



EYES WIDE SHISHA: A NOVEL
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PARENTAL
ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

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day 1. scene 01: nickanee's 3:48pm.

i said: can i be honest with you aniah? i kind of thought this place was serving shisha now until i took a closer look and it was just that old bag inhaling from her oxygen tank. really kind of uh. makes you wonder if the best place for her. if she should really be smoking butts at a dive bar? (my partner aniah watson and i had just entered the dive bar nickanee's right across from the new bridge in downtown providence and stood complacently at the bar.) aniah said: hmm i'm not sure. if i saw her? i said: right on the uhh. fucking little shitty ass deck they have. with the three to four foot tall oxygen tank right by her seat? puffing away. fuck man. i could go for a hookah right now. damn. fuckin jack off a guy or two for a well-prepared ice hookah right about now. she said: ew. yusuf. really? you want a hookah that bad? i said: maybe i'm being partially facetious. you know. she said: i would hope so. not that there's anything wrong with that. jacking off men. i said: after the thin white hipster. the guy with the moderately cunty red beard? after he exited the bathroom and i went in. you know. i was at the urinal just thinking to myself. i thought to myself do i actually like. or perhaps even prefer the kiddie urinals? she said: what's that? like a urinal for kids? i said: not even in a perverse way. not at all. because i'm totally fuckin opposed to pedophilia. but there were two urinals. and i chose the so-called kiddie urinal to pee in. but to be fair that bathroom? it has no splash guards so in my mind. the two urinals are functionally one urinal. (i allowed my clenched fist to fall onto the bar.) i said: it's at best an ornamental urinal sans splash guard. but no. i guess i do it because i'm about average height. plus i have a long torso you know? and i just like to ensure you know. beyond a reasonable doubt. that my cock and balls are as far as possible from the urinal cake. aniah said: ugh. penises are disgusting. i said: i'm pretty sure a piece of asscrack lint was on top of urinal i just peed on. fuckin place doesn't even have a mirror above the sink. fuckin reads alyssa merolla gave me the clap in '04 ya little

whooh! but you know. it's written in a toothpaste-like graffiti. she said: wow. amazing yusuf! ugh. god. i said: is every person in this fuckin place like 90 years old? antique shit shooters in here. bronze age turd cutters aniah. you know what? i actually washed my hands in there now that i think of it. but i was doing the whole pretend washing my hands. now that i think about it. no soap ass washing my hands. she said: here take some purell. please. i said: but nobody else was even in the fuckin bathroom to acknowledge my performance. my performative hand rinsing. my penis is clean.

aniah said: ew. i said: then again? it's 3pm. it could still liven up. look at that. yeah buddy. go and slurp that bowl of soup. good for you. she said: i didn't even know they served food here. i said: i thought it was just fuckin like bags of potato chips and shit. you smell that? the soup. giving off an odor of a german shepherd's mutilated corpse? aniah said: is that the soup? i thought somebody farted. i was actually gonna ask. i said: it actually impresses me. you know what it does. i'm actually impressed. at how horrendous that soup smells. in a way? i'm actually enthusiastic about the fact this fucking guy is eating a soup that you know. probably smells like. i mean i could imagine that it smells distinctly like alyssa merolla's pussy lips two decades ago or so. aniah said: yusuf. please stop! i said: straight out the academy and you get stuck with me. she said: i know right? i said: how fuckin pumped are you? she said: the lieutenant told me all about you yusuf. you're the best detective on the force. but that you're. that you have your idiosyncrasies. i said: but yeah. i'm still fucking pissed my window was down out there. i wanted that guy to hear me. he deserved to hear me. you know what i mean? what i had to say. she said: now why were you calling him a cunt again? i said: why?! the fuckin guy had the audacity to honk his horn at me as i was right in the midst of a routine parallel park! i was icing that spot and he totally threw me off! fuck that. no. fuck him. jerkoff. also? the fuck was he doing wearing that snow-hat in that run-down maroon pickup truck in mid-april? aniah said: i didn't

even see him. was it a truck? i said: how is your scalp not drenched in sweat. smelly ass scalp ass dude. shitstain. it's total shitstain behavior is what it is aniah. and it's become rampant in this city. shitstain behavior like that. yeah, let me get uhh. a mezcal and water? she said: yusuf. we're not supposed to drink on the job. are we? i said: it's providence honey. this isn't my personal idiosyncrasy. nobody gives a fuck. plus i'm only having one. she said: i could have sworn in the by-laws that. i said: i mean i need to be able to think this through. you can't catch criminals thinking like a cop. you know what i mean? especially not vicious psychos. eyeball snatchers. i need to down a couple mezcals at least. she said: you just said you were only having one! i said: also it's cash only if you want anything. i think i have. i have like forty bucks though. so we should be good.

(my beat cop pal dominic martelli walked into nickanee's in full uniform which was only somewhat noticed by the geriatric clientele.) i said: dominic. the fuck is going on my bro? he said: nothing bro. uhhh. hi aniah how are you? uhhh. i'll have a jameson on the rocks. if you don't mind? i said: of course! like i said this is on me. what're you on til midnight? he said: fuckin sucks dude. but i'll be on high alert i guess. gotta be. with all this shit. which by the way. what's the fuckin latest? i said: oh on our serial stabbing suspect? aniah said: or suspects! i said: great point aniah. he said: yeah you two are. are you both the leads? the fuck is going on with this shit? i said: last i checked we are yeah. drew the damn short straws. unfortunately. honestly dom. the lieutenant's been pretty fuckin tight-lipped about this shit. we have six fucking stabbings! all in hookah joints. all ending in the complete removal of the victims' eyes! yet none of the victims end up deceased. now you tell me. how the fuck is that possible? he said: that's some crazy ass shit. i said: yeah. i think only the fourth victim. well. to be fair. he got shot in the head. dominic said: yeah. i was first on the scene to that one. last thursday? i said: yeah i think so. he said: yeah. he's dead. i said: right. right right right. i wanted to pick your brain on that. so he's dead but

by totally unrelated circumstances then. yet the rest are all still alive and eyeless. he said: imagine that? getting shot in the head right after your eyes were plucked out? i said: it's some fuckin type of bad luck bro. put it to you this way. i don't think i'll be playing his birthday the next time i buy a lottery ticket. not that i buy lottery tickets. it's a total scam. he said: what the fuck is this world coming to? i said: that's the thing. what is it coming to dude? because if this is organized then fuck me up my own asshole. because from what i'm hearing. none of this shit has any of the markers of a series of organized hits. he said: oh not at all! that's not that particular style. i said: it's too random. it's too high profile. the victims are too disconnected. i think at least two of them have fucking clean records! he said: but anyway.

i said: yeah man. yeah mannnn. (dominic chugged his jameson and then proceeded back on his beat.) aniah said: yusuf. that's like your third mezcal in 20 minutes. and you're already done with it? you just took the last sip. are you sure this is okay? i said: the mezcal here is super weak. she said: but i've been watching the bartender make your drinks. the glasses have been filled at least halfway. with pure mezcal! and each one is a tall glass! i said: aniah. do you honestly think i've never chugged mezcal before? no i'm being serious here. it's a serious question. do you honestly believe this is the first time i've come here. patronized this established and chugged multiple glasses of mezcal? i'm totally fine! she said: i'm just concerned. because the by-laws clearly state. i said: look at that grandma playing pool. over there. you see her? she said: the like. super skinny one? i said: yeah. exactly. i don't know she seems to have like a look of pure death in her eyes? like a geriatric fuckin agent of death? i can't explain it. she said: should we interrogate. i said: no. i don't think she's gouging people's eyes out. i didn't mean it necessarily like that. but spiritually speaking. i feel strongly that she contains impressive amounts of death. i can tell that even from here. at least on first glance. (aniah gazed at her blankly for what struck me as a somewhat of an extended period of time.) i said: but anyway. should we

hit the strip? or wait until after we meet with the lieutenant? she said: what's the strip? i said: the strip club. the club of strippers. because honestly? i just can't deal with. i can't deal with fuckin white saxophone players. there's only so much white tenor sax i can take. she said: why would we go to a strip club though yusuf? there's no hookah at most of. i said: i mean it's totally racist on my part. it's pure racism. i can't lie. even if a white saxophonist is good. beyond proficient. great even. it doesn't matter. i guess i'm an anti-white racist as it relates to the tenor saxophone? she said: my mom loved kenny g. i said: isn't he a jew though? does that count? i don't even fuckin know anymore. but yeah. just based on pure caucasity i fundamentally can't get into this guy. a white saxophone player. in fact it actually annoys me more if he's actually good. aniah said: but this is more of a jazz fusion thing isn't it? i said: even worse. i'll down this and let's go.

scene 02: the cadillac lounge 5:14pm.

aniah said: you know yusuf, i still really can't believe we're going here. a strip club? ew. i hope you have chlorox wipes for after. i have purell for my hands. but for the car i mean. do they even let girls in? i said: we need to canvas potential witnesses. let's put our collective reservations about nude women exposing their nudity for monetary gain aside for a second. let's leave the bylaws to the side. for just this afternoon. we're in pursuit of the world's most furtive eye gouging artist. eye gouging artists! but please. just trust me on this. you may or may not know this. but these exotic dancers keep the median hookah joint in business. we're following the money aniah. these bitches? they live for shisha. they bow to the hookah hose. believe me. plus i have some unfinished business here anyway. some zoomer russian whore totally misrepresented the number of songs she was giving me in the booth last january. (inside the establishment said russian zoomer was found standing rather apathetically by the dj booth.) i said: listen. yeah. i'm

addressing you as vanessa. not natasha or whatever they call you over the pa here. the fuck do you think this is? what? you get a new set of lip injections and now you think it's ok to lie to the providence police? do you not know the difference between an ep and an lp? that's not how it works honey. no. not on my watch. i know your generation is into the 90 second song thing. that that's how you get the most streams and all that shit. but in my day a song had three verses and was at minimum three minutes long. sorry. but let me give a piece of advice. may i? she said: oh of course yusuf! please! share your wisdom with me daddy! i said: very funny. no i appreciate that. but let me say this. contemplate plastic. give it some thought before you inject it into your epidermis. plastic into your epidermis. you want that kylie jenner look. i get it. who doesn't? but we're not in calabasas vanessa. you want your left asscheek to get dislocated when you're getting railed from behind one night? i can tell from one look at you that i could knock a cheek off its axis with about half a dozen concerted thrusts. because the guy you're going to for these so-called enhancements is moonlighting at new york system grilling wieners every friday night. i fucking tasted his forearm hair last time i ordered three the long way over there no homo. is that gonna be a good look for you long-term you think? she said: yah, that's purr actually. i said: again very funny. you're an amusing girl you know that? listen. i know. we all know that you were intimate acquaintances with the girl with the turquoise baboon tattoo above her vagina. the one that we both know had something. if not everything? to do with mikey mumbles accidentally pouring three teaspoons of fentanyl into his vodka soda last spring? but i'm gonna let that slide. i'll let his people sort that out. okay? but we can't have people getting their eyes gouged out while smoking an ice hookah in this city. that's not. it's not gonna be fuckin good for anybody. we have enough trouble attracting businesses to this city. eye gouging just cannot be a regular fucking occurrence on my watch.

she said: but i. do. nah. it. know. en. e. thinggggggg. i said: then who does? let me talk to them. and where's gerard? because the prices here have got just absolutely absurd. she said: i haven't seen him today. i said: because i've been meaning to have a chat with him. why do i feel like i'm on the upper west side every time i close a tab here? can you answer me that? it was fuckin seven bucks for a double shot of vodka when i started coming here. plus the drink card with the five buck credit. i was basically drinking for free! now i'm paying sixteen for a casamigos blanco? i'm serious. this bartender just charged me sixteen bucks for a casamigos blanco. the fuck is that? how is a run-of-the-mill blowjob like half a grand in this place now? why am i forking over a monthly benz payment to receive chlamydia within these four walls vanessa? no you're a good girl. you're well-intentioned. i don't intend any offense. but does he think this is sustainable? she said: it's inflationism honey! then walked to the back. i said: jerome powell can lick my left nut vanessa! this used to be a respectable establishment! turning back to aniah i said: yeah she doesn't know shit. aniah said: her lips look. they're butchered. i said: yeah. and her left butt cheek looks like it fought fuckin riddick bowe and went 12 rounds. the sad thing is. she actually could be a decent looking girl. she needs to take her russian ass to an orthodox church or some shit. is what she needs to do. but you know what? when you choose to suck a cock to get a 50 percent discount on plastic surgery in johnston you're just asking for an uneven ass. there's only so much guidance you can give. aniah said: you know . . . i've experimented. i said: really? you look all natural to me. from what i can tell. she said: no. with girls. i said: oh. okay. she said: what? i said: no. i'm just saying. she said: i don't know. what are you saying? i said: no. i'm just saying. if you want my honest opinion? she said: what's your opinion? honestly? i said: honestly? bisexuality is a totally asymmetric sexual orientation in this country. she said: how do you figure? i said: how is it not? literally at least every other girl i know has

flicked at least a bean or two at one point or another. female bisexuality. in my opinion? it doesn't even exist.

aniah said: well, i mean. yeah. i mean, i don't know if i would consider myself bi. i said: of course you wouldn't. and if i stood here and told you oh yeah i got super drunk last saturday and licked lieutenant moolio's right nut. would you then consider me bi? she said: well. i said: of course not! of course you wouldn't. abso-fuckin-lutely not. i'd forever be a total homo in your eyes. a man licking another man's nutsack is never a bisexual act aniah. no. you'd tell all your friends i was a prolific sword swallower and they'd all assume they'd get aids if they so much as jacked me off. as soon as a man engages in any sort of penis play he's eternally a gay in this country. whereas a female can flick a baker's dozen beans and she's still essentially hetero. when she goes through her obligatory scissoring phase it's an innocent aberration. i'm not even saying it's right or wrong. i'm just noting an asymmetry. i'm just saying don't sit in this strip club. as i drink my sixteen dollar casamigos blanco. and fucking tell me that you've quote-unquote experimented. on some faux-bisexual bullshit. because it is no doubt a fact of the matter. there is. functionally speaking? no operating bisexuality in this country. aniah said: well if you put it that way. i said: one more? not here though. no. fuck this place. gerard is out of his damn mind with these price hikes. i thought this was a fucking recession proof business? one more at ten? is that acceptable to you. deputy director aniah?

scene 03: oyster bar 7:51pm.

(we met the head of the division lieutenant cumn moolio at oyster bar on the hill for buck a shuck and half off specialty cocktails to discuss the case further.) i said: this is on the department tab right? because i'm thinking about ordering a dozen oysters? but just for me. i would ideally want all 12. cumn said: yusuf. you've make this fuckin homicide

department run nearly single-handedly for about four fuckin years now. have fucking 18 oysters. on my personal tab. it's the least i could do! but yeah this is on the department. i said: yeah maybe i will get 18. he said: they're aphrodisiacs you know. oysters? they make you wanna fuck. let's down a few and then we can hit the strip after this. talk down a couple little whooirs into market price handies? for old time's sake? i really don't give a fuck.

i said: ugh. i haven't been to the strip in literally eons. i'm down! (aniah tried to say something but anticipating disagreeing with her i abruptly cut her off and asked moolio to give us any breaking updates on the case.) he said: well. the thing is. the forensics finally came back on the first five victims. and um. well. there's i guess you could say a minor issue? and it's not immaterial. necessarily immaterial. i mean. i don't know if it's an issue. maybe that's not the right word. issue? but it's something. i said: okay. so. the fuck is up? moolio said: well for one thing. there are no prints. and oddly enough? there's almost no blood residue either. even when we sent each victim personally up to our ancillary lab in boston. none. zip! no blood! actually there was no blood residue that we can conclusively identify at all. and it seems like. uh. well ummmmm. so it follows that. the eyeballs. they were apparently removed with . . . surgical precision it seems? i said: surgical precision? the eyeballs?! they were removed with. what? the precision of a surgeon? he said: yeah. like fuckin space x level precision or some type of shit is what they're telling me yusuf. like elon musk retard type accuracy. like arguably. precision even our leading surgeons would struggle to achieve. in a fucking medical setting. i said: but this shit happened. it all happened at the fuckin hookah bars no? he said: and that's exactly it yusuf. we have no idea how this is even possible. how the fuck do you remove an eyeball with surgical detail at a goddamned water pipe bar?! at least that's what they're telling me! and it's putting the department in a bit of a predicament. an imbroglio of sorts. because on the one hand. i don't know what the fuck to tell you two in terms of

leads. look for a rogue world class eye surgeon on the loose. smoking hookah in and around fox point? on the providence river? a cunt hair from brown? yet on the other. i said: on the other hand we can't let half a dozen civilians walk around eyeless and do nothing about it cumn! even if they're black. aniah said: yeah. the strawberry daiquiri? that's part of the happy hour deal? interrupting the waitress i said: it is. but it's like half a glass. it's half-price. but you get half the amount. honestly. i'd just get a full drink. throw it on cumn's tab. this is on the department. they can't legally do happy hour here. that's why. they give you half off a drink but then give you half the actual drink. moolio said: so anyway. this is obviously going to be. (he cleared his throat.) he said: it's going to be. a somewhat challenging case to resolve. perhaps an impossible case. perhaps an ill-advised sequence of events to even investigate further! yet. i do have at least one good lead for you two.

scene 04: luigi's studio 9:36pm.

aniah said: some frickin guy named luigi who lives in a studio apartment above a laundromat on federal hill?! i said: he runs the damn mob aniah. or what's left of it. luigi manotto. aniah said: like the mafia? i said: very old school to live above a laundromat. i like that. you have to respect that type of austerity. in this day and age? (we arrived at luigi's after we wrapped up at oyster bar with the lieutenant. the laundromat was walking distance just a few blocks down the street. the studio had a futon. a bed. a tan walmart fold out chair. and a bathroom that consisted of two rooms. one purely for the toilet. another for the sink and tub.) luigi said: yeah your lieutenant told me you guys might be coming by. my apologies for the place. for the mess. to be honest with you i don't spend a ton of time at home. honestly? i prefer to be out and about. here and there. i said: oh i totally i get it. honestly? in this day and age who really wants to be at home anyway? real estate prices? plus personally? i respect austerity. i live above a fucking aquarium supply shop on mineral spring. what do i need a second bedroom for? even one bedroom is overkill. in asia 300 square feet is considered fucking luxurious. plus austerity makes being out and about a lot more tenable. from a budgetary standpoint. so ummm. luigi. can i call you luigi? is that ok? so we're working through a few open cases here. the whole eye gouging thing. and uhhhh. i mean, you know. it would get some attention removed from your organization for sure? not that you have an organization. but you know. like. we don't need you to finger anyone. not that you would finger a guy. but if you have any relevant information that could be. perhaps? mutually useful? well we'd love to hear it. (luigi sat in the fold out chair and opened a container of high-end anchovies. he offered me one.) i said: oh man i just had 18 oysters down the street. at oyster bar? so i'm a little full. but sure i'll try one. luigi said: you like anchovies? i said: love an anchovy here and there. he said: as a kid my father always told me. a good anchovy is like

good cunt. i said: wow. that's interesting. how so? he said: honestly? i never asked. but i like cunt. so i've always assumed i should like anchovies too. you know what i mean?

i said: no. that makes total sense. it's fatherly wisdom. he said: but as it relates to the other thing. yeah lieutenant moolio. um. he stopped me in the street earlier this afternoon actually. said a few things about these occurrences. i mean. fuck. they've been disturbing to me just hearing about them! as a citizen. you never wanna see a guy lose his fuckin eyeballs. just on principle. we all deserve to have our eyeballs. but you know. i spent some time in sicily back when i was younger. so i can tell you one thing. and what i can tell you is this. there were certain types of activity off the coast over there. now i never saw it myself personally. not me. but a couple guys i considered actual good friends. people i trusted and whatnot. now they said certain things would pop out the fuckin uhh. water from time to time. things that would zip around in a way that they couldn't possibly have been made in europe. forget about africa. or frankly even in america. probably not even now! never mind back then. now. to my knowledge at least. they didn't know fuck-all about how these things actually worked. but they did say. um. that there was one instance. where some people actually may have covered the fuckin thing up. if i'm remembering correctly. because how could you not? some flying bullshit spearing people? but anyway there was this one instance. where something like this thing that happened over here happened over there. with the eyeballs and whatnot. but i will say this. the guy that that thing happened to? he was dead. now what moolio told me is these people. they're alive and walking around after this shit? that wasn't the case in sicily. it was like a mutilation thing. where the eyeballs were completely gone. like a dr fuckin frankenstein or something. to be honest i didn't pay it much mind at the time. i didn't even remember it until talking with your lieutenant today! but anyway. all we knew at the time was these things. they seemed to be connected to the waters. or at least they were really only seen. by the

people i knew at least. seen coming out of them. the waters. now that's from what i heard at least. but that's about all i can say about it. aniah said: wait. yusuf! you realize that five out of the six. they happened at tel aviv. i said: tel aviv? tel aviv . . . like the jewish ethno-state tel aviv or. aniah said: no. by the water. tel aviv on the actual providence river. they're not known for hookah. i don't know if they're actually hebrew. i said: you mean jewish. she said: but they serve shisha! remember? right on the providence river! i said: fuck me. i totally missed that in cumn's report. shit!

scene 05: tel aviv on the water 10:23pm.

(i sped us through downtown providence en route to tel aviv in a manner that was technically illegal without being unnecessarily reckless.) i said: i wonder if muldowney's. if they've finally restocked their fernet in that dive yet. aniah said: no yusuf. no more drinking for you tonight! i said: you know. now that i think about it. it was years ago. it was a tuesday night that their bouncer. at this tel aviv place i mean. that he refused me entrance because i wasn't wearing so-called dress shoes. on a fucking tuesday night he did this aniah. on the providence river! no one was even in the damn place. i even said to him but i'm looking in your establishment and no one's fuckin even in there. who cares if i'm wearing sneakers? these are vans anyway! and you know what? he still told me to go fuck myself. i must have literally erased it from my memory. like an instance of ptsd or some shit. after that interaction. (upon arriving we sat down immediately with the manager marissa bibby as the venue wound down it's post-dinner rush.) i said: so then you're telling us in no uncertain terms that all five instances occurred in the exact same seat. out there? on the deck right overlooking the providence river? she said: well i was only here for 4 out of the 5 times. but yes i feel confident in saying that. i said: so after the second or third instance of one of your customers having his eyeballs

gouged clean out. you didn't think to maybe close the deck? marissa said: well, you guys didn't say anything. i said: well, you know. there's a lot of crime in the city these days. it requires quite a bit of follow-up. she said: oh no, i totally get it. it's just the deck is a big money-maker for us this time of year. it's a really important source of revenue. i said: you know. sure a couple black guys get their eyeballs drilled out. i get it. maybe it's no big deal to you. i know the asians on the east side don't give a fuck. but the thing is a lot of our resources are tied up making sure nothing happens around the brown campus. they already withhold taxes like cosa nostra. you think that helps my cola every year? if this type a shit were to ever drip over from fox point believe me. we'll all be sinking to the bottom of the providence river. although to be honest. who knows? maybe that's what needs to happen. i mean. we're literally getting gouged as a municipality here in terms of taxes. no pun intended. it's really absurd in my opinion. half the fuckin city is tax-exempt. and the other half has property values that only make sense in aleppo in 2016. marissa said: so should we.

i said: yes. shut the fucking deck down now. please. we have reason to believe the potential assailant may be traveling aquatically. she said: in the . . . providence river? aniah said: i know. that's gross! i said: i get it. i'd rather suck ten lebanese dicks than even dip my big toe in that river personally. yet. that's where the evidence is leading us as of right now. as of right now. let me emphasize that. (once the scene was cleared. the yellow tape unwound. aniah and i went over to the deck and gazed somewhat lifelessly into the capri sun-littered waters of the providence river. beyond the fourth-rate yachts and lower middle class rowboats i felt an odd pang in my stomach. i thought i saw what looked like a strange blue light flicker just briefly on and off in the direction of the dam.) i said: did you see that? aniah said: who. the asian guy? yeah i remember him. remember? he asked me if i was cambodian when we were at muldowney's last month. ugh. loser. i'll kill him. i said: oh right right. him. yeah i guess i didn't realize there were asian biker gangs

around here. is that. a bottle of captain morgan he's drinking? aniah said: open container! we can take him in if you want. that's at least a misdemeanor! i'll get my cuffs from the car?! i said: eh. i mean i guess we could? but on the other hand. fuck him? i don't know. do you feel like doing that paperwork? i mean if you want. but after the day we've had? fuck man. no. let's grab an espresso at new harvest before they close. what is it? 10:30? 11? we can just make it if we leave right now. then we can come back with backup in the morning. aniah said: yeah i guess you're right. no you're right yusuf. we need to keep our perspective. i can't be petty as an officer now. no. thanks for talking me off the ledge yusuf. i said: but to me? honestly? this is a fuckin dead-end case regardless.

day 2. scene 06: doric lodge 10:22am.

(cumn gave me a buzz on our way to pay a visit to our second person of interest in said series of eye gougings at the doric lodge in south providence.) i said: roy? yeah i mean. i don't think he's a psychopath necessarily. although he never puts his fuckin teeth in. which might qualify. walking around with nothing but gums. cumn (on the phone) said: well he's apparently an older guy. right? from what you've said in the past at least. i said: yeah it's just. you know. the whistling. it's a bit much at times. guy's a fuckin human harmonica every time he wants to get a word in. which is every three fucking seconds! he said: yeah alright. well one of the analysts we have on retainer from boston thought there was some overlap in some of the geometric incisions or some shit. that the patterns may have been masonic in character. i said to him. yusuf knows a guy. let me have him fuckin feel him out. see what's been going on in the local lodges. that's what they're called right?

i said: personally i think it's a bit of a stretch. if you ask me. possibly even total bullshit. but okay. i mean it's most likely complete horseshit. but you never know. cumn said: you never fuckin know. he could be using masonic geometry to gum out somebody's fuckin eyeball. that's possible. roy said: you know mike lamantia right? from johnston? his dad horace? i said: umm. i don't really know horace. but yeah i know who you're talking about. yeah. he said: you know we used to use his boots as trash cans when i was on the force. he has tremendously large feet. you know that? i said: no i know mike though. nice guy. he said: now this tipster. i said: apparently he's a forensics analyst. he said: is that what you call them? tipsters? for one. he's full of shit. but secondly i think this is masonic discrimination as well. i said: i don't necessarily agree with. he said: who's she? i said: oh. this is aniah. yeah. sorry i should have. yeah. she's my new partner. recent graduate of the academy. he said: good luck honey. this city is going to fucking shit. aniah said: so i've heard. he said: it's not like when the italians ran things. back in the day. sure. every now and then a guy got shot in the street. popped in a deli or something. murdered in broad daylight. but it had meaning back then. i said: now i know. it's bullshit. total uhhh bullcrap. but hypothetically roy. you tell me. is there even a remote possibility you think this whole thing could be related. maybe not to masonry as an institution. but someone known by the lodge? i'm not talking about freemasonry. i'm talking about a mason you may know. a rogue uhhh. fuckin masonic element perhaps? he said: you'd have to ask the most worshipful yusuf. you know that. i mean. me personally? i don't fuckin know a thing about it! eye gouging? how could that possibly have anything to do with speculative masonry. it's ridiculous. absolutely ridiculous. have you seen him lately? i said: no i get it. i agree. aniah said: but what about the occult aspect? i said: who? mike? roy said: yeah. lamantia. how's he doing? i said: i haven't seen him in years. last time i saw him i think we were at brewed awakenings having a drink. watching some uhh. who was he? some fucking frank sinatra

cover guy. roy said: fuck that place. you asked something about a cult honey? aniah said: no. i was asking about the o-ccult. as it relates to freemasonry? or is that.

roy said: oh so you're one of those. you think we're buttfucking goats in here. don't you? go ahead. take a walk around. see if you see any. goats. with loose assholes. you see what i mean yusuf? this is discrimination. why doesn't biden. how come you never hear him talk about this stuff? i just don't get it. what're we fucking assholes? i said: i don't disagree roy. you know. he said: and the inflation? i can't even get a fucking pear for under three bucks! honey. those are all old wives' tales! i said: no. i get it. totally get it. produce. it's totally out of control in this fuckin country. she didn't mean it that. i mean. we actually. we have to get back to the scene anyway. forensics and shit. but truly. we appreciate your help here. your assistance roy. he said: yusuf. you can do no wrong in my eyes you know that. and no. i understand honey. you didn't mean it offensively. yet with that said i should tell you that i'm offended. but that's okay. we really need a masonic education program in this country. it's not your fault you're ignorant. yusuf. tell mikey hello next time you see him ok? tell him roy says he hopes he's doing well. that his father is doing well. tell him to give me a fucking call will you?!

scene 07: trader joe's 11:37am.

i said: you gotta go easy with the masonic stuff with him. you know. he's old. ornery. somewhat touchy. aniah said: all i did was say the word the occult yusuf! what is he. like a trump supporter or neo-nazi guy? i said: no i get it. i don't know. probably. this country is going to shit either way in my opinion. but the older guys you know? they get offended at that shit. they don't want to be seen uhh. as different in any way. aniah said: did he not have teeth? i said: no. he has teeth. he owns a full fuckin set. he just refuses to put them in. that's all. walks around

gumless whistling away! aniah said: what about the tailor? i said: frank? she said: or should we hit the scene first. i said: yeah we'll do that. you know my friend enzo always told me that guy was like german or something? always thought it was kind of weird. a german-american tailor. in north providence? seemed far-fetched. but you know i finally went into his spot. the other day. to get a dry cleaning. she said: oh yeah? like for a suit. i said: and you know. i would swear on my mother three times that that guy is one hundred percent italian. fuckin has to be. aniah said: you think he knows anything?

i said: it's just weird. you see a guy around town for like 10 years. you assume he's german because enzo told you that a decade ago. more than a decade. the weird thing is. why would i take enzo's word on that in the first place. what would he know. how would he know a tailor's ethnic background? how the fuck. was it even relevant to our conversation at the time? you know? because he patronized the fuckin place once or twice? funny how those things work i guess. she said: so. should we? i said: no. i guess i think he could definitely know something. frank. he could. i mean at this point? shit. we're gonna have to start cold calling for leads if shit keeps going like this. fuck. aniah said: this is a tough cookie to crack huh? (i shook my head in a silent disgust as we drove back to the providence river yet again.) i said: isn't it tough nut? she said: what? i said: to crack? she said: like the drug. crack? i don't know. would a crackhead be able to pull off something like this. i said: tough nut to crack i mean. isn't that the phrase? tough nut. she said: yeah this is a tough nut to crack. this case. isn't it? i said: but you said tough cookie. she said: tough cookie? to what? i said: crack. that's what you said. she said: haha. did i? i said: yeah i'm pretty sure you said this is a tough cookie to crack. she said: would that be a freudian slip? i said: do you want a cookie? i think it's supposed to be something about a cookie crumbling isn't it? that's how the cookie crumbles. not cracks. she said: yeah exactly. i said: my grandma always said that shit. then again. to be fair though. i guess cookies can crack

too. she said: the cookie crumbles. but the nut cracks. i said: crack a nut. crumble a cookie. either way we're fucked. you know. we don't even actually crack nuts anymore. in this country. people used to crack all kinds of nuts. back in previous generations. walnuts. peanuts. it's sad. have you ever had a peanut just straight from the fuckin shell? salted? she said: i'm not. i said: it's just eons better than the pre-cracked cans of peanuts. you can't even fuckin compare to two. that's why when people rave about the de-shelled pistachios. i'm just always befuddled. the essence of the pistachio is lost if it's stripped of its shell. she said: probably less vegetable oil too. i said: oh one hundred percent! but okay. now let's to this fucking manager again. see what the fuck she has to say for herself. five people getting their eyes gouged out in the same seat. i said: you don't mind that we popped in here before? i figured we're right across the street. aniah said: no i love trader joe's! i said: just wanna grab a few pieces of fruit for the day. get a couple asian pears on deck and shit. just in case my energy gets low. or if we can't get a decent espresso later.

she said: the lack of late afternoon coffee here is noticeable. to me at least. i said: providence as a municipality understands the modern need to have a strip club for almost every square mile of its boundaries. but it doesn't understand the need for all day espressos. personally? i need espressos. potentially? at any fucking hour of the day. and no dunkin donuts does not count. even if their americanos are respectable. i'm talking legitimate coffee shops. she said: there're only a small handful of legitimate coffee shops that hold reasonable hours here it seems. i said: as a city it's actually a pitiful commentary. (a woman stood in the toiletries aisle and took repeated whiffs of a deodorant stick from the shelf then put it back.) i said: aniah. any interest in a pack of fresh figs? i'll split them with you? she said: eh. i said: you ever had a fresh fig? it's a totally unique experience. much different than the dried iteration.

scene 08: tel aviv on the water 12:22pm.

(taking my first succulent bite of my fresh asian pear at tel aviv on the water) marissa said: have you seen this letter? (she held up a letter. still finishing chewing) i said: what letter? wait. why was this never brought to us? she said: there's a letter here. i mean. we received it. at the bar. from the mailman. it looks like it was addressed to. i said: hey that's my address. the fuck did that. how did that get here? she said: well. i said: what type of scam are you running here lady? you realize this is a case that involved a series of fucking attempted homicides? she said: oh no! i would never tamper with a crime investigation detective yusuf! (she rummaged through the envelope.) she said: well clearly the five is written like a nine. can't you see? (she held up the envelope for our viewing.) aniah said: oh yeah. i do see that. i said: you know what, aniah? wait. yeah i guess it kind of looks like a . . . nine? so you're saying it got delivered here. by accident? marissa said: i don't know. i just know it was dropped off here by usps. a four. is nine minus five . . .? yeah. a four number difference can be a bigger deal than you'd. i said: can i read it? she said: sure. here you go. (i snatched the letter somewhat hastily.) i said: how the fuck could a five and a nine. do you have a napkin or something at the bar over there? my asian pear is. she said: of course. here you go! i said: thank you (glancing down at the letter). i said: this is actually more like a card. as opposed to like uhh. an 8.5 by 11 piece of paper? letterhead? almost like a thank you note. a thank you card. you know this could be a total coincidence. it could actually be completely unrelated to the case. i actually went to a wedding last. wait. marissa said: yeah? i said: is there a return address? i grabbed the envelope. i said: because this is. this is just. it's fucking. completely illegible. who the fuck scribbled these little for lack of a better word . . . symbols? my doctor has better handwriting than. aniah said: i think. what does that say? morking? what's the definition of uh. morking? i

said: no. i think it's. making? marissa said: i thought it was working. i said: thank you for . . . working?

aniah said: no maybe making then? marissa said: zenerono? is this in italian maybe? is that an italian word. zenerono? aniah said: or does it maybe say generous? i said: ummm. marissa said: there's a smiley face too. if that means anything. i said: thesoume? is it maybe greek? marissa said: i think that's the same? aniah said: i actually thought it might read tresemme. marissa said: like the hair gel? i said: oh yeah. tresemme. i actually like their mousse. good balance between hold and. but you know. not like rock hard either no homo. aniah said: they make quality products in my opinion. marissa said: yet it looks like it ends with a heart sign and xo? i said: listen. i'm gonna take this. aniah do we have a handwriting lab? aniah said: ummm. that's a good question. in the academy i think they said . . . that we go to the feds for that? i said: fuck. the feds? well i don't know. marissa said: the feds? as in the fbi? i said: i know. you hate to get them involved. assholes. you never really want them involved. believe me. but honestly we might fuckin need to. in this case. because i can't. this shit is fuckin illegible! aniah said: i mean. better safe than. i said: i mean it could actually. now that i think about it. be the thank you note for my cousin's wedding last august. that's totally possible. or i don't know. a confession from our eye gouger? aniah said: or eye gougers? i said: excellent point aniah. we could be dealing with a team of professionals here. marissa said: i don't know how that could be? i said: why would that. now how would that be surprising to you? she said: well . . . i said: is there something. detective watson and i should be. informed of? regarding this case? she said: well. in each instance there were. when we asked the people. you know. the witnesses and stuff. i said: oh the witnesses who refused to speak to fuckin pvdpd? she said: well you know. before you guys got here. i know. or i thought in each case no one. they all said pretty explicitly that they didn't see anything. i said: what do you mean? didn't see any. thing? is that like a pun? she said: no. i would never joke

about a tragedy like this. that happened at my bar?! i'm not much of a pun person in any case. what i mean is. the people who were also smoking hookah. who didn't get their eyes gouged out. they said they didn't see a thing. aniah said: yet they were. marissa said: right there. they said it was like a blink of an eye.

i said: for someone who's not into puns. she said: no. i mean like instantaneous. you know what i mean. one moment they were smoking hookah. then the next second the person was screaming in pain. and they had no eyes! instantaneously their eyeballs were gone! aniah said: i think i'm gonna puke. i said: but none of them wanted to talk to us. despite their friends getting their fuckin eyeballs plucked out? i'm telling you. can't make this shit up. marissa said: well. i said: no. i get it. but you know . . . kind of tough. solving these crimes . . . maybe you could talk to one or two of them. if they come back in. if they seem remotely amenable. move them to possibly reconsider? aniah said: but seriously. where's your ladies room? marissa said (aniah was puking): you wanna drink? i said: eh. she said: do you not? i said: drink? she said: yeah. are you like a. what's the name? a teetotaler? i said: oh no! no no. i drink. i'm actually somewhat of a problem drinker. i think that's the name for it. but ummm. yeah the thing is i actually. it was a week or so ago. maybe three weeks. at the elmhurst pub. are you familiar? she said: you mean the pub in elmhurst? i said: exactly. yeah. i was there. couple well-worn women. figured they were about my age. but struck me. you know. as fuckin worn the fuck out. for lack of a better term. old bags almost. but my age! i thought at least. sitting next to a gay. maybe a somewhat younger gay? hard to tell though. the old bartender in a baggy pc friars gray sweatshirt served me a vodka that was like seven bucks and i said to myself. at the time at least. i said to myself shit! this place has fuckin great deals! thought that i needed to come here more often. but you know. in fuckinnn uh. she said: you were having second thoughts? i said: in fuckin retrospect i was sitting at the elmhurst pub well after midnight on a wednesday night. or i guess technically

thursday morning. by myself. and four barstools down sat two old bags who were somehow i thought my age. maybe i too was an old bag. am i an old bag? sitting at bars by myself around close. on weeknights. midweek. at least that what i fuckin thought in uhhh.

she said: did you know that we actually do 25% off hookah on wednesdays. i was just thinking of that. hearing your story. if you're ever out? i said: no. that's. wow. that's a good deal. a great deal actually. i actually love that. i actually might check that out. but anyway. i guess my point is that i really need to quit drinking. going out to bars and shit. so i'll probably pass on the drink for right now. at this hour? it's killing me. maybe later though. although i shouldn't. but at the same i love it. aniah said: ok i think i'm good now. i said: did you actually puke? she said: yeah. that was disgusting. it literally made me puke. i said: ew. now it was at this point that i went out to the water. yeah. i left the two of them behind. i suppose i officially transferred the investigation to aniah watson just momentarily. took a stroll back to the deck. overseeing the providence river. (what did you see at this point?) well. the light again? i mean that's the thing.

scene 09: hot club (indeterminate).

i said: ugh. what is this? my fuckin seventh michelob ultra? or maybe my eighth? enzo said: nah we've had at least 10! been going all night with this shit. i said: look at those three brick pillars. emitting nonsensical smoke. haha. do we even still fuckin manufacture shit here? there's no way. enzo said: you kidding me? in providence? what're they making over there? nothing. fuck no. we're not manufacturing shit. you kidding me? even my uncle's gabagol is imported now. (so you were. what? transferred across the street?) i wasn't sure at first. no. um. it was weird. it was weird until i went to the bathroom. then it got disconcerting. took a piss. the bathroom wasn't redone. because hot club redid its bathroom fuckin years ago. yet i was pissing in the old

hole in the wall shithole. i left the bathroom. as usual you know. fuckin took a quick glance of myself. quick peek as i went back to the deck. no beard. i had no beard. a hairless face. i had no beard. i said to enzo: the fuck happened to my beard? don't i uh. usually have a beard? he said: a beard? he laughed hysterically. he said: kid you've definitely had at least 10 beers! what'd you smoke crack in the bathroom? what're you nutty? what're you. fuckin kidding me? i've never seen you with even a shred of facial hair! why? you thinking about growing one? probably look like a terrorist. at the time. you don't get it. i'm not sure if you'll get this. see. i'd completely forgot that i was just at the deck at tel aviv. only my shaved face sparked my memory of even being at tel aviv at all. prior to that i just had a vague notion that being on the deck of hot club with enzo was a place that i shouldn't have been. (you didn't have any facial hair?) yeah. it was terrible. (yeah. i could see that actually.)

but anyway. i try and. you know i play it off with enzo like i'm just joking. i look down. my iphone looks like a fuckin m&m. i think the fuck is this? but now i'm careful. now i realize some shit is seriously fucked up. i'm like daydreaming but this shit is realer than real life. i don't wanna mention anything else to enzo. not at this time. lest he start to really think i've gone fuckin nuts. which could clearly have unforeseen repercussions. which to be honest with you i halfway think i have at this point. but i'm also not trying to make that public knowledge either obviously. i said: where we going next? he said: should we see if melissa is working? (who's melissa.) i said: at ten? oh she still. see at this point i stopped myself. melissa hadn't worked at ten in like five years. so it's becoming obvious to. well no not obvious. i mean in retrospect sure. but at the same even though it was obvious there was also obviously a sense of denial. like there's no way this can be. even though it clearly is. look on the tv and lebron is on the fuckin heat. but even though all of the evidence. i mean i also hadn't hung out with enzo in over. i don't know. five fucking years. but yeah it was obvious but it also wasn't obvious. who the fuck thinks oh of course i just

traveled a decade backward in time? on top of that like i said. my memory of even being at tel aviv period was extremely fuzzy. if not non-existent. (so did you go. to ten?) yeah we did. of course we did. enzo said: i think this girl wants to fuck me. i said: but i think she wants to fuck me a little bit too. he said: it's possible. melissa said: i haven't seen you two in a while! how've you been?! i said: you know. enzo said: helping move this kid into his apartment! she said: you moved out finally? good for you! i said: well . . . you know. (ok but what next?) well usually back during this period. the typical thing was. i'd usually have grabbed a ride with enzo from his house to start the night. go over there whack a beer or two or three. then we'd just go out in his car. but for whatever reason i guess on this night i didn't do that. i must have just fuckin met him. we had separate cars. my old buick. the lease. i couldn't believe it. leased that shit for like 68 bucks a month or some shit. (oh wow. how'd you get that deal?) apparently no one had even a remote interest in driving buick veranos ten years ago. like they couldn't give them. (yeah they discontinued that car i think?)

and i can see why? it's really a. i mean. it didn't know what it wanted to be. that was the thing of it. was it a luxury car? a ho-hum sedan? no. it was a senior citizen car but senior citizens. the vast majority of them. they already own cars. i think? that's my market analysis of the verano at least. so anyway. after ten we're both more or less three sheets to the wind. enzo said: i'm gonna go plow that cape verdean stripper. you gonna go see your girl? he laughed and immediately i realized i was still plowing my old siberian stripper down the street. (okay.) so obvious i head down there. three sheets to the wind. what else am i gonna do? (now this is the one under the bridge correct?) um. yes? oh yeah. yeah that one. fuckin walk in and the bouncer. obviously i hadn't seen him in years. but he's giving me a pass to go in for free. a matador like greeting. my frequent flier miles cashed in. i'm fucked up anyway. i asked him what day it is. he said: thursday pal. half-smirking. i didn't give a fuck. thursday. so if i remember

correctly this bitch will be working. did she have the contacts in? would she be meandering in a slow strut around the double bar? she's the first fucking thing i notice once inside. uncanny. my left nut dropped an inch and a half. at least a few centimeters. like the why the fuck would i even want to. (and then what?) and then? then right as i walked in i was back at tel aviv. that's what! took me fuckin like five to ten minutes just to reorient myself. luckily aniah and the other one were still in the spot talking about uhh. well whatever the fuck they were talking about. i guess. the case? (and you were alone on the deck the entire time?) to the best of my knowledge. i guess. but to be clear. whatever way you wanna look at it. i had no idea where the fuck i went. or where the fuck i was during that period. that was the whole thing! but i mean. i guess? again. in my mind i was gone for at least an hour? two-three maybe even. from hot club. two-three drinks at ten. and then into the strip which is when i snapped back. and i don't even know how long it was. but when i walked back in all i know is nobody mentioned anything about me being on the deck for any extended period of time. to them it was like the blink of an eye.

scene 10: tel aviv on the water 12:55pm.

i said: did you shrink? aniah said: huh? i said: your height i mean. she said: oh yeah yusuf. i shrunk! god. you have no compassion for people you know that? you're really emotionally detached aren't you? has anyone ever told you that? i just puked. does that even mean anything to you? ugh. sorry. i'm guess i'm just. i'm a little self-conscious you know? about puking. vomiting as a female. i said: oh no judgment on my end. i've vomited in public like dozens of times! but i mean. seriously. you seem a solid two three inches shorter than uhh. what are you anyway? five feet even or some shit? she said: than i was before i puked? before you went to the deck for five minutes? i've always been 4'11" yusuf. are you okay? i said: really? you also struck me as like 5'2".

about that. she said: so i shrunk in five minutes? seriously yusuf? i don't even know what you're saying. no. i've always been 4'11". last time i checked. how many drinks did you have with the uhh. marissa? while i was in the bathroom anyway? i said: none! i'm actually trying to stay off the sauce! but no. haha. i was just kidding. obviously! haha. bad joke. i actually didn't drink at all. in fact? probably just jonesing for a drink actually. haha. she said: do you know a detective folco? i said: yeah of course. anthony. um. he's the one. he's gonna give us the updated. uhhh. we're meeting with him today to touch base on the case correct? she said: yeah but he just canceled. i said: last minute like that? the fuck? who's going to brief us then? we have fuckin five open attempted homicides! and cumm is out of town on business until tuesday right? she said: i think monday? i said: what happened. why'd he cancel? she said: nancy is texting me about it right now actually. he's saying. yeah. he's saying he can't make it. um. apparently it's burning when he pees? i said: he's canceling our briefing because his fuckin piss burns? she said: that's what nancy just texted me. yeah. i said: because he caught the damn clap? he's canceling the briefing. because he caught the clap? she said: well. logistically speaking. i mean there are probably a few possibilities. burning urination can be caused by more than one sti. i think chlamydia can. i said: this department is really going to shit. you know that? guys canceling homicide briefings because their little wee-wees burn? it's sickening. i thought we were a police force. buy a goddamned prophylactic. fucking unbelievable. what does he think? that he's the first guy in this department to catch chlamydia? asshole. hold on. actually no. let me call him right now actually.

scene 11: xo 2:11pm.

(folco met us reluctantly at xo.) he said: c'mon! let's make this quick. i'm in fuckin pain over here. i said: yeah. let me get a mezcal and water. del maguey vida. you have that? yeah. you have it. great. yes please! he

said: c'mon. what are you getting. a fucking cocktail?! yusuf what the fuck? aniah said: so what do you have for us detective? he said: so you're ready? finally? good. here's the latest debrief lieutenant moolio wanted me to relay. now let me ask you both this. is the name pork chop familiar to you? at all? does that mean anything to either of. aniah said: pork ch- i said: homeless guy? black? usually tied to a used walker meandering around downtown? folco said: that description matches our intel. correct. so the latest tip. the latest credible tip that we've got on these. um. cases? it's being alleged that this pork chop character is the uncle of our latest victim. i said: and? folco said: and. ow! fuck! moved the wrong way there. i don't know. i think maybe i got soap in there or something . . . but apparently the word around the shelters is that said pork chop. well he expressed little to no surprise at the news when he received it. because obviously the news is making the damn rounds! about the eye gougings that is. (sipping my mezcal nonchalantly) i said: but with all due respect. i mean. this guy is three sheets to wind more often than not. no? and three sheets probably off opiates not booze. he might even be technically retarded from what i can tell? folco said: i don't disagree yusuf. it's very possible that. even if he wasn't mentally challenged prior to descending into homelessness. that he's mentally retarded now. after years of being on the street. that he's actually functionally retarded. but let me tell you this. the specific allegation we've received is that this pork chop has been saying things that line up almost exactly with details of the case. details of the case that have yet to be revealed to the public. i said: like? folco said: like he's been shouting out things like i don't know. ahhh a clean cut! surgical precision! shit like that. i said: c'mon detective. he said: he's been saying they'll serve as perfect specimens! little perfect specimens! hahaha! yum yum! gang gang! again and again when asked about it. that's what the reporting is at least. it could be total bullshit i agree. but telling people there's no blood to be found. the fuck would he know that? that hasn't been uhh. i said: lucky guess? it was a clean cut? maybe he just got lined

up i don't know? i mean. don't get me wrong. i'll turn over every stone and shit. (i took a sip of mezcals.) show me all the stones. but i'm also not trying to be tossed into the midst of a. i can't chase every wild good chase either you know? it's uh. a fine line so to speak. he said: how many leads. and i mean actual credible leads! are you working right now on this?

aniah said: basically none! i said: more or less that's accurate. he said: then go fucking talk to pork chop! if you can find him. i said: oh we will detective! i can find any bum in this city whether i want to or not. we will find him. i guarantee you that. right after i'm done here we absolutely will. he said: okay whatever. are we good here then? i said: who's messaging you? he said: what? i said: what is that? is that tumblr? on your phone. do you have tumblr whores messaging you now? he said: oh that? no that's. i think that's my ex-wife texting me on pinterest. i said: this is a new low for you. you know tumblr is like 90% pornbots now right? it got like bought out or some shit a decade ago. founder committed suicide or some shit. it has like 3 actual human users left. he said: no. what? like i said. no that's not tumblr. fuck outta here yusuf. seriously? you think i'm talking to pornbots on tumblr? c'mon! are we good here? i gotta go. i said: i'm not saying i'm personally above it. i'm just saying it's a new personal low for you. again. just my opinion. then again. pornbots can't spread chlamydia. no. go ahead detective. we're good here. head over to urgent care. it's nothing a little penicillin can't take care of. i promise you.

scene 12: homeless shelter 3:23pm.

i let aniah drive us and said: folco. fuckin idiot. she said: he really needs to be careful. some people are especially susceptible to genital infections. i said: downtown. it's more or less a fuckin cesspool of bums now. it's a hobo metropolis. the city spent how many millions to rejuvenate those business districts? downtown and shit. fuckin millions

of dollars and then they put the largest homeless shelter in the fuckin state right around the corner. how does that possibly make sense aniah? well. at least we know where to find pork chop. aniah said: glass half full, right? i said: let's talk to the shelter manager first. see what this asshole knows. (the shelter manager was a rotund man named ralph curio with a pale face wearing a button-up that was inexplicably tucked into his pants serving no other noticeable purpose besides accentuating his marshmallow-like frame.) he said: pork chop? pork chop pork chop pork chop . . . man i could go for a little lunch right now. a literal pork chop! haha! no seriously. they have a great chop at rosalina. if you've ever been, but um. honestly i'm not sure i'm familiar with this fellow.

i said: black guy? he said: oh i don't have any issues with them. shame about the violence in the city now. but it's not completely their fault. branch ave is like a third world country. i run a mcdonald's up there. aniah said: no. pork chop. the man we're looking for is named pork chop. and he's a black man. he said: oh a female detective! and what country are you from? i said: so you don't know a pork chop here? or you do? old black guy in a walker? he hasn't been coming around? as a homeless man? he seems to be a known quantity here. because we have reports that. he said: oh pork chop! of course! that's right. the african-american fellow. although there are quite a few. possibly mentally challenged perhaps? yes yes. um. let's see. yes i don't believe . . . i've seen him today? this week? probably. maybe. it's certainly possible. aniah said: any people he's tends to associate himself with that you could provide information. to us about? their whereabouts perhaps? have you seen any of them? he said: today? i said: no three weeks ago. sir this is a high priority fucking case we're working on. he said: oh of course. ummmmmmm. i think i'd have to say . . . no? not that i'm aware of. we're quite a high volume facility though. so i do tend to get names and faces mixed up from time to time. i also run a mcdonald's franchise over on branch avenue which takes up quite a bit of my time. aniah said: well what country are you from? ugh. i could

punch him! i said: relax. he was just trying to bang you. she said: and he thinks that works? i said: if he was knowledgeable in that sphere he probably wouldn't look like the fuckin michelin man aniah. guy's clearly a fuckin idiot. running a mcdonald's. getting high on his own supply. she said: racism in this country is out of control. i said: when hasn't it been? she said: it doesn't make it any more acceptable yusuf! racism thrives on exactly that type of amor fati! i said: let's see. at this time of night? aniah said: should we grab dinner somewhere quick? i said: this time of night? if pork chop is trying to make any decent coin he's probably meandering around a series of bars somewhere around here . . . aniah said: but which ones? i said: there are only so many in a reasonable proximity of the shelter. for a guy with a walker. but yeah. let's grab a quick bite. i could go for a decent steak at an affordable price to be honest. plus by the time we're done pork chop might actually be making his rounds.

scene 13: the capital grille 4:47pm.

aniah said: the capital grille? can we put that. i said: on the taxpayer tab? (we sat down in the back room.) i said: uh yeah. if there was a longhorn or texas roadhouse within city limits then sure. i'd say let's just go there. save a couple bucks. but no. i'm sorry. i'm not driving all the way to cranston street to save forty bucks. when brown starts paying taxes i'll start driving to cranston st for a fucking ribeye. fuck that. the department can afford the extra forty bucks. this is high profile. aniah said: i thought there was a long horn near the mall? i said: and personally? i need a fuckin steak. this isn't some discretionary shit. this is an actual requirement on my end right now. i need an actual steak in order to continue to operate at an acceptable investigative level right now. she said: that doesn't not make sense. to be fair. i said: just order a la carte. the steaks are more than enough on their own here. (my phone rang.) i said: fuck. (i looked at the caller id.) i said: shit. i gotta

take this. (it was juliana. i picked it up. walked a few strides from the table.) i said: um. hello? juliana said: hey boo. i said: hey. how's it uh. going? she said: pretty good. how's the case? i said: ugh. it's horrendous. these leads are cunty as all hell. she said: ugh. i'm sorry babe! i said: no prob babe. you know. it just is what it is i guess. part of the job you know. she said: true boo. i said: but uhhhh. how's your day? she said: it's good. long day at work. grace was late again. ugh. actually. i was just thinking . . . um. do you remember? when we were over your parents. the other weekend? i said: oh. yeah last weekend. good times. my mom made us the eggplant dish. right right. i'm actually grabbing a. she said: yeah but i was. just wondering. why um. why did you have to tell them. i mean you told them that i pay ten dollars a month for my plant app. i said: did i? the plant thing. oh yeah. we did mention that. right. she said: you mentioned it. to your parents. you told them i paid ten dollars a month for that plant app. the app that identifies plants when you put the camera over them. the one i'm always using on our walks. i said: right right right. and it's only ten bucks still? that's not a bad deal. if you like it. why? did it go up in price? or something.

she said: no i know. i like it. but do you think that's cool? always giving me away to people? telling them my business? i said: i mean. i don't know if i would consider that uhhhh. she said: i don't know yusuf. did you ever think? maybe i didn't want your parents knowing that i pay ten dollars a month for a plant app! i said: juliana wait. what? she said: that's my business yusuf! and now your parents think i'm some basic bitch! i said: is your app store history classified information now juliana? you realize that thing listens to you 24/7 right? it's listening to us right now. probably having a good laugh too! but sure. i'm sorry? i didn't realize your damn home screen required a foia now? she said: what's a foyer? and what does that have to do. i said: plus my dad found it amusing! we had a good laugh about it i thought! she said: yeah exactly. now your dad thinks i'm some basic ass bitch. spending 10 bucks a month on apps. because you gave me away! i said: not at all!

juliana. are you fucking kidding me right now? i fleshed out your beautiful personality to my immediate family! is this a practical joke you're playing on me? i'm giving you away? how so? my dad is a profligate spender! there's no judgment here. seriously. he has a real problem! she said: ugh. screw you yusuf! i said: no. screw you! but listen. can we discuss this later babe? maybe a little later? she said: later? of course. whatever yusuf! why not?! i said: i love you boo. she said: love you too yusuf. aniah said: who was that? i said: my primary care. uh physician. told me my blood work came back fine. aniah said: oh. because i thought i heard you yell at one point. i said: oh yeah. i did. i was pretty pumped about my uhh. red blood cell count. (the dominican waitress came back to our table to take out orders.) i said: we have five fuckin attempted homicides open right now. you believe that? yeah you guys only had the brown mezcal at the bar? that's all you have? okay. yeah. that's not a problem. get me uhh. ketel one on the rock with a lemon? thank you. (we both placed our orders for an a la carte ribeye each.)

i said: aniah. one thing about this gig. this fuckin job. is that it's going to take a toll on your home life. you have any decent penis in your life right now? she said: you mean like a boyfriend? i said: i mean you were telling me you were bi just the other. she said: no yusuf. i don't date women. and no. for that matter. right now? i don't date men either. i said: you're like a little starfish. she said: the way these dating apps are. sometimes i really do wish i could self-reproduce. i said: or just put an end to the bloodline outright. shit. the way things. she said: no yusuf. we're making a difference at least. trying to. you know. that's one of the reasons i. i said: you took this job. to make the world better? it's not entirely idiotic. i'll say that. it's probably worth a shot. personally? i'm hoping they really take medium rare to. (my phone rang again. i picked it up.) i said: juliana i told you. jesus christ. truly. no one cares how much you spend on discretionary apps on your phone! ten dollars for a plant app is. folco said: yusuf. it's me. detective folco. i said: oh.

sup folco. what's going on man? he said: is that ten a month? i said: for what? he said: you said something about a plant app? i'm actually starting a garden this year. or trying to. i said: yeah yeah. juliana is into that shit. you know. he said: yeah i've seen those. the apps. kind of pricey no? i said: maybe a tad. you should see this fuckin thing though. you can take a picture of almost any sort of roughage. it'll spit out exactly what it is. he said: eh. anyway. i just wanted to uh give you a call. because i'm actually with pork chop right now. i said: oh great! we just stopped real quick. to support a youth carwash and pick up some mcdonald's. but as soon the squad car is clean we'll. he said: i'm at the morgue. i said: the. he said: pork chop's fuckin dead yusuf. i said: eyeballs? he said: no actually. surprisingly. he was just stabbed in the gut a few dozen times. i said: okay well either way we'll be. he said: fuck it. it can wait until morning. the autopsy just fuckin started. it's bolvin on it. i said: ugh. bob bolvin? he said: the body probably won't be available for at least 12 hours. good luck with the plant shit.

scene 14: squad car 7:19pm.

i said: you know it's funny. highway rules. you can go ahead. pop in front of a guy. take his place on the road. drive right in front of a fuckin guy with no qualms then just toss him a jovial wave like it's nothing. that's actually acceptable! at least as long as you wave. in my opinion. aniah said: i always wave if i'm cutting someone off. i said: like i don't know. just imagine for a second. if that worked in any other sphere of human interaction? if i fuckin saw you at the grocery store and took your bag of grapes from your cart and just waved at you like thanks for these! you just went back to the produce section and got more grapes. because i gave you a wave. you went back and got more grapes. selected the grapes you wanted yet again. or better yet you found my cart five minutes later then grabbed the fuckin grapes again. fuckin waved back at me. i smile and wave back at you. thanks! she said: i usually do

instacart. have them just delivered to my place. i said: i can't use those door to door services for produce. no offense but i don't trust a personal shopper to select my fresh fruit for me. it's just not feasible. some kid making 8 dollars an hour fucking picking out my pears? he has no incentive to not really go above and beyond for me. she said: you can just order the bags of pears though. i said: i mean. to be honest? isn't that really just deferring the issue aniah? okay. it's not the personal shopper anymore picking pears. but i personally would then ask. who at the pear factory is picking those pears to put in the bag? i think there's quite frankly a high variance between certain apples and pears and fucking banana bunches. she said: i'm still a bit in disbelief. i said: i get it. but try going to a store. or better yet. have me pick your produce next time you. see if you don't notice a difference. she said: no i mean. i said: oh. pork chop? she said: i'm actually . . . kind of scared? i said: no that's. that's absurd. she said: i don't know. you don't think. now? this is kind of creepy! i said: there are a lot of odd homicides in the city. quite a few odd murders. you'll learn not to read too much into them. their odd character. she said: maybe. i said: the thing is. you start thinking you're fuckin columbo? then you'll just drive yourself nuts. and you'll fuck yourself socially in the department too. you're brooding about alphabetical shit. everyone else is tying on mixed drinks and blowing lines in the bathroom at elmhurst pub. now sure. if this fuckin guy had his eyeballs surgically removed like the others? this pork chop. after we were looking into him? then oh yeah absolutely. i'd probably be defecating into my fucking pants just slightly at least. i'd have feces present in my undies right now as we're driving. i have no qualms about admitting that. but pork chop was stabbed to death aniah. knife to gut. gutted. the guy was a damn hobo. from all accounts yes. he was a nice enough hobo. perhaps the hobo par excellence. perhaps. yet a hobo nonetheless! most often found fucked up either here or there. and statistically speaking? she said: statistically speaking people don't lose their eyes with no visible blood!

scene 15: the cadillac lounge 9:27pm.

(now at this point what were you thinking?) i was thinking. uh. that i needed to locate the girl from the uh vision. with the eyes. (why?) i just felt an inkling so to speak. a fuckin premonition or some shit. it's kind of hard to explain in detail. aniah said: alright sooo . . . i'm thinking we call it a night? hit the case with fresh eyes in the am? some fresh eyes. two pairs? i said: don't do the whole fucking pun thing like marissa. please. she said: what do you mean? i said: two pairs. of eyes? nah forget it. she said: oh no that was. i said: but yeah definitely. it's more than time to call it. i'll drop you off at the station and shit. i just have to uh. make one uhhhh. little fuckin errand and then i'm calling it too. (she bought that?) why wouldn't she? (okay. so then what?) i took a spin back to that particular spot of course. (the strip joint?) yeah that one. tied one on ten first for old time's sake. no melissa. some black dude with a neon mohawk and septum piercing served me a sapporo with no discount. anyway. then i went over. it'd been fuckin eons since i'd been in that shithole. although to be fair it's actually pretty upscale for a whorehouse. it's actually not a half bad spot to just grab a drink to be honest. nice bar. bartenders are generally friendly. for the most part the girls don't try and blatantly ask you if they can jack you off. it's something i appreciate. i find it commendable. but anyway. yeah i go there not even knowing what the fuck i'm thinking. there no fuckin way she still works there. ten years later?! last time i talked to her was nine years ago she was hanging onto the professional by a literal cunt hair. and even if she wasn't. ten years is like half a century in stripper years. it's like visiting a military base or something. in the 90s. looking for world war 2 vets and shit. (it does seem unlikely.) i go in. there are actually a couple staff members still working there from years ago. one guy's worked his way all the way to the fuckin door now. i tell him, hey man fuckin good for you i'm happy for you. some bullshit like that. it's

actually more of an insult to be honest. to tell a guy that it's good for him. good for him. that he worked his way up to doorman at a strip club? i'd personally take it as an insult. even though in a way i actually envy him. yet i said it to him with a sense of actual sincerity. working the door at a strip club is probably in reality a really good gig. entertaining at least. anyway. i fuckin walk inside. perch myself at the closest to the entrance with my back to the entrance. so i can witness all these little whooirs right as they walk out to the floor from the back. as they walk out from the back. immediately.

you know what i mean? if this girl is still working here i wanna make quick business of it. i had no interest in. i wasn't about to turn around and stumble upon a customer with half a hand up her twat buying two double shots of patron. then have to wait all that out for a five minute chat. fuck that. if i see her i'm bee-lining and performing a quick inquisition. in and out. (so did you?) oh no. no fuckin way! ten years later? no she's long gone. has to be. i didn't catch a damn whiff of her. and i didn't wanna ask around. look like an asshole. yet i did see. i couldn't help but notice a girl that looked almost exactly like. some girl i was banging outside a hookah spot a while back? in her car right next to her son's car seat? maybe like. i don't know. sometime in the not too distant past? anyway. i speak in absolutely no hyperbole when i say that i actually thought it was this girl. i couldn't get a great look at her face. only the side profile. now i was a bit spooked. especially with everything else going on you know? it put me in a space where i thought. maybe i was conflating two women? the only thing was her tits weren't quite as voluptuous? but literally everything else. height skin tone figure hair fuckin everything. but her face. it was odd. it looked extremely similar to this girl. but there was an intangible difference. one that gnawed at me. like in a dream. a dream difference. but i was awake and relatively sober. yet that's how i felt previously when i saw the orbs too. in all fairness. i stayed an extra drink just to see if i could sneak an extra peek or two at her. but this is what happens at these spots though. you stay

for one more drink for this reason or that. next thing you know you're four doubles deep slurring your life story to some dominican girl with two kids under ten trying to work it out with her initial baby dad. driving home with one eye open. just disgusting. (but in this instance you left?) oh yeah. after the second drink that's correct. i had a long day ahead of me. i knew that much. i knew it was gonna be a long day. and i knew i couldn't afford to do a deep drive into their stolichnaya. (so you left?) correct. (and then what?) i took a stroll you know. um. one last loop around. because the strip joint is like i don't know. two twat hairs from the crime scene anyway? so i figured why not take a quick spin past tel aviv. see if they're even open. if anyone is on the deck tonight and shit. (and?) and i drive by. shit is already closed. it's like maybe 11. which seemed weird. i roll up slowly and things. it's difficult to explain. (try.) well. i don't even know dude. i felt dizzy and shit. i felt a bit like a spiral. which concerned me. because i was driving. an inside out uhhh. fuckin aura? attached itself to me? in any case. (and then what?)

scene 16: ten steak & sushi (indeterminate).

i said: nah bro. i didn't believe her either. but it's true. her ass tastes like fuckin cotton candy dude. it's wild. i don't even care. enzo said: ayyyyyyyyyyyyyy. i said: you don't? he said: eat her ass? fuck no dude. she's black! i said: so? i've considered balloon knot to be. i don't know. like a racial thing dude. i don't see the. he said: you know it's like a. i don't know. you must get it. it's a cultural thing. i can only eat an italian girl's ass! you know what i mean? it's not a. because if it ever got out i was out here. i said: eating black ass? he said: i mean she's not even really black. i said: i mean she's island black. he said: exactly. island black. exactly. that's not black black. i said: well. he said: it's different. i said: no you're right. i get it. it's like she's not african-american in that sense. sure. she's of african extraction. and she's american. but she's not like ante bellum black. she's not civil war black. he said: exactly bro. yet

i still can't bring myself to eat her ass. i said: but to be fair to you. you know. this isn't like black racism on your part either. because you just wouldn't eat any non-italian ass. emphasis on non-italian! girl could be fuckin german. on some hitler shit. and you'd still refrain from eating the ass. because she's not italian. of italian extraction. he said: exactly man. see me and you? we think alike. (so now you're?) ten years back in time again. but a little better prepared this time. you know. i actually didn't mind chopping it up with enzo again. i said: yeah man. because people would try and distort that. oh you don't eat black ass? now you're some kind of racist. they'd try to spin you being pro-italian when it comes to anilingus. and then they'd make it into some kind of anti-black ass eating campaign against you. you know what i mean? he said: i'll fuck any race if they're hot. i said: the thing about me and you. we're not like that jerk-off. you know who i mean. sure we may or may not have our idiosyncrasies. but we're honest with ourselves you know? he said: yeah that's the thing. it's just my fuckin personal preference. it's like. i'm from italy you know! i said: but like. for example. chris? fuckin kid. half filipino thinks he's italian? he said: ugh kid you kidding me?! he's so fake! but you know? nice guy. i like him. he's a friend.

i said: nice guy. a friend. sure. but at the same time? is he? a nice guy? what a fucking crumb. just my two cents. remember he told that couple at ten that he was from north providence? he verbatim said quote-unquote i'm from north providence! when he hasn't lived a goddamn day in his life in north providence. and we had to nod along like he wasn't lying for what? reasons of pure vanity? completely inane vanity at that! he said: who lies about being from north providence man? i said: a sad little man. a sad sad little man. who also happens to be. ironically enough. morbidly obese. (from there?) from there we considered visiting his girl. but she didn't answer his texts so we just stayed at ten and had a few moderately discounted drinks on melissa. god. her ass was just perfect in that era. i would've cracked her on the toilet. she was like half brazilian or some shit. half portuguese half

brazilian or some shit? which i don't know. is that the same thing? (they speak portuguese in brazil. but they're distinct ethnicities. i think?) ripped a shot of jack with her per her request. which nearly made me vomit. i said: what the fuck melissa? you microwave these before you serve them to us?! this shit is like 75 degrees! it's practically burning my tongue! she said: it's a free shot. stop being a pussy! 75 is room temperature. enzo said: so what's up with your girl's eyes guy? i said: they have to be colored contacts obviously. he said: you should see this guy's girl's eyes melissa? she said: yusuf?! i didn't know you were seeing someone? enzo said: yeah we're both plowing strippers. she said: i don't know if that counts as. i said: they have to be colored contacts. her eyes. she said: what color are they? like red? something crazy like. i said: no they're umm. bright blue? enzo said: but she's asian. so you know they're contacts. she said: not necessarily! some asians actually do have. i said: they have to be. i know what you mean though. but with her skin tone?! but they're piercing man. fuck. bitch looks right through you. she said: that's their job yusuf! i mean anything's possible but. i said: oh no i know. i get it. every word out of her mouth i operate under the assumption she's ruthlessly playing me. but sometimes. enzo said: sometimes you need to get played. i said: i'm just saying i respect the professionalism. he said: she's got that gaze gaze gaze. i said: that fuckin intense gaze dude. (so did you?) see her? no. this time i was carpooling with enzo. like normal. for that period i mean. so i didn't. i mean i didn't wanna ask him to drive us there. that would've been embarrassing man. hey can you drive me to the strip club? what? (well i mean you are traveling back in time though. so.) but still. (no i get it. i'm just saying. it's not like you were staying.) well i didn't know. also like time dilation long-term effects and shit? for all i know i could've fucked myself in the future if i started acting brand new and shit. plus i didn't even know what night it was. if she'd be working. if i was even supposed to be there!

day 3. scene 17: downcity lounge 9:59am.

i said: no i just thought. um. that your eyes looked maybe slightly different? a slight variation in fuckin shade perhaps! haha. (we were at downcity grabbing a late breakfast after visiting the crime scene yet again to find (yet again) tel aviv conspicuously closed to the public when dave (an italian-american gay guy i knew from childhood) entered the venue in a manner that could be described as somewhat boisterously.) aniah said: i'm shorter. now my eyes are changing color. what. are you . . . are you falling in love with me yusuf? i said: haha! good one. yeah the fuck right. that'll be the fuckin day. me falling in love? aniah said: you falling in love or? i said: yeah i guess that or fucking a co-worker really. but either/or i guess. both are weak as fuck. both leave you exposed in exceptionally cunty ways. you know? love? what a crock of fucking shit. dave said: what's up my niggas?!!! (he'd swung the door of the venue open with such force that it was obvious he was already completely shitfaced.) aniah said: oh my. who's that? dave said: my nigga!!!!!! i said: hi dave. he said: hi daddy! i said: this is aniah. my partner. new detective um. she's new to. he said: oh hellooooo! she said: hi. how are you? he said: i'm pumped! what're we getting into today my niggas?!!!! i just finished 8 bottomless mimosas at circe!! she said: why are you saying the n-word? he said: what n-word? you mean nigga? mami! i'm italiano. that's latin!!! i said: dave. c'mon. please. don't go and get your own ass kicked by a black guy before it's even fucking noon. he said: daddy i don't give aaaaaaaa. i said: what. if anything. do you have for us? he said: well. my nigga. do you remember the kid who killed his mom for his inheritance? allegedly killed i mean. i said: nathaniel something something. made the news and shit right? but he was convicted wasn't he? he said: you're so smart yusuf. that brain of yours. yeah he was allegedly convicted i believe. anyway. yeah. apparently. according to my uncle at least. he wants to talk to you guys. apparently he has some. relevant information? for you guys? about the

thing you're investigating? i said: really? hmm. the fuck would he know. because he's been locked up for a. he said: a minute. i know. he's probably totally full of shit! but what're you gonna do? you have to talk to him! i said: talk to him? do we? aniah said: yusuf? really? i said: no. i guess we need to. obviously. after we drop in on pork chop at the morgue. i'm still waiting on the uh. the fuckin call from the coroner's office on that. yeah i guess you're right. we should probably talk to him. the son. fuckin piece of shit.

scene 18: coroner's office 11:12am.

dr bolvin said: for forty two thousand? i was like fuckkkk it. you know. the thing retains value! (he displayed his rolex watch to aniah.) he said: it's just like. once you have a 'lex? that's slang for a rolex by the way. once you have a 'lex? it's hard to go back to some bargain bin 10k watch. you know what i mean? i said: oh i'm sure. watches. they're great. aniah said: for telling time. i said: one hundred percent. plus they retain value at the high end. but anyway. yeah we just wanted to touch base on the autopsy of the uhhh. the homeless man you performed. i think last night? bolvin said: oh of course. right. the homeless fellow. porky pig i believe? yes. that was an interesting one for sure. aniah said: how so? interesting? because we were told. bolvin said: a routine stabbing? yeah that's what we thought at first as well. and to be fair. well. that's in essence what it was. a stabbing. however there were a small number of peculiarities we found during the autopsy. the first of which. i should note. the first of which was that all stab wounds were performed in a rather small radius on the man's stomach. which. to be fair. isn't altogether uncommon in itself. the gut is surely a popular place to stab people. and with that said stabbings. they usually do have a central bodily focus. a focal point to the thrusts. like a tonal center in music. gut. neck. back. c major. b flat major. d minor. and so on. yet due to the nature of stabbing someone. stabbing hurts people. people

fight back. or move around. attempt to avoid being punctured by sharp objects. even a homeless person will do this from time to time. perhaps especially a homeless person will do this. attempt to avoid getting stabbed. a homeless person who may or may not be under the influence of this or that drug at any given time of the day. i said: and so? bolvin said: and so for that reason usually we find what i'll refer to here as derivative cuts. collateral wounds. surface contusions. maybe not technical stabs so to speak. but scrapes or small divots that are directly attributable to the same sharp weapon. i said: and let me guess. bolvin said: in this case. i said: there were none.

bolvin said: correct. no collateral contusions so to speak. none to speak of! the body was exclusively wounded in the gut region. the rest of the body was entirely absent of any cut that could be positively corroborated as originating from what we deemed to be the murder weapon. but that gets us to the murder weapon itself. because the weapon certainly strikes me as most likely of a peculiar origin as well! each incision in the gut region appears to have made an identically sized entry wound. not just in shape. which makes some sense. although depending on the angle the shapes of wounds will display variance as well. but in this case. in both the shape that the weapon perforated the skin. but also the depth to which it penetrated. all penetrations were identical. each wound was exactly 3.14 centimeters deep. into the skin. the likelihood of that occurring you ask? well i'm not a trained statistician but it seems quite unlikely! almost impossibly unlikely! in short. this reminded me of an almost algorithmic stabbing. except algorithmic stabbings don't exist in the world. nauseatingly boring repeated puncturing of the skin? and finally. aniah said: oh god there's more? bolvin said: and finally. the combination of all the wounds. to my eye at least. formed the shape. and i believe most would agree with me alphabetically speaking. the shape of uhhh an a. the letter a. i said: oh cunt. bolvin said: now i would at first. if i were examining the a in isolation at least i'd say this was gang-related. a marking of a territory so

to speak. a branding. a fellow whose name began with a wanting to brand himself on his victim. something of that nature. but while the form fits that classification the mode most certainly does not. at least not to my knowledge. i said: there are no providence gangs that have any sort of surgical stabbing capability to my knowledge bolvin. you're right on that. the median street gang barely has functional motor skills. then again. on the other hand. most of those bozos probably can barely spell their own fuckin names beyond the first initial. bolvin said: the only logical possibility i can think of for the execution of these wounds with this level of precision is that the body was deceased prior to the stabbing. there's almost no way. that i can see. that these stab wounds were performed with this level of precision while this fellow was still conscious in any way. but yet there's no evidence of a cause of death prior to the wounds. i said: could he have overdosed and then this. bolvin said: toxicology came back negative for everything but alcohol. yet with that said. it's possible. sure it's possible that there's still a substance we're missing. a substance that's somehow eluding our toxicology sensors. or that perhaps he naturally expired from years of hard living. that perhaps this man's death was of a premature but totally natural cause. and then this peculiar stabbing occurred. i can't rule that out. i said: but that would require. aniah said: someone to stumble upon this dead homeless man. bolvin said: and then just so happen to have an advanced tool capable of precisely stabbing him in his gut in the perfect form of the letter a almost immediately after the fact. i said: that seems . . . perhaps absolutely absurd?

scene 19: tel aviv on the water 2:22pm.

aniah said: the letter a. does that . . . remind you of anyone?! i said: don't do this. to yourself i mean. seriously aniah? the letter a is the first letter of the alphabet. she said: and oh i don't know. the first letter of my name! i said: so? allison. alexander. alexandra! alexandria! andrew!

uhhhh. alpha and omega. and shit. there are like millions of names that begin with a. i don't know. self-centered much? she said: screw you yusuf! i said: people are into all types of mysticism and shit. almost all of it all has some shit to do with the letter a. alif is a mystical letter that appears multiple times in the qur'an aniah. did you even know that? this isn't ipso facto about you. i mean. we'll take necessary precautions obviously. let's also not lose our heads! she said: no you're right. i'm just. yeah i'm a bit creeped out! it's not just about me yusuf. this isn't pure narcissism on my part. because maybe these people are looking into us. you and i. did you ever even think of that? because we're both investigating. what if there's a letter y coming next? how would that make you feel? i said: a and y? ayyyyyyyyyyyyyy. you know. if it's my time to go? fuck it. the nature of the universe is essentially stochastic. i won't bullshit you. no. is this case fuckin unorthodox on a few fronts? oh yeah! but we can't start assuming supernatural beings are carving our initials into homeless people like street gangs to send us a message. aniah said: okay but. i said: you know what i mean? like does that even make sense? like if there's some supernatural being that can remove fuckin people's eyeballs in a fucking nanosecond and surgically carve letters in the homeless guys bellies on a whim. if that's the case. then why be so cryptic? why not like fucking come into your bedroom flick your clit and transport you in time or some shit? huh aniah? why not that? this entire a thing is. in all likelihood. a benign coincidence. let's. not. lose. our. heads. please! (we approached the entrance of tel aviv to find the entire establishment wiped clean of any sign or scent of prior occupation.) she said: what. is this? i said: curious. she said: no. yusuf. now i'm officially. i'm freaked out!

i said: let's go see the rich kid who killed his mom at the aci. we'll come back to this. she said: are you. not even going to comment on this? yusuf? i mean. i said: well. they clearly had somebody come in here and wipe the place. she said: and that's normal too? in your experience? i said: i mean. i don't know. about normal. but yeah. if i had five people

lose their eyes in my establishment?! yeah i might be worried they were about to lawyer up and sue me to goddamned oblivion. i mean that's just me. she said: but this quickly? we just talked to marissa yesterday. i said: exactly. and now the cops are up their asses too. i'm sure she talked to the owner after we left each time. probably got them even more spooked. now we're gradually inserting ourselves further up their ass. where's the owner from again? she said: uh. i said: lebanon. he's straight from lebanon. there's no extradition treaty over there. guy's been around here for years opening up shitty bar-restaurants. employing minimum wage dominicans to make his hookahs with the bottoms of their buttcheeks exposed. so what are we looking at? a lebanese dude covering his ass and hightailing it back to beirut until the dust settles. if he hears the victims lawyered up then he stayed nestled overseas. then probably comes back under his cousin's visa or some shit in a year or two. we come back here. this is called new jerusalem and the hookah is even shittier. the dominicans are wearing less clothing. that's how these things fuckin play out. it's really that simple to be honest. let's go see the mommy murderer aniah. don't let this shit get to your head.

scene 20: aci 3:33pm.

nathaniel said: oh hello! yes. yes yes yes yes yes. of course. the eyeballs! i may in fact have some relevant information for you on that front. i said: what is it pal? listen. i want to be upfront with you. i'm going to be upfront. right off the top. lay it all on the table so to speak. you want my opinion on you? because i love my mother. and i think you're a douchebag. killing your mom? fuck you. you think that's cool? murdering your own mother? no. it's not. not at all. it's what total fucking douchebags do. and i don't support it. so if you want any tangible fuckin benefit here whatsoever you need to just tell it to us straight. no prevarication. no bullshit. what you have. for us. right now. this instant actually. no fucking around.

he said: oh i would never. detective yusuf is it? it's yusuf correct? no. i would never so-called fuck around. not at all! um. sooooo. where to begin. yes well as you may or may not know i did murder my mother on a boat. allegedly! haha! in the water so to speak. this is where it occurred. and as it so happened. oddly enough. as i saddled myself into my rowboat to uh. row? back to shore. my mother's corpse on the larger vessel rotting away! ew. anyhoo. on my way back to shore i couldn't help but notice a series of strange lights in the distance. i said: what hue? the lights. he said: i don't know. light blue? they say light blue orbs are often the aura of the archangel michael. haha! of all things! have you ever been michael's? like arts and crafts shops? i used to buy large canvases there. anyhoo. in any case. i see these orbs. in the distance but then they get closer. closer and closer and closer! i said: you know. i'm certainly reassured that killing your mother didn't put you in. you know. a sour mood or anything. but again. let's get to the fuckin. he said: oh not at all! but ummm. yeah. the orbs they eventually hovered above me. in an effervescent turquoise blue. yum! turquoise. is that an indigenous color do you think? sounds vaguely native american. they say native americans often spoke to star people in their heyday. which i would assume were aliens or something? i'm just going off the spelling. i said: did you get a feel for the shape? did these orbs even have a shape? they were in the. he said: like a spaceship? i suppose yes. they were in the air. but no they didn't have a shape in the normal sense of the word. in the sense that you probably mean? they didn't look like spaceships! but they could have been! the light itself was blinding. all turquoise and whatnot. perhaps native american. aniah whispered (to me): i hate this fucking guy. i said: okay. so you were in a rowboat and multiple? orbs? initially in the distance out to sea. they approached you gradually as a series of balls of blindingly turquoise light? he said: ummmmm. yes. but it alsoooooooo. well they alsoooooooo. they communicated with me! telepathically! haha! i said: okay. and what did they say?

he said: we love you. know that we love you. that's what they said to me! always know that we love you! we love you we love you we love you! aniah said: so you're telling us. he said: oh yes honey! that's what they said to me! we love you! i said: telepathically. he said: yup! aniah said: fuck you. he said: no thank you! but i mean. like no offense intended. i said: aniah. she said: you know what? i'm not indulging. this doesn't. excuse me sir. but what does this have to do with our case? because it seems like. nathaniel said: well i know yusuf saw the orbs too. i mean. that's why i thought. he's still seeing them. that's why i thought it was um. relevant? i said: okay. i think we're done here. aniah said: yusuf? i said: okay pal. we get it. you're running a nice scam here. i don't know what the fuck the scam is. getting your rocks off wasting our time? gathering another audience to reiterate that you have no remorse about killing your own mother? but listen man. he said: you know you saw them. i said: with all due respect. i think we're. yeah. we're fuckin done here. fuckin prick. i told dave aniah. did i not say. aniah said: if you thought you were getting any benefit. he said: oh honey! i'm assisting you two pro bono! no quid pro quo required! i said: fuck you. how the fuck did you. he said: know that? oh i don't knooooowwwwwww. aniah said: wait what? i said: guard!

scene 21: nickanee's 5:35pm.

aniah said: yusuf. what was that about? i said: nickanee's? just for one? for old time's sake? she said: yusuf. c'mon! i said: i'll address it there. i mean. there's not much to tell really. there's actually nothing to address. i'll drive. she said: but seriously. you and i could both be at danger here! so if you're withholding. i mean. that's fucked up yusuf. it's my safety too you know! i said: c'mon! he's full of shit! obviously! the little cunt. he's a cunt rag. clearly! she said: i think you're in denial yusuf. that's what i think. yeah. that's exactly what i think. i said: and? maybe that's where i feel comfortable! (at nickanee's the bartender flora from my

mother's hometown was working and when we arrived we had the place to ourselves with the exception of a middle manager from a pharmaceutical company who sat next to us relaying anecdotes about the post-covid policy of his employer.) i said: yeah. i'll take a mezcal and uhhh. water. on the rocks. hold the water. hold on i have to take this.

(i stepped outside just briefly onto the shitty deck to answer lieutenant moolio's call where across the street a goth teen ate out of a bag of fritos walking up the downtown street.) i said: lieutenant. moolio said: yusuf we need to meet asap. well. maybe not asap. but by eod. asap or by eod. whichever comes first. i said: what's going on cumn? you're back in uhh. is it anything uh. super important at all? he said: we'll discuss as soon as you get back to the station. (back at the bar) i said: moolio wants to meet. aniah said: ugh. fuck me. i said: aniah you're a detective now. a homicide police officer. murder police or whatever the fuck they call in baltimore and shit. you ever watch the wire? no you're too young. you can't be fuckin scared! (i thumped my fist on the bar.) i said: no. it's no rush flora. i'm talking to her. aniah said: i know. i totally get it. but it's like gee whiz. this is some uh. i said: no no no. thank you. yes this is perfect. no it's really not. let me actually tell you something aniah. uh. everything so far. with the obvious exception of the actual eye um gougings. which yeah. we have to fuckin solve. the gougings of the eyes with surgical precision. everything else is. sure perhaps odd! but not without a possibly rational explanation. at least at this point. a homeless man with the letter a stabbed into him. she said: with an unspecified cause of death because of his impossibly precise surgical stab wounds! i said: okay. duly noted. but you know what? let's let bob bolvin and his fucking forty two thousand dollar rolex. let's give them some time. maybe there's a fuckin. i don't know. prosaic explanation after all. my point is. we. do. not. know. yet! (i paused). i said: yet! we may in fact know very soon. and at that point i may or may not shit my pants as well. but for the time being i plan on chugging this glass of mezcal and meeting with our lieutenant

hopefully at least half in the bag. she said: you know what? now that i'm. uh. i'm thinking. no. you're right yusuf. i can't lose my head like this. i need to keep my cool too. i'm cool. gotta stay. ugh. get it together aniah. rookie cop already losing her head. you know what yusuf? i'm actually putting females on the force back a decade with this type of behavior! no. i'm going to stop. let's keep a. i said: a cool head. exactly! each of us. we'll go meet with the uh. lieutenant. we'll have a drink here first. tie one on. relax our nerves. yeah. flora? get her a mezcal too! please?

(i turned back to aniah.) i said: you're drinking that. fuck you if you don't want to. take your by-laws and tuck them in your pussy-hole for the afternoon. okay? no disrespect intended. i didn't mean to disrespect your vagina like that. but we're gonna be two fuckin cool cucumbers walking into moolio's office. (behind me i heard a voice say yusuf? i turned around to find roy jones from the masonic lodge in south providence.) i said: roy. what brings you to nickanee's at this hour? he said: ay i'm fucking depressed as ever yusuf. just toss a bullet into my skull will you? do me a fuckin favor. gonna tie a few on before dinner. if i even fuckin have dinner. i said: why don't you keep it purely liquid tonight? solid food is for vaginal secretions anyway. fuck dinner. i might do the fuckin same. keep it real vegetarian and shit. mezcal is vegan as fuck. he said: how's the. oh hi. how are you? nice to see you again. how's the investigation going? find the guy yet? the sicko. city is filled with them. it's all sickos to be honest. i said: you know roy. you know. to be honest. it's been a case of some ups and downs. some peaks. but also some valleys. a few highs. but also perhaps a series of debilitating lows as well. he said: eh. you know. they're all fuckin like that at the end of the day. cases. fuck em. every case is at bottom exactly the same no matter how extraordinary the circumstances may seem on the service. fuck are you gonna do? people get killed every day. aniah said: he's not wrong you know. i said: oh look. aniah. already jaded! roy. i don't know if this one's gonna make it! haha! he said: honey. believe

me. whatever you've seen. it's only the tip of the iceberg. things get better. then inevitably they get worse in ways that are completely and utterly irrevocable. this is just the nature of things. she said: personally i prefer to subscribe to a glass half-full view usually. myself. but i also respect all perspectives as well.

scene 22: pvdpd hq 06:59pm.

moolio said: well it's not good news. i said: fuckin christ cumn. he said: but it's not the worst news either. it could be worse. news. i'll say that. aniah said: is it at least solidly mediocre. news? within the realm of mediocrity lieutenant? he said: it's. i could say that it's economically lower middle class? listen. folco briefed me earlier today. some twists and turns here. but uhhhh. i said: yes?

he said: well the coroner. dr uhhhh. bolvin. he managed to do some further analysis. just sent his report over to me personally actually. and basically. well the whole letter a thing. we have a little more clarity on that. a tad more insight. i can say that. still no clear-cut cause of death. definitely not clear-cut there but. but on the incisions to uhhhh. make the a. the incisions themselves. aniah said: what? cumn said: well examining the uh. what's the word here? the interior. the interior of the wounds. so to speak. and aniah i don't. i don't want you to get worried here. because we're still in a very speculative stage at the moment. but. she said: but what lieutenant? he said: the interiors of the cuts. on the horizontals. each one reads the name. well it's your name. aniah said: aniah? cumn said: uh yes. aniah. a-n-a-i-h. i said: a-n-i-a-h. he said: yeah. i said: you said a-n-a-i-h. that's like. what? ah-nay-ih? so maybe. he said: oh no. i meant a-n-i-a-h. aniah. yeah. as in aniah. (aniah screamed.) i said: goddamnit cumn. (aniah ceased screaming.) i said: how the fuck is this considered mediocre news?! because this seems quite frankly to be at least. he said: no. i mean i said like lower. lower middle class news. slightly below median. she said: even that! i said: this is like homeless

with a severe opiate addiction news cumn with all due respect sir no pun intended! she said: am i, am i next lieutenant?! cumn said: no. oh no no no no no no. we're gonna have a 24-7 tail on you both until this case is done. i'll promise you that. that i can assure you of. i said: okay but there has to be more here. no? for this to be even. he said: oh there is. exactly. we do have a witness for uh. (he glanced at his papers and sighed in a way that failed to hide that he was completely sick of this shit.) he said: pork chop's murder. aniah said: so somebody saw it. moolio said: correct. and the department will have detective folco accompany you as well. going forward. for the foreseeable future at least. i said: i think the first course of action here has to be to revisit the scene again. see if there are any forensics at this fuckin tel aviv. see if this lebanese fucking cum sucker left us any clues.

day 4. scene 23: tel aviv on the water 11:27am.

(the next morning in the squad car on our way back to tel aviv i made detective folco sit in the backseat to allow aniah to feel a moderate degree of comfort. or at least maybe a sense of seniority?) folco said: you know. lately? i kinda wanna fuck a pregnant bitch. i said: what trimester? he said: i don't even care bro. he said: like second or third? he said: whatever really. i said: because first tri you might not even notice the difference. he said: that's true that's true. yeah. first. that doesn't really count. i said: i mean. you're not gonna get the full experience doing first. (he displayed a pregnant woman on his phone to the front seat.) he said: like this one. i said: oh yeah. that would be fantastic! but she's at least second tri. maybe even third. he said: give her a nice creampie. i said: no better time to give one in my opinion. aniah said: guys. can we please? i said: i thought this would be kind of good. he said: yeah. get your mind off things. i said: creampies. he said: how do you feel about them aniah? creampies? i said: wait. how do you define a creampie detective? he said: just pure cum in the pussy right? i said: but

no. like is it you bust inside the pussy. like spew up into the ovaries? he said: or you mean like. uhh. you know you pull out. i said: and then jizz on the interior of the lips. aniah said: guys ew! this is not helping me. like at all! (we arrived at the still barren exterior of tel aviv got out of the squad car and moseyed into the actual establishment to take a closer look.) i said: stripped fucking clean. folco said: damn. wow! aniah said: this has to be. professionally executed? right? i said: i would say so. i mean. i would assume so. folco said: beyond professional really. (i moseyed down to the deck.) folco said: that's the actual crime scene right? (in the distance i noticed the same faint light as on prior occasions.) i said: do you see that? folco said: the capri sun packages? i said: no. like. i don't know. a. i wanna say. light? he said: ummmm. aniah said: are you seeing an orb yusuf?! something in the water? like nathaniel.

i said: no. no way! ummmm. (but at this point you?) again it's difficult to actually recall accurately this type of shit. i really can't emphasize that enough. that's it's borderline ineffable if not just plain ineffable. next thing again like previous. at first i was speaking at kind of a remove from myself? then i was back in fucking. time again. i said: listen i'm sorry. that i was in here. you know? with my face bleeding blah blah. you know that i took you for a few dances and the whole atm. the girl with the eyes said: you know you kept throwing the receipts into the air? screaming, i got money!!! i said: did i? (now this is back in.) honestly this might be even a little further than 10 years. it's all kind of a blur to me. but yes. generally that range yes. again! she has the like fluorescent. almost like you're on shrooms bright eyes. she said: yeah scotty was about kicking you out! but i bought you a bottle of water then you relaxed a little bit. you were drunk haha! still at a remove i said: you sure you don't want this uh. fifty bucks? from the atm and shit. that i owed you? according to my. she said: keep it. (hmm. pretty nice gesture for a stripper. unusual kindness from an exotic dancer. not that i would know personally.) you know. i also found it to

be a cordial gesture at the time. unorthodox perhaps. i was actually flattered. i assumed at the time that i'd just pulled my eel out. (but unlike your interactions with enzo in this instance you're telling me that you.) yeah. i was in my body and shit. but at a remove. unable to actually choose my actual words. on some automated playback type of shit or some shit. but then it started flickering. in a way that. (when you say flickering.) i mean like jumping in time. like memories. but in real life. things of that nature. (and what was happening?) i don't know exactly. i wish i did in retrospect. shit i don't even remember happening. this bitch was like hugging me. in the middle of the strip club. looking up into my eyes and shit. i looked down at her into her what i obviously assumed to be colored contacts until. (until you were back?)

scene 24: fish co. 12:31pm.

folco said: yusuf! you good bro?! aniah said: i think we need to take him to a hospital or something. i said: no no. i'm good. um. wait. what happened again? folco said: you passed out bro. you passed the fuck out. fell down straight onto this clean ass deck and shit. aniah said: are you okay yusuf? i said: ugh. folco said: bro? i said: i could use a drink. what's next door now? the old fish co. next door? over there? can we go? whatever it is now. folco said: it's fish co again dude. they just fuckin revamped it as the old fish co. i said: fuck. it's fish co. again now? we're getting. old dude. (i sat up.) i said: should we go? aniah said: wait. no. we need to make sure he's. folco said: he's good. a drink to take the edge off will help him aniah. obviously! i said: yeah i've just. just been working super hard i think. must be the stress or some shit. aniah said: yusuf did you see something? in the river? folco said: there's fuck all in that river besides half-empty sunny delight bottles aniah. c'mon! i said: oh no definitely. that river is a shithole. filled with capri sun pouches. that's to me. the most puzzling. uh. piece of this case. in my opinion

that the crime scenes are here. how could anything have that type of surgical precision! on the providence river! haha! (and at the bar?) at the bar i was pissed. they didn't have mezcal. i knew the wine would be shit. against my better judgment i ordered a vodka water. (and?) and the memories kept coming back to me. but now obviously like normal memories and shit. not like fuckin transporting in time and shit. but vivid nonetheless. abnormally vivid nonetheless. (and it was at this point that.) aniah left. she'd had enough of our shit. (what did she say?) aniah said: no. i just can't believe that there would be a tangible difference between having sex during my second or third trimester. i think each is disgusting honestly. do you guys even get the point of pregnancy? ew. honestly guys. i can't even talk about this anymore. i'm gonna go back out across the. to tel aviv. see if maybe we missed anything next door. folco said: nah i hear you. yeah. we need to double back there. we'll finish these. if yusuf is feeling up to. i said: i'll be good. just let us down these and we'll be out there with you.

(and then when you went out?) well no we heard it. or more accurately somebody came in the bar. i mean the bar had literally just opened its doors. so it was dead in there anyway. they said somebody was screaming outside. or someone had let out a particularly gruesome shout of some fuckin sort. (and then.) folco and i went outside. obviously. we obviously routed direct back to tel aviv and we found her there. eyes fucking gone. (but aniah was deceased at the scene.) that's correct. folco called it in and i took the pulse. felt like i was gonna fuckin vomit man. she was gone before folco could even connect. she might have died of fuckin shock. i don't even know. i didn't wanna know! i still don't. way before the emts got on the scene she was gone. (and what happened after that?) what happened? what happened?! haha. well that's when you guys got on the scene and shut the whole shit down. after that it was fuckin chaos. we were. all of us. me. folco. moolio. we were all boxed out. but here's what i don't get. (we'll get to that.)

epilogue. scene 25: mr cigar 4:44pm.

(detective folco and i both puffed on relatively bold cigars drinking espressos sitting outside of mr cigar directly facing mineral spring avenue.) i said: but here's what i don't get. folco said: the entire thing doesn't make sense! i said: but okay. they get apparently uhhh. a rare extradition for ziad jarrah. he's back from lebanon. they charge him for conspiracy. folco said: i know exactly where you're going with this. no. the thing is. they never charged him for aniah! i said: so aniah. then. she's still an open case? he said: a hundred and ten percent fuckin open! still! because two things. number one. jarrah is outta the fuckin country when aniah gets killed. that's for one. when she goes down she's not here. i said: they couldn't pin him with conspiracy? he said: but two. more importantly. is that she's killed on-site. the other five are still alive. the feds played into that distinction. they used. i said: they used aniah's murder to get jurisdiction into the fuckin case. he said: and now they're gonna shut the whole fuckin thing down. without even a cursory attempt to solve her case! i said: that's on us bro. man. we need to uhhh. find her killer? he said: oh of course! without their files though. i said: you mean our files! it's all fuckin classified. our own files classified from us! fuck is that? what fuckin joke. how are five stabbings in providence damn rhode island federally classified. he said: and if they are. if they are! then how are you leaving the murder of a providence cop unsolved. wouldn't that uhhhh. take some precedence?

i said: they didn't even make a good faith attempt. cunts. they've already moved their shit out of our offices. he said: oh they're long gone! i said: what a fuckin joke. really shows who they give a. he said: they needed a fall guy. and they'll figure that the running assumption will be. i said: jarrah was behind aniah too. but they just couldn't prove it. he said: and he'll do his time. judge gave him a fuckin 45 year sentence. i said: that that will be enough. to satiate folks. case closed. he

said: fuck the feds. i said: right up their federal assholes. he said: jerkoffs. i said: you know what. i know we both know it. we've known it since we were fuckin kids. obviously. but there's really no justice in this world. this world is entirely void of justice! he said: oh totally! hey. what's that? i said: what? he said: what are you? on your phone? is that. uhh. i said: oh yeah this? yeah. it's uhhh. backpage? he said: isn't that for. like whores and stuff? i said: well. that and strip clubs too i think? i was just actually just looking into it now. trying to. there's a dancer from way back in the day. um. was trying to see if she was still around. was thinking about popping in on her. if she was. but you know. without stalking the clubs in person and shit. he said: oh no yeah totally! yeah that makes sense. i remember i fingerblasted one years ago. never was able to track her down after that though. but technology has come so far since then. we know where everybody is now. i said: but what about this so-called witness? because it's fucking killing me folco. he said: which one? i said: the one. i don't know if i told you. the one that allegedly saw the pork chop. i don't even know what to call it. a stabbing? mutilation? hit? he said: the murder of that homeless prick right? i said: exactly. cumn told me. no. he told us. that there was a witness for that. that that was the good news that day. but once the feds got involved. he said: he buttoned it up. shut the fuck up. i said: i was supposed to get the info from him that fucking day. the day she. and then after that? nothing. obviously! he said: well i heard it was one of luigi's guys that saw it. now i don't know if that's who lieutenant moolio had on his docket. but the rumblings around town were and have been that one of luigi's dudes knows something. i said: by dudes you mean? he said: like relatively high up. like a dude who knows luigi personally. not some valet on federal hill who sells coke out of his nissan maxima. i said: oh okay. he said: and from what i've heard the guy isn't saying shit to anybody about it. that he's fuckin spooked. i said: plus now with the feds around it he has even less incentive! with that said. he's probably a geezer though. probably has at least one foot in the

grave if he knows luigi personally. he said: i'd bet my left nut he's at least getting aarp magazines delivered to his house.

scene 26: the home of greg gigante 6:41pm.

(and?) well i know you know. (not necessarily.) well it was a pretty small circle that we knew. so we knocked on some doors. independently. (that's understandable. and you eventually found somebody?) to be clear. actually. we knocked on just one door. that day. there's a capo. an alleged capo. i know of through an old friend. cousin of a cousin or some shit. so i knew who this dude was. i knew who he knew. so did folco. guy lived around the corner from me. around the corner from mr cigar. so i took folco with me in plainclothes that day. knocked on his door. keeping it low-key. we went over there. big fucking mansion like house right on the north providence-lincoln line. so we go up fuckin knock on the door and i more or less poop directly into my pants right on the spot. at least initially. (and why was that?) it was her dude. (i think i know who you're referencing but be a little more specific.) the bitch with the eyes from the past. from my enzo-related but also orb-related flashbacks or teleportations in time. however the fuck you'd want to classify them. she's answering the door at this capo's house and i'm perhaps sharting myself vociferously. (now this is the house of the person who allegedly witnessed the pork chop stabbing?) i said: hi. is mr gigante home? she said: he is. but who's asking? mind you i can barely get the words out of my mouth. and mind you she obviously knows exactly who the fuck i am. like she hadn't had my erect penis inserted directly into her mouth on previous occasions she asks me who's asking. yet she's playing cool. much cooler than i am! i said: i'm detective yusuf and this is detective folco. we'd just like to have an. obviously off the record. conversation with mr gigante. if that would be okay? she said: of course. come in. we were just having an afternoon cocktail. if you'd like to join for one. folco said: oh nice! do you have any

decent red wine? she said: we have a fairly wide selection in our wine cellar. i can grab something specific if you'd like. i said: he'll take a heineken. she said: and for you? i said: ummm. do you have mezcal by any chance? she said: do you mind the casamigos brand?

i said: ummmm. it's not my favorite? but if it's the only one you have on hand then i'll ummm. i'll take it on the rocks. please. she said: he's right outside on the patio. i said: please and thank you. (so you actually managed to question gigante?) gigante looked like he shitted himself even more so than i did when he saw us. we were staring at each other on his luxurious patio having never met before both of us with shit in our pants. i said: relax greg. we're off the clock and just wanna talk informally. outside. he said: you have fuckin rocks in your head kid? i said: possibly? he said: folco. the fuck are you. no. actually. officers. welcome. welcome to my humble abode. please make yourselves at home. and how may i help you? i said: we just wanted to inquire. well. there's an unsolved case. he said: i heard there have been a few of those of late. high profile too. i said: there have been. well most seem to have conveniently been uhh. quickly solved of late. gigante said: i heard that too. i said: but there is one. case. downtown. homeless guy. we wanted to pick your brain about. (wait. is she still inside?) she walks right out as i'm saying this. i said: so anyway. yeah. there was uhhh. a homeless guy downtown. stabbed up pretty bad. oddly stabbed though! from the forensics point of view at least. from our in-house coroner's perspective at least. but cause of death unknown. somewhat peculiar circumstances like i said. we were just wondering. detective folco and i. if maybe through you know. any of your networks. informally speaking of course. if there was any particular direction you could point us in? gigante said: interesting. you know. like a lot of people. i hear a lot of things. quite a few things have been happening in the city of late. on quite a few fronts. but oddly enough i don't think i've heard about that one. the whole homeless thing. until now. but you know yeah. i'm always willing to help law enforcement when at all possible. especially

in this era. so yeah i can definitely ask around and see. you know if anyone i know has heard anything! uh. fucked up about it. haha! but as of right now. unfortunately. i don't know shit about this one. to be completely honest with you.

(now how was the temperature. of the patio when this was going on?) it was um. quite uncomfortable? (how so?) well she was staring a hole through my cerebral cortex? (okay.) frankly even gigante seemed a little uncomfortable. he seemed markedly out of sorts in fact. which folco confirmed. as someone who actually knew gigante much better than i did. (yet with that said.) of course we have a history too you're right. here i am. guy she used to suck off years ago. in her new house. with her new husband. or sugar daddy. or whatever the fuck. and i'm interrogating. i mean i'm really nonchalantly asking him. but to her it could certainly have maybe come off as interrogating. him about potential murders. there was a reason for things to be off. certainly. but it wasn't that vibe. that wasn't the source of the vibes being off. no that wasn't the vibe at all. (so then. you had the drink and left?) after he demurred? yeah. given like you said. the temperature of the patio so to speak. we fuckin shot the shit with a certain uhhh. rapidity? finished the drink and got the fuck outta there. (and that was it?) and that was it. (so then. you dug that far. i mean. what was your conclusion at that point? after being involved with this case at close range for some time. up to that point.) you know that's interesting. because you would think after everything with aniah. after i mean obviously. there was something there. we weren't pissing up the wrong tree and we both realized that off the bat. right at the fuckin door. yet at the same time? if i'm being honest? both folco and i realized right there on that patio. that whatever it was we were chasing. whatever it was that we thought we were chasing. that that afternoon we got exceptionally fuckin close to it. that we finally. especially on my end. that we got close enough to it that we knew enough about it. enough about it to know that neither one of us wanted to get any closer. that getting any closer might be an

actual impossibility. that actually. we both wanted to stay as far the fuck away from it as we possibly could. that whatever vengeance we thought we sought was beyond our capabilities by an order of fucking magnitude. and that? i guess you could say that was that.