

THE COLD TRUTH

Screenplay by

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Adapted from the book by

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FADE IN:

INT. NORTH CAROLINA ROAD - NIGHT

Beneath a full moon, a DARK FIGURE rides a motorcycle through the countryside. He veers off-road, follows a dirt trail into the woods.

INT. WOODS - NIGHT

The cyclist cuts the engine, lets the bike glide under the tall pines. He leans the bike against a tree, then walks to the edge of the woods.

PALMER HOUSE - DARK FIGURE'S POV

A rambling three-story house, all by itself in the dark.

BACK TO:

DARK FIGURE

He steals across the yard, passing a child's slide and swing set. When he reaches the PORCH, he peers through a window into the darkened home. Using a switchblade, he pries off the screen, then opens the window. He pulls a hood over his face and clambers inside.

INT. PALMER HOME - NIGHT

Hovering by the window, he lets his eyes adjust to the dark interior: a STUDY, containing a cluttered desk and overstuffed book cases. He shuffles to a closed door, opens it, listens to the quiet.

He slips into the FOYER, his moon-lit shadow stretching the length of the hallway. He shines a flashlight on the stairway, letting the light illumine each step as he pads slowly up the stairs.

In the UPSTAIRS HALL, he reaches a closed door. He silently turns the knob and, using the barrel of a small-caliber pistol, nudges it open. He shines his flashlight within.

INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JULIAN PALMER, 13, sleeps on the bottom bunk; her YOUNGER SISTER sleeps on the top. After the light from the flashlight leaves her face, Julian opens her eyes, glimpsing

the man's shadowy retreat to the hall. She gets out of bed, tiptoes to the door and peeks out.

She sees someone enter her parents' bedroom.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - CONTINUOUS

Julian steps into the hall. Suddenly, a FLASH OF LIGHT and simultaneous GUNSHOT freeze her mid-step. Her MOTHER'S SCREAM is cut short by another FLASH OF LIGHT and GUNSHOT.

At the sound of the KILLER'S MOVEMENTS, she bolts down the stairs, in terror.

The killer steps into the hall, glimpses the girl's escape. A DOOR SLAMS. He starts down, unhurried, sure of his prey.

INT. PALMER STUDY - NIGHT

Julian races to the closet where she grabs her father's shotgun. With trembling hands, she loads a shell.

She can hear the KILLER'S FOOTSTEPS descending the stairs, and see the sweep of his flashlight under the door sill.

Julian brings the shotgun to her shoulder, aims at the closed door -- her hands are shaking so violently she can barely hold the gun.

The knob turns. The door swings open. The killer's moon-lit shadow fills the threshold.

INT. JULIAN'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Julian wakes with a start, her breath coming in violent gasps. Now 27, she's got thick brown hair and fair skin, a drop-dead beauty ... still haunted by memory.

She gets out of bed, navigates past stacks of packed boxes to the window of her dismantled bedroom. She opens the window, breathes deeply.

Outside, a U-HAUL TRUCK is parked in the driveway.

INT. APARTMENT STAIRWAY - DAY

Julian and TOMMY, a strapping teenager, carry her mattress down a narrow staircase.

EXT. APARTMENT DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

They emerge on the driveway, where they load the mattress into a tightly packed U-Haul truck; it's autumn in western New York, crisp and cool.

CUT TO:

A POLICE CAR stops in front of the house. LUTHER BURROUGHS, 72, in uniform, handsome, full head of silver hair, grabs a colorfully wrapped package from the seat. He gets out, starts up the driveway as Tommy is leaving.

TOMMY
Hey, Chief Burroughs.

LUTHER
All finished?

TOMMY
Yup.

LUTHER
You staying out of trouble?

TOMMY
Yes, sir.

He gets on his bike and pedals off. Luther reaches the truck as Julian squeezes the last box into the back.

LUTHER
Got room for me?

JULIAN
Always.

He sits on the ledge of the truck bed, motions her to sit next to him. When she does, he gives her the package.

JULIAN (cont'd)
Oh, Luther. You're going to embarrass me.

LUTHER
I knew you wouldn't be with us for long, not somebody who's got any ambition.

She opens the present: a polished .45 revolver, in a leather shoulder holster.

LUTHER (cont'd)
It was mine, now it's yours.

She's emotional.

LUTHER (cont'd)
It comes loaded with good luck,
plus a box of bullets, just in
case.

He hands her the bullet box. She gives him a hug.

JULIAN
Thank you, Luther.

She takes the gun out of its holster, hefts its weight.

JULIAN (cont'd)
Did you ever have to use it, in the
line of duty?

LUTHER
Or otherwise?

They laugh.

LUTHER (cont'd)
Oh, guess I drew it a few times,
but thank God, never had to pull
the trigger. In Wilson we like to
talk about our problems, not shoot
our way into bigger ones.

She slips the gun back in its holster.

JULIAN
Everything here has been so
comfortable, it's easy to forget
what can happen out there. Lately
I've been thinking about what I'd
do if I ever come face to face with
one of the bad guys in this world.

LUTHER
I been lucky there, too -- never
had to look old Mr. Evil straight
in the eye.

He knocks for 'luck' on the floor of the truck -- she does
the same.

JULIAN

When I think about it, that's when
I get scared.

LUTHER

Not you.

JULIAN

Yes, me. Sometimes I think I've
just been kidding myself.

LUTHER

You'll be fine, Julian. God will
protect you.

He takes her hand, squeezes it.

EXT. WILSON/MAIN STREET - DAY

Luther, at the wheel of his cruiser, drives with LIGHTS and SIREN as he leads Julian's U-Haul truck through the almost deserted Main Street of Wilson, New York, a rural town on the shores of Lake Ontario, population 3,000; Julian's '06 Prius is on a hitch behind the U-Haul.

EXT. STATE HIGHWAY SEVEN - DAY

At the edge of town, Luther pulls to the side of the empty highway. Julian passes by, flashing the U-Haul lights and honking the horn. Luther SQUAWKS THE SIREN a final time.

EXT. STATE HIGHWAY SEVEN - DAY

The U-Haul travels eastward on the windswept plain.

EXT. STATE HIGHWAY PULL-OUT - DAY

Roadside, Julian gets a sandwich and soda out of a brown bag.

INT. U-HAUL (MOVING) - DAY

In late afternoon, Julian drives into the mountainous Adirondack region, immersed in autumn leaves of red, yellow and orange -- the truck strains to make the climb.

EXT. CANAANVILLE, NEW YORK - NIGHT

The U-Haul arrives in the quaint downtown of a small Adirondack town -- population, 10,000.

INT. RAMADA INN - NIGHT

Julian fills out a registration card for TINA, 25, the goth night manager.

TINA

How long will you be staying?

JULIAN

I'll let you know. Could be a while.

INT. RAMADA/ROOM 109 - DAY

Julian checks herself in the mirror: she's wearing a classy linen suit that tries to contain her ample assets, but fails.

EXT. CANAANVILLE MAIN STREET - DAY

Wearing a trench coat and carrying a briefcase, Julian gets out of her Prius in front of a two-story stone building.

INT. CANAANVILLE POLICE STATION - DAY

In the lobby, Julian signs the visitor log for CHESTER, 81, a retired cop. He points to a winding staircase.

CHESTER

Second floor, first door on the left.

Julian starts up the chipped stone steps, but pauses when she hears a WOLF WHISTLE. She glances back at Chester, who is 'busy' reading the visitor log.

INT. CANAANVILLE POLICE STATION - DAY

Coat in lap, Julian waits on a bench by the door; the room is cluttered, its three desks piled with paperwork, its file cabinets overflowing; the place feels like a time warp from the way things used to be done.

Julian ignores the BELLOW that comes from behind the closed door of the corner office.

EDWARDS (O.S.)

Christalfuckingalmighty ...

She pretends not to notice the parting of the blinds behind a partitioned-glass window -- someone is peering at her.

The door opens and SERGEANT SIMMS, 45, a lanky uniformed officer, his expression slightly eerie, emerges.

SIMMS

Chief Edwards will see you now.

Frowning, he watches her cross the room.

INT. CHIEF EDWARDS' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Julian enters. Seated behind a cluttered desk, WINSTON 'BEAR' EDWARDS, 55, 6'4", 260 pounds, tilts his head to scrutinize her over his reading glasses -- he's ruggedly handsome, charismatic, and intimidating.

EDWARDS

Shut the door.

Julian complies, glances out the dirty plate glass window overlooking the street. Bear points to the chair in front of his desk. She sits.

EDWARDS (cont'd)

You lied.

JULIAN

Excuse me?

Scowling, he picks up her resumé, crumples the corners in his huge bear-paw hands.

EDWARDS

Jesus F. Christ. Julian. Julian Palmer.

JULIAN

Yes, sir.

EDWARDS

Fooled 'em, didn't ya?

She doesn't react. The ceiling fan clicks like a metronome.

EDWARDS (cont'd)

Fooled me good, too. How 'bout that.

He dangles the resumé, then lets it slip from his fingers.

EDWARDS (cont'd)

A woman.

JULIAN

So it would appear. But the personnel committee was well aware of my gender, not to mention ...

EDWARDS

Just pulling your chain, honey.

He smiles for the first time. She doesn't return it.

EDWARDS (cont'd)

What's the matter? Can't take a little bit of good-natured fun?

JULIAN

I don't find it funny.

EDWARDS

Just get over yourself. But I'll be frank -- I don't much believe in women in police work.

JULIAN

Because?

EDWARDS

Because there's a good chance of getting shot and ... I dunno, guess I'm just old school that way, but you are, after all, the one they picked.

He picks up the resumé, scans it again.

EDWARDS (cont'd)

CCNY. Top of the class, were you?
(she nods)
City Police Academy, good outfit --
I spent some time at NYPD myself.

JULIAN

You're well-remembered, sir.

Grunting, he settles back, tilting his ancient leather chair backward to a dangerously steep angle, and waves toward the outer office.

EDWARDS

Watch out for Simms there -- he's none too pleased.

She waits for explanation.

EDWARDS (cont'd)

He wanted this job. Been here a whole lot of years, then gets passed over by a youngster with a college degree. In a skirt.

JULIAN

Hopefully we can make it work. If not, that will be his problem.

EDWARDS

You got some bite there, Miz Palmer, I like that, but can we all agree your three years in Podunk don't add up to much more than child's play?

JULIAN

That's why I applied for the position here.

They stare at each other, neither one backing down.

EDWARDS

Can you read people?

JULIAN

Read them?

He waves vaguely in her direction.

EDWARDS

For instance, I know the entire contents of your shiny new briefcase there. Contains only a few more copies of this very impressive resumé, and one legal pad, because of the nasty habit you picked up in this course here.

He points to a line on her resumé.

EDWARDS (cont'd)

Criminal Law. I know you got your hair cut just within a couple days ... the evenness of your bangs. And I know the suit you're wearing, fresh-looking though it may be, is an old one. Roll the cuffs under to hide the fray, huh?

She doesn't react to his 'psychic' reading.

EDWARDS (cont'd)

Shall we open the briefcase, see how I did?

JULIAN

No. You were correct.

EDWARDS

Bonus round -- you like getting your hands dirty, or do you prefer to keep 'em clean?

JULIAN

Gee, I'm sorry you weren't at the interview.

EDWARDS

Non-responsive. What about your soul?

She shakes her head, with a slight smile.

JULIAN

Think I'll leave it at dirty hands.

He laughs.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Bear leads Julian across the street, authoritatively stopping cars by strength of will.

INT. RHINE BROTHERS CAFÉ - DAY

Bear opens the door for Julian to enter the popular Café, where CUSTOMERS crowd the tables, booths, and counter. Owner HELEN BARNES, 55, attractive, at her post by the cash register, grabs two menus.

HELEN

A little late, aren't you, chief?

EDWARDS

I got here as soon as I could, darlin'.

She leads them across the room -- some patrons, of the male variety, crank their heads as the attractive stranger passes by. Helen delivers them to Bear's booth by the window.

EDWARDS (cont'd)

Helen, this is Officer Julian Palmer, lately of Wilson, New York, and our next chief of police.

HELEN

Oh, my. Welcome.

JULIAN

Thank you.

EDWARDS

We'll be working together the next couple weeks, kind of pass the baton I guess.

HELEN

You're a very lucky woman -- the Bear is a legend around here.

EDWARDS

Just a big 'ol bear in a little piece of woods.

HELEN

(to Julian)

Don't let him fool you, he's a big shot all right -- twenty-five years at NYPD, and not one murder left unsolved.

EDWARDS

That's not exactly true, but thank you, darlin'.

She kisses a finger, plants it on his cheek.

EDWARDS (cont'd)

(to Julian)

Helen never misses any of those TV police shows -- probably knows more than I do.

HELEN

Everybody but you, chief.

She waves to a waitress lingering by the counter.

HELEN (cont'd)

(calling)

You mind, dearie?

EDWARDS

She not too happy today?

HELEN

Miss Moody, as usual. Anyway, good luck, Julian -- if this fella gives you any trouble, you come right to me, cause I know how to handle this old grizzly.

Bear pretends to swat her, but instead squeezes her hand.

EDWARDS
Don't you wish.

HELEN
Have a good one.

She departs as SARAH LANGLEY, 21, blond with a purple streak, shapely in her tight uniform, with sensuous mouth, slouches to the booth -- she's edgy, eyes averted.

EDWARDS
Hey there, Sarah -- I'll take a
roast beef sandwich, and for you,
Miz Palmer?

JULIAN
Tuna melt.

EDWARDS
And two coffees.
(to waitress)
Got that, honey, or do you need a
rewind?

Frowning at his snide remark, Sarah returns to the counter.

JULIAN
I see you make a favorable
impression everywhere you go.

EDWARDS
Miz Palmer, they don't call me the
Bear for nothin'.

INT. RAMADA INN/ROOM 109 - NIGHT

Just before dawn, POLICE SIRENS wake Julian from her restless sleep. She goes to the window, peeks out the curtain. The SIRENS FADE. She checks her cell phone: no messages.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Julian signs the visitor log for the leering Chester, then starts up the stairs.

CHESTER
No need to go upstairs, sweetie.

JULIAN
Why is that?

CHESTER

Ain't nobody up there. Chief and Simms are out to Veterans Park. Crime scene.

EXT. VETERANS PARK - DAY

Julian drives her Prius into a wooded park. She stops on a hilltop where the road has been taped off and a CRIMINALIST is dusting a rusted YELLOW VW BUG.

CUT TO:

Walking along the rise, Julian sees Chief Edwards, Sergeant Simms, a POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER, and the CORONER gathered in the creek bed below. Julian hurries down.

JULIAN

Thanks for alerting me.

EDWARDS

Sorry -- guess I'm just not used to having somebody looking over my shoulder.

Their breath is visible in the late October air.

JULIAN

What happened?

EDWARDS

See for yourself.

Julian approaches the body lying partially in the creek, covered by a sheet. She stands over it, bracing herself.

She pulls back the sheet, revealing a naked young woman, her head almost severed from the spinal column, the torso a spaghetti of flesh, the limbs bent awkwardly, the breasts cut cleanly off, a large 'X' carved on her belly. But the hair she can recognize.

Repulsed, she drops the sheet over the body. She walks up the creek, fighting her emotions. Bear follows.

EDWARDS (cont'd)

Now this is exactly why I don't recommend a woman go into police work.

JULIAN

It's the waitress, from the Café.

EDWARDS
Yeah. Sarah Langley.

JULIAN
What kind of sick individual ...

EDWARDS
If it were a dog, we'd just shoot
it and get it over with. Are you
all right, Miz Palmer?

JULIAN
I'm sorry, it's just ...

She wipes her eyes, gathers her composure.

EDWARDS
Your first?

She shakes her head.

EDWARDS (cont'd)
Then don't act like it. What is
the first tenet of good
investigative work?

JULIAN
I'm not really up for guessing
games.

EDWARDS
Check the evidence, Miz Palmer.
Always check the evidence.

He leads her back to the body.

EDWARDS (cont'd)
In this instance, the killer left
nothing behind, except the body
itself.

He removes the sheet.

EDWARDS (cont'd)
What do you see?

She forces herself to look again at the mutilated corpse.

JULIAN
Multiple stab wounds, cutting,
slicing, gouging.

EDWARDS

I would recommend making a sketch of the scene. Sometimes down the road I get more from my own squiggles than looking at some bloody photograph.

He starts back up the slope toward the rise where the men are gathered around the yellow VW.

EDWARDS (cont'd)

Join us when you're done.

Julian gets a pad out of her briefcase. She lets her gaze wander the vicinity, scanning. Fifty yards away, in the creek bed, something catches her attention.

She walks toward it, ignoring the water soaking her shoes. She reaches the spot, stares down at the partially submerged object.

JULIAN

(calling)

Chief Edwards -- I found something!

She kneels by a bloody blue scarf, with sparkles, as Bear and the others hurry down the slope. Bear gets there first.

EDWARDS

I can't believe none of us spotted that.

JULIAN

I need gloves, and a bag.

When nobody moves, Bear gives Simms a shove.

EDWARDS

You heard her!

Simms runs off. Bear and Julian share a look.

EDWARDS (cont'd)

This might be all we need to get the son of a bitch.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - DAY

Armed with his .45, Bear knocks on the door of a decrepit shotgun house. Julian waits behind him.

EDWARDS
 (calling)
 Canaanville Police.

He tries the knob -- it's unlocked.

EDWARDS (cont'd)
 Got your firearm?

She draws Luther's .45 from her concealed holster.

EDWARDS (cont'd)
 Nice. Ever use it?

JULIAN
 No.

EDWARDS
 Then just try not to shoot me in
 the ass.

He slips into the house. Julian waits on the threshold for several long beats.

EDWARDS (O.S.) (cont'd)
 You waiting for an invitation?

She enters.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Julian scans the tiny KITCHEN, dishes piled high in the sink. Motioning for silence, Bear takes the lead down the long 'shotgun' hallway.

Julian trails through the sparsely furnished LIVING ROOM; past the BATHROOM, its walls grimy; into a darkened BEDROOM, the shades pulled down and a mattress on the floor.

Satisfied that no one's in the house, he holsters his gun. Julian does the same. Bear opens a shade, letting light flood the room.

EDWARDS
 Just some young girl. Just some
 young girl, trying to get by.
 'Scuse me.

Through a hall mirror, Julian can see Bear sidle into the bathroom, stand at the toilet and heft his coat to unzip his

trousers. When their eyes meet in the mirror, Bear grunts, then lifts the door on its hinge in order to close it.

CUT TO:

They make their way back down the hall. Bear pauses by a high-school yearbook photo of Sarah scotch-taped to the mirror. In it, she's smiling eagerly, a beautiful farm girl wearing an ill-fitting dress. He somberly removes the photo and slips it into his wallet.

JULIAN

Isn't protocol to leave the place untouched? This might be a crime scene.

Ignoring her question, he continues down the hall.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - DAY

Bear and Julian walk across the dirt yard to the cruiser parked in the street; the surrounding houses are in various stages of decay.

They get in the vehicle. He inserts the keys into the ignition, but doesn't start the engine.

EDWARDS

My protocol is to remember that Sarah isn't just some dead body. She was a young woman with her own dreams, which probably didn't extend much beyond our little town's boundaries, which will now sure as shit not extend beyond them. So while I work, Miss Protocol, a photo helps me remember why I'm doing all this crap in the first place.

JULIAN

I get it.

EDWARDS

It will also help the mortician reconstruct her face.

He shakes his head sadly.

EDWARDS (cont'd)

I saw plenty killings like this in the city, but not here. I can't believe it -- retirement two weeks
(more)

EDWARDS (cont'd)
away, and something like this
happens. Goddamnit.

JULIAN
If you'd like, I'll take the lead
in the investigation.

EDWARDS
You're not on payroll until the
fifteenth.

JULIAN
Not a problem. I'll do the leg
work, and report to you.

He studies her.

EDWARDS
You know, I might just take you up
on that. Maybe it's having my foot
halfway out the door, I dunno, but
my head just isn't there.

He starts the engine.

EXT. LANGLEY FARM - DAY

Julian knocks on the door of a farmhouse with peeling paint;
the adjacent barn has a sagging roof, and the adjacent fields
are gone to seed.

The door opens: ANNA LANGLEY, 51, tenses at the sight of a
police car in the dirt driveway -- she covers her mouth.

JULIAN
Mrs. Langley?

Anna braces herself against the door -- Julian reaches out to
steady her.

INT. LANGLEY FARMHOUSE - DAY

In a worn-out living room, Julian sits in a chair opposite
Anna and PHILIP LANGLEY, 53, on the couch.

PHILIP
We adopted Sarah when she was a
baby. In the summer after high
school, she got it in her head to
find her biological parents, and
she was able to locate her mother
in New York City. We don't know
exactly what happened, but we think
the mother may have been involved
(more)

PHILIP (cont'd)
 in prostitution, drugs. Sarah came
 back very depressed -- spent six
 months in a mental ward, at Zimmern
 State Hospital. After that, she
 didn't seem all that interested in
 seeing us.

ANNA
 We kept hoping that in time
 whatever happened in New York,
 whatever heartache, would go away,
 but now, I guess ...

Her voice trails away.

JULIAN
 When did you last speak to your
 daughter?

PHILIP
 A week ago.

JULIAN
 May I ask what it was about?

PHILIP
 She asked for money. These days,
 there's none to spare.

JULIAN
 Did she say what she wanted it for?

PHILIP
 She wanted to leave Canaanville.

JULIAN
 She 'wanted' to leave, or she
 'needed' to leave?

The parents shake their heads, unsure.

INT. RHINE BROTHERS CAFÉ - DAY

Julian enters the Café. Helen is working the cash register.

HELEN
 It's almost noon -- shouldn't we be
 the first people you question?!
 Where's the chief?

JULIAN
 Let's talk in the back.

HELEN
(to CUSTOMER)
Oh my, God, Cheryl -- I can't believe I'm involved in a murder case! I can't believe this is really happening!

INT. RHINE BROTHERS CAFÉ/KITCHEN - DAY

Adjacent to the big stove, Julian questions Helen, REGGIE, 29, the black cook, handsome, muscular, and JIMMY, 23, the mentally impaired dishwasher.

JULIAN
Did Sarah do anything last night that caught your attention?

HELEN
Nothing but the same bad attitude.

JIMMY
Sarah gave me a flower.

JULIAN
That's nice, Jimmy -- she was a good person.

JIMMY
She was pretty.

JULIAN
Yes, she was. Reggie?

REGGIE
Me and Sarah closed up, like usual.

He seems nervous, focusing on his hands.

HELEN
Oh, come on, Reg -- you have to explain what 'usual' is.

REGGIE
Usual is me cleaning my kitchen, Sarah doing the money, then both of us walking to the bank for the drop.

JULIAN
Helen -- was the money in the bank this morning, did you check?

HELEN

Damn right I checked -- the money was there.

JULIAN

What happened after you left the bank?

REGGIE

I walked her to her car, then went my way.

JULIAN

What time did you get home?

REGGIE

Midnight.

JULIAN

Is there someone who can confirm that?

REGGIE

My dog, he can.

JULIAN

But he's not saying.

Helen chuckles, but not Reggie.

JULIAN (cont'd)

Had Sarah talked to any of you about leaving town?

Reggie and Helen shake their heads.

JIMMY

New York.

JULIAN

Jimmy, she went to New York last year. Did she want to go again?

JIMMY

Reggie and Sarah, New York! Party!

Julian looks to Reggie, who shakes his head.

REGGIE

He don't know what the fuck he's talking about.

INT. POLICE STATION/FORENSICS ROOM - DAY

In a fluorescent, putrid-smelling room of cluttered tables, test tubes, evidence lockers, SAM ADAMS (the criminalist from the murder scene), 45, short, unshaven, cherubic-looking, delivers his briefing to Bear and Julian.

SAM

Evidence of strangulation. The wounds themselves -- forty-four, to be exact -- inflicted with an eight-inch knife, and hands, and brute strength.

JULIAN

Straight or serrated?

He glances nervously at the bombshell invading his lair.

SAM

Serrated. A chef's knife of the standard kitchen variety. And I don't think it was a particularly sharp knife -- that's why I say hands and brute strength. Kind of like a wild animal tearing apart its prey.

EDWARDS

Spare us the editorial comments.

SAM

Sorry, chief. The preponderance of the entry-wound angles indicate a right-handed killer.

He gives Bear a large manila envelope.

SAM (cont'd)

The photos -- probably the worst bunch I ever seen.

Bear takes out the photographs, scans through them.

EDWARDS

What did Jake give for time of death?

SAM

Estimating between 2 and 4 a.m.

EDWARDS

Thanks, Sam. Feel free to tell Miz Palmer anything you would tell me -- just make sure you tell me first.

Sam giggles as Bear starts to leave through the set of swinging double doors, but Julian hesitates.

JULIAN

What about the scarf -- anything?

EDWARDS

We won't have that for a couple days.

Waving to the smitten Sam, Julian follows Bear out the doors.

INT. POLICE STATION/LOBBY - DAY

Julian stands to the side as Bear addresses a REPORTER from the Albany Mail and a REPORTER from the Canaanville Register.

ALBANY MAIL

Do you have a suspect, chief?

EDWARDS

Art -- we got squat, so when you write your article, ask the public to contact us if they have any information that could help us solve this horrific crime.

CANAANVILLE REGISTER

What was the weapon?

EDWARDS

Working on it -- that's it, fellas, love talking to you all but I gotta get to it.

Motioning for Julian to follow, he leads up the winding stairs.

JULIAN

Wouldn't it help to pass on a little bit of what we know?

EDWARDS

No. I don't want the killer to have any idea what I know or what I don't know -- I save that for when I need it.

He stops, for emphasis.

EDWARDS (cont'd)

This is a grudge match between me
and him, just the two of us --
that's how I look at it, and that's
how I win.

INT. RAMADA INN/ROOM 109 - NIGHT

In bed, Julian listens to the story of Sarah's murder on
LOCAL TV NEWS, while looking at her crime scene sketch.

EXT. VETERANS PARK - DAY

At daybreak, Julian walks along the creek bed in search of
more evidence. She stops, seeing something through the trees
on the nearby ridge -- an UNIDENTIFIED MAN is watching her.

Julian and the man gaze at each other for a moment. When she
starts walking toward him, he disappears.

Julian runs up the slope to the ridge, but when she gets
there -- nothing, except her Prius parked off-road.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Julian tries to unclutter her temporary desk while keeping an
eye on Bear, standing like a statue in his office; Simms,
another UNIFORMED OFFICER and a SECRETARY work at their
desks.

Curious, Julian approaches Bear's open door -- Simms tries to
dissuade her with hand signals, but she ignores him.

JULIAN

Chief?

Oblivious, he stares at the crime photos taped on the glass-
partition.

JULIAN (cont'd)

Chief Edwards?

Finally he looks over.

EDWARDS

Yes?

She steps into the office.

INT. CHIEF EDWARDS' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

She joins him in front of the gruesome 8 x 10 and 16 x 20 black and white photographs.

JULIAN

Are you getting anything?

He shakes his head resignedly.

EDWARDS

No, but this is how I work -- look at 'em and I think, look at 'em and I brood, then stare 'em down some more, until lo and behold I got the solution. Pretty bizarre, huh?

JULIAN

Not if it works.

He motions for her to sit as he settles in his creaky chair.

EDWARDS

Let me try out a little phrase on you here.

He slurps from his coffee mug.

JULIAN

Yes?

EDWARDS

The Perfect Crime.

She laughs.

EDWARDS (cont'd)

Stupid phrase, I know, but over the years, you see the mistakes a criminal makes, and you say, 'gee, if only he'd have done this,' or, 'if only he thought to' -- so you start to wonder whether there could be a Perfect Crime.

JULIAN

No such thing.

EDWARDS

That's exactly what I predicted you'd say, but this morning I catch myself thinking that we might finally be looking at one.

JULIAN

The case is a day old -- isn't it early to be ...

EDWARDS

I'm just getting no traction, nothing from my gut -- and that is most unusual.

JULIAN

The cook -- Reggie -- he was very uncomfortable during the interview, barely made eye contact. And he's got a canine backing his alibi.

EDWARDS

That's potential. When I first got here, I put that character in jail for thirty days -- aggravated assault. Wouldn't think he'd be too anxious to hurry back.

JULIAN

I like him for means and opportunity, but not for motive.

EDWARDS

Well then -- what is your theory?

JULIAN

Honestly, I'm confused.

She gestures toward the lurid photos.

JULIAN (cont'd)

At first glance, I see crime of passion, but the mutilation -- the carved X, breasts cut off -- that says serial killer.

EDWARDS

Right. A signature. Don't think I could retire knowing somebody like that was in our midst.

JULIAN

I looked through the database, didn't see any correlations.

Simms sticks his head in the room.

SIMMS

There's some weird guy out here who says he can help us on the Langley case.

EDWARDS

Oh, yeah?

SIMMS

Says he's been getting visions about the murder.

Bear makes a cross with his fingers.

EDWARDS

That's too spooky for me -- send him on his way.

Julian peeks through the blinds.

OFFICE - JULIAN'S POV

A MAN is seated on the bench by the door, MUMBLING into his hand.

BACK TO:

JULIAN

She turns to Bear.

JULIAN

I've read some case studies about how a psychic sometimes can open up an aspect of the crime that nobody saw.

EDWARDS

Is your goal to make a circus of our investigation?

JULIAN

Weren't you just telling me we have zip?

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Simms approaches WAYNE HILL -- 35, jet black hair combed back, his skin pale and body fragile, arthritic hands shaped in a half-clutch -- who is still MUMBLING into his left hand, the hand missing its little finger.

SIMMS

When you get finished talking to your hand, Chief Edwards will see you.

Hill looks up, as if he'd forgotten where he was.

HILL

Who?

INT. CHIEF EDWARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Hill enters. Julian moves behind Bear, allowing Hill to sit in the chair. Hill glances at the photos taped on the partition -- he shields his eyes until he can shift his chair so that he won't see them.

HILL

Those photographs are very disturbing.

His voice is raspy and strangely measured, but articulate.

EDWARDS

We can all agree on that, Mr. ...

HILL

Hill. Wayne Hill.

EDWARDS

Why is your name familiar?

HILL

Because I worked previously in Essex County, with Chief Richards.

EDWARDS

Oh, right. I remember now. The Pike Twin and Church Tower murders.

HILL

I heard you were asking the public for assistance -- that would be me, the public. I've been away from it for a while, but I had a feeling, about this particular case. I just suddenly had a feeling.

EDWARDS

A psychic feeling?

HILL

Yes.

EDWARDS

Ever notice most psychics are
women? Why is that, do you think?
Kind of a feminine profession?

He waits for Hill's reply, which doesn't come.

EDWARDS (cont'd)

What's with the hand?

Hill self-consciously puts his right hand over the left,
shielding it from scrutiny.

HILL

It's missing a finger. Sorry if it
bothers you.

The men stare, each disliking the other.

EDWARDS

All right, Mr. Hill -- we'll give
it some thought and let you know.

HILL

I'll be at the Ramada, but only
until tomorrow morning.

He departs. Julian looks to Bear, awaiting his assessment.
He sighs wearily.