UNCLE NIGEL

by

Andy Breckman

(Creator and Executive Producer of MONK)
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TEASER

EXT. DOWNTOWN PHILADELPHIA -- DAY

Welcome to Philadelphia.

We're downtown. Market Street. Independence Hall. The Liberty Bell. The streets are crowded. TOURISTS. TRAFFIC.

A FUGITIVE appears. He's scared. Desperate. He's running-wildly!- down the street!

He's a dangerous man. Tattoos. He has a handcuff dangling from one wrist. He's just escaped from the police.

In pursuit: THREE UNIFORM COPS and a young Detective named RONNIE WELLS, who we'll meet later. Ronnie is screaming, gesturing, directing the Uniforms.

They chase the FUGITIVE across the CROWDED SQUARE! Pandemonium! CARS HONK! PEDESTRIANS scream! Everyone scrambles for safety!

The WILD CHASE continues- until- finally- one of the COPS corners the FUGITIVE. ONE COP tackles him! Ronnie and the OTHER COPS pile on!

Whew. It's all over. He's back in custody.

INT. POLICE TARGET RANGE -- LATER THAT DAY

An hour later. Across town. At a POLICE FIRING RANGE.


In other words: Nigel Wells is the cop you hope shows up.

Nigel aims. He fires. BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

His supervisor steps up. Meet CAPTAIN ELLIOT MACKEY, DEPUTY CHIEF OF DETECTIVES. Tightly wound. Immaculately dressed. The future Commissioner Of Police- or so he hopes.

Nigel reloads, as...
CAPT. MACKEY
Nigel.

NIGEL
Captain Mackey.

Mackey indicates Nigel's gun. It's old, weathered.

CAPT. MACKEY
You still using a Browning Five?
(then)
I'm surprised it still works. It was discontinued twenty years ago.

NIGEL
Are you talking about me or the gun?

Nigel hits a switch. His PAPER TARGET glides toward him. We now see: his aim was near-perfect. Six shots-a tight cluster-in the heart.

CAPT. MACKEY
(impressed)
Well. I guess... it still seems to be working for you.

NIGEL
What can I do for you, Mack?

An awkward beat. Nigel sighs.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
What did he do now?

CAPT. MACKEY
Nigel, I know he's your nephew. Personally, I like the kid. He's a nice kid. He's... well-intentioned...

NIGEL
What did he do?

CAPT. MACKEY
Remember that carjacking on Vinton Street? About two weeks ago? The woman died?

Nigel nods.

CAPT. MACKEY (CONT'D)
We got a tip. We picked the guy up last night. Ronnie was supposed to bring him to court.
(MORE)
(sighs)
Fourteen blocks. One mile. That's all he had to do.

NIGEL
What happened?

CAPT. MACKEY
I almost can't say it out loud. I still can't believe it.
(resuming)
The guy said he was embarrassed. He didn't want his daughter to see him in handcuffs. Ronnie uncuffed him.

Nigel sighs. He's responsible for his nephew.

NIGEL
The guy bolted?

CAPT. MACKEY
Of course the guy bolted! Who the hell wouldn't? Market Street. Nine AM. Luckily, we contained it. They nailed him pretty quick. There's no press so far. Thank God.
(pleading)
Nigel. I've given the kid every chance. I've been more than fair-

NIGEL
I'll talk to him.

CAPT. MACKEY
(wearily)
I can't do it anymore. I can't keep looking the other way. I've got ulcers growing. I can feel them growing.
(indicates his stomach; his ulcers)
Ronnie and Ronnie Junior.
(then)
I've got to cut him loose.

NIGEL
Mack, we've been through this. If he goes, I go.

CAPT. MACKEY
No- no- no. Don't go there.
(sighing)
All right. One more chance. (MORE)
CAPT. MACKEY (CONT'D)
Because he's family. But that's it. I mean it this time. If he screws up again, he's a history lesson.

NIGEL
(warmly)
Thank you, Mack. I appreciate it.

CAPT. MACKEY
Why does he want to be a cop anyway?

NIGEL
It's his dream. It's all he ever wanted.

CAPT. MACKEY
I mean why does he want to be a cop here? In my department? In my lifetime?

EXT. STREET - CARPET STORE -- NEXT DAY

The next day. Downtown. In front of a neighborhood CARPET STORE. The street is a full-on crime scene: POLICE TAPE, SQUAD CARS, CSI TECHS, etc.

Nigel's in charge. He's waiting out front.

Tires SCREECH. Nigel's nephew, DETECTIVE RONNIE WELLS, drives up in a beat-to-shit sedan. He parks badly. He hits some GARBAGE CANS.

Ronnie climbs out. We can't believe it. This is a homicide detective? He looks more like a clerk in a comic book store. He's a man-child. Late 20's. A mass of nervous energy. Over-excited. Anxious to please. He's probably a virgin.

Ronnie is eating a SOFT PRETZEL. He's always eating.

RONNIE
Sorry I'm late. I couldn't find my gun.
(smiles)
Don't worry. I got it.

Ronnie takes out his GUN. He waves it around, carelessly.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Carly took it and tried to bury it. Can you believe it? She thought it was a bone or something-

NIGEL
Ronnie. Holster your weapon.
Ronnie awkwardly holsters his gun.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
Is the safety on?

RONNIE
Yes sir. I'm pretty sure. Yes sir. Is that the safety? Yeah, it's on. (down to business) So. What do we got?

NIGEL
It looks like a robbery. The owner's dead.

They walk toward the store, as...

RONNIE
I guess you heard about this morning.

NIGEL
We'll talk about it later.

RONNIE
Can I just say one thing? It wasn't 100 percent my fault-

NIGEL
Ronnie-

RONNIE
Uncle Nigel, I swear. He lied to me! He promised me he wouldn't run-

NIGEL
Ronnie. We've talked about this. The man is a murderer. What do murderers do?

RONNIE
Murderers lie?

NIGEL

INT. CARPET STORE -- MOMENTS LATER

Moments later. Inside.

It's a CARPET STORE. Rugs everywhere. Antique rugs. Imported rugs. On racks, on walls, rolled up, etc.
And—on the floor—in a body bag: the OWNER’S BODY. The crime scene is already cold. The store is almost empty. The CSI TECHS have left. A couple of UNIFORM COPS are lingering.

Nigel and Ronnie are in charge.

FIRST UNIFORM COP
His name was Pearlman. Murray Pearlman. He owned the place. He lived upstairs. He probably heard something, and came down. Wrong place, wrong time.

Nigel considers this.

NIGEL
What's back there?

FIRST UNIFORM COP
A loading dock. More rugs.

Nigel considers this.

NIGEL
He have a family?

FIRST UNIFORM COP
A daughter in Boston. She's on her way.

Nigel considers this.

NIGEL
Could we have the room, please?

The Uniform Cops leave. Nigel and Ronnie are alone. Nigel begins looking around. He's deliberate. Thoughtful. He sees everything.

ACROSS THE ROOM: Ronnie looks around, too. He admires a rug.

RONNIE
I like this one. What is this, Persian?
(them)
What are we looking for?

NIGEL
Clues. Clues are good. Anything that doesn't belong.

RONNIE
Clues.
Nigel carefully opens the store's CASH REGISTER. He uses a pen, to avoid smudging prints. It's filled with bills.

    NIGEL
    It wasn't a robbery.

ACROSS THE ROOM: Ronnie finds a *poppy seed bagel*.

    RONNIE
    Poppy seeds.
    
    NIGEL
    Excuse me?
    
    RONNIE
    A poppy seed bagel. With cream cheese. I guess he didn't get a chance to finish it.

Ronnie *starts to eat the bagel*!

    NIGEL
    What are you doing?
    
    RONNIE
    (shrugging)
    What's the difference..?
    
    NIGEL
    Ronnie. Put it down. This is a homicide investigation. That's material evidence.
    
    (firmly)
    Put it down. Just put it down. Right where you found it. That's right. That's a good boy.

Ronnie reluctantly puts the bagel down. The investigation continues.

Nigel finds: a PLASTIC SODA BOTTLE. It's wrapped with DUCT TAPE, and filled with FIBERGLASS.

    RONNIE
    What's that?
    
    NIGEL
    Fiberglass. It's a homemade silencer.
    
    RONNIE
    Really?

Ronnie takes the silencer.
Nigel
Maybe the gun's still here, too.

Nigel continues to look around. While Nigel is distracted, Ronnie starts **fiddling with the silencer**.

**RONNIE**
How does this work? Like this..?

Ronnie—like a curious child—slides the silencer ONTO HIS OWN GUN! He points it, absently, toward Nigel.

**NIGEL**
(concerned)
What are you doing—?

**RONNIE**
Just checking it out. I've never seen—

Suddenly—accidentally—Ronnie **pulls the trigger**! There's a **muffled shot**! PHHH-BLAM!

**ACROSS THE ROOM:** Nigel collapses! **He's been shot**!

**END OF TEASER**

"UNCLE NIGEL" **CREDIT SEQUENCE** - WITH MUSIC

The THEME SONG kicks in. **MAIN CREDITS ROLL**.

The CREDIT SEQUENCE is tough and warm and upbeat. Because that's what our show is.
ACT ONE

INT. CARPET STORE -- SECONDS LATER

A moment later. We're still in the CARPET STORE.

Nigel Wells is wounded. He's been shot in the left hand. He's in pain. He's nursing his wound.

RONNIE
Are you all right?

NIGEL
(bitterly)
No Ronnie. I'm not all right. I've been shot.

Nigel starts dressing his own wound. With his good hand, he finds a PIECE OF CLOTH... tears off a strip... and wraps it tightly around the injury.

RONNIE
Let's get you to a hospital-

NIGEL
(wincing, wrapping his hand)
We can't do that. It's a gunshot wound. The hospital would report it. You'd be suspended. You'd be off the force.

RONNIE
(babbling)
Can I say one thing? It wasn't 100 percent my fault. You turned around. You kinda startled me-

NIGEL
(interrupting)
Ronnie-

RONNIE
The trigger's too loose. It's kind of jiggly. I think it's broken-

NIGEL
Ronnie. Just- don't start. It was an accident. These things happen... at least, when you're in the room.

During this, the FIRST UNIFORM COP re-enters.

FIRST UNIFORM COP
Excuse me. Lieutenant?
Nigel collects himself. He hides his wounded hand.

NIKEL  (strained)
Yeah.

FIRST UNIFORM COP
The M.E.'s out front. He's waiting on the body.

NIGEL
We're gonna need another minute here.

Nigel winces slightly.

FIRST UNIFORM COP
Are you okay?

NIGEL
Yeah. I banged my elbow.

FIRST UNIFORM COP
Is it okay if we release the street?

NIGEL
Yeah. Sure. Thanks. We'll be right out.

The Uniform Cop leaves. As soon as he's gone, Nigel crumples slightly.

RONNIE  (concerned)
You need a doctor.

NIGEL
I'll go to Hank Randolph. He'll patch me up.

RONNIE
I thought he retired.

NIGEL
Exactly.
(then, intently)
Ronnie. Listen to me. Find the shell. Dig it out of the wall.
Then go back outside. Tell the M.E. the room's clear. There's a loading dock out back. Bring the car around. I'll meet you there.

Nigel starts toward the rear door.
RONNIE
Uncle Nigel.

Nigel turns.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Thanks.

NIGEL
I'm not doing it for you.

EXT. ABBY WELLS' HOUSE - BACKYARD -- THE NEXT DAY

The next day. A neat, modest suburban home.

We're in the backyard. ABBY WELLS- Ronnie's mom, Nigel's sister- is working on a VEGETABLE GARDEN. She's a single mom. A beautiful woman. Smart and strong and open-hearted.

Also, Abby is sick. She has some sort of blood disease. It's serious, but you wouldn't know it to look at her.

Nigel steps up. His hand is bandaged. His hand will be bandaged for the rest of the episode- a constant reminder of his complex, strained relationship with his nephew.

NIGEL
Where's your hat?

ABBY
Too nice a day.

NIGEL
Dr. Brennon said to avoid the sun.

ABBY
Dr. Brennon said a lot of things. He said I'd be dead three years ago.

Abby turns. She notices Nigel's bandage.

ABBY (CONT'D)
Oh. Baby. What happened to you?

NIGEL
It's nothing. It's a scratch. A kid with a knife.

ABBY
A kid with a knife. (she sighs) You know what Mom would say.
NIGEL
I know. I know. I should've stayed in law school.

ABBY
And she'd be right.

NIGEL
She usually was.
(then)
You look good.

ABBY
Oh shut up. I look like I feel.
Are those my jars?

With his good hand, Nigel is holding THREE CANNING JARS.

NIGEL
I didn't know what size. So I got one of each.

ABBY
I'll probably never use them. I only have four strawberries so far.

Abby continues to prune and weed, as...

ABBY (CONT'D)
Who am I kidding? I'm not a gardener.
If I'm lucky, in September, I'll have one salad. One salad. The Eleven Hundred Dollar Salad.
(then, anxiously)
So what else is happening? Is everything else okay?

NIGEL
If you're asking about Ronnie- and you are- he's doing fine. He's starting to really fit in. He's gonna be a good cop.

Abby tears up. She continues to prune and weed.

ABBY
Thank you.

NIGEL
For what?

ABBY
For coming back. For looking after my boy.
NIGEL
He's looking after me, too.
(then)
I have to go. I'm already late. Is there anything else today?

ABBY
Yeah. Tell me to hang tough. I love how you say hang tough.

NIGEL
Hang tough.

ABBY
Okay. I will.

INT. POLICE HQ - SQUAD ROOM -- SAME TIME

Meanwhile, across town. In the large, busy SQUAD ROOM. COPS and DETECTIVES and CLERKS are hard at work.

Ronnie is at his desk. He's a huge baseball fan. His desk is cluttered with PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES MEMORABILIA and BOBBLE-HEAD DOLLS.

And: a DISPLAY CASE for a baseball. But the ball has been stolen. It's been replaced with a fruit: a tangerine.

Ronnie notices the missing ball. He confronts his office nemesis: a detective named FRANK FRANKEL. Frankel is a smug, resentful prick. A bully.

RONNIE
Frankel! What did you do?

DET. FRANK FRANKEL
(smirking)
Is there a problem, Ronald?

RONNIE
YOU SONOFABITCH! Where's my ball?

DET. FRANK FRANKEL
What ball is that?

RONNIE
My baseball!! The one I caught in Game Three in 1997!
(waving the FRUIT)
You replaced it with an orange!

DET. FRANK FRANKEL
First off, you didn't catch anything. (MORE)
DET. FRANK FRANKEL (CONT'D)

My friend Barry Kazerinsky was at the game. He said it hit the Citibank sign and fell into your lap. And secondly, that's not an orange. It's a tangerine. It looks like an orange. It feels like an orange. The same way you look like a cop, but you're not a real cop.

Ronnie bristles. He notices: his baseball, in Frankel's open drawer.

RONNIE
There it is. Gimme the ball.

DET. FRANK FRANKEL
What are you gonna do, tell your Uncle?

(whining, mockingly)
"Uncle Ronnie, the big boys took my baseball".

Around the Squad Room: the OTHER COPS chuckle.

DET. FRANK FRANKEL (CONT'D)
You want it? Here it is.

Frankel tosses the ball past Ronnie to ANOTHER DETECTIVE... who tosses it to a THIRD DETECTIVE. They're playing keep-away!

RONNIE
This isn't funny! Give it back! I mean it!

The OTHER COPS toss the ball around the Squad Room. Ronnie leaps around, waving his arms.

DET. FRANK FRANKEL
"Give it baaaaack!" You really are pathetic.

Ronnie turns. He steps into a WASTE BASKET. He turns again and- THUNK!- Bangs his head on an OPEN FILE CABINET.

The snarky KEEP-AWAY GAME continues, until... a COP throws the ball wildly. It smashes through CAPT. MACKY'S GLASS OFFICE DOOR! CRAAAAASH!

Everyone freezes. A stunned, guilty beat.

DET. FRANK FRANKEL (CONT'D)
(to Ronnie)
Aw man. Look what you did.
INT. POLICE HQ - STAIRWELL -- SAME TIME

Meanwhile. Downstairs. Nigel is arriving for work. He starts up the stairs.

Capt. Mackey notices him.

CAPT. MACKEY
Nigel. You got a minute?

Nigel stops. His hand, of course, is still bandaged.

CAPT. MACKEY (CONT'D)
Jesus Palomino. What happened to you?

NIGEL
A car door. No big deal.

CAPT. MACKEY
You good to go?

NIGEL
Absolutely. What do you got?

Capt. Mackey is holding a CASE FILE.

CAPT. MACKEY
We caught a break on the carpet store. A forensic team went back inside to double-check something.

NIGEL
(anxiously)
They went back...?

CAPT. MACKEY
They noticed a second blood stain. Near the wall. You must've missed it, too.

NIGEL
Really?

Of course, they're talking about Nigel's own blood! Nigel tenses.

CAPT. MACKEY
Different blood type. What do you think?

NIGEL
(nodding, calmly)
Could be the shooter.
CAPT. MACKEY
It's gotta be the shooter! It's a gift! It's Christmas in July! The lab just got all the samples. Can you and The Dufus stay on top of it?

NIGEL
Absolutely.

Capt. Mackey starts to walk away. But Nigel doesn't move. He's still staring, concerned at the file.

CAPT. MACKEY
Are you okay?

NIGEL
Yeah. I'm just... stunned. It's good work. We got lucky. It's a lucky break.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - CENTER CITY -- DAY

Meanwhile, across town. Downtown. Philadelphia's magnificent COURTHOUSE, on Broad Street. Another historic landmark.

JUDGE PIERCE'S VOICE
Will the defendant rise...

INT. COURTROOM -- SAME TIME

Inside. A half-filled courtroom. A WHITE-COLLAR DEFENDANT is being sentenced.


JUDGE PIERCE
Mr. Russell. Look at me, sir.

The Defendant looks up.

JUDGE PIERCE (CONT'D)
I've listened to your so-called apology, and I am not assuaged. You didn't just steal your clients' money. You stole their future, and their children's future. You stole their faith. You say you're sorry? You say you feel contrition? Those are just words, Mr. Russell. They're hollow. They're meaningless. You showed your victims no mercy. You'll find no mercy here.
INT. JUDGE PIERCE'S CHAMBERS -- LATER THAT DAY

An hour later. In JUDGE PIERCE'S OFFICE. It's a large room. There's an ORNATE RUG on the floor.

Judge Pierce loves to sail. There are PHOTOS OF BOATS on the walls. And MODEL BOATS on the desk.

Pierce is at his desk, reading some papers. His SECRETARY enters.

SECRETARY
Excuse me, Judge. Have you heard from Allison?

JUDGE PIERCE
Allison?
(recalling)
The intern. With the tattoo.

SECRETARY
Yes sir. She didn't show up. I've been calling all day.

JUDGE PIERCE
No. Sorry.

SECRETARY
Did she say anything last night? I know she was working late...

JUDGE PIERCE
Not to me.
(shrugging)
I wouldn't worry about it. She'll probably show up on Monday with a new boyfriend or a new tattoo. Probably both.

INT./EXT. DELAWARE BAY - JUDGE'S BOAT -- NIGHT

That night. In the middle of the Delaware Bay. Judge Pierce is on his SAILBOAT. Alone.

He reaches a dark, isolated spot. He drops anchor. He glances around, anxiously.

There's a BODY in the boat. It's wrapped up in an OLD RUG, tied with wire, and weighted down.

With difficulty, Judge Pierce drags the BODY to the railing, and shoves it overboard.

The BODY splashes. It quickly sinks. It's gone.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

EXT. POLICE HQ - LAB -- NEXT MORNING

The next morning. Nigel enters the POLICE LABORATORY, cluttered with HIGH-TECH EQUIPMENT: microscopes, optic scanners, etc.

It's early. The lab is empty. Quiet. There's only ONE TECHNICIAN on duty.

LAB TECH
Detective Wells. You're up early.

NIGEL
I'm looking for the homicide, Tuesday night. The carpet store.

The Tech indicates a RACK OF TRAYS.

LAB TECH
Top tray. We haven't gotten to it yet.

NIGEL
I know. I'm just taking inventory.

Nigel crosses to the rack. In the tray: five glass vials. Blood samples. With stick-on labels.

He glances around, to make sure the Tech isn't watching. The Tech is across the room, busy, distracted.

Nigel quickly peels off two labels... switches them... then slips one vial into his pocket.

INT. POLICE HQ - MEN'S ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Moments later. Down the hall. In a BATHROOM.

Nigel is alone. At a sink. He splashes his face. He looks at himself, grimly, in the mirror.


His CELL PHONE RINGS.

NIGEL
(wearily, into PHONE)
Nigel Wells.

The CALLER is a woman. With a British accent.
MIRANDA'S VOICE
(flirting)
Hello, Nigel. Did you miss me?

NIGEL
Who is this?

MIRANDA'S VOICE
Really? You don't recognize this voice? And you call yourself a detective.

Nigel- finally- recognizes her. He smiles.

NIGEL
Miranda.
(then)
What time is it there?

MIRANDA'S VOICE
But I'm not there, Detective Wells. I'm here. I'm five blocks away. I've come all the way from London, England to change your life.

INT. CAFE -- LATER THAT DAY

An hour later. Downtown. Nigel and MIRANDA LERNER are in a cozy cafe. At a table. Having breakfast.

Miranda is British. Sharp. Strong-willed. She knows what she wants, and she usually gets it.

NIGEL
It can't be seven years.

MIRANDA
It's seven years.
(then)
I'm divorced.

NIGEL
I didn't ask.

MIRANDA
Yes you did.
(then)
It lasted fourteen months. I guess it's true what they say: the first year of marriage is the hardest.

NIGEL
That wasn't my experience. I found the last year of marriage to be the toughest.
Miranda smiles.

MIRANDA
That's enough foreplay. I've been sent to give you this. It's from my father.

She hands him a sealed envelope.

NIGEL
What is it?

MIRANDA
You're being wooed, Detective Wells. Daddy never forgot how you recovered his stolen Cezanne.

NIGEL
I didn't do much.

MIRANDA
This is no time for modesty, Nigel. Opportunity is knocking.
(explaining)
He has a new job. He's Director of Operations for Lloyd's Of London. It's the biggest insurance company in the free world. He's looking for a new Chief Investigator.

NIGEL
Chief Investigator...

MIRANDA
You'll have 210 people working for you. You'll make three times what you're earning now. Company car. Company jet.
(she smiles)
Company Me.
(then)
If you've got to be a cop, why not do it in style?

Nigel considers this.

NIGEL
It's in London?

MIRANDA
Hence the name. Lloyd's of London.

Nigel returns the envelope.
MIRANDA (CONT'D)
You haven't opened it.

NIGEL
I can't leave. I have family here.

MIRANDA
That's what we call a Solvable Problem. You visit them. They visit you.

Miranda playfully demonstrates: she indicates various breakfast plates and dishes.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
This is London. This is Philadelphia. (indicates a spoon) This is a commercial jetliner. ("flying" the spoon, back and forth) Thanksgiving. Christmas. Groundhog's Day.

NIGEL
I'm sorry.

MIRANDA
Do you love your job?

NIGEL
No.

MIRANDA
Do you have a girlfriend?

NIGEL
No.

MIRANDA
Then what's keeping you here?

Again, Miranda offers him the SEALED ENVELOPE. Nigel sighs. He takes it.

INT. POLICE HQ - SQUAD ROOM -- LATER THAT DAY

Later. In the busy Squad Room. Nigel and Ronnie are at their desks. Their desks are facing each other. Ronnie is reading the SPORTS PAGE.

Nigel is rubbing his bandaged hand. Ronnie notices.

RONNIE
Does it hurt?
Yes.

NIGEL

I feel terrible.

RONNIE

Good.

NIGEL

Do you want to shoot me in the hand?

RONNIE

Yes.

NIGEL

Because you can. If you want to.

RONNIE

Okay. I will.

NIGEL

I mean it.

RONNIE

Okay. We'll do it tonight. I'll come over and shoot you in the hand.

NIGEL

I can't tonight. We're playing Chicago at eight o'clock. Henderson's pitching on three day's rest.

(Remaining text partially visible...)

NIGEL

Some other time then.

Capt. Mackey steps up. He's as impatient as ever.

CAPT. MACKEY

Detective Wells!

Both Nigel and Ronnie respond. Ronnie hurriedly hides his Sports Page.

RONNIE & NIGEL

(overlapping)

Yes sir. Right here.

CAPT. MACKEY

No. I mean...

(MORE)
CAPT. MACKEY (CONT'D)  
(sighing)  
Fine. Okay. Both of you. What are you working?  

RONNIE  
The carpet store. I've been going over the inventory. I think there might be a rug missing...  

CAPT. MACKEY  
(interrupting)  
Forget the carpet store. Put it on the shelf.  

RONNIE  
What shelf is that?  

CAPT. MACKEY  
BUILD A SHELF! Go to Home Depot, build a shelf, put the damn case on it! Put all your cases on it! We've got a missing girl.  

Capt. Mackey tosses them a CASE FILE.  

NIGEL  
Who is she?  

CAPT. MACKEY  
She works for a Federal Judge. She's a cable news special report waiting to happen. That's who she is! Take care of it!  

INT. COURTHOUSE - JUDGE PIERCE'S CHAMBERS -- LATER THAT DAY  

Later. Downtown. In JUDGE PIERCE'S OFFICE. Nigel and Ronnie are talking to the Judge and his SECRETARY.  

NIGEL  
We appreciate your time, your Honor. We know you're busy.  

RONNIE  
How long has Miss Tully been working here?  

JUDGE PIERCE  
To tell you the truth, Sergeant, I'm not sure. We've had so many interns and law clerks coming through. You need a scorecard to keep up.
SECRETARY
Here's her file.
(reading from FILE)
Allison Tully. She started on March First.

NIGEL
What did she do for you?

SECRETARY
Whatever we needed. Errands. Odd jobs.

JUDGE PIERCE
Gentlemen, I'm sorry. I have a deposition in ten minutes. Why don't you walk me down the hall?

Judge Pierce gathers some PAPERS and HEAVY LAW BOOKS.

RONNIE
That's a lot of books.

JUDGE PIERCE
Do you know how many laws and regulations we have in this country, Sergeant? 42 million. 42 million laws. All to enforce ten little Commandments.

RONNIE
(writing this down)
42 million...

NIGEL
(low, to Ronnie)
You don't have to write that down. You don't have to write everything down.

They all walk out the door.

INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Judge Pierce leads the group down a HALLWAY. We TRACK WITH THEM...

RONNIE
Did she have a boyfriend?

SECRETARY
She never mentioned anyone. She wouldn't. She pretty much kept to herself.
NIGEL
Would you say she liked her job?

SECRETARY
Allison? She loved it. You could just tell. She was the first one here and the last one gone, almost every day.

Judge Pierce stops, as if he recalls something.

JUDGE PIERCE
Wait a minute. Now that you mention it. The night before she disappeared, she took a file home. Some grand jury testimony. I asked her to proofread some pages.

NIGEL
Whose testimony?

JUDGE PIERCE
A secret police informant. He was testifying against a biker gang called the Scorpians.

NIGEL
Yes sir. I know the case. I was on the task force.

JUDGE PIERCE
Then you know: their leader, Darryl Teppet, is a very dangerous individual. He'd probably do anything to get the name of that informant.

RONNIE
I think we might have a motive.

NIGEL
(not convinced)
Maybe.

RONNIE
What was his name again? The biker?

JUDGE PIERCE
Teppet. T-E-P-P-E-T.

Ronnie writes this down.

RONNIE
It's a palindrome. Interesting.
JUDGE PIERCE
Excuse me?

RONNIE
His name. It's spelled the same backwards as forwards. It could be important.

JUDGE PIERCE
How could that be important?

RONNIE
We don't know. At least not yet. It's just another piece of the puzzle.

JUDGE PIERCE
(annoyed)
What puzzle?

RONNIE
It's like a jigsaw puzzle. There's, like, a thousand pieces. This could be one of those pieces...

JUDGE PIERCE
(very annoyed)
What the hell are you talking about?

NIGEL
He doesn't know. (intently, to Ronnie) Say you don't know.

RONNIE
(low, embarrassed)
I don't know.

JUDGE PIERCE
Sergeant Wells. How long have you been on the force?

RONNIE
Two years.

JUDGE PIERCE
Two years. In all that time, have you ever closed a case? I mean, have you actually solved anything? Single-handedly?

RONNIE
Well... not as such. Not officially.

Judge Pierce shakes his head.
JUDGE PIERCE
Our tax dollars- not at work.

Judge Pierce and the Secretary walk away. Nigel and Ronnie watch them go.

INT. TULLY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- LATER THAT DAY

Later. Across town. In a MODEST, WARM SUBURBAN HOME.

Nigel and Ronnie are talking to JANET TULLY, the mother of the missing girl. Mrs. Tully is- understandably- shaken, distraught.

MRS. TULLY
Yesterday was my birthday. When she didn't call...
  (breaking down)
I was staring at the phone all night.
  (then)
She's dead, isn't she?

NIGEL
We don't know, ma'am. It's only been two days. We're just getting started.

Nigel and Ronnie are sitting on a sofa. In front of them, on a coffee table: a BOWL OF MIXED NUTS.

During this, Ronnie is chomping on nuts, and looking through the bowl. Nigel and Mrs. Tully glare at him.

RONNIE
(explaining)
I'm allergic to the cashews. They give me the squirts.

Nigel sighs. He moves the BOWL OF NUTS away from Ronnie.

NIGEL
(resuming)
Janet. We need you to be strong. Allison needs you to be strong right now. She needs you to help us.

Mrs. Tully nods, and collects herself.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
How often did she come home?

MRS. TULLY
Weekends. To do her laundry. Have some home-cooked food.
RONNIE
Was she having a problem with anyone?
Was she afraid of anyone?

MRS. TULLY
No. She seemed so happy. Happier than she'd been in a while.

Nigel indicates a BEDROOM.

NIGEL
Is that her bedroom?

INT. ALLISON'S OLD BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

A moment later. Down the hall. Nigel is searching ALLISON'S OLD BEDROOM.

He looks around, thoughtfully. He considers her BOOKS... HIGH SCHOOL TROPHIES... STUFFED ANIMALS, etc.

He glances into a TRASHCAN. He notices something. He reaches in, and takes out... a store receipt. It's from a drug store. It's for an IN-HOME PREGNANCY TEST.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- SAME TIME

Meanwhile, down the hall. Back in the LIVING ROOM. Ronnie is alone with Mrs. Tully.

RONNIE
Do you have a recent photograph?

MRS. TULLY
Yes. Of course.

Mrs. Tully crosses to a very tall, very heavy BOOKCASE. Eight shelves, filled with FAMILY PHOTOS and KNICK-KNACKS.

She takes down a conservative GRADUATION HEADSHOT of her daughter.

MRS. TULLY (CONT'D)
Will this do?

Ronnie has noticed ANOTHER PHOTO: Allison, on a beach, in a bikini, posing sexily. He reaches for it.

RONNIE
Maybe we should take this one, too. Just in case.

MRS. TULLY
In case of what?
RONNIE
Maybe she's on a beach. At a resort.

MRS. TULLY
Why would she be at a resort?
(Anxiously)
Do you know something?

RONNIE
No- no- no. I'm just saying, it's a possibility. Maybe she hit her head. She has amnesia. She woke up on a beach. It happens all the time...

MRS. TULLY
She hit her head?!
(Desperate)
What have you heard? Is she in a hospital?!

RONNIE
No- it's just a hypothetical. All right- forget it. Look. I'm putting it back...

Ronnie tries to put the SEXY PHOTO back. But Mrs. Tully grabs him, desperately! She clutches him!

MRS. TULLY
CAN I SEE HER? YOU HAVE TO LET ME SEE HER-!

RONNIE
Ma'am, I don't know where she is-

Ronnie recoils from her! They back into the giant, heavy, cluttered BOOKSHELF! Oh shit! Some shelves fall! The whole unit starts to topple over, onto Mrs. Tully!

INT. ALLISON'S OLD BEDROOM -- SAME TIME

Down the hall. In Allison's bedroom. Nigel is still considering the drug store receipt.

He HEARS, from down the hall: a THUNDEROUS CRASH!!! Nigel shakes his head. He knows. It's Ronnie's fault.

EXT. MRS. TULLY'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD -- MOMENTS LATER

Mrs. Tully was crushed under the falling bookcase.

We're outside. On the FRONT LAWN. An AMBULANCE and SQUAD CAR have arrived. Some concerned NEIGHBORS have gathered.
TWO PARAMEDICS are carrying poor Mrs. Tully - on a stretcher - from the house. Ronnie is walking alongside.

RONNIE
(calling, to Nigel)
IT WASN'T 100 PERCENT MY FAULT! I'M GOING WITH HER. I'LL MEET YOU AT THE HOSPITAL.

Ronnie scrambles into the AMBULANCE.

ACROSS THE LAWN: Nigel watches the ambulance drive away. He's holding MIRANDA'S JOB-OFFER LETTER. He's finally opened it.

Nigel sighs. He's exhausted. He's had enough. He takes out his CELL PHONE. He dials.

MIRANDA'S VOICE
Hello?

Nigel hesitates.

MIRANDA'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Nigel? Is that you?

Finally, Nigel speaks:

NIGEL
(into phone)
It's me. I'm taking the job.

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

TV SCREEN -- LOCAL NEWS

A TV SCREEN. A LOCAL NEWS REPORT is in progress.

A PHOTO of Allison Tully, the missing girl, appears. The CHYRON HEADLINE: "Still Missing".

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV)
Police are still searching for Allison Tully, the 24-year-old graduate student who's been missing since Tuesday night. Tully was last seen leaving the Courthouse on Broad Street, where she works as an unpaid intern for Judge Leon Pierce...

Then: VIDEOTAPE of the Judge, emerging from the COURTHOUSE. SOME REPORTERS converge. He makes a brief statement:

JUDGE PIERCE (ON TV)
I don't really have anything to add, except for this-
(directly to CAMERA)
Allison, if you're out there... and you can hear this... please call your mother or this office. We're all very worried about you.

We PULL BACK. The TV is in...

INT. ABBY WELLS' HOUSE - KITCHEN -- THE NEXT DAY

It's the next day. We're in ABBY'S HOUSE.

Nigel and Abby are in the KITCHEN. Nigel CLICKS OFF the TV.

Abby is taking her daily medication. There are twenty pill bottles on the counter.

ABBY
What's for lunch? Let's see...
(indicating various BOTTLES and JUICES)
Oh. My favorite- Amoxicillin. With a side order of Lisinopril. Our anti-coagulate du jour: Metronidazole- side effects include mood swings and bloating- I can't wait. And our entree today: 200 miligrams of Cephalexin- it's the "lexin" that makes it so tasty.

(then)
You want some? I hate to eat alone.
NIGEL
No thank you.

Abby starts swallowing her pills. They taste awful.

ABBY
Dad was smart. He had the heart attack—bang!—that was it.

NIGEL
Don't talk like that.

ABBY
Big brother. Talking like this is keeping me alive.

Nigel looks concerned. Abby notices.

ABBY (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

Nigel takes out Miranda's JOB-OFFER LETTER. He hands it to her. Abby reads it. She looks up.

NIGEL
I said yes.

Abby absorbs this. She's stunned. She's scared. But she tries to hide it.

ABBY
Good. Good for you.

NIGEL
(reassuring her)
I'm five hours away. There are two non-stop flights every day-

ABBY
Lloyd's of London? Wow. That's the major leagues, huh?

NIGEL
It's the private sector. It's what I've been looking for.

(them)
I'm just— I'm tired of being a garbage man. That's all I am here—

ABBY
I understand.

NIGEL
I told them about your condition.

(MORE)
NIGEL (CONT'D)
I told them I'd be coming back every month-

ABBY
Nigel. You don't have to explain. It's a great opportunity. You have to go.

Abby steps up. She smiles, sweetly. She's an angel.

ABBY (CONT'D)
You've done so much already. Nigel. It's your life. You have to live your life.

NIGEL
I've already talked to Mrs. McCort. She can drive you to therapy-

ABBY
I'm not worried about me.

Nigel sighs.

NIGEL
Ronnie will be fine. He's been on the line for two years. He's learned a lot. Actually, I think this'll be good for him. He'll have to cowboy up. Stand on his own.

ABBY
Do you think he's ready?

NIGEL
Yes. Yes I do.

EXT. GRUNGY ROADHOUSE - PARKING AREA -- NIGHT

That night. Outside of town. A grungy, no-name ROADHOUSE. It's a biker hangout. 10 MOTORCYCLES are parked out front.

At the door: a tough, linebacker-size BOUNCER.

A BAD-ASS BIKER comes roaring up. Helmet. Leather jacket.

The Bad-Ass Biker parks... badly. He bumps into ANOTHER MOTORCYCLE. It falls over. CRASHHH!

Bad-Ass dismounts... clumsily. Now his own motorcycle falls over. CRASHH! He picks up his knocked-over bike. He picks up the other bike.
Bad-Ass removes his helmet. It's- Ronnie Wells! Tattoos. Wig. God help us all. He's undercover!

EXT. NIGEL'S HOUSE -- SAME TIME

Meanwhile. Across town. In an historic neighborhood.

Nigel lives in a lovely, restored COLONIAL HOUSE. The house is as old as America.

MIRANDA'S VOICE
How long have you lived here?

INT. NIGEL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- SAME TIME


Nigel is in the kitchen, opening a BOTTLE OF WINE. His hand is still bandaged. He's opening it one-handed. It's not easy.

NIGEL
A year and a half. It's not mine. I'm house-sitting for some friends. They're sailing around the world.

Across the room: Miranda, the British attorney, is admiring the antique furniture, the bookshelves, etc.

MIRANDA
When are they back?

NIGEL
Two weeks.

MIRANDA
How perfect is that? It was meant to be.

One-handed Nigel continues to struggle with the WINE BOTTLE.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
(playfully)
Do you need some help?

NIGEL
(struggling with bottle)
No. Now I have to do it. Now it's personal.
MIRANDA
We had a neighbor with one arm. Mr. Stiles. He opened wine bottles all the time.

NIGEL
Shut up.

MIRANDA
I love the floors. And the fireplace. 
(guessing)
Seventeen... fifty?

NIGEL
1704. It's a landmark building. Alexander Hamilton lived here, before... our little spat.

MIRANDA
"Our little spat"? How diplomatic of you. Sorry about that whole taxation-without-representation thing, by the way. For the record, I was against it.

Pop! Success! Nigel opens the bottle. He pours two glasses, as...

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Have you been back to London?

NIGEL
Not since...

MIRANDA
Us?

NIGEL
Not since us.

Nigel crosses to her, carrying the glasses.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
Has it changed?

MIRANDA
London is still there. It's just... harder to find. We'll find it. 
(warmly)
I can't wait. Have you talked to my father?

NIGEL
I did. Last night.
MIRANDA
He's over the moon. He adores you.
You know that.

Miranda indicates a WALL OF FAMILY PHOTOS. Most of them feature Abby and Ronnie.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Is this the family?

NIGEL
What's left of us. My parents died when I was a kid.
(indicates the photos)
It was just me and my sister. Against the world. And that's Ronnie, her son.

MIRANDA
He's a cop, too? He must idolize you. Where's the father?

NIGEL
Gone. He disappeared.

MIRANDA
You're a detective. Why don't you look for him?

NIGEL
I'm afraid I'll find him.

MIRANDA
It sounds like a sad story.

NIGEL
It is. So we're going to drink this, and talk about something else.

Miranda sips her wine.

MIRANDA
Mmmm. It's good.

NIGEL
Your father sent it over this morning.

MIRANDA
Really? This is daddy's wine?

Miranda smiles. She moves closer, closer...
MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Well. This is going to make...
whatever transpires here tonight...
somehow... even naughtier.

They kiss. Tentatively at first... then deeply, hungrily.

They're interrupted. Nigel's CELL PHONE RINGS. Nigel reluctantly breaks away. He glances at the CALLER ID. It's Ronnie. Of course.

Nigel sighs. Miranda sighs, too.

EXT. BIKER ROADHOUSE - PARKING AREA -- LATER THAT NIGHT
An hour later. We're back at the grungy ROADHOUSE. The TOUGH BOUNCER is still out front.

Nigel- his hand still bandaged- steps up. He starts for the door. The Bouncer blocks his way.

NIGEL
Excuse me.

BOUNCER
Private club.

Nigel flashes his BADGE.

NIGEL
I'm a cop.

BOUNCER
With one arm.

NIGEL
That's true.

BOUNCER
And no warrant.

NIGEL
That's true, too. Everything you say is true.

Suddenly- Nigel explodes! He knows martial arts. He's Bruce Lee! No- he's cooler than Bruce Lee, because he only has one good hand.

One-handed, he elbows the BOUNCER in the solar plexus! CRUNCH! He pivots, and kicks the BOUNCER in the lower leg. THUNK!

The Bouncer is down. The fight took five seconds.
INT. BIKER ROADHOUSE -- SECONDS LATER

Inside. A loud, GRIMY ROADHOUSE BAR. It's like a big REC ROOM. A pool table. A big TV. Motorcycle posters. On a wall: MUGSHOTS of VARIOUS CLUB MEMBERS.

Nigel enters. TWO ANGRY BIKERS step up. One of them has a BASEBALL BAT.

NI格尔
(calling, anxiously)
Ronnie- ?

BASEBALL BAT BIKER
Can I help you?

NI格尔
I'm looking for a friend.

BASEBALL BAT BIKER
He's not here.

Once again, Nigel explodes! With his good hand, he grabs the Biker's bat and WHACKS them both with it! WHACK! CRUNK! He RAMS the Second Biker's head into a wall! CRASH!

It's over in six seconds. Nigel looks around.

NI格尔
Ronnie- ?!

DARRYL TEPPET'S VOICE
Detective Wells.

Nigel turns. DARRYL TEPPET- the Biker Club President- is holding court at a corner table. Darryl is calm. Confident. He's like a grunge prince. He's flanked by GRUNGY BIKERS and their GIRLFRIENDS. They're all drunk or stoned.

Nigel knows Darryl. They respect each other.

NI格尔
Darryl.

DARRYL TEPPET
You make a helluva entrance. You always did.

NI格尔
Where is he?

DARRYL TEPPET
He's okay. We didn't touch him. He's over over there.
Nigel turns. Ronnie is sprawled out on the POOL TABLE. He's *drunk*. Passed out. He's snoring. And drooling.

FIRST BIKER
Take him home, man. He's warping the table.

DARRYL TEPPET
He came in here like Wyatt Earp. Cursing and swaggering. We knew he was a cop from the jump.

FIRST BIKER
The peel-off tattoos. That was a big clue.

BIKER GIRLFRIEND
He kept talking about Darryl's name. How it was a palin... something.

NIGEL
(wearily)
A palindrome.

Across the room: Drunken Ronnie stirs. He *groans*.

DARRYL TEPPET
He started asking about the missing girl. You know, the girl on the news.

NIGEL
Allison Tully.

DARRYL TEPPET
I'll tell you what I told him: I don't care about the damn girl. I don't care about the grand jury. I copped a plea two weeks ago. Call Marcy Cooperman in the D.A.'s office. Check it out.

NIGEL
I will.

DARRYL TEPPET
I'm gonna do three months. It'll be like a vacation. You think I'd grab some skirt off the street? For what? To avoid three months inside? That make sense to you?

NIGEL
No. It never did.
Across the room: Drunken Ronnie tries to sit up. He moans. He's like Frankenstein.

BIKER GIRLFRIEND
What's his problem?

NIGEL
He shouldn't drink. How much did he have?

DARRYL TEPPET
One shot of tequila.

NIGEL
Is that it?

DARRYL TEPPET
Let me finish. One shot of tequila... every four minutes for an hour and a half.

Darryl takes out RONNIE'S BADGE.

DARRYL TEPPET (CONT'D)
He dropped his badge. He's got the same name. Is he your kid?

NIGEL
My nephew.

DARRYL TEPPET
Your nephew?
(then)
He dropped his gun, too. I'll go get it. Wait here.

During this, across the room: Ronnie slowly crawls off the POOL TABLE.

Here's how drunk Ronnie is: he doesn't realize his cover's been blown. He's still in "character"... still playing a "Bad-Ass Biker".

DRUNKEN RONNIE
Is it my shot?
(calling the shot)
Yellow ball... anywhere it wants to go...

Drunken Ronnie focuses. He hits the cue ball... badly. It goes flying off the table!

DRUNKEN RONNIE (CONT'D)
My bad. Sorry.
A BIKER and his GIRLFRIEND are watching him play. They— of course— know Ronnie's a cop. But they find him amusing.

DRUNKEN RONNIE (CONT'D)  
(wasted, explaining)  
My game hasn't been the same, since the accident...

BIKER GIRL  
What accident is that?

Ronnie takes another shot— and misses— as...

DRUNKEN RONNIE  
About a year ago. I was on my chopper. I was really thrashin' it. I was doin' wheelies. You know, tricks.

Ronnie's BIKER WIG comes loose. He adjusts it, awkwardly, and continues...

DRUNKEN RONNIE (CONT'D)  
I must've been doing 150. Maybe 200. Ride it like you stole it— that's my motto.

BIKER  
I hear that.

DRUNKEN RONNIE  
Anyway, I got into a little disagreement with a tree. Hit it head on. That airbag saved my life.

BIKER  
An airbag? On your chopper?

DRUNKEN RONNIE  
That's right.

BIKER  
What the hell were you riding?

DRUNKEN RONNIE  
(inventing)  
It was a... Maytag. A Maytag Low-Rider.

BIKER GIRL  
I thought they made dishwashers.
DRUNKEN RONNIE
And choppers. They're getting into
bikes now. Diversifying. It's a
beautiful machine. Very clean. No
surprise there.
   (blissfully)
There's no feeling like it. Full
throttle... open road... a big gnarly
Maytag between your legs.

Drunken Ronnie notices Nigel. Ronnie stays in character.
He "vouches" for his friend-

DRUNKEN RONNIE (CONT'D)
(as "Bad Ass")
Hey. Look who's here. It's my old
biker buddy...
   (inventing)
Harley... David. Harley David.

Undercover Ronnie winks, drunkenly.

NIGEL
Ronnie-

DRUNKEN RONNIE
We've been riding together for years.
We did Tahoe together. Remember
that? We tore that town apart, man.

NIGEL
Ronnie. They know we're cops.

DRUNKEN RONNIE
(confused, still in
character)
What are you talking about, Harley?
We're not cops. We hate cops. You
must've been riding without your
helmet again.
   (to the room)
He hates wearing his brain bucket.

Nigel hands Ronnie his GUN and BADGE.

NIGEL
Here's your gun. Come on. We're
going home.

Ronnie- finally- realizes: his cover is blown. He sighs,
relieved. He removes his stupid WIG.

DRUNKEN RONNIE
Thank God.
   (then)
What are you doing here?
NIGEL
You called me.

DRUNKEN RONNIE
(he doesn't remember)
I did?
(then)
Listen. I don't think he's the guy.
He already cut a deal with the D.A.'s office-

NIGEL
I know. I know all about it.
(warmly)
You did good work here. I'm proud of you. I'll meet you out front.

Ronnie staggers toward the door.

RONNIE
(to a GROUP OF BIKERS)
How'd the Phillies do? Anybody see the game?

Ronnie leaves. Nigel crosses to Darryl Teppet.

NIGEL
Thank you.

DARRYL TEPPET
I get it. I've got a nephew too.

Darryl indicates his nephew: a TEENAGE STONER, across the room, sitting in front of the TV, playing a VIDEO GAME.

DARRYL TEPPET (CONT'D)
The kid's a troll. A waste of skin.
I spend half my life worrying about him. But what are you gonna do?
He's in the tribe, right? He's blood.

Nigel considers this. This grungy Biker has a point.

DARRYL TEPPET (CONT'D)
We're responsible. We didn't ask for it, but that's our job. Am I right? Somebody has to be responsible.
(then)
Take care of your tribe.

Nigel shakes Darryl's hand... then walks away.

END OF ACT THREE
An hour later. Across town. Ronnie lives in a modest ONE-BEDROOM CONDO.

It's cluttered with BASEBALL POSTERS and MEMORABILIA. It's obvious: Ronnie has never brought a girl here.

Ronnie is sprawled out on a couch. He's hungover. He's still woozy. His head is pounding. He hates his life. He hates himself.

RONNIE
(woozy)
I'm so embarrassed.

NIGEL
You drank too much. It happens.

RONNIE
Not just tonight... I'm embarrassed all the time... I was born embarrassed...

Nigel is in the KITCHENETTE. He's mixing a drink.

NIGEL
You should've told me you were going in undercover.

RONNIE
(moaning)
I know, I know. I screwed up. I was trying to prove something. To you... to myself... to the squad. They hate me, you know.

NIGEL
They don't hate you.

RONNIE
They don't respect me. You can't deny that.

Nigel crosses to Ronnie, with the glass.

NIGEL
Drink this.

RONNIE
What is it?
NIGEL
Beer and tomato juice.

RONNIE
What's it called?

NIGEL
It's called beer and tomato juice.

Ronnie drinks. It works. His head clears a little.

RONNIE
Who am I kidding? I'm not a real cop.

NIGEL
You're a good cop, Ronnie. At least, you will be.

RONNIE
(anguished)
I'll never be you. I want to be you. How do people like you get to be people like you? How do you do it?
(then)
Did you read this?

Ronnie picks up a discarded NEWSPAPER. There's an article about the missing intern. It features a PHOTO of Judge Pierce, in his office.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
(reading)
"Nigel Wells, First Lieutenant, Homicide Division, was unflappable as he spoke to reporters."
(half-drunk, babbling)
They're right! That's what you are! You're unflappable! And I am sooo flappable! I'm so damn flappable!
(then)
What does that mean? Flappable?

NIGEL
I don't know.

Ronnie stops. He notices something. He takes a closer look at the PHOTO of Judge Pierce.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

RONNIE
The rug.

NIGEL
Excuse me?
RONNIE
That's a different rug.

INT. JUDGE PIERCE'S OFFICE/RECEPTION AREA -- NEXT DAY

The next morning. In the COURTHOUSE. Judge Pierce arrives for work. He greets his Secretary-

JUDGE PIERCE
Good morning, Sandra. I'm going to need copies of both depositions from yesterday before we...

The Judge stops. There are COPS in his office! DETECTIVES-including Nigel and Ronnie-and a FORENSIC TEAM. They're examining his ORNATE OFFICE RUG.

SECRETARY
(embarrassed)
I've been trying to call you...

Nigel steps up.

NIGEL
Your Honor. Good morning.

Nigel hands the Judge THREE LEGAL DOCUMENTS.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
I don't have to tell you what this is. It's a search warrant for your office. Duly executed. This one is for your car. And this is for your boat.

The Judge needs a lawyer. He turns to his Secretary.

JUDGE PIERCE
Sandra. Call Peter Wolk. Tell him to meet me here right away.
(to Nigel)
What's all this about?

NIGEL
It's about Allison Tully. The missing intern.

JUDGE PIERCE
(smirking)
You think she's on my boat?

NIGEL
No sir. I think she's in the bay. I think she's gone.

(MORE)
NIGEL (CONT'D)
It's gonna be almost impossible to convict you on that one.
(then)
We're going to get you for Murray Pearlman.

JUDGE PIERCE
Who?

NIGEL
I'm sure you remember. He owned a carpet store on Vinton Street. You killed him last week. You used a 32 caliber revolver and a homemade silencer, probably borrowed from the property room.

Ronnie steps up.

RONNIE
(to Nigel)
We found some blood. Lots of it. And look at this-

Ronnie holds up TWO EVIDENCE BAGS. They contain traces of food.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Remember the bagel? Poppy seeds. Cream cheese.

NIGEL
Okay. Don't eat it.

RONNIE
I'm not gonna eat it-

NIGEL
You better give me the bag-

RONNIE
I'm not gonna eat it-

NIGEL
(explaining, to Pierce)
Sometimes he eats the evidence.

RONNIE
I've never eaten any evidence!-

NIGEL
Last year? The library?
RONNIE
I spit that out!-

JUDGE PIERCE
(interrupting, grimly)
Be very careful, Lieutenant. You're talking to a Federal Judge.

NIGEL
Not for long.
(then)
Here's how I figure it. You were having an affair with your 24-year-old intern. She told you she was pregnant. It would've ruined everything - career, marriage. So you killed her. Tuesday night. Right here, in this office...

INT. JUDGE'S OFFICE - A WEEK EARLIER - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

BRIEF FLASHBACK. It's a week earlier. In Pierce's office.

ALLISON TULLY is dead. She's on the floor. She's just been bludgeoned to death.

Judge Pierce is anxiously rolling up her BODY in the RUG.

NIGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You wrapped her body in the rug, and got rid of it.

INT. JUDGE PIERCE'S OFFICE - RESUME PRESENT DAY

The FLASHBACK ENDS. We're back in the COURTHOUSE. Nigel continues...

NIGEL (CONT'D)
But you had a problem.

RONNIE
The rug-

NIGEL
The rug in your office. It was suddenly missing. That's the kind of thing people remember.

RONNIE
You had to replace it-

NIGEL
You had to replace the rug.
RONNIE
It was after midnight. You had—what?- six hours...

INT. CARPET STORE - A WEEK EARLIER - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Another FLASHBACK. Later that night. In the CARPET STORE. It's late. The store is dark.

Judge Pierce has broken in. He's frantically looking through a RACK OF RUGS. He finds a SIMILAR RUG, and begins to remove it.

NIGEL (V.O.)
Three AM. You broke into the carpet store. You found a rug. It wasn't a perfect match, but it was close enough.

Pierce turns. The STORE OWNER has woken up! The Owner confronts Pierce! Pierce takes out his GUN— with the HOMEMADE SILENCER— and fires! PHH-BLAM! The Owner falls, dead.

NIGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The owner woke up. Wrong place, wrong time.

INT. JUDGE PIERCE'S OFFICE - RESUME PRESENT DAY

The FLASHBACK ENDS. We're back in the COURTHOUSE. Nigel continues...

NIGEL (CONT'D)
You would've gotten away with it. Except for this.

Nigel holds up the NEWSPAPER, with the PHOTO OF JUDGE PIERCE.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
This picture was taken six weeks ago.
(indicates Ronnie)
Sergeant Wells noticed it wasn't the same rug.

RONNIE
(indicates PHOTO)
See, this one has more fringe on the border. And the curly cues in the middle are different...

Judge Pierce sighs. He's caught. He knows it.
JUDGE PIERCE
(muttering, defeated)
The curly cues.

RONNIE
(continuing, excitedly)
And look at the corners. These are little trapezoids. On the other rug, they're more like parallelograms...

NIGEL
(proudly, to Judge Pierce)
He's good with puzzles.

EXT. STREET - IN FRONT OF AN UPSCALE HOTEL -- DAY
Later. Downtown. In front of an UPSCALE HOTEL.

Miranda- the British lawyer- emerges, with some LUGGAGE. She's heading home.

Miranda turns. Nigel is there. He's been waiting for her.

MIRANDA
Nigel?

Nigel sighs. It's a heavy, regretful sigh.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
(realizing)
You're not coming.

NIGEL
I can't go. I can't just leave. My sister's here. And my partner.

MIRANDA
And your nephew.

NIGEL
My nephew is my partner.

A heavy beat.

MIRANDA
Daddy will be disappointed.

NIGEL
He'll live.

Nigel leans in. He kisses her, lightly, sweetly.
NIGEL (CONT'D)

So will you.

Nigel starts to walk away.

MIRANDA

Nigel.

Nigel stops. He turns.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

I hope they appreciate it. How much you're sacrificing.

NIGEL

It's not really a sacrifice, if you don't have a choice.

INT. ABBY WELLS' HOUSE - DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

It's a week later. We're in ABBY'S HOUSE.

Nigel, Ronnie, and Abby—our little family—are having dinner.

They're eating Abby's HOMEGROWN SALAD. It's a sad-looking meal. The lettuce is brown. The vegetables are small and misshapen.

Nigel and Ronnie are teasing Abby about the food...

RONNIE

And what is this?

ABBY

That's a cucumber.

RONNIE

Mom, I'm sorry. But this is the saddest-looking cucumber I've ever seen.

ABBY

I don't know what I did wrong. I read every gardening book I could find.

NIGEL

The red pepper looks good.

ABBY

That's a tomato. I think.

They all laugh.
NIGEL
You know, Abby, there's a supermarket just up the street. They have something called a produce section. Here's how it works: you get a shopping cart...

We PULL BACK as Nigel and Ronnie continue to laugh and good-naturedly tease Abby about her pitiful salad. They love each other. They're all they have.

END OF ACT FOUR
INT. POLICE HQ - SQUAD ROOM - CAPT. MACKEY'S OFFICE -- DAY

Two weeks later. Capt. Mackey is in his OFFICE. Nigel walks past.

CAPT. MACKEY
Detective Wells. Do you have a minute?

Nigel enters. His bandage is off. His hand is almost healed.

CAPT. MACKEY (CONT'D)
I was just talking to Lou Wessin. He said one of the blood samples from the carpet store is M.I.A.

Nigel shrugs.

NIGEL
It's not going to trial. Pierce confessed.

CAPT. MACKEY
I know, I know. It's not gonna change anything. But it's been bothering me. Like a pebble in my shoe. (accusingly)
He mentioned you were up there, in the lab, the day after it went down.

Nigel doesn't respond. An awkward beat.

CAPT. MACKEY (CONT'D)
How's your hand?

NIGEL
It's better. It's good.

Capt. Mackey takes Nigel's hand. He looks at the fading scar.

CAPT. MACKEY
A car door, huh? (beat)
That's a bullet wound.

NIGEL
Mackey. I've got ten cases on my desk-

Nigel starts for the door. But Capt. Mackey blocks his way.
CAPT. MACKEY
I knew it! He shot you, didn't he?
The Dufus shot you. Your own partner
shot you, and you've been covering
for him!

NIGEL
I'm going back to work now.

Again, Nigel starts for the door.

CAPT. MACKEY
You won't always be there. He's
gonna screw-up again- as sure as sin-
because he's a screw-up and that's
what screw-ups do. And next time,
you won't be there. But I will.
(then)
It's just a matter of time.

Nigel smiles.

NIGEL
Excuse me.

Nigel walks away. Capt. Mackey watches him go.

Nigel crosses the busy Squad Room. Ronnie's desk is cluttered
with FAST FOOD WRAPPERS. Ronnie is looking around.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
What's going on?

RONNIE
(anxiously)
I can't find my gun. It was right
here.
(trying to recall)
I walked in... I sat down...

Ronnie finally finds his GUN, under some half-eaten FAST
FOOD.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Here it is. I got it. What is that,
mustard..?

Ronnie starts to wipe off his weapon. As he does, he
carelessly points it right at Nigel!

NIGEL
Ronnie! What are you- ? Just holster
the weapon. That's right. Strap it
in. What happened to your strap..?
Nigel—patiently, wearily—helps his nephew secure his revolver.

ACROSS THE SQUAD ROOM: Capt. Mackey is watching them.

CAPT. MACKEY
(to himself)
It's just a matter of time.

END OF SHOW