

FADE IN:

INT. BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT

Men and women, young and old, dressed in tuxedos and evening gowns, crowd a luxurious banquet room. Mellow JAZZ music fills the air.

MICHAEL HOGAN, 30s, youthful good looks giving way to a ruddy, weathered complexion, stands in the front of a long line of people at a portable bar.

The bartender hands Michael a martini.

MICHAEL

Gimme two... save me a trip.

Michael hands the bartender a ten dollar bill in exchange for two martinis.

Michael guzzles the first drink, sets the empty glass on a tray, and drifts into the crowd of people.

PODIUM

The EMCEE speaks into the microphone.

EMCEE

Man Of The Year for the third straight year. It is my honor tonight to introduce the greatest police chief this city's ever had... and come November, the next Mayor of Oakland... Chief Harry Hogan.

HEAD TABLE

HARRY HOGAN, impeccably groomed and fit for a man in his 60s, stands to a THUNDEROUS OVATION. KATE HOGAN, late 50s, elegant and classy, rises with him, giving him a tender kiss on the cheek.

Michael reaches across the table to shake hands with his father and knocks over a bottle of wine. His mother gives him a glare that cuts to the bone.

He quickly uprights the bottle, tosses a napkin on the spill. He again reaches for his father, but Harry has left the table for the stage.

PODIUM

Harry humbly gestures for the crowd to quiet. The room erupts in a chorus of CHEERS as everyone stands in unison.

HARRY

Thank you. Thank you all so much.

The CLAPPING AND CHEERING intensifies.

TABLE

STEVE DELANEY, 50s, circa 1970 haircut, ill-fitting tuxedo, stands at the table next to Michael's, pumps his fists in the air and shouts:

DELANEY

YOU GOT MY VOTE!

HEAD TABLE

Michael remains seated. He slumps in the chair, grabs a stray glass of wine and gulps it down.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

Banquet guests en masse make their way through the marbled foyer. Harry and Kate mingle with folks on their way out. Harry shakes a few hands then ducks into a door marked GENTS.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Harry hits the urinal with a happy SIGH. After a moment, SOUNDS OF VOMITING disturb the quiet.

Harry glances toward the stalls, noticing a pair of legs on the floor in one of them. He flushes the urinal just as the person RETCHES again.

Harry steps to the stall and finds Michael on his knees, dry heaving into the toilet. Harry shakes his head, hurries to the sink, washes and dries his hands, straightens his bow tie, and disappears out the door.

While chatting with a few people, Delaney's pager BEEPS. He glances at the message, hurries off.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

An ambulance, SIRENS screaming, races down a seedy urban street lined with liquor stores, dive bars, nail salons, and several scantily dressed women.

The ambulance comes to a SCREECHING halt, next to two parked police cars. As two MEDICS hop out, an unmarked police car arrives.

UNMARKED CAR

Still in his tuxedo, Delaney throws a FLASHING SIREN onto the dash, steps out.

He pushes his way through a small group of onlookers to find the MEDICS attending to an ELDERLY WOMAN, lying motionless on the sidewalk. One of the medics stops CPR and shakes his head to the other.

MEDIC #1

Looks like a heart attack. Load her up.

CINNAMON, 30s, stands next to the medics. She shivers in a miniskirt, torn fishnet stockings, and flimsy tube top. She blinks back tears, doing her best to remain composed.

Delaney, still wearing his tuxedo, confronts Cinnamon. He approaches her with a big grin on his face.

DELANEY

Well if it isn't Cinnamon, my favorite little spice girl.

Delaney points to the old lady.

DELANEY

What happened?

CINNAMON

This guy ran up and grabbed her purse. Hit here a coupla times, knocked her on her ass.

Delaney makes a few quick notes.

DELANEY

Then what?

CINNAMON

(pointing)

He ran off that way. I came right over. She wasn't moving at all, bless her heart.

DELANEY

You get a good look at him?

CINNAMON

Kinda short, five-eight or so. White guy. Typical crackhead.

DELANEY

Might be two or three guys in Oakland that fit that description.

Delaney glances in the direction of a run-down liquor store, then back at Cinnamon.

DELANEY

Don't go anywhere.

CINNAMON

(winking)

If I get lucky I'll be over at the Oak. Room 107.

Delaney nods, walks away.

INT. LIQUOR STORE

Delaney flashes his badge to a jittery, cigarette smoking CLERK.

DELANEY

I'll need your surveillance tape for the last hour.

CLERK

Yes sir, officer.

The clerk hands Delaney the tape.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Delaney returns, moving swiftly toward Cinnamon. She lights up a smoke.

DELANEY

I'm gonna need to follow up with you later.

CINNAMON

Just follow up huh? You're lookin' pretty fine in that monkey suit.

DELANEY

Business before pleasure.

CINNAMON

Delaney, you know I'll show you a good time. You're the only cop around here that doesn't expect free pussy.

Delaney smiles at Cinnamon, hops into his car and drives off.

Cinnamon walks over to a newly arrived car, sticks her head in the window.

INT. POLICE STATION EVIDENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Delaney sits at a long table, pops a tape into a VCR. A black man, REGGIE GOODMAN, late 20s, wearing a lab-coat and rubber gloves, looks over Delaney's shoulder.

TV SCREEN

The video image flickers on FAST FORWARD. Various patrons zip in and out of the store. A WHITE MALE moves to the counter.

DELANEY (O.S.)

Okay, slow it down.

Reggie pushes a button on a clicker. The tape slows to normal speed.

The white man fidgets in front of the clerk. He pays for a pack of smokes, then wanders off. Immediately after, a TALL BLACK MAN with a shaved head, tosses a twelve-pack of beer on the counter.

DELANEY (O.S.)

Freeze the tape.

The image freezes. A clear shot of the black man's face.

DELANEY

Well, I'll be damned. My favorite nigger's at the scene of the crime.

Reggie grimaces.

REGGIE

That looks like Elton Harris.

DELANEY

That is fucking Elton Harris. Oh man, the Chief is gonna love this.

EXT. MOTEL

Delaney cups his ear against the door, marked "Room 107". He knocks.

CINNAMON (O.S.)

Who is it?

DELANEY

Delaney... open up.

The door opens. Cinnamon stands, wearing only a skimpy tee-shirt that doesn't quite cover her butt.

CINNAMON

I'm beat honey. Can we hook up tomorrow?

DELANEY

This'll only take a minute.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

Cinnamon motions for him to come in. They both sit on the bed.

DELANEY

You told me the attacker was a six-foot two black man, with a shaved head and a brown leather jacket, right?

CINNAMON

What are you talking about? I told you he was a--

Delaney violently shoves his hand between Cinnamon's legs.

DELANEY

I'm talkin'... you're listenin'.

Cinnamon's skinny body quivers as she nods.

DELANEY

Tomorrow morning there's gonna be a cop killin' nigger in a lineup, and you're gonna point at him, and you're gonna say, "That's the guy who did it".

Cinnamon's eyes water.

DELANEY

Any questions?

Cinnamon hesitates, shakes her head.

Delaney reaches into his pocket, tosses a one hundred dollar bill to Cinnamon.

DELANEY

Rough day.

Cinnamon grabs the bill.

Delaney unzips his pants, pulls her face onto his lap.

INT. LAW OFFICE - DAY

MARTY KAMINSKY 40s, Brooks Brother's suit, not a hair out of place, looks at his watch, stomps down the hall, looks into an empty office. He turns to no one in particular.

KAMINSKY

Anyone seen Michael?

Just then Michael hurries in, wearing a rumpled suit and needing a shave. Kaminsky motions to Michael.

KAMINSKY

My office.

INT. KAMINSKY'S OFFICE

A well appointed office, decorated in wood, brass, and leather. Michael, sits across the desk from Marty. Kaminsky's temper flares.

KAMINSKY
How many times have we been over
this?

MICHAEL
You have all the answers... you tell
me.

KAMINSKY
You get your drinking under control--

MICHAEL
(protesting)
I don't drink that much.

KAMINSKY
...or you're gone.

MICHAEL
Everyone in this firm drinks. Bunch
of hypocrites.

Kaminsky ignores the comment, hands Michael a file folder.

KAMINSKY
Elton Harris. Manslaughter, robbery.
Sink or swim on this one.

Michael glances at the file.

MICHAEL
The cop killer?

KAMINSKY
The not-guilty cop killer.

INT. BAR - EVENING

Michael sits alone at the bar, looking through the "Harris
File" and making notes on a yellow pad. He picks up a glass,
sucks down the last few drops.

The bartender, LEO, notices the empty glass, reaches for it.

MICHAEL
(slurs)
Gimme a coke.

Imitating a news announcer, Leo covers one of his ears while
he holds a knife, like a microphone.

LEO

This just in. Hell has officially frozen over. Michael Hogan just ordered a soft drink.

Michael laughs.

MICHAEL

Gimme another vodka... then I gotta go.

Michael pulls his "Palm V" hand-held computer out of his pocket, opens it, squints trying to read the screen. He resumes reading the file.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Michael wobbles up the steps, badly HUMMING the song "WITCHCRAFT".

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY

Michael, still HUMMING, tries in vain to unlock his mailbox, fumbling with his keys.

ALLISON CHAMBERS, mid 30s, stunning from head to toe, stops at the row of mailboxes.

ALLISON

Need some help?

Michael gazes up at Allison and smiles.

MICHAEL

I'm not drunk you know, you just make me all flustered inside.

ALLISON

You're cute... you are drunk...
(glances at her watch)
and I'm late.

MICHAEL

I still owe you that dinner.

ALLISON

You have my number... use it.

She smiles and sashays out the door, into the night.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Michael stumbles across the living room, slides empty beer cans and pizza boxes off of the cushions, then flops down on the couch.

Michael takes out the "Harris File", starts to read it. After a moment he puts it down, clicks on the TV, cracks open a fresh pint of vodka, takes a long swig and promptly passes out.

Michael SNORES and SNORTS loudly on the sofa. He bolts up at the muffled sound of a FIGHT in the apartment below.

Michael takes a swig of vodka. The YELLING below magnifies, mixed in with the THUMPING sounds of hard objects crashing into walls.

Michael STOMPS his foot on the floor. The yelling stops. Total silence.

He finishes off the pint, tosses it onto the floor as the noise picks up again.

INT. HALLWAY

Michael knocks on an apartment door. The door opens a crack and Allison peeks out at Michael. She opens the door a little further.

MICHAEL
(very slurred)
You're makin' an awful racket down here. Everything alright?

ALLISON
I'm sorry--

JERRY COSTELLO, 40s, black pony-tail, tattoos covering muscular arms, yells from across the room.

COSTELLO
Hurry up baby... I ain't got all night.

Allison glances toward Jerry, looks back at Michael.

ALLISON
We'll keep it down.

Allison flashes a nervous smile, quickly closes the door.