

AM NEWS

**EPISODE 1-03
"RIDE ALONG"**

**WRITTEN BY
ANDREW McCREA**

EXT. WKKL RADIO STATION - NIGHT

A wide view of the area WKKL is located in.

The little 60's brick building with the tall transmitter, wrapped in bright, red neon stands out among the view of Camden, New Jersey.

Lightning flashes one or twice ahead of the soft rumble of thunder.

INT. WKKL NEWSROOM - NIGHT

AARON enters the front door, walks around the reception desk, and into the newsroom.

Half the fluorescent lights are switched off.

He passes KEN and sits perpendicular to him, dropping his multiple bags on the desk.

AARON
Good evening, Ken.

KEN
Excited for your ride along?

AARON
Slightly anxious.

KEN
It's a good experience for any young reporter.

KEN sparks a cigar.

KEN (CONT'D)
You're going to be right there in the action.

AARON
What am I getting into?

KEN
Eh...

KEN thinks for a moment.

KEN (CONT'D)
Probably a domestic dispute, maybe a gas bar robbery.

(CONTINUED)

AARON
(dramatically sarcastic)
Fun!

KEN puffs his cigar.

KEN
At least you don't have to report
tonight. You just get to ride with
the cops and phone in a few hits.

AARON
Yeah, I don't get to write that
much tonight, I just get to be
caged up in the back seat of a
police cruiser.

KEN ashes his cigar on the floor.

KEN
Are you having another cranky
night?

AARON
No.

They stare at each other in slight contempt.

KEN
What's going on with that home
intruder?

AARON
The cops have no idea. I know-
shocking!

KEN
Stole a picture of you two and
littered your bed with flowers?

AARON
Red roses...

KEN
Creepy.

AARON
Yeah, tell us about it.

KEN puffs his cigar, filling the room with blue air.

He turns around to work on the computer.

KEN
Looks like it was a good news day.

AARON
They actually left you scripts?

KEN
School bus tipped over, pedestrian struck and killed by a hit and run, and a bathroom spy-cam voyeur gets jail time.

AARON
Nice! That's a solid news cycle.

KEN shrugs.

AARON (CONT'D)
Who do you have on your show tonight?

KEN
Some dog that went viral on the Internet-

AARON
You're interviewing a dog?

KEN
No! The owners.

AARON
Is the dog going to be here? Are you going to get him to bark on air?

KEN shoots him a dirty look.

KEN
I have a back-up sound effect in case he won't do it.

AARON lets out a chuckle.

AARON
Nice!

AARON slides open the top drawer on the desk he's sitting at.

He grabs an XLR-to-mini audio cable and a microphone, and slides them in his shoulder bag.

(CONTINUED)

KEN

What time does the ride along
start?

AARON

11.

He opens his DSLR camera bag and pulls his camera out by the strap. He sets it down gently on the desk.

He pops the bottom open and slides out the battery. He slides a different battery in and swaps SD cards.

He puts it back in the camera bag.

KEN

What are you going to do in the
meantime?

AARON

I'm going to go fill and wash the
newscruiser.

He stands up, throws his bags over his shoulders, and heads towards the reception desk.

He grabs the cruiser keys from the top drawer.

KEN

Sounds like a plan. Talk later!

He lifts his hand over his shoulder to flash him a good-bye.

INT. WKKL NEWSCRUISER - NIGHT

AARON pulls up outside the precinct building in the WKKL newscruiser.

It's an old 60's, beige-brick building, with clean lines and tall windows. And old black and white embossed back lit sign reads "POLICE."

Bars line the windows. Cold fluorescent light spills from inside.

He parks the car on the street and shuts off the engine.

He sits in silence in the car and looks at the precinct for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

AARON
(muttering)
What am I getting myself into?

He pulls his shoulder bag onto his lap and starts rummaging through it.

AARON
No one hates reporters more than
beat cops.

He takes a couple of joints out of his cigarette pack and slides them into the WKKL newscruiser's CD tray holder.

There is a flash of lightning and a gentle rumble.

He looks back at the station for a moment, then pulls a cigarette out of his pack and leans back.

He sparks it, inhaling deeply, then slides his phone out of his pocket.

He unlocks it and opens a text message with his girlfriend KENDRA.

[Note: IMs are in italics.]

AARON (TEXT)
*Just outside the police station.
I'm nervous.*

A reply comes in after a moment.

KENDRA (TEXT)
*Maybe you're just being a paranoid
pothead?*

AARON (TEXT)
Very funny.

KENDRA (TEXT)
*What do you have to be nervous
about?*

AARON (TEXT)
*I don't know. I don't normally get
like this.*

She types, but stops. Types some more, but stops.

He waits a moment. Finally, something.

KENDRA (TEXT)
*You're probably just excited.
Getting to see all the action from
inside the police tape?*

He ponders, but sighs.

AARON (TEXT)
Maybe.

He waits a moment, then texts her again.

AARON (TEXT)
Love you, babe. Have a good night.

KENDRA (TEXT)
<3 U 2

He locks the phone and slides it back in his pocket, then looks at the police station.

He grabs the straps to his bags, opens the driver's door, and slips out, yanking his bags over the seat with him.

He slams the door.

INT. CAMDEN COUNTY PRECINCT #5 - NIGHT

AARON walks in the front door of the precinct, on the right side of the facade.

A small waiting room with faded baby blue walls sits with 12 empty, blue, vinyl-plastic, upholstered chairs.

One wall is lined with floor-to-ceiling windows, fitted with bars.

The other wall is lined with security glass. A dozen cops work in the space behind it.

A box-office like window at one section of the wall has a monotoned receptionist in a cop uniform sitting behind it.

RECEPTIONIST
Good evening.

AARON
Hi, I'm Aaron Mader with WKKL News.
I'm supposed to be going on a ride
along tonight.

(CONTINUED)

RECEPTIONIST

Have a seat.

AARON sits down facing the wall of glass fronting the office space.

He watches three cops talking in a group in the middle of the room.

He looks over to the RECEPTIONIST, who seems to be instant messaging on the computer.

The RECEPTIONIST stops after a moment, looks over, waits, then goes back to firing away on the keyboard.

AARON gulps his saliva, trying to hide it.

He looks at a clock on the wall. 10:52pm.

The second hand moves slower than a half-dead turtle.

The cold fluorescent light buzzes. It makes his head buzz.

His vision distorts a bit. He squeezes his eyes and rubs them with his fingers.

The RECEPTIONIST looks over.

RECEPTIONIST

Are you alright, Mader?

AARON

I get headaches from too much fluorescent light.

The RECEPTIONIST turns away, continuing to bang on the keyboard.

He looks at the clock with double vision. 10:54pm.

There's a click, and a buzz, and the door to the office space opposite the front door opens.

A familiar face, the POLICE OFFICER who spoke to AARON the night of the stabbing spree, stands there holding it.

That POLICE OFFICER is named JOHN SPEER.

JOHN

Aaron Mader?

AARON thinks for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

AARON
Hey, I know you- You're taking me
on the ride along?

He cracks a slight smile.

JOHN
With my partner, Officer Saez.

AARON
I never got your name.

AARON extends his right hand.

JOHN
Officer John Speer.

JOHN reaches out and shakes AARON's hand.

AARON notices a female officer come up behind JOHN.

It's OFFICER JULIETTE SAEZ. She's a slim thing with a dark complexion and a tough face.

She smiles slightly.

JOHN
We're just going to finish getting
set up and we'll meet you out front
with the police cruiser in five
minutes.

AARON
OK.

JOHN lets go of the door and it slams shut.

AARON stands up, puts his bags on his shoulder, and walks out the front door.

The RECEPTIONIST watches him leave.

EXT. CAMDEN COUNTY PRECINCT #5 - NIGHT

AARON steps out into the night.

The sky spits little, sporadic rain drops.

He fishes his cigarette pack out of his shoulder bag and sparks a smoke.

He takes a deep drag, looking at the mean sky. It flashes lightning.

(CONTINUED)

He takes another deep drag and looks over at Philadelphia's sky line.

Head lights appear from behind the side of the precinct.

A cruiser, driven by EDGAR, slowly pulls up outside the police station.

JULIETTE, sitting in the front passenger seat, zips the window down.

JULIETTE

Get in.

He looks at her, takes another deep puff, then looks down as he stomps the cigarette out with his foot.

JULIETTE

Did you really just do that?

JOHN chuckles.

AARON looks back at her.

AARON

Sorry... Habit.

JULIETTE

Habit?

AARON shrugs, then jumps in the back seat, behind JULIETTE.

His shoulder and camera bags slide down his arm, dangling by the strap, as he does so.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

AARON slides to the center of the back seat. He is caged in.

The small window in front of him, between JULIETTE and JOHN, is filled open so they can talk.

AARON sits back.

JOHN

She's just teasing you.

JULIETTE

He's littering cigarette butts. I hate that.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

Really?

JULIETTE

It's, like, my number one pet
peeve.

JOHN

My pet peeve is the word *like*.

JULIETTE turns to face AARON.

JULIETTE

Just don't do it, OK?

AARON

No problem, Officer Saez. What's
your first name?

JULIETTE

Juliette.

AARON

Julie?

She nods.

AARON

Were your parents big Shakespeare
fans?

JULIETTE

My mother thought it was the most
beautiful name in the world.

They heard towards Whitman Park, one of the roughest
neighbourhoods in the United States. It sits on the lower
east side of Camden.

AARON pulls out his phone and checks his email. Nothing.

JULIETTE

So... You two know eachother?

JOHN

We've been to a lot of the same
incidents.

He looks up and smirks at him through the rear view mirror.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Aaron's the nicest reporter. He's
never a dick.

(CONTINUED)

AARON shrugs modestly.

AARON
Well, thank you!

JULIETTE chuckles.

AARON
I just figure it's my job to ask. I have to ask while I'm standing at the yellow police tape. I know unis will never comment at the scene.

JULIETTE
Fair enough.

AARON
Sometimes I get extra intel, but I honour keeping it off record or anonymous.

They drive through ghettos and ruins of Camden.

Boarded up buildings beckon to a bygone era.

JULIETTE
How'd you get into reporting?

AARON
This is kind of nice.

JOHN
What is?

AARON
Being interviewed for once.

They all smile.

AARON (CONT'D)
I always loved creative writing. My parents suggested journalism. I balked for years working crummy jobs because I thought you couldn't live as a writer. And I didn't want to write reality.

JULIETTE
Reality can be pretty fucked up.

AARON
That's what made journalism fit- I get to live out creative writing in
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

AARON (cont'd)
reality. From carnival previews to
last week's stabbing spree.

The tires crunch bits of glass and gravel as they roll
slightly slower than the speed limit.

JOHN
I can relate to that.

The sit in silence for a moment.

AARON
Where are we going, anyway?

JULIETTE
We're going to roll through Whitman
Park.

AARON
Don't cop cars get shot at in
Whitman Park?

JOHN chuckles.

JOHN
You had no problem running around
that neighbourhood to various
stabblings a week ago...

AARON's phone rings.

AARON
One sec!

He slides it out of his pocket.

Unknown caller. He answers.

AARON
Aaron Mader. Hello.

He listens to faint, sultry breathing.

AARON
Hello?

He waits a moment, confused by what he's hearing.

AARON
Hello?

JULIETTE turns around to look. JOHN eyes him through the
rear-view mirror.

(CONTINUED)

AARON hangs up.

AARON
Must've been a pocket dial. Unknown
caller, though.

He pauses.

AARON (CONT'D)
But, I could've sworn it was a
woman breathing passionately.

JOHN
Deliberately?

AARON
It was faint.

JOHN
Weird.

AARON slides the phone back in his pocket.

INT. AARON'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

KENDRA sits on the couch in the living room.

A glass of red wine sits on the granite-top coffee table,
beside her phone.

She watches the 11 o'clock news on B-TV.

A story by CARMEN DIME plays about a pedestrian struck and
killed by a hit and run driver.

KENDRA's phone rings. She lifts it up.

Unknown Caller. She answers.

KENDRA
Hello.

There is complete silence.

KENDRA
Hello?

She waits a moment longer, then hangs up.

She puts her phone down on the coffee table, and lifts her
glass of wine to her lips.

She drinks, slowly.

EXT. WHITMAN PARK - NIGHT

The police cruiser crawls slowly down a destroyed street.

Ruins of houses line the streets.

Most are dark. Some are lit by electricity, lived in. Some glow from the fires of squatters.

They occasionally pass dark shadowed figures, who stop as the cruiser rolls by.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

AARON watches the figures as they pass.

AARON
Sure feels warm and fuzzy.

JULIETTE and JOHN survey the surroundings ahead of them and to the sides of the cruiser.

AARON
What are you looking for?

The police officers continue to survey the street.

There is silence for a bit.

JULIETTE
Give us a second, Mader.

He looks around, not sure what they're searching for.

He sits in silence.

JULIETTE
We're looking for a drug dealer
who's pretty hot over here right
now.

JOHN
Deals openly in the street. We're
trying to crack down in Whitman
Park.

AARON
Oh my god, you brought me on a drug
bust?

(CONTINUED)

JULIETTE
We'll protect you.

AARON
I'm going to get shot.

JOHN
Just hope the bullets make it all
the way through you since you're
not wearing a bullet proof vest.

AARON
Oh my god!

JULIETTE and JOHN burst out laughing.

She turns around.

JULIETTE
I knew you'd react that way.

JOHN
We're still busting a drug dealer,
though.

JULIETTE
If we can find him.

AARON
Do you guys rehearse all of this?

They look at each other.

JULIETTE
We just spend a lot of time
chatting together. It's a pretty
quiet shift.

AARON
Ah, work spouse.

AARON leans back, slides his phone back out, and checks his
email. Nothing.

EXT. 1700-BLOCK MT. EPHRAIM AVENUE - NIGHT

Church's Chicken Restaurant at 1701 Mt. Ephraim, sits at the
top of a T-shaped intersection with Carl Miller Boulevard.

On the restaurant side, businesses. They look dated, but
clean and well kept.

On the Carl Miller side, broken, abandoned homes.

(CONTINUED)

One man, an average-sized BLACK MALE, approaches an older, scronny, white HOBO with jagged, red hair.

The HOBO half sleeps on a cardboard box.

BLACK MAN
Give me your drugs, loser.

The HOBO wakes up, a little scared. He sits up.

BLACK MAN
Yeah, wake up. Get up. Give me your drugs.

The HOBO tries to stand up but has some difficulty.

The BLACK MAN kicks him over.

The HOBO cries out.

HOBO
I don't have any drugs.

BLACK MAN
Bullshit, junkie.

The HOBO tries to stand back up, but the BLACK MAN knocks him back down.

BLACK MAN
Make with the drugs.

HOBO
I don't have any drugs.

The BLACK MAN scoops up one of the HOBO's bags, and starts rummaging through it.

Using a window sill on the restaurant, the HOBO manages to pull himself standing up.

He notices a gun tucked in the BLACK MAN's waistband, to his left.

The BLACK MAN throws some of the things he finds in the small bag on the ground: 20 cents in nickels, a comb with three teeth left, and a spoon.

He then lifts a small baggie from the bag.

BLACK MAN
What's this? Looks like heroine to me.

HOBO
Please, it's all I have.

The HOBO lunges at the BLACK MAN, who throws the bag on the ground, but slips the heroine in his pocket.

The HOBO goes for the gun, but the BLACK MAN grabs it.

They struggle, the HOBO managing to keep the gun pointing up in the air away from him.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

The cruiser continues at its slow pace.

AARON leans forward.

AARON
Do you guys have any crazy cop stories?

JOHN
Yeah, do you have any news stories we haven't heard?

AARON
You probably didn't hear about this one I covered in Cheyenne.

JULIETTE
You were in Cheyenne? Wyoming?

AARON nods.

JULIETTE
What brought you out there?

AARON
Entry level journalism job fresh out of school.

JOHN
What brought you back?

AARON
It's home.

AARON leans back.

He sits in silence while JULIETTE and JOHN continue to survey their surroundings.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

So, what's the story?

AARON

This drag queen named Kitty Litter was behind a rash of home robberies. This one house, someone's home, a young, pretty thing. She shoots and kills this guy with Kitty Litter, topless.

JULIETTE

Topless?

AARON

Kitty Litter flees by running across the porch roof and down a drain sprout before being busted by cops down the home's long driveway.

JULIETTE

What were they stealing?

AARON

Electronics, jewellery, and panties. He was handed a four month sentence in a minimum security jail, but he escaped. He's somewhere out there.

Static sounds from the police walkie.

DISPATCH

Dispatch to unit 37. Unit 3-7. We have a 10-67. Caller witnessed two men fighting in the 17-hundred block of Mount Ephraim Avenue. Cross road is Carl Miller Boulevard. One suspect possibly armed. Code 4.

JOHN presses the button on the side of the corded walkie pinned to his chest.

JOHN

Unit 37 to dispatch. 10-4. Responding to a reported street altercation. Code 4.

He brings the cruiser's speed back up to a fast pace and zips away through the ghetto.

EXT. 1700-BLOCK MT. EPHRAIM AVENUE - NIGHT

As the cruiser approaches, they see the BLACK MAN and the HOBO struggling with each other.

It slows to a stop just down the street from Church's Chicken Restaurant, visible behind the BLACK MAN.

The two wrestle.

HOBO
Give me my drugs.

BLACK MAN
(whispering)
I'll kill you. I'll kill you
junkie.

He gives a strong push to overpower the HOBO's grip on his gun-wielding hand.

HOBO
They're my drugs.

JULIETTE and JOHN jump out of the cruiser.

JOHN slides his hat on while JULIETTE pops open the back door for AARON to get out.

Slamming the doors behind them, they run towards the men.

AARON grabs his phone, unlocks it, opens his reporter app, and hits record.

Some lightning flashes, followed by the soft rumble of thunder. It barely drizzles.

He holds the phone in his hand by his thigh as he pursues.

The police officers draw their weapons: JULIETTE, a stun-gun, and JOHN, a gun.

JULIETTE
Drop your weapons!

The men struggle harder.

JULIETTE looks over at JOHN, then AARON.

JULIETTE
You know, I hate being ignored.

She turns back to the fighting men.

(CONTINUED)

JULIETTE (CONT'D)
Drop your fucking weapons NOW!

AARON is genuinely impressed with how tough JULIETTE is.

The BLACK MAN looks back at the cops.

BLACK MAN
Help me! Please!

He struggles and struggles with the HOBO.

BLACK MAN (CONT'D)
Help me! This junkie's trying to
rob me.

The HOBO thrusts his last bit of strength against the BLACK MAN.

The gun fires straight up in the air.

Startled AARON covers a bit for cover.

The HOBO manages to knock the gun out of the BLACK MAN's hands.

JULIETTE
That's it!

She fires the electric-volt stun gun at the HOBO.

He yelps, then collapses to the sidewalk.

The BLACK MAN slowly turns to face them, putting his hands in the air.

AARON
Wow!

His mouth drops.

AARON (CONT'D)
That was awesome!

The HOBO convulses once, but he's out cold.

JULIETTE
Are you alright, sir?

BLACK MAN
I'm fine. A little startled.

JOHN covers her while she slowly approaches him.

JOHN
Who's gun?

BLACK MAN
Mine.

JOHN
Any other weapons on you, sir?

BLACK MAN
No.

JULIETTE gets to him and slides her stun gun back into her belt.

The BLACK MAN co-operates.

She pats him down.

JULIETTE
What's in your pocket?

BLACK MAN
Cash, smokes... My dick.

She rolls her eyes.

JULIETTE
He's good. Let's get a statement.

She heads back towards AARON.

JULIETTE
We're going to take his
information, write a report, and
then we're going to take the perp
down to the station to be
processed.

AARON hits stop on the reporter app and slides it back into his pocket. The time is 1:23am.

AARON
I have to ride with him?

JULIETTE
He just received about 5,000 volts
of electricity on top of all the
alcohol I can smell on him. He'll
be outcold the whole ride.

They start to walk towards the police cruiser.

AARON
How long do I have?

JULIETTE checks her watch.

JULIETTE
Between 5 and 10 minutes.

She turns towards JOHN.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)
You OK, John?

He nods "yes."

AARON pulls open the back door of the cruiser.

He slides himself in halfway, so his right leg is dangling out the open door, with his foot propped up on the curb.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

AARON retrieves his phone from his pocket. 1:26am.

He grabs his notebook from his shoulder bag and flips it open, then gets his pencil.

He scribbles down some details.

He dials the WKKL talk studio.

AARON
Hey. I'll do a hit. Intro me with-
OK.

He places the phone between his cheek and his shoulder and grabs the notebook and pencil.

AARON
Intro me with "WKKL's Aaron Mader
is on a police ride along tonight.
We now go live to him in the
field."

He pauses.

Some thunder rolls.

AARON
OK.

Inaudible WKKL sound bleeds from the headset.

(CONTINUED)

He waits.

AARON

Ken- I'm in the backseat of a police cruiser, outside Church's Chicken Restaurant on Mt. Ephraim Avenue. I've just witnessed a street altercation stemming from what might've been a robbery. Police have taken a man into custody. Reporting live from Whitman Park, Aaron Mader, WKKL News.

He waits a second, then hangs up the phone.

He goes to slide it in his pocket, when it begins to ring.

Unknown caller.

AARON

Again?

He answers the phone.

AARON

Yes?

There is complete silence.

AARON

Hello, Aaron Mader.

He waits a moment, then hangs up, sliding the phone into his pocket.

JOHN and JULIETTE walk the unconscious old man to the police cruiser, and put him in the seat next to AARON, behind JOHN.

The HOBBO moans very faintly.

The officers get in the front of the cruiser.

AARON

You're not going to cuff him?

JOHN

We're going to get him a cell for the night and a shower in the morning before cutting him loose.

(CONTINUED)

AARON

Is he being charged?

JULIETTE

He'll receive a citation for drunk
and disorderly conduct.

JOHN starts the engine and pulls away, heading back toward
the precinct, driving briskly compared to before.

INT. AARON'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

KENDRA sleeps to the left side of their queen-sized bed,
tucked in with thick, cozy blankets- her face just peeking
out.

On AARON's night stand, the clock reads 2:11am.

Her phone lights up. Ring, ring.

Unknown caller. She moves a little bit, waking up.

She turns over and picks up the phone, looking at the Caller
ID.

She answers.

KENDRA

Aaron?

Quiet, sultry breathing.

KENDRA

Hello, who is this?

The breathing softens.

She hangs up, then sits up, turning the lamp on.

The bed is covered in red rose pedals.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

AARON watches the man, being polite about how disgusting he
smells from booze and grime.

AARON's phone rings. He slides it out of his pocket.

KENDRA is calling. The HOB0 stirs slightly.

He answers the phone.

(CONTINUED)

AARON

Hey, babe.

KENDRA (O.C.)

An unknown caller called me. When I woke up, the bed was surrounded with rose pedals again...

AARON

No fucking way.

JULIETTE and JOHN look over at each other, confused.

KENDRA (O.C.)

Why me, Aaron?

He tucks the phone down from his mouth, then covers the mouthpiece.

AARON

My girlfriend Kendra just woke up and found our bed surrounded with rose pedals.

JULIETTE

That's so romantic!

AARON

Yeah, it wasn't me...

JOHN

What?

AARON moves the phone back towards his mouth.

He looks down.

AARON

One sec, babe.

He looks back at JOHN and JULIETTE.

AARON

A few days ago, someone broke in to our apartment, stole a picture of us, and surrounded Kendra with rose pedals. An unknown caller woke her up.

KENDRA (O.C.)

It was a woman, breathing passionately, but it was quiet.

He looks down.

(CONTINUED)

AARON

What?!

He looks back at the cops.

AARON (CONT'D)

It was the same woman who called me. She heard passionate breathing.

He looks down.

AARON

Babe, we're going to change the locks. We'll figure it out.

JOHN

Let's drop in.

AARON looks back up, then down.

AARON

We're going to drop by, OK?

KENDRA (O.C.)

OK, I won't be able to sleep.

AARON

See you soon. Love you.

He hangs up the phone.

AARON

Keep going straight.

He gestures a forward direction.

EXT. AARON'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The police cruiser pulls up in the loading zone outside AARON's apartment building.

JOHN parks the cruiser and shuts it off.

The three of them remove their seat belts.

JULIETTE and JOHN exit the cruiser, JULIETTE opening the back door for AARON.

JOHN locks the doors and arms the car.

(CONTINUED)

AARON
What about the junkie?

JULIETTE
He'll be fine.

AARON walks to the front door. He swipes himself in, unlocking the entrance, and holds the door for JULIETTE and JOHN behind him.

The door shuts as they disappear within.

INT. AARON'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

The two cops, AARON, and KENDRA stand somewhat in a row, looking at the rose pedal covered bed.

Rolling lightning starts to spill through the windows, picking up a gradually more rapid pace.

JULIETTE
Do you have any idea who could've done this.

KENDRA
None.

JULIETTE
Twice now?

KENDRA nods.

AARON
John and Juliette here are an awesome team. they'll figure this out.

JOHN turns to AARON and gestures sincerely.

JOHN
I'll be honest, Aaron. We can't really do anything except file a police report and hope we catch the perp in the act.

JOHN looks around.

JOHN (CONT'D)
It doesn't appear they even broke anything to get in.

(CONTINUED)

AARON

Babe, we'll replace the locks.
We'll get one of those chain
things.

JULIETTE

I'm surprised your apartment
doesn't have one. I thought it was
standard issue inside a complex
like this.

KENDRA

It just seems so sinister.

JOHN

We'll pull the phone records and
get the phone company to untwist
the call block.

KENDRA sits on the bed.

AARON moves across the room to her.

AARON

I can stay here with you.

KENDRA

No, babe. Go. It's fine. I'm not
going to let this creep scare me
out of my own home.

AARON

Well, what? You're going to be able
to sleep?

KENDRA

No. I'll watch TV until I fall
asleep.

JOHN and JULIETTE look at each other.

JULIETTE

We'll just excuse ourselves to the
living room.

They leave the room.

AARON and KENDRA hold each other's hands. They look into
each other's eyes.

AARON leans in and they kiss. It's a nice kiss, passionate,
and lingers.

(CONTINUED)

AARON

I don't want to leave you.

KENDRA

I think you have a job to do.
Whoever it was is not coming back.
Go experience crime on the inside.

She smiles. They kiss again.

KENDRA

I love you. You came straight here
to check on me.

He leans in and hugs her, holding her tight.

AARON

You really want me to go- even on
this dark and stormy night?

KENDRA

Yes!

They kiss again. AARON stands up.

AARON

Call me at any point tonight.

KENDRA

I will, but I'll be fine.

She smiles at him again.

He watches her, smiling as he slips out of the room.

She stands up, turns around, and starts to round up all the
rose pedals littering her duvet cover.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

The two cops and AARON exit out the front door of his
apartment building.

They approach the cruiser. JOHN disarms it.

They all jump in the car, AARON sliding in beside the HOB0.

The HOB0 moans a little, the slightly wails.

AARON

Is he going to be alright?

(CONTINUED)

JULIETTE

Is he choking on his vomit?

JULIETTE turns around to watch as AARON looks over and examines him.

AARON

No...

JULIETTE

He'll be fine.

She turns back to face frontwards.

She finishes writing in her police note pad and closes it shut.

JOHN looks at JULIETTE.

JOHN

Ready?

JULIETTE

Yep.

JOHN starts the engine.

They fasten their seat belts as he puts it in drive, and slowly pulls away.

The cruiser crosses the crooked town, its bumpy streets and burnt out streetlights.

The HOBO stirs in his seat a bit, but falls back asleep.

AARON's phone rings. JOHN looks up at him through the rear view mirror.

JOHN

Unknown caller?

AARON slides it out of his pocket.

AARON

No, it's the station.

He answers the phone.

AARON (CONT'D)

Hey, Ken.

The HOBO jolts awake.

HOBO

Where are you taking me?

He lunges at AARON, somewhat grabbing at his neck.

It knocks the phone out of AARON's hand.

AARON

Get off me!

AARON and the HOBO struggle. The HOBO makes a couple of attempts to bite AARON.

EXT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

Patchy sheet lightning rolls violently overhead, but it's not raining or spitting.

The cruiser screeches to a halt in the middle of a dead, four-lane road near traffic lights blinking yellow one way and red the other.

Their light reflects off the wet, gritty road covered in tiny gravel rocks.

JOHN slams the cruiser in park.

A split second later, JULIETTE and JOHN leap out of the car.

JOHN rips open the driver's side passenger door, and leans in to grab the homeless old man.

JULIETTE yanks on AARON's door handle. The door pops open and AARON rolls out backwards.

He stands up and yanks on his bags being crushed by the HOBO.

AARON

You're crushing my camera!

The bags pop out. He places the straps on his shoulder.

JOHN manages to apprehend the HOBO, standing him up straight up, cuffing him from behind.

Static sounds from the police walkie.

DISPATCH

Dispatch to unit 37. Unit 3-7. We have a 10-54. Possible dead body. 10-49 Walter Rand Transportation

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DISPATCH (cont'd)
Center at 100 Broadway. Well-being
check in the parkade. Level 3.

The officers look at each other.

JULIETTE
Cut him loose.

JOHN turns to look the HOBO in the eye.

JOHN
It's your lucky night.

JOHN walks the man towards the boulevard.

AARON eyes him cautiously while moving backwards to
JULIETTE.

JOHN walks him under a tree and uncuffs the man.

JULIETTE
Aaron, get in the car.

AARON gets back in the cruiser.

JOHN walks around the vehicle, shutting the driver's side
backseat door.

JULIETTE pushes the talk button on her walkie.

JULIETTE
Unit 37, 3-7, to dispatch. 10-4
dispatch. Proceeding to Walter Rand
Transportation Center, 100
Broadway, for a 10-54.

The officers open their doors and slide in the cruiser.

All three slam their doors shut.

AARON watches the HOBO to his side as the cruiser peels off,
kicking plenty of tiny rocks up behind.

EXT. WALTER RAND TRANSPORTATION CENTER PARKADE - NIGHT

The rain pours, causing a hazy beam from every outdoor
light.

The cruiser pulls up to the entrance lane, to a two-sided
ticket booth manned by a lone wolf, covered by an awning so
they're out of the rain.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN rolls down his window. The PARKING ATTENDANT moves closer to JOHN's side of the ticket window.

JOHN
Good evening, sir.

PARKING ATTENDANT
Hello.

JOHN
Did you call in a well-being check?

PARKING ATTENDANT
No, I did not.

JOHN
Has it been busy? Notice any one out of the ordinary?

PARKING ATTENDANT
Not many buses at-

He leans back and looks towards the ceiling in the parking booth.

PARKING ATTENDANT
3-15 in the morning.

He leans back towards the officer in the ticket booth window.

JOHN
So, quiet and nothing out of the ordinary?

PARKING ATTENDANT
I haven't noticed anybody who looks out of place among bus riders...

He grabs a package of gum and pops a couple of pieces in his mouth.

JOHN
You mind if we pull in here to check on the well-being of a person?

PARKING ATTENDANT
No, officer, I don't mind.

He points down the length of the parkade towards JULIETTE's side of the cruiser.

(CONTINUED)

PARKING ATTENDANT

You can pull into any of those
three spaces... Those are reserved
for staff.

He hits a button on the counter beside his station. The gate
in front of the cruiser lifts.

JOHN

Thank you, sir.

He tips his hat to the man, then puts the cruiser in drive
and loops a U-shape into a stall.

Beside JOHN's side of the car is a sad-old Dodge rust
bucket.

INT. WALTER RAND TRANSPORTATION CENTER PARKADE - NIGHT

The parkade is rundown. Water trickles down the walls,
stained by calcium. The fluorescent lighting is dull and
patchy.

JOHN and JULIETTE exit the vehicle.

JULIETTE opens the door for AARON. He slides out.

He puts the strap of his camera and bag on his shoulder, and
looks at both the officers.

He slides his phone out of his pocket and opens his reporter
app. He presses record and holds the device in his hand.

AARON

I'm going to record this.

They nod.

JOHN pulls out his flashlight and turns it on.

AARON

So, what is a well-being call?

JULIETTE

Usually, they come in from people
driving by homeless people passed
out on park benches.

They start walking through the dark corridor.

(CONTINUED)

AARON

Third level? There are stairs over there.

He points to the left.

JOHN

We don't know if the caller was accurate, so we need to do a walk through to see if we find any one.

JULIETTE lifts her Maglite flashlight from her waist belt.

She turns it on.

The officers walk side by side. AARON trails behind, center.

The officers each use their flashlights to scan between the rows of parked cars on the main level- JOHN to the left, JULIETTE to the right.

Nothing.

They turn to their left, up a parking ramp, to the second level.

They continue roving down the dark corridor, scanning for signs in the darkness.

AARON

If someone reported seeing a body, why would only one unit be sent?

JOHN

Don't use this audio, OK?

AARON

I won't.

JOHN

We have very limited resources, especially at night. They send one unit to confirm the situation and deploy units as it develops.

AARON

That makes sense. What about securing a potential crime scene?

JULIETTE

We collect witnesses and clear or investigate them further.

A car crawls up behind them.

(CONTINUED)

They turn around and move to the side. The darkly-tinted car proceeds past, slowly, and turns left up to the third level.

They continue walking, scanning the shadows.

JOHN
Ever seen a dead body?

AARON
A couple of times.

They look at him.

AARON (CONT'D)
Once, we heard about a car crash on the newsroom scanner. We got there before you guys. The car was torn in half. The people's eyes were open, but they were still.

JULIETTE
How was that experience?

AARON
It's morbid, but I'm sorry to say I like it. It grounds me. It mortalizes me.

JULIETTE
I feel the same way in this job. But I love to catch bad guys.

They turn up the left-side parking ramp to the third level.

Something catches JOHN's eye.

JOHN
Saez-

He points, then positions the flashlight to the end of the corridor.

A leg sticks, foot down, out of the shadows between a car and a concrete support wall.

His flashlight lights in with a small circle in the distance. The beam from JULIETTE's flashlight comes to meet his.

They bolt towards it. AARON pursues.

He lifts the phone up towards his mouth.

AARON

We're on a well-being call at the Walter Rand Transportation Center. The caller said third level, and we've just arrived. A person is lying face down, their leg sticking out from around a parked car and wall. The police officers I am with have darted to the person to check their well-being, but it's not known right now if they are OK.

He puts the phone back by his side.

When he gets up to the body, JULIETTE motions to him to stay back.

The leg is muscular, definitely a man's, but the person has long, straight, blond hair, and is wearing a pink mini-skirt and heels.

The officers look at each other for a moment, then JOHN looks over at AARON.

JOHN

Please stop recording.

AARON lifts the phone up and presses stop. He slides the phone in his pocket.

AARON

No problem.

JOHN looks back at JULIETTE for a moment, then back to AARON.

JOHN

I know I can trust you. This has to stay off the record.

JULIETTE stares piercingly at AARON.

JOHN

She's from the Tranny Tracks. Our department started investigating a similar death a few weeks ago.

AARON looks at the dead woman.

Her dress is ripped and her ass is exposed.

A small pool of blood mixed with engine oil surrounds her.

(CONTINUED)

JULIETTE

A john raped and murdered her,
right here.

AARON

How is that possible? This is a bus
station, it's busy.

JULIETTE waves the flashlight around.

JULIETTE

It's dark in here, Aaron.

JOHN

The first one looked like a one off
thing, but this is troubling. It
looks identical to the first crime
scene.

They stand there looking at her for a moment.

AARON whips his camera out and starts snapping pictures.

JOHN

You can't publish those!

He puts the camera strap around his neck and lets the camera
dangle against her chest.

AARON

I have full media access. I won't
show the face or the clothing, but
maybe the leg sticking out by the
car.

They look at each other.

AARON

I won't share any private details.
Same story the other outlets
report.

JULIETTE stares piercingly at JOHN, somewhat fuming.

JOHN

You can trust him.

AARON nods.

He moves around to the car side of the body and crouches
down behind the tires on the back opposite side to get a
better angle.

AARON snaps more pictures.

(CONTINUED)

He stands up and puts the camera back down against his chest, then moves between the officers.

A purse lays on the ground up by the driver's side front tire. The zipper is slightly open and a lighter and stick of lipstick lay beside it.

AARON

Was the first one robbed?

JOHN

No.

JOHN moves the flashlight along the body, starting at the feet.

Her clothes are somewhat ripped and one eye is stabbed out.

AARON

She's a transsexual?

JOHN

Well, I say tranny because these alternative hookers work at the Tranny Track, but the correct term for her is she-male, as she still has a penis.

AARON collects the information, expressionless.

JULIETTE

The breasts are real, though. Well, you know what I mean.

AARON

It's sad. What a life she had.

He snaps a few more pictures, then slides the camera back in his bag.

JULIETTE

We need to call this in and shut down the facility before your colleagues arrive.

JOHN

Just to clarify... You can report what you saw here, just nothing on the first case. You have to promise me that...

AARON
I promise, John. Trust me.

JOHN
The force won't report any of those
details besides a sexual assault,
so you have an exclusive.

JULIETTE looks around, then at JOHN.

JULIETTE
Can you go shut down the parkade
and wait until we can get a detail
on the front door?

She pushes the button on the side of the walkie.

JULIETTE
Unit 37, 3-7, to dispatch. 11-44
Walter Rand Transportation Center
Parkade. Possible 1-8-7.

She releases the button.

JOHN heads towards the stairwell to get back to the ticket
booth at the front entrance.

AARON
Hey, John, I'll come with you.

He runs to catch up.

INT. PARKADE - FIRST LEVEL

A brown set of double doors open near the police cruiser
parked on the main level.

JOHN and AARON emerge from the stairwell.

They head towards the ticket booth.

AARON
So, three kills makes a serial
killer?

JOHN
Right.

The PARKING ATTENDANT stands behind it, the door propped
open, puffing a cigarette.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

Hey, buddy. We need to shut down the parkade. It looks like we have a body upstairs.

PARKING ATTENDANT

A body?

JOHN

Can you close this place down?

PARKING ATTENDANT

Yeah, I can lower the chain link doors.

He heads into the ticket booth and hits a button. Chain link garage doors descend from the ceiling, sealing the parkade.

Just then, a "Channel 5 NewsWatch" van comes speeding up to the gate.

Reporter BEN BRAZIEL hobbles out of the passenger seat of the van with crutches.

His CAMERA GUY jumps out of the driver's door and throws his ENG camera over his shoulder.

They run up to the gate.

AARON

Ben? You're back at work?

BEN

Aaron? What are you doing in there?
Let us in.

AARON looks over at JOHN.

AARON

I just happened to be on a ride along with the first responders.

BEN

Hey! Hey-

He points at the cop.

BEN (CONT'D)

I know you... You're that cop Aaron's always chatting up.

JOHN just watches him.

(CONTINUED)

AARON

I can't believe you're back at work. You almost died...

BEN

You would've liked that, wouldn't you?

AARON

No, it would've shit all over our ratings.

BEN

So, we can't get in.

JOHN shakes his head.

JOHN

No, sir.

Two cop cars come zipping up to the front gate.

BEN turns to his CAMERA GUY.

BEN

You better be shooting this!

They pull up, blocking the Channel 5 van in and jump out of their cruisers.

JOHN

Can you guys build a large perimeter around the front and get the media back. I want you guys keeping that perimeter secure and managing the front door.

He heads towards a single, brown door beside the triple chain link gates that opens to the front street.

He lets two unis in.

JOHN

C'mon, Aaron, let's go upstairs.

Just then, CARMEN appears at the gate.

CARMEN

Aaron! Hey, Aaron!

He turns to look at her. She's dressed in a black leather skirt, a tight, black top ovetop of a red shirt, red finger nails, and red lipstick, extremely flat, straight hair, and a tiny black leather purse.

(CONTINUED)

AARON

Carmen? What are doing here and why are you dressed like that?

CARMEN

I was dancing and drinking with friends at a club nearby. I was grabbing a cab and saw an email tip sent to the whole newsroom about a possible homicide here.

She looks over at BEN.

CARMEN (CONT'D)

I decided to come check it out. Hey, Ben.

JOHN

(lower)

We should get back to Julie.

JOHN walks behind AARON to the PARKING ATTENDANT on his right and says something to him quietly.

AARON

Well, I'm on a ride along and we have to get going. I'm sorry. Talk later?

They head back to the stairwell.

She raises a finger.

CARMEN

But-

The three men disappear through the double doors.

INT. PARKADE - THIRD LEVEL

JULIETTE stands guard over the body as JOHN, AARON, and the PARKING ATTENDANT re-appear through the stairwell doors on the third level.

She's created a large perimeter with yellow caution tape.

JOHN

Two cruisers showed up. I have unis on both the door and the front street.

(CONTINUED)

JULIETTE

Do we have the parkade sealed?

PARKING ATTENDANT

I dropped the overhead chain link doors.

JULIETTE

Any media?

AARON

Ben Braziel and Carmen Dime, but she was just in the area partying. She isn't reporting.

JULIETTE takes out her notepad and writes down some details.

AARON (CONT'D)

I'm going to call in a live hit over here.

He walks away from JULIETTE's police tape perimeter.

He slides out his phone and dials a "WKKL - Breaking News - Reporter Line" contact in his phone.

He calls it.

INT. WKKL TALK STUDIO - NIGHT

KEN notices the Breaking News line light up as commercials play.

He sits up and hits the switchboard.

KEN

Aaron- what's going on?

AARON (O.C.)

Homicide.

KEN

Stand-by.

He fires a "WKKL Breaking News" stinger and fades down the music bed.

KEN

Good morning, I'm Ken McKim. We have word of a homicide at this hour. We go live to WKKL's Aaron Mader.

(CONTINUED)

AARON (O.C.)

Ken- this is a WKKL exclusive:
Police have locked down the Walter
Rand Transportation Center parkade
on Broadway. A shemale has been
sexually assaulted and murdered on
the building's third level.

CUT IMMEDIATELY TO:

INT. PARKADE - THIRD LEVEL

AARON notices a group of other unis and plain-clothes
officers come through the stairwell.

INT. WKKL TALK STUDIO - NIGHT

KEN listens intently, almost eating the microphone.

AARON (O.C.)

Police don't believe a robbery
occurred here, but this is very
early into the investigation.
Detectives are arriving now.
Reporting live inside the crime
scene with police, Aaron Mader,
WKKL News.

KEN hits a button on the switchboard.

KEN

Thank you, Aaron. WKKL's Aaron
Mader on a police ride along
tonight. We'll have more on this
story as it develops.

He fires another event from the computer and goes back into
commercial break.

FADE INTO:

INT. AARON'S APARTMENT KITCHEN - DAY

KENDRA sits at the kitchen table, facing the daylight
pouring in from the large living room window.

A glass of orange juice and a cup of coffee sit in front of
her.

She picks up a piece of peanut butter toast, and half reads
a fashion magazine page, casually glancing at the radio.

(CONTINUED)

It plays WKKL 770AM, an interview between AARON and morning/day host PATRICIA FELTS.

PATRICIA (O.C.)
..just joining us, WKKL's Aaron Mader was on a police ride along overnight and one of the stops was a brutal homicide.

AARON (O.C.)
Yeah, it was around 3 A-M. Our unit, 37, was issued a well-being call at the Walter Rand Transportation Center parkade. A she-male prostitute sexually assaulted.

KENDRA munches on the toast.

PATRICIA (O.C.)
Do we know how she died?

AARON (O.C.)
All we know right now is it is being treated as a homicide and she doesn't appear to have been robbed.

PATRICIA (O.C.)
Now, you're working on a longer feature about a day in the life of Camden County officers... You got to see inside a homicide investigation in the earliest stages. Anything you can preview?

AARON (O.C.)
Well...

KENDRA hears the front door open and close.

She looks over at the kitchen door. AARON appears in it almost immediately.

AARON
Hey, babe.

KENDRA
Shit!

She flinches.

KENDRA

You scared me. I'm just listening to you on the radio right now. I thought you were the home invader.

AARON

I'm sorry, babe. I didn't think of that.

He moves across the kitchen and kisses her on the lips.

It lasts a short while.

AARON

We recorded several of those to air in rotation a few hours ago.

KENDRA

A she-male murder?

AARON

The cops said it's eerily similar to another case from a few weeks ago.

He moves around the kitchen table from her and sits down.

AARON

Sorry I couldn't stay with you all night.

She smiles at him.

He reaches across the table and grabs the other slice of peanut butter toast beside her half eaten one.

He takes a bite and smiles at her.

FADE TO BLACK