

LA LOTERIA

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WGA# 1862518

FADE IN:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DUSK

Street lights just starting to flicker on. Some, shattered by bullets, stand dark - creating eerie pockets of darkness.

Both sides of the street are crammed with old, rundown homes and apartments. No two buildings alike, as if the structures were haphazardly dropped from the sky. No planning here. This neighborhood evolved.

At the corner, sits a simple wood frame home surrounded by a wrought iron fence. The pale blue paint on the home is chipped and faded. The lawn bone dry and barren.

INT. PALE BLUE HOME/MAIN ROOM - DUSK

Small and cramped, essentially one room. The Living, dining, and kitchen area separated only by the flooring. Worn carpet meets faded linoleum.

The walls are crammed with photos - no two frames alike. They've been placed there over fifty years. In the middle of these photos - a wooden cross and a faded picture of Jesus.

ESPERANZA CORONADO (78), gentle face, white, wiry hair wearing a full length, paisley nightshirt and slippers sits in a recliner in the center of the room. She has a CALIFORNIA LOTTERY TICKET in her lap.

Esperanza puts on a pair of thick lens glasses, picks up the receiver of a house phone and slowly punches in the numbers.

AUTOMATED VOICE FROM PHONE (V.O.)

Thank you for calling the
California Lottery Office. For
English, please stay on the line.
Para espanol o prima dos.

Esperanza presses the "TWO".

AUTOMATED VOICE FROM PHONE (V.O.)

(In Spanish - subtitled)
Someone will be with you shortly.
Your call may be recorded for
quality assurance purposes.

INT. SANTA FE SPRINGS LOTTERY CALL CENTER - DUSK

A sterile room. Fluorescent lights shine down on Government issued cubicles, all in a perfect row.

One of the cubicles is manned by GABRIEL SANCHEZ (22), thin, angular face. The band from a phone headset creases his thick, dark hair. Gabriel's eyes are shut - a work nap.

A clock on his desk reads: "5:55 P.M."

An electronic phone RING catches Gabriel's attention. He opens his eyes and spots A RED LIGHT flashing on his phone console. He yawns as he presses the answer button.

GABRIEL
 (in Spanish - subtitled)
 California Lottery, Santa Fe
 Springs Office. This is Gabriel
 How can I help you?

CUT TO:

INT. PALE BLUE HOME/MAIN ROOM - DUSK

ESPERANZA
 (in Spanish - subtitled)
 I hope this is the right number. I
 need to claim a lottery prize.

INTERCUT BETWEEN GABRIEL AND ESPERANZA

All dialogue is in Spanish - subtitles in English.

GABRIEL
 For prizes less than six hundred
 dollars you can simply return the
 ticket to any lottery retailer.
 Where did you buy the ticket?

ESPERANZA
 Boyle Heights. At the Brooklyn
 Liquor store on Cesar Chavez.

GABRIEL
 Well, just take it there. They'll
 redeem it.

ESPERANZA
 I don't know how much the prize is.
 I mean, doesn't it depend on how
 many people picked all the numbers?

GABRIEL
 What kind of ticket do you have?

ESPERANZA
 The Super Lotto one.

GABRIEL

How many numbers did you hit?

ESPERANZA

All of them - I think. I'm not positive. I saw them on the TV this morning. You know, on the daily news --

GABRIEL

Yes, I know.

ESPERANZA

But they read them too fast. I can't write that quickly anymore. But I think I got all of them.

Gabriel rolls his eyes - sure that the lady has to be senile.

GABRIEL

In that case, you need to bring your ticket down to the Santa Fe Springs Office and fill out a claims form. Do you have pen and paper handy so I can give you the address?

ESPERANZA

I can't come to the office. I don't drive. They took my license away.

GABRIEL

You don't have any family - or maybe a friend that can bring you in?

ESPERANZA

No. There's no one.

Gabriel shakes his head. Really doesn't want work at the end of the shift.

GABRIEL

(under his breath)

Jesus Christ.

(to Esperanza)

Can you read them to me?

ESPERANZA

Pardon?

GABRIEL

The numbers on your ticket.

Esperanza lifts the ticket close to her glasses.

ESPERANZA
 (painfully slow)
 Two, seven, eight, eleven,
 nineteen, and thirty-eight.

Gabriel jots down the numbers as Esperanza reads them.

GABRIEL
 Okay, just a minute.

Gabriel taps the space bar on his computer screen. It goes from screen saver mode to THE CALIFORNIA LOTTERY PAGE.

Gabriel's eyes widen. On the screen:

"WINNING NUMBERS: 2-7-8-11-19-38."

ESPERANZA
 Hello?
 (no response from Gabriel)
 Hello? Are you still there?

GABRIEL
 Um - yes, yes - I am. I didn't get your name.

ESPERANZA
 Esperanza Coronado.

GABRIEL
 We're having some phone issues here, Mrs. Coronado. Can I get your phone number so I can call you back? It'll be right away.

ESPERANZA
 Of course.

Gabriel scribbles on a notepad as he listens.

GABRIEL
 Okay, just give me a few minutes.
 (listening)
 You're welcome.

END INTERCUT

Just as Gabriel presses the end call button, JOEY (25) appears at the entrance to the cubicle.

JOEY
 Shift change!

Startled, Gabriel turns his chair around.

GABRIEL
 (nervous)
 Hey - um, Joey. What's up?

JOEY
 You okay?

Gabriel nervously packs his things into a leather satchel.

GABRIEL
 Yeah - yeah, fine. You just
 startled me is all.

Gabriel stands up - Joey takes the chair.

JOEY
 You sure startle easily.

Gabriel checks his watch.

GABRIEL
 I really got to go.

Joey waves Gabriel off as he puts on the headset.

EXT. SANTA FE SPRINGS LOTTERY CALL CENTER - NIGHT

Gabriel exits the doors of a perfectly square white office building in an industrial park complex. He waves good night to a couple of COWORKERS as they all head towards their cars.

INT. GABRIEL'S CAR - NIGHT

A modest, used sedan.

Gabriel pulls his cell phone and a notepad from the leather satchel. He places his cell phone on the passenger car seat and reaches over and opens the glove compartment. He fumbles around a bit and removes a BURNER PHONE.

He taps in Esperanza's number.

GABRIEL
 (In Spanish - subtitled)
 Mrs. Coronado. This is Gabriel from
 the lottery office.
 (listening)
 I have the claim forms. If you give
 me your address, I would be happy
 to drive them over.
 (listening)
 No, it's not a problem.

Gabriel writes an address on his notepad as he listens.

INT/EXT. GABRIEL'S CAR/CITY STREET - NIGHT (TRAVELLING)

Gabriel stops at an intersection - wipes some sweat from his brow. Looks at his cell phone on the passenger seat.

VOICE FROM HIS PHONE

In a quarter mile, make a right
turn ahead.

Gabriel looks to his right as he waits for the light to change. He spots a run down, beat to shit, liquor store. The front window is peppered with advertising decals - all more than a decade old.

A large sign reads: "BROOKLYN LIQUOR."

GABRIEL

Well, I'll be damned.

Gabriel's eyes narrow - a thought is growing.

A HONK from the car behind Gabriel startles him. He looks up and sees that the light has changed to green.

Gabriel raises his hand up in an apologetic gesture and then makes a right turn, pulling up to the curb next to the store.

INT. BROOKLYN LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Crammed with more products than it was designed to hold.

Gabriel brings a bottle of soda to the counter manned by the KOREAN OWNER (50), bald patches on his head poorly concealed by a bad comb over.

KOREAN OWNER

Two fifty.

Gabriel reaches into his pocket.

GABRIEL

Give me a ticket for next weeks
Super Lotto. Random.

The Korean Owner hits a button on a Super Lotto machine on the counter and slides it towards Gabriel.

KOREAN OWNER

Three fifty.

Gabriel puts four dollars on the Counter - looks around the ceiling of the store.

GABRIEL

Where's the security camera? I want to make sure they get a nice smiling picture of me just in case this one wins.

KOREAN OWNER

Camera broken.

GABRIEL

How long?

KOREAN OWNER

Long time.

A look of suspicion comes over the Korean Owner's face as he lowers his hand underneath the counter.

KOREAN OWNER

Why - you rob me?

GABRIEL

Oh, God no. Sorry - sorry.
(as he walks off)
Keep the change.

INT/EXT. GABRIEL'S CAR/RESIDENTIAL ST. - NIGHT (TRAVELLING)

Gabriel drives slowly - his head on a swivel as he eyes both sides of the street.

VOICE FROM HIS PHONE

You have arrived at your destination - on the right.

As he reaches the PALE BLUE HOME, Gabriel stops and stares for a moment and then drives around the corner. He stops in a darkened section of the street.

Gabriel drums his fingers on the base of the steering wheel - contemplates. He picks up his cell phone - taps a contact.

GABRIEL

(into phone)
Hey, it's me.
(listening)
Yeah, I'm going to be a little late tonight. Didn't want you to worry.
(listening)
Joey's just a little late - car problems. He asked me to cover for him. Won't be too long.
(listening)
Love you too.

Gabriel pockets the phone, leans over, opens the glove compartment and grabs a small clear bag of white powder.

Gabriel taps out some powder on the top of his left hand and snorts it with force.

EXT. PALE BLUE HOME - NIGHT

It's eerily quiet. No one on the street.

Gabriel, wearing a black hoodie sweatshirt and carrying his leather satchel, opens the gate on the wrought iron fence. It CLINKS loudly as he closes it behind him. He scans around - no one's watching. Two steps up and he's at the:

FRONT DOOR

Gabriel hears the MUFFLED VOICES from a television, inside.

He removes the hoodie from his head and RAPS the door firmly.

Gabriel waits a moment and RAPS again.

 ESPERANZA (O.S.)
Who is it?

 GABRIEL
Gabriel, from the Lottery.

The CLICK of a deadbolt unlocking. A moment passes and then another CLICK.

The door creeps open. Esperanza smiles warmly.

 ESPERANZA
Kind of you to come.

 GABRIEL
You speak English?

INT. PALE BLUE HOME/MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Esperanza turns and waves Gabriel inside as she shuffles towards her recliner. On her way. She points over at a television. THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE game show is on.

 ESPERANZA
I do my best. TV helps.

Esperanza falls back into her recliner, picks up a remote from a table next to her and mutes the TV. Gabriel takes a seat on the end of a sofa next to the recliner.

ESPERANZA

Gabriel - the messenger from God.
You're Catholic?

GABRIEL

Yes.

Gabriel removes a clipboard from his satchel.

GABRIEL

Can I see the ticket? I need to
verify before I fill out the claim
form.

Esperanza reaches into the deep pocket of her paisley night
shirt and pulls out an ORANGE CALIFORNIA SUPER LOTTO TICKET.

She hands it to Gabriel. His hand trembles a bit as he stares
at the numbers.

GABRIEL

Okay - good.

Gabriel removes a pen from the satchel.

GABRIEL

So, you said that you had no
family.

ESPERANZA

Only a grandson - Pablo.

She points at the wall filled with pictures. Gabriel's eyes
scan the wall.

ESPERANZA

Just under Jesus.

Gabriel's eyes are drawn to a framed photo of PABLO CORONADO
(22), dressed in an Army Ranger uniform with an American Flag
in the background. His name is inscribed on a gold plate at
the bottom of the photo.

GABRIEL

Ah. Where is he?

ESPERANZA

Iraq. He can't tell me any more
than that.

Esperanza removes a black beaded ROSARY from her pocket.

ESPERANZA

I pray for his safety every night.

GABRIEL

And, have you told him about the ticket?

ESPERANZA

No. He's a Ranger. He's not allowed to say - um - what is it? Details. No details. He calls when he can. He's a very brave boy. You know --

GABRIEL

What about friends - anyone?

Esperanza gives Gabriel a quizzical look - not quite following.

GABRIEL

Have you told anyone about your ticket?

ESPERANZA

No. Just you. Should I have?

GABRIEL

No, not all. It's best to verify first.

Gabriel writes some notes on a form on his clipboard.

GABRIEL

You said on the phone that you bought your ticket from Brooklyn Liquor.

ESPERANZA

Yes.

GABRIEL

(writing)
Must be your lucky store.

ESPERANZA

Pardon?

GABRIEL

For your lottery tickets. I just assumed you buy them there all the time.

ESPERANZA

Oh - no. This was the very first time.

ESPERANZA (CONT'D)

Normally, I buy them before Mass
at a store by Saint Mary's Church.
That way I can pray for
forgiveness.

GABRIEL

Forgiveness?

ESPERANZA

For gambling.

(In Spanish - subtitled)

He that hastens to be rich has an
evil eye, and considers not that
poverty shall come upon him -
Proverbs 28:22.

(in English)

You read your bible - no?

GABRIEL

Of course.

(clears his throat)

Do you mind if I get myself some
water?

Esperanza starts to get up. Gabriel places his hand on hers.

GABRIEL

Please, don't get up. I can get it.

Gabriel heads back towards the kitchen area. Esperanza turns
her attention to the WHEEL OF FORTUNE.

Gabriel reaches the sink and turns on the faucet.

ESPERANZA

(staring at the TV)

Glasses are in the cupboard.

Gabriel removes a thin leather belt from his waistband. He
paces - nervous, unsure.

ESPERANZA

You find them?

Gabriel approaches Esperanza's chair from the rear and loops
the belt around her neck and pulls it back tight.

Esperanza's eyes widen in panic and her rosary flails about
as she brings her hands to the belt.

The veins on Gabriel's forearms bulge as he pulls tighter.

THE WHEEL spins on the TV.

GABRIEL

I'm sorry.

Esperanza GASPS - mouth wide open. Her eyes are in full panic as she kicks her feet - arches her back. Her face reddens.

Gabriel turns his eyes away as he GRUNTS and pulls tighter.

Esperanza's eyes widen as she fights for air. Then, in an instant, they go calm - resignation. One last glance towards the pictures of Pablo and Jesus on the wall. It's over.

Esperanza's limp arms fall to her side. The rosary drops to the floor. Her eyelids flutter and then close.

Gabriel's chest heaves up and down as the adrenaline ebbs from his body. He lets go of the belt and Esperanza's body collapses back into the chair.

Gabriel runs his hands through his hair then paces back and forth like a nervous cat.

GABRIEL

Get a fucking hold!

Gabriel goes to the sofa and puts the clipboard, belt and Esperanza's LOTTERY TICKET in his leather satchel. As he does - he notices his bare hand.

GABRIEL

Idiot!

Gabriel hustles to the kitchen - grabs a washcloth and soaks it in water. He wipes the sink faucet that he touched - scrubs the counter just in case.

As Gabriel walks back towards the living room area he hears the sound of NARCOCORRIDO MUSIC (Mexican Gang Hip Hop) emanating from outside the house.

Gabriel creeps towards the front door. He flips the living room light switch to OFF and peers through the dusty slats of a window blind out towards the street.

A black, glistening, totally remodeled, 1967 CHEVY IMPALA idles in the street. The tinted windows make it impossible to see who's inside.

Gabriel removes his cell phone from his pocket and, through the slats, zooms in on the back license plate of the Impala.

INT. 1967 CHEVY IMPALA - NIGHT

Three gang members (all twenty-something) are inside. They're all dressed in dark clothes. Tattoos cover their forearms and the exposed areas of their necks.

Two, HECTOR and MIGUEL, sit quietly in the back seat.

The driver is VICTOR VALENZUELA (goes by "DOUBLE V"). He holds one hand on the wheel as he waits.

The speakers pulsate with the sounds of Narcocorrido Hip Hop.

FROM THE CAR SPEAKERS

(music/lyrics)

"...Look me in the eye - try to
talk shit - Step up, or shut up -
bitch you're going to get hit. If
you do - you'll wake up like the
rest. Killed mother-fucker - now
tell me who's next...."

INT. PALE BLUE HOME/MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Gabriel presses the camera button and a FLASH occurs. The instant it does, Gabriel drops to the floor - panicked.

INT/EXT. 1967 CHEVY IMPALA - NIGHT

LITTLE STEVIE (20) - looks like the others but shorter, approaches the back side of the Impala. Just as he opens the door, he spots the flash from Gabriel's camera. Just a flick of light in the darkened window of the house.

Little Stevie enters the car. Double V turns off the music.

DOUBLE V

You get the cash?

LITTLE STEVIE

Got it.

Little Stevie points towards the pale blue home.

LITTLE STEVIE

I saw something in the window. Like
a flash or something.

Double V looks towards the house. Considers it a moment.

DOUBLE V

Ain't no one there to worry bout.

Double V puts the car in gear - drives away.

INT. PALE BLUE HOME/MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Gabriel, on the floor, with his back pressed up against the wall, stares at Esperanza's lifeless body.

He pulls up the picture he took on his phone. The LICENSE PLATE NUMBER is clearly visible.

Gabriel stands up and stuffs the phone back in his pocket then returns to Esperanza's body.

He stares at the corpse, takes a deep breath and then bends over and removes a JACK KNIFE from a strap connected to his ankle.

Gabriel flicks the jack knife open presses the point of the blade on the left side of Esperanza's forehead.

With the washcloth covering his left hand, Gabriel holds Esperanza's chin as he carves the letter "V" in her forehead.

Gabriel stops for a moment - dry heaves. He's not cut out for this.

He regains his composure - carves the letter "N".

He carves the letter "E."

Blood from the carved letters trickle down Esperanza's eyes, her cheek bone - drips on her night shirt.

Gabriel closes the knife and returns it to his ankle strap.

He picks up his leather satchel and returns to the window - peers at the street through the slot in the blinds. The coast is clear.

With the rag in his hand, Gabriel opens the front door - cleans both the back and front knobs. He flips his hoodie over his head and heads back to the street.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Gabriel, leather satchel in hand, walks down the cracked sidewalk within a large apartment complex. The building is bland and boring. It screams affordable living.

INT. GABRIEL'S APARTMENT/ENTRY AREA - NIGHT

Gabriel enters and quietly closes the door behind him.

Other than a dimly lit light in the kitchen area, the apartment is dark.

Gabriel opens a small closet door and stuffs the leather satchel in the back on a top shelf - out of sight.

He tip toes towards the back of the apartment and walks through the open doorway of a:

SMALL BEDROOM

A night light casts a shadow on a crib in the middle of the room. White, paper angels hanging from a mobile dance lightly in the circulated air above the crib.

Gabriel tip-toes towards the crib. His eyes fall on a sleeping eighteen-month old baby, all cozy in a pale blue cover all. This is ANDREW - Gabriel's pride and joy.

Baby Andrew stirs. Gabriel presses his finger to his lips as if to say "sssh." Andrew yawns and returns to slumber.

Gabriel exits and enters the:

ADJACENT BEDROOM

Sparsely furnished. The light from the adjoining bathroom casts a glow over a queen-sized bed. SARAH (21), pretty and petite, sleeps with a baby monitor in her hand.

Gabriel undresses, tossing his clothes on a chair, then slips in bed beside Sarah being careful not to wake her. It doesn't work. Sarah rolls over and wraps her arm around Gabriel's torso.

SARAH
(sleepy voice)
You're later than I thought.

GABRIEL
Joey never showed up.

Gabriel lovingly pats her arm.

GABRIEL
Go back to sleep.

INT. RESIDENTIAL HOME/BEDROOM - MORNING

Typical suburban bedroom.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ (42), fit and trim, stands in front of an oval mirror. She's common in appearance - doesn't bother with much makeup or jewelry.

Anna fluffs back her short dark hair and takes a look at the result. What the fuck - good enough.

She picks up a LAPD DETECTIVE BADGE from the night stand, clips it to her belt. Then grabs a REVOLVER from the same table - nestles it in a holster hidden under her sweater.

As she walks towards the bedroom door, Anna's attention is drawn to a portrait of her twenty years earlier in a LAPD uniform. Standing next to her with a beaming smile is Police Captain FRANK RAMIREZ, fifty-five at the time.

She picks the picture up - stares at it a moment.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Christ, twenty years.

Anna places the picture back down and enters the:

LIVING ROOM

And sees Frank Ramirez, now seventy-five, sitting in a recliner intently watching TV with a pencil and small notepad in his hand.

Frank wears a tattered bathrobe and his thick, uncombed, gray hair shoots out in random directions. The oxygen tubes inserted in his nose connect to a green tank at his side.

Anna gives Frank a kiss on the top of the head.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Morning, Dad. Coffee?

FRANK RAMIREZ
(points at TV)
Ssssh. It's coming on.

Anna rolls her eyes and heads towards the kitchen.

INSERT TELEVISION SCREEN

A far too giddy MALE REPORTER (30) with a face you just want to punch stands in front of Blue Screen. To his right, a large CALIFORNIA LOTTERY ICON. Underneath that:

2-7-8-11-19-38

MALE REPORTER
Three lucky winners of the Super Lotto last night. Two have already come forward to claim their share of the one hundred million dollar prize. One still remains a mystery but we know the winning ticket was bought at Brooklyn Liquor in the Boyle Heights area of Los Angeles.

BACK TO SCENE

Frank scribbles the lottery numbers down on his notepad. He points the remote at the TV - mutes it.

FRANK RAMIREZ
(calling out)
Hey, they ever get you a new partner?

KITCHEN

Anna, at the kitchen counter, stirs cream in a cup of coffee.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
No. But they're transferring over someone temporarily. From downtown.

FRANK RAMIREZ (O.C.)
Who?

Anna stops stirring - hesitates.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Huck Whitehurst.

FRANK RAMIREZ (O.C.)
(not pleased)
Huck Whitehurst? Why'd the fuck they pick him?

Anna blows air between pursed lips - how did this conversation get started?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
They didn't. He volunteered.

FRANK RAMIREZ
And why would he do that?

Anna rinses the spoon in the sink, picks up the cup of coffee and enters the:

LIVING ROOM

Where she spots her Dad thumbing through a stack of LOTTERY TICKETS, checking them against the numbers on the notepad.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
I didn't ask. Maybe he just misses working with me.

Anna places the coffee on a table next to Frank.

FRANK RAMIREZ
(still looking at tickets)
That's not what he misses.

Anna gives Frank a rap on the back of his head.

FRANK RAMIREZ
What?

Anna gives Frank a kiss on the cheek then scoops up her car keys from a small table on her way to the front door.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
I don't know why you bother buying those.

Frank looks up from his tickets - wears a serious face.

FRANK RAMIREZ
For your inheritance of course.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
I rather have the money you waste on them. I gotta go.

Anna heads towards the door handle.

FRANK RAMIREZ
Hey!

Frank lifts his oxygen tank with his left hand. Anna turns around.

FRANK RAMIREZ
No smoking today.

Anna nods - exits.

INT. GABRIEL'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Gabriel stands at the open coat closet looking into the open leather satchel - making sure the lottery ticket is there.

Sarah, holding Andrew, enters.

SARAH
Looking for your jacket?

GABRIEL
(startled)
Um - no. I mean, yeah. I think I left in the car.

Gabriel closes the satchel puts it back in the top of the closet then closes the door.

SARAH

You okay?

GABRIEL

Yeah - fine. You just startled me is all.

(checks his watch)

I gotta go.

Sarah walks over. Gabriel gives her a peck on the cheek. He tousles Andrew's hair and kisses him on the head.

SARAH

Don't forget we have dinner at my Dad's tonight.

GABRIEL

Ah, fuck. Really? We can't just --

SARAH

You promised.

GABRIEL

Alright.

(as he leaves)

But I'm not putting up with any of his shit.

EXT. PALE BLUE HOME - DAY

Although only mid-afternoon, a darkening, overcast sky threatens rain and makes it look later.

A POSTWOMAN (30), Hispanic, with a mail carrier bag over her shoulder approaches the front door.

She KNOCKS hard three times and waits.

POSTWOMAN

Esperanza.

There's no answer. She knocks again.

POSTWOMAN

(louder)

Esperanza, I have your mail.

No answer. More KNOCKS.

After a moment, the POSTWOMAN lifts the gold metal flap of the mail slot in the front door. As she starts to insert the mail, an odd odor catches her attention.

The Postwoman kneels down and peers through the slot. She jerks her head back from the smell. She looks in again. All she can make out is Esperanza's feet - motionless.

The Postwoman tests the door handle - no resistance. It's unlocked. She presses down fully and opens the front door.

The Postwoman drops her mail bag and brings her hands to her face. Stands in the doorway - frozen by the sight.

POSTWOMAN

Oh, My God.

INT. SANTA FE SPRINGS LOTTERY CALL CENTER - DAY

Gabriel at his cubicle - headset on. The red call light on his console is lit.

GABRIEL

You're welcome. Glad I could be of assistance.

Gabriel hits the end call button and watches the CALL RECORDING light go dark. A look of worry consumes his eyes.

Gabriel removes his headset and walks over three cubicles. JOLINE (30), dresses too young for her age, applies nail polish as she leans back in her chair.

Gabriel taps on the outside wall of her cubicle. Joline swivels around in her chair.

JOLINE

Gabe the babe.

GABRIEL

Can I ask you something personal?

JOLINE

Why not - shoot.

GABRIEL

You said you were reprimanded last month because you were rude to someone who called in.

JOLINE

Yeah - so?

GABRIEL

Did they listen to the recording?

JOLINE

Why do you care?

GABRIEL

I just - um, just got off the phone with someone that I think I pissed off. You know these people. I'm a little worried about the recording.

JOLINE

You should be. It nailed me.

GABRIEL

You wouldn't happen to know how long they keep them, would you?

JOLINE

I would. Ninety days.

GABRIEL

Damn.

JOLINE

Yep. Looks like you got to sweat another eighty-nine.

EXT. PALE BLUE HOME - DUSK

A black and white LAPD cruiser, two dark sedans and a white Coroner's Van are parked on the curb in front of the house.

A male CORONER ASSISTANT smokes a cigarette as he leans against the van.

Crime scene tape is wrapped around the perimeter of the wrought iron fence. The front door is open.

INT. PALE BLUE HOME/MAIN ROOM - DUSK

Esperanza's corpse sits rigid in the recliner in the Living Room area. The "V-N-E" carved in her forehead now more distinct from the dried blood.

The rosary that fell to the floor is now encased in an evidence bag on a table next to Esperanza.

A gurney, ready for use, is off to the side.

A MEDICAL EXAMINER gently scrapes underneath Esperanza's fingernails.

A male, Caucasian, CRIME PHOTOGRAPHER (60) mills about the home snapping photos. His shots are random and disinterested, as if nothing or everything could be a clue and it ain't his job to figure out which is which.

LAPD POLICEMAN DREW SAUNDERS (35) in full uniform, wears latex gloves as he examines the contents of a kitchen drawer.

Anna, wearing latex gloves, stands in the center of the living room. She scans the room for clues, laser focused - as if each blink of her eyes were taking a mental picture.

POLICEMAN SAUNDERS
(from Kitchen area)
I don't see anything out of place.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Bring one over.

Saunders brings one of the carving KNIVES from the kitchen drawer over to Anna. She examines it for a moment then directs her attention to the scars on Esperanza's forehead.

Anna hands the knife to the Medical Examiner.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
What do you think?

The Medical Examiner puts the blade of the knife up to one of the carved letters being careful not to touch Esperanza's forehead.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
I doubt it.

The Coroner hands the knife back. Anna gives it to Saunders.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Bag them all anyway.

Saunders goes back to the kitchen. The Medical Examiner points at the V-N-E initials carved on Esperanza's forehead.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
You know what it means?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Varrío Nuevo Estrada.

The Medical Examiner gives her a quizzical look.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
It's a Boyle Heights gang sign.

The Medical Examiner nods.

CORONER
Should have guessed.

BACK BEDROOM

A large man wearing latex gloves opens the drawers of a nightstand and gently sorts through the contents. He is DETECTIVE HUCK WHITEHURST (55), crew cut hair - looks like he's built from bricks. A thick, strong old bastard.

Finding nothing of interest, Huck moves to the nightstand on the other side of the bed and continues the search.

MAIN ROOM

Saunders returns from the kitchen.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
When will the print people be here?

POLICEMAN SAUNDERS
Not till tomorrow.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Are you kidding me?

POLICEMAN SAUNDERS
They're down two staff and had a backlog before that.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Christ.

Anna walks over to the window. Saunders follows. Anna removes a pen from her pocket and gently separates the slats of the blinds revealing a circular clean spot amongst the dark dust on the slat from where Gabriel's fingers rested earlier. Anna points at it.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(to Saunders)
When they do get here, make sure that they try to pull a print from there.

Anna stares at the front door. One older dead bolt lock just above a shiny, brass new one - obviously, recently installed.

Anna inspects the edges of the door - no damage.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(to the Photographer)
Get shots of the locks and the door.

The Photographer doesn't respond - busy taking random shots.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Hey!

Anna points at the door. This garners a "what a bitch" look from the Photographer before he begrudgingly walks over.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

I want pictures of the locks - front and back. And the door - all sides.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Yeah, that will break the case wide open.

Huck enters from the bedroom holding an old, worn address book in his hand. He gives the Photographer a slap on the back of his head as he approaches.

HUCK

Don't be a dick. Just take the fucking pictures.

The Photographer begrudgingly goes to the front door and starts snapping. Anna points at the door.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

(to Huck)

Both locks were open. Any sign of forced entry from the bedroom?

HUCK

They're barred. No one got in through there.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

You find anything?

HUCK

Nothing out of the ordinary. But this might help with next of kin notification.

Huck hands Anna the address book. Anna takes it - gives it a quick thumb through.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

The first page has been ripped out.

HUCK

Scratch paper probably. But all of her contacts are there.

Anna walks over to the wall filled with family picture frames. She slowly takes them all in. There are:

-- Several black and white PHOTOS of a much younger ESPERANZA with a HISPANIC MALE CHILD.

-- An old WEDDING DAY photo of that same HISPANIC MALE, now in his twenties, with a HISPANIC female, both with beaming smiles.

-- A photo of a BABY with the Hispanic Couple.

-- Several photos of a TODDLER - the baby growing up.

- The military photo of Pablo that Esperanza so proudly pointed out to Gabriel earlier.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(staring at the photos)
I don't think it's going to be all
that easy to find the next of kin.

HUCK
Why's that?

Anna points at the older photos.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Looks like she had one son. But the
pictures of him stop altogether
when...

(taps a photo of toddler)
This one here was about two - maybe
three years old. Nothing on her own
son after that. So, he's probably
gone or dead. One or the other. I'm
assuming that the kid is her
grandson. And...

(taps on military photo)
Looks like he's in the Military
now.

(reading the nameplate)
Corporal Pablo Coronado.
(turning to Huck)
You know the uniform?

HUCK
Army Ranger.
(beat)
You know, she just might have
stopped putting pictures up.

Anna shrugs this off.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 We don't do that. The newer
 pictures just get inserted over the
 older ones in the frame.

Huck gives her a "what the fuck" look.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 It's what we do.
 (calling back)
 Saunders.

Policeman Saunders approaches from the kitchen area. Anna
 points at the picture of Pablo Coronado.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 I need you to get me a contact
 number for this one.

Saunders nods.

Anna turns towards the photographer and points back towards
 the photo wall.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 I want a picture of each of these.

PHOTOGRAPHER
 Oh for Christ sakes, just take them
 into evidence.

That evokes a threatening scowl from Huck.

PHOTOGRAPHER
 Fine - fine.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 (to the Medical Examiner)
 How much longer do you need?

MEDICAL EXAMINER
 Fifteen, maybe twenty. But you can
 send the boy in. I'll need him soon
 enough.

Anna nods - shoots a nasty glance at the photographer and
 walks out the front door. Huck follows.

EXT. PALE BLUE HOME - NIGHT

The sun has set and the clouds have cleared. A forming bright
 moon creates a soft light - strong enough to cast shadows.

Anna and Huck exit through the wrought iron gate, pulling the crime scene tape over their heads.

She walks up to the Coroner Assistant, now on his third cigarette. She gives him a - "give me one" - motion.

The Coroner Assistant reaches in his pocket and tosses Anna a pack of cigarettes.

CORONER ASSISTANT
Matches are inside the box.

Anna removes a book of matches and a cigarette from the pack and lights it. One deep inhale and exhale creates a plume of smoke in the air. She tosses the pack back.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Thanks.
(nods towards the house)
He says he's ready for you now.

The Coroner Assistant butts his smoke and walks off.

HUCK
Those things will kill you.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Not exactly a news flash.

Anna gives Huck a wink. The type of wink that tells you these two have some history.

Anna offers Huck a drag - he takes it.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
So, how long I got you for?

HUCK
Thirty days. Then back to downtown.
Sure they'll get you a full-time partner by then.

Huck returns the smoke to Anna. She inhales.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
You miss it here at all?

HUCK
No.
(beat)
It's an odd place.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Meaning?

HUCK

Where the fuck are the neighbors? I mean you got a Patrol car, a Coroner's van, crime scene tape and no one's come out to see what's going on? Not even some fucking lookie loos?

Anna takes a long look up and down the street.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

It's Boyle Heights. No one comes out too look. They don't want the complications...

Anna takes one last drag - butts cigarette on the sidewalk.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

...Or the consequences.

Anna surveys the neighborhood.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Let's start with the next door neighbor and work outwards.

Anna starts towards the neighbor's house. Huck follows.

INT. EAST L.A./RESIDENTIAL HOME/DINING AREA - NIGHT

An austere but neatly maintained home.

At one end of a modest oak dining table, Sarah hums a nursery rhyme as she spoon feeds Andrew, sitting in a high chair.

FERNANDO

(irritated - to Sarah)
How much longer will he be?

SARAH

Papa, relax. Why don't you get the coffee. I'm sure he'll be right out.

Fernando sneers as he stands up from his chair.

BATHROOM

Gabriel inspects his face in the mirror. Spots a small white dot of coke residue on his nose. Dabs it with his finger and licks it clean.

He leans over and flushes the toilet. After waiting a few moments he exits and enters the:

DINING AREA

And takes a seat next to Sarah. A coffee pot, cream, sugar and cups are on the table.

Gabriel's hand jitters as he attempts to pour a tablespoon of sugar in his cup. This does not go unnoticed by an already tense Fernando.

FERNANDO
Everything all right?

GABRIEL
(as he takes a sip)
Yeah - sure.

FERNANDO
Good. I was hoping we could talk.

SARAH
(as a warning)
Papa.

Gabriel places his hand on Sarah's arm - he's got this.

GABRIEL
Go ahead. As long as it's not about coming to work for you again.

FERNANDO
It is.

SARAH
Papa, you promised.

Fernando stands - places his palms on the table.

FERNANDO
It's time to grow up! Someone needs to keep an eye on him. I could do that in the store.

Tears start to well in Sarah's eyes - anger in Gabriel's.

FERNANDO
Look, it's just that I'm concerned for...
(pointing at baby)
Andrew.

GABRIEL
Fuck you, Fernando.

An ugly silence.

FERNANDO
 What were you doing in the
 bathroom? Cocaine again?

SARAH
 Papa. He quit. I told you.

FERNANDO
 Did he?

GABRIEL
 I'm going to the car. Kiss your
 father goodbye.

Gabriel starts to leave - stops just short and turns back
 towards Fernando.

GABRIEL
 In three months I will buy and own
 your smug ass.

Gabriel exits.

Fernando steams.

Sarah weeps.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET/NEIGHBORS OF PALE BLUE HOME - NIGHT

Anna and Huck stand at the half-open doorway of a small Adobe
 style house.

A nervous HISPANIC FEMALE (30) guards the entrance to her
 home. A small FEMALE CHILD hides behind her mother's skirt -
 only her little curious face showing.

Anna takes notes on a small pad as she talks to the Hispanic
 Female. Huck stands to the side.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 (in Spanish - subtitled)
 So you didn't see or hear anything?

HISPANIC FEMALE
 Nada.

The Hispanic Female starts to shut the door.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 (in Spanish - subtitled)
 Nothing at all?

The Hispanic Female shakes her head.

HUCK
Christ almighty.

Anna extends a business card towards the Hispanic Female.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(in Spanish - subtitled)
Here's my card. If you happen to
remember anything --

HISPANIC FEMALE
No! No!

The Hispanic Female slams the door.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Damn it.

HUCK
I think she wanted the entire
neighborhood to hear that.

Just as Anna and Huck turn around, they catch the last
glimpse of a light turning off in a dilapidated house across
the street.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
I think that one ought to be next.

Anna heads towards the street. Huck follows:

HUCK
We're wasting our time.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Think of it as an opportunity for
you to brush up on your Spanish.

HUCK
(in Spanish - subtitled)
Your ass is still firm for a woman
of your age.

This elicits a smile from Anna as she crosses the street,
Huck's right behind her.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
I see that your Rosetta Stone is
paying dividends.

EXT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE/FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Totally dark. Not a light on.

Anna KNOCKS on the door. Waits and KNOCKS again.

Frustrated, Huck moves to the front and slams the door with his fist.

HUCK
LAPD! We know you're fucking in there. We saw the light, ass hole.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
So nuanced.

A light comes on. Huck gives Anna a "who's a dummy now" look.

The CLACK of a lock and the door creeps open revealing GUS SANDOVAL (30), a twitchy, drugged out, little prick.

GUS
I didn't see nothing.

HUCK
Didn't ask you anything yet.

Huck makes his way in. Anna follows.

INT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As Huck and Anna enter.

GUS
Hey, you can't do that.

HUCK
Sorry, saw the bag on the table.

Huck points towards a SMALL TABLE. On top of it, a small plastic bag containing white powder, a spoon and a syringe.

HUCK
You already hit it?

Gus stays silent - trembles. Huck pulls up a chair next the table. Anna scans the house with her eyes - searching.

HUCK
Or is it just time to hit it again?

Huck picks up the bag and closes his fist around it - tight. Gus looks as if Huck had his arm around his only son's neck.

GUS
Hey, um - look. You got no right.

HUCK
So what didn't you see?

GUS
I already told you - nothing.

Gus rubs his hands up and down his forearm. He's itching for a hit.

HUCK
The guy that sold you that bag
already told us that you got the
money by robbing that poor woman
across the street.

GUS
Who, Little Stevie?

Huck looks towards Anna. She nods - they know the guy.

GUS
He's fucking lying. I paid that
mother fucker with my own money.

Huck unfolds his fist and opens the top of the plastic bag and tilts it as if he's going to pour the contents on the floor. This panic's Gus more than his current predicament.

GUS
Don't --

HUCK
So how and when did you pay him?

Gus shakes his head.

HUCK
(to Anna)
You got cuffs?

GUS
He drove here.

HUCK
(tilting the bag more)
You want me to believe that Little
Stevie saw all those cop cars
outside and thought - hey, what the
fuck, looks like a good time for a
drug deal.

Gus puts his hands up in a begging motion.

GUS
 (panicked)
 No - no, man. It was last night.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 What time last night?

GUS
 Fuck, I don't know. Maybe seven-
 thirty.

Anna makes an entry on her notepad - gives Huck a glance.

Huck stands up, drops the plastic bag on the table.

HUCK
 (to Gus)
 You owe me.

EXT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE - NIGHT

Anna and Huck walk towards their cars.

HUCK
 So, you want to try to round up
 Little Stevie?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 No, not yet. I think we need to
 brief the Captain first.

HUCK
 Get a drink? Maybe a little
 something, something.

Anna checks her watch as she opens her car door.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 I'm going to pass. Rain check -
 okay?

HUCK
 Always okay. You know that.
 (off Anna's look)
 What's wrong?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 How am I going to tell a soldier
 eight thousand miles away that his
 grandmother got strangled?

HUCK
 I'll do it.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 No. It's part of the job. But
 thanks.

Huck nods. Anna gets in her car.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF MOSUL/IRAQ - DUSK

A sand colored ABRAMS TANK is concealed behind a gravel fortified sand dune. Uniformed Iraqi soldiers stand in silence on either side as they stare off in the distance at the city of Mosul.

There is a HUMVEE and a SMALL TENT ten feet away. It's canvas ripples in the wind.

INT. SMALL TENT - DAY

Two men are inside, crouched in the center - the tent not high enough to allow them to stand.

One of them is MAJOR AL-BAYATI (45), uniform similar to the other soldiers other than he wears a maroon colored beret.

The other man is PABLO CORONADO (22), angular, athletic and dressed in an US Army Ranger uniform. He wears a headset over his Army Ranger Beret. In one hand he holds a ruggedized notebook computer.

PABLO
 (into headset)
 Ready to receive.

Pablo keys in the numbers to his computer as he listens.

PABLO
 (into headset)
 Roger that. Repeating to confirm.
 (looking at computer)
 I have - 36, dot, 341039, dot, 43
 dot, 115405.
 (listening)
 Roger. Over and out.

Pablo points his finger at a red dot on a computer generated map on his screen.

MAJOR AL-BAYATI
 That's Mosul University. But they
 haven't taught there in years.

Major Al-Bayati exits the tent. Pablo crawls out after him.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF MOSUL/IRAQ - DUSK

Major Al- Bayati speaks to one of the Soldiers in ARABIC.
Pablo stands next to him.

The soldier nods and heads towards the Abram Tank - enters.

A WHIRLING sound as the gun turret of the tank slowly turns.
The barrel starts to rise.

PABLO
(to Major Al-Bayati)
Are you sure?

MAJOR AL-BAYATI
Of course not.

A FLAME signals the launch of the tank's missile.

INT. GABRIEL'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Gabriel eats cereal at a dinette table staring at a flat
screen TV attached to the wall. In a high chair next to him
sits baby Andrew, smearing food all over his face.

INSERT: FULL TELEVISION SCREEN

A pleasant looking, thirty-something, FEMALE ANCHOR'S face
fills the screen.

FEMALE ANCHOR
A gruesome scene as police discover
the body of an elderly woman
strangled to death in her Boyle
Heights home.

An image of Esperanza's street appears in a small box in the
corner of the screen.

FEMALE ANCHOR
The area continues to be plagued by
gang related crime despite the
District Attorney's promise to
crack down on gang related
activity. Our own Sam Shapiro spoke
to the District Attorney's office
this morning.

Screen switches to an image of SAM SHAPIRO (55) with a
microphone in front of the face of a confident looking man.

He is District Attorney ANTHONY WILSON (40). He wears an expensive black suit, his dark brown hair is streaked with gray highlights and his teeth are so perfectly straight and white, one might wonder if they were fake.

SAM SHAPIRO

When will you release the name of the victim?

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON

(into microphone)

Hopefully, soon. I understand that there has been some difficulty in notifying the next of kin.

SAM SHAPIRO

Any evidence that the homicide was gang related and if so, would it serve as a setback for your office's efforts to --

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON

At this time there is no evidence that the murder is gang related as no witnesses have come forward. I am asking that anyone who might have information related to this crime to come forward or to call the D.A.'s Tip hot line at 818-664-2647, or 818-"NO GANGS "

BACK TO SCENE

Gabriel hastily writes the phone number on a piece of paper and stuffs it in his pocket.

He picks up the remote from the dinette table and clicks off the television. He looks at Andrew, still smearing food all over his face.

Gabriel takes Andrew's baby spoon, scoops up some food from Andrew's bowl and taps the spoon on Andrew's lips.

GABRIEL

Uno más por niño

Andrew gulps down the food.

Sarah comes in from the bedroom.

SARAH

You're going to be late.

Gabriel stands up and kisses Andrew on the top of his head. He then walks to Sarah - places his arms around her waist and pecks her on the cheek.

GABRIEL

I'm - um - sorry about last night.
It's just that your Dad --

SARAH

I know - I know.

Gabriel gives Sarah one more kiss, picks up his jacket from the chair and heads towards the door.

GABRIEL

One day, baby. Don't you worry. I
have plans for us.

EXT. HOLLENBECK STATION - DAY

A three story modern structure with a funky art deco front. Greenish-silver glass panes haphazardly arranged on the facade of the building glimmer in the sunlight.

It stands in stark contrast to the century old, run down business district that surrounds it.

Anna hustles up a set of red tinted concrete steps and enters the building through bullet proof glass doors.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/CAPTAIN GARZA'S OFFICE - DAY

A glass enclosed office room in the corner of the building.

Anna, holding a folder, and Huck sit side by side at the front end of an office desk.

A short man with muscular biceps dressed in full uniform stands at a credenza as he waits for an instant coffee maker to fill his LAPD insignia coffee cup.

He is CAPTAIN AURELIO GARZA (55). He has a gentle and kind face that stands in stark contrast to the tough job. The years have not worn on him.

CAPTAIN GARZA

Sure you don't want any?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

No, thank you.

HUCK

I'm good.

Captain Garza returns to his desk, takes a seat - faces Huck and Anna.

CAPTAIN GARZA
 (to Anna)
 You were saying.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 Some of it just doesn't fit.

HUCK
 Well, yet.

That garners and admonishing scowl from Anna.

HUCK
 Sorry.

Anna removes a photo of the door locks taken the night before and slides them over to Captain Garza.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 She was a cautious woman. Those locks are relatively new.
 (pointing at the picture)
 There's no damage to the door. No signs of forced entry. It had to be someone she knew. Someone she trusted.

CAPTAIN GARZA
 Prints?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 Two days - backlog.

Even Captain Garza is embarrassed by this.

CAPTAIN GARZA
 I'm working on getting more staff.
 (beat)
 Anything stolen?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 No.

HUCK
 It looks like a gang initiation incident to me. I mean, Christ, who carves gang signs on a person's forehead?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 When was the last time a grandmother was used as an initiation? It doesn't fit.

CAPTAIN GARZA
What about the neighbors?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
There's one guy across the street.
Said he bought drugs from Little
Stevie - same night as the murder.

CAPTAIN GARZA
Little Stevie?

HUCK
Basically, a five foot pile of
shit. Been a Varrio Nuevo Estrada
banger for most his life. He runs
with Victor Valenzuela.

CAPTAIN GARZA
Double V?

Anna and Huck both nod.

EXT. DOUBLE V'S HOME - DAY

A one story, paint worn structure that sits more than fifty feet from the curb atop a small barren hill.

The windows have security bars and security cameras are perched on both sides of the weather worn eaves.

A fortified chain link fence that surrounds the property houses two PIT BULLS chained to a metal stake sunk in the middle of the hill.

A 1967 black Chevy Impala is parked at the top of a gravel driveway that ascends up the hill on the side of the house.

A white pickup truck pulls up along the curb. Little Stevie exits carrying a duffel bag.

INT. DOUBLE V'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Not at all like the exterior of the home. It has fresh paint, rich hardwood flooring, expensive furniture and electronics -

An array of four SECURITY MONITORS are mounted on the wall next to a large flat screen television.

Double V holds a game controller in his hand as he sits shirtless in a recliner playing BATTLEFIELD . His torso is peppered with tattoos and scars. His head is freshly shaven.

On the monitor, Double V sees Little Stevie, Hector and Miguel approaching up the gravel driveway. He pauses the game, walks to the front door - unlocks it and opens it.

Little Stevie, Hector and Miguel enter. Little Stevie hands Double V the duffel bag.

DOUBLE V
How much?

LITTLE STEVIE
Twenty-two thousand.

Double V walks over to a large floor safe in the corner of the room. Bends over and starts turning the dial.

DOUBLE V
There's chela in the fridge. Grab some.

All three head off towards the kitchen.

LITTLE STEVIE
(on his way to kitchen)
Yo, you hear bout Esperanza Coronado?

Double V opens the safe door - removes the cash from the duffel bag and starts stacking it in a safe.

DOUBLE V
What's to know?

Little Stevie returns from the kitchen with two beers. Hands one to Double V as he closes the safe. They both take a seat.

Hector and Miguel stay in the kitchen area.

Little Stevie takes a large gulp.

LITTLE STEVIE
Some fuck killed her. They took her body away the other night.

Double V's face reddens. He slowly clenches his right fist and starts to rhythmically pound the end table - THUMP- THUMP - THUMP.

DOUBLE V
How do you know?

Little Stevie sees the anger in Double V's eyes - wants to tread lightly. One last THUMP.

DOUBLE V
How the fuck do you know!?

LITTLE STEVIE
(nervous)
Gus told me. They were at his place
the other night - asking questions.

DOUBLE V
Which ones did he answer?

LITTLE STEVIE
He's cool, man. He wouldn't say
nuthin.

Double V stares at Little Stevie - percolates.

LITTLE STEVIE
But you remember that flash I saw.
You know, from her house.

DOUBLE V
You said it was a light.

LITTLE STEVIE
Someone must have been in there.

DOUBLE V
Then fucking find him.

Little Stevie nods. Gulps back more beer.

DOUBLE V
Now!

Little Stevie jumps to his feet. Calls back to the kitchen.

LITTLE STEVIE
Let's go.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/DETECTIVE BULLPEN - MORNING

Several cubicle stations segmented by three-foot walls. Case files and paperwork everywhere.

POLICEMEN and STAFF mill about, drink coffee and chit chat.

Anna and Huck, both with coffees in their hand, talk at her desk. Policeman Saunders approaches. He has a piece of PAPER in one hand and a BROWN FOLDER folder in the other.

POLICEMAN SAUNDERS
Hey, Huck.

Huck gives a greeting nod. Saunders hands Anna the piece of paper - a computer printout that contains a photo of Pablo and some information underneath it.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(studying the printout)
All it says is he's in Iraq. No specifics.

HUCK
He's a Ranger. You ain't going to get details. It's generally classified.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(to Saunders)
And?

POLICEMAN SAUNDERS
A request was e-mailed from our headquarters to central command late yesterday. They have confirmed that they will send him home. Well, as soon as they can.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Meaning?

HUCK
He's still in the field.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Damn.
(to Saunders)
Okay, stay on it for me. What about the parents?

Saunders hands Anna the brown folder.

POLICEMAN SAUNDERS
Dead, like you thought. It's all there.

Anna checks her watch.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Damn! I told Yamamoto I'd meet him at ten.

Anna stands up, grabs her keys and her phone from the desktop. She points at the brown folder.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 (to Huck)
 Can you start on that?

HUCK
 I'm supposed to be over at --

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 (hustling away)
 Thanks.

INT. SANTA FE SPRINGS LOTTERY CALL CENTER - DAY

Gabriel, wearing his headset, sits at his cubicle.

GABRIEL
 (into headset)
 You're welcome. Glad I could help.

Gabriel removes the headset and hits the end call button on his console.

He stands up - walks by Joline's cubicle.

GABRIEL
 I'm going on break. Cover my calls?

Joline acknowledges the request with a wave of her hand.

INT. GABRIEL'S CAR - DAY

Gabriel sits in his car in the parking lot - checks his rearview mirror to make sure no one is watching.

He removes a piece of paper from his pocket. It has the number "818-664-2647" written on it.

Gabriel punches the number in a burner phone - puts the phone on speaker mode. As he hears the RING, Gabriel pulls up the photo of the license plate he snapped a picture of. He takes several deep breaths as he waits.

VOICE FROM PHONE
 District Attorney hotline.
 (a beat)
 Hello?

GABRIEL
 Um - uh, yes. I have some information to report on the old woman who was killed. The one in Boyle Heights.

VOICE FROM PHONE

Go ahead.

GABRIEL

It's a license plate number. 7-C-S-R-2-5-0. The car, an old black one, was on the street - outside the house the night of the murder.

VOICE FROM PHONE

How do you know that?

GABRIEL

I saw it. I saw someone come from the house and get back in the car.

VOICE FROM PHONE

When did this occur?

GABRIEL

Thursday night. Um, Seven thirty-two. He was carrying a knife.

VOICE FROM PHONE

Can you describe him?

A pause.

VOICE FROM PHONE

Hello?

Gabriel ends the call. He shakes a bit - feels panicked.

He bursts open the car door - vomits uncontrollably.

INT. CORONER'S AUTOPSY LAB - DAY

A brightly lit rectangular lab room. Esperanza's corpse lay on a lab table in the center of the room.

DOCTOR WALTER YAMAMOTO (50), Japanese, wearing a white lab coat vigorously washes his hands in a metal laboratory sink.

Anna RAPS on the door jam and walks in.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Doing dishes again?

Dr. Yamamoto turns. A broad smile crosses his face.

DOCTOR YAMAMOTO

Anna. You're late - as usual.

Anna walks over towards Yamamoto and gives him a peck on the cheek as he dries his hands.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Good to see you, Walter. It has
been awhile.
(concerned)
How is Aiko doing?

DOCTOR YAMAMOTO
Fine. Finished her last round of
chemo two weeks ago. Finally
starting to eat again. She'd love
to see you.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Yeah, um - sure. I'll visit. It's
just been real --

DOCTOR YAMAMOTO
But that's not why you're here.

Doctor Yamamoto walks towards Esperanza's corpse on the autopsy table. Anna follows.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Time of death?

DOCTOR YAMAMOTO
Somewhere between 7:00 and 8:00
p.m. I may be able to narrow that
down. I'm still waiting on lab
results.

Doctor Yamamoto points to a bluish-purple circle of contusion around Esperanza's neck.

DOCTOR YAMAMOTO
But there are some things that are
fairly obvious. Whoever did it used
some sort of strap. Perhaps a thin
belt. Regardless, it was at least a
half inch wide. That's uncommon.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
How so?

DOCTOR YAMAMOTO
Normally, in strangulation
homicides the ligature marks are
much narrower - a rope, a wire -
something like that. You know,
basically, marks from a device that
is intended for the purpose.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Meaning that it might not have been premeditated. More spur of the moment?

DOCTOR YAMAMOTO
Maybe. Or maybe it's just someone that prefers strangling his victims with belts.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
I hate medical examiners.

The Doctor rolls his eyes, then points at the contusions on Esperanza's neck.

DOCTOR YAMAMOTO
You can see that the contusion pattern becomes darker on the top half. It means that whatever was used to choke her was pulled upwards. Her larynx bone was also fractured. The break is upwards rather than straight across. Again, indicating an upward pull. And a violent one.

Doctor Yamamoto points to scratch marks on Esperanza's neck.

DOCTOR YAMAMOTO
I believe these were made by the victim - struggling to remove whatever it was that was choking her. There was some tissue found under her nails. We'll get the DNA results back soon. But I'm afraid we'll find it's hers.

Anna points at the scars from the initials carved in Esperanza's forehead.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
What can you tell me about those?

DOCTOR YAMAMOTO
Made from a five or six inch blade - thin. They weren't made from any of the knives brought in from the kitchen. Oh, and I think they were made postmortem.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
How can you tell?

DOCTOR YAMAMOTO

The blood trails on her face. Given how deep these cuts were I would have expected more volume. That the blood stream would have trickled down further. But if the heart's not pumping, there's no force behind it.

(beat)

I'm speculating somewhat. I can run some more tests if you think it's important.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Please. It's critical.

(beat)

If they were made before she died, this was vengeance. If they were made afterward, it might be someone sending a message.

Doctor Yamamoto nods. He gets it.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

I gotta go.

She gives the Doc another peck on the cheek and heads towards the door.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

(calling back)

Thanks for the preview. Tell Aiko I'll come by to see her - promise.

EXT. DESERT AIRFIELD/40 MILES SOUTH OF MOSUL - NIGHT

Off in the distance, A Humvee kicks up sand as it approaches a military airfield.

There are small clay colored buildings flying Iraqi flags peppering the perimeter. The sand colored air strips nearly blend into the desert.

The Humvee pulls up to one of the small buildings. Pablo exits and heads towards one of the buildings.

INT. U.S OPS BUILDING/MOSUL AIRPORT - DAY

Pablo enters and immediately salutes LIEUTENANT WASHBURN (55), bald as a cue ball, stocky. He has a kinder face than one would expect from a man submersed in worn torn Iraq.

A SOLDIER stands next to the desk. Lieutenant Washburn nods towards him. The soldier salutes and then exits.

The Lieutenant points to a chair.

LIEUTENANT WASHBURN
Corporal Coronado, please - sit.

Pablo complies. He notices an official looking letter in the center of the desk.

LIEUTENANT WASHBURN
I'm afraid there's been some bad news, Corporal.
(beat)
You're required at home.

Pablo's eyes narrow. There's only one person at home.

PABLO
Permission to remain with the mission, Sir.

The Lieutenant slides the letter towards Pablo.

LIEUTENANT WASHBURN
They need to talk to you, Corporal.
It's out of my hands. You leave tomorrow.

Lieutenant Washburn stands up. Pablo instinctively starts to rise. Washburn puts a gentle hand on his shoulder.

LIEUTENANT WASHBURN
Stay and read the letter. The office is yours.
(beat)
My condolences, son.

Lieutenant Washburn exits and closes the door behind him.

Pablo stares at the letter on the desk - motionless.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/DETECTIVE BULLPEN - DAY

Huck sits at a desk. The contents of the brown folder, PHOTOS, POLICE PRINTOUTS, and other items that Saunders provided earlier are sprawled on his desk.

Anna approaches - points at the paperwork on the desk.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
What did you find?

Huck hands her a picture of the wedding photo from Esperanza's house of the happy HISPANIC MALE and HISPANIC FEMALE on their wedding day.

HUCK

As you already knew, that's the happy couple on their wedding day.

Huck hands Anna a police crime scene photo of that same couple, riddled with bullets and splattered with blood, on the porch of the pale blue home.

The Hispanic Male's corpse is propped up against the front wall of the home. His dead, open eyes stare forward. The corpse of the Hispanic Female lays next to him - her lifeless head in his lap.

HULK

And that's them exactly three years later.

Anna's eyes bounce back and forth between the photos. She's bothered by the contrast of the victims best and worst day. It gets to her. She swallows hard.

HUCK

What? You've seen hundreds of these.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

You're such a fuck sometimes.

Anna wipes an involuntary tear from her eye.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

And?

HUCK

We can do this later.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Give me the God damn details!

Huck pauses for a moment - sizes up the situation. He stands up and picks up an empty coffee cup.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

(firmly)

The details.

HUCK

Drive by shooting, September 27th, 1997. Gang related.

(beat)

Unsolved. Naturally.

Anna grimaces - far too many of these are unsolved.

HUCK
 (as he stands)
 Saunders says the boy - the
 grandson - is on his way to
 Baghdad. He'll be on a plane here
 tomorrow.

Anna nods and then returns her attention to the photos.

Huck places a comforting hand on Anna's shoulder.

HUCK
 They're going to release
 Esperanza's name to the press this
 morning.
 (gentle squeeze on Anna's
 shoulder)
 Leave this alone for a bit.

Huck walks away. Anna's eyes stay focused on the folder.

EXT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING - DAY

District Attorney Wilson, nattily attired and carrying a leather briefcase starts to climb the marble stairs to the entrance of the courthouse.

At the top of those stairs - several REPORTERS and two handheld news cameras.

As he hits the top step, REPORTER ONE shoves a microphone in his face:

REPORTER ONE
 Any comments on the report in the
 L.A Times this morning?

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON
 Pardon?

REPORTER ONE
 On television yesterday morning you
 indicated that there was no
 evidence of the Boyle Heights
 murder was gang related.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON
 Yes and --

REPORTER ONE
 The Times is reporting that Mrs.
 Coronado's body was mutilated with
 gang symbols.

Wilson's eyes widen in surprise. Not a look he's used to or comfortable with.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON
I'll have an update later on. I -
um, really need to get to court.

Wilson attempts to make his way to the entrance. Microphones are stuck in his face and CAMERAS hum as he walks.

REPORTER ONE
Just looking for
verification.

REPORTER TWO
Can you confirm that it was
the Varrío Nuevo Estrada
gang?

REPORTER THREE
No comment at all?

INT. D.A. ANTHONY WILSON'S OFFICE - DAY

The decors's a little more opulent than one would expect for a civil servant.

Wilson, his face red with anger, has the palms of his hands firmly planted on top of the desk as he stands over it and reads the headline from the L.A. Times centered on the desk.

The headline reads: "BOYLE HEIGHTS MURDER VICTIM MUTILATED."

VOICE FROM INTERCOM (O.C.)
He's on line one.

Wilson presses a button on the intercom.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON
Captain Garza?

CAPTAIN GARZA
(through intercom)
Hello, Anthony. How can I help you?

Wilson inhales deeply and exhales in an attempt to gain composure.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON
Help me? Interesting.

Wilson interlocks his fingers, puts his hands behind his head - paces. Composure is going to be temporary.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON
 Perhaps, you could help me by
 notifying me ahead of time when you
 find a body with a FUCKING gang
 sign carved in its forehead!
 (beat)
 You know, so I don't make an ass
 out of myself in the media.

CAPTAIN GARZA
 (through intercom)
 We didn't release that information.
 It would have compromised the
 investigation.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON
 But someone fucking did!
 (beat)
 I will be there tomorrow. Have your
 DETECTIVES available.

Wilson angrily hits the end call button.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON
 Fuck!

INT. DOUBLE VV'S HOME - MORNING

Double V, with a lit cigarette dangling from his lips, stands at a counter in the kitchen area pouring RED BULL into a half filled cup of coffee.

Little Stevie at a dinette table smoking a cigarette. A copy of the L.A Times spread out on the table.

Hector and Miguel stand in the foyer between the living room area and the kitchen.

DOUBLE V
 Does it say it was us?

LITTLE STEVIE
 Not exactly. It says that...
 (reading paper)
 "Our source says a gang sign was
 carved into the victim's forehead.
 Boyle Heights is home to several
 gangs, including the Varrrio Nuevo
 Estrada.

Double V turns around - takes a deep drag. He then removes a box of green vinyl trash bags from a cabinet.

DOUBLE V

They might as well put my fucking name in it.

(to Hector and Miguel)

I want everything out of here. Everything. You understand?

Hector and Miguel nod. Double V tosses the trash bag box to Hector. Hector snaps it out of the air.

DOUBLE V

Start with the bedroom.

Hector and Miguel exit towards the bedroom.

DOUBLE V

(to Little Stevie)

You find out anything? Who did it?

LITTLE STEVIE

No. Nobody fucking knows anything.

DOUBLE V

Maybe I ought to say it was you.

LITTLE STEVIE

(nervous)

Don't fuck with me, brother.

DOUBLE V

I ain't your brother.

Double V turns his back to Little Stevie and pours more coffee.

DOUBLE V

Go keep an eye on Hector and Miguel. I don't want anything overlooked.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/DETECTIVE BULLPEN - LATER

Anna sits at a desk. Saunders approaches - hands her a piece of paper with the transcript from the anonymous call.

POLICEMAN SAUNDERS

Got a tip from the D.A Hotline. Some guy called in with the plate number of a car he saw outside the home the night of the murder.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

(as she takes transcript)

Did he leave a name?

POLICEMAN SAUNDERS
Do they ever?

Anna reads the transcript.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
That's a little precise.

POLICEMAN SAUNDERS
What?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Never mind. Did you run the plates?

Saunders hands Anna a printout.

POLICEMAN SAUNDERS
A 1967 Chevy Impala.
(beat)
Registered to Victor Valenzuela.

Anna takes this in.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
We're going to need back-up.

INT/EXT. UNDERCOVER BLACK POLICE SEDAN - DAY (TRAVELLING)

Huck drives down a Boyle Heights residential street. Anna, in the passenger seat, stares at the anonymous call transcript in her hand.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
It doesn't make sense. Seven thirty-two - really? So, this guy happens to see a car, just happens to write down the plate number and just happens to jot down the precise time. Not seven thirty-ish. Not somewhere between seven and eight. Seven thirty-two on the nose. I mean, who does that?

HUCK
Maybe he's just meticulous.

Anna gives Huck a look of dismissal.

HUCK
You got a better theory?

EXT. DOUBLE V'S HOME - DAY

The undercover sedan creeps up to the curb.

The front doors swing open and Anna and Huck exit, both instinctively checking their hidden holsters for their guns.

Anna spots the 1967 Chevy Impala parked on top of the gravel driveway. She looks at the transcript and then at the license plate on the rear of the car - they match.

A LAPD cruiser pulls up behind them. Two UNIFORMED OFFICERS exit. Anna catches their look. She waves her hand motioning them to go to the back of the house.

INT. DOUBLE V'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Double V sits shirtless in a chair staring at a security monitor. His eyes narrow as the monitor shows Anna and Huck walking up the gravel driveway on the side of the house.

Double V glances at another monitor - sees the two Uniformed Officer's approaching the back door.

EXT. DOUBLE V'S HOME - DAY

Huck and Anna reach the top of the hill. Huck places his hands on the metal gate.

In a flash, the pit bulls, BARKING and GROWLING, charge towards them.

Huck and Anna lean back just in time to avoid the snapping jaws of one pit bull as it strains to leaps over the top of the fence. The chain that holds the pit bull to the pole tightens forcing the dog back to the ground.

The other pit bull charges - same result.

Huck looks up directly at the Security Camera. He removes his gun from his holster and takes dead aim at the dogs as he stares at the camera.

INT. DOUBLE V'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Double V sees Huck's threat to the dogs in the monitor.

He presses a button on a remote control on the table.

EXT. DOUBLE V'S HOME - DAY

The pole in the center of the hill starts to turn slowly, reigning in the chains linked to the pit bulls' necks.

The dogs GROWL and SNARL as the winding chain drags them towards the center of the yard.

HUCK
 (impressed)
 Now that's pretty fucking clever.

The front door to the house opens. Double V fills the frame.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 Victor Valenzuela?

No response - just a nod.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 We need to talk.

DOUBLE V
 Who the fuck are you?

Anna pulls the front of her sweater back so that Double V can see her LAPD BADGE, and more importantly, her gun.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 I'm Detective Ramirez. This is
 Detective Whitehurst.

DOUBLE V
 (In Spanish - subtitled)
 Why are there cops in my back yard?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 For protection.
 (menacing)
 For me. Not for you.

Double V turns and waves for Anna and Huck to follow. They do and as they enter:

INT. DOUBLE V'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY

The FLUSH of a toilet is heard.

Little Stevie, oblivious, enters from the back bathroom.

In an instinctive flash, Huck's revolver is out of his holster and pointed at Little Stevie's head.

Little Stevie's trembles as he stares at Huck.

Double V takes a seat in a chair. A bit too casually given the circumstances.

DOUBLE V
 He's not carrying.

Huck eyes scan from the toes to the head of Little Stevie's small frame.

HUCK

Little Stevie, what a coincidence.
You know, we have a common
acquaintance. The addict that lives
across from Esperanza's house.

An instant flash of anger from Double V toward's Little Stevie.

LITTLE STEVIE

(In Spanish - subtitled)
I don't know these fucks - promise.

Huck points his gun at another chair.

HUCK

(at Little Stevie)
You sit there.

Little Stevie complies.

HUCK

Okay, we're off to a very good
start.

Huck pulls up a dinette chair next to Double V and takes a seat. He still has his revolver out - motions it towards Little Stevie.

HUCK

We got a witness that places that
little fuck at the scene of a
murder.

LITTLE STEVIE

(panicky)
I ain't told no one nothing.

Double V starts to open his mouth to speak.

HUCK

Wait - wait, keep your powder dry.
It gets better.
(beat)
Seems that Detective Ramirez there
has a transcript from our hotline
identifying your car at the scene
at the same time as the murder.

Huck taps Double V on his knee with the tip of his gun.

HUCK
 Okay, now you can talk.
 (Off Double V's glare)
 What? Nothing to say?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 Where were you on Thursday night?

DOUBLE V
 Home.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 Is there anyone that can verify
 that?

DOUBLE V
 No.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 Did you know Esperanza Coronado?

No response.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 Were you on her street?

Double V's eyes narrow.

DOUBLE V
 I ain't done nothing, so...
 (In Spanish - subtitled)
 Fuck you, cunt.

In an instant, Huck's left hand finds Double V's throat. He places the barrel of his revolver on Double V's forehead.

Huck squeezes Double V's throat - his face reddens. His eyes shift to Anna in a "what the fuck" look.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 (to Double V)
 Rosetta stone.
 (to Huck)
 That's enough.

Huck releases his grip. Double V gasps in air. As he regains full oxygen, anger returns to his face. His jaw clenches with anger.

DOUBLE V
 You shouldn't have done that.

HUCK
 What, you gonna file a lawsuit?

Double V gives Huck a menacing wink.

DOUBLE V
 No, Cabron. I don't file lawsuits
 to settle my scores.
 (to Anna - in Spanish -
 subtitled)
 You let him treat your people like
 this, Chica?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 You're not my people. Now, again -
 where you on Thursday night?

DOUBLE V
 I'm not talking without a lawyer.

Huck stands up.

HUCK
 Yeah. But we haven't arrested you
 yet.

DOUBLE V
 Because I ain't killed no one.

HUCK
 (laughing)
 Yeah, that's it.

Anna drops a piece of paper on Double V's lap.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 That's a search warrant. Those two
 gentlemen at your back door are
 going to help Detective Whitehurst
 and me search the premises. Is
 there anything you want to let us
 know ahead of time?

DOUBLE V
 I already told ya. You're wasting
 your time here, Chica.

INT/EXT. HUMVEE/THE ROAD TO BAGHDAD - DAY (TRAVELLING)

The main highway between Mosul and Baghdad.

Pablo sits in the passenger seat, helmet on. He stares out
 into the desert as it passes by.

PRIVATE GONZALEZ (20) drives - eyes dead ahead.

PRIVATE GONZALEZ

You okay?

Pablo nods.

The Humvee approaches a concrete bridge that crosses over the highway. It's peppered with Arabic graffiti. Private Gonzalez points at the graffiti as they approach the bridge.

PRIVATE GONZALEZ

They got nothing on East L.A, eh homey?

Pablo turns and looks at Private Gonzalez. It's not a look of approval.

They pass under the bridge.

PABLO

It's Corporal.

Just as Private Gonzalez starts to open his mouth, an EXPLOSION catapults the HUMVEE in the air.

It tumbles violently before coming to rest in a cloud of dust.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/DETECTIVE BULLPEN - DAY

Anna and Huck enter the Detective Bullpen area - walk side by side towards their desks.

HUCK

I think the fucker did it.

Anna doesn't respond.

HUCK

You don't?

Just as Anna is ready to respond, a female STAFF ASSISTANT (30) approaches.

STAFF ASSISTANT

Captain Garza is looking for you two. Said you should see him the moment you got back.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/CAPTAIN GARZA'S OFFICE - DAY

Captain Garza is behind his desk. Huck sits across from him.

Anna, with her back to them, stands, staring at the Detective Bullpen area through the office's glass window.

HUCK

Seems to me, we got an anonymous tip placing his car at the scene. We got a neighbor saying he paid Little Stevie for drugs right at the time of the murder and we got a calling card carved into an old woman's forehead. I think that's enough for an arrest.

CAPTAIN GARZA

Why don't you agree, Anna?

Anna turns around.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

All we know is that his car was on the street. I'm pretty sure his wasn't the only one. And there's just something not quite right about the tip.

CAPTAIN GARZA

What's not --

HUCK

She thinks the tipster was a little too precise.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Don't mock me.

(to Captain Garza)

And why would they carve their initials? We haven't seen that before. Why point to themselves?

(to Huck)

Look, maybe he did do it. It's just too early to announce an arrest.

CAPTAIN GARZA

I'll think about it. We get the prints tomorrow. I want both of you here for Wilson in the morning. Understood?

Huck and Anna both nod.

INT. RESIDENTIAL HOME/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Anna and Frank Ramirez, with oxygen tubes in his nose, eat quietly at an old oak dining room table. The CLINKS of their knives and forks on their plates the only sound.

Franks takes a big bite of steak. Chews it like a cow.

FRANK RAMIREZ
So, what's eating you?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Me? Nothing.

FRANK RAMIREZ
Bull shit.

Anna takes a sip of wine. Places the glass back down.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
I think I'm being forced on a case.
Rushed.

FRANK RAMIREZ
(as he chews - mouth full)
The lady with the carved forehead.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Dad, please.

FRANK RAMIREZ
Go on.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
We have an initial suspect. But it
doesn't feel right. Everything is
there but it still seems like
something's missing. The D.A is
probably going to chew my ass out
tomorrow for --

FRANK RAMIREZ
This suspect, he a gang banger?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
One of the worst.

FRANK RAMIREZ
Then what are you worrying about?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
I don't get it.

FRANK RAMIREZ
They're probably a dozen murders
he's committed that he hasn't paid
for. Who gives a shit if he pays
for one he didn't. That's how I see
it anyway.

Anna stands up - starts clearing plates.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 (sarcastically)
 I'm surprised you never became a
 judge.

Frank cleans his chin with his napkin.

FRANK RAMIREZ
 I would have made a damn fine one.

Anna takes the plates and exits towards the:

KITCHEN

Her cell phone RINGS. She looks at the contact screen.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 Captain Garza?

Anna hits the answer button - puts the phone to her ear.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 Good evening, Captain.

CUT TO:

INT. CAPTAIN GARZA'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Captain Garza, dressed in civvies, stands in the middle of the room - phone to his ear.

His WIFE (50) approaches from the kitchen with a beer in her hand. Captain Garza politely puts his hand up in a - "just a minute" gesture.

CAPTAIN GARZA
 (into his phone)
 I wanted you to hear this before it
 hits the news. I just got word that
 Pablo Coronado's vehicle was hit by
 a roadside bomb.

CUT TO:

INT. BAGHDAD HOSPITAL - SAME TIME

Pablo, heavily bandaged and unconscious lays in a hospital bed as an IRAQI NURSE changes the IV bag at his bedside.

BEEPS from an array of medical monitors permeate the room.

An IRAQI DOCTOR, holding a medical chart and an ARMY MAJOR stand in the doorway.

IRAQI DOCTOR

(to the Major)

I'm afraid he's in fairly bad shape. We had to take both legs. There was a lot of blood loss so I can't yet speak to his cognitive abilities. He'll be in an induced coma for awhile.

ARMY MAJOR

But he's going to make it?

IRAQI DOCTOR

I am not at all certain.

The Iraqi Nurse gently wipes some perspiration off Pablo's brow. Then stares at his face - almost in reverence.

CUT TO:

INT. RESIDENTIAL HOME/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Anna leans on the counter - phone to her ear.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Thank you, Captain.

Anna ends the call - tosses her phone on the counter. She just stares at it - lost in thought.

FRANK RAMIREZ (O.S.)

Hey, sweetie. Grab me a beer - okay?....Hey, you hear me?

Anna shakes her head - wipes a tear from the corner of her eye then heads for the refrigerator. She clears her throat.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Yeah. I'm on it, Dad.

INT. GABRIEL'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Other than a sliver of light that peers in through the hallway, the room is dark and quiet.

Sarah buried in covers, sleeps soundly with her back to Gabriel. Gabriel's eyes are wide open. He stares at a clock on the night stand. It reads: "11:30 P.M."

Gabriel quietly slides out of bed. He picks up his clothes sitting on a chair in the corner of the room. Takes a peek at Sarah and tip toes out into the hallway.

INT. GABRIEL'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gabriel sits on the couch lacing his shoes.

He goes to the front door and slowly turns the latch - CLICK.

Gabriel waits a moment. All's quiet. He sneaks out, quietly closing the door behind him.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

Anna, Captain Garza, District Attorney Wilson and his ASSISTANT (28), male, tapping notes on an IPAD, sit around a conference table.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON

(angry)

Do you have any idea how humiliating it is to be in charge of a gang task force and be informed of a gang related murder by the press?

CAPTAIN GARZA

As I explained, we didn't know that the Times had that information.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON

But you know that you did!

CAPTAIN GARZA

We were still investigating the --

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON

(to Anna)

Why wasn't he arrested?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

All we had was a tip that his car was on the street. That's not illegal. And we searched the house. It was clean.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON

Sounds like that they knew you were coming.

A silence in the room. Everyone considers this.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

You know, it might have been more humiliating to arrest a suspect and then have to turn around and release him.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

Regardless, I really don't think that any of us should be more concerned about our press image than --

CAPTAIN GARZA

Easy, Detective.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON

We've got a community panicked over a grandmother's unspeakable mutilation while her war hero grandson lies in a Baghdad hospital. How do you think that image plays, Detective?

Anna stares Wilson down. Her eyes scream - what a prick.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON

(to Garza)

Any update on the boy?

CAPTAIN GARZA

He's still in a coma.

A tap on the conference door. Policeman Saunders enters.

CAPTAIN GARZA

What is it?

SAUNDERS

The prints have come in.

(a pause)

Victor Venezuela's are all over the kitchen.

Anna raises an eyebrow - she didn't expect this.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON

You seemed surprised by the obvious, Detective.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

(to Saunders)

What about the print taken from the window blind?

SAUNDERS

No match.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON

(heavy sarcasm)

Not to step on your toes, Captain,
but do you think that maybe now -
you know, given that the suspects
prints are smeared all over the
house, that perhaps an arrest would
be warranted? I'd like to have a
press conference announcing it.

Captain Garza gives the nod to Anna.

CAPTAIN GARZA

Take Huck and back up.

Anna rises, shoots one more look of disdain at Wilson and
then exits.

Captain Garza rises. Walks over to Wilson and leans over to
his ear.

CAPTAIN GARZA

(whispering)

The next time you dress me or one
of my detectives down like that I
will drop you where you stand.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON

I believe that you value your
career more than that, Captain.

CAPTAIN GARZA

I'm retirement eligible. I've
already had my career.

Captain Garza gives Wilson an intentionally painful squeeze
on his shoulder - leaves the room.

Wilson straightens his suit jacket - seemingly not bothered
by Garza's threat.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON

Did you get a confirmation on the
funeral?

ASSISTANT

They've arranged time for you at
the end of the service.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/RECEPTION AREA - DAY.

Sarah, with baby Andrew cradled in her arms, and her father,
Fernando, by her side stand at a high desktop protected by
partition. PEOPLE stand in line behind them.

Sitting high on that desk, a disinterested DESK SARGEANT (40), overweight, takes notes as Sarah talks.

DESK SARGEANT
So when did you notice him missing?

SARAH
I already told you. Last night, I woke up at three and he wasn't there.

DESK SARGEANT
We normally wait at least twenty-four hours before filing a report.

SARAH
I called his work. He's not there. He wouldn't just leave in the middle of the night. He wouldn't leave work. Something's wrong.

The Desk Sargeant seems more annoyed than interested.

DESK SARGEANT
Does he have any friends that he might have gone to see? Male? Female?

SARAH
What are you saying?

DESK SARGEANT
Just trying to get information.

FERNANDO
He's a drug addict.

SARAH
Papa!

FERNANDO
They should know if you want them to find him.

The Desk Sargeant slides a clipboard towards Sarah.

DESK SARGEANT
I'll let you fill the report out now. But there's nothing we can really do until twenty-four hours have passed.

SARAH
 (defiant)
 Can do - or will do?

The Desk Sargent points towards some empty plastic chairs in the reception area.

DESK SARGEANT
 You can fill the forms out over there.

SARAH
 My husband is missing!

The Desk Sargeant looks over Sarah's head at the people in line behind her. Then nods towards the plastic chairs.

DESK SARGEANT
 There are other people waiting.

FERNANDO
 Thank you.
 (to Sarah)
 I'm sure he's fine, mija.

Fernando takes the clipboard in one hand and Sarah's arm in the other - gently steers her towards the plastic chairs.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/WITNESS INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Double V, handcuffed, sits at a small table glowering at Anna who sits across from him. Huck stands in the corner of the small room.

DOUBLE V
 I told you, I ain't saying shit without a lawyer.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 I understand that he is on the way.

DOUBLE V
 Then why the fuck are you wasting my time now, puta?

Huck makes a choke sign with his hand as a reminder to Double V of what could be coming.

DOUBLE V
 You trying to say something, maricón?

Huck starts towards the table. Anna holds her hand up.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Should you be ordered to stand
trial at your arraignment, you'll
be transferred to Men's Central
Jail.

HUCK
Where you can spend time with your
friends.
(wicked smile)
And your enemies.

DOUBLE V
You make a lot of assumptions.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Your car was there at the time of
the murder. Your prints were all
over her kitchen.

HUCK
Little Stevie is starting to loosen
up. You know cut his losses.

This garners a glare from Double V and an inquisitive look
from Anna. She turns her attention back to Double V.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
What possible business did you have
with Esperanza Coronado?

DOUBLE V
I want my lawyer.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/CAPTAIN GARZA'S OFFICE - DAY

Captain Garza sits at his desk - reads a piece of paper.

A POLICEMAN stands at attention in the doorway - waiting.

CAPTAIN GARZA
When did this get called in?

POLICEMAN
Less than ten minutes ago, Captain.

CAPTAIN GARZA
Damn it.
(puts the paper down)
Go find Detective Ramirez.

The Policeman leaves. Captain Garza punches a button on a
phone intercom.

CAPTAIN GARZA
(into intercom)
I need you to get a hold of Anthony
Wilson.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/OUTSIDE WITNESS INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Huck leans up against the corridor wall outside the Witness Interview Room. Anna keeps an eye on Double V through the room's glass window.

HUCK
He knows we already got him there
that night from the neighbor's
testimony. So, yeah - he's a little
nervous.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(incredulous)
So he's really willing to testify?

HUCK
Well, he already signed a
statement. It says that he and
Double V were on the street that
night. That he went to get the
money and that he has no idea what
Double V did when he was gone.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Jesus.

HUCK
Little Stevie ain't as loyal you'd
think.

The Policeman from Garza's office approaches.

POLICEMAN
Garza wants to see you. He said
stat.

EXT. HOLLENBECK PARK - LATER THAT DAY

A scenic park that would make any visitor forget that it is
in the center of the city.

CHILDREN enjoying playground equipment. Their PARENTS have
one eye on them and one eye on something off in the distance.

Their focus of attention is a police presence at the corner
of the parks lagoon-like, man-made lake.

A concrete pathway circumvents the lake. The Interstate 5 Freeway overpass sits at the far end of it, casting a dark shadow on the corner of the water.

Crime scene tape has been strapped between trees. A CORONER'S VAN and a two LAPD CRUISERS are parked on the grass.

Several figures mill about walking back and forth from the vehicles to something underneath the freeway overpass, indiscernible, on the concrete lake bank.

UNDER THE OVERPASS - DAY

The sound of cars traveling down the overpass above the lake create an eerie HUM.

The Crime Photographer takes pictures of everything and anything in the area.

Anna and Huck, both wearing latex gloves, stand over a CORPSE that rests on the concrete bank at the edge of the lake.

A CORONER'S ASSISTANT stands nearby, ready with a blue body bag. Next to him, Policeman Saunders holds plastic evidence bags containing a wallet and car keys.

Anna squats down to take a closer look at the corpse and Huck follows her move.

Gabriel Sanchez's dead eyes are open. Bluish-purple contusions encircle his neck. The initials V-N-E have been carved in his forehead.

Anna points to Gabriel's neck.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Not the same tool.

HUCK
What?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Esperanza was strangled with a belt. This was done with a wire - a thin rope maybe.

Huck bends over, looks closely at the V-N-E carved in Gabriel's forehead.

HUCK
Well, they sure as fuck left the same calling card.
(beat)
There's something in his mouth.

HUCK (CONT'D)
(calling to Coroner
Assistant)
Take a look at this.

The Coroner Assistant walks over and bends down next to Huck. Huck points at a small piece of plastic just protruding over Gabriel's blue lips.

HUCK
What do you make of that?

The coroner removes a pair of surgical tweezers from his lab coat. He carefully separates Gabriel's lips and removes a small PLASTIC BAG bag filled with a white powder.

CORONER ASSISTANT
I'm guessing, cocaine.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Why would they put it in his mouth?

Anna waves Saunders over. He complies. The Coroner Assistance drops the cocaine in an evidence bag.

A PATROLMAN, a bit out of breath, walks up. Anna and Huck stand up.

PATROLMAN
The car was pretty clean. Not much of anything. I did find this. Looks like it fell into the slot between the console and the driver seat.

The Patrolman hands Anna a piece of scrap paper. It has the numbers: "6-9-2-1" written on it. Anna examines it and then hands it to Huck.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Any thoughts?

HUCK
I don't know. Maybe it's a pin number. We can check with his bank.

Huck starts to pocket the piece of paper.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Huck. In the bag.

HUCK
Yeah. Sorry, tired as fuck.

Anna gives an understanding nod - she's tired too.

Huck walks over to Policeman Saunders - hands him the piece of paper for placement in an evidence bag.

LAPD PHOTOGRAPHER
(twenty feet away)
I got something here.

Anna and Huck walk over to the Photographer who's clicking away at an object under a bush. It's a closed JACK KNIFE.

Anna picks up the knife with her gloved hand. A tint of RED is on the spine of the closed blade.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
That's just a little convenient,
don't you think?

HUCK
Or sloppy.

Anna nods - maybe. She walks to Policeman Saunders. He drops the knife in an evidence bag - seals it.

The Coroner Assistant, looking like he's late for something, stands by the corpse - blue body bag in his hand.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Can you wrap up here?

HUCK
Where you headed?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
I've got to tell a wife that we've
found her husband.

HUCK
I'll go with you.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
No. It's on me.
(beat)
This might not have happened if I
arrested Double V earlier.

HUCK
You can't put that on yourself. You
weren't sure he did it.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Well, I wasn't sure he didn't
either.

Huck watches as Anna walks away across the park.

EXT. GABRIEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The front door is ajar.

SARAH (O.S.)
 (tortured wail)
 No! No! It can't be him!

The sound of a baby CRYING.

INT. GABRIEL'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Anna stands just to the left of the door.

Andrew clutches the net inside a playpen - crying.

Sarah's face is reddened and tear streaked. She points a butter knife at Anna.

SARAH
 You're lying. He's alright. I just
 know he is!

Anna shakes her head.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 I'm sorry.

Anna places a business card on a table by the door.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 We're going to need an
 identification of the body.
 (pointing to the card)
 Call me when you're ready.

SARAH
 It's not him! It's not him!

Anna backs out - closes the doors behind her.

EXT. GABRIEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The sounds of Sarah's WAILS and Andrew CRYING fade as Anna makes her way down the cracked sidewalk.

Anna reaches her car - stops and leans up against the hood. She pulls out a cigarette and lights it watching as the purple plume wafts in the air.

After a couple of drags, Anna pulls out her cell phone, scrolls through her contacts and hits one labeled: "HUCK."

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(into the phone)
Hey, it's me... Um, I need company.
You want some?

INT. HUCK'S HOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Furnished by a life-long bachelor. No two pieces of furniture match, not a frilly pillow or comforter in sight. A large floor safe at the side of the bed doubles as a nightstand.

Huck, naked, hands behind his head, sits propped up in bed. This boy is not shy. He watches Anna at the corner of the bed as she slips into her jeans.

HUCK
Thought you said we couldn't do
this till I transferred back
downtown.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
It was an emergency.

HUCK
(playfully)
Should I feel used?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Yeah, a little.

HUCK
Oh, you bitch.

Huck lunges forward on the bed and encircles Anna's waist with his massive forearms.

HUCK
Stay a little longer.

Anna kisses Huck gently on top of his head.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
I can't. You know I need to check
on my Dad.

Huck releases his hug and rolls over on his stomach. Anna grabs one of her boots from the floor - slides it on.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
I'm going to be late tomorrow. I
got the funeral. Can you cover for
me till I get in?

HUCK
 (grunting into sheets)
 Uh-huh.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 Unless you want to go with me.

HUCK
 Fuck no.

Anna slaps Huck on the ass.

HUCK
 Ouch! Careful, you may need that
 again.

Anna grabs the other boot - slides it on.

HUCK
 Don't know why you're going.

Anna walks over to the floor safe and grabs her revolver,
 badge and car keys.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 Cause all her family is gone. I
 don't know. You know me. I just
 feel - well...

HUCK
 Guilty.

Anna contemplates this for a moment then heads for the door.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 Obligated.
 (as she slips out)
 Thanks.

INT. BAGHDAD HOSPITAL - NIGHT

An IRAQI DOCTOR holds a clipboard with a medical chart as he
 hovers over Pablo's hospital bed.

Pablo's legs have been amputated just above the knees. The
 white wrap that covers them are spotted with blood.

Pablo stares aimlessly at a sand crusted window

IRAQI DOCTOR
 There's really not more we can do
 for you here. You'll be transferred
 to Germany - the Landstuhl Medical
 Center - at the end of the week.

IRAQI DOCTOR (CONT'D)

It's a very fine facility.

(beat)

Do you understand?

Pablo, still not looking at the Doctor, musters a nod.

IRAQI DOCTOR

You know we thought there was little chance you would pull through. You are a very lucky man.

PABLO

Am I? Why's that? You going to sew my legs back on?

The Doctor takes a seat at the edge of the bed.

IRAQI DOCTOR

I know it looks bleak. But you will find a way to adapt. For your future. For your family.

Pablo turns his head - faces the Doctor.

PABLO

The last of my family is being buried today.

EXT. ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

Made of pure white stone - a century old. The Roman style columns on the facade nearly touch the street. It stands in stark contrast to the run down urban architecture that surrounds it on all sides.

Several local NEWS TRUCKS with a variety of REPORTERS, ready and waiting, stand on the curb outside the church.

INT. ST MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

Rows of simple wood pews, the first three of which are occupied by ELDERLY MOURNERS, mostly gray-haired or bald. There is one noticeable exception - D.A. Anthony Wilson.

Anna sits in the very back row - not another mourner within twenty feet of her.

A PRIEST stands at the alter in front of a white casket, adorned with flowers.

PRIEST

...We humbly pray Thee to show mercy upon the soul of Thy servant Esperanza, whom Thou hast commanded to pass out of this world, that Thou would place her in the region of peace and light, and bid her to be a partaker with Thy Saints. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

ELDERLY MOURNERS

(in Unison)

Amen.

PRIEST

May you also show your compassion and heal her beloved grandson, Pablo. For this we pray.

ELDERLY MOURNERS

(in Unison)

Amen.

Then a pause as the Priest scans the audience.

PRIEST

All of you are welcomed to attend the blessing at the burial service. Before we proceed, Anthony Wilson from the District Attorney's office has requested to address the congregation.

D.A. Anthony Wilson stands up and approaches a podium to the side of the altar.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON

First and foremost, my deepest condolences for the loved ones of
...

A brief look of disdain crosses Wilson's face as he notices Anna sneak out a side door.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON

...Esperanza Coronado. I wanted to assure that the District Attorney's office...

EXT. ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH/SIDE - DAY

Anna exits through the side doors, fumbles through her sweater pocket for a pack of cigarettes and lights up.

As she exhales she can see the back end of a television news truck on the front of the street.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Naturally.

Anna's feels the vibration of her cell phone. She removes it from her pocket. She doesn't recognize the calling number.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(into phone)
Hello.
(listening)
Yes, I'll go in with you.
(checks her watch)
I can be there in an hour.

EXT. ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH/FRONT - DAY

The doors swing open as the CONGREGATION flows down towards the sidewalk.

D.A. Wilson along with a Hispanic, female PRESS AIDE are one of the last to exit the church. Wilson hails the waiting reporters.

EXT. ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH/SIDE - DAY

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(into phone)
Okay. I'll see you then.

As Anna hangs up she can hear the CLAMOR of Reporters from outside the front of the church.

She takes one last long drag on her cigarette and with a look of disdain on her face angrily flicks it towards the front of the church.

INT. CORONER'S AUTOPSY LAB - DAY

Doctor Yamamoto, Anna and Sarah stand by a metallic, eight door corpse refrigeration unit.

DOCTOR YAMAMOTO
(to Sarah)
Are you ready?

Sarah nods. She instinctively grabs Anna's hand for support. Anna, not quite comfortable at first, squeezes Sarah's hand in a reassuring manner.

Anna gives Doctor Yamamoto a nod. He opens a latch on one of the corpse doors and slowly slides out Gabriel's body.

Sarah holds her free hand over her mouth to prevent a gasp.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Is that him?

Sarah nods. She moves forward and touches Gabriel's forehead around the scar from the V-N-E carved in his forehead.

SARAH
(sobbing)
What did they do to you?

INT/EXT. RAMIREZ'S CAR - DAY (TRAVELLING)

Anna drives. Sarah stares out the window, aimlessly - lost in thought.

Anna pulls the car into the:

HOLLENBECK STATION/PARKING LOT

And pulls into a space. She puts the car in park.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
We have to keep his clothes.
They're still running tests,
looking for DNA.

SARAH
I understand.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
I was able to retrieve the contents
of his wallet - photos, credit
cards. I thought you might need
them. Do you want them now?

Sarah nods. Anna exits the car. Sarah follows.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/DETECTIVE BULLPEN - DAY

Anna and Sarah are at Anna's desk. Anna hands Sarah a sealed envelope.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Everything's in there.

Sarah clutches the envelope to her chest.

SARAH
Thank you.

Huck approaches - motions for Anna to come over.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Can it wait?

Huck shakes his head.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(to Sarah)
Give me a minute.

She walks towards Huck as he walks towards a more secluded area - within eyesight, but out of earshot of Sarah.

HUCK
I got a voice recording of the
anonymous tip phoned into the D.A.
Hotline.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
And?

HUCK
It's just a wild hunch. But I
thought since she was here anyway,
we ought to see if she can
recognize the voice. I mean, maybe
he was the --

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(as she returns to Sarah)
Got it.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/WITNESS INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Huck, Anna and Sarah sit around a small conference table.
There's a DIGITAL RECORDER in the center of the table.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(to Sarah)
Are you sure you can do this?

SARAH
Yes.

Sarah gives Huck a nod. In turn, he hits a button on the
Recorder.

GABRIEL'S VOICE FROM RECORDER
"Um - uh, yes. I have some
information to report on the old
woman who was killed. The one in
Boyle Heights.

OPERATOR VOICE FROM RECORDER
"Go ahead."

GABRIEL'S VOICE FROM RECORDER
 "It's a license plate number. 7-C-S-
 R-2-5-0. The car, an old black one,
 was on the street - outside the
 house the night of the murder."

Sarah buries her head in her hands - starts to weep. Anna hits the stop button on the recorder.

HUCK
 Is that your husband's voice?

Anna gives Huck a "what kind of prick are you - look. She nods her head towards the door.

Anna puts a comforting hand on Sarah's shoulder as she stands.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 I'll be right back.

CORRIDOR OUTSIDE WITNESS ROOM DAY

Huck talks as Anna keeps an eye on Sarah through the glass window of the witness room.

HUCK
 C'mon, he was killed the same way
 the old woman was right down to the
 forehead and he just happens to be
 the guy that called the tip into
 the hot line.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 How would he have known Double V
 was there that night?

HUCK
 I'd bet my left nut that he was
 with the neighbor buying drugs from
 Little Stevie. I'm guessing a
 little plastic bag of cocaine.

Policeman Saunders, holding a small notebook, approaches.

POLICEMAN SAUNDERS
 The Coroner's office called.

Saunders looks at the note pad.

POLICEMAN SAUNDERS
 The blood on the knife found at the
 park matches Gabriel Sanchez.

HUCK

No shit.

POLICEMAN SAUNDERS

Also, they think it was the same
knife used on Coronado's forehead.

Anna takes this in.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

(to Huck)

You were right. They're connected.

HUCK

We should brief Garza right away.

Anna nods as she keeps her attention on Sarah.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

You go ahead. I want to get her
home.

INT. RESIDENTIAL HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Frank Ramirez, oxygen tank at his side, sits in a recliner.
He's got a beer in his hand and a bag of pretzels on his lap.

Anna sits in an adjacent sofa. She caresses the stem of a
wine glass as she watches TV. A COMMERCIAL is playing.

SUPER: FIVE MONTHS LATER

Frank grabs a handful of pretzels - stuffs a couple in his
mouth. Eyes Anna as he chews.

FRANK RAMIREZ

You know I can smell the smoke on
you.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

It's the oven.

FRANK RAMIREZ

It doesn't smell like food to --

Commercial over - The LOCAL NEWS PROMO appears on the TV.

A NEWS ANCHOR's face fills the screen. Beneath, a large
banner that reads: "LIFE IN PRISON", in large red letters.

Frank grabs the remote and turns up the volume.

INSERT TELEVISION SCREEN

NEWS ANCHOR

....Today, the jury has recommended life in prison, without the possibility of parole, for Victor Valenzuela, convicted last month in the murder of Esperanza Coronado, a longtime resident of Boyle Heights. Valenzuela, the alleged leader of the Varrio Nuevo Estrada gang, still may face retrial for the murder of Gabriel Sanchez, the jury in that case having deadlocked after ten days of deliberation. We go now to David Tran outside the Criminal Courts building.

DAVID TRAN (30), Vietnamese stands on the steps of the Court House as he holds a microphone to the very pleased face of District Attorney Anthony Wilson.

DAVID TRAN

Would you like to comment on today's decision?

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON

I want to thank the staff of my office as well as the LAPD for all their efforts in bringing Victor Valenzuela to justice.

DAVID TRAN

Are you disappointed that the jury didn't opt for the death penalty?

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON

I respect the jury's decision and my office is pleased that another violent criminal has been permanently removed from the streets of Los Angeles.

DAVID TRAN

Has your office decided whether or not you plan to retrial Valenzuela for the murder of Gabriel Sanchez?

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON

That is currently under consideration.

Huck, exiting the courthouse, briefly appears in the background behind D.A. Wilson.

FRANK RAMIREZ (O.C.)
Hey, isn't that Huck?

DAVID TRAN
This is David Tran, reporting live
from the Criminal Courts building
in downtown...

BACK TO SCENE

Frank points the remote at the TV - mutes it.

FRANK RAMIREZ
So, have you heard from him?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Not since he transferred back
downtown.

FRANK RAMIREZ
That figures.

Anna gives Frank a stern look.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
I'm not disappointed. Why should
you be?

FRANK RAMIREZ
I just thought that maybe - you
know? You're, um, not exactly
getting any --

Anna gets up from the sofa - heads out of the room

FRANK RAMIREZ
Younger.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Think I'll go out back and have a
cigarette.

FRANK RAMIREZ
(calling out)
Hey!

INT. WALTER REED MEDICAL CENTER/TREATMENT ROOM - DAY

Various PATIENTS and MEDICAL PERSONNEL interact in a large
room filled with therapeutic training equipment and
prosthetics.

In the corner, Pablo has his arm around the shoulder of a PHYSICAL THERAPIST as he wobbles on a pair of prosthetic titanium legs.

PHYSICAL THERAPIST
Seems like a good fit. What do you think?

Pablo nods and then slowly sinks back into a small bed behind him, exhaling from the exertion.

The Therapist takes a seat next to Pablo.

PABLO
How long does it take?

PHYSICAL THERAPIST
It varies. But certainly a few weeks. The best approach is to use the crutches with them at first and gradually build up your strength and balance.

Pablo extends his hand to the Therapist.

PABLO
Thanks for everything. I know I wasn't exactly easy.

The Therapist grabs Pablo's hand and gives him a bro hug - slaps him on the back.

PHYSICAL THERAPIST
Thank you, soldier.

The Therapist gets up.

PHYSICAL THERAPIST
When you get home, call me. You know, just to check in.

Pablo nods. The Therapist leaves.

Pablo scans the room and the other patients, knowing it's the last time he'll see it or them.

INT. PELICAN BAY PRISON/VISITING CENTER - DAY

A row of segmented visiting stations. A molded plastic chair bolted to the floor sits in front of each station facing fortified glass windows.

Pablo, crutches by his side, with a prison phone to his ear, sits on one of those chairs.

Double V, wearing a white cotton prison jumpsuit - phone to his ear, sits on the other side of the window. A watchful GUARD monitors the conversation.

PABLO

I'm sorry that it got you in trouble.

DOUBLE V

It ain't on you, homey. Who the fuck would think that you needed gloves to deliver groceries? Besides, those fucks would have found a way to put my prints there anyway.

PABLO

Maybe. I just --

Double V notices the crutches through the window.

DOUBLE V

How bad is it?

PABLO

Both legs - gone. Still trying to get the hang of the prosthetics.

DOUBLE V

You got blown up for nothing, homey.

PABLO

Maybe. Maybe not. It was a way out.

Double V nods - he gets it.

PABLO

Do you know who did it?

DOUBLE V

They would be dead by now if I did. Hector and Miguel are working on it.

PABLO

What about Little Stevie?

DOUBLE V

He's no longer available.

An ugly pause. Pablo knows what this means, but he doesn't want to hear it.

The Guard, with cuffs in one hand, approaches from behind Double V.

GUARD

Time.

Pablo puts his fist up against the glass. Double V matches it on his side.

PABLO

I'll find out.

Double V hangs up the phone, stands and puts his left hand behind his back. A CLICK as the Guard cuffs it.

GUARD

Right hand.

Double V raises his right hand - shoots Pablo a salute before putting it behind his back. A CLICK as the Guard cuffs it.

The Guard spins Double V around and escorts him away.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/LUNCH ROOM AREA - DAY

The room is crowded with OFFICERS and STAFF.

Several congratulatory helium balloons bob up and down against the ceiling.

A LAPD blue colored CAKE, with the word "CONGRATULATIONS" in white icing sits in the middle of a table.

Anna holds a knife over the center of the cake. Drew Saunders, dressed in civvies, stands next to her.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

I always knew that Drew would make
Detective one day.

APPLAUSE from the crowd.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

I just never expected that I would
get stuck with him as a partner.

Light LAUGHTER from the crowd.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Okay, cake and coffee now. Beers
tonight at Maggie's Pub. I
understand that Drew is buying.

DETECTIVE SAUNDERS
Hey, the raise ain't that much.

LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE from the crowd.

EXT. PALE BLUE HOME - NIGHT

Using his crutches, Pablo limps up the steps towards the front door. He inserts a key and opens it.

INT. PALE BLUE HOME/LIVING ROOM AREA - NIGHT

Pablo flicks a light switch as he enters - scans the room.

He limps towards the recliner that Esperanza was killed in. He caresses the top of the chair as if he was caressing her.

Putting his crutches aside, Pablo slumps back into the recliner. He removes his cell phone from his pocket and enters a phone number. As it rings, he stares at the FAMILY PICTURES and the WOODEN CROSS on the wall.

PABLO
(into phone)
My name is Pablo Coronado.
Esperanza Coronado was my
grandmother.
(listening)
I need to know the name of the lead
detective on the case.
(listening)
I can hold.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/LOBBY - DAY

Pablo sits on a wooden bench - waits, eyes forward - paying no attention to people entering and leaving the lobby.

He holds a copy of a Spanish Language newspaper in his hands. His aluminum crutches are propped up on the bench.

The glass doors that lead to the inner station open. Anna walks through them.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Pablo Coronado?

Pablo nods. Anna takes a seat next to him.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
I'm sorry about your Grandmother.
It was a horrible tragedy.

PABLO

Thank you.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

So what is it that I can do for you?

PABLO

I would like you to find her killer.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

I don't understand.

PABLO

Double V didn't do it.

Anna tightens with tension - old doubts brought to the surface.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

That's not what the jury thought.

PABLO

My father was a Varrio Nuevo Estrada member. You really think they kill their own.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

There wasn't any gang affiliation in the record.

PABLO

He had V-N-E tattooed on the knuckles of his right hand. How did you miss that?

Anna shakes her head. The doubts are growing stronger.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Look, Double V's car was there. His were the only prints in the house. How can you be so sure that --

PABLO

Because he brought her groceries. I know nobody believed that. But it was a promise to me - while I was gone.

(beat)

My father and mother died for their gang. That gave me and my grandmother protection. Forever.

(beat)

PABLO (CONT'D)
 You strike me as someone who ought
 to know that.

Anna just stares at Pablo. She's caught.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 Who do you think killed her?

PABLO
 I don't know. Yet.

Pablo opens the Spanish Language newspaper and hands it to
 Anna.

INSERT NEWSPAPER HEADLINE

In big bold letters, it reads: **"LA LOTERÍA"**

BACK TO SCENE

PABLO
 But I will eventually.

Pablo points at the article underneath the headline.

PABLO
 It says the prize has not been
 claimed yet. That was her prize.
 Her ticket. Her numbers.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 Are you screwing with me?

PABLO
 My father was born on February
 seventh. I was born on August
 eleventh. She was born in nineteen
 thirty-eight.
 (deliberately)
 2-7-8-11-19-38.
 (beat)
 They were the only numbers she ever
 played. One ticket, every Sunday
 for as long as I can remember. And
 the last winner still has not come
 forward.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 Two other people picked those
 numbers. Just because one hasn't
 come forward doesn't mean --

PABLO

The mystery winner just happen to pick them on the very day that she died? And Gabriel Sanchez, killed four days later, just happened to be a lottery worker. Maybe you ought to start out by figuring out who really killed him.

This hits Anna hard - sudden realization.

Pablo stands up - grabs his crutches from the bench. He limps away. As he walks, Anna can see the bottom of his artificial legs as the cuff of his pants rise upwards.

PABLO

(calling back)

Do your job before I have to.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/ANNA'S DESK - DAY

Anna removes the photo of Pablo's parents on their wedding day from a folder - stares at in a minute.

She places the photo on top of a portable printer/scanner on her desk, closes the lid and hits SCAN.

The scanner HUMS for a few moments and then the IMAGE appears on the screen of her desktop.

Anna centers the cursor on Pablo's father's hand and taps the ZOOM icon. The image grows larger and larger.

INSERT IMAGE

It's blurry. The knuckles on Pablo's Father's hand can be made out, but the marks on them are fuzzy - indistinguishable.

BACK TO SCENE

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Damn.

Anna puts a thumb drive in the side of the computer and hits the SAVE KEY. After a moment, she removes the drive - pockets it and hurries off.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/CRIME PHOTOGRAPHER LAB - DAY

A small room crammed with Camera equipment and computers.

The Crime Photographer who took the original pictures at the pale blue home sits in a chair with his feet up on a desk eating a sandwich. The FLASH DRIVE is on top of the desk.

Anna sits across from him.

CRIME PHOTOGRAPHER
So now you think I can be helpful.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(not taking the bait)
Can you do anything?

CRIME PHOTOGRAPHER
(between chews)
Maybe. We got a program that inserts pixels where they logically belong.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
What does that mean?

CRIME PHOTOGRAPHER
Means that I can probably create an image of what a computer thinks is there. No guarantee that --

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Thanks.

Anna stands.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
I'll be back this afternoon.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/EVIDENCE ROOM - DAY

An EVIDENCE CLERK (30, male) sits at a caged desk protecting a large room behind him.

Anna is on the other side of the desk - signs her name and date on a clipboard. She gives it to the Evidence Clerk.

In turn, he hands her a plastic bag containing the clothes Gabriel wore the night he was killed.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Thanks.

Anna rushes off.

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Yamamoto stands at a metal file cabinet perusing through manila file folders.

Anna sits at a desk in the center of the room. The evidence bag containing Gabriel's clothes is on top of the desk.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
I was so sorry to hear about Aiko.
She was a wonderful --

DOCTOR YAMAMOTO
I know.
(with a warm smile)
Let's not talk about it - okay? I
need to get through the day.

Anna nods. Dr. Yamamoto returns his attention to the file cabinet.

DOCTOR YAMAMOTO
Ah, here it is.

Doctor Yamamoto removes a manila folder with a white label. Typed on it: "CORONADO, ESPERANZA."

Dr. Yamamoto takes a seat at his desk and opens the folder. He removes several 8" by 10" photos of Esperanza's neck contusion that he had taken at the autopsy.

He opens a desk drawer and removes a pair of latex gloves. He opens the plastic evidence bag and removes Gabriel's belt. He takes a small tape measure out of his drawer and measures the belt's width.

DOCTOR YAMAMOTO
One inch.
(points at the picture)
Just like the contusion.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
So, it could have been used?

DOCTOR YAMAMOTO
I can't eliminate it. But I would
need DNA to include it. I'll see
what the lab can do.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
What about Gabriel Sanchez's
prints?

DOCTOR YAMAMOTO
I've sent the full set over.
They're running them now.

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/ANNA'S DESK - DAY

Anna approaches her desk. There's a large envelope on top of it labeled "PHOTOGRAPHY LAB."

Anna opens it and removes her flash drive and a note that reads: "IS THIS WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?"

She puts the flash drive in her computer. Clicks on a PICTURE ICON on the screen.

INSERT COMPUTER SCREEN

A blown up picture of Pablo's Father's hand from the wedding photo. Across his knuckles - clear as day - are the tattooed letters: "V-N-E."

BACK TO SCENE

Anna stares at the screen.

The BUZZ of her office phone startles her. She hits the answer button:

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
This is Anna.

VOICE THROUGH PHONE SPEAKER
We've processed the prints from the
Coroner's office. The results are
on their way.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Oh for God's sakes - what are they?

VOICE THROUGH PHONE SPEAKER
The print on the blind was from
Gabriel Sanchez.

A pause. Even though she knew it was coming, Anna is still taken aback by the result.

VOICE THROUGH PHONE SPEAKER
Hello?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Um, yeah. Thank you.

Anna hits the end call button. Picks up the receiver from the console and puts it to her ear. Hits the call button.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
This is Detective Ramirez. Is he
available to see me?

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/CAPTAIN'S GARZA'S OFFICE - DAY

Garza at his desk reading a report. Anna's on the other side.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
... And his prints were in her
house.

CAPTAIN GARZA
Okay. You can look into it. But
keep it quiet. I don't want Wilson
losing his mind before we have
something more concrete.

Garza closes the folder - reflects a moment.

CAPTAIN GARZA
It still doesn't explain why there
was no forced entry. She would have
had to know him somehow.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Shit!

Anna stands up and heads for the door.

CAPTAIN GARZA
What?

INT. HOLLENBECK STATION/DETECTIVE BULLPEN - DAY

A file folder with a title tag "GABRIEL SANCHEZ" is open on a
table.

A red faced and angry Anna is holding court with Saunders.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
You said there was nothing in the
phone record! She called the
lottery office.

DETECTIVE DREW SAUNDERS
Look, by the time we got the
records from the phone company,
Double V was already arrested. I
didn't think --

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
No, you didn't.

The insult falls hard on Saunders. Anna, trying not to burst from anger, picks up a scrap piece of paper from the folder with the numbers "6-9-2-1" written on it.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Did you ever follow-up on this?

DETECTIVE SAUNDERS
Yeah.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
And?

DETECTIVE SAUNDERS
It was his pin number. I checked with the bank.

One last sneer before Anna closes the folder and walks away.

DETECTIVE SAUNDERS
(calling out)
I'm sorry.
(to himself)
What a bitch.

EXT. HOLLENBECK STATION/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Anna leans up against her parked car. She has a cell phone to her ear and a cigarette in her mouth.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(into phone)
I hate to ask, but I got to bounce this off someone.
(takes a drag - listens)
Thanks. I'll see you at seven.

Anna ends the call. She takes one last drag from her cigarette - tosses it to the asphalt and enters her car.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Typical local bar - small and dark.

Huck, beer in hand, and Anna, with an empty wine glass in front of her, sit in a corner booth.

HUCK
You really think Double V had nothing to do with this?

Huck takes a swig of beer - Anna contemplates.

HUCK (CONT'D)

I mean, it's just a little coincidental that Sanchez was the one that called his plates in. At least to my mind anyway.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

I don't know. Maybe there's a connection. He could have taken out Sanchez.

(beat)

But not Esperanza.

Huck nods - he agrees with this. He points at Anna's empty wine glass.

HUCK

You want another?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

(checks her watch)

I should be getting home.

HUCK

C'mon. One for old times sake.

Anna's face show she's teetering. Huck motions towards the bartender for another round.

INT. HUCK'S HOME/BEDROOM - MORNING

Huck and Anna under the sheets - asleep.

Their BADGES, PHONES and REVOLVERS sit on top of the floor safe on Anna's side of the bed.

Their clothes are strewn haphazardly on the floor - there obviously was no time for folding.

Anna stirs awake. She rubs the sleep from her eyes and takes a moment to get her bearings.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Shit!

She slaps Huck on the shoulder rudely awakening him from a sound sleep.

HUCK

What - what - what?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

You let me fall asleep. You know I don't leave my Dad alone overnight.

Anna grabs her cell phone from the top of the safe. Hits a CONTACT and puts the phone to her ear as Huck falls back on his pillow.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(into phone - awkward)
Hey - um, just checking in to make
sure you're okay.

HUCK
(getting out of bed)
I'm going to take a shower.

This garners a harsh SSSH from Anna.

HUCK
(mouthing)
Okay.

Huck lumbers off to the bathroom.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(into phone)
No, I had to pull an all-nighter.
(rolls her eyes)
Yeah, really.

The ROAR of the shower emanates from the bathroom.

Anna hangs up the phone - stares at her clothes strewn on the floor. She rubs her hands through her hair.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Damn it.

MOMENTS LATER

The shower still roars.

Anna, fully dressed, picks up her REVOLVER from the top of the floor safe and slips it into her holster.

As she picks up her Detective BADGE, Anna inadvertently knocks Huck's BADGE to the floor.

Anna retrieve's Huck's BADGE. Just as she is placing it back on top of the floor safe she notices the BADGE NUMBER:

"6-9-2-1."

Anna freezes in place. The only discernible movement is the rise and fall of her chest from panicked breaths.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

No.

Anna hustles out of the room to the:

FRONT DOOR

And unlocks it. She pulls her cell phone out of her pocket as she walks through the Living Room and the:

KITCHEN

And approaches the back door.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

(into phone)

...You got it?Okay, get here
as quick as you can.

Anna unlocks the back door.

MOMENTS LATER

Anna sits rigidly in a chair staring at the bathroom door - slightly ajar. She has her revolver in one hand and Huck's Detective Badge in the other.

The shower is still running. It stops.

Anna pulls her cell phone out of her pocket. Hits the RECORD icon and places it in her gun holster.

HUCK (O.C.)

Hey, I was thinking we could grab
breakfast.

Huck, wearing sweats and drying his hair with a bath towel, enters the room.

HUCK

Did you hear me?

A head shake and a second later Huck realizes Anna has a gun on him.

HUCK

What the fuck?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

I need you to open your safe, Huck.

Huck starts towards Anna. She extends her arms forward - rigid - and holds the gun on Huck.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Stop!

Huck freezes in place.

HUCK

And what the fuck do you think is
in my safe?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

For the love of God, I'm hoping
nothing.

HUCK

You're acting insane.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Am I?

Anna tosses Huck's DETECTIVE Badge towards him. He snatches
it from the air.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

The last thing Gabriel Sanchez
wrote before he was killed was your
badge number.

Huck starts to move forward. Anna takes dead aim.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Open the fucking safe!

Huck walks over to the safe, bends down and dials the
numbers. He CLICKS the handle open and swings the door open.

HUCK

Help yourself.

Anna uses her gun to motion Huck towards the other corner of
the room. He takes a seat on a wooden chair.

Keeping her eyes and gun glued on Huck, Anna makes her way to
the safe. She bends down and steals a glance inside the safe -
spots a WHITE ENVELOPE.

Anna slides the envelope out. With one hand she flips the
flap open revealing the top half of a LOTTERY TICKET. She
removes the ticket.

It contains a single line of numbers: "2-7-8-11-19-38."

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

How did you get this, Huck?

HUCK
We could share.

Huck rises and starts to walk towards Anna.

HUCK
Half for you, half for me.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
Stop.

Huck inches forward.

HUCK
You wouldn't have to waste the rest
of your life chasing down scum
bags.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
(in shooting position)
I said stop.

Huck, now parallel with the bathroom doorway, holds his hands up - shows his palms in a surrender stance.

HUCK
Okay, you win.

Anna relaxes for a millisecond. Huck darts into the:

BATHROOM

And pulls a revolver from a vanity drawer. Keeping his body behind the door jam, Huck swings his arm into the:

BEDROOM

And FIRES. The bullet strikes the tip of Anna's shoulder. Her revolver falls to the carpet as she recoils from the shot. Anna makes a motion towards her revolver.

HUCK
(pointing his gun)
Don't.

The satisfied sneer on Huck's face stands in dark contrast to the look of panic on Anna's as Huck walks towards her.

Huck reaches her. They lock eyes. A wicked smile from Huck is followed by a vicious full fisted punch to Anna's face. She collapses to the floor - down and out.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Anna, unconscious, sits in a chair, her hands handcuffed behind her. Blood clots under her swollen and broken nose. A streak of blood from the bullet that grazed her shoulder oozes from her blouse.

Huck, armed with his gun, sits in a chair several feet away, calmly staring at Anna. On the table next to him a rope and a knife.

Anna comes to. She looks down at the cell phone in her holster. The red record light is still on.

HUCK

I'm sorry that you had to find out.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

How did you know about the lottery ticket?

HUCK

Why does it matter?

Anna looks at the rope and the knife on the table.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

I'm about to die. We've fucked each other. Humor me.

Huck nods.

HUCK

You make a fair point.

BEGIN FLASHBACK - FIRST DAY OF INVESTIGATION**INT. PALE BLUE HOME/BEDROOM - DAY**

Huck's in Esperanza's bedroom, wearing latex gloves, searching through the top drawer of a nightstand. He finds an old address book. Nothing else.

He opens the second drawer and pulls out a large stack of LOTTERY TICKETS bound together by a rubber band.

HUCK (V.O.)

The day we searched Esperanza's house - there was a stack of lottery tickets. Had to be more than a hundred. All neatly bound together.

Huck removes the rubber band and thumbs through the tickets.

HUCK (V.O.)

One ticket for one dollar for each week. All with the same set of numbers. 2-7-8-11-19 and 38. Funny thing was, the ticket for the day she died happened to be missing.

(beat)

I found that odd given that those numbers finally won.

Huck stuffs the entire stack of tickets into the pocket of his slacks.

He opens the ADDRESS BOOK. Written in pencil with a feeble hand on the first page: "LOTERIA 562-777-3434."

Huck rips the page from the address book - pockets it.

BACK TO SCENE

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

But how did you know?

HUCK

(off Anna's look)

Oh, I forgot to mention that on the way over to the house I just happened to hear the lottery announcement on the radio. "Mystery winner - Brooklyn liquor in Boyle Heights." I even passed the fucking store on the way over. Just around the corner. So I'm thinking - really? That poor old woman played the same damn numbers - and only those numbers - every God damn week, without fail and the ticket for the day she died just happened to be missing? Naw. She played her numbers. That meant that --

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Someone stole the ticket.

HUCK

Bingo.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Gabriel Sanchez.

Huck makes a "tip of the hat" motion.

HUCK

Well done.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

How did you figure out it was Gabriel?

HUCK

The next day, I called the lottery office. Hit two for Spanish and wala - Gabriel Sanchez. But I still had to confirm.

RESUME FLASHBACK

INT/EXT. HUCK'S CAR/SANTE FE LOTTERY OFFICE/CURBSIDE - NIGHT

HUCK (V.O.)

I ran a background check on Gabriel. Plates, criminal records - the usual stuff.

Huck waits in his darkened unmarked sedan parked on the street curb just outside the lottery office. He watches through binoculars as Gabriel makes his way through the parking lot to his own car - focusing on Gabriel's face.

Huck looks at a picture of Gabriel from the background printout. Yep - it's him.

HUCK (V.O.)

The little fuck was popped for cocaine possession last year.

INT/EXT. GABRIEL'S CAR/SANTE FE LOTTERY PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Gabriel enters his car - the dome light comes on. Gabriel removes the plastic bag from the glove compartment and taps out a line of coke on his finger and snorts it.

HUCK (V.O.)

And of course was still using.

The dome light goes dark. The red taillights beam and Gabriel's car reverses out of the space and enters the:

STREET - ALTERNATING BETWEEN HUCK AND GABRIEL'S CAR - NIGHT

Huck's car follows Gabriel's.

HUCK (V.O.)

Which gave me a legitimate reason to stop him.

Gabriel turns the corner.

Red and Blue police lights FLASH from Huck's headlights.

INT/EXT. GABRIEL'S CAR - NIGHT

Gabriel catches the lights in his rear view mirror.

GABRIEL

Fuck.

Gabriel slowly pulls over. Stares at his glove compartment. Contemplates - can he grab the coke in time?

Gabriel's car is filled with light from a high-powered flashlight held in Huck's hand.

A quick glance at his side view mirror. Huck is approaching - slow and steady. Gabriel notices the absence of a uniform.

GABRIEL

What the fuck?

Huck reaches the driver window. TAPS on the glass with the butt of the flashlight as he displays his badge with the other hand.

A pause as Gabriel stares at the BADGE NUMBER as he thinks.

Gabriel rolls down the window.

HUCK

License and registration.

GABRIEL

What did I do wrong?

HUCK

(firmly)

License and registration.

Gabriel removes his wallet from his pocket - takes out the license and gives it to Huck.

HUCK

Now, I'm going to need you to lean over - slowly - and remove your registration from the glove compartment. Along with the cocaine, of course.

GABRIEL

(panicky)

Look, I don't know why I'm being pulled over. Did I --?

HUCK

Snort cocaine in the parking lot. Yes, you did. Now give me the fucking cocaine and registration.

Gabriel's hand trembles as he removes his registration from the glove compartment and hands it along with the little plastic bag to Huck.

Gabriel starts to cry.

HUCK

Really? Get out of the car.

Still sobbing, Gabriel exits the vehicle. Huck spins him around and starts to cuff him.

HUCK (V.O.)

He was kind of a pussy. I'm surprised that he had murder in him.

GABRIEL

Please, if my wife finds out that I've been using again she'll leave me.

Huck ignores Gabriel's pleas and forces him back towards his unmarked car. He shoves Gabriel in the back seat - SLAMS the door. Huck enters the driver's side.

INT/EXT. HUCK'S CAR - NIGHT

They just sit there for a moment in silence as Huck stares at Gabriel through his rear view mirror.

HUCK

What did you do with the ticket?

GABRIEL

(confused)

The ticket?

HUCK (V.O.)

The dumb fuck thought I was talking about a traffic ticket.

HUCK

The lottery ticket. The one you
killed Esperanza Coronado for?

Gabriel's eyes widen. His pupils bounce back and forth -
panicked to his bones.

GABRIEL

I don't know - don't know what the
fuck you're talking about.

Huck turns around - faces Gabriel.

HUCK

I'm not here to arrest you. I'm
here to make a deal.

GABRIEL

A deal?

HUCK

I want half. In return, no arrest
for cocaine. No arrest for murder.
That seems real fair to me. What
about to you?

Silence.

Huck puts his keys in the ignition.

HUCK

The station it is then.

GABRIEL

Wait! Give me a chance to think!

BACK TO SCENE

HUCK

A chance to think. An odd request
from a non-thinker. You know the
dumb ass hadn't even figured out
how he was going to cash the ticket
yet.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

And you did?

HUCK

Yeah. There's a distant relative
that's going to become very rich.
In fact, we were going to pull the
trigger this month.

HUCK (CONT'D)

Figured enough time had passed -
the trial was over.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

So, you still haven't said how you
got the ticket?

HUCK

Gabriel finally saw that there was
no way out...

RESUME FLASHBACK - INT. HUCK'S CAR - NIGHT

GABRIEL

Okay, it's a deal.

HUCK

Of course, I'll need to see the
ticket.

GABRIEL

I don't have it on me.

HUCK

I know. You'll need to bring it to
me. Tonight.

GABRIEL

I can't --

HUCK

Listen, you little fuck. I'm not
negotiating.

Huck checks his watch.

HUCK

Go home. Have dinner. Do whatever
the fuck it is you do to appear
normal. Then you get the ticket and
meet me at Hollenbeck Park -
midnight tonight. I'll be by the
lake underneath the overpass. If
the ticket has the right numbers on
it, we have a deal. You understand?

Gabriel nods.

HUCK

If you don't show, I will hunt your
ass down and arrest you for murder.

Huck jiggles the plastic bag of cocaine in front of Gabriel's eyes. Like an addict, Gabriel's face shows more concern for the fate of his drugs than the fate of his life.

HUCK

And I'm keeping this for insurance.
You can have it back tonight.

(beat)

Now go.

Gabriel walks back to his car - opens the door and enters.

INT. GABRIEL'S CAR - NIGHT

Gabriel closes his eyes - thinks. He picks up a pencil and piece of paper from the console - writes down Huck's badge number.

A FLASH from Huck's headlights fill Gabriel's car. Gabriel waves meekly and turns the ignition key.

BACK TO SCENE

HUCK

Oh, I almost forgot. I asked him about the D.A. Tip Hotline. He said it was him.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

And that's why you had Sarah listen to the recording.

HUCK

Well, it certainly helped to make it seem like a vengeance killing.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

It did.

(beat)

But why Double V?

HUCK

Because the poor fuck just happened to be on the street that night.

(off Anna's look)

Oh, save the sympathy. He was collecting drug money for Christ's sake. Not like he was real innocent bystander.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

So Gabriel showed up as promised.

HUCK

He did.

RESUME FLASHBACK - EXT. HOLLENBECK PARK/LAKE - NIGHT

Dark and quiet other than the sound of cars HUMMING down the freeway overpass that spans over the corner of the lake.

The silhouette of Huck's frame is barely visible as he waits.

HUCK (V.O.)

I got to admit. I had my doubts
that he would.

Gabriel, twitching like an addict, makes his way down the darkened concrete pathway towards the figure.

HUCK (V.O.)

But an addict is an addict.

Huck, wearing a long leather jacket and tight leather gloves, stands stoically.

HUCK

Good boy. You kept your word.
That's an excellent start.

Gabriel, too afraid to talk just nods.

HUCK

Did you bring the ticket?

GABRIEL

Fi-fi-fifty, fifty. Right?

HUCK

Fifty fifty.

Gabriel reaches into his pocket and removes a LOTTERY TICKET. His hands tremble as he hands it to Huck.

Huck inspects the ticket. It's the one.

HUCK (V.O.)

The boy came through. But I still
had to make sure he hadn't done
something stupid. That he couldn't
be traced.

Huck removes the bag of cocaine from his pocket - palms it in his glove covered hand. Gabriel salivates.

HUCK

First, I need to know a little about the logistics.

GABRIEL

Like what?

HUCK

Are the calls to the Lottery Office recorded?

GABRIEL

Yeah, but they only keep them for ninety days. So we got to wait at least that long, Oh, and - um, I cut her off real quick. I called her back on a burner phone. So it can't be --

HUCK

Why does a lottery worker have a burner phone?

Gabriel points at the cocaine in Huck's hand.

HUCK

Maybe you're not as stupid as I thought.

(beat)

What about the store where it was bought? Do they keep records.

GABRIEL

No. I already checked. Their security cameras were broken. And - uh - on the - on the news the owner said he had no idea who bought the ticket.

HUCK (V.O.)

Not bad planning for a coke head.

GABRIEL

So, we have a deal or what?

Huck stares at Gabriel for a moment - the wheels are turning.

He hands the bag of cocaine to Gabriel.

HUCK

Yeah, we got a deal.

Gabriel looks at the bag in his hand as if it were gold. Then looks up at Huck.

HUCK
Go ahead. Celebrate.

As Gabriel opens the bag and nervously taps out a line on the top of his finger, Huck stuffs the lottery ticket in his pocket.

As Gabriel snorts back the coke, Huck plants a fist in Gabriel's stomach causing him to collapse to the ground.

GABRIEL
(getting up on his knees)
What the fuck?

HUCK (V.O.)
But he still was stupid as a rock.

Huck kicks Gabriel's head. Gabriel falls bouncing his head off the concrete edge of the man-made lake.

Huck reaches his hand inside his leather jacket and removes a THIN ROPE. In an instant, it's around Gabriel's neck and pulled back with the full force of Huck's body weight.

Gabriel's eyes bulge. His feet kick and he gasps as he pulls at the rope around his neck.

HUCK (V.O.)
Can't say that he didn't have it coming. The way he strangled that poor woman.

Huck pulls tighter, crossing the ends of the rope.

Gabriel's eyes roll back. His body goes limp.

Huck, exhausted from the struggle, exhales into the night air. He scans the area. Still no one around.

BACK TO SCENE

Huck looks reflective - strokes his chin.

HUCK
You may not believe this, but I am pretty sure that I wouldn't have done it if the events of that day were different.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
What day?

Huck - shakes his head - incredulous.

HUCK

It's not obvious?

(beat)

The day you decided not to arrest Double V. We tell him that someone tipped us on his license plate and then you let him free to roam the streets? You basically handed me Gabriel's killer. Vengeance, what a perfect fucking motive for the perfect fucking suspect.

(wicked smile)

Thank you.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Fuck you.

HUCK

(with a wink)

You have.

Huck stands.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Finish the story.

Huck slowly takes his seat. What the fuck - finish it.

RESUME FLASHBACK - EXT. HOLLENBECK PARK/LAKE - NIGHT

Huck bends over and rolls Gabriel's body over - face up. He spots the bag of cocaine next to Gabriel's body. Huck picks it up - inspects it. He purses his lips as he concentrates.

HUCK (V.O.)

I thought the drug connection would help.

Huck separates Gabriel's dead lips and then stuffs the bag of cocaine into his mouth.

HUCK (V.O.)

Don't mean to brag, but I thought that really had an artistic flair.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ (V.O.)

Where did you get the knife?

HUCK (V.O.)

Now that was an interesting turn of events. I'm going to say dumb luck.

Huck pats down Gabriel right leg - feels a bulge in Gabriel's left pocket and pulls out a set of car keys and a cell phone.

Huck stuffs the car keys back in Gabriel's pocket and while still on his knees hurls the cell phone deep into the lake.

Huck pats down Gabriel's other pocket. He pulls out a wallet. He opens it, inspects the contents then stuffs it back in.

HUCK (V.O)

Didn't want to leave any doubt that
it wasn't a robbery.

Huck pats down Gabriel's left leg - feels something. He rolls up the denim and finds a jack knife strapped to Gabriel's ankle.

A wicked smile crosses Huck's face as he opens the knife revealing the glimmer of a blade.

HUCK (V.O.)

The dumb fuck had it on him.

Huck kneels over Gabriel's face and firmly grabs his chin with his gloved left hand. With his right hand, he carves the initials - V-N-E - in Gabriel's forehead.

Huck stands - his breath misting in the air. Scans the area - dark and silent. He walks away, dropping the jack knife in a nearby shrub.

BACK TO SCENE

HUCK

I can't tell you how convenient it was that they matched Double V's prints to Esperanza's murder the very next day and we had a District Attorney just salivating to arrest someone.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

So you're the one that leaked the mutilation information.

HUCK

(satisfied smile)
Guilty.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

You just made one mistake.

HUCK

Yeah, I should have checked his car. That was sloppy of me.

(beat)

And unfortunate for you.

Huck stands, picks up the knife and the rope. Anna's eyes widen in fear.

HUCK

You know I've got to make it look like the others.
 (twisting the rope)
 But first, your turn. I need to know who you called while I was in the shower.

In the window of the back door, Anna can see the silhouettes of two figures.

HUCK

Saunders?

Anna averts her eyes as if Huck got it.

HUCK

Oh, God, you called Saunders. That's rich. You didn't know he was in on it? He's getting two million.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

For burying the information about your badge number.

Huck's eyes narrow - she shouldn't know that.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Yesterday he told me that they were Gabriel's pin numbers. When I saw your badge this morning, I knew he lied. About the phone records too.
 (beat)
 So, no. I didn't call Saunders. I didn't call anyone at the station. Didn't know who to trust.

A quizzical look for Huck.

HUCK

Then who did you call?

The front door opens. Pablo, dressed in his Army Ranger uniform appears in the frame. Instinctively, Huck's arm jolts up and he points his gun at Pablo.

At the same time, the back door quietly open and Hector and Miguel start to creep up behind Huck.

HUCK
 (at Pablo)
 Who the fuck are you?

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 I called him.

PABLO
 I believe you have something that
 belonged to my Grandmother.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 You don't recognize him? That's
 Pablo Coronado.

Hector and Miguel reach Huck. Hector points a gun at the back of Huck's head. A CLICK of the trigger alerts Huck's to their presence.

HECTOR
 If you move, I'll blow your fucking
 head off. Put down the gun.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
 And those are his friends.

Huck slowly lowers his hand to the table - releases his gun.

INT. RESIDENTIAL HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Frank and Anna, nose bandaged, sit in the living room watching the News.

INSERT TELEVISION SCREEN

NEWS ANCHOR
 ...Detectives Whitehurst and
 Saunders are both being held
 without bail pending their
 arraignment in the death of Gabriel
 Sanchez. We go now to David Tran at
 the D.A.'s Office.

David Tran has a microphone in the face of D.A. Anthony Wilson.

D.A. ANTHONY WILSON
 Police integrity has always been
 first and foremost a priority for
 my office and --

CLICK - as the screen goes dark.

BACK TO SCENE

FRANK RAMIREZ
Go ahead. Have a cigarette.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
I quit.

INT. PELICAN BAY PRISON/PRISONER RELEASE AREA - DAY

A PRISON GUARD escorts Double V, now dressed in regular clothes, towards a perimeter exit gate.

EXT. PELICAN BAY PRISON/PRISONER RELEASE GATE - DAY

A black 1967 Chevy Impala is parked. Hector in the driver's seat, Miguel in the back seat. Waiting for Double V.

EXT. EVERGREEN CEMETERY/BOYLE HEIGHTS - DAY

Surrounded by a chain-link fence, a gray, broken feeling place. Graves crowd into each other, markers lay broken under shady willows. Old monuments sit oddly on the untended ground - mostly nothing more than reddish dirt and crabgrass.

Pablo, in his dress uniform and now without crutches, and Anna, her nose bandaged, stand in silence at Esperanza Coronado's marker.

INT/EXT. UNMARKED SEDAN - DAY (TRAVELLING)

Anna drives. Pablo's in the passenger seat as they drive down a residential street.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
So, what are you going to do with the money?

PABLO
I'm giving most if it to Saint Mary's.
(beat)
That's what she would have done.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ
And what about you?

The car stops in front of the:

PALE BLUE HOME

Anna and Pablo stare at it for a moment - a monument to their journey together.

PABLO

I'm keeping a little for moving expenses. I got a job with the VA - Walter Reed. I leave tomorrow.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

The house?

PABLO

I'm giving it to Sarah Sanchez.
(off Anna's look)
They need it. She was a victim too.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

You're a good --

PABLO

I got to pack.

Pablo opens the door - gets out.

PABLO

Thank you, Detective.

DETECTIVE ANNA RAMIREZ

Anna.

Pablo smiles as he closes the door. Anna watches him walk up the steps towards the pale blue home.

Anna puts her car in gear and drives up the street.

She turns the corner onto a main street and stops at a stop sign right at the:

BROOKLYN LIQUOR STORE

And spot a sign in the window: "WINNING TICKET SOLD HERE."

Anna's lost in thought as she stares at the window.

A HONK from a car behind her.

Anna holds her hand up apologetically - drives on.

FADE OUT