

Episode # 10
Project - SC1013

due **SOUTH**



"THE GIFT OF THE WHEELMAN"

by

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PROLOGUE

FADE IN:

1 EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET -- TRACKING SHOT -- DAY 1

A Salvation Army Santa rings his bell. The SIGN IN A WINDOW reads ONE SHOPPING DAY LEFT BEFORE CHRISTMAS, officially pronouncing that insanity has once again fallen on the land. LOUDSPEAKERS fixed to store-fronts blast "LET IT SNOW" at the bustling procrastinators of all shapes and ages who jam the sidewalks.

RAY pulls up and parks in front of a hydrant. He gets out and hurries off down the sidewalk, as FRASER opens his door and turns to DIEFENBAKER, who sits in the back seat.

FRASER

Just stay in the car, and keep your nose out of those packages, they're not for you.

Diefenbaker lies down in the back seat, deeply disappointed.

FRASER (CONT'D)

(joining Ray and walking)
He's searched every cupboard in the apartment trying to figure out what I got him. But this year he's not going to find it.

RAY

(checking his list while walking)
Okay, I'll start with Ma and Francesca.

FRASER

Do you know what you want to get them?

RAY

(checking his wallet)
No, but I know where to find it. I go to the same place every year.
(fingering bills)
That's two hundred each.

FRASER

Ray, are you sure you can afford to be spending that much?

RAY

Christmas is about money, Fraser, don't let anyone tell you any

(MORE)

1 CONTINUED:

1

RAY (CONT'D)
different. We're talking about family
here, so you don't really think of it
as gifts as much as pay-offs. If you
keep that in mind, two hundred each
is not a bad investment.

Ray opens the door to THE ILLINOIS FEDERAL BANK and holds it
for Fraser, who enters. As Ray follows him into the bank,
we see the big poster in the bank window: FREE GIFT WITH
EVERY NEW ACCOUNT OF \$200 OR MORE. The CAMERA continues to
TRACK along the sidewalk, following a shopper, until we get
to the window of:

*

2 EXT. O. HENRY'S GIFT SHOP

2

A customer enters a beautiful old store with a dark wood
facade, displaying tasteful gifts in its undersized window.

*

*

3 INT. O. HENRY'S GIFT STOP

3

The shopkeeper, OLIVER, nods to the new customer, then returns
to the teenage boy (DEL PORTER.) Del stares through the
glass of the counter top, his attention riveted on something
we don't see. It's clearly something he wants, but worries
that he can't afford.

*

*

OLIVER

Well, what do you think?

DEL

How much is it again?

OLIVER

Seventy-five dollars.

(trying to help)

You know, I have some other ones over
here that are less expensive and you
can't really tell the difference.

DEL

No, he can tell. He'd use it all the
time. He used to have one just like
it.

OLIVER

It is a beautiful gift.

DEL

(decides)

...Okay.

(decides again)

...Okay. I'll buy it.

3 CONTINUED: 3

The other customer exits as Del digs into his pocket. *

3A EXT. O. HENRY'S GIFT SHOP -- CONTINUOUS 3A

As the customer exits we pull focus to the passing GREEN STATION WAGON. *

4 EXT. STREET -- WITH THE GREEN STATION WAGON -- CONTINUOUS 4

The car drives to the end of the block and TURNS THE CORNER onto THE NEXT STREET before pulling to the curb directly in front of THE CHICAGO COMMERCE BANK. FOUR SANTA CLAUSES step out, one carrying a large red bag. The WHEELMAN removes a Salvation Army-style tripod and bowl from the back of the car and sets it up on the sidewalk. The other three men enter the bank. *

ANGLE ON THE WHEELMAN

He starts ringing his bell, soliciting donations. His other hand presses the stem of

A STOPWATCH

The second hand sweeps into action.

5 INT. CHICAGO COMMERCE BANK BUILDING -- FOYER -- AT THAT MOMENT 5

Two of the SANTAS pull shotguns out of the bag. The third carries the big red bag. They raise their guns as they enter the bank and shout: "On the floor" and "everybody down" etc. *

6 EXT. STREET & ILLINOIS FEDERAL BANK -- AT THAT MOMENT 6 *

Ray and Fraser step out of the bank, Ray holding a wrapped present. As they head for the cross walk: *

RAY

No, I know that tone in your voice; you think I'm being cheap.

FRASER

There's nothing wrong with being frugal, Ray. If you can't afford to buy presents, getting them for opening a bank account is a viable, and even inventive, alternative.

RAY

But you think I can afford it.

(MORE)

6 CONTINUED:

6

RAY (CONT'D)

You think I'm just being cheap; that's what you're thinking.

FRASER

I'm thinking nothing of the sort. Where are we off to now?

RAY

Savings and Loan across the street.

FRASER

Of course.

RAY

You see? You see that tone of voice?

7 INT. O. HENRY'S GIFT SHOP - ON COUNTERTOP -- AT THAT MOMENT 7

Oliver closes the small box (again, we don't see what's inside). Del pulls a wad of small bills and change out of his pocket and puts it on the counter. He counts it, a little nervous that there's not enough. Oliver notices him dig deep into his pockets for a handful of quarters. They clink on the counter. Del looks up self-consciously and catches Oliver watching. Oliver averts his eyes and goes about his business. Dell counts the quarters.

8 INT. CHICAGO COMMERCE BANK -- AT THAT MOMENT 8 *

Patrons and employees lie spread-eagle on the floor. The two SANTAS with the shotguns keep them facing down, as the BAGMAN empties the cash drawers.

He pulls a bundle of twenties from a drawer and tosses it high over the counter. It EXPLODES on impact with the floor, spurting RED DYE over the customers closest to it, who scream in response.

The SANTA closest to the door checks his stop watch. It's exactly in time with:

9 EXT. CHICAGO COMMERCE BANK -- ECU ON THE STOPWATCH 9 *

in the Wheelman's hand. We angle to his face as he checks the street.

10 OMITTED 10

11 INT. O. HENRY'S GIFT SHOP -- AT THAT MOMENT 11

Oliver closes the till and turns to Del.

11 CONTINUED:

11

OLIVER

Would you like it gift-wrapped?

DEL

Is that more?

OLIVER

No.

DEL

(as long as it's not
charity)

Sure. That'd be great.

Oliver turns, taking the box to the back counter. He turns a small sign face down. It read GIFT WRAPPING: FIVE DOLLARS. Del looks down into the case, clearly thinking about the effect the gift is going to have on the receiver.

12 EXT. CHICAGO COMMERCE BANK BUILDING -- AT THAT MOMENT

12 *

The Wheelman checks his watch: a minute forty-five seconds. He pockets it, grabs a shotgun from the front seat and turns to the door.

13 INT. CHICAGO COMMERCE BANK BUILDING -- FOYER -- CONTINUOUS

13 *

The Wheelman walks directly to a FIRE ALARM on the wall. His hand goes to it. He hesitates. Then pulls it.

14 INT. CHICAGO COMMERCE BANK -- AT THAT MOMENT

14 *

The ALARM is deafening. The three SANTAS panic, swinging their guns -- this was not in the plan. Customers SCREAM in response.

SANTA #1

Stay down! Stay down!

The WHEELMAN bursts in through the doors.

WHEELMAN

Move it!--

SANTA #1

Get back to the car!

WHEELMAN

You tripped the alarm! Get the hell out of here!

15 EXT. STREET & SAVINGS AND LOAN -- AT THAT MOMENT 15

As Ray and Fraser step out of the Savings and Loan, we see that Ray is carrying a second wrapped gift.

FRASER

Tell me what it is again?

RAY

(defensive)

An ice tea maker.

FRASER

Lovely gift.

Fraser suddenly reacts to the distant alarm.

FRASER (CONT'D)

Ray.

Fraser takes off at a dead run.

RAY

It's a fire alarm! Do you have to do the job of every city employee?!

Ray reluctantly runs off after him.

16 INT. CHICAGO COMMERCE BANK -- AT THAT MOMENT 16 *

These guys are dancing on razor blades. Santa #2 runs for the foyer, Santa #1 backing out the door behind him.

WHEELMAN

(to Bagman)

That's enough! Leave it!

BAGMAN

No!

SANTA #1

(swinging around madly)

On the floor! Get down!

WHEELMAN

(to Bagman)

That's enough! Throw it!

The BAGMAN shoves a last handful of cash into his red bag, tosses it over the high counter to the Wheelman and then leaps the counter. As the bagman lands, the Wheelman tosses a shotgun back to him. The Bagman and Santa #2 break for the foyer, joining Santa #1, the Wheelman behind them.

17 EXT. CHICAGO COMMERCE BANK BUILDING -- CONTINUOUS

17 *

The bank robbers burst into the street, diving into the station wagon. Just as the bagman opens the front door, Ray and Fraser come around the corner. The Bagman turns to fire at Ray. Fraser does a flying tackle and knocks Ray out of the way as

CLICK.

No blast. The shotgun's not loaded. The bagman leaps into the front passenger seat. And realizes that THE WHEELMAN isn't with them.

BAGMAN

Where is he?!

His gun out now, Ray fires into the fender of the car. Santa #1 leaps over the back seat, landing behind the wheel as the car speeds away.

RAY

runs into the street and assumes a shooters squatting stance. But the pedestrians block him from making a safe shot.

*
*

FRASER

realizes something is wrong.

FRASER

Where was the driver?!

Fraser turns and runs back around the corner.

18 OMITTED

18

19 EXT. MICHIGAN AVE -- AT THAT MOMENT

19

With a full block lead, the Wheelman runs down the sidewalk, bag over his shoulder, pushing aside the last-minute shoppers.

DEL steps out of the gift shop just at that second, right into the Wheelman's path. They tumble to the sidewalk, the WHEELMAN's fake beard coming off in the process.

Del looks up at the man lying on top of him -- right into his face. For a SLOW-MOTION second they are both paralyzed: then the Wheelman hears the sounds of footsteps. He whips around to see:

FRASER

running up fast, half a block away.

19 CONTINUED:

19

THE WHEELMAN

leaps to his feet and disappears into the alley. Where a GREY SEDAN sits, the huge engine idling. The Wheelman shoves a key in the door, opens it and SLAMS his foot onto the pedal, firing out of the alley -- right at Fraser, who has to leap out of it's path.

FRASER

lands in a roll on the sidewalk, right beside Del, watching the grey sedan roar off down the street. Ray runs up.

RAY

Did you get a look at him?!

FRASER

No. But this young man did.

On Del's confused face, we:

FADE OUT:

END OF PROLOGUE

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

20 INT. POLICE STATION -- BULLPEN -- DAY

20

Bedlam. It's a couple of hours after the robbery. PAN the bullpen and you see it's wall to wall angry Santa Clauses: some being hauled in with hands cuffed, some being interrogated, some arguing with their ineffectual attorneys. Huey is unfortunate enough to be walking past a covey of them at this very second.

DEPT. STORE SANTA #1

You know how much money I'm losing right now?! Every kid sits on my lap, I get two bucks!

(Huey moves on, yells after him:)

I can go through forty kids an hour!

DEPT. STORE SANTA #2

(to #1)

I can do fifty.

DEPT. STORE SANTA #1

Bull. No one can do fifty and live.

Find GARDINO at his desk, interrogating a Santa.

GARDINO

It's not a difficult question: where were you at eleven o'clock this morning?

DEPT. STORE SANTA #3

(belligerent)

I have three elves that put me at the department store.

GARDINO

Yeah? Well one of those elves say you went out for about twenty minutes.

DEPT. STORE SANTA #3

He's a lying rat bastard.

Huey passes, calling loudly:

HUEY

Line up! You six, this way!

As he herds them off they GRUMBLE AND MOAN ABUSIVE LANGUAGE:

20 CONTINUED:

20

HUEY (CONT'D)

Yeah, Merry Christmas to you, too,
out the door.

He pushes them past ELAINE'S desk. Elaine sits doing a sketch of Santa Clause at her computer, sitting with a very rattled ELDERLY CUSTOMER.

ELAINE

(losing her patience)

We're not interested in how fluffy
his beard was --

ELDERLY CUSTOMER

(suddenly points to a
crossing Santa)

That's him!

ELAINE

That's the sixth Santa you've pointed
to. Can we focus a little here?

Ray and Fraser move through the wave of Santas, heading for Ray's desk:

RAY

I don't understand the problem here.
Some citizen pulled the fire alarm
and ran away. When we find him we'll
talk to him.

*
*

FRASER

Did they dust the alarm for prints?

RAY

Fraser, maybe I haven't spelled this
out for you: we are not looking to
bust the person who pulled the alarm.
This was a good person. We're looking
for bad people.

*

FRASER

You're not curious who it was?

RAY

How do I know? A customer, a Good
Samaritan, someone who works upstairs --

FRASER

All the businesses above were closed,
all the employees and patrons were
under guard on the bank floor.

(MORE)

FRASER (CONT'D)

If anyone went in from outside, the Wheelman would have spotted him. After they took over the building, there were only four people who had access to that hallway.

RAY

You're telling me one of the robbers pulled the alarm themself??

FRASER

Yes.

RAY

That's ridiculous.

FRASER

Yes. About as improbable as a thief going to a bank robbery with an unloaded gun.

RAY

I tell you Fraser, for one second there I thought I was --
.. (suddenly realizes,
something is very
wrong here:)
--why would a guy pull the trigger on a gun he knew wasn't loaded?

FRASER

Seems improbable, doesn't it?

RAY

(now he's on track)
The security tape -- the wheelman threw him the shotgun--

FRASER

--right after the bagman threw him the money.

RAY

--You say "bagman" now?

FRASER

--I'm picking up your parlance.

RAY

(running with it)
--This thing is planned to the second.
(MORE)

RAY (CONT'D)

The wheelman knows exactly when the bagman is behind the counter. He pulls the alarm, they panic, he runs in. The bagman is trapped behind the counter, he throws the bag to the Wheelman, who throws him back the gun.

FRASER

Smart.

RAY

(agreeing)

If the heat was really coming down, I'd take a gun over a bag any day. The whole thing is a double cross.

FRASER

The back entrance, the second car, it looks like he really thought this through.

RAY

And he's out of the country before his partners figure it out. Very smooth.

WELSH

(yelling "pleasantly"
over the din)

Vecchio, Huey, Louey, would you join me for egg nog?

21 INT. WELSH'S OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

21

Ray, Huey, Gardino.

WELSH

In the last half hour I've had calls from seven department stores, the Salvation Army, two parade officials and the director of a children's pageant. This was augmented by phone calls from four city council members, the deputy mayor and the police commissioner. All of them are curious why we are detaining every Santa Claus in the city on Christmas eve. The police commissioner was especially irked, seeing that his daughter was on Santa's lap in a department store when said Santa was cuffed and hauled

(MORE)

21 CONTINUED:

21

WELSH (CONT'D)

off to a paddy wagon. In our zeal to solve this crime, I can't help but wonder if we are being... how shall I say this... excessively stupid?

GARDINO

Detective Huey and I have a theory, sir.

WELSH

I'd love to hear this.

GARDINO

You want to tell him?

HUEY

No, you go ahead.

GARDINO

We believe that the perpetrators were dressed in Santa Claus suits in order to facilitate their getaway by blending into the crowd.

WELSH

In that people usually don't notice armed men fleeing a crime scene dressed in big red suits.

GARDINO

All they'd have to do is go a few blocks, ditch the car and walk into any department store and they'd fit right in, sir.

HUEY

They could even have had jobs in department stores, sir, it would be the perfect cover.

WELSH

This is your theory.

HUEY/GARDINO

Yes, sir.

Welsh just stares at them.

GARDINO

...It's not our only theory, sir.

HUEY

We have others.

21 CONTINUED: (2)

21

GARDINO

Some very good ones.

WELSH

Detective Vecchio, do you also have a theory?

RAY

Yes, sir. Actually, it's Constable Fraser's theory. Do you mind if I bring him in, sir?

WELSH

No, we need a little more red in the office.

Ray opens the door and beckons.

RAY

Fraser.

Fraser enters.

RAY (CONT'D)

-- (through his teeth,
-- his back to Welsh)
You better be right about this.

FRASER

Good morning, sir.

WELSH

Merry Christmas, constable. Detective Vecchio says you have a theory. I assume there's some kind of North Pole connection you're working?

FRASER

No, sir. It's actually a misconception that the North Pole is in Canada, sir. Over the course of history eight nations have laid claim to the surrounding area, but it's actual ownership has been in dispute since Admiral Peary planted an American flag on it in 1909 -- a fact that in itself is in dispute since many claim Matthew Henson, an African-American, and not Peary, actually discovered the--

*
*
*
*

21 CONTINUED: (3)

21

RAY

(cutting him off)

Sir, we believe there was a double cross in the bank, and the villains are headed in two different directions.

WELSH

Really.

RAY

Constable Fraser and I believe that the Wheelman pulled the alarm in order to throw the situation into chaos and double cross his partners.

WELSH

(why is this hard to believe?)

...One of the robbers pulled the alarm himself.

FRASER

Yes, sir.

RAY

And we have a witness who saw the wheelman without his beard, sir. We have him going over mug shots right now. If the wheelman's in there, he's as good as in our pocket.

WELSH

Okay. You get the wheelman, Huey & Louey work the other three --

Elaine sticks her head in.

HUEY/GARDINO

(exiting)

Yes, sir.

ELAINE

(to Ray)

Cicchelli says your witness has been through all the mug books and is coming up dry.

RAY

Not a problem, sir. Kid's just a little nervous.

Ray and Fraser exit. A belligerent Dept. Store Santa steps into Welsh's office through the open door.

*

21 CONTINUED: (4) 21

DEPT. STORE SANTA #4
(to Welsh)
Which one of your flatfoots took my
reindeer? *

22 OMITTED 22

23 INT. POLICE STATION -- WITNESS ROOM -- DAY 23

CLOSE ON ONE OF A DOZEN MUG BOOKS as the kid slams it closed.

DEL
I already looked, he's not there.

RAY
(opening one)
So look one more time.

DEL
I already did!

RAY
Kid, whoever this guy was, he was no
first timer. And if he's done this
before, odds are a hundred to one his
photo is right in front of you. Maybe
he looks a little different, but he's
there, so I need you to look again.

DEL
Why? He's not in there!

RAY
Kid, I'm having a good day, it's
Christmas Eve and I'm filled with
love for my fellow man, but I swear
to God if you don't look again I'm
gonna smack you upside the head.

FRASER
Ray, may I?
(Ray motions)
Del, why don't you just describe the
man you saw.

DEL
I didn't get a good look.

RAY
You were three inches from his face!
It doesn't get any better than that!

23 CONTINUED:

23

FRASER

Ray, maybe Del is afraid what will happen if he identifies this man.

RAY

He better worry what happens if he doesn't.

(to Del)

You're not the only one who saw a face, kid. This guy was so close to you he could count your pores. How hard do you think it'll be for him to find out where you live? You put the finger on this man and we can protect you, but if you don't cooperate--

FRASER

--we'll still protect you.

RAY

--Maybe he will, but not me, and no other cop will. Think about that, kid.

DEL

-- (stares him down)

You really were touched by the spirit of Christmas.

24 INT. POLICE STATION -- CORRIDOR -- SECONDS LATER

24

The door to the Witness Room opens, Ray holds it for Del, who heads off down the hall. Fraser steps out beside Ray to watch the kid go.

RAY

The kid's making a big mistake.

*

FRASER

Your intentions were good, Ray.

Fraser looks back into the Witness Room. Notices something.

25 INT. POLICE STATION -- WITNESS ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

25

With Fraser and Ray in the doorway. The object that has drawn Fraser's attention is in the foreground. He walks over and picks it up off the table. It's the wrapped gift the boy bought at O. Henry's.

RAY

He leave something?

25 CONTINUED:

25

FRASER

A gift.

Fraser weighs it, a wheel turning, walks back to the hall with it.

26 INT. POLICE STATION -- CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

26

Fraser returns with it. Elaine turns the corner and heads for them.

RAY

Maybe I was too hard on him.

*

FRASER

(in his own thoughts)

...Yes.

ELAINE

They pulled a palm print off the countertop. Your bagman is Robert L. Flanagan. FBI have him linked to six bank jobs with James & Cameron Donnelly.

*

*

RAY

(holy shit/takes file)

No kidding.

FRASER

Is that significant?

RAY

The Donnelly Brothers are something of a local legend. They blew out of town a few years ago after a series of really bloody bank jobs. The FBI's been chasing them around the country since. If I was a bookie, I'd give long odds that our Wheelman won't live to open Christmas presents.

Unnoticed by Ray and Elaine, a reindeer crosses the hallway in the background. Fraser notices but says nothing.

ELAINE

The Donnellys had a partner named Nick Stalidas, rumor had it he skimmed a small amount of money from them. He took off to Mexico. The Federalies found him in bite-sized pieces in the Sea of Cortez.

26 CONTINUED:

26

RAY

There are only two rules carved in the pavement in this town: you don't steal from the mob, and you don't cross the Donnellys.

FRASER

Hm.

(beat)

Well, I think I'll return this gift.

Fraser starts off. Ray stares after him.

RAY

That's good, Benny. We have a few hours tops to find the Wheelman before he's fish food, but you take the time to deliver presents.

FRASER

Thanks, Ray.

Fraser turns the corner and he's gone. Ray gives up and heads off after Fraser.

27 INT. DEL'S APARTMENT HALLWAY -- DAY

27

Del enters and puts a key in his apartment door.

28 INT. DEL'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

28

As the door opens we can see that the apartment has been trashed. Del sees this, turns and bolts...

29 EXT. DEL'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

29 *

Del flies down the hallway, turning the corner and running right into JIMMY DONNELLY. We may recognize his voice as that of the Santa #1.

JIMMY

Hi, Del.

DEL

..Hi.

JIMMY

Came looking for your dad. He wasn't home.

DEL

Yeah.

29 CONTINUED:

29

JIMMY

Tell him Jimmy Donnelly dropped by,
will you? And tell him I expect to
see him tomorrow at the distillery,
as planned. Will you do that for me?

*
*

DEL

Yeah. If I see him.

JIMMY

That's a good boy.

Jimmy pats Del on the shoulder and walks off down the stairs.
As Del sweats out his options, we:

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

30 INT. DEL'S APARTMENT (AND HALLWAY) -- DAY

30 *

No sign of Christmas here in this small one bedroom apartment that Del shares with his father. Del has the place more or less put back together. A pillow and blanket lie on the sofa. A dinette with two chairs sits in the tiny kitchen, surrounded by poorly constructed bookshelves crammed with dog-eared books and manuscripts. Del lifts the ancient typewriter back onto the table, picks up stacks of paper and manuscripts and dumps them in the trash, along with the broken cups and plates. Del hefts the heavy trash can and walks it to the front door. He lets go of one handle to open the door, and sees Fraser coming down the hall.

FRASER

Hello, Del.

DEL

(guarded)

...Hi.

FRASER

You left this in the interview room.

DEL

(takes gift)

Oh. Thanks.

FRASER

I figured you'd need that for tomorrow.

DEL

It's just something stupid.

FRASER

Ah.

(reaching for trash
can)

...Let me help you with that.

DEL

It's okay.

FRASER

(lifting it)

No trouble.

30A EXT. DEL'S APARTMENT BUILDING -- DAY

30A

Fraser puts the can down in the alley. And picks up a manuscript off the top.

FRASER
(reading cover of
manuscript)
William Porter. Your father?

DEL
Yeah.

FRASER
A writer, is he?

DEL
Not really.

FRASER
Hm. My father was quite the writer.

DEL
(can't help but be
impressed)
A professional?

FRASER
No, a Mountie. But he kept journals;
filled up almost a hundred of them.
We didn't get to spend a lot of time
together when I was growing up. It's
only now, through the things he wrote,
that I've really gotten to know him.

DEL
He dead?

FRASER
Yes. Last year.

DEL
Sorry.

FRASER
I've always thought it was the bravest
thing a person could do, to write
down your inner most thoughts, your
fears, hopes, your failings, so that
any stranger can pick it up and read
it.

30A CONTINUED:

30A

DEL

Yeah, well I'm the only stranger who ever read these.

FRASER

Would you mind if I did?

DEL

Suit yourself.

FRASER

Thanks.

Fraser nods and walks off. He turns back, casually:

FRASER (CONT'D)

The gift, is it for your father?

DEL

Yeah.

FRASER

I'm sure he'll treasure it.

DEL

It's nothing.

Fraser smiles, walks off. Del watches and then exits into the apartment.

31 EXT. DEL'S APARTMENT -- STREET -- DAY

31

Ray waits outside in his car, the engine idling. Fraser gets in.

FRASER

Del wasn't scared, he knew the thief.

RAY

He I.D.'d him?

FRASER

Yes. He just didn't intend to.

As the car drives off we cut to...

32 INT. POLICE STATION -- BULLPEN -- DAY

32

Gardino herds a pack of ELVES past in the foreground.

ELF

I told you everything I know!

32 CONTINUED:

32

GARDINO

We just have a few more questions.

ELF #2

Hey! Do we look like rats?!

*

As they pass, we find Ray on the phone at his desk, Fraser across from him.

RAY

(into phone)

Thanks.

(hangs up)

Parole officer says Porter's been a model citizen. Six years he's worked as a janitor; no complaints, never missed a day's work.

(yelling off:)

You got it, Elaine?!

ELAINE (O.S.)

Got it.

RAY

He'd go home, take care of his son, then work half the night writing short stories: apparently it was something he picked up in prison.

Ray heads for Elaine's desk, Fraser walks with him. They have to squeeze through the elves to get there.

*

FRASER

The boy's mother?

RAY

Left him with an aunt eight years ago and did a bunk. When Porter got out he took the kid back.

As they step up to Elaine's desk they find her at the computer.

ELAINE

(reading screen)

William Sydney Porter; plead guilty to one count of armed robbery, he was the driver. Served seven years, released on good behavior. Nothing since.

FRASER

It just doesn't make sense.

RAY

Crossing the Donnellys? Only if you're planning on life as a camel jockey. *

FRASER

You don't plan something this carefully and not think about how you're going to get away with it.

RAY

Maybe he did get away. For all we know he crossed the border to Canada and caught a jet.

FRASER

And leave his son behind?

RAY

Fraser, this may shock you, but in the United States of America we've discovered that bank robbers aren't always the best family men.

FRASER

He leaves prison, reclaims his son and works a minimum wage job for six years.

ELAINE

(answering phone)

Twenty-seven, Elaine Besbriss.

FRASER

(continuing)

This isn't a man who would abandon his life without a lot of thought. When the Donnellys find out they've been betrayed, his son would be a natural target. He wouldn't leave him behind unprotected.

RAY

Maybe he acted on impulse.

FRASER

No. He has a plan, we just don't know what it is.

ELAINE

Thanks.

(hangs up. To Fraser)

Porter's passport expired last month. No request for renewal.

32 CONTINUED: (3)

32

FRASER

So where is he planning to go?

Off Fraser and Ray, we cut to...

33 EXT. DEL'S APARTMENT BUILDING -- NIGHT

33

CAMERA drops down from a rundown apartment building to find Ray's car parked across the street. Ray and Fraser stakeout Porter's apartment. Ray is on his cell phone. Fraser reads one of his father's journals. Diefenbaker sits between them, looking right at Ray.

RAY

(into phone)

I took the wire tap request over in person, sir, but His Honor had consumed a great deal of Christmas cheer, and started cursing at me in Norwegian.

(listens)

I wasn't aware he spoke it either, sir... I'd appreciate that, sir.

(hangs up, looks at Dief)

Did you have to bring him?

FRASER

It is Christmas Eve, Ray.

RAY

(beat; notices)

What are you reading?

FRASER

My fathers journals. I'm just going over some of his old cases, see if there's anything similar.

RAY

Is there?

FRASER

Not that I've found.

(beat)

Hm..

RAY

What?

FRASER

I just... I wish I'd spent more time with my father. There was so much I could have learned from him. So much I should know.

*

RAY

I learned two things from my father.
One: Timing. Mostly when to duck.
Two: Never hit a kid, it doesn't teach
him anything.

(beat)

I'm going to the gas station, I'll be
right back.

(beat. Dief climbs out
with him)

He thinks he's coming with me.

FRASER

He likes you, Ray.

Ray closes the door and he and Dief walk off. Fraser opens
his father's journal and starts to read.

FRASER SR. (V.O.)

Sam Dalton only made one mistake. He
planned everything but how he was
going to spend the money. Before
he'd hit Whitehorse he'd left a trail
of twenties that took me right to his
door.

FRASER SR. leans in from the back seat.

FRASER SR. (CONT'D)

Sam's case was nothing like this.

FRASER

I know, but I can't seem to find--

Fraser suddenly realizes his father is there. He stares at
him.

FRASER SR.

Hello, son.

FRASER

...Hello.

(beat)

How are you?

FRASER SR.

I'm dead, son. You mean other than
that?

FRASER

...No, that's what I was asking.

33 CONTINUED: (2)

33

FRASER SR.

Good. Never be ashamed to ask a stupid question. I taught you that, didn't I, son?

FRASER

Not specifically, no.

FRASER SR.

Well, there's no time like the present. So, fill me in on the case.

FRASER

I'm sorry?

FRASER SR.

The case, the case you're working on, something's bothering you about it.

FRASER

Ah, well, this is it in a nutshell. There was a robbery this morning, we've identified the perpetrators, but the Wheelman -- the driver -- double-crossed his partners and...

.. (considers)

Is there any history of insanity in our family?

FRASER SR.

No, not that I'm aware. Well, there was your Uncle Tiberius, who died wrapped in cabbage leaves, but we assumed that was a freak accident. Go on, go on.

WIDE LOW ANGLE OF STREET

car in the foreground, apartment buildings in background.

CLOSER ON ONE OF THE APARTMENT WINDOWS

Across the street from the Porter's. All the other window's in this apartment building are dark; this one betrays a dim light. And then a face appears in the window. The man turns away.

34 INT. APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

34

The apartment is bare, save a broken sofa and a couple of folding chairs and a card table. JIMMY DONNELLY, his brother CAMERON wait and watch. Cameron returns from the window.

34 CONTINUED:

34

The door opens and ROBERT FLANAGAN (the Bagman) enters with a plastic shopping bag.

JIMMY

You took your time, Robert. Doing a little Christmas shopping, are we?

ROBERT

(tossing bag on sofa)
Porter had a second car, parked in an alley a block away.

JIMMY

Really? Cameron, I have to apologize to you. Seems Porter isn't planning on sharing after all. *

CAMERON

(dead serious) *
Apology accepted, James.

JIMMY

(turning with an
afterthought)
Oh, Robert, I meant to ask you--why did you toss Porter the bag?

The casually asked question sends a shiver down Robert's spine.

ROBERT

I was trapped behind the counter, the cops were coming--

JIMMY

So rather than run around, you threw him the bag and jumped over. It makes sense.

ROBERT

I was just thinking of getting out of there with the cash.

JIMMY

But you didn't, did you? You were the bagman, Robert; the bagman's supposed to carry the bag.

ROBERT

He threw me the gun, Jimmy, the alarm was going off--

34 CONTINUED: (2)

34

JIMMY

No, I understand, everyone gets to
make one mistake. And that was yours.

Jimmy raises a silenced automatic and pumps two rounds into
Robert's chest. Cameron walks up beside Jimmy.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

What did he get us?

Cameron stoops over and takes the plastic bag from Robert's
hand. Looks in.

CAMERON

FarSide calendars.

JIMMY

Oh, I love those.

Jimmy turns back and looks out the window.

34A HIS POV -- DEL'S KITCHEN WINDOW ACROSS THE STREET

34A

Del walks past the window.

34B BACK TO SCENE

34B

JIMMY

Let's go see what young Del got.

35 OMITTED
THRU
37

35
THRU
37

38 EXT. DEL'S APARTMENT BUILDING -- AT THAT MOMENT

38

Fraser Sr. still leans over the back seat, talking to Fraser.

FRASER

So, you just happened to pick this
moment to reappear.

FRASER SR.

Well, you obviously needed my help,
son. And it's my fault. If I had
better prepared you, you wouldn't be
floundering around like this.

FRASER

I'm not completely over my head.

38 CONTINUED:

38

FRASER SR.

No, don't try and make me feel better,
son. I failed you, as a father. But
I'm going to make it up to you now.

FRASER

How exactly do you--

Ray opens the car door, letting Dief scramble over the
backseat as he climbs in.

*
*
*

RAY

Anything happen?

FRASER

In what sense?

38A RAY'S POV -- THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

38A

A peeling sign on the apartment building they're parked
beside: "This Building CONDEMNED by order of..etc." The
front door is boarded.

38B BACK TO RAY

38B

RAY

(the wheels turning)

It's condemned.

(Fraser looks)

There's a light in a window up there!

Ray pulls his gun and is out the door in a flash.

FRASER

(to Dief)

Stay!

FRASER SR.

Me?

FRASER

Him.

Fraser flings his open. As Fraser Sr. follows.

FRASER SR.

You see how your partner spotted that?
Observation is everything, son.

38C EXT. ABANDONED APARTMENT BUILDING -- CONTINUOUS

38C

Fraser joins Ray in the alcove of the apartment door as Ray tries the handle.

RAY
Around the back.

But Fraser sees something and pulls Ray back before he can move--

FRASER
There!

THEIR POV -- THE STREET

The Donnelly Brothers stride across the street bearing shotguns.

RAY
(re: shotguns)
Oh, boy.
(calls out)
Police! Drop 'em!

The Donnellys wheel and open fire, Ray and Fraser pull back as they blast the corner off the alcove. The Donnellys sidestep across the street as they fire, moving to get a dead-on shot.

38D ANGLE ON DEL'S APARTMENT WINDOW

38D

Del looks out, sees the Donnellys and disappears again.

38E WITH FRASER AND RAY

38E

Fraser nods toward a wreck of a car parked at the curb. Ray nods his response and Fraser makes a dash for it as the pellets fly around him.

38F ANGLE ON WRECKED CAR

38F

Fraser lands against the fender a second before Ray does. Ray rises to fire. Camera moves to reveal Fraser Sr. seated beside Fraser: As Ray carries on a gun battle:

FRASER SR.
Count to three and then rise up together shooting.

FRASER
I don't carry a weapon.

38F CONTINUED:

38F

FRASER SR.

You what?

FRASER

I don't carry a weapon.

FRASER SR.

...Is that smart, son?

FRASER

It's the law.

FRASER SR.

(taking out his sidearm)

Ah, well no time for niceties, here,
use mine.

FRASER

Thanks, but it's imaginary.

FRASER SR.

Ah, so it is.

ANGLE ON THE DONNELLYS

Blowing the hell out of the other side of the car, as they
move round for position.

BACK WITH OUR GUYS

Glass shattering over their heads with each blast.

FRASER SR. (CONT'D)

Well, son, at least you found the
villains, there's something to be
said for that.

RAY

(reloading)

This is my last clip!

FRASER SR.

They're maneuvering for position.

FRASER

I can see that.

RAY

See what?

FRASER

They're maneuvering for position.

38F CONTINUED: (2)

38F

RAY

I can see that.

FRASER SR.

You only have a few seconds left.

FRASER

Right again.

RAY

About what??

FRASER

We only have a few seconds left.

FRASER SR.

What you need now son, if you don't mind me saying, is a good solid plan.

Fraser spots a broken brick on the curb, picks it up.

FRASER SR. (CONT'D)

Or, you could just throw a rock.

FRASER

(to Ray)

Fire your entire clip on three!

FRASER SR.

Then he'll be out of bullets.

RAY

Then I'll be out of bullets!

FRASER

I heard you both! Ready?

RAY

Is there an entire conversation going on here that I'm not aware of?

FRASER

Yes. One, two, three!

Ray rises enough to fire rapidly, giving Fraser enough cover to hurl the brick. It smacks young Cameron on the head.

CAMERON

Ahh!

Cameron falls, dropping his weapon. Overwhelmed by the sudden spray of bullets Jimmy grabs him and drags him to a car across the street, firing as he goes. Ray keeps firing as Cameron gets into the car. The rear window blows out.

*

38F CONTINUED: (3)

38F

Jimmy slides in behind the wheel, and then guns the engine and squeals off down the street.

RAY AND FRASER

run into the middle of the street, watching it go. Fraser turns to see:

HIS POV -- THE SIDE ALLEY OF DEL'S APARTMENT BUILDING

Del grabs his bike and pedals off down the alley, fleeing for his life.

FRASER

takes off after him.

WITH DEL ON HIS BIKE

Fraser catches up with him and snags him by the collar. The bike falls to the ground.

FRASER

It's not safe out here.

Ray catches up and takes the kid by the arm, walking him off back toward the car.

RAY

Didn't recognize him, huh, kid?

And they're gone. Fraser picks up the bicycle and follows them. His father is waiting just a couple of steps away.

FRASER SR.

(trying to be positive)

You really had to run very fast to catch that bike.

FRASER

...Thank you.

FRASER SR.

No, when a man does something right, it's important to point it out. Good job, son.

Fraser gives his father a restrained smile. Fraser Sr. whistles as they walk away down the alley.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

39 OMITTED
THRU
46

39
THRU
46

46A EXT. POLICE STATION -- NIGHT

46A

Flashing red and blue lights on cop cars set the festive mood.

47 INT. POLICE STATION -- INTERROGATION ROOM -- NIGHT

47

Fraser and Ray question Del. Ray paces, frustrated.

RAY

We know your father did it, we know he has the money, and we know you know where he is. What we don't know is how smart you are.

DEL

I can't help you.

RAY

Now we know. Talk to him, Benny.
(head for the door as Fraser opens his mouth; turning back, to kid:)
Ask him if he noticed the men with guns who were coming after him. Your father left you hanging, kid. Maybe you should stop worrying about him, and start worrying about yourself. Tell him, Benny.

FRASER

I will, Ray.

RAY

You do that.

Ray flings open the door and exits, leaving it open. As Fraser stands we see Gardino in the hallway.

GARDINO

I said "elves", you morons! Elves!

Gardino walks off in disgust. Just before Fraser closes the door we see six grumbling Elvis impersonators herded by a Patrolman.

*
*
*

47 CONTINUED:

47

Fraser closes the door and returns to Del.

FRASER

Del, I know you want to protect your father. If you didn't, you wouldn't be much of a son. But Detective Vecchio is right, the only way to protect him is to bring him in off the streets.

Del doesn't answer.

FRASER (CONT'D)

It took us several hours to identify your father. During that time he could have easily left town. But he didn't.

DEL

You don't know that.

FRASER

Yes, I do. He wouldn't leave you. And yet he didn't get you out of town before the robbery, arranged to meet you someplace else.

DEL

Well maybe he just didn't include me in his plans at all.

FRASER

I don't believe that. And I don't think you do.

DEL

Think again.

Ray throws open the door and enters with the same amount of steam he left.

RAY

You talk to him?

FRASER

Yes, Ray.

RAY

We don't all get the best fathers, kid. Yours isn't going to win any parenting awards. But he's all you got. You gonna help him or not?

47 CONTINUED: (2)

47

DEL
He's long gone by now.

RAY
Then you can go.

Fraser looks to Ray with some surprise.

48 INT. POLICE STATION -- CORRIDOR

48

Del steps out of the interrogation room and walks off down the hall. Fraser steps up beside Ray, who starts walking.

FRASER
You can't just let him go back out there.

They're now at the open door of the viewing room. Lt. Welsh steps out to join them, he's obviously been watching the interrogation. They watch Del walk off. During this conversation, a reindeer crosses the hallway behind them.

WELSH
Keep a real close eye on him. If you're right, his dad will try and contact him again.

FRASER
We're using him as bait?

RAY
It's something we like to do every Christmas.

WELSH
(walking off)
Just don't lose him. Or let the Donnellys get to him.

Ray shakes his head, obviously not pleased about this.

RAY
(heading off)
I gotta call my mom, explain why I'm not coming over until later, meet you out back.

Fraser turns and walks the other way. His father steps out of a doorway and falls in with him.

FRASER SR.
I never taught you how to interrogate a witness, did I son?

*

48 CONTINUED:

48

FRASER

No.

*

FRASER SR.

The seven ways to tell if a man's
lying?

48 CONTINUED:

48

FRASER
I've pieced it to together myself.

FRASER SR.
Good.
(beat, can't resist)
So you know what to watch for in their eyes.

FRASER
Yes, thank you.

FRASER SR.
So, you know that if they look up and to the right, they're lying.

FRASER
Yes.

FRASER SR.
Unless they're aware of that, in which case they try and stare right at you.

FRASER
Yes.

FRASER SR.
But they overcompensate, and end up looking down and to the left.

FRASER
Really? Would you mind waiting here?
I'll be right back.

49 EXT. REAR OF POLICE STATION -- SECONDS LATER -- MORNING

49 *

Ray waits in his car. Fraser gets in hurriedly.

FRASER
Drive. Quick.
(checking over shoulder)
Before he comes.

RAY
Who?

FRASER
My father. Quick, drive.

RAY
(not going anywhere)
Fraser, your father is dead.

49 CONTINUED:

49

FRASER

I know, and I don't mean to speak ill of him, but he's driving me nuts.

RAY

...Your father.

FRASER

He's not really here, I know that, it's all in my mind, but he just refuses to stay there. Or he'll never leave there -- I don't quite understand it, but it's getting a little bit much. I mean, does he think that I know absolutely nothing?! I'm surprised he hasn't tried to show me how to light a fire! I tell you, Ray, I have half a mind to tell him to just pack up and move out.

RAY

Of your mind.

FRASER

Yes.

FRASER SR.

(leans in from back seat)

Hello, son.

FRASER

Oh God, he's back.

FRASER SR.

What's that?

FRASER

I said "Glad you're back".
(to Ray, in confidence)
Not a word.

RAY

No problem.

Ray smiles, like you smile at a mental patient who may or may not attack you if you say the wrong thing. He looks away out his windshield and sees:

ANGLE THROUGH WINDSHIELD

Del comes out the back door of the police station and heads to where his bike is chained. A BROWN CHEVY suddenly screeches up and power-slides into a 180 degree turn.

49 CONTINUED: (2)

49

FRASER SR.

That's him!

Del opens the passenger door and gets in and the CHEVY SPEEDS AWAY. Ray throws his car into reverse and spins the wheel.

RAY

(as he wheels around)

Right in front of the police station,
now that is cheek!

and we're into:

50 A CAR CHASE

50

but a really fun one -- this guy, after all, is a professional driver and has some pretty neat tricks for ditching a tail. And Ray has a few tricks of his own. A couple of black and whites join in the chase for a while, but the Wheelman quickly ditches them. Ray is a lot harder to shake. But the Wheelman is too damn good at his job and eventually he loses Ray.

51 EXT. OVERPASS OR BRIDGE -- DAY

51

*

Ray brakes, Fraser jumps out and over the rail of the overpass as Ray's car takes off again.

52 EXT. ANOTHER CORNER -- SEVERAL BLOCKS AWAY

52

Porter (The Wheelman) pulls up to a dark corner and kills the big engine. He looks to his son.

PORTER

We should have a few minutes.

DEL

What do you want, William?

PORTER

It's "William" now. Listen, I'm sorry, okay? God, I don't know how to say this--

DEL

I don't need to hear excuses, okay?

PORTER

Hey! I'm still your father.

DEL

Yeah.

52 CONTINUED:

52

PORTER

...Listen to me. I just need you to know that if anything goes wrong--

DEL

I don't want to hear this--

PORTER

If anything happens, you need to know where I hid the money.

DEL

I don't want the damned money!

PORTER

I don't care what you want!

DEL

Now there's a surprise.

PORTER

Will you just listen to me? I don't know how this is going to go down--

DEL

You said you were finished. You said this wasn't going to happen again.

PORTER

I had to do this. Now you gotta listen to me! If anything goes wrong, I need to know you're okay.

DEL

--Now you think of this??

PORTER

You don't talk like that! I'm your father.

DEL

No, you're a loser, that's what you are. You couldn't make one damn thing work out for yourself, not one. So why should I listen to one thing you say?

Del opens the door and runs off.

PORTER

Del!... Del!

The kid knows how to disappear.

52 CONTINUED: (2)

52

Porter throws his car into gear and pulls up to the corner to try and see where his son went. (to the right)

FRASER

leans right up against his car door (having come from the left).

FRASER

You can't get away with this.

Porter pulls his revolver and aims it at Fraser. Fraser doesn't back off, but makes no aggressive move either.

FRASER (CONT'D)

I know you have a plan, but it won't work. There is no way to get away with it.

Porter just stares at him, gun pointed at his chest. For whatever reason, he doesn't fire. Porter puts his foot on the gas and speeds off.

53 HALFWAY DOWN THE BLOCK

53

he skids in a 180 to make the on-ramp.

54 RAY

54

runs up beside Fraser in time to watch the skid.

RAY

Now there's a man who loves his work.

FRASER

I don't think so, Ray.

Fraser and Ray watch him disappear.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

55 EXT. A GREASY SPOON DINER -- DAY 55

A radio blasts out some Bing Crosby favorite. Through the window we find FRASER and his father at a booth in the diner, the only patrons.

56 INT. DINER -- CONTINUOUS 56

FRASER

You sure you don't want anything?

FRASER SR.

No, thanks, son.

(laughs)

My first real Christmas dinner with you in twenty years and I'm not even really here.

FRASER

...Aren't you?

FRASER SR.

I don't understand this anymore than you do, son. Am I here, am I in your head, are you in mine? Damned if I can figure it out.

FRASER

(laughs)

Finally something you don't know.

FRASER SR.

There are a lot of things I don't understand, Benton. How I could live all those years, and not get to know my son.

As with most father-son relationships, this is just too close to an honest moment. Fraser takes a beat, then changes the subject to let his father off the hook.

FRASER

I should be able to see his plan. There aren't that many variables. But no matter which way I twist it, there doesn't seem to be any way he can make it out of this. You don't double cross your partners and then stay around town.

(MORE)

*

56 CONTINUED:

56

FRASER (CONT'D)

You don't plan a getaway but forget about your son.

(and then:)

Unless he never planned to get away.

FRASER SR.

How do you mean?

FRASER

It's the only thing that explains his actions.

FRASER SR.

I don't follow you.

FRASER

No one would attempt such an intricate double-cross and leave the getaway to chance. He did plan it out, he knows exactly what he's doing. And he's not planning on getting away with it.

FRASER SR.

Son, no one plans to fail, that doesn't make any sense.

FRASER

(rising to go)

If it's the only logical solution, it doesn't have to make sense.

FRASER SR.

What the hell does that mean?

FRASER

You don't see it?

FRASER SR.

No!

FRASER

Of course you do, it's obvious.

FRASER SR.

I don't.

FRASER

...You don't? Really?

FRASER SR.

But you do.

(beat, smiles)

Go bring him in, son.

56 CONTINUED: (2)

56

Fraser looks at his dad, understands, returns the small warm son and exits. Fraser Sr. crosses to the window to watch his son.

FRASER SR. (CONT'D)

That's what I taught you.

We hang on him a long beat before we cut to...

THE MANAGER

behind the counter. Who is staring and trying to figure out what just happened here. He crosses and quickly locks the door.

57 EXT. DEL'S APARTMENT -- DAY

57

Ray sits out front on stakeout, watching the building. Fraser steps up to the window.

FRASER

Everything okay?

RAY

...How do you mean?

FRASER

Is Del in there?

RAY

Yeah, yeah.

Fraser nods and heads over to the front door. As he enters the building, RAY'S FATHER leans in from the back seat.

RAY'S FATHER

Twenty-four hours and you still haven't solved the case?

RAY

It's Christmas, Dad, can't you give me one day off??

RAY'S FATHER

Hey; if you don't care about your work, fine by me.

As Ray's father leans back off camera, we cut to...

58 INT. DEL'S APARTMENT -- MOMENTS LATER -- DAY

58

Fraser stands in the doorway.

FRASER

I don't think you mean that.

DEL

He did this to himself. Excuse me if I'm having a hard time feeling sorry for him.

FRASER

He needs your help, Del.

DEL

The first time he went to prison I was six years old. I actually thought it was my fault. I thought if I hadn't asked for all those things -- you know, bikes or toys or whatever -- he wouldn't have had to steal to get the money. When he got out, I was so careful not to ask him for anything, so scared that if I did he'd go out and do something like this again. All I wanted was to have him here with me. But it didn't matter what I did, did it? He didn't give a damn about me, he didn't even tell me -- he just went out and did this. Well, you know what? This is not my fault! He's not my responsibility! He can go back to jail, he can go to hell for all I care.

FRASER

He's not going back to jail, Del.
He's going to die.

Off Del's look.

FRASER (CONT'D)

His plan was never to get away with the money. He's going to let you know where it is, then he's going to make sure no one can take it from you. He's going to kill the Donnellys, and himself, and he's going to make it look like the money was destroyed. It was his plan from the beginning.

DEL

Bull.

(a couple of beats)

You know when I was most proud of him?

(MORE)

*
*

58 CONTINUED: (2)

58

DEL (CONT'D)
(abandons the thought)
What do you want me to do?

*