

The Inside  
"Point of Origin"  
by  
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Current Revisions by  
(Current Writer, date)

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Address  
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[THE INSIDE]

"Point of Origin"

TEASER

1 VISUAL SEQUENCE - "INSIDE" LOS ANGELES 1

Imagine a Thomas Guide being electrocuted. We SURGE through the grid of the urban sprawl, over a black void of mountains and into the brighter void of the VALLEY...

2 EXT. BURNED OUT RESTAURANT - DAY 2

DANNY and PAUL exit Danny's car, walk past a TV REPORTER doing a stand up with a camera crew, and FIRE CREWS putting out the last of the STILL SMOLDERING REMAINS of...

SUPER: "FATTORE'S, Woodland Hills, Sunday, 3:42 pm"

PAUL

Fattore's. Think Karen and I ate here once. Like two years ago.

DANNY

Was it a hot spot, then?

PAUL

It's Sunday, Danny.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. BURNED OUT RESTAURANT - REBECCA'S CAR 3

Pulls up to the caution tape that reads "FIRE LINE - DO NOT CROSS." REBECCA steps out, and slowly takes in the devastation, flashing lights playing across her face. Though usually detached around dead bodies, something about the corpse of this building chills her.

DANNY (O.C.)

Locke.

She snaps out of her reverie as Paul and Danny walk by.

REBECCA

What's going on?

PAUL

Just got here.

(CONTINUED)

Rebecca hurries to join them. They make their way up to WEB, who's talking to the FIRE MARSHAL, and MEL, taking digital stills of the wreckage from the fire line. She turns, grins.

MEL

(checks her watch)

Glad you guys could make it.

DANNY

We don't live in the Valley on  
*purpose*, Mel.

WEB

Team, this is Fire Marshal Pierni.  
We were just discussing scenarios.  
(after greeting nods)  
Sim, catch them up.

MEL

(gestures to restaurant)

Welcome to the seventh unexplained  
property fire in L.A. County in the  
last three months.

WEB

Fire Marshal Pierni suspects a  
serial arsonist. We've been asked  
to see if we can link the incidents  
and develop a suspect profile.

FIRE MARSHAL PIERNI

I know arson's not the sexiest  
crime to you guys, but we  
appreciate the assist. It's a  
bitch to solve.

REBECCA

Fire destroys all the evidence.

Web glances to her; she didn't address that to anyone in particular, just stares at the burn site.

FIRE MARSHAL PIERNI

Most of it, anyway. 'Scuse me...

Pierni steps away to talk to a beckoning FIREFIGHTER.  
Mel holds out the digital camera to Danny.

MEL

Here. Carter wants some stills  
independent of the ERT guys. Char  
patterns with structural context.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

And...

MEL

And I brought the wrong shoes.

Danny looks down at her shoes, then his, then the burn site.

DANNY

These are Italian.

WEB

Rebecca. Your shoes look ready.

REBECCA

(unsure)

Sure...

She takes the camera and a flashlight from Mel, then hesitates before lifting the tape and stepping under. Her shoes sink into the ash.

Danny and Mel look at each other. Then follow under. Paul looks at Web, something not sitting right. He crosses to the Fire Marshal, who's now finished giving orders.

PAUL

The majority of these torch jobs are insurance scams, right?

FIRE MARSHAL PIERNI

On average, we'd say seven out of ten are owed to insurance fraud, yes.

PAUL

And the other three?

FIRE MARSHAL PIERNI

Bad luck. Or human stupidity.

Paul nods, suspicion confirmed.

Rebecca steps through the wreckage, separated from the others. She steels herself, snaps a photo of the blackened kitchen, and steps in.

CLOSE - REBECCA as she takes another step into the kitchen. Something about this place... her breath is coming shorter. She's feeling claustrophobic.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

She raises the camera. A FLAPPING at her shoulder, a WHISPERED VOICE, panning past. She turns. Nothing there. Just the CRACKLE of a still hot "cold" fire scene. She raises the camera again --

REBECCA'S POV through the viewfinder. Finding focus on some debris, the focus throwing from the foreground to the deeper background. And once it does... A BLURRY FIGURE of a MAN moves RIGHT PAST THE LENS.

REBECCA Gasps. Lowers the camera. THE ENTIRE ROOM IS ON FIRE. Tongues of FLAME licking up the walls. But even more terrifying... at her shoulder and OUT OF FOCUS a DARK FIGURE flailing in an insect and nightmarish way. Is it coming at her, she can't run, she can't scream, she can't turn to face it.

5 EXT. BURNED OUT RESTAURANT - SAME TIME

5

Paul approaches Web, Fire Marshal Pierni in the background.

WEB

He answer your questions?

PAUL

All but one.

(beat)

Why are we really here, Web?

Before Web can answer, we hear Rebecca's SCREAM. Her team members rush toward the sound--

A6 INT. BURNED OUT RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

A6

Danny gets there first, the others close behind. Rebecca stands frozen, gasping--

DANNY

What happened? What's wrong?

Behind her, we can clearly see THERE IS/WAS NO FIRE. Before heading to help, Paul shoots a cynical look to Web.

PAUL

Never mind.

OFF REBECCA, fear and confusion on her face...

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

6 INT. DUGAN'S - NEXT DAY

6

Morning. Paul enters, spots Mel and Danny at a table, heads over. Danny is flirting with the WAITRESS filling his cup.

DANNY

...under Hoover, agents weren't even allowed to drink coffee in the office. Went against the super vigilant G-Man image.

MEL

Also they couldn't ask why the Director wore garter belts.

DANNY

Anyway, rule changed, tradition remains. So now we got machines, but the coffee sucks...

PAUL

...which is why we come here.  
(sitting down)  
Hey Julie. Just a coffee.

She smirks and moves off. Danny glares at the interruption. Paul is oblivious, rushed. Mel smiles.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Glad I caught you guys before we went in. You gonna eat that toast?

DANNY

I am now.

PAUL

So I did some checking on the story behind our new case. Guess what? Fire Chief never asked for an FBI assist on this. Web volunteered.  
(off their blank looks)  
He lied to us.

DANNY

(to Mel)  
Is he suggesting our fearless leader has an agenda?

MEL

Don't be silly. Web never has an agenda. Web is love.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

Yeah, it was real sweet what happened to Rebecca out there.

MEL

Are you talking about your poor defenseless sparrow with the broken wing, again?

PAUL

No, I'm talking about Virgil Webster's new toy. A toy he *hasn't* found all the buttons to, yet.

DANNY

You sure you're not the one who wants to know where her buttons are?

PAUL

This isn't about her. It's about Web. He knows something about one of us that we don't -- and that's not healthy, for any of us.

They all go quiet as Julie delivers coffee. As she leaves...

PAUL (CONT'D)

All I'm saying is we should do a little behind-the-scenes digging... find out what he's got on her.

DANNY

Nope. Not hearing this. Not getting involved.

Danny shakes his head, throws cash on the table.

PAUL

You scared?

DANNY

Hell no. But when blondie finds out you two went diggin' in her bone pile, I'll be there, arms all full o' comfort. See ya.

Danny leaves. Paul watches him go; Mel watches Paul.

MEL

I think maybe he's right. Well, half right.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (2)

6

MEL (CONT'D)

You are looking for the buttons.  
Not Rebecca's -- Web's.

(then)

Paul, has it occurred to you he  
wants us to pursue this case  
because it's legit?

PAUL

The case is legit. His motives...  
I don't buy it. Something happened  
with Rebecca back at that burn  
site. Web knows what it was. And  
now I want to know, too...

7 INT. V.C.U. - WEB'S OFFICE - DAY

7

Rebecca sits across from Web like she's under a microscope.

WEB

What happened back at that burn  
site, Rebecca?

His demeanor suggests he may already know the answer to that  
question and may be trying to get her to catch up with him...

REBECCA

I'm... I'm not sure.

WEB

You screamed.

REBECCA

Yes...

WEB

You saw something?

REBECCA

(too quickly)

No.

WEB

Then your reaction... was in  
response to nothing at all?

Rebecca feels trapped.

REBECCA

I... felt like I was suffocating.  
The smell...

(CONTINUED)

WEB

The olfactory sense is the one most closely associated with memory. Any combination of smells might transport one back to some other time, some other place.

REBECCA

I wasn't transported. I just... I couldn't breath.

WEB

I see. Alright. I think I'll have you sit this one out.

REBECCA

No.

(off his look)

I mean, I don't feel that's necessary, sir.

(beat)

I promise, it won't happen again.

WEB

What won't?

REBECCA

My behavior... was unprofessional. If you allow me, I'm confident I can deliver a suspect profile.

(beat)

Maybe I should work here with Carter, on the forensics end...

WEB

No.

Rebecca falls silent, feeling knocked. Then...

WEB (CONT'D)

If you're going to stay with this, you have to stay all the way.

She looks up. Nods. Determined not to screw this up.

REBECCA

Where do you want me?

WEB

I want you to go back.

(CONTINUED)

OFF Rebecca, not wanting to hear that... TINNY SCREAMS PRE-LAP us to:

8 INT. V.C.U. - TECH ROOM - DAY 8

A COMPUTER SCREEN where computer generated FIRE RAVAGES a 3D model of the restaurant. The SCREAMS are coming from there.

CARTER AND DANNY sit before the monitor with the fire-modeling program in action.

CARTER  
Based on extent of fire damage, we know the flames had to have reached this level of intensity.

DANNY  
Who's that screaming supposed to be? The building was empty.

CARTER  
I know. I just added that. Should I take it out?

DANNY  
No.

CARTER  
Cool. Alright. So factoring in known variables; room dimensions, fuel load, initial ventilation -- and working backwards...

The computer-generated fire goes in reverse, shrinking until it's just a pinprick on the side of a wall near a window.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
...we get our suspected point of origin.

Paul and Mel, just back from Dugan's, are entering from the main corridor door directly into the tech room.

PAUL  
Which matches our other seven --

CARTER  
How'd you know?

MEL  
He thinks Web set them all. Did I hear screaming?

(CONTINUED)

Paul gives her a smirk. Now Web enters followed by a CLERK with a tub of VIDEOS and DVDS.

WEB

Danny. Mel. I've requested all media coverage, including crowd photos.

DANNY

Bystander inventory?

WEB

Let's see if we can find a repeat spectator.

(then)

Paul. There're three boxes from LAFD arson waiting by your desk. Narrative statements and evidence reports -- review them and chart similarities.

PAUL

Sounds like a party.

WEB

We'll reconvene in three.

Web turns to head back to his office...

PAUL

Where's Rebecca?

WEB

Working the case.

He exits into his office and closes the door.

PAUL

Well -- this ought to keep us busy while he has her doing whatever...

Rebecca's parked outside the burn site. Looking at it through her windshield. Bare-bones TEAR-DOWN CREW and a couple of ARSON INVESTIGATORS still on the scene.

We wonder how long she's been sitting here. She takes a deep breath. Okay. Enough bullshit. She opens the door.

10 EXT. BURNED OUT RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER 10

Rebecca moves through the activity, observing. She's serious. Focused.

TEAR-DOWN WORKER  
Hey, you can't go in there.

She shows her badge.

REBECCA  
F.B.I., on assist to Fire Marshal  
Pierni...

TEAR-DOWN WORKER  
Yeah, well, whatever-- just-- stay  
outta the way. We're taking down  
the compromised beams.

Rebecca nods. We MOVE WITH REBECCA through the men and women in hard hats, past the axes and the water hoses...

11 INT. BURNED OUT RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS 11

Rebecca forces herself onward. Moving through the rubble, back toward the blackened kitchen, where last she freaked.

Her breath is coming shorter now. It's not the crime scene that's got her spooked, but the potential of her mind going back to the freakish place it took her last time.

WHISPERS. The SOUNDS of something SCURRIES PAST. She stops, turns, doesn't want to, but looks anyway. Nothing there -- she faces forward again: THWAP-THWAP-THWAP... a DARK FIGURE vibrates out of view. Up ahead, where she's headed. Corner of her eye kind of thing. She hates this, screws up her courage, moves on...

REBECCA comes around a corner, into the kitchen. A couple workers are here, beginning to clear the floor. Rebecca feels glad for their presence... and then insecure again as they exit hauling some debris.

She remains, rooted to one spot, and slowly looks around. Metal pots, rusted from the fire's oxidation. Cinder heaps that used to be chairs. A charred statue of the Virgin Mary.

And then something catches her eye...

...on a stove top, the melted rubber outline of a footprint, what's left of a shoe. Rebecca moves to it... her gaze drifts directly above to...

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

...ventilation grates in the ceiling. One of them, in a direct line from the stove top, is askew. She looks around, finds a length of pipe or wood. She stabs at the grate with it. And suddenly: the METAL GRATE collapses!

Rebecca backs up, trips, and then ROLLS out of the way as it comes crashing down, creating a dust cloud. Firefighters run in and STOP SHORT as Rebecca rises from the ash, now covering her suit. She sees what they see:

A HORRIBLY CHARRED CORPSE has fallen from the ceiling. Arms frozen in place, Pompeii-style. It almost seems to be grinning with its lipless teeth. Empty, exploded eye sockets stare at a stunned Rebecca...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

12 INT. V.C.U. - BULLPEN - DAY

12

Paul pins a photo of a GOOD LOOKING HISPANIC MALE up on the death board, next to another photo of the charred body Rebecca discovered. Same guy, different look. The team is assembled. Including Web.

PAUL

He was Javier Tobias, 23, busboy. Fellow employees said he worked double shifts, sometimes he slept at the restaurant. Owner denies knowledge of this.

As Web studies the photos, Paul studies Web and continues:

DANNY

From what we can make, looks like he couldn't get out the door, tried to escape through the vent system.

WEB

Roasted alive before the flames ever got there.

PAUL

Fire Marshal Pierni actually had him as a possible suspect -- since he'd been missing up until about an hour ago. He was pretty sure he'd mentioned that to you.

This is clearly news to Rebecca, who reacts to it, looks toward Web who belies nothing.

WEB

Was he? Well, you can tell Fire Marshal Pierni we've now ruled out Mr. Tobias as a suspect. Unless you have reason to believe he set the fire himself and got caught in it?

PAUL

No.

Paul and Web hold the look. Web to Rebecca:

WEB

So who are we looking for, Special Agent Locke?

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

She gathers herself. Doesn't want to seem rattled by events.

REBECCA

Nobody.

(then)

At least... that's how most arsonists see themselves. And our UNSUB's no different... it's what he's desperately trying to change. He feels powerless to control his environment. And when he feels powerless, he starts a fire. It's the only thing he can control.

MEL

But he can't control it -- Javier Tobias is proof of that.

REBECCA

No. Javier Tobias will only be proof that his power has grown... That he's starting to become someone. The simultaneous acts of creation and destruction provide him with a sense of importance, an importance he lacks in his everyday life...

13 INT. VOLTA ELECTRONICS - SHOWROOM

13

We see LOUIS SALT, a little man around 30, in a starched short-sleeved oxford shirt with a collar that's too big for him, JC Penney tie. He's looking at a display of satellite TV systems that are arranged on shelves near a wall of TVs, all tuned to different channels. It's daytime, and the TV sets are showing soap operas, chat shows, cartoons, the local noon news. Glancing around, Louis looks for sales help. A VOLTA EMPLOYEE, recognizable as such from his distinctive blue shirt and name-badge, passes nearby, moving fast.

LOUIS

Um... could you--

But the guy is gone. Louis looks for more help. He spots a man, DAVID SARKESIAN, standing at one of those pay stations scattered throughout the store. Sarkesian has a name-badge, but a white shirt -- he's a manager. Sarkesian is finishing up some instructions to a BLUE SHIRT, as Louis approaches.

(CONTINUED)

SARKESIAN  
(to blue shirt as he goes)  
...and check if Dennis needs help  
in cameras.

(CONTINUED)

Blue shirt nods and moves off. Sarkesian goes back to flipping through receipts, still not seeing Louis.

LOUIS  
Hi. 'Scuse me? Hello?

SARKESIAN  
Oh, I'm sorry, Sir. Didn't notice you there. What can I do for you?

LOUIS  
I wanna buy a satellite TV system. The most expensive one. That one on the end.

SARKESIAN  
That's a very good unit, but I have to tell you --

LOUIS  
Does it let you record all the news channels at once?

SARKESIAN  
Um... yes. But we do have another one that offers a little better value. It's got the same features but it comes with a rebate that makes it--

LOUIS  
No. I want the good one. It's for my girlfriend. Anniversary present. I want Rosie to know I got the best.

Fishing for his wallet.

LOUIS (CONT'D)  
You can put it on this.

He hands a credit card to Sarkesian.

SARKESIAN  
Fine. Now, we offer an extended warranty--

LOUIS  
Yes. Absolutely. The best.

Both pleased by the easy sale, and having lost all respect for Louis, Sarkesian starts ringing up the sale, as...

(CONTINUED)

MOVING WITH LOUIS as he wanders back to the system, admiring that it has a bigger price tag than any of the others. Then his eye is caught by one of the display TV sets. The one showing the news -- perhaps the annoying new kind where the anchors are standing up. A FEMALE ANCHOR stands next to a flaming graphic that reads "SOUTHLAND ARSON."

ANCHOR (ON TV)  
This was the scene early Sunday morning, when a four-alarm fire ripped through Fattore's Restaurant in Woodland Hills.

The TV'S SCREEN FILLS WITH FOOTAGE FROM THE FIRE SCENE: Flames, fire trucks, fire fighters running with hoses.

ANCHOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
It was initially thought that no one was injured in the fire, but crews were later shocked to find a body in the wreckage.

ON TELEVISION: The burned out restaurant as the COVERED BODY of Javier Tobias is wheeled out by coroners.

ANCHOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The victim is being identified now as Javier Tobias, 23, who worked in the establishment as a dishwasher and busboy...

The IMAGE CUTS TO SOBBING FAMILY and CO-WORKERS.

ON LOUIS, spellbound, riveted. As the AMBIENT SOUNDS of the store DROP OUT. BUILDING CUTS between detail of the EMOTIONAL TOLL this fire has taken and LOUIS, soaking it in.

DAVID SARKESIAN

Not far away, is holding the credit card and is finishing a phone call. He hangs up, looks unhappy, crosses to --

SHOWROOM

Louis is changing the channel of one of the TV's -- the last TV, as now the entire WALL OF TVs display the FIRE STORY.

SARKESIAN  
What are you doing?

But Louis didn't hear that, taking in the wall of TVs.

(CONTINUED)

SARKESIAN (CONT'D)

Hey!

Louis turns, blinks.

SARKESIAN (CONT'D)

You're not supposed to touch those.

(then)

We got a problem. This card belongs to a "Barbara Salt," which I don't think is you.

LOUIS

It's all right. It's my mother's.

SARKESIAN

Yeah? Well, your mother doesn't pay her bills, apparently. Credit card company told me to cut it up.

A WOMAN shopper has appeared near them, reaches to change the channel on one of the TVs -- Louis snaps at her:

LOUIS

DON'T TOUCH THAT!

She backs away, rattled. Sarkesian has had enough.

SARKESIAN

Sir, I'm going to have to ask you to leave the store.

Sarkesian reaches casually for Louis' shoulder, Louis flinches away.

LOUIS

Give me my credit card.

SARKESIAN

It's not your credit card.

Sarkesian snaps his fingers toward a BEEFY SECURITY GUARD.

LOUIS

Fine. Whatever. I'm going.

Louis starts to move off. The Beefy Security Guard steps up next to Sarkesian, who doesn't take his eyes off Louis. Louis is at the door, looks back --

LOUIS' POV - of Sarkesian and the Guard, the electronic WALL OF FLAME behind them. They're whispering to each other.

(CONTINUED)

Are they laughing at him? Sarkesian has his scissors out and snips the credit card in two.

LOUIS, his eyes reflecting anger. He turns and goes. Defeated for now, but defiant. Off that --

14-A15 OMITTED 14-A15

15 INT. V.C.U. - DAY 15

Paul and Mel are tucked in by the elevator bank, having a clandestine meeting. Mel's feeling conflicted.

MEL  
I can't tell you how creepy this makes me feel... but I think you're right. This is about her somehow.

Mel hands him a fax from a file.

PAUL  
You called up your ex over at the Naval Hospital?

MEL  
Less of an "x" and more of a "y," as in "oh God why," but yes. Rebecca Locke. Academy entrance physical. Totally useless.

Paul scans the document, frustrated.

PAUL  
So, physically...

MEL  
She's disgustingly perfect. And the psych dirt's restricted, as we all know.

Paul hands the fax back to her. He knows.

MEL (CONT'D)  
So I went back a little further.

Paul looks at her. Surprised and a little confused.

PAUL  
Before the entrance exam?

MEL  
Before Rebecca Locke.

(CONTINUED)

She hands him another group of faxes.

MEL (CONT'D)

Medical records from the Children's Hospital in Augusta, where they treated Becky George after she showed up on her front porch all by herself. After eighteen months missing.

(beat)

You know she didn't speak for a month and a half after she got back?

PAUL

Yes. How did you get this?

MEL

Was tagged to the county sheriff's report. And I'm that good.

PAUL

Yes you-

(spots something there)

Are...

(reads from records)

Patient demonstrated irregular breathing pattern. Bronchial examination shows max expiratory flow at 25% of vital capacity.

MEL

Common indicator of someone who suffered smoke inhalation.

PAUL

There was a fire...

16 INT. VOLTA ELECTRONICS - MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

16

Sarkesian at his desk, doing the books. He finishes, closes the ledger. Puts it in the desk. He picks up a dry erase marker and goes to the schedule calendar. Erases the last week and starts writing in new dates...

Something's wrong. He turns. There's SMOKE seeping in under the door. Alarmed, he throws open the door -- and a FIREBALL is sucked through the room, engulfing him.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

17 INT. V.C.U. - BULLPEN - DAY

17

Carter has a large print out of the schematics of the electronics store up on the death board. Walking the team through:

CARTER

I was able to link the first seven burns based on common ignition patterns-- fire last night at the electronics shop was different. In the other cases, accelerant spread was diffuse. Here, traces led directly to the manager's office. Where Mr. Sarkesian was, alone--

MEL

Or thought he was.

CARTER

Smoke detectors were smashed, phone lines cut--

DANNY

So much for unintentional deaths.

PAUL

Sarkesian's not dead.

DANNY

Yet. 80% burns. You think he's walkin' out of that hospital?

REBECCA

I think it's still our UNSUB. The death at the restaurant must have excited him. Triggered his power drive. The other fires were crimes of opportunity... he's evolved. Moved on to targeted attacks.

MEL

You think our UNSUB knew Sarkesian?

REBECCA

I don't think our UNSUB really knows anyone... It's more likely they crossed paths. Sarkesian probably offended him somehow.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

We need to figure out everyone this man came in contact with over the past month, especially anyone he might have insulted: bitter employees, dissatisfied customers, angry neighbors--

DANNY

We're on it.

Danny and Mel fade to b.g. as Web appears.

WEB

Bad news from the hospital.

PAUL

Sarkesian died?

WEB

Worse. He woke up.  
(for Paul and Rebecca)  
Talk to him while he lasts.

Paul glances at Rebecca, sees her obvious discomfort.

PAUL

I'll take it.

WEB

Rebecca will go with you.

Mel catches Paul's eye, concerned-- they both know Web's pushing Rebecca toward the flame one more time. Paul's not ready to bend yet --

PAUL

Maybe she should stay here, work up a new profile, the suspect...

WEB

-- has been playing with a weapon for months, he just finally figured out how to point it at people. Her profile stands. We're still looking for someone who fits it... with one addition. He'll be feeling cocky...

18 EXT. ROSIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

18

Large Spanish style building, just this side of a tenement. Nicely kept. Hispanic tenants. Families. TWO MEN play checkers, talking in animated Spanish. A FEW KIDS playing tether ball.

Louis appears with a big bouquet of tulips. He looks confident. An older woman, MARISOL, walking with a wheeled cart of groceries, notices the out-of-place gringo.

MARISOL

Who're you looking for?

LOUIS

Oh-- my girlfriend. Rosie.

MARISOL

So, you're the novio, eh? She's mentioned you...

(nods at the flowers)

Good choice.

LOUIS

Yes, I figure she gets roses all the time, 'cause of her name.

MARISOL

Rosie's not here right now. Think she went to the store.

Louis looks completely crestfallen. Marisol is amused--

MARISOL (CONT'D)

Ai, amores jovenes-- it's not the end of the world. She'll be back. You wait.

Marisol hoists her laundry, moves on to her apartment.

LOUIS

Thank you. Gracias!

Louis begins pacing. Too excited to sit still. He walks across a patch of grass, smiling to himself and his flowers... SPRINKLERS come on. Louis runs out of the spray, but his pants are, embarrassingly, soaked.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Damnit!

The kids playing ball giggle.

(CONTINUED)

KID

Looks like you peed.

Louis marches over to them, angry, still clutching his flowers. Grabs their ball with his free hand.

LOUIS

You think it's funny? You did this on purpose, didn't you?

The kids are no longer laughing. A little scared by his reaction. One of the men playing checkers stands up.

MAN

Hey-- the kids didn't do nothing. Timer's busted-- sprinklers've been going off all day.

Louis scowls at his soaked pants, then back at the sprinkler. Thinks. Hands the kids their ball... and walks away.

19 INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE BURN WARD - DAY

19

Paul and Rebecca come around a corner to see Fire Marshal Pierni pacing before the door. They move to meet him. Paul and Pierni shake hands.

PAUL

Has he said anything?

FIRE MARSHAL PIERNI

Waited on you. Think he may only have one interview in him...

Rebecca looks past the door into the burn ward. SHE SEES Sarkesian's blurry outline, made even blurrier by an oxygen tent (or hyperbaric chamber). She's clearly rattled, but who wouldn't be?

REBECCA

(trying to maintain)  
Restrooms?

FIRE MARSHAL PIERNI

There.

She nods her thanks, can't manage a word, moves away.

FIRE MARSHAL PIERNI (CONT'D)

She's young.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

Yeah.

FIRE MARSHAL PIERNI

(hands Paul a folder)

Dredged the system for old fires.  
Small stuff-- dumpsters, vacant  
lots. Thought you could cross  
reference against your canvass  
list; focus the hunt. Arsonists  
usually start close to home.

PAUL

That's really helpful, thanks...  
(then, casual agenda)  
How complete is the LAFD database?  
Like if I wanted information from  
another part of the country--

FIRE MARSHAL PIERNI

Think this guy might not be local?

PAUL

(covering)

I'm probably wrong--

Pierni takes the folder, starts writing something on it.

FIRE MARSHAL PIERNI

Here. HTTP and password. Don't  
throw it around.

PAUL

Thanks.

Rebecca reappears, ready as she'll ever be. Eyeing the room  
with trepidation. Paul speaks low:

PAUL (CONT'D)

Rebecca... you don't have to go in  
there. If you want, I can just --

REBECCA

(preemptively)

I'm fine.

She's the first into the ward. Off Paul, following...

A shaggy neighborhood; beat-up stucco apartment buildings  
with weedy front yards. Danny's car pulls up.

20

CONTINUED:

20

Danny puts the car in park while Mel looks at the list in her hand. She looks out the window--

MEL

Barbara Salt. Thank God this one's a bad credit card. The bounced checks are so depressing.

They open the doors, but Danny's cell phone RINGS.

DANNY

(into phone)

Yeah? Yeah. Thanks. I'll review 'em and call you back.

(to Mel)

Carter e-mailed this morning's crowd photos.

MEL

I got this one, if you wanna--

DANNY

Nah, I'll check 'em after--

MEL

(refers to list)

We're not even through the first page, Danny. So, while I admit that Barbara Salt, a 72 year old widow with a home-based sandwich delivery service and a penchant for high-end electronics, sure sounds like a criminal mastermind, I think I can take her.

(as she goes)

You do the photos.

21

INT. HOSPITAL - SARKESIAN'S ROOM

21

Rebecca, Paul and Pierni stand before the victim. The oxygen tent just makes Sarkesian look even more distorted and disturbing. We can make out the distinctive face-melted look of a severe burn victim through the plastic. His eyes are open (we get the impression they may actually be lidless), his jaw slowly opening and closing...

REBECCA

Mr. Sarkesian? We're with the FBI. We'd like to ask you a few questions...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Off Paul, not sure if he's seeing remarkable professionalism or dogged overcompensation... Sarkesian GRUNTS and MOANS. Can he even hear them?

22 EXT. LOUIS'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

22

Mel is leaning on a doorbell. Not getting a response. She knocks. She looks over as someone approaches -- it's Louis, carrying a Jerry's Hardware bag. Sees Mel knocking at his door. He freezes. Hesitates, then keeps approaching.

LOUIS  
I don't think she's home.

MEL  
You a neighbor?

Louis stops at a nearby door. Feigns digging for his keys.

LOUIS  
Who are you?

MEL  
(flashes her badge)  
Special Agent Sim, FBI.

LOUIS  
Yeah. I'm her neighbor.

MEL  
(off the bag)  
Jerry's Hardware. I love that store. They don't make you feel stupid if you ask lots of questions.

LOUIS  
I was just... out picking up some, um, hinges and stuff.

MEL  
Do you know Mrs. Salt?

LOUIS  
Why? Something happen?

23 INT. HOSPITAL - SARKESIAN'S ROOM - DAY

23

The sad interview continues...

REBECCA  
Mr. Sarkesian, can you tell us if you had any kind of run-in or altercation with anyone recently? A customer, a neighbor... a stranger?

(CONTINUED)

SARKESIAN  
(half delirious)  
Oh no... oh no... NO!

FIRE MARSHAL PIERNI  
Special Agent Locke... I don't  
think we're doing this man any  
favors.

She ignores that, her focus still on Sarkesian.

REBECCA  
Mr. Sarkesian?

His breathing is difficult. It slows. The panic and fear  
dissolving into blankness. Paul touches her shoulder. She  
looks to him, nods. Looks back to Sarkesian.

REBECCA (CONT'D)  
Mr. Sarkesian, I'm going to leave  
my card with the nurse...

Something there sparks something...

SARKESIAN  
Card...

REBECCA  
Yes.

SARKESIAN  
The card. It was him...

Off the collective reactions to this sudden lucid comment --

Louis answers Mel's question. Mel takes notes.

LOUIS  
Nice old lady. Makes sandwiches.  
Kinda hard of hearing; takes out  
her ear thingy sometimes. Could be  
in there asleep.

MEL  
Anything else?

LOUIS  
Um-- Homemade potato chips.  
Greasy, but good.

24 CONTINUED:

24

MEL

Yummy... well, thanks for your help. Could I get your last name? I'll need--

Her cell phone RINGS.

MEL (CONT'D)

Excuse me.  
(to phone)  
This is Mel.

25 INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING AREA - CONTINUOUS - CONTINUOUS 25

REBECCA

Mel, it's me. Sarkesian said there was this guy, had his mother's credit card--

26 EXT. LOUIS'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS 26

Louis waits while Mel talks to Rebecca.

MEL

Uh-huh. Her son? Yeah. Yeah, I'm there right now...

Mel realizes that she's standing next to their new prime suspect. She casts a quick glance at Louis, but it's too late-- he's figured it out, too--

WHACK! From Mel's POV: the hardware bag coming straight at her head.

27 INT. DANNY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 27

Danny in his car, laptop open. He doesn't see Louis walk briskly past the car, nor does Louis see anything other than Danny's back. His CELL PHONE RINGS.

DANNY

(into phone)  
Danny here.

28 INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE BURN WARD - CONTINUOUS 28

Rebecca on her cell.

REBECCA

It's Rebecca. I was just talking to Mel... something happened.

29

EXT. LOUIS'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

29

Danny hurries into view. He finds Mel trying to get to her feet, groggy. He goes to her. Off that --

30 INT. LOUIS'S APARTMENT - LATER

30

Rebecca takes in the early eighties middle-class-with-poor-taste decor. Sectional sofa. Curio cabinet with a collection of fairy figurines. Upright piano. Plates with the presidents on the walls. Danny and Mel are there, too. Mel's nursing her bump with an ice pack. They're all wearing rubber gloves.

DANNY

That hadda be the easiest warrant we ever snagged.

MEL

(re: her head)  
Glad I could help.

DANNY

(off the place)  
We sure this is his place? Looks to me like just the old lady lives here --

MEL

I'd say his personality was subsumed in hers -- but I'm not convinced he even has one.

Paul walks through the open front door.

PAUL

Neighbors say Mrs. Salt died four months ago; bureaucracy's still catching up. Son Louis here's been cashing her socials--

Mel's PDA buzzes. She looks at it, as:

DANNY

Using Mommy's credit card--

MEL

(off PDA)  
And her car. Green Oldsmobile. Just recovered at Sepulveda and Moorpark-- no sign of Louis. APB's out county wide.

Rebecca has opened a pantry-type closet --

REBECCA

Um. Guys?

(CONTINUED)

30

CONTINUED:

30

They join her. It's stocked with chemicals, fuse wires, duct tape, lots of how-to books and tools--

DANNY

If he wasn't already our prime suspect, this would be exciting.

MEL

Well, at least he doesn't have any of that.

REBECCA

He won't need it. He'll make due. And it's not like he's gonna wait two weeks, either... we've humiliated him. He's on the run, he's desperate... he'll escalate again. Tonight. He has to do something to restore his sense of power.

MEL

So... what? We just wait for the next fire, hope someone gets there fast enough?

DANNY

Actually..? I think that's exactly what we do.

The others look at Danny as the sound of CHOPPER ROTORS takes us to:

31 EXT. LOS ANGELES SKYLINE - NIGHT 31

A LAFD CHOPPER RISES up over the city, as...

32 INT. HELICOPTER - NIGHT 32

In the air. Danny next to the pilot. He wears a headset and watches a computer-sized screen: a multi-colored view of Los Angeles, like an MRI (color spectrum corresponds to heat: black the coldest, then violet/blue/green/yellow/orange/red, with white the hottest).

DANNY

(into headset)

Prometheus has his wings on.

33 INT. PAUL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 33

Paul drives; Mel is in the passenger seat.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

MEL

God he loves this stuff. Should I even comment on the Prometheus thing?

PAUL

Let him have his fun.

34 INT. V.C.U. - TECH ROOM

34

Carter, wearing a headset, sits in front of the big fancy display monitor version of what Danny's watching in the helicopter. Web and Rebecca look on.

REBECCA

Is this exactly what they're seeing in the chopper?

On the monitor: the multi-colored patterns...

CARTER

Feed comes direct off the thermal imaging camera that's mounted between the skids.

REBECCA

What's that white spot?

CARTER

(into headset)  
Danny? You see that?

35 INT. HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

35

DANNY

Yeah. Just a car fire up by Skirball.

36 INT. V.C.U. - TECH ROOM - CONTINUOUS

36

CARTER

(sighs)  
That's gonna mess up my commute.

Web shoots him a look.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Right... probably not going home tonight. Maybe I should check the teams. Team one--

37 INT. PAUL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 37

MEL  
(into walkie)  
Still here.

38 INT. V.C.U. - TECH ROOM - CONTINUOUS 38

CARTER  
Team two.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)  
Copy.

CARTER  
Team three--

A39 INT. PAUL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS A39

MEL  
Carter. We've got seventeen bu-  
cars deployed out here, plus  
fourteen LAPD back-ups. All  
checked in less than ten minutes  
ago-- now please tell me you'll  
stop.

CARTER (V.O.)  
Team four --

MEL  
Oh for god's sake.

B39 INT. V.C.U. - TECH ROOM - CONTINUOUS B39

Web's leaning toward the monitor.

WEB  
What's that?

CARTER  
Danny -- pan it east.

39 INT. HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS 39

Danny's looking at the spot on screen, glowing white hot.

DANNY  
I see it. That's no car fire. Big  
hot spot. Here we go.

40 INT. V.C.U. - TECH ROOM 40

Carter enlarges the appropriate square from the grid.

CARTER

That's right, you little firebug,  
scurry, scurry, we're coming with  
our big shoes--

Web's eyes are on the screen. He speaks into his handset.

WEB

Hot spot detected in the 8600 block  
of Vermont Avenue. All teams  
affected proceed with perimeter.

41 INT. PAUL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 41

MEL

We're on our way.

A42 INT. HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS A42

Danny reacts to another HOT SPOT flaring on the screen.

DANNY

Carter -- you seeing that?

42 INT. V.C.U. - TECH ROOM - CONTINUOUS 42

Carter, Web and Rebecca all staring at it.

CARTER

Yeah... Tell me it's not.

43 INT. HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS 43

DANNY

It is. A second fire.

44 INT. V.C.U. - TECH ROOM - CONTINUOUS 44

Carter's doing the same grid-enlargement for this fire.

WEB

(into handset)

We have a second hot spot.

45 INT. PAUL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 45

Paul and Mel exchange glances-- this can't be good.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

WEB (O.S.)  
Vicinity of Melrose and David--

46 INT. HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

46

Danny reacts as now a third hot spot blooms on his screen.

DANNY  
What the hell?

47 INT. V.C.U. - TECH ROOM - CONTINUOUS

47

Another white star winks. And another.

REBECCA  
They're all over town.

CARTER  
He can't... how's he doing that?

WEB  
Simple. He's better than us.

Off Rebecca, helpless, as the white hot spots grow larger...

48-51 OMITTED

48-51

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

52 INT. V.C.U. - HALLWAY - DAY

52

Rebecca and Mel step from the elevator to meet Carter and Paul, who are approaching. Carter carries a plastic bag containing the CRISPY remnant of a timer. He holds it up:

CARTER

Timers.

The four walk towards the tech room.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Ironically, generally used for home sprinkler systems. Found 'em at three of last night's five burn sites. My guess is we'll have an uneven five before the day's out.

PAUL

That's how he was able to be in five places at once.

A53 INT. V.C.U. - TECH ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A53

The four enter. Danny is already here, watching fire footage on multiple players.

PAUL

We should check with local hardware stores, see if anyone can ID Salt. Find out how many of these things he bought.

MEL

(sheepish)

Start with Jerry's on Victory. My guess is he bought more than five. At least that's what the bump on my coconut's telling me.

(off their looks)

Yeah. I think I was probably assaulted with a bag o' timers.

REBECCA

Even if we find him, doesn't mean there won't be five more fires tonight. Or every night for a month. Who knows how many of these things he's already set?

(CONTINUED)

Paul looks at her; she almost seems to be in some kind of fugue state, staring off at something...

PAUL  
It doesn't track... he goes from single property fires to targeted killings to multiple remotely triggered fires?

REBECCA  
It tracks. Simple escalation.

Paul, a little annoyed that she's not looking at him as they speak, follows her gaze to: the multiple vid screens, various (MOS) fire NEWS FOOTAGE plays.

PAUL  
What're you doing?

DANNY  
Media coverage. Spectator search.

MEL  
Um. We already know who our perp is, Danny.

DANNY  
Which is why it's gonna be a lot easier to spot him now that I know who I'm looking for.

REBECCA  
You won't find him...

They all look at her. She's being drawn to the multiple screens... having one of her epiphanies...

REBECCA (CONT'D)  
He's not about the fires... he's not even about the destruction... or the death... He never was... The kind of heat Louis Salt needs to feel... you can't get from any fire.

She starts pointing to IMAGES on the various screens: FIRE TRUCKS. POLICE. CHOPPERS. ONLOOKERS.

REBECCA (CONT'D)  
He's about this... and this... and this. The aftermath. That's his power...

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

Making the world jump.

REBECCA

Making us jump. He's got the LAPD, LAFD, the FBI, local news and now national cable all focused on him. He doesn't just feel important... he is important.

PAUL

He needs attention.

REBECCA

Like fire needs oxygen. Which is why we're going to take it away.

Off this...

53

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

53

Prototypical coffee shop: people order at the counter, then take their coffees and order numbers to a table. Louis sits at a table with two chairs. He's got a coffee and is looking up at the TV showing NEWS COVERAGE of last night's fires. The volume is low, competing with a banal swirl of 98.7 FM and chatter.

Front door opens and Louis turns, nervous. Just an OLD MAN.

Eyes back on the TV, Louis quietly slides his hands off the table top. Follow them UNDER to see him playing with a box of mints. He shakes one out, pops it in his mouth.

The door opens again, and Louis turns to see ROSIE enter: Latina, 20's, achingly hot (Louis ain't that crazy). Louis turns away and jams four more mints in his mouth.

Rosie steps into the line waiting to order. Louis, focused, crunches his mints, quietly spits them into his coffee, and gets up. Stands straight. Holds a beat.

LOUIS

Rosie.

She turns. Registers recognition after two seconds. Smiles.

ROSIE

Louis. Hi...

He steps forward, TV showing fire wreckage framed behind him. The source of his newfound confidence.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS

Hey.

Another patron approaches Louis's table, thinking he's leaving--

LOUIS (CONT'D)  
(to patron, sharply)  
I'm saving that!

He turns back to Rosie; smiles expectantly.

ROSIE  
I, uh, how are you doing? I heard  
about your Mother. I'm so sorry.

LOUIS  
Don't worry about it. I mean,  
thank you, though.

She offers a default smile. It's enough for him. He waits for an awkward beat, and then...

LOUIS (CONT'D)  
So I was wondering if maybe I could  
talk sometime.  
(quickly)  
If we could talk. To you.  
Together.

Man, did he blow that. But he stays cool throughout. Almost aloof. Macho. Rosie nods, polite and with a good heart.

ROSIE  
Uh, sure. Yeah.

Rosie's now at the front of the order line.

ROSIE (CONT'D)  
(to counter person)  
Hi, could I get two coffees,  
please, and... a piece of carrot  
cake. With two forks.

Louis looks at her, and his heart soars. Begins pounding. A pure, adolescent smile breaks across his face. The sugary pop song on the speakers seems to crescendo just for him. He pulls out the other chair at his table to make room for Rosie...

LOUIS  
Okay.

(CONTINUED)

Rosie doesn't hear him. The front door opens and she turns and lights up. Entranced by her smile, Louis follows her look to the handsome man coming through the door. MITCH.

ROSIE

Hey, babe.

Rosie's BOYFRIEND. She KISSES him. Louis stands stunned.

He stares at the kiss and ALL SOUND falls away except for that top 40 hit. Perversely scoring his humiliation.

(CONTINUED)

Rosie and Mitch pick up their coffees and step from the counter; Rosie turns to Louis. "This is Louis." Mitch: "'Sup." But all Louis can hear is that SONG. Taunting him. Until he blurts-

LOUIS  
Did you hear about the fires?

All the SOUNDS are back. Mitch and Rosie exchange looks.

MITCH  
Yeah. Heard about 'em.

Rosie threads her arm through Mitch's.

ROSIE  
Mitch is a firefighter.

LOUIS  
Oh. Good.

Louis smiles, falling apart inside.

TV ANCHOR (V.O.)  
...breaking news on the Southland  
Fires... suspect identified and...

The words tickle his back and Louis whips around to see the counter person turning up the volume on the TV, which has now cut to BREAKING NEWS OF A PRESS CONFERENCE. Paul is speaking to a gaggle of reporters.

Louis's eyes go wide. Behind him, Rosie and Mitch are moving towards a free table...

PAUL (ON TV)  
On behalf of the FBI, I want to  
acknowledge the investigators in  
the LAFD arson squad. Without  
them, we wouldn't have found our  
man...

Louis stiffens. Without taking his eyes off the TV...

LOUIS  
Rosie.

Says it LOUD. Rosie turns. So does the rest of the diner. Louis keeps his eyes on the TV. Knows what's coming next. Until...

(CONTINUED)

REPORTER (ON TV)  
Do you have someone in custody?

(CONTINUED)

ANGLE ON TV

Where the press conference is LIVE. Paul glances past the reporters. The reporters key off that, swing their lights and cameras around to where: A handcuffed and dubious looking Danny is being marched with "high security" from a car, to an entrance around the corner of the building. He scowls and shoves a defiant grin toward the cameras.

Louis stands agog, blown away. Shaking his head.

Overlapping questions from the reporters: "Who is he?" "How did you find him?" "What's his name?" "Why'd he do it?"

PAUL (ON TV)

All I can say at this time is the suspect we've taken into custody has signed a full confession and as soon as the D.A. files formal charges, we'll be able to release his name.

As the reporters fire a barrage of questions, Louis turns to look at Rosie, lost. She's looking PAST him to Danny on TV.

ROSIE

Good. Someone caught that psycho.

MITCH

They need to give these guys the chair.

Rosie and Mitch take their seats. Louis, reeling, turns back to the TV...

PAUL (ON TV)

Until then, the story is we have our man. Thank you.

OFF LOUIS, in a fog of betrayal, trapped between the lies on TV and the lies he's told himself...

54-56 OMITTED

54-56

A57 INT. V.C.U. - WAR ROOM - EVENING/NIGHT

A57

Rebecca alone. Staring out the window at the last drop of daylight. Paul enters. She turns, expectant --

(CONTINUED)

REBECCA  
Anything?

PAUL  
Not yet. Could be he hasn't seen  
it. It'll run again tonight.

REBECCA  
Tonight may be too late... I hope  
this isn't a huge mistake.

PAUL  
It's a gambit. But I think it's a  
good strategy.

REBECCA  
We know who he is. We have his  
face, his name... and instead of  
feeding that to every media outlet,  
like we probably should --

PAUL  
And if we caught him, then what?  
Like you said, we don't know how  
many of these things he's got  
rigged to go. But if you're right  
and he walks in here on his own --

REBECCA  
And if I'm not? Then how much time  
have we wasted? And when the next  
person dies, it'll be because I was  
wrong. It'll be my fault.

She turns away from him. Conversation over. He regards her  
for a moment then we GO TO:

57 INT. V.C.U. - BULLPEN - NIGHT

57

Mel and Paul at their desks. Paul's computer has the LAFD  
ARSON LIBRARY up, with the password prompt blinking. He's  
staring at the folder Pierni scribbled on, debating...

MEL  
(re: Rebecca)  
How's she doing?

PAUL  
I don't know. I don't... even  
think she's really here. She's  
somewhere else.

(CONTINUED)

57

CONTINUED:

57

Mel looks to the War Room, considers.

MEL

So find out where.

A beat. Paul begins typing in the password...

CUT TO:

58

INT. V.C.U. - WEB'S OFFICE - SHORT TIME LATER

58

Web looks up from his work at a KNOCK at his door. Paul doesn't wait for an invitation, simply enters on his knock.

(CONTINUED)

WEB

Has Louis Salt taken the bait?

PAUL

Not yet. But Rebecca has.

(then, point blank)

April 5, 1991. Berlin, New Hampshire. The Desoto Motel burned to the ground two days before Becky George turned up on her doorstep -- with evidence of smoke inhalation. You think that's where she was being held, and fire is how she got away.

WEB

If you'd read the case file, you'd know the details of Rebecca's escape are unknown. Even she can't recall them.

PAUL

Right. Post-traumatic amnesia. Yeah. I've read the case file. And no one else was left to make a report. The Desoto was a transient hotel. They couldn't identify any of the three bodies they pulled out of there. You think one of them was her abductor, don't you?

WEB

Hadn't considered it. Interesting theory, though. Have you shared it with her? Or would that be awkward?

Paul just looks at him, smirks, shakes his head.

PAUL

Putting her on an arson investigation is sadistic. Someone carrying around that kind of unresolved trauma has no business on this case.

WEB

Assuming you're right -- maybe someone who understands the power of fire, of lighting a match, is exactly the right person for a case like this.

(CONTINUED)

This stops Paul.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

What are you saying? That she started the fire herself?

WEB

That would be conjecture.

PAUL

It's all conjecture. Even the part where I wonder how far you'll bend this girl before she breaks. And what possible good you think that'll accomplish.

Danny pokes his head into Web's office:

DANNY

We got him.

CUT TO:

59 INT. V.C.U. OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

59

Mel, Danny, Paul, Rebecca and Web are looking in at Louis, who sits alone in the interrogation Room. He's drumming the table, looking impatient.

PAUL

What do we think?

MEL

He smells weird. Like bad cologne.

PAUL

I meant his state of mind.

WEB

Impatient. Agitated. He's too important to be kept waiting.  
(to Rebecca)  
Locke. He's ready.

Rebecca's look is clear: "For me?" Paul sees her reluctance, and steps to Web, trying to head this one off at the pass.

PAUL

He saw me on TV, Web. I'm the one he's gonna want to convince. Not her.

(CONTINUED)

WEB

That's why you'll be round two.  
(to Rebecca)  
He's asked for some water.

Rebecca looks between them. Nods to Web.

INTERCUT WITH:

A60 INT. V.C.U. - INTERROGATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER A60

Rebecca enters the interrogation room with a pad tucked under her arm, carrying a pitcher of water and a styrofoam cup. She sits down opposite him, routine.

REBECCA

Louis Salt? L-o-u-i-s?

LOUIS

Who are you?

REBECCA

(not looking up)  
Special Agent Locke.

LOUIS

You're FBI? How old are you?

She looks up, doesn't answer. He looks at the water.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

I want to talk to someone more  
important.

Rebecca looks up at the tiny red light prompter behind Louis. The one that Web pushes to tell her the interrogation is over. It remains dark. Rebecca sighs.

REBECCA

That makes two of us.

LOUIS

What?

REBECCA

We've got over fifty walk-ins right now who all swear they were the ones who set the fires. Ever since the press of our capture went out, they've just been lining up.

(CONTINUED)

[THE INSIDE] "POINT OF ORIGIN" (2nd PINK) 03/24/05  
CONTINUED:

44A.

A60

A60

LOUIS  
They're all liars.

(CONTINUED)

REBECCA  
They're deaf, too.  
(leans forward,  
enunciates)  
We've got the guy.

LOUIS  
He's a liar, too. Did he tell you  
how he set five fires at once?

REBECCA  
He did.

LOUIS  
Sprinkler timers? Nine volt?

Rebecca offers a surprised look, to confirm this for him.

LOUIS (CONT'D)  
Say how he rigged them? Bet not.  
I saw him on TV, too. Could tell  
from looking at him he's too stupid  
to set up something like that.

IN OBSERVATION:

MEL  
(to Danny)  
I'm offended on your behalf.

DANNY  
I was going for stupid.

PAUL  
Shh.

BACK TO INTERROGATION:

LOUIS  
Can he tell you how to start a fire  
with a remote that'll melt in the  
first ten minutes? Does he know  
that aluminum iodine powder bursts  
into flame when it's immersed in  
water? Can he start a fire in low  
oxygen?  
(then)  
Did he tell you about number six?

IN OBSERVATION:

Number six? Everyone stands on edge. Web leans forward.

(CONTINUED)

A60

WEB

Careful...

IN INTERROGATION:

LOUIS

'Course not. 'Cause only I know  
about it, since I set it just  
before I "walked in" today.

Rebecca plays it cool. Writes on her pad. Dismissive.

REBECCA

Look, you can tell me your story...

LOUIS

I have evidence.

Rebecca stops writing. Now she struggles to play it cool.

REBECCA

What kind of evidence?

LOUIS

Well, first of all, I hit one of  
you over the head with it. Some  
red-head...

REBECCA

You... struck an FBI agent? When  
was this?

Louis shuts his mouth, stares at her for a long beat.

LOUIS

You're a liar, too.

IN OBSERVATION:

WEB

Damn it.

His concern sounds stronger than warranted. Paul looks over.

IN INTERROGATION:

Louis has gone ice cold. Rebecca feels the chill.

LOUIS

You know it's me. I can see it in  
your eyes.

(CONTINUED)

REBECCA

See what?

LOUIS

(near disbelief)

You want me. You want me.

(chuckles, sad)

Now I get the girls...

REBECCA

Louis...

LOUIS

You're gonna burn.

(Rebecca stiffens)

And you know it. You know you're  
gonna burn.

REBECCA

Where. Tell me where, Louis.

LOUIS

Are you recording this?

REBECCA

Yes.

He looks around, then at the two way mirror. Where Paul and Web are. Where he thinks the camera is. Where he looks straight at his own reflection.

LOUIS

(really to Rosie)

I love you.

And with that he grabs the pitcher of water, leans his head back, and pours it on his neck, down his chin. A stunned second-- Rebecca watching the impromptu baptism-- then the chemical reaction ignites and Louis erupts in FLAMES!

Rebecca recoils, eyes wide. She's frozen; can't move as he ROCKS BACK AND FORTH ON FIRE, SCREAMING and writhing like the figure she's seen before.

The door BURSTS open and everyone is pushing in. Danny grabs a fire extinguisher and starts spraying. Paul grabs Rebecca and drags her out, she's nearly catatonic, her eyes fixed on the fire--

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

60 INT. V.C.U. - BULLPEN - NIGHT

60

CLOSE ON: LOUIS'S HAND

Layers of skin dripping off like wet tissue paper. Visible for just a second, then a sheet is twitched into place by an EMT. The body, completely covered now, is on a gurney, which is WHEELED PAST REBECCA, who stares at it as it goes.

The room is practically whirling around her. HAZMAT GUYS (4 of them), in their suits, move toward the interrogation room. The others are nearby, urgently conferring.

MEL

How does water start a fire?

CARTER

Aluminum iodine powder mix, just add H2O and -- pow. Probably used a unguent base. Coated himself with it; skin, clothes. And all that bad cologne he was wearing? Accelerant.

WEB

Recapping the magic show won't stop our next fire. He spoke of a number six.

DANNY

Maybe he was number six.

PAUL

No. He was talking about another timer.

MEL

Well, if that wasn't the finale, then six is gonna be big.

REBECCA

No... It'll be personal.

They all look at her.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Probably smaller in scale than what we've been seeing. Maybe harder to spot. He said he had nothing left to lose, that's why he was willing to martyr himself.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

REBECCA (CONT'D)

But this last one... It's not about attention anymore. He just wants it to succeed.

MEL

So he took out the one person who could tell us how to stop it -- himself.

Rebecca is getting into the zone now, determined...

REBECCA

That's what he thought. But he's still going to tell us...

She moves to the desks. Starts digging through the evidence and case notes. Web watches, a small smile.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

The first fire. We need to identify the first fire. The original act will tell us about the final act.

Mel dives in too, finding old crime reports --

MEL

The first fire was Mueller's Mattresses. Factory fire.

REBECCA

No. That was the first successful fire. What we should be focusing on is something more tentative. A starter --

Paul reacts to that --

PAUL

Then I've got something--

He grabs the folder from his desk.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Pierni gave me some possible starter fires--

DANNY

We'll split them up.

Rebecca takes the file, opens it on the desk, leans over it:

(CONTINUED)

REBECCA  
We'll find it. The answer's here.

She looks up, meets Web's gaze with:

REBECCA (CONT'D)  
We just have to go back.

A small nod, a connection between them. Off that --

61 EXT. ROSIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

61

Rosie's coming home from work. She walks through the courtyard; greets the two men who are once again playing checkers. Passes an OLDER LATINA WOMAN, who sits on a folding chair near an open apartment door, fanning herself and watching a group of five or six kids playing, running in and out of the building.

ROSIE  
Buenas noches, Maria.

Rosie keeps on going. Waves to a PREGNANT WOMAN letting herself into her place. Waves to Marisol, who is in a doorway, sweeping out her front room.

MARISOL  
Hola, Rosie. Your boyfriend find you?

ROSIE  
Mitch was here?

MARISOL  
He stopped by again today.  
(smiling)  
That's one devoted gringo.

ROSIE  
(a little puzzled)  
Yeah. He sure is.

Rosie turns a corner; reaches her door. The bouquet of tulips is crushed on her doorstep. Stems bent, petals scattered. Uneasy, she kneels down to look at the mess.

62-66 OMITTED

62-66

A67 INT. V.C.U. - BULLPEN - NIGHT

A67

As our team pours over files and computer screens --

(CONTINUED)

MEL

Here's something. A small fire in a vacant lot, about three blocks from Salt's home. A year before the mattress factory blaze.

Rebecca takes the report, scans it.

MEL (CONT'D)

Two kids claimed to have seen "a bum" setting fire to trash. Could be Salt.

REBECCA

Or a ghost. The two witnesses -- the kids? They started this one.

She discards it just that quickly.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

We should look for a precipitating event. Some sort of tipping point... Salt's mother. When did she die?

PAUL

June of this year.

REBECCA

That's it. Look for something in June.

DANNY

How about July?

They look at him.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Firefighters were summoned to an office building on Riverside Drive. By the time they got there, the blaze was contained.

MEL

Riverside Drive...

Now she's sifting through another file --

MEL (CONT'D)

Mrs. Salt's gourmet sandwich delivery -- that was part of the route...

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (2)

51A.  
A67

PAUL  
Louis was in that building....

(CONTINUED)

REBECCA  
(to Danny)  
What was the point of origin?

DANNY  
Fire started in a corner office.

REBECCA  
Who worked in that office?

CUT TO:

B67 INT. ROSIE'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME B67

Rosie's got a glass of wine, she's in a bathrobe, phone to her ear --

ROSIE  
It's Rosie. Marisol says you came by. I found the flowers. They were beautiful, but... some of the kids kinda destroyed them. Little monsters. Anyway, I'm gonna take a nice long shower and I'll try you again after. I love you.

She hangs up. Drains her wine glass, moves to the bathroom door, disappears inside. We HOLD on the EMPTY APARTMENT for a beat. A SPARK. A WISP of SMOKE rising up... FLAMES...

C67 INT. V.C.U. - BULLPEN - NIGHT C67

Paul and Rebecca fill in Web; a buzz of activity on phones in the background from the others.

PAUL  
Rosalinda Ochoa, accountant. Her co-workers say the fire changed her life. They joke she set it herself. She started dating one of the firefighters who responded to the call. Now they're engaged.

WEB  
Salt couldn't bring himself to speak to her, so he tried to smoke her out.

REBECCA  
And ended up driving her into the arms of another man.

(CONTINUED)

C67 CONTINUED:

C67

Mel hangs up the phone in the b.g., moves to them.

MEL

I get nothing at her home number,  
we're still trying to track down  
the fiancé.

DANNY

(also joining)  
He works out of the Eagle Rock  
house. Lives in Pasadena.

WEB

(to Mel and Danny)  
Pasadena, go.  
(to Rebecca and Paul)  
Where's Ms. Ochoa live?

PAUL

Glendale.

WEB

(to Paul)  
Get there. We'll send fire crews.  
Rebecca, have Carter--

REBECCA

(decisive)  
I'll go with Paul.

Off that --

67 EXT. ROSIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

67

Paul and Rebecca rush from Paul's car. They see SMOKE  
already visible from some of the windows.

PAUL

Damnit!

REBECCA

Get people out!

68 INT. ROSIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

68

Paul and Rebecca run into the lobby, where a few confused  
residents already stand. They head for the stairs.

PAUL

Out! Everyone! Fuego, todos  
salgan!

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

68

Marisol grabs Paul's arm before he can get to the stairs.  
Rebecca keeps going.

MARISOL

Please! There are children in my  
apartment! I can't carry them--

PAUL

Show me where--

69 INT. ROSIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 69

We catch Rebecca at the top of the stairs. She runs,  
registering apartment numbers, sprinting towards Rosie's. We  
can hear SIRENS approaching, the bass rumble of the big  
engines...

Rebecca finds the door. Grabs the doorknob, flinches with  
pain but tries turning it-- it's not locked. Takes a deep  
breath and pushes it open.

70 INT. ROSIE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 70

Flames lick up all the walls. The air dark with thick smoke.  
Rebecca drops to her knees, covers her mouth with her shirt  
and crawls forward.

She finds Rosie, gasping, barely conscious, lying on the  
floor. Rebecca, coughing, eyes tearing, pulls at the dead  
weight.

REBECCA

Out. Come on.

She manages to get to her feet, Rosie leaning on her arm.  
She looks toward the door. The flames have grown since she  
entered: the doorway's filled with flames. Rebecca blinks  
her streaming eyes--

And from REBECCA'S POV, we see someone, standing on the other  
side of the fire. It's PONY MAN. Staring at Rebecca.  
Getting closer. Coming for her through the flames--

Rebecca's coughing, shaking, trying not to hyperventilate.  
She steels herself.

Pony Man stands in the middle of the flames, daring her to  
escape--

And with all her strength, holding on to Rosie, Rebecca RUNS  
RIGHT AT HIM.

71 INT. ROSIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 71

Rebecca and Rosie barrel through the flaming doorway. The ROAR OF FIRE fills Rebecca's head.

She turns back to the doorway. Sees Pony Man, just beyond the wall of flames. He's on fire. Screaming. Twisting. Suffering. He looks at Rebecca, then falls... and disintegrates into SPARKS AND ASH.

Rebecca stares. There's only flames... and the now empty space beyond them.

72 INT. V.C.U. - INTERROGATION ROOM - NEXT DAY 72

Rebecca stands, taking in the damage of the charred room. Web enters. Stands with her for a long silent beat.

WEB  
We'll need to repaint.

Beat. Rebecca stares at the blackened patterns on the wall. Thinking about Louis, and...

REBECCA  
You have to-- you have to be angry.  
To do what he did.

WEB  
To kill with fire.

REBECCA  
Yes.

Beat. He looks at her.

WEB  
I imagine that's true.

She turns to him, searching. Sees it: he knows. She looks away.

REBECCA  
The motel. I didn't know it  
would...

A beat. Rebecca gauging Web's reaction...

WEB  
Who knows how many bodies they  
might have found there... even if  
it hadn't burned down.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED:

72

WEB (CONT'D)

(beat)

It was that kind of place.

There's a tiny crack in the dam Rebecca's built. She doesn't fight it.

REBECCA

You were right. I did see something. It was him. The man who took me. I saw him... burning.

(then)

How did you know?

WEB

I didn't. I suspected. But now you know. So let him burn. Consign him to the ashes.

Web moves to the door.

WEB (CONT'D)

That's where he belongs.

He regards her for another moment. They make eye contact, briefly, it's all she can take right now. Beat. Web leaves. Rebecca exhales. Sits on the edge of the table. Allows herself a small smile...

73 INT. V.C.U. - OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

73

PULL BACK to reveal Paul, watching through the two-way glass. Absorbing the unexpected exchange he just witnessed...

74 EXT. PARK - SOMEWHERE

74

And now we're here. Where there's green grass and kids' sneakers pounding the paths. An ICE CREAM VENDOR'S cart is pulled up next to a little playground. The vendor hands cones to a FATHER and DAUGHTER. They move off, revealing the next customer. It's Pony Man. As he steps up to place his order, we see the side of his face. It's got the distinctive melted-scars of a burn survivor.

PONY MAN

Vanilla, please. Single scoop.

And as he waits for his cone, he looks around, scanning the playground as if looking for his own child. But he doesn't have a child of his own. Until he picks one.

(CONTINUED)

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END OF EPISODE