

THE SPOOK WHO SAT BY THE DOOR

"Pilot"

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ACT ONE

CLOSE ON a man's face, sharp eyes squinting, brow beaded with sweat as A SPOTLIGHT shines white-hot on his brown skin.

This is DAN FREEMAN (30). He looks stressed, gears spinning as he stares into that light. PULL BACK to see --

INT. CIA OFFSITE - INTERROGATION THEATER - DAY

Dan sits at a large table, a MEDICAL CUFF strapped around his torso. It's connected to a MONITOR, needle rising and falling with Dan's heartbeat.

A MAN sits across from him, spotlight positioned just above his shoulder so he's nearly a silhouette.

He's white. Square-jawed. Graying hair trimmed with military precision.

This is CIA OPERATIONS DIRECTOR MARK YANCEY (40s). He sips from a glass of water, then --

YANCEY

One more time, Mr. Freeman. What's the goal of a covert operative?

DAN

Infiltration.

YANCEY

By what means?

DAN

Ideally? Enticement. Learning what the target needs, then becoming something he can't live without.

YANCEY

And who supervises the operation?

DAN

An officer. Watching from a safe distance. Out of the line of fire.

Yancey jots a note on A SMALL PAD. He looks up, about to speak, but Dan continues --

DAN (CONT'D)

But the best asset runs himself. No outside contact. Minimal exposure.

YANCEY

If you're running your own op, how do you know if you've strayed from the mission?

Dan thinks for a moment, the needle on the heart monitor rising and falling at regular intervals. Then --

DAN

It's a risk. But only if infiltration is a job.

YANCEY

When is it anything but?

DAN

When the mission's in your heart. In your blood. It's the reason fanatics make the best soldiers.
(tapping his chest)
Belief.

YANCEY

And what do you believe?

A beat as Dan considers his response, then --

DAN

I believe government derives its power from the consent of the governed... That people should abolish any system that's destructive to their safety --

Yancey raises a hand, interrupting --

YANCEY

You're paraphrasing the Declaration of Independence --

DAN

You asked what I believe.

YANCEY

And you choose that over anything else? The Constitution? The Bible?

DAN

The idea that freedom is more important than power? That it's worth fighting and dying for? That idea built this office. This city. That idea... it's America.

The monitor SPIKES as Dan's heart races for a moment.

Yancey glances over his shoulder, past the spotlight, to A GALLERY where THREE MEN IN DARK SUITS observe.

Yancey locks eyes with one of the men, CIA DIRECTOR JACK TURNER. He's 50 and all WASP, Exeter in a bespoke suit. He NODS silently to Yancey, who turns back to Dan --

YANCEY
We're done.
(beat, then)
Lights.

Yancey pushes himself away from the table as OVERHEAD LIGHTS BLINK ON. And as Dan looks around, still uncertain --

INT. CIA OFFSITE - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Dan looks drained as he stands before a locker, buttoning A WHITE OXFORD over his t-shirt.

One of the men from the gallery, GRAHAM RENFROE, stands nearby. He's 30 and glows with Ivy League confidence.

RENFROE
That bit about the Declaration?
Brilliant.

DAN
Just told him what he needed to
hear.

RENFROE
You did more than that. You showed
him you were every bit the flag-
waving patriot I promised.

THE DOOR OPENS and Director Turner enters with a bulldog shaped like a man, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ALFRED AMES (40).

RENFROE (CONT'D)
Director Turner. Assistant Director
Ames...

Ames lingers by the door, eyeing Dan hard as Turner blows past Renfroe and claps a hand on Dan's shoulder.

TURNER
Welcome to the brotherhood, Mr.
Freeman.

DAN

Glad to have the job, sir.

TURNER

Like you said, it's more than a job. We're the invisible hand that turns the globe.

(then, quietly awed)

And you're the goddamn future.

Turner turns and exits. Ames glowers at Dan for another moment, then follows.

RENFROE

We should go. Mr. Yancey's waiting.

Dan finishes getting dressed, then follows Renfroe to --

INT. CIA OFFSITE - YANCEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Mark Yancey sits at a large desk filling A SHOT GLASS with Scotch. He slides it to Dan, who takes the glass, but doesn't drink. Renfroe lounges on a nearby sofa.

YANCEY

When Graham recommended you, I was skeptical. There's an institutional fit not every man's equipped to handle. You seem different, though.

Yancey pulls A FOLDER from his desk drawer and Dan watches as he studies the documents inside.

YANCEY (CONT'D)

(reading)

Two tours in 'Nam. Long range recon. A pair of Bronze Stars for valor. You get back to Chicago and start working... where was it?

DAN

Archer Daniels Midland. Shipping and Receiving.

YANCEY

A war hero pushing papers. Doesn't seem right, does it?

(then, pointed)

But we both know why that is.

DAN

Appreciate that, sir.

(then, cautiously)

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

But with all due respect... What are we doing, right now?

Yancey reads Dan's apprehension, then offers a cunning smile.

YANCEY

You tell me. Read the situation. Give me your honest assessment.

Dan nods, realizing he's being tested, then --

DAN

Alcohol's a gesture of intimacy. Also a tool to lower inhibitions. You're thinking, he's young. Black. And this is Chivas Regal. The good shit. I take a shot, maybe say something I'm not supposed to.

Dan slides the drink back.

DAN (CONT'D)

It's a smart play. But in this case, the wrong one. I don't drink.

YANCEY

Former college athlete. High level of fitness. The drink was a clumsy gambit on my part.
(nods, then)
Continue.

Dan leans back, now. Growing more comfortable.

DAN

Your casual tone is an attempt at camaraderie despite the obvious power imbalance of you being the guy who just now gave me a job.
(thinks, then)
Can I be honest, sir?

YANCEY

I asked you to.

DAN

I think you're not sure you want me here. But I passed all your tests, so now you're looking for an angle. Anything that'll give you an out.
(then, respectfully)
No offense.

YANCEY

None taken. It's a good situational assessment. There might be some folks a little upset by your presence --

RENFROE

Mr. Ames comes to mind...

Yancey cuts Renfroe a glare that quickly silences him. He turns back to Dan, voice measured but intense.

YANCEY

There are men who'd do anything to keep you out of the agency. But they don't run field ops. I do.

Yancey spins A PHOTO ON HIS DESK to face Dan -- a group of soldiers liberating a concentration camp during World War II.

YANCEY (CONT'D)

I was in the Seventh Army's forty-fifth. You know what we did?

DAN

Liberated Dachau.

YANCEY

My father says all men are created equal. That means the Jew, the Negro, even the VCs in the bush. They all deserve a fair shot.

Dan takes this in, impressed by Yancey's blunt sincerity. Yancey sets the photo aside and pulls out A MAP OF THE WORLD.

YANCEY (CONT'D)

This is the territory we cover. You decide where you want to go, I'll send you there.

Dan is awed by the map. And by the offer.

DAN

Just like that?

YANCEY

You're smart. Excelled in training.
(nods to Renfroe)
And you saved Graham's life --

RENFROE

Twice.

YANCEY

That counts for something. How soon can you relocate to DC?

DAN

My wife's already notified her firm. They have a DC office so... a week. Maybe two.

YANCEY

I'll give you three. You come out to Langley. Graham can show you where I sit.

(beat, then)

Congratulations, Mr. Freeman. And welcome to Central Intelligence.

Yancey stands, and as Dan shakes his hand, we're --

EXT. CIA OFFSITE BUILDING - DUSK

An unadorned, academic-looking building. Dan emerges onto the steps, pausing to take in the skyline. The DEPARTMENT OF STATE looms across the street, and in the near distance --

THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT pierces the sky like a spear. Dan inhales deeply, then exhales with relief. As he eyes the obelisk, a self-assured smile creasing his lips, we CUT TO --

EXT. U STREET, NORTHWEST - WASHINGTON, D.C. - MORNING

The Monument, now in the distance and FRAMED FROM INSIDE A WINDOW, barely peeking over the rooftops of low-slung apartment buildings. PULL BACK TO SEE --

INT. FREEMAN HOUSE - MORNING

Dan studies himself in a full-length mirror. He's dressed in A DARK SUIT, hair trimmed, fingers methodically adjusting his tie. He looks sharp.

From behind, a woman's hand slips around his waist. This is JOY FREEMAN. She's 28, smart and stunning, half-dressed in a blouse and skirt-suit.

JOY

You look good.

DAN

Ready for your deposition?

The bedroom is modest and only partially unpacked, MOVING BOXES stacked at the foot of the bed. AFRICAN MASKS hang on the wall, but otherwise undecorated. A work in progress.

JOY

Practice deposition. I'm prepping the client for the real thing. Which means I'll be done by five.
(then, proudly)
I got us a table at Henry's.

DAN

Celebrating something?

JOY

Well, I'm celebrating the first Black spy this country's ever seen.

DAN

First since Cato.
(off her look)
Slave during the Revolutionary War. Member of the Culper Ring. He was first.

Joy just shakes her head -- *know-it-all*.

JOY

Where'd you learn that one?

DAN

Joy, you know how much I read in country.

JOY

Couldn't just read Playboy like all the other boys?

DAN

They weren't reading... And who needs Playboy when I got you?

Dan grabs her hand and pulls her close. Joy playfully breaks away, but not entirely.

JOY

Can't. I'm gonna be late.

DAN

You won't. I'll be quick.

JOY

Where's the fun in that?

He pulls her closer and this time, she stays.

DAN
Then we'll both be late.

She smiles as Dan begins to slide her skirt over her hips.
And as Joy peels the shirt from his shoulders, we're --

INT. FREEMAN HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Dan scrapes the remains of his breakfast into the sink as Joy places dishes onto a drying rack.

JOY
Tell me you trust Mark Yancey.

DAN
I don't trust any white man. But I think he'll do what he says.

JOY
And you chose the right assignment?

Dan pauses, considering her question.

DAN
Guess we could go overseas. Berlin, maybe. Or Korea.

JOY
Lot of Black soldiers. We'd fit in.

DAN
But Counter-Intelligence is the better play.

JOY
You'll be working out of Langley. You said that building's full of analysts and pencil-pushers.

He leans against the counter, thinking.

DAN
It's true. But Co-Intel gives me an overview of the agency. I'll learn every detail of how they operate.

JOY
(lightly)
You make it sound like the agency's your target, not your employer.

Dan laughs -- maybe a little too quickly -- then deftly blows past her question.

DAN

It also keeps us in DC. With our people. And not just your folks. Here, I can keep one eye on the world, the other on the street.

JOY

Such a Boy Scout. But if you decide you want an overseas post, tell me. I already left Chicago for you. I'll move again if you ask.

DAN

Which is why I'll never ask.

She smiles, touched. Kisses him again.

JOY

Keep talking like that and I might just have to skip the deposition altogether.

Dan and Joy finish cleaning up and exit to --

EXT. FREEMAN HOUSE - MORNING

A BRICK ROW HOUSE in the Black, U Street neighborhood. Joy descends the steps but Day pauses and stares up the block, eyes focused on --

A NONDESCRIPT SEDAN parked half-way up the block. A MAN sits behind the wheel, but Dan can't see him clearly. It's innocuous. Still, Dan stares, assessing.

JOY

Baby, is everything ok?

On a dime, he snaps out of it and flashes a smile at Joy.

DAN

Henry's at five, right?

He winks, climbs into his car, and as he pulls off, we're --

EXT. U.S. CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

Tourists scale the majestic steps of the Capitol while members of Congress enter through a nearby SECURITY DOOR.

SENATOR GILBERT HENNINGTON (60 and stately) walks with his Aide, CARTER SUMMERFIELD (28, African-American).

CARTER SUMMERFIELD
There's a two o'clock with the
Agricultural Subcommittee...

A MAN passes by, THUMPING the Senator's shoulder. The Man reaches down, picks up A MATCHBOOK.

MAN
Senator, I think you dropped this.

He didn't. But the Man extends his hand, insistent. The Senator takes the matchbook. It's from THE TABARD INN.

Hennington watches the Man walk off, then turns to Carter --

SENATOR HENNINGTON
Carter, hold my appointments.

Hennington hurries for the street and Carter watches, confused, as the Senator hails A CAB and climbs in...

INT. THE TABARD INN - DAY

A quiet, exclusive club. Oak walls. Leather banquettes. In a corner booth, Director Turner sips tea while the Senator studies him from across the table.

SENATOR HENNINGTON
Background check was clean?

TURNER
He's a decorated veteran. Lives in
the ghetto near U Street. Raised in
a similar neighborhood in Chicago.

THE WASHINGTON POST is folded into thirds on the table in front of Turner. He taps it casually.

Hennington grabs the paper and unfolds it to find AN ID PHOTO OF DAN tucked inside. He looks at Turner, impressed.

SENATOR HENNINGTON
College?

TURNER
Michigan. Football scholarship.
Married his college sweetheart.

SENATOR HENNINGTON
Politics?

TURNER

Some Civil Rights marches as an undergrad, but nothing since.

SENATOR HENNINGTON

No "Snik"? Black Muslims? Panthers?

Turner shakes his head as A BLACK WAITER silently approaches and refills his glass. Hennington grins, satisfied.

SENATOR HENNINGTON (CONT'D)

I'd like a copy of his file to show my colleagues in the Senate.

TURNER

Not how this works.

SENATOR HENNINGTON

The Kerner Report gave your agency a failing grade on integration. I need proof that you've improved.

TURNER

When I sat with your subcommittee to discuss the Report, I was doing you a courtesy --

SENATOR HENNINGTON

Which was much appreciated.

TURNER

Then I won't remind you, CIA doesn't answer to Congress.

SENATOR HENNINGTON

That's a shame. You could use more oversight. Maybe we'll put that on the next ballot?

TURNER

Don't fuck with me, Gil. You know I don't need this headache. I'm fighting a hot war in Asia and a Cold War everywhere else.

SENATOR HENNINGTON

The war isn't the only thing bunchin' your drawers. Word is, you lost a man last night.

(then, probing)

Did I hear something about The Greenwood Hotel?

Turner wants to respond. Doesn't. Instead, his finger calmly slides to Dan's photo. TAP. TAP. TAP.

TURNER

I gave you a Negro officer. You want confirmation? Stop by for a photo op.

(then, pointed)

I assume you've got the bill.

Turner stands and flips his blazer over his shoulders. As he grabs Dan's photo, we're --

EXT. CIA HEADQUARTERS, LANGLEY - DAY

DAN parks outside a massive, low-slung building on a green campus. No decoration or signage. Just glass and concrete.

INT. CIA HEADQUARTERS - SECURITY GATE - DAY

Dan hands his belongings to THE ARMED GUARD, who examines them, then passes Dan through to --

INT. CIA HEADQUARTERS - MAIN LOBBY - DAY

IT'S CHAOS. Officers scramble past, men on a mission. As Dan takes it in, unsure what's driving the urgency --

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Mr. Freeman?

He turns to see DORIS BURKE (30) moving quickly for him, her heels CLACK CLACK-ing on the marble floor. She's winsome, but something more calculating clearly lurks behind her smile.

DORIS

I'm Doris. The Director couldn't be here, but he sent me to find you --

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Dan!

Dan turns to see Renfroe striding across the lobby. Renfroe grabs Dan. Hugs him. Dan pulls away and holds Renfroe at arm's length, quickly clocking the stress on Renfroe's face.

DAN

Something's wrong.

Doris waits nervously.

DORIS

I'm sorry, Mr. Renfroe, but I'm supposed to take him to Mr. Ames --

RENFROE

Tell Ames I'll walk him down.
(then, to Dan)
Let's go to my office.

As Dan and Renfroe head off --

INT. CIA HEADQUARTERS - RENFROE'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON A PHOTO of Mark Yancey, head slumped over the steering wheel of his car, hair caked with blood from a bullet hole in his skull.

DAN

(disbelieving)
How's this possible...?

RENFROE

It happened last night. His wallet was empty. Watch was missing. DCPD says it was a mugging gone wrong.

DAN

And you buy that?

RENFROE

It's not impossible. The District had 195 homicides last year.

DAN

How many of the victims were CIA Directors?

Renfroe nods, acknowledging Dan's point, but --

RENFROE

Turner's looking into it, but you have a more pressing concern. A.D. Ames is taking over field ops.

DAN

So I might not have a job?

RENFROE

Ames can't fire you. Too many eyes on your appointment. But I don't know where he's posting you. For all I know, you could wind up the only Negro in Iceland.

Dan takes this in, trying to recalibrate as Doris pokes her head through the door.

DORIS
Mr. Ames insists...

RENFROE
(to Dan)
Tell me how it goes.

Dan stands and follows Doris to --

INT. CIA HEADQUARTERS - HALLWAY - DAY

Dan trails Doris past CIA OFFICERS clustered in small groups and speaking in conspiratorial whispers.

Doris tries to put on a stoic face as she leads Dan along, but her voice shakes as she narrates the tour --

DORIS
(haltingly)
Down there... that's Logistics. And past that... past that, we have Intelligence and Analysis.

DAN
I don't need the tour if you're struggling. Can't imagine how difficult this is for you all.

They pass A SECRETARY at her desk, face buried in her hands.

DORIS
(trying to cover)
Losing colleagues is part of the job but you never get used to it.

Dan takes this in with quiet focus. Doris considers him for a moment, then forces a smile.

DORIS (CONT'D)
It's good you're here, Mr. Freeman, even under the circumstances. This place needs new blood.

DAN
CIA gets new recruits every year.

DORIS
A dozen Bonesmen from Yale? Two or three Radcliffe girls we can maybe send to Berlin? That's nothing new.

They round the corner and Doris points to an OFFICE at the end of the hall, a SMALL CROWD gathered outside the door.

Dan turns to Doris, confused.

DORIS (CONT'D)
Your welcoming committee.
(a tight smile)
Good luck, Mr. Freeman.

Doris turns, heels CLACK CLACK-ing down the hall, as Dan approaches the office.

The crowd parts to reveal CIA bulldog Alfred Ames, A SET OF KEYS twirling on his finger.

DAN
Assistant Director Ames --

Ames doesn't speak, silently opening the office door to reveal --

INT. CIA HEADQUARTERS - DAN'S OFFICE - DAY

A massive space, large enough to house a small department. It's empty but for A METAL DESK and A MATCHING BOOKSHELF. They sit beside a MIMEOGRAPH MACHINE.

There's a placard on the desk with Dan's name and title: SECTION CHIEF OF REPROGRAPHICS.

Dan glances at the machine and the title, the reality settling in: *He's the copy boy.*

Ames turns, hand outstretched as if to shake. Dan extends his own hand and Ames DROPS THE KEYS into Dan's palm.

AMES
Congratulations. You're now the
highest ranking Negro in US
Intelligence.

Ames offers a mirthless smile then exits as Dan reels, staring at the keys in his hand...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**INT. LAW FIRM - DAY**

Joy sits at a massive conference table beside the firm's founding partner, ARTHUR WINCOTT (50).

JOY

Why did you find Leon Jenkins unfit to continue his employment?

Across the table, A PAIR OF ATTORNEYS flank A BALDING, MIDDLE-AGED WHITE MAN. He's their CLIENT. Joy eyes him skeptically.

CLIENT

The way he spoke didn't sit with our image. It was unprofessional. Not like the way you talk.

Joy bristles. Wincott's eyes dart to her, suddenly nervous.

JOY

I'm sorry, but what do I have to do with Mr. Jenkins?

WINCOTT

Let's stop here --

JOY

I'd like him to explain how an Associate at a law firm is comparable to a high school dropout serving at a regional food chain?

Sweat beads on the Client's brow as the room stares at Joy.

WINCOTT

Joy, you sound a little emotional.

JOY

Sir, if our client says something that... unconsidered at deposition, he'll be paying a multi-million dollar settlement.

CLIENT

I can't take that kind of loss.

WINCOTT

Then maybe don't offend your counsel... Let's take a break.

As everyone stands --

INT. LAW FIRM - DAY

Joy and Wincott exit the conference room and pause by the MAIN DESK where a beautiful, brown-skinned RECEPTIONIST sits.

This is Joy's best friend, ANGELA WESTBROOK.

JOY

Mr. Wincott, I think I'd rather skip the courtroom on this case --

WINCOTT

Joy, the appearance of bias is already working against us. Without you in the room, we have no shot.

Joy takes this in, uncomfortable with his implication, but --

WINCOTT (CONT'D)

Consider it a favor. I'll owe you. In fact, the firm will owe you.

He WINKS and walks off as Angela leans toward Joy --

ANGELA

Already got the boss owing you favors?

JOY

I know he doesn't mean it, but I should make him pay me back...

They laugh easily, like old friends, as a handsome LIGHT-SKINNED ATTORNEY walks past. Angela nods toward him --

ANGELA

You should ask *him*.

JOY

Michael Overton? We haven't met.

ANGELA

You can chat him up at the party.

Party? Joy waves Angela off --

JOY

We already talked about this. Dan's not the party type.

ANGELA

Joy, you've been in DC three weeks
and we ain't seen you once --

Angela's PHONE RINGS. She answers --

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Wincott, Shiller?

She listens, then covers the phone and turns to Joy.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

It's for you. Should I put it
through to your office?

Joy gestures for the phone and Angela hands it over --

JOY

This is Joy Freeman...

We PUSH IN as a quiet dread spreads across Joy's face...

INT. THE BUTTERNUT DINER - DAY

A busy, neighborhood LUNCH COUNTER. Congressional staffers
and paralegals order wax paper-wrapped sandwiches. At A
WINDOW BOOTH, Joy struggles to process --

JOY

I don't understand... how can he
just be... dead?

Dan sits across from her, silent and pensive, gears spin.

JOY (CONT'D)

But... they still named you Section
Chief?

DAN

Running a department of me and the
mimeograph. Making copies for an
agency whose official policy is,
"paper leaves a paper trail."

JOY

Still... Section Chief. That title
gives you power. Maybe not how you
planned, but you can do a lot.

DAN

Six months training and testing at
The Farm. Beating out a dozen other
brothers.

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

Not to mention all the interviews they put you through. We didn't do all that for me to polish a desk.

JOY

I hear you, baby. But there's no hurry. You just got this appointment. You have plenty of time to get into the field --

DAN

No. I don't.

As Dan speaks, THE DOOR OPENS and A YOUNG BLACK COUPLE enters the diner. They're 20 and fresh-faced.

THE WOMAN wears a perfectly sculpted afro. THE MAN, a turtleneck sweater. Howard students, maybe.

Joy watches as they slide into the next booth. The Woman sits back-to-back with Dan, who continues, a spark of urgency now smoldering in his voice --

DAN (CONT'D)

If I'm not in the field, I don't get "Confidential" clearance for at least a year. Longer for "Top Secret." Can't learn op sec or engagement tactics. I'm useless.

JOY

What about Turner? He can give you the post you were promised.

DAN

He can. But he won't countermand Ames without a good reason.

Now Dan leans in, conspiratorial --

DAN (CONT'D)

Yancey said there were folks in the agency who didn't want me here. He dies the night before I start. Feels like that ain't coincidence.

JOY

You're not a detective...

DAN

Not a desk guy, either.

A beat as Joy hesitates, unsure how to respond. When she speaks, her voice is tinged with concern.

JOY

I don't know what you're planning.
Just... Promise me you'll be
careful. You worked hard to get
here --

DAN

We worked hard.

JOY

So let's not lose what we just got.

Joy is dubious but Dan takes her hand, trying ease her worry.

DAN

Still owe you that dinner.

JOY

I'm free tonight.

They stand to leave. Dan looks past the couple without so
much as a glance, but Joy slows to watch them.

They're bright-eyed. Innocent. Seemingly in love. Joy grabs
her purse, whispering to Dan...

JOY (CONT'D)

Reminds me of us at that age...

Dan doesn't answer, already moving for the door. Joy hurries
to catch him and as he takes her hand and they exit, we're --

RENFROE (PRE-LAP)

This is bullshit.

INT. CIA - DAN'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON THE MIMEOGRAPH MACHINE as Dan runs A SINGLE DOCUMENT
through the feeder. Renfroe paces nearby, highly agitated.

RENFROE

Dan, do you hear me? We need to do
something. You're too good to be
Ames' copy boy!

Dan stops the machine and the office is suddenly quiet.

DAN

You remember that village we
scouted outside Da Nang?

RENFROE

How could I forget? You made me
take point in a monsoon.

DAN

Remember what you found?

RENFROE

Bunch of old ladies sitting in the
rain, weaving those pointy hats...
(then, remembering)
That's the night you said we were
gonna lose the war.

DAN

Whole squad's huddled under tarps,
wishing we were dry. And these
grandmas are just doing their jobs.
(then, pointed)
I'm trying to win this war, which
means doing my job.

RENFROE

Making copies won't win the war.

DAN

The job isn't copies. It's intel.

Dan grabs the copies from the tray and tucks them into A RED
FOLDER. Renfroe watches as Dan takes the folder and exits --

INT. CIA - AMES OFFICE - DAY

ANNOTATED CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHS from The Greenwood Hotel
are spread across the table. Ames and Turner examine them,
Doris close by, taking notes.

AMES

The Russians have been quiet. So
have the Chinese. No one's taking
credit. Which makes me wonder if
we're looking in the wrong place.

TURNER

You have an alternate theory?

AMES

Brezhnev's been very effective in
seeding his agenda among receptive
cultures. The Vietnamese. Cubans.

TURNER

And the Negroes.

AMES
Elijah Muhammad, Fred Hampton,
Stokely Carmichael. All Socialists.

TURNER
We think the hit was local?

AMES
I'm asking the question.

A KNOCK at the door. It opens and Dan enters, FOLDER in hand.

DAN
(re: the folder)
For Assistant Director Ames.

Turner gestures for him to approach, then turns to back Ames.

AMES
The Greenwood Hotel is in the heart
of the U Street ghetto. It's
frequented by drug users and
prostitutes. It's also off our
grid. Which means no eyes on
whatever happens there.

TURNER
Thoughts, Mr. Freeman? U Street is
your neighborhood.

Dan thinks for a moment, then --

DAN
There's some crime. Mostly drug or
gang related. Lot of poverty.

AMES
Which supports robbery gone wrong --

DAN
Except most stick-up kids look for
an easy target. Bus Driver on
payday, that sort of thing. Yancey
doesn't fit the profile.

AMES
A white man clearly out of place in
the ghetto? He's an easy mark.

TURNER
Raising the question of why he was
there to begin with. I assume we
have a theory?

AMES

None I'm ready to share. But we've spoken to the FBI and DCPD. They're putting boots on the ground.

Turner NODS his approval as Ames turns to Dan --

AMES (CONT'D)

You can go.

Dan sets the folder on the table, then glances at the photo of the Greenwood. As he turns and exits --

DAN (PRE-LAP)

Yancey died at the Greenwood.

INT. DAN'S CAR - NIGHT

Dan and Joy drive home, her head resting on his shoulder.

DAN

Turner's calling it a robbery, but that doesn't sit right...

JOY

I hope you're not planning to solve that mystery tonight. I've never slept with a Section Chief before.

She leans up and kisses his cheek. But as he rounds the corner, Joy realizes --

JOY (CONT'D)

We're taking a different way home.

DAN

Need to swing past The Greenwood.

JOY

The Greenwood? Why?

Dan doesn't answer, eyes focused on the road ahead, where --

RED AND BLUE LIGHTS FLASH, A HALF-DOZEN POLICE CARS clogging the street. Dan slows the car as they approach --

EXT. THE GREENWOOD HOTEL - NIGHT

A rundown hotel. A POLICE SERGEANT stands by the entrance as A DOZEN WHITE COPS try to corral a crowd of angry neighbors.

POLICE SERGEANT

One of you niggers saw something
and we ain't leaving 'til you talk!

A COP hurls a HOTEL WORKER against the wall to pat him down.
Two more COPS strip off an OLD MAN'S shirt to frisk him.

IN THE CAR, Joy turns to Dan, panic welling in her chest --

JOY

Did you know this was happening?

DAN

Thought something might go down.
But not this...

Dan's eyes narrow with anger as, ACROSS THE STREET --

GANG MEMBERS in DENIM VESTS hurl bottles from the edge of the crowd and cheer as the glass shatters near the melee.

Nearby, A HALF DOZEN young men in leather jackets and berets move toward the officers. Members of the BLACK PANTHER PARTY FOR SELF-DEFENSE, looking to protect the innocent crowd.

Dan's eyes lingering on the Panthers, thoughts racing, as A COP SHINES HIS FLASHLIGHT into the car, waving them along. Dan pulls off, slowly rolling past --

THE SAME CAR he saw near his house. But he doesn't notice, gaze locked on --

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Beside the hotel, THREE COPS are stomping A BLACK KID (17) in a BUSBOY UNIFORM. Dan SLAMS ON THE BRAKES and reaches for the door, but Joy grabs his arm --

JOY

You go out there and you jeopardize
everything you've ever worked for.

DAN

I stay here, none of it matters.

A BEAT as she holds his arm, then... she lets go. Dan nods a silent acknowledgment and Joy watches him leap from the car --

EXT. HOTEL - ALLEY - NIGHT

The kid on the ground is nearly motionless as the Cops cut loose, NIGHTSTICKS slamming his back, arms, legs.

COP
 Why run if you didn't see nothin'!

The Cop swings again, but his fist STOPS IN MIDAIR. He turns to see Dan's hand CLENCHED AROUND HIS WRIST --

COP (CONT'D)
 The fuck are you doing?

Before the Cop reaches can grab his gun, Dan HIP TOSSES him. The Cop slams onto the pavement as THE OTHER COPS FREEZE, shocked. Dan ignores them, lifting the Busboy to his feet --

DAN
 Go.

The Busboy turns and runs away on unsteady legs as the remaining two Cops rush Dan, BATONS SWINGING --

But it's no contest. Dan's hands move like lightning. The first cop goes down. The second is reeling. But --

CRACK! A baton catches the back of Dan's head. He reaches back, hand coming away red as he drops to one knee --

ANOTHER COP looms over Dan, baton in hand. And now, the FIRST COP is back on his feet. He draws his gun and presses it to Dan's head, about to pull the trigger --

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
 Enough.

The COPS FREEZE and Dan looks up to see A MAN IN A DARK SUIT step from the shadows.

BRADLEY METZGER is 30. Not as handsome as he thinks and too slick by half. He turns to the cops --

METZGER
 He's with me.

The Cops look back and forth from Dan to Metzger, then abruptly release Dan and back away, hoisting their colleagues from the ground as Metzger approaches --

METZGER (CONT'D)
 A little far from the copy room
 aren't you, Section Chief?

As Dan wipes the blood from his face, confused by the new player on the chessboard...

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE**INT. CIA CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Dan sits at a conference table, Ames across from him, Metzger leaning against a nearby wall.

AMES

The hell were you thinking?

DAN

Cops were about to murder a kid...

METZGER

Who snuck out of the crime scene where our man died.

AMES

You should've kept driving.

Ames leans in, furious, but Dan feigns innocence.

DAN

It's my neighborhood. I just... I thought I was helping.

METZGER

You're CIA, now. We don't involve ourselves in local matters.

DAN

I still don't see the problem...

AMES

What you're failing to grasp is that the cops you assaulted were doing a job we gave them!

A FLASH as Dan's eyes narrow in anger. But it's gone in an instant, replaced with apparent wide-eyed curiosity --

DAN

Why would we need their help?

AMES

We don't *need* anything. We used them to track down a lead.

Metzger sets a folder on the table.

METZGER

Mark Yancey met someone at the Greenwood. Possibly a foreign national. We have a description and the Directorate of Support is cross-referencing it with our database. We'll have a name soon.

Now Dan leans in, tone subtly shifting to quiet skepticism.

DAN

DCPD lays the hammer on these folks and you think we got sound intel?

METZGER

You have a better angle?

DAN

I could find one.

AMES

You already have a job. Do that.

Dan turns to Ames, fighting to hold back any hint of emotion. But before his mask cracks, THE DOOR OPENS and Doris enters --

DORIS

Excuse me, but there's someone here to see Mr. Freeman.

Relieved, Dan pushes away from the table and follows Doris --

INT. CIA HEADQUARTERS - WALL OF HONOR - DAY

Senator Hennington and Carter Summerfield stand before a marble slab adorned with silver stars. THE CIA WALL OF HONOR.

Nearby, A PHOTOGRAPHER adjusts lights as Doris delivers Dan.

SENATOR HENNINGTON

Freeman! Good to see you, son. Your boss asked me over for a snapshot.

(then, to Carter)

Carter, did you know Freeman, here, ran for twelve hundred yards in one season on a bum knee?

Carter smiles awkwardly as the Senator vigorously shakes Dan's hand.

DAN

Didn't know you were a sports fan.

SENATOR HENNINGTON

Third generation Iowa Hawkeye. The
Big Ten is in my blood.

DAN

Love that stadium. Scored every
time I played there.

As the Senator laughs, the PHOTOGRAPHER grabs Dan's forearm to position him. Dan's eyes dart to the PHOTOGRAPHER'S HAND.

He quickly lets go, smiling nervously as Dan steps closer to the Senator and... FLASH!

INT. CIA HEADQUARTERS - WALL OF HONOR - MOMENTS LATER

Dan and the Senator share a final handshake.

SENATOR HENNINGTON

Look, son, I know the score. I
listen to Otis Redding, Marvin
Gaye. Hell, if my boy brought home
a colored girl, I'd be the happiest
man in Congress. So if CIA screws
with you, I need to know.

DAN

Appreciate the support, Senator.

The Senator gestures to Carter, who stands by, stiff and ready to go.

SENATOR HENNINGTON

Make sure Dan's got my number. The
direct line, not the switchboard.
(then, to Dan)
I've staked a lot on your success.
I trust you won't let me down.

Carter pulls A BUSINESS CARD from his pocket and scrawls a number on the back, flashing a tight smile, some unspoken tension between him and Dan.

Dan takes the card, watching Carter as he exits and we're --

INT. DAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Joy unpacks MOVING BOXES while her mother, GERTRUDE "MAMA" BELL (mid-50s) sits nearby reading THE WASHINGTON POST. The older woman is tidy, with kind but critical eyes.

MAMA BELL

Thought y'all was movin' to Georgetown or Dupont Circle. You still on the Black side of town.

JOY

We like the Black side of town.

MAMA BELL

I don't know why. If you gon' be successful, you need to buy you some white neighbors. That's how folks know you made it.

Joy stops unpacking and looks at Mama Bell, exasperated.

JOY

Mama, are you gonna help me unpack or just watch?

MAMA BELL

I just don't get why you moved all the way to Chicago in the first place. All them riots they had.

JOY

You had riots in DC all summer.

MAMA BELL

Had another one last night but that ain't the point, now is it?

Mama Bell gestures to the newspaper -- the front page carries a headline: NEGRO 'RIOT' AT THE GREENWOOD HOTEL.

JOY

That wasn't a riot... But what exactly is the point?

MAMA BELL

Point is, you had a whole life here. Friends. Family. Law school. That handsome young doctor --

JOY

We're not talking about him...

MAMA BELL

Tom was a good man. Smart. Rich. Took care of you while Dan was gettin' all muddy in Vietnam --

JOY

This is my home. Dan's home! You don't bring another man's name into this house.

MAMA BELL

You let him into more than just your house.

JOY

That was a mistake.

Mama Bell gestures to the house --

MAMA BELL

Or maybe this is.

JOY

I am not discussing my husband...

MAMA BELL

I ain't talking about Dan. I'm talking about the life you coulda seen if only you had as much street smarts as you got book smarts.

Joy's eyes narrow with anger.

JOY

You don't know as much about me as you think.

MAMA BELL

I take my blessings where I can...

The DOOR OPENS and Dan enters. Joy pops to her feet and hurries to intercept him --

JOY

Dan! I didn't expect you home so soon --

DAN

Not staying long. Got a work thing. Graham's coming to meet me --
(then, noticing)
Mama Bell!

Dan feigns excitement as he hugs his mother-in-law. Mama Bell holds him at arm's length, studying him head-to-toe.

MAMA BELL

You dress like that every day?

JOY

Tell him you like the suit, Mama.

MAMA BELL

It's very handsome, Daniel. Now, remind me again, where you working?

DAN

The State Department.

MAMA BELL

Government collects a lot in taxes. They should pay you better.

DAN

I'll pass that along.

He exits toward the bedroom. Joy glares at her mother, then turns and follows Dan --

INT. DAN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Joy enters as Dan changes out of his suit.

JOY

Everything go ok with Ames?

DAN

Still got the desk, if that's what you mean.

She moves to him, tentative.

JOY

We gonna talk about what happened last night? You nearly getting yourself killed by those cops...

A HONK from outside. Dan quickly checks his outfit in the mirror -- leather jacket, jeans, flared collar. Cool.

DAN

That's Graham. I gotta go.

JOY

But we have Angela's party tonight...

DAN

I won't be late.

He kisses Joy, then hustles out the door --

INT. RENFROE'S CAR - DAY

Renfroe drives, tense, as Dan studies his small notepad.

RENFROE

You wanna tell me what we're doing?

DAN

Tell me about Metzger.

RENFROE

No way. You ask me to pick you up.
Now I'm sneaking around, can't even
tell the wife where I'm going --

DAN

Tell Liz we'll have you over as
soon as we unpack the good plates.
(then, serious)
Now, Metzger. Please.

Renfroe huffs, resigned.

RENFROE

He started in Protective Services.
Transferred to Co-Intel a few years
ago. Ames's had him sniffing around
the U District for weeks, but I
don't know why. The area doesn't
have a big foreign presence.

DAN

Maybe he was trailing Yancey...

As Renfroe nods, considering this, he pulls the car up to --

EXT. THE GREENWOOD HOTEL - DAY

The police tape is gone and a few workers can be seen moving
inside the lobby. Dan approaches but slows...

The curb is STAINED WITH BLOOD from the previous night's
violence. He grimaces, then steps over it as Renfroe follows.

RENFROE

Still don't get why we're here.

DAN

I'm here to ask questions. You're
cover, in case anything pans out.

RENFROE

Dan, we're not investigators. And Metzger already has a lead.

DAN

Look, you said you owe me your life two times over, right? Consider one of those times paid back.

RENFROE

No. I got you a job and now I'm out here doing God-knows-what. After tonight, you and me are square.

DAN

Fine. Square. Just watch my damn back.

RENFROE

I always have your back.

The two men share an easy smile, then head for the door.

INT. GREENWOOD HOTEL - DAY

The aftermath of the previous night's chaos. Hotel workers put the lobby back together as Dan and Renfroe enter.

Dan approaches THE FRONT DESK, where THE MANAGER (40s, Black) stares at him, skeptical.

DAN

Hey, brother. Wondering if I can rap with you for a minute.

MANAGER

Nigga, why would I rap with the fuzz?

DAN

I ain't fuzz, brother. I'm just tryin' to help you cats out.

A BEAT as Renfroe processes the conversation -- *he's never heard Dan talk like this.*

MANAGER

Help who? Comin' with all that "brother-this, brother-that" but you got that cracker on your hip.

Renfroe sees movement in THE BACK ROOM behind the desk --

RENFROE
Somebody back there?

The Busboy pokes his head out, face bruised and swollen.

DAN
That's the kid I helped.
(to the Busboy)
You hangin' in, young blood?

The Manager turns to the Busboy, skeptical --

MANAGER
That true? You know this cat?

The Busboy offers a tentative nod, and the Manager turns back to Dan, his expression softened.

MANAGER (CONT'D)
Fine. We'll talk. But only you.
Cracker gotta go.

Dan gives Renfroe a look. Renfroe grumbles, turns and exits.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A small, dingy hotel room. The door opens and the Manager FLICKS ON THE LIGHTS as Dan follows him in.

MANAGER
This the room that dead fella got.
Always rented for the whole night.

DAN
He come here a lot?

MANAGER
I don't know about a lot but he
been here before, anyway. And each
time with the same girl.

DAN
DCPD said he met with a man the
night he died?

MANAGER
Some blonde cat. I told them white
cops all about it. Just to tell 'em
something. But truth be told, I
ain't never seen blondie before.

Dan smiles -- *I knew it* -- then continues to study the room.

DAN
Tell me about the woman.

MANAGER
She's a pro. Lotta them work here.

DAN
And you get a cut. Which is why you
didn't tell the police about her.
(beat, then)
Got a name?

MANAGER
Hear folks call her Zee.

DAN
Know where Zee lives?

The Manager eyes Dan, then --

MANAGER
This a lotta questions for one dead
honky. He somebody special?

DAN
Let's just say he was trying to
help a brother out.

MANAGER
So you owe him? Cuz brother, you
don't owe these white folks
nothin', you dig?

DAN
Ain't doin' this for white folks.

The Manager takes this in, but --

MANAGER
Even if I knew something, I
couldn't say. Girls find out I got
their business in the street...

DAN
You lose your cut.

MANAGER
Can't mess with the bread. Even for
a righteous brother like you.

The Manager moves to the door and as Dan follows, grimacing
with frustration, we're --

EXT. GREENWOOD HOTEL - NIGHT

Renfroe leans against HIS CAR and smokes a cigarette. He looks concerned as Dan approaches.

DAN

Mark was seeing a prostitute.

RENFROE

I doubt that's what got him killed.

DAN

No. But it means he had a life the agency didn't know about.

(thinks, then)

There's something here.

RENFROE

Tell it to Turner, then let this thing go. You hear me, Dan? This Yancey shit's not the mission.

Dan is silent, lost in his own thoughts. Then --

DAN

You go on. Think I'm gonna walk home. Clear my head.

RENFROE

You sure?

Dan nods and Renfroe climbs into his car and Dan watches him pull off. As soon as he's gone, Dan turns and heads toward --

A PAYPHONE. Just up the street. Dan dials. He listens, then --

DAN

It's me. I need your help...

As Dan listens, body tense, eyes darting both ways up and down the empty street...

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR**EXT. DAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Dan wears a fitted suit, tie loose around his neck as he paces at the base of his stoop. After a moment --

A '66 LINCOLN CONTINENTAL pulls up, the YOUNG WOMAN from the diner behind the wheel. She rolls down the window --

YOUNG WOMAN

You shouldn't've called. Word is, you've got a lot of eyes on you.

The Young Woman offers Dan a slip of paper.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)

Zee's address. Wasn't too hard to find if you know where to look.

DAN

I don't. That's why I called.

Dan tucks the paper into his pocket. As the car pulls off, the front door to his house opens and Joy emerges.

She looks festive in HIGH HEELS, A PARTY DRESS visible beneath her PATTERNED COAT. As Dan adjusts his tie and Joy smiles down at him, we're --

EXT. UPSCALE APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

An expensive building in an expensive -- *and mostly white* -- neighborhood. PARTY SOUNDS ECHO from inside. Dan tenses as he and Joy approach the door.

DAN

This is a bad idea. You know I hate this socialite-type stuff.

JOY

You're a spy, right? Think of it like an assignment. You're going undercover and the job is to convince these people you're having a good time. Can you pull that off?

Dan just shakes his head, forcing a nervous smile as Joy opens the door...

INT. WESTBROOK APARTMENT - FOYER - NIGHT

A massive party is in full swing. Music. Dancing. Black bourgeoisie in their 20s, 30s and 40s mingle and look fabulous.

ANGELA

Get in here, girl!

Angela hugs Joy and hands her a drink. She gives Dan a perfunctory kiss, then takes Joy by the wrist --

ANGELA (CONT'D)

I need to borrow Joy for a minute.

Dan can only watch as Angela drags Joy off. He stares at the vibrant party, swallows hard, then wades in...

INT. WESTBROOK APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dan makes his way to a cluster of guests in the center of the room. As he stands at the edge of the crowd, a hand reaches out and grabs his forearm.

It's Carter Summerfield, drink in hand. Dan offers an awkward smile.

DAN

Didn't know you'd be here.

CARTER SUMMERFIELD

DC's a small town. Black DC's even smaller. Folks like us tend to congregate in tight circles.

(then, smiling)

But this isn't exactly your crowd, is it?

Carter sips his drink, very much in his element. Dan tenses.

DAN

Look man, my wife told me to be cool, but if you wanna dig up stuff between me and you --

CARTER SUMMERFIELD

I don't. I'm just pointing out, if you're gonna be the Black face of the agency, you need to loosen up.

A beat as Dan quietly laughs at himself.

DAN

Trying. It ain't easy wearing a mask all day. Sure you know the score on that one.

Carter nods, a look of understanding between them, then --

CARTER SUMMERFIELD

C'mon. I'll introduce you around.

Dan nods, then follows Carter into the crowd...

INT. WESTBROOK APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

MARLENA SHAW plays on the stereo as Angela leads Joy around an elegant penthouse apartment. Joy takes in the opulence.

JOY

I didn't realize you moved while I was in Chicago.

ANGELA

I wanted a view. In our old place, all I could see was the building across the way.

JOY

Your home is gorgeous. I still don't know how you pay for it all.

ANGELA

That's mostly Lonnie's job.

JOY

I remember you in college, studying with a flashlight when we couldn't pay the light bill. Now you're talking about, 'it's Lonnie's job to make money? Girl, you changed.

ANGELA

The world's changed... Now fix your face. Got someone you need to meet.

Angela leads Joy to A ROLLING BAR, where the Black partner from her law firm, MICHAEL OVERTON (late-30s), mixes a drink.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Michael Overton, Joy Freeman.

MICHAEL

It's a pleasure! Sorry I haven't introduced myself at the office...

Michael beams as he shakes Joy's hand, holding it a beat too long. Joy gently pulls away.

JOY
 You're the only Black partner at
 the firm. I'm sure you're busy.
 (then, gently)
 And it's Mrs. Freeman.

Michael quickly stiffens but Joy leans in, posture suggesting she'd like him to stay --

JOY (CONT'D)
 But there is something I'd like to
 discuss, if you have a minute...

As Michael raises an eyebrow, way too comfortable --

EXT. WESTBROOK APARTMENT - BALCONY - LATER

Dan and Carter stand with a small crowd, watching Angela's stunningly chic husband LONNIE WESTBROOK (30s) holds court.

LONNIE
 Not saying it's easy, but lots of
 us found a way out of the ghetto.

GUEST
 You think the folks in the U don't
 want to do the same?

LONNIE
 If you mean that riot at the
 Greenwood, that wasn't about
 justice. It was frustration that
 Civil Rights gave some of us an out
 and left the rest behind.

Carter moves close to Lonnie and gently takes A HAND-ROLLED JOINT from between his fingers. He inhales, then --

CARTER SUMMERFIELD
 What about Saigon? Or Indochina?
 There's war all over the world. It
 ain't just Black folks acting up.

LONNIE
 And all that fighting hasn't made a
 lick of difference.

CARTER SUMMERFIELD
 It did for the folks in this room.

Dan pours two drinks at A ROLLING BAR CART, watching as Carter returns the joint to Lonnie, their fingers brushing.

CARTER SUMMERFIELD (CONT'D)

When the government realized they couldn't stop our protests, they cut up the pie, and gave everyone a slice... Which is how people like you have penthouses like this!

Members of the crowd nod as Lonnie shrugs with mock-guilt --

DAN

The apartment's spectacular. Beats my spot in the U all day every day.

Lonnie turns to Dan, eyebrow raised but still smiling.

LONNIE

Danny, you know you'll get your piece, eventually. But it's like DuBois said, the talented tenth takes the lead. That's me.

DAN

Toast to that...

He hands one of the drinks to Lonnie, then raises the other.

DAN (CONT'D)

So much talent, you make it look easy. Like you never even had the slightest struggle.

Dan offers a smile. Lonnie forces one back through gritted teeth as the crowd eyes Dan with growing curiosity...

INT. WESTBROOK APARTMENT - NIGHT

Joy talks at the bar with a rapt Michael Overton.

JOY

Back in Chicago, I was working on ways to do restorative justice --

MICHAEL

Restorative...? What does that do for the firm?

JOY

It's not just about the firm. It's a way to bring outside resources to our community.

(MORE)

JOY (CONT'D)

We give them the legal services of a DC firm. Our people never get access to that.

(then, excited)

Hundreds of billable hours we can write off as charitable donations? The chance to improve our standing with our more progressive clients?

MICHAEL

It's interesting. But if you're pitching Wincott on new business, you need a high-profile case. Something that grabs headlines --

Abruptly, VOICES RISE from the balcony. Joy turns to see Dan smiling as Lonnie gesticulates angrily in front of him.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You know that guy?

JOY

That's Mr. Freeman. Excuse me.

As she pulls away --

EXT. WESTBROOK APARTMENT - BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Joy arrives to see the crowd gathered around Dan and Lonnie. Dan is smiling. Lonnie is increasingly agitated.

LONNIE

I don't know about you, but I sure as hell fought to get here.

DAN

Was that Detroit or Da Nang?

LONNIE

Georgetown Law.

DAN

(lightly)

Battle of Georgetown? Not ringing any bells...

The crowd laughs with Dan's jab.

LONNIE

What's your problem, Freeman? You think just 'cause I'm not in the streets with the Panthers, I got no say anymore?

DAN
We can't all be revolutionaries...

LONNIE
In case you ain't been reading The Post, all the old revolutionaries are dead! The new war is in the boardroom, not the streets.

DAN
War was in the street last night. And contrary to the white man's newspaper, it wasn't no "riot." Just more state violence against Black folks.

LONNIE
You hate the man so much, why're you working for him?

Dan was having fun, but now he freezes as Lonnie digs in...

LONNIE (CONT'D)
(to the group)
Y'all know me and Dan were both up for a CIA gig? He's a "spook" now.

THE CROWD GASPS. Dan glares. Lonnie flashes a sly smile.

LONNIE (CONT'D)
What? They washed me out. Which means you're the only one sworn to secrecy, now...
(then, hissing)
Maybe don't throw stones from that glass office they gave you, huh?

Dan is speechless, the judgmental eyes of the other guests locked on him. He glances past Lonnie to see --

JOY. Jaw clenched. Mortified with embarrassment. Lonnie watches as she slips off, then turns to Dan, digging deeper --

LONNIE (CONT'D)
You better watch out for that one. I know you wanna keep her in the ghetto, but she looks real good in a penthouse.

DAN
She's almost as pretty as you.

Dan's eyes flash from Lonnie to Carter, an unspoken judgment. Lonnie watches in silence as Dan turns and exits...

INT. DAN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joy undresses, seething. Dan sits on the edge of the bed still dressed, eyes following her.

JOY

You embarrassed us in front of our friends --

DAN

Your friends.

JOY

My friends. My colleagues. And a partner from my firm. And you treated them like jerks.

DAN

A bunch of sellouts like that can't do nothing for me.

JOY

Your lone wolf, Army recon act doesn't play in the big city. We're part of a community, now --

DAN

That I'm out here fighting for! To stop the man from shooting us in the streets and beating us for breathing!

JOY

And why do you think I went to law school? You think I bite my tongue in meetings because I enjoy it? When the partner says I'm 'angry'? When he calls me 'emotional'?

Dan is silent, unsure how to answer.

JOY (CONT'D)

I'm fighting for the same things you are. But unlike you, the Army still won't let me carry a gun.

This lands on Dan and he deflates, realizing what he's done.

DAN

Look, I didn't mean to fuck up your party. But those cats are living a fantasy and I'm out here in the real world --

JOY

Real? You call trying to get yourself killed by three armed police officers "the real world?"

DAN

Wasn't like that --

JOY

Because in my "real world", you and I end up old together. With kids and grandkids. That can't happen if you keep acting like a shell-shocked grunt with a death wish!

Joy sits on the edge of the bed, exhausted.

JOY (CONT'D)

I know what you're fighting for. And I believe you'll get the job you earned. But not by risking your life. You'll get it by being smart.

She takes his hand, trying to reach him.

JOY (CONT'D)

You're the only Black man in the entire agency. A Senator gave you his phone number. In a year, you could meet the President.

DAN

Or I could still be sitting by the door, making copies.

(beat, then)

They owe us more, Joy. Not me. *Us*.

Joy squeezes his hand for emphasis.

JOY

And we'll get it.

DAN

When, Joy? Just tell me when.

Joy is silent, unable to answer. Dan leans in and kisses her face, then turns and exits. Joy watches him go, then notices something on the bed --

The newspaper *Mama Bell* was reading earlier. Joy pick it up, staring at the photo of chaos outside *The Greenwood* as --

INT. DAN'S CAR - NIGHT

Dan sits behind the wheel, trying to settle himself. After a moment, he digs into his pocket and pulls out the paper he got from the Young Man. He unfolds it to see AN ADDRESS --

EXT. TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

A rundown apartment in the worst part of town. Dan parks a few doors down and exits his car. He approaches the front door, shoves it. It CREAKS open and Dan enters --

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Dan walks up the stairs and turns the corner onto a long, narrow hallway. He walks to APARTMENT 6A. Knocks.

No answer. Dan kneels, jimmies the lock. It gives with a CLICK. Dan glances back at the empty hall, then enters --

INT. "ZEE'S" APARTMENT - NIGHT

A small studio apartment, tidy and sparsely furnished. Dan takes in the cramped kitchen -- small pot of water on the stove, tin of instant coffee beside a mug on the counter.

Cheap make-up and nail polish sit on a nearby dresser. Dan moves to the closet. INSIDE --

Skirts, dresses, halters, boas. *A working girl's wardrobe.* Flouncy hats on a shelf and on the floor beneath them, a large hat box.

Dan looks at the hat box, curious. Why aren't the hats inside? He opens it. INSIDE -- A NIKON F2 CAMERA AND A TELEPHOTO LENS.

Now Dan's gears are spinning. He moves to the bed, runs his hand under the pillows, searching. He finds nothing. He kneels and does the same beneath the mattress --

He pulls out A SMALL ENVELOPE, opens it. It's full OF NEGATIVES. He's about to dump the contents, when --

BLAM! The first bullet rips into wall beside Dan's head. BLAM! The second drives Dan scrambling to the floor.

He peeks around the foot of the sofa to see a silhouette framed in the doorway. Long hair. Curves. Brown skin. "Zee."

Dan's eyes dart around, landing on a bottle of NAIL POLISH REMOVER mixed in with the make-up on the dresser.

He lunges to grab it, rolling behind THE BED as another bullet tears past him.

The shooter steps into the room, still a shadow -- BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Now, Dan reaches into his pocket and pulls out an Army-issue ZIPPO LIGHTER. He uncaps the nail polish remover and splashes the liquid on the bedsheet. He flicks the lighter --

THE SHEETS BURST INTO FLAMES as the acetone ignites. The shooter steps back, unsure what's happening as, suddenly --

THE FIRE ALARM BLARES. Immediately, VOICES RISE from the hallway as neighbors hurry out, drawn by the alarm.

Dan is still for a beat. Finally, he pops his head up --

He's alone in the smoke-filled apartment. The shooter is gone.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

FIRE ENGINE SIRENS approach, RED LIGHTS visible in the distance, as Black and brown bodies shuffle from the building in various states of dress and undress.

Dan slips out among them, head down and collar up, eyes scanning for Zee, but --

There's no sign of her. The shooter is gone.

Dan moves to the edge of the crowd and veers off, briskly striding for his car. But as he climbs in and pulls away, he speeds past --

THAT SAME CAR that's been trailing him. Parked halfway up the block. And now we PUSH IN to see who's inside --

It's METZGER. Eyes calmly trailing Dan as he disappears into the night.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE**INT. MAN-AT-ARMS BAR - NIGHT**

An upscale bar filled with men in blazers and women from the secretarial pool. Dan sits at the bar with Renfroe, the envelope from Zee's apartment on the table before them.

RENFROE

So the hooker wasn't a hooker.
How'd the agency miss it?

DAN

It's like Ames said. The ghetto's a
blind spot. Hard for outside eyes
to see what's going on.
(thinks, then)
Which also means Metzger wasn't
watching Yancey before he died.

RENFROE

Then why was he sniffing around U
Street? The only thing around there
besides Yancey was... you.

Dan and Renfroe share a look, realizing Renfroe may be onto something. Renfroe thinks for a moment, then --

RENFROE (CONT'D)

I need to talk to Ames.

DAN

If he gives you heat, put it on me.
Not like he can fire me, anyway.

RENFROE

You think you have job security
because a Senator has your back?
(then, stern)
This is the spy game, Dan. You can
barely tell who's on your side from
day to day. These guys are playing
global chess, hear what I'm saying?

DAN

In Chicago, we didn't play chess.
We played gangs.

Renfroe wants to change Dan's mind, but --

RENFROE
 (deflated)
 It's late. I need to get home.

He stands, turns for the door but pauses.

RENFROE (CONT'D)
 That thing you told Mark about the mission being in your heart? Back in the shit, I did everything you told me, never doubted. Because I knew what mission you were on.
 (beat, then)
 But this? Risking a job you just got for a guy you barely knew?

He looks at Dan, real concern showing.

RENFROE (CONT'D)
 What's the real mission, Dan?

Dan is silent. No good answer forthcoming. Renfroe waits another moment, then turns and exits.

Dan stares at his glass, untouched and full of Scotch as a beautiful, dark-skinned WOMAN in an expensive dress (and even more expensive wig) slips onto the stool beside him.

ETTA
 This seat taken?

DAN
 That line still works?

ETTA
 Baby, everything I say works.
 (smiles, then)
 Name's Etta.

DAN
 Dan. You drinking, Etta?

ETTA
 You buying, Dan?
 (off his nod)
 Then I'll have the good stuff.

As Dan gestures to the BARTENDER, we're --

EXT. WINCOTT HOUSE - NIGHT

It's quiet as Joy walks up an elegant street lit by gaslamps. She knocks on the door of a massive brick house.

A moment later, Arthur Wincott opens the door --

WINCOTT

Joy? What're you doing here?

JOY

I'm sorry, Mr. Wincott. I just need a minute.

He hesitates, then steps aside as Joy enters --

INT. WINCOTT HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

Wincott leads Joy into a stately library overlooking an English-style garden.

JOY

It's about the promise you made.
(off his confused look)
You said you owe me. That the firm would owe me.

WINCOTT

I wasn't speaking literally.

JOY

Of course you were. You need my face in that courtroom. Not my legal acumen or strategy. My face.

WINCOTT

Joy...

He doesn't even begin the thought, unsure what to say.

JOY

It's a smart defense. But I need something in return.

WINCOTT

Is this a salary negotiation? You know raises are done on a pre-determined scale --

JOY

This won't cost you anything. In fact, you'll be able to write off thousands in billable hours.
(beat, then)
I want us to take on a pro bono case. I get to run it, and you get to burnish your standing with the liberal Senate Majority Leader.

Wincott is pleasantly surprised -- not at all what he expected.

WINCOTT

It's not a terrible idea. We'd have to find the right case...

JOY

A young man was assaulted. I want to bring charges on his behalf.

She sets THE WASHINGTON POST on his desk. It's open to the story about the "riot."

Wincott stares at it, intrigued, as a powerful smile quietly spreads across Joy's face...

INT. MAN-AT-ARMS BAR - NIGHT

A booth. Dan's glass is full. Etta's tumbler is empty.

ETTA

You ain't been around here before.

She slides her hand over his. He eyes it then pulls away, allowing his WEDDING RING to catch the light.

DAN

Even if I wanted to, pretty sure you're above my pay grade.

ETTA

Well baby, you're in luck because I'm off the clock. This don't even need to be work... I see how you look at me.

DAN

Don't mean what you think. You just remind me of someone is all.

Dan considers whether to open up, then --

DAN (CONT'D)

I read this book about a queen from a land in Africa called Dahomey. She ain't wear no wig or fancy dress, like you. But take that off? Y'all could be sisters.

ETTA

Sounds like you wanna get me naked.

DAN
Sounds like you wasn't listening.

Etta smiles as THE FRONT DOOR OPENS and A MAN enters. He looks vaguely white, but with skin dark enough that he could be Latin. He's in his 30s. Visibly strong.

Etta tenses as he moves to the far end of the bar.

DAN (CONT'D)
You know him?

ETTA
He took a ride, but ain't pay. Said
if I came for my bread, he'd kill
me. Or worse.
(beat, then)
Men can always do worse.

Etta stares at Dan, looking unexpectedly vulnerable. Dan takes this in, then stands. Etta grabs his arm --

DAN
It's cool. Just gonna talk.

He gently removes her hand and strides over to the man, pointing to Etta as he speaks --

DAN (CONT'D)
Excuse me, friend. Lady over there
says you owe for services rendered.

MAN
Go screw.

Dan doesn't move. The Man stands, towering over him.

DAN
Already been a long night. Just pay
what you owe and we can both go
home.

MAN
Or we can take this outside and I
can whip your nigger ass like we
used to do in the old days.

And now Dan perks up, realizing something is off. He glances at Etta then back to the man. Gears spinning. Then --

DAN
Fuck it.

He turns and calmly walks to the door. The Man follows...

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

A narrow alley. Dan takes off his blazer and sets it neatly atop AN EMPTY CARDBOARD box as the Man approaches.

DAN

This ain't gonna go how you think.

As the Man rolls up his sleeves, Dan grabs his wrist. The Man tries to shake free, but Dan's hand doesn't budge.

Finally Dan lets go and the Man SWINGS. He WHIFFS.

His eyes narrow as he SWINGS AGAIN. Another WHIFF and this time, Dan shoves him into the wall.

The Man is pissed now, body coiling like a fighter. Dan cocks his head, finally seeing what he sensed a moment earlier --

DAN (CONT'D)

You ain't no john.

(beat, then)

Who you really workin' for?

The man advances faster. Punches coming tighter, more controlled. Dan continues to parry his blows, finally catching the man's outstretched arm --

Dan wrenches it over his shoulder and FLIPS THE MAN ONTO THE ASPHALT.

As the Man lies on the ground, Dan snatches the WALLET from his JACKET POCKET.

DAN (CONT'D)

You with Zee? Or was it Ames? Who the fuck sent you?

Dan pulls out the Man's DRIVERS LICENSE, reads -- PAUL KOWALSKI. The name doesn't match the face. But Dan blows past it and tucks the license into his own pocket.

DAN (CONT'D)

Last time, "Paul". Tell me who you work for --

PAUL KOWALSKI stands and for a moment, it looks like he's about to answer. Then...

He bolts. Dan just watches, drained, as Paul scrambles down the alley and disappears into darkness...

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX**INT. DAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING**

Joy enters dressed for work. Dan is already at the table. It's set. Breakfast made. Joy takes it in, still tense from the night before.

She sits and Dan slides coffee to her. She pours. He waits for her to drink, then --

DAN

I'm impatient. And I want what they promised. But I took this job to change the system from the inside. So maybe I try it another way.

Joy wants to take him at his word, but she's still skeptical.

JOY

Are you saying this because you think it's true? Or because things didn't work out the way you hoped?

DAN

I'm saying it because you were right. And because the game is more complicated than I thought. I can't see the whole chessboard. And I don't want to keep playing blind.

Joy smiles, finally softening.

DAN (CONT'D)

You should eat before it gets cold.

And as Dan and Joy thaw from the night before --

AMES (PRE-LAP)

He's a liability.

INT. CIA - AMES OFFICE - DAY

Turner sits at his desk while Ames paces opposite him.

AMES

He refuses to follow the chain of command. Doesn't hesitate to freelance.

TURNER

Those sound like assets.

AMES

They would be if he was one of us.

TURNER

One of us? Your roots are showing.

AMES

You think this is about race?
 (then, measured)
 Freeman's an unknown. He fought in
 Vietnam. Listened to a hundred
 hours of Hanoi Helen telling him
 the white man was the real enemy!

TURNER

As did Renfroe --

AMES

Renfroe doesn't come from the most
 violent ghetto in the country. His
 people haven't spent the last 100
 years trying and failing to get
 their shit together.

TURNER

Your point, Mr. Ames?

Ames sighs deeply, struggling to explain something that, to
 him, is obvious.

AMES

If I were a hostile government
 looking to destabilize this country
 with a dangerous ideology like
 Communism, Dan and his people would
 be my first, last, and only target.

(then, measured)

I know Gil Hennington is breathing
 down your neck, but this Freeman
 thing? It's a bad call.

TURNER

I don't need your permission.

AMES

You need my support.

TURNER

You think Freeman is conning us.

AMES

Can you tell me he's not?

Turner steeples his fingers, brow furrowing as he thinks...

INT. CIA HEADQUARTERS - DAN'S OFFICE - DAY

A STACK OF FILES sits on the desk, A NOTE indicating how many copies of each. As Dan works his way through the stack, the door opens and Doris pokes her head in.

DORIS

Mr. Freeman? The Director would like to see you in his office.

Dan stops the copier, adjusts his tie, then follows Doris.

INT. CIA - TURNER'S OFFICE - DAY

Director Turner sits behind his desk, looking grave. Dan sits on a stiff chair, flanked by Renfroe.

TURNER

Mr. Renfroe delivered the envelope you found. We processed the negatives.

Turner sets a folder on the desk. He gestures for Dan to open it. INSIDE, SURVEILLANCE PHOTOS OF MARK YANCEY.

TURNER (CONT'D)

Whoever this "Zee" woman is, she was targeting Mr. Yancey. Moreover, the European national Mr. Metzger was pursuing turned out to be a dead-end.

Renfroe looks to Dan, who remains expressionless.

TURNER (CONT'D)

Your lead was sound, Mr. Freeman. This is clearly a matter for the agency to pursue.

Turner thinks for a moment.

TURNER (CONT'D)

You'll continue in your capacity as Section Chief. You will also find us an asset inside the ghetto who can give us credible intelligence.

He closes the folder and hands it to Dan.

TURNER (CONT'D)
 You'll report to Mr. Ames. But Mr.
 Renfroe will serve as an advisor.
 (to Renfroe)
 From now on, Mr. Freeman's mistakes
 are yours. Any questions?

No questions. But Dan cracks the faintest hint of a smile...

EXT. CIA - PARKING LOT - EVENING

Dusk. Renfroe and Dan walk to their cars.

RENFROE
 Did we do all that just to get you
 into the field?

DAN
 If I said that was the mission
 would you be mad?

RENFROE
 I just hope it was worth it.
 (beat, then)
 Liz is still waiting on that
 dinner.

DAN
 Tell her I'm already cooking.

As Renfroe smiles and Dan turns for his car, we FADE TO --

INT. ETTA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

A rundown studio. The door opens and Etta enters. She
 freezes, noticing A CIGARETTE glowing in the darkness.

ETTA
 Thought I told you not to come in
 when I ain't home.

She turns on the light, frowning at Ames, who sits on a beat-
 up kitchen chair, cigarette in hand.

ETTA (CONT'D)
 Your boy didn't want me.

AMES
 Maybe you're not his type.

ETTA

I'm every man's type. But he ain't
the cheating sort.

She sets down her purse. Takes off her stole.

ETTA (CONT'D)

He even took it easy on that fake-
ass john of yours.

AMES

Who are you talking about?

ETTA

You know. That cat who tried to
stiff me.

AMES

I'm not sure what you mean.

Etta eyes him, dubious, but Ames' face betrays no emotion. Whatever he knows, he's not sharing with her. Finally, she pivots back to the issue at hand --

ETTA

Either way, Freeman's a good man.

AMES

He's a fraud.

ETTA

(warmly)

He's smart. He knows all kinda
stuff, from all kinda books.

AMES

I don't care if he loves his mama
and sings the anthem every night.
The fact is, he doesn't belong.

As Ames continues, we CUT TO --

INT. DAN'S CAR - EVENING

Dan drives. He glances at the mirror, spots that same car he saw earlier. Almost like it's not trying to hide anymore.

AMES (V.O.)

He's too smart. Too clean.

Dan keeps a steady pace, eyes on the mirror as we CUT TO --

INT. FOLLOW CAR - EVENING

The man behind the wheel? It's METZGER. He's calm, driving at a few cars distance back, eyes locked on --

DAN'S CAR

Dan glances up at the mirror again, then speeds up and veers off the road.

IN THE FOLLOW CAR

Metzger loses sight of Dan. He speeds up and rounds a corner to find Dan's car pulled over to the side of the street.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Metzger parks close enough to see that Dan's car is empty.

AMES (V.O.)

He's better at the job than men
who've trained for years....

He scans the street and quickly realizes that ALL THE PEDESTRIANS ARE BLACK. Even from his car, Metzger stands out. He pulls away, speeding past --

DAN, pressed against a wall and tucked out of sight. He watches Metzger go, then strolls down the block to --

INT. GREENLEE'S TAVERN - NIGHT

A dive bar full of Black patrons. A SOUL BROTHER works the jukebox while TWO COLLEGE RADICALS smoke weed in the corner.

AMES (V.O.)

He doesn't drink. Doesn't smoke.

Dan enters and bee-lines for a stool at the bar. The Radicals warily eye him as he sits.

DAN

Whiskey.

THE BARTENDER is old. Black. And he's been through some shit. He pours a shot. Slides it to Dan, who tosses it back --

DAN (CONT'D)

Again.

AMES (V.O.)
 Everything about Dan Freeman feels
 like a well-told lie.

Another shot. Again, Dan drinks as --

INT. ETTA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ames paces the floor, agitated.

AMES
 His presence compromises the
 integrity of the agency. It's my
 goddamn patriotic duty to remove
 him, one way or another --

Etta grabs his hand and he looks up, realizing she's naked.

ETTA
 We gonna do business, or what?

Ames finally calms down. Digs into his pocket and pulls out A
 WAD OF CASH. And as he kisses Etta, we're --

INT. GREENLEE'S TAVERN - NIGHT

Dan glances to the back corner, where A HALF-DOZEN BLACK
 PANTHERS are spread over two small tables, three to a table.

The YOUNG COUPLE from the diner sit among them. They look
 different now, clad in Black and wearing dark sunglasses.

The Woman nods, but Dan looks past her to THE THIRD MAN at
 their table. He's 25. Wearing a SHORT AFRO, a BLACK LEATHER
 JACKET, and a severe expression.

He stands and approaches. He draws the stool beside Dan and
 sits as the Bartender pours him a drink.

THIRD MAN
 Wasn't sure you'd make it.

DAN
 Wasn't sure myself, but your lead
 panned out... I'm in.

THIRD MAN
 Glad Mr. Charlie recognized your
 talents. Chairman Mao said
 "political power grows from the
 barrel of a gun" which means
 they'll always need a good soldier --

DAN

Save the Maoist philosophy lesson
and just tell me what you want.

The Third Man sips his drink, then --

THIRD MAN

You're in the Master's house. And
my people helped put you there. So
the real question is, what can you
do for us? The revolution needs a
hand on the trigger...

DAN

I don't work for you.

THIRD MAN

You should reconsider that.

Dan thinks, then grab his drink and tosses it back.

DAN

I'll get back to you.

The Third Man calmly nurses his drink then calls to Dan --

THIRD MAN

All power to the people.

Dan doesn't respond but as he stands, patrons eye him hard.
Bartender. Soul Brothers. And every single Panther.

They watch as Dan turns and strides out the door without
looking back.

EXT. GREENLEE'S TAVERN - NIGHT

The street is busy, now. Black men and women making their way
from work to home, or from home to work on the night shift.

Dan takes in the night air. Breathes. And as he stares at his
people, a smile creeping across his face, he whispers...

DAN

All power to the people.

Then, he steps into the flow of pedestrian traffic and
DISAPPEARS among the other brown faces as we CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE