

THE LOW FIVE

One Hour Drama Pilot

By

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Logline: Corruption in LAPD Vice leaves newly-installed commander Theresa Fuchs no choice but to clean house, so she recruits a mixed bag of inexperienced officers (the lowest 5 percent of the force) to form her own trusted unit, navigating a minefield of suspicion inside and outside the force, putting their lives at risk to bring down a dangerous human trafficking ring.

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THE LOW FIVE

FADE IN:

EXT. CARGO SHIP 'SOUTHERN LIGHTS' - ALAMITOS BAY - DAY

A vast ship hauling containers churns along a glassy sea.

LEGEND: Southern Lights Freighter, Long Beach. Monday, 6:47 A.M.

Follow a short, paunchy ASIAN MAN munching a mango, waving to a nearby SEAMAN. He holds a bag, ambling down a walkway--

INT. BELOW DECK - LIVING QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

The Asian Man, CHATRI, heads to a room, looking around before taking out his keys and unlocking a door. As he enters--

CHATRI'S ROOM

He tosses the bag on a bed, raw vegetables spilling out. He makes sure the door is shut and locked. He calls out softly--

CHATRI

Mai?

Chatri steps to the bathroom, tripping on a wire, falling.

A YOUNG GIRL, (MAI) maybe 15 years old, emerges from a tiny closet, a pot in hand, and clobbers Chatri on the head.

Her clothes are tattered and she's bruised and cut all over.

Mai snatches keys from Chatri's belt, unlocks the door, and a hand grabs her ankle -- Chatri won't let her go.

Desperate, Mai kicks him in the face and runs for her life.

EXT. DECK - CARGO SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Chatri emerges, groggy, as crew prepare to dock. He scans the deck for Mai and a hand slaps his shoulder.

A SHIPMATE needs help securing equipment on deck. Chatri complies, but he's distracted.

ANOTHER ANGLE: As Chatri looks around, Mai is hanging on a storage container lifted off the deck and swung past Chatri. She can barely breathe as she glides past him.

ON THE DOCK

The container is lowered to the dock and, seeing men below, Mai jumps on top of a stack of containers. She's nimble, but not in good shape. She's running on adrenalin.

We follow Mai, running as fast as she can, disappearing--

CUT TO:

EXT. CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND - LOS ANGELES - DAY

LEGEND: Culver City, California. Monday, 10:47 A.M.

Children on swings, climbing structures, and running around as parents/nannies watch from the sidelines.

Judging from the many kids here, it's a school holiday and/or three-day weekend for Mom and Dad.

Mai emerges from the bushes circling the playground. We get a good look at her - SouthEast Asian. Maybe 15 years old.

Stumbling to the playground, Mai is weak, thin, pale.

KIDS ON THE PLAYGROUND GIVE ROOM AS MAI GETS CLOSER.

Moms and Dads take notice - there's blood on her dress. A nearby MOTHER calls to Mai, worried. She looks disoriented.

Nearing a merry-go-round, Mai collapses. The Mother runs to her as other parents gather.

MOVE IN ON MAI - unconscious on the ground. A sleeve from her colorful top is missing. She's barely breathing.

CUT TO:

A SHIPPING CONTAINER--

--hoisted by a crane. A pipe sticks out of an enclosure of the container.

Wrapped around the pipe is the colorful, distinctive torn-off sleeve from Mai's top. We are at:

EXT. LOADING DOCK - PORT OF LONG BEACH - DAY

LEGEND: Port of Long Beach. Monday, 10:12 A.M.

The crane lifts the container, suspending it in mid-air.

We are on a pipe. Follow a tiny SOUND coming out of the end.
MOVE INTO THE PIPE, tracing the sound all the way inside--

INT. SHIPPING CONTAINER - CONTINUOUS

The dim red light of an LED. Vague shapes and shadows become clearer. There are PEOPLE in here - about 15 of them.

The SOUNDS are their coughing, choking, and moaning. They are SouthEast Asian REFUGEES slumped against the container's wall or laying on its bottom. Barely alive.

ON A MAN AND WOMAN - both 30, sitting against the container wall, arm in arm, eyes closed. Are they dead? Sleeping?

Their hands clinch together. Holding a picture. It is of them embracing Mai, all smiling. These are Mai's parents.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. LOADING DOCK - CONTAINER TERMINAL - CONTINUOUS

The container is guided past another container. Close enough so that the pipe end strikes and snaps off, falling away.

A WORKER signals to a crane operator far away. The container's movement stops. The Worker turns to a FOREMAN--

WORKER
You hear something?

FOREMAN
Seagulls.

The Foreman goes. Worker waves to the operator - 'continue.'

INT. SHIPPING CONTAINER - CONTINUOUS

Barely able to lift their arms, the Refugees bang against the container walls with cups and pans. They make little noise.

EXT. LOADING DOCK - CONTAINER TERMINAL

The crane hauls the container to a spot, setting down in a slot next to other containers. Pull back to reveal:

THOUSANDS OF CONTAINERS SITTING IN THE TERMINAL

An endless array of shipping containers stacked like sardines. The refugees are trapped here.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - HOME OF LESTER AND DENICE - DAY

LESTER GREEN, 36, African-American, trim, serious, an animal alertness, fumbles with a neck-tie. His fingers are shaky.

LEGEND: Home of Lester and Diane Green, Monday, 8:15 A.M.

Lester gives up on the tie. Lingers for a moment on the picture of his two kids, LIZBETH, 10, and JARRETT, 8. They both have wide grins. Glasses. A little nerdy.

In the doorway is DENICE GREEN, 32, stylishly dressed, a tangle of emotions. Right now she's pissed and barely keeping a lid on it.

DENICE

You heard what I said?

LESTER

Taking the kids. Be at your mom's.
Got it.

DENICE

Jarrett has practice after school.

LESTER

And Lizbeth's recital is at six.

DENICE

What're we doing about the house?

LESTER

Don't know. Figure it out.

DENICE

That's not good enough.

LESTER

I gotta' get to court.

Denice looks at him. We now see the suitcase beside her.

DENICE

You really going through with this?

Lester doesn't respond. He puts on cuff links.

DENICE (CONT'D)
Throwing away your career.

LESTER
Worse if I don't testify.

DENICE
He's your partner.

LESTER
Was.

DENICE
Don't be a fool, Les. It ain't all
about the department.

LESTER
You done?

DENICE
Call if you want to see the kids.

She grabs the handle of the rolling suitcase and goes.

Lester puts on a suit jacket and picks up the gun and
detective badge sitting on a dresser.

CUT TO:

INT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - CAPTAIN GLADDING'S OFFICE - DAY

We're outside Capt. Henry Gladding's office, Vice Division.
YELLING bleeds from behind closed doors. It's ugly in there.

LEGEND: LAPD Vice Division, Monday, 11:37 A.M.

Sitting within earshot is LT. THERESA FUCHS, 35, in her
Sunday best. She looks like an unassuming grad student,
except for her relentless cop radar, now fully weaponized.

Fuchs' phone vibrates - an incoming call. She glances at the
display, ignores it.

Sitting across from her is DET. NATHAN PEARSON, 28, thin,
hair neatly combed, a kid on his first day of school.

A UNIFORMED OFFICER approaches Fuchs--

OFFICER
Be a few more minutes.

FUCHS
No problem.

PEARSON

What about me?

OFFICER

You can wait.

The Officer goes. The yelling reaches an abrupt crescendo. A plain-clothes cop, TANNER, 45, emerges, vein-popping mad.

TANNER

Chief can bite my ass. I'm out.
Today.

Tanner moves to the adjacent Squad Room, where detectives sit at desks. He's ranting so everybody can hear.

TANNER (CONT'D)

Twenty-two year record, spit-shine clean, gone to hell. Like that.
'Cuz some low five assholes got to cover their own. Who is it?

MEN and WOMEN try hard not to watch this train wreck.

TANNER (CONT'D)

Who's gonna' look me in the face and tell me I'm a dirty cop? Who?
(beat)
Bunch of pussies. Start clearing out your desks. Bet your ass Chief isn't done cleaning house.

Tanner slams his badge and gun on a desk and storms out.

Silence suffocates the room. Fuchs watches, keeping her nerves in check. Pearson is trembling. Then:

Another man emerges from the office -- DEPUTY CHIEF FRED HUTCHINS, 45, African-American, stocky, a bad-ass cop.

HUTCHINS

(to Fuchs)
You ready?

FUCHS

Sure about this?

HUTCHINS

Told you it wasn't pretty.

Hutchins turns to Pearson.

HUTCHINS (CONT'D)

You here to see Captain?

PEARSON

That's okay. I'll wait.

Fuchs and Hutchins enter--

INT. CAPT. GLADDING'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

They face CAPT. HENRY GLADDING, 54, a plump ball of nervous flop sweat. He barely notices Fuchs, addressing Hutchins while furiously boxing up his desk.

GLADDING

Administrative leave. Fucking reward for sticking my neck out.

(to Hutchins)

She here with paper work?

HUTCHINS

No.

GLADDING

Busted my ass to get my stripes, Fred. Nights, weekends...

FUCHS

Sir--

GLADDING

I sit at home while some first-year law clerk reviews an 805 on me?

City's hanging me out to dry.

Calling my association lawyer.

(beat)

So, what, she's going to fill me in on my replacement?

FUCHS

Sir, I am your replacement.

Lieutenant Theresa Fuchs.

GLADDING

Terrific. Send a kinny-garten teacher to clean up this mess.

HUTCHINS

Hank...

FUCHS

He's got a right to be angry.

GLADDING

Damn right I do.

FUCHS

One bad apple spoils the barrel.

GLADDING

I deserve better, Fred.

Fuchs steps to Gladding's desk, leaning in:

FUCHS

But I got to ask - three detectives facing corruption charges, six detectives suspended, another four on probation.

(beat)

You angry because you don't have a clue what's going on in your squad room - or because you do?

Gladding glares at Fuchs. He sends the half-filled box flying - CRASH - coffee mug smashing, papers scattering.

GLADDING

Don't worry your pretty little head. I'll send someone to clean that up.

Gladding grabs his jacket, leaves. Hutchins turns to Fuchs.

HUTCHINS

I'd stay to make introductions, but there's a press conference.

FUCHS

I can handle the squad room.

HUTCHINS

That's why we chose you.

FUCHS

Sir...how many names did the Chief go through before he got to mine?

Hutchins has a tiny, wry grin.

HUTCHINS

Keep your head above water. And let them know who's in charge.

Hutchins goes. Fuchs looks out on the Squad Room.

Detectives come and go, eyeing Fuchs with suspicion and contempt. She doesn't feel like a boss. More like a target.

Nathan Pearson approaches--

PEARSON

Didn't introduce myself before.
I'm Detective Nathan Pearson,
Financial Crimes Division.

FUCHS

I can't talk about the
investigation.

PEARSON

I'm here about a transfer request.

FUCHS

Transfer? For yourself?

PEARSON

For me to join Vice, yes.
(Off Fuchs' puzzled look)
I know my timing's not the best.

FUCHS

It's my first day, detective...

A uniformed cop, BOBBY CRUZ, 30, interrupts. A muscular, linebacker-build with an easy manner - Cruz looks out of place in standard-issue blues. He has a file.

CRUZ

Are you Commander Fuchs?

FUCHS

Interim commander.

CRUZ

Sergeant Bobby Cruz. Caught a
case, assigned to Vice.

FUCHS

You're the desk sergeant?

CRUZ

For now.

FUCHS

What're we talking about?

CRUZ

Young girl taken to St. Vincent
with minor injuries. She's Thai,
says her parents are trapped in a
shipping container. All the
translator's got so far.

FUCHS
Shipping container? Family's
undocumented?

CRUZ
Along with a dozen or so others.

FUCHS
Trafficking?

CRUZ
Interpol has identified a dozen
human trafficking operations
targeting entry in local ports. A
crime ring known as Dragonfire tops
the list. File's on top.

PEARSON
You do your homework.

CRUZ
Who do you want on this?

Fuchs surveys the squad room. Doesn't know or trust anybody.

FUCHS
I'll take it.
(beat)
Busy, Sergeant? You can brief me
on the way to St. Vincent.

CRUZ
I'm riding a desk.

FUCHS
I may be interim, but I'm still
your boss. I'll drive.

CRUZ
Yes, ma'am.

PEARSON
Commander, my transfer request?

FUCHS
I'm working. Take it up with the
Deputy Chief.

Fuchs and Cruz exit. Pearson is left alone, papers in hand.

CUT TO:

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL - DAY

Mai is in bed, flanked by DR. AVA MILLER, 38, and interpreter GRACE, 30, Thai. Mai still appears weak, groggy.

LEGEND: St. Vincent's Hospital, Monday, 1:53 P.M.

Mai turns to Fuchs and Cruz bedside. Grace interprets.

FUCHS

Mai, I'm Theresa. This is Bobby.
We're police officers.

GRACE

Mai asks if she's in trouble.

FUCHS

Tell her she's not in trouble.

(to Mai)

Grace says you and your parents
came by ship in a container.

Grace translates, then Mai speaks.

GRACE

She says her parents paid men to
provide transport from Thailand
along with others.

(translating)

Mai asks if you can find her
parents. They have little food and
water and it's hard to breathe in
the container.

FUCHS

Do you know where the ship stopped?

Grace translates. Mai shakes her head "no."

FUCHS (CONT'D)

How did you get separated from your
parents?

Mai speaks, Grace translates:

GRACE

She sneaked out through a special
hole in the container to get food
from the ship kitchen. The ship
was still on the ocean when she was
caught taking food.

CRUZ

Caught by who?

GRACE

(translating)

One of the men her parents paid.
He closed the hole so she couldn't
get back to her parents. He locked
her in a room on the ship.

CRUZ

Can you describe him?

GRACE

(translating)

He was short with no hair on top of
his head. And had tattoos on his
neck. He spoke Thai.

FUCHS

How long were you in the room?

GRACE

(translating)

5 days. The ship stopped yesterday
and she was able to escape the room
and get off the boat.

FUCHS

Did this man hurt you?

Grace translates, Mai nods.

FUCHS (CONT'D)

Ask her if the man raped her.

Grace is uncomfortable, but asks Mai. She nods.

Cruz thumbs the file in his hand. Takes out a paper with a
dragon-like design on it. Hands it to Grace.

CRUZ

Does she recognizes this?

Grace asks, Mai speaks.

GRACE

The man had this tattoo.

FUCHS

How did she get to the playground?

GRACE

(translating)

There were many trucks at the dock.
She snuck onto one. It was on the
road for a long time.

FUCHS

Tell her she's very brave.

Mai speaks up, tears in her eyes.

GRACE

She begs you to find her mother and father. The trip was supposed to be 12 days. It's been three weeks.

FUCHS

We will find them. And we will find the man who hurt you.

Fuchs clinches Mai's hand. She has tears in her eyes.

Fuchs and Cruz step away from Mai. Dr. Miller follows--

DR. MILLER

I tried to run a rape kit. She was uncooperative. I'll try again.

FUCHS

She's just a girl. Alone.

DR. MILLER

We treated the dehydration, gave her food. She'll be okay. But after Family Services comes, I don't know what'll happen to her.

Fuchs nods to Dr. Miller and exits with Cruz to the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - WALK AND TALK - CONTINUOUS

FUCHS

That paper you showed Mai?

CRUZ

Higher-ups in Dragonfire earn these tattoos. This guy's one of them.

FUCHS

She jumps ship, spends hours on a truck. Could've docked anywhere from San Diego to San Francisco.

CRUZ

Most likely Long Beach.

FUCHS

We'll start with ship manifests
from Thailand arriving the last two
days in Long Beach.

CRUZ

All due respect, ma'am, my job's
back at the station.

Fuchs plants a hand on Cruz's chest to stop him.

FUCHS

Cut the 'ma'am' b.s. I'm not
wearing a tiara and you're no
Prince Charming, okay? And don't
pretend you're some paper-pusher,
either. You're built like an All-
Pro, you walk and talk the street,
and you quote Interpol protocol.
What's the real story here?

CRUZ

Detective R-2, reassigned.
Currently under review.

FUCHS

For what?

CRUZ

Second shooting in six months.
Resulting in civilian death.
(beat)
I worked narcotics. Undercover.

FUCHS

You're a walking lawsuit.

CRUZ

Brass parked me on a desk.

FUCHS

For how long?

Cruz shrugs - 'maybe forever.'

CRUZ

I know Dragonfire because they
smuggle heroin. Looks like they've
moved into human trafficking.
They're bad dudes.

FUCHS

I need a bad dude. Help me.

CRUZ

I don't know--

FUCHS

Seeing how I'm new and there isn't a single badge in Vice I can trust and seeing how that girl's parents are trapped who-knows-where, maybe taking their last breath as we speak, how about we end the chit-chat and act like cops. What'll it be, Shooter?

CRUZ

You're the boss.

FUCHS

For now.

Fuchs blows through the exit doors. Cruz follows as--

CUT TO:

INT. WITNESS STAND - COURTROOM - DAY

Lester on the witness stand in his suit. L.A. Asst. District Attorney WALTER HIGGS questions him.

LEGEND: L.A. Superior Court, Grand Jury, Monday, 2:12 P.M.

HIGGS

Detective Green, what happened after you discovered the duffel containing money?

LESTER

I asked Detective Singer why he had not processed the evidence.

HIGGS

And your partner's response?

LESTER

He said he deserved that money more than the drug dealer.

HIGGS

What did Singer do with the fifty-thousand dollars in cash?

Higgs eyes DANNY SINGER, 35, good-looking, cocky, at the defense table with his attorney, ANN WHEELER. She rises.

WHEELER

Objection. There's still no evidence this money even existed.

JUDGE EZRA SATO speaks up--

SATO

I'll allow it, Counselor.

LESTER

He put the money in his car. Never saw it after that.

HIGGS

I have no further questions, Judge.

Judge Sato motions to Wheeler. She comes out firing.

WHEELER

Detective Green, did you take the fifty-thousand dollars?

LESTER

If I did, D.A. would've charged me.

WHEELER

There's no entry in the evidence log from my client. Or you.

LESTER

I didn't take the money.

WHEELER

Detective, isn't it true that in addition to your considerable financial difficulties, your wife has recently initiated a divorce?

LESTER

That's got nothing to do with--

WHEELER

Divorces are expensive. Fifty thousand dollars would help. Especially when there's children.

LESTER

Leave my kids out of this.

(keeping his cool)

I did not take any money.

Off Lester simmering on the stand--

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE COURTROOM - DAY

People file out of the courtroom on a break. Lester spots Singer in the crowd. He approaches Lester, his step quickening. Lester tightens up, fists clinched.

Singer grabs Lester by the neck, pulling him close. Bailiffs and bystanders try to separate them as Singer whispers--

SINGER

Your word against mine. Really think that's gonna' put me away?

LESTER

Quicker than a hiccup.

Bailiffs tear the men apart. Singer raises his hands like it was all a friendly hug, laughing it off. As he walks away--

SINGER

You want a catch a bad guy, real crook's right there.

Lester watches him go. Bailiffs, Attorneys, Cops - everyone gathered steers clear of Lester. He's alone in the crowd.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTER - PORT OF LONG BEACH - DAY

A heavy-set security officer, CLARENCE DAY, leads Fuchs and Cruz to a perch with a view to the container terminal below. It's an expanse of shipping containers stacked together.

LEGEND: Security HQ, Port of Long Beach, Monday 4:34 P.M.

DAY

Looking for a single shipping container? Be my guest. We handle 7 million here every year.

FUCHS

Let's start with vessels originating out of Thailand.

CRUZ

Anything arriving the last 3 days. Your system set up for that?

DAY

Our system's state of the art.

Day taps away on his computer. Points to his screen.

DAY (CONT'D)

It's a big list.

FUCHS

What about container weight?
People weigh a lot less than big
screen t.v.'s or cars.

DAY

I can filter for the light loads.

Day taps. Cruz eyes the screen. Still a big list.

DAY (CONT'D)

Take you a week to comb through
that. Provided what you're looking
for hasn't been hauled away.

Cruz is thinking. He turns to Fuchs.

CRUZ

If Dragonfire's trafficking these
people, maybe they don't care so
much about a safe delivery.

FUCHS

Get their money up front.

CRUZ

Take as much as a desperate refugee
will pay.

FUCHS

And spend as little as they could.
(to Day)
Can you filter cost of the
container? The cheapest ones.

Day taps keys.

DAY

Rental's dirt cheap on these two.
Down in the terminal right now.

Fuchs and Cruz trade looks as--

CUT TO:

EXT. CONTAINER TERMINAL - PORT OF LONG BEACH - DAY

A swarm of EMT and Harbor Patrol Cops surround a shipping
container, prying open the doors. Fuchs, Cruz, and Clarence
watch as CRIES come from inside the container.

The doors pop open - THAI REFUGEES appear, gasping for air, slumped together on the bottom of the container.

EMT assists refugees out of the container. Fuchs and Cruz have pictures of Mai, showing them to the refugees.

FUCHS

You know this girl? Are you her mother, her father? You know her?

Nothing. Fuchs turns to Clarence.

FUCHS (CONT'D)

You said there were two containers.

CLARENCE

Second one dropped right here.

CRUZ

State of the art, huh?

CLARENCE

It was probably hauled away.

(beat)

You think it's loaded with more of these people.

FUCHS

I know it is.

(beat)

I need to know who paid for those containers. And I want names of every crewman on that ship.

Clarence taps his hand-held device as a squad car pulls up.

Grace steps out with Mai and two Uniformed Cops. Mai zig-zags through the refugees looking for her parents.

GRACE

Squad told me you were here and I thought you might've found something. I took a chance...

Mai runs to Fuchs and Cruz, speaking quickly.

GRACE (CONT'D)

She doesn't see her mother and father. She's asking "where are they?" Did you find them?

Fuchs trades looks with Cruz. Neither wants to respond.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAUMA ROOM - LONG BEACH MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Doctors and Nurses treat refugees in a packed emergency room.

LEGEND: Long Beach Memorial Trauma Room, Monday 8:49 P.M.

Fuchs and Grace question a Woman who is barely conscious.

FUCHS

Ask if she knows the name 'Luanga.'
It was on the shipping manifest.

Grace translates, but the Woman is too weak to speak.

Cruz waves to Fuchs and Grace from across the room. They go--

GRACE

I'm sorry for bringing Mai.

FUCHS

Yeah. So am I. Is she safe?

GRACE

Back at children's hospital. My
mom volunteered to be with her.

They approach Cruz, bedside with CHUMSA, 30, ravaged by
starvation and dehydration. He speaks some English.

CRUZ

Chumsa, tell them what you said.
(off Chumsa's look)
It's okay. They're with me.

CHUMSA

I pay Luanga. To come to America.

FUCHS

Where is Luanga?

CHUMSA

Thailand. You won't find him. He
use many names.

(beat)

He say two week in box. We stay
more than 3. Out of food, out of
water.

CRUZ

Was someone supposed to meet you?

CHUMSA

Luanga say a man would come to
dock. Man never came. Only you.

CRUZ
You know his name?

CHUMSA
Zukri.
(beat)
We gave all our money to Luanga.
To come here.

FUCHS
The other container. They paid
Luanga?

CHUMSA
Yes, but we go in box. After that--
Chumsa lifts his hand, waves it - "who knows?"

CRUZ
Thank you.

Fuchs and Cruz move away from Chumsa, eyeing the refugees.

FUCHS
Luanga took all their money and was
going to let them die.

GRACE
Why leave these people and take the
other container?

CRUZ
Maybe there's more than refugees in
the second container.

FUCHS
These people have nothing. ICE
will send them back to Thailand.

CRUZ
They knew the risks.

GRACE
The same risks my parents took.

CRUZ
It's why we have laws. I mean,
you're talking to a cop.

GRACE
It's late. Don't you have a rally
to go to?

FUCHS

We've got to find these people no matter where they're from, okay?

GRACE

(taking a breath)

What do I tell Mai?

FUCHS

That nothing'll stop us from finding that container.

Grace gives a side-eye to Cruz and goes. Fuchs stands there.

CRUZ

What?

FUCHS

You have a way with women.

Cruz shrugs - 'it is what it is.'

FUCHS (CONT'D)

Get some sleep. Meet at the station at six. Time's running out for Mai's mom and dad.

Fuchs leaves Cruz among the sick and helpless refugees.

CUT TO:

EXT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - ADAMS DISTRICT - NIGHT

Fuchs is parked in front of this freshly-painted home.

LEGEND: Fuchs Family Home, Monday 10:20 P.M.

She looks at the house a moment. There's a light on inside.

INT. ENTRYWAY - FUCHS FAMILY HOME - CONTINUOUS

Fuchs enters to a barren house, her footsteps echo off walls and hardwood floors. No pictures, no furniture, nothing.

The light comes from a single lamp next to a chair. A MAN, 60's, grey-bearded, is happy to see Fuchs. This is HAL.

FUCHS

You didn't have to stay.

HAL

Uncles worry. It's what we do.
(offering a box)
I brought takeout for the painters.

FUCHS

Thanks. They're all finished?

HAL

Some touch up tomorrow. Hauled
away the furniture this morning.

FUCHS

Uncle Hal, you didn't have to--

HAL

I've got the time. You don't.
(re: house)
You sure you want to sell?

FUCHS

It's harder keeping it.

HAL

He was a good man, Theresa. Last
few years...when it went from bad
to worse, all he could think about
was disappointing you.

FUCHS

I've got to think about Mom now.

HAL

How is she?

FUCHS

Same.
(beat)
I don't know how to thank you.

HAL

A Sunday dinner with family would
be a nice start.
(offers takeout)
Eat. Don't stay up too late. And
don't be married to the job.

Hal kisses her on the cheek and goes. Fuchs collapses in the
chair and picks at the takeout.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY - MORNING

Fuchs nurses a coffee cup, pushing on with 4 hours sleep, watching Cruz admire plaques on a table.

LEGEND: DEA Conference Room, L.A. Office, Tuesday, 7:41 A.M.

FUCHS

How long you been a cop?

CRUZ

Nine years in. You?

FUCHS

Eight.

CRUZ

Vice Squad Captain. Fast climb.

FUCHS

No one else wanted the job.

CRUZ

Chief found a hero.

FUCHS

Or an excuse when it doesn't work out.

(beat)

So, you pick me up, get me fancy coffee, drag my ass to your old neighborhood. I still don't know why this is more important than finding Mai's folks.

Cruz smiles, looking behind her. TWO DETECTIVES enter the room: MAGGIE CHASE and JUAN OTERO, both 30's, both dressed down for undercover work. Cruz hugs them, turns to Fuchs.

CRUZ

Detectives Maggie Chase and Juan Otero. DEA. Partnered up when I was in Narc.

(to Chase & Otero)

This is Captain Theresa Fuchs. She's running Vice now.

Chase and Otero go mute, sizing up Fuchs like a convict.

FUCHS

Interim Captain.

(beat)

Not to be rude, but Cruz and I are up against the clock on a case.

Det. Chase drops a file on the conference table.

CHASE
Edgar Zukri.

FUCHS
The one 'sposed to meet the
refugees.

OTERO
Retired from his job as Long Beach
Terminal Coordinator six weeks ago.

FUCHS
Why is he on DEA's radar?

CRUZ
We ran deep cover on Dragonfire's
drug ring. Operation went through
the port. They think Zukri was
paid off.

CHASE
45 years old. Took early
retirement on a civil salary.

CRUZ
Maybe he won the lottery.

OTERO
At the top of Dragonfire is a man
named Soleh. He's had a revolving
door of port employees on payroll.
Soleh does his thing out of
Thailand and needs help stateside.

CHASE
A lot of help. One by one, we've
taken down his drug ring.

Fuchs phone vibrates on the conference table. She eyes it.

FUCHS
Looks like Soleh has diversified.
(beat)
Where's Zukri now?

CHASE
Disappeared. Wife hasn't heard
from him since he left the port.

CRUZ
We find Zukri, we find our
refugees.

(MORE)

CRUZ (CONT'D)
(re: buzzing phone)
Don't keep your boyfriend waiting.

FUCHS
(to Chase & Otero)
Tell me - was he an asshole back in
Narcotics, too?
(silence)
Mind if we use this?

Chase waves it away - 'all yours.' Fuchs turns and goes.
Cruz covers the awkward moment with a shit-eating grin.

CUT TO:

INT. CRUZ'S MUSTANG - CITY STREETS - DAY

Cruz drives, Fuchs scans the file.

FUCHS
Zukri's kept his nose clean.

CRUZ
Won't find dirt there. Soleh's
recruits are choir boys. Then he
finds a weakness and uses it.
(beat)
About before. The boyfriend thing.
I was out of line for--

FUCHS
You're not seriously going to talk
your way out of that?

CRUZ
I'm just saying.

FUCHS
Let's you and I go back to 'no
Ma'am, yes Ma'am.' All right?

CRUZ
Yes, Ma'am.

Fuchs lets it hang there. Cruz just drives.

CUT TO:

INT. VICE SQUAD ROOM - LAPD HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Lester Green enters, head down, moving to his desk.

LEGEND: Vice Squad Room, Downtown, Tuesday, 10:47 A.M.

All eyes are on Lester as he sets a bag on his desk.

CONLEY (O.S.)

Thought you retired to a hammock on
some Carribbean island.

The grating voice and hatchet-face belong to MITCH CONLEY,
40, a detective nobody sits near.

LESTER

Not really an island guy.

CONLEY

You're a money guy, right, Lester?

LESTER

Best tread lightly, Mitch.

CONLEY

Some attitude. Believe this, Von?

VON HATCHER, 30's, on the other side of Lester, chimes in:

HATCHER

Surprised, Mitch? Man turned on
his own partner.

CONLEY

But Singer's the dirty one. Ain't
that rich.

We've seen the look before - Lester is quietly simmering.

HATCHER

What I hear, wifey's the dirty one.

Lester jumps Hatcher. Cops and detectives are all over them,
pulling the two apart. Conley sits back, enjoying the view.

There's shouting, grappling, cursing - it's an ugly scrum.

The Cops and Detectives suddenly stop. Fuchs is watching.

FUCHS

Seems like a good time to introduce
myself. Theresa Fuchs. I'm your
new Captain. Interim Captain.

(beat)

Wanna' tell me what the hell this
is about?

LESTER

I was fixing to kick this prick's
ass. Ma'am.

HATCHER

Maybe I.A.'d finally get around to
suspending you.

LESTER

Nobody's running me out of here.

CONLEY

He's dirty. Stink's on all of us.
And it don't come off.

FUCHS

You're Detective Green?

LESTER

Lester Green.

HATCHER

Von Hatcher, Captain. I.A.'s
looking at everybody in Vice.
Charging cops, suspending cops.
They want to clean up this unit,
they should start with this puke.

CONLEY

D.A.'s going after Singer. But
she's got the wrong guy.

FUCHS

That so?

Fuchs can feel the whole room in agreement on this.

FUCHS (CONT'D)

Green. Go home. Take the day off.

Green thinks about protesting. Then grabs his bag and goes.

Conley starts applauding and the other cops join in. Fuchs
lets out a whistle that could stop a train. Room is silent.

FUCHS (CONT'D)

I want status reports on all your
open cases. End of day.

The Squad returns to their desks. Fuchs feels the chill.

She turns and practically runs into Nathan Pearson in jacket
and tie. He's got a thin stack of papers for her.

PEARSON
Captain Fuchs. A moment with you.

FUCHS
Pearson...

PEARSON
You remembered my name. Kudos,
Ma'am. I'm on break from across
the street and only have a minute.

FUCHS
Financial Crimes.

PEARSON
Two for two. I know you're busy,
so I'll make this brief--

FUCHS
Transfer request.

PEARSON
There's a reason they made you
Captain. Cream rises to the top.

FUCHS
I can't approve any transfer.

PEARSON
Department protocol says a Captain--

FUCHS
Look...if you could show me your
skills, I could put in a good word.

PEARSON
A good word, Ma'am? That's not
listed in the transfer procedures.

Fuchs hands Pearson the Zukri file.

FUCHS
Track this man's financial trail.
I want to know about every cent
he's spent. And where.

PEARSON
This is an official assignment?

FUCHS
Yeah, sure, unless you're too busy.

PEARSON

Too busy for police work? Not at all.

(taking the file)

Well, I better get started. On this assignment. Thank you, Ma'am.

Pearson goes, practically skipping out of the squad room. Fuchs turns a corner to her office and enters--

INT. FUCH'S OFFICE - VICE SQUAD ROOM - CONTINUOUS

--to find Lester Green sitting at her desk.

LESTER

Been a detective for 15 years. On the street. Undercover. Made 200 arrests. Shot twice. There's nothing I haven't seen.

(rising)

Right now, wife's itching for a divorce, I.A.'s up in my business, and a room full of cops want me locked up or dead.

(beat)

Always been a lone wolf, so situation's nothing new. But if you could give me a heads up if I'm being fired or charged, I'd appreciate it. I got kids, okay?

FUCHS

I'll do what I can, detective.

Lester nods gratefully and goes. Cruz appears at her door.

CRUZ

Someone from the Chief's office here to see you. Ma'am.

Stepping out from behind Cruz is JJ GIVENS, 28, lanky, handsome, surfer tan. He's a Hot-Shot and knows it.

GIVENS

I'm here to drive you to lunch with the Chief.

FUCHS

I didn't know we had lunch plans.

GIVENS

He likes Greek food.

FUCHS

I'm on a time-crunch with a case.

GIVENS

Chief would be very disappointed.

Fuchs considers the options. Givens steps aside as Fuchs relents and exits. Cruz eyes Givens, who follows her out.

CUT TO:

INT. UNMARKED POLICE SEDAN - CITY STREETS - DAY

Givens drives. Fuchs lounges in the back seat, amused.

GIVENS

You were promoted to run Vice?

FUCHS

I'm not sure it's a promotion.

(beat)

You a cop or a chauffeur?

GIVENS

I'm with LAPD vehicle pool.

FUCHS

They assign cops there?

GIVENS

Technically, I'm still a cadet.

I'm badged when the review is done.

FUCHS

Review?

GIVENS

I observed a hit-and-run while off-duty. I pursued the suspect.

FUCHS

In your own car?

GIVENS

Turned into a high-speed chase. But nobody outruns me. There were some civilian near-misses. And a store-front needs a complete overhaul because of the crash.

FUCHS

You consider the city's liability?

GIVENS

A lot worse if the bad guy walks.
This one didn't. Because of me.

FUCHS

So, you're reckless.

GIVENS

I'm relentless.

FUCHS

And now PD has you driving people
to lunch. Good luck on the badge.

Givens stops the car at the restaurant. Fuchs smiles, exits.

CUT TO:

INT. POULOS GREEK CUISINE - DAY

CHIEF CHARLES FANNING, 56, African-American, imposing, sits
next to JOYCE LOERNER, 30, a career-striving City Attorney.

LEGEND: Poulos Greek Cuisine, Tuesday, 12:17 P.M.

Deputy Chief Hutchins is next to Fuchs at the table. They
pick over the remainders of moussaka.

FUCHS

Baklava's delicious, Chief.

CHIEF FANNING

Wife's Greek. Only place I take
her.

FUCHS

I'm guessing you didn't bring me
here for a restaurant review.

HUTCHINS

We're happy you took the position.

FUCHS

(re: Loerner)
Is she happy?

CHIEF FANNING

It's not in her job description.

LOERNER

The city is understandably troubled
by the increasing number of cops
involved in corruption scandals.

FUCHS

That's why I'm here, right?

LOERNER

There's more evidence of payoffs from prostitution rings, blackmail inside the department, extortion, embezzlement. You name it.

HUTCHINS

Gladding lost grip on the squad.

FUCHS

Who lost their grip on Gladding?

An uncomfortable question. Fanning wades in--

CHIEF FANNING

We want to make sure you have the support to succeed as Captain.

LOERNER

As these investigations mushroom, your day-to-day needs to be about keeping the department focused.

FUCHS

And the remaining bad apples?

HUTCHINS

I.A. will handle the low fives.

FUCHS

I can't do my job with half the squad under suspicion.

CHIEF FANNING

That's why we're here. You even sniff a problem, you come to us.

LOERNER

We don't want any more surprises.

FUCHS

I'm not going to baby-sit a bunch of derelicts in detention. We're all cops. We put away bad guys. Inside or outside Parker Center.

Fuchs stands. Her phone vibrates.

FUCHS (CONT'D)

Interim or not, I'm running Vice my way. Any problems with that?

CHIEF FANNING
Got your back, Fuchs.

Fuchs checks the phone.

FUCHS
It's squad.
(answering)
Fuchs here.

INTERCUT WITH PEARSON IN VICE SQUAD ROOM

PEARSON
Captain, my assignment's done.

FUCHS
Pearson? What'd you find?

PEARSON
Mr. Zukri.

FUCHS
You're serious?

PEARSON
I'd never joke like that, Ma'am.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE VAN - OUTSIDE PECHANGA INDIAN CASINO - DAY

Pearson and Cruz sit with headphones watching a monitor of the gaming floor. Other plain-clothes COPS are with them.

LEGEND: Outside Pechanga Casino, Tuesday, 4:17 P.M.

Fuchs enters the van, huddles up next to Cruz and Pearson.

PEARSON
We observed Mr. Zukri enter the casino, but no known 20 as of now.

CRUZ
I set up undercover at all exits and entries.
(beat)
Casino allowed us to tap into their internal camera feed.

We see monitors showing multiple spots inside the casino.

FUCHS
Pearson, how did you--

PEARSON

I obtained a warrant for Mr. Zukri's financials.

FUCHS

You got a warrant? By yourself?

PEARSON

It was simple. The application went to Judge Garvey, who has a reasoned view of probable cause--

FUCHS

I get it, Pearson. How'd you track Zukri here?

PEARSON

He withdrew five hundred cash from a casino ATM. Recent transactions suggest a bit of gambling problem.

CRUZ

Maybe he's meeting a contact here.

PEARSON

Possibly. Mr. Zukri has deposited \$10,000 cash the last day of every month for the last three years. I should say, Mr. Cinnamon. That's the name on several shell accounts set up in off-shore banks tied to Mr. Zukri. Today is April 30th.

FUCHS

You uncovered all this since 10 am?

Pearson points to a monitor.

PEARSON

That's him!

We see a weasel-y FIGURE with a pot-belly pop in and out of view on the gaming floor. This is ZUKRI.

FUCHS

If there's a meet, I want to be there. We're going in.

PEARSON

We?

FUCHS

You got a problem, Detective?

Pearson smiles like a kid on Christmas morning as--

CUT TO:

INT. GAMING FLOOR - PECHANGA INDIAN CASINO - CONTINUOUS

Fuchs, Cruz, and Pearson enter the casino floor. Other plain-clothes COPS fan out behind them.

The cops separate, hunting through blue-haired pensioners and die-hard gamblers.

Pearson stops near a stand of slot machines, scanning the floor. JINGLING GAME SOUNDS echo everywhere.

Pearson turns and is suddenly face-to-face with a short, bulbous Asian man.

It's Zukri munching on chips holding a cup of slot coins.

The two just look at each for a moment. Then Pearson draws his gun and badge and with voice booming:

PEARSON

Drop or I blow your head off!

Zukri is surprised, baffled, scared. He drops his coins and gently lays down. Pearson puts a knee to Zukri's back.

Fuchs and Cruz and other Cops come running, guns drawn.

PEARSON (CONT'D)

Edgar Zukri, you are under arrest.

As Cruz kneels beside Zukri, cuffing him, Fuchs puts a finger on Pearson's pistol and delicately lowers the muzzle.

FUCHS

Let's question him before blowing his head off, okay?

Off Pearson, breathing heavy from the excitement--

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - LAPD HQ - EVENING

Zukri in cuffs, hands trembling, smokes a cigarette. Fuchs and Cruz flank him. Pearson observes from the sidelines.

LEGEND: Interview Room, LAPD HQ, Tuesday 6:22 P.M.

CRUZ
You know, those'll kill you.

ZUKRI
Smoking helps keep me calm.

FUCHS
We know you were paid to let
shipments pass inspection.

ZUKRI
I expedited some boxes. I made
some dough. So what?

CRUZ
You know what was in those boxes?

ZUKRI
Told me micro-chips. Big-time
taxes. I help my guy, he helps me.

FUCHS
Who's your guy? Give me a name.

ZUKRI
I don't know.

CRUZ
We were doing so well, Edgar.

ZUKRI
He sends me email, says there's
money if I help. Never uses a real
name. I only know him as
Dragonfire. He set up the payment.
(off Cruz's look)
Email. That's all I have.

FUCHS
And 300 thousand bucks.

ZUKRI
I had an investment opportunity.

CRUZ
What? Slot machines?

ZUKRI
I told you what I know. Can you
let me go? I was on a lucky streak
at the casino.

FUCHS
Your luck's run out.

Fuchs starts for the door, turns to Zukri.

FUCHS (CONT'D)

It's people. In those containers.
Not micro-chips. One's still out
there and if they're suffocated or
starved to death, you're an
accomplice to murder.

(beat)

You keep lighting up, Edgar.

(to Cruz)

Sit on him and get me those emails.

Fuchs goes--

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE OF ERICA LUPKE, FUCHS FAMILY ATTORNEY - DAY

Fuchs eyes photos of folks dressed for tennis. She's with
ERICA LUPKE, 64, a semi-retired attorney.

LEGEND: Office of Lupke Associates, Tuesday 7:13 P.M.

FUCHS

Thanks for meeting me.

LUPKE

I'm glad we could get this done,
Theresa. I didn't want any loose
ends with your father's estate.

FUCHS

How long did you and Al play mixed
doubles with my folks?

LUPKE

Way before you were on the scene.
40 years? A lifetime ago.

(beat)

Theresa, your father left some
items I'm sure you're aware of.

FUCHS

Sure. The fishing boat. Golf
equipment. That old Chevy.

LUPKE

Sweetie, you should know your
father was deeply in debt.

FUCHS

We didn't talk finances. And
Mom...doesn't know much...

LUPKE

Defense attorneys are very costly.

FUCHS

It's why he gave up the business.

LUPKE

I'm afraid there's nothing left.
For you or your mother.

FUCHS

Even after the house?

LUPKE

The debts have eaten everything up.
He paid a heavy price to save his
reputation. In the end, I wonder
if he felt it was worth it.

(beat)

I'm sorry, Theresa. To me, your
father will always be--

FUCHS

A good man. I know.

LUPKE

You're doing all right. I
understand you got a promotion.
Things must be going well at work.

Lupke waits for Fuchs' response. The words won't come.

CUT TO:

EXT. FUCHS ACADEMIC ACCELERATOR - NIGHT

In her car, Fuchs stops outside this boarded up storefront.
There's broken glass and crumbling roof tiles.

LEGEND: Corner of Adams and Wilshire, Tuesday, 7:52 P.M.

Old advertising is still visible - "We Help Kids Get Ahead"
and "Getting Into College Begins Now."

But there's also spray-paint graffiti -- "Predator" and
"Molestor" and "Leave No Kids Behind" with 'No' crossed out
and replaced with 'It In A.'

Pain is etched on Fuchs face. Her phone vibrates. She looks at it. Ignores the call. Throws the car in drive and goes.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME OF JAVIER AND LAURA CRUZ - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A big family meal with the Cruz family -- JAVIER, 58, well-dressed, thick, watches grand-children play. LAURA, 55, energetic, outgoing, brings a pot of matcha tea.

LEGEND: Home of Javier and Laura Cruz, Tuesday, 8:13 P.M.

Cruz laughs and tickles nieces and nephews. The kids run off and Laura gives her son some tea.

LAURA

So?

CRUZ

That's a big 'so.' What am I 'sposed to say to that?

LAURA

We'll take anything. Girl, job, going back to school. You can't hide anything from us. So?

CRUZ

School's on hold for now.

JAVIER

That was too easy. What about job?

CRUZ

Two more months, review'll be done. For now, I work the desk in Vice.

JAVIER

Vice? That won't help your career.

CRUZ

Narcotics wasn't helping either.

JAVIER

No more Vice. I'll make a call.

CRUZ

Pops, no.

LAURA

Albie--

JAVIER

He's wasting his time. Instead of preparing for a political career, he's treading water in the worst department in the LAPD. I'm calling Chuck Fanning.

LAURA

He can turn things around there.

JAVIER

You don't want your name anywhere near the scandals.

CRUZ

This is my problem to figure out.
(beat)
If and when I need help, I'll ask.
For now, no calls, Pops.

It's a tense moment, broken by Cruz's phone. He picks up--

CRUZ (CONT'D)

Theresa?

INTERCUT WITH FUCHS IN HER CAR--

FUCHS

You have lunch plans for tomorrow?

CRUZ

If I did?

FUCHS

Meet me at Gio's Pizzeria in West Adams. Noon.

CRUZ

This where I'm 'sposed to say "yes, ma'am" and not ask questions?

FUCHS

See you tomorrow.

Cruz ends the call. Feels everybody staring at him.

LAURA

So. Who's the girl?

CUT TO:

EXT. HOME OF VIOLA CLARK - NIGHT

Lester exits his Dodge Charger, approaches a Craftsman.

LEGEND: Hetzler and Culver, Baldwin Hills, Tuesday 9:03 P.M.

At the front door, Lester knocks. Denice answers--

DENICE

You can't just show up like this.

LESTER

I texted you this morning. I want to see the kids.

DENICE

My mom took them to a movie.

LESTER

Guess I'll just wait then.

Lester sees behind Denice. Sitting on the couch in her mother's home is Danny Singer. He smiles at Lester.

Lester tries to barge in. Danny rushes to Denice, who holds back Lester. Danny is all smiles, ready to fight.

DENICE

You don't belong here, Lester.

LESTER

This is how you do me, the kids?

DENICE

It's none of your business what I do or who.

LESTER

Man's going to jail, Denice.

SINGER

D.A.'s dropping charges. Matter of fact, I quit the force. Working for a security consulting firm.

LESTER

So that makes you something.

SINGER

Yeah, you could say that.

DENICE

I don't want trouble.

LESTER
You got trouble.

No win situation. Lester turns to go. Singer calls to him--

SINGER
Rest easy, Les. Denice is happy.
And I'm good with kids. You just
worry about yourself. And the D.A.

BEHIND THE WHEEL OF THE CHARGER

Lester slams the door. Phone rings. He answers:

LESTER
Captain...tomorrow?...Pizza?...if
you say so. Sure. I'll be there.

Lester disconnects. Glares at the house, alone in the dark.

CUT TO:

INT. UNMARKED POLICE SEDAN - CITY STREETS

Givens at the wheel, tapping his blue-tooth to catch a call.

GIVENS
Captain? How'd you get my
number?...yeah, I know the place.
What time? You picking up the tab?

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - EAGLE ROCK - NIGHT

Nathan Pearson in front of the computer. Picks up his cell--

PEARSON
Captain? Is this follow-up to my
transfer request?...No?...
Tomorrow?...I can be there, sure.
(beat)
Did you look at the request, Ma'am?

CUT TO:

INT. VICE SQUAD ROOM - FUCHS OFFICE - MORNING

Fifteen DETECTIVES are crammed in here, including Conley and Hatcher, noodling with cellphones, sipping coffee, waiting.

LEGEND: Vice Squad, Captain's Office, Wednesday, 9:03 A.M.

Fuchs enters, strides to her desk. She doesn't sit.

FUCHS

I'm sure you're wondering why I called a meeting this early.

CONLEY

Recite the Pledge of Allegiance?

FUCHS

It's no secret I.A. has been looking at Vice.

CONLEY

When're they getting off our backs?

HATCHER

Do something, Captain. We ain't no criminals. Gone on long enough.

Other Cops voice their agreement. Fuchs raises her hands.

FUCHS

This is one of those good news, bad news situations, fellas.

CONLEY

I'll bite - what's the bad news?

FUCHS

Everybody in this room is under investigation.

This quiets the room.

FUCHS (CONT'D)

Good news is none of you will have to sit here and worry about it. You're all on temporary suspension.

The room erupts - Cops yell at Fuchs all at once, outraged, angry, frustrated. Fuchs yells above the din--

FUCHS (CONT'D)

You want to stay and share your feelings, I'm not interested. Go to your desks, get your things, and go home.

(beat)

Now.

Cursing, grumbling, glaring - the gathered Detectives start to file out of Fuchs' office.

FUCHS (CONT'D)

If I.A. has questions, they'll reach out to you.

CONLEY

Hope you enjoy being Queen for a day. Won't last long.

Fuchs watches as doors slam, desk drawers are tossed, and furious Cops storm out of the squad room.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK ROOM - GIO'S PIZZERIA - DAY

Fuchs at a table next to restaurant supplies. Stone-faced.

LEGEND: Gio's Pizzeria, Pico and Hoover, Wednesday 12:07 P.M.

We hear Lester Green's VOICE O.S.--

LESTER

So now what? We decide on deep dish or thin crust?

Reveal: Lester, Cruz, Pearson, and Givens at a roundtable.

FUCHS

My cousin's place. I wanted to meet outside the squad room.

PEARSON

Why?

FUCHS

I don't trust anybody there.

CRUZ

Who's left to trust? Half the squad's suspended.

FUCHS

It was my call.

LESTER

Chief okay this get-together?

FUCHS

It's my unit to run, so I'm running it.

GIVENS

With secret meetings outside work?

FUCHS

'Til I know who's got my back, yes.
(beat)

It's like this: every cop in Vice is either being investigated or about to be investigated. Whoever isn't pointing fingers is covering their ass. Meanwhile, there's refugees out there who could be suffocating in a box. We've got jobs to do, cases to close.

CRUZ

What are you proposing?

FUCHS

None of you know each other. All of you come from outside Vice.

PEARSON

So we're like a Cop Super Team?
Cool!

FUCHS

I want you in the department.
Working directly under me.

GIVENS

In a pizza place?

FUCHS

For now.

CRUZ

Pump the brakes, Lone Ranger. I've got a career to think about. Vice is a step down.

FUCHS

A desk job is a step down, Cruz.

That shuts Cruz up.

FUCHS (CONT'D)

We've all got incentive.

(to Givens)

A Hot-Shot without a badge.

(to Pearson)

A Geek with one collar to his name.

(to Cruz)

A Player with a trigger-finger.

GIVENS
(re: Lester)
What about him? He's Vice.

FUCHS
Entire Squad hates him, so he must
be doing something right.

Lester stands. Takes out his car keys.

LESTER
I don't want in your little low-
five club.

FUCHS
Lester, I know you're a good cop.

LESTER
The last time someone wanted me to
join something, it involved payoffs
and protection and ended with me on
a witness stand.
(heading to door)
I'm eating Chinese. Peace.

Lester goes. Fuchs tries to put on a good face.

FUCHS
Anybody else?

PEARSON
What's "low five"?

FUCHS
Lowest five percent of the force.
Officers perceived as unfit for
duty.

PEARSON
Us?

FUCHS
Kudos, Pearson.
(beat)
So we're all good?
(shrugs and nods)
Then let's talk about open cases.

Cruz's phone buzzes - he checks his screen for a text.

CRUZ
DEA. A lead on Dragonfire.

FUCHS

Let's go.

PEARSON

Can we order first? I'm starving.

CUT TO:

INT. CHILDREN'S AREA - METRO DETENTION CENTER - DAY

DEA Agents Chase and Otero greet Fuchs and Cruz. Grace, the translator, is with them. Pearson and Givens tag along.

LEGEND: Metro Detention Center, L.A., Wednesday 1:27 P.M.

They badge security and enter a chain-link fence perimeter.

CHASE

You sure she'll be able to go through with the i.d.?

GRACE

She crossed an ocean practically on her own.

CRUZ

You sure this is the guy?

OTERO

Intel's solid. Our informant inside Dragonfire says Luanga set up a deal in L.A. He sent a pro to transact. His name is Chatri.

CHASE

Luanga is Soleh's lieutenant. He won't risk putting his people in play unless it's a big deal.

CRUZ

There's no Chatri on any ship roll call going back 3 months.

OTERO

You won't find him that way.

(beat)

INTERPOL sent a pic.

Otero holds a photo of a THAI MAN, balding, with a Dragonfire tattoo on his neck. This is CHATRI.

Fuchs and Cruz look around this open space. There's dozens of KIDS with SOCIAL WORKERS and ICE AGENTS nearby.

Fuchs watches the kids, their faces, the fear. She trembles.

CRUZ

There she is.

It's Mai, playing jump rope with some other girls.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - METROPOLITAN DETENTION CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Fuchs faces Mai as she sips a cool drink. Grace is there to interpret. The other Cops are nearby.

Fuchs slides the photo of Chatri to her.

FUCHS

I want you to tell me if you recognize this man from when you were on the ship.

Grace translates as Mai looks at the picture. She speaks.

GRACE

This is the man who hurt her. She says she is certain.

FUCHS

I'm going to find him, Mai.

GRACE

(translating)

Mai asks about her parents. Will they all have to go back to home?

FUCHS

We have to find them and make sure they're safe, okay?

Fuchs looks at Cruz, stricken. It's the best she can do.

OTERO

Put out an APB. Chatri's got to be in the area.

CRUZ

How're we supposed to catch this dude without knowing where to look?

FUCHS

Maybe we make him come to us.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - CITY JAIL - DAY

Zukri sits in orange coveralls. Fuchs and Cruz flank him.

LEGEND: Twin Towers Correctional Facility, 4:53 P.M.

ZUKRI

No. I'm not helping. No way.

CRUZ

It's simple, Edgar. Even you could do this math.

(showing Chatri's photo)

You help bring Chatri in, you don't go to prison until you die.

ZUKRI

Chatri is...dangerous.

FUCHS

We'll make sure he won't touch you.

ZUKRI

I just want to go home. My wife--

FUCHS

Does she even know where you are, Edgar?

ZUKRI

No. She will be so angry.

(cracking)

I will help. If you talk to her.

CRUZ

No problem. I have a light touch when it comes to women.

(Off Fuchs' look)

About Chatri. You have his email.

ZUKRI

He will sense something is wrong. What will I say?

FUCHS

Let's say something that'll get his attention.

CUT TO:

EXT. 626 NIGHT MARKET - SANTA ANITA RACE TRACK - NIGHT

A huge, crowded market featuring varieties of Asian food.

LEGEND: Night Market, Pasadena, CA, Thursday, 9:13 P.M.

INSIDE A TENT

Where Fuchs, Cruz, Givens, and Pearson sit with other Cops in undercover mode. Zukri is being wired up. He's scared.

ZUKRI

I'm too scared. I can't do this.

CRUZ

Edgar, focus. Tell me the plan.

ZUKRI

You are a fugitive. Wanted for stealing millions from big shipping firm. You will pay top dollar to be smuggled out of the U.S. I thought Chatri could help.

FUCHS

And the figure he responded with?

ZUKRI

Five hundred thousand.

CRUZ

But...?

ZUKRI

But you want to meet Chatri first before handing over any payment.

CRUZ

And...?

ZUKRI

And we will meet at Thai Phoon Tent to complete the deal. Nine-thirty.
(breaking)
I can't...

CRUZ

Your wife, Edgar.

Off Edgar, drowning in despair.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEAR THAI PHOON TENT - 626 MARKET - NIGHT

Zukri and Cruz are an odd couple among the many passers-by. We see Fuchs and Givens nearby in plain-clothes observing.

Cruz stiffens. He spots a MAN in the crowd, approaching.

CRUZ
(in ear mic)
I've got a 20. Asian, male, 30's.
Black jacket, white collar.

The Man stops. He resembles Chatri. He eyeballs Zukri and Cruz. He nods at them, an indication he wants them to move.

Chatri wades into a more crowded, noisy area with musicians and street acts. Fuchs and Givens have trouble keeping up.

CRUZ (CONT'D)
We're moving. Looks like Chatri.

FUCHS
(in ear mic)
All units. Grab him.

Suddenly - BANG, BANG. But it's not gun-shots. A garish Chinese Dragon is paraded into the crowd with firecrackers.

Cruz ducks instinctively and the crowd swells chaotically, pushing him back as the Dragon passes. Zukri is gone.

Fuchs and Givens furiously push past people to get to Cruz.

FUCHS (CONT'D)
Where are you, Cruz?

CRUZ
I lost the target. Zukri's gone.

Then, a SCREAM. The crowd suddenly parts, revealing a man lying in a pool of blood. It's Zukri.

Fuchs and Givens arrive on the scene, guns drawn. Cruz rushes to Zukri, checking his pulse. He's dead.

CUT TO:

INT. DEPUTY CHIEF HUTCHINS OFFICE - LAPD HQ - DAY

Fuchs watches Hutchins pace back and forth, growing irate.

HUTCHINS
Have you lost your fucking minds?

LEGEND: LAPD HQ, Parker Center, Friday, 8:03 A.M.

FUCHS
We had the suspect in sight, sir.

HUTCHINS

Until you didn't. You got a prisoner killed. Suspect's gone. And those refugees are still out there. The whole operation was a mistake from the get-go.

FUCHS

We had to take a risk, sir.

HUTCHINS

Chief picked you so you wouldn't.

Hutchins moves closer to Fuchs, trying to calm himself.

HUTCHINS (CONT'D)

You were promoted to clean up Vice. We expected a girl scout and now I'm hearing you got your own crew of loose cannons.

FUCHS

I brought in other qualified cops.

HUTCHINS

Due to the man-power shortage you created.

FUCHS

I didn't have a choice. The vice unit brought I.A. on themselves.

HUTCHINS

I'm meeting the Chief later to talk about this mess.

FUCHS

Whatever he decides, it's not my call to make.

(beat)

But until then, I'm finding these refugees and working the hundred and fifty other open cases in Vice.

Hutchins waves his hands - 'enough.' Fuchs turns and goes.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK ROOM - GIO'S PIZZERIA - DAY

The team gathers around a table. Fuchs stares at the floor.

LEGEND: Gio's Pizzeria, Friday, 8:39 A.M.

PEARSON

There's still a chance we find Chatri.

GIVENS

With what, a magic wand?

CRUZ

The way this went down, I think it was planned.

GIVENS

Chatri wanted to get nabbed?

FUCHS

He wanted to get close to Zukri. Get rid of a loose thread.

CRUZ

DEA's informant says he came for a big deal. Chatri's a soldier in the drug operation. Now, it's human trafficking. Maybe this isn't about cargo containers.

FUCHS

Or maybe Chatri has a head for business.

Off Cruz's look.

FUCHS (CONT'D)

Heroin's bigger money than people. There were no drugs in the first container.

GIVENS

But what about the second?

PEARSON

He's double-dipping. Chatri's shipping narcotics and refugees in the same container. Double the yield with half the risk.

CRUZ

Uh, yeah, exactly.

GIVENS

Why didn't Chatri do the deal and split town?

CRUZ

Maybe he didn't know the
container's location.

FUCHS

I bet Zukri did.

CRUZ

You think that guy was shaking down
a drug kingpin?

PEARSON

Killing Zukri doesn't help Chatri
find the container.

FUCHS

Did you get Zukri's home computer?

PEARSON

Yes. The warrant covered--

FUCHS

What about Zukri's wife?

Pearson realizes where Fuchs is going--

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - ZUKRI HOME - NIGHT

Fuchs, Cruz, and Givens enter a crime scene - Uniformed Cops stringing tape, Forensics swiping for prints, and a body bag with Zukri's wife laying in the middle of the room.

LEGEND: Zukri Home, Downey, California, Friday, 9:50 P.M.

DETECTIVE SARAH BRYCE is on the scene.

FUCHS

I'm Fuchs, LAPD. We spoke earlier.

BRYCE

Coroner estimates time of death
between seven and ten a.m.

(re: body)

Got a positive i.d.- Manju Zukri.

FUCHS

Place looks ransacked.

CRUZ

Our suspect might've been looking
for a computer.

Bryce points to a desktop.

BRYCE

He left that. Found this with the victim.

Bryce shows a cellphone in an evidence baggie. Fuchs thinks.

FUCHS

When we picked up Zukri, did he have a cellphone on him?

Cruz does a quick search using his cellphone.

CRUZ

Not in the log when he was booked.

Fuchs snaps on some surgeon gloves, points to the baggie.

FUCHS

May I?

Bryce hands it over. Fuchs holds the cellphone up to the light, angling the screen just so.

GIVENS

What're you doing, Cap?

FUCHS

Opening her phone.

CRUZ

Good luck without a pass code.

FUCHS

Angle it in the light. I see prints on the screen. Four digits.

GIVENS

Pearson could tell you the zillion combinations four digits gives you.

FUCHS

What's Edgar's birthday? Woman puts up with him, he had to be the love of her life.

CRUZ

(checking)
February 4nd, 1973.

Fuchs punches "4-2-7-3" and the phone's screen opens.

More punched buttons and a traveling dot appears on a map.

CRUZ (CONT'D)

What's that?

FUCHS

Edgar's cellphone. Heading north.

Off Given's and Cruz's surprised looks--

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE MAMACITA'S - LANCASTER, CA - NIGHT

The team uses infra-red military-style binoculars to spy on:

A LARGE ADOBE STRUCTURE

High-priced vehicles populate a parking lot. There's a valet and doorman. Streets surrounding the place are deserted.

LEGEND: Outside Lancaster, CA, Friday, 11:07 P.M.

There's unmarked police cars and plain-clothes COPS in dark jackets. A surveillance truck is parked nearby.

Cruz hands the binoculars to Fuchs. Has a look on his face.

CRUZ

I know this place.

FUCHS

You do?

GIVENS

A nightclub in bum-fuck who-knows-where?

CRUZ

Mamacita's. An underground card game for VIP's.

FUCHS

Mamacita's? How do you--

CRUZ

Don't ask. Place pops up, gets busted, pops up again.

FUCHS

Zukri's phone is there.

GIVENS

If Chatri's here, the container's gotta' be around.

CRUZ

There's no container here.
(off Givens look)
Chatri's looking to party before he
collects. I'm guessing everything
Chatri needed is on Zukri's phone.

GIVENS

Those refugees could be dead and
Chatri's getting his party on.

PEARSON

If he's in there, let's get him.

FUCHS

That could get ugly. Especially
with you. Chatri won't be alone.
(beat)
We need to go in undercover.

CRUZ

They know me there.

Fuchs looks at Givens whose face says "no way."

FUCHS

Terrific.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - HOME OF LESTER AND DENICE - NIGHT

Lester's phone jingles, awakening him. He answers--

LESTER

You know what time it
is?...Mamacita's?...uh-uh - my
party days are over, Cap...

Lester listens, lowers the phone from his ear, hangs his
head. Fuchs VOICE chirps away. He won't win this argument.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE VAN - OUTSIDE MAMACITA'S - NIGHT

Lester is decked out like a big-time baller in stylish jacket
and tie. A Police TECH outfits him with a wire.

CRUZ

Made some big-time busts here.

LESTER

And you blew a few of my undercover stings with that cowboy attitude. Mamacita's is a honeypot for cons.

(to Fuchs)

I'm sure Chatri has protection.

FUCHS

Could be dangerous.

LESTER

Why you called me, right?

FUCHS

I'm going in with you.

LESTER

(re: Fuchs clothes)

Like that?

Fuchs taps the plain-clothes COP next to her. Takes his jacket, throws it on, cinching it with a thick police belt.

LESTER (CONT'D)

(impressed)

You all right, Fuchs.

FUCHS

Perimeter is on lock-down. We're not having another Zukri nightmare.

LESTER

That's why when I i.d. Chatri, I'm out. I ain't cuffing nobody.

PEARSON

So you know this place from working undercover?

LESTER

I don't. But Kenny Washington, high-rolling playa' does.

(beat)

Outta' my way, son.

As 'Kenny Washington' exits the van with Fuchs--

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN FLOOR - MAMACITA'S - NIGHT

Has the feel of a casino. Women in short skirts serve drinks. Well-dressed Men and Women sit at poker tables.

Lester and Fuchs appear, playing it cool, talking into mic's.

LESTER
We're inside.

CRUZ (O.S.)
You see him?

FUCHS
It's a big place, Cruz.

Lester spots a group of burly ASIAN MEN being escorted from a table by stick-thin female ESCORTS.

LESTER
Got a hunch. Heading to the back.
(to Fuchs)
Circle around that way.

They split up. Lester follows the Asian Men down a hallway. He turns a corner and they're gone. Must have entered one of the many rooms here - but which one?

Lester turns and is face-to-face with a hulking Asian, TIKO.

TIKO
You a member, Brah?

LESTER
Kenny Washington. I'm friends with Mamacita.

TIKO
Nobody's friends with Mamacita.

ON FUCHS

As she works her way through the card room.

FUCHS
Lester? Cruz, I've lost Lester.

CRUZ
Well, go find him.

FUCHS
I'm working on it.

Fuchs travels down the same hallway now. No Lester. She spots a door cracked open. She goes to it and enters:

VIP SUITE

Fuchs warily moves into the room, turning a corner to find--

CHATRI STIRRING A DRINK

Wearing a silk bathrobe. He looks at Fuchs curiously.

CHATRI
Who might you be?

Fuchs thinks quickly. Removes her jacket.

FUCHS
A gift.

CHATRI
From?

FUCHS
A client expecting big things.
(beat)
You don't like the wrapping?

Chatri chuckles, starts pouring a second drink. Fuchs sits, forcing a smile. She couldn't be more uncomfortable.

CRUZ (O.S.)
Fuchs, who are you talking to?

ON LESTER

Slammed to the floor by Tiko. Lester's ear-bud comes loose and skitters across the floor. Tiko uses a walkie-talkie--

TIKO
(re: earbud)
We got a problem, Boss.

ON FUCHS

Chatri sitting close to her, his robe opening just enough.

Fuchs spots two cellphones on a nearby table. One cell shows a little red light flasing. Got to be Zukri's.

Fuchs phone buzzes inside her purse. Whoops.

FUCHS
Sorry. That's me.

As Fuchs reaches for the cell, Chatri grabs her hand.

CHATRI
Prostitutes here don't use phones.

Chatri digs into her purse, pulling out a gun and badge.

CHATRI (CONT'D)

Well, you are some gift.
(calling out)
Sansa! Get in here!

Chatri points the gun at Fuchs. No response from outside.

CHATRI (CONT'D)

Sansa!

Chatri goes to the main entrance, throwing open the door.
Finds two Bodyguards bound and gagged.

CLICK! Cruz has his pistol pressed against Chatri's temple.

CRUZ

That's no way to treat a lady.

Chatri drops the gun. Fuchs appears, Zukri's cell in hand.

FUCHS

Lester! Do you copy?!

ON LESTER

Tied to a chair. Tiko works Lester over, his face bloody and bruised. Fuchs' VOICE comes through the ear-bud.

TIKO

That your cop buddy?

CRASH! A window smashes and Pearson awkwardly enters. He aims a gun at Tiko. There's rumbling outside the door.

PEARSON

Los Angeles Police. On the ground.
Hands behind your head. Now.

TIKO

(laughing)

That's your cop buddy?

Tiko shakes his head, starts for Pearson -- he shoots Tiko in the leg. Tiko goes down. Can't believe he's been shot.

Suddenly, other THUGS enter the room. Pearson aims, yells--

PEARSON

Who wants a piece of this?

The Thugs stop and drop, putting their hands behind their heads. Pearson goes to untie Lester, who's in a daze.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRUCK STOP - ALONG THE 10 FREEWAY - NIGHT

A swarm of Paramedics and Cops surround an abandoned big rig loaded with a cargo container.

Bolt-cutters snap a lock on the container, the doors open, revealing the refugees. They are barely alive.

Fuchs enters, finds Mai's parents still holding each other, the picture in their hands.

Fuchs kneels, showing them a picture of Mai at the detention center. Mom and Dad smile.

As the refugees are wheeled out on stretchers, Fuchs spots Lester leaning on a squad car, face bloodied, smoking a cigarette. He nods to her and goes.

CUT TO:

INT. LINEUP ROOM - LAPD HQ - DAY

Fuchs is with Mai and Grace, Mai's parents behind her. Mai looks through a glass window at:

CHATRI IN A LINEUP OF OTHER ASIAN MEN.

Mai points to Chatri and Fuchs kneels to Mai's level. She offers a smile and a hug. But it's short-lived--

ICE Agents escort Mai and her parents out of the room. Mai turns, waving goodbye to Grace and Fuchs.

Fuchs watches her leave, helpless to do anything.

CUT TO:

INT. FUCHS OFFICE - VICE SQUAD - DAY

Fuchs enters. Lester's sitting here, facing Fuchs' desk.

LEGEND: Vice Squad Room, Monday, 11:57 A.M.

LESTER

Thought maybe you'd be heading to the pizza joint.

FUCHS

You did us a solid, Lester. Saved those people. You could've been--

LESTER

Don't see the point thinking about
coulda' beens.

FUCHS

I know about you and your wife.
And your partner.

LESTER

Right now, I gotta' do right by my
kids.

FUCHS

I know about your brother, too.

LESTER

Guess you did your homework.

FUCHS

Killing your sister, your mother.

(beat)

You were there. You could've shot
him on the spot. Why didn't you?

LESTER

Your father was cleared of the
solicitation charges. How was he
supposed to know those prostitutes
were under age, right? Gave up
everything to defend his
reputation. You were in school,
getting an MBA from SC, but dropped
out to join the force. Why?

FUCHS

Guess you did your homework, too.

LESTER

I'll join your pizza club. I need
to be around folks I can trust.

(on his way out)

Your cousin better give a discount.

CUT TO:

INT. GROUP ACTIVITY ROOM - ALTADENA ASSISTED LIVING - DAY

Fuchs approaches a WOMAN, 69, doing a puzzle. She's trim,
hair uncombed, mismatched clothes. This is MARION FUCHS.

LEGEND: Assisted Living Center, Pasadena, Monday, 4:17 P.M.

FUCHS

Ma? It's me, Ma. It's Theresa.

Marion looks up. Her face is vacant. She doesn't recognize her daughter at all.

FUCHS (CONT'D)

It's me. I'm here.

MARION

How nice of you to stop by. You remind me so much of my daughter.

FUCHS

What's this you're working on?

MARION

I'm almost finished. But I got stuck and...

(shaking)

I called my husband for help. I keep calling and calling. But he won't answer me. It's so hard.

FUCHS

I know.

END OF PILOT