

THE WORK OF ZOMBIES

Screenplay by

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FADE IN:

EXT. ANTEBELLUM ESTATE - NIGHT

A Victorian estate house decays under ancient trees draped in Spanish Moss. DRUMS rumble like a long roll of thunder.

An unlit two lane country road outside the sagging fence.

In back, a carriage house shows signs of upkeep. Curtains. Fresh paint.

Further still a barn. Lantern light spills out. The DRUMS are here and VOICES melded in a primal chant.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Salvaged house doors form a circular temple (peristyle).

PERISTYLE

Three DRUMMERS hold forth. Ageless dark faces. Black and mulatto MEN and WOMEN in simple clothes dance, rapt with the closeness and summer heat.

Painted saints, demons, animal totems on the walls. Black ribbons, an altar draped in red. A black candle drips wax onto a painted skull.

BARN

Outside the peristyle, an older sedan nudges against empty horse stalls. An open door in the back wall.

MENAGERIE

Wire cages and covered terrariums that hold lizards, toads, snakes, rabbits. Wildly colored chickens peck at the floor.

In his Sunday best, DEVON NARCISSE (18) scatters corn. Coal black face smooth above the tilted shoulders of a spinal deformity. He reacts to a rise in the CHANT.

PERISTYLE

Devon weaves through the dancers, sets a corn snake into a tank on the altar. Climbs onto a riser behind. Aloof eyes regard the crowd with disdain.

The DRUMS step up into a sharp staccato.

A vibrant PRIESTESS (young 20s), dances close. Devon blesses the crowd with flicks of a bone rattle.

DEVON

When I am troubled, I will call the
spirit down to help.

CHORUS

We call the spirit down. Answer our
prayers. Carrefour.

The Priestess jerks to a stop. Eyes roll. Limbs spasm like a
mad puppet. She whirls in a possessed frenzy.

Devon watches her, waiting. His hands twitch. Miraculously
his deformed back straightens.

People in the crowd nod in awe. Devon's arms lift high and
wide until he looks like a crucified man.

DEVON

Carrefour. Carrefour.

He makes a fantastic leap to the floor, joins the dance.

A coffin is paraded around the crowd, set down at the altar.
Hands touch in reverence.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Bony dark hands run over a simple coffin, pry open the lid.

LUCY NARCISSE (60s), paper-thin ebony skin, skeletal frame
swathed in a milk white dress, looks in on ...

MATTHEW, (20s) a hulking black man in dirty clothes. He's
wedged into the tight sides, eyes staring in fear.

Lucy nods, cranks open a window. The DRUMS pound a heartbeat.
BA-BOOM, BA-BOOM, BA-BOOM.

LUCY

You hear them? They praying for
deliverance. Deliverance from you.

She SMACKS Matthew with a short whip. Awareness comes back
with a start. He can't move and his panic grows.

Lucy backs across the empty floor. Unlocking a cabinet, she
pulls bottles - liquids, salts, petrified animal parts, hand-
drawn skull and crossbones.

The coffin stands alongside the box of a confessional, flush
into the right rear corner.

A milk crate altar draped with white and red scarves dominates the nave. To the left a make-shift stall.

Chicken wire barely holds a rotting gate in place. Some BULKY THING huddles in the deepest dark.

Lucy showers a hibachi fire with salts to send up smoke and sparks. Moaning, gesturing broadly over her goods, she mixes a potion, all polished showmanship.

Inside the stall, the thing stirs.

INT. BARN - PERISTYLE - NIGHT

Devon dances ecstatic. Women shimmy against him in fully clothed orgy. Primal energy, nothing profane.

BIG DRUM RUMBLES. MIDDLE DRUM RAPS A HEART ATTACK BEAT. SNARE DRUM REVS AND REVS AND REVS. FEET POUND TO A FEVER PITCH.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Lucy gyrates with focused attention. The Crone in full command of the Priestess' dance.

LUCY
O Shampwel O. They killed the man
to take his zombie.

In the stall, dirty fingers slide up a post, grab hold.

A second figure rears up behind the first - men by their forms. Slope shouldered, heads held at odd angles.

DISTANT CROWD VOICES meld into a plaintive wail of lost souls. The DRUMS pound faster, faster.

A bare trickle of sweat seeps into Matthew's eye. He'd scream if he could. Lucy shoves an empty jar in his face.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Here I hold your spirit. Seven days
you passed under the earth. Now I
bring you back. Come forth.

Lucy flicks water on Matthew in a mime of baptism.

Behind her, a fumbling hand knocks off the locking twine.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Be reborn with the name I give you.
Matthew.

She pushes a grayish paste into his mouth, massages the potion down his gullet.

Magically Matthew can move. He staggers out of the box like a Frankenstein. Cackling, Lucy sweeps back, right into a body.

She spins and stares up at the sullen, glaring zombies (LUKE and JOHN) towering over her.

INT. BARN - PERISTYLE - NIGHT

The DRUMS stop. The crowd winds down to a standstill. The Priestess wilts.

A woman disengages herself from Devon's embrace. His posture melts into his normal lop-sided slouch.

A collective moment to breathe, then. Heads turn.

Lucy stands in the door, all three zombies behind her.

The crowd forms an aisle. Lucy parades to the altar. Devon lends her a hand up to the chair/throne.

Fighting each step, the zombies line up at her feet, helpless to look anywhere but at her.

Lucy glares magnanimously over the crowd.

LUCY

Go to the cops for help and what do they do? Give you a paper that say bad men stay away. Do bad men obey a paper? No. So you come to me, your mambo, for help. And I help. Through me, the loa deliver justice.

A flick of her hand and the zombies turn in place.

MAMA (50s), a tense, intelligent woman comes forward to peer into Matthew's face.

Terror pleads forgiveness in his eyes. Mama turns her back on him, presses folding money into Lucy's fingers, melts into the safety of the crowd.

Devon presents Lucy with a freshly killed chicken. She sprinkles blood on the altar. Splashes wine from a bottle.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Now we give thanks to the Serpent
and Rainbow. This no place for the
dead. Take them, boy.

BARN

Devon herds the zombies into a stall. He ties a rope across.
Laughter rises as the DRUMS promote a lively beat.

Devon lingers at the peristyle door. The crowd sways in one
long, joyous conga line. As they pass in front of Lucy, hands
slip money into a shallow bowl.

The Priestess dances past the door, trying to catch Devon's
attention. His eyes are all for a full-figured dancer.

Wind instruments and a fiddle slide into a zydeco tune.

EXT. CARRIAGE HOUSE - NIGHT

Lights and LAUGHTER come from the kitchen. Through the open
door, WOMEN prepare food, including the now dressed chicken.

EXT. ANTEBELLUM ESTATE - NIGHT

A solitary car hums past. Cresting a soft hill, the
headlights catch neat modern houses further on.

EXT. SAVANNAH - NIGHT

The car continues into town. Street lights. Stores and
offices. SHIP HORNS and TRUCK ENGINES.

A large ornate Sign - Welcome to Historic Savannah.

EXT. SAVANNAH STREET - NIGHT

Pre-dawn darkness. A slum of weathered buildings, barred
windows and triple locked doors.

Movement down a side street.

MIKE CHAPDELAIN (33), muscular frame in painter overalls,
hums as he whitewashes over graffiti with a pole brush.

The car passes, splashing light, then its gone.

Another light pokes out of the alley opposite Mike. He stops
work, looks over, can't see much.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Mike eases around a store's back corner.

A parked sedan, motor running. By the headlights glare, four bodies use a tire iron to break into the building. The driver waits, head down over his cell phone.

Mike retreats, keys his phone.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Pre-dawn light turns black shadows bluish.

The Building Door SLAMS open. The TEENS, carrying bulging sacks and large boxes, make for the waiting sedan.

They skid to a stop at the car hood. The DRIVER is gagged with duct tape, hands cuffed to the steering wheel.

GUS (O.S.)

Now ya'll ought'a know better'n to
let the young'n drive.

GUS HUTCHINS (35) a lean, lanky stretch of bones and nonchalance, steps out of hiding, car keys and cell phone in one hand, badge on his belt, pistol held loose but ready.

GUS (CONT'D)

Them ANGRY BIRDS make my job so
much easier.

Headlights flash on from cop cars parked at either end of the alley. The teens drop their loot, dash up a short side alley. Six UNIFORMED COPS break cover to ambush.

Two Teens hammer their way through the gauntlet. Then a man steps out to block their escape. They pull up short.

Now in jeans and muscle shirt, Mike's police badge glints on a lanyard. He nods a greeting.

MIKE

I advise you to think on this,
boys. I wrassled gators back home
and the pair of you together don't
come close to one baby snapper.

The Teens hesitate, nudge each other for action. Mike slips the lanyard down his shirt.

The Teens charge. Mike materializes a four-foot section of pipe, sweeps the legs of Teen One.

Twirls the butt end into the stomach of Teen Two, doubling him over.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Ought'a quit while you still got
all your parts.

Teen One jumps up, rocks Mike with a punch to the face.

Mike gets him by the shirt, yanks him face-first into the wall, raps the pipe across his skull to drop him.

Teen Two pulls a knife, slashes at Mike.

Mike avoids the blade, meets the boy's frantic eyes. He drops the pipe to free both hands.

Teen Two charges. Mike side-steps, gets both hands on the Teen's knife arm, body slams the boy face-down on a barrel.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Give it up. Don't be stupid. Give
it up.

He twists the knife free.

The Teen bucks. Mike kicks the boy's legs away from purchase, puts the knife in his teeth.

TEEN TWO
Get off me. Police brutality. Help
me! He's killing me.

Mike drops his left shoulder to the boy's neck, pins the boy's right hand down in front of his face, huffs his anger under control.

MIKE
Couldn't just admit you were wrong
and come along quiet-like. Well,
you only got yourself to blame for
what comes next.

With deliberation he traces the knife across the boy's wrist.

Teen Two's eyes go wide with terror.

TEEN TWO
No. What are you doing?

MIKE
Caught you stealing. Assaulting a
police officer.
(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

I'm saving us both time and trouble
and dealing out some justice here.
This hand's mine.

TEEN TWO

No. NO! You can't. Somebody help.

Gus and UNIFORMED COP HARLEY (20s) run up.

GUS

Need help there, Rambo?

MIKE

You take that one. I got him.

TEEN TWO

No. Stop him. He's going to cut my
hand off. You can't do this. I got
rights.

MIKE

People you stole from got rights
too. An eye for an eye.

Gus looms over Mike's shoulder to look. Mike is totally calm.

Harley takes charge of Teen One.

TEEN TWO

No, no, no. Stop him. This is
police brutality.

GUS

Oh hush on up. If it were me and
you kept wiggling like that, I'd
make a mess of the job. He's from
Louisiana. You'll be fine. Lefty.

He scowls displeasure at Mike. Mike shakes him off.

GUS (CONT'D)

Let's put that one in your car,
Harley.

He drops back to help Harley with Teen One.

Teen Two wiggles and bucks, can't move Mike's weight. The
knife glides across his wrist, not breaking the skin. Yet.
The boy whimpers his terror.

TEEN TWO

No. No, please. Don't. Please. I'm
begging you. Not my hand.

MIKE

So you can steal more stuff that don't belong to you?

TEEN TWO

No. I swear. I'll never do this again. I needed the money to play ball, man. I can't play ball with one hand.

Mike holds the knife still, watches emotions play across Teen Two's face as all bravado evaporates.

MIKE

School will get you into sports.

Teen Two wilts into the barrel.

TEEN TWO

Can't read so good. Can't ever catch up. Coach says I should buy my grades.

Gus comes back. Mike slips him the knife, maneuvers Teen Two into handcuffs. He turns the boy to face him.

MIKE

You got family to call?

TEEN TWO

Yes sir.

Mike fishes a business card from his pocket, slides it into Teen Two's shirt pocket.

MIKE

You call your family, give them my name and number. We got programs to get your grades up legal. But, if I catch you stealing again. I can do a whole lot worse than take a hand. Go on.

Harley takes Teen Two, takes off. Gus scowls at Mike.

GUS

You boys get away with some shit down there in N'awlins.

MIKE

What? Did you see any blood? I didn't cut him.

GUS

You got me out here butt crack of dawn. You're buying breakfast.

EXT. SAVANNAH STREET - NIGHT

They cross the street to Mike's paint project. Mike picks up some trash on the way, making a show of looking up and down the Mom and Pop businesses.

MIKE

No Waffle House down this way.

GUS

You're still buying. How many times are you going to repaint this wall?

MIKE

Until I catch the artists.

Mike unlocks a door, piles paint buckets and brushes neatly inside. Gus eyes the painted wall, shakes his head.

GUS

You keep embarrassing me and you'll wind up working with Jeffy.

MIKE

That means you get Iris. Done.

Mike locks the door, heads for a parked car. Gus cringes.

GUS

Damn, you walked right into that, Augustus.

Gus hustles to the driver's side as Mike settles in the passenger seat.

EXT. LUCY'S BOTANICA - REAR ALLEY - DAY

Head barely topping a low dumpster, Devon pisses on the wall, eyes dull with boredom. His gaze lands on a magazine.

TEDDY BARTHOLOMEW (34), a polished Wesley Snipes clone in a Doctor's smock, beams between a pair of skeletons. One a severely distorted spine. Two, perfect alignment.

Devon zips up, grabs the magazine, wide eyes going from one skeleton to the other.

INT. LUCY'S BOTANICA - BACK ROOM - DAY

A tiny kitchen, shelves filled with recycled bottles and jars. The table full of bags of powdered sugar, colored salts, talcum powder, essential oils.

Devon settles in a chair, looks over a half-finished, hand printed label.

INT. LUCY'S BOTANICA - FRONT ROOM - DAY

Religious statues, strung beads. Bottles of herbs and spices. More bottles of spider eggs, lizard tongues, snake skin. Straw brooms twist into the roof beams. Small animal carcasses dangle.

SHONDRA (23), Halle Berry fine with Snookie fashion sense, scowls as Lucy works with bottles. Wary, nervous.

Green smoke from a pot on a Hibachi wreathes Lucy's face. Her eyes drift between this world and somewhere else.

She adds a powder. Flames burst orange and blue, die away.

LUCY

Mojo magic take a powerful gift to the gods. What you offering, girl?

Shondra's eagerness hardens. Reluctant hands bring an antique gold necklace out of her purse.

SHONDRA

This was grandma's. Pawn say he give me two hundred for it.

Lucy fingers the chain. Devon slips out from behind a cabinet to steal lusting looks.

LUCY

Twenty be more like it.

SHONDRA

This all I got. You being greedy, old woman. How do I know your juju magic even work?

Lucy drops a lid on the cauldron.

LUCY

Girl, you don't come into my place, scold me for a fake, then demand good magic. Go on, git.

She flicks a painted chicken foot, sweeps into the back room.

Shondra shoves the necklace into her purse. She catches a hint of Devon ducking back. Someone she can charm. A shimmy settles her cleavage. She offers a smile.

SHONDRA

Hey, sugar.

Devon peeks an eye out.

SHONDRA (CONT'D)

Come on now, I ain't gonna bite.

Beaming, he lurches into full view. Shondra swallows a flinch of disgust, leans on the counter.

SHONDRA (CONT'D)

Oh honey, how did your bones get all crooked? You'd be some catch if you was all good and tall.

Devon shrugs. Shondra sinks lower, flashing more boob.

SHONDRA (CONT'D)

Bet you know all the old lady's tricks. Maybe you could help a sister out.

She tickles his arm. Devon's hooked.

INT. LUCY'S BOTANICA - FRONT ROOM - LATER

Shondra exits, pocketing a small vial. Plastered to the front window Devon watches her out of sight, enchanted.

LUCY (O.S.)

Boy, quit your playing out there and come to your chores.

Resentment simmers in the look over his shoulder.

As he passes a begging bowl, he swipes a few coins.

INT. LUCY'S BOTANICA - BACK ROOM - DAY

Lucy mixes talcum powder with colored salts. Devon slinks in, uses pen and ink to draw menacing pictures on blank labels.

He copies letters without understanding the words.

DEVON
She smiled at me.

LUCY
Trash smile at any man to get what she want. That snatch not for you, boy. Get it through your head. The gods have other plans.

Lucy spots the rolled magazine in his back pocket, grabs it.

LUCY (CONT'D)
What this?

She looks at the spinal correction ad.

DEVON
A doctor. To fix my bones straight.

LUCY
Boy, you think for one minute I leave you like this if doctors say you could be fixed? Only the loa can help you.

DEVON
The loa come and they go.

LUCY
Why you fussing now? We got it comfortable here.

DEVON
You comfortable. Suppose I want more? Suppose I want a woman?

LUCY
Suppose you figure out where the money coming for that.

A scratch at the back door. Lucy tosses the magazine, dusts off her hands, opens the door. Mama is there, nervous.

MAMA
It's time.

Lucy nods, fetches a covered basket.

LUCY
I got a baby to bring. Close up, then go put those zombies to work.

Devon holds a placid face until the door closes the women out. He retrieves his magazine, smooths the page.

EXT. LUCY'S BOTANICA - REAR ALLEY - DAY

Under the hood, Devon fiddles with the spark plugs to get the engine running, hops in.

EXT. SAVANNAH STREET - DAY

Clean streets, color-coordinated boutique shops, and ancient trees. Heat shimmers off sidewalks.

INT. DEVON'S CAR - DAY

Devon pulls into the parking lot of a stand-alone building. The front door matches the one behind Teddy in the ad.

INT. TEDDY'S OFFICE - EXAM ROOM - DAY

Spotless cabinets and medical equipment. Posters of bone structure. Sitting on the table, Devon closes his shirt.

TEDDY breezes in, slaps an X-ray onto a light box.

TEDDY

Rickets. Malnutrition. Birth defect. All contributing factors.

He turns a generous smile on Devon.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Difficult to correct. Not impossible. This is not a one surgery fix, son. It will take time to see improvement.

DEVON

When can we start?

TEDDY

Now, slow down. There's a matter of payment. I don't suppose you have insurance?

Devon shakes his head.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Well then cash works best. I will be honest. This will take ten thousand or more. Half down, balance can be installments.

Shock pulls all hope out of Devon's eyes.

DEVON
Ain't got that kind of money. You a
doctor. You supposed to help.

TEDDY
The consultation is free. Services
require payment. I can do therapy
for fifty dollars a treatment, but
that only eases your pain. It
doesn't correct the faults.

Teddy pulls down the X-ray, bundles up his papers. Devon
darts to block the door.

DEVON
I can get the money.

He flourishes a fetish.

DEVON (CONT'D)
I got influence with the loa.

TEDDY
Well, when they provide the funds
you come back.

DEVON
Can make you miserable too, if you
disrespect them.

He rattles the thing in Teddy's face. Teddy controls a tiny
rise of superstitious fear.

TEDDY
Boy, I'm an educated man. Your
peasant nonsense doesn't scare me.
I need you to leave now.

Devon snarls, storms out the door. Teddy fingers a gris gris
bag under his collar, stuffs it out of sight.

INT. DEVON'S CAR - DAY

Wedge behind the wheel, Devon fights tears, mumbles curses.
He slams the car into gear. Barrels into traffic.

HORNS BLARE as drivers swerve.

Devon aims his fetish at the nearest car, chants a menacing
gibberish. The hexed car is SIDE-SWIPE as the Driver avoids
hitting Devon.

Devon snorts satisfaction, turns away from the accident.

INT. BARN - DAY

The zombies loiter in the stall.

Devon backs the car in, sits for a moment, sullen. He notices a white paper under the wiper blade.

Getting out, he snatches the flyer to rip apart.

A dollar sign logo stops him. He frowns at the photo of a new Savannah Bank. Bank. Money. Car.

Diving back across the front seat, he digs underneath. A lock box yields a small-caliber pistol.

Looks out the window at the zombies. Helpers.

INT. BANK - DAY

Small, simple office. A dozen black and Spanish PATRONS gossip as they wait on the two TELLERS.

Zombie Matthew shuffles in, moves along the front windows until he's stopped by a desk.

An exiting COUPLE, preoccupied with counting dollars, are blocked by Zombie Luke.

Zombie Luke's slack face and empty eyes make the couple edge sideways around him. Once outside, they dash away.

Zombie Luke hugs the wall away from Matthew.

Moving into the teller line, Zombie John bumps a HEAVY-SET WOMAN (40s). She whirls, ready to berate, but one look at the frozen face and she bolts out of the bank.

Hoodie over his head, Devon peers around the room, hyper with nerves. He pushes Zombie John to the teller's window, glares at the YOUNG WOMAN TELLER.

DEVON
Give me the money.

Intimidated by Zombie John's soulless glare she shoves some bills across the counter.

INT. ALLEY/DEVON'S CAR - DAY

Stopped in a wretched alley, motor idling, Devon counts out a pitiful handful of small-denomination bills. He crams the money bag under the passenger seat, slams into drive.

INT. SECOND BANK - DAY

The zombies herd a handful of CUSTOMERS behind the officers' desks. Devon waves his pistol to threaten.

DEVON
Don't nobody move. Nobody get hurt.
Give me money, bitch.

The TELLER hurries to stuff the bag.

One ELDERLY WOMAN rakes at Matthew with a knitting needle. He never flinches. The wound doesn't bleed.

The woman faints. That starts a chain reaction of screaming. Devon grabs the money bag, herds the zombies out.

DEVON (CONT'D)
Stay down. I mean it.

He fires into the air. People hit the floor. Devon backs out.

Heads only come up when TIRES PEAL OUT.

INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - DAY

The large room is clean, segmented by pairs of desks, busy with uniformed cops and detectives in suits.

Gus and Mike have desks in a corner, heads down over reports.

Senior detectives IRIS and JEFF, late 30s, soft from desk work and privileged attitudes, stroll in.

IRIS
Well if it ain't the Dynamic duo
losing sleep over a pawn shop's
cheap electronics. How'd that bust
go, boys?

JEFF
Paperwork's going to be a bitch.
Making arrests off the clock. Tsk,
tsk. Word's out. Chaplin tried to
cut off a hand. That true?

GUS
If he wanted the hand, he'd have
got it. No trying involved.

Iris and Jeff both sneer, saunter over to their own desks. Gus glares after them, looks at Mike.

GUS (CONT'D)
Newbie or not, you are entitled to stand up for yourself.

MIKE
I would, but Abe Lincoln had a thought. Better to be silent and thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt.

Gus grunts a laugh. Iris returns, slaps a paper down in front of Mike. He scans it in a glance.

IRIS
You're up, sugarplum.

Gus looks to a chalkboard and a list of names. Technically Iris and Jeff are top of the list. He clears his throat.

Iris turns cool eyes on him.

IRIS (CONT'D)
Lead detective, so I say who goes. You got a problem with that, Mister Hutchins?

Gus pushes up, eye level with Iris. Mike circles her to nudge Gus for the door before words get heated.

CHIEF WALTERS (56), a heat-wilted Tommy Lee Jones look-alike, steps out of his office.

WALTERS
Chapdelaine. Go on, Hutchins. He won't be but a minute.

INT. POLICE STATION - WALTERS' OFFICE

Sports trophies and award plaques line the shelves. Walters closes the door behind Mike, studies him.

MIKE
I didn't shoot the boy.

WALTERS
No. You threatened to cut his hand off.

MIKE
Seemed only fair. He threatened me.

Mike holds up under Walters' glare. Walters shakes his head.

WALTERS

You're still new in this town. I get that, but you hear me. I have your jacket from New Orleans. I am not going to have a repeat of that here. We don't cotton to vigilantes.

A flicker of emotion escapes Mike's innocent poker face.

MIKE

Different circumstances, chief.

Walters stalks around Mike. Faces him.

WALTERS

Uh huh. Coming back to the job after a bad shooting is never easy. Don't matter how much time has passed. Take some advice from someone who's been there. You can't save the world from its demons until you save yourself from your own. Go on now, get to work.

EXT. SECOND BANK - DAY

Stepping out of Gus' car, Mike and Gus eyeball the bank.

GUS

It's a sad day when some poor boy gets his rocks off robbing some other poor boys.

MIKE

Lazy ass opportunists. Just 'cause it ain't nailed down, doesn't mean its up for grabs.

GUS

And just who broke your heart?

MIKE

Katrina.

Gus sobers a bit, squints.

GUS

Oh. I figured it was a female made you leave N'awlins. Didn't expect it was that one.

MIKE
She broke a lot of hearts that day.

GUS
Who did you lose?

MIKE
Myself.

Gus shrugs surrender, opens the door to a sea of wary black faces inside.

GUS
Oh, this gonna be fun.

INT. NEWS TRUCK - DAY

Parked outside the bank, Barbie doll bodacious, sunny blond, AMY SANDERSON (24) adjusts her make-up in a compact mirror.

AMY
(lyrical Georgian drawl)
The heat index blah blah blah, a hundred five blah blah. Just another blah day in Savannah. Blah to you, Tucker. Lord, I hate weather. So what does Curtis give me as a first field assignment?

She pouts at the downscale bank outside the window.

AMY (CONT'D)
A piddling bank robbery in the hood. What did they get, a handful of fives?

Behind the wheel, STARK (23), Goth girl with spiked hair and dramatic make-up, checks the area, shrugs.

STARK
You were expecting to cover the Governor first time out?

AMY
You're supposed to be on my side. Let's get this over with.

INT. SECOND BANK - DAY

Gus examines a hollow camera. The Bank Manager scowls.

GUS
How do you not install real
cameras?

Across the room, Mike talks to Tellers and Customers. Nobody appears to be willing to do more than shrug. Gus saunters over, avoiding eyes.

GUS (CONT'D)
Close it on up, partner.

MIKE
Could make it look like we're
interested in serve and protect.

GUS
I don't see much interest on their
part in being protected.

He exits. Mike frets, acutely aware of the eyes on him. He offers business cards, dropping them on a table.

MIKE
Any detail you can remember will
help. Don't have to give your name.
We're all immigrants here, even if
some have forgot.

EXT. NEWS TRUCK - DAY

Amy shimmies herself respectable as Stark takes background video, focuses on the cops.

STARK
Detectives to your left.

Putting on a smile, Amy grabs a microphone and saunters over.

AMY
Amy Sanderson, WPAS news. What can
you tell me about the robbery?

Gus barely controls a leer. Mike's once-over is guarded.

MIKE
Four perps, got away without
hurting anybody.

AMY
How much did they get?

GUS

Not enough to make the six o'clock news, sugarplum.

He offers a lecherous grin, follows Mike to their car. Amy scowls after them.

AMY

That's why Curtis sent me. So he can document that he gave me any story to cover. Even the police don't care.

Whipping out her phone, she snaps Gus' license plate as the car pulls past.

INT. DEVON'S CAR - DAY

Devon's eyes swivel back and forth. Just ahead, a bank and a car pulling out of a parking spot. He zips in.

INT. THIRD BANK - DAY

Maybe a dozen CUSTOMERS. A YOUNG TELLER chats with her friend. Neither one paying real attention to the line.

Zombie Matthew lurches up, thumps a hand on the counter.

Insulted, the Teller puts on an imperious face, turns. Terror widens her eyes. She grabs her fetish necklace, screams.

Devon shoulders Matthew aside, waves the gun.

DEVON

Don't nobody be stupid. Nobody get hurt. Give me money.

The Teller simply screams.

Across the floor, an elderly GUARD pulls his gun, SHOOTS Zombie John point-blank.

Devon whirls at the sound, reflexively ducking, eyes wide, gun swishing back and forth.

The Guard trembles when John doesn't fall. John shoves him through a glass partition. Blood spatters.

Patrons freak out, hysteria mounting, edging for cover.

Devon frets, panicking.

One MAN watches him, tensed for escape. When Devon's eyes swing to the tellers he pushes to his feet, runs.

Devon cries his outrage, fires, hits the man in the back. To cover his fear he waves the gun, raises his voice.

DEVON (CONT'D)
Down! Everybody, down. You. Money.
Now.

The Teller continues her mindless screams. Her friend comes over to stuff money in the bag.

Behind a desk, a MANAGER hits a SILENT ALARM.

Zombie Luke reacts to the ultrasonic, grabs the man by the hair. Fingers find a letter opener. He stabs in a frenzy.

Devon WHISTLES. The zombies fall in like dogs. Zombie John staggers, slower with each step.

EXT. THIRD BANK - DAY

Devon throws the money bag in the front, shoves Matthew into the back. POLICE SIRENS SOUND close by.

Devon looks around for John as Luke flops into the car. John's stopped at the closed bank door, leaning heavily.

SIRENS WAIL CLOSER.

Devon scuttles around the car, dives behind the wheel. CAR ENGINE ROARS. TIRES LAY RUBBER.

John's pushed out, ignored as people fight to get out.

Cop cars pull up into chaos. John stumbles away from the scene, just another wino looking for a place to flop.

INT. DEVON'S CAR - DAY

Devon ducks as a squad car screams by the opposite way. Kissing his fetish bag, he turns into a side street.

EXT. SECOND BANK - DAY

On the sidewalk, Amy pouts in a foul mood. Stark films the bank. A pair of shaken WOMEN TELLERS come out.

AMY

Hey. Can I talk to you? I'm a reporter.

The women stare at her, aghast.

TELLER

You should not be here.

AMY

No, it's okay. Amy Sanderson, WPAS news. Did you see what happened?

She holds the microphone out as Stark lines up the shot. The tellers hold onto one another.

TELLER

We ain't got enough with zombies causing trouble? Do we need some crazy white girl making more?

She grabs firm hold of her friend, shoulders past Amy. They scurry up the block. Amy squints at Stark.

AMY

Zombies?

STARK

That's what she said. Cool, huh?

AMY

Duh. Do you see this neighborhood? If they hit the Chase downtown then we'd have a story.

Disappointed, Stark heads for the van, stores the camera. Amy pulls out her iphone, thumbs a message. Coming up, she shows Stark the screen.

STARK

News flash. Zombies robbing banks in Savannah. Story at six. Curtis is not going to like that.

They climb into the van.

INT. NEWS VAN - DAY

Amy fiddles with a police band radio.

POLICE DISPATCHER (V.O.)
 All cars in the vicinity of
 Magnolia and Sixth, bank robbery in
 progress. Shots fired.

MIKE (V.O.)
 Hutchins and Chapdelaine
 responding.

AMY
 Maybe he'll like that. Let's go.

EXT. THIRD BANK - DAY

STARK'S POV - COPS and EMTs at work. REPORTERS and curious
 onlookers crowd the crime-scene tape. Amy comes into FRAME.

AMY
 It's chaos here, Tucker. Three
 dead.

STARK'S POV SLIDES past Amy to a man being loaded into one
 ambulance. Body bags are loaded into a second.

Mike and Gus move for their car, out of camera range.

AMY (CONT'D)
 No one willing to talk on camera.
 We have conflicting reports of the
 gang members. One man seemed
 impervious to pain, shot point
 blank, and simply walked out. Looks
 like the zombie bandits are on a
 spree.

Mike stops dead, shaken by a flash of dread. Gus glances
 over, distracted by Amy's legs.

GUS
 Impervious. That's a mighty big
 word for that little girl.

MIKE
 Zombie bandits. Is that a gang?

Gus winces at Amy's zombie walk impression.

GUS
 No. It appears to me she's talking
 NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD critters.

He misses the unease that shadows Mike's eyes for a moment. Mike gives Amy a stronger once-over, gets himself behind his professional poise.

MIKE
Could have sworn I saw her doing
the weather last week.

GUS
Well dang. That's where I know
those hooters, I mean that face.

MIKE
A real reporter would know better.

Gus gets to his car, surprised when Mike heads over to Amy.

Amy sights Mike's approach. She frames up questions, but he goes to Stark first to have the camera shut off.

AMY
Hey. What's the big idea?

MIKE
Might ask you the same thing. Why
are you stirring up trouble calling
these boys zombies?

AMY
That's what their victims are
calling them.

MIKE
Not a good answer.

AMY
So give me one.

MIKE
They're thieves, playing on
superstition. You're not helping
making that your sound byte.

Amy pouts, looks to Stark to record sound. Mike's hand on the camera negates any move from her.

AMY
You're not from around here.

MIKE
Louisiana.

AMY

Maybe you hadn't noticed we have a large population of Haitians here. Officer?

MIKE

Chapdelaine. It's Detective Chapdelaine. I noticed. Got bad news for you. Zombies are ghost stories told to make the little ones behave. Do us both a favor and report the facts.

AMY

So give me some.

MIKE

When we have some. Your lead should be armed and dangerous now that people got killed. Call the station later, we might have more.

Mike nods at Stark, heads back to Gus. Amy fumes.

STARK

He's got a point.

AMY

At the top of his head. Have you seen my twitter feed?

She checks her phone, shows Stark the screen.

AMY (CONT'D)

Anybody can cover a bank robbery. I'm going with the black magic angle.

Stark sighs, not totally on board.

Gus studies Mike over the roof of the car.

GUS

Hey, I saw her first.

MIKE

I wasn't sparking her, and you're married.

GUS

I can still look. So what was that?

MIKE

Likely not much. Tight community like this one person cries zombies and pretty soon people are seeing them everywhere.

GUS

Look at the bright side. It's better'n chasing down good ole boys or hip-hoppers. They don't move so fast.

Mike rolls his eyes, exasperated, gets in the car. Gus laughs, climbs in.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Zombie John is curled next to a dumpster, dead.

INT. BARN - MENAGERIE - DAY

Devon shoves his loot into hiding, pulls a bunny out.

PERISTYLE

Devon makes a circuit of the walls, crooning prayers to the paintings, caressing the rabbit. He kneels at the altar, picks up a knife. Blood spatters.

Rocking on his heels, arms upraised in supplication, Devon waits for a response. Nothing.

He wilts down, eyes the blood dripping down the altar cloth. Suddenly digs under the cloth and brings out a lock box.

A furtive glance over his shoulder, then he slips the catch.

Only a few loose dollars and some coins. Furious, he shoves the box back into hiding.

BARN

Devon tosses the carcass to the zombies, heads to the car.

DEVON

Remember who fed you red meat.

The zombies converge on the dead rabbit. Luke reaches down, picks it up by a front paw.

Matthew clutches a leg. Pulling together they tear the body apart, retreat to corners to gobble their share.

Devon revs the engine, pulls out in a rush.

INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - DAY

DETECTIVES and UNIFORMED COPS gather at a television.

ON SCREEN - Amy in front of the Third Bank.

AMY (V.O.)

This is Amy Sanderson, WPAS News.
Well, it looks like zombies are no
longer after blood-red brains.
Today they're after long green.
Three banks have been terrorized.

Across the room, Mike and Gus review security tapes. Gus
squints in close.

GUS

The Hubble can take pictures of
stars a gazillion miles away and we
can't get a decent ID off one of
these security cams at twenty feet.
I couldn't make these guys in a
line up. Can you?

MIKE

One, two and three in back, all
shuffling like they have to think
...

That nudge of fear flickers. Mike's eyes shift to Gus to
ensure Gus hasn't caught the pause.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Think about one foot in front of
the other. Likely high. The boy.

He points out Devon huddling his face away from the camera.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Knows enough to not give anyone a
good look. Five nine-ish maybe,
hundred sixty, doesn't use banks as
a rule.

GUS

Now how can you tell that?

MIKE

His eyes are everywhere. He's never
been in this building.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

Looks like a bum leg or a bad back.
Dark skinned, probably Haitian.

He mimes the shoulder slant. Gus digs out a note pad.

GUS

He does know how to shoot. Pegged
that poor soul square.

Mike rewinds the tape to the zombie's entrance. He freeze
frames faces, enlarges images and prints them out.

No mistaking it. He recognizes signs that he doesn't want to
acknowledge in the haunted eyes.

Walters crosses to them, drops a tabloid with a full-page
zombie headline on the desk.

WALTERS

Crazy just follows you, doesn't it?

MIKE

Are we talking that reporter girl?
Wasn't me got her started.

Walters smoulders his frustration.

MIKE (CONT'D)

So give the case to Iris. I'd
appreciate it.

WALTERS

No, it's yours. A hundred and four
in the shade. Mayor with a
convention of movie folk coming in.
Last thing I need is a bunch of
island blacks freaking out. You got
anything?

MIKE

Prints are in processing. This last
bank had a security camera that
works. For what its worth.

WALTERS

That little girl is set to get
everybody worked up. Make me look
good and put an end to it. Fast.

He retires to his office. Harley passes, drops a report. Gus
grabs it up, winces, reading.

GUS
You sure about zombies not being
real?

MIKE
Sure as you're sitting there.

GUS
Maybe I'm not. Prints came back on
our knifer as a match for one
Hector Belfort. Except he died of
food poisoning three months back.

Gus hands off the report for Mike to read.

MIKE
Indigent. No coroner's report. Just
the hospital intake notes. We need
to talk to the family.

They get up quickly. Iris looks up as they pass.

IRIS
Chaplin. Before you go running off.

MIKE
Chap De Laine. It's French.

IRIS
Sure it is. Being from N'awlins and
all, what do you reckon about these
hoodoo things?

She flaunts a tabloid with zombie headlines. Mike sighs.

MIKE
Bayou folk, Creole, Haitians.
Everybody got stories about boogies
to make your hair stand on end.

JEFF
Savannah got plenty of ghosts.

MIKE
Yeah, but do the dead walk among
you? We lock our cemeteries from
the outside to keep things in.

Jeff twitches unease, buries his face in paperwork. Gus
nudges Mike out before he starts laughing.

INT. TEDDY'S OFFICE - DAY

Working at his desk, Teddy's startled when Devon plops the bag in front of him. RECEPTIONIST RITA hovers in the door.

DEVON

Got your money. Make my bones straight. Like you promised.

TEDDY

It's fine, Rita. I have this.

She pulls the door shut. Teddy looks in the bag. Avarice lights and he sets it in a drawer, smiles.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

All right. We can fit you for a brace and start physical therapy.

DEVON

Braces? Therapy? No, put my bones right.

Teddy makes a performance of checking a calendar.

TEDDY

We will. But there are steps to take. My first opening for surgery would be two months from

DEVON

No! Now! Got to be now.

Teddy pushes to his feet, patience straining.

TEDDY

Listen to me, son. This is science. It's going to take time, surgeries and therapy. And there's no guarantee I can get your bones to align.

Devon flushes with rage. A chant starts deep in his chest. He sways, puffing up with ceremonial polish.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Don't you go crazy on me. I'll call the police.

Teddy recoils from a swipe across the face. Stares at the bundle of feathers and chicken toes Devon flaunts.

DEVON

You break promise to the loa. The
loa make you pay.

He runs out. Teddy drops into his chair, finds a chicken foot
and drops of blood on the desk blotter.

Grabs through a drawer for a mirror, checks his unmarked
skin. Trembling, he sweeps the fetish into the trash.

A small cloth bag on a braided cord falls free of his collar.
He kisses it, stuffs it back, fights for composure.

EXT. SHONDRA'S HOUSE - DAY

Middle-class single family. A party in full swing. Devon
hides in a screen of brush.

Shondra sits on the steps with her cell phone. Devon steps
out. She shrieks, blinks recognition, snarls.

SHONDRA

Boy, you don't jump at people like
that. What is wrong with you?

Devon edges closer like a lost puppy.

DEVON

You my girl.

SHONDRA

Dumb-ass boys are all alike.
Believe anything for a chance at
pussy. What would I want with a
crooked-back coal baby like you?

He offers a pleading hand. She slaps him away.

DEVON

You said.

SHONDRA

I say lots of things. Get yourself
gone before my for-real boyfriend
sees you and whips your sorry ass.

She returns inside. Laughter rings out. One GIRLFRIEND leans
out the window to point and laugh at Devon.

Humiliated, Devon flicks the fetish at her. She wobbles,
falls out of sight. Devon stalks off.

Shondra helps the girl up. They laugh over a broken heel.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Devon measures out liquids and powders into a bowl, counting bottles to take the right combination.

A boom box provides DRUMS. Last to be added, with care, drops from a bottle with a fish picture. He ceremoniously offers the bowl to the skull on the altar.

DEVON

Give me your strength, Baron, and
we show them your power.

Setting the bowl aside, Devon cranks the music to ear-shattering levels, throws himself into a wild dance.

Painted Demon faces leer. Candles flare. The DRUMS POUND. Faster and faster, peaking a frenzy.

His back straightens and purpose lights his eyes. He laughs.

MINUTES LATER

Dressed in black frock coat, top hat, and features outlined in white paint, Devon mirrors the Baron's portrait. A final touch - sunglasses with one lens missing.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

A garbage truck eases up the alley. TWO SANITATION MEN manhandle dumpsters onto the truck's robot arms.

SANIT ONE

Man, I couldn't be any wetter if it
was raining. I hate summer.

SANIT TWO

I'll take the heat any day. Working
nights the rats fight you for every
scrap.

They move a final dumpster, startled when Zombie John falls over. They stare at the body.

SANIT ONE

Well shit. Call it in. We'll be
inside doing paperwork the rest of
the shift. Much obliged, fella.

He doffs his cap at the corpse.

EXT. SAVANNAH STREET - APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Run-down but not yet squalid. Mostly black families, idling, chatting. Kids playing. Gus finds parking, pulls in.

INT. GUS' CAR - DAY

Gus makes no move to get out. Mike takes in the people, fights a smile.

GUS

Oh hush up. Let's get this done.

EXT. SAVANNAH STREET - APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A small crowd of women blocks the sidewalk at the front stoop. Lucy comes out with a bundled baby, Mama at her back.

LUCY

It's a girl child.

A chorus of excited cooing strangles when someone spots Mike and Gus coming up. Eyes rake them, turn to Lucy for cues.

LUCY (CONT'D)

I smell Feds.

MIKE

Savannah Police.

(holds up his badge)

Looking for Marigold Belfort.

LUCY

She don't want to be bothered with you.

GUS

You her lawyer?

A few women snicker with derision. Mike mounts the few steps to Lucy. She meets his gaze in a steady glare of disapproval. He delicately takes a peek at the newborn.

MIKE

Bon chance, cheri.

(to Mama)

Congratulations.

(to Lucy)

Just need to ask Miss Belfort a few questions. Does she live here or not?

LUCY
She done nothing wrong.

MIKE
Never said she did. On the other
hand midwifing without a license.
That could be a problem.

Lucy holds the stare a moment more, slyly takes in the
waiting crowd, condescends to give way.

LUCY
Police business upstairs, three C.

Mike nods, heads inside with Gus.

INT. MARIGOLD'S APARTMENT - DAY

Fussy trappings mask drab poverty. MARIGOLD (26) pretty and
polished, bustles about, not looking directly at Mike or Gus.

MARIGOLD
Got nothing to say about that lazy
sack of shit. All he done was cry
how he couldn't find work befitting
his station. I found work!

She grabs up purse and keys, tight fingers betraying her
nerves. Mike offers a photo - the food poisoning candid.

MIKE
Is this him?

She gives a quick look.

MARIGOLD
That's him. That's Hector.

Mike offers a second photo - a still from the security
camera. Marigold gasps.

MIKE
This was taken earlier today. Does
Hector have a twin?

MARIGOLD
No. I don't know how this can be.

GUS
Don't know or won't tell?

MARIGOLD

Oh, now you care? Where were you when he was beating the hell out of me? I call for help three times. All I get is a piece of paper telling him to stay away. How was some paper going to keep him from breaking in my door?

MIKE

System don't always work. We do our best. Any way you can help us track Hector down now?

MARIGOLD

Don't know any more than what the police told me when they found him. We done? I got appointments.

She marches to the door, blocking a small Haitian shrine.

Gus heads out. Mike gets a look past her shoulder. Their eyes catch. Marigold worries.

He offers a smile and a business card.

MIKE

Call me if Hector shows. I'll see he doesn't trouble you again. Best you change those dying flowers before Erzueli Frieda sees them. Appreciate your time.

He exits. Marigold stares after him.

EXT. SAVANNAH STREET - DAY

The men return to the car. Gus watches Marigold toss a handful of wilting flowers in the trash before scuttling away on her spike heels.

GUS

Man pisses off a woman like that he deserves to be a zombie. Tell you what. I got a couple of Holy Roller cousins. I'll bring them in with their snakes and hallelujahs and we won't have to worry about any walking dead men.

Mike huffs a laugh. They're abruptly awash in a sea of black faces as a surging, dancing mob fills the street.

DRUMS pound. Arms wave. Colors swirl in the moving clothes.

The dancers part around the them like a wave on rocks.
Religious statues bob on platforms carried on shoulders.
Voices scale up and down in primal wails. Confetti rains.

MIKE

Easy now. They're blessing their
homes against demons.

GUS

They can't just buy locks?

The parade works its way down the street. Mike scans all
around, spots the News Van a little ways down. He walks.

EXT. NEWS VAN - DAY

Amy lowers the window as Mike comes up.

MIKE

Ladies. Need to ask what ya'll are
doing here.

AMY

I'm working on a story.

MIKE

The zombie one? It would be a favor
to me and the department if you put
that to rest.

AMY

So tell me what I can report.

MIKE

When we know something we'll say
something.

He heads back to Gus. Amy jumps out.

AMY

You talk to me or I start shouting
about zombies coming out of sewers.

Mike turns back, gets Amy by the arm, walks her to the car.

AMY (CONT'D)

Hey. Police brutality. Stark!

Mike stuffs Amy into the back seat, motions for Stark to
drive close. Into the passenger window.

MIKE
Go home. We'll see she gets back in
one piece.

He waits for Stark to drive before getting in the car.

INT. GUS' CAR - TRAVELING - DAY

Behind the wheel, Gus scowls as Mike keeps his eyes on the road. Amy huffs in the back seat.

MIKE
What's your name?

AMY
Amy Sanderson. And you?

She holds up her phone to record him.

MIKE
Mike Chapdelaine. Do I need to
spell it for you?

He glances back, turns away again.

AMY
I'll take a card. How about you?
Sugarplum.

She turns the phone to Gus.

GUS
That was. Disrespectful. I
apologize. Gus Hutchins. We're
doing the best we can.

He nods, pleased with himself.

AMY
Come on, guys, help a girl out.
This is my chance to move out of
weather.

She edges up, flaunts her cleavage. Mike nudges the phone aside to focus on her eyes.

MIKE
You want to be taken seriously as a
reporter? Then report the news
seriously. You rile up a community
there's no telling what will
happen. Makes our job harder.

Amy pouts, catches Gus leering in his rear view mirror and covers up. Back to Mike.

AMY
My research into voodoo.

MIKE
Voodoun.

AMY
Voodoo.

MIKE
Proper name is voodoun.

AMY
Voodoo, voodoun, what's the difference?

She checks that her cell phone is still recording. Gus glances at Mike. This is news to him.

MIKE
Voodoo is Hollywood nonsense.
Voodoun is the religion of the slave caste of Haiti. Still got freedom of religion here.

Amy drops the phone away, rolls her eyes.

AMY
Thanks, professor. You try selling that on the six o'clock news.

MIKE
Gus, turn right here. I know somebody maybe can help us both.

EXT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - BOUTIQUE - DAY

An antebellum three story home. Gardens of flowers and herbs line the walk. Frilled lace curtains at the windows.

The first floor divided between flower shop and botanica.

INT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - BOUTIQUE - DAY

Neat displays of religious statues, soaps, candles. Beads and incense. Further in back, bottles of exotic ingredients.

Amy follows Mike, unimpressed with the everyday stuff, gets photos of embalmed animals wired to the ceiling. Gus winces.

GUS

Son, I ain't got enough mojo to fight all this hoodoo.

MIKE

If you don't believe it will hurt you, it won't.

SYLVIA BOUVIER (62) advances from the back. Tall and elegant, mocha skin glows in her long white dress and head wrap. Merry eyes twinkle. Mike flashes his badge.

SYLVIA

Ah, bon chance, my dears. How may I be of service?

MIKE

Official business, ma'am. Mike Chapdelaine. My partner, Gus Hutchins.

Sylvia offers her hand. Gus takes it formally, intoxicated with a subliminal attraction.

AMY

This is not a voodoo haunt.

MIKE

This is a proper business run by an ordained Voodoun priestess. Now introduce yourself.

AMY

Amy Sanderson, WPAS news. We're looking for zombie makers.

Amy holds her phone up to record. Sylvia glances at Mike. He shrugs an apology. Sylvia smiles at Amy.

SYLVIA

You wish to believe.

AMY

I wish for a good story.

SYLVIA

Ah. For that I direct you to the library.

MIKE

Series of bank robberies earlier. Bandits had a peculiar look.

AMY
Witnesses said they were zombies.
Off the record.

Mike offers a photo. Sylvia frowns over it, hands it back.
She watches Gus poke around the more exotic bottled items.

SYLVIA
Difficult to say from this. If they
are zombi, they must be made whole
and released.

AMY
Is it true? They're dead?

SYLVIA
To be a zombi, the free will is
dead, not the flesh.

AMY
So you've made zombies yourself?

MIKE
I apologize for her, ma'am. Seems
like the truth shouldn't get in the
way of ratings.

SYLVIA
Let those with eyes, see.

Sylvia waves them to follow her into a rear room. Amy and Gus
hesitate. Mike herds them along.

INT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - DISTILLING ROOM - DAY

More shelves of jars and bottles, tables of chemistry
glassware. Sylvia pulls bottles here and there.

SYLVIA
A reporter. Your profession. Very
difficult for you, yes?

Amy steps up to the main table, ignorant of the equipment.
Mike idly blocks the door to keep Gus from bolting.

AMY
You have no idea.

SYLVIA
So a charm to garner advancement
would be of benefit.

AMY

Yeah, right. I've read that zombies are created with black magic.

Sylvia spoons her powders and liquids into a small pot.

SYLVIA

Magic is neutral. The intent is black or white. A houngan following the loa doesn't countenance evil.

AMY

Houn? Hoogoo?

MIKE

Houngan. Translates to priest. What is faith to one looks like magic to another. Priests walk the middle ground between good and evil.

GUS

A Jedi you would be.

MIKE

Prime example.

Amy impulsively sticks her fingers in the pot, sniffs, rubs her fingers together. She eyes Sylvia with fresh suspicion.

AMY

I've seen Alice in Wonderland. I'm not drinking anything you spit in.

Sylvia drops a bit of green liquid into a phial, seals it.

SYLVIA

That is a movie. This is proper magic. You don't drink it. You wear it. See what happens.

She offers the phial on a chain. Amy hesitates, gets no help from Mike, takes the thing.

AMY

How do I know this works?

SYLVIA

For that you must believe it works.

INT. GUS' CAR - TRAVELLING - DAY

Gus drives. Mike rides the back seat with Amy. She turns the phial this way and that, drops it into her pocket.

AMY

Magic potions. You must think I'm just another dumb blond.

MIKE

You must think we're TV cops, every bit of evidence discovered and sorted out inside of an hour.

Their eyes meet, hold. Amy senses his interest, softens her attitude.

AMY

Zombies wasn't my idea. One of those bank women said it.

MIKE

But you ran with it. These folks carry a healthy fear of their gods. You're doing nobody a favor preying on superstition.

Insulted that she can't flirt him under control, she stuffs into the corner away from him. Mike shrugs - her loss.

EXT. WPAS NEWS STATION - DAY

A noisy group of protestors mills about. Gus edges the car through and into the parking lot.

EXT. GUS' CAR - DAY

Mike follows Amy out, holds her back.

MIKE

That up there, that's your doing.

She looks over, shrugs indifference.

AMY

So give me something to report.

MIKE

Told you, we don't have anything yet. And you weren't listening to what Sylvia was trying to teach.

Amy flaunts the necklace at him.

AMY

This boogity boogity? I graduated college, asshat, and not on the horizontal. Until you provide details I'm going with the zombies.

She turns on her heel for the building door. Mike sighs, drops into the front seat.

INT. GUS' CAR - DAY

Gus eyes Mike, fighting a grin.

GUS

I seen this movie. Ends with the guy sparking the girl.

MIKE

I'd sooner take that one across my knee for a good spanking.

GUS

Kinky.

MIKE

Pervert. Head in. Maybe the lab came up with something.

EXT. TEDDY'S OFFICE - DAY

Teddy exits behind a patient, crosses to a car parked in the lot, brings out a basket of food, returns inside.

Parked across the street, Devon sits up behind the wheel, pulls his car in beside Teddy's, spills out.

Flicking a RATTLE, chanting, he circles the car. Pulls out the poison bottle, dusts door handles and frame.

He's headed for the office door when a LOUD GROUP of PROTESTORS comes up the street. Hides behind a hedge row.

The parade files past, waving signs, chanting slogans.

Devon waits out a few stragglers, rises out of hiding with a handful of rocks.

The first few bounce off the car. He finds a heavier stone, slams it off the hood. The ALARM blares.

Devon ducks out of sight.

Teddy and Rita run out, inspect the car. No real damage.

Teddy's digging for keys when a RATTLE brings his head up.

Devon jumps out, arms flailing, shaking a fetish.

Rita screams, backs further into the lot. Teddy gets a grip on his fright.

TEDDY

You little freak. Island magic has
no place here. Get away from us.

Devon shoves Teddy into the car. Teddy's hands land full into the powder. Devon dances away.

DEVON

You crossed the magic. The magic
takes you to the land of the dead.

Teddy stares at the fingerprints in the powder, looks at his soiled hands. Devon DRUMS on the car hood, chants.

Without warning, Teddy's shaking. He squirms, twists, tries to scratch everywhere at the same time.

TEDDY

No. This is not happening. Can't be
happening. Not here.

He crashes to the ground, every muscle cramping. Gasps.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

No. Please. Somebody. Help.

But the street is now deserted. He crawls to a bit of a puddle in an effort to wash the powder off. Devon dances a jig around Teddy.

Forgotten behind him, Rita lets herself into the building's back door. Lock clicks.

INT. DEVON'S CAR - DAY

Loosely wrapped in a plastic tablecloth, Teddy's wedged on the back seat. Shallow breaths fade to non-existent.

Elated, Devon turns up a Drum CD, puts the car into motion.

EXT. SHONDRA'S HOUSE - DAY

Shoes in hand, laughing, Shondra stumbles up the steps on the arm of her BOYFRIEND (28), a hulking linebacker. He pulls her close for a passionate kiss. Her bare feet scuff through powder laid out in a cross.

Devon rises up out of hiding. Boyfriend is clocked with a tire iron, shoved aside.

Shondra skids down the steps. Gets a face full of powder. Choking, blinded, she's easy prey for Devon's pull.

He herds her along with taps from his tire iron, around the house to his car. Opens the trunk. When she pushes back, he clocks her hard, shovels her in and slams the hood.

INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - DAY

The squad bustles about business, overlapping voices fielding phone calls. A small television, volume muted, is tuned to the news where Amy is using movie zombies as visual props.

Walters scowls at the screen. Iris joins him with a fistful of notes.

IRIS

She got the whole city hopping.
Zombie carjacking on Cypress.

Mike and Gus stop at the reception desk for messages.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Zombie purse snatcher on Blossom.
You name it, a zombie done it.

Jeff strolls up, drops folders on his desk.

WALTERS

It is true you can only kill those
things with a head shot?

JEFF

That's what they do on WALKING
DEAD.

Mike materializes behind Walters, head down in his notes.

MIKE

The dead don't walk, people.

JEFF

You don't know. These islanders are into devil worship.

MIKE

Haitians wouldn't recognize the Christian devil. And voodoo zombies aren't really dead. It's a mass hypnosis, generations of superstition.

Faces pucker in disbelief. Mike weaves coins through his fingers.

MIKE (CONT'D)

And a bunch of con man hocus pocus.

A pass of the hands and the coins appear to lodge in one hand. He opens the other to reveal the cheat.

IRIS

If they ain't truly dead, seems to me they could just up and run away.

MIKE

If their memory holds. The drugs can cause brain damage. And fear works against the victim. If everyone you know thinks you've died, you're dead.

JEFF

Starting to sound like you got first hand experience.

Mike catches Walters eying him with suspicion.

MIKE

Anyone claiming to practice voodoo back home was a fraud. Plenty of people still ready to believe.

WALTERS

All very interesting, but this isn't getting these perps off our To Do list. I want these boys found and locked up. You.

He grabs Mike's shoulder, steers him to a quiet corner, puts on his most formidable scowl. Mike keeps a bland expression.

WALTERS (CONT'D)

Maybe you didn't quite get my meaning earlier.
(MORE)

WALTERS (CONT'D)

If something does happen here, I'm blaming you. You won't work behind a badge anywhere in these United States. I have your file. It will go public.

Mike bristles under the threat.

MIKE

I was cleared of any wrong doing.

WALTERS

You got a reputation. That sticks in people's minds a long time.

Walters turns for his office. Mike doesn't move, steamed. Harley drops folders on Iris' desk.

IRIS

Goddammit, I got enough to do without another John Doe to track down.

She shoves the pile away. A photo slips out. Jeff takes a look, digs in a file box under his desk.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Records already been searched. No missing person reports.

Jeff straightens with a folder, slaps it in front of Iris.

JEFF

Because he's dead.

IRIS

Well yeah, three bullets in the chest will do that to you.

JEFF

Food poisoning eight months back.

Iris compares photos.

IRIS

It can't be the same guy.

MIKE (O.S.)

Let me see that.

Jeff jumps at Mike's sudden appearance at his back, surrenders the folder.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Take me for a fool. We need to talk
to the people who know how to make
the potions. Gus!

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Devon spills Shondra into the confessional. He cops a feel,
locks her in, turns to the coffin now on the floor.

He leers into Teddy's wide staring eyes.

A quick hand starts the boom box. DRUMS roll in a somber
cadence. Candles are lit. Incense set to burning.

Devon croons a song for the dead, weaves in and out of
Teddy's line of sight. He leans in.

DEVON

Pass under the earth, dead man.

TEDDY'S POV - The lid of the coffin drops down. Frozen vocal
cords deny his scream. A single tear escapes.

The lid bumps into place, blocks out all light.

BACK TO SCENE

Devon howls and dances as the DRUMS kick up faster. He humps
against the confessional door, working himself into a frenzy.

The music ends. Devon's momentum carries him for a beat, then
he falls. Spent, he hugs himself, rocks into sleep.

INT. GUS' CAR - DAY

Parked on the street, Gus and Mike people watch.

GUS

Four botanicas on this block alone.
Take your pick.

Mike zeroes in on a handful of older women scurrying into
Lucy's. He opens his door.

INT. LUCY'S BOTANICA - DAY

Three Haitian women fret at the counter. Lucy bustles about
her potions, filling fresh bottles and small cloth bags.

LUCY

White candles at the windows. Fresh bread and milk for the loa. Just a sprinkle of the magic on the step. Too much and nobody go in or out.

The door TINKLES open. Heads turn. Eyes widen when Mike and Gus saunter in.

Gus fixes on the creatures tacked to the ceiling with a disgusted sigh. The customers dart out, faces averted.

Lucy wipes her hands and advances before the men can get more than a few steps in, assumes her sternest glare.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Well, you done chased away my cash customers, may as well ask your questions. You can't roust me. I got legal papers.

MIKE

Just looking for information. We're investigating a case of food poisoning.

LUCY

All my goods is natural juju. Island medicine. No poisons here.

Gus frowns at jars with odd labels and odder contents.

GUS

You always cure a cold with lizard lips?

LUCY

What you know about wise woman ways? Don't like my answers? Then take it. Take it all. Won't find what you're looking for.

Lucy puffs up with regal indignation.

MIKE

Let's simmer down here. No call to be anything but civil.

His total ease ignites Lucy's suspicion. She makes a magical sign, gasps when recognition flares in Mike's eyes.

LUCY

(French)

Who walks with you?

Mike startles. He flicks a glance to place Gus peering into jars of pickled critters. Strolls the counter, mimicking the idle curiosity to avoid her eyes, finds her business license.

MIKE
(French)
I walk alone these days.

Lucy follows, eyes narrowed.

LUCY
(French)
So you think. I see a shadow.

Mike's confidence flickers. He studies her. Lucy nods, eases a fraction closer, lowers her voice.

LUCY (CONT'D)
(French)
Yes, bad shadows. I can help. Put you back on the path of light before the darkness claims you. The Loa favor me.

She flutters a scarf, makes a tiny skull appear magically. Mike regains his poise, does the same trick back at her.

MIKE
(French)
The Loa or the ignorant?

LUCY
(French)
I give my people what they what they lack. Faith. Strength. I see into their souls. You, your soul is troubled. Tainted by blood ...
(shakes her head)
There is no forgiveness without a blood sacrifice.

MIKE
And if I refuse your price?

LUCY
My price? I am but a servant. You must placate the good father.

Gus comes up, breaking into the battle of wills.

GUS
Hey, we speak English here. Straight up. Ya'll know who might be making zombies?

LUCY
Zombies! You white boys seen too many movies. Too willing to believe in things that don't exist.

Mike lays the bank photos on the counter for her. Lucy squints over them, backs away.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Kids. Damn fool kids. If they not getting high, they making mischief. Maybe you try that Halloween store, find out they buying masks to scare folk.

GUS
Kids.

LUCY
Got no jobs, no schooling and plenty sass. What else they gonna do but trouble people?

MIKE
Anybody in particular you might care to point out?

He sweeps up the photos, drops coins into a begging bowl. Lucy holds her glare.

LUCY
This a poor neighborhood. Maybe I point out anybody. Get you out of here quicker.

The door TINKLES open. The woman stops short at Gus' back, frozen in terror. Mike nods to Lucy.

MIKE
Appreciate your time, ma'am.

EXT. LUCY'S BOTANICA - DAY

Mike and Gus amble to the car.

GUS
What was all that mumbo jumbo?

MIKE
Creole French. Her way of warning us out of her territory. If she's not the one making these zombies, she knows who is.

Mike catches Lucy watching through the window. He offers a bow of respect. A fetish bag drops free of his collar. He tucks it back quick. Gus scopes out the street.

GUS
Go around the back?

MIKE
She wouldn't keep them here. Too many eyes. Someplace isolated.

He pulls out a note pad, jots the business name and address.

MIKE (CONT'D)
We should be able to pull an address from the business license. In the meantime, back to Sylvia's.

GUS
Honestly?

MIKE
I'm hungry. She makes the best gumbo you'll ever eat.

INT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - BOUTIQUE - DAY

Gus follows Mike in. Sylvia accepts Mike's kiss to the cheek.

SYLVIA
Ah, Michel. Who was that impudent creature?

MIKE
Weather girl looking to be the next local anchor. You laid it on pretty thick.

SYLVIA
She would accept nothing less. Come upstairs, my dears.

Mike offers his arm to Sylvia as they mount the steps. She leans in to his ear.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
Have you slept with her?

MIKE
That's a little personal. No. We just met today.

SYLVIA

I have a special on love potions.

He growls softly. Sylvia laughs.

INT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

A huge, orderly, modern room. Muted warm colors dominate. Table set for three. Windows look out over a large free-standing garage and cultivated garden.

Gus' nerves lighten at the normal setting.

GUS

That smells powerful good, ma'am.

SYLVIA

I have only one rule. No business while food is on the table.

GUS

Well, I am not one to insult a hostess when my mouth is watering. It's a deal.

The men settle into chairs. Sylvia spoons out heaping bowls of rice and gumbo.

EXT. LUCY'S BOTANICA - REAR ALLEY - DAY

Lucy steps out, goes to lock the door. She senses a presence, turns. Two Elders and Mama stand in a line. She assesses their upset in a glance, determines to wait them out.

The first Elder minces a half step forward.

ELDER

With respect, Mambo. Is it the boy making trouble?

ELDER TWO

Who else can it be. It needs to stop. Too many here have no papers and no wish to go back.

LUCY

Calm your fears. No one getting deported tonight.

MAMA

If we call the community together you can demonstrate your influence.

That hardly ruffles Lucy's calm. She smiles, nods.

LUCY

Yes. You bring them tonight. The afflicted will be released and the boy brought to judgement for the good of all.

The trio share looks. Nods all around and they leave. Lucy glares after them, settling her basket on her arm.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Damn boy, what trouble you bring down on us? A curse on you and on those cops!

She shakes a ribboned chicken foot in the air, stuffs it back in her basket.

INT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Mike clears away dishes. Sylvia reviews files with Gus. She opens the second folder to read and compare.

SYLVIA

Food poisoning by an unknown? That is the best your scientists can do?

MIKE

Nobody would think to test for puffer fish without a good reason.

GUS

Puffer fish?

MIKE

Neurotoxin. Shows up as food poisoning unless you know what you're looking for. It's the main ingredient in zombie poison.

GUS

Now hold on, you been saying zombies aren't real.

MIKE

Movie zombies aren't. Outside of the fish, its all hypnotics or harmless.

Sylvia slaps the folder closed.

SYLVIA

These are peasant ways. No society would allow such foolishness.

GUS

You got that right.

SYLVIA

No, my dear. What you call a church, followers of the loa call a society. Michel will tell you. He is a priest.

MIKE

Was. That part of my life is over.

SYLVIA

For shame, Michel. The loa chooses, not the man.

MIKE

An argument for another day. We need to get back. Merci beau coup, Aunt Syl.

INT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - BOUTIQUE - DAY

Walking out, Gus stops under one of the mummies.

GUS

So. All this, for show or for real?

SYLVIA

The simple answer - both. We use sympathetic magic in our sacraments. The loa understand.

GUS

You can't tell me all these saints are yours.

He waves at a cluster of Catholic saint statues.

SYLVIA

God's face may be different for every faith, but he's the same God.

GUS

So this would be?

Points to a large statue.

SYLVIA

Papa Legba.

He picks up a Saint Francis icon.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Zaka.

Putting Francis down, Gus shakes a Madonna at Sylvia.

GUS

The Mother of God?

SYLVIA

Without the feminine there can be
no life. You are Anglican,
Augustus?

He shivers surprise, swallows hard.

GUS

Southern Baptist.

SYLVIA

People under duress will adopt
images that are acceptable to the
establishment and so avoid
persecution.

Gus resets the Madonna, stuffs his hands in his pockets.

GUS

That don't explain the chickens.

Sylvia laughs, shrugs a gracious defeat.

SYLVIA

Easier to catch than lizards.

Gus yields defeat. He doffs an imaginary hat.

INT. GUS' CAR - TRAVELING - DAY

Gus drives. Mike keeps his eyes out the side window as they coast through a poor neighborhood.

GUS

So. Aunt Syl?

MIKE

Aunt. Second, third cousin. Family.

GUS
You're Haitian?

He gives Mike a long penetrating look. Mike shrugs.

MIKE
French, Scot, Choctaw, Creole,
Dutch. Haitian back from the slave
days. White landowner, black slave,
mulatto child. White landowner,
mulatto girl, whiter child. Still
Haitian. That a problem?

GUS
Oh hell, guess not. The Dutchman?
Was he lost?

MIKE
Probably.

Gus chews on that. Somewhere DRUMS pulse. He picks up speed,
weaves through light traffic.

GUS
Why did you quit being a priest?

Mike's fingers find the bag at his throat.

MIKE
You get raised in a way, then
something happens makes you
question everything you thought you
knew. Katrina's body recoveries got
ugly fast.

GUS
Yeah, yeah, heard all that from my
cousins that went to help.

MIKE
Well, when I wasn't working search
and rescue I was upriver keeping
kinfolk alive. We had it better
than most. By and by looters found
us. Tried to be civil about keeping
them out. Got to the point where
action was needed.

TIRES DRUM A PULSING BEAT. Gus' hands tighten on the wheel,
unconsciously picking up speed.

GUS
Turned them into zombies?

MIKE

For the love of ... What you think you know about zombies is Hollywood bullshit. But there are occasions when someone buys a punishment. Doesn't happen a whole lot.

GUS

Because people don't believe?

MIKE

Because it's a show. Done right it takes a month of Sundays of building fear up, and making the magic, then people have to believe it will happen. It's a scare tactic, like the boogerman.

GUS

Back to N'awlins.

MIKE

We were losing people. Weren't getting help. Reverted back to the old ways, a ceremony of petition. We called down the loa for help.

Gus takes a corner practically on two wheels, swerves around a slow driver.

MIKE (CONT'D)

It's not like mainstream church. You pray for help then wait. When you call on the loa, they come, but they borrow bodies to do it. Have to be careful what you ask for. Their justice is Old Testament.

GUS

An eye for an eye.

MIKE

Yeah.

GUS

How in the hell do you borrow a ... Oh wait, are we talking possession here?

MIKE

Yeah.

GUS
 Shit. So. Well. Okay. I think I can see that. What with all the mumbo jumbo and 'shroons and such. So you went after these guys. How many?

MIKE
 I don't know.

GUS
 Guess.

Gus pushes his speed. Entering a better section of the city, they race past cars and buses. Mike tenses.

MIKE
 I'll tell you everything, but first you pull over. No need to killing both of us or some innocent.

Gus shakes himself out of his semi-daze, stands on the brakes, fishtails to a stop.

Breathing to calm down, he won't look at Mike, flexes stiff fingers.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 We don't keep memories of loa action when possessed. Eight, maybe ten. Three bodies recovered. Not that hard back in the swamps dealing with city bred scum.

Mike keeps his eyes on his hands.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 When they leave it's quick and you're exhausted. Passed out. When I woke up my niece, Francine was beside me. Dead, raped, murdered by the last of the gang. They weren't hard to find, easier to put down. Blood for blood. Damn loa.

Gus lets a moment go by.

GUS
 IA clear you?

MIKE
 Called it justifiable use of force. But folks wouldn't look at me, so I left.

GUS
Been a while since that storm.

MIKE
Feels like it happened yesterday.

Gus studies Mike for a long moment, undecided.

GUS
That's a powerful lot of guilt
you're hauling around.

MIKE
I promise it won't get in the way.
Whoever's doing this is working
with poisons. It only takes a touch
and you're done for.

Gus looks for traffic, pulls out at a reasonable speed.

INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Detectives and uniformed cops gather at a large street map tacked on a wall. Walters draws a red ring around the ghetto blocks. Mike and Gus come up on the edge of the group.

WALTERS
Community's getting too riled. I
need everyone on the street. So it
looks like we're working this hard.

MIKE
We could bait a trap.

Mike steps up to draw overlapping rings around blocks.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Put the uniforms everywhere but
outside these two banks. We'll
catch him.

IRIS
If he shows again.

Walters considers the problem.

WALTERS
You got something better to do,
Iris? I'll give you those banks for
the day, Chaplin. Best I can do.

He waves them all to work.

EXT. SAVANNAH STREET - DAY

Gus strolls the sidewalk outside a bank, looks in the window.

POV - Mike shadows a Teller behind the counter.

Gus locates Jeff and Iris parked down the block, windows closed and motor running. He mops sweat, heaves a groan.

INT. BARN - PERISTYLE - DAY

On her knees at the altar, Lucy's chant rises on smoke from incense burners. She throws powder. Yellow-green flames flare, die. Dismayed, she rocks to her feet.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Devon's dragging his way home when Lucy comes up. Alarmed, he falls in step.

DEVON

Mama?

LUCY

Get your things. The spirits tell me to leave.

DEVON

What? Now? Why?

LUCY

You know why, you stupid boy. The cops been to my place asking questions. What did you think would happen when you make trouble?

DEVON

How you know its me?

LUCY

Who else robbing people with zombies! Mind me now. Whatever fit in the car, comes. Everything else gets left.

DEVON

Where we going?

LUCY

Spirits haven't shown me that. Only say. Hurry, get out. Enough talk.

Devon stops, world crashing, hurries to catch up.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Lucy sweeps in, stops at the coffin. Devon slinks in. A moment of fear then he puffs up, throws the coffin lid up.

DEVON

Doctor did me wrong. Made me mad,
so I took him.

Teddy sure looks dead. Lucy searches for a pulse, checks for breathing, pulls out her keys, unlocks her poison cabinet.

LUCY

Boy. You playing with things you
don't understand.

DEVON

I understand more than you teach.

He shoulders alongside her, picks out a vial of greenish-purple liquid, waves it at her.

DEVON (CONT'D)

I make the zombie.

Lucy sniffs at the vial, eyes Devon with dawning fear. She sets her stern face.

DEVON (CONT'D)

I got the magic.

LUCY

Magic don't put food on the table.
We a service to the community. They
pay us. That's magic.

DEVON

You think too small. Make a life
for yourself in this little nest.
I'm big. Carrefour and Ghede make
me big and strong.

LUCY

And then what? The big bad bokor
gonna make all the whites go away?
They shoot you down first. Now, we
gonna rouse this body and pray for
mercy.

Lucy sets out pots to burn incense, turns on the DRUMS.

INT. CHAPEL - CONFESSIONAL - DAY

Shondra wakes, claws to her feet, pushes at the door. She's about to bang a fist when Lucy's voice raises in a chant. She pries up the vent screen. Peers out.

Devon and Lucy sway in and out of thick incense around the coffin. DRUMS pound. Candlelight throws menacing shadows across the demon portraits.

Shondra slaps a hand over her mouth, drops the vent, and cowers against the back wall.

EXT. SAVANNAH STREET - DAY

Amy drives. Stark beside her with camera ready on her lap. They mark the increased police presence. Amy picks out Gus.

AMY

There's Chapdelaine's partner.
They're up to something.

She pulls into a parking spot half a block away.

STARK

This is not going to end well.

AMY

We catch those zombies in the act,
I am good as gold.

Stark sighs, checks out the nearest store window.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Lucy flicks water over Teddy.

LUCY

You passed under the earth but the
loa hold you safe. Now come forward
again. Be a whole man.

She taps him with the whip. Teddy chokes for breath, gets his windpipe clear.

Devon catches a flailing hand, gives Teddy leverage to get to his feet. Teddy stumbles out of the box. He plops into a chair under guidance.

There's an emptiness in his eyes that's not from hypnosis. Lucy frowns disgust, sends Devon sprawling with a backhand.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Stupid boy. This is bad work. You give this zombie to the police so they don't follow us out of town.

She exits. Devon slaps off the boom box, huddles on the floor. A SCRATCHING pulls his attention to the confessional.

Shondra comes close when the vent opens, won't look at Teddy.

SHONDRA

Ain't you a man? What's holding you to that nasty old woman?

Angry, confused, it takes a moment to sink in.

DEVON

She my mama. This all messed up.

SHONDRA

Doesn't have to be. We could go away. Together. You got money, right?

He frets, unable to clear his thoughts.

DEVON

Money, yeah. I hurt so bad sometimes to get away from her.

SHONDRA

That's right, honey. You and me, we take the money and the car and go where she'll never find us.

Doubting eyes lock on her. Shondra offers a sweet smile.

DEVON

You funning me.

SHONDRA

No baby. I didn't understand. Come on. What she going to say if she find me? Woman take her boy away?

His expression darkens.

SHONDRA (CONT'D)

That right. She make me go away and keep you to herself. Let me out. We go away together.

DEVON

Not yet. I got to get rid of him.

He slaps down the vent.

CONFESSIONAL

Shondra listens to retreating footsteps, settles back.

SHONDRA
You tar babies are all alike.

INT. DEVON'S CAR - DAY

Devon drives, eyes twitching back and forth. Cop cars and/or uniformed police seem to be everywhere.

In the back seat, awareness flickers in Teddy's eyes as they pass his office building. A tear trickles.

INT. AMY'S CAR - DAY

Busy on her phone, radio turned up, Amy's oblivious to the street. Stark dozes.

EXT. SAVANNAH STREET - DAY

Devon pulls into a spot in front of the stake out.

INT. MIKE'S BANK - DAY

Mike roams the lobby. He spots Devon and Teddy approaching outside. Keys his radio.

MIKE
Gus.

EXT. SAVANNAH STREET - DAY

An OS CRASH OF METAL ON METAL focuses Gus's attention, drowns out Mike's call.

INT. MIKE'S BANK - DAY

Mike signals the Tellers to retreat. The door opens.

Teddy lurches in under Devon's prompt. Mike holds his ground, alert for weapons.

Face sheltered under a hood, Devon pushes Teddy from behind. He sights Mike, shows the gun.

MIKE

You don't want to do that. I'm a cop. We have the bank surrounded.

Devon looks everywhere, edges a step back.

DEVON

You take him. Don't follow me.

Mike eases closer.

MIKE

Don't make this worse than it already is.

Frantic, Devon shoves Teddy at Mike.

DEVON

Kill him.

Mike catches a wrist to turn Teddy into a submission hold. Teddy erupts into a frenzy of flailing arms. A wild elbow to the jaw staggers Mike.

Devon shoves out the door.

EXT. MIKE'S BANK - DAY

Gus startles when Devon bursts out. Devon fires into the air, sending people running. Gus ducks for cover.

GUS

All units, converge on Savannah National. Anybody in the area, we have a hit on Savannah National.

INT. AMY'S CAR - DAY

Amy ducks. Crushed down in the passenger seat, Stark inches the camera up over the dash, zeroes in on Devon.

STARK

Holy shit. Since when do zombies use guns?

Devon's car PEELS out. Stark replays the video.

AMY

He may not be a zombie, but Chuck is going to shit himself for the on scene video.

Amy takes the camera, replays, slowing the action down. Devon's frantic eyes show clear. He staggers into his car.

Amy shoves the camera back to Stark, scoots up and pulls a tight U-turn.

STARK

Cops are going to want this. We got a clear plate number.

AMY

Screw them. We caught us a real live zombie in action.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Teddy staggers out of the bank. Gus takes him to the ground.

Gus locks on handcuffs, pulls Teddy up, gets a close look at the hollow eyes and lets go. Mike stumbles out, a bloody bruise across his jaw.

GUS

Shit. Shit. He's for real.

Mike searches Teddy's eyes, finds a bare trace of frantic fear. Iris' car SCREECHES to a stop. Mike waves them off.

MIKE

We're good. We're good. Looking for a black male in dark grey hoodie, twenties, thin, bad back.

GUS

Driving a white 90's Caddie. That way.

He points. Iris takes off, SIREN SCREAMING. Mike offers Teddy a reassuring shoulder grip.

MIKE

We have to get him out of here before this place turns into a circus.

Gus nods dumbly, offers a handkerchief. More cops show up.

GUS

I got him. Worry about yourself.

He leads Teddy to his car. Mike mops off his face, follows.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Lucy enters with a box. She unlocks the cabinet, packs bottles. A tiny sound brings her around. She circles the room, ends up at the confessional. Listens.

Opens the window. Shondra glares indignation.

SHONDRA

Let me out and I won't sue your ass.

LUCY

Threats? You the one locked up.

SHONDRA

Let. Me. Out. Now! That fool boy of yours the one ought'a be locked up.

Lucy returns to her cabinet. Takes out vials.

SHONDRA (CONT'D)

Do you hear me? Open this door.

Humming, Lucy adds this and that to a shallow bowl. A few drops of puffer fish poison, and she sets the bowl aside. Returns to the confessional, shakes a heavy rattle.

SHONDRA (CONT'D)

Is that supposed to scare me?

LUCY

It will.

Devon rushes in, comes up short, horrified. He pushes between Lucy and the confessional.

DEVON

No! This my woman. I love her.

LUCY

You sassing me, boy! That what this trash teach you?

DEVON

You don't talk about her that way. She gonna be mine. We going away. Never see you again.

Lucy laughs derision, backs up and waves for Devon to leave. She palms the bowl as he unlocks the door.

LUCY

Go on with your whore. You'll come begging me to take you back when she throw you out. Cheap trash only put out for money.

SHONDRA

You shut your piehole, island slut. Nobody scared of you.

Shondra shoves Lucy hard. She gets the bowl's contents flush in the face. Convulsively swallows, rubs potion out of her eyes. Really pissed, she lunges.

Lucy circles away, chanting in her best ritual voice. Drums seem to pound at each step.

DEVON

No. Mama, no. Bebe, come away now.

Shondra twitches through a spasm. Lucy gets to the cellar hole, kicks up the trap door, aims her fetish rattle.

LUCY

Getting hot in here, girl?

Sweat beads on Shondra's forehead. Her twitching becomes violent spasms and she scratches at her upper arms.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Feel like ants crawling under your skin?

Devon edges closer, frantic. Shondra gags, foaming at the mouth. The spasms intensify.

SHONDRA

Oh. Oh. Make it stop.

LUCY

Erzulie Frieda say you not worthy of her man.

DEVON

Mama, don't. I do whatever you say.

LUCY

Too late. Magic to the skin make the zombie. Magic in the mouth make a corpse. Nothing can stop it.

Shondra screams through a full body convulsion. Digs nails, drawing blood. Lucy sidesteps, shoves the girl into the hole.

A THUD ends Shondra's howl. Devon dives to the lip.

LUCY (CONT'D)
That an end to that. You married to
Frieda. Don't ever forget.

Devon gets his feet under himself, seething, gives her a shove. Lucy gasps her surprise.

LUCY (CONT'D)
You dare put your hands on me, boy?

Drawing herself up to full height it seems Lucy will win a stare down. She reaches a hand, demanding submission.

Devon gives the arm a vicious twist, breaking bones.

Lucy wrenches free, backs away. She claws along the workbench, blindly seeking a defense.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Devon Lucas, you mind me.

Devon launches himself at her with an animal cry, carrying her to the floor. Pounds fists.

Just as suddenly, Devon's rage subsides and he rolls away from Lucy's dead body, sobs.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Teddy sits under Mike's prompt. Mike pulls up a chair knee to knee. Waves a hand. Pinches Teddy's wrist. No response.

The door opens. Gus enters, reading from a folder.

GUS
Theodore Bartholomew. Legit medical licenses, for Haiti. Wouldn't or couldn't get certified here. Could be he's bilking Medicare, sending people home with braces they could have got themselves for nothing.

MIKE
Our bank robber had a bad back.

GUS
So he gets mad and turns this guy into a zombie?

MIKE
The magic only works if you believe
it works.

Mike turns to look back at Gus. His gris gris bag sneaks out of his collar. Teddy's eyes focus.

GUS
He just sparked. What did you do?

Mike turns back to Teddy. Teddy's riveted on the bag. Mike hooks a finger under Teddy's collar, brings out the charm bag. A bare flicker of plea comes and goes in Teddy's eyes.

MIKE
Gus, I need to try something.

GUS
You're gonna do that shit here?

MIKE
I'm not going to sacrifice
chickens. Just say some prayers.
Ceremony is half the battle.

Gus makes an uneasy face.

INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER

The table has been wiped down. A candle burns on a saucer. Flowers. Mass cards of the Sacred Heart. Bottle of water.

Sitting knee to knee, Mike drums a simple rhythm on his chair. Teddy rocks in time.

Gus holds position at the door, stubbornly resistant.

Mike rattles coins in a fist around Teddy. He spills the water three times in offering. Touches Teddy's forehead in blessing, waits for response.

Despair sparks in Teddy's eyes. The door opens. Walters doesn't come further than the jamb.

WALTERS
You boys have an office to toss.

MIKE
He needs ...

WALTERS
Doc is on his way. Go.

He holds the door open. Mike is slow getting to his feet, follows Gus out. Walters scowls at Teddy, closes the door.

EXT. TEDDY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The setting sun casts long shadows down the street. Mike and Gus enter the building.

INT. TEDDY'S OFFICE - RECEPTION - NIGHT

At the receptionist's desk, Mike opens a drawer to a pile of unopened bills. The appointment book is near empty.

MIKE

People sure weren't beating down his door looking for help.

GUS (O.S.)

That would explain why a doctor is robbing banks.

He dumps Devon's bag of money on the desk.

Mike fingers the bills, puzzled. Some small sound brings his head around. Gus backs to a wall, hand dropping to his gun.

Mike takes the lead. He tries door knobs, peeking into empty rooms. Comes to a locked door, puts an ear to the panel.

Gus takes up a ready stance. Mike taps the door.

MIKE

Hey there. Police.

A rising wail pierces, then ebbs into silence.

RITA

(Haitian)

Merciful father, protect me from evil. Holy Mother, protect me.

Gus winces at the dialect. Mike puzzles for a moment.

MIKE

(Haitian)

Nobody's going to hurt you, girl. Police. We're here about Doctor Bartholomew.

The weeping stops. Gus fidgets his stance, hands sweaty around his pistol. Mike waves him back, but keeps his pistol in hand. The door unlocks, opens a crack. Rita peeks out.

INT. TEDDY'S OFFICE - RECEPTION - NIGHT

Wrapped in a shawl, Rita huddles in her chair. Mike brings her a cup of tea. Gus stays back.

RITA

I knew that boy was trouble soon as he walks in.

MIKE

What's his name?

RITA

Umm. Desmond. Deammon. He mumbled bad. Peasant boy with no education. How does that happen here?

MIKE

It happens. What did he want?

RITA

To get fixed. Bad bad back. So frail and desperate, and angry. Doctor Teddy say it take time and money. Boy don't want to hear that. But he come back with the money.

GUS

Only one thing makes a man that ambitious.

MIKE

What happened next, Rita?

RITA

Boy left screaming when Teddy tell him he can't be fixed today. He come back later ...

(choking)

Had the magic. Took Teddy. That doesn't happen here. I run away, hide. Did you find Teddy? Is he all right?

Mike masters a wince.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Rita rushes in, drops in a chair, clasps Teddy's limp hand. Mike stays by the door.

RITA

Mon Dieu. Mon Dieu.

MIKE
He wears a gris gris. He's a
believer?

Rita shakes her head, emotions roiling.

RITA
Teddy don't hold with those ways.
The gris was a gift from his
grandmother.

A tap at the window. Mike eases outside.

INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - NIGHT

Gus looks Mike over with suspicion.

MIKE
He's a victim.

GUS
You color it any way you want. I
say we got us a perp and the goods.
Case closed.

MIKE
You're forgetting the driver.

GUS
Damn it, Mikey. You're not doing
more than you've already done. No.
You hear me? No.

JEFF (O.S.)
Hutchins, we got that list of
partials you asked for.

Gus jabs a finger at Mike to emphasize his point. He joins
Jeff at a computer across the room.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Mike points a weeping Rita up the hall, turns back. Teddy
raises an arm with trembling effort. Mike reads the plea in
Teddy's eyes.

MIKE
Not to worry. I'll talk to the
doctors, make them understand.

Teddy's arm falls, defeated. Mike's gaze lands on the Sacred
Heart card. Does he follow his own heart? Damned if he does.

Mike tugs Teddy to his feet.

INT. POLICE STATION - HALL - NIGHT

Mike walks Teddy up the hall, bypasses the men's room, and out the building door.

EXT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mike pulls up. Sylvia opens the passenger door to peer into Teddy's eyes.

SYLVIA

Bring him.

She leads the way to the back of the house.

MIKE

No. Sylvia. No ceremony. I can't have him out that long.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Devon straightens Lucy in the coffin, smooths down her hair.

DEVON

Tried to tell you. You don't listen. So don't haunt me. This is on you. Me leaving now.

INT. BARN - PERISTYLE - NIGHT

Devon enters, unnerved by a large group waiting. A trio of Elders form a knot in the middle.

ELDER

Where is the mambo?

Devon shivers with alarm, then puffs himself up.

DEVON

Gone, done in by the police. I stand in her place.

Chatter erupts. One Elder's raised hand silences.

ELDER

Tell us how this is.

DEVON

That reporter make trouble. Mambo
try to push it away. Cops kill her.
What needs to be done? I am here.

Distressed, the Elders put heads together for private
discussion. They turn back to Devon.

ELDER

We will see your magic before we
proclaim you priest.

DEVON

You doubt my word?

ELDER TWO

Words are easy enough. You must
show us the loa favors you.

Devon scowls around the crowd.

DEVON

There can be no magic in silence.
Let there be drums.

The men nearest the drums take up positions, thump out a
rhythm. Devon lurches into the dance.

EXT. SYLVIA'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Sylvia opens the doors. Teddy's docile enough until his gaze
finds a dead bird wired above the door. He roots to a stop.
Sylvia pats his arm.

SYLVIA

No, no fear. We don't harm you.
Come. Come.

She pats and tugs, gets him moving, blocks Mike out.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Lay aside your police things,
Michel. They are not welcome in
here. Your clothes are in your
room.

MIKE

Sylvia.

SYLVIA

You had enough time to reconsider
your actions on your way here. Now
do as I say.

INT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mike stands over the bed and a neat pile of white linen clothes. Choices, always choices. He shakes himself.

Gun, badge, wallet go onto a chest of drawers. His phone dropped precariously near the chest edge.

INT. WPAS - NEWSROOM - NIGHT

Amy works the internet. She keeps an eye out for observers, jots a note, shuts down. Grabs her purse, slips out.

INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - NIGHT

Gus works his computer, frustrated. Walters scans the room, stops at Gus' shoulder.

WALTERS

Where's my suspect?

GUS

Chapdelaine's sitting on him.

WALTERS

Iris says they went to the john over an hour ago. They're not in the building.

Gus' shoulders slump. He sits back, lifts his hands in ignorance.

WALTERS (CONT'D)

Find him before the cock crows or you're both gone.

He walks away. Gus digs for his cell phone and keys.

INT. GUS' CAR - NIGHT

Gus works his dashboard computer, motor idling.

Harley parks alongside. Getting out he leans in to Gus' window to check on his preoccupation.

HARLEY

Still chasing down your Caddie?
Call that reporter. She probably got a bead on the plate.

GUS
What reporter?

HARLEY
Foxy blonde that's been making all
the zombie noise. She was down
there, camera and all.

GUS
Son of a bitch.

He drops into gear. Harley has just enough time to jump back
as Gus peels out.

HARLEY
You're welcome.

INT. WPAS - NEWSROOM - NIGHT

Gus corners Stark.

GUS
I'm going to ask nice once. Plate
number.

STARK
Wasn't my idea.

She searches Amy's desk, no notes. Checks her camera,
scribbles on fresh paper.

INT. GUS' CAR - NIGHT

Gus waits on his computer to research Lucy's plate number.
Fingers tap the steering wheel.

A list of addresses comes up. He runs a finger down.

GUS
Tarnation! What are these people,
gypsies?

Then a series of warrants. He puts the addresses on a street
map, winces.

GUS (CONT'D)
Unpaid rent, unpaid rent, rent past
due. So how's she paying for that
little shop of horrors? Hold on.

Finds one location out of city limits.

GUS (CONT'D)
 She wouldn't keep zombies close.

He fires the engine.

EXT. LUCY'S BOTANICA - NIGHT

Amy cups hands around her eyes, peering into the window. She can't see much with the lights out. Frustration peaks.

Car lights give her a start. She shrinks into the doorway, double-takes at Gus' car as it passes.

AMY
 I know that plate. Where are you
 going in such a hurry?

She darts to her car, pulls out to tail Gus.

INT. SYLVIA'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Pictures of saints and demons. Thick white candles. A cleaned skull on a low altar. A DRUMMER (40s, pleasant faced) rumbles in a corner.

Teddy slumps on a folding chair. A dozen PEOPLE dance tiny steps in sync. Incense smoke rises in small columns.

Mike stops in the door. Sylvia pauses in the dance to face him. He shies away from her eyes.

SYLVIA
 Time has not yet healed your heart?

MIKE
 The loa made me a murderer.

SYLVIA
 Justice is not murder when those
 slain would have taken all from
 your people. Two legged, four
 legged, vermin are vermin.

Guilt sparks.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)
 Michel?

MIKE
 I hunted the ones that eluded the
 loa. Got an innocent killed.

She smiles softly, presses a hand over his heart.

SYLVIA

Vermin do not carry the weight of
conscience. We pray a healing for
you both. Come.

Mike steps out of his shoes, follows her lead into the dance.

INT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - BED ROOM - NIGHT

Mike's phone vibrates off the chest, shatters.

INT. GUS' CAR - TRAVELLING - NIGHT

Gus listens to Mike's voice mail message. BEEP.

GUS

God damn. Don't care what you think
you're doing, son. I got us a lead
on our puppet master. Come join the
party. Eighteen sixteen Wisteria.

Turns onto a local two lane road.

INT. BARN - PERISTYLE - NIGHT

Lanterns are lit. Devon and the Priestess lead the ceremony.
Neither one in true command. The crowd barely bops along.

The Priestess yanks a frightened chicken out of a sack. Devon
shows no empathy in snapping its neck, flings the carcass on
the altar.

Several disgusted people at the door slip out. The Elders
gather, heads together, clearly displeased.

INT. SYLVIA'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Offerings of fruit, wine and money on the altar. Chicken
parts char on a hibachi.

Sylvia weaves at Teddy's feet, bones almost fluid. Gentle
fingers caress his face, massage neck and shoulders.

SYLVIA

Erzueli brings you grace and
health. Erzueli releases the bonds
placed upon you.

From a pot of white paint, Sylvia thumbs designs on Teddy's face. A CHANT THROBS around them. The DRUMS POUND.

Mike weaves into the dance, losing himself in the euphoria.

Sylvia shakes a rattle all around Teddy. Passes a pot of reddish oil before his eyes, anoints his sense organs.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

The chains around you are now released. What was taken from you is returned. Your spirit resides in your flesh.

His eyes flutter, breath catches. Limbs tremble.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Show us your power, divine ones. Shower us with compassion. Take what we offer to use as you will.

Mike snaps out of the semi-trance, retreats to the door. Sylvia kneels at Teddy's feet, flutters her scarf.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Return from the living death and reclaim your life, Doctor Teddy Bartholomew.

The DRUMS stop. She waits. A tear trickles from Teddy's eyes, intelligence still imprisoned. She cradles his face gently.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

We have made good medicine, mon cher, but I fear we cannot put you back to a whole man tonight.

Teddy's mouth works soundlessly.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

No fears. You will stay with me while we see what more can be done.

EXT. ANTEBELLUM ESTATE - NIGHT

The house remains dark. The grounds deep in shadows. Gus cruises to a stop a hundred yards or so up the road.

INT. AMY'S CAR - NIGHT

Amy drives past Gus. She tops a soft hill. On the far side she slews through a U-turn, shuts her lights and coasts back up the hill, stops off the road.

INT. GUS' CAR - NIGHT

Gus works his computer, but reception is in and out. He squints out the window, can barely see the main house.

GUS

This has got to be out of my jurisdiction. Paperwork's going to be hell. Come on, you stupid thing.

He bats at the computer. It stays on momentarily.

INT. AMY'S CAR - NIGHT

Fingers clench the steering wheel. Moonlight peeks in and out of clouds, illuminating a broken gate and an overgrown driveway behind the main house.

DRUMS rumble.

She checks the sky. The near full moon rides high. She double-checks that Gus hasn't moved, drives through the gate and around the house.

INT. BARN - PERISTYLE - NIGHT

A sentry hisses a warning. Lights are extinguished. People pass through hidden doors in the walls.

INT. GUS' CAR - NIGHT

A flash of light from behind the Victorian catches his eye. Shutting his lights, he turns in.

Amy's car is parked at the carriage house.

Gus smacks the unstable computer. His phone drops on the car seat as he gets out.

EXT. SYLVIA'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Mike cradles a cell phone against his ear, eyes the remains of his phone in his other hand.

MIKE

Did he leave a message? No, my cell
committed suicide. Find him and
call me back at this number.

Sylvia comes over from tending Teddy. Mike won't look at her.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Ceremony was supposed to help.

SYLVIA

Power of belief is one thing. This
is the product of an unschooled
hand. He is safe with me.

MIKE

He can't stay here. He's a ...

Neither one aware that Teddy listens in with comprehension.

SYLVIA

He's a lost soul. The loa say the
damage is permanent. Find the one
who did this, Michel. Deal with
him. That is the price of your
healing.

A tear trickles down Teddy's face.

EXT. CARRIAGE HOUSE - BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Amy peers into windows, tries the door. Turning, Gus is right
there. She stifles a screech.

AMY

Shit, you about scared me to death.

GUS

Young lady, you're trespassing on
private property.

AMY

I'm checking on a lead.

GUS

By sneaking in the back door?

AMY

It's locked.

Gus edges past her for a quick look inside.

Behind them, Devon peers from the barn door. He fades back.

GUS
Appears nobody's home.

AMY
I heard drums.

Gus catches her by the elbow, tugs her into motion.

AMY (CONT'D)
Hey. You can't interfere with a
free press.

GUS
That so? You keep that in mind next
time you withhold information and
impede a police investigation.

AMY
Come on, you're killing my story.

GUS
No, I'm saving you from yourself.

Amy switches to a seductive cling.

AMY
Look, we are on the same side. I'm
sure we can come to some sort of
compromise. Can't we, detective?

DRUMS rumble. Gus grabs out his pistol, turns a circle, not
losing his grip on Amy.

AMY (CONT'D)
Told ya.

GUS
Hush.

He eyes the barn, unhappy, studies her.

GUS (CONT'D)
You rabbit on me and I'll drop you
cold. We clear?

AMY
Whatever. Cave man.

Gus releases her, digs for his cell. Not here. Looks back at
his car. Amy heads for the barn. Muttering, Gus catches up.

INT. BARN - PERISTYLE - NIGHT

Amy snaps pictures. Gus wrenches the phone away.

GUS
Dammit, girl, show some sense.

Behind them, the barn doors swing shut. Gus darts, puts a shoulder to the panel. Locked.

He jabs at the phone screen. No connection. Amy looks around, points to the menagerie door.

AMY
Another door back there.

She edges past the car before Gus can catch her back. He circles the peristyle from the other side.

Amy pushes the menagerie door open.

THE ZOMBIES

squat, raw flesh stuffed in their mouths. Dull eyes turn.

AMY

shrieks. Gus slams the door shut. Takes her arm, backs away.

GUS
Police. You come out with your
hands in plain sight.

Devon come out behind Gus, slams a two by four across Gus' skull to drop him. The gun slides under a pile of scraps.

Amy bolts. The Priestess blocks her escape, shoves Amy over to Devon. The drummers come out.

AMY
Listen. I'm a reporter. There are
people who will miss me. You're
making a big mistake.

Devon chants, waves his arms in a big show. Blows powder into her face. Amy sneezes in series. Devon hauls her close.

DEVON
The mistake is yours. You tampered
with things you shouldn't.
(to the Drummers)
Bring him.

Devon clocks Amy with a fist, catches her over his shoulder. The drummers drag Gus along by the arms. The zombies fall in, gnawing bones.

EXT. SYLVIA'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Back in his everyday clothes, Mike closes on the garage door, cell phone to his ear.

MIKE

How about that reporter, Miss Tits? Shit. There was a partial plate Gus was looking for. No, call me back.

Hangs up. Digs out a notebook, thumbs numbers.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Amy Sanderson. When? No, no message. Wait. Her camera girl. Punk rocker. Yeah. Covering the mayor's junket? Call her. I need whatever information she has.

INT. SYLVIA'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Sylvia sits with Teddy's hands in hers. Mike enters.

MIKE

Change of shift is trying to track Gus down.

SYLVIA

You cannot access your voice mail with my phone?

MIKE

Forgot the damn password.

Teddy's hand rises. Fingers curve in an offer of help.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Would he remember how to get back to his bokor?

Teddy manages a bare nod. Mike pulls down a scarf, ties it from his wrist to Teddy's.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Where you go, I go. When we find this bastard and get hold of his magic we'll do our best to reverse his foolishness.

Teddy follows Mike's prompt to unsteady feet. Sylvia grabs small bottles into a canvas carry-all, follows them out.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

People circle Lucy's coffin, droning a benediction.

Devon tosses Amy into the confessional, locks the door. Gus is hauled in, dropped.

ELDER

What more trouble do you bring?

DEVON

You wanted to see my power. This blanc will be enslaved to serve.

Devon goes to Lucy's cabinet. Hesitates as everything is out of place. He pockets several jars of powder. Tosses a handful into the fire, creating sparks. Show time.

INT. CHAPEL/CONFESSIONAL - NIGHT

Amy rouses. She pushes at the walls, rattles the locked door.

Wedging her fingers to keep the vent up, she peers out.

Demon portraits glare at her. Black candles blaze around a cheap coffin on the floor.

The zombies loiter over a table of caged animals.

Far left, the main door. Freedom.

Far right. Human skulls serve as candle holders on a draped altar, flanking steaming bowls and big bladed knives.

AMY

Holy shit.

The vent panel falls. She pulls at the lattice. It yields with a SHRIEK. Amy pries the vent up again, edges an eye out.

Gus hangs by his wrists to a ceiling beam, stripped to the waist, blood dried on his face.

AMY (CONT'D)

Detective? Hey, Detective, can you hear me?

DRUMS rumble. Amy ducks reflexively, returns to the window.

Devon pops up in front of her. She screeches, slams back.

Devon chants gibberish, dances away. The drummers march in, set up in a corner. The Priestess leads in the congregation.

Devon opens a snake cage, dances a large rattler around the room, drops it through the open trap door at the rear wall.

Gus stirs. Winces pain, gets his eyes open.

With a whoop, Devon lands at Gus' feet. Gus startles under the rattle and gibberish treatment, finds his focus.

GUS

You gotta do better than that to rile me, son.

Devon whirls away. He brings out a ten-foot Burmese python. Jigs around Gus, passes the snake's head whisker close.

GUS (CONT'D)

I seen bigger.

Angry now, Devon dances to the confessional.

AMY

Don't you even think of putting that thing in here.

Devon shoves the snake close to make her back up, pours the creature into the window.

AMY (CONT'D)

Eewww. Gross.

The Priestess throws powder, making the fire spark.

AMY (CONT'D)

Get away. Get away. Eewww! Why did it have to be snakes?

Devon slaps the vent shut so that it wedges tight, dances back to Gus. DRUMS hammer away. He waves a vial of puffer fish poison in Gus' face.

DEVON

We take the man to make the zombie.

GUS

Go on with your mumbo jumbo. Can't hurt me.

The Priestess presents Devon with ritual objects. He sets the vial on the altar. Gus works his hands against the knots.

INT. SYLVIA'S CAR - NIGHT

Sylvia drives at a crawl. In the back, Mike keeps his eyes on Teddy as they pass the Fourth Bank. A flinch of reaction.

MIKE

He remembers this place. Once
around the corner then make a left.

The streets remain empty. They pass a storefront church with a garish cross. Teddy fixes on it.

MIKE (CONT'D)

We're on the right track. You're
doing fine, Teddy.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

DRUMS pound a relentless undertone. Devon sprinkles a potion over the ends of a whip, snaps a blow across Gus' ribs.

GUS

Son, you just crossed the line.

The next hit draws blood. Devon smears the cuts with more of the potion. Gus hisses, bites back a cry.

DEVON

Voodoun make you a believer.

GUS

Mikey, check your goddamn
voicemail.

EXT. ANTEBELLUM ESTATE - NIGHT

Sylvia eases to a stop behind Gus' car. Mike hops out.

MIKE

Stay here.

Sylvia holds Teddy in his seat.

Mike stops at Gus' car, plucks the cell phone off the seat.

He darts to the carriage house front door, finds nothing.
Draws his pistol, circles around to the rear.

The DRUMS pulse a siren call. Teddy shudders away from Sylvia's hand.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Mike follows the blood trail around the peristyle, picks up Gus' wallet, finds the pistol. Looks into the menagerie.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

Teddy limps up the hill. Sylvia pauses at the barn.

SYLVIA

Michel.

MIKE

Right behind you.

Mike works Gus' phone, holding it up to gain a signal.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

It's Chapdelaine. Officer in
distress. Eighteen sixteen
Wisteria. No sirens.

He drops the phone into a pocket, trots to overtake Teddy.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Gus slumps in the ropes, tripping out.

GUS' POV - The room fuzzes over. People meld into a tentacled mass. The zombies dance like depraved puppets.

DRUMS set the pace for his heartbeat. Devon's painted face looms up. Laughter splinters over him.

GUS

Oh shit. Mikey. Where are you, son?

EXT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Mike eases to a grime-crusted window, cleans an eye hole.

HIS POV - the zombies herky-jerky around the floor behind Devon and the Priestess. Curls of incense haze around Gus.

BACK TO SHOT

Mike drops back, checks his ammo. Full load. Sylvia presses up for a look. Teddy slips away from them.

SYLVIA

Mon dieu! This is very bad. You cannot face so many alone.

MIKE

Back up's on the way.

Sylvia shakes her head, looks to him.

SYLVIA

Augustus may not have the time.

Mike cranes up to look through the window again.

Devon waves a stoppered vial in front of Gus' dazed eyes.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

If fear does not cripple, it will kill.

Mike deliberates, not happy with his options. Gris gris bag tight in one hand. Gun in the other. Sylvia nods.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Two paths. Neither absolute. You have faced this choice before.

MIKE

And failed.

SYLVIA

No, petite. Man's law failed you. The path of the loa is between the lines.

He stalls, tortured by his choices.

MIKE

Hell. I was starting to like it here.

SYLVIA

So protect us as only you can.

He ejects the clip, pockets that, shoves the gun into his belt under his jacket. Checks Gus' gun, hands it to Sylvia.

MIKE

Sylvia. I need you to promise you'll stop me if I ...

SYLVIA

You will be fine, petite.

She checks the safety, slips the gun into her bag.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Mike stops in the door to eye the crowd. Everyone's focused on Devon, desperate for the euphoria of ceremony.

He breathes deep of the incense. Something wistful flickers in his eyes, reined in quickly.

Mike slides over to the drums, puts a hand out over the middle drum. All three men stop in mid-motion, startled.

Heads turn. Mike holds up his badge. Whispers rocket around the room. A path opens to the room center.

Devon and the Priestess turn. Mike stops at Lucy's coffin, assesses the corpse.

DEVON

This is no place for you.

Mike signs a blessing over Lucy, faces Devon.

MIKE

That all depends.

Puzzled, Devon scans the crowd. They're all waiting on him.

DEVON

Depends, on what?

MIKE

On how reasonable you intend to be.

Devon checks the crowd's mood, puffs himself up.

DEVON

Baron Ghede is beyond your laws. I could have them rip you to pieces.

He flicks a hand. People move to close off escape. A few women at the very back slip out the door, pulling their men with them.

ELDER

This is a peaceful assembly. Why do you come among us?

MIKE

We have evidence that this boy robbed some banks, got a couple people killed. That man.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

(nods at Gus)

Is a police officer. Let's end this peaceably.

BRUISER

So you come here alone?

The BRUISER punches Mike in the shoulder. Mike spins, puts the gun point blank in Bruiser's face.

The man goes still. Mike holds aim for a seeming eternity.

MIKE

Now let's think on this, friend. I start firing and innocent people going to get hurt. You want to be responsible for that?

A moment goes by.

Another as the Bruiser weighs Mike's threat.

Slowly he raises hands, lets his belligerence fade. Mike lowers his aim a bit.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Good man. Make yourself useful. The dead have no part in this. Honor this woman proper.

The Bruiser frowns. He gets a chance to escape?

Mike holsters the gun, singles out a half dozen men to move the coffin. They hurry to walk it out.

EXT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Sylvia advances as the men settle the coffin, croons a song for the dead. The men look at one another, glance at the chapel door, then hightail it away.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Mike checks the tension in the crowd, turns to Devon.

MIKE

Only going to ask nice once. Let the prisoners go.

Devon shivers with confusion, fear rising as he scans faces and reads a growing discontent.

DEVON

You would challenge the Baron? When
I can do this.

He mimes a throw at Gus. Gus spasms, gags for breath. Devon waves a hand to start the drums. A sleight of hand adds powder to the cauldron. Flames erupt.

The congregation shrinks back to the walls, swaying into the beat of the drums.

Devon dances a few wild exaggerated steps.

Mike doesn't move, evaluating Devon's skill level. He shifts away from an arcing fist.

The Priestess grabs at Devon, points out Mike's gris gris.

DEVON (CONT'D)

Why do you wear a trinket? Do you
believe it will protect you?

MIKE

I don't need protection from a
child playing parlour tricks.

He waves hands dramatically over the cauldron. Sparks and flames pop up. Shows the congregation the powder in his palm.

MIKE (CONT'D)

You walk with shadows, boy. Have a
care they don't eat you and your
congregation alive.

Devon senses his authority slipping away.

DEVON

What do you know of our ways? These
are my people. They answer to me.
You have proved nothing. You are
nothing.

The drums pulse. The crowd weaves as one. Mike chances a look to Gus. Gus' eyes are half open, breathing labored.

Mike sighs, opens his arms wide, and sings.

MIKE

(Creole)
Peace I give to you. My peace I
bring. Wherever you find peace
there I am.

To Devon's surprise the drummers pick up Mike's rhythm, pulsing a soothing beat. The congregation nods appreciation.

MIKE (CONT'D)
One last time. The prisoners go.

DEVON
I say when they go free.

Devon weaves a few steps, darting in at Mike and away again. Mike doesn't move.

Devon passes a knife to the Priestess, jerks a nod to Gus. She puts the blade to Gus' throat.

DEVON (CONT'D)
Dance for his life, blanc.

Devon dips and weaves in a wide circle. Mike turns in place, refusing to be drawn in. The drums change to a hard rhythm.

MIKE
Been down this road, son. Further
than you. Never ends well for those
who presume too much.

Devon smacks Mike with the rattle. Mike rolls under the strike, grabs a submission hold. Devon slips free, his bones seemingly liquid.

Mike anticipates a turn, catches a wrist, pulls Devon close.

Devon snaps his skull into Mike's jaw. He pushes the zombies between them.

DEVON
Kill him!

Dull zombie eyes fix. Groping hands drag knives from the altar, pick up lengths of wood. They surround Mike.

Devon tosses powder into the fire. Smoke billows into a masking, choking fog. The congregation weaves into the drumbeat, a pulsing steady shuffling.

GUS' POV - Smoke makes writhing shadows of the zombies. Mike a dark flutter of ribbon. The crowd a shifting rainbow snake.

GUS
Focus, Augustus. This ain't real.
Can't be real.

BACK TO SCENE

Matthew and Luke slash with knives and bats. Mike plays one off the other until they go down in a tangle of limbs.

Mike disarms Teddy, holds back a killing strike, knocks him down with a sharp slap that breaks the dance frenzy.

MIKE

Using innocents to fight your
battle?

Devon opens a cage. Heaves a rattlesnake at Mike.

The Priestess shrieks as the snake flies past her, She drops the knife. Darts for safety in the crowd.

Mike catches the snake by the tail, twirls it and drops it in the cellar before it can strike him.

He grabs up the knife, slices the guy rope holding Gus, eases him to the floor.

Devon snatches up a whip, cracks it whisker close. Mike falls away from Gus, knocking into the altar. The poison vials hit the floor.

Mike regains his feet, circles with Devon.

The drums pulse danger. Their steps fall in time.

The closeness and heat work against Mike. He's fighting himself as much as he's matching pace with Devon.

The congregation sways. The Elders, Mama watch greedily - will he fold, how soon? Dare they hope he will defeat Devon?

On the floor, Gus works off the wrist ropes, groggy. His heart pounds in sync with the drums. Fingers find a poison vial. It turns into a frosty bottle of beer.

He clings to the vial - his salvation.

Hands claw through the ground level smoke. Teeth showing in a snarl, Teddy creeps toward Gus.

Frantic, Gus fumbles with the vial cap.

Teddy edges closer, eyes fixed on the vial. Closer.

Hyperventilating, Gus finally gets the cap to pop off.

Teddy swipes the vial, swallows the potion. He shrieks.

All action stops. Everyone rivets on Teddy's grotesque contortions. Absolute silence.

Eyes turn to Devon, expectant, demanding. He doesn't move.

Mike kneels. Teddy wards him off with a stiff arm and a victorious smile. He shudders with wracking muscle spasms. Mike snaps Teddy's neck.

Teddy's hand closes on Mike's arm. He smiles thanks, dies.

Mike stands, anger smouldering. He's had enough of the boy. He checks the faces around the room, turns for Devon.

MIKE (CONT'D)

How did the mambo die?

DEVON

Why do you care!

MIKE

A priest learns humility. She was your mother and you attacked her.

Devon's anger breaks.

DEVON

She attacked me! My girl! Killed my girl dead, dead, dead with the poison. Why she do that? I done everything she ask. She make me so mad.

MIKE

And him?

(nods at Teddy)

What did he do that his life should be shattered?

DEVON

He broke his promise to the loa.

MIKE

To the loa or to you? Not even Ghede is so cruel to lock a mind behind a door that can't be reopened. You're no priest.

DEVON

I belong to the Baron.

MIKE

Since when does he keep fools as pets.

He advances. Devon retreats, backing into the table.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 Ghede's priests are men. Strong,
 confident, quiet. Doing his work in
 the dark away from eyes. You make
 too much noise.

Devon snarls, grabbing along the pots and jars on the table. Fingers close on a jar of loose powder. He swings it up.

Mike gets a face full of powder. Blinded, choking, he's an easy target for Devon's whip.

Two, three lashes. He collapses to hands and knees over Gus. Devon struts.

DEVON
 You see! You see my power. There is
 only one houngan here. Me! Only I
 am your salvation.

INT. CONFESSIONAL - NIGHT

Amy moves to her knothole as bodies drop out of view.

AMY
 (softly)
 Get up. Chaplin, get up.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Mike, close to Gus' ear, is not as weak as he pretends.

MIKE
 Gus. Hey, you with me? Gus.

Gus blinks Mike into focus, clutches Mike's shirt.

GUS
 Mikey. I'm seeing things. Things a
 man wasn't meant to see.

MIKE
 It's all in your head. Where's Amy?

GUS
 Box. Corner.

Mike sneaks a glance under his arm to place the confessional. Gus' fingers tighten.

GUS (CONT'D)

Mikey. Don't let me die like that.

Devon showers liquid over Mike, into the cuts.

DEVON

Where is your power now, blanc?

Mike shakes his head, feeling the drugs.

MIKE

You're fine. It's the drugs. None of this is real. Repeat after me. None of this ...

Mike's vision blurs. He hisses, fighting for clarity.

GUS

Not real. It's not real. Go home and sleep off this bender.

The DRUMS pull at Mike, daring him to resist the lure. Gus gets hold of the gris gris bag.

GUS (CONT'D)

You swore a duty. Protect.

For a moment it seems someone else looks out of Gus' eyes.

MIKE

Damballah? You betrayed me.

GUS

I held you safe. The girl child gave herself to protect you when you were fallen. Balance the scales and do the same now.

His eyes roll up. Mike checks for a pulse, slaps Gus lightly. Gus forces his eyes open, back to his woozy self.

GUS (CONT'D)

Get us out of here, partner.

Mike slips the gun free, wedges it into Gus' waistband.

MIKE

Don't use this unless you have to.

Devon cracks the whip across Mike's back. Mike catches the leather, uses the leverage to come completely to his feet. His tension drops away as he lets the drugs work into him.

Devon minces a step backwards. Not releasing the whip, Mike follows, effortlessly mimicking the dance steps.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(Creole)

We open a path for your feet, good father. We hold open the door for your entry. Grace us now with your presence. We thrill to your service.

DEVON

Who do you call, blanc? No one here will help you.

Mike isn't listening, sweating, eyes rolling, working himself into a trance.

Worried now, Devon won't release the whip. He's blocked from the work table, looks around for another advantage.

The trap door is still up.

Devon shifts his weight, gets Mike to swing around the altar.

Gus rolls, following their advance. Sees the trap door.

GUS

Mikey, your feet. Watch your feet.

Devon rips the gris gris free,

shoves Mike into the hole.

Gus loses the gun, fumbles around for it. Devon struts to the center of the room.

DEVON

It is done. I am the Baron. Let no one question me again.

Gus finds the gun, can't get his fingers to work the safety.

The crowd withers under Devon's posturing, hope dissolving. The drums soften to a trembling beat.

DEVON (CONT'D)

Kneel to me.

People drop to their knees, postures sagging.

Smoke eddies, gathers at the trap door. Seeps down.

A hand comes up, grabs the edge.

A second hand grabs hold.

A stifled cry goes through the crowd. Heads raise.

Mike slithers up and out. He rises to his feet, the smoke wreathing around him like a cobra mantling.

In the door, Sylvia showers glitter, flutters her scarf.

SYLVIA

Damballah, good father. Protect
your children from this evil.

She sings a song of welcome. The drums shift to her beat.

The glazed look in Mike's eyes deepens. A blink and someone else looks out through his eyes - ancient, powerful.

Devon looks from Sylvia back to Mike.

DEVON

No! This hounfour is mine.

He locates a knife, lunges. Mike catches Devon's wrist, squeezes. Devon drops the blade.

He breaks free, overturns the hibachi, spilling the coals. Tosses powder to incite a rise of flame.

Mike glides into the fire and through untouched. A unified gasp then the congregation hums Sylvia's welcoming song.

Devon's had enough, turns for the door. People block him.

DEVON (CONT'D)

This blanc mocks us.

ELDER

So deal with him as befits a true
protector.

They allow him access to the worktable. He pushes through the bottles, totally unsure. Poison label, not puffer. Grab that.

Turning, Mike hasn't moved. Devon grabs zombie Matthew.

DEVON

Go. Protect.

He shoves Matthew and Luke into motion. But they're slow to respond, losing the hypnosis? Mike touches each and they sit.

Devon darts across to Gus. He forces the liquid into Gus' mouth, swipes the gun, skitters away.

Mike turns Gus on his side, gets him to retch up the poison.
 He faces Devon. Seeming to grow bigger.
 Devon backs away, pulls the trigger. Nothing. Again. Nothing.
 Mike offers the bullet clip on his palm, advances.
 Devon throws the gun, loses his balance trying to turn,
 teeters on the edge of the hole.
 Mike makes a shoving motion and Devon falls in with a scream.
 His fingers barely claw at the lip, flop out of sight.
 Gus shudders with wracking convulsions, in and out of
 consciousness. Mike kneels, runs a hand above Gus' wounds in
 a sympathetic drawing out of the poisons.
 Sylvia kneels at his side, offers a bottle of water. She nods
 the Priestess over to help.

SYLVIA

A Mambo prays for the good of all.

The Priestess weighs the community eyes on her, edges over to
 kneel at Gus' head, falls into the prayer.

Mike tugs invisible strands of sickness, wads the ball and
 tosses it in an empty bowl.

Mama shivers as putrid purple liquid sloshes.

Gus drags in a breath. Good color comes back. His eyes open,
 more rational. Mike nods, rises, stares around the watchers.

Zombies Matthew and Luke shuffle up, hands out to beg. Mike
 traces heads and shoulders, holds out empty hands.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Bring the ti bon ange.

The Priestess goes to the cabinet, locates a pair of sealed
 empty jars and a small bottle. She presents these to Mike.

He takes the lotion, anoints the men with great ceremony.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

By Damballah's hands, the
 malfacteur has met his fate. The
 bonds on you are broken. Be whole
 men once more.

Mike takes the jars, waves them at eye level.

PRIESTESS

Your souls are returned to you.
Reclaim your bodies.

The jars are thrown into the fire. CRACK. Wisps of smoke curl up around the men. The zombies tremble, blink back full awareness. In sync, they back up through the crowd, bowing repeatedly. At the door they turn and run.

Sylvia sweeps the air with her fan.

SYLVIA

What started in evil ends in good will. Offer thanks that Damballah is a generous father. You are dismissed.

People clear out. The Priestess eyes Sylvia, gets a curt nod and she hurries out. Mike collapses.

Sylvia returns to Gus, smiles into wary eyes.

GUS

That was all for show, right?

SYLVIA

Of course. Imagination is the magician's greatest asset.

Mike rolls over, fixes on the ceiling, exhausted.

MIKE

I'm alive?

SYLVIA

Only the one who supposed too much paid for his arrogance.

Mike cranes his head to locate Gus.

MIKE

We good?

GUS

Been to my cousins' prayer meeting once. I'll take them snakes any day over this. Lord, when does the room stop spinning?

Sylvia moves to Teddy to croon a song for the dead. Mike gets his feet under himself, supports Gus to sit.

Uniformed cops run in, guns drawn. Jeff pushes through.

MIKE
Stand down, guys. The party's over.

JEFF
We saw a bunch running for cars on
the other side.

MIKE
Let them go. Our bank robber is
down the hole with a rattler. Take
over here. Gus needs a doctor.

Jeff nods absently, gawking around the space. POUNDING comes
from the confessional.

AMY (O.S.)
Let me out of here. I know you can
hear me now.

JEFF
Is that ?

MIKE
You can let the snake out after I'm
gone.

Mike hauls Gus up over his shoulder, exits. Jeff opens the
confessional door, jumps away from the curled python. Amy
high steps out.

AMY
Good God, show some balls.

EXT. ANTEBELLUM ESTATE - NIGHT

Ambulances waiting. Police rummaging through the buildings.
Amy comes up from the cemetery.

A camera passes over her, zeroes in.

Stark crosses to Amy, camera dropping, checks her for damage.

STARK
Baby girl! You don't just up and
disappear like that.

AMY
I'm fine. I'm fine. Are you ready
to roll?

Stark hands over a compact, pulls a microphone from a pocket.

STARK
Fix your hair.

Amy gives herself a quick look, messes her hair further, takes the microphone.

AMY
I just went through hell. I should look like it.

Stark shoulders the camera.

STARK
And we're rolling.

Mike's in the rear cabin of an ambulance, working with an EMT, sponging Gus' cuts.

AMY
This is Amy Sanderson, live from the scene of Haitian black magic where the priest of the cult tortured a police detective as a sign of his dark power.

Amy starts Stark toward the ambulance. Sylvia is abruptly there. She blocks the camera lens with a scarf.

SYLVIA
Are you certain this is the fame you desired?

AMY
Are you kidding? Eye witness to a voodoo ceremony on US soil? Looks like that green goo of yours worked. I'm about to go viral.

SYLVIA
On your head then.

She taps the camera. The focus wobbles, winks out.

STARK
Hey! She did something. Wait. I got it. We're rolling.

Sylvia's gone. Amy heads for the ambulance. Mike pulls the door shut in her face.

Amy hesitates under a moment of conscience, locates a scene of activity, directs Stark in the new direction.

AMY

Police are on the scene. Two dead,
a policeman injured.

Amy spots Jeff coming up.

AMY (CONT'D)

Detective. What can you tell us?

Jeff assumes a professional attitude as the camera zeroes in.

INT. POLICE STATION - WALTERS' OFFICE - DAY

Walters hunches over a pile of reports and tabloids. Mike is just suddenly there, leaves his badge and gun on the desk.

Walters takes his time, eyes the goods, looks up at Mike.

The phone rings. Walters pushes the goods back toward Mike.

WALTERS

I got to take this. Mister Mayor,
sir.

Mike swipes his goods back, sketches a salute and exits. Walters lounges back with the phone, eyes the tabloids.

WALTERS (CONT'D)

You know how these rags work. This week it's zombies. Next week ETs. Come Halloween we'll be back to Elvis sightings.

One easy move deposits the pile into a trash can.

EXT. MODERN CEMETARY - DAY

An overcast day. A crowd of mourners around a fresh grave, many of the faces from Devon's church.

Mike, in white linen, and Sylvia officiate. Rain falls in a soft mist. Sylvia lifts her face to the rain.

SYLVIA

Tre bon. His sacrifice is accepted.

Gus hangs back as the crowd disperses. Rita comes up last. Mike offers a gentle hug.

Mike and Sylvia follow Gus to a car.

GUS
Nice look. I'm going to miss you.

MIKE
Who says I'm leaving the force?

GUS
Hell, son, if you don't fill this black hole somebody worse than that boy and his mama will.

SYLVIA
This is my burden until Michel chooses otherwise.

Gus nods like he believes that. A hot car races up, SCREECHES to a stop scant feet away. Amy jumps out.

AMY
Hey you, Chapdelaine.

Gus gives Mike a step or two, holding Sylvia back. If Mike notices he doesn't let on.

AMY (CONT'D)
You got me fired.

MIKE
Don't have that kind of mojo, cheri. You did it to yourself.

AMY
Those people would still be in business if not for me.

MIKE
Then I guess I ought'a say thank you. So. Much obliged.

AMY
That's it? That's all you have to say?

She stares into Mike's eyes. Gus' phone rings.

GUS
Got us a live one, partner. Shit or get off the pot.

MIKE
Enjoy Tulsa.

He passes Gus, escorts Sylvia to the car. Amy reacts.

AMY

Hey. How did he? He talked to my producer, didn't he.

GUS

Oh, I wouldn't think too hard on that. You won't like the answer. Now get this pony car out of here before I write you up for reckless endangerment.

Amy snarls, throws herself behind the wheel and peels out.

Sylvia takes Mike's car keys. He's busy trading his linen for a T-shirt as Gus heads over.

FADE OUT.

THE END