

Absolute Perfection

by

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EXT. HIGH SCHOOL RUNNING TRACK - NIGHT

TWO NINJAS in DARK SWEATS, GLOVES and SKI MASKS sneak up to a CHAIN LINK FENCE. Silhouettes. Standing 15' apart, they pull out SMALL, POWERFUL WIRE CUTTERS.

ANGLE ON NINJA #1

He quickly SNIPS a long, vertical CUT in the fence. Through the slit in the ski mask, we only see his eyes. He is Asian.

ANGLE ON NINJA #2

Also Chinese, he SNIPS a 2nd vertical cut, quickly, efficiently. He hides in the shrubbery.

WIDER

Finished. There is a 15' WIDE CUT in the fence. The top links are still attached. The sabotage is INVISIBLE!

ANGLE ON RUNNING TRACK DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Ninja #1 unrolls a flat, 4" WIDE RUBBER STRIP across the driveway's right half, near the curb. He hides in the shrubbery.

TIME CUT TO:

HIGHER, WIDER

Moonlight shows the entire FENCED-IN CIRCULAR TRACK. A LARGE BLACK LEXUS SUV enters the track driveway.

CLOSE ON WIDE RUBBER STRIP

The SUV's RIGHT tires DRIVE OVER the strip. Nothing.

EXT. RUNNING TRACK GATE - NIGHT

The Lexus GLIDES to a STOP. A husky CHINESE BODYGUARD emerges, looks around. Satisfied it's clear, he opens the passenger door for...

TOMMY CHEUNG, early 40's, FIT CHINESE guy, hard, ruthless and driven. Clearly used to having his needs met. He wears a JOGGING SUIT.

(CONTINUED)

JING TXU steps out, a terrified, mid-50's paunchy Chinese accountant, SWEATING in a wrinkled suit. Afraid of Cheung, he trembles, afraid to move. SECOND BODYGUARD appears, crowds Jing against the First Bodyguard.

(Dialog in Mandarin Chinese with English subtitles.)

TOMMY

You have failed again, Jing Txu.

JING

It couldn't be helped!

TOMMY

Nonsense! Everything can be helped. It is our Way. You are fat and lazy! Like your methods!

JING

Sir! Please! I beg of you...

Tommy removes his jacket. He's rock solid, a specimen, physically and mentally -- a force. A Bodyguard takes his jacket. Tommy stretches. The 2nd Bodyguard UNLOCKS the gate, TURNS ON the TRACK LIGHTS. They've done this before.

TOMMY

(disdain)

Of course you beg. It is your way. I will run. Then I will settle this matter -- permanently.

Tommy STARTS RUNNING. Jing contemplates his short future.

OVER NINJAS' SHOULDER

#1 watches Tommy with MILITARY BINOCULARS. He wears a WALKIE-TALKIE HEADSET.

NINJA #1 (INTO MIKE)

40 Yards.

EXT. STREET NEAR RUNNING TRACK - NIGHT

An EMPTY, UNLIT CITY BUS turns onto the street.

INT. BUS - MOVING - NIGHT

The DRIVER is a young, fit, Chinese man wearing a bus uniform. He's more soldier than bus driver, wearing a HEADSET like Ninja #1.

ON TOMMY

He runs like a machine, rounding the first turn easily.

ON NINJAS

NINJA #1 (INTO MIKE)
60 Yards. Approaching first turn.

EXT. STREET NEAR RUNNING TRACK - NIGHT

The bus SPEEDS UP, heading straight for the track.

INT. BUS - MOVING POV OUT WINDSHIELD - NIGHT

The track LOOMS LARGER as the bus SPEEDS UP.

ON SPEEDOMETER

Increasing - 50...60....65!

REVERSE ON BUS

Coming STRAIGHT AT US.

ON TOMMY

Jogging purposefully, not breathing hard, approaching the second turn -- and the cut in the fence.

ON NINJAS

NINJA #1 (INTO MIKE)
100 Yards. Approaching 2nd turn.

EXT. RUNNING TRACK AND STREET - NIGHT

The bus CLOSES IN on the CUT in the FENCE! Just as Tommy rounds the 2nd turn.

CLOSE ON ACCELERATOR PEDAL

The Driver JAMS it to the floor.

WIDER

The bus SLAMS THROUGH the fence, INTO TOMMY! SPLAT!

ON THE NINJAS

They stand quietly, unhurried and walk out to the street.

ON NINJA #2

He holds a SMALL BLACK BOX with a BUTTON and RED LIGHT. He pushes the button. The LIGHT GLOWS.

ON THE WIDE RUBBER STRIP

A ROW of 50 SPIKES FLIP UP from HORIZONTAL to VERTICAL.

ON THE NINJAS

The bus driver emerges, joins the Ninjas as a WHITE SUV arrives. All three climb in. The car drives off.

EXT. RUNNING TRACK AND STREET - NIGHT

The bodyguards THROW Jing into the first car, jump in after him and SPEED OUT BACKWARDS towards the street. Tommy's second car, RACES BACKWARDS, close behind.

INT. WHITE SUV - MOVING - NIGHT

Ninja #1 connects a SMALL TAPE RECORDER to his CELL PHONE, presses a key, plays the tape.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FEMALE TAPE RECORDER VOICE (V.O.)

911? There's been a terrible traffic accident at the corner of Camino and Hartsook. I think the injured man's still alive! Send an ambulance. And Police! The driver who hit him's stuck in his car! Hurry! Please!

Ninja #1 DISCONNECTS the wire, TOSSES the cell phone out the window and leans back. His job's done.

EXT. RUNNING TRACK GATE - NIGHT

The 2 SUVs RACE BACKWARDS, towards the street, safety -- and the spike strip.

CLOSE ON RUBBER STRIP

The 1st SUV's RIGHT REAR tire backs OVER the RAISED SPIKES. The tire BLOWS!

WIDER

The 1st SUV SPINS AROUND sideways, PIVOTING on the blown tire. The 2nd SUV, still RACING BACKWARDS, CRASHES into the stopped, sideways 1st SUV.

The dazed bodyguards pile out with the staggering Jing as 2 L.A.P.D. B & Ws arrive, LIGHTS FLASHING. COPS jump out, GUNS drawn and HANDCUFF everyone.

EXT. ANOTHER N.D. STREET - NIGHT

The White SUV drives off, disappearing into the night.

END OF TEASER

(CONTINUED)

ACT ONE

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL RUNNING TRACK - NIGHT

DET. LT. COLE and DET. SIMMS arrive in their Crown Vic. The track's become a crime scene: SID (Special Investigative Division - Prints & Physical Evidence) has their VAN. B & Ws w/FLASHING LIGHT BARS & 3 UNMARKED SEDANS populate the background.

ALAN LASKY, an area Detective, meets Cole and Simms as they step under the YELLOW CRIME SCENE TAPE. Lasky escorts Asian Detective JOHN BONSAI. All meet & greet.

LASKY

L-T; Det. John Bonsai of the Asian Task Force. He'll help us ID the vic.

Cole sees the bodyguards and Jing, the Accountant, at the WRECKED SUVs. SQUAD DETECTIVES question them.

LASKY (CONT'D)

Our uniform guys responded to a 911 call. Caught some knucklehead muscle stuck in a spike strip. Somebody whacked their boss with a bus. Bozos were trying to run.

COLE

(looks around)
Whacked? At night? On a closed running track?

(back to bodyguards)
If those guys are muscle and money, you figured the vic's a player?

LASKY

Yeah but didn't know a name. Det. Bonsai knows these guys pretty good.

JOHN BONSAI

This guy, we know him for sure. Tommy Cheung. Number One China White Dealer. Triad Shot Caller. Move lots of heroin.

COLE

OK. Good. Now we know what kind of bad guy he was. But still... Who kills Heroin dealers with a bus? And a spike strip. Where'd they get that, anyway?

(CONTINUED)

LASKY

A few came up stolen last month. This one flips spikes up with a remote.

COLE

Remote? Our guys aren't that slick!

SIMMS

Can't say that about the bus, L-T.

All walk to the bus/Tommy impact point. Cole looks around.

COLE

(thinking aloud)

So just as this guy rounds the 2nd turn, the bus speeds down the street, across the grass, through the fence and BLAM! Nice timing.

Cole walks to the fence, PEELED DOWN LIKE A SARDINE CAN TOP. He examines the edges.

COLE (CONT'D)

Cut the links. Planed to the inch. Must've had a lookout call the jogger's position to time the impact; perfectly.

SIMMS

Big job.

COLE

Premeditated.

(looks around)

Clever, hitting him on the corner. If they're late, they catch up on the straight track.

Simms looks at the point of impact, right at the cut fence, opposite the track's 2nd corner.

SIMMS

They weren't late.

COLE

No. They were not.

DET. SAMANTHA ROBBINS enters, reviewing her NOTEBOOK as she pockets her CELLPHONE.

(CONTINUED)

ROBBINS

L-T, bus was stolen from the RTD West Hollywood yard. They distracted Security with a flash-bang, hot wired the bus and bailed.

SIMMS

Slick doin's.

COLE

More than that. Damn good tactics.
(mystified)

Why a bus?
(shakes it off,
presses on)

Let's head back. Bring Det. Bonsai.

All exit to sedans.

INT. ROBBERY HOMICIDE DIVISION (RHD) - NIGHT

Cole stands at the LARGE WHITEBOARD with Dets. Lu, Robbins, Simms and Bonsai. At TOMMY CHEUNG'S PHOTO, Cole WRITES "Heroin #1." BODYGUARD POLAROIDs taped under "Tommy C. Muscle." JING'S POLAROID: "???" - Accountant." A NOTE: "Stolen spike strip - remote control!!??"

COLE

That it? That's all we know?

JOHN BONSAI

I can give you Triad names and rankings. But Narco can't tie a traffic ticket to Tommy Cheung. Boy was slick as Chinatown gets.

COLE

(sarcastic)
So slick a city bus punched his ticket?

(to himself)
And why a bus not a bullet?
(moving on)

OK. Det. Bonsai, who's gonna fill Tommy's shoes?

JOHN BONSAI

#2 is Steve Wong. #3 -- Johny Xang. They hated each other. Both are 2nd rate players. Much smaller than Tommy.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

The rest?

JOHN BONSAI

Small, minor players. Just names.
Henry Lee, Vince Lee, the Woo
Brothers. Nothing there. Tommy ran
Chinatown heroin, called the shots.

COLE

Wong or Xang do this? One of the
others start wearing long pants?

JOHN BONSAI

"Only the head of the dragon matters.
Everything else is just the tail."

COLE

Somebody steals a bus. With military
tactics and flash-bangs. Selects a
hardened target covered by muscle, and
whacks him perfectly. All we got a
whiteboard and mug shots. Det. Bonsai,
Tommy have a girlfriend? Family? Dog?

JOHN BONSAI

Big time girlfriend: Suzi Chang. Runs
a high end art gallery. Knows
everybody in Chinatown and City Hall.

COLE

How's Ms. Chang so well connected?

JOHN BONSAI

She's beautiful, smart, charming.
She's also in Tommy Cheung's Rolodex.

COLE

Det. Simms, let's go pay a visit to
the grieving girlfriend.

DET. LU

I got a C.I. I want to squeeze.

COLE

Then we check Tommy's Chinatown trail.

JOHN BONSAI

Lt. Cole. You might want to visit Wing
Quang's tea shop first.

COLE

Wing...

(CONTINUED)

JOHN BONSAI

Wing Quang. The 'Mayor of Chinatown.'
No one will talk to your Detectives
unless Wing clears it. See him first
and alone: as a gesture of respect.

COLE

(when in Rome)

OK. But stay on Triad's bottom tier.
Find out what they do when the dragon
loses its head.

Cole and Simms exit.

INT. LU'S C.I.'S APARTMENT - CORRIDOR - DAY

Lu knocks. A hard looking, scrawny Chinese woman, MAI
LIN, opens the door. She's not happy to see him.

MAI LIN

No time, Ronnie. I'm bookin'.

LU

5 Minutes, Mai. You owe me.

Resigned, she opens up for him. He enters.

INT. LU'S C.I.'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nothing Chinese. BIG SCREEN TV and lots of EMPTY SHELVES.
She's packing her life into TWO SUITCASES at once.

LU

Looks like a serious exit.

MAI LIN

(doesn't look, packs)
Serious bad people around.

LU

Henry'll protect you. Like always.

She stops, stands up. Looks at him, adult explaining to a
child.

MAI LIN

Henry's why I'm leaving. First time
I've ever seen him scared! Of
anything.

(CONTINUED)

LU
(disbelief)
The Tiger of Chinatown, scared?

She's back to packing. Fast. Scared fast.

MAI LIN
That damn bus freaked Henry.
(shivers)
Totally. Henry doesn't know people
like that. Doesn't want to meet 'em.

LU
If Henry Lee's scared...

MAI LIN
Then Mai Lin is packing. You're a
decent cop, Ronnie. And it's been a
slice. But...

She CLOSES both SUITCASES. DRAGS them out, leaving the
door open. Lu stands there nonplussed.

INT. SUZI CHANG'S ART GALLERY - DAY

Spare, stylish, VERY slick. Understated elegance,
overstated prices. SUZI CHANG, late 20's, gorgeous, sexy,
Prada and Jimmy Choo, looking like it's painted on.

She speaks to an ASSISTANT, charming a phone caller
simultaneously.

SUZI
(to assistant)
Send Yvette in a car to LAX, Bradley,
tonight at 8.
(to phone)
Gusmano, I'll have someone lovely pick
you up tonight. Of course. If you
prefer.
(to assistant)
Cynthia not Yvette.
(to phone)
And, I have the perfect piece for your
Aspen home.

Suzi sees Cole and Simms at the door. She shakes her head
and points to the sign, "BY APPOINTMENT ONLY."

(CONTINUED)

SUZI (CONT'D)

What?

(laughs)

You and Cynthia can discuss *that*.

Cole RAPS on the door. BADGES her. Unsmiling, deeply annoyed, she nods to her assistant to admit them. She regards them dismissively, oozing contempt in her eyes, but not in her voice. Never Let Them See You Sweat.

SUZI

(warm & playful)

I'll do no such thing, you rogue!
Until tomorrow.

She hangs up and wheels on Cole.

SUZI (CONT'D)

(cold, superior)

You policemen need to make an
appointment for a suitable time. We're
closed now.

COLE

Ms. Chang. I'm Lt. Cole. This is Det.
Simms. Robbery Homicide Division. We'd
like to ask...

She holds out her hand, peremptorily. Cole and Simms look at her, not understanding.

SUZI

(slowly, to a child)

W A R R A N T.

COLE

(surprised)

No. We're here simply...

SUZI

(ice)

Yes. I heard you speak. We have
nothing in your price range. Without a
warrant, we have nothing to discuss.

COLE

Do you know Tommy Cheung?

SUZI

(relaxed, bored)

He's a valued patron of important
charities. To what charities do you
and Detective Simms contribute?

(CONTINUED)

Unfazed by her insult, Cole presses harder.

COLE
(testing)
Tommy was murdered a few hours ago.

She's unfazed by his thrust. Brains, beauty, discipline.

SUZI
(discussing traffic)
How awful. The community, his many
friends will miss him terribly.

COLE
Do you know any...

SUZI
Lt. Cole. You must excuse me. I have
many people to call with this
distressing news. I can't possibly
talk to strangers at this time.

COLE
Ms. Chang. We're not strangers. We're
Los Angeles Police Robbery Homicide
Detectives investigating a murder
where the victim was known to you.

SUZI
How nice for you.
(to assistant)
Maggie, give these police officers the
number of our attorney's office.

She walks off, dismissing them in absentia. Cole leaves
pissed. Sims gets the phone number. Follows.

INT. SUZI CHANG'S ART GALLERY - DAY

SIMMS
Where we off to, Hoss?

COLE
How'd you like some tea?

SIMMS
Det. Bonsai said to go alone. I'll
catch up with Lu? See how the Dragon's
Tail is doing?

Cole nods and heads for the Crown Vic... and Chinatown.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - WEST ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Chinese families walk, enjoying the quiet night. TWO BLACK BMW SUVs arrive. FOUR CHINESE BODYGUARDS exit the first SUV. Quick threat assessment and a TALL, SKINNY CHINESE DRUG LORD, STEVE WONG, exits the second SUV, with SECOND DRIVER and FIFTH BODYGUARD. The six Wong heavies surround their protectee and enter the park, moving LEFT TO RIGHT.

EXT. CHINATOWN STREET - NIGHT

Cole PULLS UP in the CROWN VIC. BRIGHT LIGHTS and a BIG CROWD. He looks for an address.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - EAST ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A SHORT, FAT CHINESE DRUG LORD, JOHNNY XANG, PULLS UP in a MERCEDES SUV with a DRIVER and THREE XANG BODYGUARDS. They exit and walk to the meet loser, less efficiently than Wong's people. Xang's group moves RIGHT TO LEFT.

EXT. CHINESE TEA SHOP - NIGHT

Cole finds the shop, stepping through the crowd to enter.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - MAIN AREA - NIGHT

Steve Wong moves towards the meet at the center of the park. Three heavies in front, three behind. Simple. Elegant. Optimally effective. CHINESE FAMILIES and COUPLES see the echelon of hoods and quietly ease away. It's Chinatown: people know where not to be.

INT. CHINESE TEA SHOP - STAIRS - NIGHT

Cole climbs the ancient staircase from another era.

INT. CHINATOWN PARK - SNIPER #1'S HIDE - NIGHT

From a HEAVILY BRUSHED-IN area HIGH UP, we see Johnny Xang and his four bodyguards. SNIPER #1 RISES UP into the shot, holding a SNIPER RIFLE, and leans into the SCOPE. He wears a HEADSET MIKE.

SCOPE P.O.V. - XANG & BODYGUARDS - NIGHT

The CROSSHAIRS LINE UP on Xang's LEFT EAR moving RIGHT TO LEFT. (Sniper dialog in Mandarin Chinese - English subtitles.)

SNIPER #1

#1. I have a clean kill on target X.

INT. CHINESE TEA SHOP - TOP OF STAIRS DOOR - NIGHT

Standing at an old, weathered door, Cole sees a HANDWRITTEN SIGN: "PULL CHAIN to RING BELL." He pulls.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - SNIPER #2'S HIDE - NIGHT

From a HEAVILY BRUSHED-IN area HIGH UP, we see Johnny Xang and his four bodyguards.

From another, different HEAVILY BRUSHED-IN area HIGH UP, we see Steve Wong and his phalanx of six efficient bodyguards. Tactical awareness is high. Condition green.

SNIPER #2 rises up into frame, with a MATCHING SNIPER RIFLE and HEADSET MIKE. He looks into his SCOPE.

SNIPER #2

#2. I have a clean kill on target W.

INT. CHINESE TEA SHOP - DOOR AT TOP OF STAIRS - NIGHT

The DOOR OPENS. An even older, more weathered CHINESE ANCIENT, WING QUANG appears, wearing a dark suit & tie.

COLE

Sir. I'm Lt. Cole of of L.A.P.D.
Robbery Homicide Division. Det. John
Bonsai suggested I speak with you.

Cole hands the man his BUSINESS CARD.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - SNIPER #3'S HIDE - NIGHT

A different, EQUALLY BRUSH COVERED area across the park, on the opposite side. From here, Xang's troupe moves LEFT TO RIGHT.

SNIPER #3 rises up into frame, with a MATCHING SNIPER RIFLE and HEADSET MIKE. He looks into his SCOPE.

(CONTINUED)

SNIPER #3

#3. I have a clean kill on target X.

INT. CHINESE TEA SHOP - TOP OF STAIRS DOOR - NIGHT

Wing smiles.

WING QUANG

How can a humble tea seller be of
service to the great Los Angeles
Police Department? Please come in,
Lieutenant and solve this puzzle.

Cole steps inside the shop.

SCOPE P.O.V. - WONG & BODYGUARDS - NIGHT

From this view, the Wong group move RIGHT TO LEFT.
CROSSHAIRS sit on Wong's LEFT EAR.

SNIPER #4

#4. I have a clean kill on target W.

INT. CHINESE TEA SHOP - NIGHT

Cole looks around: PILES of ROOTS, HERBS and SPICES;
CANDLELIGHTS only; SIDE HANDLED POTS BREWING on small
tables; heated by BURNING OIL in clay jars; an ABACUS and
Chinese PUZZLE BOXES; no English anywhere. Nothing
electric. No phone. No lights. No TV. Cole has stepped
into another time, another millennium.

COLE

Sir...

WING QUANG

(deferential)

Please, Lieutenant. Call me Quang.

COLE

Thank you, Quang. I'm told you are a
leader in this community. Is that
correct?

WING QUANG

(humble)

We venerate our elders. I am the
oldest. That is all. Nothing more.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

I'm told the wisest.

WING QUANG

You embarrass an old tea seller,
Lieutenant. Please. Let me offer you
some tea. You've been too kind.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - MAIN AREA - NIGHT

The two drug lords and their men approach each other warily. Everyone else from the clean side of the world have disappeared. The two groups of bodyguards size each other up, then, together, show their empty hands to each other, low, palms out. No weapons.

Xang and Wong, emerge from their protective shells and approach within handshake distance.

INT. CHINESE TEA SHOP - NIGHT

Wing Quang POURS TEA from a SIDE HANDLED POT. Some for himself. Some for Cole, with practiced elegance. He hands the SMALL CLAY CUP to Cole. Waits for him to sip.

COLE

(genuine surprise)

Wonderful! I've never tasted anything
like this!

WING QUANG

(pleased)

Good. I am 37th generation Tea
Merchant. My teas provide peace for
others, satisfaction for myself.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - MAIN AREA - NIGHT

Xang and Wong SHAKE HANDS.

SNIPER #1 (V.O.)

3, 2, 1, Fire!

Four shooters FIRE AS ONE -- a SINGLE MUFFLED SHOT. Wong and Xang CRUMPLE, like marionettes with cut strings. The two bodyguard groups stare, then start BLASTING FRANTICALLY, hitting very little.

CLOSE ON SNIPER #1 - NIGHT

He PUSHES the BUTTON on his BLACK BOX. A RED LIGHT GLOWS.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - MAIN AREA - NIGHT

A SEA of FIRECRACKERS and WHOOSHING SPARK SHOWERS IGNITE, in four different spots, surrounding the meet/hit. The bodyguards SPIN AROUND, confused and useless. FIREWORKS CONTINUE; SMOKE BILLOWS; CHAOS ENSUES.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - SNIPER #1'S HIDE - NIGHT

He UNSCREWS the BARREL of his rifle without hurry.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - SNIPER #2'S HIDE - NIGHT

Sniper #2, BARREL off, UNSNAPS his SCOPE.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - SNIPER #3'S HIDE - NIGHT

Sniper #3, BARREL and SCOPE off, begins storing the sub-assemblies in a SMALL CASE with FOAM CUTOUTS.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - SNIPER #4'S HIDE - NIGHT

Sniper #4's small case is already neatly packed, rifle parts. He closes the case. It's a PAINT SPLOTCHED WOODEN ARTIST'S BOX.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - SNIPER #1'S HIDE - NIGHT

Sniper #1 stands, his MATCHING PAINT SPLOTCHED WOODEN ARTIST'S BOX, identical with #4's box.

Sniper #1 has a CANVAS, an AMATEUR'S RENDITION of a park full of families at night.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - OUTSIDE SNIPER #1'S HIDE - NIGHT

He emerges from his hide carrying IDENTICAL amateur artist SUPPLIES, bad ART and a PAINT COVERED SHIRT. FIREWORKS continue.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - SOUTH EXIT - NIGHT

Sniper # 2 exits, DRESSED IDENTICALLY to #1, carrying IDENTICAL, PAINT SPLOTCHED WOODEN BOX and IDENTICAL badly painted OIL PAINTING. FIREWORKS continue.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - NORTH EXIT - NIGHT

Sniper #3 walks to the curb, IDENTICAL CLOTHES, PAINTING and PAINT SPATTERED ART SUPPLIES. FIREWORKS continue.

A PIZZA DELIVERY TRUCK arrives instantly. #3 throws his art supplies and painting in the truck bed, then climbs in the bed with his art. Several civilians notice. The truck cab has a LIT PIZZA SIGN, in Mandarin Chinese, reads "Wan Mai Pizza". English Subtitle: "Absolute Perfection" Pizza.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - WEST ENTRANCE - NIGHT

FIREWORKS SOUNDS DIMINISH. Sniper #4 tosses his art materials into the bed of an IDENTICAL PIZZA TRUCK AND SIGN. Then, like #3, climbs into the truck bed also. Civilians here also notice the unusual behavior. The truck and odd passenger DRIVE OFF into the night.

INT. CHINESE TEA SHOP - NIGHT

Cole and Quang sip tea quietly.

WING QUANG

Peace and serenity are crucial when
the world becomes every more complex,
confusing and violent.

COLE

Quang, can you tell me about...

Cole's CELLPHONE RINGS.

DET. BARSTOW (V.O.)

Sam, it's Barstow.

COLE

(to Quang)
Excuse me, sir.
(into phone)
Whaddya got?

INT. RHD - SQUAD ROOM - NIGHT

Barstow sits alone at a desk with a single lamp, in a darkened room. He's talking to Cole on the phone.

DET. BARSTOW

Sam, we just got a call from our
Narcotics Task Force. They had a team
up on the two new China white heroin
bosses

(refers to his notes)

Steve Wong and... wait...

INTERCUT AS NEEDED

Cole's impatient.

COLE

Johnny Xang. Yeah, Barstow. I know
these knuckleheads.

DET. BARSTOW

Well your two new best friends were
having a meet. Somebody got 'em both.

COLE

Narco see anything?

DET. BARSTOW

No.

COLE

Hear anything?

DET. BARSTOW

No. Sorry, Sam.

COLE

Anybody know anything on this case?

He hangs up and turns to Quang.

COLE

I'm sorry. I must leave now.

He exits. Quang is serene in the police chaos.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARK - MAIN AREA - NIGHT - 20 MINS LATER

Cole PULLS UP in the CROWN VIC. Simms arrives in an
UNMARKED SEDAN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Robbins, Barstow and Lu are already there with L.A.P.D. And B & W's with LIGHT BARS FLASHING. A CORONER'S WAGON, an SID VAN, and THREE AMBULANCES, fill the area.

SID PHOTOGRAPHERS and CRIMINALISTS surround the BODIES. A CORONER works with her ASSISTANT CORONER. Barstow questions uninjured bodyguards. The wounded heavies are loaded into the ambulance. The ones in BODY BAGS go in the coroner's van. TWO NARCOTICS DETECTIVES in 'NARCOTICS' WINDBREAKERS take OXYGEN from PARAMEDICS.

L.A.P.D. Questions WITNESSES, some from the earlier curbside, pizza truck scenes. Some fresh faces. Officers YELLOW TAPE the area.

DET. TIMOTHY VELASQUEZ approaches Cole as he steps under the tape.

DET. VELASQUEZ
Velasquez, Rampart Homicide.

COLE
Lt. Cole, RHD. Whaddya got?

DET. VELASQUEZ
Two victims shot from locations unknown. Our Narco guys were up on them. When the smoke cleared, Narcotics grabbed the bodyguards. Saw everything, up to and including the hit; everything but the shooters. Say both victims fell at the same exact instant.

COLE
Two victims. One bullet? That what you're telling me, Detective?

DET. VELASQUEZ
(reluctant)
No. Worse. Coroner says four entry wounds. One in each ear of each victim.

Cole stares at him.

COLE
Two victims. Four bullets. One shot?

Det. Velasquez nods weakly, unhappy to agree to this implausible, if factual account.

(CONTINUED)

DET. VELASQUEZ

(uncomfortable)

Both Narcos swear they heard a single shot. Separate site interviews. Both said

(refers to his notes)

"One shot. I swear I heard just one shot."

COLE

We are having fun now, Detective. Two down. Four entry wounds and I got trained cops, Detectives, telling me one shot.

(to himself aloud)

What is this? Penn & Teller went rogue?

He looks around. No cover nearby.

COLE (CONT'D)

Where were our guys posted?

Velasquez points to a far spot.

COLE (CONT'D)

So if the shooters weren't there...

He stands where the bodies dropped, turns and looks into the distance for where the shooters hid.

COLE (CONT'D)

...then they must have been out there.

(pointing)

Long guns. High velocity rounds. Scoped. Radio contact like the bus hit, so all four could fire at once. Who are these guys?

DET. VELASQUEZ

Narcotics says they're the next two in line in China White trafficking. Knuckleheads say...

(refers to notes)

...Wong and Xang met to cut up what use to be Tommy's action.

COLE

Thanks, Detective, but I know those names. I meant who pulled this off?

He looks around at the chaos and carnage.

(CONTINUED)

COLE (CONT'D)

Lotta effort. Lotta skill. Show me the
fired rounds.

DET. VELASQUEZ

(uncomfortable X 2)

We don't have 'em, Lt. Cole. There
were no exit wounds.

Cole looks at Det. Velasquez for a long, long beat.

COLE

High velocity rounds, FOUR perfect
kill shots and ZERO exit wounds? This
IS Penn & Teller!

Det. Velasquez stands mute and pained.

COLE

(to himself, aloud)

Who are these guys?

Cole walks. Looks over the Coroner's shoulder.

COLE (CONT'D)

Doc, tell me ya' got something.

CORONER

Can't, Sam. This one's a real puzzle.
Four perfect entry shots -- in their
ears. No exit wounds.

COLE

How? Why? Shooters were only 100 yards
away. Tops. Should have been enough
velocity left for a round to exit.

As Cole stands trying to figure it out, Simms arrives
with his notebook, looking perplexed.

SIMMS

Hoss, I've never seen this before.

COLE

We're starting a club. Whadya' got?

SIMMS

Our Narco guys lost time ducking the
fireworks...

COLE

Fireworks?

(CONTINUED)

SIMMS

Yeah. After they went down, it was the Fourth of July: fireworks, sparks, lots of smoke.

COLE

They whack two guys, then put on a show?

SIMMS

(shrugs)

Our guys couldn't see a thing. Then they got some witnesses outside, at each of the four park entrances. They said they saw a guy in shorts put artist supplies and a bad painting, and himself, into the bed of a pizza delivery truck and be driven off.

COLE

Really? Never heard of a guy get into a pizza truck.

SIMMS

No. Sam. Four groups of witnesses. A group from each exit. Each group saw the same thing at the same time, at each of the four exits.

Cole regards Simms. Looks around the park.

COLE

Four shooters exit the park. Each from a different corner. Each dressed the same...

SIMMS

(consults notes)

Paint splotched shirt, artist box, bad painting. Each gets into an identical pizza delivery truck. "Absolute Perfection Pizza." If this wasn't a hit, I'd say somebody's messing with us.

COLE

It is a hit. And somebody is messing with us: all our witnesses are compromised. No jury'd buy that story. Hell. I'm not buying it!

Robbins calls out. Cole and Simms walk over. She's kneeling down looking at the ground.

(CONTINUED)

ROBBINS

Sam, take a look at this.

Cole and Simms bend down.

THEIR P.O.V. - THE GROUND

A TINY RECEIVER at the base of A BUNDLE OF WIRES.

BACK TO SCENE

Robbins stands, PULLING the WIRES UP OUT of the ground.
She holds the END OF A WEB STRETCHING IN FOUR DIFFERENT
DIRECTIONS.

ROBBINS (CONT'D)

A radio signal set off the fireworks.

SIMMS

Somebody likes remote controlled toys
-- first the spike strip, now this.

COLE

Four shooters. Single shot heard. Four
simultaneous clean kill shots. No exit
wound. Perfectly timed getaway.
Brilliant witness disinformation.
Remote controlled fireworks stop
surveillance getting to the shooters.
How did they even know we were up on
Wong and Xang? Who are these guys?

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. SWAT FIRING RANGE - SIMULATION AREA - DAY

JOHN MOSS, very senior SWAT Sergeant supervises a shooting simulation. Cole and Simms arrive.

Two SWAT OPERATORS, one tall and thin, the other shorter and stockier (not fatter), walk towards each other. FOUR OTHER SWAT OPERATORS surround the two subjects. All sit on a four foot step ladder. Each 'shooter' Operator has one clean shot. The simulation is the Chinatown Park hit.

The targets walk, the 'shooters' aim, using SWAT's empty handed long gun emulation gesture during this scene.

COLE

John Moss! How ya doin'?

Moss greets his old pals.

MOSS

Sam! Alfred! Been expecting you. We heard about this from Narco. Wanted to analyze it.

(concern)

Strongest planning & tactics I've seen in bad guys. Who are they?

COLE

(noncommittal)

Show us what you got, John

Moss walks them over to the simulation team.

MOSS

Four shooters, each with a high, clean kill shot for a good 15 degrees of arc. Constant, slow target velocity. Constant target height. We're lucky to get one high probability like that on the street. These guys had four ninety percent kill shots for TWO targets?! Somebody read their manual. Maybe even wrote a few pages.

(hushed awe)

No exit wounds?

The four faux 'shooters' exchange places with four new guys.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

John, who gets training to do a hit like this?

MOSS

SWAT. Intel guys. But not here. Government agencies are not permitted to whack the citizens they serve and protect.

COLE

Military isn't a government agency.

Moss and Simms stop walking. Cole goes on, notices, stops, turns back to them. Looks for a response.

MOSS

(reluctant)

They do have the capability. They do do this kind of thing.

Cole hears what's not being said.

COLE

But they don't send Navy Seals into Chinatown, even for Tommy Cheung.

MOSS

Don't think so. Narco said the knucklehead bodyguards couldn't hit targets at 7 meters. Suspect list getting a little too short?

COLE

A lot too short.

EXT. CORONER'S PATHOLOGY LAB - DAY

Robbins watches a PATHOLOGIST EXTRACT a BULLET from the Wong's BRAIN. An SID BALLISTICS EXPERT, ANTHONY VIGNA, observes.

ROBBINS

Lt. Cole sent me to ask why high velocity rounds didn't exit the target?

The Pathologist HOLDS a BULLET in FORCEPS, RINSES it, places it in an EVIDENCE BAG Vigna holds.

(CONTINUED)

PATHOLOGIST

Ask Tony. Vigna's Firearms. I'm
bodies. He's bullets.

Vigna EXTRACTS the bullet from the evidence bag with his
own FORCEPS. He puts a JEWELER'S LOUPE to his eye and
studies it intensely, like it was the Hope Diamond.

INSERT - RIFLE BULLET

The bottom 1/3rd is pristine. The top 2/3rds have SPLIT
OPEN FROM THE MIDDLE, while the TIP REMAINS INTACT. It
looks like a SQUASHED MOLYBOLT.

BACK TO SCENE

Vigna rotates the bullet.

VIGNA

Interesting. Very interesting.

ROBBINS

What?

VIGNA

Malformed the same way as the other
bullets.

ROBBINS

They both hit bone and distorted
identically?

PATHOLOGIST

(patiently)

There are no bones in the cerebral
cavity, Detective.

ROBBINS

OK. How'd they distort identically?
Does it matter?

VIGNA

A great deal. A very great deal.

Vigna rotates the bullet again. Examines studiously.

(CONTINUED)

VIGNA

Identical distortion from identical perpendicular cuts at precise orthogonal, right, angles, clean through. Both bullets. Jeweler's precision.

In the B.G., the pathologist DIGS for the 2nd bullet.

ROBBINS

Why do all that?

Vigna CUTS a PIECE of NOTE PAPER. ROLLS it into a TUBE.

VIGNA

Bullet squashes on impact. Diameter widens. Creates massive...

Vigna pushes the tube against the side of his head. It SPREADS OPEN, WIDER at the MIDDLE.

VIGNA (CONT'D)

...100% lethal internal damage.

He notices something, SCRAPES the bullet with a SCALPEL. Using the loupe again, he takes a closer look.

VIGNA

Amazing! Remarkable really!

ROBBINS

What?

VIGNA

They applied a thin film of solder over the orthogonal cuts. Perfect.

ROBBINS

(frustrated)
Mr. Vigna.

VIGNA

Oh. Sorry, Detective. I've just never seen anything quite...

ROBBINS

...like this before. Yeah. We get a lot of that on this one. The solder?

VIGNA

It created a skin covering the open holes the breakaway cuts made. Reduced air turbulence.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

VIGNA (CONT'D)

Same reason they didn't cut the tip:
no wobble. No miss.

ROBBINS

Why do all that?

The Pathologist extracts the 3rd bullet. It's identical.

VIGNA

Two reasons: First, to maintain great
accuracy and inflict lethal damage.

ROBBINS

Second?

The Pathologist EXTRACTS the 4th BULLET, rinses in, drops
into the evidence bag. Vigna hands them to Robbins.

VIGNA

No innocents injured. Bullet expansion
this dramatic totally dissipates
kinetic energy. Momentum vanishes.
Nothing left to push the bullet out.
No exit wound possible. Certain kill.
Zero collateral damage. I'm not in the
habit of applauding villainy, but this
really is perfect.

ROBBINS

(sarcastic)

I know: Absolutely perfect.

She takes the baggie with the four bullets and exits.

INT. RHD - CONFERENCE AREA - NIGHT

Barstow stares at the whiteboard. Lu looks out the
window. Simms stares, doodles, stares. Everyone's spent.

The whiteboard is COVERED. Everything they know so far:
PHOTOS of Wong and Xang. An ORG CHART OF MUSCLE & MONEY.
MORE GUYS' PHOTOS. A MAP of SHOOTER POSITIONS, the HIT,
and the FIREWORKS. Cole enters.

COLE

What do we know and how do we know it?
Talk to me.

BARSTOW

No more than we knew 4 hours ago.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIMMS

Somebody knows how to kill guys fast
and fancy. And they're real good at it.

COLE

And we know they hit bad men real
hard. Kill 'em. But somehow, make sure
they don't hit bystanders. Not a one.

Robbins enters with the BULLET BAGGIE.

ROBBINS

Not somehow. This how.

Everyone gathers, looks and listens.

ROBBINS (CONT'D)

SID ballistics said these were cut.
Precisely. So they'd open on impact,
create a huge wound. And stop. Dead.

SIMMS

(staring at the
bullets)

Not enough to put two in. And in each
ear? The bullet had to burst open?

COLE

(to himself, aloud)

That's why the bullets didn't exit.
Nothing left.

(to Robbins)

You say 'precisely?' Clever
ballistics?

ROBBINS

Yep.

Cole takes the bullet baggie to the whiteboard. He DRAWS
A CIRCLE AROUND the Chinatown players. Turns to the room.

COLE

Anyone here think anyone
(points to the
circle)
here could do something like this?

He holds up the baggie, looking at them. All agree: no.
Cole WRITES 'NOT A SUSPECT' next to the circled names.

COLE (CONT'D)

So where's the guy who started this?
Great tactics. Kill like an army.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

COLE (CONT'D)

Down bad guys while protecting good
guys and engineer their own ammo?

He looks around. No one has a clue.

COLE (CONT'D)

Some country start a war? Didn't tell
us?

SIMMS

SWAT says they're perfect tacticians.

Simms WRITES 'Perfect Tactics' next to 'SWAT.'

Robbins takes the MARKER.

ROBBINS

Pathology and Ballistics say they're
perfect assassins.

She WRITES 'Perfect' next to Pathology and Ballistics.

Cole takes the marker.

COLE

And the Pizza Truck, all four of it,
advertised 'perfect.'

He WRITES 'Absolute Perfection' next to the Pizza Trucks.
DRAWS a LINE CONNECTING all the 'perfects.'

COLE

This reminds me of something. I can't
remember what, though.

Everyone looks at the whiteboard, stumped. Lu stands.

LU

I'm going out and press my sources.
Gotta do something.

COLE

Take Barstow.

SIMMS

Sonia and I'll bang on some doors.
Maybe we'll turn something.

LU

What are you gonna do, L-T?

SIMMS

He's gonna have tea with the Mayor.

(CONTINUED)

COLE
Perfectly right, Alfred. Absolutely
perfectly right.

MUSIC MONTAGE

INT. CROWN VIC - MOVING - NIGHT

Cole driving through BRIGHTLY LIT Chinatown

EXT. SEEDIER SECTION - NIGHT

Lu & Barstow RIDE the night.

EXT. ANOTHER CHINATOWN NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Simms & Robbins on the road. Looking. Searching.

Miami Vice in 3 different musical and visual keys.

END MONTAGE

EXT. CHINESE TEA SHOP - NIGHT

Cole PULLS UP. Enters.

INT. CHINESE TEA SHOP - STAIRS - NIGHT

Cole takes the old stairs 2 at a time. Pulls the bell
cord.

INT. CHINESE TEA SHOP - NIGHT

Wing Quang OPENS the door for Cole.

WING QUANG
Lt. Cole! I've made more tea for you.

He hands Cole a SMALL CLAY CUP, then takes an ORNATE
CHINESE PUZZLE BOX and SLIDES the WOODEN RECTANGLES.

COLE
Thank you for seeing me. For the tea.
(re: puzzle box)
What's that?

(CONTINUED)

WING QUANG

My people invented these puzzle boxes.
We've played with them for millennia.
We enjoy the intellectual challenge.

COLE

Good. I need some clear thought.

WING QUANG

(works the box)
You want me to talk of the heroin
men's murders. China White they call
it.

COLE

(surprised)
How did you know?

WING QUANG

I hear of my community's affairs.

COLE

Because you're the 'Mayor of
Chinatown?'

WING QUANG

Many eyes. Many ears. Much to share.

He gets the box MORE OPENED.

WING QUANG (CONT'D)

And because these men have been a
blight on our people's lives too long.

Cole pretends more interest in the box than Quang's tale.

COLE

That box is so unusual. Amazing.

WING QUANG

(undeterred)
We came to L.A.P.D. We told of Tommy
Cheung and his evil Triad.

COLE

What did the Department do for you?

WING QUANG

Nothing.

COLE

I'm sorry. Our laws require...

(CONTINUED)

WING QUANG

Your laws are 200 years old. Ours?
5,000! Yours failed us. Ours govern
all our lives. They are Our Way.

He MANIPULATES the box FURTHER.

COLE

(switching)

Tell me, Quang. How did you become
'Mayor of Chinatown?'

WING QUANG

Our Chinese Consolidated Benevolent
Association asked me to serve.

COLE

Chinese Consolodated...

WING QUANG

Our government. For Chinese. By
Chinese. Our Ways bring moral order.
Guide community judgements.

COLE

Really? No use for L. A. City Hall?

WING QUANG

Does a young child guide an elder?

Quang ADVANCES the box MORE.

COLE

Did they advise you about Tommy
Cheung?

WING QUANG

No. Just business issues. But the
ruinous villains were not mourned.

COLE

Your moral culture applauds murder?

WING QUANG

A murder, like many other things, like
this box, appears as one thing...

He FINISHES the box, TURNS it INSIDE OUT revealing a
beautiful PORCELAIN FIGURINE of a Chinese Wise Man.

WING QUANG (CONT'D)

... yet be revealed as something
completely different.

(CONTINUED)

Cole's impressed. And a little puzzled.

SHORT MUSIC MONTAGE

INT. CHINATOWN GAMBLING HALL - NIGHT

SOUND OF TILES ONLY. NO DIALOG. Lu and Barstow walk through a seldom seen slice of society: a Chinese Pai-Gow palace. Winners get thousands on the turn of a tile. The Detectives get ignored.

INT. CHINATOWN BAR - NIGHT

Simms and Robbins enter, scan. Tough, hard, young Chinese citizens have zero interest in L.A.P.D. questions.

END SHORT MUSIC MONTAGE

TIME CUT TO:

INT. SUZI CHANG'S ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Suzi's LOCKING UP alone. Cole looks at Suzi from outside. Says nothing. She sees him and unlocks.

SUZI

Lt. Cole.

COLE

Ms. Chang, I'm really stuck. I need to know more on this case.

SUZI

I'm so sorry to hear that, Lieutenant.

He picks up a GALLERY BROCHURE.

COLE

Can you tell me anything about your relationship with Tommy Cheung?

SUZI

Lt. Cole! Relationship?! You read too many gossip columns!

COLE

There was no relationship?

(CONTINUED)

SUZI

(rote)

The same warm personal friendship I share with my many valued friends in the Chinatown art world.

COLE

(opens brochure)

I need facts. Not P.R.

SUZI

You're quite rude, Lieutenant.

COLE

Three men have been murdered. One linked to you. In police reports not gossip columns.

SUZI

I'm not that adventurous nor romantic. Good girl. Bad writing.

She opens the door she was locking. Cole takes the hint and exits. She closes up with a concerned look.

EXT. SUZI CHANG'S ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Cole cell RINGS as he climbs into the Crown Vic.

COLE

Cole.

LU (V.O.)

Sam, you gotta see this.

COLE

Whaddya got, Ronnie?

INTERCUT

EXT. CHINATOW PARK - MAIN AREA - NIGHT

Lu's talking on his cell to Cole. WIDEN TO REVEAL Barstow's alongside.

LU

Sam, Barstow and I followed some muscle.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

You have my undivided.

LU

Somebody made these knuckleheads got
an offer they couldn't refuse.

COLE

You mean the recently vacated big
piece of the China White pie?

Now WIDEST. The Wong/Xang park hit area. UNIFORMS load 15
CHINESE TOUGHS into VANS and B & W's. FLASHING LIGHTS.

LU

That's what they came to fight over.

(amazed)

Somebody talked Chinatown heroin
dealers into a shootout!

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. RHD - NIGHT

Cole enters. Simms & Robbins work the phones. Barstow and Lu review ARREST SHEETS.

COLE

(to Lu)

Whadya got? Whadya say?

LU

Skinny guy in the corner ran errands for Tommy. Grabbed him up in the park. Probably a real long shot.

COLE

Interrogation One. I haven't been near a favorite this whole race.

INT. RHD - INTERROGATION #1 - NIGHT - HOURS LATER

Cole, Barstow and Lue tower over MIKE DOYLE, a dim-witted, nervous little twitch who's made a career living off the crumbs better men leave behind.

LU

(pressing)

C'mon Doyle!! You were his DRIVER!

DOYLE

Yeah, Det. But I didn't see nothin'.

COLE

Listen, Sgt. Schultz, it's time you tell us what you did see!

LU

All those errands? Never saw anything?

BARSTOW

Cut time if you talk, Doyle. You smart enough to see that much?

COLE

Why'd Tommy use an Irish dummy like Doyle?

DOYLE

I ain't no dummy. I just don't speak that gook shit. Tommy liked that.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

He was afraid your massive intellect
would compromise his multi-faceted
enterprise if you spoke Mandarin?

DOYLE

(offended)

Huh? I ain't talkin' that Chink crap!
I told you! Don't you cops ever listen
none? Tommy woulda...

COLE

Tommy's gone. Out of the picture. You
are consecrated a free man. You may
speak without repercussions.

DOYLE

Reefer? I ain't no goddamn hippie! I
don't smoke that reefer crap!

COLE

(moron slow)

R E P E R C U S S I O N S. Nobody
hassles you for telling the truth.
They're all dead, jailed or bailed.

DOYLE

Oh.

(uncertain but game)

I drove stuff. Picked up stuff. People
some. Took people & stuff to Tommy.

COLE

Names for us means years less for you.

DOYLE

I never got no names! I just drove!
Didn't talk! Just drove.

COLE

Gimme something or it won't be good
for you. I promise you.

DOYLE

(scared, out of his
depth)

Women. No names fer chrissakes! Just
women. Lots. Most, once. Some, lots.

Cole puts Suzi Chang's Gallery BROCHURE in front of
Doyle. Her picture in his face.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

She a 'once' or a 'lots?'

DOYLE

Her? She was the most. Every night the
last few months before...

COLE

How long she stay?

DOYLE

The whole night. Made good coffee.
(smiles idiotically)
She was nice to me. Onlyest one.

COLE

Heartwarming. I'm whelmed.
(to Lu)
Book him, Danno.

Cole walks out.

INT. RHD - NIGHT

Cole's on his cell, putting on his coat.

COLE

Sonia, I got something special for
you...

Lu catches Cole's eye.

COLE (CONT'D)

Hold on a sec.

LU

Sam, Doyle remembers a carpenter Tommy
flew in from Taiwan.

COLE

A carpenter? From Taiwan?

LU

Worked for a week. Flew back.

COLE

Why bring a guy from China? We have
carpenters? What'd he build?

LU

Secret. Tommy wouldn't tell him.

(CONTINUED)

COLE
(deeply sarcastic)
I like 'em simple like this one.
(to phone)
Sorry. I need you for a gimmick play.

Cole explains as he exits RHD.

INT. SUZI CHANG'S ART GALLERY - NIGHT

A LARGE, expensive BLACK-TIE GATHERING of the GREAT and GORGEOUS. Much wealth. Some wine. A little art. Suzi, in a clinging Anna Sui suit, works the room with ease.

Her rhythm is abruptly broken by Cole, entering, wearing JUST A SUIT. He stands out deliberately. People notice.

SUZI
(smiling rage)
Lt. Cole! This is neither the time...

COLE
You lied to me.

SUZI
(guests hear them)
Nonsense.

COLE
You lied in the course of an L.A.P.D. Homicide Investigation. Obstruction of Justice. CA 132 PC. A Felony.

SUZI
(pure innocence)
We can work this out, Lt. Cole. But this is my biggest opening. I...

COLE
...will come outside with me. Now.

He walks away from her. She follows immediately.

EXT. SUZI CHANG'S ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Cole emerges. Waits. She comes out. LIMOS wait across the street for their patrons inside.

SUZI
Really, Lt. Cole. Any other night...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLE

THIS night, look up the street.

She turns, looks. Her jaw drops. Suzi Chang is nonplussed for the first time in anyone's memory.

Her P.O.V. UP THE STREET - NIGHT

A WEDGE of FIVE B & W's, LIGHTS FLASHING, blocks the street. An S.E.U. (Special Enforcement Unit - SWAT) detail, with helmets, shields and batons, stand ready for a riot, insurrection or art gallery embarrassment.

BACK TO SCENE

SUZI

(terrified)

Lt. Cole! This will ruin my gallery!

COLE

(without compassion)

A shame, really. But one of your guests may be involved in an ongoing homicide investigation. They'll have to be searched and questioned, cell phones seized for review.

(the bright side)

Everyone should be released by sun up.

She closes in and confronts him.

SUZI

(she bluffs)

Armed Gestapo roughing up the cities elite? You'll be pounding a beat.

He stares back at her. Without looking away, he gestures with a SMALL HAND SIGNAL up the street to the S.E.U. She turns to look up the street while he answers, still watching her, not the cops.

HER P.O.V UP THE STREET

S.W.A.T. men and vehicles, MOVE SLOWLY towards them and Suzi's gallery as Cole responds.

COLE (O.C.)

You'll be out of the art business. No more 'warm personal friendships with valued patrons.' No more 'important charities.'

BACK TO SCENE

She turns back to Cole.

SUZI

No! No! Stop them! Please!

Cole makes a DIFFERENT GESTURE, still never taking his eyes off her. She looks up the street again.

HER P.O.V UP THE STREET

S.E.U. STOPS IMMEDIATELY. Cole has them in the palm of his hand. Literally.

BACK TO SCENE

COLE

Decide. Now.

SUZI

(Surrenders, rushed)

Tomorrow. Breakfast. I'll show you what you want to see. I promise.

COLE

Only that will save you. I promise.

Cole makes a THIRD GESTURE. She looks up the street.

HER P.O.V UP THE STREET

S.E.U. CLIMBS into the B & W's & Vans. Everything disappears. Like it was a mirage.

BACK TO SCENE

She turns back to Cole. He's already climbing into the Crown Vic. She watches him drive off, goes back inside.

INT. SUZI CHANG'S ART GALLERY - NIGHT

She works the room unfazed. Approaching GUSMANO, a short, wealthy buyer with a goatee, sunglasses and TWO VERY TALL, VERY HOT BLONDES in dangerously short skirts.

(CONTINUED)

SUZI

Gusmano. Could you be a dear and let me borrow your driver?

GUSMANO

(besotted with
babeage)

Anything you want. You've given me everything I want.

She blows him a kiss and exits.

ANOTHER ANGLE ON THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE

Robbins emerges from the crowd! Looking hot, classy and an art patron to the nines, she's on her cell, watching Suzi out the window.

ROBBINS

Sam. Chang's leaving. Like you said:
in someone else's limo. Six Bravo Lima
Sierra Three Niner One.

INT. COLE'S CROWN VIC - MOVING - NIGHT

Cole's on his cell with Robbins.

COLE

Stay on her. Guide me.

EXT. SUZI CHANG'S ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Robbins emerges, watching Suzi get into Gusmano's limo and drive off. Barstow ARRIVES in an UNMARKED. Robbins climbs in. They drive off.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. EXPENSIVE NEIGHBORHOOD - BASE OF DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Cole STOPS the Crown Vic at Robbins' Unmarked, driver door to driver door.

BARSTOW

Checked the property files. House's owned by a Chinese corporation. Tommy's name isn't on the deed.

COLE

Thanks for tailing her. Wait here.

He drives up. They wait.

EXT. TOMMY CHEUNG'S HOME - NIGHT

A magnificent, secluded place with a great view. Gusmano's LIMO waits in the driveway when Cole arrives. The Limo Driver's sitting sideways, behind the wheel, door open, feet on the ground, talking on his cell.

DRIVER

(laughing)

Yeah. Twins. Told 'em I was a Rock Video producer and my driver was getting me a...

He sees Cole walking past him, towards the house.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

(to phone))

Later.

He SNAPS the phone shut. STARTS to stand to block Cole.

COLE

(shows badge)

Unless you're growing, siddown.

Intimidated, the driver sits as Cole blows past him and into the Front Door.

INT. TOMMY CHEUNG'S HOME - NIGHT

SPECTACULARLY APPOINTED, eclectic, hip and class. Cole looks around, follows a NOISE.

INT. TOMMY CHEUNG'S HOME - DEN - NIGHT

Cole walks in on Suzi Chang. Her back's to him. She's SLIDING PIECES of a FRAMED WALL HANGING of WOODEN RECTANGLES. It looks like a Chinese Puzzle box.

COLE

That what Tommy's Taiwanese carpenter flew in to build, Ms. Chang?

She SPINS around, startled.

SUZI

Lt. Cole! My God! You scared me! What are you doing here?

She eases away, REARRANGES already NEAT PILLOWS.

COLE

I'm investigating three murders, assault with deadly weapons and stolen narcotics. What are you doing here?

SUZI

I wanted to neaten the place before I brought you here tomorrow.

COLE

Bad lie. He was only...

(quoting)

...'a valued patron and contributor important to charities.' You clean house for all your customers?

SUZI

(venomous)

No, Lt.! Only those where I'm forced to tolerate very rude policemen.

COLE

Only thing I can force is you to tell me the truth: what are you doing here?

She crosses to a sofa. Sits, offering a SPECTACULAR view of thigh and leg. Anger didn't work. Maybe sex will.

SUZI

(criminal solicitation)

Lt. Cole. I'm sorry. You startled me. Let's start over. Come sit by me.

(pats the sofa)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZI (CONT'D)

We can treat each other better. Can't we?

COLE

No, Ms. Chang. We can not.

He walks to the WALL ART PUZZLE. He's getting so warm she removes her jacket, enhancing the view.

SUZI

(working him)

So much textured beauty in this room.

Cole looks at her, returns to studying the wall art.

COLE

This wood IS beautifully textured.
Like a Chinese puzzle box.

Nervous, she crosses to him, standing in front of the art. He can smell her perfume.

SUZI

(phone sex)

Something more sensual.

COLE

Ms. Chang. Is this the 'same warm personal friendship you share with your many valued friends in the Chinatown art world?'

Failure. She'll try a tantrum. She BURSTS AWAY from him and SWEEPS ART PIECES to the floor.

SUZI

You are an impossibly insulting policeman. I refuse to answer your scandalous questions. Leave me!

Cole ignores her. As if she'd not spoken. He keeps studying the wall art closely as he speaks, paying her no attention.

COLE

Frightened, aggressive, homey, venomous, suggestive, angry, now hysterical.

She's FUMING at his nonchalant dismissiveness.

(CONTINUED)

COLE (CONT'D)

Big emotional ride. You sell a lot of art that way?

Finally, he MOVES a PIECE. Then MOVES ANOTHER. A WALL SLIDES OPEN. Suzi BURSTS into TEARS, SOBBING.

SUZI

(helpless waif)

Oh, Lt. Cole! Please! Can't we...

COLE

No, Ms. Chang. We can not. What's in the secret room?

Her tears evaporate instantly. She LIGHTS a CIGARETTE.

SUZI

You are a unique man, Lt. Most...

COLE

I'm not 'most.' I'm a Robbery Homicide Detective Lieutenant. What's in the secret room?

SUZI

(defense counsel)

I really can't say. Mr. Cheung's private property is now controlled by your Probate Courts, I believe.

COLE

I believe it contains evidence material to an ongoing homicide investigation. Jurisdiction is mine.

She SNUBS OUT the cigarette, walks to the window.

SUZI

Tommy was unique. Smart, ruthless, insatiable and a megalomaniac.

COLE

Sounds exciting. What's in the room?

SUZI

(capitulating)

He recorded everything on video. Meetings. Deals. Calls.

COLE

He record you and Tommy?

(CONTINUED)

SUZI

He thought everything he did was historically important. Everything. A megalomaniac, Lt. Like I said.

COLE

You didn't want your 'warm personal friendship' exposed?

SUZI

I seduce my customers. My patrons. In private, it's sexy; in public? Ruin.

Cole PUSHES OPEN the WALL. Looks inside.

P.O.V. SECRET ROOM

VIDEO STORAGE RACKS. NEATLY LABELED TAPES.

BACK TO SCENE

Cole dials his cell.

COLE

(uninterested)
Life's hard. Then you die.
(to phone)
Sonia, come back. Get S.I.D. here.
They need to bring video tape evidence back to the squad.

SUZI

I'll do anything to...

COLE

Yes. I'm sure you would.

INT. RHD - NIGHT

Cole enters. S.I.D., Robbins and Barstow follow with BOXES of video tapes and FOUR CARTS with VCR/TVs.

COLE

We know these guys are perfect tactical murderers.

SIMMS

Absolute Perfection?

(CONTINUED)

COLE

You got it. Absolute Perfection.
(annoyed)
Where do I know that from?

LU

(suddenly remembers)
Sun-Tzu!

BARSTOW

Gezundheit!

COLE

Ronnie! Yes! The Art of War!

LU

You bet it is. I have a copy.

Lu walks off. Robbins and Barstow look confused.

SIMMS

Yeah! Yuppies used it. Believed
selling dog food on-line was war.

Lu returns with THE BOOK. Hands it to Cole.

LU

(to all)
It reduces war & tactics to a set of
rules thousands of years old.

COLE

(to himself, aloud)
Yeah. Like someone else I know.

He walks to the whiteboard. MOVES the PHOTO of Wing
Quang, the Tea Seller, to the center of the board. He
points the others to the tapes and TVs.

COLE (CONT'D)

Tommy taped everything. Look in those
for anything useful. Anything.

All reach for HEAD PHONES and TAPES.

SIMMS

What are you gonna do, Hoss?

Cole HOLDS UP the book.

COLE

Figure out how this connects with our
murders.

MUSIC MONTAGE

INT. RHD - BULLPEN - NIGHT

All WATCH tapes. Some bored. Some raised eyebrows. Lu goes to Cole's office. Enters.

INT. RHD - COLE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Cole's reading with intense concentration.

LU

I think I got something.

COLE

I know who did it. Show me.

INT. RHD - BULLPEN - NIGHT

Cole & Lu LOOK AT TAPE on a MONITOR.

ANGLE ON MONITOR SCREEN (VIDEO PLAYBACK)

Security video from a fixed high position. A LARGE ROOM with a LONG TABLE. Tommy sits at the head. On either side, eight lesser dealers including Wong and Xang. No bodyguards. Wing Quang sits at the opposite end.

WING QUANG

...and so I ask, for the community,
for the Chinese Consolidated
Benevolent Association, that this
triad stop peddling heroin in our
community.

TOMMY

Wing Quang, the Triad met with out of
of respect. We are a business. Not a
social club. We refuse your request.

WING QUANG

I speak for a community!

TOMMY

This is not a debate. It is decided.
(without looking at
the others)
There are no objections.

(CONTINUED)

Wing stands, resigned.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

A warning Quang: do not let
disappointment cloud your judgement. I
am well protected with impenetrable
defenses. The only way I won't die an
old man in my sleep...

(to the room, amused)

...is if I get hit by a bus!

EVERYONE at the table LAUGHS: the Boss made a joke.

BACK TO SCENE

Barstow, Simms, Robbins are all STUNNED. Cole had it
figured. Lu's seen the tape already.

COLE

I want you guys to mark these for any
evidence you find. Let's make some
cases.

BARSTOW

What are you going to do?

SIMMS

He's gonna drink some more tea.

COLE

You're right, Alfred. Absolutely,
Perfectly right.

He takes Lu's BOOK and exits.

EXT. CHINESE TEA SHOP - NIGHT

Cole PULLS UP. Enters with the book.

INT. TEA SHOP - DOOR AT TOP OF STAIRS - NIGHT

Wing OPENS the door for Cole.

WING QUANG

Lt. Cole! What a surprise!

COLE

I know who murdered Tommy and Wong and
Xang.

(CONTINUED)

WING QUANG

Really! Come in! Tell me how you've
solved yet another puzzle.

INT. TEA SHOP - NIGHT

Wing begins PREPARING TEA. Cole holds an ART OF WAR BOOK.

COLE

(re: the book)

The Art of War is fascinating!

WING QUANG

Sun Tzu! One of our great scholars.

COLE

The theory of battle.

WING QUANG

Our nation, like your own, has a long
history of men imposing their will on
others through conflict.

COLE

Like the conflict between you and the
Triad over China White?

WING QUANG

Between the Benevolent Association and
the gangsters ruining lives.

Wing POURS TEA into TWO CLAY CUPS. Each has a DIFFERENT
IDEOGRAM.

COLE

You asked the Triad to stop.

WING QUANG

As I was requested by the Association.
We tried asking for their dissolution
with honor.

Cole opens the book.

COLE

(reading)

When conducting conflict, rely on
mental power with honor.

Wing OFFERS a CUP to Cole.

(CONTINUED)

WING QUANG

Excellent, Lieutenant! You've studied our ways! I'm honored!

COLE

Mental power with honor. That's what this battle was about.

WING QUANG

We are China! Our Way has always been about Intellect and Honor.

COLE

Murder is not honorable.

WING QUANG

Destroying lives with drugs is not honorable. Saving men's lives is.

COLE

(reading)

Neutralizing an adversary without battle is Absolute Perfection.

WING QUANG

Precisely. Your grasp is commendable. Our Way is to strive -- for perfection.

COLE

You had Tommy murdered echoing his own words. You scared his associates away.

WING QUANG

Some were scared easily. Others...

COLE

The overwhelming tactical superiority in the Wong/Xang hit. Scared more off.

WING QUANG

Some. Yes. Others...

COLE

Wanted a noisy battle but got arrested before they could start.

WING QUANG

(quoting from memory)

Induce your adversary into a battle with bait he can't resist.

COLE

The newly vacated China White market.

(CONTINUED)

WING QUANG

Tommy Cheung was disciplined. The others were mere thugs: easily frightened; easily tempted.

COLE

Did the shooters come from Taiwan like the carpenter?

WING QUANG

There were four. Now scattered. Like the four winds.

COLE

How did you get Wong and Xang to meet? They hated each other.

WING QUANG

(quoting)
Irregular action provides options endless as the heavens.

COLE

(seeing it)
You called each one, pretending to represent the other. Each thought the other made the first, weaker move.

WING QUANG

Strong men with strong egos are easily deceived. That is, I believe, how Ms. Chang makes her living.

COLE

And the trick bullets? Our Ballistics lab never saw anything like it.

WING QUANG

We invented gunpowder, Lieutenant.
(modestly)
We have some small understanding of firearms.

COLE

You used Chinese fireworks because you knew we were following Wong and Xang.

WING QUANG

'Up on them,' I believe you say. Our warriors needed uninterrupted exits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Quang POURS more TEA for Cole and himself. He ADDS a POWDER to Cole's cup. Cole saw it. As Wing turns to put the pot back, Cole SWITCHES CUPS.

COLE

And you overkilled while ensuring bystanders were safe.

WING QUANG

Elders deemed it honorable to remove the top 3 Triad leaders.

(quoting)

"An overwhelming attack cripples adversaries' will."

Cole nods understanding.

WING QUANG (CONT'D)

Citizens were always to be protected.

(re: Cole's cup)

You've switched cups, Lieutenant. The ideograms are different.

COLE

I saw you pour powder into that one.

(confused)

I know your sense of honor. You wouldn't try to kill a policeman.

Quang drinks from his cup, the one with the powder.

COLE (CONT'D)

(shocked)

Quang! What have you done!?

WING QUANG

Another small amusement, Lieutenant. My last puzzle. One I knew you'd solve. You saw me pour and left the tea with the powder for me, as I knew you would.

COLE

How did you know that?

WING QUANG

Your dedication and purity make your actions predictable. As Mr. Cheung's dedication and evil made his equally so.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

(understanding)

That's how you knew where to set up
the spike strip: he ran every night at
the track.

Cole shakes his head in admiration of Quang's tactical
acumen.

COLE (CONT'D)

(back to present)

What was in the powder?

WING QUANG

Five thousand years of Chinese herbal
wisdom. It wasn't murder, Lieutenant.
It was fulfilling my destiny. With
honor. It had to end this way. Your
young science will say I achieved what
Tommy Cheung couldn't: I died an old
man in my sleep. Of 'natural causes.'
May your path be clear Lieutenant.

Wing Quang puts his CUP down. NODS off to sleep. Forever.

END ACT FOUR