

THE FALLEN

Ep1: Atonement

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***. TEASER

***. INT. BAR - NIGHT

A man cries. MAURY DEMEULLE (20's, jeans and plaid shirt type) sits by himself and drinks. Looks rough, hasn't slept in days, scrubby facial hair, red-rimmed eyes, and pale. He picks up his phone and makes a call.

The BARTENDER cleans glasses and watches him from the bar, pretending like he doesn't hear Maury. It's past closing.

TONY (V.O.)

Hello?

MAURY

When's a raven like a writing desk?

TONY (V.O.)

Maury? That you?

MAURY

Yeah, I'm pretty far down the rabbit hole this time.

He laughs to himself.

MAURY (CONT'D)

I been thinking about coming clean.

TONY (V.O.)

That'd be a bad idea.

Static on the line, breaking up the call.

MAURY

Yeah, well, tough.

TONY (V.O.)

You at the Rec?

More static.

MAURY

Well, I ain't driving.

The bartender puts a glass down and yells from the bar.

BARTENDER

He's mad we stopped serving him!

TONY (V.O.)

I'll be there in a few.

Static as Tony HANGS UP. Sounds like someone's talking.

Maury stands up.

MAURY
Serious about cutting me off?

BARTENDER
Yup.

MAURY
You got any coffee?

BARTENDER
Yeah, un memento, Maury.

The bartender fills up a cup with coffee and places it on the bar.

MAURY
What?

BARTENDER
I said, un memento...

MAURY
No. Sorry. I thought I heard...
(Beat)
...you know what, never mind. Hey,
is it cold in here?

BARTENDER
A little, I'll get that checked
tomorrow.

MAURY
Okay. Hey, I'm going to hit the
head.

Maury puts some money down on the bar and staggers away.

***.

BAR BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

In the bathroom, Maury squints at the lights flicker.

MAURY
Carlos, lights are crapping out!

He moves to a stall, closes the door behind him.

As he relieves himself, someone jiggles the stall handle.

MAURY
Someone's in here.

It jiggles again.

MAURY

Damn it! I said someone's in here.

He finishes urinating and shakes.

MAURY

Can't even piss in peace.

He zips and opens the door, but finds no one there. He looks around, but the bathroom is empty.

He mutters to himself as he walks to the sink.

MAURY

What the Hell was that about.

He stands at the sink and washes his hands.

His breath freezes in the air. The mirror glazes with ice.

A SHADOW's in the reflection behind him. The ice on the mirror vignettes Maury's reflection. He looks at the darkness that encroaches behind him in the mirror, and starts to cry.

MAURY

Knew something like this would
happen: just knew it. I'm sorry
about what we did.

Blood runs from his nose and ears, as his face turns blue.

MAURY

It... it can't be you, 'cause
you're dead. We killed you.

Tears roll down his face.

MAURY

Oh God, I'm sorry.

Maury dies as tears fall down his face.

***.

BAR - MOMENTS LATER

The bartender mans the bar, cleaning glasses. He watches the bathroom door.

BARTENDER

Come on, Maury. I want to go home
sometime tonight.

A CRASH comes from the bathroom. The bartender puts down his towel and approaches the door. Pauses just outside and puts his ear to it. He knocks.

BARTENDER
Hey, Maury, you fall in?

No response.

BARTENDER
If you passed out on the toilet...

...he pushes open the door to the bathroom. Lights flicker. It's dark inside, with a smattering of sparking light.

In the half-light, something's in the shadows of one of the stalls. It's MAURY, hanging and twitching.

The bartender looks ready to vomit, but he gets a grip on himself and pulls out his cell-phone to make a call.

It's the same voice that Maury heard on the phone.

TONY (V.O.)
Hello?

BARTENDER
Get over here, like right freaking
now, we got ourselves a problem.

END OF TEASER

START OF ACT 1

***. INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - DAY - TRAVELING

CHERYL (20's, deputy from her high gloss shoes to her chestnut hair that's crammed into a bun) drives down a lone country road as the theme song plays. People wave as they pass the car, some on foot; some in trucks.

The car drives down several more roads until it comes up behind a P.O.S. car that's parked on the side of a dirt road, next to a bridge and river. Someone is lying down in the backseat of the car: passed out.

***. EXT. DIRT ROAD - CONTINUOUS

CHERYL parks behind the car and grabs her sunglasses, puts them on her face and gets out of the car.

The Deputy walks up to the car. FRANK (40's) sleeps in the back. She KNOCKS, unable to wake him.

CHERYL

Frank, damn it!

He sleeps in a wrinkled and stained suit. His face is covered in a couple of days worth of beard.

He looks up with bleary eyes and rolls down the car window.

FRANK

Good evening, officer, may I help you?

CHERYL

Actually, Frank, it's morning. Have you been out here all night?

FRANK

Depends. What day is it?

Frank opens the door and exits the backseat, but only makes it far enough to put his feet on the road and gives up. When he does, beer cans and food wrappers fall from the car.

CHERYL

Wednesday.

FRANK

Then, yeah, just one night.

CHERYL

You look like shit, Frank...

FRANK

...and you wonder why I don't come into town more often.

CHERYL

Well, you need to come in today.

FRANK

If this is about the car, I was sober when I got here, drank after parking: swear to God.

CHERYL

That's not what this is about.

FRANK

Then what?

CHERYL

We got ourselves a serial homicide.

***. INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - LATER

FRANK sits in the Deputy's car, parked outside a diner. He looks through his pockets and brings out a broken cigar. Frowns at it, taking the front end and stuffing it into his pocket. He tries to light the other end, but CHERYL walks out of the diner with coffee. He quickly hides it.

He rolls down the window as he waits for her.

Cheryl gets in the car: sniffing. She hands Frank a coffee.

CHERYL

No. No. No. Don't be smoking in here, Frank.

FRANK

Wouldn't dream of it.

He stares at the coffee like it's poison, as Cheryl drives.

LATER:

Frank tries the coffee, wrinkles his face, and puts it down.

FRANK

This stuff tastes like ass.

CHERYL

Sorry, they don't sell the good stuff in our small town diner.

FRANK

What, you mean that fine dining establishment only serves crap?

CHERYL

Do your job, and you can go back to drinking beer in your hidey-hole, after you get your car out of tow.

FRANK

You didn't have to go and do that!

CHERYL

That, or ticket you for DUI.

Silence. Frank begrudgingly picks up the coffee and tries to drink it again. Quietly glances sideways at Cheryl.

FRANK

Fair enough. Look: I heard about your dad. I'm sorry...

CHERYL

...not sorry enough to come to his funeral.

FRANK

I was busy.

CHERYL

You were drunk.

Beat.

CHERYL

I thought he was your friend: him, Avery, and you--the golden boy of Quantico-- all of you were friends back at the agency.

FRANK

More like tarnished brass. I never liked the nick-name, Golden Boy of Quantico.

(Beat)

Also, never understood why your dad quit to become a po-dunk county sheriff.

CHERYL

He had a family to take care of, obligations. You remember what duty is, don't you?

FRANK

In case you haven't noticed, duty hasn't been on my radar lately.

CHERYL

Yea, noticed.

(Beat)

Avery came to the funeral.

FRANK

He did? Didn't know that. What a dick. Could've come by to see me.

CHERYL

He's probably embarrassed, didn't want to see you like this.

FRANK

Don't blame him. I wouldn't want to see me either.

CHERYL

Dad took care of you when Uncle Avery needed a place to hide you, but he ain't here no more, Frank.

FRANK

You're right, he was a friend, and mentor at the academy, but he killed himself. I'm not the one you should be mad at.

(Beat)

Wait. Did you say Uncle Avery?

CHERYL

He didn't.

FRANK

Didn't what?

CHERYL

My dad. He didn't kill himself.

FRANK

What makes you say that?

Cheryl pulls over to the side of the road. Up ahead of them, SHERIFF TONY (late 30's, stiff, permanently pressed into his over-starched uniform, awkwardly skinny) takes pictures of a MAN HANGING FROM A TREE.

CHERYL

That.

***. EXT. THOMPSON HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

A MAN HANGS from a tree in front of his rural house. His face shows the horror of his death. SHERIFF TONY stands before him, taking pictures of the scene, so absorbed in the scene before him that he doesn't notice as CHERYL and FRANK walk up behind him.

CHERYL

With Brian here, that makes three.

TONY

Two. Cheryl, nothing links these to your dad.

Tony is absorbed in taking pictures of the crime scene and doesn't look up.

CHERYL

Three hangings in a month, Tony, and they don't have anything to do with each other?

TONY

No. Two suspicious deaths that followed your father's suicide.

FRANK

Think someone's using Sheriff Clark's suicide as a template for these murders?

With hearing Frank's voice, Tony finally looks up to see that Cheryl isn't alone.

TONY

Didn't say that, and who are you?

FRANK

Agent Wash: F.B.I.

Frank shows Tony his badge.

CHERYL

He's been living out by Jeff Ross' farm. Sorry, I'm being rude: Tony-Frank; Frank-Tony.

TONY

It's Sheriff Roberts. So, you're the drunk I've been hearing about.

FRANK

More of a Federal Agent really, but you probably didn't realize that from my badge.

TONY

Here officially? Or did you come to town cause you're out of booze?

CHERYL

I asked him to help.

TONY

Sorry, but we don't need help on this. Sheriff Clark wasn't murdered, and it wasn't the start of some big case. Short of it is, he took the coward's way out.

CHERYL

He wouldn't...

TONY

...but he did. Listen, I liked him; Hell, we all did, even the criminals around here liked him, but we have to accept the truth eventually, not everything's a conspiracy. Sometimes people are weak.

Cheryl has tears in her eyes, but she does not cry. She gets inches away from Tony's face. She's angry. Her hand is clinched and shaking, ready to hit him.

CHERYL

He was not weak. Watch your mouth...

TONY

...and you watch yours, or you'll be off the force as soon as I can sign my name.

FRANK

So, it might be awhile. I mean, your first name alone has like two syllables.

Tony looks over at Frank, but then goes back to working.

FRANK

So, you got this then, Tony?

TONY

It's Sheriff, and yeah, we got this, and if you two don't mind backing up, I'd like to get back to work.

Cheryl backs up, but stares him down.

FRANK

What's your theory then?

TONY

I think you should leave this to the locals. It's nothing that concerns a wash-out Fed.

Frank holds up a finger, silencing Tony. He pulls out a cell phone and looks at the screen.

FRANK

Sorry for rudely interrupting you, but I thought you might need to see this.

Frank hands the phone to the sheriff.

FRANK

As you can see, that form is also being faxed to your office; if you can't see it too well, or can't read and write, it basically says that I'm taking the lead in this, and I'm to have the full cooperation of your department.

Tony hands back the phone.

TONY

Damn it.

(Beat)

Well, won't know much yet. The last killing was in a bar. Maury Demeulle. We thought it was someone with a grudge, but now this.

FRANK

I'd say someone had a grudge with this guy too. Look at the bruising around his elbows, fingers, and throat. He was in a fight. There's new and old wounds all over him, and these patches of black skin. Was he into drugs?

CHERYL

Busted a couple of times for meth.

FRANK

That explains the old wounds, but look at the others, and at his eyes. There's a sadness.

CHERYL

It had to have been at least two people who done this, right: one to pull up the rope and tie it, the other to stand down here and lift up the body?

FRANK

(To Tony)

Is that what you figure too?

TONY

Guess so.

FRANK

You guess? There's only one set of footprints down in the dirt here: yours, Sheriff. Where's the others?

CHERYL

So, there were two in the tree?

FRANK

From the lack of bruising on his neck, where the rope is, he was dead before being hung, plus his footprints aren't here, and if he was dead, where are the drag marks to bring him out here, or the prints of those who carried him?

CHERYL

That doesn't make any sense. How else did he get up there. There's obviously a dead guy hanging in a tree, Frank.

FRANK

Something's off here. Sheriff, what about the house?

TONY

No sign of struggle in there. Went through it already.

FRANK

Maybe we should look again, never know what a fresh pair of eyes can find. You just stay here and contaminate the crime scene some more until the medical examiner gets here.

TONY

I told you; I already looked. There's nothing...

...Frank walks to the house, followed by Cheryl. They leave while Tony talks. They ignore him as if he ceased to exist, leaving him alone with the dead man.

***.

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The front door opens to a messy house. Old food sits rotting on counters. Dirty dishes piled around the room. A big television sits surrounded by video games.

In walks FRANK and CHERYL. Frank wears latex gloves and hands a pair to Cheryl.

FRANK

Put these on.

CHERYL

You do realize that we don't actually have a medical examiner?

FRANK

Really? Who solves your murders?

CHERYL

We do.

FRANK

I have yet to see one of you with medical training. Who determines the cause of death?

CHERYL

Not many people die unnatural deaths around here, except for an occasional farm accident, cheating spouse, or drunk driver.

FRANK

Sounds like a nice place to live.

Frank uses a pen to poke through things scattered around the room. Cheryl rummages through piles of pizza boxes.

CHERYL

We do have a town doctor, you know. He's the one who figured out that Marsh Brown had been poisoning Old Lady Maggie's cats.

They keep searching.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Turns out, he thought Maggie's cats were cleaning out his chicken coup.

They keep searching.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

He ended up putting out poisoned chickens for the cats to eat. Wasn't till later that we found out that it was a fox.

Something falls, scaring both of them. Quieting them.

FRANK

Well, was there a fight or not?

CHERYL

Oh yeah, we had to put Maggie in jail for an afternoon to cool off, after she bloodied Marsh's nose, finally let her out after she promised to leave him alone...

FRANK

...not the Chickens.

CHERYL

Oh, Thompson? Yeah, he wasn't very social, and I'm pretty sure this place always looks like this.

FRANK

Then why are four game controllers over there, and a plastic cup with lipstick, and the dead man outside didn't seem the type to wear it.

CHERYL

His sister works at Chuck's Diner, but I never thought they liked each other. She's more of a good Christian girl--okay, more of a slutty Christian girl--but he was, well, you know...

FRANK

...yeah, I get it.

Frank picks up a demonic looking statue and gives it a good once over, then begins searching the garbage sacks that are piled in one room.

FRANK

Always hated the whole demon thing, demons and angels both, not very realistic, if you ask me.

CHERYL

My dad always said mom was with the angels now.

FRANK

I don't remember James ever mentioning her. She's the reason he left Quantico, but I never met her.

CHERYL

That makes two of us.

FRANK

Hold on...

CHERYL

...what? Does that surprise you?

FRANK

I think we're getting off the topic here. Hey, does this place seem a little too clean to you?

CHERYL

Yeah, not the word I would've used.

FRANK

Where's the drug paraphernalia?

Cheryl looks confused.

FRANK

Check the bedroom.

Cheryl goes into the bedroom, as Frank sits on the edge of the couch to look over the coffee table. A jumble of half empty glasses sit among empty bottles. He sniffs at the couch, scrunching his nose in disgust, until he notices a bottle that has liquor still in it.

CHERYL (O.S.)

He doesn't even have a bed!

FRANK

Probably why the couch smells like sweat. What's in there?

CHERYL (O.S.)

Bags of trash.

He starts to drink from it, but spies something on the table. He reaches down and picks up a cellphone. He turns it on, but finds that it had been reset and wiped clean. He stuffs it in his pocket.

CHERYL (O.S.)

Hey, Frank!

***. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Frank rushes to the door.

FRANK

What?

Cheryl stares out a window.

CHERYL

Thought you might want to know. There's a shed out back.

***. EXT. THOMPSON HOUSE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

FRANK and CHERYL stand in front of a rundown looking shed. Cheryl takes a large rock and smashes the lock, trying to open it.

CHERYL
Are you looking at my ass, Frank?

FRANK
(Flat)
No.

While Cheryl tries to open the lock, Frank grabs a metal rod laying on the ground and uses it to pry off the lock. They both pull back from the stench coming from the doorway.

CHERYL
God, it smells like death in there.

FRANK
I think we found what we're looking for then.

CHERYL
After you, kind sir...

FRANK
...and now you're lady-like?

***. INT. DRUG SHED - CONTINUOUS

Frank walks into the shed. It's dark. He tries a light switch, but it doesn't work. Cheryl refuses to go past the doorway.

FRANK
Flashlight?

She throws a flashlight to Frank.

FRANK
Thanks.

He catches the flashlight and tries to get it to come on, but it's on the fritz. When it comes on, Frank sees broken glass, and the place has been trashed. He looks back at her.

FRANK
You coming in?

CHERYL
No!

FRANK
Really? Why?

CHERYL
I ain't going in. Might be spiders.

FRANK
My hero.

Frank sighs and starts looking around the room.

It's a long dark shed. The sunlight barely makes it past a foot inside from the doorway. The windows are all covered with brown paper.

It looks like a meth lab, vials, beakers, and gallon drums, but the equipment has been trashed. Broken glass everywhere.

On one wall, Frank finds bloody fingerprints on the wall. Letters are written on the back wall in blood. Flies BUZZ.

It says, "I'm sorry".

Frank covers his mouth and holds back the urge to vomit.

CHERYL (O.S.)
So, what do you see?

FRANK
Unless he was finger-painting with his own blood, I think this is where he was killed.

END OF ACT 1

START OF ACT 2

***. EXT. MECHANIC'S GARAGE - DAY

Outside the garage, the mechanic, NATHAN (20's) works on a random car. He's covered in grease and overalls.

FRANK'S CAR is parked outside. CHERYL'S DEPUTY CAR pulls up on the road. FRANK gets out, but leaves the door open as he grabs some files from the seat.

CHERYL
Don't forget this.

She offers him his coffee, but he just stares at it. He uses his free hand to grab one of the nitrile gloves from his pocket. Inside, the cellphone that he found at the crime scene is wrapped up. He hands it to her.

FRANK
I forgot: I found this.

CHERYL
You found his phone?

FRANK
Don't get excited. Someone reset it already. Could you run this for prints, without telling anyone?

CHERYL
I'll try. Can I use Uncle Avery?

FRANK
Really, Uncle Avery?
(Beat)
Yeah, why not.

CHERYL
Faster than sending it to Little Rock.

FRANK
So, are you giving me a note or something to get my car, without having to pay for the tow?

CHERYL
Nope.

She slams the car door and drives off fast.

Nathan comes up behind Frank. They both watch Cheryl drive off.

NATHAN

Hey, Frank, hadn't seen you in a while. Started to think you died.

FRANK

Nope. I don't think I'd be that lucky.

Turning, he sees his car.

FRANK

Did she give you any trouble?

NATHAN

Who? Cheryl, or your car?

FRANK

I take it you got history?

NATHAN

I've got plenty of history with your car. I sold her to you.

FRANK

With Cheryl.

MECHANIC

Not much. She doesn't tend to keep guys around for long. Last time I hung out with her was right after her dad committed suicide. We got all kinds of drunk that night.

FRANK

Probably explains why she didn't give me a ticket.

MECHANIC

Yeah, she don't have room to talk. We were driving around drunk and naked, shooting that gun of her dad's out the window of the car.

Frank stares blankly at Nathan.

MECHANIC

T.M.I.?

FRANK

Just a bit.

Frank gets in his car, brushing trash out of the way.

MECHANIC

Just to let you know, I did an oil change and transmission flush while waiting for you.

FRANK

Why the Hell did you do that?

MECHANIC

Would you rather I charge the FBI for One Towing due to drunken stupor? I don't think that flies on expense forms.

FRANK

Good point.

***. INT. DINER - DAY

Small greasy-spoon diner. The bar-stools are filled with FARMERS and TRUCK-DRIVERS, quietly contemplating their existence and growing old.

FRANK walks in. The only person who notices him is SANDY JOHNSON (mid 30's), a waitress with a up-do perm and an old style waitress uniform, complete with egg stains on the front.

SANDY

Hey ya, Hun, sit where you like, got plenty of booths open. You want some coffee?

Frank sits and grimaces.

FRANK

Not really, how about juice?

SANDY

Pineapple, apple, cranberry, orange, grapefruit, or lemonade?

FRANK

Orange juice is fine.

SANDY

Sure thing, Hun.

Frank sits at a booth near the door. He looks around before flipping through the file Cheryl had given him about the victim from the bar.

He shuts it quickly when he hears Sandy walking up with his juice.

SANDY

Here you go, Hun. Do you want a menu, or is your stomach not in it today?

FRANK

You can tell?

SANDY

Oh, I've seen the look of a man suffering from sobriety before.

FRANK

This should be fine, thanks.

SANDY

If you need anything, just let me know.

FRANK

Yeah, just a minute. You Brian Johnson's sister?

Sandy looks around the room, looking to see if anybody heard him besides her. She looks over at a guy sitting in the next booth, BOBBY (40's), a guy dressed like a used car salesman, with a saccharin smile that never touches his eyes.

SANDY

Yeah, Hun, he was my brother.

FRANK

Oh, so you've heard already? News travels fast around here.

SANDY

It's a small town.

FRANK

So I keep getting reminded. You don't seem very broken up.

She glances at the slicked hair man again. Her eyes darting. She's nervous.

SANDY

It was bound to happen sometime. Besides, we haven't been close for a while now.

There are tears in her eyes, but she's fighting them back.

FRANK

When was the last time you talked?

She looks over at the man in the other booth again.

SANDY

Sorry, Hun, been a long time. Now,
I got to get back to work.

She disappears into the kitchen. The man comes over to Frank's booth and sits without asking permission.

He extends his hand to Frank.

BOBBY

Hi, name's Bobby Harraway. New in town, or just passing through?

FRANK

Been here awhile. Don't come into town often.

The smile slips a little, but then comes right back.

BOBBY

I'm the mayor here in town. What's your name, son?

FRANK

Frank.

BOBBY

Frank? Just Frank?

FRANK

Yeah, for now. Don't give out my last name till the second date.

BOBBY

Well, Just-Frank, what's your interest in Brian Johnson? I heard the Sheriff has this in hand.

FRANK

Does he? Well, I'm glad someone knows what's going on around here.

BOBBY

You an old cop or something? You kind of have that feel about you.

FRANK

Dealt with a lot of cops in your past, Bobby?

The slimy smile slips again. The Mayor looks angry for a moment, but in a flash, the smile is back.

BOBBY

Well, Frank, we're having a town meeting about this whole ordeal, tomorrow at my vineyard. It would be good to have everyone's ideas as to what might be happening...

The Mayor hands him a flier from his pocket.

BOBBY

...if you're not too busy. Details to get there are on the back. Or, if you need a ride...

FRANK

...your accent? That Californian?

BOBBY

Yeah, but it's been awhile since I left. Surprised you noticed, nobody usually does.

FRANK

It's one of my parlor tricks.

BOBBY

Can't wait to see what else you've got in the bag. See you, Frank.

Bobby winks, before turning and leaving the diner, briefly chatting with some of the other diners as he leaves, handing out fliers as he goes from booth to booth.

Frank looks over to see Sandy watching the Mayor leave; she looks worried, notices Frank looking, and ducks back into the kitchen. Her mascara is out of sorts, like she's been crying.

A man sits a cup of coffee on the table in front of Frank; it's CHUCK (Mid-60's, grizzly and hefty, as if his body's used to manual labor).

FRANK

Is this: annoy a stranger day? Or am I just lucky? I didn't order coffee.

CHUCK

On the house, looks like you need it. Heard you're working with the locals on this murder. So, you a Fed?

FRANK

Why would you want to know?

CHUCK

Oh, didn't mean to be rude. My name's Chuck. I own this here greasy-spoon.

FRANK

Not very good advertisement, calling your diner a greasy-spoon.

CHUCK

These guys don't mind. They just come here for the all-you-can-drink coffee, maybe get a bite to eat, and stare at Sandy's tits. They wouldn't budge if I was roasting a rat on a spit. They'd just ask for a refill and drop a fork for Sandy to pick up.

FRANK

Guess as long as Sandy doesn't decide to leave town or something, you've got it made.

CHUCK

Except for these dead folk. They got people spooked. Sure would appreciate it if you'd catch whoever's doing this.

FRANK

Well, I was planning on just going home and jerking off, but since you asked...

CHUCK

...smart-ass. Just figure this out before it drives away my customers.

FRANK

Aren't you just a sentimental bastard?

CHUCK
 Business is business.
 (Beat)
 By the way, noticed the pictures
 you were looking at, why was Maury
 covered in frostbite?

FRANK
 What does a burger flipper know
 about frostbite?

CHUCK
 Ain't always been a burger flipper.

Frank looks down at the cup of coffee, wrinkles his face
 into a sneer, and slowly pushes it back to Chuck.

***.
 EXT. FRANK'S HOUSE - EVENING

FRANK sits in a lawn chair on the porch. He stares
 thoughtfully at an unopened bottle of beer that sits on a
 table next to him.

FRANK
 Don't stare at me like that.

He turns the label to face away, then turns it back.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 It's been awhile since I got out.
 You're just jealous because I spent
 time with someone other than you
 today.

CHERYL (O.S.)
 Talking to yourself?

Frank looks up to see CHERYL in civilian clothes, holding a
 brown paper bag.

CHERYL
 I come bearing gifts. A peace
 offering.

FRANK
 The horse which once Odysseus led
 up into the citadel as a thing of
 guile.

CHERYL
 Huh?

FRANK

It's from Samuel Butler's translation of the Odyssey.

CHERYL

I don't get it.

FRANK

You really are a small town's child, aren't you?

Cheryl smiles and holds up the liquor.

CHERYL

Piss off. You want some of this whiskey, or should I just take it home?

FRANK

Are we brainstorming?

CHERYL

If that's what you want to call it.

FRANK

Can't think of anything else.

CHERYL

Venting?

FRANK

That'd work too.

Frank gets up and offers her a lawn chair. She sits as he goes inside and comes back out with glasses and more beer.

CHERYL

Beer before liquor makes you sicker.

FRANK

Never found it matters which way it's done. All goes down the same.

CHERYL

And you're an expert?

FRANK

I know a thing or two.

CHERYL

What do you think about these killings so far?

FRANK
Still working on that.

He sits down; grabs the file with the crime photos.

FRANK
You notice the bruising on Brian?

CHERYL
Yeah.

FRANK
And that bruising on Maury.

Frank takes a drink.

FRANK
It's not from a beating. It's
frostbite; look at the black
fingertips on Brian.

Cheryl pours a shot in each glass, and they both drink.

CHERYL
Dad always said you were good.

Frank twists off two beers and hands her one.

FRANK
You're dad was pretty good too.

They take another shot. Cheryl chases it down with some
beer.

CHERYL
My dad didn't have frostbite.

FRANK
He didn't?

CHERYL
Tony didn't say anything about it.

FRANK
If he noticed. He's not exactly the
sharpest knife in the drawer.

They do another shot, slower; the alcohol is working.

FRANK
You know, something's been
bothering me.

Frank empties his bottle and grabs another.

CHERYL

Hm?

FRANK

John left Quantico in two thousand ten. Where were you before that? He never mentioned you till he was leaving.

CHERYL

That's none of your business, Frank. You going to tell me what got you sent to this dump?

FRANK

No, but I can show you what I've been doing while I've been here.

CHERYL

Besides drinking?

FRANK

Besides drinking. Shh.

Frank pours another shot for himself and hands the bottle to Cheryl. She drinks strstight from the bottle.

Frank walks over and turns off the porch-light. The night floods in, leaving them in darkness, but soon small green lights start appearing around the woods. Cheryl walks over to stand beside Frank, staring in amazement.

CHERYL

Wow, and here I thought you were looking through old cold-cases.

FRANK

A man can't work all the time, and whiskey only sings a man to sleep so often. See those glowing lights? The light's comes from a fungus called Foxfire; it grows on decaying wood. My mother taught me about it when I was a kid. Been collecting it from the woods here. Reminds me of things lost.

Cheryl lays her head on Frank's shoulder.

CHERYL

Like what?

FRANK
That's none of your business.

Cheryl sniffs at the air,

CHERYL
Something burning?

FRANK
Damn it! The ramen!

Frank rushes into the house.

***.
INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

There are boxes and files everywhere. Inside the kitchen, FRANK has no dishes, except for a pot of burning ramen.

It smokes as he puts it into the sink. He tries to eat some noodles, but gags and gives up on it. CHERYL laughs at him.

FRANK
Well, that's my dinner.

CHERYL
I don't usually go for sexist stereotypes, but I think you need a woman's touch around here, maybe more than one dish for a start.

Frank unconsciously rubs the finger where a wedding ring should be and SUDDENLY LOOKS TIRED.

CHERYL
Pizza?

FRANK
You can order some, if you want. I think I'm heading to bed.

Cheryl walks behind Frank as he goes to the bedroom door. She peeks inside the room. She's obviously drunk.

CHERYL
Well, the bed looks comfortable enough for two.

Frank goes into a closet and brings out a pillow and a sheet, tossing it at Cheryl.

He shuts the door, leaving Cheryl outside the room, looking disappointed. She takes the pillow and sheet to a couch. After moving some boxes from it, she lays down.

CHERYL
Wonder if it's something I said.

***.
INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

FRANK sits on the side of his bed, having removed his tie and jacket. He kicks off his shoes and watches as they knock over things in the room.

He opens a drawer in the night table by his bed. There's a picture inside. He picks it up, looks at it, puts it back, and then shuts the drawer, before he turns off the light.

END OF ACT 2

START OF ACT 3

***. INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT DAY

FRANK'S cellphone rings, waking him from drunken slumber.

FRANK
Hello?

CHUCK
Frank?

FRANK
Who's this?

CHUCK
Chuck, down at the diner. I have a bit of a problem. Mind coming in?

FRANK
Can it wait?

CHUCK
Not really. Sandy done got hanged.

FRANK
Where?

CHUCK
The diner.

FRANK
I'll be right there. Hey, how'd you get my number?

The phone goes dead.

Frank hangs up the phone, but stares up at the ceiling, looking like he doesn't want to get up.

***. INT. DINER - DAY

CHUCK'S the only person in the diner. He sits alone at the bar, drinking his coffee. His apron is white and clean.

FRANK knocks on the frosted glass door.

CHUCK
Sorry, we're closed today.

FRANK
Chuck? It's me, Frank.

Chuck unlocks the door and lets Frank inside.

CHUCK

Sorry about that. Been trying to keep the regulars out. I called Tony too. He's on his way now.

FRANK

Where's Sandy? Has anyone been in here?

Chuck goes behind the bar and pours himself some more coffee, looks deep into the cup.

CHUCK

Naw, no one else, yet. You know, Sandy, she was just passing through this diner. Must've been ten years now, she came in that door. Said she was done with this little town, wanted to head to New York to get the backwoods out of her system. She was going to be a star, but needed a job to get up some bus-ticket money. I guess she wasn't as tired of this town as she thought. After awhile, she had the money to leave, but never bought that ticket.

Chuck shakes himself from a daydream and looks up at Frank. There are tears rimming his eyes. He rubs them away.

CHUCK

Dang allergies. Sorry, where are my manners? You want some coffee? Just made some. It's not like any of it's getting sold today. How about some pie? Blueberry. It's the best in all the south.

FRANK

I think I'll pass. Care to show me where the body is?

Chuck leads him into the kitchen. Sandy is hanging in the walk-in. Her body is frozen blue, and blackened from frostbite. Her face is forever in shock; tears are frozen on her face. Her hands are claws. There's bruising around her neck, like she'd been choked.

There are bloody letters on the walk-in door.

They spell out, "FORGIVE ME"

Frank turns to Chuck, who is studying the writing.

CHUCK

I can't quite make it out but something about it...

FRANK

...it says, "Forgive me."

CHUCK

I wonder who wrote it. I mean, it's not Sandy's.

FRANK

Well, if not hers, then it's the killer's.

CHUCK

You know what. That's odd, looks just like...

(Beat)

I recognize it; it's James' handwriting.

FRANK

The dead sheriff wrote this?

CHUCK

That's why I said it was odd. So, you want that coffee now?

***. EXT. WINERY - DAY

CHERYL walks up a driveway filled with cars; people arrive for the town meeting. She's on the phone with Frank.

CHERYL

You need me to come over there?

FRANK (V.O.)

No. Tony's on his way over now. I'd hate to take that small piece of being the new sheriff away from him.

CHERYL

Could've woken me up this morning.

FRANK (V.O.)

Did you want me to make you some breakfast in bed?

CHERYL
It's a good start.

FRANK (V.O.)
Well, I'll head out to the meeting
as soon as Barney Fife gets done
contaminating this crime scene.

CHERYL
Okay. See you when you get here.
Oh, and Avery found a print on the
cell phone from Brian's. He's
running the print now.

FRANK (V.O.)
Maybe we finally have some luck.

CHERYL
I'll let you know, once I hear
anything. Just hurry up and get
over here.

Cheryl hangs up the phone.

INSIDE WINERY HALL - CONTINUOUS

Cheryl walks inside and looks around.

There are seats organized for the TOWNSPEOPLE. The folks
watch BOBBY stand on a dais with his microphone.

BOBBY
Thank you, everybody, for showing
up today. Hopefully, we can clear
things up.

FARMER
Rumor has it we've had three
murders. There's a killer running
around. What you doing about it?

BOBBY
Two. The former sheriff sadly took
his own life.

CHERYL
So, these other murders just happen
to be just like his suicide?

BOBBY
It's a very sick individual. The
other two had blackened fingertips.
Your father didn't have a scratch.

CHERYL

You know a lot for someone that wasn't a part of the investigation.

BOBBY

Your new boss keeps me apprised.

CHERYL

Pretty cozy. So, what's your theory on those two murders?

BOBBY

Brian was known to be into drugs...

A noise rises up from the crowd, as if they agree.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

...and we know that Maury had his own run-ins with drugs as well.

CHERYL

You better not be saying my dad had anything to do with drugs, Bobby. I don't care if you are mayor, I'll kick your ass, right here and now.

***. INT. DINER - DAY

FRANK and CHUCK are at the diner's counter. Chuck pushes a cup of coffee to Frank, who looks at it with suspicion.

TONY takes pictures of SANDY'S BODY.

The TOWN DOCTOR (70's, dressed in a tidy suit, hair all in a disarray) pokes and prods Sandy's body with latex gloves, looking for clues.

FRANK

Tony, you should've been a photographer.

TONY

It's just part of the job, Frank.

FRANK

No, I mean instead of a sheriff.

Chuck puts two empty coffee cups on the counter.

CHUCK

Do they want some coffee?

FRANK
Tony, you want some coffee?

TONY
No, thank you.

FRANK
And you, good doctor?

DOCTOR
That would be nice, thank you.

CHUCK
Cream, sugar?

DOCTOR
Just black, thank you.

Chuck pours a cup. While Chuck looks the other way, Frank pours something from a flask into his own coffee.

He quickly hides it when Chuck comes back with the doctor's coffee. He hands it to Frank.

FRANK
Why're you giving it to me?

CHUCK
I ain't going in there again.

FRANK
Really?

Frank takes the coffee into the kitchen, when his phone buzzes. He puts the coffee down on a shelf near the doctor.

FRANK
Your coffee's here, doc.

DOCTOR
Thank you, sir.

Frank pulls out his cell-phone and looks at it.

DOCTOR
Welp, one thing's for sure, she was dead before she was hanged.

Frank looks up at Tony and puts the phone away.

FRANK
Tony, is that James' old pistol?

Tony looks down; he's wearing the pistol in a side holster.

TONY

Oh, yeah, forgot I had that on me, took it from Cheryl. Caught her and that mechanic, Nathan, buck naked, drunk, and shooting that thing at empty bottles a few nights ago.

FRANK

Can I see it? Haven't seen that thing in years. Always thought he just kept it for show, you know, some kind of wild west thing.

TONY

Huh? Sure, I guess.

Tony hands the gun over to Frank.

FRANK

He bought this at a pawn shop in California. Some Marine sold it, probably came into hard times, wanting money for more drink.

TONY

You've been there?

FRANK

Been close, real close.

Frank cocks the gun and points it at Tony, and then winks.

TONY

Frank, what the hell?

FRANK

Why'd you erase Brian's cell-phone?

TONY

What you're talking about, Frank?

FRANK

Funny thing: I remember this thing had a twitchy trigger, sometimes it goes off accidentally.

TONY

This isn't funny, Frank.

FRANK

Yeah, I know. So, why'd you do it? Your fingerprints were all over it.

TONY

I picked it up, checking it.

FRANK

You do realize that phone records aren't hard to get into, right? You were friends, weren't you?

Tony shrugs.

FRANK

One of his quiet, unseen friends that no one talks about. Trouble is: you, Brian, Maury, and Sandy over there, good friends as kids, then suddenly you stopped talking to each other? The question is, why?

Frank motions with the gun for Tony to move to the front door. Tony tries to answer, but Frank shakes his head, "NO."

FRANK

Let me tell you something else: your phone calls kept going after you stopped hanging out. About that time, you made a new friend, didn't you? Bobby, the greasy mayor.

Frank grabs one of the cups of coffee and hands it to the doctor.

FRANK

We'll be back in a few, doc. Well, maybe not Tony, but I will.

DOCTOR

Okay, thanks.

FRANK

By the way: what's that blackness around the extremities?

DOCTOR

If I didn't know any better, I'd swear it was frostbite.

As Tony and Frank start to leave the diner, Chuck looks up from his coffee; his eyes meet Frank's.

CHUCK

Told you. I ain't always been no burger-flipper.

***.

INT. WINERY - DAY

BOBBY smiles his greasy smile to the crowd. No one realizes that the lights start to flickering behind him.

Suddenly, the microphone shorts and sparks. The CROWD gets uncomfortable.

BOBBY

Wow. Maybe I need to get a new mic.

The crowd laughs nervously.

BOBBY

I vow to not relax, until whoever's doing this is brought to justice, just like the justice we did to the sheriff...

(Beat)

I mean, the justice that the sheriff would have wanted.

CHERYL

What did you say?

BOBBY

Sorry. I'm sorry. Slip of the tongue. The Sheriff's murder.

Beat. His face twitches as if there's a brief moment of pain.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

I mean suicide. It was sad. He was a good man, but we had to...

He looks confused. His eyes go wide, and blood runs down from his nose.

BOBBY

...I...we didn't mean it. It was...
What was I saying?

CHERYL

Bobby?

BOBBY

He shouldn't have been there.

Bobby 's face starts to turn red, and he shakes visibly. Blood leaks out of his ears.

CHERYL
 My father's death wasn't a suicide?
 Was it?

The lights flicker. The air turns cold enough to see Bobby's
 Breath.

BOBBY
 He's screaming. He's screaming
 inside my head! I hear him!

He falls to his knees, crying.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 Tell her about the drugs! No. Yes.
 I did. Leave me alone!

FRANK comes in from a side door, with a handcuffed TONY.

BOBBY
 Is it cold in here?

FRANK
 Go ahead, Mister Mayor, tell her
 what you did. Or should I have Tony
 tell her for you?

BOBBY
 We were trying to make some money.
 Nobody was supposed to get hurt.

CHERYL
 Drugs? What about the users? What
 about my father? You ass! Don't
 tell me nobody gets hurt...

BOBBY
 ...but they're addicts. Nobody
 cares about them. Your dad was
 different...

Bobby looks over his shoulder at the shadows behind him, the
 shadows that look as though they breathe and grow with every
 word Bobby says.

BOBBY
 (To the shadows)
 ...stop it! Get out of my head!
 Leave me alone!

CHERYL
 Drugs? This was all about drugs?
 What did you do to my father?

The crowd leaves, slowly at first--then they run.

Cheryl rushes the dias, but the wind picks up and debris flies around like a small whirlwind, with Bobby in the calm middle. She shields her eyes and stops a few feet away.

The lights shut off.

Cheryl takes out her flashlight and shines it on Bobby, leaving him halfway in the light, half in the shadows. Bobby's breath is visible, and his skin turns blue. He shakes from the cold.

BOBBY

He came up on us as we were doing an exchange. I didn't mean to. He just wouldn't listen to reason.

CHERYL

You killed my father.

BOBBY

It was an accident. The others just helped me clean it up. Tony made sure it looked like a suicide. Cheryl, I'm sorry.

Tendrils of shadow, like a smoke, comes from the shadows and wraps around Bobby's neck. Then it yanks him into the darkness.

Cheryl shines her flashlight around the area, looking for Bobby. The light lands on Sheriff Clark's ghost (50's, uniformed and grey, like all the color has been washed out of him), standing in the darkness, holding onto Bobby's neck, raising him off the ground.

Bobby cries blood, and his skin in blue, with patches of black frostbite. He looks over at Cheryl, raises his hand...

...the flashlight goes dead.

Bobby screams in the dark, but it's cut short.

Some of the lights hall come back on, weakly, wavering, shorting out. In the blinking light, Bobby's body hangs by his tie from low rafters, twitching.

FRANK

And that's why I don't wear ties.

END OF ACT 3

START OF ACT 4

***.

EXT. WINERY - DAY

TOWNSFOLK drive away in a hurry. FRANK and CHERYL drag TONY out in handcuffs. The three of them stand alone in the driveway.

TONY

What the hell was that?

FRANK

I'm not an expert, but I think it's a pissed off ghost, Tony.

Cheryl rushes at Tony and hits him in the face. She keeps hitting him, until Frank stops her.

CHERYL

How could you? I'm gonna kill you!

She lunges at Tony again, but is held back by Frank.

TONY

Pretty sure I deserve that.

CHERYL

(To Tony)

You deserve more than that.

(To Frank)

Why don't we just give him to it?

FRANK

Remember, that it is your father.

TONY

Can we talk about this somewhere else, like, as we're driving away?

CHERYL

My father should get his revenge.

FRANK

(To Cheryl)

It's your duty as a police officer.

TONY

Really? Can't we just, you know...

Cheryl takes her badge and throws it at Frank; he catches.

CHERYL
...forget it, Frank: no way in
hell!

FRANK
Fine!

Frank takes Tony and handcuffs him to a fence, then throws
the handcuff keys away.

CHERYL
What are you doing, Frank?

TONY
Yeah, Frank, what're you doing?

FRANK
Leaving him to your father.

Frank walks toward his car, leaving Cheryl and Tony alone.

TONY
Ha ha. Not funny, Frank.

Frank keeps walking.

FRANK
Well, come on. He deserves this.
You said so yourself.

Tony looks pleadingly at Cheryl.

TONY
Please, don't do this.

CHERYL
(To Tony)
Give me one good reason.

TONY
You're not a bad guy.

Cheryl is frustrated, yet takes out her own handcuff key and
unlocks Tony from the fence.

CHERYL
I want you rotting in prison.

TONY
Fair enough.

Frank comes walking back.

CHERYL
Thought you were running away.

FRANK
I couldn't, I threw my car keys.

***.
INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

CHERYL drives; FRANK'S next to her. TONY'S in the backseat, leaning to keep pressure off his handcuffed wrists.

TONY
Never been on this side of the arresting. Thought they were just complaining, but these are painful.

CHERYL
Wouldn't lean too far over. Henry Dorchester threw up back there a couple of nights ago: haven't got it all out.

FRANK
You arrest criminals in your personal car?

CHERYL
No. Ex-boyfriend, long story.

TONY
Nice, Cheryl, real nice.

CHERYL
You're no longer my boss, so I say this with all due respect: shut up.

FRANK
This isn't the way to the sheriffs' office. Where are we heading?

CHERYL
Out of town. Ghosts haunt a place, right? If we go far enough, he can't chase us. We're heading to the State Police.

FRANK
Hope you're right. Oh, by the way, Tony had this when I arrested him.

Frank hands Cheryl her father's pistol.

TONY

Look out!

Cheryl turns the steering wheel sharply, overcompensating to miss hitting the shadowy figure of the dead sheriff that stands in the road, looking colorless and transparent.

***.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The car is wrecked. The back door is wrenched open by the wreck. It slowly opens as TONY shoulders it wider to try to get free. He falls out and pulls the handcuffs underneath his feet to bring them to the front.

The passenger window is open, and FRANK is knocked out. The air-bags on driver's side and passenger side are deployed and deflating.

Tony opens the passenger door slowly and feels Frank's pockets.

TONY

You really did get rid of the keys,
didn't you? You're such an ass.

He goes to CHERYL, who is dazed and bleeding from the crash, and he fishes out her keys. He undoes the handcuffs and cuffs her to the steering wheel.

He spots something on the floorboard and reaches down, pulls out the pistol that lays at her feet.

Tony's breath frosts before him. He shakes from the cold as a hand grabs him from behind and throws him back into the dark woods, crashing through the dark underbrush.

The GHOST OF JAMES, the former sheriff, and Cheryl's father, stands beside the car. The darkness slips away from him, and color creeps back into his face and hands. He looks at Cheryl.

GHOST OF JAMES

(Whispers)

Cheryl.

He tries to touch her face, but his hand slips through her face. He pulls back his hand and stares at it for a moment before his face turns to rage as he looks around for Tony, only to see that Tony has run off.

The ghost howls with anger, and the color vanishes from his face and hands, and the dark shadows consume him once again.

***.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

TONY runs along a creek. He keeps looking around, paranoid. He stops, hears something, and shoots the pistol in random directions.

Nothing. He runs on. Something makes a sound. He fires.

TONY

Don't come near me!

FRANK (O.S.)

Easy! It's only us!

TONY

Don't you come near me either!

ANGLE ON

FRANK stands behind a tree and pulls his gun. CHERYL stands behind him.

CHERYL

We're trying to help.

TONY

Didn't want to kill him! He died right there, you know? Bobby pushed him off that cliff. That's why he brought me here; it's where he died.

Tony stands in the creek waving the gun around, pointing at a sandstone cliff.

CHERYL

We'll take you to the State Troopers; you'll be safe there.

TONY

No. No. He'll find me wherever we go; it's all my fault, my fault! Bobby thought he killed your dad, pushing him off the cliff. I knew he was still alive though, heard him, came down here and finished the job, set up those pictures of the suicide so you couldn't see the bruises. I hid the truth, thinking it'd never get out, but here it is.

Tony fires the gun again, in different directions.

He laughs hysterically.

He looks scared, to the point of crying while he continues to laugh.

TONY (CONT'D)

I don't want to die.

CHERYL

I don't doubt that, Tony.

TONY

I deserve this. Don't I? No matter where I go it'll follow me.

Tony's skin starts turning blue, and his shallow breaths freeze in the cold air. His body lifts into the air above the creek as if held up by invisible hands.

He tries to raise the gun, but his arms are weak.

DARK TENDRILS OF SMOKE rise up from the ground and envelope him. The GHOST OF JAMES rises up from the ground. He and the black smoke are one.

Tony stares at him helplessly.

CHERYL

Dad, no! Don't do it!

The shadows stops and James turns to look at her. For a moment, the sheriff's face has its color back. He looks at her with sadness in his eyes.

In that moment of distraction, Tony looks alert. He raises the pistol up and points it at Cheryl.

TONY

Sorry, old man. I ain't going out like that. Try and kill me, and I'll put a bullet in your daughter before I die.

The shadows retreat in an instant. Tony drops out of the air and into the creek.

James looks more human now.

In the confusion, Frank picks up a branch and hits Tony, knocking the pistol away, and he hits him again, knocking Tony down into the creek.

James watches for a moment, but then diverts his attention back to Cheryl.

GHOST OF JAMES
 Sorry. Never meant to get you
 involved in this.

Cheryl reaches out and touches him. Instead of going through him. Her hands glow softly and her hands meet his.

CHERYL
 It's time for you to rest now, dad.
 Mom's waiting for you.

JAMES' GHOST
 No, she's not. She's still alive.

James' ghost glows brighter and brighter as he fades away.

CHERYL
 Wait. She's alive?

When James vanishes, Cheryl and Frank walk over to Tony's body. Tony starts to move, and Frank hits him again with the branch, knocking Tony unconscious.

Frank bends down and picks up James' old pistol.

FRANK
 You mind if I keep this?

CHERYL
 Why?

FRANK
 Well, it was mine in the first
 place. Sold it to your dad. Kind a
 think I paid him back for it now.

CHERYL
 So, how're we gonna report this?

FRANK
 Um... a branch fell on him?

CHERYL
 Well, good luck with that.

Cheryl walks off, leaving Frank standing there staring. He looks down and drops the branch.

END OF ACT 4

TAG

***. INT. FBI OFFICE - DAY

***. OVER BLACK--

TWO DAYS LATER - FBI SATELLITE OFFICE - FAYETTEVILLE, AR

FRANK sits uncomfortably in an interrogation room. He looks tired. There are files spread out in front of him. TWO OTHER FBI AGENTS sit across from him, looking through files.

FBI 1

So, you really believe this stuff?

FRANK

I wrote like it was.

FBI 2

A ghost committed these murders?
You understand how this sounds,
don't you?

FRANK

Sounds like you're busting my
balls, even with a dozen eye
witnesses backing it up.

FBI 2

And we're supposed to take their
word on what happened? Don't you
think there's other explanations?

FRANK

Mass hysteria?

FBI 1

Could be.

FRANK

Human sacrifice. Dogs and cats
living together. Mass Hysteria.

FBI 2

No one mentioned human sacrifice.

FRANK

It's a quote. Never mind.

FBI 1

Are you taking this seriously?

FRANK

This: I take seriously. You: I don't.

FBI 1

You're in hot water here, Frank.

FRANK

Good. I needed a bath anyway.

FBI 2

Do you *really* believe these people were attacked by a ghost, or not?

FRANK

I wouldn't have put it in the report, if I didn't believe it.

FBI 2

So, you're sticking with that then?

The door to the room opens. DIRECTOR AVERY comes in the room, holding more files and a pie with plastic forks. He has a relaxed demeanor, friendly, smiling.

AVERY

I got it from here guys.

The other two look at each other briefly and leave the room.

FRANK

You going to chew my ass too?

AVERY

Who me? Is that what they were doing? Oh, heavens no. You want some pie? Me, I love me some pie. Blueberry, best in all of the south.

Frank stares at him for a moment before he and Avery start eating the pie.

FRANK

Then, why am I being interrogated?

AVERY

Interrogation's a strong word. Debriefed. Or we call it a review?

FRANK

A what?

AVERY

A review. How'd you feel about your little adventure?

FRANK

Let's just say, I'd rather have my testicles nailed to this chair than do that again anytime soon.

Frank takes a bite.

AVERY

We would like you to do it again. In fact, We want you to do it again full time: heading up a specialized department.

FRANK

Sorry, what?

Avery takes a bite of pie.

AVERY

Frank, there are some of us in the FBI that know about monsters. We investigate them, and if need be, cover them up, so the ordinary folks can go about their lives, not being afraid of every little bump in the night, or every shadow in a darkened room.

FRANK

You knew these things were real? And you didn't tell me?

AVERY

What was I going to say: *'Hey, Frank, by the way, ghosts and demons and shit are real. You wanna help get rid of them?'*

FRANK

Guess not. Wait. Demons are real too?

AVERY

So, now you've entered the looking glass. Are you going to stick this out, or are you gonna quit on me?

Avery gets up and throws his fork in the trash.

FRANK
Demons. Really?

AVERY
I need you, Frank.

FRANK
Head of my own department?

Avery nods.

FRANK
But, you were kidding about demons,
right?

Avery nods, 'No.'

FRANK
Is my job riding on me saying yes
to this?

AVERY
Pretty much.

FRANK
Damn it.

AVERY
Good, it's settled. We'll begin
finding you a partner.

Avery sits on the table.

FRANK
There's really only one person I
can think of, and she's it.

***. EXT. FBI - DAY

ONE OF THE TWO FBI AGENTS that were grilling Frank walks out of an exit and into a parking lot. He walks to a car and gets in, looks around before pulling out his cell-phone. His eyes go solid black as he makes a call.

FBI 1
We may have a problem.

END OF FILM