

THE ART OF VIOLENCE

When a clue from an unsolved murder is spotted in a painting, a retired NYPD Detective does whatever it takes to solve it, even break the law.

FADE IN:

EXT. GALLERY 45 - MANHATTAN - NIGHT

Constant city movement passes by the glass front of this crowded, brightly lit, upscale gallery. In the window a poster hangs: "GALLERY 45 PRESENTS: THE HUMAN FORM".

INT. GALLERY 45 - CONTINUOUS

People mingle and sip champagne, seemingly oblivious to the variety of nude art that surrounds them, except CHARLIE BECK (55), handsome but not as manicured as the others.

With a look of confusion, Charlie stares at a flesh toned, abstract painting filled with phallic type shapes.

MIMI BECK (28), a Vogue beauty, walks up behind him.

MIMI

Like this one?

CHARLIE

What is it?

She points at a small card: "PENIS ENVY - PRICE: \$10,000".

CHARLIE

Jesus.

Charlie quickly looks away.

MIMI

I'm glad you came, Daddy. I know it's not your thing.

CHARLIE

Just cus I was a cop for thirty five years doesn't mean I can't appreciate culture. Anyway, I liked. . .yours.

He gestures toward a large painting of a flower that very much resembles a vagina but he doesn't really look at it.

MIMI

Thanks. And you don't have to be embarrassed. It's not a self portrait.

Charlie tries to look. Still can't. Mimi chuckles.

A few people wave her over from across the room.

CHARLIE

Go. I'll be fine.

MIMI

Thanks Daddy.

She kisses him on the cheek and heads over to her friends.

Charlie stands alone, awkward and out of his element. He observes two men enter a door marked "EXHIBIT X".

Curiosity pulls him over, he slips inside.

INT. EXHIBIT X - CONTINUOUS

A small space set up the same as the gallery but the artwork could be labeled pornographic, some of it violent.

He quickly realizes this isn't for him and turns to leave but something catches his eye; a large painting of girl in bondage. Her face is blurred, her eyes X-ed out, a small butterfly tattoo on her breast.

FLASHBACK

EXT. WOODED AREA - DAY - FIFTEEN YEARS EARLIER

In his police uniform, Charlie stares at the same butterfly tattoo on the breast of a dead girl, her nude body covered in dirt and leaves.

BACK TO PRESENT

IAN (O.S.)

Are you a fan or a collector?

IAN (50's), slick hair, smartly dressed, gazes at the painting with admiration. Charlie can't hide his disgust.

CHARLIE

Neither. Will you excuse me?

Ian's eyes don't leave the painting as Charlie exits.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - NIGHT

Lights from the car in front of him shine on Charlie's face as he dials his cell phone. A muffled ring sounds.

MARTIN (V.O.)

Detective Martin Jones.

CHARLIE

Hey Marty! It's Charlie. I'm in the neighborhood and could use your help on something. You busy?

MARTIN (V.O.)

Always, you know that. But come by anyway. We'd love to see ya.

CHARLIE

Thanks. See you in a few.

INT. 18th PRECINCT - DETECTIVE BUREAU - NIGHT

Behind a messy desk, Charlie sips coffee from a NYPD cup. A haggard MARTIN JONES (45) approaches. He drops a cardboard box in front of Charlie.

MARTIN

Here you go.

CHARLIE

Thanks Marty.

Martin watches as Charlie rummages through the box.

MARTIN

Remember at your retirement dinner when you told me to give you a slap if you became one of those crazy old guys who tries to crack cold cases?

Charlie pauses, looks at Martin then continues searching.

CHARLIE

That's not what this is.

He pulls something out of the box and reads it. Martin shakes his head and leaves him to it.

INT. GALLERY 45 - DAY

The "Human Form" show still hangs but the gallery is void of people, except Charlie. He stands in front of Mimi's painting. Ian approaches.

IAN

Your daughter is very talented. I hope to see more of her work.

Charlie turns around, his parental guard now up.

CHARLIE

Yeah well, she's moving out of the city so I wouldn't count on it.

Ian hands Charlie a paper.

IAN

Here's the information on Antoine. He's quite mysterious. I wish you luck.

Charlie looks at the address scribbled on the paper, "1322 HUDSON STREET", nods in thanks then heads out.

MONTAGE

DAY 1 - Parked on Hudson, Charlie reads the paper and keeps his eye on a row of small warehouses across the street.

DAY 2 - Parked on Hudson, Charlie watches a truck pull in the drive. The occupants enter a different warehouse.

NIGHT 3 - Parked on Hudson, now dressed in black, Charlie watches the dark warehouse. He exits the car.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Carefully he approaches the warehouse and slips around back. He takes out something that shorts the security box.

A towel on his hand, he looks around, punches a glass pane out of the window then reaches in and unlocks the door.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

It's dark. With a small flashlight Charlie scans the room.

Paintings are stacked along the walls, all with a common theme, women in bondage.

He heads to a desk, holds the flashlight in his mouth and looks through papers. Just bills and junk mail addressed to Antoine Rasmussen. He opens drawers, nothing.

Frustrated, he scans the flashlight around the room. He stops on a beautiful painting of a beach landscape, a major contrast from all the other paintings, the signature, "RACHEL OSBORNE".

Charlie props the painting up on a table, pulls a small camera from his pocket and snaps a picture. The flash illuminates the room like lightning.

He takes a few pictures of Antoine's work. The flashes are so bright Charlie doesn't notice headlights going up the drive but seconds later he hears a car door slam.

He listens. Glass crunches under foot, someone approaches the back door.

MAN 1 (O.S.)
Someone definitely broke in.

MAN 2 (O.S.)
Don't touch anything you idiot. You want your fingerprints all over?

MAN 1 (O.S.)
Good point. We'll just report it.

Charlie feels around in the dark for an exit. He comes across a window under a black sheet. He reaches under, struggles to open it. It won't budge.

MAN 1 (O.S.)
You call it in. I'm gonna walk around and take a look.

Trapped. Quickly he moves away from the window and heads to the back door. He peeks outside.

MAN 2 stands a few yards away, paces while talking on his cell phone.

Charlie quietly opens the door then runs as fast a fifty five year old can. Startled, MAN 2 drops his phone.

MAN 1 rounds the corner to check on the commotion. Charlie sprints down the drive. MAN 1 runs after Charlie, who struggles to click the unlock button from his keychain.

MAN 2 now rounds the corner, cell phone back in hand.

Charlie gets in the car, fumbles to start it. MAN 1 pounds his fists on the window. Sirens wail in the distance.

Rattled and out of breath, Charlie pulls away and watches in the rear view mirror as MAN 2 takes a photo of his license plate with his cell phone.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Open suitcase on the bed, Charlie quickly grabs clothes from his drawers and throws them in.

Over to the closet, he grabs a box from the top shelf.

He reaches through various pictures of himself, Mimi and his Wife, pushes aside papers including a DIVORCE DOCUMENT then from underneath he pulls out a gun inside a holster.

He places it in his suitcase along with his laptop then zips it closed.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Charlie unzips his suitcase, pulls out his laptop then sits at a small table. His cell phone rings. Caller ID: MARTY.

CHARLIE

Shit.

(answers)

Hello Marty.

MARTIN (V.O.)

Charlie. You want to explain why I've been informed that your car was at a warehouse break in tonight?

GOOGLE pops up on the laptop screen. Charlie types in a search for "RACHEL OSBORNE PAINTER".

MARTIN (V.O.)

Charlie? What the hell is going on?

CHARLIE

Okay, it's a cold case. . .

MARTIN (V.O.)

Oh Jesus Charlie. Really. You're in some deep shit right now.

CHARLIE

I'll be fine. I gotta go Marty.

He shuts his cell phone, clicks on the WIKI link and reads what's on the COMPUTER SCREEN. . .

RACHEL OSBORNE - American Artist - Born 1960.
Her unique style of landscape painting gained her recognition in the 80's. Her work hangs in art museums as well as private collections. After her divorce from eccentric and controversial artist ANTOINE RASMUSSEN, Ms. Osborne moved to Phoenix, Arizona where she is a Certified Art Therapist.

He clicks on a photo of Rachel from 1980, it enlarges. His eyebrows raise, she's beautiful. He shrugs it off.

CHARLIE

We all looked good in the eighties.

Charlie opens his phone, dials "411".

CHARLIE

American Airlines. Reservations.

INT. RENTAL CAR - PHOENIX - DAY

Charlie drives out of the Enterprise lot. A map of Phoenix lay open on the passenger seat as well as a printout of Rachel's face.

INT. ART ROOM - PHOENIX COUNSELING CENTER - DAY

Soothing music plays in this bright and cheery room. Several people sit in front of easels. They try to paint a bowl of fruit like the one on display. RACHEL OSBORNE (50's), walks behind them and checks their progress.

She stops behind an OLD WOMAN and helps her guide the brush on the canvas.

RACHEL

See? One swift stroke. Easy.

From the hallway, Charlie watches through the door. He is taken by Rachel's beauty.

EXT. PHOENIX COUNSELING CENTER - DAY

Charlie leans against the building, watching everyone who exits. Rachel comes out, alone. She walks past him and heads for the parking lot, he walks after her.

CHARLIE

Excuse me. Rachel?

She stops, turns, studies Charlie.

RACHEL

Yes? Do I know you?

CHARLIE

Not yet. I've come a long way to talk to you. I want to ask you some questions . . . about your ex husband.

She continues walking toward her car, Charlie behind her.

RACHEL

I haven't seen Antoine in fifteen years. I can't imagine I'd be of any help.

CHARLIE

Fifteen years ago I worked a murder case. A young girl, strangled, marks where her wrists were bound...

Rachel stops. Her face turns pale as she listens.

CHARLIE (CONT.)

I have reason to believe Antoine may have had something to do with it. Does this surprise you Rachel?

She shakes her head no.

INT. RACHEL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Charlie slowly walks around the room. He studies the many beautiful paintings that adorn the walls. Rachel walks in, two cups of coffee in hand.

CHARLIE

You have a nice collection of art.

He joins her over on the couch.

RACHEL

Are you a collector?

CHARLIE

No. But my daughter is an artist.
She paints flowers. . .sort of.

RACHEL

So, what do you want to know Charlie?

CHARLIE

Do you know where he is? He only lives
in New York part of the year.

RACHEL

I told you, I haven't spoken to him in
about fifteen years. I erased him from
my life. I don't even have anything
from our time together.

CHARLIE

Really? He has something of yours.

Charlie takes out his camera, scrolls through the photos and finds the picture of her painting and hands it to her.

INT. ANTOINE'S WAREHOUSE - DAY

A POLICE OFFICER (35) watches as ANTOINE RASMUSSEN (60), walks around, checking to see if anything's been stolen.

His piercing brown eyes scan the room and stop on Rachel's painting, still propped on a table.

POLICE OFFICER

Anything missing or out of place?

ANTOINE

No. It all appears just as I left
it. Guess my work wasn't their taste.

He looks back at Rachel's painting and smiles.

INT. RACHEL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rachel holds Charlie's camera. Sadness comes over her as
she looks at the picture.

RACHEL

I can't believe he kept this.

She looks at Charlie.

RACHEL

I might know where he is.

EXT. MEXICAN BORDER - DAY

Charlie's rental car rolls through customs into Mexico.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - DAY

Rachel looks at a map while Charlie drives.

RACHEL

Have you given any thought to what
you're going to do when we get there?

CHARLIE

I have no idea. I'm just hoping my
instincts will kick in.

RACHEL

I still can't believe he kept our
old place. There it is. . .

Rachel points to a bungalow at the end of a desolate dirt
road. The backyard looks just like her painting.

CHARLIE

It's beautiful. You okay?

She nods "yes" but her expression says otherwise. Charlie's
cell phone rings. It's Marty, he answers.

CHARLIE

Hey Marty.

MARTIN (V.O.)

You're officially in deep shit my friend. The owner of the warehouse flew in yesterday. They guys who called it in gave him your license plate info. He knows you're a cop and he's filed charges.

CHARLIE

Antoine is there? Hello? Hello?
Martin?

Frustrated, Charlie closes his phone. He looks over at the bungalow then at Rachel.

CHARLIE

Antoine is in New York. I'm going in.

He reaches for the door handle, Rachel grabs his arm.

RACHEL

Are you sure he's in New York? This could be very dangerous. What exactly are you looking for anyway?

CHARLIE

I don't know. I just need to go in.
I need evidence. Just something.

RACHEL

I'm going in too.

They get out of the car and head to the house. Charlie adjusts the holster under his jacket.

INT. ANTOINE'S BUNGALOW - MOMENTS LATER

Charlie rifles through papers at Antoine's desk while Rachel walks around, a bit bewildered. She heads toward a door.

RACHEL

This was our bedroom.

She reaches for the door, opens it slowly then screams.

Charlie runs over. He's shocked to see a GIRL (25) on the bed, naked with wrists and ankles bound. The Girl cries and screams through the duct tape over her mouth.

An unfinished painting of the girl is propped on an easel.

CHARLIE

Guess he left in a hurry.

Rachel watches as Charlie grabs a blanket and places it over the Girl. He begins to untie her.

The whole thing is too much for Rachel. She runs out of the house.

EXT. BUNGALOW - CONTINUOUS

Rachel stands staring at the beautiful beach. Moments later, sirens wail in the distance. She breaks down.

EXT. BUNGALOW - LATER

Now sitting, Rachel is still in the same spot. Behind her are police cars and an ambulance.

Charlie walks over and sits next to her.

CHARLIE

They just picked Antoine up at the airport. He was on his way back.

Rachel stares straight ahead.

RACHEL

I was his first subject. At first it was for art then it turned violent. I never reported him, I just wanted out.

Charlie puts his arm around her, she leans into him.

INT. PHOENIX COUNSELING CENTER - DAY

Several PEOPLE sit behind easels as Rachel walks around offering assistance. Charlie watches from the door, a bouquet of flowers in his hand. She looks over and smiles.

FADE OUT