

Rookie

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Final Draft

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FADE IN:

In a luxury neighborhood on a summer's day in California, there is a blue mansion that is now a crime scene. Police cars, an ambulance, and groups of people setting up caution tape surround the home. In the driveway, a rundown Honda Civic pulls in quickly and screeches to a stop.

INT. HONDA CIVIC - MORNING

An anxious rookie police detective, BEN ARTHUR (28) is a newlywed who is eager to prove his worth to the police force. Ben is on the phone, which displays "Wife" with a heart emoji next to it, and their conversation is on speaker.

BEN ARTHUR
I'll let you know how it goes. I
love you too!

Ben hangs up the phone. He sits for a second and starts breathing fast. Anxiety grips him and he has a panic attack. After 3 deep breaths, and a montage showing his anxiety, Ben gets out of the car and walks to the house. Ben dodges the caution tape and goes inside using the front door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

JOHN SPROUT (50) is a grumpy, but experienced, detective who has been on the force for years. He is having a conversation with a police officer. A woman (40s) lays face down on the ground, deceased. Police are taking care of the body.

POLICE OFFICER
It wasn't expected or anything,
from what we know she was
completely healthy.

JOHN SPROUT
I see.

POLICE OFFICER
Should take about two days to get
you some answers.

John pats the officer on the back in approval, and Ben walks into the conversation. He is still breathing heavily.

BEN ARTHUR
I'm so sorry I'm late! What's the
victim's name?

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JOHN SPROUT
Glad you decided to join us.

BEN ARTHUR
Sorry Detective Sprout.

Ben takes a deep breath and composes himself.

BEN ARHTUR
What do we know?

JOHN SPROUT
The victim's name is May Taylor.
She was an author. Made some how-
to novel for women that was a New
York Times Best Seller.

BEN ARTHUR
Oh! May Taylor, my wife loves her
books! That's a shame, I --
(stuttering) Do we know how she
died? Is there family involved?

JOHN SPROUT
No, they're starting the autopsy
tonight. May never married and has
no living relatives.

BEN ARTHUR
Interesting.

The two detectives walk out of the house together with
Detective Sprout leading the way.

EXT. LAWN - MORNING

As the men walk out of May Taylor's house and towards their
cars, STEPHANIE STONE (37) scurries over to the detectives.

STEPHANIE STONE
Oh my gosh!! Excuse me!! Hey! Are
you two detectives for May?

Detective Sprout shakes Stephanie's hand.

JOHN SPROUT
We are.

STEPHANIE STONE
Oh hi!! I'm Stephanie. I, uh, I
live at the grey house next door.
So tragic about May. You guys are
here for that, right?

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JOHN SPROUT

Yes.

STEPHANIE STONE

I heard about it this morning.
May's cleaning lady found her gone
and the news spread like wildfire,
ya know? What are your names?
You're a handsome guy.

Stephanie points her finger to Ben's shirt. Ben pushes her hand away and speaks slowly.

BEN ARTHUR

I'm Detective Arthur, and that is
Detective Sprout. How can we help
you?

STEPHANIE STONE

Yeah, well, May was my friend.
Before she died she was acting
really shady. Is there someone, or
like, anyone I can talk to about
this?

JOHN SPORUT

Yes, come down to the police
station and we can discuss your
concerns.

STEPHANIE STONE

(speaking in Ben's direction) Oh
yeah, but come to my place! Let's
have brunch. Eleven?

BEN ARTHUR

That works.

STEPHANIE STONE

Great! Hope to see you there, Ben.

Stephanie waves goodbye in Ben's direction and scurries back to her home.

BEN ARTHUR

Her friend just died and she's
already flirting. California moms
are wild.

JOHN SPROUT

Where are you from again?

BEN ARTHUR

Oregon, but my wife is from here.

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John scoffs.

JOHN SPROUT
Yep. That will do it for ya.

BEN ARTHUR
What do you mean?

John doesn't respond and walks to open his car door.

BEN ARTHUR
Do you think that woman is tied up
in all this?

JOHN SPROUT
In May's death? Probably not.
You'll be surprised by the kinds
of people you meet in San Diego.
I'll see you at the station.

Ben nods, and the detectives walk to their respective vehicles.

INT. BEN'S HOME - EVENING

ROSE ARTHUR (20s), Ben's wife, is sitting on the living room couch in the Arthur's home while she watches a reality TV show. The sun has just set, and Ben walks into the room.

ROSE ARTHUR
Baby I missed you today!

Rose runs into Ben's arms and the couple embrace.

BEN ARTHUR
I missed you!

ROSE ARTHUR
How did that crime scene go? Do
you know who the victim is?

BEN ARTHUR
Oh, you might want to sit down for
this honey. Remember that book
you're reading, the one by May
Taylor?

ROSE ARTHUR
NO WAY! I saw that she died on the
news actually, but I didn't know
it was your case!

BEN ARTHUR
Yeah! It's crazy out here. I think
I'm getting my big break.

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ROSE ARTHUR

I'm so proud of you. You took your
meds this morning, right? Just
remember ...

BEN ARTHUR

Deep breaths. I never forget. Come
with me.

Ben picks up Rose and takes her to their bedroom, laughing.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOME - MORNING

Ben and John arrive to Stephanie's doorstep at approximately 11
a.m. Ben knocks on the golden door, and it is swung open by
Stephanie.

STEPHANIE STONE

Detectives! Welcome to my home!
Come, come in!!

Stephanie twirls her hair and glides to the dining room. There,
two kids are giggling and running around the table playing tag.
The house is beautiful, with marble countertops in the kitchen
and a shimmering chandelier above the table. A nanny runs into
the room frantically to control the kids, and they eventually
leave the room.

STEPHANIE STONE

Don't mind them, I made some
crepes for you guys. Take a bite!

JOHN SPROUT

This is extremely generous.

STEPHANIE STONE

Anything for you guys!

Stephanie smiles at Ben, who shifts uncomfortably as he walks
to the counter top and starts plating his food. John plates his
own food, but looks over at Stephanie, acknowledging her
flirtatious behavior.

JOHN SPROUT

Em, how many kids do you have
Stephanie?

STEPHANIE STONE

Just the two. Two too many if you
asked me.

BEN ARTHUR

Thanks for having us over.

(MORE)

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BEN ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Have you lived in this
neighborhood long?

STEPHANIE STONE
It's been almost four years.
Actually, May helped me find this
place.

The two detectives sit at the table and start eating the
brunch. Stephanie stands at the head of the table, claps her
hands, and begins to explain herself.

STEPHANIE STONE
My May, I guess we shouldn't even
call her mine anymore because
it's like totally insensitive, she
moved here the same time I did.
She was like obsessed with
writing.

(chewing noises)

STEPHANIE STONE
I mean, have you heard of her
book? She was SO successful. Like,
a star. But she didn't really
deserve it.

BEN ARTHUR
Well, what do you mean?

Stephanie places her hands on the table and leans in towards
Ben.

STEPHANIE STONE
Well, you didn't hear this from
me, but I heard that she was
sleeping with the neighbor. And it
was like right after her husband
died! I didn't realize their
marriage was that bad!

BEN ARTHUR
That's a lot of people dying.

STEPHANIE STONE
Well May's husband, Liam ya know,
he had cancer. Poor guy.

JOHN SPROUT
How terrible.

John's phone vibrates. He checks it.

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STEPHANIE STONE
Yes, so tragic.

Stephanie takes a sip of juice.

STEPHANIE STONE
Yeah. The guy's name is Dale Crowder. He lives at that red house down the street. Loves to travel.

BEN ARTHUR
I see, I --

STEPHANIE STONE
Yeah yeah, but May really messed with my energy, ok? She copied everything I did. Like honey, if you're going to write a book, might as well follow your own advice and be an individualist or something.

JOHN SPROUT
I mean no disrespect, but why are you so angry at her?

STEPHANIE STONE
I think she poisoned her husband.

JOHN SPROUT
Excuse me?

STEPHANIE STONE
Look, I know Liam had cancer, but he was getting better. I think since the spotlight wasn't on her anymore, she poisoned him. Just a thought.

(silence)

JOHN SPROUT
Well, thank you for telling us. We'll look into it. We should get going.

BEN ARTHUR
John, don't you think that Stephanie has more she wants to say?

JOHN SPROUT

No, we've seen everything we need to see.

STEPHANIE STONE

Oh sure! Don't want to keep you hanging. I just felt like I needed to do the right thing. I really couldn't bear this burden ... what if someone else got hurt?

JOHN SPROUT

Of course.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOME - AFTERNOON

The detectives walk from Stephanie's front porch.

BEN ARTHUR

Why did we leave early? Stephanie wasn't finished.

JOHN SPROUT

It's a dead end.

BEN ARTHUR

What do you mean? This is good stuff! Poisoning? It's what I've been waiting for!

JOHN SPROUT

What you've been waiting for? I'm not wasting my time on you, boy. I got a --

BEN ARTHUR

Well, this is just the start!

JOHN SPROUT

I've been down this road before on my first cases. I know the neighborhood. Listen to me, boy, May had --

BEN ARTHUR

Well let's keep looking, this really might be something!

JOHN SPROUT

Son, just wait! If you'd let me explain and get it out of your thick head, I --

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BEN ARTHUR
I'm not your son! You know what
it's like to be in my shoes. Just
give me a chance, old man!

Detective Sprout pauses. He folds his arms and stares right at Ben.

JOHN SPROUT
You want to do this your way?

Ben gulps. A montage of his anxiety attack plays.

BEN ARTHUR
Yes.

JOHN SPROUT
Really?

Another short montage.

BEN ARTHUR
Yes.

JOHN SPROUT
Fine.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DALE CROWDER'S HOME - AFTERNOON

Ben and John are at the doorstep of DALE CROWDER's home, the man May was accused of sleeping with. This the afternoon after brunch with Stephanie. Ben knocks on the door, and a woman named SILVIA CROWDER (40s) opens it. She is a mother of four kids and is Dale's faithful wife.

SILVIA CROWDER
Can I help you?

BEN ARTHUR
Hi, is Dale's home?

SILVIA COX
Yes, he's is my husband.

BEN ARTHUR
Great! Can we ask you a few
questions? We are detectives
working on the case of May Taylor.

SILVIA COX
Oh, I know why you're here.
(MORE)

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SILVIA COX (CONT'D)
I saw you talking to Stephanie
yesterday.

She steps in front of the door and closes it, leaving the three
of them outside.

SILVIA COX
I have kids inside and they need
to be left out of this. I'm
already aware of the rumors.
They're not true.

BEN ARTHUR
What rumors?

SILVIA COX
The rumor about May sleeping with
my husband! The one that May
poisoned her husband to get with
mine. Please leave my family
alone. Stephanie won't stop
talking about us, and I don't need
the police involved.

BEN ARTHUR
Oh, I wasn't trying to cause any
harm.

SILVIA COX
You should be wiser than to follow
gossip trails, you know! Dale
doesn't even have May's phone
number! We hardly know her.

BEN ARTHUR
I'm sorry, I didn't know.

SILVIA COX
No, of course you didn't. Because
no one seems to think around here.

Silvia shuts the door in their face.

JOHN SPROUT
You really didn't think that
through.

BEN ARTHUR
I know. That ... wasn't good. But
I know where we need to go next.

JOHN SPROUT
Really, boy?

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BEN ARTHUR
We need stop by Stephanie's
tomorrow.

SPROUT
Do it alone. I am not wasting my
time, I have more important things
to do.

BEN ARTHUR
This isn't helping John.

JOHN SPROUT
If you would just listen ...
rookie.

John walks away. Ben sighs and messes with his hair as he walks to his car. He drives into the sunset, where a montage happens of Ben anxiously getting ready for bed and excitedly getting ready in the morning. He drives to the neighborhood at 9 a.m. Once again, he comes to the front door of Stephanie's home. Ben knocks on the door and Stephanie opens it.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S FRONT DOOR - MORNING

BEN ARTHUR
Good morning, Mrs. Stone!

STEPHANIE STONE
Awe!! Ben! What a nice surprise.

BEN ARTHUR
Can I come in?

STEPHANIE STONE
You don't even need to ask.

INT. STEPHANIE'S HOME - MORNING

STEPHANIE STONE
What's up? The kids are at school
right now, so it's just us.

Stephanie touches his arm, and Ben pushes it off.

BEN ARTHUR
I wanted to hear more about May
Taylor.

STEPHANIE STONE
Oh yeah? What about her?

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BEN ARTHUR

I was wondering more about this poisoning. Can you tell me where you heard this from?

STEPHANIE STONE

I heard it from our neighbor. She said that May and Liam didn't seem that happy. Call it stress, but it just seems unlikely that all the sudden - poof! (hand motions) He is dead. I think she strangled him.

BEN ARTHUR

Strangled? You mean poisoned?

STEPHANIE STONE

Both! No, choked! Like ... she poisoned him and he choked. She strangled him after.

BEN ARTHUR

Hm. What was this woman's name? I'd like to get in contact with her.

STEPHANIE STONE

Her name doesn't come to mind right now. DO you want a drink?

BEN ARTHUR

No, I'm fine. Can you think of her name?

STEPHANIE STONE

Ben, we're finally alone. I saw you eyeing me at dinner.

BEN ARTHUR

I'm not here for that, Stephanie. I am here to get more information about May.

STEPHANIE STONE

Oh c'mon, you know you want to just relax for once.

BEN ARTHUR

Stephanie, no. I would like to get to the bottom of your claim. This poisoning, strangling, whatever thing. Do you have anything to tell me or not?

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There is a silence, and Stephanie bursts into tears.

STEPHANIE STONE
She didn't do anything.

BEN ARTHUR
What!?

STEPHANIE STONE
May. She didn't do anything. She was my friend, and I miss her so much.

Stephanie continues to sob.

STEPHANIE STONE
May and I got in a dumb fight before she died so I spread the rumors about her because I was sick of her attitude. When I saw you ... I don't know ... I just wanted an excuse to get your phone number. I didn't think it would go this far.

Stephanie laughs, embarrassed and wipes her tears.

BEN ARTHUR
Well, that's flattering, but I'm married.

STEPHANIE STONE
This was such a waste. I'm lonely.

BEN ARTHUR
I really can't help you with that. And May is totally innocent?

STEPHANIE STONE
Yes.

Ben walks out of the house without another word.

INT. BEN'S OFFICE - EVENING

Ben sits in his office, frantic to find any conflicting evidence. He picks up his cell phone to make a phone call and puts it on speaker phone.

BEN ARTHUR
Can you check on some evidence of May's crime scene for me?

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OFFICER
Sure. What do you need?

BEN ARTHUR
Can you see if May Taylor had the
phone number of Dale Crowder?

OFFICER
I'll see what I can do, but did
you hear the case is closed?

BEN ARTHUR
What? Why!

OFFICER
They found that May Taylor died of
some genetic disease. She
inherited it from her mother.

BEN ARTHUR
Oh ok. Thank you. Don't bother
about the number then.

Ben hangs up the phone. He sits in silence for a second.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - EVENING

John sits in his office looking through paper work. Ben walks
quickly into the room.

BEN ARTHUR
Detective Sprout?

John doesn't respond and continues organizing files.

BEN ARTHUR
They just closed the case. How did
you know Stephanie was a dead end
so early?

JOHN SPROUT
I got a text how May died while we
were at Stephanie's.

BEN ARTHUR
You knew this whole time?

JOHN SPROUT
I didn't know the case was for
sure closed until a few hours ago.
You didn't let me explain.

(MORE)

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JOHN SPROUT (CONT'D)
That's why I told you to wait,
son.

BEN ARTHUR
Wow. I really messed up when I met
with Silvia, huh?

JOHN SPROUT
You sure did.

BEN ARTHUR
What a waste of time! I'm sorry I
didn't listen.

John pauses to choose his words carefully.

JOHN SPROUT
Don't worry about it, I've wasted
company time too. You'll learn
from this.

BEN ARTHUR
Wow John, that's the nicest thing
you've ever said to me.

John snickers.

JOHN SPROUT
You were right earlier by the way,
I have been in your shoes once.
We've all been the rookie at some
point.

THE END

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