

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

And the shooter'll probably get taken care of by the Jokers. It's a two-fer. Garbage in, garbage out.

BRENDA

Would you be saying this if the victims were black?

The temperature in the room changes. Taylor grows calm, very still -- that too-stillness of anger.

FRANNY

I can go.

BRENDA

No.

Yes.

TAYLOR

Franny goes. Taylor is her boss.

TAYLOR

These boys kill cops. So when they turn up dead I don't think black, brown, yellow, or white. The only color I see is blue. The gangs didn't start because of the police. They won't end because of the police. We just contain them.

BRENDA

So investigating these murders is a waste of time.

TAYLOR

How you allocate your resources is up to you, Chief.

Taylor exits. Brenda watches him go. Thinks for a moment. Thinks about the one person who does care.

**INT. BRENDA'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

Outside her office, we see the Murder Room is empty, except for the cleaning crew.

Brenda sits across from Col. Walter. He sits with perfect posture and, like James Duff, radiates power. Col. Walter taps his Marine Corps RING on the chair as they take a beat to size each other up.

WALTER

I was glad to get your call.

BRENDA

I know the esteemed place women hold in the military. Pretty gutsy for you to come to a girl for help.

WALTER

Well, you kept the press out of this. So you know what you're doing here. And your reputation cancels out your gender. Seven years in the CIA, four years in D.C., three and a half years Atlanta P.D. One marriage that... didn't end well. And your father was a Captain in the Army. So you know the drill.

BRENDA

Well, I've gotten to know you a little, too, Colonel.

(checking her NOTES)

Your most famous shot was from a moving boat on the Mekong Delta. Blew off the head of an enemy sniper from 900 yards. You had 72 confirmed kills in Vietnam, 9 short of the record.

WALTER

You got my military file.

BRENDA

It was a big help.

She holds up a FILE that is completely redacted. Blacked out page after blacked out page.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

So I Googled you.

WALTER

Did you get my son's files as well?

Brenda reads from a LESS-REDACTED MILITARY FILE. Shows the Colonel (and us) a PHOTO of D.B. Walter Jr.

BRENDA

Master Gunnery Sargent D.B. Walter Jr. was in a sniper unit as part of the invasion of Afghanistan. He was sent home in the spring of 2003. Because?

WALTER

(a beat)

The road to his advancement was closed.

BRENDA

Could you be more vague?

WALTER

The important thing you need to know is that two months after he came home, a stray bullet killed his wife, Donna. She was a social worker. Shot by an East Side Catorce. Wonderful girl. Wonderful.

BRENDA

Is her case still open?

WALTER

Yes. Still interested in my opinion?

BRENDA

Very.

WALTER

That's why my son's doing this. You people can't find the guy who killed her. And he won't stop now until every Catorce is dead.

BRENDA

Why didn't your son seek revenge immediately?

WALTER

Thought the LAPD was going to do it's job. He waited. Nothing happened. Last Christmas he walked out of the house and never came home. Set off to fight this war.

BRENDA

Tell me how you can help me.

WALTER

You'll never find my boy on your own. He's behind enemy lines now. Disguised within that community. But I can tell you how he thinks. Might even be able to figure out who he plans to kill next.

BRENDA

I need your son's complete military records. Ones that aren't redacted.

WALTER

I want a list of every known East Side Catorce. Their names, their addresses.

BRENDA

I want your records, too.

WALTER

Only if...

BRENDA

I'll give you the lists.

**INT. PARKER CENTER - ELEVATORS - NIGHT**

Brenda walks the Colonel to the elevators. He carries a THIN MANILA FOLDER with the gang lists inside.

BRENDA

What are you hoping to get out of this? Helping me find your son?

WALTER

If you get to him first - without me there -

(the Colonel takes a beat)

My wife died fourteen years ago. And you know what it's like. Moving from post to post. Base to base. Your family becomes everything. My boy is all I have left. And I'm pretty sure - if I'm there when you find him, we can take him alive.

The elevator arrives, doors open.

WALTER (CONT'D)

So. Partners then?

BRENDA

Partners.

Walters enters the lift. Brenda watches as the doors close on their uncertain future.

**FADE OUT.**

**END OF ACT ONE**