

TAKAO

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. MT. TAKAO - HIKAGE FOREST ROAD - NIGHT

Rain. Brush and hemlock huddle together, forty kilometers west of the bustling Tokyo metropolis.

Japanese cedar trees stretch into the sky like long fingers. Aside from the drumming rain, the only evidence of life.

Until...

The sound of SOBBING, feet SLUSHING mud. Moving fast.

A GIRL (20s), scrambles past. SCREAMING. Runs past us.

GIRL

Help me!

She's Japanese, peroxide dyed blond hair, too old to be wearing the school uniform she's in, atypical long skirt, kanji written all over it.

GIRL (CONT'D)

Somebody! Help me please!

She stumbles, crouches low to stay out of sight. Blood drips into her eye from an unseen wound. Breath heavy.

Her head darts in all directions, terrified she checks over her shoulder.

NOTHING. Only dense trees and darkness. She rises, takes off.

POV FROM THE WOODS, someone IS chasing her, but who?

She finds her stride. Cries less, pulls away off the forest road into the woods, the darkness presses in, sinister.

She stops behind a tree, A BRANCH SNAPS. Someone is definitely out there. Eyes shoot around. She listens.

NO ONE there. She heaves in air, to calm herself down.

She doesn't hear a FIGURE creep closer. Right behind her.

She doesn't realize an arm is reaching over her...

She doesn't see surgical gloves wrap across her mouth.

Her EYES widen. Muffled SCREAMS.

BLACK.

INT. RESIDENTIAL POLICE BOX - BEDROOM - DAY

YUKA NOGUCHI (40s), snaps awake, in bed, covered in sweat, sheets, tangled around her legs.

Japanese, wiry, athletic, do good, at any cost, POLICE.

T.V ANNOUNCER (V.O)
 ...skyrocketed since laws took
 effect a decade ago...

She checks the clock. 4.59am, eyes glisten in the clock's shine, watching the time. Her hand hovers over the clock.

The alarm BUZZES. Her hand drops.

T.V.'s on in the b.g. It's been on all night.

Light cuts through drawn shades, Yuka squints, rubs her face, reaches for a pack of Bufferin, rips out a couple, swallows.

T.V ANNOUNCER (V.O) (CONT'D)
 ...number of students punished is
 up 81 percent from last year...

She rises, shuffles into the

LIVING ROOM

Unremarkable. Moving boxes still line walls with teenage art, her police academy graduation photo, almost adolescent.

T.V ANNOUNCER (V.O)
 ...Assault, the most common,
 followed by prostitution and
 pornography...

She passes her reflection, doesn't like the way she looks.

T.V ANNOUNCER (V.O) (CONT'D)
 ...After a girl hung herself last
 year, it came to light bullies
 routinely forced her to practice
 killing herself before she took her
 own life, and her teacher brushed
 off the abuse as a joke...

She turns the T.V Off, throws the remote on a small sofa, scuffs through the living area toward the

OFFICE

She shuffles to the front doors, passes a Ghost Orchid.

Yuka slides open the front door, steps out onto the

STREET

She scans the semi rural main street, noodle restaurants, gift shops, traditional Japanese buildings.

DEAD QUIET.

The only traffic a small police patrol car parked outside.

She checks the red lamp above the entrance, a recognizable symbol to residents of a police box, it's broken. Again.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

They say it's the most climbed
mountain in the world.

GORO KOYAMA (50s) leans against the police box, half-eaten hamburger in his hand. Bespectacled, mustached, unkempt, journalist. Mouth full of burger, he mutters.

GORO

Hangover?

YUKA

Me or you?

GORO

I got a follow up. How does it feel
to kill?

YUKA

Fuck you.

GORO

Can I quote you on that?

Door slides shut. Yuka moves back into a

BEDROOM

Yuka parts curtains. A GROAN from the bed. Teenager's room.

SEIRA NOGUCHI (19), long hair, Yuka's sweetness in her face, unafraid to ask hard questions, surrounded by moving boxes.

INT. RESIDENTIAL POLICE BOX - KITCHEN - DAY

Yuka, in uniform, gazes into a pan of scrambled eggs. Stiff neck, she jerks her head left, stares at that empty whiskey bottle on the bench.

Seira slides in past Yuka, like a phantom teenager.

Yuka gestures to the table, a small gift sits wrapped, with a card. Seira opens it. A wedding band on a chain.

YUKA
Happy birthday.

SEIRA
Thank you. I love it.

YUKA
Hat today please, you're still
getting over a cold.

Yuka moves to the kitchen table, squirts Brasso on terry cloth, rubs it against her badge in precise circles.

SEIRA
You feel bad for chickens when you
eat eggs?

YUKA
Do you feel bad for cows when you
eat McDonald's?

Yuka studies the badge, clips it to her jacket, straps on her gun belt, grabs her police hat, pressed uniform off a chair.

YUKA (CONT'D)
Don't forget to eat something.

SEIRA
Seen my whistle?

YUKA
What whistle?

SEIRA
The emergency whistle Papa gave me.

YUKA
Come on, we're late.

She tosses her duffel on the counter, searches through it.

A TAP on her shoulder, she turns, Seira holds Yuka's baton.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Remote, overlooking a motorway, Yuka leans against her police-issue bicycle, takes a huge drag from a cigarette.

This is as far from any action as you can get.

A car pulls up beside Yuka. In it

INSPECTOR MASAKI NAKAYAMA (50s), overweight, Squad Sub-Commander of the local police station, politician, always gunning for promotion, leans out the window.

NAKAYAMA

Settling in?

YUKA

Yep.

NAKAYAMA

Y'know, the amazing thing about your new gig is well, nothing.

YUKA

Perfect.

NAKAYAMA

Yeah. Lost children, giving directions, keeping lost property for owners to collect, listening to the worries of locals, interviews of complainants. Exciting stuff.

Yuka stamps out her cigarette.

NAKAYAMA (CONT'D)

Don't forget your 3pm.

He pulls away.

INT. BEYOND BLEAU - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Yuka stares at a vaguely erotic Klimt reproduction, looks to the SECRETARY who pretends to be busy. Yuka's phone RINGS.

YUKA

Yeah?

DISPATCH (V.O.)

We got a 10-66 out near the Hikagezawa camp site.

YUKA

I'm into something right now.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

You're all we got. Get over there
and check it out.

Looks to the clock on the wall, 3.01pm, rises, leaves.

JUNKO MORITA (40s) appears, attractive, professional, Yuka's
appointed therapist. Waiting room empty.

JUNKO

Where's my three o'clock?

Secretary shrugs.

EXT. MT. TAKAO - HIKAGE FOREST ROAD - DAY

Yuka pushes down on the pedals of her bicycle.

Eerie-quiet. She sees something flickering on a tree, stops.

She approaches the tree. A small piece of ribbon. She looks
past the tree, deeper into the forest.

Discovers another.

Another. Follows them. Birds flee their perches.

Checks her cellphone. No bars.

Yuka sees a cabin in the distance, spots a wooden tripod with
a chain hoist. A large hook hangs on the end of it.

She approaches the cabin, circumnavigates it, checks her
surroundings.

Behind the cabin a fire pit. She lifts the grate, inside a
burnt shoe. She turns, burnt shoes hang from trees.

Through blinds hanging in the window, she spots a table and
three chairs. Past that a bathtub.

She presses her hands to the window, peers in. Her eyes
widen, she stumbles back, falls. What the fuck? She rises.

She back tracks, finds a bar on her cell phone, two, dials.

EXT. MT. TAKAO - HIKAGE FOREST ROAD - NIGHT

Heavy rain. Yuka waits, no shelter. CHIEF INSPECTOR WADA (50s) sculpted face, large, broad frame, kind, approaches.

Yuka holds out a flashlight. He takes it, continues past. Focused on the task.

They reach a rusty, side door, Yuka pulls it open.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

They enter a dark room, very dark. Wada turns on his flashlight, starts.

WADA
Physical evidence outside?
Footwear, tire tracks?

YUKA
None.

WADA
In here?

Yuka scans the room.

YUKA
No blood. Gravitational. Arterial,
none. What looks like some burns on
the body, though.

WADA
I want to talk to you again, after
I've looked around.

At the end of the cabin, an open door. The light of a CAMERA FLASH spills out from that room every few seconds.

Wada moves, takes out rubber gloves, slips them on, looks at something on the floor ahead, crosses, moves through the

KITCHEN

The flashlight beam follows cockroaches across the floor from the stove to a kitchen table at the center of the room.

He moves into the

BATHROOM

Wada enters. CLICK, CLICK, CLICK, turns to see DOCTOR ICHIRO TAKAHASHI (50s), medical examiner, in the doorway, he looks up, flicks a light switch up and down. No light.

TAKAHASHI

Wonderful.

Takahashi enters, drops his bag to the floor. He stares at...

A submerged girl in a bath on her side, dead in the water.

School uniform, long skirt, kanji all over it.

No hands.

TAKAHASHI (CONT'D)

Just a kid.

He wipes his brow, reaches into his bag, surgical tools CLINK, turns to see Yuka linger behind him.

WADA

This is sergeant Noguchi, recently reassigned to us.

TAKAHASHI

A sergeant on a patrol bicycle.

Wada sweeps the room with his flashlight, moves to the dead girl, leans to study, shines his light down the corpse, to the girl's lap, studies the girl's swollen, purple arms.

Takahashi places both hands on the dead girl's body, lifts, turns the swollen visage from the water.

Wada stands, stares at the body, shakes his head, perplexed.

YUKA

Forensics is waiting outside.

WADA

There's room. Light's the problem.

Wada notices Yuka backing away, the space limitations.

YUKA

I'll help the officers question the nearest residencies.

Yuka leaves.

EXT. MT. TAKAO - HIKAGE FOREST ROAD - NIGHT

MEDICS carry the body bag as OFFICERS hold up a large tarpaulin, shielding it from a gaggle of REPORTERS.

Wada follows the body bag out, gestures Yuka to follow. They walk down the road, away from the reporters. Goro eyes Yuka.

WADA

Saw your file.

YUKA

Happy guarding carparks.

WADA

We're a small unit, we don't have anyone else to give this to. You worked homicide in the city.

YUKA

Robbery Homicide.

WADA

I'm not worried about whether my guys think they're getting time at a crime scene. Do me a favor.

Wada walks away. Yuka stands, pissed.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Running shoes pound tarmac. Yuka runs, eyes bloodshot.

LOCALS glance over at her, stop talking, walk into a store.

A MOTHER lifts her small KID into a car. Watches her pass.

AN OLDER MAN turns at the sound of Yuka's footfall.

Everyone edgy. Cautious. A murderer amongst them.

Yuka continues, looks straight ahead. Wipes the sweat from her neck. Slows to a stop just outside a...

CONVENIENCE STORE

A stack of newspapers by the front door. The "Takao Times." The headline: Victim Found in Bathtub.

Yuka picks one up, stares down at it. THEN, CRACK!

A bat hits a ball. She turns. In the distance. Takao Elementary School.

EXT. TAKAO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

A baseball game in full swing. A smattering of SPECTATORS.

Yuka wanders to the fence, spots Goro on the bottom bleacher.

Yuka crosses to the bleachers... sits down next to Goro. He turns, surprised.

GORO
Officer Noguchi, or is it
Detective?

Yuka glances out at the game.

YUKA
Who's playing?

GORO
The Bears and the Hawks. We're in
extra innings. The Hawks have a
good lineup this year.

He pours whiskey into his coke bottle, sips, offers some to Yuka, Yuka shakes her head.

GORO (CONT'D)
They I.D that girl you found?

YUKA
No. Old enough to be a freshman at
the local university. My daughter
attends out here.

GORO
She does?

Goro looks back at the game, takes a big swig of his whiskey coke. TAIGA (10), a plump boy comes up to bat.

YUKA
I work late, her grandmother's out
here so, it works.

GORO
That's my nephew.

Yuka looks over to see the boy swing and miss by a mile.

GORO (CONT'D)
That's okay! He's shit.

YUKA
He's your only relative?

Goro nods. Taiga takes another swing. Connects with the ball. Drops the bat and runs to first. Goro gives a sharp WHISTLE.

GORO
What about you? Siblings? Cousins?

YUKA
You haven't investigated that yet?

GORO
I was only doing my job.

YUKA
Had a younger sister.

Goro, sits up...

YUKA (CONT'D)
She was killed in a fire, when I was young. Kids fucking around.

GORO
I'm sorry.

Yuka leans back. Stretches her legs. Remembering.

YUKA
I remember I was more embarrassed that she had died. Embarrassed I couldn't stop what they were doing to her. Embarrassed it made me different. The kids at school, they'd ask me where she was. I'd make up stories. She was visiting an aunt, broken her leg. Stuff like that. Nice sister, huh? Just made up more and more lies...

She stops. Sits up. Senses something. Goro notices the shift.

GORO
You okay?

The row of DADS behind them. Jump up, start CHEERING.

A KID slides home. Yuka stands, tries to shake the feeling.

She scans the area, turns to go.

CONCESSION STANDS AND RESTROOMS

Bustle with STUDENTS and PARENTS.

KARIN SUGAMO and AOI HONDA (20s), two attractive young GIRLS, move through the crowd...

KARIN

Rolls up toilet paper in tight little wads. Her family is really poor. It's gross.

AOI

Too poor to buy tampons?

KARIN

Maybe it's an OCD thing.

BAM! Karin collides with Yuka.

YUKA

I'm sorry.

Karin shoots Yuka a look, a cigarette dangles from Yuka's fingertips. Karin, sees her cigarette, wants one.

KARIN

Got another cigarette?

YUKA

Try again.

KARIN

Just give me the cigarette or I'll have to make you hate me.

YUKA

Don't do that.

Yuka shakes a cigarette out of the box, offers it. Karin takes the cigarette, Yuka lights it.

KARIN

Watching the game?

YUKA

Don't know much about baseball.

KARIN

Then why the fuck are you here?

Karin heaves an exhausted, annoyed sigh, blows smoke in Yuka's face, turns, slinks away. Yuka smiles. Then coughs.

INT. AUTOPSY ROOM - DAY

Cold, clean. Stainless steel. Takahashi, stands over the corpse. Wada walks around the slab, looking the body over.

Wada notices something on the arm.

He leans close to look at five small burns on the inside of the dead girl's arm; circular, the diameter of a small coin.

Wada stands straight. Yuka enters from behind.

YUKA
Cigarette burns.

TAKAHASHI (CONT)
Oh, and there is this here...
Petechiaie in the skin, eyes,
lacerations on the neck.

WADA
Strangled.

TAKAHASHI
Violently.

WADA
Why the hands?

YUKA
Capital punishment?

TAKAHASHI
Delay identification?

WADA
Do we have an I.D?

TAKAHASHI
Dental and D.N.A are pending.

INT. NOODLE BAR - DAY

Your more high-end eatery, quiet SLURPS from CUSTOMERS.

Yuka stares out the window, across from her, MASAKO (60s), her mother, mutton dressed as lamb, good intentions, cares less about Yuka, more about scrolling through her phone.

MASAKO
I was slow joining the quote-pic
phenomenon.

The COUNTERMAN, lays a menu in front of them. Yuka glances at him, holds up four fingers, avoids conversation.

MASAKO (CONT'D)

It was so trite, I just didn't want to add to the noise.

Junko passes behind, stops, turns.

JUNKO

Excuse me. Have I seen you on TV? You're the officer who stopped that robbery in the city, right?

YUKA

No. Yeah.

JUNKO

What's a homicide detective doing getting involved with a robbery?

YUKA

Robbery homicide. Who are you?

She slides over her card.

JUNKO

Me? I sell piece of mind, if you ever need any, and you will, keep your appointments.

EXT. MT. TAKAO - JATAKI TRAIL - NIGHT

Tree limbs reach towards Karin, clothing torn, runs hard.

Crashing through brush behind her, an ASSAILANT closes in, flashlight illuminates cuts on her arms, legs, face.

With a strangled cry, Karin bursts into a clearing, trips, scrambles on hands and knees down a small embankment.

She covers her mouth, fights to quiet her breathing.

The flashlight behind her cuts through the woods, nearing.

She crouches in a small pool of brackish water, presses into the embankment, makes herself as small as possible.

Flashlight flits over her head.

Then moves off.

She rises.

Her face flooded with light. The assailant's doubled back!
A dozen yards away, moves in with speed. Karin SCREAMS!

INT. RESIDENTIAL POLICE BOX - DAY

HANDS lathered in soap scrub like a surgeon.

Brown creamy, bubbly water circles the drain. Yuka moves to

THE LIVING ROOM

Falls onto the sofa. TV a blank screen. Jack Daniel's gone.
Yuka, tired, listens to the faint sound of passing TRAFFIC.

Yuka's eyes close.

A loud KNOCK.

Yuka's eyes spring open. She sits up. Heart pounds.

Another KNOCK.

Yuka rubs her face. Calms her breathing, shuffles to the
entrance, opens the sliding door. Wada stands in the doorway.

WADA

They found another one.

Yuka glances at her watch, a large sigh.

Wada places paperwork down on the desk in two neat stacks.

WADA (CONT'D)

You were made for this Noguchi. I
can't believe you're trading it all
in for a bicycle and a complaints
desk. Guess I'm wrong.

YUKA

Where?

EXT. MT. TAKAO - TAKAOSAN STATION - DAY

In the mountains. Rain, constant. A train horn SOUNDS.

A CONSTRUCTION WORKER leads Yuka, Wada and Nakayama up a
trail, workers gather in a huddle and gawk.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER

I said to myself, I'm not going to touch this. It's still pretty fresh. When I got to it, as soon as I laid eyes on it, I knew...

Workers part, Yuka, Wada and Nakayama over a shallow grave, in it, Karin, naked in a fetal position, her hands, removed.

CRIMINOLOGISTS excavate the scene, sift soil, remove grass.

CRIMINOLOGIST

No cellphone located.

WADA

Close down the entire scene, now. Everyone who doesn't need to be here needs to leave.

Nakayama mutters.

NAKAYAMA

You're not chucking it to her?

WADA

It's in her patrol cordon. Noguchi, track into the bush, you're the only one going in.

YUKA

You have a body, I'm not search and rescue.

WADA

Anything of interest, photograph it, we'll wait here, don't want to contaminate the scene.

EXT. MT. TAKAO - JATAKI TRAIL - ENTRANCE - DAY

Yuka backtracks, finds where the construction workers enter, where the police enter, passes in front, sees something.

A braid of green nylon cord tied to two pieces of broomstick. Yuka studies the cord, notes the intricate knots.

An obvious entry point to the bush area trampled. She concentrates on the sounds. BREATHING, the RUSH of a RIVER. WIND in the trees.

EXT. MT. TAKAO - TAKAOSAN STATION - DAY

Wada and Nakayama, and two UNIFORMS smoke and joke.

NAKAYAMA

She was Special Investigations.
They've three Divisions, organized
crime, fraud and robbery homicide,
guess what she was a part of.

Something moves in the woods. SHUSHES the men. Movement.

Wada signals for the men to spread out. Holsters UNSNAP.

Nakayama, all eyes and ears, picks his way toward the trees.

Yuka emerges from the trees, raises her hands.

Nakayama takes his hand off his holster. The men relax.

YUKA

Found something.

INT. AUTOPSY ROOM - DAY

Faucet. A bead of water, quivers. Falls with a BLIP!

Yuka lingers, Wada and Dr. Takahashi beside a stainless-steel table, on it, Karin in the fetal position.

Takahashi tugs at surgical gloves, starts to cover her with a sheet. Wada stays his hand, pulls the sheet back down.

Wada studies her, in his element, gestures to an arm.

Cigarette burns.

He examines her neck, ligature marks, locks eyes with Yuka.

WADA

Same guy?

SUPERINTENDENT KIMURA (50s) enters, tall, heavy, a cop's cop, all-around nice guy.

KIMURA

Tabloids say there's a strangler on
the loose. The Govenor wants
closure. Got calls from supervisors
I didn't know I had. He read the
article on you, insisted we use
you. Investigators think you're
crazy.

YUKA

I've been called worse.

WADA

What do you think?

KIMURA

I don't solve crimes anymore, I balance budgets. Noguchi?

YUKA

This was not heat of the moment. The grave had square corners. Dug with a shovel the killer had the foresight to bring.

Takahashi finds two small holes in the head, waves the PHOTOGRAPHER over.

KIMURA

Looks like she got ice-picked.

YUKA

A large canine did that. Probably an old black bear that couldn't hunt. Dug it up, chewed at it. It felt safe in the trees, away from the riverbank, away from other bears.

Takahashi looks at a chewed vertebrate.

TAKAHASHI

I'd say you're right.
(into tape recorder)
Postmortem scavenger damage to C-1.

Nakayama enters, hands Takahashi a paper bag marked EVIDENCE.

Takahashi opens it. Removes the braid of nylon cord tied to two pieces of broomstick. Photographer SNAPS shots.

YUKA

That's your murder weapon.

KIMURA

Might be trash a camper left.

YUKA

Look, braided parachute cord, two pieces of broom stick. You approach the victim from behind, loop it around their head, hold on for all your might.

(MORE)

YUKA (CONT'D)

The more they struggle, the quicker they pass out. Now you have handles to carry around a hundred pounds of dead girl.

NAKAYAMA

That's a theory.

YUKA

That evidence supports.

Nakayama bristles, he crosses to check his cell messages.

Kimura looks at Yuka, at the cord. Turns to her.

KIMURA

Wada and Nakayama are my stars. Smart, persistent investigators.

YUKA

You're lucky to have them.

KIMURA

Any suggestions on how to proceed?

YUKA

Identify both victims, then see if they might be connected somehow.

Takahashi hands Yuka a plastic evidence bag, in it a necklace. Yuka examines it.

YUKA (CONT'D)

We have her first name.

Yuka hands the necklace to Wada, he studies it.

WADA

Karin. Common name.

YUKA

Someone may recognize her. It's a semi-long shot.

KIMURA

No, that's bread and butter detective work. Thank you. We should get upstairs.

INT. BEYOND BLEAU - JUNKO'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

Yuka sits. Junko in a facing arm chair. She looks at Yuka, a polite, expectant gaze. Yuka stares back, waits. Silence.

Such is psychotherapy.

JUNKO
Nice to finally get you here. How
are you?

YUKA
Fine.

JUNKO
How's work?

YUKA
Fine. I'm fine. How long do I have
to do this?

Yuka rises. Junko's face impassive.

JUNKO
As long as Internal Affairs wants
you to, I suppose.

YUKA
It's bullshit. You know it is.

JUNKO
I know it is so let's get it over
with, okay?

Yuka sits down.

JUNKO (CONT'D)
How's everything else?

YUKA
I told you, fine.

JUNKO
Your personal life?

YUKA
My vibrator keeps breaking.

That embarrassed Junko; she looks away from her.

YUKA (CONT'D)
Sorry.

JUNKO
How about the booze?

YUKA
It's been three months.

JUNKO
How's not smoking?

YUKA
It's fucked, now will you please
Certify that I'm just average
healthy, fucked-up police and let
me get out of here?

INT. RESIDENTIAL POLICE BOX - DAY

Nakayama slouches at a desk, Yuka waters plants nearby.

NAKAYAMA
I feel for you Noguchi. But you
gotta remember there is a chain of
command. Does you no good stepping
on everyone's toes.

Yuka pours water into the soil of a plant.

YUKA
You know what this is?

NAKAYAMA
A plant.

YUKA
It's a Ghost Orchid.

NAKAYAMA
So?

YUKA
It eats fungi, able to thrive in
even the most hostile environments.

NAKAYAMA
Nothing a weedwhacker couldn't fix.

YUKA
You can most certainly try.

NAKAYAMA
We still talking about flowers?

YUKA
It's not my assignment.

NAKAYAMA
Is now.

YUKA

What am I? Sergeant? Officer?
Detective?

NAKAYAMA

Provisionally, Detective Sergeant
Special Investigations. Who lives
in and runs a police box.

YUKA

So, what's next?

NAKAYAMA

We're coming up on twenty-four
hours after the second discovery
and you have shit.

BEGIN MONTAGE

A) EXT. SHRINE - DAY

Beside a weathered forest shrine, trees CREAK in the wind.
Yuka questions a SHINTO PRIEST (70s), bald, wears a smile.

PRIEST

These are cleansing grounds. Long
ago, spirits of children were left
here. You disturb it... they
return.

YUKA

I'm not looking for ghosts, sir.

PRIEST

Perhaps you're not looking hard
enough.

B) EXT. MARKET STREET - DAY

Yuka strolls down narrow rows of stalls, interviews SHOP
OWNERS and RETIREES.

A FRUIT VENDOR leans in, whispers.

FRUIT VENDOR

They're not from here. We'd know.
Maybe a tourist... maybe cursed.

YUKA

Cursed?

FRUIT VENDOR

My son, he saw something near the
river. A shape. White. No face.
Swear on my grave.

Yuka flashes a faint smile, jots a note.

C) EXT. TAKAO HIGH SCHOOL - PLAYGROUND - DAY

A young TEACHER (30s), anxious, speaks to Yuka by the chain-
link fence, kids playing in the distance.

TEACHER

Yes... she was in my homeroom.
Quiet. Smart. But...

He hesitates.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Some kids are cruel. One girl in
particular. Complaints, but nothing
ever really... stuck.

D) INT. LIVING ROOM - SEX OFFENDER'S HOUSE 1 - NIGHT

MAN (50s), tank top, boxers, looks like Yuka woke him up.

YUKA (O.S.)

Gonna need an address and phone
number for everybody you were with
last week.

Yuka studies a wall full of little nail holes.

YUKA (CONT'D)

What was hanging here?

E) INT. GARAGE - SEX OFFENDER'S HOUSE 1 - NIGHT

The man watches Yuka open a cardboard box, inside, framed
photos, the man, younger, stands with his then wife and kids.

F) EXT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Through the window Yuka talks to a MALE EMPLOYEE (27),
working the register. The Employee shakes his head.

Yuka walks to her car, a car whizzes by.

G) EXT. BACK YARD - SEX OFFENDER'S HOUSE 2 - NIGHT

A GRAY HAired MAN, in his pajamas, shivers in the cold.

GRAY HAired MAN
I have bad arthritis, haven't been
out of the house in months.

Yuka, opens the door to a tool shed, moves inside, rifles
around the clutter, holds up a porn magazine.

YUKA
You're not allowed to have this.

GRAY HAired MAN
I forgot it was, I promise I'll...

Yuka tosses the magazine out onto the yard, keeps rifling,
finds another magazine, another, throws them out.

Her phone RINGS.

END MONTAGE

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Yuka, a bundle of nerves, drops files on the table.

YUKA
Dead ends, all of them.

Nakayama, Yuka share a stare in silence. Wada steps up beside
Yuka, gazes through the glass, watches.

DR CHIKAO MATSUNAGA (50s) sits, stares at the table top.
Close-cropped buzz cut with graying hair. Confused.

Yuka throws Wada a look.

YUKA (CONT'D)
How do you want to do this?

WADA
Nakayama talked to the informants.
He leads, we follow?

YUKA
Okay by me.

Nakayama nods "fine". The detectives move through into the

INTERVIEW ROOM

Dr. Matsunaga stands. Nakayama steps forward, all business.

NAKAYAMA

Mr. Matsunaga, I'm Inspector Masaki Nakayama, this is Chief Inspector Tadayoshi Wada.

MATSUNAGA

You're familiar.

NAKAYAMA

That's Yuka Noguchi.

YUKA

Sergeant.

NAKAYAMA

We're investigating the recent murders around Takao. Sit, please.

Matsunaga does. Nervous.

NAKAYAMA (CONT'D)

We've been notified you made statements a week prior to the first murder. If they're true, they're quite incriminating. Do you recall having any such conversation?

MATSUNAGA

No.

YUKA

Have you read or heard about the victim found in the bathtub?

On Matsunaga and Nakayama surprised Yuka has joined in.

MATSUNAGA

When it was first in the papers, sure. I didn't follow up after those first reports.

NAKAYAMA

Why not?

MATSUNAGA

It was too morbid. I told all this to the other officer.

Now it's the detectives' turn to be thrown.

NAKAYAMA
Which other officer?

MATSUNAGA
From Hachioji.

Yuka shoots Wada a head shake, "I don't know"

NAKAYAMA
Do you remember the officer's name?

MATSUNAGA
No.

YUKA
What did you tell this officer?

MATSUNAGA
I told him I'd gone swimming that weekend. I was alone but I met a young woman there. I have her name at home if you want it.

YUKA
That would be great.

MATSUNAGA
That day when I came home, my neighbor saw me. It was about four. I forgot to tell the officer about that.

NAKAYAMA
What's your neighbor's name?

MATSUNAGA
Ichiro Watanabe. But he died. Heart attack. So I never called to follow up. The knives I had in my car with blood on them, the blood came from a boar I killed for dinner.

The three detectives, stunned.

YUKA
What?

MATSUNAGA
That weekend, there were two knives in my car. Maybe Ichiro saw them and called the first officer on me.

YUKA

We'll check that. Were you in Takao at any time during the last month?

MATSUNAGA

You mean about the bathtub killing? Or the other in the woods?

YUKA

Both.

MATSUNAGA

I guess I was down there around the same time. I used to go down a lot.

Nakayama looks over at Wada, who still hasn't spoken. "Do you want to stop her?" Wada stays quiet. Observing.

YUKA

Our informant tells us you're ambidextrous.

MATSUNAGA

No. That's untrue.

YUKA

You can't write with both hands?

MATSUNAGA

They tried to make me when I was little, at school, but I couldn't. I'm left handed.

YUKA

Would you be happy to provide us with a copy of your handwriting?

MATSUNAGA

Not without a warrant.

YUKA

You've apparently made statements about killing young girls.

Matsunaga, becoming upset.

MATSUNAGA

No. That's horrible. That's a horrible thing to say...

YUKA

So you weren't angry about being fired from the university for touching your students?

Matsunaga looks up at her. Tears in his eyes.

MATSUNAGA

I am not who you think I am.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Identically dressed MEN in white shirts and ties work under fluorescent lights of this open room.

Phones RING. A whiteboard is cluttered with maps, school photos, and crime scene timelines.

Twenty-four-hour News on TV. ROOKIES pour coffee.

A pair of CITY COUNCILMEN stand with Wada and Nakayama, Yuka next to Superintendent Kimura.

Wada enters, pins two photographs on the wall.

WADA

Say hello to our dead girls.

Yuka studies the victims. AIMI FUKUGAWA and KARIN SUGAMO deep stares, beautiful features, long hair.

YUKA

Shame.

COUNCILMAN #2

Any chance they're connected?

YUKA

No physical links yet. But psychologically?

COUNCILMAN #1

The question is who killed them.

YUKA

Male, thirty to forty. Some college but no degree. Neat appearance. At least six feet. Intelligent. Charming when necessary.

Kimura sits impressed. As are the Councilmen.

COUNCILMAN #2

Tell me again why they stuck you in that police box out in the middle of nowhere?

WADA

Lucky they did, or we may have never got to where we are.

Yuka throws him a look of gratitude.

NAKAYAMA

You think this is revenge?

YUKA

That's one theory. Whoever it is, they're not finished, they've killed before and will again unless caught.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Wada leads the FUKUGAWAS and NANAMI SAITO (20s), purity censored by her cyber punk chic, into a room with Goro and a HALF-DOZEN BORED LOCAL REPORTERS: Texting, eating, gabbing.

NANAMI

Thank you for coming. My friend, Aimi, was discovered recently murdered. We ask for anyone who may have knowledge of what happened to her to come forward.

And... she's done. Mr. Fukugawa steps in.

MR. FUKUGAWA

Aimi was our only child. She was beautiful and kind. We care about her, we love her and we want to find those who did this to her.

MRS. FUKUGAWA

Aimi came out here to study and forge her path in life. Now she needs your help. We've set up a volunteer headquarters at the Forest Visitors Communication Center. We have a hotline, and our website is HelpAimi.com.

Nanami and the Fukugawa's pause next to Aimi's photo. The Fukugawa's look devastated, they offer a deep bow. CAMERAS click. SNAP! SNAP!

A gaggle of TV REPORTERS fire questions at Wada.

REPORTER #1

Inspector? Can you substantiate
cause of death?

WADA

No, I cannot.

GORO

Do the public have a right to be
concerned?

WADA

We have seen a drop in crimes
relating to social mobility, such
as robberies, and homicide in the
past two years.

GORO

Do we have a man strangling young
girls out there or not?!

REPORTER #1

This is not a robbery and you're
avoiding answering his question.

WADA

Then to answer his question, no.

INT. RESIDENTIAL POLICE BOX - NIGHT

Yuka readies her bag. Wada's interview on T.V in the b.g.

WADA (O.S.)

These crimes lead us to believe
someone had a grudge against the
victims.

REPORTER #3 (O.S.)

Any suspects at this time?

WADA (O.S.)

We've investigated suspicious
vehicles in the area the nights
they went missing, and their
associates. No one stands out at
this time.

Seira, Yuka's daughter enters.

SEIRA

What kind of monster would do
something like that to young women?

YUKA

The kind that hides, often in plain sight.

SEIRA

All they've got is two bodies. No motive, suspect or clues.

YUKA

Listen to you, special investigator.

SEIRA

Splatter films.

YUKA

What?

SEIRA

Make a list of people who have rented splatter films from the video store.

YUKA

Heads up.

Yuka tosses a cushion in Seira's direction. She catches it.

YUKA (CONT'D)

Lock the doors.

SEIRA

Be safe. Mom?

YUKA

Yeah?

SEIRA

You're gonna get who did it right?

EXT. MT. TAKAO - JATAKI TRAIL - DAY

A row of FEET. Mostly boots. Inching forward along a trail.

YUKA (O.S.)

Anything catches your eye, put it in a bag. Anything looks strange, put it in a bag...

Arms linked, moving forward. Looking down. The SEARCH PARTY.

Yuka, walks up and down behind the line. On a megaphone.

YUKA (CONT'D)

Anything he may have dropped,
moved, kicked, or stepped on, you
put in a bag. Cigarette butts, gum
wrappers, paper clips, coins,
buttons, nine times out of ten a
suspect leaves something behind...

VOICE (O.S.)

Detective?

Yuka turns. Burly GUYS with GERMAN SHEPHERDS approach.

BURLY GUY #1

Where do you want us?

Yuka points over to the woods on the other side of the trail.

YUKA

The woods. One group head south,
the other head north.

Nakayama, who stands nearby, hands the guys radios.

NAKAYAMA

Set them to channel 6...

Two young OFFICERS approach.

OFFICER #1

We did the interviews with all the
nearby houses like you asked.

YUKA

Anything?

OFFICER #1

Here's a list of who we talked to.

Hands the list to Yuka. She glances at it.

YUKA

Alright. Go back and set up some
follow-ups for this afternoon.

The Officers nod, leave. Nakayama saunters over.

NAKAYAMA

You don't think they should start
further back?

Yuka shakes her head.

YUKA

The murderer had to have exited here. Over those rocks. Would have taken the hardest way out.

Nakayama shrugs, skeptical.

Yuka looks back at the search team. Slow. Meticulous.

Wada approaches from the bottom of the trail, stops.

WADA

We got another one.

INT. HONDA RESIDENCE - DAY

MRS. HONDA (40s), slumped on the sofa, grips a handful of tissues, as Yuka consoles her. Nakayama lingers.

MRS. HONDA

They stole my child.

YUKA

Just take it easy. We'll handle this, okay?

MRS. HONDA

Yeah, but what if...

YUKA

Now, you just take it easy. Relax and breathe. Look at me. Everything is gonna be fine. I'm gonna handle this myself. Mrs. Honda, you can trust me, right? I'll handle this.

Nakayama's cell phone BLEATS. He reaches for it.

NAKAYAMA

Nakayama...

MRS. HONDA

I trust you.

NAKAYAMA

Where was it?

YUKA

Okay.

NAKAYAMA

Okay.

Yuka turns to Nakayama. Nakayama pockets his phone.

NAKAYAMA (CONT'D)
They found a blade. Says it looks
like a match. Wada's going to drive
it to the lab in Tokyo.

YUKA
From there we can...

Nakayama crosses his arms.

NAKAYAMA
... work on the warrant. I'm on it.

INT. CAR - DAY

Yuka's eyes scan people on the street.

An OLD MAN with gnarled hands and brass-tipped cane.

Two GIRLS, like sisters.

A MAN with a thick beard.

A WOMAN with a cluster of lavender.

A GIRL's face. Hair in two barrettes, wind tousles the curls.

Yuka leans out her window towards her, gives a half-smile.

YUKA
Need a ride?

Girl turns, she looks over.

AOI
Hello again.

INT. CAR - DAY

Sunlight dapples through trees. Yuka drives. Aoi next to her.

YUKA
You were a good friend of Karin's?

Aoi traces her finger along the window.

AOI
Best friends. Since junior high
school.

YUKA
Long time.

AOI
We were like sisters. Knew
everything about each other.

YUKA
Must be tough.

Aoi shrugs. Pulls out a cigarette. Lights it.

Yuka looks over at her. She smiles. Blows out a plume of
smoke. This girl's way beyond her years.

YUKA (CONT'D)
Your mother's worried.

AOI
Do I look like I care?

YUKA
Where am I taking you?

AOI
Anywhere. Long as it's fun.

Yuka, reaches for the gear. Her foot, presses on the gas.

SCREECH! The car whips around a curve.

Aoi giggles. Likes the speed.

Yuka goes even faster. Tires SQUEALING...

EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The car breaks free from the forest, races along a road.

Ahead, a LOGGING TRUCK coming the other way.

The car shifts lanes, heads straight for the truck.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Aoi looks out at the truck. Still giggling.

YUKA
This fun?

Truck horn BLARES. Yuka accelerates. Aoi grips her seat.

Aoi looks over at Yuka. Not giggling any more.

AOI
Hey ...

YUKA
Thought you wanted something fun...

Yuka goes even faster...

Aoi squirms in her seat. Not liking this any more.

AOI
Move over!

YUKA
But this is fun!

Yuka stares ahead, tense jaw. The TRUCK bears down on them...

Aoi reaches for the wheel, Yuka pushes her hands away...

The TRUCK... a breath away...

AOI
Move over!

EXT. CAR - ROAD

The truck and the car...just feet from each other... at the last moment... the car jerks out of the way...

EXT. MT. TAKAO - TAKAOSAN STATION - DAY

SCREECHES to a stop near an old sign. Gravel flies.

Yuka jumps out, slams her door. Rounds the car, opens Aoi's door. Aoi's screaming at her.

AOI
You crazy bitch! You could've
killed us!

Yuka reaches in and pulls her out of the car.

AOI (CONT'D)
You're hurting me!

Forces her out, along the construction site.

AOI (CONT'D)
What kind of cop are you?

Aoi looks around the construction site, police tape.

Yuka pulls her up a hill, pushes her down the other side.

AOI (CONT'D)
What the fuck is this is about?

Yuka stands above her, on the hill. Her face set like stone.

YUKA
You and Karin were like sisters?

AOI
That's what I said.

YUKA
Told each other everything.

Yuka grabs her by the arm. Jerks it up. She cries out.

Yuka leans in. Just inches from her ear.

YUKA (CONT'D)
You're standing right where her
body was found in a shallow grave.

Aoi's eyes widen. She looks around, tries to break away...

YUKA (CONT'D)
Who did it?

Aoi struggles more. No good. Yuka's grip is like a vice.

YUKA (CONT'D)
I need a name.

AOI
I don't know.

YUKA
You don't know. But you were such
good friends...

Aoi, squirms. Angry. Yuka's grip tightens.

She turns Aoi's arm over, checks for burns. None.

AOI
My arm!

Yuka straightens. Aoi breaks away from her. Tears streak her face. She scrambles up the hill, turns to yell at Yuka.

AOI (CONT'D)
Happy now, you fucking bitch?

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

A car parks by Yuka and Wada. Out gets Nakayama, hands Wada the warrant. They huddle.

NAKAYAMA
Fingerprints from the blade match a male from a case three months ago.

WADA
Safety comes first. Let's do this right so everyone can go home and do the wife and girlfriend thing tonight. Time to punch in.

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

Yuka, Wada and Nakayama crouch outside the door with pistols. Assault vests worn over civvies.

Yuka and Wada to one side. Nakayama to the other.

YUKA
We supposed to knock?

NAKAYAMA
We did, didn't you hear?

Wada gives the door several quick, powerful kicks.

Wood SPLITS, hinges TEAR. It falls. The three surge into:

THE HALLWAY

Yuka in first, a hand reaches out, grabs Yuka's gun barrel.

The MAN flinches, Yuka and the man eye to eye. The man back, he shoves Yuka, she stumbles back. The gun goes off. BANG! Yuka falls to the ground. Chunks of ceiling rain down.

Echoes, ringing.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - DREAM SEQUENCE

Ringin'. Pouring rain. Suffocating.

Yuka running through it. Hearing the sound of her BREATHING.
Her HEARTBEAT.

Adrenaline pumping. An animal tracking its prey...

A DARK FIGURE flashes past. Just inches away. Playing with her. Taunting her. She whips round with her weapon and...

VOICE (O.S)
Ms. Noguchi!

INT. BEYOND BLEAU WAITING ROOM - DAY - END DREAM SEQUENCE

Yuka's eyes snap open, looks to the secretary.

Yuka rises from her waiting room seat, moves to

JUNKO'S INNER OFFICE

Yuka sits. Junko seats herself in a facing arm chair. She looks at Yuka with a polite, expectant gaze.

Yuka stares back, waits. Silence. Such is psychotherapy.

Yuka winces.

JUNKO
Bufferin?

YUKA
Already taken three, thanks.

She gives a prescription to Yuka.

JUNKO
This is Buspar, for social phobia.
It'll only work if you take it
twice a day. In about a week the
anxiety will dissolve.

YUKA
Like magic?

JUNKO
Or, chemistry. You might feel a
little dizzy at first, like you
just stood up a little too fast. If
that happens don't worry, it'll go
away. Any worse than that, stop
taking it and call me.

Yuka takes the prescription, sighs, nods. Junko smiles.

JUNKO (CONT'D)
 Good job finding the Honda girl.

YUKA
 False alarm.

JUNKO
 Is she in danger?

YUKA
 Aren't we all?

JUNKO
 Tell me about yesterday.

YUKA
 Might have a concussion. I don't
 need to stay here for that do I?

JUNKO
 How was it before the breech?

YUKA
 I don't understand.

JUNKO
 How have things been going with
 you, generally speaking?

Junko reads her file.

JUNKO (CONT'D)
 Normally when an officer loses
 their weapon, there's evidence of a
 struggle, bruising. Someone taking
 your gun is good reason to use some
 of your training. But you didn't do
 that did you? IA is going to look
 into it, I'd prefer to just ask
 you.

Yuka looks away, recedes into herself.

YUKA
 I can't do this.

JUNKO
 What can't you do?

Yuka gives her a long look, a balloon about to burst.

YUKA
 I had, I was treated for depression
 a year ago.

(MORE)

YUKA (CONT'D)

I thought it would just go away.
Just somehow get over it like a
normal person.

Her voice starts to crack.

JUNKO

Yuka, how do you feel about taking
a few days?

Yuka starts to panic.

YUKA

I can't.

JUNKO

You know, grief is not linear.

Yuka huffs, rises.

JUNKO (CONT'D)

But...

YUKA

It was a mistake. I lost it for a
minute. It won't happen again. I'll
come as often as you want. I
remember, structure helps with
hopelessness. Yesterday was a
mistake.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Yuka passes an OFFICER standing guard, she steps under police
tape. Her right hand is bandaged, a cut below her right eye,
like she cried a scar.

She scans the room. Inside, spare, untidy. Certificate hangs.
Old textbooks, a photograph, a calendar.

Dr. Takahashi inspects Nanami's motionless body in a heap on
the floor, bloodied and bruised.

YUKA

Burns?

TAKAHASHI

What happened to you?

YUKA

Slipped. Someone's face in training
fell on my hand.

TAKAHASHI

Same amount, same place. Killers a sadist.

YUKA

Maybe it's not the killer, maybe it's something the victims shared before the killings.

Wada enters.

WADA

An initiation? You alright?

YUKA

A punishment.

TAKAHASHI

Why so curious about the burns?

YUKA

Curiosity.

TAKAHASHI

This was personal, her skull's shattered.

A calendar. Yuka, curious. Heads over.

WADA

If we can reach out to anyone with similar injuries, females, similar ages, perhaps we can get to them before the killer can.

Yuka studies the calendar. On it the date circled 26TH, in the circle, three names: NANAMI. MAI. YUNA.

Two others: AIMI. KARIN.

YUKA

You see these names?

WADA

What are you thinking?

YUKA

To-do list? Any cameras in the neighborhood?

OFFICER

I'll check.

INT. MT. TAKAO - FOREST VISITORS COMMUNICATION CENTER - DAY

Volunteers transform the center into the Help The Girls headquarters. PHONES plugged in, GIANT HEADSHOTS of Aimi, Karin and Nanami hang; rice crackers and green tea.

PHOTOGRAPHERS take shots, feels like the campaign headquarters of a losing politician.

Yuka enters, PEOPLE rush to welcome her, she smiles.

From across the room, Nakayama sees all this, rolls his eyes:

Yuka spots Wada heading to her. She passes YUNA YAMASHITA (20S), who holds a handful of FLIERS with the girl's PHOTOS.

The two exchange a glance as they pass each other.

YUKA

You know her?

WADA

Don't worry, we videotape everyone who comes in or out of these things. You tend to get a lot of...

YUKA

Do-gooders?

WADA

Freaks. Hey, meant to ask you, Yuna Yamashita?

Yuka shrugs: Who?

WADA (CONT'D)

Lives out here now, student at the local university?

YUKA

Never heard the name.

WADA

Daughter's friend?

YUKA

Oh, I, right. No. Best friend? Seira doesn't even know her. I mean, to wave hi, but...no.

At the snack table, a HOMELESS GUY is stealing food.

Yuka moves to have words with him as Nakayama sidles up.

Yuka hands the homeless guy a bag of bagels to go.

NAKAYAMA CONT'D)

Oh, look, she's being good so we
can all see her be good.

WADA

You really don't like her.

NAKAYAMA

What's to like?

Yuka gets another glimpse of Yuna. The two lock eyes.

INT. CAR - DAY

Yuka drives. Speeds. Scenery whips past the window.

Her hands, tight around the steering wheel.

She grows pale.

Yuka pulls the car off to the side, jumps out of the car,
leaving the door open. Runs down an

ALLEY

Yuka leans her hand against the wall and vomits.

Hovers for a moment, saliva drips from her mouth. Braces
herself. Heaves again. Hears a BUZZING behind her. Turns.

A DEAD CAT lies next to a dumpster. FLIES buzz around its
head. Teeth bared. Eyes wide open.

Like it's watching her.

INT. RESIDENTIAL POLICE BOX - NIGHT

Masako sits in the kitchen, pours some sake, lights another
cigarette. Yuka in front of a computer, ice nurses her hand.

MASAKO

Seira asked to stay with me.

Yuka does not answer.

MASAKO (CONT'D)

If you don't spend time with kids,
you lose them.

Yuka punches on the keyboard, waits for a response.
On screen. ALL DNA ON CIGARETTE BUTTS NEGATIVE.
She sighs, stares at the screen. Door bell RINGS.
Yuka looks to the entrance. Junko in front of her.

YUKA
You have a complaint?

JUNKO
Where to begin?

YUKA
If you want to ask something...

JUNKO
Regarding the other day. You were
the first through the door,
correct?

YUKA
Yes.

JUNKO
Two shooters, right?

YUKA
One. Read the report.

JUNKO
Come on. Tape's off. It doesn't
bother you that there is a serial
killer out there? It doesn't bother
you?

YUKA
Yes, it bothers me!

JUNKO
Does it bother you you're letting
him get away?

YUKA
Let's get something straight,
nobody's getting away.

JUNKO
Listen to me. I'm trying to save
you, Noguchi, but your window's
closing.

Junko leaves, Yuka moves back in to the

BATHROOM

Insomnia. Taking its toll. Her hair, no longer combed. Her face, pale, eyes dragged open from fatigue.

Looks like the whole world's pulling her down.

MASAKO (O.S.)

If you don't need me, don't call.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

BANG! Yuka bolts upright in bed covered in a film of sweat.

The sound that woke her: the window shade FLAPPING open. STREET LIGHT floods the room.

Yuka moves to the shade, pulls it down. It lurches up.

She tugs it down again. It slaps all the way open. Yuka yanks it down so hard it rips off the window.

YUKA

Goddammit!

She gets tangled. Pulls it off, flings it in the corner.

The digital clock flips to a new minute: 4:23. Yuka, paces. Scratches her face. Unable to sleep.

Slows near the ADJOINING DOOR that leads into

SEIRA'S ROOM

Hovers. Pushes the door open. Sees...

THE PICTURES on the bedside table. Yuka, Seira and Yuka's husband. What was once Yuka's family. She moves to the

BATHROOM

Water gushes from the faucet.

Yuka reaches into the open medicine cabinet for some Bufferin, shakes out a couple.

Cups her hand under the water and knocks the pills back.

Closes the medicine cabinet and...

SEIRA'S REFLECTION looms behind her.

Yuka CRIES out, whirls around...nothing. No one's there.

INT. RESIDENTIAL POLICE BOX - DAY

Yuka does push-ups. Seira at the table does her homework.

SEIRA

I've only got three people on my family tree. The others, they have many. Is Goro a friend of yours?

Ten, eleven, twelve. Yuka doesn't answer.

SEIRA (CONT'D)

If he is, he's a friend of mine. Can I add him?

Fifteen, sixteen, seventeen. She rises, Seira's gone.

A KNOCK on the sliding glass door.

Nakayama walks in carrying two cups of canned coffee. He hands one to Yuka.

NAKAYAMA

Long days?

YUKA

Always are lately.

He glances at her cluttered desk, flips through case folders, the first report spread in front of him.

He squints at YUKA'S REPORT on the first victim, time of discovery, cause of death, preliminary response.

He frowns. Nakayama taps the report.

NAKAYAMA

Quick one. Says here you found the body at 6.45pm?

YUKA

That's right.

NAKAYAMA

I was still on patrol then. Thought I saw your bicycle outside the police box around seven-thirty.

YUKA

I circled back. Needed gloves. Scene was messy.

Nakayama nods, still looking at the report.

NAKAYAMA
Seems a bit tight.

YUKA
Some of us are faster than we look.

She raises her coffee, takes a long sip.

Nakayama flashes a smile, a flicker of doubt. He closes the file, but his eyes linger on the timestamp.

NAKAYAMA
Guess so.

Yuka's phone RINGS again, Yuka answers.

WADA (O.S.)
He's done it again..

INT. SOKA UNIVERSITY - DORM COMMON ROOM - DAY

Yuka and Wada address a DOZEN GIRLS. The pleasant ladies are gathered around a sectional couch, sitting and standing.

Among the most vocal are MIREI, MAMI, SAYAKA, and WAKANA.

SAYAKA
They said she didn't leave campus.
Not alive anyway. Or on her own
violation or whatever you call it.

YUKA
Volition.

MAMI
I saw her get in the elevator.

WAKANA
Her car's still in the parking lot.
It was here all weekend.

MIREI
She was supposed to leave Friday
night. She was going to house-sit
for her parents. Feed their cat.

Yuka has a subtle reaction to that.

WAKANA
This is making my throat close up.

YUKA
I know, right?

Wada clocks Yuka speaking in a striking-yet-subtle mirroring of the girl's youthful cadence; he quickly suppresses.

WADA
Mai didn't just disappear into thin air somewhere between this elevator and the parking lot. It was orchestrated. It was planned, probably rehearsed.

That focuses the girls for the moment.

WADA (CONT'D)
Did Mai mention meeting someone or being approached? Did you see her with anybody unusual?

MIREI
I'm her roommate. I've only ever seen her studying and frying Spam. I know she didn't have a boyfriend.

MAMI
Do you know what he's doing with them? The girls he's taking?

SAYAKA
He's raping and murdering them.

WADA
We've no evidence of that.

MAMI
It could be a sex slave ring.

SAYAKA
That's still rape and murder.

WADA
We believe this is an individual.

WAKANA
Like Tsutomu Miyazaki?

WADA
A little before your time.

WAKANA
I read.

YUKA

This man is not experimenting or playing, he's hunting.

Wada stares at Yuka, clarifies to the young women.

WADA

This man is very good at what he does. He will do it again.

WAKANA

He already took a girl from here, so the rest of us are safe.

The young woman stares a perplexed moment before her face crumples like an old doll, emotionally confused.

Wada turns to Yuka.

WADA

I fear we are running out of time.

INT. MR. AND MRS. TANAKA'S HOME - NIGHT

Mai's PARENTS, sick with worry. Mr. Tanaka rationalizes while Mrs. Tanaka looks resigned.

Wada sits opposite Mr. and Mrs. Tanaka. They examine photos of the girls.

Yuka stands, avoids eye contact with the Tanakas.

MRS. TANAKA

She looks like the other girls.

WADA

She fits the profile.

MR. TANAKA

Could Mai still be alive?

WADA

We simply have no way of knowing.

YUKA

How's the cat?

MRS. TANAKA

What?

YUKA

How's your cat? Mai was supposed to feed it.

(MORE)

YUKA (CONT'D)

Was the cat weird when you came home? It didn't eat all weekend. Must have been hungry.

The Tanaka's are unsure how to respond, then:

MR. TANAKA

I didn't notice.

Yuka mulls that a moment.

YUKA

He took her from here. She got on a train. She came home. She fed the cat. And he took her.

Wada doesn't hesitate to pull out his phone and dial.

WADA

I need ERT immediately, and a photographer.

YUKA

Can I see your daughter's room?

Mr. Tanaka leads Yuka, who pulls on gloves as they approach.

Yuka eyes the CAT pawing at the door, eager to go inside. Yuka stops Mr. Tanaka from reaching the door knob.

YUKA (CONT'D)

Would you put your hands in your pockets and avoid touching anything, please? You can hold the cat if it's easier.

Mr. Tanaka picks up the cat. Yuka wraps a gloved hand around the knob and opens the door.

MAI'S BEDROOM

The light from the hallway streaks across the floor and up the wall as Yuka ENTERS.

She stands inside the door, notices the OPEN WINDOW, flicks on the light switch, illuminating the room. She stares.

MAI TANAKA

She lays coffin-style in her bed, dressed in pajamas.

Gray pallor skin, clean THUMB-PRINT-SHAPED BRUISES visible around her neck, an unbreathing bosom evident to Yuka.

Mr. Tanaka fails to notice. He steps forward.

MR. TANAKA

Mai?

Yuka raises a gloved hand, stopping Mr. Tanaka.

YUKA

I need you to leave the room.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The room spins. Yuka scoops up water in her hands from the faucet in the sink to wash down the last two Bufferin from her now empty pack.

She splashes water on her face, dries it with her shirttail.

She takes out the Buspar, empties the pills down the drain.

Yuka takes a breath, exhales, then heads to

INT. MAI TANAKA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The CRIME-SCENE PHOTOGRAPHER takes pictures, ANOTHER dusts the window for fingerprints.

Wada enters, stands next to Yuka.

WADA

She was strangled and suffocated.
Ribs were broken.

YUKA

He put her back where he found her.

She runs her hand over her forehead, takes a deep breath.

YUKA (CONT'D)

Does anyone have any Bufferin?

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Yuka exits, bag under her arm. Steps onto the sidewalk, sees Goro sitting against a bollard. Waiting for her. Smiles.

GORO

Where you headed?

She hunches into her coat, flicks up her collar. Doesn't want him to see her fully. Nods down the road.

YUKA

Home.

Yuka looks at him. Turns, starts up the street.

GORO

Found out someone's ratting out
police in your department to
Internal Affairs.

YUKA

That so? You know who?

GORO

Wish I did. I know your file isn't
as confidential as it should be.

Yuka turns, strides up the street.

Goro, watches her, notices her swollen right hand. Calls out.

GORO (CONT'D)

The Bears won!

Yuka keeps moving, looks back, confused.

GORO (CONT'D)

The baseball game. Our team...

Slings the bag over his shoulder.

GORO (CONT'D)

We won.

INT. BEYOND BLEAU RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Yuka bursts in, flies by the receptionist.

RECEPTIONIST

She's on a call right now.

Yuka proceeds into

JUNKO'S INNER OFFICE

Junko hangs up when she sees her.

YUKA

Who's got access to my file?

JUNKO

What are you talking about?

YUKA
My file? Who's looking at it?

Junko gets up, Yuka moves in; Junko backs away from her.

JUNKO
Nobody.

Yuka moves closer, Junko backs away.

JUNKO (CONT'D)
It's a confidential psychiatric
record, it'd be illegal.

Junko backs into a wall.

JUNKO (CONT'D)
What's wrong with you?

YUKA
Don't. Don't lie to me.

Junko says nothing, looks scared.

YUKA (CONT'D)
It's Internal Affairs, isn't it?

JUNKO
You're paranoid.

YUKA
Who?

INT. BAR - NIGHT

A police bar. Yuka enters, sees Goro and Wada at a back booth, goes to them.

The BARTENDER stays behind the bar, but yells to her.

BARTENDER
Perrier, Yuka?

YUKA
Double Yamazaki, rocks.

Wada shoots her a glance.

BARTENDER
Here you go.

She gets her drink.

YUKA

Thanks.

WADA

You sure?

She sits, downs it in one go.

YUKA

Can you get me another?

BARTENDER

Here you go.

Nakayama takes the drink, hands it to Yuka.

NAKAYAMA

Double, huh?

He grins. Clearly drunk. Yuka doesn't notice him.

Yuka swings to him.

YUKA

We good?

NAKAYAMA

We're good, we're great.

Yuka gets up, faces him.

Wada and Goro get up and hold Yuka back.

Nakayama moves to the bar. Yuka spins to go after him.

Goro pulls her away.

GORO

Leave him, he's just being a bully.

YUKA

I don't like bullies.

That's it.

Yuka storms over to Nakayama, grabs his shoulder, spins him.

SMACK!

Yuka's closed fist lands on Nakayama's nose. His nose explodes, blood everywhere. Yuka winces, grabs her hand.

YUKA (CONT'D)

She gave you my file, didn't she?

SMACK!

Yuka bitch slaps Nakayama across his mouth.

NAKAYAMA
What are you talking about?

YUKA
What'd you pay her for it?

She pulls her other fist back, doesn't see Goro approach behind her; her elbow knocks Goro in the face, he drops.

NAKAYAMA
You crazy bitch! You're done,
you're fucken done. When I'm
finished, you won't be able to
collect garbage, your Gun and
badge! You're fucken fired. As of
right now.

INT. RESIDENTIAL POLICE BOX - DAY

Yuka packs. Goro KNOCKS, enters, reaches into his bag.

GORO
I was hoping to get your okay on
something.

YUKA
Don't need that anymore.

He pulls a folder from his bag.

GORO
The article on the girls. Editor
made me finish it this morning.
Said it was taking too long.

Yuka takes it. Flips it open. Neatly typed. Hands it back.

GORO (CONT'D)
You going to read it?

YUKA
Probably not.

Goro slips it into his bag, looks at Yuka, studies her face.

GORO
Haven't been sleeping much, have
you?

YUKA

Not really.

GORO

They say good police can't sleep
because a piece of the puzzle's
missing and bad police can't sleep
because their conscience won't let
them.

SIRENS scream up the street, one after the other.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Yuka strides past police cars, lights, CORONER'S MEN hover
around a car. She comes closer, they move aside.

Nakayama lies against the front seat. Shot in the head.

WADA

One shot. Close range. Possibly .38
caliber revolver. Police issue.

Yuka stares at Nakayama's body. They watch her.

KIMURA

Give me your gun.

YUKA

Don't have it. Handed it in.

KIMURA

Got a back up?

Yuka tears the Velcro holster off her ankle, gives Kimura her
gun. Kimura hands it to Wada.

Wada smells the gun, shakes his head, gives the gun to
another Internal Affairs man.

YUKA

You think I...

INT. HALLWAY - AUTOPSY ROOM - NIGHT

Yuka stops at an open doorway in time to see Dr. Takahashi
pull a sheet over the cold, blue body of Nakayama.

Takahashi goes to wash his hands, doesn't notice Yuka.

Yuka. Alone.

Steps inside. Bloody instruments on a stainless-steel tray.

Moves towards a clipboard, on the slab, eyes flick over to the shape under the sheet when...Nakayama's HAND drops.

Thick fingers. Wedding band. Yuka jumps...

Yuka's phone RINGS.

Takahashi re-emerges from the office with a manila envelope, looks down; the clipboard on the floor.

Autopsy room, empty.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - NIGHT

COMMUTERS pour out around Yuka as a train pulls away.

Yuka waits, alone. A huge clock. Ticks off seconds.

People carry luggage, more COMMUTERS arrive. Yuka's phone VIBRATES. She pulls it out, a message, UNKNOWN CALLER.

How many more must die?

Her breath catches. She scans the platform.

Cameras in every corner. Yuka steps up to the platform's edge. Cranes to see the approaching train.

A sharp SHOVE at her back.

She pitches over the edge onto the track.

People CRY OUT. Train gets closer. COMMUTERS, stunned.

A HAND, hangs onto the track's edge. Yuka.

Train right on her, hoists herself up, onto the platform, train races past.

She sees...MASKED FIGURE Hurrying. Exiting the station.

SECURITY GUARDS. Rush towards her. Yuka, gets to her feet. Shoves past them, she run.

Masked Figure hurdles the ticket gate, Yuka spots the figure, hurdles the ticket gate, dashes out to the

STREET

Getting away.

The Figure rounds a corner. Down a street. Yuka close behind.

She reaches for her gun. Fuck, I.A. have it. Both of them.

She reaches for a leg, tips the masked figure off balance, pushes the figure into the nearest wall.

Blood runs from under the mask. The figure pushes Yuka off.

The figure grabs a metal container near a trash bin, swings it, it SMASHES against Yuka's face.

BLOOD spurts from Yuka's nose. Yuka. Buckles, falls. She gets to her feet. Unsteady.

Gives chase into a CROWD of even more PEOPLE.

All wearing masks. The same masks.

Yuka. Surveys. Everywhere.

Festival crowds watch MONKS walk barefoot across burning embers, fend off evil spirits with weaponry, flay their bodies with branches.

Yuka losing track. Ahead.

A masked figure. Frozen. Stares back at her.

Yuka. Plunges into the crowd.

She races to the figure, rips off the mask.

Wrong person.

Yuka spots blood drops nearby, Follows them. Runs faster.

Through the CROWD. POLICE SIRENS. In the background. As Yuka shoves through. Tracks those drops. Like a bloodhound. Into a

NARROW ALLEYWAY

The drops end in a puddle. Yuka, wounded, exhausted, spins around, sees the figure.

The figure SMASHES Yuka into the wall, bounces back, Yuka loses her footing, falls.

The figure picks her up, HURLS her back against the wall.

A foot drives right onto Yuka. CRASH! Yuka struggles for air.

The figure LOOMS over her. Pauses. Escapes into the night.
Yuka watches. Beaten to a pulp.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

To BLACKNESS. Coming through, a WHIRRING SOUND.

Yuka, eyes open. Gash above her head. Bruises around her eye.
Nose swollen, purplish.

Her brow, furrows. She tries to figure out her bearings.

Yuka sits up, winces. Wada KNOCKS, enters.

She looks around. Jumping off the bed. Grabs her clothes.

YUKA

Someone pushed me onto the
tracks...

Yuka pulls on her pants.

WADA

Noguchi...

YUKA

I chased them all across the
Plaza...into The festival...

WADA

Yuka.

Yuka stops talking. Looks at Wada.

WADA (CONT'D)

Witnesses at the station said you
fell onto the tracks. That you were
chasing nothing through the
festival and that you were found
alone in the alley.

YUKA

What?! That's what they want you to
believe!

Yuka sees the look on Wada's face.

YUKA (CONT'D)

You're giving me that look. That
"she's-coming-unhinged" look. I
don't need that. I need you to hear
what I'm saying.

Wada. Embarrassed for her. Has about had it.

WADA

Dr. Morita and I want you to go home and stay there.

YUKA

I was already fired.

WADA

That's pending a review. If you don't want to ruin that, you'll do as I say.

YUKA

If he's following a pattern, we have only twenty hours before the next girl disappears...

WADA

Go home. Stay home. You said you were going to slow down, so slow the fuck down.

YUKA

I am slowing down.

WADA

No you're not!

Yuka stares at him. Betrayed. Grabs her clothes and her coat.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Yuka enters. Goro sits in jeans, a cowboy shirt, cowboy hat.

Yuka goes, sits next to him.

YUKA

What is it, Halloween?

Goro glances around.

GORO

Rough night?

He's drunk, slurring. Yuka sees it.

Goro takes a long, drunken look at her.

GORO (CONT'D)

You heard how these girls are connected?

YUKA

Had a hunch how they might be.

GORO

I'm talking old Sukeban gang.

YUKA

That's what the cigarette burns
were, punishment for broken
commandments.

Goro eats noodles, drinks coffee. Yuka pours him more coffee.

YUKA (CONT'D)

Feeling better?

GORO

I feel fine!

Yuka pours him more coffee; Goro guzzles it.

Goro gets looks from the other people, Yuka shushes him,
pours him more coffee. He drinks it.

A WAITRESS approaches.

WAITRESS

Excuse me, everything okay?

YUKA

Yes, sorry about...him.

WAITRESS

Can I get you anything else?

YUKA

Just the cheque please.

Goro and the waitress eye each other. Goro drinks more
coffee. He sits back, pulls his cowboy hat over his eyes.

GORO

I.A. did a track on Lt. Nakayama.
They found a safety deposit box
with five hundred thousand yen in
it, withdrawn three months ago,
used that one time.

YUKA

Doesn't matter now. But he didn't
know me three months ago.

GORO
 Junko did. Maybe the money was for something else. How the fuck do I know? I'm just an old city cowboy trying not to fall out of his saddle.

Yuka looks at him, smiles a thin smile; she's not there.

YUKA
 Let's go home.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Goro fusses for his keys, unlocks his battered, rusted car.

YUKA
 You all right? You want to walk?

GORO
 Hell no.

YUKA
 I'll drive you.

Goro ambles around to the passenger side, throws Yuka the keys, falls into his car.

Yuka's cell phone RINGS.

YUKA (CONT'D)
 Yeah.

WADA (O.S.)
 I need a favor.

YUKA
 What do you want me to do?

WADA (O.S.)
 Ruffle someone's feathers a little.

EXT. CARPARK - NIGHT

Junko walks to her car, pulls out her keys, drops them, bends to pick them up, rises, surprised to see Yuka.

YUKA
 I'm not supposed to be anywhere near here right now.

Junko wary.

YUKA (CONT'D)
Let's talk.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

At a table. Headlights stream by. Surrounded on all sides by a flow of normalcy.

YUKA
Those new APPI laws are about to pass, you'll be liable for criminal punishment, a year in jail, or a hundred-million-yen fine.

Nothing from Junko.

YUKA (CONT'D)
I bet you're thinking I'm a complete idiot. That it?

Still nothing.

YUKA (CONT'D)
Am I right?

JUNKO
Well. Yes.

Yuka, shock in her eyes. She sits back, forces a tight smile.

YUKA
I guess that's a start. Now maybe you can tell me what you want?

Junko leers at Yuka.

JUNKO
I wanted to see what you'd do.

YUKA
And?

JUNKO
You disappointed me.

Junko starts a LAUGH.

YUKA
Amused? Doesn't seem very useful.

JUNKO
What would I do without you?

YUKA

You're garbage who sells secrets
for money.

JUNKO

Don't talk like one of them. You're
not police, even if you'd like to
be. To them you're a freak...you're
the little girl they threw out of
the city because she couldn't
handle the heat. They just need you
right now.

She regards Yuka with something approaching pity.

JUNKO (CONT'D)

As soon as they don't, they'll cast
you out like a leper.

Junko eyes Yuka, searches.

YUKA

You like playing games?

JUNKO

I've got a degree in psychology,
goes with the territory.

They hold each other's gaze.

YUKA

Don't get too confident.

JUNKO

Why not? What happened, Yuka? Did
you get sucked into it? Did you
like it too much?

YUKA

It was an accident.

JUNKO

An accident? You slipped and that
alcohol fell into your mouth?

YUKA

They were armed. I was robbery
homicide.

They look at each other. Junko stares at Yuka.

JUNKO

NPSC requires you to fire a warning shot. No warning shots? Tell me about the alcohol. Tell me, Yuka.

YUKA

I didn't.

JUNKO

They never tested you, did they? But Internal Affairs knew.

They're face to face.

YUKA

I read your file too. There's no evidence of a life outside your work. Almost seems like you're afraid of people.

JUNKO

I'm not afraid of people. I just don't like them.

Their eyes dig into each other.

JUNKO (CONT'D)

Still think the perpetrator is male?

INT. RESIDENTIAL POLICE BOX - DAY

Goro eats cereal, reads the paper. Yuka makes breakfast. Yuka silent, Goro notices her clenched jaw.

GORO

You know, they say stress is the leading cause of death.

YUKA

Something's rotten in the state of Denmark.

Goro laughs. Can't believe what he's hearing.

GORO

Do you know how paranoid you sound?

YUKA

Great. Now *you're* analyzing me.

GORO
Relax a little. You're obsessed.
Don't twist things to fit your
agenda.

YUKA
There's a case.

GORO
Come on, you know there's no case
here. There's no physical evidence,
she doesn't have an alibi but
there's no motive. Anybody could
have done it.

No one says anything. Yuka pokes at the eggs.

YUKA
So what do we do? Nothing? She's
not going to hide behind anybody.

SEIRA (O.S.)
They aren't done, there's white
stuff.

YUKA
She's not going to hide at all.

SEIRA (O.S.)
Mama! The eggs are not done!

YUKA
Fine, make your own fucking eggs!

Yuka throws the frying pan in the sink, retreats to the
bathroom. The noisy hair-dryer starts up.

SEIRA (O.S.)
I wanted to, you wouldn't let me!
Mama!!! I'm hungry!

YUKA (O.S.)
You had your chance!

Yuka storms into the kitchen. Goro confused by the shouting.

GORO
You okay?

Yuka stares at Goro. DOORBELL rings. Yuka goes to the door.
Door opens. An OFFICER stands at the door, laptop in hand.

OFFICER
I shouldn't be doing this.

YUKA
What've you got?

OFFICER
Two cameras, one west side and the other east. Nothing on the east looking camera, but look at what we found here.

Yuka watches on video a GIRL getting in a black minivan.

INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - DAY

Yuka leans over the desk, a DEALER checks the photograph.

DEALER
That's an Alphard, produced by Toyota since 2002. An Alphard 350G Executive Lounge to be exact.

YUKA
Is there a difference?

DEALER
Same level of equipment with the 350G L Package. The only change is the second row, which adds on four-way powered...

YUKA
How many you think are in the area?

DEALER
A lot. But not many of the Executive lounge. Looking to buy...?

YUKA
Could you get me a list?

INT. RESIDENTIAL POLICE BOX - DAY

Keys land on the table. Yuka walks to the bathroom, past Seira's room. She notices something.

Seira's room, cleared of much of her belongings.

EXT. MASA KO'S APATMENT - DAY

Yuka bangs on the door. Door opens.

YUKA
Is this a joke?

MASA KO
Excuse me?

YUKA
You think I don't care about us?

MASA KO
Us?

YUKA
I thought we'd move somewhere better. Whatever I give her, it's never enough.

MASA KO
It was enough.

YUKA
Do you have any idea how much it cost to raise her?

Masako grabs a pen and paper, poised to write, cuts Yuka off:

MASA KO
Give me a number.

YUKA
What?

MASA KO
GIVE ME A NUMBER!

YUKA
I don't understand.

MASA KO
You give me a number for how much it would've cost to raise her, and I'll write you a check for what she owed you so that I NEVER HAVE TO SPEAK TO YOU AGAIN.

Masako slams the door shut. Yuka's phone BUZZES.

YUKA
What!?

WADA (O.S.)
You have to see this.

EXT. WEST TOKYO FIELD - DAY

YUNA'S DEAD BODY

She hangs by her neck from a lone tree, nude, a small MURDER OF CROWS gathered on branches above her.

The CROWS give the impression of guests at a dinner table.

Wada steps over police tape. CSIs comb the immediate area for forensic evidence.

Wada stares as Takahashi shoos the crows away.

WADA
They're calling him the Takao Strangler.

TAKAHASHI
Original.

WADA
Is he self-destructing?

TAKAHASHI
If he was, would he be so meticulous?

WADA
Can't tell if it's sloppy or shrewd.

Yuka watches in the distance. Wada sees her, moves to her.

YUKA
I feel like I'm dreaming.

WADA
Whoever tucked Mai into bed didn't paint this picture.

TV ANCHOR (O.S)
Police investigating the deaths of 5 young women in a suspected serial murder case around Takao deployed K-9 units Tuesday to a field where a 5th female victim was discovered.

YUKA

He wanted her to be found this way.
Like he's mocking her. Or mocking
us.

TV ANCHOR (O.S)

A top police official declined to
comment at a briefing on 20-year-
old Yuna Yamashita of Hachioji
City's recent disappearance and the
homicides of four other young
women, which prompted what has
become one of Takao's largest-ever
police investigations.

Takahashi leaves Yuna's hanging corpse, approaches Yuka and
Wada, the color drained from his face.

WADA

What is it?

TAKAHASHI

He took her heart. I think she was
still alive when he cut it out.

TV ANCHOR (O.S)

Superintendent Kimura has pulled
back on earlier theories that
multiple killers might have left
the bodies, the first of which was
a young woman discovered in a
cabin. Kimura said last week he
believes that because all of the
girls were once involved in a
Sukeban gang, their killings being
likely related.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Goro approaches his car.

TV ANCHOR (O.S)

Police said Monday that a one-
million-yen reward has led to over
a thousand tips in the case, but no
suspects have yet to be identified.

Headlights blind him. A car speeds up, ROARS on him from
behind, full bore.

He hurls himself onto his car's hood, avoids the car. He sees
the car, a Black Alphard, at the end of the alley, turns out.

He jumps in his car, GUNS it, shifts in the car's direction.

Goro dodges around cars very fast, almost side-swiping them, looking almost out of control, its MOTOR screaming.

The car appears from around a curve, crosses the median into the oncoming traffic lane.

The car SCREAMS head on right for him.

Goro steps on the GAS and heads head-on for the car.

Too late to stop. The car tries to swerve, SLAMS THE BRAKES. Not in time.

Tires screech, car tips, FLIPS up. The car goes airborne.

DEAFENING METAL-CRUNCHING as the car lands back to earth, FLIPS send the car over and over.

Car CRASHES to a halt on the side of the street.

Steam billows from the hood..

Goro gets out, runs towards it. Goro opens the car door.

Chikao Matsunaga lies hunched over the wheel, eyes open.

His neck snapped. Dead.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Police lights set up. Goro beside Lt. Kimura and several Internal Affairs men.

KIMURA

You're driving through Takao and for no particular reason this car won't get out of the way.

GORO

I don't think he meant to flip his car, do you?

KIMURA

Don't fuck with me, Koyama.

He and Goro share a stare. Wada approaches, a piece of paper in his hand.

WADA

Full name, Matsunaga Chikao. Last address, Hachioji Tokyo.

(MORE)

WADA (CONT'D)

We interviewed him recently. No priors, no convictions. The car is registered to a woman.

Kimura leers at Goro like he's going to kill him.

KIMURA

You knew him?

GORO

I knew he was interviewed in relation to the recent spate of killings. Care to comment on that by the way?

WADA

You were told to stay away.

GORO

Yeah. But you didn't tell me to stay away from the car.

Kimura looks at him in absolute disbelief.

Goro watches as medics take Matsunaga's corpse away.

INT. POLICE CAR - MOVING - DAY

Junko rides next to an OFFICER, uncomfortable silence.

JUNKO

I appreciate the lift.

OFFICER

Just doing my job.

POW! The car hits a bottle. A front tire deflates. Officer guides the crippled vehicle to the curb.

JUNKO

Mind if I stretch my legs?

Junko and the Officer get out.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The middle of nowhere. Officer hauls the spare from the trunk. Sets the jack under the bumper.

Junko spots a garbage truck. Still a mile away.

Junko watches the officer lean in the trunk for the tire iron. Garbage truck approaches.

The garbage truck gets closer, a big one. Speeding.

Junko looks at the Officer's back.

Junko shoves the Officer hard, into the highway. In front of:

WHAM!

It plasters the Officer. Shatters the WINDSHIELD. He goes under the front. Bounces, spins like a ragdoll into a ditch.

The garbage truck loses control, it rolls. Several times, a heaving mass of steel.

CRASH! The TRUCK folds itself around a husky tree. No survivors, that's clear.

Junko takes in the carnage, tugs at her ear.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

A large, glossy photograph of Junko.

She looks eighteen, dyed hair, school uniform modified, sleeves rolled, cropped shirt, long skirt as rejection of the popular mini skirt.

Cigarette burn scars. All scream Sukeban gang member.

Yuka studies the photo, a file in her hands.

She sits there, in front of a FEMALE JUVENILE OFFICER.

She turns the file, a glossy of a little girl in a pool of blood. Yuka looks up at the woman.

YUKA

How old was she when this happened?

FEMALE JUVENILE OFFICER

Fourteen. Juvenile records are sealed until they're deceased. That's why you didn't find it on your computer.

YUKA

What was the motive?

FEMALE JUVENILE OFFICER
Said she didn't know herself, just
sort of did it on impulse. The
razor just happened to be there.

Yuka stares at her.

FEMALE JUVENILE OFFICER (CONT'D)
That's what she said.

A MALE OFFICER knocks.

MALE OFFICER
Sergeant?

YUKA
Yeah?

OFFICER
We matched a name to that car you
were looking for.

Officer hands her the paper. On it, a name: JUNKO MATSUNAGA

YUKA
You know where she is now?

OFFICER
Officer was taking her
to...Tatemachi?

Yuka's eyes widen, she dashes out the door.

INT. MASAKO'S APARTMENT - DAY

A KNOCK at the door. Phone RINGS. Masako moves to the door,
opens it. Junko stands in the hallway through the door chain.

JUNKO
You're Yuka Noguchi's mother aren't
you? Yuka asked me to a welfare
check. Can I come in?

MASAKO
May I see some identification?

Phone continues to RING. Junko pulls out a badge.

MASAKO (CONT'D)
Come in Officer.

Masako stands aside, Junko enters. Door closes.

INT. MASAOK'S APARTMENT LOBBY - NIGHT

Yuka BUZZES Masako's apartment, no answer, surveys the place.

Yuka at the foot of a stairwell gazes up. Faint NOISES.

She climbs. Several flights up now, eerie noises.

Spooky. Nothing moves. Yuka enters a

HALLWAY

Flat against a wall, She slides along, moves to Masako's door, opened a crack. She peeks in. The apartment, empty.

Yuka inches the door open. Studies the apartment. Nothing moving. Steps into the

APARTMENT ENTRANCE

Footsteps get closer. Yuka moves to a door leading into the

LIVING ROOM

Steps through, into

Junko. Masako in the corner, on her knees, bound and gagged.

JUNKO'S HAND shoots out. Clamps around Yuka's neck. Yuka's face turns red. Their eyes lock.

Junko looks deep into Yuka's eyes. Squeezes harder.

Veins pop on Yuka's temples. Lip quivers... BLACKNESS descends on Yuka.

INT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

Yuka snaps back into consciousness, hands bound in wrist ties, reaches for her holster, empty.

Above her, a bare bulb, shorting.

Yuka can't move, barely breathe.

Junko appears. Their eyes on each other.

YUKA

Tell me about Nakayama.

JUNKO
You won't believe me.

Yuka stares at her.

JUNKO (CONT'D)
He paid me 500,000 yen in cash for
your file.

YUKA
When?

JUNKO
Three months before I met you.

YUKA
Why? Where's Masako?

JUNKO
I put her to sleep, just like I put
you to sleep. Do what I say and
you'll get her back, wide awake.

She prods Yuka toward those bins. Yuka resists.

JUNKO (CONT'D)
Move.

YUKA
When do I get Masako back?

Junko, fights to keep a grin off her face... until:

Yuka starts for the exit, Junko bars her way, grabs Yuka's
hand, breaks Yuka's fingers.

Yuka studies her, as if her brain can't integrate all this...

YUKA (CONT'D)
Where is she now?

JUNKO
Safe. That's all you need to...

YUKA
Is she here?

JUNKO
Of course not.

YUKA
I just wanna know where she is.

That hovers for a second. They study one another.

YUKA (CONT'D)
Where'd you put her?

Yuka notes the sadistic grin on Junko's face.

JUNKO
She'll wake up in about an hour,
give or take. You behave, or she'll
die where she is. There's about one
hour worth of oxygen inside.

Junko shoves her through a door into

AN ABANDONED OFFICE

No other exits. Door locks. Yuka tears at the doorknob.

Yuka hard at work, scrapes her wrist ties against a pipe.

SNAP!

She's free, searches for tape, wraps her broken fingers.

She kicks the door open, rushes out, bolts down the steps,
around a corner, right past Junko, catching Junko off-guard.

Junko takes off after her.

INT. WADA'S CRUISER - NIGHT

Wada on the move, screams down the street, sirens BLARE.

RADIO (O.S)
Records show the construction site
on the edge of town is owned by her
family.

He pulls a SCREECHING U-TURN.

INT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

Looking to her left, eyes on a large BOX, Yuka runs as fast
as she can.

She can hear Junko behind her.

She keeps running out to the

CONSTRUCTION GROUNDS

Yuka's ten feet from escaping. Five. A step. Junko's footsteps grow louder.

Yuka stops. Freedom, right in front of her.

Junko runs right up her tail. Yuka frozen, right on the threshold of the exit.

Junko comes to a halt. What the hell did she just stop for?

Yuka turns, winded from the sprint, eyeing her.

JUNKO

You don't really want me to kill an old lady, do you?

She grabs Yuka, shoves her forward.

JUNKO (CONT'D)

Now let's go!

Yuka slips from her grasp.

YUKA

No.

Junko halts, tenses, trying to contain her temper.

She raises her gun, points it right at Yuka.

JUNKO

I will shoot you.

YUKA

No you won't.

JUNKO

I'll fucking kill you!

Junko trains the gun on Yuka. COCKS the hammer.

A cop car train arrives.

Junko and Yuka awash in dust. Police cars encircle them, Wada jumps out, guns trained on Junko.

Junko moves fast, grabs an OFFICER, puts a gun to his head.

Yuka grabs a weapon, trains it on Junko.

JUNKO (CONT'D)

Let me out of here!

YUKA

Let me see her, I'll let you go.

JUNKO

What if you're lying?

YUKA

Then shoot me!

JUNKO

Fair enough! Nice and slow! Or he
fucking dies.

Yuka lowers her weapon.

WADA

Unit 1, hold position.

YUKA

Tell me about Doctor Matsunaga.

JUNKO

There's a name from the past.

She never takes her eyes off Yuka.

JUNKO (CONT'D)

He was my counselor in my freshman
year. He's where I got the idea to
go into psychiatry.

YUKA

He a psychiatrist?

JUNKO

Agriculture.

YUKA

Didn't you study psychiatry?

JUNKO

Only in theory. Taxidermy. You know
all about homicidal impulse, don't
you? Not in theory, in practice.

YUKA

Put it down, Junko.

Junko doesn't move. Her finger still. Her voice steady.

JUNKO

Funny. You still think this is
about him.

YUKA

It is. You're not a cop. You're not supposed to be armed.

JUNKO

Neither are the girls. But here we are.

Junko meets Yuka's eyes, not enough to drop her aim.

JUNKO (CONT'D)

I was afraid you'd bring a team, spoil the intimacy.

YUKA

Let him go, step back. Put the gun down.

JUNKO

You still don't get it, do you? You've been chasing a man. You always think it's a man. But it was never about that.

YUKA

What was it about?

JUNKO

Correction. Who. Tell me about Seira.

WADA

Who's Seira?

Yuka freezes.

YUKA

Don't.

JUNKO

You see her, don't you? Walking. Talking. Laughing. Helping with homework. That's what's been driving you. Keeping you functional.

Junko shifts the gun toward Yuka.

JUNKO (CONT'D)

Seira isn't here anymore. Seira's dead. You know that. But your grief, your failure, made a ghost of her. A beautiful, persistent hallucination.

(MORE)

JUNKO (CONT'D)

I know how real she feels, I know you love her. You call it love. I call it a psychotic break.

YUKA

You don't know what you're talking about.

JUNKO

I do. Deep down, so do you.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Yuka parts the shades in Seira's bedroom. Surrounded by moving boxes yet unpacked. Bed made, empty.

JUNKO (O.S.)

That's why your hands shake when you load your weapon.

B) Yuka in uniform, alone, at the kitchen table, squirts Brasso on cloth, rubs a badge against it, precise circles.

YUKA

Hat today please, you're still getting over a cold.

Yuka studies the gleaming badge, clips it to her jacket.

YUKA (CONT'D)

Don't forget to eat something. What whistle?

She tosses a duffel on the counter. Searches her police gear.

YUKA (CONT'D)

Come on, you're going to be late.

Yuka sees her police baton on the table.

YUKA (CONT'D)

Thank you.

C) Yuka checks her gun belt, inspects her service pistol.

She straps on her belt, zips the duffel, grabs a pressed uniform off a chair, her police hat.

D) Yuka tosses a sofa cushion.

YUKA (CONT'D)

Heads up.

It lands on an empty sofa.

JUNKO (O.S.)
Why your clock only moves when
she's not in the room.

YUKA
Lock the doors.

E) Goro eats cereal, reads the paper. Yuka makes breakfast.
Yuka silent, Goro notices her clenched jaw.

No one says anything. Yuka pokes at the eggs.

YUKA (CONT'D)
FINE MAKE YOUR OWN FUCKING EGGS.

Yuka throws the frying pan in the sink and retreats to the
bathroom. The noisy hair-dryer starts up.

YUKA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE!

Yuka storms back into the kitchen. Goro confused by it all.

GORO
You okay?

YUKA
I'm fine.

Seira's never been there.

She's been talking to her self this whole time.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

YUKA
She was just at the house.
She...she asked if she could...

JUNKO
You've spent every waking moment
since stitching her back together
with guilt and denial.

YUKA
Shut up.

JUNKO
That was Seira, that was your
memory of her, your love made
manifest. But it wasn't her.

YUKA

Shut up!

JUNKO

Or what? You'll shoot me?

Yuka crumbles, her shoulders quake, breath catches.

JUNKO (CONT'D)

She's a chemical echo. A scream
your brain turned into a lullaby.

Yuka's gun dips. Her eyes glisten.

JUNKO (CONT'D)

It wasn't the killer who broke you.
It was Seira's absence. And you
filled it with fantasy. You needed
this case. You needed these girls.
Because they gave her form again.

YUKA

Why?

JUNKO

Why did I tell you?

She smiles, venomous.

JUNKO (CONT'D)

Because I want you to see her die
again. And watch what it does to
you.

Junko suddenly drops the gun and kicks it away.

JUNKO (CONT'D)

Now arrest me, hero. Let's see if
that makes Seira...

BANG!

Yuka shoots Junko between the eyes, knocks her backwards. The officer escapes.

WADA

Move! Move!

Wada rushes to Yuka.

WADA (CONT'D)

You all right?

INT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

Yuka returns to the large hangar.

YUKA
Masako?

A pocket of unlit space, occupied by STRUTS and WIRE DUCTS.

YUKA (CONT'D)
Masako? Can you hear me?

Muffled SCREAMS. She jumps on a box, rips it open.

Yuka gasps. There's Masako.

Bound. Gagged, her broken, swollen face, a look in her eyes that says she will never be the same.

Yuka grabs Masako, pulls her close, holds her tight.

WADA (O.S.)
Get me the EMT now!

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Crowded. Yuka stands across from Goro. Announcement rings through the station.

GORO
That's my train.

Yuka hands Goro a letter.

GORO (CONT'D)
What's this?

YUKA
A little thank you. Enjoy yourself down there.

GORO
I have no doubt I will.

Goro offers a bow, Yuka returns the gesture.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Yuka stands by the window, watches the gaggle of reporters waiting for her. She's calm, withdrawn, still.

The door CREAKS open. Wada enters, with two canned coffees. He offers one.

WADA
Still don't sleep much, huh?

YUKA
Never did.

They share a quiet sip. Wada looks her over.

WADA
You didn't run. I thought you might.

YUKA
I thought about it.

A silence.

WADA
You know, she sees you.

Yuka turns to him.

WADA (CONT'D)
Seira. Wherever she is. She sees you. And I'm sure she's proud.

Yuka's eyes well.

YUKA
You believe that?

WADA
I do. I think you do too.

Yuka stares out at the reporters, emotional restraint cracks.

YUKA
I just didn't want her to be forgotten.

WADA
She won't be. You made sure of that. You ready?

She nods. They move toward the door together.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

TRAVELLERS wheel their luggage, rush to their the gates.

Yuka stares out the large window at aircraft on the apron being loaded, refueled, boarded.

Yuka turns, in front of her, Goro.

GORO

You didn't say you were taking off.

YUKA

I have a love-hate relationship with this place. I'd be lying if I said I was surprised to see you. Don't you look fully recovered?

GORO

I know about Seira.

YUKA

What she have to do with anything?

GORO

Everything. It came to me staring out the window of the train. The letter you wrote me? I was struck by the shape of your characters, virtually identical to the ones found in the cabin note. The names in Nanami's apartment on the calendar. You could imagine my surprise. Could they have all been written by the same woman?

EXT. TAKAO - TRAIN STATION - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Yuka dashes out of the station exit.

Quiet. Deserted.

She whips around, sees, a silhouette in the distance, she runs towards it.

GORO (O.S.)

I asked Superintendent Kimura, he told me the whole story. Returning home from high school Seira was assaulted.

Seira stumbles down the street toward Yuka.

GORO (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Violated and left for dead by a gang of young women.

In the distance, framed in cigarette smoke the figures of Aimi, Karin, Nanami, Mai and Yuna, the Sukeban gang.

YUKA

Seira?! Seira!? What are you doing out here?! Oh no!

Seira falls into Yuka's arms, bleeding, bursts into tears.

SEIRA

I'm sorry. I lost my whistle...

YUKA

It'll be alright, it'll be okay.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

NURSES tend to Seira's wounds. Yuka opens her hand, in it she clasps a necklace from the attackers.

Yuka takes it, looks at Seira, she avoids eye contact.

DOCTOR

She's suffered a brutal assault, bruising over most of her body. The violence inflicted upon her was not just external, I'm sorry.

YUKA

What do you mean?

DOCTOR

She's got bruises and bleeding on her genitalia.

YUKA

Seira, please, let me help you.

EXT. TAKAO - TRAIN STATION - DAY

Seira dashes, off the main street, onto Hikage Forest Road.

GORO (O.S)

But she didn't run away, did she?

Seira arrives at the cabin, runs inside.

YUKA (O.S)

Seira?

Yuka arrives, moves inside, toward Seira, who stands on a chair, rope around her neck.

Seira turns toward Yuka.

YUKA (CONT'D)
Seira please, get down. Please
Seira come here. Please. Don't.

SEIRA
Everything will be alright.

YUKA
Please Seira.

SEIRA
It'll be okay.

YUKA
Don't...

SEIRA
I love you.

Seira leans forward, falls.

CRACK!

Neck snaps instantly. Yuka stands frozen.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Yuka sits. Realizes the game is up, relieved to tears.

GORO
Why didn't you ever tell me?

YUKA
It's not a story I enjoy telling.

Goro in tears.

GORO
I would have supported you, helped
you like you helped me.

YUKA
I don't think I can be helped on
that particular subject.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
This is the final call for flight
NZ99 to Auckland. Could all
passengers make their way to Gate
47 for boarding.

GORO

I did exactly what you would've done, examined all assumptions beginning with what are the chances two parties would have had the same designs on the same girls, small, very small indeed. Unless we see them as being dependent on each other... I read the report, alcohol in your system, no regulation warning shot.

Yuka lowers her head.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Aimi runs, stops. She stops behind a tree, breath heavy.

A SOUND. Eyes shoot around. She listens. Another SOUND.

NO ONE there.

Yuka, right behind her reaches over her with surgical gloves wraps across the Aimi's mouth.

Her EYES widen. Muffled SCREAMS.

Yuka yanks back hard, pulls Aimi off balance, sending both of them backwards across the ground.

Yuka jumps on top of her, surgical gloves on, wraps her hands around her neck.

YUKA

Who was with you?

Aimi has Seira's whistle, Yuka rips it from her, squeezes.

GORO (O.S.)

You orchestrated your demotion and reassignment, to steer away from the fact it was you. To kill these girls, why?! Why?!

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Yuka sees a piece of a surgical glove on the ground.

GORO (O.S)

Successful resolution. Then back to the community police box before anyone knows where you were.

She checks her surroundings, reaches down, pockets it.

EXT. WOODS CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

Yuka approaches Karin from behind, loops the braid of green nylon cord around her head.

GORO (O.S)
But you're happy to be called back
to the crime scene the next day.

She holds on for all her might, Karin struggles, passes out.

Yuka drags her away.

GORO (O.S) (CONT'D)
Pretending to solve crimes that you
committed.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Yuka pulls out the whistle and the necklace.

GORO
As a result, Junko and her husband
will forever go down as murderers.

YUKA
They will be forgotten just like
the rest of us.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Yuka's on Nanami in a flash, she slams her against a wall, swings her around, slams her into another wall.

Nanami reaches for Yuka's face, scratches her below the eye.

Her body begins to slump, Yuka grabs her by the throat, rams her head through a glass window.

INT. MAI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Yuka stands over Mai, watches her for a quiet moment. Then...

GORO (O.S.)
I can't forget how you played us
all for idiots. Fools.

Yuka bears down on Mai's chest with her knee, cracking ribs as she squeezes her throat shut with her hands.

GORO (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I was your prize fool. Wasn't I?

Tears stream down her cheeks she tries to scream but cannot.

The bed board finally SNAPS and with it, Mai dies.

EXT. WEST TOKYO FIELD - DAY

Yuka stands, stares at Yuna's body hanging.

YUKA (O.S.)
No. You were the one I decided to
deliver myself to from the
beginning. And here we are.

Job finished, she walks away.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Yuka holds the whistle and necklace, shares Goro's gaze.

YUKA
You want me to apologize, I will.

GORO
What they did was appalling,
savage. Why didn't you go to the
police with their confession?

YUKA
I didn't want them to confess. I
wanted them to die.

GORO
They put you right where you
wanted. So what now?

YUKA
Now that depends on you.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
This is the final call for flight
NZ99 to Auckland. Could Yuka
Noguchi please make her way to gate
47 for boarding.

GORO
I have notes that will send you to
prison, probably for the rest of
your life. That or the gallows.

Yuka hands Goro a written confession.

GORO (CONT'D)
Very well.

Goro walks to the trash can, rips the paper to shreds.

YUKA
You know, I wish that my Seira had
run into you that night, who knows?

INT. RESIDENTIAL POLICE BOX - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Yuka stares at Seira's empty bed.

YUKA (O.S.)
We might've become close.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Goro rises.

GORO
I'll treasure. What. Whatever we.
Goodbye.

Goro leaves. Yuka sits in silence.

EXT. KOBOTOKE RIVER - DAY

Yuka returns to the river, cabin in the distance, in her hand
Seira's whistle.

She throws it, sends it into the river.

YUKA
Goodbye my love.

FADE OUT.