

"ABSOLUTION"

Written by

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OPEN - THE SCREEN IS BLACK

Then, in the corner of the screen, a small, dark vignette appears. It's of a framed picture hanging on a wall. The stately portrait is of A WOMEN HOLDING FLOWERS. Then...

YOUNG MAN (V.O.)

There I lay, cradled in the darkness of my mother's womb as she sits in the waiting room of the abortionist's office. My mother, barely a teenager, sees a picture on the wall. It reminds her of her mother. It is a sign from God. She is meant to be a mother. I am meant...to be.

The vignette fades to black.

FADE IN:

OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT, SUN JUST BEGINNING TO RISE

TITLE CARD:

NEW YORK CITY - NOVEMBER, 2008

OPENING MONTAGE: (EARLY MORNING, MIX OF CITY SCAPES REVEALING BOTH ENORMOUS WEALTH AND EXTREME POVERTY)

A) Extravagant, Towering Skyscrapers

B) A HOMELESS MAN sleeps over a sidewalk grate, steam rises around him.

C) Limousine quietly pulls out from an underground parking garage. A BELL HOP tips his cap.

D) A SIDEWALK PREACHER sits against a trash can, holding a sign that reads: "THE END IS HERE."

E) SOMBER PEOPLE begin to line up in front of the UNEMPLOYMENT OFFICE, waiting for the doors to open.

F) Lights in the NY STOCK EXCHANGE illuminate - WALL STREET begins to wake.

END OF MONTAGE

END OF CREDIT SEQUENCE

CUT TO:

EXT. BOWLING GREEN PARK - BRONZE STATUE OF THE WALL STREET BULL (A.K.A. "THE CHARGING BULL")

As the sun begins to rise: DEATH IS REVEALED

A BUSINESS MAN, with a rope around his neck, is hanging from one of the horns of the infamous WALL STREET BULL. A dollar bill is posted to his chest, stabbed with a gold envelope opener.

A JOGGER, with his dog, unknowingly runs up on the horrific scene. He stops, in shock. Then runs off for help.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - APARTMENT HI-RISE - DAY

INT. DETECTIVE JOHN BENSON'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

At the bathroom sink, JOHN BENSON, 35, is shaving. His wrists have LONG, WEATHERED SCARS ACROSS THEM.

Although handsome, he looks older than he is. Years of hard-living and guilt have taken their toll.

He walks down the hall to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Pours himself a cup of coffee and a shot of JAMESON IRISH WHISKEY. He drinks.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He walks into his bedroom. There, under the covers, is AMANDA, 25. Her pleasant, girl-next-door appearance contradicts her tough, feisty persona.

John sits on the bed, pulling on his shoes. She rises and puts her arms around him, kissing his neck.

JOHN
(ignoring her desire)
Let yourself out when you're
ready.

AMANDA
What if I'm still here when you
get back?

JOHN
Then you'll have wasted a
beautiful day in a shitty-ass
apartment.

She rubs against him.

AMANDA
Did I waste my time here last
night, too?

JOHN
Now *that* was not a waste of time.
Mine...or yours.

John stands and buttons his New York City Police shirt
and straps on his police holster.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Gotta run.

He walks out of his apartment. Feeling rejected, Amanda
falls back onto the pillow.

A MOMENT LATER, the door re-opens and John walks back in.

AMANDA
(from the bedroom)
I knew you couldn't stay away!

He walks over to the FISH BOWL ON THE TABLE near the
door. A child's handwriting is on a sign taped to the
bowl. It reads: "*I am Francis Fish. Feed me.*"

Next to the bowl, we see a framed picture of John posing
with a woman and young girl next to a Christmas tree.

Amanda then appears in the bedroom doorway, wearing only
one of John's police shirts. She's dangling a pair of
cuffs in her hand.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
Please tell me you're from
internal affairs.
(playful sexiness)

John again ignores her advances and sprinkles food into the fish bowl.

JOHN

There's coffee in the kitchen.

He disappears out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREETS - DAY

INT. JOHN'S '93 JEEP CHEROKEE (MOVING) - DAY

He takes a sip of his spiked coffee as he drives.

ON THE RADIO, we hear TWO ANGRY HOSTS rant about the financial meltdown.

TALK HOST #1 (V.O.)

(from radio)

...never in our history - short of the Great Depression - have we seen a financial collapse of this magnitude. The stock market has crashed, the housing market and insurance industry. Now we're bailing out the auto industry.

TALK HOST #2 (V.O.)

(from radio)

Why are we bailing them out? Just yesterday Merrill Lynch handed out BONUSES! And they lost over \$15 billion dollars last quarter alone!

TALK HOST #1 (V.O.)

(from radio)

I wanna know where the S.E.C. was in all this? Shouldn't they be policing Wall Street?

John looks out the window and sees ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL. A towering church with a 250-foot, gold-mosaic dome and steeple. But it's miniscule compared to the monstrous skyscrapers that surround it. -- Like GREENWICH PINNACLE, the most impressive of them all.

A CAR HORN HONKS behind him, waking John from his daze. He drives on.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - DAY

OFFICERS are rushing back and forth between rooms.

DETECTIVE MIKE KATZ of Homicide is in the hallway hashing it out with his partner, DETECTIVE STEVE "RICO" RICHARDS.

DET. KATZ, 50's, is a gruff, burly-looking vet. His relentless dedication more than makes up for his abrupt personality.

DET. RICHARDS, 40's, is a high-octane, wise-cracking vet, who's eager for advancement at any cost.

They stand outside the INTERROGATION ROOM.

DET. KATZ

...I don't give a shit about the possession charge!!

DET. RICHARDS

That's all we got.

DET. KATZ

Then get more! -- And don't fill out another VI-CAP report on this! It's a fuckin' waste of time!

Det. Richards walks back into the interrogation room.

Hoping to avoid the conflict, John slips past Det. Katz unnoticed and heads to his office.

Stenciled on John's door is: COMMUNITY RELATIONS.

There's a handwritten note posted next to it:
"Neighborhood Bitch Office"

John pulls the note down and walks in.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE - DAY

It's a small, one-desk office. Books and folders are stacked all around.

John hangs up his jacket and sits. The voice mail message light flashes red. He pushes the button and then begins taking notes as he listens...

COMPLAINT #1 - MAN (V.O.)

*Yeah, um, can you do something
'bout these damn kids riding their
skateboards up and down my
sidewalk at all hours...*

John presses the NEXT button.

COMPLAINT #2 - ELDERLY WOMAN
(V.O.)

*Hello? I need to talk with someone
about these damn flyers in my
mailbox. They want to paint my
house, fix my drive, clean my
gutters. Isn't it a Federal crime
to perpetrate someone's mailbox?
And this damn dog next door just
barks and barks.....*

John presses the PAUSE button as Det. Katz stops in.

DET. KATZ

Sorry, don't mean to interrupt
your bitch session, but...

JOHN

What do you need?

DET. KATZ

It's not what *I* need. It's what *he*
needs.

Det. Katz hands John a PHOTO OF A MAN WHO'S BEEN BRUTALLY
MURDERED. A dollar bill has been stabbed into his ear
with a gold-handled envelope opener.

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

Looks like we've "officially" got
a serial killer on our hands. All
three victims are Wall Street
executives. Somebody's "big-game
hunting" here.

Det. Katz hands him front page of *Wall Street Journal*.
The headline reads: "*Creedo Strikes Again*"

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

The media's named him: CREEDO.

JOHN

Creedo?

DET. KATZ

After he kills his victims, son-of-a bitch leaves a dollar bill behind with some sort of religious bullshit on it. *His creed.* -- Victim here is Paul Donalds, Hedge Fund Manager of Barrel-Stock Reserve. Stole over \$270 million from his investors.

JOHN

Katz, I haven't worked homicide in years.

DET. KATZ

Hey, I'm gonna take it to forensics anyway, just figured I'd run it past you since I was told you were all religious and shit.

JOHN

Yes, I used to be... and shit.

Det. Katz holds out another photograph. The image is of a blood-stained bill that has a symbol and scripture written on it.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(reading)

"I am all that has ever been. I am all that is. I am all that shall ever be. Yet never have mortal eyes perceived me as I am."

DET. KATZ

So...?

John looks closer.

JOHN

The symbol is obviously an Ankh.

DET. KATZ

Obvious to who? Shit, I walk into a church and the holy water starts to boil.

JOHN

The Ankh is a fairly recognizable religious symbol although there's debate as to its true meaning. But certainly with *"Never have mortal eyes perceived me"*, this guy has a God-complex.

DET. KATZ

Don't they all.

With that, RICHARDS rushes in.

DET. RICHARDS

We gotta go. Just found another body. This one was strung up on the fuckin' Wall Street Bull.

DET. KATZ

Be right there.

John attempts to hand back the photographs. Det. Katz refuses.

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

Can't. I gotta run. Take those to forensics A-SAP! And, if anything comes to mind, let me know.

JOHN

I'm not on homicide anymore. You know this.

DET. KATZ

Then *you know* I owe you big.

Det. Katz rushes out the door.

John looks back at the gruesome photographs. Then pushes them aside.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - ALLEYWAY ACROSS FROM AMORE'S ITALIAN BISTRO - DAY

In the hidden shadows of the alleyway, we see A DARK FIGURE, SNAPPING PICTURES of AMORE'S.

A jet-black Cadillac Escalade pulls up to the restaurant.

From the back seat, out steps STANLEY HOLLINSWORTH, 60's, the DIRECTOR OF THE SECURITIES & EXCHANGE COMMISSION. Despite a slight limp in his gait, he walks with great urgency.

We hear a series of CAMERA SNAPSHOTS as the Escalade speeds off around the corner and Stanley discreetly slips into the side door of AMORE'S.

CUT TO:

INT. AMORE'S ITALIAN BISTRO

The maitre d' escorts STANLEY HOLLINSWORTH to the table. MILES COWDEN and MARY-ANN PENDELTON are in the middle of their meal.

MILES COWDEN, 60's, is the brash, charismatic, narcissistic CEO OF GREENWICH PINNACLE, one of Wall Street's largest and most respected investment firms.

He's a tall, distinguished man with a full mane of salt-and-pepper hair. His tiny, oval spectacles only help to emphasize his arrogance.

MARY-ANN PENDELTON, 50's, is the head of MANHATTAN EMERALD GROUP. Another top Wall Street investment firm. She's a shrewd businesswomen, who can more than hold her own with the good-old-boys on Wall Street.

STANLEY

Forgive me, Miles.

(ignores Mary-Ann)

You're one of a hundred meetings I have today.

MILES

I, too, am busy, Stanley.

Miles continues eating. Stanley looks around nervously, measuring their level of privacy.

MARY-ANN

(unnerved by his slight)

Hello, Stanley. So good to see you.

STANLEY

Mary-Ann.

(turns back to Miles)

Not sure why you continue wanting to meet here.

MILES

Your office then?

STANLEY

Very funny. You're the last person I should be with. I can just see the headlines now: *"Director Of The S.E.C. Seen Rubbing Shoulders With Wall Street Mogul, Miles Cowden."*

MILES

Rubbing shoulders? Why you're having lunch with former colleagues. - *Actually, we're having lunch.* You're simply here enjoying our company.

MARY-ANN

(direct, to Stanley)
Ignore me all you want, Stanley, but I'm the elephant in the room that's not going away.

STANLEY

(nervous)
I don't know what more I can tell you other than the "appropriate actions" are being taken.

MILES

(nerves of steel)
Go on. Send your lawyers over. We welcome the oversight. Or whatever you and *your friends* call it.

STANLEY

The S.E.C. has no friends right now. The whole world wants our heads on a fuckin' platter thanks to you and *your friends*...
(nods at Mary-Ann)
...on Wall Street.

MARY-ANN

What the hell is that supposed to mean? You're living a pretty comfy life because of me.

STANLEY

I know. But the government cannot bailout every firm on Wall Street.

MARY-ANN

You think "too big to fail" is a joke? You think the U.S. financial market is imploding now, wait until you see what happens if you let Manhattan Emerald Group go down.

MILES

What Mary-Ann is saying here is that *the meek shall NOT inherit the Earth*. -- At least, not without our written authorization.
(MORE)

MILES (CONT'D)

(threatening)

Do we understand each other now?

STANLEY

Yes. Perfectly.

MILES

Now *this* is divine.

(resumes eating)

Best Chicken Cacciatore anywhere.

Have a taste.

He cuts off a piece of chicken and puts it on Stanley's plate.

STANLEY

Miles...Mary-Ann. I'm sorry.

He stands to leave.

MILES

Sorry is something you say to your wife when you've forgotten to open the car door for her.

STANLEY

Then, by all means...have a nice day.

Stanley walks away as Miles continues eating. Mary-Ann pushes her plate aside.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - JOHN'S OFFICE - DAY

John is sitting at his desk, eating a cold Italian sub.

He's staring at the photos Det. Katz gave him. A TV plays in the background.

TV NEWS ANCHOR

(from television)

...among other breaking news, CLIVE PARAGON, head of PARAGON STOCK & TRADE, was found brutally murdered today in Bowling Green Park.

He turns to watch the news footage of police wrapping YELLOW CAUTION TAPE around BRONZE BULL STATUE.

TV NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)
(from television)
*What used to represent wealth and
prosperity on Wall Street now
appears to be a symbol of payback
by the serial known as CREEDO.
Sources say he leaves behind a
dollar bill on his victim's...*

John grabs the phone and dials.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOWLING GREEN PARK - DAY

A crowd of news crews and bystanders have gathered.

Det. Katz and Richards are examining the BRONZE BULL.

Richards positions himself underneath the bull's horn as if he's the victim.

DET. KATZ
...so they say our Mr. Paragon was
around 6'-3", so it's highly
doubtful, he would've been killed
by hanging - not enough height.

DET. RICHARDS
Yeah, chances are he was killed
before he was brought here. Then
stabbed and hung for good measure.

Det. Katz's CELL PHONE RINGS. He answers.

DET. KATZ
Katz here.

We INTERCUT between JOHN and DET. KATZ's phone conversation.

JOHN
Your fly is down.

DET. KATZ
Speak English.

JOHN
Your whole case is all over the
news.

DET. KATZ
Yes, by the time I got here, the
media already had their story.
That's why we need your help.
(MORE)

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

I can't be in twenty places at once. -- Did you get those photos to forensics?

JOHN

Working on it.

DET. KATZ

Get off your ass and do it! And while you're at, make copies and stop by St. Paul's Cathedral on 47th. Ask for Father O'Brien. It turns out Paul Donalds was a parishioner there. Perhaps Father O'Brien can help us decipher some of the religious messages. -- I got some other photos coming your way too.

JOHN

(reluctant)

Dropping off photos is one thing...

DET. KATZ

(insisting)

We need you on this, John. We're not tryin' to save a cat from a fuckin' tree here!

Det. Katz hangs up. John sits staring at the photos.

He pulls out a flask from his desk drawer. It's dry. He begins digging around his desk. Tucked behind a stack of papers is a bottle of cough medicine. He unscrews the spray cap and drinks.

CUT TO:

INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - MORNING MASS - THE NEXT DAY

A COLLECTION PLATE is being passed. Dollar bill after dollar bill is placed in the basket.

FATHER PETERSON stands at the pulpit.

FATHER PETERSEN

Thou wilt turn, O God, and bring us to life, and Thy people shall rejoice in Thee: show us, O Lord, Thy mercy, and grant us Thy salvation.

A HYMN PLAYS on the organ.

John quietly walks into the church. He stands in the vestibule, taking it all in, reluctant to walk into the cathedral and sit down.

He takes a deep breath and exhales, then walks over to the holy water. His hand trembles as his fingers reach out to touch the water...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT (2005)

A MAN'S ARM sits on the edge of a bathtub, fingers barely touching the water. In his other hand, he holds a bottle of whiskey.

As he struggles to lift the bottle, we see BLOOD STREAMING DOWN HIS ARM. His fingers lose their grip and the whiskey crashes onto the tiled floor, mixing with the pool of blood.

A voice calls to him...

VOICE

John? JOHN????

BACK TO PRESENT

FATHER O'BRIEN

Detective...John Benson?

JOHN

(back to reality)

No. What?

FATHER O'BRIEN

Apologies. I thought you were...

FATHER O'BRIEN turns to walk away.

JOHN

Sorry. I'm him. I was just...

FATHER O'BRIEN

Hello. I'm Father O'Brien.

They shake hands. -- FATHER O'BRIEN is in mid-40s. He's charming, full of life. And right now, he's not dressed like a priest, but in workout clothes.

JOHN

Would've never have guessed by your...your...

FATHER O'BRIEN

Yes, well, they do let us out every once in awhile, Detective Benson.

JOHN

Please, call me John.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Well, John, wish you would've called me anytime BUT today. Every Thursday, I play ball at our Foundation. Can you walk with me? It's just a few blocks over.

With gym bag in hand, Father O'Brien and John walk out the side door.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY SIDEWALKS - CONTINUOUS

Just blocks away from the towering riches of the church and skyscrapers, the surrounding neighborhood is in deep poverty.

EMERGENCY SIRENS ECHO in the distance.

FATHER O'BRIEN

The precinct told me you would be dropping by. So when I noticed someone walk in late, figured it must be you.

(serious tone)

We were all quite devastated to hear about Mr. Donalds. Anything we can do to help, please ask.

JOHN

Did you know much about him?

FATHER O'BRIEN

Not really. He'd come to mass and occasionally confession - so I'm told. He was very influential in the community though. Beyond that, I don't know much more.

Overhead, a POLICE HELICOPTER RUSHES BY in pursuit.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

How long have you been working the streets down here?

JOHN

Oh, no. I'm just an office grunt
back at the precinct. Just doing a
favor.

FATHER O'BRIEN

It's no favor down here, as you
can see.

In an alley way, a severely emaciated dog struggles to
walk.

John reaches into his coat for the photographs just as
they turn the corner to the basketball courts. This is
not the time.

EXT. HERE-2-HELP FOUNDATION - BASKETBALL COURTS -
CONTINUOUS

Out on the court, there are FIVE GUYS from the
neighborhood shooting hoops.

JAMAAL, a striking 6'6" African-American, spots Father
O'Brien and shouts out:

JAMAAL

WHO DA' KING?

FATHER O'BRIEN

You da' King, Jamaal.

JAMAAL

That's all you got?

FATHER O'BRIEN

(great enthusiasm)
YOU DA' KING!

JAMAAL

There you go.

Jamaal walks over. Father O'Brien reaches out to shake
his hand and then...steals the ball and lets a 3-point
shot fly... It clangs off the front of the rim.

The other players crack up. Jamaal grabs the rebound and
then throws up a jump shot...SWISH.

FATHER O'BRIEN

(laughs it off)
Hey, Jamaal. Want to introduce you
to someone. This here is Detective
Benson.

Jamaal walks over and shakes John's hand.

JOHN

Call me John.

(pause)

Hey...don't I know you?

JAMAAL

Nah, you're probably thinking of
the *old me*. I'm Jamaal 2.0.
Bigger, faster and smarter now.

John nods as Jamaal runs back to onto the court and
tosses up another shot...SWISH.

FATHER O'BRIEN

If you know Jamaal, then you know
he used to deal. Served his time
though. Now looking to serve
others. He's doing a tremendous
job with the kids down here at the
Foundation.

JOHN

So why do you call him "The King"?

FATHER O'BRIEN

Street ball.

(nodding to the
court)

It's called "Who Da' King?" Every
man for himself. Play to 10. No
fouls. Whoever wins is THE KING.
The catch is, if he sees you
around town and calls out "*Who Da'
King*". AND if you don't say "*YOU
DA' KING*", then you owe him a
dollar.

The players are getting anxious.

JAMAAL

(shouts from the
court)

C'mon! Don't keep the King
waiting!

JOHN

I'll let you go. Just need to ask
you about *this*.

John reaches in his pocket and pulls out the copies of
the two photographs. Father O'Brien winces.

JOHN (CONT'D)

This is Paul Donalds. Wish you
didn't have to see this, but the
killer left behind this message.

John points to the blood-stained bill.

FATHER O'BRIEN
The symbol looks to be an Ankh.

JOHN
And...?

FATHER O'BRIEN
The scripture is definitely not of
Catholicism. But let me look into
it for you.

JOHN
They have some other messages they
need deciphered too. Can you help?

FATHER O'BRIEN
Certainly. If I don't have the
answer, one of my fellow priests
will. -- Can I keep these?

JOHN
How soon can you get to it?

FATHER O'BRIEN
Soon as I finish dethroning the
king.
(smiling)

JOHN
Okay. Here's my number. I'll put
you in contact with the guys
running the case.

FATHER O'BRIEN
Sounds good.

JOHN
(nods towards the
court)
So...do you ever win?

FATHER O'BRIEN
I win every day they're here with
me...and not out on the streets.

Father O'Brien smiles and jogs onto the court.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - CITY STREETS

INT. BLACK SUV (MOVING) - NIGHT

Det. Katz and Richard's SUV speeds down the street. He's ON THE PHONE WITH FORENSICS.

DET. KATZ

...yeah, we're on our way back.

(listens)

Right. And they'll be transporting the body down to you A-SAP.

(listens)

Thanks.

Det. Katz hangs up.

DET. RICHARDS

A-SAP? You're the only person I know who feels the need to abbreviate a fuckin' abbreviation.

DET. KATZ

Every second counts, A-Hole.

DET. KATZ picks up the "one-sheet" from the folder next to him. He scans it over as he drives.

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

You know what gets me? Four victims so far and they're all high-profile. This guy's not targeting hookers or transients or the type of people who could disappear and the world wouldn't notice. He's preying on the rich and well-protected.

DET. RICHARDS

So what now? These bodies are stacking up faster than we can tag-and-bag 'em.

DET. KATZ

Tag-and-bag 'em? Who are you RoboCop now?

DET. RICHARDS

I'm just saying we need help - and fast. What do you think, is John gonna jump in on this? We need him.

DET. KATZ

Can't figure it. You know that guy was the most decorated officer on the force when he was in Detroit.

DET. RICHARDS

John?

DET. KATZ

Yeah. His clearance rates were nearly double everyone else's. They say he could've run for fuckin' mayor if he wanted.

DET. RICHARDS

Seriously? That guy?

DET. KATZ

That's what they say.

DET. RICHARDS

What the hell happened?

DET. KATZ

I don't know. Just heard he lost it. Lost his family. His job....

DET. RICHARDS

...And his fuckin' mind if you ask me. A guy like that...working the desk, answering the bitch line.

DET. KATZ shakes his head, looks down at the "one-sheet".

DET. KATZ

Is this right? At any one time, there are over 80 active serial killers?

DET. RICHARDS

Yep.

DET. KATZ

Jesus! They're not all in New York are they?

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

In the background, JAZZ MUSIC plays on the stereo.

JOHN sits in his recliner, rocking nervously. He holds a glass of whiskey. He's drunk.

He turns and glances at FRANCIS THE GOLD FISH. He stumbles over and pours food into its bowl, while he dials his phone.

He paces as he waits.

On the other end, we can faintly hear a FEMALE VOICE ANSWER. He struggles to speak, but can't. He just listens to her voice until...SHE HANGS UP.

Frustrated, he SLAMS DOWN THE PHONE, knocking his whiskey glass to the floor, SHATTERING IT. With his bare hands, he begins picking up the broken pieces.

He GRABS HIS POLICE SHIRT from the couch and wipes up the jagged glass and spilt whiskey.

A glass shard pierces his skin and blood begins to flow.
He doesn't blink.

He stumbles over to the trash can and tosses away the broken glass and...soiled police shirt.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - GREENWICH PINNACLE - DAY

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE HALLWAY - DAY

INVESTMENT BANKERS are rushing up and down the hall.

Around the corner comes MILES COWDEN. Trailing behind him is a pack of doe-eyed INTERN CANDIDATES. They're furiously taking notes, hanging on MILES's every word.

MILES

...make no mistake, these are trying times for America. But with every problem, comes opportunity. Like *GOLD*, for example. It's value is skyrocketing.

(he stops walking)
Tell me why?

An INTERN, KRISTIN ABERNATHY, early 20's, brazenly steps forward. She's wearing a tight blue sweater showing off her voluptuous body. She's stunning.

KRISTIN/INTERN

Because while silver is produced for *consumption*, gold is produced for *accumulation*. Gold doesn't perish, tarnish or corrode. So as our dollar is suffering one of the greatest meltdowns in history, gold is once again elevated to the center of the global financial system.

She smiles proudly. MILES is impressed.

MILES

Thank you, Miss *Wikepedia*?

KRISTIN/INTERN

Kristina Abernathy. You can call me "Kristin".

MILES

To the head of the class.

She passes the other interns and stands next to MILES.

MILES (CONT'D)

See that?

He gestures to an EMPTY DESK IN THE CORNER.

MILES (CONT'D)

That, my friends, is what you call "The Rubicon". Where one's commitment becomes one's destiny. So decide now. -- Do you want a *corner office* like mine? Or an office "*in the corner*" like *that*?

Just then WILLIAM, the employee whose desk they're staring at, walks back with a cup of coffee. Embarrassed by the attention, he hangs his head and sluffs into his chair.

Unapologetic for his slight, MILES continues...

MILES (CONT'D)

Put another way, if you want *my job*, chances are I am going to want *you*. I champion delusions of grandeur.

(devilishly smiles)

Now I really must be going, so thank me for my time.

INTERNS

(in unison)

Thank you.

Miles walks away as the interns head toward the elevator. He motions to his SECRETARY walking past.

MILES

Get that intern's phone number. The one in the tight blue sweater. She shows a lot of promise.

MILES disappears around the corner.

CUT BACK TO:

WILLIAM, 30s, the investment grunt in the corner, turns to his colleague, BOB, 40s, just over the wall of the cubicle.

WILLIAM

(embarrassed)

Why does he do this? Doesn't he have more important things to do than give tours to fuckin' interns?

BOB

Everyone likes to show off their baby.

WILLIAM

All the while this company is falling apart around him!!

BOB

Forget it, Will. Just control what you can control.

WILLIAM sluffs back to his computer, still seething.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - JOHN'S OFFICE - DAY

JOHN is taking notes as he's listening to another message from Community Relations Line...

COMPLAINT #2 - ELDERLY WOMAN

(V.O.)

...yes, I called the other day. I have still not heard back about the barking dog next door! And all of these flyers in my mailbox.

Suddenly, rookie OFFICER DUGAN walks to John's open office door. He stops writing and pauses the machine.

JOHN

What do you need?

OFFICER DUGAN

Captain Harris needs to see you.

John nods. Officer Dugan walks away.

Before he goes, John reaches in his desk drawer for his flask and takes a hard sip.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - CAPTAIN HARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

John knocks on the door frame and walks in. Det. Katz and Richards are there

CAPTAIN HARRIS

Come on in, John. Have a seat.

There's clearly nowhere to sit in the cramped office. CAPTAIN HARRIS looks at the two detectives, waiting for one of them to give up his seat. Neither does.

CAPTAIN HARRIS (CONT'D)

Listen, John, City Hall's got the full-court press on me to track down CREEDO. The economy is in the shitter and my budget has been slashed. You... you're a damn good detective. Brilliant even...

JOHN

Hey, Cap', I don't mind standing, but not in this bull shit you're shoveling.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

Okay. Straight up. -- I need you on the CREEDO case OR I gotta let you go. My budget cannot justify an officer of your caliber answering the goddamn Bitch Line. You fuckin' stink of booze. And I'm tired of standing by you all these years without a little bit of fuckin' reciprocation.

(smiles at John)

Still standing in my bullshit now?

John turns to Det. Richards.

JOHN

Get the fuck up, Rico!

Startled by the tone, DET. RICHARDS jumps from his chair. JOHN sits down.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

They're asking me to cut more jobs this week - and one of them is yours.

JOHN

Are you serious? If you ask me, Creedo is just taking out the trash. I have about as much sympathy for these guys as those crack dealers that got shot last month.

DET. RICHARDS

Oh, so everyone on Wall Street is a piece of shit?

JOHN

I didn't say that. I'm just saying some people think this guy's a fuckin' modern-day Robin Hood.

DET. RICHARDS

Jesus!

DET. KATZ

(redirecting the conversation)

John, we need you on this. This guy ain't slowin' down. We can't follow up on half of our leads. And most of these pencil pushers we're using don't know shit about homicide.

JOHN rubs his forehead, contemplating his options.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

CREEDO's brutally killed four people in five weeks. And you can bet there's more on the way.

JOHN

I'm sorry. I can't.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

Then I'm sorry I can't keep you.

John stands up and walks out. Det. Katz throws the pen he's holding across the room.

DET. KATZ

Fuckin' Robin Hood.

CUT TO:

EXT. UPSTATE NEW YORK — LAKE PLEASANT — LATE DAY

INT. NEW JAGUAR (MOVING) - RURAL, COUNTRY ROAD

MARY-ANN PENDELTON drives down a lonely stretch of back roads in her brand new Jaguar. -- Her YORKSHIRE TERRIER, PRINCESS, sits next to her.

On the phone, but we only hear Mary-Ann's side of the conversation:

MARY-ANN

...Yes, I know.

(listens)

I'll be back in town next week for the down-size.

(listens)

The board approved it. How could they not?

(listens)

As I always say: *"A fool and his money should've never been together in the first place!"*

(laughing)

See you soon.

EXT. WALLINGFORD NATURE PRESERVE - PARKING LOT -
CONTINUOUS

She pulls into the nature preserve. Parks her car, puts on the dog leash and off they run into the woods.

MARY-ANN PENDELTON

Come on, Princess!

As they round a corner down the winding trail, an ELDERLY COUPLE appears. Mary-Ann nods as she jogs past.

Up ahead, she spots A MAN with his dog, an AUSTRALIAN SHEPHERD. -- The MAN's back is toward her as he SNAPS PICTURES of the meadow. WE NEVER SEE HIS FACE. All we see are his long, brown dreadlocks.

Out in the clearing now, Mary-Ann releases Princess from the leash, free to run at her own pace.

A few moments pass, when she looks back over her shoulder, searching for her dog. She stops.

MARY-ANN

Princess! Here...girl!

Nothing. So Mary-Ann slowly jogs back, retracing her path along the high brush. As she turns the corner, there, in the middle of the path in Princess, lying motionless.

MARY-ANN (CONT'D)

Oh, my God!

Mary-Ann rushes over and picks up her limp body. She listens. Princess is still breathing...

SUDDENLY - from out of the brush - Mary-Ann is blind-sided! Her body is driven into the ground with enormous force.

In the brutal frenzy, WE NEVER SEE CREEDO'S FACE, only flashes of gloved fists, dark sunglasses and dreadlocks.

Creedo methodically wraps his dog leash around her throat. As he chokes her, she gasps for air. Blood and saliva spew from her mouth.

FROM CREEDO'S POV, Mary-Ann's eyes roll back. Her throat streams with blood as the leash cuts into her skin. He tightens the leash, strangling her last breath from her body. It is done.

WE PAN OVER TO REVEAL -- CREEDO'S DOG, sitting obediently in the brush, watching his master ferociously murder the woman. The dog doesn't flinch.

Creedo removes the leash from her neck, reaches in his pocket and pulls out a dollar bill and a gold envelope opener - then stabs her through the chest.

With blood still on his gloves, Creedo holds out a handful of treats. The dog devours them, blood and all.

Creedo puts the dog leash back on -- and casually walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. O'MALLEY'S PUB - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

John sits alone in the PUB, drinking. He pushes a \$20 dollar bill across the bar.

JOHN

I'll have another.

The bartender, with her back to him, pays him no mind.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Hell hath no fury...?

The bartender turns around. It's AMANDA, the woman from JOHN's apartment. She pours him another whiskey and beer chaser. Slides it over.

AMANDA

Look. If you want a beer and a shot, that's fine. You want a girlfriend, I'll think about it. If you want another fuck...go fuck yourself.

John presents her with an olive on a toothpick.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

What the hell's that?

JOHN

It's my "olive branch". Just trying to say I'm sorry.

AMANDA

Then say it.

JOHN

I just did.

AMANDA

No. You said were "*trying to say* you're sorry", but never did.
(she waits)

JOHN

I'm sorry.

AMANDA

(smiles)
Fuck you.

She turns to walk away.

JOHN

Department let me go today.

She stops.

AMANDA

Ahh shit, John. What happened?

JOHN

Let's just say they...

At that moment, Det. Katz and Richards walk in.

Det. Katz walks over to Amanda, grabs her and they kiss warmly. They're clearly together.

He pats her on the ass and turns to John.

DET. KATZ
 Finest ass in the whole damn
 place. - And then there's you.
 (baiting him)
 Hey, how's Sandra these days?

John raises his shot glass, tosses it back

JOHN
 Not a clue.

DET. KATZ
 Oh, yeah. Sorry about that.

Det. Katz gestures for a couple of beers. Richards walks
 off to a booth in the corner.

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)
 John, we don't clear some of these
 bodies, FBI takes over. You know
 this. If that happens, we lose
 traction. We need to close this
 ourselves.

JOHN
 Then do.

DET. KATZ
 I don't get you. If you won't do
 this to save your fuckin' job,
 then at least do it to save some
 innocent lives.

Det. Katz throws back the beer. John just stares straight
 ahead, fuming.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT, HOURS LATER

John stumbles into his apartment. He pours himself
 another whiskey.

He collapses into his recliner, staring at the gold fish
 bowl, watching Francis swim back and forth, back and
 forth...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. DODGE MINI-VAN - DRIVING DOWN COUNTRY ROAD - JUST
 NIGHT (2005)

A YOUNGER JOHN is driving down the road with EMILY, HIS
 DAUGHTER, 6. Blonde hair, pony tail, sweet as can be.

She's holding a goldfish bowl on her lap.

EMILY

Daddy, how long do goldfish live?
A friend at school says the only
live a day or two.

(sad)

Then they flush 'em down the
toilet.

YOUNGER JOHN

Oh, no, baby. Goldfish can live
much longer than that. If you love
him and take real good care of
him, he just might live forever.

EMILY

Forever?

YOUNGER JOHN

Well, maybe until you graduate
from kindergarten.

EMILY

Wow, that is a long time.
(she smiles)
I think I'll name him Francis.

YOUNGER JOHN

Perfect name. I love it.

EMILY

I love it too.

BACK TO PRESENT

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - DAY

John walks down the hall to his office. He stands at a
distance, watching OFFICER DUGAN packing up his things.

Officer Dugan pulls a couple books off the shelf,
revealing John's hidden flask. He holds it to his nose
and takes a whiff. It's potent. He tosses it into the
trash can.

Pissed, John disappears down the hall.

CUT TO:

INT. CAPTAIN HARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

Det. Katz and Richards are there with Captain Harris.
John storms in.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

John?

(surprised to see
him)

Hey, we got people boxing your
stuff up right...

JOHN turns to DET. KATZ sitting in the chair and PUNCHES
HIM SQUARE IN THE FACE.

Det. Katz jumps from his chair to retaliate. John's ready
for him, but Det. Richards holds Katz back. Captain
Harris grabs John.

JOHN

That's for last night! You get
personal with me again and next
time - I break it!

Det. Katz grabs at his nose which is now bleeding.

DET. KATZ

You're a fuckin' head case, John!
Get some fuckin' help.

JOHN

(to Captain Harris)
Here's how it goes! I stay on the
periphery. I track down witnesses
and follow up on evidence.

(turns to Katz and
Richards)

You two track down this cock
sucker. Give me everything you
know. I'm your support. But that's
as close as I get.

(back to Captain
Harris)

You okay with that, Cap'?

CAPTAIN HARRIS

Yeah, sure. Anything you need.

John looks on his desk and sees the Creed file.

JOHN

I need this.

He grabs the file and walks out.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE - DAY

As John returns to his office, Officer Dugan is still there, just hanging up the phone.

JOHN
Your work is done here. I'm staying. Get out.

OFFICER DUGAN
Oh, well, someone just called for you. I was just writing...

JOHN
Who was it?

OFFICER DUGAN
(looks at his note)
A Father O'Brien. Wanted you to know that he received the other photographs and was able to determine some of the scripture. You can catch him at this number.

JOHN
Thanks.

OFFICER DUGAN
Um...Welcome back then.

JOHN
Thanks.

Just as Officer Dugan walks out, Det. Richards rushes in.

DET. RICHARDS
Don't get too comfortable. They just found another body! Mary-Ann Pendelton. Another Wall Street executive.

JOHN
Where'd they find her?

DET. RICHARDS
Wallingford Nature Preserve in Upstate New York. Looks like Creedon's expanding his territory.

JOHN
We got jurisdictional clearance?

DET. RICHARDS
That's why they called.

John grabs his coat, the Creedó file, and heads out.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALLINGFORD NATURE PRESERVE - DAY

In the background, we see Det. Katz interviewing the ELDERLY COUPLE from the day of the murder, while John and Det. Richards are working with the TEAM OF INVESTIGATORS as rain begins to fall.

DET. RICHARDS
(barking orders)
Cover this shit up! Rain hits this
and our whole case washes away!

John looks down at where Mary-Ann's body was found. TWO OFFICERS walk over and lay a tarp down.

DET. RICHARDS (CONT'D)
You okay?

JOHN
Fine. Just getting my bearings.
(points to the middle
of the path)
Okay, so if the victim's dog was
found, drugged and lying here,
about five feet from her...

VISIONS OF HOW IT WENT DOWN FLASH THROUGH JOHN'S MIND:

JOHN (CONT'D)
... she wasn't engaged in
conversation with Creedó. She was
ambushed.
(points to the brush)
If I'm Creedó, I'm lying in
wait...right here.

John carefully walks into the high brush and kneels down.

JOHN (CONT'D)
There's just enough brush to hide
behind....

DET. RICHARDS
I can't see you from where I
stand.

JOHN
...yet there's just enough opening
where I can see you. Like peering
through a keyhole.

A FLASH OF MARY-ANN RUNNING UP TO HER DOG, FROM CREEDO'S VANTAGE POINT

JOHN (CONT'D)

And if the sun was shining
yesterday, I suspect this entire
brush would be cast in dark
shadows. Perfect place to hide.

He looks at both sides of the path, rolling the possibilities over in his mind. He walks a bit further into the brush and finds a trampled area.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Here. This is where he waited.

He looks down and notices a long brown hair, hanging from a picker bush.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Rico, got an extra bag?

DET. RICHARDS

Yeah, here.

John carefully removes part of the bush with the brown hair and places it into the plastic evidence bag.

JOHN

What was Mary-Ann's hair color
again?

DET. RICHARDS

Brunette. Why?

JOHN

Just found a hair, not sure if
it's hers. Could be Creed's. It
was just about the height you'd
expect if he were kneeling down.

It's raining harder now.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(to the other
officers)

GET A CANOPY OVER HERE NOW!

(to Det. Richards)

They need to go over this entire
area with a fine tooth comb. No
one wearing a sweater or fabric
can walk through here. Nothing
that these picker bushes can grab
onto. Got it?

DET. RICHARDS

Got it.

JOHN

Now let's go check on our victim.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY AT GREENWICH PINNACLE - ELEVATORS - DAY

We see William, the slighted investment grunt, standing in the corner of the lobby near the gold-plated elevators. He's nervously pacing back and forth.

He looks down at his watch just as his CELL PHONE CHIMES with a TEXT MESSAGE. He begins typing his reply.

Just then Miles appears, walking toward the elevators. William rushes to finish his text.

Miles walks into the elevator and selects his floor. We see William rushing to catch the elevator. Miles reaches for the OPEN DOOR button -- but instead purposely pushes the CLOSE door button.

Miles shrugs his shoulders, feigning surprise, when the gold doors quickly close in William's face.

CUT TO:

INT. FORENSIC PATHOLOGY LAB - NIGHT

Sitting at her computer is DR. CATHERINE VOX, 30's, a pathologist. She's eating a bowl of Spaghetti O's near the grotesquely, decomposing corpse of MARY-ANN PENDELTON.

In walks DET. KATZ, DET. RICHARDS and JOHN. They nod to DR. VOX as they walk directly over to the corpse. All the detectives react to the smell.

DET. RICHARDS

Ooooh. Smelling better by the day.

DR. VOX

Obviously, we haven't had a lot of time with her, but it appears as though there's nothing out of the ordinary here.

DET. KATZ

Other than the fact she was strangled, right?

DR. VOX

(joking)

Well, you do realize, here in New York, strangulation is considered death by "natural causes".

(all business now)

So the official cause of death is "ligature asphyxiation". Or strangulation by retractable dog leash.

JOHN

A dog leash?

DR. VOX

Yes, we're not sure of the brand, but we're working on it. As for the gold envelope opener in the chest, that was postmortem. -- Typically, we're able to find traces of the killer's skin or blood under the victim's nails. But seeing as she was wearing winter gloves, there were no defense wounds of note. Hair & Fiber are examining the evidence you found. We'll know more on that later.

DET. RICHARDS

What about the dollar bill? Did you pull prints?

JOHN

Too much contamination.
(clearly in-the-know)

DR. VOX

Right. Currency typically passes through over 20,000 hands during its circulation life.

JOHN

So it's next to impossible to get much from a dollar bill that will hold up in court.

DR. VOX

Correct.

JOHN

(to Det. Richards)

Hell, four out of five bills in your wallet are going to show traces of cocaine, right Rico?

DET. RICHARDS
(defensive)
Not just mine. But everyone's.

JOHN
Thank you, Dr. Vox.

DET. KATZ
Yeah, thanks.

DR. VOX
We'll let you know more when we
know it.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - HERE-2-HELP FOUNDATION - DAY

INT. H-2-H CLASSROOM

FATHER O'BRIEN is inside a classroom, sitting in a circle
talking to kindergartners. They're laughing, having a fun
time.

JOHN walks up to the door. Father O'Brien sees him. He
waves goodbye to the kids and joins John in the hall.

FATHER O'BRIEN
How are you, John?

JOHN
Fine, Father.

They walk down the hall.

JOHN (CONT'D)
So this is your foundation?

FATHER O'BRIEN
Not for long.
(with sadness)
Lost all our funding from the Wall
Street collapse. Charities are
always the first to go.

JOHN
Isn't there something you can do?

FATHER O'BRIEN
Unfortunately, there's no bailout
for charities like us.

Father O'Brien stops and looks out a window to the kids
laughing on the playground.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)
Three million dollars in
funding...gone like that.

Suddenly, a voice from down the hall shouts:

JAMAAL
WHO 'DA KING?

Father O'Brien turns and sees Jamaal, chaperoning kids.

FATHER O'BRIEN
You da' King, Jamaal.

JAMAAL
Got that right!

FATHER O'BRIEN
(turns back to John)
Jamaal's worked so hard. And he's
not the only one. Most of these
are foster kids. Some of them will
surely end up back on the streets.
(changing subjects)
But *this* is not why you're here.

JOHN
Sorry. It's not. Wish I could
help.

FATHER O'BRIEN
Hopefully, I can help you.

He pulls out the photographs to show John.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)
The scripture is an Egyptian
worship song to Mother Neit. The
goddess of war. The "Ankh" is the
sign of life. Only Egyptian gods
were allowed to carry the "Ankh"
for it showed that they alone had
the power to give life...or take
it away.

Father O'Brien steps aside as a COUPLE FELLOW PRIESTS
walk past. He hands John papers.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)
Here. These are my notes on the
scripture and symbols.

John takes the notes, then looks over at at the crayon
artwork hanging on the bulletin board in the hallway.

(MORE)

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

Last day to see those. Foundation
is closing its doors tomorrow.

JOHN

I'm so sorry to hear this.

FATHER O'BRIEN

(optimistic)
But as the good Lord would say,
"This too shall pass."

JOHN

Thank you.
(holding out the
notes)
This is perfect.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Thank you. At least, you got to
see what we do here.

With that, the SCHOOL BELL RINGS and the classrooms let
out. The hallway fills with laughing children.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

Whatever you need, John, we're
Here-2-Help.

Father O'Brien smiles somberly, then heads down the hall
with the children.

As John turns to leave, he looks into a classroom where a
teacher is taking down lesson plans from the wall and
placing them in a box.

CUT TO:

INT. MILES'S OFFICE - DAY

Inside Miles's office, there is A TEAM OF CONTRACTORS
remodeling. -- Aside from the light from the expansive
windows, the office is cast in darkness.

MILES WALKS IN. He presses his hand against a sensor
switch on the wall. His office lights up, dramatically.

A wall of hi-def, state-of-the-art LCDs illuminate. *FOX
NEWS. CNN. C-SPAN.* It's everything a mogul could want.

CONTRACTOR

Sorry. We couldn't get it to work.

MILES COWDEN

You need one of these.

He holds up his hand.

MILES COWDEN (CONT'D)
And unfortunately, there's only
two of them in the world.

He holds up his other hand and smiles. Then settles into his chair as everyone goes back to working.

Moments later...A BREAKING NEWS STORY comes across CNN. Footage of the MARY-ANN PENDELTON MURDER flashes across the screen.

MILES COWDEN (CONT'D)
SILENCE!

Everyone stops and turns to the news screen.

CNN NEWS ANCHOR
(from television)
*...among other economic news,
MARY-ANN PENDELTON, a top
executive from the Manhattan
Emerald Group, was found brutally
murdered yesterday in upstate New
York.*

We see Mary-Ann's picture on the screen. News footage flashes shots of the crime scene.

CNN NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)
(from television)
*Her body was found on a jogging
trail only miles from her multi-
million dollar estate. All
indications are this is the fifth
victim of the serial killer
"CREEDO". The Manhattan Emerald
Group, as you may remember, had
recently come under investigation
for fraudulent investments...*

MILES
Everyone out. NOW!

The crew heads out. Miles looks over and sees a DESIGNER carrying a booklet of tiled swatches.

MILES (CONT'D)
Except YOU! Come here.

Miles pulls the swatch booklet from under the DESIGNER'S arm. He opens it and then points.

MILES (CONT'D)
This is the tile I want.

DESIGNER

Certainly. It will take 4 to 6 weeks to ship. It's from Morocco.

MILES

Well, I'm from *America*. Have it over-nighted!

She hurries out.

Miles picks up the phone and dials.

STANLEY (O.S.)

Hollinsworth speaking.

CUT TO:

INT. CREEDO'S WORKSHOP - DIMLY LIT - NIGHT

SERIES OF TIGHT SHOTS

A) A fleeting glimpse of Creedo's facial and body features as he prepares for his night out.

B) Candles flicker in the background. Incense burns.

C) Creedo pulls a black skull cap down over his brown dreadlocks.

D) He smiles: a gold-capped tooth shimmers in the candlelight.

E) He pulls a black backpack over his shoulder.

F) The flame from the candle...is blown out.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - CASE ROOM - NIGHT

The small room is jammed with John, Dr. Vox, Det. Katz and Det. Richards.

John stands at the projector screen linked up to a computer. -- We see the blood-stained dollar bill magnified on the screen. There's a circle around the pyramid on back.

JOHN

...as we now know, the pyramid here symbolizes "strength" and "durability", meaning Creedo has no intention of stopping anytime soon.

(turns to next slide)
Here, he underlined "*Annuit Ceptis*" which is Latin for "He supports our undertaking". Meaning God supported America's independence from Britain. In this case, Creedo is telling us that God approves of *his* undertaking.

DR. VOX

What's that symbol?

A crude sketch of a circle with a stick figure with many arms in the middle.

JOHN

The best Father O'Brien can tell is it appears to be "SHIVA THE DESTROYER". Shiva brings the cycle of life to an end in order for a new life to begin.

(another symbol)
This is "VISHNU THE PRESERVER".

DET. RICHARDS

He must be the "friendly god".

JOHN

To the contrary, "The Preserver's" role is to maintain divine order. When evil gains an upper hand, "The Preserver" is sent to restore balance in the universe.

Det. Richards points to another symbol, a sketch of an abstract figure.

DET. RICHARDS

What is that? A wolf?

JOHN

I'm not sure. Could be. Let me follow up.

DET. KATZ

So what we now know, Creedo's messages are covering numerous religions: Hindu, Catholicism, what was the first victim...?

DET. RICHARDS
Muslim. Got the most fanatical
 religion out of the way first,
 huh?

He laughs. No one else does.

DR. VOX
 Why so many faiths?

JOHN
 Could be he's an atheist or
 agnostic.

DET. KATZ
 Is it possible this guy has
 multiple personalities who each
 worship a different God?

JOHN
 Who knows? A psychopath like this
 is capable of anything.

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE PLAINS NEW YORK - HOLLINSWORTH ESTATE - NIGHT

A vintage, mid-19th century, Tudor-style home. It's
 stunning marble columns indicate enormous wealth.

Out of the shadows, a large dark figure with dreadlocks
 appears. It's CREEDO. He turns to his dog, the Australian
 Shepherd, and motions for him to STAY.

A motion-light illuminates the side yard. Creedo quietly
 moves toward the lamps and places black bags over the
 motion detectors.

Then makes his way to a large side-door. He pulls out a
 razor knife and begins methodically cutting into the
 door's wood-paneled base.

He pulls an L-shaped wonder bar and quietly pries the
 panel from its frame.

With just enough space, Creedo pushes his way through the
 hole in the door and disappears inside, without setting
 off the alarm.

A moment later, his black-gloved hands reach out, setting
 his shoes just outside the opening.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

CREEDO walks through the kitchen, stopping to pull a knife from the butcher block.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He walks up stairs and then quietly pushes open the door to the bedroom.

INT. HOLLINSWORTH BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

There, before him, his prey. MRS. HOLLINSWORTH. SHE IS ALONE...and sleeping.

He turns and pushes open the walk-in closet, where he puts on STANLEY's winged-tip shoes and robe.

Slowly, he walks over to her. She turns on her side. She appears restless.

CREEDO grabs the pillow beside her and places it over her head to muffle her screams as HE BEGINS TO SLASH.

THE STEEL BLADE PLUNGES DOWNWARD...again and again.

She's dead before she awakes.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLINSWORTH ESTATE - DAY

INT. KITCHEN

John, Det. Katz and Det. Richards are on the scene, mapping out the details. They're stepping around the bloody footprints.

They see the side door with the bottom, wood panel cut out. John gestures to the door alarm.

JOHN

See here. Creedo can't open the door without setting off the alarm. So he decides to go "through it". Brilliant. Creedo knew his entry point so he probably cased the place beforehand.

DET. KATZ

Slow down. We don't know this was Creedo.

JOHN

It was.

DET. KATZ

Nothing here indicates this was Creedo. No dollar bill. No gold envelope opener. The M.O.'s don't match.

JOHN

It's not *how* they were killed I'm looking at. It's *who* was killed. Creedo's targeting his victims for very specific reasons.

DET. RICHARDS

Mrs. Hollinsworth didn't work on Wall Street...

JOHN

(whispering now)
Yes, but her husband, Stanley Hollinsworth, did.

DET. KATZ

But he's the head of the S.E.C. not the head of an investment firm.

JOHN

Sure, they may make strange bed fellows, but they're sleeping in the same bed, nonetheless.

DET. KATZ

(not buying it)
Let's stick to what we know, not what we "think" we know.

JOHN

What *we know* is that Creedo's targeting Wall Street and whether you believe it or not, the S.E.C. is in collusion with Wall Street.

CUT TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - MILES'S OFFICE - DAY

A crowd of contractors are still remodeling his office, while Miles is busy analyzing financial reports.

His phone rings, he answers.

MILES
 Miles Cowden...Speak.
 (listens)
 Yes, yes.
 (listens)
 Meredith Hollinsworth? How?
 (listens)
 Oh, Jesus Christ. First, Mary-Ann.
 Now Stanley's wife.
 (listens)
 Alright then. Yes...

Miles looks up and sees the BREAKING NEWS STORY of the Hollinsworth Murder come across CNN.

MILES (CONT'D)
 ...Yes. I'm seeing it now on CNN.
 (listens)
 I'll call you back.

He looks at the contractors, standing in his office.

MILES (CONT'D)
 Jesus. Please. Go!

He turns up the volume.

CNN NEWS ANCHOR
...STANLEY HOLLINSWORTH, who has come under much scrutiny as of late due to a litany of regulatory misconduct, was reportedly out of town on business at the time of his wife's murder. More on this breaking news story as we get it...

Miles calls his secretary.

SECRETARY (O.S.)
 (from speaker phone)
 Yes, Mr. Cowden?

MILES
 Connect me to my wife...

Out of the corner of his eye, Miles has spotted KRISTINA ABERNATHY, the promising intern, walking past his office.

MILES (CONT'D)
 On second thought. I'll get back.
 (hangs up)

He motions for Kristina. Nervously, she enters.

KRISTIN/INTERN

Yes, Mr. Cowden?

MILES

(warm, but abrupt)

Call me, Miles. I need you to send flowers to this address. Send my heartfelt condolences.

He scribbles on a piece of paper and hands it to her.

MILES (CONT'D)

Here. Put the flowers on my account. My personal cell number is on there too, if you need me.

KRISTIN/INTERN

Certainly.

She's flattered. He watches her walk away.

Then he walks over to his safe, unlocks it, and PULLS OUT A GUN.

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - NEXT DAY

INT. MAIN CHURCH

Inside, there are a FEW PARISHIONERS PRAYING.

John walks in, still uncomfortable. He sees Father O'Brien lighting candles on the alter.

John locks onto the flame of a single candle, then...

A QUICK VISION OF A LITTLE GIRL'S DOLL SUDDENLY BURSTING INTO FLAMES FLASHES THROUGH JOHN'S MIND.

Father O'Brien walks over to John.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Looks like someone's got a lot on their mind today.

JOHN

(snaps out of it)

No, it was nothing. Just thinking about when I was an altar boy. It was my job to light all the candles. Not the priest's job.

FATHER O'BRIEN
I only do this on school days.
(smiles)
Rather they focus on their
studies. Besides, I find it quite
peaceful, lighting the candles.

John pulls out a couple photographs.

JOHN
So thank you for your help on the
religious scripture and symbols.
Extremely insightful.

FATHER O'BRIEN
Good, good.

JOHN
There was just one symbol we're
still having trouble with.

FATHER O'BRIEN
(looks at the photo)
Oh, yes. Such a crude sketch. Best
I can tell is it appears to be
a...

JOHN
...a wolf?

FATHER O'BRIEN
Yes.

JOHN
That's what we thought too. So
then what's it represent?

FATHER O'BRIEN
If it is indeed meant to be a
wolf, in Christianity, wolves are
known symbolize greed and
destruction. The enemy of flocks.

JOHN
"Flocks" meaning "mankind"?

FATHER O'BRIEN
Could be.

JOHN
And wolf that's howling?

FATHER O'BRIEN
The "howling posture" could be
Creedo's way of "warning us of an
coming death".

JOHN

I see.

(switching direction)
One more thing, you had mentioned
Paul Donalds took part in
confession here. Is there anything
that you can tell us that...

FATHER O'BRIEN

(serious tone)
John, you need to understand that
confession has sacramental
significance. I'm sworn to
confidentiality by my faith...

Father O'Brien stops short.

JOHN

What is it?

FATHER O'BRIEN

(sincere)
As you know, we want to do
everything we can to help you on
this, but...

JOHN

But what?

FATHER O'BRIEN

(growing anxious,
whispering now)
I'm not even sure what I know can
help.

JOHN

Let us determine that.
(pressing)
What do you know, Father?

FATHER O'BRIEN

What I know is bound by the Seal
Of Confession. There are no
exceptions. Many a priest have
gone to prison over this.

JOHN

But lives are at stake here!

FATHER O'BRIEN

So is our oath to God.

Father O'Brien looks down at his watch as more
PARISHIONERS walk in.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)
Anything else you need, please let
us know.

JOHN
(pleading)
Just point us in the right
direction, Father!

FATHER O'BRIEN
I'm sorry.

John looks down at the disturbing photographs of the
blood-stained dollar bills.

CUT TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE -
NIGHT

Greenwich Pinnacle investment bankers, William and Bob,
walk to their cars. They're carrying their boxes of
personal items. It's evident they have both been fired.

WILLIAM
(fuming)
This can't be right.

BOB
(to himself)
What am I going to tell my wife?

WILLIAM
I knew it. I told you we'd be
gone.

BOB
I got a baby on the way. No job...

William stops. He sees a sky-blue Bugatti Veyron parked
against the wall in a private space. The sports car is
amazing. One of only 300 in the world. The sign on the
wall reads: RESERVED - MILES COWDEN.

BOB (CONT'D)
Don't even think about it, Will.

WILLIAM
Here.

William hands his box of office things to BOB.

BOB

C'mon. Let's go. Will! That car's worth more than you and I put together.

William turns back and jams his finger into BOB's face, boiling with rage.

WILLIAM

Don't you say another fuckin' word. I listened to you every goddamn day we worked together and look where it got us!

He reaches into his box and pulls out an envelope opener. Bob steps back, genuinely frightened by William.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

We're doing this.

William walks over to the Bugatti.

He sees a surveillance camera pointing at the car. He looks in a nearby trash can and pulls out a plastic grocery bag. He jumps up and snags the bag over the surveillance camera.

He walks over to the car and stabs the back tire with the envelope opener, grinning as it deflates.

Then he begins scratching words into the sky-blue paint. He finishes and then steps back to admire his work.

In the distance, across the garage, we hear the CHIRPING SOUND OF A CAR BEING UNLOCKED.

BOB

C'mon!

William casually walks back to Bob and grabs his box.

BOB (CONT'D)

Shit. Let's go!

They both run to their cars and disappear.

William's message on the side of Miles's car reads:
"All The Kings Horses..."

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREETS - NIGHT

DETECTIVE DET. KATZ and RICHARDS are staked out in an unmarked police van.

DET. RICHARDS
...so he says to me, "*Rico, come
on out with me this Saturday
night. I'm hosting a benefit for
women with no legs.*"

Det. Katz looks bewildered.

DET. RICHARDS (CONT'D)
Exactly. So I say, "*Why the fuck
would I go to a benefit for women
with no legs?*" And he says,
"*Because the place will be
crawling with pussy.*"

They bust out laughing.

Just then there's a tap on the window. Richards jumps.
It's JOHN. They open the side door of the van and he hops
in.

DET. RICHARDS (CONT'D)
You scared the shit out of me!

JOHN
See. I always knew you were full
of shit, Rico.

They hand John a flask of booze. He sips.

DET. KATZ
What do you got?

JOHN
Not much. Father O'Brien agrees
with us that it's a wolf. Which
represents greed and destruction.

DET. RICHARDS
That's Creed for ya'.

JOHN
Father O'Brien seemed to want to
tell us more, but couldn't.

DET. KATZ
What the fuck does that mean?

JOHN
What he knows he heard during
confession.

RICHARDS
So?

JOHN

So legally, he doesn't have to divulge any information shared with him during confession. Like a psychiatrist or a lawyer.

DET. KATZ

Yes, but there are exceptions if it's believed that withholding that information will result in further harm to others.

JOHN

I know, I know. It may be nothing to us, but to a priest, confession is a sacred vow. -- Don't worry. I'll get him to talk to me.

DET. KATZ

We don't have a lot of fuckin' time for you to wine and dine him.

JOHN

I got it!
(changing subjects)
So how 'bout this guy, what do got?

They all look out the window as A MAN WALKS OUT of the row houses and heads up the street.

DET. KATZ

Word is this guy's taking bets on Wall Street to see who CREEDO takes out next. Just want to see how the odds are playing out.

JOHN

Odds are you're wasting your time.

John takes another hit from the flask. Det. Richards turns to him with a big grin on his face.

DET. RICHARDS

Hey, John. Wanna go to a benefit with me on Saturday night?

John looks at KATZ, who laughs.

JOHN

Next time.

He jumps out of the van as they slowly drive off, tailing their target.

John turns and looks down the alley. The same emaciated dog from before is now LYING DEAD next to a dumpster.

CUT TO:

INT. CREEDO'S WORKSHOP - DIMLY LIT - NIGHT

CREEDO picks up a couple of photographs from his work bench. They're various surveillance photos he's taken of MILES COWDEN.

Countless news clippings about MILES hang on the wall:

"Cowden Leads Wall Street To Record Returns"

"Power Broker Of The Year: Miles Cowden"

"S.E.C.'s Hollinsworth Launches Greenwich Probe"

"Greenwich Pinnacle Cleared In SEC Investigation"

Again, we do NOT see CREEDO's face. Only glimpses of his body and hands.

On his workbench, we see *"THE ECONOMIST"* magazine cover of MILES COWDEN holding a bottle of Dom Perignon. The headline reads:

"The Toast Of Wall Street"

Creedo squeezes a can of lighter fluid, dousing the cover. He ignites it. Miles's picture BURSTS INTO FLAMES.

CUT TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - MILES COWDEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

ECU of a flame from gold-plated Zippo lighter.

Camera pulls back and we see MILES, relaxing with his feet on his desk, smoking a Cohiba. His office renovation is complete. It's spectacular.

MILES is on the phone.

MILES COWDEN

...after that second plane hit the towers, you know what my thought was? BUY OIL and BUY IT NOW!

(listens)

You just knew those towel-heads were gonna start lighting the oil fields on fire as soon as we bombed Iraq.

(listens)

Exactly.

Suddenly, breaking news footage flashes across the TVs. STANLEY HOLLINSWORTH, is being escorted in the police station in handcuffs.

MILES COWDEN (CONT'D)

Holy shit, WALLACE. I have to go.

MILES hangs up and turns up the sound.

CNN NEWS ANCHOR

(from television)

...Securities & Exchange director, Stanley Hollinsworth was arrested early this morning for the murder of his wife, Meredith Hollinsworth. Mr. Hollinsworth, first came under suspicion when investigators were unable to confirm his alibi. More on that as news breaks...

MILES hits the mute button. He sits, fuming for a moment. Then dials his secretary.

SECRETARY

(from speaker phone)

Yes, Mr. Cowden.

MILES COWDEN

Call Byron Chelsey for me NOW!

MILES slams the phone down.

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH

ORGAN MUSIC PLAYS in the background for added mood.

Father O'Brien walks into the Confessional Booth. A man, ERNEST MERRIWETHER, 60's, is sitting on the other side of the screen. Ernest is a broken man. Moved to confess out of despair and desperation.

He holds a Bible and a minuatue Jesus in his hand.

ERNEST MERRIWETHER

(nervous, verge of tears)

Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.

(MORE)

ERNEST MERRIWETHER (CONT'D)

It has been...two years since my last confession. I am sorry for that.

Father O'Brien just listens, his heart feels for the broken man's sorrow.

ERNEST MERRIWETHER (CONT'D)

...I'm ashamed at the pain I have caused. To my...

FATHER O'BRIEN

What is it, my son?

ERNEST MERRIWETHER

(distraught, ashamed)

I've lost my job of 28 years. I've lost my home and family. What kind of man loses his home?...His own home. I couldn't make the payments so...I...I...I am not the man my mother raised...I am not. And for that I am ashamed.

(breaking down)

Please forgive me God.

Father O'Brien begins to read the *Prayer of Absolution*.

FATHER O'BRIEN

*God, the Father of mercies,
through the death and resurrection
of His Son has reconciled...*

With tears in his eyes, ERNEST MERRIWETHER, places the miniature Jesus into his shirt pocket.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

*...the world to Himself and sent
the Holy Spirit among us for the
forgiveness of sins...*

ERNEST opens the Bible and sets it on the floor in front of him. He makes the sign of the cross, then reaches over and PULLS A GUN OUT from under his jacket.

ERNEST MERRIWETHER

Forgive me, Father, for I have...

Before he finishes the last word, HE PUSHES THE GUN INTO HIS MOUTH and...BAM!!!

Blood splatters through the screen onto FATHER O'BRIEN's face as he jumps back, startled by the gun shot.

He races out of the booth to the other booth for ERNEST.

Blood and brain matter are everywhere. He is gone.

FATHER O'BRIEN
(devastated)
Oh, my. This can't be!

Blood is splattered across the pages of the open Bible.

CUT TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - MILES COWDEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Miles is sitting at his desk, talking on the phone with his wife. From our perspective, we only see him from the chest up. His conversation appears to be rushed.

MILES
(hurried)
I'm sorry. I have a meeting.
(listens)
I have no idea.
(listens)
Yes, me too, honey.

He hangs up the phone and the camera pulls back.

KRISTEN, THE INTERN, IS ON HER KNEES pleasuring MILES.
He pushes her away and zips up.

MILES (CONT'D)
(still euphoric)
Ahh. You're driving me crazy!

She gathers herself, fixing her hair and straightening her sheer, crimson blouse.

KRISTIN/INTERN
When can I see you again?

MILES
Soon...very soon. Just not here.

MILES's cell phone rings. -- It's STANLEY. -- He motions for KRISTEN to leave.

MILES (CONT'D)
Stanley?!

STANLEY
(frantic, mix of
tears and madness)
Miles!

MILES

Jesus Christ! What the hell...

We INTERCUT between MILES and STANLEY's phone conversation.

STANLEY

It's not true. I don't know what's happening. But it's not true.

MILES

Listen to me. Do NOT say anything until BYRON CHELSEY gets there. Best defense lawyer around!

STANLEY

I lost Meredith and they think it was me! My God!!

MILES

I know. I'm sorry. The news is saying your alibi doesn't check out.

There's silence. STANLEY doesn't respond.

MILES (CONT'D)

Stanley! They're saying...

STANLEY

I was with another woman.

MILES

You were having an affair? Is that it?

STANLEY

We were out of town.

MILES

You need to have her come forward.

STANLEY

I can't.

MILES

Having an affair doesn't make you a murderer...

STANLEY

She's fifteen.

MILES

What?

STANLEY

The woman. She's fifteen.

MILES

WOMAN?! She's a fuckin' girl!

STANLEY

I didn't kill my wife! I swear.
God, I would never.

MILES COWDEN

Let me handle this.

STANLEY

They're gonna ask...about you and
I.

MILES

Listen to me. There is *your wife*
and there is *this girl*. Nothing
more.

STANLEY

They're gonna dig, Miles! It's
what they do.

MILES

They won't go there unless you
lead them. You may think they're
bargaining chips, but they're
not...They're nails in your
fuckin' coffin!

STANLEY

I didn't do this, Miles. I swear!

CUT TO:

INT. FORENSIC PATHOLOGY LAB - DAY

JOHN, DET. KATZ and RICHARDS sit with DR. VOX going over
what they know so far about CREEDO. They're looking at
the projection screen of the Hollinsworth Murder.

DR. VOX

...Hollinsworth's shoes, his robe
and a butcher knife from his
kitchen were all found in a
dumpster around the corner from
his own house, covered in his
wife's blood. He left his bloody
foot prints *at the scene*.

DET. RICHARDS

Shit. The only thing this fuckin' idiot didn't give us...was a solid alibi.

JOHN

Hollinsworth is no idiot. He's a Harvard graduate and director of the S.E.C. What's his motive?

DET. RICHARDS

He was married. Isn't that motive enough?

DR. VOX

Funny, Rico.

DET. RICHARDS

Hey, spouses kill each other all the time. Why not him?

JOHN

Because he's too smart for a murder this sloppy.

DET. RICHARDS

If it looks like a duck...

JOHN

So Hollinsworth goes to the trouble of cutting a panel out of his own door to make it look like a break-in, but *forgets* to take his shoes off?

DR. VOX

Who knows? Maybe Hollinsworth figured he'd frame himself *so poorly* that we'd think there's *no* way he could have done this.

DET. RICHARDS

(angry now)

John, you know as well as we do if these assholes don't make mistakes, we don't catch 'em!

JOHN

Yeah, but if *we make mistakes...* more people die, Rico!

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK CITY UNEMPLOYMENT OFFICE - DAY

The Unemployment Office is JAMMED WITH PEOPLE.

BOB, with resume in hand, anxiously waits for his turn.

An office door opens and out steps WILLIAM. He slams the door behind him.

BOB
William! How are you?

WILLIAM
(angry)
Out of work, that's how I am!

BOB
Anyone hiring?

WILLIAM
You wanna wash dishes?

BOB
I'll do anything. You know I have
a baby on the way.

WILLIAM
Good luck with that.

William disappears out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. O'MALLEY'S PUB - NIGHT

It's late. Aside from the festive Christmas lights twinkling around the bar, all is calm.

At one end of the bar, DET. KATZ is holding AMANDA's hand, whispering into her ear. She laughs, they kiss.

Paying no mind, JOHN is at the jukebox. Elton John's "MONA LISAS & MAD HATTERS" begins to play in the background.

Det. Katz walks over, pats John on the shoulder.

DET. KATZ
Care for a bit of yuletide joy?

He nods to Det. Richards who is sitting in a booth, chatting it up with THREE COLLEGE-AGE WOMAN. He's wearing a Santa Claus hat and beard, gesturing for the ladies to come sit on his lap.

JOHN

Heading out.

DET. KATZ

You know if you're right about the Hollinsworth murder, Creedo's got us running all over the fuckin' map. He's framing people now.

John nods. Det. Katz takes a sip of his beer.

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

I had this case, years ago. Before forensics knew shit. Girl's found dead, cracked skull. Got the suspect with dried blood and the victim's hairs on his shoes. He confesses he broke into her house, but claims he didn't kill her. Said she was so startled she fell and smashed her head on the floor. So we can't put Murder One on him. So for months, we pushed on forensics to find something... anything.

Det. Katz reaches up and pulls a hair from his head and shows it to John.

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

See that? A hair that falls out naturally would have a bulbous root at the end. But here the root is stretched because it was forcibly removed, by a hand. The victim's hairs were stretched too. We proved he grabbed her by the hair when he smashed her skull.

JOHN

So it all came down to a hair?

DET. KATZ

No. It all came down to *luck*. It was supposed to storm that night. It didn't - or those hairs would've washed right off his shoes. A lucky break, my friend. That's what we're shootin' for.

JOHN

Not much of an investigative strategy there.

DET. KATZ

I'll take whatever I can get.

Det. Katz finishes the last of his beer, then turns and walks over to the three girls, pointing his finger and counting...

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

HO...HO...HO!

They all laugh at his joke.

John finishes his beer and gets up to leave. Amanda catches him just before he heads out.

AMANDA

It's "last call", John.

JOHN

No thanks.

AMANDA

I meant "last call"...*for me*. You got one more shot.

He stops, unsure of how to respond. He looks over at Katz holding a mistletoe over his crotch, laughing.

JOHN

What do you see in him?

AMANDA

I dunno. I just see him. And he likes to see me. Not much more to it than that.

JOHN

And maybe that's all there needs to be.

He walks out.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE LOCKUP - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

STANLEY HOLLINSWORTH is sitting with BYRON CHELSEY, a shrewd, relentless defense attorney who is willing to get his clients acquitted by any means necessary.

STANLEY

(shaking)

Got a smoke?

Byron searches his jacket.

BYRON CHELSEY

No cigarettes. This is all I got.

Reluctantly, he pulls out a CIGAR. Stanley grabs it and nervously lights it.

BYRON CHELSEY (CONT'D)

We're a long way from celebrating,
don't you think?

Stanley's mood swings between fear and anger.

STANLEY

Fuck it. Fuck them. FUCK YOU.

BYRON CHELSEY

Stanley, let me be very
succinct...

STANLEY

Director. Call me *Director*
Hollinsworth.

Stanley takes a long drag from his cigar. Byron sifts through some papers from his briefcase.

BYRON CHELSEY

I've made arrangements for bail.
Not sure the judge will approve,
but if anyone can...

STANLEY

(interrupting)
Where the hell is Miles? Are you
the whole sum of his rescue
efforts? I'm on a fuckin' island
here!

Stanley's eyes are darting around the room. He can't focus.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Can't they dim these goddamn
lights!!!

BYRON tosses his paper into his briefcase and SLAMS IT SHUT! -- He has Stanley's full attention now.

BYRON CHELSEY

(deadly serious)
Just so we're perfectly clear,
your life is now in my hands. I am
your only hope. If you're a man of
faith, then pray you do not let me
down. If you lie to me, I walk. If
you fail to follow my counsel, I
walk.

(MORE)

BYRON CHELSEY (CONT'D)

And most significantly, if you so much as mention Miles Cowden's name again, you will most certainly regret the outcome.

Byron reaches over and grabs the cigar from Stanley's mouth. He presses the cigar into the table, snuffing out the burning ash.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - CASE ROOM - DAY

John, Det. Katz and Richards are going over the case with Captain Harris. They're mapping out the victims for possible connections.

Det. Katz finishes pouring himself a cup of coffee and walks back to the board.

DET. KATZ

Okay, what do we have so far?

DET. RICHARDS

All five of Creedo's victims either died of strangulation or blunt force trauma. All of them were then stabbed with a gold envelope opener with dollar bill posted to their chest.

DET. KATZ takes a swig of coffee.

JOHN

You forgot one.

DET. KATZ

(confused)

John, we just went over this...

DET. KATZ walks back and points at Victim #1.

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

(confused)

Charles Greir, head of Caliber Investment Group. CREEDO's first victim.

JOHN

No. You forgot one *more*. Meredith Hollinsworth was CREEDO's sixth victim.

Det. Katz rolls his eyes, agitated by John's persistence.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

C'mon, John.

JOHN

That was CREEDO. Rich guys like Hollinsworth, with his influence, they make people *disappear*. They hire someone else to do it. And they sure as hell don't murder their spouse in their own home with their kids right down the fuckin' hall.

DET. RICHARDS

Hollinsworth snapped and failed miserably to cover his tracks. Simple as that.

At that moment, DR. VOX from Forensics walks in.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

Finally, someone who will talk some sense in here. Whaddya got?

DR. VOX

Turns out the hair follicles found at both the Donalds and Pendelton murders are from a canine. *The same canine.*

DET. KATZ

That hair we found was from a dog?

DR. VOX

Yes. It appears to be an Australian Shepherd mix. Brown and white coat. Once we eliminated the hairs from Pendelton's Yorkshire Terrier, we found we were able to put this Australian Shepherd at both murder scenes.

JOHN

(astonished)

So CREEDO is taking his dog with him?

John spots OFFICER DUGAN walking past the door, heading home.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Dugan! Get in here.

Officer Dugan walks in.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Get a team back over to the Hollinsworth Estate and have them comb every area of that house again - *inside and out*. We're looking for hair of any kind, preferably from a dog. Also, check to see if any of their neighbors spotted someone out of the ordinary walking a dog that night. Hopefully, an Australian Shepherd.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

Okay. So if Mrs. Hollinsworth is Creed's sixth victim, who's next?

CUT TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - BANQUET HALL - ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY - DAY

The banquet hall is packed. Festive holiday decorations adorn the stage and banquet tables.

Behind the podium there is an enormous, state-of-the-art, hi-definition video screen playing in the backdrop. It's the epitome of excess.

The frenzied CROWD erupts in applause as MILES COWDEN walks on stage.

MILES

Thank you. I see a rather impressive group assembled here today. -- As a close friend of mine would say, a group of the "Haves" and the "Have-MORES."

The crowd laughs and applauds. MILES smiles.

MILES (CONT'D)

We have much to celebrate this holiday season. We have weathered the financial storm and prospered. For this is not "*survival of the fittest*", my friends. This is "*survival of the FINEST*."

The crowd roars in approval, they toast glasses.

CUT TO:

NOTE: At this point, we begin to cut back and forth between MILES's speech to his employees and FATHER O'BRIEN's sermon to the funeral congregation.

INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - ERNEST MERRIWETHER'S FUNERAL - DAY

Shot opens on a casket being walked down the aisle. The pallbearers and congregation have tears in their eyes.

FUNERAL MUSIC plays in the background as they position the casket before the altar.

FATHER O'BRIEN steps up to the pulpit.

FATHER O'BRIEN
(extremely somber)
Thank you, friends, family,
children of God for taking the
time to pay your respects. I never
knew Ernest personally, but I know
many people just like him.
Good people with good families,
who are good citizens in their
communities. But somehow in
today's society that just isn't
"good enough".

CUT BACK TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - BANQUET HALL

The room is electric. He is preaching from the bully pulpit now.

MILES
(his enthusiasm
grows)
You've heard the liberal media
calling our industry "*Corrupt*".
They should be calling us
"*Courageous*". Courageous for how
far many of us have come, when
having come from so little. They
may see the home I live in now,
but what they don't see are the
floors, backseats and the park
benches I slept on and under to
get where I am today. I've been
married to the same woman for 23
years, but I've been married to my
job for FORTY.

MILES smiles. The crowd cheers.

CUT TO:

INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - ERNEST MERRIWETHER'S FUNERAL
Parishioners wipe tears away.

FATHER O'BRIEN
Contrary to what you may have
heard, Ernest did *not* take his own
life. His life was taken *from him*.
After nearly 30 years of working
the same job for the same
corporation, they simply let him
go. Let..him...go.

(he pauses)
Ernest lost his home, his car, his
family and self-respect. Then,
ultimately, his life.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - BANQUET HALL

MILES
I will not apologize for enjoying
the fruits of our labor. We make
our biggest contribution to
society by being good at what we
do. Yes, God made us this way for
a reason and he does not expect us
to underachieve. If we profit,
everybody gains. Make no mistake,
this is God's work we are doing
here.

MILES picks up a BIBLE from the podium and holds it up.
This is his "congregation" now. The crowd goes wild.

CUT TO:

INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - ERNEST MERRIWETHER'S FUNERAL

FATHER O'BRIEN
Somewhere along the way, Ernest
confused his *Self-Worth* with his
Net-Worth. Those two couldn't be
more different than Heaven and
Hell. So although Ernest may,
himself, have lost hope, HOPE is
not lost on us. For you see HOPE
has two children: ANGER and
COURAGE. Anger at the way things
are. And the Courage to make them
better.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - BANQUET HALL

The crowd is on their feet, applauding wildly. Miles raises his glass of champagne in toast.

MILES

God bless you all! Merry Christmas
and may we all have a prosperous
New Year!

He then walks off stage with arms held high.

CUT TO:

INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - ERNEST MERRIWETHER'S FUNERAL

FATHER O'BRIEN

Let us bow our heads and pray.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - CASE ROOM - NIGHT

Surrounded by empty pizza boxes and soda cans, JOHN, KATZ, RICO and CAPTAIN HARRIS are still pouring over the case files.

They're visibly exhausted, except for JOHN who is still pushing.

JOHN

...Okay, so aside from the fact
they are all connected to Wall
Street, what else do CREEDO's
victims have in common?

DET. RICHARDS

They're all dead.

JOHN

Thanks, Rico.

DET. KATZ

All of the victims were either
indicted or under investigation
for conspiracy and fraud.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

So essentially the whole fuckin'
country has motive.

DET. RICHARDS

Hell, Bernie Madoff fucked so many people over, even the rich hate the rich now.

JOHN

There. That's interesting.

DET. RICHARDS

I said something *interesting*?

JOHN

You know there are many parallels between the wealthy and our suspect here.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

How so?

JOHN

Corporations have similar characteristics to that of a Psychopath.

DET. KATZ

You have our attention.

JOHN

By their nature, corporations put their self-interests first regardless of who suffers. They don't feel an ounce of remorse or guilt for their acts of cruelty. Their objective is to "*profit by any means necessary*". -- Like psychopaths, corporations are made up of extremely intelligent, charismatic people, who commit horrendous acts against society.

DET. RICHARDS

So what does that have to do with this case?

JOHN

Maybe CREEDO isn't the random, blue-collar avenger we've profiled him as.

DET. KATZ

Maybe he's one of them?

CAPTAIN HARRIS

Is that not the *ultimate power*? To exert your strength over those you consider the most powerful.

Suddenly, it hits KATZ. He jumps up from his seat.

DET. KATZ

Rico, come with me! John, go see
O'Brien and convince the good
Father to tell us who the fuck
confessed to him!

CUT BACK TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE BANQUET ROOM - PARTY FLOOR

After MILES's rousing speech, the party is going strong.
Two executives walk up and shake MILES'S hand.

TOP EXECUTIVE #1

Tremendous speech, Miles.
Particularly the part about
"sleeping under a park bench".

TOP EXECUTIVE #2

Yes, when was that? *During rush
week at Harvard?*

They laugh uproariously. MILES's pretends to laugh along,
but he's just spotted KRISTIN through the crowd.

She gestures for him to follow her.

MILES COWDEN

Listen, gentlemen. Thank you so
much for sharing this wonderful
party with me, but I must call it
an evening.

TOP EXECUTIVE #1

And what an evening it was!

TOP EXECUTIVE #2

Indeed.

Kristen walks off down the hall, through two swinging
doors and quietly disappears into the kitchen. Miles
quickly follows, just a discreet moment behind her.

INT. BANQUET KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Just as MILES walks through the swinging doors into the
kitchen, a hand reaches out and grabs him by the tie and
pulls him into the pantry.

With great force, he is tossed to the floor, falling on
top of Kristin.

From behind, we see A DARK FIGURE holding a butcher knife down at them.

MILES
(shaken, confused)
Jesus! What is this? Who are you?

The camera swings around and we see: WILLIAM.

WILLIAM
Who am I? I worked for you for six miserable years and you don't know me?

WILLIAM jabs the knife in Miles's face.

MILES
I'm sorry. Sorry! I have over 800 people working for me. I can't possibly know all my employees.

WILLIAM
Ohh, but you certainly know all your *interns*, don't you?

He swings the knife towards Kristin, she trembles.

Miles tries to subtly reach into his jacket, but William turns and sticks the knife against Miles's cheek. Then reaches in and grabs Miles's gun.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
You always carry a gun, Miles?

MILES
Only when *someone* is murdering my friends. -- So what is it you want?

WILLIAM
I want my life back.

MILES
I don't know what that means...

WILLIAM
So sad. You have no idea who you are dealing with...

Just then, the pantry door smashes open. TWO BODYGUARDS (DRESSED AS WAITERS) bust in, one kicks WILLIAM in the back of the leg, breaking it. The other wraps a white table cloth around his head, blinding him. Two punches to the face and body and William is down.

Miles quickly stands and grabs his gun.

MILES

What the hell took you so long?!!

BODYGUARD #1

You two are more discrete than you realize.

They help KRISTIN off the floor. She's still shaken.

MILES

Take her out of here and calm her down. In the meantime, let's have ourselves a little exit interview with my new friend, William.

BODYGUARD #2 escorts KRISTIN out of the pantry, while Miles turns his attention to William.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Stanley is sweating profusely. He sits, handcuffed to the interrogation table. He's nervously smoking a cigarette. Det. Katz and Richards sit across from him, staring.

Finally, BYRON CHELSEY storms in.

BYRON CHELSEY

What the hell, gentlemen? Already done with your Christmas shopping?

STANLEY

I didn't tell 'em anything, Byron!

DET. KATZ

Oh, but you will.

BYRON CHELSEY

Take these off him!

Det. Richards leans over and unlocks the cuffs.

DET. KATZ

Your client better start "participating" here or he's about to have his face plastered across the news as the lead suspect in not only his wife's murder, but five others as well.

DET. RICHARDS

(to Stanley)

So do you like the name CREEDO? Or do you prefer something else?

STANLEY

You've got to be joking. I didn't murder my wife much less anyone else!

Byron turns to Stanley.

BYRON CHELSEY

Don't say another fuckin' word.

(back to Katz)

So are you now suggesting my client is Creedo? Is that what you're saying? -- Director Hollinsworth here has lost his wife and quite possibly his career over these outrageous accusations. You simply have the wrong guy.

DET. KATZ

Yeah, and what if we've got the *right* guy? You gonna donate your fee to the victim's families?

Byron doesn't say a word.

DET. RICHARDS

(to Stanley)

We hope you are Creedo, because if not, you're next on his list.

DET. KATZ

You know what the street odds are for you being Creedo's next victim?

STANLEY

Street odds? On me?

BYRON CHELSEY

(turns to Stanley)

What part of "shut the fuck up" doesn't make you shut the fuck up?

DET. RICHARDS

Let's just say, there are some folks on the streets who stand to gain financially by the demise of your client here.

BYRON CHELSEY

Are you threatening my client?

DET. KATZ

Just saying you're safer locked up in here than you are out there.

BYRON CHELSEY

We're done.

Det. Katz and Richards smile and walk out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. GREENWICH BANQUET KITCHEN - PANTRY ROOM - EVENING

MILES and BODYGUARD #1 drag WILLIAM to his feet and pull back the white table cloth that is now stained with blood from William's broken nose.

With a gun to William's head, Miles spews venom.

MILES

Did you really think you could get
me? ME?!

William is now shaking with fear.

MILES (CONT'D)

Did you think I didn't know who
fucked up my car you little,
prick. I know who the fuck you
are. Trust me, you don't drop the
cash I did on that ride and only
have one camera on it, you stupid
fuck!

Miles grabs William's face with his hand, pressing his palm against his broken nose. WILLIAM SCREAMS in pain.

Miles turns away to regain his composure...but then swings back and punches William in the face. He drops to the floor.

MILES (CONT'D)

Get him the fuck out of here! I'm
done.

CUT TO:

EXT. MCMICHAEL'S BAR - LATE NIGHT

INT. MCMICHAEL'S BAR

It's a dimly lit bar with dark mahogany wood throughout. A pathetic-looking Christmas tree flashes in the corner.

At the end of the bar, sits FATHER O'BRIEN. He just stares down into his glass of scotch, lost in thought.

Door opens and in walks JOHN. He walks over and sits down. Father O'Brien doesn't even notice.

JOHN
(to the bartender)
Whiskey and a draft.
(turns to Father)
So *this* is where priests go for
their "spiritual guidance", huh?

Father O'Brien looks up. He's had a few.

FATHER O'BRIEN
John! Good to see you!

JOHN
You okay?

FATHER O'BRIEN
I'm baptized in booze, my son!
Join me. The water is warm.

JOHN
I stopped by the church. I heard
what happened the other day. I'm
sorry.

Father O'Brien stares down at his glass.

FATHER O'BRIEN
I'm sorry I couldn't save him.
(takes a sip)
So when are you going to let me
save you?

He grabs a handful of peanuts. Gently, he opens the shell, exposing the goodness within.

JOHN
What?

FATHER O'BRIEN
Your wrist. You think I didn't
notice. What your watch band
doesn't cover up, your heart
reveals.

JOHN
You're a few years too late for
that, Father.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Ohhh, but it's never too late to
save a soul.

John sits in silence, carefully contemplating his
response. Suddenly, his PHONE VIBRATES -- It's a text
message from Det. Katz:

Hollinsworth Not Talking. Progress?

JOHN turns his phone off. And, at last, begins to talk
about his past.

JOHN

Used to be a detective in Detroit.
Headed up just about every major
homicide case in the city. Few
years ago...

(gathering himself)
...I'm tracking this serial
murderer. He's killed four
children and three others are
missing. I'm heading up the
manhunt, so my face is plastered
across the news.

John stops. Swallows hard. Clearly struggling with
reliving his past.

JOHN (CONT'D)

One night, Sandra, my ex-wife, is
working late at the hospital. So
my daughter and I are at home.
About three in the morning, a
noise wakes me up. I think it's
Sandra. So I get up and that's
when I notice there's smoke coming
out from under the bedroom door. I
can feel the heat from the fire on
the other side. Then I hear my
daughter calling "Help...Daddy...
Help!!"

(swallows hard again)
As I open the door, the fire...the
backdraft...explodes. A burning
bookcase is now blocking the
doorway. I couldn't get through.

(choking up, shaking)
So I call out to her get down.
Away from the smoke. But she
doesn't answer.

FATHER O'BRIEN

John...we don't have to do this
here.

JOHN
(mix of heartbreak
and anger)
No, no, I'm fine.

John tosses back his shot of whiskey.

JOHN (CONT'D)
So I climb out the bedroom window
and drop to the ground, breaking
my leg. I can't feel it at the
time so I run around the house and
go through the front door, but I'm
grabbed by two firemen who push me
back out. I should've gone back...

John stops and sits there in silence. He seems to have
disappeared. Father O'Brien waits.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(voice cracking)
I see her face every night. I can
hear her calling for me. How do
you live with that? I couldn't.
I didn't want to.

He takes off his watch, EXPOSING HIS SCARS.

JOHN (CONT'D)
So you still up for saving me now,
Father? I know all the scripture.
*"If any man defile the temple of
God, him shall God destroy."*

FATHER O'BRIEN
I'm sorry the church was of no
comfort to you.

JOHN
All the lives that I've saved and
they turn their back on me!

John is done, his confession is complete.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Now tell me, Father, what do you
know about CREEDO? What did you
hear in confession?

FATHER O'BRIEN
You know I'm bound by the Seal of
Confession.

JOHN

"Take heed to yourselves; if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him" -- Those who sin and who harm others must be confronted with their deeds so that they might repent.

FATHER O'BRIEN

"Let the priest who dares to make known the sins of his penitent be deposed".

JOHN

Save someone, Father.
 (quietly pleads)
 Save someone tonight like you
 couldn't do the other day.

This hits the Father to the core. He sits, staring at his scotch. It's now his turn to confess.

FATHER O'BRIEN

(to his savior)
 God, help me.

He turns to John.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

(surrendering)
 His name is STEVEN RATCLIFF. They call him, SPIDER, because of his dreadlocks. He's white. Blue eyes. Gold tooth. Lives over in the projects off of 39th street. He's a small time drug dealer. Has a fondness for young girls.

JOHN

Why haven't we heard of this guy before?

FATHER O'BRIEN

He's seen as a "poser". He's a white guy with dreadlocks. No one trusts him. And if you deal drugs, but don't have trust, you're no one.

He takes a drink, his hand shakes.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

Steven wears an "ANKH" necklace. He spoke of it often when we would talk. To him, it was a symbol for a better life.

(MORE)

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

I tried to help him, but you can't
help those who don't want it.

John stands up to go.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

I'm not suggesting he did this,
John. I'm just telling you where
I've seen the symbol. -- I cannot
get involved any further with
this. I will not testify.

JOHN

Let's hope it doesn't come to
that, Father.

John disappears out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY SECTION-8 HOUSING PROJECT - SPIDER'S
APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

A line of police cars and a S.W.A.T. van pull up. Lights
are off, no sirens. With great precision, a S.W.A.T. TEAM,
led by DET. KATZ and RICHARDS rushes into the building.

JOHN stays behind in the S.W.A.T. van, monitoring the
action. This is as close as he gets.

INT. SPIDER'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The S.W.A.T. disappears up the back stairwell.

As the team reaches SPIDER'S floor, they throw hand
signals. Just as they reach for the door to the hallway,
a man in dreadlocks pushes the door open from the other
side -- IT'S SPIDER!

Frantic, Spider kicks and pushes the detectives and
breaks free down the hall back into his apartment. The
S.W.A.T. team gives chase.

Det. Katz and Richards each take a side of Spider's
apartment door. Guns drawn. ON THREE -- ONE...TWO... with
that Det. Katz kicks the locked door.

HIS FOOT CRASHES THROUGH THE THIN WOODEN DOOR, but the
door itself doesn't budge.

With his foot stuck in the door, Katz loses his balance
and falls backwards just as...BAM! - BAM!... two shotgun
blasts destroy the door right above his head. Splinters
and shrapnel shower the hallway.

THROUGH THE HOLES IN THE DOOR, we see Spider reloading his sawed-off shotgun.

TWO SHARPSHOOTERS step forward - POP! - POP! - One bullet hits Spider in the shoulder. The other, shatters a lamp.

Spider dives into the bathroom and slams the door shut.

Det. Richards pulls Katz out of the way as the S.W.A.T. team busts through what's left of the door.

INT. SPIDER'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The SHARPSHOOTERS dive to opposite sides of the bathroom door.

SHARPSHOOTER #1 reaches up to check the door knob and... BAM! - BAM!... two shotgun blasts obliterate the door and Sharpshooter #1's hand.

He drops his gun and reaches for his bloody, mangled hand, SCREAMING IN PAIN.

SHARPSHOOTER #2 steps forward and... POP! - POP! ...he fires two shots through the gaping holes in the door. One shot hits SPIDER in the torso and the other in the head.

Spider falls backwards into the shower, taking the plastic curtain down with him as his lifeless body falls into the tub...on top of A YOUNG GIRL, cowering in fear.

YOUNG GIRL
(SCREAMS IN HORROR!)

Spider's dead body bleeds onto the shower curtain between him and the frightened girl.

Sharpshooter #2 quickly pulls her out from under Spider. Her clothes are torn. She appears to have been heavily drugged and raped.

SHARPSHOOTER #2
(over his radio)
Apartment SECURED! Officer down!

Det. Katz rushes into the bathroom, gun still drawn.

He sees the girl. She's trembling uncontrollably. He puts a bath robe around her.

PARAMEDICS rush in.

Det. Katz looks down at Spider's dead body. He has BLUE EYES, GOLD TOOTH and an "ANKH" chain around his neck.

From the other room...

DET. RICHARDS
Katz! Have a look.

INT. SPIDER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Scattered around Spider's bedroom is a mini-drug lab of sorts: small bags of amphetamines, drug paraphernalia, and a large mirror with stacks of money, cut cocaine and a razor blade.

Suddenly, John rushes in.

JOHN
You guys alright?

DET. KATZ
(stunned)
Not sure just yet.

On the wall is a line up of Polaroid pictures of young, underage girls. At the bottom of the photos are men's names written in marker.

JOHN
Shit...

John points to the photo of a young girl.

Written in marker, we see the name: STAN HOLLINSWORTH with four \$\$\$\$ symbols and a date written next to it.

DET. RICHARDS
Didn't I say if these guys don't fuck up, we don't catch 'em?

DET. KATZ
Call it in.

They stand, staring at the horrific wall of photos.

JOHN
Jesus.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: TWO WEEKS LATER

INT. POLICE STATION - JOHN'S OFFICE - DAY

John's sitting at his desk finishing up paperwork on the CREEDO case.

OFFICER DUGAN walks past his doorway, dressed as an ELF. He's carrying a stack of Christmas Presents and is clearly not happy about it.

JOHN

I see you're on Santa's Naughty
List this year.

OFFICER DUGAN

Elf you, John.

John laughs, turns back to his case folder, sifting through a few photographs from the case:

-- The high-brush from MARY-ANN's murder at the trail.

-- The gaping cut across her neck.

-- Blood-stained dollar bill with symbol of a WOLF

John stares at the wolf symbol. He reaches for his journal titled: *Community Relations*. Each day is marked with the calls received to the station.

He searches through the Creedon case file looking for DATES OF THE KILLINGS. He jumps back and forth between the two calendars.

He stands up, scanning his tape archives for November 14th. He grabs it and inserts it into the tape player and pushes PLAY.

COMPLAINT #1 - MAN (V.O.)

*....damn kids riding their
skateboards up and down my...*

John PRESSES FAST-FORWARD to:

COMPLAINT #2 - ELDERLY WOMAN
(V.O.)

*... with someone about these
flyers in my mailbox.*

(FAST-FORWARD again)

*...and this damn dog next door
just barks and barks...*

(REWINDS again)

*...and this damn dog next door
just barks and barks...*

John looks at the dates again. Then cross-checks ANOTHER KILL DATE and ANOTHER CALL.

He searches through his Rolodex and grabs a piece of paper, scribbling a few notes down. At that moment, DET. KATZ stops by.

DET. KATZ
You hear the news?

JOHN
No.

DET. KATZ
Remember that guy we were tailing,
that ODDSMAKER on who CREEDO was
gonna to kill next?

JOHN
(distracted)
No.

DET. KATZ
Sure you do. -- You alright?

JOHN
Yeah, what?

DET. KATZ
They just found his body in a
dumpster under the Hell's Gate
Bridge near the East River. Been
there a couple weeks.

JOHN
Who's this?

DET. KATZ
WILLIAM SANDERS. Used to work as
an investment broker at Greenwich
Pinnacle. Looks like you've got
yourself a new case.

Det. Katz turns to walk out.

JOHN
Hey, Katz? They ever determine if
Spider owned a dog?

DET. KATZ
Yeah, he owned twelve. Was
involved in a dog fighting ring.

JOHN
Australian Shepherds aren't
fighters, are they?

DET. KATZ
(laughing)
No. They can hold their own, but
they wouldn't stand a chance
against a pit bull. Why you ask?

JOHN
Just tying up loose ends in my
head that's all.

DET. KATZ
Well, how about heading down to
the East River and checking on our
boy, William?

JOHN
I'm on my way.

He grabs his jacket, gun, and the piece of paper. Then
takes a long, hard drink from his flask.

INT. POLICE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

John walks up to OFFICER DUGAN, still dressed as an Elf.

JOHN
Do me a favor...

OFFICER DUGAN
What?

JOHN
(hands him the note)
Call this number. Lady's been
calling about a barking dog next
door for months...

OFFICER DUGAN
Can't this wait? I'm trying to
deliver presents here!

JOHN
(insistent)
...Just call her and find out what
type of dog lives next door. Then
call me on my cell.

OFFICER DUGAN
Okay, but don't get mad if you get
a lump of coal in your stocking.

John walks out.

CUT TO:

EXT. NY HIGHWAY JUST OUTSIDE THE CITY - JOHN'S JEEP
CHEROKEE - DAY

John's driving along the East River.

He looks out the window and sees an emaciated dog limping underneath the railroad tracks as he passes.

He pulls a photograph of the WOLF SYMBOL from his jacket and looks at it. -- HIS PHONE RINGS.

JOHN

Yeah, what do you got?

OFFICER DUGAN (V.O.)

Thanks a lot, John. The old lady was pissed. Bitched at me for not returning her calls...

JOHN

What kind of dog is it?!!

OFFICER DUGAN (V.O.)

She wasn't sure of the breed.

JOHN

Color? Did she give you a color?

OFFICER DUGAN

Think she said it was white...and BROWN, mostly brown.

John looks up and sees the EXIT SIGN for the ramp to HELL'S GATE BRIDGE. -- He drives right past it and continues on.

CUT TO:

EXT. POVERTY-STRICKEN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

John pulls up to the house. We see a mailbox strewn with fliers, both inside and out.

As he heads to the porch, AN ELDERLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMAN opens the door.

ELDERLY WOMAN - COMPLAINANT #2

It's about time. -- I was a beautiful, young woman when I first called you.

JOHN

Hi. I'm Detective John Benson.

ELDERLY WOMAN - COMPLAINANT #2

Ohh, a "detective". They're sending out the big guns for this. Good. Good.

(pointing to her mailbox)

(MORE)

ELDERLY WOMAN - COMPLAINANT #2

Well, you can see what the hell
they do, day after day. Bad for
the environment too, the wasted
paper and all.

Suddenly, from behind the garage next door, A DOG BARKS.

ELDERLY WOMAN - COMPLAINANT #2

(CONT'D)

And there goes that damn dog!

(to house next door)

SHUT THAT DAMN DOG UP!

(turns back to John)

See what they've done. A woman my
age, having to scream.

JOHN

How 'bout I run over there and
have a talk with them?

ELDERLY WOMAN - COMPLAINANT #2

Just some old lady lives there.
She's ill I think. Son drops by
now and again and looks in on her
and that damn dog.

The DOG BARKS again.

ELDERLY WOMAN - COMPLAINANT #2

(CONT'D)

SHUT THAT DOG UP!

JOHN

Calm down. I'll be back in a few
minutes.

As JOHN makes his way across the yard, around to the back
of the garage...the dog comes racing around the corner.

It startles JOHN. He jumps back. It's an AUSTRALIAN
SHEPHERD.

We hear the back-entry door to the garage SLAM SHUT.

John walks to the door and reaches up to knock. Just then
the door re-opens and A MAN walks back out, bumping into
John. They're both surprised.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Woah, excuse me...

JOHN stops in disbelief.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Father O'Brien?

FATHER O'BRIEN

John? Uh, what brings you here?

Father O'Brien steps out, closing the door behind him.

JOHN

Oh, well...I was following up on a call next door.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Ms. Junger. Yeah, she's sweet.
Just don't mess with her mailbox.
(smiles)

JOHN

Seems she's taken issue with your dog.

FATHER O'BRIEN

You mean ol' King here?

He pets the dog on its head.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

Yeah, gets a little rambunctious when I'm not around. My mother lives here. I come by to check in on them. Guess I'll have to stop by more often.

JOHN

I'm sure your neighbors would be grateful.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Okay, well. I must get back to it.
Nice seeing you.

JOHN

Good seeing you too, Father.

Father O'Brien takes King back inside the garage and closes the door.

John's now closer to this case than he ever wanted to be.

He puts his hand on his gun and slowly opens the back-entry door to the garage. It's dark. He's not sure where they've gone.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Father? Forgive me...just one more question...

Just then a large, metal gas can comes swinging out of the darkness, smashing JOHN across the face. He falls helplessly to the floor, unconscious.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. YOUNGER JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (2005)

EMILY

Daddy! Daddy!! Help me!!

Startled, YOUNG JOHN wakes up in his bed as SMOKE POURS IN UNDER THE DOOR.

YOUNG JOHN

I'm coming, honey! Crawl away from the smoke! I'm coming!

He opens the door and FIRE EXPLODES, throwing him back onto the floor. The only way out is through the window. He jumps from the second-story onto the ground, collapsing IN PAIN.

He struggles to his feet, pulling himself towards the front door. The house is ENGULFED IN FLAMES.

As he rushes into the house, TWO FIREMAN, on the inside, grab John, forcing him back out.

John grabs the door frame, desperately fighting to go back in. The FIREMEN PUSH HARDER...

John looks over and sees the GOLD FISH BOWL near the door. HE GRABS FOR IT...just as he's pushed out of the door and onto the lawn.

The HOUSE EXPLODES IN FLAMES.

BACK TO PRESENT

John opens his eyes. Blood is pooling on the concrete floor near his face. He struggles to get up, but his hands are tied behind his back, bound with duct tape.

He turns his head and there, tucked into the shadows, is KING, growling.

John sees a bag of dog food and kicks it over, spilling the food into his pool of blood.

KING rushes over and begins devouring them.

John looks around for something to cut the duct tape. He spots A TABLE SAW.

He has trouble reaching it at just the right angle. He tries again, pushing hard to extend his arms just so.

HIS WRISTS...MEET THE BLADE.

JOHN
(SCREAMS!!!!)

The tape breaks. BLOOD FLOWS. -- His old wounds have been reopened. -- He grabs some rags and wraps it around his wrists.

John reaches for a light switch. A fluorescent tube overhead begins to flicker, struggling to illuminate.

Finally, CREEDO's WORKSHOP IS REVEALED:

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) The bloodied retractable leash, camera, an old coffee can filled with gold envelope openers -- and a brown wig with dreadlocks.

B) Newspaper clippings of CREEDO's murders.

C) Photos of STANLEY, MARY-ANN and MILES at AMORES's

D) A framed picture of A WOMEN HOLDING FLOWERS we saw in the opening shot.

THE CAMERA PUSHES IN ON...

E) A front-page headline from the *"Detroit Free Press"*:

"Serial Killer Burns Cop's House - Daughter Dies"

F) Clippings of CREEDO's next target: MILES COWDEN

END SERIES OF SHOTS

John grabs the newspaper article of MILES and runs out.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - NIGHT

Police cars and a S.W.A.T. van pull up. -- Det. Katz, Richards and the S.W.A.T team rush into the building.

JOHN stands outside in the S.W.A.T. van monitoring their movements via a sniper's helmet cam.

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - TOP FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

With guns drawn and red laser sights on, a S.W.A.T. team makes their way down the hallway, past an enormous gold mural of the Greenwich Pinnacle logo.

Through the blinds, the lights in Miles's office are on.

Det. Katz and Richards throw hand signals as they reach Miles's door. -- This time, the S.W.A.T. TEAM uses a DOOR RAM TO SMASH OPEN the door. -- TWO SNIPERS rush in, looking for a target...NOTHING.

Lying dead on the floor behind the couch, are Miles's TWO BODYGUARDS.

Det. Richards directs Katz's attention to a DOLLAR BILL on Miles's desk. In black marker the words read:
IN GREED WE TRUST.

DET. KATZ
(through his radio)
*Office secured. Two people dead.
But Miles and Creedon are on the
move.*

Det. Katz looks down and sees a SEVERED HAND beneath Miles's high-tech sensor on the wall.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - S.W.A.T. VAN OUTSIDE

JOHN hears Katz's message. He looks next door at ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL. Grabs a bullet-proof vest and shotgun and runs off.

CUT TO:

INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - MAIN CHURCH - NIGHT

FATHER O'BRIEN, with gun in hand, is pushing MILES down the aisle. Miles holds a towel around his BLOODY STUMP, writhing in pain. His enormous ego, now destroyed.

MILES
(negotiating)
What is it you want, Father?!
Money? I can make it happen.
Fucking anything you want!!

Father O'Brien slams the gun into Miles's head.

FATHER O'BRIEN

I want you to respect the House of
God!

They reach the CONFESSIONAL BOOTH and Father O'Brien
forces him in, handcuffing Miles's only hand to the gold
railing inside.

MILES

Why me?!

FATHER O'BRIEN

When people are starving. When
children are cast out into the
streets. There is a price to pay!
And I'm here to collect.

MILES

For what?

FATHER O'BRIEN

For all your sins, my son.

His anger spits saliva with every word.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

You...will...repent.

Father O'Brien shuts the confessional door and steps into
the next booth. He sits, waiting for Miles to speak.

MILES

Okay! Okay!

(summons the courage)

Forgive me...Father...for I have
sinned...

(he stops)

...But what? What have I done?

FATHER O'BRIEN pulls the trigger -- BAM!

The blast tears apart the screen and splinters wood.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Your pursuit of profit will *not*
come at the expense of my sons and
daughters!! REPENT NOW...and I
will deliver your salvation!

MILES

Alright... Forgive me, Father, for
I have sinned. I have done a...

His face suddenly turns pale. Blood streams through the
towel. He struggles to breath.

Saliva trickles from the corner of his mouth. He begins to convulse, but he is handcuffed.

MILES is having a heart attack.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Ohh, no. NO you don't!

Father O'Brien rushes from his confessional and into Miles's booth. His eyes roll back as Father O'Brien frantically unlocks his handcuffs and drags him onto the church floor.

He begins performing CPR, pressing on Miles's chest.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

(speaking to God)

You will not take this from me!

He pounds his chest again and again...at last, it works. Miles returns to us.

Still seething with anger, Father O'Brien pulls out his gun and points. His finger presses on the trigger, but stops. Father O'Brien is suddenly torn:

How can he kill a man whose life he just saved?

Again, he tries. He presses the gun to MILES's head...

JOHN

DROP IT, FATHER!

Father O'Brien raises up with his gun. John fires.

BOOM! -- The SOUND OF A SHOTGUN BLAST echoes through the church. -- The wooden pew near Father O'Brien's head splinters into a million pieces.

John ducks behind a towering stone pillar.

FATHER O'BRIEN

John! My son! Miles is dying. He needs help.

JOHN

You need to end this or I will.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Come save him, John, and you save yourself!

JOHN

I can't let you go, Father!

John looks out from behind the pillar -- BAM! BAM! -- Gun shots ricochet off the stone near John's face, as Father O'Brien slips out the side door.

John rushes across the pews to Miles, just as Det. Katz and Richards burst in, guns drawn.

JOHN (CONT'D)
It's Miles! He's breathing, but
needs help. I'm going after
O'Brien.

DET. KATZ
John? Wait for backup!

He disappears out the door and down the hall. Det. Katz and Richards rush to Miles's side.

INT. SIDE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

John makes his way down the hall. He hears a DOOR TO THE STAIRWELL SLAM SHUT.

INT. BASEMENT STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

He follows the footsteps, downward. The deeper he goes, the darker it becomes. He is now entering the bowels of the church, where years of decay are revealed within.

At the bottom of the stairs, an enormous oak door stands between him and Creedo.

Cautiously, he pushes the door aside and slips in.

BAM! BAM! -- SHOTS RING OUT across the darkness.

John dives behind a stack of wooden palettes. -- A few light bulbs hang from the wooden beams overhead. Shadows dance against the cavernous walls.

They are alone now.

A voice echoes across the distance, it's difficult to trace.

FATHER O'BRIEN
How is your head, John?

JOHN
Nothing that won't heal.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Ah, but old scars never quite heal
now do they? I'm sorry for that,
but you were in the way.

JOHN

Why are you doing this?

FATHER O'BRIEN

I am doing God's work here. What
are you doing? Still sitting on
the sidelines, content to watch?

JOHN

This isn't God's work. This is
vengeance.

John begins to quietly move along the wall as they talk.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Let's see you try sitting in
confessional, day after day,
listening to evil bear their sick
little souls. Well, I could no
longer bear to sit by and do
nothing.

Father O'Brien is moving quietly through the darkness as
well. They're circling each other now.

JOHN

You sacrificed Spider?

FATHER O'BRIEN

Oh, come now. Do not weep for his
tortured soul. You rescued a
little girl, did you not?

JOHN

And Stanley Hollinsworth? You
killed his wife. For what?

FATHER O'BRIEN

You think she was innocent in all
this? She knew everything Miles,
Stanley and Mary-Ann were doing.
Their greed destroyed a foundation
I spent my life building.

John steps quietly, disappearing into the darkness.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

John? Do not get brave on me.
(listening closely
for his movements)

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)
 I like you. I truly do. But you
 stand in the way of salvation.

Father O'Brien looks up just as a stack of wooden
 palettes comes crashing down towards him. He jumps out of
 the way just as John dives forward.

BAM! BAM! -- John SHOOTs Father O'Brien in the leg,
 knocking him backward against a wooden beam.

THE WOOD AND ROCK CEILING CAVES IN ON THEM.

As the dust settles, a lone light bulb from overhead,
 illuminates the scene.

Both Father O'Brien and John are buried underneath wooden
 beams.

John's leg is trapped,. While another beam has fallen
 across Father O'Brien's chest. He struggles to breath. --
 They lie, motionless, staring at one another. Both in
 agony.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)
 (struggling to
 breath)
 I'm done saving souls. I'm saving
 lives now. That is what's real.

John works to get his free his leg.

JOHN
 That symbol, that wasn't a wolf,
 was it? It was a dog. A Celtic
 symbol meaning "protective
 vigilance".

Father O'Brien struggles to smile.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Of all the symbols, you would've
 known that.

FATHER O'BRIEN
 You know, John, faith has brought
 us together. Divine intervention.

Father O'Brien raises up the pistol.

JOHN
 You don't have to do this, Father.
 You still have time to repent.

He points the gun toward John.

JOHN (CONT'D)
You can't have absolution without
confession, Father!

FATHER O'BRIEN
Yes, but what good is confession
if it doesn't inspire change?
(blood spits from his
mouth)
I am the change!!

JOHN
(pleading now)
Ask for forgiveness, Father.

Father O'Brien is slipping away. John struggles to pull
himself from under the beam.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Father...?

FATHER O'BRIEN
I'm sorry to learn about your
daughter, John. Truly. No parent
should ever lose a child.

FATHER O'BRIEN presses onto the trigger...

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)
Forgive me, mother...

BAM!! -- A lone shot rings out across the darkness.

John falls back...exhausted. It is over.

CUT TO:

MUSIC: "GOOD KING WENCESLAS" BY ST. JOHN'S BOYS CHOIR

SERIES OF SHOTS:

A) DET. KATZ and RICHARDS rush in to help pull JOHN from
the rubble. -- They see FATHER O'BRIEN'S lifeless body.

B) OUTSIDE THE CHURCH - MILES, in critical condition, is
placed into the back of an AMBULANCE. TWO POLICE OFFICERS
step inside to accompany him.

C) IN PRISON - STANLEY HOLLINSWORTH, frightened for his
life, is released into the prison's "general population".
BYRON CHELSEY looks on.

D) GREENWICH PINNACLE - KRISTIN, THE INTERN, cozies up to
another executive near the copy machine.

E) AT THE BAR - AMANDA raises a toast to all of HER BAR PATRONS. They rejoice in Christmas celebration.

F) BOB, THE INVESTMENT BANKER, rejoices in the birth of his new daughter.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

TITLE CARD: THREE WEEKS LATER

CUT TO:

EXT. HERE-2-HELP FOUNDATION - BASKETBALL COURTS - DAY

The court is quiet except for JAMAAL, who is shooting basketball alone.

In the distance, with a cane in hand, we see JOHN limping toward the courts.

Jamaal walks toward John, who is smiling.

JAMAAL
Got a question for you, John.

JOHN
What's that?

JAMAAL
Who da' king?

John smiles.

JOHN
You da' King.

JAMAAL
(with deep sincerity)
Nah. *YOU DA' KING.*

Jamaal reaches out his hand to John, then pulls him in for a hug.

JAMAAL (CONT'D)
You saved this Foundation. Saved these kids... Saved me.

JOHN
Thank Greenwich Pinnacle too. Seems the board was eager to restore their reputation.

They stand for a moment not knowing quite what to say.

JAMAAL

I gotta admit, he did a lot of
good for us all here.

JOHN

Sometimes good people do bad
things.

JAMAAL

That I know.

JOHN

Alright. When I get this leg
fixed, I'm coming for your throne.

JAMAAL

Nah. It's your throne I'm after.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICER JOHN BENSON'S APARTMENT - DAY

The front door opens. JOHN limps in. He sets his cane
onto the table near the GOLD FISH BOWL. Next to it, the
picture of John's ex-wife, SANDRA, and daughter, EMILY.

He grabs the remote and turns on the TV.

The TV PLAYS IN THE BACKGROUND, as JOHN makes himself a
cup of coffee.

TV ANCHOR #1

(from television)

*...In what can only be described
as a miracle, a US Airways jet,
Flight A320, crash landed in the
Hudson River today. They were just
minutes into their flight from
LaGuardia when the plane collided
with a flock of geese, cutting
power to both engines. Thanks to
the remarkable response from the
Coast Guard and numerous ferry
boats, all 155 passengers and crew
members...were saved.*

Next to the coffee maker, we see John's bottle of
whiskey. His hand trembles as he reaches for...the phone.

He dials. We wait for a voice. A woman answers.

JOHN
(hesitant, shakey)
Hi. It's me...John.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END

"ABSOLUTION"

OPEN - THE SCREEN IS BLACK

Then, in the corner of the screen, a small, dark vignette appears. It's of a framed picture hanging on a wall. The stately portrait is of A WOMEN HOLDING FLOWERS. Then...

YOUNG MAN (V.O.)

There I lay, cradled in the darkness of my mother's womb as she sits in the waiting room of the abortionist's office. My mother, barely a teenager, sees a picture on the wall. It reminds her of her mother. It is a sign from God. She is meant to be a mother. I am meant...to be.

The vignette fades to black.

FADE IN:

OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT, SUN JUST BEGINNING TO RISE

TITLE CARD:

NEW YORK CITY - NOVEMBER, 2008

OPENING MONTAGE: (EARLY MORNING, MIX OF CITY SCAPES REVEALING BOTH ENORMOUS WEALTH AND EXTREME POVERTY)

A) Extravagant, Towering Skyscrapers

B) A HOMELESS MAN sleeps over a sidewalk grate, steam rises around him.

C) Limousine quietly pulls out from an underground parking garage. A BELL HOP tips his cap.

D) A SIDEWALK PREACHER sits against a trash can, holding a sign that reads: "THE END IS HERE."

E) SOMBER PEOPLE begin to line up in front of the UNEMPLOYMENT OFFICE, waiting for the doors to open.

F) Lights in the NY STOCK EXCHANGE illuminate - WALL STREET begins to wake.

END OF MONTAGE

END OF CREDIT SEQUENCE

CUT TO:

EXT. BOWLING GREEN PARK - BRONZE STATUE OF THE WALL STREET BULL (A.K.A. "THE CHARGING BULL")

As the sun begins to rise: DEATH IS REVEALED

A BUSINESS MAN, with a rope around his neck, is hanging from one of the horns of the infamous WALL STREET BULL. A dollar bill is posted to his chest, stabbed with a gold envelope opener.

A JOGGER, with his dog, unknowingly runs up on the horrific scene. He stops, in shock. Then runs off for help.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - APARTMENT HI-RISE - DAY

INT. DETECTIVE JOHN BENSON'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

At the bathroom sink, JOHN BENSON, 35, is shaving. His wrists have LONG, WEATHERED SCARS ACROSS THEM.

Although handsome, he looks older than he is. Years of hard-living and guilt have taken their toll.

He walks down the hall to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Pours himself a cup of coffee and a shot of JAMESON IRISH WHISKEY. He drinks.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He walks into his bedroom. There, under the covers, is AMANDA, 25. Her pleasant, girl-next-door appearance contradicts her tough, feisty persona.

John sits on the bed, pulling on his shoes. She rises and puts her arms around him, kissing his neck.

JOHN
(ignoring her desire)
Let yourself out when you're
ready.

AMANDA
What if I'm still here when you
get back?

JOHN
Then you'll have wasted a
beautiful day in a shitty-ass
apartment.

She rubs against him.

AMANDA
Did I waste my time here last
night, too?

JOHN
Now *that* was not a waste of time.
Mine...or yours.

John stands and buttons his New York City Police shirt
and straps on his police holster.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Gotta run.

He walks out of his apartment. Feeling rejected, Amanda
falls back onto the pillow.

A MOMENT LATER, the door re-opens and John walks back in.

AMANDA
(from the bedroom)
I knew you couldn't stay away!

He walks over to the FISH BOWL ON THE TABLE near the
door. A child's handwriting is on a sign taped to the
bowl. It reads: "*I am Francis Fish. Feed me.*"

Next to the bowl, we see a framed picture of John posing
with a woman and young girl next to a Christmas tree.

Amanda then appears in the bedroom doorway, wearing only
one of John's police shirts. She's dangling a pair of
cuffs in her hand.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
Please tell me you're from
internal affairs.
(playful sexiness)

John again ignores her advances and sprinkles food into the fish bowl.

JOHN

There's coffee in the kitchen.

He disappears out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREETS - DAY

INT. JOHN'S '93 JEEP CHEROKEE (MOVING) - DAY

He takes a sip of his spiked coffee as he drives.

ON THE RADIO, we hear TWO ANGRY HOSTS rant about the financial meltdown.

TALK HOST #1 (V.O.)

(from radio)

...never in our history - short of the Great Depression - have we seen a financial collapse of this magnitude. The stock market has crashed, the housing market and insurance industry. Now we're bailing out the auto industry.

TALK HOST #2 (V.O.)

(from radio)

Why are we bailing them out? Just yesterday Merrill Lynch handed out BONUSES! And they lost over \$15 billion dollars last quarter alone!

TALK HOST #1 (V.O.)

(from radio)

I wanna know where the S.E.C. was in all this? Shouldn't they be policing Wall Street?

John looks out the window and sees ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL. A towering church with a 250-foot, gold-mosaic dome and steeple. But it's miniscule compared to the monstrous skyscrapers that surround it. -- Like GREENWICH PINNACLE, the most impressive of them all.

A CAR HORN HONKS behind him, waking John from his daze. He drives on.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - DAY

OFFICERS are rushing back and forth between rooms.

DETECTIVE MIKE KATZ of Homicide is in the hallway hashing it out with his partner, DETECTIVE STEVE "RICO" RICHARDS.

DET. KATZ, 50's, is a gruff, burly-looking vet. His relentless dedication more than makes up for his abrupt personality.

DET. RICHARDS, 40's, is a high-octane, wise-cracking vet, who's eager for advancement at any cost.

They stand outside the INTERROGATION ROOM.

DET. KATZ

...I don't give a shit about the possession charge!!

DET. RICHARDS

That's all we got.

DET. KATZ

Then get more! -- And don't fill out another VI-CAP report on this! It's a fuckin' waste of time!

Det. Richards walks back into the interrogation room.

Hoping to avoid the conflict, John slips past Det. Katz unnoticed and heads to his office.

Stenciled on John's door is: COMMUNITY RELATIONS.

There's a handwritten note posted next to it:
"Neighborhood Bitch Office"

John pulls the note down and walks in.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE - DAY

It's a small, one-desk office. Books and folders are stacked all around.

John hangs up his jacket and sits. The voice mail message light flashes red. He pushes the button and then begins taking notes as he listens...

COMPLAINT #1 - MAN (V.O.)

*Yeah, um, can you do something
'bout these damn kids riding their
skateboards up and down my
sidewalk at all hours...*

John presses the NEXT button.

COMPLAINT #2 - ELDERLY WOMAN
(V.O.)

*Hello? I need to talk with someone
about these damn flyers in my
mailbox. They want to paint my
house, fix my drive, clean my
gutters. Isn't it a Federal crime
to perpetrate someone's mailbox?
And this damn dog next door just
barks and barks.....*

John presses the PAUSE button as Det. Katz stops in.

DET. KATZ

Sorry, don't mean to interrupt
your bitch session, but...

JOHN

What do you need?

DET. KATZ

It's not what *I* need. It's what *he*
needs.

Det. Katz hands John a PHOTO OF A MAN WHO'S BEEN BRUTALLY
MURDERED. A dollar bill has been stabbed into his ear
with a gold-handled envelope opener.

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

Looks like we've "officially" got
a serial killer on our hands. All
three victims are Wall Street
executives. Somebody's "big-game
hunting" here.

Det. Katz hands him front page of *Wall Street Journal*.
The headline reads: "*Creedo Strikes Again*"

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

The media's named him: CREEDO.

JOHN

Creedo?

DET. KATZ

After he kills his victims, son-of-a bitch leaves a dollar bill behind with some sort of religious bullshit on it. *His creed.* -- Victim here is Paul Donalds, Hedge Fund Manager of Barrel-Stock Reserve. Stole over \$270 million from his investors.

JOHN

Katz, I haven't worked homicide in years.

DET. KATZ

Hey, I'm gonna take it to forensics anyway, just figured I'd run it past you since I was told you were all religious and shit.

JOHN

Yes, I used to be... and shit.

Det. Katz holds out another photograph. The image is of a blood-stained bill that has a symbol and scripture written on it.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(reading)

"I am all that has ever been. I am all that is. I am all that shall ever be. Yet never have mortal eyes perceived me as I am."

DET. KATZ

So...?

John looks closer.

JOHN

The symbol is obviously an Ankh.

DET. KATZ

Obvious to who? Shit, I walk into a church and the holy water starts to boil.

JOHN

The Ankh is a fairly recognizable religious symbol although there's debate as to its true meaning. But certainly with *"Never have mortal eyes perceived me"*, this guy has a God-complex.

DET. KATZ

Don't they all.

With that, RICHARDS rushes in.

DET. RICHARDS

We gotta go. Just found another body. This one was strung up on the fuckin' Wall Street Bull.

DET. KATZ

Be right there.

John attempts to hand back the photographs. Det. Katz refuses.

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

Can't. I gotta run. Take those to forensics A-SAP! And, if anything comes to mind, let me know.

JOHN

I'm not on homicide anymore. You know this.

DET. KATZ

Then *you know* I owe you big.

Det. Katz rushes out the door.

John looks back at the gruesome photographs. Then pushes them aside.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - ALLEYWAY ACROSS FROM AMORE'S ITALIAN BISTRO - DAY

In the hidden shadows of the alleyway, we see A DARK FIGURE, SNAPPING PICTURES of AMORE'S.

A jet-black Cadillac Escalade pulls up to the restaurant.

From the back seat, out steps STANLEY HOLLINSWORTH, 60's, the DIRECTOR OF THE SECURITIES & EXCHANGE COMMISSION. Despite a slight limp in his gait, he walks with great urgency.

We hear a series of CAMERA SNAPSHOTS as the Escalade speeds off around the corner and Stanley discreetly slips into the side door of AMORE'S.

CUT TO:

INT. AMORE'S ITALIAN BISTRO

The maitre d' escorts STANLEY HOLLINSWORTH to the table. MILES COWDEN and MARY-ANN PENDELTON are in the middle of their meal.

MILES COWDEN, 60's, is the brash, charismatic, narcissistic CEO OF GREENWICH PINNACLE, one of Wall Street's largest and most respected investment firms.

He's a tall, distinguished man with a full mane of salt-and-pepper hair. His tiny, oval spectacles only help to emphasize his arrogance.

MARY-ANN PENDELTON, 50's, is the head of MANHATTAN EMERALD GROUP. Another top Wall Street investment firm. She's a shrewd businesswomen, who can more than hold her own with the good-old-boys on Wall Street.

STANLEY

Forgive me, Miles.

(ignores Mary-Ann)

You're one of a hundred meetings I have today.

MILES

I, too, am busy, Stanley.

Miles continues eating. Stanley looks around nervously, measuring their level of privacy.

MARY-ANN

(unnerved by his slight)

Hello, Stanley. So good to see you.

STANLEY

Mary-Ann.

(turns back to Miles)

Not sure why you continue wanting to meet here.

MILES

Your office then?

STANLEY

Very funny. You're the last person I should be with. I can just see the headlines now: *"Director Of The S.E.C. Seen Rubbing Shoulders With Wall Street Mogul, Miles Cowden."*

MILES

Rubbing shoulders? Why you're having lunch with former colleagues. - *Actually, we're having lunch.* You're simply here enjoying our company.

MARY-ANN

(direct, to Stanley)

Ignore me all you want, Stanley, but I'm the elephant in the room that's not going away.

STANLEY

(nervous)

I don't know what more I can tell you other than the "appropriate actions" are being taken.

MILES

(nerves of steel)

Go on. Send your lawyers over. We welcome the oversight. Or whatever you and *your friends* call it.

STANLEY

The S.E.C. has no friends right now. The whole world wants our heads on a fuckin' platter thanks to you and *your friends*...

(nods at Mary-Ann)

...on Wall Street.

MARY-ANN

What the hell is that supposed to mean? You're living a pretty comfy life because of me.

STANLEY

I know. But the government cannot bailout every firm on Wall Street.

MARY-ANN

You think "too big to fail" is a joke? You think the U.S. financial market is imploding now, wait until you see what happens if you let Manhattan Emerald Group go down.

MILES

What Mary-Ann is saying here is that *the meek shall NOT inherit the Earth*. -- At least, not without our written authorization.

(MORE)

MILES (CONT'D)

(threatening)

Do we understand each other now?

STANLEY

Yes. Perfectly.

MILES

Now *this* is divine.

(resumes eating)

Best Chicken Cacciatore anywhere.

Have a taste.

He cuts off a piece of chicken and puts it on Stanley's plate.

STANLEY

Miles...Mary-Ann. I'm sorry.

He stands to leave.

MILES

Sorry is something you say to your wife when you've forgotten to open the car door for her.

STANLEY

Then, by all means...have a nice day.

Stanley walks away as Miles continues eating. Mary-Ann pushes her plate aside.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - JOHN'S OFFICE - DAY

John is sitting at his desk, eating a cold Italian sub.

He's staring at the photos Det. Katz gave him. A TV plays in the background.

TV NEWS ANCHOR

(from television)

*...among other breaking news,
CLIVE PARAGON, head of PARAGON
STOCK & TRADE, was found brutally
murdered today in Bowling Green
Park.*

He turns to watch the news footage of police wrapping YELLOW CAUTION TAPE around BRONZE BULL STATUE.

TV NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)
(from television)
*What used to represent wealth and
prosperity on Wall Street now
appears to be a symbol of payback
by the serial known as CREEDO.
Sources say he leaves behind a
dollar bill on his victim's...*

John grabs the phone and dials.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOWLING GREEN PARK - DAY

A crowd of news crews and bystanders have gathered.

Det. Katz and Richards are examining the BRONZE BULL.

Richards positions himself underneath the bull's horn as if he's the victim.

DET. KATZ
...so they say our Mr. Paragon was
around 6'-3", so it's highly
doubtful, he would've been killed
by hanging - not enough height.

DET. RICHARDS
Yeah, chances are he was killed
before he was brought here. Then
stabbed and hung for good measure.

Det. Katz's CELL PHONE RINGS. He answers.

DET. KATZ
Katz here.

We INTERCUT between JOHN and DET. KATZ's phone conversation.

JOHN
Your fly is down.

DET. KATZ
Speak English.

JOHN
Your whole case is all over the
news.

DET. KATZ
Yes, by the time I got here, the
media already had their story.
That's why we need your help.
(MORE)

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

I can't be in twenty places at once. -- Did you get those photos to forensics?

JOHN

Working on it.

DET. KATZ

Get off your ass and do it! And while you're at, make copies and stop by St. Paul's Cathedral on 47th. Ask for Father O'Brien. It turns out Paul Donalds was a parishioner there. Perhaps Father O'Brien can help us decipher some of the religious messages. -- I got some other photos coming your way too.

JOHN

(reluctant)

Dropping off photos is one thing...

DET. KATZ

(insisting)

We need you on this, John. We're not tryin' to save a cat from a fuckin' tree here!

Det. Katz hangs up. John sits staring at the photos.

He pulls out a flask from his desk drawer. It's dry. He begins digging around his desk. Tucked behind a stack of papers is a bottle of cough medicine. He unscrews the spray cap and drinks.

CUT TO:

INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - MORNING MASS - THE NEXT DAY

A COLLECTION PLATE is being passed. Dollar bill after dollar bill is placed in the basket.

FATHER PETERSON stands at the pulpit.

FATHER PETERSEN

Thou wilt turn, O God, and bring us to life, and Thy people shall rejoice in Thee: show us, O Lord, Thy mercy, and grant us Thy salvation.

A HYMN PLAYS on the organ.

John quietly walks into the church. He stands in the vestibule, taking it all in, reluctant to walk into the cathedral and sit down.

He takes a deep breath and exhales, then walks over to the holy water. His hand trembles as his fingers reach out to touch the water...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT (2005)

A MAN'S ARM sits on the edge of a bathtub, fingers barely touching the water. In his other hand, he holds a bottle of whiskey.

As he struggles to lift the bottle, we see BLOOD STREAMING DOWN HIS ARM. His fingers lose their grip and the whiskey crashes onto the tiled floor, mixing with the pool of blood.

A voice calls to him...

VOICE

John? JOHN????

BACK TO PRESENT

FATHER O'BRIEN

Detective...John Benson?

JOHN

(back to reality)

No. What?

FATHER O'BRIEN

Apologies. I thought you were...

FATHER O'BRIEN turns to walk away.

JOHN

Sorry. I'm him. I was just...

FATHER O'BRIEN

Hello. I'm Father O'Brien.

They shake hands. -- FATHER O'BRIEN is in mid-40s. He's charming, full of life. And right now, he's not dressed like a priest, but in workout clothes.

JOHN

Would've never have guessed by your...your...

FATHER O'BRIEN

Yes, well, they do let us out every once in awhile, Detective Benson.

JOHN

Please, call me John.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Well, John, wish you would've called me anytime BUT today. Every Thursday, I play ball at our Foundation. Can you walk with me? It's just a few blocks over.

With gym bag in hand, Father O'Brien and John walk out the side door.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY SIDEWALKS - CONTINUOUS

Just blocks away from the towering riches of the church and skyscrapers, the surrounding neighborhood is in deep poverty.

EMERGENCY SIRENS ECHO in the distance.

FATHER O'BRIEN

The precinct told me you would be dropping by. So when I noticed someone walk in late, figured it must be you.

(serious tone)

We were all quite devastated to hear about Mr. Donalds. Anything we can do to help, please ask.

JOHN

Did you know much about him?

FATHER O'BRIEN

Not really. He'd come to mass and occasionally confession - so I'm told. He was very influential in the community though. Beyond that, I don't know much more.

Overhead, a POLICE HELICOPTER RUSHES BY in pursuit.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

How long have you been working the streets down here?

JOHN

Oh, no. I'm just an office grunt
back at the precinct. Just doing a
favor.

FATHER O'BRIEN

It's no favor down here, as you
can see.

In an alley way, a severely emaciated dog struggles to
walk.

John reaches into his coat for the photographs just as
they turn the corner to the basketball courts. This is
not the time.

EXT. HERE-2-HELP FOUNDATION - BASKETBALL COURTS -
CONTINUOUS

Out on the court, there are FIVE GUYS from the
neighborhood shooting hoops.

JAMAAL, a striking 6'6" African-American, spots Father
O'Brien and shouts out:

JAMAAL

WHO DA' KING?

FATHER O'BRIEN

You da' King, Jamaal.

JAMAAL

That's all you got?

FATHER O'BRIEN

(great enthusiasm)
YOU DA' KING!

JAMAAL

There you go.

Jamaal walks over. Father O'Brien reaches out to shake
his hand and then...steals the ball and lets a 3-point
shot fly... It clangs off the front of the rim.

The other players crack up. Jamaal grabs the rebound and
then throws up a jump shot...SWISH.

FATHER O'BRIEN

(laughs it off)
Hey, Jamaal. Want to introduce you
to someone. This here is Detective
Benson.

Jamaal walks over and shakes John's hand.

JOHN

Call me John.

(pause)

Hey...don't I know you?

JAMAAL

Nah, you're probably thinking of
the *old me*. I'm Jamaal 2.0.

Bigger, faster and smarter now.

John nods as Jamaal runs back to onto the court and
tosses up another shot...SWISH.

FATHER O'BRIEN

If you know Jamaal, then you know
he used to deal. Served his time
though. Now looking to serve
others. He's doing a tremendous
job with the kids down here at the
Foundation.

JOHN

So why do you call him "The King"?

FATHER O'BRIEN

Street ball.

(nodding to the
court)

It's called "Who Da' King?" Every
man for himself. Play to 10. No
fouls. Whoever wins is THE KING.
The catch is, if he sees you
around town and calls out "*Who Da'
King*". AND if you don't say "*YOU
DA' KING*", then you owe him a
dollar.

The players are getting anxious.

JAMAAL

(shouts from the
court)

C'mon! Don't keep the King
waiting!

JOHN

I'll let you go. Just need to ask
you about *this*.

John reaches in his pocket and pulls out the copies of
the two photographs. Father O'Brien winces.

JOHN (CONT'D)

This is Paul Donalds. Wish you
didn't have to see this, but the
killer left behind this message.

John points to the blood-stained bill.

FATHER O'BRIEN
The symbol looks to be an Ankh.

JOHN
And...?

FATHER O'BRIEN
The scripture is definitely not of
Catholicism. But let me look into
it for you.

JOHN
They have some other messages they
need deciphered too. Can you help?

FATHER O'BRIEN
Certainly. If I don't have the
answer, one of my fellow priests
will. -- Can I keep these?

JOHN
How soon can you get to it?

FATHER O'BRIEN
Soon as I finish dethroning the
king.
(smiling)

JOHN
Okay. Here's my number. I'll put
you in contact with the guys
running the case.

FATHER O'BRIEN
Sounds good.

JOHN
(nods towards the
court)
So...do you ever win?

FATHER O'BRIEN
I win every day they're here with
me...and not out on the streets.

Father O'Brien smiles and jogs onto the court.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - CITY STREETS

INT. BLACK SUV (MOVING) - NIGHT

Det. Katz and Richard's SUV speeds down the street. He's ON THE PHONE WITH FORENSICS.

DET. KATZ

...yeah, we're on our way back.

(listens)

Right. And they'll be transporting the body down to you A-SAP.

(listens)

Thanks.

Det. Katz hangs up.

DET. RICHARDS

A-SAP? You're the only person I know who feels the need to abbreviate a fuckin' abbreviation.

DET. KATZ

Every second counts, A-Hole.

DET. KATZ picks up the "one-sheet" from the folder next to him. He scans it over as he drives.

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

You know what gets me? Four victims so far and they're all high-profile. This guy's not targeting hookers or transients or the type of people who could disappear and the world wouldn't notice. He's preying on the rich and well-protected.

DET. RICHARDS

So what now? These bodies are stacking up faster than we can tag-and-bag 'em.

DET. KATZ

Tag-and-bag 'em? Who are you RoboCop now?

DET. RICHARDS

I'm just saying we need help - and fast. What do you think, is John gonna jump in on this? We need him.

DET. KATZ

Can't figure it. You know that guy was the most decorated officer on the force when he was in Detroit.

DET. RICHARDS

John?

DET. KATZ

Yeah. His clearance rates were nearly double everyone else's. They say he could've run for fuckin' mayor if he wanted.

DET. RICHARDS

Seriously? That guy?

DET. KATZ

That's what they say.

DET. RICHARDS

What the hell happened?

DET. KATZ

I don't know. Just heard he lost it. Lost his family. His job....

DET. RICHARDS

...And his fuckin' mind if you ask me. A guy like that...working the desk, answering the bitch line.

DET. KATZ shakes his head, looks down at the "one-sheet".

DET. KATZ

Is this right? At any one time, there are over 80 active serial killers?

DET. RICHARDS

Yep.

DET. KATZ

Jesus! They're not all in New York are they?

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

In the background, JAZZ MUSIC plays on the stereo.

JOHN sits in his recliner, rocking nervously. He holds a glass of whiskey. He's drunk.

He turns and glances at FRANCIS THE GOLD FISH. He stumbles over and pours food into its bowl, while he dials his phone.

He paces as he waits.

On the other end, we can faintly hear a FEMALE VOICE ANSWER. He struggles to speak, but can't. He just listens to her voice until...SHE HANGS UP.

Frustrated, he SLAMS DOWN THE PHONE, knocking his whiskey glass to the floor, SHATTERING IT. With his bare hands, he begins picking up the broken pieces.

He GRABS HIS POLICE SHIRT from the couch and wipes up the jagged glass and spilt whiskey.

A glass shard pierces his skin and blood begins to flow.
He doesn't blink.

He stumbles over to the trash can and tosses away the broken glass and...soiled police shirt.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - GREENWICH PINNACLE - DAY

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE HALLWAY - DAY

INVESTMENT BANKERS are rushing up and down the hall.

Around the corner comes MILES COWDEN. Trailing behind him is a pack of doe-eyed INTERN CANDIDATES. They're furiously taking notes, hanging on MILES's every word.

MILES

...make no mistake, these are trying times for America. But with every problem, comes opportunity. Like *GOLD*, for example. It's value is skyrocketing.

(he stops walking)

Tell me why?

An INTERN, KRISTIN ABERNATHY, early 20's, brazenly steps forward. She's wearing a tight blue sweater showing off her voluptuous body. She's stunning.

KRISTIN/INTERN

Because while silver is produced for *consumption*, gold is produced for *accumulation*. Gold doesn't perish, tarnish or corrode. So as our dollar is suffering one of the greatest meltdowns in history, gold is once again elevated to the center of the global financial system.

She smiles proudly. MILES is impressed.

MILES

Thank you, Miss *Wikepedia*?

KRISTIN/INTERN

Kristina Abernathy. You can call me "Kristin".

MILES

To the head of the class.

She passes the other interns and stands next to MILES.

MILES (CONT'D)

See that?

He gestures to an EMPTY DESK IN THE CORNER.

MILES (CONT'D)

That, my friends, is what you call "The Rubicon". Where one's commitment becomes one's destiny. So decide now. -- Do you want a *corner office* like mine? Or an office "*in the corner*" like *that*?

Just then WILLIAM, the employee whose desk they're staring at, walks back with a cup of coffee. Embarrassed by the attention, he hangs his head and sluffs into his chair.

Unapologetic for his slight, MILES continues...

MILES (CONT'D)

Put another way, if you want *my job*, chances are I am going to want *you*. I champion delusions of grandeur.

(devilishly smiles)

Now I really must be going, so thank me for my time.

INTERNS

(in unison)

Thank you.

Miles walks away as the interns head toward the elevator. He motions to his SECRETARY walking past.

MILES

Get that intern's phone number. The one in the tight blue sweater. She shows a lot of promise.

MILES disappears around the corner.

CUT BACK TO:

WILLIAM, 30s, the investment grunt in the corner, turns to his colleague, BOB, 40s, just over the wall of the cubicle.

WILLIAM

(embarrassed)

Why does he do this? Doesn't he have more important things to do than give tours to fuckin' interns?

BOB

Everyone likes to show off their baby.

WILLIAM

All the while this company is falling apart around him!!

BOB

Forget it, Will. Just control what you can control.

WILLIAM sluffs back to his computer, still seething.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - JOHN'S OFFICE - DAY

JOHN is taking notes as he's listening to another message from Community Relations Line...

COMPLAINT #2 - ELDERLY WOMAN

(V.O.)

...yes, I called the other day. I have still not heard back about the barking dog next door! And all of these flyers in my mailbox.

Suddenly, rookie OFFICER DUGAN walks to John's open office door. He stops writing and pauses the machine.

JOHN

What do you need?

OFFICER DUGAN

Captain Harris needs to see you.

John nods. Officer Dugan walks away.

Before he goes, John reaches in his desk drawer for his flask and takes a hard sip.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - CAPTAIN HARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

John knocks on the door frame and walks in. Det. Katz and Richards are there

CAPTAIN HARRIS

Come on in, John. Have a seat.

There's clearly nowhere to sit in the cramped office. CAPTAIN HARRIS looks at the two detectives, waiting for one of them to give up his seat. Neither does.

CAPTAIN HARRIS (CONT'D)

Listen, John, City Hall's got the full-court press on me to track down CREEDO. The economy is in the shitter and my budget has been slashed. You... you're a damn good detective. Brilliant even...

JOHN

Hey, Cap', I don't mind standing, but not in this bull shit you're shoveling.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

Okay. Straight up. -- I need you on the CREEDO case OR I gotta let you go. My budget cannot justify an officer of your caliber answering the goddamn Bitch Line. You fuckin' stink of booze. And I'm tired of standing by you all these years without a little bit of fuckin' reciprocation.
(smiles at John)
Still standing in my bullshit now?

John turns to Det. Richards.

JOHN

Get the fuck up, Rico!

Startled by the tone, DET. RICHARDS jumps from his chair. JOHN sits down.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

They're asking me to cut more jobs this week - and one of them is yours.

JOHN

Are you serious? If you ask me, Creedo is just taking out the trash. I have about as much sympathy for these guys as those crack dealers that got shot last month.

DET. RICHARDS

Oh, so everyone on Wall Street is a piece of shit?

JOHN

I didn't say that. I'm just saying some people think this guy's a fuckin' modern-day Robin Hood.

DET. RICHARDS

Jesus!

DET. KATZ

(redirecting the conversation)

John, we need you on this. This guy ain't slowin' down. We can't follow up on half of our leads. And most of these pencil pushers we're using don't know shit about homicide.

JOHN rubs his forehead, contemplating his options.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

CREEDO's brutally killed four people in five weeks. And you can bet there's more on the way.

JOHN

I'm sorry. I can't.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

Then I'm sorry I can't keep you.

John stands up and walks out. Det. Katz throws the pen he's holding across the room.

DET. KATZ

Fuckin' Robin Hood.

CUT TO:

EXT. UPSTATE NEW YORK — LAKE PLEASANT — LATE DAY

INT. NEW JAGUAR (MOVING) - RURAL, COUNTRY ROAD

MARY-ANN PENDELTON drives down a lonely stretch of back roads in her brand new Jaguar. -- Her YORKSHIRE TERRIER, PRINCESS, sits next to her.

On the phone, but we only hear Mary-Ann's side of the conversation:

MARY-ANN

...Yes, I know.

(listens)

I'll be back in town next week for the down-size.

(listens)

The board approved it. How could they not?

(listens)

As I always say: *"A fool and his money should've never been together in the first place!"*

(laughing)

See you soon.

EXT. WALLINGFORD NATURE PRESERVE - PARKING LOT -
CONTINUOUS

She pulls into the nature preserve. Parks her car, puts on the dog leash and off they run into the woods.

MARY-ANN PENDELTON

Come on, Princess!

As they round a corner down the winding trail, an ELDERLY COUPLE appears. Mary-Ann nods as she jogs past.

Up ahead, she spots A MAN with his dog, an AUSTRALIAN SHEPHERD. -- The MAN's back is toward her as he SNAPS PICTURES of the meadow. WE NEVER SEE HIS FACE. All we see are his long, brown dreadlocks.

Out in the clearing now, Mary-Ann releases Princess from the leash, free to run at her own pace.

A few moments pass, when she looks back over her shoulder, searching for her dog. She stops.

MARY-ANN

Princess! Here...girl!

Nothing. So Mary-Ann slowly jogs back, retracing her path along the high brush. As she turns the corner, there, in the middle of the path in Princess, lying motionless.

MARY-ANN (CONT'D)

Oh, my God!

Mary-Ann rushes over and picks up her limp body. She listens. Princess is still breathing...

SUDDENLY - from out of the brush - Mary-Ann is blind-sided! Her body is driven into the ground with enormous force.

In the brutal frenzy, WE NEVER SEE CREEDO'S FACE, only flashes of gloved fists, dark sunglasses and dreadlocks.

Creedo methodically wraps his dog leash around her throat. As he chokes her, she gasps for air. Blood and saliva spew from her mouth.

FROM CREEDO'S POV, Mary-Ann's eyes roll back. Her throat streams with blood as the leash cuts into her skin. He tightens the leash, strangling her last breath from her body. It is done.

WE PAN OVER TO REVEAL -- CREEDO'S DOG, sitting obediently in the brush, watching his master ferociously murder the woman. The dog doesn't flinch.

Creedo removes the leash from her neck, reaches in his pocket and pulls out a dollar bill and a gold envelope opener - then stabs her through the chest.

With blood still on his gloves, Creedo holds out a handful of treats. The dog devours them, blood and all.

Creedo puts the dog leash back on -- and casually walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. O'MALLEY'S PUB - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

John sits alone in the PUB, drinking. He pushes a \$20 dollar bill across the bar.

JOHN

I'll have another.

The bartender, with her back to him, pays him no mind.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Hell hath no fury...?

The bartender turns around. It's AMANDA, the woman from JOHN's apartment. She pours him another whiskey and beer chaser. Slides it over.

AMANDA

Look. If you want a beer and a shot, that's fine. You want a girlfriend, I'll think about it. If you want another fuck...go fuck yourself.

John presents her with an olive on a toothpick.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

What the hell's that?

JOHN

It's my "olive branch". Just trying to say I'm sorry.

AMANDA

Then say it.

JOHN

I just did.

AMANDA

No. You said were "*trying to say* you're sorry", but never did.
(she waits)

JOHN

I'm sorry.

AMANDA

(smiles)
Fuck you.

She turns to walk away.

JOHN

Department let me go today.

She stops.

AMANDA

Ahh shit, John. What happened?

JOHN

Let's just say they...

At that moment, Det. Katz and Richards walk in.

Det. Katz walks over to Amanda, grabs her and they kiss warmly. They're clearly together.

He pats her on the ass and turns to John.

DET. KATZ
 Finest ass in the whole damn
 place. - And then there's you.
 (baiting him)
 Hey, how's Sandra these days?

John raises his shot glass, tosses it back

JOHN
 Not a clue.

DET. KATZ
 Oh, yeah. Sorry about that.

Det. Katz gestures for a couple of beers. Richards walks
 off to a booth in the corner.

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)
 John, we don't clear some of these
 bodies, FBI takes over. You know
 this. If that happens, we lose
 traction. We need to close this
 ourselves.

JOHN
 Then do.

DET. KATZ
 I don't get you. If you won't do
 this to save your fuckin' job,
 then at least do it to save some
 innocent lives.

Det. Katz throws back the beer. John just stares straight
 ahead, fuming.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT, HOURS LATER

John stumbles into his apartment. He pours himself
 another whiskey.

He collapses into his recliner, staring at the gold fish
 bowl, watching Francis swim back and forth, back and
 forth...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. DODGE MINI-VAN - DRIVING DOWN COUNTRY ROAD - JUST
 NIGHT (2005)

A YOUNGER JOHN is driving down the road with EMILY, HIS
 DAUGHTER, 6. Blonde hair, pony tail, sweet as can be.

She's holding a goldfish bowl on her lap.

EMILY

Daddy, how long do goldfish live?
A friend at school says the only
live a day or two.

(sad)

Then they flush 'em down the
toilet.

YOUNGER JOHN

Oh, no, baby. Goldfish can live
much longer than that. If you love
him and take real good care of
him, he just might live forever.

EMILY

Forever?

YOUNGER JOHN

Well, maybe until you graduate
from kindergarten.

EMILY

Wow, that is a long time.
(she smiles)
I think I'll name him Francis.

YOUNGER JOHN

Perfect name. I love it.

EMILY

I love it too.

BACK TO PRESENT

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - DAY

John walks down the hall to his office. He stands at a
distance, watching OFFICER DUGAN packing up his things.

Officer Dugan pulls a couple books off the shelf,
revealing John's hidden flask. He holds it to his nose
and takes a whiff. It's potent. He tosses it into the
trash can.

Pissed, John disappears down the hall.

CUT TO:

INT. CAPTAIN HARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

Det. Katz and Richards are there with Captain Harris.
John storms in.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

John?

(surprised to see
him)

Hey, we got people boxing your
stuff up right...

JOHN turns to DET. KATZ sitting in the chair and PUNCHES
HIM SQUARE IN THE FACE.

Det. Katz jumps from his chair to retaliate. John's ready
for him, but Det. Richards holds Katz back. Captain
Harris grabs John.

JOHN

That's for last night! You get
personal with me again and next
time - I break it!

Det. Katz grabs at his nose which is now bleeding.

DET. KATZ

You're a fuckin' head case, John!
Get some fuckin' help.

JOHN

(to Captain Harris)

Here's how it goes! I stay on the
periphery. I track down witnesses
and follow up on evidence.

(turns to Katz and
Richards)

You two track down this cock
sucker. Give me everything you
know. I'm your support. But that's
as close as I get.

(back to Captain
Harris)

You okay with that, Cap'?

CAPTAIN HARRIS

Yeah, sure. Anything you need.

John looks on his desk and sees the Creed file.

JOHN

I need this.

He grabs the file and walks out.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE - DAY

As John returns to his office, Officer Dugan is still there, just hanging up the phone.

JOHN
Your work is done here. I'm staying. Get out.

OFFICER DUGAN
Oh, well, someone just called for you. I was just writing...

JOHN
Who was it?

OFFICER DUGAN
(looks at his note)
A Father O'Brien. Wanted you to know that he received the other photographs and was able to determine some of the scripture. You can catch him at this number.

JOHN
Thanks.

OFFICER DUGAN
Um...Welcome back then.

JOHN
Thanks.

Just as Officer Dugan walks out, Det. Richards rushes in.

DET. RICHARDS
Don't get too comfortable. They just found another body! Mary-Ann Pendelton. Another Wall Street executive.

JOHN
Where'd they find her?

DET. RICHARDS
Wallingford Nature Preserve in Upstate New York. Looks like Creedon's expanding his territory.

JOHN
We got jurisdictional clearance?

DET. RICHARDS
That's why they called.

John grabs his coat, the Creedó file, and heads out.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALLINGFORD NATURE PRESERVE - DAY

In the background, we see Det. Katz interviewing the ELDERLY COUPLE from the day of the murder, while John and Det. Richards are working with the TEAM OF INVESTIGATORS as rain begins to fall.

DET. RICHARDS
(barking orders)
Cover this shit up! Rain hits this
and our whole case washes away!

John looks down at where Mary-Ann's body was found. TWO OFFICERS walk over and lay a tarp down.

DET. RICHARDS (CONT'D)
You okay?

JOHN
Fine. Just getting my bearings.
(points to the middle
of the path)
Okay, so if the victim's dog was
found, drugged and lying here,
about five feet from her...

VISIONS OF HOW IT WENT DOWN FLASH THROUGH JOHN'S MIND:

JOHN (CONT'D)
... she wasn't engaged in
conversation with Creedó. She was
ambushed.
(points to the brush)
If I'm Creedó, I'm lying in
wait...right here.

John carefully walks into the high brush and kneels down.

JOHN (CONT'D)
There's just enough brush to hide
behind....

DET. RICHARDS
I can't see you from where I
stand.

JOHN
...yet there's just enough opening
where I can see you. Like peering
through a keyhole.

A FLASH OF MARY-ANN RUNNING UP TO HER DOG, FROM CREEDO'S VANTAGE POINT

JOHN (CONT'D)

And if the sun was shining
yesterday, I suspect this entire
brush would be cast in dark
shadows. Perfect place to hide.

He looks at both sides of the path, rolling the possibilities over in his mind. He walks a bit further into the brush and finds a trampled area.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Here. This is where he waited.

He looks down and notices a long brown hair, hanging from a picker bush.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Rico, got an extra bag?

DET. RICHARDS

Yeah, here.

John carefully removes part of the bush with the brown hair and places it into the plastic evidence bag.

JOHN

What was Mary-Ann's hair color
again?

DET. RICHARDS

Brunette. Why?

JOHN

Just found a hair, not sure if
it's hers. Could be Creed's. It
was just about the height you'd
expect if he were kneeling down.

It's raining harder now.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(to the other
officers)

GET A CANOPY OVER HERE NOW!

(to Det. Richards)

They need to go over this entire
area with a fine tooth comb. No
one wearing a sweater or fabric
can walk through here. Nothing
that these picker bushes can grab
onto. Got it?

DET. RICHARDS

Got it.

JOHN

Now let's go check on our victim.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY AT GREENWICH PINNACLE - ELEVATORS - DAY

We see William, the slighted investment grunt, standing in the corner of the lobby near the gold-plated elevators. He's nervously pacing back and forth.

He looks down at his watch just as his CELL PHONE CHIMES with a TEXT MESSAGE. He begins typing his reply.

Just then Miles appears, walking toward the elevators. William rushes to finish his text.

Miles walks into the elevator and selects his floor. We see William rushing to catch the elevator. Miles reaches for the OPEN DOOR button -- but instead purposely pushes the CLOSE door button.

Miles shrugs his shoulders, feigning surprise, when the gold doors quickly close in William's face.

CUT TO:

INT. FORENSIC PATHOLOGY LAB - NIGHT

Sitting at her computer is DR. CATHERINE VOX, 30's, a pathologist. She's eating a bowl of Spaghetti O's near the grotesquely, decomposing corpse of MARY-ANN PENDELTON.

In walks DET. KATZ, DET. RICHARDS and JOHN. They nod to DR. VOX as they walk directly over to the corpse. All the detectives react to the smell.

DET. RICHARDS

Ooooh. Smelling better by the day.

DR. VOX

Obviously, we haven't had a lot of time with her, but it appears as though there's nothing out of the ordinary here.

DET. KATZ

Other than the fact she was strangled, right?

DR. VOX

(joking)

Well, you do realize, here in New York, strangulation is considered death by "natural causes".

(all business now)

So the official cause of death is "ligature asphyxiation". Or strangulation by retractable dog leash.

JOHN

A dog leash?

DR. VOX

Yes, we're not sure of the brand, but we're working on it. As for the gold envelope opener in the chest, that was postmortem. -- Typically, we're able to find traces of the killer's skin or blood under the victim's nails. But seeing as she was wearing winter gloves, there were no defense wounds of note. Hair & Fiber are examining the evidence you found. We'll know more on that later.

DET. RICHARDS

What about the dollar bill? Did you pull prints?

JOHN

Too much contamination.
(clearly in-the-know)

DR. VOX

Right. Currency typically passes through over 20,000 hands during its circulation life.

JOHN

So it's next to impossible to get much from a dollar bill that will hold up in court.

DR. VOX

Correct.

JOHN

(to Det. Richards)

Hell, four out of five bills in your wallet are going to show traces of cocaine, right Rico?

DET. RICHARDS
(defensive)
Not just mine. But everyone's.

JOHN
Thank you, Dr. Vox.

DET. KATZ
Yeah, thanks.

DR. VOX
We'll let you know more when we
know it.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - HERE-2-HELP FOUNDATION - DAY

INT. H-2-H CLASSROOM

FATHER O'BRIEN is inside a classroom, sitting in a circle
talking to kindergartners. They're laughing, having a fun
time.

JOHN walks up to the door. Father O'Brien sees him. He
waves goodbye to the kids and joins John in the hall.

FATHER O'BRIEN
How are you, John?

JOHN
Fine, Father.

They walk down the hall.

JOHN (CONT'D)
So this is your foundation?

FATHER O'BRIEN
Not for long.
(with sadness)
Lost all our funding from the Wall
Street collapse. Charities are
always the first to go.

JOHN
Isn't there something you can do?

FATHER O'BRIEN
Unfortunately, there's no bailout
for charities like us.

Father O'Brien stops and looks out a window to the kids
laughing on the playground.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)
 Three million dollars in
 funding...gone like that.

Suddenly, a voice from down the hall shouts:

JAMAAL
 WHO 'DA KING?

Father O'Brien turns and sees Jamaal, chaperoning kids.

FATHER O'BRIEN
 You da' King, Jamaal.

JAMAAL
 Got that right!

FATHER O'BRIEN
 (turns back to John)
 Jamaal's worked so hard. And he's
 not the only one. Most of these
 are foster kids. Some of them will
 surely end up back on the streets.
 (changing subjects)
 But *this* is not why you're here.

JOHN
 Sorry. It's not. Wish I could
 help.

FATHER O'BRIEN
 Hopefully, I can help you.

He pulls out the photographs to show John.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)
 The scripture is an Egyptian
 worship song to Mother Neit. The
 goddess of war. The "Ankh" is the
 sign of life. Only Egyptian gods
 were allowed to carry the "Ankh"
 for it showed that they alone had
 the power to give life...or take
 it away.

Father O'Brien steps aside as a COUPLE FELLOW PRIESTS
 walk past. He hands John papers.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)
 Here. These are my notes on the
 scripture and symbols.

John takes the notes, then looks over at at the crayon
 artwork hanging on the bulletin board in the hallway.

(MORE)

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

Last day to see those. Foundation
is closing its doors tomorrow.

JOHN

I'm so sorry to hear this.

FATHER O'BRIEN

(optimistic)
But as the good Lord would say,
"This too shall pass."

JOHN

Thank you.
(holding out the
notes)
This is perfect.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Thank you. At least, you got to
see what we do here.

With that, the SCHOOL BELL RINGS and the classrooms let
out. The hallway fills with laughing children.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

Whatever you need, John, we're
Here-2-Help.

Father O'Brien smiles somberly, then heads down the hall
with the children.

As John turns to leave, he looks into a classroom where a
teacher is taking down lesson plans from the wall and
placing them in a box.

CUT TO:

INT. MILES'S OFFICE - DAY

Inside Miles's office, there is A TEAM OF CONTRACTORS
remodeling. -- Aside from the light from the expansive
windows, the office is cast in darkness.

MILES WALKS IN. He presses his hand against a sensor
switch on the wall. His office lights up, dramatically.

A wall of hi-def, state-of-the-art LCDs illuminate. *FOX
NEWS. CNN. C-SPAN.* It's everything a mogul could want.

CONTRACTOR

Sorry. We couldn't get it to work.

MILES COWDEN

You need one of these.

He holds up his hand.

MILES COWDEN (CONT'D)
And unfortunately, there's only
two of them in the world.

He holds up his other hand and smiles. Then settles into
his chair as everyone goes back to working.

Moments later...A BREAKING NEWS STORY comes across CNN.
Footage of the MARY-ANN PENDELTON MURDER flashes across
the screen.

MILES COWDEN (CONT'D)
SILENCE!

Everyone stops and turns to the news screen.

CNN NEWS ANCHOR
(from television)
*...among other economic news,
MARY-ANN PENDELTON, a top
executive from the Manhattan
Emerald Group, was found brutally
murdered yesterday in upstate New
York.*

We see Mary-Ann's picture on the screen. News footage
flashes shots of the crime scene.

CNN NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)
(from television)
*Her body was found on a jogging
trail only miles from her multi-
million dollar estate. All
indications are this is the fifth
victim of the serial killer
"CREEDO". The Manhattan Emerald
Group, as you may remember, had
recently come under investigation
for fraudulent investments...*

MILES
Everyone out. NOW!

The crew heads out. Miles looks over and sees a DESIGNER
carrying a booklet of tiled swatches.

MILES (CONT'D)
Except YOU! Come here.

Miles pulls the swatch booklet from under the DESIGNER'S
arm. He opens it and then points.

MILES (CONT'D)
This is the tile I want.

DESIGNER

Certainly. It will take 4 to 6 weeks to ship. It's from Morocco.

MILES

Well, I'm from *America*. Have it over-nighted!

She hurries out.

Miles picks up the phone and dials.

STANLEY (O.S.)

Hollinsworth speaking.

CUT TO:

INT. CREEDO'S WORKSHOP - DIMLY LIT - NIGHT

SERIES OF TIGHT SHOTS

A) A fleeting glimpse of Creed's facial and body features as he prepares for his night out.

B) Candles flicker in the background. Incense burns.

C) Creed pulls a black skull cap down over his brown dreadlocks.

D) He smiles: a gold-capped tooth shimmers in the candlelight.

E) He pulls a black backpack over his shoulder.

F) The flame from the candle...is blown out.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - CASE ROOM - NIGHT

The small room is jammed with John, Dr. Vox, Det. Katz and Det. Richards.

John stands at the projector screen linked up to a computer. -- We see the blood-stained dollar bill magnified on the screen. There's a circle around the pyramid on back.

JOHN

...as we now know, the pyramid here symbolizes "strength" and "durability", meaning Creedo has no intention of stopping anytime soon.

(turns to next slide)
Here, he underlined "*Annuit Ceptis*" which is Latin for "He supports our undertaking". Meaning God supported America's independence from Britain. In this case, Creedo is telling us that God approves of *his* undertaking.

DR. VOX

What's that symbol?

A crude sketch of a circle with a stick figure with many arms in the middle.

JOHN

The best Father O'Brien can tell is it appears to be "SHIVA THE DESTROYER". Shiva brings the cycle of life to an end in order for a new life to begin.

(another symbol)
This is "VISHNU THE PRESERVER".

DET. RICHARDS

He must be the "friendly god".

JOHN

To the contrary, "The Preserver's" role is to maintain divine order. When evil gains an upper hand, "The Preserver" is sent to restore balance in the universe.

Det. Richards points to another symbol, a sketch of an abstract figure.

DET. RICHARDS

What is that? A wolf?

JOHN

I'm not sure. Could be. Let me follow up.

DET. KATZ

So what we now know, Creedo's messages are covering numerous religions: Hindu, Catholicism, what was the first victim...?

DET. RICHARDS
Muslim. Got the most fanatical
 religion out of the way first,
 huh?

He laughs. No one else does.

DR. VOX
 Why so many faiths?

JOHN
 Could be he's an atheist or
 agnostic.

DET. KATZ
 Is it possible this guy has
 multiple personalities who each
 worship a different God?

JOHN
 Who knows? A psychopath like this
 is capable of anything.

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE PLAINS NEW YORK - HOLLINSWORTH ESTATE - NIGHT

A vintage, mid-19th century, Tudor-style home. It's
 stunning marble columns indicate enormous wealth.

Out of the shadows, a large dark figure with dreadlocks
 appears. It's CREEDO. He turns to his dog, the Australian
 Shepherd, and motions for him to STAY.

A motion-light illuminates the side yard. Creedo quietly
 moves toward the lamps and places black bags over the
 motion detectors.

Then makes his way to a large side-door. He pulls out a
 razor knife and begins methodically cutting into the
 door's wood-paneled base.

He pulls an L-shaped wonder bar and quietly pries the
 panel from its frame.

With just enough space, Creedo pushes his way through the
 hole in the door and disappears inside, without setting
 off the alarm.

A moment later, his black-gloved hands reach out, setting
 his shoes just outside the opening.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

CREEDO walks through the kitchen, stopping to pull a knife from the butcher block.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He walks up stairs and then quietly pushes open the door to the bedroom.

INT. HOLLINSWORTH BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

There, before him, his prey. MRS. HOLLINSWORTH. SHE IS ALONE...and sleeping.

He turns and pushes open the walk-in closet, where he puts on STANLEY's winged-tip shoes and robe.

Slowly, he walks over to her. She turns on her side. She appears restless.

CREEDO grabs the pillow beside her and places it over her head to muffle her screams as HE BEGINS TO SLASH.

THE STEEL BLADE PLUNGES DOWNWARD...again and again.

She's dead before she awakes.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLINSWORTH ESTATE - DAY

INT. KITCHEN

John, Det. Katz and Det. Richards are on the scene, mapping out the details. They're stepping around the bloody footprints.

They see the side door with the bottom, wood panel cut out. John gestures to the door alarm.

JOHN

See here. Creedo can't open the door without setting off the alarm. So he decides to go "through it". Brilliant. Creedo knew his entry point so he probably cased the place beforehand.

DET. KATZ

Slow down. We don't know this was Creedo.

JOHN

It was.

DET. KATZ

Nothing here indicates this was Creedo. No dollar bill. No gold envelope opener. The M.O.'s don't match.

JOHN

It's not *how* they were killed I'm looking at. It's *who* was killed. Creedo's targeting his victims for very specific reasons.

DET. RICHARDS

Mrs. Hollinsworth didn't work on Wall Street...

JOHN

(whispering now)
Yes, but her husband, Stanley Hollinsworth, did.

DET. KATZ

But he's the head of the S.E.C. not the head of an investment firm.

JOHN

Sure, they may make strange bed fellows, but they're sleeping in the same bed, nonetheless.

DET. KATZ

(not buying it)
Let's stick to what we know, not what we "think" we know.

JOHN

What we *know* is that Creedo's targeting Wall Street and whether you believe it or not, the S.E.C. is in collusion with Wall Street.

CUT TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - MILES'S OFFICE - DAY

A crowd of contractors are still remodeling his office, while Miles is busy analyzing financial reports.

His phone rings, he answers.

MILES
 Miles Cowden...Speak.
 (listens)
 Yes, yes.
 (listens)
 Meredith Hollinsworth? How?
 (listens)
 Oh, Jesus Christ. First, Mary-Ann.
 Now Stanley's wife.
 (listens)
 Alright then. Yes...

Miles looks up and sees the BREAKING NEWS STORY of the Hollinsworth Murder come across CNN.

MILES (CONT'D)
 ...Yes. I'm seeing it now on CNN.
 (listens)
 I'll call you back.

He looks at the contractors, standing in his office.

MILES (CONT'D)
 Jesus. Please. Go!

He turns up the volume.

CNN NEWS ANCHOR
...STANLEY HOLLINSWORTH, who has come under much scrutiny as of late due to a litany of regulatory misconduct, was reportedly out of town on business at the time of his wife's murder. More on this breaking news story as we get it...

Miles calls his secretary.

SECRETARY (O.S.)
 (from speaker phone)
 Yes, Mr. Cowden?

MILES
 Connect me to my wife...

Out of the corner of his eye, Miles has spotted KRISTINA ABERNATHY, the promising intern, walking past his office.

MILES (CONT'D)
 On second thought. I'll get back.
 (hangs up)

He motions for Kristina. Nervously, she enters.

KRISTIN/INTERN

Yes, Mr. Cowden?

MILES

(warm, but abrupt)

Call me, Miles. I need you to send flowers to this address. Send my heartfelt condolences.

He scribbles on a piece of paper and hands it to her.

MILES (CONT'D)

Here. Put the flowers on my account. My personal cell number is on there too, if you need me.

KRISTIN/INTERN

Certainly.

She's flattered. He watches her walk away.

Then he walks over to his safe, unlocks it, and PULLS OUT A GUN.

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - NEXT DAY

INT. MAIN CHURCH

Inside, there are a FEW PARISHIONERS PRAYING.

John walks in, still uncomfortable. He sees Father O'Brien lighting candles on the alter.

John locks onto the flame of a single candle, then...

A QUICK VISION OF A LITTLE GIRL'S DOLL SUDDENLY BURSTING INTO FLAMES FLASHES THROUGH JOHN'S MIND.

Father O'Brien walks over to John.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Looks like someone's got a lot on their mind today.

JOHN

(snaps out of it)

No, it was nothing. Just thinking about when I was an altar boy. It was my job to light all the candles. Not the priest's job.

FATHER O'BRIEN
I only do this on school days.
(smiles)
Rather they focus on their
studies. Besides, I find it quite
peaceful, lighting the candles.

John pulls out a couple photographs.

JOHN
So thank you for your help on the
religious scripture and symbols.
Extremely insightful.

FATHER O'BRIEN
Good, good.

JOHN
There was just one symbol we're
still having trouble with.

FATHER O'BRIEN
(looks at the photo)
Oh, yes. Such a crude sketch. Best
I can tell is it appears to be
a...

JOHN
...a wolf?

FATHER O'BRIEN
Yes.

JOHN
That's what we thought too. So
then what's it represent?

FATHER O'BRIEN
If it is indeed meant to be a
wolf, in Christianity, wolves are
known symbolize greed and
destruction. The enemy of flocks.

JOHN
"Flocks" meaning "mankind"?

FATHER O'BRIEN
Could be.

JOHN
And wolf that's howling?

FATHER O'BRIEN
The "howling posture" could be
Creedo's way of "warning us of an
coming death".

JOHN

I see.

(switching direction)
One more thing, you had mentioned
Paul Donalds took part in
confession here. Is there anything
that you can tell us that...

FATHER O'BRIEN

(serious tone)
John, you need to understand that
confession has sacramental
significance. I'm sworn to
confidentiality by my faith...

Father O'Brien stops short.

JOHN

What is it?

FATHER O'BRIEN

(sincere)
As you know, we want to do
everything we can to help you on
this, but...

JOHN

But what?

FATHER O'BRIEN

(growing anxious,
whispering now)
I'm not even sure what I know can
help.

JOHN

Let us determine that.
(pressing)
What do you know, Father?

FATHER O'BRIEN

What I know is bound by the Seal
Of Confession. There are no
exceptions. Many a priest have
gone to prison over this.

JOHN

But lives are at stake here!

FATHER O'BRIEN

So is our oath to God.

Father O'Brien looks down at his watch as more
PARISHIONERS walk in.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)
Anything else you need, please let
us know.

JOHN
(pleading)
Just point us in the right
direction, Father!

FATHER O'BRIEN
I'm sorry.

John looks down at the disturbing photographs of the
blood-stained dollar bills.

CUT TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE -
NIGHT

Greenwich Pinnacle investment bankers, William and Bob,
walk to their cars. They're carrying their boxes of
personal items. It's evident they have both been fired.

WILLIAM
(fuming)
This can't be right.

BOB
(to himself)
What am I going to tell my wife?

WILLIAM
I knew it. I told you we'd be
gone.

BOB
I got a baby on the way. No job...

William stops. He sees a sky-blue Bugatti Veyron parked
against the wall in a private space. The sports car is
amazing. One of only 300 in the world. The sign on the
wall reads: RESERVED - MILES COWDEN.

BOB (CONT'D)
Don't even think about it, Will.

WILLIAM
Here.

William hands his box of office things to BOB.

BOB

C'mon. Let's go. Will! That car's worth more than you and I put together.

William turns back and jams his finger into BOB's face, boiling with rage.

WILLIAM

Don't you say another fuckin' word. I listened to you every goddamn day we worked together and look where it got us!

He reaches into his box and pulls out an envelope opener. Bob steps back, genuinely frightened by William.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

We're doing this.

William walks over to the Bugatti.

He sees a surveillance camera pointing at the car. He looks in a nearby trash can and pulls out a plastic grocery bag. He jumps up and snags the bag over the surveillance camera.

He walks over to the car and stabs the back tire with the envelope opener, grinning as it deflates.

Then he begins scratching words into the sky-blue paint. He finishes and then steps back to admire his work.

In the distance, across the garage, we hear the CHIRPING SOUND OF A CAR BEING UNLOCKED.

BOB

C'mon!

William casually walks back to Bob and grabs his box.

BOB (CONT'D)

Shit. Let's go!

They both run to their cars and disappear.

William's message on the side of Miles's car reads:
"All The Kings Horses..."

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREETS - NIGHT

DETECTIVE DET. KATZ and RICHARDS are staked out in an unmarked police van.

DET. RICHARDS
...so he says to me, "*Rico, come
on out with me this Saturday
night. I'm hosting a benefit for
women with no legs.*"

Det. Katz looks bewildered.

DET. RICHARDS (CONT'D)
Exactly. So I say, "*Why the fuck
would I go to a benefit for women
with no legs?*" And he says,
"*Because the place will be
crawling with pussy.*"

They bust out laughing.

Just then there's a tap on the window. Richards jumps.
It's JOHN. They open the side door of the van and he hops
in.

DET. RICHARDS (CONT'D)
You scared the shit out of me!

JOHN
See. I always knew you were full
of shit, Rico.

They hand John a flask of booze. He sips.

DET. KATZ
What do you got?

JOHN
Not much. Father O'Brien agrees
with us that it's a wolf. Which
represents greed and destruction.

DET. RICHARDS
That's Creed for ya'.

JOHN
Father O'Brien seemed to want to
tell us more, but couldn't.

DET. KATZ
What the fuck does that mean?

JOHN
What he knows he heard during
confession.

RICHARDS
So?

JOHN

So legally, he doesn't have to divulge any information shared with him during confession. Like a psychiatrist or a lawyer.

DET. KATZ

Yes, but there are exceptions if it's believed that withholding that information will result in further harm to others.

JOHN

I know, I know. It may be nothing to us, but to a priest, confession is a sacred vow. -- Don't worry. I'll get him to talk to me.

DET. KATZ

We don't have a lot of fuckin' time for you to wine and dine him.

JOHN

I got it!
(changing subjects)
So how 'bout this guy, what do got?

They all look out the window as A MAN WALKS OUT of the row houses and heads up the street.

DET. KATZ

Word is this guy's taking bets on Wall Street to see who CREEDO takes out next. Just want to see how the odds are playing out.

JOHN

Odds are you're wasting your time.

John takes another hit from the flask. Det. Richards turns to him with a big grin on his face.

DET. RICHARDS

Hey, John. Wanna go to a benefit with me on Saturday night?

John looks at KATZ, who laughs.

JOHN

Next time.

He jumps out of the van as they slowly drive off, tailing their target.

John turns and looks down the alley. The same emaciated dog from before is now LYING DEAD next to a dumpster.

CUT TO:

INT. CREEDO'S WORKSHOP - DIMLY LIT - NIGHT

CREEDO picks up a couple of photographs from his work bench. They're various surveillance photos he's taken of MILES COWDEN.

Countless news clippings about MILES hang on the wall:

"Cowden Leads Wall Street To Record Returns"

"Power Broker Of The Year: Miles Cowden"

"S.E.C.'s Hollinsworth Launches Greenwich Probe"

"Greenwich Pinnacle Cleared In SEC Investigation"

Again, we do NOT see CREEDO's face. Only glimpses of his body and hands.

On his workbench, we see *"THE ECONOMIST"* magazine cover of MILES COWDEN holding a bottle of Dom Perignon. The headline reads:

"The Toast Of Wall Street"

Creedo squeezes a can of lighter fluid, dousing the cover. He ignites it. Miles's picture BURSTS INTO FLAMES.

CUT TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - MILES COWDEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

ECU of a flame from gold-plated Zippo lighter.

Camera pulls back and we see MILES, relaxing with his feet on his desk, smoking a Cohiba. His office renovation is complete. It's spectacular.

MILES is on the phone.

MILES COWDEN

...after that second plane hit the towers, you know what my thought was? BUY OIL and BUY IT NOW!

(listens)

You just knew those towel-heads were gonna start lighting the oil fields on fire as soon as we bombed Iraq.

(listens)

Exactly.

Suddenly, breaking news footage flashes across the TVs. STANLEY HOLLINSWORTH, is being escorted in the police station in handcuffs.

MILES COWDEN (CONT'D)
Holy shit, WALLACE. I have to go.

MILES hangs up and turns up the sound.

CNN NEWS ANCHOR
(from television)
...Securities & Exchange director, Stanley Hollinsworth was arrested early this morning for the murder of his wife, Meredith Hollinsworth. Mr. Hollinsworth, first came under suspicion when investigators were unable to confirm his alibi. More on that as news breaks...

MILES hits the mute button. He sits, fuming for a moment. Then dials his secretary.

SECRETARY
(from speaker phone)
Yes, Mr. Cowden.

MILES COWDEN
Call Byron Chelsey for me NOW!

MILES slams the phone down.

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH

ORGAN MUSIC PLAYS in the background for added mood.

Father O'Brien walks into the Confessional Booth. A man, ERNEST MERRIWETHER, 60's, is sitting on the other side of the screen. Ernest is a broken man. Moved to confess out of despair and desperation.

He holds a Bible and a minuatue Jesus in his hand.

ERNEST MERRIWETHER
(nervous, verge of tears)
Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.

(MORE)

ERNEST MERRIWETHER (CONT'D)

It has been...two years since my last confession. I am sorry for that.

Father O'Brien just listens, his heart feels for the broken man's sorrow.

ERNEST MERRIWETHER (CONT'D)

...I'm ashamed at the pain I have caused. To my...

FATHER O'BRIEN

What is it, my son?

ERNEST MERRIWETHER

(distraught, ashamed)

I've lost my job of 28 years. I've lost my home and family. What kind of man loses his home?...His own home. I couldn't make the payments so...I...I...I am not the man my mother raised...I am not. And for that I am ashamed.

(breaking down)

Please forgive me God.

Father O'Brien begins to read the *Prayer of Absolution*.

FATHER O'BRIEN

*God, the Father of mercies,
through the death and resurrection
of His Son has reconciled...*

With tears in his eyes, ERNEST MERRIWETHER, places the miniature Jesus into his shirt pocket.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

*...the world to Himself and sent
the Holy Spirit among us for the
forgiveness of sins...*

ERNEST opens the Bible and sets it on the floor in front of him. He makes the sign of the cross, then reaches over and PULLS A GUN OUT from under his jacket.

ERNEST MERRIWETHER

Forgive me, Father, for I have...

Before he finishes the last word, HE PUSHES THE GUN INTO HIS MOUTH and...BAM!!!

Blood splatters through the screen onto FATHER O'BRIEN's face as he jumps back, startled by the gun shot.

He races out of the booth to the other booth for ERNEST.

Blood and brain matter are everywhere. He is gone.

FATHER O'BRIEN
(devastated)
Oh, my. This can't be!

Blood is splattered across the pages of the open Bible.

CUT TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - MILES COWDEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Miles is sitting at his desk, talking on the phone with his wife. From our perspective, we only see him from the chest up. His conversation appears to be rushed.

MILES
(hurried)
I'm sorry. I have a meeting.
(listens)
I have no idea.
(listens)
Yes, me too, honey.

He hangs up the phone and the camera pulls back.

KRISTEN, THE INTERN, IS ON HER KNEES pleasuring MILES.
He pushes her away and zips up.

MILES (CONT'D)
(still euphoric)
Ahh. You're driving me crazy!

She gathers herself, fixing her hair and straightening her sheer, crimson blouse.

KRISTIN/INTERN
When can I see you again?

MILES
Soon...very soon. Just not here.

MILES's cell phone rings. -- It's STANLEY. -- He motions for KRISTEN to leave.

MILES (CONT'D)
Stanley?!

STANLEY
(frantic, mix of
tears and madness)
Miles!

MILES

Jesus Christ! What the hell...

We INTERCUT between MILES and STANLEY's phone conversation.

STANLEY

It's not true. I don't know what's happening. But it's not true.

MILES

Listen to me. Do NOT say anything until BYRON CHELSEY gets there. Best defense lawyer around!

STANLEY

I lost Meredith and they think it was me! My God!!

MILES

I know. I'm sorry. The news is saying your alibi doesn't check out.

There's silence. STANLEY doesn't respond.

MILES (CONT'D)

Stanley! They're saying...

STANLEY

I was with another woman.

MILES

You were having an affair? Is that it?

STANLEY

We were out of town.

MILES

You need to have her come forward.

STANLEY

I can't.

MILES

Having an affair doesn't make you a murderer...

STANLEY

She's fifteen.

MILES

What?

STANLEY

The woman. She's fifteen.

MILES

WOMAN?! She's a fuckin' girl!

STANLEY

I didn't kill my wife! I swear.
God, I would never.

MILES COWDEN

Let me handle this.

STANLEY

They're gonna ask...about you and
I.

MILES

Listen to me. There is *your wife*
and there is *this girl*. Nothing
more.

STANLEY

They're gonna dig, Miles! It's
what they do.

MILES

They won't go there unless you
lead them. You may think they're
bargaining chips, but they're
not...They're nails in your
fuckin' coffin!

STANLEY

I didn't do this, Miles. I swear!

CUT TO:

INT. FORENSIC PATHOLOGY LAB - DAY

JOHN, DET. KATZ and RICHARDS sit with DR. VOX going over
what they know so far about CREEDO. They're looking at
the projection screen of the Hollinsworth Murder.

DR. VOX

...Hollinsworth's shoes, his robe
and a butcher knife from his
kitchen were all found in a
dumpster around the corner from
his own house, covered in his
wife's blood. He left his bloody
foot prints *at the scene*.

DET. RICHARDS

Shit. The only thing this fuckin' idiot didn't give us...was a solid alibi.

JOHN

Hollinsworth is no idiot. He's a Harvard graduate and director of the S.E.C. What's his motive?

DET. RICHARDS

He was married. Isn't that motive enough?

DR. VOX

Funny, Rico.

DET. RICHARDS

Hey, spouses kill each other all the time. Why not him?

JOHN

Because he's too smart for a murder this sloppy.

DET. RICHARDS

If it looks like a duck...

JOHN

So Hollinsworth goes to the trouble of cutting a panel out of his own door to make it look like a break-in, but *forgets* to take his shoes off?

DR. VOX

Who knows? Maybe Hollinsworth figured he'd frame himself *so poorly* that we'd think there's *no way* he could have done this.

DET. RICHARDS

(angry now)

John, you know as well as we do if these assholes don't make mistakes, we don't catch 'em!

JOHN

Yeah, but if *we make mistakes...* more people die, Rico!

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK CITY UNEMPLOYMENT OFFICE - DAY

The Unemployment Office is JAMMED WITH PEOPLE.

BOB, with resume in hand, anxiously waits for his turn.

An office door opens and out steps WILLIAM. He slams the door behind him.

BOB
William! How are you?

WILLIAM
(angry)
Out of work, that's how I am!

BOB
Anyone hiring?

WILLIAM
You wanna wash dishes?

BOB
I'll do anything. You know I have
a baby on the way.

WILLIAM
Good luck with that.

William disappears out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. O'MALLEY'S PUB - NIGHT

It's late. Aside from the festive Christmas lights twinkling around the bar, all is calm.

At one end of the bar, DET. KATZ is holding AMANDA's hand, whispering into her ear. She laughs, they kiss.

Paying no mind, JOHN is at the jukebox. Elton John's "MONA LISAS & MAD HATTERS" begins to play in the background.

Det. Katz walks over, pats John on the shoulder.

DET. KATZ
Care for a bit of yuletide joy?

He nods to Det. Richards who is sitting in a booth, chatting it up with THREE COLLEGE-AGE WOMAN. He's wearing a Santa Claus hat and beard, gesturing for the ladies to come sit on his lap.

JOHN

Heading out.

DET. KATZ

You know if you're right about the Hollinsworth murder, Creedo's got us running all over the fuckin' map. He's framing people now.

John nods. Det. Katz takes a sip of his beer.

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

I had this case, years ago. Before forensics knew shit. Girl's found dead, cracked skull. Got the suspect with dried blood and the victim's hairs on his shoes. He confesses he broke into her house, but claims he didn't kill her. Said she was so startled she fell and smashed her head on the floor. So we can't put Murder One on him. So for months, we pushed on forensics to find something... anything.

Det. Katz reaches up and pulls a hair from his head and shows it to John.

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

See that? A hair that falls out naturally would have a bulbous root at the end. But here the root is stretched because it was forcibly removed, by a hand. The victim's hairs were stretched too. We proved he grabbed her by the hair when he smashed her skull.

JOHN

So it all came down to a hair?

DET. KATZ

No. It all came down to *luck*. It was supposed to storm that night. It didn't - or those hairs would've washed right off his shoes. A lucky break, my friend. That's what we're shootin' for.

JOHN

Not much of an investigative strategy there.

DET. KATZ

I'll take whatever I can get.

Det. Katz finishes the last of his beer, then turns and walks over to the three girls, pointing his finger and counting...

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

HO...HO...HO!

They all laugh at his joke.

John finishes his beer and gets up to leave. Amanda catches him just before he heads out.

AMANDA

It's "last call", John.

JOHN

No thanks.

AMANDA

I meant "last call"...*for me*. You got one more shot.

He stops, unsure of how to respond. He looks over at Katz holding a mistletoe over his crotch, laughing.

JOHN

What do you see in him?

AMANDA

I dunno. I just see him. And he likes to see me. Not much more to it than that.

JOHN

And maybe that's all there needs to be.

He walks out.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE LOCKUP - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

STANLEY HOLLINSWORTH is sitting with BYRON CHELSEY, a shrewd, relentless defense attorney who is willing to get his clients acquitted by any means necessary.

STANLEY

(shaking)
Got a smoke?

Byron searches his jacket.

BYRON CHELSEY

No cigarettes. This is all I got.

Reluctantly, he pulls out a CIGAR. Stanley grabs it and nervously lights it.

BYRON CHELSEY (CONT'D)

We're a long way from celebrating,
don't you think?

Stanley's mood swings between fear and anger.

STANLEY

Fuck it. Fuck them. FUCK YOU.

BYRON CHELSEY

Stanley, let me be very
succinct...

STANLEY

Director. Call me *Director*
Hollinsworth.

Stanley takes a long drag from his cigar. Byron sifts through some papers from his briefcase.

BYRON CHELSEY

I've made arrangements for bail.
Not sure the judge will approve,
but if anyone can...

STANLEY

(interrupting)
Where the hell is Miles? Are you
the whole sum of his rescue
efforts? I'm on a fuckin' island
here!

Stanley's eyes are darting around the room. He can't focus.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Can't they dim these goddamn
lights!!!

BYRON tosses his paper into his briefcase and SLAMS IT SHUT! -- He has Stanley's full attention now.

BYRON CHELSEY

(deadly serious)
Just so we're perfectly clear,
your life is now in my hands. I am
your only hope. If you're a man of
faith, then pray you do not let me
down. If you lie to me, I walk. If
you fail to follow my counsel, I
walk.

(MORE)

BYRON CHELSEY (CONT'D)

And most significantly, if you so much as mention Miles Cowden's name again, you will most certainly regret the outcome.

Byron reaches over and grabs the cigar from Stanley's mouth. He presses the cigar into the table, snuffing out the burning ash.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - CASE ROOM - DAY

John, Det. Katz and Richards are going over the case with Captain Harris. They're mapping out the victims for possible connections.

Det. Katz finishes pouring himself a cup of coffee and walks back to the board.

DET. KATZ

Okay, what do we have so far?

DET. RICHARDS

All five of Creedo's victims either died of strangulation or blunt force trauma. All of them were then stabbed with a gold envelope opener with dollar bill posted to their chest.

DET. KATZ takes a swig of coffee.

JOHN

You forgot one.

DET. KATZ

(confused)

John, we just went over this...

DET. KATZ walks back and points at Victim #1.

DET. KATZ (CONT'D)

(confused)

Charles Greir, head of Caliber Investment Group. CREEDO's first victim.

JOHN

No. You forgot one *more*. Meredith Hollinsworth was CREEDO's sixth victim.

Det. Katz rolls his eyes, agitated by John's persistence.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

C'mon, John.

JOHN

That was CREEDO. Rich guys like Hollinsworth, with his influence, they make people *disappear*. They hire someone else to do it. And they sure as hell don't murder their spouse in their own home with their kids right down the fuckin' hall.

DET. RICHARDS

Hollinsworth snapped and failed miserably to cover his tracks. Simple as that.

At that moment, DR. VOX from Forensics walks in.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

Finally, someone who will talk some sense in here. Whaddya got?

DR. VOX

Turns out the hair follicles found at both the Donalds and Pendelton murders are from a canine. *The same canine.*

DET. KATZ

That hair we found was from a dog?

DR. VOX

Yes. It appears to be an Australian Shepherd mix. Brown and white coat. Once we eliminated the hairs from Pendelton's Yorkshire Terrier, we found we were able to put this Australian Shepherd at both murder scenes.

JOHN

(astonished)

So CREEDO is taking his dog with him?

John spots OFFICER DUGAN walking past the door, heading home.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Dugan! Get in here.

Officer Dugan walks in.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Get a team back over to the Hollinsworth Estate and have them comb every area of that house again - *inside and out*. We're looking for hair of any kind, preferably from a dog. Also, check to see if any of their neighbors spotted someone out of the ordinary walking a dog that night. Hopefully, an Australian Shepherd.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

Okay. So if Mrs. Hollinsworth is Creed's sixth victim, who's next?

CUT TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - BANQUET HALL - ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY - DAY

The banquet hall is packed. Festive holiday decorations adorn the stage and banquet tables.

Behind the podium there is an enormous, state-of-the-art, hi-definition video screen playing in the backdrop. It's the epitome of excess.

The frenzied CROWD erupts in applause as MILES COWDEN walks on stage.

MILES

Thank you. I see a rather impressive group assembled here today. -- As a close friend of mine would say, a group of the "Haves" and the "Have-MORES."

The crowd laughs and applauds. MILES smiles.

MILES (CONT'D)

We have much to celebrate this holiday season. We have weathered the financial storm and prospered. For this is not "*survival of the fittest*", my friends. This is "*survival of the FINEST.*"

The crowd roars in approval, they toast glasses.

CUT TO:

NOTE: At this point, we begin to cut back and forth between MILES's speech to his employees and FATHER O'BRIEN's sermon to the funeral congregation.

INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - ERNEST MERRIWETHER'S FUNERAL - DAY

Shot opens on a casket being walked down the aisle. The pallbearers and congregation have tears in their eyes.

FUNERAL MUSIC plays in the background as they position the casket before the altar.

FATHER O'BRIEN steps up to the pulpit.

FATHER O'BRIEN
(extremely somber)
Thank you, friends, family,
children of God for taking the
time to pay your respects. I never
knew Ernest personally, but I know
many people just like him.
Good people with good families,
who are good citizens in their
communities. But somehow in
today's society that just isn't
"good enough".

CUT BACK TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - BANQUET HALL

The room is electric. He is preaching from the bully pulpit now.

MILES
(his enthusiasm
grows)
You've heard the liberal media
calling our industry "*Corrupt*".
They should be calling us
"*Courageous*". Courageous for how
far many of us have come, when
having come from so little. They
may see the home I live in now,
but what they don't see are the
floors, backseats and the park
benches I slept on and under to
get where I am today. I've been
married to the same woman for 23
years, but I've been married to my
job for FORTY.

MILES smiles. The crowd cheers.

CUT TO:

INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - ERNEST MERRIWETHER'S FUNERAL
Parishioners wipe tears away.

FATHER O'BRIEN
Contrary to what you may have
heard, Ernest did *not* take his own
life. His life was taken *from him*.
After nearly 30 years of working
the same job for the same
corporation, they simply let him
go. Let..him...go.

(he pauses)
Ernest lost his home, his car, his
family and self-respect. Then,
ultimately, his life.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - BANQUET HALL

MILES
I will not apologize for enjoying
the fruits of our labor. We make
our biggest contribution to
society by being good at what we
do. Yes, God made us this way for
a reason and he does not expect us
to underachieve. If we profit,
everybody gains. Make no mistake,
this is God's work we are doing
here.

MILES picks up a BIBLE from the podium and holds it up.
This is his "congregation" now. The crowd goes wild.

CUT TO:

INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - ERNEST MERRIWETHER'S FUNERAL

FATHER O'BRIEN
Somewhere along the way, Ernest
confused his *Self-Worth* with his
Net-Worth. Those two couldn't be
more different than Heaven and
Hell. So although Ernest may,
himself, have lost hope, HOPE is
not lost on us. For you see HOPE
has two children: ANGER and
COURAGE. Anger at the way things
are. And the Courage to make them
better.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - BANQUET HALL

The crowd is on their feet, applauding wildly. Miles raises his glass of champagne in toast.

MILES

God bless you all! Merry Christmas
and may we all have a prosperous
New Year!

He then walks off stage with arms held high.

CUT TO:

INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - ERNEST MERRIWETHER'S FUNERAL

FATHER O'BRIEN

Let us bow our heads and pray.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - CASE ROOM - NIGHT

Surrounded by empty pizza boxes and soda cans, JOHN, KATZ, RICO and CAPTAIN HARRIS are still pouring over the case files.

They're visibly exhausted, except for JOHN who is still pushing.

JOHN

...Okay, so aside from the fact
they are all connected to Wall
Street, what else do CREEDO's
victims have in common?

DET. RICHARDS

They're all dead.

JOHN

Thanks, Rico.

DET. KATZ

All of the victims were either
indicted or under investigation
for conspiracy and fraud.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

So essentially the whole fuckin'
country has motive.

DET. RICHARDS

Hell, Bernie Madoff fucked so many people over, even the rich hate the rich now.

JOHN

There. That's interesting.

DET. RICHARDS

I said something *interesting*?

JOHN

You know there are many parallels between the wealthy and our suspect here.

CAPTAIN HARRIS

How so?

JOHN

Corporations have similar characteristics to that of a Psychopath.

DET. KATZ

You have our attention.

JOHN

By their nature, corporations put their self-interests first regardless of who suffers. They don't feel an ounce of remorse or guilt for their acts of cruelty. Their objective is to "*profit by any means necessary*". -- Like psychopaths, corporations are made up of extremely intelligent, charismatic people, who commit horrendous acts against society.

DET. RICHARDS

So what does that have to do with this case?

JOHN

Maybe CREEDO isn't the random, blue-collar avenger we've profiled him as.

DET. KATZ

Maybe he's one of them?

CAPTAIN HARRIS

Is that not the *ultimate power*? To exert your strength over those you consider the most powerful.

Suddenly, it hits KATZ. He jumps up from his seat.

DET. KATZ

Rico, come with me! John, go see
O'Brien and convince the good
Father to tell us who the fuck
confessed to him!

CUT BACK TO:

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE BANQUET ROOM - PARTY FLOOR

After MILES's rousing speech, the party is going strong.
Two executives walk up and shake MILES'S hand.

TOP EXECUTIVE #1

Tremendous speech, Miles.
Particularly the part about
"sleeping under a park bench".

TOP EXECUTIVE #2

Yes, when was that? *During rush
week at Harvard?*

They laugh uproariously. MILES's pretends to laugh along,
but he's just spotted KRISTIN through the crowd.

She gestures for him to follow her.

MILES COWDEN

Listen, gentlemen. Thank you so
much for sharing this wonderful
party with me, but I must call it
an evening.

TOP EXECUTIVE #1

And what an evening it was!

TOP EXECUTIVE #2

Indeed.

Kristen walks off down the hall, through two swinging
doors and quietly disappears into the kitchen. Miles
quickly follows, just a discreet moment behind her.

INT. BANQUET KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Just as MILES walks through the swinging doors into the
kitchen, a hand reaches out and grabs him by the tie and
pulls him into the pantry.

With great force, he is tossed to the floor, falling on
top of Kristin.

From behind, we see A DARK FIGURE holding a butcher knife down at them.

MILES
(shaken, confused)
Jesus! What is this? Who are you?

The camera swings around and we see: WILLIAM.

WILLIAM
Who am I? I worked for you for six miserable years and you don't know me?

WILLIAM jabs the knife in Miles's face.

MILES
I'm sorry. Sorry! I have over 800 people working for me. I can't possibly know all my employees.

WILLIAM
Ohh, but you certainly know all your *interns*, don't you?

He swings the knife towards Kristin, she trembles.

Miles tries to subtly reach into his jacket, but William turns and sticks the knife against Miles's cheek. Then reaches in and grabs Miles's gun.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
You always carry a gun, Miles?

MILES
Only when *someone* is murdering my friends. -- So what is it you want?

WILLIAM
I want my life back.

MILES
I don't know what that means...

WILLIAM
So sad. You have no idea who you are dealing with...

Just then, the pantry door smashes open. TWO BODYGUARDS (DRESSED AS WAITERS) bust in, one kicks WILLIAM in the back of the leg, breaking it. The other wraps a white table cloth around his head, blinding him. Two punches to the face and body and William is down.

Miles quickly stands and grabs his gun.

MILES

What the hell took you so long?!!

BODYGUARD #1

You two are more discrete than you realize.

They help KRISTIN off the floor. She's still shaken.

MILES

Take her out of here and calm her down. In the meantime, let's have ourselves a little exit interview with my new friend, William.

BODYGUARD #2 escorts KRISTIN out of the pantry, while Miles turns his attention to William.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Stanley is sweating profusely. He sits, handcuffed to the interrogation table. He's nervously smoking a cigarette. Det. Katz and Richards sit across from him, staring.

Finally, BYRON CHELSEY storms in.

BYRON CHELSEY

What the hell, gentlemen? Already done with your Christmas shopping?

STANLEY

I didn't tell 'em anything, Byron!

DET. KATZ

Oh, but you will.

BYRON CHELSEY

Take these off him!

Det. Richards leans over and unlocks the cuffs.

DET. KATZ

Your client better start "participating" here or he's about to have his face plastered across the news as the lead suspect in not only his wife's murder, but five others as well.

DET. RICHARDS

(to Stanley)

So do you like the name CREEDO? Or do you prefer something else?

STANLEY

You've got to be joking. I didn't murder my wife much less anyone else!

Byron turns to Stanley.

BYRON CHELSEY

Don't say another fuckin' word.

(back to Katz)

So are you now suggesting my client is Creedo? Is that what you're saying? -- Director Hollinsworth here has lost his wife and quite possibly his career over these outrageous accusations. You simply have the wrong guy.

DET. KATZ

Yeah, and what if we've got the *right* guy? You gonna donate your fee to the victim's families?

Byron doesn't say a word.

DET. RICHARDS

(to Stanley)

We hope you are Creedo, because if not, you're next on his list.

DET. KATZ

You know what the street odds are for you being Creedo's next victim?

STANLEY

Street odds? On me?

BYRON CHELSEY

(turns to Stanley)

What part of "shut the fuck up" doesn't make you shut the fuck up?

DET. RICHARDS

Let's just say, there are some folks on the streets who stand to gain financially by the demise of your client here.

BYRON CHELSEY

Are you threatening my client?

DET. KATZ

Just saying you're safer locked up in here than you are out there.

BYRON CHELSEY

We're done.

Det. Katz and Richards smile and walk out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. GREENWICH BANQUET KITCHEN - PANTRY ROOM - EVENING

MILES and BODYGUARD #1 drag WILLIAM to his feet and pull back the white table cloth that is now stained with blood from William's broken nose.

With a gun to William's head, Miles spews venom.

MILES

Did you really think you could get me? ME?!

William is now shaking with fear.

MILES (CONT'D)

Did you think I didn't know who fucked up my car you little, prick. I know who the fuck you are. Trust me, you don't drop the cash I did on that ride and only have one camera on it, you stupid fuck!

Miles grabs William's face with his hand, pressing his palm against his broken nose. WILLIAM SCREAMS in pain.

Miles turns away to regain his composure...but then swings back and punches William in the face. He drops to the floor.

MILES (CONT'D)

Get him the fuck out of here! I'm done.

CUT TO:

EXT. MCMICHAEL'S BAR - LATE NIGHT

INT. MCMICHAEL'S BAR

It's a dimly lit bar with dark mahogany wood throughout. A pathetic-looking Christmas tree flashes in the corner.

At the end of the bar, sits FATHER O'BRIEN. He just stares down into his glass of scotch, lost in thought.

Door opens and in walks JOHN. He walks over and sits down. Father O'Brien doesn't even notice.

JOHN
(to the bartender)
Whiskey and a draft.
(turns to Father)
So *this* is where priests go for
their "spiritual guidance", huh?

Father O'Brien looks up. He's had a few.

FATHER O'BRIEN
John! Good to see you!

JOHN
You okay?

FATHER O'BRIEN
I'm baptized in booze, my son!
Join me. The water is warm.

JOHN
I stopped by the church. I heard
what happened the other day. I'm
sorry.

Father O'Brien stares down at his glass.

FATHER O'BRIEN
I'm sorry I couldn't save him.
(takes a sip)
So when are you going to let me
save you?

He grabs a handful of peanuts. Gently, he opens the shell, exposing the goodness within.

JOHN
What?

FATHER O'BRIEN
Your wrist. You think I didn't
notice. What your watch band
doesn't cover up, your heart
reveals.

JOHN
You're a few years too late for
that, Father.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Ohhh, but it's never too late to
save a soul.

John sits in silence, carefully contemplating his
response. Suddenly, his PHONE VIBRATES -- It's a text
message from Det. Katz:

Hollinsworth Not Talking. Progress?

JOHN turns his phone off. And, at last, begins to talk
about his past.

JOHN

Used to be a detective in Detroit.
Headed up just about every major
homicide case in the city. Few
years ago...

(gathering himself)
...I'm tracking this serial
murderer. He's killed four
children and three others are
missing. I'm heading up the
manhunt, so my face is plastered
across the news.

John stops. Swallows hard. Clearly struggling with
reliving his past.

JOHN (CONT'D)

One night, Sandra, my ex-wife, is
working late at the hospital. So
my daughter and I are at home.
About three in the morning, a
noise wakes me up. I think it's
Sandra. So I get up and that's
when I notice there's smoke coming
out from under the bedroom door. I
can feel the heat from the fire on
the other side. Then I hear my
daughter calling "Help...Daddy...
Help!!"

(swallows hard again)
As I open the door, the fire...the
backdraft...explodes. A burning
bookcase is now blocking the
doorway. I couldn't get through.

(choking up, shaking)
So I call out to her get down.
Away from the smoke. But she
doesn't answer.

FATHER O'BRIEN

John...we don't have to do this
here.

JOHN
(mix of heartbreak
and anger)
No, no, I'm fine.

John tosses back his shot of whiskey.

JOHN (CONT'D)
So I climb out the bedroom window
and drop to the ground, breaking
my leg. I can't feel it at the
time so I run around the house and
go through the front door, but I'm
grabbed by two firemen who push me
back out. I should've gone back...

John stops and sits there in silence. He seems to have
disappeared. Father O'Brien waits.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(voice cracking)
I see her face every night. I can
hear her calling for me. How do
you live with that? I couldn't.
I didn't want to.

He takes off his watch, EXPOSING HIS SCARS.

JOHN (CONT'D)
So you still up for saving me now,
Father? I know all the scripture.
*"If any man defile the temple of
God, him shall God destroy."*

FATHER O'BRIEN
I'm sorry the church was of no
comfort to you.

JOHN
All the lives that I've saved and
they turn their back on me!

John is done, his confession is complete.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Now tell me, Father, what do you
know about CREEDO? What did you
hear in confession?

FATHER O'BRIEN
You know I'm bound by the Seal of
Confession.

JOHN

"Take heed to yourselves; if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him" -- Those who sin and who harm others must be confronted with their deeds so that they might repent.

FATHER O'BRIEN

"Let the priest who dares to make known the sins of his penitent be deposed".

JOHN

Save someone, Father.
 (quietly pleads)
 Save someone tonight like you
 couldn't do the other day.

This hits the Father to the core. He sits, staring at his scotch. It's now his turn to confess.

FATHER O'BRIEN

(to his savior)
 God, help me.

He turns to John.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

(surrendering)
 His name is STEVEN RATCLIFF. They call him, SPIDER, because of his dreadlocks. He's white. Blue eyes. Gold tooth. Lives over in the projects off of 39th street. He's a small time drug dealer. Has a fondness for young girls.

JOHN

Why haven't we heard of this guy before?

FATHER O'BRIEN

He's seen as a "poser". He's a white guy with dreadlocks. No one trusts him. And if you deal drugs, but don't have trust, you're no one.

He takes a drink, his hand shakes.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

Steven wears an "ANKH" necklace. He spoke of it often when we would talk. To him, it was a symbol for a better life.

(MORE)

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

I tried to help him, but you can't
help those who don't want it.

John stands up to go.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

I'm not suggesting he did this,
John. I'm just telling you where
I've seen the symbol. -- I cannot
get involved any further with
this. I will not testify.

JOHN

Let's hope it doesn't come to
that, Father.

John disappears out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY SECTION-8 HOUSING PROJECT - SPIDER'S
APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

A line of police cars and a S.W.A.T. van pull up. Lights
are off, no sirens. With great precision, a S.W.A.T. TEAM,
led by DET. KATZ and RICHARDS rushes into the building.

JOHN stays behind in the S.W.A.T. van, monitoring the
action. This is as close as he gets.

INT. SPIDER'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The S.W.A.T. disappears up the back stairwell.

As the team reaches SPIDER'S floor, they throw hand
signals. Just as they reach for the door to the hallway,
a man in dreadlocks pushes the door open from the other
side -- IT'S SPIDER!

Frantic, Spider kicks and pushes the detectives and
breaks free down the hall back into his apartment. The
S.W.A.T. team gives chase.

Det. Katz and Richards each take a side of Spider's
apartment door. Guns drawn. ON THREE -- ONE...TWO... with
that Det. Katz kicks the locked door.

HIS FOOT CRASHES THROUGH THE THIN WOODEN DOOR, but the
door itself doesn't budge.

With his foot stuck in the door, Katz loses his balance
and falls backwards just as...BAM! - BAM!... two shotgun
blasts destroy the door right above his head. Splinters
and shrapnel shower the hallway.

THROUGH THE HOLES IN THE DOOR, we see Spider reloading his sawed-off shotgun.

TWO SHARPSHOOTERS step forward - POP! - POP! - One bullet hits Spider in the shoulder. The other, shatters a lamp.

Spider dives into the bathroom and slams the door shut.

Det. Richards pulls Katz out of the way as the S.W.A.T. team busts through what's left of the door.

INT. SPIDER'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The SHARPSHOOTERS dive to opposite sides of the bathroom door.

SHARPSHOOTER #1 reaches up to check the door knob and... BAM! - BAM!... two shotgun blasts obliterate the door and Sharpshooter #1's hand.

He drops his gun and reaches for his bloody, mangled hand, SCREAMING IN PAIN.

SHARPSHOOTER #2 steps forward and... POP! - POP! ...he fires two shots through the gaping holes in the door. One shot hits SPIDER in the torso and the other in the head.

Spider falls backwards into the shower, taking the plastic curtain down with him as his lifeless body falls into the tub...on top of A YOUNG GIRL, cowering in fear.

YOUNG GIRL
(SCREAMS IN HORROR!)

Spider's dead body bleeds onto the shower curtain between him and the frightened girl.

Sharpshooter #2 quickly pulls her out from under Spider. Her clothes are torn. She appears to have been heavily drugged and raped.

SHARPSHOOTER #2
(over his radio)
Apartment SECURED! Officer down!

Det. Katz rushes into the bathroom, gun still drawn.

He sees the girl. She's trembling uncontrollably. He puts a bath robe around her.

PARAMEDICS rush in.

Det. Katz looks down at Spider's dead body. He has BLUE EYES, GOLD TOOTH and an "ANKH" chain around his neck.

From the other room...

DET. RICHARDS
Katz! Have a look.

INT. SPIDER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Scattered around Spider's bedroom is a mini-drug lab of sorts: small bags of amphetamines, drug paraphernalia, and a large mirror with stacks of money, cut cocaine and a razor blade.

Suddenly, John rushes in.

JOHN
You guys alright?

DET. KATZ
(stunned)
Not sure just yet.

On the wall is a line up of Polaroid pictures of young, underage girls. At the bottom of the photos are men's names written in marker.

JOHN
Shit...

John points to the photo of a young girl.

Written in marker, we see the name: STAN HOLLINSWORTH with four \$\$\$\$ symbols and a date written next to it.

DET. RICHARDS
Didn't I say if these guys don't fuck up, we don't catch 'em?

DET. KATZ
Call it in.

They stand, staring at the horrific wall of photos.

JOHN
Jesus.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: TWO WEEKS LATER

INT. POLICE STATION - JOHN'S OFFICE - DAY

John's sitting at his desk finishing up paperwork on the CREEDO case.

OFFICER DUGAN walks past his doorway, dressed as an ELF. He's carrying a stack of Christmas Presents and is clearly not happy about it.

JOHN

I see you're on Santa's Naughty
List this year.

OFFICER DUGAN

Elf you, John.

John laughs, turns back to his case folder, sifting through a few photographs from the case:

-- The high-brush from MARY-ANN's murder at the trail.

-- The gaping cut across her neck.

-- Blood-stained dollar bill with symbol of a WOLF

John stares at the wolf symbol. He reaches for his journal titled: *Community Relations*. Each day is marked with the calls received to the station.

He searches through the Creedon case file looking for DATES OF THE KILLINGS. He jumps back and forth between the two calendars.

He stands up, scanning his tape archives for November 14th. He grabs it and inserts it into the tape player and pushes PLAY.

COMPLAINT #1 - MAN (V.O.)

*....damn kids riding their
skateboards up and down my...*

John PRESSES FAST-FORWARD to:

COMPLAINT #2 - ELDERLY WOMAN
(V.O.)

*... with someone about these
flyers in my mailbox.*

(FAST-FORWARD again)

*...and this damn dog next door
just barks and barks...*

(REWINDS again)

*...and this damn dog next door
just barks and barks...*

John looks at the dates again. Then cross-checks ANOTHER KILL DATE and ANOTHER CALL.

He searches through his Rolodex and grabs a piece of paper, scribbling a few notes down. At that moment, DET. KATZ stops by.

DET. KATZ
You hear the news?

JOHN
No.

DET. KATZ
Remember that guy we were tailing,
that ODDSMAKER on who CREEDO was
gonna to kill next?

JOHN
(distracted)
No.

DET. KATZ
Sure you do. -- You alright?

JOHN
Yeah, what?

DET. KATZ
They just found his body in a
dumpster under the Hell's Gate
Bridge near the East River. Been
there a couple weeks.

JOHN
Who's this?

DET. KATZ
WILLIAM SANDERS. Used to work as
an investment broker at Greenwich
Pinnacle. Looks like you've got
yourself a new case.

Det. Katz turns to walk out.

JOHN
Hey, Katz? They ever determine if
Spider owned a dog?

DET. KATZ
Yeah, he owned twelve. Was
involved in a dog fighting ring.

JOHN
Australian Shepherds aren't
fighters, are they?

DET. KATZ
(laughing)
No. They can hold their own, but
they wouldn't stand a chance
against a pit bull. Why you ask?

JOHN
Just tying up loose ends in my
head that's all.

DET. KATZ
Well, how about heading down to
the East River and checking on our
boy, William?

JOHN
I'm on my way.

He grabs his jacket, gun, and the piece of paper. Then
takes a long, hard drink from his flask.

INT. POLICE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

John walks up to OFFICER DUGAN, still dressed as an Elf.

JOHN
Do me a favor...

OFFICER DUGAN
What?

JOHN
(hands him the note)
Call this number. Lady's been
calling about a barking dog next
door for months...

OFFICER DUGAN
Can't this wait? I'm trying to
deliver presents here!

JOHN
(insistent)
...Just call her and find out what
type of dog lives next door. Then
call me on my cell.

OFFICER DUGAN
Okay, but don't get mad if you get
a lump of coal in your stocking.

John walks out.

CUT TO:

EXT. NY HIGHWAY JUST OUTSIDE THE CITY - JOHN'S JEEP
CHEROKEE - DAY

John's driving along the East River.

He looks out the window and sees an emaciated dog limping underneath the railroad tracks as he passes.

He pulls a photograph of the WOLF SYMBOL from his jacket and looks at it. -- HIS PHONE RINGS.

JOHN

Yeah, what do you got?

OFFICER DUGAN (V.O.)

Thanks a lot, John. The old lady was pissed. Bitched at me for not returning her calls...

JOHN

What kind of dog is it?!!

OFFICER DUGAN (V.O.)

She wasn't sure of the breed.

JOHN

Color? Did she give you a color?

OFFICER DUGAN

Think she said it was white...and BROWN, mostly brown.

John looks up and sees the EXIT SIGN for the ramp to HELL'S GATE BRIDGE. -- He drives right past it and continues on.

CUT TO:

EXT. POVERTY-STRICKEN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

John pulls up to the house. We see a mailbox strewn with fliers, both inside and out.

As he heads to the porch, AN ELDERLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMAN opens the door.

ELDERLY WOMAN - COMPLAINANT #2

It's about time. -- I was a beautiful, young woman when I first called you.

JOHN

Hi. I'm Detective John Benson.

ELDERLY WOMAN - COMPLAINANT #2

Ohh, a "detective". They're sending out the big guns for this. Good. Good.

(pointing to her mailbox)

(MORE)

ELDERLY WOMAN - COMPLAINANT #2

Well, you can see what the hell
they do, day after day. Bad for
the environment too, the wasted
paper and all.

Suddenly, from behind the garage next door, A DOG BARKS.

ELDERLY WOMAN - COMPLAINANT #2

(CONT'D)

And there goes that damn dog!

(to house next door)

SHUT THAT DAMN DOG UP!

(turns back to John)

See what they've done. A woman my
age, having to scream.

JOHN

How 'bout I run over there and
have a talk with them?

ELDERLY WOMAN - COMPLAINANT #2

Just some old lady lives there.
She's ill I think. Son drops by
now and again and looks in on her
and that damn dog.

The DOG BARKS again.

ELDERLY WOMAN - COMPLAINANT #2

(CONT'D)

SHUT THAT DOG UP!

JOHN

Calm down. I'll be back in a few
minutes.

As JOHN makes his way across the yard, around to the back
of the garage...the dog comes racing around the corner.

It startles JOHN. He jumps back. It's an AUSTRALIAN
SHEPHERD.

We hear the back-entry door to the garage SLAM SHUT.

John walks to the door and reaches up to knock. Just then
the door re-opens and A MAN walks back out, bumping into
John. They're both surprised.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Woah, excuse me...

JOHN stops in disbelief.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Father O'Brien?

FATHER O'BRIEN

John? Uh, what brings you here?

Father O'Brien steps out, closing the door behind him.

JOHN

Oh, well...I was following up on a call next door.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Ms. Junger. Yeah, she's sweet.
Just don't mess with her mailbox.
(smiles)

JOHN

Seems she's taken issue with your dog.

FATHER O'BRIEN

You mean ol' King here?

He pets the dog on its head.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

Yeah, gets a little rambunctious when I'm not around. My mother lives here. I come by to check in on them. Guess I'll have to stop by more often.

JOHN

I'm sure your neighbors would be grateful.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Okay, well. I must get back to it.
Nice seeing you.

JOHN

Good seeing you too, Father.

Father O'Brien takes King back inside the garage and closes the door.

John's now closer to this case than he ever wanted to be.

He puts his hand on his gun and slowly opens the back-entry door to the garage. It's dark. He's not sure where they've gone.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Father? Forgive me...just one more question...

Just then a large, metal gas can comes swinging out of the darkness, smashing JOHN across the face. He falls helplessly to the floor, unconscious.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. YOUNGER JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (2005)

EMILY

Daddy! Daddy!! Help me!!

Startled, YOUNG JOHN wakes up in his bed as SMOKE POURS IN UNDER THE DOOR.

YOUNG JOHN

I'm coming, honey! Crawl away from the smoke! I'm coming!

He opens the door and FIRE EXPLODES, throwing him back onto the floor. The only way out is through the window. He jumps from the second-story onto the ground, collapsing IN PAIN.

He struggles to his feet, pulling himself towards the front door. The house is ENGULFED IN FLAMES.

As he rushes into the house, TWO FIREMAN, on the inside, grab John, forcing him back out.

John grabs the door frame, desperately fighting to go back in. The FIREMEN PUSH HARDER...

John looks over and sees the GOLD FISH BOWL near the door. HE GRABS FOR IT...just as he's pushed out of the door and onto the lawn.

The HOUSE EXPLODES IN FLAMES.

BACK TO PRESENT

John opens his eyes. Blood is pooling on the concrete floor near his face. He struggles to get up, but his hands are tied behind his back, bound with duct tape.

He turns his head and there, tucked into the shadows, is KING, growling.

John sees a bag of dog food and kicks it over, spilling the food into his pool of blood.

KING rushes over and begins devouring them.

John looks around for something to cut the duct tape. He spots A TABLE SAW.

He has trouble reaching it at just the right angle. He tries again, pushing hard to extend his arms just so.

HIS WRISTS...MEET THE BLADE.

JOHN
(SCREAMS!!!!)

The tape breaks. BLOOD FLOWS. -- His old wounds have been reopened. -- He grabs some rags and wraps it around his wrists.

John reaches for a light switch. A fluorescent tube overhead begins to flicker, struggling to illuminate.

Finally, CREEDO's WORKSHOP IS REVEALED:

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) The bloodied retractable leash, camera, an old coffee can filled with gold envelope openers -- and a brown wig with dreadlocks.

B) Newspaper clippings of CREEDO's murders.

C) Photos of STANLEY, MARY-ANN and MILES at AMORES's

D) A framed picture of A WOMEN HOLDING FLOWERS we saw in the opening shot.

THE CAMERA PUSHES IN ON...

E) A front-page headline from the "*Detroit Free Press*":

"Serial Killer Burns Cop's House - Daughter Dies"

F) Clippings of CREEDO's next target: MILES COWDEN

END SERIES OF SHOTS

John grabs the newspaper article of MILES and runs out.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - NIGHT

Police cars and a S.W.A.T. van pull up. -- Det. Katz, Richards and the S.W.A.T team rush into the building.

JOHN stands outside in the S.W.A.T. van monitoring their movements via a sniper's helmet cam.

INT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - TOP FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

With guns drawn and red laser sights on, a S.W.A.T. team makes their way down the hallway, past an enormous gold mural of the Greenwich Pinnacle logo.

Through the blinds, the lights in Miles's office are on.

Det. Katz and Richards throw hand signals as they reach Miles's door. -- This time, the S.W.A.T. TEAM uses a DOOR RAM TO SMASH OPEN the door. -- TWO SNIPERS rush in, looking for a target...NOTHING.

Lying dead on the floor behind the couch, are Miles's TWO BODYGUARDS.

Det. Richards directs Katz's attention to a DOLLAR BILL on Miles's desk. In black marker the words read:
IN GREED WE TRUST.

DET. KATZ
(through his radio)
*Office secured. Two people dead.
But Miles and Creedon are on the
move.*

Det. Katz looks down and sees a SEVERED HAND beneath Miles's high-tech sensor on the wall.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREENWICH PINNACLE - S.W.A.T. VAN OUTSIDE

JOHN hears Katz's message. He looks next door at ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL. Grabs a bullet-proof vest and shotgun and runs off.

CUT TO:

INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - MAIN CHURCH - NIGHT

FATHER O'BRIEN, with gun in hand, is pushing MILES down the aisle. Miles holds a towel around his BLOODY STUMP, writhing in pain. His enormous ego, now destroyed.

MILES
(negotiating)
What is it you want, Father?!
Money? I can make it happen.
Fucking anything you want!!

Father O'Brien slams the gun into Miles's head.

FATHER O'BRIEN

I want you to respect the House of
God!

They reach the CONFESSIONAL BOOTH and Father O'Brien
forces him in, handcuffing Miles's only hand to the gold
railing inside.

MILES

Why me?!

FATHER O'BRIEN

When people are starving. When
children are cast out into the
streets. There is a price to pay!
And I'm here to collect.

MILES

For what?

FATHER O'BRIEN

For all your sins, my son.

His anger spits saliva with every word.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

You...will...repent.

Father O'Brien shuts the confessional door and steps into
the next booth. He sits, waiting for Miles to speak.

MILES

Okay! Okay!

(summons the courage)

Forgive me...Father...for I have
sinned...

(he stops)

...But what? What have I done?

FATHER O'BRIEN pulls the trigger -- BAM!

The blast tears apart the screen and splinters wood.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Your pursuit of profit will *not*
come at the expense of my sons and
daughters!! REPENT NOW...and I
will deliver your salvation!

MILES

Alright... Forgive me, Father, for
I have sinned. I have done a...

His face suddenly turns pale. Blood streams through the
towel. He struggles to breath.

Saliva trickles from the corner of his mouth. He begins to convulse, but he is handcuffed.

MILES is having a heart attack.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Ohh, no. NO you don't!

Father O'Brien rushes from his confessional and into Miles's booth. His eyes roll back as Father O'Brien frantically unlocks his handcuffs and drags him onto the church floor.

He begins performing CPR, pressing on Miles's chest.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

(speaking to God)

You will not take this from me!

He pounds his chest again and again...at last, it works. Miles returns to us.

Still seething with anger, Father O'Brien pulls out his gun and points. His finger presses on the trigger, but stops. Father O'Brien is suddenly torn:

How can he kill a man whose life he just saved?

Again, he tries. He presses the gun to MILES's head...

JOHN

DROP IT, FATHER!

Father O'Brien raises up with his gun. John fires.

BOOM! -- The SOUND OF A SHOTGUN BLAST echoes through the church. -- The wooden pew near Father O'Brien's head splinters into a million pieces.

John ducks behind a towering stone pillar.

FATHER O'BRIEN

John! My son! Miles is dying. He needs help.

JOHN

You need to end this or I will.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Come save him, John, and you save yourself!

JOHN

I can't let you go, Father!

John looks out from behind the pillar -- BAM! BAM! -- Gun shots ricochet off the stone near John's face, as Father O'Brien slips out the side door.

John rushes across the pews to Miles, just as Det. Katz and Richards burst in, guns drawn.

JOHN (CONT'D)
It's Miles! He's breathing, but
needs help. I'm going after
O'Brien.

DET. KATZ
John? Wait for backup!

He disappears out the door and down the hall. Det. Katz and Richards rush to Miles's side.

INT. SIDE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

John makes his way down the hall. He hears a DOOR TO THE STAIRWELL SLAM SHUT.

INT. BASEMENT STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

He follows the footsteps, downward. The deeper he goes, the darker it becomes. He is now entering the bowels of the church, where years of decay are revealed within.

At the bottom of the stairs, an enormous oak door stands between him and Creedo.

Cautiously, he pushes the door aside and slips in.

BAM! BAM! -- SHOTS RING OUT across the darkness.

John dives behind a stack of wooden palettes. -- A few light bulbs hang from the wooden beams overhead. Shadows dance against the cavernous walls.

They are alone now.

A voice echoes across the distance, it's difficult to trace.

FATHER O'BRIEN
How is your head, John?

JOHN
Nothing that won't heal.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Ah, but old scars never quite heal
now do they? I'm sorry for that,
but you were in the way.

JOHN

Why are you doing this?

FATHER O'BRIEN

I am doing God's work here. What
are you doing? Still sitting on
the sidelines, content to watch?

JOHN

This isn't God's work. This is
vengeance.

John begins to quietly move along the wall as they talk.

FATHER O'BRIEN

Let's see you try sitting in
confessional, day after day,
listening to evil bear their sick
little souls. Well, I could no
longer bear to sit by and do
nothing.

Father O'Brien is moving quietly through the darkness as
well. They're circling each other now.

JOHN

You sacrificed Spider?

FATHER O'BRIEN

Oh, come now. Do not weep for his
tortured soul. You rescued a
little girl, did you not?

JOHN

And Stanley Hollinsworth? You
killed his wife. For what?

FATHER O'BRIEN

You think she was innocent in all
this? She knew everything Miles,
Stanley and Mary-Ann were doing.
Their greed destroyed a foundation
I spent my life building.

John steps quietly, disappearing into the darkness.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

John? Do not get brave on me.
(listening closely
for his movements)

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)
 I like you. I truly do. But you
 stand in the way of salvation.

Father O'Brien looks up just as a stack of wooden
 palettes comes crashing down towards him. He jumps out of
 the way just as John dives forward.

BAM! BAM! -- John SHOOTs Father O'Brien in the leg,
 knocking him backward against a wooden beam.

THE WOOD AND ROCK CEILING CAVES IN ON THEM.

As the dust settles, a lone light bulb from overhead,
 illuminates the scene.

Both Father O'Brien and John are buried underneath wooden
 beams.

John's leg is trapped,. While another beam has fallen
 across Father O'Brien's chest. He struggles to breath. --
 They lie, motionless, staring at one another. Both in
 agony.

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)
 (struggling to
 breath)
 I'm done saving souls. I'm saving
 lives now. That is what's real.

John works to get his free his leg.

JOHN
 That symbol, that wasn't a wolf,
 was it? It was a dog. A Celtic
 symbol meaning "protective
 vigilance".

Father O'Brien struggles to smile.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Of all the symbols, you would've
 known that.

FATHER O'BRIEN
 You know, John, faith has brought
 us together. Divine intervention.

Father O'Brien raises up the pistol.

JOHN
 You don't have to do this, Father.
 You still have time to repent.

He points the gun toward John.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 You can't have absolution without
 confession, Father!

FATHER O'BRIEN
 Yes, but what good is confession
 if it doesn't inspire change?
 (blood spits from his
 mouth)
 I am the change!!

JOHN
 (pleading now)
 Ask for forgiveness, Father.

Father O'Brien is slipping away. John struggles to pull
 himself from under the beam.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Father...?

FATHER O'BRIEN
 I'm sorry to learn about your
 daughter, John. Truly. No parent
 should ever lose a child.

FATHER O'BRIEN presses onto the trigger...

FATHER O'BRIEN (CONT'D)
 Forgive me, mother...

BAM!! -- A lone shot rings out across the darkness.

John falls back...exhausted. It is over.

CUT TO:

MUSIC: "GOOD KING WENCESLAS" BY ST. JOHN'S BOYS CHOIR

SERIES OF SHOTS:

A) DET. KATZ and RICHARDS rush in to help pull JOHN from
 the rubble. -- They see FATHER O'BRIEN'S lifeless body.

B) OUTSIDE THE CHURCH - MILES, in critical condition, is
 placed into the back of an AMBULANCE. TWO POLICE OFFICERS
 step inside to accompany him.

C) IN PRISON - STANLEY HOLLINSWORTH, frightened for his
 life, is released into the prison's "general population".
 BYRON CHELSEY looks on.

D) GREENWICH PINNACLE - KRISTIN, THE INTERN, cozies up to
 another executive near the copy machine.

E) AT THE BAR - AMANDA raises a toast to all of HER BAR PATRONS. They rejoice in Christmas celebration.

F) BOB, THE INVESTMENT BANKER, rejoices in the birth of his new daughter.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

TITLE CARD: THREE WEEKS LATER

CUT TO:

EXT. HERE-2-HELP FOUNDATION - BASKETBALL COURTS - DAY

The court is quiet except for JAMAAL, who is shooting basketball alone.

In the distance, with a cane in hand, we see JOHN limping toward the courts.

Jamaal walks toward John, who is smiling.

JAMAAL
Got a question for you, John.

JOHN
What's that?

JAMAAL
Who da' king?

John smiles.

JOHN
You da' King.

JAMAAL
(with deep sincerity)
Nah. *YOU DA' KING.*

Jamaal reaches out his hand to John, then pulls him in for a hug.

JAMAAL (CONT'D)
You saved this Foundation. Saved these kids... Saved me.

JOHN
Thank Greenwich Pinnacle too. Seems the board was eager to restore their reputation.

They stand for a moment not knowing quite what to say.

JAMAAL

I gotta admit, he did a lot of
good for us all here.

JOHN

Sometimes good people do bad
things.

JAMAAL

That I know.

JOHN

Alright. When I get this leg
fixed, I'm coming for your throne.

JAMAAL

Nah. It's your throne I'm after.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICER JOHN BENSON'S APARTMENT - DAY

The front door opens. JOHN limps in. He sets his cane
onto the table near the GOLD FISH BOWL. Next to it, the
picture of John's ex-wife, SANDRA, and daughter, EMILY.

He grabs the remote and turns on the TV.

The TV PLAYS IN THE BACKGROUND, as JOHN makes himself a
cup of coffee.

TV ANCHOR #1

(from television)

*...In what can only be described
as a miracle, a US Airways jet,
Flight A320, crash landed in the
Hudson River today. They were just
minutes into their flight from
LaGuardia when the plane collided
with a flock of geese, cutting
power to both engines. Thanks to
the remarkable response from the
Coast Guard and numerous ferry
boats, all 155 passengers and crew
members...were saved.*

Next to the coffee maker, we see John's bottle of
whiskey. His hand trembles as he reaches for...the phone.

He dials. We wait for a voice. A woman answers.

JOHN
(hesitant, shakey)
Hi. It's me...John.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END