

STRANGER 456

PILOT

Written by

Peter Lance

Based on his novel

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WGAW REGISTERED

Fate, monstrous and empty
You are malevolent.
Well-being is vain
and always fades to nothing.
Shadowed and veiled
you plague me too.
Now, through the game,
I bring my bare back
to your villainy.

-Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi
Codex used by Carl Orff
in his 1935 composition
Carmina Burana

HOUR ONE
TEASER

INT. DARKENED ROOM - HO CHI MINH CITY - VIETNAM - NIGHT

The 40 year-old ex-FBI agent we'll soon come to know as

T.C. FORBES Ph.D. leans over a battered laptop at a desk in a dingy room at the Hotel Tranh in the old Cholon district.

He's shirtless, stripped to his underpants. As the camera pans across his battered body, we discover the physical scars of his career hunting monsters for The Bureau.

FORBES (V.O.)
This room is deserted, but I'm
not alone. I have a friend
across the desk from me.
(He eyes his old 9mm
Beretta FS)

Forbes picks up the gun and stares down the barrel for a moment. We go CLOSE ON THE SAFETY as he flicks it off.

FORBES (V.O.)
Most of the time he sits there
quietly. But there are moments
when I can hear him scream -
begging me to find an ending
to this piece.

He hesitates, then puts the Beretta back on the desk.

Reaching over to a series of PILL BOTTLES on the table nearby, Forbes washes down a PERCODAN CAPSULE with cognac, rubbing his thigh as he pecks out this confession on an old Panasonic Toughbook with a half-cracked screen.

FORBES (V.O.)
Some people are patient.
Others stab at elevator
buttons.
(taps the desk with
his index finger)
I used to be able to wait --
work the cases methodically --
until I ran into the human
virus they call Axel.

The camera finds a three-inch thick mildewed file with the "Fidelity-Bravery-Integrity" logo of the FBI above the designation: **STRANGER KILLER 456**. Forbes looks around what appears to be an otherwise empty room.

FORBES (V.O.)

There are people I went through Quantico with - old friends - who will never forgive me for this. They'll say that by pulling back the cover and exposing the lies I'll be hurting the Bureau. But this *has* to be said. The institution is corrupted. The methodology is all wrong.

Forbes rubs his thigh and as the camera angles lower we see a two-inch STAB WOUND, long ago sutured.

FORBES (V.O.)

People will keep dying, *erased* by these hunters of humans, as long as the FBI hides the truth about 456.

Forbes opens the file. Clipped to an FBI 302 memo is A MUG SHOT of BOBBY LEROY COLE aka "Axel," the most audacious serial killer in FBI history.

FORBES (V.O.)

No matter what the official story is. No matter how many times they produce pictures of his remains; DNA in his ashes, I know he's still out there - The psychopath with the 160 IQ.
(shadowy surveillance shots of Axel)
And as I sit here waiting with my Percodan and my gun, there is one truth I know for sure: He won't stop until he has Maddy up on his wall.

He finds the IRISH PASSPORT of MADDY BERGSTROM aka Mary Harrigan; a beautiful 26-year-old with short black hair.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. A CAVERNOUS SPACE - SOMEWHERE - NIGHT

A huge, dimly lit interior space. Could be an old ballroom; maybe an abandoned church. Along the walls and beneath the enormous ceiling: SCAFFOLDING. Suddenly, we hear the WHIRRRR of a mechanical device. We push in to find: AN AUTOPSY TABLE.

SUPER: **TWO YEARS AGO**

AXEL, mid 20's and chillingly handsome, leans over THE BODY OF A YOUNG WOMAN laid out, face down. He's stripped to the waist in black leather pants and cut like an athlete on crank.

As we go CLOSE ON THE WOMAN'S WRISTS, we see that they've been sutured, indicating that the body has been EMBALMED.

WHIRRRRR... That noise. Maybe a skull saw. But as we get closer, we see that it's A TATTOO NEEDLE.

Axel leans in and pulls the hair back from her neck. He begins to tattoo TINY LETTERS and NUMBERS at the base of her skull. We see the letter J and THE NUMBERS 20:14-18.

When the tattooing is done, Axel turns the body over and we see that she is beautiful with WHITE ALABASTER SKIN.

INT. AN OFFICE IN A CORNER OF THE SPACE

An entire wall is covered with PICTURES: snap shots, driver's licenses and missing person photos. Dozens of faces of men, women and children. On each picture, marked with a Sharpie we see LETTERS & NUMBERS: I 6:8-12, D 32:6-22. They're all in the same numerical sequence as the tattoo.

Now Axel opens A JOURNAL and records the numbers he's just tattooed to the neck of the beautiful blonde.

As the camera pans across the wall of pictures we:

ANGLE: THE POLAROID OF A DEFIANT REDHEAD

She's in her late teens, riding on the back of a chopped Harley. Dressed in black leather. Her arms are around her "old man;" some predicate felon from A BIKER GANG. On her right shoulder there's A TATTOO of THE ANGEL OF DEATH.

Somehow she bears a strange resemblance to MADDY the dark-haired woman with the Irish passport mentioned by Dr. Forbes.

RESUME CAVERNOUS SPACE - MOMENTS LATER

Axel picks up the body of the blonde and CARRIES THE CORPSE to the center of the space.

He sets it on A FAUX MARBLE FLOOR painted in trompe l'oeil style. Taking pains to pose the body, he moves quickly before rigor sets in, bending the gorgeous woman's torso.

Then, when he's got her just right, he pulls out A DIGITAL CAMERA and flashes a picture. One angle. Flash! Then another. Finally, we go...

CLOSE ON THE UNDERSIDE OF AXEL'S WRIST. Just above his cuff line we see that HE'S NUMBERED TOO: M 20:16 22:14.

Off another hot white flash...

CUT TO:

EXT. A MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - DAYS LATER - NIGHT

A late 90's battered FORD ECONOLINE VAN swerves along Route 22 in Washington State. The two-lane crestline road is icy and dark as SNOW starts to fall.

INT. THE VAN - CONTINUOUS

AXEL is at the wheel and the look in his eyes says "homicide." As he careens down the highway, he seems tired.

At one point he starts to nod off and the van drifts across the median. But he snaps back and shakes it off. Just then...

POV: A SIGN blows by...

SNOQUALMIE 6 MILES

Axel checks his watch. He's under some kind of pressure to be somewhere. He flips down THE SUN VISOR and eyes:

THE POLAROID OF THAT BIKER CHICK from the cavernous space. He runs his thumb across her face and licks his lips.

AXEL
Bitch on wheels...

Suddenly... VAROOM! A CAR swerves past him around one of the hairpin curves, so Axel spins the wheel to avoid it.

He recovers and flips the visor back, then he checks himself in the REAR VIEW MIRROR as if on his way to some rendezvous.

Axel stretches his neck, trying to stay focused then connects AN IPHONE to A HUGE BLUETOOTH SPEAKER in back and hits PLAY.

Carl Orff's CARMINA BURANA shatters the night on the mountain road: The sound of fornicating monks chanting in Latin.

AXEL (CONT'D)
(chanting with it)
O fortuna velut luna, status
variabilis. Semper crescis aut
decrescis, vita de-stabilis...

Axel grins, then starts to fade, so he dry swallows some SPEED. As he waits for it to kick in, the music blares. Then, as he looks away... The van crosses the median again and...

VAROOOM! A big LOGGING TRUCK blows past it honking..

SCREEECH... The van stops. Inside, Axel slams it into reverse, fishtailing on the ICY ROAD as he BUCKLES HIS SEAT BELT, does a 180 and heads back toward... THE LOGGING TRUCK.

Horn blaring... pedal to the floor... Axel is methed up and raging. He pulls up alongside the semi in the oncoming traffic lane.

He sucks on his MIDDLE FINGER and jams it into the air at the TRUCK DRIVER; turning up the volume from the iPhone and blasting the lyrics:

AXEL (CONT'D)
Nunc obdurat. Et tunc curat.
Ludo mentis aciem
egestatemmmmmmm!

THE DRIVER eyes Axel and sees that he's whacked. He speeds up and pulls ahead, checking his side mirror.

POV: THE VAN is chasing him..

Now, on the twisting mountain road, Axel's van roars up beside the cab of the logging truck and... BAM! SIDE SWIPES IT.

At this point, the driver is worried. Who is this fucking guy? He jumps on his CB to call the Sheriff when...

Axel pulls ahead, cuts in front of the logging truck's headlights and HITS THE BRAKES...

BOOOOM!!! The big semi demolishes the van's bumper, forcing it to skid across the median, whereupon it...

Blasts through A GUARDRAIL as...

A BIG DOUGLAS FIR BRANCH pierces the windshield and
THE VAN gets hung up 1,000 feet above A GORGE.

INT. VAN - MOMENTS LATER

Axel is pinned against the wheel, bleeding all over the airbag. Semi-conscious, but the crank is keeping him awake and amazingly, as the horn blares, he keeps muttering the lyrics like some crazed mental patient on animal trunks.

AXEL

Felix et beatus, nunc a summo
corrui, gloria pri-va-tus...

Now, face covered with blood, he grabs THE POLAROID of the biker chick and lets it blow out the window into the storm.

END TEASER

ACT ONEEXT. A SHERIFF'S CHOPPER AIRBORNE - LATER - NIGHT

A snow storm is about to roll in as A Bell Jet Ranger, buffeted by heavy winds, roars over Route 22.

INT. CHOPPER - CONTINUOUS

At the stick we find Snoqualmie County SHERIFF MIKE BERGSTROM, (stern; mid 50's) and his rookie Deputy, MADDY, a pretty, early 20's redhead who's also his daughter. Suited up for winter mountain rescue in a Nomex jumpsuit, goggles and a helmet, she looks down through the oncoming blizzard & spots:

POV: The van teetering in the trees.

MADDY

I've got it. Just outside the guard rail at four o'clock.

SHERIFF BERGSTROM

(struggling with the controls)

Get *down* there. I can't hold her long.

Maddy winces at the snap of his tone. Working for her old man isn't easy. She gives him a THUMBS UP and clips onto A LINE.

MADDY

I'm on it Dad, just chill...

SHERIFF BERGSTROM

Don't argue. We've got a five minute window before all hell breaks--

Before he can finish, she's out the door rappelling DOWN TO:

EXT. THE VAN

Hanging in the tree. By now the battery is dead and the music is off. As Maddy drops next to THE DRIVER'S SIDE WINDOW, she switches on A PEN LIGHT FLASH and spots...

THE MAN INSIDE moving behind the glass. He's alive.

MADDY
Male subject. Semi-conscious.

SHERIFF BERGSTROM
(impatient)
Jump on it. Get him clipped...

The snow is really starting to come down now...

MADDY
Easy for you to say Daddee...
Goddamn thing's hangin' by a
threa--

Just then, the van drops a few inches...

SHERIFF BERGSTROM
What? Didn't copy.

MADDY
Forget it.

Maddy pulls herself along the tree branch and reaches the door handle. But just as she opens it, THE VAN drops again.

MADDY (CONT'D)
(backing off)
Oh shit...

SHERIFF BERGSTROM
What's wrong?

Cautiously, like it could all go down any second, she moves to the door and carefully pulls it open. AXEL'S FACE is covered in blood. Quickly, Maddy pulls out SURGICAL SCISSORS and cuts off his seat belt. She starts to get A HARNESS around him when...

SNOW FALLS from an upper branch and THE VAN DROPS a foot.

MADDY
Jesus...

Maddy pulls back and looks down...

POV: THERE'S A 1000 FOOT DROP to the gorge below and the wind is roaring. Finally, she strains forward and gets the belt around Axel. Then CLICK... just as she has him...

ANOTHER PILE OF SNOW HITS THE ROOF and...

The van drops from the tree, careening HOOD-OVER-TAIL until it hits THE GORGE BELOW and explodes in A FIREBALL.

BUT NOW, UP ABOVE...

Maddy and Axel, dangle on the rappelling line like a Christmas tree ornament. She wraps her arms around him while...

INT. THE CHOPPER

Her father hits the winch and starts pulling them up.

CLOSE ON AXEL'S FACE, he's inches from Maddy as they're lifted toward the chopper. She takes the flashlight and opens one of his eyelids, checking his vitals when suddenly, he wakes up. For a beat there's A LOOK OF RECOGNITION on his face.

MADDY
(startled)
Hey. You O.K.? Can you
hear me?

But then, he closes his eyes and drops back under as the two of them spin on the winch line moving up to...

INT. THE CHOPPER

Sheriff Bergstrom struggles to hold it steady while Maddy pulls herself up and swings inside with her crash victim.

She unclips him quickly and straps him down on A BODY BOARD; then rotates her index finger signaling she's good to go and...

THE CHOPPER TAKES off.

ANGLE AXEL'S FACE

For a second, through the blood, we catch THE HINT OF A SMILE.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

MADDY watching through an ER room door as
A YOUNG NURSE cuts open Axel's clothing while...
An ER DOCTOR looks for fractures as...
A LAB TECH takes blood for analysis, whereupon...
AXEL, still sedated, is drawn through an MRI as
The ER Doc eyes the image and shows surprise.

INT. E.R. - MOMENTS LATER

Axel, still under, is in a corner bed. Cleaned up, he looks rock star handsome. The mid 20's ER Nurse lifts up the sheet covering him and eyes his body. Wow. She rolls her eyes.

Just then, The ER doctor taps her on the shoulder, so she pulls a curtain around the bed and exits with him out to:

INT. E.R. ANTE ROOM

Where Sheriff Bergstrom and his daughter are waiting.

NURSE

Hey Maddy....

(leans in and whispers)

You oughta see him without his clothes on.

Embarrassed by the comment, Maddy turns to the Doctor.

MADDY

What's his condition?

DOCTOR

If I knew his date of birth, I'd buy Powerball tickets and play the number.

SHERIFF BERGSTROM

Meaning?

DOCTOR

Minor contusions, no fractures and zero brain trauma, thanks to the airbag and your daughter.

(nods to Maddy)

Also, he had enough HGH and meth in his system to send a hockey team to the Stanley Cup.

(hands him the lab report)

SHERIFF BERGSTROM

(to Maddy)

What did I tell you?

MADDY

Did I say you were *wrong* Dad?
I just said he was --

NURSE
Hot, right?

Maddy looks away from her, trying to stay professional.

DOCTOR
He's also an UNSUB. We
couldn't find a piece of I.D.
on him, except this:

Shows them A PHOTO of the M 20:16 22:14 on Axel's wrist.

SHERIFF BERGSTROM
You think it's a prison tat?

DOCTOR
(shakes his head)
Looks like a professional
needle.

For some reason, Maddy seems nervous at this talk of body art.

SHERIFF BERGSTROM
All right then, let's get him
locked down in a room.
(to Maddy)
I want you posted outside his door.

MADDY
For how long?

SHERIFF BERGSTROM
'Til we can run his prints
through NCIC. For now we hold
him as a DUI.

NURSE
Why? 'Cause he's got a tattoo?

SHERIFF BERGSTROM
No. Because he almost killed a
truck driver up on that road,
because he's legally intoxi-
cated and because I *said* so.
(turns to Maddy)
Cuff him to the bed.

Off Maddy, trading a look with the Nurse that says, "Yeah,
I know. My Dad's an asshole..."

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY- NEXT MORNING - EARLY

Maddy is in a chair outside Axel's room, nodding out. She's been up for the past 48 hours. Just then, double doors swing open and her father walks in followed by A FLOOR NURSE.

SHERIFF BERGSTROM
Deputy!!!

MADDY
(startled)
Yeah? O.K. I'm up.

SHERIFF BERGSTROM
(looming over her)
Did you lock him down like I told you?

MADDY
Dad, this guy was so far under last night that --

Just then as the Nurse unlocks the door.

NURSE
Oh no...

INT HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sheriff Bergstrom pulls back a curtain surrounding the bed to find: IT'S EMPTY. The bed clothes have been stripped. The Sheriff draws his weapon, a 9 mm Sig-Sauer, and pushes into...

INT. THE BATHROOM

...which is also deserted as, Maddy rushes over to the third story window which is OPEN to find: THE SHEETS torn and tied into a makeshift ESCAPE LINE.

SHERIFF BERGSTROM
He's gone!
(spins toward Maddy)
Goddamnit girl, what have I told you since the day you got back here?

MADDY

(staring out the window)
You are not cut out for this
work... Dad, I'm --

She turns to face him, contrite, but Bergstrom pulls back.

SHERIFF BERGSTROM

Sorry doesn't cut it. Now get
home and clean up. I need you
back at the Station in 20
minutes to get out the BOLO.

Off Maddy, looking like she's been pole-axed.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. DARKENED ROOM - HO CHI MINH CITY - NIGHT

Forbes gets up from the desk and goes to a "murder wall" covered with crime scene photos, surveillance stills, maps and various SNAPSHOTS of Maddy and her family in happier times. He focuses on an exterior shot of the Bergstrom house.

On the front porch steps we see Maddy, then about 10, smiling with her father, mother SHAUNA (pretty, late 30's) and brother BILLY, 12, in a Little League uniform. He's holding A TROPHY.

FORBES (V.O.)

The Bergstrom house was a modest three bedroom ranch on the outskirts of Snoqualmie.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD - MOMENTS BEFORE THE PICTURE WAS TAKEN

A HIGH SHOT moving from the Bergstrom house to an adjacent ball field. A game's in progress. Top of the 9th. Full count.

The Sheriff, his wife and Maddy are in the stands cheering on Billy as he stands at bat...

SHERIFF

That's right son, power stance.
See if you can break the upstairs windows in the house.

Shauna does a two-finger whistle. Maddy, cheers.

The pitcher nods at the catcher's signal, likes the sign and fires a sinker as Billy swings and slams it skyward. He rounds the bases and the crowd roars...

INTERCUT:

INT. BERGSTROM HOUSE HALLWAY - PRESENT DAY

The camera pans across a wall full of pictures, military decorations, awards, diplomas and other family shots.

FORBES (V.O.
 Captain Michael Bergstrom,
 U.S. Marine Corps Retired, was
 a happier man then.

(shot of Mike in uniform
 during Desert Storm)

After eighty combat missions
 during Desert Storm he came
 home without a scratch.

(Mike & Shauna; mid 20's)
 Married Shauna his first high
 school crush and in 12 years
 of marriage he'd never glanced
 at another woman.

EXT. MADDY'S JUNIOR HIGH. - AFTERNOON

Maddy, now 12, waits alone as the lot clears out after school.

FORBES

Even that afternoon when Maddy's
 mother missed car pool, he told
 her everything would be fine.

Finally, her father pulls up in THE SHERIFF'S UNIT.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Shauna as she's drawn into AN MRI MACHINE. The Sheriff
 watches, worried, through a glass window. But he puts on his
 game face as he walks out to find his children.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Mike sitting across from Maddy and Billy.

SHERIFF

God would never do harm to a
 woman as good as your mom. He
 just doesn't work that way.

EXT. BERGSTROM HOUSE - DAYS LATER - DAY

The Sheriff's unit pulls up. Mike gets out and opens the door for
 Shauna who seems frail as Billy and Maddy rush out to them.

FORBES (V.O.)
 But if God created the Universe,
 He also inflicted the best of
 His creatures with cancer.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

SHAUNA'S GRAVESTONE. Maddy and her brother weeping next to their father who seems paralyzed.

RESUME BERGSTROM HOME - PRESENT - PANNING THE WALL OF PICTURES

Mike in an MH-60 Seahawk helicopter during Desert Storm.

FORBES (V.O.)
 Up to that point, Maddy's
 father had literally flown
 through life without a hitch.
 Now, with the death of his
 wife, he felt vulnerable.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. BERGSTROM LIVING ROOM - WEEKS LATER

Mike in a chair in the living room tossing down a shot of Jack Daniels. Maddy comes up to him with a book, wanting help with a homework assignment. But just then, Billy eyes her, shaking his head, as if to say, "Stay away from Dad."

FORBES (V.O.)
 But instead of hugging his
 kids, Mike became an angry
 drill instructor trying to
 prep them for the worst.

INT. MADDY'S BEDROOM - A YEAR LATER

Maddy, now 13, lies in bed with headphones on trying to drown out the noise as her father pounds on the door.

SHERIFF
 I need that room spic 'n span
 before dinner young lady.

Maddy just turns up the volume on her iPod to drown him out.

INT. BILLY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pristine. The antithesis of Maddy's. Billy makes his bed and folds the sheets with "surgical corners." He bounces a quarter off the blanket when he's done.

FORBES (V.O.).

Billy responded to the new regimen by trying to outdo his old man.

Billy (14) in Eagle Scout uniform; a sash full of merit badges.

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

He blew through Scouting in three years, amassing every merit badge in the BSA Handbook.

EXT. SNOQUALMIE HIGH TRACK - DAY

Bill throwing the javelin. Shot putting and pole vaulting.

EXT. SNOQUALMIE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Flashing lights from Mike's unit as he pulls up to AN ACCIDENT SCENE and rushes out to find BILLY'S JEEP, having ROLLED INTO A DITCH. He runs past it and sees Billy, in his prom tux, on the tailgate of an ambulance with A BROKEN LEG.

FORBES (V.O.)

The one time he allowed himself to break loose he got wasted and killed his shot at a track scholarship.

INT. BERGSTROM LIVING ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

He's graduated from Jack Daniels to Wild Turkey and he's tossing it down three fingers at a time.

FORBES (V.O.)

The frown lines on Mike's face got a little deeper that day.

INT. BERGSTROM HALLWAY - FINISHING PAN OF THE PICTURE WALL

The camera settles on a shot of Billy next to his father standing proudly in a SNOQUALMIE DEPUTY'S UNIFORM.

FORBES (V.O.)

Maybe that's why he was so
gung ho for Billy to join him
at the Sheriff's Station and
so worried after The Surge in
Iraq when his son ran off to
Seattle and joined The Corps.

A GRADUATION PIC of Billy after Marine Basic Training.
A COMBAT SHOT of Billy with his unit in Fallujah, Iraq.
A FRAMED PURPLE HEART and BRONZE STAR
With the BLACK SLASHES of POSTHUMOUS DECORATIONS.

As Forbes narration ends, the camera settles and we hear
THE NOISE OF A SHOWER. Finally, POV the camera moves into:

INT. THE BATHROOM

Where Maddy, the second child who's tried to fill her
brother's shoes, sits in the corner of the shower weeping.
LONG RED HAIR, clipped 'til now, falls across her shoulders.

MOMENTS LATER

She steps out and pulls on a thin robe. Drying her eyes, she
dons a pair of panties and moves to the medicine cabinet. The
mirrored door is open. Maddy finds some Advil. Then, when she
closes THE MIRROR her heart stops:

POV: on the mirror, written in her LIPSTICK it says:

Fate, monstrous and empty...

Suddenly, AXEL lunges out from the hallway dressed in one of
BILLY'S UNIFORMS. He grabs her from behind by the hair.

AXEL

I knew it. A natural
redhead... And your skin...
Pure alabaster...

INT. MADDY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He drags her into the room and flings her face-down onto the
bed, tying her hands behind her with the robe belt.

AXEL

Take off the robe. Let me see it.

Maddy struggles, but he's got his knee on her back. She looks left, right, across the room POV: HER HOLSTER IS EMPTY.

MADDY
What are you talking about?

AXEL pulls out her SMITH & WESSON and cocks it.

AXEL
You *know* what I mean...

He spins her around and pulls the robe down exposing her shoulder. There's A SKIN GRAFT where THE TATTOO had been. We realize now for sure that:

Maddy is the defiant biker chick from Axel's Polaroid.

AXEL (CONT'D)
You had it covered.
(grabs her hair)
Does your old man know who you ran with? Did you tell him?
(leans down and whispers)
If there's one thing I *hate*, it's people who defy their own nature.

MADDY
What do you know about *anything*?

AXEL
I know about *you*...

MADDY
(struggling)
How?

He jerks her up from the bed and pushes her against a wall, holding the gun with one hand and her throat with the other.

AXEL
You can't be someone you're *not*. Just accept it. There's outlaw in your blood.

He licks her ear with his tongue as she struggles, then SHE SPITS in his face. Axel just smiles and grinds in on her.

Wide-eyed, Maddy is fighting to get free, but Axel squeezes her throat, so she stops before she blacks out.

With less resistance now, Axel shoves her gun in the belt behind his back. Then he runs his free hand down across her breasts, toward her panties. But just then...

THE PHONE RINGS on the bed table.

INTERCUT:

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION

Sheriff Bergstrom is on his cell phone, pacing.

INT. MADDY'S BEDROOM

The phone rings again and: AN ANSWERING MACHINE CLICKS ON:

MADDY'S VOICE
Leave it at the beep.

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION

SHERIFF BERGSTROM
Maddy I need you back here
ASAP. We got a hit from NCIC.
The States in Indiana pulled
a partial at the scene of a
home invasion in Bloomington.
Sorority house. There's a coed
still missing.

CLOSE ON A COMPUTER SCREEN on his desk: There's A SNAPSHOT of the missing coed. It's THE DEAD BLONDE Axel posed in the open. We play the tension now, as...

INT. MADDY'S BEDROOM

CLOSE ON THE MACHINE. There's no response.

SHERIFF BERGSTROM (O.C.)
Maddy, do you copy? Pick up.

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION

Bergstrom looks worried, so he rushes outside and jumps in his unit, a Tahoe SUV. He heads out, lights and siren.

INT. MADDY'S BEDROOM

Now, in the distance, Axel hears the siren. He lets go of Maddy's neck and grabs her by the hair from the back.

AXEL

To be continued. Let's go...

He spins her around and quickly unties the belt from the robe on her wrists. With the skill of a man expert in abduction, he grabs THE HANDCUFFS from the belt on his waist and...

Slaps one on Maddy's RIGHT wrist. He's about to cuff her LEFT when, She looks across the bed and spots her S&R kit with the SURGICAL SCISSORS she used to pull Axel out of the chopper.

Suddenly, before he can get the second cuff on, Maddy jerks away and in one, swift move, rolls across the bed, grabs the scissors and jams them into his thigh as he lunges for her.

AXEL (CONT'D)

Argggh! This is *not* a good time for me to have scars...

He pulls out the scissors and drops them, lunging at her with his bloody hand and catching the edge of her robe, flipping her onto the floor. Maddy pushes back with her feet to get away, but Axel grabs her ankle, pulling her toward him. He slides his hand up between her legs, catching her panties as

EXT. A SNOQUALMIE STREET

BERGSTROM'S UNIT roars by and the tension mounts while...

INT. MADDY'S BEDROOM

Axel rips off her PANTIES and lunges for her neck with his other hand, but Maddy groin kicks him, sending him into a corner. She escapes from the bedroom and goes to...

INT. THE HALLWAY

Where she reaches THE GUN CABINET. She flings it open and pulls out A DOUBLE BARRELED REMINGTON SHOTGUN.

INT. MADDY'S BEDROOM

Axel takes a beat to recover, then jumps up. He slams THE DOOR to her bedroom closed and LOCKS IT as: BOOM! Maddy blows a hole through the door. Axel looks left, right and spots THE KEYS to MADDY'S UNIT, another Tahoe parked outside. So he KICKS OUT THE BEDROOM WINDOW...

EXT. BERGSTROM HOUSE

...jumping through it and rolling to the door of Maddy's unit, just as she exits the house and FIRES the second barrel... BOOM! BLOWING OUT THE LEFT SIDE WINDOW OF THE UNIT. In the bg her father's siren is getting louder as...

INT. MADDY'S UNIT

Axel ducks down and slams it into reverse while... Maddy reloads. He roars up the street as she fires another round and BLOWS THE REAR WINDOW, but now he's halfway up the block.

For a beat, Maddy just stands there, half in shock and trembling. She's naked below the robe now and there's BLOOD on the hem where he grabbed her.

Starting to shiver from the shame of letting him escape again, Maddy drops onto the front step and puts her head in her hands. Off the sound of her FATHER'S SIREN closing in.

EXT. A TRUCK STOP - NIGHT

Axel parks the Sheriff's unit out of sight in between two trailers. He exits and shoves Maddy's SMITH & WESSON into his waistband. Looking across the truck stop lot he spots:

POV: A TRACTOR-TRAILER hauling cars, about to take off.

Axel takes out Maddy's panties and sniffs them. A trophy of his escape. He shoves them back in his pocket and smiles, then runs to the exiting car carrier and jumps onto the tail.

EXT. TRUCK STOP - MOMENTS LATER

The big semi roars out and disappears in the dark.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREEINT. AN INTERROGATION ROOM - THE NEXT DAY -

UNDER HARSH LIGHTS Maddy sits at a table in her deputy's uniform. AN FBI FILE drops in front of her. It says STRANGER 456. As we pull back, we see that she's being grilled by SSA RON KILLEBREW; a mid 50's Bureau pit bull with a brush cut, a raspy Southern drawl and a smoker's cough.

KILLEBREW

Did he say anything about a journal?

MADDY

No. If he had it, it must have gone down in the van.

KILLEBREW

Of course. So you let him go.

MADDY

(defensive)

Not exactly. I put a hole through my bedroom door to stop him.

KILLEBREW

Nonetheless, the offender escaped.

ANGLE HER FATHER outside, watching through two way glass.

KILLEBREW (CONT'D)

Tell me about your forensic training.

MADDY

(sheepish)

Nothing formal... Just, you know, what I've learned on the job... It's mostly search and rescue work up here agent...

KILLEBREW

Supervisory *Special* Agent...

MADDY

Sorry. I forgot. All you guys from the Bureau are *Special*...

Killebrew winces, but let's that one go by. He starts circling the table like a predatory animal.

KILLEBREW

According to your jacket, you put on a uniform after your brother died.

MADDY

(uneasy)

So? What about it?

Maddy looks up at a mirrored window, knowing her father's behind it watching her. Killebrew opens A FILE on Billy.

KILLEBREW

William Bergstrom. Takes a leave from his post as your father's deputy in 2010. Marine corporal. Caught by a sniper in Fallujah leading his unit to safety.

(stabs at Billy's picture)

Goddamn hero. What made you think you could ever live up to *him*?

Maddy looks up at him, finally recovering some spunk.

MADDY

Is this the Bureau's approach to interrogation? Humiliate the subject and she'll open up? The only reason I agreed to this was so you'd show us his file. Now who the fuck *is* he?

Just then, the door opens and Sheriff Bergstrom walks in.

SHERIFF BERGSTROM

Show some civility, Maddy.

KILLEBREW

(smiles)

No. I get it. It's understandable she'd be a little prickly. After all, the man stripped her, took her weapon and escaped in her unit.

MADDY

(gets up to exit)

I don't need this shit, O.K.?

SHERIFF BERGSTROM

(stands in front of her)

Sit down, Deputy.

She's about to split when Killebrew OPENS A FILE and starts tossing down PICTURES OF WOMEN: all kinds: hookers, teachers, runaways, nurses, coeds. Finally, we see A MUG SHOT of Axel.

KILLEBREW

We don't know his birth name. He's listed in BAU's suspect files as Stranger Killer 456 but he likes to call himself Axel as in Guns N' Roses. We've traced him back to age ten when his parents died in an arson fire.

(SHOTS OF THE FIRE)

MADDY

I thought you said you didn't know--

KILLEBREW

He was adopted. The little fucker stabbed them with a Buck Knife before he drowned them in gasoline and lit the match.

(shots of Axel from surveillance cams; ATMS)

He grew up in four different foster homes. He'd kill their pets first, then he'd threaten their children.

(Maddy swallows hard)

I've been tracking this fiend for more than a year. So far, we've tied him to the abduction of 37 females.

MADDY

Abduction? You haven't found--

KILLEBREW

Any bodies. Not a hair. Not a fiber.

(MORE)

KILLEBREW (CONT'D)
The only crime scenes we have
are the points of abduction.

SHERIFF BERGSTROM
Which means, if they're
dead...

KILLEBREW
That would make him the most
audacious serial killer since
Green River and your little
girl here was a hair's breath
away from becoming his latest.
(Maddy turns away)
That's right Deputy. You
should've cuffed him to the
bed. You should've nailed his
fucking door shut and put
another unit on the street
outside his window.

Maddy turns to her dad for support, but he shakes his head.

KILLEBREW (CONT'D)
'Cause of you we just lost Ted
Bundy from the Class of 2016.

Off Maddy humiliated...

CUT TO:

EXT. AMTRAK STATION - WEST GLACIER, MONTANA - MAGIC HOUR

A dozen TOURISTS wait on the platform while, in the distance,
snow dusts the upper Rockies. Suddenly, we see CLOSE UPS of
the tourists through the lens of A DIGITAL CAMERA.

A PAIR OF COLLEGE KIDS carrying backpacks. CLICK.

A YOUNG MOTHER with HER BABY in a snugly. CLICK.

A wealthy-looking late 50'S WOMAN in a Burberry. CLICK.

As the camera zooms in on the woman we see that she's got a
matched set of PRADA LUGGAGE - CLICK, GOLD EARRINGS - CLICK and
there's A SAPPHIRE on her ring finger - CLICK CLICK.

Just then, A WARNING BELL SOUNDS and LIGHTS FLASH, signaling
the arrival of A PASSENGER TRAIN heading East.

TRACK ANNOUNCER
Announcing the arrival of
Amtrak's Empire Builder with
service to Chicago, stopping
at Grand Forks, Fargo,
Minneapolis and Milwaukee.

Now, as the train pulls in and the passengers start to board,
we catch a glimpse of AXEL JUMPING ABOARD the last car.

INT. EMPIRE BUILDER - CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

As the train starts to leave the station, an AMTRAK PORTER
leads the woman down the corridor carrying her luggage. He
stops at A PRIVATE COMPARTMENT marked (6) and opens it.

PORTER
Number Six. Miss. Would you like
me to turn down your bed now?

WOMAN
Yes please. You can call me in
the morning before we reach
Milwaukee?

She hands him a \$5 dollar bill. The Porter smiles and unlocks
a PULL-DOWN BED. He draws A SHADE across the window in the
door to the corridor, then tips his hat and exits.

INT. PRIVATE COMPARTMENT - LATER - MAGIC HOUR

The woman is in A NIGHT GOWN preparing for bed. There's a
small TRAVEL CASE open and she's removing her makeup.

Just then, she hears A NOISE in AN ADJOINING COMPARTMENT.

Somebody weeping. Like a small child. She moves over and
listens. The weeping stops. Then she hears A MAN clear his
voice, so she pulls back.

She starts to move toward THE BATHROOM which is on the same
wall as the adjoining compartment, but just as she approaches
the door, she stops. Oh God...

THE WEEPING IS COMING FROM INSIDE HER OWN BATHROOM.

FEAR CUTS THROUGH HER HEART and she quickly turns toward the
outside door. But before she can reach it, THE BATHROOM DOOR
flies open. Axel lunges out and snaps her neck.

A SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS

As Axel rifles through her bags. He finds the jewelry, A PATEK PHILIPPE WATCH and a wallet full of cash along with A DRIVER'S LICENSE with a Milwaukee address and A MERCEDES KEY.

In the makeup case he finds bottles of Xanax and Darvocet. He swallows a couple of mood stabilizers. Then he wipes the tears from his eyes.

EXT. AMTRAK STATION - MILWAUKEE - DAWN

The Empire Builder rolls in and Axel gets off. He checks the time on the Patek Philippe on his wrist and looks around.

INT. EMPIRE BUILDER - BATHROOM

THE WOMAN'S BODY has been jammed into the tiny space with her luggage open and her clothes sprawled all over her. On her BELLY IN EYELINER Axel has written the words:

TOO MUCH MAKEUP

EXT. AMTRAK STATION PARKING LOT - MILWAUKEE - LATER

Axel walks down through the rows of cars, periodically trying the KEYLESS REMOTE for the Benz. Once, twice and then... CHIRP... Lights flash on cream-colored CLK63 Cabriolet.

EXT. INTERSTATE 94 SOUTH - DAY

The Mercedes WITH THE TOP DOWN, screeches down the interstate. Axel pops the console and retches over the woman's choice of CD's: Julio Iglesias, Andrea Bocelli and Neil Diamond get flung out the window as he stabs at THE TUNER and hits hard rock formatted 1240 AM blasting...

The Scorpions' ROCK YOU LIKE A HURRICANE Finally, VAROOM.... the Mercedes roars past a sign for: CHICAGO 91 MILES.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS

Maddy at a gym, getting medieval on A HEAVY BAG. As she throws punches and kicks, she flashes back to the interrogation.

KILLEBREW

...anything about a journal?

MADDY

...must have gone down in the van.

A TOW TRUCK hauls the FIRE CHARRED VAN from the gorge.
 KILLEBREW & A FORENSIC TEAM on the way to examine it as
 Maddy attacks the bag,
 THE TOW truck backs the van into AN IMPOUND GARAGE
 Maddy kicks the bag; then decides to go for it.
 She takes off out the back door of the gym...
 Down an alley and up over a fence as...
 The FBI team closes on the garage, but...
 Maddy gets there first and spots:
 POV: THE VAN sitting in a corner...
 She races to it,
 checking under the seats as...
 The FBI Team enters the garage
 Maddy reaches under
 THE SPARE TIRE WELL.

And pulls out: A FIRE RAVAGED PACKAGE wrapped in duct tape.
 She rolls out from under the van and exits out into...

EXT. THE BACK ALLEY - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Where she drops behind a dumpster; hyperventilating and barely considering the consequences of losing her shield and getting charged by the DOJ with obstruction of justice.

She bites at the duct tape, peeling it back, frantically unraveling the package. When the tape's gone, she comes to A HEFTY GARBAGE BAG, then another. Two more layers of plastic partly melted; then finally, she pulls out... **AXEL'S JOURNAL**

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Working alone in the Sheriff's Station, Maddy paws through page after page of Axel's scribbling: an elaborate system of letters and numbers interspersed with SKETCHES of angels in sexual acts; coupling with demons and mythological beasts.

He has whole CHAPTERS full of news clips and analyses on the most notorious serial killers: DeSalvo, Heidnik, Gein, Lucas, Corona, Berkowitz, Williams, Bianchi and Buono.

In the middle there's a table grid of the major unsolved serial killer cases in the country from late 2010. The table contains the killer's name, the location, number of deaths and the name of the CHIEF INVESTIGATOR in each case.

Case	Area	From	Victims	Investigator
Pig Sty Killer	Des Moines	2011-13	29	T. Hastings
Bus Stop Strangler	Nashville	2010-12	26	R. Killebrew
Ohio River Killer	Dayton	2013-14	32	T.C. Forbes
Gay Bar Killer	Kansas City	2014-15	10	F. Grimes
Dismemberer	O.K. City	2012-13	16	G. Bruner
Field Killer	Galveston	2010-11	21	B. Harvey
Child Snatcher	Pittsburgh	2013-14	26	T.C.. Forbes
Railroad Killer	Midwest	2012-14	34	R. Killebrew
I-80 Killer	Illinois-Ind.	2011-	18	T.C.. Forbes R. Killebrew
TOTAL OPEN CASES			186	

Next to FBI Agent Ron Killebrew, the investigator who comes up most often is THOMAS C. FORBES, a senior FBI Agent who's listed with Killebrew on the unsolved series of Midwest truck stop-prostitute homicides dubbed THE I-80 KILLER cases.

CLOSE ON A COMPUTER SCREEN

Maddy does a Lexis/Nexis search for "T.C. Forbes." A DOZEN URL'S cross the screen with a series of headlines & pictures.

MADDY
(reading)
Forbes, Thomas C. FBI
Quantico. Behavioral Analysis
Unit. Born 2/18/76.
(FBI I.D. photo of Forbes)
(MORE)

MADDY (CONT'D)

Master's Thesis at Emory on
the Atlanta Child Murders...
Ph.D. Kennedy School at
Harvard 2012... Dissertation
on John Wayne Gacy...

(Forbes up in Cambridge)

Returns to the Bureau 2013.
Lead agent on the I-80
killings. Wounded during an
arrest attempt... Killebrew
gets assigned to the case and
suddenly...

(Wash Post headline:

BAU AGENT EXITS BUREAU)

He's out.

She prints A 2014 SEATTLE POST profile of Forbes under the
headline: SERIAL HUNTER TO TEACH AT U. WASH.

CUT TO:

INT. UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON LECTURE HALL - DAY

Maddy slips into the back row of a stadium seating lecture
hall. Down below, DR. FORBES limps slightly, using a NINE
IRON as a cane as he holds forth in front of 100 students.

The 40 year-old ex-serial hunter is ruggedly handsome in an
old sport coat over a denim shirt and wrinkled corduroys. Two
years younger than the half-naked multi-scarred man we first
met in the Ho Chi Minh City hotel room.

There's a three-day growth on his face and he's brandishing
the golf club like a weapon as he goes after A MALE STUDENT
named WARD in the second row.

FORBES

So when you registered for
Homicide what were your
expectations, Mr. Ward? Coast
with a easy C? Maybe pick up a
copy of last year's Blue Book
exam on Craig's List? I mean,
come on, you had to know the
course was *murder*...

(a few laughs from the
students)

Didn't anyone show you my rap
sheet?

(Ward nods nervously)

(MORE)

FORBES (CONT'D)
 Which version? Forbes, the
 burnout who brings his Beretta
 to class? Forbes the sadist
 who feeds on under grads or
 Forbes the defrocked agent
 with a chip on his shoulder
 the size of Hannibal Lecter?

More laughs from the crowd.

FORBES (CONT'D)
 Come on son. You're prepping
 for a career in law
 enforcement and this is the
 Parris Island of criminology.
 Basic training. Get past me
 and you'll never die in
 combat. But don't you EVER
 come into my class unprepared!
 (SLAMS THE CLUB DOWN)

Ward squirms. He stares down at the text: Fisher's TECHNIQUES
 OF CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION. He hesitates, then suddenly,
 Forbes jumps onto the first row of seats and looms over him.

FORBES (CONT'D)
 Sphincter tightening Mr. Ward?

ANGLE MADDY in the back row wincing at Forbes's heavy-
 handedness.

DOWN BELOW Ward almost pisses his pants as he eyes the book
 for the answer, then he grits his teeth and takes a shot...

WARD
 Patech...a... Petechial
 hemorrhages.

Suddenly, Forbes lights up.

FORBES
 Bang! That's it, Mr. Ward. The
 first indication of death by
 asphyxiation.

Ward breathes a sigh of relief as Forbes jumps back down and
 writes a number on a WHITE BOARD: 88%.

FORBES (CONT'D)
 Now let's talk about clearance
 rates.

(MORE)

FORBES (CONT'D)

You've read the stats...
 Eighty-eight percent. That's
 the percentage of conventional
 homicides that are solved.
 Most people kill *once* and only
 once in their lives. And they
 kill for a-
 (holds a hand to his ear)

THE CLASS

Motive...

FORBES

Right. So as soon as you hit
 the chalk mark and I.D. the
 vic, ask yourself where he
 worked, who he owed money to
 or who he was fucking.
 (eyes the class)
 You draw a straight line
 between the dead guy and his
 known associates and you'll
 wrap it up. In 88% of the
 cases you'll be trading Cuervo
 shots with your partner 72
 hours post-mortem.
 (slams the club down hard)
 HOWEVER... The serial killer
 is a different breed. He's a
 stranger... Typically a white
 male; late 20's to mid 30's.
 Above average intelligence. He
 may be an XYY with an extra
 male chromosome. Almost
 always, he's a victim of
 severe abuse as a child.
 (slowing down)
 He starts young; mutilating
 animals, setting fires,
 wetting his bed. The full
 MacDonald Triad. In his early
 teens he's looking in windows.
 Peeping Tom shit. But as he
 gets bolder, he graduates to
 serial rape and then...

Forbes turns to face the white board, not just speaking
 hypothetically, but recalling his own awful memories.

FORBES (CONT'D)

His first one is usually close to home. Easy prey. A hooker; a hitch hiker. Some runaway girl that nobody misses. When he makes his first kill he often bolts the scene, tossing out pieces of evidence; wracked, not with guilt, but the fear of being caught. He lays low, then he trolls for another. In this hunting phase he goes into an aura. He gets smashed to kill the pain, then speeds up on meth to get hard. Pretty soon he starts crossing jurisdictions; selecting a victim in point A...

(drawing out the letters)
capturing her in point B...
killing her in point C and
dropping her body in point D.

Forbes gets somber as he thinks back on the carnage of his own career and draws LINES between ABC & D on the board.

FORBES (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, you add time and distance between point A and point D and you'll find that the clearance rate will drop to less than *five* per cent.

(turns to face them)
And why? No motive. He's a phantom. You have no fucking idea who this man is or where he'll strike next.

The class sits transfixed as Forbes stands there, almost frozen for a moment in his own past. He grips the podium as he looks out at the faces of a hundred kids who will never know the horror that still haunts him.

Maddy looks down as HIS HANDS TREMBLE. Turned off by his bitterness at first, she begins to understand his pain.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON QUAD - MOMENTS LATER

Forbes exits the lecture building and crosses to an old BMW R/75/5 motorcycle. He stows his briefcase in a saddlebag and climbs on, about to kick-start it when Maddy stops him.

MADDY

Dr. Forbes. Deputy Bergstrom,
Snoqualmie Sheriff's Department.

FORBES

Got your message on my voice mail.
(turns away)
I don't consult anymore.

He kicks starts it & pops the clutch, ready to take off when:

MADDY

Fine. I just thought, you
know, since Killebrew's all
over it, that-

FORBES

Ron Killebrew? BAU Quantico?

Maddy nods. Forbes shuts off the bike and burns a look into her. Finally, he grits his teeth & nods for her to get on.

He kicks starts it, pops the clutch and screeches off across campus, zig-zagging in and out of students, then up onto a sidewalk and down a steep embankment as Maddy holds on.

MADDY

You don't wear a helmet?

FORBES

At my age a man rides a
motorcycle for one of two
reasons: to pick up girls or
to service a death wish.

MADDY

My Dad says that at *your* age
they're both the same thing.

Forbes skids to a stop, stung by the remark.

FORBES

That's good. Next time send *Dad*.
I don't have time for games.

He nods for her to get off, but Maddy presses.

MADDY

Look, I'm sorry. I wouldn't have
come all the way up here if I
didn't need your help. Please...
It was a stupid, thing to say.

FORBES

You're right. It was.

He eyes her, deciding whether or not it's worth it...

FORBES (CONT'D)

It was also true. Hang on.

Maddy smiles and grabs him around the waist. Forbes LEAVES
RUBBER and runs a RED LIGHT as they screech off.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOURINT. FORBES'S TOWNHOUSE - MINUTES LATER

The camera trucks down a wall full of books. Geberth on CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION. DiMaio's GUNSHOT WOUNDS. TIRE IMPRESSION EVIDENCE by McDonald. William Bodziak on FOOTWEAR IMPRESSIONS and Dr. Cyril Wecht's CAUSE OF DEATH. We keep moving...

Along a Brag Wall of yellowed citations and plaques, onto the floor stacked shoulder-high with FILES stamped with the LOGOS of various POLICE DEPARTMENTS requesting Dr. Forbes's help.

Maddy sits across from him as he pages through Axel's Journal. She eyes A DOZEN empty PERCODAN BOTTLES on a credenza behind him.

As he reads, Forbes rubs his thigh. Almost unconsciously he grabs a pill bottle, pops the top and dry swallows a capsule. Finally, he closes the Journal and hands it back to her.

MADDY
(expectant)
So?

FORBES
See that stack of files? Some are cold cases ten years old. Positive DNA matches and I don't even have time for *them*...

MADDY
I just need an opinion. His journal is like a scrap book. There's a profile on every serial murderer since The Boston Strangler.

FORBES
And you want to know if he's a star fucker or if Killebrew was right and you unleashed a psychopath?

MADDY
(guilty)
Something like that.

Dr. Forbes hands the journal back to her and turns away.

FORBES
You don't want to know...

MADDY
(getting up)
Oh, yes I do.

He slaps his hand on his desk and turns to face her.

FORBES
No!
(gets up; starts pacing)
You have no idea what it's
like to be on the trail of a
predatory killer who won't
stop.

As he circles the room, Forbes gestures to a series of framed
CRIME SCENE PHOTOS and NEWS CLIPPINGS.

FORBES (CONT'D)
No matter what, he's always
ahead. The more bodies he
drops, the greater the public
hysteria, so you end up
choking on the intake.

N.Y. DAILY NEWS headline: SON OF SAM EVIDENCE GLUT

FORBES (CONT'D)
You're overwhelmed by a
thousand false leads. Every
morning you come into the
office to find the families of
victims waiting; praying for
some kind of hope, but you
have none.

SEATTLE TIMES HEADLINE: TED KILLER DISAPPEARS.

FORBES (CONT'D)
Other cops pass you in the
hall and turn away. The brass
doesn't want to know you,
'cause the killer's still out
there. You're an embarrassment
to the department.

S.F. EXAMINER headline: ZODIAC KILLER STILL AT LARGE

FORBES (CONT'D)

The press dogs your every move. You wake up dreading the next body drop. Meanwhile, the killer gets bolder... Every murder that goes unnoticed, is a challenge for him to go on. He's out there, hysterical; laughing at you. Why? Because he calls the play.

He moves over and sits down across from Maddy.

FORBES (CONT'D)

In ninety-five out of a hundred cases you lose, Deputy Bergstrom. The murder stops only after the killer exits your jurisdiction or maybe he gets hepatitis or AIDS or he's arrested on a lesser charge and ends up in stir. In this line of work, rarely, if ever, do you have the satisfaction of making a collar. Even with amateurs...

(nods to Axel's journal)

...And this young man has a Ph.D. in serial death. He's studied. He's on an accelerated learning curve. From his knowledge of forensics and his classical references I'd say he's got an IQ in the high one-fifties. And given the meth in his system, I'm certain he's killed since you lost him.

Maddy winces. He's rubbing his leg now from the pain...

FORBES (CONT'D)

I happen to think Ron Killebrew is a fraud and an empty suit, but he's right about this one. You were lucky. Give it up. Be glad he fled when he did. He's not your problem anymore...

MADDY
Oh yes he is...

FORBES
Well, he's not *mine*.
(he turns away and eyes
THE STACKS OF FILES)
I'm just... *tired*.

Maddy nods toward the PERCODAN BOTTLES.

MADDY
You mean *bitter*, don't you?

She grabs her files, gets up and exits, doing her best to stay professional until she reaches...

INT. THE HALLWAY - OUTSIDE FORBES'S TOWNHOUSE

Where she leans back against a wall and begins to weep.

CUT TO:

INT. AXEL'S LAIR - DAY

He's up on one of the four-story SCAFFOLDS, pressed into a corner of the huge space, painting a face on the wall using A DIGITAL PICTURE as a reference. It's the face of THE BLONDE CO-ED from the opening. WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE by Guns N' Roses blasts from an iPhone linked to a stationary speaker.

We don't understand his grand design yet, but we will. As he paints, Axel is frustrated that despite the clarity of the picture, the woman, in death, has her eyes closed and he's representing her on the wall as if she's alive.

AXEL
(muttering to himself)
Open your fucking eyes.

Incensed, he throws down his brushes, then drops down from the scaffolding by a rope and storms into...

INT. HIS OFFICE AREA

Growing more agitated, Axel quickly crosses to A FILE DRAWER full of cards marked with his mysterious NUMBERS.

He runs through a pile of SKETCHES - line drawings of FACES he's about to paint on the walls. One is the outline of...

A 12-YEAR-OLD GIRL IN REPOSE. But he needs a model.

Getting more hyper and agitated, Axel goes to his WALL OF PICTURES. He looks for a face, but he can't find a 12-year-old female. As he scans the wall, we catch part of A HEADLINE.

DEMOLITION FOR HIGHWAY

Finally, Axel moves to a calendar and checks a date three weeks away. He's under some kind of a deadline.

He goes back to the wall now and searches for another subject. A WOMEN IN HER MID 20'S.

Gnashing his teeth, he's about to give up, when he spots THE SNAPSHOT of a young raven-haired woman with her back to camera. She flashes an alluring look over her shoulder. At the small of her back is the tattoo of A PERFUME BOTTLE.

Axel pulls the picture off the wall and flips it over. On the back it says "CHRISTIE SLOANE 312-555-2650."

CUT TO

INT. LAND ROVER - N. MICHIGAN AVE - CHICAGO - MAGIC HOUR

It's raining when Axel pulls up in a stolen LR 4 outside Saks Fifth Avenue's store on the Magnificent Mile. He looks through the front window and eyes...

A pretty clerk at THE PERFUME COUNTER with dark black hair and perfect white skin. He licks his lips and rubs himself.

AXEL

Christie...

INT. PARKING GARAGE - AFTER WORK

Christie exits with a girlfriend, MELISSA. They pause near their cars and agree to rendezvous for drinks on Rush Street.

CHRISTIE

Spy Bar, Fifteen minutes.

MELISSA

Your turn to buy. See ya.

Melissa gets in her Jetta and takes off. Christie moves to her Mini and tries to unlock it with a remote. It won't work.

CHRISTIE
Damn it... Not now...

She tries to put the key in the lock, but somebody's filled it with CRAZY GLUE. As she turns, ZAP! She's hit by A TASER.

INT. LAND ROVER - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Christie stirs, finding herself under the cargo cover of the LR 4. She's been flex-tied at the wrists. Frantic, she starts kicking at the back seat of the SUV when, suddenly...

SCREECH. Axel pulls to a stop. He reaches over the seat and zaps her unconscious.

INT. AXEL'S LAIR - LATER - NIGHT

Christie wakes up to find herself cuffed to A BEAUTICIAN'S CHAIR. There's AN IV in her arm, pumping in some kind of drug. She feels spacey and light-headed as Axel comes in and smiles benignly. This time the metal is acoustic.

EVERY ROSE HAS ITS THORN by Poison.

AXEL
I know what you must be
thinking, but please, Don't
worry. I'm going to send you
home...

He takes out the IV, then tips her back toward A BASIN.

AXEL (CONT'D)
After I do your hair.

What? Christie doesn't get it. Suddenly he's touching her head gently and running water over her coal black hair. She's so doped up, she doesn't know what to think as Axel picks up A REMOTE and blasts the music from the iPhone.

He pours out shampoo and starts massaging her scalp.

AXEL (CONT'D)
(singing it)
We both lie silently still in
the dead of the night...

A SERIES OF SHOTS WITH EVERY ROSE UNDER

Axel dyes Christie's hair the color of amber...
 He gives her straight tresses a perm and later...
 Christie trembles, as he makes her up using
 eye shadow and blood-red gloss on her lips.

Finally, he shows her A MIRROR. She looks positively angelic.

He hands her a loose fitting silk robe and she puts it on.
 He walks her out to the FAUX MARBLE FLOOR and
 Starts shooting her with THE DIGITAL CAMERA.

For the first time, bizarre as all this is, Christie begins
 to relax. Maybe he's not so insane. She does look beautiful.
 Finally, Axel grabs THE REMOTE and turns off the music.

Christie looks around THE HUGE SPACE and GLIMPSES AXEL'S WORK
 on the ceiling. Classical renderings of men, women & children.
 Finally, she gets up the courage to ask.

CHRISTIE

Why did you bring me here?

Axel finishes shooting and sets the camera down. He exits and
 returns with the snapshot of her with THE TATTOO on her back.

AXEL

I saw this and I had to have you.

CHRISTIE

(suddenly defensive)

Where did you get that?

Axel smiles and pulls back the robe exposing THE TATTOO on
 her lower back. Then, with a mirror, he moves up to her neck.
 Christie eyes the NUMBER he's branded her with: H 12:22-26

CHRISTIE (CONT'D)

(worried)

What's that?

AXEL

Something to remember you by.
 I needed you alive. Even after
 embalming, the lividity bleaches out
 the skin. And the eyes... With the
 others, the eyes were just dead.

CHRISTIE
(terrified now)
What... *others?*

He pulls back A CURTAIN revealing THE EMBALMED BODY of...

THE BLONDE COED from the open. Christie freaks. She gets up and takes off, frantically trying to find her way out of his lair.

THERE'S A SHORT CHASE

But Axel catches her by the hair. He wraps the silk robe around her neck and starts to squeeze, ever so slowly, watching her die the way a cruel boy might snuff the life out of a butterfly. Finally, he forces her eyes open, leaving her to stare up at him, wide-eyed in death.

CUT TO:

EXT. AXEL'S LAIR - LATER NIGHT

Naked in the November cold, Axel pushes a cart with the bodies of Christie and The Blonde. Rolling the cart along A RAMP to A LOADING DOCK, he comes to AN ENORMOUS FURNACE.

When he opens the metal door FLAMES LICK OUT and we cut wide to reveal that Axel's lair is actually...

AN ABANDONED MEAT PACKING PLANT 60 miles south of Chicago.

There's 19 STORY BRICK SMOKESTACK next to the furnace. It's encircled by A RUSTED METAL WALKWAY that spirals up from the ground to the top almost 200 feet above the open country.

EXT. TOP OF THE STACK - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Axel, his muscled body rigid, stands on the three-foot-wide rim of the smokestack.

As the smoke carries the ashes of his victims south into the American heartland, he feels invincible.

FADE OUT:

END ACT FOUR