

TRUE BLUE

by

Jon Feldman

&

Chris Brancato

Exec. Prods  
Chris Brancato  
Jon Feldman  
Albert J. Salke

January 15, 2010

Network Draft #3

©2010, ABC Studios. All rights reserved. This material is the exclusive property of ABC Studios and is intended solely for the use of its personnel. Distribution to unauthorized persons or reproduction, in whole or in part, without the written consent of ABC Studios is strictly prohibited.

Old friends. New murders.

ACT ONE

ON A WELL-WORN PHOTO -- SEVEN FRIENDS. Early 20s, laughing, bottles of beer, lives full of possibility. Almost all in POLICE UNIFORMS. We HEAR --

JD (V.O.)

What can you say about old friends  
that hasn't been said already?  
That you were richer for knowing  
them, poorer for losing them. And  
not a day goes by that you don't  
wish they were in your life again.

INT. TOWNHOUSE -- SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT

KEVIN ULSTER, 30s -- handsome with an instantly likeable face -- HOLDS THE SNAPSHOT. As he reflects on the photo, the DOORBELL RINGS. He slips it onto a closet shelf.

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

Sometimes if you're lucky... they  
find their way back.

IN THE HALLWAY -- Kevin approaches entry, peers through the PEEPHOLE and pulls the door open. The back of his head obscures the face of the visitor.

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

And sometimes...if you're not --  
they don't.

A GUN rises in the Visitor's hand. FIRES. A DEAFENING SHOT blasts Kevin backward. As his falling body BLACKS OUT THE FRAME, we SMASH CUT to...

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A COUPLE. Bodies intertwined. Steamy, passionate SEX. The MAN is gruffly handsome; the WOMAN raven-haired and beautiful. It's the kind of sex that only happens in Forum Letters or dreams.

JD

(as he kisses her neck)  
Remind me again why we got  
divorced.

KATHERINE

(throes of passion)  
Not thinking with my brain right  
now...

As their all-world lovemaking continues, we HEAR the INCESSANT RINGING of a doorbell and we SMASH TO --

INT. JD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JD CONLIN -- 30s, gruffly handsome -- the MAN IN THE DREAM -- BOLTS upright in bed. The sex was a dream, the doorbell isn't.

INT. JD'S FRONT DOOR - (MOMENTS) LATER

JD opens the door to face KATHERINE MILLER, 30s, raven-haired and beautiful. In other words, THE WOMAN IN THE DREAM. His ex-wife.

KATHERINE

I know it's your night and I didn't want to wake the kids --

JD

It's...fine. I musta dozed off. What's wrong?

KATHERINE

It's Kevin. He's dead.

As JD stares, his world rocked....

INT. JD'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

JD sits, lost in thought. Katherine sits nearby.

JD

...doesn't seem fair. Of all the guys to take a bullet.

KATHERINE

He always asked about you. Complained that -- since you transferred out of the Precinct -- he never saw you anymore.

JD's detective brain kicks into gear.

JD

What do you know so far?

KATHERINE

Not much. Just what the CIs reported. He answered his front door. Shot point blank. Died en route to the ER.

JD

Jesus. That's an execution.

KATHERINE

Brass is all over me on this. A Detective gets killed, they want answers yesterday. Normally, I'd assign Malcolm, but he was Kevin's partner so --

JD

You're the Captain, so it's your call. But you need someone strong. Who can handle the pressure from upstairs.

Katherine looks at him. JD's one step ahead...

JD (CONT'D)

(shakes his head)

No, Kat. I'm chasing serial killers out in Oakland, you know that. I can't just --

KATHERINE

You said it yourself -- I need someone strong. And there's no stronger Detective in this city than you.

Just then, EMILY, 9, and WILLIE, 7, enter, sleepy-eyed.

WILLIE

Mommy?

KATHERINE

(maternally)

Hi, sweethearts...

EMILY

What are you doing here? Are you and Daddy getting back together?

JD can't help but smile.

KATHERINE

No, sweetie. Mommy and Daddy are talking about work.

WILLIE

But you don't work together.

JD

Actually...we do now.

Now, Katherine can't help but smile.

JD (CONT'D)  
But go back to bed, guys. Daddy'll  
be right in.

The kids shuffle off. Before Katherine can thank him --

JD (CONT'D)  
I'll need Walker.

KATHERINE  
Still on suspension.

JD  
For cruelty to a pit bull. Did  
the judge know there was a kid  
attached to that dog's mouth?

KATHERINE  
Walker has a drinking problem.

JD  
I saw him last week. He's been  
sober three months. Drank nothing  
but grape soda.  
(then)  
And I want Peter, too.

KATHERINE  
What? JD, you can't dictate the  
prosecutor.

JD  
No, but you can. And when Walker  
and I catch the sonafabitch who  
killed our friend, I want the best  
ADA in the city making the case.  
And someone who loved Kevin as much  
as we did.

KATHERINE  
JD... it's more complicated than  
that.

JD  
Then it's a good thing you're the  
Captain. Because if anyone can  
make it happen, it's you.

As Katherine nods, stands...

JD (CONT'D)  
And Kat? How the hell do you look  
so beautiful at 2 AM?

She smiles at him, improbably touched. And as she exits, letting the APARTMENT DOOR close behind her, we MATCH TO --

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

As a CAR DOOR opens... JD and WALKER McRAE -- 30s, handsome, African-American -- exit their sedan.

WALKER

I have a feeling I owe you.

JD

For what?

WALKER

Getting my suspension lifted.

JD

She wanted the best. That's why you're back.

WALKER

You're a good partner. Bad liar. But a good partner.

JD smiles, as they move UP THE COURTHOUSE STEPS.

WALKER (CONT'D)

You gonna be able to work with her?

JD

Who, Kat? Yeah, piece of cake.

WALKER

'Cause I remember -- after the divorce. Precinct had a pool. How long before they get back together? I had July '07. You lost me a hundred.

JD

Should picked "never." Coulda paid for some of your vino.

(beat)

Anyway, I don't think about her like that anymore.

WALKER

(smiles)

Like I said, good partner. Bad liar.

INT. COURTROOM - SAN FRANCISCO SUPERIOR COURT

Assistant District Attorney, PETER CALLAHAN -- mid-30s, movie-star good looks, Italian suit -- addresses the jury.

PETER  
 -- sometimes the right decision  
 isn't the popular one. But that  
 doesn't make it any less right.

THREE FEMALE JURORS stare back at him, smitten. Peter returns to the prosecution table. JOSH, his fellow ADA, leans in.

JOSH  
 We've got Jurors 3, 6, 8. They all  
 but threw their panties at you.

ANGLE ON A MALE JUROR also staring longingly at Peter.

JOSH (CONT'D)  
 And 11, too. Man, if you don't  
 practice in the right city.

Just then, Peter BEAMS as JD and Walker enter the courtroom. As the JUDGE bangs his gavel and adjourns the court, Peter makes a beeline for the gallery.

PETER  
 (elated)  
 What the hell -- ? Look at you.  
 What it's been, two years? I tell  
 people about you guys, no one  
 believes you even exist --  
 (off their sober looks)  
 Wait a second. This isn't a social  
 call, is it?

As JD and Walker look back at Peter, their faces telling all, we're --

INT. HALLWAY - COURTS BUILDING - LATER

JD and Walker talk with a stunned Peter in the hallway.

PETER  
 Of course, I'm in. The DA owes me,  
 won't be a problem. Jesus...Kevin.  
 I've been so wrapped up in this  
 trial I haven't been checking my  
 cell. When's the last time you --?

JD  
 Talked to him? Last year. He left  
 a message a few months ago, but...  
 you know --

PETER  
 We didn't make time for each other  
 anymore.

JD nods.

WALKER  
 Kevin dropped by Best Mart a couple  
 times. While I was doing security.

PETER  
 I'm sorry about your suspension.  
 I'd heard, but --

WALKER  
 It's okay. Got me sober.

JD  
 And a discount on DVDs.

As the old friends share a smile, we're --

INT. BULLPEN -- LATER (NIGHT)

The OLD FRIENDS greet each other. JD gives MAUREEN MINILLO  
 (30's) - sexy but perennially-single civilian secretary - a hug.

MAUREEN  
 I always knew you'd be back. Or  
 maybe I just hoped.

Peter embraces Detective MALCOLM GOLD -- mid-30s, rumped,  
 cynical, receding hairline.

PETER  
 I like the beard, Malc.

MALCOLM  
 It scares children.

Now Maureen hugs Walker.

MAUREEN  
 (whispers in his ear)  
 You smell nice. Not like Scotch.

WALKER  
 Ralph Lauren For Men. Smells  
 better, doesn't taste as good.

Back to Malcolm and Peter --

MALCOLM

So you're prosecuting... JD and Walker are running point. And I can't do a damn thing to help. Don't even have a new partner yet.

JD

(to Malcolm)

Heard you took the plunge, Malc.

MALCOLM

(hugging JD)

Yeah, sorry I didn't invite you guys. To the wedding. It was just immediate family. Amy's parents. My lawyer and shrink.

Now, Peter and Maureen hug.

PETER

Mo. You look exactly the same...

MAUREEN

(smiles)

I am exactly the same. Still single, still the Precinct secretary --

PETER

Still beautiful.

(then, sympathetically)

How you doing-- okay?

Maureen shrugs -- she's been better. Peter nods, understanding. We're BACK to Walker, JD and Malcolm --

WALKER

So how's married life treating you?

MALCOLM

The truth? You get a roommate who never leaves. You wake up, she's there. Come home, she's there. "What'd you do today, hon?" Why do I have to tell her what I just did? I just did it. How about we talk about something that I didn't just do? That would be interesting for me.

JD

(smiles)

Nice to see you haven't changed.  
Still better with the dead than the  
living.

MALCOLM

(laughs, then)

It's good to see you guys.

WALKER

Damn shame it took a bullet.

Malcolm nods ruefully.

INT. KATHERINE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Katherine sits behind a desk covered with police briefings  
and framed photos of her kids. Pacing is CAPTAIN RAYMOND  
PERKINS, coiled, early 40s, Internal Affairs.

PERKINS

Your top detective is gunned down  
at his front door and the rumors  
are sure to follow.

He gauges her. She's poker-faced.

PERKINS (CONT'D)

We think Ulster was mixed up with  
some questionable types. Spotted  
at nightclubs up in North Beach  
that front for drug operations.

KATHERINE

If you're suggesting Kevin was  
dirty, I have no proof. I do know  
he and Detective Gold had the  
highest clearance rate in the  
Precinct.

PERKINS

This is the new IA, Captain. We  
don't rush to judgment. But rumor  
also has it that Bay City Vice  
caught Kevin in some surveillance  
photos. Muling a briefcase of  
gambling money to the Bank of  
California.

KATHERINE

Any more rumors and you'll put TMZ  
out of business.

PERKINS

Strange thing is no one can find those pictures. They disappeared.

KATHERINE

Raymond, this is the Mission. You're barking at me cause Bay City Vice lost photographs? Talk to them - not me.

Perkins glances out through her office window to the bullpen, where JD hugs and talks to the old friends.

PERKINS

Working with the ex.

KATHERINE

Who better?

PERKINS

Don't get me wrong. JD's a great cop.

Perkins starts for the door - stops --

PERKINS (CONT'D)

So you might mention to him I'm looking for those photos. And when he finds them...that his first call is to me.

He flashes a smile, exits. Off Katherine, thinking...

INT. KEVIN'S TOWNHOUSE

Glass walls provide a stunning panoramic view of San Francisco. The CRIME SCENE is a bustle of activity -- uniforms, CIs. JD and Walker enter into it --

WALKER

Sweet place. Kevin was doing okay for himself.

JD

On a detective's salary.

Walker notes the inference, then reads from his NOTEPAD.

WALKER

(reading)

Killed by a .32 caliber bullet. As indicated by the shell casing found on his doorstep.

(MORE)

WALKER (CONT'D)  
(as they climb the stairs)  
Gun hasn't shown up yet.

JD  
Good thing the city's not  
surrounded by water or anything.  
More guns in the Bay than an estate  
sale at Lil Wayne's house.

They reach the landing, enter the bedroom. Walker turns to  
the C.I. lifting evidence from the bed.

WALKER  
Anything worth telling me about?

CI  
(re: hair fibers)  
One black, one blonde. I'll have  
to confirm it back at the lab.  
But looks like hair fibers from  
multiple sources.

WALKER  
Meaning he was sleeping with more  
than one woman. Nice to know some  
things never changed.

JD enters Kevin's walk-in closet.

JD  
(calling to WALKER)  
Same old Niners' jerseys. At  
least we know he didn't blow his  
paycheck on clothes.

JD scans the closet. Looking for something.

JD (CONT'D)  
You wonder? How a cop affords a  
place like this?

WALKER  
You think Kevin was dirty?

JD  
(shakes his head)  
He was our training officer. He  
taught me everything I knew about  
being a cop. And half of what I  
know about being a man. But let's  
be honest -- I'm not sure I knew  
him anymore.

Walker nods. Neither did he. A UNIFORM pulls Walker off. JD

remains, alone. Then he sees something, reaches, pulls out --

The PHOTO OF THE FRIENDS. Lives full of possibility. The same photo Kevin held moments before his death. JD's transfixed. Memories flooding back. From the photo, we MATCH DISSOLVE to --

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

The GROUP sits SIX ACROSS, not unlike the photo except with one distinction -- Kevin is no longer with them. As the priest offers the BENEDICTION, we HEAR --

PETER (PRELAP)

So... what have you turned over so far?

EXT. PRESIDIO CEMETERY -- DAY

OUR SIX FRIENDS sit in the shade of the RECEPTION TENT amidst the lush, tree-lined cemetery overlooking San Francisco Bay.

WALKER

Been through a dozen field reports. No one saw anyone approach his apartment. No one saw anyone leave.

JD

That's not what he's asking.

Peter nods at JD.

MALCOLM

We've all heard the rumors. But all I knew was he'd been doing off-hours security for some rich chick. That's not a crime.

JD

Her name's Mia Sherman. Got her name off his cell phone records. We're seeing her after this.

MALCOLM

Ten bucks says she was hot and blonde. With near-perfect breasts.

MAUREEN

(ignoring Malcolm)  
Protecting someone in need. That was Kevin. He never changed.

KATHERINE

No. We did.

Peter looks up.

PETER

Wait...what are you saying? He died because he didn't have us anymore?

MALCOLM

I shared a sedan with him for the last three years. He hated that we drifted. If I had to hear that story about JD and Peter and that jumper on the Bay Bridge one more time --

WALKER

(laughs)  
Helluva story though.

MALCOLM

Not if you heard it every day.

JD

(looking at Pete)  
We made a great team back then. Til you wussed out and went to law school.

Peter laughs.

WALKER

Malcolm's right. Why do you think Kevin dropped by Best Mart? Or left birthday messages on everyone's cell phones? He remembered what we were like together and he didn't want to let it go.

PETER

So we drifted. But we had lives to live. I loved him as much as anyone. But we didn't pull the trigger.

JD

No, but he was in trouble and we let him down.

MAUREEN

He never said a word to me. About anything. How could I help him if he never said a word?

KATHERINE

Because back then, he wouldn't have had to. We would've just known.

(beat)

I need some air...

Katherine, full of emotion, stand and walks off. The others exchange concerned looks.

JD

I got it.

As JD follows, we're --

EXT. KEVIN'S BURIAL PLOT - MOMENTS LATER

Katherine stands alone at Kevin's grave, a fresh mound of dirt and flowers. She feels JD behind her.

KATHERINE

Don't mean to be a drama queen. I know we're all hurting.

JD

Nice turn-out today. Kevin would be happy that we all showed.

KATHERINE

We used to take it for granted. All of us together. Now... it's an event.

JD

Hard not to miss that. The six of us. You and me.

She looks at him, smiles. But there's something she wants to say...

KATHERINE

There was a part of me that always thought you and I would end up together. Even after the divorce --

JD

I know. Me, too. In fact, I'd been thinking --

KATHERINE

I met someone, JD.

JD

(surprised)

What? You...?

KATHERINE  
(apologetically)  
I didn't plan it. I was lonely and  
he was a good listener. At first,  
I mainly talked about you -- hours  
on end -- I was surprised he even  
kept listening.

JD  
So...who is he? The guy?

Katherine looks at JD. Wants to respond but...can't. Just  
then, Peter steps in.

PETER  
You okay, Katherine? I just wanted  
to make sure...

JD  
Pete...we're kinda in the middle of  
something here.

KATHERINE  
(apologetically)  
JD...

And, in that moment, JD puts it together. Katherine and...

JD  
(stunned)  
Peter.

Katherine looks apologetically at JD. She's dating Peter.  
And as the trio trades awkward looks, we...SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. PRESIDIO CEMETERY - DAY

JD strides off, Peter following closely behind him.

PETER  
(concerned)  
JD...you weren't supposed to find  
out like that.

JD  
(clenched)  
Pete. It's fine.

PETER  
I know we haven't talked in awhile,  
but I was gonna call you about this --

JD  
(still clenched)  
Pete. It's fine.

PETER  
How come every time you say "it's  
fine" I feel like you want to hit  
me?

JD  
(really clenched)  
Pete. It's fine.

JD walks off. Peter knows it's best to let him go.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- as JD approaches Walker IN THE PARKING LOT,  
leaning against their unmarked sedan. Walker notes his mood.

WALKER  
What's wrong? You okay?

JD  
My ex-wife is dating Peter.

WALKER  
O-kay. Taking that as a "no."

As JD SLAMS the car door closed, we're --

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Malcolm clicks the lock on his SEDAN, when we HEAR --

KATHERINE  
Mal...?

They share a hug. She feels his bubbling emotions.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)  
How you holding up?

MALCOLM  
(wistful)  
I'd bust Kevin's hump about what a slob he was. Now the sedan's spotless and what I wouldn't give for some burger wrappers on the dash. The things you miss, huh?

Katherine gives him a sympathetic look. Then --

KATHERINE  
Just got word from Dispatch. You caught a 187 up on Russian Hill. But if you're not ready --

MALCOLM  
What are you kidding? I was ready to pop someone myself, just to get my mind off him --

KATHERINE  
(smiles, then)  
And you'll be happy to know your new partner came through. She's on her way here now.

MALCOLM  
Great. About time --  
(then, realizing)  
"She?"

Off Malcolm's look, we SMASH TO --

INT. MALCOLM'S CAR - DRIVING

DETECTIVE TESS FLYNN -- late 20s and beautiful -- reads from the DISPATCHER'S REPORT, as Malcolm drives. And seethes.

TESS  
Susannah Ross wrote a popular blog. About her dating life in San Francisco. Dog-walker found her body this morning. Strangled in her apartment.

MALCOLM  
You're really my new partner? Or is this just some elaborate Strip-o-gram?

TESS

I was a P3. Due for promotion.  
Don't worry-- I'm well-qualified.

MALCOLM

Now Walker gets JD back to solve my  
partner's murder. And I get who,  
Veronica Mars?

TESS

I'm sorry about your loss. I  
admired Detective Ulster's work.  
(then)  
Word in the precinct is that you  
all came up together. Some sort of  
clique or something.

MALCOLM

That's the word?  
(then, grudgingly)  
Yeah. Back in the Mission.

TESS

Ten years ago the Mission was  
pretty hot. What was it like for  
you guys?

MALCOLM

You don't quit, do you? I know you  
ten minutes, you're interrogating  
me like I'm Mohammed Atta.  
(beat)  
"What was it like?" JD and Peter  
were both chasing Katherine. And  
even though she picked JD, they  
were still like brothers. Walker  
could handle his liquor. I was an  
optimist, believed nice guys got  
the girl -- 'til I found out  
Maureen had a thing for Kevin. And  
Kevin... lovable, magnetic, messed-  
up Kevin... Kevin was alive.

He takes a moment to remember. Then...

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

(sincere)  
They were my best friends. I loved  
them all.  
(then)  
Interrogation over?

INT. MIA SHERMAN'S APARTMENT - LATER

JD and Walker question MIA SHERMAN, 30s with beauty that can only lead men to no good end, in her opulent Pacific Heights apartment.

MIA

Around the time of my divorce, my ex-husband made certain threats. Threats that I took seriously. I hired Kevin to provide security for me.

WALKER

And what did that entail?

MIA

He'd accompany me in public. Places I felt vulnerable. There was no set routine. Anywhere I didn't feel safe.

JD

What about when you felt lonely?  
(off Mia's look)  
We found hair fibers in Kevin's bed. It's not a technical analysis but I'd say about your color and length.

MIA

You're right -- it's not a technical analysis.

JD

No, I'll get that from the lab in about an hour. I can read it to you in my Captain's office.

Sensing her evasiveness is futile, Mia relents.

MIA

Yes, I was sleeping with him.  
(then)  
But it was casual. No strings.

JD

First thing you said that I believe.

MIA

I cared for him, but...he wasn't someone easy to get close to.

(MORE)

MIA (CONT'D)

Maybe he saved that for another woman. Or maybe for his friends. He wouldn't be the first man like that.

WALKER

Your ex-husband. How would he react if he knew you were seeing someone?

MIA

Nothing my ex does surprises me anymore. Even murder.

INT. SUSANNAH ROSS' APARTMENT

Small but stylish. Just like the victim. Malcolm studies the beautiful, lifeless body of SUSANNAH ROSS, 30s.

MALCOLM

(to a nearby CI)

Petechial hemorrhaging consistent with asphyxiation. Bruising on the neck confirms manual strangulation.

TESS

(walking up)

No sign of forced entry. Meaning Susannah knew her killer.

MALCOLM

Great, I see how this partnership is gonna work. You'll handle all the obvious deductions, I'll take the rest.

Malcolm notices Tess' reaction to the corpse.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

(needling)

You ever seen a vic before?

TESS

I was a beat cop before getting bumped. Not a shut-in.

Tess does her best to hide any discomfiture. Malcolm indicates a PILLOW under the victim's head.

MALCOLM

See the pillow. Supports your theory that the killer knew the victim. Probably even had feelings for her.

(MORE)

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

After killing Susannah, the guilt reflex kicked in -- wanted to make sure she was comfortable. Even in death.

(off Tess's look)

You can say it -- it's creepy.

Just then, Malcolm finds a SMALL PILL under the dust ruffle of Susannah's bed (don't worry, he's wearing gloves). Motions to a CI --

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Get this to the lab.

The CI takes it, as a Uniform cop comes over. Tess watches Malcolm in action, impressed by his detective skills.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

(to the Uniform)

Whaddaya got?

UNIFORM

Last known sighting was her neighbor. Said she saw the victim yesterday morning.

EXT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Malcolm and Tess face MOLLY COUGHLIN, 30s, plain but sweet-looking. And devastated.

MALCOLM

(introducing)

Miss Coughlin.

MOLLY

-- Molly.

MALCOLM

I'm Detective Gold. This is --

(swallowing hard)

-- Detective Flynn.

MOLLY

Susannah was my friend. This is devastating.

MALCOLM

You saw her...

MOLLY

Yesterday morning. She was going to meet her fiancée. Brunch.

(MORE)

MOLLY (CONT'D)

They were supposed to get married next month.

Tess and Malcolm exchange a look.

TESS

What did you know about him? Her fiance?

MOLLY

Nothing, we'd never met. He lived in Seattle. But I felt like I really knew him. The way she wrote about him on her blog was magical.

MALCOLM

Thank you, Molly.

Molly smiles appreciatively, clears. Tess turns to Malcolm.

TESS

What do you think?

MALCOLM

I think JD and Walker are solving the murder of my former partner. And I'm trapped in an episode of "CSI: Vagina."

(as he exits)

C'mon...let's go read her blog.

As Malcolm huffs off and Tess follows, we're --

EXT. STREET - NORTH BEACH - LATER

JD and Walker emerge from their sedan outside the club "Gate." Walker notes JD's demeanor.

WALKER

I know that look.

JD

What look?

WALKER

Just because I haven't seen you in awhile doesn't mean I don't know your looks. And that look says you're thinking about how to get her back...

JD

Bullshit.

WALKER

Oh yeah?

JD

I'm thinking about solving Kevin's murder. And that's all I'm thinking about.

WALKER

And I drank because I liked how it tasted with fish.

As they enter into the club, we're --

INT. JOHN LEESON'S OFFICE

A BACK OFFICE at a hip, urban club. Pre-business hours. Walker and JD talk with JOHN LEESON -- 40s, slick and no-bullshit. Also in the room is ALEX, 30s, John's associate.

JD

Your ex-wife says that she was scared of you.

JOHN

Please don't tell me my tax dollars are paying for cops who believe what my ex-wife says...

An OPUS X CIGAR burns in an ashtray on John's desk.

WALKER

(fanning the air)  
You're saying she's lying?

JOHN

I'm saying I never laid a hand on her. Or threatened her. Her shyster lawyer convinced her to scream abuse. Told her it would help in the divorce trial. Hiring your cop friend was all part of the act.

JD

So you had no problem she was sleeping with Kevin?

JOHN

(laughs)  
You kidding? I was thrilled to know that I wasn't the only moron who fell into that velvet trap.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Too bad Kevin didn't marry her, I  
 coulda ended spousal support.  
 Tell 'em, Alex.

Alex nods in agreement. Walker and JD exchange a look.  
 Though coarse, John seems convincing enough.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 And if I really had a problem with  
 Kevin... why would I have hired  
 him?

Stunner. Walker and JD are shocked.

WALKER  
 He worked for you?

JOHN  
 You didn't know? I met him at one  
 of our court hearings. He was  
 there with Mia -- providing  
 "security." We got to talking--  
 easy guy to like, you know?

They nod. They know.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Nightclubs are a cash business.  
 Having a cop around keeps people  
 from getting ideas.

INT. "GATE" - MOMENTS LATER

JD and Walker exit through the club.

JD  
 You want to say it or should I?

WALKER  
 Kevin was mixed up with some bad  
 dudes.

JD  
 Thanks for not making me say it.  
 Vice thinks Leeson's into gambling  
 and drugs.

WALKER  
 I don't get it. He had more  
 service commendations than any cop  
 in the Bay. And this is how he  
 pays the rent? Providing muscle  
 for some douchebag.

JD

Kat was right -- we were his family. Look what happened when we split -- Kevin goes bad, you fell into a bottle, my marriage imploded. Only Peter came out ahead -- he got the girl.

WALKER

Malcolm got married.

JD

He came out ahead. Not so sure his wife did.

Walker smiles, as Alex heads them off.

ALEX

Detectives.

WALKER

What can we do for you, Alex?

ALEX

I don't know if this means anything, but I got to know Kevin a little. At the end of the night and he was always rushing off. To see some girl.

JD

Mia?

ALEX

No. Wouldn't give a name. But you know the look when a guy's excited about who he's got waiting for him.

As JD and Walker consider this, we're --

INT. KATHERINE'S APARTMENT

Doorbell. Katherine answers it -- JD and their kids enter.

KATHERINE

(kissing her kids as they struggle past her)

Hi. Hello. Nice to see you, too...  
(re her kids' lack of interest)

They do wonders for my self-esteem.

JD

They ate already. Emily needs to finish her Science homework. Something about invertebrates.

A beat, as they face each other.

KATHERINE

I'm sorry, JD. I didn't know how to tell you...

JD

So. How long have you and Pete...?

KATHERINE

A few months. First month was coffee. Second month was dinners.

JD

We can skip the third month, thanks.

KATHERINE

My point is, I never intended it to be Peter. He was a friend. When I didn't have many to talk to.

JD

You coulda talked to me.

KATHERINE

About what? How much I missed you. How much I hated you for not missing me.

JD

You don't think I missed you...?

KATHERINE

By the end, I was never sure what you were thinking. I mean, maybe if we'd gone to therapy. Or...not rushed into signing. None of this would be happening. But...

JD

I made a lotta mistakes, I know. Probably why I dream about you, Kat. A chance to finally get it right.

As she looks at him, touched, we HEAR --

PETER (O.S.)

Sorry I'm late. Traffic up and down Stockton.

JD turns to see Peter entering behind him. He's got a TAKE-OUT BAG and a BOTTLE OF WINE. He gives Katherine a kiss.

PETER (CONT'D)

Hey, JD. You wanna join? I ordered way too much.

JD

No... you two go ahead. Walker's waiting for me.

JD leaves. Katherine and Peter watch him go, conflicted.

INT. BULLPEN - PRECINCT

Malcolm scrolls through Susannah's blog on his computer, as Maureen sits nearby.

MAUREEN

I read Susannah's blog every day. Probably coulda written it, too. All about a single woman trying to find love in San Francisco.

MALCOLM

You mean, science fiction?

MAUREEN

But after years of trying, she finally found the man of her dreams.

MALCOLM

Would've been nice if she gave him a name. "The One." Talk about pressure. Guy won't be "The One" for long after he drops a deuce in the crapper and forgets to flush.

Malcolm looks at Susannah's beautiful photo on the screen.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Look at her. How could it be so hard for her to meet the right guy?

MAUREEN

It's not easy finding your soulmate. That's what Susannah was looking for.

MALCOLM

Or maybe he came along years ago, but she was too busy thinking of someone else.

Malcolm offers a sympathetic smile.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)  
 God bless him, Mo -- I loved him  
 too -- but Kevin wasn't soulmate  
 material. You know that.

Maureen nods. She knows.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)  
 And soulmate-- I think most people  
 settle for the nearest warm,  
 willing body and just call them  
 their "soulmate" so nobody'll judge  
 them for settling for the nearest  
 warm, willing body.

MAUREEN  
 That's a sad thought.

MALCOLM  
 We're not in our 20s anymore. And  
 our soulmates aren't what they used  
 to be.  
 (then)  
 You seeing anyone?

MAUREEN  
 Malcolm...

MALCOLM  
 Sorry. Just curious what the guy  
 who gets you will have that I  
 didn't.

Pretending not to have overheard anything, Tess enters with a  
 printed blog entry.

TESS  
 No luck tracking down the fiancée.  
 And all of Susannah's friends and  
 family members have clear alibis.  
 But listen to this --  
 (reading)  
 "Thank God for James. Sometimes I  
 think his friendship is more  
 meaningful than any love affair  
 could be."

MAUREEN  
 (realizing)  
 James! That's her best friend. He  
 knew everything about her.

MALCOLM

(to Tess)

C'mon, Nancy Drew, let's go see a man about a soulmate.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - KEVIN'S BUILDING - DAY

JD enters with two cups of coffee. Hands one to Walker, who pores over SECURITY CAMERA footage on a pair of monitors.

JD

Night of the murder, building records show Kevin buzzed someone in just before eight P.M.

WALKER

Except I've been through every camera, every angle. No sign of a mystery woman paying Kevin any late night booty calls.

JD

He probably went to her house. No danger of her wanting to stay over.

Walker smiles. Then JD notices something on the split security screen. A WOMAN emerging from her car in the parking garage.

JD (CONT'D)

Wait a second. What's that? Zoom in, will you?

ON THE MONITOR -- we FREEZE on a GRAINY FIGURE.

JD (CONT'D)

Can you get any closer?

Walker nods. And we ZOOM in on the FACE of the WOMAN until it's unmistakable. The mystery woman is --

JD (CONT'D)

Katherine.

Off JD, shocked, we...SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - DAY

Malcolm, on his cell, and Tess emerge from their car.

MALCOLM

(hanging up phone)  
Got preliminary notification from  
the coroner. Susannah had ninety  
migs of Diazepam in her stomach.

TESS

Valium.

MALCOLM

And traces of rum, sugar cane, and  
mint.

TESS

(knowingly)  
Mojitos.

MALCOLM

Nice to see you're up on your club  
cocktails. I'm having the uniforms  
do a canvas of all the local bars.

TESS

I think maybe Susannah's fiancée  
killed her. Then split town. Not  
sure of motive yet, but --

MALCOLM

You know what I think? That maybe  
you shouldn't think so much.

Tess suddenly stops short.

TESS

Okay. Your friend died. And you're  
upset about it. Half-pissed and  
half-sad and I'm sorry for you, I  
truly am. But Susannah Ross had  
friends too and they deserve her  
murder solved just as much as you  
do Kevin's. So instead of being  
such a prick to me, why don't you  
remind yourself that you're one of  
the best detectives in this city  
and help me find the person who  
killed Susannah?

And for once, just this once, Malcolm has no retort.

EXT. BALCONY - (MOMENTS) LATER

Malcolm and Tess talk with JAMES ALBERTSON, late 20s and nice-looking, on the BALCONY of his Nob Hill apartment.

JAMES

Susannah and I were friends. I did the web design for her blog. And when she went on blind dates, I'd sometimes sit at the bar to keep tabs on her.

TESS

James. Can you tell us a little about her fiancée?

MALCOLM

His real name, for instance.

JAMES

I wish I could. Except... there was no fiancée.

Malcolm and Tess exchange a look. Stunned.

MALCOLM

Wait a second. You're saying her fiancée didn't exist?

JAMES

Susannah was always writing about these lousy dates and sexual misadventures. She created "The One" to give her readers hope. She swore me to secrecy. Said at least she wanted her fictional life to have a happy ending.

MALCOLM

(skeptical)

You two never dated?

JAMES

She wasn't my type. Remember, this is San Francisco...

Malcolm nods, getting it.

MALCOLM

Can you think of anyone who might've had a reason to hurt her?

JAMES

Well... there was one guy -- really had a thing for her. They had a date that ended badly. But she never wrote about him on the blog.

TESS

Why not?

JAMES

He threatened her. Said if she did, she'd regret it.

As the Detectives consider this, we're --

INT. PRECINCT -- DAY

Maureen types up a report on her computer. Peter crosses through the bullpen, pauses by Maureen's desk.

PETER

Hey. How's the wake coming along?

MAUREEN

Tomorrow at five at McSorley's.

PETER

(smiles at the memory)  
McSorley's. It'll be good to be back there again. Even if Kevin can't make it.

MAUREEN

(a beat, then)  
It's nice about you and Kat.

PETER

Maureen...

MAUREEN

It's okay -- you and I were just friends with benefits. And only then because we both struck out with the people we really wanted. But I think you and Katherine have a chance at something good.

Peter nods, appreciative. Then, he steals a glance at her computer.

PETER

(indicating the screen)  
What's cooking there?

MAUREEN

Request for DNA testing.

PETER

Yeah? Whose?

MAUREEN

I'm sure JD told you about the hair strands at the scene. One's Mia Sherman's. The other belongs to an unidentified female. Our so-called "mystery woman."

No, JD didn't tell him. As Peter wonders why, we're...

EXT. PRECINCT

JD and Walker roll up in their car, step out. Still stunned from what they saw on the security tapes.

JD

What was she doing at his apartment the night he was killed?

WALKER

I think it's safe to assume she didn't kill Kevin.

JD

Yesterday, I assumed she wasn't dating Peter. How about we go easy on the assumptions for awhile?

INT. PRECINCT - (NEARLY) CONTINUOUS

JD and Walker move through the Precinct entry.

WALKER

I'm gonna check out-of-state rap sheets for all our probables.

IN THE BULLPEN -- Peter immediately steps in.

PETER

Hey...JD. Um, why didn't you tell me about a second female suspect?

JD

She's not a suspect yet.

PETER

C'mon, buddy. You know how this works. I'm the ADA. My ass is on the line, too.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

So you need to tell me everything you're doing. At all times.

JD

I'm working. In about ten minutes, I might grab some coffee. And depending on how much I drink, maybe take a piss. That cover it?

PETER

Whoa...Jesus. What's up with -- ?  
(stopping, realizing)  
Oh, I see what this is about. You want to punish me, don't you?

JD says nothing. Then...

PETER (CONT'D)

I waited a year, JD.

JD

What?

PETER

A year after the divorce. Before I asked her for a drink.

JD

She said Month One was coffee. You guys should really get your stories straight.

PETER

What should I have done? If I'd come to you and asked your permission to take her out on a date...what would you have said?

JD

I'da said "no." But I woulda respected you for asking.

PETER

Listen to you. I mean...what is it? Is it because I make her happy? Or because you couldn't? I really want to understand.

JD

If I have to explain it to you, Pete, you never will.

JD and Peter face each other.

PETER

I want this "mystery woman" brought in for questioning.

WALKER

Pete... no.

JD

I told you. She's not a suspect at this time.

PETER

Then I have no choice but to invoke prosectorial privilege. I want the suspect interrogated. Now.

JD

(a beat, then)

Fine. Suit yourself.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

A subdued Katherine faces JD across the table. Peter paces the room, agitated. Walker sits behind JD.

PETER

Kat. What were you doing there?

JD

Peter, I'll handle this.

(turns to Kat)

Kat...?

KATHERINE

I needed to talk to Kevin. Privately. Bay City Vice was looking into some nightclubs with high drug activity. They spotted Kevin in some of their surveillance photos.

She slides an ENVELOPE OF PHOTOS across the conference table.  
ANGLE ON THE PHOTOS -- Kevin carrying a briefcase into a bank; Kevin with John Leeson and Alex Barnes at the bar.

PETER

(concerned)

What're you saying? You were there to warn him? About an internal investigation?

JD

Pete. This isn't a courtroom. It's where we eat lunch.

WALKER

We know Kevin was providing security for John Leeson. He owns some of those clubs.

KATHERINE

Vice wanted to turn the pictures over to Internal Affairs. I called in a favor - got them to bury the photos.

JD

So you broke policy to protect him.

KATHERINE

Kevin had a stellar career and he needed to be told it was all going to end unless he straightened up. He promised me he would. A few hours later he was dead.

PETER

Jesus, Kat. I get the loyalty. But subverting an IA operation? Forget his career, what about yours?

KATHERINE

You know IA. They're jackals. One lousy picture and Perkins'll drag his body down Lombard Street. His life was the job - someone needed to protect him.

PETER

If it ever comes out you short-circuited an IA probe, your career's done. Over. Everything you've worked for the last ten years...

JD

There's no reason it has to come out. We know why you did it. I'm sure we'd all have done the same thing for Kevin. Right, Pete?

PETER

(to JD)

You're so self-righteous. I loved Kevin, too. But no, I wouldn't have given up my career for him.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

And if you say you would, you're either lying or looking for an excuse to spend more time on your boat.

JD

I lost that boat in the divorce. So I guess it'll be half-yours someday.

KATHERINE

(raised voice)

Stop it. Both of you.

(they look at her)

There was a time that we used to protect each other from the big bad world. When we were always on the same side, no questions asked. I missed that about us. What I did was wrong, but given the choice I'd do it again.

Peter considers her reasoning, as JD scoops up the photos of and stuffs them in his jacket.

JD

I'll take care of these.

As JD exits, we're --

INT. APARTMENT -- DAY

Malcolm and Tess question STEVEN ABBOTT, 35, average in most respects, in a modest apartment.

MALCOLM

Susannah Ross was found strangled in her apartment. You went on a date with her a few months earlier that ended badly.

STEVEN ABBOTT

Yeah, for me. Took her to Fog City Diner. Dropped a hundred bucks on dinner. After which, she told me she wasn't interested.

MALCOLM

Maybe she wanted Italian.

STEVEN ABBOTT

I had real feelings for her. But she didn't have any intention of dating me.

(MORE)

STEVEN ABBOTT (CONT'D)

I was just fodder for her stupid blog. She practically admitted as much.

TESS

(working him)

That doesn't seem fair. You drop real money on dinner and she disrespects you like that --

STEVEN ABBOTT

Exactly. I mean, I may not be George Clooney or some nerd with Google stock options, but I could've given her a good life. Women always complain men want some unrealistic fantasy, but they're no different...

MALCOLM

So were you upset when you heard Susannah was getting married?

STEVEN ABBOTT

No, I was happy.

(then)

'Cause if she was off the market once and for all, I'd know the cause was lost. I could move on.

This resonates with Malcolm, who sighs.

MALCOLM

Well you got your wish. She's off the market.

INT. WOMEN'S ROOM - PRECINCT

Katherine splashes water on her face. Maureen enters.

MAUREEN

You...okay?

KATHERINE

(covering)

No, I'm fine, thanks. Just so dry in here. My skin gets...so dry.

Maureen nods. Sensing Katherine's guard is up.

MAUREEN

You and Pete...wow. Here I work twenty feet from you and I didn't even know...

KATHERINE

I wanted to tell you. I meant to --

MAUREEN

No, I get it -- you're busy. Kids. A precinct. Peter now. Can't have time for everyone.

KATHERINE

(realizing)

Is that what you think? That I don't have time for you anymore? Mo...I don't have time to shave my legs anymore. Why do you think I wore pants all summer?

Maureen smiles, Katherine continues.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

If I'm with the kids, I feel guilty I'm not working. If I'm at work, I feel bad I'm not with the kids. Throw in Peter and the only thing I'm consistent at is neglecting someone at all times.

MAUREEN

You know what I see? I see the only female Captain in the city. A great Mom. And someone -- in my opinion -- who looks good in pants.

(then, wistful)

I coulda told you those things anytime.

Maureen exits. Katherine watches her go, exhales.

EXT. PRECINCT - DAY

Peter sits alone on the precinct steps. After a beat, Walker exits the Precinct. Peter takes him in.

PETER

You think I wanted to fall in love with my best friend's ex?

WALKER

How's that?

PETER

How many dead-end relationships have I been through? You met those girls.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

Nob Hill society chicks,  
executrices from the Financial  
District. All they made me feel  
was alone. And then...Kat. I  
didn't wanna fall for her ten years  
ago and I didn't wanna fall for her  
now. Christ, I loved being a cop  
but half the reason I left for the  
DA's office? 'Cause I couldn't  
look at them together every day.

Walker nods, remembering.

PETER (CONT'D)

And now -- I agonized. She and I  
talked about it ad nauseum. "What  
about JD? How to tell JD?" He came  
so up often, I felt like I was in a  
goddamn menage a trois.

WALKER

He's hurting. You can understand.

PETER

JD and I went thru the Academy  
together. We walked a beat in the  
Tenderloin together. I'm hurting,  
too. I fell in love, but I don't  
want to lose my best friend over  
it.

WALKER

Hate to be the wise black man here.  
But Pete... I'm not sure you're  
gonna have a choice.

Peter looks at Walker, nods solemnly. He understands.

INT. HALLWAY - PRECINCT - LATER

As Katherine walks to her office, an eager Malcolm steps in  
beside her.

MALCOLM

Hey...what's the latest? They gonna  
crack Kevin?

KATHERINE

If anyone will, I'd bet on JD and  
Walker. What about you -- where  
are we on Susannah Ross?

MALCOLM

No suspects, no motive, no fiancée.  
A complete dead end. On the bright  
side, Flynn's been my partner 24  
hours and she hasn't yet requested  
a transfer.

KATHERINE

(smiles)  
Give her time.

Malcolm peels off, as Katherine enters --

INT. KATHERINE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

-- where she's surprised to see JD waiting for her.

JD

I'm sorry about that. I know it  
got a little out of hand --

KATHERINE

Let's forget it. We have enough to  
worry about -- where are we on Kevin?

JD

Uniforms and secondary teams are  
still canvassing, but Walker and I  
are focused on Mia Sherman and her  
ex-husband, John. Neither has a  
credible alibi.

KATHERINE

What's your gut?

JD

Database found a Nevada warrant on  
Mia Sherman. She got arrested 18  
months ago in Vegas. Assault with  
a deadly weapon, which just  
happened to be a .32.

KATHERINE

Ballistics?

JD

Waiting on the lab. But Mia  
confirmed a sexual relationship  
with him, so I'm thinking --

KATHERINE

Love affair gone bad?

JD

If you could imagine a failed love affair producing that kind of drama.

Katherine offers a faint smile.

JD (CONT'D)

I respect what you did for Kevin. Too bad Pete can't see it.

KATHERINE

Please, JD. Let's not.

JD

Actually, let's. Because I need to understand...

KATHERINE

What do you need to understand? That I was alone and heart-broken? That I fell in love with a man who listened and cared?

JD

You love him? He makes you happy?

KATHERINE

(softly)  
He doesn't make me unhappy.

JD

What else doesn't he do?

KATHERINE

He doesn't go out for drinks every night with Walker and Malcolm. He doesn't get threatened by my promotions. And when we have a fight, it doesn't take him seven years to say I'm sorry.

JD

(stung)  
I never doubted Peter was more fully evolved than I am.

KATHERINE

(shakes her head)  
Do you see what you're doing? If I say nice things about Peter, I'm an insensitive bitch. If I tell you he's not you, I'm some flighty tease.

(MORE)

KATHERINE (CONT'D)

Look, I don't know where Peter and I end up, but maybe that's the appeal. Because I know how you and I'd end...and I don't think my heart could take that again.

JD looks at her.

JD

I think you still love me, Kat.

KATHERINE

(a beat, then)

Do I? Some days, I'll admit it. But you know what you have to admit -- we didn't work. In theory we worked, for those two kids we worked, after a bottle of wine we worked. But day-in, day-out...

JD

I'm different now.

KATHERINE

And so am I.

JD

I can leave my work at the office.

KATHERINE

Not being able to is what makes you great.

JD

I'd rather be a good husband than a good detective.

KATHERINE

And you'd resent me for that choice. All over again.

JD

I think we owe it to Kevin. To give it a shot. It's what he would have wanted...

KATHERINE

You know what we owe to Kevin? To solve his murder. So...

She indicates the door. He nods. Starts out, turns back--

JD

One more thing.

He KISSES her, lips pressed tight, and for the briefest moment she gives in to it before pushing free.

JD (CONT'D)

We more than just worked. We were scorching.

He exits, leaving her breathless-

INT. HALLWAY - PRECINCT

JD exits through the bullpen. Unseen by JD is someone perched in a corner of the room. Someone who saw the kiss through Kat's cracked door. Someone more than a little pissed.

Off Peter, simmering, we...SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. MIA SHERMAN'S APARTMENT -- DAY

CLOSE ON THE FLICKERING FLAME of a candle. WIDEN as JD and Walker face Mia Sherman. The CANDLE burns on her mantle.

WALKER

Ms. Sherman, we're back because you're a person of interest in the murder of Kevin Ulster.

JD

That's cop talk for "we think you know more than you're telling us."

MIA

I didn't have anything to do with Kevin's death.

JD slides an arrest report towards her.

JD

You were arrested at the Mirage Hotel last year for threatening your ex-husband with a .32 caliber handgun.

MIA

He'd been cheating on me. I thought it was mature that I didn't actually fire.

WALKER

We don't have proof it was the murder weapon, but Detective Ulster was murdered with a .32. Can you see why we're suspicious?

MIA

Then you're talking to the wrong person. The gun was John's. I grabbed it from his overnight bag.

JD notices a PAIR OF WINE GLASSES sitting next to Mia's sink.

JD

You two still in touch?

MIA

Only when I take him to court for nonpayment of spousal support.

Walker breathes in the candle's aroma.

WALKER  
Candle smells nice.

MIA  
Tell you what. Leave me alone and  
I'll let you have it.

EXT. MIA SHERMAN'S APARTMENT

Walker and JD stride toward their sedan.

WALKER  
You smell that up there?

JD  
The burning wax? Or the cigar  
smell it was meant to cover up?  
(then)  
I'm thinking Opus X. Same stick  
that was burning in John Leeson's  
ashtray.

WALKER  
(smiles)  
Nice to know you're still part  
bloodhound.

JD  
Plus the wine glasses.  
(then)  
Maybe those two aren't quite as  
estranged as they'd like us to  
believe.

WALKER  
24-hour surveillance on both?

JD nods, as Walker starts to dial his cell.

JD  
That candle did smell nice, though.

They sit into their sedan, doors closed with a SLAM.

INT. BULLPEN - PRECINCT

Maureen is packing up for the night. Tess approaches.

TESS  
Oh...hi. I need to run jackets on  
some POIs in the Ross murder.

MAUREEN

I'm leaving for the wake. But the database is up. You can use my passcode. Top drawer.

Tess smiles appreciatively, as she sits at the computer. Maureen pauses before exiting.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

Malcolm was devastated about Kevin. Whether he shows it or not --

TESS

That's sweet.

MAUREEN

What is?

TESS

You're apologizing for him.

MAUREEN

No. I'm just telling you who he is. After ten years of being his friend.

TESS

(nods, then)

Can I ask? You two. You never...?

MAUREEN

(a little wistful)

No, I couldn't see past Kevin. Back then, loyal and dependable could never compete with sexy and unavailable. And now... "sexy and unavailable" is still unavailable. And "loyal and dependable" is too.

TESS

If it makes you feel better...I majored in choosing the wrong guy. And I graduated with honors.

Maureen smiles. A bonding moment. As Maureen exits and Tess turns back to the computer, we HEAR --

JD (PRELAP)

What can you say about old friends that hasn't been said already? That you were richer for knowing them, poorer for losing them.

INT. MCSORLEY'S - DAY

Kevin's wake is packed, as JD gives his speech which we now realize is the VOICE OVER from earlier.

JD

And not a day goes by that you  
don't wish they were in your life  
again.

ANGLE on our friends, looking back at JD from the crowd.

JD (CONT'D)

Kevin was once a part of such a  
group of friends. Who loved each  
other. Who made the world safer  
and sweeter for each other. And  
then...who lost each other. We  
struck out at the world alone.  
Convinced ourselves that's what  
growing up meant. Maybe it was  
easier than admitting how much we  
needed each other.

Shots of our friends, reacting.

JD (CONT'D)

If I could do it again, I'd hold  
these old friends closer. And  
maybe we wouldn't be here tonight.  
(then, raising a glass)  
Alright. I've exceeded my limit on  
cliches. So to Kevin. Our friend.  
To those he brought together. And  
to those he leaves behind...

As the room toasts, we're --

INT. MCSORLEY'S -- ONE HOUR LATER

It's an Irish wake -- in other words, a party. Music blares.  
At a FRONT TABLE, Katherine gently touches Peter's forearm as  
he slugs down another G&T. Motions to the SERVER for another.

KATHERINE

(concerned)  
That's three.

PETER

I knew there was a reason I wasn't  
drunk yet.

KATHERINE

Peter, I understand why you're angry and I'm sorry. But what you saw was...nothing.

PETER

Guess we have different definitions of nothing. Because what I saw... certainly looked like something.

As Katherine watches him down another drink, we're...AT THE BAR, with Walker and JD --

WALKER

That was a nice speech.

JD

Found it on-line. Hope I stuck Kevin's name in in the right places.

Walker smiles, as JD's eye is drawn toward Tess, entering. A CASE FILE under her arm.

TESS

Detectives. Anyone seen Malcolm?

JD

He's been detained.

He indicates a corner table, where Malcolm and Maureen are deep in conversation.

TESS

Got a report I need to discuss with him.

JD

Interesting.

TESS

The report?

JD

That you two are still talking.

JD glances over at Katherine and Peter. Turns back to Tess.

JD (CONT'D)

How about a drink while you wait?

TESS

I'm on-duty.

JD

You're a detective now. You're  
always on duty.

She smiles, a flicker of attraction. Then we're AT THE  
CORNER TABLE -- as a tipsy Malcolm speaks to Maureen.

MALCOLM

I'm an asshole. The way I treat  
her. My wife's a goddamn saint and  
I take it out on her.

MAUREEN

Take what out on her?

MALCOLM

That she's not you.

(beat)

It should be you I just married,  
Mo. It should be us in that house  
in Nohe Valley.

MAUREEN

But Malcolm, you and I -- we never  
even...

MALCOLM

Of that I'm painfully aware. Could  
never compete with that thing you  
had for Kevin.

MAUREEN

I overlooked more than a few nice  
guys because of him. Maybe you  
more than anyone.

And perhaps this is the greatest gift she could have given  
him - an acknowledgement of *what might have been*.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

I loved him. But in the end, what  
did we have? A few great months  
and then years of missing those few  
great months. But you're my friend,  
Mal. And that never has to go away.  
Losing you would be harder than  
losing any lover.

MALCOLM

(gently)

Do me a favor. Get married. Take  
yourself off the market so I don't  
have to live with the hope you  
might change your mind.

Off Maureen's look of sympathy, we're --

AT A BOOTH -- JD nurses a whiskey. Tess sips Diet Coke.

TESS

So how's it being back? In the precinct?

JD

Great. You know. Get a bunch of old friends together, smooth sailing...

TESS

(smiles, then)

You know... when I was a Uniform, I heard a lot about you.

JD

Oh yeah?

TESS

That you want a murder solved -- that you're the man.

JD

That it?

TESS

That you're a good Dad.

JD

Homicide and kids -- my specialties.

TESS

That you still have a thing for your ex.

JD

(wincing)

And Malcolm questions your Detective skills...

TESS

My two cents? Maybe the past is the past for a reason. Maybe it's time to look forward. Find someone new. Who makes you feel something more than regret.

JD

Know anyone?

TESS

Sorry, no.  
 (then, smiles)  
 But I find her, I'll let her know  
 you're looking...

JD smiles. The flicker starting to ignite. Cut short when Walker approaches.

WALKER

(nod to Tess, then)  
 Surveillance just checked in.  
 A dude just left Mia Sherman's  
 apartment.

JD

They make him?

WALKER

They left that for us.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- we're with Peter and Katherine, doing their best to smile, as JD and Walker approach.

JD

(to Peter)  
 Just want you to know we have a  
 lead on a suspect.

Peter nods. Then, his discretion weakened by the alcohol --

PETER

Thanks for the heads-up. Glad not  
 everything's on the sly these days.

JD

What's that mean?

PETER

I think you know.

PETER (CONT'D)

In her office. I saw you  
 kiss her.

KATHERINE

Peter...

Walker shakes his head. This can't be good.

WALKER

Oh, crap.

JD

How's it feel to have your friend  
 kiss your girl? Not too good, does  
 it?

(MORE)

JD (CONT'D)

You couldn't get her back then.  
But I'll give you this -- you're a  
patient SOB.

PETER

You're such a hypocrite. You talk  
about friendship. But you're no  
better a friend than anyone else.

JD

Maybe not. Maybe I'll just settle  
for being a better kisser.

PETER

You sonofab--

And with that, Peter decks JD with a solid right cross. As  
JD hits the floor, we...SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. MCSORLEY'S - NIGHT

The wake's over. Stragglers depart. MALCOLM sits on the curb, watches Maureen getting into her Civic. Tess approaches.

TESS  
(re: Maureen)  
The one that got away?

MALCOLM  
Not really. Never had her.

She sits down on the curb next to him.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)  
Do not pity me.

TESS  
I don't, actually. I kind of envy  
the friendship you guys had.

Whether it's the booze or the mood, MALCOLM lowers his guard.

MALCOLM  
Maureen said sometimes it's harder  
to lose a friend than a lover.

TESS  
I think she's right. That's what I  
came to talk to you about...

As Tess hands Malcolm her CASE FILE, we're --

INT. JAMES ALBERTSON'S LOFT - LATER

Malcolm and Tess question James Albertson, Susannah's friend.

JAMES  
Yes, I filed suit against Susannah  
in 2004. That blog was my idea and  
when it started making money...I  
wanted my share.

TESS  
The verdict was sealed. Can you  
tell us what happened?

JAMES  
I spent 30 grand on lawyers to get  
a 20 grand settlement. And  
Susannah and I patched things up.

MALCOLM

You were with her the night she died.

JAMES

(exhales)

We had drinks at Libre. I already told you that.

MALCOLM

Did you go back to her apartment with her?

JAMES

No. She was a little drunk. So I put her in a cab at the bar and went home.

TESS

That we can verify. A neighbor saw Susannah return home alone.

JAMES

A neighbor? Who, Molly?

TESS

Why? You have a problem with Molly?

JAMES

Molly liked to think she was Susannah's friend. But I thought she was just a groupie. A fan of the blog. Who didn't understand that what Susannah wrote was... fiction.

TESS

What do you mean?

JAMES

It was an ego boost for Susannah. Having Molly in her life. But I just thought it was creepy.

As Malcolm and Tess share a look, we're --

EXT. MIA SHERMAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

JD and Walker emerge from their car.

WALKER

You were outta line to bait Peter like that.

(MORE)

WALKER (CONT'D)

I know you don't want to hear it  
from me. But you were outta line.

JD

This what happens? You sober up  
and you become the voice of reason?  
(beat, conceding)  
I know...

WALKER

How's the jaw?

JD

Sonafabitch has a right like Manny  
Pacquiao.

PRELAP -- KNOCK, KNOCK.

INT. MIA SHERMAN'S ENTRY

Mia opens her front door to face JD and Walker.

MIA

(upon seeing them)  
You're kidding.

JD

One question. You answer honestly,  
you won't see us again. You don't,  
Detective McRae and I might have to  
lease the sublet next door...

As she looks at them...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

Malcolm and Tess sit across the table from Molly Coughlin.

TESS

Molly?  
(then)  
Susannah was your friend, right?

MOLLY

Of course --

TESS

Not easy losing a friend, is it?

MOLLY

I told you, I didn't kill her.

TESS

I'm talking about the fact she was getting married.

There's a slight flicker across Molly's face.

TESS (CONT'D)

I get it. I hate it when one of my single girlfriends suddenly ups and gets married. Like she's found the Golden Ticket and you're stuck eating Kung Pao-for-one the rest of your life.

MOLLY

I was happy for her!

MALCOLM

You were jealous!

Malcolm slides the Medical Report across the table.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Our tox report said Susannah had Valium in her system the night she was strangled. She didn't have a prescription for Valium. According to the CVS on Union, you did.

MOLLY

Oh, so I'm the only one in this city who takes Valium? What else you gonna charge me with? Rooting for the Niners?

Tess motions to Malcolm. Let me take over. He nods.

TESS

Here's what I think happened. On the night she died, she couldn't sleep. Came to you to borrow some Valium. You gave her some. Just before you killed her.

MOLLY

You're crazy, you know that? This is crazy--

TESS

We ran a background. You didn't tell us you spent six months in a psych ward for an attachment disorder after your college roommate filed a restraining order.

MOLLY

That was a totally different thing.

TESS

The sad part is, you weren't going to lose Susannah at all. Because her fiancée doesn't exist.

Molly stares at TESS, stunned.

MOLLY

What? No that's not possible. She told me all about him --

TESS

He was a hoax. Fiction. A made up story for the readers of her blog. It was joke, Molly. You killed her for no reason at all.

Molly lowers her eyes. A long beat passes.

MOLLY

She said we'd always be friends. But they all move on. They meet their perfect men and they live their perfect lives. And they forget you. All of them. Why didn't she just tell me the truth?

Molly hangs her head, as Malcolm gives Tess an approving nod: *You've done good.* Tess smiles to herself.

INT. "GATE" - JOHN LEESON'S OFFICE

JD and WALKER face John Leeson.

LEESON

I thought we were done with this crap.

WALKER

We're not here to see you.

They gesture to Leeson's associate, Alex Barnes, nearby. He's busy lighting a cigar. An Opus X.

JD

Mr. Barnes, were you in a sexual relationship with Mia Sherman?

LEESON

(wtf?)  
What did you say?

ALEX

John, I don't know what the hell they're talking about--

JD

Our surveillance saw a man matching your description leave her apartment an hour ago.

WALKER

We thought John was the cigar smoker. We were wrong. It's you.

ALEX

You guys on the rock? That doesn't prove anything.

JD

True. Luckily, Mia just did that for us. Admitted you were sleeping together.

WALKER

Accessory to murder charges have a way of making people cooperative.

JD

She said when you found out she was also seeing Kevin -- you went nuts.

WALKER

(to Alex)

Guess that's why you were so eager to tell us Kevin was running off to meet a "mystery woman."

JD

We may not look bright, but we catch on eventually. And by the way, no good comes from smoking.

Cornered, Alex suddenly SPRINTS for the door. JD and Walker follow in pursuit.

INT. "GATE"

Alex RACES through the packed club. Music pumps from the speakers. Dancers are bowled over like ten pins. Alex reaches a back door, RAMS through it.

JD and Walker dodge clubgoers, follow. JD pushes through the same back door, Walker goes in another direction.

OUTSIDE -- Alex flies INTO THE ALLEY. A private GARBAGE TRUCK doing nighttime collections blocks the north end.

ALEX  
Jesus. Move it!

The SANITATION WORKER barely reacts. Alex is trapped. Not sure what to do. ANOTHER ANGLE, as JD approaches with gun held high. Tension as JD inches forward. NO SIGN OF ALEX.

JD  
(calling)  
Come out! Show hands!

Alex suddenly RISES from BEHIND THE DUMPSTER. His GUN TRAINED on JD. But before he can fire --

A BULLET PIERCES HIS CHEST. Alex drops to the ground, revealing WALKER -- behind him -- in a shooter's stance.

WALKER  
(looks at JD)  
That's for Kevin.

As Walker and JD share a look of rueful satisfaction, we HEAR --

PETER (PRELAP)  
The man who murdered Detective  
Ulster has been identified as Alex  
Barnes.

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Peter addresses a throng of REPORTERS from a makeshift dais at a hastily-called press conference.

PETER  
Mr. Barnes was shot and killed when  
he engaged Detectives McRae and  
Conlin in a gunfight.

BACK OF THE ROOM -- JD watches Peter. Has to admit he's smooth. Then...Perkins from IA steps in next to JD.

PERKINS  
Good job today.

JD  
Thanks.

PERKINS

(a beat, then)

I'm sure you've heard about the photos Bay City Vice took of your friend Ulster. Word has it your ex-wife had 'em buried. Happen to stumble across those photos?

JD

No, sir.

PERKINS

(studies him)

I know what it's like having friends on the job, but I can have your badge if you're lying...

JD

I don't believe you, Perkins. I don't think you have any idea what it's like having friends on the job.

(then)

We done? Cause the man is talking about me...

Perkins gives him a lingering look that says "this isn't over." As he exits, JD turns his attention back to Peter.

PETER

-- though we have yet to recover the .32 caliber handgun used in the murder, the D.A.'s office considers the case closed. No further statements at this time.

Peter moves off the dais, ignoring the inevitable barrage of questions to find --

KATHERINE, waiting for him.

KATHERINE

You're good at those.

PETER

Good at some things, not so good at others.

(off her look)

You know how long I've loved you, Kat --

KATHERINE

Peter --

PETER

(continuing)

So long that I believed it when you told me you were over JD. But it's clear to me...you're not. And I can't be the guy you're with while you're thinking about another guy.

KATHERINE

Peter --

PETER

One day, maybe... who knows? But for now, I'd like to stick to the things I'm good at.

He exits. Katherine, hurt, watches him go. From across the room, Katherine sees JD WATCHING her. A moment. But it's a moment of empathy. DISSOLVING TO...

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO

MUSIC RISES. The city at Golden Hour. The Bridge, the Wharf, Chinatown. The hour growing later.

INT. MCSORLEY'S - NIGHT

The old hang-out. JD, Walker and Malcolm share a booth.

MALCOLM

I'm not here for five years and suddenly...twice in one night. What's that called...when that happens?

WALKER

Called too much free time, I think.

Malcolm smiles.

JD

(then, exhales)

This is lame. What are we even doing here?

MALCOLM

You're here to set things straight. McRae and I are here for the steak fries.

They look up as Peter enters. JD stands. They face each other.

JD

Thanks for coming.

PETER  
 (a beat, then)  
 Sorry for that punch.

JD  
 Sorry for giving you a helluva  
 reason to throw it.

JD reaches out his hand. Peter takes it, pulls him into a hug.

PETER  
 Guess we both lost her.

JD nods, as the old friends sit down at their table. Then Walker looks OFF-CAMERA --

WALKER  
 (surprised)  
 You gotta be kidding me.

ANGLE ON THE FRONT DOOR -- as Katherine enters with Maureen. MUTUAL SHOCK as they see the men at the table.

WALKER (CONT'D)  
 What are you guys -- ?

KATHERINE  
 (a look to Maureen)  
 We just thought it was time to  
 catch up.

WALKER  
 Cool. *Awkward* but cool. You guys  
 want to -- ?  
 (indicates the table)

Katherine settles between JD and Peter. The trio trades glances, doing their best to deny the OBVIOUS AWKWARDNESS.

JD  
 (standing)  
 Why don't I get a pitcher?

AT THE BAR -- as the BARTENDER slides a pitcher to JD. He reaches for his wallet, instead pulling out the OLD PHOTO of the FRIENDS. He stares at it, as WALKER steps in behind him.

WALKER  
 (to the Bartender)  
 Cranberry and soda.

The Bartender moves away. Walker studies the photo.

WALKER (CONT'D)  
 Look at us. Young and dumb.  
 (long beat, then)  
 Be nice to have that back.

JD  
 Maybe we do.

A nice thought. Walker considers, then--

WALKER  
 Know what's funny? We solved  
 Kevin's murder, but we never found  
 the gun or the mystery woman.

JD  
 (shrugs)  
 Guns disappear. And for all we  
 know, there was no mystery woman.

INT. APARTMENT -- NIGHT

CLOSE on a GUN in someone's hand. A .32, To be exact. WIDEN  
 to reveal that someone is...

TESS  
 (on phone)  
 Yes, I have it. I know it can be  
 traced back to you. I'll get rid  
 of it, I promise. Please...just  
 stop calling.

To WHOM she's speaking to will be REVEALED later. For now,  
 Tess clicks off the phone. Troubled.

But instead of getting rid of the gun, she... SLIDES it deep  
 into her underwear drawer. Off her, we... SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW