

DETECTIVE BROWN

EPISODE 01 - PILOT

"Dealer in Hope"

Written by

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FROM BLACK

We hear "The Look of Love" by Zoltan Swanson & Waage Peterson play. Noir jazz. Trumpet over piano and light snares.

FADE TO:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT

It's raining. We see a street lamp. A quiet street. A house with one light on in the living room. Blinds drawn. An all black police car that looks like a Ford Mainline sits parked in the driveway.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
How many men got a ticket out of
the war, only to realize the war
was something they loved?

INT. LIVING ROOM / KITCHEN

We're in a living room that opens up to a joint kitchen. It's the 1950's. An analog clock on the wall. Clean counters. We're CLOSE on a glass of whiskey and an ashtray filled with cigarette butts that sit on an end table.

Next to the end table we see a man sitting alone on single padded chair. It's DETECTIVE FRANK BROWN. He smokes a cigarette and reads a folded newspaper. He wears a matted suit and a rugged shaved face. A black tie and pack of cigarettes in his coat pocket. Late 40's.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
I haven't been sleeping well.

A phone on the wall rings. We hear it over the music. Detective Brown puts down the paper, gets up, walks over to the phone and answers it. We hear mumbled words over the line. Detective Brown responds.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Understood.

He hangs up the phone, walks over to the end table and finishes his glass of whiskey in one gulp. He walks over to the coat hanger on the wall next the front door and grabs his beige trench coat and his patrol cap.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
My father always said you could
tell the look of a man from his
eyes. How he walked. How he talked.
(MORE)

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
How he thought... The things that
make a man. In my time I've found
that's not always true.

He walks out the front door and closes it.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

It's still raining. Detective Brown unlocks his car with a
key, gets in, starts it and backs out of the driveway.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
I've seen good men kill and sinners
save lives. In many cases I've
understood both.

INT. CAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Detective Brown drives down the street. The wind shield
wipers on the car moving back and forth.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
From my viewpoint it's not up to
us. You and me... I think the world
gives us oars and we row the
boat... again and again. Until we
reach our final destination.

We take a beat.

Detective Brown makes a turn off a hill and through the
windshield we can see 1950's Los Angeles at night. We're
entering the edge of Chinatown.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
The city is dark, filled with
vagrants and prostitutes. I don't
know who I can trust.

The lights of Chinatown now start to shine on Detective
Brown's face through the rain beaten windshield.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
My life has been spent in wars. I
came back from one only to find
another waiting at home. I watched
my brothers die from bullets. I
watched my wife die from cancer.
Neither made sense.

Through the windshield we see Detective Brown pull up to a
crime scene in front of a single family home.

Squad cars and police tape out front, it's still raining. Police stand around holding umbrellas. The front door is open. There's a small crowd.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
And every day I load my pistol -
never knowing if this is the one I
don't come home.

Detective Brown parks the car and steps out.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
I'm living on borrowed time.

The car door SLAMS.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE / CRIME SCENE - NIGHT

Detective Brown walks through the front door of a slightly run down house and is greeted by a police officer, DEPUTY SCOTT GOLDEN. Golden is a tall drink of water, skinny with mopy blonde hair.

DEPUTY GOLDEN
Detective Brown. Thanks for coming.

DETECTIVE BROWN
What do we have Deputy?

DEPUTY GOLDEN
We caught a bad one. She's in the
back.

INT. BEDROOM / CRIME SCENE - NIGHT

Detective Brown and Deputy Golden walk into a bedroom to see a WOMAN shot through the head, leaned up against the corner of a wall. Blood is everywhere in the room, on the walls and on the unmade bedspread.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Christ.

Detective Brown looks at the body, repulsed.

DETECTIVE BROWN (CONT'D)
Give me the details.

Deputy Golden flips through a small legal pad. Detective Brown walks around the scene while Golden gets him up to date.

DEPUTY GOLDEN

Well... this is uhhh... Melanie Goodrich. A 37 year old mother of two. She was a widow. Her husband was killed in Korea two years ago. From the looks of everything she's been here three or four hours. Neighbor called after hearing a gunshot. Reported seeing a brown sedan leaving after. We got the plate.

DETECTIVE BROWN

Where are the kids?

DEPUTY GOLDEN

We're still trying to track them down. We've also been trying to contact her next of kin. It looks like she has a sister in New York, but it's late we haven't been able to get in contact.

DETECTIVE BROWN

Huh. How was she supporting herself?

DEPUTY GOLDEN

She had a survivors pension through the VA... other than that I don't know.

Detective Brown lights up a cigarette.

DETECTIVE BROWN

That's barely enough to pay the rent. She had to have been doing something else.

DEPUTY GOLDEN

I agree.

DETECTIVE BROWN

Anything else?

DEPUTY GOLDEN

Yeah one other thing...

Deputy Golden reaches into his coat pocket.

DEPUTY GOLDEN (CONT'D)
Right before you walked in. We
found this.

Deputy Golden reaches into his coat pocket and hands
Detective Brown a piece of paper with a NAME and a TIME
written on it.

KOVKA

4:30pm.

DEPUTY GOLDEN (CONT'D)
It was already ripped out of her
datebook.

Detective Brown takes the ripped piece of paper.

DETECTIVE BROWN
I'm gonna need that datebook.

DEPUTY GOLDEN
Sure it's right here.

Deputy Golden goes to the top of the dresser, grabs the
datebook and hands it to Detective Brown.

Another OFFICER walks in.

OFFICER
Detective Brown. We've got a lead
on the car. We gotta go.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Detective Brown drives his car down the rain soaked streets.
Windshield wipers still going. He smokes a cigarette, the
window isn't cracked. "Time After Time" by Stuart Fischer and
Wagner Becker plays on the radio.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
The road to hell is paved with bad
intentions. Good intentions are
what get us a spot in heaven...

We take a beat.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
I've spent my life weary.

We see Detective Brown make a right and we see city through
the windshield, we're heading towards it.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
The greatest men often have the
greatest sadness... In Greek
mythology the story of Sisyphus is
seen as a tragedy. He cheated death
and earned eternal punishment
pushing a rock up a hill in the
underworld.

Through the windshield we can see a red light. Detective
Brown stops the car. He's the only one on the road.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
The human response is to wonder if
he was pushing the right rock... or
if it's better than not having any
rock to push at all.

We take a beat.

Through the windshield we see squad cars lined up on the side
of a city street next to a florist shop.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
Why was a mother of two murdered in
cold blood?

Detective Brown parks the car on the curb behind the squad
car.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
God willing we're about to find
out.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Detective Brown lights a cigarette and walks up to a group of
OFFICERS standing next to SHERIFF THOMPSON in front of the
florist shop. They all hold umbrellas sheltering them from
the rain. Sheriff Thompson has a strong stature and a crew
cut.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Sheriff Thompson.

SHERIFF THOMPSON
Detective Brown. Thanks for coming.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Fill me in.

SHERIFF THOMPSON

Car was found in the back. The perp
picked the lock. No one inside when
we got here. The boys are in there
going through it now.

DETECTIVE BROWN

Mind if I take a look?

SHERIFF THOMPSON

Be my guest.

Detective Brown nods, takes a drag of his cigarette, and
walks in the store.

INT. FLORIST SHOP - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

A florist shop. It's dark but incandescent bulbs shine
through the backroom. Two uniformed OFFICERS stand looking
through the service desk.

DETECTIVE BROWN

How you doing fellas?

OFFICER

Been better. We just got started if
you want to take a look around.

DETECTIVE BROWN

Thanks. Can we get some lights in
here?

The officers shrug that comment off. Detective Brown turns
around and looks at the florist shop. It's maintained.
Nothing is out of place.

Detective Brown walks to a display of Magnolias and yells
back at the officers.

DETECTIVE BROWN (CONT'D)

What do you think he was looking
for here?

OFFICER

Beats me. There's still money in
the register. Lock pick triggered
the alarm. The owner should be here
soon, you can ask her.

Detective Brown talks through his thoughts out loud.

DETECTIVE BROWN

So this guy shoots a woman, kills her - then drives his car here. When he gets here he breaks into this shop. Presumably grabs something and then just disappears.

OFFICER

That about sums it up.

DETECTIVE BROWN

Did we get anything out of the car?

OFFICER

No, it was stolen. It's clean - except for a little blood. He could still be close by.

DETECTIVE BROWN

I don't think so. Whoever did this knew what they were doing. This isn't their first time.

OFFICER

Why do you say that?

DETECTIVE BROWN

Ms. Goodrich was shot twice. Once in the head, once in the heart. They were targeted and precise shots. The car was stolen - the perp did that because he knew we couldn't trace it back to him. And the lock here was picked which means that he had a kit and he was prepared to do it.

We take a beat.

DETECTIVE BROWN (CONT'D)

Union Station is about six blocks from here. He probably went on the train... That's what I would've done.

Both the officers look up at Detective Brown as if they hadn't thought of that.

Sheriff Thompson walks through the door.

SHERIFF THOMPSON
Detective Brown... the store
owner's here.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The rain has now stopped. The owner of the florist shop, IRENE TRUMER, stands outside talking to the police. Irene is a short, mid 50's woman, though she looks older than her years. She stands smoking a cigarette.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Mrs. Trumer.

IRENE TRUMER
It's Miss.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Okay.. Ms. Trumer. Why do you think
someone would come here after
committing a murder?

IRENE TRUMER
I have no idea.

DETECTIVE BROWN
But... you have to have some idea,
right? He seemed to know why he was
here. Could it be someone you know,
would he drop a change of clothes?

IRENE TRUMER
Look. No one I knew stashed clothes
or anything like that here. I had
\$200 in the register. Other than
that nothing of value... besides
the flowers.

DETECTIVE BROWN
The register was untouched.

Irene shrugs and lights a cigarette with a match, Detective Brown notices.

IRENE TRUMER
I don't know what to tell you.
Maybe he got spooked and my shop
was the first one he saw.

Detective Brown takes a cigarette from his pocket and motions to Irene.

DETECTIVE BROWN

You mind?

Irene looks at the matchbook.

IRENE TRUMER

Oh, sure.

She hands Detective Brown the matchbook. He briefly looks at it. It says:

LORENZO'S CABARET

4465 HOLLYWOOD BLVD

Detective Brown grabs a match, lights his cigarette and PUTS THE MATCHBOX IN HIS POCKET.

DETECTIVE BROWN

Thank you.

IRENE TRUMER

Is that all?

DETECTIVE BROWN

That's all for now.

IRENE TRUMER

If you don't mind, I'm going to go check and see if anything is missing.

Detective Brown motions to the door with his hand.

DETECTIVE BROWN

Thank you ma'am.

Irene walks into the shop.

Detective Brown walks over to Sheriff Thompson who is smoking a cigarette.

DETECTIVE BROWN (CONT'D)

Hey, I think our perp might've taken the train. Can we get some patrolman to keep an eye out?

SHERIFF THOMPSON

Sure thing... We got this for now. Why don't you head on home and get back at it after some sleep. It's late. We'll give you a call if we hear anything.

Detective Brown nods.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Have a good night Sheriff.

Sheriff Thompson nods and Detective Brown walks back towards his car.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Detective Brown drives home through the Los Angeles city streets smoking a cigarette. We hear "Lonely Nights" by Mason Woods and Stuart Fischer playing on the radio.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
I've been on hundreds of cases now
and solved all but one. I don't
talk about that... I suppose it's
just me thinking maybe if I solve
one more then the pain of losing
Marie will suddenly go away.

We take a beat. Detective Brown makes a turn.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
Pain is an alarm in a deaf world.
A screaming megaphone at the pulpit
of our lives. It's a universal
experience, a harsh truth. It
awakens you to something you've
been neglecting... and when you get
the message it's usually too late.

We take a beat, Detective Brown takes a long draw from his cigarette.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
I know for me it was.

Detective Brown pulls in the driveway of his house. The music fades.

FADE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

From the view of the ceiling fan we look down on Detective Brown waking up. It's the morning. He gets out of bed and walks out of the room. We hear "Slow Morning" by Van Olsen playing.

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

We're CLOSE on a pair of hands holding a coffee grinder. The grinder runs and we pan out to see Detective Brown grinding the coffee and pouring the grinds into a coffee machine.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
My mornings are slow. I prefer it
that way.

Detective Brown pours himself a cup of coffee.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
I drink my coffee, I smoke my
cigarettes and I read the paper. I
consider myself a student, but my
teachers are criminals.

Detective Brown sits down and drinks his coffee while smoking a cigarette and reading the newspaper. Cup of coffee and cigarette in the same hand.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
The newspaper is my text book... A
robbery in Sun Valley, a break-in
in Hollywood. It's all the same -
the same motives - money, women.
After all what else is there?

We take a beat.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
Well... maybe more than you'd
think.

INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

Detective Brown, fully dressed and holding a briefcase walks into the police station. He smiles at the secretary JAN, a mid 20's blonde woman.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Good morning Jan.

JAN
Good morning Detective Brown.

Detective Brown nods at her and keeps walking, nodding at a few other officers and walks into his corner office.

INT. DETECTIVE BROWN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Detective Brown walks into his office, it has a large set of windows on the wall opposite from his desk. His desk is wooden, it's clean. He has filing cabinets behind it.

Detective walks in and sits down on his leather desk chair.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
Can never get a moments peace.

Sheriff Thompson walks in.

SHERIFF THOMPSON
Good morning Frank.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Morning Ellis.

SHERIFF THOMPSON
We picked up a guy last night for
the Goodrich murder.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Oh? Where'd you find him?

SHERIFF THOMPSON
At the train station... like you
said.

DETECTIVE BROWN
How'd you get him?

SHERIFF THOMPSON
Well, there aren't that many people
on the train that late at night and
he looked suspicious so we stopped
him...

Sheriff Thompson reaches into his pocket and pulls out a set of keys.

SHERIFF THOMPSON (CONT'D)
And he had these on him.

Thompson tosses keys on Detective Brown's desk.

DETECTIVE BROWN
He still had the car keys on him?

SHERIFF THOMPSON
I swear they get dumber every day.

DETECTIVE BROWN
You're telling me.

SHERIFF THOMPSON
But this should be open and shut.
Go down and get a confession on him
and I'll buy you a drink.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

An interrogation room. No windows. Dark green brick walls.
The perp, NEIL BARLOW, a mid 20's man with brown hair sits
handcuffed to the car.

Detective Brown walks in holding documents and closes the
door behind him.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Hi.

Detective Brown pulls the chair out and sits across the
table. He opens the manilla folder and flips through some
documents until he finds the one he's looking for.

DETECTIVE BROWN (CONT'D)
So... Neil Barlow from Van Nuys.
Why did you kill Melanie Goodrich?

NEIL BARLOW
I'm innocent! I didn't kill anyone.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Neil you had the car keys on you.
You still have blood on you. How do
you explain that?

NEIL BARLOW
I swear I didn't do it.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Why were you at the flower shop?

NEIL BARLOW
Man I don't gotta tell you
anything.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Neil, we've got you on the blood
and the car keys. The car that was
directly tied to the scene of a
brutal murder. We've got enough to
try you and convict you for life.
(MORE)

DETECTIVE BROWN (CONT'D)
But if you work with us... maybe we
can get your time down.

NEIL BARLOW
Man...

Talking to himself.

NEIL BARLOW (CONT'D)
It wasn't supposed to be like this.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Like what?

NEIL BARLOW
Nothing. You don't know anything...

Neil thinks about it for a second.

NEIL BARLOW (CONT'D)
You know what, I did it. I'm
guilty. I killed that woman. You
tell your bosses that.

DETECTIVE BROWN
To be clear you're confessing to
killing Melanie Goodrich?

NEIL BARLOW
Yeah I killed her. How much more
clear do I need to be?

DETECTIVE BROWN
But... Why?

NEIL BARLOW
I didn't like the way she looked at
me... I don't gotta say anything
else. You got the answer you wanted
now get me out of this room.

INT. BAR - DAY

Detective Brown sits with Sheriff Thompson drinking whiskey
and smoking cigarettes at a bar. The bar is a classic
watering hole, wooden bartop, glass mugs, dim lighting.

They clink glasses in celebration.

SHERIFF THOMPSON
What was that, 5 minutes? That must
be a new record.

DETECTIVE BROWN
It was bizarre. One moment he was saying he was innocent the next he was confessing. Why?

SHERIFF THOMPSON
Why do they do any of the dumb stuff they do?

DETECTIVE BROWN
When I asked why he killed her he said he didn't like the way she looked at him.

SHERIFF THOMPSON
Brutal.

DETECTIVE BROWN
It just doesn't sit right.

SHERIFF THOMPSON
I think you're overthinking this. Celebrate an easy one for once.

Detective Brown thinks about it.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Yeah... you're right.

Sheriff Thompson finishes his drink.

SHERIFF THOMPSON
Well I gotta get back to it. Take the day if you want. You earned it. We'll call you if we need anything.

Detective Brown raises his glass.

DETECTIVE BROWN
Thanks.

Sheriff Thompson walks out.

Detective Brown finishes his drink. He calls the bartender.

DETECTIVE BROWN (CONT'D)
Bartender. One more.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Detective Brown leaves the bar and walks to his car in the parking lot. He stops before he enters the car, puts a cigarette in his mouth and reaches into his pocket.

He pulls out the match book and looks at it. We hear "How Do I Say Goodbye" by Zane Goodman and Schulz Hoffman playing.

LORENZO'S CABARET

4465 HOLLYWOOD BLVD

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
Could use something to eat.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

A traditional diner. Relatively empty. Detective Brown smokes a cigarette, a cleaned plate in front of him.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
The story of humanity is a story of resilience. It's a long history of men and women who we're abandoned for their faults... and who are hoping to be redeemed.

We take a beat.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
Am I past the point of redemption?... I don't know... But I've spent my life walking up to doors that didn't open when I knocked.

He takes a drag of his cigarette.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
In truth the only redemption I've found is in a fresh pack of Chesterfield's.

Detective Brown takes out his wallet, puts cash down for the meal and walks out of the restaurant.

DETECTIVE BROWN (V.O.)
...And in the barrel of my Smith & Wesson.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Detective Brown gets out of the car. He puts his keys in his pockets and fumbles around and pulls out the message from Melanie Goodrich's datebook.

KOVKA

4:30pm.

Detective Brown mumbles to himself out loud.

DETECTIVE BROWN

Huh.

Detective Brown puts the note back in his pocket walks down the driveway to his mailbox.

He opens the mailbox and on top of the stack of mail there's a typed message on white paper in bold typed letters.

YOU GOT THE WRONG GUY.

BLACK