

THE COP KILLERS

FADE IN:

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

A young plain-clothes COP grinds his knee into the back of a squirming SUSPECT -- attempts to restrain his arm as the man resists; cursing, spitting, SCREAMING.

His partner, RAWLEY NINER (39), unkempt hair, a half-beard, strung out -- does a quick sweep of the room -- gun drawn - - checking behind velvet curtains and down a dark passage marked 'EXIT'.

SUSPECT

Pig bastards! Sonofabitch!

A bright, colorfully alluring BAR accents a decadent room. The glass surface - aligned with GLOWING FLOURESCENT TUBES - stretches the length of the counter.

An EXOTIC DANCER stands between two stools, facing the bar, bent over, hands down on the bright glass. Her legs a good two feet apart.

She peeks behind her, spots Niner doing his search. Niner catches her, points toward the bar.

NINER

Eyes forward sweetheart! Move again and I'll bust your nose open!

Niner swiftly kicks her legs further apart, grabs her waist and pulls her back.

NINER (CONT'D)

Move it back.

DANCER

Buy me a drink first.

NINER

Nah. We played that game.

SUSPECT

You hear that? Fucker didn't pay!  
Stuck his dick in her!

Niner's partner pulls a nice wad of cash from his suspect's pocket, holds it up for all to see.

COP

What's this? You takin' up a  
collection for the church  
picnic?

SUSPECT

For your mother, pig!

Niner sniffs and paces the bright pink carpet like a train wreck - watches as his partner pulls a snub-nosed REVOLVER from his suspect's pants.

COP

Look at this. Forty caliber Smith.

Niner catches the dancer turning around again.

NINER

(to dancer)  
Hands on the counter!

COP

(to Suspect)  
Just like our guy that was found  
in a dumpster up on West Eighty-  
Third and Main last week. They  
found a forty caliber like this  
stuck in his throat. Choked on  
his own blood.

NINER

Traced his credit card back here.

The Dancer spins around, furious, fearless.

DANCER

He had nuthin' to do with it!

Niner pulls her arm behind her back and pushes her into the bar.

NINER

Don't fuckin' move!

He jerks her arm upward as she winces in pain -- cries out. His partner takes offense.

DANCER

Let go! Please!

COP

(to Niner)

Rawley, take it easy!

Niner restrains her with one arm, aims his gun at the back of her head with the other - sweating, excited, nervous.

NINER

Just a little worked up.

COP

You're sweatin' like a pig. What the hell's a matter with you comin' to work like this?

NINER

Just a little somethin' to get the engine cranked. Sorry I'm not eighteen anymore.

His partner rolls his eyes with disgust.

COP

Come on. Cuff her and let's get the hell out of here.

The Dancer stares down at the counter behind the bar, spots a carved up lemon wedge and a sharp jagged KNIFE resting on a cutting board.

Niner turns his back on the dancer as his partner pulls out an extra pair of hand cuffs. He stuffs his gun in the front of his pants.

The Dancer goes for the knife. Niner turns to her, cuffs ready. She swings around as Niner's swiftly --

STABBED IN THE ABDOMEN

Before he can cry out, he has vivid flashbacks of a sordid past.

FLASHBACK - SERIES OF SHOTS

-- Niner violently throws RAUL ORTEGA (30s) from his third story balcony as girlfriend, Justine Herrera (20s) watches the incident in horror, a blood curdling SCREAM.

-- Niner watches as ABBY SAMMS (17) - FIRES TWO SHOTS into BOBBY VAN DEN KEMP (30s) as he floats out into the shallow end of a small pond.

-- Abby rests in a bathtub full of BLOOD. She raises both arms out of the water. Both wrists cut.

INT. NINER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

And Niner jumps out of a deep sleep - hyperventilating and scared. He stares at his lap - notices that he's urinated on himself.

He grabs at a SCAR that stretches across the left side of his abdomen.

INT. NINER'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Niner, with a towel around his waist, tosses his wet sweat pants into the bathtub - along with four other pair of wet boxers and sweats.

He spots an orange prescription bottle on the sink, notices that it's empty, picks it up, chucks it against the wall.

INT. THE GRAB SHACK - NIGHT

This small convenience store is empty as the front counter clerk KEITH MEERS (25), shaved black hair, heavy sideburns and flashy earrings, sucks a lollipop and sits on a swivel stool.

The news is playing on a FLATSCREEN above a cigarette rack.

Meers pays close attention to a special broadcast about a police officer's shooting.

ON THE TV

A female REPORTER stands just off a thin, two lane blacktop at the foot of a strip mall's entrance.

REPORTER

It's been almost two weeks since police officer Troy Beechum was found dead on this small side street, just off of Fletcher Road, in what authorities claim as a "traffic stop gone wrong".

ON MEERS

- as he checks his watch, and then outside. He spots a car on the street passing the store and FLASHING ITS HEADLIGHTS  
Meers turns his attention to the parking lot. Not a car in sight. He turns back to the news report.

ON THE TV

The camera follows the reporter as she slowly steps down a steep hill, toward a drainage pipe.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

Beechum was discovered here at the bottom of this grassy slope with two gunshot wounds. One to the chest and one to the stomach.

Meers rolls the lollipop around in his mouth as he's glued to the news report. Entranced by it.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

Police officers were first led to the scene by the blazing fire of Beechum's squad car...supposedly set by his attacker...

Meers is distracted by the BRIGHT REFLECTION OF HEADLIGHTS bouncing off the dark parking lot pavement.

Meers checks one of four parking lot surveillance monitors hanging near the television. He spots a dark colored car shut off its lights and park.

He seems upset by this. Even a bit nervous.

EXT. GRAB SHACK PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A black eighty-two Corvette parks at the farthest possible spot on the side of this grimy convenience store.

INT. CORVETTE - NIGHT

Niner behind the wheel as he sniffs some coke from a nasal spray bottle. His eyes wide, chest heaving. He shakes his head, waking up a bit.

EXT. GRAB SHACK PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Niner steps around the side of this small building -- into the front lot. His coat is long and bulky, concealing some sort of weapon.

INT. THE GRAB SHACK - NIGHT

Meers spots Niner entering the store - gives him the heads up as Niner holds out TWO FINGERS.

Meers reaches under a register, punches a code into a safe and opens the door, pulls out TWO TWISTED BAGGIES OF PILLS and holds them in his palm.

Niner walks around a shelf and down the last aisle, headed for the soda coolers. He stops at one of the doors, spots his own reflection in the glass.

He sees the reflection of ABBY SAMMS in the glass reaching out to him. BLOOD on her wrists.

The shock of this causes Niner to drop his keys to the tile -- bends down to retrieve them.

TWO ARMED GUNMEN

- burst through the door in BLACK with SKI MASKS and twelve gauge shotguns. Both men are BLACK.

Meers drops the two bags of pills on the counter as he puts both hands in the air.

GUNMAN #1 steps to the counter, aimed at Meers and ready to put him away.

GUNMAN #1

Okay tough guy! Empty the safe and put the shit in a bag! You even think about goin' for that piece I'll blow your brains all over those cigarettes!

Niner spots the two gunmen from a globed mirror hanging in the corner of the ceiling.

GUNMAN #2 surveys the store, checking for customers. No one in sight.

Meers slowly moves for the safe under the register where he keeps his secret stash of illegal substances.

GUNMAN #1 (CONT'D)

Go on! Move it!

IN THE SAFE

sits a forty-five pistol. Meers reaches for it.

NINER (O.S.)

(to Meers)

Don't do it.

Meers and the two gunmen turn and spot --

NINER

standing by an endcap on the last aisle. His left hand is stuffed in a coat pocket. His right hand hidden behind the shelf.

NINER

Two against one are never good odds. Let's face it. Nobody wants a gunfight. Nobody gets paid and somebody gets killed.

NINER (CONT'D)

Next there's cops. Even if you do score some quick cash, you won't be around long enough to spend it.

GUNMAN #2

Shit. Now what?

GUNMAN #1

Hit em' in the mouth!

Meers once again reaches for his gun. Gunman #1 catches him.

GUNMAN #1 (CONT'D)

Hands in the air!

Niner pulls back his coat and exposes a silver forty four magnum snub shoved down his pants.

NINER

You don't wanna do that.

GUNMAN #2

Fuck, he's got a piece!

NINER

Tell you what.

Niner pulls his left hand out of his coat. He's got a fat wad of cash wrapped with a rubber band.

NINER (CONT'D)

I got three grand. Right here. A pretty good score considering.

This catches their attention.

NINER (CONT'D)

It's yours. All you gotta do is come get it.

Gunman #2 checks with his partner. Gunman #1 gives him the nod. Gunman #2 walks to Niner, snags the cash from his hand and stuffs it in his pocket.

He then yanks the forty four from his belt - holds it on Niner as he backs off with the shotgun in his other hand.

For a brief moment, Gunman #2 looks away, checks with his partner.

GUNMAN #2

Alright, man! Let's go!

NINER

- swings his right arm through a stack of popcorn kernels featured on the endcap, knocks the tall jars to the floor and exposes a SAWED OFF SHOTGUN.

MEERS

- takes cover behind the counter as Gunman #1 backs toward the door, panicked.

Gunman #2 aims the forty four, squeezes the trigger. The SAFETY IS ON.

GUNMAN #2 (CONT'D)

Oh, fuck!!!

Niner cocks his pump action grip and FIRES.

Hits Gunman #2 in the FACE blowing pieces of it across the store.

Gunman #1 takes it on the heels, storming out of the store -- tail between his legs.

Niner pumps and takes aim.

POW! POW! He SHATTERS THE FRONT WINDOW as his suspect flees the scene.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAB SHACK/REAR DOOR - NIGHT

It's the back of the store where a GETAWAY CAR awaits near a rear door. Gunman #1 quickly jumps in the driver's side and floors it.

He leaves some tire behind as he bolts off.

EXT. GRAB SHACK PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Niner spots the GETAWAY CAR making a right at a corner STOP LIGHT - tearing off like a bat out of hell.

Niner jumps in his Corvette, throws it in reverse and PEELS OUT - drives backwards into oncoming traffic.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Cars HONK and SWERVE to miss as the out of control Corvette power-slides across the pavement.

He spins in a ninety degree angle. Now in driving position as he charges toward a corner stop sign, makes a fast right and begins his pursuit.

The GETAWAY CAR is a good two hundred yards off, weaving in and out of traffic.

Niner puts the pedal down, quickly catches up with the four door clunker.

On the opposite side of this street sits a tall, seven-tier parking structure.

The GETAWAY CAR cuts across a grassy median - into oncoming traffic as it SNAPS THROUGH THE YELLOW GUARD RAIL, into the tall structure.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

The GETAWAY CAR storms up a ramp and cuts a hard left as it continues to climb the garage.

THE CORVETTE

- enters through the front gate. The windows down as Niner listens to TIRES SQUEALING ON THE PAVEMENT.

NINER

I hear you, asshole.

THIRD FLOOR

The Corvette turns a corner - spots the GETAWAY CAR stopped dead center of the ramp. The driver's door open.

Niner spots a STAIRWELL DOOR in the far corner and pieces it all together.

He quickly jumps out. Shotgun in hand as he heads for the stairwell.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Niner enters the dark staircase - is KNOCKED OVER THE HEAD by GUNMAN #1 as he drops to his knees.

Niner grabs at his aching head as Gunman #1 hovers over him -- mask still on and CELL PHONE IN HAND.

He offers the open phone to Niner.

GUNMAN #1

It's for you.

Niner's a bit confused by this as he slowly sits up. He's reluctant to accept the phone.

The Gunman appears to have caught some of the shotgun blast to his leg. Bleeding.

GUNMAN #1 (CONT'D)

Take it.

He accepts the phone, listens.

VOICE (O.S.)

Detective Niner. Listen to me very carefully...because these next moments could very well be the most important of your life.

NINER

Who is this?

VOICE (O.S.)

The man you shot tonight was a cop. The man in front of you is also a cop.

Niner scans his attacker up and down. His gun now by his side. A non threatening pose.

NINER

I don't understand.

VOICE (O.S.)

If I were you, I'd listen closely and follow my instructions, without question. Understood?

Silence.

VOICE (O.S.)

Good. As we speak... all available units are currently en route to the grab shack store, in response to a 911 call made by the owner, Mister Keith Meers.

(beat)

In less than a minute, others units will be reaching the parking garage on fifth and Dawson where you are presently located.

NINER

What do you want?

VOICE (O.S.)

The police are not to detain this man. They are not to question him. He was never there and neither were you.

(beat)

Your only other choice is explaining why you killed a cop in cold blood and fled the scene. It's up to you, Sergeant.

Niner is at a loss for words.

VOICE (O.S.)

Do you understand?

(beat)

Better hurry, Detective. They're on their way.

NINER

Yeah. I understand.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Niner's Corvette crawls along at a snail's pace as several PATROL CARS roam up and down the sloping ramps.

A UNIFORM COP

approaches the Corvette as Niner rolls down his window and pokes a head out - flashes a badge.

NINER

Yes, sir, boss?

UNIFORM COP

Sergeant. Sorry to bother you.

NINER

What's goin' on?

UNIFORM COP

We had a botched robbery two blocks down. The owner said the shooter drove off in an early model Chevy Impala. Got another 911 call from a guy sayin' some whack job almost rammed his car crossing the median and booked it into the garage.

(beat)

He said he wasn't sure of the model, but from the description, it looks like our guy.

NINER

You said shooter? Somebody get shot?

UNIFORM COP

Yeah, they're saying one of ours walked in on em' robbin' the till and took a twelve gauge to the face. D.O.A.

NINER

A cop?

UNIFORM COP

Yeah. Some homicide cop named  
Keyes, Reed, Creed. Something  
like that.

Niner fights his obvious guilt. The Uniform Cop watches him closely.

UNIFORM COP (CONT'D)

Are you alright, Sergeant?

Niner snaps out of it.

NINER

Sorry to hear that. Good luck to  
you.

The Uniform Cop pats his roof, sends Niner on his way as he heads for the exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. WATERMAN MEDICAL CENTER - NIGHT

Niner's Corvette hurries into the half-empty lot and parks illegally in the ambulance bay.

He jumps out, opens the passenger door and helps out DORIAN WILSON (20s) - black wounded cop from the grab shack liquor store robbery.

Wilson is a young, able, physically fit man with tight corn rows for hair. More of a gangster than a cop.

His leg is bleeding as he limps and drags his foot on the ambulance bay with his arm around Niner.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Niner and Wilson enter. The front desk is quiet, no one in the admit chair.

NINER

Officer needs assistance!

He spots a waiting room with a bunch of empty chairs, sits Wilson down on one of them as he grabs at his bleeding leg in excruciating pain.

An ORDERLY steps out from behind a curtain area, trash bin in hand. He spots the wounded man wincing in pain.

ORDERLY

Oh, shit.

(to Niner)

I'll get somebody!

As he clumsily dumps the trash bin on the ground in a panic and bolts off.

NINER

Yeah, you do that!

And here comes ER nurse CARLY DENNIS (29) - our feisty but sexy fireplug from "Niner", now with long, beautiful black hair pulled into a tight ponytail.

She spots Niner and his wounded cop bleeding out in chairs and shakes her head in disgust.

CARLY

You know, I knew this day was coming eventually.

NINER

Don't start. I got a shot cop here. Caught a twelve gauge to the leg.

CARLY

(to Wilson)

Yeah, me and Dorian go way back. Don't we, Dorian?

Wilson gives her a dirty look as he continues to wince in pain from the gunshot wound.

The Orderly returns with three more NURSES and a stretcher. They help Wilson off the chairs and onto the flat mattress as he SCREAMS out.

They quickly wheel him down the hall and towards a trauma room as Carly and Niner follow behind.

NINER

You know this guy? Let me guess.  
An ex boyfriend?

CARLY

Yeah - if I ever switch from cops to low-life drug dealers he'll be the first one I call.

(smug)

Although the distinction between the two is growing slimmer by the minute these days.

Carly disappears into the trauma room to help with Wilson -- leaves Niner in the hall, confused.

Another nurse, CARRIE ANN (30s) - shuffles up the hallway toward Niner, a message in hand.

CARRIE ANN

Sergeant Niner?

NINER

Yes?

CARRIE ANN

You had a phone call come in about five minutes ago. He left you this message.

Niner opens the folded paper and reads.

INT. HOSPITAL CHAPEL - NIGHT

A dark, dimly lit prayer room with a cross on the wall and a bunch of empty chairs.

In the shadows sits a tall, lean man with a tailored suit and a full head of slicked back hair. His name is MICHAEL LAZURUS (40s) - all business.

He waits comfortably with his hands crossed in his lap.

Enter Niner.

LAZURUS

Sergeant Niner. Won't you have  
a seat?

He stops at the doorway, feels a second pair of eyes on him  
as he looks to his right.

And there stands DETECTIVE JEB WALSH (40s), fully gray with  
dark eyes and a gruff, chiseled face.

NINER

You got some explaining to do,  
Lucy.

Niner takes a seat in the last row as he keeps a close eye  
on Walsh. The two exchange a hard stare.

Lazurus stands, moves closer to the light, exposing a face  
that spells "money" and "greed".

LAZURUS

My name is Michael Lazurus. I've  
been appointed special counsel  
for District Attorney Ross.

(motions to Walsh)

I believe you know Sergeant Walsh.

Niner checks with Walsh. These two don't like each other  
and it shows.

LAZURUS (CONT'D)

We're heading up an investigation  
into the disappearance of Ross's  
daughter Sarah.

NINER

I wasn't aware there was a dis-  
-appearance.

LAZURUS

No. As far as the general public's  
concerned there wasn't. Mister Ross  
would like to keep it that way.

NINER

Okay. I'm lost.

LAZURUS

After three days and no word from Sarah, the police discovered she'd last been seen with her boyfriend leaving a nightclub called "The Room".

Niner feels Walsh's eyes on him as the two exchange another brief glance.

LAZURUS (CONT'D)

This was a week ago Saturday. The boyfriend being a low level dealer named Keith Meers.

This grabs Niner's attention.

LAZURUS (CONT'D)

I believe you know him. He runs his product from a two bit liquor store off of Bailey Avenue. You've been making buys from him for the last three and a half months to be exact.

NINER

What's that have to do with the DA's daughter?

LAZURUS

Needless to say, the police had a few questions for Mister Meers. Him being their only suspect.

(beat)

Expecting him to put up a fight and swear his innocence, he admitted to being with Sarah at the time she was taken.

NINER

Taken? As in kidnapped?

LAZURUS

Meers claims he was too scared to come forward about Sarah. Given his chosen profession and his connection to some major criminal elements, there might be some acquaintances of Mister Ross that would seek to do him bodily harm.

NINER

I take it this relationship was a secret?

LAZURUS

That's correct. Now, Mister Meers not only claims to have been there ...but to know the identity of one of her kidnappers.

NINER

You know who it is. So what're you waiting on?

LAZURUS

Unfortunately, for Meers, it's not that simple. You see, these men who took her are connected to some very dangerous people. People that will have Meers killed if they think he's talked with the police.

Niner notices that Walsh is keeping a careful eye on the nurses passing in the hall. He shuts the chapel doors.

NINER

Hence, you guys deciding to stage a half-assed fake robbery where Meers catches a shotgun blast to the chest. You guys capture the whole thing on video...release it to the press...and as far as the public knows, Meers is dead.

Lazurus nods.

Niner shrugs.

LAZURUS

As it turns out was an imperfect plan.

NINER

What's this have to do with me?

LAZURUS

According to Meers, these men are holding Sarah for ransom. This was later confirmed when Mister Ross received a video disc of his little girl tied to a chair... along with their ransom demands.

(beat)

They want three hundred thousand, which also confirms Meers statement that there were three of them the night Sarah was taken.

NINER

You know, you guys still haven't answered my question.

LAZURUS

I'm assigning you to Mister Meers. He says he doesn't know where Sarah is, but has the connections to find out who does. Whatever he digs up on these guys, you report it to me. No one else.

NINER

Where is he?

LAZURUS

Staying at the Best for Less Motel under the name 'Walsh'.

Lazurus tosses him the ROOM KEY.

LAZURUS (CONT'D)

And Rawley. Keep it quiet this time.

EXT. WATERMAN MEDICAL CENTER - NIGHT

Niner heads to his car, still parked in the ambulance bay as an angry Carly comes storming out through the electric doors.

CARLY

Wait a second!

Niner turns as she catches up with him.

CARLY (CONT'D)

What happened? And you're not leaving until you tell me.

NINER

Who is he?

Carly's confused. Not following.

CARLY

Who?

NINER

The kid I brought in. Dorian.

CARLY

According to you, he's a cop.

NINER

He isn't?

Carly pauses, more confused than ever.

CARLY

No, he's not. So why did you say he was? Afraid this one was gonna press charges, Rawley?

NINER

Tell me about him.

CARLY

I don't know. My guess, he's a dealer.

NINER

Why's that?

CARLY

Gee, I don't know. Cos this is his fifth trip to the ER in less than two years. But I suppose you don't know anything about that, do you?

NINER

No, not really. What's his last name?

CARLY

Not until you tell me what's going on. I'm serious this time!

NINER

Gee, Carly, I can't. His last name?

Carly tries to stand her ground, but his eyes are cutting a hole through her face. She buckles and huffs in defeat.

CARLY

Bastard. Wilson! Dorian Wilson!

Niner pats her on the behind.

NINER

You're a peach.

He jumps in his Corvette and darts off, leaving Carly still huffing and puffing.

CARLY

And don't touch my ass!

INT. THE GRAB SHACK - CRIME SCENE - NIGHT

The dead body of police officer ROGER CREED (40s), lay limp on the tile floor, covered in a simple white sheet.

The part covering his face is SOAKED THROUGH WITH BLOOD.

A PHOTOGRAPHER shoots a few SNAPS as a crew of UNIFORM COPS converse with a female CRIME SCENE TECH.

A hip, young detective gnawing a piece of chewing gum paces behind the register, reviews the EMPTY SAFE below the cash drawer.

This is RAY CLARK (30s), thin, beady eyes, rat-like face. A real prick.

Ray stares into the empty cash drawer and then the overhead surveillance monitors that cover the parking lot and entire store.

A cute latina exits a back office with similar surveillance monitors and video disc recorder. She sports a form-fitting turtle neck and tight slacks.

This is GINA SANTOS (30s) and despite her model looks has a fierce intelligence about her.

Santos hovers over Creed's body just as --

NINER

- enters the store, acting surprised by what he sees.

NINER

I come at a bad time?

SANTOS

Rawley Niner. Just talking about you today.

NINER

(silly grin)

Anything good?

SANTOS

A girlfriend of mine asked me if I was still seeing that cop. I said 'you mean the one I caught fucking that nurse last month'? Nah. It didn't work out.

NINER

Well. I'm glad enough time's passed we can joke about it.

SANTOS

Yeah, they say time heals any-  
-thing.

Ray comes from behind the counter.

RAY

Well, well. You just got a real  
hard time stayin' away from dead  
bodies, don't you, Rawley?

SANTOS

Just lay off, Ray.

NINER

Nah. Just got drawn in by the  
glow of the pretty red and blue  
lights, that's all.

(beat)

So what the hell happened here?  
Who's the stiff?

RAY

The stiff is a cop. So why don't  
you show some respect for once,  
asshole.

Santos motions to Ray to back off.

SANTOS

Alright, alright. Just give us a  
sec, okay, Ray? Get some air.

Ray reluctantly joins the other officers in conversation as  
Santos and Niner step into a corner.

SANTOS (CONT'D)

Our guy on the ground was Roger  
Creed. Homicide.

(beat)

The 9-1-1 call was made by the  
manager, Keith Meers.

SANTOS (CONT'D)

Vice says he's a known dealer.  
Low-level, small time shit.

NINER

Creed, Creed, Creed. Where do I  
know that name from?

SANTOS

He was the primary on the Beechum  
shooting. May've heard his case  
hit a stand-still these last two  
weeks? No leads, no suspects.

NINER

Yeah, I noticed. So what?

SANTOS

So I don't think it was an accident  
Creed just happened to be in this  
part of town.

NINER

You're losing me?

Santos checks with the others before grabbing Niner's arm  
and dragging him toward the back office.

SANTOS (CONT'D)

Come in here so we can talk.

They enter a small office and video surveillance room with  
a wall of digital monitors and time clocks.

SANTOS (CONT'D)

This manager, Keith Meers was a no  
show right? He calls in a robbery  
and boom. He disappears before we  
can question him.

Niner glances over the security monitors as Santos finishes  
her story.

SANTOS (CONT'D)

Now, check this out. Tonight's  
surveillance video is missing.

SANTOS (CONT'D)

Which means the shooter took the disc with him.

NINER

So what was Creed doing here?

SANTOS

Don't you get it?

NINER

Obviously I don't.

SANTOS

Our guy took the disc. Just like Beechum's squad car. His shooter set it on fire and burned up the video surveillance camera along with it. Covering his tracks.

Niner thinks it over. Plays stupid. Acts surprised.

NINER

You're thinkin' Beechum and Creed's killer are the same guy?

SANTOS

Don't know. Too bad Keith Meers didn't hang around long enough for me to ask.

NINER

So Creed was liking Meers for the Beechum job and tried to bust him.

SANTOS

Only he's waiting. At the register with a sawed off twelve gauge he pulls from a private safe.

(beat)

Meers sees him coming from the lot, gets nervous and burns him.

Niner pokes his head out, eyes Ray peeking into the office from across the floor, spying on them.

He shuts the door.

SANTOS

You're about to ask me for a favor aren't you? The answer's no.

NINER

Not a favor. More of a professional courtesy. There is a difference you know?

SANTOS

If you weren't on suspension, it would be a professional courtesy. But you are, which makes this a favor.

NINER

Look. The faster you say yes, the less we gotta argue about it.

(smiles)

You're just gonna cave. You might as well get it over with.

Santos rubs her sore temples. She's been there and done that with Niner more than a few.

SANTOS

What, what, what? What the fuck do you want, Rawley?

NINER

I need you to run this guy's sheet. Some street punk, dealer type named Dorian Wilson.

SANTOS

Who's Dorian Wilson?

NINER

If I knew that, I wouldn't need you.

Santos smiles.

SANTOS

Right. And why is he important?

NINER

I can't tell you that.

Santos huffs in protest - throws her hands on her hips.

NINER (CONT'D)

But I got good word that he could be a snitch. So you might wanna check if he's registered.

SANTOS

Anything else?

NINER

No. That about does it.

SANTOS

Great. Can you get the hell out of here?

Niner opens the door to leave but turns back.

NINER

This is not a favor.

Santos folds her arms - not amused.

Niner takes her cue and leaves.

He goes for the door but stops when he notices that the END CAP of POPCORN has been re-staged -- no signs of a struggle and no evidence tying him to the scene.

EXT. GRAB SHACK PARKING LOT - NIGHT

It's absolute pandemonium as the news media vans and a slew of eager reporters flood the scene.

Niner evades the crowd and heads to his car. A black four door Mercedes cruises to a stop in front of him.

He stops. The rear window lowers.

LAZURUS

Get in.

Niner reluctantly crawls in the back. The Mercedes cruises slowly out of the busy lot.

EXT. MINI-MALL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

It's reaching the later hours as a typically busy lot sits completely empty - minus a BLACK MERCEDES.

Lazurus and Niner watch as Walsh rests a LAPTOP COMPUTER on the hood of the Mercedes and plays a VIDEO DISC.

ON THE LAPTOP

The image of SARAH ROSS (19) - cute brunette, innocent face sits tied to a tall swivel chair and gagged.

The room is dark with bright FLASHES OF WHITE LIGHT shining on and off her face. The beam of a FLASHLIGHT.

Some sort of steel shelving is barely visible behind her as Niner struggles to focus on the video.

One of the abductors - a black ski mask - stands behind her - strokes her hair, holds her face toward the camera.

ABDUCTOR #2 squats in front of her - staring at the camera with the flashlight under his chin.

ABDUCTOR #2

Take a real good look, Mister DA.  
Pretty girl. That's a real nice  
smile. A smile like that's worth  
at least a million dollars...

ON NINER

- as he grows visibly concerned. He checks with Lazurus and Walsh, who are also upset.

ON THE LAPTOP

ABDUCTOR #2 (CONT'D)

I know what you're thinking. Relax.  
We know you can't pull that kind of  
bread. Lucky for us, our needs are  
small. What we're looking for is  
three hundred thousand...

ABDUCTOR #2 (CONT'D)

You see, a man like you...in your position shouldn't have a problem throwing something like that together. Unless, of course, you want the world to know what kind of company your baby girl's been keeping. Where she was the night she disappeared.

ON LAZURUS

- as he shrugs in disgust. His anger is palpable.

ON THE LAPTOP

ABDUCTOR #2 (CONT'D)

So here's how we want this to work. You go to the cops...she dies. You go to the press...she dies. We're gonna keep things nice and quiet.

(beat)

You got forty eight hours. You fuck with us, we won't have a choice but to cut her into nice even pieces and throw her in Lake Michigan...

LAZURUS (O.S.)

Sick bastard.

ABDUCTOR #2

Next time you hear from us, it will be by phone. By the first call you better have that money ready. There won't be a second.

(laughs)

Don't worry, Ross. We'll make sure she don't get lonesome.

Walsh stops the video.

BACK TO SCENE

Walsh folds up the laptop and puts it back in the trunk of the Mercedes as Lazurus and Niner talk.

NINER

So who is he?

LAZURUS

He's the one. The leader. Meers recognized the tattoo on his hand. He claims to know his identity but won't talk until we release the footage of his death to the press.

NINER

That didn't work out so well. So what now?

LAZURUS

Now he's got a dead cop with his brains splattered all over his store. He can do what we say or be charged with Creed's murder.

Niner eyeballs Walsh who is sparking up a smoke and leaning on the Mercedes - minding his own business.

NINER

And if that doesn't work?

Lazurus slowly steps in Niner's face. A deadly serious look in his eye.

LAZURUS

Then you'll do what you do best,  
Sergeant. Make him understand.

EXT. BEST FOR LESS MOTEL - NIGHT

Niner's Corvette finds an empty spot and parks. Out steps Niner with the room key in hand. He jets up a short set of stairs and stops at "Room 212".

He uses the room key given to him by Lazurus to unlock the motel door.

INT. MEERS MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

And Keith Meers awaits behind the door, a gun in hand and seemingly nervous, his hands shaking, sweating like a pig.

Enter Niner.

Meers grabs him and throws him against a wall, his gun to the back of Niner's head. He reaches into Niner's belt and grabs his magnum - tosses it to the floor.

NINER

Is there a problem?

MEERS

You're fuckin' A right there's a problem, bitch. You even flinch, I'll do to you what you did to Creed.

NINER

I'm on your side, asshole.

MEERS

We'll see about that. We'll just see.

Meers grabs the back of Niner's coat, jerks him away from the wall, shoves him toward the bathroom. He kicks Niner in the back, forcing him to the tile floor.

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT

Meers picks up Niner, bends him over the bathtub with his gun pressed against his skull.

MEERS

What the fuck were you doin' in my store tonight, cop?! Huh?!

NINER

You got it wrong!

MEERS

Bullshit! You and Walsh set me up! You killed that cop so I'd take the fall!

NINER

I don't know what you're talkin' about!

MEERS

You know! You fuckin' know! Walsh took her! And now he's sending you to kill me and cover his tracks! Just say it!

Meers presses the barrel of his nine mil into Niner's neck as he slumps forward.

NINER

I didn't know he was a cop! I got the call from Walsh tonight! Said he had a job if I was interested! He said two punks were gonna try to burn you and take your stash! I was supposed to stop it! That's all!

MEERS

Bullshit! You're lying! Don't lie to me!

NINER

I'm telling you the truth! He paid me three grand in cash! He never said they were cops!

Meers thinks it over. He finally lays off and takes a seat on the toilet, calms himself.

Niner slowly stands. Brushes the crud from his pants as he tries to collect himself.

In the blink of an eye, he grabs Meers by the throat, slams his head into a cabinet mirror, SHATTERS THE GLASS.

Niner then shoves him out of the confined bathroom and into the main room.

Meers trips and falls onto the bed. Niner then twists his arm behind his back as he winces in pain.

MEERS

You're gonna break my arm!

NINER

Now would be a good time to explain the rules to you. You don't touch me. You don't hit me. You sure as hell don't pull a gun on me...

Meers cries out in pain as he smacks his other hand on the mattress.

NINER (CONT'D)

You don't carry a gun while in my presence. You so much as make a mean face, I'll rip it off, wipe my ass with it and staple it back to your forehead. Got it?

MEERS

Yeah, man! Fuckin' crystal! Let me go!

NINER

Remember all that stuff I told you back there about Walsh?

MEERS

Yeah, man.

NINER

Well I lied. I don't know anything about it. But I think you do. And if you lie to me I'll cut your dick off and use it to fuck the hole I blow in your skull.

MEERS

Whatever, man. Just lay off.

Niner releases him. Meers curls up on the mattress in a world of hurt.

Meers sits up, rubs his sore forearm and stares at Niner like he's out of control.

MEERS

You're crazy, man. You know that?  
You don't have to go all Pesci on  
me. Shit, man.

Niner walks to the front window - peeks through the cheap venetian blinds and checks outside.

NINER

You said Walsh took her? Why?

Niner picks up his magnum from the carpet, stuffs it back in his pants.

MEERS

Come on, man. Everyone knows Walsh  
is the guy. Where have you been?  
He practically controls the whole  
operation.

NINER

What operation you talkin' about?

MEERS

At the club, man. The Room. Where  
Sarah was taken. Who the hell else  
do you think is behind it? He's been  
bleedin' De Luca dry for years.

NINER

De Luca? Dennis De Luca?

MEERS

He's the main man. Owns "The Room".  
He's been running club drugs through  
there for the last two years. It's  
like party central seven nights a  
week over there, man. He put Walsh  
on his payroll last year after he  
wouldn't leave him alone.

NINER

If you knew all this, why wait  
until the cops picked you up?

MEERS

I was scared, man. Walsh is a cop.  
A low level dealer like me makin'  
those kind of accusations don't go  
over too well down at the station  
house.

Niner paces the carpet as he thinks it all over. Meers  
rubs at his sore arm and wimpers like a child.

MEERS (CONT'D)

I think you really hurt me.

Niner pops a smoke, lights up. The answer finally hits him  
like a sack of bricks.

NINER

Internal Affairs must've finally  
caught Walsh's hand in the cookie  
jar. He has Sarah kidnapped so the  
DA drops the charges.

MEERS

(sarcastic)

Wow. How you come up with that  
brilliant conclusion, cop?

Niner hauls off and smacks Meers across the back of his  
head - WHAP!

MEERS (CONT'D)

Ouch! Shit, man! Lay off!

NINER

Tell me about the guy in the video.  
The one with the tattoo on his hand.  
Is he one of Walsh's guys?

(dead serious)

You fuck around with me --

MEERS

Yeah, yeah. Cut off my prick and choke me with it. I get it.

Meers stands, shakes his arm, rubs his sore muscles down as he paces the carpet. Niner quickly grows impatient with him -- gets in his face.

NINER

Tattoo hand! Is he with Walsh?!

MEERS

Nah, man. He's one of De Luca's thugs. Larsen. Bo Larsen. Pushes De Luca's shit in the men's room down at The Room. He's one of his best movers.

NINER

And what's his story?

MEERS

What story you talkin' about?

NINER

His life story, dickhead! His story! He got a mean streak?! Has he done time?! Is he capable of hurting Sarah?!

MEERS

Yeah, he's mean, man. I mean, I ain't seen him hurt no one or nuthin. But he's a tweeker, man. Those guys aren't exactly known for their sound judgment.

NINER

And the other two?

MEERS

I don't know about the others. All I saw was Larsen.

MEERS (CONT'D)

Fuckin' stupid tattoo of those  
bones on his hand.

Niner picks up Meers gun from the bathroom floor, drops the magazine and ejects the last round.

He quickly slides the gun into three pieces and drops it in the trash bin.

MEERS (CONT'D)

Are you crazy, man? I'm gonna  
need that.

NINER

When do things start poppin' down  
at "The Room"?

MEERS

Things don't get goin' til around  
twelve thirty.

(beat)

Why? What're you gonna do?

Niner smiles.

NINER

Pay Mister De Luca a visit.

INT. "THE ROOM" NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

It's rounding midnight as the crowds start pouring in thru the open front gate of this old production warehouse - now a flashy nightclub.

Guarding the wide open gateway are a crew of bulky SECURITY MEN, frisking clubbers and directing traffic through a maze of black-ribboned stanchions and metal detectors.

It is literally one big "Room" with wall-to-wall aluminum and round, dust-ridden LIGHTS hanging low over the crowd.

A whole floor of dancers gather under the glowing lights - most of them high as a kite.

A PIZZA DELIVERY MAN

- is stopped at the front gate by security. He's wearing a big red hat and sports a thick beard and goofy prescription eye glasses.

He's carrying a red zipper bag full of hot pies - ready for delivery.

PIZZA MAN

Got a delivery for a Mister De Luca.  
Three large supremes, one with extra anchovies.

The SECURITY MAN eyes him up and down.

SECURITY MAN #1

Yeah, go ahead.

The Pizza Man enters the warehouse with his stack of pizzas and forces his way through the crowd.

EXT. STREET CURB - NIGHT

Niner's Corvette parks illegally in a red zone near the end of a street curb - the corner of a dark, back alley where a crowd of clubbers are making their way.

Out steps Niner and Meers as they make their way toward the trunk. Niner pops it open, reaches in and grabs his trench coat.

Under the coat sits an empty trunk.

NINER

Sons of bitches took my twelve gauge. Looks like I'll have to improvise.

Niner opens up his spare tire compartment and grabs a fancy looking automatic pistol with extended barrel, chambers the first round.

MEERS

Are you just gonna go in there and start shooting?

NINER

I typically find when questioning a suspect, waving a loaded gun in his face offers the quickest turnaround time.

Niner flicks on a red selector switch on the side of his weapon.

MEERS

What the hell is that?

NINER

This is a Glock ten millimeter with a full-auto selector switch add-on. Fires hollow point loads at twelve hundred rpm. It also has a tendency to spoil your afternoon.

Niner stuffs it in the back of his pants. Meers shakes his head in amazement.

MEERS

You started a lot of fires as a kid, didn't you?

Niner shoves Meers out of the way - shuts the trunk.

NINER

If Larsen or De Luca see you, we can kiss Sarah goodbye. Can I trust you to stay here and behave yourself?

MEERS

Of course, man. Whatever.

Niner isn't convinced. He pulls out his handcuffs.

NINER

Dumb question. Get in the car.

EXT. "THE ROOM" NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

The line is growing longer and longer - extending down the dark alley as Niner struts his way to the front.

He turns his head, takes a huge sniff from his nasal spray bottle, eyes wide, now fully awake.

Security Man #2 spots Niner cutting the line and stops him right at the entrance.

SECURITY MAN #2  
Goin' somewhere, blondie?

Niner flashes a badge.

The Security Man steps aside as he lets Niner bypass other clubbers getting frisked.

INT. "THE ROOM" NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Niner enters the busy club, cuts through the crowd gathered near a full bar. The music is loud and the lights are even brighter.

Against each wall in the room are expensive leather couches and glass cocktail tables - occupied with the lovely ladies of the evening.

Niner moves safely behind these couches, out of the way and out of sight. He spots a SHORT STAIRCASE on the other side of the room.

A gorgeous WAITRESS (20s) shakes her way up the metal steps with a serving tray in hand and used napkins stuffed in the empty highballs.

Niner turns his attention to what's waiting at the top of these steps. An office of some sort with the LIGHTS on inside.

DENNIS DE LUCA

is pacing back and forth in front of the open window as the waitress KNOCKS at his door.

Niner smiles until he spots SECURITY MAN #3 moving toward him from the other side of the room.

He turns and spots SECURITY MAN #2, from outside, watching him from the other end of the club.

Niner moves for a wet bar in the corner of the room as he keeps an eye out.

AT THE BAR

A FEMALE BARTENDER, bra and panties, serves up some drinks on a serving tray.

NINER

Excuse me!

She turns and spots him waiting with his badge held in the air. In the blink of an eye her chipper smile flips upside down.

BARTENDER

Oh, God. Vice?

NINER

Chill, baby. I'm not here for you.

Niner checks behind him, spots the two SECURITY MEN closing in on him as they move for the bar.

NINER (CONT'D)

Place like this, I bet you got your share of fights, huh?

BARTENDER

Yeah, I guess. Why?

NINER

You guys must keep something behind the bar in case shit gets out of hand, I bet.

The Bartender spots the Security Men closing in on Niner as his back is turned.

BARTENDER

Yeah? So?

NINER

I got a feeling something's about  
to go down. Why don't you let me  
have it. Just in case.

The Bartender reluctantly hands Niner an aluminum BASEBALL  
BAT rested under the counter.

NINER (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Security Man #2 steps to Niner - grabs him by the shoulder  
and spins him.

Niner CRACKS HIM DEAD IN THE KNEECAP as he drops like a fly  
and cries like a girl.

He SWINGS AROUND --

WHAP! Hits Security Man #3 across the face as he too drops  
to the floor.

Niner wraps the ball bat around #2's throat as he struggles  
to stand up. He swiftly pulls up on the bat, chokes the man  
-- knocks him out.

The big oaf falls limp to the carpet.

Niner stares across the floor at the staircase and notices  
a --

PIZZA DELIVERY MAN

- moving up the steps with some sort of TATTOO ON HIS RIGHT  
HAND.

NINER

Larsen.

Niner jets across the dance floor, pushing and shoving the  
crowd left and right.

He's making good time until --

SECURITY MAN #4

- punches him right IN THE CHEST.

Niner drops like wet cement. GASPS FOR AIR as he crawls on the dance floor like an infant.

INT. DE LUCA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The hot waitress from the stairs rests her tray on a cherry oak desk - yanks the used napkins from an array of highball glasses.

There are ROLLS OF CASH on the bottom of each glass. It's a busy night and business is good.

Sitting behind the oak desk is DENNIS DE LUCA (30s) - drug dealer and business owner. He's a real wannabe thug with greased black hair, pockmarked complexion.

DE LUCA

Shit, baby. What you been doin' out there tonight? Giving out hand jobs with every hundred dollar purchase?

WAITRESS

I guess my secret's out.

De Luca grabs a fat wad of cash from one of the glasses and hands it to the waitress.

DE LUCA

Nice work.

She reaches for it. He retracts.

DE LUCA (CONT'D)

By the way, if I find out you're skimming from me, the Ross girl won't be the only one disappearing around here.

The waitress jerks the money from his hand, plays insulted as she stuffs the cash down her skimpy top.

WAITRESS

You know what your problem is,  
Dennis? You need to relax.

The waitress walks around De Luca's desk and stares outside the window. She makes eye contact with --

LARSEN

-- who makes his way up the stairs in his Pizza Man outfit and hat. He gives her the nod. She winks back.

The waitress shuts the velvet curtains - seductively stares down at De Luca in his chair.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)

A girl like me deserves something  
extra.

She kneels down in front of him, unzips his pants, reaches inside. He grabs her hand, yanks her hair back.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)

You're hurting me.

DE LUCA

You better get used to it. Because  
if there's one thing you need to  
learn, bitch...

(smiles)

A guy like me deserves something  
extra.

The waitress winces in pain from his tight grip. De Luca laughs.

He shoves her head into his lap as she does her thing and does it well. A few KNOCKS at the door.

De Luca stares at his DESKTOP FLATSCREEN and spots a pizza man at his door with a stack of pies.

LARSEN (O.S.)

Pizza delivery!

DE LUCA

I didn't order any pizza.

(to waitress)

Go see what that's about.

The waitress wipes her mouth and stands. She walks to the door and opens as De Luca fixes himself, buttons his pants.

In rushes --

LARSEN

with his stack of pizzas. He reaches inside the red zipper bag and yanks out AN UZI. Just as De Luca turns --

Larsen open fires and SPRAYS HIM WITH GUNSHOTS, RIDDLES THE VELVET CURTAINS with large BULLET HOLES.

De Luca falls limp in his swivel chair. His sport coat and silk shirt a BLOODY MESS.

Larsen pushes the waitress out of his way as he rushes over to check De Luca's pulse.

His hand on his neck. Dead as a doornail.

In rushes --

NINER

- Glock ten, fully automatic pointed at Larsen and ready to fire.

LARSEN

- spots him, grabs his UZI from the desk, but Niner is too quick -

The RAPID FIRE of a fully automatic ten mil sports a wicked MUZZLE FLAIR as Larsen's hit with a full TEN SHOTS in less than a second.

Larsen is --

FLUNG BACKWARD...FORCED THROUGH THE WINDOW...

EXT. DE LUCA'S OFFICE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Larsen's dead body flops clumsily down the short staircase below De Luca's office window, stops at the bottom, almost runs into a Security Man with a bloody nose.

He quickly races up the steps toward De Luca's office with a double barrel shotgun.

INT. DE LUCA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

From the shattered window, the waitress stares down at her dead boyfriend Larsen as the Security Force make their way up.

She stares at the front door. Niner is long gone. Nowhere in sight.

CUT TO:

INT. THE ROOM NIGHTCLUB - STAIRS - NIGHT

A UNIFORM COP removes a white sheet soaked with BLOOD from LARSEN'S BODY - limp on the steps. Lazurus and Walsh watch on.

His left hand exposed with a vivid tattoo of a hand without skin - the bones of five fingers.

UNIFORM COP

One of ours recognized the tattoo.  
He either is or was a member of a  
street gang called "The Zombies".  
Hired guns. Kind of a "Thugs-R-Us"  
to anyone looking for protection.

WALSH

What's his name?

UNIFORM COP

Larsen. Bo Larsen.

Walsh and Lazurus exchange a brief look.

INT. DE LUCA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The waitress who witnessed Larsen and De Luca's death gets interrogated by another plain-clothes DETECTIVE as he jots down some notes.

DETECTIVE

So you can't tell me anything about  
the shooter? He was white, black,  
green, whatever?

The waitress drags a cigarette - stays strangely quiet as the Detective grows visibly frustrated.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

You can talk to me now or we can go  
to the station. But you're not doing  
yourself any favors.

In walks Lazurus and Walsh.

WALSH

Excuse me, Detective.

Walsh flashes a quick badge for the un-amused officer.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Walsh. Narcotics.

(beat)

You think I could have a quick word  
with the lady?

(to Waitress)

If that's okay with her.

The Detective seems put off by this at first, then notices the waitress growing strangely nervous. He decides to play along.

DETECTIVE

I'll be in the hall.

He steps out.

Walsh steps up to the waitress, in her face, impatient and ready for some answers.

WALSH

Now you're gonna be a real good girl and tell us what happened here. I'll tell you something. I'm gonna find out anyways.

Lazurus takes a look at De Luca's bullet-ridden body behind the desk.

The waitress watches Lazurus over Walsh's shoulder, nervous and unsure.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Don't worry about him. Worry about me.

Lazurus keeps eye contact with the waitress as he joins the conversation.

WALSH (CONT'D)

You come up here for a little so and so with the boss man, put his prick in your mouth and in runs Larsen like the wild west.

The waitress bounces on her heels - now scared to death and in tears.

LAZURUS

Tell you what. We'll change the subject.

Lazurus holds up a photo of SARAH ROSS.

LAZURUS (CONT'D)

You recognize this girl?

WAITRESS

Yes.

LAZURUS

And you were about to tell us  
what happened to her. Yes?

The waitress stalls. She finally breaks.

WAITRESS

She was here last week. With her  
boyfriend. I don't remember his  
name.

WALSH

Cut the bullshit. You know damn  
well what his name is so you can  
stop the act.

(beat)

She was with Meers and then what  
happened?

The waitress bursts into tears.

WAITRESS

Understand, I didn't have a choice.

WALSH

Choice to do what?

WAITRESS

I get a call from Bo last Saturday.  
Said that the Ross girl...

LAZURUS

The Ross girl what?

WAITRESS

That she OD'd. That she died from an  
overdose of ecstasy. "X" that I sold  
her. Told me the cops were gonna come  
to Dennis asking a bunch of questions.  
Because this was the last place she  
was seen alive, the cops would find  
out that...

WALSH

That you killed her? Well I got some news for you, sweet pea. She's alive.

The waitress is rendered speechless.

WAITRESS

(scared)

So what happens to me now?

Walsh checks with Lazurus. The two exchange a quiet look as the waitress eagerly awaits her fate.

EXT. OFFICE ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Niner stands at the edge of the roof - stares down at the crowd of PATROL CRUISERS and FLASHING RED AND BLUE LIGHTS illuminating an otherwise dark alley.

Through the rooftop door walks Lazurus and Walsh.

LAZURUS

When I said I wanted to be apprised of your every move, what didn't you understand about my instructions?

Niner polishes off what's left of his hotdog.

NINER

Michael. You seem agitated.

Smacks his hands together, brushes some bread crumbs from his shirt.

LAZURUS

Why didn't you tell us about Bo Larsen?

Niner plays stupid, thinking it over.

NINER

Larsen, Larsen. Tell me about him again. I'm not so good with names sometimes.

NINER (CONT'D)

Oh, that Bo Larsen. He was the one that turned De Luca into a screen door about thirty minutes ago.

WALSH

And you wouldn't know anything about that, would you?

NINER

Obviously I do, genius. I thought you were a detective.

Walsh fights the urge to slug Niner in the mouth. He moves closer but Lazurus gives him the cue to back off.

LAZURUS

What happened?

NINER

Well...I go to have myself a chat with De Luca and he goes and gets himself wasted. Pretty good timing, don't you think? It's almost like Larsen was tipped off.

WALSH

What's that supposed to mean?

NINER

Come on Walsh. I know you're dirty, but I didn't know you were stupid.

Walsh charges after him - snags him up by the shirt collar and holds him over the edge of the roof.

LAZURUS

Enough! We got less than twenty four hours! With Larsen dead, God only knows what they're capable of doing to the girl!

Walsh lets him go. Niner very coolly fixes his shirt and coat with a smug grin on his face.

LAZURUS (CONT'D)

Alright, the way I see it, we got no choice but to get the ransom together.

NINER

The DA got that kind of money laying around?

LAZURUS

Don't you worry about the money. You just better hope, for your sake, she's still breathing.

Walsh paces around the roof like an angry, nervous wreck shaking his head, cursing the night air.

LAZURUS (CONT'D)

Keep your phone charged. We need a bag man and since you decided to blow away our only suspect, you're in charge of seeing the money gets delivered. Any more fuck ups and it's on you.

(to Walsh)

Let's go.

Walsh leads the way as Lazurus follows behind. Niner and Walsh exchanging a mutual look of hatred.

NINER

Thanks for the dance, Walsh. Next time...I lead.

WALSH

Looking forward to it.

Walsh follows Lazurus out the door and back into the office building. Niner sparks up a smoke, takes a nice, long drag as he stares down at the RED and BLUE LIGHTS.

NINER

I bet you are, asshole.

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

Standing at a large bay window with the blinds fully opened is DISTRICT ATTORNEY MARK ROSS (50s), doughy and aging, but strong-willed, determined and stubborn.

He stares out, into the hustle and bustle of the early morn traffic below. It's his city but somehow the weight of this burden hangs on a weary face.

An INTERCOM BUZZES from his desk. He steps to his desk and answers --

ROSS

Yes?

SECRETARY (O.S.)

Detective Santos for you.

ROSS

Thank you, Gale. Send her in.

In walks Santos in another form fitting top - dark trousers and badge hooked to her belt.

SANTOS

You sent for me, sir?

ROSS

Captain Drydek tells me you've been assigned to Detective Creed's shooting?

SANTOS

Yes, sir. At your request.

Ross smiles. A bit embarrassed.

ROSS

Yes, of course. As you know Beechum and Creed's murders have caused quite the media stir. Lousy bloodsuckers decided to turn a bad situation into an embarrassing one.

ROSS (CONT'D)

One that dishonors this office.

(serious)

I can't have that, Santos.

Ross paces the carpet, rehashing what seems like an all too rehearsed speech.

ROSS (CONT'D)

You should read some of the latest.

We can't protect our own. How are

we supposed to protect the public?

And all this nonsense.

Ross faces his window, peers out into the morning sun as an intense anger comes over him.

ROSS (CONT'D)

The truth is...this is all on me.

With cases of this magnitude, shit

rolls uphill. And it becomes my

responsibility to put the pressure

on. To make a very strong and

public statement. That cop killing

will not be tolerated by this

office.

SANTOS

I don't understand, sir.

Ross faces Santos.

ROSS

I know, I know. What does all this

have to do with you?

Ross slowly steps closer to Santos. A bit nervous and not to be trusted.

ROSS (CONT'D)

I heard that you've established

some sort of connection between

the Beechum and Creed murders.

Is this true?

SANTOS

And where did you hear this? If  
I may ask, sir?

A smug grin from Ross.

ROSS

It's my job to know, Santos. So  
what do you have for me?

SANTOS

The evidence at the scene suggests  
that Keith Meers is the shooter.

ROSS

Evidence?

SANTOS

There was a safe under the register  
that was opened. It's probably where  
Meers kept the twelve gauge that  
killed Creed. Add the fact that he  
fled the scene before we could  
question him along with the position  
the body was found points to Meers  
as the killer.

ROSS

Any possibility he was kidnapped?

Santos seems confused by his question.

SANTOS

Kidnapped by whom, sir?

ROSS

The men who robbed the store.

And the wind is literally sucked from Santos body as her  
face turns to stone.

SANTOS

Guess I haven't thought of that.

ROSS

And what do we know about this kid Meers?

SANTOS

He's a local dooper. Small timer. Sucker punched a cop when he was seventeen. That and a few busts for assault tell me he's got a mean streak.

ROSS

Mean enough to kill a cop during a drug stop?

SANTOS

Enough motive to kill Creed.

Ross thinks it all over. He finally snaps out of it.

ROSS

Well. Keep on him. If you learn anything, you bring it to me first. Before we go to the press, I wanna be sure he's the guy. We can't afford any more embarrassments, Santos.

INT. NINER'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Niner prints up a newspaper internet article named "MONEY HIDDEN IN STOLEN CAR", as he sucks the rest of his coffee down.

On this front page article are the images of OFFICER TROY BEECHUM (30s) - bulky, tough, ex marine type - holding an unzipped sachel bag with three hundred thousand in cash exposed to a news camera.

He is smiling at the camera. Proud of his accomplishment. Standing just behind him, speaking with another officer is Walsh.

Niner swiftly snags up the pages from the printer tray.

EXT. NINER'S APARTMENT DOOR - EARLY MORNING

Carly - in her usual ER scrubs - KNOCKS at the door with a handful of medical records stuffed in a manila file.

INT. NINER'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Meers shuffles his way to the door, wipes the morning crust from his eyes. He is shirtless and in his boxers, not fully awake.

He unlocks the four deadbolts from Niner's door, opens and finds a surprised Carly waiting on the other side.

CARLY

Oh, God, Rawley. How much coke did you do last night?

MEERS

Excuse me?

Carly snaps out of it.

CARLY

Sorry. I'm a friend of Rawley's.  
Is he in?

MEERS

Yeah. Come on.

Meers heads back in, scratching his ass. Carly reluctantly follows him inside.

Niner enters, internet articles in hand, spots a very angry looking Carly in the kitchen as she slams down her files on a counter top.

CARLY

You know, you acted like it was life and death getting Wilson's records. I go out of my way to get them and you don't answer your phone for four hours. What am I missing?

NINER  
(to Carly)  
Shut up a sec.

Carly's jaw drops to the floor. Shocked and appalled.

Niner walks over to Meers, who's now planted himself on the couch, sparking up a morning smoke.

CARLY  
(offended)  
Good morning to you too.

NINER  
(to Meers)  
Check this out.

Niner hands his paperwork to Meers, who takes a quick look.

NINER (CONT'D)  
Four weeks ago, Walsh pulls over a car on suspicion of a GTA. A black Mercedes AMG. The driver was this kid Terrel Washburn, a real career criminal type with a sheet longer than my dick.

CARLY  
Oh, that long, huh? Wow.

Niner grows irritated and turns to Carly.

NINER  
You think you could tone down the sarcasm for at least two minutes?

Carly folds her arms in protest. A smug grin as she taps her foot on the carpet.

NINER  
(to Meers)  
So this Washburn boosts cars for local chop shop operations since he's sixteen.

Meers struggles to follow along - staring back and forth between the article and Niner.

NINER

Unbeknownst to Mister Washburn, he was hauling three hundred thousand in drug money, hidden in the trunk.

MEERS

Holy shit.

NINER

Just as Walsh pulls this Mercedes over he gets some unexpected help from a uniform cop patrolling the area. One Troy Beechum.

This catches Carly's attention. Her smug look turns more intrigued.

NINER (CONT'D)

Between Beechum and Walsh, one of them found three hundred k in the trunk.

MEERS

Beechum. Where do I know that name?

CARLY

He was a cop.

NINER

(smartass)

Yes Carly, thank you. He wasn't just any cop. He was a cop killed during a traffic stop two weeks ago. After he got burned, his shooter torched his squad car, along with the video surveillance ID'ing the killer.

Meers takes a closer look at the stolen car in the internet article. He recognizes it.

MEERS

This AMG. It's De Luca's ride.

Niner smiles and snaps his fingers.

NINER

Bingo. You tell me it's just a coincidence Walsh happened to pull this car over, I'll eat my gun. He was looking for it.

MEERS

He was getting De Luca's money back?

NINER

Right.

Carly finally intervenes as she walks over to the two men in their all too private conversation.

CARLY

This is all very interesting, but can I speak now, please?

NINER

Yes. By all means.

Carly sports an excited, but fake smile.

CARLY

Oh joyous. I got your boy Wilson's medical records.

Niner quickly snags them out of Carly's hands. He does a good review of each file.

CARLY (CONT'D)

What you want with them, I have no idea, but I got them. In return, you're gonna tell me what's going on.

Niner ignores her, simply nudges her out of the way as he concentrates on the medical charts.

CARLY (CONT'D)

(frustrated)

Okay, maybe later.

Niner keeps his nose in the records as he sets them down on his kitchen counter top.

NINER

Keith, what's the date of that article?

Meers ruffles through the various papers until he finally spots the front page.

MEERS

May Twenty Seven, Friday.

NINER

Washburn was the only one who got busted that night, but he wasn't working alone.

MEERS

How you know that?

NINER

Washburn doesn't work alone.

MEERS

Oh. Okay.

Carly rubs her sore temples, shuts her eyes, talks softly to herself as Niner's driving her bonkers.

NINER

(to Carly)

Hey! Bag of jokes! Snap out of it!

He CLAPS his hands together, startles Carly out of a self imposed stupor.

CARLY

Heh?

NINER

You got anything on Wilson from the Twenty Seventh?

Carly sifts through the mess of medical records.

CARLY

I have an idea. Why don't I look?

Her mouth is non-stop as Niner just shakes his head.

CARLY (CONT'D)

May Twenty Seven. GSW to the arm.  
Surprise, surprise. Treated for...  
(confused)  
...poison ivy?

Niner turns to Meers.

NINER

(to Meers)

Wilson was riding shotgun. After Walsh pulls them over, he books it into the woods. Walsh gets a shot off, hitting Wilson in the arm.

CARLY

I remember that night. Poison Ivy was so bad, we practically covered him in ointment. Before we could call it in, this asshole cop comes in and picks him up.

Both Niner and Meers eyes light up. They turn to each other with a smile.

Niner jerks the news article out of Meers hand and holds it up for Carly. He points at Walsh standing behind Officer Beechum and the bag of money.

NINER

Is this the asshole?

CARLY

That's him. Who is he?

Meers is now totally invested. He slowly walks over to the others, a worried look on his face.

MEERS

An asshole.

NINER

Washburn and Wilson were a team.  
Only Wilson gets away that night.  
He was the only one that had  
enough sense to run.

Niner paces the carpet but suddenly stops in his tracks. A deadly serious look in his eye.

INT. GRAB SHACK STORE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Niner shoots "Roger Creed" with a shotgun blast to the face as his partner "Dorian Wilson" quickly backs out the front door on foot.

END FLASHBACK

INT. NINER'S APARTMENT - PRESENT DAY - MORNING

Niner snaps out of it as he spots Carly and Meers watch him with great interest.

NINER

(quietly)

...enough sense to run.

INT. POLICE EVIDENCE LOCKER - DAY

Walsh struts into the dark basement evidence room with some sort of paper in hand. He approaches a DESK SERGEANT (50s) in the middle of filling out a chart.

He sets the file down, shoves it in the Sergeant's face as he returns with a nasty stare.

DESK SERGEANT

(nasty)

What the hell is this?

WALSH

A signed requisition order from the  
District Attorney's Office, checking  
out evidence. Case number 12015-8.

The Sergeant isn't convinced as he stares back and forth between the requisition papers and Walsh.

DESK SERGEANT

I'm gonna have to clear this.

WALSH

(smiles)

Of course.

The Sergeant walks to the back. Walsh's fake smile turns to an ugly stare as he anxiously checks his watch.

EXT. MINI-MALL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

We're back at the mini mall lot where we first watched the ransom video. Lazurus throws the bag of money onto Niner's hood, unzips.

NINER

Is it all there?

LAZURUS

Three hundred thousand. Exactly.

NINER

You guys sure did pull through on this money pretty quickly. May I ask where you got it? Or is that official business of the District Attorney's Office?

Lazurus returns with a quiet smile. Meers watches their interaction closely.

LAZURUS

Remember. I'm just a messenger, Detective. Let's just say Ross pulled through in a bind. If I were you, I'd be more worried about getting her back alive and what will happen if you don't.

Niner shakes his head in disgust.

NINER

Am I getting any back up?

LAZURUS

Ross gave specific instructions.  
No backup. Just you. If these  
men even suspect we're having  
you followed, they could kill  
Sarah. It's an unacceptable  
risk.

(beat)

You understand that Ross isn't  
interested in prosecuting these  
men, only making them disappear?

NINER

Yeah, I get that.

LAZURUS

That means no hero shit. Do the  
exchange and get the girl back.  
That's it.

Niner motions to Meers, leaned against the trunk of his  
Corvette.

NINER

And what do I do with him when  
this is over?

LAZURUS

Let him go. Only after Sarah's  
safe and in custody. Understood?

Niner nods. Lazurus hands him written instructions from the  
abductors.

LAZURUS (CONT'D)

These are instructions. They're  
gonna make you jump through some  
hoops to make sure you're not  
followed. I sure hope you don't  
have something stupid up your  
sleeve, Detective.

NINER

Is that all?

LAZURUS

Go on. They're waiting.

EXT. FOUR LANE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Niner's Corvette cruises a fairly busy business district as he and Meers keep an eye on both sides of the road.

MEERS

What side of the street did they say it would be?

NINER

You know, I've lived here thirty something years and never heard of this place.

Meers spots a glowing sign on the other side of this street with the words PUG 'S TWENTY FOUR HOUR CLEANERS flashing on and off.

MEERS

There it is! Pugh's Cleaners!

Meers scans Niner's slovenly sport coat and slacks.

MEERS (CONT'D)

A dry cleaner. No wonder you never heard of it.

Niner turns his attention left - spots the PUG 'S sign with the "H" burnt out, crosses a solid median, drives into head on traffic and pulls a dangerous U-turn.

Cars HONK and swerve to miss.

MEERS (CONT'D)

You know, another fifty feet and you could've turned!

NINER

You wanna get your girl back or criticize my driving?

EXT. PUGH'S DRY CLEANERS - NIGHT

Niner quickly parks in a handicapped spot by the front door of this low rent dry cleaners.

INT. NINER'S CORVETTE - NIGHT

Niner opens his glove box, pulls out a nine millimeter and hands it to Meers. His wrist once again cuffed to the door.

NINER

Anyone tries to take the cash,  
you shoot em' in the head.

Meers nods understandably as Niner jumps out, runs for the door as a PHONE RINGS INSIDE.

INT. PUGH'S DRY CLEANERS - NIGHT

The Korean owner of the cleaner picks up the ringing phone just as Niner enters.

And --

-- jerks the phone from his hand as the owner curses him in Korean and makes rude hand gestures.

NINER

(into phone)

Niner here.

DIGITAL VOICE (O.S.)

Evening, Detective. So glad you could play. There's a dumpster out back. Inside you will find a tape recorder with further instructions on where to make the delivery.

NINER

Sorry, dickhead. New plan. If I don't see Ross here in the next ten minutes, I burn the cash.

NINER (CONT'D)

You won't touch the girl. I know it, you know it. More importantly, Mark Ross knows it. Do yourselves a favor and let her go and I promise you I won't blow holes in all you sonsofbitches.

The computer voice on the other line HANGS UP.

Niner pushes the small Korean out of his way as he walks to the back of the building.

EXT. PUGH'S DRY CLEANERS - NIGHT

Niner takes off his sport coat and tosses it to the ground as he flips open the lid on the large, green dumpster and hops inside.

He tosses garbage left and right - searching for anything that resembles a tape recorder. He grows frustrated with the search and stops.

Looks up.

On a side street he sees a traffic sign marked INTERSTATE 4 with an arrow pointing left.

NINER (CONT'D)

Fuck me.

Niner quickly leaps out of the dumpster and runs around the side of the dry cleaners. He pulls a forty four magnum from his belt.

He spots a YOUNG WOMAN run for the driver's side of his car and jump in.

NINER (CONT'D)

Cunt motherfucker!

In the near distance, his Corvette pulls away from the park spot, TIRES SQUEALING ON THE ASPHALT.

INT. NINER'S CORVETTE - NIGHT

Meers laughs his ass off as he spots Niner chasing down the street like a mad fool.

MEERS

Go baby, go!

SARAH ROSS (19) - gorgeous brunette, curly hair - is behind the wheel, chest heaving, nervous.

EXT. PUGH'S DRY CLEANERS - NIGHT

Niner runs down the middle of the open highway as cars HONK behind him. He finally gives up, stands dead center of the road as he catches his breath.

The traffic builds as they continue to HONK and CURSE. He turns to them.

NINER (CONT'D)

Shut up! Go around!

INT. GINA SANTOS HOUSE - NIGHT

Santos is sprawled out on the living room couch, asleep and with the television on. A CELL PHONE RINGS right under her face, startling her.

SANTOS

Yeah, Ray, what is it?

(listens)

Where?

EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Several PATROL CARS gather near the scene of the crime with RED and BLUE LIGHTS FLASHING.

MEERS DEAD BODY lay shot in the chest in the passenger side of a parked BMW. Our hot waitress from the nightclub cries while being questioned by a UNIFORM COP.

An UNMARKED SQUAD CAR parks near the scene as SANTOS and partner CLARK jump out.

They immediately investigate the inside of the BMW and spot Meers sprawled out on the leather guts.

A UNIFORM COP greets them.

UNIFORM COP

Word is, this is the asshole that did Creed at that liquor store hold-up.

SANTOS

What happened?

Clark spots the waitress crying while being questioned by the other officers.

CLARK

Looks like he fucked with the wrong chick.

UNIFORM COP

Our girl here says he tried to jack her car. Pulled a thirty eight from her console and plugged him.

SANTOS

Anything else?

UNIFORM COP

Yeah. We found a sawed off twelve gauge in the front seat of his car. What do you think the odds are of ballistics matching up the strike marks with the one that did Creed?

CLARK

He got nervous and tried to split town. Oh, yeah. He did Beechum alright. He did both of them.

Clark peeks his head in the car and flips a double bird at Meers dead body.

CLARK (CONT'D)

You got what was coming to you,  
fuck face! How you like me now?!

Santos turns and catches eyes with the waitress, who fakes some tears for the cameras. She turns away from Santos in obvious shame.

SANTOS

Who is she?

CLARK

Who is she? Who gives a shit?  
The sack of shit's dead. Our  
case is closed.

A whole crew of TV NEWS VANS arrive at the scene. Clark does a quick fix of his shirt and tie.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Don't think I've ever been so  
happy to see the press.

Clark pats Santos on the arm as he heads off.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Come on. I'm gonna enjoy this.

But Santos isn't so sure as she once again catches eyes with our guilty waitress.

INT. GRAB SHACK STORE - STOCK ROOM - NIGHT

Niner wanders about this rear stock room, paying real close attention to the steel shelves that make up the bulk of the room.

RANSOM VIDEO - FLASHBACK

Sarah Ross sits tied to a SWIVEL STOOL. Behind her stands a steel shelving unit stacked up with groceries, beer, liquor and other products.

Larsen kneels down in front of the video camera, FLASHLIGHT BEAM under his chin, illuminating his face.

INT. GRAB SHACK STORE/STOCK ROOM - PRESENT DAY - NIGHT

Niner spots an all too familiar steel shelf with the very same items found in the ransom video.

Enter Santos. She carries with her a thick stack of files and police records. Her face hidden by shadows.

SANTOS

I pulled the files on Terrel Washburn and Dorian Wilson like you asked.

Santos steps closer, into the light.

SANTOS (CONT'D)

Now you're gonna return the favor and tell me what the hell happened in here last night.

NINER

Tell me about Washburn.

Santos scoffs at him, not believing what she's hearing.

SANTOS

You don't get it, do you, Rawley? I'm risking my job even speaking with you. You broke in here!

NINER

Did they find him yet?

SANTOS

Find who?

NINER

Keith Meers. Did they find him?

SANTOS

An hour ago. He tried to jack a BMW but things didn't work out so well for him. Took a thirty eight in the chest.

Niner bursts out in a nervous laughter, shaking his head and pacing the floor.

NINER

They've got her.

SANTOS

Who's they?! What're you talking about?! You need to start talking or I'm out the door and on the phone with Internal Affairs!

Niner nervously walks in circles as Santos grows more and more impatient with him. He stops, faces her.

NINER

Last night, I tried to make a buy from Meers. Before I knew what was going on, two black guys in ski masks bust in with a couple of scatter guns. Before they could take the register, I took one of them out.

Santos is shocked by this.

SANTOS

You shot Creed?

NINER

It wasn't Creed. It was Terrel Washburn. With half his face missing, they figured no one would know the difference.

SANTOS

I don't understand. Washburn?

NINER

I chased down the second gunman, only to find out he was working with the police. It was Dorian Wilson. Washburn's partner in crime.

SANTOS

That's why you asked about him.

NINER

Last month, a narcotics cop named  
Jeb Walsh pulled over a Mercedes  
Six Hundred on suspicion of a GTA.

Niner begins walking in circles again, piecing all of the  
finer details together.

NINER (CONT'D)

Washburn was behind the wheel and  
Wilson was riding shotgun. Wilson  
got away but Washburn took a pinch.

SANTOS

(impatient)

I'm out of here.

And Santos turns for the door.

NINER

Neither one knew they had three  
hundred k in drug money stashed  
in the trunk.

Santos huffs in protest, but decides to stay where she is.

SANTOS

Get somewhere. Fast.

NINER

Before Walsh could put one in his  
head and make off with the cash, a  
beat cop shows on the scene to  
assist.

Santos thinks back. It hits her.

SANTOS

I remember. It was Beechum.

Niner nods.

NINER

This wasn't just any drug money.  
Dennis De Luca's money. Walsh  
was on his payroll.

SANTOS

Okay. You're losing me again.

NINER

Last night, our friend Walsh sent  
Washburn and Wilson on a mission.  
Stage Meers death. Shoot him on  
camera and release the footage to  
the press.

Santos also begins pacing the floor. Thinking it all over.  
She stops.

SANTOS

But the video disc was missing.

NINER

Exactly. I messed up the works  
when I blew away Washburn.

Santos stares at the wall, tries to make sense of it all as  
she shakes her head in frustration.

SANTOS

They re-staged the crime scene?

NINER

And planted Creed's identification  
on Washburn's body. Nobody knows  
the difference and nobody asks.

Santos begins pacing the floor again - soaking it all in  
with a look of true confusion.

SANTOS

You're saying they framed Meers  
for Creed's murder? Why?

NINER

Knowing you would tie Meers back to Beechum's shooting. It was a back up plan. Plan A didn't work out so well.

SANTOS

But why? What was all this for?

NINER

Mark Ross's little girl was taken. Two weeks ago Saturday.

SANTOS

(confused)

Sarah? But I didn't --

NINER

Nobody did.

SANTOS

What happened?

Niner takes a load off and sits down on a stack of twelve pack beers.

NINER

Sarah was seeing Meers. When the cops went to him for answers, he claims he knew who did it. Only he won't talk until PD guarantees his safety.

SANTOS

I don't get it. Who took Sarah?

NINER

Meers. Two of De Luca's men. And Walsh orchestrated the whole thing.

SANTOS

Walsh? But how? I thought --

NINER

The ransom was three hundred k. The exact amount Walsh and Beechum found in the trunk of the Mercedes.

Santos rubs her sore forehead as too much information at once is giving her a headache. She squints in confusion as Niner drones on.

NINER (CONT'D)

Ross signs a requisition order to get the money out of evidence. They let Meers walk with the ransom and Walsh burns him. He gets the money back to De Luca. For a cut, of course.

SANTOS

So...Walsh killed Beechum?

NINER

It wasn't a coincidence Walsh pulled over De Luca's car. I think Beechum knew he was wrong and found some dirt on Walsh.

SANTOS

Walsh finds out and has Beechum killed.

NINER

It was easy. He baited Beechum into pulling him over on a drunk stop or whatever. Beechum gets out of his car and boom. Walsh burns him.

SANTOS

Then torches the car to cover the evidence. Just like a smart cop.

NINER

Very good.

Santos just can't swallow it all. She shakes her head, not buying the whole story.

SANTOS

How could Ross go along with this?  
Lying to the police, covering up  
evidence, staging a fake robbery?  
It doesn't make sense.

Niner ponders this. His dancing eyes suggest a busy mind at work.

NINER

No, it doesn't.

SANTOS

I mean, if his baby girl was taken,  
he'd have every cop in Detroit out  
beatin' down doors. Why would he  
agree to all this?

(beat)

It's wrong. I don't buy it.

And then it hits him. Niner is rendered silent. He stares at the floor in a trance-like stupor.

SANTOS (CONT'D)

What is it?

NINER

Come on.

Niner jumps up, grabs Santos by the arm, drags her toward a door and back into the store.

SANTOS

Where are we going?

NINER

I'll tell you when we get there.

Niner and Santos storm out the front door.

CUT TO:

INT. ROGER CREED'S FARM HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

The living room sits empty. Free of furniture and the other things that constitute a home - while stacks of brown boxes cover most of the filthy carpet.

Santos and Niner sip coffee, watch on as ELISE CREED (40s), sad wife of the late Roger Creed, shuffles boxes around in the kitchen and wipes down empty cabinets with cleaner.

SANTOS

Mrs. Creed, I'm very sorry to hear about Roger. He was a great cop. One of the best.

Elise sprays her rag with cleaner and wipes a cabinet door in a nervous frenzy.

ELISE

He used to be. Sometime... not so long ago, his heart died. Lost his passion for the job. For me. For life.

Niner stares out a back window and spots an old-fashioned horse barn in the near distance. The front gate opened.

ELISE (CONT'D)

He saw one too many dead bodies. Messed him all up inside. So he decided he wanted out. Only we couldn't. So far under water on this house, we needed a snorkel.

NINER

(smiles)

Been there, done that.

ELISE

And those horses started calling him. And football games and any other damn thing he could place a bet on. That was gonna be our big ticket out, according to him.

Santos turns and catches eyes with Niner.

ELISE (CONT'D)

You see, it only took him a year to blow my mother's inheritance and put us so far under we can never come back up. We finally decided it was time to go.

SANTOS

Moving into a smaller place?

ELISE

Who? Me?

Elise smiles and sprays her rag with cleaner.

ELISE (CONT'D)

I'm unpacking.

Niner squints in confusion. Santos too.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Another two weeks and we were gone. Starting over. Then he goes and gets killed on the job. The insurance money was enough to save the house.

Elise laughs. And then tears up.

ELISE (CONT'D)

Can you believe that? I get the house, but my Roger's gone. He thought I cared about the money. I wish he was here. I'd tell him the money never mattered. But I can't. I can't go back.

Elise gives up on the cabinets, throws her rag in the sink.

Niner finds a framed eight by ten photo of ROGER CREED AND WALSH in their dress blues.

NINER

Roger and Jeb Walsh, huh?

Niner hands the photo to Santos.

ELISE

They went to the academy together.  
Him and Jeb were from the same  
neighborhood. Grew up together.  
Even partnered for awhile.

NINER

Is that right?

Niner smiles at Santos.

ELISE

Sometimes I thought he should've  
married Walsh they spent so much  
time together. To Roger, he was  
the best. Between the two of em,  
they were gonna save the world.  
They loved the job.

NINER

Yeah, I bet.

Santos rolls her eyes.

ELISE

You ever hear that saying if you  
love something too much it could  
destroy you? Well...that's what  
happened to Walsh. He wasn't gonna  
be happy until he brought my Roger  
down with him.

(angry)

Well congratulations, Walsh. You  
did it.

EXT. ROGER CREED'S FARM HOUSE - MORNING

Niner and Santos walk to their car as Niner keeps an eye on  
the big blue horse barn near the side of the house.

NINER

Is it me, or does Roger Creed warrant further investigation.

SANTOS

No, it's not just you. So Creed stages his death while his wife gets the insurance check and saves their house?

NINER

Something like that. There were three of them in the ransom video. Larsen, Meers, and Creed makes three.

Santos walks to the driver's side, while Niner stops at the passenger door.

NINER

He's close. I can smell him.

Niner stares off into the trees - in deep thought as Santos watches him closely.

SANTOS

What is it?

NINER

Something's not right.

SANTOS

What do you mean?

NINER

Washburn wasn't supposed to die in that robbery. The whole thing was a fake. If I hadn't been there, they would've pulled it off.

Santos ponders this.

SANTOS

Yeah? So?

NINER

So if Washburn lives, Creed can't stage his death.

(beat)

So what's Creed's angle in this?

SANTOS

Simple. We know that Walsh killed Beechum. He wasn't about to arrest his best friend for murder. Walsh talks him into doing a fake ransom so the two of them can split the cash and retire.

(beat)

What else is there to understand?

Niner shakes his head and scratches his chin in a nervous frenzy.

NINER

No. That's not all. There's something else going on.

Niner turns his attention toward the blue barn and notices some shadowy figure moving around inside.

Santos observes his strange demeanor.

SANTOS

(quiet)

What is it?

NINER

There's someone in the barn.

Santos begins to turn.

NINER (CONT'D)

(quietly)

Don't...look.

Santos keeps her eyes forward, stands frozen, too scared to move.

SANTOS

What do we do?

NINER

Nothing. You're gonna get in the car like everything's fine. Don't draw any attention to yourself.

SANTOS

What're you gonna do?

NINER

I don't know yet.

SANTOS

Okay, good. Great plan.

NINER

Get in the car. I'm gonna check things out.

Santos opens her door and crawls in. She stares through the windshield -- spots a MAN BRANDING A HIGH-POWERED RIFLE as the reflection of the sun bounces off his scope.

SANTOS

Rawley!

BAM!

The loud CRACKLING of the rifle startles Niner as he jumps to the ground.

ZIP!

The high powered BULLET rips thru the windshield - STRIKES SANTOS IN THE HEAD.

Her BLOOD and BRAIN MATTER SPRAYS ACROSS THE REAR SEATS and leather upholstery.

NINER

- pulls both his forty four magnum and ten millimeter Glock as he peeks under the car, into the barn.

He spots the DARK FIGURE now running toward the back of the barn with his rifle.

Niner charges toward the barn - BOTH GUNS BLAZING. Bullets spray the inside of the dark room at random.

Niner dives to the ground - taking cover on the side of the barn as he quickly re-loads. He looks up and spots a window on the side of the building.

He takes one last deep breath, raises both guns in the air as he quickly stands...

Points both weapons at the window - OPEN FIRES. The SHARDS OF GLASS fall into the barn and on the grassy lawn.

Niner runs to the window, peeks inside. He spots a SHADOWY FIGURE on the wall of a lit STAIRCASE.

ELISE

- steps onto the front porch - spots Santos dead behind the wheel. She notices Niner making his way around the barn and quickly takes cover inside.

INT. CREED'S BARN - STAIRCASE - DAY

Standing on a staircase, between the first and second floor and brandishing a rifle is ROGER CREED (40s), sweaty, angry and nervous.

He takes the butt of his weapon, shatters out a back window pane overlooking his back yard.

Creed loads another shell and points the rifle at the grass below - waiting for Niner to make his move.

EXT. CREED'S BARN - DAY

Niner stops at the edge of the barn wall, peeks around the corner. He spots large SHARDS OF GLASS on the rear lawn, busted out from the second story window.

He flips the selector switch on his GLOCK - FULL AUTOMATIC as sweat drips from his forehead.

Niner very carefully points his magnum in the direction of the broken glass. He FIRES a SINGLE SHOT.

BAM!

- as the bullet HITS THE GLASS -

CREED

- returns fire with a SINGLE RIFLE SHOT.

The rifle blast randomly hits the lawn below as Creed flies into a panic, reloads his weapon. Before he can reload --

NINER

- steps from around the corner with both weapons raised and ready to fire. He unloads both the forty four and his Glock at the shattered window.

INT. CREED'S BARN - STAIRCASE - DAY

The RAPID FIRE BULLETS RIDDLE CREED WITH MULTIPLE GUNSHOTS as he stumbles down the stairs. His dead body lay limp at the base of the steps.

EXT. CREED'S BARN - DAY

Niner keeps his guns aimed at the shattered window as there are no signs of life inside. He quickly runs for the front door of the barn.

INT. CREED'S BARN - FIRST FLOOR - DAY

Niner does a sweep of the busy room - walking around a lawn mower, saw horses and a work table. In the back of the room is the stairs. Creed lay dead at the base.

Niner aims his weapon at Creed. He points his magnum up the stairs as he slowly makes his way up.

INT. CREED'S BARN - SECOND STORY - DAY

Niner peeks his head around the top of the staircase, spots SARAH ROSS on a flatbed mattress, bound and gagged.

He aims his weapon at the bottom of the steps - plays it safe as he walks to Sarah.

Pulls the gag from her mouth.

NINER

You come here often?

SARAH

Get me the fuck out of here!

Niner and Sarah are distracted by the sound of a CAR ENGINE creeping up the dirt road.

Niner puts the gag in. Sarah wiggles and grunts in protest as Niner checks the front window.

FRONT WINDOW

A car comes to a halt behind Santos sedan. Out steps Walsh with a twelve gauge in hand. He pumps one into the chamber as he checks on Santos.

Niner goes to Sarah, puts a finger to his lips, signals her to keep quiet. Sarah stops her angry grunting.

Niner drops a magazine from his Glock, reloads as he walks to the staircase railing and waits quietly.

FIRST FLOOR

Walsh hovers over his dead friend. His anger is palpable as a single tear wells up in his eye. He stares up the steps, points his shotgun at the top.

SECOND FLOOR

Niner stands frozen. Quiet. He stares at Walsh's SHADOW ON THE WALL. It slowly disappears.

Niner exhales. Waits. A few moments pass. The SOUND OF A CAR ENGINE CRANKS OVER.

He runs to the front window and stares down.

EXT. CREED'S FARM HOUSE - DAY

Walsh speeds off, angry and determined as his car kicks up a mound of dust and dirt in the air.

INT. CREED'S BAR - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Niner heads back to Sarah, pulls the gag from her mouth as she stares up at him with an angry scowl.

SARAH

Fucking asshole!

Niner pulls a switchblade from his ankle - cuts the cloth ties from Sarah's hands and feet.

NINER

That's right. Now let's go.

CUT TO:

EXT. NINER'S APARTMENT - DAY

A taxi cab pulls to the front of Niner's complex and stops. Out steps Niner and Sarah. The cab darts off as a cautious Niner checks the parking lot.

The coast is clear as they begin up the stairs toward his apartment.

INT. NINER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sarah is curled up on Niner's couch. Her face is dirty and caked with black, chalky dust. Her eyes are tired and beady as she's been holding them open for days.

Niner paces the carpet, keeps a close eye on Sarah, reading her face and heart.

SARAH

So what now?

NINER

Now you're gonna walk me through what happened that night.

SARAH

You know what happened.

NINER

No. I don't think I do. The only ones that know what went down are you and Meers. And he's dead.

SARAH

What's gonna happen to me?

NINER

It depends. On whether or not I think you're telling the truth.

Sarah rubs her cold arms, feels the pressure from Niner as his unflinching eyes cut a hole through her chest.

SARAH

Where's my father?

NINER

Don't worry about him. You worry about you.

Sarah's scared look turns angry.

SARAH

I'm not saying another word until he gets here.

Niner laughs.

NINER

You don't understand.

Niner takes a seat on his coffee table, in Sarah's face as she does her best to ignore him.

NINER (CONT'D)

You won't see your father again until you talk. That's the deal.

Sarah huffs and puffs, tired of Niner's demands.

NINER (CONT'D)

You want another deal? Okay.  
How about this? I could call  
Jeb Walsh and let you two work  
it out.

Sarah thinks it all over. She slowly comes around, finally acknowledges Niner's presence as the two exchange a glance.

NINER (CONT'D)

You can start anytime.

Sarah takes one last deep breath.

SARAH

I don't remember too much. Just  
that I was pretty loaded. Don't  
even remember what I took or if  
I took anything.

NINER

Give me the short version.

SARAH

My head started hurting real bad.  
Everything was spinning. Keith  
helped me to the car and put me  
in the back seat so I could lay  
down.

Niner sparks up a smoke, offers one to Sarah. She takes it and puffs a nice, long drag.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I wake up later... not knowing  
where I was. I sit up and see  
Keith and this cop standing in  
front of the car...

NINER

Beechum.

Sarah nods.

NINER

Go on.

SARAH

He's getting cuffed. And all I could think about was ending up on the front page.

(scoffs)

The DA's daughter. Loaded up on God knows what, puking all over the backseat. Her drug dealer boyfriend getting busted on some drunk stop...

Sarah chokes up.

NINER

So what happened?

SARAH

Then...I could feel Keith's gun under me. Must've hid it there while I was passed out, so the cops wouldn't think to search it. And then...

NINER

And then what?

SARAH

I got out of the car. Pointed my gun at this cop. Told him who I was...and if he knew what was good for him to forget that we were ever there...

Sarah tears up now.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Before I knew it, Keith jumped for his gun. I screamed. The gun went off.

Niner shuts his eyes in disgust. Sick to his stomach.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I didn't mean to kill him.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Keith panicked. We took off. He called this cop Walsh to help cover the scene. The next day, I saw on the news that someone burned up his car.

(beat)

Keith told me it was Walsh. He told me he did it cos he couldn't risk Keith getting arrested...

NINER

Why's that?

SARAH

He knew too much. About Walsh. He'd been blackmailing De Luca and taking money from "The Room".

NINER

What else?

SARAH

He told me the only reason that cop Beechum stopped him was to get dirt on Walsh. Said if he didn't give it to him, he'd bust both of us on a possession charge.

Niner stands, begins pacing the carpet, rubs at his weary face as Sarah spills.

SARAH (CONT'D)

All he had to do was tell him about some dirty cop and he was gonna let us walk!

NINER

How does Roger Creed play into this?

SARAH

Keith said Walsh and this other cop Creed showed him a video of me shooting Beechum. And how they were gonna use it to blackmail Daddy.

Niner checks his balcony door, locks it up and stares into the two lane highway across the street.

No one in sight.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Keith said if I was smart and went along with it, we could find a way to steal the ransom and skip town. Nobody would ever know, he said.

NINER

Well, he lied.

SARAH

What?

NINER

He was never planning on sharing that money with you. He was gonna split it four ways with Larsen, Walsh and Creed. At least that was the deal they made with him.

SARAH

That can't be.

NINER

Walsh set it up to get De Luca's money back. Three hundred grand. He takes a small percentage for his troubles and has Meers killed to cover his tracks.

Sarah rocks back and forth, in complete shock and unable to sit still. She bursts into tears.

SARAH

Oh my God. I think I'm gonna be sick.

INT. WATERMAN HOSPITAL MORGUE - DAY

Carly strolls in with some papers and charts in hand as a MORGUE ATTENDANT sits quietly at his desk.

He looks up, spots Carly at the door.

CARLY

Excuse me.

ATTENDANT

Carly. How're things in the big  
bad ER?

Carly walks to his desk.

CARLY

Pretty slow, from what I hear.  
I'm not starting for another  
twenty.

ATTENDANT

You look spent, girl.

CARLY

Yeah. I'm running on empty.

ATTENDANT

Looking for a quiet place to nap?

CARLY

I heard a patient of mine came in  
DOA. Wanted to check for myself.

ATTENDANT

Sorry to hear that. And what's the  
name?

CARLY

Wilson. Dorian Wilson.

The Attendant sifts through a full rack of medical charts  
on his desk.

ATTENDANT

Wilson, Wilson, Wilson...

He pulls one.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

GSW to the leg?

The Attendant walks to a far corner and stops at a body covered in a white sheet.

CARLY

Yeah. Just came in last night.

The Attendant pulls back the sheet. It's Dorian Wilson.

CARLY (CONT'D)

What happened?

ATTENDANT

Looks like an accidental overdose.  
Vicodin and hydrocodone.

Carly observes the body. As fresh as the day he was born.

CARLY

Thanks.

She heads out.

INT. NINER'S APARTMENT - DUSK

The orange sunlight creeps through the closed blinds of his sliding glass balcony door.

Sarah is out cold on the couch, covered in a blanket. Niner grabs a portable phone from his coffee table. Dials.

LAZURUS (O.S.)

Hello, Sergeant. Looks like you changed the game plan on us.

NINER

I've got her.

LAZURUS (O.S.)

You can't possibly win this fight.  
So I'll make you a deal. A one-time offer. Hand over the girl now, and we'll just kill you.

NINER

That's a pretty good deal, I have to admit. But it's not what I'm looking for.

NINER (CONT'D)

I'm thinking around the ballpark of  
...a hundred thousand? A third of  
what De Luca lost. Or, you can kiss  
the whole three hundred goodbye  
when I turn her in.

INT. WALSH'S CAR - NIGHT

Walsh behind the wheel, stares up at Niner's second story apartment while Lazurus sits shotgun - still on the phone in negotiations.

Waiting anxiously in the back seat is Mark Ross. He also keeps an eye on Niner's apartment.

LAZURUS

What do you think she's gonna do?  
Confess to Beechum's murder? Toss  
her hands in the air?

(smile)

It's gonna be her word versus yours  
without that video.

NINER (O.S.)

You let me worry about that. Meet  
me at Lake Pointe Mall. The top of  
the parking garage. Twenty minutes.

(beat)

If I don't see that money I'll put  
one in each of your heads faster  
than a fly gets fucked.

He hangs up. Lazurus laughs.

INT. NINER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Niner throws the phone on the couch as Sarah awakens. She stares at the phone, and back to Niner.

SARAH

Who was that?

NINER

That...was "The Man".

SARAH

What man?

NINER

You mean his name? I don't know.  
My guess...he's De Luca's supplier.  
Had some money coming his way that  
never showed. Now he wants you.

Niner quickly walks to his bedroom.

SARAH

But he's got his money! What does  
he want with me?!

He comes back out with an extra two firearms and hands one  
to Sarah. She stares at it, a bit intimidated.

NINER

You know too much. He's scratching  
everyone off the list that ties  
into him. You included.

Sarah rests the gun on the couch, afraid of it, scared of  
what she might do with it.

NINER (CONT'D)

He wants to meet in twenty minutes.  
Lake Pointe Mall. A hundred grand  
in exchange for you.

SARAH

(scared)

Are you gonna go?

Niner opens the chamber on his forty four mag, checks for  
bullets. He's got one left, pulls a speed loader from his  
shoulder holster, empties and re-loads.

NINER

Nope.

SARAH

Why?

Niner takes a seat at his dining room table - resting his forty four mag next to his ten mil. He picks up the ten mil and drops the empty clip.

He opens a new box of shells - starts loading up a couple of magazines.

NINER

Because they're already here.

Sarah turns her attention to the front door, seeming very nervous about what's waiting on the other side.

SARAH

They're here? Well what are they waiting for?

Niner finishes loading the magazine - slaps it back into his gun as his face turns to stone.

NINER

Waiting for us to open up that door.

Sarah jumps up, keeps both eyes on the front door. She grabs her gun from the couch - holds it with both hands.

SARAH

So what do we do?

NINER

Wait until they lose patience and bust in here.

Sarah stares at Niner like he's nuts.

SARAH

What the hell kind of plan is that?

LATER

Niner sits perched under a kitchen counter, in between two stools, holding two hand guns, hidden away from anyone who comes through the front door.

INT. NINER'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Sarah waits quietly in the shower. Her hands squeezing the gun in a tight grip. The curtain pulled all the way closed.

SARAH

(quietly)

Our Father in Heaven, Hallowed  
be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done. On Earth, as  
it is in Heaven...

EXT. NINER'S APARTMENT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Walsh and Lazurus load up their shotguns with twelve gauge loads, ready to storm Niner's apartment.

Lazurus grabs Walsh's arm. He stops loading the weapon and turns to him.

LAZURUS

Remember. I lost considerable  
money because of De Luca. But  
he's gone. We got a chance to  
start fresh here. You and me.  
To do that, I can't have any-  
thing standing in my way.

(beat)

Not this cop. Not anything.  
You understand?

WALSH

Yeah. I got it.

Walsh jerks his arm away in defiance. He cocks his shotgun and steps out.

Lazurus smiles, turns to Ross, still in the back seat.

LAZURUS (CONT'D)

Cheer up, Ross. It'll all be over  
soon.

Lazurus steps out. He and Walsh head for Niner's building - shotguns ready.

INT. NINER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Niner, still on the carpet with his guns ready, starts to drift off. He shakes his head, waking himself, checks his watch.

A TALL MIRROR resting against the back of the living room couch gives off a reflection of the front door.

And then --

The front door is BLOWN TO BITS by a pair of twelve gauge shotguns on the other side.

Enter Walsh and Lazurus.

Walsh blasts the standing mirror with a double pump from his shotgun. Shooting his own image as SHARDS OF GLASS shatter in all directions.

INT. NINER'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Sarah shrieks and covers her ears, curls up like a scared child in the corner of the tub.

INT. NINER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lazurus and Walsh observe what's left of the broken mirror and glass on the carpet.

Niner knocks over a bar stool, distracting Walsh. He leaps from behind the counter and unloads on Walsh.

POW-POW-POW-POW-POW!

Walsh is RIDDLED WITH SHOTS - forcing both him and Lazurus onto the dining room table. Lazurus attempts to push Walsh off of him, unable to free himself.

Niner stands, slowly walks to Lazurus as he finally pushes Walsh's corpse to the floor.

LAZURUS

I guess I never thought of that.  
I suppose a new deal is out of  
the question?

NINER

Here's your first clue.

Niner aims his forty four at his face.

BAM! Right between the eyes as BLOOD and BRAINS splatter the hardwood table.

And Niner turns around.

SARAH

stands with her gun aimed at Niner.

SARAH

Put the gun down.

NINER

You're not gonna make it.

SARAH

You got nothing on me. None of you do. Not anymore.

NINER

You won't do it.

SARAH

Oh, yeah? I did it once. I can do it again.

NINER

The last time was an accident.

Sarah stays strangely quiet. Her guilt written all over her tired face.

NINER (CONT'D)

Or was it?

Sarah's lips quiver and her hands shake.

SARAH

Just stay out of my way! Please!

NINER

You can't keep running forever.

SARAH

Oh yes I can. And you're not gonna stop me.

NINER

I guess you better shoot me cos you're not walking out that door.

SARAH

I'm warning you. Drop the gun!

Niner smiles. He shakes his head at Sarah.

NINER

I can't do it, Sarah. I can't let you go.

Sarah finally snaps under pressure.

BAM!

She fires a single shot. Hits Niner in the left shoulder as he quickly returns fire.

BAM-BAM-BAM!

Three shots riddle Sarah's body as she's flung backward and over the side of the couch.

She falls limp on the cushions. A BLOODY MESS. Her lifeless eyes stare back at us.

Niner hovers over her, stares down at his handy work. Tears in his eyes.

EXT. NINER'S APARTMENT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Ross spots Niner exiting his apartment and walking down the steps, armed with Walsh's twelve gauge.

Ross panics, jumps out and gets in the driver's side of the car. He checks for keys, but the ignition is empty. Niner is slowly closing in on him.

ROSS

Shit!

Ross checks in the glove box, center console - anywhere for a gun. Nothing.

Niner steps closer and closer to the getaway car, takes aim with his shotgun.

BAM! The first blast BLOWS OUT THE FRONT LEFT TIRE.

Niner walks to the front of the car - ejects a spent shell and aims at Ross.

The WINDSHIELD TAKES A DIRECT BLAST as Ross takes cover on the leather seats.

Niner ejects a spent shell. He steps to the front right tire and takes aim.

BAM! As the tire explodes.

Niner drops the shotgun on the asphalt and pulls his forty four, takes aim through the passenger window at Ross - who is scared stiff.

ROSS

Niner! It wasn't my idea! They  
made me do it!

Niner pulls back the hammer on his magnum. Steps closer to the window.

ROSS (CONT'D)

You don't wanna do this.

He fires. The bullet striking the steering column and just missing Ross.

Several UNMARKED SQUAD CARS arrive at the scene.

Ross breaks into tears. Niner smiles at the pathetic sight before him. He slowly lowers his gun as a slew of UNIFORM COPS draw down on him.

FADE OUT.

THE END

