Untitled NBC Universal Pilot

by

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. MULHOLLAND DRIVE -- NIGHT (NIGHT 1)

A crime scene. The CAMERA PANS past a coroner's van, a couple of arriving black and white police cars...

...And ENDS on an older sedan pulling up.

LUI S NELSON exits. He's 30, black. Wears a dark suit. A little nervous. He touches something under his shirt, then heads for the police cordon.

2 INT. BARTOS' HOUSE -- BY STAIRWELL -- MOMENTS LATER

Numerous cops and SID techs mill about, doing their jobs. Among them...

CHRISTIE WINTERS, 30s, beautiful, dresses well. She's staring at the dead body of a man lying at the foot of the staircase, ANDREW BARTOS, 35.

There's blood around the body's bruised face and left thigh; his neck is clearly cracked. Winters examines the wrists... and she smiles.

LIEUTENANT ADAM MOLNAR waits, watching silently. Nelson enters.

NELSON
Lieutenant, sorry I'm late. I was waiting for my new partner--

LT. MOLNAR
Shouldn't have. She's here. And technically, you're her new partner.

The LT indicates Winters, but doesn't introduce them. He doesn't even look at Winters. Nelson notes this oddness.

NELSON
Detective Winters. I'm Luis--

WINTERS
Hi. What do you see here?

Nelson looks around, surprised to be put on the spot. The LT looks like he's used to this behavior from Winters.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
Yeah, yeah, we should chat, bond. (MORE)
WINTERS (CONT'D)
And we will. But tour's up and I
got a date in an hour, so I'd really
like to get out of here, so... What
do you see?

Nelson starts examining the body. Narrating:

NELSON
Bruising on the face and head, cracked
neck...

The camera TILTS UP the stairs to find, surprisingly...

ANDREW BARTOS (whose body they were just standing over)
walking down the stairs. He's 35, a wealthy entrepreneur.

NELSON (CONT'D)
Probably fell.

Bartos starts to fall--

WINTERS
No.

Bartos stops, mid fall--

WITH NELSON AND WINTERS AT THE BOTTOM

WINTERS (CONT'D)
Bruises on the head are cylindrical--

NELSON
You hit the stairs at the right angle--

WINTERS
They still won't cut you. Legs are
cut. He's got pieces of broken glass
inside his wounds.

NELSON
And around him. And the stairs still
look wet.

BACK ON THE STAIRS WITH BARTOS

He's still mid-fall, but now he's holding a glass of water.

NELSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He was carrying a glass of water.

Bartos trips, tumbles, cracks his neck, lands on the ground,
the glass breaking and cutting into his thigh.

(CONTINUED)
And Bartos winds up right back where we found him.

Winters shakes her head, points to the leg:

**WINTERS**
...These aren't puncture wounds, they're slice wounds... Too regular and deep for the glass shards.

Nelson looks; she's right.

**NELSON**
Sorry. I haven't had a chance to examine--

**WINTERS**
Then why are you speculating? He also has a black eye.

**NELSON**
(looks, then)
That's a week old.

**WINTERS**
Might have taken a long time to kill him. Did you smell the floor?

**NELSON**
I just got here.

**WINTERS**
And if you'd gotten here fifteen minutes earlier, you would have spent the time sniffing the floor?

**LT. MOLNAR**
Stop jerking us around; what's it smell like?

**WINTERS**
Floor. Except over there.

Winters points to a corner of the room.

**WINTERS (CONT'D)**
That part smells like detergent.

**LT. MOLNAR**
You smelled the entire room.

**WINTERS**
No.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
As she steps forward, REVEAL BARTOS, in the corner, his wrists bound behind him with duct tape. He's terrified.

WINTERS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
There's hair missing on his wrist. Suspect duct tapes our vic; then slices his leg a few times.

Bartos screams as the KILLER, whose face we do not see, moves into frame and plunges a knife into Bartos' leg. Slicing him. Twice. Three times.

The cops watch in the foreground as Winters narrates.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
Beats him in the head, kills him. Then wants to cover it up, so breaks his neck, shoves the glass in the wounds, dumps him at the bottom of the stairs.

The killer drops the knife, takes a metal pipe and hits Bartos five times with it, cracking his skull. Then he breaks the dead man's neck, lifts his victim and dumps him on the floor next to the stairs, crushing a glass underneath him.

And once again Bartos' body is back in its actual position.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
Nothing stolen plus torture plus staged crime scene: presumably this guy had some serious enemies; either he's working for the mob; or he is the mob; or just independent drugs or--

LT. MOLNAR
Winters, you get briefed when you came in here?

WINTERS
Nobody volunteered.

LT. MOLNAR
Because nobody talks to you.

WINTERS
Yes. It's very rude. I'm thrilled you're talking to me right now.
LT. MOLNAR
If they had, they'd have told you, this guy isn't in the mob. He's in the frozen yogurt business.

Winters is seemingly unaffected.

WINTERS
Weird. Wonder why a guy in the frozen yogurt business would get tortured and killed.
(to Nelson)
We should get on that first thing in the morning.

NELSON
Where are you--

WINTERS
I told you. I got a date.
(off Nelson's look)
Hey, it's not like the killer's gonna torture him any more.

And Winters leaves. Nelson turns to the LT.

LT. MOLNAR
Welcome to Robbery Homicide.

Off Nelson--

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER
ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. SARAH MURPHY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN -- DAY (DAY 2)

Winters is three years older than her sister, SARAH MURPHY. Sarah holds her toddler, EMMA, as Winters looks through the refrigerator--

SARAH
Don't they have any food at the station?

WINTERS
Free food?

SARAH
(to Emma)
This is why we keep stuff in this big box, so you get to see your Aunt Christie every once in a while.

Winters takes Emma in her arms but continues to look for food--

SARAH (CONT'D)
So how was your new partner?

WINTERS
You're not gonna ask me about the date?

SARAH
I know how the date went. He was wearing the wrong kind of coat--

WINTERS
It was a belted trench coat!

SARAH (surprised)
Really? Wow, I thought I was just giving a generic example.

WINTERS
Why do you bother fixing me up?

SARAH
Because eventually somebody will come along that you can't pick apart.

WINTERS
You mean like your husband?

(CONTINUED)
SARAH
(Obviously not)
Michael's distant, he's a Republican,
he's completely uninterested in
hearing about my patients, he's not
nice to you--

WINTERS
Why do you stay with him?

SARAH
Because I love him.
(them)
You're always going to be able to
pick someone apart. I'm hoping
someday you'll choose not to.
(them)
So how was your new partner?

WINTERS
He's distant, he's a Republican,
he's terribly uninterested in your
job... But I accept him because I
love him.

SARAH
There you go.

She takes Emma back and leaves. Winters takes a cheese stick
out of the fridge; takes a bite, then throws it out as she
leaves--

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT -- DAY

A studio apartment. Nelson is with his girlfriend GENEVIEVE
(late 20s), both getting dressed. Nelson wears an undershirt,
a St. Michael's medal on a pendant around his neck. He's in
a mood, slams the fridge door closed.

NELSON
There's nothing to eat.

GENEVIEVE
Settle down. You always get like
this. Give her a chance.

NELSON
She humiliated me.

GENEVIEVE
You spent five minutes together; you
know nothing about her.

Nelson re-opens the fridge.

(CONTINUED)
NELSON
I know she doesn't act like a cop, doesn't even look like one--

GENEVIEVE
What does that mean?

NELSON
She just--

Genevieve closes the fridge door to get his attention.

GENEVIEVE
She's hot? Can't be a cop if you're a good looking woman?

NELSON
That's not what I meant--

GENEVIEVE
Oh, it's just the fact that she's a woman?

NELSON
You know I don't have a problem with women on the force.

GENEVIEVE
I know you say you don't have a problem with women on the force. But you've spent all of five minutes working with one and you're freaked out.

NELSON
Because she's a bitch!

GENEVIEVE
Not a bastard?

Nelson gives her a look--

NELSON
I gotta go.

And Nelson grabs a cheese stick out of the fridge and grabs his shirt--

INT. BARTOS' LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Winters and Nelson talk to BARTOS' WIFE. She's weeping, emotional, a mess. As Nelson talks to her, he's kind, empathetic. Winters watches silently. (Note: Nelson always takes notes; Winters never does.)

(CONTINUED)
BARTOS' WIFE
No one would hurt Andrew. Everyone loved him.

NELSON
No financial problems? No trouble at home?
  (off her silence)
I'm sorry, I can only guess how you're feeling right now, but any information...

BARTOS' WIFE
No, nothing like that.

WINTERS
...But something?

BARTOS' WIFE
He'd been distant.

WINTERS
For the last week?

BARTOS' WIFE
(surprised)
Yeah.

Now Nelson is also surprised.

WINTERS
Since he got the black eye?

BARTOS' WIFE
(yes, but)
That was just from running into a door.

WINTERS
Who was he with when he got jumped by this door?

Nelson reacts to the insensitivity--

INT. SMOOOOTHIES INC. -- SKLAR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Winters is with CHARLES SKLAR, one of Bartos' business partners. He's low-key, nebbishy, and right now, very upset, desperate for answers.

SKLAR
It's unbelievable. Andrew was such a nice guy; this doesn't make sense.
  (MORE)
SKLAR (CONT'D)
You sure it wasn't a robbery or something?

WINTERS
My instincts say no, on account of nothing being robbed.  
(off Sklar's look)
What happened last Thursday?

SKLAR
(surprised by the question)
Nothing. Why?

WINTERS
He had a black eye.

SKLAR
That was nothing. We were out at dinner, the partners; it was our company's second anniversary...

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE RESTAURANT -- NIGHT -- FLASHBACK
Sklar, Bartos and their two partners, DONALD EDWARDS and BRIAN OBERMAN, drunkenly exit. Edwards and Sklar walk ahead of Oberman and Bartos, who are bickering in a good-natured fashion.

BARTOS
You could have paid for once.

OBERMAN
Hey, you bring in some financing, dinner's on me for a month.

And with that, Bartos bangs into a door, gasps in pain and puts his hand to his eye.

BARTOS
Geez--

His partners laugh at this.

BARTOS (CONT'D)
It's not funny!

INT. SMOOOOTHIES INC. - EDWARDS' OFFICE -- DAY
Now we're with Nelson, who's interviewing Edwards (handsome, polite, also understandably upset).
EDWARDS
Bartos is dead; somebody killed him; why are you asking me about Thursday?

NELSON
(takes a beat)
I'm not sure.

INT. SMOOOOOTHIES INC. - HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Winters and Nelson have regrouped in the hallway.

WINTERS
Because one third is bigger than one quarter. When a partner dies, the other partners are the first suspects.

NELSON
They seem pretty torn up.

WINTERS
Where's the fourth partner?

NELSON
Oberman; he's with a supplier.

WINTERS
(gives Nelson a look)
Right. Partner's dead but business is business.

Winters wanders over to a SECRETARY sitting outside an office that says "Oberman" on it. Nelson follows.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
Excuse me, miss, I'm about to throw up.

SECRETARY
The bathroom's just down--

WINTERS
Could you please get a bowl or something from the kitchen?

SECRETARY
A bowl? Shouldn't you--

WINTERS
Please?

The secretary quickly walks off.

(CONTINUED)
NELSON
What are you doing?

Winters walks behind the desk and opens up the computer's electronic calendar program. Nelson nervously touches his medal under his shirt (as he did in the Teaser.)

NELSON (CONT'D)
This'll get tossed out of court--

WINTERS
Not really expecting to find the murder weapon in here.

NELSON
It wasn't necessary to lie to that woman--

WINTERS
(clicks on an address)
No supplier meeting; Oberman's at the doctor.
(clicks)
Hand and wrist doctor...
(clicks, then amazed)
Specializes in injuries from punching your business partner in the face.

She closes out the computer program and stands as the Secretary returns with a bowl.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
Ohhh. Do you have a bigger bowl?

As the woman turns to go fetch--

WINTERS (CONT'D)
While you're gone, do you mind if we look in your computer to check the partners' appointments?

SECRETARY
(uncertain)
I don't think I'm allowed to--

WINTERS
(to Nelson)
Truth sometimes works; lying always does.

And Winters heads for--
Nelson and Winters are back with Sklar.

SKLAR
No. It was a door. You're wasting your time. There's a killer out there and you're dicking around with a stupid drunken dinner--

WINTERS
Do you watch CSI?

SKLAR
What?

WINTERS
They can tell the difference between eight different types of black eyes. You run into a door, it leaves a distinct bruising pattern.

(Sklar says nothing)
You're smart enough to know you're gonna get caught. Which makes this an incredibly easy interrogation. So I'm gonna let my partner take over.

(sotto to Sklar)
He's new, when you fold, it'll make him feel good; like a real cop.

NELSON
(to Winters; holding in his anger)
Can we talk? Outside?

WINTERS
(re Sklar)
He's lying; break him.

Nelson is annoyed, but turns to Sklar:

NELSON
What happened that night?

WINTERS
(to Nelson)
What are you? Canadian? I believe the correct phrasing is: what happened that night, eh?

Nelson grabs Winters by the arm and pulls her outside--
INT. SMOOOTHIES INC. - HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Winters and Nelson argue--

WINTERS
Do not touch me.

NELSON
Yeah, I'm the one acting inappropriately.

WINTERS
This is an interrogation; not an interview for Vanity Fair--

NELSON
Why are you treating me, him, the widow, everyone like crap? What if they're telling the truth? What if we're wasting our time?

WINTERS
There's a reason they call it breaking suspects; not building up suspects.

NELSON
I start out nice--

WINTERS
You are nice!

NELSON
Is that your problem?

WINTERS
You can't be nice and be a good cop.

The argument is interrupted by Sklar emerging from the office--

SKLAR
(sheepish)
We were lying because it meant nothing.

WINTERS
It always does.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE RESTAURANT -- NIGHT -- REVISED

FLASHBACK

What we saw before, except in this version, the men are drunker, in worse moods. Edwards and Sklar again walk ahead of Oberman and Bartos, who are again bickering, but not good-naturedly.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BARTOS
You could have paid for once.

OBERMAN
Hey, you bring in some financing, dinner's on me for a month.

BARTOS
I'd be happy you just brought in your wallet.

SKLAR
Chill out, guys, we're celebrating.

Sklar and Edwards turn back at the sound of a scuffle. Bartos and Oberman are pushing each other.

OBERMAN
Tired of you riding me--

SKLAR
Brian, stop it--

Bartos pushes Oberman, then Oberman punches Bartos in the face. He immediately pulls back his hand in pain--

EDWARDS
The hell you doing?

Edwards pushes them apart. Bartos holds his swelling eye. All the men are stunned it went that far. Scene freezes, except for Sklar; he turns to the Camera--

SKLAR
It was a just a dumb, drunken fight; didn't mean anything.

INT. DETECTIVE CAR - MOVING -- NIGHT

Nelson's driving, Winters is in the passenger seat.

WINTERS
It was not just a 'dumb, drunken fight'.

NELSON
These guys don't seem like killers.

WINTERS
Business people get in fights, they sue each other, steal from petty cash, sleep with the guy's wife, they don't get in punch-outs.
NELSON
Some do.

WINTERS
Not these guys.

NELSON
(skeptical)
You're sure of that?

WINTERS
I'm sure.

NELSON
Based on what?

WINTERS
My superpower.

Nelson nods, annoyed.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
I know how to read people.

NELSON
Oh. I thought you meant you could shoot lasers out of your eyes.

Winters turns to him, looks closely...

WINTERS
(figuring it out)
You've got the flat accent and quick patter of an L.A. boy, but with a slight twang; you were born somewhere else, Georgia.
   (Nelson reacts: good guess)
When you're nervous, you touch your chest right there, looks like an oval pendant, I'm guessing a St. Michael's medal. Black Catholic's not so common; neither is black 'Luis'; mom was Hispanic; bet she stuck you in a Catholic school, probably Loyola.
   (then)
You're, what, 30? Incredibly young for RHD -- not as young as I was, but still -- means you're smart and hardworking enough you could be running a hedge fund in your pajamas, but you're making 90 plus bonus
(MORE)
CONTINUED: (2)

WINTERS (CONT'D)
busting bad guys, means there's some personal reason; maybe friend or family hurt by bad guys.
(reads his reaction)
Or... something more personal. You took your mom's religion. Maybe Dad turned to the dark side, young Skywalker joins the Jedi Knights--

NELSON
--It was St. Mary's, not Loyola.
And don't talk about my family.

He says nothing more. Winters smiles.

EXT. OBERMAN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Winters and Nelson are outside Oberman's house in the Valley. Winters is leaning on the doorbell.

WINTERS
No answer. And yet his car's in the garage. My spidey sense tell me he's avoiding us.

Winters moves towards the window. Looks inside.

Winters' POV: There some black smoke coming into the foyer from somewhere in the back of the house...

WINTERS (CONT'D)
There's a fire in there--

Nelson looks in another window.

NELSON
Just something burnt on the stove.

Winters turns and glares at Nelson.

WINTERS
Why would you say that? That smoke gives us exigent circumstances; exigent is a beautiful thing; don't mess with exigent.

INT. OBERMAN'S KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

A foot kicks out a panel on a glass door leading to the backyard. Nelson's hand reaches in and turns the lock open.

The two cops enter, see smoke pouring from a pan on the stove. Nelson turns the stove off as Winters looks around.

(Continued)
Nelson turns. In the corner is Oberman, horribly beaten and bruised, clearly dead.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
Guess he didn't do it.

Off Nelson--

END OF ACT ONE
A half hour after we left off. UNIs and SID TECHS mill about. Throughout the scene, Winters just sits, thinking, while everyone else works. Nelson examines Oberman's bruised corpse--

NELSON
Blunt force trauma, cylindrical object, about 3/4 inch diameter...

WINTERS
Looks like a suicide to me, you cool with that?

Nelson ignores Winters' joke, starts going through Oberman's pockets, checking his wallet, etc., as--

NELSON
Consistent with what killed his partner.

WINTERS
And one half is bigger than one third.

NELSON
It wasn't the partners.

WINTERS
Why not? Because they're just nice, average businessmen?

NELSON
Because of the differences in the crime scenes.

WINTERS
You just said--

NELSON
I said they were killed the same way. But before vic one died, he was tortured. If this was just a simple business grab, all you do is hit the guy over the head and go home.

Winters muses on that good point as Nelson starts searching the room.
So... the killer was more pissed off at vic one.

Vic two was beaten to death; how much more pissed can you get?

WINTERS
(realizes something)
Or... he wasn't more pissed off. He wasn't torturing for fun; he needed something from vic one that he didn't need from vic two.

Like?

The name of vic two.

Somebody hates these guys enough to kill them but doesn't know their names?

Something happened Thursday night. Somehow, they did something bad to someone bad.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
We find out where they were Thursday--

Nelson is now looking through a wastebasket.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
Receipt from Thursday night, 12:31 AM. He bought gas, paid in cash. Right outside Lancaster.

Road trip.

Winters finally gets up.
EXT. LANCASTER -- MINIMART -- NIGHT

Out in the California desert. The Detective car's parked here at a run-down highway minimart.

INT. MINIMART -- NIGHT

The obese CLERK looks at a photo of Oberman--

CLERK
Oh yeah, this dude... I totally remember him, because he was driving a car. And buying gas. I'd never seen anything like it.

NELSON
(lose the attitude)
You do know we're investigating a homicide.

CLERK
Which is why I'll remember you guys. 
(handing back photo)
But I got no idea who this guy is.

WINTERS
Where you keep the security tapes?

The clerk takes a closer look at Winters...

CLERK
...You I'll definitely remember.

Winters smiles.

INT. MINIMART -- BACK ROOM -- NIGHT

Nelson and Winters watch the surveillance video. It shows the four guys driving up in a fancy Porsche SUV.

WINTERS
That's Bartos' car, it was in the driveway at his house.

ON THE VIDEO: Oberman gets out the driver's seat.

NELSON
Why's Oberman driving?

VIDEO: Bartos gets out, too, walks off camera, holding a handkerchief over his eye.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WINTERS
Because Bartos can only see out of one eye.

VIDEO: The other two men wait in the car.

Winters fast forwards the video.

Bartos and Oberman get back in, start to drive away. But Winters hits freeze-frame, points--

WINTERS (CONT'D)
Nasty dent in the fender. That's why we're here.

NELSON
An accident?

WINTERS
Hit someone's car, someone's dog, maybe someone... Dude isn't the hire-a-lawyer type; gets the license, pays someone off at DMV, finds Bartos, tortures him to get the names of his homeboys; actually workboys. Now he's doing them one by one.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM -- DAY (DAY 3)

Winters and Nelson talk to Sklar who's clearly scared out of his mind, desperate.

SKLAR
No one would want to kill any of us. It makes no sense.

WINTERS
Yeah, just another random, senseless act of violence. Against two partners, in two days. Who did you piss off last Thursday?

SKLAR
I told you. Nobody.

WINTERS
You're not a bad guy, I'm sure it wasn't intentional, you just screwed up, you hurt someone and you know what happens to what goes around...

Winters shows Sklar the crime scene photos of the bodies--

(CONTINUED)
20 CONTINUED:

WINTERS (CONT'D)
Your partners -- nice, normal, family guys -- were beaten until their heads cracked open and their brains spilled out. They were pleading and screaming for their lives... And you're next.

Sklar breathes out... He wants to talk... But he doesn't.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
Whatever you're hiding isn't worth that.

SKLAR
I don't know anything.

Nelson clicks on a TV. On the screen is the Lancaster surveillance video, freeze-framed.

NELSON
Tell us about Lancaster.

Sklar's shocked, his demeanor suddenly changes.

SKLAR
...I want a lawyer.

21 INT. PRECINCT HALLWAY -- DAY

Nelson and Winters walk through the squadroom. Winters is pissed.

WINTERS
One question and the guy lawyers up. You got mad skills, Nelson.

NELSON
You weren't getting anything--

WINTERS
Because your brilliant use of the video proved to him all we know is they busted a fender--

NELSON
You were going to show him the video--

WINTERS
When the time was right.

NELSON
When's that?

(CONTINUED)
WINTERS
When I say it is.

She stops Nelson. She's really pissed.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
I'm the D-3, the murder book's in my name.

NELSON
So my job is what? To admire you?

Winters controls herself, but she's still angry--

WINTERS
My first partner, I was a Boot, we got called to this domestic. Some bad character named Jolly Roger was trying to bust into his ex-girlfriend's house.

NELSON
Sorry, at what point of the story did you board the pirate ship?

WINTERS
Yeah, Nelson, that's the point of the story, the guy's funny name.

INT. SOUTH CENTRAL HOUSE -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

Ten years ago. A younger WINTERS and her PARTNER, a veteran, are interviewing a GIRL...

WINTERS (V.O.)
We were interviewing this girl when my partner saw something.

Winters' partner gets a look, starts glancing around, opens a closet door, motions to Winters to come over. But Winters keeps questioning the girl.

WINTERS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
My partner started tossing the place, motioned for help but didn't say why. I wasn't crazy about the guy, he was old-school, I wanted to keep talking to her. So I did.

Suddenly the door leading to an adjoining room bursts open and a large gang member, JOLLY ROGER, shoots the partner twice in the chest. He goes down.

(CONTINUED)
A terrified Winters grabs her nightstick and subdues the suspect in a chokehold, but he pulls a shot off which cuts a long trench into her arm. She grimaces in pain as--

WINTERS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Like I said, I was a Boot. Gets me a dead partner...

INT. PRECINCT HALLWAY -- BACK TO SCENE

There's some emotion on Winters' face. She's rolled up her sleeve, showing a long scar stretching up her forearm.

WINTERS (V.O.)
...And this memento mori.
(then)
I didn't know what he saw; I'll never know. But he was in charge.
(then)
Two of us going in different directions gets us killed. You gonna follow my lead?

Nelson nods. He wasn't expecting this kind of honesty from Winters. They cross into:

INT. SQUADROOM -- CONTINUOUS

They approach the LT; Winters carries some residual anger--

WINTERS
We need 24-hour SIS surveillance on the two surviving partners.

LT. MOLNAR
You think they're the killers?

WINTERS
They'll lead us to the killer.

LT. MOLNAR
Tell them to stay in a hotel, or get some private security. You're not using them as bait.

Winters abruptly turns and walks away. Nelson follows.

NELSON
Where are you going?

WINTERS
You heard the man; they need private security.

(MORE)
INT. NELSON'S CAR - OUTSIDE SKLAR'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Nelson's in his personal car outside Sklar's house. Looking out at an empty street. His phone rings and he answers--

INT. WINTERS' CAR -- OUTSIDE EDWARDS' HOUSE -- INTERCUT

Winters is on her cell, sitting in her Lexus, looking at the empty street.

WINTERS
I'm watching a large man running down the street with a knife dripping something red. You think it's important?

NELSON
Why are you a cop, Winters?

WINTERS
I like puzzles and Will Shortz already had a job.

NELSON
I figured little things like morality and justice had nothing to do with it.

WINTERS
You really talk like that?

NELSON
I'm not ashamed of actually caring about something.

WINTERS
Fine, care, just don't pretend you got it figured out. It's not black and white... er... no offense. It's dark gray versus light gray.

NELSON
Not homicide. Taking a life, that's an offense against God.

WINTERS
So why doesn't He help us solve them?

(CONTINUED)
NELSON
He does. He's helped me many times when I get stuck on a case.

WINTERS
He threaten to slew some perp's first born unless he confessed?

NELSON
(annoyed)
Actually he gave them boils.

WINTERS
(not letting up)
So the half of the murders we don't solve, God wasn't offended by them?

NELSON
Yes, bad things happen; aren't you clever for noticing and not believing in anything.

WINTERS
I believe people are basically dirty. I believe half the people who get killed probably deserved it. And half the people in jail for murder probably had a good excuse.

NELSON
So why did you become a cop?

WINTERS
For the chicks.

Nelson looks out his rear view window.

NELSON
Dammit. There's a guy getting out of a car behind me; thing's been there since I got here. Call you right back.

He hangs up and watches--

27 EXT. STREET NEAR SKLAR'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

But the man (RAYMOND BEAN, 50s, black) isn't headed for Sklar's home; he's headed for Nelson's car. Nelson gets out to intercept--
NELSON
(regular guy)
Had a little car trouble; called triple A--

BEAN
(badges him)
Raymond Bean, Internal Affairs.

Off Nelson--

INT. BEAN'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Nelson and Bean.

BEAN
You've heard the scoop on your new partner?

NELSON
I've heard rumors.

BEAN
The one about having a squad of off-the-books informants? Or the one about thousands missing from a dope dealer she busted?

NELSON
How many cops you know don't get accused of that crap by dealers?

BEAN
How many get accused of that by virtually every dealer they bust? How many drive a Lexus? How many dress like they got the employee discount at Marc Jacobs?

NELSON
She's so dirty, how come you haven't gotten her yet?

BEAN
She's been through three partners the last two years, and I'm still hitting that blue wall. Makes me think maybe she's got something on them... So you can imagine how happy I was to find she got partnered up with an altar boy. I mean, literally, you were an altar boy.

(MORE)
BEAN (CONT'D)
(then)
Dirt tends to spread. You want to
stay clean, call I.A. soon as you
see any.

NELSON
Can I go now?

Bean nods. Nelson exits.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE SKLAR'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Nelson walks towards his car, thoughtful. He opens his phone
to call Winters, but...

He notices a light on in Sklar's house. Wasn't on before.
He walks quickly towards the house and hears a voice from
the back yard:

SKLAR'S WIFE (O.S.)
Charlie! ...Charlie!

Nelson runs, hops the fence, goes into the backyard, into...

EXT. SKLAR'S BACKYARD -- NIGHT

Finds Sklar's WIFE, terrified. Nelson holds up his badge--

NELSON
I'm a cop. It's okay. What happened?

SKLAR'S WIFE
He heard a noise, came down; the
door was open, I don't know where he
went--

NELSON
He didn't go out front--

SKLAR'S WIFE
There's a gate to the alley--

Nelson runs toward the gate--

EXT. ALLEYWAY BEHIND SKLAR'S HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Nelson bursts through the gate into the alleyway.

A half block away is a white van. Beside it, Sklar is on
his hands and knees, a baseball bat still gripped uselessly
in one hand.
A LARGE MAN (it's too dark and too far to get a good look at him) hits Sklar with some sort of metal bar--

NELSON
Police! Stop!

The man sees Nelson and tosses Sklar into the back of the van. He slams the door, runs into the driver's seat.

Nelson runs towards the van, his gun out.

NELSON (CONT'D)
Get out of the--

The van starts up and speeds away before Nelson can catch up. Nelson stops, flips open his cell, dials--

NELSON (CONT'D)
This is Detective Luis Nelson, LAPD. Kidnapping at 1235 Main Street, Valley Village...

Off Nelson, worried he just got someone killed--

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. SKLAR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Winters rushes in to find COLE and HAYES, veteran detectives, supervising the SID Techs as they dust for prints.

WINTERS
Where's Nelson?

COLE
(enjoying this)
Evening, Detective, how's the case going--

WINTERS
(loudly)
No. I'm not going to sleep with you.
(to SID Tech)
Where's Nelson?

SID TECH
Getting reamed by the Lieutenant--

WINTERS
--Where?

SID TECH
They needed privacy.

INT. SKLAR'S HOUSE - SMALL BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Sure enough, the LT is giving Nelson crap. Which is unnecessary since Nelson already feels like crap.

LT. MOLNAR
You ignored my direct orders--

Winters enters as:

NELSON
I'm sorry. I screwed up.

WINTERS
Why are Cole and Hayes here?

NELSON
Because I screwed up.

(Continued)
WINTERS  
(to Molnar)  
You're gonna let them sit on this case, take the ransom call because Nelson screwed up.

LT. MOLNAR  
You both screwed up.

WINTERS  
My guy didn't get kidnapped; I don't deserve to be punished because he screwed--

LT. MOLNAR  
I haven't decided anything.

WINTERS  
You didn't even authorize the surveillance, so actually if we'd had a team, he couldn't have fallen asleep and missed--

NELSON  
I didn't fall asleep.

WINTERS  
My point is it's the Lieutenant's fault. And your fault. Not my fault--

NELSON  
This isn't helping--

WINTERS  
--Which means I should be here waiting for the ransom call, let Cole and Hayes interrogate Edwards, do whatever other crap needs--

LT. MOLNAR  
(makes a decision)  
Cole and Hayes are staying here.

The LT leaves. Nelson turns to Winters--

NELSON  
Beautifully played; you talked him into giving us the crap work.

Winters seems unaffected; she opens the medicine cabinet as--
CONTINUED: (2)

WINTERS
Cole and Hayes are going to sit here waiting for a ransom call that's never going to come--

NELSON
(confused)
Why not?

She's found some dental floss, starts flossing.

WINTERS
Because the guy's already dead--

NELSON
How can you know?

WINTERS
Because I killed him.
(then)
And because there was no ransom for the first two guys.

Off Nelson's look, Winters stops flossing--

WINTERS (CONT'D)
Okay, you feel guilty enough about the kidnapping. I'm sure he's alive and doing fine. But there's not going to be a ransom call because this wasn't a kidnapping; it was a murder you interrupted. I'm gonna haul Edwards in; see you at the squad room.

And Winters leaves. Nelson slowly smiles, impressed.

INT. SKLAR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Nelson exits, smiling. Cole and Hayes approach.

COLE
Tell Winters she can start by following up on the van; it was stolen from Leona Valley outside Lancaster on Saturday--

HAYES
(to Nelson)
--What are you smiling about? You and Winters just got bounced to garbage duty, you should be crying.

(CONTINUED)
NELSON

Yeah... It's just funny how good she is at reading people.

Hayes and Cole exchange a look.

HAYES
(to Cole)
You owe me twenty.

NELSON

What's going on?

HAYES

She 'read' you?
(off Nelson's surprise)
She 'deduce' you were born in Georgia?

Okay, that throws Nelson for a beat.

HAYES (CONT'D)
She tell you anything that's not in your personnel file?

NELSON
(can't believe this)
She's not supposed to have access to--

COLE
(annoyed at losing bet)
Neither are we. Welcome to Robbery-Homicide. And happy birthday last week, by the way.

Stunned, Nelson turns to leave, then turns back--

NELSON

Her first partner, he dead?

COLE
Yeah.

NELSON

He die in the line of duty?

35  EXT. FISHING BOAT OFF THE FLORIDA COAST - FLASHBACK -- DAY

We again see Winters' ex-partner, a little older than when we last saw him. Very much alive. Battling a large fish.

HAYES (V.O.)

Is fishing the line of duty?
CONTINUED:

COLE (V.O.)
I think it counts -- she pissed him off so much he retired to Florida.

Winters' ex-partner clutches his chest and collapses. As friends come to his assistance, we TILT DOWN TO REVEAL the name of the boat... the "Jolly Roger."

INT. SQUAD ROOM -- MORNING (DAY 4)

Nelson pursues Winters toward the interview room.

NELSON
How could you pull my personnel file?

WINTERS
You just go down to records, bring a latte--

NELSON
I knew you'd say that.

WINTERS
You knew the records officer could be bought off with coffee?

NELSON
And I knew you'd say that.

WINTERS
I've been to paradise but I've never been to me.
(off Nelson's look)
No way you knew I'd say that. We got a suspect waiting; can you put away your hurt feelings for a little while--

NELSON
I knew you'd dismiss everything I said with some remark you found incredibly amusing.

WINTERS
Oh, it's amusing. You just can't appreciate it because you're the victim. A story about how my partner didn't die a gruesome, violent death is hardly gonna cow you into listening to me.

Nelson stops Winters.
WINTERS (CONT'D)
I told you not to touch me.

Nelson lets go.

NELSON
How did you cut your arm?

WINTERS
I was on the Serengeti--

NELSON
Stop lying. How did you cut your arm?

Winters gives Nelson a long look.

WINTERS
I was an orphan. My eighth foster father used to drink; a lot, one day--

NELSON
Shut up.

WINTERS
(heading off)
I'll take lead on the interrogation of the last partner.

NELSON
(thoughtful)
...No.

WINTERS
(stops, turns to him)
I don't care how mad you are; you're not doing it; not until you learn how to lie like a grown up.

NELSON
I'm not taking the lead either...

Winters gives Nelson a curious look as he pulls out his cell phone...

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM -- DAY

CLOSE ON Sklar's scared Wife...

SKLAR'S WIFE
...Where's my husband?

REVEAL EDWARDS, extremely nervous, sitting across from Sklar's Wife in the interview room.

(CONTINUED)
He can't make eye contact with her. Nelson and Winters are there, too.

NELSON
Either tell the woman what you're hiding or apologize for letting her husband die.

Nelson grabs Edwards' head, forces him to make eye contact with Sklar's Wife.

NELSON (CONT'D)
Ask him again.

SKLAR'S WIFE
Where's my husband?

Edwards averts his eyes toward Winters.

WINTERS
Yeah, yeah, it's a cheap emotional trick. But as cheap emotional tricks go it's a pretty good one.

Finally, Edwards looks to Sklar's Wife...

EDWARDS
Brian knew about a place up in Lancaster... Strip club, but the girls do... more, you know? We didn't want you to--

WINTERS
That's what you're covering up? You hired some hookers?

EDWARDS
We didn't even make it up there.

INT. BARTOS' CAR - MOVING -- NIGHT -- FLASHBACK

Bartos drives; Sklar sits beside him; Oberman and Edwards are in the back seat. They're all drunk - except for Edwards.

OBERMAN
(a little loud)
Sklar, your wife is so gonna kill you.

EDWARDS
(to camera, not drunk)
It's just a figure of speech.

(CONTINUED)
Yeah, we get it.

Edwards turns back to see Winters sitting between him and Oberman.

EDWARDS
The guy came out of nowhere--

WINTERS
The guy in the white van?

Edwards nods and points ahead. Winters looks out the front of the car as the white van (from Sklar's kidnapping) crosses in front of them. Bartos slams on the breaks as Sklar screams and Oberman braces himself.

Edwards and Winters watch, completely unaffected, as the car skids out of control--

WINTERS (CONT'D)
(calm)
Stop.

The action freezes - the car is mid-skid; possibly going to flip. But Winters and Edwards talk to each other as if they're still in the interview room.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
Get in the front seat.

EDWARDS
What?

WINTERS
Your story is much more believable if you're driving.
(off Edwards' look)
Drunk hit and run is pretty bad, but only if you're the driver--

EDWARDS
We made up a lie to protect--

WINTERS
Who?
(indicates Bartos behind the wheel)
The first dead guy? Soon as he's killed there's no one to protect. Whoever was driving is still alive.

TIGHT ON WINTERS
CONTINUED: (2)

WINTERS (CONT'D)
Put yourself in the front seat.

WIDEN TO REVEAL Edwards and Bartos have switched seats.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
Okay, continue.

The car continues on its skid--

EXT. HIGHWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Bartos' car smashes into the white van, driving it off the road. The van skids to a halt while the car continues onward--

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM -- BACK TO SCENE

EDWARDS
Everybody seemed okay. I mean, Bartos got a black eye and Oberman busted up his hand but the other guy just went off the road, he had to be okay--

SKLAR'S WIFE
(distraught)
Why didn't you call the police?

EDWARDS
We were drunk; we should have; we--

SKLAR'S WIFE
After Adam was killed, you should've--

EDWARDS
We didn't know anything; we didn't get the van's plates, we didn't get a good look at the driver... (it all sounds so lame)
I'm so sorry...

Nelson and Winters consider him for a beat. Nelson looks to Winters; Winters doesn't look back. Finally...

WINTERS
Thank you. You can go home.

Off Nelson--

INT. PRECINCT HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Going away from the interview room, once again Nelson catches up to Winters.

(CONTINUED)
NELSON
He's lying. You don't let your business partner die to cover up a minor traffic accident--

WINTERS
I know.

NELSON
(this is insane)
You know? He described the exact scenario you described yesterday. Cover up for a hit and run.

WINTERS
I buy that the guy they ran off the road would want to kill them. But it seems a bit coincidental that the guy who stole the van from that guy two days later would also want to kill them.

(them)
The van wasn't stolen until Saturday. Edwards took the ingredients we gave him -- broken fender, injuries, angry guy in a van -- and whipped up a delicious new lie.

NELSON
Then we can't let him go.

WINTERS
You think you can get the truth out of him when his partner's widow couldn't?

NELSON
Don't call her that.

WINTERS
He's gonna do one of two things: go after the killer or get killed by the killer. You'll note 'the killer' was in both of those clauses.

And Winters exits. Nelson takes a beat, considers, then follows--

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE
ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

42 EXT. LANCASTER - OUTSIDE STRIP CLUB -- DAY

START ON a small downscale strip club advertising 'Lancaster's Loveliest Ladies'. PULL BACK TO REVEAL--

WINTERS (V.O.)
How bad does a lie have to be that you'd rather die than tell the truth?

Edwards sits in his car parked on a side street. PAN CONTINUES from Edwards' car as:

NELSON (V.O.)
Technically, they'd rather let their friends die than tell the truth.

And we finally ARRIVE AT:

The Detective Car where Winters and Nelson sit and watch at a discreet distance.

WINTERS
More technically, they'd rather let their *partners* die than tell the truth.
(off Nelson's look)
I'm just saying there's a difference.

43 INT. DETECTIVE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

NELSON
How long we gonna--

WINTERS
When are we gonna get there, Mommy?

NELSON
We use the fact he's driven up here, surprise him, we'll break him.

WINTERS
That's just the guilt talking.

Nelson can't wait any more. He opens the door.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
(sighs, hates to do this)
Get back in or I call Internal Affairs.

(CONTINUED)
NELSON

Funny.

He steps out. Winters calls after him:

WINTERS
And I'll say what a stand up guy you are. How you admitted to me they approached you last night. That's serious misconduct.

Nelson's stunned that she knows; gets back in--

NELSON
How--

WINTERS
You hung up on me because a car pulled up; the kidnapping vehicle was a van. Since you wouldn't have told anybody where you went, gotta be somebody who followed you from Parker Center. Means it's either a good guy or a bad guy. Since you didn't mention it in your report, means it's a good guy. Since you didn't use it as an excuse for your screw up, means the good guy ordered you not to talk about it. Only one division does that.

Nelson starts to get out of the car again--

WINTERS (CONT'D)

I said--

NELSON
Edwards is moving.

Winters looks out the front window to see--

EXT. STRIP CLUB PARKING LOT -- DAY

Edwards is indeed out of his car and approaches a lone woman heading towards the club, taking out a set of keys.

WITH WINTERS AND NELSON

Winters quickly gets out of the car - but to stop Nelson.

WINTERS
It's a stripper. You think the killer's a stripper?
Nelson stops but, unlike Winters, he never takes his eyes off Edwards--

NELSON
How do you know she's a--

WINTERS
You've been living in LA too long. Giant boobs, small ass? Doesn't exist in nature--

NELSON
I think he wants information--

WINTERS
So let him get it. Get back in the car.

Nelson starts moving toward Edwards--

WINTERS (CONT'D)
I will call I.A.--

NELSON
--He's got a tire iron.

Nelson starts running.

WITH EDWARDS AND STRIPPER

Edwards is indeed brandishing a tire iron threateningly--

WINTERS
Freeze!

Edwards stops, turns, sees Winters and Nelson charging toward him, guns drawn. He quickly drops the tire iron--

EXT. ALLEY BESIDE STRIP CLUB -- DAY

WIDE SHOT

At the far end of the alley, Nelson grills the Stripper. At the near end, Winters grills Edwards. We can't hear either conversation until--

JUMP FROM CLOSE ON ONE INTERROGATOR/INTERROGATEE TO THE NEXT

EDWARDS
I just needed directions.

STRIPPER
He was just asking for directions.

(CONTINUED)
NELSON
With a tire iron?

EDWARDS
Car trouble.

WINTERS
It's working fine now.

STRIPPER
Did he have a tire iron? I didn't notice.

WIDEN AS Winters approaches Nelson and the Stripper.

WINTERS
It's over; he talked.

STRIPPER
No he didn't.

NELSON
You sure? How do you know this guy so well if he just stopped you for directions?

STRIPPER
I don't. But I know cops.

WINTERS
Well, that's bad for us.

She grabs the Stripper's purse, removes a cell phone, starts pressing buttons.

STRIPPER
You got no grounds to search me.

WINTERS
True.

She looks at the cell's call log, then: Shows her:

WINTERS (CONT'D)
--Who's "Luc"?
   (off her surprise)
You called each other three times Thursday night.

STRIPPER
   (back to unfazed)
I got no idea.
WINTERS
(turns to Nelson)
Who here doesn't know cops?

TIME CUT TO:

Winters and Nelson approach Edwards.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
It's over. She told us about Luc.

Edwards looks from Winters to Nelson, scared, busted--

EDWARDS
It was her idea. We just came there for the sex, none of this would have happened if she hadn't told us Luc could get us coke--

EXT. STRIP CLUB PARKING LOT -- NIGHT -- FLASHBACK

It's where we just were. But now it's night. And Bartos' car sits in the parking lot. The four partners are sitting on the hood, snorting coke off of a briefcase.

BARTOS
Good stuff, huh?

EDWARDS
I don't feel anything.

BARTOS
(giggling)
No, it's good.

EDWARDS
It's crap; you're high because you're drunk and scared. You've been snorting baby powder. Son of a bitch ripped us off.

AT THE MOUTH OF THE NEARBY ALLEY - our Detectives watch this flashback unfold right in front of them. Edwards is magically both in front of them and with them in the alley.

NELSON
Stop lying.

EDWARDS
I'm not lying--

WINTERS
At least tell a lie we might believe.

(CONTINUED)
BACK WITH THE FLASHBACK

Same as we just saw but different speakers.

EDWARDS
Good stuff, huh?

BARTOS
I don't feel anything.

EDWARDS
(giggling)
No, it's good.

BARTOS
It's crap; you're high because you're drunk and scared. You've been snorting baby powder.
(see something, starts walking)
Son of a bitch ripped us off.

We see what he sees. A big guy, LUC, has left the bar and is headed for his car. The others reluctantly follow Bartos toward--

LUC
Good night gentlemen. Pleasure doing business with you.

BARTOS
We want our money back.

LUC
Caveat losers.

BARTOS
There's four of us--

EDWARDS
Come on, Bartos, it's just a couple hundred--

BARTOS
Our money!

SKLAR
He could have a gun.

BARTOS
(to Luc)
You got a gun?
LUC
Yeah.

BARTOS
Show us the gun.
(no response so he yells)
Show us the gun or show us our money.

Luc slowly reaches into his pocket...

EDWARDS
This is stupid. Bartos, we gotta--

And Luc pulls out... Nothing.

LUC
No gun. And no money. Go back to the city; cheap lesson: just because you're wearing a suit, doesn't mean you're not a loser.

Oberman slugs Luc (hence his broken hand.) Luc punches back, connects with Bartos (hence his busted lip).

Luc fights back but there are four of them and they're tougher than you'd expect. Luc is quickly down and out. They kick him a couple more times, then Sklar searches Luc's pockets, pulls out a wallet with a few thousand dollars--

SKLAR
There's over three grand here.

EDWARDS
(scared)
Take our two hundred and let's get out of here.

BARTOS
Take it all.

Sklar grabs the money; Bartos spits on Luc.

BARTOS (CONT'D)
Cheap lesson: don't underestimate people in suits.

And they head for their car as Luc tries to get up.

They all scramble into the car, peel out, hitting the fender on a street sign as they go--
EXT. ALLEY BESIDE STRIP CLUB - BACK TO SCENE

Winters is talking to Edwards; Nelson's on his phone, writing something down.

WINTERS
What exactly was your plan coming up here? Kick his ass again?

EDWARDS
I was gonna buy him off--

NELSON
Before or after he killed you?

Nelson flips the phone closed; doesn't look happy.

NELSON (CONT'D)
Lancaster Sheriff's got a hit on a Luc McGinley, did time in Lompoc for assault and narcotics trafficking.

WINTERS
Where's he live?

NELSON
That's the problem. Violated his probation, no forwarding. I got a couple of known associates--

Winters grabs a sheet that Nelson was writing on.

WINTERS
Phil McGinley -- that his brother?

NELSON
Yeah. Went up on the same drug beef as Luc--

WINTERS
Lives in Leona Valley, that's where the white van was stolen from.

EXT. PHIL MCGINLEY'S HOUSE -- DAY

Winters and Nelson are in bulletproof vests, guns out. Two SHERIFF DEPUTIES with them also have guns out. Winters is at the front door, standing to the side, ringing the doorbell, taking in the home, the yard, the driveway.

WINTERS
You know what would be nice? A big rock.

(CONTINUED)
NELSON
You gonna break in?

WINTERS
Only if they don't open when I say it's pizza delivery.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY
You got no grounds for a search.

WINTERS
(to Nelson)
I told you not to call the locals. I think I smell smoke--

NELSON
He's right. This is the brother's place; we got no evidence he's involved at all; no evidence that Sklar is here--

WINTERS
Fine.

She turns and walks off the porch, towards her car. Surprised, Nelson follows--

NELSON
What's going on?

WINTERS
Look at the driveway.

There's a discolored spot - silver.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
You think we might have enough probable cause to bust into a van that matches the one you saw at the kidnapping scene except it's been freshly painted silver?

Nelson sees that Winters is walking directly toward just that, parked across the road.

INT. VAN -- DAY

BLACK

The rear doors get pried suddenly and violently open REVEALING--

Nelson and Winters stand side by side, guns drawn, pointed straight ahead; the two local cops behind them--
CONTINUED:

Beat. Then they lower their weapons almost as one and hurry forward.

REVERSE TO REVEAL - Sklar lying bound on the floor of the van in a pool of his own blood; his head cracked open, a bloody tire iron next to him.

Nelson rushes to the body. Feels for a pulse--

NELSON
He's alive.

He's unbelievably relieved.

EXT. PHIL MCGINLEY'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

A number of police cars, an ambulance and plenty of local looky loos have gathered. Paramedics work to stabilize Sklar. But Winters is right over their shoulder, looking around the inside of the van, making it awkward.

WINTERS
How long is this gonna take?

PARAMEDIC
(annoyed)
You mean to keep him alive?

WINTERS
I'm just saying this place is the home of a murderer and at some point he's going to come home and it'd really help if you guys weren't here.

PARAMEDIC
(calling out)
Can we get security here?

WINTERS
(not moving)
It's okay, I'm a cop.

AT THE DETECTIVE CAR

Nelson stands by the car with Edwards, who is nervous. Winters approaches.

NELSON
Is he gonna be okay?

WINTERS
They still don't have him stabilized. You think there's anything we can do about the crowd?

(CONTINUED)
NELSON
(no point)
You think Luc will come back if there's no one here except for the ambulance and police cars?

Edwards suddenly gets a very brief scared look.

WINTERS
What's wrong?

EDWARDS
Nothing.

Winters follows where his gaze went – into the crowd.

NELSON
Did you see Luc?

EDWARDS
Thought I did, I was wrong.

Winters and Nelson scan the crowd. Too many people to get a good look.

Winters starts walking in the general direction in which Edwards was looking.

NELSON
You see something?

WINTERS
No.

NELSON
Then what are you doing?

WINTERS
Seeing who runs.

She starts to quicken her pace. After a couple of steps-- A guy takes off and starts sprinting away. It's Luc-- Winters pursues. Nelson pursues Winters.

NELSON
(to Uni re Edwards)
Watch him.

They bust through the crowd in pursuit.

(CONTINUED)
NELSON (CONT'D)
(as they run)
Why would he lie?

WINTERS
I don't know; but I bet Luc does.

NELSON
Freeze!

Their prey dashes around a corner; as they follow--

WINTERS
Did you think that was gonna work?

And with that, Luc dashes across a street and gets hit by a car.

Nelson and Winters stop, stunned--

WINTERS (CONT'D)
Man, Nelson, you're right about God helping you out on cases.

Guns drawn, they cautiously approach his prone body--

DRIVER
He came out of nowhere--

NELSON
Get back in the car.

Winters still holding the gun, checks the body for a pulse.

DRIVER
(from car)
Should I call 911?

WINTERS
...No hurry. He's dead.

Winters and Nelson exchange a look - they've still got some strange unanswered questions and we--

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR
ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. DETECTIVE CAR - OUTSIDE MCGINLEY'S HOME -- NIGHT

A few hours have passed. Edwards sits alone in the back of the car. Waiting. Nervous. After a few beats, Nelson and Winters get into the back seat, on opposite sides of him. (Winters carries a plastic evidence bag.)

WINTERS
Stop lying.

EDWARDS
I haven't said anything.

WINTERS
I was referring to everything you've said to us. Ever.
(off his silence)
Why did you pretend you didn't see Luc in the crowd?

Edwards doesn't answer. Nelson turns to Winters, a little impatient.

NELSON
Just tell him what we found out.


NELSON (CONT'D)
All your partners were beaten with this.

Winters shows Edwards a plastic bag containing a bloody tire iron (the one Winters found with Phil.)

NELSON (CONT'D)
It's a tire iron, from a Porsche. Weird weapon of choice.

EDWARDS (getting anxious)
I don't know why he'd do that. Why are we here, why aren't you out finding Luc's brother?

NELSON (to Winters)
Just tell him.

(CONTINUED)
EDWARDS
Tell me what?

Winters ignores Nelson.

WINTERS
When you threatened that stripper, you also used a tire iron. Seems like your weapon of choice.

EDWARDS
(thrown)
You think I killed my partners? That's crazy; I have an alibi...

WINTERS
I'm saying the killer was telling us something; telling you something--

Nelson can't stand idly by any longer--

NELSON
--We just got back from the hospital.

WINTERS
(pissed)
Nelson--

NELSON
(to Edwards)
My partner thinks lying to you will get a confession; I think she's wrong--

WINTERS
(seething)
--It's not your call; you're supposed to be following my lead--

EDWARDS
(surprised)
Is Charlie okay?

WINTERS
(to Nelson)
Can we talk outside?

NELSON
No.
(to Edwards)
Your partner's in bad shape but he's alive. And awake... And angry.
Nelson talks to Sklar. Sklar's head is bandaged, he's woozy. But growing angry...

NELSON (V.O.)
I told him you fed us that lie about the hit and run while he was getting beaten half to death and his wife was begging for your help.
(then)
He gave us a different story.

INT. STRIP CLUB - BACK ROOM -- NIGHT -- FLASHBACK

The four partners are buying drugs from Luc while Luc's brother PHIL (much smaller than Luc) looks on.

NELSON (V.O.)
He says Luc's brother was there that night.

EXT. STRIP CLUB PARKING LOT -- NIGHT -- REVISED FLASHBACK

The fight we saw before but it's not with Luc - it's with his little brother, Phil. Oberman pushes Phil; Phil pushes back, harder.

NELSON (V.O.)
It wasn't Luc you were fighting with. It was Phil. And you didn't just fight with him; you killed him...

Edwards runs up behind Phil and smashes him in the head with a tire iron. Phil falls. Edwards hits him over and over.

NELSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
With the tire iron you took out of your friend's car. Luc's been getting revenge.

INT. DETECTIVE CAR -- BACK TO SCENE

Edwards is wavering.

EDWARDS
Charlie's lying, he's angry. I'm not a criminal--

NELSON
I know you're not. Which is why I'm being honest with you. Now you be honest with me, make this right.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Edwards pauses, agonized...

    EDWARDS
    It was self-defense.

    WINTERS
    (annoyed, angry)
    Here we go. What did you expect him
to say, Nelson? You handed him all
we know, he's gonna take it and use
it--

    EDWARDS
    (devastated)
    --No. It's true.

EXT. STRIP CLUB PARKING LOT -- NIGHT -- REVISED FLASHBACK

Phil's got Oberman in a chokehold. Sklar and Bartos are
both trying to pry his arm away, but Phil's got him good.

    BARTOS
    Get off him! You're killing him!

Edwards gets out of Bartos' car. Bartos pops the trunk.

Oberman can't breathe. Edwards comes up, scared, carrying
the tire iron.

    EDWARDS
    Let him go!

Phil doesn't. Edwards swings at Luc's head.

A horrible crack.

Phil lets go and falls to the ground. Oberman coughs, chokes,
finally breathes. But Luc just lies there.

The men are terrified.

    SKLAR
    Oh geez... Oh, God... What'd you do?

Bartos feels Phil's neck.

    BARTOS
    I don't think... No pulse...

He gets up, backs away from the body. The four friends look
down at the man they just killed, the enormity hitting them.
Sklar leans over and throws up.

(CONTINUED)
Oberman sees the open trunk of Bartos' car. Makes a decision. He leans over and picks up Phil's body.

EDWARDS
What are you doing? Leave him there.

OBERMAN
With our prints? Our DNA? You want your life to be over?

BARTOS
There's a blanket in the trunk.

Bartos takes the blanket in the trunk, spreads it out and Oberman dumps the body on it. The other men help as they roll it up.

As they're about to close the trunk, they hear--

LUC (O.S.)
Hey!

Luc, stunned, is outside the club.

Edwards tosses the jack towards the trunk but it bounces off and hits the ground. The men jump in the car.

Luc rushes at them. Just as he's about to get to their car, they speed off, hitting a street sign and damaging the fender.

EXT. HIGH DESERT -- NIGHT

The four men finish burying the body in a shallow grave that they've dug with their hands. They're tired, dirty, cold. Sklar's crying.

SKLAR
He's gonna call the cops--

OBERMAN
He doesn't know who we are. And there's no body. No body; no crime.
(off their fear)
We're gonna be okay. We stick together, we're getting through this.

Oberman puts his arm around Sklar's shoulders. Off the four friends...

EXT. OUTSIDE PHIL'S HOUSE -- DAWN (DAY 5)

A few minutes later. At the Detective Car, Edwards finishes writing down a statement on a legal pad, dried tears on his face. Nelson takes it.

(Continued)
NELSON

Thank you.


EDWARDS
Tell Sklar I'm sorry.

WINTERS
Can't do that. He's dead. He never came out of the coma.

Edwards, shocked, turns to Nelson, realizing the cops didn't talk to Sklar at all.

EDWARDS
You lied to me?

NELSON
Yeah... Sorry.

Nelson leaves. And Off Edwards, bluffed into a confession, his life over--

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INT. DINER -- MORNING

Winters and Nelson are relaxed, sitting in a booth, eating pie.

WINTERS
Well done. That was fun.

NELSON
No, it wasn't.

WINTERS
You feel bad about lying?

NELSON
I feel bad that Sklar's dead. I feel bad there wasn't one decent person on this case--

WINTERS
No damsels to rescue? It's the real world, Nelson. Even the good guys have a little dirt on them.

NELSON
You?

WINTERS
Shocking, I know.

(CONTINUED)
NELSON
I'm not asking about a smudge here
or there. I'm asking... Are you
dirty?

A pause. Nelson means this seriously.

NELSON (CONT'D)
No wire; I just need to know the
truth.

WINTERS
You gonna quit if I say yes?

NELSON
I can handle you jerking me around,
pulling files, lying to secretaries.
But if you're corrupt, I'm putting
in for a new partner.

WINTERS
In that case, I'm clean.

Nelson thinks, considers, chuckles.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
You don't believe me?

NELSON
You've been screwing with me since
the moment we got teamed up--

WINTERS
Trying to make you a better cop.

NELSON
No. You've been trying to make me
quit. Now I give you a chance, an
easy out, no real confession, just a
'yes' and you're done with me, but
you don't. Why?

Winters takes a beat, then comes clean...

WINTERS
I had three partners the last two
years. They were dirty. I knew
they were dirty. I had proof they
were dirty... Which was good. Meant
I could trust them.

(then)
But the problem with blackmailing
your partners is the relationship is
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
WINTERS (CONT'D)

inherently unstable. Which is why
I've had three partners in two years.
They find a way to quit. I'm thinking
maybe I was wrong. Maybe I'm better
off with someone who asks me stupid
questions like 'are you dirty?' and
believes in truth, justice and apple
pie and isn't ashamed of it...
(then)
I'm keeping you because I trust you.

Nelson takes a beat with that, then...

WINTERS (CONT'D)

You're paying for the pie; I've got
to go; got a date.

And Winters gets up and leaves. Off Nelson, considering.

EXT. DINER -- MOMENTS LATER

Nelson exits and heads for his nearby car. Gets in...

INT. NELSON'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

REVEAL BEAN, waiting for Nelson in the back seat. Nelson
doesn't look at him.

NELSON
Nothing yet.

Bean nods, moves to exit--

BEAN
See you.

NELSON
Yeah.

And Bean leaves. Off Nelson's uncertainty, we--

INT. WINTERS' APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Half-dressed, Winters gets ready for a date; debating between
two blouses. Her sister is with her, watching TV.

SARAH
He forgot our anniversary.

WINTERS
(not shocked)
I'm shocked.

(MORE)

(continuing)
WINTERS (CONT'D)
(then)
Which top should I go with?

SARAH
The one on the left.

WINTERS
You're not even looking.

SARAH
Because it doesn't matter. Normal people don't judge each other based on whether their coats have belts.

WINTERS
The world would be a better looking place if they did.

SARAH
How's it going with the partner?

WINTERS
He asks too many personal questions.

SARAH
You answer any of them?

WINTERS
All of them.

SARAH
Any truthfully?

WINTERS
You're annoying.

SARAH
It's genetic. You tell him our background?

WINTERS
Why should I?

SARAH
Because you're a bitch and he might cut you some slack if he knew why.

WINTERS
He shouldn't.

SARAH
I know.

(CONTINUED)
Winters starts putting on the blouse on the left and...

WINTERS
(quietly)
I told him we were raised in foster homes, all that stuff.

Surprised, Sarah stops watching TV, looks to her sister. This is huge.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
He didn't believe me.

SARAH
(beat, then sadly)
Girl who cried wolf.

She goes back to watching TV.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Undo another button, your date won't even know what color it is.

Winters undoes a button and heads for the door--

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FIVE