

(Name of Project)

by  
(Name of First Writer)

(Based on, If Any)

Revisions by  
(Names of Subsequent Writers,  
in Order of Work Performed)

Current Revisions by  
(Current Writer, date)

Name (of company, if applicable)  
Address  
Phone Number

THE UTAH MURDER PROJECT

SUPERIMPOSE:

INSPIRED BY A TRUE STORY

In total darkness we hear the almost deafening sounds of a HEART SLOWLY BEATING. The loud sound is up close and in our ears. It continues as we slowly --

FADE IN:

E.C.U. OF A HAND GRIPPING A .45 CALIBER AUTOMATIC. The heart beating continues as we TILT UP to reveal the face of undercover narcotics detective CHARLIE DESANTIS (30s). He is unkempt with wild long hair, goatee and beard.

The gruff and scruffy cop is leaning his back against a car door, hiding. He is nervous and shaking -- panting and sweating like a thirsty animal. Obviously scared for his life.

In the b.g. we barely make out the sounds of RANDOM GUNSHOTS ECHOING THROUGH THE AIR. With each shot, DeSantis flinches just a bit. These gunshots are faint, though. Dimmed out by the deep, pulsating sound of the detective's HEART BEAT.

EXT. STREET CURB - EAST LOS ANGELES - DAY (SLOW MOTION SEQUENCE)

Hiding next to DeSantis is his partner JEFF SPEARS (30s) -- scruffy and unkempt. Spears looks to have had a few more years on the force. In his eyes we see that he is also visibly frightened.

The two men are undercover and have just closed in on a suspect. It appears that a deal has just gone bad. Very bad. The constant barrage of gunfire SHATTERS THE WINDOWS OF THE PARKED CAR. Shards of glass attack the two men as they cover themselves from harm.

JEFF

In a slow and steady movement...the detective stands and rests his hands on the roof of the unmarked squad car -- aiming his weapon down the street and in the direction of their suspect RAMON VASQUEZ (30s) also hiding safely behind a row of parked cars.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VASQUEZ

instantly returning the cops fire with shots from a large, automatic machine gun. Like an uzi, only more high-tech and deadly.

JEFF

quickly ducks down, dodging the gunfire and hitting the ground with his partner.

DESANTIS

continues to sit in a state of shock, unable to move due to a gunshot wound to the leg. He peeks from the corner of his eye and turns his head slightly --

HIS P.O.V.

He notices a young boy (7) trapped under his bicycle. He is crying and covering his ears -- muffling the deafening gunfire.

BACK TO SCENE

DESANTIS

wants desperately to help the child but cannot move.

JEFF

turns and notices his partner's catatonia. He abruptly grabs him by the collar and mouths the words "Get the boy!"

DESANTIS

simply cannot move an inch.

JEFF

recklessly runs into the line of fire to cover the young child. He instantly catches some stray fire in the back and falls, wounded. As he struggles to get up, he manages to pull the boy from his bicycle -- almost out of harm's way. Unfortunately, the detective cannot dodge the constant blaze of sporadic gunfire.

DESANTIS

watches as his partner is hit with several more shots as he and the boy struggle to take cover behind the vehicle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JEFF

falls to the ground, dying.

THE BOY

lay still on the ground, frozen and unable to move.

DESANTIS

desperately reaches out to the boy -- who is crying heavily.

THE BOY

reaches his arm to DeSantis -- who successfully pulls him from the line of fire.

DESANTIS

holds the scared child in his arms as BULLETS CONTINUE TO SPRAY THE VEHICLE they're hiding behind. The detective turns and notices --

JEFF

desperately reaching his hand out to him, begging for help. He is blood-soaked, dying. He mouths the words "Help me!" Before DeSantis can react we quickly...

CUT TO:

INT. DESANTIS' HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

DESANTIS jumping up and awaking from the nightmare. He is completely drenched in sweat and cannot catch his breath. He slowly manages to compose himself. The detective is a very different looking man than in his dream. Short hair, no beard. Just some five o'clock shadow.

He lays on a beaten, old couch in the middle of his living room. The coffee table before him is completely covered with EMPTY LIQUOR AND BEER BOTTLES. Not five or six, but forty or fifty bottles. The floor surrounding him is also covered with empty bottles and other trash.

DeSantis calms himself -- looks down at his pants and notices that he's urinated. A few moments pass before he stands and continues toward the bathroom to get cleaned up. As he passes through the filthy home, he kicks and muddles his way through the trash and debris.

## INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

DeSantis enters and flicks on the light. Without hesitation he removes his pants and tosses the urine soaked sweat pants into the bathtub -- which is filled with ten or more other pairs of urine stained sweats and boxers. We stay on the bathtub a few moments... taking it all in. This is a sad, deeply haunted and disturbed man.

CUT TO:

## EXT. MOTEL - DESERT HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A small, dusty motel in the middle of nowhere. A NEON VACANCY SIGN FLICKERS on and off. A total of three cars sit parked in the dusty lot. The night is suspiciously quiet, with only a slight wind in the air.

## SUPERIMPOSE:

BRYERSON, UTAH  
APRIL 13, 2004  
11:49 PM

The long stretch of road in front of the motel is empty. It seems to stretch into eternity with no sign of a vehicle in sight. Then...suddenly...TWO BRIGHT HEADLIGHTS are seen in the distance. A CAR coming up the road.

The LIGHTS become BRIGHTER and BRIGHTER as the car draws nearer. As it becomes visible we see that it's a Grey DODGE PICK-UP with a DIRT BIKE mounted in the cab. The truck draws nearer to the motel, turns into the barren lot.

## EXT. MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

The truck parks in an empty spot. From the truck steps an unseen MAN, from the waist down. We'll call him "The Cowboy". Dressed in typical cowboy apparel. Blue jeans, boots. He steps to the rear of the vehicle and pulls a long AREA RUG from the truck's cab. He begins toward the room.

## INT. MOTEL ROOM

The cowboy enters, leaving the door wide open. We see a pair of HANDS in RUBBER GLOVES as he unrolls the rug in front of the bathroom door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SERIES OF SHOTS

A PINK BLOUSE and pair of BLUE JEANS lay on the un-made bed. The man grabs the clothing and stuffs it into a large garbage bag.

A PICTURE appears to be missing on the motel room wall. There is a hook where a picture used to hang. We TILT DOWN to reveal several shards of BROKEN GLASS AND A SHATTERED PICTURE AND FRAME on the carpet.

Suddenly...A HAND reaches down and grabs the picture from the floor. He tosses the broken picture frame into the garbage bag.

BATHROOM

The cowboy grabs the white shower curtain and pulls it from its rings. As the shower curtain is removed we are shocked to see A BLOODY HANDPRINT on the shower wall. The print is small and delicate. The print of a young woman. We then quickly...

CUT TO BLACK.

ROLL TITLES:

THE UTAH MURDER PROJECT

FADE IN:

INT. MEN'S LOCKER ROOM - L.A.P.D. - DAY

DeSantis opens up his locker and packs a few personal belongings into a small gym bag. This includes a nickel-plated .22 CALIBER HANDGUN. His backup weapon. Taped to the inside of his locker door is a PHOTO of a young woman (20s) -- blonde and beautiful. DeSantis spots the photo out of the corner of his eye. He takes a moment and gazes at the young woman. He peels it from the locker door and tosses it into his bag.

INT. OFFICE OF CAPTAIN EDDIE GRUBER - NARCOTICS DIVISION

CAPT. GRUBER P.O.V.

From behind his desk. We stay on the front door as we notice DESANTIS approaching it from the other side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We hear the VOICE OF CAPTAIN GRUBER on the telephone as DeSantis peers through the glass.

CAPTAIN GRUBER (O.S.)  
Yeah. I just got off the phone  
with IA five minutes ago and got an  
earful.

DeSantis gives a quick knock before entering.

CAPTAIN GRUBER (O.S.)  
I got trouble knocking on my door  
right now. I'll call you later.

DeSantis shuts the door behind him and stands respectively with his hands crossed and rested on his lap. We hear Captain Gruber HANGING UP A PHONE.

CAPTAIN GRUBER (O.S.)  
I hear you've officially requested  
a stress leave. Ninety days?

DESANTIS  
That's right.

The sound of Captain Gruber shifting in his chair, sighing uncomfortably.

CAPTAIN GRUBER (O.S.)  
Well that's pretty damn irregular  
considering the present  
circumstances, don't you think,  
DeSantis?

The detective doesn't respond. His eyes remain locked on the Captain. He doesn't even blink.

CAPTAIN GRUBER (O.S.)  
Put yourself in my shoes, Charlie.  
It's only been two weeks since IA  
cleared you on assault charges and  
now you're asking for a three month  
leave.

DESANTIS  
I know how it must look.

CAPTAIN GRUBER (O.S.)  
Good. Cos it looks real fuckin'  
bad. I went to bat for you with  
Internal Affairs to convince them  
you weren't losing it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CAPTAIN GRUBER (O.S.) (cont'd)  
Now you're going on a psycho leave  
and giving them every excuse to re-  
open the investigation.

DESANTIS  
I need to figure some things out.  
About this place. About where I  
stand.

CAPTAIN GRUBER (O.S.)  
So you're thinking about a  
transfer?

DESANTIS  
Like I said...I need some time.  
That's all I can really tell you  
right now.

CAPTAIN GRUBER (O.S.)  
All right. You listen and listen  
good.

We slowly close on DeSantis' face.

CAPTAIN GRUBER (O.S.)  
As far as I'm concerned if you  
wanna run off for three months and  
ruin your record, that's fine with  
me. But let me make one thing  
crystal clear to you. I don't want  
you in this building. I don't want  
to see you. I don't wanna hear  
about you harassing Vasquez. The  
best advice I can give you...get  
the hell as far away from here as  
possible. Cos Internal Affairs  
will be watching and so will I.

A slight grin on DeSantis as the Captain approves his three  
month leave.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - UTAH - DUSK

The camera travels quickly down a two lane desert road. An  
ORANGE SUN AND SKY illuminate the RED DESERT TERRAIN. It's  
beautiful. Nothing bad could ever happen here.



INT. DESANTIS' CAR

The detective cruises down the long desert highways of Utah. He passes the time by anxiously flipping through the channels on his stereo -- not picking up much.

EXT. DOWNTOWN BRYERSON - DAY

DeSantis slowly passes through the downtown avenues of Bryerson, Utah. Population 3,459. It's an old fashioned burg that hasn't seen a touch of remodeling since the Eisenhower years.

The streets consist mostly of small, family owned businesses and shops. An old movie palace, five and dime stores. An ice cream parlor, etc. It's very quaint in a dull and dreary kind of way.

INT. DESANTIS' CAR

He peeks out his window and spots the Sheriff's office in the near distance. He slows to a halt, approaching the front door of the office. A SIGN ON THE WINDOW reads "Closed for Sunday dinner".

DeSantis grins at the sign -- shaking his head in amusement. He continues down the street, headed for Sunday dinner.

EXT. HOME OF SHERIFF DAN PATTERSON

DeSantis pulls up to the front of the home. A real down home southern cottage with a giant front yard and picket fence. Children are running about the yard, playing tag, wresting, rough-housing.

The detective attempts to park but there are cars up and down both sides of the street -- as far as the eye can see.

DeSantis stares in amusement at the very basic innocence of this town.

DESANTIS  
Can Opey come out and play?

EXT. BACKYARD

The backyard is where the party is. A barbecue is going. Music is playing. And rows of townspeople sit at picnic tables, eating, socializing. Enjoying the simple life. It's a regular Sunday afternoon event for the people of Bryerson.

DeSantis and SHERIFF DAN PATTERSON (50s) stone faced and rugged -- sit at a corner table, away from most of the crowd. Also sitting with them is DEPUTY BILLY BRACKEN (20s) a short and thin but fierce looking young man with a menacing stare and something to prove. DeSantis hands The Sheriff a manila folder.

DESANTIS

This is a missing person's report filed by The Gold's in November of 1996. After week four and no contact was made, Darcy was presumed dead. A little under two weeks later...she shows up back at home.

The Sheriff turns his attention from the paperwork to DeSantis. He squints in confusion.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

Turns out she was staying with a girlfriend and her brother at his place. Some secluded cabin in the woods, 40 miles up state. At the time of her disappearance, her parents were in the middle of an ugly divorce. Darcy admitted to me that she used this as a ploy to keep her parents together.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Why didn't the Golds mention any of this before?

DESANTIS

They probably don't want the past drudged up any more than I do. Being that Mr. and Mrs. Gold were still contract players for NBC, the whole incident became a huge media case. Sheriff, what I'm asking is this. I was hoping...for now...we could keep this incident quiet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Sheriff stares over at Deputy Bracken who watches with equal suspicion.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

You know if word of this leaks, your town is flooded with reporters. If her kidnapper is continuing to make contact with you, odds are he's still here. I think a media presence would only scare this guy off. But I know you already know that, Sheriff. Otherwise you would've called the state police and FBI the moment Darcy was picked up.

The Sheriff cracks a smile -- SMIRKS at the young detective. He's blown away by his up front, in-your-face directness. DeSantis is a force to be reckoned with. Whether the Sheriff likes it or not.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Anything else, Detective?

Deputy Bracken lets out a SMIRK as he devours another slice of the pie.

DeSantis pays the Deputy no mind and stays focused on the Sheriff's eyes.

DESANTIS

I'd like permission to stick around. Review your case files. Talk to any witnesses you may have questioned. You have a sketch of this man. I'd like to help show his picture around. See if we can pinpoint who this man is. I'd like to make myself useful, Sheriff.

Sheriff Patterson sighs in frustration. He sits, staring at DeSantis with uncertainty.

EXT. SIDEWALK

Sheriff Patterson and DeSantis take a stroll down a sidewalk in front of his home. Children are still running about.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Since your friend disappeared, I've been flooded with phone calls.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERIFF PATTERSON (cont'd)  
 People are coming in off the street asking questions about a kidnapping I don't have any answers to. Like you said, the only good lead we have is the fact this man's maintained contact. Until we get something better, I don't wanna draw any more attention than I have to.

DESANTIS  
 I understand.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
 That includes flashing an LA badge and making everyone even more nervous. Next thing you know...the whole town's calling. Asking questions. Wanting to know if there's some crazy bastard out there abducting girls. Darcy's friends, The Golds, they don't wanna believe she's gone.

Sheriff Patterson stops in his tracks -- faces DeSantis.

SHERIFF PATTERSON (CONT'D)  
 Maybe they think you'll tell them something different. Something they'd rather hear. You say you wanna help?

DESANTIS  
 Whatever I can.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
 You keep them calm and out of my hair so me and my men can do our jobs.

INT. CASEY AND LEANNE'S MOTEL ROOM

At a corner table. DeSantis sits across from CASEY BRENNER (20s) dark hair, as beautiful as Darcy.

Sitting on the edge of a nearby bed is Darcy's other friend LEANNE BOWMAN (20s) red hair, cute.

Sheriff Patterson leans his back comfortably against the wall, listening in on the conversation. He remains silent and passive despite his obvious disgust with DeSantis.

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CONTINUED:

CASEY

He called twice. Yesterday and today.

DESANTIS

At what time did you get the first call?

CASEY

Real early. I'd say around five in the morning or so. Maybe Five thirty.

DESANTIS

What did he have to say?

CASEY

He just wanted to let us know what a great time he and Darcy were having. Then he said whatever you do, don't leave your room for the next few days. Either him or Darcy would be calling back.

DESANTIS

Did you ask to speak with Darcy?

CASEY

He said she couldn't come to the phone. She was in the shower. Getting cleaned up from their long, hot night. He was disgusting.

DESANTIS

And what about this second call?

CASEY

He didn't call again until today...a little bit after two o'clock. This time Sheriff Patterson was here.

DeSantis notices Sheriff Patterson leaning on the wall. The two men exchange stares.

CASEY (CONT'D)

He didn't say anything about Darcy. He just asked if I spoke with the police. He said he had a message for them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DESANTIS

A message?

CASEY

When I told him The Sheriff was here and wanted to talk, he hung up. I guess he panicked. That's when I called you. Darcy said to call you if I ever needed help.

DESANTIS

You did good, Casey.

(to Sheriff)

Sheriff? You think I could have a few minutes with the girls?

Sheriff Patterson gives DeSantis an angry stare, but maintains his cool composure.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

I'm gonna check on The Golds.

He continues out.

DESANTIS

Casey -- when we spoke the other day, you mentioned that Darcy was drinking a lot the night she disappeared.

CASEY

Yes she was. We all were. So what?

DESANTIS

Do you know if Darcy's been in any kind of trouble lately? Like with her drugs? Has she been depressed at all?

Leanne visibly grows suspicious of the detective's questioning. As does Casey.

CASEY

What're you saying?

DESANTIS

Before The Sheriff and I can continue any further we need to establish Darcy's mind set at the time of her abduction.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Casey seems to be growing impatient with the detective's line of questioning.

LEANNE

What the hell does her mood have to do with anything? She was picked up in broad daylight in front of two witnesses. What's your problem?

DESANTIS

I know you're both scared of the publicity Darcy would get if this thing went public. We all know this isn't the first time she's disappeared.

LEANNE

That's bullshit. That was eight years ago. She was just a kid. I can't even believe you're bringing that up now.

(to Casey)

Please tell him he's crazy.

Casey is awkwardly silent -- refusing to take sides with Leanne. She's already contemplated this.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Casey?

Leanne awaits an answer and doesn't get one. She sits in a state of total dismay and utter disgust, folding her arms and looking away in protest.

DESANTIS

She jumped in a strange car although the two of you strongly advised against it. When the Feds get wind of this, they're gonna find this behavior a little suspicious. Especially with her history of running away.

Leanne sighs, completely disgusted. She buries her face, unable to even look at the detective.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

The reality is, if we can't get her back soon, this will go public. That means FBI. A statewide APB.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

Her face all over the news and on every paper and tabloid that can't wait to use this incident to dig up her past and use it against her.

LEANNE

But she didn't run away! She was kidnapped!

DESANTIS

I know she was. But in order for me to find out exactly what happened to Darcy, I'm gonna need all the facts. I need to know if she was back on her pills. If she was drinking again. If she was having problems at work or with her love life. Anything and everything.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - RESIDENTIAL STREET - MORNING

It is a typical beautiful sunny day in California as DARCY GOLD (20s) blonde hair, drop dead gorgeous, jogs down a sidewalk in her quiet, up scale neighborhood. She moves with the grace and confidence of a born star.

SUPERIMPOSE:

SANTA MONICA, CA  
TWO WEEKS AGO

Darcy finishes her jog and continues into her apartment building.

INT. DARCY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Darcy enters and continues into the kitchen. She grabs a bottled water from the refrigerator and begins chugging it down like a mad woman.

MINUTES LATER

Darcy is sprawled out on the living room floor, stretching her legs out after a long, hard jog. She is in a full split. The PHONE RINGS behind her. Darcy attempts to grab the phone from the table, but her hand cannot reach. She quickly sits up, answers.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

DARCY

Hello?

INT. OFFICE OF ALICIA NEWMAN - KBS STUDIOS

Darcy sits across from her boss ALICIA NEWMAN (50s) a very attractive but somewhat frigid woman. She is the creator and executive producer of "Beverly Manor". One of the top rated dramas of the last ten years. She is a very important woman and she knows it.

MS. NEWMAN

I'm sorry to call you in here like this. It's been a long week. And a stressful one at that.

DARCY

What is it you wanna talk about?

MS. NEWMAN

We've been making provisions to re-write Jennifer's character back into the show. We're gonna be bringing her back for next season.

DARCY

I don't understand. Didn't we kill her off?

MS. NEWMAN

Yeah, but the fans miss her. They miss her a lot.

DARCY

I know. It takes time for any show when they lose a cast member to --

MS. NEWMAN

(interrupting)

No. I'm afraid our problem runs a bit deeper than that.

(abruptly changing the subject)

How rude of me. Would you like a drink, Darcy?

Darcy sits awkwardly silent -- anxious and uncertain.

DARCY

Umm. Sure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ms. Newman gives Darcy an unsure grin and briskly walks to a corner liquor cabinet. She pours herself and Darcy a shot of scotch. She gives Darcy an extra generous belt of the liquor.

Darcy notices this and becomes visibly worried.

MS. NEWMAN

We've had a thirty percent drop in ratings since last season. The network feels it's because of Jennifer's absence. Quite frankly, they don't feel we can last another season without her. The competition is just too stiff.

Ms. Newman hands Darcy her drink and has a seat on the edge of her desk.

DARCY

Did she say something to you about coming back?

MS. NEWMAN

No. But I don't think that will be a problem. Her new program hasn't taken off the way we expected. There's already talks of a mid season replacement. She can easily make the transition back to Beverly Manor. Make a surprise appearance on the season finale...and our ratings will go through the roof.

DARCY

A surprise appearance? But we already wrapped for this season.

MS. NEWMAN

We're gonna be re-shooting this season's last two episodes. It's the majority opinion that in order to get us back in the race, our last episode should be more of a cliff hanger. Something that will wet the viewer's appetite. Make them wanna tune in for another season. The producers feel with focusing the story line on Jennifer, it could be our best year ever.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DARCY

I see.

MS. NEWMAN

It seems the only logical way of bringing Jennifer back this season is if she exacts her much-awaited revenge on Kristen. Unfortunately, that would mean --

DARCY

(interrupting)

That would mean killing me off.

MS. NEWMAN

It's a ratings war, Darcy. And we're losing fast. In the end, it all comes down to the numbers.

INT. STAIRWAY - DARCY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Darcy begins up a flight of stairs with a large bag of groceries, looking completely disgusted. Her annoying neighbor MICHAEL (20s) boyishly handsome, but a bit cocky, looks over a railing and notices her coming up the stairs.

MICHAEL

Darcy.

Darcy SIGHS in frustration -- continuing up the steps toward her neighbor. Michael meets her half-way. His cocky smile ear to ear.

MICHAEL

Funny running into you like this. You coming up the steps just as I'm leaving.

DARCY

And how did I know I'd be running into you today?

MICHAEL

So you've been thinking about me?

Darcy fights back a smile and looks away in embarrassment.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You're blushing.

DARCY

I don't blush.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MICHAEL

You're red as a beet.

DARCY

I'm having a hot flash. Now excuse me. I have ice cream melting.

MICHAEL

I won't keep you. I was just wondering if you'd had time to re-think my offer for dinner.

DARCY

I have.

MICHAEL

So what did you decide?

DARCY

I haven't.

Darcy passes Michael and continues up.

MICHAEL

Okay. I can see I got you at a bad time. If you change your mind --

DARCY

I know where you live.

Darcy disappears around a corner, out of sight.

INT. DARCY'S APARTMENT - DUSK

The BRIGHT SUN peaks itself through Darcy's blinds and into her living room.

Darcy is sprawled out on the couch, asleep. On the table in front of her sits a GIN AND TONIC and a half-empty bottle. Her PHONE RINGS. This startles Darcy, causing her to jump. She lets the phone ring, eventually letting the answering machine pick it up.

MRS. GOLD (O.S.)

Darcy? It's your mother. Are you there? Hello?

Darcy reaches for the phone, answers.

DARCY

Hi, mom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. GOLD (O.S.)  
Darcy? Are you all right? You  
sound like you were sleeping.

DARCY  
I was. So what's up?

MRS. GOLD (O.S.)  
Just checking to see if you're  
still coming to dinner. Your  
father's expecting you, you know?

Darcy quickly wakes herself. Sits up.

DARCY  
Oh, man. What time is it?

She checks her watch and grabs her head in pain from sitting  
up too fast.

MRS. GOLD (O.S.)  
It's quarter till' six. What's  
wrong?

DARCY  
Nothing. I have a headache.

MRS. GOLD (O.S.)  
Oh. So are you still coming?

DARCY  
I don't know. I've kind of had a  
bad day.

MRS. GOLD (O.S.)  
What happened?

DARCY  
It's a long, complicated story.  
One I really don't wanna get into  
right now.

MRS. GOLD (O.S.)  
Well it sounds to me like the last  
thing you should do is be alone  
right now. Why don't you get  
dressed and come over. We can talk  
about it before dinner.

A beat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MRS. GOLD (O.S.)

Hello?

DARCY

Yeah. Okay, Mom.

MRS. GOLD (O.S.)

Okay. See you in a little bit.

Darcy hangs up. She lets out a huge, unenthusiastic sigh of exhaustion.

EXT. HOME OF HENRY AND SHARON GOLD - NIGHT

The Gold's upper middle class home. Darcy definitely enjoyed a comfortable but humble childhood.

INT. DINING ROOM - HOME OF HENRY AND SHARON GOLD

Darcy and her two parents HENRY GOLD (50s) and SHARON GOLD (50s) sit at the dinner table devouring a large home-cooked meal. Fried chicken, mashed potatoes, corn on the cob, etc.

MR. GOLD

So what's the big deal? I thought you liked Jennifer.

DARCY

I do. I guess.

MR. GOLD

So what's the problem? I think it'll be good for the show if she came back. Especially for your character.

MRS. GOLD

I think Darcy's concerned there might not be room for both of them on the show.

MR. GOLD

Hey, Darcy. You've got no reason to be upset about this. She's been on that program for seven years. It's only your first season. You can't just expect to win over her fans just like that. You'll have to give them time to develop your character.

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CONTINUED:

Darcy puts down her fork and nervously folds her arms. She can't even look her father in the eye, let alone tell him the real truth.

MR. GOLD (CONT'D)

But all that doesn't matter. What matters is your mother and I are proud of you. You've accomplished a lot this year. I know we haven't exactly been supportive. But you surprised the hell out of a lot of people by staying sober the way you have. You should be proud of yourself. Just like we are.

Darcy looks anything but proud.

MRS. GOLD

He's right, Darcy.

Mrs. Gold notices Darcy's strange demeanor.

MRS. GOLD (CONT'D)

Honey? Is there something you're not telling us? You don't look so hot.

Darcy pauses -- contemplates telling her parents she was let go from the show, but eventually backs down.

DARCY

No. I guess I'm just not that hungry.

MR. GOLD

Listen to your father. Don't let Jennifer Conway get you down. You're a winner. It's in your blood. You're just gonna have to get used to it.

Darcy sports a fake smile and scoops herself some mashed potatoes.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. DARCY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

DARCY pulls her S.U.V. into an empty spot.

INT. DARCY'S S.U.V.

Darcy's face is red and her eyes are filled with tears. She shuts off her engine and begins crying heavily.

INT. HALLWAY - APARTMENT BUILDING

Darcy continues to cry as she slowly walks through the hallway headed to her apartment.

INT. DARCY'S APARTMENT

Darcy enters -- shuts the door behind her. She rests her back against the door, slowly sliding to the floor and balling like crazy.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

Michael is in bed, asleep. He hears a LOUD KNOCKING coming from the other room. He quickly gets up, tosses on a robe and continues to the door. He answers and is in shock to see DARCY standing before him.

Her makeup is a mess from crying. She stands silent and still. Michael finally breaks the silence.

MICHAEL

It's 11:30. A little late for dinner, don't you think?

Darcy invites herself inside -- still crying. She begins kissing Michael. He is taken back at first, but doesn't stop her. She takes off his robe and begins kissing his bare chest -- forcing him against a wall as they continue.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM - SOME TIME LATER

Darcy checks to see if Michael is awake. She quietly sneaks out of bed. Michael is almost comatose. He doesn't even move let alone notice Darcy.



INT. DARCY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Darcy enters. She is completely disheveled and seemingly upset at herself for what she's done with Michael. She tosses her keys down on a corner table as a long, complicated day is coming to an end.

BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Darcy sits alone in the dark, drinking a gin and tonic and talking on the phone with Casey.

DARCY  
Did I wake you?

CASEY (O.S.)  
It's okay. What's up?

DARCY  
Nothing. I just wanted to talk.

CASEY  
Yeah, right, Darcy. It's one o'clock in the morning. What's the matter?

DARCY  
Umm...do you wanna get out of here? Maybe go somewhere this weekend?

CUT TO:

INT. CASEY AND LEANNE'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

CASEY  
And that's pretty much it.

DESANTIS  
And you don't know anything else?

CASEY  
No. But I could tell something was wrong by the way she was acting. I could hear her crying. When I asked what it was, she wouldn't tell me. It was obvious she didn't feel like talking about it, so I didn't push.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DESANTIS

But she did tell you she lost her job and slept with Michael?

CASEY

No. Not then. I didn't hear about that until later. But I knew she had a bad day. You could tell she just wanted to get the hell out of LA as soon as possible. She suggested we go to her parent's lodge in Park City for the weekend.

DeSantis jots down a few notes on a note pad.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - UTAH - DUSK

Darcy's S.U.V. barrels down the empty highway. Surrounded by BRIGHT RED LANDSCAPE. In the b.g., we hear LOUD MUSIC PLAYING from the interior of the truck.

INT. S.U.V.

Darcy is behind the wheel with Casey up front and Leanne in the back.

LEANNE

So, Darcy. I hear you're living across the hall from Hannibal Lector.

Darcy doesn't respond. She simply stares over at Casey with disgust.

CASEY

Sorry. I had to tell her.

LEANNE

So what's his problem anyway? Is he, like, leaving dead flowers on your doorstep and writing you poems in his own blood?

DARCY

It's not like that. He's harmless. He's an actor and he's new in the building. He's just a little star struck.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARCY (cont'd)  
Once he finds out I'm out of a job,  
he'll get over it. Believe me.

LEANNE  
Casey said that you said he was  
stalking you or something.

CASEY  
Was stalking her. Not anymore.  
(to Darcy)  
Isn't that right, Darcy?

Darcy smacks Casey on the arm. Leanne's jaw drops as she slowly figures it out.

LEANNE  
You slept with him?! You little  
skank!

DARCY  
It was a mistake.  
(to Casey)  
Why did you even do that?

LEANNE  
Oh, I see. You could tell her you  
porked some weird stalker guy you  
barely even know, but you can't  
tell me?

DARCY  
Maybe it's because I know you'd  
freak out and call me pretty names  
like ho-bag and skank.

LEANNE  
Well, I'm sorry, Darcy, but I'm not  
the one who's constantly breaking  
our pact.

CASEY  
A pact? There's a pact?

LEANNE  
Darcy and I decided that the next  
relationship we were in, we were  
gonna hold out on our man for at  
least three months. The idea being  
that any man that can last three  
months is in it for more than sex.

DARCY  
Or he's really lame and desperate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LEANNE

Oh. So now I go with desperate guys? Is that it? That the only guy who could possibly be interested in Leanne's saggin' tits is some reject who hasn't been laid in five years? Please, Darcy. Don't feel the need to spare my feelings or anything. Just come out with it.

CASEY

(to Leanne)

Oh, yeah. While we're on the subject. Who's pregnancy test did I find in your waste basket last week?

DARCY

Busted! Now who's the skank?

LEANNE

Okay. First of all, that wasn't mine.

CASEY

It wasn't mine! I know it wasn't Darcy's, so who else could it be?

LEANNE

If you'd shut up a second, I could tell you, Casey!

CASEY

Okay, fine. Tell us. We're all ears.

Darcy breaks out in hysterics.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

I had a friend over. She lives with her folks. She was too afraid to do it at home so she used our place.

CASEY

Yeah, right, Leanne. You're so busted.

Darcy continues laughing uncontrollably.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LEANNE

(to both)

What're you guys?...like a tag team or something?

(to Casey)

I'm trying to talk to Darcy for a second. I'm trying to make a point and you're, like, re-directing everything at me. Getting all in my face.

DARCY

And how many times exactly did you and Roger go out before he climbed the great peaks of Mount Leanne?

CASEY

Yeah, really. It couldn't have been more than twice.

LEANNE

Yeah, but it was over a span of three months, so that doesn't count.

Darcy and Casey continue laughing at Leanne.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

It doesn't count!

EXT. GAS STATION - CONVENIENCE STORE

They approach an old worn down gas station and turn in -- parking in front of one of the pumps. Out steps Darcy and the two girls. Darcy continues into the store.

CASEY

Great going, Leanne. I should've known better than to tell you anything.

LEANNE

What? I'm bored. Nobody said anything for, like, two hours. I was just trying to liven things up a bit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CASEY

Well you did. Why'd you have to say anything about her neighbor? Darcy's never gonna tell me anything again.

LEANNE

Hey, I'm sorry, but I tell you guys everything and...

Leanne stops mid-sentence when she notices a suspicious MAN (30s) blocking Darcy from entering the convenience store. He is being very flirtatious, forcing himself on her. He is a typical red-neck cowboy with a full beard, tank-top, dark shades and cowboy hat.

CASEY

What is it?

LEANNE

That cowboy won't let Darcy inside.

Casey also turns her attention to the door. The cowboy stands, blocking Darcy from the doorway.

Casey begins filling Darcy's tank, all the while watching the greasy cowboy as he continues to taunt Darcy.

CASEY

(to herself)

Just kick him in the balls, Darcy.

The cowboy finally gives up and lets Darcy pass. He continues to his truck...A GREY DODGE PICK-UP sitting at the far end of the lot.

Casey watches the mysterious man as he returns her stare. He grins and points his finger at her, all the while holding a bottle of beer in the same hand. He flicks his thumb as if he's pulling an imaginary trigger.

Casey is visibly frightened by this.

The cowboy crawls in his truck, cranks up the engine. He sits, waiting, staring back at the girls in his rearview mirror.

Darcy coming out of the store.

Casey hangs up the pump as she and Leanne get back in the truck. Darcy follows behind.

INT. S.U.V.

Casey and Leanne stare into Darcy's rearview mirror, gazing at the dirty pick-up in the distance.

LEANNE  
Nice wheels.

Casey turns her attention to Darcy who is seemingly upset.

CASEY  
You okay?

DARCY  
Same ass holes, different state.

CASEY  
Some things you can't get away from.

EXT. GAS STATION

The girls pull out of the small lot and back onto the highway. They continue down the road a piece -- the grey pick-up follows behind.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

The three girls sit bellied up at the local bar, doing shots of tequila.

Darcy is the ring leader, setting the other two up with another shot.

DARCY  
Raise your glasses.

The three girls prepare for a toast.

DARCY (CONT'D)  
Here's to Jennifer. For her triumphant, but all too soon return to Beverly Manor.

CASEY  
Here, here. I guess.

The three girls tap glasses -- about to throw down another shot, until --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEANNE

Wait.

Casey and Darcy stare over at Leanne, waiting.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

The other day, didn't you say you wanted to claw this chick's eyes out and smash her face with a brick?

Casey checks with Darcy.

DARCY

So maybe it isn't the most sincere of toasts. I'm just trying to be a good sport.

(changing the subject)

Okay. For real this time. All joking aside. Here's to my mother and father, Henry and Sharon Gold. May their love only grow stronger in these very difficult days that lay ahead.

Leanne looks over at Casey who returns her stare. They are both suspicious of Darcy's strange rhetoric. The three girls tap glasses, throw back another shot.

CASEY

(to Darcy)

Why don't you ease up a bit. Don't you think you're hitting the booze a little hard?

DARCY

Yes I do. On that note, I think I'll have another.

Darcy pours herself another shot of Cuervo.

DARCY (CONT'D)

Are you gonna have one with me or you gonna be a pain in my ass this whole trip?

Casey gives up and holds out her glass to Darcy who quickly fills it.

Leanne turns her attention to the front door and notices THE COWBOY from earlier. He struts over to the bar and bellies up. The bartender takes his order.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

LEANNE

Oh great. Don't look now.

Casey and Darcy notice him sitting down just a few feet away. They watch as he whispers something to the bartender.

The bartender smiles and approaches the girls.

BARTENDER

Excuse me ladies. The gentleman at the end of the bar will be taking care of your tab this evening.

CASEY

Tell him no thanks.

DARCY

Tell him we appreciate it.

CASEY

Darcy?

DARCY

Let him pay. Who cares?

CASEY

I don't want him hassling us again.

DARCY

He didn't hassle you, he hassled me. If I wanna be hassled, that's my problem.

CASEY

You're drinking too much.

DARCY

No. You're just drinking too little.

SOME TIME LATER

Darcy and the cowboy are dancing. Darcy is absolutely obliterated. Out of her mind drunk. She is hanging all over the cowboy and making a fool of herself.

Casey and Leanne sit at a corner table, way passed ready to leave.

LEANNE

Do you think we should say something to her?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LEANNE (cont'd)  
I mean, if she's not careful she's  
gonna throw up all over his shirt.  
Just like at that club last month.

Casey squints a bit, confused.

CASEY  
Darcy said that was you.

LEANNE  
Whatever. Can we just go get her  
and leave?

Casey reluctantly takes the job and walks over to Darcy and  
her dance partner.

CASEY  
Excuse me. We have to go.

DARCY  
Oh, do we have to?

Casey grabs her friend by the arm and pulls her away from the  
cowboy. They continue out of the bar as Leanne follows  
behind.

DARCY  
(to cowboy)  
Bye, bye!

INT. MOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Darcy is puking her guts up in the toilet as Leanne holds her  
hair back.

Casey walks in with a few cans of ginger ale. She pours one  
into a small cup of ice and rests it on a nearby sink.

CASEY  
How's she doing?

LEANNE  
You wanna turn down her bed. I'm  
gonna try to move her.

Casey steps out -- back into the bedroom. Darcy tosses a few  
more chunks into the commode. Leanne takes a peek inside.

LEANNE (CONT'D)  
God. What is that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Casey turns down the sheets on one of the two beds. She looks up and notices A MAN -- WEARING A DARK SKI MASK AND BLACK COWBOY HAT -- staring into the window, between the drapes and into their room. He quickly backs away.

CASEY

Leanne?

Casey slowly moves to the door and locks it. She hurries to the window and peeks outside. There is no one in sight.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - MORNING

The S.U.V. is back on the road as the three girls continue their journey across the red desert.

INT. S.U.V.

LEANNE

My stomach is killing me.

CASEY

You need some coffee and dry toast. Soak up some of that poison in your system.

DARCY

There's a diner about a quarter mile up the road. My dad used to stop there all the time for breakfast.

LEANNE

Oh, God. Remind me again why I drink tequila. There's got to be an easier way to have fun.

Darcy looks to her right, quickly taking notice of something:

DARCY'S P.O.V.

They pass by a mysterious BLUE STATION WAGON sitting on the side of the road. The driver's side window is down and a man's head sits rested against the side of the door. He isn't moving. There is BLOOD in the man's hair and on the door. They continue past the car.

BACK TO SCENE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARCY  
Wait. Go back.

CASEY  
What? Did you forget something?

DARCY  
No. Back there in that car. I saw someone. They were bleeding and they weren't moving!

CASEY  
I didn't see anything.

DARCY  
I did! And he was bleeding! Look! Somebody could be hurt! Now will you just go back!

LEANNE  
I saw something too, Casey. Maybe we should check it out.

CASEY  
Are you kidding me? We're in the middle of nowhere. You don't know that guy. He could have a gun or something. He could stuff the three of us in his trunk.

DARCY  
It's my truck and I'm telling you to turn around right now!

CASEY  
No way, Darcy! Forget it!

Darcy forcefully grabs the wheel, jerking it to the right, forcing them onto the soft shoulder. Casey quickly steps on the brakes.

CASEY  
What the fuck, Darcy! What the hell's the matter with you?! Are you high?!

DARCY  
Turn around right now or get out of the truck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Casey looks in the rearview mirror, staring back at Leanne. The two girls sharing a look of shock and confusion. Casey turns back to Darcy.

CASEY  
Alright, Darcy. We'll go back.

EXT. HIGHWAY

Casey pulls a quick u-turn and heads back toward the idle car. The S.U.V. pulls up about a hundred feet behind the car and slowly comes to a halt.

INT. S.U.V.

DARCY  
Wait here.

CASEY  
With pleasure.

Darcy steps out and begins toward the vehicle. Casey and Leanne watch as Darcy gets closer and closer.

EXT. HIGHWAY

Darcy stops and peeks through the rear windshield at the man behind the wheel. He isn't moving. She continues toward the car -- her pace a bit slower and more cautious.

INT. STATION WAGON

CAMERA P.O.V.

From the interior of the car, we look up at Darcy as she approaches the passenger side door and peeks inside. She is visibly startled by something and steps back a bit.

EXT. STATION WAGON

Darcy stares back at her two friends.

INT. S.U.V.

Casey and Leanne both watch as Darcy stares back at them with a panicked look in her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEANNE

What is it? What do you see?

EXT. STATION WAGON

DARCY

He isn't moving! I'm gonna check  
his pulse!

INT. S.U.V.

Casey nervously strokes her hair back.

LEANNE

Now would be a good time to go get  
her.

CASEY

Let me guess. You want me to do  
it?

LEANNE

Well, you're closer.

Casey smirks at Leanne, shakes her head and steps out.

INT./EXT. S.U.V.

Casey slowly steps out of the truck and begins toward Darcy  
and the station wagon.

CASEY

Darcy!

DARCY

There's blood all over the place!  
I think he might be dead!

CASEY

Then let's call an ambulance and  
get the hell out of here!

Darcy peeks through the rear passenger window and into the  
backseat. Something catches her attention.

DARCY'S P.O.V.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The man's wallet sits opened on the backseat. Credit cards and wallet sized photographs are scattered all over the place. It appears someone has stolen his money.

INT./EXT. S.U.V.

Leanne watches as Darcy opens the rear passenger side door.

LEANNE

What the hell is she doing?

EXT. HIGHWAY

Casey continues toward the car at a brisk pace.

CASEY

Darcy, I'm serious! Let's go!

Darcy crawls into the backseat, against the advisement of her friend. She has to know.

INT. BACKSEAT - STATION WAGON

Darcy picks up the wallet from the seat. She opens it and notices that it is completely empty. No loose cash, no nothing. Suddenly...THE MAN BEHIND THE WHEEL sits up and strikes Darcy over the head, knocking her backward. He starts the engine and darts off.

EXT. HIGHWAY

Casey watches in horror.

CASEY

DARCY!!!

The car spins out of the dirt and back onto the main road.

INT. S.U.V.

Leanne also watches in horror as the station wagon speeds off down the highway.

LEANNE

OH MY GOD!!!

EXT. HIGHWAY

Casey chases after the car on foot as a panicked Darcy smacks her hands on the rear windshield and SCREAMS for help. Her screams are silent: muffled by the glass.

LEANNE

Jumps from the car and yells for Casey to return.

LEANNE  
COME ON!!!

Leanne jumps in the driver's seat.

Casey runs back and jumps in the front passenger seat. The two girls quickly begin after the car, in full pursuit.

INT. S.U.V.

CASEY  
DON'T YOU LOSE HER!!!

LEANNE  
CALL THE POLICE!!!

Casey is in an absolute panic as she pulls out her cell phone and dials 9-1-1.

CASEY  
The phone's not working!

They gain on Darcy's kidnapper but quickly begin to slow down. Leanne hits the gas repeatedly, but seems to do no good. The car keeps getting slower and slower. Soon, stepping on the gas has no effect at all.

Leanne looks down at the gauge. The tank is empty.

LEANNE  
What the hell!

CASEY  
We're losing him!

EXT. HIGHWAY

The S.U.V. comes to a complete halt on the side of the road.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

A FEW MOMENTS PASS

Then suddenly...a frantic Casey and Leanne jump out of the truck and head up the road on foot -- running as fast as they can. They are headed for a small DINER in the near distance. A pay phone awaits them.

EXT. DINER

Casey and Leanne approach the diner, completely exhausted. Casey runs to a pay phone and dials 9-1-1.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

911. What's your emergency?

CUT TO:

INT. CASEY AND LEANNE'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

CASEY

And that was the last we saw of her.

DESANTIS

Neither this grey pick-up or the wagon had a license tag?

CASEY

So what do you think? You think it was the same guy?

DeSantis nods in agreement.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF PATTERSON'S CAR - DAY

Sheriff Patterson and DeSantis cruise down a dusty piece of highway, side by side.

DESANTIS

I hear this isn't the first time a woman's been abducted in Bryerson.

Sheriff Patterson smiles at DeSantis's coy persistence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERIFF PATTERSON

So you heard about that did you?

DESANTIS

You wanna tell me about Janet Cooney?

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Not much to tell. She was this hooker. Drifted in to town some years back. She was out there on the highway, sellin' her ass for about two years. One night, some john picks her up, beats her damn near to death, then drops her in the desert right where he found her.

DESANTIS

No leads?

SHERIFF PATTERSON

No. She's got no known family. We couldn't get anyone to claim the body. After the autopsy, we had her cremated. Outside her occupation, no one seems to know much about her.

DESANTIS

So what's your take on what happened?

Sheriff Patterson stares suspiciously over at DeSantis. Reluctant to answer.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

We found a switchblade in the dirt near Cooney's body, covered in blood. Her right thumb and finger were sliced up real good. Examiner said she cut herself with the blade. So I'm thinking, he starts getting rough with her so she pulls the knife.

DeSantis going over the case in his head and comparing his theories with the Sheriff.

SHERIFF PATTERSON (CONT'D)

He tries to knock the knife out of her hand and she cuts herself.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SHERIFF PATTERSON (CONT'D)

Then he starts in on beating her. Only he don't stop. When he's done, he drags her into the desert and off he goes into the sweet bye and bye.

DESANTIS

What about the possibility this guy's local?

SHERIFF PATTERSON

I don't think so. Her house was only a quarter mile up the road from where we found her. That's where she usually took her johns. I think this guy wanted a quickie for the road. Besides. A local knows about a thousand better hiding places for that body than on the side of the highway in plain view. No. This guy was in a panic.

DESANTIS

That would be true. Unless he wanted you to find her body.

Sheriff Patterson turns and gives DeSantis a discerning stare.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

I know what you're getting at. Now just in case you're thinking there's a connection between the Cooney murder and your girl getting snatched, you can hold it right there.

DESANTIS

I didn't say that.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

No, but you're hinting at it. I'm not as slow as you think, DeSantis.

DESANTIS

You got a small town, Sheriff. I wouldn't think this type of thing happens every day.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

No, it doesn't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DESANTIS

And you don't think there's a possibility of a connection?

SHERIFF PATTERSON

I watched that girl for years, peddling her ass on that highway. It was a matter of time before some nut job passing through town broke her neck or cut her throat. The last thing I wanna do is scream serial killer and get everyone in town into an uproar. They'll be burning up my phone line every time little Susie's late getting home from cheerleading.

DeSantis visibly grows weary of Sheriff Patterson's uncaring, lazy attitude.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

This isn't LA. It's peaceful here. For the last twenty years these people have been looking to me to keep it that way. If word gets out I'm losing control, then all hell breaks loose.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - CRIME SCENE

The sound of a door being unlocked. Enter DeSantis and Sheriff Patterson. The first thing DeSantis notices are the MINUTE DROPS OF BLOOD on the carpet, leading into the bathroom.

HIS P.O.V.

DeSantis looks into the bathroom and instantly notices the BLOODY HANDPRINT on the interior wall of the shower. (No shower curtain)

BACK TO SCENE

The two men continue further into the room. DeSantis takes notice of the barren hook on the wall where a picture once hung.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

I figured they started fighting right about here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sheriff Patterson stands near the center of the room where the picture fell from the wall.

DeSantis notices small pieces of broken glass and a BLOODY RIGHT HANDPRINT. The small print of a young woman.

SHERIFF PATTERSON (CONT'D)

Looks like they started fighting,  
he throws her into the wall,  
knocking the picture down and  
shattering the frame. That's  
probably where she cut herself.  
She falls right about here and  
bleeds out.

DeSantis turns his attention from the bloody spot to yet another BLOOD STAIN about ten feet away. A good foot from that stain are TWO MORE BLOODY HANDPRINTS. The prints are small and delicate.

He approaches the blood evidence, kneels down to take a closer look.

In the corner of the room sits a small round table. There is a small BLOOD SMEAR on the edge of the table.

DeSantis then motions toward the BLOOD STAIN and HANDPRINTS on the carpet -- connecting all the dots in his head.

He stands and motions toward the bed. The blankets are turned down on only half of the bed, as if only one person has slept in it.

DESANTIS

You get the lab results from  
forensics?

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Yeah. They pulled a blonde hair  
from the bed sheets and crossed it  
with a sample from Darcy's hair  
brush. No match.

DeSantis stays focused on the crime scene, completely ignoring Sheriff Patterson.

INT. BATHROOM

MOMENTS LATER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DeSantis kneels over the bathtub, takes a peek. Sheriff Patterson hovers behind him. DeSantis notices the prints of THREE BLOODY FINGERTIPS on the edge of the tub.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
You notice anything missing?

DESANTIS  
The shower curtain.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
He used it to wrap the body.

DESANTIS  
There's three print smears on the edge of the tub, plus the handprint. But the rest of the shower's immaculate. It's like he cleaned around it.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
Looks like she regained consciousness and tried to get out.

DESANTIS  
What's wrong with this picture?

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
The handprint. It's too high up the wall. If your girl were flat on her back, there's no way she'd reach.

DESANTIS  
Very good, Sheriff, but what does it mean?

INT. SHERIFF PATTERSON'S HOME - OFFICE - NIGHT

DeSantis sifts through a stack of CRIME SCENE PHOTOS from both the Janet Cooney murder and the motel room where Darcy was assaulted. Sheriff Patterson sits comfortably with his feet kicked up on a desk, waiting for DeSantis to finish.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
I don't know what you think you're gonna find, but we've been over every inch of those things a thousand times.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DESANTIS

It never hurts to have a fresh pair  
of eyes.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Look. If I don't get to bed, my  
wife's gonna come looking for me.

DeSantis picks up a large PHOTO OF JANET COONEY'S BODY from the desk. It is a FULL SHOT of her body, laying idle in the desert. Her LEFT ARM lay fully extended and exposed. Her RIGHT ARM is carefully place behind her back.

He lays the picture down and reviews the next; a CLOSE UP of the deceased's LEFT HAND. There are severe cuts on the woman's thumb and index finger. Self-inflicted wounds caused by a switchblade.

DESANTIS

Wait a minute.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

What?

DeSantis picks up another CRIME SCENE PHOTO from the desk; the BLOODY HANDPRINT of Darcy's LEFT HAND on the shower wall.

He lays the photo down and picks up another; a shot of another BLOODY HANDPRINT on the motel room's carpet. Darcy's wounded RIGHT HAND after she is violently tossed to the floor.

DESANTIS

There's only one print on the  
carpet.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Yeah?

DESANTIS

If Darcy cut both her hands on the  
glass, then why is there only a  
right hand print on the carpet?

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Simple. Her left hand never  
touched the floor.

DESANTIS

Maybe. Or someone else cut it for  
her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SHERIFF PATTERSON

What're you saying?

DeSantis tosses down a photo and picks up another. This one is a CLOSE UP of Cooney's RIGHT ARM, placed carefully behind her back.

DESANTIS

Cooney's arm was found behind her back. I don't think this was coincidence. This is how your guy restrained her. She didn't die in that car. Your guy walked her into the desert first.

The wheels begin to turn in Sheriff Patterson's eyes.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

Then he wraps her arm around her back and listens to her scream in pain as she begs for her life. You know what else? I think he did the same thing to Darcy.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Now hold on. Don't you think you're getting a little ahead of yourself? All this could be coincidence.

DESANTIS

That's why the left hand print. He pulls Darcy's arm around her back. Just like he did to Cooney. That's when he cut her. He cuts her left hand and plants her print on the shower wall.

DeSantis picks up the photo of Cooney's LEFT HAND, severely wounded from a knife.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

Darcy's left hand print. That's what he wanted us to find. That's the connection.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Find what? And what connection?

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

DESANTIS

I think I know what this guy was trying to tell you now, Sheriff. Come and get me, cop.

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

DeSantis, Sheriff Patterson and The Golds sit at a large conference table, discussing the investigation.

The Golds appear very weary. They look as if they've been crying non-stop for days.

DESANTIS

Has Darcy mentioned anything to you about getting strange phone calls or if someone might be following her?

MR. GOLD

If there were someone like that, she wouldn't tell us.

MRS. GOLD

She doesn't like to worry us. We've always been very protective with Darcy. When her drugs started getting out of control, we put her in a hospital. When she got out, we insisted she come stay with us for awhile. She didn't want any part of it. But the network insisted she stayed under strict supervision those first few months out of the program. She's barely spoken with us since.

DeSantis is locked into every word. A look of intense concentration consumes his face.

MR. GOLD

She was hell bent on jumping right back into her career. No matter how much we were against it.

DeSantis looks to be in deep thought, pondering what The Golds have told him. He snaps out of it and turns his attention back to The Golds.

DESANTIS

Thank you.

EXT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - DAY

Mr. Gold takes his dog for a short walk across the parking lot, leash in hand. Sharon stands in front of the office, puffs away at a cigarette, taking one nervous drag after the next as DeSantis exits the building. He spots her, quietly having a seat on an outside bench.

MRS. GOLD

It really is beautiful country,  
isn't it?

DeSantis stares off into the mountains, as if for the first time.

DESANTIS

Yes, it certainly is. I guess I  
never stopped to notice.

MRS. GOLD

I forgot how much I missed it here.  
It's so quiet. Sometimes I wonder  
if Darcy were better off being  
raised in a small town. Someplace  
where people don't walk all over  
you, or spit on you so much as look  
at you.

Sharon nervously reaching for another smoke, sparking it up. DeSantis noticing her slowly growing angry, almost breaking out into tears.

MRS. GOLD (CONT'D)

But we were the typical Hollywood  
family. Darcy spent most of her  
childhood either listening to Henry  
and I argue or watching us drink.  
Our whole world revolved around the  
next audition or getting picked up  
by some stupid pilot. And it was  
always a competition. We thought  
our lives would change if we had a  
baby and stopped thinking about  
ourselves. But it didn't. Nothing  
ever changed.

Sharon's eyes remain locked on Henry, now tossing a tennis ball with his dog.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. GOLD (CONT'D)

Except now, instead of two angry people in the house, there were three. I remember when things got too hot between Henry and me at the dinner table...Darcy would ask if the three of us could go get ice cream. We would always give in. Every time. It seems like every other night, after dinner, we were sitting down at Scoops. Watching each other eat ice cream. None of us saying a damn thing. But it always put a smile on Darcy's face. Henry and I would just look at each other, smiling at what a little con artist she was. She was funny that way.

Sharon turns, smiling at DeSantis, who politely returns her grin.

MRS. GOLD (CONT'D)

I guess she had to have a sense of humor living with the two of us. Imagine our shock when Darcy announced she wanted to be an actress like her mommy. I guess, in a way, she'd been performing her whole life. That's all she ever knew how to do.

DeSantis slowly drifts off into a daydream, contemplating what Sharon has told him.

INT. DESANTIS CAR - NIGHT

DeSantis cruises down a long, dark stretch of highway. He makes a left turn onto a dirty, country road. He slowly makes his way down the path until he approaches TWO PATROL CARS -- LIGHTS FLASHING.

Parked in the middle of the road is the BLUE STATION WAGON from before. The trunk sits open.

DeSantis notices and is visibly frightened.

INT./EXT. DESANTIS CAR

DeSantis steps out and approaches the abandoned car. He is greeted by Sheriff Patterson.

DESANTIS  
Is she...?

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
No. But we did find this.

Sheriff Patterson walks to the rear of the station wagon and motions inside. He grabs one of FIVE LARGE RED GAS CANS from the trunk. They are all filled to the brim with gasoline.

SHERIFF PATTERSON (CONT'D)  
Looks like he siphoned the gas out of Darcy's truck the night before. And so the game continues.

DESANTIS  
You get a lead on the owner?

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
No tags, no registration and not one visible VIN on the entire car.

DESANTIS  
Anything else?

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
Take a look for yourself.

Sheriff Patterson begins toward the driver's side of the vehicle.

DeSantis follows behind.

Sheriff Patterson motions toward bright RED BLOOD on the outside of the driver's door.

SHERIFF PATTERSON (CONT'D)  
Red paint. It's all over the interior.

DeSantis peeks his head inside, taking in the carefully staged crime scene. Fake blood is carefully spattered on the steering wheel, headrest, dashboard and windshield.

DESANTIS  
So what do you make of this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERIFF PATTERSON

To the untrained eye, like Darcy,  
this might look a helluva lot like  
a gunshot wound to the head, close  
range.

DeSantis pulls his head from the window and faces The  
Sheriff.

SHERIFF PATTERSON (CONT'D)

And just when she figures him for  
dead, she opens the door to check  
his ID and off he goes.

DESANTIS

I.D.?

Sheriff Patterson hands DeSantis a black wallet.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Found it in the backseat along with  
a mess of stolen credit cards, no  
cash. The cards were scattered  
everywhere and the wallet was  
empty. Your girl probably spotted  
it in the backseat and got in to  
get a closer look.

DESANTIS

It's a set-up. He makes it so he  
got shot by some drifter who  
snagged his cash.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

This guy sure went through a lot of  
trouble to snatch your girlfriend,  
DeSantis.

DESANTIS

Yeah. Looks that way.

DeSantis brushes off the Sheriff. Sheriff Patterson's eyes  
never leave the detective.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

If he dumped her, she can't be far.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

The dogs are on their way. It'll  
be sun-up in about an hour.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DESANTIS  
I'll let The Golds know.

DeSantis walks off. Sheriff Patterson watches with suspicion.

CUT TO:

INT. CASEY AND LEANNE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark. DeSantis sits in a corner chair, in deep thought, as Casey and Leanne sleep in the same bed just a few feet away.

Casey lays awake, focusing on the telephone. Leanne is sound asleep.

CASEY  
I keep waiting for that phone to ring.

Casey focuses on DeSantis' eyes, studying them.

CASEY (CONT'D)  
You think she's dead, don't you?

(...)

DESANTIS  
I don't know.

CASEY  
Me too.

DeSantis is visibly surprised with Casey.

CASEY (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry.

DESANTIS  
(motioning to Leanne)  
How's she handling this?

CASEY  
Leanne? Same way she deals with everything else in her life. She sleeps all day and hopes everything will work out on its own.

DESANTIS  
And Darcy? Does she...?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CASEY

Still talk about you? Drink herself to sleep every night over her unborn child? No. Not at all.

DESANTIS

That's not what I was gonna ask.

CASEY

She doesn't blame you for losing the baby. It was the stress of everything. Trying to stay straight. Trying to stay perfect in the public's eyes. She hasn't been happy for awhile, you know?

DESANTIS

Do her parents know about us?

CASEY

I don't know. Darcy never mentioned it. It doesn't really matter anymore, does it? The only thing you can do for her now is find her and bring her home alive. After that, the two of you can call it even.

INT. MR. AND MRS. GOLD'S MOTEL ROOM

Henry and Sharon lay awake in bed. Sharon in Henry's arms, searching for some comfort at this very difficult time. Thoughts of their daughter's safety consume their every second.

The PHONE suddenly RINGS, startling The Golds. Henry reaches over and answers.

MR. GOLD

Hello?

No one.

MR. GOLD (CONT'D)

Hello?

(listens)

Who is this?

Sharon quickly sits up, putting her ear to the phone and listening for a voice on the other line.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STRANGE MAN (O.S.)  
I'm watching you.

A stunned Sharon covers her mouth to keep from screaming. Suddenly...there is a LOUD KNOCK at the door. The Golds almost jump off the bed in a panic as Sharon lets out a horrible shriek.

MR. GOLD  
Stay here.

Mr. Gold reluctantly heads for the front door. He opens and walks outside --

INT./EXT. MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Gold looks into the distance and notices the strange COWBOY -- black cowboy hat and face mask -- on a DIRT BIKE, sitting at the edge of the motel parking lot. He is revving his engine and staring back at Mr. Gold.

Mr. Gold simply stands in shock, unsure of his next move. He only returns the man's stare. He is helpless.

Mrs. Gold runs to the doorway and notices something taped on the door itself. It is a polaroid of Darcy, streaked in blood. Her throat has apparently been slit. Her lifeless eyes staring back at us. Mrs. Gold instantly turning away from the photo, covering her mouth. She vomits slightly, in between her fingers, stumbling to the floor in shock.

The cowboy speeds off, down the dark highway, kicking up a mound of dirt and dust into the air.

Mrs. Gold SCREAMS out in horror. Mr. Gold runs back into the room, noticing the picture. He also SCREAMS out in agony at this gruesome sight. He grabs his wife and holds her tight as they grieve for their daughter together. Then, the PHONE RINGS again. Mr. Gold rushes over to answer.

MR. GOLD  
Hello?

THE COWBOY (V.O.)  
This must be daddy.

MR. GOLD  
Yes. This is Henry Gold.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

THE COWBOY (V.O.)

Good. Pay close attention, Henry. Now you know I'm watching you. That means I see things. When you take your next piss, before you fuck one more inch of that wife of yours, I'll know about it. Tell me you understand.

MR. GOLD

Yeah. I get it.

Mrs. Gold hovers over the toilet, dry heaving. She is in complete shock, sick beyond description.

Mr. Gold rushes over to her, getting her attention. She stares up at him.

MRS. GOLD

Oh my God, Henry!

Mr. Gold shuts his eyes, unable to bear the scene before him. He quickly turns away from his wife, trying to focus.

THE COWBOY (V.O.)

Now understand this, Henry. If you involve one more cop or step one foot outside this city without my permission...I let the whore die. Now's the part where you ask me what I want.

MR. GOLD

What do you want?

THE COWBOY (V.O.)

Good boy. I want five hundred thousand cash, not a penny less.

MR. GOLD

I...I don't know. I don't have that kind of money. Be reasonable. I can get you some money, but...

THE COWBOY (V.O.)

(interrupting)

Now, come on, Henry. Your daughter's worth it. I know who she is. There's a lot of people who wanna see her live. You're in charge of seeing she does.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THE COWBOY (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 When you get the cash, you can contact Darcy's cell and I'll get you the time and place. You have forty eight hours. Well...you're wasting time, Henry. I need a yes or no.

MR. GOLD  
 Yes, of course. I can get it.

THE COWBOY (V.O.)  
 Good. I like your attitude. You're one step closer to getting your daughter back. Sleep well, Henry.

The cowboy hangs up.

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

DeSantis, The Golds, Casey and Leanne gather around the table as Sheriff Patterson stands at the helm.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
 This was only a warning of what he'll do to her if we don't meet his demands. He's asking for half a million cash.  
 (to The Golds)  
 I assume you and your wife don't have that kind of money laying around?

MR. GOLD  
 No. We've got about \$100,000 in savings, a few bonds. Nothing close.

MRS. GOLD  
 Maybe if we made a good faith payment it could buy us some more time...

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
 It won't work. It's got to be \$500,000. Not a dime less or he kills Darcy. Now it's obvious this man knows who she is and what kind of cash she's capable of raising. He's not looking to settle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. GOLD

But Darcy's just getting started.  
She doesn't have that kind of  
money.

DESANTIS

But she knows people who do.  
People who would want to help her.  
Our guy knows that.

MR. GOLD

What're you saying?

DESANTIS

The only option we have is going to  
KBS. I think our guy's counting on  
that.

LEANNE

The network?

DESANTIS

If this goes public and the press  
finds out they refused to put up  
Darcy's ransom, they'll have a  
field day with it. After just  
letting Darcy out of her contract  
I'm sure they won't want any more  
bad publicity.

MRS. GOLD

I don't understand. Darcy's  
missing, possibly dead and you're  
talking about publicity.

DESANTIS

As twisted as it may sound, putting  
up Darcy's ransom is a ratings  
booster. Once we get her back, a  
lot of people are gonna want to  
hear her story. If they're smart,  
the execs at KBS will want her back  
alive as soon as possible.

Casey looks to be in deep thought -- contemplating something.  
She finally breaks her silence --

CASEY

What if we can't get the money in  
time? You can't be sure KBS will  
just hand over this kind of cash  
with no questions asked.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SHERIFF PATTERSON

I'm gonna have to agree with DeSantis on this one. If they know they're Darcy's only hope, they'll cooperate. They have a lot more to gain by getting her back.

CASEY

It just seems like too big a risk.

MRS. GOLD

No. This won't work. There's got to be an easier way of getting this money. Maybe from the police or the FBI. Don't they prepare for situations like this?

SHERIFF PATTERSON

He said if we involve the police or FBI, he's gone and Darcy's as good as dead.

MRS. GOLD

You don't know that.

DESANTIS

You already know he's been watching our every move. I guarantee you he'll be watching this one.

MR. GOLD

Time's already running out. How do you know for certain that these people at the network will cooperate?

DESANTIS

May I make a suggestion?

EXT. KBS STUDIOS - HOLLYWOOD, CA - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE:

KBS STUDIOS  
HOLLYWOOD, CA

Cars are entering and exiting the front yellow gates of this busy television studio.

INT. BEVERLY MANOR PRODUCTION OFFICE

DeSantis follows a busy Ms. Newman through the office. She is carrying a lot of paperwork and seems disinterested in DeSantis's story.

MS. NEWMAN

Put yourself in my position, Detective. What would you do if you were me? Just days after you let Darcy out of her contract, her ex fiance shows up asking for \$500,000 in ransom money. You wouldn't think that the least suspicious?

DESANTIS

I don't know. I guess it would depend on my personal relationship with Darcy. Look, I know this is a lot to take in, Ms. Newman, but we don't have a lot of time here --

MS. NEWMAN

Right. I get it.

Ms. Newman enters her office as DeSantis follows behind, shutting the door.

EXT./INT. OFFICE OF ALICIA NEWMAN - CONTINUOUS

Ms. Newman walks around her desk and sorts some paperwork as she continues with DeSantis.

MS. NEWMAN

You have 48 hours to get the money or she's dead, right?

DESANTIS

Actually, it's 36.

MS. NEWMAN

Right. I saw that movie too. I think I produced it.

DESANTIS

It sounds suspicious, I know. But believe me, this couldn't be more --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MS. NEWMAN

Why haven't I heard anything about this until now? Why haven't you alerted the police or the FBI about Darcy's disappearance.

DESANTIS

If you'd just listen one second --

MS. NEWMAN

I wonder what your Captain would feel about all this. I'm sure you've alerted him of Darcy's abduction. Maybe I should give him a call and we can straighten this out right now.

Ms. Newman picks up her phone. DeSantis quickly grabs it and slams it down on the receiver.

MS. NEWMAN (CONT'D)

What the hell do you think you're doing?

DeSantis dials, puts the phone to his ear, listens.

DESANTIS

Hey. It's Charlie.  
(listens)  
She's right here in front of me,  
Mr. Gold.

Ms. Newman is taken back by this sudden change in events. She is stunned and visibly frightened.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

(into the phone)  
You wanna talk to her?

DeSantis hands the phone to a very reluctant Ms. Newman.

MS. NEWMAN

Hello?  
(listens)  
Yes, Mr. Gold. I've been made aware of the situation and I'm very sorry.  
(listens)  
Yes. I'm well aware of your time restraints. Detective DeSantis has been filling me in.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MS. NEWMAN (cont'd)

(listens)

No. Of course not.

(listens)

Yes, sir. I can guarantee you that  
KBS will be doing everything we can  
to ensure Darcy's safe return.

(listens)

Yes, of course I will.

(listens)

Yes. Thank you. And may God be  
with you and your family.

(listens)

Yes. Goodbye.

Ms. Newman hangs up the phone and stares back at DeSantis  
with a look of uncertainty in her eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIRT ROAD - BRYERSON, UTAH - NIGHT

A large U-HAUL VAN sits parked on the dirt path. The rear  
cab is open. Sitting a good thirty feet from the truck is a  
MAN on a DIRT BIKE -- THE COWBOY. He is wearing his  
trademark black cowboy hat and face mask.

He REVS THE MOTOR on his bike, giving it some juice. He then  
rides the bike up a long metal ramp, into the back of the  
van.

The cowboy parks the bike and jumps out, closing the metal  
ramp and sliding door behind him. He continues to the  
driver's side and gets in. The SOUND OF THE ENGINE STARTING.

FULL SHOT OF THE TRUCK

The large U-HAUL continues up the long, dark path. The  
echoing ROAR OF THE ENGINE fills the night sky -- the truck  
slowly disappearing into the darkness.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. STREETS OF DOWNTOWN BRYERSON - NIGHT

DARCY'S S.U.V. slowly cruises down the quiet street. It is  
the middle of the night. Not a soul in sight. The S.U.V.  
approaches an alley and stops.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Parked halfway down the alley is the cowboy's grey dodge pick-up. The motor bike that was once strapped into the truck is now gone.

INT. S.U.V.

Henry Gold sits behind the wheel with a cell phone to his ear.

MR. GOLD

Okay. I'm here.

THE COWBOY (O.S.)

I see you.

INT. SHERIFF PATTERSON'S CAR

Deputy Bracken drives through the dark avenues of this quiet downtown with Sheriff Patterson at his side -- using an earpiece to listen in on Mr. Gold and the kidnapper's conversation.

THE COWBOY (O.S.)

Now, real slow-like, you're gonna back down the alley in reverse.

EXT. ALLEY #2

DeSantis also cruises down a dark alley with his head lights off. He slowly comes to a halt.

INT. DESANTIS CAR

DeSantis also has a plug in his ear -- listening to the kidnapper's demands.

THE COWBOY (O.S.)

You're gonna keep going until you reach the fire escape. Then you stop.

INT. SHERIFF PATTERSON'S CAR

Deputy Bracken continues down the dark street with Sheriff Patterson at his side.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
Stop the car.

EXT. SHERIFF PATTERSON'S CAR

They come to a halt. Out steps The Sheriff.

EXT./INT. SHERIFF PATTERSON'S CAR

Sheriff Patterson pops his head inside the window.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
When I give the word, you move it  
in. But not one second before.  
You got it?

DEPUTY BRACKEN  
Got it.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
Okay. See you there.

Sheriff Patterson continues down the street on foot as his  
Deputy pulls away. He puts a two way walkie to his mouth.

SHERIFF PATTERSON (CONT'D)  
DeSantis? Are you in position?

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. DESANTIS CAR

DeSantis responds with his two way walkie.

DESANTIS  
Copy that.

EXT. STREET

Sheriff Patterson pulls his gun from a holster as he  
continues down the street on foot.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
(into the walkie)  
All right. Just stay put and be  
ready to block that exit.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. DESANTIS CAR

DESANTIS  
Roger that.

INT. ALLEY

The S.U.V. pulls ahead of the alley a few feet, then begins down the alley in reverse. It slowly approaches the grey dodge pick-up and stops about twenty or thirty feet from the bumper.

INT. S.U.V.

Mr. Gold puts the cell to his ear.

MR. GOLD  
I'm here.

THE COWBOY (O.S.)  
Now you're gonna take the money out. Then open up those back doors. Let me take a real good look. If I even think I see a shadow of something or someone...I'll slit her throat. Tell me if you understand.

MR. GOLD  
I understand.

THE COWBOY (O.S.)  
Great. Now get out.

Mr. Gold opens his door and steps out with the BLACK MONEY BAG in hand. It is filled with \$500,000 cash.

INT./EXT. S.U.V.

Mr. Gold walks to the rear -- about to open the back door --

THE COWBOY (O.S.)  
Wait.

Mr. Gold stops in his tracks.

THE COWBOY (O.S.)  
Open your coat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mr. Gold pulls open his coat, letting the cowboy take a peek.

THE COWBOY (O.S.)  
Take it off.

Mr. Gold removes his coat and drops it to the ground.

THE COWBOY (O.S.)  
Put your hands up and turn around.

Mr. Gold places his hands in the air and slowly turns, facing the back of the S.U.V.

THE COWBOY (O.S.)  
Now open up the doors.

Mr. Gold opens the rear doors of the S.U.V. There is no one inside.

INT. DESANTIS CAR

DeSantis listens carefully.

THE COWBOY (O.S.)  
Real good, pops. We're halfway there.

EXT. STREET

Sheriff Patterson continues jogging down the street with his gun drawn and in the other hand holding in his ear piece, still listening to every word. He slowly approaches the entrance to an alley.

He peeks his head around the corner and notices the grey dodge pick-up sitting in an adjacent alley. He also notices the shadowy figure of a MAN hiding behind a trash dumpster.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
I see him. I see the son of a bitch. He's hiding behind the trash.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. DESANTIS CAR

DeSantis responds.

DESANTIS  
Is Darcy with him?

SHERIFF PATTERSON (O.S.)  
I can't tell.

DESANTIS  
Don't move in. Not yet.

SHERIFF PATTERSON (O.S.)  
He'll kill him.

DESANTIS  
He'll kill her if he sees you.

INT. ALLEY

Mr. Gold approaches the driver's window of the grey pick-up with the bag of money, then suddenly -- THE COWBOY comes careening around the left-hand corner on a motor bike, wearing his trademark hat and mask, armed with a large MAG-LIGHT FLASHLIGHT. He shines the LIGHT into Mr. Gold's face, blinding him, knocking him over the head with the flashlight.

EXT. STREET

Sheriff Patterson chases after the suspect.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
Move it in! He's on the move!

INT. ALLEY

Mr. Gold lay unconscious on the ground. The Cowboy grabs the money bag, begins down the opposite end on his bike.

Sheriff Patterson spots the motor bike speeding down the second alley, raises his weapon to fire. Before he can get a clear shot, the motor bike disappears behind a wall.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
DeSantis, he's headed your way!

EXT. ALLEY

DeSantis comes to a screeching halt in front of the alley's exit, blocking the Cowboy in.

The Cowboy also spots DeSantis and slams on his brakes. He pulls a very large .50 CALIBER REVOLVER with LASER SIGHTING from his side.

DeSantis steps out of his car and runs into the alley with his gun drawn. He stops and points his weapon at the suspect.

DESANTIS  
DROP IT!!!

Sheriff Patterson comes careening around the corner and stops. He notices the stand-off between the two men.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
Shoot him! What're you waiting  
for?!

EXT. STREET

Deputy Bracken cuts a hard right into the second alley, quickly making his way up the alley, toward The Sheriff.

INT. ALLEY

The Cowboy points his red laser light at DeSantis' chest, ready to pull the trigger. He has the detective's life in his hands.

Sheriff Patterson points his pistol at The Cowboy, ready to shoot the masked killer. He spots DeSantis in his line of fire and cannot take the shot.

The Cowboy begins after DeSantis at full speed.

DESANTIS  
FREEZE!!!

The Cowboy moves closer and closer to DeSantis -- who stands frozen and cannot take the shot.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
SHOOT HIM!!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Cowboy drops his weapon and strikes DeSantis over the head with the large flashlight, knocking him to the ground.

The Cowboy passes DeSantis' car and back onto the main street.

EXT. STREET

The dirt bike is out of sight almost immediately.

INT. ALLEY

DeSantis lays on the ground, grabbing his throbbing head in pain. Sheriff Patterson runs down the alley toward him.

EXT. STREET

The cowboy is nowhere in sight. He has gotten away.

EXT. SHERIFF PATTERSON'S OFFICE

DeSantis peers through the glass at Sheriff Patterson pacing back and forth on the phone. He is arguing with someone.

Abruptly, The Sheriff slams the phone down on the receiver. Enter DeSantis.

EXT./INT. SHERIFF PATTERSON'S OFFICE

Sheriff Patterson gives DeSantis a look of complete contempt.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

I thought I told you to wait at the motel. If The Golds see you here, they'll take your head off. If I don't do it first.

DESANTIS

You hear anything?

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Oh, we're just getting flooded with phone calls here, DeSantis! If you bothered putting a hole in that cowboy I guess we could be checking the local hospitals for gunshot wounds!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DeSantis hangs his head low -- in shame. Yet, he remains focused and continues droning on about the case.

DESANTIS

I'm guessing he ditched the bike and had a back up car waiting somewhere close by.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Is that right? You know, you're always one step ahead of us good ole' boys, aren't you? Or maybe you're just covering for the fact that you just plain fucked up out there.

DESANTIS

I couldn't get a clear shot.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Bullshit! Hell, L.A.P.D.! You spend four days a week at the pistol range, you can't shoot one lousy son of a bitch ten feet in front of you?!

Deputy Bracken enters -- interrupting the men.

DEPUTY BRACKEN

Excuse me.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Not now, Billy! Can't you see I'm busy in here!

DEPUTY BRACKEN

Sorry. The Golds wanna know what's happening?

SHERIFF PATTERSON

(to Bracken)

DeSantis here was about to tell us what in the hell happened out there.

(to DeSantis)

Well? We're waiting!

DESANTIS

I couldn't see well enough to get a clear shot. But he had me in his sights. All he had to do was pull the trigger and I was done.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DESANTIS (cont'd)

But he didn't. It took a lot of nerve for him to charge me the way he did. It's like he knew I wouldn't take the shot.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

That's real interesting, DeSantis. Why the hell would he think that?

DESANTIS

Because he knows I've figured out who he is.

Deputy Bracken lets out a slight smirk, shaking his head in contempt.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

You've figured it all out. Well tell me, DeSantis -- Who is he? If you don't mind letting the rest of us simple minds in on your little secret.

DESANTIS

Somebody close to Darcy. A friend. A boyfriend, maybe.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Darcy's boyfriend? They're all in cahoots together now? Is that it?

DESANTIS

It's the only explanation I can come up with.

Sheriff Patterson lowers his head and shakes it in frustration. He picks up a PHOTOGRAPH from his desk, hands it to DeSantis -- who inspects it.

INSERT - PHOTO OF JANET COONEY

Her dead body is bruised and badly beaten.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

That look familiar to you? Billy found that in the pick-up, under the driver's seat. Now unless Darcy's boyfriend drove into town to beat Cooney to death, I'd say this new little theory of yours is one big fuckin' steaming pile of horse shit.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

DeSantis shuts his eyes in embarrassment. He hands the photo to Deputy Bracken who is smiling from ear to ear.

SHERIFF PATTERSON (CONT'D)

(to Deputy Bracken)

Billy. I want you to escort the detective back to his motel. Let him pack his things. When he's done, make sure he's on the road and headed the right direction.

DEPUTY BRACKEN

Yes, sir, boss.

Sheriff Patterson excuses himself from the office, leaving DeSantis standing pitiful and shamed. He simply stares at the floor with nothing to say for himself. For the first time, he is completely speechless.

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - MAIN WAITING ROOM

The Golds, Casey and Leanne all listen as The Sheriff explains the latest news on Darcy's abductor.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

I've arranged to set up road blocks on both ends of the interstate, within a hundred mile radius of here. Along with my staff, we've got men in five different counties looking for Darcy. Checking every local motel, every back road, bus depot and train station from here to Salt Lake. I've also contacted the state police. They're putting an APB out on Darcy and our suspect. The FBI too. A field agent from the bureau will be here in the morning. I'll be officially turning over...

(catching himself)

Darcy's investigation...to them.

MR. GOLD

You assured us the safest thing for Darcy was to keep this quiet.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

I know. We did what was right and safe for Darcy at that time. But things are a bit different now.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERIFF PATTERSON (cont'd)

We made good with the ransom. This man's got the money and the means to disappear for good. He can only expect us to come at him with everything we got. And that's exactly what we're going to do.

MR. GOLD

It's a little late for heroics, Sheriff. Neither one of you could admit this was a situation you couldn't handle. None of you. You just wanted to keep things nice and quiet so you didn't put a scare in your precious little town. No! That would make too big of a mess!

Sheriff Patterson hangs his head low as Mr. Gold continues to let him have it.

MR. GOLD (CONT'D)

You wanna help us now, Sheriff? You tell the FBI everything. You tell them how you insisted on keeping them from my daughter's investigation to cover your ass. Then maybe you can tell them how you let a Los Angeles detective a hundred miles out of his jurisdiction let our daughter's kidnapper get away right under your nose. Why don't you put all that in your fucking report!

Casey looks away and to the front door where Deputy Bracken is escorting DeSantis out.

EXT. MOTEL

Casey pulls into the motel lot and parks in front of their room.

Deputy Bracken sits waiting in his squad car, taking notice of Casey. She ignores him and heads for the room.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

DeSantis finishes packing his stuff into a suitcase. Enter Casey, who quickly shuts the door behind her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CASEY

Why didn't you take that shot?

DESANTIS

It's the Feds case now.

CASEY

You think she's alive, don't you?

DESANTIS

She wasn't at the drop.

CASEY

That doesn't mean she's dead. Even if you thought she was dead, why didn't you take that shot? You had nothing to lose. He dropped his gun.

DeSantis wants to answer Casey. The words are there, but he just can't. He stares at her for what seems like an eternity. Then...suddenly...he breaks his silence.

DESANTIS

I can't help her anymore. I've put in my time. She's sick, Casey. Very sick and there's nothing more me or you can do about that.

Casey stands in shock by this statement. She wanted to hear this, but didn't expect to.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

But I think we've all known that for awhile now.

CASEY

Oh my God.

DESANTIS

She wanted a new life. You said so yourself. Now she has the chance. Away from everything and everybody.

Casey covers her mouth as if she's going to be sick. She turns away from him and stares out the window.

CASEY

What did this man talk her into? What the hell was she thinking? I don't understand! Any of this!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CASEY (cont'd)  
No, Charlie! Why would she do  
this?!

DESANTIS  
Maybe she feels like it's her only  
way out. I don't know. It's not  
your problem anymore.

CASEY  
You knew what she did here. You've  
known this whole time. That's why  
you kept it quiet.

DeSantis doesn't respond. He only smiles and changes the  
subject.

DESANTIS  
You know what I think, Casey?

CASEY  
No.

DESANTIS  
I think the best thing for all of  
us now is to walk away.

CASEY  
You didn't help her, Charlie. You  
only made things worse by not  
calling the police. You have to  
tell The Sheriff about this.

DESANTIS  
I tried that once. He's not  
listening.

CASEY  
She could hurt herself. If she's  
out there and sick and needs help,  
I wanna help her.

DESANTIS  
Good luck with that.

DeSantis passes Casey and exits the room, leaving Casey in  
complete shock.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - NIGHT

DeSantis heads down the dark country highway, headed for  
home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The camera TILTS DOWN as he reaches into the passenger seat and grabs a pack of smokes. Resting underneath the cigarettes is an orange and white envelope marked U-HAUL.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. DESANTIS HOME - NIGHT

DeSantis pulls into his driveway. He steps out and immediately walks to the trunk. He pops it open and there sits his suitcase, as well as a large SILVER BRIEFCASE.

He grabs the suitcase and pulls it out, sets it down on the pavement. He then pulls out the silver briefcase and uses his free hand to shut the trunk.

EXT./INT. DESANTIS HOME

DeSantis enters his dark home, shutting the door behind him. The house is fairly empty. The cluttered mess that was once there is now a memory. There are cardboard boxes everywhere filled with personal belongings. It appears he is moving out very soon. He drops his suitcase on the floor and continues into the kitchen with the SILVER BRIEFCASE.

KITCHEN

DeSantis hides the briefcase under the sink. He grabs a glass from a cabinet, sets it down. He reaches into the freezer and grabs a few ice cubes, tosses them into the glass. He grabs a bottle of whiskey, resting nearby on the counter and pours himself a good double shot. He takes a generous swig of the scotch.

He continues across the home and to the FRONT WINDOW. He stares aimlessly into the distance at nothing, gulping down the rest of his drink.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT - CRIME SCENE - DAY

We CLOSE ON the skeletal, decomposed remains of DARCY GOLD on the red desert sand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUPERIMPOSE:

BRYERSON, UTAH  
THREE WEEKS LATER

Standing hovered over the body is Sheriff Patterson and Deputy Bracken.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
Where was she buried?

DEPUTY BRACKEN  
We found a shallow hole and white shower curtain about a hundred yards from here. It was chewed up pretty good. Looks like the damn coyotes got to her.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
What about The Golds?

DEPUTY BRACKEN  
Haven't called them yet. I was waiting on you.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
Call the coroner. I wanna get her out of here before I start making the calls.

DEPUTY BRACKEN  
You got it.

Deputy Bracken begins off as Sheriff Patterson stares at the wretched, decomposed body with disgust.

We PULL AWAY and GO WIDER AND WIDER to reveal Sheriff Patterson standing a good hundred yards from a SHALLOW GRAVE.

As we stare into the grave, we notice a large AREA RUG inside. The remains of a WHITE SHOWER CURTAIN lay some ten to fifteen feet from the grave.

INT. CITY MORGUE - DAY

Sheriff Patterson stands hovered over Darcy's remains which lay on an examination table. Also standing over the body is a young FORENSIC EXAMINER who is discussing the condition of the body with The Sheriff.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FORENSIC EXAMINER

There is one visible entry wound on the victim's chest. It was caused by a small, thin blade, approximately 3 inches in length and 1 inch in diameter. Probably a pocket knife of some sort.

DeSantis enters the room -- grabbing the attention of a not so thrilled Sheriff Patterson.

He tosses DeSantis a dirty stare as the young detective approaches the examination table.

FORENSIC EXAMINER (CONT'D)

The victim also suffered a fractured skull and jaw. Although she was stabbed, she died of extreme hemorrhaging in the brain as a result of trauma to the head.

DeSantis focuses on the body closely.

FORENSIC EXAMINER (CONT'D)

Upon first examination, we find maggot mass aggregation in the pelvic and genital regions of the body and also in the skull and nasal cavities. It was the particularly small size of the larvae that I found interesting. The fact that these maggots remained stabilized and didn't continue their growth cycle suggests the body remained in a cooler climate. I also found empty puparium on the underside of the body and on the remains of the shower curtain.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

What does that mean?

FORENSIC EXAMINER

It means that the victim had remained under ground for a duration of no less than twenty days. Which places time of death, at the latest, one to two days, maybe even hours after her abduction.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Is there anything else about the body we should know about?

FORENSIC EXAMINER

There's no signs of sexual assault.

DeSantis shuts his eyes -- sighing in relief.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Anything else?

FORENSIC EXAMINER

There is one thing.

DeSantis quickly opens his eyes and turns his attention back to the examiner.

FORENSIC EXAMINER (CONT'D)

The size of the maggots in the victim's nasal cavity is of a particularly large size. Almost three times the normal size, to be precise. This strongly suggests years of repeated cocaine abuse.

SHERIFF PATTERSON

She was a coke addict?

DESANTIS

I don't see the importance of that now.

FORENSIC EXAMINER

As you know, Detective, I'm legally obligated to record any forms of substance abuse in my report. It's for identification purposes.

DESANTIS

I can appreciate that. But as far as this girl's parents are concerned, she never had a coke problem and has been drug free and sober for eight months. When the press gets a hold of this, she'll be all over the front page.

FORENSIC EXAMINER

What is it exactly you're asking me to do, detective?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

FORENSIC EXAMINER (cont'd)  
To falsify my findings in order to  
ease the grieving process of this  
girl's parents.

DESANTIS  
Sheriff? Would you excuse us a  
moment.

Sheriff Patterson reluctantly steps out of the office.  
DeSantis gives the examiner the evil eye. The examiner  
simply returns his stare. The two men stand silent, staring  
each other down. We then very slowly...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. HALLWAY - CITY MORGUE

The Golds, Casey and Leanne await in a hallway outside the  
examination room. The Golds sit on a bench, grasping each  
others hands tight as Casey and Leanne pace back and forth on  
the cold hard floor.

Sheriff Patterson and DeSantis exit the exam room, catching  
everyone's attention.

Mr. Gold quickly stands and approaches The Sheriff.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
I'm very sorry.

Mr. Gold loses control -- SCREAMING out in despair and  
crumbling to his knees. Sheriff Patterson grabs him, but is  
pulled down by his weight. The two men both fall to their  
knees. He slowly puts his arms around Mr. Gold, comforting  
him.

Mrs. Gold pulls her husband away from The Sheriff and holds  
him tight.

Casey and Leanne also weep for their friend. They walk over  
to The Golds and place their arms around them. They all hug  
and mourn together.

Sheriff Patterson shuts his eyes, unable to witness the  
unbearable scene before him.

DeSantis is taken over by guilt. He turns and walks off.

Sheriff Patterson turns and notices that DeSantis has  
suspiciously left.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

VERY WIDE SHOT of the worn, old station. From a distance, we see DeSantis' car pull into the station and park in front of a pay phone booth. Out steps DeSantis who walks into the booth and picks up the phone.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. POLICE STATION - L.A.P.D. - INTERNAL AFFAIRS - DAY

TWO MEN enter the division of Internal Affairs. The first man through the door is LT. WOLF (40s). Following behind is DETECTIVE AARONSON (30s) a very youthful appearance. Sitting at his desk, behind a computer is DETECTIVE HARRIS (40s).

LT. WOLF  
Harris? Wake up.

Det. Harris spins around in his chair, facing Lt. Wolf.

DET. HARRIS  
Yeah?

LT. WOLF  
I want you to meet Detective Kyle Aaronson.

The two men shake.

DET. AARONSON  
Hey there.

LT. WOLF  
It's his first official day with I.A.D. I'm putting him with you on the DeSantis case.

DET. HARRIS  
Have you already been briefed?

DET. AARONSON  
No, not yet.

DET. HARRIS  
Take a seat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Det. Aaronson has a seat across from Harris, while Lt. Wolf stands hovered over the men. Det. Harris hands Aaronson a stack of thick files on DeSantis.

DET. HARRIS (CONT'D)

Detective Charlie DeSantis, narcotics division. A degenerate gambler, wife beater and all around bad guy. We just got word from one of our C.I.'s that he's into Artie Vittero for \$75 grand. Coming out of vice, I'm sure you're aware of Mr. Vittero's activities.

DET. AARONSON

(nodding in agreement)

Oh, yes.

DET. HARRIS

This C.I. says that DeSantis has less than three weeks to square his debt or he's a dead man. Now it just so happens that DeSantis requests a stress leave and mysteriously leaves Los Angeles.

DET. AARONSON

He's on the run?

LT. WOLF

Exactly. The word from his Captain is DeSantis needed some personal time to deal with his partner's recent death. He's been cracking up ever since he saw him killed.

DET. HARRIS

According to this C.I., DeSantis has been bringing a lot of heat down on himself by putting thousands of dollars in counterfeit cash onto the streets.

LT. WOLF

Supposedly, there may even be a price on his head. He said the word is, he's been making a lot of drug buys. Generating some names.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DET. HARRIS

We think he's been trying to get closer to a Ramon Vasquez, an east side cholo, piece a shit who shot his partner six months ago.

DET. AARONSON

They never caught this guy?

LT. WOLF

By the time they found Vasquez, DeSantis had already beaten him within an inch of his life. Vasquez's lawyer saw to it that all charges against his client were dropped. Ever since, DeSantis has been trying to put him away. He's obsessed.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. DESANTIS HOME

DeSantis sits at the kitchen table with the SILVER BRIEFCASE opened. He stares into the case at the money.

DET. AARONSON (V.O.)

So where did all this money come from?

He grabs a hand full of the cash and stuffs it into a manila envelope.

DET. HARRIS (V.O.)

We have reason to believe DeSantis stole over 2 million in counterfeit cash from a drug bust he says went sour.

He wraps a rubber band around the envelope.

LT. WOLF (V.O.)

Narcotics sends him in with the funny money to make the deal. Fifty kis.

He walks to his bedroom, grabs a long coat from his closet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LT. WOLF (V.O.)

According to DeSantis, they put a gun to his head and made out with the coke and the cash.

DET. HARRIS (V.O.)

He says somebody on the inside blew his cover. Somebody told them he was a cop, all right. It was DeSantis.

DeSantis stuffs the envelope into his coat pocket.

DET. AARONSON (V.O.)

And he keeps the phoney cash handy to support his gambling habit.

DET. HARRIS (V.O.)

And pay off his debts.

DeSantis walks to the kitchen and shuts the SILVER BRIEFCASE full of cash.

LT. WOLF (V.O.)

I just got off the phone with Captain Gruber in narcotics. He says he just got a call from Bryerson, Utah, Sheriff's office. The Sheriff there says DeSantis has been there for weeks, investigating the kidnapping of an old girlfriend. Darcy Gold. He says he thought we should know.

DeSantis walks to the center of his living room and pulls open an ATTIC DOOR. He unfolds a small ladder from the attic and begins up the small steps.

DET. HARRIS (V.O.)

She's an actress here in LA. The word is DeSantis went to Darcy's producer at KBS, an Alicia Newman, and requested the \$500,000 in ransom money.

THE ATTIC

DeSantis places the silver briefcase in a dark corner, out of sight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DET. HARRIS (V.O.)

He told her whoever snatched Darcy contacted him and said if he didn't get the money within 48 hours, he'd kill her.

He begins back down the ladder and into the living room.

DET. AARONSON (V.O.)

And they actually gave him the money?

DeSantis folds up the ladder and shuts the attic door.

DET. AARONSON (V.O.)

So what happened?

EXT. DESANTIS HOME - DUSK

DeSantis exits his home -- walks to his car and gets in. He pulls out of the driveway as we watch him begin down the street.

LT. WOLF (V.O.)

A couple days ago, the Bryerson Sheriff's office found a body in the desert. The coroner officially identified the body as one Darcy Gold.

DET. HARRIS (V.O.)

Meanwhile, Darcy's killer has mysteriously disappeared into thin air and no one has the first clue who he is or where to find him.

EXT. HOME OF HENRY AND SHARON GOLD - DUSK

Mr. Gold exits -- makes his way toward the mail box.

LT. WOLF (V.O.)

Bottom line, we think DeSantis is working with someone.

DET. AARONSON (V.O.)

Who?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LT. WOLF (CONT'D) (V.O.)  
The same person who kidnapped and  
murdered Darcy Gold. Who that is,  
we don't know yet.

DET. AARONSON (V.O.)  
What does this Utah Sheriff have to  
say about it?

LT. WOLF (V.O.)  
He's obviously suspicious of  
DeSantis. But he doesn't have all  
the facts. And that's how we're  
gonna keep it. DeSantis is a smart  
cop.

Mr. Gold approaches the mail box and opens it -- pulling out  
the day's mail.

LT. WOLF (V.O.)  
He'll smell trouble a mile away.  
The smartest thing we can do now is  
wait.

DET. AARONSON (V.O.)  
Wait for what?

Mr. Gold sifts through the mail and notices an envelope with  
the logo WESTLAKE INSURANCE at the top left corner.

DET. HARRIS (V.O.)  
Wait for him to relax and think he  
got away with it.

Mr. Gold opens the envelope and pulls out a check in the  
amount of 1.5 MILLION DOLLARS.

DET. HARRIS (V.O.)  
Hopefully, he'll slip up and get  
careless. And that's when we'll  
nail him.

A look of pure shock consumes Mr. Gold's face.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. HOME OF HENRY AND SHARON GOLD - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mrs. Gold is busy putting away leftover fried chicken and mashed potatoes into tupperware containers. She is cleaning up the kitchen after a large family supper. She peaks through the kitchen window and spots her husband and Darcy on a porch swing outside.

Darcy's head is rested in her father's lap as she finishes a bowl of ice cream. He lovingly strokes her hair back as they continue to swing back and forth.

Mrs. Gold smiles at the loving scene. Darcy's like a kid again.

FRONT PORCH

Mr. Gold and Darcy continue to swing back and forth as Darcy dishes out her problems to her father.

DARCY

When am I ever gonna catch a break, daddy? I'm on the show one stinkin' season and they're already plotting to get rid of me.

MR. GOLD

Oh, come on now. They just got caught with their pants down. It's got nothing to do with whether people like you or not. Look at you. You're young, beautiful, smart, and you got me for a father. What more could a girl want?

Darcy smiles.

DARCY

I'm sorry I lied to you and Mom before. I didn't know how you guys would take the news.

MR. GOLD

Just remember. You're better off than Jennifer Conway. She couldn't cut it on her own show so she had to come crawling back. But not you. You're going all the way. Just watch. Movies, the Oscars, the whole bit.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

DARCY  
Thanks, dad.

Darcy smiles at her father. She notices that his nose is bleeding.

DARCY (CONT'D)  
Dad? Your nose is bleeding.

Darcy quickly sits up. Henry uses his finger to wipe the blood from his nose.

MR. GOLD  
Damn it.

Darcy pulls a tissue from her pocket.

DARCY  
Here.

She begins wiping her father's nose. He snatches the tissue from her hand as he begins coughing like crazy.

DARCY (CONT'D)  
Are you okay?

MR. GOLD  
I'm fine.

He continues to cough.

DARCY  
I'll get you some water.

Darcy jumps from the swing and continues into

THE KITCHEN

where Mrs. Gold is scrubbing out some pots in the sink. Darcy pulls a drinking glass from a nearby cabinet.

MRS. GOLD  
You look so cute out there with your father. It's just like when you were a kid.

DARCY  
Yeah. The simple days. I wouldn't mind having those back.

MRS. GOLD  
Yeah. Me too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Mrs. Gold stares at her husband through the kitchen window with a look of concern on her face.

MRS. GOLD (CONT'D)

Oh well. We can't turn back time,  
now can we?

Darcy notices her mother's obvious gloom.

DARCY

Mom? Has Daddy been doing okay?  
He doesn't look so hot.

MRS. GOLD

He's been sick on and off for a few  
weeks now.

DARCY

Has he been to a doctor?

MRS. GOLD

You know your father. He'd be  
bleeding from the eyes before he  
stepped into a hospital.

Darcy stares at her mother with suspicion. She continues out of the kitchen. Mrs. Gold turns and notices that Darcy has left the room. She sighs in relief.

INT. BATHROOM

Darcy walks in and over to the sink -- begins filling the drinking glass with the cold water.

She can't help but notice a stack of magazines sitting to the left of the faucet. On top sits a special medical magazine entitled WHAT EVERY PATIENT NEEDS TO KNOW.

She picks up the magazine and begins flipping through it. She spots a page marked SECTION 1: PREPARING FOR YOUR TRANSPLANT. She flips through a few more pages and spots a page marked SECTION 2: THE TRANSPLANT PROCESS.

Darcy sets the magazine back where she found it. She looks up and stares at herself in a side mirror. She opens the side cabinet and spots A PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE. She pulls the bottle from the cabinet and reads the label. It is marked PROPRANOLOL. She also notices a large liquid glass container. A medical label reads LACTULOSE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She puts the medication back in the cabinet as a look of pure fear covers her face.

INT. DARCY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Darcy sits at home at her computer, doing research. She is on the website DOGPFILE.COM. She types in the words PROPRANOLOL and LACTULOSE into the search box and hits fetch.

HER P.O.V.

A medical webpage pops up.

INSERT - PARAGRAPH

"Some patients who have had bleeding from ruptured varicose veins in the lower oesophagus may be put onto a drug called Propranolol which reduces the pressure in those veins and lowers the chances of them bleeding again. Finally, liver transplantation may be considered in patients with end-stage cirrhosis."

BACK TO SCENE

Darcy reads the shocking information concerning her father's medication.

INSERT - PARAGRAPH

"Lactulose is used in higher doses to help reduce a complication associated with liver disease called hepatic encephalopathy."

BACK TO SCENE

Darcy shuts her eyes and rests her hands on her weary face. She goes to the FILE MENU on her computer and selects the PRINT OPTION. A copy of the webpage begins to print.

EXT. HOME OF HENRY AND SHARON GOLD - DAY

A FULL SHOT of the home. From a distance, we see Darcy's S.U.V approaching the home and pulling into the long driveway. Out steps Darcy. She is carrying with her a manila folder filled with paperwork.

We watch Darcy from a distance as she approaches the front door and rings the doorbell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. GOLD answers. We see that the two exchange some words, but cannot hear what is going on. We are watching only as voyeurs. Darcy opens the manila folder, pulls out the paperwork and hands it to her father. A few seconds pass and Mr. Gold invites her inside.

We SLOWLY DISSOLVE into night time. Suddenly...

DARCY

Exits the front door in tears. She is crying heavily. She continues to her car and gets in.

INT. S.U.V.

Darcy continues to cry. She quickly begins out of the driveway.

EXT. STREET

The S.U.V. darts down the street at very high speed.

EXT. HOME OF HENRY AND SHARON GOLD

ANGLE ON the front window. We peek through the glass at The Golds -- both in tears as they watch Darcy storm down the street.

INT. DARCY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Darcy pulls her S.U.V. into an empty spot.

INT. S.U.V.

Darcy shuts off her engine, continues to cry heavily.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Michael is in bed, sleeping. He suddenly hears a KNOCKING at the door. He quickly crawls out of bed and puts on a bathrobe. He continues to the front door and answers. He is in shock to see DARCY standing before him.

MICHAEL

A little late for dinner, aren't you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Darcy stares up at Michael with a sad, desperate look in her eye.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Michael is still sleeping. He rolls over and attempts to cuddle with Darcy, but no one is there. She has left. He quickly opens his eyes and notices that Darcy is gone. He sits up in bed and turns his attention to the BATHROOM. Notices that the door is shut.

MICHAEL

Darcy?

There is no answer from the bathroom.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Hello?

Michael realizes she's gone. He grabs his portable phone from a night stand and dials. He rests the phone to his ear.

INT. DARCY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Darcy is dressed for her morning jog. Her look is somewhere between angry and regretful. Her phone begins RINGING -- stopping her on the way out the door.

She looks down at the phone, knowing it's Michael and pondering whether or not to answer. She decides against and continues out.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - MORNING

Darcy jogging down the sidewalk. Her regular morning routine. As she jogs, we see Darcy's thoughts unfold before our eyes.

MS. NEWMAN (V.O.)

It's a ratings war, Darcy. And we're losing. In the end, it all comes down to the numbers.

SERIES OF SHOTS

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ms. Newman breaking the bad news to Darcy.

MS. NEWMAN

I'm sorry, Darcy. You don't know how much it hurts me to do this.

Darcy having dinner with her parents.

MR. GOLD

You're a winner, Darcy. It's in your blood. Get used to it.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

Darcy jogging down the sidewalk, obviously affected by her thoughts.

MRS. GOLD (V.O.)

Honey? Is there something you're not telling us?

BACK TO MONTAGE

Mr. Gold's nose begins to bleed. Darcy takes notice.

DARCY

Your nose is bleeding.

Darcy and Mrs. Gold in the kitchen.

DARCY

Has he been to a doctor?

MRS. GOLD

You know your father. He'd be bleeding from the eyes before he stepped into a hospital.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

Darcy jogging even faster.

BACK TO MONTAGE

Darcy confronts her father at the front door.

DARCY

I know you're sick. I know what medications you're taking and I know you're looking into a transplant.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DARCY (cont'd)

I need you and Mom to quit lying to me and tell me what the hell's going on.

Mr. Gold is overcome with grief.

END MONTAGE

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

Darcy jogs faster and faster.

MR. GOLD (V.O.)

Why don't you come inside. We can talk about it.

Darcy's jogging begins to slow as she starts crying. She eventually stops altogether -- burying her face in her hands. She is completely overcome with grief.

EXT. HOME OF HENRY AND SHARON GOLD - BACKYARD - DAY

Mr. Gold is busy throwing a tennis ball back and forth with his golden retriever.

DARCY steps off the back porch, toward her father. She looks tired and miserable. The sound of the back door shutting catches Mr. Gold's attention.

MR. GOLD

Hi, baby. I didn't know you were here.

DARCY

Just got here.

MR. GOLD

How'd things go with Ms. Newman?

Darcy looks down and nervously begins playing with her fingernails.

DARCY

Not so good.

MR. GOLD

Oh? You couldn't get them to change their mind?

Darcy shakes her head -- too upset to say the words.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARCY

It's over.

MR. GOLD

I'm so sorry, Darcy.

DARCY

Don't be. The last thing you should be worrying about now is me. I've been enough trouble for you and Mom already.

Mr. Gold retrieves the tennis ball from his dog and stares at Darcy with concern.

DARCY (CONT'D)

The truth is if it weren't for you, I probably wouldn't be alive right now. I know I wouldn't. I know sometimes it seems like I don't appreciate you guys. But I do. I really do.

Mr. Gold is seemingly touched by his daughter's sincerity.

DARCY (CONT'D)

Sometimes I get real angry because...it seems like you won't let me grow up. But I'm really just angry at myself because I know deep down I could never make it without you.

Darcy can no longer hold back the tears. She loses it.

DARCY (CONT'D)

And I'm angry because I never said thank you. Thank you for being there and for being my daddy. It hurts so bad because I wanna help you like you helped me, but I can't.

Mr. Gold hurries over to his daughter and gives her a giant hug.

MR. GOLD

Just you being here right now is enough.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

DARCY  
(crying)  
Why didn't you tell me?

MR. GOLD  
I guess I was afraid. Your mother  
and I thought you needed some time  
to get back on your feet. We just  
wanted to wait and see what our  
options were before we said  
anything.

DARCY  
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, dad.

MR. GOLD  
It's okay. You're here now.

From a distance, we watch as the two continue to embrace.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. FORENSIC EXAMINATION ROOM - CITY MORGUE - DAY

Sheriff Patterson, DeSantis and the forensic examiner hover  
over the supposed remains of Darcy Gold.

DESANTIS  
Sheriff? Would you excuse us a  
moment?

Sheriff Patterson reluctantly steps out -- leaving the  
detective and the coroner to each other.

FORENSIC EXAMINER  
Sorry, DeSantis. But my price just  
went up.

DESANTIS  
Darcy never used coke.

FORENSIC EXAMINER  
I know. It's called a bargaining  
chip. I get what I want and I  
won't send this report to Darcy's  
physicians in Los Angeles. I'm  
sure they'll find my report very  
fascinating.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FORENSIC EXAMINER (cont'd)  
After going through that rehab clinic, I'm sure they know Darcy's drug history real good. It's only a matter of time before they figure out the truth.

DESANTIS  
You stupid son of a bitch. Do you even know what you're doing?

FORENSIC EXAMINER  
Now come on, Detective. What did you expect? She was a hooker. They're not exactly Snow White.

DESANTIS  
You knew Cooney was a user this whole time.

FORENSIC EXAMINER  
Of course. Everyone did. But it was your idea to use her body. Not mine. You put me in a hell of a spot, Charlie. I'm just trying to protect my best interests.

DESANTIS  
You bastard.

FORENSIC EXAMINER  
I got news for you. This is my show now. Unless you want Sheriff dipshit in on our little secret, you better do exactly as I tell you.

DESANTIS  
What do you want?

FORENSIC EXAMINER  
I want another fifty grand. And I want it tonight.

(...)

DESANTIS  
Go to hell.

FORENSIC EXAMINER  
No. Roger's Park. Midnight. If you're one second late, I'm faxing this report to LA. What's it gonna be?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DeSantis grabs the examiner and shoves him backward.

FORENSIC EXAMINER (CONT'D)  
 Don't be so angry, cop. You're  
 acting like I've never done this  
 before.

DeSantis grabs him by the shirt and pushes him against a wall.

FORENSIC EXAMINER (CONT'D)  
 Careful. Your boyfriend's outside.  
 You should've known better. Did  
 you really think I was gonna let  
 you screw me again? I got all  
 those bodies for you and your mob  
 friends and what do you do? You  
 try to fuck me out of my money.  
 Now I'm on the run from that  
 greaseball for the rest of my life.

DESANTIS  
 Nobody told you to testify, you  
 dumb shit.

FORENSIC EXAMINER  
 Strike two, DeSantis. Now I want a  
 hundred.

DeSantis tries like hell to restrain himself.

FORENSIC EXAMINER (CONT'D)  
 You wanna make it two hundred?

DeSantis begins to calm himself.

FORENSIC EXAMINER (CONT'D)  
 Take your hands off me.

DeSantis slowly lets go of the man and backs away.

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE - CITY MORGUE

The forensic examiner opens a file drawer. He flips through the files until he reaches one labeled COONEY, JANET. He pulls the file from the drawer and lays it on a table.

TABLE

Next to the file is another manila envelope marked GOLD, DARCY. Also laying on the table is a piece of paperwork.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We see various shots of words like "Gold, Darcy" and "post-mortem"

He pulls the dental charts and paper work from the Cooney folder, which are carefully separated by PRE-MORTEM and POST-MORTEM records. He removes the X-rays from both sets of paperwork and places them on the table. He begins filling out the necessary paper work for Darcy Gold's post-mortem dental records.

INT. HALLWAY - CITY MORGUE

The Golds, Casey and Leanne await patiently in a waiting room for Sheriff Patterson and DeSantis. The same as before: Casey and Leanne pacing on the floor, The Golds awaiting on a bench.

Sheriff Patterson and DeSantis exit the coroner's office.

Mr. Gold stands and approaches Sheriff Patterson.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
I'm very sorry.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

DeSantis' car pulls up next to another CAR in the middle of nowhere. He steps out and approaches the other car. The driver's side door opens and out steps MICHAEL (Darcy's neighbor). He is carrying the BLACK MONEY BAG. He turns the bag upside down and dumps several heavy books onto the ground.

MICHAEL  
That's real good thinking,  
detective. Something tells me you  
don't exactly trust me.

DESANTIS  
Stop where I can see you.

DeSantis pulls his gun out and points it at Michael -- who quickly drops the black bag and places his hands in the air.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHAEL

Take it easy. If I wanted to kill you, I would've done it back in that alley.

DESANTIS

Turn and face the car and put your hands on the hood.

Michael laughs -- shakes his head in disgust.

MICHAEL

I don't believe this.

Michael reluctantly turns and places his palms on the hood of the car. DeSantis quickly pats him down for weapons.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I don't have a gun anymore, remember?

DESANTIS

Shut up.

DeSantis walks to the trunk of his car and opens it. He pulls out another large BLACK BAG and begins back to Michael. He places the bag on the roof of Michael's car and unzips it. He pulls out his share of the money and tosses it in front of Michael -- who is still palms down on the hood.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

It's all there.

Michael reaches down and grabs a hand full of the cash.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

You know what you have to do to get the rest.

Michael backs away from the hood with the money in hand.

MICHAEL

I've been doing some thinking about that.

DESANTIS

Oh yeah? What've you been thinking about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MICHAEL

I was thinking, if and when I were to do this, how do I know you'll keep your word and pay me my money?

DESANTIS

You don't.

MICHAEL

Then what if I were to tell you to go to hell?

DESANTIS

Then I let Darcy look at that long rap sheet of yours. And when she finds out what a piece of shit, drug dealing pervert you really are, she won't want anything more to do with you.

Michael's demeanor suddenly changes, knowing that DeSantis has his number.

DESANTIS

Don't think for one second you're smarter than me.

Michael laughs and shakes his head in disbelief.

MICHAEL

Darcy told me to watch out for you. She said you were tricky. I guess this means we're partners again.

DeSantis slowly walks over to Michael. He gets in his face. Michael is seemingly intimidated by this.

DESANTIS

I want it done tonight. I don't care how you do it. But she doesn't leave this town alive.

MICHAEL

Whatever you say, detective.

DeSantis returns to his car and gets in. He drives off, kicking up the desert sand behind him.

Michael watches as DeSantis continues down the desert road. He stands watching -- as the car becomes invisible.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

He puts the money in his coat pocket and reluctantly begins into his car.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. ACTING STUDIO - WEST HOLLYWOOD - DAY

Michael exits an acting workshop after a long session. He continues down a sidewalk and approaches his car, parked against a curb. There is a message waiting under his windshield wiper. He picks it up, reads.

INSERT - LETTER

MICHAEL,  
MEET ME AT EL DORADO'S  
ON SAN VICENTE, 2 O'CLOCK,  
DARCY

BACK TO SCENE

Michael smiles, crumples up the message.

EXT. EL DORADO CLUB - DAY

Michael patiently awaits outside of the club at a small lunch table. He is sipping on a cool drink while he waits for Darcy. A hand touches his shoulder.

He turns and notices DESANTIS approaching him from behind. He has a seat across from him.

DESANTIS  
Surprise, Michael.

MICHAEL  
You?

DESANTIS  
Sorry about the note on your car.  
I figured it would get you here  
quicker. I was right. You're ten  
minutes early.

MICHAEL  
What do you want?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DESANTIS

I didn't hear from you yesterday.  
You're supposed to be giving me  
updates. That was the deal.

MICHAEL

I was busy.

DESANTIS

And what exactly were you busy  
doing, Michael?

Michael sits silent -- knowing where DeSantis is taking this.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

Don't act so surprised, Michael. I  
had your apartment bugged just like  
Darcy's. So you two are getting  
pretty close now.

MICHAEL

She came over. She was upset.

DESANTIS

I know. I heard. Sounded like  
things got pretty hot between you  
two. Sucks to be the shoulder to  
cry on, but someone's got to do it.

MICHAEL

Look, I told you everything you  
need to know. She hasn't talked to  
Internal Affairs and they aren't  
talking to her. Nothing's changed.  
I never lied to you.

DESANTIS

You sound suspiciously like someone  
who's trying to hide something,  
Michael.

DeSantis sits silent -- gazing intimidatingly back at  
Michael. After a full ten seconds of awkward silence --  
Michael finally breaks.

MICHAEL

Okay. She told me about some money  
she found at your place. It was  
right before she broke things off  
with you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Then she tells me about how you just show up at her place at odd hours, asking her questions about who she's been talking to. The only thing that's keeping her from going to the cops is the fact she's scared shitless of you.

DESANTIS

Okay, Michael. I want you to listen carefully. If I.A. shows up on my doorstep asking a bunch of questions about stolen money, I'm gonna assume either you or Darcy talked. I'm also gonna assume you lied to me. You know the rest.

DeSantis lays down a manila envelope on the table and stands to leave.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

There's another ten grand if you decide there's something else I should know about. I hope you do the right thing. A lot of innocent lives may depend on your decision. I'll see you around.

DeSantis walks off. Michael grabs the envelope and opens it. It is filled with loose bills, about \$10,000.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Michael enters -- carrying a large bag of groceries. He heads for the kitchen and lays the bag down on the counter top. The sound of DESANTIS in the b.g. startles him.

DESANTIS (O.S.)

You should get a better lock for that door.

Michael quickly turns around, pulling out a .9MM HANDGUN from his coat and points the weapon at a DARK FIGURE sitting in a corner chair.

DeSantis flicks on a nearby lamp, revealing himself to Michael.

DESANTIS

Don't shoot. I'm allergic.

Michael continues to point his weapon at DeSantis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHAEL

What the hell're you doing here?

DESANTIS

I came to talk to you about another job.

MICHAEL

I'm not interested in any more of your jobs, cop.

DESANTIS

(motioning to gun)

Do you mind?

MICHAEL

What do you want?

DESANTIS

Have you talked to Darcy lately?

MICHAEL

Haven't seen her, haven't talked to her. Now for the last time, what are you doing here?

DESANTIS

I figured out a way to help Darcy's old man. But I'm gonna need your help. Yours and Darcy's.

MICHAEL

Why the hell would I do that?

DESANTIS

Because you're in love with her. If there's anything I can do, Darcy. Isn't that what you told her right before she cried herself to sleep in your arms?

A sore subject for Michael. He puts the hammer back on his weapon and places it back in his coat. He continues into the kitchen and begins emptying his groceries.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

I know you wanna help her, Michael. Well I'm giving you the chance. Might be your only chance of getting her back. You can either take it or you can continue to be a miserable sack of shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Michael grabs a beer and continues back into the living room.

MICHAEL

Okay, cop. What's in it for you?

DESANTIS

If we do this right, we all come out on top. Not just Darcy and her father. I'm talking serious money with minimal risk. All I need to know is if you're in or out.

Michael stands silent -- gulping down his beer and gawking back at DeSantis -- who simply returns his stare, patiently awaiting an answer.

EXT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

DeSantis exits the building and continues down a sidewalk. Watching carefully from his apartment window is MICHAEL. He stares at the detective with extreme suspicion and apprehension.

DeSantis stops and stares back at Michael, smiles at him.

Michael notices and slowly backs away from the window.

DeSantis pulls a cigarette from his pack and sparks it up, still smiling in the direction of Michael's apartment window. He continues up the sidewalk.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. DESANTIS HOME - NIGHT

His car pulls into the driveway. Out steps DeSantis -- who walks to the rear of the car and opens his trunk. He reaches inside and pulls out the large BLACK MONEY BAG. He shuts the trunk and continues into his house.

INT. DESANTIS HOME - NIGHT

DeSantis enters. He walks further into the home with the money bag -- dropping it in the center of the room. He continues into the bathroom.

BATHROOM

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DeSantis runs a shower. Before he gets undressed, he walks back into the living room.

LIVING ROOM

He grabs the black money bag from the ground and continues into the kitchen. He places the bag on the kitchen table and unzips it. He then kicks his right leg up onto a chair, pulls his pant leg up and yanks out a small HANDGUN from an ankle holster. He places the weapon into the money bag and zips it back up.

INT. BATHROOM - SHOWER

A FEW MINUTES LATER

DeSantis is in the middle of a shower. He hears the faint sound of his CELL PHONE RINGING. He quickly turns off the water and grabs a towel from a nearby rack.

He steps out of the shower and grabs his cell phone from off the bathroom sink, answers.

DESANTIS  
Yeah? DeSantis?

No answer.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)  
Hello?

MICHAEL (O.S.)  
It's done.

(...)

DESANTIS  
Where are you?

MICHAEL  
Carl's grocery on highway 30.  
About fifteen miles east of Kanab.

DeSantis stands in shock. He cannot bring himself to ask the question.

DESANTIS  
Where is she?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHAEL (O.S.)

She's real close. I can show you  
if you'd like.

DESANTIS

Stay put. I'll be there in three  
hours.

Michael hangs up. DeSantis catches a glimpse of himself in the mirror, not liking what he sees. He turns away from the mirror and continues to dry off.

INT. BEDROOM

DeSantis finishes getting dressed. He grabs his gun and holster from a night stand, places them on his belt and continues into the

KITCHEN

where his black money bag sits rested on the dining table. He grabs the money bag and walks to the front door. Exits.

INT./EXT. DESANTIS HOME - NIGHT

DeSantis exits and continues to his car. He gets in and pulls out of his driveway in a hurry. Sitting in a parked car down the street and watching closely is MICHAEL.

He waits until the detective's car is invisible, then gets out. He struts across the street toward the home. As he approaches the front door, he pulls out a spare KEY that Darcy has given him. He unlocks the front door and walks inside.

INT. DESANTIS HOME

Michael walks further into the home and quickly begins searching the premise for the stolen ransom money.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Michael checks the bedroom closet, tearing it apart.

Michael searches the kitchen cabinets.

Michael searches under the kitchen sink.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Michael becomes frustrated. He spots the attic door on the ceiling and quickly pulls it open.

END MONTAGE

Michael unfolds the ladder from the attic and begins up. He reaches the top and looks inside.

INT. ATTIC

Michael notices the SILVER BRIEFCASE of money sitting in the corner. He grabs it and begins back down the ladder. As he steps off, he notices DESANTIS sitting in a living room chair, holding a gun and resting his arms on the chair.

Michael stops in his tracks -- completely taken by surprise.

DESANTIS

What did I tell you about thinking you're smarter than me, Michael? You and I both knew there was only one thing that could come from you taking me to see Darcy's body. Either you kill me or I kill you.

Michael is frozen with fear. He can't take his eyes off of DeSantis' gun.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

You played it cool in Utah when I gave you that fifty grand in funny money. But you played it off. You did the right thing and kept your mouth shut. You wanted to wait until my guard was down to come take my money. So let me see if I can get this straight...

Michael turns his attention from the gun to DeSantis.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

...You never killed Darcy. And not only is she still alive...you and that cunt were gonna run off with my money together.

DeSantis points his gun at Michael.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

Where is she?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHAEL

If I tell you, you'll kill me.

DESANTIS

Believe me...it'll hurt a lot worse  
if you don't.

DeSantis cocks the weapon and points it at Michael's  
genitals.

MICHAEL

I can take you to her. I can still  
do it. I can kill her if you want.

DeSantis slowly lowers his gun.

DESANTIS

Good. Very good, Michael. You  
just bought yourself a second  
chance.

Michael lets out a huge sigh of relief -- giggles nervously.

MICHAEL

You almost made me piss myself.  
Tell you what. Let me take a quick  
leak and we'll go do this.

DeSantis stares at Michael with apprehension.

DESANTIS

You got thirty seconds.

Michael reluctantly turns his back on DeSantis and heads for  
the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

Michael reaches into the back of his pants and pulls out a  
small AUTOMATIC PISTOL. He pulls back the slide, cocking the  
weapon.

INT. KITCHEN

DeSantis pulls out a large CUTTING KNIFE from a rack on the  
kitchen counter. He slowly moves toward the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

Michael holds a cell phone to his ear and gun in his hand. Suddenly, DeSantis kicks in the door and pushes Michael backward. He has Michael in one hand and the large KNIFE in the other. He pushes the young thug into the shower door -- almost shattering it and knocking the phone out of Michael's hand.

DeSantis drives the knife into Michael's gut -- retracts, then once more as Michael drops to the floor. He spits up blood onto the cold, hard tile and grabs his gut in pain.

DeSantis yanks a hand towel from a nearby rack and tosses it to Michael.

DESANTIS

Put some pressure on the wound.  
You're gonna bleed out.

Michael grabs the towel and holds it to his stomach.

DeSantis notices the cell phone on the floor.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

What is this?

He reaches down and picks it up -- puts it to his ear.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

Michael can't come to the phone  
right now.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM

A WOMAN'S HAND hangs up a phone on its receiver. Who is this mystery woman? Darcy?

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM

DeSantis hangs up the cell phone. He hovers over Michael with the knife in his hand. A crazed look in his eyes.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

DESANTIS

You must think this all comes easy for me. Taking lives. Watching someone die. Did you know I held my partner's wife in my arms for four hours when I broke the news to her. She blamed me for what happened, you know? I'm just trying to make things right again. Nobody understands that. Darcy never understood. She was too selfish. But she always was a spoiled little bitch.

DeSantis kicks Michael in his wounded stomach. He SCREAMS out in agony.

The detective reaches down and runs his hand through Michael's pockets. He pulls out a MOTEL ROOM KEY.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

(staring at the key)

What's this, Michael? Room 101. Is this where you two love birds are hiding?

Michael once again SCREAMS out in agony.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

I told you I'd make it hurt if you tried to fuck me, didn't I? Now look at you. Isn't this a sight? A real life, living piece of shit dies next to my toilet. The irony.

MICHAEL

Fuck you.

DESANTIS

Oh, such foul language from such an upstanding citizen. Tell you what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna go get your girlfriend. But I'll be back. You can run, but the nearest hospital's fifteen minutes. You move, you'll probably bleed out in five. Your best bet is to sight tight until I get back.

DeSantis pulls Michael's gun from the floor and pulls back the slide -- cocking the weapon. He ejects the clip and rests the gun on the bathroom sink.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

There. There's one in the chamber.  
In case the pain's a little too  
much for you. Consider it giving  
you an easy way out.

A look of pure hatred consumes Michael's face.

DESANTIS (CONT'D)

If I don't see you when I get  
back...it's been real. Take care.

DeSantis smiles and continues out of the bathroom, shutting  
the door behind him.

Michael attempts to sit up, but the pain is too intense. He  
stares up at the handgun rested on the sink.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL - SANTA MONICA - NIGHT

DeSantis pulls into the small lot, in front of room 101. He  
gets out and begins toward the door.

EXT./INT. MOTEL ROOM

DeSantis enters with his gun drawn. There is no one in  
sight. He notices that the bed isn't made, as if someone has  
slept in it. He walks further into the room and hears a  
SHOWER RUNNING in the bathroom. He slowly makes his way  
toward the bathroom door.

He looks down at the sink next to the door and notices a red  
lipstick resting on the counter top. He attempts to open the  
door, but it is locked. He stands back and gives the door a  
swift kick, knocking it open.

INT. BATHROOM - MOTEL ROOM

DeSantis slowly approaches the shower -- pulls back the  
curtain. There is no one there. He looks at the shower wall  
and notices large letters made of red lipstick. It says FUCK  
YOU. A little inside joke between Darcy and DeSantis.

DeSantis becomes furious with rage. He runs out of the  
bathroom, intent on killing Darcy.

INT./EXT. MOTEL ROOM

DeSantis runs out of the room and back to his car. He SQUEALS his tires against the concrete lot and back onto the street.

INT. DESANTIS HOME

Enter DeSantis. He makes his way to the bathroom. He approaches with caution -- slowly opening the door. Laying presumably dead on the tile is MICHAEL.

The gun DeSantis left on the sink is now sitting limp in Michael's hand. There is some blood on his head where Michael shot himself.

DeSantis pulls a cell phone from his pocket and dials a number. He briefly turns his back on Michael.

DESANTIS

Yeah. It's me. Why don't you meet me at my place in half an hour. I got a job for you guys.

A LOUD SHOT is heard in the b.g. DeSantis looks down and notices BLOOD SPATTERED on the wall before him. He slowly looks down at his chest and notices he's been shot. He turns around, facing Michael -- who is still alive on the floor. Barely. He is pointing the handgun at DeSantis, panting his last few breaths of life.

DeSantis stares down at Michael in disbelief. He touches his wounded chest and observes the BRIGHT RED BLOOD on his hand. He falls against the opposite wall, knocking off a few pictures.

He falls to the living room floor, gasping for air. The CLIP OF BULLETS he took from Michael's gun falls out of his pocket and hits the floor.

Out of the bathroom crawls Michael, who is near death.

DeSantis struggles to reach into his holster and pull his gun.

MICHAEL

Notices the gun clip on the living room floor and quickly attempts to stand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DESANTIS

Manages to pull the gun from his holster. He attempts to point it at

MICHAEL who finally manages to stand up.

The pain is so severe and he is so weak from the loss of blood that he falls to his knees. He keels completely over, face first. The GUN CLIP is just within reach of Michael.

MICHAEL

Reaches out his arm, attempting to retrieve the bullets.

DESANTIS

Is now pointing the gun at Michael. His hand is shaking. He does not have the strength to pull the trigger.

MICHAEL

Is finally able to grab the GUN CLIP and place it into his weapon. He reaches up and points his weapon at

DESANTIS

Who is still shaking from weakness.

The two men are now pointing their weapons at each other. We quickly...

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. DESANTIS HOME - NIGHT

A LONG SHOT of the home. We hear the faint sounds of TWO GUNSHOTS going off simultaneously. DeSantis and Michael have presumably killed each other.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS - (SILENT)

The Golds pull into the parking lot. As they enter the lot, we see a sign reading "Medical Center".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mr. and Mrs. Gold step out of their car and begin walking toward the hospital's entrance.

Mr. Gold is pulling a suitcase behind him.

Mr. Gold laid up in a hospital bed, while his wife holds his hand.

DARCY (V.O.)  
I just need you to tell me. How  
serious is it?

Several doctors enter and wheel Mr. Gold's bed out of the room.

MR. GOLD (V.O.)  
This is very hard.

A tear falls down Mrs. Gold's face as she watches them wheel her husband to surgery.

INT. HOME OF HENRY AND SHARON GOLD - DAY

The Golds sit on their couch, holding hands. Across from them sits Darcy -- who is anxiously awaiting an answer.

MR. GOLD  
Your mother and I noticed something was wrong a few months ago. There was some changes in my behavior. I started feeling tired. Real tired. Then we noticed some yellow discoloration on my skin. She thought I might have jaundice, so I went for a physical. The doc said my liver was abnormally large so he did a biopsy. He discovered that I have fibrosis.

DARCY  
Cirrhosis?

MR. GOLD  
Right. I keep forgetting you play a nurse on TV. The doc says I've got some scar tissue that's blocking the normal flow of blood through my liver. It's caused a lot of complications. I have what's called coagulopathy.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. GOLD (cont'd)

It's a type of hypertension that's causing my blood to clot. They've put me on Vitamin K and a few other meds to try and un-clot the blood.

DARCY

That's why the nose bleeds?

MR. GOLD

Right.

DARCY

And you're gonna need a liver transplant?

MR. GOLD

That's right.

DARCY

How soon?

MR. GOLD

Soon.

DARCY

Years? Months? Days? What?

The Golds stare at each other with concern for their daughter.

MR. GOLD

Months.

DARCY

Oh my God.

EXT. HOME OF HENRY AND SHARON GOLD

Mr. Gold exits his home and begins toward the mailbox at the end of the driveway.

MRS. GOLD (V.O.)

But there's good news, Darcy. Because your father has a rare blood type, the doctor says there shouldn't be a problem getting his name near the top of the transplant list.

DARCY (V.O.)

That's great, daddy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. GOLD (V.O.)  
It's not so great.

MRS. GOLD (V.O.)  
What're you talking about?

(...)

Mr. Gold approaches the mailbox and pulls out the day's mail.

MR. GOLD (V.O.)  
I didn't want to tell you like  
this, but...I'm afraid that...I'm  
currently not eligible for the  
transplant.

MRS. GOLD (V.O.)  
What?

MR. GOLD (V.O.)  
Our HMO is refusing to cover the  
costs of the transplant. They're  
saying with my history of drinking,  
I'm too big a risk for the  
operation.

DARCY (V.O.)  
I don't understand. You've been  
sober for five months.

MR. GOLD (V.O.)  
The pre-operation costs alone are  
\$240,000. That's just to make me  
eligible for the operation. That's  
not counting the actual transplant  
and the post-op care. All  
together, this will cost around  
\$750,000.

DARCY (V.O.)  
Dad, you're kidding, right? Please  
tell me this is one big joke.

Mr. Gold sifts through the mail and discovers a letter from  
KBS. He tears it open and begins reading.

MR. GOLD (V.O.)  
I wouldn't kid you about something  
like this. I'm afraid the only  
thing that could get me on that  
operating table now is a miracle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Mr. Gold folds up the letter and begins back to the house.

INT. HOME OF HENRY AND SHARON GOLD - DAY

The Golds sit at the dining room table as Mr. Gold reads the contents of the KBS letter.

MRS. GOLD

What's this?

MR. GOLD

It's a letter from Darcy's boss.

MRS. GOLD

You're kidding? It's only three months late. Not only do the bastards fire her, they can't even send us some lousy flowers. What does it say?

MR. GOLD

Dear Mr. And Mrs. Gold. I'm terribly sorry to hear about the loss of your beautiful daughter. She was a bright shining star that breathed new life into everyone she encountered. She will be missed dearly by everyone at KBS, but mostly by me. I am thankful that some good has come of all this with the success of your liver transplant. From everyone at KBS, we wish you a speedy recovery. Sincerely, Alicia Newman.

MRS. GOLD

Nice letter. We could've used it three months ago.

Mr. Gold pulls out two AIRLINE TICKETS from the envelope.

MRS. GOLD

What's that?

MR. GOLD

Two first class tickets to Cancun.



INT. CASEY'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Casey is in the midst of chopping up some vegetables for dinner. She walks to the refrigerator and is about to open the door, but stops when she spots a PHOTO of her and Darcy stuck to the surface.

BACKYARD

Casey carries out a large garbage bag and begins toward two large trash bins. She opens the lid on one of the bins and is in shock to see PILES AND PILES OF MONEY laying on top of the garbage.

Casey is overwhelmed with joy. She begins laughing hysterically and crying at the same time. She knows where the money came from.

INT. LEANNE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Leanne cuts the tape on the top of a large cardboard box with a knife. She has received a package from UPS. She pulls out a few random items from the box. A bunch of memories shared between her and Darcy. At the bottom of the box is THE OTHER HALF OF THE RANSOM MONEY.

She is also overwhelmed with joy -- doing a little dance on the couch.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF PATTERSON'S HOME - NIGHT

Sheriff Patterson is kicked back on his recliner watching the evening news. It's the first moment of peace he's had all month.

INSERT - TV

A live broadcast in front of DeSantis' home. A FIELD REPORTER covers the story as several uniformed officers and plain clothes detectives roam about the scene.

REPORTER

A Los Angeles narcotics detective and a known drug dealer have apparently killed each other at the detective's Van Nuys home, sometime late last night.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REPORTER (cont'd)  
Both victims were killed with a  
single gunshot wound to the face,  
close range...

BACK TO SCENE

We slowly close on Sheriff Patterson's face as the news  
continues...

REPORTER (O.S.)  
Police cannot speculate as to what  
exactly led to these shootings, but  
are calling the death of the two  
men drug related...

The news of the detective's death does not phase him in the  
least.

REPORTER (O.S.)  
Detective Charlie DeSantis had  
himself been the target of a long,  
ongoing, internal investigation,  
linking the detective to several  
major drug organizations in the Los  
Angeles area...

The sound of the reporter's voice slowly fades away as we  
stay on Sheriff Patterson. His face is complete stone, not  
evoking the slightest emotion. Then...slowly...he cracks a  
smile.

EXT. BEACHSIDE HOTEL - CANCUN, MEXICO - DAY

A TAXI pulls up to the front of a quaint little beach side  
resort. Out of the cab steps Mr. And Mrs. Gold. The CAB  
DRIVER steps out and walks to the trunk of the car. He opens  
it and pulls out The Gold's luggage.

The Golds begin rolling their luggage toward the hotel.

EXT./INT. HOTEL

The Golds enter the hotel and begin toward the front desk.  
Directly to the left of the front door, sitting patiently in  
a chair and grasping a flower in both hands is DARCY. She is  
overwhelmed at the sight of her parents. A tear falls down  
her cheek. She stands and slowly begins walking toward them.  
We stay on the chair. Before we can witness this touching  
family reunion, we slowly...

FADE TO BLACK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE END