S HOME/GARDEN PATH - LATER

As dusk settles, Logan steps out of the car, closes the door and slaps the roof. Malik drives off as Logan walks towards the house.

He looks across at Denton's house to see it shrouded in darkness with no sign of life initiating him to veer to the right and on towards the house.

EXT. PETER DENTON'S HOUSE/PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Climbing the stairs of the porch, he takes the few steps to the front door and peers through the glass panes before ringing the bell.

Clearly the resident is not at home. Casually, he walks round to the back of the house, ensuring no-one is around to see him.

EXT. PETER DENTON'S HOUSE/REAR GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

An owl hoots as he approaches the rear of the house. He bends down to look through a basement window which he checks and discovers is locked. Pulling out a penknife he jimmies the lock and pushes the window inwards enabling him to enter.

INT. PETER DENTON'S HOUSE/BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

The room is in complete darkness as he locks the window and crosses the room, the distant sound of thunder rumbling from afar.

The detective pulls out his lighter and a small glow enables him to see what is in close proximity. A few steps away he can make out a table which he walks towards. It appears to be a workbench with carpentry tools lying around. Here he finds a wooden control bar for a marionette alongside a ball of string.

The detective raises the lighter higher and investigates the rest of the room until he finds a series of marionettes hanging from the wall. He moves closer to the puppets and studies them, raising the arms and studying their construction. He steps back and checks the time before leaving the room and climbing the stairs.

EXT. PETER DENTON'S HOUSE/PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Logan carefully closes the door and makes his way to his house.

INT. EXCELSIOR BUILDING NEW OFFICE SPACE - NIGHT

Pulcinella enters a wide expansive, pillared space that is under construction to create an open-planned environment. The ceiling is incomplete with girders showing, while wiring sticks out from power points plotted around the walls.

Large windows expose the cloudy night sky. There is a rumble of thunder and through the rain that begins to run down, the Manhattan Municipal Building stands aloof in the distance.

Pulcinella walks out of the shadows past step ladders and a toolkit lying on the dusty floor towards the back of Sanderson who studies the cityscape ahead through the rain-soaked windows.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA

You'd think they'd look after their tools. They don't come cheap.

Sanderson, wearing a beige cashmere, knee-length coat pivots to face the mobster.

ROBERT SANDERSON

Same could be said about your men.

The mobster gets closer to his partner.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA

My men?

ROBERT SANDERSON

The ones that profit from my connections.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA

We're all greasing the machine.

ROBERT SANDERSON

Well, we're not here to quibble over semantics.

(MORE)

ROBERT SANDERSON (CONT'D)
Someone is out to disturb this
little venture and it's attracting
too much heat.

Pulcinella produces a cigar and lights it with a lighter,
puffing intermittently, producing clouds of smoke that waft
in the breeze as it drifts through the building.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
This ain't no beef with the
competition.

He spits on the floor then takes another puff as he wanders
towards a window.

ROBERT SANDERSON
You sure?

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
This all started with that girl.
It's personal.

Sanderson watches the mobster approach the window.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
Some boyfriend or husband is really
pissed. We're looking into it but
the cops ain't any the wiser.

ROBERT SANDERSON
I can't have this coming onto me.
If I go down, we all go down.

The mobster turns swiftly to face the politician who walks
towards him.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
Hey. Remember who you're talkin'
to. No-one's going down. We're
clean.

ROBERT SANDERSON
Until someone makes the connection.
..and if that happens I'm cutting
loose.

Pulcinella advances towards the politician.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
That ain't an option.

Suddenly he pulls back his coat, revealing a gun, as he
pulls out a hanky from his pocket and wipes his nose..

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
Your choice is pretty fuckin'
simple. See it through or...

He returns the hanky into his pocket and pats the gun.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
...this.

The two men stand silent for a moment then Pulcinella grins as he covers the gun with his coat.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
You got your money. Your shares.
You ain't traceable. So, get out
there and make the world a better
place. Leave this fuckin' shit for
me to clean up.

The gangster walks parallel to the windows, away from the politician. His arms reach out to either side, as he swivels around smiling broadly.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
We got it all.

Sanderson appears unimpressed.

ROBERT SANDERSON
You better be right.

He walks away, leaving the gangster alone.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA
(mumbles)
Fuckin' shmuck.

The mobster turns and advances towards the window and gazes out while puffing on his cigar.

Unseen, the killer appears from behind plastic sheeting that hangs from the ceiling between the rooms.

He is dressed in the same overalls and face protection as he quietly walks towards the gangster who is unaware of his presence. In one hand he holds a damp cloth while in the other he holds a gun which he begins to raise and point as he nears Pulcinella.

The gangster takes one last puff then drops the cigar before rubbing it out with his shoe. He reacts with sudden surprise as he turns to see the figure pointing the gun at him a few steps away.

GIANCOMO PULCINELLA (CONT'D)
You better be good with that
fuckin' thing otherwise you're a
dead man.

The figure waves the gun indicating for him to get down on the ground.

Pulcinella steps back and swiftly reaches for his gun. A shot fires hitting him close to his shoulder and he staggers backwards, but it doesn't stop him from grasping his gun and pulling it out to fire back.

The shot hits the ceiling as he falls to the ground in pain before he blacks out.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

INT. EXCELSIOR BUILDING/STREET - DAY

The following day and a large crowd of reporters, camera crews, onlookers, police and support services have converged outside the Excelsior as the detectives pass through and advance.

INT. EXCELSIOR BUILDING/FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Uniformed police guard the area as they walk towards an elevator.

INT. EXCELSIOR BUILDING/ CORRIDOR TO CRIME SCENE #3 - CONTINUOUS

The detectives step out of the elevator into an army of police, FBI and forensics milling around and organising the investigation and security.

They advance towards double doors and open a door each where the hub of voices gets louder.

INT. EXCELSIOR BUILDING NEW OFFICE SPACE - CONTINUOUS

An FBI officer authoritatively approaches.

FBI OFFICER #1
Id?

The detectives show him their badges.

FBI OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)
You're the guys supposed to be
cracking this case?

He turns his head to look at the crime scene then back at Logan and Malik.

FBI OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)
You're doing a good job.

The two detectives walk away from the FBI agent towards the victim but notice red writing on the wall.

GRAINS OF TIME FOR A MISTAKEN SON

The detectives walk up to the message and study it. The penny suddenly drops for Logan..

LOGAN FORD
He's been offering clues all this time.

Malik turns to his partner.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
The first was property for Wilmot.
Land and Buildings. The next was
Punch and Judy. No show without
Punch.

The two men study the message on the wall in thought.

MALIK EDWARDS
It originated in Italy.

LOGAN FORD
Yeah...but it wasn't called Punch.

CAPTAIN HANLEY (O.S.)
Pulcinella.

The detectives turn to see their captain studying the message. He looks back at the message.

LOGAN FORD
There's gonna be another?

Logan turns to view the crime scene, followed by Malik.

Pulcinella, stripped naked, hangs about fifteen feet in the air with the familiar cord attaching his limbs and body to the girders and stretching out like a spider's web to various points in the ceiling. Hooks, attached to a pulley, stretch the skin on his back as the weight of his body pulls down. A bloody rag is wrapped around his eyes while his head is kept upright with string attached from the ceiling to his hair. Both the mobster's arms and legs are outstretched as he faces downwards towards a pool of blood on the floor.

His face is covered in dried blood, while his stomach has been sliced open for his entrails to fall to the floor, remaining attached to his body.

In his mouth is stuffed bank notes.

Malik remains fixed as Logan, unphased, walks closer to the scene, while a team of forensics slowly lower the pulley. Coroner Ernst Becker appears from behind Malik.

ERNST BECKER
He left the tools of his handiwork behind.

MALIK EDWARDS
Huh?

Malik is aghast and dumbfounded at what he sees.

ERNST BECKER
The ladder...toolbox. He must've known in advance.

Malik nods in agreement.

ERNST BECKER (CONT'D)
The results of the unborn should be in later today.

Malik is sickeningly mesmerised by the scene before him as Becker watches him.

ERNST BECKER (CONT'D)
You ok?

MALIK EDWARDS
The rage.

ERNST BECKER
It's beyond comprehension.

MALIK EDWARDS
No. There's a reason.

Logan approaches the two men.

LOGAN FORD
We need to figure that message.

The detective leaves the scene. Malik looks at Becker and shrugs his shoulders before following his partner.

EXT. EXCELSIOR BUILDING/STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The two men approach the throng of reporters, with some shouting questions, as they pass under the crime scene tape and make for their car. They fight their way through the crowd.

CRIME SCENE #3 REPORTER #1
Are the police any closer to
catching this person?

CRIME SCENE #3 REPORTER #2
Do they know the connection between
the victims?

LOGAN FORD
No comment.

Eventually they reach the open street and escape the madness.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
Four bodies in as many days.

He thuds the roof of the car with his fist.

MALIK EDWARDS
Hey. We're within touching
distance.

LOGAN FORD
Feels like a chasm.

Logan's anger and frustration is bursting at the seams. He escapes the company of his partner and walks off, leaving Malik confused.

MALIK EDWARDS
Where're you going?

LOGAN FORD
Think this through.

INT. ROBERT SANDERSON OFFICE - DAY

The politician appears panic-stricken, as he listens to his wife, while staring out the window of his office. Concerned no-one hears his conversation, he keeps his voice low.

ROBERT SANDERSON
(whisper)
I'm telling you I'm next. I know
it.

VERONICA SANDERSON (O.S.)
Honey you're not making sense. Why?
Shouldn't you contact the FBI or
the CIA? Isn't that what they're
for?

Sanderson pulls out a quart bottle of whisky from his drawer and, holding the phone between his shoulder and neck, he opens the bottle and takes a swig.

ROBERT SANDERSON
Pulcinella's been murdered.

VERONICA SANDERSON (O.S.)
Robert, you said this deal was a
shoe-in. Stocks and shares. That
was it.

The politician takes another gulp from his glass.

ROBERT SANDERSON
I - My life is in danger... and
there's nothing anyone can do. Oh
Jesus.

VERONICA SANDERSON (O.S.)
Robert -

The politician thrusts the phone down and takes another drink. He tries to gather his thoughts then begins to stuff documents into a briefcase before heading for the door.

INT. ROBERT SANDERSON OFFICE/RECEPTION DESK - CONTINUOUS
Sanderson stops at his P.A's desk where she is typing.

ROBERT SANDERSON
Mary, cancel all my meetings for
the rest of the week.

MARY ERSKINE
Where will you be?

ROBERT SANDERSON
No calls.

He doesn't wait for a response as he departs the office.

EXT. LOGAN'S HOME/STREET - DAY

A yellow cab draws up outside the detective's house and he steps out on to the pavement. Nothing stirs in the quiet street as he advances towards his neighbour's house.

EXT. PETER DENTON'S HOUSE/PORCH - CONTINUOUS

He climbs the steps of the porch and bangs on the door.

LOGAN FORD

Peter! You in?!

He repeatedly thumps his fist against the door till he hears footsteps.

The door opens to reveal his neighbour, dressed in a nightgown, whose sleep has been disturbed. He wipes his eyes and winces.

PETER DENTON

Logan? What's with banging?

The detective struggles to contain his anger.

LOGAN FORD

Where were you last night?

Denton is taken aback by the question.

PETER DENTON

What?

LOGAN FORD

(louder)

Where were you last night?

PETER DENTON

What's that got to do with you?

LOGAN FORD

I came over here last night and the place was empty.

PETER DENTON

You sneaking up on me?

LOGAN FORD

Those fuckin' puppets!

Denton realises Logan has been snooping.

PETER DENTON

Get off my property.

He attempts to close the door but Logan pushes back with force, knocking Denton to the floor, and steps in.

LOGAN FORD
Not till you tell me where you were
last night!

Denton picks himself up from the floor, his face fizzing with rage.

PETER DENTON
I stayed over at a friend's place.

He pushes Logan in the chest.

PETER DENTON (CONT'D)
You have no bloody right being
here. How dare you?!

Logan is stunned. He steps back.

Denton advances, pushing him again and again.

LOGAN FORD
(stutters)
I'm sorry. This is all wrong.

PETER DENTON
Damn right it is! Are you crazy?!

Logan begins to come to his senses.

LOGAN FORD
I've made a terrible mistake.
Pete -

The neighbour gathers himself as he recognises Logan is in distress.

PETER DENTON
Clear your head, man. Look at you.
What in God's name are you thinking
coming over here like some maniac?

Logan is filled with guilt.

PETER DENTON (CONT'D)
Why do you need to know where I
was?

LOGAN FORD
The murders. They're like puppets.

Denton is in disbelief.

PETER DENTON
I don't believe it. You think...you
think I'm this crazy guy?

LOGAN FORD
Why not? Someone's doing it!

Logan's neighbour steps out on to the porch.

PETER DENTON
My friend needed some company so we
sat in, had a few beers. Chatted.
Watched tv. Anything to take his
mind off his troubles. Christ, we
even watched Sanderson's speech.

LOGAN FORD
Sanderson?

PETER DENTON
Yeah, that dumb politician with his
holier than thou bullshit.

There is a moments silence.

LOGAN FORD
I'm sorry.

Denton sighs as he studies his neighbour.

PETER DENTON
Apology accepted.

Logan awkwardly makes for the porch steps.

LOGAN FORD
Think I should go. I'll...I'll make
it up to you.

PETER DENTON
Yeah. A bottle of malt might be a
good start.

Logan drops his head and walks towards his house.

INT. CORONERS OFFICE/CORRIDOR - DAY

Ernst Becker is walking towards his office.

MALIK EDWARDS (O.S.)
Ernst!

The coroner stops and turns to see who is calling his name.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
I was hoping you might have that
DNA result.

The detective approaches.

ERNST BECKER
You're in luck...and we found a
matching record of the father.

INT. LOGAN'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY

As Logan rummages through the vcr tapes, Audrey enters the house and advances into the room. The detective is frantically checking each cassette.

AUDREY FORD
What are you doing?

LOGAN FORD
Christina was recording a
programme. I need to find that
tape.

Audrey circles around her husband and calmly picks out a cassette which she hands to him. He grabs the tape and thrusts it into the vcr. Pressing play, he realises it needs to be rewound.

AUDREY FORD
You alright?

LOGAN FORD
No. We've had a third murder.
Everything is going south.

He stops rewinding and plays the video. It is Sanderson standing at the foot of the steps. The flag pin can be clearly seen on his lapel. The detective stops the video and rises to his feet.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
Gotta go.

Audrey watches her husband rush out of the house and head for his car.

INT. RICHARD EVAN'S APARTMENT/ENTRANCE - DAY

Malik stands alone in the stairway landing and knocks on the front door. He waits but there is no response. The detective glances around before pulling out a skeleton key which he inserts into the lock.

For a moment he fumbles with the key till he hears the door unlock. Quietly he enters the apartment.

INT. RICHARD EVAN'S APARTMENT/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The muffled sound of neighbours filters into the apartment as Malik walks through the dim hallway, pushing doors open on either side and glancing in as he advances.

Reaching the living room door, he pushes it open and enters.

INT. RICHARD EVAN'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The low light of the early evening spreads across the room as the detective wanders around the busy room. Piles of books sit in corners and newspapers lay discarded on the sofa. He meanders between the furniture, picking up objects and returning them.

He glances to his left at a dining table and advances towards it.

Photographs of video stills are spread over the table beside a brown envelope with large letters *RS* written along with bundles of receipts and coupons.

He picks up one of the photos and studies the image of Robert Sanderson with Lucia Blinkley.

INT. EXCELSIOR BUILDING NEW OFFICE SPACE - NIGHT

FLASHBACK of the message on the wall.

INT. THOUGHT PROCESS

The image of an hour glass with sand flowing down.

MALIK EDWARDS (O.S.)
Grains of Time...

INT. THOUGHT PROCESS

The words *ERR* and *SON*

MALIK EDWARDS (O.S.)
Mistaken son

INT. RICHARD EVAN'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He returns the photo before looking through the receipts. The name *R SMITH* appears next to the credit card details. Placing the receipt back, he spots a postcard under some newspaper cuttings of the murders.

He retrieves the postcard containing a funny cartoon of a stork carrying a baby in a towel with the words *Coming Home Soon*.

INT. POLICE STATION/HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Logan is accompanied by a uniformed officer who unlocks the cell door and allows the detective to enter.

Harvey is sitting on the bed smoking a cigarette and reading a magazine.

The door closes behind Logan as he advances to a wary prisoner who is wearing the jacket with the flag pin.

LOGAN FORD
Your flag pin.

HARVEY
(disgruntled)
What about it?

The detective threateningly stands over the seated prisoner.

LOGAN FORD
It's not yours, is it?

Harvey says nothing as he sucks on his cigarette and exhales.

Logan grabs Harvey by the throat and lifts him to his feet, the prisoner trembling with fear.

HARVEY
Guard!!

The detective slaps him across the face.

LOGAN FORD
It belongs to Robert Sanderson
doesn't it.

HARVEY
Guar -

Logan grips tighter and slaps his again.

LOGAN FORD
He was there the night of her
death, wasn't he?

Harvey's feet stumble as the detective forces him back towards the cell wall.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
Wasn't he?!

HARVEY
Yes! Yes! He was there. The guy
found her like that. He did
nothing. Pulcinella sorted it out.

The detective releases the prisoner who breathes in heavily
as he feels his neck.

Logan rips the flag pin from his jacket.

HARVEY (CONT'D)
It was just a stupid accident.

The detective walks towards the door and bangs on it. The
door opens to enabling him to leave.

INT. ROBERT SANDERSON OFFICE/RECEPTION DESK - EVENING

Malik approaches the reception desk where Mary is gathering
her possessions as she prepares to leave.

MALIK EDWARDS
Excuse me.

The receptionist turns to see the detective who is showing
her his badge.

MALIK EDWARDS (CONT'D)
I'm looking for Robert Sanderson.

MARY ERSKINE
He's headed home for the night.

MALIK EDWARDS
I need his address.

INT. ROBERT SANDERSON'S HOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT

The politician, watched by his wife, is urgently packing a
suitcase in their large expansive bedroom, plotted with
chairs, a walk-in wardrobe and en-suite. Running along one
side is a series of tall bay windows that look out over
their property while another door connects to the adjacent
room.

ROBERT SANDERSON
Veronica, get packed.

VERONICA SANDERSON
Did you call the authorities like I
said?

ROBERT SANDERSON
We can go stay at Mount Vernon till
this psycho is caught.

His wife grabs him to get his attention.

VERONICA SANDERSON
Are you listening?

Sanderson's eyes bulge with sheer panic.

ROBERT SANDERSON
Don't you understand? He's going to
fucking kill me! Now get packed.

His stunned wife takes a step back.

VERONICA SANDERSON
What the hell have you done?

Sanderson walks over to a drawer and yanks out some clothes
before thrusting them into his suitcase.

ROBERT SANDERSON
It was a ten mill deal that was
supposed to be risk-free that's
turned into some...

He stares at her in blind panic and shrugs his shoulders.

RICHARD EVANS
...I don't know...killing spree?
Gangland revenge?

VERONICA SANDERSON
These murders?!

ROBERT SANDERSON
I had nothing to do with them.

His wife, stunned by his reaction, retreats then pulls out a
small suitcase from the wardrobe to begin packing, laying
the suitcase on the bed before retrieving underwear from a
set of drawers.

VERONICA SANDERSON
How could you be so stupid?!

Behind them, the door slowly and quietly opens to reveal the
killer dressed in the familiar clothing, holding a gun.

He taps the weapon against the door and the couple stop
before turning to face him.

ROBERT SANDERSON
Oh Jesus! No!

Veronica blurts out a squeal as she covers her mouth with her hand in horror.

The killer points the gun at her then glances at the politician.

RICHARD EVANS
(to Sanderson)
On the floor. Face down.

Sanderson, his hands up in front of his chest in surrender, steps back.

ROBERT SANDERSON
Please. You want the shares? The money? Have it.

RICHARD EVANS
Lucia.

Sanderson is stunned. His wife looks over at him with confusion.

ROBERT SANDERSON
The girl? I had nothing to do with it.

The killer unzips his overall and produces a photo which he throws at the bed. The husband and wife glance at it as the killer pulls the zip back up.

ROBERT SANDERSON (CONT'D)
It was an accident!

RICHARD EVANS
She was pregnant.

VERONICA SANDERSON
Oh my god! Robert!

RICHARD EVANS
Down!

The politician lays down on the floor with his arms outstretched.

ROBERT SANDERSON
I didn't know. If I had, things would've been different.

The killer opens his bag, while aiming the gun at Veronica, and retrieves some cable ties which he lays on the bed.

RICHARD EVANS
Tie his hands...behind his back.

He waves the gun at her and she cautiously grabs the cable ties before circling around the bed to begin securing her husband, her mouth trembling as her shaking hands fulfil the instruction.

While she is bent down, the killer retrieves the bottle of chloroform and soils the rag then places the bottle to one side.

With her back to the killer, the rag is smothered over her mouth till she is unconscious.

ROBERT SANDERSON
Please don't harm her. She's done nothing.

The killer secures her arms and legs before placing tape over her mouth then takes the same roll of tape and covers Sanderson's mouth.

He meticulously returns the tape and bottle to the bag before lifting Sanderson to his feet, whose eyes bulge with fear.

EXT. ROBERT SANDERSON'S HOME/ENTRANCE HALLWAY - SAME TIME

The front door slowly opens to reveal Logan cautiously entering with his gun raised. He hears movement upstairs and carefully advances towards the winding staircase under the bright lights of a central chandelier.

INT. ROBERT SANDERSON'S HOME/BEDROOM - SAME TIME

The killer guides the politician into one of the chairs then places his bag on the floor to open it and pull out the tape.

He winds the tape around the chair, leaving the politician unable to escape.

Suddenly he hears the sound of a creaking floorboard and turns to look. Still holding the gun, he walks away from the politician.

INT. ROBERT SANDERSON'S HOME/BEDROOM DOORWAY - SAME TIME

Logan steps on to the landing. He stops. The house is eerily silent.

Stretching along the landing are closed doors, apart from one. He crosses the floor and slowly edges along the wall, his weapon at the ready.

Reaching the door, he peers inside to see Sanderson taped to the chair and facing him. The politician struggles to break free as he shakes his head.

Logan steps back and raises a foot which ferociously kicks the door wide open to slam against the wall, while his gun is raised and pointing ahead, when suddenly a gunshot rings out. Logan feels the shock of pain in his thigh flow through his body as he swivels around before falling to the floor.

Lying on his back, he turns his head to see the killer casually walking towards him before coming to a standstill to look down at him.

The detective writhes in pain as the killer kicks the officer's gun out of reach, then he pulls down the filter mask and lifts up the goggles to stare into the eyes of the detective. It is Richard Evans.

LOGAN FORD
You're no hero.

RICHARD EVANS
It was never my intention, but
justice was served.

LOGAN FORD
Her death was a tragic accident.

RICHARD EVANS
Not only her death though.

LOGAN FORD
Your child?

RICHARD EVANS
A sequence of events that destroyed
the hope we had. Each was a puppet
to the other but Sanderson led the
merry dance.

Evans raises the gun till it is pointing directly at Logan's face.

RICHARD EVANS (CONT'D)
He will be my final act.

As the killer eyes look into Logan's he hears a gunshot ring out. He stares numbingly as blood seeps out of his nostril, while his arm drops to his side.

His stomach wrenches and he turns around to see Malik standing at the top of the landing, smoke wafting from his weapon.

Evans raises his weapon and another shot is fired, entering the killer's throat as he falls backwards landing next to Logan.

Malik walks towards his partner and crouches down.

MALIK EDWARDS
I called ahead. Backup should be coming.

Logan offers a pained chuckle.

LOGAN FORD
You're a star.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

EXT. ROBERT SANDERSON'S HOME/GARDEN - LATER

The property is surrounded by flashing vehicles as Sanderson and his wife are led away under the night sky, watched by the detectives as Logan is helped by his partner towards an ambulance.

LOGAN FORD
He can kiss his career.

MALIK EDWARDS
He never had my vote.

The two men reach the paramedic.

PARAMEDIC
We'll get you straight to the hospital.

LOGAN FORD
Christ, it's just a graze.

MALIK EDWARDS
You want to shut up and do as you're told for once?

Malik watches the door close and the vehicle leaves the scene.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN

EXT. SCHOOL BASEBALL PITCH - DAY

Parents and friends cheer as they sit watching the baseball match under a clear blue sky.

Callum steps up holding his baseball bat and looks over to see his parents, sister and Malik cheering him on.

LOGAN FORD
Go for it!

The boy smiles and readies himself. Logan offers a handshake with Malik.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)
(to Malik)
We make a good team.

Malik chuckles.

MALIK EDWARDS
We do indeed.

LOGAN FORD
But vegan?

Callum smacks the ball and runs as the crowd cheer.