

UNCLE NIGEL

by

Andy Breckman

(Creator and Executive Producer of MONK)

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TEASER

EXT. DOWNTOWN PHILADELPHIA -- DAY

Welcome to Philadelphia.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INT. POLICE TARGET RANGE -- LATER THAT DAY

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

On the firing line: NIGEL WELLS, First Lieutenant, Homicide Division. A veteran cop. Strong. Deliberate. Confident. A quiet man. Nothing surprises him.

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

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

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

Nigel reloads, as...

CAPT. MACKEY

Nigel.

NIGEL

Captain Mackey.

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

CAPT. MACKEY

You still using a Browning Five?

(then)

I'm surprised it still works. It was discontinued twenty years ago.

NIGEL

Are you talking about me or the gun?

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

CAPT. MACKEY

(impressed)

Well. I guess... it still seems to be working for you.

NIGEL

What can I do for you, Mack?

An awkward beat. Nigel sighs.

NIGEL (CONT'D)

What did he do now?

CAPT. MACKEY

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

NIGEL

What did he do?

CAPT. MACKEY

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

Nigel nods.

CAPT. MACKEY (CONT'D)

We got a tip. We picked the guy up last night. Ronnie was supposed to bring him to court.

(MORE)

CAPT. MACKEY (CONT'D)

(sighs)

Fourteen blocks. One mile. That's all he had to do.

NIGEL

What happened?

CAPT. MACKEY

I almost can't say it out loud. I still can't believe it.

(resuming)

The guy said he was embarrassed. He didn't want his daughter to see him in handcuffs. Ronnie uncuffed him.

Nigel sighs. He's responsible for his nephew.

NIGEL

The guy bolted?

CAPT. MACKEY

Of course the guy bolted! Who the hell wouldn't? Market Street. Nine AM. Luckily, we contained it. They nailed him pretty quick. There's no press so far. Thank God.

(pleading)

Nigel. I've given the kid every chance. I've been more than fair-

NIGEL

I'll talk to him.

CAPT. MACKEY

(wearily)

I can't do it anymore. I can't keep looking the other way. I've got ulcers growing. I can feel them growing.

(indicates his stomach;
his ulcers)

Ronnie and Ronnie Junior.

(then)

I've got to cut him loose.

NIGEL

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

CAPT. MACKEY

No- no- no. Don't go there.

(sighing)

All right. One more chance.

(MORE)

CAPT. MACKEY (CONT'D)
 Because he's family. But that's it.
 I mean it this time. If he screws
 up again, he's a history lesson.

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

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

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

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

EXT. STREET - CARPET STORE -- NEXT DAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NIGEL
 Ronnie. Holster your weapon.

Ronnie awkwardly holsters his gun.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
Is the safety on?

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

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

They walk toward the store, as...

RONNIE
I guess you heard about this morning.

NIGEL
We'll talk about it later.

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

NIGEL
Ronnie-

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

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

RONNIE
Murderers lie?

NIGEL
That's right. Murderers lie.
(wearily)
Okay. Forget it. Let's just go
inside.

INT. CARPET STORE -- MOMENTS LATER

Moments later. Inside.

It's a CARPET STORE. Rugs everywhere. Antique rugs.
Imported rugs. On racks, on walls, rolled up, etc.

And- on the floor- in a body bag: the OWNER'S BODY. The crime scene is already cold. The store is almost empty. The CSI TECHS have left. A couple of UNIFORM COPS are lingering.

Nigel and Ronnie are in charge.

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

Nigel considers this.

NIGEL
What's back there?

FIRST UNIFORM COP
A loading dock. More rugs.

Nigel considers this.

NIGEL
He have a family?

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

Nigel considers this.

NIGEL
Could we have the room, please?

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

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

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

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

RONNIE
Clues.

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

NIGEL
It wasn't a robbery.

ACROSS THE ROOM: Ronnie finds a poppy seed bagel.

RONNIE
Poppy seeds.

NIGEL
Excuse me?

RONNIE
A poppy seed bagel. With cream cheese. I guess he didn't get a chance to finish it.

Ronnie starts to eat the bagel!

NIGEL
What are you doing?

RONNIE
(shrugging)
What's the difference..?

NIGEL
Ronnie. Put it down. This is a homicide investigation. That's material evidence.
(firmly)
Put it down. Just put it down. Right where you found it. That's right. That's a good boy.

Ronnie reluctantly puts the bagel down. The investigation continues.

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

RONNIE
What's that?

NIGEL
Fiberglass. It's a homemade silencer.

RONNIE
Really?

Ronnie takes the silencer.

NIGEL

Maybe the gun's still here, too.

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

RONNIE

How does this work? Like this..?

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

NIGEL

(concerned)

What are you doing- ?

RONNIE

Just checking it out. I've never seen-

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

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

END OF TEASER

"UNCLE NIGEL" CREDIT SEQUENCE - WITH MUSIC

The THEME SONG kicks in. MAIN CREDITS ROLL.

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

ACT ONE

INT. CARPET STORE -- SECONDS LATER

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

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

RONNIE
Are you all right?

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

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

RONNIE
Let's get you to a hospital-

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

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

NIGEL
(interrupting)
Ronnie-

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

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

During this, the FIRST UNIFORM COP re-enters.

FIRST UNIFORM COP
Excuse me. Lieutenant?

Nigel collects himself. He hides his wounded hand.

NIGEL
(strained)
Yeah.

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

NIGEL
We're gonna need another minute here.

Nigel winces slightly.

FIRST UNIFORM COP
Are you okay?

NIGEL
Yeah. I banged my elbow.

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

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

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

RONNIE
(concerned)
You need a doctor.

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

RONNIE
I thought he retired.

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

Nigel starts toward the rear door.

RONNIE

Uncle Nigel.

Nigel turns.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Thanks.

NIGEL

I'm not doing it for you.

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

The next day. A neat, modest suburban home.

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

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

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

NIGEL

Where's your hat?

ABBY

Too nice a day.

NIGEL

Dr. Brennon said to avoid the sun.

ABBY

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

Abby turns. She notices Nigel's bandage.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Oh. Baby. What happened to you?

NIGEL

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

ABBY

A kid with a knife.

(she sighs)

You know what Mom would say.

NIGEL

I know. I know. I should've stayed
in law school.

ABBY

And she'd be right.

NIGEL

She usually was.
(then)
You look good.

ABBY

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

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

NIGEL

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

ABBY

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

Abby continues to prune and weed, as...

ABBY (CONT'D)

Who am I kidding? I'm not a gardener.
If I'm lucky, in September, I'll
have one salad. One salad. The
Eleven Hundred Dollar Salad.

(then, anxiously)

So what else is happening? Is
everything else okay?

NIGEL

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

Abby tears up. She continues to prune and weed.

ABBY

Thank you.

NIGEL

For what?

ABBY

For coming back. For looking after
my boy.

NIGEL

He's looking after me, too.

(then)

I have to go. I'm already late. Is there anything else today?

ABBY

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

NIGEL

Hang tough.

ABBY

Okay. I will.

INT. POLICE HQ - SQUAD ROOM -- SAME TIME

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

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

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

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

RONNIE

Frankel! What did you do?

DET. FRANK FRANKEL

(smirking)

Is there a problem, Ronald?

RONNIE

YOU SONOFABITCH! Where's my ball?

DET. FRANK FRANKEL

What ball is that?

RONNIE

My baseball!! The one I caught in Game Three in 1997!

(waving the FRUIT)

You replaced it with an orange!

DET. FRANK FRANKEL

First off, you didn't catch anything.

(MORE)

DET. FRANK FRANKEL (CONT'D)

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

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

RONNIE

There it is. Gimme the ball.

DET. FRANK FRANKEL

What are you gonna do, tell your Uncle?

(whining, mockingly)

"Uncle Ronnie, the big boys took my baseball".

Around the Squad Room: the OTHER COPS chuckle.

DET. FRANK FRANKEL (CONT'D)

You want it? Here it is.

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

RONNIE

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

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

DET. FRANK FRANKEL

"Give it baaaaack!" You really are pathetic.

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

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

Everyone freezes. A stunned, guilty beat.

DET. FRANK FRANKEL (CONT'D)

(to Ronnie)

Aw man. Look what you did.

INT. POLICE HQ - STAIRWELL -- SAME TIME

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

Capt. Mackey notices him.

CAPT. MACKEY
Nigel. You got a minute?

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

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

NIGEL
A car door. No big deal.

CAPT. MACKEY
You good to go?

NIGEL
Absolutely. What do you got?

Capt. Mackey is holding a CASE FILE.

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

NIGEL
(anxiously)
They went back..?

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

NIGEL
Really?

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

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

NIGEL
(nodding, calmly)
Could be the shooter.

CAPT. MACKEY

It's gotta be the shooter! It's a gift! It's Christmas in July! The lab just got all the samples. Can you and The Dufus stay on top of it?

NIGEL

Absolutely.

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

CAPT. MACKEY

Are you okay?

NIGEL

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

EXT. COURTHOUSE - CENTER CITY -- DAY

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

JUDGE PIERCE'S VOICE

Will the defendant rise...

INT. COURTROOM -- SAME TIME

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

On the bench: JUDGE LEON PIERCE. The toughest judge in Pennsylvania. A brilliant, strict, methodical man.

JUDGE PIERCE

Mr. Russell. Look at me, sir.

The Defendant looks up.

JUDGE PIERCE (CONT'D)

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

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

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

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

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

SECRETARY

Excuse me, Judge. Have you heard from Allison?

JUDGE PIERCE

Allison?

(recalling)

The intern. With the tattoo.

SECRETARY

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

JUDGE PIERCE

No. Sorry.

SECRETARY

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

JUDGE PIERCE

Not to me.

(shrugging)

I wouldn't worry about it. She'll probably show up on Monday with a new boyfriend or a new tattoo. Probably both.

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

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

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

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

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

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

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. POLICE HQ - LAB -- NEXT MORNING

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

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

LAB TECH
Detective Wells. You're up early.

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

The Tech indicates a RACK OF TRAYS.

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

NIGEL
I know. I'm just taking inventory.

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

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

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

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

Moments later. Down the hall. In a BATHROOM.

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

Shit. Shit. Shit. He just tampered with evidence. He's never done that before.

His CELL PHONE RINGS.

NIGEL
(wearily, into PHONE)
Nigel Wells.

The CALLER is a woman. With a British accent.

MIRANDA'S VOICE

(flirting)

Hello, Nigel. Did you miss me?

NIGEL

Who is this?

MIRANDA'S VOICE

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

Nigel- finally- recognizes her. He smiles.

NIGEL

Miranda.

(then)

What time is it there?

MIRANDA'S VOICE

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

INT. CAFE -- LATER THAT DAY

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

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

NIGEL

It can't be seven years.

MIRANDA

It's seven years.

(then)

I'm divorced.

NIGEL

I didn't ask.

MIRANDA

Yes you did.

(then)

It lasted fourteen months. I guess it's true what they say: the first year of marriage is the hardest.

NIGEL

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

Miranda smiles.

MIRANDA

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

She hands him a sealed envelope.

NIGEL

What is it?

MIRANDA

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

NIGEL

I didn't do much.

MIRANDA

This is no time for modesty, Nigel. Opportunity is knocking.

(explaining)

He has a new job. He's Director of Operations for Lloyd's Of London. It's the biggest insurance company in the free world. He's looking for a new Chief Investigator.

NIGEL

Chief Investigator..?

MIRANDA

You'll have 210 people working for you. You'll make three times what you're earning now. Company car. Company jet.

(she smiles)

Company Me.

(then)

If you've got to be a cop, why not do it in style?

Nigel considers this.

NIGEL

It's in London?

MIRANDA

Hence the name. Lloyd's of London.

Nigel returns the envelope.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

You haven't opened it.

NIGEL

I can't leave. I have family here.

MIRANDA

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

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

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

This is London. This is Philadelphia.

(indicates a spoon)

This is a commercial jetliner.

("flying" the spoon,
back and forth)

Thanksgiving. Christmas. Groundhog's Day.

NIGEL

I'm sorry.

MIRANDA

Do you love your job?

NIGEL

No.

MIRANDA

Do you have a girlfriend?

NIGEL

No.

MIRANDA

Then what's keeping you here?

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

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

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

Nigel is rubbing his bandaged hand. Ronnie notices.

RONNIE

Does it hurt?

NIGEL

Yes.

RONNIE

I feel terrible.

NIGEL

Good.

RONNIE

Do you want to shoot me in the hand?

NIGEL

Yes.

RONNIE

Because you can. If you want to.

NIGEL

Okay. I will.

RONNIE

I mean it.

NIGEL

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

RONNIE

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

(referring to SPORTS

PAGE)

He's five and eight on the road. I've got a bad feeling about this one...

NIGEL

Some other time then.

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

CAPT. MACKEY

Detective Wells!

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

RONNIE & NIGEL

(overlapping)

Yes sir. Right here.

CAPT. MACKEY

No. I mean...

(MORE)

CAPT. MACKEY (CONT'D)

(sighing)

Fine. Okay. Both of you. What are you working?

RONNIE

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

CAPT. MACKEY

(interrupting)

Forget the carpet store. Put it on the shelf.

RONNIE

What shelf is that?

CAPT. MACKEY

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

Capt. Mackey tosses them a CASE FILE.

NIGEL

Who is she?

CAPT. MACKEY

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

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

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

NIGEL

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

RONNIE

How long has Miss Tully been working here?

JUDGE PIERCE

To tell you the truth, Sergeant, I'm not sure. We've had so many interns and law clerks coming through. You need a scorecard to keep up.

SECRETARY

Here's her file.

(reading from FILE)

Allison Tully. She started on March First.

NIGEL

What did she do for you?

SECRETARY

Whatever we needed. Errands. Odd jobs.

JUDGE PIERCE

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

Judge Pierce gathers some PAPERS and HEAVY LAW BOOKS.

RONNIE

That's a lot of books.

JUDGE PIERCE

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

RONNIE

(writing this down)

42 million...

NIGEL

(low, to Ronnie)

You don't have to write that down. You don't have to write everything down.

They all walk out the door.

INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

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

RONNIE

Did she have a boyfriend?

SECRETARY

She never mentioned anyone. She wouldn't. She pretty much kept to herself.

NIGEL

Would you say she liked her job?

SECRETARY

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

Judge Pierce stops, as if he recalls something.

JUDGE PIERCE

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

NIGEL

Whose testimony?

JUDGE PIERCE

A secret police informant. He was testifying against a biker gang called the Scorpions.

NIGEL

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

JUDGE PIERCE

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

RONNIE

I think we might have a motive.

NIGEL

(not convinced)
Maybe.

RONNIE

What was his name again? The biker?

JUDGE PIERCE

Teppet. T-E-P-P-E-T.

Ronnie writes this down.

RONNIE

It's a palindrome. Interesting.

JUDGE PIERCE

Excuse me?

RONNIE

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

JUDGE PIERCE

How could that be important?

RONNIE

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

JUDGE PIERCE

(annoyed)

What puzzle?

RONNIE

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

JUDGE PIERCE

(very annoyed)

What the hell are you talking about?

NIGEL

He doesn't know.

(intently, to Ronnie)

Say you don't know.

RONNIE

(low, embarrassed)

I don't know.

JUDGE PIERCE

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

RONNIE

Two years.

JUDGE PIERCE

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

RONNIE

Well... not as such. Not officially.

Judge Pierce shakes his head.

JUDGE PIERCE

Our tax dollars- not at work.

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

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

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

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

MRS. TULLY

Yesterday was my birthday. When she didn't call...

(breaking down)

I was staring at the phone all night.

(then)

She's dead, isn't she?

NIGEL

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

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

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

RONNIE

(explaining)

I'm allergic to the cashews. They give me the squirts.

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

NIGEL

(resuming)

Janet. We need you to be strong. Allison needs you to be strong right now. She needs you to help us.

Mrs. Tully nods, and collects herself.

NIGEL (CONT'D)

How often did she come home?

MRS. TULLY

Weekends. To do her laundry. Have some home-cooked food.

RONNIE

Was she having a problem with anyone?
Was she afraid of anyone?

MRS. TULLY

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

Nigel indicates a BEDROOM.

NIGEL

Is that her bedroom?

INT. ALLISON'S OLD BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

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

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

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

INT. LIVING ROOM -- SAME TIME

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

RONNIE

Do you have a recent photograph?

MRS. TULLY

Yes. Of course.

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

She takes down a conservative GRADUATION HEADSHOT of her
daughter.

MRS. TULLY (CONT'D)

Will this do?

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

RONNIE

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

MRS. TULLY

In case of what?

RONNIE

Maybe she's on a beach. At a resort.

MRS. TULLY

Why would she be at a resort?
(anxiously)
Do you know something?

RONNIE

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

MRS. TULLY

She hit her head?!
(desperate!)
What have you heard? Is she in a hospital?!

RONNIE

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

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

MRS. TULLY

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

RONNIE

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

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

INT. ALLISON'S OLD BEDROOM -- SAME TIME

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

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

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

Mrs. Tully was crushed under the falling bookcase.

We're outside. On the FRONT LAWN. An AMBULANCE and SQUAD CAR have arrived. Some concerned NEIGHBORS have gathered.

TWO PARAMEDICS are carrying poor Mrs. Tully- on a stretcher- from the house. Ronnie is walking alongside.

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

Ronnie scrambles into the AMBULANCE.

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

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

MIRANDA'S VOICE
Hello?

Nigel hesitates.

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

Finally, Nigel speaks:

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

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

TV SCREEN -- LOCAL NEWS

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

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

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV)

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

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

JUDGE PIERCE (ON TV)

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

We PULL BACK. The TV is in...

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

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

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

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

ABBY

What's for lunch? Let's see...

(indicating various
BOTTLES and JUICES)

Oh. My favorite- Amoxicillin. With a side order of Lisinopril. Our anti-coagulate du jour: Metronidazole- side effects include mood swings and bloating- I can't wait. And our entree today: 200 milligrams of Cephalexin- it's the "lexin" that makes it so tasty.

(then)

You want some? I hate to eat alone.

NIGEL

No thank you.

Abby starts swallowing her pills. They taste awful.

ABBY

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

NIGEL

Don't talk like that.

ABBY

Big brother. Talking like this is keeping me alive.

Nigel looks concerned. Abby notices.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

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

NIGEL

I said yes.

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

ABBY

Good. Good for you.

NIGEL

(reassuring her)

I'm five hours away. There are two non-stop flights every day-

ABBY

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

NIGEL

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

(then)

I'm just- I'm tired of being a garbage man. That's all I am here-

ABBY

I understand.

NIGEL

I told them about your condition.

(MORE)

NIGEL (CONT'D)

I told them I'd be coming back every month-

ABBY

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

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

ABBY (CONT'D)

You've done so much already. Nigel. It's your life. You have to live your life.

NIGEL

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

ABBY

I'm not worried about me.

Nigel sighs.

NIGEL

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

ABBY

Do you think he's ready?

NIGEL

Yes. Yes I do.

EXT. GRUNGY ROADHOUSE - PARKING AREA -- NIGHT

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

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

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

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

Bad-Ass dismounts... clumsily. Now his own motorcycle falls over. CRASHH! He picks up his knocked-over bike. He picks up the other bike.

Bad-Ass removes his helmet. It's- Ronnie Wells! Tattoos. Wig. God help us all. He's undercover!

EXT. NIGEL'S HOUSE -- SAME TIME

Meanwhile. Across town. In an historic neighborhood.

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

MIRANDA'S VOICE
How long have you lived here?

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

Inside. Wow. It's a dream house. Original brick. Original woodwork. We're back in the 18th century. Spacious. Tastefully furnished.

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

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

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

MIRANDA
When are they back?

NIGEL
Two weeks.

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

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

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

NIGEL
(struggling with bottle)
No. Now I have to do it. Now it's personal.

MIRANDA

We had a neighbor with one arm. Mr. Stiles. He opened wine bottles all the time.

NIGEL

Shut up.

MIRANDA

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

NIGEL

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

MIRANDA

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

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

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Have you been back to London?

NIGEL

Not since...

MIRANDA

Us?

NIGEL

Not since us.

Nigel crosses to her, carrying the glasses.

NIGEL (CONT'D)

Has it changed?

MIRANDA

London is still there. It's just... harder to find. We'll find it.

(warmly)

I can't wait. Have you talked to my father?

NIGEL

I did. Last night.

MIRANDA

He's over the moon. He adores you.
You know that.

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

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Is this the family?

NIGEL

What's left of us. My parents died
when I was a kid.

(indicates the photos)

It was just me and my sister. Against
the world. And that's Ronnie, her
son.

MIRANDA

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

NIGEL

Gone. He disappeared.

MIRANDA

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

NIGEL

I'm afraid I'll find him.

MIRANDA

It sounds like a sad story.

NIGEL

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

Miranda sips her wine.

MIRANDA

Mmmm. It's good.

NIGEL

Your father sent it over this
morning.

MIRANDA

Really? This is daddy's wine?

Miranda smiles. She moves closer, closer...

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Well. This is going to make...
whatever transpires here tonight...
somehow... even naughtier.

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

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

Nigel sighs. Miranda sighs, too.

EXT. BIKER ROADHOUSE - PARKING AREA -- LATER THAT NIGHT

An hour later. We're back at the grungy ROADHOUSE. The TOUGH BOUNCER is still out front.

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

NIGEL

Excuse me.

BOUNCER

Private club.

Nigel flashes his BADGE.

NIGEL

I'm a cop.

BOUNCER

With one arm.

NIGEL

That's true.

BOUNCER

And no warrant.

NIGEL

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

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

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

The Bouncer is down. The fight took five seconds.

INT. BIKER ROADHOUSE -- SECONDS LATER

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

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

NIGEL
(calling, anxiously)
Ronnie- ?

BASEBALL BAT BIKER
Can I help you?

NIGEL
I'm looking for a friend.

BASEBALL BAT BIKER
He's not here.

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

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

NIGEL
Ronnie- ?!

DARRYL TEPPEP'S VOICE
Detective Wells.

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

Nigel knows Darryl. They respect each other.

NIGEL
Darryl.

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

NIGEL
Where is he?

DARRYL TEPPEP
He's okay. We didn't touch him.
He's over there.

Nigel turns. Ronnie is sprawled out on the POOL TABLE. He's drunk. Passed out. He's snoring. And drooling.

FIRST BIKER

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

DARRYL TEPPE

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

FIRST BIKER

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

BIKER GIRLFRIEND

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

NIGEL

(wearily)
A palindrome.

Across the room: Drunken Ronnie stirs. He groans.

DARRYL TEPPE

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

NIGEL

Allison Tully.

DARRYL TEPPE

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

NIGEL

I will.

DARRYL TEPPE

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

NIGEL

No. It never did.

Across the room: Drunken Ronnie tries to sit up. He moans. He's like Frankenstein.

BIKER GIRLFRIEND

What's his problem?

NIGEL

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

DARRYL TEPPE

One shot of tequila.

NIGEL

Is that it?

DARRYL TEPPE

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

Darryl takes out RONNIE'S BADGE.

DARRYL TEPPE (CONT'D)

He dropped his badge. He's got the same name. Is he your kid?

NIGEL

My nephew.

DARRYL TEPPE

Your nephew?

(then)

He dropped his gun, too. I'll go get it. Wait here.

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

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

DRUNKEN RONNIE

Is it my shot?

(calling the shot)

Yellow ball... anywhere it wants to go...

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

DRUNKEN RONNIE (CONT'D)

My bad. Sorry.

A BIKER and his GIRLFRIEND are watching him play. They- of course- know Ronnie's a cop. But they find him amusing.

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

BIKER GIRL
 What accident is that?

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

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

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

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

BIKER
 I hear that.

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

BIKER
 An airbag? On your chopper?

DRUNKEN RONNIE
 That's right.

BIKER
 What the hell were you riding?

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

BIKER GIRL
 I thought they made dishwashers.

DRUNKEN RONNIE

And choppers. They're getting into bikes now. Diversifying. It's a beautiful machine. Very clean. No surprise there.

(blissfully)

There's no feeling like it. Full throttle... open road... a big gnarly Maytag between your legs.

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

DRUNKEN RONNIE (CONT'D)

(as "Bad Ass")

Hey. Look who's here. It's my old biker buddy...

(inventing)

Harley... David. Harley David.

Undercover Ronnie winks, drunkenly.

NIGEL

Ronnie-

DRUNKEN RONNIE

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

NIGEL

Ronnie. They know we're cops.

DRUNKEN RONNIE

(confused, still in character)

What are you talking about, Harley? We're not cops. We hate cops. You must've been riding without your helmet again.

(to the room)

He hates wearing his brain bucket.

Nigel hands Ronnie his GUN and BADGE.

NIGEL

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

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

DRUNKEN RONNIE

Thank God.

(then)

What are you doing here?

NIGEL

You called me.

DRUNKEN RONNIE

(he doesn't remember)

I did?

(then)

Listen. I don't think he's the guy.
He already cut a deal with the D.A.'s
office-

NIGEL

I know. I know all about it.

(warmly)

You did good work here. I'm proud
of you. I'll meet you out front.

Ronnie staggers toward the door.

RONNIE

(to a GROUP OF BIKERS)

How'd the Phillies do? Anybody see
the game?

Ronnie leaves. Nigel crosses to Darryl Teppet.

NIGEL

Thank you.

DARRYL TEPPE

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

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

DARRYL TEPPE (CONT'D)

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

Nigel considers this. This grungy Biker has a point.

DARRYL TEPPE (CONT'D)

We're responsible. We didn't ask
for it, but that's our job. Am I
right? Somebody has to be
responsible.

(then)

Take care of your tribe.

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

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. RONNIE'S CONDO - LIVING ROOM -- LATER THAT NIGHT

An hour later. Across town. Ronnie lives in a modest ONE-BEDROOM CONDO.

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

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

RONNIE

(woozy)

I'm so embarrassed.

NIGEL

You drank too much. It happens.

RONNIE

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

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

NIGEL

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

RONNIE

(moaning)

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

NIGEL

They don't hate you.

RONNIE

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

Nigel crosses to Ronnie, with the glass.

NIGEL

Drink this.

RONNIE

What is it?

NIGEL
Beer and tomato juice.

RONNIE
What's it called?

NIGEL
It's called beer and tomato juice.

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

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

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

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

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

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

NIGEL
I don't know.

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

NIGEL (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

RONNIE
The rug.

NIGEL
Excuse me?

RONNIE
That's a different rug.

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

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

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

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

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

Nigel steps up.

NIGEL
Your Honor. Good morning.

Nigel hands the Judge THREE LEGAL DOCUMENTS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

NIGEL (CONT'D)

It's gonna be almost impossible to convict you on that one.

(then)

We're going to get you for Murray Pearlman.

JUDGE PIERCE

Who?

NIGEL

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

Ronnie steps up.

RONNIE

(to Nigel)

We found some blood. Lots of it. And look at this-

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

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Remember the bagel? Poppy seeds. Cream cheese.

NIGEL

Okay. Don't eat it.

RONNIE

I'm not gonna eat it-

NIGEL

You better give me the bag-

RONNIE

I'm not gonna eat it-

NIGEL

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

RONNIE

I've never eaten any evidence!-

NIGEL

Last year? The library?

RONNIE
I spit that out!-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INT. JUDGE PIERCE'S OFFICE - RESUME PRESENT DAY

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

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

RONNIE
The rug-

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

RONNIE
You had to replace it-

NIGEL
You had to replace the rug.

RONNIE

It was after midnight. You had-
what?- six hours...

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

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

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

NIGEL (V.O.)

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

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

NIGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The owner woke up. Wrong place,
wrong time.

INT. JUDGE PIERCE'S OFFICE - RESUME PRESENT DAY

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

NIGEL (CONT'D)

You would've gotten away with it.
Except for this.

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

NIGEL (CONT'D)

This picture was taken six weeks
ago.

(indicates Ronnie)

Sergeant Wells noticed it wasn't the
same rug.

RONNIE

(indicates PHOTO)

See, this one has more fringe on the
border. And the curly cues in the
middle are different...

Judge Pierce sighs. He's caught. He knows it.

JUDGE PIERCE
 (muttering, defeated)
 The curly cues.

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

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

EXT. STREET - IN FRONT OF AN UPSCALE HOTEL -- DAY

Later. Downtown. In front of an UPSCALE HOTEL.

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

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

MIRANDA
 Nigel?

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

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

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

MIRANDA
 And your nephew.

NIGEL
 My nephew is my partner.

A heavy beat.

MIRANDA
 Daddy will be disappointed.

NIGEL
 He'll live.

Nigel leans in. He kisses her, lightly, sweetly.

NIGEL (CONT'D)

So will you.

Nigel starts to walk away.

MIRANDA

Nigel.

Nigel stops. He turns.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

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

NIGEL

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

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

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

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

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

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

RONNIE

And what is this?

ABBY

That's a cucumber.

RONNIE

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

ABBY

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

NIGEL

The red pepper looks good.

ABBY

That's a tomato. I think.

They all laugh.

NIGEL

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

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

END OF ACT FOUR

TAG

INT. POLICE HQ - SQUAD ROOM - CAPT. MACKEY'S OFFICE -- DAY

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

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

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

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

Nigel shrugs.

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

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

Nigel doesn't respond. An awkward beat.

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

NIGEL
It's better. It's good.

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

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

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

Nigel starts for the door. But Capt. Mackey blocks his way.

CAPT. MACKEY

I knew it! He shot you, didn't he?
The Dufus shot you. Your own partner
shot you, and you've been covering
for him!

NIGEL

I'm going back to work now.

Again, Nigel starts for the door.

CAPT. MACKEY

You won't always be there. He's
gonna screw-up again- as sure as sin-
because he's a screw-up and that's
what screw-ups do. And next time,
you won't be there. But I will.

(then)

It's just a matter of time.

Nigel smiles.

NIGEL

Excuse me.

Nigel walks away. Capt. Mackey watches him go.

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

NIGEL (CONT'D)

What's going on?

RONNIE

(anxiously)

I can't find my gun. It was right
here.

(trying to recall)

I walked in... I sat down...

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

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Here it is. I got it. What is that,
mustard..?

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

NIGEL

Ronnie! What are you- ? Just holster
the weapon. That's right. Strap it
in. What happened to your strap..?

Nigel- patiently, wearily- helps his nephew secure his revolver.

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

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

END OF SHOW