

Untitled NBC Universal Pilot

by

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TEASER

FADE IN:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LIEUTENANT ADAM MOLNAR waits, watching silently. Nelson enters.

NELSON

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

LT. MOLNAR

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

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

NELSON

Detective Winters. I'm Luis--

WINTERS

Hi. What do you see here?

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

WINTERS (CONT'D)

Yeah, yeah, we should chat, bond.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WINTERS (CONT'D)

And we will. But tour's up and I got a date in an hour, so I'd really like to get out of here, so... What do you see?

Nelson starts examining the body. Narrating:

NELSON

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

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

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

NELSON (CONT'D)

Probably fell.

Bartos starts to fall--

WINTERS

No.

Bartos stops, mid fall--

WITH NELSON AND WINTERS AT THE BOTTOM

WINTERS (CONT'D)

Bruises on the head are cylindrical--

NELSON

You hit the stairs at the right angle--

WINTERS

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

NELSON

And around him. And the stairs still look wet.

BACK ON THE STAIRS WITH BARTOS

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

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

He was carrying a glass of water.

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

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (2)

2

And Bartos winds up right back where we found him.

Winters shakes her head, points to the leg:

WINTERS

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

Nelson looks; she's right.

NELSON

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

WINTERS

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

NELSON

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

WINTERS

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

NELSON

I just got here.

WINTERS

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

LT. MOLNAR

Stop jerking us around; what's it
smell like?

WINTERS

Floor. Except over there.

Winters points to a corner of the room.

WINTERS (CONT'D)

That part smells like detergent.

LT. MOLNAR

You smelled the entire room.

WINTERS

No.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WINTERS (CONT'D)

Just the section that had absolutely
no dust and a tiny bit of blood
splatter on the wall next to it.

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

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

There's hair missing on his wrist.
Suspect duct tapes our vic; then
slices his leg a few times.

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

The cops watch in the foreground as Winters narrates.

WINTERS (CONT'D)

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

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

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

WINTERS (CONT'D)

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

LT. MOLNAR

Winters, you get briefed when you
came in here?

WINTERS

Nobody volunteered.

LT. MOLNAR

Because nobody talks to you.

WINTERS

Yes. It's very rude. I'm thrilled
you're talking to me right now.

(CONTINUED)

LT. MOLNAR

If they had, they'd have told you,
this guy isn't in the mob. He's in
the frozen yogurt business.

Winters is seemingly unaffected.

WINTERS

Weird. Wonder why a guy in the frozen
yogurt business would get tortured
and killed.

(to Nelson)

We should get on that first thing in
the morning.

NELSON

Where are you--

WINTERS

I told you. I got a date.

(off Nelson's look)

Hey, it's not like the killer's gonna
torture him any more.

And Winters leaves. Nelson turns to the LT.

LT. MOLNAR

Welcome to Robbery Homicide.

Off Nelson--

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

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

3

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

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

WINTERS
Free food?

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

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

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

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

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

WINTERS
It was a belted trench coat!

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

WINTERS
Why do you bother fixing me up?

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

WINTERS
You mean like your husband?

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

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

WINTERS
 Why do you stay with him?

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

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

SARAH
 There you go.

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

4 INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT -- DAY

4

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

NELSON
 There's nothing to eat.

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

NELSON
 She humiliated me.

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

Nelson re-opens the fridge.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

NELSON

I know she doesn't act like a cop,
doesn't even look like one--

GENEVIEVE

What does that mean?

NELSON

She just--

Genevieve closes the fridge door to get his attention.

GENEVIEVE

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

NELSON

That's not what I meant--

GENEVIEVE

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

NELSON

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

GENEVIEVE

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

NELSON

Because she's a bitch!

GENEVIEVE

Not a bastard?

Nelson gives her a look--

NELSON

I gotta go.

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

5 INT. BARTOS' LIVING ROOM -- DAY

5

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

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

BARTOS' WIFE

No one would hurt Andrew. Everyone loved him.

NELSON

No financial problems? No trouble at home?

(off her silence)

I'm sorry, I can only guess how you're feeling right now, but any information...

BARTOS' WIFE

No, nothing like that.

WINTERS

...But something?

BARTOS' WIFE

He'd been distant.

WINTERS

For the last week?

BARTOS' WIFE

(surprised)

Yeah.

Now Nelson is also surprised.

WINTERS

Since he got the black eye?

BARTOS' WIFE

(yes, but)

That was just from running into a door.

WINTERS

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

Nelson reacts to the insensitivity--

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

6

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

SKLAR

It's unbelievable. Andrew was such a nice guy; this doesn't make sense.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

SKLAR (CONT'D)

You sure it wasn't a robbery or something?

WINTERS

My instincts say no, on account of nothing being robbed.

(off Sklar's look)

What happened last Thursday?

SKLAR

(surprised by the question)

Nothing. Why?

WINTERS

He had a black eye.

SKLAR

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

7 EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE RESTAURANT -- NIGHT -- FLASHBACK

7

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

BARTOS

You could have paid for once.

OBERMAN

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

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

BARTOS

Geez--

His partners laugh at this.

BARTOS (CONT'D)

It's not funny!

8 INT. SMOOOOTHIES INC. - EDWARDS' OFFICE -- DAY

8

Now we're with Nelson, who's interviewing Edwards (handsome, polite, also understandably upset).

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

EDWARDS

Bartos is dead; somebody killed him;
why are you asking me about Thursday?

NELSON

(takes a beat)
I'm not sure.

9 INT. SMOOOOTHIES INC. - HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER 9

Winters and Nelson have regrouped in the hallway.

WINTERS

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

NELSON

They seem pretty torn up.

WINTERS

Where's the fourth partner?

NELSON

Oberman; he's with a supplier.

WINTERS

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

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

WINTERS (CONT'D)

Excuse me, miss, I'm about to throw
up.

SECRETARY

The bathroom's just down--

WINTERS

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

SECRETARY

A bowl? Shouldn't you--

WINTERS

Please?

The secretary quickly walks off.

(CONTINUED)

NELSON
What are you doing?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As the woman turns to go fetch--

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

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

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

And Winters heads for--

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

10

Nelson and Winters are back with Sklar.

SKLAR

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

WINTERS

Do you watch CSI?

SKLAR

What?

WINTERS

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

(Sklar says nothing)

You're smart enough to know you're gonna get caught. Which makes this an incredibly easy interrogation. So I'm gonna let my partner take over.

(sotto to Sklar)

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

NELSON

(to Winters; holding
in his anger)

Can we talk? Outside?

WINTERS

(re Sklar)

He's lying; break him.

Nelson is annoyed, but turns to Sklar:

NELSON

What happened that night?

WINTERS

(to Nelson)

What are you? Canadian? I believe the correct phrasing is: what happened that night, eh?

Nelson grabs Winters by the arm and pulls her outside--

11 INT. SMOOOOTHIES INC. - HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

11

Winters and Nelson argue--

WINTERS

Do not touch me.

NELSON

Yeah, I'm the one acting inappropriately.

WINTERS

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

NELSON

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

WINTERS

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

NELSON

I start out nice--

WINTERS

You are nice!

NELSON

Is that your problem?

WINTERS

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

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

SKLAR

(sheepish)

We were lying because it meant nothing.

WINTERS

It always does.

12 EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE RESTAURANT -- NIGHT -- REVISED
FLASHBACK

12

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

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

BARTOS

You could have paid for once.

OBERMAN

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

BARTOS

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

SKLAR

Chill out, guys, we're celebrating.

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

OBERMAN

Tired of you riding me--

SKLAR

Brian, stop it--

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

EDWARDS

The hell you doing?

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

SKLAR

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

13 INT. DETECTIVE CAR - MOVING -- NIGHT

13

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

WINTERS

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

NELSON

These guys don't seem like killers.

WINTERS

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

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

Some do.

WINTERS

Not these guys.

NELSON

(skeptical)

You're sure of that?

WINTERS

I'm sure.

NELSON

Based on what?

WINTERS

My superpower.

Nelson nods, annoyed.

WINTERS (CONT'D)

I know how to read people.

NELSON

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

Winters turns to him, looks closely...

WINTERS

(figuring it out)

You've got the flat accent and quick patter of an L.A. boy, but with a slight twang; you were born somewhere else, Georgia.

(Nelson reacts: good guess)

When you're nervous, you touch your chest right there, looks like an oval pendant, I'm guessing a St. Michael's medal. Black Catholic's not so common; neither is black 'Luis'; mom was Hispanic; bet she stuck you in a Catholic school, probably Loyola.

(then)

You're, what, 30? Incredibly young for RHD -- not as young as I was, but still -- means you're smart and hardworking enough you could be running a hedge fund in your pajamas, but you're making 90 plus bonus

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (2)

13

WINTERS (CONT'D)

busting bad guys, means there's some personal reason; maybe friend or family hurt by bad guys.

(reads his reaction)

Or... something more personal. You took your mom's religion. Maybe Dad turned to the dark side, young Skywalker joins the Jedi Knights--

NELSON

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

He says nothing more. Winters smiles.

14 EXT. OBERMAN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

14

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

WINTERS

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

Winters moves towards the window. Looks inside.

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

WINTERS (CONT'D)

There's a fire in there--

Nelson looks in another window.

NELSON

Just something burnt on the stove.

Winters turns and glares at Nelson.

WINTERS

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

15 INT. OBERMAN'S KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

15

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

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

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

WINTERS

Nelson...

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

WINTERS (CONT'D)

Guess he didn't do it.

Off Nelson--

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

16 INT. OBERMAN'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

16

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

NELSON

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

WINTERS

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

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

NELSON

Consistent with what killed his partner.

WINTERS

And one half is bigger than one third.

NELSON

It wasn't the partners.

WINTERS

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

NELSON

Because of the differences in the crime scenes.

WINTERS

You just said--

NELSON

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

Winters muses on that good point as Nelson starts searching the room.

(CONTINUED)

WINTERS

So... the killer was more pissed off
at vic one.

NELSON

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

WINTERS

(realizes something)

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

NELSON

Like?

WINTERS

The name of vic two.

NELSON

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

WINTERS

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

Nelson is now looking through a wastebasket.

WINTERS (CONT'D)

We find out where they were Thursday--

Nelson pulls out a receipt--

NELSON

The high desert.

(tosses to Winters)

Receipt from Thursday night, 12:31
AM. He bought gas, paid in cash.
Right outside Lancaster.

WINTERS

(cool)

Road trip.

Winters finally gets up.

17 EXT. LANCASTER -- MINIMART -- NIGHT 17

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

18 INT. MINIMART -- NIGHT 18

The obese CLERK looks at a photo of Oberman--

CLERK

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

NELSON

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

CLERK

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

WINTERS

Where you keep the security tapes?

The clerk takes a closer look at Winters...

CLERK

...You I'll definitely remember.

Winters smiles.

19 INT. MINIMART -- BACK ROOM -- NIGHT 19

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

WINTERS

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

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

NELSON

Why's Oberman driving?

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

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

WINTERS

Because Bartos can only see out of one eye.

VIDEO: The other two men wait in the car.

Winters fast forwards the video.

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

WINTERS (CONT'D)

Nasty dent in the fender. That's why we're here.

NELSON

An accident?

WINTERS

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

20 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM -- DAY (DAY 3)

20

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

SKLAR

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

WINTERS

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

SKLAR

I told you. Nobody.

WINTERS

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

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

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

WINTERS (CONT'D)

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

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

WINTERS (CONT'D)

Whatever you're hiding isn't worth that.

SKLAR

I don't know anything.

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

NELSON

Tell us about Lancaster.

Sklar's shocked, his demeanor suddenly changes.

SKLAR

...I want a lawyer.

21 INT. PRECINCT HALLWAY -- DAY

21

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

WINTERS

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

NELSON

You weren't getting anything--

WINTERS

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

NELSON

You were going to show him the video--

WINTERS

When the time was right.

NELSON

When's that?

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

WINTERS

When I say it is.

She stops Nelson. She's really pissed.

WINTERS (CONT'D)

I'm the D-3, the murder book's in my name.

NELSON

So my job is what? To admire you?

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

WINTERS

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

NELSON

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

WINTERS

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

22 INT. SOUTH CENTRAL HOUSE -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

22

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

WINTERS (V.O.)

We were interviewing this girl when my partner saw something.

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

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

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

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

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

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

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

Like I said, I was a Boot. Gets me a dead partner...

23 INT. PRECINCT HALLWAY -- BACK TO SCENE

23

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

WINTERS (V.O.)

...And this memento mori.

(then)

I didn't know what he saw; I'll never know. But he was in charge.

(then)

Two of us going in different directions gets us killed. You gonna follow my lead?

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

24 INT. SQUADROOM -- CONTINUOUS

24

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

WINTERS

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

LT. MOLNAR

You think they're the killers?

WINTERS

They'll lead us to the killer.

LT. MOLNAR

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

Winters abruptly turns and walks away. Nelson follows.

NELSON

Where are you going?

WINTERS

You heard the man; they need private security.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

WINTERS (CONT'D)
(off Nelson, unabashed)
Yeah, we're using them as bait.

25 INT. NELSON'S CAR - OUTSIDE SKLAR'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

25

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

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

26

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

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

NELSON
Why are you a cop, Winters?

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

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

WINTERS
You really talk like that?

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

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

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

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

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

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

WINTERS

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

NELSON

(annoyed)

Actually he gave them boils.

WINTERS

(not letting up)

So the half of the murders we don't solve, God wasn't offended by them?

NELSON

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

WINTERS

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

NELSON

So why did you become a cop?

WINTERS

For the chicks.

Nelson looks out his rear view window.

NELSON

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

He hangs up and watches--

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

27

But the man (**RAYMOND BEAN**, 50s, black) isn't headed for Sklar's home; he's headed for Nelson's car. Nelson gets out to intercept--

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

NELSON
 (regular guy)
 Had a little car trouble; called
 triple A--

BEAN
 (badges him)
 Raymond Bean, Internal Affairs.

Off Nelson--

28 INT. BEAN'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

28

Nelson and Bean.

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

NELSON
 I've heard rumors.

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

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

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

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

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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

BEAN (CONT'D)

(then)

Dirt tends to spread. You want to stay clean, call I.A. soon as you see any.

NELSON

Can I go now?

Bean nods. Nelson exits.

29 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE SKLAR'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

29

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

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

SKLAR'S WIFE (O.S.)

Charlie! ...Charlie!

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

30 EXT. SKLAR'S BACKYARD -- NIGHT

30

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

NELSON

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

SKLAR'S WIFE

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

NELSON

He didn't go out front--

SKLAR'S WIFE

There's a gate to the alley--

Nelson runs toward the gate--

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

31

Nelson bursts through the gate into the alleyway.

A half block away is a white van. Beside it, Sklar is on his hands and knees, a baseball bat still gripped uselessly in one hand.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

A LARGE MAN (it's too dark and too far to get a good look at him) hits Sklar with some sort of metal bar--

NELSON

Police! Stop!

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

Nelson runs towards the van, his gun out.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Get out of the--

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

NELSON (CONT'D)

This is Detective Luis Nelson, LAPD.
Kidnapping at 1235 Main Street, Valley
Village...

Off Nelson, worried he just got someone killed--

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

32 INT. SKLAR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT 32

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

WINTERS
Where's Nelson?

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

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

SID TECH
Getting reamed by the Lieutenant--

WINTERS
--Where?

SID TECH
They needed privacy.

33 INT. SKLAR'S HOUSE - SMALL BATHROOM -- NIGHT 33

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

LT. MOLNAR
You ignored my direct orders--

Winters enters as:

NELSON
I'm sorry. I screwed up.

WINTERS
Why are Cole and Hayes here?

NELSON
Because I screwed up.

(CONTINUED)

WINTERS

(to Molnar)

You're gonna let them sit on this case, take the ransom call because Nelson screwed up.

LT. MOLNAR

You both screwed up.

WINTERS

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

LT. MOLNAR

I haven't decided anything.

WINTERS

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

NELSON

I didn't fall asleep.

WINTERS

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

NELSON

This isn't helping--

WINTERS

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

LT. MOLNAR

(makes a decision)

Cole and Hayes are staying here.

The LT leaves. Nelson turns to Winters--

NELSON

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

Winters seems unaffected; she opens the medicine cabinet as--

(CONTINUED)

WINTERS

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

NELSON

(confused)

Why not?

She's found some dental floss, starts flossing.

WINTERS

Because the guy's already dead--

NELSON

How can you know?

WINTERS

Because I killed him.

(then)

And because there was no ransom for the first two guys.

Off Nelson's look, Winters stops flossing--

WINTERS (CONT'D)

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

And Winters leaves. Nelson slowly smiles, impressed.

Nelson exits, smiling. Cole and Hayes approach.

COLE

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

HAYES

(to Nelson)

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

(CONTINUED)

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

Hayes and Cole exchange a look.

HAYES
(to Cole)
You owe me twenty.

NELSON
What's going on?

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

Okay, that throws Nelson for a beat.

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

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

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

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

NELSON
Her first partner, he dead?

COLE
Yeah.

NELSON
He die in the line of duty?

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

35

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

HAYES (V.O.)
Is fishing the line of duty?

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

COLE (V.O.)

I think it counts -- she pissed him off so much he retired to Florida.

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

36 INT. SQUAD ROOM -- MORNING (DAY 4)

36

Nelson pursues Winters toward the interview room.

NELSON

How could you pull my personnel file?

WINTERS

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

NELSON

I knew you'd say that.

WINTERS

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

NELSON

And I knew you'd say that.

WINTERS

I've been to paradise but I've never been to me.

(off Nelson's look)

No way you knew I'd say that. We got a suspect waiting; can you put away your hurt feelings for a little while--

NELSON

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

WINTERS

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

Nelson stops Winters.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

WINTERS (CONT'D)

I told you not to touch me.

Nelson lets go.

NELSON

How did you cut your arm?

WINTERS

I was on the Serengeti--

NELSON

Stop lying. How did you cut your arm?

Winters gives Nelson a long look.

WINTERS

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

NELSON

Shut up.

WINTERS

(heading off)

I'll take lead on the interrogation of the last partner.

NELSON

(thoughtful)

...No.

WINTERS

(stops, turns to him)

I don't care how mad you are; you're not doing it; not until you learn how to lie like a grown up.

NELSON

I'm not taking the lead either...

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

37 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM -- DAY

37

CLOSE ON Sklar's scared Wife...

SKLAR'S WIFE

...Where's my husband?

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

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

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

NELSON

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

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

NELSON (CONT'D)

Ask him again.

SKLAR'S WIFE

Where's my husband?

Edwards averts his eyes toward Winters.

WINTERS

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

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

EDWARDS

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

WINTERS

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

EDWARDS

We didn't even make it up there.

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

38

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

OBERMAN

(a little loud)

Sklar, your wife is so gonna kill you.

EDWARDS

(to camera, not drunk)

It's just a figure of speech.

(CONTINUED)

WINTERS (O.S.)

Yeah, we get it.

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

EDWARDS

The guy came out of nowhere--

WINTERS

The guy in the white van?

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

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

WINTERS (CONT'D)

(calm)

Stop.

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

WINTERS (CONT'D)

Get in the front seat.

EDWARDS

What?

WINTERS

Your story is much more believable if you're driving.

(off Edwards' look)

Drunk hit and run is pretty bad, but only if you're the driver--

EDWARDS

We made up a lie to protect--

WINTERS

Who?

(indicates Bartos behind the wheel)

The first dead guy? Soon as he's killed there's no one to protect. Whoever was driving is still alive.

TIGHT ON WINTERS

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (2)

38

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

WIDEN TO REVEAL Edwards and Bartos have switched seats.

WINTERS (CONT'D)
Okay, continue.

The car continues on its skid--

39 EXT. HIGHWAY -- CONTINUOUS

39

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

40 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM -- BACK TO SCENE

40

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

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

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

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

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

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

WINTERS
Thank you. You can go home.

Off Nelson--

41 INT. PRECINCT HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

41

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

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

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

WINTERS

I know.

NELSON

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

WINTERS

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

(then)

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

NELSON

Then we can't let him go.

WINTERS

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

NELSON

Don't call her that.

WINTERS

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

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

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

42 EXT. LANCASTER - OUTSIDE STRIP CLUB -- DAY 42

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

WINTERS (V.O.)

How bad does a lie have to be that
you'd rather die than tell the truth?

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

NELSON (V.O.)

Technically, they'd rather let their
friends die than tell the truth.

And we finally ARRIVE AT:

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

WINTERS

More technically, they'd rather let
their *partners* die than tell the
truth.

(off Nelson's look)

I'm just saying there's a difference.

43 INT. DETECTIVE CAR -- CONTINUOUS 43

NELSON

How long we gonna--

WINTERS

When are we gonna get there, Mommy?

NELSON

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

WINTERS

That's just the guilt talking.

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

WINTERS (CONT'D)

(sighs, hates to do
this)

Get back in or I call Internal
Affairs.

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

Funny.

He steps out. Winters calls after him:

WINTERS

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

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

NELSON

How--

WINTERS

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

Nelson starts to get out of the car again--

WINTERS (CONT'D)

I said--

NELSON

Edwards is moving.

Winters looks out the front window to see--

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

WITH WINTERS AND NELSON

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

WINTERS

It's a stripper. You think the killer's a stripper?

44 CONTINUED:

44

Nelson stops but, unlike Winters, he never takes his eyes off Edwards--

NELSON

How do you know she's a--

WINTERS

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

NELSON

I think he wants information--

WINTERS

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

Nelson starts moving toward Edwards--

WINTERS (CONT'D)

I will call I.A.--

NELSON

--He's got a tire iron.

Nelson starts running.

WITH EDWARDS AND STRIPPER

Edwards is indeed brandishing a tire iron threateningly--

WINTERS

Freeze!

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

45 EXT. ALLEY BESIDE STRIP CLUB -- DAY

45

WIDE SHOT

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

JUMP FROM CLOSE ON ONE INTERROGATOR/INTERROGATEE TO THE NEXT

EDWARDS

I just needed directions.

STRIPPER

He was just asking for directions.

(CONTINUED)

NELSON
With a tire iron?

EDWARDS
Car trouble.

WINTERS
It's working fine now.

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

WIDEN AS Winters approaches Nelson and the Stripper.

WINTERS
It's over; he talked.

STRIPPER
No he didn't.

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

STRIPPER
I don't. But I know cops.

WINTERS
Well, that's bad for us.

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

STRIPPER
You got no grounds to search me.

WINTERS
True.

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

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

STRIPPER
(back to unfazed)
I got no idea.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (2)

45

WINTERS
 (turns to Nelson)
 Who here doesn't know cops?

TIME CUT TO:

Winters and Nelson approach Edwards.

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

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

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

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

46

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

BARTOS
 Good stuff, huh?

EDWARDS
 I don't feel anything.

BARTOS
 (giggling)
 No, it's good.

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

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

NELSON
 Stop lying.

EDWARDS
 I'm not lying--

WINTERS
 At least tell a lie we might believe.

(CONTINUED)

BACK WITH THE FLASHBACK

Same as we just saw but different speakers.

EDWARDS

Good stuff, huh?

BARTOS

I don't feel anything.

EDWARDS

(giggling)

No, it's good.

BARTOS

It's crap; you're high because you're drunk and scared. You've been snorting baby powder.

(sees something, starts walking)

Son of a bitch ripped us off.

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

LUC

Good night gentlemen. Pleasure doing business with you.

BARTOS

We want our money back.

LUC

Caveat losers.

BARTOS

There's four of us--

EDWARDS

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

BARTOS

Our money!

SKLAR

He could have a gun.

BARTOS

(to Luc)

You got a gun?

(CONTINUED)

LUC

Yeah.

BARTOS

Show us the gun.

(no response so he
yells)

Show us the gun or show us our money.

Luc slowly reaches into his pocket...

EDWARDS

This is stupid. Bartos, we gotta--

And Luc pulls out... Nothing.

LUC

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

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

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

SKLAR

There's over three grand here.

EDWARDS

(scared)

Take our two hundred and let's get
out of here.

BARTOS

Take it all.

Sklar grabs the money; Bartos spits on Luc.

BARTOS (CONT'D)

Cheap lesson: don't underestimate
people in suits.

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

They all scramble into the car, peel out, hitting the fender
on a street sign as they go--

47 EXT. ALLEY BESIDE STRIP CLUB - BACK TO SCENE

47

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

WINTERS

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

EDWARDS

I was gonna buy him off--

NELSON

Before or after he killed you?

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

NELSON (CONT'D)

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

WINTERS

Where's he live?

NELSON

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

Winters grabs a sheet that Nelson was writing on.

WINTERS

Phil McGinley -- that his brother?

NELSON

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

WINTERS

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

48 EXT. PHIL MCGINLEY'S HOUSE -- DAY

48

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

WINTERS

You know what would be nice? A big rock.

(CONTINUED)

NELSON
You gonna break in?

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

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

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

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

WINTERS
Fine.

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

NELSON
What's going on?

WINTERS
Look at the driveway.

There's a discolored spot - silver.

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

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

BLACK

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

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

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

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

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

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

NELSON

He's alive.

He's unbelievably relieved.

50 EXT. PHIL MCGINLEY'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

50

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

WINTERS

How long is this gonna take?

PARAMEDIC

(annoyed)

You mean to keep him alive?

WINTERS

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

PARAMEDIC

(calling out)

Can we get security here?

WINTERS

(not moving)

It's okay, I'm a cop.

AT THE DETECTIVE CAR

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

NELSON

Is he gonna be okay?

WINTERS

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

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

(no point)

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

Edwards suddenly gets a very brief scared look.

WINTERS

What's wrong?

EDWARDS

Nothing.

Winters follows where his gaze went - into the crowd.

NELSON

Did you see Luc?

EDWARDS

Thought I did, I was wrong.

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

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

NELSON

You see something?

WINTERS

No.

NELSON

Then what are you doing?

WINTERS

Seeing who runs.

She starts to quicken her pace. After a couple of steps--

A guy takes off and starts sprinting away. It's Luc--

Winters pursues. Nelson pursues Winters.

NELSON

(to Uni re Edwards)

Watch him.

They bust through the crowd in pursuit.

(CONTINUED)

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

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

NELSON
Freeze!

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

WINTERS
Did you think that was gonna work?

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

Nelson and Winters stop, stunned--

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

Guns drawn, they cautiously approach his prone body--

DRIVER
He came out of nowhere--

NELSON
Get back in the car.

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

DRIVER
(from car)
Should I call 911?

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

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

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

51 INT. DETECTIVE CAR - OUTSIDE MCGINLEY'S HOME -- NIGHT 51

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

WINTERS

Stop lying.

EDWARDS

I haven't said anything.

WINTERS

I was referring to everything you've said to us. Ever.

(off his silence)

Why did you pretend you didn't see Luc in the crowd?

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

NELSON

Just tell him what we found out.

Winters gives Nelson a look. Nelson backs off.

NELSON (CONT'D)

All your partners were beaten with this.

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

NELSON (CONT'D)

It's a tire iron, from a Porsche. Weird weapon of choice.

EDWARDS

(getting anxious)

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

NELSON

(to Winters)

Just tell him.

(CONTINUED)

EDWARDS

Tell me what?

Winters ignores Nelson.

WINTERS

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

EDWARDS

(thrown)

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

WINTERS

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

Nelson can't stand idly by any longer--

NELSON

--We just got back from the hospital.

WINTERS

(pissed)

Nelson--

NELSON

(to Edwards)

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

WINTERS

(seething)

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

EDWARDS

(surprised)

Is Charlie okay?

WINTERS

(to Nelson)

Can we talk outside?

NELSON

No.

(to Edwards)

Your partner's in bad shape but he's
alive. And awake... And angry.

52 INT. E.R. -- DAY 52

Nelson talks to Sklar. Sklar's head is bandaged, he's woozy. But growing angry...

NELSON (V.O.)

I told him you fed us that lie about the hit and run while he was getting beaten half to death and his wife was begging for your help.

(then)

He gave us a different story.

53 INT. STRIP CLUB - BACK ROOM -- NIGHT -- FLASHBACK 53

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

NELSON (V.O.)

He says Luc's brother was there that night.

54 EXT. STRIP CLUB PARKING LOT -- NIGHT -- REVISED FLASHBACK 54

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

NELSON (V.O.)

It wasn't Luc you were fighting with. It was Phil. And you didn't just fight with him; you killed him...

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

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

With the tire iron you took out of your friend's car. Luc's been getting revenge.

55 INT. DETECTIVE CAR -- BACK TO SCENE 55

Edwards is wavering.

EDWARDS

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

NELSON

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

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

55

Edwards pauses, agonized...

EDWARDS
It was self-defense.

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

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

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

56

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

BARTOS
Get off him! You're killing him!

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

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

EDWARDS
Let him go!

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

A horrible crack.

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

The men are terrified.

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

Bartos feels Phil's neck.

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

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

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

56

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

EDWARDS

What are you doing? Leave him there.

OBERMAN

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

BARTOS

There's a blanket in the trunk.

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

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

LUC (O.S.)

Hey!

Luc, stunned, is outside the club.

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

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

57 EXT. HIGH DESERT -- NIGHT

57

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

SKLAR

He's gonna call the cops--

OBERMAN

He doesn't know who we are. And there's no body. No body; no crime.

(off their fear)

We're gonna be okay. We stick together, we're getting through this.

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

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

58

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

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

58

NELSON

Thank you.

Edwards nods, spent. Nelson starts walking to join Winters who waits nearby.

EDWARDS

Tell Sklar I'm sorry.

WINTERS

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

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

EDWARDS

You lied to me?

NELSON

Yeah... Sorry.

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

59 INT. DINER -- MORNING

59

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

WINTERS

Well done. That was fun.

NELSON

No, it wasn't.

WINTERS

You feel bad about lying?

NELSON

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

WINTERS

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

NELSON

You?

WINTERS

Shocking, I know.

(CONTINUED)

NELSON

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

A pause. Nelson means this seriously.

NELSON (CONT'D)

No wire; I just need to know the truth.

WINTERS

You gonna quit if I say yes?

NELSON

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

WINTERS

In that case, I'm clean.

Nelson thinks, considers, chuckles.

WINTERS (CONT'D)

You don't believe me?

NELSON

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

WINTERS

Trying to make you a better cop.

NELSON

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

Winters takes a beat, then comes clean...

WINTERS

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

(then)

But the problem with blackmailing your partners is the relationship is

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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

(then)

I'm keeping you because I trust you.

Nelson takes a beat with that, then...

WINTERS (CONT'D)
 You're paying for the pie; I've got
 to go; got a date.

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

60 EXT. DINER -- MOMENTS LATER 60

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

61 INT. NELSON'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS 61

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

NELSON
 Nothing yet.

Bean nods, moves to exit--

BEAN
 See you.

NELSON
 Yeah.

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

62 INT. WINTERS' APARTMENT -- NIGHT 62

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

SARAH
 He forgot our anniversary.

WINTERS
 (not shocked)
 I'm shocked.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WINTERS (CONT'D)

(then)

Which top should I go with?

SARAH

The one on the left.

WINTERS

You're not even looking.

SARAH

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

WINTERS

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

SARAH

How's it going with the partner?

WINTERS

He asks too many personal questions.

SARAH

You answer any of them?

WINTERS

All of them.

SARAH

Any truthfully?

WINTERS

You're annoying.

SARAH

It's genetic. You tell him our background?

WINTERS

Why should I?

SARAH

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

WINTERS

He shouldn't.

SARAH

I know.

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED: (2)

62

Winters starts putting on the blouse on the left and...

WINTERS

(quietly)

I told him we were raised in foster
homes, all that stuff.

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

WINTERS (CONT'D)

He didn't believe me.

SARAH

(beat, then sadly)

Girl who cried wolf.

She goes back to watching TV.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Undo another button, your date won't
even know what color it is.

Winters undoes a button and heads for the door--

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FIVE