

SEDGWICK

written by

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EPISODE 1

EXT. NORTH ORLEANS STREET - DAY

CHIRR-CHIRR-CHIRR-CHIRR. Cicadas chirp.

Heat waves shimmer over the cracked pavement of a vacant street, empty except for a few parked cars. Overgrown, untended trees droop their branches just feet over them, weighed down with vivid green leaves.

Summer in a concrete jungle.

From behind, LESTER, 20s-40s male, walks haltingly on the sidewalk. He is rail-thin, with spindly arms. A dirty white shirt and jeans hang off his frail frame.

The sidewalk he limps along is lined with a sagging chain-link fence, separating the street from an ugly, overgrown lot of weedy vines. Rising from the vines, rusted steel girders stretch towards the sky, holding up --

RATTLE-RATTLE-RATTLE-RATTLE. The Chicago Brown Line train, elevated upon the girders, thunders by. Lester doesn't react.

EXT. NORTH ORLEANS ROOF - CONTINUOUS

From a view across the street and about 30 feet up, Lester ambles along.

A booted leg steps to the edge of the roof. *Someone is watching Lester.*

EXT. NORTH ORLEANS STREET - CONTINUOUS

Lester has a long, narrow nose, and gaunt eyes. His expression is mostly empty, but holds the slightest bit of tension, as if he's holding back pain. *Probably from that limp.*

The elevated train tracks he's been walking beside now swing over him, crossing the street. He walks under them, slowing.

He peers ahead...

...the North Avenue intersection is just 30-40 yards away. A steady stream of cars file along, and pedestrians cross on the sidewalk.

He peers left...

...the girders of the Brown Line curve to the West, marking a path to the Sedgwick train stop. Through the steel beams a brick station entrance is just visible.

He peers right...

...the girders curve to the South. Thickets of leaves and ivy climb them, filling the gaps between beams. *Practically a forest within the city.*

Lester peers deeper still...

...into the shadowy depths. The beams and leaves conspire to block the sunlight, hiding a dark recess under the tracks.

Except...what's that? Something eye-catching peaks above one of the crossbeams lying across the ground. Its color doesn't match the orange-brown rust of the beam.

Lester peers deeper yet again. *What is it?*

It's a human hand. Still, and draped over the beam. Whoever it belongs to lies behind it, in the overgrown thickets under the tracks.

CHIRR-CHIRR-CHIRR-CHIRR. The cicadas stir. But not just them.

ZZZZ-ZZZZ-ZZZZ-ZZZZ. Flies do too.

Lester's gaunt eyes stare at what he *must know* is a dead body.

CHIRR-CHIRR-ZZZZ-ZZZZ. The cicadas and flies fill the air.

EXT. NORTH ORLEANS ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Behind Lester, the distant, unfocused figure on the roof stands menacingly, looking down.

Oh shit. Roof guy killed whoever is under the bridge, and Lester is next. Right?

EXT. NORTH ORLEANS STREET - CONTINUOUS

Wrong. Because instead of recoiling in horror at the sight of the corpse's hand...

...Lester's lips curl into a slight smile.

Lester continues limping on, towards the bustling North Avenue.

EXT. NORTH ORLEANS ROOF - CONTINUOUS

So who was the guy on the roof? It was...

NATIONAL GUARD OFFICER 1, 20s male. He wears a uniform, but no helmet or armor. He steps away from the edge and back to the center of the roof, joining...

...NATIONAL GUARD OFFICER 2, 20s male, at a pair of chairs settled underneath a shade awning.

Next to it, a plastic folding table holds a laptop computer and a cache of electronics. Binoculars, night vision goggles, microphones...surveillance equipment.

It's a routine outpost.

TITLES: "Sedgwick"

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The lively sounds of a house party. Music, talking, glasses clinking.

A translucent brown liquid is poured into a shot glass.

ABBY

Is it really that bad?

DEVON

You've just gotta drink it quickly.

Several PARTYGOERS are dispersed in groups around an open living room/kitchen.

A group of 4 friends crowd around a kitchen counter. Among them are a first couple...

- RAJ, 30s male, Indian- or Pakistani-American, life of the party

- VIC, 30s any gender, white, a bit of a bully

...and a second couple...

- DEVON, 30s male, any ethnicity, "strong but silent" type

- ABBY, 30s female, any ethnicity, eager to please

Raj gleefully passes out the 4 identical shot glasses.

RAJ

Here we go, here we go, here we go.

VIC
Smell it first!

ABBY
I'm scared.

VIC
Don't be a baby. Drink it.

RAJ
And don't hold your nose, that's
cheating. Don't think about it,
just go! Go! Go!

They all down their shots. Grimaces all around.

Abby reaches for a beer bottle, but Vic playfully stops her.

VIC
No chasers! Let it settle.

RAJ
Gotta get that aftertaste.

ABBY
You said it was like black
licorice. That wasn't black
licorice.

DEVON
It's different for everyone.

RAJ
Welcome to Chicago, baby!

Raj wrangles Abby and Devon into a hug. To Abby:

RAJ
I can't *believe* you moved here for
this dude! You're gonna regret the
fuck out of this.

EXT. DECK - NIGHT

The lights of distant apartment buildings dot the sky over a
residential deck.

The foursome sit around a table, Raj and Vic on one side,
Devon and Abby on the other. No more shots glasses anymore;
just beers and seltzers.

RAJ
So...have you seen him yet?

Abby smiles sheepishly at Devon, who sips his beer nonchalantly. *Go on.*

ABBY
No. Not yet.

VIC
You've gotta.

ABBY
I want to. Devon doesn't wanna show him to me.

DEVON
It's not my thing.

VIC
(teasing)
He's scared of Little Lester.

DEVON
I'm not scared. I don't like the obsession over him.

Raj and Vic look doubtful. *Yeah, right.* But --

ABBY
He's telling the truth. It's the "Chicago crime" reputation thing. He thinks it's ruining the city.

DEVON
80 people leave per day.

VIC
You're no fun.

Devon shrugs and looks away dismissively. *I don't really care what you think.*

Abby touches his shoulder gently. *Relax.*

RAJ
I mean, this city loves that shit. They do tours of Al Capone's murders. H.H. Holmes, Gacy. Now it's Lester.

VIC
Except he's still around and you can see him. He's like a mascot.

DEVON
Benny the Bull is a mascot.

VIC

You have such a hard-on for Golden Age Chicago.

DEVON

I don't like people trivializing what he's doing here.

10% feel like they're hostages in their own city. 10% are, like, *fans of him*. Everyone else doesn't care. I just don't think it's very funny.

Awkward beat. After a moment, Devon stands.

DEVON

Anyone want another?

Everyone declines.

Devon walks away back towards the lights of the apartment.

Abby watches him leave, concerned, but Raj and Vic smirk at each other. *Uh oh. Dad's angry.*

ABBY

Sorry. He's kinda sensitive about it.

RAJ

Nah. It's alright.

Vic leans forward conspiratorially.

VIC

If you wanna see him, we can show you. There's an app.

ABBY

There's an *app*?

FLASHBACK

EXT. DAYTON AVENUE - NIGHT

Vic and Raj stand on the sidewalk of an intersection. They both have their phones in hand, peaking periodically at it and then at the streets around them.

Another SPECTATOR, 30s-40s male, stands close by. He's also checking his phone.

RAJ
Last sighting was on Larrabee. Are
you from here?

SPECTATOR
Nah. Milwaukee.

THA-TING. THA-TING. THA-TING. A distinctive notification
noise comes in on everyone's phones.

SPECTATOR
Where's he at?

RAJ
Heading south. This way.

VIC
There! That's him!

Across the street, illuminated by street lamps, Lester walks
with the same halting gait. He doesn't seem to notice at all
that...

...hovering behind him are 5-6 additional SPECTATORS, each
holding their phones out and recording him.

RAJ (V.O.)
Vic took me to see him my first
week.

Vic, Raj, and the Spectator cross the street, falling in with
the rest.

ABBY (V.O.)
What's he like? In person, I mean?

VIC (V.O.)
I mean...he looks like a guy. Like
he looks human. But he's not.

Vic swings her phone around to film herself.

INSERT - CELL PHONE FOOTAGE

She and Raj grin into the camera, Lester and the procession
walking ahead of them.

VIC
It's Lester, baby! Woo!

BACK TO SCENE

The small group follows Lester down Dayton Avenue, keeping
their distance of about 10 yards.

One BOLD SPECTATOR circles around Lester to take pictures from in front.

Lester's pupils dilate at the camera flash, but otherwise don't react.

ABBY (V.O.)
What did he do?

RAJ (V.O.)
He just walks. Steady, same pace.

ABBY (V.O.)
Where was he going?

VIC (V.O.)
Nowhere. He doesn't follow a pattern.

RAJ (V.O.)
They tried mapping his routes -- some math people at UIC thought he was turning based on traffic flow. Nothing.

VIC (V.O.)
We followed him for like, an hour. I was getting bored.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL ALLEY - LATER

Vic and Raj continue following Lester, but the group they're in is now smaller: just 3-4 others. Only one has their phone out.

RAJ (V.O.)
But then we got really lucky.

The alley they're in is not a popular street; it's a narrow pathway, walled with rows of garage doors which form the rear of their residential units. The kind of street you'd hesitate to use as a shortcut.

Vic and Raj have stopped filming.

RAJ
My phone's gonna die.

VIC
I think we can hang a right at the end of this. There's a Brown Line stop.

RAJ
I want pizza. Is there anything
close?

VIC
I'll look.

Ahead of them, KELLY and MONROE, 20s females, enter the alley, walking towards the procession in the midst of a light-hearted conversation. Backpacks hang off their shoulders.

RAJ (V.O.)
There were these college girls...

MONROE
She came back after econ and her
roommate did *all* her laundry while
she was gone --

KELLY
(laughing)
Oh, no!

MONROE
-- and hung it up in her closet.
Which is *really nice*, but like, you
don't need to do that...

She trails off, noticing Lester and his followers walking toward them.

Monroe and Kelly clam up, quickly. They move to one side of the alley, hugging the wall of garage doors.

The two groups trudge toward each other.

VIC (V.O.)
There's all these theories about
how he chooses.

SHA-CLICK. SHA-CLICK. Lester's halting steps on the concrete.

Lester's empty eyes see nothing.

VIC (V.O.)
To me...it just seemed random.

Kelly averts her gaze as they pass.

Monroe does the same at first...but she can't help it. She peeks. And as she does...

...Lester's eyes dart in her direction.

A spindly hand clutches Monroe's wrist.

Monroe's eyes immediately spring with tears.

MONROE

Kelly --

VIC

Oh, fuck.

Monroe tries to pull away, gently at first, then desperately.

SPECTATOR

He's got her!

The small group of spectators spring into action. Phones come out. Their camera lights dance across Monroe as she struggles, trying to keep her voice steady and polite.

MONROE

Get him off me. Please, get him off.

ABBY (V.O.)

What'd you do?

Vic backs away, her mouth parting in exhilarated horror.

SPECTATOR

Don't touch 'em!

RAJ (V.O.)

Nothing. When he's got you, it's over.

INSERT - CELL PHONE FOOTAGE

Lester continues his halting steps, dragging Monroe behind him. Her resistance does absolutely nothing to slow his stride.

The spectators encircle the pair, forming a perimeter of paparazzi.

Behind the camera, Raj's half-appalled, half-excited voice is heard -- the way you might react if a fight broke out in front of you at McDonald's.

RAJ

Oh, shit! Oh, shit!

BACK TO SCENE

Monroe strikes violently, repeatedly, at Lester's arm. It does nothing at all.

RAJ (V.O.)
He's not human.

One spectator, thrilled, types furiously on his phone.

THA-TING. THA-TING. THA-TING. Everyone's phones buzz with notifications from the app: *Lester has caught one.*

Monroe is begging, crying. She's a college kid, away from home for the first time in her life. And she's going to die. She blubbers, her panic rising, as she turns to Vic.

MONROE
Could you help me? Please, ma'am,
can you help?

SPECTATOR
She can't do nothin'!

Kelly has frozen where the snatch occurred, just a few yards away. As she's dragged away, Monroe pleads.

MONROE
Kelly, please -- my mom. My mom,
Kelly. He's gonna take me to the
pit, and my mom -- SHE'S GONNA SEE
IT, KELLY, THEY'RE GONNA SHOW IT
EVERYWHERE!!

But Kelly doesn't help. She turns and walks quickly away.

MONROE
KELLY, DON'T LET HIM TAKE ME!
KELLY!!!

But Kelly doesn't stop. As Monroe continues screaming, being dragged steadily away with spectators in tow, Kelly clutches at the straps on her backpack.

Her eyes brim with tears as she stalks away from her friend.

END FLASHBACK

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Devon, carrying a fresh beer, approaches a window and peeks out to the deck beyond. He sees...

...through the window, Abby is totally enraptured in the story.

He bites his lip in disapproval.

EXT. APARTMENT - LATER

Devon and Abby hug Raj and Vic goodbye.

Raj and Vic return back inside; Devon and Abby leave.

EXT. BROWN LINE STATION - LATER

Devon and Abby sit together on a bench. Devon is silent, watching for the train.

Abby notices Devon's hardened expression. She bumps his shoulder playfully.

ABBY

Hey. Don't worry.

Devon musters a smile. He goes back to watching for the train, slightly warmed. But then --

THA-TING. Abby's phone receives a notification.

END