

Turf War

By

Cindy Hutchins

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Cindy Hutchins
cindyhamihutchins@gmail.com
704-963-9633

TURF WAR

OPENING TITLES OVER.

Montage of La Costa from the window of a car. A day in the life of a typical Florida town.

EXT. LA COSTA HERALD BUILDING.

BEN walks up the stairs of the La Costa Herald. He is dressed like a college student and carries a back pack. He is handsome, seems young and sweet, clean cut, and timid. He doesn't meet the eyes of anyone, but clutches the backpack as if he fears he will lose it.

INT. THE HERALD AD DESK.

LILLY ANDREWS sits behind the desk, looking at BEN as he approaches. Thick glasses are perched on her nose.

BEN
Ca...Can I place an ad here?

He opens the pack and looks inside, reaching in to seemingly pet something inside. She regards him disinterestedly and points to the sign in front of her that says "AD DESK".

He hands her a piece of paper which she reads.

She hands him a clipboard with a piece of paper and pen. BEN writes, handing it back.

INT. DON DEFRANCO'S BEDROOM.

DON awakens. He rubs his face and kisses his hand, touching it to the empty pillow beside him.

DEFRANCO
Morning, Gracie.

He climbs out of bed and crosses to the bathroom, regarding himself in the mirror. He looks rough.

DEFRANCO
I'm going to retire today,
Grace. Maybe, move to Arizona. Be
a cowboy. I'm too old to be chasing
serial killers in La Costa,
friggin' Florida.

INT. DEFRANCO'S LIVING ROOM.

(CONTINUED)

He has now showered and is dressed. He finishes a cup of coffee, and looks at a picture of Grace. He again kisses his hand and touches it to her image.

DEFRANCO
I miss you, sweetie.

EXT. MAIN DRAG, LA COSTA.

LOUIS sits on a bus bench across from the La Costa Herald. He is a handsome man, with dark hair and eyes, and has a hawkish look in his eyes.

EXT. LOUIS' POV.

BEN comes out of the Herald building. LOUIS stands, crosses the street dodging cars, and follows BEN to the other bus stop. LOUIS follows BEN onto the bus, moving behind him.

ANGLE: INT BUS.

LOUIS reaches out as if to touch BEN, then pulls his hand away. LOUIS follows BEN out to the street, then to his apartment building, the front door is open.

EXT. BEN'S NEIGHBORHOOD.

LOUIS watches which apartment BEN enters.

ECU: LOUIS NOTES BEN'S BACKPACK.

Satisfied, LOUIS turns and walks back down the street.

INT. THE MAIN POLICE STATION.

DEFRANCO sits at his desk and shifts papers back and forth.

ANGLE: POV DEFRANCO.

BILLY appears in the office. He is immaculate in his dress and has a fresh faced innocence about him. He approaches, stops, and smiles.

INT. DEFRANCO'S DESK.

BILLY

Morning.

DEFRANCO

I have a theory. I've been working on. What if this guy is MPD or something. Have we checked the mental institutions for any whack jobs recently released?

BILLY

I'll get on it.

BILLY drops his briefcase on his own desk adjacent to DEFRANCO'S and turns on his computer.

ANGLE: OFFICE.

LUCY enters, striding toward their desk carrying a folder. She is dressed in a suit, but obviously a goth underneath. Her gaze is steely. She stops in front of DEFRANCO.

LUCY (ANNOUNCING)

It's two guys. It has to be. That explains everything, the divergent MO's and the high cycle.

DEFRANCO

And that helps me catch the bastard how?

LUCY

Now, you know you're looking for two guys.

DEFRANCO

No offense to you or Freud, but who can really predict these wackos? Every shrink in the country worked on Bundy and Green River, but you know how they really got caught?

LUCY

Dumb luck on the part of detectives like yourself?

DON

Police work. Good old fashioned police work.

LUCY sighs and drops the folder in his lap.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY
Just read this...

DEF FRANCO rolls his eyes and tosses the file to BILLY.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF THE SAVE MART: NIGHT.

CU LOUIS. His eyes narrow as he watches BEN leave work with his ever present back pack in tow. The boy seems to be having a conversation with the bag. Louis is rapt.

EXT. CRIME SCENE.

DEF FRANCO walks through a crime scene. LUCY and BILLY join him. They walk to the front of one of the apartments and slide under the crime tape. The officer guarding the scene nods to them.

DEF FRANCO
What we got?

OFFICER
It's your boy, alright. He
sodomized her with a curling iron.

DEF FRANCO and his team move past the officer. BILLY and LUCY wait at the door as DEF FRANCO enters the crime scene.

INT. CRIME SCENE.

DEF FRANCO tiptoes across the room. It was once a blue carpet, now blood stained. Furniture is broken and knick knacks are strewn around. The body is covered with a bloody sheet.

GREGORIA kneels over the body. GREGORIA is petite and her dark hair has silver strands. She is wearing reading glasses, and a magnifying helmet.

DEF FRANCO
Nan.

She looks at him over her visor.

GREGORIA
We have got to stop meeting like
this.

DEF FRANCO
At least, we're meeting.

(CONTINUED)

GREGORIA

It's him. Bashed her head in with something. I'm thinking a bat. The sodomy was post mortem, thank God. This guy seems to like his work.

DEFRANCO

What makes you think it's a baseball bat?

She pulls back the sheet and points at something on the forehead.

GREGORIA

I'm pretty sure that says "Louisville Slugger". I'll get an impression of that. This guy has anger management issues.

DEFRANCO

Did he have sex with this one?

GREGORIA

Not unless you count the curling iron.

GREGORIA brushes the hair out of her face with her wrist. There is blood on the gloves. If not for that, she might look like a woman in her garden, serene and comfortable.

DEFRANCO

So? What's up?

GREGORIA

As usual, no forensic evidence. Lucy mentioned her two killer theory. Every other vic, latex, and talc spermicide.

DEFRANCO (DISGUSTED)

This guy is fucking with us. Look. He leaves a legible impression on the girl's head, but can't shatter a Hummel?

He points to a Hummel that lays on the floor.

GREGORIA

Do you think he has some psychological training?

He nods briefly, running his eyes over the room.

(CONTINUED)

DEFRANCO

Could be a cop. I think he wants us to know he's fucking with us. He's a sociopath, dangerous, and unpredictable.

GREGORIA (NODDING)

I have to get her to the morgue. Her roommate is outside, or so they tell me. She's the one who found her. Poor kid.

She stands, pulls the sheet back into place, and signals for the EMT's to move her. She pats DEFRANCO'S shoulder after taking off her gloves.

GREGORIA

Have a good night.

After another quick look around, DEFRANCO follows her out of the room.

EXT. PALISADES PARK, CIRCA 1964.

DEFRANCO dreams of GRACE as she appears in the picture next to his door. They are at the park. She is eating cotton candy and they are drinking lemonade. She is laughing. She is wearing a blue flowered dress and her hair falls in red ringlets.

DEFRANCO

Grace. Oh, Grace!

INT. DON DEFRANCO'S BEDROOM.

DEFRANCO wakes in a cold sweat and reaches for the ghost of his dead, beloved wife. He wipes his face and fights back tears.

DEFRANCO (WEEPING)

Oh, no. Grace.

INT. DEFRANCO'S HOUSE.

DEFRANCO is having breakfast, reading the paper. He has a small dictating machine. He flips open the paper to the personals. He turns the machine back on as he peruses the paper.

(CONTINUED)

DEFRANCO

This is the fourth body. Two were found in a cheap motel by the beach, two in their homes. This guy has different comfort zones. One day, he likes to be in the victim's home, the next in a neutral area. Two of the murders are particularly brutal. The other two, he simply rapes and strangles them, which is sort of a missionary position serial murder. Other times, he gets real kinky.

DEFRANCO's eyes are drawn to a listing.

POV: NEWSPAPER QUOTE.

PSYCHOBOY. NOTHING TO PROVE BUT YOUR BODY AND MINE. DO YOUR WORST. I WAS HERE FIRST. MR. JINX.

DEFRANCO tears out the listing.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT: AFTERNOON.

BEN wakes. JINX is screaming in the other room. BEN leaps out of bed, skidding into the living room. He grabs the backpack and jerks JINX out of it.

BEN

What's wrong?

JINX

You left me alone. I warned you not to leave me again.

BEN hugs the monkey to him for a long minute.

JINX (CONTINUING)

I would never abandon you like that.

BEN

I'm sorry, Jinx. It won't happen again.

JINX (SOFTENING)

You always say that. You need to clear your mind.

(CONTINUED)

BEN (VISIBLY RELAXING)
I'm off tonight. What should we do?

JINX
We could go to that arcade and play
some video games.

BEN
Don't you think Dad will get
pissed?

JINX
Dad is in Atlanta. I'm in charge
here and I say it's alright. We
could even try again, possibly...

BEN freaks out and falls to the floor. He freaks out. He
screams and thrashes hysterically.

JINX (SPEAKING STERNLY)
You will never be healthy until you
can do it. We can use the hotel by
the beach again, one more time. I
feel sure you can do this Ben.
You just have to complete the act.
Have sex like a normal person.

BEN (SHRIEKING IN HYSTERIA)
No! Don't make me!

JINX
Calm down, Ben. I'll take care of
you.

BEN (GAINING SOME COMPOSURE)
You'll take care of me?

JINX
I always take care of you.

BEN reaches out tentatively, grabbing JINX, and wrapping
around him.

EXT. THE STREET: DAY.

LOUIS is driving. He puts the top down. Two blonds in a
Miata pull up next to him and giggle. At the next light, he
stops and flashes a winning smile.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS
You ladies looking for some fun?

DRIVER (GIGGLING WITH HER FRIEND)
What you got in mind?

LOUIS
I doubt I could describe it and do it justice. I got a place at the beach. Say about 8ish? Some steaks, and I got a hell of a Chardonnay from Paris. Over on the Cul-de-Sac of Cocoa Bana.

DRIVER
Which one of us?

LOUIS
Why not both?

The driver frowns. The light changes and LOUIS blows off his turn to pursue them. They get caught at another light.

DRIVER
Bug off, perv.

Blond 2 whispers something in her ear and she giggles again.

DRIVER (SHOUTS TO LOUIS)
OK! I guess with a murderer in town there's safety in numbers!

LOUIS
Yes, indeedy! Safety in numbers!

The light changes and they speed away. Reveal LOUIS with a hungry look on his face.

INT. STATION HOUSE: DAY.

DON hangs up the phone. BILLY comes over and sits beside him.

DEFRANCO (LEANING OVER CONSPIRATORIALLY)
Do me a favor, would you?

DON pulls the torn newspaper ad from his coat pocket.

BILLY (EARNESTLY)
Yeah, sure. Anything.

(CONTINUED)

DEFRANCO

Go to the Herald and find out who placed this ad. Find out anything you can.

BILLY smiles and nods.

INT. THE ARCADE: EVENING.

BEN plays a game. Next to BEN is a girl with short brown hair with red highlights. CAROL BROWN. The girl is playing a game. He regards her as an unattractive jerk comes up behind her and hits her arm, making her lose the game. The guy walks away, laughing. She turns and leaves the arcade with the guy. As they leave, the ugly guy tries to put his arm around her. She pushes him away.

JINX (FROM THE PACK)

It's time for us to go.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE ARCADE.

BEN walks out. A girl is panhandling next to the door. She is blond, hungry looking, and little strung out.

HOMELESS GIRL

You lonely?

BEN ignores her. She reaches out and grabs his arm.

HOMELESS GIRL

Sure you don't want a date?

BEN regards her.

JINX

If you can do it, you'll be well. I promise this will be the last time for a while. A couple of months, even.

BEN (HIS FACE FREEZING INTO AN ICY MASK)

Sure, come on.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT: EVENING.

BEN opens the door, letting her enter first. He closes the door behind him and locks it. He gives her a hint of a smile.

HOMELESS GIRL (CHECKING OUT THE APARTMENT)

So, you live here alone?

BEN

No, I have a roommate.

HOMELESS GIRL

Where is he?

BEN (PUTTING THE PACK ON THE CHAIR)

Around.

BEN stands, watching her. The girl looks around the apartment. The room is full of Salvation Army furniture, and is very neat and tidy.

HOMELESS GIRL (AFTER AN UNCOMFORTABLE SILENCE)

Well, you wanna do it?

She looks up at BEN, who is boring into her with his eyes. She shifts uncomfortably, looking at the door.

HOMELESS GIRL

I's fifty an hour, half and half.
You game?

BEN nods, but doesn't breathe or blink. Again, she looks at the door as if considering bolting. Finally, she walks over to him and kneels in front of him. She unzips his pants. He falls back onto the couch and she moves with him. She looks down at him.

She reaches down and lifts her shirt, revealing two perfect breasts.

HOMELESS GIRL

Go ahead, touch 'em.

She pulls his hands up and has him rub her.

He looks up at her face, touching her, and seems to be really into it. He leans forward and rubs his face in her breasts. He is lost in the moment. He kisses her neck, then her mouth. She pushes him back.

(CONTINUED)

HOMELESS GIRL

No. No kissing.

She pushes him back into her breasts. Again, a close up of her face. You can see that she is on a drug. Impulsively, he slides his hands to the sides of her face, kissing her hard. At first, she protests, then she reciprocates. For a long moment, they are kissing. Then, she pushes him back.

HOMELESS GIRL

Hang on there, daddy!

At the word daddy, BEN'S eyes change and he becomes furious. He slips his hands around the girls neck and slams her back into the coffee table, splintering it. Her head bounces off the floor with a sickening thud.

He falls on her and has sex with her.

JINX (FROM THE PACK)

What have I always told you?

BEN lays still for a while, then leans up, sits back, and rubs his face violently.

BEN (SCREAMING)

Not in the house. Not in the house.
Not in the fucking house!

BEN jumps to his feet with pants around his ankles.

JINX (A SINISTER LEER IN HIS VOICE)

And, where did you bring her?

BEN

I don't need a lecture right now.

He looks at the mirror and sees himself. Suddenly, he looks his age. The killer is still just behind the blue irises.

JINX

No harm done. I thought it would make more noise, actually.

BEN (SNAPPING)

And what are we going to do with the body?

JINX

Tomorrow, we'll get one of those big trash cans. Then, we can take her to the beach and dump her body.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

How am I going to roll a trash can
six blocks to the beach without
being seen?

JINX

You probably can't. But let's face
it, you've done weirder stuff. Just
act natural. Who's going to
question you?

BEN

Won't she smell?

JINX

Not for a couple of days. No one
knows she came here.

BEN

I could go at night. Only crack
heads and drunk frat kids are out
there at night.

INT. LOUIS' HOUSE: NIGHT.

LOUIS sits in his recliner sipping chardonnay, looking at the girls from the car who are now dead. They are posed in a spank scene. One of them is in a maid costume, the other one is nude, but placed decorously. The one in the maid costume is holding a paddle. There is a blue tarp beneath them.

LOUIS leans forward and notices some of the blood has leaked on the carpet beneath them. He stands in a fury.

LOUIS

Damn it! Bitches!

He leans over her, menacingly. The dead girl stares up blindly. He leans back again, looking at them with great boredom. Then, he puts it down and goes into the other room, stripping down and putting on a robe. He grabs an axe.

FLASH: AN AX COMING DOWN AND COMING BACK UP RED.

INT. LOUIS, BLOOD DOTTING HIS ROBE.

LOUIS has two large garbage bags. He drags them out of the house.

EXT. OUTSIDE LOUIS' HOUSE.

LOUIS drags the bags out to a catamaran. He sails out. He turns on the lantern. He opens the bags and begins dropping body pieces into the water, an arm, a leg.

At that moment, large sharks come out of the water and eat. He feeds them, mesmerized by them. When he runs out of body parts, he tosses the clothing, including the robe. He is now naked in the darkness. He stands and looks out over the ocean.

LOUIS (SHOUTING)
I am a fucking GOD!

INT. DEFRANCO'S HOUSE: NIGHT.**CU ON CLOCK THAT READS 2:00AM.**

DEFRANCO sits in his arm chair, drinking a cup of warm milk and holding the picture of GRACE.

DEFRANCO
I miss you, sweetie. And, now have all my days and nights to miss my dead wife. How can there be hope in a world without Grace?

He sighs, and wipes a tear from his eye.

INT. STATION HOUSE: DAY.

DEFRANCO stares at the phone as if it has some answer. Suddenly, it rings.

DEFRANCO
Metro Police. Detective DeFranco speaking.

BILLY (V/O)
Hey boss, it's me. I'm over here at the Herald. The woman remembers the guy who placed the ad. Said he was a little weird and stood out.

DEFRANCO
Does she have a name?

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

And an address. If my Google map is correct, it's in the middle of the harbor.

DEF FRANCO

Anything else?

BILLY

Well... actually, the old lady thinks she could do a sketch. But, I got to tell you, she has glasses that would fit the Hubble telescope.

DEF FRANCO (SMILING WANLY)

Bring the old lady in.

He hangs up the phone.

DEF FRANCO

Oh, Grace, there are two of them. Now what the fuck am I going to do? All I know is there are two of them and they might be talking.

He stands, grabs his coffee cup, and exits.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT: DAY.

Ben enters the living room. As he moves around the couch, he trips over the girl's body. He stops himself before stepping on the shards of the broken coffee table. BEN nods, stares.

JINX

She looks like she's in rigor.

Again, BEN nods vacantly.

He puts JINX in the pack and goes to the front door, opening it. Taped to the outside of the door is a note.

JINX

You need to do something because you're standing here with the door open and the body of a dead whore on the floor. Someone is bound to notice something sooner or later.

BEN grabs the note and jerks it off the door, trying not to make too much contact with it.

(CONTINUED)

JINX
Now, read it to me.

BEN opens the note.

ECU: THE NOTE.

Dear Sir,

Let's say we meet, you and I. The construction site out at the end of Villa Nova Road. Bring your friend in the pack.

JINX
Of course, we aren't going.

BEN stands still for a minute, then takes out his cell phone, hitting a few buttons.

JINX
I forbid you to do this, boy.

BEN (INTO THE PHONE)
Mr. Baxter. I'm feeling really bad today. I can't come into work.
(pause) Yes, sir. I'll take some medicine and feel better(He hangs up).

JINX
Benjamin. Did you hear me? This can only end badly.

BEN (THOUGHTFULLY)
I have a dead whore in the middle of my living room. I doubt it gets much worse than this. Maybe, he can help me.

JINX
I think he wants to kill you.

BEN
Maybe, that would help. I need to go get a trash can.

BEN leaves the room.

INT. STATION HOUSE: DAY.

BILLY escorts Lilly into the station house. DON hands her a cup of coffee and shows her a seat. LUCY strides up and sits on the desk behind her. LILLY bats her eyes at DEFRANCO. She has garish makeup, is wearing a brightly colored frock, and huge orange framed glasses with thick lenses.

DEFRANCO (IGNORING THE FLIRT)

OK. So, could you tell me a little bit about the guy who placed the ad?

LILLY

A pleasant enough young man. A little slow, maybe. Handsome enough, but sort of lackluster.

DEFRANCO

Anything notable about him?

LILLY

He had a backpack with him, and he was talking to it. You know, I thought he might have a puppy or something in it.

DEFRANCO

You have been such a help to us, Miss. Could you do a sketch with an artist for me?

LILLY

Of course.

DEFRANCO nods to BILLY, who stands and takes LILLY to another desk. DEFRANCO looks to LUCY.

INT. STATION HOUSE: DAY.

DEFRANCO watches as PHILLIPS gives LILLY his card and escorts her out. BILLY brings him the sketch.

ECU: THE SKETCH.

It's a dead ringer for BEN.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE: NIGHT.

BEN gets to the construction site and walks around, finding landmarks.

He becomes conscious of headlights coming toward him. He stands to face them. The car stops and the engine dies. LOUIS exits the car, leaving the door open.

BEN stretches. He strikes a defiant pose.

LOUIS walks around to the front of the car. He regards BEN for a long minute, lecherously.

BEN (HIS VOICE HARD)
You Psycho Boy?

LOUIS (PLAYFULLY)
Yup. You Mr. Jinx?

BEN
So, what did you want?

LOUIS (LOSING A LITTLE BIT OF HIS CONTROL)
Jesus Christ. I could take over the fucking world with you. Every fucking little old lady from here to Pasadena will line up to bake you fucking cookies!

BEN wheels, holding out his fists to protect himself.

LOUIS is completely enraptured. He realizes BEN is backing away.

LOUIS
Sorry kid. I got a little away with myself there. No blood, no foul.

He offers BEN his most winning smile. BEN relaxes a little.

LOUIS
I just want to talk.

BEN (CHILDISHLY)
I don't want to kill them.

LOUIS
Of course you don't. They make you do it. You're preaching to the choir here, pal.

LOUIS takes another step closer to BEN. BEN watches him.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS (HANDS OUT INOFFENSIVELY)
I got a collection of 'em myself.
So, How many you done?

BEN (LYING)
I...I don't remember.

LOUIS (CASUALLY)
I got 23 so far, mostly in other jurisdictions. I've been a drifter since my mother passed away. God rest her soul. You got to keep on the move in our line or work, eh?

BEN
This isn't work. It's...bad. It's therapy. Mr... a friend of mine says if I can... you know, do it...

LOUIS
Fuck?

BEN (LOOKING ASHAMED)
Yeah. If I can, I'll be well.

LOUIS
How's that working out for you, kid?

As BEN becomes distracted with his thoughts, LOUIS begins to edge ever closer to him.

BEN
Is this what you wanted to talk about? You some kind of pervert who gets off on other peoples' kills? Maybe a fag or something? Cause I like girls.

LOUIS (STILL MOVING SLOWLY)
Some of my favorite people are girls. We have that in common. We could work together. You could stay with me. We could cruise for chicks in my Bimmer.

BEN
Not interested. What do I have to say to get you to leave me alone?

LOUIS
See, that's a problem. A partner, I could let stay. A competitor, on
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS (cont'd)
the other hand, that's completely
different.

BEN
Somehow, I doubt we both troll for
the same fish.

BEN takes a step backwards and LOUIS rushes him, grabbing
the backpack as BEN turns to flee. A tug of war ensues.
LOUIS is grinning, until he looks down into BEN'S face and
sees the frightened look. They fight. Ben wins.

BEN regains his composure, grabs his pack, and runs away.

LOUIS (SITTING UP AND RUBBING HIS NECK)
You little bastard.

LOUIS becomes conscious of something in his hand. It's a fob
off the backpack.

ECU: THE FOB.

"Benjamin Kensington Dettrick" is written there.

EXT. LOUIS DRIVING HOME.

LOUIS is in his car looking beat up. Red lights come up
behind his car. He pulls over. A police officer approaches.

OFFICER BOB
Hey, Louis.

LOUIS
Hey, Bob.

OFFICER BOB
The reason I stopped you is the HOA
wants to get the license numbers of
all the locals.

LOUIS
No problem.

LOUIS reaches into his pocket. His wallet isn't there.

LOUIS
I think I left my wallet at home.
I'll get it to you tomorrow.

(CONTINUED)

OFFICER BOB
No problem. Just drop it at the
station. Take care.

LOUIS
You, too.

The officer walks away.

LOUIS (SMILING)
That little fucker stole my wallet.

INT. SPRINT STORE.

LOUIS enters, smiling at the girl behind the counter. She is pretty with perfectly coiffed, blond hair. She wears a name tag.

ECU: NAME TAG.

Sprint - MONICA - How may I help you?

INT. SPRINT STORE.

MONICA (BRIGHTLY)
Welcome to the Sprint store. How
may I help you?

LOUIS (LEANING CLOSE TO HER.)
I'm in kind of a jam here. A
business associate gave me his
number and I lost the card. I
really need to get in touch with
him. There's a million dollar deal
riding on this and my boss will
have my ass...

MONICA
Sorry, I can't give that info out.
I don't have access.

LOUIS
Ah, I see. You know, I think
someone as smart as you probably
knows how to get around those
little access issues.

She blushes and looks away.

(CONTINUED)

MONICA
I could get fired.

LOUIS
What's life without a little
risk. Benjamin Kensington
Dettrick.

MONICA (SIGHING)
You're probably a process server.
Give me a minute.

She disappears in the back. She returns with a piece of paper which she shoves at him. She walks away. He looks at the paper.

ECU: THE PAPER.

Both BEN'S and MONICA'S phone numbers are there.

EXT. THE BEACH HOTEL CRIME SCENE.

DEF FRANCO'S car pulls into a crime scene at the beach. DEF FRANCO walks to the risers of the hotel. GREGORIA is already there, leaning over the body.

DON
Fancy meeting you here. How long
has she been here?

GREGORIA
She's out of rigor.

DEF FRANCO
Is it my boy?

GREGORIA
Talc, latex, spermicide. This one
looks like she died from blunt
force trauma to the head. He
slammed her into something and she
bled out. He broke her limbs, post
mortem, probably to put her in
something to transport her.

DEF FRANCO (SARCASTICALLY)
Hum, sounds like he's escalating.

GREGORIA
Maybe, he's burning out. That's
usually when you catch them.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY and LUCY stride up beside them.

BILLY
He's official now. Three murders.

DEFRANCO
Assuming, there are two of
them. (Sighs) There's two of them.
Fine. I didn't need to sleep
anyway.

BILLY
So, we contact the Feds?

DEFRANCO
Naw. Maybe a private group, but
that's big money. I'll talk to the
chief.

INT. GROCERY STORE.

BEN is bagging groceries. His cell phone rings. He almost drops the bag. His boss, Mr. Baxter walks over.

BEN
Yes. Can I take this?

MR. BAXTER
Sure, take your break. I'll finish
here.

INT. THE BREAK ROOM AT THE STORE.

BEN opens his phone and puts it to his ear.

BEN (UNCERTAINLY)
Hello?

LOUIS (V/O)
Ben. It's Louis.

BEN seems puzzled. He has no idea who this is.

LOUIS
You left so quickly last night, we
didn't really have time to talk.

BEN reaches into his pocket and takes out the wallet he stole.

ECU: WALLET AND LICENSE.

LOUIS PATTERSON 1572 Cocoa Bana Drive. There are credit cards and some cash. **BEN pockets the cash.**

INT: THE OFFICE MORNING.

LOUIS
You still there?

BEN
Yeah. Look, just leave me alone.
I'm going to get better.

LOUIS
A noble goal, but you can't do that alone. Look, I'm a psychology major. Maybe, I can help you.

BEN (CHILDISHLY)
I don't think you want to help me. You aren't a very nice man.

LOUIS
Well, that would be the pot calling the kettle black. I saw the evening edition, Ben. Heidi Moritz. A prostitute. That is a cliché. Done to death. Anyone can kill a prostitute.

BEN (YELLING)
I told you I don't want to kill them!

LOUIS (CALMLY)
Of course, but if you have to, why do street trash? Look, let's meet again. I'll keep my hands off your little friend and we can just chat somewhere public.

BEN (EMPHATICALLY)
No! Leave me alone!

BEN snaps the phone shut and gets up. He goes back to work.

INT. LOUIS' HOUSE.

LOUIS looks at the phone in a fury, and then closes it.

LOUIS
That little fucker.

He picks up a sculpture. He flings it against the wall.

EXT. LOUIS DRIVING.

LOUIS pulls up in front of BEN'S apartment building and stops. He gets out and goes in.

INT. BEN'S BUILDING: DAY

LOUIS stops and knocks on the door marked "Office". He knocks and an eye appears in the keyhole.

LANDLADY
Yes?

LOUIS
Yes ma'am. Do you know Ben Dettrick?

LANDLADY
Ben. Yes, why? Who are you?

LOUIS
I'm his step brother. He called our dad and said he needed some money. Dad asked me to bring it down. Which apartment is his?

LANDLADY
Ben never mentioned a brother...

LOUIS
We're estranged.

She opens the door. She is in a house coat and has her hair in curlers.

LANDLADY
Third on the right.

LOUIS walks down the hall, pointing to doors until she nods. He makes a bit of a production of pulling out his wallet.

(CONTINUED)

LANDLADY (SIGHING)
I'll just let you in.

LOUIS smiles. She comes over with the master keys and opens the door. He enters.

LOUIS (A LITTLE LOUDLY)
What a nice lady.

As soon as she is out of earshot.

LOUIS
She has got to go.

LOUIS looks around at the apartment. It is very tidy and everything is organized. The coffee table is laid neatly in the corner.

LOUIS (INCREDULOUSLY)
Jesus, Ben. Your old man must have
been career military.

In the bathroom cabinet, he finds a bottle of peroxide which he takes with him back to the living room, sitting down in front of the couch. He takes out his moleskin pad and writes a note, putting it on the floor next to a small blood stain. He puts the peroxide on top of it.

ECU: THE NOTE.

BEN, love what you've done with the place. Use the peroxide to remove the blood stain. Call me. 813-555-9043. I can help you. Louis.

He stands and, as an after thought, takes out his check book, writes a check, and drops it on the note.

EXT. BEN'S APARTMENT.

BEN jaunts up the stairs and to his apartment. He unlocks the door and takes JINX out of the bag. He sees the note on the floor. He freezes.

JINX
Don't read it. He'll go away.

BEN sits down next to it. He looks at the note and the check.

JINX

I mean it, boy. Don't do it.

BEN opens the bottle of peroxide and pours it onto the blood stain. It bubbles. He picks up the check.

JINX

If you cash it, he'll own you forever. That's what he wants.

BEN slides it into his wallet. He sits for a minute. Suddenly, rage covers his face. He pulls out his cell phone and dials. It rings twice, LOUIS answers cheerfully.

LOUIS (V/O)

Hey, Ben.

BEN (SCREAMING)

You stupid fucker!

LOUIS (CASUALLY)

Good to hear from you.

BEN

How did you get into my apartment?

LOUIS (PLAYFULLY)

Your landlady. I told her I was going to leave you a check.

BEN

You lied to my landlady?

LOUIS

No. I did leave you a check. Now, you just cash that. It's just a small token of my appreciation.

BEN (SCREAMING)

I don't want your appreciation. I want you to get the hell out of my life. Leave me alone!

LOUIS

You don't really mean that. If we were to team up, man, we could burn down the world.

BEN (HIS VOICE HARD)

I have someone.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS

Well, whomever that may be, I'd say they were falling down on the job, there, Bennie. Look, I just want to talk. If you talk to me, I'll leave you alone.

BEN (NEAR HYSTERICIS)

No, you won't! Leave me alone!

BEN turns off the phone and lays down on the floor, weeping like a child. He cuddles MR. JINX and goes to sleep.

EXT. THE STREET: NIGHT.

BEN is on his bike, riding quickly. He pulls into the parking lot of LOUIS' office and sneaks up the stairs. He jimmys the lock and goes in.

EXT. LOUIS' OFFICE: MORNING.

LOUIS jaunts up the steps cheerily and unlocks the door. A fuse hisses, the room erupts into a fireworks festival. LOUIS quickly grabs a fire extinguisher. A moment later, a couple of policemen come in to help him. Soon, the fire is out. LOUIS walks outside.

OFFICER

So, who did we piss off?

Louis gives him a look. The cop shrugs and walks off. Louis takes out his cell and dials.

LOUIS

Sophie! You need to cancel my appointment's today and don't bother coming in. (pause) Yeah, I'll explain it all later.

He hangs up, and walks away from the cops some distance. He hits his speed dial. BEN finally answers.

BEN

This is Ben.

LOUIS

The fucking cops are in my office, as we speak.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Hope you don't keep anything
incriminating there. That would
really suck. You ready to give up?

LOUIS (AGITATED)

I'm coming over there to kick your
sorry ass.

BEN(SOUNDING SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT)

Do that, and I'll call the cops
myself and tell them you're some
serial killer.

LOUIS

You magnificent bastard, you. I
like you, Ben. So, I'm going to
give you another chance.

BEN (SCREAMING)

I don't want your chances. I want
you to leave me alone!

LOUIS

Meet me at the construction site
tonight. I want to give you a gift.

BEN

I don't want...

LOUIS

It would really suck if the police
got your name and some specific
details of the Moritz murder.
Midnight. Be there.

BEN

Fine. Fuck you.

LOUIS

Fine. Fuck you, too.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE: NIGHT.

LOUIS is waiting for BEN. He checks his watch. BEN skids up
on the bike. His backpack isn't in evidence.

LOUIS

Where's your friend?

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Around. I couldn't trust you to not break your word.

LOUIS (SINCERELY)

I would never break my word to you. And here, as promised, a little gift to show my honor in this situation.

LOUIS opens the trunk of his car. It is Monica from the Sprint store. She is still wearing the name tag that says "May I Help You"?

BEN is terrified and mesmerized all at the same time.

LOUIS

Settle down, kid. This is the sports model. You're just used to economy. Come on. I know you. Take her for a test drive. Put your hands around her throat and see how she performs...

BEN hesitates and runs forward, tackling LOUIS. They fall to the ground and roll around, wrestling. LOUIS splits BEN'S lip. BEN isn't even phased. BEN flips LOUIS and straddles him, punching LOUIS repeatedly in the chest. LOUIS flips BEN back over and hits him in the face three times in rapid succession. BEN shakes it off and they continue to fight.

LOUIS raises his hand to slap BEN.

BEN (ALMOST WEEPING)

Sorry, Daddy.

LOUIS smiles. He knows Ben is gone.

BEN shakes his head, as if to find some clarity. LOUIS slaps him hard and BEN wets himself.

LOUIS

Now, you stupid little fuck. You take that girl and do what I said.

He stands and pulls BEN to the trunk of the car. The girl is there, still struggling. LOUIS leans over her, smiling.

LOUIS

BEN has gone to Disneyland. He'll be our entertainment for the evening.

(CONTINUED)

BEN leans over her. LOUIS gives him room to work. BEN suddenly seems to come back to his senses. He mouths for the girl to just be quiet. He reaches out and grabs her throat. She thrashes wildly, but he keeps hold of her. At the last second, he brings his elbow back and connects with LOUIS' face.

LOUIS falls, holding his nose as BEN lifts the girl out of the car. He drags her into the construction site.

BEN then drags Monica into an unfinished building.

EXT. LOUIS AT THE CAR.

LOUIS stalks to the car, leans in, opens the glove compartment, and takes out a Ruger 9 mm, then follows BEN.

INT. THE UNFINISHED BUILDING.

BEN leans over MONICA in a closet. She struggles and moans.

BEN
You have to be quiet. He'll hear
us.

BEN slides the gag out of her mouth. She manages a teary half smile. Outside a gun goes off.

BEN
Fuck. He has a gun.

MONICA
Why is he doing this to me?

BEN takes the rope off her hands, then gently rubs her rope burn.

BEN
He isn't doing this to you. He's
doing it to me.

MONICA
Why?

BEN
Long story that you don't want to
hear.

BEN covers her mouth as LOUIS passes. When LOUIS passes, BEN drags her down the stairs. LOUIS appears and fires at them, hitting the door frame. BEN and Monica duck. They are now outside.

(CONTINUED)

BEN looks for cover. He cuts between two of the houses and leaps over a hole carrying Monica with him. LOUIS, follows, falling into the hole.

LOUIS

BEN!

BEN ducks around a corner, holding MONICA in front of him. He covers her mouth again, keeping her in a tight grip.

LOUIS

Ben, she's seen our faces. Don't you think she's going to the cops? We're serial killers, man. This is a death penalty state.

MONICA tries to get away from BEN who holds her tighter. He shuts his eyes tight, as if in prayer.

LOUIS

Come on. Play ball with me and we'll eat like kings.

ANGLE: ON BEN.

He opens his eyes. He's made up his mind.

BEN

You want her, Louis? Come and get her.

BEN pulls the girl forward and they sprint away. He pulls MONICA into a vacant house and up the stairs, stowing her in a closet.

BEN (MANICALLY)

Stay here.

MONICA freezes. BEN goes out to the landing and waits.

LOUIS enters and BEN throws some timber at LOUIS then leaps over the railing, hitting LOUIS. Ben strangles LOUIS. LOUIS stands, he's lost the gun. Finding it, he runs upstairs.

BEN attacks LOUIS knocking him and Monica out the window. BEN grabs MONICA and holds her. LOUIS lets go of her leg. BEN lifts MONICA. LOUIS raise the gun and aims.

BEN

Oh, shit!

The gun goes off and MONICA'S head explodes. BEN looks at LOUIS.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS
Don't take it so hard, kid. It's
for the best. I really had a lot of
fun. Just leave the body. The cops
will clean it up for us.

LOUIS turns and walks back to his car.

INT. THE HOUSE.

BEN let's MONICA'S body fall. He collapses to the floor of
the house. His cell rings.

BEN (FLAT AFFECT)
Ben, here.

FATHER
Ben, it's your father.

BEN'S eyes freeze and he lays absolutely still.

BEN
Dad?

FATHER
I'll be in town tomorrow and I
thought we'd have dinner.

BEN
Sure, Dad. When?

FATHER
I'll call you when I get into town.
And Ben, wear something decent this
time.

BEN
Yes, sir.

FATHER
Good bye.

BEN
Yes, sir.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT: EARLY MORNING.

BEN awakens.

JINX
He'll be here, today. Get up. We
have to clean. You know what will
happen.

BEN jumps up and grabs JINX. They go into the kitchen to
clean.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT: EVENING.

BEN sits in the living room. He looks like a spring coiled,
ready to pop.

BEN sits straight backed on the couch as if at attention.
Suddenly, he stands, carrying JINX, and goes into the
bathroom. He takes the bottle out of the back of the toilet
and sucks down a long, desperate slug. Then takes another.

JINX (SARCASTICALLY)
Disappointing. It's been a couple
of months since you got really
soused.

BEN
I wish I could get my hands on
something better. Some Oxycotton or
Valium. It would go easier, Jinx.

JINX (ADAMANTLY)
Fight back.

BEN (WHISPERING)
I'm too scared.

BEN slides to the floor of the bathroom.

JINX
We could run.

BEN
That's how we ended up here.
There's no point. I'll just take it
and it will be over. Once I'm well,
maybe then, we can get away from
him.

He gets up and brushes his teeth, scrubbing like he's trying
to wear off the enamel then, he rinses twice with mouthwash.

(CONTINUED)

He combs his hair again, and as he does, goes into the bedroom, stashes JINX and the bottle under a loose board beneath his bed, and drops the comb on top of the bed. There is a knock at the door. His eyes are wild with fear. He stands and opens the door.

BEN SR. is waiting there. He is an older version of his son.

He pushes past BEN and begins to inspect the premises. BEN closes his eyes and a tear falls on his cheek.

FATHER (O/C)

Much better than last time. I need to use the facilities and then, we can leave.

For an instant it seems it is over. He waits, breathless.

FATHER (O/C)

What is this, Ben?

BEN'S panics. His father returns carrying a comb. He slaps BEN in the face with it.

FATHER

A place for everything, Ben, and everything in its place.

He punches BEN in the face. BEN makes no move to protect himself. The onslaught continues.

FATHER

They asked me to retire, because some little bitch says I sexually harassed her. They threatened me with censure!

BEN falls and his father begins kicking him over and over again until his rage subsides. BEN lays on the floor, curled in a fetal position until his father, sweeping his hair out of his face and back into place, reaches down to help him up. BEN winces as he stands.

BEN (PAINFULLY, WHEEZING)

Sir, may I go and clean up?

The old man nods. The look on his face is intense, angry.

BEN

It may take a minute, sir. Is that acceptable?

Again, the old man nods. For a moment, he looks almost guilty, almost aware of what he has done. BEN limps into the bathroom.

INT: THE BATHROOM.

Once alone, BEN looks in the mirror. He looks bad. He washes his face and reaches under the sink, takes out a chest wrap, puts it on. It's excruciatingly painful. He vomits, and breathes hard.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM.

BEN enters. His father smiles at him.

FATHER (AS IF NOTHING HAS HAPPENED)
So, Thai?

BEN
Of course. I know a place down the street.

They exit the room.

EXT. TAMPA/ST.PETE AIRPORT.

BEN stands with his father. They are saying goodbye, acting as if all is normal.

FATHER
We should do this more often.

BEN (A BIT SARCASTICALLY)
Yes, sir. I can't get enough of our time together. I love you, sir.

The older man hands BEN a check.

FATHER
Here's five hundred. Let me know if you need more.

BEN smiles and turns, hailing a cab. It stops and he gets in.

BEN
See you.

His father leans in the front and hands the cabbie some cash. He turns and goes into the airport.

INT. ARCADE.

BEN enters. He sees the girl he watched a few days before. She is wearing gothic attire. She looks at her watch. Beside her is the red headed jerk who annoyed her the other day. BEN is enchanted. He walks over to her, unconsciously.

GIRL (ANNOYED)
Let's go. We're going to be late.

JERK (WAVING HER OFF)
We'll go when I lose.

BEN stands there for a second, then steps forward impulsively.

BEN
Mind if I jump in?

JERK (WITH GREAT BRAVADO)
If you don't mind getting your ass kicked.

BEN
Whoa, you think you're that good? Well, I'll tell you what. If I can kick your ass with the character you pick, you leave with the lady and take her anywhere she wants.

BEN looks at the girl and smiles. She smiles back shyly.

JERK
You're on, asshole. What do I get if I win?

BEN (HALF SERIOUSLY)
I'll let you live?

Jerk rolls his eyes.

BEN (REACHING IN HIS POCKET AND PULLING OUT A BILL)
I got a fifty here. Worth your while?

The jerk grins. They set up the game and begin to play. A moment after they start, the jerk jumps back from the defeat.

JERK (ANGRILY)
Cheat! You cheated!

BEN smiles and looks at the girl.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Pay up. Anything the lady wants.
And, you better not welch on me.

The jerk turns. He's a sore loser and stomps to the door.
The woman hesitates.

GIRL

Hi, I'm Carol.

She extends her hand. He takes it.

BEN.

I'm Ben. I've seen you here before.

CAROL.

I've never seen you. I'd remember.

BEN

I'm kind of dressed up tonight.

She looks at his face and reaches up unconsciously,
touching his bruised cheek.

CAROL.

Did you have an accident?

BEN

Um, yeah.

The jerk yells at her from across the loud arcade.

JERK

I thought you were in a hurry to
go!

CAROL.

In a minute, Danny.

She leans up, kisses BEN'S bruised cheek, and takes off
after her friends. BEN stands there in heaven for a minute.
His phone rings. He pulls it out of his pocket and opens it,
walking out of the arcade.

BEN

Hello?

LOUIS (V/O)

Ben, hi. It's Louis. Get your ass
over here. I have a big surprise
for you! I know you wouldn't want
there to be any unfortunate
accidents happening without you

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS (V/O) (cont'd)
being here to play hero again. I
just love this game, pal. You have
the address. Just check my ID in my
wallet. Take the bike. It's faster,
and I don't think I can wait.

LOUIS hangs up. BEN panics and breaks into a run.

EXT. OUTSIDE LOUIS' HOUSE.

BEN pulls into the Cul-de-Sac and sees LOUIS' house, one of those stilted beach affairs. It is blazing with light in the darkness of the deserted street. Loud Cuban music drifts on the air.

BEN pulls up next to the house and parks the bike. He hangs JINX'S pack on the handlebars, then walks up the stairs.

He knocks on LOUIS' door.

The music softens and LOUIS pulls the door open, a glass of wine in hand. He smiles and offers it to BEN. The house is well appointed.

LOUIS (GIDDY)
Good, you made it. Well, come the
fuck in.

BEN shakes his head, looking sternly at LOUIS. Then, LOUIS' guest stands. It's BEN'S father.

BEN'S falls backwards in his haste to retreat. LOUIS jumps forward and grabs him, the two of them wrestling on the porch. BEN crawls to the stairs. LOUIS pulls him back and rolls him over.

LOUIS (GROWLING AND IMITATING BEN'S
FATHER'S VOICE)
Look here, you little ingrate. I
went to a great deal of trouble to
arrange this soiree. The least you
could do is come in for a drink.

LOUIS' face bursts into a huge grin.

LOUIS
So, did I sound like him, kid? Did
I catch the essence?

CUT TO BEN.

BEN is hysterical. He is weeping. LOUIS shakes him hard and drags him to his feet. BEN shakes his head and tries to get away, but LOUIS has him tight.

FATHER (COMMANDING VOICE OF DOOM)

Boy!

BEN'S spine straightens. His eyes go wild. LOUIS drags him the rest of the way into the house and pushes him into a chair.

BEN (WHISPERING, HYSTERICALLY)

You are not real. You cannot be here. I'm dreaming and I'll wake up. You got on a plane. You have a class tomorrow.

BEN'S eyes have gone glassy, and clearly, he isn't sentient anymore.

FATHER

Ben, Louis here has been telling me that you're having some issues. He thinks you need to see a therapist, maybe be institutionalized.

ECU: BEN'S FATHER'S FACE.

Psychotic rage boils on Ben Sr.'s face.

INT. LOUIS LIVING ROOM.

BEN

Louis? Louis thinks that *I* have problems? I'm crazy?

BEN begins ranting.

BEN

You are a figment of my imagination, generated by years of sadistic abuse, alcohol, and drugs. And, Louis is a fucking serial killer!

BEN laughs in his father's face and the old man's eye begins to twitch. BEN is moving quickly from hysteria to catatonia. Suddenly, BEN'S attention shifts from his father looming above him to LOUIS behind his father with a baseball bat

raised over the old man's head. The bat comes down. BEN'S father crumples. BEN now lapses into hysterical laughter.

POV: FISH EYE LENS. BEN'S FATHER.

The old man mouths something. He reaches for BEN, but the boy doesn't understand it.

REGULAR LENS.

LOUIS is in front of BEN now, smiling with a streak of BEN SR.'S blood on his face.

LOUIS (OFFERING THE BAT)
OK, kid. It's your turn.

BEN'S hands are shaking. He's almost delirious. LOUIS slaps him. Ben stops and stares at his father. The old man is still moving.

BEN (INCREDULOUSLY)
You killed my father!

LOUIS
No. I incapacitated your father.
You have to kill him. Trust me.
It's the only way you'll ever get
him out of your head.

BEN
Did you kill your father?

LOUIS
No. My mother. It was liberating.
So, come on champ. Maybe, you'd
like to just strangle him?

BEN (INCREDULOUSLY)
I can't kill my father.

LOUIS
Why not? You do two whores a month.
Don't make me make you do this.

BEN
How are you going to make me do
anything?

LOUIS (SLYLY)
I know where the monkey is.

(CONTINUED)

BEN looks at the door. LOUIS bolts for it and BEN leaps up, catching him there. They struggle.

BEN (DESPERATELY)
OK! I'll do it, just...don't.

LOUIS (GRINNING)
OK. Do it.

LOUIS stand and grabs the bat from the floor. He hands it to BEN who takes it sullenly.

BEN
Promise me. You said you'd never
break a promise to me. Promise me.
Jinx stays out of it.

LOUIS (CROSSING HIS HEART)
I promise. Today only. Tomorrow all
bets are off.

BEN
I'm going to get caught.

LOUIS
How? I handed you an alibi.
Hundreds of people saw you drop him
at the airport and get into a
cab. How long has he tried to hide
your motive for killing him? Kill
him, Ben. This will be more
therapeutic than killing all the
whores in Times Square.

BEN raises the bat and half-heartedly hits his old man. The father grunts. He glares at BEN, willing him to stop.

LOUIS (IMITATING BEN SR.'S VOICE)
Can't you do anything right?

BEN completely loses control. He brings the bat up and down again with the grace of a Bolshoi ballerina, bringing the bat down again and again in a symphony of gore.

LOUIS grabs him, making him stop. BEN sinks to the floor, exhausted and hysterical.

LOUIS goes into his bedroom. He comes back with some pills and a glass of amber liquid which he hands to BEN.

LOUIS
Take this.

BEN (EXAMINING THE PILLS)
Percodan and bourbon.

BEN obediently takes the pills and downs the booze.

BEN
I'm going to be fucked up. We
better get rid of the body before
I'm gone.

LOUIS (EXCITED)
Well, I've got another surprise for
you!

EXT. A CATAMARAN AT SEA: NIGHT.

BEN dangles his feet drunkenly in the water. He is giggling like a madman. LOUIS is chumming for the sharks.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT: EVENING.

LOUIS tucks BEN into his bed. He takes JINX out of the pack and slides him under the covers next to BEN.

LOUIS
Good night, sporto!

LOUIS laughs hard and slips out of the room.

INT. POLICE STATION.

BILLY is running toward DEFRANCO'S desk with a hand full of papers. He skids to a stop in front of the older officer.

BILLY (SHOVING THE PAPER AT DEFRANCO)
It's our guy. Well, one of them.
The gun fired at the construction
site belonged to one of the
victims. It was reported missing
from her apartment.

DON (STANDING WEARILY)
I'll call the chief.

INT. OUTSIDE THE CHIEF'S OFFICE.

BILLY approaches DeFranco anxiously.

BILLY

Well?

DEFRANCO (DISGUSTED)

He's giving it to the SBI. From here on out, you and me will be fetching that coffee.

The younger detective is crest fallen.

DEFRANCO

OK. Here's what you do. You use what you know to ingratiate yourself. You got a career to care about. Me, I just want to retire.

BILLY

But...

DEFRANCO

But nothing. You need to get noticed. You're gonna get your own serial some day. You're going places.

DEFRANCO turns and leaves the building.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT: MORNING.

BEN awakens, the phone is ringing. He picks it up. He isn't quite conscious yet.

BEN

Dad?

DEAN

No, Ben. This is your father's boss, Dean Rucker. Remember me?

BEN (CONFUSED)

Yes, of course. Hello, Dean. What can I do for you?

DEAN

I was wondering if you'd seen your father? He didn't come to work this morning.

(CONTINUED)

BEN
No, I..

FLASH: BEN'S FATHER BEING KILLED.

BEN
Yeah, we had dinner last night and
then, I... (pause)

DEAN
Ben, are you there?

BEN (V/O)
What now? Lie, Ben. It's what
you're best at.

BEN (ALOUD)
I dropped him at the airport about
nine. He said he had to get back.
He had an early class.

DEAN
Hum. OK. I'm sure there's nothing
to worry about. I'll call you when
we know more.

BEN
Yeah, please let me know. Sure,
bye.

BEN hangs up the phone and picks up JINX.

BEN (A LITTLE HAPPY)
So, this is what the world looks
like without dad.

JINX
A little bright, huh?

BEN smiles, lays back, and closes his eyes.

JINX
There's still Louis to consider.
He's dangerous.

BEN
I can handle Louis. He'll get bored
with us soon enough.

JINX
Do you think so? Because I don't.
Or, that when he does get bored
with us, he'll try to kill us.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Try. Did he bring us home last night?

JINX

Must have.

BEN

Where are my clothes? I'm pretty sure I don't want to know what happened last night.

The phone rings and BEN answers it casually.

LOUIS

Ben, buddy. How's it hanging?

BEN

I'm not your buddy, Louis.

LOUIS

I would call killing your father and feeding him to the sharks a bonding experience.

BEN

I need time to think, Louis.

LOUIS

No, no thinking. What say you and me go out and paint the town red?

BEN

I have to work.

LOUIS

You work in a grocery store. It's not like you're due in surgery.

BEN

I have to go and make money to pay the rent on my shitty apartment. And besides, there's the little fact that I hate your guts.

LOUIS

And, after all I've done for you. Well, I'll just have to think up another game for us to play.

BEN

I'm numb, Louis. Can we do this later?

(CONTINUED)

BEN is falling asleep.

BEN

But, if you could score me some
more of that Percodan...

EXT. POSH LA VERDE ACRES.

LOUIS enters the gated community and drives up to a nice estate. He gets out of the car, walks up to the door, and knocks. A Hispanic maid lets him in.

EXT. THE LANAI OF THE ESTATE.

LOUIS is escorted to the table. Behind it sits Morales, a big, burly Hispanic man who looks a bit like Che Guevara. He is wearing a robe. He smiles at Louis.

MORALES

Louis, my friend. I'm glad to see
you!

LOUIS

Good to see you, too. I need your
help.

MORALES

I am intrigued.

The maid enters and puts a tequila sunrise in front of each of them.

LOUIS

Breakfast of champions. To your
health!

MORALES (DRINKING)

So, what can I do for you? You help
me find this beautiful house and
those stock tips you give me pay
off like drugs!

MORALES laughs at his own joke.

LOUIS

I need some papers and not that
illegal alien shit you got for
Holzhouser. I'm going to need to
leave the country. Two sets.

(CONTINUED)

MORALES (INTERESTED)
You kill someone?

LOUIS
No, actually I killed 23 people.
Well, after last night, it's more
like 24.

LOUIS is met with gales of laughter. His face remains
straight.

LOUIS
So, you see, if the police find out
it was me, well, they're going to
ask a lot of uncomfortable
questions and then, send me to the
lethal injection room. I need the
papers to disappear.

MORALES
I think they use the electric chair
here.

He waits for LOUIS to tell him it's a joke. LOUIS doesn't.

MORALES
You're serious?

LOUIS nods.

MORALES
You killed 23 people. My realtor...

LOUIS
24, but whose counting.

MORALES
You're fucking serious...

LOUIS
Am I going too fast for you here,
sparky? Are you going to help me or
not?

MORALES (CONSIDERS AND SHRUGS)
What you need? Passports, Visas?

LOUIS
The works. I'll get my own photos.
Both identities, male. Oh, and more
of those Percodan.

(CONTINUED)

MORALES

So, you some kind of hired killer?

LOUIS

Why, you in the market?

MORALES

I can always use a good man...
Beside, who'd ever believe a
fucking realtor... (falls into
laughter again).

LOUIS

No, this is purely recreational.
I'm a serial killer.

MORALES

OK. Now, I know you're pulling my
dick. So, what's in this for me?

LOUIS

I won't date your daughter.

MORALES

That's the fucking truth.

LOUIS

How much?

MORALES

For you, 25k each, and you'll owe
me a favor. And, I'll throw in the
Percodan as a gimme.

LOUIS

Kind of a value added service?

MORALES reels with laughter.

MORALES

I love you, hombre! I'll give you
a bank account to do a transfer.
It's secure.

LOUIS

Always a pleasure doing business.

MORALES

Si! Fax me the documents. You have
the number.

LOUIS nods and MORALES stands, his robe flapping open to
reveal a speedo which is misplaced on this body.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS stands and leaves.

INT. ARCADE.

The place is busy. LOUIS looks out of place. BEN is enraptured in a video game. His backpack is at his feet.

JINX

You know, now that your father is gone, maybe, you should get a job here.

At that moment, a man in a dirty wife beater comes past BEN with a change apron. He is balding. BEN turns and stops him.

BEN (NERVOUSLY)

Could I speak to the manager.

MORRIS

You have the pleasure.

BEN

I'm Ben Dettrick, and I was wondering if I could put in an application for a job?

MORRIS

Why the hell should I hire you when I don't hire any of the other kids who ask for work?

BEN

Because I'm an adult, 32. I can fix any of these machines. And, I doubt you're going to get any other college grads applying this week.

BEN'S courage breaks and he looks away. MORRIS considers.

MORRIS

OK. I'll start you part time at nine an hour. Be here tomorrow, about two in the afternoon. If you can fix the machines, I'm looking for a manager. Maybe, take a little time off and get out of this shit hole.

BEN

I'll be here. I'm very prompt.

(CONTINUED)

MORRIS

Yeah, whatever. Hey, how many times do I have to tell you delinquents to stay off the pinball machine!

BEN beams. CAROL moves up behind him and tugs on his shirt. He wheels, sees her, and his face turns brighter.

CAROL.

Thanks for the other night. Danny is an asshole. He's still bitching that you beat him. I'll give you five bucks if you can do it again.

BEN (LIGHT HEADED)

You sure you have the right guy? I'm not used to beautiful women just thanking me for winning a video game.

CAROL.

Ben, right? Dinner with dad? Rent to pay. Yeah, it's you. I think the black shirt was much better, though.

An uncomfortable moment of silence passes between them. Then, BEN blurts out...

BEN

I just got hired here.

CAROL.

Cool. Then, I'll get to see a lot of you.

She looks him up and down.

BEN (BLUSHING)

Yeah. I think I might like that.

CAROL.

Me, too. OK, then.

BEN

OK, then.

BEN turns and leaves the arcade. Focus on LOUIS in the background, watching. After BEN is out the door, LOUIS walks over and accidentally spills her soda on her.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS
Christ, I'm sorry. Let me get that
for you.

CAROL.
It's all right.

LOUIS
No, I'm such a klutz. That looks
like Spanish lace. Let me get that
dry cleaned.

DANNY (COMING UP BEHIND HER)
Watch it, dick weed.

LOUIS
Little boys who talk like that lose
their tongues.

DANNY puffs up in false bravado. LOUIS backs him down with a
bloodcurdling look.

CAROL (THE PEACE MAKER)
It's fine, really. I'll just go
rinse it out.

LOUIS
Look (taking out his notebook).
Here's my dry cleaner. My
compliments. What's your name, so I
can tell him to expect you?

CAROL
It's Carol Glasser.

LOUIS
Pretty name. OK, Carol. Again, I'm
sorry.

He takes her hand and kisses it, then moves into the crowd.

EXT. BEN'S APARTMENT DOOR.

LOUIS knocks on the door. BEN looks out the peephole.

BEN
Go away.

LOUIS (LOUDER THAN NECESSARY)
I got your Percodan!

The door opens savagely and LOUIS enters. BEN is wearing
sweats and his hair is wet.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Do not make drug deals on my door step. What are you talking about?

LOUIS

This morning you said I should score you some Percodan. I did. I also noticed you haven't cashed my check.

BEN

I don't want your money and I don't need your drugs.

LOUIS pulls the bottle out of his pocket and waves. BEN watches it the way a starving man would.

LOUIS

Oh, but you do, Blanche. You do.

BEN (SHIFTING IN PLACE)

I can get my own drugs.

LOUIS

So, why did you need mine when your father kicked the shit out of you yesterday?

BEN collapses onto the couch. LOUIS opens the bottle, takes out five, and gives them to BEN.

LOUIS

I'd leave you the bottle, but I know how prone you psychopaths are to suicide. Call me if you want more.

BEN (NODDING)

Is this the same stuff?

LOUIS nods.

BEN

Cool. My frigging ribs are killing me.

LOUIS

Well, if you need anything else, just call me. I'm your friend, remember?

BEN says nothing.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT: MORNING.

BEN sits in the middle of the couch in a Percodan haze. Four pills sit on the table in front of him. An alarm clock goes off.

CU of BEN'S eyes. They close and the alarm goes off again. He jolts awake and jumps up. He goes into the bedroom and turns off the clock. He gets dressed, grabs JINX, bolts out the door.

INT. THE STORE.

A police officer comes into the store and talks to Mr. Baxter, pointing at BEN. BEN looks nervous.

MR. BAXTER

Ben, could you come here for a second?

JINX

I know what your thinking boy and, if you run, you're dead.

He takes a deep breath and walks to BAXTER and the officer.

BEN

Is there something wrong?

BAXTER.

No, no. The officer just wants to ask you some questions.

BEN (V/O)

You cannot be fucking serious. We are going to the lethal injection chamber, post fucking haste.

BEN (CALMLY)

Oh, OK. Did I do something wrong?

COP (LIKE HE'S TALKING TO A CHILD)

No, son. Nothing like that. We think you might have met a bad man.

BEN nods.

BEN

OK. Do I get to ride in the police car?

(CONTINUED)

OFFICER
Absolutely. Let's go.

BAXTER (AS BEN WALKS AWAY, IN A WHISPER)
He's a little slow, if you know
what I mean.

BEN smiles.

BEN
I have to go and get my pack.

He dashes off for the back of the store without looking
back. A moment later, he's there.

INT. DEFRANCO'S SQUAD ROOM.

DEFRANCO and LUCY go into the mirror room and watch BEN for
a minute. BEN spins in the chair and generally acts like a
kid.

DEFRANCO
Said the kid is slow. I better get
in there.

LUCY
Put a little pressure on him. Will
you?

DEFRANCO
Yeah. And next, I'll beat up some
school kids for their lunch money.

LUCY (IMPLACABLY)
IQ isn't a determiner of a serial
murderer.

DEFRANCO goes around to the entrance and enters the room.

DON
Hey. I'm Detective DEFRANCO.

BEN
I'm BEN!

DEFRANCO
Yeah. Well, who's your friend in
the bag?

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Mr. Jinx. Will this take long?

DEFRANCO

No, not at all. Nobody thinks you did anything wrong, but I do have some questions. First, do you know what lying is?

BEN

Well, duh. It's not telling the truth. I'm not stupid, you know.

BEN begins to swivel the chair back and forth.

DEFRANCO

Of course not. Ben, remember the other day? You went to the newspaper and placed an ad.

BEN nods, not looking at DEFRANCO.

DEFRANCO

Do you remember why you did that?

BEN nods.

DEFRANCO

Would you tell me?

BEN

A guy gave me twenty bucks to.

DEFRANCO (LEANING FORWARD)

What guy?

BEN

I don't know some guy at the arcade. I trashed him at Tekken. I'm the best player there.

DON

Do you remember what the guy looked like?

BEN (HESITATING A MOMENT)

Yup. He was older. He had red hair and brown eyes and a mole or something on his chin. Really gross. And, he had a tattoo.

(CONTINUED)

DEFRANCO

Could you describe him and make a picture with my sketch artist?

BEN

Yup.

DEFRANCO

OK, I think we're done. Would you like a Coke or something?

BEN wipes his face and nods.

EXT. THE MIRRORED ROOM BEHIND INTERROGATION 2.

LUCY is watching BEN intently. DEFRANCO enters.

DEFRANCO

So.

LUCY

Well, if he's faking the kid thing, he deserves the Oscar. He's probably telling the truth. I haven't seen anything that makes me think he's guilty. I also haven't seen anything that makes me think otherwise.

DEFRANCO

Well, I'm letting him go. Nothing to hold him on.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT: EVENING.

BEN is sitting on the floor. JINX is sitting next to him.

BEN

That was incredibly frigging close. I never want to see the inside of a police station again.

JINX

I think you handled it nicely. We'll have to find some way to thank Baxter for telling them you're retarded. Louis could keep the death penalty off the table if you ever get caught.

(CONTINUED)

BEN
I don't want to talk about this.

JINX
And what shall we do tonight?

BEN smiles. He takes out his cell phone. He dials.

CUT TO LOUIS' HOUSE. LOUIS IS MAKING DINNER.

His phone rings. He picks it up.

LOUIS
Yello!

BEN (V/O)
Louis, it's Ben.

LOUIS (EXCITED)
As I live and breathe, to what do I
owe this honor?

BEN (V/O)
Just thought, you'd be interested
in my day, is all.

LOUIS
Did she have a nice ass?

BEN (V/O)
I met Detective DeFranco.

LOUIS stops for a long moment. His face freezes in an evil
frown.

LOUIS
The head of the serial killer task
force?

BEN (A SMILE IN HIS VOICE)
Yup.

LOUIS (CAUTIOUSLY)
Where the hell are you, buddy? Are
you busted?

BEN
I'm at home. They asked me if I
knew any serial killers and I
thought of you.

LOUIS freezes. For a second, it looks as if his nervous
system has over loaded.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS (STILTED)
If you sold me down the river, you
little fuck, I'll rip off your head
and shit down the stump.

BEN
Have a hell of an evening, Louis.

BEN hangs up.

LOUIS reaches over and turns off the burner on his food. He
throws his telephone against the wall with such force it
shatters. Yet, the whole time, he has a calm demeanor.

LOUIS (SEETHING)
That fucking little psycho.

EXT. BEN'S APARTMENT: NIGHT.

LOUIS' car pulls up outside the complex. He leaps out of
the car and storms up the stairs.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT BUILDING: NIGHT.

LOUIS stops in front of BEN'S door and bangs hard.

LOUIS
Open up this fucking door or I'll
burn this God-damned building down.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT: NIGHT.

BEN is looking out the peephole. He is smiling. JINX is
sitting on the couch as if watching. BEN unlocks the
door letting LOUIS in.

LOUIS swings wide, but BEN is ready for it and ducks. LOUIS
shrugs past him into the apartment.

LOUIS (COMMANDING)
Shut the door.

BEN obliges.

LOUIS (FURIOUS, SPITTING AS HE SPEAKS)
Convince me to let you live.

BEN
It's a joke, Louis, a game. I
thought you liked games.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS
Hardy, fucking har. What did you
tell them, you little shit?

BEN
You know me, always helpful.

LOUIS
You little jackass. I work over a
cop shop!

LOUIS moves forward, but BEN doesn't flinch.

BEN (A BIT SARCASTICALLY)
You mean the one where they have
the fireworks displays?

BEN laughs and LOUIS finally loses it. He swings at BEN who ducks. LOUIS' hand connects with the wall and he screams. LOUIS whirls around and grabs BEN by the hand. He comes up with his free hand and connects twice with BEN'S broken ribs. Then, smacks him in the face opening up the lip, making it drip blood. Still, BEN holds his smile.

BEN
You're not very good with your
fists, Louis. Or maybe, I've just
had a better quality of abuse. I'm
spoiled.

LOUIS backhands him. Then, leaps over him and grabs JINX off the couch. BEN turns to grab him, but LOUIS kicks him in the chest and sends him sprawling. He, then puts his foot on BEN'S injured ribs.

LOUIS
Daddy was bullshit compared to me,
kid. He never knew a good thing
when he saw it.

BEN is gasping in pain.

BEN (WHEEZING)
I...

LOUIS releases the pressure.

BEN (BREATHLESSLY)
I gave them a sketch of my gym
teacher. I told 'em I put an ad in
the paper for him. They picked me
up at work and Mr. Baxter told 'em
I'm retarded.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS steps back. His rage is spent. He sits on the couch and shoves JINX into his jacket.

BEN (DEMANDING)
Give him back, Louis.

LOUIS
You really like having your ass kicked, don't you. Well, things are going to be different from now on. I'm daddy and you do what I say from now on. Got it?

BEN looks a bit defiant. LOUIS reaches into his pocket and takes out a lighter. He takes JINX from his coat and lights the lighter. BEN stops, stares. He sits back, looking completely broken.

BEN (QUIETLY)
Yes, Louis.

LOUIS
I couldn't quite hear you there, boy.

BEN (LOUDLY)
Yes, Louis.

LOUIS (CORRECTING)
Sir.

BEN (LOOKING DOWN, BROKEN)
Yes, Sir.

LOUIS (THOUGHTFULLY)
Sir, I think I like that. You're a God, Louis. Say it.

BEN
You're a God, Louis.

LOUIS
Now, kid, here's the deal. I'm taking the monkey with me, and if you piss me off, the monkey ends up like daddy, sleeping with the fishes. I'll be in touch. Oh, and if the police show up again, don't think of me.

LOUIS skirts out of the room. BEN remains kneeling in the middle of the floor like a penitent. After the door closes, he looks up, horror in his eyes. He is alone.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT: NOON.

BEN awakens and doesn't find Jinx. He is horrified. The clock goes off. He jumps out of bed takes a shower. He looks at himself in the mirror after his shower, he begins to weep.

JINX (IN HIS HEAD)
It's OK. I'm with you.

BEN
Are you dead?

JINX
Ben, I was never alive. Maybe, I am just part of your sickness. Get up and go to work. The police might be watching you.

He goes to the other room and gets his wallet. He takes out DEFRANCO'S card. He looks at the phone, then puts the card back in his wallet.

INT. ARCADE: NIGHT.

MORRIS
You're on time. Good start.

BEN grabs his apron and puts it on. CAROL walks by and grins.

CAROL
Look at you. Staff!

She points to his apron and he smiles.

BEN
Someday, I aspire to have a job that doesn't involve wearing an apron.

He looks around.

BEN
Where is your boyfriend?

CAROL (PUZZLED)
Who? Oh, you mean Danny. That dork isn't my boyfriend. He wishes he was.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Oh.

CAROL.

Yup. The position of boyfriend is wide open. I'm always taking applications.

BEN

I'll keep that in mind.

He blushes. She smiles, turns, and saunters off, suggestively. He watches her, then goes back to work.

INT. ARCADE: LATE NIGHT.

The crowd has thinned and become older. MORRIS walks up to BEN with a half smile on his face.

MORRIS

Great job, kid! Go home.

He hands BEN some cash and slaps him on the back. BEN feels a tug on his sleeve as he takes off his apron. He turns, and it is CAROL.

CAROL

Some of us are going to the club.
You wanna come?

BEN

Sure.

She grabs his hand and drags him out of the arcade into the clear, Florida night. She takes him over to an old Chrysler and jumps on the hood. She doesn't let go of his hand. On impulse, he puts his arm around her and she snuggles into his shoulder.

A few minutes later, DANNY comes out, dragging some girl and gets in the car. He stares holes in BEN as they get in.

EXT. THE CLUB: NIGHT.

The door of the car opens and BEN and CAROL get out, as does DANNY and his date. DANNY drags the girl inside, pissed off.

CAROL pulls BEN playfully into the club which is dark and cavernous. It is a typical Goth club. BEN buys himself a beer, a bourbon back, and a mixed drink for CAROL. They move to the dance floor.

(CONTINUED)

She dances and he sits on a small stage where kids gather.

CAROL moves to him and dances for him. She leans forward, rubbing herself on him. He leans up and kisses her. He gently pushes her hair out of her face and she dances away.

He finishes the beer and gets up, moving to the Men's room.

INT. THE BATHROOM.

The room has a stall and three urinals. He goes to the first urinal and uses it. A very drunk DANNY enters the room. He eyes BEN.

DANNY

So, who the fuck do you think you are?

BEN (ZIPPING)

Excuse me?

DANNY

Carol is my girl. So back off.

BEN

Carol doesn't seem to think so. She seems to think she's my girl, at least for tonight. And, if she changes her mind tomorrow, then that's up to her.

DANNY

Carol doesn't know what she wants. You're just the flavor of the week.

In the background, a tall, dark man appears in the door frame and watches quietly. The principles don't see him.

BEN

At least I'll get laid in the deal. More than you got.

DANNY throws a punch at BEN who dodges it. DANNY falls on him and brings his head up, catching BEN'S lip, making it bleed again. BEN'S eyes switch from calm to killer. He pops DANNY in the nose, sending the smaller man reeling backwards to the floor. BEN pounces on him and raises his hand.

BEN (SEETHING)

Don't ever touch me again.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY turns over clutching his injured nose. BEN stands and wipes the blood from his mouth. He turns and sees the dark man now, noticing the radio in his ear. He sighs.

BEN

Sorry.

The dark figure is completely calm. He motions for BEN to follow, he turns and leaves the room. The security guy leads BEN outside.

Outside the dark man pulls out a joint, lights it up, and offers it to BEN.

SECURITY GUY

It'll take the edge off.

BEN

I'm really sorry about that back there. It won't happen again. He hit me, and I kind of lost it.

SECURITY GUY

Danny? Fuck that little prick. He comes in here all the time, trying to cause shit. If it wasn't you, it would have been someone else.

They smoke together in silence.

SECURITY GUY

Where did you get your training?

BEN

Beg pardon?

SECURITY GUY

Your training. I saw you in there. You're blindingly fast and probably lethal.

BEN

I got tired of having my ass kicked in school.

SECURITY GUY

You look ex-army, a Ranger, or some special ops shit. That's where I came from. You need some extra money, I can get you some work here.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Just like that?

SECURITY GUY

You could have killed him, you didn't. It doesn't hurt that the others saw your little show. You can handle yourself.

BEN

I'll keep it in mind.

BEN turns to go back in the club.

SECURITY GUY

Hey, hang out a minute. Danny is getting kicked out of the club. I want him to think you're getting disciplined, too. If not, he'll fucking whine. I'm Davis. You need anything, you let me know.

DAVIS drops the roach on the ground and steps it out.

DAVIS

Don't listen to him. You ain't the flavor of the week. I've been here for three years and I've never seen Carol with anyone.

DAVIS puts a hand on BEN'S shoulder and heads back into the club. CAROL comes out and finds him.

CAROL (SCREECHING)

Oh, my God! You're bleeding!

She pulls out some Kleenex and pushes it into his bleeding lip. He flinches.

BEN

Ow!

CAROL

Don't be a baby.

She frowns and puts the Kleenex back in his lip. They sit down on the pavement.

CAROL

You get in a lot of fights?

She touches his broken lip, tracing the bruises on his face.

(CONTINUED)

BEN
I walked into a door.

She throws her arms around him and bumps his head on the asphalt. BEN recoils from the blow.

BEN
Jesus, woman. You're going to kill me!

CAROL
Sorry.

She rubs the top of his head.

BEN
Guess we should call a cab.

He kisses her.

INT. BEN'S FRONT DOOR.

BEN
You said you live near here. Want me to walk you home?

She shakes her head, flirting a bit.

CAROL
My roommate has her boyfriend over tonight.

He grins and blushes. She turns and kisses him passionately. They move up the stairs in a passionate embrace, to his apartment. He leans back for a minute, fumbling for his keys, and unlocks the door.

BEN
Come in.

They enter the apartment and he locks the door. Again, they lock in a wild embrace. They fall to the floor.

BEN (COMING UP FOR AIR)
You are so amazing. I can't believe this is real.

He buries his face in her neck and they make out.

(CONTINUED)

CAROL (PUSHING HIM BACK)
I want you.

He swallows hard and takes a deep, gasping breath.

BEN
Carol.

He looks deeply into her eyes.

BEN
Sex is always a disaster for me.

CAROL
Tell me about it.

She sits up next to him on the floor.

CAROL
Everything is going so well and then, all of a sudden, it gets so creepy.

BEN (IRONICALLY)
Yeah, exactly. I want to take a little time. Go slow. You know, I never wanted to be with someone as much as I want to be with you. I've watched you at the arcade for a week now, and Christ, I want you.

He kisses her again and gets lost for a second, then stops himself.

BEN
Would you think I was an asshole if I said I just wanted to go lay down and hold you 'til I go to sleep?

CAROL
I would think you're that perfect man my mother says doesn't exist.

He stands, takes her hand, pulls her up, and they walk into his bedroom together.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT: MORNING.

BEN rises and leaves CAROL sleeping in his bed. He watches her for a minute to make sure she is breathing. Then, he dresses for the arcade and leaves her a note. He places it on the pillow, kisses his hand, and brushes it against her cheek.

INT. POLICE STATION: DAY.

LUCY is at her office in the station, looking over a file. It is marked "DETTRICK, BENJAMIN KENSINGTON". She seems to be amazed at what she is reading. She closes the folder, stands, and walks down the stairs to the main squad room, almost walking in. She sees the State Police setting up. She looks at the State Police, and at DEFRANCO and BILLY, looking morose. She puts the file back in her briefcase and waves to them as she leaves the building.

INT. POLICE STATION.

The command center is set up. White boards and laptops are all around. The room is filled to capacity. DON sits next to LT. MITCHELL, a tall, serious looking man with salt and pepper hair. He has a military bearing. DEFRANCO sits in the back with BILLY and LUCY, completely segregated.

WILSON

We are setting up a sting operation in the red light district. We are going to type by profile, as provided by the good doctor (motions to LUCY). We are hoping to have some results by this weekend. A forensic expert is coming over from the Feds this afternoon.

DEFRANCO frowns.

WILSON (CONT.)

We have access to a wider database network, and are running prints through Quantico and the military bases. There is also a possible witness. Unfortunately, we are having trouble locating said witness. He is a disabled fellow that no one seems to be able to track down.

He eyes DEFRANCO and frowns. DEFRANCO leans over to LUCY and whispers.

DEFRANCO

I wish this guy would use a fucking contraction.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY smiles.

WILSON

So, in closing people, we need to
get out there and do our job. We
need to catch these bastards.

The meeting breaks up and the room becomes a flurry of activity. LUCY, DEFRANCO, and BILLY retreat to their desks.

BILLY

What do you think?

DEFRANCO

These guys couldn't catch a cold.
It's all science and machines.
They're chasing human beings.

BILLY

Yeah, but the forensics?

DEFRANCO

This is going to get ugly. I'm so
tired.

BILLY looks away. LUCY bites her lip. WILSON comes over to them.

WILSON

Hey, Don!

DEFRANCO

Yes.

WILSON

Can you get us some coffee? There's
a Starbucks around the corner.

EXT. STREET: DAY.

BEN walks CAROL to work. She is dressed in a suit and carries a brief case. They stop before a brokerage house. He is dressed like a bum in a torn shirt and jeans. She kisses his cheek.

CAROL

See you later.

He nods, looking pensive.

EXT. CORNER CAFE: DAY.

BEN watches CAROL'S building while drinking coffee and reading comic books.

EXT. CAROL'S BUILDING: DAY.

BEN and CAROL walk to lunch. They go into a shop and get some clothing. They giggle and play. BEN looks truly happy.

They exit the store.

BEN

I've got to run to the arcade, but I'll be back to pick you up at 5 sharp. Don't talk to anyone. Especially, if they say they are a friend of mine.

CAROL (SARCASTICALLY)

Well, that's a conversation starter.

BEN

I'm having a little argument with a friend of mine and he's a little bent.

She nods and kisses him.

BEN

I'll be here at five, sharp.

EXT. THE CLUB.

BEN and CAROL exit a hearse that has been painted bubble gum pink. They walk to the entrance of the club. DAVIS is standing there.

DAVIS

Boy, am I glad to see you. I got a guy out sick. You game?

BEN

How much?

DAVIS

Not much. A hundred in cash. It's house music night, usually pretty tame. All you got to do is walk

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DAVIS (cont'd)
around looking serious. You already
got a rep.

BEN
Sure.

DAVIS
I'll comp Carol. Could you go
inside for a minute, Doll?

CAROL nods, reluctantly letting BEN go, and enters the club.
DAVIS pulls BEN beside the club and lights up a joint.

They smoke for a minute and LUCY appears, looking like a
vampire. She is in all black. She exchanges a look with
DAVIS.

DAVIS
She wants to talk to you.

BEN
What does she want?

DAVIS
Who the fuck ever knows what Lucy
wants. If you don't want to talk to
her, I'll tell her to fuck off.

BEN
No, I'm curious.

DAVIS shrugs, hands BEN the joint, and walks off. BEN takes
a long drag and puts the joint out against the wall. LUCY
comes over grinning like a snake.

LUCY
So, Ben. You and Carol an item?

BEN nods, looking straight out at the passing traffic.

LUCY (SUDDENLY)
Were you a bed wetter?

He hesitates for a minute.

BEN
'Til I was fifteen.

LUCY
What about fires, Ben. You like
fires?

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Never burned down a house or anything, but boys will be boys.

He looks at her for the first time, and his eyes are confident and sure.

LUCY

What about animals? Like to pull the wings off flies?

BEN

No, I like animals. You can trust them.

LUCY

Unlike people?

BEN

Most people.

He looks away from her again.

LUCY

You following the serial killer story in the papers?

BEN

A little. I find it morbid. I try not to watch the news or stuff like that.

LUCY

So, what do you think is going on?

BEN

You're the cop, you tell me?

LUCY

Did Davis tell you?

BEN

Saw you at the Police Department the other day.

LUCY

Touche. So, did you do it?

BEN

I know you're a cop. Do you think I'd just admit to a capital offense to you?

(CONTINUED)

LUCY
I haven't mirandized you.

BEN
Voluntary utterance. I studied a little law.

LUCY
At UGA. Yes, impressive credentials for a bag boy. At the office, you told DeFranco you were a retard.

BEN
I did nothing of the sort. He assumed I was a retard. I let him think it. Give people what they want and they leave you alone.

LUCY
Who taught you that?

BEN
That would be telling.

LUCY
You never answered my question. Did you kill them?

He shakes his head.

LUCY
But, you know who did.

BEN
You smoke?

She pulls out a Marlboro and gives it to him. He lights it and takes a long drag.

LUCY
Would you tell me?

BEN
If I knew, would I tell you? Hum, no. Particularly, if that person had something they were holding over my head.

LUCY
Did you commit a crime? Because I could...

(CONTINUED)

BEN

More a momento of the past.
Something I need.

LUCY

What about the construction site?
Hypothetically, I mean. What do you
think happened?

BEN

I don't know what you're talking
about. I told you. I don't watch
the news.

LUCY

I can compel you and charge you as
a accessory after the fact.

BEN

And, I can flee the jurisdiction.
No state in the Union would bust a
sweat to extradite me.

LUCY

He's a murderer.

He turns to her with his eyes wide and great passion in his
voice.

BEN

Yes, he is. And, I want to stay
alive. And there's Carol to
consider.

LUCY

We can protect you.

BEN

Sure, you can. Like you protected
all the victims. Nice try, lady.
But, I don't know anything.

She gives up, reaches in her pocket, and pulls out a card.

LUCY

Here's my card in case you change
your mind.

BEN

I already have your bosses', and I
won't change my mind.

She puts the card away, defeated. He finishes the cigarette
and stomps it out.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY
You're playing a dangerous game.

BEN
I've done it before. I need to go
check on Carol.

He turns and goes into the club, leaving her to watch as he walks away. She seems captivated with him.

INT. LOUIS' HOUSE.

LOUIS is on-line and he grins. He turns to JINX who is perched on the edge of his desk.

LOUIS
Jinx, old boy. I'm willing to
forgive that boy a lot of sins, but
I need to make an abject lesson
here. He seems to have forgotten
us. It's a real betrayal, not just
to me, but to you as well. I can't
let him do this to us. We have to
get rid of that girl and get our
Ben back.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT HALLWAY: NIGHT.

BEN and CAROL are at the door, necking. BEN opens the door, embraces her again, and they are inside, leaving the door open as they neck. LOUIS appears at the doorway and moves up behind them, expertly slipping a garrot over BEN'S head and around his neck. BEN flails, but can't get away from LOUIS. BEN falls to the floor and LOUIS pulls the cord tighter around BEN'S neck.

LOUIS
Four minutes, Ben. Then, you'll be
really dead. Isn't that what your
dad used to tell you? That's what
you said. Four minutes. You told me
all kinds of things about him that
night on the catamaran. Can you
hear me, Ben? Can you...

Fade to black.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT: NIGHT.

CU on BEN'S face as he regains consciousness. He stands and looks around, searching for CAROL. He finds nothing. He pulls out his cellphone, dials, and puts his phone to his ear.

LOUIS (VOICE MAIL (V/O))
 Thanks for calling Patterson Realty. I'm with a client right now. Please leave a message and I'll get right back to you.

BEN (ENRAGED)
 You fuck! If you hurt her, I promise I will spend the rest of my life making you wish you had never been born. Do you understand me?

He looks around one more time and sees a note on the floor in a little film tube. He opens it.

LOUIS (V/O)
 Ben, now, we have our last game. Winner take all. I can't wait. Go to the corner of House and Coco Bana. You have 8 hours.

He hangs up the phone in a fury, breathing hard. A moment later, he bursts into movement, running to the hallway and jumping on his bike. He unlocks the chain and throws his leg over it, moving fast down the hallway, and jumping the stairs to the street.

EXT. THE CLUB.

BEN rides his bike fast into the parking lot. DAVIS and the club's manager are talking in front of the door. BEN skids the bike to a stop in front of DAVIS and jumps off.

DAVIS
 Whoa, man, relax. Breathe and tell me.

BEN (HEAVING BREATH)
 I need your...help.

DAVIS
 OK. Ease back a minute.

He holds BEN up a minute as BEN catches his breath. BEN looks at the manager.

(CONTINUED)

DAVIS
It's OK. He's cool.

BEN
No offense, but nobody's this cool.
Can you take me to the corner of
House and Coco Bana?

DAVIS waves to the manager.

DAVIS
I'll see you tomorrow, man.

They walk to DAVIS' car, a big Thunderbird. They sit for a minute and DAVIS turns to BEN.

DAVIS
Where's Carol?

BEN
Louis has her.

DAVIS
Who's Louis?

BEN
A serial killer.

DAVIS thinks for a minute.

DAVIS
What do you need from me?

BEN (A LITTLE CONFUSED)
That simple?

DAVIS shrugs.

BEN
I need a gun.

DAVIS
What kind?

BEN
Something I can blow Louis' fucking
head off with. And some C4 and det.
cord.

DAVIS
How much time do we have?

BEN

8 hours.

DAVIS

OK. I know a guy. He's probably asleep. My friend's place is on the way there.

BEN smiles.

EXT. JOE'S HOUSE.

A plain white clapboard house in a run down neighborhood. They stand on the porch. The door opens and JOE appears in a wheelchair. He is an ancient black man, missing a leg, and wearing a filthy wife beater. He is surly and half asleep. Across his lap sits a shotgun.

JOE

Why you bringing somebody I don't know to my doorstep in the dead of night? Boy, ain't you got good sense?

DAVIS

This is Ben. A serial killer has his girlfriend.

JOE looks at them and considers this for a minute. He rolls his wheelchair out of the way so they can enter.

JOE

What you need? How much cash you got?

BEN reaches in his pocket and pulls out a wad of cash. JOE reaches for the cash, but DAVIS snatches it out of his old hands.

JOE

I don't know what I got in your price range.

DAVIS

Didn't I mention a fucking serial killer has his girlfriend?

JOE (MUTTERING)

Come ask a man for a favor in the middle of the night. Punk.

(CONTINUED)

JOE goes over to the closet and reveals a floor to ceiling gun cabinet. He taps in the combination and opens the door, revealing a selection of guns. He rolls out a Desert Eagle. DAVIS holds it up.

DAVIS

This is a magnum. Kicks like a fucking mule. How close do you think you can get to him?

BEN

Well, he wants to humiliate me. Pretty close.

DAVIS cocks his head questioningly.

JOE

These guys are pretty smart, I hear.

BEN

Some of them.

DAVIS

Here, man, take this.

He hands BEN a smaller weapon, a 9mm.

DAVIS

This is a nine. You're gonna want to hit him from pretty close range. Just point and keep pulling the trigger 'til you hear the snap.

DAVIS puts the Desert Eagle in his belt.

DAVIS

Where you keep the C4, you crochety old fuck?

JOE

In my night table. Take it all. It's starting to sweat.

BENS' eyes get big.

JOE

That's why your boy don't know shit about guns. He's a demo man! I got one detonator. We was gonna have a hell of a Fourth of July.

BEN

Thanks. I can make some more for you later if you like.

JOE

You ex army?

BEN

No, was a pyro as a kid. I have a degree in chemistry.

They get the C4 and wrap it in a piece of plastic. There is also a roll of cord. They put both in a small bag with the detonator.

DAVIS

Is this enough?

BEN

It will have to be.

DAVIS pulls off five hundred dollars and hands it to JOE.

DAVIS

Here, thanks.

JOE

Come back for the Fourth. You can make C4 and we'll have a hell of a bang.

BEN takes the rest of the cash from DAVIS and they go back out to the car. They get in.

DAVIS

OK. Now what? We have about 8 hours?

BEN

I'm not sure how long I was out. He thinks I'm on a bike, so that should count for something. He doesn't know I have friends.

DAVIS

Well, you do. House and Coco Bana?

BEN

That's about three blocks from where Louis lives.

DAVIS turns on the engine with a throaty growl. They pull out and drive down the street.

EXT. THE STREET: NIGHT.

They drive to House and Coco Bana. DAVIS pulls over to the curb and turns off the car.

DAVIS

OK. What are we looking for?

Ben shrugs. They look around. There is a film canister sitting on a window ledge of a building. He reaches for it but DAVIS grabs him and throws him to the ground. A gunshot rings from across the street and a car rips off into the night.

DAVIS

You, OK?

DAVIS is scanning the area. His body is covering BEN. He reaches over and grabs the film canister and then, standing, lifts BEN to his feet. He pulls him to the car.

DAVIS

Cops. Time to go.

A moment later, we hear the distant whine of a siren.

INT. POLICE STATION: NIGHT.

CU on BILLY who is listening to the police band at his desk. His feet are up on the desk and he is drinking coffee. He calls to DEFRANCO at the next desk.

BILLY

There was a shooting down on Coco Bana.

DEFRANCO

Yeah. Big gun, and someone drove away like the devil was chasing him.

BILLY

Yeah.

DEFRANCO

This is going to be a rough night. I think this might be the start of something.

BILLY

Based on what?

(CONTINUED)

DEFRANCO

No, just wait for it. Just trust me.

EXT. LOUIS' HOUSE.

BEN is placing C4 on the leg of LOUIS' stilt house. He shapes it carefully and then, writes his initials in the C4. The det cord is wrapped around another leg.

BEN

I have to tell you something. I can't have secrets between us. I've never said this out loud to anyone but Jinx.

DAVIS

Who's Jinx?

BEN

My invisible friend. You know, the new police theory in the papers says that there are two serials in the city?

DAVIS

I read something about it.

BEN

Well, there are. I'm one of them.

The only change in DAVIS is a turn of the head and a raised eyebrow. He waits passively as BEN continues.

BEN

My father was a complete ass who murdered my mother and tortured me. It was college, I was in an alley, a whore tried to roll me, and I strangled her to death. I don't know if I enjoyed it. I really don't remember much of it. I just felt strong afterward. I want to get well. I've been working on it. Getting better, I mean. I hate what I am. I think really Louis has more to do with it. He keeps me pissed off.

DAVIS

Pissed is good.

(CONTINUED)

BEN (SMILING)

Yeah, better than where I should be.

DAVIS

Where is that?

BEN

Drooling in a corner, masturbating, killing a whore while I fuck her. I've never been this sane for this long. But now, I have to go the final step. I have to kill Louis. I killed my father a few days ago. He's the last body. Since then, I haven't even really thought about it much. Which is amazing, considering how much of a obsession killing people can be.

DAVIS

Tell me about it. Only difference between you and me is, I killed for my country. It wasn't any more honorable. It was just sanctioned. Maybe, there is redemption for both of us. We'll see. But, if there isn't, I'll do us both like men.

He touches the gun in his belt.

BEN

OK, in a little while, I'm going to tell you to run.

DAVIS

Don't worry. I know this drill. I'll be the little white blur whizzing past you.

They move to the steps and go upstairs. They walk up to the front door. BEN jimmys the door. They hear a woman inside. And as the door opens, they see movement at the couch. DAVIS motions for BEN to be quiet. DAVIS moves into the room, his gun in hand. On the couch is a form covered by a blanket. DAVIS grabs the blanket. A blow up doll rolls to the floor. They find a tape recorder. BEN sees that it is running. A sticker says "Turn the Tape Over". BEN complies and turns it over, and the recorder on.

CAROL (SCREAMING)

Jesus! Stop, you're hurting me.
Stop it...

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS (GROWLING)
Shut the fuck up.

There is the sound of a slap and weeping.

LOUIS
OK, sparky. Here's the deal. Out in the water you might just be able to see my catamaran. You remember the catamaran, don't you? Well, maybe not. You were fucked up plenty that night. Anyway, go to the boat for your next clue. And, watch out for the sharks.

BEN bashes the tape recorder into a million pieces on the floor. DAVIS stands beside him with no show of emotion. After a minute, he gains his composure and stands, walking out flanked by the impassive DAVIS. He, then walks to the beach dropping pieces of clothing. DAVIS begins to disrobe.

BEN
No, you stay here. If I'm not back in a half hour, go to the police and have them find Carol.

DAVIS nods and sits in the sand. BEN walks into the ocean and dives in. He swims. He hesitates with pain.

DAVIS (WATCHING FROM SHORE)
Just push through it. It only hurts if you think it hurts.

BEN (YELLING, OUT OF BREATH)
You're not the one in the middle of a Fear Factor decathlon, asshole.

DAVIS laughs. BEN strokes out to the catamaran and finds it listing oddly. He sees a bucket of chum attached to the side. Then, he sees the shark swim past. He takes a deep breath and climbs onto the boat. After catching his breath, he stands and finds the tube tied to the mast. The sail is up and the boat buffets back and forth. A shark comes up trying to grab the bucket and the boat lurches. BEN falls, almost losing the tube, but saves it at the last second. He lies on his back, opens the tube, and reads the note.

NOTE
Go to my office next. I have something there for you.

(CONTINUED)

BEN stands and tries to make the catamaran move. It lurches and tips making movement difficult. He finds the anchor line and cuts it, making the boat jump wildly in the surf. He falls to the deck again. He cries, then collects himself.

BEN

I can figure this out.

He gets up and makes the boat go toward shore. It begins to work. Just then, a shark comes up and grabs the chum bucket tossing the boat several feet toward the shore. BEN holds on for dear life, and then makes his way to the breakers. Once there, he jumps off the boat and DAVIS grabs him, wrapping him in a towel.

BEN

Where did you get the towel?

DAVIS

Inside. I figured since we're blowing it up anyway, I'd help myself.

They get up and go to the house. BEN inserts the detonator in the C4, sets the timer, and det cord. They run for the car. In the car, BEN and DAVIS speed away from the scene. They stop at the end of the Cul-De-Sac.

DAVIS

Where is the earth shattering
Ka-Boom?

BEN

Wait for it.

There is a dampened boom. The house begins to rock back and forth and finally falls to the beach, shattering into a million pieces.

DAVIS

Nicely played, maestro.

BEN

We have to go to his office.

The T-bird drives away in a fog of squealing tires.

EXT. LOUIS' OFFICE.

BEN and Davis sit looking at the office. The sun is on the horizon.

DAVIS

It's over a cop shop?

BEN

Yup.

They get out of the car and sneak over to the office. They move up the stairs like stray cats. BEN once again jimmys the lock. They see a woman tied to a chair in the middle of the room. BEN hesitates for a minute. DAVIS can tell BEN is about to lose it. The figure doesn't move.

DAVIS

It isn't her. Get your ass up and don't go all girly on me.

BEN leans down beside SOPHIE and motions for her to be quiet. She nods, and he takes off her gag.

BEN

Shh. Who are you?

SOPHIE

I'm Louis' secretary. I came in yesterday evening because he wanted me to do some paper work. He tied me to a chair and told me some men would be coming to kill me. I thought...

DAVIS

We aren't going to kill you. We have to get you out of here.

SOPHIE

I can go downstairs, to the police station...

BEN

You can't go down there.

SOPHIE

Why?

BEN

Louis has my girlfriend. And, he'll kill her if we get the cops involved.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE

But, the police can catch him.

DAVIS

We don't know where he is.

SOPHIE

But the police could...

BEN

NO! (Taking a breath). Is there somewhere we can take you?

SOPHIE

I'm going to the police.

She begins to struggle. BEN looks alarmed. Finally, DAVIS knocks her out with the butt of his gun.

DAVIS

So, what should we do with her?

BEN

How the fuck should I know?

DAVIS

I just figured you should be good at this by now. I mean, you know, getting rid of women...

BEN smiles at DAVIS' wickedness.

BEN

The dead can't identify you. You just drop 'em somewhere. We can't just leave her here. Not alive.

DAVIS

Dead's an option for me.

DAVIS stands and throws the girl over his shoulder in a fireman's carry. They both go to the door.

BEN

Do you have a plan?

DAVIS

Yup, not getting caught. Act casual, and if anyone sees us, run like fuck.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Um, simple yet elegant. I like it,
As plans go, I'd say it's the best
one we have.

Both of them exit the room and move down the stairs. They cling to the shadows and move toward the T-Bird. He can see the car from where they are standing, when a policeman comes out of the cop shop and spies them.

POLICE OFFICER

Hey, what are you doing? Stop!

BEN (TO DAVIS)

Run!

POLICE OFFICER

Freeze!

Both of them take off running to the car. DAVIS throws open the door and shoves the girl in. They hear gun fire, and both duck. The car is between them and the officer.

BEN

Get the car running. I'll distract
him.

BEN rolls over the hood of the car. The officer fires, missing him. BEN kicks the officer, knocking the officer to the ground. DAVIS slides into the driver's seat and revs the engine to life. Before he gets the door closed, they pull off.

INT. CAR: NIGHT.

BEN is sitting in the passenger seat. Suddenly, the realization hits him.

BEN

We have to go back. I forgot the
note!

A police car appears behind them, siren's flashing.

DAVIS (ORDERING)

Put on your fucking seat belt. We
can go back later. I am trying to
drive here.

BEN does as commanded. He fights to connect both SOPHIE and his seat belt as the car jostles. More police cars join the chase as DAVIS careens up a one way street the wrong direction. DAVIS blows through a light, and one of the police cars following them, is struck by an on coming truck.

INT. THE CAR.

DAVIS

This is getting us nowhere fast.

There is a slightly manic edge to DAVIS' voice. BEN looks more than worried. DAVIS spins the car around a corner and heads towards the docks. BEN pushes both his hands against the dash board. Davis bootlegs into the dock area, pursued by the police. He jogs around large stacks of boxes and dock workers who are doing their work. One of the police cars hits a pallet of boxes.

BEN (YELLING)

Please tell me you aren't going to do what I think you're going to do.

DAVIS' reply is a deranged smile. His lips peel back from his teeth in a fiendish grin.

DAVIS

I've always wanted to do this.

EXT. THE RAMP.

At the end of the pier, a ramp moves out over the ocean. Davis bears down on it. Davis considers them for a second, then pours on more speed. The car rushes up the ramp, leaps out over the ocean. It crashes into the water and begins to sink.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. POLICE STATION.

BILLY comes over to DEFRANCO'S desk in a hurry.

BILLY

Some fruitcakes just jumped a car off a pile into the Gulf. They abducted a girl. Oh, and a house blew up over on Coco Bana.

(CONTINUED)

DEFRANCO

Blew up?

BILLY

Well, there was an explosion and it fell over. It was one of those stilt houses.

DEFRANCO doesn't reply.

BILLY

Aren't you going to say something?

DEFRANCO takes a sip of coffee.

DEFRANCO

You won't find them if you go looking now. They aren't through. You can chase the flames or wait until they settle down.

BILLY sits down in the chair across from DEFRANCO and waits.

INT. WAREHOUSE.

BEN awakens lying on an old blanket behind a stack of wooden boxes. SOPHIE is beside him, unconscious. He reaches over to feel her pulse. She's alive. He wipes a little blood out of his eye.

DAVIS (OFF CAMERA)

Just wait a few minutes. I think I can get us out on a truck in the back. We can hide in a box.

MYSTERY VOICE

You think they're gonna let a truck out of here without a ton of dogs sniffing all over it? The place is crawling with pigs.

DAVIS

I ditched the car a quarter mile from here.

MYSTERY VOICE

If you do get out, what are you going to do? Every cop in town is looking for you.

(CONTINUED)

DAVIS

No, not me. How do they know it was me? It'll be hours before the car is out of the water.

MYSTERY VOICE

And the girl?

DAVIS

She's your fucking problem. Keep her for all I care.

MYSTERY VOICE

Ok, I'll do this for you, but then we're even.

DAVIS

No, Peterson. We'll never be even. You will owe me for the rest of your worthless fucking life.

There is silence, then...

PETERSON

Just take my car and lay low. I'll handle the girl. How long you want her out of commission?

DAVIS

Ten hours ought to be enough. It won't matter after that.

BEN stands and looks around.

PETERSON

Ah, sleeping beauty awakens!

BEN looks at Peterson, who is obviously a low life.

DAVIS

Hey, you're up sooner than I thought you'd be. This is Peterson. He owes me his whole miserable life.

The room is obviously a meth lab. Peterson is smoking.

BEN

How long was I out?

DAVIS

20 minutes, maybe.

(CONTINUED)

DAVIS stands and gives BEN a bottle of Jack Daniels. BEN downs as much of it as he can. Peterson stands and takes some cloth off the table. He walks to BEN and pushes it hard over BEN'S eye. BEN swoons and DAVIS pushes a chair under him.

DAVIS

You, OK?

BEN

I have a concussion.

PETERSON (HOPEFULLY)

You a doctor?

BEN

No. I've just had a lot of concussions.

Peterson laughs.

BEN (SUDDENLY REMEMBERING IN PANIC)

We have to go back to Louis' office!

DAVIS

No can do. The place is swarming with cops. They found a body.

BEN begins to freak. DAVIS grabs him to steady him.

DAVID

It wasn't Carol, but she was rather harshly treated. It's some hooker he hit in the head a few times and left in the closet. I don't know anything else.

Ben looks like he's going to lose it. DAVIS holds up the film canister.

DAVIS

You with me? I got the note. It was on the chick. We're going to your house, man. Do think you can walk?

BEN nods.

EXT. THE DOCKS.

DAVIS drives Peterson's car. They wear dark glasses. The cops ignore them.

EXT. BEN'S APARTMENT.

They pull up in front of BEN'S apartment building and get out of the car.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT: AFTERNOON.

The door is slightly ajar. BEN and DAVIS move up the stairs, guns in hand. They lean against the door frame, signaling to each other. DAVIS throws the door open, entering gun first.

BEN'S landlady lays dead in the middle of the living room. Her throat has been cut in a mock second smile. Everything in the room has been smashed, even the couch which seems to have been chopped with a hatchet.

BEN walks from room to room and surveys the damage. He looks like he's going to be sick. DAVIS watches for a minute, then grabs BEN and shakes him.

 DAVIS (LOOKING INTO BENS' EYES)
Man, just don't.

BEN nods.

 DAVIS
I think we're clear.

Both of them begin crawling on the floor, looking for the tube. BEN finds it and reaches under and grabs it. He pulls it out and as he does we see...

INT. THE WALL.

The tube trips a detonator which sets off some det cord. The cord begins to burn and runs up the walls, leaving black lines. The room begins to fill with smoke. DAVIS sees something in the corner, a bomb. He grabs BEN and pulls him out of the room. They run from the building, screaming for people to get out. They launch themselves out the front door and down the stairs, just as the concussion from the explosion throws them to the street in a shower of flame and broken glass.

EXT. THE STREET.

BEN and DAVIS lie on the ground. People are running in every direction. They move, some of them off the street, some from inside carrying their belongings. A guy runs by carrying a TV. DAVIS turns to BEN.

DAVIS

This guy is really starting to piss me off.

BEN

Welcome to my universe.

They stand up and BEN looks into his hand. The tube is there.

LOUIS (V/O, THE NOTE)

Ben, I have to separate you from the things you love. You need to go to the arcade. The tube is on that stupid game you play with her. Now, when did I set that stupid timer for? I think it was ten, maybe nine? Well, you better hurry.

BEN looks at his watch. It is fifteen to nine. He breaks into a run followed by DAVIS. BEN takes out his phone as he runs.

INT. POLICE STATION.

BILLY and DEFRANCO watch the SBI, the Feds, and the patrolmen milling around. Mitchell walks over to them.

MITCHELL

Why don't you guys go home. The "A" team is here now.

He throws them a sarcastic smile and walks away. DEFRANCO watches him with a calm clarity. The phone rings and DEFRANCO picks it up.

DEFRANCO

DEFRANCO.

BEN (V/O)

This is Ben. Ben Dettrick.

DEFRANCO sits up and grabs a pen. He motions for paper. Billy hands him some.

(CONTINUED)

DEFRANCO

What can I do for you, Ben?

BEN

He's going to blow up the arcade at
Twelfth and Boardwalk.

BEN pauses to catch his breath.

BEN

You have to evacuate everyone.

DON (A LITTLE EDGY)

Who?

BEN (ANGRILY)

Louis! The killer! He said he would
blow it up at nine or ten. I'm
going there now to try and get
everyone out!

The phone goes dead. DEFRANCO hangs up.

DEFRANCO

That was him.

BILLY nods. DEFRANCO picks up the phone again. He dials a
number.

DEFRANCO

Rico, I got a tip for you.

RICO (V/O)

Shoot.

DEFRANCO

The arcade at Twelfth and
Boardwalk. It's really reliable. Be
careful.

RICO

Fuck.

He hangs up. DEFRANCO stands and BILLY follows him. MITCHELL
intercepts them.

MITCHELL

You wouldn't be following a lead
you're not sharing?

DEFRANCO

Me? I'm the "B" team, remember? I
couldn't find a clue with a map.

(CONTINUED)

MITCHELL

If you move a muscle out of this station house, you don't work here anymore, Detective.

DEFRANCO turns to BILLY.

DEFRANCO

Stay here, kid.

MITCHELL

Don't move, I mean it.

DEFRANCO

Go fuck yourself. You don't tell me anything anymore.

He takes his shield and throws it at MITCHELL. LUCY is coming in and sees what's going on. As DEFRANCO leaves the building, she follows him.

EXT. THE PARKING LOT OF THE POLICE STATION.

LUCY follows DEFRANCO down the stairs. He turns to face her.

LUCY

I've got to tell you something.

DEFRANCO wheels on her.

DON

What?

LUCY

Ben Dettrick isn't what he seems to be. He's in this thing up to his eyebrows. There's something going on with Ben, something unrecorded. I saw him at the club the other night and we talked. It's the other guy who's more dangerous. Ben is trying to get well. I think...I think he's something completely new.

DON looks at her. He seems to be searching her eyes for something. He sighs and looks at her. He reaches over and hugs her.

DEFRANCO

Bye.

EXT. THE BOARDWALK: MORNING.

Ben and Davis run onto the boardwalk. People are opening their businesses for the morning. Ben runs to the arcade and looks in, seeing Morris there with a couple of kids. He drags the door open and runs in.

BEN

You have to get out!

They stare at him.

BEN

NOW!

They all run out of the arcade. He rushes in and sees the tube, grabs it and runs out. He looks at his watch.

ECU: WATCHFACE.

9:00

EXT. BOARDWALK: MORNING.

All the men visably relax. A police car arrives and two officers approach the arcade. The bomb goes off. The explosion rips through the peaceful morning and showers everyone with glass and shatters video games. They huddle together until it stops.

Ben leaps up and looks around. There are a number of injured people and several buildings are damaged, on fire. A police officer is at Ben's feet. He takes a pulse then shakes his head.

BEN

(To Morris)

A police officer named DeFranco
will be here.

Ben opens the tube and looks at the contents. He hands it to MORRIS.

BEN

Give him this. Help people. I have
to go save Carol.

Before MORRIS can speak DAVIS and BEN take off running away from the devastation.

EXT. THE SHATTERED BOARDWALK: MORNING.

DEFRANCO arrives and sees MORRIS. Emergency vehicles are everywhere. He sees Morris wandering around in a blanket. He walks over to him.

DEFRANCO
What the hell happened?

MORRIS
Somebody blew up my Arcade! I'd be dead, but Ben came running in like Superman or something and pulled us all out just in time! He's a bag boy. Bag boys don't become Superman, do they?

DEFRANCO
Ben? Ben Detterick?

MORRIS
Yeah, You DeFranco?

DEFRANCO
Yeah.

Morris hands him the paper from the tube

MORRIS
He said to give you this.

Defranco reads it and nods.

DEFRANCO
Thanks.

DEFRANCO leaves in the same direction as BEN and DAVIS did.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE.

BEN and DAVIS stand outside the building, catching their breath. They look up at the top windows, and then, at the boarded up door.

BEN
I need one more favor from you. Louis knows me, and he's going to want me stressed, to make me freak out. I need you to help me keep control.

(CONTINUED)

DAVIS

Check. Keep Ben out of his happy place. Got it. So what the fuck is this guy's deal?

BEN

He wants me for a pet. I don't want to go there, Davis. I've spent my whole life climbing out of that hole. If...If I kill Carol.

DAVIS

You ain't gonna. Think about what's directly in front of you. It's the only way to get out.

They look up one more time, and then pass through a hole in the boards that LOUIS left for them.

INT. THE TOP FLOOR OF THE WAREHOUSE.

LOUIS and CAROL sit in a room waiting for BEN. She is bound and gagged. Her makeup is smeared from her tears. He pulls her to the window and makes her look down.

LOUIS

Scream, and I'll kill you right here.

She nods and he removes her gag.

LOUIS

Whose the guy with Ben?

CAROL (SCARED)

That's Davis, I think. He's a friend of Ben's from the club.

LOUIS

Ben doesn't have any friends, except me. And for now, you. Tell me about this Davis guy.

CAROL

I don't know much.

LOUIS jerks her arms backward and makes her squeal.

LOUIS

Make something up. Something convincing.

(CONTINUED)

CAROL

He's a bouncer at the club. A real hard case. Ex army, I think. I once saw him break a guys arm with the flat of his hand.

LOUIS puts the gag back on her.

LOUIS

We have to make ready, sister.

He grins and drags her to her feet and gives her a deep kiss on her gagged mouth.

INT. THE BUILDING.

There is a lot of debris and garbage in the building. Most of the windows are broken out. A calendar is all that remains of the Myer's company, which once owned this building. Hanging on the wall pronounces "1988".

DAVIS

Hoka, Hey.

BEN

What's that?

DAVIS

Today is a good day to die.

DAVIS' face is impassive. They move into the building. To the right is a doorway, to the left on the back wall, a second.

DAVIS

Which way?

BEN points to the right. They move in that direction, guns drawn. BEN puts his hand over his mouth. It's locked. He takes out a nail file. A moment later, he is picking the lock on it.

BEN (MAKING CONVERSATION)

So, how'd you end up here?

DAVIS (MATTER OF FACTLY)

I was a sniper in the Army. I was on a job in Honduras. All the best jobs were there. So, I'm in a tree and the target comes out of his house. Some politician or something. I have the bead, the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DAVIS (MATTER OF FACTLY) (cont'd)
wind dies, and the shot is perfect.
I could make it in my sleep. Then,
his daughter comes out. She was
maybe five, and just as cute as you
could imagine. He picked her up and
pulled her right into my target. He
kissed her on the cheek. I pulled
the trigger. Got 'em both
through the heart from 150 yards
away. A two fer.

BEN
And you have a problem with the
guilt?

DAVIS
No, I have a problem with the fact
that I didn't have any guilt. I was
a gun. Didn't want to be. So, I
left, wandered, and ended up here.

The door swings open revealing a large stairwell. There are
footprints in the dust on the floor.

BEN
Louis?

DAVIS
I'm not tracker, but I'd say
they're fresh. Guess we go up?

The two of them begin to move up the stairs, clinging to the
edge of the wall for as much cover as they can get. The
place is full of debris. There is a glassy quality to BEN'S
eyes that DAVIS monitors.

DAVIS opens the door. BEN goes through. A box falls on him
from above the door frame. Something falls out of it. BEN
shrieks as if a rat had jumped on his head. He slumps to the
floor and DAVIS moves beside him.

BEN
No, God no. I'm so fucking sorry. I
swear it was an accident...

DAVIS (YELLS)
BEN!

BEN jerks over and looks at DAVIS.

DAVID

We have to get Carol. Your father is dead. Come back from the "happy place".

BEN begins to giggle hysterically, then catches himself. He looks over at the now fallen contents of the box being chewed by hungry rats.

BEN

What's in the box?

DAVIS (STANDING AND LOOKING)

It's a toy, man. I had one of these. My grandma made it for me.

He reaches down and picks up a sock monkey. BEN freezes in horror. The monkey is covered in blood. He reaches over and grabs the monkey. DAVIS stares at him for a minute. BEN examines the monkey like it's covered with fine print.

DAVIS

It's just a sock monkey.

BEN

It isn't him.

DAVIS

Who?

BEN

Jinx. It isn't him.

DAVIS

Jinx? Oh, your invisible friend. Your friend is a sock monkey?

BEN

I thought we explained the part of this where I'm crazy.

DAVIS

Ok, psychosis. Got it.

BEN

I think he's part of my sickness.

DAVIS

I'm going to have to say that is a very good possibility. Does the monkey talk back?

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Yes.

DAVIS

Then, we have a winner.

BEN drops the toy and goes back to the staircase. He doesn't look at DAVIS. He just begins his climb back to the top floor of the building.

INT. CAROL'S ROOM.

She is weeping and pulling at the chains that keep her tethered to the wall.

LOUIS

I think Ben is on his way. He's freaked out, too. You have to study your victim, really get to know them. You should have seen Ben a few weeks ago. He could barely function. He's really come along, practically healthy. I blame you for that. But, I can make this work for me.

He stands, picks JINX up off the floor, and sits down again.

LOUIS

People think Ben is retarded. Did you know that? I guess you don't really know anything about him. I watched him stumble down the street that first day with that vacant stare and I saw potential.

LOUIS punches JINX hard.

LOUIS

Yup. This little guy will be going with us. It will give me a handle on Ben. At least, until I can teach him some real loyalty.

LOUIS turns and looks directly into CAROL'S eyes, almost sentimentally.

LOUIS

You really are quite lovely, aren't you? Not his usual type. That is why you have to go.

LOUIS walks over to CAROL and back hands her. She falls back onto the dirty mattress, crying.

ANGLE: BEN.

The vacant look on his face is worrisome. DAVIS has to pull him to the wall of the stairwell. They continue to move up toward the top. DAVIS speaks to break the silence.

DAVIS

She can take care of herself. Once, she told me that night that she was waiting for her soul mate, and she'd know him when she saw him. She seemed so fucking sure, you know. I mean, I don't buy that psychic shit or anything, but she seemed so sure...

DAVIS is lost in thought for a minute.

DAVIS

I envied him. You, really. I envied you.

BEN wipes his eyes and nods. They look in the landing and see something in the corner. It's clothing, CAROL'S. DAVIS looks at him uncertainly, waiting for BEN to react.

CU: BEN.

He is angry. He walks with great determination.

INT. THE HALL.

Behind him, DAVIS hits the speed dial and puts the phone to his ear.

VOICE

Lucy, here.

DAVIS

It's Davis. I need you to come down to the warehouse on Boardwalk, the abandoned one.

LUCY

Why?

(CONTINUED)

DAVIS

Just come down here. I need you to help me talk someone down.

LUCY

Sure, no problem.

DAVIS hangs up and looks at BEN as he walks down the hall. They carefully walk around a hole in the floor to the last door, the only one that is closed. DAVIS holds up his gun as does BEN. DAVIS braces as BEN swings the door open. DAVIS lunges into the room.

LOUIS is standing behind the door with an evil grin and the baseball bat cocked. He swings like Babe Ruth hitting DAVIS in the forehead. DAVIS goes down hard. BEN moves in behind him quickly. LOUIS dives over to CAROL and grabs her face in his hands, turning defiantly to BEN.

LOUIS

Shoot me, lover boy.

BEN looks to DAVIS who is laying unconscious in a corner. He looks back to LOUIS and drops the gun.

BEN

OK. Let's get this over with.

LOUIS gets up, grabs the Desert Eagle DAVIS dropped, and moves to a stool in the corner of the room. He picks JINX up from behind the stool and sits. He motions to CAROL, who is dressed in a tight business suit and stilettos.

LOUIS (HOLDING UP JINX)

Remember this guy?

BEN

Jinx?

He lurches forward, but Louis pulls JINX out of his grasp before he can close his fingers.

LOUIS

I thought you'd forgotten about old Jinxy, here. Jinx was your friend through everything. The abuse, the hookers, but it's OK. Me and Jinx got you something.

He pulls two folders from behind the stool.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS

Here are two new identities. For you and me.

BEN'S eyes shift from JINX to CAROL. LOUIS throws the folders on the floor. BEN grabs the one with his name on it and slides it in the back of his pants.

LOUIS

Now, go and remove Carol's gag.

BEN hesitates. LOUIS shakes JINX by the neck as BEN scampers to CAROL, taking out her gag. He makes sure she is OK.

LOUIS

Now, Carol. You're probably wondering why I called this meeting today. See, you don't know Ben here very well.

BEN

Don't do this, Louis.

LOUIS

She has a right to know. Now, Ben has an IQ of one hundred and sixty-two. A genius. Yet, he works at a video game arcade. Why is that, I wonder?

BEN glowers at him.

LOUIS

His father was an entertaining man. The old man would come down and beat the shit out of Ben, get his rocks off, and give the kid a check.

BEN looks humiliated. CAROL reaches over and touches his hands.

LOUIS

Maybe, Ben told you that? But, I'm sure he hasn't told you his deepest, darkest secret.

BEN (PLEADING)

Louis. Please don't do this. I'll do anything. Just don't.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS

You'll do anything, anyway. I own you, boy. Remember?

LOUIS holds JINX up.

LOUIS

Ben's secret. See, he's a psychotic serial murderer. He has to have his hands around a woman's throat to get off. I think that's how it works. Isn't it, Ben? He chokes them to death. I think it's fascinating, but I'm a sociopath, and don't really have the same behavioral modifiers you do. That's why I'm pretty sure he hasn't done the deed with you.

She gasps and looks at BEN. He looks away from her in shame.

LOUIS

The monkey is more important to him than you are. You see, psychopaths sometimes hear voices in their heads. Ben manifests as Mr. Jinx, here.

He shakes JINX for emphasis. BEN moves toward the monkey, but LOUIS jerks it away again.

LOUIS

Jinx is a part of his whole psychological makeup. It's a part of his personality, his ego, if you will. If he loses it, he'll die. If he had to choose between you and Jinx, I'm afraid you'd lose.

CAROL

Ben?

She stares at him as if waiting for him to deny it.

LOUIS

Don't believe me?

LOUIS takes out a pocket knife. He puts the blade to JINX'S head. BEN screams and lunges at LOUIS, stopping at LOUIS' feet.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

No, Louis. Please. I'll do anything.

BEN throws himself prostrate at LOUIS' feet.

LOUIS

Call me master.

BEN

Master, please...

LOUIS (TO CAROL)

Here ends the lesson. It must really suck to be you, right now.

CAROL collapses into tears. BEN looks back and forth at them, uncertain which way to go.

LOUIS

Enough, Ben. I want you to have sex with Carol. Let's put this matter to bed once and for all. Pun intended.

Both of them look at LOUIS in horror.

LOUIS

No, really. Fuck her. Then, we can get rid of the body and get on with our lives.

Both are motionless.

LOUIS

OK. I didn't want to have to do this. Fuck her or the monkey gets it.

He holds the blade up to JINX. BEN crawls over to CAROL.

BEN

OK, Louis. OK.

BEN kneels in front of her. He reaches over and starts to unbutton her shirt.

CAROL

Jesus, Ben. Don't do this. Please, for God's sake. It's a stuffed monkey. I'm a person!

He leans forward and kisses her. She bites his lips. He pulls back, a glaze in his eyes, and almost slaps her. She recoils and his eyes refocus on her. He turns to LOUIS.

BEN

Jinx?

He waits and there is no response. He looks completely lost.

BEN

Jinx?

His head cocks for a second and he turns to CAROL.

BEN (CALMLY)

I love you. It will be alright. (To LOUIS) I'll make you a wager.

LOUIS

I'm listening...

BEN

If I can do this with Carol, you'll let us go. And, you'll give me back Jinx. If I kill her...

CAROL squeaks. BEN soothes her. He turns back to LOUIS.

BEN

If I kill her, I'll go with you, willingly. No more fighting. I'll be your slave.

LOUIS

Deal.

CAROL

Ben, don't do this.

BEN

Shhh!

She recoils again. He reaches over and grabs her, holding her.

BEN (WHISPERING IN HER EAR)

It's, OK. Don't worry. (To LOUIS), We keep our clothes on.

LOUIS nods.

BEN

Swear it.

LOUIS (GRUDGINGLY)

I swear on my mother's grave, I'll
let you go.

BEN turns to CAROL and kisses her. She resists and he kisses her again more deeply.

BEN

Let me unlock her hands.

LOUIS

No way...

BEN

You can lock the door.

LOUIS stands and locks the door. He tosses BEN the key to undo CAROL'S bonds. Ben glances again to Davis then back to Carol.

BEN (WHISPERING)

I love you. It's OK. I went through
a lot tonight. Trust me.

He glances over to DAVIS, who is still not moving.

CAROL(WHISPERING)

What if he still kills us?

BEN

Shh. Trust me.

He smiles and suddenly, LOUIS is forgotten. They are deep in embrace with one another. Fade.

BEN shakes his head. CAROL is lying on the bed with her head leaning back. She doesn't move. BEN panics and shakes her. Her eyes snap open and she screams.

LOUIS

That was boring.

BEN glances at Davis again. BEN looks at CAROL. A sinister look crosses his face. He leers at her. CAROL looks horrified and tries to push BEN off. He holds her down, roughly.

BEN

That was no fun at all. Let's try
it again the old fashioned way.

(CONTINUED)

BEN'S hands slide to her neck. LOUIS grins and stands and from the corner, DAVIS jumps to his feet and slams into LOUIS. BEN jumps up from the mattress, pulling CAROL. He slams into the door, breaking it open. He flings CAROL into the hall and yells.

BEN

RUN!

She does as he commands. He turns to DAVIS who is fighting with LOUIS.

BEN

'Bout time!

DAVIS

He hit me with a fucking bat! Go get Carol safe!

BEN moves out the door around the hole in the floor and sees CAROL go through a door to the roof. He runs up after her.

ANGLE: DEFRANCO.

DEFRANCO is on the eighth floor of the building. He hears the gun go off upstairs. He begins running up the stairs with his own gun drawn. He sees BEN disappear up to the roof. He follows BEN.

ANGLE: ROOF DOOR.

BEN comes out. He stumbles around looking desperately for CAROL.

BEN

Carol, baby. Where are you?

He hears her crying in a corner and runs in that direction. He falls down next to her and throws his arms around her. At first, she pushes him away and then, embraces him.

The door slams open and out comes DEFRANCO, heaving for breath. He stands for a minute, then speaks.

DEFRANCO

Ben? Come out and we'll talk about this.

BEN (TO CAROL)

I love you.

BEN stands and holds his hands up.

(CONTINUED)

DEFRANCO

Ben. Step away from the girl.

BEN takes a step forward and the door slams open again, making both of them turn. LOUIS appears, covered in blood with a manic look on his face. He brandishes his gun at DEFRANCO who points his back.

LOUIS

Freeze, copper!

He laughs manically. DEFRANCO watches him carefully.

LOUIS

So, seems we got a little Mexican stand off here. I say we both shoot and may the better man win.

DEFRANCO

Look son, put down the gun and we can talk about this...

LOUIS

You seem to be confused, old man. I'm not your son and putting down the gun is a stupid idea. Do you know how long I've had to work to get young Benjamin in this position? Fuck you. That little bastard is mine and I'm not leaving here without him. If I have to kill you, well, just fucking great.

BEN turns back to CAROL.

BEN

Stay here, baby. I won't let him hurt you.

LOUIS

Do you really think you can stop me? I could shoot her like I did that bitch at the construction site. I'm a pretty good shot, too. You should have seen the look on your face when the gun went off. It was priceless. That's what it could be like all the time. You holding them, me killing them. For Christ's sake, stop dicking around. Kill the bitch and the cop, and let's get on the fucking plane.

DEFRANCO'S eyes move between BEN and LOUIS.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

I'm already stopping you, Louis. Think about it. With Carol alive, you have a lot more control over me. It's the ultimate handle. Carol and Jinx. You'd hold all the cards. Let's face it, I've lost whatever heart I've had for murder, but with this...

DEF FRANCO inches toward LOUIS. LOUIS moves toward the edge of the building, keeping DEF FRANCO in the corner of his eye.

BEN

With Carol in the world, you can make me kill whores for you for the rest of my life. I won't complain.

LOUIS

Ben, you are a pathological liar. All you psychos are. You've made so many promises to me and none of them are true.

BEN

This time, you have something really big on me. You have Jinx and Carol. I would do anything to to keep you from killing them. Anything...Master.

LOUIS smiles. DEF FRANCO stops for a minute and looks past the two killers.

DEF FRANCO'S POV.

Grace is standing at the edge of the building, smiling. She is saying something to him. A white light surrounds him. He sees LOUIS and BEN in a different way, as dark and dirty. He is transfixed for a moment, then shakes his head and returns to normal vision.

DAVIS and LUCY emerge from the doorway into the bright light. DAVIS is covered in his own blood and LUCY is all but carrying him.

DEF FRANCO

You sicken me, the both of you. You trade in human suffering and act like it's nothing. Everything is another entertainment or another bargain. More bread and circuses.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DEFRANCO (cont'd)
How dare you live while my Grace
lays in the ground? Which one of
you pieces of shit killed the
prostitutes?

BEN raises his hand. DON turns the gun on him.

DEFRANCO
Fine, you first.

DEFRANCO holds up the gun, extends it as far as possible,
and gently begins to pull the trigger. BEN braces to die.

The door slams open again, and they all look toward the
door. LOUIS reaches out and grabs DEFRANCO. He tugs on him
hard. They both lose their balance, falling over the side.
BEN breaks into a run and reaches blindly over the side. He
looks over just in time to see LOUIS dangling over the side
and DEFRANCO, at the bottom. BEN reaches over with his
injured hand and grabs LOUIS' free hand.

LOUIS
Pull me up, you stupid fuck.

BEN (STRAINING)
Why?

LOUIS smiles.

LOUIS
Because you're well, Ben.

CAROL comes out of her hiding place and walks over to BEN.
She moves beside him and looks impassively at LOUIS. His
hand is slipping. CAROL reaches over the side and grabs
BEN'S hand. LOUIS looks at her, reading her.

LOUIS
Do it, bitch.

CAROL pulls BEN'S fingers away. LOUIS falls to a gruesome
death. Police cars pull up, see the body, and look up at
them.

BEN turns and moves over to DAVIS. LUCY has now laid him on
the ground with his head in her lap. BEN leans over,
grabbing his hand.

BEN(TO LUCY)
We have to get him to a doctor.

LUCY shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

You cannot die on me!

DAVIS pulls BEN close and whispers something in BEN'S ear. BEN weeps and shakes his head furiously.

BEN

No.

DAVIS (WITH HIS LAST BREATH)

It doesn't matter. I'm fucking gone, man.

He dies. BEN falls backwards onto the roof and stares straight up at the bright blue morning above him. Finally, he stands up and takes CAROL in his arms. He helps LUCY up and walks toward the door with them. As they descend to the next floor, he sees something. He lets the girls go and walks down the hall. It's JINX laying in the floor. He picks him up and regards him. He drops him and walks away.

EXT. BACK OF AN AMBULANCE.

BILLY, LUCY, and BEN are there. CAROL is behind BEN in the ambulance.

BILLY

I want to know what the hell happened.

BEN

I don't know the whole story. Louis was screwing with Davis. And for some reason, Carol and I were caught in the cross fire. Davis and I were friends from the club. So, were he and Carol before we met. Louis was playing some kind of sick game.

BILLY

But, why Davis?

BEN hesitates for a minute. Looks at LUCY.

BEN

Davis was the other serial killer.

BILLY nods and leaves. LUCY glares at BEN.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Davis told me to say that.

LUCY

I should turn you in.

BEN

If you let me go, I'll let you study me. I'll send you a letter ever six weeks. I'll tell you everything. You'll be the preeminent expert on serials.

She starts to say something, then stops.

LUCY

If you are so much as an hour late with a letter, I'll start a man hunt for you that makes that Bin-Laden shit look like school yard hide and seek.

BEN

Deal.

LUCY (INCREDULOUSLY)

What the fuck are you?

BEN

I don't know. Look, I'm not very good at promises, but I really want to keep this one. I promise.

LUCY

Go to the hospital and get the fuck out of town.

INT. THE CORONER'S OFFICE.

BILLY and LUCY enter GREGORIA'S office. She has been crying. She wipes her eyes as they come in.

GREGORIA

Sorry. Kids and friends are always hard.

BILLY sighs and nods.

BILLY

Lt. Asshole sent me down to get the rest of the paperwork. He's tying up loose ends and heading back to Tallahassee.

(CONTINUED)

GREGORIA

Well, it's all here. It seems to fit the story the kid told. Ben, what's his name? Has anyone found him yet?

BILLY

Not since he left the hospital.

GREGORIA

There is one thing, and maybe it's just me.

BILLY looks at her.

GREGORIA

Your friend, Davis had a full compliment of body hair.

BILLY

And?

GREGORIA

Well, we never found any hairs on the victims. It's odd, but not unheard of. Most serials shave all their body hair off, though.

BILLY

I'll mention it to the Lt.

GREGORIA

If you want to keep him around, be my guest.

She goes back to her work as they leave. LUCY follows BILLY out into the hall, nervously.

LUCY

Do you think it's important?

BILLY.

It feels like it is.

His phone rings and he flips it on speaker.

LT. MITCHELL

It's Mitchell. Get your ass back here. DeFranco, the incompetent asshole. His files are screwed two weeks from Tuesday. Then, haul your ass down to Starbucks and get me some coffee.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

Yes, sir.

LUCY (BREATHLESSLY)

Are you going to tell him?

BILLY (CONSIDERING)

No, I want him gone. So, I guess
you can keep your serial killer.

He walks off down the hall and disappears into the elevator.