

(Name of Project)  
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FADE IN:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A group of MOURNERS, black-clad and sorrowful, surround the foot of an open grave.

Front and center stands KELLY (32), with eyes hidden beneath dark shades and face set hard. His finely tailored suit and expensive shoes do not hide the rough edges of his character.

To Kelly's right stands TERRY (33), tall and muscular, he is an intimidating image. Though with eyes far kinder than Kelly's, he too has an air about him that hints of danger.

Terry struggles with restrained sorrow. He puts his arm on Kelly's shoulder.

On Kelly's left lingers SHANNON (30). Though nearly the same build as Kelly, he seems dwarfed by the stronger personality.

Shannon shuffles his feet nervously, obviously uncomfortable with the emotional scene.

These three stand out as a unit among the Mourners.

DETECTIVE FRANK RUBY (46) waits a discreet distance away. He puffs on his cigar and watches the funeral intently. His eyes are those of a cautious predator.

The Mourners slowly shuffle away in small cliques. They offer condolences to Kelly as they pass.

Soon only Kelly, Terry, and Shannon remain at the grave side.

Terry pats Kelly on the back.

TERRY  
(to Kelly)  
We'll wait at the car for you.

He turns to leave. Elbows Shannon as he passes.

Shannon looks clueless to the hint.

Terry gestures for Shannon to follow.

Shannon get the hint. The two leave.

Ruby watches Terry and Shannon depart the grounds.

He snubs out his cigar then approaches Kelly.

RUBY  
 Sorry, kid, she was a nice girl.

KELLY  
 How would you know?

RUBY  
 Everyone said so. Listen, don't be sore at me, kid. I don't mean any disrespect, I'm just trying to find her killer.

KELLY  
 By following me? By tearing my house apart?

RUBY  
 What do you want me to say? You had motive. It's procedure. But if you want the truth, I don't think you did it.

KELLY  
 Then what the fuck are you doing here?

RUBY  
 You don't think this is personal for me? You know how many times I've had to look at the crime-scene photos of that girl?

FLASHING IMAGE of a young woman lying naked, pale, and bloody.

Kelly grinds his jaw. Stares into the grave.

RUBY  
 I gotta heart, kid, so I feel for you. But you aren't the only one affected by her murder, believe me.

He leaves Kelly.

EXT. CEMETERY - PARKING LOT

Terry and Shannon sit on the hood of Terry's '69 Camero. They smoke and swig from a flask.

Something catches Shannon's eye.

Terry turns to see Ruby walk towards them from the cemetery.

SHANNON  
 Motherfucker! At her funeral? Can you believe this motherfucker?

TERRY  
Whaddaya expect?

Ruby walks by them.

Shannon sniffs the air.

SHANNON  
God, what a fucking stink! You smell  
that shit, Terry?

Ruby turns. He steps toward Shannon.

Shannon hops off the car ready for action.

Terry intercepts. Gets between them.

TERRY  
Hey, hey, hey - there's no need to get  
all sensitive, detective. My boy Shannon  
here wasn't referring to your particular  
stench. We're downwind of the graves,  
you know?

Ruby gives Terry 'the eye' for a long moment.

RUBY  
You're feeling real sensitive about your  
friend's loss, aren't you?

He takes two steps back, then walk away.

Terry and Shannon watch him climb in his car and leave.

TERRY  
You ought to check your shit in when he's  
creeping around.

SHANNON  
I ain't sweating him, Terry.

TERRY  
Well you should. We don't need the heat  
right now - Kelly most of all. In fact,  
don't mention this to him.

SHANNON  
Why? It was funny.

TERRY

Really? Well maybe I'm missing something, because I don't see what's funny about aggravating a homicide detective who's up Kelly's ass dusting for prints.

SHANNON

Because he's a bitch, so why not?

TERRY

We got a big payday coming up, right? Kelly's the only one who can close the deal. You following me?

SHANNON

Yeah, alright. I won't say nothing to him.

EXT. CEMETERY - GRAVE SIDE

Kelly tosses a handful of soil onto the coffin. He walks down the path toward the parking lot.

EXT. CEMETERY - PARKING LOT

Terry and Shannon smoke and wait. Kelly joins them.

TERRY

How you doing, man?

KELLY

I need a drink.

SHANNON

Way ahead of ya.

He tosses the flask to Kelly who takes a swig.

KELLY

You see Ruby?

Terry and Shannon answer simultaneously.

SHANNON

Nope.

TERRY

Yeah.

They look at each other, surprised. Kelly's eyes go from Terry to Shannon.

KELLY

Did you see him or not - which is it?

TERRY

We saw him.

SHANNON

Yeah, we saw him, but we didn't say nothing to him, or anything, and he just got in his car and left. He didn't say nothing to us neither.

He ends it all with a weak shrug.

Terry rolls his eyes.

Kelly looks suspiciously at both of them.

KELLY

Am I witnessing a bungled conspiracy here, or what?

TERRY

Yeah, pretty much. I blame it on stupid over there.

SHANNON

You're the one who said to do it.

TERRY

I didn't say to deny we saw him. How we gonna not see him when he's walking right the fuck past us?

KELLY

Someone gotta straight answer for me, or what?

TERRY

Look, it's blown up all outta proportion now, but it really wasn't no big deal. We just got into a beef with Ruby.

KELLY

"Beef" is a bit vague, Terry.

TERRY

We had a beef - a run-in. Whaddaya want me to say? A beef's a beef. I can't define it any more than that for ya.

KELLY  
 (to Shannon)  
 Did you start it? Did you egg this  
 motherfucker on?

SHANNON  
 I'm not sure what you mean or if I did.

KELLY  
 Did you talk to him, taunt him, argue, or  
 otherwise exchange fucking words that  
 caused a conflict between you two and the  
 homicide detective who's on my ass?

SHANNON  
 Since you put it that way - yeah, I guess  
 I did.

TERRY  
 Look, Kelly, Shannon fucked up and shot  
 his mouth off, Ruby stepped so I took  
 point, then he backed off and left.  
 That's it. I figured no harm no foul, so  
 why stress you out. If it was a bad  
 call, I'm sorry.

SHANNON  
 Yeah, I'm sorry too, man.

KELLY  
 Anything to do with this guy is my  
 business. Don't keep my business from me  
 again - not ever.

TERRY  
 We cool.

He offers his fist. Kelly's meets it at the knuckles.

SHANNON  
 So's it drinking time or what?

KELLY  
 Let's do it.

They climb into the car. (License reads: "T'S '69")

INT. SANDMAN'S BAR - NIGHT

Music. Lots of PATRONS. A cool spot with a specific  
 clientele.

Terry and Shannon, drunk and loud, shoot pool.

Kelly, with jacket and tie off, sits at a booth in the corner. Many empty glasses litter the table.

Kelly stares into the froth of his pint.

EXT. SAN QUENTIN STATE PRISON - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The main gate opens.

Kelly, dressed in black, steps out into the sunlight. He looks up at the clear blue above, then glances back at the prison. Walks on.

PARKING LOT

Shannon lies on the hood of Terry's '69 Camaro. Sees Kelly.

SHANNON

Yo, Kelly!

He jumps off the hood. Runs over to Kelly and makes to embrace him. Kelly stops him with the palm of his hand.

KELLY

Easy, man. No need for all that.

SHANNON

Yeah, sorry, Kelly. I'm just glad to see ya, man. I mean, I can't believe you're fucking out.

They head for the Camaro.

SHANNON

Yo, when's Terry getting out?

KELLY

He's up for review in six.

Shannon opens the driver's door. Makes to get in.

SHANNON

Think he'll get it?

Kelly stares at Shannon.

SHANNON

Oh shit, sorry - habit.

He tosses Kelly the keys. Jogs around to the other side.

Kelly settles into the driver's seat and fires-up the engine.

SHANNON

So ya think Terry will get parole?

KELLY

Yeah. I got it worked out.

SHANNON

Sweet. So where we going?

KELLY

You are going home. And me? I'll burn that bridge after I cross it.

The Camaro lays down a thick line of smoke and rubber as it screeches out of the prison parking lot.

INT. HALF PINT LOUNGE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK CONT'D)

Kelly at the back, drinks a pint, and watches the crowd.

His eyes focus in on DANIELLE (mid 20s), a beautiful blonde with confident grace and intelligent eyes. She deftly deflects the attentions of the MALE PATRONS who approach her.

Kelly observes it all without expression.

Danielle strolls over to the jukebox.

Kelly joins her.

Kelly and Danielle stand in silence and watch the title cards flip past as Danielle sifts through the selection.

DANIELLE

So what do you think? Rock or Eighties pop?

KELLY

Rock.

DANIELLE

Eighties pop it is, then.

Kelly smiles.

Danielle catches his reflection in the glass.

DANIELLE

Nice smile. You're good at that, aren't you?

KELLY

What's that?

DANIELLE  
Being cool.

KELLY  
Never thought about it.

DANIELLE  
Sure you haven't.

KELLY  
You can pick your tunes while you give me  
all this attention, you know.

DANIELLE  
Multi-tasking's for mediocrities, kiddo,  
not me.

KELLY  
Sound philosophy.

DANIELLE  
Yup.

She turns to the jukebox. Kelly watches her selection.

KELLY  
Kim Wilde?

DANIELLE  
'Kids In America', baby. For all you  
revolutionaries out there.

She presses the select button.

The red credits number drops from twelve to eleven.

KELLY  
That's one.

Danielle selects the song until her credits expire.

DANIELLE  
It's all yours, Mr. Cool.

She heads back to her seat. Half way there Danielle looks  
back at Kelly over her shoulder.

Kelly smiles.

He returns to his booth and takes out a small note pad and a  
pen. Writes.

Danielle watches Kelly. A FRAT BOY type taps her shoulder.

FRAT BOY  
He hassling you?

Danielle LAUGHS aloud.

Kelly glances up. Sees Frat Boy's expression. Writes again.

FRAT BOY  
What's so funny?

Danielle dismisses the giggles with a wave.

DANIELLE  
Nothing. Sorry. It's not you. No he  
wasn't hassling me. But thanks for  
asking. That's very noble of you.

FRAT BOY  
Can I buy you a drink or something?

DANIELLE  
Sure. Cosmo.

FRAT BOY  
(to bartender)  
Can I get a cosmo over here?

The BARTENDER raises a finger, demanding patience.

Danielle watches Kelly write, her face now serious.

Frat Boy passes the drink to her.

FRAT BOY  
Here you go.

DANIELLE  
Thanks.

She takes the cocktail and walks to Kelly's booth.

Frat Boy stands there looking puzzled and dejected.

Danielle slides into the seat across from Kelly.

DANIELLE  
Just want to let you know it worked.

KELLY  
What's that?

DANIELLE

Your whole sit alone - get out your pen -  
write in the corner - be intriguing - Mr.  
Cool thing. It worked.

KELLY

I was starting to have my doubts.

DANIELLE

Don't get too happy, you still have to  
pay-up.

KELLY

Pay-up?

DANIELLE

You got my attention. I walked over  
here. Now you have to show me what  
you're writing or drawing or whatever.

KELLY

Just a poem.

DANIELLE

You going to let me read it?

KELLY

Nope.

DANIELLE

Total gyp. You owe me another drink  
then.

KELLY

Fair enough.

EXT. HALF PINT LOUNGE - BACK PATIO - LATER

Danielle sips another cosmo while Kelly drinks from his pint  
and smokes. KIDS IN AMERICA still plays in the b.g.

DANIELLE

So there you have it - I'm a student  
struggling to get my masters in art  
histories, and working at a gallery  
downtown to make ends meet. Fascinating,  
huh? So what's your story? And what the  
hell's your name anyway?

KELLY

Kelly.

DANIELLE

Nice name. Mine's Danielle.

KELLY

Nice to know ya, Danielle.

DANIELLE

So tell me your story, Kelly?

She gulps down the remainder of her cosmo.

KELLY

I just got out of prison today.

Danielle coughs.

DANIELLE

You're shitting me?

KELLY

Nope.

DANIELLE

Christ. And I zeroed you as the nice guy. Excuse me while I adjust my targeting system.

She puts her index fingers to her temples and twists them back and forth with her eyes crossed.

Kelly watches, amused.

DANIELLE

Ah, much better. Now you look like an axe-murderer.

She LAUGHS.

DANIELLE

Sorry, I'm pretty loaded here.

She examines her empty cocktail glass.

KELLY

I'll get you another.

He heads for the bar.

DANIELLE

I can't believe I thought you'd be the nice guy.

Kelly turns.

KELLY

It's cool. I had you pegged as the drunk  
easy lay.

She looks up.

DANIELLE

Looks like we were both wrong.

INT. DANIELLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK CONT'D)

Kelly and Danielle burst through the door, arms around each  
other. They kiss. Fierce. Primal.

Between kisses and playful bites they frantically strip each  
other's clothes off.

Danielle pauses a moment and stares at the many hard-core  
prison tattoos that cover Kelly's muscular arms and torso.

Kelly lifts her head up. Kisses her.

Naked, they fall onto the bed.

Danielle grabs her stereo remote off her night stand. Points  
and pushes.

The sounds system lights up. FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON, by Pau  
Pau New Guinea plays - loud.

Danielle throws the remote aside. Jumps on Kelly. He rolls  
her over. They kiss and explore.

Their sex ebbs and tides between tender and aggressive.  
Sweat glistens.

INT. SANDMAN'S BAR (PRESENT)

A JANINE (20s) tentatively approaches Kelly.

INT. DANIELLE'S BEDROOM (FLASHBACK)

DANIELLE CRIES OUT her pleasure. KELLY MOANS in ecstasy.  
Their bodies, in a pulsing rhythm, undulate together.

INT. SANDMAN'S BAR (PRESENT)

GIRL

Hey, Kelly. I heard about Danielle.

Kelly snaps back to reality. DANIELLE'S MOANS still linger.  
He looks up annoyed.

KELLY

What?

GIRL

I heard about Danielle. I just wanted to say I'm really sorry.

KELLY

Okay. Thanks, Janine.

Janine shuffles away.

Danielle's CRIES OF ECSTASY ECHO in Kelly's mind, then harmonize with SCREAMS OF AGONY.

Kelly rubs his temple. Tries to shake it off.

SHANNON (O.S.)

Grab your crying ass some tissue, bitch, cuz it's all over now.

Kelly turns to see Shannon sink the nine ball.

TERRY

Shit.

Shannon SNICKERS.

SHANNON

Yo, Kelly, you're up.

A BIG BIKER behind Shannon steps forward. He thumbs to his FRIEND #1 beside him.

BIG BIKER

Hey, we got next game.

FRIEND #2 and FRIEND #3 stand up looking menacing.

SHANNON

Nah-nah, m'boy's got the game.

Kelly stands unsteadily.

BIG DUDE

Him? He can barely walk.

KELLY

Fuck you. I'm fine.

He stumbles into the cue rack. Sifts through the selection.

SHANNON

You see there? He's fine.

FRIEND ONE

This is bullshit! Our names are up.

He points to the chalk board.

TERRY

Allow me educate you, if I may, on the finer points of billiards protocol in this here establishment. First of all, at this table it's winner plays - period. And secondly, your names scribbled up here don't mean fucking shit.

BIG BIKER

The fuck if it don't!

He steps towards Terry. Shannon intercepts.

SHANNON

(whispers)

Just let my friend play, alright. He buried his girlfriend today.

BIG BIKER

I don't give a fuck if his bitch died! I want my fucking game!

Kelly breaks his pool-cue across Big Biker's head.

Everyone stares in shock as Big Biker hits the floor face first.

Friend #1 rushes Kelly.

Kelly lashes out with a kick to Friend#1's face knocking him back over a table.

Kelly then kicks BIG BIKER in the ribs repeatedly.

Friend#2 leaps at Terry.

Friend#3 goes for Shannon.

Terry puts a forearm across the nose of Friend#2 who staggers back, his nose streaming blood.

Shannon kicks Friend#3 in the crotch.

Friend#3 doubles over and SHRIEKS in agony.

Terry nails Friend #2 with hay-maker punch.

Friend #2 collides into a group of FREAKED-OUT CHICKS who SCREAM.

Shannon follows the groin-kick with a big uppercut to Friend #3's jaw.

The blow straightens the bigger man before he drops in a heap.

SANDY (39), the hard-assed no-shit-taking proprietor of the joint, vaults over the bar between two Patrons, knocking them aside.

Kelly, void of expression, kicks Big Biker until Terry pulls him away.

The melee lasts less than a minute.

All three Friends are down and Big Biker is a bloody mess.

Patrons stare in shock and fear.

Sandy shoves a Patron out of him way.

SANDY

Jesus fucking Christ, you guys!

SHANNON

They jumped us, Sandy. What were we s'pose to do?

Sandy sees Big Biker.

SANDY

Oh, man. What the fuck, Kelly?

Kelly shrugs. Tosses the broken end of the cue on the table.

SANDY

Just get the fuck out of here.  
(implied to Patrons)  
Ain't no one gonna call the cops!

TERRY

Thanks, Sandy.

SANDY

Just get him the fuck out of here. And you owe me - again.

Kelly, Terry, and Shannon stagger out.

Sandy bolts the door behind them.

The Patrons, silent and anxious, watch Sandy casually reach over the bar and whip out a baseball bat with nails driven through the head.

Sandy faces his fearful audience. Smiles.

SANDY

So - here we are. But before any of you  
leave, you better be real fucking sure  
that you weren't.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A cigar ember flares in an unmarked Ford sedan a half block  
down from Sandy's joint.

INT. SEDAN

Ruby watches Kelly and Shannon enter the Camero. Terry  
climbs in the driver's side.

The Camero heads up the street.

Ruby follows.

INT. CAMERO

Kelly ride's "shotgun" and Shannon sits in back.

Terry laughs.

TERRY

Goddamn, you fucked that guy up, Kelly.

SHANNON

The punk-bitch fucking asked for it. All  
those biker motherfuckers are all the  
same - thinking they're bad-ass cuz they  
big. I hate those kinda motherfuckers.  
We ought to find some more of them and  
beat their asses too.

TERRY

What do you mean "we", Shan? You didn't  
do shit.

SHANNON

Bullshit! I was all over that goofy  
motherfucker.

TERRY

I didn't see you all over a goddamn  
thing.

SHANNON

That's cuz you was too busy getting an  
ass-whooping from the bitch of the bunch.

TERRY

Better check yourself, little man, before I show you an ass-whooping.

SHANNON

Yeah right. You even think to flex, and I'll be like -bam!- right on you dishing out the pain, boy.

Terry slams the brakes.

Shannon nose-dives into the back of Kelly's seat.

Kelly catches himself on the dashboard.

KELLY

What the fuck, man!

TERRY

I'm just fuckin' around, Kelly.

KELLY

Well don't! I ain't in the mood for no more surprises tonight.

SHANNON

(holding his nose)

You can kick his ass if you want, Kelly. I don't mind.

Kelly turns on Shannon.

KELLY

And you! Stop banging the back of my seat. I got no patients left and my mood's slipping, you hear?. Fuck!

Shannon sits back, bewildered by the outburst.

Terry throws a sidelong glance at Kelly, then gives Shannon a "don't worry about it" look in the rear-view mirror.

The trio ride in an uncomfortable silence for a while.

TERRY

You worried about catching heat for tonight? Most of the people there know us. And you know Sandy'll convince any wannabe-do-gooders who they'd be fucking with.

KELLY

I'm just pissed, man. The last leg of any deal's the toughest.

KELLY (CONT'D)

If it's gonna go wrong, it'll be at the end. And here we are at the eleventh hour and I decide to stomp some motherfucker's head in.

TERRY

Don't sweat it, Kelly. Nothing's fucking with this deal. We just keep our shit in order.

KELLY

From here on out, that's our M.O.

SHANNON

What's this M.O. shit?

KELLY

It means don't go bullfighting in no china shop. We keep out of trouble until the deal's done.

TERRY

Sounds good. Let's grab a bottle on the way to my crib.

KELLY

Nah. Take me home.

Both Terry and Shannon look at Kelly, shocked.

TERRY

You wanna go to your pad?

KELLY

I don't fucking stutter, Terry.

TERRY

Yeah, thanks for reminding me. Shit, next time I show you a little - you know - brotherly concern, just jab me in the eye with a jagged chicken bone, okay? Will you do that for me?

SHANNON

If he won't I will.

TERRY

Just try small fry. You'll wake up with the whole fucking chicken up your ass.

SHANNON

Ah man, that's fowl.

(beat)

Fowl, get it?

SHANNON (CONT'D)

'That's fowl', as in chicken. C'mon you guys, that was funny. It was like one of them -what do you call 'em? - misnomers or something.

TERRY

Goddamn you're stupid, Shannon.

SHANNON

So?

Kelly leans the seat back and closes his eyes.

INT. DANIELLE'S HOUSE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Early dawn light glows behind shades and curtains.

The home has been decorated with class and a touch of the feminine. Many tall leafy plants. Art and tapestries. Figurines.

BEDROOM

Kelly and Danielle lie beneath the sheets. Danielle sleeps soundly. Kelly's open eyes stare up at the ceiling fan.

Kelly watches the blades spin lazily around.

He sits on the edge of the bed. Rubs his face. Glances at Danielle.

Kelly finds and pulls on his boxers. He gathers-up his garments. Tucks them under his arm. He silently exits.

KITCHEN

Kelly sifts through the fridge. Grabs a beer.

LIVING ROOM

Kelly throws his clothes on the couch. He wanders about. Inspects the art and the books on the shelves. He goes to the fireplace.

The mantle piece looks like a shrine of sorts. Many photos of Danielle's parents are the focus of the setting.

Kelly studies the central picture of Danielle with her mom and dad - a professional studio shot.

DANIELLE (O.S.)

They're my parents.

She enters from the bedroom in her small nightgown.

KELLY  
Figured so.

DANIELLE  
Robert and Kate.

KELLY  
You all look happy together.

DANIELLE  
We were.

Her face saddens.

KELLY  
They died, huh?

Danielle nods.

DANIELLE  
Car wreck - eight months ago.

KELLY  
Sorry to hear it. Good people don't seem to hang around too long.

DANIELLE  
I just feel blessed they were here for me when they could be. They were the best. I was very lucky.

KELLY  
You must have deserved them.

DANIELLE  
Yeah, I guess. You couldn't sleep, huh?

KELLY  
Ain't used to a soft mattress and down pillows, know what I mean.

DANIELLE  
No, I couldn't imagine. Well, feel free to lounge about - have another beer, or whatever. I'm going to crawl back into my soft, cozy bed.

She sleepily strolls to bedroom.

Kelly watches her body move under the short, thin nighty. He looks at the photo again.

KELLY  
(to the photo)  
Fucking drag, huh? Well, here's to ya.

He lifts his beer in salute. Takes a large swig.

Reflected in the glass of the picture, Kelly sees Danielle standing the bedroom door.

Kelly turns.

Danielle gives him a warm, affectionate smile.

DANIELLE  
I'd like to see you when I wake up. Just  
wanted to tell you that.

She closes the door.

Kelly downs his beer.

EXT. DANIELLE'S HOUSE - DAY

Kelly climbs into the Camaro. Drives away.

INT. GALLERY - DAY - RAINING (FLASHBACK CONT'D)

Sculptures line the walls. Large paintings hang just off the floor by thin cables anchored at the high ceiling. The effect is that of a labyrinth of painted canvas through the center of the long showroom.

Large windows span floor to ceiling at the front.

Umbrella-wielding pedestrians hurry through the rain outside.

At the rear of the Gallery, Danielle sits at her desk facing the labyrinth of hanging paintings.

She writes in beautiful calligraphy on a display label.

The front door chime rings.

Danielle looks up. She hears the door swing closed.

DANIELLE  
Hello?

She stands and smooths down her skirt and quickly straightens the desk clutter.

DANIELLE  
Hello?

She strolls to the door. Looks outside, then glances down.  
 Wet footprints lead from the door into the labyrinth.  
 Danielle follows them.

DANIELLE  
 We seemed to have missed each other.

In the heart of the labyrinth the footprints dry and fade.  
 Danielle, nervous now, looks through the space under the  
 paintings. She sees no one.

DANIELLE  
 Alright, this isn't cool at all.

She balls her hands into tight fists.

DANIELLE  
 (to herself)  
 You better be deaf, fuck-nut.

She exits the maze at the rear of the gallery.

A beautiful, deep-violet orchid sits on her desk.

Danielle looks around. She goes to the desk. Opens the card  
 attached.

It reads: 'ANY CHANCE FOR A TAKE-BACK?'

Danielle smiles.

DANIELLE  
 Not a chance in hell.

KELLY (O.S.)  
 Too bad.

She spins around.

Kelly stands behind her.

KELLY  
 Hey.

DANIELLE  
 That was really creepy. Seriously.

KELLY  
 Sorry.

DANIELLE

Sure you are. So you want a take-back, huh? What exactly does that mean?

KELLY

It means I regret that I left the other night. I'd like to make it up to you.

DANIELLE

Took you all week to figure this out?

KELLY

No. I didn't know how to go about it - coming here I mean.

DANIELLE

Well, you did okay, kiddo. Orchids are my favorite. And the note's cute too.

KELLY

You hungry?

DANIELLE

Starving.

KELLY

Good.

He offers his hand.

Danielle, surprised at the gesture, take it.

DANIELLE

Keep up this sweet stuff and I might let you stick around for a while.

Kelly kisses her, then hand in hand they walk out.

EXT. GALLERY - BACK ALLEY - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Terry's car pulls up.

CAMERO

Kelly wakes. Shannon bail out. He runs across the alley and relieves himself.

TERRY

You sure about this, Kelly? I know you're a hard motherfucker and all but - well, you know what I mean.

KELLY

No I don't.

TERRY

Well shit, if you want me to spell it out - you ain't slept in there since Danielle was killed, man, and you just buried her.

KELLY

I know this already, Terry. So say what's really on your mind.

Shannon heads back.

TERRY

(to Shannon)

Yo, Shan-the-Man, hang out for a minute.

Shannon shrugs, annoyed. Looks around for something to occupy himself with.

TERRY

Look, this deal has got to pay-out or I'm fucked.

KELLY

Worried 'bout me cracking, huh? Is that why you and flap-jaw over there didn't wanna tell me about Ruby?

TERRY

Basically, yeah.

KELLY

I've never let you down, Terry.

TERRY

I know, man. It's just - well, it freaks me out up just being here, so I figure it's got to fuck you way out of shape to go sleep up in the joint.

KELLY

I got to come back sometime, right? Look, the place's been cleaned and repainted and everything so don't trip. Besides, Danielle's finally been laid to rest, so maybe I can rest now too. Know what I mean?

TERRY

If your cool, I'm cool, man.

KELLY

So it is, so it was, and shall be.

TERRY  
Amen, brother.

SHANNON  
So's my time-out fucking over yet, or  
what? This is sepatist, ya'll.

KELLY  
Keep Shannon at your place and tie him  
down.

TERRY  
Three days? I'll end up killing him.

KELLY  
Cool with me. I prefer a two-way split.

TERRY  
Yeah? Well, I prefer no split.

He winks.

TERRY  
Yo, Shan, let's roll.  
(to Kelly)  
See you in three, motherfucker.

Kelly climbs out of the Camaro. Shannon jumps in. Terry  
speeds off.

Kelly looks up.

The rear of the Gallery looks dark, ominous, knowing.

Kelly exhales forcefully. Makes his way toward the door.

FLASHING IMAGES of Danielle's bloody body.

Kelly looks dizzy.

The world sways to-and-fro.

FLASHING IMAGES of Danielle's bloody body.

Kelly drops down and vomits.

With each painful heave comes another BLOODY IMAGE.

A moment passes before Kelly rights himself.

RUBY (O.S.)  
Looking good, kid.

Kelly turns to see Ruby walk from the shadows. Ruby tosses him a handkerchief.

Kelly throws it back. Wipes his mouth with the back of his hand. He glares at Ruby.

RUBY  
We gotta talk.

INT. GALLERY

Statues, paintings, and sculptures of international and domestic style.

Kelly turns on the lights.

Ruby lights a cigar.

Kelly whips out a flask.

RUBY  
Haven't you had enough?

KELLY  
Guess not.

He takes a deep swig.

RUBY  
The recklessness of youth by definition.

KELLY  
Look, you said we had to talk, so talk.

RUBY  
You're one of those people who scan the first page of a book before you read it, aren't you? Judging the merit of content based on a brief glimpse of the surface.

He ambles about, looking at this and that.

RUBY  
Your gallery interests me. I had no idea that selling art was so easy to jump into. I'm amazed that an ex-con straight out of the joint becomes a successful art dealer all of a sudden.

KELLY  
It was Danielle's baby. She put it all together.

RUBY

And let you ride for free. Next thing you know, Terry and Shannon jump on board. Imagine that - three old school running partners hook-up after the joint, go legit, and never look back. It's the kind of story that make's even the hardest hanging judge smile with glee. And I mean that sincerely. It's great you've kept them out of trouble.

KELLY

What's your point, Ruby?

RUBY

I'm gettin' to it. But, in order for you to understand the details I have to paint the whole picture. You see, my job, simply put, is to find answers to questions - solve equations. 'X' represents the unknown. So in Danielle's murder, I'm looking for a Mr. X, and you were my first suspect.

KELLY

We've been through this how many fucking times?

RUBY

Just bare with me, 'G', alright?  
Remember, 'the whole picture'.

He digs some papers out of his pocket. Hands them over.

RUBY

That's a print-out from your travel agent.

KELLY

Purchasing acquisitions are my end of the business.

RUBY

Danielle ever go with you on these trips?

KELLY

Sometimes.

RUBY

Naturally I looked into the gallery to prove your motive for killing her. The investigation threw me a curve.

He hands Kelly a print-out with Danielle's name on top.

KELLY

Is this right?

RUBY

Yeah. Look at the dates, kid. Most of those flights were when you were out of town. Some of the reservations are for two - Danielle and an unknown companion. A "Mr. X" perhaps.

Kelly scrutinizes the documents further.

RUBY

Now for the good news. Customs had your warehouse under surveillance for months. They know you're moving contraband through there, but the surveillance came up with zilch, so they had to call off the watch. They gave me their files when I took the one-eighty-seven because they want to see someone take you down if they can't.

KELLY

So now I'm a smuggler as well as a murderer?

RUBY

You're not hearing me, kid. Your gallery's been under surveillance. It is that surveillance that positively identifies Mr. X, and proves, beyond a shadow of a doubt, an affair existed.

KELLY

An affair? You saying Danielle was fucking around? You better have a whole lot more than this shit.

Ruby hands Kelly a manila envelope.

Kelly removes several photos.

His face drops, then changes to rage. He throws the photos at Ruby.

KELLY

Fuck you! That ain't fuking real. If you've doctored this shit...

RUBY

Jealousy's the number one motive.

KELLY  
I didn't kill her, you fuck!

RUBY  
I ain't saying you did.

Kelly's anger instantly flips to confusion.

RUBY  
Danielle and Terry met mostly at your warehouse, sometimes here.

KELLY  
I don't believe it.

RUBY  
This ain't that big of a stretch, kid. He'd have it all - the girl and your business. Profits are best split with no split, right?

He lets that sink in.

RUBY  
But how to take you out? That was Terry's dilemma. My theory is Danielle wanted to tell you - leave you fair-n-square. But Terry knows what a psychotic son-of-a-bitch you can be, and he feared your reprisal. Unable to convince her to keep her trap shut, he shut it for her.

KELLY  
If this is all true, then why haven't you busted his ass?

RUBY  
At long last we come to the intrigue beneath the surface.

He relights his cigar.

RUBY  
Why have I compromised a federal surveillance operation and perhaps my own career to tell you all this? It's simple, kid. I know that Terry murdered her. He didn't leave any conclusive evidence. That takes detailed premeditation. He thought long and hard about what he was going to do.

IMAGE: Hands pulling on rubber gloves.

RUBY

He beat her and slashed her to death.

IMAGE: Danielle in a stumbling run from a slashing blade.

RUBY

She was so brutalized...

IMAGE: Fist rain blows into her face one after another.

RUBY (V.O.)

I had trouble considering that someone  
who knew her might have done it - even in  
the heat of passion.

IMAGE: Blood splatters as her nose shatters and lips burst.

RUBY (V.O.)

It took her a long time to die.

IMAGE: Danielle on the floor lacerated, swollen, bloody.

RUBY (V.O.)

And she spent that time in absolute agony  
and terror.

IMAGE: Danielle's eyes stare behind swollen lids. Mucus and  
blood drip from her nose and mouth. Her breath comes in  
hard, uneven gasps.

RUBY

I've gathered all the evidence. It's not  
enough even for an arrest, much less a  
conviction. But I know, goddamn it. I  
know what he did.

KELLY

So you want justice?

RUBY

No. I want that motherfucker to pay.

INT. TERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Shannon dances with TWO GANGSTA CHICKS. He chugs a "forty".

Terry sits on the couch. He appears lost in thought. His  
cell phone rings. He answers.

TERRY

Hey, Kel, what's up?.

(beat)

Sure. You alright?

(beat)

TERRY (CONT'D)  
Yeah, he's here like you said.  
(beat)  
Alright, I'll bring him.  
(beat)  
Okay, okay! I'm on my way. See ya in  
ten.

He hangs up. Looks puzzled.

TERRY  
Yo, Shan, we gotta roll.

SHANNON  
Now?

TERRY  
No, fucking tomorrow. Let's go!

SHANNON  
(to Girls)  
Keep them asses hot for me, alright?

He slams the 'forty' as he follows Terry out.

EXT. GALLERY - BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Terry and Shannon pull up. Music blasts from the car.

CAMARO

Terry looks up at the windows.

No lights visible inside.

Terry turns the music down.

TERRY  
Wait here.

SHANNON  
Wait here? I wanna come up.

TERRY  
Yo, Kel told me to tell you to wait in  
the car. So do me a favor - just a small  
favor - stay in the fucking car, alright.

SHANNON  
Whatever, man.

He cranks the music back up. Terry heads for the door.

INT. KELLY'S LOFT

Dark. Silent. Terry enters.

TERRY  
Kelly? Yo, Kel?

KELLY (O.S.)  
In here.

LIVING ROOM

Tasteful decor marred by thick, dark stains. Blood everywhere from the violence of the murder. Plants stand neglected, the leaves brown and limp.

Kelly sits on the couch in the corner. He drags on a smoke.

Terry enters. He's thrown back by the scene before him.

TERRY  
Holy Christ.  
(beat)  
Kelly, you okay?

Kelly blows a smoke ring. A manila envelope sits next him.

KELLY  
How do I look?

TERRY  
Not good. Kelly, man, this place is  
fucked up. I thought...

KELLY  
Thought what? I had it cleaned? I lied.  
Don't want it clean. Her blood's a  
reminder. Remind you of something?

TERRY  
I don't know - a fucking bad nightmare.

KELLY  
There all bad, aren't they? Nightmares I  
mean.

TERRY  
Yeah. Say, Kel, let's get out of here,  
alright.

KELLY  
They say that about women too.

TERRY

What?

KELLY

That they're all bad.

TERRY

Yeah, well, "they" would know, right? So whaddaya say, man, let's roll. We can hit the liquor store on the way to my crib, toss a few back and talk there.

KELLY

Nah, I think I'll stay.

TERRY

C'mon, Kel...

KELLY

And you'll stay with me. Sit down.

TERRY

What's up, man? Why you tripping yourself like this?

KELLY

Do I gotta break your legs to get you to sit down, Terry. Sit.

Terry hesitates a moment then sits.

KELLY

Much better. Now we can do a little Johnny Carson thing - have a chat, you know.

TERRY

Well, I'm sitting. What the fuck do you want to talk about?

KELLY

Whatever's on your mind. Like, how do ya feel about all this blood?

TERRY

I don't know, Kel - it's kinda sickening, man.

KELLY

Has that effect, don't it? But that's only the surface. What you get at a glance. Like the first page of a book.

He stands. Gestures at the bloody scene around him.

KELLY

You see, this ain't just blood, it's a story told drop by drop. It begins right over there.

He points. Walks to the spot.

Terry look more and more uncomfortable.

KELLY

The killer stood right here in this very spot. He waited while she showered, a knife in his hand. What do you think he was feeling? Anticipation?

He appears to contemplate this.

KELLY

Danielle used to sing in the shower a lot, or hum something, you know. The poor girl couldn't carry a tune to save her life. When she gets out she comes in here for some reason - maybe she heard something, who knows - but she walks right past him. He sliced her across the back right to left.

He demonstrates.

KELLY

How do we know this?

He points with the blade to a dark splatter on the wall.

KELLY

That's how. That was the first drop. That drop right there. Page one.

TERRY

Kelly, man, I...

KELLY

Don't interrupt me, Terry! Don't fucking interrupt me again. Just listen.

Terry sits back in surrender.

KELLY

Danielle tries to defend herself. She loses most of four fingers and a thumb. He just keeps hacking, slinging blood everywhere. She collapses and he stands over her. Check out his boot prints?

He points with knife again. Terry stands up.

TERRY

I'm fucking through, Kelly. I've had enough!

KELLY

Have you? No, I ain't through with you yet. So sit the fuck down.

Terry hesitates.

KELLY

That's the last time I ask.

TERRY

What are you gonna do - stick me?

KELLY

If you don't take a fucking seat - yeah, that's exactly what I'm gonna do - I'm gonna open you up where you stand.

Terry sits. Rage and fear combine.

TERRY

Kelly, if your in there somewhere, understand this ain't gonna be forgotten. Ain't no "Oops - sorry, bro, I kinda lost my fucking mind" gonna make this shit go away. This is permanent shit going on here between you and I.

KELLY

Yes it is. Now shut the fuck up.

He points at a large stain on the couch and walks over.

KELLY

The killer, he plops down and watches her bleed. Somehow, she gets up - can you believe that? - and she tries to make a run for it. See her little footprints?

He stands and points out the bloody barefoot trail.

KELLY

There was hair - her hair - all over the place - handfuls of it.

He begins to act out the story.

KELLY

See, when he catches her he snatches her by the hair, slings her around. He drags her back in here then hits her over and over.

He stands now over the largest and darkest of the stains.

KELLY

Her jaw, nose, skull, all broken. The last thing he does is lift her head up by the hair and scalps her.

He squats down and makes a scalping motion.

Kelly rights himself and stares at the floor as if seeing her lying there.

TERRY

How do you know all that shit - what happened, I mean?

KELLY

The writing's on the wall, man. I showed you that.

TERRY

No. You read a police report or something. Tell me you ain't been crawling around here inspecting Danielle's blood and reliving her murder all night. C'mon, the cops told you that shit, right?

KELLY

A bloodstain speaks a thousand words, man. So does a surveillance photograph.

He tosses one at Terry.

Terry's goes pale. For the first time we see near-panic.

TERRY

Look, Kelly, I don't know where you got this, but...

KELLY

Ruby gave it to me.

TERRY

Ruby? That fuck? He's trying to fuck us up, man. This ain't fucking real.

KELLY

Really? Well how about this one? Is that real?

He throws the photo at Terry.

KELLY

Or how about this one? Or better yet, this one, where you got Danielle bent over my fucking desk at the warehouse? What's the story here? This ain't real neither?

He paces back on forth like a caged animal.

TERRY

You gotta listen to me, Kel, alright? I'm looking at this shit and I'm seeing how it must look but you gotta believe me...

KELLY

Believe what? That all these photos are faked? That Ruby's masterminded an elaborate sham just to convince me that you were fucking my girl? Is that what I should believe? I don't fucking think so.

A tense moment passes.

KELLY

I don't know what the fuck you're thinking right now, but you better open your mouth and say something because I starting to get real fucking twitchy, you hear me?

TERRY

Alright, man.

KELLY

What?

TERRY

It's true.

KELLY

What's fucking true?

TERRY

Danielle and I we were seeing each other.

Kelly pulls a pistol from the couch cushions.

He levels it at Terry.

Terry tries to retreat into the chair.

TERRY

Kelly, don't! I'm sorry! Fuck! Don't shoot me, man!

Kelly's hand trembles. He lowers the weapon.

Kelly gives Terry the long stare goodbye.

TERRY

Can, I say something?

Kelly answers in the affirmative with a wave of the gun. Resumes his pacing.

TERRY

Kelly, I don't know how it happened. I would never... Danielle came over to talk about you. She asks me if I knew what was going on with you. She said you two were growing pretty distant. This became sort of a thing for her - we'd have coffee or whatever and she'd talk about you. She was really tore up that things weren't good with you guys. One night she came over - I guess you guys had fought or something - and she's crying and all. We both got pretty loaded and one thing - you know - led to another.

KELLY

Just like that, huh? One thing just led to another. One minute you're minding your own business, then all of a sudden you up and fall and into my girl's pussy. Is that about how it happened?

TERRY

We was fucked up, Kel. I was smashed out of my head on stupid hits of Jamison's. I swear, when it happened, it was like it wasn't real - like a dream I was gonna wake up from and be able to take back.

KELLY

So fucking Danielle was okay with you?

TERRY

No. I don't know how to explain it. I fell for her, man.

TERRY (CONT'D)

She was all tore up and I wanted to help her. Sometimes I was mad at you for not treating her better. It was like, how I justified it all, you know. She talked about telling you, but I convinced her that'd be a bad idea. It wasn't suppose to go on so long. We kept trying to end it but couldn't.

KELLY

So you fools were in love, huh?

TERRY

Yeah, we were, Kelly.

KELLY

Life's some funny shit, huh? The cop who suspected me for her murder tells me she's fucking around with my best partner. Who'd a'thunk it?

TERRY

You know Ruby's fucking jacked he's fucked our shit up.

KELLY

Don't get confused here, man. You fucked our shit up. You!

TERRY

I know, Kelly, I know. I'm just saying he didn't do it to do you no favors, that's all.

KELLY

Like I don't know this? Actually he wasn't trying to fuck with me, Terry. He did it to fuck with you.

TERRY

What? Why'd he wanna fuck with me?

KELLY

Because he wants you to pay for Danielle.

TERRY

For Danielle?

KELLY

Yup, that's right. Ruby says you killed her.

TERRY

No. No, Kelly, that's bullshit. That ain't fucking true. I wouldn't do that. C'mon, you know I wouldn't kill her.

KELLY

Do I? Ruby thinks you were planning to ice me all along but she wouldn't go for it.

TERRY

Well, it's fucking bullshit, man.

KELLY

Then why'd you tell her about the shipment we got coming if you wasn't trying to cut me out of the deal?

TERRY

She already knew something was up, Kel. She said you stonewalled her. So she asks me. Threatens to blow the whistle if I don't give her the skinny on our gig. As for Ruby, I got some shit I'd like to say to that motherfucker about all this.

KELLY

Well, I think that's a swell idea. I'm gonna go get him so we can clear this thing up once and for all.

TERRY

Go get him?

KELLY

Yeah. He's in the other room.

He levels the pistol at Terry.

KELLY

Don't you go nowhere.

He disappears into the hall.

Terry looks scared and confused. He makes to stand. Looks down the hall. He thinks better of it.

Kelly returns pushing a rolling desk chair with Ruby gagged and duct-taped to it.

KELLY

Well, here he is. Go ahead, give the motherfucker a piece of your mind.

Terry, completely flabbergasted, stares in slack-jawed silence.

KELLY

Rather not? Fine. It don't matter anyway.

TERRY

Kelly, you gotta listen to me. You got a homicide detective tied to a chair and you're tripping out on this whole Danielle thing. Nobody's hurt, so if you stop now the court will have some - you know - sympathy for your state of mind or whatever. But not if you hurt this cop. They'll fucking fry you.

KELLY

We'll see.

TERRY

Kelly, please, I know I was fucking her behind your back. I admit that, and I'm sorry, okay? But you gotta hear me on this, I did not kill Danielle.

KELLY

I know you didn't.

TERRY

You do?

KELLY

Yeah. See, after you told her about the shipment - and the whole fucking operation, basically - she came to me and she threatened to call the cops if I didn't shut it down. I had no choice at that point, so I killed her.

(to Ruby)

I guess that makes me, Mr. X, don't it?

Terry unconsciously shakes his head back and forth.

KELLY

Don't look so surprised, Terry. I know you had your suspicions.

TERRY

No, I didn't think you could. Jesus, I can't believe you did that to her.

KELLY

Yeah, well, I did. It messed me up  
though - cutting her up like that. But  
we all get what we got coming, don't we.

He smiles. Raises the pistol.

EXT. GALLERY - TERRY'S CAR

Shannon, with a joint in one hand and his flask in the other,  
leans back in the seat and rocks-out to the BLARING MUSIC.

Shannon hits the joint hard, totally oblivious as the windows  
of the loft above light-up from multiple muzzle flashes.

Moments later Kelly climbs in the driver's seat.

Shannon jumps.

SHANNON

Fuck, Kelly! You freaked the shit out of  
me.

Shannon sees a drop of blood run down Kelly's cheek.

SHANNON

Is everything alright?

KELLY

Yeah, everything's fine.

He smiles.

Kelly smokes the tires and SCREECHES out of the parking lot  
and into the distance.

FADE OUT

THE END