

PILOT

SERIAL HABITS
"SNAKE BITE"

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FADE IN:

EXT. DARK CITY STREET - LATE NIGHT

CHARLENE, a prostitute, gets into a silver ford fiesta with a license plate that reads IM8FRK.

It drives away.

INT. STATE PRISON - SOLITARY - MORNING

MICHAEL ARDEN is doing pushups inside his prison cell.

BYRON SHEPARD prison warden and two correction officers approach.

WARDEN SHEPARD

Let's go Arden.

MICHAEL stops mid-way up from a pushup, but does not stand to his feet.

MICHAEL

Where am I going?

WARDEN SHEPARD

You're out of here.

MICHAEL

Been on locked down for three years, why move me now?

WARDEN SHEPARD

I'm not moving you anywhere. You're out. Turns out you really didn't kill your wife; she was killed two months ago.

MICHAEL

Two months ago; why am I just now finding this out?

WARDEN SHEPARD

It was a need to know thing...you know how that is. Now get your things and let's go.

MICHAEL

I'd say I needed to know.

WARDEN SHEPARD

It was my discretion; and to be frank I was trying to find a way to keep you inside. But as the law would have it, you're a free man.

One of the officers unlocks the cell and step away so that it electronically jars opens.

Michael stands to his feet, collect what little personal possessions he owns, and follows close behind.

Michael stops and visits with his good friend.

HUNT leans his head against his bars in his still locked cell.

HUNT

Don't forget me.

MICHAEL

I won't. You keep your head up.

HUNT

You know it. I'll be seeing you.

MICHAEL

I hope not.

EXT. WOODED AREA - LATE AFTERNOON

Two joggers running.

One stops to tie his shoe. Something off to his right catches his eye. He looks over to see someone on the ground.

JOGGER 1

Is that a person over there?

JOGGER 2

Where?

Stands and point in the direction of the guy on the ground.

JOGGER 1

Over there.

They rush over.

A 50 something white man lay dead. He has been discarded in the woods with several bullet holes throughout his body.

The killer's trade mark: two distinct bullet holes in the shape of a snake bite through his left lung.

Calls 911

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)
9-1-1, how can I help you?

JOGGER 2
Hello. Yes. There's a guy in the woods. I think he's dead.

His Ford Fiesta, license plate "IM8FRK" sits vacant. Both front doors are wide open.

EXT. STATE PRISON - GATE - SAME TIME

Michael walks towards a waiting cab...

An unmarked police car pulls up.

TAMAR DAVIS gets out, walks over to the cab and gives the cab driver some money.

The cab driver drives away.

Michael wait for Tamar.

Tamar walks back to her car.

TAMAR
Arden?

MICHAEL
Yeah.

TAMAR
Get in.

They drive away.

INT. LOCAL BAR - LATE NIGHT

Charlene gulps down a strong drink.

CARLA, a mouse like 20 something approaches. Carla's dim eyes light up around Charlene, but she understands her place in the pecking order of prostitution.

CARLA
Hi Charlene.

CHARLENE
Hey. What's up?

CAPTAIN DAVIS
Pena looking for you.

CHARLENE
So what.

CARLA
He wants his money.

CHARLENE
He'll get it. Why you so worried
about Pena and my shit?

CARLA
I'm not. I just...
You know how he is. I don't want
you to get into trouble.

CHARLENE
Yeah, I know how he is.

CARLA
You going back out?

CHARLENE
Yep.

CARLA
I'll go back out too.

CHARLENE
Do whatever you want.

Charlene gulps down her last drink. She pays and leaves.
Carla is in hot pursuit.

EXT. LOCAL BAR - LATER

A black car pulls up and Charlene climbs in the passenger
side.

The car speeds out of sight while Carla is left alone.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOME - MID-AFTERNOON

The two bedroom house looks bigger than it should be.

Michael stands in the door and takes in his surrounds. All the memories of what he was doing the day before he was arrested seep through the walls and into his brain.

He looks towards the small dining area to see that a dust filled tarp is hiding his gauge train set (years of work) that was once house to a formal dining room table and chair set.

He can tell that someone has been taking care of the place. He doesn't ask.

He allows himself to feel safe.

MICHAEL

Thanks.

TAMAR

You're welcome. Captain Davis sent me.

MICHAEL

Captain, hum?

TAMAR

He said to tell you he'll be here as soon as he can.

MICHAEL

So Davis is Captain?

TAMAR

We all heard what happen, and...

Interrupts her prying.

MICHAEL

...And it's nobody's business.

Goes to look in the refrigerator for anything cold to drink. Finds it empty.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Guess I need to go shopping.

TAMAR

That reminds me, I have some groceries in the trunk of my car. Captain figured you might need some food.

MICHAEL

I do. Thank you.

TAMAR
You're probably wondering who I am?

MICHAEL
The thought had crossed my mind.

TAMAR
I'm your new partner; I hope.

She points to Michael's detective badge and gun on a nearby table.

Michael walks over and picks them up.

MICHAEL
Partner?

TAMAR
Yes; well not really. I mean it hasn't been officially decided.

MICHAEL
Why? Where's Ryan?

Remorseful.

TAMAR
Dead.

MICHAEL
When? What the hell happen to him?

TAMAR
About two month ago. The official report said he hanged himself, but...

MICHAEL
But what? What is Captain Davis say?

TAMAR
Captain Davis isn't talking about it.

MICHAEL
Two months? Is that why I'm out?

TAMAR
I don't know the details of why you're out (of prison).

Michael picks up his gun and badge.

He walks over and opens the door allowing Tamar to leave.

MICHAEL
Did Captain Davis say what time
he'd be by?

She steps outside the door.

TAMAR
No, but it'll probably be late.

MICHAEL
I'll be here.

TAMAR
Let's get your groceries.

They leave and return with several bags.

Tamar helps Michael put away the groceries.

MICHAEL
Thanks again.

TAMAR
You're welcome, again. I'd better
head back to the station.

MICHAEL
Thanks again.

Michael extends his hand, Tamar accepts.

Tamar leaves.

INT. BEDROOM - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Michael takes a long shower.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOME - LATER

Michael walks over to a nearby closet; just before opening the door, he picks up a glass picture frame with a picture of a small child inside. He looks at it for a moment and turns the picture on its back side and keys in a five digit code into a tiny 10 key number pad hidden under the stand of the picture frame. Like magic, a slender slide door and handle on the right hand side just inside the closet is revealed. He opens the slide door and enters.

INT. SECRET ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He close the door and picks an identical picture frame, this one has a picture of an older woman, his mother. The sound of a door lock is heard after he types a different number key code into the key pad located in the same place on this picture frame. The room semi comes alive. Lights reveal a very small but very high tech surveillance room still under construction. There is a dust filled building plan of the entire house tacked to on the wall where he left it. An electrical user guide still scatter on the dust filled small table where he left it. What was once his favorite coffee mug has a five year old stain nestled inside is still right where he left it.

Michael takes his time soaking in the memory of his pet project.

He runs his finger through the spider web of wires attached to the surveillance computer skew over the table

MICHAEL
Hello old friend.

Remembers why he went to jail in the first place.... and why he was released.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Stephanie.

INT. STEPHANIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Michael searches Stephanie's apartment for any hint of what could have happened to her. Doesn't find anything.

BARBARA, the landlord, late 60's short and round, is on the other side of the door when he opens it.

BARBARA
Who are you? No one is supposed to be in here

MICHAEL
My name is Michael. This was my wife... ex wife's apartment.

BARBARA
You're Michael?

MICHAEL
Yes.

BARBARA
I was sorry to hear about
Stephanie. She was a nice lady.

MICHAEL
Thank you. I'm not sure what to do
with her stuff. You're welcome to
any of it.

BARBARA
Are you sure?

MICHAEL
Yes, I'm sure. Help yourself to
whatever you want.

BARBARA
Thank you.

MICHAEL
You have a nice day.

Start to leave.

BARBARA
Oh, wait a minute.

He turns around.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
I have a package I've been holding
for you.

MICHAEL
Me?

BARBARA
Yes. Wait right here. I'll be right
back.

She disappears down the hall.

Michael steps back inside the apartment to wait.

Barbara return with a large manila envelope.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
This is for you.

MICHAEL
What is it?

BARBARA

I don't know. Stephanie asked me to give it to me whenever you came around.

MICHAEL

When did she give this to you?

BARBARA

About four months ago. Said she was leaving town and wanted me to keep this safe for her. But she never did.

MICHAEL

Never did what?

BARBARA

Leave. She stayed here... until... well you know... she was killed.

MICHAEL

Can I ask you something?

BARBARA

Sure.

MICHAEL

Did you ever see or hear anything strange going on?

BARBARA

Every now and then, but I tried to keep to myself. Didn't want to get involved.

Michael felt that she knew more than she was telling. He decides not to press her (for now).

MICHAEL

Okay. Well thanks again... for this too.

Tucks the envelope under his arm and leaves.

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - LATER

Crime scene. Police squad cars have sealed off traffic in both directions. A police officer tape off the area.

The KIA has been abandoned. Both door left wide open.

A few yard away the dead body of a 30 something white male lay dead.

He has six gun shot wounds throughout his body.

Again two snake like bullet wounds cover his left lung.

DETECTIVE BENITA (Benny) FULLER and DETECTIVE AARON OWENS take in the scene.

They approach the body. Aaron kneels over the victim.

AARON

Looks like we got another one.

Points to the snake bite bullet holes.

BENITA

This makes five, in five months.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOME - LATER

Starts to open the envelope

The door bell ring.

FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Michael opens the front door to see CAPTAIN A. J. DAVIS standing on the other side. Tamar is standing just behind his left shoulder.

MICHAEL

Captain Davis?

CAPTAIN DAVIS

Damn! Finally.

MICHAEL

Come on in.

Michael steps aside and allows Tamar and Captain Davis to enter.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

I'm glad you accepted them.

TAMAR

What?

CAPTAIN DAVIS
His badge and gun.

MICHAEL
Can't do my job without them.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Captain Davis and Michael greet each other with a hand shake.

The three of them discuss their next move.

CAPTAIN DAVIS
I had to pulled every damn string I
had to get you your job back.

MICHAEL
Thanks, I appreciate it.

CAPTAIN DAVIS
I know you just got out, and I'm
sure you want to rest before
jumping in, but...

MICHAEL
But what?

CAPTAIN DAVIS
But I need you back ASAP.

MICHAEL
There's a lot shit coming and going
from the inside.

CAPTAIN DAVIS
Always is. Anything worth talking
about?

MICHAEL
Yea, I made a valuable friend.

TAMAR
What are we talking about?

Just realizes who she is.

MICHAEL
Tamar! This isn't your daughter?

TAMAR
I am, but what does that have to do
with anything?

CAPTAIN DAVIS

That's why I sent her to pick you up. She's one of the very few I can trust right now.

MICHAEL

I don't follow. What's happening?

CAPTAIN DAVIS

There's a dirty game of cat and mouse in the house.

MICHAEL

Is that why I've been in jail all this time.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

They needed you out of the way.

TAMAR

So why is he out now?

MICHAEL

Because my ex finally did the right thing and actually got herself killed while I was locked up.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

So the charges had to be dropped.

TAMAR

I'm sorry for your loss.

MICHAEL

Don't be; the only good deed she ever did. I went by her place to see if I could find anything.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

And did you?

MICHAEL

Nothing.

TAMAR

We didn't find anything when we first search as well.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

It's a cold case for now. As for this other thing; we got five dead bodies and no one to blame.

MICHAEL
How's he doing it?

TAMAR
Shooting them.

MICHAEL
This couldn't be our guy from a
years ago.

TAMAR
Why would it take someone a years
to kill again?

MICHAEL
That's what we need to find out.

CAPTAIN DAVIS
Are you coming to the station?

MICHAEL
Yes.

TAMAR
You might not get a very warm
reception.

CAPTAIN DAVIS
She told me that you know about
Ryan?

MICHAEL
What happened?

CAPTAIN DAVIS
My guess is, the same folks that
put you in, killed him. Tried to
convince us he committed suicide.

MICHAEL
How do you know?

CAPTAIN DAVIS
I don't, just a hunch. Let's go
make things official.

TAMAR
What's so special about you and
Ryan? What do you know that
jeopardized your life and got him
killed?

MICHAEL

I haven't figured that out yet. Can we do this tomorrow? Right now I want to get some rest; sleep in my own bed.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

Okay. We'll pick you up first thing.

MICHAEL

Naw, I got my car.

TAMAR

That thing still runs?

MICHAEL

It's a classic. And yes it still runs. I'll see you all in the morning.

Captain Davis and Tamar leave.

INT. FRONT DOOR - LATER

Michael picks up his car keys from a nearby bowl and leaves.

EXT. HIS CAR - CONTINUOUS

He gets into his car, surprised it still works.

He drives away.

I/E, LOCAL BAR - LATER

He enters routinely as if five years never happened.

INT. LOCAL BAR - CONTINUOUS

Bartender sees him and with a nod of the head he points him out to PENA, a short round Cuban man deep in conversation with two huge goon types.

Pena grabs Charlene by the arm.

PENA

You got something for me?

Charlene takes out a wad of money and start to count out. Pena takes it all.

CHARLENE

DAMN! Pena, leave me some money so I can eat.

Gives her two hundred.

CHARLENE (CONT'D)

What the fuck and I'm supposed to do what with this. I told you... if you fuck me I'm out. Half. That's the agreement.

PENA

I'm just playing.

He gives her another two hundred.

She leaves.

Pena approaches Michael who has taken a seat at a table in the back corner.

PENA (CONT'D)

I heard you was out.

MICHAEL

Didn't think you cared.

PENA

I don't.

Bartender approaches.

BARTENDER

What can I get you.

MICHAEL

I don't care.

Bartender walks a with a tray carrying two shots of whiskey, and two beers. He places a glass of each in front of them.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Thanks.

The bartender walks away.

PENA

I got something that might interest you.

MICHAEL

Cool, but first, who set me up?

PENA
I don't know nothing about that,
but here's what I do know.

MICHAEL
About?

PENA
The night Stephanie died, my boy
Tony other there, saw some guy
going in her apartment. Know what I
mean?

MICHAEL
Who was he?

PENA
Never found out, but he's dead.

MICHAEL
Dead? What happen?

PENA
Two shots; one to the chest, the
other to the head. Know what I
mean?

MICHAEL
Damn.

PENA
Yeah, another thing; my boy, said
he saw that guy take a bag up to
Stephanie's place. Didn't see him
come out with it. Know what I mean?

MICHAEL
Did he see anybody else go up
there?

PENA
Nope, but they'll keep an eye for
you, know what I mean?

MICHAEL
Thanks for looking out.

PENA
I got you, know what I mean?

MICHAEL
Yeah, I feel ya.

Pena stands to his feet and starts to walk away. He stops and turns to face Michael.

PENA
Tell that hot ass Chica friend of yours I'm still waiting on that dinner she promised me.

MICHAEL
(Joking)
Keep waiting you Cuban fuck.

PENA
(Also Joking)
Kiss my Cuban ass.

Michael stands to his feet, and they offer each other a single arm hug and hand grip combination. Pena walks back over to the two goons to pick up their conversation.

Michael pays for the drinks and leaves.

INT. POLICE STATION - RECEPTION AREA - EARLY MORNING

Michael, Captain David and Tamar enter the station. WALLY, a friendly chubby faced officer, looks past Captain David and Tamar. His warm smile welcomes Michael.

MICHAEL
Hey Wally. It's good to see you.

WALLY
Mikey! It's good to have you back.
I'll buzz you in.

He buzzes them in, a woman approaches the desk, interrupting Wally before he can say another word. Wally turns his attention to her. Michael follows Captain Davis and Tamar through the secured door.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERIOR - CONTINUOUS

Plain clothes and uniform officers busy themselves getting ready for the day. At first, no one notices Captain Davis and Michael.

CAPTAIN DAVIS
Excuse me, can I have your attention.

Everyone turns to Captain Davis; sees Michael and burst into applause and a standing ovation.

Michael stops at his old desk to see it is very lived in by its new owner. He looks around to see a photo of officer Ryan hanging on the wall of fallen officers. He stops when he hears a familiar voice call his name.

BENITA FULLER (Benny), his late partner's girlfriend, enters.

BENITA
Michael Arden.

He turns to face her.

MICHAEL
Benita Fuller.

They offer each other a tight hug.

BENITA
I'm so glad to see you. I heard you were getting out. When?

MICHAEL
Yesterday.

BENITA
Let's go get some coffee.

MICHAEL
Gotta make things official.

BENITA
Okay, maybe another time.

MICHAEL
As soon as I'm finished with Cap.

BENITA
Hey I have all of your mail. Five years worth.

MICHAEL
Funny. It's was you?

BENITA
Me what?

MICHAEL
You took care of my place.

BENITA
I needed to stay connected. I hope you don't mind.

MICHAEL
I don't.

INT. CAPTAIN DAVIS' OFFICE

Michael signs paperwork.

CAPTAIN DAVIS
Before you can hit the streets you
need to talk to H-R, and
Rosenberger.

MICHAEL
The psych?

CAPTAIN DAVIS
Yep. If you want to keep your badge
...get up there.

He start out of the office.

CAPTAIN DAVIS (CONT'D)
Arden...good to have you back.

MICHAEL
Good to be back.

He leaves.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERIOR - CONTINUOUS

Michael start up the H-R and Rosenberger.

MICHAEL
Hey Bennie don't go to far, as soon
as I'm done, we'll head out.

BENITA
Okay.

She returns to her desk, while Michael disappears up the
stairs.

INT. LATER

Michael returns.

MICHAEL
Sorry it took so long. I forgot how
winded he is.

BENITA

I know, some things never change.

Michael takes in his surroundings.

MICHAEL

Right, some things never do change.

Benita takes in the surrounding as well.

BENITA

Yep.

MICHAEL

Alright let's go.

They leave.

I/E. LOCAL COFFEE SHOP - MID-DAY

Benita and Michael catch up.

They collect their coffee and go outside.

Sit at an empty table.

BENITA

How have you been?

MICHAEL

I don't know yet. What about you?

BENITA

I've had better days.

MICHAEL

I heard about Ryan. I'm so sorry.

BENITA

Thank you for that. The official report said suicide.

MICHAEL

What's the unofficial report

BENITA

I think Ry got too close to something, and became a target.

MICHAEL

Too close to what?

BENITA

Whatever he was working on; trying to get you out.

MICHAEL

Why didn't you come to see me?

BENITA

Right after you went in. I told Ryan I wanted to go and see you. To see if there was anything we could do, but he told me not to. No matter what happened to him; I was not to go to the prison to see you.

MICHAEL

Did he say why?

BENITA

Yes. We were being watched. You, me and Ryan; we were being watched. And he figured if they saw me with you; I might end up in prison like you, or worst, dead. Ryan was scared. Me too.

MICHAEL

I had no idea.

She pretend to stroke his hand, but slips him a tiny thumb drive.

BENITA

I've been carrying this with me ever since Ryan died. I found it in his things.

MICHAEL

What's on it?

BENITA

I don't know. I tried to get in it, but Ryan had it encrypted, and I can't break the code.

MICHAEL

I know someone who can. We'd better head back.

BENITA

Before you ask me, I have no idea what happened to Stephanie.

MICHAEL

I know you don't; you would have told me if you did.

They stand to their feet. Both place a tip under one of the empty cup.

Walking to their car.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

By the way Pena says hi, and he's waiting for some dinner date you promised him.

BENITA

Well that little bastard can just keep waiting.

She shakes her head in aggravation.

MICHAEL

You know you like him.

BENITA

Shut up, and get in the car.

Someone is watching them through the lens of a camera. The sound of the camera snapping pictures of Michael and Benita is heard several times.

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

Captain Davis is frustrated when Michael and Benita enter.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

Where have you two been?

MICHAEL

To get coffee.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

Well, while you two were playing catch up; there was another homicide.

BENITA

Same M-O?

CAPTAIN DAVIS

Yes.

To Michael

BENITA

There have been a string a murders
over the past five months.

INT. COMPUTER INTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUE

They move into the computer Intel conference room where an
evidence board maps out the skimpy trail of evidence .

EZRA JORGENSEN, late 20's, a computer whiz kid follows behind
eating his usual chocolate nut covered doughnut. He plops
down in his comfortable place and pecks away at the computer.
Tamar and AARON, early 30's follows. Tamar hands her father a
cup of coffee and take a seat next to Aaron.

Captain Davis flick a light switch. A screen lowers from the
ceiling.

Aaron turn on the projector, while Erza connects it to his
computer.

One by one, images of the victims are projected.

BENITA

They all follow the same pattern.

EZRA

Shot up like a pin cushion

AARON

With two specific bullet wounds to
the left side of their chest area.

TAMAR

They look like snake bites.

EZRA

All of the victims were discarded.
The stranger thing; nothing was
taken.

TAMAR

Right. He left the money, their
wallet, their jewelry...

EZRA

...Their cars. He left everything.

Aaron throws a small soft squishy ball and hits Ezra in his
head.

EZRA (CONT'D)

Damn! What's up with that.

AARON

Sorry, I was actually just tossing it up and it went in the wrong direction.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

Okay kids, that's enough play time.

AARON

Sorry.

MICHAEL

Do they have anything in common?

EZRA

Yep, their all white. By the way, Michael it's good to have you back.

BENITA

We've missed you.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

(To Michael)

Before you dive into this case, H.R., and legal need you upstairs.

MICHAEL

On my way.

Michael leaves.

AARON

So you're making him lead?

CAPTAIN DAVIS

Yes. Do you have a problem with that?

AARON

Yes Sir. I think I should be lead. After all he's been away for five damn years Sir.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

All the more reason to give his this case. He hasn't forgotten how to do his job.

AARON

I completely disagree with you, Sir. He should earn his stripes like everyone else.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

He's earned more stripe than you'll ever know.

AARON

Look, like everyone here, I feel bad that he was locked up for all those years. But he shouldn't be turned into the golden boy just like that.

BENITA

And you think you should be?

AARON

Frankly, yes.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

Fuller will take the lead... And her partner... Arden can watch. (To Aaron) Does that meet with your approval?

Upset, Aaron storms out.

TAMAR

I assumed I would be Arden's partner?

CAPTAIN DAVIS

Anyone else want to join him?
(To Tamar) As for you; don't assume.

MARVIN ATKINS, late 20's, and another computer whiz kid enters and takes his desk near EZRA.

EZRA

Hey.

MARVIN

Morning.

Marvin buries his face into his computer.

Tamar whispers to Benita.

TAMAR

Ten bucks says those two are Trump supporters

Benita offers Tamar a side glance

BENITA

Girl! (Stop).

INT. LATER

Michael re-enters to find Captain Davis and Benita still waiting for him.

BENITA
Hey partner.

MICHAEL
Partner?

CAPTAIN DAVIS
Yes. Who better to put you with,
then someone we both trust.

MICHAEL
It's official.

Michael hand a piece of paper to Captain Davis.

CAPTAIN DAVIS
Got through all the red tape?

MICHAEL
Not yet; got a meeting at 9
tomorrow.

BENITA
Let's go.

CAPTAIN DAVIS
Until then, I want you on the
sidelines. Understand?

MICHAEL
Yes Cap, I understand.

Benita and Michael leave

EXT.

Walking to their unmarked car.

MICHAEL
Where do we start?

BENITA
The examiner's.

MICHAEL
Is it still in the same spot?

BENITA

Yeah, why?

MICHAEL

It's only two blocks, let's walk.

BENITA

Okay.

MICHAEL

He's killed five people in five months, and all of a sudden he kills two more in the time it took me to be released. What do we know about the victims, besides them all being white and male? What do they have in common?

BENITA

That's what we need to find out.

Charlene and Carla brush past Michael and Benita. Neither giving the other a second glance or thought.

EXT. SAME TIME

CARLA

Did you wanna grab a bite to eat?

CHARLENE

Yeah, I could eat something.

Carla comes alive at the thought of Charlene having lunch with her.

CARLA

I want a gyro. Let's go to Freddy's.

CHARLENE

Okay.

EXT. SAME TIME

Back to Michael and Benita.

BENITA

I don't know. None of them have ever come in contact with the other. They don't have the same circle of friends; at least not that we can tell.

INT. CITY MORGUE

This 21st century high tech city morgue is cold and uninviting.

Two dead bodies lay stretched out on their prospective slabs.

The lead examiner, KARLI BOYD late 30's early 40's, is going over a glass-covered table of evidence.

Michael and Benita enter.

MICHAEL

You can always tell when Karli has found something good; she get's this look on her face.

Karli looks up and turns to face the familiar voice. Still holding on to her stressed frozen expression.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Yep, that's the face.

KARLI

And there it is. I can't say that I'm sorry they let you crazy ass back out on the street.

They embrace.

MICHAEL

It is so good to see you my friend.

KARLI

The same goes for me. You good?

MICHAEL

I am now. I heard some stuff about you while I was locked up.

KARLI

What stuff?

MICHAEL

That you went and broke my heart; married, kids.

KARLI

Yep; three years next month. Twin boys.

She picks up a picture of her family and gives it to Michael.

MICHAEL

Nice family. I'm going to have to meet them.

KARLI

We're having a bar-b-que this weekend. You two should come.

MICHAEL

I'll be there.

BENITA

Me too.

KARLI

I know you didn't come here to talk about me. I assume you're here to talk about those two.

MICHAEL

Yeah, anything new?

KARLI

Nothing you don't already know from the report I sent over.

The morgue apprentice, RYAN late 20's has a puzzled look on his face as he pulls back from his microscope.

RYAN

Excuse Doctor Boyd, I think I found something.

They approach Ryan at his microscope.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Here take a look. It's some kind of foreign object.

Karli looks through the lens...

Sees something very familiar....

Takes a closer look...

MICHAEL

What is it?

KARLI

I've seen this before.

Michael and Benita both take a look, but neither know what they should be seeing.

INT. LOCAL GYRO SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Charlene and Carla enjoy their meal.

Carla - purse.

Takes out a bottle of salmon colored fingernail polish....

The wet brush strokes each fingernail...

Old cracked polished covered...

CARLA
Want to use it?

CHARLENE
Yeah, my nails look a mess.

Charlene runs the brush over her nails.

CARLA
How was last night?

CHARLENE
Went alright.

CARLA
One of your regs?

CHARLENE
Yep. That prick never tips though.

CARLA
If he comes around tonight, mind if
I have a go? I could use the cash.

CHARLENE
All yours.

CARLA
What kind of car?

CHARLENE
It's a nice one. A black BMW.

CARLA
My brother had one like that.

Charlene does not acknowledge. She wipes her mouth.

CHARLENE
(to the waitress)
Hey can I get the check?

Waitress approaches and give her the bill.

Charlene hand her a \$20.

Waitress leaves and return with change.

Charlene puts a dollar bill on the table and leaves.

Carla does not leave a tip, she just leaves.

INT. CITY MORGUE - CONTINUOUS

MICHAEL

What are we looking at?

BENITA

It looks like old blood.

KARLI

I don't think it is. I want to say that I've seen it before. (to the apprentice) Run some test. See what you get.

MICHAEL

We'll check back.

KARLI

Okay. Or I'll call when I know something.

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Michael and Benita headed back to the station.

Pass by Charlene and Carla...

Carla bumps into Michael...

Her purse falls...

Things scatter...

CHARLENE

Damn! You need to watch where you're going.

CARLA

Sorry.

CHARLENE

Not you, him.

MICHAEL
It was an accident, no harm done.

Benita picks up the polish.

BENITA
Pretty color.

Benita reads out loud.

BENITA (CONT'D)
Salmon. Nice.

CARLA
Thanks.

Carla takes her polish. She and Charlene and hurries on their way.

Michael and Benita head back to the station.

EXT. POLICE STATION

MICHAEL
Hey, I'm need to go and check on a friend. I'll talk to you later.

BENITA
Okay.

INT. STATE PRISON - INTERROGATION ROOM

Hunt is led in and chained to his chair.

MICHAEL
What no solitary?

HUNT
Decided to be good. Figured you might drop by. You good?

MICHAEL
Yeah. You?

HUNT
No better, no worst than I was yesterday.

MICHAEL
Listen, I need your help with something.

HUNT

Yeah?

MICHAEL

We got a string a murders. They don't make since. There's no connection. We got nothing. All we know is, their white men.

HUNT

That ain't telling me shit.

MICHAEL

I know.

HUNT

Don't nothing stand out?

MICHAEL

The only thing they all have in common is that fact that they were all shot multiple time with two distinct bullet holes to the left side of their chest.

HUNT

When you say distinct; What they look like?

MICHAEL

Like snake bites.

HUNT

His calling card.

MICHAEL

Yeah, that's what I figured.

HUNT

How many he get so far?

MICHAEL

Up to seven.

HUNT

All the same?

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HUNT

Give me a few days, and I'll see what I can come up with?

(MORE)

HUNT (CONT'D)

Although it don't sound like no
dude did this.

MICHAEL

What do you mean?

HUNT

Sounds like a piece a pussy did
this one. Shit, she mad about
something.

MICHAEL

So the killer's a woman?

HUNT

Yep. Could be.

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

EZRA

Hey Karli called, said she may have
something. She also said you need
to get a cell phone.

BENITA

I agree. Where'd you go?

MICHAEL

I told you, to see an old friend.
Are we headed back to see Karli?

BENITA

Yes.

Captain Davis approaches.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

I need everybody in the situation
room right now.

INT. SITUATION ROOM

There is a new photo on the evidence board.

It's Charlene.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

Aaron, play the video.

Surveillance video clips of the each victim's cars just
before they were killed.

All show Charlene getting into their cars.

Video ends

Lights come on.

CAPTAIN DAVIS (CONT'D)
We wanted to know what these men
had in common.

Taps Charlene's picture.

CAPTAIN DAVIS (CONT'D)
She's who they all had in common.

MICHAEL
(whispers to himself) He said it be
a woman.

BENITA
What?

MICHAEL
Nothing.

BENITA
She looks familiar.

CAPTAIN DAVIS
That's good, then she won't be hard
for you two to find.

MICHAEL
I have no clue who she is.

AARON
She's a hooker.

BENITA
How do you know this?

AARON
How do you not know this?

He points to the scene.

One more video of Charlene soliciting passersby. Carla
standing off to the side almost as an after-thought (puffing
her cigarette).

INT. CITY MORGUE - LATER

KARLI

So that tiny spec I thought was dried blood; turns out it wasn't blood.

BENITA

What was it?

KARLI

It's consistent with nail polish.

MICHAEL

Nail polish?

KARLI

Yes. It matches this brand in particular.

Ryan reveals an image of Walmart brand Weekly Nail Polish, Salmon

KARLI (CONT'D)

To be honest, I never would have thought twice about it, but I remembered seeing that same image on one of the other victims.

MICHAEL

Can you tell who it belongs too?

KARLI

Unfortunately the speck is too tiny to get a definitive DNA match.

BENITA

Damn.

INT. STATE PRISON - INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER

MICHAEL

You were right. The examiner found fingernail polish. We think the killer might be a prostitute.

HUNT

Yeah, could be. But why would she kill her money makers. Unless they ain't paying. But if I know my girls, even the ones in here. They ain't gonna give it up for free. Especially if it's her business.

(MORE)

HUNT (CONT'D)

You gotta pay up front. She gonna make sure she get hers before he gets his. Naw, you better look somebody else.

MICHAEL

Are you sure? We have video that shows her getting in the car with every one of the victims.

HUNT

Does the video show her getting out of those same cars?

MICHAEL

No.

HUNT

Remember this; a bitch ain't gone kill her money. Unless she don't have a choice. And even then it's got to be full of shit for her to do it. Understand.

MICHAEL

I hear you.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Charlene's background information is displayed on the screen.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

Here's what we know. The woman in the videos name's name is Charlene McDonough. The good news. She has a record and it goes deep. As you can see. She has several arrest most of them for assault. She was arrested for armed robbery, couple of DUI's, car theft, resisting arrest, and the list goes on.

BENITA

She was married for two week. The husband had the marriage annulled, even put out a restraining order due to assault.

AARON

Damn, she beat the man up with his own cane.

TAMAR
She had a horrible childhood. No
wonder she's so messed up.

CAPTAIN DAVIS
Bring her in.

EXT. CHARLENE'S MOTEL ROOM- LATE NIGHT

A small quiet chaos of police arrive to arrest Charlene.

Knock on the door.

Charlene opens the door.

BENITA
Charlene McDonough?

CHARLENE
Yes.

BENITA
We need you to come with us.

Genuinely shocked.

CHARLENE
For what?

BENITA
We just want to ask you some
questions about your recent
activities involving a string of
murders..

CHARLENE
Murders? What hell! I don't know
nothing about no murders.

BENITA
You can volunteer (hold up a
warrant) but I do have a warrant if
you refuse.

CHARLENE
This is some bogus shit.

She willing goes.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER

BENITA

How long have you been on the streets?

CHARLENE

Since I was sixteen.

BENITA

I want you to know that I'm here to help you. So whatever you can tell us about these murders. It just might help your case.

Visibly shaken.

CHARLENE

I told y'all, I don't know shit about no murders. I didn't kill no body.

BENITA

Tell me if you recognize any of these men.

Benita slowly clicks through the disturbing images of the dead men.

Image of the last victim is left on the screen.

Charlene eyes are fixed on him.

BENITA (CONT'D)

I see you know him.

CHARLENE

I knew all of them. He was a one of the nice ones. Never tipped though.

BENITA

Do you realize you were the last person to see any of these men alive.

Genuinely shocked.

CHARLENE

What! How? That's bullshit.

BENITA

We have video of you getting into their vehicles hours before they died.

CHARLENE

That's a lie. I give them sex and they paid me, and I left. You can ask....

Blank mind... No one.

Hands on the table...

No alibi...

Bennie notices the nail polish.

BENITA

What color is that?

CHARLENE

What?

BENITA

On your nails.

CHARLENE

I don't know.

BENITA

I'll need a sample. Do you mind?

CHARLENE

My friend gave it to me. I don't care.

Cotton swab rubs against the fingernail...

Fall to bottom of the test tube...

SEALED...

INT. LOCAL BAR - ONE WEEK LATER

Carla enters.

CARLA

Hey, you seen the Charlene?

BARTENDER

Nope.

CARLA

Where's Pena?

BARTENDER

In the back.

INT. BACK OFFICE.

Knock

PENA

What?

Door opens.

CARLA

Hey, I...

PENA

Damn! Did you hear me say come in?

CARLA

I can't find Charlene.

PENA

Bitch in jail.

CARLA

What! You need to get her out.

PENA

Nope, not getting involved with this one. Got her on murder charges.

CARLA

Murder? Charlene didn't do nothing.

PENA

I don't care if she did or didn't. No my problem; know what I mean.

Carla leaves.

INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

CAPTAIN DAVIS

Good job everyone. (To Benita) I want your reports by morning.

BENITA

Yes Sir.

Michael is perplexed.

BENITA (CONT'D)

What's wrong with you?

MICHAEL
 Didn't this seem a little too easy?

EZRA
 Nope.

AARON
 Just feel in our laps.

MICHAEL
 That's what I mean. When Bennie
 interrogated her, she seemed
 genuinely surprised.

AARON
 So. She's a good actor. She did
 have seven alias.

MICHAEL
 That's not it. She had no idea what
 we where were talking about.
 Something's off.

EZRA
 Well I'm not sticking around. I
 have a date. I'll see you all
 tomorrow.

He leaves.

Michael can't shake what Hunt said about a prostitute not
 killing their money.

MICHAEL
 If she got paid, why the need kill
 them?

TAMAR
 Maybe she was a black widow.

MICHAEL
 That's not it.

AARON
 I'm tired. We can worry about this
 tomorrow.

CAPTAIN DAVIS
 I agree. Good night everyone. Tam
 you need a ride?

TAMAR
 No thanks dad, I drove.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

Okay. Call your mother when, so I don't have hear her.

TAMAR

Yes Sir.

Everyone leaves.

Headquarters is locked down for night.

A night janitor runs a mop over the floor.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NEXT DAY - MID-MORNING

Drinking coffee. Michael empties the contents of the envelop on to the table. (folded piece of paper, bank vault lock box key, thumb drive and a sealed envelope.)

Michael opens the letter.

STEPHANIE (O.S.)

If you're reading this. It's too late for me. I'm so very sorry that I played any part in their scheme to set you up. I had no idea it would go this far. I tried to get out and to get you out. Please forgive me. Here is everything I know. I know I can't make up for the five years, but I hope this helps. Love Steph...

He opens the piece of paper. Login and password.

Loads the thumb drive in the computer and logs in.

Audio recording. The male voice is on his phone talking. His is the only part of the conversation that can be heard.

UNKNOWN MALE VOICE

Ruiz is done... The girl's next... No need to worry about Arden, he'll be dealt with from inside... I'm taking his old lady to the airport right now... She knows what to do. (to Stephanie) You do know that you can never come back here again... You know what will happen if you do?

STEPHANIE VOICE

I do.

UNKNOWN MALE VOICE
I'll call you when I put her on the
plane. (to Stephanie)Let's go.

End of recording.

Michael understands his solitary confinement and the warden's
comment about "need to know."

Remember the thumb drive that Bennie gave him.

Inserts it.

Error message "Encrypted"

Michael studied and completed a variation of computer coding,
encryption and technology courses while in prison.

Unlocks the encryption.

The only folder on the thumb drive.

'T-C-B-C'

Clicks on the folder.

A virus like encryption streams down the screen.

MICHAEL
Ryan what kind of shit were you
into?

Removes the thumb drive.

INT. LOCAL BANK - LATE AFTERNOON

Vault

Michael waits.

The door opens. A bank officer place a large lock box on the
table in front of Michael. They each insert their keys to
unlock the box.

BANKER
Take your time.

He leaves.

Michael opens the box. \$250 thousand in cash. A bank book in
his name with over a half million dollars. A postcard.

He opens the postcard....

'Love Steph.'

Puts the bank book in his pocket. Changes his mind and puts it back in the box for safe keeping. Instead takes a wad of cash.

He closes the lock box and rings for the banker.

The banker returns.

MICHAEL
I'm done here.

BANKER
Very well Sir.

They lock the lock box and banker leaves with the box. Michael leaves with some cash, the card and his key.

EXT. CITY STREET - LATE NIGHT

A red sport's car pulls up next to Carla.

DRIVER
Where's Charlene?

CARLA
She's sick.

DRIVER
You free.

CARLA
Sure.

Carla tosses her cigarette and climbs in.

They drive off.

INT. CAR

CARLA
Ever did it in the woods?

DRIVER
You a freaky thing. I like it.

Sinister grin...

Reaches inside her purse...

Gun drawn...

Fears for his life.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
What the fuck?

CARLA
Drive. (BEAT) I heard you don't
like to tip.

DRIVER
Tips, is that what this is about.
Fuck take my wallet. Hell you can
have everything.

CARLA
Naw, you should have thought about
that before you stiffed my friend.

DRIVER
Who's your friend? I'll tip her
too.

A squad car approaches from the opposite side...

The gun is jabbed into his side...

He's at her mercy...

JUST DRIVE...

CARLA
There's a motel on the next corner;
pull in and park.

INT. POLICE STATION - CAPTAIN DAVIS' OFFICE

Michael plays the audio for Captain Davis and Benita.

CAPTAIN DAVIS
Where'd you get this?

MICHAEL
Stephanie's landlord gave it to me.
Said Stephanie ask her to hold it
for me.

BENITA
I wonder who the guy is?

CAPTAIN DAVIS
And who he's talking to?

MICHAEL

Me too.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

Did the landlady say or give you anything else?

Lies.

MICHAEL

No.

BENITA

He mentioned a female. Who is he talking about. Do you think it could be me?

CAPTAIN DAVIS

God! I hope not. I can put a 'detail' outside your place.

BENITA

I don't think that's necessary. We don't know when this was recorded. These people, whoever they are could be long gone.

MICHAEL

Or they could still be in here. We should be on alert.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

Agreed.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - LATE NIGHT

The motel looks abandoned. A single street light sits center - stage in the parking lot surrounded by darkness.

He parks in the darkest corner.

Car goes silent.

INT. CAR

CARLA

Do you have a cell phone?

DRIVER

Yes.

CARLA

Get it.

Takes cell phone out of arm-rest compartment.

Offers it, but she doesn't take it.

CARLA (CONT'D)

Call the police.

He's taken aback.

DRIVER

Call the police? You want me to
call the police?

CARLA

Yes. Tell them that you will die in
exact five minutes unless a lady
named Charlotte McDonough is
released.

9-1-1

Conversation between the driver and the 911 operator.

911 OPERATOR

9-1-1. What is your emergency?

PURE FEAR.

DRIVER

I'm going to die... in exactly five
minutes... unless you release
Charlotte McDonough.

911 OPERATOR

I'm sorry Sir, but can you repeat
that?

Terror hides in plain sight as he speaks.

DRIVER

She said... I'm going to die... in
exactly five minutes... unless you
release Charlotte McDonough.

INT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Wally rushes through the door.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

What's wrong Wally?

WALLY
Some guy on the phone says he's
going die in five unless we release
Charlotte McDonough.

MICHAEL
Shit! Is he still on the line.

WALLY
Yes.

MICHAEL
(to Marvin)
Tell them to patch it through here.

Marvin sprints out.

Few seconds later a single line lights up on the desk phone.

CAPTAIN DAVIS
Track it.

EZRA
On it.

CAPTAIN DAVIS
See if there's GPS on the caller's
phone.

MARVIN
Got it.

The stage is set.

Michael picks up the line.

Conversation between Carla and Michael

MICHAEL
Hello.

CARLA
Who are you?

MICHAEL
My name is Detective Arden.

CARLA
Did she tell you?

MICHAEL
Yes, she told me. Where's the guy?

CARLA

Right here with my gun pointed at his balls. Well... when are you going to let my friend go?

MICHAEL

Soon. But first, Who are you?

CARLA

That's none of your concern. Just let Charlene go. Or... I swear he's a dead man.

Aaron pulls up the video of Charlene getting ready to get into the last victim's car. This time the image of Carla stands out.

BENITA

Freeze. Right there. I've seen her.. That's the girl we bumped into. The one with the polish. That's her.

TAMAR

Her name is Carla Herren. Age 28. A rap sheet as long as Charlene. Shit!

CAPTAIN DAVIS

What?

TAMAR

She's wanted for the murder of Troy Benjamin, a construction worker in Tulsa Oklahoma. She's alleged to have shot him six times, including the two 'snake bites' to the chest after he ran over a friends' dog.

BENITA

How did we miss her?

CAPTAIN DAVIS

Reflect later. We got a life to save, and a killer to catch.

MARVIN

His GPS is turned on. We know where they are.

EZRA

About ten minutes away.

CAPTAIN DAVIS
Keep her talking Michael. Let's go
everyone. Get a chopper in the air.
Get that line transferred to my
cell. NOW people.

The room buzzes with chaotic order. People jump into their
tasks with ease.

KEEP CALM

MICHAEL
We want to get Charlene released
too, but it will take some time.

SHOT FIRED.

CARLA
That one was a warning. The next
one won't be.

Michael woos a confession from Carla.

MICHAEL
I understand. So do you know why
Charlene is being held?

CARLA
Yeah... said she killed somebody.

MICHAEL
Yes. She killed seven men. So you
know it won't be easy to get her
out.

Laughs

CARLA
Y'all stupid. Charlene didn't kill
nobody.

MICHAEL
How do you know.

CARLA
Because I did. I killed them
bastards for hurting my friend. I
love her.

EXT.

Michael and the other quickly make their way to their perspective cars.

EN ROUTE

MICHAEL

It's good that she has a friend like you.

CARLA

They took advantage of her... All of them...

Michael starts to speak, but ...

The wooing worked.

A montage of images of every dead body and how she left them slithers into Carla's minds eye

Carla breaths deep... Sigh...

Paints the picture...

CARLA (CONT'D)

I was protecting her. They didn't deserve her.

MICHAEL

That's what friend do.

CARLA

They'd have their turn with her... and I'd have my turn with them.

EXT. MOTEL - 8 MINUTES LATER

SURROUNDED.

Speaking through bullhorn.

CAPTAIN DAVIS

Carla Herren! Got the car with your hands up.

CARLA

(to Michael)
Tell Charlene that I loved her.
(MORE)

CARLA (CONT'D)

Tell her that I did it all for her.
Tell her...

Last shot fired.

Driver's side door clumsily opens...

Man falls out... knee spewing blood.

Police swam the car.

EXT. KARLI'S HOME - BACKYARD - SATURADAY AFTERNOON.

Bar-b-que. Kids and adults fill the yard. Family and friends enjoy each other's company.

Michael and Benita enter the back gate. Benita has two trays store bought cookies. Michael has a case of beer.

KARLI

Oh my god, you came. I'm so glad.

Seeks out her husband who she knows is at the grill.

KARLI (CONT'D)

Jim!

He can't hear her over the noise and the music.

KARLI (CONT'D)

That's Jim, my husband at the grill. Come on in. Everyone's here. And please enjoy yourself.

They disappear into the crowd.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - EXECUTIVE OFFICE- LATE NIGHT

The office huge, modern and very elegant... And dark...

A leather gloved hand carries an envelope....

Tosses it on the desk...

Photos of Michael and Benita spill out.

A woman's hand picks them up.

FEMALE'S VOICE

So it is true. He is out. And their
together.

FADE TO BLACK.