

THE WORK OF ZOMBIES

Written by

Patricia Semler

Story by

James R. Prine

109 Lemon Court  
Kissimee, Fl 34743  
Scripdragon@cfl.rr.com  
407 344-8868

FADE IN:

**EXT. ANTEBELLUM ESTATE - NIGHT**

Ancient oaks stand guard over an abandoned Victorian estate house. Weeds have taken over formal gardens.

Behind the main house, a carriage house shows signs of habitation. Curtains. Fresh paint. Cultivated herbs in pots.

**EXT. CARRIAGE HOUSE - NIGHT**

Around back, lights and laughter come from the kitchen. Through the open door, a group of BLACK WOMEN dressed in simple shift dresses prepare food.

Deeper into the yard is a large barn. DRUMS beat. VOICES carry in a primal chant. The house lights just touch on lantern lights from the open doors of the barn.

**INT. BARN - PERISTYLE - NIGHT**

Salvaged house doors form a circular temple (Peristyle). Posters and paintings cover the walls. Saints and demons, animal totems and arcane symbols.

Three DRUMMERS hold forth. Mid-thirties, hard, dark faces.

A crowd of black and mulatto MEN and WOMEN sway to the drums. All ages, simple clothes, rapt with the closeness and heat.

Black ribbons cover a center support beam. At its foot, milk crates peek from under a red drape, forming an altar. A black candle drips wax onto its holder - a painted human skull.

LUCY NARCISSE (56) whirls through the dancers. Apron over a long full skirt, ebony skin, milk white dress. The Crone in all her glory.

**BARN**

Outside, to the left of the peristyle, horse stalls stand empty. At the back wall a door on wire hinges hangs open.

**MENAGERIE**

A bare light bulb swings over tables of wire cages and terrariums holding amphibians, toads, snakes, rabbits. Free roaming wildly colored chickens cluck around human feet.

DEVON NARCISSE (18) shuffles from cage to cage, crooning greetings, parceling out food, petting. His coal black face is smooth above tilted shoulders of a spinal deformity.

He scatters corn for the floor birds, reacts to a rise in the VOICES, picks up a terrarium holding a rat snake, heads out.

**PERISTYLE**

Devon weaves through the dancers, sets the snake on the altar, takes his place on a cane chair just behind.

A vibrant PRIESTESS (young 20s), mimics Lucy's moves in a counter-clockwise circle around the altar.

She and Lucy curtsey before Devon. He blesses the crowd with flicks of a bone rattle.

The DRUMS step up into a sharp staccato. The Priestess freezes. Her eyes roll up. Mouth goes slack. Then her limbs jerk wildly. She dances in a possessed frenzy.

Devon's eyes find Lucy. At her nod, his hands twitch. Miraculously his back straightens. Arms lift wide until he looks like a crucified man. Feet stamp to the beat.

DEVON

Carrefour. I am yours.

Lucy weaves through the crowd.

LUCY

I serve good, I serve bad.

DEVON

We serve good. We serve bad.

LUCY

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

The crowd joins in.

CHORUS

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

A coffin is paraded around the circle, placed at the altar.

Devon leaps off his chair, takes the snake out, dances into the crowd. Women shimmy against him in a fully clothed orgy.

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

Devon whirls out of the throng, deposits the snake in its cage, slips through a hidden door.

**BARN**

Behind the peristyle, Devon humps out his orgasm in time to the drums, a rag to his groin to catch his ejaculation.

**PERISTYLE**

SILENCE CRASHES. Motion stops. The priestess folds in a heap.

Lucy plucks a chicken from an open box, wrings its neck, sprinkles the blood on the altar. Splashes libations from a wine bottle.

LUCY

We give thanks for the blessings of  
Serpent and Rainbow.

The DRUMS resume in a dance beat. The crowd sways into one long, joyous undulating conga line. One of the Kitchen workers wraps the chicken in a tea towel, heads out.

Devon slinks around the dancers, joins Lucy and the Priestess at the barn door.

**EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT**

Cresting a shallow hill behind the barn, Devon and the Priestess follow Lucy through decayed, broken headstones and rampant weeds of an abandoned cemetery.

To a small chapel of flaking whitewash and tar paper roof.

**INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT**

Lucy lights candles. Salvaged bookcases overflow with bottles, jars. The box of a confessional makes a dark corner.

An altar set with white and red dominates the nave. A coffin leans upright against the back wall next to a trap door in the floor.

Lucy unlocks a cabinet, looks over small bottles of grisly things, such as lizard parts and snake skins. Dark liquids carry skull and crossbones labels.

Devon mimics her moves as she makes a ceremony of mixing together various powders and liquors. The Priestess reaches for a small dark glass bottle with a drawing of a fish.

Lucy slaps her hand away.

LUCY

That for taking the man, not waking  
the zombie. Think. Remember.

Lucy puts the bottle higher, resumes her artifice. More showmanship than actual magic. But the girl drinks it all in.

Devon pulls off the coffin lid. A MAN (28) rests inside, held upright by the tight walls, face slack, eyes open, lifeless.

LUCY (CONT'D)

This person was a plague on our  
streets. He was given to me when  
the police did nothing to protect.  
Now he will see justice done.

At Lucy's nod, the Priestess opens a window. The DRUMS invade as if right outside.

Lucy smacks the prisoner with a short whip. Full awareness then panic lights in his eyes. He remains immobile.

Devon swings a brazier. The air thickens with incense and smoke. Lucy gyrates dramatically.

LUCY (CONT'D)

They kill the man to take his  
zombie. O Shampwel O. Don't yell  
Shampwel O. They killed the man to  
take his zombie.

A bare trickle of sweat runs down the prisoner's face. Eyes scream for release. Devon hands Lucy an empty baby food jar. She waves it in the prisoner's face.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Here I hold your spirit. Your life  
is mine. You passed under the  
earth. Now come forward again.

The Priestess holds out a bowl of water. Lucy flicks drops on the man in a mime of baptism.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Be reborn with the name I give you.  
Matthew.

She brings a small tube from a bag at her bosom. Forces the slack jaw open, pushes a grayish paste to the back of his throat, massages the potion down his gullet.

More ritual blows sting Matthew's shoulders. He convulses, straightens, manages a step out of the box.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
This is how the gods deliver  
justice. No one give sanctuary nor  
aid to this lost soul.

Smoke envelops them. DRUMS crescendo. Lucy leads zombie Matthew to a makeshift cage where two more empty-eyed, ashen zombies (LUKE and JOHN) linger.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
This your home until I call you.

Lucy locks cabinets, puts out the candles. Matthew bumps up against a wall, stops moving. That trace of rationality crumbles, staring at a twist of twine holding the cage shut.

**INT. BARN - PERISTYLE - NIGHT**

The conga line snakes, bodies pressed close in a joyous mass. Food now out on tables, including a freshly roasted chicken, and a party atmosphere rocks the walls.

Lucy weaves through, comes face to face with MAMA (56), a tense, intelligent woman. Mama nods a deference.

LUCY  
The daddy has been dealt with. Make  
your sacrifices and he don't ever  
show his face again.

MAMA  
I keep the faith, mambo.

Mama waves to a basket of food stuffs, presses folding money into Lucy's fingers, melts into the safety of the crowd.

At the door, head low on his shoulders, Devon's eyes follow buxom women through his lashes.

The Priestess shimmies, trying to get him to follow her into the crowd. A flick of Devon's glance dismisses her.

**EXT. CARRIAGE HOUSE - DAY**

Dawn is a bare blush in the sky. Lucy rocks on the back porch, culling herb cuttings.

LUCY  
 (calls)  
 Devon. Get your lazy ass out of  
 that bed. We got a shop to open.

**INT. DEVON'S ROOM - DAY**

Fingers of light sneak under heavy curtains.

The room is small, neat with only a slat box bed, a chest of drawers and pictures of voluptuous women tacked to the walls.

A small television frizzes in and out of snow, color all but gone. Curled awkwardly, clutching a centerfold, Devon sleeps.

INSERT TV SCREEN - AMY SANDERSON, 24, Barbie doll bodacious, sunny blond, poses at a weather map of the Southern USA.

AMY (ON TV)  
 (lyrical Georgian drawl)  
 The heat index continues to hover  
 in the high nineties as we wait for  
 this front to get on up into the  
 Carolinas. It'll be another sultry  
 August day in Savannah, ya'll. So  
 take it slow. Back to you, Tucker.

**EXT. SAVANNAH ALLEY - DAY**

A dingy alley between three-story buildings.

A door slams open. Four wiry black TEEN BOYS carrying bulging sacks and boxes make a dash for a waiting sedan.

They skid to a stop at the car hood. The TEEN 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 hayseed nonchalance, steps out of a recessed door, keys and iphone in one hand, badge on his belt, pistol held loose but ready.

GUS (CONT'D)  
 Them ANGRY BIRDS make my job so  
 much easier.

The four drop their loot, turn and dash for the far end of the alley. Six UNIFORMED COPS break cover to ambush.

Two Teens hammer their way through the gauntlet. A shadow looms to block their escape. They skid to a stop.

MIKE CHAPDELAIN (33), stocky, in muscle shirt and jeans, cropped curly hair dark above a wide placid face, edges out of the shadow. His Police badge glints on a lanyard.

Mike nods a greeting, moving idly to put the Teens at a disadvantage.

MIKE

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

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

The Teens charge. Mike sidesteps, swings a four-foot pipe to sweep the legs of Teen One, twirls the weapon into the stomach of Teen Two to double him over.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Now I gave ya'll fair warning about doing this my way.

Teen One regains his feet, swings wildly. Mike ducks and shoves him away. Teen Two pulls a knife, loses it to a wrist numbing hit. A tap to the skull drops him.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I'm telling you, quit while you still got all your parts.

Gus and uniformed cop HARLEY (26) run up as Teen One rocks Mike's head with a punch to the face.

Mike shakes off the pain, scowls at the Teen.

Gus pulls up, holds Harley back.

GUS

No, stay back.

HARLEY

You sure?

GUS

We'll just wait 'til he's done.

Mike a second punch, grabs Teen One by the shirt and bounces the boy's head off the wall, hog-ties him with a stray wire.



Teen Two breaks for freedom. Mike sails the pipe between his legs to drop him, stalks over.

GUS (CONT'D)  
That's enough. Simmer down now.

He puts himself in the way, backs Mike up. Harley gets Teen Two in cuffs.

GUS (CONT'D)  
You still new to Georgia. We don't skin two-legged critters here.

Mike's eyes shift to Teen Two. The boy puts himself in the patrol car.

Gus herds Mike out of the alley.

SAVANNAH STREET

Facing them, store windows are shuttered with security gates. Dull neon signs flash behind grimy barred windows of the burgled pawn shop.

GUS (CONT'D)  
We done our part. Come on. I need some breakfast. You're buying.

Mike loses his belligerence, breathes deep, scans around.

MIKE  
Didn't notice any Waffle House down this way.

GUS  
You're still buying. You need to work on that temper, son.

MIKE  
I gave them fair warning.

GUS  
Right. Don't embarrass me. You'll wind up working with Jeffy.

They bracket a late model sedan, Gus at the driver's door.

MIKE  
That means you get Iris. That works.

Mike gets in the passenger side. Gus winces.

GUS

Damn, you walked right into that,  
Augustus.

He climbs in, starts the car.

They ease through a present day ghetto of boarded-up stores and barred windows on working shops. Riotous colors and flowerpots on second story window sills.

**INT. LUCY'S BOTANICA - DAY**

A tiny storefront. Floor-to-ceiling shelves of religious statues, strings of beads. Bottles of herbs and spices.

Further back, bottles labeled as spider eggs, lizard tongues, snake skin. Straw brooms twist into the roof beams. Chicken, bat, frog carcasses dangle. Not your neighborhood pharmacy.

SHONDRA (23), Halle Berry fine with Snookie fashion sense, watches Lucy work with pots and bottles. Wary, nervous.

Huddled in a corner, Devon steals lusting looks.

Green smoke, from a miniature cauldron on a Hibachi, wreathes Lucy's face. Her eyes drift between this world and somewhere else with theatrical flair.

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, waves Shondra off.

LUCY

You see anything here make you  
think this be of value to me?

SHONDRA

This all I got. You being greedy,  
old woman. How 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 at the girl, growls a threat and sweeps into the back room.

Shondra shoves the necklace back into her purse. Her eyes fall on Devon, narrow with consideration. A shimmy settles her cleavage. She offers a smile.

SHONDRA

Hey, sugar.

Devon ducks behind a wall. Peeks an eye out.

SHONDRA (CONT'D)

Come on, I ain't gonna bite.

Beaming, he moves 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 straight.

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 dares to tickle his arm. Raptured eyes drink her in.

#### **INT. LUCY'S BOTANICA - LATER**

Shondra exits, pocketing a small vial. At 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.

#### **BACK ROOM**

Lucy mixes talcum powder with colored salts. Devon slinks in, sorts out filled bottles to the shelves.

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.

**INT. DEVON'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Curled over his magazines, Devon yawns, slaps the television.  
The channel changes. Barely pulls in the signal.

ON SCREEN - TEDDY BARTHOLOMEW (34), a polished Wesley Snipes  
clone, moves between a pair of skeletons. On his left a  
severely distorted spine. On the right, perfect alignment.

TEDDY (ON TV)  
Advancements in kinesiology ...  
scopy, and joint aspiration ...  
break-through in correcting spinal  
deformation.

Devon's head snaps up.

TEDDY (ON TV) (CONT'D)  
Minimally invasive surgery ...  
Techniques ... erase ... misaligned  
vertebrae ... Offices ...

The screen frizzes into static. Devon falls out of bed to  
pound the set, but it's dead. Furious eyes chance on the  
fallen magazine. Teddy smiles from a full page ad.

**EXT. SAVANNAH STREET - DAY**

Better neighborhood of clean streets, color-coordinated  
boutique shops, and ancient trees. Heat shimmers off  
sidewalks under a high blue sky.

Middle-class PEDESTRIANS give way as Devon limps by, scanning  
doors for address numbers. He stops outside a sign matching  
the ad picture, pushes in.

**INT. TEDDY'S OFFICE - EXAM ROOM - DAY**

Spotless medical cabinets and equipment. Posters of bone  
structure. 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.

DEVON  
How much?

TEDDY  
Cash works best. Thirty thousand up  
front. Balance can be installments  
at a fair rate of interest.

### **RECEPTION**

Devon storms out. Teddy brings a folder to his RECEPTIONIST.  
RITA (27) is dark and pretty.

TEDDY (CONT'D)  
Trash it. Boy ain't got a pot to  
piss in.

He plucks a fresh folder from a short pile, reads, then  
smiles at a WOMAN (30s) sitting rigid in an elaborate back  
brace.

TEDDY (CONT'D)  
Ah, Mrs. Singer. Come on in. How's  
that brace working for you?

He lends a hand to help her up, guides her up the hall.

### **EXT. SAVANNAH STREET - DAY**

Eyes down, arms flying, Devon pushes his way through people.

His blind flight is brought up short by honking horns. One  
step into a street, he jumps back to the curb.

Anger fixes on a bank across the street. He looks for  
anything to throw. Nothing. Crosses the street.

### **INT. BANK - DAY**

Devon presses to the glass like a leering gargoyle. Fingers  
curl into fists. A PATROLMAN nudges him into motion.

**INT. CARRIAGE HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

Lucy hums over a stew pot. Devon drags in.

LUCY  
Where you been, boy?

DEVON  
Out.

LUCY  
We got it comfortable here. Don't  
be making mischief.

He wiggles onto a chair, doodles nervous circles on the table with his finger.

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

Lucy scowls, turns away, but Devon catches her disgust.

LUCY  
When the loa take you, you make sex  
magic. Til then don't be dreaming  
of things you know ain't coming  
true.

The door slams. Lucy turns. Devon's gone. Raises her eyes.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
Ain't for spite I tell him these  
things. I been a good servant.  
Could have given me a good child.

Tastes her stew. She grabs a flat basket, heads out.

**INT. MENAGERIE - DAY**

Devon doles out feed, picks up a chicken to caress, his only comfort. Low moaning carries over the animal sounds.

**BARN**

Devon locks the menagerie door, scowls at the zombies wobbling around a shortened stall. He flows along the sedan.

Stops at the driver's door. White paper on the seat catches his eye. He grabs out an advertisement for a new bank.

In anger he tears the paper. A dollar sign logo catches his eye. He frowns at the Savannah Bank photo.

Bank. Car.

Diving across the front seat, he digs underneath. A lock box yields a small-caliber pistol. He shoves it away.

DEVON

Can't rob no bank by myself.

He backs out, eyes lighting on the zombies.

**EXT. BARN - DAY**

Devon drives out the open doors, all three zombies crowded into the back seat.

**INT. BANK - DAY**

Small and 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.

Zombie Luke shoots an arm out to keep the door open. An exiting COUPLE stops short, back away from his hard staring eyes. Luke pushes in, moves the opposite way from Matthew.

The Couple slip out and hurry away. The door closes.

Zombie John stares at the door handle, clueless. Devon edges a hand around John to pull the door open.

Devon guides Zombie John to the teller line, bumps a HEAVY-SET WOMAN (40s). She whirls, ready to berate, but one look at the faraway eyes and slack jaw, and she clutches her bag, bolts from the line.

Devon peers around the room, hyper with nerves. He pushes Zombie John to the teller's window, shoves a note at the YOUNG WOMAN TELLER.

Her protest dies under Zombie John's cold glare. Rattled, she shoves some bills into a bag.

**INT. CAR - DAY**

Blocks away, the zombies crammed into the back, Devon counts out a pitiful handful of small-denomination bills. Anger spurts. Looks up. Across the street another bank.

**INT. SECOND BANK - DAY**

The zombies herd customers behind the officers' desks. Devon threatens the tellers, waves his pistol.

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 as blood streams down his face. She screams. Another woman faints.

That starts a chain reaction of screaming from the bank customers. Devon grabs the money bag, herds the zombies out.

DEVON (CONT'D)  
Ya'll stay down. I mean it.

He fires a shot in the air. People cower, heads down. Devon backs out the door.

**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  
People get hungry, angry. They do  
all sorts of things. Don't make it  
right, just desperate.

GUS  
And this philosophy is based on?

MIKE  
Katrina.

Gus sobers a bit, squints.

GUS  
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 meets Gus' eyes directly.

MIKE  
Myself.

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

GUS  
Oh, this gonna be fun.

**INT. BARN - DAY**

Devon herds the zombies into their pen, locks them in.

**MENAGERIE**

Devon dumps his loot. Small bills. Nowhere near enough. He shoves the money into hiding, pulls a bunny out of its pen.

**PERISTYLE**

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

**BARN**

Devon tosses the carcass to the zombies.

DEVON  
Remember who fed you red meat.

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

Matthew and John clutch legs. Pulling together they tear the body apart, retreat to corners to gobble their share.

**INT. NEWS TRUCK - DAY**

Parked outside the police cordon, Amy adjusts her make-up in a compact mirror. She pouts at the street.

AMY  
Really? Somebody robbed a bank down here? 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 wanted out of weather. This could be your big break.

AMY  
The only thing I'll break today is a nail opening this damn door. Let's get this over with.

**EXT. NEWS TRUCK - DAY**

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

STARK  
Detectives to your left.

AMY  
I know, I know.

She puts on a smile, grabs the microphone and saunters over.

AMY (CONT'D)  
Detectives, 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, wearing masks, 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 and slides behind the wheel.

Focused on herself, Amy pouts frustration.

AMY  
That's why Curtis sent me here. So he can document that he gave me a story to cover. This is so bogus.

A pair of WOMEN TELLERS come out of the bank. Heads together, shoulders blocking, the one sprinkles salt across the doorway. They hurry away.

AMY (CONT'D)  
Oh shut that thing off. There's no story here.

**INT. NEWS TRUCK - DAY**

Amy starts the motor, blasts the air conditioning. Stark gets in behind the wheel, reviews her coverage.

AMY  
Just erase it.

Stark tilts the view screen to Amy.

**INSERT CAMERA VIEWER** - The focus zooms past Amy to the tellers as the salt sprinkles to the ground.

TELLER (V.O.)  
No zombie will cross ...

AMY (V.O.)  
(overlapping)  
Oh shut that thing off. There's no story here.

Amy squints at Stark, gets a shrug.

AMY (CONT'D)  
Did she say zombie?

STARK  
Sounded like zombie to me. How fun is that?

AMY  
Do you see this neighborhood? If zombies hit the Chase downtown then we'd have a story. Let's go.

Stark shuts down the camera, stores it away.

**INT. WPAS BULL PEN - DAY**

Amy scans a police log, pauses at a bank robbery report, moves on. A second bank robbery report grabs her attention. She brings up both reports side by side.

AMY  
They hit banks back to back? Yeah,  
but nobody got hurt.

A finger edges to the delete key, pauses.

AMY (CONT'D)  
Unless they can't be hurt.

PRODUCER (O.S.)  
Sanderson, do you have an angle on  
that bank robbery?

Amy opens the Internet and types in Zombies. A list of web sites pops up.

AMY  
Give me fifteen minutes.

#### **BROADCAST STUDIO**

Small, cluttered with equipment. Stations for weather and sports flank the two person anchor desk. TECHNICIANS hustle behind the cameras and lights.

At the desk, Amy fusses with her clothes and the position of the microphone pinned to her too-low collar.

The PRODUCER (28) over-caffeinated, wiry thin, walks over, reading a paper. He drops it on the desk, red lines sections.

PRODUCER  
No. No. No. Okay with this part.  
And you can't use the video.

He marches away. Stark grins beside the main camera as the AD counts down soundlessly, gives Amy a cue.

AMY  
This is Amy Sanderson, WPAS News.  
Well, it looks like zombies are no  
longer after blood-red brains.  
They're after green, as in money.  
Two banks were terrorized today.

#### **INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - DAY**

The detective squad gathers around a television.

INSERT SCREEN - Amy at the anchor desk.

AMY (ON TV)

Witness statements agreed that the thieves were glassy-eyed and slow moving. The police have no comment on the reality of zombies invading our community.

BACK TO SCENE

CHIEF WALTERS (56), a sweating Tommy Lee Jones look-alike, wags a finger at the screen, glares at his force.

WALTERS

Going to a hundred and four in the shade. The Mayor with a convention of movie investors coming in. Last thing I need is a bunch of island blacks freaking out. Squash this.

The group breaks up.

**INT. LUCY'S BOTANICA - DAY**

Devon tends to his work with nervous energy, anxious to be elsewhere. Lucy pays him no mind.

**EXT. CARRIAGE HOUSE - DAY**

Lucy mounts the back porch steps as Devon backs to the barn.

LUCY

Don't be using all my gas. Lord, I'll never understand boys with their cars.

She lets herself in.

Devon watches from behind the wheel. He slides out, darts into the barn, returns leading the zombies.

**EXT. THIRD BANK - DAY**

Devon herds the zombies out of the building and into the car, throws a heavy bag on the seat. He peels out as alarms go off. Patrons stream out.

**INT. FOURTH BANK - DAY**

Big and clean. Maybe a dozen patrons.

Senior Teller Mama locks on as Zombie Matthew bulls his way through the line. Terrified recognition widens her eyes. She touches a fetish necklace, lets out a scream.

Devon turns Matthew to the front door, waves the gun.

DEVON

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

Mama wheezes out prayers to all gods.

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

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

Patrons freak out. Scream. Scramble. Devon shoots a MAN at the front door, trying to push past Matthew.

DEVON (CONT'D)

Down! Everybody, down. You. Money. Now.

A SECOND TELLER 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 out by the hair. Fingers find a letter opener. He stabs in a frenzy.

Devon whistles and herds the zombies out.

CAR ENGINE ROARS, TIRES LAY RUBBER. People fight to get out.

**INT. THIRD BANK - DAY**

Gus examines a hollow camera. Mike comes up, on his cell.

GUS

How do you not install real cameras? I swear I don't understand these people.

He tosses the camera onto the manager's desk.

MIKE

Got another hit, two blocks over.

GUS

Shit, piss and corruption! We don't catch this gang, you know it's our fault 'cause cops don't give a damn about this neighborhood.

They head for the main doors.

**EXT. FOURTH BANK - DAY**

COPS and EMTs work the scene. REPORTERS and curious onlookers crowd the crime-scene tape. Amy comes into frame.

AMY

It's chaos here, Chuck. Two dead, bodies savaged.

CAMERA POV slides past her to a man being loaded into one ambulance. Body bags are loaded into a second.

**INT. DEVON'S CAR - DAY**

Parked in an alley, motor idling, doors open, Devon half-way in the back, trying to stanch the blood from John's chest.

John labors a final breath. Devon sits back, scared, looks around. A dumpster stands open not far away.

**EXT. ALLEY - DAY**

Devon cruises out. In the dumpster, John sprawls dead.

**MONTAGE - SAVANNAH STREETS**

Newspapers, legit and tabloid, lead with zombie headlines and lurid movie stills.

Televisions in store windows feature Amy and movie zombies.

Botanicas do a brisk business.

White pedestrians look twice at every black face.

Ghetto stores close early.

As night closes in, black families hustle children into houses. Doors and windows are locked. Candles light windows. DRUMS pulse an undertone.

**INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - DAY**

Mike and Gus plow through paperwork.

Trendy detectives IRIS (28) and JEFF (30) enter, lock onto the pair. Jeff hunches and shuffles in a movie zombie lurch.

JEFF  
Brains. Brains.

His fingers barely brush Mike's shoulder. Mike catches the hand and drops Jeff to his knees in a blink.

IRIS  
Hold on there, Chaplin. Don't kill him. We was just funning.

GUS  
You two don't have anything better to do? Like work a case?

Mike lets Jeff up, goes back to work.

JEFF  
At least we cover the whole case. Not like two senior detectives missing a little fact like their bank robbers are zombies.

MIKE  
Zombies?

JEFF  
Do you not watch the news?

He grabs a remote, switches television channels.

INSERT TV - Amy on screen. A movie zombie graphic behind her.

AMY (ON TV)  
Described as ashen with vacant eyes, and impervious to pain.

BACK TO SCENE

Jeff mutes the television.

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

MIKE  
She's not talking about a new gang?



GUS

No, it appears to me she's talking  
NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD critters.

Mike rolls his eyes, goes back to his paperwork. Iris and  
Jeff retire to their nearby desks.

MIKE

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

GUS

Dang. That's where I know those  
hooters, I mean face.

MIKE

A real reporter would know better.

GUS

Zombies. That's better'n chasing  
down good ole boys or hip-hoppers.  
They don't move so fast.

Walters drops a tabloid with a full-page walking dead zombie  
headline on Mike's desk.

WALTERS

Where are you on this?

MIKE

Forensics got some prints for  
processing. Finally got a security  
camera that works.

WALTERS

This little girl is getting  
everybody worked up. Make me look  
good and put an end to it.

He retires to his office. Jeff digs in his bottom drawer.  
Tosses a string of garlic on Mike's desk. Mike brings it to  
his nose, inhales deeply.

JEFF

Damn, son, that wasn't a hint to  
start cooking. It's for them  
zombies.

GUS

Jeff, you're an idiot. Garlic is  
for vampires, not zombies.

MIKE

If there was such a thing.

IRIS  
Now Chaplin.

Mike stashes the garlic in a drawer.

MIKE  
Chap De Laine. It's French.

IRIS  
French or Cajun, it's a mouthful.  
Being from N'awlans and all, bet  
you seen all them hoodoo things.

Mike sits back in the chair with dead-pan solemnity.

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 uncomfortable. Iris' confidence wavers.

WALTERS (O.S.)  
Iris, Jefferson, are you doing  
anything useful?

The pair bury heads in papers. Gus digs in his desk.

MIKE  
Drawer ain't big enough for you to  
hide in.

GUS  
I got Holy Water in here somewhere.  
We're gonna need it.

**INT. TEDDY'S OFFICE - DAY**

Devon plops a cloth bag on the desk. Rita hovers in the door.

RITA  
I told him.

TEDDY  
It's fine. I got this.

She pulls the door shut.

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

Teddy looks in the bag. Avarice lights and he sets it under  
the desk, smiles.

TEDDY  
Pull up a chair. We can fit you for  
a brace and start physical therapy.

DEVON  
No braces. No therapy. On the  
television you said you can 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 and  
surgeries and therapy. And there's  
no guarantee we can get your bones  
to align.

Devon flushes with rage. The chant starts deep in his chest.

TEDDY (CONT'D)  
Don't you go crazy on me. I'll call  
the police.

Devon weaves, puffing up with his ceremonial polish. A bundle  
of feathers and chicken feet appears from a pocket.

Teddy recoils from a swipe across the face with the fetish.

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

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

He 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.

**INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - DAY**

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 not twenty feet off target. I couldn't make these guys in a line up. Can you?

MIKE

One, two and three back there, all shuffling like they have to think about one foot in front of the other. Could be high. This boy.

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

MIKE (CONT'D)

Knows enough to not let anyone get a good look. Five nine-ish maybe, hundred seventy-five, island black, 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. Looks like a bum leg or a bad back.

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

GUS

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

Harley passes by, hands off a report. Gus winces reading it.

GUS (CONT'D)

You sure about zombies not being real?

MIKE

Sure as you're standing there.

GUS  
 Maybe I'm not. Our knifer died of  
 food poisoning three months back.

Gus hands off the report.

MIKE  
 Dead men don't rob banks. Let's  
 talk to the family.

**INT. FAMILY HOME - DAY**

Fussy trappings of wealth mask drab poverty. MARIGOLD (26)  
 dark, 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 sit  
 and cry how he couldn't find work  
 befitting his station. I found  
 work!

She shrugs on a suit jacket, grabs up purse and keys, tight  
 fingers betraying her nerves. Mike offers a photo - a death  
 scene candid.

MIKE  
 Is this him?

She leans in for a quick look, straightens.

MARIGOLD  
 That's him. That's Hector.

Mike offers a second photo - a still from the security  
 camera. Marigold looks, 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 called three times.  
 (MORE)

MARIGOLD (CONT'D)

All I get is a piece of paper telling him to stay away. How was that going to keep him from breaking in my door?

MIKE

Can't change the past, ma'am. Can you tell us anything that will help us track him down?

MARIGOLD

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

She marches to the door, blocking a small Haitian shrine. Gus heads out. Mike pauses. Their eyes catch. Interest sparks.

MIKE

Erzueli Frieda likes fresh flowers and chocolates. Appreciate your time.

Marigold stares after him.

**EXT. SAVANNAH STREET - DAY**

Gus watches Marigold scuttle 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. Let them come in with their snakes and hallelujahs and we won't have to worry about any walking dead men.

Mike laughs, heads up the street.

**MONTAGE - SAVANNAH STREETS**

Surrounded by a sea of black faces, Gus and Mike work the streets. Wary eyes track them from store to store.

Heads shake negatives to questions. Faces remain hostile.

Newsstands hawk tabloids with zombies.

A flamboyant street musician regales them with zombie lore.

A street peddler sells charms and potions.

Garbage men collecting dumpsters get a surprise when they find Zombie John in the refuse.

Lucy passes a newsstand, doubles back to screaming zombie attack headlines.

**INT. BARN - DAY**

Slumped in the car, Devon wallows in misery. The upholstery gleams with fresh deep cleaning.

The barn door occludes. He shivers, looks up.

Backlight gives Lucy an illusion of height. She takes a step, shrinking back to normal size.

LUCY  
Where you been, boy?

He sinks lower. Lucy glares past the car to the zombie pen.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
You messing with my zombies? Where the other one?

He keeps silent. She drags the door open, grabs an ear.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
Answer me.

DEVON  
Got shot. Had to dump him.

Fury gives him a vicious shake.

LUCY  
Bullets don't kill my magics.

DEVON  
No magic gonna stop a body from bleeding out. Bank guard think to be a hero, start shooting. Nothing I could do.

LUCY  
Where is he now?

DEVON  
Threw him away. Nobody come looking for you.

He wilts under her furious glare.

LUCY

Why you in a bank at all?

Defiance flickers. Lucy shakes him.

LUCY (CONT'D)

It's that girl. Ain't it.

DEVON

Went to a doctor. He was gonna fix my bones straight. Needed money.

LUCY

Damn fool boy. No doctor can help you. Only the loa make your back straight.

DEVON

The loa comes and he goes. I want to be straight all the time, be a proper man.

LUCY

Boy. Doctors told me when you was teeny little, there ain't nothing can be done. You think for one minute I leave you like this if that not so? You get these fool thoughts out of your head.

She pushes him away, turns on her heel. The house door slams. Devon simmers under a building fury. He turns the engine over, pulls out in a rush.

**EXT. SHONDRA'S HOUSE - DAY**

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

Shondra comes out, on a cell phone, sits on the steps. When she hangs up, he steps forward. She shrieks, blinks recognition, snarls.

SHONDRA

What are you doing jumping at me like that?

He edges closer like a lost puppy.

SHONDRA (CONT'D)

I said I'd pay you when I could.



DEVON

Don't want your money. Want you.

SHONDRA

You 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 loud. One GIRLFRIEND leans on the window to point and laugh at Devon.

Furious, he flicks the fetish at her.

She stumbles, falls out of sight. Satisfied, Devon leaves.

Shondra helps her up. They laugh over a broken shoe heel.

**INT. MENAGERIE - DAY**

Devon shoves in, hits a table of cages, sets them shaking. He slams around the room.

Chickens scramble away from kicking feet. He staggers against the snake table. The top slides loose. Fangs sink into flesh.

Devon howls, flings his arm up and around. Snake won't let go. Fingers squeeze just behind the head to release the jaws. He slams it to the ground, grabs a shovel and pounds it dead.

DEVON

Son. Bitch. You. Bite me? I teach you respect.

Still enraged, he swings the shovel at the cages. Glass splinters. Blood flies. Chickens squawk.

With the last terrarium smashed, Devon falls to his knees, exhausted. He looks at the carnage, wails.

DEVON (CONT'D)

Oh, my children. See what you make me do. Bad woman.

**PERISTYLE**

Blinded with tears, Devon lays dead chickens on the altar.

DEVON

My children I give to you. Taken in anger. Anger only do I crave. Anger and hate and the will to do what must be done. Baron Ghede, hear and answer me.

LATER

Devon faces Baron Ghede's portrait. His outfit mirrors the painting - black frock coat, top hat, features outlined in white paint. Devon adds sunglasses with one lens missing.

**INT. WPAS - NEWSROOM - DAY**

On her computer, Amy highlights the same picture of Baron Ghede. Caption - Lord of the Dead.

The Producer walks up.

PRODUCER

We're pulling your story. The front office just got off the phone with the mayor. People are walking on eggshells.

AMY

So we ignore the ratings bump?

He takes a moment to wrestle conscience.

PRODUCER

Talk to the cops. Get a fresh angle or it's back to weather.

**INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - DAY**

Iris and Jeff make like they're busy. Walters hovers, thumbing through papers.

WALTERS

Zombie purse snatcher on Magnolia?  
Zombie stealing food. Damnation.  
It true you can only kill these things with a head shot?

Mike and Gus stroll up.

JEFF

That's what they do on WALKING DEAD.

MIKE

People, the dead do not walk.

WALTERS

We got a Haitian population ready to bust over these voodoo zombies. You explain these things.

MIKE

Psychotropic poisons, power of suggestion and generations of superstition.

Everyone stares. Mike shrugs amusement, brings several coins out of his pocket to weave through his fingers.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Just cause I talk slow don't mean I ain't been to college. African tribes used captured prisoners as slaves. The slaves were made with poisons that mimic death and plenty of 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

Sometimes the poisons wipe out memory. And fear works against the victim. If everyone you know thinks you've died, you're dead.

JEFF

They eat brains.

MIKE

Movie zombies eat brains. I never understood why.

WALTERS

All very interesting, but this is not getting these fools off our To Do list. Chapdelaine, stay lucid about this.

He heads for his office. Mike joins Gus at their desks, pulls out a city map. Marks bank jobs.

MIKE  
Localized hits, but no pattern.

GUS  
Targets of opportunity in an area  
he's comfortable with.

MIKE  
We could try a stakeout.

GUS  
We ain't got that kind of manpower  
and the chief will never go for it.

Iris shuffles folders on her desk, pulls out Zombie John's photo, stares perplexed.

IRIS  
I've seen this fool before.

Jeff glances, drags a file box from under his desk, digs.

IRIS (CONT'D)  
No missing person reports.

Jeff straightens with his nose in a folder, slaps it open 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 should be talking to the people who would know how to mix the poisons.

He heads for the door. Gus hurries to catch up.

GUS

Much obliged, guys.

Jeff grins until he meets Iris' frosted eyes, gets busy.

**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

I got good magic to keep trouble from your doors. White candles at every window. Fresh bread and milk for the loa. Just a sprinkle of magic on the step. Too much and nobody go in or out.

Three heads nod understanding. The door TINKLES open. Heads turn. Eyes widen.

Mike and Gus saunter in. Gus, with a sour twist to his mouth, fixes on the creatures tacked to the ceiling.

The customers dart out, faces averted.

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

LUCY (CONT'D)

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

MIKE

We're not INS. Savannah PD. We're investigating some cases of food poisoning.

He shows his badge. Lucy sniffs at it, straightens regally.

LUCY

All my goods is natural, healthy juju. Island medicine. Ain't no poisons here.

Gus shifts his line of sight to jars with odd labels and odder contents.

GUS

No? Then them wombat eyes is really jelly beans? Maybe I'll give a call to the Board of Health.

LUCY

You do that. Maybe I call the mayor and the press. Tell them the police is harassing people of color.

MIKE

Maybe we can all be civil about a few questions.

They both glare at him. Lucy huffs a regal indignation, refusing to yield.

GUS

Straight to the point then. 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

Somebody's doing a good job of making them seem real.

LUCY

Kids. Damn fool kids. That's all. If they not getting high, they making mischief. Maybe you try that Halloween store, find out they buying masks to scare people.

GUS

Kids?

LUCY

Look out the window. They got no job, no schooling and plenty sass. What else they gonna do?

MIKE

Anybody in particular you might care to point out?

He drops coins into a begging bowl set in the middle of the chaos. Lucy holds her glare when his eyes turn to her.

LUCY

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

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

MIKE

Appreciate your time, ma'am.

**EXT. LUCY'S BOTANICA - DAY**

Exiting, Gus takes a hard sour look up the block.

GUS

Lord have mercy, it's going to take us all day to hit every one of these boogety shops.

Getting silence, he glances, reads a tension in Mike's face.

GUS (CONT'D)

Oh, make my day and say we ain't gotta go any further.

MIKE

Not sure. If she is a mambo, she wouldn't be running these things in public view. Her standing in the community depends on good will.

GUS

We're not in Haiti.

MIKE

We are in a culture that's operated in secrecy and fear for generations. No one would give her up if she were the mastermind.

GUS

Don't look like she's hurting for a livelihood.

Gus studies Lucy's window.

GUS (CONT'D)

Well no sense to standing here looking like fish out of water.

He rounds the car to the driver's door. They're abruptly a conspicuous minority in a sea of black faces as a surging, dancing mob rounds the corner and fills the street.

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

Gus falls into defensive posture. Mike's suddenly at his back, arrests a pistol draw.

MIKE

Let them go.

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

GUS

I didn't see no permits for a parade.

MIKE

They're blessing their homes against demons.

GUS

They can't just buy locks?

The parade works its way down the street.

Returning to the passenger side, 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, gets in the car.

Lucy signs against the evil eye, retreats deep into the shop.

#### **INT. CHAPEL - DAY**

Devon, decked out in Baron Ghede clothes and white paint, goes through the poison cabinet. He carefully measures out liquids and powders into a bowl.

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

DEVON

Give me your strength, Baron. Guide my actions that justice is served.

The bowl goes back to the bench. He cranks the music up to ear-shattering levels and throws himself into a dance.



Painted Demon faces leer from the walls. Candles flicker and flare. The Drums pound. Faster and faster Devon whirls, reaching a peak of frenzy.

The music stops. He collapses. Rising, his back straightens and a sinister purpose lights his eyes. He laughs.

**INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - DAY**

Mike digs through paperwork. Gus works his computer, enlarges a city street map, turns the screen to Mike.

GUS

Okay. Say we staked out these few banks here, put uniforms all around, we could herd him in like a pig to slaughter.

MIKE

Works for me.

Mike swivels the monitor to study the map. Gus heads for Walters' office.

Walters shows Amy out as Gus comes up.

WALTERS

Talk to the Detective Chapdelaine. Right over there.

Amy studies her quarry.

WALTERS (CONT'D)

If you ask nice he might let you ride along on a run. Tell him I said it should be a priority.

Walters escapes into his office with Gus. Amy saunters through the room, drawing glances from everyone she passes.

AMY

Detective Chaplin?

Without looking up.

MIKE

Chapdelaine. Do I need to spell it for you?

AMY

I'll take a card. Amy Sanderson. WPAS news. I'm covering the zombie bank heists.

Mike leans his chair back to study her.

MIKE

Ah huh. I'm reminded of something  
Abe Lincoln is reported to have  
said to Harriet Beecher Stowe.

AMY

Who?

MIKE

She wrote UNCLE TOM'S CABIN.

AMY

And his quote?

MIKE

So you're the little lady who wrote  
the book that started this great  
war.

Clueless would be a generous description of her non-reaction.

MIKE (CONT'D)

What can I do for you, Ms.  
Sanderson?

AMY

Do you have any leads on the  
zombies?

MIKE

I'd appreciate it if you'd stop  
calling them that. Gives people the  
wrong idea.

AMY

What's the right idea?

MIKE

Some slick thieves think they have  
a gimmick. They pick on smaller  
banks in poor neighborhoods and  
play on people's fears.

AMY

So you don't believe in zombies.

Mike takes his time, disliking her energy.

MIKE

Don't matter what I believe. It's  
what people hear and see on the  
news.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

You rile up a community there's no telling what will happen. Makes my job harder.

AMY

Keeping secrets makes my job harder, detective. I have to report something.

Gus returns, checks Amy out.

GUS

I know you. You're the Channel Six weather girl. What brings you out of the green screen business?

She shies away from his deliberate brush by.

AMY

I'm covering the zombie bank robbers.

GUS

We don't call 'em zombies.

MIKE

I told her that.

GUS

Makes people antsy.

MIKE

Told her that too.

AMY

What he hasn't told me is if you have any leads on this case. What can I say in my report?

GUS

We don't have any leads. We're working on making a solid ID from security tapes.

She pouts at him, locks onto the computer screen.

AMY

Is this where you're looking?

Mike turns the screen, heaves up out of his chair. She turns on the charm, daring him to ignore her.

AMY (CONT'D)

Come on, guys, help a girl out.

MIKE

You want to be taken seriously as a reporter? Then report the news seriously. Zombies do not rob banks. If you'll excuse us, we have work to do.

AMY

Your captain said I could tag along.

Gus and Mike share a dubious look.

GUS

Why don't I follow up on that DOA? You take Lois Lane for a ride.

Mike scowls at Amy's bright smile.

**INT. MIKE'S CAR - DAY**

Mike drives with half an eye on Amy in the passenger seat.

AMY

So you don't believe in zombies.

MIKE

Most rational folk don't. Here's a quote for you.

She grabs her cell phone out to video him.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Ninety percent of what you think you know about voodoo, Hollywood made up. Somebody got hold of a good ghost story and there you go.

She drops the phone away, pouts.

AMY

If you're not going to be up front we can turn around right now.

MIKE

No. I have a better idea.

**EXT. SYLVIA'S BOUTIQUE - DAY**

One of antebellum's finest three story homes. Under the wrap-around porch, the bottom front rooms have been converted to flower shop and botanica/boutique.

Cultivated gardens of flowers and herbs line the walk. Upper floor windows frilled with fine lace curtains.

**INT. SYLVIA'S BOUTIQUE - DAY**

Brightly painted. Neat shelves of religious statues. Tables of sachets, soaps, candles. Beads and incense. Further in back, bottles of exotic ingredients, mummified creatures.

Amy follows Mike inside, unimpressed with the everyday stuff, fixes on the embalmed animals wired to the ceiling.

SYLVIA BOUVIER (62) smiles from the store rear. Tall and elegant, mocha skin glows in her long white dress and head wrap. Merry eyes twinkle.

MIKE

Mrs. Bouvier is a High Priestess in service to the loa.

SYLVIA

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

Mike flashes his badge.

MIKE

Official business, ma'am. You've heard about the bank robberies?

SYLVIA

How can one not. Zombies are good for ratings, no?

AMY

Amy Sanderson, WPAS news. Are you confirming that these robbery suspects are zombies?

She digs her iPhone out to record. Sylvia glances at Mike. He shrugs. She smiles at Amy.

SYLVIA

You wish to believe.

AMY

I wish for a good story.

SYLVIA

Ah. For that you should go to the library.

AMY

Look, this is my job. Are these men  
zombies or not?

Mike offers a grainy photo from the bank camera. Sylvia  
frowns over it, hands it back.

SYLVIA

Difficult to say. If they are, they  
are men under compulsion. They must  
be made whole and released.

AMY

But they are dead.

SYLVIA

Their free will is dead, not the  
flesh.

AMY

That tells me nothing. Have you  
made zombies yourself?

MIKE

I apologize for her, ma'am.  
Apparently facts shouldn't get in  
the way of higher ratings.

SYLVIA

Let those with eyes, see. I can do  
nothing for a closed mind.

Sylvia retreats to an inside room. Amy scowls, follows.

#### **DISTILLING ROOM**

A true apothecary with shelves of jars and bottles, tables of  
glassware. Sylvia pulls bottles here and there.

AMY

If they were real, who would do  
something like that?

SYLVIA

A bokor. A sorcerer.

AMY

So we are dealing with black magic.

Sylvia studies her, curious, amused.

SYLVIA

Power is neutral. The intent is black or white. Shall I demonstrate for you? A love potion perhaps?

AMY

I don't believe in magic.

SYLVIA

Yet you believe the undead walk.

Amy simmers, frustrated for a strategic advantage.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

I have it. A charm to bring success. It is difficult for a woman in your business. No?

AMY

You have no idea.

Sylvia spoons powders and liquids into a small pot. Mike hangs back at the door, eyes flicking from Amy's closed body language to Sylvia's artistry.

AMY (CONT'D)

What are you putting in there?

SYLVIA

Powdered herbs, distilled essences. Every potion is different, just as every person is different. What will work for you will be useless to this police officer.

Amy impulsively sticks fingers in the pot, sniffs the material and rubs her fingers together.

AMY

Looks like baby powder and smells like perfume to me.

SYLVIA

A houngan following the loa doesn't countenance black magic.

AMY

Houn? Hoogoo?

MIKE

Houngan. Translates to priest.

Amy eyes Sylvia with fresh suspicion.

AMY

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

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

SYLVIA

That is movie nonsense. This is proper magic. And no, you don't drink it. You wear it. See what happens.

She offers the phial on a cheap 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. MIKE'S CAR - DAY**

Amy holds the phial to the light, frowns at the swirl of color. She drops the thing into her pocket.

AMY

This was a waste of time.

MIKE

This is how we work. We chase leads. Gather information. Eliminate possibilities.

AMY

Give reporters the run around?

MIKE

TV cop shows have an hour to solve a crime. We take all the time we need, and we double-check our research before committing a report to paper.

Amy huffs annoyance. He puts the car into drive.

**INT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

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



Sylvia hums over cooking pots, accepts Mike's kiss to the cheek when he comes up from behind.

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

I play to expectations. Who am I to dissuade such a closed mind?

MIKE

I'd never ask you to reveal secrets to outsiders, let alone a reporter.

SYLVIA

She will report what she cares to see. Neither of us can change that. Have you slept with her?

MIKE

That's a little personal. No.

SYLVIA

Good. You will need all your energy to defeat this bokor.

His RINGING CELL PHONE saves him from answering.

MIKE

Yeah, Gus. Yeah, you're in the right place. I'll let you in.

He stashes his phone, heads for a hall door.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Hope you don't mind.

SYLVIA

I had a suspicion I would have company for dinner.

**INT. SYLVIA'S BOUTIQUE - DAY**

Gus follows Mike through, bats away a hanging carcass.

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

MIKE  
 If you don't believe it can hurt  
 you, it won't.

**KITCHEN - DAY**

The men enter. Gus' nerves lighten at the normal setting.

MIKE  
 Sylvia Bouvier, my partner, Gus  
 Hutchins.

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

SYLVIA  
 Welcome.

GUS  
 My pleasure. 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.

**INT. SYLVIA'S BOUTIQUE - KITCHEN - DAY**

Mike clears away dishes. Sylvia reviews the files with Gus.

GUS  
 Cause of death is here.

He points out a section. She squints at the page, opens the  
 second folder to read and compare.

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

(MORE)

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

(French)  
Puffer fish, Michel?

MIKE

(French)  
Possible. Stinging nettle could  
substitute for Datura.

SYLVIA

(French)  
Spiders and toads. Materials easy  
enough to obtain. It is the belief  
that worries me.

Gus looks from one to the other.

GUS

One of ya'll want to put that into  
proper English.

Mike shrugs an apology, pulls up a chair.

MIKE

Puffer fish neurotoxin shows up as  
food poisoning unless you're  
looking for a neurotoxin. These  
test results are useless.

GUS

Now hold on, you've been telling us  
zombies ain't real.

MIKE

Movie zombies aren't. Outside of  
the fish, the ingredients are all  
hypnotics. Combine ceremony with  
peasant ignorance and the power of  
suggestion and poof, you have  
walking dead men.

Sylvia slaps the folder closed, pushes it away.

SYLVIA

These are peasant ways. No one in  
any society would be so obvious.

GUS

Society?

SYLVIA

Many of our words took on double  
meanings to avoid prosecution from  
the overlords.

(MORE)

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
 So what you call a church,  
 followers of the loa call a  
 society. It is a peaceful religion.  
 Michel 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  
 should get back to work.

**INT. SYLVIA'S BOUTIQUE - DAY**

Trailing Sylvia and Mike, Gus stops under a mummified bat.

GUS  
 So all this? For show or real?

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

GUS  
 Wish I did. You're going to tell me  
 all these saints are yours?

He frowns at a cluster of Catholic saint statues.

MIKE  
 God's face may be different for  
 every religion, but he's the same  
 God. Same for the loa.

GUS  
 So who would this be?

Points to the largest statue.

SYLVIA  
 Papa Legba.

He picks up a Saint Francis icon.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
 Zaka.

Putting Francis down, he shakes a Madonna at Sylvia.

GUS

Now I know this here's the Mother  
of God.

SYLVIA

The Madonna is a powerful goddess.  
Without the feminine there can be  
no life. You are Anglican,  
Augustus?

GUS

Southern Baptist.

SYLVIA

Any suppressed people will adapt  
their religion to images that are  
acceptable to the establishment.

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 a lizard.

Gus' turn to yield to defeat. He doffs an imaginary hat.

MIKE

Time's a 'fleeting. Merci beau  
coup, Aunt Syl.

**EXT. GUS' CAR - DAY**

Gus leans on his car roof, in no hurry.

GUS

Aunt Syl?

Mike turns away from his own car.

MIKE

Aunt, second, third cousin. Family.

Gus puzzles it out, surprised eyes searching Mike's face.

GUS

So you're Haitian?

MIKE  
French, Scot, Choctaw, Creole,  
Dutch, Haitian.

Their eyes hold for a long beat.

GUS  
Dutch? Was he lost?

MIKE  
Probably. Do we have a problem?

GUS  
I don't know. Tell me about this  
priest business. Didn't see that in  
your bio.

Mike deliberates, reluctant.

MIKE  
I was raised in a spiritual path  
some call voodoo.

Gus doesn't budge, has him blocked in, literally.

GUS  
Why'd you leave?

MIKE  
Katrina's aftermath made us more  
isolated than usual. We got by.  
Pretty soon it got ugly for anyone  
that had more than his neighbor.  
Looters found us. Couldn't keep  
them out. Couldn't restock ammo  
after awhile.

His eyes go hollow, defensive.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
People needed hope, security. So I  
led a ceremony of petition.

GUS  
Sacrificed a few chickens? Called  
down divine retribution?

MIKE  
You mainstream Christians got some  
mighty peculiar rites. Eating the  
body and blood of the Savior?

GUS  
We're talking about you.

MIKE

When the loa come, they borrow bodies. Have to be careful what you ask for. They're literal and their justice is Old Testament. This time they took me.

His gaze holds steady. Gus squints.

GUS

How many?

MIKE

I don't know.

GUS

Guess.

MIKE

Eight, maybe ten. Three bodies recovered. We don't keep memories of loa action when possessed.

GUS

Ten. By yourself? And you don't remember a damned one, Rambo?

Mike bristles, annoyance rising.

MIKE

Not that hard back in the swamps when you're dealing with city bred scum. If I was going to court selective amnesia there are a few body collections I wouldn't mind getting out of my head.

GUS

Okay, we all got a case or two where we crossed the line. How do I trust that it's not going to happen here?

MIKE

You can't. I can't. Voodoo isn't a rules and regulations religion. All I can do is deny it in my life.

That doesn't exactly ease Gus' upset.

GUS

So I should ask the chief to take you off this case.

MIKE

Don't. This boy is working with poisons and hallucinogens. Sometimes it only takes a puff in the face and you're done for. You need me in there.

GUS

No, I need to think on this. First we have to catch this fella. That means we stake out the banks. After that.

He shrugs. Mike sighs, backs off.

MIKE

You're the boss.

Gus opens his car door, stops.

GUS

Any charges filed against you?

MIKE

The bodies that were found had long histories. Commissioner chose not to prosecute self defense. I left after the rescue work to let any rumors die.

Debate over, he gets into his car. Gus gets behind the wheel, backs his car up. Mike makes a tight turn, takes off.

Gus drums fingers on his steering wheel, conflicted.

**EXT. TEDDY'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

Devon drives up, parks across the street.

Teddy escorts a last patient out. He darts to a car parked next to the building, brings out a bottle of wine and basket of food, returns to the door.

Rita lets him in, locks the door.

Devon pulls in beside Teddy's car, spills out.

He brings a rattle out of a messenger bag, circles Teddy's car, aiming his power, spitting out nonsense words.

Next he grabs one of the poison bottles out of the bag. He dusts door handles and frame, chanting his prayer.



Finally, aims his chicken foot fetish at the car, finds a spot in shadows to wait.

**INT. WPAS - BROADCAST STUDIO - NIGHT**

Amy at the anchor desk.

AMY

I'm going to warn ya'll, some of these pictures are disturbing.

**INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - NIGHT**

The night crew goes about business. Mike stands at the television, volume muted.

Poorly lit candid black and white photos flash by.

Walters joins him, winces disgust.

WALTERS

You were supposed to shut her up.

MIKE

Can't force truth on people, Captain. I tried. That girl got a bad case of ambition.

Walters frets his displeasure, sneaks an eye at Mike.

WALTERS

We're not going to have a repeat of New Orleans here.

MIKE

Different circumstances.

WALTERS

We are not going to have a repeat here. You work the stake out then you're off the case. Now, go on home.

He heads back to his office. Mike fingers the cloth bag under his shirt, heads out.

**INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Mike stares out his second floor window. The room is barely furnished. Moving boxes stacked against the walls.

A small Haitian altar guards a side window. Incense smoke coils lazily. Mike smothers the incense, nods at the statue.

MIKE

I'm still mad at you. But we can still deal. Wouldn't mind your blessing if I was to set down roots here.

He pours some coffee into a tiny cup, turns off the lights.

**EXT. TEDDY'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

Teddy and Rita, tipsy drunk, lock the front door. The street is deserted.

They lean on each other, laughing to the car, oblivious to the darkness. Teddy steals a kiss.

A RATTLE brings Teddy's head up. Devon jumps out, arms flailing, shaking a snake head fetish.

Rita screams, backs further into the lot. Teddy sobers fast, blocks Devon's advance on her.

DEVON

Feel the anger of the loa.

TEDDY

You little freak. Island magic doesn't work here. Get away from us.

He grabs the driver's door handle.

DEVON

Ghede call you to the land of the dead.

Devon slams Teddy into the door. Teddy shoves backwards, hands full into the powder. He swipes an arm, catches air.

Devon laughs, points Teddy's attention back to the door.

DEVON (CONT'D)

Who is stupid now? You crossed the magic. The magic will take you.

Teddy stares at the fingerprints in the powder, looks at his soiled hands. Devon dances around him, chanting, drumming on the car hood.

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. You.

Devon skates away from Teddy's lunge. Teddy crashes to hands and knees, every muscle in spasm. Gags for breath.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Don't do this. Please.

Crawls to a bit of a puddle in an effort to wash the powder off. A cry chokes to a wretched squawk.

Devon turns to Rita. She's backed into a corner, blank eyed as she mumbles prayers behind a small necklace cross. He looms over her. She wails a plaintive scream.

**INT. DEVON'S CAR - NIGHT**

Teddy curls across the back seat, paralyzed. Devon slides behind the wheel, puts the car into motion.

**EXT. SHONDRA'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Shondra laughs to her door on the arm of her BOYFRIEND (28), a hulking linebacker. He leans in for a passionate kiss. Bare feet scuff through powder laid out in a cross.

**INT. SHONDRA'S HOUSE - FRONT HALL - NIGHT**

The lovers hang onto the door frame. The lights won't turn on. Shondra laughs, fumbles a lighter out.

Devon leers, ghoulish in his paint and Ghede clothes.

Shondra screeches, drops the lighter. Boyfriend is shoved outside and the door slammed.

A bone RATTLE shakes. DRUMS pound a threat. Shondra claws along the wall, screaming.

Devon backs her into a corner, blows powder into her face. Her scream strangles, and she passes out. Devon gets under her fall, heads out the back.

DEVON

My way. Now and forever.

**INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT**

Devon spills Shondra into the confessional. He lingers to cop a feel, locks her in, hurries out.

Returns with Teddy, dumps him into a coffin, straightens Teddy's limbs, leers into eyes frozen wide.

Devon 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, wafting smoke around the coffin.

Sweat beads on Teddy's forehead. Not dead, immobilized. Devon leans in, goes to close Teddy's eyes, changes his mind.

DEVON

Pass under the earth, dead man.

**TEDDY'S POV -**

The lid of the coffin closes Teddy in. Frozen vocal cords deny his scream. A single tear escapes.

**EXT. SAVANNAH STREET - DAY**

Daybreak. The ghetto neighborhood looks like a ghost town. No one on the street. Windows boarded.

**INT. LUCY'S BOTANICA - DAY**

Lucy offers charms to an ELDER man (70s), ramrod straight and distinguished, and Mama.

ELDER

This bokor brings trouble.

MAMA

If the police call the INS we'll all be sent back.

LUCY

A malfacteur steal the white man's money, that no business of ours. Steal our homes and safety, that we cannot allow. I will do all I can.

The Elder and Mama leave, tossing money into the begging bowl. Lucy locks her door, turns the closed sign.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
Damn you, boy. Now you done it.

**INT. BARN - PERISTYLE - DAY**

On her knees at the altar, Lucy's chant rises on smoke from incense burners. Dressed normally, exhausted, Devon looks in.

Lucy throws powder into a burner. Blue-green flames flare, die. She drops lids on all the pots, rises.

LUCY  
Good, you're here. The spirits have spoken. We leaving this place.

DEVON  
We're what? Now?

LUCY  
Tonight. Get your things. Whatever fit in the car, comes. Everything else.

She shrugs, fatalistic.

DEVON  
Where we going?

LUCY  
Spirits haven't shown me that. Only say. Hurry, get out. Enough questions. There's work to be done.

She brushes past him with the skull. Devon doesn't move, world crashing.

**INT. CARRIAGE HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

Lucy piles pots and dishes into a sturdy box.

LUCY  
Devon!

No answer. She peers out the back window.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
Damn you, boy, where you at?

**INT. BARN - DAY**

Lucy backs away from the menagerie slaughter, troubled. Car's in place. A faint echo of DRUMS brings her head up.

**INT. CHAPEL - DAY**

The coffin is surrounded by candles. BOOM BOX THUNDERS DRUMS. Devon dangles food at the confessional door vent.

DEVON

Come on, bebe. I bring you good food.

SHONDRA

How do I know it's not poisoned?

LUCY (O.S.)

Devon Lucas Narcisse, what you doing down here?

Devon slaps the vent shut, tosses the plate, manages an innocent look before she sweeps in. Lucy scans the room, fixes on him. His confidence withers.

**IN THE CONFESSIONAL**

Shondra puts an ear to the vent.

**CHAPEL**

The DRUMS kick into a power theme. Devon puffs himself up.

DEVON

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

He throws off the coffin lid. Lucy steps up.

Teddy's glazed eyes hold a bare glimmer of life.

Quick fingers search for a pulse, then pull out her keys. She unlocks her poison cabinet, checks the bottles.

LUCY

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

DEVON

I understand more than you teach.

He shoulders alongside her, brings a vial of greenish-purple liquid and a sealed empty jar out of his private lock box.

DEVON (CONT'D)

I make the zombie. Here is his soul. There is his punishment.

Lucy's eyes shift sideways as she handles the bottles with more care. She sets her stern face, locks the cabinet.

LUCY

Stupid boy. The cops been to my place. And the community officers. Bad enough you take their money. Now you make threats against a man?

DEVON

He a bad man.

LUCY

Don't matter.

DEVON

We got the magic.

LUCY

Magic don't pay bills or put food on the table. We a service to the community. They pay us good. 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 you give him to the police so they don't follow us out of town.

Her fierce look cuts off further protest. Lucy sets out pots to burn incense, pumps up the volume on the drums.

**INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - DAY**

Gus leads a meeting over a street map. Draws a red ring around the ghetto blocks. Mike comes up on the outer edge.

GUS

Uniforms everywhere but these two banks.

A blue circle within the red includes the previous hits.

IRIS

If he shows again. That's a mighty big if, Hutchins.

GUS

You got something better to do today, Iris? The community will see we're doing something. Maybe quiet things down some even if we don't catch him.

Gus scans faces, dares Mike to counter the suggestion.

**INT. CHAPEL - DAY**

The coffin has been upended. Lucy flicks water at Teddy. Awareness follows her numbly.

LUCY

I hold your spirit. Your life is mine. You passed under the earth. Now come forward again. Be reborn with the name I give you. Xander.

She smacks him with the whip, feeds him the paste. Teddy spasms, near collapses with convulsions.

Lucy supports him, wailing prayers to the gods, mock whipping his limbs, consoling. Gets him to a chair.

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

LUCY (CONT'D)

This zombie belong to you. Take care of him.

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

Shondra comes close when the vent opens, looks at Teddy.

SHONDRA

Is he truly dead?

DEVON

Wasn't my fault. Sometimes they don't breathe good in the box. Nasty old woman always saying I mess up.



SHONDRA

Ain't you a man? Screw that old bitch. What holding you to her?

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

DEVON

What?

SHONDRA

You don't need to stay if she making you miserable.

DEVON

She my mama. This all messed up.

SHONDRA

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

He paces a tight circle, unable to clear his thoughts.

DEVON

Get away. 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 she'll never find us.

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

DEVON

You funning me.

SHONDRA

No baby. I was scared. Didn't understand like I do now. 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. BARN - DAY**

Devon shoves Teddy into the car, gets behind the wheel. Teddy stares out the window, intelligence numb.

**EXT. SAVANNAH STREET - DAY**

Amy drives. Stark beside her with camera ready on her lap. They mark police presence until close to the target area.

AMY  
There's Chapdelaine. This is it.

She pulls into a parking spot half a block away.

STARK  
You sure about this?

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

Stark sighs, checks out the nearest store window.

**INT. DEVON'S CAR - DAY**

Devon drives with care, eyes twitching back and forth. Cop cars and/or uniformed police everywhere.

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

**INT. AMY'S CAR - DAY**

Amy works her iphone, radio turned up.

**INT. DEVON'S CAR - DAY**

Devon turns a corner. A car bolts out of a side street, causing him to hit the brakes hard. He aims a chicken foot wand with a snarl.

The rude driver sideswipes a parked car. Devon drives around the accident, pleased with his magic.

**INT. BANK - DAY**

Mike shadows a Teller in her routine.

**EXT. SAVANNAH STREET - DAY**

Up the street, Gus paces, on a radio, back to the bank.

GUS  
We're looking for four black males  
in a vintage sedan.

IRIS (V.O.)  
When you say vintage, does that  
mean big or old?

GUS  
Big enough to have sex in the back  
seat without showing the world your  
business.

He signs off with a snort of disgust. Devon passes, pulls into a spot in front of Mike's stake out.

**INT. BANK - DAY**

Mike keys in to Teddy's lurching entrance, nods the Teller to leave and takes her window. Standing tall, face sheltered under a hood, Devon pushes Teddy from behind.

Devon shoves a note across. Mike scans the scrawl, weighs Teddy's distraction, focuses on Devon.

MIKE  
You sure you want to do this?

DEVON  
Don't talk. Give us money.

MIKE  
Innocent people could get hurt.

Devon shows the barrel of his gun under a messenger bag. Teddy slumps against the counter.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
It's over, boy. I'm a cop. We have  
the bank surrounded.

Devon searches. Mike traps his gun hand on the counter. Devon wrenches out of the hold, retreats with gun aimed at Mike.

Somebody moves, distracting Devon.

Mike vaults to the counter, leaps to take Devon down.

Devon squalls. Teddy swings around, grabs at Mike as Mike struggles to put Devon into a submission hold.

Devon frees an arm, cracks Mike across the temple to stun. He pushes to his feet, threatens the patrons with the gun.

Teddy lurches after Devon. Mike catches a leg to slow him down. Devon fires wildly, backs to the door.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Carrying a take-out bag, Stark flirts with Harley.

GUNSHOTS ring out from the bank.

Stark hits the deck, crawls back to Amy's car.

GUS

Scans for the trouble, radio up.

GUS

Check in. Where did that come from?

JEFF (V.O.)

We're quiet here.

Gus rivets on Mike's bank, runs.

GUS

Mike? Mike, check in. All units,  
converge on Savannah National.  
Suspect armed and dangerous.

Devon bursts out, waves his gun to send people running.

**INT. AMY'S CAR**

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

AMY

What did I tell you? We scooped  
everybody.

STARK

Yeah. Just get that motor running in case that fool starts shooting again.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Teddy staggers out. Gus takes him to the ground. Devon peels away, causing a pile up in traffic.

**INT. AMY'S CAR - DAY**

Stark brings the camera down. Squad cars scream past them. Amy scoots up, U-turns out of danger.

AMY

You got all that?

STARK

Picture perfect.

AMY

Chuck is going to shit himself.

STARK

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

AMY

After I make the evening news.

Stark frowns disapproval, hangs on for dear life.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Gus locks on handcuffs, pulls Teddy up, gets a close look at the hollow eyes and lets go. Mike stumbles out, blood seeping from a darkening bruise on his temple.

GUS

Shit. Shit. He's for real.

Mike searches Teddy's eyes, finds a bare trace of frantic fear. Uniformed cops surround them.

MIKE

We're good. We're good. Get on that car. White 90's model Caddie, one black male in dark grey hoodie.

He hands off Devon's pistol. People move. Mike offers Teddy a reassuring shoulder grip, shakes Gus.

MIKE (CONT'D)

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

Gus nods dumbly, offers a handkerchief.

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, girl? You the one locked up.

SHONDRA

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

Lucy returns to her goods. Takes out a vial of poison.

SHONDRA (CONT'D)

Do you hear me? Open this door.

Humming, Lucy empties the vial into a shallow bowl, adds a bit of this and that, holds the bowl out of sight and returns to the confessional.

LUCY

As mambo it is my duty to protect the community.

SHONDRA

I don't give a rat's ass for your island bugaboos.

LUCY

You will.

Devon rushes in, horrified that his secret is undone. 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, waves for Devon to leave. Accepting the taunt, he opens the box, herds Shondra to 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 shoves Lucy hard against the workbench.

SHONDRA

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

A slap rocks Lucy's head. The bowl of poisons flies into Shondra's face. The girl gasps in a few drops, gets madder.

Lucy circles away from raking nails, chants gibberish in her best ritual voice.

DEVON

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

SHONDRA

Somebody got to teach your mama some manners.

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

LUCY

The loa take you, unbeliever. Getting hot in here, girl?

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

LUCY (CONT'D)  
Feel like ants crawling under your  
skin? You belong to the loa now.

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

SHONDRA  
Make it stop.

LUCY  
The loa are jealous of their  
priests. Erzulie Frieda say you not  
worthy of her man.

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

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

Shondra screams through a full body convulsion. Digging nails draw blood all over. She charges. Lucy sidesteps, shoves the girl headfirst into the hole.

A crash cuts off Shondra's howl. Devon dives to the lip.

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

Sanity snaps and he launches himself at Lucy with an animal cry. Bones break on impact. Stunned, she doesn't fight his frenzied pounding. Blood flies.

Just as suddenly, his rage yields to exhaustion and he rolls away from Lucy's dead body, sobs.

#### **INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY**

Teddy drops into a chair 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. Set up this spinal correction thing. 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. Dark enough to be Haitian.

GUS

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

MIKE

The magic only works if you believe it works.

Mike shrugs, looks 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 looks from Gus to Teddy. Teddy's riveted on the bag. Leaning in, Mike hooks a finger under Teddy's collar, brings out a similar charm bag.

A bare flicker of plea comes and goes in Teddy's eyes.

MIKE

Gus, I'd like 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**

The table glistens with fresh cleaning. A candle burns on a saucer beside a vase of flowers and mass card pictures of saints and the Sacred Heart. A bottle of water stands ready.

Mike sits knee to knee with Teddy, drums a simple rhythm on his chair, sways gently. Teddy rocks in time. Gus stands at the door, stubbornly resistant to the beat.

Mike shakes coins in a fist to mimic a rattle around Teddy. He spills water three times in offering. Touches Teddy's forehead in blessing, waits for response.

Intelligence sparks in Teddy's eyes, but he's lost the ability to communicate.

### **SQUAD ROOM**

Gus leads the way out. Mike brings the door shut.

MIKE

Doesn't matter how educated you are, superstition still gets your goat. There's a chance I can break the hypnosis with a proper ceremony.

GUS

You're pushing your luck.

MIKE

Not here. At Sylvia's.

GUS

No. Nothing doing.

Mike bites back protests, caught between obligations.

GUS (CONT'D)

You are a police officer first, son. That man was bagged committing a robbery.

Iris joins them, offers a candid photo.

INSERT - Rita, dead, face contorted in frozen fear.

BACK TO SCENE

IRIS

Rita LaFleur. Found her around the back of the doc's office. Mauled but not enough to kill. Never believed you could scare a person to death.

She continues to her desk. Gus gives Mike an "I told you so" look. They head out.

**INT. TEDDY'S OFFICE - RECEPTION - DAY**

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

MIKE

Looks like he was having a tough go of it. Unpaid bills, sparse client list.

GUS (O.S.)

That would explain why a doctor is robbing banks.

He comes out of Teddy's office with Devon's bag of money and the waste basket.

GUS (CONT'D)

Count comes close to all four banks. Then there's this.

He dumps the fetish out in front of Mike.

**INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - DAY**

Mike studies Teddy through the interrogation room glass, sitting in the same position. Gus comes up.

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 taking him to the john, let alone out of lock up. 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.

**INTERROGATION ROOM**

Mike pulls up a chair. He holds up Rita's photo. Teddy's eyes fix. An unsteady arm rises. Fingers clutch. Tears well.

MIKE

Ah, you are still in there. I can say no to the gods for myself. I can't abandon an innocent. Come with me.

Mike tugs Teddy to his feet.

**SQUAD ROOM**

He walks Teddy up the hall, and instead of going to lock up he guides Teddy out the building door.

**INT. CHAPEL - DAY**

The priestess looks around, surprised by the disarray. Coming in further she recoils at Lucy's corpse.

A sob brings her around. Devon's huddled under the workbench.

PRIESTESS

Devon? What happened here?

Shocked out of his misery he finds his feet.

DEVON

She crossed me.

He scoops Lucy up to dump her in the pit.

PRIESTESS

Don't you dare!

Devon swings around to glare at her.

PRIESTESS (CONT'D)

Don't matter what she done, she was mambo and your mama. She deserve a proper burial. You do that, I don't say another word.

She lifts the lid of the coffin. Devon hesitates a moment, nods and lays Lucy in the box. Priestess drops the lid. His hand closes on hers.

DEVON

You're mine now.

PRIESTESS  
Always was. They looking for mambo.

DEVON  
Where?

PRIESTESS  
In the temple. Go. I clean up here.

**INT. PERISTYLE - DAY**

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

ELDER  
Where is the mambo?

Devon frets for an answer, puffs up.

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

Chatter erupts. The 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  
You're not proven to us. We will see your magic before we proclaim you priest.

DEVON  
You doubt my word?

MAMA  
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 BOUTIQUE - DAY**

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.

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

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.

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.

**INT. WPAS - NEWSROOM - DAY**

Amy works the internet. Clock behind her shows 6:00. She keeps an eye out for observers, jots a note, shuts down. Grabs her purse, slips out.

**INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - DAY**

Clock on the wall now 7:00. 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 an hour ago. They're not in the building.

Gus' shoulders slump. He sits back, lifts his hands in ignorance. Walters scans around the room.

WALTERS (CONT'D)

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

He walks away. Gus digs for his cell phone. Harley drops off some papers, checks the computer screen.

HARLEY

Still chasing down that sedan? Call that reporter. She probably got a bead on your 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 grabs his jacket, bolts for the door.

HARLEY

You're welcome.

**INT. WPAS - NEWSROOM - DAY**

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. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY**

Dressed in loose white linens, Mike exits, passing the chest where his gun, badge, wallet and phone lay.

**INT. GUS' CAR - DAY**

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

GUS

God damn. Don't know where you got to, son, but I got us a lead on our puppet master. Come join the party. Eighteen sixteen Wisteria.

Drops the phone, pulls into heavy traffic.

**INT. SYLVIA'S GARAGE - DAY**

A formal temple. Pictures of saints and demons on the walls. Sconces with thick white candles. A cleaned skull on a low altar. A MIDDLE AGED DRUMMER rumbles in a corner.

Teddy slumps in 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. Hands beckon him inside. He shakes a negative.

Sylvia closes. Mike shies away from her eyes.

SYLVIA

Time has not healed your heart yet?

MIKE

The loa made me a murderer.

SYLVIA

Justice is not murder, not when those slain would have taken all from your people. This is why you do not remember. Vengeance belongs to the loa. Come. Give aid where it is needed.

Mike steps out of his shoes, falls in step with her.

**INT. PERISTYLE - NIGHT**

Lanterns light the hall as day fades into twilight outside.



Devon and the Priestess lead the dance, rushing the steps. He lets her sing the chanted devotions. The crowd barely bops to the MUSIC, just not into it.

The Priestess brings a listless chicken out of a sack, holds it out to Devon. He takes it to the altar, snaps its neck, drops the carcass on the altar.

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

**INT. SYLVIA'S GARAGE - NIGHT**

Offerings of fruit, wine and money lay on the altar. A bit of chicken chars 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.

Mike brings a pot of white paint. Sylvia thumbs designs on Teddy's face. The chanting caresses them.

**INT. PERISTYLE - NIGHT**

The zombies shamle through the crowd, drawn to the altar and animal blood. People yield ground. The DRUMS STOP.

ELDER

What is this?

Panic flickers in Devon's eyes, then anger takes over and he pulls up tall, affecting his Baron Ghede persona.

DEVON

What do you expect from the lord of the dead? These were judged and sentenced to the living death. They answer to me, as they should.

Devon raises a hand to bring the zombies to heel. He glares at the drummers. They beat a tattoo without conscious effort.

DEVON (CONT'D)

Don't offend the dark ones with your disrespect. Dance or worse than the living death will follow you home!

The Priestess shimmies through steps. One by one people resume the dance. The Elder and Mama the last to yield.

**INT. SYLVIA'S GARAGE - NIGHT**

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

SYLVIA

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)

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

She looks for reaction. Mike squats at her side. A tear trickles from Teddy's dull eyes, intelligence still imprisoned.

MIKE

Ceremony was supposed to help.

SYLVIA

Power of belief is one thing. This. This is the product of an unschooled hand.

She cradles Teddy's face in her hands.

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, cheri. You will stay with me while we see what more can be done.

Sylvia walks Mike to the door, out of earshot.

MIKE

He can't stay here. He's a ...

SYLVIA

He's a victim of a crime. The loa say he has been damaged, perhaps permanently. Find the one who did this, Michel.

**EXT. ANTEBELLUM ESTATE - NIGHT**

Amy cruises to a stop, stares at the crumbling house. Can't be the right place. DRUMS rumble.

She checks the sky. The near full moon beams. Drives through the gate and around the house.

**INT. PERISTYLE - NIGHT**

A watchman hisses a warning. The Elders look to Devon.

DEVON

Out the back.

Candles and lanterns are extinguished. People file out through hidden doors in the walls.

**EXT. ANTEBELLUM ESTATE - NIGHT**

Gus rolls to a stop. A flash of light from around the back catches his eye. He turns into the yard, stops alongside the main house.

Amy's car is parked at the carriage house.

Gus inputs her plate number into the computer, keys his cell.

**INT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - BED ROOM**

Mike's phone vibrates off the chest, shatters.

**INT. GUS' CAR - NIGHT**

Voice mail picks up.

GUS

Dammit, Mike, get your sorry ass to eighteen sixteen Wisteria. We got problems.

He slides the phone to his pocket, gets out. The phone falls onto the car seat.

**INT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - FRONT HALL - NIGHT**

On Sylvia's house phone, Mike eyes the remains of his phone.

MIKE

Did he leave a message? No, my cell committed suicide. Find him and call me back at this number.

**EXT. CARRIAGE HOUSE - BACK PORCH**

Amy peers into windows, tries the door. Turns. 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.

He catches her by the elbow, tugs her into motion.

AMY (CONT'D)

Hey. Police brutality. You can't interfere with a free press.

GUS

I should put you over my knee for withholding information and impeding 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  
Just don't hit me in the face.

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 - NIGHT**

Amy uses her phone to snap pictures. Gus wrenches it 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 iphone screen. No response.

GUS (CONT'D)  
What shit carrier do you have?  
There's no service here.

Amy turns a circle, 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 eases the menagerie door open.

THE ZOMBIES

squat, raw flesh stuffed in their mouths. Dull eyes turn.

AMY

lets out a shriek. Gus slams the door shut.

GUS

That's enough investigating, missy.

Takes her arm, backing up the long way around the temple.

GUS (CONT'D)

Police. You come out with your hands in plain sight.

Devon steps out of hiding, slams a two by four across Gus' skull to drop him. Gus' gun slides under a pile of scraps.

Amy bolts. The Priestess blocks her escape.

Devon checks Gus' pockets for ID, drops the wallet and iphone. The Priestess shoves Amy to him. The drummers appear.

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, gags.

Devon hauls her close, leers.

DEVON

You will make a fine sex slave.  
(to the Drummers)  
Bring the blanc.

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.

**INT. SYLVIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Mike paces, on the house phone.

MIKE  
How about that reporter, Miss Tits?  
Shit. There was a partial plate Gus  
was looking at. No, call me back.

Hangs up. Digs out a notebook, dials. Sylvia comes up.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
Amy Sanderson. When? No, no  
message. Wait. Is her camera girl  
there? Punk rocker. Yeah, that one.  
Covering the mayor's junket? Never  
mind.

He cradles the receiver, turns to Sylvia.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
Would he remember how to get back  
to his bokor?

SYLVIA  
He's barely functional.

MIKE  
I don't have a choice. Gus could be  
tracking this sorcerer on his own.

Sylvia considers.

SYLVIA  
It must be his choice or we open  
ourselves to this bokor's  
corruption.

MIKE  
Fine. Ask him.

**INT. SYLVIA'S GARAGE - NIGHT**

Mike waits at the door. Sylvia walks Teddy over.

SYLVIA  
He agrees. Mon petite, be warned.  
His fears are great.

MIKE  
(to Teddy)  
If I had another option I'd take  
it. People are in danger.

He ties a long scarf from his wrist to Teddy's.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Where you go, I go.

Sylvia tosses powder to a burner, sings a few bars, adds bottles to her bag, nods them out.

**INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT**

Two dozen people circle Lucy's coffin, droning a benediction.

Devon tosses Amy into the confessional, locks the door. Gus is hauled in, dropped.

ELDER

What trouble do you bring on us now?

DEVON

You wanted to see my power. This blanc will be enslaved to serve.

The Elders put heads together. Devon uses the time to fill his pockets with powders from Lucy's cabinet.

MAMA

This goes too far.

ELDER

Why not show the blancs we can stand as men? Fear they understand.

Devon tosses a powder into the fire. Sparks gush up.

DEVON

The loa will decide this man's fate. Prepare for ceremony.

Uneasy heads nod reluctant agreement.

**INT. CONFESSIONAL - NIGHT**

Amy rouses. She pushes at all walls, rattles the locked door. Pries at the window vent.

Wedging her fingers to keep the vent up, she peers out.

Demon portraits glare at her from the walls. 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 listens for discovery, 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 Hutchins? Detective, can you hear me?

DRUMS rumble. Amy ducks. A cautious eye returns to the window.

Devon pops up in front of her. She screeches, slams back.

Devon points his bone rattle at her, 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. Don't bite me, you creepy thing.

GUS  
It's a constrictor, honey. As long as it doesn't wrap around you, you're fine.

AMY  
Easy for you to say.

Devon throws powder onto the candles, making them spark.

AMY (CONT'D)  
Get away. Get away. Eewww!

GUS  
Stop that. The mumbo jumbo can't hurt you if you don't let it.

Devon slaps the vent shut so that it wedges tight, dances back to Gus. DRUMS hammer away. He waves a vial in Gus' face.

DEVON  
We take the man to make the zombie.

The Priestess dances to him with ritual objects. Devon sets the vial on the altar to attend to obligations. 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 dips the ends of a whip into a pot of liquid, snaps a blow across Gus' ribs.

GUS

Son, you just crossed the line.

The next hit draws blood. Devon smears the cuts with a greasy potion. Gus hisses, bites back a cry.

DEVON

Voodooon make you a believer.

GUS

Mikey, check your goddamn voicemail.

**EXT. ANTEBELLUM ESTATE - NIGHT**

Sylvia eases to a stop behind Gus' car. Mike unknots the scarf, 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 past, up the hill. Sylvia stops at the barn.

SYLVIA

Michel.

MIKE

Right behind you.

Mike works Gus' phone, ten yards behind Teddy.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
 Chapdelaine. Officer in distress. I  
 need back up at eighteen sixteen  
 Wisteria. Silent approach. Now.

He drops the phone into a pocket. They overtake Teddy.

**INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT**

Gus slumps in the ropes, tripping out.

The room fuzzes over in clouds of colors. 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-crust window, cleans an eye hole.

Inside, the crowd rocks to the drums. Zombies herky-jerky around the floor behind Devon and the Priestess. Dusty curls of incense form haze around Gus - bloodied and reeling.

Mike drops back, checks the ammo in his pistol. Nowhere near enough for the crowd. Sylvia presses up for a look. Teddy slips away from them.

SYLVIA  
 Mon dieu! This is very bad. You  
 cannot face so many alone. We will  
 wait for your back-up?

MIKE  
 Gus may not have the time.

They both peek through the window.

Devon waves a stoppered vial in front of Gus' dazed eyes.

Sylvia pulls back, shakes her head.

SYLVIA  
 If fear does not cripple, it will  
 kill him. This boy is careless with  
 the poisons.

Mike deliberates, not happy with his options.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
The gods want you, not your partner.

MIKE  
Sylvia. I need you to promise you'll stop me if I ...

SYLVIA  
You will be fine, petite. I have faith. Do you also.

She brings his gris gris out to rest on his shirt.

MIKE  
Hell. This is my day for breaking rules. What's one more?

He ejects the magazine, unloads the chamber, shoves the ammo into a pocket and gun into its holster.

#### **INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT**

Mike enters. He moves through bodies to the room's center. Eyes fix on him. People stop moving.

The DRUMS sound a warning. Devon and the Priestess turn to glare. Devon works for memory of Mike's face.

DEVON  
Policeman. You have no power here. Go away.

MIKE  
You got a cop there. Assaulting an officer is a felony. Let him go and I can forget the rest of this.

DEVON  
Baron Ghede is beyond your laws. Go, or worse will happen to you.

He flicks a hand. The drums ramp up into a threatening rhythm. The zombies, including Teddy, form up in a row in front of Devon. The crowd closes off escape behind.

MIKE  
People. This man robbed several banks, got people killed. You don't want to be here when the squad cars roll up.

Voices whisper. A few at the very back slip out the door. A handful of BRUISERS loom up behind Mike.

DEVON  
Your words have no power here.

One of the bruisers rips the pistol from Mike's back. Aims point blank, fires an empty cylinder. Gawks.

Mike holds a hand out for the pistol.

MIKE  
I may be foolish. I'm not stupid.

The bruiser surrenders the gun. Mike shoves it in his belt. Turns back to Devon.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
The dead have no part in this.  
Honor this woman properly.

Several men lift the coffin out of the way.

DEVON  
The Baron holds more than one life  
in his hand.

He spins, mimes a throw at Gus. Gus spasms, gags for breath. Mike tenses for a lunge.

MIKE  
Son, while you still got all your  
parts.

The Priestess leans into Devon's ear, whispers, points. Devon advances a few steps, focused on Mike's gris gris.

DEVON  
A believer? Where lies your  
hounfour?

MIKE  
New Orleans.

DEVON  
The city of fools who play at the  
secret rites.

MIKE  
Well now, that's between you and  
me. Let the prisoners go and I'll  
take that bait.

Devon's confidence flickers. He looks past Mike to his congregation, waiting, ready to bolt.

DEVON  
We will dance.

MIKE  
Prisoners go free first.

DEVON  
No.

He flicks a hand at the drummers. The beat pounds to nerve wracking pressure. Devon weaves a few steps. Mike doesn't move.

Devon passes a knife to the Priestess, jerks a nod to Gus. She drops back to put the blade to Gus' throat.

DEVON (CONT'D)  
Dance for his life, blanc.

MIKE  
Dance for your own.

He mirrors Devon's steps and they flow around the floor. The congregation forms a living wall around them.

Mike gets close enough, grabs Devon into a submission hold, forces the rattle out of his hand. Devon snaps his skull into Mike's jaw to break free. He motions to the zombies.

DEVON  
Kill this intruder.

He gets out of the way. Dull zombie eyes fix. Groping hands find weapons.

Devon tosses powder into the fire. Smoke billows into a masking, choking fog. The zombies surround Mike.

A strong lilting voice cuts in over the drums. Sylvia glides into the room, imperious, fanning a spray of feathers in blessing.

MAMA  
Erzueli Frieda? This is none of your concern.

SYLVIA  
Is this not? For shame. A mob against one man. By whose authority do you act?

ELDER

The houngan directed.

Sylvia follows his point to Devon.

SYLVIA

He who would be the Baron? This is your houngan? Let him prove himself against the blanc warrior. Power against power without interference.

Murmurs ripple through the crowd. More people make their escape.

Sylvia nods, crosses to the drummers, singing. They fall in time with her song.

Mike weaves side to side, drawing the zombies into his rhythm.

**GUS' POV -**

Smoke makes writhing shadows of the zombies. The drums breathe for him.

Through the smoke, Mike flows in time to the drums. Behind him, Sylvia is a shifting rainbow of movement.

GUS

Focus, Augustus. This ain't real.  
Can't be real.

Zombies slash with knives and bats. Mike dodges, pulls weapons. The zombies don't injure, won't stay down.

Devon and the Priestess weave like hydra heads.

Gus moans, forces his eyes shut.

BACK TO SCENE

Mike disarms Teddy, holds back a killing strike. A sharp slap breaks the dance frenzy. Teddy sits heavily.

Devon grabs a rattler out of its cage, tosses it. Mike catches head and tail, dances it around the hall.

Mike threatens the Priestess, catches the knife from her hand, crosses behind the altar and drops the snake in the hole.

He slices the knot of the guy rope holding Gus up. Before he can do any more, Devon cracks the whip, backs him away.



Gus uses the altar to right himself, woozy, knocking the poison vials to the floor.

Teddy fixes on the rolling vials, crawls.

Gus' heart pounds in sync with the drums. Every breath deepens his high. Fingers find a poison vial.

Teddy creeps toward him. Eyes fixed. Mouth agape.

Gus gags, terrified. He fumbles with the vial cap.

Teddy swipes the vial, swallows the poison. Convulses with a shriek. All action stops.

Mike kneels. Teddy wards him off with a stiff arm and a grotesque smile.

TEDDY

Better off all dead.

Teddy shudders through brutal muscle spasms. Empathic, Mike snaps Teddy's neck for a quick death.

Mike turns, clutches Gus' shoulder, pushes away the vials.

MIKE

Gus, you with me?

Gus works to bring Mike into focus.

GUS

Seeing things. Things a man wasn't meant to see.

MIKE

Then close your eyes, but stay with me. We're both walking out. Where's Amy?

GUS

Box. Corner.

Mike glances to place the confessional. Gus' hand closes on Mike's arm. He's barely hanging onto sanity.

GUS (CONT'D)

Mikey. I'm gonna be sick. Don't let me die like that.

Devon cracks the whip across Mike's back. Once. Twice. Mike falls half-over Gus.

SYLVIA

Stay your hand. This is not the way  
of the loa.

DEVON

This is the law. The loa favor the  
strongest.

He faces the remaining congregation, leers at Sylvia. A  
bruiser advances to take hold of her arm.

Tasting blood, Mike struggles to hands and knees, fighting  
the lure of the drums. Gus shudders under him. He clutches  
the gris gris bag.

GUS

You swore a duty. Protect.

MIKE

In the name of Damballah?

GUS

In anybody's name. Get Old  
Testament on his ass already.

Mike squeezes Gus' hand, sways in time to the drums. The  
chant starts deep in his chest.

The Elders' focus shifts as Mike rises. Devon turns, scowls,  
snaps the whip.

Mike catches hold, uses it to pull himself fully upright.

MIKE

I gave ya'll fair warning about  
doing this my way. Last chance.

DEVON

You don't order me.

Devon sends a brazier of fire flying at Mike. Flames spurt  
high. People scream. DRUMS GO SILENT.

Engulfed, Mike drops like the wicked witch melting.

Devon turns his fetish stick at Sylvia.

DEVON (CONT'D)

Do you now see? I am the favored of  
the loa. Swear obedience or join  
your man in death.

SYLVIA

Foolish child, you crow too soon.

Smoke curls around Mike, forms a column. Something moves within the flames.

Watchers retreat to the walls, silent with dread.

The smoke collapses. Mike flows to his feet like a cobra mantling. Sylvia starts a wailing prayer-song of welcome, showers perfume. Nervous fear goes through the crowd.

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Damballah, good father. Protect your children from this evil.

DEVON

Stupid woman. This blanc mocks us.

Devon grabs a machete, swipes. Mike stops Devon's hand with a lightning grasp of the wrist, grabs Devon's other hand.

Devon can't break the deceptively easy hold or look away from Mike's eyes. Mike forces him into a weaving dance.

Gus huddles, shrinks back behind the altar.

DRUMS pick up by themselves. Around and around Mike and Devon spin, stamp, whirl.

Devon's fury dissolves into confusion, then fear. His shoulders twitch out of good posture.

DEVON (CONT'D)

No. This is my hounfour. The magic is mine.

As they come up on the altar, Devon sees an opportunity, pulls Mike to the rear wall.

DEVON (CONT'D)

These are my people.

To the edge of the trap door, Devon sets his weight, sneers.

DEVON (CONT'D)

Prove yourself a fit priest. Join me among your children.

He pushes to tip Mike over the hole. Gus wails, reaches. His grab falls short. Mike seems to walk on air across the hole. His tug pulls Devon off balance.

Devon flails, falls into the hole. A chilling scream issues. Fingers claw at the lip. Before anyone can move, the hand flops out of sight.

Mike crosses to Gus, wipes sweat off his face. Gus shudders with wracking convulsions, losing consciousness.

Mike croons a prayer, runs a hand above the whip tracks in a sympathetic drawing out of the poisons. Sylvia kneels at his side, offers a bottle of water, croons in harmony.

Sylvia looks back for the Priestess, nods her over to help.

SYLVIA

Mambo prays for the good of all.

The Priestess weighs the eyes on her, edges over to kneel at Gus' head, falls into the prayer.

Mike tugs and weaves invisible strands of sickness, wads the ball and tosses it in an empty bowl.

Mama edges up to look. Putrid purple liquid sloshes.

Gus drags in a breath. Good color comes back. His eyes open, more rational. Mike nods, ends the song, rises, stares around the huddled watchers.

A ripple of fear threatens a stampede out. Zombies John and Luke shuffle to Mike, hands out to beg.

Mike traces heads and shoulders, holds out empty hands.

PRIESTESS

What does he ask for?

SYLVIA

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. His  
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.

Mike throws the jars into the fire. Wisps of smoke curl up around the men.

The zombies tremble, straighten and 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 was started in evil ends in good will. Leave now and offer thanks that Damballah is a generous patron.

People clear out. The Priestess eyes Sylvia, gets a curt nod and hurries out. Mike folds into a heap.

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, listening, exhausted.

MIKE

How many?

SYLVIA

The malfacteur has met his fate.

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 that hole. Take over here. Gus needs medical attention.

Jeff nods absently, gawking around the space. POUNDING comes from the confessional. Mike hauls Gus up over his shoulder.

AMY (O.S.)

Let me out of here. Is anybody out there?

JEFF

Is that ?

MIKE

You can let the snake out after I'm gone. Sylvia.

SYLVIA

I will be along presently.

Gus groans. Mike sets the weight, hurries out.

Jeff opens the door, jumps away from the curled python. Amy glares as she high steps out.

AMY

Good God, show some balls.

**EXT. ANTEBELLUM ESTATE - NIGHT**

Ambulances. Police. Amy wanders through. Stark gets through the police line, checks her for damage.

STARK

Baby girl! You don't just up and disappear like that.

AMY

I'm fine. Are you up for a live feed?

STARK

Better believe it.

She leads Amy to the van, unearths the camera bag.

STARK (CONT'D)

Fix your hair.

She hands over a mirror. Amy tosses it, grabs the mike out.

AMY  
I just went through hell. I should  
look like it.

Stark grins, shoulders the camera.

STARK  
And we're rolling.

AMY  
This is Amy Sanderson, live from  
the scene of Haitian black magic.

Mike exits the carriage house with Gus wrapped in blankets.  
Amy blocks him from an ambulance.

MIKE  
Don't.

He shoulders past. EMTs help Mike get Gus settled on the  
gurney. Mike closes the door. Sylvia glides up.

SYLVIA  
Are you certain this is the fame  
you desired? At what cost, petite?

She's gone before Amy can respond. Amy turns to the camera.

STARK  
We're still rolling.

AMY  
One man dead, a policeman seriously  
injured. We may never know what  
started this young man's crime  
spree.

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. WPAS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

The Producer faces an angry group - the Haitian elders, and a  
mayor's REPRESENTATIVE.

PRODUCER  
You can't interfere with freedom of  
the press.

ELDER

It is your responsibility not to put people in danger.

MAMA

How many sponsors will be happy when we picket your station?

REPRESENTATIVE

We won't do well if this goes to court.

PRODUCER

That's extortion.

REPRESENTATIVE

There's a simple solution. Get rid of the face of the issue.

The Producer glances at Amy at the weather green screen.

LATER

Amy cleans out her desk. The Producer inventories so company material doesn't get taken.

**INT. POLICE STATION - WALTERS' OFFICE - DAY**

Walters lounges over coffee, on the phone, tabloids spread across his desk. The usual ET babies and celebrity gossip.

WALTERS

You know how these rags work, Mister Mayor. This week it's zombies. Next week ET's. Come September we'll be back to Elvis sightings.

One easy move deposits the pile into a trash can.

**EXT. CEMETERY - DAY**

Candles stand at the cardinal points around a casket. A small gathering, mostly faces from Devon's society. Sylvia sprinkles tobacco, croons a chant.

Mike and Gus watch from a discrete distance.

Amy marches up. She slaps Sylvia's pendant into Mike's hand.

AMY

You got me fired.



MIKE

Wish I had that mojo. You did it to yourself, cheri.

AMY

Those people would still be in business if not for me.

MIKE

Well, then I guess we owe you some thanks. Thank you. Enjoy Tulsa.

GUS

Much obliged.

Gus lays on a full-on smooch, follows Mike to the grave. Amy flusters, wiping away the kiss.

AMY

I never said where I was going.

Mike stops about five feet behind the gathering.

GUS

You come all this way to stop now?

MIKE

It's not my fight.

GUS

If you don't fill the void somebody worse than that child will.

MIKE

I thought you weren't crazy about being partners with Jeff.

GUS

I'm not, but it beats dealing with you moping out your days behind a desk. Go on, git. 'Sides you can make double by coming in as a consultant, and I'll expect some of that to come my way for the referral.

Mike has to grin, edges forward. Rain mists softly as Sylvia finishes her benediction. She smiles at him.

SYLVIA

Ah, his sacrifice is accepted. He will rest easy, petite.

The mourners offer Mike signs of respect, straggle away. Mike turns his face to the rain.

MIKE  
Bon chance, Teddy Bartholomew. Bon  
chance to us both.

**INT. LUCY'S BOTANICA - DAY**

Mike's a different man. Dressed in crisp linens, gris gris bag in the open, he rearranges the displays to a lighter atmosphere. The door TINKLES open.

When Mike turns, Marigold is halfway in and staring in fear.

It takes her a moment to get over her shock and focus on the gris gris bag and clothes.

MARIGOLD  
Didn't expect you here.

MIKE  
Neither did I. I should warn you  
Hector's been restored.

MARIGOLD  
He learn his lesson?

MIKE  
I believe so.

MARIGOLD  
Good.

She looks around, stalling.

MARIGOLD (CONT'D)  
But just in case. What would you  
suggest as protection?

MIKE  
One. Change your locks. Two. I have  
a scent that will remind him of his  
zombie days. Come on in.

He comes forward to close the door. Their fingers brush. Marigold flusters.

FADE OUT.