

CORPUS DELECTI

Written By

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A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "The Poe Murders"

BEGIN CREDITS

EXT. THE NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE - NIGHT

SUPER: "New York City - 1:00 A.M."

The city is really animated with people and vehicles.

EXT. THE CITY MORGUE - NIGHT

SUPER: "Queens"

The lights illuminate the inside of the building through the windows.

EXT. THE DOORS OF THE MORGUE - NIGHT

A tall, dark figure, who wears a ski mask over his face, holds up a Forty-Four Bulldog Special with a silencer on the barrel, looks at it and he runs down the street. No one who walks the streets notices the gun in his hand.

INT. THE MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

BECKY SCHULMAN, a slim medical examiner, who looks to be in her mid 30s, is clad in hospital scrubs and has a clipboard in her hand.

On the clipboard, a medical report is on it. She looks over a cadaver with the privates covered on the table. She writes as she looks the cadaver over as she writes.

BECKY

Multiple bruises of the upper torso. Laceration of the front of the neck.

(she walks to the opposite side of the table - she trips but doesn't fall)

What the hell?

As she looks down on the floor, she sees:

A DEAD BODY IN A POOL OF BLOOD!

The dead body is clad in a medical examiner's outfit and sneakers. The corpse lays on its back and has a few chess pieces scattered above its head and a few pieces of paper on his bloody chest.

Becky drops her clipboard on the floor and screams loudly as she OPENS the door and runs out of the medical examiner's office. The body lays still in the pool of blood on the floor.

EXT. A HOME IN QUEENS - NIGHT

SUPER: "Home of Ed and Roselyn Green"

INT. ED AND ROSELYN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ED GREEN, an African American detective in his late 40s, from the New York City Police Department and his wife, ROSELYN GREEN, known to her husband as Rose, who is also in her late 40s and is a curator at the Museum of Modern Art, are asleep in their bed.

Just then, Ed's cell phone, which is on the night table on Ed's side of the bed, RINGS. Ed drowsily wakes up, turns on the lamp and answers the phone on the third ring.

ED

Hello?

INT. DANA CASSADY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

DANA CASSADY, a Caucasian woman in her late 30s, is clad in a white wife beater T-shirt and a pair of black panties, stands by her bed and she is on her cell phone as she talks to a drowsy Ed.

DANA

Ed? It's Dana.

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION - ED AND DANA

ED

What's up?

DANA (O.C.)  
(phone-voiced)  
We have to drive to the morgue in Queens. I just got a call from the precinct saying that someone got murdered in the morgue.

ED (O.C.)  
(phone-voiced)  
It's after one in the morning. Who would get murdered at this hour?

DANA  
I was told that a medical examiner was murdered. So, get dressed and I will come pick you up in about fifteen minutes.

ED  
All right. I will be waiting for you.

END CREDITS.

DANA (O.C.)  
(phone-voiced)  
All right. I'll see you when I get there.

Dana hangs up her cell phone, puts it on her night table and begins to get dressed.

INT. ED AND ROSELYN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ed puts his cell phone on his night table and gets out of bed. He is clad in a T-shirt and a pair of blue boxers and black dress socks. He gets dressed.

Roselyn slowly wakes up and sees Ed as he gets dressed.

ROSELYN  
Ed, where are you going? It's late.

ED  
(zips up his slacks)  
I got a call from my partner. She said that she got a call from the precinct and the boys in blue told her that a medical examiner got murdered at the morgue in Queens.

(MORE)

ED (CONT'D)

She is also going to pick me up soon and we are going to drive to the morgue to investigate the murder.

ROSELYN

(re: Ed)

Oh my goodness!

ED

(he picks up a dress shirt and puts it on)

Yup. I tell you: It is not easy being a detective.

ED (CONT'D)

(re: Roselyn gets out of bed topless and clad in black panties - she picks up her robe and puts it on)

I just hope that it isn't anything too serious.

ROSELYN

(she ties the belt of her robe around her waist)

I think that murder is serious. Wouldn't you say?

ED

(buttons up his shirt)

Of course, murder is serious...but a medical examiner getting murdered at a morgue? It just seems so weird.

ROSELYN

Are you saying that you're not up for the job?

Ed goes over to the bed, sits down on his side of it and puts on his shoes.

ED

If I wasn't, I wouldn't have become a detective. As much as I hate it, I got to answer the call of duty.

He gets up off the bed and tucks his shirt front in his slacks and tucks the back of his shirt in his slacks.

Roselyn gets a tie off the dresser and she stands behind Ed as he turns up his collar.

Ed's P.O.V.: He looks at his reflection as he is half dressed.

Roselyn puts his tie around her husband's neck and Ed ties his tie and straightens it out and fixes it while he looks in the mirror. Then, he puts on his holster.

Roselyn has his suit coat in her hands and she holds it open as she stands behind Ed and then, Ed puts his arms in the arms of the coat and Rose puts it on him.

As Ed turns and faces his wife:

ED (CONT'D)  
Well, how do I look?

ROSELYN  
You look like a well dressed  
detective.

ED  
Thank you so much.

ROSELYN  
You're welcome.

Roselyn and Ed embrace each other and give each other a passionate kiss. When the kiss ends:

ED  
I love you.

ROSELYN  
And I love you, too.

Ed lets Roselyn go and he walks back over to his side of the bed and picks up his cell phone and his wallet inside it and he puts them in the opposite pockets of his slacks.

He picks up his badge and pins it on his suit coat and he picks up his gun and puts it in his holster inside his suit coat.

EXT. THE GREEN'S HOME - NIGHT

Dana's car pulls up in front of the house.

INT. DANA'S CAR - NIGHT

Dana takes her cell phone out of her jacket pocket and dials Ed's number and then, she puts the phone on her ear.

INT. ED AND ROSELYN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ed's CELL PHONE RINGS. He reaches into his left slacks pocket, takes out his cell phone, opens it and puts the phone on his left ear.

ED

Yeah.

INT. DANA'S CAR - NIGHT

Dana holds her cell phone on her right ear.

DANA

Yeah, Ed. I'm parked outside.

INT. ED AND ROSELYN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ed is still on his phone.

ED

Okay. I'll be out in a few seconds,  
Dana.

DANA (O.C.)

(phone-voiced)

Okay. I'll be waiting.

ED

Cool.

He closes his phone and puts it back in his left slacks pocket. As Roselyn walks over to him, he turns and faces her and they give each other a quick but passionate kiss.

ED (CONT'D)

(to Roselyn)

I'll see you soon, sweetheart.

ROSELYN

Likewise.

Ed leaves the bedroom.

EXT. ED AND ROSELYN'S HOME - NIGHT

The FRONT DOOR OPENS and Ed walks out of the house and locks and CLOSES the door behind him.

He walks down the steps and toward Dana's car. Then, he OPENS the passenger's door and gets into the car and finally, he CLOSES the door and puts on his seat belt.

Dana puts the flashing police light on the roof of the car and then, she begins to drive to the morgue.

INT. DANA'S CAR - NIGHT

Ed is in the passenger's seat and Dana is in the driver's seat. The two detectives talk about the case.

ED

Let me get this straight: It's after one in the morning and a medical examiner was killed in a morgue in Queens?

DANA

That's the message I got from the precinct. To be honest with you, I found it kinda weird myself.

ED

Did they say who killed the medical examiner?

DANA

Nope. The precinct said that a female med ex found the body on the floor laying in a pool of blood in the M.E.'s office. The female M.E. was working on a cadaver when she accidentally tripped over the male M.E.'s body.

DANA (O.C.) (CONT'D)

(re: Ed as he listens to his partner)

Then, she screamed in terror when she saw the body on the floor.

ED

Shit!

EXT. THE MORGUE - NIGHT

Dana parks behind a line of parked cars. She turns off the motor, takes the keys out of the ignition and she and Ed take off their seat belts, OPEN their car doors, get out of the car and walk to the entrance of the morgue.



ED

(to Dana)

Call me crazy, but I never thought there would be a murder in a morgue. I thought a morgue was a place where dead bodies were taken.

DANA

Same here. When I got the call from the precinct about the murder and where it took place, I couldn't believe it, either. I mean, who would be crazy enough to murder an M.E. in a morgue?

ED

I don't know, Dana, but we are about to find out.

(they stop at the doors of the morgue and Ed opens a door)

After you.

DANA

(she enters the morgue)

Thank you.

As Ed enters the morgue and lets the door go:

INT. THE HALLWAY OF THE MORGUE - NIGHT

The two detectives are in the hallway. They watch the staff walk through the hallway and talk to the police officers who are already on the scene. Becky walks over to the detectives.

BECKY

Are you the detectives who are here to investigate the murder that took place in the M.E.'s office earlier?

DANA

Yes. I am Detective Cassady and this is my partner, Detective Green. We're from the Twenty-Seventh Precinct. Are you the one who called about the murder?

BECKY

Yes. I'm Becky Schulman, one of the M.E.s here.

(MORE)

BECKY (CONT'D)

(she and the two  
detectives walk toward  
the crime scene as the  
detectives put surgical  
gloves on their hands)

I got scared shitless when I saw  
the dead body on the floor in the  
M.E.'s office. I was doing my job  
when I accidentally tripped over  
the body. When I looked at it, I  
screamed in terror. I couldn't  
believe that an M.E. was murdered  
here. I mean, we M.E.s deal with  
dead bodies for a living. We never  
thought that we would be murder  
victims.

They stop at the crime scene with a single piece of yellow  
police tape across the open doorway. There are two police  
officers inside. They examine the dead body inside.

ED

Thank you for bringing this murder  
to our attention, Becky. We are  
going to go in and delve into this  
case a little bit further and see  
what we can find out.

BECKY

Okay. Good luck.

ED/DANA

Thank you.

As Becky leaves the detectives, the detectives go into the  
office as they duck under the tape.

INT. THE MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The detectives are in the office and two officers, TED FOLEY,  
a husky officer in his early 30s and PAUL CARSON, a slim  
officer in his late 30s, stand near the body on the floor as  
they look down at it. The cadaver is still on the table.

ED

(to Ted and Paul)

Have you gotten any added info  
about the victim?

PAUL

We questioned Becky Schulman before you two got here and we found out that the victim's name was Joshua Perkins. He was a married man and worked at the morgue as an M.E. for a solid decade.

TED

I wonder how the victim's wife is going to feel when she finds out that her husband was murdered.

ED

You guys are lucky. You're not the ones who have to tell her.

DANA (O.S.)

(re: the dead body as Dana kneels down and her hand picks up the papers off the corpse's chest)

Look at this.

DANA (CONT'D)

(she stands up straight)

It looks like the killer ripped out the pages of a book and the pages are parts of a story.

ED (O.S.)

(re: the dead body as Ed kneels down and picks up the four chess pieces all around the corpse's head)

Look at this.

As he stands up straight:

ED (CONT'D)

Four chess pieces were around the victim's head.

The four cops walk to another part of the office and make sure not to step in the blood that surrounds the body.

DANA

This is weird. The killer had put two bishops and two rooks near the head. The killer must be a great chess player.

ED

Dana, I hate to put a hole in your theory, but we're dealing with more than just your typical killer.

DANA

What do you mean, Ed?

ED

Well, think about it. A murder in a morgue? Chess pieces scattered around the head?

(he points to the pages in Dana's hand and then, he kindly takes the papers and inspects the first page)

And this? This is the short story "The Murders In The Rue Morgue" written by Edgar Allan Poe. The killer ripped the story out of a book and left it on the body as a calling card.

As Dana kindly takes the pages back from her partner and looks at the first page carefully, she sees that Ed was right. As she looks at the body on the floor and the cadaver on the table:

DANA

Well, it can't get any more rue than this.

(to Ted and Paul)

Do either of you know what the end result of the cadaver was?

TED

The same end result as the medical examiner...homicide.

DANA

Ah, homicide. A specialty of law enforcement.

The corpse is still on the floor and it lays in a pool of blood as the detectives leave the crime scene and make sure not to step in the blood.

INT. THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PRECINCT - NIGHT

Ed and Dana sit at their desks. Then, LIEUTENANT RITA MARTIN, an African American police officer, who is in her mid 50s, walks over to her detective's desks.

RITA

Let me get this straight: An M.E. was murdered in a morgue in Queens?

DANA

We thought it was kinda strange, too, but the killer left some weird evidence behind. Emphasis on the word "weird".

RITA

What was the evidence?

ED

(he holds up the evidence bag with the four chess pieces in it)

The killer left two rooks and two bishops near the top of the corpse's head.

(he puts the bag on his desk and picks up the second bag with the short story in it)

And the killer ripped out Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Murders In The Rue Morgue" and rested it on the corpse's chest.

Rita is shocked at this bit of news.

RITA

Holy shit! Are you saying that the killer is a fan of Poe's works and he just brought that short story to life?

DANA

That's the theory we're going with.

RITA

Have you got any information on the victim?

ED (O.S.)

His name was Joshua Perkins. He was in his mid forties and he was one of the M.E.s at the morgue and he was a married man. He had ten years on the job.

ED (CONT'D)

The female M.E. who found him was Becky Schulman.

(MORE)

ED (CONT'D)

She had five years on the job. The officers we spoke to said she was in a state of fright when she called them and that's when they called Dana and she called me.

ED (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(re: Dana listens to her partner and Rita listens to Ed, as well)

You'd think an M.E. with that much experience would be used to seeing dead bodies.

RITA

Well, I'd wet my pants too, if I found a dead body where I worked.

ED

Well, we've decided to go to Becky Schulman's apartment and get some more information on the murder.

RITA

Okay, but do me and this precinct a small favor, will you?

DANA

What's that, Lieu?

RITA

Don't hassle her during your questioning. She still might be a little shaken up. The last thing this department needs is a police harassment charge.

Dana and Ed nod their heads in response to the lieutenant's request. Then, they get up from their seats and then, they leave the precinct.

FADE OUT.

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "Apartment of Becky Schulman - Greenwich Village - Monday, April 2nd"

FADE OUT.

INT. BECKY SCHULMAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A series of KNOCKS are heard on the apartment door. Becky answers the door. As she OPENS the door, she comes face to face with:

ED AND DANA, WHO STAND OUT IN THE HALL.

DANA  
Becky Schulman?

BECKY  
Yes? You're the detectives I met  
back at the morgue earlier this  
morning.

ED  
May we come in?

BECKY  
Sure.

As Becky opens the door wider:

The detectives make their way in. Dana comes in first and Ed follows right behind her and Becky CLOSES the door behind them. She walks over to the detectives who stand in the middle of the living room.

DANA  
We're here to ask you some  
questions about Joshua's murder  
back at the morgue.

BECKY  
I still can't get that murder out  
of my head. I haven't been able to  
sleep since then. Can you imagine  
that? I graduated medical school at  
the top of my class and I freaked  
out when I saw Joshua's body on the  
floor.

ED  
It's understood. You didn't expect  
to see the body on the floor and  
you panicked. It's nothing to lose  
sleep over.

BECKY  
You're a little late on the words  
of comfort, Detective.

DANA

How well did you know Joshua Perkins?

BECKY

We always sat together and ate lunch at a diner in the neighborhood. We were great friends.

ED

Did he have any enemies at the morgue? Did he get a promotion and someone else didn't?

BECKY

No. He was well respected at the morgue. As a matter of fact, he was my mentor when I was a rookie M.E. I wouldn't be where I am now if it wasn't for him.

DANA

Are you seeing a therapist? You still look a little shaken up.

BECKY

Yes, I am. I took a few weeks off so I could maintain any sanity that I did have.

ED

Does Josh have any family here in New York?

Becky walks away from the detectives and walks toward her coffee table and when she faces them again:

BECKY

His relatives are in New Jersey. The only person who lived with him was his wife on the fourth floor. She wanted him to be a lawyer, but Josh insisted on becoming a medical examiner. Like I said earlier, I wouldn't be where I am now if it wasn't for him.

Dana and Ed continue to look at Becky in silence. They look at each other and they look back at Becky again, in silence.

FADE OUT.



A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "Apartment of Joshua and Violet Perkins - Greenwich Village - Monday, April 2nd"

INT. THE PERKINS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A series of KNOCKS are heard on the door. VIOLET PERKINS, Joshua's wife who is in her mid 40s. She answers the door.

As she OPENS it, she comes face to face with the detectives, who stand in the hall.

VIOLET

May I help you two?

The detectives have their badges pinned on their jackets. Dana has hers pinned on her leather jacket and Ed has his pinned on his overcoat.

ED

I'm Detective Green and this is my partner, Detective Cassady.

(sighs sadly)

We've got some bad news about your husband.

DANA

May we come in so we can talk a little more in depth?

Violet silently nods her head in agreement to Dana's question and as she opens the door wider:

INT. THE PERKINS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The detectives enter the living room and Violet CLOSES the door and walks over to where the detectives are.

VIOLET

What bad news do you have about my husband?

The detectives look at each other in silence. Ed lets out a deep sigh, because he doesn't know how Violet will react to the news about her husband.

ED

Your husband was murdered at the city morgue in Queens earlier this morning.

Violet runs the fingers of her right hand through her shoulder-length brunette hair, which has a single braid on the right side of her head. She gasps in shock, covers her mouth and begins to cry.

VIOLET

I...I can't...I can't believe it!

DANA

He had six bullet holes in his chest. His death was immediate. You have our condolences.

VIOLET

Well...this sure puts a detour in our plans.

DANA (O.S.)

(re: Violet wipes her tears with her hands)

Plans?

VIOLET

Yes. We were going to start a family next week.

VIOLET (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(re: Dana and Ed as they listen to Violet as she speaks)

We've been talking about having children for three months. We were going to start our family on his weekend off.

Violet wipes her tears and lets out a sniffle.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Did you find the son of a bitch who murdered my husband?

ED

No, but that's what we're going to find out.

VIOLET

Did you find anything that will lead you to whom the killer is?

DANA

Yes, we did, Mrs. Perkins. Four chess pieces and the pages of the short story "The Murders In The Rue Morgue" by Edgar Allan Poe.

DANA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 (re: Violet listens to  
 Dana as she wipes her  
 tears again)

We have reason to believe that the  
 killer has some weird fascination  
 with Poe's works and thought he  
 could get his rocks off by bringing  
 Poe's short stories to life.

VIOLET (O.S.)  
 (re: Ed)  
 I truly didn't want him to be an  
 M.E. He always brought his work  
 home.

ED  
 What do you mean?

VIOLET (O.S.)  
 (re: Dana)  
 He always brought home unfinished  
 medical reports and worked on them  
 in the kitchen.

VIOLET (CONT'D)  
 Then, at dinner, he always talked  
 about who he worked on and what  
 they died from. Everything from  
 AIDS to gunshot wounds in the  
 chest.

The detectives and Violet face each other.

ED  
 I take it you didn't have a strong  
 stomach when he talked about his  
 work.

VIOLET  
 On the contrary, Detective, I do  
 have a strong stomach. The thing  
 was he was talking about his job  
 more than he did about us.

DANA  
 That didn't sit too well with you,  
 I gather.

VIOLET (O.S.)  
 No, it didn't.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

It was like he was neglecting our marriage. It was like he was married to his job than to me.

ED

Then, I don't understand. If you say he was married to his job, when did he talk to you about starting a family?

VIOLET

At dinner. If he wasn't talking about work, he was talking about starting a family. At the time when he had his job on his mind, we went into couples' therapy.

VIOLET (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(re: Ed and Dana)

We did great and he was able to balance his job and our marriage after eight weeks. I really wanted him to be a lawyer. At least lawyers deal with the living.

ED

You'd be surprised at what lawyers deal with nowadays.

Violet looks at the detectives with a sad face.

EXT. THE APARTMENT HOUSE - NIGHT

As Dana and Ed exit the apartment house:

ED

Let's see what we've got so far.

(he and Dana walk to their car)

The murder victim was an M.E., he was also a mentor for a female rookie M.E. and the widow wanted him to quit the profession and become a lawyer.

(re: Dana)

You think the killer could be the wife? I mean, I do think she had a motive. She wasn't too happy when he went into the medical examiner profession.

DANA

It couldn't be the wife. You saw how upset she got when we told her that her husband ended up in the same place where he worked at.

ED

You think the killer had some repressed anger against M.E.s?

They stop toward their car. Ed walks toward the passenger's seat and Dana walks toward the driver's seat.

DANA

With the evidence we've got, I'm not sure what the killer was repressing.

The two detectives OPEN their car doors and get in the car simultaneously and they CLOSE their doors the same way.

INT. THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PRECINCT - NIGHT

Dana and Ed talk to Rita as they walk through the busy precinct. Rita has a mug of coffee in her right hand. The detectives talk to her about the information they had gotten earlier.

RITA

Was the victim's friend helpful on the case?

As the detectives face Rita:

ED

Well, Becky told us that Joshua was her mentor and he was a well respected M.E. and she and Joshua had been good friends on the job.

DANA

We also talked to Joshua's wife, Violet. She tried to talk him out of becoming an M.E., but he didn't listen and he became one anyway.

ED

I guess, in this case, the woman was right.

Dana looks toward her partner with a semi-shocked and sarcastic look on her face. She also grins in the same manner.

DANA

All right. Who are you and what have you done with my partner?

ED

What? I can't side with the wife? She did try to talk Joshua into choosing a different job.

(re: Dana and Rita)

He went against her wishes and now, he's on the very same slab that the other cadavers before him were laying on. ...And if this situation doesn't go under the category of women's intuition, I don't know what does.

RITA

Do you have any leads on the wife?

DANA

She wasn't too happy about her husband's death. Other than that, we don't have any other leads.

RITA

Well...try getting some leads at the morgue. Take a break tomorrow and start on Wednesday.

As she takes a sip of her coffee:

FADE OUT.

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "City Morgue - Queens, New York - Wednesday, April 4th"

INT. THE MORGUE - DAY

Dana and Ed are talking to ANNE MARSDEN, another female M.E., who is in her mid 40s and a good friend of Becky and Joshua. The detectives and Anne walk toward the door of the medical examiner's office.

ED

How well did you know Joshua Perkins?

ANNE

He was a great guy. He introduced me to Becky one time we three were having lunch. It's a shame she took off from work. She was really a great M.E.

(re: Dana and Ed)

She was really upset when she found Joshua's body on the floor in the office. The janitor wasn't too happy, either. He was on major cleanup detail.

As the detectives and Anne stop at the office door:

DANA

So, are you Becky's temporary replacement?

ANNE

Yeah. That is, until Becky comes back to work. To be honest with you guys, I wouldn't be the least bit surprised if she never returned to work. She was pretty shaken up. It's a good thing she isn't here now.

ED

Why do you say that?

ANNE

Joshua's body is on the table in here and I have the unfortunate luck of pulling the slugs out of his body. Can you imagine the trauma Becky would have gone through if she had this job?

As she OPENS the door and goes inside, Dana and Ed face each other in silence as the office door CLOSES.

INT. THE MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE - LATER

Dana and Ed are now talking to RON CARTER, a man in his late 50s and the head medical examiner and the detectives stand near the table. Ron sits on a stool in front of the table and he has a wrapped sandwich on a plate which is on the table.

RON

Joshua Perkins? He was the best M.E. this morgue has ever had.

(MORE)

RON (CONT'D)  
(he sees that the  
detectives look a little  
disgusted)  
Don't worry. The table was  
thoroughly cleaned and it is germ  
free.

DANA  
Well...that's a relief.

Dana and Ed look at Ron in silence and then:

ED  
Did Joshua have any enemies? Any  
petty arguments with any of the  
staff?

Ron looks toward the detectives.

RON  
Yeah. He had one with me.  
(he points to the wrapped  
sandwich on the plate on  
the table)  
Chicken salad?

GREEN  
No thanks.

DANA  
Ditto. I've heard a lot of negative  
stuff about food at a morgue.

RON  
Suit yourselves.  
(he picks up the sandwich  
off the plate and unwraps  
it)  
I'm starving.

ED  
You mentioned you and Joshua had a  
disagreement?

RON  
Yeah. That's right.

ED  
What was the disagreement about?

RON  
It was his job.

The detectives and Ron face each other as they talk.



DANA

Well, according to two of your female M.E.s, he was well respected and well liked.

RON

Well, I agree with those two M.E.s. He was well respected. Like I said earlier, he was the best M.E. this morgue's ever had.

ED

I don't understand. If he was well respected, what was the disagreement between you and him about?

RON

The disagreement was he had worked at this morgue for ten years without a single vacation. Not to speak ill of the dead, but do you guys want to know what he said when I told him, 'You've put in ten years here. Take a few weeks off'?

Dana and Ed continue to look at Ron.

ED

What did he say?

RON

He said, and I quote, 'I'm gonna succeed at my job...or die trying'. Unquote. No pun intended.

Ron takes a bite out of one half of his sandwich in his hand and slowly chews it.

Dana and Ed watch Ron eat.

DANA

I guess those were his last words.

Ron nods his head in response to Dana's statement as he takes another bite of his sandwich and he chews it slowly.

INT. THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PRECINCT - DAY

Ed and Dana walk toward their desks along with Rita, who holds another cup of coffee in her hand.

ED

We've spoken to Anne Marsden,  
another M.E. It turns out she and  
the deceased were also good  
friends.

RITA

He was also friendly with Becky  
Schulman. Hold on a minute. Wasn't  
Perkins married?

DANA

According to his wife, they were  
happily married.

ED

(to Rita - he sits down in  
his chair at his desk)

Wait a minute. Are you saying that  
Perkins might have had affairs with  
the female M.E.s?

RITA

My women's intuition says that the  
wife found out that he was cheating  
and had a motive to kill her  
husband. I mean, think about it.

(re: Ed and Dana listen to  
Rita)

Her husband gets a little too  
friendly with the female M.E.s, she  
tries to talk him out of the  
profession, he ignores her, she  
finds out her husband is unfaithful  
and she kills him.

DANA

I don't think the wife killed  
Perkins, Lieu. When we told her  
that her husband was killed, she  
really let out the tears.

ED

We also spoke to Ron Carter, the  
head M.E. He said that Perkins had  
worked at the city morgue in Queens  
faithfully for ten years with no  
vacations.

DANA

(sits in her chair at her  
desk)

(MORE)

DANA (CONT'D)

His last words were, prior to his death were, 'I'm gonna succeed at my job or die trying'.

ED

That kinda puts a hole in your theory, Lieu. I thought the killer was the wife, but I was wrong, too.

RITA

Well, until you can prove me wrong, try retracing your steps and question Becky Schulman and Anne Marsden again.

As Rita takes a sip of her coffee and leaves her detectives' desks:

Dana looks toward Ed.

Ed looks toward Dana in silence as he shrugs his shoulders.

FADE OUT.

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "Apartment of Becky Schulman - Greenwich Village - Wednesday, April 4th"

INT. BECKY SCHULMAN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Becky, Ed and Dana stand in front of each other.

ED

We're sorry to bother you again, Becky, but we have to ask you some more questions about Joshua.

Becky looks worried but calm.

BECKY

Sure. Ask away.

ED

Did Joshua have any affairs with you or any of the female M.E.s?

BECKY

Of course not. He kept his relationships with us strictly professional.

(MORE)

BECKY (CONT'D)

Like I said earlier, he was well respected and he was my mentor.

(re: Ed and Dana listen to Becky as she speaks)

He also told me and the other M.E.s about how much he loved his wife. I wish I could have found a guy like Josh.

DANA

What was the boy to girl ratio at the morgue?

BECKY

Ten male M.E.s and ten female M.E.s. As far as we were concerned, it was pretty equal...and professional.

ED

Well, with you and Joshua gone, it still seems pretty equal.

BECKY

On the contrary, I'm going back to work tomorrow and I'm still keeping my therapist on standby.

DANA

That's awesome. Thanks for talking with us.

The two detectives prepare to leave and Dana turns and faces Becky and Ed does the same.

DANA (CONT'D)

One last thing. Do you know where Anne Marsden lives?

BECKY

She's on the fifth floor. All of us M.E.s live here in the apartment house. You know, it makes planning parties so much easier.

As she smiles:

FADE OUT.

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "Apartment of Anne Marsden - Greenwich Village -  
Wednesday, April 4th"

ANNE (O.C.)  
Detectives, what are you doing  
here?

INT. ANNE MARSDEN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Anne, Dana and Ed stand and face each other.

ED  
We're here to ask you a few more  
questions about Joshua's murder.

ANNE  
What questions do you have for me?

Dana and Ed look at Anne.

ED  
How close were you and the rest of  
the female M.E.s with the deceased?  
'Cause we got word that he was a  
little too friendly toward you  
gals.

Anne is shocked at what Ed said.

ANNE  
I don't know who told you that, but  
his relationships with us was  
totally professional. He's never  
made a single pass at any one of  
us. The only thing on his mind was  
his job.  
(re: Dana and Ed as they  
listen to Anne carefully)  
Oh, and the other thing on his mind  
was his wife. When he wasn't  
talking to us about work, he was  
talking about his wife.

DANA  
So, was there any jealousy among  
you girls?

Anne puts her hands on her hips.

ANNE  
On the contrary, we were happy for  
Josh. As a matter of fact, we  
wished that Joshua was cloned. The  
only thing we told him were the  
stories about the losers we were  
dating at the time.

(MORE)

ANNE (CONT'D)

We considered his wife the luckiest woman in the state of New York.

(re: Dana and Ed continue to listen to Anne as she speaks)

I mean, it's not every day a New York City woman can find a man as perfect as Josh.

Ed's cellular phone RINGS and as he reaches in his slacks pocket, he takes out the phone, opens it and answers it.

ED

(to the ladies)

Excuse me.

(into the phone)

Green.

As he walks to another part of the apartment:

Dana and Anne continue to talk to each other as Ed continues to talk on his cell phone.

DANA

One last question, Anne. Your head M.E. told us that he and Joshua had a disagreement. It was about him working for ten solid years without a single vacation. Did he ever tell you or the other female M.E.s about that?

ANNE

If they did have a disagreement, no one told us about it. I guess it was kind of a 'Don't ask, don't tell' thing.

ED (O.S.)

Dana...

As she and Anne face Ed:

Ed CLOSES his cell phone and puts it back in his slacks pocket.

ED (CONT'D)

...we got a call from the boys in blue from an abandoned theater on Broadway. You're not gonna believe what they found there.

FADE OUT.

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "An Abandoned Theater - Broadway - Wednesday, April 4th"

EXT. THE ABANDONED THEATER - DAY

Dana parks her car behind three double parked police cars. As they get out of the car, they react to a strange smell that seems to be coming from inside the abandoned theater. Dana and Ed cover their mouths and noses in disgust.

ED

Holy shit! What the fuck is that  
smell?

PETER HARTFORD, a slim male cop who looks to be in his mid 30s, has a gas mask covering his eyes, nose and mouth, walks over to the detectives with gas masks in his hands and gives them to Ed and Dana, who quickly take them and put them on their faces.

PETER

(to the detectives,  
muffled)  
Something was decomposing in there.  
That could've been the reason why  
the theater was abandoned.

INT. THE ABANDONED THEATER - DAY

Peter and the detectives enter the theater.

Two other cops, JANINE FALCO, a slim female cop, who is in her mid 30s and JOE PACKARD, a husky male cop, who is in his mid 30s, are also wearing gas masks that cover their eyes, noses and mouths and are wearing white surgical gloves on their hands.

They pick up the pieces of the floorboards, which are loose from the stage.

The detectives and Peter walk toward the stage and stop a few feet away from it.

DANA

(to Janine and Joe,  
muffled)  
Hey, you two. What did you find?

JANINE  
 (to Dana and Ed, also  
 muffled)  
 Detectives, I think we've hit the  
 motherlode.

Janine and Joe are together on the stage with the floorboards all pulled out and Janine reaches down into the stage and pulls out a rotted and somewhat bloody severed arm with a hand attached and shows it to the detectives and Peter.

JANINE (CONT'D)  
 A dead body has been cut up and  
 stuffed into the floorboards of the  
 stage.

She pulls out another rotted and bloody severed arm with a hand attached and she sets it down on the stage next to the other one.

JANINE (CONT'D)  
 The chest is wedged between the  
 head and the chopped up legs. And  
 there are a couple of sheets of  
 paper on top of the rest of the  
 body.  
 (she reaches into the  
 stage and pulls out  
 sheets of paper and she  
 holds them and shows them  
 to the detectives and  
 Peter)  
 It seems like these pieces of paper  
 has words on them. It's a short  
 story.

Dana, Ed and Peter continue to look toward the cops on the stage.

ED  
 (to the cops, muffled)  
 What's the title of the short  
 story?

Janine and Joe look toward the detectives and their fellow uniformed cop. Janine looks at the first page of the short story in her right surgical gloved hand. As she looks toward Dana, Ed and Peter:

JANINE  
 "The Tell Tale Heart" by Edgar  
 Allan Poe.



JOE  
 (he reaches in the stage  
 and pulls out a small  
 manila envelope)  
 There's also a small envelope along  
 with the short story.

As he holds his right surgical gloved hand out and turns the envelope upside down over his hand:

JOE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 (re: Dana, Ed and Peter  
 listen to Joe,  
 attentively)  
 And you'll never guess what was  
 inside it.

DANA  
 Tell us. We're dying to know.

BACK TO JOE

He holds an eye with nerves hanging from it and blood covering it in his surgical gloved hand.

JOE (O.S.)  
 The victim's eye.

Dana, Ed and Peter are shocked at what they have heard and seen.

DANA  
 I take back what I said.

INT. RITA'S OFFICE AT THE PRECINCT - DAY

Dana and Ed stand in front of her desk in total silence.

RITA (O.S.)  
 Let me see if I got this straight:  
 The killer had struck again and  
 took the body and cut it up and  
 stuffed the body parts in the  
 floorboards of a stage in an  
 abandoned theater on Broadway?

RITA (CONT'D)  
 (sitting back in her chair  
 behind her desk)  
 Is that what you're telling me?

Dana and Ed tell Rita what they know.

ED

That's the shortened version of the story. The forensics team and the boys in blue told us that the killer also cut out one of the victim's peepers.

(re: Dana)

And the short story "The Tell-Tale Heart" was on the chest stashed with the other body parts in the floorboards of the stage in the abandoned theater.

DANA

Forensics also told us that the body was there approximately seventy-two hours. The smell in that theater could make you lose your appetite forever.

RITA

And we still have no identity of the killer?

DANA

Unfortunately, no, but we're probably dealing with another Son of Sam.

RITA

You mean a copycat?

DANA

That's what it's beginning to look like. The only difference between the 1977 version and the present version is: The present version kills his victims via Edgar Allan Poe.

RITA

Do we at least have an I.D. on the second victim?

ED

Negative. The boys listed the victim as John Doe.

Rita lets out a sigh and rubs her face with both hands and she returns her hands on the desk and folds them.

RITA

This case is getting more and more weird as the bodies pile up.

(MORE)

RITA (CONT'D)

Take a break on go on home and work  
on the case tomorrow.

ED/DANA

Sure thing, Lieu.

The detectives walk toward the entrance of the precinct with  
Dana leading and Ed following behind.

EXT. THE PARKING LOT - DAY

Dana and Ed walk over to Dana's car.

ED

Wow! This case is gonna be a trip.

DANA

You're not kidding. We haven't even  
got a lead on this case and already  
we have two dead bodies to  
investigate.

As the detectives stop at Dana's car:

ED

Thank God that the lieutenant gave  
us some time off today to clear our  
minds.

DANA

Yeah. You're right.

ED

Can you give me a lift to the  
Museum of Modern Art to pick up my  
wife? She works there.

DANA

Sure. I'll take you there.

ED

Thanks.

Dana walks around to the driver's seat and Ed walks toward  
the passenger's seat and they get in the car and put on their  
seat belts.

Dana's CAR IGNITION TURNS OVER and Dana moves out of her  
parking space and she drives out of the parking lot.

As the car drives down the street:

SUPERIMPOSED SERIES OF SHOTS - SPINNING PUBLICATIONS

-- The Daily News and the front page reads: "UNKNOWN SERIAL KILLER HAUNTS NEW YORK CITY POPULATION!"

-- The New York Post and the front page reads: 'KILLER TERRORIZES NEW YORK CITY!"

-- The New York Times and the front page reads: "SERIAL KILLER HITS NEW YORK CITY!"

And then:

SERIES OF SHOTS - PEOPLE READING THE PUBLICATIONS

-- A couple reads The Daily News article on the serial killer.

-- A woman reads The New York Post article on the serial killer.

-- A man with a black beard reads The New York Times article on the serial killer.

INT. THE PERKINS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

On Violet's television screen, LIZ CHO, a news reporter from ABC News, reports the news about the unknown serial killer.

LIZ

We interrupt your regularly scheduled program to bring you this special report. An unknown serial killer has killed two people: One in Queens and the other in an abandoned theater on Broadway.

(re: Violet)

The body in Queens was identified as Joshua Perkins, a medical examiner in a morgue and the body found in the abandoned theater on Broadway has been identified as John Doe. The police have no leads of the unknown serial killer's whereabouts or where the killer may strike next, but they have found clues to the killer's methods of killing his victims.

LIZ (CONT'D)

(re: Liz)

According to police reports, the killer killed his victims in the manner of the short stories written by the nineteenth century author Edgar Allan Poe. Not since David Berkowitz in the late 1970s has a killer terrorized New York City. More on this story as it develops.

Violet, who sits on her couch, turns off her television via the remote control and she starts to cry. She is really upset that her husband is dead.

EXT. THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART - DAY

Dana's car stops right in front of the museum.

INT. DANA'S CAR - DAY

The detectives have a short discussion about the case they will continue to investigate the next day. Ed gets out of the car and looks at Dana through the open window.

ED

Thanks a lot for the lift, Dana. I really appreciate it.

DANA

No problem, Ed. Will you be ready to tackle the investigation of this Edgar Allan Poe based serial killer tomorrow?

ED

I most certainly will be. Will you be ready?

DANA

I sure will be. See you tomorrow.

ED

Likewise.

DANA

How are you going to get home?

ED

My wife drove her car. I'll be getting a lift with her. I will drive my car tomorrow.

DANA

That sounds good. Take care.

ED

You too.

As Dana drives off, Ed walks toward the museum stairs and walks up the stairs.

INT. THE MUSEUM - DAY

The museum is semi-packed and Ed enters the museum and walks through the crowd. Then, he walks toward Roselyn, who stands in the middle of the museum.

The couple give each other a loving embrace.

ED

Hey, Rose. How was work?

ROSELYN

It was tiring; being on my feet all day, but I had a good time. I gave a group of folks a tour of the works of Gauguin, Van Gogh, Picasso, Rousseau and Dali.

(she hands the car keys to Ed and he takes them from her)

You drive. My feet hurt like hell.

They walk ahead.

EXT. ED AND ROSELYN'S HOME - DAY

Ed drives the car right in the driveway in front of the garage. The MOTOR SHUTS OFF and then, the couple takes off their seat belts and get out of the car and they CLOSE the doors and walk toward the steps of their house.

As they walk up the stairs and onto the porch:

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - DAY

The sound of the lock to the house being unlocked and taken out of the doorknob is heard. Then, as the DOOR OPENS, Roselyn enters the house first and Ed follows right behind her and CLOSES and LOCKS the door behind him.

They walk toward their bedroom.

## INT. ED AND ROSELYN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Roselyn comes in and takes off her jacket and blouse and then, Ed comes in and takes off his suit coat and tie.

As Roselyn takes off her skirt and shoes and is now clad in her black bra and panties, Ed sits on the bed and he takes off his shoes, socks and slacks and is now clad in his boxers and T-shirt.

Finally, Roselyn walks out of the bedroom.

## INT. THE BATHROOM - DAY

As Roselyn walks into the bathroom, she walks over to the tub, SLIDES the curtain to the left a little and turns on the hot and cold water to take a shower.

Ed enters the bathroom as he holds two robes and then, Roselyn sticks her hand in the shower and feels the water to see if it is warm.

When she finds out that the water is warm, she takes off her underwear and puts them in the hamper and gets into the shower, leaving Ed in the bathroom holding the robes.

Ed puts the robes on top of the hamper and he takes off his T-shirt and boxers and puts them in the hamper and joins his wife in the shower.

## INT. THE SHOWER - DAY

The couple gets soaked and they turn and face each other. They embrace each other and then, they give each other a passionate kiss as the water from the shower head soaks their bodies.

As the kiss ends, Ed admires his wife and looks at her wet bare breasts. Roselyn smiles as Ed looks her in the eyes with love in his. He kisses her chest and he slowly kneels as he kisses her stomach.

Roselyn, who is still standing up straight, puts her hands on Ed's shoulders as he simulates oral sex on her. Roselyn's eyes roll back into her head and she moans in pleasure as she gets eaten out and the water soaks her and Ed's bodies.

Roselyn also fondles her bare breasts as she moans in pleasure. Ed stands up and then, he and Roselyn give each other another passionate kiss.

FADE OUT.

EXT. DANA'S HOUSE - DAY

A car drives past the house. Dana's car parks in the driveway in front of the garage. The motor is shut off and Dana takes off her seat belt and she gets out of the car and finally, she CLOSES the car door and walks toward the steps of her house.

She walks up the stairs and onto the porch and stands in front of the front door.

INT. DANA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The sound of the lock to the house being unlocked and taken out of the doorknob is heard. As the DOOR OPENS, Dana enters the house and CLOSES and LOCKS the door behind her.

She walks to her bedroom.

INT. DANA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Dana comes in and takes off her leather jacket. She sits on her bed and takes off her sneakers and socks. Next, she stands up and takes off her leggings and throws them on the bed and then, she takes off her wife beater T-shirt and reveals a black sports bra.

Now, Dana is clad in a black sports bra and matching panties.

Finally, Dana walks out of the bedroom.

INT. DANA'S BATHROOM - DAY

As Dana walks into the bathroom, she walks over to the tub, SLIDES the door to the left a little and turns the hot and cold water on to take a shower.

She walks back out of the bathroom for a few seconds. Next, she has her robe in her hand when she returns to the bathroom.

She puts it on her hamper and then, she takes off her underwear and puts it in the hamper and she stands in the bathroom completely naked.

She sticks her hand in the shower and feels the water to see if it is warm. When she finds out that it is warm, she steps into the tub and SLIDES the shower door CLOSED.



INT. THE SHOWER - DAY

Dana stands under the shower head and the water soaks her entire body. She rubs her wet face with her wet hands and then, she begins her shower by picking up her loofah and a bottle of liquid soap.

She wets the loofah and pops open the bottle of liquid soap and squeezes the bottle of liquid soap onto the loofah. Then, she closes the bottle and returns it to the shelf in the shower. She begins to wash her neck and chest.

FADE OUT.

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "The Twenty-Seventh Precinct - 10:00 A.M. - Thursday, April 5th"

EXT. THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PRECINCT - DAY

TRAFFIC SOUNDS are heard and people walk past the precinct are seen.

INT. THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PRECINCT - DAY

The detectives inside are busy tackling the case they were working on yesterday.

Ed and Dana are at their desks working on the case. SOPHIA COLLINS, a slim Caucasian woman in her mid 50s, enters the precinct and walks over to Ed and Dana's desks. She looks really upset.

As Ed looks up at Sophia:

ED

May we help you?

SOPHIA

Yes. My name is Sophia Collins. My husband was considered missing four days ago. I have reason to believe that he was the victim of the brutal killing that took place in the abandoned theater within those four days.

DANA

Hold on one minute, Mrs. Collins.  
 (she picks up the receiver  
 to her phone and presses  
 a button as she holds the  
 receiver on her right  
 ear)

Lieutenant. It's Dana. We have a  
 person who knows one of the victims  
 of the serial murders that took  
 place yesterday. ...Her name is  
 Sophia Collins. ...Okay. I'll tell  
 her.

As Dana hangs up her phone and stands up:

DANA (CONT'D)

Mrs. Collins, the lieutenant would  
 like to see you. I will take you to  
 her office. Follow me.

Dana signals Sophia to follow her and then, the two ladies  
 make a beeline to Rita's office.

INT. RITA'S OFFICE - DAY

Rita sits behind her desk with a cup of coffee on top of it.  
 Dana KNOCKS on the door.

RITA

Come on in. Door's open.

Dana OPENS the door and she and Sophia enter the office and  
 stand right in front of Rita and her desk.

DANA

Lieu, here is Sophia Collins.  
 (to Sophia)  
 Mrs. Collins, this is Lieutenant  
 Rita Martin.

Sophia and Rita shake hands.

SOPHIA

Pleased to meet you, Lieutenant.

RITA

Likewise, Mrs. Collins.

As the ladies sit down in their seats, Dana leaves the office  
 and she CLOSES the door behind her.

RITA (CONT'D)

What can I do for you?

SOPHIA

I have reason to believe that my husband was killed three days ago. When we were together, he said he was going out to get a pack of cigarettes, but he never came home.

(re: Rita listens to

Sophia carefully)

I called the precinct the next day and the police said that they would try to find him, but that was two days ago. I watched the ABC News yesterday and it said that a John Doe was found dead in an abandoned theater on Broadway.

(re: Sophia is upset)

Do you know if the victim is my husband?

RITA

We are still investigating the case, Mrs. Collins. What was your husband's name? Did he have any distinguishing marks on his body or anything we can use to identify the victim as your husband?

SOPHIA

His name was Frank. He had a tattoo of the American flag on his left arm.

RITA

Okay. I'll ask my detectives to look into that.

(she picks up her coffee mug)

Do you have a number where you can be reached?

SOPHIA

(she picks up a piece of paper and a pen off Rita's desk and writes her home phone number on the paper)

Yes. I will write it down on this piece of paper.

(MORE)

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

(she puts down the pen and  
hands Rita the paper -  
Rita takes the paper from  
Sophia)

Here's my number and address. I  
live in a house in Brooklyn. I hope  
that your detectives can find out  
if John Doe is my husband.

RITA

That will be our top priority as we  
solve this case.

As the ladies stand up from their chairs in unison and shake  
hands again:

SOPHIA

Thank you, Lieutenant. I appreciate  
your precinct helping me get  
closure on my missing husband.

RITA

You're welcome, Mrs. Collins. We  
here at the NYPD are always willing  
to protect and serve.

As Rita walks toward Sophia, Sophia OPENS Rita's office door  
and she leaves the office with Rita right behind her.

INT. THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PRECINCT - DAY

Sophia and Rita walk over to Ed and Dana's desk and stop  
right in front of them and they begin another conversation.

RITA

We will keep you informed about  
your missing husband, Mrs. Collins.

SOPHIA

Thank you, Lieutenant. I hope you  
find the fuckin' bastard who was  
responsible for killing him...if he  
was killed, that is.

RITA

Do you need a lift? I can have one  
of my officers drive you home.

SOPHIA

No. That won't be necessary. I will  
take a cab...but thanks for the  
offer.

As Sophia sadly walks toward the entrance of the precinct:

BACK TO RITA, ED AND DANA

Rita faces her detectives.

RITA

Wow. Talk about a grieving widow.

DANA

Do you really think that the John Doe we found at the abandoned theater is her husband?

RITA

I'm not so sure, but she did give an accurate description of him back in my office.

ED

What did she say about him?

RITA

She said that her husband's name is Frank and he had a tattoo of the American flag on his left arm.

(re: Ed and Dana listen to Rita in silence)

Here's what I want you two to do. Go down to the medical examiner's office and get some information about John Doe to see if it was indeed Mrs. Collins' husband.

ED

Well, before we do that, we have to go to the library and check the newspaper archives and get some more info on her husband.

RITA

Well, that sounds like a good idea. The more info we get, the quicker this insane case can be solved.

Ed and Dana get up from their seats at their desks and walk toward the entrance of the precinct.

DANA

Let's head to the library.

ED

I'll drive.

EXT. THE PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Different vehicles drive past the library and people walk on the sidewalk past it.

INT. THE NEWSPAPER ARCHIVES - DAY

Dana sits down in front of the newspaper archive machine and Ed stands behind her as he looks over his partner's shoulder.

THE NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE MACHINE

It has a front page on the screen. It is a four day old New York Post and the caption reads: "BROOKLYN MAN MISSING!" It also has a photo of Frank Collins on the front page under the headline and on his left arm is a tattoo of the American flag.

BACK TO DANA AND ED

They are shocked at the newspaper article and they speak to each other in low but audible voices.

DANA

Hey, Ed. Mrs. Collins said her husband went missing four days ago, right?

ED

Yeah.

BACK TO THE NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE

The archive turns to the news article.

BACK TO DANA AND ED

They look at the newspaper article together.

DANA

Get a load of this.

(re: the article)

Frank Collins, a fifty-five year old man in Brooklyn has gone missing. His wife, Sophia, had told the police in Brooklyn that he was a construction worker for Harrison Construction Incorporated and reported Frank's absence and was quite worried about his whereabouts.

(re: the detectives)

(MORE)

DANA (CONT'D)

Lieutenant George Dunlap and his officers took the woman's information and looked into her husband's disappearance. After twelve hours, the police had no leads or information about Frank and considered the investigation closed, but agreed to reopen it when they have the chance.

The detectives look at the article in shocked silence.

ED

Oh shit. So, Frank went missing on the first of April. I wonder why they gave up after twelve hours.

DANA

I don't know, Ed, but it looks like we need to take a trip and pay a visit to Brooklyn's finest.

FADE OUT.

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "Thirty-Third Precinct - Brooklyn, New York - 11:00 - Thursday, April 5"

EXT. THE THIRTY-THIRD PRECINCT - DAY

Traffic sounds are heard and people walk past the precinct.

INT. THE PRECINCT - DAY

The precinct looks just as busy as the Twenty-Seventh; if not busier. Dana and Ed walk inside and stand in the middle of the precinct.

DETECTIVE BRIAN COSGROVE, mid-40s, a slim Caucasian male, dressed to the nines with his badge on his lapel and  
DETECTIVE GREG MATTHEWS, mid-40s, a slim African American male, also dressed like his partner walks over to Ed and Dana. He wonders why they are at the precinct.

BRIAN

May we help you two?

ED

I'm Detective Ed Green...  
(he and Brian shake hands)  
(MORE)

ED (CONT'D)

...and this is my partner, Dana  
Cassady.

(Dana and Brian shake  
hands)

We're from the Queens PD.

BRIAN

I'm Detective Brian Cosgrove and  
this is my partner, Detective Greg  
Matthews.

GREG

(to the detectives)

Pleased to meet you.

ED

Likewise.

(beat)

We're here to ask you a few  
questions about a case your  
department worked on four days ago.

GREG

We work a lot of cases, Detective.  
You and your partner are in the  
same racket. You gotta be specific.

DANA

We are here to ask about Frank  
Collins.

(calm silence)

Specific enough for ya?

Brian and Greg look at Dana and Ed with a look of shocked  
silence. Oh shit! They know why the Queens detectives are at  
the precinct and who they are talking about.

GREG

What about him?

ED

Your department were called to find  
him after his wife told you he was  
missing on the first of April.

DANA

And you only investigated the case  
for twelve hours and then, you gave  
up.

BRIAN

We had no leads or information, so  
we had no choice.



DANA

So, you're just going to let the case go cold?

BRIAN

Like I said, we had no choice!

GREG

Hold on a minute, Brian.

(to Ed and Dana)

How did you know about the Collins case?

ED

We came from the library and looked up Collins' disappearance when the wife came to our precinct telling us and our lieutenant that her husband was still missing four days later.

GREG

What did she say exactly?

DANA

We're not allowed to give out that information. It's an ongoing investigation. We can tell you that it is a cold case and we want to investigate it.

BRIAN

We can't do that. Collins' disappearance happened in Brooklyn and that's where the investigation stays.

ED

Look, I don't want to raise hell on your turf, but the way I see it, you two have two choices: You can either take us to the cold case room and hand over the Collins case...

(re: Brian and Greg)

...or I could tell your lieutenant that you fucked up in finding him and leaving his wife worried.

(re: Ed and Dana -  
sounding serious)

Your call.

Oh shit! Ed seems angry at this point. Brian and Greg see how serious Ed was with his ultimatum and don't want any trouble with their lieutenant or the detectives so:

BRIAN

Follow me. I'll take you to get the case.

ED

Lead the way.

INT. THE COLD CASE ROOM - DAY

The room is really quiet. As the door OPENS, Brian and Ed enter the room and walk through the shelves of cold cases.

As they get to the one they are looking for, they stop right in their tracks.

A COLD CASE

The box reads: "F. COLLINS - APRIL 1, 2020".

BACK TO BRIAN AND ED

Brian takes the cold case out of its place on the shelf and hands it to Ed. As Ed takes it from him:

BRIAN

There you go.

ED

You did the right thing.

Then, Ed leaves the row of shelves and the room itself with the cold case in his hand.

FADE OUT.

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "The Twenty-Seventh Precinct - 11:00 A.M. - Thursday, April 5"

INT. THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PRECINCT - DAY

Ed and Dana are at Ed's desk with the cold case on it. Ed has a piece of paper in his hand, which happens to be a missing persons report.

ED

To be perfectly honest with you,  
Dana, those detectives in Brooklyn  
did a real shitty job on the  
Collins case.

DANA

I agree, Ed. I totally agree.  
(beat)  
Find anything tangible we can use  
to give Mrs. Collins some closure?

ED

Not too much information on the  
missing persons report. The only  
things on here is his name, age,  
date of birth, his job description,  
who he worked for and the date her  
husband turned up missing.

Dana looks in the box and:

DANA

Holy shit!

ED

What's up?

DANA

You'll never guess what is in here.

ED

Surprise me.

Dana reaches into the box and pulls out a cover of a book  
that has been ripped off the book itself...but it's not just  
any cover. Dana shows it to Ed. It is, in fact:

DANA

(re: the cover in Dana's  
hand)

It is the cover of the book of  
short stories and poems by Edgar  
Allan Poe.

The title is: "GREAT TALES AND POEMS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE -  
EDGAR ALLAN POE - COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED".

Ed looks at the cover in his partner's hand. He is surprised  
at this. In fact, he doesn't know what to say at first...but  
after a few minutes of silence, he finally speaks.

ED

Holy shit! You mean Frank was a fan of Poe?

DANA

Looks like it. I wonder if his wife knows.

(she looks at the cover)

I better go tell the boss about this.

Dana walks over to Rita's office door.

INT. RITA'S OFFICE - DAY

Dana KNOCKS on the door.

RITA (O.S.)

Come on in.

Dana OPENS the door and walks toward Rita's desk with the book cover in her hand.

DANA

Lieu, I got something to tell you.

RITA

What is it?

DANA

We found out a little more info about Frank Collins.

RITA

Okay, spill it.

DANA

Well, first: Frank Collins has been missing since the first of April. Second: We found out that he worked construction at Harrison Construction Incorporated and third...

(she hands the cover to Rita and Rita looks it over)

...Frank may have been a fan of Edgar Allan Poe.

Rita is shocked by this. She looks the book cover over with wide eyes.

RITA

This is amazing! How did you get this information?

DANA

Remember when we told you that we were going to the library earlier?

RITA (O.S.)

Yeah.

DANA

Well, we got the info from the newspaper archives and we also went to the precinct in Brooklyn.

RITA

Why did you need to go there?

DANA

While we were perusing the archives, they also said that the cops in Brooklyn gave up looking for Franklin after looking for twelve hours.

RITA

Twelve hours? Franklin has been missing for four days.

DANA

Yeah...and since they couldn't find any leads or information, they made Franklin a cold case.

At this point, Rita can't believe what Dana had said and as she hands the book cover back to Dana.

RITA

Son of a bitch. So that's why Franklin's wife came to see us. Those fucks in Brooklyn didn't even try to look for Franklin.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

(shouting really angrily)

Where is Rita?!

As Rita stands up from her seat, she and Dana walk out of the office and into the precinct and walks toward Ed and his desk.

RITA

George, why the hell are you  
raising your voice in my precinct?

LIEUTENANT GEORGE DUNLAP, a tall, slim Caucasian man, who seems to be in his mid-50s and is dressed in a suit and overcoat and a badge pinned on it, stands next to Ed and his desk. He looks pissed off.

GEORGE

I am here to ask you who the hell  
are you sending your detectives to  
my precinct to take over a case  
that belongs to the Brooklyn PD?

Now, Rita is pissed off as and Dana walks back to her desk and sits in her seat and Rita stands in front of George. Rita goes out of her way to defend her two detectives.

RITA

First of all, I had nothing to do  
with them going there. They went to  
your precinct to investigate a  
missing persons case that you and  
your Brooklyn detectives gave up on  
after investigating it for twelve  
hours when Collins was missing four  
days ago.

(re: George still looks  
angry)

And while we are on the subject of  
Collins, his wife came to see me  
and my detectives when you and your  
detectives didn't do your jobs.

GEORGE

My detectives and I were doing  
their jobs.

RITA

Really? If that is true, why is  
Collins a cold case?

Before George speaks, Rita holds up her hand and stops him before one word comes out of his mouth.

RITA (CONT'D)

I'll tell you why...it's because  
you and your goddamn department  
refuse to take time out of your  
busy schedules of arresting black  
people and Latinos to locate a  
missing man and ease the pain of a  
married and worried woman.

(MORE)

RITA (CONT'D)

You and your department didn't even so much as look into the fact that he might be dead!

RITA (CONT'D)

(re: George)

Oh...and another thing. A John Doe was found by my detectives in an abandoned theater on Broadway yesterday. Can you or your detectives say that?

George remains silent because he knows that Rita is right about how hard her detectives are working on the case. He even eases up on his anger and begins to understand where Rita is coming from.

RITA (CONT'D)

I didn't think so. I'm going to tell you something, George. You and your department need to do a better job protecting and serving Brooklyn, because we cops don't get to pick and choose which crimes to investigate and we damn sure don't just arrest criminals of color. We arrest criminals of all types.

(beat)

Now, if you would kindly leave my precinct, my detectives have a job to do.

At this point, George is defeated and he silently leaves the precinct. When he is gone, the entire precinct, including Ed and Dana cheer and chant, "Lieu!". Rita revels in the chant.

SERIES OF SHOTS - THE ENTIRE PRECINCT CHEERS AND CHANTS

Rita smiles.

RITA (CONT'D)

(loudly over the cheers and chant)

Thank you! Thank you!

(the cheers and chant stop)

Okay, guys. Get back to work.

(to Ed and Dana)

You two go to the medical examiner and get some information on the Joe Doe.

ED

Will do.

DANA

Okay.

The detectives get up out of their seats and leave the precinct.

FADE OUT.

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "The Office Of The Medical Examiner - Thursday, April 5"

INT. THE MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE - DAY

Ed and Dana are in the office of SHEA CONNORS, a somewhat chubby African American woman in her early 50s. She is the medical examiner for the NYPD. She wears surgical gloves on her hands.

Shea has seen a lot of bodies come into her office, but none were as gruesome as this.

The detectives and Shea stand on opposite sides of the table. On the table, the rotted body parts of John Doe are set up to look like a cadaver.

ED

What can you tell us about John Doe, Shea?

SHEA

Well, I can tell you that whoever chopped up this body had a fuckin' field day. They must have hated the shit outta this guy.

DANA

We have reason to believe that this is the body of a guy named Frank Collins.

ED

We were told that he has a tattoo of the American flag on his left arm.

SHEA

I'm glad you mentioned that. This victim is Frank Collins because...



As she picks up the left arm, a tattoo of the American flag is seen on it. It looks like it has faded, but it is clearly seen.

SHEA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 ...tah-dah. You can barely see it,  
 but it is definitely a tattoo of  
 the American flag.

The detectives are happy that the confirmation has been discovered, but they are unhappy that they have to tell Sophia that her husband is dead.

Shea puts the arm back down in place on the table and picks up the envelope and holds out her free hand and turns the envelope upside down and the eye and ends up in her free gloved hand.

Then, she shows the eye, with the nerves attached, to the detectives.

#### THE EYE

It is in between Shea's thumb and pointer finger.

SHEA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 And what I don't understand is why  
 this sick fuck cut out the guy's  
 eye.

Ed and Dana look disgusted, but they keep calm.

DANA  
 Well, we just found out that the  
 sick fuck has some kind of hard on  
 for Edgar Allan Poe's short stories  
 and poems.

SHEA  
 Let me guess...  
 (she looks at the eye in  
 her hand - looks back at  
 the detectives)  
 ..."The Tell-Tale Heart".

DANA  
 You got it.

SHEA  
 Holy shit! It is going to be  
 difficult getting this back into  
 the socket.

(MORE)

SHEA (CONT'D)

It seems like the killer severed the nerves when he cut out the eye, but I will do what I can to put it back in place.

DANA

Okay. Shea. We have to go. We have a widow to visit.

SHEA

Okay. I am glad I could help.

Ed and Dana have looks on their faces that agree. Then, they wave and leave the office.

FADE OUT.

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "The Home Of Frank and Sophia Collins - Brooklyn, New York - Thursday, April 5 - 12:00 P.M.

EXT. FRANK AND SOPHIA'S HOME - DAY

Ed's finger pushes the doorbell and the DOORBELL RINGS ONCE.

Ed and Dana stand on the porch and face the front door of the house.

ED

I really hate this.

DANA

You and me both.

THE FRONT DOOR

As it slowly OPENS, Sophia peeks her head out of the door. When she sees that it is the detectives, she opens it wider.

SOPHIA

Detective Green. Detective Cassady. What brings you here?

DANA

We're here to bring you some very bad news. May we come in?

SOPHIA

Sure. Please. Come on in.

As she opens the door even wider:

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - DAY

The detectives enter the house and walk to the middle of the living room. Sophia CLOSES the door and joins the detectives.

SOPHIA

What is it you want to tell me? Is the John Doe my husband?

The living room is as silent as a library. Ed and Dana are not comfortable about telling her what they have to tell her.

Sophia awaits their response.

BACK TO ED AND DANA

Dana takes a deep breath and answers Sophia's question.

DANA

Yes. John Doe is indeed your husband. We also found this in his personal effects when we went to pick up the box at the Brooklyn precinct.

She reaches in the pocket of her leather jacket and takes out a folded piece of paper and hands it to Sophia.

Sophia kindly takes it from Dana and unfolds it.

SOPHIA'S HANDS

As she unfolds the last fold, she discovers that it is the cover to Edgar Allan Poe's book of short stories and poems that we have seen earlier.

Sophia is perturbed at what she holds in her hands and she looks at the detectives with the same look.

SOPHIA

What is this?

ED

That's the cover of a book of short stories and poems by Edgar Allan Poe. Did Frank read that book?

SOPHIA

Three years ago. He got a copy from the library and brought it home and read it from cover to cover. After he finished it, he brought it back and haven't thought of it since.

ED

We think that the killer planted that cover on Frank when he chopped up his body and stuffed his severed body parts in the floorboards in the abandoned theater on Broadway.

SOPHIA

(begins to cry)  
Jesus Christ!

As she really begins to cry:

The detectives feel her pain.

BACK TO SOPHIA

Her sadness is well known at this point. The tears flow out of her eyes like Niagara Falls.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Do me a favor, Detectives.

BACK TO ED AND DANA

They look toward Sophia with unhappy looks on their faces.

ED

What's that, Mrs. Collins?

SOPHIA

(she sniffles and wipes  
the tears off her face)  
Find that bastard who killed my  
husband and make him pay.

The detectives nod their heads in response to Sophia's statement.

INT. THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PRECINCT - DAY

Ed and Dana are at their desks. They are doing their best to try and find out who the killer is with all the evidence they have collected.

ED

This case is getting more and more difficult to solve. We don't even have a suspect.

DANA

Don't feel too bad, Ed. All we have to do is to keep looking.

JON BAXTER, an average African American male, who is in his late 30s, walks into the precinct and walks over to Ed's desk. He looks a little unhappy.

Ed looks toward Jon in shock.

Dana also looks toward Jon and Ed.

BACK TO JON AND ED

Jon looks at the detectives with a really sad look on his face.

ED  
May we help you?

JON  
My name is Jon Baxter.

ED  
I'm Detective Ed Green...  
(re: Dana)  
...and this is my partner,  
Detective Dana Cassady.  
(re: Jon and Ed)  
Is there anything we can do for  
you?

JON  
Is your lieutenant here?

DANA  
Yes, she is. Why do you need to  
speak to her?

JON  
I was at home watching the news and  
I heard about the murder at the  
morgue in Queens and the murder at  
the abandoned theater on Broadway.  
(sighs sadly)  
I have some information on the  
killer and I need to speak to you  
as well as your lieutenant.

ED  
Stay right here. I will call her.

He picks up the receiver to his phone, puts it to his ear and he presses a button to summon Rita in her office.

ED (CONT'D)  
Yeah...Lieu, you gotta come out  
here.

(MORE)

ED (CONT'D)

...A kid by the name of Jon Baxter  
has some information on the killer.  
...Okay.

Then, Ed hangs up his phone.

RITA'S OFFICE DOOR

As it OPENS, Rita exits her office and CLOSES the door behind  
her and walks over to the detectives and Jon.

When she joins them:

DANA

Lieu, this is Jon Baxter.  
(to Jon)  
Jon, this is Lieutenant Rita  
Martin.

RITA

(she and Jon shake hands)  
Pleased to meet you.

JON

Likewise.

RITA

Detective Green has informed me  
that you have some information on  
the killer who had committed two  
homicides.

Jon is nervous about what he is about to reveal.

JON

Yes, I have a lot of information  
about the killer.

Dana, Ed and Rita look at Jon in complete silence.

DANA

Okay. You can start by giving us an  
I.D. of the killer.

JON

You're looking at him.

BACK TO DANA, ED AND RITA

They look at each other in shock and then, they look back at  
Jon.

JON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

That's right.

BACK TO JON

He looks at the detectives and Rita with an unhappy face.

JON (CONT'D)  
The killer...is me.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Jon sits in a chair at the table. Dana and Ed are in the room with him.

As Ed sits in a chair next to Jon:

ED  
Okay, Jon. Tell us everything from the beginning.

JON  
I'm the one who killed that guy in the city morgue in Queens and I was the one who killed the man in that theater on Broadway four days earlier.  
(the more he talks, the sadder he becomes)  
I didn't know what I was doing when I killed those people. I felt so guilty after I went home, so I've decided to come here and confess to the crimes.

Dana sits on the opposite side of the table and she and Ed listen to Jon in silence.

JON (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
The gun that was used in the murder at the morgue was a Forty-Four Bulldog Special and I used a small hatchet in the murder at the Broadway theater.

ED (O.S.)  
Okay, Jon. Tell us why you murdered those men.

JON  
I don't know. I guess I wasn't thinking when I had committed those crimes. When I saw them on the news, I had to give myself up.

DANA

Why did you use Poe's short stories to kill them?

JON

I am an avid reader of Poe and I can relate to him in so many ways. My favorite short stories of Poe's were "The Murders In The Rue Morgue" and "The Tell-Tale Heart".

DANA

Did you plan on killing those men in the same way as in the short stories?

JON

No...I truly didn't plan on killing those men. It just happened.

ED

Where are the murder weapons?

JON

They're in the closet in my bedroom in my apartment.

DANA

Where's your apartment?

JON

I live in Apartment Three- C at the apartment house on Fifth Street. You guys have to put me in jail. I know I've committed two murders, but I'd rather go to jail than go back to the hellhole I've been in.

ED

And where was that?

As Jon looks toward Green:

JON

Bellevue.

Ed is shocked at Jon's "other" residence. He looks toward his partner with the same face.

Dana looks at Ed with the same face. She is just as shocked as Ed.

BACK TO ED



ED

Jon, you do realize that you have to go to trial for the murders you have committed.

JON

Shit! I confessed to the crimes. Why would I have to go to trial?

DANA

You have to because all suspects are innocent until proven guilty.

ED

Here's another question, Jon: Why did you escape from Bellevue?

JON

I couldn't take it there anymore.

As Dana gets up from her seat at the table, she walks toward the one-way mirror and stands in front of it.

The detectives and Jon are still together in the room.

As Dana walks back toward her seat at the table:

JON (CONT'D)

I missed my life at home. I have been in that goddamned hospital for three months. My family never visited me because they think that my mental illness is just a phase.

ED

Are you taking any medications of any sort for your mental illness?

Jon looks toward Ed as he answers the question.

JON

Yeah. Forty milligrams of Geodon and twenty-five milligrams of Seroquil, but I hadn't taken them for two weeks since I had escaped from the hospital.

EXT. THE INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Rita, PAUL GIBSON, a tall Caucasian male in his early 60s, who is a district attorney for the state of New York and SUSAN KAPLAN, a tall Caucasian woman, who is in her mid-40s and is also an attorney who works with Paul, are on the other side of the one-way mirror.

Inside the interrogation room, Dana sits back down in her seat. Rita switches off the intercom and she and the lawyers have a conversation together.

RITA

Well, what do you guys think?

SUSAN

To be perfectly honest with you, I don't know if this situation will go to trial.

PAUL

This situation has to go to trial.

SUSAN

If it does, Paul, we'll be dealing with a case, a clear case of corpus delecti for both murders and you also have to take into consideration that Baxter escaped from Bellevue.

PAUL

If this situation doesn't go to trial, we might as well quit our jobs and take a permanent vacation.

(to Rita)

Baxter said that the murder weapons were in his closet in his apartment?

RITA

Yes.

As Paul faces Susan and vice versa:

PAUL

Susan, draw up a warrant and have the detectives search Baxter's apartment for the murder weapons.

SUSAN

Will do.

As Rita and the lawyers leave the one- way mirror:

FADE OUT.

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "Apartment Of Jon Baxter - 1010 Fifth Street -  
Thursday, April 5"

INT. JON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ed and Dana, who wear white surgical gloves on their hands, walk over to the closet door and as Dana OPENS it, she searches for the murder weapons. Later, she takes out a shoe box with the lid on it. She shows it to her partner.

DANA

Hey, Ed. Look at this.

ED

Well, open it up and let's see if  
we hit the jackpot.

Dana takes off the lid, puts it under the box, reaches in it and she takes out a Bulldog Forty-Four Special and shows it to Ed.

DANA

Ka-ching.

Ed looks toward the closet and sees something else inside it.

ED

Hey, Dana. I think we've found  
something else.

He walks toward the open closet, reaches inside it and takes out a small hatchet. The blade has blood all over it and he shows it to Dana.

ED (CONT'D)

I guess this was used for the  
murder in the theater four days  
ago.

Dana looks toward Jon's dresser and she sees something else and as she walks over to it, and she picks up a switchblade.

DANA

I think we've found something else,  
Ed.

DANA (CONT'D)  
 (she flicks the  
 switchblade and the blade  
 is covered in blood)  
 A switchblade with blood on it. I  
 guess this was used to cut out  
 Collins' eye.

INT. JON'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dana and Ed hold all three murder weapons enter the room and walk toward Jon, who looks really unhappy. Jon turns and faces them in silence.

JON  
 I see you found the murder weapons.

ED  
 Yeah, I'm afraid so.

DANA  
 And I'm afraid that I am gonna have  
 to read you your rights.

JON  
 I understand.

As Dana hands her partner her murder weapon and takes out a pair of handcuffs out of her leather jacket pocket:

DANA  
 (walks over to Jon)  
 Jon Baxter, you are under arrest  
 for the murders of Joshua Perkins  
 and Frank Collins.  
 (she puts Jon's hands  
 behind him and puts the  
 handcuffs on Jon's  
 wrists)  
 You have the right to remain  
 silent. You give up that right,  
 anything you say can and will be  
 held against you in a court of  
 law--

As the detectives and Jon leave the living room:

FADE OUT.

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "Office Of D.A. Arthur Miller - 1:00 P.M. - Friday,  
April 6"

INT. ARTHUR MILLER'S OFFICE - DAY

Paul and Susan sit in the chairs in front of Arthur's desk. They just got done explaining what took place in the interrogation room at the precinct to their superior.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

Let me see if I got this straight:  
Jon Baxter wants to be sent to jail  
without going to trial?

SUSAN

Yes. You should have seen him in  
the interrogation room back at the  
precinct. He practically confessed  
to both homicides.

ARTHUR MILLER, a husky Caucasian man, who is in his early 60s and is the senior D.A. and Paul and Susan's boss, sits in a chair behind his desk and faces his lawyers.

ARTHUR

And you say he had remorse for both  
murders?

PAUL

Yes. Big time. He's also an escaped  
mental patient.

ARTHUR

He wouldn't happen to be a patient  
at Bellevue, would he?

Paul and Susan are shocked at Arthur's question.

SUSAN

Yes. How did you know that?

ARTHUR

His escape made the front page of  
every newspaper in the state;  
including The New York Times.  
Missing Persons are still on the  
lookout for him.

PAUL

(re: Arthur)

Well, the detectives have him in custody. They're debating on whether or not they want to send him back to Bellevue.

(re: Paul)

Of course, I'm debating on whether or not Jon Baxter is competent enough to stand trial.

SUSAN

(concerned)

What are you saying, Paul? Are you saying that this situation doesn't need a trial and we should give Jon Baxter exactly what he wants?

PAUL (O.S.)

You were there when the detectives were questioning him, Susan.

PAUL (CONT'D)

He said when he didn't take his medication, he didn't know what he was doing. He also said that he didn't want to go back to Bellevue. He had bad feelings there.

SUSAN

So, are you saying that we should send Baxter to jail?

PAUL

I'm not saying that at all, Susan. Whether Baxter likes it or not, this situation will go to trial and whether we like it or not, this case will be a case of corpus delecti.

The lawyers and Arthur face each other.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(to Susan)

Tell the detectives to bring Jon Baxter to my office.

SUSAN

I'll get right on it.

As she gets up and leaves Miller's office...

ARTHUR

(to Paul)

You know, a German philosopher,  
Nietzsche, once said, "Out of chaos,  
comes order". Let's hope you and  
Susan can make that bit of  
philosophy a reality.

Paul silently nods his head in agreement.

FADE OUT.

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "Office Of Executive Assistant D.A. Paul Gibson -  
Friday April 6"

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE - DAY

Paul sits in his chair behind his desk and Susan and Jon sit  
next to each other in the chairs in front of Paul's desk.  
Paul is talking about Jon's situation to Jon himself.

Jon and Susan face Paul as he speaks.

PAUL (O.S.)

Mr. Baxter, I asked you to come to  
my office to tell you...

(re: Paul)

...that even though you have  
confessed to the murders you have  
committed, your situation and you  
yourself will have to go to trial.

JON

(shocked)

I confessed to the crimes. Wasn't  
that enough?

PAUL (O.S.)

That's all well and good...

Paul has his hands folded on top of his desk.

PAUL (CONT'D)

...but as you know, all people, who  
are accused of committing crimes,  
or in your case, people who confess  
to committing crimes, are innocent  
until proven guilty. I'm sorry to  
have to say this, but...you have to  
have your day in court.

Jon is not happy about this, but he understands and he sighs sadly in response to what Paul had said.

PAUL (CONT'D)

My assistant and I also have reason to believe that the reason you have confessed to the murders is because you don't want to go back to Bellevue.

Susan listens to Jon and Paul speak to each other.

PAUL (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Now, in light of your situation, we understand why you don't want to go back. What we want to know now is why you had escaped from Bellevue in the first place.

Jon sits back in his chair as Susan turns her head toward Jon as he gives Paul his answer.

JON

The reason why I have escaped from Bellevue is because I wasn't properly treated there. When I asked anyone to help me, I was pushed aside and was told, 'I'll be with you in a minute' and nobody came to help me out.

(re: Paul as he listens to Jon's explanation)

And they figured that if they doubled my medication doses, my symptoms would be limited.

SUSAN

And seeing that you didn't take your medication--

As Jon turns his head and faces Susan:

JON

I killed those two men, but I swear...I didn't mean to.

Susan looks toward Paul in silence.

Paul looks at Jon and his assistant.

FADE OUT.



A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "Bellevue Medical Center - Friday, April 13"

INT. THE RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Susan has a conversation with the NURSE, who is behind the desk.

SUSAN

Do you know a patient by the name of Jon Baxter?

NURSE

Yes. He was one of our more problem cases. He had escaped from here a couple of months ago. We called Missing Persons and we haven't heard anything from them since.

Susan puts her palms on the desktop.

SUSAN

Well, you'll be happy to know that we have him in custody down at the precinct.

The Nurse looks at Susan with shock and as she stands up from her seat:

NURSE

You're gonna bring him back here, aren't you? I mean, he hasn't been well since he was first admitted here.

The Nurse and Susan look at each other as they continue their discussion.

SUSAN

Well, that's going to be a little difficult. The "problem case" in question has committed two homicides since his escape.

NURSE

Oh my God.

SUSAN

What's the matter?

NURSE

Jon Baxter was diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic. He also tried to commit suicide during his stay here. He has been put in restraints every time he attempted to do so.

Susan is shocked at this point. She didn't know this little unknown fact about Jon Baxter.

SUSAN

Are you saying that Baxter killed two people because he couldn't kill himself during his stay here?

The Nurse has a calm but concerned look on her face.

NURSE

He's a paranoid schizophrenic, ma'am. He thinks people are out to get him.

Susan looks at the Nurse in shocked silence.

SUSAN (O.C.)

It seems that Jon Baxter is a little sicker than we give him credit for.

INT. ARTHUR'S OFFICE - DAY

Susan and Paul sit in the chairs in front of Arthur's desk.

SUSAN

One of the nurses told me that he tried to commit suicide numerous times and she thinks that Baxter committed the murders during his escape from Bellevue because he couldn't kill himself in the hospital.

Arthur sits in his chair behind his desk.

ARTHUR

What was his diagnosis?

SUSAN (O.S.)

Paranoid schizophrenia.

ARTHUR

Get our psychiatrist to interview him.

SUSAN

Any particular reason?

ARTHUR

Ever heard of a second opinion? We need an expert opinion to see if this kid is competent enough to stand trial.

PAUL

You're pretty confident that this situation will go to trial, Arthur. Let's not forget we're dealing with a member of the mental health community. If we send the wrong message, we'll be repeating history.

Susan looks at Paul with concern.

SUSAN

What do you mean, Paul?

PAUL (O.S.)

In the Renaissance era...

Paul faces his assistant.

PAUL (CONT'D)

...if you were not in good mental health, you would be put to death or be beaten until you died.

SUSAN

Thank God we're living in the twenty-first century.

PAUL

That may be true, Susan, but people with mental illnesses are still not getting a fair deal in this world.

Arthur folds his hands on top of his desk.

ARTHUR

What are you saying, Paul?

As Paul looks at his superior with a serious but silent look on his face:

PAUL

If this case goes to trial, I don't want any part of it.

(he looks at Susan)

I'm turning the case over to you, Susan.

Susan looks at Paul with serious concern.

SUSAN

Are you serious, Paul?

PAUL

I'm beyond serious about this decision.

ARTHUR

Well, Susan. Hone your skills as an attorney. You're gonna try the Baxter case.

As Susan stands up from her seat, she walks behind it and stands behind it.

SUSAN

Okay...and I'll call Griffin and get him to interview Baxter.

As she walks toward the office door:

FADE OUT.

INT. THE INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

NICK GRIFFIN, a tall Caucasian man, who is in his late 50s, is the psychiatrist for the police department, and Jon sit on opposite sides of the table.

Nick has his hands folded on top of the table.

NICK

Jon, do you know why I'm here?

Jon sits back in his chair.

JON

Yeah. You're a psychiatrist. You're here to talk about the murders I have committed.

NICK

Do you really think you have committed those murders?

JON  
Yes. Yes, I did.

NICK  
Tell me about your stay at  
Bellevue.

Nick and Jon continue their conversation.

JON  
Well, to make a long story short, I  
hated that hospital. My fellow  
patients were really being  
mistreated and we weren't being  
listened to.

NICK  
Is that why you escaped from the  
hospital?

JON  
Yeah.

NICK  
What was the reason behind the  
murders?

JON  
I haven't been taking my  
medication.

NICK  
In your honest opinion, do you  
think you should go to jail for  
your involvement in the murders?

JON  
You want my honest opinion?

Nick slowly nods his head in response to Jon's question.

Jon gets up from his seat and walks around the room.

JON (CONT'D)  
I'd rather go to jail than go back  
to that goddamned hospital.

NICK  
If you had taken your medication at  
the time, do you think you would  
have committed the murders?

JON

No, I don't think so. I mean, the meds did ease my depression and it did help me think better and it limited my paranoid thoughts.

Jon turns around and looks toward Nick as he walks back to his seat and sits down in his chair.

JON (CONT'D)

I spoke to the wife of the medical examiner I killed at the morgue in Queens. She came to the precinct to ask the detectives if they found the killer.

(re: Nick listens to Jon  
in silence)

When the detectives told her that I was the one, she turned to me and just looked at me in silence. Then, she shed some silent tears.

(re: Jon)

When I confessed my involvement in her husband's murder, do you know what she told me?

NICK

What? What did she say to you?

JON

She said, 'I forgive you'.

NICK (O.S.)

What did you expect her to do?

JON

(feeling really upset)

I killed her husband. To tell you the truth, I expected her to put her foot in my ass and call me every bad name in the book.

NICK

Did you expect her to hate you?

JON

Yeah...but let me ask you a question: If I killed someone you really loved...wouldn't you hate me?

Nick looks at Jon in deep silence.

EXT. CHEZ NAPOLEON - DAY

Traffic sounds are heard and people walk past the restaurant.

SUSAN (O.C.)  
(to Nick)  
So, what's the verdict on Baxter?

INT. CHEZ NAPOLEON - DAY

The restaurant is semi-filled. Nick, Susan and Paul are having dinner together. Nick answers Susan's question as he cuts a piece of his ham.

NICK  
He seemed competent enough. He knew what he did was wrong and he admitted he needed to be punished for his actions but--

Paul holds a forkful of a well done steak in his hand as he looks at Nick. He doesn't like what he is about to hear from Nick.

PAUL  
Uh-oh. What does the "but" mean?

NICK  
He might be better off back at Bellevue.  
(beat)  
Considering his mental status during the course of the murders, he was bound to be returned to Bellevue anyway.

SUSAN  
He killed two people. He shot one person and made a jigsaw puzzle out of the other. In my opinion, I don't think society will give him the red carpet to Bellevue.

NICK  
That's true, but the mental health community will argue that Jon Baxter was not of sound mind.

Paul holds another forkful of his steak in his hand.

PAUL  
So, what's your final analysis, Nick?

NICK  
I think you should send him back to  
Bellevue.

INT. ARTHUR'S OFFICE - DAY

On the television screen, Liz Cho reports the current news.

LIZ  
Good evening. I'm Liz Cho. Our top  
story: The police have captured the  
unknown killer who has killed  
Joshua Perkins and John Doe, who is  
now known as Frank Collins. The  
killer's name is Jon Baxter, a man  
in his thirties, who killed his  
victims in the manner of the short  
stories of Edgar Allan Poe. Baxter  
is now in custody at the twenty-  
seventh precinct. More on this  
story as it develops.

Arthur turns off the television and he sits down in his seat  
behind his desk.

Susan and Paul sit in the chairs in front of Arthur's desk.

SUSAN  
(to Arthur)  
We spoke to Nick and he thinks that  
Jon should be returned to Bellevue.

ARTHUR  
Well, that's gonna be a tad  
difficult; considering the fact  
that he wants to go to jail.

Susan and Paul listen to Arthur.

ARTHUR (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
I guess what I'm saying is: Let's  
take this case to trial...

Arthur has his hands folded on his desk.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)  
...and let the proverbial chips  
fall where they may.

A series of KNOCKS are heard on Arthur's office door.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)  
Come in.



As the DOOR OPENS, SANDY KRAMER, an attorney for Baxter's defense, comes into the office and she stands on Susan's right side. Susan and Paul are still seated in the chairs in front of Arthur's desk.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

May we help you?

SANDY

I'm Sandy Kramer. I'll be representing Jon Baxter. If you want my opinion, this case shouldn't even be going to trial, but knowing you three, he won't stand a chance in court.

SUSAN

Your client killed two people in cold blood.

SANDY

That may be true, Counselor, but don't forget...we're dealing with a member of the mental health community.

She sets her briefcase on top of the desk, UNLOCKS it, OPENS it and she gives Susan a folded document and Susan opens it up and reads it in silence and:

SUSAN

According to this, you're dismissing the charges and you're entering a plea of not guilty by reason of mental disease or defect.

(she looks up at Sandy)

You do realize we're going for two counts of Murder Two.

SANDY

Yes, I know, but let's be serious for one moment. Do you really think a jury will convict on two counts of Murder Two when they find out that Jon Baxter escaped from Bellevue?

(re: Susan)

Jon Baxter more or less needs psychiatric help, not a jail sentence.

SUSAN

I'm not excusing what your client did, but he seemed to know what he wanted when he was talking with us earlier.

SANDY

Please! He wasn't taking his medication. He was on the lam when he escaped from Bellevue. He could have told you that he was responsible for the war in Vietnam and he would have you believe him.

SUSAN

We know that that's not true. We're only interested in trying him for the two people he had killed.

SANDY

(sighs)

All right. If you insist on continuing this, I have nothing to say except...

(she closes her briefcase,  
locks it and takes it off  
the desk via the handle)

...I'll see you in court.

She leaves the office and CLOSES the door behind her.

ARTHUR

Look at it this way, Susan. You'll now be trying a high profile case.

Susan inhales deeply and then, she exhales deeply.

FADE OUT.

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "Supreme Court - People Vs. Jon Baxter - Friday, April 20"

EXT. THE COURTHOUSE - DAY

Reporters are scattered all around the building. Paul and Susan walk toward the building and walk up the stairs as the reporters follow them and ask them different questions MOS.

SUPERIMPOSED SHOTS - SPINNING PUBLICATIONS

-- The New York Post with the caption: "KILLER GOES TO TRIAL!" on the front page and a picture of Jon Baxter is also on it.

-- The Daily News with the caption: "KILLER BROUGHT TO JUSTICE!!" Jon's photo is on the front page next to the caption.

-- The New York Times with the caption: "KILLER ESCAPES FROM BELLEVUE!!" Jon's photo is on the front page.

The reporters continue to follow the lawyers and Jon into the building and ask them questions MOS.

As the newspaper FADES OUT, the barrage of questions from the reporters are heard and Paul and Susan repeatedly say, "No comment" as they walk toward the doors of the courtroom.

When the reporters see that they were not getting anywhere with Susan and Paul, they look toward the doors of the courthouse and see:

Sandy and Jon enter the hall.

BACK TO THE REPORTERS

They all run toward them and ask them a barrage of questions.

REPORTER #1 asks Sandy a question. She speaks into her microphone.

REPORTER #1

Sandy Kramer, you are defending Jon Baxter in court. What do you think the outcome will be once the trial is over?

As Reporter #1 turns her microphone over to Sandy:

SANDY

I think the outcome will be Jon will be found not guilty of these crimes. He is a member of the mental health community and should not be put in jail.

As Sandy and Jon begin to walk toward the doors of the courtroom, the reporters follow them and continue to ask a barrage of questions. As Sandy opens the door, she and Jon go inside and they leave the reporters out in the hall.

INT. THE COURTROOM - DAY

As Sandy and Jon walk over to their table and take their seats, Jon looks across the room and looks at Susan and Paul at their table, in silence. Susan looks toward Jon, also in silence. The both of them look ahead.

The BAILIFF, an African American male, who looks to be in his mid-40s, stands by a door.

BAILIFF

All rise.

Everyone in the courtroom stands up.

BAILIFF (O.S.) (CONT'D)

"The People Versus Jon Baxter" is now in session.

BACK TO THE BAILIFF

He continues to stand by the door. When the door OPENS, JUDGE LISA DANIELS, a Caucasian woman in her late 50s, enters the courtroom, CLOSES the door behind her.

BAILIFF (CONT'D)

The honorable Judge Lisa Daniels presiding.

Then, Lisa walks toward the bench and takes her seat behind it.

JUDGE DANIELS

(to the court)

You may be seated.

The entire court takes their seats.

BACK TO JUDGE DANIELS

She picks up her gavel and:

JUDGE DANIELS (CONT'D)

This court will come to order.

She BANGS her gavel down once and as she sets it down:

JUDGE DANIELS (CONT'D)

First, we will hear from the defense.

Sandy and Jon are at their table and Sandy gets up from her seat and walks past the stenographer and toward the jury.

SANDY

Thank you, Your Honor.

(to the jury as she stops  
near them)

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury. I  
am here to tell you about this man  
named Jon Baxter.

(she slowly walks to the  
end of the jury box)

He is here in this courtroom  
because he has committed two  
murders. Now, before you judge him,  
let me also inform you that he has  
a mental illness...paranoid  
schizophrenia, to be exact.

(re: the members of the  
jury)

Now, having said that, Jon Baxter  
also didn't take his medication and  
that was the only fact behind these  
murders.

(re: Jon at the  
defendants' table)

He was not in his right state of  
mind when he committed those  
murders. The prosecution wants to  
put him on trial because of these  
murders...

(re: Sandy as she walks to  
the center of the jury  
box and faces the jury)

...but to be honest with you...they  
are putting Jon Baxter on trial for  
one reason and one reason only.  
They want to put him in jail. Jon  
Baxter isn't a bad guy. He just  
made a mistake...but he shouldn't  
be punished so severely for it.

Sandy walks over to her seat next to Jon and sits down in her  
chair.

JUDGE DANIELS

Now, we will hear from the  
prosecution.

Susan and Paul look toward each other in silence and Susan  
slowly gets up from her seat and slowly walks past the  
stenographer and toward the members of the jury.

SUSAN

Thank you, Your Honor.

(to the members of the  
jury)

(MORE)

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Jeffrey Dahmer. John Wayne Gacy. Aileen Wuornos. David Berkowitz. These are some well known killers who have terrorized their communities by killing people and ruining lives. We can add another name to this list...Jon Baxter.

(re: Jon and Sandy listen to the prosecution speak)

Jon Baxter has killed two people and terrorized the state of New York. His actions have made the front page of every newspaper and every news channel in New York and just like the aforementioned killers, Jon Baxter has ruined the lives of the people he has killed.

(re: Susan)

Now, the defense has stated that he has a mental illness...but that should not excuse him for what he did. He killed two people in cold blood.

(re: the members of the jury)

The defense also said that he shouldn't be punished severely for what he did, but in case you have forgotten, ladies and gentlemen...murder is a crime and the person who commits murder should be punished to the fullest extent of the law.

(re: Susan)

During this trial, you will hear from the loved ones of the victims. Please...take their testimonies into consideration when you give the final verdict in this case.

Susan walks back to the prosecution's table and takes her seat next to her colleague.

JUDGE DANIELS

Defense, call your first witness.

SUSAN

The defense calls Violet Perkins to the stand.

INT. THE COURTROOM - DAY

Violet is on the stand.

VIOLET

I was very upset when I was told my husband was murdered.

Sandy stands in the middle of the courtroom.

SANDY

How did you feel when you found out that my client allegedly committed the murders in question?

Jon sits in his seat at the table and listens to the widow's testimony.

VIOLET (O.S.)

He told me, as well as the detectives, that he murdered my husband.

Violet looks and feels sad...not only for the death of her husband, but for Jon's situation, as well.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

He was crying and he apologized to me repeatedly.

SANDY

And what did you say to him after my client confessed?

VIOLET

I told him...that I forgave him.

SANDY

Why did you forgive him? He allegedly killed your husband.

VIOLET

When he told me that he was suffering from a mental illness, I knew he wasn't in his right mind when he committed those murders.

Jon listens in silence.

SANDY (O.S.)

Thank you, Mrs. Perkins.

(to the judge)

Nothing further, Your Honor.

As Sandy returns to her seat and sits down next to Jon:

Judge Daniels looks toward the prosecution.

JUDGE DANIELS  
(to Susan)  
Counselor, you may cross examine.

Susan and Paul sit in their seats and as Susan stands up from her seat:

SUSAN  
The prosecution rests, Your Honor.  
She sits back down.

INT. THE COURTROOM - LATER

Sophia is now on the stand. Sandy gets up from her seat and slowly walks over toward Sophia.

SANDY  
Mrs. Collins, how did you find out that your husband was murdered?

SOPHIA  
The detectives who investigated the case came to my house and confirmed it after the police in Brooklyn gave up on it. I went to the police in Brooklyn and told them that my husband was missing on April first and the police in Brooklyn said they would look into the case and four days later, they said that they didn't have any leads or information leading to my husband's disappearance.

SANDY  
How did you feel when the detectives confirmed that your husband was murdered?

SOPHIA  
At first, I was upset and angry. When I found out that your client was the killer was when I went to the Twenty-Seventh Precinct, I felt kinda bad for him. He confessed that he committed the murder and he also told me that he didn't mean to do it.

Jon listens to the testimony in silence.



SANDY (O.S.)  
Thank you, Mrs. Collins.  
(to Judge Daniels)  
Nothing further, Your Honor.

BACK TO SANDY

She walks back to her seat and sits down in the chair.

JUDGE DANIELS  
(to Susan)  
Counselor, you may cross examine.

Susan gets up from her seat and slowly walks over to Sophia.

SUSAN  
Mrs. Collins, could you give the  
court your honest opinion on Jon  
Baxter?

SOPHIA  
In my honest opinion, he is just a  
misunderstood young man. He has  
probably had a difficult life and  
he didn't know how to make it  
better.

SUSAN  
Would you be surprised to know that  
he is a patient who escaped from  
Bellevue a month ago?

SOPHIA  
No. I read about that in The New  
York Post. According to the story,  
he said he wasn't being treated  
well. Mr. Baxter has a mental  
illness. I totally understand that.  
I have a brother who suffers from  
depression so I can understand what  
Mr. Baxter is going through.

SUSAN  
Thank you, Mrs. Collins.  
(to Judge Daniels)  
Nothing further, Your Honor.

Then, she goes to her table and takes her seat.

INT. THE COURTROOM - LATER

Now, Nick is on the stand.

Sandy stands a few feet away from him.

SANDY

What mental illness does Jon suffer from, Doctor?

NICK

Mr. Baxter suffers from paranoid schizophrenia.

SANDY

What are the symptoms of this illness?

NICK

The symptoms are: Hearing voices, seeing or sensing things that are not there, mistaken beliefs, unusual suspiciousness and antisocial behavior.

(re: Sandy)

Mr. Baxter has suffered from all of these symptoms when he committed the murders.

SANDY

What medications is my client on?

NICK

He is on a combination of Geodon and Seroquil. They treat the symptoms of schizophrenia. They are both antipsychotic drugs.

Sandy walks over toward Nick.

SANDY

Now, was my client taking his medications at the time these alleged murders took place?

Nick looks at Sandy calmly and speaks in the same tone of voice.

NICK

I spoke to your client one on one and he told me that he didn't take his medications at that particular point in time.

SANDY

Thank you, Doctor.  
(to Susan)  
Your witness.

Sandy walks over to her table and as she takes her seat, Susan gets up from hers and walks over to Nick at the stand.

SUSAN

Doctor, was the defendant of sound mind when he committed these alleged murders while he wasn't taking his medications?

NICK

Although he didn't take his medications, he also admitted the fact that he knew that what he confessed to was not correct human behavior.

SUSAN

So, what you are saying is: When Mr. Baxter committed the alleged murders, he did know right from wrong; even though he was not medicated at the time.

NICK

In my professional opinion...yes he did.

SUSAN

Thank you, Doctor.  
(to Judge Daniels)  
Nothing further, Your Honor.

She walks back to her seat and sits down next to her colleague.

INT. THE COURTROOM - LATER

Ed is now on the stand.

Sandy stands right in front of him.

SANDY

Detective Green, you and your partner investigated this case. When did you find out about the murders?

ED

My partner and I had investigated the first murder at the morgue in Queens. Then, we investigated the murder in the abandoned theater on Broadway.

Sandy walks back to her table and picks up an evidence bag. Inside it, is the gun with a silencer on it that was used in the first murder. She walks back toward Ed and shows him the gun.

SANDY  
(to Judge Daniels)  
I'd like to submit this as People's  
Exhibit One, Your Honor.

JUDGE DANIELS  
Noted.

SANDY  
Can you tell us the meaning behind  
this gun, Detective?

As Ed kindly takes the evidence bag with the gun in it from Sandy, he looks at it as he gives his testimony.

ED  
This was the gun your client used  
in the first murder at the morgue  
in Queens. He used it to murder  
Joshua Perkins, a top medical  
examiner.

SANDY  
Is this the same Joshua Perkins who  
was married to Violet Perkins?

ED  
(re: Jon)  
Yes, it is.

SANDY  
Can you describe the make of the  
gun?

ED  
It's a Forty-Four Bulldog Special  
with a silencer on the barrel. This  
was the same make of gun that David  
Berkowitz used in the Son of Sam  
murders back in 1977.

As he hands the evidence bag back to Sandy, she kindly takes it from Ed and walks back to her table and picks up another bag. This one has the short story in it and as she walks back to Ed:

SANDY

I'd like to submit this into evidence as People's Exhibit Two, Your Honor.

JUDGE DANIELS (O.S.)

Noted.

SANDY

Detective...

(she hands the bag to Ed  
and he takes it from her  
and looks at the contents  
inside it)

...can you tell the court what this is?

ED

These are the pages of the short story "The Murders In The Rue Morgue".

SANDY

How does this story tie in with the murder of Joshua Perkins?

ED

(re: Sandy walks to her table and picks up another evidence bag with the four chess pieces in it)

Your client used the contents of the short story to kill him and there were four chess pieces scattered around the victim's head and the pages of the short story were placed on the victim's

As Sandy walks back toward Ed with the bag with the chess pieces in it:

SANDY

(to Ed)

I'd like to introduce you to People's Exhibit Three.

(Ed hands the short story back to Sandy and Sandy takes it back from him - she hands Ed the chess pieces)

Are these the chess pieces?

ED

Yes. Two rooks and two bishops.

As Ed hands the chess pieces back to Sandy:

SANDY

And you said that Mr. Baxter  
committed a second murder at an  
abandoned theater on Broadway?

She walks back to her table and picks up the small hatchet.

ED (O.S.)

Yes. He killed the victim on the  
first of April. My partner and I  
didn't get the call until the  
fifth. We went down to the theater  
and the smell of the decomposing  
body filled the air.

SANDY

Which brings us to People's Exhibit  
Four. This hatchet.

ED

Yes. That hatchet was used to chop  
up the victim's body and the body  
parts were stuffed into the loose  
floorboards on the stage.

As Sandy puts the hatchet down on her table where she and Jon  
are:

SANDY

Was there anything else you found  
along with the body?

ED

Yes. There was also pages of  
another short story written by Poe.

SANDY

(she picks up the next  
evidence bag)  
People's Exhibit Five. Poe's short  
story "The Tell-Tale Heart".

ED

Yes, indeed. Your client copied the  
murder in the story.

SANDY

Did he use anything else on the  
victim?

ED

Yes. He used a switchblade to cut out the victim's eye.

Sandy picks up the evidence bag with the switchblade and shows it to the court as well as Ed.

SANDY

People's Exhibit Six. Is this the switchblade that was used?

ED

Yes. We also found dried blood on the blade. It proved that the victim's eye was cut out with that piece of evidence.

SANDY

(she puts the evidence bag on the table)

Detective, what is your opinion on the defendant?

ED (O.S.)

My honest opinion is: Your client is mentally unstable and he is unfit to be in society. He escaped from Bellevue.

SANDY

Nothing further, Your Honor.  
(to Susan)  
Your witness.

As she walks back to her table and sits next to Jon, Susan gets up from her seat and walks over to Ed.

SUSAN

Detective Green, what was your overall opinion on this case?

ED

To be honest, my partner and I thought this was the most bizarre case in the history of law enforcement. We thought the Son of Sam murders were full of insanity, but this particular case made those murders look like child's play.

SUSAN

How did you find out that Mr. Baxter was the killer?

ED

He came to the precinct and confessed to my lieutenant, my partner and me.

SUSAN

Why do you think he confessed?

ED

He told us that he felt guilty for his involvement in the murders. He also said that he saw the murders on the news and he came to the precinct and spilled his guts; no pun intended.

SUSAN

In earlier testimony, the court was told that the defendant has paranoid schizophrenia and he knew right from wrong even though he didn't take his medications as prescribed. Do you think that the defendant knew what he did was wrong?

ED

Well, if he came to us and confessed to the murders and said he had remorse for his involvement in them, I would say he did.

SUSAN

Thank you, Detective.  
(to Judge Daniels)  
Nothing further, Your Honor.

She walks back to her table and sits down in her seat next to Paul.

INT. THE COURTROOM - LATER

Jon is now on the stand. He is really unhappy about being on trial.

Sandy stands up from her seat and walks in the middle of the courtroom as she looks toward Jon and vice versa.



SANDY

Mr. Baxter, did the detectives have a valid search warrant to search your apartment for the weapons used in the murders you allegedly committed?

JON

Yes...and they read me my rights once they found them.

SANDY

Why did you confess to the murders?

JON

I felt guilty. I took the lives of two people and there is no justification for what I did.

Violet sits in the courtroom audience and she listens to Jon's testimony in silence...and so is Sophia. They have unhappy looks on their faces as they listen.

JON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I don't understand why Mrs. Perkins and Mrs. Collins didn't throw the book at me. I killed their husbands. I took their lives and by doing that, I have ruined theirs...and that is something I will have to live with for the rest of my life.

BACK TO JON

He continues to speak.

JON (CONT'D)

I'm not asking for sympathy. I am asking the court to give me the punishment I truly deserve.

SANDY

And what punishment is that, Mr. Baxter?

JON

Jail time.

Sandy has a shocked look on her face as she stares at Jon.

SANDY

Thank you, Mr. Baxter.  
 (to Susan as she walks  
 toward her table)  
 Your witness.

As she sits in her seat, Susan gets up from hers and walks over toward Jon.

SUSAN

Mr. Baxter, is it true you have  
 escaped from Bellevue because you  
 weren't properly being treated  
 there?

Sandy quickly gets up from her seat.

SANDY

(to Judge Daniels)  
 Objection! Relevance?

SUSAN

Goes to the defendant's state of  
 mind, Your Honor.

Judge Daniels looks toward Kramer across the courtroom.

JUDGE DANIELS

Objection overruled.  
 (to Jon)  
 Answer the question, Mr. Baxter.

Jon turns his head away from the judge and faces Susan. He is even more upset than he was before.

JON

Yes, I escaped. You have to  
 understand that people who suffer  
 from mental illnesses aren't taken  
 seriously in today's society.

ON SUSAN

She listens to Jon's testimony in a state of relative calm.

JON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

We can't even get jobs because  
 society thinks we can't handle the  
 pressure...and "normal" people  
 think that our illnesses are  
 phases. And don't even get me  
 started on relationships.

SUSAN

How do you feel about knowing the fact that you have paranoid schizophrenia?

JON

I'm not happy about it. That's for sure...but it was inherited. My father had it and it was given to me.

Susan faces Judge Daniels, but before she speaks:

JON (CONT'D)

I am just sick of having this damn illness. It just takes its toll on me and I don't know how to control it.

SUSAN

Maybe...if you had taken your meds as prescribed, you might be able to control your illness, Mr. Baxter.  
(to Judge Daniels)  
Nothing further, Your Honor.

She walks back to her table and takes her seat next to Paul.

FADE OUT.

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "The People Vs. Jon Baxter - Trial Part 20 - Friday, April 20"

INT. THE COURTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

After deliberations, the jury comes back into the courtroom and take their seats in the jury box. Then, the bailiff takes a folded piece of paper from the forewoman and takes it to Judge Daniels and hands it to her.

She unfolds it and reads it silently and hands it back to the bailiff, who hands it back to the jury forewoman.

BACK TO JUDGE DANIELS

She looks toward the jury.

JUDGE DANIELS

Madam Forewoman, has the jury reached a unanimous verdict?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
We have, Your Honor.

The JURY FOREWOMAN, an African American woman who is slim and seems to be in her mid-50s, holds the piece of paper in her hand. It happens to be the verdict of the trial. She reads it to the entire courtroom.

JURY FOREWOMAN  
In the case of "The People Versus  
Jon Baxter", we find the  
defendant...

Sandy and Jon stand while the verdict is being read.

BACK TO THE JURY FOREWOMAN

JURY FOREWOMAN (CONT'D)  
...not guilty by reason of mental  
disease or defect.

BACK TO SANDY AND JON

Sandy is happy about the verdict, but Jon is not, because he knows what Judge Daniels will say next.

JUDGE DANIELS  
Mr. Baxter, seeing that you have  
been found not guilty of the  
charges that have been brought  
before you, I have no choice but to  
sentence you to Bellevue for  
complete psychiatric care.  
(she picks up her gavel)  
Case is dismissed. Court is  
adjourned.

She BANGS her gavel once and as she puts it down:

Susan and Paul stand up at their table in silence as the commotion about the verdict is heard.

They pack up their briefcases, close them up and finally, they take them off the table and disappear into the crowd and leave the courtroom as the commotion is still going on.

INT. THE COURTHOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

When the lawyers enter the hall, the mob of reporters ask them different questions about the case. Susan does her best to answer their questions.

Sandy and Jon enter the hall and the mob of reporters crowd around them and leave Susan and Paul alone together.

PAUL  
 (to Susan)  
 Score one for the mental health  
 community.

As they walk ahead:

INT. ARTHUR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Susan, Paul and Arthur are in the office together. The lawyers stand behind the chairs in front of Arthur's desk and Arthur stands behind his chair behind his desk.

SUSAN  
 (to Arthur)  
 Well, Jon Baxter is safely back at  
 the hospital...  
 (to Paul)  
 ...but that still doesn't explain  
 why you didn't want to try the  
 case, Paul.

Paul has an unhappy look on his face and in his voice. He inhales deeply and he exhales in the same manner as he answers his young colleague's question. He reflects back to a time in his childhood.

PAUL  
 (a little unhappy)  
 My cousin Ron, who also suffered  
 from paranoid schizophrenia, had  
 committed suicide.  
 (he sniffs once)  
 He put the barrel of a forty-four  
 in his mouth and pulled the  
 trigger. He was at his apartment at  
 the time and the super found him  
 when he came to fix Ron's sink.  
 This case hit a little too close  
 too home.

Susan listens to Paul attentively.

PAUL (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 We were teenagers at the time. When  
 either one of us had a problem, we  
 were always there for each other.

BACK TO PAUL

He lets out a deep sigh of unhappiness.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
I still think of him when his  
birthday comes around.

Arthur feels Paul's pain and so does Susan.

BACK TO ARTHUR

He continues to stand behind his desk.

ARTHUR  
I am sorry to hear about that,  
Paul. You have my deepest  
condolences.

SUSAN  
(she pats Paul on his back  
gently)  
Same here, Paul.

PAUL  
(to his fellow lawyers)  
I appreciate your kindness.

Arthur's PHONE RINGS and as Arthur picks it up on the third ring:

ARTHUR  
Hello?...Yes. ...Yes, they're here.  
(dramatic pause - he looks  
shocked)  
Oh my God. ...I'll tell them to be  
right down. ...Yes. They will meet  
you there.

Arthur HANGS UP his phone and:

SUSAN  
What is it, Arthur?

ARTHUR  
That was Detective Green on the  
phone. He wants you and Jack to  
meet him and Detective Cassady down  
at Bellevue.  
(dramatic pause)  
Jon Baxter killed himself.

Susan and Paul look at Arthur, totally shocked and then, they look at each other with the same faces.

INT. BELLEVUE MEDICAL CENTER - NIGHT

Ed and Dana are already inside. The floor is filled with panicked staff and patients and a plethora of uniformed cops. Paul and Susan enter the hospital as they join the detectives and they, as well as the lawyers have a conversation with each other.

SUSAN

What the hell happened?

As they start to walk toward Jon's hospital room door:

ED

Baxter smuggled a small knife into the hospital, laid in his bed and stabbed himself in the chest under the covers and he bled out.

PAUL

Who called you about the suicide?

DANA

One of the nurses. She had panicked when she called us and her panic started a chain reaction.

They all stop at the room's entrance, which has police tape across it and one by one, they duck under the tape and enter the room and once everyone is inside:

THE LAWYERS AND THE DETECTIVES

They look toward the hospital bed in silent shock and concern.

Jon's dead body is seen in the bed. His body is under the covers and the white linen is soaked in blood and the knife that Jon used to kill himself is stuck into his chest. Jon's eyes are open and so is his mouth.

DANA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

The body's been dead for two hours.

Susan walks over to the corpse and takes the piece of paper off Jon's dead body and unfolds it and reads it to herself.

SUSAN

It's a suicide note.

DANA (O.S.)

What does it say?

SUSAN

(reading the note aloud)  
I killed two people. I felt guilty.  
The murders were so raw and filthy.  
Maybe my death will even the score.  
As I lay here in a flood  
Of type O positive healthy blood  
What you see here is blood and  
gore.  
And with this blood and unsightly  
gore:  
I'll kill again...nevermore.

PAUL

Imagine that. He killed himself and  
then, he parodied Edgar Allan Poe's  
poem "The Raven" in his suicide  
note.

THE DETECTIVES AND THE LAWYERS

They continue to look at the dead body in the hospital bed.

ED

In pace requiescat.

The lawyers and the detectives leave the room.

A slow advance is seen on Jon's dead body.

FADE OUT.

A BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: "In Memory of Shirley Anne Griffin, Grover Lee  
Griffin, Beulah "Nana" Mayers and Craig Mayers".

FADE TO BLACK.

ROLL CREDITS.

FADE OUT.