

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

The grit of a dirty street corner, shrouded in fog. A street light burns brightly above, creating a pocket of light in the darkness.

The voice of MAGS SMITHIE narrates the scene as a door SLAMS and FOOTSTEPS walk through the darkness, creating playful shadows under the streetlight.

The FLICKER of a match lights a CIGARETTE in the dark.

SMITHIE (VO)

It was Friday - a dark Friday. A Friday filled with fog - a fog I'd seen before, on the eve of a case so treacherous, I was certain - dead certain - I'd never see this kind of fog again.

As the feet stop under the street light, we see they are feet attached to bare legs, in HIGH-HEELED SHOES. Those legs are attached to a feminine trench coat, and two ruby red lips with a cigarette dangling between them, the rest of the woman's face shadowed under the brim of a large hat.

SMITHIE (VO)

That was back when I was a weather girl with the nightly radio news. Back before they decided I didn't have the voice for it. Too many cigarettes and not enough water.

(coughing)

Hydration is key.

The WOMAN blows a trail of smoke, which gracefully dances across the foggy night air.

From across the street, a MAN in a suit and tie, covered in a black trench coat, tip-toes through the shadows behind the street lights.

SMITHIE (VO)

But now - now I'm my own boss.
Choose my hours. Choose my clients.
Choose my loyalties.

From behind the Smoking Woman, the MAN appears.

MAN

Voulez-vous couche avec moi?

The Woman gives a start, and tries to turn around, but the Man is directly behind her. Instead, she removes her cigarette from between her lips.

WOMAN

Ce soir?

The Man suddenly swipes one GLOVED HAND across her mouth and nose, and the other across her stomach, locking her in place. She struggles for a moment, but soon begins to lose consciousness, and finally her eyes flutter closed. He leads her back into the shadows.

SMITHIE (VO)

And most importantly, I choose to
always - always - drink enough
water.

TITLE: "JUST PLAIN DEAD"

INT. SMITHIE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The room is dark, with only the neon glow of the street below seeping in through the Venetian blinds, and a desk lamp turned on the desk, cluttered with papers and Chinese takeout. The papers wriggle around thanks to the constant hum of a small fan on top of a nearby file cabinet.

The desk chair is occupied by Detective Mags Smithie, gulping down a large glass of water. When she sets it down, she breathes a huge sigh of relief.

SMITHIE (VO)

But I'm losing my point. I was
tired that night - dead tired.
Tired of my duck soup cases, too
easy to solve. Tired of the
maleficent chill in the air.

She wraps her coat tighter around her shoulders, and buttons one of the buttons - it pops.

SMITHIE (VO)

And most of all, I was tired of
popping buttons off my jacket. I
was always popping buttons.

She opens a small BOX, full of buttons, and throws the new one on the pile.

SMITHIE (VO)

But my luck was about to change.

Just then, a KNOCK at the door startles Smithie. She smooths her collar, and pulls out her pocket mirror to adjust her hair. When she's ready, she sits back in her chair.

SMITHIE

Come in.

In through the door slides a tall, dark, and mysterious man: WESLEY WOLFRAM. He looks over his shoulder and closes the door quietly, eyes darting to and fro.

WESLEY

Detective, you've got to help me!

SMITHIE (VO)

He was the most beautiful man I had ever seen; he dressed so sharp he was almost bleeding. Of all the offices in all the world, here he was standing in mine!

SMITHIE

(to Wesley)

Please sit down. What can I do for you, Mr...

WESLEY

Wolfram. Wesley Wolfram. It's just that I - that I -

Wesley bursts into tears, and Mags finds a crumpled HANKIE in her pocket, offering it to him.

He takes it, blows hard, and hands it back.

WESLEY

Thanks.

SMITHIE (VO)

It was my hankie, and I would never wash it again.

WESLEY

I'm sorry to come in here like this. I'm such a mess. But I didn't know who to turn to. It's my mother. She was kidnapped.

Wesley sighs, and bursts into tears again.

SMITHIE

There, there. Calm down, Mr. Wolfram, and tell me exactly what happened.

WESLEY

I was at her club - I mean, supper club - I was there with her, I mean, and she left. I thought she went home, but when I went later to her apartment to - to pick up - something - she wasn't there. The place was disheveled, but nothing was missing. Nothing except her, that is. She was missing. Gone!

SMITHIE

And you didn't see anything out of the ordinary at the supper club?

WESLEY

No, nothing unusual.

SMITHIE

Of course not. What is your mother's address?

WESLEY

My what?

SMITHIE

Your mother's address. So I can search the crime scene. There must be a trace. No criminal disappears without a trace.

WESLEY

Except the clever ones.

SMITHIE (VO)

Mouthy. I wasn't sure I liked that about him. Nor did I like his eyes, darting to-and-fro, making me dead certain he was whistling through the graveyard.

CLOSE-UP on Wesley's upper lip, quivering between panic and control.

SMITHIE (VO)

So I decided to fan the baggage at his mother's house to buy myself a little more time to figure out his

(MORE)

SMITHIE (VO) (cont'd)
game - it was the least I could do
for such a good looking fella.

CLOSE-UP on Smithie's lips as she speaks.

SMITHIE
Don't worry, Mr. Wolfram. Your case
is safe with me. Safe, and
soon-to-be-solved.