

STREETS ON FIRE

by

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EXT. CHICAGO SKYLINE - NIGHT

Gliding over the sprawl to the tune of Sam Cooke's 'A Change is Gonna Come.' Towering monoliths swaying against thunderous winds. Scores of villages within city limits; La Villita, Chinatown, Greektown, Little Seoul. A sleepless hub of commerce, poverty, peace. Crime. Chicago is now.

Soaring over the Tri-State Freeway now, an 18-WHEELER motors down the road, nearing the periphery. Antiquated industrial complexes stand disconnected, abandoned. Ideal real estate for industries seeking anonymity from society - the law.

The truck pulls into a lot, finds shelter in a -

INT. TRUCK GARAGE - NIGHT

The 18-wheeler parks in a row of COMMERCIAL VEHICLES, bodies stripped. MECHANICS unweld metal containers from their rims, concealing bundles of HEROIN. More bundles are unloaded from the rocker panels, seat cushions.

The ACCOUNTANT (30's) punches numbers into his PDA, taking inventory of the shipment - neatly stacked on metal slabs. He moves for an SUV parked idle by the entrance door, climbs in -

INT./EXT. SUV/GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Sits beside FRANK RUSSO (60's), broad, grizzled. A relic of the Chicago Outfit, circa Capone. His eyes are closed, lost blissfully in the epic ballad issuing from the speakers.

ACCOUNTANT

Frank -

Russo doesn't hear him, in the zone. Reminiscing.

RUSSO

I remember the first time I heard this number. Sinatra did a gig at the Uptown theater. '64. Before Blue Eyes takes the stage this colored kid does a set. Sharp threads. Class. Voice like silk. No one would admit it that night, but we were all thinking it: change, it was fucking here.

The song fades.

RUSSO (CONT'D)

Again.

The DRIVER queues the stereo. Plays Sam all over again.

Russo looks to the accountant, all business now -

RUSSO (CONT'D)
What's the count?

ACCOUNTANT
It's all there. Five hundred keys.

He hands Russo the PDA.

ACCOUNTANT (CONT'D)
Your largest shipment to date. Not a bad
way to retire.

Russo fumbles with the PDA, alienated by this new technology -

RUSSO
Jesus, what ever happened to a pen and a
columnar?

ACCOUNTANT
All tech now, Frank. Light, easy to
store.

RUSSO
Yeah? What happens if I drop it?

Russo tosses it back. The accountant nearly fumbles the
catch.

RUSSO (CONT'D)
Fuck tech.

BOOM! An SRT VAN bursts through the entrance, grill fixed
with a front-end BATTERING RAM. Charging.

Russo produces a REVOLVER.

The van PLOWS hard into the SUV. Sends it sailing in
reverse. Colliding with an 18-wheeler.

Mechanics react, arm themselves as -

The van locks tires. Men in tactical gear, ski masks spill
out of the double-doors, brandishing assault rifles. And in
a blink, the mechanics are cut down by heavy fire.
Mincemeat.

The lead shooter steps up, fearless, RELOADS full-tilt.
Blows multiple mechanics to hell. Then, the firing ceases.
Over before it began.

The lead shooter removes their mask. Reveals:

CANDIE JONES (20's)

Strong, sexy. Woman.

Another shooter removes his mask -

KENNY (20's)

Mohawk, boyish. A jock with a big gun. He removes earbuds, pauses Brad Paisley on his iPod - his music to murder to. He activates the iPod's TIMER - counting down.

KENNY
Sixty seconds!

He starts for the heroin, fellow shooters following. Begin loading product into the van.

Jones draws a PISTOL. Marching amongst the wounded, executing them.

A man emerges from the van's passenger-side -

HANSON (50's)

Hard features, crew-cut. A warrior who's been around the block. He pops a TABLET of Pepto Bismol, following Candie Jones.

Russo stumbles out of the SUV, banged up, fumbling shells into his revolver.

Jones DRILLS Russo in the shoulder, his leg. KICKS away the six-shooter.

The driver goes for his gun; Jones SHOOTS him first.

Russo crawls, trailing blood. Stops at Hanson's boot. He looks up, meeting his maker -

RUSSO
You got some nerve, pal. What gives you the right -

Hanson draws a GLOCK - SHOOTS him in the head.

The accountant staggers out the car, hands raised. Trembling before Hanson, Jones -

ACCOUNTANT
Please. I wasn't even here. I'll disappear. Swear to God.

Hanson approaches the accountant, looks him up and down. Smiles, amused by the man's fear.

SIRENS echo in the distance. Responding.

The TIMER on Kenny's iPod BEEPS -

KENNY
Time to go!

Shooters pile into the van, clockwork.

Hanson looks at Jones, turns away from the accountant -

HANSON
Sorry. Strictly business.

Walks. Jones puts pistol-nozzle to the accountant's head. FIRES.

Hanson, Jones slip into the van. Peel out. And Sam still sings from Russo's now totaled SUV, taking it home -

SAM COOKE
*...It's been a long, a long time coming,
but I know a change gonna come, oh yes it
will...*

INT. L-TRAIN (MOVING) - PRE-DUSK

OFFICER WILLIAM FINLEY (27)

Strong, black. Chin held high. A soldier of pride, order. He sits sandwiched between a hoard of commuters. Pensive. Anticipant.

The train stops. An ELDERLY WOMAN (60's) lumbers through sliding doors.

Finley rises, offers his seat -

FINLEY
Please.

The elderly woman accepts -

ELDERLY WOMAN
Thank you.

She sits, pauses, locked on Finley's HOLSTERED GUN - peeking out of his jeans. She looks at him, concerned.

Finley smiles, reassuring -

FINLEY
It's all good. I'm a police officer.

The woman shifts in her seat, uneasy.

ELDERLY WOMAN
What a waste. And such a nice young man.

Finley watches her rise, searching for another seat.
Dispirited.

INT. PRECINCT - LOBBY AREA - PRE-DUSK

Dated, distressed conditions. On the wall above the waiting area, fading: "WES RV ANPR TEC" A house in disrepair.

Finley weaves through the bustle. Uniforms, criminals, victims. Business is booming.

INT. ORGANIZED CRIME DIVISION (OCD) - KEEGAN'S OFFICE - PRE-DUSK

A woman at her desk, chair reclined, watching OPRAH online.
Empowered.

SERGEANT CARRIE KEEGAN (late 30's)

Sporty frame, no time to be pretty. Jaded by decades of office politics, sexism. A KNOCK at the door, disruptive.

Keegan, annoyed, pauses the show, hurries for the door, opens it. Finley stands before her, ready to work.

FINLEY
Sergeant Keegan?

She nods, impatient.

FINLEY (CONT'D)
I'm William. William Finley -

SGT. KEEGAN
You're early.

She pushes past him, rushed -

SGT. KEEGAN (CONT'D)
This way, please.

Keegan leads Finley to his desk. Switches on his computer.

SGT. KEEGAN (CONT'D)
This is your desk. Roll call's in an hour. Major Crimes is stopping by.

She's already marching back to her office.

FINLEY

What for -

She slams the door.

Finley acquaints himself with the desk. Organizes it to his liking. He pulls a book from his bag: TECHNIQUES OF CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION, SIXTH EDITION. Reads.

OFFICER AMELIA SANTOS (20's) breezes through, stunning despite the sweat, gym clothes. She spots Finley, drops her purse on the desk. If she's interested, she doesn't show it. Running through her e-mail -

OFCR. SANTOS

Amelia. They call me Santos 'round here. Last name. Amelia's cool, too. Your choice.

FINLEY

William.

OFCR. SANTOS

That's easy. I'll be in the showers, William.

She exits, leaves Finley no time to catch his breath. He returns to his book, smitten. Sees he's lost his page.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DODGE CHALLENGER (MOVING) - PRE-DUSK

The revamped muscle car roaring through rush-hour traffic, raping the speed law. Reckless.

INT./EXT. DODGE CHALLENGER (MOVING)/HIGHWAY - SAME

"Fuck the Police" punching the speakers - the Dilla version.

INK on a bicep: Notre Dame's fighting LEPRECHAUN flipping the bird.

A book on the dash: The Bar Exam For Dummies.

OFFICER JAMES MCCOY (27)

Mussy, white. "Selleck" sprouting above his upper lip. He dumps half a bottle of Red Bull out the window, refills it with a flask full of vodka. Sucks it down. Eyes his watch. HAMMERS the gas.

In the REARVIEW: a MOTORCYCLE OFFICER, SIRENS flashing.

McCoy steers into the emergency lane. Stops.

The officer heads for the vehicle, opening his ticket book. Unlocking his holster -

MOTORCYCLE OFFICER
License and registration.

McCoy feels around for his wallet, clearly can't find it.

MCCOY
Hang on, chief. It's here.

He sweeps a heap of empty Red Bulls off the seat, reveals a HANDGUN.

The officer spots the weapon, steps back, hand on his pistol.

MOTORCYCLE OFFICER
Step out of the vehicle and put your hands on your head.

MCCOY
Then I can't find my wallet.

MOTORCYCLE OFFICER
Get out of the car!

McCoy steps out. Hands behind his head -

MCCOY
Dude, I'm a cop -

The officer searches him.

MOTORCYCLE OFFICER
You smell like shit. You been drinking?

MCCOY
It's five o'clock somewhere.

The officer begins to cuff him.

MCCOY (CONT'D)
C'mon, it's my first day. Cut me some slack. I'm already late for my shift.

MCCOY (CONT'D)
(off the Officer's
silence)

Look, you want proof? Tin's in the car.

MOTORCYCLE OFFICER
Yeah? What's your badge number?

McCoy thinks hard -

MCCOY
Wait. I know it. Five digits.
Four...six - shit. There's a seven in
there somewhere -

The officer slams McCoy on the hood, moves for the driver's side.

Searches inside. It's a sty. Candy wrappers, cigarette cartons, an empty bottle of aspirin. No sense of ownership.

What the officer can deduce: the driver is lazy, spoiled. Lost. He lifts The Bar Exam For Dummies, finds the BADGE underneath.

MOTORCYCLE OFFICER
Christ.

He inspects it. Meets eyes with McCoy - face pinned to the hood. Wearing an 'I-told-you-so' kind of smile.

INT. OCD - SQUADROOM - NIGHT

LT. EPPS (O.S.)
Raymond Priest. Architect and chairman
of the South Side gang known as Nu
Country...

A MUG SHOT of RAYMOND PRIEST (30's), digitally projected on the wall behind LIEUTENANT ROBERT EPPS (30'S), straight and narrow. Tailored suit boasting superiority. Addressing the night owls of 2nd shift. Tired eyes, stubble-ridden jaws. Lowlifes with badges.

Finley listens intently, jotting keywords into his steno. He feels eyes on him, looks opposite -

Santos's gaze looms, liking what she sees. Finley turns away, bashful.

LT. EPPS (CONT'D)
Dealer, extortionist, killer. As you all know, Priest has been a formidable figure in the Chicago underworld for well over a decade. Barlow.

He looks to LIEUTENANT JAKE BARLOW (30's), his partner and lackey, standing by the projector. He changes the SLIDE: a candid of Russo.

LT. EPPS (CONT'D)
Frank Russo, Priest's distributor - Chi's major heroin supplier.

ANOTHER SLIDE: Russo's bullet-riddled corpse posing for the crime scene.

LT. EPPS (CONT'D)
Slain at his warehouse last night.
Only traces of his latest shipment were found at the scene. Word on the street, his largest to date. Five-hundred keys of Afghan H. Ballpark.

(beat)

In conjunction with the FBI, the DEA and I.S.P., we're executing a citywide investigation. Russo's killers are out there, along with the heroin. Best case is a twofer, nab the killers and the buyers. Buyers like Priest looking to re-up their supply. This station covers his turf, which means all officers within Organized Crime Division are to be pulled from their current cases to aid us in our pursuit. Starting now.

GROANS in the room.

LT. EPPS (CONT'D)
Hey - hey! Think you're the only ones?
I said citywide. That's a lot of badges on this.

OFCR. BORKOWSKI
(low)
Sounds like work -

OFFICER JOHN BORKOWSKI (30's), bald and bulky. A beer and burgers kinda guy. Finley watches him - smacking Nicorette, fighting from dozing off.

LT. EPPS
The objective is close surveillance on Priest and his associates. You spot a hand-off on the corner, bring 'em in. Desperate criminals are the best informants -

The doors swing open. All heads turn to McCoy, cheek shining. Sedated. Endeavoring anonymity.

LT. EPPS (CONT'D)
You're late. Officer?

MCCOY
James McCoy - Jim. Woulda' got here sooner, but a patrolman went all LAPD on my ass.

(to: Keegan)
Sarge.

SGT. KEEGAN
(embarrassed)
Jim.

McCoy grabs a seat between Finley and Santos, blocking their line of sight. He nods to Santos. She turns away, repulsed.

LT. EPPS
Recruitment is down, guys. Everyday officers are hightailing it to the 'burbs for fatter checks and shorter hours. This is your priority. Chicago needs you. Sergeant Keegan.

McCoy leans over to Finley, lost -

MCCOY
What'd I miss?

INT. OCD - SQUADROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Keegan reads from a clipboard, doling out assignments -

SGT. KEEGAN
Sims, Reston. 4100 block, South Indiana.
Santos, Borkowski. 5300 block. South Dearborn.

Borkowski meets eyes with Santos, winks suggestively. Finley takes note, jealous.

SGT. KEEGAN (CONT'D)
Finley, 10-16. Crest Hill Station. Take McCoy.

Finley turns to McCoy, distraught, trepidatious. He quickly raises a hand. Keegan pauses -

SGT. KEEGAN (CONT'D)
Finley.

FINLEY
It's our first day.

SGT. KEEGAN
I'm aware.

FINLEY
Two rookies to a detail?

MCCOY
Relax chief, I showered.

FINLEY
It's unorthodox. We should be partnered
with vets.

SGT. KEEGAN
You ever done a 10-16?

FINLEY
Plenty.

SGT. KEEGAN
Good. You can show Jim how it's done.

Keegan continues. Finley buries his head in his palms. Day
one gone to hell.

FINLEY (O.S.)
I'm better than this detail, sarge. I
need to be out there learning my
district.

INT. OCD - SQUADROOM - LATER

The team empties out. Finley follows Keegan to her office -

FINLEY
I've done more 10-16's than I can count.
What's an errand to the boonies gonna
teach me that I don't already know?

SGT. KEEGAN
You're escorting a prisoner with valuable
knowledge pertaining to Priest's
operation. You're doing your part.
(beat; Finley shaking his
head)
Hey, hunger's on your record. Your
experience and expertise in this
understaffed division practically makes
you a vet.

Keegan spots McCoy - playing 'Donkey Kong' on his iPhone.

SGT. KEEGAN (CONT'D)
Take a drive. He won't bite.

INT./EXT. UNMARKED - MOVING - NIGHT

McCoy pouring his flask of vodka into a can of Red Bull. Finley behind the wheel, seething, hating his assignment - hating McCoy even more.

FINLEY
There are other ways to caffeinate.
Coffee for one.

MCCOY
Joe gives me the shits. You play ball,
Bill?

FINLEY
The hell's that supposed to mean? And
it's William.

MCCOY
William. Means you're athletic. Most
would take it as a compliment. I played
ball.

FINLEY
I've seen you on SportsCenter. Blew your
shot at the pros. How old was she?
Sixteen?

MCCOY
Seventeen, and her parents consented.

McCoy studies Finley, reads his disapproval.

MCCOY (CONT'D)
Hey, I'm a man. Athletes get more trim
than rock stars.

FINLEY
I know the turf.

MCCOY
Do you? Mamacita back at the station -

FINLEY
Santos.

MCCOY

She wants to pop out your kids and you haven't even made plans.

FINLEY

I don't rap to coworkers.

MCCOY

No dipping in the company ink, right? Too bad. That's ass on tap. You should talk shit to her, man. Get your balls rolling before someone else does.

FINLEY

Worry about your own balls, alright? And I boxed. Army circuit. I got my share. I know what I'm doing.

McCoy lights a cigarette, unfiltered.

MCCOY

Pugilist, huh? That's cool. What are you? Middleweight? Light-heavy -

FINLEY

Super middle. And put out the damn cigarette.

He rolls down the window, fanning smoke. Annoyed.

MCCOY

Can't. Been buried in books all day. I'm stressed.

FINLEY

Then quit smoking.

MCCOY

You don't want me quitting. I'd be more of an asshole than I already am.

Off Finley, regarding McCoy with contempt.

The roar of SLIDING DOORS, O.S.

INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Finley escorting his prisoner, QUENTIN "Q" ELLROY (21) towards the exit. His head stashed in a hoodie. Obama on his T-SHIRT - the president parodied in 80's hustlerwear, gold chain around his neck.

INT. UNMARKED - MOMENTS LATER

Finley helps Q into the backseat. The prisoner eyes McCoy, sizing him up. Fear tactics.

INT. UNMARKED (MOVING) - NIGHT

McCoy, fidgety, despising the silence. He turns to Q - idle behind the cage.

MCCOY

Skimmed your file, Quentin. A little weed, a little speed. Ten miles over the limit. Asshole was just trying to meet his quota. Too many people out here getting away with murder to be worrying about that shit.

FINLEY

Our job is to transport the prisoner, not engage him in conversation.

Q

I blame my whip.

The officers pause, listening.

MCCOY

Your whip?

Q

S-Class, 221. My new ride.

MCCOY

My dad rolls in one of those. V-twelve.

Q

Mine's diesel.

McCoy shrugs, jealous.

MCCOY

That's cool.

Q

Rolling down the Eisenhower, errand to the burbs. My girl Kendra blows up my phone. All hooting and hollering. 'I need to talk to you Q.' I'm like, aight. Talk. 'But I need to tell you in person.'

MCCOY
That's girls for you.

Q
But now she's got my attention and I'm halfway to where I need to be, so I just punch it to Crest Hill. Going so fast I could see the future.

MCCOY
Bet it didn't help things they saw a brother behind the wheel.

Q
S'why I blame the whip. Officer smiled like it was Christmas when he caught me. Slammed me on the hood and everything.

MCCOY
(pointing to his cheek)
Been there, chief.

FINLEY
What about the hundred grand?

MCCOY
Hundred grand?

Q looks away, exercising his right to remain silent.

FINLEY
If you hadn't just skimmed the report you'd know the arresting officer found a hundred thousand dollars in cash stuffed inside his bookbag.

Q
Yo, that's my money. Earned every dollar. Supports me and my sister. That's our ticket out.

FINLEY
Sure it was yours? Or Priest's? I mean, somebody's gotta do the laundry. Guy like that probably has accounts spread out all over the state. Am I right?

Q
Yo, I don't wash for nobody.

FINLEY
That what he tells you to say?

Q trades looks with McCoy.

Q
I don't know about this dude.

MCCOY
Me neither.

EXT. L-TRAIN PLATFORM - SAME NIGHT

Hanson, Jones, Kenny and fellow MUSCLE ascend the stairs, enter through a caged door - bypassing the turnstiles. Hanson's muscle marked by hard builds, militarized gaits. Professionals.

Marching along the abandoned platform, Jones sneaks a playful finger into Hanson's palm, flirting.

The train doors slide open. Hanson and his men enter.

AT THE HEAD OF THE TRAIN

The MOTORMAN activates the OUT OF SERVICE indicator. Accelerates.

INT. L-TRAIN - CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Hanson and his men walk the aisle, each grabbing a handle bar - keeping watch.

Delegates from all syndicates and their go-to enforcers sit quietly. Drinking from flasks. Killing time.

Hanson stands at the head of car. Right to business:

HANSON
Evening, gentlemen. Appreciate you all coming on such short notice. Time is money, so brass tacks: Frank Russo is dead -

IRISH BOSS
Yesterday's news. Tell us something we don't know. Like, who the fuck you are.

Hanson glances down at the IRISH BOSS (30's), crimson beard, horn-rimmed glasses - Henry VIII with a dash of Elvis Costello.

HANSON
Something you don't know. Well -

He counts callously with his fingers, going over the facts -

HANSON (CONT'D)
I killed Russo. And I have his heroin.

The delegates stir, trading WHISPERS, affronted. The balls on this guy.

A RUSSIAN BOSS (50's) speaks up, incredulous, enraged:

RUSSIAN BOSS
You've got the nerve, you know? Frank was not just an associate, he was my friend.

He looks to VICTOR (20's), his Herculean bodyguard, giving the order -

RUSSIAN BOSS (IN RUSSIAN) (CONT'D)
Victor, put down this dog and his bitch.

Hanson pops a pepto tab as -

Jones draws her GUN, quickly fixes a suppressor to the barrel. SHOOTS the Russian boss - his blood painting the adjacent boss's suit. Jones trains her pistol on Victor - his gun barely drawn.

HANSON
Think it over, Grigorovich. She just put you in charge of the family. Power's in your hands, son.

VICTOR
How do you know my name?

Hanson rolls his eyes, annoyed he has to explain, but -

HANSON
Victor Grigorovich. Five-eleven Hampton Road. Wife, Anya; two boys, Felix and Joseph. And a Boston Terrier named Boris.

The trains SQUEALS to a stop. The surroundings: graffitied industrial complexes, miles from downtown. No man's land.

Hanson eyes Victor, a direct challenge, as his men carry the corpse of the Russian Boss towards the door -

HANSON (CONT'D)
We cool, Victor?

Victor nods, holsters his weapon like a good boy.

The doors slide open. The muscle toss the boss.

HANSON (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Nobody needs violence.

Hanson SNAPS a finger. Candie Jones pitches him a KILO of H. He holds it high, for all to see.

HANSON (CONT'D)
You all want your H? You buy it from me now. All five hundred keys.

The stirring heightens. The JAMAICAN BOSS (30's) pipes up -

JAMAICAN BOSS
How much?

HANSON
Two-hundred thousand.

JAMAICAN BOSS
A kilo? Mercy. The Tongs quote at one-fifty -

HANSON
Tongs closed shop. They're out of business.

JAMAICAN BOSS
How do you know?

Hanson gives a Jones a cryptic look, shifts his gaze back to the Jamaican.

HANSON
My price stays at two, non-negotiable.

The LATIN BOSS (40's) chimes in:

LATIN KING BOSS
I'm with him. What makes you so special?

HANSON
Peace, unity. A fair share for everyone, so long as you follow my lead.

LATIN KING BOSS
And what do we get in return? Following you?

HANSON
Immunity. From all law enforcement intervention - county to federal.

Skeptical CHUCKLES throughout the car.

HANSON (CONT'D)

I write my own ticket. And I am your best option. Transaction's in 72 hours. Re-up, or starve.

The train SCREAMS to a stop before a platform. The crime lords trade looks, smiles quickly fading as Hanson and his men empty out.

INT./EXT. UNMARKED (MOVING)/STREET (SOUTH SIDE) - LATER

McCoy, head propped against the window, out. Q in the backseat, also catching shut-eye. Finley brakes at a RED LIGHT, scopes the area.

ON THE CORNER: A YOUNG MAN in a hoodie, moving for a Caprice - parked idle, tail lights blinking. He transacts through the passenger window. Illegal business in plain sight.

The STOPLIGHT turns green. Finley jerks the wheel, steers towards the crime.

Q stirs awake; McCoy remains comatose.

The young man, caught in the headlights, breaks into a sprint, ducks into an alley. Out of sight.

The Caprice tears away from the curb, buys distance. Getting away.

Finley pursues. Angles for the opposite lane, evading multiple collisions. Weaving like an automotive acrobat. He eclipses the Caprice. Cuts it off. YANKS the brake.

Tires lock. The Caprice rockets into the unmarked, front-end now an accordion. TOTALED -

INT. UNMARKED - NIGHT

McCoy startles awake. Rattled.

Finley, unfastens his seat belt, GUN drawn, BADGE palmed -

FINLEY

Don't get me shot.

Finley jumps out.

McCoy fumbles his gun, badge. Half-asleep. Way behind.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Finley circles the Caprice, controlling the scene.

BACKSEAT SUSPECT kicks open the door. Finley KICKS it right back in, door breaking the suspect's NOSE.

McCoy hustles for the car, wiping sleep from his eyes.

Finley rips open the driver's side door, locks on the DRIVER - lowering his hands, reaching for something...

DRIVER
You're making a big mistake, pal.

FINLEY

DRIVER
We got clearance -

The Driver goes for the object -

Finley SHOOTS, grazes the driver's hand.

McCoy reacts, on edge -

MCCOY
The hell was that!?

The driver GRUNTS, grabbing at the wound. Drops a BADGE at Finley's feet. He inspects the tin, engraved: CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT. Finley drops the badge: no fucking way.

MCCOY (CONT'D)
Bill!?

The driver, incensed -

DRIVER
C.P.D. dickhead! We're undercover!

Finley shakes his head, incredulous. Wants to crawl into a hole and die.

MCCOY
Bill?!

McCoy, panicked, confused, looks O.C.

He runs for the unmarked: the BACKSEAT WINDOW has been KICKED OUT - now a shattered sheet of glass on the pavement. Q is gone. Coop flown.

McCoy begins to LAUGH, incredulous, hysterical as -

Finley moves for the sidewalk, sits on the curb. Fucked.

EXT. STREET - LATER

The Driver, wearing a big frown as a medic wraps his wounded hand. Another medic tends to the backseat driver - head tilted upward as his nose is set.

Finley and McCoy on the sidewalk, the latter smoking a cigarette. Eyes cast down, humiliated. Keegan paces before them, quietly enraged -

SGT. KEEGAN

Those UC's? They're on the same team, Bill. Our side. They were fishing for a buyer - another trafficker to lead us to the H.

FINLEY

Sarge -

SGT. KEEGAN

And then Ellroy - your prisoner, Shawshanks his way out of the goddamned window. I mean, how the hell do you miss that? Look, I don't care how you do it - find him. Both of you.

MCCOY

You punishing me for this? It's his fault. Punish him. Send me home. Tired anyway.

SGT. KEEGAN

You wanna go home? Go. But don't come back. Ungrateful prick. The strings I had to pull! You shouldn't even be here. Make a decision. Right now. Work together, or walk.

Finley mulls it over, cornered. Back against the wall. Off McCoy, hating both options.

INT./EXT. UNMARKED (MOVING)/STREET - NIGHT

Motoring along. Back-end smashed in. Window kicked out.

McCoy in the passenger seat, frown directed at Finley - gaze averted, driving quietly. An awkward beat. Then -

FINLEY

What?

MCCOY

What do you mean 'what'? You gonna shoot me, too?

FINLEY

Don't tempt me.

MCCOY

And how the hell are we supposed to find Ellroy? Kid could be in Gary by now.

Finley draws out the LAPTOP mounted on their dash.

FINLEY

Look, run his name. Reference known associates.

MCCOY

I know you're not giving me orders. Fucking Action Jackson over here killing my buzz.

FINLEY

Work with me. See if that girlfriend he was talking about comes up...Kendra.

MCCOY

Why the girlfriend?

FINLEY

'Cause that's where fools on the run usually hide.

MCCOY

Gotta get a little pussy before you skip town, right?

FINLEY

Something like that.

McCoy regards the laptop like a foreign object. Finley switches it on.

FINLEY (CONT'D)

They didn't teach you the system at boot?

McCoy typing into the laptop -

MCCOY
The academy? Didn't attend.

FINLEY
How long were you on patrol before plainclothes?

MCCOY
Four weeks. Brutal.

Finley pauses, his silence demanding an explanation.

MCCOY (CONT'D)
Don't give me that look. Like the lady said, strings were pulled. Dad's a lawyer. Keeps a lot of cops like her out of trouble. Glare at him.

A MATCH opens on the laptop's screen.

MCCOY (CONT'D)
We might be in business, chief. I got a Kendra Daniels in Bronzeville. 210 Ellis Street. Worth a shot -

Finley cuts the wheel, executing a sharp U.

McCoy holds tight, Finley accelerating.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Finley KNOCKS on the door. McCoy stands by, tapping out a smoke.

FINLEY
I'll talk.

MCCOY
Please.

KENDRA DANIELS (20's) answers the door, looks the officers up and down.

FINLEY
Kendra Daniels?

KENDRA
Ya'll got a warrant?

Finley looks at McCoy, outsmarted. Turns back to Kendra.

FINLEY
No. How'd you know we were cops -

She SLAMS the door in his face. McCoy lights a cigarette, moving for the edge of the porch.

MCCOY
Good hustle, Bill. I've seen Jehovah's Witnesses tally more face time.

Finley KNOCKS. No answer. KNOCKS harder.

Then, McCoy, peering into the back alley, spots Q climbing out the side window. Fleeing. McCoy turns to Finley, lazy -

MCCOY (CONT'D)
Found him.

FINLEY
Who?

Finley peers into the alley, sees Q, sprinting away.

FINLEY (CONT'D)
Shit!

Finley hurtles the PORCH. Lands it. McCoy stays put -

MCCOY
Do your thing! I'll catch up!

FINLEY
Get your ass down here!

McCoy grudgingly steals one last drag of his cigarette. Tosses it. Clears the porch. Lands hard on his ass. Stumbles to his feet. Dragging.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Q - showing no signs of slowing, runs for his life.

FINLEY - keeping up, just as fast.

MCCOY spills into the street, trailing, a bit out of shape. Finley and Q are barely visible. Just ahead: two YOUNGSTERS pulling wheelies on lowrider bicycles. McCoy shows his badge, levels KID #1 into the grass. Steals his bike.

MCCOY
Police business!

He begins to push, catching up. Then, he stands, pushing faster. Weaves through sidewalk traffic. Gaining momentum.

The kids spit, swear - their only recourse as McCoy flees the scene.

Q covers another block. Meets a TAXI. LEAPS OVER THE HOOD. Still running.

Finley jumps, slides over the taxi's hood.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Q darting for an OLD BLACK WOMAN entering the building, groceries cradled. He knocks her over, produce spills.

Finley hits the door, helps the old lady to her feet. She rejects the gesture, swatting him away. Finley drops her.

Q guns for the elevator doors - closing. He leaps in, crashes into a COUPLE.

MALE

Watch it!

Q shows a PISTOL tucked in his jeans. The couple raise their hands, male throwing his wallet at Q's feet.

Finley nears the closing doors; Q waves goodbye. The doors SHUT. Finley watches the NUMBERS climb, top floor: 12.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER

Finley bolts up the stairs - and it's a climb.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

McCoy ditches the bike, enters, moving past the embittered old lady -

MCCOY

Where'd they go?

OLD BLACK WOMAN

Who?

MCCOY

The black dudes!

OLD BLACK WOMAN

Kiss my ass, whitey!

McCoy moves for the elevator, frantically taps 'UP' button. Impatient. Watches the NUMBERS fall, slow. He eyes the EXIT for the staircase.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER

McCoy enters. Looks up, sees Finley nearing the top. He runs up the stairs. Instantly loses momentum. Then, he stops, catching his breath, barely three flights covered. He turns around, staggers back to the ground floor. Exits. Refusing the challenge.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - TOP FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Q spills out of the elevator. Home free as -

Finley discharges from the EXIT, weathered. Meets eyes with Q. Finley draws.

FINLEY

Freeze!

Q turns, glides for ROOF ACCESS.

Finley holsters his gun, pursues.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Finley emerges, sees Q disassembling his gun, ditching it in a garbage chute - dodging the possession charge. Then, he leaps from the roof - lands onto the adjacent building. Superhero shit.

Finley takes a few steps back, bracing himself. Sprints. Jumps. Crash-lands the rooftop, rolling. Back on his feet now as Q enters the rooftop exit.

STREET LEVEL

McCoy observes the stunts, jogging along the buildings. Panting. Sweating gallons.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Finley explodes through the entrance, tracks Q - HOPPING FROM FLIGHT-TO-FLIGHT, expediting his escape.

Finley follows suit, replicating Q's moves. His foot CATCHES a banister. He falls hard, tumbles down a flight. Gets right back up. Committed.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - Q - CONTINUOUS

Back on streets. Tired. Approaching a DINER on the corner, rounds it.

Finley, right on Q, cheats path, cutting through the -

INT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

Weaves through a cluster of patrons -

EXT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

PLOWS INTO Q. Their bodies rolling on concrete, earning scrapes as -

A CAR locks tires, inches from road-killing Finley, Q. They tussle, each fighting for the advantage...

EXT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

McCoy lumbers for the diner, on his last leg. He cuts into the alley, darts into the -

INT. DINER - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

KNOCKS over a COOK, falls with him. Shoves the poor cook away -

MCCOY
Get the fuck off me!

He gets up, wobbles, grabs a TIN OF BEANS on his way out into the dining area...

EXT. DINER/STREET - CONTINUOUS

Q KNEES Finley in the groin, disabling him. He darts away, leaves Finley reeling. Home free as -

McCoy explodes out of the entrance, CAN OF BEANS in his grip. He spots Q making a clean getaway, steps back, measuring the distance. LAUNCHES a Hail Mary, can sailing. A beat, as the can CRACKS Q over the head. Grounds him.

McCoy hunches over, dry heaving. Finley gets to his feet, running past McCoy -

FINLEY
Nice throw.

Rushes Q, drags him by the arm, leading him back towards the diner -

FINLEY (CONT'D)
You have the right to remain silent.
Anything you say can and will be used
against you -

Q
Shut-up and cuff me, man.

FINLEY
What?

Q
You deaf? I said cuff me, nigga!

Finley SOCKS Q in the gut, takes the air out. Tows him to a parking meter, cuffs him to it.

McCoy gets his footing, woozy, notes a small crowd - witness to the episode.

MCCOY
Yo, Bill.

Finley turns, sees the gathering mob. He zeros in on a TEEN, recording it all on his mobile.

FINLEY
You recording this?

The teen nods -

TEEN
Putting you on blast, pig. I'm gonna make you famous.

Finley stands motionless, quietly devastated. A long excruciating beat. McCoy reads Finley - his common sense fully evacuating self.

MCCOY
Bill. Don't -

Finley launches himself at the kid - McCoy plays interference, blocks the mad officer. The mob protects the Teen, his hands thrown up, all bark and swagger -

TEEN
Come at me, pig! Do something! Do something!

Off McCoy and Finley, grappling for dominance. Fucked again.

EXT. DINER - LATER

Curbside bustle. Cops, photographers, the news.

IN AN ALLEY: Keegan stands before Finley and McCoy. At a total loss. McCoy sucks down a gallon of water, hydrating.

SGT. KEEGAN
Just tell me you didn't hit the kid.

Finley doesn't respond. Keegan holds his gaze, waiting for him to break. Then -

MCCOY
He didn't hit him. Just charged him a little. Hey, we retrieved our collar didn't we?

Keegan stalks away, giving up. Leaves McCoy and Finley in the alley.

FINLEY
Thanks, Jim.

MCCOY
No worries, chief.

McCoy nearly pats Finley on the back, lowers his hand instead. Not quite there yet.

INT. PRECINCT - OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

Finley, McCoy, Keegan, studying a bandaged Q from behind the two-way mirror: slouched in his seat, feet perched on the table. Cool as a monk.

SGT. KEEGAN
(impatient)
Epps should be here by now. I'm getting coffee. Watch him.

Finley watches her exit. Moves for the interrogation room. McCoy follows him.

MCCOY
Where you going?

FINLEY
Going in.

MCCOY
She said watch him. Didn't say nothing about interrogating him.

Finley opens the door. McCoy closes it.

MCCOY (CONT'D)
Think he's gonna talk to the guy who assaulted him?

MCCOY (CONT'D)

I'm better off in there than you are.
Wait for the lieutenants. Don't be
stupid.

FINLEY

They don't know his kind like I do. Know
the lingo better than anyone in this
department. Move.

McCoy steps aside.

INT. PRECINCT - INTERROGATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Finley pushing a can of soda before Q, making friends.

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT - OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

McCoy observing, listening to Finley and Q through LOUD
SPEAKER.

FINLEY

Been almost an hour. Ain't thirsty?

Q

Can of pop ain't gonna make us friends.

FINLEY

Guess I ain't the only one who's been in
that chair before.

Q

What'd you do, jack a candy bar?

Finley looks to the observation window, reaches under the
table, flips a TOGGLE SWITCH. The loud speaker goes dead.
McCoy is tuned out.

MCCOY

Shit.

He puts his ear to the glass. No dice.

MCCOY (CONT'D)

That motherf -

BACK TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Finley and Q, real talk.

FINLEY

Candy bar? I was a soldier. Had my own corner and everything. Shared it with my brother. Stack a day, easy.

Q

That's it? Negro, I pull two stacks in a work day.

FINLEY

Ten years ago. Account for inflation.

Q

Whatever.

FINLEY

Anyway. Cop pulled up on us one day. Lined me and my brother against the wall. Cleared our pockets in front of the whole neighborhood. He had the right, it was just the way he did it. Slammed my brother on the pavement. Stomped on his head. Like it was fun. Like he was enjoying it. So, I reacted.

(beat)

Took three officers to pull me off him.

He lifts his shirtsleeve, bicep wearing gang ink.

FINLEY (CONT'D)

West Ave Mob. Used to tear shit up. But, squad was getting out of control. So, I enlisted. Joined up with the Rangers. Thought I was ducking the riffraff.

Q

Did you escape? What you was ducking?

Beat. Finley shakes his head.

FINLEY

Don't really matter where you go. Sandbox, Cali, the Chi. Same shit. Streets on fire. Everywhere.

Q

(agreeing)

No bull.

FINLEY

So how long you been pushing for Priest?

Q sits back, hands behind his head. Sharp.

Q
Nice try. But I'm still talking to a cop.

FINLEY
Acting awful gangster for a dude looking at some sentence. Already got you on the reefer.

Q
First offense, fam. House arrest. Time I can sleep through. And resisting arrest? On video I'm the vic. Maybe I should be the one asking questions.

Finley just sits there, tongue-tied. Bested.

Keegan enters, fuse short. Eyes penetrating Finley's. Caught.

SGT. KEEGAN
Priest posted bail.

Q levels the can of Coke. Vindicated.

Q
Justice is served.

SGT. KEEGAN
Let's go.

Keegan leads Q out. Finley pushes his chair out, follows -

INT. PRECINCT - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Bumps into a patrolman, calling out -

FINLEY
Quentin.
(off Q's turn)
Ain't easy saying what's on your mind around these people.
(eyes on Keegan)
They only act like your friends when they want something from you.

He hands Q a card, who reads it. He smiles, crumples the card, pitches it at Finley.

Q
Thanks for the Coke, Bill.

He leaves. McCoy catches up, stands beside Finley as Keegan escorts Q to the elevator -

MCCOY
What'd did you say to him in there?
After you killed my audio.

Finley gives him a disagreeable look, in no mood. Trails off.

MCCOY (CONT'D)
C'mon, I'll buy you a drink. Take the edge off. Maybe we'll get some strange.

Finley continues stride, heading for the EXIT.

FINLEY
Ain't thirsty and I don't drink.

MCCOY
Then I'll buy you a pop. We'll shoot some pool. Laugh about tonight.

Finley enters the staircase, SLAMS the door.

McCoy stands in the hallway, officers brushing past him. He turns to walk, nearly bumps into a uniform. Out of sorts, out of place.

INT. BAR - AFTER HOURS

The Black Keys wailing bluesy on the jukebox - 'Same Old Thing.'

McCoy jerks a pool cue, sinks a ball. He plays alone. Downs a bottle of beer as a BRUNETTE (late teens) arrives at the pool table, fists around two bottles of domestic. She places one on the table beside McCoy, who readies the next shot.

MCCOY
Thought I was supposed to buy the drinks?

BRUNETTE
It's not your beer yet. Depends on who you are.

McCoy sinks another ball.

MCCOY
Who I am. And why's that important?

BRUNETTE
You might have fans.

McCoy sneers, grabs the beer, drinks.

BRUNETTE (CONT'D)
Hey, play the game. Lemme see the tat.

MCCOY
Lemme see some ID.

BRUNETTE
You a cop? I'm 21.

McCoy holds her gaze, serious.

BRUNETTE (CONT'D)
All right, 19.

MCCOY
You slip the doorman your number?

BRUNETTE
I gave him a number. Just not mine.

The brunette points to a herd of females gathered at the bar, stifling giggles.

BRUNETTE (CONT'D)
They dared me to ask if you played for ND.

MCCOY
You've seen me play?

BRUNETTE
No. But my dad's a die-hard Irish fan.

McCoy leans over for another shot, TATTOO peaking out of his sleeve. The brunette rolls up his sleeve for a full view -

BRUNETTE (CONT'D)
Cool.

MCCOY
So, what do you get out of the dare?

The brunette shrugs, biting her lip, a femme fatale in training -

BRUNETTE
I don't know, maybe I get to fuck a quarterback.

McCoy sinks the 8-ball. Drops the pool cue on the table. He looks her up and down, loving this game -

MCCOY

Maybe?

INT. BAR - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The brunette collides with a mirror, ass mounted on the sink. Her lips meet McCoy's. He slips a hand under her skirt. She responds, MOANING. Her hand stops at his GUN. She pauses, curious, unbuttons his holster, draws the weapon. Her finger traces the barrel, slow.

He places his holster, badge on the towel dispenser. She feels around his belt, unlocks the handcuffs. Biting his ear, lips. Wraps a leg around his waist. Showtime.

INT. FINLEY'S APARTMENT - SAME

Finley executing sit-ups on a decline bench, hugging a forty-five pound plate - added strain.

'THE UNTOUCHABLES' on TV. Malone and Ness at church.

MALONE

*...They pull a knife, you pull a gun. He
sends one of yours to the hospital, you
send one of his to the morgue...*

Finley shadowboxes. Sharp, rancorous blows.

MALONE (CONT'D)

...That's the Chicago way!

His MOBILE rumbles on the table. He answers, out of breath -

FINLEY

Hello.

INTERCUT:

EXT. STREET CORNER - SAME

Q, bruised, on his mobile, moving with purpose -

Q

It's me.

Finley pauses, not the call he expected -

FINLEY

Quentin?

Q
Phone's prepaid, so don't bother calling back.

FINLEY
You're using a burner. Smart.
You alright?

Q
Nope.

FINLEY
Priest hurt you?

Q
Look, I don't want no part of what he's getting the squad into.

FINLEY
What's he getting ya'll into?

Q
Tomorrow at six. Millennium Park. I'll find you.

He hangs up the phone. Tosses it in the gutter. Rounds a corner. Then, a SEDAN quietly rolls from the curb. Follows.

EXT. SHIPYARD - NIGHT

Gliding over a legion of shipping containers. MUZZLE FLASHES strobing between two containers below.

EXT. SHIPYARD - CONTINUOUS

A TONG ENFORCER lying in a pool of blood - swearing in Vietnamese. CANDIE JONES steps over him. Slaps a magazine into her pistol. Executes him.

She stands amongst a gaggle of corpses, bullet wounds issuing smoke. Kilos of heroin scattered about - the Tong's supply.

SKI-MASKED SHOOTERS collect the kilos, tossing them back into the container.

Jones pulls her cell, speed-dials.

CANDIE JONES
Almost done.

CUT TO:

INT. PENTHOUSE HIGHRISE - BEDROOM

HANSON

So are we.

Hanson on the other end, fixed on -

A TONG BOSS in his underwear, bruised and bound at the foot of his king size. A CALL GIRL weeps beside him.

HANSON (CONT'D)

See you in a few.

He disconnects. Kenny stands beside him chewing gum. Silenced pistol at his side. Hanson pockets his phone, turns to the Tong Boss -

HANSON (CONT'D)

I'm burning your supply, your men too. Competition. Don't need the headache. I'd have to match your prices, share turf, customers. Times are tight. Dog-eat-dog, you know. Funny, you probably know what dog tastes like. Kenny.

Hanson pops a Pepto tab. Kenny SHOOTS the Tong boss. The call girl SCREAMS. Kenny turns the gun on her. She begs, sopping in sweat, tears -

CALL GIRL

He means nothing to me. He pays me to...Just let me go. You'll never see me again. Swear.

Hanson kneels to her level, touches her face, hair, wiping away tears.

HANSON

Sorry. Strictly business.

Hanson rises, walks away. Kenny FIRES.

INT. OCD - SQUADROOM - EARLY EVENING

Finley arrives at his desk. ON HIS MONITOR: YouTube footage of the assault. He turns to Borkowski and another officer, stifling laughter.

Santos moves sheepishly for Finley, who sees her approaching.

FINLEY

You got jokes, too?

They turn to Jim - snoring at his desk. Not a care in the world. Santos shakes her head, feeling Finley's pain -

EXT. MILLENIUM PARK - EVENING

Twenty-five acres of park area situated at the center of town. Public art, gardens, stragglers. The sounds of the city are faint, distant. A quiet refuge for the urban denizen.

Finley paces, anxious, checks his watch: 7:30 P.M.

McCoy on a bench, FLASHLIGHT helping him along THE BAR EXAM FOR DUMMIES, impatient. He closes the book. Marches away.

MCCOY
Kid clowned us. Again.

Finley takes one last look around the deserted park. Q isn't coming.

EXT./INT. UNMARKED/STREET - LATER

The unmarked draws up before Q's house. Finley cuts the engine, unbuckles his seat belt. McCoy isn't moving.

MCCOY
I'll sit this round out. If he's home,
thank him for shafting us.

MCCOY

What?

FINLEY
You're useless. Ellroy called me.
Coulda' pressed charges for what I did,
but he didn't. With his intel we could
pop Priest, and his supplier.

FINLEY(CONT'D)

That kind of hustle opens a lot of doors
and I'm not gonna let you fuck it up for
me. Go on and stay. Little bitch.

Finley climbs out, slams the door. He fogs the window,
writes: BITCH.

McCoy seethes.

EXT. ELLROY ROWHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Finley KNOCKS on the door. No answer. He tries again. No
dice. He turns, sees McCoy standing at the foot of the
steps.

MCCOY

I'm not a bitch. And I ain't useless.

Finley smiles, moving down the steps. Gets in his face.

FINLEY

No? What are you then?

McCoy doesn't respond.

Finley moves past McCoy, who grabs his shirt. Finley whirls,
lightning in his step, SOCKS him hard in the gut. McCoy
crumples. And that's what happens when you challenge an ex-
Ranger to a fight.

Finley continues for the backyard - McCoy TACKLES him from
behind. They wrestle in the dirt. Scramble to their feet.
Squaring off.

Finley SIDEKICKS, which McCoy catches, SOCKS HIS GROIN -
toppling him. SWEEPS him. Gets to his feet, grabs McCoy by
the collar, shovels into his body, multiple blows. McCoy is
a punching bag. He hits the ground again, totaled. Finley
proceeds for the backyard, again. Then -

MCCOY

Uncle Tom.

Finley stops, turns -

FINLEY

What?

McCoy spits blood, stumbling to his feet -

MCCOY

Think just because you flash a badge
they'll see you any different? You're
dreaming -

Finley charges. McCoy charges lower - levels him. Their bodies barrel through the fence, on the way to the unmarked. McCoy tosses Finley, who SPIDERWEBS the back windshield.

McCoy holds Finley, liver-punching him. Finley KNEES his groin. McCoy visits the pavement.

Finley hops off the car, done playing around.

FINLEY

Now you gone'n did it.

And then, in a blink, Finley shows his lethal side. Applies a trained assault. Sharp jabs, skilled elbows, fancy footwork. McCoy is overwhelmed, out-fisted - losing. Finley takes McCoy's feet from beneath him, KICKS him before he meets the ground.

FINLEY (CONT'D)

Peace, motherfucker.

Finley marches for Q's backyard. Leaves McCoy writhing on the ground. Finished.

EXT. ELLROY ROWHOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Finley rounds the house, LIGHT spilling from the basement door - wide open. He draws his weapon, proceeds - FOOTSTEPS from behind. Finley spins, gun leveled - McCoy raises his hands. Bloodied. Pummelled.

FINLEY

You back for more?

MCCOY

Not if we're shooting.

Finley lowers his weapon, points to the door.

FINLEY

It was open.

He squats, produces a small FLASHLIGHT, spotlights the LOCK on the floor. Signs of a break-in.

McCoy reluctantly draws his gun.

MCCOY

You first.

INT. ELLROY ROWHOUSE - FINLEY + MCCOY - LIVING ROOM

Standing before a CORPSE (20's), shot to death, vacant eyes gazing into the television, gun in his grip.

McCoy shielding the stench with his shirt-collar.

FINLEY

You seen one before?

MCCOY

Body? Once or twice. Never a murder vic. Who is he?

FINLEY

Muscle, judging by the build. Q probably called in some protection after his spat with Priest.

Finley inspects the body, assessing the damage.

FINLEY (CONT'D)

Double-taps to the chest. One in the head. Maximizes shock, trauma. Whoever they were, they had training.

MCCOY

You a detective now?

Finley shines a light beneath the sofa.

FINLEY

See any casings lying around?

McCoy surveys the room, half-assed.

MCCOY

Nothing. Can we call it in now?

FINLEY

(ignoring him)

Stay close.

STAIRCASE

They move up the stairs, cautious. Finley's gun held low; McCoy's next to his head. Like he's seen in the movies.

FINLEY (CONT'D)

Keep it low.

MCCOY

Why?

FINLEY

So you don't blow your eardrums if it goes off.

They reach the top, alert. Move down the hall. McCoy shines a light in a BATHROOM, steps inside.

FINLEY (CONT'D)

C'mon, man, here?

MCCOY

You shovel-hooked my bladder. I'm fucking leaking.

FINLEY

Hurry up. And don't touch anything.

BATHROOM

McCoy lifts the toilet seat with his shoe. Flashes a light on the bowl. Unzips.

HALLWAY

Finley reaches a room - door closed. Finley puts a hand in his shirt, uses it to turn the knob. Enters.

He shines a light across the floor before the bed. Disappointment washing over him as he regards:

Q, laying on his stomach, his hand on a gun he never fired. Two wounds to the back. One in the head. A dead body.

BATHROOM

McCoy taking a piss. Then, a faint SOUND from somewhere inside. He zips up. Looks at the cabinet below the sink. A CREAK. Spooky.

MCCOY

Hello?

He inches for the cabinet - a small figure explodes from inside. McCoy jumps -

MCCOY (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ!

FIREs an errant shot, fragments the wall. He stumbles, grabs the shower curtain for support. Falls into the tub.

BEDROOM

Finley turns to the mystery guest: a LITTLE GIRL, sprinting down the hall.

STAIRCASE

She darts down the stairs - is swept off her feet, a captive in Finley's arms. He marches up the stairs, ARIANNE (6) kicking and SCREAMING in his grip.

EXT. ELLROY ROWHOUSE - LATER

EMTs wheeling out a body bag. A MALE REPORTER, douchebag tag beneath his lip, standing before the camera, giving the crime scene play-by-play.

McCoy smokes on the curb beside Arianne - trembling in a blanket.

The Reporter and his crew make their way to McCoy and Arianne.

REPORTER

That her? That the sister?

MCCOY

Not now.

The reporter kneels to her level, ignoring McCoy.

REPORTER

Arianne, I'm a reporter with Channel 5.

Arianne doesn't respond, gaze fixed straight ahead. In a daze.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

Arianne?

MCCOY

Three.

REPORTER

You mind talking to us? Just for a second.

MCCOY

Two, chief.

REPORTER

Don't you wanna be on TV? -

McCoy DECKS him, carries Arianne away. Onlookers SNICKER.

INT. ELLROY ROWHOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

EMTs zip up Q. Cart his body out. Epps and Barlow inspect the room. Epps lifts Q's mattress, unearths a small cache of WEAPONS. Tosses the mattress.

LT. BARLOW
That's a lot of chrome.

LT. EPPS
You play, you pay.

LT. BARLOW
What're you thinking?

LT. EPPS
Priest. Maybe. Probably ordered the hit.

LT. BARLOW
So we lean on him.

LT. EPPS
On a conspiracy hunch? Dead-end street, partner. Toss it to homicide. It'll go cold in a day.

They remove their gloves, satisfied.

FINLEY (O.S.)
Ballistics found no shell casings.
Forensics? No prints that don't belong to the occupants of the house.

Barlow turns to Finley, standing by.

LT. EPPS
We heard. What's your point?

Epps nods to Barlow. They march out of the bedroom. Finley follows as they head down the stairs.

FINLEY
The usual suspects? They never leave a scene this clean. If Priest ordered it, he outsourced the work.

LT. BARLOW
You're not giving his bangers enough credit.

FINLEY

Put me with homicide. Another body might expedite the investigation, keep it from going cold.

LT. EPPS

Homicide's got all the help they need. And I got a morgue full of Tongs. Bodies were cooked, along with their latest shipment of H.

FINLEY

Think whoever stole Russo's smack is sending a message to the buyers?

LT. BARLOW

You know the priority. Expedite that. Officer.

They exit, leave Finley standing at the door, dejected. Stung. An OFFICER bumps shoulders with Finley - in the way. Finley steps back, watches the officer yellow-tape the door. Cutting him off.

INT. PRECINCT - OBSERVATION ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

McCoy observing through the two-way -

INT. PRECINCT - INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME

As Santos sits before a blank steno, tapping the paper with her pencil. Arianne sits frozen in place, traumatized.

OFCR. SANTOS (O.S.)

She's experiencing acute stress. Symptoms could worsen in a few days. Once reality settles.

INT. PRECINCT - OBSERVATION ROOM - MCCOY, SANTOS - CONTINUOUS

Watching Arianne through the two-way as she stares at crayons and a coloring book, in no mood to color.

MCCOY

What about her parents?

OFCR. SANTOS

Forget it. Father was killed a year after she was born. Mother OD'd when she was two. Ellroy was all she had. Break room's got a spare couch. I'll take her to CPS in the morning.

MCCOY

Child Protective Services? They'll throw
her to the wolves.

OFCR. SANTOS

A group home ain't exactly the wolves,
Jimmy.

MCCOY

You seen the living conditions? Precious
little thing like that's fresh meat.

OFCR. SANTOS

It's her only option at this point.

Beat. McCoy steals another look at Arianne. Feeling for
her.

MCCOY

I'll stay the night. Take her to CPS
first thing.

OFCR. SANTOS

You sure?

McCoy is serious for once.

MCCOY

Go home.

OFCR. SANTOS

All yours.

They move for the door:

MCCOY

Can I ask you something?

OFCR. SANTOS

Shoot.

MCCOY

When you masturbate, you thinking about
Bill?

OFCR. SANTOS

No, but I bet you are.

MCCOY

Hands? Batteries? Both?

She slams the door. McCoy turns to Arianne, watches her
through the two-way. His smile fading.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - AFTER HOURS

Bodies on the floor. Drunk, wet, horny. A DJ works the tables. Remixing Kanye.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - VIP AREA - CONTINUOUS

Roped off and smoke-filled. The walls lined with imported furniture. Rococo tables hosting tumblers filled with straight doses of vodka, cognac. Gangster's paradise.

Priest sits in a corner, KENDRA sitting beside him. Her arms crossed, looking ill. Priest looks stressed. Medicates the tension with cognac. Hanson to his left, scotch at the ready. He's loose, tipsy -

HANSON

Relax, Ray. It was clean. I hear CPD'll cold the case by morning - not that they give a shit anyway. They've got real work to do.

Hanson notes a catatonic Kendra beside Priest, curious.

HANSON (CONT'D)

Jesus, what do you got her on? Girl's lost in space.

Priest leans into Hanson's ear, whispers -

PRIEST

That's Q's woman. Thinks I did it.

Hanson talks lower, ensuring Kendra can't hear -

HANSON

You're not worried she'll talk?

PRIEST

She knows better. Round my way, they all know better.

A nearby ENFORCER interrupts, nodding to the FLAT SCREEN hanging above Priest, Hanson -

ENFORCER

Yo, Ray. Peep the T.V.

PRIEST

What is it?

ENFORCER

Bad news.

PRIEST
This better be good.

Priest and Hanson look behind them, see: footage of McCoy
SOCKING the Reporter, Arianne in his grip.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
The hell's she doing with that cop?

HANSON
Who's she?

Priest stands, pissed.

PRIEST
His sister, motherfucka! You watching
the same TV?!

Kendra smiles, a small victory amidst the tragedy.

Priest walks for the bar, on edge. Hanson follows.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
I may be hood, but I'm a professional.
This comes back to bite me, I ain't gonna
be happy. And I'll let it be known.
Make sure nobody puts money in your
pocket.

Priest SHAKES his glass at the BARTENDER, who refills it.

HANSON
And what would you have to sell, Ray?

PRIEST
I'll go through a recession before I go
to jail. You're about to be bad for
business.

Hanson, poker-faced, pushed too far -

HANSON
Let's get something straight, I am the
business. There's a solution to every
problem and you better believe I'm going
to see to the problem. But you cross me,
I'll make corpses out of every one of
your knucklehead bangers. Just like that
rat errand boy. Without me you ain't
shit on the street.

Hanson drinks his whiskey, pours the rest on the counter.

HANSON (CONT'D)
Your whiskey's turned. See you in a few,
Super Fly.

Priest stands down, remembers his place. Hanson abandons the bar. Moves through the crowd. Candie Jones joins him on the way out, passing -

FINLEY, who moves deeper into the club. Arrives at the VIP Area, manned by a club SENTRY.

Finley shows his BADGE. The sentry steps aside.

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Hanson and Jones spill into the alley. Kenny stands by their vehicle, waiting.

HANSON
Start the car.

Kenny climbs in. Fires up the engine.

Jones looks to Hanson -

CANDIE JONES
Something wrong?

Hanson CLOCKS her. She slams into the car. Winded.

HANSON
You didn't see her?

CANDIE JONES
Who?

HANSON
His goddamned sister!

He throws another punch. Jones blocks it.

CANDIE JONES
I didn't know he had one -

HANSON
She was in the house!

He shoves her to the cement. Kneels beside her, levels a fist. A tense BEAT, then he caresses her face, tender -

HANSON (CONT'D)
You're a professional. Find her. Make
me forgive you.

Hanson climbs into the SUV. Peels out. Leaves Jones
writhing by the curb.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - VIP AREA - CONTINUOUS

Finley stands facing Priest. Kendra, fear-ridden, remains
beside the kingpin. His thugs are slouched nearby, waiting
for a reason. Another one moves behind Finley. The rookie
is surrounded.

PRIEST
You pay cover, newblood? Or d'you flash
the bling?

FINLEY
How you know I'm a rookie?

PRIEST
This my turf, son. I know about all the
pork patrolling my district.

Finley meets eyes with Kendra, hoping she's listening.

FINLEY
I found Quentin.

PRIEST
You did? He say anything to you?

Priest chuckles, looks to his hoods. They join in.

Finley smiles, KNOCKS the table over, spilling cognac.
Charging Priest -

The hoods respond, grab Finley before he can pounce.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
Motherfucker, are you crazy!?
(to: Hoods)
Take Wesley Snipes out back. We gonna
have a real talk.

They drag Finley towards the back.

Priest straightens his shirt, looks to his enforcer -

PRIEST (CONT'D)
You, watch her ass.

The enforcer complies, lifts the table back on its legs.
Sits beside Kendra, her tears streaming.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Finley, locked in the hoods grip, wrestled into the kitchen.
Priest trails behind. He turns off the stove pilots, barking
at the cooks -

PRIEST
Everybody take five. Smoke, drink, piss,
just get the fuck out my kitchen.

The help obeys, filing out.

Priest grabs a towel hanging over the sink, runs hot water
over it. Daubs his face. Then, he marches for Finley,
grabbing a BUTCHER KNIFE from the counter on the way. Face-
to-face now -

PRIEST (CONT'D)
Think you can come play gangster in my
club?

He puts the knife in his left hand. Shovels a RIGHT-HOOK in
Finley's gut.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
Motherfucker, you need an invite to do
that.

Finley spits, hunched over, still here -

FINLEY
I won't need shit when I arrest you for
killing Ellroy.

Priest grabs Finley's face, so he's listening -

PRIEST
Lemme tell you something about that boy,
youngblood. Nobody cares. Not me. Not
the police. No-fucking-body. He ain't
need my bullets. He deaded himself.
Think cause you blue I'm supposed to piss
my jeans. I got friends everywhere -
even on your side. Shit, you work for
me, fam.

(to: hoods)
Throw his bitch-ass out before I do
something stupid.

He tosses the knife on the counter, stalks away as the hoods drag Finley out.

INT. DODGE CHALLENGER (MOVING) - MORNING

Morbid silence. McCoy YAWNING behind the wheel, stealing glances of Arianne - dazed, confused.

He pops open a Red Bull, dumps half out the window. Readies his flask. Sees:

Arianne, staring at him curiously.

McCoy pockets the flask, sips the Red Bull.

MCCOY
Wanna hear some music?

No response.

He switches on the radio: 50 Cent rhymes spitefully, trailed by simulated GUNFIRE. McCoy powers off. Drums the wheel, eager to break the ice. Then, he glimpses -

GOLDEN ARCHES, materializing in the distance. A moment of clarity.

INT. MCDONALDS - MORNING

McCoy wolfing down a McMuffin, shovelling hashbrowns. He washes it down with O.J.

Arianne stares at her meal - no appetite to speak of.

MCCOY
You're one tough broad turning down a
Happy Meal.

He digs in her happy meal, excavates hashbrowns. Eats.

MCCOY (CONT'D)
Better stop me. McMuffin's next.

Arianne just looks at him, puzzled, unyielding. He unwraps the toy, pushes it toward her. She wants nothing to do with it. McCoy sits back, thinking. Then -

MCCOY (CONT'D)
Be right back.

JUMP TO:

McCoy returns, vanilla sundae in hand. Arianne smiles, sort of.

EXT. CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS)/ INT. DODGE CHALLENGER - LATER

The Challenger draws up to the curb.

McCoy looks to the passenger seat: Arianne lays dead asleep, traces of ice cream blotting her mouth, cheeks. McCoy uses the foot of his shirt, cleans her face.

MCCOY

We're here.

She doesn't hear him, comatose.

INT. CPS - RECEPTION - MORNING

McCoy carries Arianne inside. Stops before the RECEPTIONIST, free hand digging out his badge.

MCCOY

Officer James McCoy.

He turns, shows Arianne dozing on his shoulder.

MCCOY (CONT'D)

We have an appointment.

RECEPTIONIST

(presenting a clipboard)

Sign-in. Someone will be right with you.

McCoy grabs a pen.

INT. CPS - WAITING AREA - LATER

A CHILD (10), sitting across from McCoy and Arianne, waiting to be handed over. He wears a long face, miserable. His escort, a uniformed officer, is busy texting. Indifferent.

Arianne studies the waiting area; it's cold, sterile. Lonely. She unconsciously fiddles with the fabric of McCoy's jacket arm, looking for comfort, safety.

McCoy pauses, unsure how to proceed.

ARIANNE

I don't like it here. I want my brother.

McCoy purses his lips, angry, feeling her pain.

MCCOY
I know you do.

INT. OCD - PRE-DUSK

Finley staring into his computer, printing KENDRA DANIELS record.

Epps spots Finley from behind, strolls for him, grabs the printout...

LT. EPPS
Kendra Daniels. Ellroy's girlfriend.
Homicide tried talking to her last night.
Girl didn't say shit. Case closed.

Crumples it. Barlow observes from behind him.

FINLEY
She didn't say anything cause she's scared.

McCoy enters, steps slowly for the exchange.

LT. EPPS
Last I checked your badge didn't say homicide. Five-hundred kilos, junior.
Get to work. You're wasting my time.

FINLEY
Since when is a murder investigation a waste of time?

LT. EPPS
Ellroy was a 'banger. Dime a dozen in this city. More of his kind mopped up the better -

Finley launches at Epps - MCCOY blocks his path. Saves Finley from losing his job. Tows him out.

Epps smiles, asking for it.

LT. EPPS (CONT'D)
Better get your priorities in check, junior. You don't want me talking to your Captain. All I gotta do is take the stairs.

INT. PRECINCT - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Finley bursts through the doors, disgruntled. McCoy draws up beside him, attentive -

MCCOY

You cool?

FINLEY

Nope.

MCCOY

Me neither. Let's take a ride.

Finley stops, unsure where McCoy is taking this. McCoy opens the door to the EXIT stairs. He turns, hurried -

MCCOY (CONT'D)

C'mon, I'm driving. Let's get some air.

Finley proceeds, dragging his feet through the exit.

INT. UNMARKED - CONTINUOUS

McCoy starts the engine, reads Finley - on fire. McCoy cuts the engine -

MCCOY

Fuck Epps. No, scratch that. Fuck the police and their goddamned priorities. Ellroy was a dealer - a criminal. But some asshole took him from a six-year-old girl who loved him. Turned her into an orphan. And that shit ain't right.

FINLEY

Yeah? And what're we gonna do? Talk to Kendra? Get her to play ball?

MCCOY

It's a start.

FINLEY

Did you hear Epps -

MCCOY

And I said fuck Epps!

FINLEY

Jim, we go digging any deeper, they'll take our shields, our jobs. Win or lose, we'll go down. You up for that?

McCoy, his game face on -

MCCOY

Whatever it takes.

Finley mulls it over, his vision of a bright future as one of Chicago's finest quickly evaporating.

FINLEY

Fuck Epps.

MCCOY

There you go.

McCoy fires up the engine.

Finley begins to smile, can't believe he's saying -

FINLEY

Fuck the police.

McCoy puts the car in reverse -

MCCOY

That's right. Fuck the police.

FINLEY

Fuck the police!

He puts it in DRIVE.

They peel out of the garage. Galvanized. Into the night.

KNOCKING, O.S.

EXT. KENDRA'S ROWHOUSE - NIGHT

PATRICE (50s), Kendra's mother, opens the door, long grey locks tied in a bun, body built by yoga.

Finley prepares to draw his badge -

FINLEY

I'm officer William Finley -

Patrice CLOSES the door - Finley stops it with his foot. Determined. He talks through the gap -

FINLEY (CONT'D)

We just need to talk to Kendra, Ms. Daniels.

PATRICE

She already talked to the police. Leave my girl alone.

She jerks the door - McCoy grabs the frame with his HAND. She releases the door, overpowered.

MCCOY
She didn't talk to us.

A beat, Patrice staring at the ground, wanting this to stop.
She looks up at the officers -

PATRICE
She's at work right now.

MCCOY
Where's work?

EXT. WALGREENS - BACK ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Finley pacing, frustration rising. McCoy leans against a dumpster, playing with his lighter.

Kendra stands against the wall - in Walgreens apparel, vehemently shaking her head. Refusing to answer their questions.

KENDRA
I told you, I said what I had to say to homicide. Ya'll taking up my break time with this shit.

MCCOY
Did you say what you really knew?

KENDRA
So I can end up like Quentin? Ya'll should know better. And what about his sister?

MCCOY
She's safe.

FINLEY
Hey, we're taking a big risk talking to you. Our people, they're fine putting this thing away cold. Quentin's just another number to them. One less problem they gotta worry about.

Kendra looks to McCoy.

MCCOY
He's right. You wanna stick it to the cops? Tell us what we need to know.

A long beat. Kendra looks at them, a cold chill running up her spine -

KENDRA

He thinks 'cause Quentin worked for him,
that somehow he owns me.

MCCOY

Who?

KENDRA

He won't leave me alone. Assholes's been
calling me. Making threats. Telling me
to practice my answers should ya'll come
around.

FINLEY

Give us a name.

KENDRA

I tell you who it is and you put him
down, hear me? This dude's just as
strong inside.

Finley approaches her, carefully -

FINLEY

Please.

Off Kendra, trembling. Fear personified.

INT. OCD - KEEGAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Keegan storms inside through, mind made up -

SGT. KEEGAN

Absolutely not.

Finley and McCoy trail closely behind, hot-blooded -

FINLEY

Girl's willing to testify. Priest
ordered that hit.

MCCOY

She's got voicemails, call lists ID-ing
his land line. Green light this shit, so
we can do our thing -

She SLAMS the door, direct -

SGT. KEEGAN

Siddown!

Finley takes a chair. McCoy plants himself at the edge of
her desk, posing.

SGT. KEEGAN (CONT'D)
Does my desk look like a chair?

McCoy rises, takes a chair beside Finley.

SGT. KEEGAN (CONT'D)
You want to go back to patrol? Sweat it
out in the cap and uniform for the rest
of your life? 'Cause that's where you're
going if you keep this up.

FINLEY
If I get demoted busting Priest, cover me
in blue.

MCCOY
Amen.

Keegan sinks into her chair, facing her eager employees,
mulling it over -

SGT. KEEGAN
And Kendra, you really buy her angle.

MCCOY
She was spooked. I'm sold.

Keegan shifts focus to Finley, eyes asking for the honest
truth -

SGT. KEEGAN
Bill? My ass is on the line, too.

FINLEY
It's a win-win, Sarge. We play this
right, squeeze him enough, may even get
that H ya'lls are looking for.

A beat. Keegan coming to a decision. She picks up the
phone, her eyes drilling into the rookies -

SGT. KEEGAN
You go with backup.

Finley and McCoy share a look, a small victory.

FINLEY
You got it.

SGT. KEEGAN
Borkowski and Santos. You take their
lead, or I hang up. Don't fuck me on
this.

MCCOY

Trust us, we would never, ever fuck you -

Finley looks away, saves himself from laughing.

MCCOY (CONT'D)

Ever.

Keegan wants to throw the receiver at McCoy. Dials instead.

INT. CPS - RECEPTION - DAY

Candie Jones, healing from Hanson's drubbing, stands before the receptionist. Peeved.

CANDIE JONES

Arianne with two n's. Last name Ellroy.

The receptionist is typing away.

RECEPTIONIST

Nothing.

CANDIE JONES

A police officer brought her here yesterday.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry. Not pulling up anyone by that name in our database.

Candie picks up the check-in clipboard, impatient.

CANDIE JONES

Where's yesterday's?

INT. UNMARKED CRUISER (MOVING) - MORNING

Borkowski in the passenger seat, lap hosting five opened packs of sugar. He tears open his sixth, pours it into a large cup of coffee.

Santos drives, sipping coffee. She adjusts the rearview, verifies Finley and McCoy are still behind them.

INT. UNMARKED CRUISER (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Finley motors close behind, sees Santos's watchful eyes through her rearview, liking that she cares. McCoy in the passenger seat, his voice groggy -

MCCOY

Dicked around for a while as a paralegal.
Got fired after three weeks. Too many
"smoking breaks." Before that I was a
commentator for ESPN 2. Got canned after
the first game. 'Incendiary remarks.'

FINLEY

What'd you say?

MCCOY

Wished cancer on Miami's quarterback.
Couple viewers called the network.
People are fucking sensitive. Badge was
just the next job. How 'bout you? Lemme
guess. Your brother got capped and the
police never caught the guy. Am I close?

Finley freezes, provoked. Gives McCoy a hard look. A BEAT.
McCoy realizing he's gone too far.

MCCOY (CONT'D)

Yo. Dude, I'm sorry. I had no idea.
I'm an asshole. I -

Finley smiles, breaking the tension.

MCCOY (CONT'D)

Jesus! Think that's funny?

FINLEY

Nah, he's alive. Locked up, but he's
here. Wasn't always this law-abiding,
you know. I used to be a troublemaker.
In the DNA, I guess. Anyway, got
collared for some shit I shouldn't have
gotten into. Did six months in juvie.
Day of my release, on my way out, guard
said something like he'd see me soon.
You know, anticipating my return.
Something about that just - I swore I'd
spend the rest of my life proving that
asshole wrong. It's like, if I became
the best of my enemy, I was winning.

MCCOY

Well, Bill, lemme be the first to say
you're doing a shit job. You should
quit. Like, now.

Finley smiles, warming up to McCoy's sarcasm.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Borkowski and Santos, checking weapons, slipping into KEVLAR. Gearing up. Finley, McCoy stand close by, watching curiously, like they've never done this before.

OFCR. BORKOWSKI

Wife and daughter are gonna give me shit.
Serving this arrest's a complete
imposition on family time.

He tosses two vests to Finley and McCoy -

OFCR. BORKOWSKI (CONT'D)

You two are lucky I hate family time.

EXT. STREET - THE OFFICERS - MORNING

Moving down the morning sidewalk. Santos sneaks a glance at Finley, quietly lustng. McCoy catches her looking, gestures fellatio. She flips the BIRD.

EXT. PRIEST RESIDENCE - MORNING

Borkowski and McCoy climb the steps of the 19th century palace. Regal. Pillared. Easy living for the South Side's reigning crime lord.

Borkowski nudges McCoy, nods to a SECURITY CAMERA perched above the door.

EXT. PRIEST RESIDENCE - ALLEY - MORNING

Santos and Finley glide down the alley, opening the gate to a fence. Crossing into the yard. Both eager to engage, neither knowing how. They arrive at the door, trade fleeting glimpses. Santos quietly SIGHS. Waiting.

EXT. PRIEST RESIDENCE - MORNING

TANISHA (30s) opens the door. Morning hair, resentful eyes. Lips pursing her first cigarette of the day, half-smoked.

TANISHA

Ya'll boys know what time it is?

OFCR. BORKOWSKI

Yes we do. S'why we thought the early hour'd be the best time to speak to Mr. Priest.

He shows her the WARRANT. She looks over Borkowski and McCoy skeptically.

TANISHA
Well, come on an' get him.

The officers trade looks. That was easy.

EXT. PRIEST RESIDENCE - ALLEY - DAY

Santos checks her mobile. A text reads: INSIDE.

INT. PRIEST RESIDENCE - HALLWAY - DAY

Tanisha leads Borkowski and McCoy inside the surprisingly spacious corridor of the house, her feet lazily slapping the polished wood as they move deeper inside. A covetous collection of framed street art adorn the concrete walls - le Rat, Banksy, Fairey.

TANISHA
Can I interest ya'll in a beverage? It's slim pickins. Got O.J., C.J. and cognac.

McCoy is only half-listening, distracted, captivated by the eccentric surroundings. Warhol meets the mean streets.

MCCOY
It's five o'clock somewhere.

TANISHA
Ray likes himself some soy milk, but that's off limits.

OFCR. BORKOWSKI
We're fine.

She heads up the stairs, calling after Priest.

A tense, eerie silence as McCoy loiters, appreciating the gangster's palace.

MCCOY
Asshole's got class. You see all this, B?

Borkowski shifts in place, impatient. Ready to go.

OFCR. BORKOWSKI
Yeah, I see it. Stay close, alright?
Don't touch anything.

A melody thumping from the living room, synthesized, very 80's. McCoy begins humming, identifying the tune. He peeks into the living room, sees EDDIE MURPHY projected on a wall, singing in the studio. McCoy quietly sings along -

MCCOY

*...My girl wants to party all the time,
party all the time, party all the time.*

Borkowski shakes his head, unamused...

BORKOWSKI

Knock it off -

Turns to face a SHOTGUN BLAST, knocking him off his feet -

Tanisha RACKS the shotgun, FIRES at McCoy, who DIVES into the living room.

INT. PRIEST RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Finley KICKS through the kitchen doors, Santos right behind him. Guns up -

A HOOD SPRAYS fire from an Uzi -

Santos TACKLES Finley beneath a table. Finley PLUGS the hood's leg, who drops, taking aim at the officers. Santos FIRES first. Drills him.

INT. PRIEST RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

McCoy grabs the coffee table. Shields himself as a shotgun BLAST rips through the wood - inches from his head. He THROWS the table. Tanisha BLOWS another hole through the table as it sails in her direction, LEVELS her.

INT. PRIEST RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - FINLEY & SANTOS - MORNING

Advancing through the house. Another HOOD emerges from behind the wall, NAILS Santos. She slams the ground.

The hood hugs the wall - out of harms way.

Finley FIRES through the wall - draining his clip. Drops him. Dead.

INT. PRIEST RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

McCoy stumbles out into the hallway, winded, then -

TANISHA jumps McCoy's back, her elbows strangling. Back in the living room, losing air, caught in the projector's beam as Eddie and Rick James jam in the studio.

INT. PRIEST RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Finley tends to Santos - fighting off her vest, bullet pancaked into the armor - BANG! BANG! BANG! Roars by Finley's ear. He hits the deck, weapon up.

RAYMOND PRIEST, pistol gripped, is already fleeing.

FINLEY

Freeze!

Finley sprints through the hall, stops before Borkowski, who writhes on the floor, clutching a wound below the belt.

INT. PRIEST RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

McCoy GRABS Tanisha's arms, FLIPS her over his head, slamming her onto the floor. He holds her still, PUNCHING her like she's a guy. Cuffs her.

INT. PRIEST RESIDENCE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Finley BARKS into his WALKIE as Santos tends to Borkowski.

FINLEY

Adam-six to dispatch. Requesting a 10-45 at 803 South Harper! Send an ambulance!

Finley lobs Santos the walkie -

FINLEY (CONT'D)

(re: Borkowski)

Stay with him.

Breaks for the entrance.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Priest huffing for a GARBAGE TRUCK. A GARBAGE MAN climbs off, collects a bin. Priest opens the driver's side door, grabs the DRIVER - gunpoint. Drops him out onto the pavement. Takes the seat. Drives.

The garbage man watches the truck speed away, holding the bin.

Finley closes in, blowing past the garbage man, racing for the truck.

McCoy explodes from the house, catching up.

The truck makes a sharp turn...

Finley LEAPS FROM THE CURB, like Mike - gets a grip on the moving truck, his body colliding with heavy metal, holding on for dear life.

McCoy watches in awe as a loud HORN roars from behind. McCoy spins. Faces a CITY BUS. He holsters his pistol. Rushes -

INT./EXT. CITY BUS(MOVING)/ STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Inside. McCoy flashes his BADGE, addressing the DRIVER, morning commuters -

MCCOY
Everyone off the bus! Police business!
Please!

Passengers GROAN, rolling their eyes, taking their time.

Finally, McCoy draws his PISTOL, desperate. SHOOTS out a window. Taking control -

MCCOY (CONT'D)
Are you deaf!? Get off the fucking bus!

Passengers REACT. Empty out like their lives depend on it.

McCoy yanks the driver out of her seat, pushing her out with the others. Takes the wheel. PUNCHES it.

The bus turns hard - hugging the curb. Sideswipes a STOP SIGN. GRINDS along a line of parked cars, scraping paint.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Finley holding tight to the compactor - inching for the driver's side door. He opens it - looks into the barrel of Priest's gun. Finley GRABS the firing hand - BANG! Goes an errant shot. He loses his footing, hanging from the door.

Priest FIRES again - Finley ducks below the window, glass giving a quick shower.

Priest glimpses the road - BRAKES before a parked sedan. Too late and too fast. The RIGHT TIRES climb. Pancake the sedan.

The truck continues, barrels through a RED LIGHT. Leaves multiple collisions in its wake.

INT./EXT. CITY BUS (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

McCoy approaches the RED LIGHT. BRAKES. Jerks a sharp RIGHT, avoiding the pile-up. MERGES, as the bus fights to stay on all fours. McCoy steps on it. Continues the charge.

INT./EXT. GARBAGE TRUCK (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Finley, clinging to the door, pulls himself up. Pissed. He PUNCHES through the window, connects with Priest, who levels his pistol. Finley makes a grab, the two wrestling for the gun. SHOTS ringing wayward.

INT./EXT. CITY BUS (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

McCoy executes a sharp left. Aligns the bus parallel with the GARBAGE TRUCK.

The commercial vehicles are now racing. The city block between them creating makeshift, industrial-sized lanes.

McCoy accelerates, pushing the needle.

INT./EXT. GARBAGE TRUCK (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Finley pummels Priest. Priest counters with a PISTOL-WHIP to the head. Finley nearly loses his footing, grip. Hangs from the swinging door.

Priest readies the gun, hand on the wheel, smiling as he locks on Finley.

Finley looks beyond Priest, shock registers; whatever he sees, it's big. Then, Finley leaps off the truck just as -

The bus PLOWS into the garbage truck. Topples it.

Priest is ejected from the window, body scraping cement. Then, the TRUCK LANDS ON PRIEST, crushing him. Coasting on its side. Leaving a trail of blood as it GRINDS to a halt.

INT. CITY BUS - CONTINUOUS

McCoy steadies the wheel, foots the brake. Climbs out.

EXT. PRIEST RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

EMTs wheel out Borkowski, breathing. Surviving. Santos walks by his side, moving for the ambulance.

Uniforms lead Tanisha to a black and white. Her hands cuffed behind her.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

McCoy walks slowly for the carnage, stops beside Finley, standing quietly before the toppled garbage truck. Their lead deceased.

Responding PATROLMEN converge, surrounding the scene.

INT. PRECINCT - INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER THAT MORNING

Tanisha sits alone. Cheek bruised, hair a mess. Cool as ice.

INT. PRECINCT - OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Finley, Santos, Keegan stand in waiting, watching the gang empress pass the time.

Epps enters, Barlow trailing. Moving for the observation window, verifying the subject. Epps turns to the officers, ready to blow a gasket -

LT. EPPS

The hell's she doing in there?

(to: Finley, McCoy)

Who gave you two the go-ahead on Priest?

I didn't authorize it.

(to: Keegan)

Keegan?

Keegan looks away, timid.

LT. EPPS (CONT'D)

Okay. I'll make it easy on myself, recommend everyone for suspension -

LT. BARLOW

I made the call.

Epps turns to Barlow, betrayed.

LT. BARLOW (CONT'D)

They got calls, Rob. Recorded threats to Ellroy's girlfriend. I can play 'em for you.

LT. EPPS

Priest was a key lead -

LT. BARLOW

Yeah, and what if he never took us to the stash? He had that boy murdered. Someone had to answer for it.

LT. EPPS

(re: Tanisha)

What do you suggest we do with her?

LT. BARLOW

Ask some questions. See what she knows under a little pressure.

Off Epps, not liking this one bit.

TANISHA (O.S.)

Ya'll is way off. I mean, he and Q may of had their differences, but he ain't pull that trigger...

INT. PRECINCT - OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

LT. BARLOW (O.C.)

Never assumed he did. We want the man he hired.

Finley, Santos, Keegan observe. Finley watches with a close eye. He wants to be in there.

BACK TO:

INT. PRECINCT - INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tanisha leans back in her chair, like she owns the place.

LT. EPPS

You're facing an accessory beef. Charges could be worse depending on what the D.A. digs up between now and trial. I hoop with D.A. - he's a prick. Your circumstance has no weight in his courtroom. Play victim all you want, I guarantee he portrays you as the monarch of Priest's empire. With your husband gone, who's next on the list to point the finger at?

LT. BARLOW

Not a lot we can do for you, Tanisha. Unless of course, there's something you can do for us.

Epps slides a pack of smokes to her side of the table.

TANISHA

Quit a long time ago, baby. Gonna have to do a lot better than a six-dollar pack of jacks.

LT. EPPS
And all you're gonna get is freedom in return.

Tanisha looks at the lieutenants, knows she's cornered.

TANISHA
Whatchu' want?

LT. EPPS
Two things. Ellroy's trigger man.

TANISHA
And?

LT. EPPS
Few days ago some guns went gangland on Frank Russo. I'm sure you're well aware of the fact that he was your husband's supplier for over five years.

Tanisha averts her eyes, confirming his suspicion.

LT. EPPS (CONT'D)
Anyway, guns helped themselves to his entire supply of Afghan-flavored H. Priest being a big spender in town, man had to have an idea who might be off-loading Russo's consignment. I mean, what's a dope dealer without his dope?

Epps draws out a DIGITAL RECORDER, lays it on the table. A BEAT, then -

TANISHA
Not here. These people, ain't like the villains I know. You want me to talk? I want protection.

LT. EPPS
We'll see what we can do.

TANISHA
Uh-uh. No seeing. I want guarantees. My terms, or nothing at all. First, let's talk about the safe house: you're getting me a suite. Somewhere nice.

LT. EPPS
Where's nice?

TANISHA

The Drake's nice. And ya'll cover my expenses while I'm there. I don't pay for shit. Soon as you get me there, I'll tell you what I know.

Off Epps, Barlow, considering the demands.

INT. PRECINCT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Finley emerges from the observation room, finds McCoy crouched against the wall - looping the events in his head. Finley sinks to the floor beside him.

MCCOY

How's Borkowski?

FINLEY

Stable. You good?

McCoy, nods, guarded.

MCCOY

I'm sorry about Priest. I was just trying to help -

FINLEY

No. You saved my ass today.

He rises, offers McCoy a hand.

FINLEY (CONT'D)

We got escort duty again. Barlow's orders. You in?

McCoy takes it, gets to his feet. Off which.

INT. UNMARKED/GARAGE - DAY

Tanisha slides in behind the cage. Finley buckles up. McCoy climbs in, careful not to face Tanisha.

TANISHA

What's wrong, killa? Ain't got nothing to say?

McCoy remains silent, face forward.

FINLEY

Don't let her get to you.

Two MOTORCYCLE OFFICERS mount their bikes. Motor beside the unmarked.

Finley keys the ignition. Pulls the unmarked out of the garage.

EXT. UNMARKED (MOVING) - DAY

The motorcade cruising along the Chicago River.

INT. UNMARKED (MOVING) - SAME

McCoy sits anxiously. Finally turns to her - enough is enough.

MCCOY

Look, I'm sorry. Okay. For what it's worth. I was protecting my partner.

TANISHA

I'm just messing with you, boy. I knew the stakes. I ain't mad atcha'. May have loved Ray, but that don't mean I liked him.

EXT. UNMARKED (MOVING)/STREET - SAME

As the motorcade merges, another motorcycle officer advances, catching up. It's Candie Jones, eyes tinted by aviators. Playing the part.

TANISHA (O.S.)

Lied more times than the law allowed and he sure as hell didn't mind putting his hands on me once in a while. Then there were the girls...

She accelerates past the unmarked, moving for the two motorcycle officers.

She eyes her side-view mirror, establishes the unmarked's position...

INT./EXT. UNMARKED (MOVING)/STREET - SAME

Finley addressing Tanisha through the rearview -

FINLEY

That was some good hustle you pulled back there on Major Crimes. Got them bending over backwards for your scoop on that dope stash. Hope you ain't lying.

TANISHA

I got nothing to hide. Ain't like they're gonna believe me anyway.

MCCOY

Why wouldn't they believe you?

TANISHA

Don't be ignorant, boy. Ya'll are a part of the biggest gang in the country. How you think your peoples are gonna act if you start going after your own? That's a losing battle right there.

McCoy and Finley look at each other - heeding the insinuations.

FINLEY

Whatchu' saying? Police got something to do with the dope?

TANISHA

I'm saying the police stole it.

Jones, motors between the other two officers, draws a silenced PISTOL. DRILLS one after the other. Their bikes veering off. CRASHING.

Finley and McCoy react, eyes wide, witnessing the carnage ahead...

Jones locks the brakes, holsters the pistol. THEN, draws an MP9 SUBMACHINE GUN - bike skidding in reverse for the unmarked. Steering beside Finley, McCoy, Tanisha...

Finley instinctively forces McCoy's head down as...

Jones sprays GUNFIRE. Windows explode. The exterior is riddled...

Finley is GRAZED in the bicep. Swerves. Losing control...

The unmarked careens, crashing through a barrier - into the river.

Jones U-turns sharp. Speeds away.

INT./EXT. UNMARKED/RIVER - CONTINUOUS

Sinking. McCoy and Finley emerge from the passenger-side window. Finley swims for the backseat - Tanisha is shot dead. He tries the door, yanks hard. No give. He reaches through the window, cuts his arm on broken glass. Losing air. Time - MCCOY grabs him by the collar, tows him to the surface.

EXT. CHICAGO RIVER - CONTINUOUS

McCoy and Finley emerge from the water. Breathe.

EXT. STREET - LOWER LEVEL - MCCOY & FINLEY - DAY

Along the guardrail, soaked. They're hunched over, hands over knees, breathing so deep it hurts. High speed traffic screaming past them.

FINLEY

Tanisha. She warned us, man. She warned us and they killed her.

MCCOY

Tried to kill us.

(beat)

Cops. Our people. Stealing from dealers. Taking over the dope game. You surprised?

FINLEY

No.

MCCOY

Yeah, me neither.

Finley removes his overshirt, BITES off a sleeve, wraps it tight around his bicep, oozing blood.

The echo of SIRENS steals into the atmosphere. Finley and McCoy trade looks, on the same page.

They begin to jog away from the scene.

MCCOY (CONT'D)

You need stitches, chief.

FINLEY

No hospitals. They'll be looking for us there.

MCCOY

Didn't say anything about a hospital.

FINLEY

What do you suggest?

MCCOY

I know a nurse. We can use her place as a safe house.

Now they're running as we move TOPSIDE -

STREET LEVEL

Black and Whites motoring in the opposite direction,
reporting to the scene of the crime. POLICE CHOPPER circling
above.

MOM (O.S.)
Jesus Christ, what the hell happened to
you?!

INT. MCCOY RESIDENCE - NIGHT

MCCOY'S MOM (40's) lead the two inside, near panic as she
regards their injuries.

MCCOY
Just a scuffle, mom. No biggie.
(kisses her cheek)
Dad here?

MOM
He's cooking dinner.

She waves at Finley, awkward, awaiting an introduction -

MOM (CONT'D)
Hello.

MCCOY
This is Bill. My co-worker. He needs
some sewing?

MOM
Why didn't you take him to the hospital?

MCCOY
Cause you're a nurse.

MOM
No, Jimmy, you should've taken him to the
hospital -

MCCOY
Mom.

MOM
(surrendering)
Take him downstairs.

McCoy leads Finley into the house, Mom calling after them -

MOM (CONT'D)
And don't drip on the carpet!

They move through the hallway as Finley takes in the spacious surroundings, impressed. Prosperous, comfortable. The kind of home he's only seen on sitcoms.

FINLEY

Nice crib. You live close by?

MCCOY

Just a walk up the stairs.

FINLEY

(incredulous)

You live with your folks?

MCCOY

It's temporary. 'Til I get my shit together.

FINLEY

How long you been here?

MCCOY

Five years.

IN THE LIVING ROOM, Finley spies ARIANNE standing before a television - rocking out to GUITAR HERO.

FINLEY

(low)

What's she doing here?

Finley drips blood all over the carpet.

MCCOY

Arianne? She lives here.

FINLEY

You're gonna be her big brother.

MCCOY

Just submitted the paperwork. Fingers crossed.

McCoy opens the basement door, heading down. Finley pauses, watching Arianne at home in her new surroundings.

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

What about Sarge?

INT. MCCOY RESIDENCE - BASEMENT - LATER

Mom carefully dressing McCoy's wounds. Finley curiously traces his arm, stitched up. The young officers going through the possibilities -

FINLEY

Nah, she did us a solid giving us Priest.
Don't see her doing dirty.

MCCOY

Or maybe she led us to Priest. You know,
set an ambush.

FINLEY

You're reaching.

MCCOY

Okay, Santos.

FINLEY

Next.

MCCOY

Be helpful if you hit that by now, we'd
know more about her -

FINLEY

Next.

MCCOY

Okay. The prick lieutenants. Epps and
Barlow.

Finley eyes McCoy - like he's onto something.

FINLEY

Maybe. But their hard-ons for the H
tells me no. Plus -

MCCOY

(ahead of him)

Barlow got us the warrant -

Mom stops working on them, frustrated, left out -

MOM

Okay, what the hell's going on? What
kind of trouble you in, Jimmy?

MCCOY

I told you, mom, police business, the
less you know, the better -

MOM
I don't dress another scratch 'til
somebody talks to me.

McCoy and Finley trade looks, cornered.

MCCOY
Alright, but, just don't tell dad -

MOM
James. Tell me.

Off McCoy, about to deliver the news.

INT. MCCOY RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

DAD
Are you out of your fucking mind?!

MOM
(re: Arianne)
Honey, watch your mouth! You'll scare
Arianne.

McCoy's DAD (60's), pacing before Finley and McCoy. Broad shoulders, skin like leather. A domesticated Warren Oates. He wears a Notre Dame apron around his waist.

The officers sit on the couch, sheepish. Like children awaiting the terms of their punishment. Arianne sits beside McCoy, listening timorously -

DAD
Absconding from a crime scene? You have
to go back to the station. I'll drive
you. They know me there.

MCCOY
No way. We walk back in there and we're
marked for death.

FINLEY
He's right. There's a leak in our
department. Ain't safe to go back to
headquarters 'til we can identify the
mole.

Dad stands before them, out of ideas. He sits, collecting himself. Looks into his sons eyes, spiteful.

DAD

You know, if you'd passed the bar by now,
none of this would have happened. You
wouldn't even be in this mess.

MCCOY

Christ, not now.

DAD

Have you even taken the steps to prepare
this time?

MCCOY

To hell with that test.

DAD

What?

MCCOY

So I can follow in your footsteps?
Defending your golf buddies so they can
continue embezzling company funds? No
thanks.

DAD

Smart ass. I got you this gig as a
temporary means to an end. So you could
understand the law from the bottom up. I
got firms all over town holding you a
seat -

Dad zeros in on the RANGERS tattoo on Finley's wounded arm,
distracted.

MCCOY

What?

DAD

That's some serious ink you got there,
Bill. Rangers?

Finley nods. Dad rolls up his sleeve, bicep wearing an EAGLE
CARRYING AN ANCHOR.

DAD (CONT'D)

U.S.N.

Dad proceeds to unbutton his shirt -

MCCOY

Jesus, here we go with the Navy.

Dad reveals two BULLET WOUNDS dotting his lower back.

DAD

Got those underwater. Rescue mission off the coast of Hong Gai. Our SDV's battery died in Charlie's waters. Enemy boat spotted us. We swam fast to the bottom. But their bullets were faster. Missed my liver by an inch.

FINLEY

(playing along)

Oh yeah?

Pulls up his shirt, shows a canvas of SHRAPNEL WOUNDS across his chest.

FINLEY (CONT'D)

Shrapnel from a roadside. Tossed me.

DAD

Ugly. But how about this?

Dad drops his pants, shows off a scarred cheek. Finley puts his hands up, slightly uncomfortable -

FINLEY

That's close enough.

MOM

(disgusted)

Jesus Christ, baby!

DAD

Charlie slashed me with a saber. Smarts more than getting shot.

McCoy props a leg on the table, unrolls his pants to the knee - an old scar runs vertically.

MCCOY

Got that against SC. Rolled right on a naked bootleg. Saw Touchdown Jesus as I made the pass. Got clipped by the biggest truck on the field. Torn ligament. Two knee surgeries. But we won. I was a warrior out there.

DAD

Emphasis on was.

Ariane stands, getting in on the action. She pulls her shirt down to her shoulder: A BULLET wound marks it.

ARIANNE

A bunch of them came through our window.
My brother covered me before more of 'em
could catch me.

Dead silence in the room - no one sure how to react to this
child's war story. Then -

DAD

She's got me beat. Bill?

And before Finley can respond an EXPLOSION OF SILENCED
GUNFIRE rips through the windows. Sudden. Without warning.

Finley hits the floor, all instincts.

Dad tackles Mom, seconds before SHOTS tear into her chair.

McCoy dives for Arianne, grabs her on his way down.

Bullets decimating walls, furniture, appliances.

Finley scans the mayhem, army crawling, sees:

McCoy holding Arianne close beneath a sofa, her protector.

Mom CRYING in Dad's arms, helpless as they witness the
destruction of their home.

Finley arrives at the edge of the HALLWAY, reaches cautiously
for the light switch, cuts the lights as -

The FIRING CEASES. SOUNDS of weapons reloading. VOICES in
hushed tones. BOOTSTEPS on the porch. Coming closer.
Approaching the front door...

Finley leans against the wall, thinking fast, looks beside
him:

The FIREPLACE, more importantly its TOOLS. Finley grabs a
POKER, sprints into -

THE HALLWAY

The FRONT DOOR is battered down...

Finley charges the intruding SHOOTER, SWINGS hard. THUMP!
Goes the poker, hooked into the shooter's chest. Finley
acquires his SHOTGUN as -

Another SHOOTER enters, assault rifle leveled and ready...

Finley deftly adapts, shields himself with the first shooter's body - now taking multiple hits from the second shooter. Finley racks the SHOTGUN with one hand, FIRES. Blows the second shooter out of the house.

Finley turns, hearing MACHINE GUNFIRE shattering glass -

IN THE LIVING ROOM

A THIRD SHOOTER climbs through the window, turns on his FLASHLIGHT fixed to his assault rifle. His beam searches the dark, finds -

Arianne, Mom, Dad, huddled together in a corner.
Defenseless.

Third Shooter levels his weapon -

MCCOY strangles him from behind. Third Shooter aimlessly FIRES into the ceiling, losing control. McCoy steals a PISTOL from Third Shooter's holster, FIRES three shots into his back.

Mom and Dad cover Arianne's eyes as -

Third Shooter goes limp in McCoy's arms, drops dead to the floor.

A HAND grabs McCoy from behind, he reacts, violent, disturbed.

It's Finley, finger over his lips. He picks up Third Shooter's assault rifle, hands it to him.

FINLEY
(whispering)
They're all over the place.

McCoy looks to Arianne, his folks.

MCCOY
Basement.

INT. MCCOY RESIDENCE - BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Finley and McCoy hustle the family into the basement. Out of harms way. They crouch beneath the staircase. McCoy hands Dad a pistol.

Stay here. MCCOY

Dad nods, checking the pistol, no stranger to combat.

Finley loads shells into the shotgun. McCoy checks the assault rifle.

MOM

Jim -

FINLEY

Shhh!

Multiple BOOTSTEPS from above. Heavy, tactical.

Finley looks to McCoy, grave.

FINLEY (CONT'D)

They're inside.

INT. MCCOY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Three remaining SHOOTERS in black camo, ski masks, sweeping the area. Shooter #4 signals them to split up.

DINING ROOM

Shooter #5 skirts the dining room table. Cautious. A SOUND in the kitchen. He puts his back to the window, edges for the kitchen. SHOTS roar from behind, pump him full of lead. He drops, revealing Finley standing outside, SHOTGUN smoking.

HALLWAY

Shooter #4 REACTS, vigilant steps for the dining room. Finds Shooter #5, dead below the window. The BARREL of an assault rifle contacts the back of his head - McCoy holds the weapon.

MCCOY

Put it down, chief.

Shooter #4 drops his gun. Hands on his head.

MCCOY (CONT'D)

How many inside? Minus the corpse?

Shooter #4 doesn't respond. Stands motionless, facing the window. Keeping McCoy guessing.

MCCOY (CONT'D)

Turn around.

Shooter #4 whirls with a suicidal ROUNDHOUSE KICK. Whips McCoy off the ground. McCoy hits the wood. Motions to train the machine gun on Shooter #4, who grabs the weapon, forces McCoy to SHOOT sideways, clearing the magazine. He grabs McCoy by his collar, BODYSLAMS him on the dining room table -

Beats the living shit out of him. Then, yanks McCoy by his shirt, pitches him out the window.

OUTSIDE

McCoy eats grass, rolling onto the lawn. Shooter #4 hops out, strides for him. McCoy crawls. Weak. Shooter #4 KICKS him hard in the gut. McCoy reels. He KICKS again. McCoy spits blood this time.

#4 grabs McCoy by the hair, wraps an elbow around his neck. McCoy, choking, losing life by the second, slackens. Then -

FINLEY grabs Shooter #4 from behind, BREAKS his neck.

McCoy gets to his feet, stumbles. Falls into his partner's arms. Thrashed. Gasping.

FINLEY

I got you, man! I got you! It's over.

SCREAMING from inside. Followed by two SHOTS.

MCCOY

No!

McCoy races back inside. Finley calls after -

FINLEY

Jim!

McCoy turns. Finley lobs him a pistol.

INT. MCCOY HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

McCoy moving tactfully down the stairs, pistol low. Finley right beside him.

MCCOY

Dad!...Mom!

No answer as they inch for the foot of the stairs, breath held, back to the wall, fearing the worst. They round the corner, do-or-die, find -

DAD holding a smoking gun, standing over another SHOOTER - breathing heavy, like he's dying.

Mom and Arianne tremble in the corner, eyes drowning in tears. Witness to the violence.

McCoy moves carefully for his Dad - somewhere else now, his first kill since Vietnam. McCoy carefully takes the gun away from his father's grip, tucks it in his jeans.

Finley kicks away the weapon. Removes his ski-mask: KENNY, eyes vacant. Expired.

Then, a Brad Paisley RINGTONE - singin' from Kenny's pocket. Everyone trading confused looks.

Finley hands McCoy the phone -

FINLEY

Talk.

MCCOY

What?

FINLEY

Low voice. Short sentences. We need to know who this is.

McCoy reads the caller: UNKNOWN NUMBER. Thumbs the SPEAKER button.

MCCOY

Yeah.

VOICE (O.S.)

You all done?

McCoy thinks fast, improvising.

MCCOY

Yeah.

VOICE (O.S.)

Everyone? McCoy and Finley, too?

McCoy turns to Finley, who nods "yes."

MCCOY

All done.

VOICE (O.S.)

Couple of black and whites are headed your way. Ten minutes, max. See you at breakfast.

The voice disconnects. McCoy and Finley meet eyes, betrayed. The voice all too familiar.

MCCOY

Was that -

FINLEY

I think so.

Finley searches Kenny's pockets, snatches out a wallet - there's an ID inside. It reads: SPECIAL OPERATIONS UNIT - ILLINOIS STATE POLICE.

FINLEY (CONT'D)

S.O.U.

He passes the I.D. to McCoy. He takes a moment, processing the implications, anger, hate building inside. Tosses the I.D. on Kenny's corpse.

MCCOY

Fucking cops in this town.

EXT. MCCOY RESIDENCE/STREET - NIGHT

Multiple CRUISERS, an ambulance converge on the scene.

Finley stands at the front of the house, BADGE raised.

McCoy sits on the porch, bitter, vengeful.

Tires lock before Finley. Patrolmen spill out, weapons at the ready.

Neighbors observe from their porches, their typically serene suburban block is now a crime scene.

Keegan emerges from one of the cars. Marches for Finley, regarding the bullet-riddled home.

SGT. KEEGAN

Jesus, you two alright?

INT. UNMARKED CRUISER (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Epps driving for the house. Barlow in the passenger seat, tensing up as he makes out McCoy and Finley - alive and well. He's seeing ghosts.

EXT. MCCOY RESIDENCE - MOMENTS LATER

The UNMARKED CRUISER brakes to a stop. Epps climbs out, notes Barlow, hesitating.

LT. EPPS

What's up?

Barlow unfastens his seat belt, nervous.

LT. BARLOW
Nothing.

He exits.

McCoy takes note, walks for the lieutenants, marching past Keegan.

A RINGTONE chimes somewhere in the vicinity. Barlow reaches into his pocket, sees the number, re-pockets the phone.

McCoy holds KENNY'S PHONE high, closing in on Barlow.

MCCOY
Aren't you gonna answer that? You
motherfucker -

Then, he breaks into a charge. TACKLES Barlow to the grass. Wails on him. Raging fists of fury.

Finley, Epps, Keegan and fellow officers rush the scrap.

Finley fights through the chaos, gets a grip on McCoy, saves him from killing Barlow. He grabs Kenny's phone, saves it from being trampled.

Epps helps Barlow to his feet, gives McCoy a hard look -

LT. EPPS
What the hell's gotten into you!?

Finley labors to contain a spitting, kicking, punch-drunk McCoy -

MCCOY
Ask your partner! He knows! HE KNOWS
EVERYTHING!

Epps turns to Barlow, quizzical -

LT. EPPS
What's he talking about?

LT. BARLOW
Kid's talking crazy. How the hell should
I know?

Finley releases McCoy, who paces, livid.

MCCOY
Go on and tell him! Catch him up to
speed you back-stabbing piece of shit!

Finley lobs Epps the phone.

FINLEY
Found that on one of the shooters.

Finley holds Epps's gaze.

FINLEY (CONT'D)
Barlow. He called one of the shooters.
Check his log. You'll see.

Epps looks into his partner's eyes, playing out the possibility in his mind.

LT. BARLOW
What?

LT. EPPS
Let me see your phone.

LT. BARLOW
Jesus, you're not actually buying this -

LT. EPPS
Jake.

A long PAUSE. All eyes on Barlow, in the hot-seat.

LT. BARLOW
Fuck it.

He hands Epps the phone, begins to walk for the car, nowhere to run. Behind him, Epps holds both phones, verifies his suspicions. A BEAT, as Barlow leans on the car, tense.

Epps looks up from the mobiles, eyes on Barlow. He calmly draws his SERVICE WEAPON, holds it at his side.

Barlow averts his eyes from Epps, nearly laughs, humiliated. Unholsters his weapon.

Officers react, hands on their pistol grips.

Barlow removes his BADGE from his belt. Surrenders it and his gun on the hood of the car. He puts his hands behind his head, awaiting arrest.

McCoy, Finley, Keegan witness the process unfold as Epps moves for his partner, drawing his cuffs. Arrests him.

Keegan turns to McCoy and Finley -

SGT. KEEGAN

I need you back at the station. Your family, too. They're safer there.

MCCOY

Are they, sergeant?

McCoy pushes past her, moves for his family as they stand together on the porch, holding each other. Stressed and shook. Gracious survivors.

INT. PRECINCT - SQUADROOM - AFTER HOURS

Officers glued to their phones. Bracing leads. On the clock.

Arianne on a corner couch, head resting on Mom's lap. Dad hovers around them, anxious. It's been a long night for the McCoy family.

INT. PRECINCT - OBSERVATION ROOM - AFTER HOURS

McCoy, Finley, Santos, Keegan, their focus intently fixed on -

INT. PRECINCT - INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME TIME

The continual HUM of overhead fluorescents. Mood edgy.

Epps sits before Barlow, tense, quietly enraged. Betrayed.

Barlow refuses to meet his partner's gaze, eyes averted. Failing to hide the angst, shame.

Epps slides his RECORDER to the center of the table.

LT. EPPS

Make it easy on yourself.

Barlow stares at the device, cool, half sneering.

LT. BARLOW

C'mon, Rob, you know I ain't saying shit -

And then Epps explodes, TACKLING Barlow to the ground. Issues three consecutive blows, splitting his lip. He grabs Barlow by the shirt-collar, face-to-face, delirious. Hands tightening around his neck -

LT. EPPS

You don't want to talk?

STRANGLING.

LT. EPPS (CONT'D)
Fine. I won't talk either.

Epps draws his GUN...

INT. PRECINCT - OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Finley, McCoy rush the door to the interrogation room as...

INT. PRECINCT - INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Epps unlocks the gun's safety, trains it on Barlow - McCoy TACKLES Epps against the wall. Finley grabs Epps's shooting arm, forces it upward.

Barlow COUGHS on the floor, sweaty, mug crimson, scared straight.

Epps breathes hard, slowly coming back to Earth. He surrenders his weapon to Finley, who locks the safety.

Finley and McCoy release Epps as Keegan and Santos enter, help Barlow to his feet.

Epps straightens his jacket, embarrassed.

LT. EPPS
I can't...I'm sorry. I can't do this.
(to: McCoy, Finley)
He's all yours.

Epps leaves the room.

Keegan picks up the recorder, hands to Finley. She exits. Santos follows. The rookies are now in charge.

INT. PRECINCT - INTERROGATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Finley and McCoy sit before Barlow, who daubs a bloody lip. Finley taps the RECORD button, begins.

LT. BARLOW
Might as well just throw me inside, cause like I said -

FINLEY
You ain't saying shit. We got that part.

MCCOY
You? A cop. In prison? I love this idea.

FINLEY

Or, maybe you don't go quietly. Maybe you help us out a little, play the game. Become an untouchable.

MCCOY

Transactional immunity. Complete protection from future prosecution related to the witnesses testimony.

Finley gives him a look, impressed -

MCCOY (CONT'D)

It's your only ticket out. Otherwise, it's just you going down. Taking the heat for whoever you're protecting. And taking a lot more when you're bunking upstate.

LT. BARLOW

Fuck you.

MCCOY

No, fuck you.

McCoy pushes himself from the table, grabs the recorder, leaning over Barlow, mouth to mic -

MCCOY (CONT'D)

To the sharks listening to this conversation, this cocksucker tried to have my partner and my family killed. Please, please, please make the rest of his life a living hell.

He slams the recorder down on the table -

MCCOY (CONT'D)

Or don't.

Returns to his seat, checks his watch, mastering his "bad cop."

FINLEY

Special Operations Unit. Start there.

Barlow sits up, hesitant, weighing his options. Then -

LT. BARLOW

It's a branch of the State of Illinois Homeland Security.

McCoy gestures him to continue -

LT. BARLOW (CONT'D)
Active for three years now. High-tech surveillance, undercover work, anti-terrorism. No warrants, limitless jurisdiction.

(beat)

I'm their eyes and ears in Major Crimes.
I fed them intel. All our moves.
Keeping them a step ahead.

MCCOY

Ahead of what?

LT. BARLOW

You, me, us, CPD.

FINLEY

How'd they get to you? Why now?

LT. BARLOW

Jesus, you two are so self-righteous.
Been here barely a week and you're interrogating me? You got no idea what it's like. Fifteen years I put in this department -

FINLEY

Lieutenant -

McCoy gestures a YAWN.

LT. BARLOW

Taking shit, unpaid overtime, yes to pay-cuts to keep my job. I served my city -

FINLEY

Lieutenant!

A beat, Barlow shifts in his chair, agitated -

LT. BARLOW

I was working vice. S.O.U. had pictures of us. She was a C.I. I got a fucking wife. How could I say no?

McCoy smirks -

MCCOY

You were bangin' your informant -

FINLEY

Jim.

(to: Barlow)

Who's the man in charge?

Barlow SIGHS frustration. The walls closing in.

LT. BARLOW

Hanson.

(beat)

Captain John Warren Hanson. Been around since the 80's. War on drugs. All that shit. Unit's well-trained. The kind of tactics they teach Special Ops, Delta Force. Happy?

FINLEY

So he murdered Ellroy.

LT. BARLOW

Probably deferred to one his flunkies. John don't have the stomach.

FINLEY

Connect Priest.

LT. BARLOW

Priest, he came to Hanson as sign of trust. Said he didn't want any trouble. That kid was going to blow the lid off the entire op. Hanson took care of it.

McCoy turns to Finley, the truth dawning -

FINLEY

Ellroy was going to tell us about cops selling H. Just like Tanisha.

Barlow hesitates, then -

LT. BARLOW

Man's created a monopoly. Guarantees zero interference from law enforcement.

MCCOY

In exchange for what?

LT. BARLOW

Incentive is peace in the streets. By the rules. No turf wars, or vendettas. Everybody plays nice, or nobody sells dope.

Finley sneers, skeptical -

FINLEY

Motive's bullshit. He knows the turf.
The types he's doing business with. Why
inherit the stress of being a supplier
this late in his career?

Barlow shrugs -

LT. BARLOW

Ask him. I told you what I know.

MCCOY

Not everything.

LT. BARLOW

I'm past fucking dead, alright. What
else you want from me?

McCoy would smile if he weren't so bitter.

MCCOY

Where's breakfast?

Off Barlow, exposed, cornered. Where our officers want him.

INT. PRECINCT - LOCKER ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Finley and McCoy stand before mirrors, slipping into ballistics vests. Checking their weapons. Their nerves going off the charts.

Behind them, Epps performs the same ritual, his manner the opposite: casual, controlled, been-there-done-that.

McCoy splashes water on his face. Breathes deep.

Epps takes note, staring at them through his mirror -

LT. EPPS

Thanks for...I lost my head back there.
(beat)

Remember my first raid. Felt like I had everything to prove. Like the weight of the world was on my shoulders. Jesus, I could barely hold my food. Fear, natures best laxative.

Epps slaps a magazine into his pistol, holsters it. He leaves McCoy and Finley gazing at their reflections, scared shitless.

INT. FIRING RANGE - NIGHT

Hanson at a station, draws fast - quick-fires. Six consecutive bull's-eyes.

INT. ILLINOIS STATE POLICE DEPARTMENT - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Hanson strides through a sea of police officers. His associates.

He marches over the State Police Seal, motto declared:
INTEGRITY. SERVICE. PRIDE.

He moves for a door, manned by touch-pad. He punches in a code. Enters.

INT. S.O.U. (SPECIAL OPERATIONS UNIT) - CONTINUOUS

Stark, sleek, high-tech. The most high-tech safe-house you've ever seen. Rows of top-shelf computers, wall-mounted LCD's, cell-phone tracers. Unlimited access at their fingertips. Too much power.

A group of S.O.U. men gear up. They load PISTOLS, ASSAULT RIFLES. Provisions.

He joins Candie Jones and a few others at a table. They load kilos of heroin into duffle bags, shoulder them, moving for the back door.

INT. PRECINCT - SQUADROOM - MORNING

McCoy stands before the parents, Arianne. He kneels before the little girl, searching for words, the stakes fully realized. She hugs him tight, shows no signs of letting go.

Off-guard, McCoy fights for cool. Her love giving him strength, purpose. Hope.

HEAVY BOOTSTEPS, O.S.

INT. PRECINCT - CORRIDOR - MORNING

The underbelly of the precinct. A long, hollow stretch of chipped concrete and faulty lighting.

Epps, Santos, a small battery of SWAT OFFICERS stride down the corridor, business in their step, their poise ice-cold. Pugilists trooping for the ring.

INT. MEAT PACKING RUINS - ATRIUM - MORNING

A KNIFE stabs the body of a KILO BRICK...

Hanson watching nervously as a CHEMIST extracts a small portion of heroin from the brick with the knife, deposits the powder into a petri dish...

INT. PRECINCT - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

McCoy and Finley bring up the rear of the procession, observing their colleagues with envy, respect. This is their rite of passage.

INT. MEAT PACKING RUINS - CONTINUOUS

Triads, Irish muscle, Latin Kings, Jamaicans. Small crews. All eyes on a CHEMIST, awaiting the results of the impurity test. Their heroin-to-be portioned and stacked into small towers on makeshift tables. Ready for purchase.

A cadre of S.O.U. muscle running bills through counting machines on makeshift tables. Ensuring a smooth, friendly transaction.

Candie Jones checks her watch, impatient, uneasy, reports to Hanson -

CANDIE JONES
(low)
I don't like it. Barlow, Kenny. They should be here by now.

Hanson pops a TABLET, paying her no mind, refusing to embrace her concern.

CANDIE JONES (CONT'D)
John -

He moves for his men, carefully counting the money -

HANSON
These men want to go home with product today. Hurry your count.

The Irish Boss smiles, amused by Hanson's anxiety -

IRISH BOSS
Relax, John. We're in no hurry. Make sure it's all there.

Hanson smiles, doing a shit-job hiding agitation.

EXT. TRI-STATE FREEWAY - MORNING

The sun's slow climb over the city's peaks, shafts of morning light pouring through the skyline. Great weather for a showdown.

The cavalcade of CPD vehicles and a SWAT VAN speeding down the freeway. Ripping through traffic, the emergency lane at their full disposal.

INT. UNMARKED (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Finley behind the wheel, resolute, the picture of true grit.

McCoy shakes out a cigarette, edgy, then crumples the carton, pitches them both out the window. Quitting.

INT. MEAT PACKING RUINS - MORNING

Forsaken and beyond repair. A state of incomplete demolition. Three crumbling stories of decayed concrete and rusted steel. Support beams hang like drapes, begging to fall.

INT. MEAT PACKING RUINS - ATRIUM - MORNING

A gathering in what used to be the main floor - now a moss-grown, open-air atrium hosting the transaction.

Enforcers pack product into large suitcases. Wrapping it up.

Hanson's men zip up multiple cash-filled duffle bags, filled to capacity.

EXT. MEAT PACKING RUINS - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Hanson, Candie Jones, S.O.U. men load into two SUVs. Four to a truck.

Bosses, their enforcers take to their vehicles. Engines growl to life.

INT./EXT. SUV/MEAT PACKING RUINS - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Candie Jones keys the ignition, turns on the radio. Punk rattles the speakers.

Hanson fastens his seat belt, massages his temples, relieved -

HANSON

Oldies, please. All the way to the O'Hare.

Candie Jones scans the stations, lands on The Beatles. 'Baby You're a Rich Man,' or a damn good cover.

Jones drives, motoring for the street. Then -

CPD VEHICLES, SWAT VAN pulling in. SIRENS wailing. Blocking passage. No one is getting out.

Jones HAMMERS the brake.

Hanson sits up, shocked, foiled. Fucked. He draws his GLOCK.

HANSON (CONT'D)
Go back. Go BACK!

Jones puts the SUV in reverse, steps on it, back into the LOT - SLAMS into the SUV behind her, forces it off-course.

Jones's SUV recklessly CLIPPING multiple syndicate cars along the way - at this juncture, it's every man for himself.

Syndicate bosses, their enforcers, S.O.U. men climb out. SCATTER. Running for their lives. The mad dash.

Epps, Santos jump out of their cruiser, guns drawn low.

SWAT Officers empty out of the van, assault rifles leveled, SAFETIES unlocked. Routine.

McCoy and Finley climb out of their unmarked, weapons out, looking like they belong.

Hanson and Jones, both hefting what money they can salvage, exit the SUV, armed, retreating back into the RUINS.

SWAT Officers fan out, covering the lot, hastily charging the syndicate bosses, cutting them off. Subduing them swiftly. Bodies in imported threads slamming the concrete. Apprehended.

Remaining enforcers, the four sabotaged S.O.U. men skirt the perimeter of the ruins, using the facade as a station to ready weapons. They FIRE frantically on the law, their shots wayward, panicked.

SWAT responds, closing in on their suspect's perch, short, controlled BURSTS taking them down. Picking off the handful of criminals and dirty cops with terrifying precision.

Epps leads the charge. McCoy, Finley, Santos, a SWAT OFFICER (BURNS) following close behind as they enter -

INT. MEAT PACKING RUINS - ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The LOBBY. Quiet, deserted, gutted. No signs of Hanson and Candie Jones.

The officers advance with caution, securing the area. Into -
THE CORRIDOR

Long and narrow. Multiple doors lining passage. Hanson and Candie Jones could be hiding behind any one of the portals.

Epps swings into an old MEN'S ROOM, alert: clear. Nothing but rubble, a leaky faucet, moss-ridden urinals. He searches the stalls, kicking down each door. Grabs his WALKIE, quietly -

LT. EPPS
All clear in the john. Santos?

Santos steps into a LOCKER ROOM. Moves along the rows of rusted lockers, wary, vigilant. It's empty. She puts mouth to mic -

OFCR. SANTOS
Same story here, Lieutenant. Burns?

THE COOLER

BURNS, the SWAT Officer, pacing along, tracking FOOTPRINTS in the dirt. Dozens of meat hooks hanging from above.

He grabs his walkie -

SWAT OFFICER BURNS
I got nothing in the cooler.

IN THE HALLWAY

McCoy and Finley remain in the corridor, holding down the fort. Then, GUNFIRE. Multiple shots. Rapid successions. Coming from the cooler.

McCoy and Finley react, dart for the source. Enter.

THE COOLER

Find Burns lying motionless. Bullet-riddled.

They discover an additional PASSAGEWAY connected to the room, receding FOOTSTEPS echoing behind it. Hanson and Jones are close.

Santos, Epps enter, regard the carnage.

Finley points to the additional passageway -

Epps takes charge, signaling his inferiors to wait as he peers around the passageway. Sees a tiled hallway, chipped and mold-ridden, it's only source of light coming from the sun pouring through the spare windows built along the wall.

LT. EPPS
Stay close.

Epps proceeds. Finley, McCoy, Santos follow.

INT. MEAT PACKING RUINS - ATRIUM - CONTINUOUS

Epps creeping into the clearing, trailed by his officers. He puts a cautious HAND up.

The officers stop.

Epps points upward, indicating the upper levels.

He steps into the opening, spins towards the upper levels,
his instincts spot on, reflexes too slow -

LT. EPPS
Shit.

Automatic GUNFIRE rains from above. Punching his vest. Taking him off his feet. He takes one in the LEG, firing back, SHOTS aimed upwards as he falls.

Santos provides COVER FIRE, maneuvers them beneath a metal table, bullets ripping into the rusted metal. Her slide locks back, pistol dry -

SANTOS
(to: McCoy, Finley)
Third floor!

McCoy and Finley step back, posted below the upper floors. Hanson and Candie Jones's position revealed. Finley looks to McCoy, both on the same page.

INT. MEAT PACKING RUINS - STAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

McCoy and Finley racing up, weapons trained every which way as they reach the second floor -

Into the hallway, covering both directions. Working as a unit. Finley signals McCoy to split. Then, they break off in opposite directions, splitting up.

McCoy edges towards an abandoned ASSAULT RIFLE, perched on the ledge overlooking the atrium. Shooter nowhere to be found.

Finley hugs the wall, nearing a doorway, enters -

INT. MEAT PACKING RUINS - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Stark and hollow. An old desk caked in dust. A rotary phone perched at the edge. Cobwebbed chairs leaning against the wall...

INT. MEAT PACKING RUINS - MAIN HALL - CONTINUOUS

McCoy prepares to reach for the rifle, CANDIE JONES emerges from behind, STABS McCoy in the leg with a TACTICAL KNIFE. Yanks him away from the perch. Holding his hand, forcing him to FIRE into the air, clearing his clip.

She slams him against the wall, removes the knife. McCoy SCREAMS.

INT. MEAT PACKING RUINS - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Finley reacts to the noise -

FINLEY

Jim!

Heading for the hallway - is blindsided by HANSON, holding his Glock - Finley DEFLECTS Hanson's firing hand, SHOT tearing into the wall beside him. TACKLES Hanson to the ground, SHOTS firing in his grip.

Finley SLAMS Hanson's hand on the ground, forces the gun free. Issues head-numbing BLOWS, pummeling the old timer.

Hanson KNEES Finley in the gut, sends him stumbling back - into the desk.

HANSON

Fuckin' rookie! Fight back!

Finley grabs the ROTARY PHONE, rips it from the desk's surface. SWINGS. Connect's with Hanson's jaw, who spits blood. He SWINGS again - Hanson ducks it. SOCKS Finley in the gut. KNOCKS the phone out of his hands. The two collide, swinging. Trading blows. Furious fisticuffs. Blood. Sweat. Fury.

INT. MEAT PACKING RUINS - MAIN HALL - CONTINUOUS

Candie Jones SLASHES at McCoy, who ducks the swing, her KNIFE cutting a TRAIL OF SPARKS across the wall.

McCoy responds, SOCKS Candie Jones in the crotch. She stumbles back, winded. Charges again, SLASHING the air, scorned.

McCoy dodges her parries as best he can, grabs the knife-hand in the mid-swing. ELBOWS hard to the face. Grabs a handful of blonde, PUNCHES again, dragging her -

MCCOY

You're one of those crazy chicks.

Frees the knife from her grip, sends it sliding.

MCCOY (CONT'D)

Wants to be treated like a dude!

Sneaks a head-shattering jab.

Jones replies - THREE-KICKS to McCoy's crotch. He slumps to the ground, pain going to his head -

MCCOY (CONT'D)

God...damn

Jones collects her knife, prepares to pounce -

OFCR. SANTOS (O.C.)

Fuck you!

SANTOS levels Jones to the ground.

The two WRESTLING on the cold, cracked surface. Fighting to kill.

McCoy limps for the perched ASSAULT RIFLE, grabs it. He checks the magazine: it's loaded...

Santos is losing, Jones laying down a barrage of bruise-inducing blows as - AUTOMATIC FIRE RIPS THROUGH JONES, hurtles her forward. She staggers, clutching multiple GSW's. She looks at McCoy, incredulous, spits blood -

CANDIE JONES

Wa...wait...

She draws her BADGE, begging for mercy, her life.

McCoy lowers the assault rifle, merciful. Then something cold in McCoy's eyes. Vicious, grim.

CANDIE JONES (CONT'D)
Please...I'm a cop -

McCoy FIRES again, drying the magazine - hammering Jones to the wall. She sags, making her slow trip to the floor. Exhales her last breath. No more.

Santos SIGHS, beaten, floored. Then, notes something behind him -

OFCR. SANTOS
McCoy!

She grabs McCoy's PISTOL, heaves it to him.

He catches it, spinning -

Finley stands before Hanson, pistol-nozzle to his head, sans ballistics vest. A hostage.

MCCOY
Let him go, asshole.

HANSON
Bad start, kid. You're supposed to talk the hostage-taker down. Be his friend.

MCCOY
I ain't your fucking friend.

HANSON
You got a mouth, don't you? Think I liked you better when you were a quarterback.

FINLEY
Why you doing this?

HANSON
Fuck 'why.' Because I had to. Because the law don't pay. And when it's all said and done a gold watch and a pension worth less than my left nut don't make ends meet these days.

FINLEY
Wasn't about peace in the streets. You weren't taking over shit. Deal's just a quick dollar.

HANSON

It's called retirement money and I fucking earned it. Thirty-one years of service and I got the scars and two ex-wives to show for it. You play the game long enough, see what I've seen, you'll come around.

MCCOY

Bad news, chief, this place is locked down. You're going nowhere.

HANSON

Exactly why it's time to negotiate. I think you know the terms, so decide fast - before SWAT complicates things.

FINLEY

Jim, shoot this motherfucker!

Hanson FIRES a shot in the air. Presses the barrel to Finley's neck, burning him.

HANSON

The hostage doesn't have a say in the negotiations, Billy-boy. Shut the fuck up.

(to: McCoy)

Gun on the floor, Jim. And I will walk. And he will live. Very. Fucking. Simple.

McCoy stands motionless. A tense BEAT. Then, he drops the gun.

Finley closes his eyes, hopeless.

HANSON (CONT'D)

Jesus. You really are a rookie. Nothing personal...

He turns the gun on McCoy, Santos -

HANSON (CONT'D)

Strictly business -

Finley grabs Hanson's firing hand, the two wrestling for control of the pistol - SHOOTS himself. Drops.

McCoy takes a knee - grabs his gun. Takes aim. A clear shot as -

Hanson looks up -

BANG-BANG roars McCoy's gun. Two in Hanson's chest. Then, McCoy stands - SHOOTS again.

Hanson is taken off his feet - one in the head.

Finley lies on the floor, nursing a wound in his stomach.

McCoy responds, runs for his partner. He takes Finley in his arms - unresponsive. Near death.

SWAT arrives at the scene. All eyes on the wounded officer.

EXT./INT. STREET/ AMBULANCE (MOVING) - DAY

Tearing down the road.

EMTs work overtime, trying to revive Finley - breathing through an oxygen mask, body linked to tubes.

McCoy sits beside him, losing it. Sees Finley's hand, hanging from the stretcher - twitching. Showing signs of life. McCoy takes it, holding his friend's hand. Fighting back tears.

INT. HOTEL - BANQUET HALL - DAY

Students waiting anxiously, chugging caffeine. Knees bounce. Shoes tap carpet. Everyone sweating bullets as they endure the Illinois Bar Exam.

McCoy is nowhere to be seen.

MCCOY (O.S.)
Fuck. The. Bar.

INT. PRECINCT - HALLWAY - DAY

McCoy and a living, breathing FINLEY, both slouching in chairs outside the CAPTAIN'S OFFICE. Finley's face an equally gruesome canvas of scrapes, cuts, bruises. They watch the station traffic, cool, calm, ready to accept their punishment like men.

FINLEY
How'd your pops take you skipping out?

MCCOY
Arianne's the only one who knows.
Speaking of which, adoption papers were approved.

They trade daps.

FINLEY
Big brother.

MCCOY
Got her in a great school. Testing high
in her class. Girl's gonna change the
world.

Finley lifts his shirt, distracted, admiring the giant
bandage across his belly. Still healing.

McCoy looks away, disgusted -

MCCOY (CONT'D)
Yo, how many times you gotta look at it?

FINLEY
Baby's gonna scar nice. You gonna cry
again?

MCCOY
That's all in your head, chief. I never
cry.

FINLEY
Wasn't that dead, Jim.

MCCOY
Heads up.

Finley turns, sees -

Santos marching for them. Writing on her steno.

Finley sits up, losing cool.

Santos rips the paper from her steno, hands it to Finley -

OFCR. SANTOS
This is my cell. Ask me out sometime.

MCCOY
'Bout time Santos.

OFCR. SANTOS
Blow me.

She storms off, her peace made.

MCCOY
That woman is going to own you.

Finley watches her walk, owned. And then he rises. Marches after her.

MCCOY (CONT'D)
Where you going?

Finley doesn't hear him. Catches up to Santos. Grabs her hand -

SANTOS
What?

Steals her into the -

INT. PRECINCT - BREAK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Draws her close. Kisses her. She pulls back. A beat, Finley looking deep into her eyes. Then, Santos kisses back. Deeper. Harder. She lays her head on his chest, exhales. These two need each other.

SANTOS
Good luck with the Captain.

INT. PRECINCT - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - DAY

McCoy and Finley sitting nervously before the -

CAPTAIN (60's), hard exterior, an old WOUND scarring his cheek - a man who's earned his survival. He quietly reads a report. Then looks up, studies the two officers, eyes injecting fear.

SIDE NOTE: Cameo moment. We're talking iconic, cop film legend. For the qualified few reading this, you know who you are.

CAPTAIN
Which one of you assholes slugged the reporter from Channel 5?

McCoy apprehensively raises a hand, sheepish.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
He lost a tooth. Don't worry about his dental bill, it's on us.

McCoy lowers his hand. The Captain continues -

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Epps told me all about the shit-show you put on this week. Said you were stubborn. Disobedient.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

That you had issues with authority.
Would you agree with his assessment?

They shake their heads hesitantly, too timid to answer yes or no.

The Captain digs in his drawer, extracts a BADGE. Tosses it to Finley.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

For you.

Finley inspects the shield, confused -

FINLEY

Says detective.

CAPTAIN

You've been promoted. Homicide Division.
Thank Epps.

Finley gives him a quizzical look, stifling a smile. McCoy looks at the badge, left out, jealous.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

It was his belief that your skills would be put to better use elsewhere. Think he said something like, you needed a challenge, or some fucking thing.

MCCOY

That's all great, Captain. But where's mine?

CAPTAIN

You'll get yours - after the academy.

McCoy shifts in his seat, not sure he heard him correctly.

MCCOY

The academy.

CAPTAIN

Thirty-six weeks. And you have to graduate.

MCCOY

Captain that's nine months you're talking.

CAPTAIN

That gonna be a problem?

Before McCoy can respond -

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

I mean, it'd irk me to no end if I knew my friend and former partner was kicking ass where it counts, while I wasted away in a shit unit. All because I refused to undergo the basic training required of every man and woman pursuing a career in law enforcement.

(beat)

But, that's just me.

Off McCoy, frustrated, speechless.

INT. PRECINCT - LOBBY AREA - MOMENTS LATER

McCoy explodes out of the elevators, incensed. Pushing through the bustle. Finley barely keeps up with him -

FINLEY

Come on, Jim. Ain't like he said forever.

McCoy only walks faster -

MCCOY

It's another test. The Bar all over again.

FINLEY

But you're my fucking partner, man!

A BEAT as McCoy stops in mid-stride. Slowly moves back for Finley, eyes narrow, curious.

MCCOY

The hell you just say?

FINLEY

Don't act like you didn't hear me. I'm not working up there without you. The badge is yours, so suck it up. Finish this.

McCoy lets out a deep SIGH, mulling it over -

MCCOY

You really think I can do this?

Finley holds his gaze, convinced -

FINLEY

Jim, you'll kill it. You're a good cop.

McCoy is taken aback. Never once associating himself with the phrase. He likes it. Almost smiles, beginning to believe -

MCCOY
I'll kill it.

Finley smiles, moving -

FINLEY
You better.

They begin to walk for the door, pass a MAINTENANCE WORKER applying paint to the wall above the waiting area, filling in the letters that were once missing.

FINLEY (CONT'D)
Let's get fucked up. On me. We're
detectives now.

MCCOY
Oh, so now you're thirsty. Thought you
didn't drink.

FINLEY
It's five o'clock somewhere.

And our officers exit the building, stepping out into the world. Stronger. Ready for the next chapter.

The maintenance worker steps down the ladder, gathers his tools, his little project complete.

The wall now reads: WE SERVE AND PROTECT

And we -

CUT TO BLACK.