

THE APOSTLES

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"The Apostles"

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. CALHOUN BEDROOM - DAY

Dawn light splashes across a framed photo of a crew-cutted altar boy... OVER THIS, in a reverential murmur --

PREACHER (O.S.)

'Let the little children come to me,
and do not hinder them, for the
kingdom of God belongs to such as
these.'

DRIFTING now, ACROSS this dresser-top of framed photos, FROM altar boy, to high school football star, to Marine. A final silver-framed photo completes the display -- Marine now a decorated LAPD officer, clear-eyed and dedicated.

This is JOHN "PREACHER" CALHOUN, 27, who we now GLIMPSE through a crack in a bathroom door, perched on the commode as he reads aloud from his dog-eared bible.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

'And He took the children in His
arms, put His hands on them and
blessed them.'

... DRIFTING again, TO the adjacent bedroom... where KELLY CALHOUN, 23, Preacher's new bride, is just yawning awake to a turned-low clock radio. Kelly has that girl-next-door beauty and perfect body that served her well as the top attraction at "The Garden Of Eden," a local exotic dance venue. She lazes up into the morning light, yawning.

Kelly steps to the ajar bathroom door, listens to Preacher for a moment, smiling to herself, choosing not to interrupt this familiar morning ritual.

EXT. UPSTAIRS DECK/NEIGHBORING YARD - CONTINUOUS

Kelly pads out over graying redwood, stops at the railing. Morning mist still clings to the canyon below. Every hilltop visible is peaked with tract houses. *Simi Valley*. Kelly stretches yoga-style, the t-shirt creeping up her thigh, inadvertently putting on a show for...

"IRON MIKE" BRINJAK, 38, a buffed and lean sergeant with the LAPD, currently at a weight bench in the neighboring backyard, battling a barbell, sweat soaking through his gray LAPD sweatshirt. Upon spotting Kelly, Mike instantly ups his reps. His mild grunting snags Kelly's attention.

KELLY

'Morning, Officer Brinjak.

MIKE

Kelly. Didn't anyone tell you --
honeymooners sleep 'til noon.

KELLY

You know Preacher...

MIKE

First one to roll call. You married
a total kiss-ass, you realize that.

KELLY

Long as he kisses mine first, who
cares?

MIKE

Heck of a wedding you guys threw.
How was the honeymoon?

KELLY

Pretty darn spectacular, actually.

MIKE

That's good, 'cause we were beginning
to worry about old Preacher. You
know, which team he's playing for...

KELLY

Home run every time up to bat.

Preacher is suddenly out on the deck, wrapping his arms
around Kelly from behind.

PREACHER

You guys talking about me?

KELLY

Mike was just admiring your *courage*
as a police officer, *faith* as a man.

PREACHER

... No, Mike, I'm not gay.

Mike is milliseconds from a retort, when, from inside --

DEE (O.C.)

Mike honey, don't forget the
chlorine, and clean out that skimmer.

MIKE

And clean up the dog poop...

DEE (O.C.)

And clean up the dog poop!

MIKE

See what you guys have to look forward to.

(toward house)

Right on it, baby!

Mike gives a wink, rolls off the bench and heads for the pooper-scooper. Preacher turns Kelly to him, for a loving smooch, while, below, the CAMERA PUSHES PAST a scooping Mike, FLOATING over the fence to the neighboring house (currently being added on to in a big way) -- IN THROUGH a bedroom window --

INT. MCBRIDE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

PETER and ERIN McBRIDE, 29 and 28 respectively, are in bed together, four-month-old PHEOBE, their baby, softly snoring between them. Peter, a darkly-handsome man, is wide awake, staring at a detective's gold shield on the nightstand. It GLEAMS brightly in a ray of sunshine. CLOCK RADIO BUZZES, and Erin is instantly awake, sitting up. Erin, a marathoner, is in peak condition. She rolls out of bed, snatches up her gold shield --

ERIN

Why'd I leave *that* there?

PETER

To torture me?

She tosses it to a bureau top, kisses Peter on his forehead.

ERIN

Don't worry, you'll get your gold badge. Now get the baby up -- I'll put on the coffee.

Erin is already bee-lining for the bathroom. Peter gently lifts Pheobe, holds her close.

PETER

Hey, gumdrop. How's my sweetness-and-light?

FLOP -- a Golden Retriever, SCOUT, leaps on the bed, lavishing licks on little Pheobe. Peter gives the pooch a shove.

PETER (CONT'D)

Scout, you moron... Get down! Go!
Get the paper! Go on, boy.

Scout dutifully scampers from the room. Peter sniffs the air, then, in Apocalypse-Duvall --

PETER (CONT'D)
I love the smell of dirty diaper in
the morning.

EXT. MCBRIDE FRONT YARD AND NEIGHBORING HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

... as Scout heads to fetch the paper, SEE we're at the end of a cul de sac. Our three main houses -- the Calhouns, Brinjaks and McBrides -- and now a fourth house REVEALED, the Rydell house. It's this house that catches Scout's attention before he can fetch the paper.

The dog can HEAR a man's CRYING through an open window. Scout WHIMPERS...

INT. RYDELL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

... CREEPING through this messy, bachelor's house... no female touches whatsoever... DOWN a back hallway that dead-ends on a den. Door to the den is ajar. The man's WEEPING is louder now. Suddenly, BLAM, a SHOT RINGS OUT! A body clatters into view, falling to the floor, *dead*.

The WEEPING has stopped. Outside, Scout begins to BARK.

SLAM TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. CUL DE SAC - DAY

Yellow police tape crisscrosses our once-quiet cul de sac. Three black-and-whites are joined by a Fire Department EMT unit as well as a coroner's van.

There's peeling "Just Married" paint on the back of Preacher's driveway-parked Ford F-150 as Kelly emerges with a now-dressed Preacher. He's pinning his badge onto his belt, holding Kelly back.

PREACHER

Wait here.

Kelly stops in the driveway as Preacher joins Peter, also with badge and LAPD windbreaker, standing with a couple of UNIFORMS. Peter is stunned, avoiding eye contact, covering shock with a quiet edge.

PETER

(to Preacher)

Frank's dead. Killed himself...

(biting back emotion)

Blew his freaking head off.

PREACHER

(gut-punched)

Man. Partnered with him for a week last month. He barely said five words.

PETER

Same deal when he partnered with me.

Like they say -- gotta watch the quiet ones.

INT. BRINJAK HOUSE - DAY

Iron Mike and DEE heading for the door. First time we've seen Dee -- 42, well-dressed, refined, and far classier than her environs.

DEE

We should've reached out. The way he withdrew... after the divorce... how hard he took it.

MIKE

Nothing harder than a hollow point.

(as they reach door)

Kids, stay inside until we get back.

Mike and Dee hurry out the front door. The *kids*, TIM and STACY, 18 and 16, respectively, are at the living room window, looking out. Tim's your all-American jock, while Stacy's on the Goth track. The only thing sharper than the stud in her nose is her sarcasm.

TIM

Mr. Rydell was a cool guy... I don't get it.

STACY

Why should you? You inherited Dad's machismo. Avoid emotion at all cost... Dimwit, don't you know, suicide is the number one killer of cops? Which makes Officer Rydell just another... statistic.

EXT. CUL DE SAC - CONTINUOUS

Dee has joined newlywed Kelly by the mailboxes.

DEE

Back from your honeymoon, but instead of the 'welcome wagon,' you get the coroner's wagon.

KELLY

It's awful. How well did you guys know him?

DEE

Well enough that we should have seen it coming.

KELLY

Part of being married to a cop...

DEE

Sticking together is a way to cope. Book club is the way to escape.

KELLY

Book club?

DEE

Girls only. You've got 'til Thursday to read 'The Kite Runner...' We're meeting at my place. Eight sharp. Oh, and if you could do me a favor, Kelly -- a little more cover-up during morning yoga. I've got a teenage boy in the house. *Two*, if you count my husband.

Erin, dressed, gold shield now pinned to her belt, baby Pheobe in her arms, is crossing up.

ERIN
Hey, Dee. Kelly... This is
unbelievable.

Dee is already reaching for the baby.

DEE
Let me hold Pheobe. You've got work
to do.

ERIN
Right. Thanks.

Erin hands off Pheobe, heading to Peter, Preacher and Mike.

KELLY
Nothing like having your job follow
you home.

DEE
Do you ever worry yours might?

KELLY
Dee, I'm an ex-stripper. Preacher
got me out of that world. I'm never
going back.

ACROSS THE WAY

Mike in animated recall with Peter, Preacher and the uniforms
as Erin approaches --

MIKE
... It was back when I worked
Devonshire. Guy used a shotgun.
Pulled the friggin' trigger with his
toe. Exit wound the size of
Chatsworth.

ERIN
Anyone call Christine?

MIKE
Not that I know of.
(to uniforms)
You guys contact the lieutenant?

PETER
Someone did.

MIKE

This won't be easy... even for the Ice Princess.

PETER

I dunno. She hated Frank.

ERIN

They may have been divorced, but he was the father of her daughter.

Erin ducks under the tape, crosses to LT. CHRISTINE RYDELL, 35, just getting out of an arriving black-and-white. All legs, this girl. Way hot... but cold as steel.

ERIN (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, Chris.

Christine is watching the body-bagged gurney emerging from the house. Christine, not prone to emotion, sucks it in -- even though the suicide is her ex-husband.

ERIN (CONT'D)

There was a positive i.d. -- but if you want to see him...

CHRISTINE

No. It's all right.

ERIN

And if you don't want to go in...

The body is loaded into the van.

CHRISTINE

I have to.

Erin follows Christine toward the house.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)

First I've been back since the day I took Rachel and walked out.

INT. RYDELL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Christine moves robot-like through this pig-stye. Known for a level head, it's still everything she can do to hold it together.

Erin follows her to the rear den where a CSU team and techs are going over the room with evidence vacuums. A pool of blood stains the carpet. But it's a framed photo Christine turns to -- one of her and Frank, 15 years ago, a toddler between them. A much happier time.

A TEAM MEMBER crosses up.

TEAM MEMBER

No note, Lieutenant. Pretty clear what happened, though.

He crosses off when he realizes she's barely listening.

ERIN

Chris...?

Christine silently steps out through double french doors to --

EXT. BACK PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Ignored plants in cracked pots. Christine touches a brown bug-eaten leaf. Erin steps out next to her. They're alone.

ERIN

You've got to get out of here. You and Frank were married for eight years.

CHRISTINE

And divorced for eight. To the day.

(beat)

We started an IA investigation on him two weeks ago.

ERIN

Did he know?

CHRISTINE

Might have. IRS computers flagged him for us. He was making big land purchases in Idaho. Way beyond his means...

Christine looks out on the forgotten backyard. A wall of dead rose vines cling to a rotted trestle. Her eyes brim with tears.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)

Bastard. All he had to do was water them.

Erin, fighting her own emotion, touches Christine's arm warmly. Peers. *Friends.*

EXT. CUL DE SAC - MINUTES LATER

Coroner's van rolls off. Mike, Peter and Preacher watch.

MIKE

... You sit on an ass-full of
bitterness long enough, it finally
blows. You rode with him more than
any of us, Peter...

PETER

(covering)

He never talked about it.

Erin is coming back; Peter joins her. Together, they veer
back toward their house.

PETER (CONT'D)

She all right?

ERIN

I don't think so. Look, I know
you're scheduled for patrol, but
could you use a sick day and watch
Pheobe? I need to go in.

PETER

(not thrilled)

Okay...

Erin and Peter have reached Dee. Peter takes Baby Pheobe.

ERIN

(to baby)

Sweetie, Daddy's going to stay with
you today. Mommy has to go to work.

(to Peter)

Berta starts tomorrow. You're going
to love her.

Erin kisses both Pheobe and Peter's cheeks, turns and heads
back to the scene.

Mike and Preacher nod to Erin as she passes.

ERIN (CONT'D)

See you gentlemen at work.

When Erin is gone, Mike points a chin back toward Peter and
the baby.

MIKE

Kicked by drunks, spit on by hookers -
- but I'll still have a better day
than that poor cop.

Preacher smiles. The two watch Peter head back to his house.

EXT. VALLEY SUBSTATION - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Looks more like a dentist's office than a stationhouse.

INT. VALLEY SUBSTATION - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Two uniforms -- ETTINGER and YOUNG -- are done for the day, changing back into civvies.

ETTINGER

... Word is, IA was all over him.

YOUNG

Internal Affairs closing in, so he offs himself. Makes sense.

BAM! A locker is slammed one row over. Iron Mike is coming around the corner, Kevlar vest open, half geared-up.

MIKE

You can friggin' put a lid on that right now.

Preacher, from nearby, steps in to restrain Mike.

PREACHER

Mike... easy...

MIKE

Frank was no grass-eater. He was a good cop and good guy.

ETTINGER

Just saying what I heard, man.

MIKE

Yeah, well, I heard you're a stupid friggin' moron, should I believe that, too?

PREACHER

Mike! *Enough.*

Young's got hold of Ettinger, pulling him back.

YOUNG

Let it go.

No one fights with Iron Mike. Once they're gone, Mike shrugs free of Preacher.

PREACHER

C'mon. We've been wondering about him, too.

MIKE

Lieutenant 'Iceberg' cut his balls off in that divorce. She moved up through the ranks, he didn't. That's what killed Frank. Bit by bit, for five friggin' years.

Mike turns away, snapping his vest closed, buttoning his shirt. Preacher watches him in silence.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Women are taking over the planet. My wife graduates third in her law school class... In a year she'll be making a hundred-and-fifty K.

PREACHER

Thought you were proud of her.

Mike looks at him a beat, flashes that *big* smile.

MIKE

Hey -- am I saying 'no' to the dough? You're looking at the happiest goddamn cop alive next to yourself... marrying a hottie like that. Mmmm-hmmm.

(starts off)

By the way, Bible boy, you and the new Missus are coming to the graduation party. Saturday afternoon, our house. No excuses.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Desk Sargent LASZLO, a bald African-American, slides his laptop onto the lectern.

LASZLO

Seats, officers. The tax-payers of the San Fernando Valley are waiting... First off, we've got a flasher at the El Nina bar on Sherman Way... the one right next to the girls' ballet academy...

Mike is sliding into a chair --

MIKE

Permission to castrate, Sir...

LASZLO

You're late, Brinjak...
(looks back to laptop)
(MORE)

LASZLO (CONT'D)

Okay, back off the north valley meth biz... Undercover is all over it and me, if we interfere again... Oh, yeah, back from the honeymoon, applause for Officer Calhoun and bride Kelly.

A smattering of APPLAUSE -- which Preacher waves off.

LASZLO (CONT'D)

'Born-again Brigade,' I'm sure you're all thrilled to have your unofficial leader back.

GLENN SPENCER, an older cop, raises a hand --

SPENCER

I take offense at that, Sergeant. *

LASZLO

Shut up, Officer Spencer. This organization does not discriminate -- race, creed, sex, or what-have-you.

MIKE

You see Spencer doing that dance at Preacher's wedding? Now if that isn't 'what-have-you' behavior, I don't know what is.

(beat)

You know, Glenn, heard West Hollywood is looking for undercovers...

SPENCER

Hate to think what's under *your* covers, Officer Dildo.

Mike playfully shoots him the middle finger.

LASZLO

(overlapping)

All right, that's enough, listen up... Number one priority are these restaurant take-overs. They're hitting in broad daylight now. I don't have to tell you -- this is the D.A.'s top priority.

He slaps closed his laptop.

LASZLO (CONT'D)

On a personal note, I'd like to take a moment to recognize Officer Frank Rydell, a great cop, a great guy...

(MORE)

LASZLO (CONT'D)

appears to have killed himself at 0-eight-hundred this morning. If you've got a God, pray for Frank. If not, keep him in your heart.

(beat of silence)

Dismissed!

REVEAL Erin's watching from a back doorway. A plain-clothed detective, she turns away, finds Christine coming up next to her. They cross through the busy bullpen --

CHRISTINE

Don't tell me you miss roll call. What -- the sexist jokes, black humor?

ERIN

There were some good laughs.

CHRISTINE

They may hate me for being IA, but at least I get to pick my own clothes. Got a second? I want to show you something.

INT. CHRISTINE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Christine tosses a file across her desk. The insides spill out in front of Erin.

CHRISTINE

The case we were building on Frank.

Erin thumbs through it.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)

We checked the usual -- drugs, missing contraband... Though there's no money trail yet, I'm thinking it's something bigger. There's just no proof.

ERIN

Why? Why would Frank go bad?

CHRISTINE

Bitterness, maybe. I dunno. There're a lot of theories why a cop goes bad. Usually, it's just greed. The grass is greener... One thing we do know -- rarely does a bad cop operate alone. He could've had a partner or partners. That means we

(MORE)

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
multiply the money Frank was bringing
in...

ERIN
Hundreds of thousands of dollars.

CHRISTINE
You lived on his street. Whole cul
de sac partnered with him at one time
or another. I'm going to need your
help on this, Erin.

ERIN
I'm not IA.

CHRISTINE
Which is why they might talk to you
instead of me. I'm putting you on
the case, Erin. Unofficially. I
don't have to tell you, if someone
finds out...

ERIN
No, you don't have to tell me...

Christine smiles, pats Erin on the back.

CHRISTINE
Oh... I saw Pheobe's photo on the
desk bulletin board. *Beautiful*. I
know its hard to leave her behind
every day.

ERIN
I've got good help at home.

EXT. MCBRIDE BACKYARD - DAY

Little Pheobe is SCREAMING her head off. Peter's got her in
a backyard swing, swinging away, but it won't appease her.

On the other side of the fence, neighbor Dee has a stack of
lawbooks laid out, laptop front-and-center on the patio
table. Pheobe's relentless CRYING draws her to the fence
separating the two properties.

DEE
Day off, or late shift?

PETER
Sick day to watch the baby. Gold
badge versus silver, gold wins every
time.

DEE

Boy, I remember that cry. Can bring you to your knees.

PETER

First month they call it colicky. Then something like 'fussy baby syndrome...'

DEE

It's called 'normal.' You guys are reading way too many books.

Dee vaults the fence, crosses to now-SCREAMING Pheobe.

DEE (CONT'D)

When my kids were young there were like five books. Now what're we looking at -- a hundred?

Dee's got the kid out of the swing, comforting her.

PETER

Two hundred on Erin's nightstand alone.

DEE

It's an instinct, not a science. Wow, that smell... You forget.

PETER

Another diaper?

DEE

That baby smell. Intoxicating.

PETER

Mike says you're graduating this week.

DEE

Final job interview tomorrow. I'm studying up on the firm. Very well-to-do. I'm scared to death.

PETER

You'll do great.

(smiles)

And if you don't -- we're always looking for a new nanny. Our third starts tomorrow.

(smiles)

Look at her.

Pheobe's sound asleep in Dee's arms.

DEE
Once you got it, you never lose it.
(handing off baby)
All yours. Careful.

Peter gently takes Pheobe in his arms.

PETER
Thanks, Dee. And good luck tomorrow.

Peter heads toward his house, Dee watching after...

INT. MCBRIDE NURSERY - MOMENTS LATER

Peter lays Pheobe in her crib, switches on the mobile...
tiptoes out of the room.

INT. MCBRIDE HALLWAY/DEN - CONTINUOUS

Peter comes out into the hallway. *Silence is golden.* Until a BEEPING starts in the den. He hurries in, digs his cell phone out of a pile of bills. He hits "1" for voicemail. An agitated VOICE comes on. It's the dead FRANK RYDELL.

FRANK (V.O.)
(on phone)
Pete, it's Frank. This thing's out
of control... *Call me.*

The message ENDS. Then, an electronic woman's voice --

VOICE
(on phone)
Friday, 2:12 AM. To delete this
message...

Peter doesn't have to wait, hitting "7," deleting it.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CUL DE SAC - BRINJAK GARAGE - NIGHT

Night finds the cul de sac quiet, the only real light a SOFT GLOW emanating from Mike and Dee's garage. Mike is working on his Mustang. Dee comes out with a sandwich for him.

DEE
I don't remember the house ever being
so quiet.

MIKE
Tim has a late team meeting...

DEE

Stacy's at a party.
 (gives him his sandwich)
 Feels weird, doesn't it?

MIKE

Last three years you'd've killed for
 a quiet house. Threatened it more
 than a few times.

Dee smiles, leans back on a tool cart, nearly falls over.
 Mike grabs her. They're physically close for a moment. Ten
 years ago, it would have led to something. Now they separate
 quickly, Dee first.

DEE

I'm losing my mind. Graduation.
 These endless interviews. The BAR.
 This lunch tomorrow is *so* important.
 But you know what's got me *really*
 obsessed?

Mike bites into the sandwich.

MIKE

No clue.

DEE

Table manners. I've been eating take-
 out and over the sink so long... I
 mean, when was the last time we went
 out for dinner?

MIKE

Got me there.

Dee wipes a dab of mayonnaise off his cheek.

DEE

You've had to put up with a lot
 lately. All this school, the kids
 growing up...

MIKE

And we know how well I do with
 change.

DEE

You're happy for me -- right?

MIKE

Sure.

An elaboration would be nice, but it doesn't materialize.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Look, I'm walking the razor blade of old age here. You can support *me* for awhile. And you're happy. It's been awhile since I've seen that.

A silence, then --

DEE

You happy?

MIKE

Don't spend a lot of time thinking about it.

DEE

You should. For once, you should do what makes *you* happy.

Mike, uncomfortable, starts back inside.

MIKE

You know me -- a couple good DUI's, bust some heads -- I'm in hog heaven.

Dee is left alone in the garage. She hits the button, the automatic door going down.

BRINJAK HOUSE/RYDELL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

... Brinjak garage door finishes closing, the light CLICKS OFF. CAMERA PICKS UP Erin McBride's Explorer pulling into her driveway. Erin would head into her house, but catches something out of the corner of her eye -- a FLASHLIGHT sweeping past the sidelights of the Rydell front door. The light recedes into the house. Erin yanks a flashlight from her car, jogs toward the house.

Crossing up a side walkway, she draws her Baby Glock, thumb on the safety. A side door's been jimmied open.

INT. RYDELL HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Erin creeps through the house. FOOTSTEPS above. A CRASH! Muffled RUMMAGING. Erin finds her way to the stairs. She ascends carefully, one step at a time. A LOUDER CRASH -- a crowbar RIPPING into a wall.

UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

The intruder's FLASHLIGHT glows under the master bedroom door. Another CRASH, then GLASS SHATTERING.

Erin stops outside the door, sets herself, raising her Baby Glock with her right, her flashlight with her left. She kicks in the door.

ERIN
Police! Freeze!

The flashlight is on the floor, the intruder's shadow seen outside, on the deck, racing off.

EXT. UPSTAIRS DECK/STAIRS/SIDE OF HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Erin, gun at the ready, races across the deck, double-times it down the stairs. She slows, cautiously edges along the side of the house, finger on the trigger. She spins around the corner, nearly firing... shocked to find Peter there.

PETER
Erin... hey... I saw a guy running.
Took off in a blue sedan. Couldn't
get the plates.
(holds up cell)
Already called it in.

Erin lowers her gun, still gripping it tightly.

ERIN
What're you doing here, Peter?

PETER
I was at home, upstairs... I heard
your car, but when you didn't come
in... What the hell went on in
there?

ERIN
They... he was looking for something.

PETER
Guess you scared him away.
(beat)
Everyone's saying Frank was on the
take...

After her own beat --

ERIN
Guess this confirms it.

Erin falls back against the house, finally allowing herself to breathe.

INT./EXT. PATROL CAR - NIGHT

Preacher rolls the mean streets, only companion his SQUAWKING RADIO. From out of the OVERLAPPING CHATTER --

DISPATCHER

... Denver-eight, two-eleven in progress, Atlas Storage, suspicious activity, possible burglary, code three.

Preacher grabs the mic.

PREACHER

Denver-eight. I'm a block away.

Preacher hits the lights, jams on the accelerator.

EXT. ATLAS STORAGE - NIGHT

A labyrinth of low-lit garages, rusty fences, twisted razor wire. Preacher's patrol car, lights painting eerie shadows, slowly cruises down the narrow passageway. He uses his search beam to check the alleys. Suddenly, a shadow dashes out from behind a dumpster, racing off. Preacher jumps out, adrenaline pumping, racing off after the shadow.

Preacher catches another glimpse of the black-clad perp, scrambling through trash cans, down another narrow alley.

PREACHER

Police! Stop!

Preacher's got his gun out, now at a dead run. He jumps a wall of boxes, dashes around a corner.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

(into shoulder mic)

Denver-eight requesting back-up,
Atlas Storage.

Every inch of this maze looks exactly alike. Disoriented, Peter stops... A NOISE behind him. He spins, double-backs, finds himself at a cinder block --

DEAD END - CONTINUOUS

Preacher stops, starts to turn, never seeing the heavy black sap, being swung by the mysterious figure. It hits Preacher in the side of the head with a sickening THUD. Preacher drops to his knees, nearly unconscious. A knife presses against the cross on a chain around Preacher's neck. The hooded stranger hesitates, leaning down to Preacher's ear --

STRANGER

'The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies... He slandered God's name and those who live in heaven... All of the earth will worship the beast...'

(then)

'I have been cast down to the earth, I who laid low the nations.'

In the same instance, the stranger lets go of Preacher. Preacher falls to all fours, gasping for air.

STORAGE GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Preacher rounds a corner, heading back to his car, still wobbly. A second patrol car, LIGHTS FLASHING, is parked ten garages away, by an open garage door. Spencer, a uniform, is outside, leaning against a wall, *vomiting*. Preacher staggers up. Spencer is pointing into the dark garage. Preacher takes a step in, blinks against the darkness, instantly struck by a disgusting smell.

FLASH -- what Preacher SEES -- three embalmed bodies, wrapped in plastic, *beheaded* and *posed* at a long folding table.

Preacher backs out into the alley, stunned.

SPENCER

Christ, Preacher... you see that?
What the hell do we do?

PREACHER

Call the detectives.

Preacher, stunned, stares off into the night, deeply disturbed.

SLAM TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. CUL DE SAC - DAY

Redolent in early morning light. It's the next day.

INT. CALHOUN BEDROOM - DAY

Preacher lies on the bed, wide awake, a naked Kelly next to him. He's watching the light on her smooth skin and exposed breasts. Kelly slowly wakes, her hand finding his. She leans over, starts to kiss him eagerly, stopping when she sees the bruise on his face.

KELLY

... What happened?

Preacher avoids her eyes.

PREACHER

A drunk. It's nothing.

Preacher sits up.

KELLY

You got home so late... I fell asleep.

(looks at him)

You're sure you're okay?

Preacher nods, kisses her, crosses to the bathroom, closing the door.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Preacher sits on the closed commode, lifts his bible off a counter. He can't bring himself to open it.

INT. MCBRIDE FOYER/KITCHEN - DAY

A newspaper delivered by Scout flops open when Erin tosses it on a table in the foyer. A bottom-of-the-page headline states, "3 Bodies Found in Storage Unit." Erin doesn't look at it, continuing the tour she's giving her new nanny, BERTA GUTIERREZ, 21, who is holding Pheobe as she follows Erin on a circuitous route through the house.

ERIN

... She takes a morning nap, and sometimes an afternoon nap, but *that* nap sometimes turns into an early bedtime, which means she'll be up all night... All our numbers are by the

(MORE)

ERIN (CONT'D)
 phone in the kitchen.
 (gestures to TV)
 It's satellite. Only my husband
 knows how to work the remote.

Berta has stopped by a wall in the front hallway, looking at the photos of Peter and Erin in police uniforms, on vacation... the requisite fifty baby photos.

ERIN (CONT'D)
 Obviously we went a little overboard
 in the photo department.

BERTA
 My father's a policeman in Guatemala.

ERIN
 Then you know... the late hours,
 different shifts. My husband and I
 met in the police academy. We waited
 five years to have Pheobe.

Berta smiles, bounces Pheobe.

BERTA
 In my country, *nobody* waits. Such a
 beautiful baby, you're very lucky.

A moment as Erin watches Pheobe's delight... an instant report between nanny and charge. It cuts Erin to the core.

ERIN
 I'll show you the kitchen.

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Erin sweeps through, Berta and Pheobe right behind.

ERIN
 It's all baby-proofed, so you have to
 fiddle to get things open...

Erin is pushing a tab to open a drawer.

ERIN (CONT'D)
 My husband hates these things...

BERTA
 But he's good with the remote.

ERIN
 (smiling)
 A reason to keep him. The dog stays
 out most of the day, but you can let
 him in...

Erin trails off, having spotted something out the window -- a view of the Rydell house.

More cops are out front; Christine Rydell on her cell phone.

ERIN (CONT'D)

Berta... Pheobe... Mommy'll be right back.

EXT. RYDELL HOUSE - A MINUTE LATER

Erin reaches Christine, who is watching as two detectives carry large, dirt-caked garbage bags to a CSU van.

ERIN

What've we got?

CHRISTINE

What last night's intruder was looking for... Buried under the floor of Frank's old tool shed... Unmarked bills. Over a hundred thousand.

ERIN

You wish it was an answer, but it just brings up more questions.

Christine nods.

CHRISTINE

You've got baby puke on your blouse.

Erin looks down, sees it, smiles.

ERIN

Nice detective work.

CHRISTINE

That's quite an addition you've got going on your house.

ERIN

The money pit. Everything they say about remodeling is true.

CHRISTINE

... We added a nursery to this one, too. Burned up our savings.

(beat)

Strange how Peter showed up last night.

ERIN

Nice if he'd gotten a plate for us.

CHRISTINE

Yeah...

A silence.

ERIN

How's Rachel doing?

CHRISTINE

My own kid -- I don't even know what to say to her. It's tough to lose your father... even if he did skip out on his last five visitations.

(beat)

When we were still married, the hardest part was sharing her with Frank... Even harder after the divorce. Look, I know you and Peter are struggling. Don't give up without a fight.

Christine crosses off. Erin looks back toward her house. Berta has Pheobe out in front, playing...

PETER (V.O.)

(pre-lap)

Sometimes I just get... I don't know... anxious or something...

INT./EXT. BLACK-AND-WHITE - SIDEWALK CAFE - DAY

Erin's husband, Peter, damp with perspiration, stares out the passenger window. He and Mike are cruising down a Warner Center street. Pedestrians crowd the sidewalk.

MIKE

... Dude, you're wound up tighter than a Chinese queer with a chopstick up his ass. You got to roll with it, Petey-boy. We all know you want to be Mayor some day, Governor... You've got to earn it, son. Here, on the street... Right now, you're at the way bottom of the food chain. Your psychos, pervs and freaks, the law protects them... which makes us the bad boys. That's why we wear black hats. You may not like that, but I love it...

PETER

Sarge, we've been around this block three times. Looking for something in particular?

Mike points his square jaw in the direction of a sidewalk cafe, slowing the black-and-white as they pass.

Mike's wife, Dee, is having lunch with lawyer HOWARD DAVIDSON, 40-something, at a chichi sidewalk cafe. Howard's a definite "McDreamy," oozing sexy charm.

MIKE

Big partner at the firm that wants to hire Dee. That's gotta be his car -- the Maserati. Made them park it in front so he can keep an eye on it.

(reads plate)

Run that plate. LGL EGL. 'Legal Eagle.' Gimme a break.

Peter types into the mobil computer between them (MDT). Mike eases the car to the curb across the street from the cafe.

PETER

(reading)

Registered to a Howard Davidson. 418 Maple Drive. No wants, no warrants.

MIKE

Beverly Hills flats. No wife on the registration... so we'll assume divorced. Shops at Barney's, Patek Philippe watch... uses body lotions... probably smells something like a coconut when he's not steeped in toilet water.

(squints)

Those hair plugs? What do you think, Petey? Bushel of pubes moved up top?

PETER

I can't believe you're spying on your wife.

MIKE

That's insulting. *Spying*. Why would you say something like that?

Mike has binoculars out, focusing on Dee. She's laughing at one of the lawyer's jokes.

MIKE (CONT'D)
My wife, the suck-up.

In Mike's binoculars, FULL-FRAME, Dee glances over at the patrol car. Once. Then a double-take.

PETER
She's made us.

Mike covers the Dee-side of his face with a cupped hand, steps on the accelerator.

MIKE
Moving on.

Peter is about to make a comment, points ahead instead --

PETER
Numbnuts, twelve o'clock.

Peter's indicating a black Yukon running a red light. Mike hits the lights, pulls in close behind the Yukon.

MIKE
Your spot -- your bust.

EXT. STREET - YUKON AND BLACK-AND-WHITE - CONTINUOUS

Yukon is taking its time pulling over. Mike WHELPS the SIREN. The SUV turns into an alley adjacent to a parking structure. Peter runs the plates as Mike stays right on the SUV's tail, both vehicles coming to a stop. Mike checks the MDT screen.

MIKE
No wants, no warrants. Mimi Reese.
Soccer mom with a heavy foot.

As Peter opens his door --

PETER
Where does *she* shop?

MIKE
Target.

PETER
Tinted windows. I hate tinted windows.

Peter crosses to the driver's side window. Mike, out of the car as well, takes up a position on the passenger side, trying to get a look inside.

DRIVER's door suddenly opens just before Peter gets there. Peter snaps back, hand on his holstered gun.

PETER (CONT'D)
That's far enough. I want you back
in the vehicle.

DRIVER
The light was yellow, man...

PETER
License and registration, please.

Driver takes a step as if going back to the car, then suddenly takes off running.

PETER (CONT'D)
Sonuvabitch!

Peter sprints after him. Mike draws his gun, throws open the passenger back door of the SUV, sees the vehicle's empty.

END OF ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Peter is faster and angrier than the Driver, catching him before he can reach the end of the alley. Peter tackles him, smashes him in the mouth. The guy rolls over, tries to scamper away.

PETER
Stupid asshole, you're under arrest.

DRIVER
Yeah, well, screw you...

Peter grabs him, throws him up against a dumpster with one hand, throttles him with the other. The guy is spitting blood, Peter is hauling off to clobber him again, when Mike rushes up, pulling Peter off the guy. Mike quickly handcuffs the semi-conscious Driver, puts him facedown on the ground. Then Mike spins on Peter, who is rubbing his bleeding knuckles.

MIKE
What the hell is that all about?

Peter, out of breath, nearly panting, just stares at him.

INT. VONS GROCERY STORE - DAY

SCREECHING tires... on a wobbly shopping cart as it takes a corner at full speed. Christine's at the helm, fifteen-year--old ipod-ed daughter RACHEL by her side.

RACHEL

I got pissed. I said stuff.

CHRISTINE

You've never gotten detention in your life.

RACHEL

What am I supposed to do? You made him out like a monster, but he was human to me. He was my father.

CHRISTINE

Rach... we have to stick together... When you have these feelings, you need to come to me.

RACHEL

I would... if I thought you'd ever be there.

(quickly)

Look, I'm meeting friends at Coffee Bean...

Rachel tosses a box of cereal in the cart, veers off. Christine turns, finds Erin is there, cart full of disposable diapers and baby formula. Before Erin can say anything --

CHRISTINE

Peter's suspended because Peter used excessive force.

Erin is caught off-guard.

ERIN

He's... I had no idea.

Christine lets out a heavy sigh.

EXT. SIMI VALLEY PARK - MINUTES LATER

Christine and Erin are sitting on the tailgate of Erin's mini-van. They're overlooking a man-made lake, sharing a bag of chips, groceries still in their respective cars.

ERIN

... It's not an excuse, but Peter's been acting weird lately... since I was promoted. You were promoted over Frank, too.

CHRISTINE

Yeah. Everyone assumed that's why we got divorced.

(MORE)

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)

(looks off)

Prick had an affair. Some P-1 right out of the academy. I never bothered to find out who. Just assumed they'd hook up as soon as Rachel and I were out of the picture.

(beat)

The crew working these restaurant robberies. They could be a bigger syndicate. Those boys love having someone inside the police...

ERIN

I'll add it into the mix.

Christine nods.

CHRISTINE

Nothing ever turns out the way you expected, does it?

She turns to Erin, who is lost in thought. Their eyes meet.

ERIN

Our ice cream's melting.

CHRISTINE

Ah!

Christine jumps up, races for her car. Erin's smile droops.

INT. VALLEY SUBSTATION - NIGHT

Preacher, arriving for his shift, is moving through the general bullpen, turning into a separate wing, ignoring a "Detectives Only" sign over the door. He stops in the open doorway of a glassed-off conference room. Blow-up PHOTOS of the Atlas Storage crime scene are in evidence. Two detectives -- WATTSBERG and LEWIS -- are chewing ideas.

WATTSBERG

... Open any storage locker in L.A. County, you've got about a fifty-fifty chance of finding a corpse.

LEWIS

Three stiffs, still no id's. They can't even give us the year they died. And the one -- he cut off so much, we don't know if it's male or female.

(notices Preacher)

Yes, Officer?

PREACHER

They were posed... at that table...
'The Last Supper.'" When he held the
knife on me, he quoted 'Revelations'
and 'Mathew.'

WATTSBERG

You told us this last night.

PREACHER

He's a serial killer.

Wattsberg rises from his chair.

WATTSBERG

Look, Flathead, we don't say 'serial
killer' every time we find a few dead
bodies. We leave that for the ink
slingers at the Daily News.

(crossing to him)

So do us a favor, get back out there
and write some more tickets... And
next time you corner a section-eight,
shoot the fuck before he gets to the
sermon.

Wattsberg closes the door in Preacher's face.

PETER (V.O.)

'Hush, little baby, don't say a
word...'

INT. MCBRIDE NURSERY - NIGHT

Peter has Pheobe cradled in his arms, softly singing --

PETER

'... Mama's gonna buy you a
Mockingbird. And if that Mockingbird
won't sing, Daddy's gonna buy you a
diamond ring...'

Pheobe, fast asleep, doesn't stir as Peter gently lays her in
her crib. He watches her sleep a moment, eyes glistening
with tears. BEEP... He checks his cell's text message:

Need to talk

Peter presses "delete," flips the clamshell closed.

INT. MCBRIDE KITCHEN - A MOMENT LATER

Erin's finished sanitizing baby bottles. Peter sweeps in.

PETER

These guys... it's like they never finish anything. They tear out a wall, leave a mess, move on to the next wall...

Peter pops the beer he's retrieved from the refrigerator.

ERIN

Pheobe go down for you okay?

PETER

Slam dunk. Singing works better than rocking.

He covers coolly with a long pull on the beer.

ERIN

Keeping track of those?

PETER

It never leaves my side.

ERIN

Well it's your fourth.

PETER

Which accounts for the sarcasm.

ERIN

Christine had no choice but to suspend you. Excessive force -- god, what were you thinking?

PETER

Obviously I *wasn't* thinking.

ERIN

What's going on with you, Peter? Is this about my promotion...?

PETER

It's that *since* you got the promotion, all you talk about is Pheobe. How you miss her. How it's agony going to work... *Quit*, Erin. Just quit. We can make it on one salary.

ERIN

No, we can't.

PETER

I'll put in for more overtime...

ERIN

I'm not quitting, Peter -- and don't ever suggest it again.

Peter slams his beer to the counter.

PETER

You're right. I shouldn't drink.

Peter leaves the half-a-beer on the counter, walks out.

EXT. REAR PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Peter steps over boxes of tile, stops in a splash of moonlight. *An old vegetable garden shows signs of being freshly dug up.* His phone TONES again. He looks at the message --

Don't mess with us.

Again, he "deletes" it, then looks back at the house, nervous, a man in a corner...

SLAM TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. BRINJAK BACK YARD - DAY

Mike lets the barbell down with a CLANK. His focus drifts from *his* ritual to neighbor Kelly's... out on her deck, finishing that lovely, languid stretch.

KELLY
Another beautiful morning.

MIKE
You're what makes it that way.

KELLY
You flirting, old man?

MIKE
'Cause I'm old is why I can.

From inside --

STACY (O.S.)
Breakfast, Dad!

KELLY
(with a twinkle)
You're not *that* old.

Mike smiles as he enters his house.

Kelly looks beyond the Brinjak yard, to the McBride yard, where Peter works feverishly, *laying down cement where the dug-up garden had been the night before.*

INT. BRINJAK KITCHEN - A MOMENT LATER

Mike, just entered, is crossing for juice. Tim and Stacy, his teenage kids, are gathering up stuff, heading for school.

STACY
Made you eggs. They're on the stove.

MIKE
Thanks, kiddo. Tim, buddy, don't forget our game tonight.

TIM
I'll be there.

Tim races out the door. Mike turns toward those eggs, when, from the doorway --

DEE (O.S.)

Well?

Mike turns to find Dee in the doorway, gorgeous in a slim suit, hair and make-up impeccable.

MIKE

What's this -- an intruder? Should I call nine-one-one?

DEE

Big meeting with the partners. This is it. I either get it or I don't.

(adjusting her suit)

How am I going to afford these clothes on a regular basis?

Mike makes a romantic move on her from behind --

MIKE

You're what we call in the department *shyster-hot*.

(sniffs)

Mmmm. New perfume, too.

Dee brushes back his advancing lips.

DEE

Careful. My make-up.

(heads to door)

Wish me luck.

BANG, the back door closes. Mike stands there, alone in a house that just a minute ago was teeming with life.

INT. VALLEY SUBSTATION - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Some Uniforms -- Spencer, Young and Ettinger -- are talking about the storage unit case. *Cop gossip* -- nothing like it.

SPENCER

... So the nutcase spouts all this bible verse in Preacher's ear. And Preacher, he, like, knew it was the Book of Whatever... and the detectives are like...

PREACHER

(interrupting)

It was the Book Of Revelations. About Satan.

Preacher has just walked in. All eyes jump to him.

YOUNG

Why do you think the guy didn't kill you?

PREACHER

I don't know. I just -- I felt protected.

Young and Ettinger exchange a look.

ETTINGER

Tell him your theory, Preacher. How this isn't a job we chose... God made us cops, right? We're His Apostles.

Looks are exchanged. Smiles. Someone *snickers*.

YOUNG

That's great, Preacher. *Apostles*. I'll keep that in mind.

SPENCER

And I'll keep wearing my Kevlar... just in case we're not.

Room is emptying quickly. Preacher just sits there, now sadly embarrassed by his beliefs.

INT. UPSCALE LAW OFFICES - EXECUTIVE CORRIDOR - LATER

Howard Davidson (of sidewalk cafe and Maserati fame) has an arm looped in Dee's, guiding her out of a board room full of white-haired PARTNERS and down a splashy office corridor.

HOWARD

They loved you. Every one of them.

DEE

Really? I got the impression... with all those questions about my husband...

HOWARD

Husbands and wives aren't an issue here. Just results.

(stops)

Now close your eyes. No peeking.

Dee closes her eyes. Howard turns her into a gorgeous, corner office.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Okay. Open.

(as she opens eyes)

Corner and a view. Office services rarely argues with a senior partner.

(aware of her emotion)

Take all the time you need.

Dee, alone now, is too overcome to cross its threshold.

EXT. SIMI PARK - NIGHT

FUHRUMPH! Mike takes a bone-crunching hit from Preacher and goes down hard, both tumbling across the turf. They're under the lights in a local park, playing a mean game of "touch" football. *Boy's night out.*

MIKE

Get off me, you Bible-thumping queer!

Preacher rolls off him, both guys helped up by Peter. Tim, Mike's kid, hurries up.

TIM

Let's go -- third and long. Shake it off, Dad.

MIKE

You just get me the ball, college-boy.

QUICK CUTS...

* Tim is hiked the ball; Mike goes long. Perfect strike. *Six points.*

* Now Preacher's quarterback -- flips back to Peter, slammed in the backfield by Mike, who pile-drives him into the dirt.

* A blocked punt. Mike picks it up; Tim blocks for him. Preacher gets even -- cutting Mike down at the knees. *Mike lies still.* A horrible moment as everyone rushes in. He opens his eyes and smiles.

MIKE (CONT'D)

What -- you thought you hurt me?

PREACHER

I thought I killed you.

As Tim helps his old man up again --

MIKE

Who's buying? Oh right, the losers -- that would be you guys.

INT. BRINJAK LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Girl's night out. Dee is refilling Kelly's glass. Erin is flipping through her copy of the 'The Kite Runner.'

DEE

(to Kelly)

I can't believe you actually read the book.

ERIN

The whole book club idea is just an excuse to get rid of the guys.

DEE

Like they need one...

KELLY

You really should read it. It's a story of wanting something better, but not letting go of what you've left behind...

(trails off)

Actually, it's about a lot of things, but that's what I got out of it.

DEE

I can't believe you had the time to read it.

KELLY

Beats sitting around worrying... that Preacher won't come home. What do you guys do, just ignore it -- that any day your husbands could get killed?

A silence. No one's going to answer that.

ERIN

I think Dee meant with your honeymoon and all...

DEE

Mike nearly killed me those first months. Swear to God, I walked funny.

KELLY

Preacher's the horniest guy in the universe.

DEE

Coming from you, that says a lot.

KELLY

Wakes up hard, goes to bed hard.

ERIN

I'll just ask it -- size?

KELLY

Have you seen his shoes?

A fit of laughter.

INT. THE BUNKER - NIGHT

... Preacher, Mike and Peter bellied-up to the old bar. Mike's drinking ice tea, the rest drinking beer.

PETER

Preacher, you'll probably deck me for saying this, but your wife -- that body -- you're the luckiest prick on earth.

Preacher stares at him, tight-lipped -- *is he angry?* -- then breaks into a huge grin.

PREACHER

You got *that* right.

PETER

I've been married too long.

MIKE

What about me?

PETER

I just... it's like we lost something along the way.

MIKE

You get comfortable. Cops don't do well with comfort. On the street, comfortable gets you killed.

INT. BRINJAK LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

... Dee and Erin are LAUGHING, huddled around Kelly.

DEE

... I don't know, I think it's like so... brave. To get up in front of a bunch of guys...

ERIN

You control them, right? That's the turn-on. A power trip.

KELLY

For some of the girls...

ERIN

Do the patrons actually get aroused?

KELLY

There's a bulge here or there. *

DEE

I've got to learn how. Teach me how to do it.

ERIN

Dee, you've already got a job.

DEE

No. For Mike. To put a little, you know, excitement back in our lives. We're getting to that age.

ERIN

Sex is a routine.

DEE

Actually, an event.

Dee's switched on the stereo.

DEE (CONT'D)

C'mon, Kelly, show us how it's done.

Dee finds some *techno-bump-and-grind* MUSIC. Kelly gets up, looks around, finds a bannister to substitute for a pole, then begins to swivel, twist, contort, grind, and... *oh, my.*

INTERCUT - THE BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

PETER

... Erin's so caught up in work, and with the baby.

(looks over)

See old Hudson McGuire over there...

A ninety-year old man is nursing a beer across the way.

PETER (CONT'D)
He's getting it more than I am.

INTERCUT - BRINJAK LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Erin and Dee are naturals, gyrating against the bannister, Kelly joining them in the three-way.

KELLY
 That's it. *Great.* Grind those hips.
 Thrust it, girls... Like you're on
 top and riding him...

From the doorway --

STACY
 Oh my God.

All spin to a just-entered Stacy holding Pheobe.

STACY (CONT'D)
 Must've been some book this month.
 (re: Pheobe)
 She was getting a little fussy.

ERIN
 Sounds like bedtime.
 (hurrying to Pheobe)
 Thanks, guys. Stacy, I'll settle
 with you in the morning, okay?

Erin beats it out of there. An uncomfortable moment.

STACY
 Better get cracking on that homework.

Stacy bounds up the stairs. Kelly turns to Dee.

DEE
 I don't know how to thank you. That
 was... exhilarating.

KELLY
 You guys are great.
 (afterthought)
 Do you think Erin's okay?

DEE
 You'll learn -- all relationships
 have their ups and downs.
 (beat)
 You just don't want the 'downs' to go
 on too long.

Dee realizes she's talking about herself as much as anyone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BRINJAK HOUSE - TWO HOURS LATER

Mike pulls his Mustang into his driveway. He'd go inside, but notices Erin's car is in *her* driveway, IDLING. Muffled -- inside the car -- the ear-splitting BAWLING of a baby.

Mike crosses over, finds Erin sitting behind the wheel, nearly in tears herself, as Pheobe WAILS on. Mike taps on the glass; Erin buzzes down the window.

ERIN

Tell me Peter's right behind you.

MIKE

They stayed for another round.

ERIN

Only thing that puts her to sleep is a moving car, and I had some wine at your wife's...

MIKE

Shove over. Let the teetotaler drive.

Mike hops into the car, puts it in gear. As they drive off, they pass Preacher pulling into his driveway.

INT. CALHOUN FOYER - NEARLY CONTINUOUS

... Preacher glides into the foyer. He'd call out, but hears Kelly's hushed voice, back of the house, wrapping a phone call.

KELLY (O.S.)

(into phone)

... I don't know. Look, he's home...
I'll try to make it...

CALHOUN DEN - CONTINUOUS

Kelly is crossing to hang up.

KELLY

(into phone)

Right. Talk to you tomorrow.

Kelly hangs up, turns to doorway, where Preacher is standing.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Hey, baby...

(gestures to phone)

Amber, from the club... It's her birthday.

PREACHER

Good for her.

KELLY

Look, I know you don't want me talking to them, but what am I supposed to do when they call?

(smiles)

Mmmm. You smell good.

PREACHER

If they didn't have our number, they wouldn't call.

KELLY

Amber's my best friend. Like our neighbors, these cops, are *your* friends.

CALHOUN FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Kelly follows Preacher toward the stairs. They start up.

PREACHER

Look, I'm not going to deny you used to dance in a strip club... But I got you out of that mess, and you agreed to keep it behind you...

KELLY

You saved me, I'm not denying it...

UPSTAIRS LANDING/BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kelly follows him down the hallway, into the bedroom.

PREACHER

I didn't save anyone. Some guy comes after you, I get the call...

KELLY

I meant when you fell in love with me. That's what saved me.

PREACHER

We've talked about starting a family. You were going to go off the pill.

KELLY

I never said right away.

Preacher's slipped off his shirt, about to go into the shower. *Lean, six-pack, perfectly toned.* Kelly can't help but admire his body. He feels her eyes.

PREACHER

What're you doing? We're in the middle of an argument here.

KELLY

You like to look at me. Why can't I like to look at you?

Kelly runs a warm palm over his flat stomach.

KELLY (CONT'D)

There was a second half to our agreement.

(off his silence)

You teach me to be good -- I teach you to be bad.

PREACHER

Define 'bad.'

Her hand slips down into his sweatpants. His face softens in ecstatic anticipation.

KELLY

I say we skip 'bad,' move right to 'wicked.'

Kelly kisses him on the mouth. Deep. *Passionate.* As they walk each other to the bed, lips locked...

EXT./INT. MUSTANG - HILLTOP - NIGHT

Mike rolls Erin's car to a stop overlooking the twinkling lights of Simi Valley. Erin turns back; Pheobe is asleep.

MIKE

You hear the nicknames -- Steamy Valley, Pig Farm -- but I love this place.

ERIN

When we moved in, it was going to be temporary.

MIKE

Right. Peter's big plans.

ERIN

He hasn't given up.

MIKE

He should soon, or it's going to drive him bat-shit.

ERIN

That, or the room addition. He doesn't handle that stuff well.

(beat)

Reassure me, Mike. Tell me all marriages aren't like this.

MIKE

Only the good ones. It's the struggles that make you stronger.

Erin looks off, a tear burning in her eye.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Hey. I'm sorry.

ERIN

No... you're right... I wish to God he'd just tell me what he's thinking... what he's feeling. Sometimes I just need him to take charge and lay down the law and...

On the tip of her tongue, "... and be more like you." Instead --

ERIN (CONT'D)

You must be so proud of Dee.

Mike nods, but doesn't make eye contact.

ERIN (CONT'D)

You're a good man, Mike.

MIKE

Don't let that get around. Might destroy my reputation.

She laughs, turns and finds him staring at her intently. When their eyes touch, there's a *spark* neither can deny.

INT. CALHOUN BEDROOM - NIGHT

Preacher and Kelly lie naked in the afterglow. Kelly is sound asleep. Preacher rises, walks naked into --

BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Preacher freezes in his tracks. A beheaded corpse is sitting on the commode.

JUMP BACK TO:

BEDROOM

Preacher wakes from this NIGHTMARE, in a cold sweat, next to peacefully sleeping Kelly. He can SEE through the open door to the bathroom that it's empty.

SLAM TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. CEMETERY DRIVE - DAY

Twelve police Harleys lead a funeral procession.

SAME - LATER

Frank Rydell's coffin is placed on a riser by uniformed pall bearers. Mike, Preacher and Peter are amongst them. They move aside, joining their wives -- Dee, Kelly and Erin -- who are standing with Christine and her daughter, Rachel.

DEPUTY CHIEF stands up to deliver his eulogy.

DEPUTY CHIEF

Frank Rydell and I roomed together at the academy. He was a good cop. He didn't complain. He served his city and its citizens well. He will be greatly missed.

The Chief nods toward an honor squad to one side. They raise their M-16's and FIRE. Once... Twice...

With each SHOT, Christine grimaces. Her eyes meet Erin's, and Erin offers a slight smile.

With the final SHOT ECHOING across the canyons, Deputy Chief turns to the MINISTER...

DEPUTY CHIEF (CONT'D)

Pastor, if you could close...

Suddenly, a VOICE from the sidelines, Frank's daughter --

RACHEL

I'd just like to say, my Dad loved all of you. He would talk about you when I was growing up. Instead of a bedtime story, he'd tell me all the crazy, funky stuff you did. You became my heroes.

(beat)

And he was *my* hero...

Choking on tears, Rachel turns and moves back to her place.

MINISTER

'My God is my rock, in whom I take refuge...'

DISSOLVE TO:

PARKING LOT - A FEW MINUTES LATER

People are reaching their cars, chatting in small groups.
Peter kisses Erin on the cheek.

PETER
See you later.

Peter heads to his car. Erin would head to hers, but --

CHRISTINE
Got a second?

ERIN
Sure.

They move off.

In another corner of the parking lot, Dee's son, Tim, is
approaching Rachel, who's just walking up.

TIM
Rach, that was great what you said...

RACHEL
Thanks.

TIM
You should stop by the
neighborhood... We've barely seen
you since you moved out...

RACHEL
New school, all that...

TIM
Right.

RACHEL
But we should get together.

TIM
That'd be great.

A smile. A spark.

NEAR A MAUSOLEUM - A MINUTE LATER

Christine fishes in her purse as Erin follows her.

ERIN
... Rachel is really going to need
you now...

Christine stops. She's pulled an envelope out of her purse.

CHRISTINE

I got a court order to open Frank's safety deposit box. I expected more cash, a deed... maybe proof of some secret child he had out of wedlock...

Christine hands an envelope to Erin. Erin, slightly anxious, opens it, several little shells falling out, some sand.

ERIN

I don't get it.

Christine takes a step away, eyes suddenly welling with tears as she looks off. *A crack in the ice.*

CHRISTINE

It's from our honeymoon in Hawaii... twenty years ago... He got called back to work and insisted I stay the full seven days...

(smiles)

Always was a cheap bastard. Anyway, I put the sand and those shells in an envelope and stuck it in his bag, so he'd find it when he got home.

(beat)

Go ahead. There's a note, too.

Erin fishes a yellowed paper out of the envelope, reads --

ERIN

'I miss you. I love you. I'll never stop... Christine.'

Christine tries to inhale her tears, but it's useless. Erin takes her into her arms, holds her close.

INT./EXT. PATROL CAR - LATER

Preacher, in his patrol car, passing the Garden Of Eden, a Lankershim strip club. He sees Kelly's car parked out front.

INT. GARDEN OF EDEN - DAY

A modest birthday party is taking place just beyond the "Closed For Private Party" sign. AMBER, a svelte blonde, is blowing out candles. Kelly is amongst the gaggle of STRIPPERS, a couple of bartenders, a bouncer...

KELLY

What was your wish...?

AMBER

That I didn't like you guys so much,
and I'd wake up one day and quit this
crazy job. But I won't, will I? And
why won't I?

In unison, a rallying cry --

STRIPPERS

The money!

Heads are turning to Preacher entering. He crosses to Kelly.

AMBER

Look who's here...

KELLY

Hey, Preacher, say 'happy birthday'
to Amber.

PREACHER

Happy birthday, Amber.
(to Kelly)
Can I talk to you?

Preacher steers her out a door. Amber breaks the silence.

AMBER

Okay, where the hell are my presents?

INT. BACK PARKING LOT - DAY

Kelly pulls free of Preacher's grasp.

PREACHER

We talked about this...

KELLY

I can't just cut things off like you.
Maybe you can -- the way you did with
your parents.

A silence. Preacher looks off, frustrated, unable to express
his feelings.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Why can't you forgive me?

PREACHER

What're you talking about?

KELLY

You're a Christian, and committed,
and I love that -- and you forgive
(MORE)

KELLY (CONT'D)
 everyone in the world for every sin,
 but you can't forgive me my past...
 (beat)
 God forgives me, right? Why can't
 you?

Preacher, confronted with his own dogma, slowly nods.

PREACHER
 I guess I'm human.

KELLY
 I guess we both are.

Another silence.

KELLY (CONT'D)
 You're angry that I didn't tell you I
 was coming here... What about what
 you're not telling me?
 (beat)
 Since the night you came home with
 that bruise.

PREACHER
 I wanted to protect you... I see
 things on the street... It makes me
 scared I'll lose you.

KELLY
 Look at me, Preacher. You're not
 going to lose me... I mean, don't
 you see we're like the hope of the
 whole world... that we found each
 other... It's why I believe in God.
 He gave me this really cool gift...
 he gave me *you*.

Preacher's eyes are brimming with tears.

PREACHER
 I just love you so much.

He embraces her tightly, nearly trembling. She closes her
 eyes against his strong shoulder.

KELLY
 I'm not going anywhere -- ever.

As they hold each other closely --

EXT. UNIVERSITY HALL - DAY

A gathering of law students, still in their caps and gowns. Dee is in the middle of a group of much-younger STUDENTS. Her two kids, Tim and Stacy, stand nearby.

DEE

It sneaks up on you... all that emotion...

STUDENT

No one worked harder than you, Dee.

Howard, her new boss, parts the crowd, shakes Dee's hand vigorously, embracing her.

HOWARD

Well done, Dee. Oh, and welcome to Davidson-Coburn-Russert-and-Klein. Just got the official word.

Dee jumps for joy, embracing Howard spontaneously.

Across the way, in his dress blues, Mike watches all. He bellows a thunderous --

MIKE

All right!

Heads turn, the sea parts, this time for Iron Mike, who, though spiffed up, looks quite out-of-place.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Baby, I was a little late, but I saw it all from the back. You were spectacular.

He seals the gush with a kiss.

DEE

Mike, this is Howard, my new boss.

Mike grabs Howard's hand in an *iron* grasp, pumps it wildly.

MIKE

She got the job -- good for her. Good for you.

HOWARD

Expect long hours.

MIKE

She's put up with mine long enough.
(suddenly)
(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

Hey! Party at my place Saturday.
 'Little barbecue, little celebrating.
 You're all invited!
 (sniffs Howard)
 Damn, Howard. Is that Pierre Cardin?

HOWARD

As a matter of fact, it is.

MIKE

I got a nose on me, Howie... cologne,
bullshit... a lot of things.

The threat is less-than-IMPLIED.

HOWARD

Wow, look at all those ribbons...
 Which one's Rodney King?

MIKE

Funny thing about Rodney King...

Dee's already got a hand on Mike's shoulder, steering him
 away from Howard, who was one insult away from a hammering.

DEE

C'mon, honey, you need to meet the
 Dean.

When they're a short distance away, Dee stops.

MIKE

I get it -- the Dean was an excuse.
 I've got an hour or so till I'm on --
 let's take the kids to dinner.

DEE

I thought I'd stay a little longer.
 Then there's a party...

Mike nods. A silence ensues.

MIKE

Well okay. Great. See you at home.
 (kisses her)
 I *am* proud of you.

Dee instantly regrets the "dismissal." Mike starts to go.

DEE

Mike...

MIKE

I get it.

Only too well. Mike takes off. Dee might follow, but suddenly Howard has a champagne glass in front of her.

HOWARD

Like that son of yours. I let him know Stanford's got an excellent law school.

Dee says nothing, watching Mike's lonely retreat.

EXT. CUL DE SAC - NIGHT

Rain batters the cul de sac, visible in sheets against the street lights. Erin is driving home, HEADLIGHTS sweeping PAST a man sitting at the curb. Erin slows as she comes up, realizes it's Mike. Erin parks, jumps out.

ERIN

Mike. My God. 'You okay?

Mike blinks through the rivulets of rain water running down his face. He's stinking drunk.

MIKE

The time gets away from you.

Erin's helping him up. They start toward Mike's house.

ERIN

You're drunk.

MIKE

Got tired of waiting... Dee didn't come home. Said she would... Home by eight. And so it begins...

ERIN

You haven't had a drink in two years.

MIKE

Hits you like a freight train.

ERIN

Dee's graduation was today...

MIKE

Been to one, been to a thousand...

He stops to regain his footing, his weight fully on Erin.

MIKE (CONT'D)

You are a very attractive woman, Erin.

ERIN

Mike...

MIKE

The other night, in the car... what
was going through my head... damn if
it's not going through my head again.

And before Erin knows what's happening, Mike is kissing her
hotly... deeply. It grows in intensity, until Erin finds
herself unable to resist, actually responding.

From an upstairs window in the McBride house, Peter is
staring down through the rain-streaked glass, *watching*...

SLAM TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

EXT. CUL DE SAC - DAY

The clouds have cleared... *sort of...*

EXT. BRINJAK BACK YARD - DAY

A back yard fiesta has been set up to celebrate Dee's graduation. Weight-training equipment has been replaced by tables of food and drinks. GUESTS (cops mixed with law student graduates) trying to mingle. But it's Junior High time -- one on one side of the party, the other on the other.

Mike grills up burgers. Dee brings out a tray of more patties. Aside --

DEE

We're not going to ignore last night.

Mike realizes she's talking about his drinking, can't possibly know about the kiss with Erin.

MIKE

What I did, or you did...?

DEE

I stay out late once in my life, you go off the wagon?

MIKE

Wish it was that calculated.

POOLSIDE

Just-arrived Preacher is looking a little worried as wife Kelly strips down to her bikini, dives into the pool. Tim, Mike's son, stands nearby, mesmerized by Kelly's lithe shape shimmering just below the surface. Sister Stacy elbows him.

STACY

That's so sick.

TIM

(all innocence)
What...?

STACY

Whatever fantasy that testosterone soaked brain of yours is conjuring.

SERVING TABLE

Mike's putting out a plate of steaming burgers.

MIKE

Eat up, guys... Let's go.

(looks over)

Howie! Glad you could make it.

Howard can't avoid Mike's monster handshake.

HOWARD

Great house, Mike.

MIKE

Amazed you found it. Nav system on your car, right? Maserati. Does the guy talk to you in Italian?

HOWARD

(weak smile)

Good one.

MIKE

Keep an eye on those wheels. I'm serious. Top of the stolen list.

PATIO DOOR

Peter and Erin are arriving. Preacher rushes over to help with the huge bowl of potato salad Erin is proffering. Peter's holding the baby.

PREACHER

Hey, guys, let me help you with that.

Dee is hurrying over, focused on Pheobe.

DEE

There's my little sweetie. Time for my baby fix.

Dee takes the baby from Peter, cooing and fusing over her.

PETER

She loves a good party.

Erin has stepped away, looking across the party to Mike. Their eyes meet, hold for a moment. They trade a smile.

SERVING TABLE

Dee has Pheobe under an arm. Howard approaches.

HOWARD

You're so nice to include me, Dee.

DEE

You were nice to come. Enjoy yourself. Mingle.

HOWARD

No doubt I've seen some of these guys in court.

Dee leans in close to his ear.

DEE

Wouldn't bring that up.

Meanwhile, Mike has jumped up on a picnic table bench --

MIKE

Hey, if I could get everyone's attention. Grab your beer or whatever, 'cause this is a toast... to my wife of twenty-one years... You managed to raise two amazing kids, keep me in line, hold the family together... *and find time to realize your lifelong dream...* Well, hot damn, you made it. Friends and family, I give you Dee Brinjak, *Esquire*.

BIG APPLAUSE, AD-LIBBED congratulations, as everyone crowds in around Dee. Howard's the first to reach her. Big hug.

Mike and Tim end up a short distance away, side-by-side.

TIM

Dad. I don't like this Howard dude.

MIKE

I know. He smells like a girl.
(looks at his watch)
Man, look at the time...

PREACHER AND KELLY

... are on the outskirts. He's handing her a towel.

KELLY

Covering me up?

PREACHER

Drying you off.

A tiny, tender kiss. Kelly again finds mist in her eyes.

KELLY
My God, how did I ever survive
without you?

They go into a warm embrace.

MIKE

... is now edging through party-goers, shaking hands...

MIKE
Called me in for the early shift.
Work of a cop is never done...
(to various party-goers)
Thanks for coming. Good to see
you...

Erin is also saying "good byes," first to Dee --

ERIN
Sorry. Got called in, too. Thanks
so much. Watch Peter and Pheobe for
me?

Dee hugs her.

DEE
You got it.

ERIN
Congratulations again, Dee.

FOLLOW Erin to Peter, who is holding Pheobe, at a distance, cell phone to his ear.

ERIN (CONT'D)
I'll get the dry cleaning on the way
in...
(kisses Pheobe)
You be good for daddy.

Mike is coming up to her.

MIKE
Give you a ride in?

ERIN
That'd be great.

Erin continues off. Peter, holding Pheobe, watches after them, emotions in a knot --

EXT. CUL DE SAC - MIKE'S MUSTANG - DAY

Mike and Erin get in, close the doors simultaneously.

MIKE

Me first. I want to apologize for last night. I was drinking again, feeling sorry for myself... I had no right, and I'm sorry.

After a silence, Erin nods her head.

ERIN

One time thing. Never happen again.

MIKE

No way. Never.

They trade a twittery smile. A nod. Then --

ERIN

Still driving me to work?

MIKE

Why the hell not?

Mike puts his car in reverse, ROARS down the driveway, nearly side-swiping Howard's Maserati.

ERIN

God... you almost hit that guy's car.

MIKE

(with a twinkle)
Damn. I missed.

VRRRRM. The Mustang speeds off.

INT. BRINJAK HOUSE - KITCHEN

Dee steps in from the party, fishing more potato salad out of the refrigerator. She turns to find Howard standing there.

HOWARD

Such a charming neighborhood, quaint house... Why am I having such trouble picturing you here?

DEE

It's where I've spent the last twenty years.

HOWARD

All these cops... They don't just work together, they *live* together.

DEE

Lawyers do the same thing.

HOWARD

Excellent rebuttal.

DEE

Didn't know we were arguing.

Howard has moved in close to her.

HOWARD

You'll be great in a courtroom.

He brushes against her. Dee puts a gloppy spoon down hard.

DEE

You know, you've really got to stop this.

HOWARD

Why should I? You have so much potential... and you're wasting it...

Dee stares at him for a beat, then just starts to LAUGH.

DEE

I'm sorry -- you're just so obvious. You're a lawyer, you're not supposed to have an imagination.

HOWARD

You can't still be in love with that mook of a husband?

Dee doesn't hesitate -- hauling off and hitting Howard square in the jaw. He falls back in pain, clutching his jaw. Dee rubs her bruised knuckles, biting back her own pain.

DEE

My husband caught you hitting on me, he'd do a *lot* worse.

Howard stares at her with surprised eyes.

DEE (CONT'D)

You're thinking of firing me, but you're smart enough to know I'd blast your ass with a sexual harassment suit. So... we'll just call this a

(MORE)

DEE (CONT'D)
draw and I'll start Monday as
planned.

Howard's eyes scan the room, find the door.

DEE (CONT'D)
Yes, that's the door.

HOWARD
(enjoying the challenge)
See you Monday, then.

Howard vanishes out through the front of the house. BAM --
the front door is heard closing behind him. Dee notices
daughter Stacy standing in the opposite doorway.

STACY
You go, Mom.

EXT. BRINJAK BACKYARD - DAY

Preacher is watching Kelly take the baby from Dee, holding
her. Kelly is overcome with maternal feelings. Laughing,
she looks over, her eyes meeting Preacher's. A warm smile is
shared. Preacher's phone TONES. He picks up, chilled by the
voice he hears on the other end. It's the stranger.

PREACHER
Hello?

STRANGER
I understand they call you *Preacher*.
And you're wondering who I am. 'To
keep me from becoming conceited,
there was given me a thorn in my
flesh, a messenger of Satan, to
torment me...' How many Apostles
were there, Preacher?
(off Preacher's silence)
That's right -- *nine*.

The phone GOES DEAD in Preacher's hand.

INT. CHRISTINE'S OFFICE - DAY

Christine sits in bright light from the window. Her desk is
strewn with things taken from Frank's house. A photo of
Christine and Frank and Baby Rachel harkens to better times.
KNOCK at the door. A LAB TECH sticks her head in the door.

LAB TECH
Lieutenant, I've got final ballistic
results on Frank's death. Powder
burns aren't even in the ballpark.
(MORE)

LAB TECH (CONT'D)

It wasn't suicide. Frank was murdered.

Christine just stares at the photo, completely blown away.

INT./EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Mike parks his Mustang in a strip-mall parking lot.

ERIN

Thanks, this'll only take a second.

Mike waits in the car, watching Erin slip into a dry cleaner's. He turns up the radio, Willie Nelson's "Blue Eyes In The Rain." His gaze shifts to the right.

Doors to a neighboring restaurant burst open and two well-dressed guys rush out. One's got a magnum revolver in his hand; the other's got an UZI. Both are in masks. They're heading to the getaway car several spaces down from Mike's. Mike draws his Glock out from under his car seat.

Erin emerges from the dry cleaner's with her crisp blue uniforms wrapped in plastic. She SEES the gunmen too late.

MIKE

Get down!

Erin drops the dry cleaning as Mike is rolling out the door of the Mustang. Erin reaches for her holstered Baby Glock, but the gunmen have spotted her. The magnum-toting man raises his gun and, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, blasts three rounds right into Erin, hitting her in the chest, an arm, her thigh... Erin flops over backwards, as, simultaneously, Mike raises his gun to fire, drawing a BARRAGE of AUTOMATIC FIRE. Mike rolls and keeps on FIRING, as the getaway car peels off.

Mike scrambles to Erin's side. She's gurgling blood, looking up at him with wide, frightened eyes.

ERIN

Pheobe...

SLAM TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE