

SCRIPT TITLE

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An interrogation room. Detective Staples circles peter Lorre, playing bad cop all we here are his footsteps and the cracking of his knuckles. Detective Flowers plays good cop and sits directly in front of peter.

PETER (V.O.)

When you fire your weapon in the slums where the buildings block the sun and the sun dont never reach, there isnt a question asked. When you fire your weapon topside in this city, at a well known entrepreneur... Well, the shit hits the fan with the Business Inspection Bureau. I never worked with these guys before. They brought them in as investigators on my case. I aint never met these guys in my life. Theyre soft, these fellas, and the one playing bad cop is chubby, face filled with his high life on Wall Street. The one playing good cop sweats and looks from side to side, and he sits with his chest puffed out and angled so that I can see clearly that his badge is more impressive than mine. Honestly I like this grey-haired hard ass pacing around me better. His badge aint been shined since he earned it, and he keeps it tucked behind the extended collar of his black suit, out of site.

FLOWERS

My name is Detective Flowers, this is my partner Detective Staples. I trust you know why you are here.

PETER

Memory is a little foggy to be honest, Flowers. Why dont you remind me.

STAPLES

We got us a fuckin joker here eh Flowers?

FLOWERS

Easy Staples, he has a badge.

STAPLES

You just watch your mouth Lorre,
you are already on thin ice with
your employers. You can get away
with this attitude with your small
time investigators but the BIB
means business.

PETER

Sorry, I tend to be cranky when
yanked from my gin at 3AM. You
fellas are really cutting into my
downtime.

Staples gets close to peters ear.

STAPLES

Yeah and you know how my night was
before I got the call to drive out
to this no-name financial district
when I was asleep in my bed? I was
gonna get my beauty sleep.

PETER

But you look so young.

STAPLES

You little shit.

FLOWERS

Staples. Why dont you get our boy
here a glass of gin with some ice
and lime. Cool off a bit.

PETER

Hold the lime and ice for me will
you Staples.

Staples slams his hands on the interrogation desk

STAPLES

You need anything else Lorre, maybe
some balls and a tall glass of shut
the fuck up.

PETER

Id hate to be a pest.

Staples exits.

FLOWERS

pete, can I call you pete?

PETER

No.

FLOWERS

Detective, you know why you are here and, trust me, I was on the same beat in a different town before I made it to the BIB. I was an independent once too and I know the red tape is frustrating because you guys do the real work. Im not here to get you in any deep water here. What we have here though is an entrepreneur with a bullet in the kneecap and no witnesses. You rushed into action without contacting a contracted agency for backup in a situation with shots fired, not to mention the unexplained presence of the unidentified dead man presumed to be from the underside. Humanicorp has asked us to investigate this is their financial interest.

PETER

I am within my rights as an independent to investigate how I see fit, or am I mistaken?

FLOWERS

And Im not here to question that. I am here to make sure that no breach of civil contract was performed in your legal investigation. An entrepreneur with a bullet in his knee is a hairy situation and you knew that when you chose to abandon recommended protocol in a potentially deadly situation.

PETER

I had the evidence.

FLOWERS

The fire set off the nuclear transformer and created an electromagnetic pulse. All of their encrypted computers were fried.

PETER

I had physical evidence also.

FLOWERS

It was lost in the fire.

PETER

Bullshit.

FLOWERS

By the time we got there the building was burned out. We have a team on the site now but it seems unlikely that any hard evidence will be found. I read your report...

PETER

Yeah? What did you think? Did I forget to mention Im tracking down a major lead who will be skipping the district as soon as possible for amnesty under another corporate cluster? So yeah I was a little rushed on the damn report.

FLOWERS

I know this is an inconvenience. But your report was... underwhelming, to say the least.

PETER

What, specifically was your problem with it? I see you have it on the desk.

FLOWERS

I appreciate your sense of humor Detective Lorre, but it is 4AM and I would like to be there when my children wake up for school and to cook breakfast for my wife, so I will be blunt with you.

A ruffling of pages is heard.

FLOWERS (CONT'D)

Your report reads, and I quote, I did my job, I shot someone who deserved it, and now Im after another bastard... more on this late... I dont want to get short with you detective. I know this is frustrating but if you cooperate and truly have nothing to hide we will be out of here before the sun rises and you can get your lead.

PETER

Alright, fine. Still waiting on that Gin though.

FLOWERS

Just start at the beginning, Staples will return in a minute.

PETER

You know I would love to Flowers, but my throat is so dry, and I just cant seem to focus on this. It just seems like my right hand is missing something vaguely, I dunno, glass shaped? Oh yeah, my Gin.

FLOWERS

Listen detective, this process can last all night or we can get to the bottom of this thing now. If you have nothing to hide there is nothing to fear.

peter says nothing.

FLOWERS (CONT'D)

Okay, Staples will be back soon, but I will warn you he doesnt like running errands and he is going to be very upset... We will wait.

Moments pass, the awkward hum of air conditioning and the light above peter are heard. Staples enters and sets the drink down roughly on the table

STAPLES

Start talking.

FLOWERS

We are all ears, detective.

PETER

Yeah thanks for the room service chief, but I asked for no ice and you spilled my drink with your dramatic show of force.

Staples walks behind peter. Suddenly, he grabs peter by the head and forces him loudly into the desk, into an ear, Staples whisper.

STAPLES

Ive got a masters degree in dramatic show of force you small time wannabe. Some have called what I do a fuckin art form, you got me? We aint contractors kid, we are big fuckin business and Im sick of the fuckin attitude.

PETER

Jesus Staples lighten up, thats my god damn drinking arm. I need that thing.

FLOWERS

Staples! Thats enough.

Staples releases peter, who sits back up, we hear the ice clinking as he drinks his gin.

PETER

Im gonna need another one of these...

FLOWERS

Then start talking detective.

As peter begins to talk the soundscape of the interrogation room fades out while the sound of a night-street with a downpouring of rain are heard. Cars and people pass. Advertisements are heard.

PETER (V.O.)

Fair enough. I was closing up my office and taking off my tie when she walked in. She was still wet from the rain, her spring dress clinging to her body. I could tell she was in some sort of trouble.

VICTORIA

Detective Lorre?

PETER

Call me pete.

VICTORIA

pete. I need your help.

PETER

Whats the problem?

VICTORIA

My brother, I cant prove anything but I think hes mixed up with the wrong people. I got this message from him two days ago... I cant get a hold of him.

She plays a recording

JOHN

Victoria, sis, it isnt safe anymore. I cant tell you why but Humanicorp is after me. I have to get off of the grid. I cant tell you where Im going or why, and if they come after you give them this recording. Sis, I hope this isnt goodbye, I will try to contact you when I am safe but it could be a while, and I have to wait until I know you are out of danger from Humanicorp. Do not try to help me, this is big Victoria. I hope they leave you alone but if they dont you have to cooperate with them. I love you little Sis.

The recording cuts out.

PETER

Humanicorp. Im not familiar. Contractor?

VICTORIA

No. Corporation. They do health and medicine mostly. I dont know what my brother found but by the way he was scared he discovered a breach in financial contract or something worse, and if they are after him it must be something they cant settle in the courts. Humanicorp has the kind of muscle to settle your average trial and it wouldnt make a dent.

PETER (V.O.)

Contractors are small fry. They get paid to manufacture and distribute for corporations. Corporations, these guys are the big guns.

(MORE)

PETER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

There isnt any law against an independent taking on a corporation, and nothing is ever confirmed but people disappear. I had never taken a corporate gig before, too much risk and independents dont get paid the kinda money that makes it worth it. But that dress, and her eyes, they were blue like nothing Ive seen before.

VICTORIA

Will you help me?

PETER

You know anything about the independent investigation business?

VICTORIA

Ive done research.

PETER

So why are you coming to me? You know Id have to be crazy to go after a corporation. These guys are out of my league.

VICTORIA

I tried every investigation contractor in the town.

PETER

They wont help?

VICTORIA

Humanicorp announced something huge that they are keeping under wraps, some new drug. Very secretive, my brother was under a financial contract to maintain absolute silence, hes a scientist, a very good one and got hired on a few months ago.

PETER

And the contracted agencies are worried about public image going after a corp during a major unveiling of a revolutionary product...

VICTORIA

They said they didnt have enough evidence to start a legitimate investigation into breach of public contract. But I know they are just afraid to expose whatever drug this is to other corporate influence.

PETER

Breach of public contract is a serious charge miss...?

VICTORIA

Call me Victoria.

PETER

Victoria, if I start this investigation and it goes under false charge the public will have my badge revoked...

VICTORIA

My brother is not someone to trump up a situation and he knows the courts well. I have never heard him that scared before. He wouldnt be leaving unless this was something major that the courts would not be able to handle.

PETER (V.O.)

And then, she did the worst thing possible. She leaned over my desk and the light hit her eyes. She was crying. Ive always been a sucker for a pretty girl in trouble.

PETER

Victoria...

VICTORIA

I can pay! I dont have much but I will do whatever it takes.

I-- Oh god Im going to regret this. Im gonna need to get to your brothers place and see if I can find anything there before I get myself into something big.

Victoria leans in and kisses him on the cheek.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Thank you, peter, I know this is dangerous. I think he still lives at this address.

She writes.

PETER

Aw, dont mention it. Lets get to your brothers place and see if he left anything worthwhile. You should get some rest.

VICTORIA

Im coming with you. I can help.

PETER (V.O.)

I know it was a rookie move, but...

PETER

Okay, lets get you into something warm though, you look like youre freezing half to death.

We are now in a car, peter drives. Light radio music plays. He lights a cigarette and rolls down the window.

PETER (CONT'D)

You smoke cigarettes?

VICTORIA

Huh?

PETER

Do you like nicotene?

VICTORIA

Oh yes.

PETER

Here... lemme light it for you.

VICTORIA

Thanks...

A pause.

PETER

You said you and your brother dont talk anymore?

PETER (CONT'D)

What happened?

VICTORIA

We grew up in the under city.

PETER

Really? Its tough to get out of there, and most are there by choice.

VICTORIA

John was always so smart, and my Dad saw it and he wanted to get us out of there so we could get the education that he never had. He brought us out of that, he worked non-stop.

PETER

Sounds like a good guy.

VICTORIA

He wasnt. He was a drinker, a mean one. He used to beat up on us two, but my mom got the worst of it. He quit drinking once we got up top but John never forgave him. But I understood. I never expected Dad to be superman or to be perfect. Yeah he was a mean bastard but he changed, and he worked harder than anyone should have to work and he did it for us. He had a hard life. John left before Dad died, he went to school which Dad paid for, and I heard from him from time to time but they never talked again. And after he died, I dunno. John stopped calling me. I would just get funds transfered into my account from time to time. I was so mad at him for running away... and now he is in trouble.

PETER

Yeah.

VICTORIA

What about you? Why did you become an independent?

PETER

When I was a kid... my parents were both shot point blank range in the head and nobody ever found their murderer.

VICTORIA
Oh my god. Really?

PETER
No. That was a lie. My parents
are both alive and kicking.

VICTORIA
That isnt funny. So why do you do
it?

PETER
I dunno. Im good at it. I like
the challenge.

VICTORIA
Oh yeah?

PETER
Sorry, nothing poetic about it.
Just plain old curiosity and either
guts or stupidity- I can never
decide which.

VICTORIA
I hope he is okay. This is it
coming up on the left. The blue
one with the red door.

PETER
I see it.

peter parks the car, and they both exit, in a continuous take
they walk from the car to the front door. Victoria tries the
knob.

VICTORIA
Its locked.

PETER
I got it.

peter gets the door open, they enter and flick on the light.

VICTORIA
Oh my god its been ransacked! They
beat us here.

PETER
This isnt like a corporation...
Theyre cleaner than this.

VICTORIA
Who do you think did it?

PETER

No clue. Stick close to me.

peter cocks his gun.

VICTORIA

What are we looking for?

PETER

Well your brother probably left clues to expose whatever is being covered up here. And if he is smart like you say he is it wouldnt be easy to find. Lets find his room.

They walk to a door and open it. John is dead in his room. Victoria gasps and sobs.

VICTORIA

He doesnt have a pulse... He isnt breathing. John?

PETER (V.O.)

And there he was. You never get used to a body. On the screen even horrendously gory maulings have a sense of grace and style about them. In real life, nobody dies with grace. They are always stuck at some awful angle in their neck, face frozen in agony, eyes wide open. Sprawled out on the floor like some unfortunate road kill, gathering a puddle of blood beneath him. Something very wrong happened in that room. Corporate murders are rare but in extreme cases of copyright protection or an attempt at monopoly they do occur. This is not their work. Not even a sleazy sub-leasee of a contractor would be this sloppy. It didnt line up right with me.

PETER

Victoria.

She continues to cry.

PETER (CONT'D)

Victoria. I need you to move. You have to go wait in the car.

VICTORIA
No dont touch him!

peter is slapped

PETER
Hey! He is gone. Okay? I know you want to grieve right now but you cant. You need to leave this room and after I am done investigating we will dial coroner services and we will see that he is attended to. That is the best thing we can do right now. But right now I need for you to turn it off, and wait in the car and be alert. Take this communicator and if you see anyone drive off and let me know. Here are the keys, keep the engine running on silent and do not turn on any lights... Be careful. They have probably ditched the area entirely, but whoever did this could still be close.

VICTORIA
I cant leave him.

PETER
Im going to find out what happened here. I promise you that. I wont be long.

VICTORIA
Okay... okay... youre right... Im sorry Johnny...

She slams the door on her way out. peter begins searching through the room, opening drawers.

PETER (V.O.)
If he was fleeing why did he come back here? He mustve been looking for something important. None of this makes sense. Humanicorp couldnt have done this, its financial suicide to leave messy crime scenes for the BIB, but our stiff seems to think they are behind something. poor kid. Deep knife wounds and third degree burns all over his body, probably from a fusion cutter or acetylene torch.
(MORE)

PETER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He didnt die quickly. They
tortured him. What did they want
from him. I spotted a safe in the
closet, door swung wide open,
emptied. Whatever they wanted,
they got it. There has to be
something here. Something hidden.

He is heard opening desk drawers and other things until.

PETER (V.O.)
A rip in the seam of his bed. I
pulled out a small red notepad.

In the car, Victoria is lightly crying. The car door opens.

VICTORIA
Did you find anything?

PETER
I found a notepad. Scoot over, Ill
drive. Can you read it out loud
for me?

VICTORIA
Yeah, sure. Okay... There isnt
anything in here.

PETER
Keep looking, it had to be hidden
for a reason.

She flips through the pages.

VICTORIA
Here is something... He only wrote
on one page.

PETER
What does it say?

VICTORIA
Its only a to do list-

PETER
Read it to me.

VICTORIA
Get groceries
Remember to walk the dog
Ask Hal about the current project
at work.

PETER

He left us something. He isnt the only one who knows.

VICTORIA

Its just a list.

PETER

He must have known he was being watched and when they attacked he must have hidden the notebook. We need to find Hal at Humana Corporation. Fold down that screen in front of you will you? Computer, can you run a search through Humanicorps database for any employee matching the first name Hal, who worked with a John?

COMPUTER

One moment... only one employee on record in the same research department as a John.

PETER

Well thats a writers convenience. Can I have his address computer?

COMPUTER

Displaying address now.

PETER

Lets go see if Hal knows anything.

We cut to Hals house. peter knocks on the door. Hal answers

HAL

May I help you?

PETER

You work with John?

HAL

Who are you?

PETER

Detective peter Lorre, independent investigation.

HAL

What do you want with me?

PETER

John was murdered, a note he left implied that you may have some information for me.

HAL

I am strictly forbidden to talk about my work. Im under contract.

PETER

Someone tortured and killed your buddy John for whatever he knew. His little sister is out in my car grieving. I need the information you have. Humanicorp may be involved in a breach of social contract which supercedes the contract you are under now.

HAL

I dont know what you are talking about.

PETER

Whatever you are in kid, I promise you that you are in way over your head. I dont know who did it but someone is targeting this project you are working on, and you are in danger.

HAL

Im sorry detective, but I cant help you with that. I wish that I could.

The door slams, peter walks back to the car and gets in

PETER

He knows something but he wont budge. Someone has him scared.

VICTORIA

So what do we do?

PETER

Nothing. I cant force him to go against corporate contract without some evidence of a breach of social contract. Im gonna take you back to my office, and tomorrow we will come back and hope he has a change of heart.

VICTORIA

But.

PETER

We will turn him around, he is scared now. Come on lets get something to eat and get some rest.

We cut to the office, Johns phone rings. He sits up and takes a drink, then answers.

PETER (CONT'D)

Detective Lorre.

HAL (ON PHONE)

Detective, we spoke earlier tonight. We have to meet.

PETER

Im at my office now.

HAL

No. Somewhere safer. pick me up at the bus station on Ford Avenue in ten minutes.

The phone clicks. Hal is heard putting on clothes.

HAL (CONT'D)

I thought I might wake Victoria up from off of the couch, but I thought she could use the rest. I thought let her sleep and Ill have a new lead in the morning. I grabbed my coat.

We cut to the car pulling up to the bus station.

PETER

Get in.

HAL

Okay. We cant take too long. Drive to the park through the service ramp, I have clearance and there is no surveillance there. Its a block away on the right... right here.

The car comes to a stop after some time

PETER

What is this about, Hal?

HAL

John came to my house a few weeks ago, woke me up in the middle of the night. He was wild, Id never seen him like that before. And today at the beginning of our shift they told me that John had committed suicide. It didnt sit right with me.

PETER

What did John say when he came to your house?

HAL

He said he was scared, that he thought people were watching him. He said something big at work was happening. Something they discovered or synthesized and that it was the most complex chemical ever discovered and its effects on humans vary wildly. He wouldnt go into details but he said that Humanicorp was getting involved in something that would spiral out of control.

PETER

What is this chemical?

HAL

He wouldnt say. He got more and more irrational, and then he left.

PETER

I need to know about the project.

HAL

As he left he said when Flip hits the market, all of heaven and hell will break loose.

A gunshot, breaking glass, a bullet hits Hal. Peter guns the engine. As he drives away, he is calling out Hals name, but there is no response. We fade back to the interrogation room.

PETER

What? Whats that look for? Do you know about Flip?

STAPLES
Flowers. Im gonna get the
detective another drink.

PETER
What is Flip?

STAPLES
We were hoping you could tell us.

END

The interrogation room. Staples sets down a glass of gin
with ice. peter takes a drink.

FLOWERS
Staples please hit record. For the
record all involved parties will
state their names. Detective
Flowers, BIB

STAPLES
Detective Staples, BIB

PETER
Me? Oh. Detective Lorre,
independent investigation. What do
you know about Flip?

FLOWERS
No more than you, just whispers and
strange deaths.

STAPLES
What happened after Hal was shot?

We fade from the interrogation room to the car.

PETER
I got the hell out of there. I
didnt see the attacker he must have
had a rifle. I didnt even see the
muzzle flash. I went back to the
office and I ditched my car. I
didnt know what to do with Hal. I
had to leave him there.

We cut to the office. peter walks to victoria, who is still
asleep.

PETER (CONT'D)
Victoria!

She wakes up.

PETER (CONT'D)

We have to get out of here now. I met with Hal and whoever is pulling the strings shot him. They probably have my plates and by now know who we both are. We need to dissappear.

VICTORIA

What?

PETER

We are in something big here Victoria. I dont know what is going on but we need to become sparse. There will be people after us soon.

VICTORIA

Where can we go?

PETER

I dont know. Anyone could be after us.

VICTORIA

I know where we can go. But it wont be easy.

PETER

Where?

VICTORIA

The undercity. I know my way around this sector pretty well. I grew up down there.

PETER

Sounds like our only chance. Get your shoes on, lets go.