

"WAY OF THE HAND"

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08/26/22

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FADE IN

INT. HIDEOUT - NIGHT

ECU: A PIANO KEYBOARD: The delicate fingers of 'MERCY PHEUNG' - female, asian, 20s, attractive, - pass lightly across the keys to find the first simple note - filling the darkness with beauty.

The note hangs in the air like a downy feather, held aloft by the next ethereal note, and the next.

The music unfolds slowly, easily - imbued with the emotional depth of a divine prodigy.

Her HANDS dance in the keys with grace and precision.

Her black hair glistens like satin. Her eyes glow in a SEA OF CANDLES surrounding her.

The MUSIC BUILDS. Her energy, her passion ignites the space around her and darkness itself shrinks away.

Enraptured, she continues on - TINY WHITE SPARKS swirl around her as she rises to stunning musical heights before ...

Her performance ends dramatically. She measures her breath, eyes cast down. Then, TO CAMERA:

MERCY (whispers)
I love you.

FLASH TO

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

CU: Mercy's hand loses contact with the hand - her fiancé - 'DAN DAVIS' - male, 20's, thin, in a BLACK SUIT. A few TINY WHITE SPARKS pass from her hand to his. From this image, we SLO-SPIRAL OUT ...

PULLING BACK TO GOD POV: A POOL OF BLOOD EXPANDS beneath them, dead - in the shadow of a forgotten alley surrounded by TRASH and trampled ROSES.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN

EXT. STREET - COFFEE STAND - NIGHT

POLICE SIRENS WAIL on the streets of a dark, crime-ravaged city as we descend to the front of a 24 Hr. COFFEE SHOP and land on a NEWSPAPER. HEADLINES READ: "CITY NOT SAFE POLICE CHIEF WARNS. HERE'S WHY HE'S WRONG".

We find the back of 'MAYA MARTINEZ' - Latina, female, 30s, tough, attractive, short hair - wearing a BLACK LEATHER JACKET over a TURTLENECK SWEATER.

She unwraps a THROAT LOZENGE and places it in her mouth just as ...

'TOMMY' - male, 30s, jacked, slick, - slides up next to her.

TOMMY

Hi.

Maya glances over, then she's back to her paper.

MAYA

Do I know you?

TOMMY

Not yet.

He smiles, and looks her over. She grumbles ...

MAYA (deadpan)

Not interested. Beat it.

TOMMY

It's like that?

MAYA

Exactly like that.

TOMMY

Dyke?

MAYA

Cop.

She casually pulls her jacket aside to reveal her BADGE and her GUN. And this time, she locks on with confident eyes ...

MAYA
Detective. First class.

TOMMY
That's hot.

COFFEE VENDOR JOE (OS)
Detective?

MAYA
Move along.

TOMMY
What happens if I don't?

MAYA
Do ya like your teeth?

She holds on Tommy. He backs off. Maya turns. 'JOE' hands her a CUP OF TEA, and asks ...

JOE
Chamomile. Extra honey.
That guy botherin' you?

MAYA
Everybody bothers me, Joe.
Everybody but you. You, I love.

JOE
The reason I live and breathe.

Her CELLPHONE RINGS. She answers.

MAYA
Martinez. ... Can somebody else mop it up? I'm comin' off a double. ... Yeah? How big?

CUT TO

EXT. STREET/ALLEY - NIGHT

MAYA'S BADASS MUSCLE CAR roars up and parks near a POLICE CRUISER at the entrance to an alley.

The CRUISER LIGHTS are on but nobody's around. She gets out and approaches carefully.

SUDDENLY: YOUNG HOOLIGANS run along the street, laughing - then disappear in the shadows like wild eerie ghosts.

She scans the area. A voice is heard O.S.

HAMMOND VO
Detective. Over here.

'OFFICER HAMMOND' - male, 40s, a big, seasoned meathead of a beat cop - exits the alley with a FLASHLIGHT.

Maya unwraps and pops another THROAT LOZENGE as she moves in. Hammond begins ...

HAMMOND
 Dispatch got a ghost call.
 Traced it here. Five dead. Four
 male. One female. It's a regular
 "abattoir" in there.

Maya shoots Hammond a look as they enter the alley.

HAMMOND
 Slaughterhouse.

MAYA (distracted)
 I know what abattoir means.

HAMMOND
 Kids got me a dictionary for my
 Birthday.

MAYA (distracted)
 Happy Birthday.

HAMMOND
 Thanks.

As Hammond leads her down a long alley ...

HAMMOND

I spent the day clickin' my
heels in front of a review board.
Turns out, I need sensitivity
training. Whatever that means.

MAYA (distracted)

You have a dictionary. Look it up.

HAMMOND

I did. It shows a picture of
a cop with his hands tied.

Their FLASHLIGHTS find a mess of tangled bodies at the DEAD
END of the alley. Maya moves forward.

MAYA (soft)

What the ... hell?

Hammond keeps his distance as she scans the area and finds:
BODIES, A KNIFE, PIPES, and ROSES everywhere. She stops at one
of the broken, beaten faces now at her feet.

MAYA

You're kidding. Uri Demanov?

HAMMOND

I told you this was big.
Only son of "Nicoli The Fist".
I haven't called it in yet.

Maya scans the other bodies.

MAYA

Uri's "Blood Brothers".

HAMMOND

Worst of the worst.

LOW ANGLE ON: A tangle of grossly contorted bodies as Maya
moves deeper into the carnage.

Hammond begins.

HAMMOND (grim)

We've seen a lot of 'gristle' in this town, but honestly, have you ever seen anything like this?

MAYA

No. ... Any ideas?

HAMMOND

Ideas are above my pay grade.

Maya examines the man who doesn't visually fit with the others (DAN) - face-up in a POOL OF DRIED BLOOD.

She finds a BLOOD-SMEARED CELLPHONE nearby, shuts it OFF, and hands it to Hammond. He bags it.

Next, she finds his WALLET, and pulls his DRIVER'S LICENSE.

MAYA

Daniel T. Davis.

She looks to Hammond. Hammond shrugs.

HAMMOND

Never heard of him. ...
Whoever he is, he wasn't alone.
There's no way one guy did
all'a this. Not to these guys.

A SOUND from above - a SCUFFLE - grabs her attention and the beams of their flashlights.

MAYA

Hello?!

Nothing. Then, a FLUTTER of wings.

HAMMOND

Pigeons.

Maya turns to Mercy's lifeless body.

Her THROAT's been SLASHED. Maya lingers on the wound - thrust into a private memory.

Hammond steps up.

HAMMOND

Mercy Pheung. Daughter of Kim Pheung.
They own a Thai joint downtown.
Good food. Good people.

MAYA

She was pretty.

Maya turns her attention back to Dan and her eye catches something, odd.

Near his right hand, she finds a SQUISHY PIECE OF FLESH.

She holds it up in the light. It's a HUMAN EAR.

Hammond and Maya do a quick visual inventory of the bodies.

MAYA

Dimitri. ... Boris.

HAMMOND

Uri. ... And these two.
Five bodies. Ten ears.

MAYA

So, who does this belong to?

SUDDENLY: Maya's ankle is VIOLENTLY GRIPPED by Dan's right hand!

MAYA

Hey! Hey!

She pulls her PISTOL and points it at Dan, but he's clearly unconscious. And yet, his HAND is CRUSHING her ankle. She tries to break free but it's no use.

MAYA

Hammond!

SLAM TO

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Concerned TECHNICIANS and 'NURSE NANCY' - female, 30s, very attractive, - rush Dan along a hallway to the ER.

NURSE NANCY

Mr. Davis? Can you hear me?

Mr. Davis? ... We're losing him!

Dan FLAT-LINES. Her voice fades as we ...

SLOW FADE TO

WHITE BLINDING LIGHT

MERCY VO (whispers)

I love you.

FADE IN

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM/HALL - NIGHT

In a dark hospital room, we find Dan in a bed, HEAD WRAPPED IN BLOODY BANDAGES, in a coma. THUNDER ROLLS in the distance.

Maya stands nearby - eyes on Dan. After a thoughtful moment, she finishes her TEA and LIMPS for the door. In the hall she finds Hammond.

MAYA

Who can we trust? Marquez?

HAMMOND

Marquez. And Johnson. Just transferred in. I've already made the calls. Three shifts. 24/7. This door's covered.

MAYA

Thanks, Ham.

HAMMOND

Hey. ... How you holdin' up?

He seems to know something personal about Maya.

MAYA

Nights like this, I envy
the dead. Good night.

OFF HAMMOND: Friendly concern.

TRANSITION TO

EXT. MAYA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Maya's car rolls up and enters a GATED PARKING GARAGE.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

She exits her car with a LARGE, BLACK LEATHER SATCHEL, and moves to the ELEVATOR ... keenly aware of every shadow.

A LOUD CAR RUMBLES out on the street. Somewhere, a COUPLE is having an argument. It sounds horrific.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

She waits for the doors to close with her HAND on her GUN.

CUT TO

INT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

After locking EVERY LOCK on her HEAVY STEEL DOOR, we FOLLOW MAYA through her neglected apartment to a BACK WAR ROOM.

IN THE WAR ROOM: The walls are covered with MAPS, CHARTS, MUG-SHOTS, NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS, etc.

A POLICE SCANNER crackles in the B.G. as she unpacks the SATCHEL - more FILES & PHOTOS.

ON THE WALL: She finds the MUG-SHOTS of the Blood Brothers and draws big black "X"s over their faces.

All but one: KNOX - male, 20s, big ears, greasy. She stops at his photo to consider an idea.

Then, ... she draws a QUESTION MARK over his LEFT EAR.

INT. MAYA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

She CHEWS a handful of ASPIRIN, starts the SHOWER, pops in a THROAT LOZENGE, and swallows hard.

She removes her shoulder holster, places her GUN on the sink and removes her TURTLENECK SWEATER to reveal ...

A LARGE SCAR across her throat. Her eyes linger on the scar as she brushes her teeth.

TRANSITION TO

INT. LUXURY SUITE - DAY

'KNOX' is violently shoved to the floor - a gasping, bloody mess. A DIRTY, BLOODY RAG covers his LEFT (MISSING) EAR.

Two goons named 'STICKS' (skinny) and 'STONES' (huge) - male, tough guys - grin as they back away.

ANGLE ON: The back of a LARGE LEATHER CHAIR facing MASSIVE WINDOWS over-looking the city. Large KNIVES decorate the walls like works of art. BLACK ROSES are everywhere.

A FAT CIGAR loaded with 2 inches of ASH rests in the fingers of 'NICOLI DEMANOV' - male, 50s, grim, a VERY LARGE and POWERFUL MAN - with a face hardened by a life of violent crime.

Next to Nicoli, we find a pale-skinned man named 'WORM'.

A smokin' hot chick named 'MUFFIN' waits off to the side like an expensive sex-toy dressed in black. Worm begins ...

WORM

Today we were asked to claim
the body of our beloved prince.

KNOX

I ... I ...

Muffin quickly steps to Knox.

"SNICK" - A SILVER SPIKE EXTENDS from her STILETTO HEEL and she JAMS it into his left hand - PINNING it to the floor.