CHRONICLES

by

Jamie Vanderbilt

Based on the books
"Zodiac" and "Zodiac Unmasked"

by Robert Graysmith

White shooting script 8/15/05
Full Blue script 9/9/05
Pink revisions 9/20/05
Yellow revisions 9/30/05
Green revisions 10/4/05
Goldenrod revisions 10/26/05
Buff revisions 10/31/05
Salmon revisions 11/29/05
Cherry revisions 1/25/06
Tan revisions 1/29/06
White 2 revisions 2/20/06
Blue 2 revisions 6/26/06
Pink 2 revisions 6/29/06
Yellow 2 revisions 7/5/06
FINAL SHOOTING SCRIPT
FADE IN:

1 INT. CORVAIR -- NIGHT

Our camera is MOUNTED to a CAR WINDOW. Driving through a small town at night. Passing white picket fences. Kids' discarded big wheels. American flags flutter. 

July 4th, 1969 - Summer of Love. Vallejo, California

FIREWORKS streak into the sky. Cookouts winding down. The car slows. Stops in front of a house on Beechwood Avenue. The driver HONKS. MIKE MAGEAU races out. Skinny at 19. Runs up to the window. To the camera:

MIKE
Where have you been? I've been waiting since seven.

At the wheel is DARLENE FERRIN, 22, clad in a WHITE AND BLUE JUMPSUIT. Fake eyelashes and braces make her look like 17.

DARLENE
(good natured)
Get in, I'm starving. I haven't eaten in like twenty four hours.

MIKE
Let me drive, then.

DARLENE
No way, Jose. I have to pick up fireworks for the party tonight. Food first though.

Mike doesn't move - he wants to drive.

DARLENE (CONT'D)
You coming or not?

2 EXT. MR. ED'S -- NIGHT

BOOM DOWN to see a local Vallejo teen hangout. Although the 60's are almost over, Vallejo didn't get the memo. Darlene (still driving) and Mike, cruising through the crowded lot. She sees something offscreen. Frowning, unnerved:

DARLENE
Screw this place.

MIKE
I thought you needed to eat.

(CONTINUED)
DARLENE
We have time before the party. We could just go talk.

Mike blinks at this. An opportunity...

EXTERIOR BLUE ROCK SPRINGS -- PARKING LOT -- NIGHT

Minutes later. The Corvair pulls into the lot of the local golf course. Make out point. The car on the road behind them, passing, continuing on.

INTERIOR DARLENE'S CAR -- NIGHT

Darlene, parking, checking the rearview to watch the car pass. Tense, but relaxing as it goes. Mike, noticing.

MIKE
Are you okay?

DARLENE
(relaxing)
Fine.

MIKE
You seem a little funny.

She touches his chest, playfully.

DARLENE
It's July and how many shirts are you wearing?

MIKE
(embarrassed)
I'm cold.

DARLENE
You're cold in July?

BANG-BANG-BANG! Mike and Darlene JUMP and Mike gives out a scream! Looking around to see KIDS. A group of them in three cars. Laughing, they toss another lit string of fireworks towards the Corvair. BANG-BANG-BANG!

MIKE
Fuck off and die!

The kids PEEL OUT. Leaving Mike and Darlene alone. After a moment, Darlene begins giggling. RELAXING.

MIKE (CONT'D)

What?

(CONTINUED)
DARLENE
(mimicking)
"Fuck off and die!"

She keeps laughing.

MIKE
Shut up...

But he's smiling. Soon he succumbs to the laughter as well. He shifts closer. Then, through the windshield - HEADLIGHTS. Signaling to turn into the lot. The car pulls to a halt eight feet behind them on their left side. Turning out the lights. But not the engine. Mike stares at the car. Only one person in it. Odd for a make out spot.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Is that the car that was behind us before?

Darlene doesn't respond.

MIKE (CONT'D)
(squinting)
It is, I think he's been with us since my house- Shit, is that your husband?

DARLENE
No.

But she can't take her eyes off the car. The driver makes no move to get out...

MIKE
I can to tell him to leave-

She puts her hand over his. Looks at him. Don't move. They wait for what seems an eternity. Then...

The other car PULLS FORWARD. Headlights click BACK ON. Passing the Corvair. They watch it go, finally disappearing over the horizon.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Who was that, Darlene?

DARLENE
Don't worry about it.

Mike studies her face. Unnerved.

MIKE
So... do you want to-

(CONTINUED)
DARLENE

Oh, shit...

Through the windshield - HEADLIGHTS, COMING BACK over the horizon. Darlene and Mike watch them reach the entrance to the parking lot. THEY TURN IN.

MIKE

Let's go.

Darlene, FROZEN.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Now, Darlene.

The car pulls to a halt behind the Corvair. In an off-line position, like a COP.

Mike, reaching over to start the engine when - A SPOTLIGHT from inside the other car hits the Corvair.

The door opens and THE COP inside gets out. Walks up to the car. Flashlight outstretched, shining it in Mike and Darlene's faces, blinding them. He reaches Mike's door.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Get your I.D.

(rolls down his window)

Man, you kinda creeped us-

THUNK! Mike's BLOOD AND TEETH EXPLODE onto the dashboard.

The muzzle of a SILENCER FLASHES. The Man KEEPS SHOOTING. BULLETS PUNCH through flesh and bone. Some shots rip straight through Mike and into Darlene.

Mike is shot in the face, the neck, and the arm. Darlene is shot twice in each arm, and three times in the back.

The Man lowers the gun. Silence.


The Man FIRES TWO MORE SHOTS into Mike, propelling him into the BACK SEAT. Then TWO MORE into Darlene for good measure. The Man turns and walks away.

FADE TO:
P.O.V. the front of a police motorcycle as it's HEADLIGHT cuts into the lot... OVER THIS WE HEAR a coin clink into a phone. One number dialed.

FEMALE OPERATOR {NANCY SLOVER}
Vallejo Police Department?

The headlight, SWINGING over asphalt until it comes to rest on MIKE, slumped against the REAR of the Corvair. Blood, running down his shirt...

A MAN (O.S.)
I want to a report a double murder...

The Officer (HOFFMAN) dismounts and runs to him...

A MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
If you go one mile east on Columbus Parkway to the public park, you will find kids in a brown car...

Mike gestures - and Hoffman goes to the front seat to find Darlene. In even worse shape. She tries to mouth something.

A MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
They were shot with a nine millimeter Luger. I also killed those kids last year. Goodbye.

CLICK. The line goes dead. SMASH TO OUR TITLE SCREEN...

August 1, 1969. SOARING OVER WATER towards the Bay City. Magnificent spires and bridges. Bustling to life.

ROBERT GRAYSMITH stands, brushing his teeth. Mid 20's. Next to him, his 4 year old son DAVID brushes his teeth as well. Mimicking his father's movements. Graysmith does his top teeth, David does his. Graysmith smiles. David smiles. Graysmith scrubs his tongue, David scrubs his.

GRAYSMITH
And spit.

(CONTINUED)
Graysmith spits. David does not.

DAVID
I swallowed it.

GRAYSMITH
Why?

DAVID
It was minty.

Graysmith laughs and scoops David up.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- MORNING

The tiny apartment is cluttered. Dick Tracy and old mystery movie posters abound. The TV PLAYS while Graysmith ties David's shoes.

NEWSCASTER
...at the Hall of Justice vow that the rapist will be arrested and brought to trial...

Graysmith frowns and shuts off the TV.

DAVID
(giggling)
Rapist! Rapist!

GRAYSMITH
Do daddy a favor and don't yell that at preschool, okay?

DAVID
Rapist!

GRAYSMITH
Much better.

He finishes David's shoes.

DAVID
Are we gonna see Mom and Aaron tonight?

Graysmith winces a little. Glances at the clock.

GRAYSMITH
We're gonna be late.
EXT. PRESCHOOL -- MORNING
Graysmith kisses his son on the forehead and sends him inside. Then turns and RUNS...

INT. GRAYSMITH'S CAR - INCHING ALONG IN TRAFFIC - DAY
Traffic's bad. Graysmith sketching something in his lap as he inches along. We get a good look - FOUR CARTOON SKETCHES. Very rough, but good...

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREETS -- MORNING
Graysmith hustles down the sidewalk amongst pedestrians. Behind him, a MAIL TRUCK passes him on the street. Both, coming up to the SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, a grand old building on Fifth and Mission. The logo above the entrance. Graysmith pushes through the doors into

OMITTED

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE -- LOBBY -- MORNING
Graysmith hurries across the lobby towards an OPEN ELEVATOR. The DOORS CLOSE just before he can reach it...

EXT. ALLEY NEXT TO CHRONICLE -- MORNING
The TRUCK halts by a LOADING DOCK. TWO MEN get out and begin unloading large DUFFEL BAGS of mail onto a FLATBED DOLLY...

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE THIRD FLOOR -- MORNING
DING! Graysmith emerges from the elevator into the controlled chaos of the paper's editorial offices. Phones ring. Typewriters clack. Reporters hustle. Graysmith heads to a small COFFEE STAND manned by an ill tempered white haired midget named SHORTY.

GRAYSMITH
How's the coffee today, Shorty?

Shorty points upward at his sign - "DELICIOUS AS HELL COFFEE AND SANDWICHES".

INT. ELEVATOR -- MORNING
The Mailmen ride up towards the third floor with a smaller MAIL CART that's marked "Editorial".
Graysmith gets his coffee from Shorty and heads to his desk, getting hung up by a crowd of people standing around -

Paul Avery's desk. Avery, 30's, well dressed, crime reporter. Currently entertaining the crowd with a joke.

Avery
...and the bartender says, "Superman, you are one mean son of a bitch when you're drunk!"

The others laugh. Graysmith pushes through them. Reaching his own desk. Devoid of people, away from the action. He opens his briefcase, just settling in when

Hyman
Editorial in two!

Graysmith begins regathering up his things as -

The elevator doors across the room open and the mailmen emerge. We pick them up again, traveling the length of the third floor offices and into

Omitted

15

16

17

14B INT. CAROL FISHER'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Where the cart is dumped out onto a Carol Fisher's desk. We stay on the letter pile as she begins to sort them.

We zoom in on follow one letter in particular. Rush to Editor is chickenscrawled twice on it. Through the door, we see Graysmith - last through into the Editorial Room.

Peck (O.S.)
All right let's get going.

Graysmith shuts the door. Carol begins opening the letters.
Graysmith just nods meekly and takes the sketches back.

INT. CAROL FISHER'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Carol slices open the Rush To Editor letter...

INT. EDITORIAL ROOM -- MORNING

PECK
Paul, what's on the crime beat?

AVERY
Janice in Datebook won't let me take her to dinner.
(off Peck's look)
What? It's a crime.

Graysmith cracks the slightest of smiles. Interrupted as the door opens revealing Carol Fisher. Face grave.

PECK
Carol, what do you-

CAROL FISHER
You need to see this.

She lays the Rush to Editor letter on the table. The others crowd around. Scanning it. Peck looks up to Carol.

PECK
Go get the publisher.

CUT TO:

INT. EDITORIAL ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

CHARLES DE YOUNG THEIRIOT - sits at the head of the table. Old, patrician, reading the letter aloud.

THEIRIOT
Dear Editor. This is the murderer of the two teenagers last Christmas at Lake Herman and the girl on the 4th of July near the golf course in Vallejo. To prove I killed them, I shall state some facts which only I and the police know. Christmas - Brand name of ammo Super X. Ten shots were fired. The boy was on his back with his feet to the car. The girl...

(CONTINUED)
He hands the letter to Peck with distaste. Motioning for him to continue.

PECK
The girl was on her right side, feet to the west. July 4th - One girl was wearing patterned slacks. The boy was also shot in the knee. Brand name of ammo was Western. Here is part of a cipher. The other two parts of the cipher are being mailed to the editors of the Vallejo Times and S.F. Examiner.

NEXT PAGE - Full of strange symbols. A CODE.

PECK (CONT'D)
I want you to print this cipher on the front page of your paper. In this cipher is my identity. If you do not print this cipher by the afternoon of Fry. The 1st of August 69, I will go on a kill rampage Fry night. I will cruise around all weekend killing lone people in the night then move on to kill again until I end up with a dozen people over the weekend".
(pause)
It's unsigned except for a symbol.

Peck puts the letter down. The others move forward to examine it. Seeing the SYMBOL:

AVERY
Is it me, or does that look like a gunsight?

Lost among them, Graysmith picks up THE CODE. WEIRD SYMBOLS litter the page in UNBROKEN BLOCK PARAGRAPHS...

THERIOT
Today is August first. He wants his code in the afternoon edition.

HYMAN
If the Examiner doesn't have the balls to run it, we scoop the Bay-

PECK
Charles, this man is talking about shooting twelve people-

(CONTINUED)
HYMAN
And not running this could make
him do that-

PECK
If we run it we could be setting a
very dangerous precedent-

HYMAN
Oh, come on, it's newsworthy-

PECK
We'd be giving this sick bastard a
soapbox. What does that say to
people?

THEIRIOT
Back up. The Vallejo stuff, is it
true?

HYMAN
Paul?

AVERY
What, I cover crime in Vallejo?
(off Theiriot's look)
I cover crime in Vallejo.

He rises and exits to make calls. Hyman, to Theiriot:

HYMAN
Let's shoot the code and call
SFPD. If it turns out to be real,
at least we'll have the material.

A beat. Theiriot nods.

HYMAN (CONT'D)
Copy!

A COPY BOY sticks his head in.

HYMAN (CONT'D)
Get Grant in here, we need some
photos. Graysmith?

Graysmith looks up from the code, his reverie broken.

HYMAN (CONT'D)
Don't you have a cartoon to
finish?

Graysmith takes the hint. Puts down the code and leaves.
19 INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE THIRD FLOOR -- MORNING
Graysmith, wandering back to his desk. Passing Avery who
sits, dialing. Graysmith, hoping to hear the conversation...

AVERY
(into the phone)
This is Paul Avery from the San
Francisco Chronicle, I'm looking
for someone to shed some light on
a letter we received...

20 INT. VALLEJO POLICE DEPARTMENT -- MORNING
SERGEANT JACK MULANAX (40's hook-nosed), on the phone.

MULANAX
You want to run it, run it-

SECRETARY
Jack, you got a guy from the
Chronicle on two!

MULANAX
Lenny, hang on...
(clicks over)
Sergeant Mulanax.

21 INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE THIRD FLOOR -- MORNING

AVERY
Sergeant, this is Paul Avery at
the Chronicle. I just wanted to
check if you had an unsolved
firearm related homicide on
Christmas and maybe one on July
4th?

MULANAX
(through phone)
Shit, you got one too?

22 INT. EDITORIAL ROOM -- MORNING
Avery re-enters to find Hyman on the phone.

PECK
Al's on with the Examiner, they
got the same letter, but with a
different code.

(CONTINUED)
AVERY
(checking his notes)
So did the Times Herald. VPD confirmed the shootings; Christmas, two teenagers on lover's lane, both DOA, David Farraday and Betty Jensen - July 4th, Darlene Ferrin and Michael
(trying to pronounce)
Mah- Mag- I think it's "Mayhew". He lived. She didn't.

THEIRIOT
The murder weapons?

AVERY
Match the calibers he gives in the letter. I bet the Times Herald will go with it.

Hyman cups his hand over the receiver to update them:

HYMAN
Examiner says they're going but won't go front page. I say we go front page and if he kills twelve people, it's not our fault.

Theiriot heaves a long sigh as the debate continues...

Graysmith, at his desk. Unfinished cartoon pushed aside. He doodles something else - THE CODE. Recreated from memory. He looks up to see the ENTIRE EDITORIAL STAFF of the paper is now in with Theiriot. Carol Fisher stops by his desk.

CAROL FISHER
Robert, we need- You're not done yet?

GRAYSMITH
Sorry.

He switches to the cartoon.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
Theiriot's still here.

CAROL FISHER
He's never here this late...

Graysmith scoops up his finished cartoon and heads for
INT. EDITORIAL ROOM -- DAY

Hyman speaks as Graysmith slips in.

HYMAN
...ten minutes to press, Charles.

Theiriot, quiet. Thinking. Graysmith hovers with his cartoon near Peck who whispers:

PECK
Leave it.

THEIRIOT
(deciding)
Okay, replate, we'll go page 4.

Weary, but happy a decision has been made, the staff heads for the exit. Avery, commenting to the others:

AVERY
Twenty bucks to the first person who cracks the guy's name.

GRAYSMITH
(quietly)
He won't give his name.

Avery turns, surprised the quiet cartoonist has spoken. Graysmith looks a little surprised too.

AVERY
(to everybody)
Anyone wanna grab a drink?

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET -- EVENING

Graysmith heads home. Passing "MORTI'S", a BAR near the CHRONICLE. Looking through the window - Avery and several others from the paper laughing, carousing. He watches for a moment, then moves on.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE -- EVENING

Graysmith dumps a stack of LIBRARY BOOKS on his desk. David grabs the top one happily - *Yertle the Turtle*. All the others, about CODEBREAKING or MURDER. Graysmith looks at the wall - covered with reproductions of JAMES BOND NOVEL COVERS. He sighs. Begins taking some down. We can't see his hands. He moves away and we see he's tacked THE CIPHER up in their place. As we push in on SYMBOLS...

**NAVY PROJECT LEADER**

All right, people, listen up...

---

A group of CRYPTOGRAPHERS seated around a table with the cipher. The PROJECT LEADER addresses them.

**NAVY PROJECT LEADER**

The cipher is broken into three sections - each one is eight lines with seventeen symbols...

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A similar gathering of codebreakers.

**D.O.D. PROJECT LEADER**

No breaks between the symbols denoting different words, no numbers or clues to substitution keys...

---

Two codebreakers sit at their desks, splitting a sandwich.

**F.B.I. CODEBREAKER**

And you got symbols from at least seven different sources - Greek, Morse Code, Navy Semaphore, Weather Symbols, Astrological Signs...
SUPERIMPOSE - RESIDENCE OF DONALD HARDEN - BREAKFAST NOOK

DONALD and BETTYE HARDEN sit perusing their morning papers. Donald examines the PRINTED CODE. He studies it. A beat.

DONALD
Hey, take a gander at this code thingy.

He passes it to his wife. She looks intrigued.

DONALD (CONT'D)
Want to give it a go?

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE THIRD FLOOR -- DAY

August 7, 1969. Graysmith, working on the day's cartoon.

AVERY (O.S.)
The guy who used to sit there was a great cartoonist.

Graysmith looks up to see Avery.

AVERY (CONT'D)
Bob Bastion. Now he's on public television for some reason...
Paul Avery.

GRAYSMITH
Robert Graysmith. I've been here nine months.

AVERY
You were right, by the way. He didn't give his name.

That gets Graysmith's attention.

GRAYSMITH
Who cracked it?

AVERY
A history teacher and his wife in Salinas.

He lays the translation of the code down on the desk. Graysmith picks it up. Begins reading aloud, the horror growing on his face with every sentence.

(CONTINUED)
GRAYSMITH
I like killing people because it is so much fun. It is more fun than killing wild game in the forest because man is the most dangerous animal of all to kill. Something gives me the most thrilling experience, it is even better than getting your rocks off with a girl. The best part of it is that when I die I will be reborn in paradise and they - They I have killed will become my slaves. I will not give you my name because you will try to slow down or stop my collecting of slaves for the afterlife.

Silence. Graysmith, shaken.

AVERY
Methinks our friend is a tad bit fuckered in the head. I heard he even sent Vallejo a code key to help. Impatient prick, isn't he?

GRAYSMITH
What are those letters at the bottom?

He points and we see them - EBEORIETMETHHPITI

AVERY
Leftovers? Maybe an anagram?

Graysmith begins writing, trying different permutations of the letters: Robert Hemphill, Van M. Blackman, Robert Emmet the Hippie...

AVERY (CONT'D)
You're pretty good at those. (noticing) "Robert Emmet the Hippie"?

Graysmith tries more. Avery watches. After a bit:

AVERY (CONT'D)
How'd you know he wasn't gonna give his name?
GRAYSMITH
(to himself)
Man is the most dangerous animal
of all... Man is the most
dangerous animal of all...

He continues writing and mumbling. This guy is strange.
Avery walks away, intrigued. Passing Peck, who whispers:

PECK
Paul, editorial now.

INT. EDITORIAL CONFERENCE ROOM -- MORNING

The EDITORIAL STAFF huddled, going through something. Avery
pushes through them. Bumping into Hyman.

HYMAN
Another letter, more of the same -
details about the murders. He
taped a flashlight to the gun,
that's how he hit them in the dark-

THEIRIOT
But he gave himself a name.

Avery looks down as we push in on the NEW LETTER:

DEAR EDITOR,
THIS IS THE ZODIAC SPEAKING...

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST ROAD -- AFTERNOON

VROOM! A VOLKSWAGEN KARMANN GHIA ROARS past camera, speeding
down a winding road carved out of the forest above LAKE
BERRYESSA. Two college kids, BRYAN HARTNELL at the wheel,

September 27, 1969 - Napa County, California

EXT. LAKE BERRYESSA -- TWILIGHT

The sun, creeping down. The light's gone golden. Bryan and
Cecelia lie side by side, on a peninsula. Two trees shade
them. No one else in sight.
BRYAN
This used to be a town. The county decided the land would work better as a lake, so they flooded it. There's an entire—

CECELIA
-hidden city under the water. We were here last spring, remember?

He smiles. She smiles back but then SEES SOMETHING.

CECELIA (CONT'D)
Somebody else is here.

Bryan stays in his position. Not looking.

BRYAN
It's a public park.

CECELIA
He's watching us.

BRYAN
Well, we're very good looking.

Cecelia playfully swats him. Looking back to the brush.

CECELIA
Where'd he go?

She scans the landscape.

CECELIA (CONT'D)
There. He went behind a tree.

BRYAN
(still not looking)
So? He's taking a leak.

A beat.

CECELIA
Oh, my God, he's got a gun!

Bryan turning to see - The TREE only TWENTY FEET AWAY. A MAN IN BLACK has emerged from behind it. Wearing A HOOD like an EXECUTIONER'S MASK. Slits for eyeholes and over them, sunglasses. The hood's front with a CROSS STITCHED into it which QUARTERS A CIRCLE. A SHEATHED KNIFE hangs from his left side and a GUN IN HAND. Bryan and Cecelia, beginning to stand... The Man walks over, aiming the weapon at them.
THE MAN
Don't move, I want your money and your car keys. Don't move.

BRYAN
Whatever you say. We'll cooperate, okay? What do you want us to do?

The Man motions for them to stand. They do. Bryan is "water side" standing parallel to the man. Cecelia is to Bryan's right. The Man keeps his distance. Bryan pulls out the his wallet and tosses it. Searching his pockets for the keys, motor-mouthing:

BRYAN (CONT'D)
You're welcome to everything I have, but is there something more I could do? Could I give you a check or something?

THE MAN
No.

BRYAN
I could give you my phone number, and, you know- maybe I could give you more help than you think you need-

CECELIA
(explaining)
He's a sociology major.

THE MAN
Sorry, I can't remember where I put the keys, they might be on the blanket, can I-

The Man motions with the gun - Bryan leans down to search on their blanket.

BRYAN
Can I ask you a question? I read in Reader's Digest that thieves don't always have their guns loaded-

THE MAN
It's loaded.

CECELIA
Bryan, do what he says.
BRYAN
I am, I am.
(finding them)
Here's the keys.

Bryan tosses them.

THE MAN
I want her to tie you up.

BRYAN
Okay.

He pulls some lengths of hollow core clothesline from behind his back. Hands them to Cecelia who immediately goes behind Bryan and begins tying his hands behind his back, loosely. Bryan, to Cecelia as she works:

BRYAN (CONT'D)
(whispering)
I might be able to get the gun-

CECELIA
Bryan!

The Man points the gun at his head.

THE MAN
Don't get any ideas-

BRYAN
I won't-

THE MAN
I killed a guard escaping from prison in Montana.

BRYAN
I'm not doing anything, okay?

THE MAN
I'm not afraid to kill again.

BRYAN
(after a bit; as she ties)
What was the name of that prison?

The Man doesn't respond. They stand in silence as Cecelia finishes. The Man immediately goes to her and begins binding her hands behind her back (he may have holstered the gun to do this).
BRYAN (CONT'D)
You said it was in Montana, right?

THE MAN
I'm taking your car and going to Mexico.

The Man finishes with Cecelia and steps behind Bryan.

THE MAN (CONT'D)
She tied you loose, didn't she?

He CRANKS the ropes around Bryan's wrists tighter.

THE MAN (CONT'D)
Get on your stomach so I can tie your feet.

BRYAN
Come on, man. I didn't complain when you tied our hands-

THE MAN
On your stomach-

BRYAN
It gets cold at night, we could freeze-

The Man steps points the gun at him at point blank range:

THE MAN
Get down! Right now!

Bryan and Cecelia do. The Man binds Bryan's feet to his hands in silence. Does the same to Cecelia. Hog-tying them. Then steps back, surveying his handiwork.

BRYAN
Now that it's all said and done - was the gun really loaded?

The Man pops the clip. Removes a SHINY BULLET. Showing Bryan. Then puts it away. Moving behind him, out of his line of vision. Bryan, lying there, trying to figure out how he's going to get himself untied once the Man leaves when-

The Man pulls the KNIFE from the scabbard and STABS BRYAN IN THE BACK. It happens so quick, it takes a moment for Cecelia to realize what's happening. And then she begins to SCREAM.

The Man pulls the knife out of Bryan. RAISES IT AGAIN...

And Dear God, we're actually going to have to watch this...

(CONTINUED)

Bryan's eyes. Finding Cecelia. Seeing what's happening to her. And then looking away...

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE BERRYESSA -- EVENING

Later. The screaming is done. The sun, almost down. Cecelia has rolled to her side. Her bound wrists now up by Bryan's mouth and he's trying to CHEW THEM FREE. He spits out some rope. Pulling at the knot with his teeth between sobs... Her hand comes free. She moves... and SCREAMS. We can't hear it, because OVER THIS WE HEAR - More coins in a pay phone. Dialing. Ringing...

NAPA POLICEMAN
Napa Police Department?

Bryan rolls. Positioning his wrists by Cecelia's free hand.

THE MAN
I want to report a murder - no, a double murder.

With an incredible effort she begins tugging on his ropes...

THE MAN (CONT'D)
They are two miles north of Park Headquarters. They were in a white Volkswagen Kharmann Ghia.

Bryan's wrists come free...

THE MAN (CONT'D)
I'm the one that did it.

CLICK. He's hung up. Bryan, pulling the ropes from his legs. He crawls to Cecelia. Kisses her once on the lips.

BRYAN
I'll get someone...

Somehow, he manages to STAND. Stooped over, arms crossed around his stomach. Just one step is an amazing effort. Bryan takes three before COLLAPSING. He only made it six feet. He rises again. Walks again. Falls again. Finally he gives up... And begins to crawl.
EXT. FOREST ROAD -- EVENING

...above the Lake. Bryan's car, still pulled off to the side of the empty road. A PARK RANGER slows at the abandoned car. Nothing out of the ordinary. He rolls his eyes. Kids. He drives on. We stay on the car. Slowly moving to the passenger side to reveal SCRAWLED IN MARKER ON THE DOOR:

O VALLEJO 12-20-68 7-4-69 SEPT 27-69-6:30 BY KNIFE

CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE THIRD FLOOR -- MORNING

CLOSE ON - Graysmith's fingers grip a pencil. SKETCHING.

AVERY (O.C.)
The boy lived, the girl didn't.
Imagine surviving something like that. And the dates on the car - the two Vallejo killings and now the one in Napa. Why Napa?

Pulling back to reveal it's a sketch of ZODIAC IN COSTUME.

AVERY (CONT'D)
What's he doing out of Vallejo? And- Sweet Christmas, what are you drawing?

By now we can tell we're by Graysmith's desk.

GRAYSMITH
The kid who survived, this is what he said Zodiac was wearing-

He stops, his EYES GOING WIDE as something clicks.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
Oh, my God...
He leaps up and races off. Practically knocking over Hyman. An odd duck, that one. Hyman sits and picks up the sketch.

HYMAN
Jesus, where'd he come up with that?

(CONTINUED)
AVERY
It's Zodiac at the lake.  
(re: Graysmith)
What's his story, anyway? He seems a little farther out than far out.

HYMAN
Graysmith? He's a fucking boy scout. Doesn't smoke, doesn't drink, doesn't curse.

AVERY
Horrible.  
(seeing)
Aaand he's back.

As Graysmith returns to the desk clutching a FILM BOOK. He puts it down, frantically paging through it. He turns the book to Avery and Hyman and stabs the page: A black and white FILM STILL from an old movie - a man DRESSED IDENTICALLY AS THE ZODIAC.

HYMAN
What is that?

GRAYSMITH
A still from The Most Dangerous Game.

AVERY
"The Most Dangerous Game"?

GRAYSMITH
It's a movie about a count who hunts people for sport. "Man is the most dangerous animal of all" - I knew I'd heard it somewhere!

AVERY
And this is the Count?

GRAYSMITH
Exactly. "Count Zaroff".

AVERY
"Zaroff" with a Z?

HYMAN
Jesus. He's hunting people...

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO SKYLINE -- NIGHT

October 11, 1969. We SOAR OVER the CITY, passing through the half completed TRANSAMERICA PYRAMID. A RADIO SHOW:

(CONTINUED)
...news on the Twenty. Because of the recent attacks police have ordered curfews in effect tonight for the following counties - Napa, Solano, Contra Costa, Alameda, Marin, and San Mateo so please everyone, stay safe, stay inside, and keep calling.

Pushing down into the bustling streets of the city - people way too busy with their urban lives to be bothered with anything else.

Vic in San Francisco, you're on the line. So the Zodiac doesn't scare you?

Heck no, the guy's just doing his thing out in the sticks. What's really scary is the yippies down in the Haight with their "free love".

Heavy foot traffic. The THEATER CROWD just being let out. A couple hippies play guitar for change.

Alfred from Vacaville feels differently - Alfred, are you gonna take that?

Well, I agree about the hippies, but I resent him calling us "the sticks" - those were nice clean cut young people that man killed. We have good solid Christian communities here in the North Bay.
We track the Cab's progress, moving from the business and theater district towards the residential PACIFIC HEIGHTS...

RADIO HOST (V.O.)
You bring up a good question - is the Zodiac a Satanist? Amber from Oakland, what do you think?

CALLER 3 (V.O.)
Well, the symbols look Satanic, but that's not what I called about - my question is where does the Chronicle get off encouraging him like that?

RADIO HOST (V.O.)
A great question, and I'd also ask - since when did a big city paper like the Chronicle even care about what happens in rural communities like Vallejo? Aren't they covering this just to sell more papers? Alison in San Francisco?

CALLER 4 (V.O.)
I don't know about them caring or not caring but I do know The Zodiac demanded they print his letters or he'd kill more people-

CALLER 3 (V.O.)
(breaking in)
But they didn't have to. And he's killed more people anyway.

The cab slowing. A posh part of the city. The sidewalks, empty. Pulling to halt at the corner of Washington and Cherry. The Cabbie puts it in park...

RADIO HOST
A great point Amber. So a general question for all our callers, what do you think he'll do next?

BOOM! The Cabbie's HEAD SNAPS FORWARD. Shot by his PASSENGER, who we don't see. Silence. As we begin to pull away from the CAB...

(CONTINUED)
The PASSENGER gets out. Moving around the car. Gets into the FRONT PASSENGER seat. Leaves the door ajar. He seems to be (but is not) cradling the Cabbie’s head in his lap. We’re still pulling up and away slowly, across the street...

OVER THIS: A phone ringing. Picked up.

SFPD OPERATOR (O.S.)
San Francisco Police-

TEENAGE GIRL (O.S.)
Yeah, there's a fight! In a cab!
SFPD OPERATOR (O.S.)
What is your location?

TEENAGE GIRL (O.S.)
The corner of Washington and Cherry, one's drunk! We think he's robbing him!

The Man gets out again. Walks around the front to the Driver's side door. Holding a RAG. Still PULLING BACK...

SFPD OPERATOR (O.S.)
Is the crime still in progress?

TEENAGE GIRL (O.S.)
Yes!

And then, the sound of a MACHINE GUN...

INT. GRAYSMITH APARTMENT -- DAVID'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

...it's a TOMMY-GUN. Coming from an old tape recorder. Graysmith lays on the bed next to his son in the dark, listening to a DICK TRACY radio program on cassette:

FLAT-TOP (O.S.)
Take that Tracy! Come on boys, let's go!

The sound of squealing tires. Then pistol shots.

FLAT-TOP (O.S.) (CONT'D)
He shot our tires! Darn that Tracy!

The sound of a car crashing. David giggles. Graysmith, who's heard this a thousand times, mouths the next lines:

DICK TRACY (O.S.)
You boys are under arrest!

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
(as the music swells)
Join us for the next incredible episode of Dick Tracy!

Graysmith stops the tape. He rises, tucking David in.

GRAYSMITH
Enough for tonight.

DAVID
Dad, what's Zodiac?

(CONTINUED)
Graysmith pauses. Carefully:

GRAYSMITH
He's a very bad man. A criminal.

DAVID
Who is he?

GRAYSMITH
Nobody knows.

DAVID
Are you gonna catch him?

Graysmith smiles.

GRAYSMITH
You should get some sleep.

He kisses David on the forehead and moves to the door.

DAVID
Somebody's gonna catch him, right?

In the doorway, Graysmith turns back.

GRAYSMITH
Who always catches the bad guys?

DAVID
The good guys?

GRAYSMITH
That's right.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

A couple, asleep. The PHONE RINGS. The man reaches for it. Misses. Knocks over the bedside lamp. CRASH!

TOSCHI
Ah, nuts...

His WIFE switches on her lamp. The man sits up and we get our first real look at INSPECTOR DAVE TOSCHI. Handsome, Italian-American. Groggy, he answers the phone.

TOSCHI (CONT'D)
Whoever this is, you owe me a lamp.
ARMSTRONG
(on phone)
Cabbie's been shot three blocks from the Presidio.

TOSCHI
I didn't do it. I've been with my bride all night, she can vouch.

ARMSTRONG
You'll pick me up?

TOSCHI
Let me just describe the lamp you're gonna buy for me-

CLICK. Armstrong, gone. Toschi hangs up. His wife sighs.

TOSCHI'S WIFE
I'll go put on the Folgers...

46  EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET CORNER -- NIGHT

A lone cop stands waiting. Plain clothes. Silver hair. Kind face. This is BILL ARMSTRONG. A CAR pulls up to the corner, driven by Toschi. Armstrong gets in.

47  INT. TOSCHI'S CAR (MOVING) -- NIGHT

TOSCHI
I was sound asleep.

ARMSTRONG
Suspect's a Negro Male Adult. Walt's on scene, he's locked off the cab and secured the crowd.

TOSCHI
Seriously, dead asleep. My eyes were closed and everything.

Armstrong pulls a box of Animal Crackers from his pocket and hands them to Toschi, who begins munching on them as he drives.

ARMSTRONG
You ever try Japanese food?

TOSCHI
You mean like teryaki?
ARMSTRONG
No, like the urchin and raw fish.

TOSCHI
I'm eating here, Bill.

ARMSTRONG
I always wanted to try it.

TOSCHI
So. Why don't you?

Armstrong stares out the window.

ARMSTRONG
Haven't gotten around to it.

EXT. WASHINGTON AND CHERRY -- NIGHT

CHOOM! KLIEG LIGHTS on a Fire Department "Spotlight Vehicle" snap on, illuminating the block. An AMBULANCE and CRIME LAB VAN are already on scene. Uniforms work through the crowd, comparing faces to a physical description they've gotten.

Toschi pulls to a halt at the edge of the scene and gets out with Armstrong. Homicide INSPECTOR WALTER KRACKE approaches.

KRACKE
Evening, gents. Lovely night for a botched robbery, huh?

TOSCHI
Third one this week. The end of summer rush.

KRACKE
I got foot patrols going through the park and the dogs are on their way. Victim's name is Paul Stine. (gestures to the Ambulance driver)

Dousette pronounced him at 10:10. Suspect fired one shot, back of the head, driver's wallet and car keys are missing.

ARMSTRONG
How do you know his name?

Kracke points to a distraught AFRICAN AMERICAN MAN.

(CONTINUED)
Leroy there came down from Yellow Cab to I.D him. Neighborhood's pretty high end for this kind of thing, so I already set up transpo for the cab and the coroner's rolling.

Toschi, noticing the crowd of onlookers and other cops lingering near the body and the car.

Any witnesses?

Kids who called it in saw the suspect from that window.

He points to a THREE STORY HOUSE across the street.

They hear a shot?

No, they first saw him in the front seat, thought he was a drunk fighting with the driver. Oldest kid ran downstairs to get a better look from that window, described him as a white male, glasses, crewcut, stocky and wearing a dark jacket.

I thought he was black.

That's the description that went out to radio cars.

We already corrected it. You guys need anything else?

Nah, get outta here.

Thanks.

(grinning)

Happy Birthday.

Toschi turns to his partner.
TOSCHI
No kidding, it's your birthday?

ARMSTRONG
Yeah.

TOSCHI
That's great. Happy Birthday.

ARMSTRONG
Thanks. You want the body or the scene?

TOSCHI
Body.

The partners split up. A well practiced ritual. Toschi goes to the cab where LAB TECHS are photographing the DRIVER, who lies in the bloody front seat. One tech, DAGITZ looks up as Toschi approaches.

DAGITZ
Dave. Looks like he wiped the cab down pretty good but we've got some blood over here.

He points to the door jamb. Toschi pulls out a flashlight to examine it. Squinting:

TOSCHI
Print?

DAGITZ
Could very well be. We'll dust it at the Hall. Odd thing is, we also got gloves.

TOSCHI
The suspect's?

DAGITZ
There's blood on them.

Toschi flips open his notebook and begins to SKETCH the scene. He works quickly, using a TAPE MEASURE to gauge distances. When he's done:

TOSCHI
Got enough?

The PHOTOGRAPHER nods. To Dagitz:

TOSCHI (CONT'D)
Help me roll him.

(CONTINUED)
He and Dagitz take hold of the body and hoist it out of the cab and onto the pavement. The crowd MURMURS at the sight. Toschi leans in to check the cab's floor. Discovering:

**TOSCHI (CONT'D)**


The Photographer leans in. Flashbulbs pop. Documenting the position of the shiny copper casing. Toschi measures its position. Adds it to the sketch.

**TOSCHI (CONT'D)**

Tweezers?

Dagitz hands him tweezers. Toschi gingerly bags the casing. Straightens up, as Armstrong approaches.

**ARMSTRONG**

Nothing from the crowd.

**TOSCHI**

Okay - I'm your shooter, an Adult Negro Male who happens to be a stocky Caucasian. I flag a cab, I give this address—Did he give this address? Who's got the fare book?

A UNIFORM produces the bagged book. Armstrong checks it.

**ARMSTRONG**

Says Washington and Maple. One block that way.

He points. Toschi jogs down the street a little towards the other corner. Sees what he needs to and jogs back.

**TOSCHI**

Lighting's the same there so maybe I see somebody walking their dog.

**ARMSTRONG**

You don't want a witness so you say "go down a block". Cabbie pulls over—

**TOSCHI**

And I wait till he puts it in park cause I'm smart and I don't want him hitting the accelerator after I shoot him.

Toschi stands behind the Uniform, using him as he acts out the rest.

(CONTINUED)
ARMSTRONG  
Cabbie stops, puts it in park, boom.

TOSCHI  
I shoot him on the right - he slumps right?

ARMSTRONG  
Maybe you've got your hand on his collar when you shoot.

TOSCHI  
Either way, I just dumped a quart of blood into the front seat.

ARMSTRONG  
So why do you get into the front seat?

TOSCHI  
The money?

ARMSTRONG  
But he's dead. You could just reach over the seat, pull his wallet and never get near all the blood. Why do you get into the front seat?

TOSCHI  
Cause I'm an idiot?

ARMSTRONG  
You're not an idiot, you waited for him to put it in park.

TOSCHI  
Let me see the fare book...

Armstrong hands it over. Toschi peruses it.

TOSCHI (CONT'D)  
I am an idiot, I'm his third fare of the night. I just killed a guy for eight bucks.

(to Armstrong)  
You have any more animal crackers?

UNIFORM  
What?

ARMSTRONG  
They're in the car.

(CONTINUED)
TOSCHI
I was gonna finish them later.
(pause)
Fine.

Toschi rises and goes back towards the car...

INT. WASHINGTON STREET HOUSE -- NIGHT

The DOORBELL RINGS. The FATHER answers it. Toschi holding crackers.

FATHER
Are you a reporter?

TOSCHI
(flashing a badge)
No, sir, SFPD. I need to have a word with your children alone, one at a time-

FATHER
They just saw a man die. I'm not letting them out of my sight.

INT. WASHINGTON STREET HOUSE -- UPSTAIRS -- NIGHT

Toschi sits across from the SIX KIDS, who inhale the animal crackers as they talk, breathlessly overlapping:

16 YEAR OLD (TEEN BOY) 13 YEAR OLD (TEEN GIRL)
It looked like they were Yeah, and he had a rag-
drunk and fighting-

TOSCHI
Inside the car, he had a rag?

13 YEAR OLD (TEEN GIRL) 16 YEAR OLD (TEEN BOY)
No outside- He came around the side of the car and was wiping stuff-

12 YEAR OLD (FRIEND) 13 YEAR OLD (TEEN GIRL)
(mouth full of crackers) No, he was, and then he put it in his pocket-
I didn't see him wiping stuff-

TOSCHI (CONT'D)
First time you saw him he was in the front seat. Then he gets out-

16 YEAR OLD (TEEN BOY)
And comes around to the driver's side with the rag-

(CONTINUED)
TOSCHI
Did you see his face?

16 YEAR OLD (TEEN BOY)     13 YEAR OLD (TEEN GIRL)
Yeah-                       Sort of-

TOSCHI (CONT'D)
What did he look like?

The kids think about this for a second.

16 YEAR OLD (TEEN BOY)
Normal.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE -- MAIL ROOM -- DAY

October 14, 1969. Carol Fisher, sorting through letters. She stops at the last one. A CROSSED CIRCLE in the return address corner. On the front in BLUE FELT PEN:

SF CHRONICLE, SAN FRAN, CALIF..
PLEASE RUSH TO EDITOR
PLEASE RUSH TO EDITOR.

She takes a letter opener and slices open the top...

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE THIRD FLOOR -- MORNING

Graysmith, sketching. From down the hall, CAROL'S SCREAM!

avery (v.o.)
This is the Zodiac speaking...

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE -- DAY

Toschi and Armstrong enter the newspaper's lobby...

avery (v.o.)
I am the murderer of the taxi driver over by Washington Street and Maple Street last night...

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE HALLWAYS -- DAY

Toschi and Armstrong stride down the corridor towards the conference room, past staring REPORTERS...

(CONTINUED)
AVERY (V.O.)
To prove this, here is a blood
stained piece of his shirt...

CUT TO:

A 3 by 5 PIECE of grey and white SHIRT CLOTH, SOAKED IN BLOOD. Neatly torn, not cut. It sits on a table in

INT. EDITORIAL CONFERENCE ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Surrounded by Graysmith, Avery, Theiriot, and the Editorial staff. Avery, reading the letter aloud:

AVERY
I am the same man who did in the
people in the North Bay Area. The S.F. Police could have caught me last night if they had searched the park properly instead of holding road races-

The doors open and Toschi and Armstrong enter.

AVERY (CONT'D)
Dave.

TOSCHI
Paul. Where's the shirt?

Theiriot leads him over to the bloodstained cloth.

ARMSTRONG
There's your rag from the kids.

TOSCHI
So he sits in the front seat to rip off a piece of the shirt...

AVERY
Is this on the record-

TOSCHI
What do you think, Paul?

ARMSTRONG
No.

HYMAN
He takes credit for Vallejo and Napa-

GRAYSMITH
It's worse than that.

The room turns to look at him.

(CONTINUED)
Graysmith frowns. Heads for the door once again. When he's gone, Toschi turns back to Theiriot.

**TOSCHI**
What did he mean "worse"?

**THEIRIOT**
Read the last part.

**TOSCHI**
School children make nice targets. I think I shall wipe out a school bus some morning. Just shoot out the front tire and the pick off the kiddies as they come bouncing out—Jesus, who handles buses—Department of Transportation?

**ARMSTRONG**
School board.

Toschi, scoops up the letter, heading for the door...

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**INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE THIRD FLOOR -- DAY**

Graysmith, by Avery's empty desk. Digging in his trash for info on Zodiac. He straightens up when he sees the Detectives exit the Conference Room. Toschi and Armstrong in rapid conference as they walk:

**ARMSTRONG**
We need matches on blood and fabric—

**TOSCHI**
I'll call Napa and Vallejo, pull the other letters and get them up to Sacramento for handwriting—

**avery**
Dave, hold up! Is it true you got a print off the cab?

**TOSCHI**
Yeah, we got a partial in blood, but that's not for publication—

**avery**
Hey, it's me.

Toschi and Armstrong step on the elevator and are gone. Avery heads back to his desk. Graysmith follows.
GRAYSMITH
Did he say they had a print?

AVERY
Partial.

GRAYSMITH
Wow. Wow. Did you notice he was wearing his gun like Bullit?

AVERY
Steve McQueen got that from Toschi.

He sits and begins typing his notes.

GRAYSMITH
Does he think Zodiac's gonna send another code? I think he's gonna send another code-

AVERY
(still typing)
Robert? You're looming.

Graysmith slinks back to his desk. People bustle around him, electricity in the air. And there's nothing for him to do.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE -- EDITORIAL ROOM -- EVENING

Twilight through the windows. Theiriot has gathered the entire Editorial staff. We PAN across them as he speaks...

THEIRIOT
In cooperation with SFPD, we will run the Zodiac letter without including the threat on school children. We do not want to start a citywide panic so I'm asking all of you to keep this confidential. Just go about your daily business...

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET -- MORNING

Graysmith stands on a corner with David. Uncomfortable with his father's presence.

DAVID
You don't have to wait with me.

GRAYSMITH
It's okay. I want to.

A YELLOW SCHOOL BUS rounds the corner. Rumbling towards them. Graysmith exhales.

(Continued)
David hefts his backpack as the bus approaches. Graysmith watches him. Preparing to get on. The bus stops. The Driver cranks open the door. David steps forward... Graysmith can't take it. STOPS HIM.

DAVID
Dad?

Graysmith looks to the Driver. Apologetic.

GRAYSMITH
I'm gonna drive him myself today.

INT. OFFICE OF QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS -- NIGHT

Sacramento, California. AN EYE behind a magnifying glass. Chief of Questioned Documents - Sherwood Morrill.

He studies the Zodiac letters side by side. Meticulous, slow work. Toschi stands next to him. Maddened by the pace. Morrill makes a note.

TOSCHI
What's that?

MORRILL
Similarities in the lower case r's.

He keeps going. Moves onto the e's. Makes another note.

TOSCHI
And that?

MORRILL
That was you waiting in the hall if you speak again. I have to concentrate.

TOSCHI
Sorry-

MORRILL
Sorry counts as speaking.

INT. OFFICE OF QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS -- HALLWAY -- NIGHT

SLAM! Morrill shuts the door behind Toschi, locking him out. Armstrong, on the couch across from the doorway, a couple of snacks on his lap. He's eating chips. A beat.

TOSCHI
There are similarities in the lower case r's.
Armstrong tosses Toschi a box of Animal Crackers. He tears them open.

ARMSTRONG
We have to release the bus threat.

TOSCHI
It'll screw us.

ARMSTRONG
We're already screwed. We just went from routine cabbie shooting to "Mass Murderer Targets Kids".

Silence. Toschi sighs. The door to Morrill's office opens and he steps out with a grave look on his face...

ANCHORMAN
The Zodiac Killer has come to San Francisco...

INT. GRAYSMITH APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -- EVENING

Friday, October 17, 1969. Graysmith and David, watching TV:

ANCHORMAN (O.S.)
Confirmation tonight from the San Francisco Police Department that in his latest taunting letter which takes credit for the murder of cab driver Paul Stine, the Zodiac has threatened to "wipe out a school bus and pick off the kiddies as they come bouncing-

CLICK. Graysmith shuts the TV off, but not quick enough. David stares at him. Terrified.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE THIRD FLOOR -- EVENING

Avery, pounding away at his typewriter on an article as the news report continues in the background:

(CONTINUED)
ANCHORMAN (O.S.)
...if you think you might know who
the Zodiac is, you can call the
San Francisco Police Department's
tipline...

Saturday, October 18, 1969. PHONES RING OFF THE HOOK. The
place has become ZODIAC CENTRAL. PAN across the DETECTIVES,
ALL ON THE PHONE. Overlapping:

DETECTIVE 1
Yes, sir, we'll add your dry
cleaner to our suspect list...

DETECTIVE 2
...Vice President Agnew's
whereabouts are pretty well
established, ma'am...

Ending on Toschi, hanging up his phone. Behind him CAPTAIN
MARTIN LEE pulls on a tie and straightens it.

CAPTAIN LEE
Press conference is at four, I
need to tell them where we are.

Toschi's phone begins RINGING AGAIN. He ignores it.

TOSCHI
We're coordinating with the school
board, and expect a break in the
case very soon.

CAPTAIN LEE
Where are we really?

TOSCHI
Swamped. When they can't get
through on the tip line they call
the switchboard and keep getting
put through.

CAPTAIN LEE
Hard suspects?

TOSCHI
About ninety an hour - we're up to
around five hundred.

CAPTAIN LEE
Can you narrow it down?

(CONTINUED)
TOSCHI
If I could get out of this chair-
(answering the phone)
Homicide, could you hold please?

He puts the phone back down. RINGING AGAIN, almost immediately. Captain Lee pulls on his blazer.

CAPTAIN LEE
I have to tell them the entire force is on this.

TOSCHI
How many men can you give me?

CAPTAIN LEE
For now it's just you and Bill. And Monday's a school day.

TOSCHI
I got three daughters, Chief.

CAPTAIN LEE
Where's Armstrong?

TOSCHI
On with Vallejo.
(answering phone)
Homicide, Toschi...

PAN TO - Armstrong in mid conversation.

ARMSTRONG
We're playing catch up here. I'd like to set up a meeting with your survivor, Michael Mageau-

MULANAX
Can't. Skipped town.

ARMSTRONG
The only guy who's seen Zodiac without a mask is missing?

MULANAX
When he was still in the hospital we could show him line ups every day. Soon as he got out he left. Don't think he wants to have anything to do with this.

(CONTINUED)
ARMSTRONG
Well, if you could just send us everything you've got-

MULANAX
Road goes both ways - we need that print you lifted from the cab. Also, we should've been in on the handwriting.

ARMSTRONG
I apologize, things have been moving fast. Who should I talk to in Napa so we can coordinate?

MULANAX
Ken Narlow.

INT. NAPA POLICE HEADQUARTERS -- DAY

KEN NARLOW, now on the phone with Armstrong.

NARLOW
We should have been in on the handwriting.

ARMSTRONG
I apologize, things have been moving fast. We're gonna need your scene photos-

NARLOW
Can't help you.

ARMSTRONG
Ken, I don't want to get into a jurisdictional thing-

NARLOW
We didn't have a crime scene. Ranger who found the kids literally swept everything into a picnic blanket. All we got were the Wing Walker prints.

ARMSTRONG
The what?
NARLOW
Bootprints to and from the scene were made by size ten and a half Wing Walkers - they're a type of boot specifically designed to walk on the wings of planes, exclusively sold at military PX's.

Armstrong, writing this down...

ARMSTRONG
You can only buy at a PX with a military I.D, so our suspect could be military. Did you narrow your list off this?

NARLOW
Yeah.

ARMSTRONG
Did Vallejo?

NARLOW
I don't know. I don't work in Vallejo, I work here.

ARMSTRONG
Can you send us a photo of the bootprint?

NARLOW
Yes, can you send us the handwriting stuff?

ARMSTRONG
I though Questioned Documents already did.

NARLOW
Nope. Vallejo's got it, we don't.

ARMSTRONG
I'm sorry, I'll have Questioned Documents- No, I'll fax it to you.

NARLOW
We don't have a fax yet.

ARMSTRONG
Okay, I'll mail it.

(CONTINUED)
NARLOW
We'll mail ours but call Mulanax, maybe Vallejo can get you a mimeo quicker.

INT. VALLEJO POLICE DEPARTMENT -- DAY

MULANAX
Why don't you just get a photo off the original plaster cast?

ARMSTRONG
We'd have to wait because they don't have a fax.

MULANAX
We don't have a fax.

ARMSTRONG
Look— I just want to get us coordinated.

MULANAX
Have you called Solano Sheriff's Office?

ARMSTRONG
Why would I call Solano?

MULANAX
Cause the two kids who got killed last Christmas were Solano's.

ARMSTRONG
I thought they were Vallejo.

MULANAX
They were over the county line. You're gonna need to coordinate with them too.

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE -- HOMICIDE UNIT -- EVENING

As Armstrong hangs up the phone. At the end of his rope. Then he notices Toschi's face. Grim.

ARMSTRONG
What now?
INT. S.F.P.D. PATROL CAR (MOVING) -- DAY

Toschi and Armstrong sit in the back of the black and white. In the front seat are two patrolmen, FOUKE and ZELMS. They drive through Pacific Heights. Close to the Stine scene.

PATROLMAN FOUKE
We got the call to circle the scene, look for a negro-

TOSCHI
So this is three minutes after the shooting?

ARMSTRONG
Where was he?

PATROLMAN ZELMS
About three, yeah-

PATROLMAN FOUKE
There, where that woman is.

TOSCHI
Were you driving this way or the other way?

PATROLMAN ZELMS
This way.

ARMSTRONG
This is Jackson and Maple. So, the cab is catty corner one block that way-

TOSCHI
Did you slow down?

PATROLMAN FOUKE
(across to Toschi)
Of course we slowed down! But dispatch said he was a Negro Male Adult-

TOSCHI
They corrected that.

PATROLMAN FOUKE
-this guy was white, not in a hurry, sort of lumbering along-

PATROLMAN ZELMS
But at the time they hadn't-

ARMSTRONG
Lumbering?

PATROLMAN FOUKE (CONT'D)
(answering Armstrong)
Like he was shuffling.

(CONTINUED)
ARMSTRONG
He was stocky? Had a crewcut?

PATROLMAN FOUKE
Yeah, but it was dark, he was in a
dark jacket, we didn't think-

TOSCHI
Did you talk to him?

PATROLMAN FOUKE
(beat)
No.

Zelms shoots him a look. Silence.

ARMSTRONG
You need to sit down with a sketch
artist, so we can get a new
composite.

Neither of the Patrolmen can look at him. Toschi, realizing,
this is a nightmare for them, too.

TOSCHI
Guys? It's okay.

The Patrolmen's faces - no it's not.

EXT. BUS GARAGE -- NIGHT

Sunday, October 19, 1969. CLOSE ON - the COMPOSITE SKETCH OF
ZODIAC as it's being handed out to a collection of BUS
Toschi sits in front. Looking just as bad.

TOSCHI
Your number one priority is the
kids - you hear shots, you get
them down, lean on the horn and
keep driving. You drive on the
rims till you get to a populated
area, then duck and cover.

On the drivers. Shell shocked. Toschi rubs his brow.

TOSCHI (CONT'D)
I know you didn't sign up for
this, but we're doing everything
we can-

WOMAN BUS DRIVER
Like what?

(CONTINUED)
Toschi surprised. A large WOMAN BUS DRIVER in the third row.

WOMAN BUS DRIVER (CONT'D)
I got two kids too scared to go
near the windows in our house much
less to school. What are you
doing for them?

A general MURMURING of support from the other drivers.
Toschi, shocked into silence.

WOMAN BUS DRIVER (CONT'D)
That's what I thought. C'mon,
Johnny.

The Woman and several others rise to leave in disgust.
Toschi, watching them go. Paralyzed. Finally...

TOSCHI
We're gonna catch this guy. We're
gonna catch him and put him away.

He means it. The Woman sees this in his eyes. She and the
others retake their seats.

70  INT. GRAYSMITH'S CAR (MOVING) -- MORNING

Monday, October 20, 1969. Graysmith, driving David to
Both scared. As we hear a PLANE SOAR overhead...

71  EXT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE THIRD FLOOR -- DAY

Avery, working at his desk. The TV playing continuous NEWS

AVERY
(not looking up)
I believe we discussed the looming-

GRAYSMITH
(conspiratorially)
Do you think they've considered
the water theory?

Avery looks up at him.

AVERY
"Water theory"?

(CONTINUED)
GRAYSMITH
Geographically, every attack took place near a body of water, or a water based name. Lake Herman Road, Blue Rock Springs Road, and Lake Berryessa-

AVERY
Waaash-ington and Cherry?

GRAYSMITH
You think?

AVERY
No.

GRAYSMITH
I'm looking for patterns. I've been reading this book "Homicide Investigations" by Lemoyne Snyder? He says you always look for patterns-

AVERY
No. You can't think of this case in normal police terms.

GRAYSMITH
Why not?

Avery stares at him. He's not going away. Avery sighs and motions for Graysmith to sit.

AVERY
Consider the fingerprint. You have four crime scenes - Solano, Vallejo, Berryessa, and here. No usable prints at the first three or on the letters...

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE -- HOMICIDE UNIT -- DAY

The print man BILL HAMLET sits at a folding table with a magnifying glass, going through prints on 3X5 cards as Toschi and Armstrong look on, frustrated.

TOSCHI
How does our master criminal suddenly come to the city and leave a bloody latent? I mean, assuming the gloves are his, he shoots the cabbie, then takes them off?
73 INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE THIRD FLOOR -- DAY

GRAYSMITH
So it's not his print?

AVERY
Maybe, maybe not, but that's not the point. The first attack-

GRAYSMITH
David Farraday and Betty Lou Jensen.

AVERY
Both die, but from there on out, he only manages to kill the girls.

GRAYSMITH
Not for lack of trying.

74 INT. HALL OF JUSTICE -- HOMICIDE UNIT -- DAY

ARMSTRONG
Mageau lives, Ferrin dies. Hartnell lives, Shepard dies. He gets so caught up with the women, he forgets to finish off the men.

TOSCHI
Plus, they're all couples, all lovers lanes.

75 EXT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE THIRD FLOOR -- DAY

GRAYSMITH
Paul Stine's not...

AVERY
Exactly.

A beat. Graysmith getting it:

GRAYSMITH
A single male cab driver killed at Washington and Cherry doesn't fit.

AVERY
So why did Zodiac kill him?

76 INT. HALL OF JUSTICE -- HOMICIDE UNIT -- DAY

Toschi turns to Armstrong, realizing:

(CONTINUED)

TOSCHI
What?

ARMSTRONG (O.S.)
Someone claiming to be Zodiac called Oakland P.D. a half hour ago. He says he's gonna call in on Jim Dunbar's morning show. He wants either F. Lee Bailey or Melvin Belli on to counsel him.

TOSCHI
On television?

ARMSTRONG
In three hours.

TOSCHI
We better go wake up Melvin.

INT. TOSCHI'S CAR (MOVING) -- NIGHT

Toschi drives, Armstrong sits shotgun. Exhausted.

TOSCHI
Animal crackers?

ARMSTRONG
Glovebox.

A VOICE from the floor of the backseat:

BELLI (O.S.)
Are these windows bulletproof?

We realize Belli is already in the car, hiding in back.

TOSCHI
Yes, Melvin.

Armstrong gives him a look - Toschi shakes his head "no".

TOSCHI (CONT'D)
You don't have to lie on the floor.

(CONTINUED)
BELLI (O.S.)
This man is a marksman. He could
snuff me out at a moment’s notice.

ARMSTRONG
Are you sure you're up to this?

BELLI (O.S.)
Don't you worry, Inspector, I'll
be fine when the lights come on.
This man asked for my help.

TOSCHI
You mean the man you're worried
about snuffing you.

BELLI (O.S.)
What are these, cookies? Dear
Lord, man, do you ever clean this
car?

As they turn into the KGO TELEVISION PARKING LOT. The
entrance, swarming with REPORTERS.

TOSCHI
Shit.

BELLI (O.S.)
(panicked)
Good God, what?

ARMSTRONG
KGO must've tipped other stations.

FLASHBULBS go off as they pull up. Immediately, the
cheerfully rotund attorney with a foppish fashion sense pops
up from the floor, ready for the limelight.

INT. BACKSTAGE TELEVISION STUDIO -- MORNING

While Toschi speaks to the DIRECTOR in the glass control
booth, Armstrong stands briefing Belli and host JIM DUNBAR as
both are being miked up for the broadcast.

ARMSTRONG
Get him talking, convince him to
meet you somewhere. If you see an
opportunity, we want you to
suggest Old St. Mary's Church in
Chinatown.

DUNBAR
You'll be tracing the call?

(CONTINUED)
ARMSTRONG
Pacific Telephone says you have to
keep him on for fifteen minutes.

BELLI
We can do that, can't we Jim?

Dunbar doesn't look as convinced.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Sixty seconds! Clear the set!

INT. GRAYSMITH HOME -- MORNING
Graysmith and David, sitting. Graysmith, turning on the TV -
Flips the channel to the CHANNEL 7 - DUNBAR sits facing BELLI
and converses to the camera.

DUNBAR
Welcome to this special edition of
our show in which we're joined by
attorney Melvin Belli who the
Zodiac Killer personally requested
to appear...

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE THIRD FLOOR -- DAY
Avery and other reporters, in early to watch. Shorty sits
with them. Avery opens a pad, ready to write.

DUNBAR
So, the phone lines are open, Mr.
Belli is here-

BELLI
Here to help, Jim.

DUNBAR
Yes, here to help, and we ask the
public not to call in so that the
Zodiac himself can reach us...

INT. CONTROL BOOTH -- MORNING
Through the glass we see Belli and Dunbar chatter banally,
waiting for the call. Toschi, checking his watch. JOLTED
when the PHONE RINGS. The booth erupts.

TOSCHI
Roll the tape, get the tape-

A reel to reel tape recorder hooked to the phone is
activated. The DIRECTOR shushes them as in the studio...
INT. TELEVISION STUDIO -- MORNING

BELLI

Hello?

Silence.

BELLI (CONT'D)

Hello, this is Melvin Belli. Who am I speaking with?

Just the HISS of an open phone line. We pan through the booth. Everyone on the edge of their seats...

INT. GRAYSMITH HOME -- MORNING

Graysmith and David watching.

VOICE (O.S.)

This is the Zodiac speaking.

A chill goes up Graysmith's spine...

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO -- MORNING

BELLI

Is there something I can call you that's a little less ominous?

A long beat. Then:

VOICE (O.S.)

"Sam".

BELLI

Sam, is there somewhere we can meet and talk about this?

VOICE (O.S.)

Meet me on top of the Fairmont hotel. Without anyone else or I'll jump!

INT. CONTROL BOOTH -- MORNING

Toschi scoops up a phone. Speaking rapidly.

TOSCHI

I need a unit at the Fairmont Hotel...
87 INT. TELEVISION STUDIO -- MORNING

BELLI

Sam?

VOICE (O.S.)

Yes.

BELLI

Do you think you need medical care?

VOICE (O.S.)

Medical, not mental.

BELLI

Do you have health problems?

VOICE (O.S.)

I'm sick. I have headaches.

BELLI

I have headaches too, but a chiropractor stopped them a week ago. I think I can help you--

CLICK. "Sam" hangs up.

88 INT. GRAYSMITH APARTMENT -- MORNING

GRAYSMITH

He knows they're tracing his calls...

89 INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE THIRD FLOOR -- MORNING

Avery, scribbling, trying to get down every word.

DUNBAR (O.S.)

Sam, we'd like you to know that we are not tracing these calls. It's a long, difficult process and ineffective with these short calls--

The PHONE RINGS AGAIN.

90 INT. TELEVISION STUDIO -- MORNING

BELLI

Sam?

A beat.

(CONTINUED)
VOICE (O.S.)
Uh-huh?

BELLI
Sam, we're not tracing your calls.
Sam - You have my word.

Through the glass, Toschi gives him a thumbs-up.

VOICE (O.S.)
Okay.

BELLI
Sam, you need to tell me what your problem is.

91 INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE -- MORNING
Avery, Shorty, and the Reporters, watching.

VOICE
I don't want to go to the gas chamber. I have headaches. If I kill, I don't get them.

SHORTY
That's fucked up.

92 INT. TELEVISION STUDIO -- MORNING

BELLI
You want to live, don't you, Sam? Well this is your passport. How long have you been having these headaches?

VOICE (O.S.)
Since I killed a kid.

A beat as everyone takes this in.

BELLI
Do you have blackouts?

VOICE (O.S.)
Yes.

BELLI
Do you have fits?

VOICE (O.S.)
No. I just have headaches.
DUNBAR
Did you attempt to call one other
time when Mr. Bailey was with us
two or three weeks ago?

VOICE (O.S.)
Yes.

DUNBAR
Why did you want to talk to Mr.
Bailey-

BELLI
Why do you want to talk to me?

VOICE (O.S.)
I don't want to be hurt. I don't
want to go to the gas chamber.

BELLI
You're not going to be hurt if you
talk to me.

DUNBAR
You're not going to the gas chamber.

BELLI
I wouldn't think that they'd ask
for capital punishment. We should
ask the district attorney - you
want me to do that, Sam? You want
me to talk to the district
attorney?

Over the phone, we hear a SMALL SCREAM.

DUNBAR
(panicked)
What was that, Sam?

VOICE (O.S.)
I did not say anything.

BELLI
We heard a scream.

In a small voice:

VOICE (O.S.)
That was my headache.

BELLI
You sound like you're in a great
deal of pain-

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

VOICE (O.S.)
My head aches. I'm so sick...

Another SCREAM. Belli jumps this time.

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'm going to kill them! I'm going
to kill all those kids!

CLICK. Another hang up.

INT. GRAYSMITH HOME -- MORNING
Graysmith shuts off the TV. David, in a small voice:

DAVID
Do I have to go to school today?

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE -- MORNING
Avery looks down at his scribbled notes.

AVERY
I gotta file this.

He races out of the room....

INT. CONTROL BOOTH -- MORNING
Toschi exhales.

TOSCHI
Hell....

DUNBAR (O.S.)
Our lines are still open, Sam, and
we ask you to please call back...

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE -- AVERY'S OFFICE -- MORNING
INSERT - Avery, typing: POTENTIAL ZODIAC CALLS TELEVI-

HYMAN (O.S.)
Paul, he's back on!

Avery leaps up and books back to the TV to see...

BELLI (O.S.)
(on TV)
Sam, what do you want us to do?
INT. TELEVISION STUDIO -- MORNING

VOICE (O.S.)
I feel awful lonesomeness.

BELLI
We should meet and talk. Just us.

VOICE (O.S.)
Okay.

BELLI
How about Old St. Mary's Church in Chinatown?

VOICE (O.S.)
No, I pick. In front of the Daly City St. Vincent De Paul at 10:30.

BELLI
I'll see you there. Take care of yourself, Sam.

CLICK. He's gone.

INT. CONTROL BOOTH -- MORNING
Toschi scooping up the phone:

TOSCHI
I need an address in Daly City...

EXT. DALY CITY STREETS -- MORNING
A HUGE CONVOY of POLICE CARS scream through the streets. Following them are at least SIX NEWS VANS.

INT. TOSCHI'S CAR (MOVING) -- MORNING
Armstrong drives. Toschi sits shotgun.

TOSCHI
There is no way this guy shows.

They pull up to the St. Vincent De Paul. Getting out...
Cops everywhere. Helicopters circle. In the midst of it all is a smiling Belli. He looks to Toschi and Armstrong.

BELLI
You gents put on quite the secret meeting!

We PULL BACK from the scene to take in all the hub-bub...

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL BOOTH -- DAY

A REEL TO REEL TAPE - Playing back the television program. BRYAN HARTNELL, the survivor from Berryessa. Listening.

BRYAN
It's not him. Voice is too high, too young.

Toschi shuts off the tape.

TOSCHI
Thanks for coming down.

Bryan nods and gets to his feet. It's a slow, agonizing process because of his wounds. Armstrong goes to help...

BRYAN
I got it.

Armstrong steps back. Bryan finally manages to straighten up and grips a cane. He slowly hobbles out of the booth. Toschi watches him go. Pained. Once he's out of earshot:

ARMSTRONG
They pulled off the trace. Our Daly City no-show called from a mental institution.

Toschi snorts.

ARMSTRONG (CONT'D)
The operator from Oakland PD is sure the man who called her had a deeper voice. Calmer.
(pause)
Could've actually been him.
November 10, 1969. Graysmith, stepping off the elevator to find... The room is practically DESERTED. That can only mean one thing. He drops his briefcase and RUNS.

Headed for the Editorial Room. Rounds a corner to find it PACKED WITH PEOPLE. Theiriot's faint voice in the center:

THERIOT (O.S.)
...so I shall change my way of collecting slaves. I shall no longer announce to anyone when I commit my murders, they shall look like routine robberies, killings of anger and a few fake accidents, etcetera.

Graysmith politely tries to get through the throng towards the table. Not wanting to jostle anyone. ANOTHER REPORTER, whispering, filling Graysmith in:

THERIOT (O.S.) (CONT'D)  REPORTER
The police shall never catch me because I have been too clever for them. One - I look like the description passed out only when I do my thing, the rest of the time I look entirely different. I shall not tell you what my disguise consists of when I kill. Two - as of yet I have left no fingerprints behind contrary to what the police say about me, I wear transparent finger tips. All it is is two coats of airplane cement coated on my finger tips...

Graysmith reaches the table. Theiriot, ringed by Avery, Hyman, Peck, Toschi and Armstrong.

THERIOT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
...I enjoy needling the blue pigs. Hey, blue pig, I was in the park, you were using firetrucks to mask the sound of your cruising prowl cars.

Close on TOSCHI'S FACE.

(CONTINUED)
THEIRIOT (CONT'D)

Hey, pig, doesn't it rile you up to have your nose rubbed in your booboos? If you cops think I'm going to take on a bus the way I stated I was, you deserve to have holes in your heads-

(flips the page)

Oh, no.

TOSCHI

Let me see.

He takes the pages. One - a crudely sketched DIAGRAM. Toschi examines it as Armstrong takes the letter:

ARMSTRONG

Take one bag of ammonium nitrate fertilizer, and one gallon of stove oil, and dump a few bags of gravel on top- It's a bomb.

TOSCHI

Somebody needs to call the army and see if this Rube Goldberg contraption could actually work.

ARMSTRONG

Dave, take a look at this.

He's opened the dripping pen card to reveal - A HUGE NEW CIPHER. Avery blinks. Looks across the table to see Graysmith...

OMITTED

104

105

INT. MORTI'S -- NIGHT

Graysmith sits with Avery. Finally allowed in to the inner circle. On the table - whiskey for Avery and a HUGE BLUE UMBRELLA DRINK for Graysmith. As he sips it:

AVERY

So, tell me about yourself. You married?

GRAYSMITH

Divorced. Two kids.

AVERY

What do you do for fun?

(CONTINUED)
GRAYSMITH
Well... I like to read... I enjoy books...

AVERY
Those are the same things.
(leaning forward)
(MORE)
Graysmith doesn't respond. Looking guilty.

GRAYSMITH
I guessed.

AVERY
You guessed.

GRAYSMITH
The first code was too easy.

AVERY
This can no longer be ignored - what is this you're drinking?

GRAYSMITH
You wouldn't make fun of my drink if you tried it.

Avery, breaking. He takes the drink. Takes a sip and...

CUT TO:

GRAYSMITH AND AVERY - Later. Now both have huge blue drinks. Both buzzed now, the new code in front of them. He removes a vial of coke from his coat. Taps some into a dish. Rolling the tip of an unlit cigarette in it.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
Who actually cracked the code? A married couple who like puzzles. So what does that say about Zodiac?

AVERY
He's no expert.

GRAYSMITH
Right. The first one was just a substitution code like the kind we all did as Boy Scouts, A is 1, B is 2, and so on-

AVERY
We weren't all Boy Scouts.

Graysmith pulls a rumpled copy of the FIRST CIPHER from his pocket and spreads it out on the table.

(CONTINUED)
GRAYSMITH
It looks hard, but you just have to know where to start-

AVERY
You actually carry that around with you?

GRAYSMITH
Why?

AVERY
(smiling)
No reason.

GRAYSMITH
What is the most common double consonant in the English language?

AVERY
Consonant?

GRAYSMITH
The double L. And what's the one word we know Zodiac will use in here?

AVERY
"Kill".

GRAYSMITH
Exactly, so the Hardens start looking for double symbols which they find here, here, and here — each with the same two symbols preceding them. Now they've got a repeating four letter word ending with two symbols they assume stand for "L"—

AVERY
(getting into it)
And since they think the whole word is "Kill"—

GRAYSMITH
That gives them the symbols for "K" and "I". And they're on their way.

AVERY
So how does someone go from A is 1 and B is 2 to this?
GRAYSMITH
The same way I did. He goes to the library.

Graysmith opens his briefcase and pulls out a STACK of LIBRARY BOOKS. Holds up the first one.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
"The Codebreakers". In the preface, the author presents a simple substitution alphabet. 8 of the 26 symbols he suggests were in the first Zodiac cipher.

AVERY
What about other symbols? The medieval looking ones?

GRAYSMITH
I thought they looked medieval too. Then I found a cipher used during the Middle Ages in here. (pulls a second book) Guess what the cipher was called. The Zodiac Alphabet.

A beat. Avery takes the book. Looks at the page. The Zodiac Alphabet sits there, many symbols identical to the First Code. Avery, lights the cigarette. Taking Graysmith in.

AVERY
Jesus, kid... What do you want out of this?

GRAYSMITH
What? Nothing-

AVERY
What's your angle? This is good business for everyone but you.

GRAYSMITH
How can you call this business?

INT. TOSCHI'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Toschi, up late. Staring at the letter. Big band plays on the phonograph. He absently munches animal crackers as he rereads the lines over again:

What you do not know is whether the death machine is at the sight or whether it is being stored in my basement for future use

(CONTINUED)
TOSCHI'S WIFE
Come to bed.

He looks up at her. A beat.

TOSCHI
I have to make a call.

He picks up the phone and dials. She heads for the bedroom. On the other end, groggy:

ARMSTRONG (O.S.)
Hello?

TOSCHI
Not many people have basements in California-

ARMSTRONG (O.S.)
"Basement for future use", yeah. I'll have Vallejo and Napa check with their city planners. Get some sleep.

Toschi looks to the bedroom. Then back to the letter. No chance of that tonight.

EXT. MELVIN BELLI'S TOWNHOUSE -- NIGHT

December 29, 1969. Bleary eyed, Toschi and Armstrong climb the steps to Belli's richly appointed residence.

BELLI (V.O.)
(overly dramatic)
Dear Melvin, this... Is the Zodiac speaking.

INT. MELVIN BELLI'S TOWNHOUSE -- LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Close on Toschi and Armstrong, pad out, taking notes. Belli across from them, reading the newest ZODIAC LETTER.

BELLI
I wish you a happy Christmass.
The one thing I ask of you is this, please help me. I cannot reach out for help because this thing in me won't let me.

WIDEN to show that Belli has called the police there in the middle of a DINNER PARTY. The hoi palloi of San Francisco stand behind Toschi and Armstrong, gasping at Belli's dramatic reading of the letter he just received.

(CONTINUED)
Belli pauses as his HOUSEKEEPER delivers a hot toddy.

BELLI (CONT'D)

Thank you.
(clears his throat)
I am finding it extremely difficult
to hold it in check I am afraid I
will lose control again and take
my ninth & possibly tenth victim

SOCIETY WOMAN
Melvin, he's reaching out to you!

ARMSTRONG
Poor fellow.

BELLI
Inspectors, he sent the letter
directly to my residence instead
of the papers. It's a cry for
help, intended as a private
communique.

TOSCHI
Which is why you contacted the
press.

BELLI
The people have a right to know.
(offering)
Toddy?

ARMSTRONG
When did the letter arrive?

BELLI
In the last week. I was away for
the holiday, on safari. What did
you gentlemen do for Christmas?

TOSCHI
You're looking at it.

BELLI
You must see Africa. The cradle
of civilization. Fascinating

Murmurs of agreement from the partygoers.

ARMSTRONG
Back to the killer who wrote you?

(CONTINUED)
BELLI
Yes, of course. It's my belief he only penned this letter because he couldn't get through to me on the Dunbar show or here.

TOSCHI
He called here?

BELLI
Several times. I was out, but he spoke with my housekeeper. Didn't leave a number.

ARMSTRONG
He's crafty like that. Mind if I ask her some questions?

BELLI
Not at all, though the real story is the letter.

ARMSTRONG
I'll be back.

He exits to go look for the housekeeper. Belli, focusing his attention on Toschi.

BELLI
This is a window into this man's soul. Killing is his compulsion - though he tries to ignore it, it drives him. It's in his blood.

TOSCHI
Could be. Or maybe he just likes attention.

EXT. HIGHWAY 132 -- NIGHT
March 22, 1970. Outside Modesto. Late. A lone duster of a SEDAN rattles down the highway, the only car in sight.

INT. SEDAN (MOVING) -- NIGHT
KATHLEEN JOHNS at the wheel. Sweet face, 30's. Changes lanes. From nowhere, HEADLIGHTS are suddenly behind her. Kathleen signals. Changing lanes so the HEADLIGHTS can pass. They don't. They pull up behind her. FLASHING NOW. Kathleen keeps driving. The other driver becomes more insistent. HONKING. Motioning for her to pull over. Finally she does. Pulling to a halt on the SHOULDER of the road. The other car pulls in behind her.

(CONTINUED)
And as it does, we TILT to see... Kathleen's SLEEPING BABY on the seat next to her. A MAN walks up. WE DON'T SEE HIS FACE. Kathleen, nervous. Thinking maybe this wasn't the best idea. She reaches to put the car back in gear when:

THE MAN (O.S.) (apologetic)
I hope I didn't scare you. Your right wheel is loose.

Kathleen relaxes. Feeling dumb for being scared.

KATHLEEN
Really?

THE MAN (O.S.)
I could tighten the lugs for you.

KATHLEEN
Would you?

THE MAN (O.S.)
Can't be too careful.

He goes back to his car and retrieves a LUG WRENCH. Kneels down behind her back tire, out of sight. He's down there a long time. Kathleen checks her rearview. Can't see him. Just as she's getting nervous again....

THE MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
All done.

She turns, he's STANDING by the passenger door.

KATHLEEN
Thank you.

THE MAN (O.S.)
No problem. Have a good night.

He walks away. Kathleen, watching him go back to his own car. He gets behind the wheel. Starts back up. Headlights on. Puts the car in gear. Pulls back onto the highway.

Passing her. She watches his tail lights go. She puts her own car in drive and pulls out...

She only gets fifty yards when her RIGHT WHEEL CRUNCHES OFF the axle in a SHOWER OF SPARKS! The baby, waking, CRYING... Kathleen fights for control, wrenching the wheel right, managing to pilot it to the shoulder. Kathleen, breathing hard. Picks up her baby. Trying to quiet him. Through the windshield, we see THE MAN'S CAR SLOWLY PULL A U-TURN.

(CONTINUED)
The headlights, coming back. She's too involved with baby to notice until:

THE MAN (O.S.)(CONT'D)
Are you okay?

She JUMPS at his voice. He's pulled alongside her.

KATHLEEN
Yeah, I- Yeah.

THE MAN (O.S.)
Must've been worse than I thought.
I could give you a lift to a service station.

Kathleen looks back to her tire. Makes a decision. Gathers up her baby and gets out of the car.

THE MAN (O.S.)(CONT'D)
I didn't know you had a baby.

Kathleen stops.

KATHLEEN
Is that a problem?

A long beat...

THE MAN (O.S.)
The more the merrier.

Trash everywhere. Kathleen slides into the passenger seat. Her baby on her lap. They pull onto the highway. Riding in silence. Quite fast. The baby, crying. Kathleen uncomfortable. She lights a cigarette. Smokes a little. Still the man doesn't speak. She stubs the butt out nervously.

Finally sees a GAS STATION coming up. Relieved. But the Man doesn't slow down. THEY PASS IT.

KATHLEEN
I think you passed a gas station.

THE MAN
It was closed.

She looks at him. Tries to regroup. They're SPEEDING UP. Doing near 70. The Man CRANKS DOWN his WINDOW. Howling air fills the car. Kathleen's Baby WHINES at the cold.

(CONTINUED)
KATHLEEN
Shhhhhh. It's okay. Mommy's here.

The Man looks over at her.

THE MAN
Before I kill you, I'm going to throw your baby out the window.

Kathleen blinks. Did he just say...

CUT TO:

INT. WOMAN'S CAR (MOVING) -- LATER

A WOMAN drives Highway 132. Listening to music. A BIG RIG, stopped ahead. The DRIVER in the middle of the road PLEADING with a HYSTERICAL WOMAN. She pulls over...

EXT. HIGHWAY 132 -- NIGHT

The Woman gets out of her car. Before she can even ask

TRUCK DRIVER
She was on the side of the road!

The hysterical woman is KATHLEEN and she's SCREAMING BLOODY MURDER. Face cut bloody from jumping from the car. Gravel in her hair. And no baby in sight.

WOMAN
What happened? What he do to you?

TRUCK DRIVER
I didn't do nothing, lady! I found her like this-

Kathleen, gasping and weeping as she tries to form words

KATHLEEN
Muh-muh-muh-

WOMAN
What? What is it? It'll be okay-

KATHLEEN
(through sobs)
He said- my baby-

WOMAN
Your baby?
(to the Driver)
Where's her baby?

(CONTINUED)
Still weeping, Kathleen turns and begins to STUMBLE AWAY from them. Heading for the side of the road. The Driver pales.

TRUCK DRIVER
Oh, Jesus...

The Woman, following her and we do to, as Kathleen slides down the embankment and pushes some tall grass aside and - Her baby lies there. Perfectly fine. Safe. Alive.

WOMAN
You hid him?

KATHLEEN
In- In case he came back...

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE -- MORNING
April 20, 1970.

TOSCHI (V.O.)
This is the Zodiac speaking...

Toschi and Armstrong, getting out of their car. Walking toward the Chronicle's entrance...

TOSCHI (V.O.)(CONT'D)
By the way have you cracked the last cipher I sent you?

As they push through the FRONT DOORS...

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE LOBBY -- MORNING
April 28, 1970. MATCH TO - Toschi and Armstrong entering the lobby. WEARING DIFFERENT CLOTHES. A different day.

ARMSTRONG (V.O.)
This is the Zodiac speaking...

They step into the elevator...

ARMSTRONG (V.O.)(CONT'D)
I would like to see some nice
Zodiac buttons wandering about
town...

The elevator doors close - DING!

AVERY (V.O.)
This is the Zodiac speaking...

Walking briskly to the Editorial Room...

AVERY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I shot a man sitting in a parked car with a .38.

As Graysmith watches, they close the door.

GRAYSMITH (V.O.)
This is the Zodiac speaking...

July 24, 1970. Graysmith reading a copy of the newest letter aloud:

GRAYSMITH
So now I have a little list, beginning with the woman and her baby that I gave a rather interesting ride for a couple hours one evening a few months back that ended in my burning her car where I found them—

(puts down the letter)
We're really not going to run anymore of his letters?

He looks over to Avery who slugs back a shot. Quite drunk.

AVERY
Our brothers in blue want us to hold off. To see how he "reacts".

GRAYSMITH
Four letters in three months and he doesn't mention Kathleen Johns till now...

AVERY
That's because he's full of shit.

GRAYSMITH
What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)
AVERY

You don't know?

He gets to his feet. Unsteady.

AVERY (CONT'D)

I'll show you.

118 INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE -- ARCHIVES -- NIGHT

Dark. The stacks, deserted. Keys in the door. Lights come on. Avery weaves into the room, leading Graysmith.

GRAYSMITH

I don't think we're supposed to be in here-

AVERY

That's why I have keys, Robert. I am a man with keys. Pull the Modesto Bee from March for me. I'm gonna sit and smoke.

Graysmith goes. Avery, true to his word, sits and lights up. Graysmith's voice, from the stacks:

GRAYSMITH (O.S.)

What am I looking for!

AVERY

Kathleen Johns! Also, grab the Chron from— Never mind, I'll find it!

TIME CUT TO:

118A BOOM! Avery drops a copy of the Chronicle on the table next to the Modesto Bee.

AVERY

Okay, look at the letter again. The part about Kathleen Johns. What facts does he give?

GRAYSMITH

Woman and her baby abducted... car set on fire...

AVERY

Now read the article from the Bee.

Graysmith begins reading an article entitled "WOMAN ESCAPES FROM ZODIAC".

(CONTINUED)
AVERY (CONT'D)
Seeing it yet?

GRAYSMITH
Everything in the letter was already printed in the paper.

AVERY
He's done it before.

Holds up the Chronicle. A FRONT PAGE STORY about a police officer shooting.

AVERY (CONT'D)
Officer Richard Radietch, shot sitting in his car.

GRAYSMITH
Zodiac said he shot someone in their car-

AVERY
Couple days after this article came out. Police already have somebody in custody. Zodiac didn't do it, but he took credit anyway. He's in it for the press. (drunken grin)
He's constructing an image. Shit, he even stole his symbol.

GRAYSMITH
What?

On Avery. Realizing he might have said too much.

AVERY
If I tell you something, will you promise not to tell anyone else?

GRAYSMITH
Who am I going to tell?

AVERY
Totally solid point. Okay.

He pulls a piece of paper from his pocket and hands it to Graysmith, who unfolds it.

GRAYSMITH
It's a magazine ad for a watch-

(CONTINUED)
AVERY
A Zodiac watch. Look at the face.

Graysmith does. And right in the center of the watch face is the GUNSLIGHT ZODIAC SYMBOL.

GRAYSMITH
Oh, my goodness...

AVERY
That's right. I think it's only place that word and that symbol have ever appeared together before the letters. Guy stole his logo off a watch.

GRAYSMITH
Why would someone who's killed thirteen people do that?

AVERY
Claims he's killed thirteen people. But which ones can we actually confirm? The three in Vallejo, the one at Berryessa, the cabbie and that's it.

(off his look)
Bobby... you almost look disappointed.

INT. TOSCHI'S CAR -- NIGHT

October 11, 1970. TOSCHI and ARMSTRONG. Sitting. We don't know where. Toschi munches animal crackers.

ARMSTRONG
Chief's pulling everyone off the buses. Business as usual.

TOSCHI
Something will shake loose.

ARMSTRONG
Not a peep in four months. First he can't shut up and now...

TOSCHI
Maybe we drove him underground.

ARMSTRONG
Maybe he's gone.

Toschi reaches down for another cracker. The box is empty.

(CONTINUED)
TOSCHI
Happy Birthday.

ARMSTRONG
Thanks.

Toschi puts the car in drive...

EXT. WASHINGTON AND CHERRY -- NIGHT
...and we realize they've been sitting vigil at the Stine scene. We hold on the corner as the two men drive away.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE THIRD FLOOR -- MORNING

October 28, 1970. Graysmith in a chipper mood, buying a cup of coffee from SHORTY.

GRAYSMITH
Does it ever bother you that people call you "Shorty"?

SHORTY
Does it ever bother you that people call you "retard"?

GRAYSMITH
Nobody calls me that.

Shorty just stares at him. Confused, Graysmith walks over to Avery, who's sorting through his MAIL and watching the TV on the wall, which plays a PRESS CONFERENCE.

CANDIDATE
(on TV)
I believe some clues were overlooked in the murder of Darlene Ferrin...

GRAYSMITH
Who's that?

AVERY
Florence Douglas, mayor of Vallejo. She's running for governor.

He opens one letter. Bill. Tosses it.

CANDIDATE (O.S.)
In the last year we have received ten pieces of correspondence from the Zodiac, and still are no closer as to his identity...

(CONTINUED)
AVERY
And sayonara police endorsement!
Good work, Flo.


GRAYSMITH
Does anybody ever call me names?

AVERY
You mean like retard?

GRAYSMITH
Yeah.

AVERY
No.

Another letter. Opens it. He STOPS COLD. Graysmith doesn't notice. Still watching the television.

AVERY (CONT'D)
Oh, my God...

The sound of all Avery's letters, FALLING TO THE FLOOR. Graysmith turns to see... A BLOODY PIECE OF PAUL STINE'S SHIRT. Fallen from an envelope that bears Avery's name.

AVERY (CONT'D)
I touched it...

INT. EDITORIAL ROOM -- MORNING

Avery, Toschi, Armstrong, Peck, and Hyman sit, a GREETING CARD between them. SKELETON on the front.

HYMAN
Paul, we didn't run his last letters. You wrote the bulk of the Zodiac articles. It's only natural for him to get frustrated and try and communicate with you-

AVERY
Fuck "communicate" Read that.

The front reads: FROM YOUR SECRET PAL.

Below that is a printed verse. Toschi reads aloud:

(CONTINUED)
TOSCHI
I feel it in my bones, you ache to
know my name, and so I'll clue you
in...

Uses the tweezers to open the card. Finishing the rhyme:

TOSCHI (CONT'D)
...But then why spoil our game!
Boo!  Happy Halloween!

Inside the card - another skeleton, pasted from a different
card and sketches of EYES PEERING OUT. Below that:

PEEK-A-BOO - YOU ARE DOOMED! 4-TEEN

Silence as they stare at it.

TOSCHI (CONT'D)
Didn't you call him a "latent
homosexual" in one of your
articles?

Avery raps his fist on the table.

AVERY
I want a gun.

INT. GUN RANGE -- DAY

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! On a target as the bullets miss it
completely. Avery finishes emptying a HUGE GUN. Graysmith,
stands next to him, holding a newspaper. Reading aloud:

GRAYSMITH
"...Paul Avery's investigation has
earned him a message from the
Zodiac himself warning - "You are
Doomed". As a result, several
Chron Newsman are wearing lapel
buttons reading I Am Not Paul
Avery'".

Graysmith lowers the paper. Revealing HE WEARS ONE OF THE
BUTTONS. Avery lowers his gun and we see he WEARS ONE TOO.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
You should really be selling
these.

(CONTINUED)
AVERY
(reloading)
It's been a windfall since they published the threat on my life. This one guy won't stop writing. I'm gonna meet him tonight down south in "Riverside". You want to tag along?

GRAYSMITH
Tonight? I kind of have a date.

Avery raises his eyebrows, reloading.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
Who's this tipster?

AVERY
He wishes to remain anonymous. I, of course, wish to remain infamous, so we're gonna get along great.

He turns and UNLOADS THE GUN again. DEAFENING.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREETS -- EVENING -- (RAIN)

Using a newspaper as an umbrella, Graysmith hurries through a light rain to a RESTAURANT. Late for his date...

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT -- EVENING -- (RAIN)

Graysmith enters, soaked. Late. Fumbles his way up to the table where his date is sipping wine. Her name is MELANIE.

GRAYSMITH
You must be Melanie.

MELANIE
Which would make you Robert.

GRAYSMITH
It would. Glynnis told me a lot about you- Oh, good, you already have wine.

MELANIE
I do.

GRAYSMITH
I'm so sorry, how late am I-
MELANIE
Just a few minutes. I only just
got here-

He knocks over a GLASS. Grabs a napkin, dabs up the spill.

GRAYSMITH
Sorry - I mean, good. Traffic was
terrible, I was at a gun range.

MELANIE
Glynnis said you were a
cartoonist, what were you doing at
a gun range?

GRAYSMITH
Reading. I think I need more
napkins-
    (as he sits)
So, you work with Glynnis?

MELANIE
For her, actually.

GRAYSMITH
She seems very nice but my kids
are afraid of her-

MELANIE
Me too. So, the gun range?

GRAYSMITH
I'm kind of helping out on - you
know the Zodiac?

MELANIE
Yeah.

GRAYSMITH
Do you know who Paul Avery is?

MELANIE
Why does that sound familiar?

GRAYSMITH
He's the writer Zodiac threatened.

MELANIE
Yes, I saw that on TV.

GRAYSMITH
Well, I work near him - he's
following a lead tonight.
    (MORE)

(CONTINUED)
He went down to Riverside to meet an anonymous tipster. Where is Riverside?

MELANIE
I think it's near L.A.

GRAYSMITH
You know, I don't think he knows it's that far.

She laughs. He smiles.

MELANIE
It sounds dangerous.

GRAYSMITH
Yeah. What do you mean?

MELANIE
Well, it's an anonymous tip, right?

GRAYSMITH
Yes...

MELANIE
So it could be an ambush. It could be Zodiac. Seems kind of stupid.

GRAYSMITH
Yes, well... Paul has a gun.

MELANIE
Oh. Okay.

A beat. Melanie picks up her menu.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
So, what's good here?

GRAYSMITH
(looking around)
Uhhh, I've never been here before. The spaghetti?

A WAITER appears.

WAITER
Are you ready to order?
MELANIE
Yes... I'll have the penne vodka, but could you do it in a cream sauce?

WAITER
Of course. And you, sir?

She looks - he hasn't picked up his menu. Preoccupied.

MELANIE
(to the waiter)
Could you give us another minute?

The Waiter departs. Instead of looking at the menu, Graysmith begins searching his pockets.

GRAYSMITH
You don't have any change, do you?
I don't have any- Wait.
(pulls a coin out)
No, that's a penny.

MELANIE
Do you need to make a phone call?

GRAYSMITH
Well, when you said it was dangerous - I started thinking that's true, it is dangerous-

MELANIE
And stupid.

GRAYSMITH
So stupid, that's right. I want to call his wife to see if she's heard from him.

Melanie stares at him. She picks up her purse.

MELANIE
I have change.
Graysmith and Melanie, huddled half in and out of a phone booth. Soaked as Graysmith feeds coins into the phone. Then dials. Rotary. It's taking forever.

GRAYSMITH

Sorry. I'm sorry. It would be so much easier if we had wrist radios, wouldn't it?

MELANIE

I don't quite know how to answer that, Robert.

He finishes dialing. Finally:

GRAYSMITH

It's ringing. Hello? Mrs. Avery? Oh, Ms. St. James. But you are married to Paul Avery? Good. Oh, sorry, this is Robert Graysmith, from the Chronicle. Is everything all right?

(pause)

Well, no, of course everything should be all right. I didn't mean that it wasn't, I meant- I'm sure you're fine, everyone's fine. But, have you heard from Paul?

(pause)

I didn't mean you should have heard from him- No, it's not a bad thing, I just wanted to make sure he's, you know... alive.

He winces at the response he gets...

Avery pulls up to a curb. Across the street, a fenced off old CAR WASH. He rechecks the address. This is it. He shuts the engine and gets out of the car. Crosses the street. Hops the fence. Approaching the dark building...

avery

Hello?

Graysmith, hanging up the phone. He turns to Melanie.
GRAYSMITH
She'll call when she hears from him.

MELANIE
Good.

GRAYSMITH
(can't believe it)
I actually have to go home. To wait for the call.

Melanie stares at him.

MELANIE
Is this some sleazy plan to get me to come back to your place?

GRAYSMITH
Oh, my goodness, no, I'm sorry-

MELANIE
I'll get the food to go.

EXT. ABANDONED CAR WASH -- NIGHT -- (RAIN)


AVERY
Hello? I'm supposed to meet someone?

No reply. Avery steps back. Collecting himself. He walks around the building. Comes to the car entrance.

AVERY (CONT'D)
Hello? Is anyone in there?

No response. Avery takes a few tentative steps in.

AVERY (CONT'D)
I got your letter?

Still nothing. He fumbles out his gun. Waving it around in a terrible parody of a cop. More steps in.

AVERY (CONT'D)
I have a gun!

MOVEMENT behind him. He whips around and points the shaky gun at A MAN STANDING THERE. An awkward moment.
AVERY (CONT'D)
Hi. Paul Avery.

VOICE (O.S.)
That's not what your button says...

INT. GRAYSMITH HOME -- DAWN
Graysmith, phone by his side. Up all night. Melanie curled up on the couch, still in her dress. She blinks awake.

MELANIE
Anything?

GRAYSMITH
No. You don't have to stay-

MELANIE
Are you kidding? This is the most interesting date I've ever had-

THE PHONE RINGS. Graysmith, snatching it up:

GRAYSMITH
Paul?

INT. QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS -- MORNING
Avery on the pay phone in the hallway. Through a door, we see SHERWOOD MОРРIpll examining something...

AVERY
You're not gonna believe this...

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE -- HOMICIDE UNIT -- MORNING
Toschi entering to find the place in an uproar - phones ringing off the hook. Glares from other cops.

TOSCHI
What the hell is this?

ARMSTRONG (O.S.)
Dave, in here!

Toschi looks - the voice came from
Toschi finds Captain Lee and Armstrong watching a MORNING NEWSCAST on Lee's small portable black and white TV:

NEWSCASTER
(on TV)
...in a bizarre twist, the hunted has become hunter. Chronicle Reporter and Zodiac target Paul Avery claims to have uncovered new information regarding the only unsolved homicide in Riverside County's history - a 1966 Southern California murder that Avery now believes was the Zodiac's first victim.

TOSCHI
What?

CAPTAIN LEE
He didn't call you about this?

ARMSTRONG
(pointing at TV)
Hang on.

Now showing FOOTAGE of an INTERVIEW with Avery:

AVERY
(on TV)
The Riverside killer wrote to the press letters that I took personally to the Office of Questioned Documents.

INTERVIEWER
(on TV)
And what did this expert tell you?

AVERY
(on TV)
What I knew in my gut, Ron. The handwriting matches Zodiac's...

ARMSTRONG
How'd he get the evidence out of Riverside?

TOSCHI
He took it to Sherwood without telling us, that son of a bitch...

(CONTINUED)
Lee goes over and turns off the television.

CAPTAIN LEE
You know how bad this looks?

TOSCHI
We don't know how real the lead is-

ARMSTRONG
It's very real. You know how I know? Because I saw it on TV.

Silence. They know he's right.

CAPTAIN LEE
Get on a plane, but keep it quiet. If it hits the press you're meeting in Riverside, it automatically confirms Avery's story, right or wrong.

INT. PLANE -- DAY

November 16, 1970. Toschi finding his seat next to Narlow and MEL NICOLAI.

NARLOW
Dave, you know Mel Nicolai, he's working the case for Justice?

TOSCHI
Good to see you, Mel.

NICOLAI
All due respect, can someone explain to me why I'm reading about breaks in this case in the Chronicle instead of getting calls from you?

TOSCHI
They screwed us.

NARLOW
Dave, you do get your name in the paper a lot. People talk.

TOSCHI
I don't talk about open investigations period, Ken.

PILOT (O.S.)
Please prepare for departure...

(CONTINUED)
Toschi leans back in his seat when a passing passenger claps him on the shoulder. AVERY, grinning:

AVERY
Dave!

Narlow and Nicolai look on in disbelief.

AVERY (CONT'D)
Paul Avery, good to meet you, Paul Avery. Can I catch a ride with you gents when we land?

TOSCHI
Not a good idea, Paul.

AVERY
I gotta take a cab? We're going to the same place-
(off Toschi's look)
Fair enough, fair enough.

He heads a few rows back to his seat as Narlow and Nicolai stare daggers at Toschi...

INT. RIVERSIDE POLICE STATION -- DAY

Toschi, Narlow, and Nicolai shuffle into CAPTAIN IRV CROSS's office. Toschi, extending a hand.

TOSCHI
Thanks for seeing us, Captain.

CAPTAIN CROSS
Not at all. You have some files for us?

TOSCHI
I'll show you mine you show me yours.

TIME CUT TO:

Cross's desk, littered with files. He reads from his Murder Book, by rote:

CAPTAIN CROSS
Cheri Jo Bates attended Riverside Community College.

(MORE)
CAPTAIN CROSS (CONT'D)
Studying in the library the night of October 30, 1966, left with an unidentified male at closing - 9 P.M., body was found the next morning in the parking lot stabbed to death. Her car was disabled, someone pulled the distributor coil which caused the battery to die. The suspect shows up, offers to help-

NARLOW
Like Kathleen Johns?

CAPTAIN CROSS
Who?

NARLOW
A woman outside of Modesto, might be a Zodiac victim-

TOSCHI
Might be. Her account's in, uhhhh, this file.

He taps one of the many on Cross's desk.

CAPTAIN CROSS
Okay - A typewritten confession was sent to the Riverside Press Enterprise November 29th, a month after Bates' murder. They ran it.

He hands them copies. Narlow, reading:

NARLOW
"I am not sick, I am insane, but that will not stop the game. This letter should be published for all to read"- He wants to publish, he calls it a game, sounds like our boy.

CAPTAIN CROSS
Six months later, the police, the girl's father, and the paper all received these.

He slides them a second letter, this one handscrawled:

BATES HAD TO DIE
THERE WILL BE MORE
2

TOSCHI
Double postage, like Zodiac.

(CONTINUED)
NICOLAI
These are what Sherwood Morrill
matched to the Zodiac letters?

CAPTAIN CROSS
These and the desktop. Don?

A Riverside Officer enters, carrying a small LIBRARY DESK.

CAPTAIN CROSS (CONT'D)
This was found a couple months
later in library storage.

The cops crowd around it. The poem, carved into wood.

Sick of living/ unwilling to die
cut. Clean. If red/
clean. Blood spurting
dripping

Spilling;

All over her new
dress. Oh well,
it was red
anyway.
Life draining into an
uncertain death. She won't
die.
This time. Someone ll find her
just wait till
next time.

Rh

NICOLAI
Sherwood got a handwriting match
off wood? Nobody carves in their
true handwriting.

CAPTAIN CROSS
Also, our letters and your
letters, they don't bear much
resemblance.

He puts "Bates had to Die" next to the Paul Stine letter.

NARLOW
How did Paul Avery get the
exemplars to give to Sherwood?
CAPTAIN CROSS
I gave them to him. We spoke at length, and I told him we were meeting today.

TOSCHI
You told him?

CAPTAIN CROSS
Yes. I also told him we don't think this was Zodiac.

Toschi blinks.

TOSCHI
Wait a minute-

CAPTAIN CROSS
We have a guy we like for it. Don't have enough to make it stick yet, but we're pretty sure it's him.

TOSCHI
If you don't think it's Zodiac, why did you give anything to Avery?

CAPTAIN CROSS
I'm trying to cooperate-

TOSCHI
By giving information to reporters?

NARLOW
(trying to defuse)
Look, I don't know from handwriting but Sherwood says it's a match, right? So maybe your guy did Cheri Jo, typed the confession, Zodiac saw it in the paper and wrote the letter to take credit. He's done that before.

CAPTAIN CROSS
Look, you now have everything we have, but in my opinion? You all came south for nothing.
NICOLAI
FUBAR, gentlemen. FUBAR.

NARLOW
I don't care what he says, this could still be Z.

TOSCHI
Problem is, the entire state already thinks it is.

Narlow spies AVERY across the street, waiting for them.

NARLOW
Why don't you complain to your press agent?

As Avery approaches, Narlow and Nicolai take off. Toschi deliberately moves in the other direction.

TOSCHI
Really don't want to talk to you right now, Paul-

AVERY
Dave, just a few questions-

TOSCHI
Not now.

AVERY
It's news. I'm doing my job-

TOSCHI
Well, now I can't do my job, Paul. We're already screwed with the amount of tips we get and you just freaked out the entire state!

TOSCHI (CONT'D)
I've got Vallejo, Napa, and DOJ looking at me sideways, Riverside telling me I'm on a snipe hunt and-

(Continued)
TOSCHI
This may not be Zodiac. Does that matter to you? Does it matter that Riverside may not be able to make a case against their suspect?

AVERY
Tell that to Sherwood! I'm beating the bushes, trying to draw him out! We're in this together-

TOSCHI
No, we're not in this together because I'm not worried about upping my circulation!

AVERY
He wrote me! He threatened my life!

TOSCHI
Paul-

AVERY
It's been a year and a half, Bullit, are gonna catch this fucking guy or not?

Silence. Toschi, mad enough to spit.

TOSCHI
Fuck yourself Paul. You should've called me.

He stalks away. Leaving Avery to pick up his pad.

OMITTED

INT. GRAYSMITH APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -- MORNING

Graysmith, reading the morning paper - "ZODIAC RIVERSIDE CONNECTION CONFIRMED - by Paul Avery". He takes out a pair of scissors and begins clipping it for his files...

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE -- HOMICIDE UNIT -- MORNING

Toschi, sitting with the same paper. The PHONES all around RINGING OFF THE HOOK. Armstrong, across from him.

ARMSTRONG
Here comes Southern California...
An exhausted Toschi sits across from an INFORMANT. The latest in a countless string of interviews.

INFORMANT 1
I think my mailman is the Zodiac Killer...

We begin a series of CUTS - DIFFERENT INFORMANTS, different locations - talking to either Toschi or Armstrong:

INFORMANT 2
...told me her father was the Zodiac, I'd just finished porking her, women don't lie then...

OVERLAPPING - TO TOSCHI IN A LIVING ROOM:

INFORMANT 3
...found a note on my car saying "Zodiac is coming for you"...

OVERLAPPING - NOW TO ARMSTRONG IN A DINER:

INFORMANT 4
...he's on the pot - you found pot on the letters, right...

OVERLAPPING - TO TOSCHI AT THE PRECINCT:

INFORMANT 5
...I tried telling the LAPD but they just won't listen!

OVERLAPPING - TO ARMSTRONG OVER THE PHONE:

INFORMANT 6
...he's killing geographically, cutting a big "Z" across the state.

Armstrong writing - Giant Z on a notepad, and as the VOICES CONTINUE, we see OTHER PADS fill up with words like - Landlord, Radians, Binary, Witchcraft, Semaphore, and Manson and TELEPHONE NUMBERS and NAMES and more numbers and more names and the voices grow and grow and grow and grow and the word Torrance is written on a pad and finally:

(CONTINUED)
INFORMANT 7 (O.S.)
He said his favorite book was "The Most Dangerous Game".

Armstrong looks up, interested for the first time. We're in

INT. SCIENCE DYNAMICS BUILDING -- DAY

July 26, 1971 - Torrance, California. Armstrong sits with DON CHENEY and SANDY PANZARELLA.

PANZARELLA
We were roommates with Leigh's brother in college and Leigh would come down sometimes. Then- Tell him about the conversation-

CHENEY
New Year's Day, 68. I go over to Leigh's house. He'd been out of work a couple months.

ARMSTRONG
What did he do?

CHENEY
He was a teacher. Lost his job over "politics" or something.

Teacher - fired? goes onto the pad below New Year's 68.

CHENEY (CONT'D)
He was drinkin' Coors, getting a load on. Starts talking about hunting people, like that book. Says how you can put a light on a gun to use as a sight in the dark-

ARMSTRONG
He said that?

CHENEY
Yeah. So I ask him, "How would you get away with it?" He says it'd be easy, cause there'd be no real motive to the thing. Then he says he'd write letters to the police and call himself Zodiac to mess with 'em.

PANZARELLA
Leigh liked messing with people.

(CONTINUED)
ARMSTRONG
You're sure it was "Zodiac"?

CHENEY
Yeah, I thought it was a stupid name. So I told him. He gets all upset and says "I don't care what you think, I thought about it a long time, and that's the name I'm gonna use."

ARMSTRONG
He'd been thinking about it a long time.

CHENEY
He was raw about losing his job at the school. Talked about shooting out the tires of a school bus and picking off the "little darlings".

ARMSTRONG
He used those words?

CHENEY
That's what made me remember. Afterwards I told my wife I didn't wanna see him again and I haven't since. Other thing is, Leigh's into skindiving. I know he's been up to that lake a bunch of times, the one in Napa-

ARMSTRONG
Berryessa. Did you ever go with him?

CHENEY
Couple times we went fishing by Putah Creek near there.

PANZARELLA
Tell him when you put it together.

CHENEY
About a year ago in the paper, there was a story about the Zodiac, and it all comes back. I tried to call the local cops-

PANZARELLA
They blew him off. Thought he was a nut.

(CONTINUED)
CHENEY
So I said forget it. But then I
told Sandy about it-

PANZARELLA
I made him call Manhattan Beach
P.D. I got a friend there I knew
would take it seriously.

ARMSTRONG
And you're sure your conversation
about Zodiac happened on the first
day of 1968?

CHENEY
Couldn't have been any later cause
I started a new job in LA on
January 20th. I had to move.

149 INT. HALL OF JUSTICE -- HALLWAY -- DAY

Toschi and Armstrong, passing cops, walking and talking.

TOSCHI
Here's the problem. This guy...

ARMSTRONG
Arthur Leigh Allen.

TOSCHI
This guy Allen, he just lays out
his entire evil plan to a fishing
buddy on New Year's Day?

ARMSTRONG
I don't know. He's angry, he's
drinking, he's been thinking about
it for awhile... I can buy that.

TOSCHI
Why didn't Cheney come to us sooner?

ARMSTRONG
I checked, he tried. First
recorded contact with a PD about
Allen was in Pomona, January 10th,
1970. He got lost in the shuffle.

TOSCHI
Does Cheney have anything against
Allen - did Allen screw his wife
or something?

(CONTINUED)
ARMSTRONG
We'll do a full background, but I gotta tell you - I like this guy.

Toschi pauses in the door to the Homicide Unit.

TOSCHI
Let's try and pull handwriting...

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE -- HOMICIDE UNIT -- DAY

Armstrong, on the phone with NICOLAI. INTERCUT:

ARMSTRONG
He was a public school teacher, they should still have a record of his application, right?

NICOLAI
Yeah. What school?

ARMSTRONG
(checks notes)
Valley Springs. Also, he may have been in the Navy which matches up with the boots thing.

NICOLAI
I'll see what I can get for you. You throw a heads-up to Mulanax?

ARMSTRONG
I was about to.

NICOLAI
Have him check Vallejo banks, if Allen's got an account they should have check stubs.

INT. DINER -- AFTERNOON

Armstrong, having lunch. Toschi enters and takes a seat.

TOSCHI
Sherwood called, he got the samples.  
   (re: sandwich)
   Is that pastrami?

Armstrong tears off half and hands it to him.

(CONTINUED)
TOSCHI (CONT'D)
Check stubs are a wash, cause there's so little writing on them. The application's got more, but he says it doesn't look like Z. He's not ruling him out, but he can't rule him in either.

ARMSTRONG
Well, that's... vague.

TOSCHI
(chewing)
He needs more samples. Oh, also - our guy's a perv. When Mel got the application from Valley Springs, they told him Allen had been fired for touching kids.

ARMSTRONG
Touching?

TOSCHI
Polite euphemism. What do you want to do?

ARMSTRONG
Let me make a few calls.

He rises to leave. Toschi, shouting after him:

TOSCHI
Can I have the rest of your-

ARMSTRONG (O.S.)
Yes!

152 INT. HALL OF JUSTICE -- HOMICIDE UNIT -- DAY

Armstrong, on the phone with PANZARELLA. INTERCUT:

ARMSTRONG
Did you and Mr. Cheney have a chance to look at the copies of the Zodiac letters we sent?

PANZARELLA
Yeah, some of that stuff is creepy.

ARMSTRONG
We know.

(CONTINUED)
PANZARELLA
No, I mean creepy like Leigh. He misspells words like that, thinks it's funny. And he makes up rhymes, too. Like that one "I feel it my bones, you ache to know my name"... Very Leigh.

ARMSTRONG
What about the handwriting?

PANZARELLA
I don't know. Don't you have experts for that stuff?

ARMSTRONG
Our man at Questioned Documents says it's inconclusive.

PANZARELLA
Maybe he did it with his other hand.

ARMSTRONG
The letters are a little too neat for someone to have written with the wrong hand—

PANZARELLA
Not for Leigh.

Armstrong leans forward in his chair.

ARMSTRONG
What do you mean?

PANZARELLA
He's ambidextrous. He can write with both hands. Didn't you know that?

INT. CAPTAIN LEE'S OFFICE -- EVENING

Toschi and Armstrong, sitting with Captain Lee.

ARMSTRONG
Here's our theory - In every day life Allen uses his left hand, job applications, letters to friends, etcetera. But he writes the Zodiac letters with his right hand producing a different handwriting that he can't be linked to.

(CONTINUED)
TOSCHI
We gotta go see this guy, Chief.

CAPTAIN LEE
Where is he?

ARMSTRONG
Vallejo, he works at Union Oil in Pinole. He's also got a brother who lives up there.

CAPTAIN LEE
See 'em both. And bring Mulanax in, it's his backyard.

TOSCHI
Because that worked so well in Riverside.
(off Lee's look)
Cooperation at all costs, that's us.

EXT. PINOLE -- UNION OIL REFINERY -- DAY


INT. UNION OIL REFINERY -- BREAK ROOM -- DAY

A FOREMAN leads Toschi, Armstrong, and Mulanax into the cramped meeting room.

PINOLE FOREMAN
You can talk to him in here. Coke machine's busted, by the way.

Toschi looks over at the machine, out of order since 1957.

TOSCHI
No kidding.

PINOLE FOREMAN
I'll go get him for you.

The Foreman leaves. Mulanax turns to the others.

MULANAX
How do you want to do this?

TOSCHI
Bill talked to the informants. He leads, we follow?

(CONTINUED)
MULANAX
Okay by me.

Armstrong nods - "fine". FOOTSTEPS in the hallway. HEAVY. The detectives turn to the closed door in anticipation. The door opens... and ARTHUR LEIGH ALLEN fills it. Over 200 lbs. Close cropped buzzcut with graying hair. Confused. Armstrong steps forward, all business. Immediately:

ARMSTRONG
Mr. Allen, I'm Inspector Bill Armstrong, this is Inspector David Toschi, and that's Sergeant Jack Mulanax - we're investigating the Zodiac murders in San Francisco and Vallejo. Sit, please.

Allen does. Nervous.

ARMSTRONG (CONT'D)
An informant notified us that you made certain statements eleven months prior to the first Zodiac murder and if they're true, they're quite incriminating. Do you recall having any such conversation?

LEIGH ALLEN
No.

MULANAX
Have you ever read or heard about the Zodiac?

Allen, surprised the second cop has joined in.

LEIGH ALLEN
When it was first in the papers, sure. I didn't follow up after those first reports.

ARMSTRONG
Why not?

LEIGH ALLEN
Because it was too morbid. I told all this to the other officer.

Now it's the detectives turn to be thrown.

ARMSTRONG
Which other officer?

(CONTINUED)
LEIGH ALLEN
From Vallejo.

Mulanax shoots Toschi a head shake – "I don't know"

ARMSTRONG
Do you remember the officer's name?

LEIGH ALLEN
No. But it was right after the murder at the Lake.

MULANAX
And what did you tell this officer?

LEIGH ALLEN
I told him that I'd gone to Salt Point that weekend to skin dive. I was alone but I met a couple there. I have their names at home if you want them.

MULANAX
That would be great, Arthur.

Leigh.

MULANAX
What?

LEIGH ALLEN
Leigh. Nobody calls me Arthur. Also, that day when I came home, my neighbor saw me. It was about four. I forgot to tell the officer about that.

ARMSTRONG
What's your neighbor's name?

LEIGH ALLEN
Bill White. But he died about a week afterwards. Heart attack. So I never called to follow up.

(suddenly)
The knives I had in my car with blood on them, the blood came from a chicken I killed for dinner.

The three detectives, stunned.

MULANAX
What?

(CONTINUED)
LEIGH ALLEN
That weekend, there were two knives in my car. Maybe Bill saw them and called the first cop on me.

MULANAX
We'll be checking on that. Let me ask you something else, were you in Southern California at any time during 1966?

LEIGH ALLEN
You mean about the Riverside killing?

A beat.

MULANAX
Yes.

LEIGH ALLEN
I guess I was down there around the same time. I used to go down a lot, I like the auto races.

Armstrong looks over at Toschi, who still hasn't spoken. "Do you want to jump in?" Toschi stays quiet. Observing.

ARMSTRONG
Our informant tells us you're ambidextrous.

LEIGH ALLEN
No. That's untrue.

ARMSTRONG
You can't write with both hands?

LEIGH ALLEN
They tried to make me when I was little, but I couldn't. I'm left handed.

MULANAX
He also says you made statements about killing school children.

Allen, becoming upset.

LEIGH ALLEN
No. That's horrible. That's a horrible thing to say...

(CONTINUED)
ARMSTRONG
So you weren't angry about being fired from Valley Springs for touching your students?

Allen looks up at him. Tears in his eyes.

LEIGH ALLEN
I am not the Zodiac. And if I was, I certainly wouldn't tell you.

Silence... And then Toschi finally speaks:

TOSCHI
That's a nice watch.

LEIGH ALLEN
Thank you.

TOSCHI
Can I see it?

Allen holds it up for them. *It's the Zodiac Watch.*

TOSCHI (CONT'D)
Where did you get it?

LEIGH ALLEN
It was a Christmas gift from my mother two years ago.

TOSCHI
That's sweet. Tell me something, Arthur, do you remember anyone you might have had a conversation with regarding the Zodiac?

LEIGH ALLEN
Maybe Ted Kidder or Phil Tucker at Vallejo Recreation, but I'm not positive. I used to work there... (suddenly realizing) Ohhhh, The Most Dangerous Game!

ARMSTRONG
What?

LEIGH ALLEN
The Most Dangerous Game! That's why you're here isn't it? Best thing I read in high school.

(MORE)
It's about this man who waits for people to get shipwrecked on his island because he's tired of hunting animals, so he hunts the people for the challenge.

TOSCHI
Man is the most dangerous animal?

LEIGH ALLEN
That's the whole point to the story! Great book.

The WHISTLE outside the plant blows. Lunch.

LEIGH ALLEN (CONT'D)
May I go?

TOSCHI
Yes. Thank you for your time.

Allen rises to leave...

LEIGH ALLEN
I'm willing to help you in anyway possible. I can't wait until the day comes when police officers aren't referred to as "pigs".

ARMSTRONG
Thanks. We'll be in touch.

Allen exits the room. The detectives stand there.

TOSCHI
So... does anyone think this suspect warrants further investigation?

INT. JOHN AND CATHERINE ALLEN RESIDENCE -- VALLEJO -- EVENING

Toschi, Armstrong, and Mulanax sit in the home of JOHN and CATHERINE ALLEN - Allen's brother and sister-in-law.
Armstrong, laying out papers on the coffee table.

ARMSTRONG
These are copies of the letters Zodiac sent us. Would you mind taking a look at them?

JOHN ALLEN
You think my brother's the Zodiac.
TOSCHI
He's someone we're looking at.

CATHERINE ALLEN
Are you going to arrest him?

ARMSTRONG
It doesn't work that way, Mrs. Allen. We don't go around arresting people because we're interested in them as suspects.

Catherine begins examining the letters.

JOHN ALLEN
Leigh's always been troubled.

MULANAX
Is it true about the children?

JOHN ALLEN
Unfortunately. We don't see him much anymore. Since we found out.

Toschi notes the TODDLER TOYS on the floor.

ARMSTRONG
What's your feeling about Don Cheney?

JOHN ALLEN
Don Cheney, my old roommate? Is he the one who contacted you?

ARMSTRONG
That's confidential, sir.

John considers this.

JOHN ALLEN
Don's a very reliable guy. If he were to tell you something, I'd believe it to be true.

Catherine suddenly stabs a finger down at a letter.

CATHERINE ALLEN
This one.

TOSCHI
What about it?

CATHERINE ALLEN
Here, where he spells Christmas with two s's.

(CONTINUED)
They look at the Belli letter – *This is the Zodiac speaking.*  
*I wish you a happy Christmass...*

CATHERINE ALLEN (CONT'D)  
We got a Christmas card from Leigh  
a couple years ago. He spelled it  
the exact same way, "Christ-mass".

Silence. John Allen looks up to the cops:

JOHN ALLEN  
What can we do to help?

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE -- CAPTAIN LEE'S OFFICE -- DAY  

Toschi, briefing their Captain.

TOSCHI  
The brother's gonna search Leigh's  
bedroom next time he goes out of  
town.

CAPTAIN LEE  
Gets you around a search warrant.

TOSCHI  
For now. If we get something,  
Mulanax will take it to the Vallejo  
DA to search the house properly. We  
also talked to the cop who  
interviewed Allen before. Doesn't  
remember how he got onto him but  
said he didn't look like a killer,  
so he didn't like him for Z.

CAPTAIN LEE  
But you do.

TOSCHI  
I wish we could've taken him in  
right there.

CAPTAIN LEE  
Take it slow. Try and get more  
stuff to Sherwood, a match'll get  
you a lot farther with the  
warrants-

Armstrong pokes his head in from the SQUAD ROOM:

ARMSTRONG  
Dave, you got Avery on two.
TOSCHI
Tell him to screw.

ARMSTRONG
Should I communicate that verbatim or can I spice it up a bit?

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE -- MORNING

Avery, asleep in his car. Parked across from Morti's. A RAPPING on the window. Avery awakes with a JOLT. GRAYSMITH. Avery gets out, hungover. Begins walking to the Chronicle.

GRAYSMITH
I've been thinking-

AVERY
God save us all.

GRAYSMITH
The letter to Melvin Belli. It was sent exactly one year after the Lake Herman Road murder. And the one to Cheri Bates' father and the Riverside paper was sent exactly six months after her death. She was killed a day before Halloween, you received a Halloween card-

AVERY
All fascinating pieces of minutiae, Roberto, but it's a little early in the day-

GRAYSMITH
It's eleven. You missed Editorial.

AVERY
Spectacular.

OMITTED

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE THIRD FLOOR -- DAY

Graysmith and Avery exit the elevator. Passing SHORTY, who raises his hands in mock surrender:

SHORTY
Don't shoot, Avery! Take what you want, but leave me my life!

He breaks up, cackling. Avery, not breaking stride:

(CONTINUED)
AVERY
Suck my nuts, Short Man.

SHORTY
(good naturedly)
Fuck you and the retard!

GRAYSMITH
Why does he keep calling me that?

They reach Graysmith's desk.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
Do you think I should call Toschi about the pattern of the letters?

AVERY
And alert his little banana republic? They're holding back. He hasn't called in weeks.

GRAYSMITH
You think they have a suspect?

AVERY
Haven't the foggiest. But do I have a surprise for him...

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE -- DAY

Armstrong walks over to Toschi's desk.

ARMSTRONG
Hiccup with Cheney - Allen made "improper advances" toward his daughter.

TOSCHI
When?

ARMSTRONG
In '67. Could give Cheney a motive against Allen.

TOSCHI
Okay, but why would Cheney go see him after that? If someone was messing with your daughter would you go spilt a six-pack with him?

DETECTIVE (O.S.)
Armstrong, Catherine Allen on one!

(CONTINUED)
ARMSTRONG
Here goes nothing...

Armstrong picks up. Toschi listens in.

ARMSTRONG (CONT'D)
Thanks for getting back to us.

CATHERINE ALLEN (O.S.)
I haven't been able to find the Christmas card I told you about.

ARMSTRONG
That's okay, just keep looking.

CATHERINE ALLEN
Leigh moved his trailer up to Santa Rosa this weekend for school, so John searched his bedroom at my mother's house. He didn't find any codes or knives...

ARMSTRONG
What about something we can test for handwriting?

INT. QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS -- AFTERNOON

Toschi and Armstrong, standing next to Morrill as he checks the handwriting exemplars for Allen. This time, Toschi is silent. Morrill lowers the magnifying glass and sighs.

MORRILL
This suspect is not your Zodiac.

TOSCHI
Did these samples match his checks stubs and application?

MORRILL
Perfectly.

ARMSTRONG
Then we just retested his left hand! We already know he's ambidextrous-

MORRILL
In my thirty-eight years of experience, I've never seen anyone that ambidextrous. Both hands would have commonalities. I'm sorry, but this just won't work.
INT. HALL OF JUSTICE -- HOMICIDE UNIT -- DAY

Toschi scoops up his ringing phone. INTERCUT:

TOSCHI
Homicide, Toschi.

MULANAX
Dave, Jack Mulanax. We struck out with the judge. He won't sign off on a warrant for Allen's house.

TOSCHI
Why not?

MULANAX
He said it's not enough. Unless we bring him a handwriting match or some evidence-

TOSCHI
How are we gonna get evidence if we can't even toss his house?

MULANAX
I don't know. I'm sorry.

INT. CAPTAIN LEE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Toschi and Armstrong with Captain Lee.

CAPTAIN LEE
What do you want to do?

TOSCHI
Don't know what we can do without Vallejo. We need Allen's other hand, and we can't get it without a warrant.

CAPTAIN LEE
Are there other guys you should be looking at?

Toschi and Armstrong exchange a look.

TOSCHI
About twenty-three hundred.
CAPTAIN LEE
Okay then.

A beat. They turn and leave.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE -- PECK'S OFFICE -- DAY

Avery. Circles under his eyes. Underweight. Lounging on a couch across from Peck.

PECK
You can't go on like this.

AVERY
Like what? Happy and horny?

He lights a smoke and grins. Peck holds up a LETTER.

PECK
You wrote the Department of Justice and asked to be put in charge of the Zodiac investigation?

AVERY
I merely suggested that those with intimate knowledge of the case create an information clearing house to promote an exchange and freeflow of ideas.

PECK
And that you run it.

AVERY
Who better than me? The "marked man".

Peck leans forward, unamused.

PECK
If you want to work here I need three things - One, stop boozing - two, stop whatever else you're doing - and three, cut this kind of nonsense out.

Avery rises. Unsteady on his feet.
Dear Templeton, if at any time you feel my excellent work isn't in step with your piece of shit rag, I'll more than happily decamp for greener pastures.

He exits through the door. Peck shouting after him:

PECK
I mean it!

Graysmith at his desk. He looks up at Peck's shout to see Avery wobbling towards him.

GRAYSMITH
What was that about?

AVERY
A little editorial tete-a-tete. Let's get a drink.

GRAYSMITH
It's ten in the morning.

AVERY
An early lunch.

GRAYSMITH
Are you okay?

Avery stares at him for a moment. Touched.

AVERY
Not at all. But thank you for asking.

Avery claps him on the back.

AVERY (CONT'D)
Hey, Shorty, wanna get a drink?

SHORTY
Fuck, yeah!

They head for the elevators. Hyman, passing by.

HYMAN
Paul, where are you going?

(CONTINUED)
Avery merely raises his arm, SHOOTING HIM THE FINGER. Not turning around. He gets in the elevator with Shorty. On Graysmith. Watching him until the doors close. PRELAP:

ARMSTRONG (V.O.)
So how do you want to start doing this?

FADE TO:

166A EXT. TRANSAMERICA BUILDING -- TIMELAPSE -- EFFECTS SHOT

As it FINISHES CONSTRUCTION. Covering A YEAR. Over this:

TOSCHI (V.O.)
We need to recheck Benson and Flowers-

CAPTAIN LEE
Why does Napa keep calling about a Rick Marshall?

TOSCHI
I'm iffy on Marshall, but Vallejo's on Benson and Flowers...

MULANAX (V.O.)
I looked at Benson and Flowers, they're morons, but they're not Z-

TOSCHI (V.O.)
Narlow hasn't gotten Marshall's prints yet-

ARMSTRONG (V.O.)
So it's not Benson or Flowers?

MULANAX (V.O.)
No ballistics match-

TOSCHI (V.O.)
Sherwood says he's a no-

ARMSTRONG (V.O.)
What about the watermarks-

TOSCHI (V.O.)
What about the postmarks?

CAPTAIN LEE
Every letter except the last one is postmarked San Francisco-

MORRILL (V.O.)
There's an Eaton Watermark on the first three letters, but then it changes to a "Fifth Avenue" watermark which is sold at Woolworths-

PAROLE OFFICER (V.O.)
This parolee David Carpenter hasn't checked in, I think he looks pretty good as your guy-

ARMSTRONG (V.O.)
I really like him for it-

NARLOW (V.O.)
No way it's him.

MORRILL (V.O.)
It's not his handwriting-

(CONTINUED)
ARMSTRONG (V.O.)
Big fat no on Marshall-

TOSCHI (V.O.)
Carpenter was in custody at the time-

TOSCHI (V.O.)
It's a dead end, Chief-

ARMSTRONG (V.O.)
We've got nothing.

SILENCE. The Pyramid - FINISHED. Then:

CATHERINE ALLEN (V.O.)
It's been awhile since we've heard from you.

166B INT. JOHN AND CATHERINE ALLEN RESIDENCE -- EVENING

Armstrong sits across from Catherine Allen.

ARMSTRONG
We have a lot of cases, Mrs. Allen and a lot of suspects on this case-

CATHERINE ALLEN
You've moved off my brother-in-law.

ARMSTRONG
We couldn't get the warrant.

CATHERINE ALLEN
Last year we arranged to get Leigh help from a social worker. He only went twice. We saw him recently. The first time in nine months, his mother brought him by to see the new baby- After he came by, I went to that social worker. He couldn't talk about a former patient. I told him he was a Zodiac suspect and just asked him straight if he thought Leigh was capable of killing people-

ARMSTRONG
But because of patient confidentiality-

CATHERINE ALLEN
The man said yes.

Armstrong stares at her.

(CONTINUED)
ARMSTRONG
Why hadn't you seen him in nine months?

CATHERINE ALLEN
He's going to school in Santa Rosa.

ARMSTRONG
Santa Rosa? Where's he living?

CATHERINE ALLEN
In his trailer.

166C INT. HALL OF JUSTICE -- HOMICIDE UNIT -- EVENING
Toschi looks up as Armstrong enters.

TOSCHI
We gotta go check a Z tip on Mare Island-

ARMSTRONG
The trailer in Santa Rosa.

What?

TOSCHI
Leigh Allen. The one he lives out of while he goes to school.

Toschi leans back, his attention captured.

ARMSTRONG (CONT'D)
You're Z. You've taken trophies - a wallet, keys, bloody shirt. Are you gonna hide them in your mother's house or in your own trailer?

166D INT. HALL OF JUSTICE CORRIDORS -- EVENING
Toschi and Armstrong, walking with Captain Lee.

CAPTAIN LEE
It's in Santa Rosa?

ARMSTRONG
Sonoma County. We wouldn't have to go through the Vallejo D.A.

(CONTINUED)
CAPTAIN LEE
It's been eleven months since you talked to this guy, now you want to search his trailer?

TOSCHI
If we find something, great, if not, at least we get his prints and handwriting from both hands.

Turning a corner:

CAPTAIN LEE
I thought Sherwood shut you down.

TOSCHI
What if we could get a second opinion?

166E INT. QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS -- PASCOE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Toschi with handwriting expert TERRY PASCOE.

PASCOE
I don't want to step on Sherwood's toes, he trained me at this-

TOSCHI
Terry, all we need to know is - if the suspect is ambidextrous, could he have written the letters with his other hand?

PASCOE
Off the record? There are differing schools of thought on this. Get samples from his other hand. If he's the Zodiac, you'll get a match.

166F INT. HALL OF JUSTICE -- HOMICIDE UNIT -- NIGHT

Captain Lee sits on the edge of Toschi's desk facing the two detectives.

ARMSTRONG
...we got that from Pascoe, meanwhile I spoke to a psychologist who'd be willing to testify that someone who undergoes a personality change like Zodiac would manifest it physically, altering his handwriting-

(CONTINUED)
Which is why Sherwood didn't get a match from Allen's samples. We've got Pascoe and this psychologist, coupled with Cheney it could be enough for the warrant.

Lee rises, heading for the door.

CAPTAIN LEE
Get Cheney on the record.

DON CHENEY listens as Armstrong rapidly READS OFF a LIST OF STATEMENTS:

ARMSTRONG
...that on January 1st 1968, Arthur Allen told you about hunting people, that he said he would attach a light to a gun and shoot people in lovers' lane areas and would write letters to confuse the police, that he would shoot the tires off a school bus and shoot the kiddies as they came bouncing out, and that he would call himself Zodiac.

CHENEY
Yes.

ARMSTRONG
And you'd be willing to swear to this under oath in Superior Court?

CHENEY
Without any hesitation.

Toschi, Armstrong and Captain Lee stand around a SPEAKER PHONE. On the other end is Santa Rosa D.A. JOHN HAWKES.

CAPTAIN LEE
John, I got Dave Toschi and Bill Armstrong with me and we think they've got enough for a warrant. (MORE)
They’re going to take you through this. I’m assuming you’ve got Mr. Cheney’s statements?

Yup.

Okay. Guys?

Armstrong opens his notes.

Suspect is Arthur Leigh Allen, current residence, Sunset Trailer Court, Santa Rosa, California. Physical description – Allen is similar in height, weight, and build to a man seen at Lake Berryessa the day of the stabbings.

I understand he doesn’t look much like the San Francisco composite.

True his height and weight are sketchy, but lumbering Caucasian with crewcut is right on-

We never had much confidence in the composite from the kids – even the patrolman who saw Zodiac said he didn’t look much like that sketch.

Military bootprints – Allen was a Navy man and wears size 10 1/2, the same size found at Berryessa-

What about guns?

Cheney says Allen owns several firearms. We’ll list them all in the warrant.

And the ciphers?

(Continued)
ARMSTRONG
Could be code training in the Navy, and people have seen Allen with ciphers in the past.

SANTA ROSA D.A. (O.S.)
Really, who?

TOSCHI
His sister in law, and a guy named Phil Tucker who he worked with at a public pool.

ARMSTRONG
Tucker also told us he had a conversation with Allen about how to attach a flashlight to the barrel of a gun.

CAPTAIN LEE
John, that's two sources on the ciphers and two on the flashlight.

SANTA ROSA D.A. (O.S.)
What about his threats on children?

CAPTAIN LEE
Suspect worked at elementary schools and was fired for molestation in March/April '68 - could give him motive.

ARMSTRONG
At the very least, it's home turf; he'd have knowledge of bus routes, which both threats centered around.

SANTA ROSA D.A. (O.S.)
What about the bomb?

ARMSTRONG
Allen works as a chemist, which means he knows the compounds needed to create explosives.

CAPTAIN LEE
Take him through the geography.

ARMSTRONG
Vallejo murders - Allen lives in Vallejo with his mother in her basement.

(MORE)
Berryessa murder - The day the kids were stabbed, Allen's neighbor saw bloody knives in his truck which he claimed was used to kill a chicken.

SANTA ROSA D.A. (O.S.)
Does he have any alibis?

ARMSTRONG
He claimed he did, but has been unable to produce the names of a "couple" he supposedly met on the day of Berryessa-

TOSCHI
Bottom line is, Allen can't alibi up on anything - Riverside, Vallejo, the Lake, or us. Now tell him about the name.

SANTA ROSA D.A. (O.S.)
What name?

ARMSTRONG
"Zodiac". Allen wears a watch that bears both the word and the crosshair symbol. And he mentioned Zodiac to Cheney a year and a half before it appeared in any letter.

They stare at the phone, awaiting the response. Finally:

CAPTAIN LEE
John?

SANTA ROSA D.A. (O.S.)
That's pretty good, guys.

CAPTAIN LEE
We think so too.

SANTA ROSA D.A. (O.S.)
Let's take it to a judge...

September 14, 1972. Toschi and Armstrong get out of their car along with Santa Rosa D.A. INVESTIGATOR CAMERON and Santa Rosa DETECTIVE ROY. The four men walk in silence. Reaching the trailer. Toschi turns to Armstrong.
TOSCHI

You ready?

Armstrong nods. Toschi turns and KNOCKS on the DOOR... It swings open on it's own. Unlocked.

DETECTIVE ROY

Mr. Allen, this is the Santa Rosa Police Department! We have a warrant to search your residence!

No response. Toschi shrugs and steps inside...

INT. ALLEN'S TRAILER -- DAY


DETECTIVE ROY

I'll check with the neighbors.

He ducks out. Stacks of books and clothes in every corner. A chattering sound and an animal smell. Rank. Like shit. Toschi wrinkles his nose. Then he sees - Caged squirrels. Stacked on top of the books. Some run around the trailer free. Toschi tries to step over them. Cracks a window for the smell. Roy returns.

DETECTIVE ROY (CONT'D)

Neighbor said he tore out of here about a half hour ago. You think somebody tipped him?

TOSCHI

Doesn't matter, we're not leaving till he comes back. Shall we?

They begin poking around.

ARMSTRONG

(to Cameron and Roy)

Help me with the bed?

They grab hold of the bed. Moving it to reveal - A WOODEN DILDO. A HUGE JAR OF PETROLEUM JELLY. Toschi, in the kitchenette. Checking the fridge. Spotty with food. Opens the icebox-

TOSCHI

Jesus!

What?

(CONTINUED)
TOSCHI

Squirrel.

Armstrong, not understanding. He comes to look – there is a FROZEN SQUIRREL in the icebox.

DETECTIVE ROY

Piece of work, this guy.

Armstrong nods. Moves to check the drawers in the living room. Toschi, searching the closet.

TOSCHI

Two blue windbreakers.

DETECTIVE ROY

Like at the Stine scene?

TOSCHI

(rooting around)

Yup, but no blood – hey, hey black gloves. Size seven, same as we found in the cab. He's got the same shoe size and glove size as Z – I'm sure it's just a coincidence-

Armstrong, checking the drawers. One, two three– He STOPS.

ARMSTRONG

Dave, I got a gun. Check that – two guns. Both .22's. One automatic, one revolver-

TOSCHI

That's interesting, because he's got an M-1 rifle in his closet.

Armstrong goes to look. A .30 cal carbine. A beat.

ARMSTRONG

For little darlings who come bouncing off buses?

Toschi smiles. The sound of a CAR OUTSIDE...

172 EXT. TRAILER PARK -- DAY


TOSCHI

Hi, Arthur. Remember us?
INT. HALL OF JUSTICE -- HOMICIDE UNIT -- NIGHT

Toschi and Armstrong sit in chairs, waiting for the results. Nervous. Through the glass to Lee's office we see the Captain talking on the phone. Hangs up. Opens the door.

CAPTAIN LEE

No.

TOSCHI

On the handwriting?

CAPTAIN LEE

Ballistics - no match, prints - no match, writing - no match.

ARMSTRONG

On both hands, right, we got writing from both of his hands-

CAPTAIN LEE

And neither hand matches.

TOSCHI

Tell Sherwood to try again-

CAPTAIN LEE

Fellas. He's not your guy.

Silence as this sinks in. Toschi stands and leaves, SLAMMING THE DOOR. Lee heads after him, leaving Armstrong sitting there, equally devastated that they were wrong...

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - STAIRS - NIGHT

Toschi stalks outside, fuming. Lee emerges behind him.

CAPTAIN LEE

What do you want? Time off? A hug?

Toschi turns.

TOSCHI

You know what the worst part is? I can't tell if I wanted it to be Allen so bad because I thought it was him, or because I wanted all of this to be over...

(CONTINUED)
CAPTAIN LEE
Because you thought it was him.
And I did too.
(pause)
Maybe you should take some
vacation. Spend some time with
the wife and kids. Go to
Candlestick.
CAPTAIN LEE (CONT'D)
Take in a movie.
CUT TO:
175A ON A GIANT MOVIE SCREEN - JOHN VERNON (THE MAYOR) reads a
KILLER'S LETTER that's projected on a screen in his office.

JOHN VERNON (THE MAYOR)
To the city of San Francisco - I
will enjoy killing one person
everyday until you pay me one
hundred thousand dollars...

176 INT. MOVIE THEATER -- NIGHT
Hundreds of San Francisco's elite sit in their finery
watching a police screening of Dirty Harry unspool in front
of them. Among them, Toschi and his wife.

JOHN VERNON (O.S.)
If you agree, say so tomorrow
morning in the personal column,
San Francisco Chronicle and I will
set up a meeting...

176A ON THE MOVIE SCREEN - the shot is now a close-up of the
letter (which looks very Zodiacish):

JOHN VERNON
If I do not hear from you, it will
be my next pleasure to kill a
Catholic Priest or a...

Vernon pauses in distaste - the word is "nigger". CUT TO
Close on Vernon as he reads the killer's signature:

JOHN VERNON (CONT'D)
Scorpio.


177 INT. MOVIE THEATER -- LATER
Late in the movie - Toschi, almost at the end of his rope.

(CONTINUED)
I've got seven kids from the Fourth Street School, now listen, I've got the bus-

ONSCREEN - SCORPIO is holding a WOMAN BUS DRIVER HOSTAGE in front of a YELLOW SCHOOL BUS filled with KIDS.

(note - from here till the end of the written dialogue Clint Eastwood does not appear onscreen - in other words CLINT EASTWOOD WILL NOT APPEAR IN THIS MOVIE). A LITTLE GIRL tries to get off the bus, interrupting his ransom call:

SCORPIO KILLER (O.S.)
-come on now, honey, that's a good girl, back in the bus...
(she goes - into phone)
And I've got the bus driver. Here she is, just tell him.

IN THE AUDIENCE - Toschi leans over, whispering to his wife:

TOSCHI
You want some popcorn?

TOSCHI'S WIFE
Do you want me to come with you?

He shakes his head. Rises and heads for the exit, scooting past other audience members, enraptured by the movie. Only one other person in the theater notices Toschi go-

GRAYSMITH. Sitting with MELANIE. He watches Toschi leave...

BUS DRIVER (O.S.)
It wasn't my fault, he had as gun-

SCORPIO KILLER (O.S.)
Just tell him your name...
Toschi stands alone under a banner Dirty Harry. Trying to light a smoke in the wind.

GRAYSMITH (O.S.)
The good guy shoots him in the chest. That's how it ends.

Toschi turns to see Graysmith. He looks shaken by the whole thing. Our two heroes, standing there. Meeting for the first time. Toschi stares at him.

TOSCHI
I know you.

GRAYSMITH
I work at the Chronicle. Robert Graysmith - maybe Paul Avery's mentioned me?

TOSCHI
No, that's not it...

They shake hands, Graysmith masking his disappointment.

TOSCHI (CONT'D)
Dave Toschi, nice to meet you.

Behind them, the THEATER DOORS OPEN. The invigorated audience pours out, headed for the afterparty. The POLICE COMMISSIONER, passes by, in high spirits.

POLICE COMMISSIONER
Dave! That Harry Callahan did a hell of a job closing your case, huh?

TOSCHI
Sure did, Commissioner. Good thing he didn't let due process get in the way, huh?

The Commissioner gives him a funny look but chuckles anyway and moves on. Toschi looks back to Graysmith.
TOSCHI (CONT’D)
So what do you do over at the paper?

GRAYSMITH
I'm a cartoonist.

TOSCHI
That's good. That's a good job. Make people laugh.

His wife appears, taking his arm. Ready to leave.

TOSCHI (CONT’D)
Nice meeting you.

He turns to leave when

GRAYSMITH
You're gonna catch him. You're Dave Toschi.

Toschi turns back. Smiles and shakes his head.

TOSCHI
Pal? They're already making movies about it.

Graysmith doesn't know what to say. Toschi heads off. We hold on Graysmith, standing on that cold street corner as we

FADE OUT

SILENCE

179 BLACKNESS.

Is it over?

Then, - faint music. Of the times. The mid 70's. And news reports. Something about... Watergate? Bobby Fischer? Saigon? Squeaky Fromme? And there’s rock and roll and funk and the beginnings of disco and Patty Hearst and Zebra Murders and "Son of Sam" and it builds and builds until...

FOUR YEARS LATER

APPEARS ON SCREEN AND WE

CUT TO:
A BABY GIRL - lifted to her parent's shoulder... And it's
GRAYSMITH. Older. Hair closer cropped. An expert at this.
He bounces his daughter MARGOT who coos.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)
...has confirmed that columnist
Jimmy Breslin of the New York
Daily News has received a letter
penned by the Son of Sam. Dubbed
the .44 Caliber Killer by the
press and later "Son of Sam" by
himself, the killer began his
rampage in 1976, targeting couples
in parked cars, and communicating
with authorities through a series
of handwritten letters.

Interest piqued, Graysmith heads to the LIVING ROOM. More
feminine now that a wife lives here. It's late, everyone
else asleep.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
If any of this sounds familiar to
our viewers, it's because our own
fair city once had a very similar
brush with the macabre. In light
of the events in New York,
tonight, we look back on what
police call "A Cold Case",
possibly the most famous in
history - The Zodiac.


NEWSCASTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Shortly after a connection was
established between an unsolved
1966 murder in Riverside and the
Cipher Slayer, Zodiac's letters
became more infrequent, and
finally nil. Many believe he is
dead. But Inspector David Toschi
has different ideas.

File footage of TOSCHI.
NEWSCASTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Toschi, who rose to public prominence for his investigations into both the Zodiac and the Zebra Murders, is currently making headlines as the next possible Chief of Police. Along with his partner William Armstrong, Toschi is the only San Francisco detective still working a case that at one time commanded the attention of hundreds of policemen. Now it's down to just two. And the killer, still at large, who haunts them.

180A EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET CORNER -- NIGHT

Toschi and Armstrong pull up to a curb by Armstrong's apartment building. Done for the day.
Armstrong begins gathering up his stuff. Preoccupied with something. Maybe even upset. Toschi notices.

TOSCHI
You want to keep the car tonight?

ARMSTRONG
It's your turn.

TOSCHI
I know, but if you drop me at my place, you can have it.

Armstrong looks out the window – his WIFE stands in the door to the building, waiting. Toschi sees her too. Strange. Armstrong turns back to Toschi. Has to tell him.

ARMSTRONG
You should keep the car.

TOSCHI
Yeah?

ARMSTRONG
I'm not coming in tomorrow.

TOSCHI
What's up?

ARMSTRONG
I'm done. I put in for a transfer.

TOSCHI
Where?

ARMSTRONG
I'm looking at fraud. I can't be on call anymore.

TOSCHI
I understand.

ARMSTRONG
Rather watch my kids grow up, you know?

TOSCHI
Yeah. Hey, good for you.

ARMSTRONG
You'll be okay?

(CONTINUED)
TOSCHI
I'll be fine.

Armstrong smiles. Gets out of the car. Thinks of something.

ARMSTRONG
Hey... I'm not leaving you holding
the bag on anything, am I?

He means Zodiac. Toschi knows it.

TOSCHI
Nope.

ARMSTRONG
Okay.

TOSCHI
Hey, now you got time to get that sushi.
Armstrong smiles. Walks to his building. Toschi sees him go to his wife. He waves. She waves back, knowing what just transpired. He watches the Armstrongs disappear inside. Then drives away.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE THIRD FLOOR -- DAY

The NEWS ROOM. Different. Old faces gone. New faces there. A YOUNG REPORTER setting up shop at what used to be Avery's Desk. Graysmith watches. Finally walks over.

GRAYSMITH
Hi. Robert Graysmith.

JENNINGS
(absently)
Duffy Jennings.

Graysmith watches him get comfortable in Avery's chair.

GRAYSMITH
The guy who used to sit there was a great reporter.

JENNINGS
I'm sure he was. I mean, it's an honor to leave the Chronicle and go work for the Sacramento Bee.

He threads a piece of paper into his typewriter.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)
Nice meeting you.

EXT. WASHINGTON AND CHERRY -- NIGHT

October 11, 1977. The eighth anniversary of Stine's death. Toschi sits in his car like always. Except this time, the passenger seat is empty. He's alone. Toschi sighs and puts the car in gear. Driving away. We HOLD on the corner... Until a YELLOW CAB pulls up to it. The Passenger gets out and pays the driver. GRAYSMITH. Taking in the scene for the first time.

INT. GRAYSMITH'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Graysmith, sitting on his couch, going through yellowed newspaper clippings from Zodiac. Turning page after page.

(CONTINUED)
The headlines flitting past - "'I've Killed Seven' Zodiac Claims", "Zodiac Sends New Letter Says He's Killed Ten", "New Zodiac Letter Claims 17+", "Cops No Closer On Zodiac's Identity"– A VOICE BY HIS EAR:

MELANIE
"I am not Paul Avery."

Graysmith starts. Melanie laughs.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
The boys need tuck-ins and the poop machine needs changing.

GRAYSMITH
Flip you for it?

MELANIE
You wish.
(looking at the book)
No one has more Zodiac crap than you.

Graysmith blinks at this. Looking down at the album. The same name at the top of every article – By Paul Avery.

185 EXT. HARBOR -- SUNSET

Graysmith walks down the dock among houseboats. Comes to one in particular - with SHEET METAL over the windows. He knocks on the door. COUGHING from inside.

It cracks a little to reveal AVERY. Face gaunt. Eyes bloodshot. Looks like hell. Taking in Graysmith. Then:

AVERY
You gotta be fucking kidding.

186 INT. AVERY'S HOUSEBOAT -- SUNSET

Avery leads Graysmith inside, clearing away some of the mess. Graysmith, a little surprised at the state of things.

GRAYSMITH
I hope I'm not interrupting anything...

It's clear from his surroundings the only thing Graysmith has interrupted is Avery playing PONG.

(CONTINUED)
AVERY
Not at all.
(re: Pong)
Have you seen this thing? It's mesmerizing...

GRAYSMITH
Yeah. Yeah. So... how have you been?

AVERY
Can't complain. Bee's not exactly the Chron, but fuck it, right? Work is work. You want a drink?

He begins making a mixture of gin and ice.

GRAYSMITH
Don't worry about it-

AVERY
No worry at all, my friend. Nobody comes by from the old days - what we got ourselves here is an occasion.

(raising the bottle)
To your health. And mine. Mostly mine.


GRAYSMITH
It's good to see you, Paul.

Avery smiles at him and settles into a chair.

AVERY
So, what's new?

He takes a seat. Graysmith takes a deep breath.

GRAYSMITH
I've been thinking.

AVERY
Yeah?

GRAYSMITH
Somebody should write a book.

(CONTINUED)
"Somebody" should write a book about what?

About Zodiac.

That's not new. Is that why you're here?

(pitching him)
Nobody knows more about the case than you. You have the files - if you put together all the information, it could jog something loose-

Lost the files.

(horrified)
You lost them?

Lost them or tossed them, who cares, man?

But you wanted to be in charge of the investigation!

That was a long time ago.
(refilling his glass)
We work in the daily business as in to-day. What did you think we were doing back then? You didn't really think it was important?
(off his look; laughing)
Oh, Jesus... We were just trying to sell newspapers. More people die in three months on the East Bay commute than that idiot killed. He offed a few citizens, wrote a few letters, and faded into footnote. What, Gray, did you think I was just sitting here waiting for you to drop by and reinvigorate my sense of purpose?
Silence. Graysmith rises stiffly, suddenly formal:

GRAYSMITH
Thank you for your time.

He heads for the door. As he goes:

AVERY
It's been four years, Bobby - let it go.

He turns back to face Avery.

GRAYSMITH
I don't care what you say. It was important. It was important.

AVERY
Well, what the fuck did you ever do about it?

GRAYSMITH
What-

AVERY
If it was so important, what did you do? Hovered over my desk? Stole shit out of wastebaskets? Oh, I'm sorry, I'm being unkind. You went to the library.

This hits hard. Avery may be mad, but he's right. A beat.

GRAYSMITH
Sorry to have bothered you.

He turns and goes.

EXT. HARBOR -- SUNSET -- (RAIN)

Graysmith gets into his car. It's begun to rain. He sits behind the wheel. Breathing hard. Taking it all in. He comes to a decision. Puts the car in gear and drives.

INT. GRAYSMITH APARTMENT -- NIGHT -- (RAIN)

Late. Graysmith comes in from the rain. STACKS OF BOOKS under his arm. Melanie, watching TV. Looks up as he enters.

MELANIE
Where have you been?

He disappears into the bathroom. We hear water running.

(CONTINUED)
188 CONTINUED:

GRAYSMITH (O.S.)
The library.

189 INT. HALL OF JUSTICE -- HOMICIDE UNIT -- DAY

Toschi at his desk. He looks up to see Graysmith.

GRAYSMITH
Hi.

TOSCHI
(no idea who this is)
Hi.

A beat.

GRAYSMITH
We met at the movies once.

TOSCHI
It must have been magical.

GRAYSMITH
I'm Robert Graysmith, I work at the Chronicle. I was wondering if I could buy you lunch.

190 INT. DINER -- DAY

Graysmith and Toschi sit across from each other. Toschi chows down on a burger. Graysmith ignores his food.
TOSCHI
So you're a friend of Paul Avery's?

GRAYSMITH
He's the reason I'm here. I wanted to ask to you about Zodiac.

TOSCHI
I appreciate the interest but we don't discuss open cases-

GRAYSMITH
What's happening with it really? Day to day?

TOSCHI
We're actively pursuing all leads-

GRAYSMITH
It's just you now, isn't it.

TOSCHI
Mr. Graysmith, Zodiac hasn't written in three years. Do you know how many murders San Francisco has had since then?

GRAYSMITH
No.

TOSCHI
Over two hundred. That's a lot of dead people and grieving families who need our help.

GRAYSMITH
So nobody cares anymore?

Toschi puts down his burger.

TOSCHI
Hey. I care.

GRAYSMITH
Can I show you something?

Toschi shrugs. Graysmith pulls a stack of books from his briefcase and lays them on the table.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
I've been doing research on the first code. *Everything* an amateur would need to create it can be found in these books.

(MORE)
So I started thinking, if you can track the books, maybe you can find the man.

He hands Toschi a LIST.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
I know you thought Zodiac was military so I went to every base library and got a list of people who checked out the books. That's when I found this.

He points to the PRESIDIO LIBRARY LIST. Almost the entire column of books have the word "MISSING" written by them.

TOSCHI
"Missing"?

GRAYSMITH
That means the book was stolen.

TOSCHI
Almost every book on ciphers was stolen from the Presidio Library?

GRAYSMITH
And the Oakland Army Terminal Library. Someone didn't want to leave a record of checking them out, so he stole them.

Toschi stares at him.

TOSCHI
Who are you again?

GRAYSMITH
I just want to help.

A beat. Toschi, mulling this over. Finally:

TOSCHI
I can't allow you to help. I can't have more meetings with you to discuss what you might uncover and I certainly can't tell you to go talk to Ken Narlow in Napa, N-A-R-L-O-W in Napa who was in charge of the case up there. You understand?
Graysmith, seated across from Narlow.

NARLOW
I'm sorry Mr. Graysmith, but we don't cooperate with writers-

GRAYSMITH
I'm not a writer, I'm a cartoonist.

A beat.

NARLOW
And Dave Toschi sent you?

GRAYSMITH
Yes.

NARLOW
Why?

GRAYSMITH
Maybe he thought I could do some good.

NARLOW
(laughing)
What are you, a boy scout?

GRAYSMITH
Eagle Scout actually. First class.

A beat. Narlow, realizing he's not kidding.

NARLOW
You really want to do this, you shouldn't let me stop you. Try Vallejo. Jack Mulanax.

Graysmith, seated across from Mulanax.

MULANAX
I understand what you're trying to do, but-

GRAYSMITH
I'm a friend of Dave Toschi's. He said you could help.

(CONTINUED)
Mulanax stares at him, silent.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
The case is dead, right? Zodiac's long gone, yesterday's news?
MULANAX
That's what they say.
GRAYSMITH
So what's the harm?

193 INT. EVIDENCE LOCKER -- DAY
Mulanax leads Graysmith past ROWS OF CARDBOARD BOXES.

MULANAX
No pens, no paper, no copiers. Anything you see that’s relevant, you gotta remember in your head.

They turn a corner to find THREE ENORMOUS BOOKCASE TYPE SHELVES filled with boxes.

MULANAX (CONT'D)
Here you go.
GRAYSMITH
Which one?
MULANAX
All of them. There are more in the next room. They're all marked with these numbers.

He points to one box, marked #243-146.

MULANAX (CONT'D)
I'll be outside.

He goes. Graysmith wastes no time. Opening the top box, scanning the Vallejo police reports. Words flashing by—Ferrin, Lynch, Mageau, Corvair, Breathing phone calls, NMA, handwriting, painting party, hypnosis, Husted...

194 INT. VALLEJO POLICE DEPARTMENT -- LOBBY -- DAY
Mulanax getting coffee as Graysmith HURRIES PAST.
GRAYSMITH
Thank you very much!

(CONTINUED)
He's gone before Mulanax can respond. Officer GEORGE BAWART wanders in to see this stranger's hasty departure.

MULANAX
Hey, George.

BAWART
Hey. Who was that?

MULANAX
Graysmith. Some cartoonist, thinks he's gonna solve the Zodiac.

Bawart watches Graysmith running across the street towards a restaurant like a madman.

BAWART
Good for him.

195 EXT. FRIED CHICKEN SHACK -- DAY

Graysmith sits at a table scribbling furiously into a notebook. Transcribing from memory what he's just read...

196 OMITTED

196A INT. GRAYSMITH'S CAR -- DAY -- (RAIN)

Parked under a BRIDGE. Graysmith sits with Margot on his lap. The door opens. Toschi slides in, eating a hot dog.

GRAYSMITH
Thanks for meeting me, Inspector.

TOSCHI
We're not meeting. I gotta be back in five minutes-

GRAYSMITH
Did anyone ever show Mike Mageau suspect photos?

TOSCHI
Why?

GRAYSMITH
He's the only surviving victim who saw Zodiac without a mask.

(CONTINUED)
TOSCHI
No, why are you asking me?
Darlene and Mageau are Vallejo's investigation, Paul Stine is mine, you got four minutes now-

GRAYSMITH
Darlene Ferrin was being followed.

Toschi stares at him.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
I know Mulanax says they already found this guy, a George Waters. But he also says Darlene had lots of "admirers" who would come by the restaurant where she worked. When Darlene and her husband moved into their new house, they threw a painting party-

TOSCHI
What's a painting party?

GRAYSMITH
It's a party where people come over and help you paint.

TOSCHI
That sounds like a terrible party.

GRAYSMITH
But someone who was not Waters showed up that night and Darlene was really scared of him.

Toschi, considering.

TOSCHI
You think Zodiac knew Darlene.

GRAYSMITH
And if Zodiac knew her, maybe Mageau knew Zodiac.

TOSCHI
We'll never know. Mageau's gone. In the wind. If you want to connect Zodiac to Darlene, you're gonna have to find another way.

(CONTINUED)
GRAYSMITH
I have another way. Phone calls.
The night of Darlene's murder-

TOSCHI
Yeah, Zodiac called the police.

GRAYSMITH
But there were four other calls. Two to Darlene's house, one to her brother-in-law, and one to her father-in-law, just heavy breathing. They started around 1:30 a.m., before anyone in the family knew Darlene had been shot-

TOSCHI
This was in the Vallejo files?

Graysmith nods.

TOSCHI (CONT'D)
Goddammit...

Margot begins to whine. Graysmith extracts a bottle from his bag and starts feeding her as he continues.

GRAYSMITH
Inspector, somebody doesn't just randomly prank call a victim's entire family ninety minutes after a shooting. Either Zodiac shot a random couple and then recognized Darlene-
TOSCHI
-or he killed Darlene on purpose.

GRAYSMITH
Either way, Zodiac had to have known her.

Toschi, mulling this over.

TOSCHI
That's good, Robert.

GRAYSMITH
I need to find Darlene's sister. Maybe she can tell me who the mystery man is.

TOSCHI
Try that. I gotta get back. Bye, cutie.

He pats Margot's head and gets out of the car. About to leave when something occurs to him. Leans in the window.

TOSCHI (CONT'D)
It is interesting you mention Zodiac calling people at home. I heard he did that in San Francisco once.

GRAYSMITH
Who did he call?

TOSCHI
That's privileged information and as lead on the case, I really can't tell you. (musing)
But maybe Melvin Belli could.

197 INT. BELLI'S HOUSE -- DAY

Graysmith sits in the parlor, waiting for the famous lawyer. His HOUSEKEEPER sets a tray of cookies in front of him.

HOUSEKEEPER
He should be along soon.

(CONTINUED)
GRAYSMITH
Oh, it's fine. I've only been here-

(chacks his watch)
Oh, wow. Two hours.

HOUSEKEEPER
He is not usually this late-

GRAYSMITH
No, really, it's fine. These look like very good cookies.

He tries one while she watches. He smiles, showing how good they are. Makes an "mmm" sound. She's satisfied.

HOUSEKEEPER
You are here about a case?

GRAYSMITH
I'm writing a book about the Zodiac.

HOUSEKEEPER
Oh, I remember that. I spoke to him.

GRAYSMITH
You mean to Mr. Belli about the case?

HOUSEKEEPER
No. To the Zodiac when he called. He said he had to kill because it was his birthday.

Graysmith puts down the cookie.

GRAYSMITH
He said it was his birthday?

HOUSEKEEPER
Yes. You want more cookies?

GRAYSMITH
When did he call?

HOUSEKEEPER
So many years ago... Mr. Belli was away for Christmas. Gone for a week. The Zodiac called, wanted to talk to him. I said he is not here.

(MORE)
He said "I have to kill, today is my birthday" then he hangs up. Then the letter arrives.

GRAYSMITH
So - he called before the letter arrived on- on-
(checking his notes)
December 20th. But Mr. Belli was only gone a week-

HOUSEKEEPER
He came back on Christmas. Not a good day to work-

GRAYSMITH
So he left on the eighteenth.

HOUSEKEEPER
(smiling)
Is that helpful?

198 INT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET -- PHONE BOOTH -- AFTERNOON

Graysmith, on the phone with Toschi.

GRAYSMITH
She says it was his birthday!

TOSCHI
You'll need to confirm that, won't you?

GRAYSMITH
How?

TOSCHI
I never spoke to her, but maybe my partner did-

GRAYSMITH
How do I get in touch with him?

TOSCHI
Don't. Bill wanted out of this as far as I'm concerned.

GRAYSMITH
So how do I confirm it?

TOSCHI
If my partner spoke to someone at Justice about it, they would have put it in a report. Standard procedure.
Graysmith, sitting across a desk from MEL NICOLAI.

GRAYSMITH
I just need to confirm the date.

NICOLAI
Mr. Graysmith-

GRAYSMITH
I've narrowed it down to between the 18th and the 20th of December-

NICOLAI
Okay, I'll play. Let's say this call did take place. And let's say it really was Zodiac. Why would he volunteer the day he was born? Plus, nobody died on December 18th. Just like nobody died over the weekend when he was going to kill a dozen people, or when he threatened to shoot school kids and blow up buses. He's a liar, Mr. Graysmith.

GRAYSMITH
But if it was him and he wasn't lying-

NICOLAI
Do you know how many qualifiers you just put in that sentence? 
(before he responds)
Look, off the record - Bill Armstrong checked this out. We took it seriously. But none of our suspects at the time had the same birthday as this phantom caller.

Silence. Graysmith flips his notepad shut.

NICOLAI (CONT'D)
Can I give you a piece of advice? You're looking in the wrong place. Handwriting and fingerprints, that's what this whole thing is about.
Melanie sits, staring at a newspaper article. The door opens and Graysmith enters. Hanging up his coat:

GRAYSMITH
Hey, how was your day?

MELANIE
Long. Who's Sherwood Morrill?

GRAYSMITH
He's a handwriting expert in Sacramento.

MELANIE
He called, he says he can meet you tomorrow morning at 7.

GRAYSMITH
Great.

MELANIE
So you're taking off work?

GRAYSMITH
Just in the morning-

MELANIE
Sacramento's two hours away.

GRAYSMITH
Really?

MELANIE
Yes. What's this?

She holds out the newspaper to him.

GRAYSMITH
Oh, the article came out! Yeah, a reporter called me.

MELANIE
It talks about you researching Zodiac.

GRAYSMITH
Well, yeah, that's why they wrote it-

(CONTINUED)
MELANIE
I'm not sure that's something I want people to know about.

GRAYSMITH
You're not embarrassed, are you?

MELANIE
No, Robert, it's in the paper.
What's the one thing we know about Zodiac? He reads the newspaper.

GRAYSMITH
Oh, come on, it's not like-

The PHONE RINGS. Graysmith rises and picks it up.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
Hello?

VOICE (O.S.)
Mr. Graysmith? The Robert Graysmith mentioned in the paper today?

GRAYSMITH
Yes-

VOICE (O.S.)
I can tell you who the Zodiac is.

GRAYSMITH
Who is this-

VOICE (O.S.)
The Zodiac Killer is so full of movies, he has records of his activities on film. I tried to tell the police but they wouldn't follow through on it. Are you ready for the important part, Mr. Graysmith?

GRAYSMITH
Yes.

VOICE
There is a man you need to find.
His name is Bob Vaughn, V-A-U...

Graysmith snaps to Melanie for a pen. Writing on his hand.

VOICE (CONT'D)
...G-H-N. He is a friend of the Zodiac's.

(MORE)
Mr. Vaughn does not know his friend is a killer, and is storing some film canisters for him. In these canisters is the evidence you'll need.

GRAYSMITH
What's his name?

VOICE (O.S.)
You have quite enough to get started-

GRAYSMITH
Please.

A beat.

VOICE (O.S.)
The Zodiac's name is Rick Marshall.

CLICK. The man has hung up.

MORRILL (O.S.)
Handwriting is everything.

Graysmith walks with Morrill through his GARDEN. Every so often, the handwriting expert stops to check a flower.

MORRILL
Can a fingerprint give you the key to a criminal's mental state? Can a shell casing give you insight to motive?

GRAYSMITH
No?

MORRILL
Zodiac uses a mixture of cursive and printing. Most of us do. We choose at some point in our lives, how to physically construct each letter. Once we lock this into our brains, our handwriting may change over the years, but the moves themselves will remain unaltered. Do you understand?

GRAYSMITH
Yes.
MORRILL
Except Zodiac's doesn't. Specifically with his "k". In his first letters, k's were executed with two strokes. Later letters, he did them with three.

GRAYSMITH
Why?

MORRILL
We don't know.
(re: the lilacs)
I gotta spray these.

Graysmith follows Morrill to his garage to get the sprayer.

GRAYSMITH
How many suspects were cleared through handwriting?

MORRILL
All of them. Also, the print in the cab. No match was ever found.

GRAYSMITH
Is there any way someone could beat a handwriting test?

MORRILL
No. Whoever the Zodiac is, he's not someone I cleared.

Morrill walks back to the lilacs. Graysmith follows.

MORRILL (CONT'D)
About a month ago, a man named Wallace Penny showed up on my doorstep, very distraught. He said he knew who the Zodiac was. He gave me a name. Rick something-

Graysmith stops in his tracks.

GRAYSMITH

MORRILL
What?

GRAYSMITH
Rick Marshall. The same man you talked to called me...

(CONTINUED)
After he left, I went back through my files to check the name. I never cleared a "Rick Marshall" for handwriting.

INT. POLICE CAR -- DAY

Toschi sits with his new partner, eating lunch.

TOSCHI
You have any Animal Crackers?

His partner looks at him like he's high.

POLICE RADIO (O.S.)
Twenty-two call in IMMEDIATELY.
Land line only.

Toschi looks over to see a POLICE CALL BOX on the corner...

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE -- HOMICIDE UNIT -- DAY

Captain Lee picks up. Next to him, an excited DUFFY JENNINGS. INTERCUT with Toschi at the CALL BOX:

TOSCHI
It's me, what's up?

CAPTAIN LEE
I've got Jennings from the Chron-

Jennings snatches the phone out of his hand. Manic.

JENNINGS
Parker spotted it this morning, you gotta come in now and see it-

TOSCHI
See what?

JENNINGS
A new Zodiac letter and it mentions you.

TOSCHI
(to his partner)
We're gonna have to run some red lights.
Toschi's car SCREAMS through the streets, SIREN BLARING...

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - STAIRWELL -- DAY

Toschi enters at a sprint, taking stairs two at a time. Sees Captain Lee at the top, flanked by TWO MEN in SUITS. Before he reaches them:

TOSCHI
You got it with you?

Captain Lee hands it over. Toschi, reading aloud:

TOSCHI (CONT'D)
Dear, Editor, This is the Zodiac speaking. I am back with you. Tell herb caen I am here, I have always been here. That city pig toschi is good, but I am smarter and better he will get tired then leave me alone. I am waiting for a good movie about me. Who will play me. I am now in control of all things.

At the bottom of the page

Yours Truly,
O - guess
S.F.P.D. - 0

Toschi stares at the letter and looks up again. Noticing the men in suits for the first time. And Lee's expression. And the fact that the OTHER COPS PASSING them are EYEING HIM STRANGELY. Something's not right...

CAPTAIN LEE
Dave, these guys are from Internal Affairs. We need to talk.

ALTERNATE ENDING

CAPTAIN LEE (CONT'D)
Dave, these guys are from Internal Affairs, they're gonna need a handwriting sample.

TOSCHI
What, you don't think I wrote this?
INT. GRAYSMITH HOME -- NIGHT

Graysmith, sitting with his family, eating dinner. The television on in the other room. Faintly we hear the END OF THE NEWS INTRO THEME followed by:

(CONTINUED)
NEWSCASTER (O.S.)
Good evening. Our top story tonight, the San Francisco Police Department has confirmed that the man who called himself Zodiac and terrorized the Bay Area has broken his silence of fifty one months. In a letter claiming "I am back with you" the Zodiac makes no overt threats against the citizenry, and muses that his life and times would make the basis for a good movie. The terse sixty-six word missive also manages to mention both San Francisco Chronicle Columnist Herb Caen and the Department’s own Inspector David Toschi by name. Are they targets? Or is something more at work here? Our team coverage on the Cipher Slayer’s Return begins as Alan Freeman has more...

DURING THIS - Graysmith looks up reflexively. Then sees Melanie staring at him. He tries to be good. The kids, watching this tennis match of looks. Takes a bite.

GRAYSMITH
These carrots are delicious-

MELANIE
Oh, just go.

Graysmith bolts out of his chair and rushes into the living room. The kids follow. ON TV:

REPORTER
...Thank you, Eric. These personal mentions have drawn controversial accusations from at least one source tonight as San Francisco Chronicle columnist Armistead Maupin has charged that not only is the new letter be a forgery, but that it was written by Toschi himself - the very man charged to hunt the Killer.

Graysmith face pales.
REPORTR
Maupin, a respected author best known for his "Tales of the City" stories, has gone on the record saying he believes Toschi wrote the letter to drum up publicity for himself. And the theory is gaining strength. Sources wishing to remain anonymous within the Hall of Justice say that Toschi has always had a weak spot where publicity was concerned...

INT. TOSCHI KITCHEN -- NIGHT

TOSCHI'S WIFE, on the phone with Graysmith. Speaking in hushed tones so her husband doesn't overhear. INTERCUT:

TOSCHI'S WIFE
Maupin used David as a character in his column. David got a kick out of it so he wrote a couple anonymous letters asking for the character to be brought back. It was like writing fan mail to himself, that's all. But David didn't write that letter.

GRAYSMITH
I know he didn't. I'm sure this will all blow over-

(CONTINUED)
TOSCHI'S WIFE

Blow over?

She looks into the next room where Toschi sits. Staring out the window. DEVASTATED.

TOSCHI'S WIFE (CONT'D)

They kicked him out of Homicide.
They made him give his handwriting like some criminal-

GRAYSMITH

May I talk to him?

TOSCHI'S WIFE

No.

GRAYSMITH

Then could you ask if he ever investigated a man named Rick Marshall?

TOSCHI'S WIFE

That is all you can think about?

GRAYSMITH

I-

TOSCHI'S WIFE

Mr. Graysmith, Maupin works at your paper. We trusted you-

Cut off as TOSCHI takes the phone from her and HANGS IT UP. Exchanges a look with his wife. Then he turns and goes back to the living room, to sit with his drink.

INT. NAPA POLICE HEADQUARTERS -- DAY

Graysmith with Narlow.

NARLOW

Of course he doesn't want to talk, his career's over and your paper did it. I got half a mind to kick you out of here myself-

GRAYSMITH

Does the name Rick Marshall mean anything to you?

This stops Narlow cold. He goes and shuts his office door. Turns back to Graysmith, intrigued:

NARLOW

What are you after?

(CONTINUED)
GRAYSMITH
What have you got?

NARLOW
Hypothetically? You just named my favorite suspect in the whole case. Couple years ago, I was trying to get his prints? Handed him a photo to look at. He takes it, is about to hand it back when he stops and says "My goodness, I got fingerprints all over this." Then he wipes them off.

GRAYSMITH
Why wasn't he ever tested for handwriting?

NARLOW
Because they finally did get his prints and cleared him against the one in Stine's cab.

GRAYSMITH
(deflating)
So it's not him.

NARLOW
Maybe yes, maybe no.

GRAYSMITH
What do you mean?

NARLOW
Zodiac left gloves behind. If you have the foresight to wear gloves while committing a murder, how the hell do you leave a fingerprint?

GRAYSMITH
But it was in blood. They found it at the scene-

NARLOW
All it takes is one curious civilian or cop to reach out and touch something and boom—false print. Take a look at the crime scene photos, the cab wasn't that secure.

GRAYSMITH
That print was used to disqualify thousands of suspects.

(CONTINUED)
NARLOW
Which is why we also used handwriting.

GRAYSMITH
But not with Marshall.

NARLOW
SFPD had a handwritten sign from the window of his house. Looked nothing like the Z letters so they moved on.

GRAYSMITH
What if he didn't write the sign?

NARLOW
My thoughts exactly. Marshall was a Navy man, received code training. He used to work as a projectionist at a silent film theater-

Graysmith looks up.

GRAYSMITH
How much do you want to bet one of the films he projected was "The Most Dangerous Game"?

Silence. Narlow stares at him.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
How can I get a copy of Rick Marshall's handwriting?

NARLOW
Only three ways. One, get a warrant, which you can't - Two, get him to volunteer it which he won't-

GRAYSMITH
And three?

NARLOW
Get creative.

209 INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE THIRD FLOOR -- EVENING

Graysmith, on the phone with Morrill.

(CONTINUED)
MORRILL (O.S.)
I don't know what to tell you.
You get it, I'll analyze it.
Beyond that, you're on your own.

Graysmith runs his fingers through his hair.

GRAYSMITH
What about the man who came to see you? The one who called me-

MORRILL (O.S.)
Wallace Penny.

GRAYSMITH
Did he leave a number?

CUT TO:

209A Graysmith, dialing. The phone ringing. Then:

VOICE (O.S.)
Hello?

GRAYSMITH
Hi, this is Robert Graysmith.

VOICE (O.S.)
How'd you find me?

GRAYSMITH
I need a sample of Rick Marshall's handwriting.

VOICE (O.S.)
I told you, Vaughn is the key-

GRAYSMITH
Mr. Penny, if Rick Marshall's the Zodiac, I need his handwriting to confirm it. Can you help or not?

Silence. Then:

VOICE (O.S.)
Rick used to draw movie posters for the theater Vaughn worked at. I'll send one down.
Morrill stands over a table. Magnifying glass in hand, and
heaping glass of scotch by his side. Examining the movie
poster. Behind him, Graysmith waits, holding his breath.

MORRILL
I'll need more samples.

GRAYSMITH
But is it-

MORRILL
About as close as I've ever seen.
And that's why I need more. We
have to tread lightly here. We
are talking about implicating this
man as the Zodiac.

GRAYSMITH
I'll get more. I'll find Vaughn.
I'll track down Linda. It's
weird, I've tried the DMV,
Darlene's family - no one seems to
know where she is-

MORRILL
Mr. Graysmith? Most of the writing
matches the exemplar. In a way,
though, it's the part that doesn't
match that scares me the most.

GRAYSMITH
How do you mean?

MORRILL
The only letter on this poster
that absolutely, positively does
not match, is the letter "k".

Graysmith, brushing his teeth. Melanie, asleep. The PHONE
RINGS. Graysmith runs to pick it up.

GRAYSMITH
Hello?
(no response)
Hello? Who is this-

He stops. Listening. Someone is on the other end. Just
BREATHING... CLICK. The line goes dead. Graysmith hangs
up. Turns to see MELANIE awake. Staring at him. Scared.
Toschi, leaving for the day. He exits the front of the building with a couple of other cops, laughing and joking. Heading down the sidewalk when he hears:

    GRAYSMITH (O.S.)
    Inspector! Dave!

He turns to see Graysmith coming towards him. Looking a little more manic than usual. The other cops, sensing this guy's a little off. Toschi turns to them:

    TOSCHI
    I'll catch up with you.

They go. Toschi turns to Graysmith.

    TOSCHI (CONT'D)
    You stop calling my house. That is unacceptable, do you understand?

    GRAYSMITH
    (taken aback)
    I need your help to find Linda-

    TOSCHI
    (turning away)
    Jesus...

    GRAYSMITH
    We ran some handwriting samples-

    TOSCHI
    We?

    GRAYSMITH
    I'm working with Sherwood.

    TOSCHI
    Sherwood who got canned from Questioned Documents. Sherwood who drinks like Paul Avery now.

    GRAYSMITH
    He retired.

    TOSCHI
    Is that what he told you?

    GRAYSMITH
    Are you saying Sherwood's wrong?

    (CONTINUED)
TOSCHI
I'm saying stop calling my house.

He turns to go. Graysmith, desperate to keep the conversation alive, follows him down the street.

GRAYSMITH
We ran them on Rick Marshall-

TOSCHI
No, Robert.

GRAYSMITH
I know you don't think it's him-

TOSCHI
I mean, no, I'm not having this conversation.

GRAYSMITH
I think Marshall knew Darlene. I can't find Mageau or Linda, but I'm gonna talk to Bob Vaughn-

Toschi stops and turns to him. Amazed by the obsession.

TOSCHI
You need to get out of this.

GRAYSMITH
What?

TOSCHI
Robert, the Rick Marshalls of the world, the blind alleys will suck you dry.

GRAYSMITH
He said he wouldn't announce his murders anymore, he'd just do them!

TOSCHI
You know what the chances of arresting someone are now? Too many years gone, too much evidence lost.

GRAYSMITH
But-

(CONTINUED)
TOSCHI
I've been a cop for twenty five years, murder police for ten. What do you for a living?

GRAYSMITH
You know what I-

TOSCHI
You're a cartoonist.

GRAYSMITH
So what are you saying?

TOSCHI
Zodiac was my job. It's not yours.

Graysmith, hurt. Toschi, satisfied he's gotten the message. He turns to leave when

GRAYSMITH
He's still out there, Dave!

Toschi turns back. Looking at him.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
If you could just help me find Linda-

TOSCHI
I'm done with this. And I am done with you.

He turns on his heel and leaves.

214 OMITTED

214A EXT. GRAYSMITH APARTMENT -- AFTERNOON

Graysmith gets out of his car to see Melanie hurrying down the steps, harried. Before he can ask:

MELANIE
You were supposed to pick up the boys from soccer.

GRAYSMITH
Oh, God, I'm sorry, it completely slipped my mind-

MELANIE
They're at the Coes. They tried to call you at work.

(CONTINUED)
GRAYSMITH
I was with Dave-

MELANIE
So I had to leave my work, come home, I'm going to get them right now.

GRAYSMITH
I'll go-

MELANIE
I'm already here, Robert. I'm going.
(getting in the car)
You have to stop ignoring them.

GRAYSMITH
I don't ignore them-
(off her look)
I'm sorry. I'll spend more time with the kids. I promise.

INT. GRAYSMITH KITCHEN -- AFTERNOON

2 year old Margot sits in a highchair. Graysmith makes her a sandwich. DAVID and AARON sit at the table, cross referencing dates from BOOKS, Aaron on the MISSING/MURDERED LIST and David has the ASTROLOGICAL CHARTS.

AARON
What about September 26, 1970?

DAVID
I'm checking... What is it?

AARON
Lake Tahoe nurse goes missing.

David finds the date on the chart.

DAVID
Uhhh, one day before the Vernal Equinox. Dad?

GRAYSMITH
Mark it.

David turns to a LARGE BOARD and marks the nurse's name, date of disappearance, and celestial significance.

AARON
Got another on June 19, 1971...

(CONTINUED)
All right - that's gotta be close to Summer Solstice.

David flips through charts to check. He nods. Graysmith delivers Margot her sandwich.

You boys might not want to mention our "special project" to your mother.

How come you guys don't sleep in the same bed now?

This stops Graysmith cold. David gives his younger brother a dead arm. Before anyone can speak, the PHONE RINGS. Grateful for the distraction, Graysmith picks up.

Hello?

Mr. Graysmith, it's Ken Narlow. You called?

We've been cross-referencing lunar cycles with the Zodiac's timeline - more often than not each cycle since '69 corresponds with a letter, an attack, or get this - an unsolved homicide.

Who do you have working with you?

Graysmith glances at his sons.

Some colleagues.

Dad?

Hang on a moment.

(to Aaron)

Yeah, buddy?

What's this?

(Continued)
And he holds up the UNSOLVED 1969 CODE. Graysmith, staring at it and we...

CUT TO:
215A ON VIDEO: Graysmith sits awkwardly with an interviewer.

**August 9, 1979.** A NEWSCASTER OVER THIS:

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
In the decade since the Zodiac's second cipher was received, every federal agency has taken a crack at decoding it. But today, we are pleased to announce that where those agencies had failed, a cartoonist has succeeded.

Graysmith, cowed. The interviewer turns to him.

INTERVIEWER
How'd you do it?

GRAYSMITH
Ummm... A lot of books from the library...

PULLING BACK from the TV until we realize we're in

216 INT. BAR -- DAY

PAUL AVERY sits on a stool watching the report. OXYGEN TANK perched on the stool next to him. Smoking. A BLUE GIRLY DRINK in front of him. Cackling:

AVERY
The fucking library...

217 INT. GRAYSMITH'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Graysmith, on the phone. His hand, taking something down. It reads Linda - San Joaquin County Honor Camp.

GRAYSMITH
(into phone)
Thank you, so much!

He hangs up the phone and turns to see Melanie, ecstatic.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
I found Linda! You know why it's taken me so long? Because she's in prison! Isn't that great?

MELANIE
Why'd you do it?

(CONTINUED)
He looks at her, confused.

GRAYSMITH
Because she's the key! If she can identify Marshall-

MELANIE
I'm not talking about Linda whoever. You went on TV. You put your face out there for him to see...

Graysmith's face falls.

GRAYSMITH
You're being paranoid-

MELANIE
Who's been calling our house? At least once a week and you never let me answer.

GRAYSMITH
It's nobody.

MELANIE
Right.

A beat. Staring at her. She stares back.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
What's it going to take for you to be done with this, Robert?

GRAYSMITH
I don't have time to talk about this now, I have to meet Bob Vaughn-

MELANIE
Well, that's too bad, because we're talking about it. When's it going to be enough? When you catch him? When you arrest him?

GRAYSMITH
Be serious-

MELANIE
I am.

Silence. Graysmith, slowly:

(CONTINUED)
GRAYSMITH
I need to know who he is.
(pause)
I need to stand there and look him in the eye and know it's him.

MELANIE
And that's more important than your family's safety.

GRAYSMITH
I have to do this, Melanie.

MELANIE
Why?
(no response)
Look at me, Robert. Why?

GRAYSMITH
Because nobody else will.

She stares at him.

MELANIE
That's not good enough for me.

GRAYSMITH
I have to go, are you done?

She blinks. Stunned. Turns and walks out of the room.

EXT. AVENUE MOVIE THEATER -- NIGHT -- RAIN

The same address as in the phone book. Graysmith stands on the corner as a car pulls up. Very dark inside. All we see is a LIT CIGARETTE.

VOICE (O.S.)
Robert Graysmith?

Graysmith squints, he can't make out the man's features very well through the rain and darkness.

GRAYSMITH
Mr. Vaughn?

VAUGHN (O.S.)
You said you needed to talk to me?

GRAYSMITH
Yes. There's a coffee shop on the corner--
VAUGHN
Why don't you just come to my house?

The light of the cigarette exposes Vaughn's yellow smile.

GRAYSMITH
I wouldn't want to put you out-

VAUGHN
It's not far.
(tosses the smoke)
You can follow me.

EXT. VAUGHN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT -- RAIN

Graysmith follows the wild white haired Vaughn through the
door of his house and into a cluttered living room.

GRAYSMITH
Thank you for having me over-

CLICK. Vaughn LOCKS THE DOOR from the inside WITH A KEY.

VAUGHN
Not at all.

Vaughn takes a seat in an easy chair. Graysmith clears some
magazines off the couch and sits across from him.

GRAYSMITH
I wanted to ask you about a
particular film the Avenue may
have run when you were an organist
there. "The Most Dangerous Game".

VAUGHN
We've run it many times.

GRAYSMITH
How about in 1969?

VAUGHN
I'd have to check my records.
Why?

GRAYSMITH
You remember the Zodiac Killer?

Vaughn's face darkens.

(Continued)
VAUGHN
This is about Rick Marshall, isn't it?
GRAYSMITH
He worked as your projectionist?

VAUGHN
For a time. I don't have any occasion to correspond with him these days.

GRAYSMITH
There's a connection between one of the Zodiac attacks and the film—

VAUGHN
You mean the symbol.

Graysmith doesn't follow. Vaughn pulls out a coil of FILM LEADER.

VAUGHN (CONT'D)
The Zodiac symbol on film. On the countdown. It's trimmed off each reel before they're shown, but it always arrives with it. First time I saw it in the papers, I immediately thought of this.

Graysmith looks - STANDARD ACADEMY LEADER COUNTDOWN, which looks EXACTLY LIKE A ZODIAC SIGN.

GRAYSMITH
We got a tip that Rick left a film canister with you. Something he told you never to open.

VAUGHN
A "tip" about a "mysterious film canister"?

GRAYSMITH
Is it true?

Vaughn stares at him. Finally:

VAUGHN
Yes.

GRAYSMITH
Have you opened it?

VAUGHN
No.

GRAYSMITH
May I see it?

(CONTINUED)
VAUGHN
Rick took it back in 1972.

Graysmith's face falls.

VAUGHN (CONT'D)
And this "tip" is how you got it in your head that Rick's the Zodiac?

GRAYSMITH
That and the movie posters.

VAUGHN
Excuse me?

Graysmith fumbles out the folded poster.

GRAYSMITH
The handwriting on the posters Rick did. It's the closest we've ever come to a match-

VAUGHN
Rick didn't draw any posters.

GRAYSMITH
What? No, he did this one-

VAUGHN
Mr. Graysmith, I do the posters personally. That's my handwriting.


GRAYSMITH
I won't take any more of your time-

VAUGHN
Not at all. Before you go, I should check on when we played that film.

GRAYSMITH
I don't want to trouble you-

VAUGHN
No trouble. The records are just down in the basement.

A beat. Graysmith, echoing Toschi:
GRAYSMITH
Not many people have basements in California.

VAUGHN
(smiling)
I do.

INT. VAUGHN'S BASEMENT -- NIGHT

The door CREAKS OPEN. Vaughn and Graysmith stand at the top of a rickety wooden staircase. We hear WATER DRIPPING somewhere down in the darkness. Vaughn flicks a switch, a naked bulb snaps on somewhere below. Very little light.

Graysmith really doesn't want to be here. Vaughn leads him down the stairs, hand on his back as they walk.

VAUGHN
The very detailed posters I kept, but the one-off cheapos like that one there I just threw into the back alley... Here we go.

They finally stop by an overstuffed bookshelf. Vaughn pulls one handbound volume from it and begins flipping through the pages. Graysmith looks around, nervous.

The bulb above them flickers. Vaughn reaches up and tweaks it with a finger - the light goes constant again. Above Graysmith's head, the CEILING BOARDS CREAK. As though someone were WALKING AROUND UPSTAIRS.

GRAYSMITH
You live alone?

Vaughn nods absently, still searching the book.

VAUGHN
Here it is. "The Most Dangerous Game" - ran it May 1969. That would have been about nine weeks before the first Zodiac letter, correct?

Graysmith, still looking up at the ceiling.

GRAYSMITH
Yeah...

VAUGHN
You believe he saw the film at our theater and was inspired?

(CONTINUED)
More FOOTSTEP CREAKS from above.

GRAYSMITH
You're sure no one else is in the house?

VAUGHN
Would you like to go and check?

GRAYSMITH
That's all right. Thanks for everything.

Graysmith turns and heads for the stairs. Forcing himself to walk, not run. He climbs them, getting into...

221 INT. VAUGHN'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Graysmith emerges from the cellar. Looking around. No one. He hurries to the door, grasps the knob and... LOCKED. From the inside. Graysmith looks for the bolt. No way to unlock it. He's TRAPPED. The floorboards creak behind him and he SPINS TO SEE... VAUGHN. Standing in the cellar doorway. Slowly walking towards him. Menacing. Reaching into his pocket... and pulling out the KEY. He steps past Graysmith and unlocks the door for him.

VAUGHN
Have a good night.

222 EXT. GRAYSMITH APARTMENT -- DAWN

Graysmith exits his car, guzzling coffee, hair crazed. Just back from his meeting with Vaughn, mumbling:

GRAYSMITH
Maybe there are two of them. Marshall did the killing, Vaughn wrote the letters...

223 INT. GRAYSMITH APARTMENT -- DAWN

Graysmith steps inside and takes two steps before realizing - The HOUSE IS SILENT.

GRAYSMITH
Hello?

Nothing.
223A INT. BOYS' BEDROOM -- DAWN

He pokes his head into the room. Beds made. Not slept in.

223B INT. GRAYSMITH'S BEDROOM -- DAWN

The same. He stands there. Goes back downstairs.

223C INT. GRAYSMITH APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -- MORNING

He sits on the couch. His wife and children. GONE. Holding a note: "Took the kids to Mom's. Don't call."

He looks at the phone. Next to it a note in his own writing. One he took down before.

"Linda - San Joaquin County Honor Camp."

He stares at the two notes. Two paths. But he already knows the one he's taken. He picks up the Linda note...

224 OMITTED

225 OMITTED

225A INT. SAN JOAQUIN HONOR CAMP - LAUNDRY ROOM - AFTERNOON

Graysmith stands as a GUARD walks LINDA DEL BUONO up to him.

PRISON GUARD
You got five minutes.

225B INT. SAN JOAQUIN HONOR CAMP - MEETING ROOM - DAY

The Guard departs to a safe distance. Linda taking in Graysmith. He looks terrible. Linda, wary.

LINDA
What's this about?

GRAYSMITH
Zodiac.

LINDA
(lightning a smoke)
Figures. You got the look.

GRAYSMITH
What look?

LINDA
Like you got it bad for this.

(CONTINUED)
GRAYSMITH
I'm fine.

LINDA
Right.

GRAYSMITH
Tell me about this "painting party".

LINDA
Told the cops about it forever ago. Darlene always had lots of boys around, even though she was married. This one guy was weird, though. He used to bring her presents from Mexico. I don't know why she was friends with him. She once told me he'd killed somebody.

GRAYSMITH
Really?

LINDA
Yup. Maybe when he was in the service.

GRAYSMITH
The Navy?

LINDA
I think so.

GRAYSMITH
Was he into movies?

LINDA
He wasn't into people, I can tell you that. This party Darlene threw, people were supposed to show up, have beers, help paint. This dude shows up in a suit. He sat alone in a chair, didn't talk to anyone. Creeped me out. Darlene told me not to go near him. She was scared of him. Couple weeks later, she was dead.

She takes a long shaky drag on her cigarette.

GRAYSMITH
Do you remember his name?
LINDA
It was short. Like a nickname.
Rob or Stan or-

GRAYSMITH
Rick? Or Bob maybe?

She looks at him strangely. A long beat. Then:

LINDA
No. No, I don't think so.

GRAYSMITH
Rick or Bob - are you sure?

LINDA
Yeah.

GRAYSMITH
How can you be sure? Think hard-

LINDA (GETTING ANNOYED)
I am thinking hard-

He grasps her arm. The Guard starts moving towards them...

PRISON GUARD
Hey!

GRAYSMITH
Rick Marshall or Bob Vaughn, it was one of those names, wasn't it-

LINDA
No-

GRAYSMITH
Yes-

LINDA
Christ, mister, it wasn't Rick or Bob!

The Guard separates them. He stumbles back. Stands there. Wife gone. Life ruined.

GRAYSMITH
I'm sorry. I'll go.

He turns and walks away. She watches him go. Broken. Done. She blinks as it comes to her:

LINDA
It was Lee.
Graysmith stops in his tracks.

GRAYSMITH
Leigh?

He turns back to her.

LINDA
Yeah, Leigh. That sounds right...

EXT. VALLEJO POLICE DEPARTMENT -- EVENING -- (RAIN)

The rain, now pouring. Graysmith, standing outside of the department. Mulanax blocking his entry. Both men, shouting at each other over the weather:

GRAYSMITH
I just need to see one file-

MULANAX
I'm sorry, I talked to Dave Toschi. He said I shouldn't-

GRAYSMITH
I remember a name! I saw a name!

MULANAX
Mr. Graysmith, you need to go home-

GRAYSMITH
One file! Please! I've got the name!

MULANAX
(turning away)
I'm sorry...

GRAYSMITH
Please! This is all I've got!


GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
Please...

Mulanax steps aside and lets him in.

INT. MULANAX'S OFFICE -- NIGHT -- (RAIN)

Graysmith puts a piece of paper down on Mulanax's desk.
GRAYSMITH
Here! “Linda states that some of Darlene’s closest friends are LEE who used to bring Darlene presents from Tia Juana”–

MULANAX
So what?

GRAYSMITH
He knew her! Linda said Leigh! This is Leigh!

MULANAX
No, that’s one name in a file that contains hundreds. It’s nothing.

GRAYSMITH
But you said Dave Toschi–

MULANAX
Agrees with me. Our investigation into this suspect is over.

---

INT. GRAYSMITH'S HOME -- NIGHT -- (RAIN)

Rain pounds the roof. The contents of his ZODIAC INVESTIGATION now COVER THE EMPTY LIVING ROOM. Tacked up on every wall, papers all over the floor. Furniture pushed aside. It's overwhelming. Graysmith, on the floor, scraping through pages. Hasn't eaten or slept for days. MUMBLING to himself.

GRAYSMITH
You made a mistake somewhere, where were you weak, where did you make a mistake...

The phone rings. Graysmith picks up.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)

Hello?

(CONTINUED)
The BREATHING again. Slow and steady as ever. He SLAMS the phone down. Goes back to a file. Accidentally knocking over his coffee, dumping it all over the pages.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)

Goddammit!

Graysmith HEAVES the java soaked file across the room. It lands on the floor next to a pair of FEMALE FEET. Pan up to reveal MELANIE, standing in the open doorway.

MELANIE

You didn't return my calls.

Graysmith, stunned to see her.

GRAYSMITH

I've been kind of busy.

MELANIE

(looking around)

I can see. The book's going well?

He doesn't respond. They stare at each other. Two people who no longer know how to act around one another.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

I called the Chron...

GRAYSMITH

I'm not a cartoonist anymore.

MELANIE

I heard. When's the last time you ate something?

GRAYSMITH

Can I have that file back?

She walks over and hands it to him.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)

He made a mistake, he made a mistake...

It takes him a second to realize he's speaking aloud. Looking up at her. Like a child.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)

Nothing makes sense anymore...

She looks around the room at the mountain of papers.

(CONTINUED)
MELANIE

Did it ever?

GRAYSMITH

Yeah. It did.

It's clear he's talking about her.

MELANIE

Robert. It was just the date that never ended.

GRAYSMITH

Do you think-

MELANIE

No.

He just stares at her, numb. Then nods.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

But we have a daughter together. You have two good sons. They miss you.

GRAYSMITH

I...

(looking around)

I don't want them to see me like this...

MELANIE

Neither do I. But I will not let you lose them. Do whatever you have to. But finish this.

Silence. Melanie turns and walks out. Graysmith sits. Alone. Looking at the MOUNTAINS OF PAPERS. Years of his life, gone. He slowly starts collecting them. Cleaning up. Wiping the coffee stained papers off. One, a DMV SHEET on ARTHUR LEIGH ALLEN. And there it is, right at the top.

Graysmith stops. STARING at it. And we pull away from him, as he stands stock-still rooted to the ground...

INT. TOSCHI'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT -- (RAIN)

The rain has mellowed into a light shower. A TAPPING on the window. Faintly:

GRAYSMITH (O.S.)

(whispering)

Dave! Dave! He made a mistake!

(CONTINUED)
Toschi blinks awake. Next to him, his wife does the same.

TOSCHI'S WIFE
Is he actually here?

Toschi sits up. Graysmith seeing him, thrilled:

GRAYSMITH
He made a mistake! I'll meet you around front!

TOSCHI
Robert, don't-

But Graysmith's already going from the window, excited. Toschi, pulling on his robe...

TOSCHI (CONT'D)
Call SFPD, I'm gonna shoot him...

233A OMITTED

233B INT. TOSCHI HOME -- NIGHT -- (RAIN)

Toschi walking down the hall. Graysmith, now lightly knocking on the door.

TOSCHI
Go away, Robert!

GRAYSMITH (O.S.)
You need to hear this-

TOSCHI
No I don't!

GRAYSMITH (O.S.)
The birthday! The one time he was weak, the one time he gave something away!

TOSCHI
I'm calling the cops-

233C EXT. TOSCHI HOME -- NIGHT -- (RAIN)

GRAYSMITH
(screaming)
It's Arthur Leigh Allen!

A pregnant moment. Graysmith stares at the door. Then - tumblers in the lock. The DOOR SWINGS OPEN revealing

(CONTINUED)
TOSCHI

Where did you get that name?

Graysmith, surprised to be granted an audience. Still

GRAYSMITH

The call to Belli's house December '69, "I have to kill, today's my birthday"? It was his birthday! Arthur Leigh Allen was born on December 18th!

He slaps the wet DMV sheet up against the door. DOB 12/18/33. Toschi stares at it. A beat and then...

TOSCHI

Get in here.

233D INT. TOSCHI KITCHEN -- NIGHT -- (RAIN)

Toschi hands Graysmith a MUG of steaming coffee, then takes a seat across from him at the kitchen table.

TOSCHI

He wrote me, you know.

(pause)

2500 different suspects. And the only one who ever wrote me a letter is Leigh Allen.

GRAYSMITH

Sometimes killers want to help out-

TOSCHI

Robert, I know this.

(pause)

He was arrested for molestation in January '75. Sent me this when he got out.

He slides a LETTER across the table.

GRAYSMITH

"Sorry, I wasn't your man. If I can help out"- This is typewritten.

TOSCHI

Using a typewriter isn't a crime.

GRAYSMITH

He knew her, Dave. This was in the Vallejo files.

(CONTINUED)
He shows Toschi Linda's statement.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
Mulanax said he was your favorite suspect. That you spent two years on him. That nobody else came close-

TOSCHI
The evidence all said no. Sherwood disqualified him.

GRAYSMITH
The same Sherwood who drinks like Paul Avery now?

TOSCHI
What are you telling me?

GRAYSMITH
Sherwood's wrong.

Toschi looks down at the Date of Birth. Then back up to Graysmith.

TOSCHI
I'll show you mine, you show me yours.

233E EXT. DINER -- DAWN

A misty morning. On a tiny coffee shack below the bridge...

233F INT. DINER -- MORNING

Graysmith and Toschi, in a booth. Empty breakfast plates pushed aside, SURROUNDED by both the SFPD and GRAYSMITH'S ZODIAC FILES. At this all night. Graysmith, gesturing to SFPD handwriting reports.

GRAYSMITH
...you have Sherwood in writing saying "I'm sorry this just won't work", and Terry Pascoe-

TOSCHI
His protege-

GRAYSMITH
Fine, his protege, but a handwriting expert saying "Do not disqualify this suspect on the basis of handwriting". These two cancel each other out-

(CONTINUED)
TOSCHI
No, because it was Sherwood's case. He was the head of Questioned Documents. If it went to trial, all the defense would have to do is call Sherwood to the stand - and there was no way to get Allen into court in the first place because there was no evidence.

GRAYSMITH
But you have him seen with ciphers, the military bootprints, the same size shoes and gloves, "The Most Dangerous Game", the Zodiac watch-

TOSCHI
Robert-

GRAYSMITH
-the background with school kids, the misspellings of "Christmas", the bloody knives in the car, the connections to the murder scenes-

TOSCHI
It's all circumstantial. Stine's shirt, his wallet, his keys - we should have found one of those things in that trailer. We didn't.

He sighs, running his hand through his hair. Graysmith and he begins digging through the folders.

GRAYSMITH
Hang on a second.

TOSCHI
What?

GRAYSMITH
The trailer, I saw- (finding it)
Here. From Catherine Allen - "Leigh cleaned out his trailer Friday after work and took it to Santa Rosa Saturday August 7, 1971."

TOSCHI
Yeah?

(Continued)
GRAYSMITH
You interviewed him at the refinery Wednesday August 4th.
(pause)
He's cleaning out his trailer and moving it to a different county 48 hours after you interviewed him.

Toschi stares at him.

GRAYSMITH (CONT'D)
You have to look at this stuff side by side.

TOSCHI
What do you mean?

GRAYSMITH
Allen and the Zodiac. Their timelines. When was the first murder in Vallejo?

TOSCHI
Christmas of 68.

GRAYSMITH
Eight months after Allen's fired for molesting children and his family discovers he was a pedophile. When did the letters begin?

TOSCHI
July of 69.

GRAYSMITH
After the second murder and they continue until you interview Allen. Did any letters after that contain swatches of Stine's shirt?

TOSCHI
No.

GRAYSMITH
Because he dumped it. He got scared. Because you went to see him at work. When's the next time Zodiac wrote?

TOSCHI
Not until January of 1974.

(CONTINUED)
GRAYSMITH
Which means he's silent for three years after you talk to him. But by '74 he feels safe again. Everyone's moved off Allen as a suspect. So Zodiac writes three new letters - January, May, and July in '74.

TOSCHI
But then the letters stopped again.

GRAYSMITH
What happened to Allen?

TOSCHI
He was arrested. January of '75. They sent him to Atascadero. We didn't get a single letter while he was in there.

GRAYSMITH
And when is he released?

TOSCHI
August of '77.

GRAYSMITH
He gets out, writes you, and then? We get our first new Zodiac letter in four years.

(paused)
What do you think?

Toschi leans forward.

TOSCHI
I've got one question.

Graysmith looks at him, expectantly.

TOSCHI (CONT'D)
Zodiac had to have known Darlene Ferrin, right?

GRAYSMITH
Because of the phone calls on the night of her murder, that's right.

TOSCHI
And because of this report, we know Darlene knew a man named "Lee".

(CONTINUED)
GRAYSMITH

Yes.

TOSCHI

All coincidence aside, how can you be sure that Leigh Allen is the "Lee" in the report? Vallejo's a small town but it's not that small. How do you know they're connected?

Silence. Graysmith stares at him.

GRAYSMITH

This is a case that's covered both Northern and Southern California with suspects and victims spread out across hundreds of miles, would you agree?

TOSCHI

Yes.

GRAYSMITH

Allen lived in his mother's basement on Fresno Street. Darlene worked as a waitress at the Vallejo House of Pancakes. (pause) Leigh Allen lived less than fifty yards away.

A long beat.

TOSCHI

Christ.

GRAYSMITH

Do you think it's him?

TOSCHI

The prints and handwriting-

GRAYSMITH

I'm not asking the cop, I'm asking my friend - do you think it's him?

TOSCHI

Yes. (pause)

But we could never prove it.

(continues)
GRAYSMITH
Just because you can't prove something doesn't mean it's not true.

Toschi looks at him. Nods.

TOSCHI
I gotta get going. I start in burglary today.
(pause)
Let me buy you breakfast.

Toschi puts some money on the table. Rises. Heads for the door...

GRAYSMITH
Dave? When did you know?

Toschi turns back.

TOSCHI
The minute I laid eyes on him.

EXT. ACE HARDWARE -- PARKING LOT -- MORNING

Just opening for business. A car pulls into the lot. Graysmith.

INT. ACE HARDWARE -- MORNING

Graysmith enters the store. Looking for someone. A HEAVY BALD CLERK, stocking. We see him only from behind...

GRAYSMITH
Excuse me?

The clerk turns and flashes a smile. His nameplate reads "LEE". He wears a ZODIAC WATCH on his wrist.

They stand three feet apart. Graysmith stares at him. Looking in the eye... Allen's smile fades. Realizing why Graysmith's there. He frowns. His face transforms. And we see how terrifying this man really could be. They hold each other's gaze for what seems like forever...

July 4th, 1989 – Vallejo, California. AN AMERICAN FLAG fluttering in the breeze. Twilight. The sun, giving way to a crisp summer evening. The PARKING LOT where Darlene Ferrin died. Twenty years later. Graysmith sits on the hood of his car, sipping a Diet Coke. Older and grayer.

BAWART (O.S.)
Twenty years, huh? Darlene and Mike – right there.

Graysmith looks up to see GEORGE BAWART ambling towards him. Pointing at the spot the Corvair parked.

BAWART (CONT'D)
Kind of amazing, a guy shoots a couple of farm kids, writes some letters, and we’re still talking about it. Robert Graysmith, I presume.

GRAYSMITH
Sergeant Bawart?

BAWART
Call me George. I took over for Jack Mulanax a couple years back.

GRAYSMITH
How’d you know it was me?

Bawart holds up a copy of the book.

BAWART
Your cover photo.
(looking around)
So Mike Mageau never made a positive ID on anyone, huh?

GRAYSMITH
I could never find him.

BAWART
You talk to his family?

Graysmith looks at him. Defensive.

GRAYSMITH
Why’d you ask me here, Sergeant?

(CONTINUED)
BAWART
Wanted to tell you something.
Couldn't do it over the phone.
(pause)
We've reopened the case on Arthur
Leigh Allen.

On Graysmith. His vindication.

GRAYSMITH
Really?

BAWART
Really.
(pause)
We don't want that getting around-

GRAYSMITH
I understand-

BAWART
It's your book that did it.

A beat as this sinks in.

GRAYSMITH
(flustered)
I never meant for it- I mean, I
got some of it wrong-

BAWART
You got a lot of it right, too.
(chuckling; to the
book)
I don't know how a civilian found
out half this stuff - hell, as a
cop I probably don't want to know,
but things are moving again. We
found Robert Emmet the hippie.
(off Graysmith's
look)
Yup, Robert Emmet Rodifer, went to
high school with Leigh, he's over
in Germany. We're also onto a guy
named Spinelli - claims Allen told
him he was gonna go to San
Francisco and shoot a cabbie.

GRAYSMITH
Seriously?

BAWART
Seriously. There's one more
thing.

(CONTINUED)
He takes a step closer to Graysmith. Confidentially:

BAWART (CONT'D)
Allen's sick. He's got diabetes, maybe terminal. So even if we get him - he's already got. You understand?

GRAYSMITH
But you have to do it anyway, right?

BAWART
Hell, no one else will. Any case, I thought you deserved to know.

GRAYSMITH
I appreciate it. Good luck.

He offers a hand and Bawart shakes it.

BAWART
Hey, you wanna go grab a bite, talk the case a bit?

Tempting - the old Graysmith would have said yes in a heartbeat. But he smiles as he realizes his answer is

GRAYSMITH
Not really. But thanks.

BAWART
Mr. Graysmith, thank you.

Graysmith smiles. Gets into his car. Bawart watches as he drives away.
CHOOM! A PLANE coming in for a landing...


Bawart strides up to a SECURITY GUARD. They're expecting him. He's led to a PRIVATE ROOM at the back of the airport...

Bawart alone. Opening the briefcase. Extracting several files, a well dog-eared copy of Graysmith's book, a MANILA ENVELOPE, and a HOGAN HIGH YEARBOOK...

MIKE MAGEAU being led by security to the private room. Bedraggled hair, skittish face. Life has not been kind...

The door opens and Bawart looks up from a YEARBOOK PHOTO of Young Mike Mageau, to see the real version standing in front of him. He rises, extending a hand.

BAWART
Mr. Mageau, thank you for seeing me.

MIKE
You're the one I talked to on the phone?

BAWART
Yes, sir, George Bawart, Vallejo PD, I took over the case from Jack Mulanax.

MIKE
It's been twenty two years, I don't know how I can help you...

(CONTINUED)
BAWART
This is just a formality. I'm going to show you a group of photographs. The person that shot you may or may not be among this group of photographs. You don't have to pick anybody out just because I'm showing you these pictures. Do you understand?

MIKE
Yes, sir, I do.

Bawart picks up the envelope and extracts a PHOTO ARRAY from it. LEIGH ALLEN'S FACE among five others. He places the photo array down on the table.

Mike frowns, staring down at the different pictures...

BAWART
Take your time. If you don't recognize anyone that's okay.

Mike stares at the pictures for 15 seconds. Then:

(CONTINUED)
MIKE

That's him.

Mike stabs his finger down at a picture. A YOUNG ARTHUR LEIGH ALLEN. Bawart blinks.

BAWART

How sure are you?

MIKE

Pretty sure. He had a round face like this guy.

He points to the picture of a SECOND MAN.

BAWART

Are you identifying this second person as well?

MIKE

No, no, just that he has a round face like that. It's this man.

He taps the photo of Allen.

BAWART

On a scale of one to ten, how sure are you?

MIKE

It's at least an eight. Only other time I saw this face was on July 4, 1969. I'm very sure that's the man who shot me.

CUT TO:

A BLACK SCREEN.

Silence. The following words appear:

In 1991 Arthur Leigh Allen's basement was searched by the Vallejo Police Department. In it were found bomb diagrams, explosive devices, 7 handguns, 4 rifles, and codebooks.

In order to secure the warrant, Don Cheney, the man who first implicated Allen as the Zodiac, was given a polygraph test. He passed with flying colors.

These words fade. Replaced by:

(CONTINUED)
Following Mike Mageau's identification of Allen as the Zodiac Police were scheduled to meet on August 27, 1992 to discuss arresting him for the murders.

Allen suffered a fatal heart attack one day before this meeting took place. No arrest was ever made.

These words fade. Replaced by:

Inspector David Toschi retired from the San Francisco Police Department in 1989. He was completely cleared of all charges that he wrote the 1978 Zodiac letter.

Politically destroyed by the allegation, however, he never rose above the rank of Inspector.

These words fade. Replaced by:

In 2001 DNA tests were run on several of the Zodiac envelopes. The San Francisco lab claimed DNA found under the stamps did not match Arthur Leigh Allen's.

Some believe these tests exonerated Arthur Leigh Allen. Others believe Zodiac would not have licked his own stamps since saliva typing tests were already common in 1969.

In 2004, the San Francisco Police Department officially deactivated the Zodiac investigation. The Zodiac cases in Vallejo, Napa, and Solano County remain open to this day.

These words fade. Replaced by:

Today Robert Graysmith lives in San Francisco and enjoys a healthy relationship with his children. Many people believe he was wrong in his conclusions on the Zodiac case.

The anonymous phone calls he was receiving abruptly ceased in 1992. Not a single one has occurred since Allen's death.

ROLL CREDITS

FADE OUT