

FORCE UNDER COLOR

A Play in Three Acts

by

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CHARACTERS

DET/SGT WILLIE GLEASON	Seasoned homicide detective, age, mid sixties
DEPUTY ROY PERRY	Gleason's homicide bureau partner, 30 years old
DEPUTY EMIL WESTPHAL	Deputy charged with assaulting his prisoner, age 30
DEPUTY DALE KELSO	Deputy Sheriff and partner of force allegation suspect Westphal, 32 years old
CORBIN ASHFORD	Victim/Suspect who suffered beating from Westphal
RACHEL WESTPHAL	Westphal's wife, attractive, 30+ years old
CAPTAIN WALDO WARE	L.A. Sheriff's Department Homicide Bureau Commander, about 60 years old.
BILL BARRETT	Deputy Sheriff, friend of Westphal, age 30s
JACK FUEGLIN	Homicide detective and friend of Gleason, age mid 50s

FORCE UNDER COLOR

PAUL FLOOD Attorney for Kelso, age 30 to 40
TWO YOUNG COPS Bar patrons, ages, late 20s (non-speaking)
HARDBELLY Non-speaking bartender, age 50s

TIME

A four month period in the early 1980s.

ACT I

Scene 1 Interview room at Colima Sheriff's Station
Scene 2 Westphal's living room

ACT II

Scene 1 Captain Waldo Ware's office
Scene 2 Code Four Bar, that evening.
Scene 3 A room at Criminal Courts Building, one month later.

ACT III

FORCE UNDER COLOR

Scene 1 Attorney Room, Hall of Justice Jail, two months later.
Scene 2 Code Four Bar, six months later.

ACT I

Scene 1

SETTING

An interview room at Colima
Sheriff's Station

AT RISE

SERGANT WILLIE GLEASON and DEPUTY
ROY PERRY sit at a table. Both are
looking through their notebooks.

GLEASON

(holds notebook out as though
hard to read)

Well, here we go. Roy, my boy, why don't you see if the
good Deputy Westphal is up to seeing us?

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(with this, PERRY walks to the door, exits and returns with DEPUTY WESTPHAL

PERRY

Have a seat Westphal.

GLEASON

(motions to PERRY)

Roy Perry, I'm Sergeant Gleason. Do you recognize us?

WESTPHAL

(looks at both)

I don't, should I?

GLEASON

No, you shouldn't. Why we're here I don't have a clue. We're assigned to Homicide...rolled out here from the Hall of Justice because some potentate decided we should deal with this instead of your station detectives. Can you tell that we're not jazzed?

WESTPHAL

(nods)

I guess.

GLEASON

(checks notes)

You work with a Deputy Kelso?

WESTPHAL

Unhuh.

GLEASON

How long?

WESTPHAL

About eight months, give or take.

GLEASON

Get along well.

WESTPHAL

Good enough.

GLEASON

(checks notes again)

He's a...a lateral transfer from Arcadia P.D.?

WESTPHAL

(smiling)

Yeah.

GLEASON

Not exactly the crime capitol of the world.

WESTPHAL

(broad smile)

Colima is in there somewhere too.

PERRY

You worked Greystone Station for quite a few years, saw a lot of action.

WESTPHAL

Too much.

PERRY

I see in your file that you were wounded in that truck stop shootout.

WESTPHAL

(points to thigh)

Through and through, it healed well.

GLEASON

In fact, you were involved in four other shootings at Greystone.

WESTPHAL

It's a hot station.

GLEASON

You have a batch of commendations.

WESTPHAL

I don't think this get-together involves my commendations.

GLEASON

(studies Westphal)

No, it doesn't. Tell us what it does involve?

(WESTPHAL stares at them,
back and forth, but says
nothing)

PERRY

Tell us about last night.

(WESTPHAL stares at the floor)

GLEASON

You were a Ranger, correct?

(WESTPHAL nods)

GLEASON (cont'd)

Most cops I know with military backgrounds became good
cops, some of them great cops.

WESTPHAL

Yeah, it happens.

GLEASON

There's a level of discipline...

WESTPHAL

I'm sorry, but this small talk is not something I'm
comfortable with. Can we cut to the chase?

GLEASON

Sure. What the fuck happened last night?

(WESTPHAL is clearly troubled
and seems agitated, but remains
silent)

GLEASON (cont'd)

Need some help? Right now the charge line is going to read
Force Under Color of Authority, False Police Report,
Obstruction of Justice, Failure to...

WESTPHAL

With all due respect, I wish to consult with my attorney.

GLEASON

Are you sure that's what you want to do?

(WESTPHAL nods. GLEASON folds his notebook nods to WESTPHAL and motions to the door.

GLEASON (cont'd)
We're through...for now.

(WESTPHAL leaves the room)

GLEASON (cont'd)
I knew that was coming. So, all we're going to get to work on is what comes out of Ashford's mouth, not something good cases are built on...Roy, why don't we see what Kelso has to tell us.

(PERRY leaves the room and returns with Deputy KELSO)

GLEASON
(without looking up)
Sit down.

(KELSO takes a seat)

GLEASON (cont'd)
My partner, Roy Perry, I'm Sergeant Gleason...
(looks at notes)
and you are Dale Kelso, worked Arcadia P.D. before coming into the Department.

KELSO
Yes sir, I was a lateral transfer.

GLEASON
Drop the sir shit. Did you work with any other deputy at Colima Station besides Deputy Westphal?

KELSO
Yes, I did, for a short while and then I was assigned to Westphal for training.

GLEASON
What kind of crime did you deal with in Arcadia?

KELSO

Drunk drivers, mall shoplifters, some burglaries and car thefts.

GLEASON

Not too many felonies?

KELSO

Some, not too many.

GLEASON

Sex crimes?

KELSO

A few.

GLEASON

Vehicle pursuits?

KELSO

Rarely.

(PERRY becomes unnerved by
GLEASON'S bizarre questions,
his glances at GLEASON reflect
this)

GLEASON

How about obstructing or resisting arrest?

KELSO

I remember a few, some of...

GLEASON

(interrupts)

You never really cut your teeth as a cop, did you?

(KELSO sours somewhat)

And then you're assigned to a deputy who survived five shootings in as many years. What did you think about that?

KELSO

I didn't really think about it. I know he has a great background, and I'm happy he's my trainer.

GLEASON

Do you feel comfortable with Westphal's capability as a cop?

KELSO

(confident)

Yes, I do. He's a...he's a top cop.

(KELSO seems embarrassed by his remark)

GLEASON

Top cop? That's an interesting word to describe him. So, you hold him pretty high?

KELSO

Yes, I hold him very high.

GLEASON

You don't know us, do you?

KELSO

I heard you're from Homicide.

GLEASON

(animated)

Homicide? Why the hell is someone from Homicide working an excessive force case?

(KELSO shakes his head, confused)

GLEASON (cont'd)

Don't know? Because we have a force policy that states among other things, that we don't use prisoners as punching bags.

(draws closer to KELSO)

Now, let's get this over. From all we've heard thus far, you were nothing more than a spectator to what happened last night...

(to PERRY)

Which doesn't surprise me considering his background.

(KELSO is shaking his head)

Why are you shaking your head? You weren't there?

KELSO

I was there! Of course, I was there. I'm not going...

GLEASON

(interrupts)

Let me be absolutely blunt with you. Right now, you're walking the fence on a handful of felonies, some of which...

KELSO

(interrupts)

I want a lawyer.`

GLEASON

(sits back, smiling)

Were you told to say that?

KELSO

No.

GLEASON

Do you feel you are in jeopardy?

(KELSO doesn't answer)

Do you think you did something wrong?

(KELSO bows his head)

Frankly, at this point, you appear to be nothing more than a bystander, which troubles me in a way. Cops generally aren't bystanders to anything when duty calls. You must have had a hard time unbuckling your seat belt so you could...what's the word...intervene. Oh, I didn't ask you that. Did you try to stop the attack?

(no response from KELSO)

You know, I'd advise you of your rights if I suspected you of something. Do I need to do that?

KELSO

I'm not saying anything until I get to talk with my lawyer.

GLEASON

Who is your lawyer?

KELSO

I don't know yet.

GLEASON

You want to talk with someone you don't know yet. Can you tell me why you want to do that?

(to PERRY)

Roy, can you think of a reason why Dale would want to talk with a lawyer he doesn't know yet?

PERRY

Sure, a false police report is a felony the last time I checked. Obstruction of Justice is in there somewhere.

KELSO

I'm not obstructing anything. It's my right.

GLEASON

Yeah, you're right, it is just that...your right...a strange decision. Right now, I suspect you of nothing. Soon we'll have a good rundown on last night's activities from a guy, I've been told, who runs around giving concussions to transvestites. Are you willing to have us proceed with his version of events?

KELSO

(now nervous and fidgety)

I...I'm still asserting it.

GLEASON

To protect Westphal?

KELSO

I want a lawyer, that's all I'm saying.

GLEASON

(angry)

Smarten up, God damn it! Some piece of shit got his face rearranged by your partner, and if buying into a "Code of Silence" is your way of being a "Good Cop", you'll wonder what hit you when a slew of indictments come down nailing your ass to the wall! Take your sorry ass out of my sight, and start thinking about your future!

(KELSO quickly leaves)

PERRY

You pushed a little on the lawyer thing.

GLEASON

Hell yes I did. He has nothing to fear because he was just what I said he was, a spectator.

PERRY

Yeah, a spectator who has to live with what he says.

GLEASON

(glares at PERRY)

I'd buy that if both were guilty! This Kelso is grabbing onto something we're not aware of. Go see if Ashford is still here.

(PERRY leaves as GLEASON sits back in his chair and stares at the ceiling, he starts humming the DRAGNET THEME. PERRY returns with ASHFORD. His face is bandaged and his eyes blackened. He is wearing bloodied street cloths)

GLEASON

Take a seat Ashford.

(GLEASON looks him over)

Jesus! What a mess! And don't tell me I should see the other guy.

ASHFORD

(points to his face)

This is a piece of work by one of your God damned deputies!

GLEASON

Not my deputy! To clear your mind, we don't work here. We're assigned to the Hall of Justice downtown. That sharp looking guy next to me is Roy Perry and I'm Sergeant Gleason. We both work homicide.

ASHFORD

Homicide? What the fuck! The fucker died? He couldn't have died!

GLEASON

Who couldn't have died?

ASHFORD

The dude in the bar...The Polyanna.

GLEASON

And what's your connection to the dude in The Polyanna?

(ASHFORD is confused and looks back and forth between them)

ASHFORD

I think you guys are looking for someone else.

GLEASON

No, we're looking for you. You took some licks from a Deputy Westphal.

ASHFORD

(still confused)

What does homicide have to do with it?

GLEASON

I wish we could answer that. It isn't our idea, but here we are.

(studies ASHFORD'S face)

You don't look so good.

ASHFORD

You wouldn't look no good neither if some sadistic prick put you through a meat grinder.

GLEASON

Why would he do that?

ASHFORD

I just told you, he's a sadistic prick.

GLEASON

Yeah, but sadistic prick doesn't read well in reports.

(looks at PERRY)

Roy, you've been very quiet, perhaps you can help clear things up.

(GLEASON looks at his notebook)

PERRY

We're assigned this case because a deputy went over the line in arresting you.

ASHFORD

That's a cute way of putting it.

PERRY

Whatever, but let's hear about why he was arresting you in the first place.

ASHFORD

I had some trouble at The Polyanna.

PERRY

Did the trouble find you or did you seek it out?

ASHFORD

I don't know nothin about that. I don't know what that means.

GLEASON

What it means, Mr. Ashford, is that we want you to explain what the fuck went on at The Polyanna Bar.

ASHFORD

Oh. I mixed it up with a faggot.

GLEASON

(grimaces)

Faggot? Jesus, man, that went out with Hoola Hoops. Try to dress up your "mixing it up" so we can understand it.

ASHFORD

I was minding my own business when this guy comes in wearing a dress.

GLEASON

You knew that guy was a guy even though he was wearing a dress?

ASHFORD

When he ordered a drink, he sounded like a guy, and he had a Adam's Apple as big as a apple.

GLEASON

We'll take your professional opinion on the guy being a guy. What happened next?

ASHFORD

I told him to take a hike.

GLEASON

Oh! I didn't know you owned the bar.

ASHFORD

No, I don't own the bar, I go there a lot, and this dude weren't no regular. I said, "Go drink somewheres else."

GLEASON

What did the man in a dress do?

ASHFORD

He told me to buzz off.

GLEASON

Obviously, you didn't buzz off.

ASHFORD

No, it got physical then.

GLEASON

Tell us about that.

ASHFORD

(hesitates)

Maybe I should talk with my lawyer.

GLEASON

You can if you want to. We're not here to deal with that. We're here to deal with you getting thumped by Deputy Westphal. We want background on why you look the way you do.

ASHFORD

(ponders it, then)

I grabbed him by the hair, but it pulled off, so I grabbed him by the back of his dress and was dragging him to the door. He swung at me.

GLEASON

I'm not surprised.

ASHFORD

Well, that's when I knocked him on his ass.

GLEASON

Tell us how he got a concussion and a broken right wrist.

ASHFORD

Huh? That bad? Too bad, when he swung on me it was self defense from then on. There ain't no one can tell me no different.

GLEASON

I can tell you this, you are good with double negatives.

(this confuses ASHFORD)

Dragging someone around by the hair tends to nullify that position but enough of your evening out. Tell us why Deputy Westphal would batter you while you were in handcuffs?

ASHFORD

I already told you, he's a sadistic...

GLEASON

(spits it out)

Let us determine that, Goddamn it! What led up to the beating?

ASHFORD

(smiling)

No way, no how, I'm through talking. Talk to my lawyer.

GLEASON

(broad smile)

Really? Obviously there is something more and you don't want it out there. I should tell you...that's what we're good at.

ASHFORD

Take you're best shot, I'm suing big time.

GLEASON

(folds his notebook)

Lawyer or not, I think we'll be talking again

(turns to PERRY)

Time to fold our tent.

(PERRY leads ASHFORD out the door leaving GLEASON alone)

GLEASON

(to himself)

What were the buttons?

(as though ASHFORD was still
there)

How the fuck did you get to Westphal? Hmm.

(PERRY returns)

PERRY

I get the impression you're thinking Ashford set the whole thing up.

GLEASON

That's why you're my partner, Pahdnah! The beating was something Ashford wanted to happen. How he managed that is the puzzle.

(GLEASON wearily gets up
and puts his hand on PERRY'S
shoulder as they walk slowly
to the door)

GLEASON (cont'd)

Why doesn't this seem to bother you as much as it troubles me?

PERRY

How do you know it doesn't bother me?

GLEASON

(stops and looks PERRY in
the eye?)

I can see that it doesn't. I see it in your eyes.

PERRY

I can see in your eyes...that you need Clear Eyes, big time.

BLACKOUT

ACT I

FORCE UNDER COLOR

Scene ii

A Day Later

SETTING

The living room at Westphals's residence, a neat, but ordinary arrangement of chairs, sofas and tables, etc.

AT RISE

RACHEL WESTPHAL enters through a door, tidies a chair, looks the room over. a DOOR BELL RINGS.

(as RACHEL opens the door, SGT. GLEASON and DEP. PERRY enter)

GLEASON

I'm sorry for the return visit. It won't take long
(motions to PERRY)
You may remember my partner, Roy Perry.

(RACHEL nods as they all sit. PERRY seems to study RACHEL)

GLEASON (cont'd)

We talked with your husband at Colima Station. Frankly, he wasn't helpful. We thought maybe you could give us some insights on his frame of mind.

RACHEL

What, no search warrant?
(looks away, then back)
Some insights? To help you sink my husband?

GLEASON

We have nothing but the suspect's statement. We need help, and although I'm surprised you agreed to see us, I'm happy you did.

RACHEL\

I'm as confused as you are. I'd like to know what's going to happen. Do you have any idea what this is doing to our kids?

GLEASON

I know it's not easy...

RACHEL

(interrupts)

No, it isn't. They're at the age where...Oh forget it! What do you want?

PERRY

Mrs. Westphal, all we want is the truth.

RACHEL

Yeah, I've heard that line before.

GLEASON

What your husband did last night came out of left field. Something caused him to snap.

RACHEL

(hesitates)

We...we haven't been getting along for awhile.

(starts losing it)

Actually for nearly a year...or two.

GLEASON

Is that why your husband arranged to get transferred to Colima?

RACHEL

(thinks about it)

I thought it was about me, but it was for the kids. He needed them as much as they needed him.

GLEASON

You have just the two?

RACHEL

(shakes her head)

Stanley and Jake.

GLEASON

Were the two of you trying to repair the marriage?

RACHEL

He talked about it.

(cold)

I went along.

(with some emotion)

I needed a roof over my head!

GLEASON

You were not interested in getting your marriage back on track?

RACHEL

There was damage...too much damage.

(looks directly at GLEASON)

Are you married?

GLEASON

Yes.

(clears his throat)

Forty-two years.

RACHEL

(weighs it)

That's a long time.

GLEASON

My marriage is in shambles. We hardly speak.

RACHEL

Oh..that's too bad.

GLEASON

(changes tack)

Listen, we are not looking for ways to sink your husband. The beating is a total mystery to us. Knowing about things he may have had on his mind could help us.

RACHEL

For the past few months he's been...well suspicious. I've never seen him like that.

GLEASON

Give us an example.

RACHEL

He searches my purse, the phone bills, and sometimes he shows up when I'd least expect him to...even when he's working.

GLEASON

Was there a reason for him to be suspicious?

RACHEL

What do you mean?

GLEASON

Rachel, you know what I mean.

RACHEL

(looks aside, then)

I'm not going to talk about that.

GLEASON

About what?

RACHEL

Leave the subject alone!

GLEASON

We'll find out eventually.

RACHEL

(sarcastic)

Then you'll know, won't you!

GLEASON

(picks up a photo from the table)

How old are your children?

RACHEL

Stanley is nine, and Jake is two, why do you ask?

GLEASON

Seven years apart. Any reason for that?

RACHEL

(rages)

Reason for what? I have to have a reason for having children seven years apart?

GLEASON

Is Jake you husband's child?

(PERRY winces at this)

RACHEL

(jumps up)

Get the fuck out of my house!

(GLEASON slowly rises. PERRY is stunned. He gets up as well)

GLEASON

We're not known for asking delicate questions.

RACHEL

That question is insulting. I'm going to report you!

GLEASON

Then I guess I should clam up.

(GLEASON nods to PERRY)

PERRY

Mrs. Westphal, have you ever been to the Banboo Club?

RACHEL

(eyes wide, she appears stunned)

What?

(looks away)

I may have...ah...maybe a few...what does that have to do with anything?

PERRY

It's just a question.

(waits)

Well?

RACHEL

None of your God-damned business!

(venting)

Am I under suspicion here?

PERRY

No, you are not. We're trying to figure out why your husband threw his career in the mud and jumped on the fast train to prison.

RACHEL

(almost light-hearted)

He's going to prison?

GLEASON

(breaks his silence)

Enough dancing!

(looks at PERRY)

Where did this Bamboo Club question come from?

PERRY

(points a finger at RACHEL)

I did a little research at Colima Station. September 9, 1979. You witnessed a bar fight. A guy was stabbed. You were with...?

RACHEL

(caught)

I was there, yes, what about it?

PERRY

And you were with...?

RACHEL

(angry)

You seem to have all the answers, you tell me!

PERRY

Whoever it was threw out a bogus name and address. But one thing is certain. He wasn't your husband.

RACHEL

(uncertain, but getting composure)

What of it? Emil wanted to get our marriage back on track and I wasn't for it.

(looks at GLEASON)

Now that the cat's out of the bag, I just...

(frustrated)

Oh what's the point! I don't know how you guys figure this crap out, but no, Jake is not Emil's child.

GLEASON

Did your husband know that?

RACHEL

No. oh no! He did not. But now it all seems so unimportant.

(softens)

I know you're just doing your job, and I wish I could help you. Why Emil flipped out? I don't know. I can say, it isn't like him.

(looks away)

It had to have been something that happened that night.

GLEASON

Who is Jake's father?

RACHEL

Oh, no. You're not going after him.

GLEASON

Either you tell us or we'll check birth records.

RACHEL

(small laugh)

The records won't tell you what you want to know.

GLEASON

The "records" tell us a lot. Have you ever been arrested?

RACHEL

(now cornered, looks away)

I had a troubled youth.

GLEASON

Did your husband know about your "troubled youth?"

RACHEL

(nervous)

Why should he know that? It has nothing to do with our marriage.

GLEASON

Well, at twenty years old, you were leaving your "youth" when you fell for prostitution in Las Vegas.

RACHEL

Ancient history!

GLEASON

One year later, for pimping a fifteen-year old runaway from Chicago?

RACHEL

(angry)

I paid my price!

GLEASON

Did you husband know of your background?

RACHEL

Yeah, like really! I'm sure gonna tell him his honey was a whore!

GLEASON

In 1982, did you try to kill your husband?

(RACHEL'S eyes bug out as she
gasps)

BLACKOUT

ACT II

Scene 1 (two days later)

SETTING:

The office of L.A. County Sheriff Homicide Bureau Captain, WALDO WARE. The room is modest in every respect, nondescript pictures hang on the walls, utility style furniture, photos and plaques depicting cop work.

AT RISE:

CAPTAIN WALDO WARE, an imposing man with a tired face, sits at his desk. He is DIMLY ILLUMINATED as he reads a report. His jacket is hung on a coat rack near his desk.

FORCE UNDER COLOR

SPOT BRIGHTENS on WARE as he scans paperwork. Slight pause, then GLEASON enters STAGE LEFT)

WARE

(looks up, stares at GLEASON then throws the papers on his desk)

Willie, for Chrisakes, I thought you were through causing me grief.

GLEASON

(as he sits)

Grief, what grief?

WARE

Yeah, yeah, play fuck-around. You accused Westphal's wife of trying to kill her husband. THAT kind of grief!

GLEASON

(solemnly)

I asked her if she tried to kill him. That's hardly accusing.

WARE

(studies GLEASON, then smiles)

I know you well enough that your smugness tells me you probably have a hole card.

GLEASON

I know my song well before I start singing.

WARE

You and your Dylan moonscapes. Okay, lay it on me.

GLEASON

My trusty sidekick spent hours at Colima Station going over old reports. About the time that he found the Mrs. was consorting with a male not of their household, he found a report of a poisoned dog. This dog...

WARE

Jesus! Willie, get to the point!

GLEASON

(laughs)

Dog, poisoned.
Dog, belonged to Westphal's neighbor.
Dog, large, 90 pound Rottweiler.
Dog, allowed to roam.
Dog, entered Westphal's open garage.
Dog, drank anti-freeze.
Dog,...

WARE

Okay! Okay. I'm sorry, dress all that up.

GLEASON

It seems we had more attentive deputies a few years back. In their report, they observed a shallow bowl in Westphal's open garage with a liquid described a "neon-yellow." A half-full anti-freeze jug was nearby.

WARE

Who the fuck would pour anti-freeze in a bowl?

GLEASON

Shit! You've mellowed sitting on your ass behind that desk!

WARE

What else was in the report?

GLEASON

The deputies asked Westphal's wife about the anti-freeze. She said she wasn't aware it was there. When the deputies talked with the neighbors who owned the dog, they were sure it was intentionally poisoned. There were five "barking dog" reports at Colima Station filed by Westphal's wife.

WARE

And you think the dog caper was a trial run for her juicing up her husband's food?

GLEASON

I do think that, especially after finding out that the neighbors were going to sue the Westphal's, until the good wife gave them a thousand dollars and had them promise not to mention it to her husband.

WARE

And you got all this from the neighbors?

(GLEASON nods)

She didn't want her husband to know about the anti-freeze business.

GLEASON

Now you're getting the old swing back.

WARE

Christ! Where'd he find this wench?

GLEASON

She's not what I'd call a sweet little thing, especially when she said, "I need a roof over MY head," not our heads.

WARE

(looks at him)

Speaking of sweet thing, you look like shit! Are you getting all the help you need?

GLEASON

What other nice things do you have to say?

WARE

Well, I call them like I see them. You don't look good.

GLEASON

You noticed that? Yeah, I just took a whiz, and I looked in the mirror, I said to myself, "Who the hell is this guy?"

WARE

You want me to get you some help? Miller's team is low on the totem right now?

GLEASON

Not now, we've got the thing pretty much put to bed. I came by to give you the highlights, and if I ever get another case like this, I'll be putting my papers in.

WARE

(smiling)

Not crazy about these *specials*, are we?

GLEASON

(mocking)

When you were working cases I suppose you relished them?

WARE

Well, lick it up, it's part of the job.

GLEASON

Oh, you can say that now...

(points to his shoulder)

...you wear captain's bars. Some of us stayed in the trenches and kept working cases. You think you'd think different if you were in my shoes?

WARE

(tolerating him)

Willie, we go back eons, you and me, in fact, I broke you in. Don't be getting on any high horse and lecturing me.

(thinks about it)

You should be happy a guy who worked homicides is your captain. Maybe you'd like to get something like Captain Snyder in here or...

GLEASON

(interrupts)

Sorry, sorry I stepped on your toes, no harm meant. I adore the fact that you are my boss. I'll shut up now.

WARE

Well not totally. Let's hear about Deputy Westphal

GLEASON

It's one of those force things that no one can embrace...

(not enjoying this)

...Westphal, a recent transfer to Colima Station, a *Prince of the City*, up to this point, drives his unit behind a liquor store and thumps his handcuffed prisoner in the back seat. A real piece of shit named Corbin Ashford.

WARE

(points to report)

I've read up on some of it. What was Ashford doing, kicking out the windows?

GLEASON

Not from what I've dug up, in fact, most of what I've dug up puts Westphal in a very deep hole.

WARE

(feigned drama)

Elaborate on that.

GLEASON

We've got enough physical evidence and witness statements to file it as it stands. Of course, we've got zip from Westphal and his partner.

WARE

They invoked, I read that.

GLEASON

Of course. When was the last time we had a serious force beef and had the deputy talk with us? It doesn't happen anymore.

GLEASON

I was hoping I'd be able to get Westphal's partner to open up.

WARE

Who's his partner?

GLEASON

No one you'd know, Dale Kelso, a lateral transfer from Arcadia P.D. who is embracing the code... that would be the code of silence, of course.

WARE

Fill me in on what we know.

GLEASON

Before our Ashford was busted, he was at another bar about a half mile down the road. He was boozing it up when a transvestite waddled up to the bar. Ashford let the world know that he wasn't going to tolerate this lowering of the bar's standards and pointed to the direction of the door, letting the sissy know that this is the way out. The transvestite threw a hissy fit, whereupon Ashford used him as a mop. In the course of doing this he concussed the guy's head and broke his wrist.

WARE

So, Westphal was responding to this call originally?

GLEASON

That he was, but he didn't find him until they spotted the car from info they got at the first bar. Westphal and his partner went in the second bar, spotted Ashford and busted him for felonious assault.

WARE

How did we get this damned thing?

GLEASON

We can thank the Weekend Duty Commander. Apparently after Westphal thumped him, he was taken to the ER for treatment, and then booked. His first phone call was to his mother, who stormed Colima Station with a horde of relatives. Deputies at the station are calling it the "White Trashathon." We got the call when the duty commander decided it was too hot for station detectives to handle.

WARE

Lucky us. What was Westphal tweaked enough about to rearrange Ashford's face?

GLEASON

That, my dear Waldo, is the gist of the thing. Why? He's got a real puke in his car, much like so many other pukers he's dealt with, but with this one, he flipped.

WARE

Maybe his brother is a transvestite?

GLEASON

(gives him a sour look)

As Martha Stewart would say, "Oh Puleeeze!"

WARE

(slight pause)

That's Rivers, Joan Rivers.

GLEASON

(thinks about it)

Yeah, I meant her.

WARE

So how close are we in getting this to the D.A.?

GLEASON

Signed, sealed and nearly delivered, a few sleepless nights
for the old guy

WARE

I'm afraid Westphal is facing joint time on this.

GLEASON

(reconciled)

Well, as I said, signed, sealed, etc., but it has some
unresolved glitches.

WARE

You know I don't like glitches, Willie...what are they?

GLEASON

Nothing to worry about, like I said, we'll get a handful of
felonies on him, but it just doesn't add up. They're my
glitches.

WARE

(studies Gleason)

Is there something you're not telling me?

GLEASON

Hell no, why would you ask me that?

WARE

(with some force)

Look at me, God damn it! This is Waldo...Waldo, your homi
bud for what, twelve...fifteen years? I've seen you during
and after cases that would cause some to eat their guns.
You've got trouble written all over that pretty face.

GLEASON

(cynical)

Why do they send this shit our way? Next time we have a
homicide at Colima Station, I can see how happy the
uniforms will be at seeing us.

WARE

I don't think so...our people are above that.

GLEASON

You weren't there when I questioned them. Westphal is an
icon to them. I checked his record...seven pretty heavy

commendations...he was involved in five shootings, all in policy, not a hint of misconduct.

WARE

Five shootings...at Colima?

GLEASON

No. Hell no. He worked Greystone for about seven years before transferring to Colima.

WARE

Why was he transferred?

GLEASON

He asked for it. I guess he saw the handwriting on the wall, figured he'd better cool his heels before someone got lucky. They made him a training officer. He goes through shit and high water at the hottest station in the county, only to fall in it working sleepy hollow.

WARE

That is some pretty strange kaka. When do you think you'll take it to the D.A.?

GLEASON

I called Holloway. He told me to bring it over tomorrow.

WARE

Once that's done, I don't want to see you around here for a few days...go to the beach, get some sun. How's Ellen?

GLEASON

(sullen)

Don't ask.

WARE

Oops, sorry, I just think you should take some time off, okay?

GLEASON

Oh, I'll go somewhere, but you can scratch the beach.

WARE

By the way, why isn't your new partner, Perry, with you?

GLEASON

He's rolling to a suicide in Lynwood.

WARE

How's he working out? You've had him for what? Six months?

GLEASON

Eight months. He's fine...doesn't talk much which is ducky with me.

WARE

Yeah, that fits in with the Willie I know. Actually, I'm surprised the two of you are getting along. Knowing your quirks, you're damn hard to please.

GLEASON

You did good, Waldo, he's a nice kid.

WARE

What does he think about Westphal?

GLEASON

(with some cynicism)

Oh, he thinks we did a helluva job nailing him.

WARE

There you go again, putting nuances to what's on your mind

GLEASON

Of course it's not going to bother him, he's too damn young to have enough mileage doing this work for it to bother him.

WARE

Talk straight Willie, mileage for what?

GLEASON

(now agitated)

The mileage, the experience, to ask the significant question after all the questions we need answers for have been answered...WHY! Anybody can see from the evidence that Westphal thumped a handcuffed prisoner. Mickey Mouse could have wrapped this up in an hour. The *why* of it is the sticking point.

WARE

(patient, but not convinced)

Willie, when a rapist attacks a woman, do we seek out reasons for his actions? No, we build a case and put him away.

(changes tack)

The big *why* in my mind is why you're putting yourself through this. The guy went over the line...he fucked up.

GLEASON

(weighs it)

No. It isn't that simple. The rapist had a plan to do his caper. Westphal's act came out of left field. It's like Hank Aaron hitting a home run and then running over and decking the bat boy.

WARE

Willie, are you getting all the oxygen you need? Am I supposed to make some sense out of that?

GLEASON

(tired)

No, I guess it only makes sense to me.

WARE

(with emphasis)

Willie, your main focus should be on the fact Ashford was in Cuffs.

GLEASON

(nodding)

Agreed! It just isn't done, and when it does happen, we've got to find out why.

(looks around the room as though the answer is on a wall)

The suspect hardly noticed that Kelso was there.

WARE

From what I've read, Ashford took some heavy lumps?

GLEASON

Oh yeah, the right side of his face looks like a train hit it. He's got a bunch of stitches across his mouth, black eyes and a small, weird, square imprint on his cheek from Westphal's ring.

WARE

Lucky he didn't break his jaw.

GLEASON

It'll all heal over, but he's nothing to look at now.

WARE

You can be sure they've put all this on video. It won't look nice to a jury.

GLEASON

The County is going to need deep pockets for this one.

WARE

(pensive)

We never had lawsuits back in the fifties, and we did a little damage then too, didn't we?

GLEASON

(smiles)

Oh, yeah, we did. It was the norm, I guess.

WARE

Except in Westphal's case, the dude was cuffed.

(now smiling)

You can identify with that, right Willie?

GLEASON

(not smiling)

You don't have to remind me.

(looks hard at him)

I'm surprised you remember that. It has to be twenty-five years ago, at least.

WARE

(still smiling)

The guy simply found your buttons.

GLEASON

(thinks about it)

When you get right down to it, the cases are similar, aren't they?

WARE

(now serious)

With one significant exception, that was then, and reason for you to drop any misgivings you have about Westphal. We didn't have a "force policy" back in the fifties that

amounted to anything like what we have today. Westphal has been grilled and grounded in the new rules. I just think it's damn ironic that you got the case.

GLEASON

(with an edge)

You think it's ironic? You don't know the half of it. Okay, I've got a bone or two in my closet, but it goes far beyond that. I'm learning things about Westphal that, I'd swear, came out of my seabag. This is becoming a lot more than a "force" case.

WARE

If you're talking about our days in the field back in the fifties, you can't...

GLEASON

(interrupts)

No, I'm not talking about that, it's more personal,

(with some emotion)

It's personal, but you're right, it's ironic and there must be some meaning behind it.

(thinks about it)

It's beyond ironic, actually, it's God damn hysterical. I'm gonna laugh my ass off to keep from throwing my badge and gun on your desk. I know I'm not going to like how this turns out.

WARE

Sorry I brought it up.

GLEASON

You didn't bring it up. It's been on my mind since I got the case. Every day that goes by I see myself as Westphal when we worked the field.

WARE

(measured tone)

Willie, you're old enough and experienced enough to stay on top of that kind of trip. Stick to the facts, Westphal thumped a guy in cuffs, for some screwed up reason, and he's gonna pay for that. And I do think it's damn ironic, and nothing more than ironic, that you just happened to get the case.

GLEASON

Yeah, I guess I'll settle for ironic to keep from laughing myself to death.

(gets up to leave and winks at Ware)

We'll see how it goes tomorrow.

(GLEASON walks toward the door and turns)

GLEASON (cont'd)

Do you know what Thoreau said about circumstantial evidence?

WARE

(tired)

Thoreau, the Walden Pond guy?

GLEASON

Yeah, he said that circumstantial evidence can be quite convincing such as when you find trout in milk.

WARE

(serious)

Are you losing your mind?

GLEASON

(smiles)

Maybe.

(GLEASON turns and exits)

BLACKOUT

(END OF SCENE)

ACT II

Scene 1 (THAT EVENING)

SETTING

The CODE FOUR BAR, a watering hole for off duty and on-their-way-home cops. Police memorabilia hang from the walls and a few shooting trophies adorn shelves. The scene is dimly lit.

AT RISE

A bartender, HARDBELLY, polishes glasses. WILLIE GLEASON sits by himself at a table mid stage. He is wearing a sports jacket and loosened tie. His drink is in his hand. At another table across the stage are three young cops who occasionally eyeball GLEASON. As SPOT BRIGHTENS on GLEASON, he rolls the glass on his forehead. He looks at it and sees it is empty.

GLEASON

(without looking)

Hardbelly! I'm out of fuel.

(HARDBELLY raises his arm and nods. LIGHTS BRIGHTEN as one of the young cops, BILL BARRETT, gets up and walks over to GLEASON)

BARRETT

You don't remember me, do you?

GLEASON

(looks him over)

I remember the face.

BARRETT

(extends hand)

Barrett, Bill Barrett.

(GLEASON reluctantly shakes his hand)

Mind if I sit down?

GLEASON

I don't pay the rent here.

(motions to chair)

What's on your mind?

BARRETT

Emil Westphal, he...

GLEASON

Hold it right there! We won't be talking about Westphal.

BARRETT

Let me refresh you on my pretty face. I was Westphal's partner at Greystone when he took that bullet.

GLEASON

Oh, yes...

(nods and smiles)

...and you X'd the shooter.

(studies BARRETT)

I guess you're thinking that gives you a claim on my progress with Westphal's case.

BARRETT

No, I don't think that. What I'm thinking is that there is something wrong with the whole picture.

GLEASON

Tell me what's wrong with the "whole" picture.

BARRETT

What happened that weekend is not something Emil was capable of doing.

(HARDBELLY brings GLEASON his drink)

GLEASON

Well, facts are facts.

(sips his drink)

Is there something I missed?

BARRETT

(slightly irritated)

It just isn't him! I worked with him for years at Greystone. He's not like that.

GLEASON

Not like what?

BARRETT

Listen, I've seen him wade into deputies who were heavy with suspects. He wouldn't tolerate it.

GLEASON

(matter-of-factly)
So what, you think he snapped?

BARRETT
I heard he wouldn't talk with you.

GLEASON
(nods)
And what does that tell us?

BARRETT
Yeah, I suppose it doesn't look good.

GLEASON
Did you know Kelso?

BARRETT
Un uh, but I heard he's a flake.

GLEASON
(looks over to BARRETT'S table)
Do your buddies have a take on this?

BARRETT
No, they knew Westphal, but they didn't work with him.

(GLEASON looks up and sees JACK
FUEGLIN, a homicide bureau veteran
walking in. FUEGLIN rips off his
tie and stuffs it in his jacket He
warily eyes BARRETT)

FUEGLIN
Willie, how goes?
(GLEASON nods to BARRETT
who gets up and walks back
to his table)
Who's that guy?

GLEASON
A deputy who partnered with Westphal. He worked with him at
Greystone.

FUEGLIN
Any help?

GLEASON

Nah, he feels like I do, like what the fuck happened with Westphal?

(GLEASON looks over at BARRETT)

Maybe he knows more than he's saying. He had that look.

FUEGLIN

You and your "looks".

GLEASON

I'm thinking He knows more.

FUEGLIN

Why are you still messing with this case. It's over. I heard you're filing it tomorrow. It's put to bed as you like to say.

GLEASON

Yeah, that's a nice way to put it.

FUEGLIN

For me that would be a load off my back.

GLEASON

It would be nice for me to be able to say that.

FUEGLIN

Willie, for chrisakes, Why does this thing bother you?

GLEASON

(with slight drama)

Well, I guess sinking cops isn't what I wanted to do when I grew up.

FUEGLIN

I hear you, but you can't fight it. You didn't ask for the case.

GLEASON

Who would ask for this shit? But I really could have done without this particular case.

FUEGLIN

I heard it's a bad one. His partner, Kelso, any hope he's going to roll? I've heard he's sort of a wimp.

GLEASON

(with cynicism)

We had a more endearing term for it in years past. Yeah, so far, he's zipped up.

FUEGLIN

Well that could mean something entirely different. Maybe he was in on the action.

GLEASON

(emoting)

Jack, Jack, Jack, he may have shined his flashlight in his Goddamn eyes, he may have kissed him, but take my word for it, he did not beat his body. The case may be over and put to bed in your mind, but it's not over, and it's not "put to bed." You know what I mean?

FUEGLIN

Not exactly.

GLEASON

There's a vacuum in my head, if that makes any sense. Yes, he beat the crap out of his prisoner, but I can't locate a shred of malice. Anger? Sure, a shitful. Westphal snapped over something. And his wife turns out to be a loose cannon. I can't figure it out.

FUEGLIN

Fat chance of that with both of them invoking.

(studies GLEASON)

Willie, you don't look too spiffy, in fact, you look depressed.

GLEASON

Can't help that, I sleep in fits and starts. Jack, you're an old head, back in your patrol days, you had to get heavy with suspects every now and then, right?

FUEGLIN

Not often, but yeah, when it was needed, but not someone I had cuffed.

GLEASON

Forget the cuffs, it's an incidental part of it.

FUEGLIN

Incidental? Bullshit, Willie, it's the *principal* point here. We don't beat on cuffed prisoners.

GLEASON

And Hank Aaron doesn't deck batboys.

FUEGLIN

That makes a lot of sense!

GLEASON

You don't think it makes sense? Hank Aaron wouldn't dream of hurting a batboy, but if he did, we'd really want to know what's behind it.

FUEGLIN

Man, you are really fishing.

(While GLEASON and FUEGLIN talk
BARRETT is seen casting glances
at GLEASON'S table. He seems
oblivious to what his friends
are discussing)

GLEASON

Think for a moment, Westphal, in his years of patrol, has never,

(with emphasis)

never had a complaint lodged against him! He has commendations coming out his ass, outstanding evaluations, yet, at 2:20 a.m. on a Saturday morning, he slam dunks a prisoner who was in cuffs. Don't you think that's problematic?

FUEGLIN

(incredulous)

Yeah, it's a big problem for Westphal.

(Gleason sits back, frustrated)

GLEASON

I guess it's my problem too.

(GLEASON takes an envelope out
of his jacket pocket and drops
it on the table)

GLEASON (cont'd)

You know what this is?

FUEGLIN

(smiling)

I got a feeling I'm going to find out.

GLEASON

I've been served. Ellen is finally calling it quits on me.

FUEGLIN

Oh, Christ, Willie, I'm sorry...

GLEASON

No, no, no, don't be. It was a long time coming. I'm glad for her sake. She'll be a lot better off.

(as they sip their drinks, in walks
ROY PERRY, GLEASON'S partner of eight
months)

GLEASON (cont'd)

(in good fun)

Well, it's Roy, my boy! Mama's going to be pissed at you, stopping by for something as diabolical as a "hit"

(Fueglin folds his arms and
takes it all in, smiling)

You're actually going to have an alcoholic beverage?

PERRY

(extends middle digit)

Jump on this, Willie...

(sees paper on table)

What's that?

GLEASON

That, dear Roy, is a nail in my coffin.

(confused, PERRY looks at FUEGLIN who nods. PERRY scans the paper and realizes it is personal and says nothing, grimacing as he drops it on the table. PERRY then pulls out a notebook and flips through the pages. GLEASON looks at BARRETT'S table and gets a friendly nod.)

GLEASON (cont'd)
Looks like he's got something on his mind.

FUEGLIN
What?

GLEASON
(abstractly)
Nothing.
(looks at PERRY)
Are you looking for something to torment me with?
(PERRY ignores him as GLEASON
looks back at other table)
Christ, Jack, remember when you knew everyone in here. Are
all these guys really cops?

FUEGLIN
(tiring of it)
Yes, Willie, they are really cops.

GLEASON
You know, most of these guys probably have college degrees.
(nods to the table across room)
That guy over there is probably a teacher who hates kids,
and his buddy is probably an out of work aerospace
engineer.
(rubs his hand over his face)
No wonder we're getting more and more of these "specials."

FUEGLIN
Someone's looking out for me, I haven't had one in months.

PERRY
(with a slight edge to it)
Westphal's as young as some of them. Why is he so high on
your totem pole?

GLEASON
(surprised)
Roy, Are you actually getting in my face? I like that. I
may have a hard time answering your question because you
have caught me between bases.

FUEGLIN
Jesus, can I believe what I'm hearing?

GLEASON

No, you can't because I'm a helluva runner.

(looks at PERRY)

Number one, Westphal didn't go to college, two he served in the military with distinction and three, he exemplifies the kind of cop we hope to produce, that is until just after 2:00 a.m. on May 24th.

PERRY

I went to college, how would you categorize me?

GLEASON

(also with a slight edge)

I'll answer that Roy, if you will first categorize me.

(Fueglin sits back and folds his arms, as though about to see something remarkable)

PERRY

(smiles and hesitates)

How about smart, sometimes too smart, irritating, sometimes entertaining, opinionated, a bit of an old codger, not a snappy dresser, but most likely the best dick in the unit.

(unknown to PERRY, GLEASON has kept track with his fingers)

GLEASON

Did you say dick or prick? I'd hate to ask you that when you're drunk.

(holds up fingers)

I got five negatives and three positives...not bad.

(FUEGLIN is still awed by what PERRY said)

PERRY

I'm waiting.

GLEASON

Are you sure you want to hear this?

PERRY

Fire away.

GLEASON

If I had a son, I'd want him to be just like you. I can say that you are a damn good detective, or I would have left you on someone's doorstep. In putting up with me you deserve more than you can imagine. I know that you were actually kind with your observations, but true enough to let me know where I stood. Can I kiss you now?

(with this, FUEGLIN lets out
a big breath of air)

GLEASON (cont'd)

What's with you?

FUEGLIN

Oh, nothing. I've just never seen the sun shine so bright.

GLEASON

Well, bask in it. You'll never see it again.

(looks at PERRY with a
benevolent smile)

Roy, how was your trip to Greystone?

PERRY

Actually, I checked some people out at Colima Station first and then went to Greystone, then to Pasadena P.D.

GLEASON

You've been busy, haven't you?

PERRY

(scans notes)

It seems they were on the verge of canning Kelso at the point they assigned him to Westphal.

FUEGLIN

(joking)

Yeah, sure, like how many deputies actually get canned?

PERRY

He came close, very close. Seems he had a different training officer before Westphal and they rolled on a call to a vehicle off the freeway in a ditch. The driver turns out to be a drunk plumber, built like Mike Tyson. When they try to hook him up, he starts swinging the trainer around like a toy. The trainer ends up on the ground wrapped around the guy, and Kelso running around like a housewife with a hot griddle in her hands. The trainer kept yelling, "Hit him with your sap, hit him with your God damn sap!"

(GLEASON and FUEGLIN are taking
it all in)

Instead, Kelso ran to the radio car and yells "help" in a few hysterical words.

GLEASON

What happened to the trainer?

PERRY

He was lucky, a CHP unit spotted his lights and they finally helped getting the guy hooked up. They showed me a photo of the trainer. The plumber had grabbed the badge area of his shirt and ripped it down to his waist.

(PERRY gives with a slight
laugh)

Pathetic man, his shirt a tattered mess, with half of it draped down the front of his pants, his white tee shirt the only clean thing on him.

FUEGLIN

Obviously, the trainer didn't shoot Kelso or you would have told us that first.

PERRY

He told the watch commander he wouldn't enter a radio car with him again.

GLEASON

Did Kelso have any reasonable explanation for what he did?

PERRY

Nada. That's when "Lurch" Westphal came to Colima and the brass figured that maybe he could turn Kelso around.

GLEASON

What the hell is a Lurch?

PERRY

I knew that would interest you. I picked that up at Greystone. No question about it, Westphal was a legend there. He picked up the "Lurch" thing after a call to an ice cream parlor.

FUEGLIN

(interrupts)

Shit, this gets better by the moment.

PERRY

Westphal got a call about some guy in a car, flipping out and beating his wife. It's hot as hell and this goes on right in front of an ice cream parlor...it's full of people, all ga-ga watching this guy beat the crap out of this woman. Westphal drives up and parks right in front of the car.

FUEGLIN

I think I'm going to like this.

PERRY

As he walks up to the driver, the dip fumbles around and locks the door. Mr. dipshit doesn't realize his window is down. Westphal grabs him by the shirt and pulls him through the window, flops him on the ground and hooks him up. The ice cream place breaks into applause and Westphal picks up the name "Lurch."

GLEASON

(seems confused)

What does "Lurch" mean?

FUEGLIN

Jesus, Willie, you hear a great story like that and you wonder what a name means?

GLEASON

Yeah, it doesn't fit.

FUEGLIN

So what, it resonates.

GLEASON

Whatever that means. And it isn't the first time someone's been pulled through a window.

PERRY

But Westphal had an audience.

FUEGLIN

A supportive and appreciative audience.

GLEASON

Did they give him some freebie ice cream?

PERRY

I didn't ask.

GLEASON

(slightly furtive)

Did they call Westphal "Lurch" at Colima?

PERRY

I didn't know about the nickname until I went to Greystone.

GLEASON

(to FUEGLIN)

See, he's sharp! He knew I was stringing him on.

(looks at PERRY)

Didn't you?

PERRY

No, Willie, I didn't. It was just the way my day went.

(GLEASON looks over and sees
BARRETT eyeballing him)

GLEASON

What the fuck is with this guy?

FUEGLIN

(looks over at BARRETT)

What's going on here, Willie?

GLEASON

Never mind, it's nothing.

GLEASON

(looks back at PERRY)

Any other great news?

PERRY

Some interesting stuff turned up at Pasadena P.D., Our supposed victim had busts for drunk driving, battery and lewd conduct...

FUEGLIN

Lewd conduct?

PERRY

He was stoned at a bus station and walked out of the rest room with his lizard hanging out.

FUEGLIN

Classy.

PERRY

Anyway, our victim may have...

GLEASON

(Interrupts)

Hold it there! I'm having a problem with this "victim" thing. He's a SUSPECT!

(PERRY hangs his head)

I've been hearing some strange stuff out of you lately. It must have been that "supervisory" class you took.

(turns to FUEGLIN)

You know what I heard him say the other day? "Prioritize." You and me call it getting our shit together and they call it shinola.

(sees that PERRY is patiently waiting)

Please,

(affectedly)

Please, continue.

PERRY

(measured)

Our "victim" may have flapped his gums in jail. I got a call from an inmate back here from San Quentin for a retrial. He says he was Ashford's cellmate for a few weeks.

GLEASON

What does he have for us?

PERRY

Don't know, He said we should talk one-on-one.

FUEGLIN

I don't know, Willie, jailhouse snitches are bad karma.

GLEASON

It's worth a try.

(looks at PERRY)

Is that it Roy?

PERRY

(he nods as he gets up)

I'll see you tomorrow.

GLEASON

Roy, first thing tomorrow, head over to the jail and see what this guy has for us.

(PERRY nods and exits)

FUEGLIN

Why are you so damned hung up on Westpahl, sending Perry around, racking up all this miscellaneous crap? The fucker's ready to be filed, end of story.

GLEASON

(irritable)

You don't know what I know! I know his background, the whole nine yards!

FUEGLIN

You're talking like he's your son.

GLEASON

(thinks about it)

That's an interesting observation.

(slowly nods)

Very interesting.

FUEGLIN

C'mon, Willie, it's just another case.

GLEASON

You haven't had cases that fuck with your mind?

BARRETT

I gotta talk with you.

GLEASON

So talk. Your eyes have been drilling holes in me for the past fifteen minutes.

(FUEGLIN gets up)

FUEGLIN

Willie, I'm outta here. See you back at the Bureau.

(FUEGLIN exits)

GLEASON

(irritated)

This better be good. I consider my time with that man as quality time.

BARRETT

(hesitant)

Maybe...

(appears to have second thoughts)

GLEASON

Sit the fuck down and lay it on me!

BARRETT

What do you know about Westphal's wife?

GLEASON

What I know is I've caused her more grief than I care to. Why do you ask?

BARRETT

Before Westphal booked to Colima, she was messing around.

GLEASON

Keep it up son, you'll make a detective yet. We know about that.

BARRETT

Did you know their youngest was not Emil's

GLEASON

(draws closer, measured)

Doing what I do, I know that too...but It surprises me that you do.

(BARRETT hangs his head)

In a few seconds, you're going to break out in a sweat, aren't you?

BARRETT

(erupts)

Jake is my kid! Fuck! He's my kid!

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT I

Scene 3 (THE NEXT DAY)

SETTING

The office of Ass't D.A. LENNY HALLOWAY.

AT RISE

HOLLOWAY is practicing putting a golf ball into a glass. The office is sparse with the exception of a small table with two chairs, a set of golf clubs, his diplomas and pictures on the wall and a desk chair. Detective GLEASON enters through a door STAGE LEFT as HALLOWAY puts the putter back in

FORCE UNDER COLOR

the bag. GLEASON glances around the room, finally walks up to the golf clubs and examines them. Holloway sits down and picks up a file and removes a cover sheet. He studies it for a while, then pushes back in his chair.

HOLLOWAY

What do you think?

GLEASON

(shrugs, surprised)

What do I think? About that?

(exaggerates)

You've got what I think, two months of work. Right there on your desk...reads just like Front Page Detective.

HOLLOWAY

Not quite. You do better work.

GLEASON

(takes a club from the bag)

I do what I'm paid to do.

(takes a slow swing with the club)

But this kind of work I can do without.

HOLLOWAY

(drops paperwork)

You know, I could never figure out why you homicide guys get tied up with cases like this.

GLEASON

Figure that one out, and make it stop, and I'll take your whole family out to dinner...Kentucky Fried Chicken. No white meat though.

HOLLOWAY

Do you automatically get them? I mean, they're basically misconduct, criminal misconduct, but hardly equating with someone being murdered.

GLEASON

Very astute! I'll at least buy you a drink to celebrate your acumen, if that's the right word.

HOLLOWAY

I'm getting the impression you don't like these cases.

GLEASON

Hell, no. No! I don't, and I really don't like this one.

(Gleason takes another slow swing)

HOLLOWAY

I can see why, it's a messy one.

GLEASON

Messy it is, but not in the way you think.

HOLLOWAY

Is there more to this than what I'm reading here?

GLEASON

No.

(points to his head)

Some of it stays up here.

HOLLOWAY is confused by this)

HOLLOWAY

Everything I need to file this case is

(pointing to file)

in here, but I'm thinking, from your attitude, there is more to this.

GLEASON

Yeah, there's more to this for me, but not for you.

HOLLOWAY

You are making this into a riddle.

GLEASON

Just for me.

HOLLOWAY

I don't have time for this. From reading your report it's done, end of story.

GLEASON

Yeah, nice play on words, end of fucking story.

HOLLOWAY

Hmm, maybe the Sheriff should think twice about sending you guys out on these cases.

(GLEASON nods)

I would think the Sheriff would want an independent investigation on something like this.

GLEASON

(selects another club)

It's been tried and doesn't work, at least in the eyes of the Sheriff.

HOLLOWAY

I don't follow you.

GLEASON

(stops practicing)

The Sheriff likes to clean his own house. That's why you guys don't get them, and the State Attorney General usually is not crazy about getting them. When something like this happens, most people think Internal Affairs, but our IA don't deal with criminal cases, they look for

(ditto fingers)

real cases, like someone banging a captain's secretary.

HOLLOWAY

That should be a crime?

GLEASON

(sighs)

Depends.

(puts club back in bag)

What do you shoot?

HOLLOWAY

(offhand)

I've got a 10 handicap, what's yours?

GLEASON

(feigned awe)

I don't play anymore. It's a strange game.

(all business now)

So, you got what you need in there?

(motions to file)

HOLLOWAY

I've got what we need to sink the guy, but I read his background and I actually know him in an offhand way. I prosecuted a robbery case in the Greystone area. He was the arresting deputy. He's a dream on the stand, and his work and reports were flawless. Why would a cop with his experience, his talents, resort to something like this?

GLEASON

(walks over to file and picks up
a photo of Westphal. He points to
the photo as he looks at Holloway)

Because when we make our fine young Turks policemen, the litany goes, we want them to be devoid of emotions, fearless in the face of danger and immune from all the things that make most people goosey. Whoever wrote that crap didn't live in my neighborhood.

HOLLOWAY

Goosey? The fact is, he thumped Ashford's face, in handcuffs no less, and in any book of policy and procedures, he went well above what is allowed, and beyond what's expected of him.

GLEASON

Oh, that's classic, what's allowed and expected. You know something, I'm sure you have never faced a deranged person at 2:00 in the morning. Westphal and all the other 9,000 plus deputies on the department do it on a regular basis. When someone decides to take on the world, what is allowed and expected isn't the first thing that pops into a cop's mind.

HOLLOWAY

That doesn't have any bearing on Westphal's case.

GLEASON

Only indirectly. Westphal routinely handled hundreds of encounters like this without going beyond what is "allowed and expected." This one exception doesn't fit any scenario that I'm familiar with, and I've investigated many.

HOLLOWAY

I'm not sure where you're headed with that.

GLEASON

No, I'm sure you aren't, and I'm not sure I am. I'm just hung up on some details. You know, those little things that keep you up all night.

HOLLOWAY

Whatever those details are, they won't apply to Westphal's case. He's in it up to his armpits.

GLEASON

(again with some cynicism)

I'm getting the feeling I'm in it too.

HOLLOWAY

(picking up on Gleason's cynicism)

It's obvious to me that my filing this case troubles you.

GLEASON

I try to not let my feelings enter one way or another, with
(starts getting an edge)
an emphasis on "try." We get these "specials" thrown at us a few times a year. The brass seems to think that we'll do a bang up job, and guess what? We do a bang up job, one that no one will question. Sink or swim, Deputy Westphal's dark cloud grew darker when his case was assigned to homicide, and especially to me.

HOLLOWAY

At any rate, you did it so nicely we're going to set a prelim on both of them. I figure five felonies, including force under color of authority, false police report and a few other charges.

(fills out form)

Have you heard from Westphal's attorney?

GLEASON

(somewhat subdued)

No, nothing. And unlikely we will hear anything, which is par for that course.

(in thought)

But I still can't figure out why Kelso's attorney isn't rolling him over.

HOLLOWAY

What do you know about Kelso?

GLEASON

He's a lateral from Arcadia P.D., high on hopes and low on experience. He's been with Westphal for five or so months.

HOLLOWAY

According to the file, it's as though he doesn't exist. Nothing other than the fact he was a cop and now is a deputy.

GLEASON

There's good reason for that, he's most likely one of the newer breeds of cop...college educated,

(now sarcastic)

a social conscience...about as street wise as an Eskimo right off the Kobuk River.

(looks hard at Holloway)

I was hoping a slew of felonies coming Kelso's way would force him to roll over.

HOLLOWAY

Maybe he did have a role in it.

GLEASON

I'm pretty sure he didn't.

(chuckles)

Beyond being a bedazzled spectator.

HOLLOWAY

Yeah, that's strange, he was there but obviously not part of the action.

(pushes the file away)

Let's see how it plays out in the Preliminary Hearing, if it gets that far.

GLEASON

You're thinking Kelso is going to roll?

HOLLOWAY

I'd be willing to bet.

GLEASON

You must think I'm easy. You've been talking with his attorney.

HOLLOWAY

Swear to God, I'm expecting to, but I haven't. I've had a few cop force cases before.

GLEASON

Touche. A ten handicap, not bad.

(GLEASON walks over and
takes out another club)

I actually shot par golf in high school.

HOLLOWAY

Well, c'mon out and join us on Saturday.

GLEASON

Nah, I've stashed my knickers away and when I wear shorts, kids run screaming to their mommies. Smart asses say things like, "The last time I saw legs like that there was a note on the toe." Plus, I can't take the posers.

HOLLOWAY

Posers?

GLEASON

Oh, you've seen them. Every time they get a good shot they assume the pose...like a caricature of Sam Snead.

(he takes a slow swing and holds
it as though for a photo, then
in a mocking voice)

...take note of my form, please,

(he lowers the club)

and when they get a crappy shot, they bang the ground like it jumped up and messed the shot up.

HOLLOWAY

Sam Snead? Jesus, you are old.

GLEASON

(without missing a beat)

And you are young, part of the new school.

HOLLOWAY

New school? What are you talking about?

GLEASON

How old are you?

HOLLOWAY

Thirty, why?

GLEASON

I was on a beat in the Vermont area when you were just an egg somewhere.

HOLLOWAY

(smiling)

Does that make you nervous?

GLEASON

If I were to play golf with you, I'd say yes, otherwise, it would be no. You reminded me, however, that I'm a dinosaur.

HOLLOWAY

Not my intent. I knew who Sam Snead was.

GLEASON

Oh yeah, what did they call him?

HOLLOWAY

Ahh, Sam, the Sneak?

GLEASON

Slammin' Sammy. What's a mashie niblick?

HOLLOWAY

Hmm, I know it has something to do with golf.

GLEASON

Yeah, it's a dinosaur too. It's a seven iron. Yup, you are part of the new school, just like my partner is part of the new wave.

(Holloway's phone rings, he answers, then)

HOLLOWAY

Yeah, he's here now filing it. What's the deal?

(listens)

Cecil Callaway's kid? Jesus!

(starts laughing)

I know, I know, it is serious, but damn! So what happens now?

(listens)

No, of course, I haven't seen the file but I think it we're going for Felonious Assault or maybe Assault with Force Likely to Produce Great Bodily Harm, one of the two...maybe both.

(listens)

No, there is a problem. Gleason is here to file on the deputies involved in the arrest of Ashford.

(listens)

No, we can't do that, Callaway was, well, brutalized. He looks like a train ran over him. We're going for five felonies. Cut and dry, really. Alright, okay. I'll tell him.

(GLEASON becomes intensely interested Holloway's conversation. HOLLOWAY slowly replaces the phone)

HOLLOWAY (cont'd)

Christ! There's always a catch!

GLEASON

I think I want to leave.

HOLLOWAY

Not so fast.

GLEASON

What? Our sissy has connections?

HOLLOWAY

Does the name Cecil Callaway ring a bell?

GLEASON

He makes golf clubs?

HOLLOWAY

(laughs)

I wish it were that simple. He's a former U. S. Attorney and has big connections to my boss. He was on the phone.

GLEASON

What does he want us to do, make it all go away?

HOLLOWAY

He wants to see Ashford crucified.

GLEASON

Good luck with that with Westphal and his partner facing joint time

HOLLOWAY

That doesn't mean they can't testify.

GLEASON

Jesus Christ man, you don't have to be a lawyer to see how all this will play before a jury!

HOLLOWAY

(his head drops)

Fuck! My mom wanted me to be a doctor.

GLEASON

(laughs)

At your age it's not too late.

BLACKOUT

ACT II

Scene 1 (THAT EVENING)

SETTING

The CODE FOUR BAR, a watering hole for off duty and on-their-way-home cops. Police memorabilia hang from the walls and a few shooting

FORCE UNDER COLOR

trophies adorn shelves. The scene is dimly lit.

AT RISE

A bartender, HARDBELLY, polishes glasses. WILLIE GLEASON sits by himself at a table mid stage. He is wearing a sports jacket and loosened tie. His drink is in his hand. At another table across the stage are three young cops who occasionally eyeball GLEASON. As SPOT BRIGHTENS on GLEASON, he rolls the glass on his forehead. He looks at it and sees it is empty.

GLEASON

(without looking)

Hardbelly! I'm out of fuel.

(HARDBELLY raises his arm and nods. LIGHTS BRIGHTEN as one of the young cops, BILL BARRETT, gets up and walks over to GLEASON)

BARRETT

You don't remember me, do you?

GLEASON

(looks him over)

I remember the face.

BARRETT

(extends hand)

Barrett, Bill Barrett.

(GLEASON reluctantly shakes his hand)

Mind if I sit down?

GLEASON

I don't pay the rent here.

(motions to chair)

What's on your mind?

BARRETT

Emil Westphal, he...

GLEASON

Hold it right there! We won't be talking about Westphal.

BARRETT

Let me refresh you on my pretty face. I was Westphal's partner at Greystone when he took that bullet.

GLEASON

Oh, yes...

(nods and smiles)

...and you X'd the shooter.

(studies BARRETT)

I guess you're thinking that gives you a claim on my progress with Westphal's case.

BARRETT

No, I don't think that. What I'm thinking is that there is something wrong with the whole picture.

GLEASON

Tell me what's wrong with the "whole" picture.

BARRETT

What happened that weekend is not something Emil was capable of doing.

(HARDBELLY brings GLEASON his drink)

GLEASON

Well, facts are facts.

(sips his drink)

Is there something I missed?

BARRETT

(slightly irritated)

It just isn't him! I worked with him for years at Greystone. He's not like that.

GLEASON

Not like what?

BARRETT

Listen, I've seen him wade into deputies who were heavy with suspects. He wouldn't tolerate it.

GLEASON
(matter-of-factly)
So what, you think he snapped?

BARRETT
I heard he wouldn't talk with you.

GLEASON
(nods)
And what does that tell us?

BARRETT
Yeah, I suppose it doesn't look good.

GLEASON
Did you know Kelso?

BARRETT
Un uh, but I heard he's a flake.

GLEASON
(looks over to BARRETT'S table)
Do your buddies have a take on this?

BARRETT
No, they knew Westphal, but they didn't work with him.

(GLEASON looks up and sees JACK FUEGLIN, a homicide bureau veteran walking in. FUEGLIN rips off his tie and stuffs it in his jacket He warily eyes BARRETT)

FUEGLIN
Willie, how goes?
(GLEASON nods to BARRETT who gets up and walks back to his table)
Who's that guy?

GLEASON
A deputy who partnered with Westphal. He worked with him at Greystone.

FUEGLIN

Any help?

GLEASON

Nah, he feels like I do, like what the fuck happened with Westphal?

(GLEASON looks over at BARRETT)

Maybe he knows more than he's saying. He had that look.

FUEGLIN

You and your "looks".

GLEASON

I'm thinking He knows more.

FUEGLIN

Why are you still messing with this case. It's over. I heard you're filing it tomorrow. It's put to bed as you like to say.

GLEASON

Yeah, that's a nice way to put it.

FUEGLIN

For me that would be a load off my back.

GLEASON

It would be nice for me to be able to say that.

FUEGLIN

Willie, for chrisakes, Why does this thing bother you?

GLEASON

(with slight drama)

Well, I guess sinking cops isn't what I wanted to do when I grew up.

FUEGLIN

I hear you, but you can't fight it. You didn't ask for the case.

GLEASON

Who would ask for this shit? But I really could have done without this particular case.

FUEGLIN

I heard it's a bad one. His partner, Kelso, any hope he's going to roll? I've heard he's sort of a wimp.

GLEASON

(with cynicism)

We had a more endearing term for it in years past. Yeah, so far, he's zipped up.

FUEGLIN

Well that could mean something entirely different. Maybe he was in on the action.

GLEASON

(emoting)

Jack, Jack, Jack, he may have shined his flashlight in his Goddamn eyes, he may have kissed him, but take my word for it, he did not beat his body. The case may be over and put to bed in your mind, but it's not over, and it's not "put to bed." You know what I mean?

FUEGLIN

Not exactly.

GLEASON

There's a vacuum in my head, if that makes any sense. Yes, he beat the crap out of his prisoner, but I can't locate a shred of malice. Anger? Sure, a shitful. Westphal snapped over something. I can't figure it out.

FUEGLIN

Fat chance of that with both of them invoking.

(studies GLEASON)

Willie, you don't look too spiffy, in fact, you look depressed.

GLEASON

Can't help that, I sleep in fits and starts. Jack, you're an old head, back in your patrol days, you had to get heavy with suspects every now and then, right?

FUEGLIN

Not often, but yeah, when it was needed, but not someone I had cuffed.

GLEASON

Forget the cuffs, it's an incidental part of it.

FUEGLIN

Incidental? Bullshit, Willie, it's the *principal* point here. We don't beat on cuffed prisoners.

GLEASON

And Hank Aaron doesn't deck batboys.

FUEGLIN

That makes a lot of sense!

GLEASON

You don't think it makes sense? Hank Aaron wouldn't dream of hurting a batboy, but if he did, we'd really want to know what's behind it.

FUEGLIN

Man, you are really fishing.

(While GLEASON and FUEGLIN talk
BARRETT is seen casting glances
at GLEASON'S table. He seems
oblivious to what his friends
are discussing)

GLEASON

Think for a moment, Westphal, in his years of patrol, has never,

(with emphasis)

never had a complaint lodged against him! He has commendations coming out his ass, outstanding evaluations, yet, at 2:20 a.m. on a Saturday morning, he slam dunks a prisoner who was in cuffs. Don't you think that's problematic?

FUEGLIN

(incredulous)

Yeah, it's a big problem for Westphal.

(Gleason sits back, frustrated)

GLEASON

I guess it's my problem too.

(GLEASON takes an envelope out of his jacket pocket and drops it on the table)

GLEASON (cont'd)

You know what this is?

FUEGLIN

(smiling)

I got a feeling I'm going to find out.

GLEASON

I've been served. Ellen is finally calling it quits on me.

FUEGLIN

Oh, Christ, Willie, I'm sorry...

GLEASON

No, no, no, don't be. It was a long time coming. I'm glad for her sake. She'll be a lot better off.

(as they sip their drinks, in walks ROY PERRY, GLEASON'S partner of eight months)

GLEASON (cont'd)

(in good fun)

Well, it's Roy, my boy! Mama's going to be pissed at you, stopping by for something as diabolical as a "hit"

(Fueglin folds his arms and takes it all in, smiling)

You're actually going to have an alcoholic beverage?

PERRY

(extends middle digit)

Jump on this, Willie...

(sees paper on table)

What's that?

GLEASON

That, dear Roy, is a nail in my coffin.

(confused, PERRY looks at FUEGLIN who nods. PERRY scans the paper and realizes it is personal and says

nothing, grimacing as he drops it on the table. PERRY then pulls out a notebook and flips through the pages. GLEASON looks at BARRETT'S table and gets a friendly nod.)

GLEASON (cont'd)

Looks like he's got something on his mind.

FUEGLIN

What?

GLEASON

(abstractly)

Nothing.

(looks at PERRY)

Are you looking for something to torment me with?

(PERRY ignores him as GLEASON

looks back at other table)

Christ, Jack, remember when you knew everyone in here. Are all these guys really cops?

FUEGLIN

(tiring of it)

Yes, Willie, they are really cops.

GLEASON

You know, most of these guys probably have college degrees.

(nods to the table across room)

That guy over there is probably a teacher who hates kids, and his buddy is probably an out of work aerospace engineer.

(rubs his hand over his face)

No wonder we're getting more and more of these "specials."

FUEGLIN

Someone's looking out for me, I haven't had one in months.

PERRY

(with a slight edge to it)

Westphal's as young as some of them. Why is he so high on your totem pole?

GLEASON

(surprised)

Roy, Are you actually getting in my face? I like that. I may have a hard time answering your question because you have caught me between bases.

FUEGLIN

Jesus, can I believe what I'm hearing?

GLEASON

No, you can't because I'm a helluva runner.

(looks at PERRY)

Number one, Westphal didn't go to college, two he served in the military with distinction and three, he exemplifies the kind of cop we hope to produce, that is until just after 2:00 a.m. on May 24th.

PERRY

I went to college, how would you categorize me?

GLEASON

(also with a slight edge)

I'll answer that Roy, if you will first categorize me.

(Fueglin sits back and folds his arms, as though about to see something remarkable)

PERRY

(smiles and hesitates)

How about smart, sometimes too smart, irritating, sometimes entertaining, opinionated, a bit of an old codger, not a snappy dresser, but most likely the best dick in the unit.

(unknown to PERRY, GLEASON has kept track with his fingers)

GLEASON

Did you say dick or prick? I'd hate to ask you that when you're drunk.

(holds up fingers)

I got five negatives and three positives...not bad.

(FUEGLIN is still awed by what PERRY said)

PERRY

I'm waiting.

GLEASON

Are you sure you want to hear this?

PERRY

Fire away.

GLEASON

If I had a son, I'd want him to be just like you. I can say that you are a damn good detective, or I would have left you on someone's doorstep. In putting up with me you deserve more than you can imagine. I know that you were actually kind with your observations, but true enough to let me know where I stood. Can I kiss you now?

(with this, FUEGLIN lets out
a big breath of air)

GLEASON (cont'd)

What's with you?

FUEGLIN

Oh, nothing. I've just never seen the sun shine so bright.

GLEASON

Well, bask in it. You'll never see it again.

(looks at PERRY with a
benevolent smile)

Roy, how was your trip to Greystone?

PERRY

Actually, I checked some people out at Colima Station first and then went to Greystone, then to Pasadena P.D.

GLEASON

You've been busy, haven't you?

PERRY

(scans notes)

It seems they were on the verge of canning Kelso at the point they assigned him to Westphal.

FUEGLIN

(joking)

Yeah, sure, like how many deputies actually get canned?

PERRY

He came close, very close. Seems he had a different training officer before Westphal and they rolled on a call to a vehicle off the freeway in a ditch. The driver turns out to be a drunk plumber, built like Mike Tyson. When they try to hook him up, he starts swinging the trainer around like a toy. The trainer ends up on the ground wrapped around the guy, and Kelso running around like a housewife with a hot griddle in her hands. The trainer kept yelling, "Hit him with your sap, hit him with your God damn sap!"

(GLEASON and FUEGLIN are taking
it all in)

Instead, Kelso ran to the radio car and yells "help" in a few hysterical words.

GLEASON

What happened to the trainer?

PERRY

He was lucky, a CHP unit spotted his lights and they finally helped getting the guy hooked up. They showed me a photo of the trainer. The plumber had grabbed the badge area of his shirt and ripped it down to his waist.

(PERRY gives with a slight
laugh)

Pathetic man, his shirt a tattered mess, with half of it draped down the front of his pants, his white tee shirt the only clean thing on him.

FUEGLIN

Obviously, the trainer didn't shoot Kelso or you would have told us that first.

PERRY

He told the watch commander he wouldn't enter a radio car with him again.

GLEASON

Did Kelso have any reasonable explanation for what he did?

PERRY

Nada. That's when "Lurch" Westphal came to Colima and the brass figured that maybe he could turn Kelso around.

GLEASON

What the hell is a Lurch?

PERRY

I knew that would interest you. I picked that up at Greystone. No question about it, Westphal was a legend there. He picked up the "Lurch" thing after a call to an ice cream parlor.

FUEGLIN

(interrupts)

Shit, this gets better by the moment.

PERRY

Westphal got a call about some guy in a car, flipping out and beating his wife. It's hot as hell and this goes on right in front of an ice cream parlor...it's full of people, all ga-ga watching this guy beat the crap out of this woman. Westphal drives up and parks right in front of the car.

FUEGLIN

I think I'm going to like this.

PERRY

As he walks up to the driver, the dip fumbles around and locks the door. Mr. dipshit doesn't realize his window is down. Westphal grabs him by the shirt and pulls him through the window, flops him on the ground and hooks him up. The ice cream place breaks into applause and Westphal picks up the name "Lurch."

GLEASON

(seems confused)

What does "Lurch" mean?

FUEGLIN

Jesus, Willie, you hear a great story like that and You wonder what a name means?

GLEASON

Yeah, it doesn't fit.

FUEGLIN

So what, it resonates.

GLEASON

Whatever that means. And it isn't the first time someone's been pulled through a window.

PERRY

But Westphal had an audience.

FUEGLIN

A supportive and appreciative audience.

GLEASON

Did they give him some freebie ice cream?

PERRY

I didn't ask.

GLEASON

(slightly furtive)

Did they call Westphal "Lurch" at Colima?

PERRY

I didn't know about the nickname until I went to Greystone.

GLEASON

(to FUEGLIN)

See, he's sharp! He knew I was stringing him on.

(looks at PERRY)

Didn't you?

PERRY

No, Willie, I didn't. It was just the way my day went.

(GLEASON looks over and sees
BARRETT eyeballing him)

GLEASON

What the fuck is with this guy?

FUEGLIN

(looks over at BARRETT)

What's going on here, Willie?

GLEASON

Never mind, it's nothing.

GLEASON

(looks back at PERRY)

Any other great news?

PERRY

Some interesting stuff turned up at Pasadena P.D., Our supposed victim had busts for drunk driving, battery and lewd conduct...

FUEGLIN

Lewd conduct?

PERRY

He was stoned at a bus station and walked out of the rest room with his lizard hanging out.

FUEGLIN

Classy.

PERRY

Anyway, our victim may have...

GLEASON

(Interrupts)

Hold it there! I'm having a problem with this "victim" thing. He's a SUSPECT!

(PERRY hangs his head)

I've been hearing some strange stuff out of you lately. It must have been that "supervisory" class you took.

(turns to FUEGLIN)

You know what I heard him say the other day? "Prioritize." You and me call it getting our shit together and they call it shinola.

(sees that PERRY is patiently waiting)

Please,

(affectedly)

Please, continue.

PERRY

(measured)

Our "victim" may have flapped his gums in jail. I got a call from an inmate back here from San Quentin for a retrial. He says he was Ashford's cellmate for a few weeks.

GLEASON

What does he have for us?

PERRY

Don't know, He said we should talk one-on-one.

FUEGLIN

I don't know, Willie, jailhouse snitches are bad karma.

GLEASON

It's worth a try.

(looks at PERRY)

Is that it Roy?

PERRY

(he nods as he gets up)

I'll see you tomorrow.

GLEASON

Roy, first thing tomorrow, head over to the jail and see what this guy has for us.

(PERRY nods and exits)

FUEGLIN

Why are you so damned hung up on Westpahl, sending Perry around, racking up all this miscellaneous crap? The fucker's ready to be filed, end of story.

GLEASON

(irritable)

You don't know what I know! I know his background, the whole nine yards!

FUEGLIN

You're talking like he's your son.

GLEASON

(thinks about it)

That's an interesting observation.

(slowly nods)

Very interesting.

FUEGLIN

C'mon, Willie, it's just another case.

GLEASON

You haven't had cases that fuck with your mind?

FUEGLIN

No, I haven't

(chuckles)

Maybe I'm brain dead.

GLEASON

Maybe you're more cut out for this work than I am.

FUEGLIN

You're nuts! I've worked with you for decades. You eat this work up.

GLEASON

I eat homicides up, not this shit!

FUEGLIN

Maybe you should tell Waldo you don't want any more force beefs. You have enough time in the bureau to do that.

GLEASON

It's just this fucked case. I'm regurgitating it night and day.

FUEGLIN

Willie, you realize that no matter what you turn up, there is no way this shit will fly with the public. In their eyes, Westphal is going to be seen as a sadistic prick.

GLEASON

Ha! That's what Ashford called him. Yeah, that's a given. They'll read about it, decide that Westphal is fucked and read on to check on their mutual funds, the difference being I know he isn't a brutal cop.

FUEGLIN

You're pretty sure about that?

GLEASON

(studies FUEGLIN, then)
I am, Jack, I most certainly am.

(BARRETT gets up and approaches
GLEASON)

BARRETT
I gotta talk with you.

GLEASON
So talk. Your eyes have been drilling holes in me for the
past fifteen minutes.

(FUEGLIN gets up)

FUEGLIN
Willie, I'm outta here. See you back at the Bureau.

(FUEGLIN exits)

GLEASON
(irritated)
This better be good. I consider my time with that man as
quality time.

BARRETT
(hesitant)
Maybe...
(appears to have second thoughts)

GLEASON
Sit the fuck down and lay it on me!

BARRETT
What do you know about Westphal's wife?

GLEASON
What I know is I've caused her more grief than I care to.
Why do you ask?

BARRETT
Before Westphal booked to Colima, there was talk she was
messing around.

GLEASON

Keep it up Son, you'll make a detective yet. We know about that.

BARRETT

Did you know their youngest was not Emil's

GLEASON

(draws closer, measured)

Doing what I do, I know that too...but It surprises me that you do.

(BARRETT hangs his head)

In a few seconds, you're going to break out in a sweat, aren't you?

BARRETT

(erupts)

Jake is my kid! Fuck! He's my kid!

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

GLEASON

Maybe not.

(not comfortable with this)

It's come to my attention that you...

(looks down, then straight on)

...that you may have been cheating on your husband.

RACHEL

(she stares at him, emotionless)

There's no "may have" to it. Yes, I found solace when none was there.

GLEASON

(slightly jolted)

I was under the impression your marriage was on the mend.

RACHEL

Too late, too little.

GLEASON

Your husband transferred, I'm told, to try and repair the damage working at Greystone brought into the mix.

RACHEL

Yes, very late in the game he saw what was happening.

(becoming emotional)

But I was far too involved with...well, with whom I was involved.

GLEASON

Would you care to share the name of this person you're seeing?

RACHEL

I was using past tense. I am no longer seeing him.

(draws back)

Isn't the case against Emil concluded? Why are you asking me these questions?

GLEASON

It's concluded, officially, but I'm not settled in my mind as to why it happened in the first place.

RACHEL

Emil was...actually we were all under a lot of stress.

GLEASON

Did he know you were...you were seeing someone?

RACHEL

I think he suspected it, but he didn't know for sure.

GLEASON

Was that the reason for his transfer?

RACHEL

(thinks about it)

I think he did it for the kids. We were...distant at that point.

GLEASON

Again, would you share with me who this "someone" is?

RACHEL

(sure of herself)

I see no point in causing him trouble. It's over. It was...

(welling up)

He was a comfort zone for me at a very bad time. Nothing else.

GLEASON

Will you at least answer this? Was he a deputy?

RACHEL

No, I'm not that careless.

GLEASON

I should have asked, is he in law enforcement?

RACHEL

(spits it out)

You're very clever. No.

GLEASON

You seem to be getting angry.

RACHEL

(near tears)

I'm good at keeping my cool, but keep prodding and it will spill over and I'm not sure you'll like it.

GLEASON

I'm sorry. I don't want to do that.

RACHEL

Why are you going to these extremes? Emil is through. He's headed for prison. He's a good man, but he embraced his work over everything else, including me and the kids. He was never home and when he was, he slept.

(angry)

Work and court! Work and court! We never went on vacations. My folks and my sister would come by more than I wanted because they were embarrassed for me.

(looks severely at GLEASON)

Yes, I strayed! Jesus!... What do you do to these men? There should be limits!

(sobbing)

It didn't have to end this way!

(she turns and puts a hand on GLEASON'S
knee)

I'm sorry.

(she gets up and EXITS quickly)

BLACKOUT

ACT II

Scene 3 (ONE MONTH LATER)

SETTING

A room in the Criminal Courts building.

AT RISE

GLEASON AND PERRY sit as they wait. There is a table with a half-dozen chairs, much like a small conference room. They are joined by ATTORNEY PAUL FLOOD and DALE KELSO. They all shake hands, and sit as FLOOD remains standing.

FLOOD

I've talked with Holloway and he's given me assurances that my client will not face charges if he cooperates.

GLEASON

(without making eye contact)

I'm aware of that

(looks intently at KELSO)

I've been waiting for this day.

KELSO

(nervous)

I'll try to be helpful.

GLEASON

(takes his time)

If I were to ask you to describe what happened to your partner at the time he assaulted your prisoner in just one sentence, what would you say?

KELSO

(almost too quickly)

He snapped.

(he looks at each of them)

He just, lost it.

GLEASON

(nodding)

Now, describe in detail what your suspect was saying, or doing, just before Westphal snapped.

KELSO

(hesitant)

To start with...he ah.... He was... obscene.

GLEASON

(slight smile)

Obscene?

(looks to PERRY)

Obscene, he says. A man in handcuffs is obscene.

(looks back at KELSO)

You're a God damn deputy sheriff, trained for six months at our academy, and partnered with one of the finest officers this department has produced, and when asked to describe what a suspect was saying or doing, you reply that he was obscene?

KELSO

(now shaken)

It was what he said, and how he said it.

GLEASON

(now a paternal smile)

Well then tell us how he said it.

(FLOOD takes a seat and starts to fidget and fumble as though wanting to intervene, but GLEASON turns toward him with a withering look and the attorney settles back)

KELSO

Almost as soon as he was put in the back seat, he started, He said he (long pause) he...

GLEASON

Spit it out!

KELSO

(biting)

Screwed Westphals's wife!

GLEASON

(GLEASON subdues some)
You're about thirty years old?

KELSO

Thirty two.

GLEASON

You've been a cop for about five years now?

KELSO

Six years last month.

GLEASON

Do you like the work?

KELSO

(warming up some)

Pretty much.

GLEASON

What did you do before?

KELSO

I was a teacher.

(GLEASON looks over at PERRY
and smiles)

GLEASON

You were a lateral transfer from Arcadia and you originally went to our academy when you joined Arcadia, correct?

KELSO

Yes, Arcadia contracts with the Sheriff for training.

GLEASON

Did you have any particular reason for joining such a small P.D.?

KELSO

I tried to join the Sheriff's Department, LAPD and the Highway Patrol, but Arcadia took me.

GLEASON

Why do you think those departments didn't take you?

KELSO

I think it had something to do with the oral boards.

GLEASON

Were you happy when you applied and were accepted as a lateral transfer?

KELSO

Oh yeah.

GLEASON

And when you were assigned to Westphal for training?

KELSO

Are you kidding? I was elated. He has a great rep.

GLEASON

So you thought you were in the hands of a pretty good cop?

KELSO

Absolutely, he is one of the finest men I've ever met.

GLEASON

Did you feel you could measure up to Westphal at some point?

KELSO

No. No way. I think he alerted me to the fact that some are destined to be great cops and some of us are destined to act in their shadows.

GLEASON

Which brings us back to that night. Why did this "great cop" disregard everything he knew, and taught others, and put himself, and you, in jeopardy?

KELSO

(gives it a lot of thought)

Of course, it had everything to do with that night, but the crux of it, I think, has its roots at Greystone station. When things were quiet...

(he smiles thinly)

...which was most of the time at Colima, we'd talk about everything but police work. He liked to fish and he adored his wife and kids. But when he was working Greystone, it put a big damper on his family life. That's when he asked for a transfer.

(now seems pensive)

Everyone thought he wanted to get away from a "hot" station, but the real focus was on getting his marriage back on track. He wanted to repair what all those nights in that "jungle" and all those days in court had damaged. He felt things were on the mend when he came to Colima, until that night.

GLEASON

I think you're warming up to the encounter with Ashford.

KELSO

Warming up to it? I can't put the thing out of my mind!

(starts losing it)

Foul-mouthed...he's nothing but...he's a pile of shit!

(stops to gain control)

He talked like he knew Westphal's wife. He described her perfectly. Then came the details, how he did this with her, and how "perfect" she was in bed. Westphal told him to shut up two or three times, each time I could see things were going bad. Suddenly, he veered off the highway and went behind a liquor store. I should have realized what was happening and bailed out to stop him.

GLEASON

That comes, I suppose, with experience, the fact that Westphal's buttons were being pushed.

(KELSO nods)

In hindsight, an experienced partner would have put himself between Westphal and Ashford.

(KELSO nods again)

You seem to have a history of being at the right place at the wrong...let me put it another way, being the wrong person at the right place.

FLOOD

(timidly)

Sergeant Gleason, my client doesn't need an evaluation of his conduct. He's here to assist you and...

GLEASON

Don't talk to me about assistance! Your client came close to losing it with your representation. Understand this! Deputy Kelso, by virtue of his actions, not only on the night in question but on many other occasions, has put a spotlight squarely on his *conduct*. Virtually every thing a cop does has a relevance to conduct...how he handles a traffic stop, gives death notices and most important, how he conducts himself when the proverbial shit hits the proverbial fan.

(draws closer to KELSO)

Do you have any idea how Ashford got to know Westphal's wife?

KELSO

I don't. It was like a bolt of lightning. When I looked at Westphal he had a...he looked deranged.

GLEASON

Have you met Westphal's wife?

KELSO

Yes, quite a few times.

GLEASON

And?

KELSO

Ashford described her perfectly. I was floored by it.

GLEASON

Did Westphal make any statement that would suggest he knew Ashford beforehand?

KELSO

Nothing. It was out of left field.

GLEASON

Did Ashford say what he did for a living?

KELSO

Interesting. I did ask him that when I filled out the booking form. He smiled and said he was a "prettyfier."

GLEASON

A prettyfier, what the fuck is a prettyfier?

KELSO

When I asked him what that was, he said, "You figure it out." Then he grinned and said, "...pretty soon I'll be a magnet."

GLEASON

A magnet? What the fuck!

PERRY

Maybe he was trying to say magnate

GLEASON

What?

PERRY

Magnate...mag...nate! Big wig, moneyed.

GLEASON

I'm getting the picture now.

(GLEASON still seems
bewildered, looks at PERRY
and tilts his head to Kelso)

PERRY

Tell us about the beating.

KELSO

The beating? More like a reaction. Westphal braked to a stop, bailed out, opened the back door, dragged Ashford half way out and hit him twice in the mouth. As he hit him he yelled, "Shut your mouth!"

PERRY

He just hit him twice?

KELSO

Two times. They were like jackhammer blows...nasty blows.

PERRY

What then?

KELSO

Westphal got back in the car and drove to the ER and got him sewed up, and we booked him.

PERRY

What did Westphal say?

KELSO

Not a word. And after seeing that, I said nothing.

GLEASON

Was there any discussion later about the report?

KELSO

He wrote it. He said he didn't want my hands to get dirty.

GLEASON

Why did you wait until now to roll over?

KELSO

(looks down and becomes distant)

It wasn't Mr. Flood's fault. I wasn't going to help you at all. Westphal told me to turn, to tell the truth

(now emotional, after long pause)

The truth of the matter is that bastard deserved what he got! You should nail me too. After he hit him I felt he got what he deserved.

(looks hard at GLEASON)

I'm on a fence! Remember? You told me that.

(looks at FLOOD)

I know I told you I'd cooperate, but now I realize this is so God damn unjust. You weren't there! You had to be there! I'm not going to testify against him. You can file on me too.

FLOOD

He's been under a lot of stress. He needs some time.

KELSO

I don't need time. You're sinking a good man!

GLEASON

(with some feeling)

You don't have to worry, there will be no prelim if history tells me anything.

(FLOOD appears confused)

Westphal will plead to two or three of the charges.

(draws close to KELSO)

Dale, let me share something with you. I realize now that I shouldn't have been so hard on you. You're caught in a cultural time warp, or maybe I am. More people like you are becoming our thin blue line. A lot of us old dogs have lived through changes that at the time they were thrust on us seemed beyond reason. Miranda, evidence rules and, of course, force policy. When I began my career, thumping a mouthy suspect was commonplace, until someone went too far. I remember one of my first screwups as a new cop. I spotted a guy fleeing from a gas station burglary. I chased him but he got away. My lieutenant was pissed at me because I didn't shoot the suspect. Back then, any fleeing felon was fair game. We lived through the Warren Court, Rose Bird and now we're living with video cameras and review boards. Yes, Westphal is one of the best, but he screwed up, falling victim to the new view of what goes bump in the night. You're the new face of law enforcement. It's hard for old eyes to focus on that.

(looks at FLOOD)

We have all we need.

(GLEASON and PERRY rise and shake hands with FLOOD and KELSO as they leave the room)

GLEASON

(GLEASON looks at PERRY)

You talk too much.

PERRY

Jesus, Willie, I was going to ask for an intermission to take a pee.

GLEASON

Yeah, I guess I laid it on thick.

PERRY

You did, but I know when you think you're right. Am I part of this new wave?

GLEASON

Oh yes, Roy, my boy, unless you can tell me who Rose Bird was.

PERRY

(thinks)
Something to do with, ahh..Welles, Orson Welles?

GLEASON
You're thinking of Rose Bud...you failed. You're surfing on
the new wave.

PERRY
What makes you think Westphal will cop out?

GLEASON
He's enough of a man that he won't put Kelso through the
stigma of a trial.
(as they walk slowly to EXIT)
I think he knew it was all over as he was wiping Ashford's
blood off his fist.

PERRY
You feel sorry for him, don't you?

GLEASON
Sorry?
(stops as the door and looks
squarely in PERRY'S eyes)
Sorry! No, wrong word, I feel...inadequate.
(looks away)
I feel useless...impotent.

(GLEASON stares at PERRY
for a long moment and they
EXIT)

BLACKOUT

ACT III

Scene 1 (TWO MONTHS LATER)

SETTING

The ATTORNEY ROOM at the Hall of Justice Jail. The room is stark with nothing more than a table and three chairs.

AT RISE

WILLIE GLEASON is seated and at ease in one of the chairs with a note pad in front of him. Suddenly the door opens and in walks CORBIN ASHFORD. Ashford is dressed in jail orange. He walks in arrogantly and sits with an attitude.

ASHFORD

I'm only here because my attorney said it was okay.

GLEASON

Well, good for your attorney. The case is over and we are pretty much through with it. You healed up nicely. How are they treating you?

ASHFORD

I can't complain, but the food sucks, and the guards are fucked.

GLEASON

I've heard you're scheduled for a trial on that beating you gave the guy in the bar.

ASHFORD

My attorney said we can't talk about that.

GLEASON

How very astute of him. Did you know Westphal before the incident?

ASHFORD

I don't know no cops.

GLEASON

I'm not talking about him being a bosom buddy, did you know who he was before the night he arrested you?

ASHFORD

(hesitant)

I might have seen him.

GLEASON

Around town?

ASHFORD

Something like that.

GLEASON

Give me an example.

ASHFORD

(now testy)

I don't have no example.

GLEASON

What kind of work did you do before you were arrested?

ASHFORD

Maybe I should call my attorney.

GLEASON

(matter-of-factly)

I've talked with your attorney, that's why I'm here. The case is over. The cop is headed for the joint, and you only have to worry about your dislike of cross-dressers.

ASHFORD

I worked for a landscaper.

GLEASON

And the Westphal's were one of the company's accounts?

ASHFORD

Maybe, I didn't know he was a cop at the time.

GLEASON

How many times did you see him at his home?

ASHFORD

I hardly never saw him, maybe two, three times, usually from a distance when he was leaving, but she was there, in and out, shopping, by the pool, bringing us water, every Thursday.

GLEASON

And when you were busted by Westphal, you put two and two together and...?

(GLEASON spreads his hands as though passing off the rest of the sentence to ASHFORD)

ASHFORD

And what?

GLEASON

Fill in the God damn blanks! You were busted for cleaning a transvestite's attic, put in the deputy's car and...?

ASHFORD

I may have mouthed off.

GLEASON

(sarcastic)

You may have mouthed off. Not good enough. A deputy who has seen more action than most cops, and who never got a "force" beef, decides to rearrange your features, why?

ASHFORD

How bout what I said, he's a sadistic prick?

GLEASON

(settles back)

Do you have a sister?

(ASHFORD is caught off-guard)

ASHFORD

What's she got to do with anything?

GLEASON

Nothing, of course, unless I bring her into it.

ASHFORD

I don't get it.

GLEASON

Do you get along with her?

ASHFORD

Yeah, I look after her.

GLEASON

Well enough to keep her from bedding down with me?

ASHFORD

(suspicious)

What kind of bullshit is this?

GLEASON

Bullshit. That's exactly what it is...plain bullshit. I've said something that hits home in your world. Just words, but they can be used as weapons, can't they?

ASHFORD

(becomes sullen)

I don't get what you're talking about.

GLEASON

Well, by just mentioning your sister in the way I did, I got a rise out of you...a smattering of sweat on your brow, you know about this bullshit business, don't you?

ASHFORD

You're not going to get nowhere near my sister.

GLEASON

Of course I'm not, but I got close enough inside your head that I got you to break out in a sweat.

ASHFORD

Whatever you say, man.

GLEASON

You said you mouthed off, was it like I mouthed off?

ASHFORD

What do you want me to say, that I didn't screw the cop's wife?

GLEASON

I just want the truth.

ASHFORD

(cocky)

The truth is... you'll never know.

GLEASON

(doesn't react, and smiles)

You get along well with your mother, don't you?

ASHFORD

What about it?

GLEASON

Well, you are...

(looks at his notes)

twenty-seven, an age at which most men have weaned themselves of their mother's milk.

ASHFORD

(confused)

What?

GLEASON

Let me see if I can explain it to you. About twenty-five years ago, a guy, about your age, called my partner a slimy kike. I put him down with three blows and hooked him up for obstructing. Just like you, he was booked and given a phone call. He didn't call his mommy, he called the station and asked for the watch sergeant. He told him to tell us that he apologized for what he said. He was a man who saw the error of his ways. You are a punk who can never hope to reach his stature.

ASHFORD

I don't have to listen to this shit.

GLEASON

(with some drama)

Oh, but you do. Maybe not from me, but hopefully you'll spend some time in the joint where punks can't hide, and mommy dearest is nowhere to be found. Oh, yes, you'll hear it, and, I suspect, you'll feel it, in spades.

(as an after thought)

And if you don't like being called a punk, what do you call a guy who beats the shit out of a guy in a dress and then, when caught, calls out to his mother.

ASHFORD

(now surly and uneasy)

I ain't saying no more shit, man, I'm suing the prick.

GLEASON

Well, for not saying shit, you said a lot. I'll make it a point to alert the transvestite to time his lawsuit on the tail of yours, and I'll volunteer as a witness.

ASHFORD

Fuck you man, we're through. I want out of here.

(ASHFORD starts banging on the table.
A DEPUTY enters)

GLEASON

Take this Prince of Shit back to his castle.

(As the DEPUTY leaves, he turns back and looks at GLEASON and without saying anything, holds up two fingers. GLEASON nods. The door closes as GLEASON enters info into his notebook. The door re-opens and the DEPUTY ushers in HECTOR ARIAS, A HEAVILY TATTOOED AND MUSCLED CONVICT.

GLEASON

Take a seat Hector.

(GLEASON continues to write, then,)

GLEASON (cont'd)

How are you getting along?

ARIAS

Just counting the days.

GLEASON

My partner took your call. Needless to say, we're interested in anything you have to tell us about Ashford.

ARIAS

It's not a lot, I bunked with him for a few weeks just after I returned from Quentin. He has a mouth like a teletype. You just push the button and off he goes. I finally told him to clam up or I'd rearrange his teeth. He said a cop already did that. I told him he probably got sick of hearing him flap his gums.

GLEASON

Maybe that's closer to the truth than we know. What is it you want to share with us?

ARIAS

He said he just nailed a cop on a brutality beef, and that he was going to cash in on a big lawsuit he already had in the works.

GLEASON

Did he say anything about how the beating went down?

ARIAS

Nah, I hear so much bullshit on that score, you never believe any of it, and he was nothing more than a punk. What I think would interest you guys is that he said he screwed the cop's wife and that he razed the cop about it. When the cop reacted he said that was his ticket for a big payoff.

GLEASON

(leans toward ARIAS)

Hector, can we try to get a bit more precise on what exactly you heard. Did Ashford tell you he actually had sex with West..,ah, with the cops wife, or that he just told the cop he did, just to piss him off and try...

ARIAS

(interrupts)

Yeah, man I thought the same thing and I asked him, actually I said, "Bullshit, you just told him that to piss

him off. No cop's wife would lay down with a piece of shit like you." Instead of answering me, he just sat there and rolled his fingers as though he had a wad of bills, with a shit eating grin on his face.

GLEASON

(gathers his notes)

The pool just gets murkier. Thanks for getting in touch with us, but I'm curious, why did you contact us?

ARIAS

A little while ago, you almost said his name, Westphal, right? The punk knew his name. A little over three years ago, I fell for an ex-con with a gun. Westphal busted me and I spent a little over two years in the joint. There are cops and there are cons. Westphal was straight with me. Yeah, he busted me, but there was some mutual respect there. You can sense it, just as you can easily see through a punk like Ashford. I guess what I really wanted to tell you is that Westphal is a good man, and if what I've told you can help him, go for it.

GLEASON

(stands and extends his hand)

It's much appreciated. It is a lot of help to me.

(raps the door)

Is there anything you need?

(Arias starts to shake his head, then,)

ARIAS

Louis L'Amour paperbacks. There's nothing they have here that I want to read.

GLEASON

(as the DEPUTY leads ARIAS away)

I'll work on that.

(GLEASON leans against the wall, staring at the floor. Finally, he picks up his notebook and raps it on the table edge and leaves the room HUMMING THE THEME FROM DRAGNET)

BLACKOUT

ACT III

Scene 2 (SIX MONTHS LATER)

SETTING

The CODE FOUR BAR.

AT RISE

JACK FUEGLIN AND ROY PERRY sit at a table nursing their drinks when they are joined by CAPTAIN WALDO WARE. He walks up to their table

WARE

No trouble finding the two of you.

(joking, raises an arm to
HARDBELLY)

No wonder your solve rate sucks.

FUEGLIN

You'd be surprised what we solve in here.

WARE

Don't know what you're talking about, I'm talking about your cases.

FUEGLIN

Boy, this place isn't the same without Willie.

WARE

Well perk up, I just got off the phone with him. He may be showing up.

FUEGLIN

There you go Roy. You miss him, don't you?

PERRY

Yeah, I guess I do, sort of like a beagle I had. He kept pissing on the bathroom rug. I cussed him up and down, but

FORCE UNDER COLOR

he kept pissing on the rug. I miss him. What's it been, five...six months?

FUEGLIN

Yeah, about that. You know, I don't know this for sure but I think that Westphal case took the life out of him.

WARE

More than you know, boys, more than you know. I tried to get him to open up on it after Westphal copped out, but he'd clam up and then turn sour. Maybe we should stay away from it if he shows up.

PERRY

Can't figure why it bothered him so much. The guy was dirty. Willie worked dozens of cases like that. What was so different about Westphal?

(they both look to WARE who appears to be involved in some heavy thought)

PERRY (cont'd)

Captain, you with us?

WARE

(snaps out of it)

Let me tell you something about Willie. He and I worked patrol in the Lomitas area. It was pretty much a redneck area with a lot of calls every night. We didn't have pepper spray, Tasers or Manodnock Batons back then. Our "tools" for controlling goons who wanted to fight consisted of wooden batons, which were useless, Gonzalez saps and leather gloves. One fine evening, Willie got a call in the Rosemead area that someone was stealing neighborhood cats and killing them. Willie found the guy. He had an eight-foot wooden fence surrounding his property and had a few trees inside it. He would round up cats and use them to train dogs to tree mountain lions. There were cat carcasses all over the place. Willie busted the guy and was putting him in the car. The guy decided he wasn't going to go along with the program and tried to prevent Willie from putting him in the car. Willie decked him, hit him more times than Westphal hit his prisoner. Willie was tough as nails, but he had a soft spot for animals. They were Willie's button.

Nothing ever came out of these because it was understood, you play by the program or you got put down.

PERRY

The fact remains, Westphal's prisoner was in cuffs.

WARE

So was Willie's. I used to kid him about it, but no more. There are other things that must have been on his mind. I never paid much attention to it as his case developed, but, like Westphal, Willie was a highly decorated marine in Korea, I mean big time. His time on the department, the commendations and shootings almost mirror Westphal's. And like Westphal, it weighed heavily on his marriage, something he hid from everyone, it really broke him up. He committed himself to his job. A lot of people would say he was a "heavy", too prone to use force, but that was the tenor of the time. Kipling said it best, "It's Johnny this and Johnny that, and throw him out, the brute, but it Johnny, savior of the land, when the guns begin to shoot."

(unknown to WARE, GLEASON has
walked in and approaches)

GLEASON

Jesus, Waldo, you're not spouting poetry again.
(he grabs a chair from a nearby table)
You didn't say it was going to be a convention.
Roy, my boy, have they cut you loose yet?

PERRY

(to FUEGLIN)
See, the beagle. Yeah, Jack and I are partners.

GLEASON

Well good, I enjoyed having you as my partner, you know that, don't you?

PERRY

(smiling)
I wasn't sure, but hearing you say it makes it all good.

WARE

Willie, I'm happy you decided to come by, but the way you sounded on the phone made me wonder if you were bringing some luggage with you.

GLEASON

I was good at hiding that when I was younger, but then again, you're from the old school.

(an awkward silence builds as
FUEGLIN picks up on it and motions
to PERRY)

FUEGLIN

Willie, Roy and I have some contacts to make. It was great seeing you...come by the Bureau when you have a chance.

(they leave as WARE, sensing
something is in the air, draws
closer to GLEASON)

WARE

Okay, Willie, I've known you long enough to see dark clouds in the fields of your mind. What's up?

GLEASON

What's up? My health is going to pot, I can't sleep...I drink too much. Ellen is long gone...out of my life. Other than that things are rosy.

WARE

What happened to all these golf and fishing ideas? Retirement isn't supposed to be what you're going through.

(pause)

What's really going on?

GLEASON

I think you're sharp enough to know.

WARE

Westphal?

GLEASON

(nods)

I've never directly told you this, but Westphal is me as a young cop.

WARE

C'mon, Willie, I knew that, but those were the old days...they're gone. We did things that are illegal today. Dylan said it best, "The order is rapidly fading." Can't you just let it go?

GLEASON

It's not just the case itself, it's as if he followed in my footsteps.

(WARE sits back in thought)

Our military background is almost a ditto, and
(shallow laugh)
you still remember our days in patrol?

WARE

I'd rather not.

GLEASON

Did we brutalize anyone?

WARE

(not sure)

I wouldn't call it...

GLEASON

(interrupts)

We kicked ass when it was needed. How many shootings were you involved in during our patrol days?

WARE

A couple.

GLEASON

Kill anyone?

WARE

You know I didn't.

GLEASON

You remember my history, don't you? Four shootings in seven years, all of them at Greystone, all of them in policy, three dead, and me with a hunk of lead still in my

leg. Jesus, when I read Westphal's sheet, I thought it was me!

WARE

You've got to drop this! Don't you see what it is doing to you? Is it because you think he got a raw deal?

GLEASON

A raw deal?

(sarcastic)

Did he get a raw deal? Let's rearrange the setting. You are having a drink in a bar. Some asshole starts mouthing off about your wife. You deck him. Cops come and check everything out and make an offer. Shake hands, go home and no one gets in trouble. How many times, Waldo, did we do that with guys who let their mouths run wild and someone took a hit over it?

WARE

That's ancient history. They weren't in uniform and they weren't prisoners in cuffs.

GLEASON

That's right, we're supposed to be above it, above any emotional outburst, like the bomber crews in Twelve O'clock High. What is a maximum effort...how far can you push a person before they crack?

WARE

I didn't write that book. That was during the war...different rules, different dynamics. Today, cops must live by a code of conduct.

(they sit back, sipping their drinks)

WARE (cont'd)

Have you been to a doctor?

GLEASON

A doctor can't cure what I have.

WARE

What do you have?

GLEASON

(after a long pause)

I guess you can call it a cancer of the soul.

(WARE frowns, GLEASON)

(absently)

Do you know what happened to Westphal?

WARE

Of course, he copped to a couple of felonies and got four years.

GLEASON

No, I mean what really happened.

WARE

Willie, I'm not following you.

GLEASON

(uses his fingers)

One, convicted and fired from the job he loved and sent to prison. Two, his wife divorced him. Three, Ashford, that miserable piece...

(he starts losing it, then
recovers)

Ashford is suing him for millions, and four, isn't this the foul-tasting frosting on the fucking cake? The latest chapter of this never-ending saga is that the FBI is mounting a civil rights violation against Westphal.

(WARE stares, bug-eyed)

GLEASON (cont'd)

(becomes a bit frantic)

Remember? I had a talk with Kelso when Westphal copped out. The *why* that bugged me got filled in.

WARE

I know all that Willie, including what Ashford said to Westphal.

GLEASON

(becoming disconnected)

But what we didn't know is that Westphal was in the process of repairing his marriage when he transferred to Colima and things were working out. Do you see what was happening in

Westphal's head? Things were starting to work again in his marriage! Are we asking too much of our people? Granted, we aren't at twenty thousand feet over Berlin, so how much can we push for performance? Isn't five shootings pushing the envelope?

(WARE sees that GLEASON is
losing it)

Christ, if Westphal was in the Eighth Air Force he's be heavy with medals...he had seven commendations, he had kids too...how do you balance that, when someone's mouth is the weapon? How do we measure when words cut? Can we keep sending them out in harms way? There are people who...would you turn away from words that cut? Why...can we...

(confused)
they are causing...
(looks at WARE, quivering)
I...You

WARE
Willie, calm down. I want you to see my doctor. Will you go?

GLEASON
(gasping, then slowly mellows)
You have always been a prince, Waldo
(pause)
I'll, ah...I'll think about it...I will.
(he rises)
I have to pee.
(starts out but turns and
reaches in his jacket pocket
and hands WARE a small envelop)
Dodger tickets, behind 3rd base, enjoy.

WARE
No, you should go, it would do you some good.

(WARE holds out the tickets)

GLEASON
(stares at them, shakes his head)
The thrill...it's ah...gone

(GLEASON EXITS STAGE LEFT)

as WARE watches him, WARE
slouches back in his chair
and taps the envelop on
the table. He ALERTS, looks at
it and jumps off his chair,
throwing the envelope on the
floor)

WARE

WILLIE!

(just after he yells we hear
a single GUN SHOT)

(BLACKOUT)

(CURTAIN)