

[THE INSIDE]

"Thief of Hearts"

TEASER

1 EXT. MODEST NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT 1

Pounding rain. The kind that sends homes sliding down fashionable hills in L.A. But this is no fashionable neighborhood. It's a bit gone-to-seed working class place.

OFFICIAL VEHICLES rolling in. SEDANS, SUVs. One skids right up to LENS and we can read the GOVERNMENT PLATES. FEET swing out of the driver's side, we ARM UP to the face of SPECIAL AGENT PAUL RYAN. He's wearing a flak vest under his FBI windbreaker. LEGEND: "El Monte, California, November, 2002."

Another SUV pulls up and DANNY alights, along with a female agent: SPECIAL AGENT MARGARET ALVAREZ. Paul's on the move, gun out. More armed flak jacketed FBI AGENTS pouring out of stopping vehicles, falling in behind him, moving toward a --

TIDY HOUSE. Nondescript. Nothing about it stands out. The FBI agents, Paul clearly in the lead, take up positions at the door, others ringing the perimeter. Paul looks to Danny, gives a slight nod. Danny nods back toward -- TWO FBI AGENTS with a battering ram run the gauntlet to the door, SMASH!

2 INT. MODEST HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 2

BILLY RAY POPE, 30's, sits at a TV tray pulled up close to the secondhand television set. He slurps soup from a spoon, peers over the top of his cream of tomato as the FBI agents storm in. A phalanx of guns now trained on him.

PAUL

On the ground, Billy Ray -- now!

Pope dabs his mouth with his napkin. Gets his hands where everyone can see them as he lowers himself to the floor, face down. He's cuffed by one of the agents, then yanked to his feet. Alvarez sticks a warrant in his face.

POPE

I don't read "The Watchtower." But thanks for stopping by.

ALVAREZ

William Raymond Pope, we're here to serve a search warrant on these premises.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alvarez nods to some others, then moves off with Danny.

POPE

Just make sure you leave a mint on
my pillow when you're finished!

Paul shoves Pope up against a wall. In his face:

PAUL

Shut up.

POPE

You gargled. I appreciate that.
(off Agents)
They won't find anything. You do
know that, right?
(off Paul's silence)
Little boy lost in a big man's
shirt. Still so much to learn. If
there was anything here, you really
think he'd let you lead the party?

PAUL

Virgil Webster doesn't go out in
the rain for trash like you.

POPE

So lemme ask you a question.
Papers won't say... This guy
you're looking for... this guy
who's not me... You think when he
cuts their hearts out, they're
still alive, or what?

Danny reappears, frustrated. Alvarez not far behind.

DANNY

Place is clean.

ALVAREZ

Obsessively.

POPE

Told ya. But thanks for playing.

But Paul doesn't look deterred. He shoves the cuffed Pope at
Danny, is already on the move with:

PAUL

Bring 'em.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Danny and Alvarez exchange a look. Paul isn't going out the front, but the back. Pope looks uncertain suddenly.

3 EXT. MODEST HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 3

Paul walks through the downpour, Danny, Alvarez, Pope and some other agents appear, watching him.

DANNY
(to Alvarez)
What's he doin'?
(she shrugs; he calls to:)
Whaddya doin'?

Paul pulls on rubber gloves, scans the neat garden. Vegetables, flowers, etc. He zeros in on a young rosebush, moves to it, yanks it out of the ground. He gets on his knees, starts digging through the soil with his hands. Danny and Alvarez watching with fascination. Paul feels something in the earth. Pauses, looks back at Pope, whose brow is furrowed, watching as --

-- Paul pulls out a fatty wet lump of something. It jiggles in his hand. A HUMAN HEART. Pope reacts to that, and suddenly he's not glib wisecracking guy, but something primal and dark bubbles up from his soul.

POPE
GRRRAARGHHHH!

He HOWLS, twists out of Danny's grip, starts forward going animal. Danny tackles him and wrestles him in the mud, Pope squirming and barking like the trapped creature he is.

4 EXT. MODEST NEIGHBORHOOD (SHORT TIME LATER) - NIGHT 4

Pope, filthy and muddy but restrained now, looking demonic and ugly as Danny and Alvarez hustle him down the front walk/yard, past a FIGURE standing there in the foreground. Pope gives a hateful ironic smile to the UNSEEN MAN. Now here comes Paul, bringing up the rear. He meets up with the FIGURE: VIRGIL WEBSTER. Standing coolly under his umbrella. Paul is soaked, but not caring. Web holds his look. And then he smiles. Proud. Paul smiles back. Appreciative.

WEB
Welcome to the team, son.

We hold on Paul, rain streaked, dirty, content, proud --

ABRUPT CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLUE SKIES AND A LEGEND: PRESENT DAY.

And under those skies, a cheerful backyard. A WOMAN with her back to us, bent over/hunched, digging in a garden, in --

5 EXT. PAUL'S HOME - BACKYARD - DAY

5

Paul appears with a plate of burgers for the grill.

PAUL

What are you doing?

The woman turns. She's Paul's wife, KAREN RYAN. About Paul's age, sturdy, beautiful in her way, and oh-so-very pregnant. About five and half to six months worth.

KAREN

I can't get anything to grow.

(off his ironic look to
her belly)

Shut up. You did this.

PAUL

Shouldn't you be avoiding strenuous activity?

KAREN

You have no idea how little effort it takes for me to kill something.

She wipes the perspiration from her brow with the back of her hand, leaving a cute smudge. It's so cute he can't help but go to her, kiss her on the cheek. She wriggles.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Where's my lunch?

PAUL

I'm heating up the barbecue.

That tasted good. He dives in for another, and now he's nuzzling her. Too irresistible. She tries to resist.

KAREN

How long will that take?

PAUL

Long enough for us to, you know...

KAREN

Hello. Um, we already did that?
And have you seen me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

I always liked fat chicks.

She slugs him in the shoulder. He laughs.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I'm kidding. I think you look hot.

He continues with the nuzzling. It's having an effect.

KAREN

I thought I was supposed to avoid strenuous activity?

PAUL

I'll do all the heavy lifting.

KAREN

If you can somehow avoid using terms like "heavy" and "lifting"...

His cell phone RINGS. They freeze. Paul answers it.

PAUL

Hello?

He listens. His face goes grim. She reads it right away.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Okay. Yeah. Bye.

He hangs up. Looks at her. His apology is unspoken because:

KAREN

Go.

6 INT. SUBURBAN HOME #1 - HALL/BEDROOM - DAY

6

Paul, still dressed for a day off, moves past FORENSIC GUYS and COPS, careful not to step on: FLOWER PETALS have been strewn along this hall, candles lit. He follows the trail to the BEDROOM. DEAD WOMAN on the bed, wearing a sexy negligee, lying in a come-hither position. Appearing behind him:

WEB

Lisa Aaron. 26, married lady. Her husband had been in Vegas for a three day software conference. He returned home this morning to the aroma of scented candles. Love songs playing on the stereo.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WEB(CONT'D)

A pair of Mrs. Aaron's panties lying enticingly just inside the front door. A trail of rose petals led to what I'm sure Mr. Aaron expected would be a more lively encounter.

Paul steps past REBECCA, who is also here. He moves closer, to the body, knowing what he'll see, but dreading it. Standards and practices shouldn't worry, because we don't get too much boob, since most of the victim's left breast has been torn away, revealing a gaping hole in her chest cavity. She's also got a bullet hole in her head.

REBECCA

Victim was raped. Death resulted from one .38 caliber shot to the head, point blank. The heart muscle was removed post mortem. We haven't recovered it yet.

Paul glances to Web; you haven't told her yet?

PAUL

You won't.
(then)
Have you looked in her mouth?

WEB

(holding Paul's gaze)
Not yet.

Rebecca looks at the two men looking at each other. Not being slow to take a cue, she moves to the corpse, pries the mouth open with her gloved hands. Shines a light down there. Sees something. She takes a tool from a nearby FORENSIC TECH. Fishes. Pulls out...

...a rolled up envelope. She straightens it. Opens the envelope. Slides out a Valentine's Day card. Opens it. A cartoon heart springs forward with the greeting, "Missing You, With All My Heart." Off that --

END OF TEASER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ACT ONE

7 INT. V.C.U. - BULLPEN - DAY 7

The group assembled. Crime scene photos and evidence bags scattered about. Web appears from his office.

WEB

I just spoke to the warden at Satsuma Penitentiary. Billy Ray Pope is tucked away in his cell, working on his appeal.

That was directed mostly to Paul, who has the same emotional history and connection to the case that Web does.

MEL

So it wasn't him.

PAUL

It was him.

WEB

Of course it was.

The others reacts to Web and Paul's casual tandem certainty.

DANNY

How you figure? Murder furlough?

Paul holds up the sheathed Valentine's card.

PAUL

This is how I figure. Pope forced Valentine cards down the throats of all his victims. That detail was never made public. No one knows about that except us -- and him.

DANNY

I remember. We kept the card detail in-house. To weed out the crazies and the chronics.

REBECCA

It didn't come out in the trial?

WEB

It didn't need to. Paul found Stacey Travers' heart buried under Pope's rose bushes. Jury thought that was enough.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

Pope may not have done this one physically, but he guided the hands that did. Lisa Aaron's murder is a perfect re-creation of his crimes. Down to the choice of victims.

REBECCA

Victims?

PAUL

He only targets couples. Married couples. I would argue that the husbands were his primary victims.

MEL

Bet Mrs. Aaron would take issue with that.

WEB

Paul's right. For Pope, it was about the men. They had something he never could. So he destroyed it. Made them like him. Bereft, alone, hollow.

MEL

Okay, so how? If he's orchestrating it from the inside, how's he doing it?

REBECCA

Maybe we should ask him.

8 INT. V.C.U. - ELEVATOR/CORRIDORS - DAY

8

DING! The elevator doors open; Mel exiting with ZOYA PETIKOF, a dish. Patrician, poised -- and a viper in the courtroom. She's Pope's attorney.

ZOYA

I just want it made clear, I've advised my client against speaking to you, and if I feel at any time your questions are veering into inappropriate or unhelpful territory, I'll pull the plug.

MEL

Great shoes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZOYA

Thank you.

9 INT. V.C.U. - WAR ROOM - DAY

9

Everyone assembled. Dark-ish in here. CARTER is fiddling with a connection to a large monitor. Paul regards Zoya.

PAUL

Any particular reason your client doesn't want to look us in the eye?

ZOYA

He's under no obligation to speak with you at all. Even this much is a courtesy.

DANNY

We'll send him a card.

CARTER

Okay. Stand by. Live from a Federal Penitentiary near you...

He backs away as the signal resolves. A static video camera trained on an empty chair in a PRISON VISITING ROOM.

ZOYA

Are you sure this is a secure feed?

CARTER

No. It goes direct to Fox News. We're the FBI, lady. Relax.

Now a FIGURE appears. An orange prison jump suit. Billy Ray Pope lowers himself into the chair. Paul sets his jaw. Even on a feed, he hates looking at this guy. Pope fiddles with an ear piece, looks past the lens.

POPE

Closer.

The VIDEO IMAGE ZOOMS in, finds its focus. Pope smiles.

POPE (CONT'D)

Hello. Who have we got?

WEB

Virgil Webster. My team. Your lawyer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POPE

Paul? Paul Ryan?

PAUL

I'm here.

POPE

(squints, then)

Hey. What's that on your finger,

Paul? You tie the knot?

Paul glances over to Carter who shakes his head: no way.

POPE (CONT'D)

Kidding. I can't see you. I read about it in your online alumni newsletter. Gotta love the internet. Oh, and I hear you're also expecting a little special agent. Congrats on that.

Rebecca jumps in to get this train back on track with:

REBECCA

Mister Pope, we don't want to take up too much of your time --

POPE

They gave me three consecutive life sentences. I got nothing but time.

REBECCA

Alright, our time, then. We'd just like to ask you a few questions.

POPE

That the new one, Web? Sounds young. Fresh. Locke, isn't it? Special Agent Becky Locke?

REBECCA

Rebecca.

POPE

You've tallied up some good ones in your short time, Becky. I'm impressed. So, yeah, you can ask me some questions. But before you do? I want Ryan to leave.

Uncomfortable silence. Paul's partners steal looks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

POPE (CONT'D)

Dunno if he told you, Becky, but my case was Paul's big audition for the varsity squad -- but I'm innocent. So he's got no right to be there since, by my lights, he flunked the entrance exam.

Silence. Pope cocks his head, listens.

POPE (CONT'D)

Is he leaving, Ms. Petikof?

ZOYA

No. He's not.

POPE

'Kay. We're done.

Pope reaches for his ear piece. Paul stays him with:

PAUL

Fine. I'm going.

Paul rises. It's humiliating. We move with him as he crosses to the door. We leave with him. As the door shuts behind him we hear:

POPE

Okay, Becky. Shoot.

10 INT. V.C.U. - KITCHEN - SHORT TIME LATER - PAUL 10

pouring himself some coffee. Eyes on the closed war room. A well dressed African American man enters from the kitchen side. This is SUPERVISORY SPECIAL AGENT GLENN TERRY. Spots:

TERRY

Paul Ryan?
(off Paul's nod)
Supervisory Special Agent Glenn Terry. Am I to understand there's a live feed coming into this building from Satsuma Penitentiary?

PAUL

There is.

TERRY

Kill it.

11 INT. V.C.U. - WEB'S OFFICE - SHORT TIME LATER

11

Through the door, WE SEE Zoya hoisting her bag, giving a look back toward Web's office as the door closes. Web's the one closing it. Paul is in here along with Terry.

WEB

What's this about, Glenn?

TERRY

Judge Hawthorne has agreed to hear Pope's appeal. His attorney has apparently presented some rather compelling exculpatory evidence.

PAUL

You mean like another murder that matches Pope's M.O. and signature? We noticed. We're investigating it.

TERRY

Not anymore. Assistant Director Gordon doesn't want you going near the Lisa Aaron murder until after the appeals process is over.

PAUL

What?

TERRY

Your involvement with this new murder might suggest it's somehow connected to the Pope case.

WEB

It is.

TERRY

That's not the Bureau's position. If we start acting like it is, may look as though we put away the wrong man.

PAUL

This is what he wants. You pull me off this, you're playing right into Pope's hands.

Paul looks to Web for support. Instead Web looks to Terry:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WEB

Is my entire team barred from the Aaron murder, or just those who were active on Pope?

Paul can't believe what he's hearing.

TERRY

If you can do it without compromising the Pope case, you can assign someone to the Aaron murder.

PAUL

You're not going along with this?

WEB

Paul. Go home.

Paul stares for a beat. Fuck. Paul starts to go, Web adds:

WEB (CONT'D)

And send in Locke on your way out.

He throws open the door, heads out. The other three are kind of milling nearby. Paul brushes past Rebecca with:

PAUL

Web wants to see you.

CUT TO:

PAUL (CONT'D)

Who wants to see me?

12 INT. MILITARY BASE APARTMENT - NIGHT

12

A crime scene. That was directed to an MP whispering in Paul's ear. Paul's in the midst of consoling a distraught MARINE, NATE LAIRD. Nate's only half in uniform: the pants and a white t-shirt that's drenched in blood. Blood stains on his hands, smudged on his face. He's in total shock. Paul looks to where the MP is indicating to see: WEB AND ALVAREZ, clearly having just entered the scene. A LEGEND: "Camp Pendleton, August, 2002."

Web looks at Paul (now we're in Web's POV), as Paul meets his gaze, looks back to Nate, says something reassuring. Nate nods absently, staring in shock. Paul rises, moves to Web.

PAUL

You wanted to talk to me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WEB

Supervisory Special Agent --

PAUL

-- Virgil Webster. Yeah. I have a couple of your books, actually. Paul Ryan, San Diego office.

WEB

This is Special Agent Alvarez. We'll take it from here.

Paul's not ready to step aside just yet --

PAUL

I've just spent the last hour with this guy. Think I can save you some time. He didn't do this.

WEB

I know. The man who did is William Raymond Pope. A nobody. A very smart nobody. We've had him under surveillance for two months, and tonight he slipped the net. But while I know him to be guilty, I haven't been able to prove it. So I am going to speak to that man, and he will recount for me every second of the last forty-eight hours on the off chance that some seemingly insignificant detail --

PAUL

He tried to revive her.
(Web looks at him)
He tried to perform CPR on his wife. And she didn't have a heart. You really going to make him tell that story again?

WEB

Are you asking me to have a heart, Paul Ryan, San Diego office?

PAUL

I'm asking you to let me finish my interview. Let me finish it -- then let me help you nail this guy.

Web looks at him. A beat. He waves a hand toward Nate. Be my guest. Paul returns to Nate, more determined than ever.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

We stay with Web and Alvarez as they watch Paul continue with his (unheard) interview with the distraught marine.

WEB

Poor bastard. Signs up to serve his country. Thinks he can protect even one person. What would it be like to wake up from that dream, I wonder?

ALVAREZ

You're not talking about the marine, are you?

Web smiles. Alvarez watches Web watching Paul.

ALVAREZ (CONT'D)

He's a boy scout. You really think you can play nice with a boy scout?

WEB

Sometimes you want one to help you cross the street.

13 OMITTED

13

A14 INT. PAUL'S HOME - DAY

A14

Paul enters, still tense. MUSIC is playing. Johnny Mathis, "My Funny Valentine" or something. He doesn't note it as:

PAUL

Hey. I'm back. You're not going to believe what happened today. Or actually, I'm sure you will.

He loosens his tie, shrugs off his jacket as he speaks. He drapes his jacket over a chair, notes a glass of red wine sitting on a table. Picks it up, looks at it.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Hey -- what's this for? You're not supposed to be... Karen?

No sign of her. Now he's starting to get nervous. He moves to the stairs, reacts as he sees... a pair of WOMEN'S PANTIES lying on a step. He moves to it. Picks up. Casts a glance upstairs. He pulls his gun, starts up the stairs --

MOVING WITH PAUL up the stairs as Johnny Mathis warbles... he reaches the top. Moves toward the bathroom. The door is open and the TUB is running... CANDLES flicker in there...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Paul's breathing comes more shallow now. Sweat beads breaking out on his brow. A SOUND. He whirls with his gun --

KAREN is standing there with a plastic laundry basket.

KAREN

Geez, Paul! What the hell?!

PAUL

(quickly stows gun)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

She just blinks. He sees more dropped laundry. Picks it up, drops it in her basket, looks at the tub.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Thought you weren't supposed to get in the bath? Or drink wine?

KAREN

They're for you. Mel called and said you were coming home early, that you were having a bad day. Paul, what's going on?

PAUL

Billy Ray Pope. He's back.

CUT TO:

14 INT. COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR - DAY - BILLY RAY POPE 14

in an orange jumpsuit and a serene expression, is walked down the corridor by two COURT DEPUTIES. His legs are shackled and his wrists are cuffed to a high security waist chain.

15 INT. COURTROOM - LATER - IN SESSION 15

Paul seated at the prosecutor's table with the ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY. Web observes from a back room seat. Seated in the gallery is a group of VICTIMS' FAMILIES. We recognize Nate Laird, the marine, among them. At the center of them is the unofficial spokesperson for the families, SUE CUNNINGHAM. Pope is trying his best to look like Tom Hanks. Earnest. Zoya paces in front of the JUDGE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZOYA

...point two: we submit that in light of recent events, there should be sufficient cause to entitle Mr. Pope to an impartial review of the facts as they now appear. We will show that the investigation upon which the **government** based its case was incompetent and prejudicial in the extreme. Distorting the facts, and twisting the truth. Today, the truth gets a second chance. And the truth is that Billy Ray Pope...

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*

TIME CUT TO:

16 INT. COURTROOM - SUE CUNNINGHAM ON THE STAND, TESTIFYING 16

SUE CUNNINGHAM

...cut my sister wide open. And when Mark found her there he blew his own head off.

ZOYA

Objection!

JUDGE

Mr. Shutan?

U.S. ATTORNEY

Ms. Cunningham, please just tell the court what you saw when you opened the door to Kim's bedroom?

TIME CUT TO:

17 INT. COURTROOM - CAPTAIN NATE LAIRD ON THE STAND 17

LAIRD

Blood. On the sheets. On the headboard. On the wall above the headboard...

As Laird struggles through the details, Paul glances to:

CLOSE: POPE. Mouth dry, riveted. He takes a sip of water.

LAIRD (CONT'D)

Jodie was... arranged. On the bed. She was pale. Very pale. Her arms and legs were spread... I... I...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It seems he can't go on.

U.S. ATTORNEY
Thank you, Captain. That's all.

JUDGE
You may step down.

Laird rises shakily from the stand. Passes Pope, won't look at him. Rejoins the supportive family members:

ZOYA
Your honor, defense calls Special Agent Paul Ryan to the stand.

18 INT. COURTHOUSE - CORRIDOR - SLIGHT TIME CUT 18

Rebecca moves to the courtroom door and into --

19 INT. COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS 19

Rebecca stands at the back. Paul's on the stand.

ZOYA
There were how many victims of this so-called "Thief Of Hearts" killer, Special Agent Ryan?

PAUL
Six. Six that we know of.

ZOYA
And in every instance, the heart muscle was extracted and carried from the scene?

PAUL
That's right.

ZOYA
But when you dug up my client's garden, you only found one, isn't that right?

PAUL
(wry)
Yes. We only found one human heart in your client's garden.

ZOYA
How did it come about that you knew where to dig?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

We received a tip from a witness who observed Mr. Pope engaging in some suspicious activity in his backyard. At two in the morning. She said he was covered in blood.

ZOYA

And you used this testimony to secure your warrant to search my client's property?

PAUL

Yes.

ZOYA

No further questions.

Rebecca, watching Paul step down, starts as Web appears.

WEB

What are you doing here?

REBECCA

Canvassing for suspects.

WEB

Elucidate.

REBECCA

The rape kit on the victim...

ZOYA

Defense calls Elizabeth Fisher to the stand.

Web puts up a finger indicating "hold that thought." Watches as ELIZABETH FISHER, 34, single Mom, approaches the bench and is sworn in (we can't hear it from here). Elizabeth looks uneasy as she takes her seat. Zoya prowls.

ZOYA (CONT'D)

Ms. Fisher, you testified on December 14, 2002, that you saw the defendant, Mr. Pope, digging in a suspicious manner in his backyard on the morning of November 5th. Were you telling the truth?

LIZ FISHER

(deep breath)

No. I was not.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A WHISPER SHOCKWAVE runs through the room.

ZOYA

You never saw Mr. Pope doing anything suspicious?

LIZ FISHER

No.

Now SHOUTS. Judge GAVELS. Paul is stunned.

ZOYA

Would you please tell the court why you lied under oath?

LIZ FISHER

I... got a phone call on the first, November first. Someone I didn't recognize. He offered to pay me ten thousand dollars to... say that I saw my neighbor digging in his garden at night. I... I was working two jobs at the time and-

ZOYA

He told you to call the police?

LIZ FISHER

He told me to call the FBI, and ask for Special Agent Paul Ryan.

Paul is thunderstruck. Zoya nods, lips pursed.

ZOYA

Can you identify the man who called you?

LIZ FISHER

We never met. He left the money for me in a motel room.

The court EXPLODES into an uproar. The Judge HAMMERS his gavel like in the movies.

JUDGE

We'll have order!

Web calmly turns back to Rebecca, away from the furor.

WEB

Okay. This better be good.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Rebecca, flustered, looks to Paul, who is sitting in shock. She then looks back at the Judge.

JUDGE

This hearing will be in recess
until 3 P.M. on the 23rd.

BAM. Rebecca turns back to Web, collects herself.

REBECCA

You and Paul thought the Lisa Aaron murder was a perfect forgery of Billy Ray's crimes. It wasn't. Billy Ray's victims were all raped by... a human. Specifically a male human. Lisa Aaron was violated with an object.

WEB

You're saying our new killer may not have been... equipped in the same way.

REBECCA

We should widen our range of possible suspects. There's a chance our new UNSUB may be --

WEB

-- a woman.

She looks at him; he's not looking at her. His gaze has found something else. She follows it to see --

ZOYA AND BILLY RAY POPE

She has taken her seat next to him at the defense table. She's giving him a supportive squeeze on the knee. The hearing is going well. And her hand lingers a bit too long... and travels a bit too far up his inner leg.

REBECCA AND WEB

React to that. Off that --

END ACT ONE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ACT TWO

20 INT. V.C.U. - BULLPEN - DAY

20

Everyone at their desks. Paul looks like he's been at his all night, old case paperwork stacked up. Web stands as Rebecca passes out dossiers on Zoya to Mel and Danny. Paul doesn't get one, keeps focused on his own work.

REBECCA

Zoya Petikof. Junior partner at Epstein, Hoffs, Gustafson & Rhone. *They work a lot of pro bono cases, mostly anti-death penalty stuff.*

*
*
*

MEL

And she's killing for one of her clients?

*

REBECCA

(shrugs)

Some anti-abortionists shoot clinic doctors.

*

MEL

Pope didn't get the death penalty.

DANNY

Unfortunately.

REBECCA

No, but Zoya's first husband did. She was 19, he was 38. Henry Clayton Barber. Zoya wrote to him in prison. They were married just before he met "Old Sparky." She insisted he was framed. He's the reason she took up the law.

WEB

Maybe this time a prison romance isn't enough. *She wants them to be together.*

*

DANNY

(makes sense)

She'd know about the Valentine card. *She is his attorney.*

*

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REBECCA

Only if he told her. Turns out the prosecution withheld that detail from Pope's original defense team during discovery.

*
*
*

MEL

Okay. Even if they are involved, it doesn't answer the question -- who bribed Liz Fisher? She said she heard a man's voice.

*
*
*
*

DANNY

So what are you saying?

MEL

What you don't want to hear. That maybe the real killer made that call.

*

PAUL

The real killer did. William Raymond Pope.

They all look over at Paul.

DANNY

Framed himself?

PAUL

Think about it. He knew we were onto him. Maybe he wanted to get himself convicted on false testimony, take the heat off his tail, let the appeal to wash him clean.

*

*

They all just look at him for a beat; he's reaching.

REBECCA

And the latest murder, Lisa Aaron?

*

PAUL

It was taking too long. New hearing request denied three times in fives years. He needed someone on the outside to give him a boost.

*
*
*
*

MEL

A boost?

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DANNY
From the outside --

*
*
*

PAUL
Then he met Zoya.

Uncomfortable silence as they all stare. No one wants to be the one to say "wacky conspiracy theory."

WEB
It's a reasonable theory. You should pursue it.

Web heads to his office. Paul gathers some files, exits off.

MEL
He thinks that's a reasonable theory?

DANNY
Maybe if you're Oliver Stone.

A MAIL CLERK rolls a cart by, hands Rebecca a card-sized brown paper bag.

REBECCA
Oh, good. Thanks, Joel.

She slides out: a VALENTINE CARD. It matches the one found in Lisa Aaron. She's been expecting it. Now she heads off.

MEL
Hmmm. Maybe she's the killer.

21 INT. V.C.U. - TECH ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

21

Paul enters. Carter sits at a computer monitor where SOUND WAVES rise and fall. He's got earphones on, is making a transcription.

PAUL
Carter. Hey? Carter!

Carter senses the presence, turns, pulls down the earphones.

PAUL (CONT'D)
How much of our old interrogations do we have stored in there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER

I've digitized up through '02.
Started with the oldest first.
Tapes were turning to dust.

PAUL

So would we have easy access to the
interviews Web did with Pope right
after his arrest?

CARTER

Yeah. I can pull those up.

PAUL

Can you make me a copy?

22 INT. V.C.U. - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

22

Rebecca and Zoya enter. Rebecca's carrying a briefcase.

REBECCA

I appreciate you agreeing to meet
with me.

ZOYA

It's near the courthouse. I have
to be around **when** the ruling's
handed down. What **is** this, an
interrogation room?

*
*

REBECCA

It's soundproof. I thought we'd be
more comfortable here.

**As Zoya's looking the other way, Rebecca surreptitiously
places the Valentine card we saw her receive on the corner of
the table. Zoya didn't see her do that. Rebecca takes a
seat. Zoya takes the one opposite, doesn't make note of the
card on the table.**

*
*
*
*
*

ZOYA

Yeah, comfy. Look, unless you're
going to tell me you guys are
willing to admit you railroaded my
client in 2002, we don't have much
to talk about.

REBECCA

Well, actually, I was hoping to
talk about you...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZOYA

Me?

REBECCA

You, and your relationship to Billy Ray.

ZOYA

He's my client. Y'know, the one I just mentioned...

REBECCA

When did you take his case?

ZOYA

July, 2003.

Maybe during this Zoya absently reaches for the card, taps the edge of it on the table while she talks, clearly just a nervous, without-thinking-about-it kind of way. Doesn't really look at it.

*
*
*
*

ZOYA (CONT'D)

I saw his story in the L.A. Weekly, noticed the name of the public defender who argued his case, knew the guy to be a schmuck, so I went to meet with Billy Ray myself. And that's when I looked into the eyes of an innocent man.

*

Rebecca looks to her notes, writes something. Glances as Zoya tosses the card back into the table without even looking at it, impatient now. Rebecca, eyes on her note pad:

*
*
*

REBECCA

And when did you two fall in love?

Zoya stares. Rebecca says nothing. Finally looks up.

ZOYA

You've obviously looked into my background. I'm not some crazy who sends love letters to killers. Henry Clayton Barber was innocent.

REBECCA

Just like Billy Ray Pope.

ZOYA

That's right. Henry was murdered by the State of Florida.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ZOYA(CONT'D)

Billy Ray was kidnapped by the federal government. I couldn't save Henry -- but I will free Billy Ray.

*

REBECCA

No matter what it takes.

*

*

Zoya says nothing, just looks at her.

*

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Who can blame you? He stole your heart... He's had some practice.

*

*

*

Rebecca has opened her briefcase and starts laying out grisly crime scene photos of heartless torsos, dead women.

*

ZOYA

Am I supposed to be shocked? I've worked this case for two years. I've seen these photos.

Zoya pushes the photos in a heap back at Rebecca, in the process the Valentine card falls off the table. Zoya continues:

*

*

*

ZOYA (CONT'D)

Whoever committed these acts is sick and depraved. Maybe you should be spending more time looking for that person and less time persecuting my client.

*

*

*

*

*

Before rising, Zoya reaches down, picks up the fallen card, drops it back on the table (without looking at it in any significant way), hoists her bag and goes. Rebecca reaches over, picks up the card. Muses on it and Zoya's non-reaction to it. We PRE-LAP GAVEL POUNDING and WE ARE:

*

*

*

*

*

23 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

23

Paul with Rebecca; the victims' families huddled together; Zoya, Pope and the D.A. on tenterhooks. The Judge rules.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUDGE

Given new information that has come to light, and after reviewing key evidence in the defendant's conviction of three years ago, it is the finding of this court that the jury verdict in People V Pope be set aside and that William Raymond Pope be released at once. Mr. Pope -- you're free to go.

Off the shock of those assembled --

24 INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - SHORT TIME LATER

24

Pope, Zoya at his side. An impromptu press conference. Paul and Rebecca at the sidelines, Paul watching with revulsion. It's all he can do not to pull his gun.

POPE

No. I'm not bitter. I've always had confidence in our system of justice and knew, in my heart, that this day would come. In fact, I want to personally thank Special Agent Paul Ryan. Being falsely arrested by him is the best thing that ever happened to me.

He reaches out, puts his arm around Zoya, pulls her to him.

POPE (CONT'D)

Some people wait a lifetime and never meet that one special person. If it weren't for my legal battles, I might not have, either.

She beams at him. He kisses her.

POPE (CONT'D)

Now if you'll excuse us, my fiance has been threatening to buy me some new clothes. Something not orange.

They go. The press conference starts to break up, revealing: THE FAMILIES staring at Paul. Sue Cunningham marches up to him, her face a mask of steel. She slaps him across the face. He lets her. How can he not? She turns and walks away without saying anything. Other family members look at him, some as angry as Sue, some not. Rebecca looks at Paul, wants to say something, but he preempts it with:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

Least I could do that much for her.

He turns and walks away. She lets him go. Off Rebecca --

25

EXT. MODEST NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

25

Liz Fisher, the recanting witness, exits a low-rent home. She's got her coat on over a waitress uniform. She starts down the walk. Passing a PARKED CAR, out of which Paul emerges. He falls in behind her.

PAUL

Ms. Fisher?

She turns, registers recognition.

LIZ FISHER

Oh, god. Look, I'm gonna be late.

PAUL

Please. I just need a minute.

LIZ FISHER

I'm sorry. But I told the truth.

PAUL

I believe you. And I understand. Look, you were offered a lot of money. And you told me what I wanted to hear... but now I need you to hear something... Please. The man who called you that night, could this be his voice?

He holds up a digital recorder. Hits play. WE HEAR Pope's VOICE in the download of the Pope/Web interrogations.

POPE (V.O.)

You know I'm innocent. You know I didn't bury that heart in my garden.

She listens. Closes her eyes. Tries to concentrate.

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

Why would I? Why wouldn't it be with the other hearts I apparently plucked out?

WEB (V.O.)

That's a very good question, Bill.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Liz suddenly opens her eyes, registering recognition --

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

Where are the other hearts? Where do you keep them?

LIZ FISHER

Yeah! Yeah, that's him. Real distinctive voice.

PAUL

What? No, that...

POPE (V.O.)

Uh, with the yellow moons, orange stars, and green clovers?

PAUL

That voice you mean?

POPE (V.O.)

They're magically delicious, I hear.

LIZ FISHER

No. The other one.

WEB (V.O.)

I imagine you keep them fresh. Refrigerated? Some special place you can return to, again and again...

LIZ FISHER

Him. That's the man who called me.

Paul is reeling. A dry swallow, then:

PAUL

Are you sure?

LIZ FISHER

Yeah. I mean, it's been a while. But that's a voice you don't forget. That's a voice could sell you something. Who is he?

WEB (V.O.)

Tell me what you imagine, Billy, when you take them out in your most private moments and handle them?

26 INT. V.C.U. - WEB'S OFFICE - DAY

26

Web at his desk, doing some paperwork. He doesn't even look up as Paul barges in without knocking.

WEB

This is starting to become a habit with you, Paul. Am I going to have to--

CRASH! Paul sweeps Web's work onto the floor. He certainly has Web's attention.

PAUL

Stacey Travers. Billy Ray Pope's last victim. It was her heart we found in Pope's garden. And you put it there. *

WEB

I put it there? Does that make me the killer? I'm trying to keep up.

PAUL

You knew he was guilty, but you couldn't prove it. You wanted to catch him in the act. So you let him think he'd slipped your net. You followed him to Stacey Travers' home. You watched him get out of his car... and you let him go in. *

Web's face is an expressionless mask. *

PAUL (CONT'D) *

But something went wrong. Maybe because you'd been breathing down his neck for so long, he got nervous, rushed through his ritual. But she was dead before you could get there.

Web just looks at him, neither confirming nor denying.

PAUL (CONT'D) *

And somehow he got away. I think it's because... you tried to revive her. But Stacey Travers was dead. She was never coming back. Her heart had stopped beating... *

(then)

I just have one question.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL(CONT'D)

Did Pope just not take it with him?
Or did you cut that woman open
yourself, before you planted part
of her back at his place?

That hangs there for a moment. Paul's clearly said his
piece. Finally:

WEB

You're about to be a father, Paul.
I think it's time for you to grow
up.

PAUL

You won't deny it. *

WEB

I won't dignify it. Do you think
we put away an innocent man? *

PAUL

No. I think we framed a guilty
man. I'm just curious -- once that
was accomplished, why'd you ask me
to stay? To join your team?

WEB

The truth? *

PAUL

Yeah. Let's try that. *

WEB

Because you're a smart
investigator. And you're honest.
You're honest, and you're
forthright, and you're
transparently good. And every once
in a while, those qualities are
useful to me. *

Paul stares at him. Motherfucker. Never have such words of
praise sounded like such kick in the balls. Paul opens his
jacket, takes out his FBI credentials...

WEB (CONT'D)

Paul --

...then his gun.

WEB (CONT'D)

Paul --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He sets them on Web's desk. Turns and starts to go. Web puts his hands on his desk, starts to rise:

WEB (CONT'D)

Paul. Before you go --

Paul pauses, half-looks back. Web looks at him, then nods toward the stuff on the floor that Paul knocked there at the start of all this --

WEB (CONT'D)

-- pick it up.

Paul still looks at him for a suspended moment, then:

PAUL

I'm done bending over for you.

And he's gone. Off Web --

27 OMITTED

27

END OF ACT TWO

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT THREE

28 INT. PAUL'S HOME - (LATE) DAY

28

CLOSE ON A GUN as Paul jams in a clip, works the slide. He's in a closet, in civilian clothes. This is a civilian gun.

KAREN (O.S.)

Paul?

Paul quickly shoves the gun in his belt, pulls his shirt over it as Karen walks into the room. All she sees is Paul pulling a jacket off a hook and sliding it on.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Are we gonna talk about this?

PAUL

What's to talk about? Isn't this what you always wanted?

She blinks, feeling smacked. Loses a beat.

KAREN

Worrying about your job isn't the same as wanting you to throw it away.

Realizes how blunt he sounded. He's not mad at her.

PAUL

I know, I'm sorry. I didn't mean it like that. It's just, Web...

KAREN

It's *always* Web, hon. This is different. This is about Billy Ray Pope. It's about you. I haven't seen you like this since you were on that case.

Paul worries. She knows him too well.

PAUL

You're just seeing me worked up. It's... everything's gonna be fine.

KAREN

I never said it wasn't.

PAUL

I just gotta get out, take a drive. Cool down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAREN

Where are you going?

PAUL

Just around. Clear my head.

As he moves past her, she grabs his wrist. Firm.

KAREN

Please don't. Stay with us tonight.

PAUL

I will. I promise. Won't be long.

He kisses her forehead. Lips. Careful not to hug her with the gun in his belt. Then she watches him go.

KAREN

Bring cell, check in.

Karen waits a second, then heads to the closet. Goes straight to the GUN SAFE. Keys in the code. Opens it to reveal an empty casing where the Glock is usually snugged.

Karen worries. She knows him too well.

29 INT. V.C.U. - BULLPEN - (LATE) DAY

29

Paul's empty desk sticks out like a sore thumb. Danny, Mel and Rebecca surround it.

MEL

Should we call him, or wait for him to call us?

REBECCA

Did this have something to do with Supervisory Agent Terry?

DANNY

Web hates Glenn, he wouldn't give Paul up to him.

(looks to Web's door)

Something went down last night between the two of 'em.

WEB (O.S.)

Locke.

They all startle, move back to their work as Web enters from another direction, file in hand, little obsessed himself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WEB (CONT'D)

Where's your report on the Petikof interview?

REBECCA

Still working on it, Sir...

WEB

Billy Ray Pope's been on the street for five hours. That's five hours too long. Give me what you got.

Rebecca fumbles with her file. Web has not patience.

WEB (CONT'D)

Did she express any potential as the UNSUB?

REBECCA

Actually, I was struck more by what she *didn't* express. *

(off his look)

She saw a replica of the Valentine's Day card in my file, and didn't react at all. I believe the killer would've registered recognition, at least... *

WEB

She's a lawyer. Think maybe she's *bluffing*?

REBECCA

I'm not sure.

WEB

Get sure.

(throws her a file)

Medical examiner's telling us not only was Lisa Aaron assaulted by an object, but the rape occurred post mortem. Figure that supports your female UNSUB theory. *

REBECCA

A woman might not have the strength to control a living victim...

WEB

If Zoya's not our woman, find me who is. Otherwise I want evidence on her and I want it now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MEL

Where's Paul?

WEB

Not on this case.

DANNY

You fire him?

As Web enters his office, shutting the door behind...

WEB

I haven't fired any of you, yet.

The door closes. Danny gets up, frustrated, and exits, leaving Mel and Rebecca with the burden of proof...

30

INT. HIGH END ROMANTIC RESTAURANT - (LATE) DAY

30

Billy Ray and Zoya enjoying a romantic night of freedom. They're halfway through their second course, both buzzed on wine, victory and each other. It's a little creepy.

ZOYA

How does it feel to be a free man?

POPE

I'll let you know in an hour or so.

Zoya grins, slowly leans across the table. Whispers, carnal.

ZOYA

When we get home... I want you to
tear me apart.

PAUL (O.S.)

Aw, that's sweet.

Paul appears out of nowhere, slides into their booth.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Is this table murderers only, or
can I... thanks.

ZOYA

What are you doing here?

PAUL

Joining you guys for dinner.
(grabs menu, reads casual)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL(CONT'D)

Then breakfast, lunch, dinner again. I hear the hearts of palm salad's tasty.

POPE

It's over, Paul. We won.

PAUL

It should be over, shouldn't it? I mean, murder accomplished what it was supposed to; you guys are together, no one else needs to die. Kinda funny. The streets are safer now that the serial killer is back on them.

Pope doesn't find it funny. He clenches the handle of his steak knife in an threatening manner.

POPE

You're making a mistake.

ZOYA

Just ignore him, Billy.

PAUL

Billy? Just "Billy" now? What happened to Billy Ray? Trying to distance yourself from the whole "Achy-Breaky-Heart" thing? 'Cause we always got a kick out of that.

ZOYA

This is harassment.

PAUL

This is just the beginning.
(to an approaching waiter)
We're still working.

But it ain't a waiter.

DANNY

You're not.

He looms there, making it clear Paul is going to talk to him.

31

INT. HIGH END ROMANTIC RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

31

Paul and Danny off to the side; Pope and Zoya in the b.g.

PAUL

What the hell are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DANNY

What do you think? Trying to make sure you don't do something stupid. Which I see I'm a little late for.

*

PAUL

How'd you even find me here?

Zoya and Pope rise, start to go. Paul instinctively starts to move; Danny steps in his way. Paul shoots him a look. Sees Danny is watching them leave. Then, realizing:

PAUL (CONT'D)

Web put a tail on them. That's how you found me. He thinks I'm right.

Paul relaxes a little. No need to chase them.

DANNY

He thinks you're right. But he's not the one ordered the tail.

PAUL

Who did? You?

Danny just stares. And the second realization:

PAUL (CONT'D)

You didn't put a tail on them... you put one on me.

DANNY

You're the one doing the stalking.
(beat)
Worried about you, man.

PAUL

Already got a wife, thanks.

Paul walks away from Danny, out the back. As he goes...

PAUL (CONT'D)

Call off your dogs, Danny. They're useless now.

32 INT. V.C.U. - BULLPEN - NIGHT

32

Rebecca at her desk. Mel appears, with more files.

REBECCA

It was cursory...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEL

What was?

REBECCA

The rape. The non-rape. Whatever
you want to call it.

A desk phone RINGS. Mel looks to it; Rebecca doesn't.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Paul's. It's been doing that a
lot. It'll go to voicemail.

Sure enough, the phone does. Rebecca absorbed in documents.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Doesn't track. The killer made
sure she was dead first, then tried
to make it look like she was raped.
But without much... conviction?

MEL

Gotta say, I'm comin' around on the
whole Zoya killing so her prison
lover could be set free thing.
It's the only motive we got.

REBECCA

Is it...?

Paul's phone RINGS again. Rebecca's not even hearing now.
She rises, moves off with --

REBECCA (CONT'D)

I'll be right back. I want check
something.

Mel looks to Paul's RINGING phone. To the blinking light.
Worried...

EXT. ZOYA'S DOGTOWN MODERN ART LOFT - NIGHT

*

A taxi pulls up. Billy Ray Pope gets out of the back, moves
to the building.

*

*

33 INT. ZOYA'S DOGTOWN MODERN ART LOFT - NIGHT

33

Dark. The door opens. Pope enters. He turns on the light.

He JUMPS, sees Paul sitting there, in an armchair, waiting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

Sorry. Where were we?

Pumping adrenaline, Billy Ray Pope heads for Paul...

POPE

Get out of here...

He freezes as Paul idly puts his gun on his knee.

PAUL

Not your house, Billy. Which begs the question, where's Zoya?

POPE

How long you gonna keep this up?

Paul's CELL RINGS. He checks it. Mel. Kills the call.

PAUL

Well, I've cleared my schedule, so let's not worry about the time frame.

Pope stares at him. At his gun.

POPE

Can we be real with each other for a second? Man to man?

PAUL

Sure.

POPE

When we first met... I was going through a rough time. But I'm different now. I've changed.

PAUL

You've *changed*?

POPE

I'm in love, Agent Ryan. I love someone now, and she loves me.

PAUL

Enough to kill for you.

(Pope doesn't answer)

That's great, Billy. I'm happy for you. But have you asked yourself the most important question?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Paul gets out of his chair. Pope steps back...

PAUL (CONT'D)

How long will it last? How many nights will you spend, snuggled up to her, listening to the pounding in her breast? How long before you rip her open and root around in the warm gore? How long before you take her heart to meet the others you stashed away?

*

Paul's CELL begins RINGING again. He ignores it.

PAUL (CONT'D)

'Cause that's how long I can wait.

POPE

I'm gonna call the cops.

PAUL

Hang on. Maybe that's them.

(into phone)

Ryan.

34 INT. V.C.U. - BULLPEN - SAME TIME (INTERCUT PHONE)

34

Mel on the phone, cradling the receiver a bit, voice low.

MEL

Paul, it's Mel. Where are you?

PAUL

Just with a friend. Actually gotta go...

MEL

Wait, no! Your phone here, it's... the only one they had. The number to call in case of emergency.

PAUL

What?

MEL

It's... Karen, Paul.

Paul begins to implode, looks at Pope, terrified. Pope sees his look, scares himself, and RUNS.

Paul DROPS the phone, runs, SLAMS Pope against the wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

What did you do?!

Pope is terrified. Paul JAMS his gun into Pope's head, pressing it against the wall, shaking.

PAUL (CONT'D)

WHAT DID YOU DO?!

Sweat on both their brows. Tears blooming in Paul's eyes. Paul's finger squeezing on the trigger.

Then the door opens, and Zoya walks in, holding two bags from the market. She sees Paul, stunned, drops them. Bottles BREAK, and Paul blinks back to his senses. Looks down to the phone on the floor. He releases Pope, scoops it up.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Mel?

MEL (V.O.)

Are you there? What's going...

PAUL

Where's Karen?

MEL (V.O.)

Cedars. She's in surgery now. It was an accident, Paul.

PAUL

What?

MEL

Car accident. Cop said she wasn't paying attention...

He lowers the gun, shell shocked. Heads to the door, passing a stunned and confused Zoya.

Zoya runs to cradle a whimpering Pope.

35 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

35

Paul runs down the hall. A NURSE moves to intersect him.

PAUL

Is she okay?

NURSE

She's okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Something in the way she says that stops him dead.

PAUL

Is he okay?

The Nurse wavers. Paul reads the story on her face.

NURSE

I'm so sorry. She lost the baby.

Time dies.

A36 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

A36

KAREN in bed. Paul moves quietly to her bedside. Numb.

As he looks at her, flat on her back, IV and other tubes running into her, his disbelief cracks. Then he begins to. The weight of everything crushing him. Her eyes open slowly, drugged. Paul pulls it together for her sake. Brave smile.

KAREN

Paul?

PAUL

Shhh.

KAREN

Went... looking for you.

And there it is. Paul, devastated, at a loss for words. He reaches out and takes her hand.

PAUL

I'm here.

Her eyes close. Grief or fatigue. The Nurse steps up behind him.

NURSE

She needs to sleep.

He nods. Turns. Sees Mel standing at the doorway, ashen.

36 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - VISITOR'S BENCH - NIGHT

36

Paul and Mel sitting next to each other. No comforting touches. No eye contact. Just the silence that says it all.

PAUL

It's my fault. Why she was out...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mel looks to him, wants to contradict him, but doesn't. Paul shakes his head with a pained smirk.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I thought it was him.

MEL

Who?

PAUL

I thought, if he hurt her, if he *touched* her, I'd kill him. No questions. No courts. No matter what happened, he would die.

MEL

Paul...

Paul's focus shifts inward, realizing something.

PAUL

No matter what...

MEL

Paul, look at me.

He turns to her. Suddenly determined.

PAUL

Will you stay with her?

MEL

Why, what do you...

PAUL

Melody, will you stay with Karen?

Mel exhales like, "yeah, okay sure but..." Paul squeezes her hand, then moves off down the hall. Mel stands.

KAREN (O.S.)

Paul...

Mel looks to Karen, feeling guilty, and trapped here...

37

EXT. ZOYA'S DOGTOWN MODERN ART LOFT - NIGHT

37

Paul's car pulls up, and he kills the lights. He drove here fast. He looks up at Zoya's loft. Shadows moving around.

Paul leans back in his seat, quieting his breathing. Seems relieved that he got here in time. For what, we wonder?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His cell phone RINGS, and he answers it.

REBECCA (V.O.)

Paul. It's me.

INTERCUT WITH:

38 INT. V.C.U. - BULLPEN - NIGHT

38

Rebecca on the phone, but speaking softly.

REBECCA

I know you're not officially on this case, but I need to run something by you that I'm not sure Web wants to hear.

He's still watching the building, and the street. Silence.

PAUL

Yeah?

REBECCA

I think everything that suggested our UNSUB might be a woman actually means something else -- I believe Lisa Aaron's killer had sympathy for her. The rape penetration was cursory, and was carried out after she was dead.

PAUL

Mean after her heart was cut out?

REBECCA

The crime still had to be forged, so... the motive doesn't change. Get Pope's appeal heard, get him back on the street.

Paul doesn't respond. He's watching another CAR PULL UP.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

We assumed the only way the killer would know about the greeting cards was if Pope told them. But I don't think Pope ever told Zoya. She still thinks he's innocent.

The mystery car's headlights go dark. A FIGURE steps out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REBECCA (CONT'D)

The only way the killer would know about the cards was if he saw one himself -- if he'd discovered one of the victims, and was trained to respond.

NATE LAIRD moves to the trunk, pops it.

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

The first step to CPR is to clear the airway of obstructions.

He takes out a tool kit. A knife. And a gun. He stares at *Zoya's building*; and Paul stares at him, grim. *

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Think we may be looking at one of the victims' husbands, most likely Jim Travers, or Nate Laird.

Laird conceals the gun in his coat, closes the trunk.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

They both fought hardest for the death penalty. Maybe it was one of *their* plans that got frustrated.

Paul watches Laird, armed for bear, move towards Zoya's apartment. He doesn't move a muscle. After a beat...

PAUL

It's a solid theory. Let me know what you find.

He hangs up.

END OF ACT THREE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ACT FOUR

39 INT. V.C.U. - ALCOVE / HALL - NIGHT 39

Danny, coat in hand, heading out quickly through the exit down the glass hallway... reveal Rebecca on the phone.

REBECCA

...We just alerted the MP's at Pendleton. They say Laird's on duty, but they can't find him.

INTERCUT WITH:

40 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT 40

Mel is in the door of Karen's room, ducking dirty looks from the NURSES re: her being on the cell phone in the hospital.

REBECCA

Danny's on his way there now. We also can't get Travers on the phone. He lives in Tarzana. Can you get there?

MEL

(quiet)

I can't. I'm at the hospital.

REBECCA

What? Are you okay?

MEL

I'm fine, it's... there was an accident with Paul's wife.

(beat)

Rebecca, she lost the baby.

REBECCA

Oh my God. He didn't say anything.

MEL

Who?

REBECCA

Paul. I just spoke to him...

MEL

Where was he?

REBECCA

What do you mean? He's not with you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEL

No, he took off to I don't know
where, asked me to stay with Karen.

REBECCA

(quiet, thinking)

Was he emotional?

MEL

Yeah, but, it was more like... it
felt like he *knew* something.

Off Rebecca, disturbed...

41 EXT. ZOYA'S DOGTOWN MODERN ART LOFT - NIGHT 41

Paul sitting stoically in his car, as --

42 INT. ZOYA'S DOGTOWN MODERN ART LOFT - NIGHT 42

Pope and Zoya sit on the sofa together. He's leaning against her, and she's sheltering him with an arm. Freud would be hard. His head is on her chest, listening to her HEART BEAT.

ZOYA

It's gonna be okay.

POPE

He can't do this to us.

ZOYA

No he can't. I'm gonna end his
career, I'm gonna put him in jail.
We'll see how *he* likes it.

He snuggles closer. Thump-Thump. Thump-Thump. THUNK. A heavy noise at the door. They both look up at it. Zoya's heart-beat SPEEDS UP.

POPE

Not again...

ZOYA

I'll take care of it.

Zoya, determined, goes to the door as Pope melts back away from it. She opens the door --

And gets HIT HARD ACROSS THE MOUTH WITH THE BUTT OF A GUN. She goes down. Pope leaps up as LAIRD enters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAIRD

Remember me?

Pope's eyes widen on Zoya, but one look at Laird sends him scrambling to get away. Laird slams the door, locks it.

43 EXT. ZOYA'S DOGTOWN MODERN ART LOFT - NIGHT

43

From his car, Paul watches the door slam. His hand instinctively goes to his door handle, but he doesn't open it. He removes it, conflicted.

Suddenly, HEADLIGHTS. Another car arrives. Rebecca.

Paul, pissed that she's here, gets out.

PAUL

Locke.

She sees him. Hesitates. Doesn't know what to expect.

PAUL (CONT'D)

How's your theory coming?

Rebecca spots Laird's car.

REBECCA

(re: the car)

Marine sticker. This Laird?

PAUL

Could be.

REBECCA

He's already up there, isn't he?

He just looks at her.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Paul, what are you doing?

PAUL

Nothing.

REBECCA

This isn't justice.

PAUL

No, but it's something.

She sees his pain there, his terrible conflict.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REBECCA

I know what happened with Karen.
I'm sorry.
(then)
Go. You shouldn't even be here.

She turns and heads for the loft. Off Paul, watching her go,
conflicted --

44 INT. ZOYA'S DOGTOWN MODERN ART LOFT - NIGHT

44

Zoya's groaning on the floor, half conscious.

POPE

Is slammed into a wall. Falls. Tries to get away from the
looming Laird, but he's on him. Laird holds him down stuffs
his gun in his waistband, and produces a BIGASS KNIFE.

Laird RIPS Pope's shirt open, exposing part of his chest.
Pope squirms and struggles. Laird punches him.

ZOYA

Fights to regain consciousness; it's not a fight she's
winning at the moment, as --

LAIRD

Over Pope.

LAIRD

I know you shot Jodie first. But I
figured I'd cut your heart out
while you was still breathing.
Want you to know how it feels.

Pope musts bile through his pain.

POPE

Just so you know...
(smiles, vicious)
Your wife was worth every second.

Laird raises the knife, and --

REBECCA

Freeze!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rebecca's stepping through the front door, gun out, moving in cautiously. Laird does freeze, looks at her. *

REBECCA (CONT'D) *
Please, Captain. Just drop the *
knife. *

The marine in Laird emerges for just a second. *

LAIRD *
Ma'am. Please leave. *

REBECCA *
Can't do that, Nathan -- put down *
the knife. *

LAIRD *
This filth killed Jodie. *

REBECCA *
I know... *

LAIRD *
He needs to pay. State wouldn't do *
it, I'll do it for 'em. *

REBECCA *
CAPTAIN! *

The knife arcs up. Pope's eyes go wide, the knife starts to *
descend and BOOM! Laird is shot, Spins. He hits the ground. *

Rebecca reacts to that. She didn't shoot... she sees -- *

PAUL *

Has entered the apartment. His gun aimed and smoking (do *
they do that?) *

Pope scurries back into the corner, away from the fallen *
Laird. *

POPE *
Thank you. *

Paul, gun still out. Rebecca shaken. Zoya runs to her man, *
and gathers him up in her embrace. Paul lowers the gun... *

LAIRD lolls over with his gun, points dazed at Pope...

ZOYA *
NO! *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Zoya shields her lover. THREE GUNSHOTS. One from Laird, two from Paul, putting **Laird DOWN for good.** *

Pope blinks, face speckled with bright blood. Not his own.

POPE

Zoya?

Zoya is DEAD in his arms. He cradles her, howling in agony. ON LAIRD - dying. Satisfied. He remembers that howl.

LAIRD

See how it feels. *

Laird dies. Rebecca retrieves his gun. Pope SOBS.

Paul stands there, gun dangling from his hand, taking in the scene. Justice achieved. Sort of. Or not at all.

UPCUT TO:

47 INT. ZOYA'S DOGTOWN MODERN ART LOFT (LATER THAT) NIGHT 47

On-scene aftermath. Nate, Pope and Zoya have all been taken away. CRIME SCENE GUYS remain, processing the place like ants tending aphids. Paul and Rebecca look on, both of them still looking a little stunned. Glenn Terry approaches.

TERRY

Ryan. I've heard your name a lot tonight. Zoya Petikof called in a complaint against you earlier.

(dryly)

Before she was shot.

Rebecca steps forward, tries to help.

REBECCA

Sir, I can explain...

Terry turns to her with a withering look...

TERRY

Ah, so you can explain. How two neighbors saw Ryan here earlier today, before Petikof called in her complaint. How he failed to protect the only person in the room who was innocent of a crime. I can't wait to hear your justification.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WEB (O.S.)

He was working for me.

Web has entered the scene. He approaches the others.

WEB (CONT'D)

Special Agent Ryan was acting on my very specific instructions.

It's the second time someone in this room has "taken a bullet" for someone else. Terry is ice cold.

TERRY

I see.

WEB

I'd like a moment with my SA, please.

Terry nods, backs off. Web and Paul move off to the side.

PAUL

I don't work for you, and I don't want any favors.

WEB

Then you are a private citizen who just became a vigilante felon. And they will cuff you right now.

Paul lets that sink in. Looks to the crime scene.

WEB (CONT'D)

Or. You're a federal agent, acting under orders.

Paul doesn't say anything. Doesn't need to.

WEB (CONT'D)

Now go. Be with your Wife.

Paul looks at him. He knows about Karen. He nods and turns away. No thank yous.

WEB (CONT'D)

I'll see you in the office when you're ready.

Paul feels the sting, but keeps walking. Off Web, turning back towards the crime scene--

48 INT. V.C.U. - BULLPEN - DAY

48

Some time has passed. But not much. We're with Paul as he makes his way to the cluster of desks.

He finds Mel, Danny and Rebecca already there. They stand as he approaches. Mel goes to him and hugs him. He allows her.

MEL

How's Karen?

PAUL

She's home.

*

Far as he wants to go, there. He looks at Danny, who smiles, leaning on Paul's desk. Danny slides the drawer open. Paul's gun and credentials inside.

DANNY

Welcome back.

Paul takes the items. Holsters the gun, looks at Rebecca. She smiles, no good at this sentimental stuff.

PAUL

Thank you.

(to Mel, Danny)

All of you.

It's a warm feeling. Then Web's door opens.

Everyone tenses a bit as Web walks out. Except Paul.

WEB

Welcome home, Paul.

PAUL

Thanks. Just so we're clear, I'm not back here because of you. And I don't really mean "thanks."

WEB

No?

Paul steps to Web, looking him right in the eyes.

PAUL

Things are gonna change around here, least as far as you and I are concerned. I'm done being the heart you never had, or your puppet in shining armor, or whatever.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL(CONT'D)

You'll treat me with the respect
due my ability and experience as a
Special Agent who's served the
Bureau over ten years. And who's
tolerated you longer than most.

WEB

Well, you're right about one thing -
- thing's are gonna change.

He's said that last as he spots --

TERRY GLENN and a couple of INTERNAL AFFAIRS GUYS in suits
have entered from the glass doors. Terry pauses at Web. Two
old soldiers eyeing each other.

WEB (CONT'D)

Firearm is unloaded, on the desk.
Along with my credentials.
(as he goes)
Key's in the drawer.

And Web walks out. Terry and his guys move into Web's
office, the two I.A. Guys moving around to Web's desk, one of
them leaning over, starting to access Web's computer.

The gang just blinks. Looking. Terry is at Web's office
door, expressionless as he closes it, shutting them out.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE