

CHARMING CITY

Written by

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No Man, Can Kill, No-Mann

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FADE IN:

CAPTION: *In 1975, Baltimore businesses gave out "Charm City" bracelets to rectify their city's high crime reputation.*

FADE CAPTION: *It didn't work.*

EXT. BAD DECISIONS BAR - RAINY NIGHT

Seedy run-down bar with neon sign flashing, *Bad Decisions*.

Christmas decorations in its front window have the letters *M, A, S*, burned-out so it now twinkles, "*MERRY X---*."

GABRIELLE DRAPER DAMM, 40s, African-American female, fit-for-age, wearing a black leather raincoat with matching leather fedora run-splashes down its puddle-ridden sidewalk then ducks into the bar.

INT. BAD DECISIONS BAR - CONTINUOUS

Interior is dark with lots of shadows. No patrons.

DANCER, age hidden by make-up, has seen better days. Her pasties-tassels fringe have lost some of their strings. She sways almost frozen in a recessed mirrored-shelf behind bar.

Draper enters and body-shakes flinging water off her coat then sets it with hat on top on bar. She's wearing a cheap dark suit. She sits on a stool scanning the room disgusted.

DRAPER

What a shit hole.

NO-MANN stands from behind bar wearing a bartender's vest and wiping hands on a bar towel. He speaks with a British accent.

NO-MANN

Quite right, old girl.

DRAPER

Scotch, cubed.

NO-MANN

Flooded?

DRAPER

Neat.

NO-MANN

Not your humble abode, I'm afraid.

DRAPER
Great, a stand-up bartender. When's
your floor show?

No-Mann places a full iced-glass in front of Draper.

NO-MANN
Just missed it, love.

DRAPER
(examines her drink)
You're fast.

NO-MANN
Others say not fast enough.

DRAPER
Uh-huh? I like to drink in peace.

No-Mann spreads middle-fingers on one hand into V-shape.

NO-MANN
I come in peace.

DRAPER
Seriously?

NO-MANN
What's-a matta', Rudolph, rough
ride?

DRAPER
Somethin' like that.

Draper sips her drink, is surprised, and toast-approves.

No-Mann wipes her counter down with his towel.

NO-MANN
How long a Copper?

DRAPER
Who said I was a police officer?

NO-MANN
A jacket can be tailored to hide
your gun-bulge.

DRAPER
Costs too much.

NO-MANN
Mistakes often do.

Draper looks up at Dancer. She keeps glancing down at the floor behind the bar. Draper looks in the mirrors to see a reflection of the real BARTENDER on the floor. Draper moves her right hand inside her left lapel.

NO-MANN

Like that one.

No-Mann stabs a paring knife through her hand onto bar-top.

TIME LAPSE:

Draper's left hand is pinned. She grimaces drawing her service revolver and *fires*.

No-Mann backhand-deflects Draper's gun up and to the side.

TIME LAPSE ENDS.

Draper's bullet strikes Dancer in her forehead. Brain-matter splatters on her mirrored-walls. She dead-falls onto the bar then slides off it onto the floor past Draper.

No-Mann wrenches the gun from Draper then aims it at her.

NO-MANN

Jolly good shot, lass.

DRAPER

Jesus!

NO-MANN

God damn.

DRAPER

Fuck you.

NO-MANN

No, nimrod, the initials on your handkerchief. "*G. D. Damm*" -- phonetically speaking of course.

Draper pulls a clear baggie from inside her left lapel. In it is a precisely folded white handkerchief embroidered with the black letters, "*G. D. Damm*."

NO-MANN

(lifts nose smelling)

Mmmmm, mentholated rub. You hold that over your nose at a murder scene. Don't you --.

(tightens aim)

Homie-side detective.

No-Mann slowly pulls gun's trigger as Draper stares dead-pan. Its hammer moves as cylinder ratchets; *click, click, click*.

DRAPER

Get it over with, bad boy.

No-Mann smiles, then hums the *COPS* TV-theme while pointing his gun at the ceiling. He pushes its cylinder release button then flicks open to spin it with his thumb so six casings fall out one-by-one.

NO-MANN

Hmmm, hmmm, hmmm, hmmm--hmmm-mmm-
mmm-mmm-mmm, etc.

TIME LAPSE:

Six bullets with one empty casing bounce on bar-top around Draper's stabbed-hand.

TIME LAPSE ENDS.

No-Mann flicks now empty cylinder back into its gun.

NO-MANN

Think I'll enjoy watching you
figure out my bad --.
(*slams* gun on bar)
Boy!

No-Mann hands his bar-towel to Draper who takes it in shock then sees it's soaked with blood and drops it.

NO-MANN

Places to go, peoples to kill.

Draper yanks the knife out of her hand and slices it through the air. Her blood flies over the bar shelve's back-bottles.

DRAPER

What the --?

No-Mann is gone. Bar's front door *slams* shut.

Draper spins on her stool.

The window decoration's letters X, E, E, Y, turn off and letters A, S now turn on so it flashes, "*ME---* --*AS.*"

Drapers toast the sign.

DRAPER

Merry F'n Christmas.

EXT. BAD DECISIONS BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Police Cruisers and an Ambulance are parked in front at angles with red lights rotating but no sirens.

ONLOOKERS are held back by a POLICE OFFICER and a BEAT PATROLMAN, both rookies, in full Baltimore City uniforms.

INT. BAD DECISIONS BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Red lights strobe outside the windows as C.S.I. ONE takes evidence pictures while C.S.I. TWO puts numbered stand-up placards over the six casings and gun on bar.

DETECTIVE STIKUM looks more like Draper's older sister than her partner and even wears the same cheap suit.

Draper sits on same stool with cut hand bandaged and bloody.

EMT-ONE and EMT-TWO lift Dancer into an open body-bag.

EMT ONE

She was good.

EMT TWO

Damn good.

The place her on a standing gurney then roll past Draper.

Stikum stops the gurney to examine bullet-hole in Dancer's forehead then zips body-bag shut and pushes gurney away.

STIKUM

Damn shame.

DRAPER

"God damn."

STIKUM

That, too?

DRAPER

No, the Perp, he knew my initials, sounded them out, that's what he said.

STIKUM

He said your full name?

DRAPER

Just the last but he knew ...

STIKUM

"He knew" how to rattle ya'.
That's what they do, dummy.

DRAPER

No, this perp is different. He
moves fast. Too, fast.

STIKUM

Look, you're in shock, Captain's on
her way. I'll watch your gun till
the Shooting Team gets here. Ride
in the ambulance to the hospital,
everyone can question you there.

EMT-One and EMT-Two now lift Bartender's closed body-bag onto
a second standing gurney and roll it past Draper who points.

DRAPER

How could anyone, do that?

Stikum stops the gurney and zips open its body-bag. The real
Bartender rests chest-up but the back of his head showing.
His head has been sewn-on backwards with a rawhide strip.

STIKUM

Sew a head on backwards? Who cares.
We just catch 'em. Let the shrinks
shrink 'em. Perp say anything else?

DRAPER

"Places to go, peoples to kill."

STIKUM

Perfect. A comedienne killer.

EMT-One exits pushing Dancer's gurney. EMT-Two exits pushing
Bartender's gurney. Draper follows both. All three exit.

Stikum steps but slips on the bloody floor falling. She pops
up bleeding from her left hand and pulls out a handkerchief
wrapping it around the hurt hand then puts on Draper's hat.

STIKUM

Merry F'n Christmas.

EXT. HAMPDEN'S 34TH STREET - LATER SAME NIGHT

"Miracle on 34th Street" Christmas lights twinkle brightly.

Rain ended leaving wet streets. No traffic or pedestrians.

Stikum walks with purpose on the sidewalk past a street light when she's grabbed from above and disappears. Silence, then her *gurgle-screams* are in-between loud repeated *thumps*.

A large Santa-mechanical on a porch turns on arms-waving.

MECHANICAL SANTA
Ho, HO, HOOOOO!

Its arms move faster as its voice goes high-pitched.

MECHANICAL SANTA
Hee, Hee, Hee, Heeeeeeeeeeeee!

EXT. OFFICE OF CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER - NEXT MORNING

City government building at 900 West Baltimore Street.
STAFFERS enter and exit its main entrance.

INT. CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER LAB - MOMENTS LATER

Huge open room with high ceiling. Cadaver dissection tables are spaced along one wall. The nude Bartender lies on one.

PATHOLOGIST, 30s, albino, in a lab coat wearing a full face-mask, is doing a forensic exam on the Bartender's body. He finishes snipping last piece of Bartender's neck suture-skin then zip-pulls that rawhide strip out while talking into a hanging microphone.

PATHOLOGIST
The non-absorbable sutures are a continuous twenty-five point four millimeter strip measuring --.

He pulls the rawhide strip straight on table-frame's ruler.

PATHOLOGIST
Forty-three point eighteen centimeters.

Draper enters in same suit with a new huge white bandage.

PATHOLOGIST
Instrument used for its guide holes appears to be --.
(sees Draper)
Morning, Detective. You were lucky.

He turns microphone off then turns severed head face-up.

DRAPER
Why would I feel "lucky."

PATHOLOGIST
That you don't have Claw Hand.

Draper holds up to model her claw-curved wrapped hand.

PATHOLOGIST
(lifts face shield)
Emergency Doc said your attacker missed the Median Nerve and all three dorsal metacarpal veins. A surgical strike, in your favor.

DRAPER
Uh-huh, tell me about the head.

Pathologist tilts head and moves its chin as ventriloquist.

PATHOLOGIST
I ain't no snitch!

Draper dead-glares at Pathologist who *coughs* to speak normal.

PATHOLOGIST
Little attempt at crypt humor.

DRAPER
Very little, and not very cryptic.

PATHOLOGIST
Actually, the head's separation and sutures do tell us quite a lot.
(presents dead head)
See its irregular skin separation?

Bloody-tissue falls out onto the table. Draper steps back.

DRAPER
No show, just tell.

PATHOLOGIST
Well, the epidermis, dermis, and hypodermis jagged detachment shows the head was not "cut off."

DRAPER
But the perp had a knife?

PATHOLOGIST
Maybe, but only your blood and prints were on it. So no, the ...

DRAPER

Only my prints?! He was bare-handed when he stabbed me.

PATHOLOGIST

Might have burned his fingertips with acid. The D, N, A lab will tell us more in thirty days.

DRAPER

A month! They on early retirement? I need it yesterday.

PATHOLOGIST

Slow down windy-talker. The lab has to batch cases as it is.

(counts on fingers)

Serology, extraction, quantitation, detection, analysis, interpretation then review. Four weeks is fast, trust me.

DRAPER

Don't want to.

PATHOLOGIST

Ahhhh, a true disbeliever. Then what you can believe is this, this head, was "ripped" from its body.

DRAPER

Now, hold on there, Doc Doom. It was "torn?" How much strength does that even take?

Pathologist goes to a large white marker-board on wall and writes the equation " $N = 1 \text{ KG} \times M/S(\text{squared})$."

PATHOLOGIST

A Newton is the force needed to accelerate one kilogram of mass at one meter per second squared in direction of its applied force.

DRAPER

Bet you didn't party a lot in college, Doc Strange.

PATHOLOGIST

Actually, I was a party animal.

DRAPER

Okay then, in animal terms, what could have the power to do this?

PATHOLOGIST
Big f'n bear.

DRAPER
Arnold!

PATHOLOGIST
Along with several terminators, as
proved by --.

Pathologist talks as adds on board " $F = M \times F/T(\text{squared})$."

PATHOLOGIST
Dimensional Analysis where F is
force, M is mass, L is length, and
T is ...

Draper grabs Pathologist's marker and wags it at him.

DRAPER (FRUSTRATED)
Enough with the un-relative
equations, Einstein! Could a human
being cranked on P.C.P. do this?

Pathologist pulls another marker out of his lab coat pocket
to tap on the board's letter "T."

PATHOLOGIST
Time, is the missing variable.

DRAPER
I got the impression the suspect
hadn't been there that long.

PATHOLOGIST
Ahhhh, then that explains the guide
holes for his sutures.

DRAPER
Why, what'd he use?

PATHOLOGIST
A finger.

DRAPER
"Finger?!" I'll show you a finger!

Draper flips Pathologist *The Bird*.

PATHOLOGIST
Don't shoot the messenger. My
colleagues already have.

DRAPER
Whose finger?

PATHOLOGIST
Assume his own since the dancer and bartender didn't have skin under their nails. Probably a pointer.

DRAPER
Jesus! Can a person just poke their finger through someone else's skin?

PATHOLOGIST
Actually, no. But a bear's claw ...

DRAPER
Fuck the bears, I don't care! Give me something human to go on.

PATHOLOGIST
Someone huge of incredible muscle mass with brute strength enhanced by ultra-pharmaceuticals might ...

DRAPER
Swarzeneger on crack! That's what I said.

PATHOLOGIST
Bigggggg f'n bodybuilder.

DRAPER
Thanks for the long way around, Magellan.

Draper turns to exit as Pathologist studies his equations then mentions matter-of-factly.

PATHOLOGIST
C.S.I. found a key of cocaine and ten thousand cash in a floor safe.

DRAPER
(spins 180°)
Behind the bar?

PATHOLOGIST
(doesn't turn around)
Under the bartender's body. You must have surprised the suspect before he could retrieve them.

DRAPER

A muscled coke-head revenging a drug deal gone bad! Now we're cookin'. Thanks again, Doc Who.

PATHOLOGIST (QUOTES)

"Demons run when a good man goes to war."

DRAPER

What?

PATHOLOGIST

No, "Who." Doctor Who.

Pathologist goes back to working his math problems on board.

Draper shakes her head then turns to leave again.

PATHOLOGIST

Sorry to hear about your partner.

Draper throws marker at Pathologist's head but hits his marker board. Pathologist spins angry as both exclaim.

DRAPER/PATHOLOGIST

What?!

EXT. HAMPDEN'S 34TH STREET - LATER THAT DAY

Street is blocked-off at either end by police cars. A large commercial crane is backing-up *beeping* to a light post.

Police Officer and Beat Patrolman hold back a CURIOUS CROWD all taking cellphone videos with selfies up at the light.

Draper parks an unmarked unit and exits then looks up to see Stikum lies impaled face-up half-way down on the post.

Draper's mouth hangs open then she clicks her teeth closed.

DRAPER

What thaaaaa' --?

Draper goes to FIRE CHIEF directing SEVERAL FIREMEN, all in full uniforms.

DRAPER

H-h-how --?

Fire Chief points to a large pool of blood around light-base.

FIRE CHIEF

"How" much? Must be her whole one and a third gallons.

DRAPER

No, how was she, how did she, her body, get up on --?

FIRE CHIEF

Hey, it's takin' us two hours just to figure how to get her off.

DRAPER

But who, who, who --?

FIRE CHIEF

What are you an owl? "Whomever" did it --removed then reattached the light's Cobra-head.

DRAPER

The perp took the time to replace the light fixture?! How long would that even take?

FIRE CHIEF

Look Detective, let me get her to the lab first then ask them. Okay?

DRAPER

Uh, okay. Sorry. She, she was my partner.

FIRE CHIEF

Could have been your twin.

Draper looks up at Stikum's wrapped left hand then down to sidewalk and sees her hat. She picks it up and looks at it.

DRAPER

Her killer, must have thought so, too.

Draper instinctively re-blocks then puts on her hat.

An invisible voice whispers in Draper's ear.

NO-MANN (O.S.)

Merry F'n Christmas.

Draper yanks her hat off looking around. No one is there.

EXT. BALTIMORE POLICE HEADQUARTERS - LATER SAME DAY

Police Cruisers are double-parked along one curb as REAL BALTIMORE POLICE OFFICERS enter and exit their building.

INT. POLICE CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

A small built-in office within a larger office space holds multiple desks for DETECTIVES, in suits, who work phones out at their desks.

Draper sits in a chair looking out the glass-wall at them.

CAPTAIN, 50s, African-American female, in uniform, enters carrying a file and sits.

CAPTAIN
Sorry for your loss.

Moment of respectful silence then Captain holds up her file.

CAPTAIN
Heck of a night, Detective. Tell me all about your, Bad Decisions.

DRAPER
I was off-duty, it was raining. I wanted to get wet, went in. Boom, walked into a crime in progress.

CAPTAIN
And because Stikum wore your hat, and injured her hand the same as you the killer thought she was you?

DRAPER
That's my theory.

CAPTAIN
Theorem, maybe. but help me out with this Speedy Gonzalez culprit that you missed at close range with both a gun then a knife because --.

Captain opens her file to find a page then reads it aloud.

CAPTAIN
"He was really, really fast, deflecting my gun-hand almost lightening fast, so fast, that my bullet killed the" prostitute.

DRAPER

Stripper.

Captain taps her polished pointer-finger on the file.

CAPTAIN

Not according to her Jacket. All of this because your Suspect --.

Captain traces same line with same finger and continues.

CAPTAIN

"ripped the head off the bartender-dealer then sewed it on backwards using his finger as a needle."

(looks up in disbelief)

I got all that right?

DRAPER

You're right. Heck of a night.

CAPTAIN

I need you to take time off, process everything, then come back clear-headed and ready for duty. The Department's new psychiatrist will need to examine you first.

DRAPER

Administrative Leave?

CAPTAIN

Merry F'n Christmas.

Captain slides over an official typed police form.

DRAPER

P, D, two-seventeen?

CAPTAIN

(nods)

With pay, pending the Shooting Committee's ruling.

Draper takes the form and reads it.

CAPTAIN

Standard notice that while on Leave you have no police powers. Sign and date, please.

Draper signs the form and slides it back over.

CAPTAIN

Your service weapon and badge out
in the gun locker?

Draper hands over a locker-key on a fob.

CAPTAIN

Draper, you're my best detective.
Go home, relax, decompress. Enjoy
being a citizen again.

Both stand and shake hands. Draper exits. Captain looks down
at the folder's pictures and shudders.

CAPTAIN

Come back --"really, really fast."

Captain closes the file.

EXT. SIDEWALK OF DRAPER'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NOW MIDNIGHT

Stucco three-story building with red-metal balconies and fire-
escape at corner of East Cross and South Charles streets.

Draper, still in her wrinkled suit, weave-walks drunk
carrying a grocery bag with "*Nick's Seafood*" printed on it.

No-Mann's voice speaks behind Draper but he's never seen.

NO-MANN

Catch of the day?

Draper drops her bag and spins reaching for service revolver.

DRAPER

Freeze!

No one is there. Draper pulls her empty hand out of jacket.

NO-MANN

Thought they only sold fresh?

Draper spins other way *snapping* open a knife. No one's there.

NO-MANN

Hope that's sharper than your wit.

DRAPER

Stop it!

NO-MANN

Stop what? Killing them, or gutting
you?

Draper spins 360°. No one is there.

DRAPER

Both!

NO-MANN

Can't do neither.

DRAPER

"Can't," or won't?

NO-MANN

Ahhh, Free Willy. All righty then,
I choose not to.

DRAPER

Why to everything!

NO-MANN

Oh my, you're efficient. Well, so
am I. The only answer necessary
(true snake-hiss)
issssssss, because I can.

DRAPER

And my partner, a-hole?

NO-MANN

Changed my mind. Careful with the
insults or I'll change it back.

DRAPER

What, are you doing?

NO-MANN

Exactly.

Silence. Draper continues to search. Still no one.

DRAPER

What, do I call you?

No answer. Draper picks up her bag and enters building.

From far away, JUDGE's high-pitched male-scream *echoes*.

JUDGE (O.S.)

Aieeeeeeee!

INT. DRAPER'S APARTMENT - DAYBREAK

Small but clean one-bedroom apartment. Lights are off. *Knock*
on front door then the bedroom light comes on.

Draper exits in paisley pajamas shuffling to put on a robe carrying a back-up gun and hits a shoulder on a wall-corner.

DRAPER

Shit, fuck, piss. --What?!

Outside front door is OFFICER SUZUKI, 30s, Asian-American female, ponytail-bun, attractive, in full police uniform.

SUZUKI (O.S.)

Police. Need to ask you a few questions.

DRAPER

Ask away.

No response then louder *knocking* on door.

Draper puts gun in an atrium curio-drawer then opens door.

Their eyes meet. Suzuki smile warms. Draper's heart skips.

SUZUKI

Routine canvassing of your neighborhood. Did you hear anything unusual outside last night?

Draper is still speechless and opens her door wider to point at the wall of LEO plaques and awards.

SUZUKI

You Active?

DRAPER

Ad-Leave.

SUZUKI

Which division?

DRAPER

Homicide. What happened?

SUZUKI

(checks her notes)
Approximate time set at midnight.
A male, late 40's, was butchered,
split down the middle.

DRAPER

Knife or saw?

Suzuki loses her composure and steps back.

SUZUKI

Uh, neither. We don't know what the murder weapon is at this time.

DRAPER

Skin torn uneven? Broken bones jagged? Almost like he'd been ripped apart by bare hands?

Suzuki is visibly shaken and turns to leave.

SUZUKI

Thank you for your time, ma'am.

DRAPER

Hey!

Suzuki turns. Draper opens her robe with hands on hips.

DRAPER

Do I look like a "ma'am?"

SUZUKI

Wearing those P.J.s?

Draper hurriedly closes her robe tying its sash angry.

SUZUKI

Madame, maybe?

Suzuki winks. Draper steps back furrowing her brow then closes the door rubbing her "hurt" shoulder.

DRAPER

Don't go there.

Draper opens to step through a window onto her fire-escape.

EXT. DRAPER'S APARTMENT BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Draper admires the sunrise. She scans the street below. All is normal. She wonders aloud. No-Mann is never seen.

DRAPER

Why me?

NO-MANN

Why not?

Draper spins. No one is there.

DRAPER

Rude to question a question.

Draper is pushed by something unseen knocking a flower-pot sitting on a corner shelf over its railing.

TIME LAPSE:

Flower-pot falls tumbling end-over-end as dirt spills out.

TIME LAPSE ENDS.

EXT. SIDEWALK BELOW DRAPER'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Flowerpot *smashes* on the sidewalk in front of a JOGGER in a Santa hat who jumps back startled then looks up angry.

EXT. DRAPER'S APARTMENT BALCONY - IMMEDIATELY

Draper recovers to search again. Nope, no one.

DRAPER
What do I call you?

NO-MANN
How about, about, ahhh --?
(sneezes while answering)
ssssNo-Mann.

DRAPER
Bless you.

Draper is *slapped* hard by an invisible palm.

NO-MANN
Don't say that!
(laughter fades)
HEE, Hee, hee, hee, etc.

DRAPER
(rubs reddening cheek)
F-me.

NO-MANN
(echoes from far away)
Ex-act-leeeee!

INT. OFFICE OF MEDICAL EXAMINER - THAT AFTERNOON

Cadaver dissection tables along one wall now have DIFFERENT CORPSES all with horrific disfigurements.

Pathologist stands between two tables, each has one half of a nude Male, 50s, on both. Most of his head is on one table.

Draper enters in a new cheaper suit and is taken aback.

PATHOLOGIST
Thought you were on Leave?

DRAPER
Left. Came back. Full moon?

PATHOLOGIST
Must be, I mean, look.

Pathologist lifts Judge's head to show neck has bite-marks.

DRAPER
Dental match?

PATHOLOGIST
Yep.

DRAPER
Who?

PATHOLOGIST
I cannot tell a lie.

DRAPER
Good for you. Who?

PATHOLOGIST
George Washington.

Draper's eyes roll as she replays his answer in her head.

DRAPER
Knock off the satire, it ain't
punny.

PATHOLOGIST
I'm not, that's what you're
hearing.

Silence as both stare at each other. Draper has an epiphany.

DRAPER
Wait. "The" George Washington?

PATHOLOGIST
I called the National Museum of
Dentistry here this morning. One of
his dentures is missing.

Pathologist strokes Judge's head as a Shakespearian actor.

PATHOLOGIST

Alas, poor stoic, I knew him not.

DRAPER

"Earth to Major Tom!" The guy was bitten by wooden teeth?

PATHOLOGIST

Please. Washington's multiple dentures were never made of wood. -- Animal teeth set in a metal base.

DRAPER

How the --?

PATHOLOGIST

And none of my colleagues will even discuss this theory of occurrence.

Pathologist drops Judge's head *thang* then lifts both feet.

PATHOLOGIST

Some big "thang" grabbed his ankles and made a wish.

DRAPER

I. D. the Vic?

Pathologist elbows towards his lap-top. Draper looks.

On it is the Judge's Headshot wearing his judicial robe.

DRAPER

Judge Harold?!

PATHOLOGIST

Yep, Hang 'Em High Harry, his-self.

DRAPER

Sierra's gonna' hit the fan on this one, he was under judicial review.

PATHOLOGIST

For --?

DRAPER

Unofficially? Selling his verdicts. Officially. Now, nothing, No suspect means no Inquiry.

PATHOLOGIST

Speaking of inquiring minds --.

Pathologist drops Judge's head on its metal table *thang* then lifts both feet, each on a different table.

PATHOLOGIST

Watch this feat.

Pathologist drops both heels on metal-top *thang-thang* then walks to the next occupied table and lifts its sheet.

On it, Stikum's nude body lies on her back with a huge pentagon-shaped hole through her chest. Two oval bruises are on either side of that hole.

Draper cringes then looks away pointing back.

DRAPER

What caused --those?

PATHOLOGIST

"Those" detective, are what my peers won't address either. Bruises form pre-mortem, right?

Draper turns back nodding.

Pathologist pulls Stikum's shoes out of a bag then lays them on Stikum's chest, one over each bruise. A perfect fit.

DRAPER

She was pushed down on the pole with her shoes?!

Pathologist puts one hand in each shoe pumping up and down while imitating the *Twilight Zone* four-note TV-show theme.

PATHOLOGIST

Do-do, do-do, do-do, do-do, right?

(buzzer sound)

Ehhhhhhh! Wrong. She was "stomped" down the pole --by someone wearing her shoes.

Pathologist snaps his fingers in time as he sings *Jim Croce*.

PATHOLOGIST

"Badder than ole' King Kong, meaner than a junk-yard dog."

Draper grabs Pathologist's fingers to stop his *snapping*.

DRAPER

Show some respect! Wait --?

Draper *snaps* her own fingers reasoning it out.

DRAPER

A pile driver! Yeah, use its access ladder to carry the body up to the top, take off and put back on the light-head, after using its impact hammer to force the body down it.

PATHOLOGIST

Bet you partied too much in college, Sherlylocks.

Pathologist draws a triangle *Roman Pile Driver* on his board.

PATHOLOGIST

One, not enough time to build or bring in one. Two, no driver-pistons are shoe-shaped. No, what ever did this had incredible inertia behind its "super-human" stomping. Whatever it is?

DRAPER

"It" is a he, a British bugger, calling himself Snow Man.

PATHOLOGIST

"Snow?" as in cocaine?
(steps back)
Whoa, whoa, whoa? You talked to him, it, whatever?

DRAPER

Twice. Seen once. He confirmed killing Stikum thinking she was me.

PATHOLOGIST

What the "f" is he?

DRAPER

Magician, computer geek, speed freak, triathlete, all around psychopath, who knows? But he won't stop killing until he is stopped.

PATHOLOGIST

Tell your Captain?

DRAPER

Like your peers, no one wants to hear my questions they can't answer.

PATHOLOGIST

So what do we do, Kemosabe?

NO-MANN

"We" paleface?

Pathologist and Draper spin as No-Mann appears leaning arms-folded in a corner wearing an impeccable three-piece suit.

PATHOLOGIST

Where'd he come from?

DRAPER

You can see him? *That ain't good.*

NO-MANN

To be fair, I didn't explain the game's only rule, so here it is.

(clears throat, smiles)

If you tell someone about me, they have to die.

No-Mann moves with super-speed to grab Pathologist around his throat then lift and throw him on the only empty table.

Draper grabs a medical cleaver and throws it at No-Mann who catches without looking while imitating Elvis Presley.

NO-MANN

"Thank you, thank you very much."

No-Mann cuts-off, *chop-chop-chop-chop*, Pathologist's arms and legs at their joints so fast, it almost looks simultaneous.

Pathologist is in shock looking at his four amputated limbs.

PATHOLOGIST

End meeeeeeeeeee!

No-Man's open-mouth *ding-dings* then speaks as a STEWARDESS.

NO-MANN AS STEWARDESS (FILTERED)

"In the event of emergency, please assume a bracing position."

DRAPER

Nooooooo!

No-Mann grabs Pathologist's hair and decapitates him with the cleaver then lifts the wide-eyed head dripping blood.

Pathologist's jaw moves with No-Mann as ventriloquist.

NO-MANN AS PATHOLOGIST

You've been warned, young lady. Do not snitch again or it's --.

No-Mann drops cleaver on floor to throw Pathologist's head at Draper who ducks. The head leaves a bloody mess on the wall and rolls to a stop near Draper as its jaw moves again.

PATHOLOGIST HEAD
Beddy bye --permanently.

Draper stares at bleeding head then looks up with mouth open.

NO-MANN
Smarter than you look, kinda'.

No-Mann reaches out to lifts Draper's chin closing it then wipes off his own bloody hands on Draper's jacket.

NO-MANN
Kinda' hard to prove what really happened, if you're covered in his blood. 'Eh, what, son?

PATHOLOGIST HEAD
ELVIS!

Draper spins then raises both eyebrows and turns back. No-Mann is gone. Draper stumbles to a wall alarm and *pushes* it.

Klaxon sounds as overhead rotating red lights come on and doors seal shut. Draper slides down the wall to sit on floor.

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER SAME DAY

Windowless 8' x 8' room in Baltimore police headquarters.

Draper sits in one of two chairs handcuffed to a metal table.

INSPECTOR HERSKOWITZ, 40s, in suit with badge-case hanging on, enters and plops a file on the table then sits across.

HERSKOWITZ
I'm Inspector Herskowitz with ...

DRAPER
Yeah, yeah, I've heard of you. Why your department and not Homicide?

Herskowitz's stares studying then slides his file forward.

Draper reads, is shocked, reads more, then slides file back.

HERSKOWITZ
Yep, "your" Stikum was sticky.

DRAPER

How long has my partner been under investigation?

HERSKOWITZ

Over a year. We were almost ready to indict when, how 'bout that, she's suddenly murdered.

DRAPER

Do I need my Union Rep?

HERSKOWITZ

You tell me.

They both glare at each other.

HERSKOWITZ

Let's start over. Tell me the truth.

DRAPER

Love to, but then he'd have to kill you.

HERSKOWITZ

Who, your Rep?

DRAPER

(earlier buzzing sound)
 Ehhhhhh! Time's Up! Jay, tell the police man what he didn't win.
 (voice goes male-deep)
 Right, Dan. Detective Herskowitz, you've just won the right to --Stay Alive!
 (makes a crowd noise)
 Yeaaaaaaaaa!

Draper smacks her lips *Cheshire Cat* smiling.

Herskowitz sits in awe then pulls his file back angry.

HERSKOWITZ

You're a walkin' apocalypse, buddy. Come clean, you'll feel better.

DRAPER

(sniffs an arm-pit)
 Hey, bud-dee, thanks for reminding me, I need a shower, big-time. So charge me or release me but whatever you do make it fast, I gotta pee.

HERSKOWITZ

Oh, I'm gonna' charge you alright,
so better get an attorney.

DRAPER

Can't, can't tell him either, can't
tell anyone, that's the problem.

HERSKOWITZ

What? Wait? "Can't tell?" Why,
what'll happen?

Draper sits silent. Herskowitz *bangs* a fist on table-top.

HERSKOWITZ

What, will, happen?!

Draper *bangs* her fist same answering in same timber.

DRAPER

What, you, think?!

Herskowitz tilts head analyzing Draper's words; epiphany.

HERSKOWITZ

The killer, knows who you talk to?

DRAPER

He knows I'm here, talking to you.

HERSKOWITZ

What?

(dismisses concept)

Makes sense since the killer is --.

Herskowitz uses hand-remote to turn on the wall's monitor.

MONITOR: Recording from Morgue's ceiling camera shows Draper talking with Pathologist then zooms in on Draper with a crazed-look picking up the cleaver then video goes to static.

Herskowitz uses remote to turn off the monitor smiling.

HERSKOWITZ

How about now, tough gal?

DRAPER

Asking the wrong questions, Stupor
Cop. Why is none of the victim's
blood on my hands? When do fixed
lenses zoom? How did the rest of
the feed get erased?

Draper *rattles* her cuff.

DRAPER (CONT'D)

Release me, go home, take your wife dancing.

HERSKOWITZ

Divorced. But at least she's still kickin'.

Draper scoots her chair back as if shot then recovers.

DRAPER

Good one. Got a reaction, just not the right one. But then, you can't know that. Can you, narcoleptic?

HERSKOWITZ

I "know" the difference between facts and coincidence. Your wife was horribly murdered and her killer never found --.

(taps folder three times)

Just, like, now.

DRAPER

When you came in, I swore I'd never tell you. Now I want to.

HERSKOWITZ

So what's stopping you?

Monitor on wall behind Herskowitz comes on showing the room.

Draper leans side-to-side watching her movements mirrored in the monitor's reflexion.

DRAPER

Because I won't, give it, the --.

(bolts upright)

Satisfaction.

Monitor's view changes to Pathologist lying on cadaver table with the four appendages re-positioned. Both hands raise giving Draper *Double Birds* then fall. Monitor goes blank.

Draper flips *Double Birds* back to the monitor.

Herskowitz *slams* his open palm on the metal tabletop. *Boom*.

HERSKOWITZ

Let's see who laughs last the most when I charge you as a serial killer, comedian cop!

DRAPER
 Hey bone-head, deep in your bones,
 you know I'm being framed!

Herskowitz stares in Draper's eyes and knows she's innocent.

DRAPER
 Charge me or release me but don't
 ever follow me. Either way, I have
 to work this case alone.

Herskowitz thinks then decides and unlocks Draper's cuff.

HERSKOWITZ
 You know I can't do either.

DRAPER
 I know, but --.
 (rubs released wrist)
 At least I tried.

No-Man's laughter echoes in hallway. Draper eyes go wide.

NO-MANN
 HEE, Hee, hee, hee, etc.

DRAPER
 Hear that?

HERSKOWITZ
 Hear what?

DRAPER
 Good, stay stupid.

Herskowitz stares at Draper stupefied. Draper points.

DRAPER
 Just, like, that.

Draper stands and *knocks* on door. It opens and she exits.

Captain enters watching Draper do down the hall.

CAPTAIN
 Well?

HERSKOWITZ
 Well done, her brain's fried.

EXT. DRAPER'S APARTMENT BALCONY - THAT NIGHT

Draper exits out her window onto fire-escape with a beer.

She sips from her beer bottle. No-Mann answers invisible.

DRAPER
You here?

NO-MANN
Always.

Draper leans on her fire escape railing nursing her bottle.

DRAPER
So you do what you do, when you
want to, because you can do?

NO-MANN
Someone's been eating smart food.

DRAPER
Love their popcorn. But listen, we
can talk in person, I'm not afraid.

No-Mann appears behind Draper wearing a white two-piece suit.

NO-MANN
BOO!

DRAPER
WHO?!

Draper jumps spinning to *slosh* beer on No-Man's suit. She tries to blot it off with her monogrammed handkerchief.

DRAPER
Gotta' stop sneaking up on ...

NO-MANN
This was a brand new suit!

No-Mann grabs Draper's wrists hard to put her on her knees.

Draper's beer bottle falls off the balcony end-over-end.

EXT. SIDEWALK BELOW DRAPER'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Jogger, wearing a *Grinch* cap, now has his DOG in reindeer-antlers. Beer-drops fall on Jogger who stops and holds out a palm. *Rain?* Bottle *explodes* on sidewalk. Jogger jumps back. Dog tries to lick-up the beer. Jogger picks up Dog hugging.

EXT. DRAPER'S APARTMENT BALCONY - RETURN TO

No-Mann tightens his grip on Draper's wrists.

NO-MANN
Think this is a game!

DRAPER
(in severe pain)
Don't, you?

No-Mann looks evil then smiles good-natured and lets go.

NO-MANN
Quite right, lassie. Threw a paddy,
sorry about that.

No-Mann waves a hand over his suit and its dry-clean fresh.
He adjusts his cuffs.

NO-MANN
And how was your day, Guv?

DRAPER
(stands rubbing wrists)
Oh, witnessed another murder, got
accused of it, dropped a perfectly
good beer, you know, the usual.

NO-MANN
Ahh, but you didn't snickel.

DRAPER
Slow learner, fast thinker.

A cowboy hat appears on No-Man's head, he knocks it back.

NO-MANN
Yeah, so what ya' thinkin' now,
partner?

DRAPER
Why use rawhide?

NO-MANN
To sew his head back on?
(readjusts hat)
Oh, you know, 'cause of that there
western-like tele-show.

DRAPER
What? Wait? "Rawhide?"

No-Mann opens his mouth and its original TV-theme *plays*.

NO-MANN/SONG
"Don't try to understand 'em, just
rope n' tie and brand 'em."

No-Mann snaps his hand to make the song's bullwhip *crack*.

NO-MANN
Catchy tune. Anything else?

Draper's brow furrows then she closes her eyes.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LUCKY II CORNER STORE - CHRISTMAS EVE YEARS AGO

7-11 got nothing on this convenience store as Draper enters.

DRAPER
Feliz Navidad! Dónde está el, *uhhh*,
garlic?

No response. Draper's inner police-alarm goes off. She reaches inside her suit lapel for her gun.

A pair of white-gloved hands slip a string of braided-garlic over her head from behind then chokes her out.

INT. ARLINGTON ROW HOME - LATER SAME NIGHT

Modest and clean middle-class house decorated for Christmas inside and out. Draper enters front door.

DRAPER
Sorry I'm late hon, walked into a
crime scene and had to wait for the
Debriefing Team.

Draper hangs her hat and coat on a self-standing coat-rack then puts her gun, holster, and badge in its top drawer.

DRAPER
Perp even took my wallet.
(no response)
Karen?

No response. Draper's inner police-alarm goes off again. She reaches for her gun.

Same pair of white-gloved hands slip a doubled string of silver-garland over her head from behind choking her out.

RETURN TO.

INT. DRAPER'S LIVING ROOM - PRESENT NIGHT

Draper's eyes open then narrow to slits.

DRAPER

Yeah? Know anything about my wife's murder?

NO-MANN

(raspberries)

I don't remember names.

(eyes roll back)

Ooooooh --Karen.

No-Man's suit and cowboy hat change to those of a 1930's gangster as he uses a bad Italian accent.

NO-MANN

'Eyyyyy, everybody make-a mistake.

DRAPER

"Mistake?" Karen was a mistake?!

No-Mann opens eyes wide and covers his mouth still Italian.

NO-MANN

I'ma bad-a boy.

DRAPER

(angry mumbles)

Freakin' remorseless fucker.

No-Mann *snaps* his fingers to return to his earlier suit.

NO-MANN

What'd you just say to me?

DRAPER

I said, "fabulous revelation."

NO-MANN

Ahh, the good ole book of Revelation. Only apocalyptic document in the New Testament. It is my personal --disfavorite.

DRAPER

Allegory of our spiritual battle between good and evil. Your first name wouldn't be John, would it?

NO-MANN

Call me Emperor Domitian, if you like. I don't care about titles.

DRAPER
Then why Snow Man?

A WWII German helmet appears on No-Man's head with a monocle in one eye as he hits Draper up the back of her head.

NO-MANN
N, O, dash, M, A, N, N. Dumbkopf.

DRAPER
Okay? "No-Mann," same question.

NO-MANN
(as *Hogan's Heroes*)
"I know nuthink!"

They stare. No-Mann's helmet disappears and back to British.

NO-MANN
Because it's the last thing a bloke says to me when they realize they're about to go tits up.

No-Mann holds out a hand for fake-protection and feigns fear talking in Pathologist's voice.

NO-MANN AS PATHOLOGIST
Noooo, mannnnnn!

DRAPER
Sick. What about women?

No-Mann's eyes open wide so monocle falls out. He catches it.

NO-MANN
Strumpets, what about them? I never listen, just nod my head going "Uh-huh, uh-huh, yes dear," then --.

No-Mann crunches his monocle in a fist to sound of glass *breaking* then blows through fist and opens. Nothing there.

DRAPER
That's sick-sick, bro.

NO-MANN
"Bro?" Now that's sick.

DRAPER
Ever see "The Blues Brothers?"

NO-MANN
Yeah, sick. Why did--? You think I'm on a mission from God?!

DRAPER
Aren't you?

No-Mann bends *laughing* hard then stands to wipe his eyes.

NO-MANN
Oh man, haven't laughed that long
in a long time.

No-Mann looks at his wrist for nonexistent watch.

Thanks bro, gotta' go.

DRAPER
Another murder?

No-Mann becomes Elvis Presley with hair and bedazzled costume then primps his gelled hairdo quoting the real Elvis.

NO-MANN AS PRESLEY
"Values are like fingerprints, man.
Nobody's are the same but you leave
them all over everything you do."
(pose-points to street)
THA' KING!

Draper peers over railing then looks up self-disgusted and turns back. No-Mann is gone but yells back to Draper.

NO-MANN
"Run, Forest, Run!"
(laughter fades)
Hee-Haw, hee-haw, hee-haw, etc.

EXT. STREET BELOW DRAPER'S APARTMENT - SIMULTANEOUS

Herskowitz sits in unmarked car across the street in parking lot aiming a low-light camera out his driver's window up at Draper. He pulls the camera back in to re-play its recording.

CAMERA INSERT: Video shows Draper is talking to himself.

HERSKOWITZ
Almost had me.

Cruiser's radio *crackles* on with female voice of DISPATCHER.

DISPATCHER (FILTERED)
All units, two, four, five in
progress, East Cross and Light.

HERSKOWITZ
Assault with a deadly weapon. Here?

NO-MANN AS DISPATCHER (FILTERED)
 Correctomundo, constable --at Cross
 Street Market.

Herskowitz stares at radio, then starts car, sticks arm out to place a red mobile-flasher on its roof, and exits fast.

EXT. DRAPER'S APARTMENT BALCONY - IMMEDIATELY

Draper is leaning over her handrail and sees his red light rotate on cruiser below then it burn rubber leaving.

DRAPER
 Warned you, Super Mario.

Draper steps back through her open window and closes it then punches out its pane.

DRAPER
 God Damn You!

Window's broken glass *explodes* out and falls.

EXT. SIDEWALK BELOW DRAPER'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Pedestrian is standing under his open Christmas-umbrella talking to Beat Patrolman. Broken glass showers them. Beat Patrolman steps under umbrella. Pedestrian thumbs-up to its origin. Beat Patrolman's shoulder-radio *crackles* on.

HERSKOWITZ (FILTERED)
 Officer needs assistance! Mother's
 on the Alley! David, ten, thirty!

Beat Patrolman takes off running. Pedestrian holds out a flat palm checking for more "rain." None, so looks out from under his umbrella shaking a fist straight up.

EXT. ALLEY NEAR CROSS STREET MARKET - MOMENTS LATER

Herskowitz's revolving red-light strobe-flashes a 40s female.

The PROBATION OFFICER, in a skirt-suit, is being pulled back and forth across the alley like an invisible shark attack.

Herskowitz stands with his hand-held radio near his mouth watching Probation Officer *scream* as she now slides up the brick wall on her back with arms and legs flailing.

PROBATION OFFICER
 Aieeeee!

She stops sliding so stops screaming and looks pleading at Herskowitz then grabs her throat making *gurgling* noises.

Her blouse yanks open popping its buttons as her bra splits, rib cage cracks apart. and her beating heart emerges from her chest to hover dripping blood then flies at Herskowitz who dives to the ground. Her heart smashes against a dumpster behind him as blood and tissue explode. Herskowitz looks up.

Probation Officer now hangs in a crucified position with telephone-pole foot-pegs impaled in hands and crossed-feet.

HERSKOWITZ

Fuck me.

NO-MANN

Okie-dokie.

Herskowitz spins drawing his weapon. No one is there.

Beat Patrolman runs around alley corner with his gun drawn sees Herskowitz's badge, holsters. They stare at each other.

NO-MANN

HEE, Hee, hee, hee, etc.

Herskowitz hears No-Mann and jerks his head around scanning.

HERSKOWITZ

That ain't good?

Beat Patrolman stares up at Probation Officer's crucifixion.

BEAT PATROLMAN

Got that right.

INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - NEXT MORNING

Draper sits same as before watching Detectives on phones.

Captain in uniform, and Herskowitz in suit, enter each carrying a file and sit. Captain waves her file first.

CAPTAIN

What aren't you telling me?

DRAPER

All I can tell you is, I'm in deep.

HERSKOWITZ

Deep shit ya' mean, and gettin' deeper.

Herskowitz tosses his folder to Draper who opens and looks.
It has pictures of Probation Officer crucified on brick wall.

HERSKOWITZ

Know her?

DRAPER

Nope. Know you unfortunately. I saw
you leave last night.

HERSKOWITZ

So you knew I was watching?! That
why you put on the invisible act?

DRAPER

You didn't see anyone? Good.

HERSKOWITZ

Thought I heard creepy laughter.

DRAPER

Not good.

CAPTAIN

I agree, because the only reason
you're not being interrogated is
because Herskowitz video-taped you
outside when the 911 call came in.

DRAPER

Let me guess. Anonymous. Sent
Rescue to a false address?

Captain opens her file and reads.

CAPTAIN

Hmmmm, yeah? With no caller I, D.

HERSKOWITZ

How'd you know?

DRAPER

There's a difference between being
confident --and conceited.

CAPTAIN

Which are you?

DRAPER

Thanks for the vote of confidence.
(to Herskowitz)
So I'm no longer a suspect?

HERSKOWITZ
Definitely suspicious.

Draper flings the folder in anger at Herskowitz so Probation Officer's pictures fly out.

DRAPER
Really?! So how far would you go to stop a killer, killer? Would you joke with him, watch helpless as he keeps murdering, all while trying to strategize how to stop him?

HERSKOWITZ
Wouldn't miss him twice that's for sure!

DRAPER
Good luck, dead-head.
(stands)
Captain, since I'm still a citizen, I'm exercising my citizen's right to drag my sorry ass home.

CAPTAIN
No! Go see the shrink, that's an order.

Draper ram-rod salutes, crisp about-faces, then exits.

CAPTAIN
Still think she's guilty?

HERSKOWITZ
Of withholding information?
Abso-freakin'-lutely.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST WAITING ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Small outer room with wooden chairs. Draper sits reading "*Baltimore Kids Chess League*" magazine. Inner door opens.

PSYCHIATRIST, African-American, attractive, professional hair, wearing a suit and glasses, enters and extends a hand.

PSYCHIATRIST
Detective Draper, been looking forward to interrogating you.

They shake as Draper tilts her head.

DRAPER
You mean --interviewing?

Psychiatrist smiles beguiling sweeping a hand to her door.

PSYCHIATRIST
Abso-freakin'-lutely.

Draper enters office first followed by her. Door closes.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Large desk, chaise lounge, and two plush leather chairs.

Psychiatrist sits in one chair and hand-motions for Draper to lie on the couch. Draper sits in the other chair.

PSYCHIATRIST
You've certainly had a traumatic
forty-eight hours.

DRAPER
(sneezes while answering)
Shhhhh-it happens.

PSYCHIATRIST
Want to talk about "it?"

DRAPER
Not really.

PSYCHIATRIST
Memories too painful?

DRAPER
Would be for you.

PSYCHIATRIST
Then what shall we talk about?

Draper turns her head sideways studying the full book-shelf.

DRAPER
Read any good ones?

Draper *snaps* her fingers then writes in her pocket notepad.

PSYCHIATRIST
Could go for a walk?

Draper takes a book from the case and re-sits reading it.

DRAPER
Bring back a fat-free Hazelnut
Latte no whipped cream. Thanks.

Psychiatrist shakes her head writing in Draper's file.

EXT. ENOCH PRATT FREE LIBRARY - LATER SAME DAY

READERS enter and exit from its Cathedral Street entrance.

INT. ENOCH PRATT MAIN READING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Large wood tables with metal table-lamps have a FEW READERS scattered about.

Draper reads alone at a table surrounded by big open books.

LIBRARIAN, 40s, hair in bun, wearing a pant-suit with reading glasses on a lanyard sets a new stack of books on his table.

LIBRARIAN

That's the last we have on him.

Draper writes a note on a legal pad then opens her top book.

LIBRARIAN

School project?

DRAPER

Old school.

Draper reads out loud tracing with a finger book's words.

DRAPER

King Domitian declared himself Rome's perpetual censor with strict control over both public and private morals. "Morals" huh?

LIBRARIAN

(recites from memory)

Emperor Domitian, eighty-one to ninety-six C.E. The Roman Senate assassinated him then condemned his memory to oblivion passing a decree that his inscriptions be erased and all record of him obliterated.

Draper looks up at Librarian. She explains.

LIBRARIAN

Did my thesis on him.

DRAPER

(closes new book)
Highlights?

LIBRARIAN

Highly intelligent. Able to quote Homer and Virgil. Marksman with a bow and arrow. Declared himself "Lord and God over all." The Roman historian Suetonius described him as having "an odd sense of humor."

DRAPER

"Odd" huh? Astrology?

LIBRARIAN

He consulted Apollo the god of enlightenment then became increasingly superstitious and finally, very, very paranoid.

DRAPER

Talisman?

LIBRARIAN

The Raven. Even minted a coin with Apollo on one side and the bird on the other. Suetonius wrote that a Raven perched on the Capitalium and predicted Domitian's death cawing "All will be well."

DRAPER

"All" hope so. Soft spot?

LIBRARIAN

Bald spot. Overly sensitive of it. Even wrote a book on hair care. He wore wigs and cut out the tongues of servants who bathed him so they couldn't describe his bald head.

Draper writes on his pad "*Don't Tell*" then underlines it.

DRAPER

Don't "tell" huh? Psychopath?

LIBRARIAN

Psychopathic. He slew his own brother then raised the second persecution against Christians. Most of whom were crucified. Others boiled alive, some quartered.

DRAPER

Nice guy. Internment?

LIBRARIAN

Cremated. His ashes were mingled with those of his niece and spread in an unknown location. That must have really burned him.

DRAPER

Why?

LIBRARIAN

Because he hated women and wanted immortality, not obscurity.

DRAPER

Maybe, he found a way to get both.

Draper stands and points at her pile of books.

DRAPER

Need help putting those away?

YOUNG MAN, almost anemic, looking homeless, walks by.

Draper notices he and Librarian make eye-contact nodding.

LIBRARIAN

Thanks but, it's my job.

DRAPER

And our conversation is, my job.
(flips open badge-case)
Do not discuss this with anyone. No one. Understand?

Librarian nods. Draper pockets badge to pull out cellphone.

DRAPER

Where's a terminal? I need to call our Poe Museum.

Librarian scratches her head then points. Draper exits.

LIBRARIAN

Nevermore.

Librarian goes to meet the Young Man behind a bookcase.

EXT. MUSCLE CAR DRIVING ON MONUMENT STREET - THAT NIGHT

Dark deserted road in poorer suburban neighborhood. Older loud muscle car speeds by with FOUR GANG BANGERS inside.

INT. MONUMENT STREET MUSCLE CAR - CONTINUOUS

BANGERS ONE and TWO are in front, BANGERS THREE and FOUR are in back, all in their 20s, who look Middle Eastern, but speak with Hispanic accents. The three passenger Bangers wear gang colors with *Taqiyah* skullcaps reloading automatic weapons. Banger One drives wearing a gang-color kerchief as a hat.

BANGER ONE
Hear him yellin', "Nooooo, Mannnn!"

BANGER TWO
(*mesz-nune-ah* = madwoman)
With his majniuna Granny cursin' us
the whole time!

BANGER THREE
She one, big, bad, mama-jama.

BANGER FOUR
(*U-mahk* = your mother)
Ommak!

EXT. BANGERS CAR - CONTINUOUS

All Four Bangers laugh as both rear tires *explode*. Car veers all over the street before hitting a tree. Its horn *blows*.

INT/EXT. BANGERS WRECKED CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Banger One lies on his steering wheel. He sits up and horn stops. Bangers Two, Three, and Four *moan*. All Four Bangers exit car simultaneous to look at their respective rear tires.

Multiple arrows stick out of both rear tire's sidewalls.

BANGER ONE
What the hell, varon?!

BANGER TWO
"A good archer is known not by his
arrows but by his aim."

The other Three Bangers look at Two stupefied.

BANGER TWO
Thomas Fuller. What, I Google?

BANGER THREE
Oh, he like that William Teller
dude and that, uh, uhhhh--?

BANGER FOUR
Robin Hoodlum.

All Four Bangers nod. Banger One goes to speak but an arrow pierces his forehead to stick out the back of his skull. His eyes go wide in surprise as he deadfalls backwards.

Banger Four spins to stand behind the trunk with his Mac-11 aimed. Two arrows pierce through both his thighs into the car trunk's metal pinning him. He *fires* his gun in anger-pain.

Banger Two and Three run behind front bumper *shooting* their Mac-11's angled to the sides in over-lapping fields of fire.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF BANGERS WRECKED CAR - CONTINUOUS

Tracer-fire lights the darkness in three arcs then stop.

NEIGHBORHOOD DOGS begin *barking*.

EXT. BANGERS WRECKED CAR - MOMENTS LATER

The Three Bangers drop their used clips to reload new ones.

BANGER FOUR
Tozz Feek! Pull these out, wali!

Banger Two and Banger Three try to pull out the arrows but they won't budge and their metal shafts won't break off.

BANGER TWO
Need a bone-saw or somethin', ése.

BANGER TWO
How you doin', amigo?

No answer. Bangers Two and Three look. Banger Four's eyes are wide open just like his mouth which now has an arrow in it. Its arrowhead sticks out the back of his neck. There is a note tied to his arrow's shaft below the feathers.

Banger Two removes and unravels note with hands shaking to read aloud its three capital letters glued from a magazine.

BANGER TWO
I. C. U?
(note rolls up in hand)
ÁNDALE!

Banger Two runs around a tree using one hand to hold onto it. An arrow pierces that hand nailing it to the trunk. He tries pulling it free when a second arrow now pierces both hands.

BANGER TWO

Aieeeeeee!

Banger Three takes off running up the sidewalk.

BANGER TWO

Where you goin' man?!

No-Mann whispers in Banger Two's ear in Banger One's voice.

NO-MANN AS BANGER ONE

Where you goin' --man?

BANGER TWO

Dios mío!

An invisible hand *slaps* Banger Two's face who goes wide-eyed.

Muted horns begin playing the 1944 hit song "*Mairzy Doats.*"

NO-MANN

"Dozy doats and liddle lamzy divey.
A kiddley divey too, wouldn't you?"

Full orchestration with "The Pied Pipers" *singing* now plays.

EXT. MONUMENT STREET SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

Banger Three runs for his life as Banger Two death-shrieks.

BANGER TWO (O.S.)

EEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

Banger Three slows asking for forgiveness in Spanish.

BANGER THREE

(*Pair-dohn-a-mais*)

Perdóname.

No-Mann whispers in Banger Three's ear in Banger Two's voice.

NO-MANN AS BANGER TWO

Forgive what --man?

Banger Three spins to look and falls on his back in the grass median. His lips pantomime-move as he silently confesses.

NO-MANN

Ohhhhh --that.

Banger Three has his ankles crossed. An arrow pierces down through both his shin bones into the ground.

BANGER THREE

Aieeeeeee!

Banger Three rolls side to side with one arm outstretched. An arrow shoots straight down piercing that wrist to the ground.

BANGER THREE

Por favor, Jesús!

No-Mann speaks in Pathologist's voice with same buzzer sound.

NO-MANN AS PATHOLOGIST

Ehhhhhh! Wrong disciple, ése.

Banger Three's eyes go wide as he gives in to destiny and his free-arm now outstretches. An arrow pierces that wrist to the ground. He's whimpers in submission.

BANGER THREE

Nooo, mann.

NO-MANN

There it is!

The orchestra *playing* ends on the song's crescendo.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF BANGER THREE - MOMENTS LATER

Banger Three lies in crucified-position *sobbing*. An arrow flies straight down through his crotch. He goes cross-eyed.

NO-MANN

Bull's eye.

A pitch-pipe *sounds* then No-Mann sings the alternate "Jingle Bells" Christmas ditty.

NO-MANN

"Jingle bells, Batman smells,
Robin laid an eggggg. The Batmobile
lost a wheel, and the Jo-ker got --
awaaaaa-aaaay!"

Surrounding homes Christmas lights and decorations come on.

NO-MANN

Wheeeeeeee, hee, hee, hee, hee!

Christmas bells *jingle* throughout the city.

INT. DRAPER'S APARTMENT - NEXT NIGHT

Draper sits in the dark on the couch. *Knock* at front door.

DRAPER
Leave a message!

Herskowitz opens the door entering. He is unshaven and still wears the same suit now severely wrinkled.

HERSKOWITZ
You don't lock up?

DRAPER
Used to. Now, no point. What's up?

HERSKOWITZ
Me, for two days. We had four more grisly murders.

DRAPER
Wasn't me. I was here strategizin'.

HERSKOWITZ
I know. Can we talk?

DRAPER
You can.

Herskowitz closes the door and flips wall's light-switch. End table lamp comes on. Draper reaches over and clicks it off. Herskowitz falls in the chair across from Draper.

HERSKOWITZ
This case, is really dark.

DRAPER
Should see it from my side.

HERSKOWITZ
I'd like to. Can you tell anything? Anything at all that could help?

DRAPER
Sure, but I won't because, believe it or not, you've grown on me.

HERSKOWITZ
Like ivy?

DRAPER
Poison.

Herskowitz *laughs*. Tension between them is finally broken.

HERSKOWITZ
How are you being blackmailed?

DRAPER
 Okay, since you can't take a hint,
 I'll spell it out. G-o, a-w-a-y.

HERSKOWITZ
 What's he holding over you?

DRAPER
 You, me, everybody, everything.
 (stands)
 I need a drink.

HERSKOWITZ
 Make mine a triple.

Draper exits into her kitchen.

INT. DRAPER'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Narrow, small, and basic with a four-bottle-bar set-up on counter's cutting-board. Dirty dishes are piled in the sink.

Draper enters.

DRAPER
 Scotch?

HERSKOWITZ (O.S.)
 Cubed!

DRAPER
I know the feeling.

Draper opens freezer and gets out a plastic ice tray, twists it to break its grip, grabs four cubes, and *clinks* two in two glasses. She goes to pour liquor in first glass and freezes.

INSERT: Inside each ice-cube, a frozen eye stares up at her.

Draper chugs from the bottle then re-caps it.

DRAPER
 Tell me about your new murders?!

HERSKOWITZ (O.S.)
 Gang drive-by. We found the get-away car with all four *Ali Babas* used for archery practice. The killer popped-out their eyeballs.

DRAPER

How many victims in the house?

HERSKOWITZ

None, just a rival gang member and his enabler-granny. Why?

Draper turns the tray upside down hard on the cutting board then lifts it away slowly. She counts eight more ice-cubes with eyes "staring" up at her then dumps both glasses ice onto same cutting board.

All twelve eye-ball cubes now slide around by themselves until they form earlier three letters. "I, C, U."

Draper grabs a grocery plastic bag, sweeps all twelve ice cubes into it, twirls and ties its end closed, then puts it in a paper lunch bag and exits with bag.

DRAPER

Ask an officer to do a Welfare Check.

INT. DRAPER'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Draper enters and flips on overhead light. Herskowitz shields his eyes. Draper grabs her jacket and opens front door.

HERSKOWITZ

Why?

DRAPER

Because I can count. Come on, drinks on me.

HERSKOWITZ

Dinner?

DRAPER

No! Uh, no. Lost my appetite.

Herskowitz point at Draper's bag puzzled.

HERSKOWITZ

Then what's that?

DRAPER

Doggie-bag.

Draper pushes Herskowitz out and closes door behind them.

No-Mann *chuckles* invisible then speaks in Stikum's voice.

NO-MANN AS STIKUM
Comedienne cop-o, perfecto.

Cardboard taped over the broken window is sucked out and
aways. The broken glass on fire-escape morphs into a new
window pane and repaired window slides open.

NO-MANN
Least I can do --.

Good-as-new window slides shut. No-Man's voice fades.

NO-MANN
To her! Ho, Ho, Ho! Oh no, not
that!

EXT. INNER HARBOR WALKWAY - NOW MIDNIGHT

The cement sidewalk with guardrail next to the Patapsco River
has lamp posts spaced along it.

Draper walks under a burned-out light, lifts her paper lunch-
bag, flicks open her knife, then pokes holes in the bag and
throws it far out into the water. *Plop*. She watches it sink.

SUZUKI
Heave to, matey!

Draper spins drawing her back-up gun and threatens with both
gun and knife to see Officer Suzuki is off-duty wearing a
jogging suit and sweating.

SUZUKI
Uuuuu. Brought a gun and a knife.
Going to a fight?

DRAPER
Better not quit your day job.
(holsters gun))
Run here often?

SUZUKI
Every night. Thought you were on
Admin, not supposed to carry a gun?

DRAPER
Am. Not. I have --an inferior
complex. Appreciate you keepin'
this on the down low.

SUZUKI
How low? And what'd you throw?

DRAPER
Bad i-deas.

HOOKER screams in the park. Both run towards her screaming.

HOOKER (O.S.)
Help meeeeeeee!

EXT. FEDERAL HILL PARK - CONTINUOUS

Lots of older shade trees in the small walking park.

Draper and Suzuki round a tree to freeze staring at HOOKER, 20s, anemic, mini-skirt, tube-top with a Santa hat and colored-lights flashing in her platform-shoes. She hangs splayed in mid-air with ropes tied around each wrist and ankle. Each is tied to the top of a tree. All four trees are bent over, almost touching ground, tied-off to smaller trees.

DRAPER
DON'T!

All four trees ground-ties release at the same time *snapping* their trees upright which quarter the Hooker most bloody.

Her blood bathes Draper and Suzuki. Suzuki goes hysterical.

SUZUKI
WHAT, THE --?!

Draper puts an arm around Suzuki while dialing her cellphone with free hand.

OPERATOR (FILTERED)
9, 1, 1. What is your emergency?

DRAPER
Detective Draper, Baltimore Police,
badge 3, 7, 5, 6, Homicide.
Dispatch a Coroner and Supervisor
to "The Great Red bank of Clay."
I'll guide them to a murder scene.

OPERATOR (FILTERED)
Federal Hill Park. Affirmative.

Draper pulls out her handkerchief in plastic bag and gives it to Suzuki who wipes off her face. Suzuki scrunches her nose.

SUZUKI
Beer? And Vicks?

OPERATOR (FILTERED)
En route. Do you require Rescue?

DRAPER
Just a Meat Wagon and Fire Services
--with lots of hoses.

Draper hangs-up. No-Mann *chuckles* unseen.

NO-MANN
HEE, hee-hee, hee-heeeee.

Draper pulls Suzuki in closer drawing her gun.

DRAPER
Hear that?

SUZUKI
Hear what?

Draper relaxes holstering her gun then hugs Suzuki tighter.

Suzuki's eyes open wide "*Oh my*" as romance-sparks fly.

No-Mann in lumberjack clothes walks out of the shadows behind Suzuki with an ax across one shoulder and boom-box on other.

Stereo turns on *playing* the movie-theme from "Love Story."

DRAPER
Hear that?!

SUZUKI
You're scaring me?

DRAPER
That's okay, scaring myself.

Draper rubs Suzuki's back as she glances over Suzuki at No-Mann who now solo ballroom-dances with his ax as a partner.

INT. SUZUKI'S APARTMENT - PAST MIDNIGHT

Her windowless basement efficiency is tiny and messy.

Draper stands outside the bathroom door in bloody clothes.

Bathroom door opens. Suzuki exits clean in a full bath-wrap.

DRAPER
Oh my! I, uh, I should go home.

SUZUKI

Wouldn't make it a block before a
Road Dawg felony-stop. Drop your
clothes inside in the trash bag.

Draper enters bathroom.

SUZUKI

I'm making a drink, want one?

DRAPER (O.S.)

Sure.

Draper leans back out the open bathroom door.

DRAPER

No ice.

Draper reenters bathroom closing its door.

INT. SUZUKI'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Draper is in the running shower. Bathroom light turns *off*.

DRAPER

Oh, come on!

Shower curtain opens. Hallway light silhouettes Suzuki.

SUZUKI

Okay.
(drops towel naked)
I need another hug.

She steps in and closes its curtain.

Air steams. Sink's mirror fogs over then the letters *I, C, U*
form on it by an invisible finger that draws a heart around
the letters then an arrow diagonal through it. Arrow bleeds.

INT. SUZUKI'S KITCHEN AREA - THAT MORNING

Basement apartment with no windows. Kitchen is pass-through.

Draper stands in jeans and t-shirt making coffee.

Suzuki enters dressed same. They match.

SUZUKI

Quite a hug.

DRAPER
Been awhile. Java?

SUZUKI
Juice, please. What happened to our clothes?

DRAPER
Bad ju-ju so tossed them.

SUZUKI
Like your "bad i-deas?"

DRAPER
(changes subject)
You always keep different sized clothes laying around?

SUZUKI
Sometimes they leave in a hurry.

Draper raises an eyebrow then gets an egg carton out of the refrigerator. She closes its door with her butt.

DRAPER
Eggs? Make a mean omelet.

SUZUKI (NODS)
Sure. I called in. L.T. gave me the day off.

DRAPER
That's because we both get debriefed at two.

Draper *cracks* an egg in a bowl. A red smiley-face forms in its yolk. Draper *grumble-mumbles* putting bowl in the sink.

DRAPER
Let's go out instead.

Suzuki puts both arms around Draper's neck seductive.

SUZUKI
"Debriefed at two" huh? Wanna debrief me now --for two?

Draper hears *popping* and glances over Suzuki into the sink. The egg in the bowl is cooking. Draper reaches behind Suzuki to run the kitchen faucet's water in the bowl. It *sizzles*.

DRAPER
Let's put that on hold for now.

Draper pushes Suzuki out. Both exit. Front door shuts behind.

Kitchen's under-counter radio turns on playing the *Love Story* theme again. Egg and water boils in bowl then both explode leaving globs on the walls and ceiling that drip like blood.

INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY

Draper sits in suit as before staring at Detectives outside.

Captain and Herskowitz enter with files to sit as before.

CAPTAIN
Deja vu, Detective.

DRAPER
Third time's a charm.

HERSKOWITZ
Maybe, but you're not.

DRAPER
Back atcha', Dickless Tracy.

HERSKOWITZ
You took me out to talk and all I got out of you was a hangover.

DRAPER
Be happy that's all you got. I coulda' told Uber you lived in D.C.

CAPTAIN
Knock it off, Officers! We have a serial killer and the investigation is going nowhere. Draper --.
(leans forward)
Herskowitz says you're withholding because you're being blackmailed.
(no response)
Take that as a yes. Also says the suspect has your apartment bugged.

DRAPER
And here.

CAPTAIN
"Here?!"

Captain picks up phone and hits speed-dial then commands.

CAPTAIN
Get me Special Operations, I need a
sweep of ...

DRAPER
Don't bother.

Captain looks at Herskowitz who nods head.

CAPTAIN
"Don't bother."
(hangs-up)
He's that good?

HERSKOWITZ
Good enough to hack our
surveillance cameras.

DRAPER
So you believe me?

HERSKOWITZ
Not really, but facts don't lie.

CAPTAIN
But you have to, is that it?

DRAPER
I talk, people die. I ask
questions, more people die.
(snaps fingers)
Captain, send a unit to the public
library. Hope I'm wrong.
(stands)
Captain, reinstate me. Either way,
I'm in this way over my head.

CAPTAIN
Just don't drown.

Captain decides then retrieves and tosses key fob to Draper.

CAPTAIN
Your badge and gun are still in the
locker. Shooting Commission cleared
you. Psychiatrist almost didn't.

Draper catches the key fob and half-salutes then exits.

HERSKOWITZ
Tail her?

CAPTAIN
Abso-freakin'-lutely.

EXT. ENOCH PRATT PUBLIC LIBRARY - LATER SAME DAY

Ambulance and several police cruisers with red lights flashing with sirens-off are parked at angles in front.

Readers have formed a crowd behind police *Do-Not-Cross* tape.

Draper parks an unmarked cruiser and enters two-at-a-time up the stairs hanging her badge-case out of lapel pocket.

INT. ENOCH PRATT LIBRARY LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Draper enters and hears voices at a back bookcase.

EMT-One and EMT-Two roll a gurney past her to same place.

EMT-ONE
Business is good --.

EMT-TWO
Too good.

DRAPER
"Today it is bad. And day by day it will get worse. Until at last, the worst of all --arrives."

EMT-One turns puzzled pointing to a portrait of Arthur Schopenhauer who is a dead-ringer for *Ebenezer Scrooge*.

EMT-ONE
Arthur Schopenhauer?

EMT-TWO
Who viewed life as an irrational, painful, and meaningless?

Draper gives a big Thumbs-Up then continues to the voices.

EMT-ONE
Someone's a radical pessimist.

EMT-TWO
Or a strict nihilist.

INT. ENOCH PRATT LIBRARY BACK WALL - CONTINUOUS

Draper enters around a corner as Police Officer comforts Beat Patrolman who is throwing up. Draper looks up.

EMT-One and EMT-Two enter with gurney then freeze to stare up at where Draper gawks.

The Librarian has been cut into multiple sections and body stacked between books on several shelves. Her head's on one, shoulders below on lower shelf, chest below both, etc.

SUZUKI

What's up with your perp?

Draper spins angry to Suzuki now dressed in full uniform.

DRAPER

Why are you here?!

SUZUKI

I was debriefed?

DRAPER

Twice. No. Why are you "here?"

SUZUKI

Seems anyone involved with your perp is caught up in --.

(points to Librarian)

Murder most foul.

DRAPER

Speaking of foul. You're, Out!

EMT-ONE

Where's all --?

EMT-TWO

Her blood?

Draper and Suzuki turn to look. Beat Patrolman dry-heaves again. Draper points to Police Officer.

DRAPER

Get him out of here please. Then come back and secure the room until Crime Scene arrives.

Police Officer helps Beat Patrolman who both exit.

SUZUKI

No blood? He cut her up off-site then stacked her like this? How'd he get the body parts in here?

(looks around)

They have cameras?

Draper grabs Suzuki by her shoulders and shoves her back.

DRAPER

Get out and stay out of this!

Suzuki kicks Draper in a shin who grabs it hopping.

SUZUKI

Cut the chivalry crap! I'm a police officer same as you.

DRAPER

Yeah? Well, you're more than that to me!

(rubs cheek embarrassed)

So I need you to distance yourself from me and this case, Ray.

SUZUKI

Officer. --Detective.

DRAPER

Fine. Would you please interview any witnesses outside, Officer?

Draper takes Suzuki's hand and kisses the back of it.

DRAPER

Pretty, please?

Suzuki softens, half-salutes, and exits. Draper mumbles.

DRAPER

'Course you won't find any.

HERSKOWITZ (O.S.)

Another white-collar drug-dealer.

Draper spins. Herskowitz stands watching arms-folded.

DRAPER

Who?

Herskowitz head-motions to the Librarian's "parts."

HERSKOWITZ

Seems kids got a little something extra when they checked out a book from her. How'd you know, Casanova?

DRAPER

(snaps fingers)

He became a librarian!

HERSKOWITZ

Who?

DRAPER

Casanova. He spent his last years in a library so he could write his memoirs.

(snaps fingers again)

That's It!

HERSKOWITZ

What is? Gonna' write your own epitaph?

DRAPER

If I live long enough.

Draper exits in a hurry.

HERSKOWITZ

Oh, you're leaving? Yeah, sure, go ahead. Thanks for the help. Not!

Herskowitz looks up at Librarian and throws-up in mouth.

INT. DRAPER'S LIVING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Draper sits on her couch reading. Her suit jacket is on the armrest. Her service revolver lays on top of it.

The fire-escape window self-opens.

NO-MANN

Reading "The Good Book?"

Draper pulls her book against her chest revealing its cover, "*The Lives of the Twelve Caesars.*"

No-Mann appears wearing a new three-piece shiny suit then unbuttons its jacket to sit in the chair across from Draper.

NO-MANN

Sulky Suetonius? I never liked his writings about me. Mad as a bag a' ferrets that one.

DRAPER

Did you really spend days in seclusion killing flies with a stylus?

No-Mann *snaps* his fingers to become a Roman Caesar with toga, laurel crown, and just a bit of gayish wrist-flop.

NO-MANN

Et tu, ya' big bruté?

Draper fast-draws her revolver and *fires*.

TIME LAPSE:

Draper's bullet squashes against No-Man's forehead and sticks. No-Mann wrinkles brow and bullet falls in his hand.

TIME LAPSE ENDS.

No-Mann throws the bullet back super-fast tearing Draper's white shirt at the shoulder, blood oozes down it. No-Mann morphs back into his earlier suit then brushes it off.

NO-MANN

Feel better?

Draper studies her bleeding shoulder then holds her handkerchief against it.

DRAPER

Not really.

NO-MANN

What the devil was that all about?

DRAPER

Test.

NO-MANN

All you did was make me testy. Just be glad we weren't playing darts or you would have gotten a beastly delivery. What were you aiming at?

DRAPER

Your toupee.

No-Mann *swipes* his hand through the air.

Draper flies across the room breaking a table when landing.

No-Mann quotes *Homer* from "The Iliad" straightening toupee.

NO-MANN

"He lives not long who battles with the immortals."

Draper moans picking herself up to paraphrase Homer back.

DRAPER

"Who at one moment flame with life and at another weakly perish."

NO-MANN

And Homer, too?!

(fast *claps*)

Darling, you are working overtime.

(*tch-tch's*)

You need a holiday, girlfriend.

No-Mann stands, interlocks fingers, and *cracks* all knuckles.

NO-MANN

Ever been to the Red Sea? I make
sure it lives up to its name.

Draper pulls a towel off a free-standing birdcage to reveal a
black RAVEN inside. It *caws*.

RAVEN

Don't kill Draper!

No-Mann steps back grabbing his chest as if shot.

NO-MANN

No! How?

DRAPER

Picked it up today. Took his
trainer a while to teach it.

NO-MANN

I'll Poe him!

DRAPER

Don't bother, he's on vacation. Why
don't you take one, too?

No-Mann clenches his fists and steps forward.

Draper *raps* a knuckle on Raven's cage.

RAVEN

Don't Kill Draper!

No-Man's face turns crimson then he disappears.

NO-MANN

Bloody bastard.

Balcony window closes.

Draper relaxes *sighing* then lifts Raven's cage off its stand
and exits down bedroom hallway carrying it.

DRAPER

You're sleeping with me, bud-bud.

RAVEN
I'll Poe him!

INT. HOMICIDE DIVISION OFFICE - NEXT MORNING

Detective area outside Captain's office. Detectives sit at their desks making phone calls.

Draper sits at her desk reading a file. Earlier birdcage sits on desk covered.

Captain and THOMAS N "TNT" TOMAS, late 20s, fit, high-and-tight, is a smart-ass know-it-all you can depend on.

Both enter in cheap dark suits.

CAPTAIN
Welcome back. Meet your new partner. Say, "Hello."

RAVEN (O.S.)
'El-lo.

DRAPER
Already got one.

Draper pulls towel off Raven then raps knuckle on cage.

RAVEN
Don't Kill Draper!

TNT
Clever --not. What's its name?

DRAPER
Kevlar.

CAPTAIN
Okay ladies, this is not a democracy. Draper, Detective Tomas was Academy Class President and scored near perfect on his exam.

TNT
Actually --perfect, sir.
(to Draper)
Call me, T.N.T.

DRAPER
Captain, with his initials, you don't want him on this case. He can't help me, no man can.

TOMAS

I can help you when you've fallen
and can't get up.

CAPTAIN

Oh, I'm sorry, you thought we were
having a discussion --not.

Captain yells to Detectives. All stop in mid-motion.

CAPTAIN

LISTEN UP! Press is killing us!

Captain holds up *Baltimore Sun's* front page. Headline reads,
"KILLER KUTS-UP KORPSES" ByLine under it reads, "Keystone
Kops Knundrum." Captain folds newspaper under an arm angry.

CAPTAIN

Detective Draper is lead, assist
her!

Captain stares hard at TNT while pointing at Draper.

CAPTAIN

"Assist, her."

DRAPER

Cap'n --?

Captain glares at Draper who "zips" mouth. Captain exits.

TNT

Let's go Dana Scully. I'll drive.

DRAPER

Where?

TNT

Oh, I'm sorry --.

TNT cups his hands around mouth then talks slow and loud.

TNT

A-na-thur, Mur-dur!

Draper stands, puts on suit jacket, then grabs birdcage.

TNT

Do You, Require, Assistance?!

Draper holds out birdcage and *shakes* it.

RAVEN

Bloody bastard.

TNT *laughs*. Draper smiles. They're partners now. Both exit.

EXT. ALLEY ACROSS FROM CAMDEN YARDS - MOMENTS LATER

TNT parks an unmarked cruiser. He and Draper exit.

Draper carries her birdcage now covered.

TNT

You really gonna' carry that crow everywhere?

DRAPER

Raven, boom-boom.

TNT

T, N, T, wise-ass.

Both enter the alley.

EXT. ALLEY ACROSS FROM CAMDEN YARDS - CONTINUOUS

Police Officer and Suzuki, in uniforms, stare at something.

TNT

Who called it in?

Police Officer spins surprised stepping away from the face-down orange-suited ORIOLES MASCOT covered in blood.

POLICE OFFICER

Hey?! --Oh, sorry, little jumpy.

DRAPER

(sees Suzuki)

You're relieved Officer.

POLICE OFFICER

Great, thanks.

SUZUKI

Not you. And no, I'm not.

DRAPER

Yes, you are!

TNT's head has been following their banter and deduces.

TNT

Are you two --?

TNT looks from Suzuki to Draper who glares at TNT.

TNT

Looks like a standard "Who shot
Cock Robin." Why call us?

Draper hooks a shoe-tip under Mascot's hip and rolls it over.

Mascot rolls onto its back. Its face is gone. Zipper on suit
is open and body's innards are gone like he was fish-gutted.

The Three react jumping back except Draper.

TNT

Jesus!

DRAPER

Relax, nitro.
(to Police Officer)
Where's his stuffing?

Police Officer has the dry-heaves. Suzuki fights hers.

SUZUKI

We can't find it.

NO-MANN

HEE, Hee, hee, hee, etc.

Draper hears No-Man's laughter and pulls the cover off the
birdcage fast surprising the Raven.

RAVEN

DON'T KILL DRAPER!

TNT

(jumps back further)
Mary and Joseph! Between that --.
(points to Mascot)
And that --.
(points at Raven)
Workin' with you is no joy-joy.
(recovers)
And it's T.N.T., state drooper.

DRAPER

(to Suzuki)
Don't bother looking for his rest.
(to Police Officer)
I.D?

POLICE OFFICER

I ain't lookin' in there.

Police Officer shakily points at blood-soaked orange suit.

Suzuki pulls out latex gloves. Draper yanks them from her.

SUZUKI
Bloody bastard!

Police Officer and TNT glance at each other, *Whoa*.

Draper hands Suzuki's gloves to TNT.

TNT
Why I gotta' do it?

Draper glares at TNT who puts on latex gloves and searches body retrieving a bloody wallet. He opens it then exclaims.

TNT
Hey, it's that famous sports attorney.
(snaps gloved-fingers)
What's his name?

Blood flicks off TNT's finger-tips so other Three jump back.

DRAPER
Watch it, salt-peter.

SUZUKI
I know who you're talking about. A real bottom-feeder.

TNT places the bloody wallet in an Evidence Bag.

DRAPER
Officer, secure the scene until C.S.I. gets here. Suzuki, canvas the neighborhood. You won't find anything but we need to keep up public appearance.
(to TNT)
Get back to the station, correlate all the victims for common denominators then reverse cross reference for their uncommon ones.

TNT
Thought these killings were random?

DRAPER
That's what we're supposed to think.

Draper fast-exits carrying Raven in cage.

SUZUKI

You taking our car? How do I get back? Where are you going?!

DRAPER

Improvise! *I do*. Gotta' see a thing, about a thing, nitro.

TNT

Hey E.D! It's T.N.T!

Draper *shakes* her birdcage as she gets in their cruiser.

RAVEN

Nevermore!

INT. DRAPER'S LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Draper sits on her couch reading another book.

An antique chessboard is now set up on its coffee table.

The fire-escape window opens.

NO-MANN AS RICKY RICARDO

"Lucy, I'm home!"

Draper closes book and holds up its cover to reveal title, "*The Iliad*."

NO-MANN

Virgil, too?! What a Renaissance woman.

No-Mann appears wearing a smoking jacket with dashing ascot.

NO-MANN

Virgil was Dante's guide through hell and purgatory, you know.

DRAPER

Which am I in?

NO-MANN

(goes arms-wide)
Why, a "Divine Comedy" of course.

DRAPER

Only I ain't laughin'.

No-Mann unbuttons his jacket and sits across from Draper. He *snaps* his fingers and a pipe appears in them.

NO-MANN
And that, my friend, is your flaw.

DRAPER
I ain't your "friend!"

NO-MANN
Closest thing to it, fuzzy-wuzzy.

DRAPER
What are we doing?

NO-MANN
Same old, same old.
(studies chessboard)
Playing mind games.

No-Mann *snaps* his fingers and his thumb-tip catches fire. He lights his pipe with it then waves hand so flame goes out. He waves same hand again and a black Pawn moves one space.

DRAPER
White is supposed to move first.

NO-MANN
I play by my own rules.

Draper moves her opposite white Pawn.

DRAPER
So I've observed. Where's the rest
of your lawyer-victim?

No-Man's black Knight moves. Draper moves her white Knight.

NO-MANN
"Victim?!" Need to be more
specific, Webster. There are four
types. Did you mean a person who's
attacked, killed, or robbed?

DRAPER
Certainly robbed him of his life.

NO-MANN
Only half. The rest of him is
vacationing under the South Seas.

DRAPER
He was a well-known attorney.

NO-MANN
Trust me, all the other sharks
there, now know him very well.

No-Man's black Bishop moves. Draper moves her white Bishop.

NO-MANN

Ooor did you mean, someone who's
cheated or fooled by someone else?

DRAPER

Who'd he fool?

NO-MANN

Everyone, especially himself.

No-Man's second black Pawn moves. Draper moves her opposite white Pawn.

NO-MANN

Then again, what about someone
who's harmed by an event, such as
illness or accident?

DRAPER

Or mistake.

No-Mann becomes his N.J. Gangster only now with a Chef's hat.

NO-MANN

'Ey, when you make-a omelets.

DRAPER

What about its last definition?

No-Mann morphs back to his smoking jacket to wave a hand in L-fashion. His second black Knight moves in same L-fashion.

NO-MANN

Oh, so you really meant when a
human is sacrificed in performance
of a religious rite to a deity.

Draper picks up second white Knight *slamming* it on Board.

DRAPER

You're no god.

NO-MANN

Sure? Sure act like one.

No-Man's second Bishop moves. Draper slides her Bishop.

DRAPER

Are you The Devil?

NO-MANN

Please. Prefer, Mephistopheles.

No-Mann leans back steeping his thumbs and fingertips.

NO-MANN
Tell you what. If you win, I'll
tell you everything.

DRAPER
Deal.

Draper leans forward studying the Board.

NO-MANN
But since the house always wins,
when you don't, you lose, everyone.

No-Mann smiles charming. Draper studies harder whispering.

DRAPER
What's your Tell?

TIME LAPSE:

No-Mann and Draper play chess until each have four pieces left. Black has Pawns at A-4, D-4, G-6 and King at C-3. White has Pawns at H-3 and H-4 with Bishop at C-5 and King at F-2.

TIME LAPSE ENDS.

No-Man's black King moves by itself to C-4.

NO-MANN
Know which game we're playing now?

Draper moves her Bishop to E-7.

DRAPER
Don't like games, I like strategy.

No-Man's King moves to B-3.

NO-MANN
Which is why you always lose.

Draper studies the Board, then lays her King over.

NO-MANN
Veselin Topalov versus Alexey
Shirov, 1998 game. I should know, I
was there.

DRAPER
The Gruenfeld Defense, Exchange
Variation. I know --so was I.

Draper lays an old curled picture on the chessboard. It is of Topalov and Shirov from behind showing their audience. Draper is a teen and sits in the front row. No-Mann sits in the same row dressed and looking the same as present.

No-Mann makes a finger-gun and aims it at the picture. His thumb moves down and picture burns-up like flash-paper.

NO-MANN

So you already knew our game's outcome.

DRAPER

Only this one.

NO-MANN

Then why play at all?

DRAPER

Had to be sure. Look, I get your whole *I'm indestructible, so I can do whatever the fuck I want thing.*

NO-MANN

I hear a "but" coming.

DRAPER

Do you have to do it so often?

NO-MANN

No law, just disorder. So call me, Elwood.

DRAPER

What?! Wait, so you are on a mission from God?

NO-MANN

Something like that.

RAVEN

Don't kill Draper!

No-Mann aims his finger-gun at Raven then lowers his thumb.

NO-MANN

Pow.

Raven *explodes* to now only feathers floating in the cage.

Draper looks from smoking feathers to No-Mann in disbelief.

No-Man's fingertip smokes so he blows across it.

DRAPER
But, but, but --?

NO-MANN
There they are.

DRAPER
No, I mean, how, how did, why
didn't --?

No-Mann guffaws then slaps a thigh and becomes an Old West cowboy complete with hat, chaps, and accent.

NO-MANN
If you can't take a joke son, don't
look in the mirror.

No-Mann morphs back into himself.

NO-MANN
Master strategist. Hah!

DRAPER
But I thought you were ...?

NO-MANN
Who cares what you thought thought-
less.

No-Mann stands and buttons jacket with pipe in his mouth to now imitate Robert De Niro.

NO-MANN
Forgetaboutit. --I'm just messin'
with ya', man. I ain't Domitian,
I'm No-Mann. You can't stop me.

no-mann disappears. His pipe drops on to the floor.

NO-MANN
No man can. HEE, Hee, hee, etc.

The window opens and self-closes.

EXT. MINIVAN ON BALTIMORE WASHINGTON PARKWAY - NEXT DAY

A minivan drives past "M&T Bank Stadium" leaving Baltimore.

FAMILY OF FOUR, in Christmas sweaters, ride with windows up. They wave excitedly at the NFL RAVENS MASCOT standing out front on its sidewalk waving back animated.

INT. MINIVAN ON BALTIMORE WASHINGTON PARKWAY - CONTINUOUS

FATHER drives. MOTHER is front passenger. SISTER and BROTHER sit in back seat. All wear seat belts and sway side-to-side *singing* with car's radio playing carol "*O Christmas Tree.*"

FAMILY/RADIO

"From base to summit, gay and bright,
There's only splendor for the sight.
O Christmas Tree! O Christmas Tree!
Thy candles shine so bri-ghtly ...!"

Radio turns *off*. All four of their seatbelts release and retract at the same time. Family stops singing confused.

Brother looks at Sister. He *explodes* into flames screaming.

BROTHER

Aieeee!

Sister looks at Mother. Sis *explodes* into flames screaming.

SISTER

Aieeee!

Mother looks at Father. Mom *explodes* into flames screaming.

MOTHER

Aieeee!

Father looks in rearview mirror.

No-Mann sits in the back travel seat dressed as Ravens Mascot with costume head now off swaying to music. He stops to look innocent at Father in the mirror then aims his finger-gun.

NO-MANN

What?

No-Man's thumb drops. Father *explodes* into flames screaming.

FATHER

Aieeee!

Radio turns back *on* playing "*We Wish You a Merry Christmas.*"

Family rocks left and right screaming in sync to the music.

FAMILY

Aiee, Aiee!--Aiee, Aiee!...etc.

No-Mann *sings* along with both palms held high swaying.

RADIO/NO-MANN

"Oh, bring us a figgy pudding, Oh,
bring us a figgy pudding, Oh, bring
us a figgy pudding and a cup of
good cheer --!"

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

Minivan is careening all over the road with no fire on its
outside. Family are *screaming*. Radio *plays*. No-Mann *sings*.

FAMILY

Aiee, Aiee!--Aiee, Aiee!...etc!

RADIO/NO-MANN

"We won't go until we get some. We
won't go until we get some. We
won't go until we get some, so
bring some out here!"

Minivan travels out-of-frame. Radio and No-Man's singing
fades on "here" then sounds of their *crash* most horrific.

EXT. NEAR FAMILY'S WRECKED MINIVAN - LATER THAT DAY

Traffic is stopped and backed-up on I-295 ...as usual.

STATE TROOPER in Maryland uniform interviews several REDNECK
WITNESSES, all losers, parked on same road's shoulder.

Firetruck and Ambulance with red lights on but no sirens are
parked near the wrecked minivan on same shoulder.

Family CORPSES charred-black sit inside their gutted car.

Minivan's exterior paint is perfect and shines freshly waxed
in the sun.

Earlier Firemen and Two EMT's stand scratching their heads.

Draper parks an unmarked cruiser and goes to them.

DRAPER

Where's the Chief?

Fire Chief in firemen's gear with a Santa Hat duct-taped onto
his helmet walks out from behind the car.

FIRE CHIEF

You again?

Draper hangs badge-case on suit-pocket as she walks to Chief.

DRAPER
 Why do you think this is related to
 our serial killings?

FIRE CHIEF
 Witness accounts.

Draper walks to the burned-out minivan.

INT. FAMILY'S WRECKED MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

The van's windows have been blown out by the intense heat.
 The four charred bodies inside have their mouths wide open.

Draper stands outside and uses a pen to touch Father's skull.
 His head falls off creating a chain-reaction so the other
 three heads fall off as dominoes.

EXT. FAMILY'S WRECKED MINIVAN - IMMEDIATELY

Fire Chief jumps away.

FIRE CHIEF
 Jesus?! You do this often?

DRAPER
 Once is enough. So what happened?

FIRE CHIEF
 Family of four was driving along
 not wearing their seatbelts when
 the interior suddenly became a --?

Chief two-finger whistles at State Trooper shaking head with
 hands out. State Trooper looks at his notebook then yells.

STATE TROOPER
 "Fireball!"

DRAPER
 Locate its source?

FIRE CHIEF
 Uh-uh. Fire Marshall's on his way.
 But nothing explains how their
 outside paint remained undamaged.

DRAPER
 Spontaneous combustion.

Fire Chief's mouth falls open then he quotes its definition.

FIRE CHIEF

"The ignition of a combustible material without the application of external heat or flame!" Which one?

DRAPER

Self-generated heat produced by humans.

FIRE CHIEF

S.H.C?! All four?! Are you freakin' nuts?

DRAPER

Gettin' there. I think you'll find their initial heat was generated by fermentation of microorganisms.

FIRE CHIEF

Can I get that in writing?

TNT parks his unmarked cruiser then exits running.

TNT

Draper! I found it!

DRAPER

Found what, dyn-o-mite?

TNT

Their uncommon common denom ...?

Whirlwind of dust encircles TNT stopping him and blowing his suit jacket open. Whirlwind dissipates. TNT opens his jacket. His waist is now ringed by old-style dynamite sticks with all fuses burning. Draper and TNT stare at each other.

DRAPER

T, N, T!

TNT *explodes* knocking EVERYONE over. Pieces of him rain down on ALL who re-stand in shock cleaning TNT off themselves.

FIRE CHIEF

Key-rye-stt! More S.H.C?

DRAPER

Nothing spontaneous here. It was cold premeditated murder.

FIRE CHIEF

How, when, why, by whom?

Draper becomes Bruce Willis from "Die Hard" with dry wit.

DRAPER

"Welcome to the party, pal."

Draper goes to TNT's charred circle of ground. Only his two shoes remain as smoke wafts out them.

DRAPER

What shouldn't you have found?

NO-MANN

Better Ask Louder!

(laughter fades)

HEE, Hee, hee, hee, etc!

Fire Chief watches Draper shaking her fist up at thin air.

FIRE CHIEF

"Who driving, Stevie Wonder?"

INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY

Draper sits as before. Captain and Herskowitz enter and sit.

HERSKOWITZ

Well, here we are again.

DRAPER

You are, I'm not.

CAPTAIN

Really, then where are you?

DRAPER

On planet mental.

HERSKOWITZ

Lost in thought or thinking about losing?

DRAPER

Ever played chess with a Champion?

CAPTAIN

No. And what the "f" are you talking about?

DRAPER

Sometimes you have to sacrifice a Pawn to capture the King.

HERSKOWITZ

TNT was sacrificed?

DRAPER
What would you call it?

CAPTAIN
Unfinished business since your
story is incomplete.

DRAPER
It has a beginning and a middle.
I'm working on some kind of end.

HERSKOWITZ
Start foreshadowing!

Draper jumps up venting anger knocking over her chair.

DRAPER
Exactly which part of "*Leave Me
Alone*" do you not understand?!

CAPTAIN
Easy, Detective. Sit, please.

DRAPER
No! I told you not to assign T.N.T
to the case and look how he died!
(to Herskowitz)
And you! I warned you of any
meddling consequence!
(kicks fallen chair away)
This is not a normal case! It can
not be handled using regular
procedure! He's smart and ...

Draper stops herself then calms down.

CAPTAIN
And what, Detective? He has us
"all" under surveillance?

Draper picks up her chair to sit in it exhausted.

DRAPER
Yes. Twenty-four, seven.

CAPTAIN
Your home, my office, the lab,
crime scenes? They're all bugged?

DRAPER
When I'm in them, yes.

HERSKOWITZ
How's that work exactly?

DRAPER

Do you have a learning disorder?

HERSKOWITZ

I'm learning, you are disorderly!

Draper jumps up with fists. Herskowitz does same.

CAPTAIN

Detectives! Take it down a notch.
We're all on the same team.

DRAPER

There's only "I" in my team.

CAPTAIN

So you're saying you have to go
this alone without departmental
assistance?

Draper drops her head and fists then collapses in chair.

DRAPER

Finally.

CAPTAIN

(to Herskowitz)
Special Services able to get
anything off T.N.T's computer?

Herskowitz sits always staring at Draper.

HERSKOWITZ

His hard drive was wiped clean.
(suspicious to Draper)
Any idea how your suspect got into
it?

DRAPER

"Suspect?!" Don't suspect. Believe.
That something, everything, in this
crazy case is true and probable.

HERSKOWITZ

And the improbable?

DRAPER

You really do have a death wish.

HERSKOWITZ

Told you earlier, I can't stay out.

DRAPER

Then certify your Will!

CAPTAIN

Detectives, let's agree to agree, temporarily. Detective Draper, you have forty-eight hours to write some kind of happy ending to your unhappy story.

(to Herskowitz)

Remove surveillance on Detective Draper.

DRAPER

You had me tailed?

HERSKOWITZ

S.O.P.

DRAPER

Bad choice of initials, S.O.B.

(nods to Captain)

I'd ask you to wish me luck but luck's got nothing to do with it.

Draper stands and exits.

HERSKOWITZ

Has she ever behaved like this on other cases?

CAPTAIN

She's as detached and methodical an investigator there is. Something's gotten to her.

HERSKOWITZ

Or someone. She's afraid.

CAPTAIN

Better read between the lines in her reports. She's scared shitless.

HERSKOWITZ

Because she knows her career is on the chopping block.

Both react to the sound of a guillotine's blade dropping.
Chunk!

INT. DRAPER'S LIVING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Draper sits on her couch reading a new book with chessboard set up on the coffee table.

Fire-escape window opens.

King's black Pawn moves by itself two spaces to E-4.

DRAPER
King's Gambit?

Draper moves her Queen's white Pawn to D-4 then holds up his book's cover. Title is "*Divine Comedy*" by Dante Alighieri.

NO-MANN
Queen's Gambit and Dante's Inferno?

No-Mann appears in a new silk suit with white Carnation in lapel and sits across from Draper.

No-Man's black Pawn moves *hard-bumping* Draper's white Pawn sending it flying through the air to Draper who catches it.

NO-MANN
Sacrificing another pawn?

DRAPER
Figured since I'm living the story might as well read it.

Draper closes book then moves her Bishop's white Pawn to D-3.

NO-MANN
Is Virgil guiding you? Bet you can't wait to get to Purgatorio.

DRAPER
Actually looking forward to Paradisio.

No-Man's Bishop black-Pawn self-moves to E-3.

Draper moves her King's white-Knight.

NO-MANN
No such thing, amico. Bye the bye, are you going for a Sicilian or French Defense?

DRAPER
Which circle am I in?

NO-MANN
As in Dante's "Nine Circles of Hell??
(2nd black Knight moves
Where those who perverted their values to commit fraud or malice must suffer eternal damnation?

DRAPER
With you --Hell is, on earth.

NO-MANN
According to that long-nosed geek.

Draper moves her second white Pawn.

No-Man's Knight's black Pawn self-moves.

DRAPER
Ahhhh, Dragon Defense. So which
circle am I in now, Bruce Lee?

No-Mann's eyes go to horizontal slits with an Asian accent.

NO-MANN
Kung Fu you, glass-flopper.

DRAPER
Why, because of my virtuous life,
or am I starting to grow on you?

NO-MANN
(still in Asian accent)
Like black fungus. And just as
tastee. You know you cannot win,
confused Confucius.

Draper studies chessboard then looks up.

DRAPER
Allegory or metaphor?

No-Mann *snaps* his fingers to return to normal and British.

NO-MANN
Now you're just being superfluous
and rhetorical.

Draper moves her Rook's white Pawn one space.

DRAPER
Ever play to a Draw?

NO-MANN
Again, no such thing wanker.

DRAPER
Then that, unkind sir, is your
flaw.

No-Mann *snort-chuckles* most rude as his Rook's black Pawn
self-moves two spaces.

EXT. CHARM CITY CAKES - NEXT MORNING

Herskowitz, in new suit, parks his unmarked car in front and exits. He is wearing stylish argyle socks and enters store.

INT. CHARM CITY CAKES - CONTINUOUS

PATRONS stand at small two-person round tables enjoying coffee and pastries.

Draper stands at a table wearing a light-colored suit drinking coffee and reading the "*Baltimore Sun*" newspaper.

Herskowitz stands across. Draper reads without looking up.

HERSKOWITZ
Any late night visits?

DRAPER
He plays all hours. What's up?

Herskowitz leans forward to whisper.

HERSKOWITZ
Had the place swept. We can talk.

DRAPER
They don't serve fruit cakes here.

Herskowitz slides a flash-drive across their table.

Draper's eyes never stop reading.

DRAPER
What's that?

HERSKOWITZ
T.N.T. uploaded his files to it.

Draper grabs the drive and drops it in her coffee cup.

Herskowitz retrieves it burning his fingers.

HERSKOWITZ
Ow! What the hell?! Don't you know what's on there?

DRAPER
Tell me, you don't?

Herskowitz wipes off the drive then his fingers with a napkin then looks at Draper and smiles.

Restaurant's commercial coffee urn flies across the room as it's lid pops off. Urn upsets dumping its scalding liquid over Herskowitz who holds his head screaming.

HERSKOWITZ

Aieeeeeeee!

DRAPER

No, man! He's in agony!

TIME LAPSE:

Empty coffee urn jams down all the way down over Herskowitz compressing him completely inside then falls over. Only argyle socks show. His shoes now stand alone on the floor.

TIME LAPSE ENDS.

Patrons all exit running and screaming.

PATRONS

Aieeeee!

Draper steps back holding her sick-stomach.

DRAPER

Boiling brew?

NO-MANN

One can never find a cauldron of burning oil when one needs one.

Coffee urn self-uprights on the floor as its lid covers it then its spigot opens and blood pours out.

NO-MANN (O.S.)

One lumpy or two?
(laughter fades)
HEE, Hee, hee, hee, etc!

INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - LATER THAT MORNING

Draper sits waiting. Her suit has large coffee stains on it. She sniffs the air then her jacket and yanks it off angry throwing it in a metal trashcan. She rips her stained tie off and throws it in also. He starts to unbutton her shirt.

Captain enters carrying a file and sits behind her desk.

CAPTAIN

Throwing in the towel?

DRAPER

Seeing death is one thing. But
smelling it --?

Draper rips her shirt off popping its buttons and balls it up to throw into same trashcan. She wears an olive-drab Athletic shirt with matching sports bra. She sits down breathing hard.

Captain pulls out a drawer and tosses Draper a clean shirt.

CAPTAIN

Take the rest of the day off then
see the Department's shrink
tomorrow morning. Not a request.
(shakes head))
This isn't working out.

Draper puts on her clean white dress shirt angry.

DRAPER

You're telling me.

CAPTAIN

No, not just me.

Draper looks at Captain, *What?*

CAPTAIN

Word came down, the Chief has
formed a Task Force. Your name,
did not come up.

DRAPER

Just like that.

CAPTAIN

No. Just like these!

Captain slides her file to Draper. It opens spilling out pictures of Herskowitz's mangled, round, compressed-body on a Morgue cadaver table with the coffee urn next to it.

CAPTAIN

Read the witness statements in
there. Sci-Fi shit. God Damn.

DRAPER

(claps hands once)
Another God Damn feint!
(no response, explains)
He used, God's name in vain.

CAPTAIN

"He" who, dammit!

DRAPER
Don't know? No man does.

CAPTAIN
Freakin' riddles?! Go home and
don't come back till I call you!

Draper gathers the pictures to put back into file.

CAPTAIN
Leave them! Go see the Shrink! Now!

Draper drops the folder on desk and exits.

Captain stands. A picture fell under Draper's chair. Captain picks up the chair then *smashes* it on floor.

CAPTAIN
G, D, Damm!

No-Mann speaks out of the speaker-phone.

NO-MANN (FILTERED)
Phonetically speaking.

Captain spins searching. No one. She shakes her head.

CAPTAIN
Good thing I'm going on vacation.

Captain picks up a travel brochure off her desk.

Brochure's picture-cover of a Hawaiian beach with a hula dancer is titled "*South Seas Sabbaticals*."

Hula Dancer begins swaying. Hawaiian "*Aloha `Oe A Hui Hou*" music begins *playing* out of Captain's speaker-phone.

Captain *pushes* all its buttons but music keeps playing. She drops the brochure on floor to stomp on it. Music stops.

Captain falls into her chair and takes off her badge.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE - NEXT MORNING

Psychiatrist wears a skirt-suit. Draper wears a three-piece suit with carnation. Both sit as before but in silence.

Psychiatrist *clears* her throat. Draper looks away. Psychiatrist taps her pencil repeatedly. It irritates Draper.

DRAPER
Mind?

PSYCHIATRIST
Is a terrible thing to waste.

Draper stands to leave.

PSYCHIATRIST
Nice suit. Going to a funeral?

Draper falls back into her chair.

DRAPER
Always.

PSYCHIATRIST
Things getting worse?

DRAPER
Out of control.

PSYCHIATRIST
Know the best medicine?

They stare at each other then Draper *snorts* incredulous.

DRAPER
Laughter?

PSYCHIATRIST
Exactly.

DRAPER
You're kidding?!

PSYCHIATRIST
Humor is healthy. Some see it as a
weakness. Do you?

Psychiatrist leans forward taking off her glasses to stare.

Draper stares back then gets out her pocket notepad and
writes something in it as if in a trance.

Psychiatrist smiles and writes in Draper's file.

INT. DRAPER'S LIVING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Draper stands in the dark holding a hammer and drinking from
a tall paper cup labeled "*Baltimore Coffee and Tea Company.*"

She opens the window and throws the cup out then slams it
closed. She grabs her chessboard, breaks it in half over a
knee, then nails its two pieces across the window frame.

Knock on front door. Draper keeps hammering.

DRAPER
Closed for repairs!

Draper hammers more then louder *knocking*.

DRAPER
Moved!

Pounding on door. Draper yanks the door open angry.

DRAPER
What?!

Pedestrian stands in a white Christmas sweater drenched in dark coffee stains and wags a finger accusingly at Draper.

Draper punches him in the nose knocking Pedestrian down then slams the door and flips its deadbolt.

DRAPER
Just saved your life! *Whoever you are?*

Draper drops the hammer to fall into a chair. Light *knocking*.

DRAPER
Don't leave a message!

SUZUKI (O.S.)
Let me in.

DRAPER
This is a recording!

Draper doesn't move. There's scratching at the door-lock then its handle flips. Suzuki enters holding a lock-pick.

DRAPER
Breaking and entering? Nice police work.

Suzuki flips the wall light-switch on.

SUZUKI
Nice building. There's a drunk passed out in your hall.

Draper throws a pillow at Suzuki who catches it.

SUZUKI
Aww, our first fight.

DRAPER
Want it to be our last? Go, Home!

Suzuki closes the door to sit on couch hugging the pillow.

SUZUKI
Wanna' talk about it?

DRAPER
Wanna', canna', can't. Plato.

SUZUKI
Pluto or Allegory of the Cave?

DRAPER
It's cartoon-time. So, both. When shadows become reality.

SUZUKI
You're just a puppet now?

DRAPER
Dancin' on a string.

Window's frame *rattles*. It can't slide open so vibrates.

DRAPER
Leave Now!

Window's glass *implodes* as chessboard-pieces fly.

Suzuki covers her face with the pillow.

Draper doesn't care anymore and remains motionless as glass shards cut her face.

NO-MANN (O.S.)
Sociopath Socrates was a puppet master, too.

SUZUKI
Who said that?

DRAPER
You heard that?! *Shit*.

No-Mann appears now wearing a tuxedo with a red rose in its lapel. He sits then looks at floor. The chess pieces lay scattered and broken in half. No-Mann shakes his head.

NO-MANN
Capitulation Copernicus? How about Poker?

No-Mann flips his hand like a magician and a deck of cards appear. He begins fan-shuffling further and further apart.

NO-MANN
Five Card --stud?

SUZUKI
This your asshole?

Draper tries to admonish Suzuki but No-Mann frisbees cards one-by-one cutting her face leaving multiple cuts bleeding.

NO-MANN
If you can't say something nice.

SUZUKI
Fuck you!

No-Mann raises both eyebrows then smiles at Draper.

NO-MANN
Women. Can't live with 'em, but I
sure as hell can kill 'em.

No-Mann points his finger-gun at Suzuki.

DRAPER
Stop!

NO-MANN
That is a four-letter word to me,
my friend.

DRAPER
Is that what I am to you? Really?

NO-MANN
Not really. Maybe an amusing
distraction. Maybe not.

No-Mann interlocks his fingers and *cracks* all eight knuckles then points his finger-gun at Suzuki again.

DRAPER
Stop! Just, stop.

NO-MANN
Starting to get tiresome, plonk.

DRAPER
(*claps hands excited*)
Exactly! Too much of a good thing
becomes just that. So both of us
need a holiday from each other.

NO-MANN

Why do you think I'm dressed like this, space cadet? Just tidying up a few loose ends before my blast-off.

Draper pulls her back-up gun.

NO-MANN

Automatic is an improvement over a revolver but still can't hurt me.

Draper racks slide to place barrel against her own temple.

NO-MANN

You'd kill yourself, over a trollop?

DRAPER

Over this one, yes.

NO-MANN

I can take that gun away from you.

DRAPER

Probably. But I'd find another.

NO-MANN

Wait? You're serious? Don't you want to live at all cost?

DRAPER

Of course I do, but too much of a good thing becomes a bad thing.

NO-MANN

No such thing.

DRAPER

And that, will be your downfall.

No-Mann sits back and adjusts his bow-tie smiling evil.

NO-MANN

Do tell.

DRAPER

Economics of the soul.

NO-MANN

Don't have one. Too costly.

DRAPER

Unlimited wants versus limited resources.

Draper lowers his gun. No-Mann leans-in interested.

DRAPER (CONT'D)

You kill for whatever cruel reason drives you but you have to keep finding new and more creative ways to do it because --.

NO-MANN

If you must.

DRAPER

I must, I must. Because you are --.

No-Mann waves his hand and Draper's gun *flies* out the window.

DRAPER

Bored!

NO-MANN

"In a universe so full of wonders, Humans have managed to invent boredom." Terry Pratchett.

DRAPER

"Truth is, everyone is bored, and devotes himself to propagating habits." Albert Camus.

NO-MANN

Ahhhh, The Plague-man.

Draper shakes his head pointing to No-Mann.

DRAPER

No! You, are the Plague, man. Because you have horrible habits.

No-Mann points at his chest.

NO-MANN

Me?! Look to your own life, lifeless. You live alone, think alone, masturbate alone.

Draper finger-stabs at No-Mann.

DRAPER

Look in the mirror, numb-nuts.

NO-MANN

"Numb-nuts?!"

No-Mann makes a fist aiming it at Draper's crotch which bunches-up like being gripped. Draper's eyes cross.

DRAPER

Uuuuuuuuuuuuu?

No-Mann smiles then sits back and opens his fist.

Draper's eyes uncross and she breathes a sigh of relief.

A wind *blows* in the window flipping-open Draper's note-pad to what she wrote in the Psychiatrist's office. Her head tilts to read "*Odd sense of humor*" and "*Laughter a weakness.*"

Draper has an epiphany then head-motions to Suzuki grinning.

DRAPER

And I thought she, was a ball-buster.

Both look at Suzuki who chagrins.

SUZUKI

You're both cockels.

No-Mann and Draper *explode* laughing. No-Mann comes down.

NO-MANN

That felt pretty good. Glad I didn't kill you earlier buuuuuut --?

No-Mann smiles evil pointing his finger-gun at Suzuki.

Click of a third gun's hammer. Both look at Draper who holds her service revolver cocked against a temple.

NO-MANN

Oh, like that really scares me.

There is a second loud click. Both look at Suzuki who has her service revolver cocked against her temple.

Wind *blows* through. Draper tilts head then forced-laughs.

DRAPER

Women --we always gotta' be the center of attention, huh?

Draper head-motions at Suzuki to laugh also. Suzuki doesn't understand. Draper looks at No-Mann and *laughs* so crazy it infects No-Mann who laughs. Both look at Suzuki who has such a dumbfounded look Draper and No-Mann laugh louder. When one of them points to Suzuki, she tilts her head the other way, *Huh*, and both laugh louder. Draper escalates on purpose.

Suzuki is puzzled and lowers her gun. Draper smiles at her nodding animated, *Join in*. Her look Draper is priceless.

SUZUKI

"A day without laughter is a day wasted!"

NO-MANN

Charlie Chaplin!

No-Mann snaps his fingers to become Charlie Chaplin's "*The Little Tramp*" with Bowler, cane, and bowed-legs, then does a classic routine around the room.

Suzuki can't help herself and laughs for real.

Draper nods to Suzuki and both now take turns lowering their weapons then put them back to their temples laughing.

Each time they do, No-Mann goes into convulsions then changes back to his original tuxedo holding onto his side.

NO-MANN

Stop!

SUZUKI

Four-letter word!

No-Mann comes down chuckling then wipes his eyes.

NO-MANN

If laughter's good for the soul,
then I guess I still have one.

DRAPER

There ya' go.

NO-MANN

Fine, fine, so once you're right.

DRAPER

No, I mean --.

Draper back-hand waves to the broken window.

DRAPER

There! Ya' go.

No-Mann lifts his chin adjusting his bow-tie.

NO-MANN

Hey, do that thing again, you know,
where you aim your guns, only this
time --do it at each other.

Suzuki and Draper stop laughing. Their arms raise. They fight but can't stop themselves and point their guns at each other.

DRAPER
Can't, control, Sorry.

SUZUKI
Love Story.

No-Mann choke-laughes.

NO-MANN
Wait! Did you just say, "Love means never having to say You're Sorry?"

No-Mann gyrates and stomps on the floor then belly-laughes.

Draper and Suzuki can now lower their guns.

No-Mann makes both hands into finger-guns and points them at Draper and Suzuki's heads.

Draper and Suzuki look at each other lovingly then raise their own guns back to their own heads.

NO-MANN
Are you kidding me?!

No-Mann makes Italian gesture with fingers-tips together speaking with an Italian accent.

NO-MANN
Romeo e Giulietta?

No-Mann falls on knees laughing hysterical in Italian accent.

NO-MANN
Fan-tas-ti-cooooooo!

A clear glowing softball-size globe rolls on the floor from the hallway and touches No-Man's shoe.

The globe expands and envelopes No-Mann within its sphere.

NO-MANN
Noooooooooooo ...!

No-Mann stands encased in a clear glowing force field. He screams but can't be heard then pounds his fists on inside.

Draper and Suzuki watch spellbound then drop their guns.

DRAPER/SUZUKI
What the --?

Psychiatrist enters from hallway now wearing an evening gown minus glasses with her long hair down. She's beautiful and opens her shoulder purse to retrieve a small glowing metal case. She flips it open to show one side has alien lettering and its other side a bright reflective hexagon.

SUZUKI

What are you?

PSYCHIATRIST

Law Enforcement Officer.

DRAPER

From a different dimension.

PSYCHIATRIST

Smarter then your brainwaves show.

SUZUKI

Wait! Aren't you --?

(to Draper)

Isn't she our --?

DRAPER

(to Psychiatrist)

Endorphins?

Psychiatrist looks at No-Mann screaming silent in the sphere.

PSYCHIATRIST

Laughter is our only mental weakness so we only do it at social activities. I had to wait until you had him laughing intensely enough that he could not sense me.

SUZUKI

Laugh till it hurts?

Psychiatrist drops her badge-case in purse then pulls out a glowing sparkling rod and touches No-Man's sphere.

His sphere collapses with No-Mann inside pounding silently on its walls back down to its original softball-size.

DRAPER

What happens to him?

PSYCHIATRIST

We don't employ your concept of justice so not your concern.

Psychiatrist waves rod and sphere-ball rises to enter her purse. She drops the rod inside then *snaps* purse closed.

SUZUKI

Sure as hell is my concern lady if
more like him visit!

PSYCHIATRIST

He didn't "visit" --he escaped.

DRAPER

More than once apparently.

Psychiatrist *snaps* her fingers and her purse disappears.

PSYCHIATRIST

But never again. I've taken
precautions so your planet be
spared any further visitors.

SUZUKI

Great now, but I'm already scarred
for life.

PSYCHIATRIST

No, you aren't --.
(to Draper)
Or you either.

Psychiatrist makes two finger-guns and aims both at Draper
and Suzuki who re-coil hugging each other.

PSYCHIATRIST

Pow. Pow.

Draper and Suzuki fall back onto the couch with eyes closed.

Psychiatrist spreads all ten fingers. A bright aura forms
around her then Wind blows through the room.

Broken chessboard and pieces reform as new on coffee table.
Balcony's broken glass reforms in its frame as new then
slides open. A fully decorated Christmas Tree appears in a
corner with presents under it. Draper and Suzuki's clothes
return to normal and their facial cuts fast-heal completely.

Psychiatrist continues morphing into a ball of energy hanging
in mid-air then "ball" floats out the open window.

Her breeze blows past Suzuki and Draper moving their hair.
Both awake and look at each other groggy and puzzled.

DRAPER

Wanna' get drunk?

SUZUKI

Merry F'n Christmas yeah.

Draper holds Suzuki's hand and confesses.

DRAPER

When my wife died, I lost my best friend. Seeing what police officers have to everyday made it too hard to become, vulnerable again so I shut down to survive. But now --?

Draper gets a puzzled look and feels at a bulge in her pants pocket then pulls a small Christmas-wrapped box out of it.

DRAPER

Now I don't want to just get by. I want to live it by sharing my life.

Draper hands box to Suzuki who opens and gets misty-eyed. She takes out to hold-up a vintage Baltimore charm bracelet.

SUZUKI

Always wanted one as a little girl, thank you. And --.
(kisses her cheek)
Ditto, kiddo.

Suzuki puts on the bracelet and admires it tearing.

DRAPER

As the poet once said, "Maybe we ain't got culture, but at least we're eatin' regular." May I take you out to Christmas dinner?

Suzuki and Draper stand then embrace and kiss deeply.

SUZUKI

I --.

DRAPER

Ditto, kiddo.

They hold hands in love as Draper opens the front door.

Now conscious Jogger stands in its doorframe with a bloody nose and flips them "Double Birds."

Suzuki kicks Jogger in his balls. His eyes cross then he falls on his belly. She pink-handcuffs his wrists behind.

SUZUKI

First thing we do as a couple is find a new apartment building.

Draper blows Suzuki a kiss who catches to put in a pocket.

EXT. DRAPER'S APARTMENT WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Psychiatrist's light-aurora floats outside their window.

PSYCHIATRIST

How charming.

Window self-closes then "Ball" continues to float up high above the city as bright Christmas lights twinkle below.

PSYCHIATRIST

"And to all a good night."

(now as *The Wicked Witch*)

"My pretties, ah, hah, hah, hah,"
heh, heh --heh, *hack-hack!*

Psychiatrist gets a *racking* cough as church bells sound throughout Baltimore. It begins to snow.

PSYCHIATRIST

"And your little dog, too!"

Snowfall now turns into a blizzard.

EXT. OUT OF EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE - CONTINUOUS

Psychiatrist's energy ball continues up into the Stratosphere to reveal the Earth is now completely encased in a huge Snow Globe. Globe's translucent sides then disappear.

FADE OUT.