

Diagnosis Murder

"Murder Blues"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. HOUSE – EARLY MORNING

1

It looks like a crime scene at an Ethan Allen showroom. We
wind through COPS and FORENSIC TECHS, as we follow

STEVE

his

words

SLOAN, sipping a STYROFOAM CUP of COFFEE. He is working
way up behind a WOMAN in a BLUE WIND-BREAKER, with the
MEDICAL EXAMINER etched in big yellow letters on the back.
She is leaning over a WOMAN'S CORPSE.

STEVE'S VOICE

What've you got?

M.E.'S VOICE

A headache, lower back pain, and
bags under my eyes that qualify as
luggage.

Steve Sloan crouches beside her and offers her his COFFEE.

STEVE

I warned you not to join the
M.E.'s office.

cup

The woman turns and we realize it's AMANDA. She takes the
and sips it.

AMANDA

It's not the job. It's the divorce.
(then)
And this is an amicable split.

STEVE
They say divorce is one of the big
three for causing stress. So's
starting a new job.

AMANDA
The work takes my mind off my
troubles.

STEVE
I suppose a corpse will do that.

Steve studies the body. A WOMAN in her 30's, face-down in
a
negligee on the floor, three BULLET HOLES in her back, her
arm
outstretched in front of her.

AMANDA
Janet Dettmeyer, lives here alone.
She's been dead about two hours.

(CONTINUED)

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1 CONTINUED: 1

Amanda stands up and, still sipping the coffee, starts to point some things out to Steve.

AMANDA

Judging by the splatter patterns on the walls and carpet, she caught someone coming through the window and was shot three times as she made a run for the phone.

Amanda takes another sip of coffee and motions to the phone with her cup. The phone is on a table just out of reach of the victim's out-stretched arm.

AMANDA

Jewelry's missing, so my guess is a burglary gone bad.

STEVE

I don't see why they pulled me out of bed, you got it all covered.

(then, smiles)

Want my job, too?

AMANDA

No, but I'll take a refill. Easy on the sugar this time.

She hands him the empty cup and goes back to her work.
And on his look, we go:

2 EXT. HOUSE – EARLY MORNING

2

Steve emerges, still holding the empty cup, just as an UNMARKED POLICE SEDAN pulls to the curb, windows rolled down.

Detectives STANG and HALLORAN are inside.

HALLORAN
Councilman Watson shown up yet?

STEVE
At dawn on a Saturday?
(shakes his head)
He likes big-ticket murders,
between nine-and-five on weekdays.
There aren't any sound bites here.

Halloran and Stang share a grim look.

STANG
That's his wife in the body bag.
She ditched him a couple months
ago. Started calling herself Ms.
Something-or-other and wearing a
wonder bra.

(CONTINUED)

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2 CONTINUED: 2

Steve groans and looks back over his shoulder at the house. This simple case just became a pain-in-the-ass.

HALLORAN

We've been trying to get him on the phone, no answer. We're on our way over to his place now.

Steve opens the door to the backseat, tosses his empty cup on the floor, and climbs in.

STEVE

Let's go.

And on the sedan speeding off, we:

CUT TO:

3 EXT. WATSON'S HOUSE – DAY 3

Usually houses this nice have gates around them. Halloran leans on the bell. They can hear it RINGING inside. They wait a moment. Nothing. Steve bangs on the door and shouts:

STEVE

Councilman Watson? It's the police.

Halloran shifts his weight, impatient. Steve pounds on the door again. Stang walks away.

STANG

I'm taking a look around.

Stang disappears behind the house. Steve knocks again.

HALLORAN
How much longer are we going to
stand here making noise?

STEVE
You got a better idea?

HALLORAN
We go in.

STEVE
Without a warrant and without
probable cause? Have you forgotten
that Watson is on the police
commission? I'd hate to hear your
bad ideas.

(CONTINUED)

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3 CONTINUED: 3

HALLORAN

If something has happened to Watson, and the press finds out we were hanging around out here, debating procedure, we might as well leave our badges behind when we leave.

That's when Stang returns and motions them to follow him.

STANG

You want to see this.

4 EXT. WATSON HOUSE – DRIVEWAY 4

Steve crouches and examines the stairs leading to the back door of the house.

STEVE

It's blood.

Halloran is at the back door of the house.

HALLORAN

There's more on the doorknob.

(then)

Maybe we should knock louder this time.

Steve shares a look with Halloran – he wins. Steve draws his gun, marches up to the door, and KICKS IT OPEN.

5 INT. WATSON HOUSE – DAY 5

As Stang comes through, covered by Steve and Halloran.

STANG
Knock. Knock.

Stang moves forward, covering the other two as they come in.

The threesome move methodically through the house, cross-covering each other as they go.

STEVE
Police. If there is anyone in the house, step forward slowly with your hands up.

They reach the master bedroom... the door is ajar. Steve pushes it open to reveal:

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5.

6 INT. WATSON HOUSE – MASTER BEDROOM

6

MATTHEW WATSON, 50's, is waking up groggily in bed.

Stang

moves into the bathroom, Halloran checks out the closets. Steve covers Watson with his gun and, with his free hand, yanks the sheets off the bed. Watson is still half-asleep, apparently uninjured and unarmed.

WATSON

Who are you? What the hell is going on?

STEVE

Steve Sloan, Homicide.

Halloran checks the phone, it works. He notices a BOTTLE OF SLEEPING PILLS on the night stand.

HALLORAN

No wonder he didn't hear anything.

He tosses the bottle to Steve, who glances at it.

7 THE BOTTLE – STEVE'S POV

7

It's for triazolam, a tranquilizer. It's from the COMMUNITY GENERAL PHARMACY, prescribing doctor is: MARK SLOAN.

8 BACK TO SCENE

8

Steve looks back at the still-groggy Watson.

STEVE

How many of these did you take?

WATSON
Three-four, I don't know.

Stang steps out of the bathroom, holstering his gun.

STANG
There's blood in the bathtub and
the sink.
(then)
Think maybe he had a nosebleed?

STEVE
I think someone should read him
his rights.

And on Steve's grim look, we:

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

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6.

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

9 EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

9

A cluster of REPORTERS surrounds POLICE CHIEF MASTERS,
50's, as
he addresses them, wearing his UNIFORM.

REPORTER #1

Chief Masters, do you really
believe Councilman Watson is
capable of committing such a
vicious crime?

MASTERS

I have the greatest respect for
Mr. Watson, but I also firmly
believe he's capable of doing
whatever will further his
interests.

REPORTER #2

Some people are going to say that
this arrest smells of a personal
agenda.

MASTERS

And most of them work on your
paper's editorial board. I'm
prepared that they're going to
call this a fight over the
mayoralty, despite the fact that
neither Mr. Watson nor I have
announced any intention to run.

REPORTER #1

So you really believe Councilman
Watson is guilty?

MASTERS

Of corruption, personal and
professional? Yes. Of working to
tear down everything real
Americans believe in? Just look at
his record.

REPORTER #1

Of murder, Chief. Is he guilty of
murdering his wife?

MASTERS

I'm sorry, it would be
inappropriate for me to comment on
that.

(CONTINUED)

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9 CONTINUED: 9

and Masters disappears behind a door and we FIND Steve, Stang, Halloran standing to one side. Stang and Halloran seem pleased, but Steve is vaguely troubled.

STANG
I think we just bought ourselves
promotions.

STEVE
I hope that's all we bought.

CUT TO:

10 INT. POLICE PRECINCT – INTERROGATION ROOM – DAY
10

Watson fixes MARK with a look of pure sincerity. Mark has a hard time meeting it. There's just the metal table, four chairs, a MIRROR and a BARRED WINDOW.

WATSON
You know me, Mark. Do you honestly
believe I could do what they're
saying?

MARK
You've been my patient for a long
time, but Steve is my son, and
he's a good cop.

WATSON
One of the few.

MARK

I have to tell you, Matthew: He believes you're guilty.

There, it's out in the open. But it doesn't even slow Watson.

WATSON

As he should -- based on the evidence. I've had a very public, and very bitter, separation from Janet, and there was blood all over my house. But I didn't put it there.

MARK

Who did?

WATSON

There could have been fifty people marching through my house for all I know.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

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8.

10 CONTINUED:

10

WATSON (cont'd)

I went to bed at eight and didn't
wake up until I was being
arrested -- thanks to the
tranquilizers you prescribed.

(then, ironic)

First decent night's sleep I've
had since the separation.

Mark studies Watson.

MARK

Steve was there. If he saw
evidence being planted, he would
expose it.

WATSON

If he saw it.

(then)

The officer who "found" the blood
was Tony Stang. My commission on
police brutality named him one of
the twelve worst cops on the force
and urged his immediate
termination. Masters ignored the
recommendation, of course.

MARK

I'm sorry, Matthew, I can't
believe police officers would let
a murderer go free and frame an
innocent man just to silence a
critic.

WATSON

How about to protect a corrupt

power structure from the one man
who stands a chance of bringing it
down?

Mark wants to believe his friend, and yet--

MARK

I don't know. It sounds so--

WATSON

Paranoid?

MARK

Well, yes.

WATSON

It's not the first time I've been
called paranoid. Hell, I've been
hearing that for decades -- every
time I said Geronimo Pratt was
framed.

(CONTINUED)

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9.

10 CONTINUED: (2)

10

MARK

The Black Panthers leader? Wasn't he just released from prison?

WATSON

After serving 25 years for murder. A federal judge ruled the FBI and the DA's office had suppressed proof of his innocence.

(then)

I don't have 25 years, Mark. I need justice now.

And on Mark's concern:

11 INT. POLICE PRECINCT – PIKE'S OFFICE – DAY
11

for CAPTAIN CYNTHIA PIKE, 40's, attractive but tough, motions

Mark to wait just one more minute as she tries to get off the phone. He settles into one of the two uncomfortable, metal seats. Her office is a neat, orderly glass-walled island in one corner of a busy, over-populated, paper-strewn precinct that needed a paint job 20 years ago and still hasn't gotten it.

PIKE

(into phone)

Stang and Halloran took the call because they were in the area.

(then)

They were on patrol. That's why we call them patrol cars.

(then)

If the mayor wants to work out the duty roster himself, he's welcome to my job. Until then, I won't be second-guessed.

She slams down the phone and turns to Mark. That's when
the phone RINGS again.

MARK
Maybe this is a bad time.

PIKE
It's not going to get any better.

She picks up and hangs up the phone.

MARK
I just talked to Matthew Watson.

PIKE
And he told you he was framed.

(CONTINUED)

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11 CONTINUED: 11

MARK

He makes a strong argument.

PIKE

Go ahead, Doctor. Follow that thought wherever it takes you.

The phone starts ringing. She ignores it, staring at Mark, challenging him to take the obvious next step.

MARK

I just want to rule out the possibility that what Watson's saying is true.

Mark gets up to go, but Pike isn't done.

PIKE

Don't we all. But if you find anything odd, I'd appreciate it if you came to me before the press.

MARK

Of course.

PIKE

Because there was only one officer at Watson's house who was also at the crime scene -- and he'll take the biggest fall.

Mark is clearly worried. He looks out the window at his son, just another weary face in the sea of weary faces that is the precinct squad room.

MARK

I know.

And on Mark's troubled look:

12 INT. PRECINCT - SQUAD ROOM - DAY
12

Stang and Halloran are holstering their weapons and stuffing extra bullets into their pockets as Steve approaches.

STEVE
Expecting a siege?

HALLORAN
Matter of fact, we are.

STANG
Watson says he's framed, and ten
seconds later your father is here
trying to prove it.
(more)

(CONTINUED)

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12 CONTINUED: 12

STANG (cont'd)

Way I see it, the crap is gonna hit us any minute.

(then)

But you got nothing to worry about, do you?

STEVE

My father is Watson's doctor, this is just a courtesy.

STANG

Yeah, my dentist is on the way down, too.

HALLORAN

(to Steve)

What chance do we have against a city councilman and his powerful allies?

STEVE

My father is only interested in the truth, and we all know what happened out there. You have nothing to worry about.

STANG

Oh, so the truth will protect me. I feel so much better already, don't you Fred?

HALLORAN

I'll feel better after we've fired a couple dozen rounds at the shooting range.

Halloran turns to go. Stang hangs back a moment.

STANG

Remind your Dad who the good guys
are. They are the ones with badges.

And on Steve, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

13 13 EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – ESTABLISHING – DAY

14 14 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – PATHOLOGY – DAY

We face the TWO GLASS DOORS leading to the lab. On one
door,
there's the usual PATHOLOGY LAB sign.

(CONTINUED)

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14 CONTINUED: 14

the
On the other door, there's a COUNTY SEAL on the door and
words: "County of Los Angeles, Adjunct Medical Examiner's
Office." JESSE pushes through the doors to find BODIES on
every table. Amanda moves among the various CORONER'S
ASSISTANTS, directing their activities, signing clipboards,
double-checking their work as Jesse catches up with her.

JESSE

I had no idea so many people get
killed in LA.

AMANDA

Not all of them are murders,
Jesse. Some are accidents, some
are deaths by "undetermined
causes," some are--

see.
Jesse whips back a blanket to examine a CORPSE we don't
He WINCES at the sight, quickly putting the sheet back over
it.

AMANDA

--drowning victims that wash up on
the beach after days at sea.

Amanda motions to the body Jesse just glanced at.

JESSE

Remind me to never, ever, do that
again.

AMANDA

You didn't come down here for a
tour of my new lab.

JESSE

Actually, Mark sent me down for
the work-up on Janet Watson.

Amanda goes to her desk and retrieves a file.

AMANDA

I'm afraid there's no mystery
here. Cause of death is a .35
caliber bullet that punctured her
aorta.

JESSE

What about the tox screen?

AMANDA

Nothing unusual -- just trace
amounts of acetaminophen and
pseudoephedrine hydrochloride.

(CONTINUED)

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14 CONTINUED: (2) 14

JESSE
Cold medicine.
(then)
Did you find anything at all that
could possibly clear Councilman
Watson?

AMANDA
No, but I found something that may
convict him: That was definitely
Janet Watson's blood all over his
house.

She hands Jesse the file. And on his look, we:

CUT TO:

15 INT. BEACH HOUSE – DAY 15

with
on
Jesse,
who looks on.

Mark is riding a COMPUTERIZED EXERCISE BIKE, one of those
an elaborate control panel, virtual reality goggles propped
his forehead as he reads the SAME FILE Amanda handed to
who looks on.

MARK
It doesn't look very good.

Mark puts the goggles back on.

JESSE
You should see what was on table
number three.

(re: bike)
I've never seen an exercise bike
like this before.

MARK
You can ride 7000 different routes
around the world.

Steve enters as Mark starts going up a steep hill on his "bike
trek."

STEVE
Still in France?

MARK
Crossed the border ages ago. I'm
three miles outside Gstaad. Where
have you been?

STEVE
Nowhere as exotic. I've been back-
tracking Janet's movements over
the last 24 hours.

(CONTINUED)

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15 CONTINUED: 15

Unnoticed by the others, Mark's uphill climb is getting
harder
and harder.

STEVE

She was home all day except for a
trip to the drugstore for some
cold medicine.

JESSE

Maybe she was followed from the
store by one of those home
invasion guys.

STEVE

And maybe space aliens came to
take her back to their mothership.

JESSE

They wouldn't shoot her with
bullets. They'd use phasers.

Steve glares at Jesse, who is shooting him a smile. Behind
them, Mark is now going quickly downhill, the pedals
spinning
wildly. He lifts his feet off the pedals and coasts.

STEVE

My point is, any theory is
possible, but all the proof we
have points to Councilman
Watson -- and he's not helping
himself by refusing to talk to the
police.

MARK

Except to say he's innocent.

STEVE

Which is somehow less compelling
than the fact his wife's blood was
all over his house.

Something occurs to Mark, he takes off his goggles.

MARK

Let me see that file again.

Mark reaches for the file and starts to read through it again,
seemingly looking for something. Steve and Jesse share a
look.

JESSE

I've got a feeling he's got a
feeling.

And on Mark, intent on his search, we

CUT TO:

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15.

16 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – PATHOLOGY – DAY
16

Amanda is working over a body with pathology assistant JAN YANIHURO, 20's, bright and energetic.

AMANDA

...the bullet avulsed the inferior branch of the right, main pulmonary artery, causing massive internal hemorrhaging and death.

(then)

That finishes up Mr. Fitz. Who's next?

JAN

He's the last one.

Amanda barely conceals her disappointment.

AMANDA

There are no more bodies? What about that five car pile-up?

JAN

You cleared that up before lunch.

AMANDA

Right. Maybe we should look them over again, in case we missed something.

JAN

That's what we did after lunch.

AMANDA

Oh.

(then)

Guess it's time to fill out the
report on that drowning victim.

JAN

Done.

Amanda is beginning to look uncomfortable. She wants to
work.

She needs work.

AMANDA

Well, we've put off ordering
supplies long enough. Let's get
down to it.

JAN

I got down to it this morning.

Amanda gives her a cold look.

AMANDA

My, aren't we efficient.

(CONTINUED)

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16 CONTINUED: 16

JAN

I have to be to keep up with you,
Dr. Bentley. You mind if I go?
I have a date with the guy in
radiology.

AMANDA

Have a great time. I'll just
stick around and finish up the,
uh, stuff.

Jan smiles and leaves. Amanda looks around for something
to do. She finds a crooked picture and is straightening it when
THE PHONE RINGS. She dives for it, relieved and ready for
action.

AMANDA

Dr. Amanda Bentley, staff
pathologist, adjunct county
Medical Examiner. What have you
got?

INTERCUT WITH:

17 INT. BEACH HOUSE – DAY 17

Mark is on the phone. Steve and Jesse are nearby.

MARK

Amanda, sorry to bother you. Did
you run a tox screen on the blood
samples collected at Councilman
Watson's house?

AMANDA
Sure did. Came up clean.

MARK
No drugs or preserving agents?

AMANDA
Nothing at all.

MARK
(sadly)
Thanks, Amanda.

AMANDA
(quickly)
I can do the autopsy again, if you
like.

Mark is confused. Why the heck would she want to do that?

MARK
That really isn't necessary.

(CONTINUED)

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17 CONTINUED: 17

AMANDA

Are you sure? It's no trouble.

MARK

Thanks for the offer, but I have what I need. I appreciate the work, Amanda.

And on Amanda's dejected look, Mark hangs up the phone and shares a grim look with Steve and Jesse.

DISSOLVE TO:

18 18 EXT. PRECINCT – ESTABLISHING – NIGHT

19 19 INT. PRECINCT – INTERROGATION ROOM – NIGHT

A stark, empty room, save for a MIRROR on one wall and BARRED WINDOW on another. Mark and Captain Pike are sitting at the table when Stang comes in.

STANG

I heard you wanted to see me.

PIKE
Sit down, Detective.

Stang glances warily at Mark and continues standing.

STANG
Is he here to look at my
hemorrhoids, or is there something
I ought to know?

PIKE
I said sit down.

Stang slides out a chair, and sits down. He casts an uneasy
glance back over at Mark.

PIKE
I never liked you, Stang -- but I
fought for you because you cleared
cases. When Watson's commission
called you dirty, I persuaded them
you were just over-enthusiastic.
Made sure you kept your job.

(CONTINUED)

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19 CONTINUED: 19

STANG

And I never even got around to
baking you a batch of cookies.

PIKE

Shut up, Stang.
(then)

Being a cop in this town is a
lousy job, and as long as you do
it right, I'm not going to make it
worse by busting you over the
small stuff.

STANG

That's what makes you a hero to us
little guys, Captain.

PIKE

You've got one chance to save your
badge here, Detective. You want to
take it, or you want to mouth off?

Stang wants to mouth off. But he manages to keep it shut.

PIKE

As long as you're clean, no one's
going to mess with you while I'm
here. But if you're dirty, nothing
you can do will keep me from
bringing you down.

Now Stang is beginning to see there's a little more here than
another reprimand.

STANG

Who says I'm dirty?

Pike turns to look at Mark. Stang follows her gaze angrily.

STANG

What the hell does he know?

MARK

If I knew, we wouldn't be having
this conversation. Right now I
just think you framed Councilman
Watson for murder.

Stang stares at him, processing it, not believing it.

STANG

You think?

(to Pike)

Do I have to sit here and listen
to this crap?

(CONTINUED)

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19.

19 CONTINUED: (2)

19

MARK

You had the motive. You hated
Matthew Watson.

STANG

I admit I crossed him off my
Christmas card list, but find one
cop in the department who liked
the guy.

(to Pike)

Go on, tell me you voted for him.

MARK

You had the motive, and you had
the opportunity. You were the one
who went behind the house alone.
You were the one who found the
blood on the driveway. You were
also the one who found it in the
bathroom.

STANG

Where do you suppose I got all
this blood?

(then)

Oh yeah, your son must've given me
a big, dripping swab of the stuff
from the crime scene and said
paint the place with it.

MARK

That was where you made your
mistake. The blood didn't come
from the crime scene.

He Stang stops, the sneer momentarily dropping from his face.
didn't expect to hear this from Mark Sloan.

STANG
What are you talking about?

MARK
Janet Watson was taking cold medication -- yet there was no sign of it in the blood at Councilman Watson's house.

PIKE
That means the blood didn't come from Janet Watson the day she was killed...but some time before.

MARK
That's premeditation.

PIKE
And that's Murder One.

(CONTINUED)

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19 CONTINUED: (3) 19

Stang looks from one to the other. He's in deep trouble.

STANG
I want my PBA rep.

Pike gets up.

PIKE
If that's how you want to play it--
(then)
You want to talk, I'm willing to
make a deal with you. But it's a
limited time offer. I want an
answer when I come back.

Pike and Mark walk out, leaving Stang alone, shaken. He
glances at his REFLECTION IN THE MIRROR and, realizing
there
might be someone watching, puts his sneer back on and
blows a
kiss to whoever is behind it.

20 INT. PRECINCT - OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT
20

Halloran and Steve are on the other side of the mirror.

HALLORAN
There goes my career and my
pension.

STEVE
You didn't frame Watson, he did.

HALLORAN

You think that makes a difference?
I was his partner. He goes down,
so do I.

Halloran walks out. Steve takes another look at Stang, then leaves.

21 INT. PRECINCT – SQUAD ROOM – NIGHT
21

Steve joins Mark in the busy squad room.

MARK

Watson was released ten minutes ago. He's already scheduled a press conference outside City Hall for tomorrow morning.

STEVE

If he really cares about the city, he'd keep his mouth shut.

(CONTINUED)

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21 CONTINUED: 21

MARK

The man's wife was murdered and his reputation was ruined, Steve. You can't blame him for wanting to restore it.

STEVE

He doesn't need to hold a press conference to do it.

(then)

The public already distrusts us. By exploiting the situation, Watson is stoking their outrage. It could get bloody out there.

MARK

And you'll be caught right in the middle.

STEVE

I made the bust with Stang and Halloran. I'm already in the middle.

MARK

It doesn't help that your father brought down a fellow cop. I've made you an outcast.

STEVE

Stang was dirty. The rest I can live with.

That's when they hear a GUNSHOT. All the detectives instinctively take cover. Steve turns to Mark. They both know

where that sound came from. They rush out of the squad room to:

22 INT. PRECINCT - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

22

They rush down the hall to find Pike and Halloran outside the interrogation room door. They are trying to open it.

HALLORAN
It's locked.

Steve opens the observation room door and rushes in with Pike.

23 INT. PRECINCT - OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

23

Steve and Pike stop in front of the one-way glass and look into the interrogation room. Stang has jammed a chair under the doorknob. Stang's body is face-down on the floor.

PIKE
No.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97 22.

23 CONTINUED: 23

The Pike picks up a CHAIR and HURLS IT THROUGH THE GLASS.
mirror SHATTERS. Pike climbs through the jagged glass,
followed by Steve.

24 INT. PRECINCT – INTERROGATION ROOM – NIGHT
24

BLOOD Steve goes to Stang, finds a GUN in his hand, a pool of
minor on the floor. Pike, BLEEDING now from several major and
and cuts, pulls away the chair that was jammed under the door
lets in Mark and Halloran. Steve looks up from the body and
shakes his head.

STEVE
He's dead.

And on their grim reactions, we

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

25 INT. PRECINCT – PIKE'S OFFICE – NIGHT

25

The shades are drawn. An EMT is treating several ugly lacerations on Pike's arms and a few minor scratches on her face. Steve and Halloran look grim.

PIKE

I pushed him too hard. I made sure there was no way he could get out without losing his badge and doing time -- except one.

STEVE

You couldn't have known what he'd do.

PIKE

I shouldn't have left him alone. He was a cop. He had no other choice.

STEVE

Maybe -- but where the hell did he get the gun?

Halloran looks away, he hates what he's about to say.

HALLORAN

Could've been his throw-down weapon. Kept it in his ankle holster.

Pike glares at Halloran, barely controlling her rage.

PIKE

You never know when you might
shoot an unarmed man and need a
weapon to plant on him.

HALLORAN

Guns have a way of disappearing,
even if they were there. You've
been on the streets. You know that.

Pike looks at her two officers, her anger barely under the
surface of her words.

PIKE

(to Steve)

Take Stang's gun down to
ballistics.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

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25 CONTINUED: 25

PIKE (cont'd)
(then, to both)
Spread the word: any officer in my
precinct carrying a second weapon
better lose it. Today.
(then)
Dismissed.

Steve and Halloran leaves. The EMT applies some
disinfectant
to a wound, Pike winces, but takes it.

DISSOLVE TO:

26 EXT. BEACH HOUSE – ESTABLISHING – DAY
26

WATSON (O.S.)
This shocking injustice proves
what I have been saying for years
about this police department...

27 INT. BEACH HOUSE – DAY 27

Mark, Amanda and Jesse watch the WATSON PRESS
CONFERENCE on
TV. He is surrounded by the LEADERS of several MINORITY
GROUPS
(African-American, Hispanic, Korean, etc.)

WATSON (ON TV)
They don't serve the badge. They
don't serve the community. They
don't serve the law. They serve

Chief Masters and his personal
agenda.

(then)

They are his foot soldiers,
enforcing his will, trampling our
civil rights in his brazen pursuit
of power.

The crowd behind him ROAR THEIR APPROVAL.

WATSON (ON TV)

We demand the Chief's immediate
resignation and an in-depth re-
investigation of every case
Detective Stang worked during his
long and deplorable career.

Mark switches off the TV set and turns to Jesse and Amanda.

MARK

Steve was right -- Watson's
rhetoric could spark a war on the
streets.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97

25.

27 CONTINUED:

27

JESSE

I hate to say it, Mark, but the Councilman has a point and you proved it: The police framed him.

AMANDA

An officer may have framed him. It's unfair to blame the entire department for one man's actions.

(then)

Do you think Steve condones what Stang did?

JESSE

Of course not, but I think even Steve would agree that when you wear a badge, you are representing the entire department.

MARK

There are too many unanswered questions to just let it go with Stang's suicide.

(then)

Who killed Janet Watson? Where did Stang get Janet's blood?

AMANDA

I may have a lead. After Stang's suicide, I re-opened the autopsy of Janet Watson. I found a nearly-healed puncture in the crook of her arm. It's a wound consistent with someone drawing blood. But I called her family doctor, and he hasn't seen her in months.

JESSE

Maybe she gave blood. I could check out the local blood banks, see if she made any donations recently.

MARK

Good idea. Can you get on it this afternoon?

JESSE

Sure.

(then)

There's something I don't get. If Stang killed her, why didn't he just use blood from the scene?

Mark takes a deep breath -- he's thought about this, too.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97 26.

27 CONTINUED: (2) 27

MARK
There's only one reason I can
think of..

And as they mull the disturbing implications of that, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

28 28 EXT. POLICE PRECINCT – ESTABLISHING – DAY

29 29 INT. POLICE PRECINCT SQUAD ROOM – DAY

Steve comes in, carrying a file, heading for Pike's office. He
stops when he sees through the window that Pike is talking
to

Masters -- and it doesn't look like a happy conversation.
Halloran comes up behind Steve.

HALLORAN
They offered a lip-reading class
at the Academy. Never regretted
skipping it until now.

STEVE
Think they're talking about your
future?

Halloran gives Steve a sardonic grin.

HALLORAN
My what?

STEVE
It's not necessarily over for you,
Fred.

HALLORAN
Yeah, I hear Burger Town is always
looking for experienced security
guards.

And with that, he walks away. Steve watches him sadly, then
heads to Pike's door and knocks, then goes into:

30 INT. POLICE PRECINCT – PIKE'S OFFICE – DAY
30

Pike and Masters stop their conversation as Steve comes in.
They stare at him.

MASTERS
Were you aware, Detective, that
there was a meeting going on in
here?

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97 27.

30 CONTINUED: 30

STEVE

Yes, sir. I'm sorry, but--

PIKE

I asked Detective Sloan to bring me the ballistics report on Stang's gun as soon as it was available.

If it's possible, Masters' look gets colder. He takes the file from Steve.

MASTERS

I see.

(to Steve)

Have you looked at this?

STEVE

Yes, sir. It appears that Stang's gun was the same weapon that killed Janet Watson.

PIKE

I can't believe it...

Pike looks crushed. Masters doesn't betray any emotion.

MASTERS

(to Steve)

Who else knows?

STEVE

No one. The techs didn't know whose gun they were testing.

MASTERS

See that it stays that way.

Pike sees where he's going and tries to head him off.

PIKE

You're not thinking of trying to bury this. If Stang actually murdered Janet Watson--

MASTERS

It's an ongoing investigation, Captain. We'll announce the results when we know the entire truth.

PIKE

Word gets out, it always does. And then it will look like we have something to hide.

Masters gives her a hard look, then turns to Steve.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97

28.

30 CONTINUED: (2)

30

MASTERS

When Stang went into Councilman
Watson's house, where were you?

STEVE

Right next to him, sir.

MASTERS

And who made the actual arrest?

STEVE

I did.

MASTERS

And who was in charge of the
ballistics report on Stang's gun?

Pike and Steve exchange a look.

MASTERS

So you see, it already looks like
we have something to hide, doesn't
it?

STEVE

Sir, if you're suggesting that I
had anything to do with--

Masters holds up a hand, cutting him off.

MASTERS

I'm not suggesting anything. But
the press will. And the suggestion
of a police conspiracy to murder
Janet Watson and frame her husband
will be enough to destroy us all.

PIKE

That's why we should come forth with everything we know as soon as possible.

MASTERS

It's taken this department five years and three chiefs to recover from the last scandal. I'm not sure we can ever recover from another one.

(hands Pike the file)

Bury this.

He leaves. Pike sighs heavily.

PIKE

They never learn.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97

29.

30 CONTINUED: (3)

30

STEVE
Captain?

PIKE
It's not the crime that brings you
down, it's the cover-up.

STEVE
And we're right in the middle of
it.
(then)
But maybe we can get out.

PIKE
We can't release the ballistics
report against the Chief's
explicit order.

STEVE
But if we find independent
evidence confirming our
suspicion...

Pike stares at him for a moment, appreciating the thought.
Then:

PIKE
Get us a search warrant for
Stang's apartment.

Steve heads for the door.

PIKE
But Sloan, do it quietly.

Steve nods and leaves. A moment later, Pike's phone rings.

PIKE
Pike.
(listens)
Dr. Sloan is where?

And on Pike's baffled look, we:

CUT TO:

31 INT. PRECINCT – INTERROGATION ROOM – DAY
31

Mark walks around the room, pausing to study the
SHATTERED
MIRROR and then the WINDOW, which is BARRED on the
outside. He
is still at the window when Pike comes in.

PIKE
Dr. Sloan... what are you doing
here?

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97 30.

31 CONTINUED: 31

MARK

I find that revisiting the scene of the crime often gives me a fresh perspective.

PIKE

Then shouldn't you be at Janet Watson's house?

MARK

We have a pretty good idea what happened there. What we don't know is what happened here.

PIKE

Stang jammed the door shut and blew the back of his head off.

MARK

What if he didn't?

Pike looks confused.

PIKE

Are you suggesting he was murdered?

MARK

I'm suggesting it's a possibility.

Pike gives him a dubious look.

PIKE

Even if we forget he was holding the gun that killed Janet Watson, and that there were powder burns on his hand, the door was jammed

shut from the inside. The windows are barred. And the mirror wasn't broken until I tossed a chair through it.

MARK

I know. But consider this: Janet Watson gave blood at a City Hall blood drive three days ago... and the bag has disappeared.

Now Pike is getting it.

PIKE

If Stang killed Janet Watson, why bother stealing a bag of blood drawn three days before?

(then, realizing)

That's why you think someone else may be involved -- someone who was afraid Stang would talk.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97 31.

31 CONTINUED: (2) 31

MARK

Let's assume, for the moment,
that's what happened. How could it
have been done?

Pike looks around, studying the room anew.

PIKE

The killer walks in the door,
pulls out a gun and caps Stang. He
puts the gun in Stang's hand, jams
a chair under the door, then has
maybe ten seconds to get out...
but how?

Mark returns to the window and points to the bars.

MARK

Notice how rusty these bars are.
So is the lock.

Pike joins Mark and examines the bars.

MARK

Now look closely at the lock. The
rust is gone around the loop.

PIKE

It's been opened recently.
(then, angry)
God-damn it.

MARK

Where are the keys for the lock
kept?

PIKE
In the desk sergeant's drawer.

32 INT. PRECINCT - DAY

32

Mark and Pike are at the desk sergeant's counter. Pike opens the drawer and, using a pencil, lifts the keys out by the ring.

PIKE
I'll have them checked for prints,
though it's probably a waste of
time.

MARK
Who knew about these keys?

PIKE
Every cop in the precinct -- in
case of a fire or other emergency.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97 32.

32 CONTINUED: 32

back Pike drops the keys into an evidence bag and leads Mark to her office.

PIKE

There's still a big problem with your theory: there was no time between the sound of the gunshot and us breaking into the room for the killer to get away.

MARK

We're assuming that the gunshot we heard was the shot that killed Stang. What if it wasn't?

They arrive at:

33 INT. PRECINCT - PIKE'S OFFICE 33

Where Steve is waiting.

MARK

Suppose the killer shot Stang with a silenced gun, left the weapon in Stang's hand, then escaped through the barred window. The killer climbed back into a nearby room and then, safely away from the crime scene, used a different gun to fire a blank.

PIKE

That all makes sense. But how do you explain the powder burns on

Stang's hand?

Steve clears his throat and steps forward.

STEVE

Stang and Halloran visited the shooting range a couple hours before he was killed.

PIKE

And there must have been fifty cops who saw him there... and saw an opportunity.

Pike can barely keep her anger in check.

PIKE

(to Steve)

What happened to that search warrant on Stang's place?

Steve pats his breast pocket.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97 33.

33 CONTINUED: 33

STEVE
Right here, Captain.

PIKE
(to Steve)
Let's go.

And on the two of them hurrying out, we:

CUT TO:

34 34 EXT. STANG'S APARTMENT – ESTABLISHING – NIGHT

35 INT. STANG'S APARTMENT – NIGHT 35

Pike is thoroughly searching the place, tossing drawers and checking behind and under furniture.

36 EXT. STANG'S GARAGE – NIGHT 36

Steve EMPTIES THE TRASH CAN onto the floor. He is sorting through the usual muck of day-to-day life when he discovers...

37 HIS POV – A BAG 37

It's a RED CROSS blood bag, Janet Watson's name clearly marked on the label.

Steve comes in, the blood bag now in an EVIDENCE BAG.

STEVE
Captain, I've got something.

Steve finds Pike in the ransacked bedroom, reading a FILE
that
has MASKING TAPE on TWO ENDS.

STEVE
The Red Cross bag that contained
Janet Watson's blood.
(re: the file)
What's that?

PIKE
Trouble for all of us.

Pike looks up from the file, clearly disturbed.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97 34.

38 CONTINUED: 38

PIKE

I found this taped under a drawer.
It's a secret police intelligence
file on Councilman Watson -- from
Chief Masters' office.

And on Steve's dread, we

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97

35.

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

39 OMITTED

39

40 EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

40

Pike stands with Councilman Watson at her side, bathed in the harsh light of TV LIGHTS. We pull back to reveal a CROWDED PRESS CONFERENCE is in progress. Mark, Steve, and Halloran are also in the crowd. Pike speaks forcefully, but she seems weary.

PIKE

I want to say this clearly, and without equivocation: Individuals in this department framed Councilman Watson for murder and, in all probability, were involved in the killing of his wife.

The REPORTERS react with SHOCK.

PIKE

It appears that Det. Stang planted Janet Watson's blood on the Councilman's property and that Det. Stang's gun was the murder weapon.

Pike waits a moment for the impact of this revelation to sink in. For once, the press corps is quiet, too stunned to say a

word. The silence itself is astonishing.

PIKE

I share your horror at this abuse
of the public trust.
But I urge you not to condemn the
entire department for the actions
of a few corrupt officers. I
promise you that we will find the
truth, no matter where it leads.

Pike steps back. Watson, clearly moved, takes the podium.

WATSON

I want to praise Captain Pike for
her honesty and courage. It's good
to know there are still a few
police officers in this city we
can believe in.

Watson offers his hand to Pike. She takes it. A HUNDRED
FLASHBULBS seem to go off at once. The REPORTERS surge
forward, hurling questions at Pike and Watson.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97 36.

40 CONTINUED: 40

REPORTER #1
Councilman, is Chief Masters
behind this plot against you?

REPORTER #2
Was Detective Stang murdered?

REPORTER #1
Is Captain Pike being considered
to replace the Chief?

Pike steps weakly up to the mike. Mark notices her
discomfort.

PIKE
That's all. My office will be
releasing a detailed statement
within the hour. Thank you.

Pike and Watson go, but not before Mark sees her grab a
pillar
to steady herself. Concerned, Mark goes in after them.
Halloran storms off, Steve follows him. Mark joins them as
Pike lowers herself heavily onto a bench.

WATSON
Mark, I want to thank you again.
Without your help, I'd be in a
cell and this scandal would never
have been exposed.

But Mark ignores the praise and goes to Pike.

MARK
Are you all right?

PIKE
I feel terrible. I don't take any
pleasure in this.

MARK
That's not what I'm talking about.

He feels her forehead.

MARK
You're burning up.

CUTS He rolls up her sleeve and examines her arm. One of the
is SWOLLEN AND RED, and her MUSCLE is TWITCHING.

MARK
How long has your arm been
twitching like this?

PIKE
A few hours, maybe. It's just
nerves.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97 37.

40 CONTINUED: (2) 40

MARK
I'm afraid it's not.
(to an officer)
Get an ambulance down here right
away.

And on his concern, we:

CUT TO:

41 OMITTED 41

42 INT. POLICE PRECINCT – SQUAD ROOM – DAY
42

Halloran goes to his desk and starts angrily pulling the
drawers out of his desk, emptying the contents onto the top.
Steve comes up to him.

HALLORAN
Still think I have a future here?

STEVE
Depends how much you knew about
what Stang was doing.

Halloran stops, stares at the mess on his desk.

HALLORAN
You want to help? Get me one of
those boxes for this crap.

Steve hands him a MOVING CARTON from the floor, then
picks up

a small black box from the desk and opens it -- it contains a MEDAL. He knows what it's for.

STEVE

Long Beach refinery stand-off. I was in the academy then. Watched you pulling out those hostages on TV.

HALLORAN

Yeah, I was the big hero that day. Great things in my future.

Halloran takes the medal from Steve and tosses it in the garbage.

STEVE

What happened, Fred?

HALLORAN

Stang happened.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97 38.

42 CONTINUED: 42

STEVE

I guess a dirty partner doesn't do much for your reputation.

HALLORAN

Suspect gets a couple of bruises on the way back to the precinct, gun gets dropped at a shooting, doesn't matter which partner does it. You're a team.

STEVE

You could have said something.

HALLORAN

Right.

STEVE

Not the department's way, is it? We don't talk, we take action.

Halloran stops and looks sharply at Steve.

HALLORAN

What are you getting at?

STEVE

Stang didn't kill himself.

That's not much of a surprise to Halloran.

HALLORAN

Never seemed like his style.

(then)

I look good for popping him, that it?

STEVE

You were the first one at the
interrogation room door.

HALLORAN

I had to use the can. Door was
locked, so I was waiting outside.

(then)

As a crack detective, I'm sure
you've observed that the bathroom
is right next to interrogation.

STEVE

That's your story?

HALLORAN

You got motive, you got
opportunity. Cuff me, what the
hell do I care?

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97

39.

42 CONTINUED: (2)

42

Halloran picks up his box and walks away. Steve follows.

HALLORAN

That sonofabitch Stang. He
couldn't be content just
humiliating Watson, he had to
destroy him.

STEVE

Humiliating him how?

HALLORAN

With his wife, of course.

STEVE

(putting it together)
Stang... and Janet Watson?

HALLORAN

She got off on sleeping with the
one cop her husband hated the
most. Stang said it was the same
for him.

STEVE

And you never thought of
mentioning this?

HALLORAN

Who would it have helped?

Halloran leaves the building. And on Steve, pondering that
thought, we:

CUT TO:

Mark emerges gingerly from his car as Steve comes up behind him, carrying a file.

STEVE

I see the bike tour's treating you well. Been pedaling the green hills of Africa?

MARK

Try the steep hills of Spain.

STEVE

I'd like to. Think I can get a flight today?

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97 40.

43 CONTINUED: 43

MARK

I came down to see how you're doing. Now I know. I guess this Stang thing is getting to you.

STEVE

No, I love being despised by everyone I work with.

Mark tries to find a way to comfort his son.

MARK

Remember when you found out your college quarterback was getting his test questions in advance?

STEVE

And I let you convince me to go to the administration.

MARK

You took a lot of heat then, but you came out all right.

STEVE

I was cut from the squad, my car was torched in the parking lot, and I couldn't get a date my entire junior year.

Oh. Mark didn't remember that part.

MARK

Still, you saw a wrong and you made it right. That's what's important.

STEVE

Especially if you ignore the fact that the quarterback was drafted by the pros, the coach re-upped with a huge raise, and they expelled some poor grad student who got blamed for the whole thing.

Wow. This isn't anything like the point Mark was aiming at.

MARK

I was sure there was a life lesson in there somewhere.

STEVE

The guilty were rewarded, the innocent were punished, and I got screwed.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97

41.

43 CONTINUED: (2)

43

MARK

Okay, maybe the football thing was a bad example.

STEVE

No, I think it's pretty much dead-on.

(then)

I hate myself for even thinking this, but in a way, everyone would have been better off if you'd never proven the blood was planted.

MARK

Except for Matthew Watson, who'd be facing the death penalty for a crime he didn't commit.

STEVE

And what a loss that would be.

(off Mark's look)

I told you I hated myself for thinking it. We're talking about bringing down the chief of police.

MARK

You know it's the right thing to do.

They both know how hollow that sounds right now.

STEVE

So was exposing the quarterback. So why's he making 13 million a year while I'm checking to see if my car's on fire yet?

And on Mark's concern:

CUT TO:

44 EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – ESTABLISHING – NIGHT
44

45 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – PATHOLOGY – NIGHT
45

Amanda is doing an autopsy in the empty lab as Jesse passes by in the corridor. He does a double-take and comes in.

JESSE

I thought your shift ended hours ago.

AMANDA

It did -- but I have a lot of work to do.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97 42.

45 CONTINUED: 45

JESSE

I'm sure it's nothing that can't wait -- they're dead. They will still be dead tomorrow.

Jesse checks his watch.

JESSE

You can catch CJ before he goes to bed.

AMANDA

CJ is with Colin this week. There's just a big, empty house waiting for me.

JESSE

Well, my shift ends after I see this next patient. We could go see that new action movie... "Jack Bludd: Deathfist." Deathfist drives this monster truck with rocket launchers that--

AMANDA

(interrupts)

I really want to get this work done. But thanks.

Jesse shrugs and starts to go, then stops. He turns around slowly.

JESSE

Look, I know what you're doing.

(then)

I did the same thing when my

parents divorced.

AMANDA

You removed someone's liver?

Jesse ignores the sarcasm and continues.

JESSE

I joined every club at school,
went out for every team,
volunteered for every charity, I
even hung around to help the
custodians to clean the rooms.

(then)

Anything except go home and face
my pain. It caught up with me,
though.

AMANDA

I'm fine, Jesse. I just want to
get my work done.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97 43.

45 CONTINUED: (2) 45

JESSE

Fine.

He starts to go again, then stops.

JESSE

But I'm saving you a seat at
"Deathfist."

She smiles and goes back to work. Jesse goes.

46 OMITTED 46

47 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – PIKE'S ROOM – NIGHT
47

Pike is feverish, sweaty, an IV in her arm, monitors beeping.
A NURSE checks the cardiac monitor and makes a notation in

a

chart. Pike can barely summon the strength to look over as
Jesse comes in studying a chart, trying to look less worried
than he really is.

PIKE

This'll teach me to eat fish tacos
from a roach coach.

JESSE

It's a good lesson to keep in
mind, but your condition has
nothing to do with food poisoning.

PIKE

Then what?

Jesse checks the chart.

JESSE

I'm looking at the files your doctor sent over, and I don't see any record of a tetanus shot in the last ten years.

PIKE

Tetanus?

(suddenly scared)

I know I did. I stepped on an old nail and my parents sent me to the hospital--

(realizing)

--when I was fifteen.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97 44.

47 CONTINUED: 47

JESSE

We've started aggressive treatment, and I think we caught it early enough that, with a little luck, you'll be out of here in a day or two.

PIKE

What if I'm not lucky?

If she's not lucky, she's going to die in a particularly horrible way -- and they both know it.

JESSE

Let's not worry about that until we have to.

(to nurse)

Continue IV, D5W 1/2 normal saline, 150ccs an hour. Diazepam 10 mg IV push. Heparin 5000 units, IV, with infusion, 800 units an hour. And T.I.G., 3000 units IM.

just Jesse gives Pike a comforting smile and goes to the door, as an enraged Chief Masters storms in.

MASTERS

What the hell were you thinking?

Jesse steps in front of him.

JESSE

This is not a good time.

Masters shoves Jesse out of the way and gets in Pike's face.

MASTERS

I'm the Chief of Police, not you.
I decide what goes public, no one
else.

PIKE

I don't let suspects in a homicide
dictate how I handle an
investigation. Sir.

Jesse Behind Masters, Steve Sloan slips into the room, motions
out, and closes the door behind him.

MASTERS

You playing politics now, Pike?
What kind of deal did you strike
with Watson?

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97

45.

47 CONTINUED: (2)

47

PIKE

You wanted the ballistics report on Stang's gun suppressed. We found an intelligence file on Watson, from your office, in Stang's place. You add it up.

MASTERS

You don't even see how you're being played by that bastard. All you're doing is tearing this department down -- so he can be mayor.

PIKE

I'm doing my job.

Masters shakes his head and heads for the door, but not before giving Steve a withering look.

MASTERS

Guess I ought to congratulate you, Sloan. If Pike makes Chief, what's that gonna make you?

Masters walks out. Pike sags, exhausted, and looks at Steve.

PIKE

Tell me you've got good news.

STEVE

You tell me.

Pike looks puzzled. Steve hands her a file.

PIKE
Stang's phone records?

STEVE
Look at that number. It shows up
more than thirty times.

Pike recognizes the number.

PIKE
That's Masters' private line.

They share a brief moment of triumph -- before the reality
of
we: what they're talking about hits. And on their shared worry,

CUT TO:

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97

46.

48 INT. PRECINCT – NIGHT

48

Steve is hard at work at his desk when a shadow falls over it. He looks up in surprise to see Chief Masters. Steve immediately stands up.

STEVE
Chief.

MASTERS
We have to talk.

Masters motions him with a jerk of his head into Pike's office. Steve dutifully follows him inside.

49 INT. POLICE PRECINCT – PIKE'S OFFICE – NIGHT
49

Masters slams the door and confronts Steve.

MASTERS
I'm taking over the Watson investigation while Capt. Pike is hospitalized.

STEVE
I don't think that's a good idea, sir.

MASTERS
Thank you for sharing your opinion, detective. Give me everything you have on the case.

STEVE

I can't do that, sir.

MASTERS

As long as you're wearing that badge, you work for me, and you will do exactly what I tell you.

STEVE

Is that what you told Stang?

Masters doesn't take the bait.

MASTERS

You're off the case. Hand over all your files and notes, now.

STEVE

I don't share details of an ongoing investigation with a suspect. And like it or not, Chief, you're a suspect.

(CONTINUED)

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49 CONTINUED: 49

Masters gets in Steve's face.

MASTERS

I'm still the same cop I was when
I walked a beat in South Central.
I don't break the law, I enforce
it.

STEVE

Then you know why it has to be
this way. If that's a problem for
you, fire me.

Masters studies Steve, then:

MASTERS

You better hope this plays out the
way you think it will... because
I'll still be standing when it's
over.

(then)

The question is, will you?

Masters walks out, leaving Steve to ponder that.

50 INT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY 50

Steve sits with Mark and Jesse at breakfast.

STEVE

(to Mark)

I looked into your theory of how
Stang was killed. You were right.

(then)

I checked every room on the same

floor. In the men's room, I found powder traces on the ceiling, consistent with someone firing a blank in there. And the rust on the window bars was flaked off at the hinge -- they've been opened recently.

JESSE

If it wasn't for the rusty bars, you might never have figured out Stang was murdered.

Suddenly, something occurs to Mark. He's lost in thought as the others chew over the case.

STEVE

The question now is who killed Stang.

(CONTINUED)

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50 CONTINUED: 50

JESSE

And was it really Stang who killed Janet Watson or someone else?

STEVE

And were they doing it on Chief Masters' orders?

Mark snaps out of his thoughts with:

MARK

There's definitely a conspiracy at work here, but not the one we're being led to believe.

(then)

There's just a couple more details I need to check...

And on his certainty, and everyone else's confused looks,
we:

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

51 51 EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL – DAY

52 52 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – NURSES' STATION – DAY

Mark, carrying a cup of coffee, joins Amanda at the counter. She is clearly exhausted. He sets the cup in front of her. She looks at it like it's poison.

AMANDA

Get that thing away from me.

MARK

Sorry, you looked like you might need a little pick-me-up.

AMANDA

That's what I told myself each of the last six hundred times I filled a coffee cup.

MARK

I'm sure you're due for some time off. Why not go away somewhere?

AMANDA

I can't, I have too much work.

(then, realizing)

Thanks for reminding me. I've got six autopsies waiting.

She grabs the coffee and hurries off, nearly running into Jesse, who joins Mark.

MARK
She's working too hard.

JESSE
No, she's running.

Mark thinks about that for a moment, then:

MARK
How is Cynthia Pike?

JESSE
No change.
(then)
Now I understand why my mother
always made me wear shoes when I
went outside.

That's when Steve emerges from the elevator, looking grim.

(CONTINUED)

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52 CONTINUED: 52

STEVE

I checked with the department's janitorial service. They cleaned the restroom the night before Stang's death.

MARK

What about the observation room mirror?

STEVE

They did every room on the floor, including all windows and mirrors.

MARK

That's what I was afraid of.

STEVE

Dad, this seems like an odd time to be concerned about the sanitary conditions of my workplace. What's going on?

MARK

Let's go over what we know: Stang's killer jammed the interrogation room door closed with a chair, then shot him with a silenced gun.

STEVE

Then the killer took off the silencer, left a gun in Stang's hand, climbed out the window to the bathroom, where he fired a blank into the ceiling.

JESSE

When everyone rushed to the
interrogation room, the killer
slipped out of the bathroom in the
confusion.

STEVE

That all makes sense to me -- so
what does the cleaning crew prove?

MARK

Unfortunately, it proves that
Stang was murdered by Cynthia Pike.

Jesse and Steve stare at him.

STEVE

That can't be right...

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97

51.

52 CONTINUED: (2)

52

MARK

Remember how Captain Pike got into
the interrogation room?

STEVE

She smashed the mirror and climbed
through. Cut herself up pretty
badly doing it.

MARK

What if she cut herself
deliberately?

STEVE

Why?

MARK

To cover up the fact that she'd
already cut herself on the rusty
window bars. What she didn't know
was that she'd infected herself
with tetanus.

A moment, then the truth of it hits Steve and Jesse.

JESSE

Which she couldn't get from a
clean mirror.

Steve tightens angrily.

STEVE

All this time...

(then)

Why would she do it?

MARK
I have an idea -- but we won't
know for sure until we bring down
the leader of this conspiracy.

And as Mark contemplates his next move, we:

CUT TO:

53 INT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

53

as Watson stares at Mark and Steve incredulously.

WATSON
Pike and Stang were in this
together?

STEVE
I didn't want to believe it myself.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97

52.

53 CONTINUED:

53

WATSON

I still don't.

MARK

Pike killed your wife and Stang
planted the blood at your house.

WATSON

I just told the city she had my
complete trust, for God's sake.

MARK

And that's exactly what she wanted
you to do. Everything is going
exactly as she planned it. With
Chief Masters, of course.

WATSON

Why?

MARK

For all the reasons you thought
before: to ruin you and give
Masters a clear shot at the
Mayor's seat.

STEVE

And he'd make her the first female
Chief of Police in LA history. But
once Dad figured out you were
framed, Pike decided to make Stang
the fall guy and save herself.

MARK

Pike killed Stang and tried to
make it look like suicide. But she

made a few mistakes, one of them fatal.

(off Watson's look)

She contracted tetanus and I'm afraid she isn't responding to treatment.

WATSON

If she dies, we'll never be able to prove Masters was behind this.

STEVE

There might be a way. Offer the Chief a deal, tell him you know about the intelligence file in Stang's place. Tell him you'll exonerate him if he drops out of the race and endorses you for Mayor.

Steve holds up a small TRANSMITTER and MICROPHONE.

(CONTINUED)

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53 CONTINUED: (2) 53

STEVE
And wear this when you do it.

And on Watson's look, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

54 54 EXT. ABANDONED GREENHOUSE – ESTABLISHING – DAY

55 OMITTED 55

56 56 INT. ABANDONED GREENHOUSE – DAY

Watson walks in to find Masters standing in the center of the empty greenhouse.

WATSON
What's the matter, didn't know any good empty warehouses or abandoned amusement parks?

MASTERS
You asked for this little party.
So tell me why I'm here.

WATSON
Because next time we meet I'll be wearing this.

his Watson holds up the TRANSMITTER and lets it dangle from

hand.

WATSON

I'll offer to make you a deal on tape that will implicate you in my wife's death and the plot to frame me.

(then)

This is your last chance to save yourself.

If Masters is jarred by this, he's not showing it.

MASTERS

You can eavesdrop on every conversation I have until I die, and it won't change a thing. We both know I had nothing to do with any of it.

Watson shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97

54.

56 CONTINUED:

56

WATSON

Doesn't matter. It sure looks like you did, and that'll be enough to ruin you. Unless I help you out.

(then)

Tomorrow, we can put on an act that will clear you and put all the blame on Pike and Stang.

MASTERS

(wryly)

All I've got to do is forget about a couple of your parking tickets.

WATSON

I want you to drop out of the race, endorse me, and use your "resources" on my behalf while I'm in office.

MASTERS

And how do you explain all that's happened?

WATSON

We'll say Pike and Stang were lovers. She found out he was also sleeping with my wife and wasn't happy about it. So Pike figured out a way to kill her and lay everything on Stang.

MASTERS

(playing along)

And you'll say Pike planted the blood at your house, knowing Dr.

Sloan would clear you and go after Stang. Pike killed Stang, makes it look like suicide, end of story.

WATSON

Now you're getting the hang of it.

MASTERS

Only one problem: Pike won't play along.

WATSON

Pike is dying. And even if she makes it, who will believe her if you and I support each other?

MASTERS

Sounds good. Bet it sounds just as good on tape.

Masters opens his jacket to reveal a TRANSMITTER.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97

55.

56 CONTINUED: (2)

56

MASTERS

Good thing one of us was wired.

Watson is shocked. Before Watson can do anything, Steve appears behind him with Halloran, their guns drawn. Mark, pushing Pike in a wheelchair, emerges from an adjoining room with two UNIFORMED OFFICERS.

MARK

Watson's story wasn't far from the truth, Chief. With one crucial difference. He was the one having the affair with Captain Pike.

(to Pike)

Isn't that true?

She nods, glaring at Watson with utter hatred.

PIKE

He killed his wife and planted the blood on his own property. We framed Stang -- and I killed him. The only thing Stang was guilty of was bad luck.

WATSON

Shut-up, Cynthia.

PIKE

(to Watson)

You were ready to sacrifice me to save yourself. One good turn deserves another, honey.

Steve looks at her with disgust.

STEVE

You did it all, so Masters would
be disgraced, Watson would become
Mayor, and you'd be the new Chief
of Police.

Pike looks away, she can't meet his gaze. Masters turns to
the officers and makes a motion towards Watson and Pike.

MASTERS

Get them out of here.

(to Halloran)

I'm sorry about what's happened to
you. I'll make it right.

Halloran nods, but then says privately to Steve:

HALLORAN

Yeah, sure.

(CONTINUED)

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56 CONTINUED: (3) 56

STEVE
It beats Burger Town.

The officers lead Watson and Pike away... but Watson stops,
and turns to face Mark.

WATSON
How did you know it was me?

MARK
Once I realized Pike killed Stang,
I asked myself who benefited the
most from all this. It certainly
wasn't Masters. But I couldn't
have proved it if you hadn't tried
one last manipulation.
(then)
I counted on you being a
politician to the end -- and you
were.

And on Watson's utter defeat, and Mark's triumphant smile,
we:

DISSOLVE TO:

57 INT. PRECINCT - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Masters and several ND OFFICERS are packing up Pike's files
into boxes as Steve comes in.

STEVE
You wanted to see me, sir?

Masters motions the officers out.

MASTERS
(to officers)
We need a few minutes.

The officers leave and close the door.

MASTERS
Capt. Blake from North Hollywood
will be taking over here.

STEVE
He's a good man.

MASTERS
He does his job – nothing more,
nothing less. He's thinking about
his pension, not politics.

(CONTINUED)

"Murder Blues" Buff 7/29/97 57.

57 CONTINUED: 57

STEVE

Then I hope the department is saving up for a nice gold watch for him.

(then)

I'm not holding out hope for mine.

MASTERS

This is my department. I will not tolerate any opposition from within.

Masters steps close to Steve, meeting his gaze.

MASTERS

I want my officers clearing cases, not pursuing their own private agendas.

(then)

You're staying. But if you ever move against me again, I will crush you.

Steve nods, turns to go, when:

MASTERS

By the way, that was good police work.

Masters allows himself a small smile. And on Steve's surprise, and relief, we GO TO:

58 EXT. BEACH HOUSE – DAY

58

Amanda drives up front in her car. She honks insistently.
Mark comes up to her window.

AMANDA

What's so urgent that I had to
stop here on my way to work?

MARK

I know it's out of your way, but
it couldn't wait.

She motions for him to spit it out.

MARK

I know how busy you are, and I
really hate to add to your
workload, but this is important.

Again, she motions him to hurry up.

AMANDA

I can handle it.

(CONTINUED)

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58 CONTINUED: 58

MARK

I just learned that Dr. Hugo Arbuthnot, the renowned forensic anthropologist, is demonstrating his new technique for reconstructing a human skull from shards of bone. You have to see this.

AMANDA

Great -- where and when, I'll be there.

MARK

That's the bad news -- Hawaii in seven hours. Here's your ticket and hotel reservations. I'm really sorry, Amanda.

AMANDA

No problem, it's a five hour flight. I've got two hours to spare, if I leave right now.

She speeds off, laying rubber. So much of a hurry, she doesn't see the smile on Mark's face as she goes. Jesse sneaks out of hiding behind Mark and looks off in Amanda's wake.

JESSE

What do you think she will do when she gets there and finds out there's no Dr. Hugo Arbuthnot and no demonstration?

MARK

Hopefully she'll laugh about it
and find an empty spot on the
beach.

JESSE
And if she doesn't?

MARK
We have seven hours to think of a
plan.

And on their looks, we:

FADE OUT:

THE END