

The OP

A 10 minute play

by

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CAST

NICK BRYANT - 30s - Casual clothes, but wears a holstered pistol under his open shirt. In his pockets, he carries a gold detective badge and handcuffs.

JUDY OWEN - 30s-50s - Similar attire to NICK including a holstered pistol. SHE wears her ID and gold detective badge on a bead chain. SHE carries a walkie-talkie.

SET - A bare apartment. There are two folding chairs and a set up folding table. One folding chair is upstage; a three ring binder is on the seat. A few empty coffee cups, discarded snack wrappers and a full ashtray sit on the table. A camera sits mounted on a tripod downstage facing the audience. The actors play as if there are two windows downstage. The camera points out one of the "windows."

AT RISE: JUDY stands looking out a "window" with her binoculars. SHE is listening to the walkie-talkie. NICK walks around looking at the apartment.

JUDY

(To the walkie-talkie)

Copy. We're 10-84 at the OP. All quiet at the suspect's place. 17:00 hours. Yeah. *(SHE listens)* Yeah. Roger that.

(Puts down walkie-talkie on the table, resumes looking out the window with binoculars.)

NICK

A shitty day in a shit hole OP. Look at this place.

(Looks up at the ceiling)

Is that a rat hole?

JUDY

(Chuckles)

I don't remember it, but rats don't bother me. I've seen worse. At least you're not pulling an eight hour shift in the surveillance van with Jimmy Hartigan. Ugh, what a creep. Hartigan's got this funk that'd give me nose bleeds...

(Gestures around the room)

And hey, the toilet flushes and the OP's got a clear line-of-sight. We're livin' the dream, baby.

NICK

The what?

JUDY

The OP ... observation point. How many stakeouts have you done?

NICK

I've done a couple in patrol cars.

JUDY

Waiting for the Krispy Kreme to open up ain't a stake out.

NICK

Very funny.

(Looks out other window)

JUDY

Since you're there, why don't you check the camera?

NICK

Looks okay. Memory card's good. I think the battery's okay.

JUDY

Lemme see. This thing's finicky. If anything happens, let me handle it.

NICK

Okay.

JUDY

How come I don't know you?

NICK

Voluntary sign-up. I needed the overtime.

JUDY

Yeah, but I don't even recognize you from the house. You new?

NICK

Kinda. Passed my 18 months back in April. I got a transfer from Midtown South.

JUDY

Okay, rook. Here's my three rules for stakeout: stay awake, keep your head outta your ass and do exactly what I say.

NICK

Sure...How we fixed for meals?

JUDY

I ordered something on the way over - Chinese.

NICK

Could you add something to the order?

(SHE shrugs "I guess so.")

NICK

Have them throw some fried rice. And a Coke.

JUDY

Okay. I'll text it in.

(SHE types into HER phone. NICK picks up the binoculars and looks out the window)

Cool. Should be here any minute.

NICK

So why we watching this skell?

JUDY

They didn't tell you anything?

(HE shakes his head)

My unit's been watching this place for a couple weeks. Word is the main suspect, AKA, Horace Stacker, is cooking a lot of meth over there. Movin' it too. We just need enough PC to go in.

NICK

Couple a weeks and you haven't found probable cause yet?

JUDY

Yeah, sensitive topic. Word is, he may be getting some help.

(NICK looks at her, puzzled.)

Every time we plan a raid, he seems to get the heads up. We break doors, we find empty rooms.

NICK

Holy shit. A snitch in the precinct?

JUDY

(SHE looks at him)

Maybe. How long you been working with the 7-8?

NICK

Three months and I asked for it. My wife and I got a place in Fort Greene. ... Why you looking at me?

JUDY

No. I'm just sayin' this ain't no ordinary stake out.

NICK

Looks pretty ordinary to me.

JUDY

How 'bout you keep track of anyone comin' and goin' and I'll take care of the rest.

NICK

So we're just watching the game of this guy Stacker?

JUDY

There's also a BOLO on a mope named Alex Zlato. Intel says he's from Cartagena way, now in our neighborhood. But they say he could be moving in on Stacker's operation. He's got a bunch a warrants. We see him, we call in the cavalry.

NICK

What's he look like?

JUDY

(She picks up the 3-ring binder off the chair, opens it, and shows him photographs. Points at one photo)
That's Zlato. A real gaucho, likes to wear cowboy hats, boots. Hell, he probably carries a six-gun.

NICK

Shouldn't be too hard to spot in Brooklyn.

JUDY

(Points out window)
And see the guy with the red bandana tied up on his head? Sitting on the steps? I call him Tupac.
(HE raises the binoculars)
He's their spotter.

NICK

Great spotter. He's looking at his phone.

JUDY

It hard to get good help nowadays. Don't forget the usual shit, either. Get license plates, see what's getting delivered. And get ready to be bored.

NICK

Oh, I'm ready to be bored. ... So how 'bout you?

JUDY

Huh?

NICK

You know about me. What about you?

JUDY

I share a place with my brother in Bay Ridge. I like to cook. I have dog named Frodo.

NICK

Nice. You a Tolkien fan?

JUDY

Who?

NICK

J.R.R. Tolkien. He wrote *Lord of the Rings*, the *Hobbit*...

JUDY

I like the name Frodo.

NICK

My wife and I looked at Bay Ridge. Really nice with all those ethnic restaurants and...

JUDY

But you didn't move there. I get it. I live there 'cause my brother's there. He's got stage four cancer, so most of the time it's a colossal bitch.

NICK

Oh. I'm sorry.

JUDY

His medical bills don't make it easy. I grab overtime anywhere I can, but I'm still strugglin' - like this stakeout. I don't want to but . . .

(SOUND of Doorbell)

JUDY

Thank God. I'm starved.

(They both move to the door. But she stops him.)

First rule of stakeout, someone always stays at the OP - no matter what.

NICK

Yeah. Sorry.

(SHE exits. HE looks out the window with the binoculars. SHE returns with a large paper bag and starts to set the food containers out. HE reaches for a container.)

JUDY

Hey.

(SHE points to the window as if to say "You're on duty." As HE turns to look out the window, SHE pulls out an iced tea, a Coke, a quart plastic food container and three cardboard pint take out containers. SHE eyes them nervously, peeks in each one and when she opens the third, pulls out a piece of paper. SHE reads it quickly and pockets it. SHE is about to put the third container back in the bag when NICK turns back.)

NICK

Your spotter guy looks like he's taking a nap.

(HE steps over to grab the Coke and the nearest pint take out container. SHE stops HIM with her hand.)

Sorry. Which one's mine?

JUDY

(Gives him one)

This one.

NICK

They gave you an extra rice?

JUDY

No. I ordered two.

NICK

Why'd you order two pints instead of one quart?

JUDY

I like brown rice and fried rice, okay? Jesus. I don't care if the spotter's taking a dirt nap. Stay on the OP.

(HE shrugs and goes back to the window. SHE puts the third pint container back in the bag. Picking up the walkie-talkie, SHE puts it on the chair farthest from the window. SHE opens the iced tea, drinks and strolls to the camera; she adjusts the controls and returns to the food and begins to eat.)

NICK

Hey.

JUDY

Hey, what?

NICK

That guy. See him. Down there. He's wearing a cowboy hat.

(She strolls to window)

I can't see his face. The hat. But I think something's up.

(SHE squints out window)

And shit! Two other guys coming from the other way. See them? In the hoodies? I think they're strapped. You on the camera?

JUDY

(Moves to camera, squints at viewfinder)

Yeah. I see 'em.

NICK

(Shocked)

Whoa! You seeing this?

(Flinches several times)

Holy shit! You seeing this?!

JUDY

Call it in!

NICK

They're inside now! And see that car?

JUDY

What car? There's like, twenty cars. Call it in!

(SHE fiddles with the camera)

Shit!

NICK

(Pointing)

There. It's slowing down.

JUDY

Call it in, numbnuts. I got it!

(SHE looks in the camera and fiddles with the controls. HE steps back and grabs the walkie-talkie)

NICK

Dispatch. I'm calling in a 10-34. Shots fired. A least one vic, maybe two. Yeah. Belmont, number 440. My name is Officer Bryant. Badge 351. No, I'm not on scene. Yeah. Copy that.

(To JUDY)

What's the car?

JUDY

What?

NICK

ID on the getaway car, the blue one? Plate number?

JUDY

It's already gone.

(Struggles with camera)

Shit. I can't...It was a Honda Civic -- blue.

NICK

I know it's blue. Jesus. You know how many blue Honda Civics there are in this city?

(To walkie-talkie)

Stand by, dispatch.

(Pushes her from the camera)

JUDY

Hey!

NICK

If it's on here we can go back and...

(He looks at camera. Beat. He stares at her.)

Where are the shots?

JUDY

What?

NICK

From today. There are no recent photos on this camera. There were, but now they're gone.

JUDY

You're crazy.

(She shoves him over to look at viewfinder)

NICK

I don't think so. Something's wrong here. Really wrong.

JUDY

Oh c'mon!

NICK

The one time we really need photos as evidence, the camera was off.

JUDY

Calm down, rook.

NICK

Sorry. I'm not a rook. I'm Detective Bryant. IAB.

(Pulls his detective badge from a pocket)

JUDY

(Disgusted)

I should'a known a dick like you'd be internal affairs.

NICK

Your story about a snitch in the precinct is right, but we have reason to believe the snitch is you.

JUDY

'Reason to believe'? Are you fuckin' kidding me?

NICK

For a detective second grade, you're getting some pretty hefty deposits in your bank account.

JUDY

That's my business. Not yours!

NICK

You knew this was going down. But I can't figure out how you got the message to turn off the camera.

JUDY

I made a mistake, asshole. Shit happens.

NICK

You wouldn't do it through the phone - we could get records. I didn't see any visual signals. The only outside contact you've had is...

(They both look at the paper bag on the table. HE realizes and lunges for the bag before she does. Pushing her away, he upends it. Sauce packets and the third take out container spill on the table. They struggle for it, but it lands on the floor. A roll of 100 dollar bills falls out. NICK grabs it.)

JUDY

That's one of the craziest... The delivery guy must have... that's gotta be his money! His tip money!

NICK

He gets tips in hundred dollar bills?

JUDY

Even if that money was for me, I'm a respected veteran; no one'll believe your story.

NICK

(Points the "rat hole" in the ceiling, and waves to it.)
Jimmy Hartigan might. He's been recording the whole thing.

JUDY

You internal affairs guys are shits, you know that? I made 12 Gs from this. Twelve lousy G's and my brother's bills would've been paid. Free and clear. And what's 12 G's to these motherfuckers?

(Gestures out the window)

They make 12 G's in an hour!

(NICK, sadly pulls out a pair of handcuffs)

Your guys posted outside?

NICK

Front and back. Don't do it.

JUDY

Do what?

(SHE backs away from HIM)

NICK

Judy? I need your gun and shield. Right now.

JUDY

(Nods. Puts her gun on the table but not her detective badge.)

Sorry, you're not getting this.

NICK

Don't.

JUDY

(Smiles.)

And you thought this stake out would be boring.

(SHE runs out. HE runs upstage.)

NICK

Judy?! Judy!? Judy!!

(HE exits. LIGHTS FADE)