

# **CITY OF NETS**

by  
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FADE IN:

EXT. CHICAGO TRIBUNE BUILDING - DAY

CALM MUSIC plays. Bright, sunny day.

JEN MALONE (30-ish), slight, pretty woman strolls across the street toward a parking garage. She carries a briefcase and bouquet of lilies.

Jen's husband, JAKE MALONE (40s), gruff exterior, the exact opposite of Jen, walks beside her, angrily talking on his cell phone.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

They stop in front of a vintage Mustang convertible. Jake makes a "blah, blah" hand motion at the cell phone. Jen gives Jake a peck on the cheek as he hands her the keys.

Jen slides into the driver's seat and turns on the ignition.

The car EXPLODES. Jake is flung backwards.

Jake rushes into the burning car and tries to rescue his wife. Another EXPLOSION.

Jake is thrown away from the flames. His right leg on fire.

JAKE

NOOO...

INT. SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Jake, passed out on his roll-out bed, hugging a Jack Daniels bottle, bolts up. The bottle crashes to the floor.

JAKE

...NOOO!

Rain beats outside.

Jake slowly rolls off his bed in his underwear, revealing scarring on his right leg. He shivers.

A Silver Zuni Eagle Fetish Necklace hangs around his neck. He climbs into the dirty jeans and sweatshirt on the floor.

He walks through his dingy pigsty, one-room apartment, stepping around and over the scattered clothes, cluttered boxes and near empty Jack Daniels' bottles.

A baseball is wedged to keep the window open. A wooden cane lies by the door.

Jake empties a whisky bottle into a dirty glass. He slugs it back, BLASTS a Jethro Tull CD on the stereo and ignores the neighbors who POUND on the wall.

EXT. THE PORT OF CHICAGO - AFTERNOON

BERNARD TRIACHI, an attractive, well-dressed man with that perfect combination of a seductive smile and steely gaze, watches CAL ADAMS accept a sheaf of papers from the Shipping Agent.

Cal, Triachi's Irish weasel lieutenant, hands him the papers.

They stroll through the shipyard past freighters and the workmen unloading them.

TRIACHI

All of the arrangements are made?

CAL

(thick Irish brogue)

The cargo arrives Thursday from Bandar Abbas to New York, L. A. and Chicago. Our usual shipment, the "Horse" and a little something extra. Don't worry, I'm using a small independent as the front, nothing traceable to you. I do have one concern.

TRIACHI

Don't. Mr. Malone will be otherwise distracted. You did make sure his anniversary gift is being delivered today, didn't you?

CAL

Of course, sir.

TRIACHI

Good. I don't want Jake to ever think I've forgotten him, especially on this day of all days.

Triachi and Cal get into a Town Car.

RUSS SHEINBERG (late 20s), wearing a well-worn Cleveland Indians cap, watches them from the shadows and takes pictures on his cell phone.

Triachi and Cal drive away.

Sheinberg walks over to the Shipping Agent.

SHEINBERG

I'd like to talk to you about some  
of your shipments.

SHIPPING AGENT

Not without a warrant.

SHEINBERG

(hands him some bills)  
I'm no cop.

INT. CHICAGO TRIBUNE OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

"Stan Marshall, Managing Editor" plaque on the door.

Scattered around the office, reams of computer printouts,  
random pages from the *Chicago Tribune* and ashtrays half-  
filled with unsmoked, chewed up cigarettes.

STAN MARSHALL (60-ish), balding, leans comfortably back in  
his chair, chews on a cigarette while scribbling red marks  
over papers. Sheinberg, still wearing his Cleveland Indians  
cap, stalks over to Stan.

SHEINBERG

(points to the papers)  
Well...

STAN

Dig deeper, Sheinberg.

SHEINBERG

Most are too scared to talk.

STAN

Deeper. Use some of that  
initiative I hired you for.

SHEINBERG

That was always Jake's strong suit.  
I need his help. He knows more  
about Triachi than anyone.

Stan shakes his head no.

He deserves another chance.

Stan tosses his cigarette out.

STAN

The last chance I gave him cost the paper more than he's worth. Let it go, you're as good as he ever was.

SHEINBERG

No one's as good as Jake. And if it wasn't for me, Jen would still be alive.

Stan chews on another cigarette, looks out his window at the rain.

STAN

If it wasn't for all of us...

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Music plays LOUD. Neighbors still POUND. Jake refills his glass.

On his desk, a framed picture of Jen with her nameplate leaning against it: "Jen Malone, Assistant District Attorney, Cook County, Illinois"

JAKE

(toasts the picture)  
Love ya, babe. Miss ya.

Jake's eyes shift to the newspaper pictures and articles about Triachi papering his walls. More than half have been ripped.

On the right wall, a collage of Triachi and a woman (KATE LINDSEY). Kate's face is well hidden by a large brimmed hat but she exudes sexuality none-the-less. Adjacent, front page newspaper headlines "DRUG DEALER WITNESS KILLED IN PLANE CRASH."

Another grouping on the left, Triachi at various official city and state gatherings with the Chicago Mayor and Governor of Illinois. In all of these pictures Cal is by his side, protecting him.

Jake swings his arm back to throw the glass but stops and downs the whiskey instead.

KNOCK.

Jake refills his glass. The bottle's empty. He tries every one. They are all empty. He SMASHES one against the wall. This quiets his neighbors.

Jake answers his door. On the ground, a long flower box and a pint of Jack Daniels.

Jake pours himself a drink and lifts the card attached to the flowers:

*HAPPY ANNIVERSARY*

He glances at the picture of Jen and opens the box, lilies. He downs his drink.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
You always remembered.

Jake shoves the bottle into his overcoat pocket, picks up the lilies and his cane and leaves.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Dreary, drizzling. Jake limps to a headstone using his cane to maintain his balance.

CLOSE ON HEADSTONE

Jen Malone  
1969-2005

Jake lays the lilies in front of the headstone.

JAKE  
I'm sorry...so sorry.

He limps out of the cemetery.

INT. STAIRWAY IN JAKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Jake shakes the rain off as he stumbles up the stairs and...

EXT. JAKE'S APARTMENT

...trips over the woman in front of his door, LAURA PERCIVAL (30S), beautiful, sexy, hard edged. He angrily turns Laura to him.

JAKE  
What the fuck are you doing here?!

Jake unlocks his door.

LAURA

I go where my job takes me. This is an official visit, Mr. Malone.

JAKE

Cut the mister shit. Ya know I hate being called that, counselor --

Laura stands inches from Jake.

LAURA

-- Cut the counselor shit. You know I hate being called that.

Laura steps towards the doorway. Jake doesn't budge.

I need a few minutes of your time to talk about Kate Lindsey.

JAKE

Died in a plane crash. End of story. We've talked.

LAURA

And I know what today is. I thought you might want some company.

Jake shows her his bottle of whiskey and walks into the apartment, closes the door.

Laura stares at the closed door then turns and slowly walks down the stairs.