

17TH PRECINCT

"Equinox"

by
Ronald D. Moore

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TEASER

OVER BLACK:

In the City of Excelsior, in the 17th precinct...

FADE IN:

FLEETING IMAGES --

-- GLASSES reflecting city lights...

-- RUNNING FEET... they TRIP on an obstruction...

-- A HAND GOES DOWN, saves the fall...

-- EYES behind the glasses are furtive, wary. Scared.

-- A DARK ALLEY ahead, a VAGRANT just outside, sitting on the sidewalk, nursing a steaming cup...

-- The man in glasses walks into the shadows...

-- We can't see the MAN's face, but his body tells us he's middle-aged, but vigorous. And very worried. He looks around in the shadows of the night.

-- A SMALL PLANT propped on the ground, leaning against the brick wall. Before our eyes, it begins to WILT...

-- A KNIFE FLASHES in the dark...

-- The man suddenly OPENS his mouth and begins to SCREAM--

-- But outside the alley, all is quiet. The vagrant sips his steaming cup...

-- In the alley, the KNIFE FLASHES AGAIN and AGAIN as a man's strangled CRIES of PAIN mix with PLEAS for MERCY --

-- A pair of YOUNG LOVERS walk by the alley, giggling and kissing, they step around the vagrant, never glance down the alley where DARK SHAPES move and struggle...

-- The man COLLAPSES in the alley.

-- His eyes peer into oblivion as his own BLOOD POOLS around him...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. 17TH PRECINCT STATIONHOUSE - MORNING

Establishing. The 17th Precinct Station House is in what we might recognize as the SENTINEL BUILDING. The building has a 19th century aesthetic. The familiar pyramidal shape of the Transamerica Building is in the b.g., telling us immediately that we're in the City by the Bay.

INT. 17TH PRECINCT STATIONHOUSE - BULLPEN - DAY

CLOSE ON -- DETECTIVE CHIEF INSPECTOR WILDER BLANKS standing near the coffee station, the glass carafe in one hand, but not actually pouring coffee into the mug in his other. Wilder (50's) has a rugged, craggy quality to his face, and the deep-set eyes of a man who's seen more than his share of terrible things in his half-century of life.

Right now, his eyes are focused on something in a faraway space that only he can see.

We can't see much of the rest of the bullpen, but UNIFORMED COPS and PLAINCLOTHES DETECTIVES go about their work in the b.g. although no one interrupts Wilder in his reverie. Another man, carrying a clipboard -- DETECTIVE INSPECTOR LIAM BUTTERFIELD (30's), his face as smooth and sleek as Wilder's is craggy -- comes over and quietly sits on the edge of a nearby desk and waits.

Wilder finally takes a deep breath and seems to come back to the here and now. His eyes focus on Liam waiting patiently nearby, but there's a part of him that is still in that faraway place -- like a man trying to hold on to the rapidly fading wisps of a dream.

WILDER

What do we have this morning?

Liam hands him the clipboard. Wilder quickly flips through the pages for a moment.

LIAM

Jogger found a body in North Beach. Not much else so far -- a burglary, some nuisance calls...

WILDER

Put Bosson and Longstreet on the homicide. Hold everything else until Mira gets here.

Liam can't hide his shock.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIAM

Mira? Mira Barkley? Chief, you
can't be serious --

WILDER

I'll be in Superior Court.

Wilder brusquely walks out of the station, leaving a
disbelieving Liam in his wake.

INT. JEFF'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

JEFF BOSSON in the left-hand seat, CAOLÁN (pronounced KAY-
lawn) LONGSTREET in the right as the vehicle zips through
city streets. Caolán is blonde, short hair, slender build,
very fit, in his mid 30s, projects a seriousness of purpose
and deep focus. Jeff has a British accent, is about the same
age with long dark hair, also slender but with the
professional slouch of someone who takes pride in avoiding
the gym.

Caolán's looking through the pages of a TEXTBOOK.

CAOLÁN

Twenty percent of the test is on
forensics. Great.

JEFF

You like forensics.

CAOLÁN

Doesn't mean I'm good at taking
tests on it.

(flipping pages)

Exemplar print evaluation... hair
and trace elemental procedures...
dusting techniques? Dust? Who
uses dust anymore?

JEFF

Old school. Some of those
questions probably haven't changed
since the fifties. Why this sudden
interest in promotion? Susan
develop a thing for men wearing
stripes?

CAOLÁN

She's developed a thing for the
raise that goes along with them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFF

Oh I forgot -- the meeting with the financial planner. I take it all is not well in the monetary forecast?

CAOLÁN

With two kids, two college funds, two mortgages, and two retirement accounts to deal with, the forecast is poverty with a chance of destitution.

JEFF

What about Susan's shop? I was by there last week -- happened to be in the area -- and it looked like business was booming.

CAOLÁN

It's doing okay. Antiques aren't what they used to be.

Beat.

JEFF

But don't antiques have to be what they used to be?

CAOLÁN

What?

JEFF

Huh?

They exchange a confused look as the car SLOWS and PARKS on a STEEP STREET. TWO MARKED POLICE CARS are nearby.

EXT. STREET - NORTH BEACH - DAY

An upper middle-class neighborhood, where rows of SHOPS march down the hill toward the distant BAY. Caolán and Jeff walk toward an ALLEYWAY.

CAOLÁN

You have plans for the Equinox?

JEFF

Is Susan cooking?

CAOLÁN

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFF

Then I have plans.

CAOLÁN

She's getting better. C'mon -- you haven't been over in weeks. She's starting to think you don't like her anymore.

JEFF

Oh, for god's sakes...

CAOLÁN

And don't be late. She hates it when you're late.

They arrive outside the entrance to the alley, YELLOW TAPE marks the crime scene. A uniform -- ISRAEL (30s) meets them and they all AD LIB GREETINGS.

ISRAEL

Body's down the alley about fifty feet behind the dumpster. No witnesses, no one heard anything. Body was found by a jogger at six fifteen. We've placed seals at both entrances and sky-screens on the roof, and the necromancer is on her way.

Jeff and Caolán nod and duck under the tape --

EXT. NORTH BEACH - ALLEY - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

They walk around the DUMPSTER to find the BODY of a MAN in his 50's lying face down in a POOL OF BLOOD.

CAOLÁN

Multiple stab wounds. Some defensive. Definitely a struggle.

JEFF

I'll mark and lift, you take pictures.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Wilder Blanks OPENS the door and takes a seat in the back along with a few other SPECTATORS watching the end of a CRIMINAL TRIAL. The Judge -- HAROWAN (40s) -- is just reaching a verdict.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUDGE HAROWAN

... while defendant clearly did assault and rob Mr. Cole on the night of the twelfth, the court is also mindful that defendant has been fighting an addiction to alkaloids and has enrolled in a recovery program.

In the audience, DET. SGT. MIRA BARKLEY, a heavy-set woman in her mid-sixties, shifts in her seat with growing anger.

JUDGE HAROWAN (cont'd)

Therefore, this court sentences defendant to the loss of the use of his right arm for a period of one year. Sentence to be imposed immediately.

The judge BANGS the gavel and the DEFENDANT slumps in his chair before the BAILIFF CLERK escorts him to the Judge's bench. Mira is outraged.

MIRA

His right arm? That's it? Really?

JUDGE HAROWAN

You're out of order, Detective.

MIRA

He's the leader of a gang of thugs that have been terrorizing people up and down the wharf. You really think he needs both arms for that?

JUDGE HAROWAN

Detective Barkley, you're one step away from a gag order.

That shuts her up. Mira watches in disgust as Harowan puts her hand on a piece of OBSIDIAN on the bench and POINTS to the Defendant's ARM, which immediately FALLS LIMP at his side. The Defendant cradles his useless arm as he walks away, but clearly isn't that devastated by the sentence. He shoots Mira a grin as he walks out of the courtroom along with most of the on-lookers. That's when Mira sees Wilder sitting in the back row. Their eyes meet -- she's surprised to see him.

EXT. NORTH BEACH - ALLEY - DAY

Caolán somehow has a three-ring BINDER filled with full page PHOTOS of the crime scene (they look more like etchings, actually) but has no camera. He flips through the pages for a moment as Jeff finishes marking the scene with CHALK, drawing symbols next to all the BLOOD pools and spatters. Jeff stands up and Caolán hurries to get out of the way.

CAOLÁN

Hold on -- hold on. Lotta blood here -- rather not end up wearing any of it.

(finds a spot)

Go ahead.

Jeff reaches out a hand, and gives a minute flick of his fingers. EVERY DROP OF BLOOD in the alley LIFTS AWAY from the surface where it lay and HOVERS a few inches in the air. A floating, shimmering sea of crimson. Caolán takes a picture: with one hand he "grabs" an image from the scene, then "throws" it at a BLANK PAGE in the binder. A PHOTO APPEARS. Then, he flips the page and does it again.

CAOLÁN (cont'd)

Got it. Okay, move it back.

Another flick of a finger and the ocean of blood RACES OUT in STREAMS -- stopping at discrete POINTS in midair where they form FLOATING GLOBES. Caolán continues to take pictures.

CAOLÁN (cont'd)

(looks over globes)

I'm counting one, two -- five arterial sprays. Three non-fatal spatters from muscle tissue, no arteries.

(to Jeff)

Okay, move forward.

Jeff moves his hand sideways and the GLOBES of blood break up again into STREAMS, which then head back toward the places from which they were drawn only a moment ago. Jeff yo-yo's his hand slightly back and forth and the blood streams correspondingly YO-YO through the air, showing the exact pathways the blood originally took when it spurted from the victim. Caolán studies and "photographs" the patterns.

CAOLÁN (cont'd)

First wound -- a non-fatal slash... took place here. Pretty low...

(studies the blood)

Got him in the... back of the leg?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFF

Hamstring. Incapacitated him.

CAOLÁN

Victim staggers... goes to his knees... receives the second wound here... looks like a kidney puncture... raises his arms to ward off the attack... defensive wounds...

(crouches down to lower blood streams)

Goes down to all fours... then... what? Bleeding from existing lacerations...

The droplets here are moving up and down only a few inches as if they came from wounds very close to the ground.

CAOLÁN (cont'd)

No new wounds for another ten feet.

JEFF

He wants to watch his victim crawl, bleeding and begging for mercy.

Caolán studies the streams, moves on to the last streams of blood moving back and forth in the air, some of which lead back to the body itself lying curled on the ground.

CAOLÁN

Final blows are here. One to the neck, with an arterial spray from the carotid, and the other straight down into the back and punctures the heart. Victim collapses.....

(beat)

And the last thing he sees is his own blood pooling around him.

As that grim thought sinks in...

INT. COURTHOUSE - CORRIDOR - DAY

Wilder and Mira ENTER from the courtroom and walk through the busy corridor. Wilder's vibe is interior, brooding. He tends to let others speak first in most situations.

MIRA

Don't know why we bother. Judges just make it up as they go along.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIRA (cont'd)

Doesn't matter what the law says,
doesn't matter what the facts are,
all that matters is what the judge
feels is "justice."

WILDER

Always been that way. "Truth
before the law."

MIRA

It's gotten worse. It used to be
you could count on a little
consistency, a little logic. Now
everything's just a whim.

(beat)

I'm not buying you lunch if that's
why you're here.

WILDER

The Stoics are back.

Mira stops dead in her tracks. Wilder keeps going, glances
back at her.

WILDER (cont'd)

Outside.

He EXITS the building. Mira takes a moment, almost decides
not to follow him, then...

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DOWNTOWN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Mira catches up with Wilder. PEDESTRIANS are everywhere,
walking in the sunlight of the morning.

MIRA

You sure?

WILDER

Just a feeling.

Judging by her reaction, "just" a feeling from Wilder is good
enough for her.

MIRA

What's the case? A single murder
or is it a series again?

WILDER

I don't have a case. Not yet. But
something is happening. I know it -
- that same metallic taste in my
mouth I had back in Alameda.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mira takes that very seriously. She glances around to make sure no one is listening.

MIRA

Who knows about this?

WILDER

No one. And I want to keep it that way until we know for sure.

MIRA

It's been what -- twelve years since Alameda? Why now?

WILDER

I don't know and I don't know when the first body is going to show up in the 17th Precinct either.

(beat)

But I want you there when it does.

MIRA

I don't do that kind of work anymore. I'm on robbery now. Better hours. Less hassle. Victims walk away at the end.

WILDER

You used to be one of the best homicide detectives on the force.

MIRA

Past tense?

WILDER

Past tense.

MIRA

(stung)

Good enough to save your rookie ass. Twice.

WILDER

Once. I would've gotten out of that high-rise.

MIRA

Not with a thaumaturgical circle of raven's feathers on the fire escape you weren't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WILDER

Which I never saw and you did.
Like I said -- one of the best.

(beat)

If the Stoics really are back, then
this city's going to need all the
help it can get. Especially from
someone who... "understands" them.

That's a sore point -- Mira stops. Wilder doesn't.

MIRA

The hell's that supposed to mean?

WILDER

(keeps walking)

I've already cleared your transfer
through division. You'll meet your
new partner at the stationhouse.

MIRA

Partner? Wait a minute -- I work
alone now! Wilder! WILDER!

But Wilder just keeps walking.

EXT. NORTH BEACH - ALLEY - DAY

The blood has returned to the ground. Caolán is going
through the photo binder, making hand-written notations next
to the pictures. Jeff kneels down next to the body.

JEFF

Let's have a look at you then...

He rolls the body over and gets a look at the face for the
first time. He recognizes him immediately.

JEFF (cont'd)

My word.

CAOLÁN

Something?

Caolán comes over and looks for himself -- has a similar
shocked reaction.

Just then, MORGANA KURLANSKY (40s) enters the crime scene,
carrying a LEATHER BAG. Morgana is striking, with long jet-
black hair shot with wild streaks of silver. Blue, piercing
eyes never seem to rest on any one object, endlessly
searching and probing her surroundings or the faces of those
with her. She and the detectives AD LIB GREETINGS, then --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MORGANA

We have a name yet?

CAOLÁN

Ready for this? Donald Pynchon.

MORGANA

(surprised)

As in -- ?

JEFF

The very one.

MORGANA

Oh. How sad.

CAOLÁN

I better call this in.

He takes out his PHONE -- a FLAT, SLEEK CRYSTAL with rounded edges and a multi-faceted interior. He holds the crystal in front of his mouth.

CAOLÁN (cont'd)

Call DCI Wilder Blanks.

There's a slight flicker of LIGHTS from within the crystal.

MORGANA

Down the alley, please. I need to concentrate.

Caolán waves in acknowledgement, then moves off. Morgana kneels next to the body with a heartfelt sigh and looks down in genuine sympathy. Unlike a coroner, a necromancer must have a sympathetic connection with the victim, not detachment. Morgana opens her bag and takes out large WHITE CANDLE, an iron BRAZIER, and a large glass BOTTLE OF SALT. She begins placing the objects around the victim.

EXT. NORTH BEACH - ALLEY - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Morgana sits on the ground, eyes closed, before a small tied bunch of BURNING HERBS in the tiny brazier, which emits a thick waft of SMOKE. Morgana leans in to the smoke, inhales deeply and then exhales a DARK CLOUD, which gathers into a tall COLUMN OF SMOKE. The shifting smoke begins to FORM the OUTLINES OF A MAN -- never quite becoming stable, the spectral form always on the verge of disintegrating.

MORGANA

Donald...?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The smoky face becomes that of the victim, DONALD PYNCHON.

ANGLE ON JEFF

Standing nearby. He cannot see the spectral figure.
Throughout the following, he can only see and hear Morgana's
voice and see a billowing column of smoke.

MORGANA (cont'd)
Donald Pynchon... is that you?

DONALD
I'm Don... what's happened?

MORGANA
You've passed through the veil of
death. Listen to me. Our time is
short. Who attacked you?

DONALD
I want to go... I don't want to
look back...

Donald starts to walk away, the smoke starting to tear away
and dissipate as he does so. Morgana raises her voice.

MORGANA
Donald! If you leave injustice
behind, it will follow you.

The figure stops, looks back.

DONALD
It was... vengeance.

The SMOKE DISAPPEARS completely and Donald is gone. Morgana
takes a cleansing breath before getting to her feet.

MORGANA
(to Jeff)
It's a blood debt. He called it
"vengeance."

Caolán rejoins them.

CAOLÁN
I just spoke with the DCI. He's
calling City Hall right now, says
it's going to send shock waves
through the entire city.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MORGANA

The real shock is that Excelsior's Executive Prophet -- the man who forecasts the future for the entire city -- couldn't see his own death coming.

BOOM UP and PULL BACK, revealing the CITY: STEEP HILLS dotted with SKYSCRAPERS above the glittering WATERS of the BAY down below. It looks like San Francisco, but it's not.

It's the City of Excelsior.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. NORTH BEACH - ALLEY - DAY

The crime scene is now a hive of activity, with uniformed officers and forensic specialists working. At the mouth of the alley, a small CROWD of onlookers are peering in past the patrolmen guarding the entrance. Wilder LIFTS the SHEET now covering the body as it lies on a GURNEY. Morgana is nearby.

WILDER

Any chance you'll get a second contact back in the lab?

MORGANA

His shade was eager to move on. I doubt he'll want to find the way back to his body.

WILDER

(re: victim)

Left shoelace untied, the right's double-knotted. He was in a hurry.

He drops the sheet and the attendants wheel the gurney away.

WILDER (cont'd)

I want to be there when you break bread.

MORGANA

It won't be long -- I don't want the body to cool much further. I'll have my office call your office.

Morgana EXITS and Wilder goes to where FORENSIC INVESTIGATOR ANDRES LOPEZ (30s) is working with an ASSISTANT. Andres is a thin man with impeccable taste in clothes and fashion. At the moment, he's holding a DIVINATION ROD in his hand and passing it over various objects in the alley. The rod ILLUMINATES MAGICAL ENERGY PATTERNS, similar to the way a blacklight works. The patterns themselves look like intricate BRUSH STROKES of paint. The Assistant is "throwing" the images into a binder. Andres glances up at Wilder's approach.

ANDRES

The alley is lousy with prints. Dozens of people have manipulated magical energy here over the last few weeks.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDRES (cont'd)
It's going to take a while to check
them all for exemplars.

Caolán calls out from a spot farther down the alley:

CAOLÁN
Something over here, Chief.

Wilder and Andres move to where Caolán has found something on
the ground. It's the WILTED PLANT we glimpsed in the Tease.

CAOLÁN (cont'd)
I think it's some kind of charm.

ANDRES
It's Ninebark. Under the right
spell, it can generate a field of
dead sound for three hundred feet
in every direction. This is why no
one heard anything.

Andres passes the divination rod over the wilted plant and
sure enough, it LIGHTS UP with magical energy. Andres then
picks up the plant with his bare hands, examines it closely.

ANDRES (cont'd)
Nineback is native to the northern
coast...
(sniffs the plant)
This one came from Mendocino.

Wilder suddenly has a flash of intuitive insight --

WILDER
That's important.
(to Caolán)
Remember that. Mendocino is
important to this case-- don't know
how or why. But there's something
there.

CAOLÁN
(writes in notebook)
Got it.

WILDER
Have we contacted the wife?

CAOLÁN
Jeff's with her right now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WILDER

Keep me tightly informed on this one -- Mayor's office is going to want frequent updates and the press is going to go wild.

CAOLÁN

Got it.

EXT. 17TH PRECINCT STATIONHOUSE - DAY - WIDE

Establishing. The differences between Excelsior and San Francisco are even more apparent now: the complete absence of power lines and telephone poles; and TREES, BUSHES, and GRASSES are much more abundant, with many buildings themselves covered in GREENS. The plants themselves are well-sculpted and manicured, adding aesthetically to the landscape as well as literally supplying power.

INT. 17TH PRECINCT STATIONHOUSE - BULLPEN - DAY

Now that we have a better look at the Bullpen, we can see that the basics are familiar: work desks, file cabinets, coffee pots, stacks of paperwork, status boards, and a continual buzz of activity. However, there are crucial differences:

-- VINES cover one entire wall, their twisting branches and leaves woven into patterns as artful as any tapestry.

-- WATER meanders through the room, the small channel snaking alongside the desks and beneath floor panels so as to avoid being stepped in by the unwary.

-- Light is provided by SHEETS of ROCK which GLOW, embedded in the ceiling or held in the arms of familiar-looking lamps. OPEN FLAMES also provide practical light to some areas, decoration to others.

-- BOOKS are everywhere, of many different sizes and shapes, giving the feeling of a library.

Liam moves through seemingly chaotic operation like a combination traffic cop and professor of library studies.

LIAM

Daltry! No more overtime unless it's authorized in writing.

DALTRY

C'mon, I'm working a tough case down in the Tenderloin--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIAM

Funny how all your cases have witnesses in brothels. Where's Travers?

JIMMY TRAVERS (25) is sitting patiently in a chair in a crisp suit. He begins to stand up.

JIMMY

Here, sir.

LIAM

Good. Sit.

Liam blows into his office without breaking stride.

INT. 17TH PRECINCT STATIONHOUSE - LIAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Small and even more jammed with books and paperwork than the Bullpen. Liam ENTERS and finds Mira Barkley slouching against a side table.

MIRA

I need a desk.

LIAM

You need a punch in the mouth.

MIRA

Good to see you too, Lisa.

LIAM

It's Liam now. Actually, Detective Inspector Butterfield to you.

MIRA

(peers at his face)

You look younger. Makes you look more feminine. You might want to grow a beard -- you know, something to remind you who you are now.

LIAM

Trust me -- I have all I need to remind me.

MIRA

I'll file that under "Things that make me ill."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIAM

We're off to a bad start and that's good, because ruining your days is going to be a lot of fun.

A quiet beat and Mira's armor drops a little.

MIRA

Would it be wrong to say I've missed you?

LIAM

You had a chance to say a lot of things eight years ago. But you didn't. And I'm not Lisa anymore. Inside or out.

MIRA

(armor comes up again)
Okay -- I'm supposed to meet my new partner.

LIAM

TRIVERS!

Jimmy Travers appears in the doorway.

JIMMY

Yes, sir?

LIAM

Detective James Travers meet
Detective Sergeant Mira Barkley:
your partner and training officer.

JIMMY

(sticks out hand)
Nice to meet --

MIRA

Training officer? A rookie?

LIAM

As per DCI Blanks' instructions.
And for your first assignment --

Liam rolls up a blank piece of PAPER and put it into what looks like a tight FLOW of SMOKE endlessly running from one stationary metal cap to another on his desk. (We might have noticed several of these stations, called "*the stream*" out in the bullpen as well.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

This is their version of the internet.) When the paper enters the smoke of the stream, PRINT appears and covers it with a complete CASE HISTORY with detailed maps, photos, time logs, etc. Liam hands it to Mira.

MIRA

(looks over paper)

What the hell's this? An apartment building in Russian Hill might have a curse on it?

LIAM

I wouldn't get your hopes up, it's probably just a hex.

Mira wants to lash out at Liam, but pulls back, lowers her voice, tries to sound reasonable.

MIRA

Look, I know you're enjoying yourself, but Wilder Blanks didn't go through all the trouble of bringing me back just so I could investigate nuisance calls.

LIAM

He didn't see fit to tell me why he brought you back. I'm sure he has his reasons. But for now, your assignments come from me. And your first one is in Russian Hill.

Mira glares at him, but there's nothing she can do.

INT./EXT. MIRA'S CAR - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jimmy and Mira climb into her car parked at the curb. The car -- like all cars in this world -- has no steering wheel and literally drives itself.

MIRA

(to car)

Take us to Union and Larkin.

The car begins MOVING, silently melding into street TRAFFIC. Mira reads the incident report as Jimmy waits. Finally --

JIMMY

So... uh... how long have you been on the force?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIRA

(brusque)

Thirty years. I'm from Minneapolis, I have a younger sister, my parents are dead, I'm divorced, no kids, but three cats, my favorite color is green, favorite food is Italian, and I have absolutely nothing to teach you about police work. Okay?

JIMMY

Sure. I mean, yeah okay -- sorry, just thought we should --

MIRA

We don't need to get to know each other. You're the hot new prospect so I'm thinking DCI Blanks decided to make me feel guilty and unprofessional unless I showed you how to wipe your ass in the rain, but he'll come to his senses eventually and I'm guessing you'll have a new partner by the end of the week. Questions?

Beat.

JIMMY

That wipe your ass in the rain thing -- is that with an umbrella?

She almost laughs. She tosses the incident report in his lap and looks out at the passing scenery.

MIRA

Wipe it with this.

INT. PYNCHON TOWNHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

An expensive townhouse in Pacific Heights. The decor and furnishings are aggressively modern, flaring into what we would consider contemporary: sleek surfaces, rounded shapes, a spare, almost stark use of color. As with all homes in the city, there are also PLANTS in abundance. GRASSES appear to be growing out of the floor, with different varieties and textures forming an intricate decorative pattern akin to a large rug. One corner of the room contains a flow of WATER endlessly flowing over ROCKS and MINERALS, with FIRE dancing on the water's surface.

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CONTINUED:

The view out the window is majestic, stretching from the GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE (almost exactly the same, but without the cabling) to the small island of ALCATRAZ (without the decrepit prison).

SYLVIA PYNCHON (40s) is blonde, athletic, a bit of a fashionista, her clothes are cutting edge and provocative. At the moment, she's flustered, emotional, still trying to process what's happened. She can hardly stand in one place, and Jeff tries not to crowd her.

JEFF

Mrs. Pynchon, do you know what time your husband left this morning?

SYLVIA

I-I don't know... He -- he was gone when I woke up... can't believe this is happening...

JEFF

Was that unusual? Did he often leave before you were awake?

SYLVIA

What? Yes -- well, no. I mean, he has left the house before I got up, but that was, like, to catch a flight or a meeting, not just without a word --
 (chokes back tears)
 -- I never said goodbye.

JEFF

Did your husband have any enemies or anyone that might wish him harm?

A bitter laugh punches through the tears.

SYLVIA

What -- are you kidding? Last winter he predicted the bond market was going up, half the speculators on the Pacific Stock Exchange wanted him dead.

JEFF

I'm looking for something more specific -- a recent argument, a threat of some kind...

Sylvia tries to calm herself and think clearly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SYLVIA

Yesterday... he had a... heated argument on the phone.... about the prophesy he cast for Equinox. The holiday forecasts are usually just... ceremonial. Some innocuous prediction about the city having "struggles to overcome in the future," that kind of thing.

(beat)

But this year, Don saw... something. Something that bothered him greatly. He almost physically staggered when he made the casting.

JEFF

Did he tell you what it was?

SYLVIA

No, but he never did. He was always concerned about secrecy, didn't want the public to get wind of what he'd seen until it was officially released.

JEFF

This "heated argument"? Someone got upset about this particular prediction?

SYLVIA

You should've heard them cursing at each other on the phone. Don was so angry. Said he was appointed by the Governor and refused to be treated that way by some local political hack.

JEFF

Which local political hack?

SYLVIA

The Deputy Mayor. Brian Kohl.

CUT TO:

A LOAF OF BREAD

Being torn in half by a woman's HANDS.

MORGANA (O.S.)

Nothing is created. Nothing destroyed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAN UP to reveal Morgana, wearing a working smock.

MORGANA (cont'd)

This we know when we enter the void.

She takes a BITE of bread and bows her head briefly. Then looks up at someone o.c.

MORGANA (cont'd)

Let's begin.

REVEAL: INT. NECROMANCER LAB - DAY

Their equivalent to a coroner's lab is more like a chapel. Light comes from large MINERAL PANELS set into the walls and ceiling, providing warm light to the exam pedestal. The room is filled with large CABINETS containing various tools as well as herbs, potions, and amulets of every description. Lush CURTAINS and soft FABRICS deaden sound. The CORPSE lies on a draped pedestal with JASMINE spilling out of the base, and is dressed in ceremonial, loose-fitting clothes which maintain the dignity of the body.

Wilder watches as Morgana begins putting her (bare) hands on the corpse, palpating the torso.

MORGANA

He hated the cold... autumn made his joints ache... He touched a dog yesterday... not his... a stranger's dog... there was a woman in his bed -- his wife. She touched him as they slept... but he felt more warmth from the dog...

(beat)

I hear Mira's back. How do you feel about that?

WILDER

Don't take advantage of the situation to ask questions you know I don't want to answer.

MORGANA

You don't have to answer questions during a necropsy. But if you lie, it'll disrupt the portents.

WILDER

I'll take a pass.

Morgana begins to put her fingers into the actual wounds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MORGANA

The killer had never attacked a person with a knife before... the feeling of the blade cutting flesh was new... but they didn't want it to end, either... wanted to prolong the pain... prolong the suffering...

WILDER

Pynchon's shade said he was killed for "vengeance"...

MORGANA

(nods)

The wounds twist and tear at their deepest point -- definitely an act of vengeance, not sadism. Let's see what physical memories remain in the body...

She moves to the corpse's head, where we can see HERBS have been packed into the nose, mouth and ears. She LIGHTS each bunch with a match, causing them to send out thin tendrils of SMOKE. Morgana INHALES the smoke.

MORGANA (cont'd)

Dark dreams... something intrudes... a bell... a bell again... wakefulness... out of bed... cold room... bones ache... small voice in my ear... I speak... I listen...

(builds)

Panic... upset, worry, hurry, dressing, fear, cold, outside... go, go, go far... run... run... walk... stop... wait. There's a putrid smell... turn... FEAR --

She steps back, staggered as the smoke dissipates. Morgana regains her composure and Wilder hands her a glass of wine.

MORGANA (cont'd)

Thank you. Anything useful?

WILDER

He was asleep. Got a call in the middle of the night. Something on that call scared him. He got dressed in a hurry and took off into the night to deal with something...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WILDER (cont'd)
something from his past...
something chasing him.
(beat)
The Executive Prophet had a
secret... and last night it caught
up with him.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Mira and Jimmy standing on the sidewalk looking at something
o.c. The SOUND of BANGING can be heard.

MIRA
Wilder Blanks, what the hell have
you got me into?

REVEAL

The APARTMENT BUILDING on the corner. It's an old Victorian,
a classic. But at the moment it looks like a classic gone
mad: every DOOR and WINDOW in the place is OPENING and
CLOSING on its own, making a terrific racket of BANGING and
SLAMMING that would drive anyone within insane.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - RUSSIAN HILL - DAY

The doors and windows randomly SLAMMING OPEN and CLOSED.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

The building Super, DELMORE KEATON (60s), looks tense and haggard as he meets with Mira and Jimmy. The banging and slamming from all over the building can be heard throughout.

DELMORE

We've tried three industrial strength exorcisms -- nothing. No hex has this kinda staying power, it's a curse and that means the city has to step in.

SLAM-SLAM-SLAM! A triple dose from the window in this very room causes all of them to jump.

JIMMY

Are any of the tenants suffering from illness, bad luck, or other misfortune since this began?

DELMORE

Misfortune? What the hell do you call this?!

Mira goes to the PLANT WALL in the office and peers closely at the leaves. She takes out a PACKET of BURYING BEETLES from her pocket, taps a few of the bugs out onto the leaves.

JIMMY

(in b.g., over above)
I understand, but technically, speaking, a curse, by definition, impregnates an object with ill fortune that thereafter affects anyone coming into contact with it.

ECU - THE BUGS

Walk on the leaves... stop. Then begin MUNCHING the plants.

JIMMY (cont'd)

So if this building were truly cursed, there would be symptoms --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIRA
(interrupts)
What do these power plants run?

DELMORE
They're for the air conditioner --
but it's not on right now.

He gestures to what appears to be an OPEN-SIDED EMPTY BOX sitting next to the plants.

MIRA
Something's draining power from
these plants right now.

Delmore and Jimmy move to look at the insects.

MIRA (cont'd)
(re: insects)
Burying beetles -- they won't eat
plant matter unless it's actively
transmitting magical energy. And
from the way they're chomping down,
I'd say there's a lot of energy
going out.

JIMMY
(realizes)
A totem. Someone's put a totem in
the building.

MIRA
That's the way it looks to me.

DELMORE
What the hell's a totem?

JIMMY
It's a block of onyx impregnated
with a spell to suck energy from
one power source and then redirect
it. If that's what's happening,
then there's a totem hidden here
somewhere that's taking power from
your plants and pumping it into the
doors and windows.

DELMORE
But I've had the whole building
searched high and low for any
unauthorized charms --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MIRA

It's probably generating its own camouflage screen -- it's as good as invisible right now. Best way to find it is to starve it of energy, that'll cut the camouflage as well as stop all the banging and slamming. You'll have to shut down every power plant in the building.

DELMORE

You mean I gotta go around and get every single tenant to turn off every single magical device in their apartments? Gotta be an easier way.

MIRA

Sure. You can wait until everyone moves out. Be a lot easier to search an abandoned building.

Off Delmore's resigned and bedraggled face...

INT. 17TH PRECINCT STATIONHOUSE - DCI OFFICE - DAY

A TREE rises right through Wilder's office, the upper canopy blending imperceptibly into the ceiling. ONE BRANCH hangs just above the desk and Wilder uses it to display photos and hang his collection of coffee mugs. [It's important to note that plants and trees are not treated as "sacred" objects by anyone, but as practical and functional elements of their personal and professional spaces.] At the moment, Jeff and Caolán are giving Wilder an update on the case.

JEFF

Part of Brian Kohl's duties are to be the Mayor's liaison with the Office of Divination Activities, which was run by Donald Pynchon.

CAOLÁN

It's something of an open secret around City Hall that they've hated each other for years.

JEFF

Pynchon resented what he saw as Kohl's overtly political interference in what is supposed to be a non-partisan office.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFF (cont'd)

Kohl, for his part, has told colleagues that he considered Pynchon a reckless blowhard, who gave little or no thought to the ramifications of his words.

WILDER

What about the Equinox prophesy? Is that what Sylvia Pynchon heard them arguing about?

CAOLÁN

Ah -- there's an interesting subject. ODA says there is no Equinox Prophesy, that Pynchon never cast one this year.

Liam ENTERS with a NEWSPAPER in hand.

LIAM

It's hit the afternoon edition.

While he shows his copy to Jeff and Caolán, Wilder calmly picks up a NEWSPAPER from his desk, rolls it up and then inserts it into the STREAM unit on a nearby sideboard. The stream FLOWS over the paper, washing the previous edition's ink away and "printing" a new paper in a matter of seconds. Wilder shakes open the paper with a snap, revealing the banner headlines: "EXECUTIVE PROPHET KILLED" "CITY IN MOURNING" "POLICE BAFFLED"

CAOLÁN

Little early to be called "baffled."

JEFF

Better than "flummoxed."

WILDER

Go interview Brian Kohl -- but keep it quiet. Let's not put it out there that a deputy mayor is being interviewed in a homicide investigation.

EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

Establishing. The landmark architecture is familiar to any resident of San Francisco, but as everywhere in the city, there's an abundance of PLANT life everywhere, giving the impression of buildings nestled in a natural park.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL (PRELAP)
... there's been some debate on
whether to declare the Equinox
holiday as a day of mourning.

INT. CITY HALL - DEPUTY MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

DEPUTY MAYOR BRIAN KOHL (40s) paces back and forth in his
office as Jeff and Caolán look on.

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL
But I think the Mayor is leaning
away from that -- he's concerned
that kids might always associate
the Equinox with Don's murder.

CAOLÁN
My kids associate it with getting
out of school. Their teachers were
crying in class as they tried to
explain what had happened.
Finally, they just let everyone go
home.

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL
He was a part of everyone's life.
We relied on him to give us some
word, some idea of what tomorrow
would bring, for good or for ill.
Now... we're all alone with our
silent fears.

JEFF
Mr. Kohl, when was the last time
you saw him alive?

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL
Yesterday morning. He dropped by
the office to deliver a... working
draft of the traditional Equinox
prophecy.

CAOLÁN
I'm sorry, but ODA told us there
was no Equinox prophecy.

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL
Well, not officially, no. It was
just a draft.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFF

Pynchon's wife said you had a heated argument on the phone. Was it about this "draft"?

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL

Yes... but you have to understand something: every official prophesy about the future of this city has a political component -- even a weather forecast has implications for the fishing industry, the transportation sector, tourism --

(realizes)

-- wait. That's not why you're here, is it? You don't think I had something to do with his murder?

CAOLÁN

We're just gathering all the facts.

JEFF

Like your whereabouts last night between midnight and four am?

Kohl is suddenly conscious that he could be a suspect.

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL

I was out. With friends. Drinking and raising hell, you know? I had a little too much and one of them put me in a cab and sent me home -- I don't know what time. I passed out on the couch.

CAOLÁN

Can we have the names of your friends and the places you went?

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL

I, I really rather not involve them in this kind of thing...

JEFF

We'll be discreet. Their names?

Kohl is really starting to get nervous. He licks his lips for a beat and the detectives just wait and let him sweat.

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL

Okay. Okay. I wasn't out with friends. But... I mean I have a wife, kids, a career...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL (cont'd)
 (struggles)
 I was with another woman, all
 right? At her apartment.

JEFF
 What's her name?

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL
 Samantha. Shetland. She has a
 place in the Tenderloin above the
 pawn shop on O'Farrell Street.

CAOLÁN
 How long were you with her?

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL
 From ten until... I'm not sure. I
 really did have too much to drink
 and she's the one who called a cab
 and sent me home. Look -- I know
 you've got to go talk to her, but
 I'd like to keep this quiet -- for
 obvious reasons.

CAOLÁN
 If it checks out, I don't see why
 it would be in the record.

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL
 Thank you! Thank you -- if there's
 anything I can ever do...

JEFF
 Caolán could use the answers to the
 sergeant's exam.

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL
 When do you need them by?
 (off their looks)
 Oh. Joking. Of course. Sorry.

Caolán and Jeff exchange looks again, then EXIT.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. SAMANTHA'S APARTMENT - TENDERLOIN - DAY

SAMANTHA SHETLAND (30s), an attractive, tightly-wound woman with streaked, multi-color hair, sits on her couch across from Jeff and Caolán in her rat-trap apartment. The furniture was probably salvaged from yard sales. The POWER PLANTS are scraggly things that look more like weeds.

SAMANTHA

Is Brian in trouble?

JEFF

We're just confirming some information. How long have you two been involved?

SAMANTHA

Six months. We... met at a fundraiser. I was one of the servers. We started to talk and... I don't know, it just kinda happened.

JEFF

Did you see him last night?

Samantha swallows hard, squirms in silence for a moment -- suddenly the FRONT DOOR OPENS and LEO, a nine-year old boy BURSTS IN the apartment with a backpack over his shoulder.

LEO

I am so sick of that stupid school and those idiotic teachers I could--

SAMANTHA

Leo!

(to detectives)

My son.

(to Leo)

We have visitors, sweetheart -- police officers. But it's nothing to worry about.

But Leo isn't reassured. He eyes the detectives with suspicion before making a beeline for the back bedroom.

LEO

I have homework.

He CLOSES the door behind him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMANTHA

I should make him a snack.

She goes to the refrigerator, takes a bunch of things out, puts them on the counter.

CAOLÁN

Good-looking kid.

SAMANTHA

He's... very special.

JEFF

We were talking about Brian Kohl...

SAMANTHA

(deliberate)

Yes. I did see him last night. From ten until four. Then he had too much to drink and passed out on my couch. So I called a cab and sent him home.

CAOLÁN

That's what he told us.

(suspicious)

Almost word for word.

Jeff notes a small JAR on the counter where Samantha is making a sandwich.

JEFF

I see you're taking bdellium.

Samantha starts, recovers.

SAMANTHA

I have... allergies.

JEFF

Allergies? I see. Must be quite severe given the amount you're taking.

(off her look)

I noticed earlier your eyes have a slight yellowish cast. That suggests either a large oral dosage or... a substantial topical one.

Her hand goes unconsciously to her face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JEFF (cont'd)

(quiet)

In addition to being an inflammatory, bdebellium is often used to mask dermal bruising.

(beat)

May I?

Samantha is humiliated, on the verge of tears, but she nods and Jeff passes his hand over her face -- UGLY BRUISES APPEAR.

JEFF (cont'd)

Who did this to you, Miss Shetland?

SAMANTHA

He - he wasn't always like that. But now... it's his temper. He can't control it. Especially when he drinks...

CAOLÁN

You're talking about Brian Kohl...

SAMANTHA

(nods)

He... he'd been drinking before he got here... and he was angry. Problems at work, someone was out to get him -- I don't know, he wasn't making a lot of sense. Kept saying, it wasn't right, wasn't right, couldn't let it happen. That's when he got violent. I was - I was scared. I tried to just stay out of his way... but he caught me...

(puts a hand to her face)

When he was... finished, he just left. Don't know where he went or what he did after that.

CAOLÁN

What time did he leave?

SAMANTHA

Around one, one-thirty, maybe?

CAOLÁN

And you haven't heard from him since?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SAMANTHA
(too quick)
No.

CAOLÁN
Samantha... why do you want to
protect this man?

Samantha struggles for a beat.

SAMANTHA
He called this morning. About his
jacket. He was very upset about it
for some reason. Said he had to
have it back today and not to touch
it until he could come by and get
it.

CAOLÁN
You still have the jacket?

Samantha retrieves a BROWN JACKET. The detectives go through
the pockets. They find a small piece of GREY SLATE with
WORDS BURNED into the surface:

JEFF
(reads)
*"There is corruption at the heart
of our city. The coming year will
be marked by scandal as a member of
the mayor's inner circle is exposed
as betraying the public trust as
both embezzler and thief."*

Off Caolán and Jeff's reactions...

INT. 17TH PRECINCT STATIONHOUSE - WILDER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A short time later, Jeff and Caolán wait anxiously as Wilder
mulls over what they've told him.

WILDER
I don't buy it.

The two detectives react with exasperation.

JEFF
He has a mistress, a drinking
problem --

WILDER
-- a nasty temper, a history of
violence --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFF

-- no alibi for the time of the murder --

CAOLÁN

-- and a forecast in his jacket pocket inditing him as a future embezzler.

JEFF

A forecast that would end his career just as effectively as if he'd actually committed the crime.

WILDER

It's too easy. The clues just fell in our laps.

Beat.

JEFF

Do you have an intuitive feeling on this, Chief Inspector? Is that your hesitation?

WILDER

Not intuitive. Not magical at all. Just something my old partner taught me about -- a cop's hunch.

(beat)

Bring in Kohl for questioning in the morning. Sweat him, but keep an open mind to other possible avenues.

Jeff and Caolán nod, then EXIT.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - RUSSIAN HILL - NIGHT

The building is almost completely DARK and only ONE DOOR is still BANGING away. Mira and Jimmy are watching from the sidewalk as the LAST LIGHT goes out in the building -- when it does, the door STOPS BANGING.

MIRA

Can it be this easy?

Jimmy appears nervous, agitated. Can barely stand still.

MIRA (cont'd)

What's with you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

I don't know, it's like I can't stand still. Like I've got ants crawling up my spine.

Delmore comes out the front of the building.

DELMORE

That's it. Lady on four didn't want to turn off the vaporizer on her cat's litter box.

MIRA

All right. Let's go find us a totem.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - VARIOUS - NIGHT

Mira, Jimmy, and Delmore searching the building with handheld FLASHLIGHTS -- powerful round CRYSTALS that can emit shafts of light in different sizes and colors.

-- Mira searching the Basement.

-- Delmore searching storage closets.

-- Jimmy searching through power plants.

-- Mira opening a wall access panel.

-- Delmore rummaging through trash cans.

Finally:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - ATTIC - NIGHT

Mira and Delmore hunched beneath the low roof and shining their lights as Jimmy carefully pulls up something from beneath the dusty boards of the attic with a pair of TONGS.

JIMMY

Here we go...

MIRA

Careful -- don't let it touch your fingers.

He finally pulls up a small multi-faceted BLACK CUBE. Tiny hints of light zip across the facets, giving the impression of a living thing. He sets it down.

DELMORE

I'll be damned. Never seen anything like that before.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIRA

Not many people have outside of a lab. They're typically used for research on high-level mental experiments --

Jimmy suddenly STIFFENS and nearly falls over.

MIRA (cont'd)

Hey -- you okay?

JEFF

Something's wrong -- someone's in trouble!

He scrambles toward the stairs -- Mira and Delmore close behind.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - RUSSIAN HILL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jimmy quickly leads Mira and Delmore down the Hallway... he looks from door to door... finally stops at one.

JIMMY

Here.

MIRA

(urgent, to Delmore)
You have the key?

DELMORE

Why? What's going on --

MIRA

Can you open the door?

DELMORE

Sure, but she's still home, I was just here a minute ago.

(knocks)

Lana? Lana, it's the super again, can I...?

But the door isn't latched and it SWINGS OPEN --

-- REVEALING the DEAD BODY of Lana Keystone lying in a POOL OF BLOOD.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT 4-C - RUSSIAN HILL - NIGHT - LATER

Morgana, Wilder and Mira watch the BODY of LANA KEYSTONE (30s) being trundled out of the apartment on a GURNEY.

MORGANA

Her shade wasn't very cooperative. All she wanted to talk about was whether she'd find her dead sister now.

WILDER

What do we know about her?

MIRA

Lana Keystone was a professor at Cal. Taught advanced magical engineering and biology with an emphasis in power plant design. Never married, sister died two years ago, lived a quiet life, friends, popular with her students - - very noncontroversial figure.

WILDER

You have a cause of death?

MORGANA

Not yet. But from the damage to her sternum and the loss of blood, it's most likely a physical weapon.

Mira and Wilder exchange a significant look at that.

MORGANA (cont'd)

I'll know more after the necropsy -- probably breaking bread around noon.

Morgana EXITS. The minute she's gone, Mira turns to Wilder.

MIRA

You think the Stoics did this?

WILDER

We won't know until Morgana gives us a cause of death.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIRA

You have a feeling about it?

WILDER

There is something... familiar here. But I can't touch anything stronger than that.

MIRA

A professor at Cal... why would they target her?

They both process that internally for a moment. Then she turns on him with a sharper tone.

MIRA (cont'd)

Why didn't you tell me Jimmy Travers is an intuitive savant?

WILDER

I wasn't sure. Neither were the instructors at the academy. Figured the best way to find out was to put him on a case with someone who knew what it was like to partner with one.

MIRA

Thanks a lot.

JIMMY (O.C.)

Sergeant? Check this out --

Wilder and Mira turn to where Jimmy has opened a CABINET filled with MAGICAL OBJECTS.

JIMMY (cont'd)

Most of these are obviously healing stones and herbs, but down here -- this entire shelf is filled with protection charms.

WILDER

That's a lot of protection for a professor at Cal.

MIRA

Wait a minute. When the super told her to turn off all her enchantments, she resisted, said she was worried about her cat -- but she doesn't have a cat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WILDER

(realizes)

She didn't want to lift her protective web.

MIRA

Exactly. She knew she was in danger. And her killer knew she had an elaborate web of protection spells guarding her apartment.

WILDER

The whole thing was a set-up. They wanted you to turn off the power to disable her protective charms.

MIRA

Giving the killer free entree into the apartment.

JIMMY

(certain)

And this is just the beginning.

He catches himself, seems surprised that came out of his mouth. Jimmy looks at them in shock.

JIMMY (cont'd)

Why do I know that?

Mira looks at Wilder: "What have you got me into?"

EXT. EXCELSIOR - DAWN

The first rays of SUNLIGHT stab out over the hills of the East Bay and stab toward the skyscrapers of Excelsior, lighting them up like thousands of mirrored jewels.

INT. CAOLÁN'S APARTMENT - DAWN

Caolán, his wife SUSAN (30s) and their two children DOREEN (7) and BOYLE (11) gather around a window. SUNLIGHT comes in through the window, is caught by an ARRAY of PRISMS around the room and FUNNELED to a single prismatic CRYSTALLINE SCULPTURE atop a table. The sculpture then spreads the light onto the PRODUCE loaded on the table below. Caolán reads from a BOOK:

CAOLÁN

"We welcome the Equinox with open hearts and open hands..."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

In the b.g., Jeff ENTERS with an armful of GIFTS. Susan raises an eyebrow in reproach. He grins and shrugs.

CAOLÁN (cont'd)

"We draw the sun's life into ours
and pray the blessings from its
rays take purchase in the fruits of
our table so they may fill us with
joy at the feast of Equinox."

The rays of the sun shift away from the prisms and the light show is OVER. Family hugs all around. Susan makes her way over to Jeff as Caolán says good-bye to the kids in the b.g.

JEFF

Yes, I'm late, I apologize, but
wait until you see what I got you.

SUSAN

Better than last year's "Love Cola"
I hope?

JEFF

That was a genuine love potion
straight from my mother's cauldron
and if you hadn't mixed it with
vodka the two of you would've had
an amazing anniversary.

SUSAN

Everything should go with vodka.
Are you coming for dinner?

JEFF

If you're cooking, I wouldn't miss
it.

CAOLÁN

'Bye, sweetie.

Caolán kisses Susan and he starts out the door with Jeff.

SUSAN

Oh -- Jeff! Wait a second! I
forgot your gift.

She goes to get a small WRAPPED BOX.

CAOLÁN

I'll pull the car around, meet you
downstairs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Caolán EXITS. The second the door closes behind him, the temperature between Susan and Jeff instantly changes. Susan's voice is hushed and urgent.

SUSAN

(low)

What do you mean you're coming to dinner? I thought we agreed --

JEFF

He insisted.

SUSAN

Do you know how awkward this is?

JEFF

How do you think I feel?

SUSAN

This has to stop.

JEFF

I agree. But it's...

SUSAN

Complicated. I know.

Susan glances back at the kids beginning to snack at the food on the table.

SUSAN (cont'd)

I should go.

JEFF

Right. 'Bye.

He heads down the hall. Susan nearly shuts the door, then can't quite close it. Jeff turns back and their eyes meet.

SUSAN

Are you... coming by the shop today?

JEFF

Should I?

Another beat, then she SHUTS the door without answering, leaving Jeff alone to deal with the tangle of mixed emotions as he heads off to join his partner.

INT. 17TH PRECINCT STATIONHOUSE - INTERROGATION - DAY

In contrast to every other room we've seen in this world, there is a complete absence of organic life, fabric, or soft textures of any kind. The walls appear to be hard rock, the chairs and table cold metal. Brian Kohl is in the hot seat, looking at the handwritten PROPHECY they found in his JACKET, which is also on the table.

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL
It's a fake.

INTERCUT:

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

In an adjacent room, Caolán watches through what appears to be an entirely TRANSPARENT WALL. Liam ENTERS.

LIAM	JEFF
Has he asked for an attorney yet?	It's in Pynchon's own hand.

CAOLÁN	DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL
Not so far. I think he's still hoping to keep this all a secret.	That can be faked with the right spell.

JEFF
To frame you for a murder you didn't commit. Are you really so disliked that someone would go to all that trouble?

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL
I don't know why, but someone did, okay? I'm innocent.

JEFF
If this prophecy isn't genuine, then where is the real one? Because we know he delivered one to you on Thursday and we know it wasn't a "draft."

Kohl is in a jam and he knows it, decides to confess.

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL
I... destroyed it.

JEFF
How convenient.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL

It would've panicked people.
Panicked the entire city. I didn't
want that on my conscience.

JEFF

I'm so glad your conscience is
clear. What did it say?

He really doesn't want to do this, but finally:

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL

"An old foe has returned to strike
at our very way of life. The
coming year will bring fear and
death... as Excelsior enters a time
of darkness."

Jeff is slightly chilled despite himself.

JEFF

He was sure about what he saw?

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL

He was always sure. But can you
imagine if we actually published
that? Businesses would stop
investing, tourism will dry up, the
city's bond rating would tank -- it
would cripple us just as we're
starting to pull out of the
recession.

(beat)

So, I had the slate destroyed.
When I told Pynchon, he freaked
out, we had words on the phone, I
needed a drink and the next thing I
know I'm in Samantha's apartment
drunk as a skunk.

JEFF

And that's when you started hitting
her?

DEPUTY MAYOR KOHL

She was hitting me. She was acting
crazy. Screaming, yelling, saying
I should leave my wife and move
back to Mendocino with her and Leo.
All I did was defend myself -- and
okay, maybe I overreacted and went
too far. That doesn't make me a
killer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

In the Observation Room, Caolán suddenly turns to Liam.

CAOLÁN

Did he just say "Mendocino"?

INT. 17TH PRECINCT - BULLPEN - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Liam has his HAND directly in a STREAM, his eyes rapidly moving back and forth as he sees the flow of information in his mind. Finally, he sees something.

LIAM

Here we go --

He grabs a single SHEET of paper from a nearby desk and plunges it into the stream - TEXT AND GRAPHICS APPEAR instantly and he hands it to Caolán and Jeff.

CAOLÁN

(quickly skims)

Samantha Shetland... rented a house in Mendocino for two years... no job, no discernible income...

JEFF

Son Leo attends public school... has disciplinary problems... mother and son leave abruptly... move to Excelsior six months ago...

Jeff's crystal phone RINGS. He answers.

JEFF (cont'd)

Bosson.

(beat)

I'm on my way.

CAOLÁN

This can't be it. There's nothing here from before two and a half years ago.

LIAM

That's all there is in the stream.

JEFF

Andres has something. I'll be in forensics.

Jeff EXITS.

CAOLÁN

Look, she didn't just appear two years ago. She must be using an alias, fake ID, something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIAM

(points to document)
Her ID's clean. But a little odd --
issued directly from a "Judge Ball"
on the Superior Court in Mendocino.

CAOLÁN

Why would a judge issue an ID?

INT. 17TH PRECINCT STATIONHOUSE - FORENSIC LAB - DAY

The domain of Andres Lopez looks at first glance like a pool hall, with a couple dozen billiard-sized TABLES marching across the large, open floor. Each of the tables is bounded by elevated borders to keep the objects from various crime scenes safely contained within. TECHNICIANS work the tables, bringing potions, casting spells, conducting experiments, etc. The entire floor is one huge power web, covered with grasses and low-bushes and the walls are covered with books.

Andres and Jeff walk briskly through the busy lab.

ANDRES

We checked the database for any exemplars, but none matched the mage print from the Ninebark plant found at the scene. But -- when we started extrapolating the pattern, we did find something interesting...

A TECHNICIAN is passing a METAL COMB through the air over the WILTED PLANT collected in the alley which is now lying on the table. The Technician is wearing a pair of GOGGLES and Andres grabs two more pair for himself and Jeff.

JEFF'S POV - THRU GOGGLES

The lenses cast everything in a weird orange light, but the mage print pattern now is bright GREEN and the intricate energy pattern extends beyond the weed itself by a foot in each direction. The Technicians's comb can be seen literally "teasing" out more fine strands of the print. Andres can pass his hand through the print without damaging it in the slightest as he points out highlights to Jeff.

ANDRES (cont'd)

The original casting stroke was made from left to right. The slight upward wave you see here suggests someone practiced in using the spell. Now --

(points to print)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDRES (cont'd)
 These ridges along the anterior
 cast relate directly to a person's
 age. The older they are, the
 longer and deeper the ridges...

JEFF
 These look kinda short...

ANDRES
 Exactly. These are not the
 patterns of a man... these are the
 patterns of a boy.

JEFF
 A boy?
 (realizes)
 How old?

ANDRES
 I'd say no more than nine or ten at
 the most.

JEFF
 Leo.

OFF Jeff's face as another piece of the puzzle falls into
 place.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY/SAMANTHA'S APARTMENT - TENDERLOIN - DAY

Jeff and Caolán KNOCKING on the door to Samantha's apartment.

CAOLÁN
 Police! Ms. Shetland! Samantha!
 We need to talk to you and your
 son! Samantha!

More knocking still produces no answer. Jeff tries the door
 and it swings OPEN --

-- revealing the APARTMENT is EMPTY. Cleaned out. Samantha
 and Leo have disappeared.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. 17TH PRECINCT STATIONHOUSE - BULLPEN - DAY

Wilder, Morgana, Caolán, and Jeff around the desks of the two detectives. Images from the crime scene are on display.

JEFF

The landlord said they gave no notice, just up and left -- dropped the keys in the mailbox and walked away from their security deposit.

WILDER

Back to Mendocino?

CAOLÁN

I put in a call to the sheriff's station to let us know if they turn up. But I have to say, I'm still having a hard time believing Leo is the killer.

MORGANA

The wounds on the body do indicate that they were made from a low angle and almost all slash upward, indicating either an attack from a sitting or crouching position or... from a very short person.

CAOLÁN

The blood patterns at the scene imply a thoroughly planned and executed murder -- first slashing the victim's hamstring, then a methodical, calculated attack. These are not the actions of a child.

JEFF

Could be a sociopath. Completely amoral and without feeling.

CAOLÁN

I could buy the boy as his mother's accomplice. He sets the sound mask and she carries out the murder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFF

Why not set the sound mask herself?
Why involve him at all?

MORGANA

Sympathetic magic? The mother
controls the boy from a remote
location through the use of an
effigy or a doll. He may not have
even been aware of what he was
doing.

WILDER

I'm still waiting to hear a motive.
Why would either of them want to
kill the Executive Prophet of
Excelsior -- a city they've only
lived in for six months?

A beat as Wilder looks over the range of materials on
display: articles about Pynchon draw his attention.

WILDER (cont'd)

Pynchon did a lot of travelling,
gave lectures across the country.
Did he ever lecture in Mendocino?

CAOLÁN

Let's find out.

He moves to put his hand in the STREAM just as Liam ENTERS.

LIAM

Just got off the phone with the
Mendocino Superior Court clerk. He
said he has no idea why Judge Ball
issued Samantha Shetland an ID,
that the court files are missing.

WILDER

Can we talk to Ball?

LIAM

She's retired. Keeps to herself
now, doesn't take calls or respond
to mail.

Caolán reacts to something in the stream.

CAOLÁN

Found something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Someone hands him some a sheet of paper, which he puts in the stream and gets the "printout." The others gather round as he spreads the sheets on the table which are a compilation of DIFFERENT ARTICLES from different sources (think articles gathered from a Google search).

CAOLÁN (cont'd)

(reading)

Pynchon gave a lecture in Mendocino at a symposium in 1996 -- fifteen years ago.

JEFF

After Mendocino he went to Eureka...

LIAM

No -- he cancelled Eureka. There's a notice here.

CAOLÁN

He cancelled the whole tour after Mendocino. But there's no explanation... in fact, half this article's missing.

JEFF

Half of this article's gone too.

LIAM

(sudden)

It's a judicial wipe.

MORGANA

What's that?

LIAM

They're rare. Usually after someone gets a state pardon. The judge casts a spell that seeks out and wipes all mention of the case from the stream.

CAOLÁN

(realizing)

Didn't the Clerk in Mendocino say there were missing court files?

WILDER

We're on the right track here, I know we are.

(to Liam)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WILDER (cont'd)

We need to talk to that Judge. You said she retired -- where?

LIAM

She has a house in Point Reyes.

EXT. POINT REYES - WIDE - DUSK

As the sun touches the waters of the Pacific, a CAR travels a dirt road along the dramatic northern California coast toward one particular HOUSE perched on the very edge of a cliff high above the surf.

INT./EXT. CAOLÁN'S CAR - MOVING - DUSK

Caolán, Jeff and Wilder riding in the car. Wilder suddenly feels something.

WILDER

Stop the car.

Caolán puts up a hand [it's his car, so it only responds to him] and the car comes to a smooth stop. They all get out about a half mile from the house. Wilder walks around the front of the car, where the HEADLIGHTS are illuminating the smooth dirt road.

WILDER (cont'd)

Someone's been here recently.

JEFF

No footprints, no tire tracks...

WILDER

Kill the lights.

Caolán flicks a hand toward the car and the lights go OUT. Wilder kneels in front of the vehicle and takes out a small LEATHER KIT from his jacket pocket. [NOTE: These kits are carried by all the detectives, each of them keeping individual items in them.] Wilder removes a small DIVINATION ROD from the kit, much like the one used by Torres in the alley. He holds it out over the road and it ILLUMINATES HIDDEN FOOTPRINTS leading up the road toward the house.

CAOLÁN

Two people.

JEFF

A woman and a child.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILDER
Call for back up.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUDGE BALL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Moments later, Wilder, Caolán, and Jeff are outside the house of Judge Ball. The LOW MOANING SOUND of the WIND never stops on this high promontory. The detectives quickly size up the house which is completely DARK.

JEFF
No lights --

WILDER
(certain)
Someone's definitely inside.

Wilder walks up to the front porch.

WILDER (cont'd)
I'll take the front. Caolán you
take the back, Jeff try the second
floor--

Suddenly, his voice goes silent even as he keeps talking. He stops, startled and looks back at the other two who are a couple steps behind him.

JEFF
Chief Inspector?

Wilder tries to talk again, but nothing comes out. He steps toward them and his voice returns.

WILDER
Sound mask.

JEFF
Just like the murder scene.

They each reach into small LEATHER HOLSTERS on their belts [about the size and shape of the ones used to carry handcuffs] and pull out COPPER DISKS about four inches in diameter and shaped like a discus. This is a GLADIUS, the police sidearm. Each detective holds it the same way: flat against the palm, fingers wrapped around the edge. The gladius is held and used like a gun -- at the ready position, leading the way into any space where danger might lurk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILDER

I'm usually sensitive to death, so I don't think the Judge is dead, but she may be in trouble. I'll take the front, Caolán the back, Jeff try the upstairs windows, there's a trellis around the side. Remember -- once we're in, we won't be able to hear a thing, so be on your guard. Let's move.

The detectives split up:

-- Wilder goes to the front door

-- Caolán around back

-- Jeff begins climbing the trellis

Everything inside the house takes place in silence. Only the MOANING of the WIND can be heard throughout the following:

-- On the front porch, Wilder tries the door. It's locked. He reaches into a pocket with his free hand, takes out a small round container, flips open the lid, exposing MOSS inside. He fits the container over the LOCK on the door, allowing the moss to touch the metal -- the door OPENS.

INT. ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

Wilder ENTERS cautiously, his weapon in his hand. A STAIRCASE is directly ahead, with doorways to rooms leading left and right. He goes to a LIGHT PANEL and tries to turn on the lights -- no power. He takes a beat, then slowly walks toward the stairs.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Caolán OPENS the back door with his own container of moss.

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT

Looking down as Wilder slowly makes his way up the staircase. Samantha moves into view, watching Wilder from a hidden vantage.

EXT. JUDGE BALL'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

A SECOND CAR is coming up the dirt road. It parks in front of the house near Caolán's car. JUDGE LEANDRA BALL (40s) gets out of her car and looks at the unfamiliar vehicle in her driveway with puzzlement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUDGE BALL
 (calls out)
 Hello? Hello, is someone here?

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT

Wilder can't hear Ball as he approaches the top of the stairs. He also can't see the KNIFE in Samantha's hand as she presses herself into the shadows...

INT. SECOND FLOOR GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Jeff finds an unlocked window and slips inside...

INT. ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

Judge Ball comes through the door into her home. Tries the lights. Nothing. She calls out, but her voice is silent.

ANGLE - LEO

Is in the shadows beneath the staircase, watching Ball. He has his own KNIFE.

ON THE SECOND FLOOR LANDING

-- Samantha raises her knife...

-- Wilder senses danger...

-- Samantha simply LETS GO OF THE KNIFE, and it FLIES AWAY AT LIGHTNING SPEED once it leaves her hand.

-- Wilder instinctively spins and DUCKS out of the way just as the knife FLIES by his head and STICKS in the wall.

-- Samantha snaps her fingers twice and the knife FLIES BACK to her hand.

-- Wilder spins around and FIRES his gladius, which EMITS a BOLT of ENERGY which barely MISSES Samantha, but BLOWS OUT the large STAINED GLASS WINDOW at the top of the staircase.

IN THE ENTRYWAY

Ball is still trying to get her bearings in the dark and silent house, unaware of the fight on the floor above. Leo is creeping around from behind the stairs, keeping to the shadows with the knife in his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ON THE SECOND FLOOR

Samantha shifts positions, hiding in the shadows, her knife at the ready. Wilder has dropped back slightly for cover. In order for him to get closer to her, he'll have to step out into the open.

IN THE KITCHEN

Caolán is still checking adjacent rooms, unaware of any of the above. He prepares to move out toward the entryway when he sees something down at the foot of one of the walls: A WILTED PLANT. He immediately recognizes it as the soundmask seen in the alleyway and he moves quickly toward it.

IN THE ENTRYWAY

Ball at the foot of the stairs, Leo slipping up behind her...

ON THE SECOND FLOOR

Samantha is watching for any move on Wilder's part that will expose him to her knife.

IN THE KITCHEN

Caolán POURS LIQUID from a small vial over the soundmask. The plant CHANGES COLOR and **SOUND RETURNS** just as --

ON THE SECOND FLOOR

Jeff steps out into the Hallway, his foot making a BOARD CREAK.

Startled, Samantha whips around and is about to hurl the knife at Jeff --

Wilder sees Samantha break cover and he FIRES at her, the energy BOLT hitting her squarely and KNOCKING her back and OUT THROUGH THE WINDOW.

IN THE ENTRYWAY

Judge Ball jumps back at the sound of the fight from above, and she CRASHES RIGHT INTO LEO. They both go down in a heap, both of them yelling and thrashing about, the knife in Leo's hand flailing about as he struggles with the much larger and stronger woman.

Caolán rushes into the Entryway, and grabs Leo's knife hand.

LEO
LET ME GO! LET ME GO! NO! NO!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Caolán pins the boy's hand and he DROPS THE KNIFE as the Judge scurries away. Jeff and Wilder come running down the stairs.

CAOLÁN
 THAT'S IT LEO! YOU'RE DONE!
 YOU'RE DONE!

Pinned helpless by the detective, Leo stops struggling.

WILDER
 (to Judge)
 Are you all right?

JUDGE BALL
 I think so...

Caolán WRAPS a STRING around Leo's hands, then points at the string, which FLASHES briefly, then binds the boy's hands as effectively as metal cuffs. He lifts the boy to his feet. The Judge recognizes him.

JUDGE BALL (cont'd)
 Lionel? Lionel Dickson?

JEFF
 We know him as Leo Shetland.

JUDGE BALL
 He's -- his real name is Lionel Dickson.

WILDER
 He's not a boy either, is he?

JUDGE BALL
 No. He's actually... forty-two.
 (to Leo)
 Oh, Lionel... what have you done?

Leo glares at her with pure hate in his eyes, but says nothing.

Judge Ball sits down heavily at the foot of the stairs and puts her head in her hands. As the three detectives exchange looks and wonder what they've found...

CUT TO:

EXT. JUDGE BALL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Later. POLICE CARS and OFFICERS are everywhere. Judge Ball sits on the steps of her house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUDGE BALL

Fifteen years ago, Donald Pynchon walked into the Mendocino police station and said he'd had a vision of a murder that hadn't yet happened. He was in town for a lecture when he had the vision. Saw the killer, the victim, everything -- except when and where.

(beat)

The police began a frantic search, but by the time they found the woman it was too late -- raped and murdered, exactly the way he'd described. But at least Pynchon said he could identify the killer

(beat)

So when he picked Lionel Dickson out of a line-up, we had no reason to doubt his testimony.

(beat)

Dickson was convicted and I gave him a life sentence of... Reenactment. A spell was cast which made him experience the original attack as if from the victim's point of view. Twelve times a day he would see and feel the violation of the rape... the fear... and ultimately the pain of death itself.

(beat)

Twelve times a day. For life.

She looks away for a long beat.

JUDGE BALL (cont'd)

Two years ago there was another murder -- the same MO as the one in '96. Rape. Strangulation. But this time, the man was caught in the act. Under interrogation he confessed to other killings... including the one in '96.

WILDER

Pynchon was wrong?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JUDGE BALL

Mistaken identity. Similar height, weight, hair -- the average person could glance at them from a distance and mix them up.

CAOLÁN

But a Executive Prophet is no average person.

JUDGE BALL

No. No, he's not.

(beat)

It was clear that Dickson had to be set free. The damage had been done, but that didn't mean it couldn't be remedied in some way. I wanted him to have a chance to start over.

WILDER

So you issued a judicial wipe to clear the record, I understand that. But why the rejuvenation spell? Why make him a boy again?

JUDGE BALL

A just society should not only recognize its mistakes, it should also be generous in restitution. So I gave him back not only the years he had lost, but more. A second childhood. A way to truly make amends for what had happened.

They watch as the BODY of Samantha Shetland is wheeled by on a gurney toward a waiting vehicle.

CAOLÁN

What about her? Who is Samantha?

JUDGE BALL

His sister. Catherine. She had been the one person who had maintained his innocence through the years. His greatest advocate and protector. I gave her a new identity so she could pose as his mother as he started a new life.

JEFF

They tried to adjust, but they couldn't.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JEFF (cont'd)

All they cared about was punishing the two people they felt had ruined their lives: Donald Pynchon and you.

CAOLÁN

They tried to frame Brian Kohl for Pynchon's murder and they probably would've dumped your body in the ocean, without a trace.

Leo/Lionel is now led to a police car by a pair of UNIFORMS.

JUDGE BALL

I really thought... he could start over. Thought he could let go of the bitterness and rage he felt over what had been done to him.

Beat.

WILDER

There's no spell to change the human heart.

EXT. EXCELSIOR - NIGHT

Establishing. The glittering City by the Bay.

INT. MORGANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Morgana is asleep, her hair splayed over her pillow, moonlight shining in through the window. A DARK FIGURE steps into frame and looms over her lying defenseless in bed.

MORGANA

You hungry?

REVEAL the figure is Wilder. He begins to disrobe.

MORGANA (cont'd)

Pizza in the fridge.

WILDER

Maybe later.

He sits down on the bed and she helps him off with his shirt.

MORGANA

What do you think will happen to Leo or Lionel or whatever he wants to be called now?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILDER

Judge Harowan will get the case in the morning -- everyone wants to make a deal, make this all go away as quickly as possible. DA's willing to let him walk -- provided he's aged up to an old man. Maybe ninety-five years old.

MORGANA

It's not right to just whip someone through ages like that.

WILDER

No...

She brushes a stray hair from his face.

MORGANA

Something else is on your mind.

WILDER

The Keystone murder. I read your report on the cause of death.

MORGANA

It was so bizarre -- I've never seen or heard of anything like that in my career.

Beat.

WILDER

I have.

EXT. SEA BAR - MARINA - NIGHT

A dive bar that's been here for at least fifty years.

INT. SEA BAR - NIGHT

Mira is bringing a PITCHER OF BEER over to where Jimmy is sitting at a table. From the peanut shells and empty pitchers, it's clear they've been here a while and Jimmy's definitely feeling it. She pours them both another glass.

JIMMY

I... don't understand what I'm supposed to... do.

MIRA

Supposed to drink.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

No, not -- the thing I've got. You know, the...

MIRA

The intuitive gift that can also be a curse? You use it. Sometimes it uses you. That's why you became a cop.

JIMMY

No, it's not. Becoming a cop was... a whim... almost a random idea I had one day.

MIRA

Trust me, you're gonna start looking back on your life and see a lotta things differently -- a lotta things you thought were random or "lucky" or "chance." Nothing is random for you. You'll be a hell of a cop someday. Someday. If you listen to me.

JIMMY

Okay. I'm listening.

MIRA

Good start. Have you ever heard of a group called the Stoics?

INT. MORGANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wilder now pacing as he relates the story to Morgana.

WILDER

They're a group... dedicated to the destruction of magic.

(off her look)

I know, it sounds crazy, like saying you want to destroy the sun, but that's their goal and they're deadly serious about it. They believe society is corrupt and decadent because magical energy derives from the unrestrained emotions of the human soul. That our system of justice is subjective and irrational because it's a slave to the whims of the heart instead of the head.

INT. SEA BAR - MARINA - NIGHT

As before.

JIMMY

All of which you agree with.

MIRA

(sharp)

Lesson one on having the gift of intuition is knowing when to keep your mouth shut.

(beat)

The Stoics are terrorists, plain and simple. They see the world as beyond redemption, so they aim to destroy it and rebuild it in their image.

JIMMY

Rebuild it how?

INT. MORGANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

WILDER

With their version of reason. Rationality. And something they call "science."

INT. SEA BAR - MARINA

MIRA

They've discovered ways of doing things that may seem crazy at first. But they're not crazy. They're different and they're effective and they're the most serious threat I've seen in forty years of police work.

INT. MORGANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

WILDER

Twelve years ago, the Stoics were implicated in a series of murders in Alameda. Mira and I were assigned to the case. The press in those days was a little more cooperative and we managed to keep the group's name out of the papers for the most part.

INT. SEA BAR - MARINA - NIGHT

MIRA

We cracked the case, found the killers -- we put a couple of them in the ground, and two more in Supermax detention for life. We thought we broke them up for good... but they're back.

INT. MORGANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

WILDER

Donald Pynchon saw it. And it was so strong, so frightening that it kept him from seeing his own impending death.

INT. SEA BAR - MARINA - NIGHT

MIRA

"An old foe has returned to strike at our very way of life."

(beat)

That's the Stoics, Jimmy. And they're behind the death of Lana Keystone.

JIMMY

How do you know that?

Mira pulls out a file from her purse, hands it to him.

MIRA

This is Morgana's necropsy report. She found something deep inside the victim's thoracic cavity. Something that went through her chest, broke the sternum, tore open the aorta, finally lodged near the heart.

JIMMY

Some kind of propulsive spell?

MIRA

There was no spell. Not a trace of magical energy. This is what killed her --

Mira takes a small ENVELOPE out of her jacket and hands it to Jimmy. He opens it and looks inside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

What is it?

MIRA

It's what the Stoics used to kill
their victims twelve years ago.

Jimmy reaches into the envelope and takes something out and
holds it up to the light --

MIRA (cont'd)

It's called... a bullet.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE