BATTLE CREEK

Episode 101

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TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT 1

An elementary school pageant. Nothing too fancy. As "Flight of the Bumblebee" plays, A DOZEN SIX YEAR-OLDS buzz about the stage in fat yellow and black striped costumes.

They're performing for a full house of smiling, blue-collar PARENTS.

It gets even cuter when a ballerina all in green tiptoes into view, waving her magic wand. This tiny GREEN FAIRY is a big-eyed heartbreaker. Absolutely adorable.

The girl's proud DAD hurries from his seat into the aisle. Grinning ear to ear, he frames his Green Fairy in the fold-out screen of his video camera, recording her solo dance.

The door at the back of a darkened auditorium opens...revealing the SILHOUETTE of a MAN.

CLOSE - THE SILHOUETTED MAN

Meet RUSS AGNEW, 40. His suit was all he could afford when he bought it fifteen years and twelve pounds ago, but it's clean and pressed. Russ clearly isn't a parent, as he doesn't give a shit what's happening onstage. He's here scanning the audience.

And all he sees are a sea of parents holding video cameras. For some reason, this pisses him off.

When he sees what he's looking for, he beelines down the aisle -- straight for the DAD, taps him on the shoulder--

The Dad turns to see Russ, who shrugs apologetically, flashes a BADGE, keeps his voice low.

RUSS
Battle Creek Police. Sir, you wanna come with me?

DAD
(concerned, confused)
W-what's going on? --

RUSS
--Does that have a digital or optical zoom?

2 EXT. STREET - BATTLE CREEK - NIGHT 2

We're looking at a diner from a half a block away. Except we don't know that. Because it's slightly shaky (HAND HELD) and incredibly blurry. *

TEDDY THE SNITCH (O.S.)
It's blurry.

FONT (O.S.) *
It's a phone. It doesn't have an *
optical--

TEDDY THE SNITCH (O.S.)
It's blurry! It's useless! I'm gonna die because you guys don't have--

And we hear a SCREECH OF TIRES and pan down to REVEAL, IN FOCUS (since it's in the foreground), a 2001 Chevy Metro sliding to the curb, bumping into it, opposite the skeevy DINER. And now that we have a little more in focus, it becomes clear... This is <u>not</u> the nice part of town.

Russ jumps out and hurries toward a nearby van. Triumphant, he holds up the fancy, commandeered video camera.

3 INT. CARGO VAN - DAY 3

Russ piles into the driver's seat. In the passenger seat is a relieved DETECTIVE FONTANELLE WHITE, 30s. In the empty cargo bay, a pudgy young man sits shirtless atop a milk crate. This is Teddy the Snitch, a very nervous general miscreant.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
I'm still gonna die.

Russ crawls in back with Teddy. He wastes no time taping a microphone to the snitch's blobby, bare chest.

RUSS
No you're not, Teddy. Dying was never one of your choices. Cooperate or go to jail; that was the complete list.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
Did I tell you what this guy did to his mother? His own mother.

FONT
His mother died when he was two.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
He killed her with a Thomas the Tank Engine.
(off their looks)
He was precious.

RUSS
Precocious.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
He was psycho! He smokes more meth than he sells! If he gets even the faintest whiff I'm narking on him...

RUSS
Relax and shut up. It'll go like clockwork.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
Yeah, right. Like that ever happens around here.

FONT (O.S.)
Uh, Russ...?

Up front, Font is checking the operation of the video camera. Seeing footage of the cute GREEN FAIRY, he frowns confused.

FONT (CONT'D)
Where'd you get this?

RUSS
Ah. Try not to tape over that.

Russ finishes wiring Teddy, then switches on their McCarthy-era RF EQUIPMENT. He squints at it, switches it off and on again.

RUSS (CONT'D)
Font? Why isn't the red light coming on?

Font and Russ exchange a look - they both know what this means. But...

FONT
...Maybe the red light is broken...?

Russ takes a calming breath -- *what to do*? A beat, then...BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! He pounds on the equipment. Teddy's trust has understandably disappeared.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
Who sells you this crap-- Goodwill?!

Font puts a finger to his lips to shush him. Teddy won't shush.

TEDDY THE SNITCH (CONT'D)
No, dude-- first the video camera then the wire? What the hell kinda police department is this?!

RUSS
The grossly underfunded kind. And not for nothing, also the kind that busted your ass. Shut up and let me think!

Anxious silence. Font speaks low and intense to his partner.

FONT
Dealer's gonna be here in twenty minutes. What we gonna do, Russ? We gotta be able to record this buy.

RUSS
(knows it's a long shot)
Teddy calls us, puts his phone on speaker--

TEDDY THE SNITCH
--And as soon as a horn honks anywhere within a block, I get to get raped.

RUSS
You mute it--

TEDDY THE SNITCH
And leave it on the table? Tell him to speak loudly--?

RUSS
You cover it up--

TEDDY THE SNITCH
And tell him to speak louder? It's not designed for broadcasting crap people don't want broadcast. You're done! B to the O to the N-E-D! This is pathetic; just put me in jail.

Teddy starts to put his shirt on. Russ just stares at him, completely calm and unthreatened. Finally...

RUSS
...Take your shirt off.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
Why should I?

RUSS
Because you're not going anywhere.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
I'm sure as hell not going into that diner.

RUSS
Yes you are.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
Give me one good reason.

RUSS
...You're a loser.

Font reacts; Teddy reacts.

RUSS (CONT'D)
We're all losers; that's why we're in this van in this town in this state. But you've perfected the art, Freddy--

FONT
Teddy.

RUSS
I don't need to know your name to know you've managed to make every conceivable wrong decision in your life; I figure you've managed to make it to thirty still living in your mother's basement, I figure you haven't had a date in over six months, and lamest of all, I figure you've managed to make less money selling drugs than you would have made if you'd just said "yes" when your sister's boyfriend's cousin's buddy or whoever it was said he could get you a job... at Burger King. So you know, deep down inside, that no matter how stupid our plan sounds, no matter how doomed to fail it is, it's better than any choice you'd make as soon as you walk out of here.

Silence. Teddy is devastated by the truth.

FONT
(concerned)
Russ... He's crying.

RUSS
Yeah. But he's also taking his shirt off.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
(fighting back tears, defensive)
I'm not crying. ...And my mom lives with me.

FONT
...And we still need a microphone.

Russ shuts his eyes, thinks for all he's worth. Now...Eureka.

RUSS
(to Font, excited)
Your sister lives near here, right?
(off Font's nod)
Didn't she just have a baby?

Off Font, wondering just how this is supposed to help them:

4 INT. DOWN & OUT DINER - NIGHT 4

Gangbangers, tweaking crackheads, homeless guys and runaways--this isn't exactly Denny's. We PAN this dangerous interior to land on... A BABY MONITOR, shaped like a purple teddy bear, sitting atop a booth table.

A hand props a MENU against it, hiding it. This is Teddy, who sits alone, simultaneously scared and pissed.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
Un...believable.

5 INT. CARGO VAN - CONTINUOS - TEDDY 5

Can be seen on the fold-out VIDEO SCREEN -- Font is zoomed in on him, videotaping him through the distant diner window.

Beside Font sits Russ, fiddling with the volume on the OTHER HALF of the BABY MONITOR. It's plugged to a 12 VOLT ADAPTER that's in turn plugged to the CIGARETTE LIGHTER. And...

TEDDY THE SNITCH (V.O.)
Can you hear me? Of course you can't hear me, I'm talking to myself and then I'm gonna get raped.

Amazed his muttering is coming in so loud and clear, Russ and Font bump fists -- victory!

FONT
This is actually gonna work!

RUSS
Whoa, whoa -- here he comes.

Both detectives peer out the window. Across the way, one mean, Paul Bunyan-size mofo crosses the parking lot and enters the diner. This is the DEALER they've been waiting for.

Russ clicks on a MICROCASSETTE RECORDER, holds it beside the baby monitor. With bated breath, Font mans the camera. On his little screen we see the Dealer take a seat opposite Teddy.

TEDDY THE SNITCH (V.O.)
Hey buddy, whassup? How you been?

DEALER (V.O.)
Can't complain.

TEDDY THE SNITCH (V.O.)
Yeah? Excellent. How's tricks?

Font looks askance at Russ -- *tricks*? Mr. Cool's in the house.

DEALER (V.O.)
(impatient)
You got the money?

TEDDY THE SNITCH (V.O.)
Absolutely, right here. You're welcome to coun--
(the guy grabs it)
Yeah. Go ahead and count it. That's cool.

Font gives a thumbs-up. Russ grins and nods -- they've got him dead to rights. It's all going like clockwork. Until...BEEP BEEP...

RUSS
What the hell was that?

DEALER (V.O.)
What the hell was that?

RUSS and FONT FREEZE. Oh...shit.

FONT
(hoping not)
...Battery low? I put in new--

RUSS
Our batteries?

TEDDY THE SNITCH (V.O.)
I didn't hear anything.

BEEP BEEP again, soft but distinct. And RUSTLING SOUNDS are heard.

DEALER (V.O.)
What the hell?! You're wired?!

TEDDY THE SNITCH (V.O.)
No; someone must have left-- I mean what sort of idiotic cops would use--

WHAM! The sounds of a BEATING.

TEDDY THE SNITCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Guys. Guys. Guys. GUYS!!

Teddy HOWLING. But Russ and Font haven't heard the last of the conversation because they are now sprinting across the parking lot.

6 INT. DOWN & OUT DINER - CONTINUOUS 6

Russ and Font burst inside, shoving through a crowd of low-lives who stand watching the Dealer as he swings Teddy by the collar, BANGING HIS HEAD off the floor like he's trying to drive a nail.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
SHOOT HIM! SHOOT HIM IN THE HEAD!

Font tackles the big man low -- Russ hit him high. They all sprawl to the floor in a big, kicking pile.

Hanging on for dear life, Russ fumbles in his pocket, pulls out a STUN GUN. It's old and worn, with duct tape around the handle. Russ james the business end in the huge man's NECK.

Nothing happens. Russ holds it up, clicks it on and off. It's not working -- which gives the Dealer the opportunity to grab Russ by the throat.

RUSS'S POV - THE DEALER

The Clint Eastwood shot: a fist as big as a Christmas ham cocks back, then comes whistling straight us. As it HITS -- BOOM!

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

7 EXT. GOVERNMENT COMPLEX - MORNING 7

A giant CORN FLAKE cast in bronze sits atop a black pedestal; a daily reminder of the promise of the past unfulfilled.

And our Chevy Metro passes. Russ drives into the complex, passing a sign that says "POLICE", parks and climbs out with a box of eclairs.

A sign that says "RESERVED FOR R. AGNEW" marks his space. Russ notes that the post it is on stands slightly ASKEW. He carefully and proudly straightens it, then walks toward the building.

8 INT. P.D. HALLWAY - MORNING 8

WORKMEN finesse a long roll of carpeting around a sharp corner. Curious, Russ steps over it, rounding into view on his way up this bland hall. His curiosity grows and his pace slows as he stares in through the floor-to-ceiling windows of an UNOCCUPIED OFFICE SUITE. More WORKMEN are inside, putting the final touches on a very nice work place.

Wondering at this, Russ smiles slightly and turns and enters * the office DIRECTLY OPPOSITE. The sign on this door says "DETECTIVE SQUAD".

9 INT. DETECTIVE SQUAD - CONTINUOUS 9

Russ enters and is greeted by his fellow detectives.

FUNKHAUSER
There he is! French Connection!

Russ shakes his hand. The others call out to congratulate him: "Great job," "Nice shiner." Russ waves them off -- *no big deal*.

RUSS
French Connection ends with the bad guy getting away, Funkhauser.

FUNKHAUSER
(didn't know that)
I know that. But drugs, right? You know what I mean. Good bust!

This bullpen is panelled with blonde wood, as if brought via time machine from the 1960's. The place is a struggle between homey and homely -- family photos and personal touches brighten the mismatched office furniture.

Computers, all with CRT monitors, weigh down each desk.

There's not a lot of room in here for the DETECTIVES present. There's FUNKHAUSER, nice guy, midwest sized, eats way too much cheese, tends to tie his tie a bit short. NIBLET, nice guy, eats way too much cheese (but somehow his metabolism has let him get away with it), tends to tie his tie a bit short (because that's how Funkhauser does it), bit odd looking. And JACOCKS, nice gal, miserable to be lactose intolerent, her name has made her the toughest person in every room she's in (maybe it wasn't her name, but something sure has), yet she's proud of the fact that she goes all the way to Detroit to buy her clothes. The guys aren't quite sure of her sexuality - dying to know but know they'd die if they asked.

RUSS
Guys, I brought eclairs. Help yourselves.

The guys nod pleasantly -- *cool* -- and turn back to their work. Maybe hoping for a bigger reaction, Russ keeps it alive.

RUSS (CONT'D)
I'm putting them right here.

But the moment is already over. Russ sets the eclairs beside the ancient coffee machine. He glances at the wall behind it -- three COMMENDATION PLAQUES are hung in a neat row, all awarded to "Det. Russell Agnew." *

Russ takes a quick brush at one, flicking a speck off the brass.

HOLLY (O.S.)
Congratulations.

Russ turns to see HOLLY DALE, the office manager. She's early 30's and cute. Most definitely cute.

Upon seeing Russ and his black eye, her smile turns to a frown of concern.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Aw, Russ!

And upon seeing Holly, tough guy Russ becomes slightly lost.

RUSS
It's fine. It's nothing.

HOLLY
Does it hurt?

He shakes his head -- *please.* She reaches a hand out, almost touches his face, but not quite. They stare at one another just long enough for us to know that there's mutual attraction here. Russ drops his eyes first, points to the table.

RUSS
I brought eclairs.

Holly nods pleasantly -- *cool.* Russ nods past her, turning her attention to the windows which look out onto the hallway. From here, the workmen are visible across the hall.

RUSS (CONT'D)
(hopeful)
I put in a requisition for more space six months ago; you think it got approved?

HOLLY
I don't think so.
(off his look)
They got carpeting.

Russ stares at the workers and the new carpeting going in. Then looks down at the ratty tile floor he stands on and realizes she makes a good point.

Anxious to change the subject, Holly holds up a newspaper -- "The Battle Creek Intelligencer."

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Did you see? Nice write-up about your bust. I just wish they'd mention you and Font by name.

Russ pores over it. He hesitates just a tad too long before:

RUSS
We're cops, not movies stars.

He tucks the paper under his arm, keeping it. Giving Holly a smile, he heads for the COMMANDER'S OFFICE.

10 INT. COMMANDER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOS 10

The boss, COMMANDER GUZIEWICZ, looks more like the Maytag repairman than a cop. His office is no fancier than the bullpen it's adjacent to -- but it's got low-budget character. There is a TV, on which dances the adorable GREEN FAIRY.

Guziewicz (pronounced "GUZZA-wits") stands staring raptly at the Green Fairy. Font sits nearby, watching her, too. Russ enters, sees the TV.

RUSS
Fast-forward -- it's after this.

GUZIEWICZ
I've seen it.
(a beat; absently)
Boy, is she a cutie.

Font nods. Guziewicz shuts off the tape, turns to Russ.

GUZIEWICZ (CONT'D)
Great job yesterday.

Russ pulls the door shut. Points to his EYE.

RUSS
"Great" jobs don't end with me getting punched out.

Russ grabs the broken WIRE EQUIPMENT off a table, holds it for the boss to see.

RUSS (CONT'D)
Commander, that bust -- it should've gone by the numbers.

Russ digs his broken STUN GUN out of his pocket, calmly places the business end against Font's head; Font doesn't even flinch as Russ clicks it on. POP! A tiny puff of blue SMOKE curls out of it.

FONT
We could shoot people instead. Is that what you want? We're not shooting enough people?

Guziewicz has heard it all before, but patiently holds his tongue. Russ counts off on his fingers for emphasis.

RUSS
We need new equipment; new to this world, not just new to this precinct. We need the latest training. We need... <u>everything</u>!

Russ looks to Font for backup.

FONT
Or we could shoot people. I don't mind shooting people. *
(more serious) *
Something's gotta change. *

Guziewicz holds Font's look for a moment, considering what he's said, then turns to Russ...

GUZIEWICZ
Russ, can I speak to you alone?

Font and Russ exchange a confused look; then Russ shrugs, indicating it's okay for Font to leave, which he does...

GUZIEWICZ (CONT'D)
Two things. One... I'm thinking of changing up the partnerships.

RUSS
(surprised)
And when you say "thinking of", that's your way of saying "decided to" but giving the illusion that you're consulting with me.

GUZIEWICZ
(beat, then)
Yes.
(annoyed)
Why do you do that?

RUSS
Cut through the crap?

GUZIEWICZ
Yes! That crap is there for a reason. That crap makes bad news a little less harsh. I like that crap. I want that crap. I gave a lot of thought to that crap.

But when Russ sees something that doesn't make sense to him, he is incapable of leaving it alone.

RUSS
One: you put us together three months ago and our clearance rate is already the best in the squad--

GUZIEWICZ
--Which still sucks--

RUSS
Two: Font loves working with me. Three: I love working with him. And four: When things go wrong, it's got nothing to do with the pairings; it's our equipment, our resources, our infrastructure.

GUZIEWICZ
And I know you love working with Font but the job isn't about who you love and this decision has nothing to do with resources or infrastructure.

Russ considers for a beat...

RUSS
Wow.
(processing in his head)
I gave you four reasons not to do this. And you rejected three of them.

We may not, but Guziewicz knows what the missing reason is and where this is going and doesn't like it...

GUZIEWICZ
Don't do this.

RUSS
(doing this)
Did Font ask for this change?

GUZIEWICZ
(please don't make me answer that)
No. You've got answers, you don't need questions.

RUSS
Don't give me this dance--

GUZIEWICZ
This is the crap we need; this is the crap society needs; this is the crap--

RUSS
(trying not to sound hurt) *
Why doesn't he like me?

GUZIEWICZ
He likes you.

RUSS
Why doesn't he want to work with me?

GUZIEWICZ
He likes you. He thinks you're smart; he thinks you're a great cop...

Obviously that wasn't an answer. Russ waits... Guziewicz knows, unfortunately, Russ won't give up till he has the full truth.

GUZIEWICZ (CONT'D)
He thinks you're... mean.

RUSS
(reacts: "mean"?)
I brought eclairs.

GUZIEWICZ
(amazed)
Did you really make Teddy cry?
(off Russ)
He says you make people cry a lot.

And Guz was right - this is information Russ didn't need to know. But he maintains his tough exterior...

RUSS
What was the other thing you wanted to tell me? That we're now an elementary school?

GUZIEWICZ
...Great news. We're getting help. *

Off Russ, wondering what that means:

11 EXT. DETROIT FIELD OFFICE - NIGHT 11

A high-rent building towers over us. We FIND a sign in f.g: FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, DETROIT FIELD OFFICE."

12 INT. DETROIT FIELD OFFICE - NIGHT 12

The blue and gold FBI SEAL fills frame, mounted on a wall. We PAN off it to reveal... a bullpen that is everything the little Battle Creek detective squad is not.

Low, stark-white ceiling and walls stretch away to a vanishing point. Flat screens are on every desk. This looks more like the newest Ian Schrager hotel than a law enforcement facility.

No one is at their desk, however. Folks are standing around in a big group. It's an OFFICE PARTY and the last lines of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" are rising to a crescendo.

CLOSER - THE CROWD

We PRESS THROUGH these well-heeled men and women, coming upon their guest of honor. Meet... SPECIAL AGENT MILTON CHAMBERLAIN, late 30s.

Milt is Brad Pitt, only taller. He's George Clooney, only more aw-shucks charming. He's a couple of years younger than Russ, clean-cut and perfectly-- though not overly -- groomed.

"...THAT NOBODY CAN DENY!" Gets sung at full volume, then everyone applauds. Champagne is poured. Male agents clap Milt on the back. Female agents hug hum, kiss him and practically hang off him like tinsel. Everybody adores this guy.

TINK-TINK! A champagne glass gets tapped, quieting everyone. AGENT BROMBERG, late 40s, a good cop, a cop's cop, who has seen it all maybe one too many times, has the floor. Heartfelt.

AGENT BROMBERG
I'm no good at these things.
(beat)
But I gotta say... Milt, you've been an asset to this office. You've been an asset to me. A great partner and a great friend. I don't know where I'd be without you... And I'm a little scared to find out. Good luck. To both of us.

Hear, hear. The crowd murmurs in sad agreement. Milt's turn.

MILT
Kenny... everybody. I'm no good at these things, either...

FEMALE AGENT
Milt, you're good at everything!

The crowd *oooohs* good-naturedly, sensing a double entendre. The cute FEMALE AGENT puts her hands to her mouth and blushes.

MILT
I...huh. Thank you, Sandy! No, seriously, I am so touched right now.

Humble, Milt shrugs and gives up. He turns to BROMBERG, offers the man his hand. Bromberg firmly shakes it...

...Then gives Milt a full-on, fatherly HUG. Everybody CLAPS.

AGENT BROMBERG
Our loss is Battle Creek's gain.

Bromberg and Milt pose for photographs, Bromberg's arm across Milt's shoulder. FLASH, FLASH, FLASH!

Off this lovefest:

13 INT. BROMBERG'S OFFICE - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER 13

Bromberg enters his office and closes the door, blocking our view of the revelers in b.g. He has complete privacy now.

He breathes a ragged sigh of relief -- *thank God that's over.* Muttering to himself, as if talking about Bin Laden or Hitler:

AGENT BROMBERG
Good riddance, you miserable sack of shhh...

Before he can finish this sentence, we PRELAP--

14 INT. DETECTIVE SQUAD - DAY 14

The detectives (other than Russ) and Holly are gathered by the windows which look out onto the hall. They gawk across at:

THEIR POV - THE RESIDENT AGENCY

The little office is complete. We've got a clear view into the outer office, which is so tasteful and rich it looks ready for the cover of "Architectural Digest." Even the gold FBI SEAL somehow looks upscale.

The centerpiece of it all is Milt's PERSONAL ASSISTANT, seated at her desk. This woman is the spitting image of Gisele Bundchen.

Font, Guziewicz and the guys stand staring at her, transfixed. Feeling their eyes on her, the Secretary looks up from her appointment book. She gives them a friendly wave.

REVERSE POV

As seen from <u>this</u> side of the hall, the guys all dumbly wave back.

FUNKHAUSER
Damn. Even their seal is nicer than ours.

JACOCKS
When did two million people move to Battle Creek?

HOLLY
It's just a "Resident Agency."
(off their looks)
FBI satellite office.
(MORE)

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Lou says there's over a hundred of them spread around the--

She's cut off as the others *oooh* as a rich leather SOFA gets carried into the swank new space.

Font looks at the detectives, connected in their envy, and knows there's one missing. He looks back, guiltily, toward...

RUSS'S DESK. He sits alone, doing paperwork, looks up, his gaze meets Font's...

Then, his phone rings. Happy for the distraction, Russ quickly answers:

RUSS
Detective Squad. Agnew speaking.

INTERCUT WITH:

15 INT. MRS. SEYMOUR'S PLACE - DAY - CONTINUOS 15

MRS. SEYMOUR, a feisty but slightly out-of-it little lady in a WHEELCHAIR is on the line. A cat or two scampers through the frame.

MRS. SEYMOUR
I want to file a complaint. Is this Russell?

Russ looks at his watch, silently chastising himself - should have known this was coming. He is listless but polite.

RUSS
How are you today, Mrs. Seymour? Still out of your mind?

MRS. SEYMOUR
I want to file a complaint. A morality complaint.

RUSS
(prompting her)
Nice young man with the mustache?

MRS. SEYMOUR
-- There's this nice young man with a mustache who's being "*kept*" by an older man with a mustache. They live in a big mansion together and the young man gets to ride around in a fancy red sports car -- but he has to wear short shorts! Always! It's obscene.

RUSS
Tell you what, Mrs. Seymour -- I'll fly to Hawaii first thing tomorrow and arrest Tom Selleck.

MRS. SEYMOUR
Well, I wish you would!

MEANWHILE, AT THE WINDOW--

FONT
Feds is smug-ass sonsabitches.

NIBLET
Say what?

FONT
Control freaks -- all the time gotta run the show. You watch.

RUSS (O.S.)
It's one guy, Font.

They turn to Russ, hadn't noticed him approaching.

RUSS (CONT'D)
How miserable can one guy make you?

And off that thought and Font's guilty reaction, we go to--

16 INT. MILT'S OFFICE - AT THAT MOMENT 16

Milt stands in f.g., fists on his hips, staring into space. Behind him, his Assistant raps on his open door.

ASSISTANT
Milt? It's almost nine-thirty.

MILT
Thank you. I'll just be a minute.

She heads back to her desk. Milt remains here alone for another beat or two, studying his very stylish, very tasteful new office. There's not one thing wrong with it that we can see.

Except Milt is clearly dissatisfied. With what, we're not sure.

His lips move, silently at first. We CREEP IN on him. He seems to be PSYCHING HIMSELF UP, giving himself a pep talk. We hear:

MILT (CONT'D)
Big smile, big laugh, you love it here. Big smile, big laugh, you love it here. Big smile, big --

17 INT. DETECTIVE SQUAD - MINUTES LATER 17

Milt LAUGHS heartily.

MILT
I love it here! You kidding?

WIDE ON THE ROOM - EVERYBODY

Stands listening as Milt holds the floor. Guziewicz, Russ, Font, the other detectives and Holly -- are all present.

MILT (CONT'D)
I was brought up in a small town. This is just like coming home!

RUSS
You grew up in Michigan?

MILT
Well, Monaco. But same deal.

Russ reacts; the others don't.

GUZIEWICZ
Well gosh, we are certainly glad to have you. Guess I should introduce you around, huh? Detectives Russ Agnew and Fontanelle White.

Milt shakes their hands in turn.

MILT
Hi. Agent Milton Chamberlain. Milt.

GUZIEWICZ
Then there's our two "Aarons" -- Aaron Funkhauser, Erin Jacocks.

MILT
Nice to meet you, Aaron. Erin.

JACOCKS
They call me E. Easier to tell us apart that way.

Milt nods graciously, then reacts to Niblet, who eagerly sticks out his hand.

NIBLET
I'm Niblet. Welcome aboard.

MILT
Hi. Niblet?

FONT
(to Niblet)
Smile for the man.

Niblet smiles wide, showing his tiny teeth and huge, pink gums.

FONT (CONT'D)
Like niblet corn.

MILT
Ah. Huh.

GUZIEWICZ
(moving on)
And this is Holly, our office manager.

MILT
Good to meet you, Holly.

A beat. It's not lost on Holly that this man is breathtakingly handsome. Apparently distractingly so because: *

HOLLY *
You are... really good looking. *
(suddenly aware) *
I'm so sorry. That wasn't very *
professional. It's just a little... *
distracting. *

NIBLET *
(genuinely sympathetic) *
It is. *

MILT *
(smiles that smile, *
to Holly) *
No worries. You're a little *
distracting yourself. *

A PHONE RINGS -- on Russ's desk. And rings. And rings. *

GUZIEWICZ
...Russ, you gonna get that?

RUSS
(checks his watch)
Magnum P.I. is still on; the calls don't stop till eleven.
(off their looks)
It's complicated.

MILT
(a beat)
Here to help. I'll take it.

Milt moves to answer the phone. Russ shrugs happily.

RUSS
Hey, alright -- but answering that phone makes you the primary.

Milt gives a good-natured nod and picks up.

MILT
Detective Squad, Agent Chamberlain speaking.

Milt listens for a beat, then frowns. Grabbing a pad and a pen, he scribbles some notes. Some more notes. Russ watches, confused. Finally, Milt covers the receiver, turns to the others who are waiting expectantly.

MILT (CONT'D)
Looks like we've got a double homicide.

Say what? Off Russ, stunned:

RUSS
No. No. No.
(approaching)
Magnum gets double homicides.
Rockford gets double homicides.
Battle Creek does not get double homicides.
(grabs phone)
Mrs. Seymour...?

INTERCUT WITH:

18 INT. RATTY APARTMENT - DAY 18

Not Mrs. Seymour. Not a place where people actually live. At least not if they have any choice about where they live. And on a couch, a body with several bullet wounds; a second one near the window.

In the middle of the carnage stands RICKY, 24, a stunned pizza delivery kid (still in his uniform, still with his pizza box) and OFFICER CALDWELL, a beat cop in uniform, his phone to his ear, not used to dealing with situations like this.

OFFICER CALDWELL
Excuse me? This is Officer Caldwell; it's pretty bad; when are you guys gonna get here?

OFF RUSS, suddenly aware that he may have just handed off the case of his life--

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

19 INT. RATTY APARTMENT BUILDING - PUBLIC HALLWAY - DAY 19

Milt, Russ and Font, Funkhauser, Jacocks and Niblet. The whole gang is here. The door has crime scene tape across it. Down the hall, COPS keep other residents at bay. Officer Caldwell and the Pizza Deliver kid (Ricky) brief our people.

RICKY
I knocked like eight times. They're good customers-- were good customers, big tippers, but sometimes they're slow to answer the door. The last knock, the door kind of opened... And I saw the blood...

OFFICER CALDWELL
No sign of a weapon; but we've got Officers canvassing the neighborhood.

MILT
Do we have names for the victims? *

OFFICER CALDWELL *
Pizza kid said they always paid cash. Landlord says the rental agreement was in the name of Bart Simpson; also paid cash.

RUSS
(to Ricky)
And you didn't see anybody coming in or going out?

RICKY
Don't think so. I mean there were people in the building but... no one looked liked they'd just killed somebody.

OFFICER CALDWELL *
No security cameras in the building - or any of the nearby businesses.

RUSS
Of course.

RICKY
Didn't need 'em.
(MORE)

RICKY (CONT'D)
(off their looks, anger leaking through)
Couple years ago, this was a decent crappy neighborhood. ...Things like this didn't happen around here.

Russ knows what the kid is talking about and nods sympathetically until he notices--

Milt also nodding sympathetically. Then Milt sets down a cardboard dispenser box and reaches inside for a pair of one-size-fits-all, POWDER BLUE TYVEX BOOTIES. He pulls them on over his Cole Haan shoes.

MILT
Guys, you're welcome to wear these... they'll help us keep the site uncontaminated.

The detectives step forward to take a pair.

JACOCKS
Check these out. High-tech!

The guys all agree, murmuring their approval as they struggle to balance on one foot, hopping in place as they pull on their booties. Russ watches warily, but does not partake.

NIBLET
Feel like I'm with NASA!

Russ winces and takes the tape off the door and enters. Font takes note...

20 INT. RATTY APARTMENT - CRIME SCENE - CONTINUOUS 20

Russ squats by one of the bodies. Milt joins him. They look but don't touch. Font and the others stand behind them, observing.

RUSS
Two males, one approximately 35, the younger one likely in his early twenties.
(touches skin lightly)
This one's still warm. If the pizza'd been here five, ten minutes earlier we'd have had an actual witness.

MILT
Or we'd have had a dead witness.

Russ considers Milt - is he giving him crap? He certainly doesn't appear to be.

MILT (CONT'D)
My crime scene people I'm sure can give us an accurate time of death.

RUSS
(creeping annoyance)
I'm sure.

Russ pats his own suit coat, checks the pockets.

RUSS (CONT'D)
Who's got the latex glove?

The other Battle Creek guys all check their pockets.

MILT
You need a latex glove?

RUSS
No, we've got one.
(realizes that sounds ridiculous)
We just, uh. Share it.

Not trying to embarrass Russ, Milt offers him a fresh pair. Embarrassed nonetheless, Russ nods thanks and pulls them on, then removes a WALLET from the clothing of the deceased.

RUSS (CONT'D)
Dead man's wallet means dead man's name.

Milt opens the wallet to reveal... Nothing. No cash; no driver's license, no credit cards (all of which should have been implied by the word "nothing"). But...

MILT
No worries. FBI lab gets to work on the DNA, facial recognition software; we'll have names in less than 24 hours.

Milt smiles at Russ. Russ stares at him a beat, nods slowly -- his expression inscrutable.

MILT (CONT'D)
That's what I'm here for - to help. I'll have an FBI team in lickety split; you'll be amazed what we can get done.

Russ unhappily hands over the wallet.

21 INT. RATTY APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER 21

Russ steams out of the apartment, followed by Font--

RUSS
(chirpy voice)
FBI lab should be able to pull that info, lickety split. Lickety split!

FONT
(on his way to an apology)
Russ, I didn't mean to hurt--

RUSS
(bigger issues)
Water under the bridge. Because I know you're with me on this one; because you were right about this guy.

FONT
I was right? I don't think I--

RUSS
He's a Fed. Smug-ass son of a bitch.

Font considers Russ's anger; feels for the guy... *

FONT
Russ... Holly was just saying what * we were all thinking; the man is * kind of ridiculously--*

RUSS
This isn't about Holly! This is * about us. Doing our job. We don't * need to get bailed out. He can ID those bodies in 24 hours? We can do it in one. You and me. The old fashioned way, without laser beams and photons and whatever the hell. Common sense. I know this town; I know these people; nothing goes on down the hall that the other end of the hall doesn't know about.

FONT
(bit out of guilt)
Okay.
(but...)
...Wasn't our big problem yesterday that we didn't have enough equipment?

Russ just stares at him for a beat... He looks down at Font's feet.

WIDE - RUSS AND FONT

For the first time in this scene, we see both men full-length. Font is still wearing his POWDER BLUE TYVEK BOOTIES.

RUSS
Take those off, please.

22 INT. APARTMENT 612 - MOMENTS LATER 22

A similar apartment. But lived in. Someone's home. Russ and Font sit on chairs directly across from Carole and Peter Brown, mid-70s, a little nervous.

RUSS
Exactly what time did you hear the shots?

The look at each other.

CAROLE
...We didn't.

PETER
The TV was on.

Russ considers...

CAROLE
Can we get you some coffee cake?

23 INT. APARTMENT 6O5 - LATER 23

Another apartment. Also similar. This time Russ and Font sit across from Leonard Michaels, 30s, a coffee cake in between them.

LEONARD
I'm so sorry. The TV was on.

24 INT. APARTMENT 606 - LATER 24

Another apartment, another RESIDENT, another coffee cake, same message--

RESIDENT
The TV was--

And before she can even finish the thought, Russ is on his feet, heading for the door.

25 INT. APARTMENT 609 - LATER 25

Still another apartment. Russ and Font sit alone (waiting) in the living room. Font considers Russ; he's even more intense than usual... *

FONT *
Russ... we should probably talk.
I'm really sorry about--

RUSS
Don't. Never apologize for what you believe. Only apologize for being wrong.
(then)
Do you think you're wrong?

He looks at Font. Font feels bad but can't hold his gaze--

RUSS (CONT'D)
Then don't apologize.

Font really does feel like crap but just then MARLA GREEN enters, carrying a coffee cake.

RUSS (CONT'D)
(impatient)
There was a shooting here about an hour ago; I'm not going to ask you if you heard the shots because it really doesn't matter; but I want to know what you know about the people who lived in 602; you checked out their mail, you listened in on their conversations in the lobby, on the elevator--

MARLA
I don't do that.
(off Russ, pointed)
What's my business is my business. And what's not is not.
(off Russ's glare, genuine)
You sure you don't want any cake?

RUSS
No. Just one last question... is this a dicks only apartment complex?

MARLA
I'm sorry?

RUSS
Don't worry. It's really rhetorical. I'm trying to figure out why you're stonewalling me and it'd be naive to expect you to tell me.

He gets up and heads for the door; Font nods his apologies to Marla and follows, concerned.

26 INT. RATTY APARTMENT - CRIME SCENE - DAY 26

Russ comes back in and stops, stunned.

The place has been transformed. The Battle Creek detectives are gone replaced by close to a dozen federal agents, many in full haz-mat gear, going over the place with ultraviolet flashlights and other extremely high tech looking equipment; dozens of strings connect the blood splatter back to the bodies. Milt is in the middle of it all, the quarterback. He looks at Russ.

MILT
Hi, Russ. How's it going?

RUSS
(quickly regroups)
Spoke to every tenant on this floor; they had absolutely nothing to tell me.

MILT
That's a shame.

Is Milt screwing with him? Russ isn't quite sure. *

RUSS
Which told me quite a bit, I figure.

Milt reacts, appears to be interested. *

RUSS (CONT'D)
(fast, this is what he does well) *
The people in this neighborhood are never big fans of the cops but the fact that they were nice while telling me nothing tells me that it's not about us, it's about the crime. I think they're glad these guys are dead. I didn't see any paraphernalia in here but I think they were making drugs; meth or PCP or--

MILT
2C-P.
(off Russ's surprise, indicates one of his workers)
It's new. The gas chromatograph connected to a mass spectrometer detected several picograms of phenethylamine.

Well that sort of takes the wind out of Russ's sails.

RUSS
...Picograms?

MILT
Anything else?

RUSS
I think the empty wallet was to make us think it was a robbery instead of a simple territorial dispute. We can get the vics names by going through the DEA database, matching them with any--

MILT
Danté Peron and Gavin Smart.

RUSS
(what the hell?)
...How? ...It's only been an hour; you can't have equipment that works that fast?

MILT
The gentleman in 605 told me over coffee cake.

Russ is devastated.

MILT (CONT'D)
That was a very impressive analysis.

RUSS *
...But useless.

Milt doesn't need to answer that. *

MILT
I should be done here fairly soon. If you want, you can go wait at your office with the rest of the guys.

And Milt goes back to work. Russ looks around, feeling completely helpless and useless - and maybe even a little pissed that this guy has shown him up on his home turf. But the thing about being useless is, by definition, there's nothing you can do about it... *

RUSS
...Okay.

He turns and exits.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

27 INT. DETECTIVE SQUAD - DAY - ECLAIRS - NIGHT 27

Fill frame, glistening -- only three left. A fat pink hand grabs one. It's Funkhauser, who bites it in half, then licks icing off his thumb. It's like we're watching him have sex.

FUNKHAUSER
(mouth full)
These are the best eclairs ever!

The donut box (same as the previous day) has a note on it: "Thanks for making me feel at home, Milt".

We ADJUST to find... Russ sitting at his desk silently GLARING at the man. Reading Russ's sour expression sweet Holly gently speaks up on his behalf.

HOLLY
You know, Funkhauser -- Russ brought us the exact same ones the other day.

Funkhauser stares blankly, genuinely trying to remember.

FUNKHAUSER
Mmmm. No... these are different.

GUZIEWICZ
Detectives...

Taking another bite, Funkhauser wanders over to where Guziewicz is gathering all of his detectives.

GUZIEWICZ (CONT'D)
The FBI has provided us with their completed report; interesting stuff, quite the read, very nice of them to pass it on--

RUSS
"Nice"? Don't they sort of have to loop us in.

GUZIEWICZ
Well, even if they did I'd still say it was nice but, in this case, technically no, they didn't. Since they're taking lead--

RUSS
Why? It's a homicide, no state lines were crossed, no federal employees were involved, it's not their jurisdiction.

GUZIEWICZ
(a little confused)
But... he did answer the phone.

RUSS
(seriously?)
It was a joke. Come on, everyone has to realize it was a joke.

GUZIEWICZ
There's such a thing as honor.

RUSS
There's also such a thing as lunacy.

GUZIEWICZ
Be that as it may, Milt's asked to have someone team up with him--

And every hand goes up. Every hand except for Russ's. Russ reacts, a little more than annoyed at the contrast between his desirability and the new kid's. *

RUSS
Seriously? Why? Because of the booties? Because of the eclairs? I bring the same damn eclairs! *

GUZIEWICZ *
Russ... *
(an order) *
Calm down... *
(then) *
He requested you.

And that throws Russ. And everyone else for that matter.

28 INT. ESCALADE - MOVING - BATTLE CREEK STREETS - DAY 28

Milt's car. It's definitely not a Chevy. Fully loaded, leather seats, all the bells and whistles. Russ makes note of all the luxury as he sits in the passenger seat; Milt drives. After taking it all in...

RUSS *
Why me? *
(MORE)

RUSS (CONT'D)
(off Milt)
Every single one of the detectives in my squad would give their left nut for a chance to work with you.
(correcting)
Except for Jacocks, she'd give her left ovary. ...And Niblet, he actually doesn't have a left nut.

MILT
They told me you were good.

RUSS
No they didn't. They told you I was a pain in the ass. So why me?

Milt drives for a beat, considering - does he have an answer to that question; does he want to answer that question...

MILT
...I trust my gut. My gut tells me you're the right choice.

RUSS
So no actual... thought? No actual analysis? And it took you several seconds to do that lack of analysis?

Milt shrugs, what more does he need? Russ hates a lack of analysis. But Milt can just move on:

MILT
We're going to talk to dealers and users, find out who sold 2C-P, who was using, who was angry, who had a grudge--

RUSS
You know how many dealers and users there are in this town?

MILT
Approximately.

Milt hands Russ a stack of papers with a list of names on it. Russ looks at the ridiculously long list and considers the futile task in front of them...

RUSS
There's one name on this list you need to talk to. He's the dead guys' main distributor; he's the guy who knows everything about the dead guys' business.

MILT
Great. Which name is that?

RUSS
I have no idea.
(off Milt's look)
But everybody on this list who isn't that guy knows who that guy is. And everybody on this list is going to tell us exactly nothing.

MILT
These are their streets, their business, they have every reason to help us.

RUSS
Okay. Let's do it your way.

Russ sits back...

RUSS (CONT'D)
You got satellite radio in here? *

MILT
(beat, then)
And what exactly would be "your way"?

29 INT. DONUT SHOP - DAY 29

ON TEDDY THE SNITCH, eating a donut--

TEDDY THE SNITCH
No way.

Teddy has the long list of names in front of him. Across from him sit Milt and Russ.

TEDDY THE SNITCH (CONT'D)
I'm not a snitch.

RUSS
Your name is Teddy the Snitch.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
My name is not Teddy the Snitch.

RUSS
Yes. But we do call you that. And we do it for a reason. Because your name is Teddy and you do snitch. We just need to know the name of Danté Peron's guy on the street.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
Why can't Danté tell you?

MILT
Because Danté is dead.

That's all Teddy needed to hear. He shoves his donut aside and he's up and out of there. Russ shoots Milt a look--

MILT (CONT'D)
He deserves to be able to make an informed decision.

Russ and Milt hurry after Teddy.

30 EXT. DONUT SHOP - CONTINUOUS 30

RUSS
I'll double your fee.

Teddy quickly turns back.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
It's not about the money.

RUSS
And yet...

MILT
...You turned around.

Teddy is still hesitant.

RUSS
One name.
(still not quite there)
Actually don't even need a name.
Just need you to point a finger.

31 INT. ESCALADE - CRAPPY NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY 31

The car pulls to the curb. Russ and Milt look out the front window toward a group of gang bangers on the corner.

After a beat, Teddy's head slowly rises from where he has been hiding in the back seat.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
The tall Hispanic.

And he quickly ducks back down.

RUSS
They're all Hispanics.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
No they're not. That's racist.

RUSS
How is that racist? They are.

Teddy peaks back up.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
I'm pretty sure the one on the left is Persian.

RUSS
No way.

TEDDY THE SNITCH
(down again)
He's wearing the green Armani shirt.

Russ and Milt exchange a look. Russ has no idea which shirt that is. Milt nods, he knows.

TEDDY THE SNITCH (CONT'D)
Now if you can just drop me off--

But Russ hands him a twenty dollar bill as he opens the door--

TEDDY THE SNITCH (CONT'D)
No. You can't just--

MILT
(slightly appalled)
Twenty dollars?

TEDDY THE SNITCH
(what can you do?)
Economy sucks.

Milt looks to Russ, conflicted, then quickly hands Teddy another twenty before following Russ-- *

TEDDY THE SNITCH (CONT'D) *
No-- These windows aren't even tinted--

But Milt is now gone too. And Teddy fumes. But then he finds the remote for the video screen in the back seat; now he's happy--

32 EXT. NEARBY ALLEY - DAY 32

Russ and Milt escort the gang banger, OMAR, 27, cocky, unafraid, toward some privacy.

OMAR
This is far enough; need witnesses in case you guys go Rodney King on my ass.

RUSS
We know you work with a guy named Danté Peron.

OMAR
(not cooperating)
Is he a life counselor too? Never heard of him but maybe I can friend him on Facebook and we can--

RUSS
He's dead.

Russ watches Omar's reaction closely. He seems genuinely stunned.

OMAR
...How.

RUSS
He had a negative reaction to a bullet entering his head.

OMAR
Oh God.

RUSS
When did you last talk to him or Gavin Smart?

OMAR
(worried)
Gavin??
(Milt's look confirms his fears)
Oh God, oh God. Gavin was my sister's nephew.

RUSS
When did you last speak to either one?

OMAR
He was a good kid.

Omar is now a completely different guy than the defiant one we met just moments ago; he's a human being suffering a loss and going through all the myriad emotions that entails.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Took good care of his sister, helped her with Math and stuff. And Danté, you didn't know him but... we worked together at the plant till they shut down half of it; the best guy, funny, great stories, would do anything for you.

Milt is sympathetic. He hands Omar a kleenex because Omar is indeed starting to tear up. Milt places a reassuring hand on Omar's shoulder--

MILT
You have to be strong.

Russ is stunned.

RUSS
He's a drug dealer! The fact that people's cereal eating habits have changed doesn't give him the right--

OMAR
I do something illegal, I deserve to die?

MILT
If you prick him, does he not bleed?

RUSS
(to Milt)
Seriously?
(to Omar)
And no, you don't deserve to die. You just can't expect not to.

OMAR
(righteously indignant)
I <u>expect</u> to get screwed on deals; I <u>expect</u> to maybe go to jail; I expect <u>people</u> to treat me like crap. But...
(searches for the thought)
It's just drugs, man.

RUSS
You can cry tomorrow. Right now I need the names of all Danté's suppliers, any other buyers and especially anybody sniffing around his territory.

OMAR
Go to hell.

RUSS
You don't think I can make you miserable?

OMAR
I don't care if you make me miserable. Those guys can make me dead.

RUSS
Might as well be with a cop on this corner 24/7.

MILT
That would be a waste of resources.

Russ shoots Milt a look.

MILT (CONT'D)
And I understand your department is very strapped right now.
(to Omar)
We don't want to make you miserable.

RUSS
I actually do.

MILT
I don't. Omar, we know you have a cell phone. And thanks to the NSA data collection we will be able to get the names of every person you've ever called or has called you. I'm guessing one of those is the person we're looking for.
(beat)
But I'm also guessing that many of those people, each of whom we'll have to talk to at length, has absolutely nothing to do with this crime and may not even know that you're involved in the drug trade: your girlfriend, your sister... your mother.

The threat is clear. Omar takes barely a beat before...

OMAR
Travis Taylor.

33 INT. ESCALADE - CRAPPY NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY 33

Milt and Russ climb back in, excited. And as they drive off--

RUSS
That was brilliant! NSA?! Insane; but you completely sold it.

MILT
I don't believe in bluffing.
(off Russ's confusion)
I really didn't want to make him miserable.

RUSS
(stunned)
You have access to the NSA database?

Milt shrugs modestly. Russ is actually a little disappointed. Milt takes note.

MILT
That seems to bother you? That I told the truth?

RUSS
No. It's just...

TEDDY THE SNITCH (O.S.)
It's not the Battle Creek way.

They turn back to see Teddy, whom they'd completely forgotten about.

TEDDY THE SNITCH (CONT'D)
Anybody can tell the truth. But what if the truth doesn't help you. What if your truth sucks. Then you gotta make something. Something from nothing. Something from less than nothing. Something from crap. That takes smarts, that takes ingenuity.

34 EXT. ESCALADE - CRAPPY NEIGHBORHOOD - MOMENTS LATER 34

The car screeches to a stop and Teddy is hurried from the vehicle--

TEDDY THE SNITCH
Maybe cab fare; they shut down this bus--

But the car is gone.

35 INT. ESCALADE - CRAPPY NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY 35

Milt and Russ continue on their own.

MILT
We question Travis Taylor and we search his home.

RUSS
Don't think so. Travis Taylor controls half the drug trade in this town. But the fact that a corner dealer figures the guy killed for even more territory isn't exactly... evidence. Certainly not enough for any judge to grant a search warrant.
(thinking, a brilliant idea dawning)
But maybe if we told Travis that we had--

But--

MILT
(a little loud)
Call Judge Bloomenthal.

And the bluetooth system in the car does just that. After a beat.

YOUNG VOICE
Hello.

MILT
Hi there Lily, it's Milt. Is your daddy home?

Off Russ, trying to process this bizarre new world he suddenly finds himself in--

36 EXT. UPSCALE HOME - FRONT PORCH - EVENING 36

An upscale conservative neighborhood; an upscale conservative home.

Russ, Milt and what seems to be a SWAT squad have gathered, fully geared up, completely silent, on the front porch. A particularly large officer holds a tactical battering ram. Milt signals him: on three; one, two--

VOICE (V.O.)
Come in.

That stops everyone. Milt and Russ look around and see a small security camera mounted high on the wall.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
That's a five thousand dollar solid maple door. And it's open.

Beat. Milt turns the handle, it opens. And they all anti-climactically file in.

37 INT. UPSCALE HOME - KITCHEN - EVENING 37

While officers go in and out of the room, thoroughly searching the home, Russ and Milt sit with TRAVIS TAYLOR, sharing coffee cake naturally. Travis is early 40s, from the streets, of the streets but desperately trying to redefine himself as a solid upper class citizen. There is kid's art on the fridge.

TRAVIS
Danté was a dick. And worse, he was a stupid businessman. The kid couldn't have been all that sharp either or he wouldn't be working with him.
(off their looks, with a smile)
But I suppose I should add that I didn't kill them.

Russ glances to Milt, neither of them like or trust this guy, but Milt shrugs patiently as the search continues around them...

38 EXT. UPSCALE HOME - FRONT YARD - NIGHT 38

As the FBI search team packs up behind him, Russ paces at the curb, aggravated. After a moment, Milt emerges from the home and approaches--

RUSS
He's a smug bastard. I hate smug bastards.

MILT
...We found nothing.

RUSS
Which is consistent with just two things: innocence, and guilt.
(off Milt)
You kill someone, first thing you do is start scrubbing everything in your life.

MILT
I've got additional warrants for his office and--

RUSS
Won't find anything there either.

MILT
We keep looking until we find something; that's all we can do.

RUSS
(firm)
No. We can do it the Battle Creek way.
(off Milt)
...We bluff.

Off Milt, accepting...

39 INT. DETECTIVE SQUAD - NIGHT 39

In the largely empty bullpen, Russ and Milt meet with Ricky (Pizza Delivery Kid). Ricky is uncomfortable, perhaps even scared.

RUSS
"Third guy from the left." ...That's all you need to say.

RICKY
You want me to ID him? Say I saw him running out? But I didn't see anything.

RUSS
(selling hard)
You won't have to testify to anything. You won't have to say anything except: "third guy from the left".

RICKY
I don't--

RUSS
(no big deal)
We just need him to believe we have evidence against him. Which means we need his lawyer to believe we have evidence against him. Then the DA offers him a plea and he takes it. And he goes to jail. Not because you lied but because he's guilty.

RICKY
(to Milt)
And this is legal?

But Milt is having doubts too. He turns to Russ.

RUSS
(simple)
We can't lie in court; we can't lie to judges; but we can lie to lawyers; and we lie all the time to drug dealers and murderers.

RICKY
And the DA is okay with this?

RUSS
...We can't lie to the DA either. So we haven't told him.
(quickly)
But it doesn't matter, this isn't evidence, there's never going to be a trial.

RICKY
I'm sorry. I can't do this.

He starts to get up. But...

MILT
Ricky. We need your help.

That's all he says. But he says it with sincerity. It clearly is having its intended effect.

40 INT. LINE UP ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 40

Russ and Milt, along with Ricky, DA PERLMUTTER and Travis Taylor's lawyer, VINCENT CALZONETTI, look through one way glass.

RICKY
...Third guy from the left.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GLASS is the police lineup. Travis is indeed the third one from the left.

DA PERLMUTTER
You're absolutely sure.

Ricky takes a very quick glance toward Russ and Milt:

RICKY
...Third guy from the left.

DA PERLMUTTER
(to Calzonetti, pleased)
Shall we talk?

Off Calzonetti, knowing he's screwed...

41 INT. DETECTIVE SQUAD - LATER 41

Russ and Milt wait in the empty bullpen.

MILT
...This is why I wanted to work with you.
(off Russ's look)
Couple of drug dealers, who cares if they're dead, who cares who killed them, the streets are better off without them. But indifference just leads to more indifference. Anger leads to more anger. And killing leads to more killing.
(off Russ)
You know that. And you're willing to risk your career to help save your community.

Russ isn't quite sure that that is what he's been doing.

RUSS
I'm just doing my job.

MILT
(smiles)
There's no guarantee this will work.

RUSS
Perlmutter's good; he'll get them to take a plea.

MILT
You've worked with Perlmutter before?
(off Russ's nod)
I'm guessing you've crossed him before? That something you've done has angered him?

No argument from Russ so far.

MILT (CONT'D)
So what happens when he comes out of that room and for some reason they didn't take the deal. Perlmutter's going to want to press charges anyway, he's got a great witness, a great case. Except... he doesn't. What's he going to do when you tell him that?

Russ, amazingly, hadn't considered that possibility.

MILT (CONT'D)
You analyze everything, so I know you thought of that. And you did it anyway.

Milt smiles at Russ. In admiration? Or is he somehow taunting Russ? Russ isn't completely sure.

A moment later, Perlmutter, Calzonetti and Travis emerge from a meeting room. Calzonetti and Travis don't look happy as they head for the door. As soon as they're gone, Russ and Milt nervously await their verdict...

DA PERLMUTTER
No deal.

Russ is stunned; the walls suddenly closing in on him.

RUSS
(stupid reason)
His client insists he's innocent.

Off Russ and Milt, knowing what happens next--

42 EXT. GOVERNMENT COMPLEX - LATER 42

Russ exits the building, heads for his car. He looks like his dog just died.

God, has this been a lousy week. And then he notices something that stops him. His SIGN, the one that says "RESERVED FOR R. AGNEW," stands TILTED AT AN ANGLE again.

Russ eases it upright. It droops the other way. Russ stares at it a beat... then KICKS the shit out of it, knocking it flat.

MILT (O.S.)
Russ?

Russ turns to see Milt with Ricky. Milt leaves Ricky a few steps away and approaches:

MILT (CONT'D)
I spoke to Perlmutter. And your Commander.

RUSS
(instantly suspicious) *
You did? Why would-- *

MILT
You still have your job. *
(off Russ) *
I explained that it was my idea. *

RUSS
(bit stunned)
...You... lied?

MILT
(no I didn't) *
I supported the idea. That makes me just as responsible as you.

RUSS
So... you lied?
(even more baffling) *
For me? And now... I owe you? Was *
that the idea? That I--

BANG; a gunshot, almost instantaneously accompanied by the * SQUEAL of tires--Russ quickly pulls his weapon, searching for the source of the shot while Milt, oddly, hurries away--

Russ spots a fast approaching vehicle, more GUN SHOTS, he RETURNS FIRE as Milt... TACKLES and COVERS Ricky as--

A SHOT HITS... RUSS--

--in the shoulder, he goes down, continuing to fire back as the car exits the complex. The threat gone but...

MILT
Russ? You okay?

Milt and Ricky are okay. Russ looks at his shoulder and all the blood, stunned, scared...

RUSS
I don't know. ...I've never been shot before.

And off the fear and the sound of sirens approaching--

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

43 INT. E.R. - MORNING 43

Russ rests in a hospital bed, his shirt off, his shoulder bandaged. He's depressed, feeling bad for himself, not going anywhere. Holly stands, concerned, across from him. An FBI agent is in the doorway, keeping guard.

HOLLY
Doctor says you were lucky; bullet passed right through, no arteries hit, you're gonna be okay.

Russ nods, doesn't feel lucky.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Agent Chamberlain has your witness in a safe house. And he's got people trying to track down the vehicle but there were no plates. And he's posted a guard here just in case you were the actual target. ...And he sent flowers.

Indeed, there is a very lovely flower arrangement on a dresser nearby. Russ nods, relieved to hear that things are being taken care of - without him.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Does it hurt?

RUSS
(lying)
No. ...I'm fine.

And then Holly waits; knows he's not, knows there's more. Finally...

RUSS (CONT'D)
I'm just, uh...

He tries to figure how to put it into words.

RUSS (CONT'D)
I'm just seeing things clearly.
(a beat)
I'm a small-town cop. There's winners in the world, and then there's... the rest of us.

Holly understands.

HOLLY
Milt.

RUSS
It's not just the car and the mass chemography things and the judges on speed dial. It's everything he does... It's naive and it's simplistic and...
(drives me crazy, but)
It works. ...He saved my career. He saved that kid that I put in danger with that stupid bluff.
(trying to make sense of this)
...Maybe he's good for me; maybe I should learn from him, right? I mean, if he's just plain better than me, why should I let that..? I shouldn't...
(what's the word?)
...hate him. ...So, so much.

He trails off, looks to Holly plaintively.

RUSS (CONT'D) *
...Why am I so desperate to prove that I'm better than him? *

What exactly is he asking her? Is it about her? Is it about him? And in answer to both... *

HOLLY *
...Because you are. *

And what does that answer fully mean? A moment she suddenly finds herself needing to diffuse. *

HOLLY (CONT'D) *
Solve this case. You'll feel better. *

He considers this. Then awkwardly and painfully, but resolutely, starts to put his shirt on - a man with a mission.

44 INT. FBI SAFE HOUSE - DAY 44

A fabulous apartment with a great view but no one is looking at the view because, number one, it's a view of Battle Creek and, number two, there's also a 70 inch 4K HD TV screen. Ricky and Milt are watching, eating popcorn.

Then there's a knock at the door. They look at each other, concerned--

Milt turns off the TV, goes to the door, checks the peephole. Relieved, he throws the door open to:

MILT
(thrilled to see him)
Russ!

RUSS
(entering, intense)
The obvious theory is Travis Taylor is trying to shut up a witness. Except he couldn't have known who the witness was unless his lawyer told him but--
(then realizing)
Holy crap; this is your safe house??

MILT
Actually, I'm living here until--

RUSS
(even more impressed)
Holy crap. How big is that TV?

Milt shrugs. Russ regroups.

RUSS (CONT'D)
But...
(tries to remember his thought process)
By the time of the shooting, the DA knew the lineup was bogus, and he would've told Taylor's lawyer and if Taylor's lawyer would have told Taylor about the witness, he certainly would have told him the witness was bogus. So why shoot anyone.

Milt nods, that does seem to make sense.

RICKY
He can still hate me for trying to put his ass in jail.

RUSS
No. Guys like Taylor have too much money to kill without a good reason.

RICKY
That's really admirable. They kill. What the hell is a good reason for killing?

They don't really have an answer to that...

RICKY (CONT'D)
(growing distraught)
...And if you're right, then someone else shot at me and you have no idea who and you have no idea why and no leads and no... nothing.
(unfortunately, no argument with this)
Which means I'm here forever because you're never going to know.
(then)
My neighborhood sucks, this town sucks... more and more every year but... this is my home.

He obviously feels a deep connection to this place and the people who live here. So does Russ. But it's Milt who steps over and places a hand on the poor kid's shoulder.

MILT
We will make this right. We will find this killer.

RICKY
You don't know that.

MILT
I know that. All actions have ramifications. Which means all actions leave evidence. And we will find that evidence. For no other reason than it exists and we won't stop looking until we find it.

The kid seems slightly reassured but Russ hates empty promises. He doesn't want to be a dick but... the kid needs to know--

RUSS
That's just not even close to true.
(to Ricky)
We'll do our best. To solve this case, to keep you safe. And we screwed you over. And... I'm sorry. But crimes go unsolved every day: evidence is ambiguous, evidence deteriorates, evidence disappears--

And then the phone rings....

MILT
(answering)
Chamberlain.

He listens for a beat, then--

MILT (CONT'D)
Thank you.
(hangs up)
They found the gun.

Russ reacts, annoyed--

RUSS
Of course.

45 EXT. DUMPSTER BEHIND RATTY APARTMENT - DAY 45*

SMASH - the sound of Milt jumping into a half full dumpster. Followed by a similar sound as Russ joins him. A gun sits amidst the garbage in front of them.

Once again, the nearby area has been taped off to keep lookie-loos out. A UNIFORMED OFFICER reports.

UNIFORMED OFFICER
Homeless guy found it; we're not sure if it's yours but since the shooting took place just two doors up...

MILT
(putting on gloves)
Much appreciated. Did the homeless individual touch the weapon.

UNIFORMED OFFICER
Don't think so. He says he didn't.

Milt picks up the gun, starts to examine it; Russ looking over his shoulder.

MILT
I want everything in here catalogued by position in three dimensions. And I want analysis on everything.
(noticing, examining)
Appears to be a fragment of something behind the hammer.

The two consider it, curious.

MILT (CONT'D)
Possible flesh.
(to nearby agent)
We'll need DNA analysis.

He starts to bag the weapon, but Russ stops him, wheels turning, trying to process everything:

RUSS
What if Ricky was right? What if Travis tried to kill him just because Ricky pointed the finger at him?

MILT
You think that would make him that angry?

RUSS
No. But what if he didn't feel angry? What if he felt... threatened?

MILT
Threatened by the pizza kid? I'm not following.

Russ takes the gun, carefully but in his bare hand--

MILT (CONT'D)
I'd rather you didn't touch--

He stops because...

Russ is examining the foreign object by carefully... licking it.

RUSS
It's not flesh. It's... anchovy.

Holy shit.

Milt quickly pulls out his cell phone and speed dials--

46 INT. FBI SAFE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 46

The phone rings. An FBI AGENT answers.

AGENT MOLNAR
Agent Molnar.

MILT (V.O.)
Where is he? Where's Ricky? He's the shooter; he hid the gun in his pizza box--

Concerned, Molnar heads toward a bedroom--

AGENT MOLNAR
He went to take a nap.

He opens the door and the room is empty and a window is open.

AGENT MOLNAR (CONT'D)
...Oh crap.

47 EXT. DUMPSTER BEHIND RATTY APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 47

Back with Russ and Milt scrambling desperately toward the Escalade.

RUSS
He's cleaning up his crappy neighborhood.

MILT
And we led him right to his next target.

RUSS
(damn me)
Third guy from the left.

And they speed off, Russ pulling out his phone--

48 INT. UPSCALE HOME - KITCHEN - AT THAT MOMENT 48

OPEN ON Travis Taylor, on his knees begging for his life. Ricky is holding a gun on him. Ricky hates this guy and what he stands for. But Ricky is also scared out of his mind; scared of what he's about to do. As a phone rings and rings--

TRAVIS
Please. I've got kids. Look at the pictures; just look at the pictures; my wife's got them all over the place--

RICKY
(doesn't look; can't)
Yeah? You care about kids?

TRAVIS
(looks up, challenging)
And you? You figure this is going to make your 'hood better? Fewer drugs, more vigilantes, that's what you figure it needs?

Ricky does have doubts. But...

RICKY
I don't have any choice any more. I either kill you or you kill me.

The phone stops ringing. Ricky raises the gun, terrified but resolved--

And then SMASH; that five thousand dollar door buckles--

Milt and Russ step in, Ricky swings his weapon toward them-- Russ aims back. But Milt... Milt raises his hands to indicate he's not a threat. And quickly gestures to Russ--

MILT
Don't.

RUSS
Seriously? He's got a gun; he's got a pointed gun.

MILT
He's not a killer.

Russ looks confused by Milt's approach. Actually, Ricky does too. Russ does not lower his weapon.

RUSS
Well... he has, you know... killed. So...

MILT
Doesn't make him a killer.

RUSS
Sort of does. *

MILT
Our actions don't define us.

RUSS
What? Seriously? Of course they do. What the hell else would define us?

MILT
Our soul.

RUSS
I don't even know what that means.

MILT
(to Ricky) *
I know you're scared. That's why *
you didn't pull that trigger long *
before we got here. Because you *
don't want to. And you didn't want *
to. *

He's actually getting through to the kid-- *

MILT (CONT'D)
You killed... because you didn't *
know what else to do.
(MORE)

MILT (CONT'D)
You saw things were terrible and you had to do something. And you made a terrible mistake but--

RICKY
(the sad bottom line)
But none of that matters now. I killed. I'm going to jail. The only question left is does this bastard live or die?

He turns his weapon back toward Travis.

MILT
(almost angry)
Of course it matters!
(regroups, but emotion leaks through as:)
We cannot be defined by our mistakes. We cannot let one thing, no matter how horrible, overpower everything else we do in our life. And the only way to do that is to make sure... everything else we do in our life overpowers that mistake. We have that chance. As long as we're alive we have that chance, that obligation.

Russ is staring at Milt - what the hell is he talking about - it seems awfully damn personal.

MILT (CONT'D)
Ricky... are you a killer? It's your choice.

Ricky stands there, pointing the gun at Trevor for a long beat...

RUSS
Does this ever work?

MILT
(as close as Milt can come to being annoyed)
Yes. People want to do the right thing--

RUSS
Here's what works for me.
(raises his gun)
You don't need to go to jail. You can die.
(MORE)

RUSS (CONT'D)
(beat)
You shoot that bastard and I will shoot you.

Beat, then Ricky looks to Milt. A long beat...

Ricky doesn't even look at Russ. His eyes are locked with Milt's. Milt reaches out his hand for the weapon...

49 EXT. UPSCALE HOME - FRONT YARD - DAY 49

As FBI agents load Ricky into a vehicle and numerous others secure the crime scene in their extraordinarily efficient way, Milt and Russ walk toward the Escalade in silence for a beat.

RUSS
That stuff about second chances...
It seemed awful personal.

MILT
(without looking to Russ)
It's Battle Creek. It was a bluff.

Russ isn't sure he buys that but chooses to let it go...

RUSS
...He gave up because of the threat.

MILT
He gave up because it was right.

RUSS
You don't believe your own b.s..

MILT
Nor do you. ...You're a good person Detective Agnew.

RUSS
And you, Agent Chamberlain... are the devil.

Milt smiles. Russ doesn't, still not sure if it's true or not. And they climb into the Escalade.

50 INT. RESIDENT AGENCY - DAY - A FEW DAYS LATER 50

The blue and gold FBI SEAL fills frame. FLASH-FLASH-FLASH!

REVEAL, it's a press conference, lots of photos get taken, strobing the room. MUSIC CONTINUES THROUGHOUT this scene -- characters speak, but we don't hear them.

Milt smiles for the REPORTERS. Milt motions to...

...Russ, standing off to the side. It's a week or so later; Russ's black eye from the Teaser is gone, but he does have a sling on his arm. At Milt's urging, Russ steps forward to stand with him, sharing the limelight. *

Guziewicz, Font, Funkhauser, Jacocks and Niblet are here, watching proudly. So is Holly. She smiles at Russ, who smiles back.

FLASH-FLASH-FLASH! More pictures get snapped. Milt puts his arms around Russ, skooching him closer and making sure he gets in the picture.

For Russ, life is good. He's finally getting what he wanted.

FLASH! FREEZE-FRAME on the two men at the height of their triumph. This image TRANSFORMS into a NEWS PHOTO which then CROPS DOWN...

Until it's a photo of MILT ALONE, which winds up on the front page of "The Battle Creek Intelligencer." The headline reads "FBI AGENT SOLVES DOUBLE MURDER."

We realize poor Russ is <u>never</u> going to win. Off this...

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW