

INTERROGATION

FISHER vs. IA OFFICER LYNCH

Anders Weidemann & John Mankiewicz

"When re-investigating a case, good detectives pick their own path through all available evidence."

In 1983, 17 year old ERIC FISHER was charged with the brutal murder of his mother at her home in Los Angeles.

Convicted in 1985, Fisher served more than 26 years in California state prisons before he was exonerated of the crime in 2009.

The murder of Mary Fisher remains unsolved.

MAIN TITLES:

An idyllic house in the San Fernando Valley.

PUSH IN slowly and FADE UP SOUND, quick clips from the 911 call, police radios, interrogations, witness statements, hearings, trials, appeals, parole hearings --

Clock the parked '66 Mustang, the blood smeared telephone on the porch, the long line extending into the open door.

Inside the house, SOUND builds in rhythm with staccato FLASHES of CRIME SCENE PHOTOS: the pulled window, a set of keys, bloody footprints, knives, building to an almost subliminal FLASH of Mary's smashed head, her lifeless body.

The bloody BASEBALL TROPHY on the floor nearby.

MUGSHOTS of Eric, 17, day of the crime, eyes shocked wide.

Back inside the house. FLASHES of CRIME SCENE PHOTOS take us to the kitchen. Family snapshots on the refrigerator. CLOSER to FIND the faded snapshot of ERIC, 7, in Little League, proudly holding his new BASEBALL TROPHY, looking right at us.

MATCH CUT TO:

ERIC FISHER, middle aged, grim, in prison. The same grey green eyes.

SOUND CUTS OUT.

A heartbeat of thick silence as we STUTTER ZOOM IN on Fisher's eyes until the image explodes into nothing but grey green PIXELS and --

SNAP TO BLACK

FADE IN:

INT. LIBRARY / MULE CREEK PRISON - DA

ERIC FISHER. 38, well-built, bald, glasses. Confident, determined, into CAMERA:

ERIC
You've exhausted your state
remedies.

PULL BACK to SEE pencils, legal pads, case work and notes neatly organized around Eric. Inmate CARLOS - 40's, Latino, tats - sitting across as:

ERIC (CONT'D)

Filed your appeal. Petitioned for review to the California Supreme --

CARLOS

-- Why I'm here. I need help with my federal habe.

ERIC

Sorry. I don't see any workable issues.

Eric slides the neat stack of Carlos' LEGAL FILES toward him, but Carlos stops him with a hard hand, and --

CARLOS

My lawyer didn't do shit. That's my issue.

ERIC

Your lawyer put your skin cells under your victim's fingernails? Your come in her ass --

CARLOS

-- Cocksucker cut a deal with my co-defendant. Made sure I took all the weight.

ERIC

Her body in the trunk of your car.

CARLOS

"Ineffective assistance of counsel."

Sliding the LEGAL FILES toward Carlos --

ERIC

You can't just say you had a bad lawyer, Carlos. You gotta show how.

Eric goes back to his work, ignores Carlos. Makes a couple of notes.

CARLOS

Yeah like you're doing --
(leans in, pointed)
-- with that bad cop of yours.

Eric looks up. *How does Carlos know what he's doing?*

Carlos lunges, grabs Eric's left wrist, stands.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
You're close to proving it, too.

Carlos grabs a pencil, stabs it into Eric's palm.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
All this work? A big shot cop
investigator coming here to see
you? Finally?

Eric gasps as Carlos digs the pencil in deep, twists. Blood wells up. Leaning in, close, in Eric's ear:

CARLOS (CONT'D)
He could hear some real bad shit
about you, Brucie. Before he gets
here.
(off Eric's look)
Sergeant Ian Lynch. Who knows? He
might cancel his trip.

Carlos drops the pencil, wipes his hand on Eric's bald head, smears it with blood.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
The snitch statement. You'll need
that transcript for my habeas.

Carlos opens a file, shows Eric a document. A lawyer's name, a phone number.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
Make the request, counselor.

Carlos leaves. Eric, head down, staring at his bloody palm.

JUAREZ (O.S.)
Fisher.

WIDER, Eric looks up. Uniformed Mule Creek Corrections Officer JUAREZ - 40s, Latino - approaches, "concerned."

JUAREZ (CONT'D)
Oh no. Hurt your hand?

Juarez throws some GAUZE and DUCT TAPE on the table. Leans down to Eric. Low, chilling:

JUAREZ (CONT'D)
And good luck with your IA shitbag.

Juarez moves off.

ERIC, gasping in pain, starts to bandage his palm --

JUMP TO:

ERIC, palm bandaged, back at work. A harsh ELECTRONIC BELL takes us:

INT. MULE CREEK/ERIC'S CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

ERIC, in LOCK DOWN position, front of the cell. His left hand, bandaged by the Prison Infirmary.

WIDER, cell mate HUNTER - 60's, black - next to Eric.

As the cell doors SLAM CLOSED the BELL CUTS OUT.

WIDER, the CELL BLOCK. Sixty inmates standing by their cell doors. Roving guards.

WIDER STILL. Six floors of this hell.

CLICK. Lights out.

EXT. MULE CREEK PRISON - DAY

Off a flock of sparrows to DETECTIVE IAN LYNCH, 33, redhead, XXXL-sized, suit and tie, parking his rented white Taurus.

TITLE CARD: "FISHER vs. IA OFFICER LYNCH"

ENTRANCE BY GUARD TOWER

Lynch locks his gun in an individual gun locker, puts the key in his pocket.

A GUARD puts the gun locker in a bigger LOCKBOX, the lockbox in a BASKET.

WIDER, as the Tower Guard above ROPE BUCKETS the basket up to the Tower and Lynch enters Mule Creek.

LYNCH (PRE-LAP)

Okay, this is a tape-recorded interview for an Internal Affairs investigation.

INT. CELL BLOCK / MULE CREEK - DAY

BUZZ. Eric's cell door opens. A guard escorts him out.

LYNCH (V.O.)
 Present to be interviewed is Eric Fisher. The I.O. conducting the interview is Sergeant Ian Lynch, serial number 25710.

Eric and the Guard move off.

TITLE CARD: "NOVEMBER 10, 2003 11:15 AM, MULE CREEK PRISON"

INT. STRIP SEARCH ROOM / MULE CREEK - DAY

Naked, Eric knows the drill. *Bend, spread cheeks, cough.*

LYNCH (PRE-LAP)
 Charlie Shannon, a private investigator in your employ, filed a complaint on your behalf to the Los Angeles Police Department in regard to a letter written to your Parole Board.

OUTSIDE STRIP SEARCH ROOM

With his right hand, Eric buttons his shirt. The Guard hands him a FILE FOLDER.

Eric walks, PUSHING CAMERA BACK. Focused. So prepared.

LYNCH (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)
 A letter dated April 7th, 1998 --

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM / MULE CREEK - DAY

Lynch and Eric. Lynch's digital recorder on the table, red light GLOWING, as Eric carefully arranges his files and sits.

LYNCH
 -- written by Lieutenant Dave Russell. Is that correct?

ERIC
 That is correct.

Lynch takes out a copy of the letter, shows it to Eric.

LYNCH
 And this is a copy of the letter, correct?

ERIC

Correct. But that's just the beginning --

LYNCH

-- Good place to start.
(off the letter)
In this letter, Russell claims --

ERIC

-- not 'claims.' Straight up lies.
(right at Lynch, from memory)
"Several years after the crime, I met with the new owners of the home where this crime occurred. They informed me they had found 150 dollars in cash in the attic of Eric Fisher's former home. The amount of cash is the amount of money that was reported missing from the victim's purse the day of the murder."

Eric's left leg, jiggling, nervous.

LYNCH

You got a good memory.

ERIC

You would too if someone stole your whole life.

As Eric stands, paces, moves across the room --

ERIC (CONT'D)

Russell said I killed my mother for 150 bucks of grocery money, but at trial, my lawyer kept asking 'Then where is it? Where IS it?' Russell never had a good answer.
(the letter)
This was the last piece of the frame.

LYNCH

What was your reaction when you found the letter?

ERIC

My reaction?
(turns, right at Lynch)
Finally. Thank God. I can prove he's lying.

(MORE)

ERIC (CONT'D)
 (off Lynch's look)
 If I never had the money, how could I hide it in my old house? How could the new owners find something that was never there?

LYNCH
 You mind sitting down?
 (tape recorder)
 I'd like to get all of this.

As Eric comes back, sits --

LYNCH (CONT'D)
 I interviewed Borenstein, the new home owner. He says he never found the money, never talked to Russell -
 -

ERIC
 -- That's why you're here. He told Charlie Shannon the same thing.

LYNCH
 Mr. Borenstein also said he might not testify.

ERIC
 -- Does that matter?
 (off Lynch's look)
 The man's a lawyer. He doesn't want to get involved.

LYNCH
 The fact is, Mr. Fisher, even if Mr. Borenstein did testify, it's not enough to re-open your case --

ERIC
 -- I know; that's the point: if Russell lied about this, what else did he lie about?

Eric hands Lynch a hand-written one page document.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 That's just what I know. 25
 provable lies. Acts of official misconduct. Crimes.

Lynch considers. Looks at the document.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 He manufactured evidence, lied to
 the jury, under oath.

LYNCH
 (off the list)
 "Day of the crime. The windows --"

ERIC
 -- He claimed the glare from the
 sun would have made it impossible
 for me to see my mother through the
 window.

Handing Lynch another document, an OFFICIAL WEATHER REPORT --

ERIC (CONT'D)
 But there was no glare. Because
 there was no SUN.
 (pointing at the date)
 May 11th, 1983. The whole day was
 overcast.

Eric HOLDS UP reconstruction PHOTOS that show Russell
 reflected in the window.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 That's why he took these on the
 11th. Sunny and bright. It fits his
 glare theory.

LYNCH
 (skeptical)
 You're saying Russell manipulated
 photographs to deliberately mislead
 the jury.

Getting up again, frustrated --

ERIC
 -- the Judge let him testify as a
 expert on light. On everything.
 Footprints, blood --

LYNCH
 -- Mr. Fisher --

ERIC
 -- You wanna know how that
 happened?

LYNCH
 You really need to sit down --

ERIC

-- Ask HIM about it!

(off Lynch's look)

RUSSELL. You're gonna see him,
right? Ask HIM how he pulled this
shit off.

Eric moves to the table, pushes a chair out of the way to
grab a document, getting worked up.

ERIC (CONT'D)

That's a reference to a statement
from a neighbor. Their gardener saw
someone leave my parents house just
before I got there.

(hands Lynch the document)

There's a reference number for the
statement transcript, it's supposed
to be in the case files, but it's
not there.

LYNCH

-- Mr. Fisher --

ERIC

-- Check the murder books; it's
disappeared. Charlie Shannon tried
to get the tape, and guess what?
That's missing too.

(from memory)

Tape number 83-63.

Lynch just looks at him. Eric grabs a pen, writes it on
Lynch's notepad himself as --

LYNCH

Please. Sit.

Eric looks at Lynch, then sits. His left leg, jiggling.

LYNCH (CONT'D)

Let's cut to the chase: if you
didn't kill your mother, someone
else did. Which means someone else
was in the house that day. But
there's no evidence --

ERIC

-- There WAS. There WAS evidence.
That's what I'm trying to tell you.

Pulling his chair close to Lynch, leaning in --

ERIC (CONT'D)

There had to be, because yeah,
 "let's cut to the chase": I didn't
 do it. And if that evidence isn't
 in the murder book, it's because
 Russell made fucking sure it
 wasn't.

(sitting back)

Where's the interview with the
 neighbor?

LYNCH

Who knows? Maybe it fell out of the
 book.

ERIC

Fell out? Jesus.

LYNCH

It's been known to happen. More
 than 20 years of paperwork --

ERIC

(getting up, pissed)

-- I know how long it's been. Trust
 me.

Eric paces, turns back to Lynch --

ERIC (CONT'D)

Why else would he lie to my parole
 board?

(off Lynch's look)

He wanted to KEEP ME HERE. If I got
 out, people would know what he did.

LYNCH

-- Fine. Say he buried it. Even if
 he did, the blood, the knives, the
 evidence that was there...

Lynch lets this thought trail off. *The evidence against Eric
 was overwhelming.*

ERIC

Then why did you come up here?

LYNCH

To do my job. Investigate your
 complaint about Russell's letter.
 If he knowingly lied to your parole
 board --

ERIC

-- 'If?'

LYNCH

Part of my investigation is hearing your side of the story --

ERIC

-- But you're not LISTENING!

LYNCH

(calm, low)

Yes, I am. And frankly, all I've heard is speculation. No provable facts --

ERIC

(losing it)

-- Russell destroyed the facts. How many times do I have to TELL you?!

Lynch clocks Eric's rage. *The same rage that led to a 17 year old kid killing his mother?*

Lynch makes a decision. Stands.

LYNCH

I'm sorry, Mr. Fisher. At this point, I feel we've strayed beyond the scope --

ERIC

-- No. We're just getting STARTED.

Lynch turns off the recorder.

LYNCH

Appreciate the time.

ERIC

Come on, no. I'm sorry I yelled, but you can't leave, please don't.

As Lynch collects his stuff --

ERIC (CONT'D)

I know who did it.

(Lynch keeps moving)

I know who killed my mom. You're not interested in that?

LYNCH

At this point, not particularly --

ERIC
 -- Russell knew it too. You know
 why?

Lynch knocks on the door, and --

LYNCH
 Guard.

ERIC
 Because I told him. I gave him the
 killer's NAME.

LYNCH
 Mike Keller. Your former roommate.
 Killed himself in 1996. Convenient
 suspect.

Eric, spun out, as the Guard opens the door and --

LYNCH (CONT'D)
 We're done here.

As Lynch starts to leave, Eric grabs a handful of pages,
 moves to the doorway.

ERIC
 Please, read this, talk to Shannon.
 (Lynch just looks)
 I'm sorry, okay? I'm sorry I
 yelled.

LYNCH
 It's okay, Mr. Fisher.

Eric, thinking he's just gotten a reprieve, holds the papers
 out again, but Lynch pulls back.

LYNCH (CONT'D)
 I'll let you know when my
 investigation is complete.

Lynch exits. Off Eric, clutching his hand-written pages,
 thinking his last shot at freedom just walked out the door.

EXT. LAX - EVENING

An airplane ROARS over the sky, goes in for landing over Los
 Angeles --

INT. LAX TERMINAL - EVENING

Lynch walks toward the exit, past Drivers holding signs for arriving passengers. As he stops, surprised --

LYNCH'S POV - A perky BLONDE - LAURA - early 30's, stewardess pretty, black skirt, white shirt, LAPD baseball cap - holds a hand-lettered Sgt. Ian Lynch sign.

As Laura approaches, grinning --

LYNCH

I don't get it. I'm just going to the --

*

LAURA

-- LAPD airport parking lot.
(her cap)
Courtesy service. I'm Laura.

Laura moves for Lynch's bag, he pulls back.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Up to you Sergeant, but the cab line looks pretty backed up.

Off Lynch's look:

INT./EXT. CADILLAC - MOVING - NIGHT

Laura drives, Lynch in the back seat. As she approaches the LAX Police Station parking lot on Century Blvd --

LYNCH

This is fine.

LAURA

Full service, Sergeant. Door to door.

Laura enters the lot, slips a ten to the Guard, who raises the gate. As the Caddy drives through --

The Caddy pulls up next to Lynch's parked white Taurus. As Laura gets out of the car, CHARLIE SHANNON pulls Lynch's door open, and --

SHANNON

Welcome to L.A.

Shannon - big, bearded, late 30's, hot-tempered - is Eric's P.I. Not happy to see him --

LYNCH
Goddamnit, Shannon.

As Lynch climbs out of the car, Laura hands him his bag and -- *

LYNCH (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

SHANNON
How was Eric?

LYNCH
A shitload waste of time. Out of my way.

SHANNON
Got something to cheer you up.
(like game show host)
Laura, show Sergeant Lynch what he's won today.

Laura points to the Caddy trunk like a game show hostess --

LYNCH
Jesus Christ.

Lynch moves to the trunk, looks in. Shannon moves in behind him as --

SHANNON
That's right. The Eric Fisher case files. The whole murder book.

LYNCH
I don't even wanna know where you got that.
(lower, to Shannon)
And I am done.

As Lynch moves to his car, to Laura, serious --

SHANNON
Give us a minute.

As Laura moves off, Shannon moves to Lynch, and --

SHANNON (CONT'D)
If Russell buried evidence, the proof is in there.

Lynch opens his car door, gets in. Shannon's hands on the open door frame.

LYNCH
Watch your hands.

As Shannon pulls back, Lynch closes the door.

INT. LYNCH'S CAR - PARKED - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Lynch fumbles for his car keys as Shannon knocks on the window. Lynch starts the car, ignores him. Yelling, MUFFLED through the window --

SHANNON
You're a cop. You can make archive requests, see what's missing. Find out exactly how Russell framed Eric.

Not looking at Shannon, Lynch lowers the window.

SHANNON (CONT'D)
Bring down a dirty cop, get an innocent man out of prison.

LYNCH
A guy who bashed his mom's brains in.

SHANNON
You a hundred per cent on that?
(off Lynch's look)
I thought you cared about catching bad cops.

Lynch considers, relents.

LYNCH
Fine. Get the books.

As Shannon moves off to his car, Lynch backs out quick, drives off, makes Shannon jump out of the way.

As Lynch drives off, Laura approaches Shannon and --

LAURA
We done?

Off Shannon's look:

INT. PI OFFICE - RESEDA - NIGHT

A half empty bottle of SCOTCH on a table, two empty glasses.

Laura, making out with Shannon on the couch. Pretty hardcore stuff.

A cell phone rings.

Shannon, torn. Doesn't want to answer, but has to.

SHANNON

Sorry.

He takes the call.

AUTOMATIC PHONE OPERATOR (O.S.)

You have a request for a collect
call from Mule Creek Penitentiary
and --

(Eric's Voice)

Eric --

As Shannon is waiting, phone in hand, Laura reaches for his wallet --

SHANNON

Just so you know, it's been kinda
slow lately.

In the compartment, she finds a single bill.

LAURA

A hundred?

SHANNON

I already paid you two for the
drive.

AUTOMATIC PHONE OPERATOR (V.O.)

If you accept the charges, say yes.

LAURA

I'll give you a handjob.

SHANNON

(into phone)

Yes.

*(as she starts to unzip
him)*

I didn't mean you. I'm not paying a
hundred bucks for a handjob.

Shannon takes the hundred dollar bill from Laura, puts it
back in his wallet, closes it --

SHANNON (CONT'D)
If I wanted a handjob I'd do it
myself. Better and for free. Hell
I'd even tip myself.

Laura's had enough, grabs her purse and leaves --

SHANNON (CONT'D)
Don't --

INT. MULE CREEK PRISON/PHONE AREA - NIGHT (INTERCUT)

Eric by the wall, phone in hand.

Big PUMPED UP INMATE waiting behind him, not happy about
waiting --

ERIC
I blew it, Charlie.

SHANNON
What are you talking about?

ERIC
I tried telling him, just like we
said, but I fucking lost it. I lost
him.

INT. MULE CREEK PRISON/PHONE AREA - NIGHT (INTERCUT)

SHANNON
Didn't seem that way to me.

ERIC
You saw Lynch?

SHANNON
Sure. Met him at the airport.

ERIC
What did he say?

SHANNON
He was tired from the trip. Large
man on an airplane, trust me, it's
not easy --

ERIC
-- What did he say, Charlie.

SHANNON
Nothing really. I gave him the
files and he took off --

ERIC
-- He took the files?

SHANNON
We have a bad connection?

ERIC
(you're saying:)
That happened. He took the files.

SHANNON
(selling it hard)
Yes. He took them. Which word don't
you understand?

Eric wants to believe Shannon, Lynch's his last hope, but...

SHANNON (CONT'D)
You okay?
(no response)
Hang in there. I'll let you know
when I hear from him, okay?

Eric hangs up. Frozen. Trying to find a reason to believe his *
piece of shit PI isn't straight up lying to him.

Eric by the wall, phone in hand.

PUMPED UP INMATE
You done?

Eric moves away from the phone.

RESUME - SHANNON, IN HIS OFFICE

Cell phone in his hand, disconnected. Alone in the room.
Feeling bad about lying to Eric, but he had to.

Then he sees: On his desk, his WALLET. Wide open. Empty.

SHANNON
Fuck.

INT. ERIC'S CELL - NIGHT

Eric in his bunk, trying to sleep.

Distant SCREAMS. Someone getting attacked or having a mental breakdown - could be either one. Or both.

Other inmates SCREAM back --

INMATE (O.S.)
Shut up! Shut up or I'll cut you
up!

Eric, in despair, focusing on the pictures taped to ceiling.

Photos of BLUE SKY, a snapshot of a nice looking REDHEAD, an '83 Mercedes 380 SL from an ad. Eric, in his father's lap, a week old.

HUNTER (O.S.)
You're gonna help Carlos with his
legal shit?

Hunter underneath Eric, devil's head tattooed on his lower arm, getting a syringe ready.

HUNTER (CONT'D)
If you don't, there's a Hunny Bun
hit with your name on it.

Hunter slams the needle home. Re-hits. Blood in the tube.

HUNTER (CONT'D)
Twenty Hunny Buns buys a major
beatdown.

Hunter falls back on his bunk.

HUNTER (CONT'D)
He'd do it himself, but he's on the
red list. One more beef...

ERIC
Carlos raped and killed a 19 year
old girl. Four months pregnant.
Took his time doing it, too.

Eric, staring at the ceiling.

HUNTER
We all have our shit.

Below, as the Mexican smack hits Hunter's main-line, low, slurring --

HUNTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Carlos did... young girl. You...
your mom.

Eric SLAPS his HAND against the WALL and --

ERIC
I didn't. You fucking know I
didn't.

Eric turns, looks down -- HUNTER, eyes gone, the needle
sticking out from the devil's head.

Off Eric, laying back on his bunk, losing hope --

EXT. LAPD CENTRAL DIVISION - NIGHT

Outside the worn down Central Division Building, Lynch is
making his way through Latino demonstrators carrying signs
with the face of Gonzalo Martinez, 26 -- and: "STOP POLICE
KILLING OUR CHILDREN" -- "END POLICE ABUSE"

DEMONSTRATORS (O.S.)
Enough is enough! Enough is enough!

LECTURER (PRE-LAP)
If you think about it we're trying
to get someone to agree to go to
jail with us.

INT. LAPD CENTRAL DIVISION / TRAINING HALL - NIGHT

Inside, police officers listening to a LECTURER (male, 30s,
perfect hair.) Behind him, a power point presentation with
the words "VERBAL JUDO - THE GENTLE ART OF PERSUASION".

LECTURER
It's something very serious, very
scary, it's only natural that they
might want to fight us. And we
don't wanna fight with them.

DAVE RUSSELL, 53, standing by the door, skeptical. Good looks *
gone to seed, but he's a CO Lieutenant now, and don't you
forget it.

LECTURER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Instead of escalating the
situation, simply apply the five
principles I told you about.

The door opens and CAPTAIN RUPERT (56) enters, approaches
Russell. As the Lecturer continues in background, low, to
Russell:

CAPTAIN RUPERT
The IA guy is here to see you.

RUSSELL
(the lecturer)
We paid this clown?

CAPTAIN RUPERT
Ian Lynch. Says he's got an appointment.

RUSSELL
(re: the lecturer)
We paid this clown?

CAPTAIN RUPERT
Andy, you've gotta deal with this.

As Rupert walks away, concerned, Russell stares off at --

| | |
|---|--|
| LECTURER "Sir, is there anything I can say or do to to make you change your attitude?" | COPS IN CHORUS (O.S.) "Sir, is there anything I can say or do to to make you change your attitude?" |
|---|--|

LECTURER
Gooood! Great job everyone! Now I'm gonna need a volunteer.
(spots Russell)
How about you, sir?

Russell just stares at the lecturer. *Big mistake, pal.*

LECTURER (CONT'D)
Anything I can do to make you change your attitude?

RUSSELL
Yeah. Pick someone else.

Off Russell, pissed, turning, walking off --

INT. LAPD CENTRAL DIVISION / BULLPEN - NIGHT

As Russell enters, moves to Lynch, waiting patiently. As Lynch sees him, rises --

LYNCH
Ian Lynch, Internal Affairs. We had an appointment --

RUSSELL
 -- Eric Fisher's a manipulative
 prick, guilty as sin. You're
 wasting your time.

LYNCH
 Is there a place we can talk?

INT. RUSSELL'S GLASSED IN OFFICE - DAY

Lynch, across the desk from Russell, the red light on his
 digital recorder on as, mid-interview --

LYNCH
 You spoke to the new owners of the
 Fisher residence?

A copy of his letter to the parole board in front of him --

RUSSELL
 That's what it says.
 (looking up)
 There a problem?

LYNCH
 Yes sir. According to Mister
 Borenstein --

RUSSELL
 -- Let me guess. He says we never
 spoke.
 (small smile)
 He's right. I talked to the wife.

LYNCH
 Mrs Borenstein is dead, sir.

RUSSELL
 Really? That's too bad. We done?

A tense beat.

LYNCH
 The 150 dollars, did you file it?

RUSSELL
 I would if I could. They never
 showed it to me.

LYNCH
 They?

RUSSELL

Mrs. Borenstein. No. She didn't show me the money.

LYNCH

You saying she kept it?

RUSSELL

No, I'm saying she spent it on half a dozen hoola hoops.

(then)

All I know is she told me she found it, in his old room.

(standing)

Where Fisher hid it. After he killed his mother.

Russell reaches across, turns off Lynch's recorder.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

The worst you can give me is an finding of 'unsustained.' Go ahead, give me the unsustained, and let's move on.

Eyes lock. Outside the window, detectives pretend they're not watching or trying to ear-hustle the proceedings.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Meanwhile, I've got police work to do.

Lynch extends his hand.

LYNCH

Thanks for your time, Lieutenant.

Russell shakes his hand, smiles.

RUSSELL

Always happy to help the Rat Squad.

EXT. BRADBURY BUILDING / DOWNTOWN LA - DAY

The jewel of Los Angeles architecture.

INT. INTERNAL AFFAIRS / LYNCH'S BULLPEN CUBICLE - DAY

Lynch at the word processor, listening to the taped conversation with Russell.

THE SCREEN, as he types "-- find the complaint against Detective Dave Russell is UNSUSTAINED."

Lynch backspaces the "UNSUSTAINED" away. Considers. As he shuts off the word processor, stands --

INT. INTERNAL AFFAIRS / BULLPEN - DAY

Lynch, walking out, sees IA OFFICER LOUISE by the coffee machine, and veers left to avoid her --

BY THE ELEVATORS - DAY

Lynch waits for the elevator to come.

LOUISE (O.S.)

Ian.

He turns, looks at her as the elevator arrives.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

You finished with Russell?

LYNCH

Just about.

LOUISE

That's a yes or no question.

As Lynch enters the elevator, pushes the down button.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

You said you'd be done today.

As the door closes, off Louise, frustrated --

EXT. SHANNON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The parking lot of a North Hollywood office building. As Shannon helps Lynch carry the boxes of notebooks -- the relevant parts of ERIC's murder book -- to Lynch's car.

SHANNON

You're doing the right thing here.

LYNCH

That's right. You can keep billing Eric Fisher.

FROM INSIDE LYNCH'S TRUNK, as Shannon puts the last box in the trunk, steps back, and, to Lynch --

SHANNON

I made a list of what's missing.

LYNCH

-- Don't push it.

Lynch SLAMS his TRUNK. Off the BLACKNESS --

INT. DINING ROOM / LYNCH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

At the dinner table, eating salmon: Ian Lynch, THREE BOYS, and their mother, Ian's wife Louise (the woman from IA).

A long silence between husband and wife. And then --

LYNCH

If you were accused of writing a letter in which you were manufacturing evidence, would you accept an 'UNSUSTAINED'?

LOUISE

I knew it. Jesus, Ian, you gotta let this go.

LYNCH

You wouldn't. I wouldn't. No good copper would take an UNSUSTAINED.

(beat)

If you didn't do it, the only finding you'd accept is UNFOUNDED. Complete clearance of the charges.

(the point)

Russell suggested UNSUSTAINED.

LOUISE

Then give it to him. Finish it.

Their oldest son - JOE, 14, big - starts to leaves the table.

LYNCH

Plate.

Joe comes back for his plate, and --

LYNCH (CONT'D)

Get your uniform on. We're leaving in 15 minutes.

(to Jack, the youngest)

You practice your guitar today?

Jack holds out his hand, Lynch feels his fingertips for calluses, smiles.

RAMOS (ON TAPE) (CONT'D)
 Did you hit your mother with that
 trophy?

ERIC (ON TAPE)
 No.

Lynch fast forwards, stops the tape when he hears RAISED VOICES AT HIGH SPEED, and we HEAR:

ERIC (ON TAPE) (CONT'D)
 I want to take another test! I'm
 not lying! I am not lying, man!

EXAMINER (ON TAPE)
 Stand up! I'm tired of your
 bullshit. Get on your feet or I'm
 gonna KNOCK YOUR FUCKING HEAD OFF!

Lynch hears a SMACK, and Eric cries out.

EXAMINER (ON TAPE) (CONT'D)
 And don't give me anymore of your
 bullshit --

Lynch stops the tape, rewinds, plays it again.

ERIC (V.O.)
 I'm not lying!
 (rewind)
 I'm not lying!
 (rewind)
 I'm not lying!

A HONK nearby startles Lynch. He STOPS the tape, looks up and SEES the PARKING LOT, almost empty now. The game's over. Off Lynch's look: *

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - LYNCH'S CAR - NIGHT

Lynch's car heading for the baseball field, his trunk wide open.

At the curb, Lynch's son Joe, waiting, with a coach. The only kid left. Not happy at all.

INT. MULE CREEK PRISON - COMPUTER SCIENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Eric in front of a monitor, chatting with a woman in a Netscape CHAT ROOM. Her ID shows her as a pretty redhead.

Chatting away, Eric doesn't notice the guard leaving the

room.

An ENFORCER, a jacked Latin King, enters.

ENFORCER
Carlos says time's up.

Eric looks up.

ERIC
I told him, the transcript's not here yet.

ENFORCER
Yeah. Because you didn't make the request.

The Enforcer closes the door, moves closer.

ERIC
Whatever he's paying you --

ENFORCER
-- Shut the fuck up --

ERIC
-- I'll DOUBLE it. Tomorrow, soon as the commissary opens. Protein bars, Hunny Buns, soap --

The Enforcer SUCKER PUNCHES Eric. SLAMS him against the wall. *
PUNCHES him three times, hard in the face. Eric slides down *
the wall, staring up, almost knocked out.

ENFORCER
Get the transcript.

INT./EXT. LOUISE'S CAR - NIGHT

JACK LYNCH (11) in the back of his parents' car, an electric guitar next to him.

JACK
Mom, how do you make your hands grow larger?
(off her glance)
David says my fingers are too short to do a barre chord.

A SIREN WHOOP and BLUE LIGHT shining through the back window. Checking the rear view, glancing at Jack:

LOUISE
Don't worry honey. Probably just
rolled through a stop back there.

Louise pulls over, pulls down her window, and hangs her hands
out the window to show she doesn't have a weapon.

LOUISE (CONT'D)
Working late officer?

PATROL COP
License and registration please.

She's got it all ready. As she hands it to him, frowns --

LOUISE
You look familiar. I'm on the Job
myself, Central Division.

The patrol cop checks her ID and --

PATROL COP
Step out of the car, ma'am.

Louise looks, can't see a nameplate or a badge.

LOUISE
Where's your badge, officer --

PATROL COP
-- Step out or I pull you out.

JACK
Mom?

LOUISE
It's alright, hon.

She opens the door.

LOUISE (CONT'D)
Officer, I need your name --

PATROL COP
-- Turn around.

Louise looks back to the police car. The cop's partner, in
shadow, waiting.

LOUISE
You gonna let him do this?

-- the patrol cop SPINS Louise to face the car, PUSHES his
knee between her legs, spreads them.

JACK

Mom?!

The officer pats her down. Lower. Between her legs.

LOUISE

What's your probable cause?

He pats her ass, between her ass cheeks --

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Take your fucking hands OFF -

Louise PUSHES BACK. The patrol cop SLAMS her up against the car. About to cuff her, he's PULLED AWAY HARD.

WIDER, Lieutenant Dave Russell, in the Patrol Cop's face:

RUSSELL

What the hell's wrong with you?

PATROL COP

Sir --

RUSSELL

-- Go back to your vehicle, I'll deal with you later.

As the Patrol Cop walks away --

LOUISE

What's your buddy's name?

RUSSELL

He won't get away with this. I'll see to it personally, you have my word.

LOUISE

I don't give a shit about your word. I want that cop's name.

Smiling, looking toward the back seat:

RUSSELL

You all right, Jackie-boy?

Jack stares. LOUISE, worried. *How the does he know Jack's name?*

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

I apologize for the inconvenience, Mrs. Lynch.

(MORE)

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
If you have any problems at all,
please, give me a call.

As Russell hands her his card --

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
Dave Russell. Home number's on the
back.

Russell opens the door for her.

LOUISE
Step back.

Hands raised, smiling, Russell steps back.

Louise gets in the car, closes the door. Steadies her shaking hands on the wheel.

Russell, watching her drive off. FADE UP George Jones singing "He Stopped Loving Her Today," taking us:

INT. LYNCH'S HOUSE / OFFICE ROOM - NIGHT

Off the RADIO, playing George Jones, to Lynch in his little cave like office. His big body hunched at a door and brick desk, the box of CASE FILES on the desk nearby.

He's reading an interview with Mike Keller. We SEE ENOUGH to know that the interview took place in a Mississippi jail --

He reads a couple of pages and stops, mid-page, reaches for another BINDER. Flips through, looking, and finds RUSSELL'S REQUEST for information on Mike Keller, returned with "NO CRIMINAL RECORD." He notes the birthdate on Russell's request.

Back to the Mississippi interview. Lynch finds Keller's FACE SHEET at the top of the document, checks the birthdate.

Compares it to the birthdate on Russell's request.

Two different days.

Lynch reacts. Thoughtful.

Grabs a legal pad, the page filled with notes. Flips the page, starts to write, but a SOUND makes him stop.

Lynch gets up, turns down the radio, listens. Footsteps. Lynch covers the box with a drop cloth, moves to the stairs, calls up:

LYNCH

Louise?

THE KITCHEN

As Lynch comes up the stairs, out of breath and --

LYNCH

Honey? You home?

Lynch moves through the empty kitchen to --

THE LIVING ROOM

And sees Louise across the room, her back to him, one arm wrapped around herself, the other holding a glass of Scotch.

LYNCH (CONT'D)

What's going on?

LOUISE

I'm fine.

Louise downs the drink. With trembling hands she reaches for the bottle of Scotch on the sideboard, but Lynch slowly puts hand on hers, stops her.

Off Louise, turning to him, mascara all over her face, tears in her eyes --

INT. JACK LYNCH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lynch tucks his son in as --

LYNCH

You okay?

JACKIE

I'm fine. But mom...

LYNCH

Don't you worry about mom. I've got that covered.

Lynch turns out the light.

LYNCH (CONT'D)

No one's gonna hurt this family.
Ever. That's a promise.

As Lynch bends, kisses his son on the head --

INT. LYNCH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lights out. Louise and Lynch in bed, mid-conversation, as Louise turns to him, low, pissed:

 LOUISE
You think you're gonna avenge my honor?

 LYNCH
You're not listening. Russell put in the wrong birth date for Mike Keller on purpose. When it came back with no hits, he stopped looking --

 LOUISE
-- I don't give a fuck what he did, and I don't need you defending me --

 LYNCH
-- I'm doing my job. I'm taking down a bad cop.

Louise sits up, turns on the light.

 LOUISE
If he's so bad, how come there aren't other complaints? About any of his other cases?
 (off Lynch's look)
That's right; I checked.
 (then)
If you'd done your job --

 LYNCH
I don't believe this --

 LOUISE
-- investigate one fucking letter; that's all you had to do.
 (beat)
I told you to leave this alone.

Off Louise, really shook --

INT./EXT - LYNCH'S RENTAL CAR - MOVING - DAY

Lynch's face set, grim, on a mission, as he takes the turn off for Mule Creek Prison.

SUPERED TITLE: "DECEMBER 2nd, 2003 9:55 AM, MULE CREEK PRISON"

INT. STRIP SEARCH ROOM / MULE CREEK - DAY

Quick shots of Eric being strip-searched.

Bend, spread cheeks, cough.

Eric's face is bruised. A black eye, faded purplish green. His broken nose is taped.

LYNCH (PRE-LAP)
Tell me about Mike Keller.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM / MULE CREEK PRISON - DAY

Eric and Lynch, once again, across from each other, as Lynch puts the digital recorder on the table, turns it on.

ERIC, on edge. *This is it.*

LYNCH
Michael Keller. From the beginning.
How did you two meet?

Eric exhales, leans slowly back against his chair. *One more chance. He needs to keep calm.*

ERIC
Palmer House. Drug rehab. I was an outpatient. I already had my own apartment, but my parents made me go.

LYNCH
And Keller?

ERIC
He got there on his own.
(softly)
He didn't have anyone.

As we PUSH IN on ERIC --

TOM (PRE-LAP)
-- Look, I don't know what I'm doing here either.

INT. PALMER HOUSE (1982) - DAY

TOM FISHER, 59, Eric's father, mid-speech.

TOM

Frankly, I don't get this. I like a good drink now and then, and sure, I've smoked a little dope too.

WIDER, kids in a circle, their parents next to them. Eric, 17, skinny, frizzy hair, next to his dad. Leg jiggling.

TOM (CONT'D)

But bottom line, I'm here to support my son.

Tom puts his arm around Eric, who doesn't like it much.

TOM (CONT'D)

And if this is what it takes?

Tom takes his hand off of Eric, as Eric stares across the circle at ANNIE DECKER, a dark haired beauty.

Eric's memory SNAP ZOOMS to ANNIE, smiling right at him as --

LISA

(mouthing it)
Wanna fuck?

BOB

Sitting in a church with
strangers when I should be
playing golf?
(then, dead serious)
I am one hundred per cent in.

Next to Annie, an empty chair, and then MIKE KELLER, 17, all by himself.

Look up "sullen" in the dictionary and put a Hells Angels leather jacket on it. Rough. Scary looking.

TOM

That's all I got. I'll shut up and listen, maybe I'll learn something.
(smiles at Eric)
Right, Eric?

Eric, staring off at Keller. A torn backpack at Keller's feet... A YELLOW CORD, tied to the backpack.

Next to Tom, BRENDA, an emaciated 15 year old girl in a Patti Smith t-shirt. *

BRENDA

Brenda, meth addict. And alcoholic, I guess, but that's mostly to come down from the meth.

As Brenda continues, ZAILIAN, a counselor moves to Mike Keller, whispers something.

Keller, pissed, stands so hard his chair falls over backwards. He grabs his backpack and walks out.

Off Eric, watching him go --

EXT. PALMER HOUSE / PARKING - DAY

As Eric waves goodbye to his father, driving off, and moves to his parked Mustang on the far side of the parking lot.

Next to the Mustang, on the curb, Mike Keller sits, smoking weed.

ERIC
What was that about?

KELLER
Fucking Zailian. Says I'm out of
the program.
(the parking lot)
Guess this is home now.

Mike hands Eric the joint, but Eric, looking around nervously, declines.

ERIC
You need a ride somewhere?

KELLER
No place to go.

Eric thinks for a while.

ERIC
I've got an apartment. It's tiny,
but it's got a couch.

Mike, glad, extends his hand --

KELLER
I'm Mike.

ERIC
(smiles)
I know.

I/E. MUSTANG / LOS ANGELES (1982) - DAY

The boys in the car, wind in their hair.

ERIC FISHER (V.O.)
Somebody said he had pulled out a
knife on a girl. Actually pulled a
knife on a girl in a meeting.

EXT. FISHER RESIDENCE (1983) - DAY

Eric passing the kitchen windows, nailed shut, on his way towards the back yard --

Behind him, Mike and Annie in front of Eric. Mike in his leather jacket, Annie in slutty jeans shorts.

ERIC
 Mom's grocery shopping, and I don't
 have any keys -- But she'll be gone
 for at least a couple of hours --

Then, as they come to the back yard --

WIDER: The pool. Crystal water. An inflatable mattress.

ANNIE
 Wow man. Shit.

Annie starts to wiggle off her shorts --

JUMP TO:

SPLASH as Annie jumps into the water, naked.

Eric removes his clothes, only eyes for Annie.

Mike sitting on a chaise lounge, in his leather jacket, watching Eric as he gets undressed, playing with a butterfly knife.

Eric dives into the water, naked. A perfect dive.

ERIC
 (from the water)
 You coming?

Annie, now floating on the inflatable, on her stomach, smiling-

ANNIE
 You obviously don't know Mike. If
 it's between taking off his jacket
 and dying of heatstroke, he'll die
 any day.

Mike takes off the leather jacket.

Annie claps her hands, and when Mike takes off his t-shirt, revealing a paper-white torso --

ANNIE (CONT'D)
 (as if blinded)
 My eyes! My eyes!

INT. ARMY SHOP - DAY

STACKS of hunting knives, Bowie knives, combat knives.

Keller smiles at the perfect weight of the THROWING KNIFE in his hand. Whirls, pretends to throw it at Eric, who FLINCHES.

Keller's laughs, as Eric smiles, turns to the counter, the FAT CLERK in camo pants watching them. Behind him, a shotgun, resting against the back wall.

Eric looks back at Mike Keller, hiding the throwing knife in his pants.

ERIC
 Man no. Just don't.

KELLER
 It's a fucking hundred dollars.

Eric turns around, watches the fat clerk watching them.

KELLER (CONT'D)
 What he gonna do? Run after us?

ERIC
 I can get you the money.

As Mike Keller hesitates --

INT. LIVING ROOM / FISHER RESIDENCE (1983)- DAY

Sitting next to each other in a nice sofa, Mike Keller and Eric watches as Tom opens a COMBINATION SAFE.

TOM
 So how come you're into stamps,
 Mike?

KELLER
 Oh you know. My dad liked it.

TOM

Really. It was my dad who got me interested as well. A lot of these are from him.

From inside, he brings out his STAMP COLLECTION.

TOM (CONT'D)

He was in the military too. Bought stamps wherever he went.

Tom sits down next to the boys. Showing them a section:

TOM (CONT'D)

These are from countries that no longer exist.

Eric watches Keller's large eyes.

KELLER

How much are they worth?

TOM

Which one?

(Keller points)

Ah. Prussia. 1917, the year of the revolution.

(then)

I don't know. Maybe a thousand.

KELLER

They're so cool.

MARY FISHER, 66, comes in with a tray of sandwiches for Tom and the boys, a couple of Cokes and an ice cold bottle of Heineken.

As Tom takes the beer, Mike clocks Eric staring at the Heineken.

KELLER (CONT'D)

(low, to Eric)

Coke is fine.

(to Mary)

This looks great, Mrs. Fisher.

Thank you.

Mary Fisher and her husband trade looks. *Maybe this Keller kid is a good influence.*

Eric takes a bite of his sandwich.

ERIC

Whoa. Perfect bacon.

EXT. ERIC RESIDENCE - DAY

Outside the front door, Eric and Mike say goodbye to Eric's parents.

MARY

Nice to meet you Mike. And I'm so proud of both you boys.

MIKE KELLER

One day at a time, right?

TOM

(to Eric, pointed)
How's the job hunting?

ERIC

It's alright. Me and Mike, we're fixing up cars --

TOM

-- I mean a real job.
(off Eric's look)
Not easy to find one. Gas money, clothes.
(easy smile)
Gotta work at finding work these days.

As Tom pulls a 50 from his wallet --

ERIC

It's ok dad.

Tom folds the fifty, stuffs it in Eric's shirt pocket.

TOM

Get a job, we'll call it even.

INT. MUSTANG / FISHER RESIDENCE - DAY

Eric sits down behind the wheel, not feeling good about himself.

Keller smiles at the Fishers, standing next to each other on the porch.

As Keller reaches under the seat for a couple of cold beers, and offers one to Eric, in a way his parents can't see, and Eric starts the Mustang --

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

The Prussian stamp on the counter as the Clerk counts out the money for Eric. Nearby, Keller watches -- fidgety, excited, a kid on Christmas morning. *

CLERK

And... seven hundred.

As Eric takes the cash --

INT. SEPULVEDA APARTMENT - DAY

A THUMP as the THROWING KNIFE hits the back of the front door.

IAN LYNCH (V.O.)

What kind of knife was it?

ERIC (V.O.)

A throwing knife... no WAIT, it was more like a combat knife, US Army type thing. Fixed blade, serrated.

Mike Keller, smoking a joint, heads back to the door, retracts the blade and suddenly -- it's a HUGE COMBAT KNIFE.

ERIC (V.O.)

But Mike loved throwing it.

As he gets ready to throw it again --

KELLER

It's gotta be over a hundred grand of stamps in there --

Eric, smoking pot, lying on the floor, petting two kittens, not proud of what he has done --

KELLER (CONT'D)

We should just take it.

Eric smiles, stoned.

KELLER (CONT'D)

I'm serious. Hit it and split it.
(off Eric's look)
Fifty grand each.

Eric doesn't smile anymore.

ERIC

They're my parents, Mike.

KELLER

They won't feel a thing. They got insurance on that shit.

ERIC

I'm not gonna steal my dad's stamps again. It was a shitty and stupid thing to do.

Keller throws the knife again -- KDANK.

ERIC (CONT'D)

They give me everything, they buy me groceries, they pay for the apartment. And I risk it all for what? To buy you a stupid knife?

Eric stands up.

ERIC (CONT'D)

What do I get from you? Not even a thank you. You haven't even paid the rent.

Mike, STONED, angry, gets the knife back.

KELLER

Who buys the beer you're drinking? Who buys the pot you're smoking?! I do!

ERIC

With my money.

KELLER

Your dad's money. You haven't given me shit. You're just a bragger and a fucking thief.

Mike, THROWS the knife at the back of the door.

KELLER (CONT'D)

Now shut your hole or you're next.

Eric grabs hold of Mike's backpack --

Eric starts filling the backpack with Mike's clothes and stuff.

ERIC

Take your shit and get out of here.

Then Keller GRABS him, SHOVES him against the doorway -- takes the knife from the door --

Pressing it up against Eric's throat.

KELLER

Don't ever touch my shit again.

Eric, scared to death.

MIKE KELLER

Say it.

ERIC

I'm sorry Mike.

A brief moment... and then Mike Keller lets Eric go.

Eric, putting his palm to his throat, sees drops of blood on his hand.

Fuck. Keller actually *cut him*.

The boys, staring at each other. Nothing much to say.

ERIC (V.O.)

He moved out the same day.

Mike takes his bag, pulls open the door, walks out, taking the knife with him.

Over Eric, looking out the open door, just standing there --

IAN LYNCH (V.O.)

Did you file a police report?

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM / MULE CREEK PRISON - DAY

Eric's face, twenty years older, as he leans back into the chair.

ERIC FISHER

No. He moved back to his parents in Mississippi. I didn't see him again until the day before the murder.

Eric sighs, looks down on his prison shoes, suddenly lost.

LYNCH

Eric?

A beat. Then, softly:

ERIC

My dad.
(off Lynch's look)
(MORE)

ERIC (CONT'D)

My dad figured it out. He said my mom told him Keller had been to the house the day before. Asking for odd jobs.

(then)

Bullshit. He was scouting the house.

Lynch, still skeptical. So Eric plays his trump card:

ERIC (CONT'D)

At 10:22 on the day of the murder, a call was placed from the phone inside my parent's house, to this number, one digit short of getting connection.

Eric flips a piece of paper, shows it to Lynch. A phone company PRINT-OUT.

ERIC (CONT'D)

All the calls from the house on the day of the murder.

He points at the list.

ERIC (CONT'D)

My Dad's office, that's me. And this is the 911. And then, this one, 10:22, ten minutes earlier. Guess where it goes?

(off Lynch's look)

Where it's supposed to go. If you're not panicked because you just killed someone, and can actually dial the whole number.

(adding an extra "9")

Mike Keller's mother.

Lynch, stunned, takes the list.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Russell never figured it out. Only reason it's still in the case file.

LYNCH

(thoughtful)

Day of the crime.

ERIC

(pushing)

10:22, from our house, just a few minutes before I called 911.

(leaning in)

(MORE)

ERIC (CONT'D)

Keller left right before I got there, maybe even while I WAS there.

(his theory)

The thump I heard. That was the back door slamming. He just locked the door, slammed it behind him and left.

LYNCH

(getting it)

The gardener. Witness statement from the neighbor.

ERIC

Mike Keller. Had to be.

Lynch, still not convinced --

LYNCH

No. He had to leave some kind of trace.

ERIC

That's what I've been trying to tell you.

LYNCH

There was only one set of shoe prints. Yours.

ERIC

According to the footprint expert who testified at my trial.

(off Lynch's look)

Russell.

LYNCH

If someone else was there, the crims saw it too. And SID.

(off Eric's look)

Come on, Eric. A conspiracy? I don't buy it.

ERIC

You didn't buy the gardener either. You check into that? The missing witness statement?

Lynch nods. Thinks. He's IA, but still, he hates to believe another cop abused his power this badly.

Lynch looks up at Eric.

LYNCH

Yeah, I did.

(then)

You're right. It didn't just fall
out of the book.

Off Eric, sensing hope, a slim chance at freedom --

INT. VISIT ROOM / MULE CREEK PRISON - DAY

Through dirty glass, on phones, Eric, in a good mood, and the *
REDHEAD from his CHATROOM.

She's wearing a short skirt, a low cut blouse with a zipper.
Into phone, low, sexually charged --

ERIC

Buzz through the last door, take
that first big gulp of free air...

REDHEAD

... and I'm right there. In that
shiny black 380. Tank full of gas,
top down, perfect California day...

ERIC

And then?

The Redhead looks around, checks the room -- coast clear --
leans forward, unzips her blouse, shows him some skin as --

REDHEAD

Then we drive, baby.

ERIC

I'm driving.

REDHEAD

Fuckin' A. Eric Fisher, free man,
behind the wheel. Lookin' finer
than fine.

ERIC

We take the I-15, up Figueroa
Mountain.

REDHEAD

That's right. Higher and higher.

(lower)

What happens then? When we get to
the top?

ERIC

You take your panties off.

She spreads her legs, touches herself between the legs.

REDHEAD

And then?

INT. LAPD/SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION DIVISION - DAY

Lynch at the front desk, being waited on by a CLERK - 40's, black, thin.

LYNCH

I need photos from a case file.
Blood evidence, footprints, all of
it, the originals.

Lynch gives the desk clerk a piece of paper with the DR and C numbers. The Clerk looks.

LYNCH (CONT'D)

Contact sheets. I wanna see every
frame.

Looking up from the case and evidence numbers --

CLERK

That's gonna take some time.

LYNCH

Yeah. I was thinking a few hours.

Lynch pulls up a bottle of Johnny Walker Black, puts it on the counter.

Off the Clerk's look:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Russell, drunk, at a table in back, mid-date with LESLIE - 30's, nice-looking.

RUSSELL

It isn't the big cases that you
remember. It's the small ones that
get away.

LESLIE

(impressed)
A homicide detective. That's the
real thing --

RUSSELL

(pushing through)

-- This kid in the valley. 20 years ago. Girlfriend just found out he gave her herpes, and when she didn't want to sleep with him again he beat her up. Pushed her into a bathtub, kicked her in the head.

LESLIE

And he skated?

RUSSELL

For that, yeah. But I got him for something else. Something worse.

(then)

You don't want to hear about this.

As Russell signals the waitress for another round --

LESLIE

You kidding?

(sweet smile)

I don't meet a lot of real life heroes.

(off his look)

Seriously.

Leslie puts a twenty on the table.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

This round's on me.

INT. LYNCH'S HOUSE / DOWNSTAIRS OFFICE - NIGHT

Lynch comes down the stairs, pulling a disc from an SID ENVELOPE marked URGENT.

At his desk, Lynch slips the disc in his CD drive. His screen fills with PROOF SHEETS of BLOOD AND FOOTPRINT EVIDENCE. He clicks one, opens it up, hits PRINT.

BY THE PRINTER, Lynch pulls out a color print of the proof sheet.

BACK AT THE DESK, Lynch compares the PROOF SHEET to the pictures in the MURDER BOOK of SHOEPRINTS outside the window.

As he sees the PHOTOS in the BOOK, he X's them out on the PROOFSHEET. Off Lynch, making X after X --

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Russell and Leslie, further along. Leslie, drawn in as --

RUSSELL

The killshot? Crushed her skull
with a baseball trophy he'd won as
a kid.

(softly)

He was 7. She was at the game.

LESLIE

Jesus, Andy. You deal with some
dark stuff.

RUSSELL

(the reluctant hero)
Somebody has to, darlin'.

LESLIE

To protect and serve.

RUSSELL

I'll drink to that.

As Russell leers at her, and clinks glasses --

INT. LYNCH'S HOUSE / DOWNSTAIRS OFFICE - NIGHT

Lynch checking the PROOF SHEET of BLOOD TRACES on the walls.
Checking them off against the MURDER BOOK PHOTOS. All there.

Lynch stands. Stretches. He's tired.

WIDER, a PILE of checked PROOF SHEETS. He's been at this a
while.

As Lynch exhales, sends another PROOF SHEET to the printer.

INT. COP BAR - NIGHT

Russell and Leslie, as --

RUSSELL

None of it would have happened if
they'd let me put him away the
first time.

The Waitress comes by with two shots. Off the drinks, raising
a hand --

LESLIE
Not for me.

RUSSELL
(to the Waitress)
Don't worry, she's kidding.

As the Waitress sets the drinks down and moves off --

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
Your profile says you like to party.

LESLIE
Early day tomorrow.

Leslie starts to gather her stuff. As Russell knocks back his shot, and grabs Leslie's -- *

INT. LYNCH'S HOUSE / OFFICE ROOM - NIGHT

At his desk, Lynch checks a PROOF SHEET of BLOODY FOOTPRINTS found in the bathroom against the book.

He checks off a couple, then stops. Looks through the book.

He can't find a PHOTO.

Lynch works the computer, SELECTS the PHOTO he can't find. Blows it up, so it fills the screen.

THE SCREEN, a SMEARED BLOODY FOOTPRINT.

LYNCH, leaning in. STARING at the SCREEN.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Leslie exits the bar as Russell stumbles after her, drunk. As Leslie raises her hand, trying to hail a cab -- *

RUSSELL
Come on, I'll take you. I'll drive you home.
(off her look, with edge)
What. You don't think we're a "match dot com"?

As a cab spots her, pulls over, Russell grabs her arm and --

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
I'm a detective. I detect strong fucking chemistry here.

Leslie gives him a quick kiss to distract him, pulls her arm away. Her eyes full of promise --

LESLIE
Another time.

As Leslie gets in the cab and closes the door --

INT. CAB - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

As Russell hangs on the rear door, and, THRU THE WINDOW --

RUSSELL
Is there anything I can say or do
to make you change your attitude --

LESLIE
(low, to Cabbie)
-- Drive. Drive.

As the cab pulls away, Russell moves with it, and --

RUSSELL
Cockteasing fucking bitch!

LESLIE, as she pulls the little DIGITAL RECORDER from her purse, turns it off. Shudders, as the cab speeds away.

The SOUND of distant BOMBS EXPLODING takes us --

INT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Russell drunk, alone in the kitchen, watching a frozen casserole heat in the microwave. SOUND takes us --

-- WIDER, a TV on the counter playing CNN. The green NIGHT VISION footage of bombs falling on FALLUJAH.

The microwave oven BEEPS.

Russell opens it, takes out the plate but BURNS himself, drops the plate --

RUSSELL
Fuck.

Food splattered all over the floor.

EXT. TECHNICAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION - DAY

Lynch on his way inside the building --

RON RAQUEL (PRE-LAP)
Look at the pattern.

INT. RON RAQUEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Ron Raquel - 58, Hispanic, heavysset - looking at a SHOE PRINT PHOTO through a magnifying glass, showing Lynch.

RON RAQUEL
The same, all of them. Long wavy lines.

LYNCH takes the magnifying glass, looks as --

RON RAQUEL (CONT'D)
This print, like all the others, came from Fisher's sneakers.

Now, Raquel takes Lynch's PHOTO, the one he found, the bathroom SHOE PRINT.

RON RAQUEL (CONT'D)
But the pattern here.

As Lynch leans in, looks --

LYNCH'S POV, THRU MAGNIFYING GLASS: LONG WAVY LINES, smeared with some ZIG-ZAG patterns.

RON RAQUEL (CONT'D)
(pointing)
Some smears. But zig-zags too.
Another pattern --

LYNCH
-- Another sneaker. Someone else's.

RON RAQUEL
Can't say for sure. Not without further examination.

LYNCH
(come on)
Different pattern, different shoe.
Someone else was in that house --

RON RAQUEL
I think so too, but you're not paying me to think.
(then)
If you're taking down a bad cop, doubt is not your friend.

Lynch sighs, nods. Raquel's right.

LYNCH

Full report then. Peer review,
whatever it takes.

Off Lynch, determined, a dog with a bone --

INT. MULE CREEK PRISON / LIBRARY - DAY

Eric at the counter, holding a RED PEN --

ERIC

You need to sign to get this going.

CARLOS

Sign what?

ERIC

Notice of appeal. Your federal
habe.

WIDER, Eric hands the PEN to Carlos, as a C.O. - WINSLOW,
black, 50's, huge, near the counter, watches Carlos take the
RED PEN.

CARLOS

You got the snitch transcript?

ERIC

(yes)

You're right. Your lawyer really
fucked up.

Eric moves off to a table nearby, behind a big bookshelf but
still close to the counter, out of visibility for the C.O.

Eric gives Carlos an official notice to sign. Carlos signs
it. Eric takes the red pen. As Carlos starts to move away,
Eric loses his smile and

STABS HIMSELF in the thigh with the pen. Blood spurts. Eric
falls on the ground, moaning.

As Carlos whirls to Eric --

WINSLOW

(to Carlos)

On your knees, face down, now.

CARLOS

I didn't touch him!

WINSLOW

Now!

Another C.O. comes in out of nowhere, and low-bridges Carlos to the ground. Eric, on the ground, watching Winslow subdue Carlos.

CARLOS

You're fucking dead.

Off Eric's blank look back at him --

INT. CELL BLOCK/MULE CREEK/ERIC'S CELL - NIGHT

HUNTER, on the bottom bunk.

HUNTER

Hear you lost a client.

As CAMERA MOVES to Eric, in the top bunk, in shorts, rubbing his damaged thigh, the wound almost healed --

HUNTER (CONT'D)

Carlos. Disciplinary problems.

Transferred out today.

(no response)

Third strike.

ERIC, staring into darkness as --

INT. IA / JERI WEINSTEIN'S OFFICE - DAY

As Lynch enters, closes the door --

SUPERED TITLE: MARCH 10, 2004 10:35 AM, "LA INTERNAL AFFAIRS".

JERI WEINSTEIN - 50's, tough but fair -- puts down a REPORT on the table.

WEINSTEIN

Russell investigation. Good work.

LYNCH

I'm not done.

WEINSTEIN

Yes you are, Sergeant.

(off Lynch's look)

The department's gonna reopen the Fisher case. RHD.

(MORE)

WEINSTEIN (CONT'D)

Corbin and Roberts are gonna do a full reinvestigation.

LYNCH

What happens to Russell?

(off the look)

The man framed a 17 year old kid --

WEINSTEIN

-- a overwhelmingly guilty 17 year old kid if I recall correctly, but in any case...

(tight smile)

Above our pay grade.

LYNCH

The letter to the parole board was nothing. I'm preparing a supplemental report --

WEINSTEIN

-- No, you're not. It's over, on our end.

(the report)

I'll pass this on to RHD.

Weinstein goes back to her work.

LYNCH

Boss, there's a second shoe print.

(off Weinstein's look)

Not verified yet, I know --

WEINSTEIN

-- Sergeant, you need to understand something.

LYNCH

Ma'am?

WEINSTEIN

The department's changed. Things were done differently back then.

LYNCH

Still. That doesn't make it right.

Lynch, face tight, gets up and walks out.

INT. IA OFFICE / BULLPEN - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Lynch, walking away, furious. LOUISE, watching, by her desk, worried.

EXT. IA OFFICE - DAY

Lynch, outside the building, in his suit, smoking. As Louise approaches, joins him --

LYNCH

It's over. They shut me down.

Louise takes his cigarette, takes a drag herself.

LOUISE

You did your job. The department
will deal with that asshole.

(hands back cigarette)

You did good.

Lynch takes another drag, drops the cigarette, grinds it out. *
Off Louise, still worried --

INT. VISITING ROOM / MULE CREEK PRISON - DAY

Eric, devastated, a phone pressed to his ear, Russell on the other side of the glass.

ERIC

We're done.

SHANNON

No, Lynch's done. You and me, we're
gonna fight this. We've got the
shoe print. This guy Raquel --

ERIC

-- Right. LAPD expert.

SHANNON

I've talked to the LA Times --

ERIC

-- Fuck the LA Times --

SHANNON

-- Murray and Roberts. They're good
reporters, they're interested --

ERIC

-- Yeah. Like Lynch was interested.

(then)

How much did you pay him?

SHANNON

What?

ERIC

How much of my father's money did you give Lynch? A taste, to string me along while he worked the complaint?

SHANNON

I get it, Eric. I get it. You're upset --

ERIC

-- I'm not upset. I feel like a big fat weight has fallen from my shoulders.

(then)

You. You're nothing but a fat useless leach. You're fucking fired.

And Eric hangs up the phone. He sits there, staring at Shannon, still on the phone, gesturing --

SHANNON

Pick up the phone. Talk to me.

Eric SPITS on the window. As the glob falls down the dirty glass, Shannon hangs up, stands, and, loudly:

SHANNON (CONT'D)

I'm not giving up.

Shannon walks away. Off Eric, just sitting there --

INT. LYNCH'S CAR / PARKING LOT OUTSIDE SHANNON'S OFFICE - DAY

Lynch waits. A pile of documents in his hands. On top, a report: "THE CASE OF ERIC FISHER: DID A FAULTY INVESTIGATION BY AN LAPD OFFICER LEAD TO ERIC'S MURDER CONVICTION?"

Glancing in his side view, he sees Shannon approaching.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Shannon and Lynch outside the car, as Shannon takes the report and the BATHROOM PHOTOS. Looks. Considers. Then:

SHANNON

You're gonna catch some heat for this.

LYNCH

Make it worth it.

EXT. LA TIMES - DAY

Through the window, SHANNON talks to MURRAY and ROBERTS.

SHANNON (PRE-LAP)
This is obviously someone else's
footprint.

INT. LA TIMES - BREAK ROOM - DAY

Shannon, at the table with MURRAY and ROBERTS, armed with a Lynch's report and the photos. As Roberts looks at the BATHROOM SHOEPRINT Shannon showed Raquel --

MURRAY
Yeah, we heard. Zig zag, not wavy -

SHANNON
Fisher's innocent. Dave Russell
framed him. And the department
covered it up.

ROBERTS
According to our sources the Fisher
case is being re-investigated.

SHANNON
And what's gonna come of that?
(obviously)
More cover-up.

Murray and Roberts share a look.

As a young woman enters the room, and gets a Coke from the machine --

SHANNON (CONT'D)
All I'm asking you to do is look
into Russell.

ROBERTS
We pulled clips on Fisher.

MURRAY
A lot of evidence against him, Mr.
Shannon. Maybe Russell helped it a
little --

SHANNON
-- He helped a lot. All the way. He
framed an innocent kid.

(then)

(MORE)

SHANNON (CONT'D)

You think the LAPD really cleaned up its act after Rampart? Rodney King?

(off the looks)

What about the cops who were here before? Who stayed through. You think they changed? Because a fucking commission told them they had to?

(disgusted)

I thought you guys were reporters.

Shannon leaves.

Murray and Roberts share a look, as the woman with the Coke moves to their table.

LESLIE

Dave Russell is a creep and a half. He coulda done that. What he said.

(off the looks)

I did a Styleside piece about on-line dating thing. Social life of city workers, lots of cops.

(then)

Russell was the worst. I had to take about three showers after.

Leslie leaves. Off Murray and Roberts, sharing a look --

INT. ERIC'S CELL / MULE CREEK PRISON - DAY

As Eric enters his cell --

SUPERED TITLE: JULY 3, 2004 16:35 AM, "MULE CREEK PRISON".

On his cell bed, an ENVELOPE with prison mail awaits.

Eric opens the envelope, takes out a letter written on LAPD stationary, scans it quickly, throws it in the toilet.

THE TOILET, the letter, as it starts to soak and bleed. The complaint against Robert Fisher. The conclusion: 'A finding of UNSUSTAINED.'

Eric, reflected in the water, as he FLUSHES the TOILET. Off his dark, hopeless eyes --

INT. ERIC'S CELL / MULE CREEK PRISON - DAY

Hunter ties off Eric's arm, wraps it HARD. Taps the vein to bring it up. Lights a match. Holds the flame to the bent spoon.

THE VEIN, throbbing.

THE NEEDLE, as Hunter moves the needle toward the vein.

Eric SLAPS the needle from Hunter's hand. Loosens the cloth. Leans back against the wall.

ERIC, staring into darkness as a BUZZ takes us:

INT. CELL BLOCK / MULE CREEK - DAY

Eric's cell door opens. A guard escorts him out. Eric, downbeat, lets the Guard move him off.

INT. STRIP SEARCH ROOM / MULE CREEK - DAY

Naked, Eric knows the drill: *Bend, spread cheeks, cough.*

IN. OUTSIDE STRIP SEARCH ROOM - DAY

Eric, buttons his shirt. Walks, PUSHING CAMERA BACK.

INT. VISIT ROOM / MULE CREEK - DAY

As Eric enters the visit room he spots Shannon, pressing RAQUEL'S REPORT to the glass.

Eric just stares at him.

Shannon flips pages, presses the BATHROOM SHOE PRINT to the glass. The ZIG-ZAG pattern.

Eric sits down, reluctantly. Stares at the report. Shannon waits, then picks up the phone.

Eric picks up his phone.

SHANNON

Verified, one hundred per cent, by
Ron Rawuel. Peer reviewed, ready
for court. Someone else was in the
house.

ERIC
If you're lying, I'm gonna --

SHANNON
(cuts him)
-- There's more.

As Shannon flips through the report --

SHANNON (CONT'D)
Raquel found something else. In the
coroner's files.

Shannon finds a PHOTO of MARY'S CRUSHED HEAD, holds it to the *
glass. Eric winces, looks away.

SHANNON (CONT'D)
None of the crims noticed it in
'83. Raquel says the science has
improved. I don't get it, but I
don't have to. Like I said, ready
for court.

Shannon pulls out a ENHANCED BLOWUP of the PHOTO, presses it
against the glass.

SHANNON (CONT'D)
See that?

Eric looks at the enhanced photo, tries to take it in.

ERIC
Same pattern.

SHANNON
Same shoe print. On her head. And
it's not yours.
(beat)
I'm thinking Mike Keller.

Eric, taking this in, overcome, looking away.

SHANNON (CONT'D)
The guys from the Times are coming
to talk to you about it.
(off Eric's look)
Murray and Roberts. They're in,
buddy.

Eric looks back at Shannon. A tear rolls down his face.

SHANNON (CONT'D)
I told you. I don't fucking give
up.

Off Eric --

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM / MULE CREEK - DAY

As Eric enters, and this time Murray and Roberts are waiting for him.

MURRAY
Mr. Fisher. Matt Murray.
(shakes)
It's an honor to meet you.

ROBERTS
(shaking hands)
Scott Roberts.

MURRAY
Anyone who can survive this. What
you've been through.

Murray and Roberts sit at the table, notebooks out. Eric sits.

ERIC
How does this work? Where do we
start?

Murray and Roberts share a look, and --

MURRAY
Detective Dave Russell. How about
we start with him?

A beat. Then, as Eric starts to speak --

INT. LAPD CENTRAL DIVISION - DAY

Russell coming into work.

SUPERED TITLE: "MAY 25, 2005, 9:15 AM."

Russell feels the buzz in the air. His colleagues. Rupert,
all the detectives, stop talking. Off the looks --

INT. IA OFFICE / BULLPEN/ LYNCH'S CUBICLE - DAY

Lynch gets to his desk. On it, today's morning edition of the
LA Times, opened. Lynch sees --

*
*

Printed PHOTOS of Russell, Eric, Lynch and under photos of the BLOODY SHOEPRINTS -- the headline: "NEW LIGHT ON A DISTANT VERDICT".

Lynch looks up as Louise enters the cubicle. Low, terrified:

LOUISE

What the fuck have you done?

SNAP TO BLACK:

END OF EPISODE