

Teddy

by

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WGAE & WGAw Registered

FADE IN:

EXT. N.J. TURNPIKE SERVICE AREA - NIGHT - EARLY FALL, THE PRESENT

Dozens of tractor-trailers are parked in parallel, several parked two-deep. Mercury lights glare daylight, traffic WHINES on the turnpike, cars are entering and leaving the gas service bays.

A truck emblazoned with "Blasingame's" on the trailer stops just beyond a space between two parked trucks and begins to back into the space. A beige Buick stops 100 feet away at the edge of the parking lot.

INT. BUICK

TITUS MEADOWS, a lit cigarette in his mouth, watches the truck back into the slot. It is the only truck in the row with the tractor facing out.

Titus, 45, looks older thanks to gray hair two weeks past due for a cut and a day-old beard. Crow's feet at the corners of his tired eyes imply a happier time. His jacket and shirt are stylish but wrinkled.

The TRUCK DRIVER opens the driver's-side door.

Titus snuffs the cigarette in the ashtray, picks up a digital camera with a large lens from the seat next to him, and aims it at the driver.

EXT. N.J. TURNPIKE SERVICE AREA

Digital camera's POV

ROLL CREDITS

Driver exits the truck. THEODORE BEIR, 30-something and carrying a 9x12 manila envelope, approaches the driver between the trucks.

Beir is a bit less than 6 feet tall and of average build with salt and pepper hair, full beard, and a prominent nose. He wears a brown leather jacket, white silk t-shirt, and Khaki-colored wool slacks with knife-edge creases.

Beir and the driver shake hands.

CLICK

FREEZE FRAME

Beir and the driver exchange a few quick comments. Beir hands the envelope to the driver.

CLICK

FREEZE FRAME

Beir walks quickly away from the driver along the line of trucks.

CLICK

HOLD FREEZE FRAME of Beir in space between two trucks as Brubeck's "TAKE FIVE" PLAYS on a car radio.

INT. SILVER TAURUS - MOMENTS LATER

Beir is driving fast on the turnpike. He turns up the volume on the radio and beats the steering wheel to Brubeck's rhythms.

EXT. N.J. TURNPIKE

Jazz continues as Beir's Taurus speeds away in the fast lane.

Titus' Buick INTO FRAME 10 car lengths behind, keeping pace.

EXT. JERSEY SIDE OF THE WALT WHITMAN BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

"TAKE FIVE" ENDS as Beir's Taurus ascends the bridge. The Philadelphia skyline INTO VIEW.

ANNOUNCER (ON RADIO)

(low key)

That was, of course, the Brubeck standard, "Take Five", and before that, the latest from the Rippington's. I've got Boney James and Rick Braun coming up along with something from Diana Krall to warm the cockles of your heart, or whatever it is she warms. (chuckles) This is Billy Wynn, keeping you company this starry evening on Philly's only smooth jazz station.

SINGER (JINGLE ON RADIO)

W J J Z, one-oh-six-point-one.

"SHAKE IT UP" begins as the Taurus changes lanes at the crest of the bridge.

Titus' Buick, 10 car lengths behind and INTO FRAME, follows the Taurus.

EXT. SOUTH STREET - LATER

Beir's Taurus pulls to the curb at the corner of South and Third. The customary procession of slow-moving cars passes.

South Street is jammed with a motley assortment of YOUNG PEOPLE, gawking adult TOURISTS, and an occasional POLICE OFFICER.

MILLY, a tall, emaciated teen with a little girl's face approaches the Taurus. She is wearing a black concert shirt and dirty black jeans. Her hair is short and white-blond.

A distinctive, black, serpentine tattoo emerges from beneath Milly's shirt sleeve and winds down her right arm to the back of her hand. She enters the Taurus.

When the car door closes, the left turn signal flashes.

Titus' Buick INTO FRAME. It stops and lets the Taurus into the line of traffic.

INT. TAURUS

Milly presses a button and CONTEMPORARY ROCK EXPLODES from the car speakers.

INT. HARRY'S CLUB, SOUTH STREET - LATER

CONTEMPORARY ROCK merges with the CLAMOR from gyrating DANCERS jamming a modest dance floor in the center of a club that is chrome and black and flashing lights. The dancers are mostly twenty-something and black dominates their attire.

MARVIN BLAIN sits among several PATRONS jamming a long bar. He drinks from a half-full glass of beer.

Blain is bald and conspicuous in a business suit. He fidgets and frequently glances at the crowd as though looking for someone.

Beir enters and works his way through the dancers to Blain.

Titus enters, scans the crowd and sees Beir greet Blain. Titus moves closer to the pair and watches them talk.

Beir hands a business card to Blain, who looks around furtively. Beir leaves Blain and penetrates the dancing throng. Titus takes a step toward Beir.

HAROLD HOUSTON INTO FRAME in front of Titus.

Houston is 60 and tall with a slightly-bulging middle and a notoriously poor black rug on his head. His attire attempts to emulate a young person's style but fails righteously.

TIFFANY and B.J., the former a red-head, the latter a blond, grin as they hang on Houston's arms, stare at Titus, and try to act like they are of age.

Tiffany is a bosomy, boozy teenager. B.J. is an adolescent transvestite who is taller and prettier than Tiffany. Their collective lack of style equals Houston's.

Houston grins, spreads his arms, and dislodges his companions, who nearly lose their balance on their five-inch platforms.

HAROLD HOUSTON

Titus! My man!

Titus glances at Houston, cringes, and looks beyond him to where Beir disappears into the crowd.

Houston puts his arm around Titus and steers him toward his girls.

HAROLD HOUSTON

You've got to meet my honeys.

Titus smiles weakly at Tiffany and B.J.

TITUS MEADOWS

Hey.

Titus strains against Houston's clutch to turn his head. He sees Beir at the doorway to the street.

HAROLD HOUSTON

What're you looking at? Aren't they something? Want to join us?

Tiffany and B.J. giggle into their hands as Titus breaks free of Houston's clutch and makes for the exit.

TITUS MEADOWS

Another time, Harold. Got to go.

Houston looks at Titus in disbelief for a beat and then turns toward his companions, smiles lasciviously, and does an exaggerated version of the "Twist."

Tiffany and B.J. giggle and Houston laughs loudly as he corrals them in his arms and walks them toward the bar.

EXT. HARRY'S - MOMENTS LATER

Several YOUNG PEOPLE are loitering on the sidewalk near the entrance. PEDESTRIANS pass. Cars HONK. Engines RACE.

Titus emerges from Harry's. There is urgency in his eyes as he looks up and down the sidewalk.

TITUS MEADOWS

Fuck!

Titus takes out a pack of cigarettes, taps one out, lights it with a BIC lighter, and walks OUT OF FRAME to his left.

Blain emerges from Harry's, looks covertly to his left, and walks into the pulsing sidewalk crowd to his right.

END CREDITS

EXT. ABANDONED SOUTH PHILLY ROWHOUSE - LATER

Blain stops on the empty sidewalk in front of the house. He looks at a business card in his hand and then at the number on the house.

Blain glances around, mounts the front porch, tentatively tries the front door knob, and opens the door.

INT. ROWHOUSE STAIRWAY

Blain enters the house and climbs the stairs.

INT. ROWHOUSE BEDROOM

Milly, wearing only white cotton panties, reclines on a dirty queen-sized mattress in the otherwise empty room.

Milly is leaning back on her elbows, her ribs prominent and her breasts not, her scrawny legs spread, her crotch aimed at the door.

FOOTFALLS APPROACH and the FLOOR CREAKS.

Blain opens the door, takes a step into the room, and with wide, lust-filled eyes, takes in Milly. His mouth opens slightly, and he wipes a small bit of drool from the corner of it with the back of his hand.

Milly stares impassively at Blain, lifts her knees, deftly removes her panties, flings them across the room, and returns to her original pose.

MARVIN BLAIN

Jesus Christ.

Blain tears off his suit coat, tie, and shirt as he kicks off his shoes. He unbuckles his belt and drops his pants.

Blain nearly stumbles as he steps out of his pants and advances toward Milly. She almost smiles but maintains her impassive stare.

Blain stops at the edge of the mattress and drops his boxers.

Something startles Milly. She looks past Blain and alarm fills her eyes.

Blain follows her gaze by slowly turning his head and his body follows. Worried disbelief is in his eyes.

MARVIN BLAIN

What the fuck?

PHFFT!

Blain's hands shoot out as his eyes jerk toward a brutal wound in his groin. In a flash, pain distorts his face, and his hands clasp the wound. He cries out, drops to the floor, writhes and yells.

Milly crabs backward on the mattress with a child's terror in her eyes.

MILLY

Oh my God. Oh my God.

PHFFT!

Blain stops writhing as blood appears from a small wound in his head. The blood puddles around him.

Milly cowers against the wall and cries.

MILLY

Oh my God. Oh my God.

PHFFT!

Milly leans limply against the wall as blood streams down her face from a small hole above her open, lifeless eyes.

A gloved hand INTO FRAME. It drops a business card into the blood on the floor by Blain.

INT. SAL'S 12TH STREET CAFE - LATER

Titus sits alone at one of ten small tables in the long, narrow, brick-walled, Queen's Village bistro. The light is low and small candle lamps illuminate checkered table cloths.

Two CHEFS clean up a grill at the back of the bistro, and a GAY COUPLE quietly converse at a bar at the front of the room, where a BARTENDER straightens-up.

Twenty-something waitress TRUDY, well-pierced and Goth-coiffed, readies tables for the next day.

RUTH TYLER, a middle-aged waitress with blue collar sensuality places coffee and a spoon in front of Titus.

Titus lights a cigarette. Ruth steps back, puts her hands on her hips, and stares at him. Titus takes a deep draw, blows it out with gusto, and looks at Ruth.

TITUS MEADOWS

What?

RUTH TYLER

It's against the law to smoke in here.

Titus looks at the cigarette for a beat.

TITUS MEADOWS

You going to call a cop?

RUTH TYLER

Those things are going to kill you.

TITUS MEADOWS

Would you miss me?

RUTH TYLER

You do tip good.

TITUS MEADOWS

Don't know that it's done me a damn bit of good.

Titus looks for a place to put out his cigarette, grinds it into the spoon, drinks a slug of coffee, and drops the butt into the cup.

RUTH TYLER

What the hell am I supposed to do with that?

Titus shrugs sheepishly. Ruth looks disgusted as she grabs the cup and takes it to the bar.

Trudy, carrying a handful of silverware wrapped in cloth napkins, stops next to Titus.

TRUDY

Why don't you treat her nice?

TITUS MEADOWS
I thought I did.

Ruth approaches as Trudy leaves shaking her head.

RUTH TYLER
Nice means something more than a four
buck tip on a twenty dollar meal.

TITUS MEADOWS
I thought that was pretty nice.

Ruth sits at the table, grabs Titus' shirt, and leans toward him until her lips are only an inch from his.

RUTH TYLER
Think again.

Ruth releases Titus, smiles coyly, gets up, and walks toward the bar. Trudy approaches.

TITUS MEADOWS
(loud)
What happens if I'm nice?

Trudy walks past Titus.

TRUDY
You two ever get tired of this game?

Titus smiles, takes out a cigarette, and lights it.

INT. RUTH TYLER'S BEDROOM - LATER

Titus sits slightly propped up against pillows in Ruth's bed and smokes a cigarette. Ruth lies against him with her head on his chest, her hand slowly twirling the hairs below his navel just above where a sheet covers them.

RUTH TYLER
They're going to kill you.

TITUS MEADOWS
It's either them or booze. These get me
in less trouble.

Titus takes a drag and blows it out.

RUTH TYLER
Getting colder tomorrow.

TITUS MEADOWS
Does that this time of year.

RUTH TYLER
I hate cold weather.

TITUS MEADOWS
Live here and you get cold weather.

Ruth looks up at Titus.

RUTH TYLER
Why don't we go live someplace warm?

TITUS MEADOWS
I work here.

Ruth watches her hand descend beneath the sheet.

RUTH TYLER
Work someplace else.

TITUS MEADOWS
Are we an official couple now?

RUTH TYLER
Do we gotta be?

Titus takes a drag and blows it out.

TITUS MEADOWS
Don't know.

Ruth pushes the sheet back and slowly crawls on top of Titus. She takes the cigarette from his hand, butts it in an ashtray on the nightstand, settles against him, and kisses him deeply as he wraps his arms around her.

INT. SERENO MANSION - NEXT MORNING

LAURENCE BLASINGAME sits on an ornate, white iron side chair next to a matching, glass-topped table and sips coffee from a Limoge cup. He is in the Florida room of a 30-room Georgian mansion that sits high on a hill and is observing the portion of his 400-acre estate that borders the Brandywine River.

Blasingame, 60, wears an elegantly tailored, charcoal grey suit of lightweight wool, a crisply starched white shirt and a new power tie. His hair is white, long-ish, thick and wavy, and his face is still bronzed from summer golf and yachting.

Hinges of a heavy, metal French door CREAK, and Blasingame continues staring at the Brandywine Valley.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Good morning, Titus.

Titus INTO FRAME. He stands to the side of Blasingame, takes in the view, yawns and stretches.

TITUS MEADOWS
Morning Mr. B.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Once again I presume you've missed some sleep on my account.

TITUS MEADOWS
Not just on your account. I finally got pictures...

Blasingame holds up his hand to silence Titus as a maid, SARA, moves INTO FRAME. She pours coffee into Blasingame's cup and turns to leave.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Bring Titus a cup Sara. He's in dire need.

SARA
Yes, Mr. B.

Sara exits. Blasingame gestures to one of the side chairs. Titus sits.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
So it's what we thought? Definitely?

TITUS MEADOWS
I didn't see them actually transfer anything, but it was an unscheduled stop, and the driver met a guy...

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Met a guy?

TITUS MEADOWS
Gave him a large envelope.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Who gave to whom?

TITUS MEADOWS
The other guy gave it to the driver. I figured he was important so I stopped tailing the truck and followed the guy.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
And?

TITUS MEADOWS

I followed him to South Street and lost him.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

South Street?

TITUS MEADOWS

Picked up a girl. Looked twelve.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

So South Street was about perversity and not about my merchandise.

TITUS MEADOWS

Afraid so.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

I'm satisfied this is as big as I was afraid it was. Bigger than you, if you don't mind my saying so. Time to take advantage of friendships Titus.

Titus stares at the countryside.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

It can't be as bad as all that. There must be someone at the Bureau still willing to speak to you. Frankly, hiring you was more than just a way to ease my guilt over Theresa's cavalier behavior toward you. I had hoped you would be able to open a door or two when needed. I think it's time. (beat) Titus?

Titus sighs and with resignation in his eyes turns toward Blasingame.

TITUS MEADOWS

I'll see what I can do.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

I'm intrigued about this man. South Street, you say?

TITUS MEADOWS

Harry's.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

Isn't that a rather notorious place of late.

TITUS MEADOWS

With Twenty-somethings.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

Isn't a place awash in alcohol a rather dangerous place for you?

TITUS MEADOWS

It could be. Ran into Harold Houston. Good incentive to leave.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

Dear Harold. What was the old fool doing at Harry's?

TITUS MEADOWS

Squiring two teenagers, one of which might've been a guy.

Blasingame suppresses a smile.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

Some things never change.

BILLY MONTGOMERY, Blasingame's night shift bodyguard, enters. Montgomery, 39, is a former second-team NFL linebacker who looks as if he could still play.

Titus nods at Montgomery, who nods back.

BILLY MONTGOMERY

T-man.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

Leaving Billy?

BILLY MONTGOMERY

Unless there's something you need Mr. B.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

The hand-off has been made, thank you. I'll need you to meet me in town tonight. You can ride back to the city with me and Titus in the morning.

BILLY MONTGOMERY

Will do. (to Titus) See ya, old man.

Titus smiles and jerks his head toward the door. Billy smiles back and exits as Sara enters with a cup and saucer that she places in front of Titus.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

(to Titus)

Please tell Paul to fire up the Benz. I'll be leaving in five minutes.

Sara stops pouring coffee into Titus' cup and looks at Blasingame.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

Mr. Meadows can take his coffee in the car. Meet us in the driveway with a thermos, Sara. In the future, I'd appreciate a bit more haste when I make a request.

SARA

Yes sir.

Titus gets up as a chastened Sara exits.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

Time to get official, Titus. Let the gendarmes take this on.

Titus walks toward a doorway into the house and pauses.

TITUS MEADOWS

Do you want me to get Theresa up to speed about what's been happening?

Blasingame sips his coffee and stares at the countryside.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

I'll tell her what I think she should know, but thank you for offering. (beat) Titus, out of curiosity, you've been with us for nearly half a year and haven't called her.

TITUS MEADOWS

We've talked.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

I'm not talking about the business.

TITUS MEADOWS

I know what you're talking about. Things change in ten years.

Blasingame reaches for Titus' cup, leans back, sips the coffee and stares at the countryside.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

I suppose they do.

Titus studies Blasingame for a beat and exits.

INT. THERESA BLASINGAME'S APARTMENT - LATER

THERESA BLASINGAME is sharply dressed and ready for work except for lipstick, which she artfully applies in front of a theatrical make-up mirror in a dressing room.

Theresa is 35, strikingly beautiful in an androgenous way, her hair short and very blond, her skin alabaster, her eyes jade green. She is tall and wears heels that exaggerate her height.

Theresa walks to a full-length mirror, does a cat-walk pirouette, and then a model's pose. She presses her lips together, poses again, and then exits the room.

Theresa walks through an elegant living room, scoops a lightweight coat off the back of a chair, and puts it on as she walks toward her front door.

Phone RINGS

Theresa pauses.

THERESA BLASINGAME
(voice mail message)
You've reached Theresa Blasingame's
phone. I'm either not home or have
something better to do than answer the
phone. Leave a message if you'd like.

Phone BEEPS

LAURENCE BLASINGAME (ON PHONE)
Theresa, Dear, need to talk with you
first thing. (chuckles)

INTERCUT:

INT. LIMOSINE

Titus sits beside Blasingame who speaks into a cell phone. Titus stares out the window as the limo speeds along I-95.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
I must admit I find your message a trifle
off-putting, but that is the prerogative
of the young, I suppose. Chiao.

Theresa raises an eyebrow and smiles as the answering machine CLICKS. She turns on her heel, and exits. The door SLAMS.

Blasingame turns to Titus and smiles.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Once a parent, always a parent.

Blasingame opens the Wall Street Journal and reads. Titus looks out the window.

EXT. ABANDONED SOUTH PHILLY ROWHOUSE - LATER

The front of the house is cordoned off by police tape.

Curious BYSTANDERS gawk at a half-dozen uniformed COPS milling about within the tape. Police cars and a coroner's van line the street.

Titus INTO FRAME carrying a thin valise. He ducks under the police tape. One of the cops stops him. Titus pulls a wallet from his jacket and shows identification.

A few words are exchanged, and Titus is passed by the cop.

Titus mounts the stoop and enters.

INT. ROWHOUSE STAIRWAY

Titus climbs the stairs. He ignores two DETECTIVES, and they ignore him, as they pass each other on the stairs.

INT. ROWHOUSE BEDROOM

Titus enters and stops.

Milly and Blain remain in death's pose.

A FORENSICS TEAM examines the room, two CORONER'S TECHNICIANS ready a body bag for Milly, and three DETECTIVES chat in a corner with SAM SOLARIS and DENISE WITHERSPOON.

Witherspoon, a 30-year-old African American, wears black slacks, sensible shoes and a blue FBI jacket over a white turtleneck. Solaris, 45, announces his FBI affiliation with a crew cut, black shoes, navy suit, white shirt and tie.

Solaris notices Titus. He smirks, says something to Witherspoon, who turns and gives Titus a welcoming smile.

Solaris approaches Titus and addresses the others over his shoulder.

SAM SOLARIS
I'll be in touch this afternoon.
(to Titus)
Jesus Christ. Tight-ass Meadows. I heard you were dead. Or was it pickled?

TITUS MEADOWS

Fuck you.

Solaris, who is taller than Titus, moves chest to chest with him and smiles threateningly. Witherspoon hurries across the room.

SAM SOLARIS

You'd love to, you miserable...

Titus and Solaris grab each other. Witherspoon tries to separate them. The detectives rush to them.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

Knock it off!

The detectives pull Titus and Solaris apart. The two quickly shake loose and glare at each other defiantly. Solaris smirks and stares at Titus as Solaris walks to the door.

SAM SOLARIS

All the forms I'd have to fill out for decking you would ruin it for me.

Titus makes a move toward Solaris as Solaris exits, but Witherspoon grabs Titus' arm and restrains him.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

What is wrong with you?

Titus raises his palms chest high and glances down. The detectives and others return to their tasks.

TITUS MEADOWS

Nothing.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

You sure?

TITUS MEADOWS

Forget it. (looks around) Jesus. I haven't seen anything like this in a while.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

What're you doing here?

TITUS MEADOWS

I'm your mom's baby brother. Told me where you were because she still thinks I'm adorable.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

She must be getting senile because adorable you're not. And speaking of senile, you can't come barging into a crime scene.

TITUS MEADOWS

Still have a Bureau I.D.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

You can't use that.

TITUS MEADOWS

I guess I can because I did. And when did you get so anal?

Titus steps away and surveys the room.

TITUS MEADOWS

What is this?

DENISE WITHERSPOON

Not your affair anymore.

TITUS MEADOWS

If Solaris is here it means this isn't the first time. How many?

DENISE WITHERSPOON

Uncle, this isn't your business.

TITUS MEADOWS

Humor me.

Witherspoon raises an eyebrow and sighs.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

Eight.

TITUS MEADOWS

Eight? How come the media hasn't been on this?

DENISE WITHERSPOON

They'll be on it now. Actually, there's been eighteen victims, eight events.

TITUS MEADOWS

Solaris just put them together?

DENISE WITHERSPOON

He doesn't use your program. Thinks it's flawed.

TITUS MEADOWS

It took him eighteen victims? His brain is flawed.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

(shrugs shoulders)

They were all within a hundred miles of here but in four different states. A lot of small time jurisdictions. Nobody made the connections until a week ago.

TITUS MEADOWS

And now there's another one. All like this?

DENISE WITHERSPOON

It's not your worry anymore.

The coroner's technicians pick up Milly and lift her onto the open body bag. One of them places her arm across her chest and Titus notices the serpentine tatoo.

TITUS MEADOWS

Jesus H. Christ.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

What?

TITUS MEADOWS

I saw her last night. A guy I was tailing picked her up on South Street.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

(to technicians)

Don't close her up.

Witherspoon and Titus approach the body. Titus kneels next to Milly, looks at her arm and face. He looks at Witherspoon and nods.

INT. TITUS MEADOW'S OFFICE - LATER

Titus is sound asleep and sits upright in his desk chair with his head back and mouth wide open.

His office is spare, small, and crammed with a large desk, metal file cabinets, and two side chairs.

The tops of the file cabinets and the side chairs are covered with piles of files and memos. A monitor, keyboard, small coffee maker, and a 5x7 framed photo of Titus and Ruth Tyler are on the desk, surrounded by clutter.

Theresa strides into the office, does a double take when she sees Titus sleeping, and then smiles a haughty smile. She sits on a back corner of Titus' desk.

THERESA BLASINGAME
(forceful)
Mr. Meadows.

Titus wakes, startled and disoriented for a beat. He leans back in his chair and puts a hand to his heart.

TITUS MEADOWS
Christ. I hope you know CPR.

THERESA BLASINGAME
Spare me. (beat) You know, you're awfully cute when you're asleep.

Titus stands and moves closer to the coffee maker. He pours old coffee into a never-washed mug.

TITUS MEADOWS
Your father's been keeping me up late.

THERESA BLASINGAME
To the point, as usual. I suppose that's the offspring of your former life.

TITUS MEADOWS
I suppose. And the point is?

THERESA BLASINGAME
He told me about the theft. Actually, thefts, right? I don't understand why we haven't picked up on this before.

TITUS MEADOWS
Could've been longer if it weren't for...Let's just say your father has at least one friend in this building.

THERESA BLASINGAME
(cynical)
In addition to you and me?

TITUS MEADOWS
Of course.

THERESA BLASINGAME
How loyal. Do you mind if I sit?

They both look at the two side chairs. Titus shrugs.

TITUS MEADOWS

Use mine.

Theresa sits in Titus' desk chair. She picks up the framed photo.

THERESA BLASINGAME

You still seeing her?

Titus shrugs.

THERESA BLASINGAME

Still big on commitment, I see.
(puts photo back)
So what have they discovered?

TITUS MEADOWS

They?

THERESA BLASINGAME

I'm assuming there's a they. Interstate commerce isn't exactly the bailiwick of a loss prevention manager and part-time bodyguard.

TITUS MEADOWS

I think that's something you should take up with your father.

THERESA BLASINGAME

You were always so cute when you tried to be evasive.

TITUS MEADOWS

What are you doing?

THERESA BLASINGAME

And flirting still makes you uncomfortable.

TITUS MEADOWS

Flirting from a woman who could put my head on a platter makes me uncomfortable.

Theresa laughs and approaches Titus. She stands close to him and smiles as she strokes his cheek, once.

THERESA BLASINGAME

I could, you know.

Theresa steps away, spins a model's spin to face him, and smiles a superior's smile.

TITUS MEADOWS

Ask your father. He'll tell you what you want to know.

THERESA BLASINGAME

I intend to. He's already told me a bit.
(studies Titus for a beat)
Such sincerity in that face.

Titus goes to his desk chair and sits. Theresa perches close to him on the desk.

THERESA BLASINGAME

I had a drama coach who was always quoting George Burns. "Sincerity is everything," he said, "and if you can fake that, you've got it made."

TITUS MEADOWS

Ms. Blasingame, what do you want?

THERESA BLASINGAME

I'll talk with father. I just thought it would make sense to hear what I needed to know first hand, presented on a platter so to speak.

Theresa pats Titus' cheek and exits with a model's stride.

Titus rubs his cheek, shakes his head, and stares at the wall.

INT. SAL'S 12TH STREET CAFE - LATER

Sal's is filled with LUNCH PATRONS. Ruth, Trudy, and MARIE are waiting tables. The chefs and bartender are at work.

Titus sits at a two-top with Denise Witherspoon. Ruth approaches them.

RUTH TYLER

(to Witherspoon)

I used to think you had good taste in men.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

(laughs)

Good to see you, Ruthie.

Ruth and Witherspoon kiss cheeks.

TITUS MEADOWS

I get one of those?

RUTH TYLER
 (to Witherspoon)
 You hear anything?

DENISE WITHERSPOON
 Not a thing. You two still an item?

RUTH TYLER
 Apparently we're not an official couple.

Denise looks a question at Ruth and then at Titus, who shrugs.

TITUS MEADOWS
 It's complicated.

RUTH TYLER
 What they all say. What can I start you guys with?

Witherspoon looks quickly at Titus before addressing Ruth.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
 How about two iced teas?

RUTH TYLER
 You got it.

Ruth moves OUT OF FRAME.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
 How come you haven't made an honest woman of her in all this time?

TITUS MEADOWS
 She is an honest woman. That's what I love about her.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
 Ever tell her?

TITUS MEADOWS
 Don't we have about eighty-seven more important things to talk about than Ruth and me?

DENISE WITHERSPOON
 Only one thing. (leans forward) We ran the images you took of the guy through our system but didn't get anything.

TITUS MEADOWS
 Not likely killers like him have records.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
You're preaching to the choir, Uncle.

TITUS MEADOWS
Sorry.

Ruth delivers the iced teas.

RUTH TYLER
So what can I get you Denise?

TITUS MEADOWS
What about me?

RUTH TYLER
You're going to order gnoccis with a side salad, oil and vinegar. Denise?

DENISE WITHERSPOON
(laughs)
How long have you two not been an official couple?

RUTH TYLER
Too long. What'll it be?

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Penne, please. Marinara sauce, and I think I'll have the side salad, house dressing.

RUTH TYLER
You got it.

Ruth departs.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
I just love that girl.

Titus rolls his eyes.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Right. Anyway, the guy's not only a potential serial killer, he's a definite suspect in the heists. Guys like that usually *do* have records. From the tag number, the car is a rental. That should give us something.

TITUS MEADOWS
Fingerprints.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Let's hope.

TITUS MEADOWS
You interested in our end of the problem?

DENISE WITHERSPOON
I've been working on a major theft and
resale operation Galdemagio's running.

TITUS MEADOWS
Enzo?

DENISE WITHERSPOON
None other.

TITUS MEADOWS
Jesus.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
I know. I want access to your I.M.
systems. If invoices aren't showing
missing merchandise in receiving,
someone's manipulating your system.

TITUS MEADOWS
And hacking into the vendor's.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Or vice versa.

TITUS MEADOWS
I'll talk to the Old Man about access.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
I don't need his permission.

TITUS MEADOWS
Humor me, OK? I have to work with him. He
expects obeisance. Even from the Bureau.
Warrants would be an embarrassment.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
You'll talk with him today?

TITUS MEADOWS
Today.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
About this other thing. Solaris is an
idiot. A couple of us were assigned to
assist him, and what you know could help
me.

TITUS MEADOWS
It's not my affair, remember?

DENISE WITHERSPOON
He won't know.

TITUS MEADOWS
You'd be putting yourself in a bad place
if he finds out.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
I don't want any more kids to die.

Ruth brings salads to the table.

RUTH TYLER
Who's dying?

TITUS MEADOWS
Nobody's dying, Ruthie.

RUTH TYLER
You are if you don't stop smoking.

Ruth OUT OF FRAME. Witherspoon leans forward and touches
Titus' arm.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
You know she loves you, right?

Titus looks at Witherspoon, his eyes narrow, and then he
looks away. Witherspoon sits back and shakes her head.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
How can anybody so smart be so dumb.

INT. LA CASA ROMA - LATER

La Casa Roma is an Italian restaurant in the midst of a row
of large brownstones on South Broad Street.

There are a few semicircular booths and three small tables in
the room. Dark red, black and gold predominate the decor. The
wallpaper is elaborate and flocked; vases contain gaudy silk
flowers; ornate light fixtures are dimly lit.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO is seated at the back of a booth with FRANK
RATICO and MARIANO MARCELLO. The trio is alone and laughing.

Galdemagio is in his early thirties and speaks with a
distinct South Philly accent. He is wiry and of medium height
with distinctly Mediterranean features. He wears an expensive
flowered silk shirt and razor creased slacks.

Ratico is in his middle thirties and is dressed casually but
expensively.

Marcello, 50, is also casually attired, but despite apparent efforts to the contrary, his appearance retains the essence of his first-generation-American, blue collar origins.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

So the son of a bitch turns around, sees me and says, "Holy Mary, Mother of God. Fucking Enzo's here."

All three laugh.

A WAITER enters with a bottle of wine.

The men stop laughing and stare at him.

His eyes darting back and forth among the men and a bottle of wine, the waiter fumbles with the corkscrew, and when the cork is out, his hand shakes as he pours the wine slowly.

Galdemagio appears close to losing his patience. Marcello and Ratico appear apprehensive and glance at Galdemagio.

The waiter finishes and exits.

Galdemagio jerks his head in the waiter's direction.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

Fucking moron.

Galdemagio looks at Marcello and Ratico coldly and then laughs.

Ratico and Marcello laugh in kind. The laughter subsides and they drink the wine.

FRANK RATICO

Not fucking bad.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

Only the best for my boys.

FRANK RATICO

So Carmine says, "Fucking Enzo's here." What the fuck did you do?

Galdemagio takes a drink, leans back and beams.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

I put the fucking barrel of a thirty-eight against his fucking forehead and blew his fucking brains out.

Marcello and Ratico look blankly at Galdemagio apparently unsure of how to respond.

Galdemagio starts to laugh. Marcello and Ratico follow suit.

Beir enters.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
Teodoro! Have some vino!

Galdemagio pours Beir a glass.

Beir pulls a chair up to the table and raises his glass. When he speaks, his voice is low and raspy.

THEODORE BEIR
Salude, Don Galdemagio.

Beir drinks.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
So how's business?

THEODORE BEIR
There's a problem.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
Problems have solutions, goumba.

THEODORE BEIR
(drinks)
Maybe we should back off for a while.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
Back off? Are we in business or what?
We're talking supply and demand, my
friend, supply and demand. Are people
demanding jeans that cost an arm and a
leg from some fucking Jew in Manhattan,
or the same thing at half the price from
some nice Dago boys on Broad Street?

MARIANO MARCELLO
The nice Dago boys.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
He speaks!

Galdemagio and Ratico look at each other and smile.

Marcello looks questioningly at Beir and Ratico and shrugs his shoulders.

Galdemagio and Ratico roar; Beir smiles.

Galdemagio leans over and gives Marcello a bear hug.

The men settle down and drink their wine.

Galdemagio gets up and nods to Beir to follow. They go to a booth across the room. Galdemagio lights up a cigar.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
What's the problem?

THEODORE BEIR
The store is onto something.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
The store?

THEODORE BEIR
Somebody inside smelled something.
Management put a store security guy on
it, and he got pictures last night.

Galdemagio sucks in a breath, his back stiffens, and his eyes turn frigid. He takes a drag, blows it out, and watches the smoke.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
I'll shut down till I find out more. Mind
you, temporary. I don't like people
fucking with my business. Who is this
security guy?

THEODORE BEIR
A former FBI agent. Works directly for
Blasingame.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
Blasingame knows about last night?

THEODORE BEIR
Apparently.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
Any idea what he's going to do?

THEODORE BEIR
Not yet.

Galdemagio looks into Beir's eyes. Beir does not look away.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
Doing *something* could be fatal, you know?

THEODORE BEIR
(pauses for a beat)
I guess.

Galdemagio leans back, draws on his cigar, blows out the smoke and glances at Beir with cold eyes.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

Guess this. You weren't careful. They got your picture. Somebody'll be looking for you. Might be outside right now waiting to get your picture with me. I hate it when fatal includes friends, you know?

Beir looks down, pulls lightly on his beard, looks into Galdemagio's eyes, and nods ever so slightly.

INT. SERENO MANSION - EVENING

Titus sits in a large, overstuffed chair in an opulent, antique-crammed parlor. He is reading a magazine.

Billy Montgomery INTO FRAME.

BILLY MONTGOMERY

Hey man. Sorry I'm late.

TITUS MEADOWS

No problem. He's watching TV in the upstairs study. Probably asleep on the sofa.

BILLY MONTGOMERY

What I'd like to be doing. I'll go sit with him. (Beat) You seeing Ruthie tonight.

TITUS MEADOWS

Hadn't planned on it, but maybe. She's working.

BILLY MONTGOMERY

That woman is always working. She's a good woman Titus.

TITUS MEADOWS

I've been hearing that a lot lately.

EXT. REAR OF SERENO - MOMENTS LATER

There is a full moon. Titus appears through the rear exit. He pauses, looks at the sky, and then at his watch. He skips down the few steps to the parking pad, walks to his Buick, gets in, and starts it up.

The Buick backs up and slowly travels Sereno's long winding drive.

EXT. CHATEAU COUNTRY - MOMENTS LATER

AERIAL SHOT of Buick with it's headlights prodding a winding two lane.

EXT. CENTERVILLE - MOMENTS LATER

AERIAL SHOT of Buick traveling through the town. A single car, an old Bentley, passes in the other direction.

EXT. I-95 ENTRANCE RAMP NEAR CHESTER - MOMENTS LATER

AERIAL SHOT of Buick entering a modest stream of traffic.

PAN to sparkling Philly skyline in the distance.

INT. SAL'S 12TH STREET CAFE - LATER

Titus enters and sits at the bar. Two PATRONS sit at the other end. A few COUPLES dine at tables.

Trudy INTO FRAME.

TRUDY

What're you doing here?

Titus gives her a "What do you think?" look.

TITUS MEADOWS

Where's Ruthie?

TRUDY

On her way to Key West.

TITUS MEADOWS

What?

TRUDY

Amazing. A classy woman comes in here today, starts talking to Ruthie, and the next thing I know, Ruthie tells Jack she's quitting, that the woman gave her a job at a bar she owns in Key West. Even gave her money for the trip.

Trudy waits for a response. Titus looks like he has been clubbed.

TRUDY

(smirks)

You are one pathetic mother fucker, you know that Titus?

Titus stares. Trudy shakes her head and exits.

The bartender INTO FRAME.

BARTENDER
What'll it be?

Titus focuses on the bartender, and then his eyes trail to the bottles behind the bar. Titus wets his lips and takes out a cigarette.

BARTENDER
You can't smoke in here, Titus.

Titus glares at the bartender, crumples up the cigarette, drops it on the bar, and exits.

INT. HALLWAY IN APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Titus wanders slowly down the hallway, one hand extended toward the wall to keep him on track. His eyes are half-closed. A vodka bottle in his other hand is half-full.

Titus reaches his apartment, fumbles for keys, drops the bottle on the carpeted floor, bends over to pick up the bottle and drops the keys.

THERESA BLASINGAME (O.C.)
Need a hand?

Titus jerks upright. Theresa INTO FRAME. She wears tight jeans, high heels, and a short leather jacket over a sweater.

THERESA BLASINGAME
Why Titus, I'm surprised at you. I thought you were over this.

Titus' eyes narrow. He points at Theresa with the bottle.

TITUS MEADOWS
I know you. You could have my head on a platter.

Theresa laughs as she picks up the keys, unlocks the door and opens it. She takes the bottle from him.

TITUS MEADOWS
Hey!

THERESA BLASINGAME
You can have it back if you're a good boy, but first you're going to sober up a bit.

TITUS MEADOWS
I don't think I like your tone.

Theresa laughs and steers Titus into his apartment.

INT. TITUS MEADOW'S APARTMENT - LATER

Titus slumps on a stool at a counter in the kitchen. A cup of black coffee is in front of him. Titus wears only a bathrobe; his hair is wet and combed back.

On the other side of the kitchen, Theresa, sans jacket, leans back against a stove. A slight smile plays on her face.

TITUS MEADOWS
How did you know where I live?

THERESA BLASINGAME
H.R.

TITUS MEADOWS
They're not supposed to give that out.

THERESA BLASINGAME
Sue them. (beat) Drink.

Titus drinks the coffee.

Theresa approaches, puts her elbows on the counter, her chin on her interlaced fingers. She looks into Titus' tired eyes.

Titus looks at his coffee.

THERESA BLASINGAME
This isn't the first time I've sobered
you up, is it?

TITUS MEADOWS
That was a long time ago.

THERESA BLASINGAME
I was a kid.

TITUS MEADOWS
Didn't know shit.

THERESA BLASINGAME
Maybe. We were close, weren't we? Used to
tell each other secrets.

TITUS MEADOWS
Did we?

THERESA BLASINGAME
Why won't you tell me who the good guy is
who put father onto what's going on?

TITUS MEADOWS
It's your father's say.

THERESA BLASINGAME
What would he say about what I saw
staggering up the hall tonight?

Titus looks at Theresa. Restrained worry lights his eyes as she goes to the stool next to him and sits.

TITUS MEADOWS
You own a bar in Key West?

THERESA BLASINGAME
Part of a bar. With an actress friend.
She needed a good cocktail waitress.

TITUS MEADOWS
I care about her.

THERESA BLASINGAME
Apparently not enough. Said yes in a
heartbeat. Actually, maybe two.

TITUS MEADOWS
Why?

THERESA BLASINGAME
Why what?

TITUS MEADOWS
Ruth.

THERESA BLASINGAME
Wanted to find out how serious you two
were before I came over here. Scruples,
you know.

Titus snorts and shakes his head. He drinks, puts down the cup and leans back.

TITUS MEADOWS
What do you want from me?

Theresa stands over Titus, spins him toward her, takes his face in her hands and kisses him. He does not resist.

Theresa slowly pulls away and sits on the stool.

THERESA BLASINGAME
(softly)
He still treats me like a child. It's my
division that's losing merchandise. I
have a right to know what's going on.

TITUS MEADOWS
I can't say anything.

THERESA BLASINGAME
I have a right to know. Just like my
father has a right to know you've fallen
off the wagon.

Titus slowly spins back to the counter. He looks at the coffee cup, picks it up and drains it, and puts it back on the counter. He stares at the wall.

TITUS MEADOWS
Houston.

THERESA BLASINGAME
(laughs)
I should have known.

Titus turns to Theresa, his face a question.

THERESA BLASINGAME
They go way back, my father and him.
(serious)
Way back. (beat) Harold Houston. (beat)
He hates my guts, you know. If I hadn't
decided to come back, he'd have my job.

Theresa and Titus each stare at nothing for a beat.

Theresa turns and studies Titus. She stands and turns him toward her. She slips her hands inside the robe and kisses him.

Titus pulls his lips away from Theresa's.

TITUS MEADOWS
Why now?

Theresa looks into his eyes for a beat before kissing him.

Titus does not respond for a beat but then puts his arms around Theresa and kisses her back, hard. They slowly pirouette across the floor, kissing, undressing, until they end up with Titus pressing Theresa against the counter.

They end a kiss and Titus lifts Theresa onto the counter. She leans back, eyes closed, mouth open in pleasure, as Titus goes down on her OUT OF FRAME.

INT. F.B.I. PHILADELPHIA OFFICE - NEXT MORNING

Sam Solaris sits at a cluttered desk situated at the side of a large office filled with other desks and office paraphernalia.

Witherspoon, AGENT WHITE, and AGENT MARGOLIS lean against desks and counters and drink coffee from Styrofoam cups. Witherspoon's eyes are flashing.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

We're giving them nothing? Aren't you embarrassed?

SAM SOLARIS

We just got on this. I'm not going to go out on a limb with nothing more than speculation.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

We've got years of profiling in the data base.

SAM SOLARIS

Voo doo.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

(to other agents)

I don't believe this.

The agents look into their coffee cups. Witherspoon shakes her head, puts down her cup, looks out a window, and crosses her arms.

SAM SOLARIS

(to all)

What we know stays here. Nothing leaves until I say so.

(to Witherspoon)

I mean it. It stays here. I don't want him anywhere near any of this.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

Who?

SAM SOLARIS

You know damn well who.

(to all)

We'll meet this afternoon. Take a look at what we have before then.

(to Witherspoon)

I mean it.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

Right.

Witherspoon spins on her heel and exits.

INT. TITUS MEADOW'S BEDROOM - LATER

Titus sleeps with his head at the edge of a disheveled bed. A sheet half-covers him, and his arm hangs over the edge. The empty vodka bottle and an empty pint of Rye are on the floor near his hand.

DOORBELL RINGS (beat) POUNDING ON DOOR

Titus stirs.

POUNDING ON DOOR

Titus struggles to his feet and winces, eyes half-closed, as he walks out of the bedroom in his boxers.

POUNDING ON DOOR

DENISE WITHERSPOON (O.C.)

Titus! Are you in there?

Titus goes to the door and opens it.

Witherspoon's expression quickly runs from anger to shock to worry. She puts her hand to her mouth.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

Titus. What did you do?

Witherspoon spins him around and guides him toward a hallway.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Titus sits on the toilet. Witherspoon turns on the shower and exits.

INTERCUT:

INT. KITCHEN

Witherspoon prepares coffee maker.

Titus stands under cold shower in soaked boxers.

Witherspoon cooks eggs.

Titus in front of mirror, in deep hangover, struggling to shave.

Witherspoon puts plate of eggs and toast on the counter.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Titus wears a dress shirt and clean boxers. He struggles to tie a tie.

Witherspoon INTO FRAME.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Later, Uncle. You need grub.

They exit the room and head down a hallway, Witherspoon in the lead.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Talked to somebody named Billy. He said
he'd cover for you. Apparently,
Blasingame spent the night in the city.
(beat) Sounded cute.

EXT. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SPRINGFIELD - LATER

AERIAL SHOT of white Crown Victoria pulling to a stop in front of the church. Titus exits the passenger side. Denise steps out of the driver's side and watches Titus walk toward the church.

INT. CHURCH FELLOWSHIP HALL - MOMENTS LATER

A.A. MEMBERS sit around a long table in the center of the room, and a few other MEMBERS stand near a doorway.

Titus appears in the doorway. The members greet Titus, some shake his hand. Their body language and expressions indicate Titus is not a stranger to them. Titus walks to the table and sits.

INT. CHURCH FELLOWSHIP HALL - LATER

SERIES OF SHOTS of members sharing, laughing, crying. When Titus is IN FRAME, he is somber and unresponsive. Last shot in series: All eyes are on Titus as he sits silently, head down.

Titus looks around at the members; his eyes show emotion that is a hairsbreadth from release.

TITUS MEADOWS
My name's Titus.

EXT. SOUTH STREET - LATER

MARY, 14, with platinum spiked hair and a baby face, stands with her legs spread, straddling the legs of BARRY, who is leaning against a store front. Barry is well-pierced and grungy.

MARY
It's a lot of money.

BARRY
Don't care. Guy's a freak.

MARY
Not a total freak.

BARRY
Total.

MARY
I don't mind doing it. Done a lot worse
for nothing.

Barry turns his head away, his eyes angry. Mary yanks his face back toward him, plants a kiss on his lips, and grinds her crotch against him.

Mary ends the kiss and leans back but does not let go of his face.

MARY
It's a lot of money.

BARRY
You ain't going in there alone.

INT. TITUS MEADOW'S APARTMENT - LATER

Witherspoon leans against the refrigerator. Titus sits at the counter, which is covered with evidence. He holds up a Ziploc bag with a business card inside. The card has a dark stain on the back of it.

Titus reads the card silently and then looks at Witherspoon.

TITUS MEADOWS
"Nearer my God to thee?"

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Old Protestant hymn.

TITUS MEADOWS
I'm getting older, not dumber. Each time?

DENISE WITHERSPOON

Same card, signed Teddy, beside the body of the adult.

TITUS MEADOWS

Teddy. Always beside the adult?

DENISE WITHERSPOON

Always. The car was stolen. No prints. Philly P.D. is going to be passing the picture you took.

TITUS MEADOWS

Same M.O.?

DENISE WITHERSPOON

We're thinking e-mail contacts. Got people checking that end.

TITUS MEADOWS

Just now?

DENISE WITHERSPOON

Nobody put that together until now. May not be helpful if this is an identity theft thing.

TITUS MEADOWS

Always next to the adult. The guy's got a vendetta. It's not about the kid. Probably sexually abused as a kid.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

Somehow I don't think the kids would agree it wasn't about them.

TITUS MEADOWS

The kids could finger him. Or maybe he thinks he's doing them a favor. Saving them from being abused again. Where did the others happen?

Witherspoon opens up a map centered on Philadelphia with the following locales marked: Camp Hill (PA), Timonium (MD), Dover (DE), Egg Harbor (NJ), Trenton (NJ), Reading (PA), Rising Sun (MD), South Philadelphia.

TITUS MEADOWS

Christ. This guy's all over the place.

INT. QUEEN'S VILLAGE INTERNET CAFE - LATER

CUSTOMERS quietly mill about or sit in front of computer monitors. Two young ATTENDANTS work behind the counter.

Beir, wearing a baseball cap, sits facing a computer monitor and types the following message, which is displayed on the monitor: DEAR KARL, FINALLY FOUND THE PERFECT GIRL FOR YOU.

INT. HARRY'S CLUB, SOUTH STREET - EVENING

Music THROBS. The dance floor is jammed, and the bar is crowded with PATRONS.

RACHEL, 21 and tacky-beautiful, sits at the bar with the bottom of her skirt hiked near her crotch. She swirls cubes in an otherwise empty glass and stares at her reflection as her head bobs to the beat.

Harold Houston INTO FRAME. He inserts himself between Rachel and a YOUNG MAN to his left. The man looks annoyed, but shifts the stool slightly to make room for Houston.

Rachel gives Houston a put down glance.

Houston laughs and pulls a wad of bills from his pocket. Rachel notices and looks into his eyes. Her's ask, "Well?"

HAROLD HOUSTON
(laughs)
You need another drink.

RACHEL
Do I?

HAROLD HOUSTON
Trust me.

RACHEL
How many times have I heard that?

HAROLD HOUSTON
(laughs)
Not many. You're too young.

RACHEL
Not so young.

HAROLD HOUSTON
What are you, eighteen?

RACHEL
Hey, you trying to get me in trouble?

HAROLD HOUSTON
You look like trouble.

BARTENDER INTO FRAME. Houston holds up Rachel's glass. The bartender takes the glass and moves OUT OF FRAME.

HAROLD HOUSTON
Where was I?

RACHEL
You were about to get into trouble.

HAROLD HOUSTON
Was I?

RACHEL
You wish.

HAROLD HOUSTON
I'm having a party tomorrow night.
Interested?

RACHEL
What kind of party?

HAROLD HOUSTON
A surprise party.

Bartender INTO FRAME with Rachel's drink. Houston pulls a C-note from the wad and slides it across the bar. Rachel's eyes say, "whoa!". The bartender looks annoyed but takes the bill.

RACHEL
What kind of surprise?

HAROLD HOUSTON
You'll find out when you get there.

RACHEL
Right.

Houston fans open the wad of bills on the counter.

HAROLD HOUSTON
I'll make it worth your while.

Rachel looks into Houston's eyes for a beat.

RACHEL
You have a cigarette?

Houston whips out a silver cigarette box, opens it, and offers the contents to Rachel. She takes one, puts it to her lips, and looks expectantly at Houston.

Houston pulls a lighter from his pocket and lights the cigarette. His eyes are locked with hers.

HAROLD HOUSTON
You have a sister?

Rachel takes a drag and exhales in Houston's face. He doesn't flinch.

RACHEL

A brother.

Houston's eyes half close and his lower jaw quivers slightly. He takes a breath and holds it for a beat.

HAROLD HOUSTON

How old?

Rachel takes a deep drag, tilts her head back, and blows smoke toward the ceiling. She gives Houston a sly smile.

INT. ABANDONED UNIVERSITY CITY ROWHOUSE - LATER

Mary, barefoot, wearing a black lace top and short leather skirt, sits on a mattress on the floor. Barry paces.

BARRY

This is fucked up.

MARY

Relax.

Barry stands over her.

BARRY

We're getting out of here.

Sound of DOOR OPENING and CLOSING; FOOTSTEPS on stairs.

Mary's eyes convey alarm. She jerks her head toward a closet. Barry hustles into it and closes its battered, louvered door.

Beir INTO VIEW. He studies Mary for a beat. She fidgets.

THEODORE BEIR

Lose the top and the skirt.

Mary removes the top.

Barry's POV through the slats of the closet door...

Mary, partially obscured by slats, removes the skirt.

Sound of DOOR OPENING and CLOSING. Beir moves OUT OF FRAME.

KARL INTO FRAME, his face not visible through the slats. He quickly undresses.

Floor CREAKS. Karl turns.

PHFFT!

Karl SCREAMS, falls to the floor and writhes.

MARY
(panic)
Oh Jesus!

PHFFT!

Karl stops moving.

MARY
(screams)
Barry!

PHFFT!

Mary slumps over.

Barry, barely visible in the closet's shadows, slumps back against the wall and brushes against two metal hangers that CLATTER.

Beir turns toward the closet and fires three silenced shots through the door.

Sound of a BODY HITTING THE FLOOR.

Beir drops a business card on the floor in the blood around Karl's head and exits.

EXT. ABANDONED UNIVERSITY CITY ROWHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Frank Ratico and Mariano Marcello sit in a parked, black Lincoln Towncar across the street from the rowhouse. They watch Beir exit the house and walk rapidly away.

Ratico nods toward Beir. Marcello gets out of the car and follows Beir on the sidewalk opposite Beir.

Ratico exits the car, crosses the street, goes to the rowhouse and looks up and down the sidewalk before entering.

INT. ABANDONED UNIVERSITY CITY ROWHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Ratico enters the upstairs bedroom and sees Karl in a puddle of blood and Mary surrounded by a blood-soaked mattress.

FRANK RATICO
(mutters)
Holy mother of God.

Ratico quickly surveys the room and sees a small stream of blood coming from beneath the closet door. He goes to the closet, opens the door, and sees Barry.

Barry is barely alive, in a contorted position on the closet floor. He looks up at Ratico, attempts to speak, but the words are aborted in a gurgle of blood. Barry dies.

Frank backs up. Disgust turns the corners of his mouth. He glances quickly at the other bodies and hustles out the door as a calliope plays CIRCUS MUSIC.

EXT. SERENO ESTATE - NEXT DAY

Amplified CALLIOPE CIRCUS MUSIC surrounds a half-dozen carnival rides in action on a lawn that stretches from the mansion toward the Brandywine. The mansion is a hundred yards from the activity. The day is sunny and warm.

A hundred or so CHILDREN from 5 to 12-years-old ride the rides and mill about. RIDE OPERATORS tend to the rides, SOCIAL WORKERS tend to the children, and SERENO STAFF man a refreshment stand.

A CLOWN, made up to the max, cavorts with a group of younger children near the refreshment stand.

Laurence Blasingame stands at the edge of the front porch in an Ivory-colored suit, French blue shirt and power tie. Blasingame rocks from heel to toe, his arms folded across his chest, a smile on his face as he surveys the scene.

Titus is to the side and slightly behind Blasingame.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Beautiful, isn't it?

TITUS MEADOWS
The day?

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
The children, Titus. The children.

Blasingame goes down the steps. Titus follows.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Imagine the torment of their young lives.

TITUS MEADOWS
I've seen it.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Abuse?
(stops, turns toward Titus)
You've seen it?

TITUS MEADOWS
What it produces.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Your work with the FBI presumably.

Titus nods and walks slowly toward the activity.

Blasingame follows, head down, hands behind his back.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
And presumably it wasn't a migraine
yesterday, was it?

Titus stops. Blasingame walks a step past Titus and faces him.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
I have to trust you, you know? No lies.

TITUS MEADOWS
Yes sir.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
It wasn't a migraine.

TITUS MEADOWS
It wasn't.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
I won't ask more other than to ask if you
have things, shall I say, under control.

TITUS MEADOWS
I do.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Good.

Blasingame turns and walks. Titus follows.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
If it happens again, no matter how
wrongly my daughter treated you, no
matter how much I've come to care about
you, you'll no longer be in my employ.
Understood?

TITUS MEADOWS

Understood.

Blasingame and Titus walk in silence for several steps. They watch the clown play an exaggerated ring-around-the-rose with several of the younger children.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

She is remarkable with them, don't you think?

TITUS MEADOWS

Sir?

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

Theresa. (laughs) The clown, Titus, the clown. (beat) Even as a child, she couldn't resist getting into her mother's makeup, God rest her soul. I suppose it's why she went off to Broadway.

TITUS MEADOWS

I thought it was to get away from me.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

(laughs)
Don't be ridiculous.

Blasingame and Titus are within 50 feet of the clown and the children. Blasingame raises his arms and smiles.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

Children!

The children who were with the clown run to him, laughing, and surround him. Little ones cling to his legs. Titus stands back. Theresa watches stone-faced. Titus and Theresa's eyes meet for a beat.

Theresa lowers her eyes for a beat. She forces a clown's smile on her face and turns to the crowd.

THERESA BLASINGAME

Kids! Kids! Say hello to Mr. Blasingame!

Theresa and Titus watch all the children run toward Blasingame.

INT. SAL'S 12TH STREET CAFE - EVENING

Sal's is full of PATRONS, except for one table in the back by the grill. The staff goes about their business. Titus sits at the bar. A half-filled glass is in front of him.

Witherspoon enters, takes the glass and sniffs it.

TITUS MEADOWS
Iced tea.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Why would you come here?

TITUS MEADOWS
I miss her.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
It's a bar, Uncle. A bar.

TITUS MEADOWS
Leave me alone.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
No. (beat) There was another one.

Titus' eyes express surprise.

TITUS MEADOWS
Way quick.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
I know. Can we talk?

Titus gets up and nods to the back of the room. Witherspoon follows him to the empty table. They sit.

TITUS MEADOWS
You have the map?

Titus pushes back the tiny floral centerpiece and place settings as Witherspoon spreads the map on the table.

Trudy INTO FRAME.

TRUDY
You don't own this place, you know?

TITUS MEADOWS
Cut us a break, Trudy.

TRUDY
Cut me a break, old man. You're costing me a tip.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Bring me a Ceasar salad. Put some chicken on it?

TRUDY
Not a problem.

Trudy looks at Titus. He remains focused on the map. Trudy rolls her eyes and walks OUT OF FRAME.

TITUS MEADOWS
You got a pen?

Witherspoon produces a pen.

TITUS MEADOWS
Which one was first?

Witherspoon marks a "1" next to Camp Hill.

THERESA BLASINGAME
There.

TITUS MEADOWS
Next?

Witherspoon marks a "2" next to Timonium, puts the end of the pen in her mouth for a beat, and then marks a "3" next to Dover.

Titus and Witherspoon look at each other. An insight is reflected in their eyes. Titus takes the pen.

TITUS MEADOWS
Let me guess.

He marks a "4" next to Egg Harbor and looks at Witherspoon, who nods, her eyes wide in amazement. Titus puts the pen at Camp Hill and draws a line between each succeeding marked town creating a tightening spiral that goes to Philadelphia.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
This last one screws it up.

TITUS MEADOWS
Where was he from? The man.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Neighborhood. A professor at Penn.

TITUS MEADOWS
The one before, number eight?

Witherspoon takes out a Palm Pilot and punches it three times with the stylus.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Jersey. Canton.

Titus follows the spiral back and locates Canton very close to the spiral. He looks at Witherspoon.

TITUS MEADOWS
"Nearer My God to Thee."

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Wherever that spiral ends, somebody's
going to die.

SAM SOLARIS (O.C.)
Is this willful insubordination,
Witherspoon?

Sam Solaris and Agents White and Margolis INTO VIEW.

Witherspoon turns in her chair as Titus casually folds the map. Witherspoon turns back to the table. A foursome at an adjacent table leaves.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
I'm having dinner with my uncle.

SAM SOLARIS
What's with the map, tight-ass?

TITUS MEADOWS
Planning a trip to the country. You're
not invited.

SAM SOLARIS
Break my heart.

Solaris pulls up an empty chair and sits backwards on it. He looks at White and Margolis and jerks his head toward Witherspoon. The agents pull up chairs on either side of her.

SAM SOLARIS
I'm sure Neesie here has you up to speed.

TITUS MEADOWS
I don't know what you're talking about.

SAM SOLARIS
Shame. Here I was hoping you'd rattle off
a profile for me.

TITUS MEADOWS
What good would that do? You'd ignore it.
Assuming I knew what you were talking
about.

SAM SOLARIS
 (to Witherspoon)
 I wasn't fucking around. I don't want you
 seeing him while you're on this
 investigation.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
 You can't tell me to stay away from
 family.

SAM SOLARIS
 We'll see.
 (stands; to Titus)
 Talk to her, tight-ass. Tell her the
 Bureau doesn't tolerate insubordinate
 fuck ups.

Titus glares at Solaris as Trudy moves INTO FRAME carrying a
 salad.

TRUDY
 We got a convention going here?

Solaris ignores Trudy and smirks at Titus.

SAM SOLARIS
 (to White and Margolis)
 Let's get out of here.

Titus, Witherspoon and Trudy watch the three men depart.

TRUDY
 Was that guy Mafia or something?

TITUS MEADOWS
 Definitely something.

Trudy places the salad on the table and moves OUT OF FRAME as
 Witherspoon leans forward.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
 Give me a profile.

TITUS MEADOWS
 You heard him, Denise. You know what
 happened to me. Don't fuck this up.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
 I don't give a damn. Give me something.
 Anything.

TITUS MEADOWS
 I gave you his damned picture.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

Not enough. Do you have anything else?

Titus looks around the cafe and then leans forward.

TITUS MEADOWS

This guy is real smart. That's a given. A college graduate, maybe a professional of some kind. Likely doesn't have a family. Too busy with this sordid shit plus whatever is up with Galdemagio. And that baffles me. It doesn't fit.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

I know.

TITUS MEADOWS

An only child. Protestant, I'd say, given the reference to the hymn. Straight-laced upbringing. Best face forward in public at all times, but somebody close--a father, uncle, somebody--was abusing him, probably sexual and violent. Every one of these guys is the perpetrator to him. Every one of those kids is him.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

He kills himself?

TITUS MEADOWS

Come on, girl. What drives this guy is a fear of death somebody put into his head when he was a kid. He's getting revenge each time he kills a perp, but with the kids, he's killing what he loathes most about himself.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

A sense of being powerless?

TITUS MEADOWS

Not a sense. A wrenching reality that won't go away, fear that death is around the corner, a fear that enrages him, one he can't contain. If it doesn't find an outlet, he'll implode.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

The interval says, what, this is getting worse inside him?

TITUS MEADOWS

Maybe he's just getting impatient.

Titus and Witherspoon look into each other's eyes for a beat. Titus looks away. Denise, wearing a frown, digs into her salad.

INT. SERENO MANSION - NEXT MORNING

Laurence Blasingame sits at the table in the Florida room and periodically sips coffee. He stares at the countryside.

Titus sits at the other end of the table staring at an empty cup on the table in front of him.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
You spent the evening with your niece.

TITUS MEADOWS
I did.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Talking about our problem.

TITUS MEADOWS
That and other things.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
And?

TITUS MEADOWS
Galdemagio seems to have shut down his operation.

Blasingame turns in his chair and looks at Titus.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Really?

TITUS MEADOWS
The warehouse he was using is empty.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
I suppose this is good news.

TITUS MEADOWS
Unexpected news. I don't know about good. It may mean he knows we know.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Frankly, I don't give a damn about retribution. I just want him to stay away from my business.

TITUS MEADOWS
If he knows, he probably feels the same.

Blasingame picks up his coffee cup, turns his gaze back to the countryside, and takes a sip of coffee.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

No doubt. (beat) I wonder what he does know.

(turns to Titus)

For instance, could he know that Houston blew the whistle? Could Harold be in danger?

TITUS MEADOWS

Houston didn't finger him. All he did was find the shortage.

Laurence turns back to the view. Titus looks out the windows.

TITUS MEADOWS

Houston is an odd duck, isn't he?

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

(snorts a smile)

Is that a kind way of saying pervert?

TITUS MEADOWS

I'm not one to judge.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

But you are curious.

TITUS MEADOWS

I suppose. Did he ever have a family?

Blasingame turns to look at Titus, who is looking at the view. Blasingame cocks his head slightly.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

You're wondering if he was ever normal.

TITUS MEADOWS

(faces Blasingame)

I suppose.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

(turns back to the view)

He used to be a model of decorum years ago. Wife, nice home in Chester County, a child. It changed when his son disappeared a few weeks before his fourteenth birthday. The police looked for a while. Harold even hired a private agency, but eventually, he gave up ever hoping to see him again. He and Theresa were the best of friends from the time

(MORE)

LAURENCE BLASINGAME (cont'd)
 they were little. Took her a while to get over it. (beat) If you don't mind, Titus, I'd like to spend a little time alone. Ask Sara to bring more coffee, please, and ask Paul to stand down for about half an hour. It's too beautiful a morning to hurry off to work, don't you think?

Titus quietly gets up and exits.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
 Titus?

Blasingame turns enough to see Titus' empty chair. With narrowed eyes, he turns back to the view and his coffee.

EXT. SERENO MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

Titus stands at the edge of a swimming pool apron and smokes a cigarette as he stares at the Valley of the Brandywine. His face is a study in concentration.

Titus takes a last drag, drops the butt on the apron, grinds it out with his shoe, and kicks it into the adjacent grass.

Titus turns his head and slowly surveys the estate. He rubs his eyes and draws his hands down his cheeks to his neck as he gives the valley a final look. He shakes his head slightly, turns and walks toward the house.

INT. HOUSTON'S WESTTOWN HOUSE - EVENING

Houston, Rachel, and Rachel's 11-year-old brother, TOM, stand by the front door.

Houston is made up with mascara, rouge and lipstick and wears a big-hair, blond wig. He is naked beneath an ornate, silk, flowered robe and totters on spike heels. His expression is cold and lifeless.

Rachel wears a revealing black lace top and pants and high black boots. Tom wears a denim jacket over a t-shirt and jeans. He is quietly crying.

Houston takes a roll of bills from the robe, peels off five C-notes and hands them to Rachel.

RACHEL
 (to Tom)
 Stop crying you little shit.

Rachel counts the bills and then looks at Houston, judgment in her eyes balanced by a knowing smile.

RACHEL

You are one perverted son-of-a-bitch, you know that?

(to Tom)

I said, stop crying.

Rachel raises her hand to smack Tom, but Houston grabs it.

HAROLD HOUSTON

Wait outside for a minute. Tommy and I are going to have a little chat.

RACHEL

We got to get going.

HAROLD HOUSTON

It'll just be a minute.

Rachel stuffs the bills into a tiny black handbag, opens the front door and walks out. Houston closes the door.

Houston gets down on his haunches to face Tom, who cowers against a wall, his eyes wide and terrified. Houston's tone is simultaneously gentle and coldly matter-of-fact.

HAROLD HOUSTON

If you say anything about the fun we had tonight, Tommy, I'll find you and kill you, do you understand?

Tom nods his head emphatically, eyes wide.

HAROLD HOUSTON

Besides, your mom would think you were making it up, wouldn't she? She'd think you were being really bad, wouldn't she?

Tom nods his head and begins to cry harder. He does not take his eyes off of Houston.

HAROLD HOUSTON

In fact, it's likely she'd hate you for what you've done, because you're an evil little boy, aren't you, Tommy?

(Tommy nods his head and cries)

An evil, evil little devil child, aren't you?

Houston coldly watches Tom cry for a beat. One corner of Houston's mouth curls up and quivers. He stands, opens the door, and watches Tom nearly stagger down the steps.

Houston watches Rachel grab Tom by the back of the neck as they walk toward a driveway. She shakes him and wags a

threatening finger at him as they walk. She shoves Tom away as they near the driveway.

Houston closes the door, kicks off the high heels, and walks through a house of impeccable Early American decor to a den where a computer monitor is on.

Houston sits at the computer, clicks the mouse, and AOL announces YOU'VE GOT MAIL.

Houston scrolls through spam to a subject reading, "Found Him." He opens the mail, reads it, pulls at his lower lip, clicks on "reply" and begins typing a response.

INT. BUICK - LATER

Titus is in the car and slowly driving around Rittenhouse Square, a cell phone at his ear. Small groups and couples of PEDESTRIANS walk the sidewalks opposite the park.

TITUS MEADOWS

It's me. (long beat) I could come up and scrub your back.

Titus pulls the Buick to a stop along the curb opposite Theresa Blasingame's apartment building.

TITUS MEADOWS

I'll wait. (long beat) How about Mulligan's, in what, say, an hour? (beat)
OK.

Titus shuts off the cell phone and drops it in his pocket. He looks up and sees Beir walking toward the building. Beir drops a cell phone into a pocket.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING

Titus exits the Buick. Its flashers are on. Traffic keeps him from crossing the street.

Beir sees Titus, walks past the entrance to the apartment building, and meets a large group of loud, cavorting, PENN FRESHMAN coming in the opposite direction.

Titus watches Beir walk behind the freshmen. Titus fidgets as he studies the traffic, looking for a break. He looks toward where the freshmen had been and then to where they are in front of the building entrance.

Titus sees Beir's head at the back of the passing freshmen as Beir enters the building.

As the freshmen clear the front of the building, Marcello INTO VIEW on the sidewalk.

The traffic breaks. Titus runs across the street to the entrance. A black, Lincoln Towncar slows to let Titus pass.

The Towncar stops in front of Marcello. Marcello gets in the Towncar and it drives away.

INT. BUILDING FOYER

Titus enters and pulls on the locked interior door. He shakes it, steps back, pulls out his cell phone, and punches in numbers.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

The street in front of the building is blocked off by patrol cars, their lights flashing.

Titus stands on the edge of Rittenhouse Square opposite the building, smokes, and watches UNIFORMED OFFICERS and DETECTIVES mill about the sidewalk and patrol cars.

Solaris, Witherspoon, and Agents White and Margolis converse on the sidewalk near the entrance.

Detectives stop occasional BUILDING TENANTS as they exit the building. Each time, a detective checks a note pad before allowing them to pass.

Witherspoon leaves Solaris et al and crosses the street to where Titus stands.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

Solaris swears he's going to find a way to crucify you for this.

TITUS MEADOWS

He's in the building.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

He's not in the building. No one has seen him anywhere.

TITUS MEADOWS

You're telling me he's evaporated into thin air.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

I'm telling you, you made a mistake. You saw somebody who looked like him.

TITUS MEADOWS
God damn it, I saw him go in!

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Uncle, this is my fault. I should never
have gotten you involved.

TITUS MEADOWS
Don't patronize me, Denise. I was doing
this before you were born.

Witherspoon's eyes flash anger. She points a finger at Titus.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
That's it. You're out of this. I don't
want you in this anymore.

Theresa exits the building. Titus glances at her as she is
questioned by the detective at the door, and then Titus looks
into Witherspoon's eyes.

TITUS MEADOWS
Tell Solaris I'm out of it. Get him off
your back. Tell yourself, if you want,
but I'm in it, whether you like it or
not.

Witherspoon watches Titus cross the street and intercept
Theresa on the sidewalk. She watches the two of them walk
away.

INT. TITUS MEADOW'S BEDROOM - LATER

Titus and Theresa lie naked on the bed looking at the
ceiling, their heads on pillows, a sheet pulled to their
waists.

Titus smokes.

THERESA BLASINGAME
Those are going to kill you.

TITUS MEADOWS
There's a novel theme. A lot of things
can kill you.

THERESA BLASINGAME
I hate work.

TITUS MEADOWS
That can do it.

THERESA BLASINGAME
I've got to get away.

TITUS MEADOWS
A few days in the Keys should do it.

THERESA BLASINGAME
Permanently get away.

TITUS MEADOWS
You could run the bar in Key West.

Theresa rolls onto her side, takes the cigarette from Titus, leans across him and crushes it in an ashtray on a nightstand, and then lays next to him. She takes hold of his chin and turns his face toward hers.

THERESA BLASINGAME
I'm serious.

Theresa lets go of Titus' chin, rolls to her back and stares at the ceiling.

TITUS MEADOWS
Your father would not be pleased.

THERESA BLASINGAME
Fuck him.

Titus rolls onto his side and studies Theresa.

TITUS MEADOWS
Really?

Theresa gives him a quick glance and then stares at the ceiling.

THERESA BLASINGAME
He's not what he seems.

TITUS MEADOWS
What does he seem?

THERESA BLASINGAME
The Great and Noble Man. Those kids. *His* kids. His special charity.

TITUS MEADOWS
Seems pretty noble to me.

THERESA BLASINGAME
I was his kid. Trust me, it's all for show or feeding guilt or some such bullshit.

Titus rolls toward the nightstand, taps a cigarette from a pack on the stand, lights it, lays back against the pillow, takes a drag and exhales.

TITUS MEADOWS

What kid of father was Harold Houston?

Theresa's eyes flicker open for a flash. She darts a glance at Titus from the corner of her eye, and then returns her gaze to the ceiling, but her eyes are on alert.

THERESA BLASINGAME

Where did that come from?

TITUS MEADOWS

Your father told me Hal had a son that disappeared.

Titus waits a beat for a response. He turns his head to look at Theresa, who stares at the ceiling. He rolls his head back and takes a drag.

TITUS MEADOWS

Told me you two were good friends.

THERESA BLASINGAME

Best friends.

TITUS MEADOWS

Unusual, no?

THERESA BLASINGAME

We were both only children. Our fathers were friends. We had a lot in common.

Titus takes a drag and exhales.

TITUS MEADOWS

I think he was on his way to see you tonight.

Theresa snaps her head toward him, her eyes narrowed.

THERESA BLASINGAME

Teddy's dead.

Titus looks at her and cocks his head, insight in his eyes.

TITUS MEADOWS

I don't think so.

Theresa rolls over, sits up for a beat, stands and starts walking toward a doorway, picking up her clothes as she goes.

THERESA BLASINGAME
Conversation over.

TITUS MEADOWS
What?

Theresa stops and faces Titus, fire in her eyes.

THERESA BLASINGAME
It hurts too much.

Titus sits on the edge of his bed and pulls on his boxers.

TITUS MEADOWS
If I'm right, a lot of people are getting hurt too much.

THERESA BLASINGAME
Enough!

Titus stands and faces her, his body posture defiant.

TITUS MEADOWS
Not enough! Maybe he's back from wherever he's been. Could be he's trying to hurt Blasingame's--his father's division specifically--by scheming with Galdemagio. Maybe he's back to kill his father.

THERESA BLASINGAME
Teddy's dead. Dead! If this is some pathetic attempt to make up for a failed career, Titus, you're on the wrong track. I don't want to hear another word.

TITUS MEADOWS
What're you afraid of?

THERESA BLASINGAME
(screams)
Not another word!

Theresa spins toward a door, steps through it and SLAMS it.

Titus goes to a phone on his nightstand and punches in a number. He waits a beat.

TITUS MEADOWS
Security please. (beat) Marty? Titus. Need a favor. You know Harold Houston's home address? (double beat) Westtown? Thanks.

Titus hangs up the phone, goes to a dresser, opens the top drawer, and pulls out the map he picked up at Sal's. He spreads it on the bed and traces the spiral to its end. It ends near Westtown.

Titus folds the map, puts it in the dresser, picks up the phone and punches in a number. He waits several beats.

INTERCUT:

INT. DENISE WITHERSPOON'S BEDROOM

Phone is RINGING.

Witherspoon is sleeping. She starts, rolls toward the phone on a nightstand, and groggy, answers it.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Hello.

TITUS MEADOWS
Harold Houston is next.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Who is this?

TITUS MEADOWS
It's on the map.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Uncle?

TITUS MEADOWS
It's on the map.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Don't call me anymore.

TITUS MEADOWS
I'm right about this, Denise. It's his son. His son named Teddy.

Denise hangs up.

Titus looks at the receiver and quickly hangs it up when the door opens. Theresa, dressed, INTO VIEW. She looks a question.

TITUS MEADOWS
Wrong number.

THERESA BLASINGAME
Take me home.

Theresa leaves the room.

Titus pulls at his lower lip. He picks up the pack of cigarettes from the nightstand, taps out a cigarette, lights it, and stares at his reflection in a mirror as he takes a drag.

INT. HAROLD HOUSTON'S OFFICE - NEXT MORNING

Houston sits at his desk in his shirtsleeves, his necktie loose, working on his computer. Reading glasses perch on his nose.

A door opens and a SECRETARY enters. Houston looks up. The secretary nods toward the outer office and steps aside.

Titus enters. Houston stands.

HAROLD HOUSTON
Titus! My man!

The secretary exits. Harold gestures to a club chair in a conversational grouping at one side of the spacious office.

After Titus sits, Houston sits.

HAROLD HOUSTON
What can I do you for?

TITUS MEADOWS
I want to talk about your son.

Houston's face turns ashen. He looks away and slumps back into his chair. His voice is raspy in response.

HAROLD HOUSTON
Whatever for?

TITUS MEADOWS
I think you're in danger.

HAROLD HOUSTON
(looks at Titus)
Whatever for?

TITUS MEADOWS
I think your son is planning to kill you.

Houston looks at Titus with incredulity in his eyes. He stands up, takes a few steps, turns and looks at Titus as if Titus is crazy.

HAROLD HOUSTON
My son died a long, long time ago.

TITUS MEADOWS
Your son disappeared.

HAROLD HOUSTON
He's dead, Titus.

TITUS MEADOWS
Are you positive?

Houston takes a step towards Titus and points to the door. Houston's eyes are filled with fury, his voice barely under control.

HAROLD HOUSTON
Leave my office.

TITUS MEADOWS
I'm trying to help you.

Houston takes another step toward Titus and leans forward threateningly.

HAROLD HOUSTON
I said, get the fuck out.

Titus hesitates.

HAROLD HOUSTON
(screams)
Get out!

The secretary appears at the door as Titus gets up and exits. The secretary gapes at Houston, alarm in her eyes, as he shakes in red-faced rage.

INT. WEB CAFE - EARLY EVENING

Beir sits at a computer reading an e-mail. He sits facing the cafe entrance.

Ratico enters the cafe, stops in the doorway, and surveys the PATRONS. He spies Beir, casually walks toward him until he is opposite Beir, and waits.

Beir looks up after a beat. His eyes dart left and right before returning to Ratico, who jerks his head toward the street.

Ratico turns and walks toward the entrance. Beir signs out.

EXT. WEB CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

Ratico stands beside a black Towncar parked at the curb.

Beir exits the cafe and approaches the car.

Ratico opens the front passenger side door. Beir gets into the car. Ratico closes the door and watches as the Towncar slowly pulls away from the curb.

INT. LINCOLN TOWNCAR

Galdemagio sits behind Marcello, the driver, as the Towncar slowly drives the streets of Queen's Village. Galdemagio wears a lightweight, camel colored suede overcoat and a dapper dark brown fedora.

Galdemagio looks at Beir and then out the side window.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

So I'm asking myself the other day, I wonder what Teodoro does in his spare time. Isn't that right, Max?

MARIANO MARCELLO

That's right, Don Galdemagio.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

So what do you do in your spare time, pal?

Beir jerks his eyes slightly toward Galdemagio.

THEODORE BEIR

The Internet.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

You're full of shit, Teodoro.

Beir looks out his side window, eyes on alert. Galdemagio slowly turns, looks at Beir coldly, and then looks out the window on his own side.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

So I ask myself, if Teodoro's not being honest with me about his spare time, what else is he holding back?

Beir continues to look out the window. Galdemagio turns and studies Beir.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

Friends tell each other the truth, pal. Isn't that right, Max?

MARIANO MARCELLO

You're right, Don Galdemagio.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
You my friend, Teodoro?

Beir turns and faces Galdemagio.

THEODORE BEIR
What is this about?

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
Who'd you visit in the Rittenhouse Towers yesterday? You know, the building that started crawling with cops as soon as you went in the front door.

THEODORE BEIR
You've been following me?

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
One, you stupid fuck, I got more important things to do. Two, it's not for you to ask, and three, who the fuck did you visit?

THEODORE BEIR
A friend.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
Max, do you think he's fucking with me?

MARIANO MARCELLO
Sounds like it.

THEODORE BEIR
I'm not fucking with you.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
Why don't you tell me you visited Theresa Blasingame? She lives in that building. You don't have someone on the inside at Blasingame's working for you, you stupid fuck. You're working for her. I'm thinking *she's* your friend, Teodoro, not me.

THEODORE BEIR
I can explain.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
Fuck the explanation. I want to know why she's doing this. She have a drug problem? Spend too much fucking time in Atlantic City?

THEODORE BEIR
I don't know.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
(bellows)
You don't know?

Beir's eyes begin looking for escape, but he sits still and erect in the seat.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
Listen, you stupid fuck. You don't know how close you are to Hell. If you're her boy, you've been playing me. Pretty fucking stupid.

THEODORE BEIR
I haven't been...

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
Shut the fuck up! Stupid to get involved with rich 'mericans. They think they're smart. Too smart. They take chances, and when they get their fucking asses in a crack, they turn state's evidence. That's when businessmen like me get fucked over.

THEODORE BEIR
I know that wouldn't happen.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
(bellows)
You don't know shit!
(mutters)
Stupid fucking 'mericans.
(to Marcello)
To the airport.

THEODORE BEIR
Where are we going?

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
Where you're going depends on what you decide in the next twenty minutes.

INT. HOUSTON'S WESTTOWN HOUSE - TWO HOURS LATER

Front door IN FRAME.

DOOR BELL CHIMES.

Houston INTO FRAME wearing a black leather harness and thong, spike collar, and jack boots. Pasty flab protrudes between the straps of the harness. He opens the door.

Beir stands on the stoop wearing a dark brown, three-quarter length leather coat over a black turtleneck. Sunglasses hide his eyes.

PAUL, a waif-like boy of 13 with white blond hair stands next to Beir. He wears a dirty concert shirt under a worn denim jacket, wrinkled blue jeans, and sneakers. His cold eyes show no emotion.

Houston looks Paul up and down and then scrutinizes Beir for a beat.

HAROLD HOUSTON
He'll do. (to Paul) Come on.

Houston turns. Beir puts a hand on Paul's shoulder. Paul doesn't move.

Houston glances at Paul and then frowns at Beir.

HAROLD HOUSTON
You staying?

THEODORE BEIR
Thought I might.

HAROLD HOUSTON
Not enough of him for the two of us.

THEODORE BEIR
That's your business. He's mine.

HAROLD HOUSTON
You a cop or something?

THEODORE BEIR
Definitely not a cop. I have to take him back. What am I supposed to do, drive around for whatever?

HAROLD HOUSTON
There's a thought.

THEODORE BEIR
He stays, I stay.

HAROLD HOUSTON
Suit yourself.

Houston gestures toward a parlor and then glances at Paul, jerks his head toward a hallway, and walks in that direction.

Paul looks at Beir, who shakes his head no.

THEODORE BEIR

(to Houston)

He'll find you. I got one last thing to tell him. I want to be sure you get your money's worth.

HAROLD HOUSTON

Oh, I'll get my money's worth.

Houston OUT OF VIEW down the hallway.

INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Ohio Players' *FIRE* BLASTS from an entertainment center in a large room that is an exaggerated replica of a Seventies' sex club. Posters of early porn films adorn the walls; lush sofas and huge pillows line the walls.

The room is bathed in intense red light.

Bondage paraphernalia hangs from the ceiling in one corner and various S&M devices are scattered about. Porn magazines are piled on end tables. The entertainment center is plastered with photos of sex acts.

Houston paces. He rhythmically slaps a riding crop against his palm.

FOOTSTEPS on the stairs are barely heard above the music. Houston stops pacing and looks toward the stairs.

Beir INTO FRAME. His hands are in his coat pockets.

Houston has to yell to be heard above the music.

HAROLD HOUSTON

Where is he?

THEODORE BEIR

Sent him home.

HAROLD HOUSTON

What? Are you crazy?

Houston takes a threatening step toward Beir. Beir pulls a revolver from his coat pocket. A silencer is on the barrel.

Houston's eyes open wide, and he retreats.

HAROLD HOUSTON

What the fuck?

THEODORE BEIR

Sit.

HAROLD HOUSTON

What for?

Beir fires a silenced shot that EXPLODES the screen of the large TV in the entertainment center. Houston jumps back at the sound.

The MUSIC STOPS.

Houston stares wide-eyed at the revolver.

THEODORE BEIR

Sit.

EXT. LA CASA ROMA - MIDNIGHT

Frank Ratico stands on the sidewalk near the front door. A YOUNG COUPLE walks by holding hands. The girl is beautiful in a South Philly way, and Ratico watches her walk away as he smokes.

Galdemagio's Towncar INTO VIEW with Marcello at the wheel.

The Towncar stops. Marcello pops out and opens Galdemagio's door. Galdemagio exits, looks around warily, and walks toward La Casa Roma.

Ratico looks a question at Galdemagio, his hands lifted in query.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

Atlantic City still sucks.

FRANK RATICO

I mean, what about the guy?

Galdemagio stops.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

He's got three fucking days to take out the Blasingames. Both of them. As soon as he does, I want him dead. He doesn't do it in three days? I want him dead, the fucking sicko. Capece?

FRANK RATICO

Capece.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

I'm fucking hungry.

Ratico opens the door and waits for Galdemagio to pass through. Galdemagio speaks as he passes Ratico.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

Disgusts me to think I've been dealing
with such a sick fuck.

EXT. HOUSTON'S WESTTOWN HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The large, two story, Colonial stone home, illuminated by portable flood lights, sits in the midst of a broad green lawn bordered by shade trees.

A driveway sweeps toward the house and a stone walk winds from the driveway across the lawn to the open front door. Six uniformed STATE TROOPERS are slowly walking across the lawn looking for evidence.

Marked and unmarked State Police cars line the driveway. Yellow police tape from tree to tree marks off the crime scene.

NEIGHBORS stand outside the tape and gawk. Three satellite trucks from local TV stations clog the street. Several REPORTERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, and CAMERA PERSONS mill about.

A grey Crown Victoria INTO VIEW driven by Denise Witherspoon. Two STATE TROOPERS lift the yellow tape blocking the driveway. The Crown Victoria passes underneath it and stops.

Witherspoon exits the car and walks toward the front door.

INT. HOUSTON'S WESTTOWN HOUSE

Witherspoon enters through the front door.

Witherspoon pauses for a beat and watches a FORENSICS TECH slowly scouring Paul's clothing for evidence. Paul lies on his back in a pool of blood, his eyes open in death's stare, a bullet hole in his forehead.

Witherspoon passes DETECTIVES as she walks toward the door to the basement.

INT. BASEMENT

Solaris talks with two detectives. The room remains bathed in red light.

Witherspoon INTO VIEW coming down the stairs.

SAM SOLARIS

(to detectives)

Hold on a minute.

Solaris looks at Witherspoon, nods toward the other end of the room, and takes a few steps in that direction.

Witherspoon glances toward the end of the room. Her eyes and mouth twitch as she fights to keep from vomiting.

Houston's full body profile INTO VIEW hanging by his spike collar, which is attached to a chain hanging from a hook that is part of his S&M paraphernalia. The body is slowly turning, which brings his back INTO VIEW.

A streak of dried blood and filth runs down the inside of one leg and has pooled beneath his feet.

SLOW ZOOM to HEAD SHOT as Houston's purpled face slowly turns INTO VIEW. His bloated tongue protrudes and his pupils are rolled up beneath his eyelids.

DENISE WITHERSPOON (O.S.)

Jesus.

Solaris shrugs.

SAM SOLARIS

A bit creative this time.

Solaris holds up a plastic evidence bag with Teddy's calling card in it.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

No head shot.

SAM SOLARIS

No shot. That is if you don't count the kid and the TV. Fucking sicko castrated him. He was probably alive.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

He's not the only fucking sicko. Look at this place. I can't believe Titus called this.

SAM SOLARIS

No kidding?

DENISE WITHERSPOON

He thinks it's this guy's kid. We need to check it out.

SAM SOLARIS

You don't predict this with a profile.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

It was the locations of the other...

Witherspoon looks at Solaris, her eyes steeled for bad news. Solaris' eyes are just cold steel.

SAM SOLARIS
You're suspended as of right now, Agent Witherspoon.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
You're out of your mind.

SAM SOLARIS
You fucked up. I warned you to keep him out of this. You want me to quote all the regs you busted in getting him involved in this? Him of all people?

DENISE WITHERSPOON
I did fuck up. If I'd have listened to him, that boy up there might still be alive.

SAM SOLARIS
Boo fucking hoo. Titus got lucky. You? Not so lucky. Might as well give me your credentials and your gun now.

Solaris holds out his hand. Witherspoon glances at it and then takes a step toward Solaris.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
You're going to have to take them.

SAM SOLARIS
(smirks)
You're just making it worse for yourself.

Witherspoon glares for a beat, spins on her heel, and exits.

INT. LA CASA ROMA - CONTINUOUS

The restaurant is closed. RICHIE ARENA, the 40-year-old owner, sits on a stool by the maitre d's podium and pages through the schedule book. Marcello slowly rocks heel-toe, hands behind his back, by the front door.

The door opens and Titus enters wearing jeans, sweater and an open leather jacket. His face is drawn, his eyes intense. Titus glances at the owner and then at Marcello, who holds up his hand.

MARIANO MARCELLO
Got to check you out.

Marcello glances at the owner and nods toward the dining rooms. The owner scoots.

Titus lifts his arms enough for Marcello to pat down his upper body. Marcello pats down each pant leg and then faces Titus.

MARIANO MARCELLO
You're clean.

TITUS MEADOWS
I know.

MARIANO MARCELLO
Whatever.

Marcello motions with his head for Titus to follow him and walks away. Titus follows.

INT. PRIVATE DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The walls are a deep purple. Ornate, gold sconces provide little illumination. A number of large plastic tropical plants fill the corners of the room, which is just large enough for a rectangular table that seats 10.

Galdemagio sits at one end and fiddles with a half full glass of wine. Ratico sits to his right.

ARMAND FORTE and VINCENZE FITABOLLI, each in their early sixties, sit next to each other on the opposite side of the table from Ratico, but two chairs away from Galdemagio.

Forte is thin and stooped; Fitabolli is portly. Both wear gray silk suits, white shirts and ties.

All five are stone faced and avoid eye contact.

Marcello enters and walks behind Forte and Fitabolli.

Titus enters the room and pauses for a beat. His eyes quickly dart from one to the other of the men in the room, ending with Marcello, who stands behind the empty chair next to Galdemagio.

MARIANO MARCELLO
Over here.

Titus goes to the empty chair. Marcello pulls it out, and Titus sits. Marcello stands behind Titus, who glances at Ratico before turning his attention to Galdemagio.

TITUS MEADOWS
I appreciate this.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

I'd say it's nothing, but it's not nothing, which is why I've asked friends...

(nods at Forte and Fitabolli)
...to join us. You'll forgive me if I don't introduce them.

TITUS MEADOWS

I know who they are.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

Then I have to ask you to forget they're here.

TITUS MEADOWS

I have a good memory.

Galdemagio glances at Forte and Fitabolli. Fitabolli glowers at Titus. Forte rolls his eyes and looks at the ceiling.

A smile slowly breaks on Galdemagio's face. The face breaks into a guffaw as he pushes his chair back and slaps Ratico, who forces a supportive chuckle.

Galdemagio leans toward Titus, places his hand on Titus' forearm, and smiles.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

You get whacked, nobody cares. You know that, right?

Galdemagio's eyes never leave Titus' eyes as he leans back in his seat and takes a sip of wine.

Titus returns look for look and reaches inside his jacket.

Ratico jumps up and whips out a handgun as Galdemagio stares where Titus is reaching. Forte and Fitabolli do the same, and Marcello steps forward.

Titus spreads his hands and looks at Ratico.

TITUS MEADOWS

Easy.

MARIANO MARCELLO

Yo Frank. I checked him out.

TITUS MEADOWS

I need you to look at something.

Galdemagio gestures to Ratico to sit and then gestures for Titus to give it to him.

Titus extracts a trifolded piece of paper from his jacket and passes it to Galdemagio.

Galdemagio unfolds it. It is the picture Titus took of Beir at the turnpike rest stop. Galdemagio looks at Ratico as he passes the picture to him. Ratico looks at the picture and then makes eye contact with Galdemagio.

Galdemagio turns to Titus.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

Am I supposed to know this man?

TITUS MEADOWS

I don't have time for games. I need to find this guy.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

Call a cop.

Titus sits back and exhales through pursed lips.

TITUS MEADOWS

You know what? This was stupid. Why would you give a fuck about kids getting their brains blown out?

Titus gets up abruptly. Galdemagio glances at Marcello and slightly but quickly shakes his head. Marcello steps in front of Titus. Titus stops and looks at Galdemagio. There is anger and disgust in Titus' eyes.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

You don't know me, pal.

TITUS MEADOWS

Don't be so sure.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

You're the one needs to be sure. You're on my corner tonight.

Galdemagio and Titus eyeball each other for a beat.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

Sit.

After a beat, Titus sits.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO

I'm not saying I know this guy, all right? But a friend of mine saw his work.

Galdemagio leans toward Titus, who responds by doing the same. Forte and Fitabolli stare at Titus. Ratico clears his throat and fidgets briefly.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
You understand me?

TITUS MEADOWS
Where?

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
An abandoned row house in University
City.

TITUS MEADOWS
Tell me.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
A dead fucking pervert, a girl with a
bullet through the head, and a kid in a
closet.

TITUS MEADOWS
Does your friend know where he is?

Galdemagio looks at Forte and Fitabolli. Fitabolli nods slightly.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
My friend tells me this man might want to
use information about business associates
to cop a plea. If I help you find him, I
might be hurting friends of mine.

TITUS MEADOWS
Choices have consequences.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
Like your coming here.

TITUS MEADOWS
Maybe.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
I need some guarantees for my friends.

TITUS MEADOWS
I'm fresh out.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
Then there's nothing more to say. I'm
sorry I can't you.

TITUS MEADOWS
 Sorry is exactly how I'd describe you.

Galdemagio glares at Titus as he addresses Ratico.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
 Frank? Why don't you and Max see Mr.
 Meadows to the door.

TITUS MEADOWS
 I'll see myself out.

ENZO GALDEMAGIO
 No you won't.

Titus and Ratico stand. Marcello heads for the doorway. Titus and Ratico follow.

INT. LA CASA ROMA FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Marcello pushes open the front door and stands aside as Titus exits. Frank stops at the door.

FRANK RATICO
 (to Marcello)
 Think I'll get some fresh air. How about
 you?

MARIANO MARCELLO
 I hate fresh air.

Ratico laughs and goes outside.

EXT. LA CASA ROMA

Titus is walking away. Ratico takes a few steps and stretches.

FRANK RATICO
 (loud)
 You got balls, Meadows.

Titus stops, turns, and looks at Ratico, who glances at La Casa Roma's closed door.

FRANK RATICO
 I know where you might find your man.

TITUS MEADOWS
 I'm listening.

Titus and Ratico walk toward each other.

FRANK RATICO
I'm not telling you one fucking thing.

Frank taps a cigarette from a pack, offers it to Titus who takes it, and taps out one for himself.

TITUS MEADOWS
I don't know you.

Titus produces a lighter and lights Frank's cigarette and then his own.

FRANK RATICO
This ever gets out, we're both dead.

TITUS MEADOWS
Understood.

FRANK RATICO
Your man's got a contract on your boss and it's got to be done soon. He's got an inside connection that's going to open a door.

TITUS MEADOWS
Who?

FRANK RATICO
All I can tell you is, find the old man and eventually your man is going to show up.

TITUS MEADOWS
Why are you doing this?

FRANK RATICO
I'm the one saw what that sick fuck did. I got kids. Near to made me puke.

TITUS MEADOWS
Thanks.

Titus extends his hand. Frank drops the cigarette to the sidewalk and crushes it.

FRANK RATICO
Fuck you. I'm already regretting I did this. Get out of here before I do something stupid.

Titus shakes his head and walks away. He takes a last drag and flicks his cigarette into the gutter.

EXT. SOUTH BROAD STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Titus approaches his Buick along the sidewalk.

Cell phone BEEPS.

Titus stops next to the Buick, pulls the phone from his pocket, and puts it to his ear.

TITUS MEADOWS

Yo. (beat) You're shitting me. (beat)
Thirty minutes.

Titus hangs up, pockets the phone, hustles around to the driver's side, and hops into his car.

Titus starts up the Buick with a roar and peels out of the parking place.

INT. BUCKLEY'S TAVERN - LATER

It is near closing time. A few PATRONS are at the bar talking with the BARTENDER.

Denise Witherspoon is seated in a booth by a window.

Titus enters, sits opposite Witherspoon, pulls the map marked with murder sites out of his jacket, and spreads it on the table. He takes out a pen and continues the spiral to Centerville.

TITUS MEADOWS

Houston wasn't the last one. It's
Blasingame.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

You're certain.

TITUS MEADOWS

Nearly, but it's different. A contract.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

He couldn't have planned the timing this
fine.

TITUS MEADOWS

Maybe. I don't know. I called Billy. He's
got Blasingame battened down tight. Since
you're temporarily unattached, I thought
you might like to join me.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

Funny, but Solaris doesn't have a sense
of humor. He has a warrant out for you.

TITUS MEADOWS
For what?

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Interfering with a Federal investigation.

TITUS MEADOWS
I've been stuck in his craw since the Academy.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
Old news.
(stands)
How far away are we?

TITUS MEADOWS
Five minutes.

Titus stands and follows Witherspoon to the door.

INT. SERENO MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Billy Montgomery sits at a table reading Forbes in the service kitchen, a large, sterile-looking white room equipped with commercial grade appliances.

Intercom RINGS.

Montgomery goes to an intercom unit on the wall and presses a button.

BILLY MONTGOMERY
Who is it?

THERESA BLASINGAME (INTERCOM)
Theresa.

BILLY MONTGOMERY
Where've you been girl? Your father's been worried sick.

THERESA BLASINGAME (INTERCOM)
He can stop worrying. Let me in.

Billy pushes a button on the unit.

EXT. SERENO ESTATE ENTRANCE

AERIAL SHOT of large metal gates mounted on mortared stone columns opening.

A silver Audi sedan drives through the gate.

INT. SERENO KITCHEN

Blasingame enters wearing slippers and a robe over pedestrian pajamas.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Did I hear you talking to someone?

BILLY MONTGOMERY
Theresa.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
At the gate?

BILLY MONTGOMERY
Yes sir.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Good.

Blasingame opens the refrigerator, extracts a bottle of Maalox, shakes it, opens it, and takes a slug.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
That should get me through the night.
I'll wait for her in the study.

BILLY MONTGOMERY
Yes sir.

Blasingame exits.

Montgomery picks up the Forbes and starts reading.

Sound of DOOR OPENING and CLOSING

BILLY MONTGOMERY
(eyes in Forbes)
Welcome Miss Theresa.

After a beat, Montgomery looks up, then jumps up with shock in his eyes.

BILLY MONTGOMERY
Who the fuck are you?

PHFFFT!

A small red spot appears on Montgomery's upper chest as he flies backward, hits the wall and drops to the floor leaving a broad streak of blood on the wall behind him.

Beir INTO VIEW holding a silenced revolver. He glances at Montgomery as he walks by him on his way out of the kitchen.

INT. SERENO STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

Blasingame reclines in a plush leather club chair listening to Brubeck, eyes closed. A single, low wattage lamp is lit.

A floorboard CREAKS.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

Theresa?

Blasingame waits for a beat then turns. His eyes show fearful surprise as he slowly pushes himself to his feet.

Beir INTO VIEW in the shadows of the room. The revolver is pointed at Blasingame.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

My man...

THEODORE BEIR

Your man is on the floor in the kitchen.

Beir takes a step out of the shadows. Blasingame backs up a step.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

(near whisper)

What do you want?

THEODORE BEIR

Your attention.

A shot FLASHES from the silencer. The bullet SHATTERS a mirror behind and to the left of Blasingame, who flinches and takes a quick step behind the sofa.

THEODORE BEIR

Best not to move.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

Who are you?

THEODORE BEIR

The name Teddy Houston ring a bell?

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

It's not possible.

THEODORE BEIR

Why? Tell me why?

In one swift move, Blasingame whips a glass paperweight from the table behind the sofa toward Beir's head.

Beir ducks as Blasingame darts through a doorway into a dimly lit hall.

Beir recovers, aims, and fires the revolver. The bullet CRASHES into the door jamb as Blasingame disappears into the hall.

Beir runs to the doorway.

The light in the hall goes out. Beir hesitates for a beat and then moves into the hallway.

EXT. SERENO ESTATE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Titus and Witherspoon arrive at the gate in the Buick. The driver's side window opens. Titus leans out and punches a code into a keypad on a pole.

The gates open.

From a distance, POP POP POP is heard.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

Go! Go!

The gates are not fully open as the Buick peels out through the gates. The passenger side CRASHES against the gate and sends it flying.

The Buick roars up the drive.

INT. SERENO MANSION

Moonlight through a window casts shadows on Blasingame as he strains to see into the darkness. He holds a snub-nosed .38 with both hands, his arms extended at full length. He is breathing heavily.

THERESA BLASINGAME (O.C.)

You missed him Daddy.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

Theresa! Get away! You're going to get shot!

THERESA BLASINGAME (O.C.)

It's going to be harder this time.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

What are you doing?

THERESA BLASINGAME (O.C.)

Helping a friend.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Have you gone mad?

Blasingame is illuminated by a gun FLASH and a vase next to him SHATTERS.

Blasingame runs toward stairs in the diffused moonlight. A gun FLASH shows him starting up the stairs accompanied by the THWACK of a bullet striking plaster.

INT. SERENO KITCHEN

Titus runs into the kitchen followed by Witherspoon, who has a purse slung over her shoulder. Titus sees Montgomery slumped against the wall.

TITUS MEADOWS
Christ.

Titus and Witherspoon hurry to Montgomery and kneel beside him. His shirt is blood soaked; his head is turned toward Titus. Witherspoon feels for a pulse on Montgomery's neck.

TITUS MEADOWS
(loud)
Billy!

Montgomery slowly opens his eyes without moving his head, looks at Titus, and then closes his eyes.

TITUS MEADOWS
Call 911.
(stands)
Give me your gun.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
I can't.

TITUS MEADOWS
God damn it, give me your fucking gun!

Witherspoon pulls an automatic from her purse and gives it to Titus.

TITUS MEADOWS
Don't you leave him. 911.

Witherspoon pulls a cell phone and punches 9. Before she can punch a second number, a gunshot BOOMS twice.

TITUS MEADOWS
That was upstairs.

Titus hustles out of the kitchen.

DENISE WITHERSPOON

Be careful!

(punches in 1,1; waits a beat)

I need an ambulance...

INT. SERENO MANSION MASTER SUITE

The suite is expansive. The only light is moonlight coming through the windows.

Blasingame is silhouetted in a window in the bedroom.

Beir INTO FRAME slinking in the shadows along the wall of a short hallway leading to the bedroom. The revolver is in one hand, a book is in the other.

THEODORE BEIR

Only one left Mr. B.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

What have you done with my daughter?

THEODORE BEIR

I know that gun. Six chambers.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

(panicked)

Where is she?

Beir tosses the book to his left. It lands with a THUD.

Blasingame's revolver BOOMS. Plaster SHATTERS.

THEODORE BEIR

No more.

Beir steps out into the moonlight and moves deliberately toward Blasingame.

THEODORE BEIR

You have to pay for what you did to me.

You know you have to pay.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

Who are you?

THEODORE BEIR

Don't you remember me? Teddy? Fun and games with you and Dad and Theresa?

LAURENCE BLASINGAME

It's not possible.

THEODORE BEIR
You have to die.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Oh God.

THEODORE BEIR
Ah, you're feeling it.

LAURENCE BLASINGAME
Oh God.

Beir raises his revolver, points it, and it CLICKS.

Blasingame rushes toward Beir, who pulls a small automatic from his jacket and points it at Blasingame. The gun BOOMS and FLASHES.

Blasingame jerks backward, stumbles toward a dresser, slowly spins and crumbles to the floor in a bright patch of moonlight, where he moans and clasps his upper chest where he has been shot.

Beir approaches and points the gun at Blasingame.

THEODORE BEIR
You're feeling it, aren't you? Feeling what I've felt every day of my life, the sheer terror, death's breath on my neck. I'm so glad it's the last thing you're going to feel.

Beir extends his arm and points the gun between Blasingame's terrified eyes.

THEODORE BEIR
I've waited all my life for this.

Titus flies INTO FRAME and crashes into the back of Beir. Beir goes flying and loses the gun which CLATTERS onto the floor near Blasingame. Beir hits the floor and Titus lands next to him.

Beir is quickly to his knees and starts for the gun.

Titus lunges, grabs Beir around the thighs, and Beir goes down.

Beir turns onto his back and flails wildly with his legs, but Titus pulls himself into a sitting position on top of Beir, who swings wildly at Titus.

Titus deflects Beir's fists and sends his own to Beir's face. The fist makes a direct hit, but the sound is a light SMACK.

Titus gets off of Beir in a flash and stands above him.

A ceiling light comes on as Witherspoon comes INTO VIEW.

Blasingame has pulled himself to a seated position against a dresser. He points Beir's gun at Beir.

Beir's face is drastically altered, the definitive imprint of a fist is visible on a smashed nose pushed toward the right side of his face.

Beir pulls himself up onto one elbow, grabs hold of the front of his face and rips it off to reveal Theresa Blasingame beneath the mask.

TITUS MEADOWS
Holy Jesus!

THERESA BLASINGAME
(to Titus)
He has to die.

TITUS MEADOWS
I don't believe this.

THERESA BLASINGAME
Kill him!

The gun BOOMS. Theresa's head snaps back; her body flops to the floor.

Titus and Witherspoon each step toward Blasingame, who waves the gun at them. Titus and Witherspoon freeze.

TITUS MEADOWS
Put it down.

Titus glances at Witherspoon and then looks at Blasingame. Titus extends his hand.

TITUS MEADOWS
Give me the gun, Laurence.

Blasingame points the gun at Titus who takes a step back and shows Blasingame both palms.

Blasingame quickly puts the gun into his mouth.

DENISE WITHERSPOON
(screams)
No!

The gun BOOMS.

Blood EXPLODES behind Blasingame's head. His body goes limp, his head drops with eyes open and dead cold.

Titus staggers backward. When his legs make contact with the bed, he plops down and sits.

Titus looks at Denise who is frozen in place, her eyes peering through her fingers.

TITUS MEADOWS

Jesus Christ but I am way too old for this.

INT. MARGARITAVILLE CAFE IN KEY WEST - ONE MONTH LATER

The bar is jammed with TOURISTS and NATIVES. Ruth, dressed in a halter top and very short cutoff jeans, is mixing a drink behind the bar. A hibiscus blossom adorns her hair.

Titus, wearing a wild island shirt, Bermuda shorts, and a Phillies baseball cap, enters and sits at the only open stool, which is at the end of the bar.

Ruth does a quick double-take when she sees Titus, but recovers and pours the drink nonchalantly.

Ruth slides the drink across the bar and approaches Titus.

RUTH TYLER

How come you ain't got a cigarette stuck in your face?

TITUS MEADOWS

I knew somebody once who told me those things would kill me.

Jimmy Buffett's "Why Don't We Get Drunk and Screw?" begins to play.

RUTH TYLER

You still tip good?

TITUS MEADOWS

Not as well as I dance.

Titus offers his hand. Ruth smiles broadly, takes his hand and comes out from behind the bar. They do a respectable fox trot to the song.

RUTH TYLER

You're good, Titus Meadows, but I'm looking for more than a Fred Astaire clone and a four buck tip on a twenty dollar meal.

TITUS MEADOWS

Did you have to come all the way here to look?

RUTH TYLER

I couldn't take another winter.

TITUS MEADOWS

I would've shoveled your walk.

RUTH TYLER

I wanted you to keep me warm.

TITUS MEADOWS

You never asked.

RUTH TYLER

Neither did you.

TITUS MEADOWS

If I kept you warm, would it mean we were an official couple?

RUTH TYLER

Do we gotta be?

TITUS MEADOWS

What if I want to be?

RUTH TYLER

You know, Key West isn't exactly cold.

TITUS MEADOWS

I'll put my air conditioner on deep freeze.

RUTH TYLER

I have to work past midnight. Why don't you hang around?

TITUS MEADOWS

Still hustling me for tips?

Ruth stops dancing, smiles, and kisses Titus who kisses her back as Buffett sings and credits roll.

FADE TO BLACK.