

TOKYO VICE

Written by

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Based on "Tokyo Vice: An American Reporter
on the Police Beat in Japan," by Jake Adelstein

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We OPEN CLOSE on the pale face of a white man in his early 20s, hair cropped high and tight, staring straight ahead, trying not to look as frightened as he feels.

This is JAKE ADELSTEIN.

As we hold on him, we realize we're HEARING the faint sound of MUSAK. Soothing, treacly; completely at odds with the coiled young man before us.

We PULL BACK...

INT. ELEVATOR - SHINJUKU PLAZA HOTEL - TOKYO - NIGHT

To take in Jake in full: his stylishly tailored DARK SUIT, the matching dark shirt and tie. Next to him stands Detective CHIAKI SEKIGUCHI, 40s, with sunken black eyes and a nose that's been broken more than once. Thick hair brushed back into a pompadour. His dark suit is a little worse for wear.

The two men face front, bodies tense. The music tinkles on; the elevator rises. Finally, Sekiguchi speaks. As will (almost) always be the case, when we [**hear Japanese**], we see the translation at the bottom of the screen.

SEKIGUCHI

[When we sit down, you're gonna order a black coffee.]

(beat, still facing front)

[Not a cappuccino. Not that chocolate sprinkled shit. Just coffee.]

JAKE

(eyes ahead)

[What if I want milk and sugar?]

SEKIGUCHI

(eyes ahead)

[Fuck you.]

INT. FRONT DESK - SHINJUKU PLAZA HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Jake and Sekiguchi stand before a poised YOUNG JAPANESE WOMAN, hair pulled tightly back. The hostess stares down at her RESERVATION LIST, then up at Jake.

YOUNG JAPANESE WOMAN

(confirming)

[Adelstein, Jake?]

JAKE

[Yeah.]

YOUNG JAPANESE WOMAN

(with a cool smile)

[Your guests are already here.]

INT. LOUNGE - SHINJUKU PLAZA HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

We HEAR clinking SILVERWARE and the low murmur of JAPANESE VOICES as Jake and Sekiguchi walk in step behind the Young Woman. As they weave through the elegant room full of well-dressed JAPANESE GUESTS casually sipping and supping...

SEKIGUCHI

(voice low, just for Jake)

Speak as little as possible. Let them do the talking.

The hostess glides to a halt before a DOOR to a private room. She OPENS THE DOOR, smoothly gesturing for them to enter.

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - SHINJUKU PLAZA HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

In the hushed, dimly lit backroom, Jake and Sekiguchi sit shoulder-to-shoulder at a TABLE, untouched CUPS OF BLACK COFFEE before them.

The man sitting across from Jake wears a similar DARK SUIT, tie knotted tight against his thick neck. "POPEYE" has a deep SCAR over one eyelid, causing it to droop. He slips a CIGARETTE into his mouth. As his meaty hands spark a GOLD-PLATED LIGHTER, we see his HAND IS MISSING A FINGER.

A coiled THUG with a shock of ORANGE HAIR sits next to Popeye, dressed in the same uniform, his eyes locked on Jake.

POPEYE

(to Jake)

[We know what you are looking into, and we wish for you to stop.]

JAKE

[I'll keep that in mind.]

Popeye smiles. The man next to him does not.

POPEYE

[Tadamasa-san is like a father to everyone in our organization. And this story you are writing, it is putting our father in jeopardy.]

(MORE)

POPEYE (CONT'D)
 (calm and measured)
**[So you will erase your story, or
 we will erase you.]**

Jake stares at the men across from him. They stare back. No one moves.

POPEYE (CONT'D)
**[Walk away and it'll be like it
 never happened. Write it, and
 there's nowhere you can hide.]**

Popeye leans in close to Jake. As he flicks CIGARETTE ASH in the ASHTRAY in the middle of the table...

POPEYE (CONT'D)
 (softly, a whisper)
**[But before we kill you, first
 we'll kill everyone you love.]**

Popeye leans back and waits for a response. Jake turns to Sekiguchi, looking for guidance. The detective stares back at him, stone faced...then he subtly cocks his head, as if to say: *"It's up to you."*

Jake turns back to Popeye.

JAKE
**[Do you mind if I smoke while I
 consider your offer?]**

Popeye nods. Jake takes a CLOVE CIGARETTE out of a crumpled pack in his breast pocket and slips it between his lips. Popeye leans in and lights Jake's cigarette with his LIGHTER.

As Jake inhales, Popeye's eyes are locked on him, waiting for an answer. The sounds of the room fall away and all we HEAR is the CRACKLE of burning tobacco.

Jake exhales, the SMOKE BILLOWS out of his mouth, and we

CUT TO:

A BLACK SCREEN with the WORDS: *Two years ago.*

The SOUND of pulsing JAPANESE POP kicks in.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - ROPPONGI DISTRICT - TOKYO - DAY

A CROWD coming toward us. A sea of JAPANESE MEN AND WOMEN, in almost identical DARK SUITS and BRIEFCASES, wearing WHITE SURGICAL MASKS. As if in time to the music, they move as one.

And not one of them is on a mobile phone. Because this is 1999. And this Tokyo, as we'll soon learn, is a very different city from the one we now know.

In the midst of the endless flow of people, we find Jake flowing along with them. Here there's not an inkling of the stylish, hard-boiled clove-smoker we just met. It's only two years ago, but he looks like a different person: an All-American kid, hair messy and floppy; his thin body draped in a loose sweatshirt, baggy jeans, and scuffed sneakers; a backpack dangles from his shoulder.

INT. AIKIDO STUDIO - TOKYO - DAY

The music carries us as we TRAVEL down a row of JAPANESE MEN IN WHITE ROBES PUNCHING AND ROARING. At the end we find Jake, the only white face in the room, robes hanging off him, a boy among warriors.

As one, the men start to kick their LEGS TO SHOULDER HEIGHT--except Jake, who can't get his above his waist--and we

CUT TO:

INT. SHINJUKU TRAIN STATION - TOKYO - DAY

Jake standing with a mob of COMMUTERS before a SUBWAY CAR. The car's DOORS WHOOSH OPEN. It's packed; almost no one gets off.

The mob SURGES FORWARD as immaculately UNIFORMED TRAIN OFFICIALS roughly SHOVE the commuters into the train car.

Jake is buffeted this way and that; he's fighting to get on before the doors close; he's getting nowhere; and we

CUT BACK TO:

INT. AIKIDO STUDIO - DAY

The class sitting cross-legged, watching Jake and a LARGE MAN circle each other, bodies tensed and crouched.

JAKE CHARGES...

And is THROWN TO THE MAT with bone-crunching force.

RAPID SERIES OF SHOTS: Jake being slammed, kicked, beaten.

CLOSE on JAKE'S FACE: pressed to the mat, teeth gritted, refusing to give up.

The MUSIC ENDS and we

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - APARTMENT BUILDING - TOKYO - DAY

An APARTMENT DOOR SWINGING OPEN, revealing Jake standing in the rundown hallway, face slightly BRUISED, in what we'll come to recognize as his "uniform" of baggy jeans and oversized sweatshirt.

Staring back at Jake is a HEAVY-SET JAPANESE WOMAN, wearing nothing but a thin silk robe, irritation etched on her face.

JAKE
(not for the first time)
[I apologize for being late.]

INT. BEDROOM - CLIENT'S APARTMENT - TOKYO - A LITTLE LATER

In her small, dingy bedroom, the heavy-set woman lies naked, face down on a MASSAGE TABLE, as Jake works on her. Sweat on his brow, face grimacing from exertion; his HANDS dig into her jiggling, corpulent flesh.

He GRIMACES. A hand is cramping. Using an ELBOW, he digs on.

INT. HALLWAY - APARTMENT BUILDING - TOKYO - DAY

From the end of the narrow hallway, we watch Jake standing back outside the woman's apartment door, BOWING to her, as she hands him an ENVELOPE.

INT. HALLWAY - APARTMENT BUILDING - TOKYO - MOMENTS LATER

As Jake walks, he opens the ENVELOPE.

He STOPS, staring at the small handful of YEN inside.

JAKE
Seriously?

Jake looks back down the narrow hallway. The DOOR IS CLOSED.

Fuck it. He walks on.

EXT. STREETS OF RAPPONGI - TOKYO - NIGHT

Jake moves alone through a crowd, taking in the FACES coming at him. NEON LIGHT glowing from endless STORE SIGNS floods out into the darkness.

A group of YOUNG JAPANESE WOMEN walk toward him, dressed in SCHOOL GIRL UNIFORMS. Their DAY-GLOW HAIR pulled back tight. Like chic Anime characters brought to life.

The Anime Girls come closer, Jake tries to make eye contact...and they BRUSH BY HIM, as if he's not even there.

INT. BALCONY - TOURIST NIGHTCLUB - RAPPONGI - LATER

BOOMING AMERICAN CLUB MUSIC assaults us as we take in a cavernous multi-floor disco; its cheesy theme-park décor; everything covered in a riot of MIRRORS and COLORED GLASS.

Jake stands stiffly at the edge of one of the club's balconies, an umbrella-ed neon-colored COCKTAIL in his hand. He stares down at the FOREIGN TOURISTS and YOUNG FRESH-FACED JAPANESE swaying and sweating together on the dance floor...

...while trying to summon the courage to speak to the chic JAPANESE GIRL next to him, sipping her drink from a straw.

As they both stare at the young folks from all over the world, swaying and bumping to the music:

JAKE
(shaking his head)
[Tourists.]

The girl looks at him, noticing Jake for the first time. He gives her his best "cool" smile.

JAKE (CONT'D)
[They love this stuff.]
(then, smooth as he can)
[You from around here?]

Her FACE REDDENS in confusion and embarrassment. She's so unnerved that a foreign "gaijin" is flirting with her, she can't even process that he's speaking her language.

JAPANESE GIRL
(halting)
I sorry. No speak English.

The girl nods sharply in apology and turns back to watching--willing a wall to form between them.

Jake stares at her, then back out to the dance floor, trying to mask how crushed and mortified he feels.

EXT. COOL NIGHTCLUB - RAPPONGI - LATER

Jake stands in line with YOUNG, TRENDY JAPANESE MEN AND WOMEN, all snaking their way toward the narrow entrance door to a hidden-away club for Tokyo's hippest.

Jake reaches the VELVET ROPE...the hulking JAPANESE BOUNCER blocks him. He makes an "X" WITH HIS FOREARMS:

BOUNCER
(a growl)
[No gaijin.]

Jake opens his mouth to protest, but the menace from the man makes him back away.

EXT. SIDEWALK - ACROSS FROM THE SAME NIGHTCLUB - LATER

Jake stares in fascination as a pack of BLACK CLAD YAKUZA prowl toward the entrance. DARK GLASSES on, even in the middle of the night. Faces set like stone.

The waiting patrons part before them. The bouncer smoothly steps aside. The men enter.

EXT. NEWSSTAND - STREET CORNER - RAPPONGI - LATER

Jake stands in front of a BRIGHTLY LIT KIOSK, staring at a prominent display of JAPANESE MAGAZINES. Each shiny cover displays suave-looking MEN IN DARK SUITS AND SUNGLASSES. All dressed identically to the men we just saw entering the club.

INT. BAR - RAPPONGI - LATER

Jake sits alone, nursing a BEER. The Japanese BARTENDER ignores him as Jake pours over the YAKUZA FANZINE he just bought. We study the glossy pages with him: images of cool, handsome black-clad mobsters, getting the full "US Weekly" treatment.

From the end of the bar, Jake scans the dimly lit room, taking in the other patrons. All Japanese. Laughing. Flirting. Ignoring him.

INT. STAIRWELL - JAKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EVEN LATER

An exhausted Jake, Yakuza magazine rolled up in his hand, makes his way up a narrow set of Everest-STEEP STAIRS. As he climbs, we take in the fading, peeling WALLPAPER. The grime.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Jake stands silently in the middle of his one-room, shit-hole of a flat. If he stretched his arms wide, he could just about touch two walls at once.

The room holds a few worn TATAMI MATS, a battered FUTON, an OLD TV, one rickety BOOKSHELF full of what looks like research volumes and books about newspaper reporting. And that's it.

Jake drops the magazine on a large pile. We see they're all yakuza fanzines of one kind or another.

CLOSE on his face, etched with loneliness.

He takes a deep breath. His day's not over yet.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Jake sits cross-legged on a tatami, a thick REFERENCE BOOK down off the shelf and beside him. Open in front of him is a JAPANESE NEWSPAPER.

He looks at the paper, then into the notebook in his lap, as he carefully copies the JAPANESE CALLIGRAPHY SYMBOLS that make up the paper's headline. On he works, deep into the night.

INT. BEDROOM - DIFFERENT CLIENT'S APARTMENT - TOKYO - DAY

A bleary-eyed, sleep-deprived Jake works on the BONY BACK of the NAKED JAPANESE MAN lying on a massage table before him. This client's bedroom is just as small and depressing as that of the corpulent woman's we saw Jake working on before.

Jake stares off, HANDS DIGGING HARD into the man's dry, blotchy skin--

NAKED JAPANESE MAN
(face down, yelp of pain)
[Hey! Watch it!]

JAKE
(mumbling, automatic bow)
[**Sorry. My apologies.**]

He shakes his head--"focus!"--as he works on.

INT. CHECK-OUT COUNTER - 7-ELEVEN - TOKYO - LATER

Jake stands at the counter as a uniformed JAPANESE MALE CLERK rings up his purchase: a RICE TRIANGLE, a CAN OF COFFEE, and a pre-paid PHONE CARD.

The place looks just like a cookie-cutter 7-Eleven in the States, except for the giant WALL OF HARD-CORE PORN MAGAZINES behind the clerk, out and about for all to see.

As Jake stares up at the cornucopia of graphic images...

YOUNG MALE CLERK
(thick accent, brusque)
Twenty-five.

Jake opens another envelope of "massage yen." He counts the bills. Shit. Not enough.

He looks up at the Clerk. The man is waiting.

Jake pushes the can of coffee to the side.

EXT. A STREET IN DOWNTOWN TOKYO - MOMENTS LATER

Under a DARK GREY SKY, Jake weaves through the crowd of Japanese faces. As he ravenously inhales his rice triangle...

The HEAVENS OPEN UP. As one, everyone but Jake pulls out matching TRANSLUCENT UMBRELLAS and opens them to the sky. A ghostly wall of clear plastic, shielding everyone but Jake.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - STREET CORNER - ROPPONGI - LATER

The sky is PITCH BLACK now. The rain torrential, waves of water crashing down. As men and women race for shelter, we see a dripping-wet Jake standing in the capsule-like phone booth. It's as if he's in a fishbowl: outside the booth, all of Tokyo swims around him.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - STREET CORNER - ROPPONGI - CONTINUOUS

Jake wipes water from his face, holding the PHONE in the crook between his ear and shoulder. We see the phone card he just bought inserted, the minutes ticking down, as we HEAR:

JAKE'S MOM (O.S.)
 (through the phone)
 What if you don't pass the test?
 Then what?

We hear the concern in his mother's voice--and the Brooklyn accent that years in central Missouri haven't fully erased.

JAKE
 I'm gonna pass. But thanks for the encouragement.

JAKE'S MOM (O.S.)
 But what's your backup plan? Your student visa's almost up; you can't get a real job there without a real visa.

JAKE
 Yeah, I'm eminently aware of that, Ma.

JAKE'S MOM (O.S.)
 All I'm saying is, your father and I have been talking, and we both agree, if you don't pass, you should come home and he can help you get the same kind of job here.

JAKE
 (not the first time)
 Ma, this is my home.

JAKE'S MOM (O.S.)
 No, Jake, it's where you went to school, which I'm sure was fascinating. Not that we'd know, of course, as sharing your life with your own family seems to be of no interest to you.

Jake's JAW TIGHTENS--he's struggling not to let his buttons be pushed--as her words pour forth, laced in anger and longing.

JAKE'S MOM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 But you graduated a year ago. We have not seen you for a year.

JAKE
Ma, I've told you, I am studying.

JAKE'S MOM (O.S.)
For a year?

JAKE
Yes!

JAKE'S MOM (O.S.)
Do you even know what's happening
with your sister and her
treatments? Do you even care?

JAKE
I'll call her next week.

JAKE'S MOM (O.S.)
When next week? Because I'm not
going to get her hopes up again,
then have you--

JAKE
I said I was sorry!
(relenting, softer)
I'll call her. Okay? I promise.

Jake stares out of his fishbowl, watching the rain come down.

JAKE (CONT'D)
(struggling for the words)
Ma. This is where I wanna be.
(Beat. then)
I need to try and do this. On my
own. Not with Dad's help. Just me.

He grips the phone to his ear, needing her approval. For a moment, just the SOUND of her breathing, struggling with what to say--or not say, then:

JAKE'S MOM
(quietly)
When's the test?

JAKE
Tomorrow.

JAKE'S MOM (O.S.)
Well. Good luck then.

And we hear the CLICK of Jake's Mom hanging up.

INT. SIGN-IN DESK - MASS MEDIA QUALIFICATIONS CENTER -
MORNING

A prim and confused JAPANESE MATRON stands behind a large desk. She reads out loud from the PAPER IN HER HAND.

JAPANESE MATRON
(mangling his last name)
"Jake Adelstein."

She looks up to see Jake standing before her in a cheap, ill-fitting BAGGY BLACK SUIT. She stares at him over her GLASSES, trying to understand.

JAPANESE MATRON (CONT'D)
[**This test is in Japanese.**]

JAKE
(bowing)
[**Yes, I know.**]

JAPANESE MATRON
(slowly, as if to a child)
[**To be a reporter in Japanese.**]

JAKE
(bowing again)
[**Yes, I know.**]

She stares at him...then slides the TEST across the desk.

INT. TEST HALL - MASS MEDIA CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Jake walks the aisle between LONG WOODEN TABLES full of seated TEST TAKERS: countless YOUNG JAPANESE MEN in eerily IDENTICAL NAVY BLUE SUITS with MATCHING RED TIES, and a hand-full of YOUNG JAPANESE WOMEN in matching pant-suits of the same blue and scarves of the same red.

Eyes follow Jake, the lone white face in his out-of-place funereal garb.

INT. TEST HALL - MASS MEDIA CENTER - A MOMENT LATER

CLOSE on a WALL CLOCK, HANDS snapping to "12:00 p.m."...

As one, the now seated Jake and all other applicants TURN THEIR TESTS OVER.

ANGLE UP: Jake's anxious face. BEADS OF SWEAT already forming on his brow, as we see what he's thinking: *This is it.*

INT. TEST HALL - MASS MEDIA CENTER - TIME PASSING

OVERLAPPING IMAGES:

Jake writing intently with a PENCIL...

The CLOCK ON THE WALL reading: "2:00 p.m."...

Jake furiously ERASING a swath of his writing...

The CLOCK ON THE WALL reading: "2:45 p.m."...

Jake's hand gripping the pencil so tightly that his FINGERS have gone white, as he writes on and on.

INT. TEST HALL - MASS MEDIA CENTER - LATER

Jake sits still, looking down at his finished essay. He lets out a breath. He's done it. Around him, other test takers are still scribbling on, faces tight with anxiety.

He checks the clock: "3:45 p.m."

For a moment, he's not sure what to do. Then Jake puts his HANDS BEHIND HIS HEAD and leans back slightly in his chair--relief and pleasure on his face.

INT. TEST HALL - MASS MEDIA CENTER - LATER

The CLOCK HANDS snap to "4 p.m." A BUZZER SOUNDS.

Everyone around Jake PUTS DOWN THEIR PENCILS.

Jake unclasps his hands from behind his head as the weary Test Takers around him stumble to their feet. Amidst the SOUNDS of CHAIRS SCRAPING FLOOR, Jake PICKS UP HIS TEST...

...and freezes. Because on the back page, there's ANOTHER QUESTION. That he didn't see. That he didn't answer.

As the other Test Takers file past and around him, Jake just sits there. He doesn't move. He just stares down at his colossal failure. His dream come to ruin.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - MORNING - DAYS LATER

CLOSE on a TELEVISION SCREEN playing a shitty second-rate AMERICAN CARTOON (think: "Space Ghost") as we hear the tinny DIALOGUE poorly dubbed in Japanese.

Jake sits cross-legged on a tatami mat in front of his TV, wearing nothing but a pair of BOXER SHORTS. A box of "Morinaga Chocolate flakes" by his side; a half-eaten bowl of the cereal in his lap. He stares zombie-like at the screen. He looks like he hasn't moved--or washed--in days.

The nearby PHONE RINGS. Jake doesn't move.

It RINGS AGAIN. Nothing.

Mid THIRD RING...eyes still glued to the TV...Jake PICKS UP.

JAKE
(a flat monotone)
[Hello.]

A MAN'S VOICE on the other end responds in Japanese--a low MURMUR that we can't make out. But as the man keeps talking, Jake's EYES get WIDER AND WIDER.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - YOMIURI SHIMBUN OFFICES - DAY

Three somber INTERVIEWERS sit behind a LONG TABLE. They're "Salary Men": matching dull grey corporate suits, side-parted hair, thick-framed glasses, pens in their shirt pockets.

A nervous Jake sits across from them in his one ill-fitting suit, squeezed behind a SCHOOL DESK, knees up to his chest.

FIRST INTERVIEWER
[You transferred from...]
(reading off a document)
"University, Mis-sou-ri..."
(back up at Jake)
[...to Sophia University.]

JAKE
(bowing from his seat)
[Yes.]

FIRST INTERVIEWER
[To study Japanese Journalism.]

JAKE
(another seated bow)
[Yes.]

FIRST INTERVIEWER
**[Because you wish to be a crime
journalist. In Japan.]**

The men stare at Jake, truly perplexed.

JAKE
 (beat, then haltingly)
**[My father is a coroner. He would
 talk about murder investigations.
 Show me bodies. It's interesting.]**

The men keep staring. Jake can see it on their faces: now they think he's just plain weird.

The men lean their heads together, WHISPER, then turn back.

The SECOND INTERVIEWER holds up JAKE'S TEST.

SECOND INTERVIEWER
**[Your written Japanese is
 excellent.]**

JAKE
[Thank you.]

The Second Interviewer TURNS the unfinished half toward him.

SECOND INTERVIEWER
[So how do you explain this?]

We see Jake struggling with what to say. Finally, the truth:

JAKE
**[I was so excited to take the test,
 I did not pay attention.]**

They nod, digesting this. Then:

FIRST INTERVIEWER
**[Even with only finishing half,
 your score was high.]**

SECOND INTERVIEWER
[Very high.]

From his seat, Jake nods in gratitude--and relief.

FIRST INTERVIEWER
**[The Yomiuri Shimbun has ten
 million readers a day. The largest
 circulation in the world.]**

SECOND INTERVIEWER
**[No foreigner has worked here.
 Ever.]**

Silence. Then, as one, the interviewers lean in.

FIRST INTERVIEWER
[Do you believe in loyalty?]

JAKE
 (bowing from his chair)
[Absolutely.]

SECOND INTERVIEWER
[Do you eat sushi?]

JAKE
 (bowing again)
[Every day.]

Third Interviewer finally speaks.

THIRD INTERVIEWER
[Many here believe Jews control the world economy.]
 (challenging)
[What do you think?]

The room goes quiet as the men await Jake's answer.

JAKE
 (deadpan, hint of a smile)
[If we did, do you think I'd be satisfied with what you're gonna pay me?]

INT. NATIONAL NEWS OFFICE - YOMIURI SHIMBUN OFFICES - DAY

We MOVE swiftly through the grimy, dingy chaos of "Japan's Greatest Newspaper"...passing by SECRETARIES typing on ancient COMPUTERS as RINGING PHONES go unanswered; over and around the haphazard stacks of old NEWSPAPERS piled everywhere; taking in the sloppily dressed REPORTERS PLAYING CARDS AND SMOKING like chimneys...

....finding Jake and a dozen other NEWBIE REPORTERS, standing clumped together, trying not to look intimidated.

We linger on the faces of the two young men closest to Jake, both of whom we'll soon get to know:

"FACE" is tall for a Japanese. With his wavy hair and muscular build, he's straight out of a fashion magazine.

"FRENCHIE" is short and compact, his wire-rimmed GLASSES and THREE-PIECE SUIT shout "egg-head."

INT. NATIONAL NEWS OFFICE - YOMIURI SHIMBUN - A LITTLE LATER

The new recruits are lined up before MARI MARUYAMA, mid 20s, as she gives them their marching orders. She exudes a non-nonsense professionalism.

MARI

[I'm Mari Maruyama. I'm the Sub-Cap. You will report to me.]

As Mari makes her way down the line, she hands each of the young men a copy of a BOUND SCRAPBOOK.

MARI (CONT'D)

[These are examples of articles. Memorize their format.]

Jake is at the end of the line, watching her as she makes her way toward him--not wasting a movement or a word.

MARI (CONT'D)

(to them all)

[This is the exact and only format you will use: "Who," "What," "When."]

JAKE

(accepting his scrapbook)

[What about "Why"?)

MARI

[Only at the end, and only if there's room.]

JAKE

[How often is there room?]

MARI

[You should assume never.]

(then)

[First learn what you're doing, then worry about "Why."]

JAKE

(with a grin)

[Thanks for the tip, Mari-chan.]

Mari's FACE REDDENS. Her EYES NARROW; she locks them on Jake.

MARI

I'm not your friend, and I'm certainly not your girlfriend, so you're about a thousand hours too early in this relationship to call me "Mari-chan."

We're not sure if Jake's more shocked by her turn-on-a-dime anger, or that she's ripping him a new one with a cut-glass ENGLISH ACCENT.

MARI (CONT'D)

As your superior--and your Senpai-- you will pay me the courtesy of using "Mari-san," or "Mari-sama." Understood?

Jake stares at her. He blinks.

JAKE

Yeah.

MARI

(stepping closer to him)
You think because you're a foreigner, the rules are different? Not in this company, and not with me.

She pivots; she's gone.

Jake sees Frenchie and Face staring at him. On the down low, Face gives him a THUMBS UP: "Way to go."

INT. EDITOR'S SECTION - YOMIURI SHIMBUN - A LITTLE LATER

Bureau Editor YUUTO KIMURA, 50s, a fearsome bull of a man, stands in front of a BANNER of the YOMIURI LOGO, mid pontification to the new hires. A freshly chastened Jake stands in the back of the pack.

KIMURA

(barking, a drill sergeant)
[Why are you starting on the police beat?]

The cowed newbies stare back at the Bureau Editor. Was that rhetorical? Are they supposed to answer?

KIMURA (CONT'D)

[Because everyone starts on the police beat.]

(MORE)

KIMURA (CONT'D)
**Because even greenhorn fucks like
 you won't screw up writing these
 articles.]**

Mari stands off to the side as Kimura barrels on.

KIMURA (CONT'D)
**[Purse snatching, family suicides,
 people choking to death on rice
 cakes: this is what you will be
 covering. You want to be Woodward
 and Bernstein? Fuck you: go work
 somewhere else.]**

We watch Jake, focusing hard, working to keep up with
 Kimura's rat-a-tat-tat.

KIMURA (CONT'D)
**[Now, listen closely because I'm
 only going to say this once.]**
 (jutting a hand at Mari)
**[Your Sub-cap will assign you a
 story. After you are assigned your
 story, this is the precise order of
 actions you will take to...]**

Kimura keeps speaking--but the SUBTITLES ON SCREEN DISAPPEAR.

CLOSE on Jake's panicked face. He's exhausted; he can't keep
 up; he's lost the thread. Kimura is still going, the
 subtitles are still missing, and then...

Jake realizes the room is actually SILENT. Because Kimura is
 staring at Jake, registering him for the first time.

Kimura slowly RAISES his hand and points at Jake.

KIMURA (CONT'D)
[Who the hell are you?]

As one, the newbies slowly turn and look at Jake.

JAKE
 (beat, then)
[I'm your new reporter, sir.]

As one, the newbies slowly turn back to look at Kimura.

The editor looks like someone just threw up in his mouth.

KIMURA
 (yelling at the room)
[Who let this gaijin in here!?!]

Kimura WHIPS A SHOE OFF HIS FOOT AND POINTS it at Jake like a weapon--like he's going to hit him with it. Now. Hard.

KIMURA (CONT'D)
**[Throw this barbarian out before he
 pollutes our office!]**

We HEAR an older man's commanding voice:

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
[Kimura!]

Across the room, Editor MATSUYAMA, an elegantly dressed patrician in his 60s, stands in the DOORWAY of his office.

MATSUYAMA
[Enough.]

Kimura curtly nods in deference toward his boss. Editor Matsuyama turns his gaze to Jake and the rest of the newbies.

MATSUYAMA (CONT'D)
 (slyly)
[Let's put these boys to work.]

INT. BACK ROOM - SAKE BAR - THAT NIGHT

MUSIC courses through the SMOKE-FILLED ROOM where the crime beat team is beginning the process of getting drunk out of their minds. As one, the SENIOR STAFF HOIST THEIR DRINKS.

SENIOR STAFF
 (in unison)
 Kanpai!!!

INT. BACK ROOM - SAKE BAR - LATER

The party in full swing; newbies mill, trying to fit in.

Mari and two FEMALE STAFFERS are POURING DRINKS for their male counterparts. Mid-pour, Mari looks up to see Jake across the room, awkwardly holding a beer, watching her.

She CROOKS HER FINGER and beckons to him: *You come over and pour the drinks. Now.*

INT. BACK ROOM - SAKE BAR - MOMENTS LATER

As the MUSIC POUNDS we see:

Jake moving between the staffers, formally REFILLING THEIR GLASSES, as the men delight in his humiliation.

JUMP TO:

Jake COUGHING from the smoke of the CIGARETTE dangling from the mouth of the DRUNKEN REPORTER next to him. The man holds out a LARGE GLASS. Jake waves it off but the reporter thrusts the booze into his hand. Jake screws up his courage and DOWNS IT. His eyes BUG OUT. The man happily POUNDS HIS BACK.

JUMP TO:

Jake, wedged between two drunken, confused senior staff, as they all YELL over the music:

JAKE
(correcting, again)
Adelstein.

TWO MEN
(trying, failing)
Adelstein.

JAKE
(louder, slower)
Adelstein!

TWO MEN
(giggling, losing it)
Adelstein!

INT. BACK ROOM SAKE BAR - LATER

The party is getting sloppy and ragged. In the far corner, Jake huddles with Frenchie and Face.

FRENCHIE
(over the music)
Mossad!

JAKE
(not understanding)
What?

FRENCHIE
(slower, louder)
MO-SAD!

Jake stares at him completely confused.

FRENCHIE (CONT'D)
 (accented English)
 Everyone here thinks you are a spy.
 (explaining further)
 For the Israelis.

JAKE
 (in disbelief)
 Are you kidding me?

They're not.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 Dudes, I'm from Missouri.

A glassy-eyed Face, grins as he squeezes Jake's shoulder.

FACE
 (a conspiratorial wink)
[Okay, James Bond!]

The bacchanalia rolls on. Jake takes in the room, feeling the gulf between he and everyone else.

INT. BACK ROOM - SAKE BAR - MINUTES LATER

All the senior staff and newbies surround Jake, CHEERING him on as he guzzles an entire bottle of JAPANESE WHISKY.

He finishes it in triumph--the last of it splashing down his chin and shirt.

JAKE
 (head back, bellowing)
 Kanpai!!!

The crowd goes wild.

INT. BACK ROOM - SAKE BAR - STILL LATER

A plastered Jake stands in front of the crowd. In full performance mode, he shows them a 500-YEN COIN, then grandly GESTURES: "Nothing up this sleeve... Nothing up that one." Then, with a solemn flourish...

Jake PUSHES THE COIN UP ONE OF HIS NOSTRILS.

The crowd explodes in delirium:

Frenchie is so excited he SPILLS HIS DRINK all over himself.

Mari SCREWS UP HER FACE--is that bemusement or disgust?

Jake THROWS UP HIS HANDS in triumph...

And his BODY IS RACKED WITH A MASSIVE SNEEZE.

In SLOW MOTION, SOUND WARPING as well, the coin--and a giant goober of SNOT--float across the room...

hitting the bull-like Kimura square in the face.

We can hear a pin drop. Kimura is too stunned to even wipe the goop off his face. Jake's mouth hangs open.

FRENCHIE
(leaping to his feet)
**[Jake-kun, you really are a
barbarian!]**

The room explodes with LAUGHTER, washing away the tension.

The newbies swarm Jake. He locks eyes with Frenchie and gives him a look: *"Thank you for saving my ass."*

A seething Kimura WIPES HIS FACE.

We HOLD on Jake's sweaty, flushed, exhilarated face.

EXT. MIDDLE OF STREET - SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - NEXT MORNING

SOUNDS of morning BIRDS. A DEAD MAN's wide-open eyes stare up at us. A KITCHEN KNIFE sticks out of his BLOOD-SOAKED CHEST.

Dead Man's POV: looking up into the faces of four somber-faced JAPANESE UNIFORMED PATROLMEN. They stare down. Beat.

Detective Sekiguchi, the broken-nosed man with the slicked back hair whom we met at the top of the pilot, comes into frame. He stares down with the other cops as he silently takes a long PULL on a CIGARETTE.

EXT. MIDDLE OF STREET - SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

Sekiguchi crouches down over the Dead Man, whose body is cordoned off by YELLOW TAPE. He's wearing a variation of the same dark suit we first saw him in. As the beat cops watch, he takes out a POCKET ASHTRAY and STUBS OUT HIS CIGARETTE.

He PUTS out a hand. A beat cop hands him a pair of LATEX GLOVES. He snaps them on. Every move Sekiguchi makes is economical and smooth. This is not a man who fucks around.

Sekiguchi PULLS UP THE SLEEVE of the dead man's jacket and looks at his bare arm. He looks up at the other cops. He ROLLS THE SLEEVE BACK DOWN.

EXT. SIDEWALK - SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

A hungover-as-hell Jake stands across the street from the crime scene, watching Sekiguchi investigate. Jake's still in his clothes from last night's epic party, but now he wears an ARMBAND: the YOMIURI LOGO we saw at the paper's offices.

Jake stares in fascination as the detective rolls up the Dead Man's other sleeve...checking for something that's not there.

We PULL BACK to take in the full suburban Tokyo idyll: matching ROW HOUSES line each side of the street; MANICURED GRASS before each home; all is perfectly just so...save the bloody body lying at an angle in the middle of the street.

REPORTERS we recognize and those we don't are fanning out: each headed toward a different row house, each wearing an ARMBAND with their newspaper's logo.

As Jake keeps staring at the crime scene we HEAR a DOORBELL.

EXT. FRONT STOOP - ROW HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

A Japanese HOUSEWIFE OPENS HER DOOR. Standing there is Jake.

JAKE
[Good morning.]

As she stare at him, he hands her his MEISHI, the ubiquitous Japanese business card, BOWING in the formal way.

The Housewife takes it, looks at it, then looks back at Jake.

HOUSEWIFE
[You're a reporter?]

JAKE
[Yes.]

HOUSEWIFE
[But you're a gaijin?]

JAKE
[Yes.]

She SLAMS THE DOOR in his face.

Jake sees Face on a nearby stoop, having watched what just happened. Again, he gives the Jake a "nice going" THUMBS UP.

EXT. LOCAL METRO POLICE STATION - LATER THAT DAY

Jake and Frenchie are late, walking swiftly in time toward the GREY CONCRETE building in front of them.

At the entrance, Jake pulls open the GLASS FRONT DOOR.

EXT. ELEVATOR - LOCAL METRO POLICE STATION - A MOMENT LATER

Our two newbies push into an elevator already stuffed with REPORTERS from the crime scene--DOORS CLOSING behind them.

INT. ELEVATOR - LOCAL METRO POLICE STATION - A MOMENT LATER

As the elevator rises, Jake and Frenchie watch the other reporters TAKE OFF THEIR ARMBANDS.

Eyes clock each other: *So we should do that, too, right?*

They hastily pull theirs off as we HEAR: "PING."

INT. LOBBY - LOCAL METRO POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

The packed-in reporters spill out of the elevator and into the buzzing lobby of the police station.

Most of them move en masse toward a DOOR on the other side of the lobby, but Jake slows, taking it in.

Jake's POV: A Japanese version of a police station in a 1970s New York City cop movie. PEELING PAINT on the walls; seedy, coffee-stained COUCHES; weary faced OFFICERS in SHORT-SLEEVED LIGHT BLUE UNIFORMS moving to and fro.

As we see the fascination in his face...

JAKE IS SMASHED INTO THE WALL.

A FAT COP is pinning Jake with his own body--THICK HAND PRESSING JAKE'S HEAD FLAT AGAINST THE WALL.

FAT COP
(barking to the room)
[Who let this shit out of holding?]

Jake tries to speak; only a GURGLE comes out.

A SKINNY COP is there, grunting as he tries to HANDCUFF JAKE'S FLAILING HANDS.

Face grinding the wall, Jake SEES Frenchie staring at the chaotic melee--JAW HANGING OPEN.

SKINNY COP
(whacking Jake's head)
[Hold still, you little fuck!]

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
[Hey!]

DETECTIVE HIROTO YAMAMOTO, 30s, lean, rugged, "movie cop" handsome, is crossing the room toward Jake and the cops. He's in street clothes, moving fast, and pissed.

YAMAMOTO
(admonishing the cops)
[What are you assholes doing?]
(pointing at Jake)
[He's one of the new guys, not a fucking perp.]

The two cops stare at Yamamoto...then sheepishly release Jake, MUMBLING apologies as they drift off back to work.

As Jake steadies himself with one hand against the wall he was just "eating," Yamamoto SLAPS HIS SHOULDER.

YAMAMOTO (CONT'D)
(with a grin, walking on)
[Welcome to hell.]

INT. PRESS BRIEFING ROOM - POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

The reporters sit bunched together on FOLDING CHAIRS. Jake, still dazed, sits knee-to-knee with Frenchie. All face front, holding individual copies of the ONE PAGE Sketch of Details.

CAPTAIN FUJI, late 50s, stands before them behind a LECTERN. His narrow eyes peer out from behind HORN-RIMMED GLASSES. Fuji's gray hair is incongruously cut in a 1960s Beatles bob.

CAPTAIN FUJI
[This is what we know about the deceased: Name, age, address, time he was found...]

A REPORTER RAISES A HAND. Fuji NODS sharply. The man STANDS.

REPORTER
[Do you have a motivation?]

CAPTAIN FUJI
 [Do you see "motivation" on that
 piece of paper? No? Then why are
 you asking that question?]

As the chastened reporter SINKS BACK INTO HIS SEAT...

CAPTAIN FUJI (CONT'D)
 (to all, holding up paper)
 [Everything you need to know is
 written here. So we are going to go
 through this, point by point, and
 that is all we are going to do.]
 (leaning in, sharply)
 [Is that clear?]

All the reporters around Jake bark as one:

REPORTERS
 [Hai!]

As Captain Fuji looks back down at his copy on his lectern...

Jake sees Yamamoto, leaning against the doorway, gnawing a
 TOOTHPICK, grinning in delight at the Captain's slap down.

As Fuji continues, Jake faces front but LEANS IN to Frenchie.

JAKE
 (under his breath)
 Who's that guy?

Frenchie clocks who Jake's asking about.

FRENCHIE
 (eyes front, soto as well)
 Yamamoto. Vice squad. Bad ass.
 (quieter, gossiping)
 They say he loves poo.

Facing front, back and forth, the corner of their mouths:

JAKE
 (correcting)
 "Poon."

FRENCHIE
 "Poon"?

JAKE
 Yeah.

FRENCHIE
 Not "poo"?

JAKE
Trust me.

FRENCHIE
[Thanks.]

JAKE
[Don't mention it.]

FRENCHIE
(nodding at Yamamoto)
And they say he knows yakuza.

Jake turns to Frenchie, who gives him a knowing look: *Yep.*

Jake turns back to look at Yamamoto...but he's gone.

INT. PRESS OFFICE - POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NEXT DAY

We HEAR the CLACKITY-CLACK of typing as we take in the busy open-plan "bullpen" for the city's crime reporters. This is where the reporters from all the Tokyo newspapers gather, and write their stories.

We work our way down a row of uncomfortably SMALL DESKS...a REPORTER seated at each, on a PHONE or TYPING AWAY...and end on...a seated Jake, utterly absorbed as he pours over a YAKUZA FANZINE.

Mari SLAPS THE BACK OF HIS HEAD with a ROLLED UP DOCUMENT. As she DROPS IT ON HIS DESK:

MARI
The body in the street. Write it up
by end of day.

She turns to walk away as Jake sees that her "weapon" is the how-to manual he was given on day one.

JAKE
(rising, stopping her)
Wait.
(then)
So...what's the angle?

She cocks her head, staring at him. *The angle? Seriously?*

MARI
Five hundred words. End of day.

JAKE

Yeah, but...

(looks around, steps close)

I mean...how do I...do it?

MARI

Figure it out, "Jake-chan." That's the job.

We HOLD on Jake, absorbing that he's just been thrown into the deep end of the pool.

INT. STAIRWELL - JAKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Jake bounds up the stairs, two at a time.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

SERIES OF QUICK TIGHT SHOTS:

Jake yanking his smelly AIKDO UNIFORM from his backpack.

Jake shoving a thick TOKYO ADDRESS GUIDE into the backpack.

Then shoving in a REPORTER'S NOTEPAD.

Then his copy of the police's one-page Sketch of Details.

Jake SNAPPING a BEEPER onto his belt.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - MOMENT LATER

Jake stares at himself in his MIRROR, backpack over one shoulder. Hand through his hair; he lets out a deep breath.

JAKE

[Let's roll.]

EXTS. MULTIPLE BACK STREETS - LATER

MUSIC carries us as Jake walks a winding alley, Address Guide open in his hands. He TURNS A CORNER...and it's a DEAD END.

He walks a different maze-like street, reading the ADDRESS NUMBERS he's passing. He looks down at his open Address Guide, he looks up...he STOPS. Yeah. He's completely lost.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - LATER

Jake walks down a street that looks exactly like the other two, toward a SMALL HOUSE. As he moves, he looks down at the street address on his copy of the Sketch of Detail. He looks back up at the house. He's found it.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE - MOMENT LATER

Jake KNOCKS on the DOOR. No answer. KNOCKS AGAIN. Nothing.

He sees the MAILBOX to his right--with LETTERS inside.

Jake looks behind him. No one is around. He looks left, then right. Coast is clear.

He OPENS THE MAILBOX and takes out a STACK of envelopes.

Swiftly, he rifles through them...looks like bills, bills, bills...he STOPS.

Jake stares down at an expensive looking linen envelope--a different shape than the rest--embossed with a LARGE ORNATE BLACK KANJI.

EXT. STOREFRONT - MINI MALL - LATER

Jake stands in front of an EMPTY STORE. What must be a "FOR RENT" SIGN in Japanese is in the WINDOW. Through the glass he sees a large room stripped bare. Whatever was here is gone.

He checks the store's address against the RETURN ADDRESS on the envelope with the Black Kanji. Yeah, this is it. Dead end.

Jake looks down at his WATCH: "3 p.m."

INT. PRESS OFFICE - POLICE HEADQUARTERS - LATER THAT DAY

Backpack over his shoulder, Jake walks swiftly down the row of mini-desks...Shit. Every single one is being used.

Jake keeps moving, eyes darting about...he spies an unused WORD PROCESSOR stacked on top of a FILE CABINET.

INT. PRESS OFFICE - POLICE HEADQUARTERS - MOMENTS LATER

At the end of the row of desks, Jake sits hunched in front of the word processor, perched on a GARBAGE CAN.

His FINGERS hunt and peck at the KEYBOARD, as his eyes dart back and forth from the screen to the now rumpled copy of the one-page police Sketch of Details that's in his lap.

His eyes cut to the CLOCK ON THE WALL: "4 p.m."

His fingers peck faster and we

CUT TO:

INT. DOOR TO KIMURA'S OFFICE - YOMIURI SHIMBUN - END OF DAY

The beefy Bureau Editor standing in the DOORWAY to his office, bellowing to the full room.

KIMURA

[Gaijin!]

INT. KIMURA'S OFFICE - YOMIURI SHIMBUN - MOMENTS LATER

Kimura sits behind his messy DESK, stacked with PILES OF ARTICLES in different stages of editing. Kimura's eyes pin Jake, sitting in the chair in front of him, as he STABS the NEWSPAPER COPY before him.

KIMURA

[What is this shit?]

Jake stares at him, totally thrown. Mari sits in the corner of the room, trying to will herself to be invisible.

KIMURA (CONT'D)

[You write that this man was "murdered"?)

JAKE

[...Yeah. Because he was. I was at the scene.]

Bad move. We see Mari's alarmed gaze: *Really? You're talking?*

KIMURA

(to Mari)

[Do you know this man was murdered?]

(to Jake)

[Did the cops tell you he was murdered?]

JAKE

[Sir, I did the job as / instructed.]

KIMURA
 (overlapping him)
**[Your job was to call the officer
 in charge of this case, find out
 what the charge is, and write that
 down--word for word.]**

JAKE
 (fighting his anger)
[Sir, I think--]

Kimura SLAMS HIS PALMS on his desk.

KIMURA
**[You're not paid to think! You're
 paid to write what you are told!]**

EXT. KIMURA'S OFFICE - YOMIURI SHIMBUN - MOMENTS LATER

The door to Kimura's office is closed, but through his GLASS WALL we see the red-faced Kimura berating the stoic Mari.

Jake stands in the newsroom, watching the torrent of abuse.

KIMURA whips his SHOE OFF, BRANDISHING it at Mari...

..and Jake realizes: the SENIOR MALE STAFF around him are loving this. He takes in their SMILES. GIGGLES. WINKS. Their delight at seeing this woman put in her place.

Kimura's OFFICE DOOR OPENS and Mari walks out, eyes front, cheeks flush, jaw clamped.

As she passes Jake, he steps forward, opening his mouth to apologize...

The LOOK Mari gives him makes the words die in his throat.

Jake stands rooted, sick to his stomach, watching her cross to the EXIT DOOR.

EXT. TOKYO CITY BUS - EVENING

From ABOVE we watch a Bus drive away from the city center.

INT. TOKYO CITY BUS - CONTINUOUS

Jake sits alone under the green-tinged light, as through the dark window, central Tokyo falls away.

Ahead of Jake, a LITTLE GIRL sits with her MOTHER. The girl stares at Jake in silent fascination. Looking at him like he's from another world.

Jake looks back at her, then turns his head to look back through the window and into the night.

INT. STAIRWELL - JAKE'S APARTMENT - LATER

From the top of those steep STAIRS, Jake and his ever-present backpack walk toward us, slowly taking one step at a time.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Jake sits cross-legged on a Tatami mat, shoes off, backpack lying next to him, as he stares at the BLACK TV SCREEN. The shadowy outline of his face reflects back at him.

He LIFTS A BEER into frame, TAKES A PULL, and lowers it.

We sit across from him, watching exhaustion, embarrassment, and determination flicker over his face. It's like we can see the question rattling around his brain: *What do I do now?*

EXT. LOCAL METRO POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

Jake walks alone toward the same concrete building, hands stuffed in his sweatshirt pockets, face set.

INT. LOBBY - LOCAL METRO POLICE STATION - LATER

As COPS mill about the busy lobby, Jake SITS ON A COUCH, elbows on his knees. Waiting.

INT. LOBBY - LOCAL METRO POLICE STATION - EVENING

Day turning into night; shifts ending, shifts starting; new faces move about. Jake's still there.

On the other side of the lobby, a DOOR OPENS.

Through it steps the plain-clothed Yamamoto; shift ending, slipping into a LEATHER JACKET.

Jake RISES TO HIS FEET.

INT. LOBBY - LOCAL METRO POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

COPS move to and fro as, on the other side of the lobby, Jake talks intently to Yamamoto. They're too far away for us to hear what's being said, but even over here we take in Jake's HANDS: gesticulating with fierce intensity.

INT. LOBBY - LOCAL METRO POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Yamamoto stares at Jake, then cocks an eyebrow.

YAMAMOTO
 ["Show you the ropes"?]

The vice cop turns to address the room.

YAMAMOTO (CONT'D)
 [Hey! This guy wants me to tie him
 up and do weird shit.]

We clock SOMO, the fat cop from before, and ARAI, the skinny one, LAUGHING as they shake their heads.

JAKE
 (pushing on)
 [Let me just buy you a drink.]

YAMAMOTO
 (patting Jake's shoulder)
 [Listen, I like gaijin, but only
 with tits.]

He SNAPS UP HIS JACKET COLLAR, starts toward the elevator...

And we SEE Jake get an idea.

JAKE
 (calling after him)
 [Detective!]

INT. TRANSVESTITE DIVE BAR - EDGE OF KABUKICHO - LATER

A beautiful TRANSVESTITE BARTENDER, swathed in genderless Tokyo Chic, POURS TWO SHOTS for Jake and Yamamoto.

YAMAMOTO
 (repeating, slow, rough)
 "I like your dress."

JAKE
 (feeding him the next one)
 "Very flattering."

YAMAMOTO
 (repeating back, stumbling)
 "Very flat.../ flatter..."

JAKE
 (correcting, enunciating)
 "Flattering."

YAMAMOTO
 (getting it right)
 Flattering. "Very flattering."

JAKE
[Now, like this...]

Jake PICKS UP HIS GLASS, holding it up to Yamamoto.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 (smooth, "a player")
 "I like your dress. Very
 flattering."

Yamamoto PICKS UP HIS GLASS, holding it up to Jake.

YAMAMOTO
 (aping his tone and style)
 "I like your dress. Very
 flattering."

They CLINK, then SHOOT THEIR DRINKS: the detective, smoothly;
 Jake with a grimace.

Yamamoto eyes Jake, then COCKS HIS HEAD at the door.

YAMAMOTO (CONT'D)
[Let's go.]

EXT. STREETS OF KABUKICHO - LATER

MUSIC carries Jake and Yamamoto as they walk through the
 teeming CROWD flowing through Tokyo's red-light district.
 Jake is the only white face as far as the eye can see.

This is a different Tokyo than we've seen: HARD FACES in the
 crowd; TRASH strewn streets; dark alleys; an air of menace.

Yamamoto swaggers through it in his hip Tokyo attire: tight
 designer jeans, perfectly white tennis shoes, and leather
 jacket. Beside him, in his baggy pants and pullover, Jake
 looks like the kid younger brother, trying not to gape at the
 cornucopia of sex splayed out before him.

They walk past a STOREFRONT with PICTURES in its windows of HALF-NAKED WOMEN in skimpy HIGH-SCHOOL UNIFORMS...

Past a CLUB with a NEON-LOGO of a WHIP-WIELDING DOMINATRIX...

CLOSE on Jake's face. *"Now I'm getting somewhere."*

The MUSIC SHIFTS, an erotic thumping pulse now, and we

CUT TO:

INT. GROPING CLUB - KABUKICHO - LATER

A room built as an exact replica of the Tokyo subway cars we've seen. The place is packed with JAPANESE SALARYMEN, holding on to subway STRAPS. Jake and Yamamoto are squeezed together, DRINKS in hand, as Jake watches the SCANTILY CLAD WAITRESSES role-play as subway gropers: pressing and rubbing themselves against the weirdly passive-faced men.

Jake takes a CHUG, watching a WOMAN SLIDE HER HANDS across a MAN'S CROTCH, and we

CUT TO:

INT. S&M CLUB - KABUKICHO - LATER

A small stage in a RED-VELVET DRAPED ROOM, where a MALE CUSTOMER kneels on all fours, PANTS DOWN AROUND HIS ANKLES. A DOMINATRIX stands over him.

Jake stands with other MEN and WOMEN at the edge of the stage. He's drinking here too--something stronger.

The Dominatrix coolly raises a WOODEN PADDLE and--"WHACK!"-- she paddles the man's ass hard.

Cut from the Man's grimace of pleasure/pain to Jake's wide-eyed fascination.

"WHACK!"

Jake GULPS his drink.

"WHACK!"

Jake gulps again, and we

CUT TO:

INT. MEN'S TOILET - DEN OF DELIGHTS - KABUKICHO - VERY LATE

Jake standing in a claustrophobically small men's room, PEEING into a CHIPPED WHITE URINAL, as we HEAR the MUFFLED THUMP of club music seeping through the PAINT-CHIPPED WALL.

He sways as he relieves himself; glassy eyes straight ahead.

As we hold on Jake, we HEAR a DOOR SWINGING OPEN...SWINGING CLOSED...FOOTSTEPS crossing to the urinal next to him... ZIPPER coming down...someone PEEING LIKE AN OPEN FIREHOSE.

For a moment, Jake and the unseen person stand there doing their business; faint thump of music off in the distance.

As Jake shakes himself finished, he (and we) HEAR: "*splot*"... then, again: "*splot*."

Still at the urinal, Jake LOOKS DOWN.

JAKE'S POV: SMALL POOL OF BLOOD on a dirty WHITE TILED FLOOR.

As we register what it is...with a "*splot*," another DROP OF BLOOD FALLS, widening the pool of red.

PAN UP to see a HAND dangling at a man's side, a THIN TRAIL OF BLOOD DRIPPING from beneath an OPEN CUFF of a BLACK SHIRT.

Standing at the urinal next to Jake, eyes front, is AKIRO SATO, early 20s, head-to-toe in yakuza black, LIT CIGARETTE dangling from his full lips. Even in here, doing this, he's got the air of a Japanese James Dean (doomed and all).

JAKE

[Hey...]

Sato drifts his gaze to the concerned face of Jake, standing less than a foot from him.

JAKE (CONT'D)

[You all right?]

Sato's eyes follow Jake's, down to the blood seeping out of the young yakuza's shirt sleeve.

JAKE (CONT'D)

[Need some help?]

Sato stares, like he's sizing Jake up...then reaches around with his OTHER HAND, and slowly PULLS UP HIS SHIRT SLEEVE... revealing his FULL ARM, raw and bloody from a fresh, elaborate TATTOO, snaking all the way from wrist to shoulder.

Sato flicks his cigarette into his urinal and ROLLS HIS SLEEVE BACK DOWN (working hard not to show how much that hurts). He moves to one of two side-by-side sinks and TURNS ON THE WATER.

Jake joins him at the other sink. He turns on his tap. As they stand next to each other, each WASHING THEIR HANDS:

SATO
 (proud, about his tattoo)
 [**"The Old Way."**]
 (then, matter of fact)
 [**I'll live.**]

We stare in to Sato's basin, soapy water PINK FROM HIS BLOOD.

INT. DEN OF DELIGHTS - KABUKICHO - MOMENTS LATER

An upscale Hostess Club: colored lights, dark mahogany walls, gilded mirrors. Out here, the muffled music we heard in the men's room is at full volume. The sexy American period pop pulses (think Prince's "D.M.S.R."), synthesizers pushing us through the room.

The booths and tables are full of JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN, dark ties loose against their unbuttoned white collars. HOSTESSES sit with each group of men--beautiful young Japanese women, each in an elegant dress of a different monochromatic color, POURING DRINKS with cool elegance.

On a small stage in the front of the room, STRIPPERS GYRATE to the music. Jake and Yamamoto sit at a stage-side table.

While Yamamoto watches TWO WHITE WOMEN, a blond and a brunette in their 20s, do terrible things to their poles...

Jake stares through the gloom at a cluster of tables in the corner, full of YOUNG YAKUZA. Black-clad "Sumokomi," newbies out on the town--blowing off steam, drinking and smoking hard. They're all Jake's age, bristling with energy and testosterone.

Sato sits in the middle of them, legs splayed, sipping his drink: the king amidst his courtiers.

Jake turns back to Yamamoto.

JAKE
 (about the men)
 [**Know any of them?**]

Yamamoto doesn't respond, his eyes locked on the strippers.

JAKE (CONT'D)
[How about you invite them over?]

The detective keeps his eyes on the stage.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 (pushing on)
[What do you think?]

Jake is getting pissed. Is the cop ignoring him? Not understanding? Or just fucking with him?

The club's manager appears at their table. He stands over them, SLICKED HAIR as oily as his manner. His smile is pure crocodile.

SLICK
 (to Yamamoto)
[What can I get you, sir?]

Eyes still fixed on the stage, Yamamoto nods toward Jake.

YAMAMOTO
[Ask him, he's paying.]

INT. THE DEN OF DELIGHTS - MOMENTS LATER

The two barely clothed strippers we just watched on stage now sit with Jake and Yamamoto as the hovering Slick POPS OPEN A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE and pours it around.

The dark-haired dancer is next to Jake. The blond sits close to Yamamoto. She flicks her bangs from her eyes as she holds her GLASS up to be filled. Her accent is heavy Polish; she's bubbly and young.

PAULINA
 (to Yamamoto)
 Thank you very much.

He smiles and nods, taking credit for the purchase.

PAULINA (CONT'D)
 (slowly, for his benefit)
 I am Paulina....
 (gesturing to her)
 This is Tatiana.

TATIANA
 (to Jake, same accent)
 Hello.

Jake watches her slowly cross her legs. They go on for days.

Yamamoto leans in to Paulina...

YAMAMOTO
(smoothly, as practiced)
I like your dress. Very flattering.

Paulina leans in to Yamamoto, her HAND LIGHTLY GRAZING HIS THIGH. She smiles.

PAULINA
Thank you.

Yamamoto smiles back. He turns to Jake.

YAMAMOTO
(matter of fact)
**[I'm gonna fuck these two in the
back, then we're gonna move on.]**

Jake stares at him. Not knowing what else to say:

JAKE
(with a thumbs up)
[Great.]

INT. THE DEN OF DELIGHTS - A LITTLE LATER

As music thumps louder now, Jake nurses his champagne, alone at his table, trying not to look like the fish out of water that he is.

Across the room, two Japanese hostesses POUR DRINKS and LIGHT CIGARETTES for the Sumikomi...but the "young guns" are getting rowdy. Tempers are rising. A heated argument breaks out between two of the youngest and drunkest yakuza. Violence is in the air. As men start to rise...Sato SAYS SOMETHING...the table starts laughing...anger gone...back in their seats.

Jake watches it all. How does he get into that world?

And we HEAR the iconic opening cords of an American rock classic. (Let's go with Guns N' Roses' "Sweet Child of Mine.")

INT. STAGE - DEN OF DELIGHTS - CONTINUOUS

Up on the stage where the strippers stripped, now stands HELENA, mid 20s, the only foreign white hostess we've seen. Hair pilled high, sheathed in her gown, she's bathed in BLUE LIGHT as the guitar wails...she eases up to a microphone, throws back her head, and launches in...to a perfectly lip-synced karaoke performance of a Japanese cover of the song.

She--and the cultural mashup--are mesmerizing. Her elongated gestures as she moves slowly in time to the song. Her restrained emotional intensity, without a hint of irony, as she "sings" in Japanese.

Jake stares at her.

Sato stares at her.

The blue light plays across her face as she closes her eyes, carried along by the music.

The song ends...no applause. Nothing. Entertainment over, everyone turns back to their tablemates and their drinks.

Helena makes her way down the steps leading from the stage back into the room. Stepping into "regular" light, we see her flame red hair, her sharp eyes. As she passes Jake's table...

JAKE

That was great.

(slower, to be clear)

Up there. You were really good.

HELENA

(with a wry smile)

Well thanks, sailor. A girl does her best.

Jake blinks, surprised to hear her American accent.

Helena looks at his unfinished bottle of champagne.

JAKE

You want a drink?

HELENA

(considers him, then)

Sure.

As she sits, Jake swipes a clean glass from the next table. As he pours the last of the bottle in their glasses...Slick is by his side.

SLICK

[Anything else, sir?]

JAKE

[No. We're all set. Thank you.]

And the manager drifts on...

HELENA

Your Japanese is really good.

JAKE

Thanks.

HELENA

So why are you hanging out with cops?

JAKE

Oh. Uh. I'm a reporter. For the Yomiuri.

HELENA

Wow.

(considers it, then)

That's weird.

She sips. He's not sure how to respond to that.

HELENA (CONT'D)

What do you report on?

JAKE

I'm on the crime beat.

HELENA

So, stories about...

She gestures subtly toward Sato and his table.

HELENA (CONT'D)

...guys like that?

JAKE

Could be.

HELENA

(arching an eyebrow)

Could it now?

They both smile.

JAKE.

Where'er you from?

HELENA

Saitama, originally. But I've been in Tokyo for the last few years.

JAKE

No, I mean, where are you from...?

He makes a gesture, indicating "...in the States."

HELENA

Oh, you mean, where am I from...?
 (playfully copies gesture)
That's what you wanna know.

JAKE

(grinning)
 Yeah.

HELENA

Well, that's a second bottle
 question.

He stares at her, confused. She leans in.

HELENA (CONT'D)

See, how this works is...
 (gesturing to the bottle)
 ...the more you buy, the longer we
 talk. The better you buy, the
 better our talk. But if there's no
 buying at all...

She shrugs: "then we're done."

Jake looks back at her, as she waits for his response.

JAKE

(so hard to say)
 I...I don't have enough. For a
 whole 'nother bottle.

She considers this.

HELENA

Well then...

She SHOOTs the rest of her champagne, then rises.

HELENA (CONT'D)

Duty calls.

As Jake watches her move away from him and toward the booths
 full of Japanese businessmen...

He sees Sato, watching her too. As if the young yakuza can
 feel Jake's gaze on him, he turns to meet his eyes.

They stare at each other, across the room.

Jake NODS, "Hey."

Sato just keeps looking at him. A Sphinx-like, unbroken gaze.

INT. ROOM - MASSAGE PARLOR - KABUKICHO - EVEN LATER

A relaxed Yamamoto lies face up on a massage table, naked but for a SMALL TOWEL over his privates. As a YOUNG JAPANESE WOMAN MASSAGES HIS LEGS, he rests his head under one arm, using his other to hold his cigarette as he schools Jake.

YAMAMOTO
[There's no murder in Japan.]

INT. ROOM - MASSAGE PARLOR - KABUKICHO - CONTINUOUS

Jake lies face down on a matching table, naked but for the square of cloth over his rump, as his JAPANESE MASSEUSE (she can't be any older than he is) RUBS OIL deep into his THIGHS.

JAKE
[So then, what was that?]

We realize Jake and Yamamoto are getting massaged in the same room, the space divided in two by a CLOTH CURTAIN.

INT. YAMAMOTO'S SIDE OF THE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

YAMAMOTO
**[Manslaughter. Always. Unless
 there's a witness. If you're not a
 hundred percent sure it's a murder,
 it's not.]**

INT. JAKE'S SIDE OF THE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jake's masseuse SQUIRTS MORE OIL on her hands and GESTURES for him to "turn over."

As he does, making sure his cloth goes with him:

JAKE
 (distracted)
 Hunh.

INT. YAMAMOTO'S SIDE OF THE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Yamamoto takes a pull on his cigarette.

YAMAMOTO
 (imitating him)
 "Hunh."
 (bemused)
 (MORE)

YAMAMOTO (CONT'D)
[Fucking Americans, with your:]
 "Hunh."

INT. JAKE'S SIDE OF THE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jake's masseuse expertly PUSHES HIS LEGS UP so his feet are resting on the table...then DROPS JAKE'S CLOTH on the floor.

YAMAMOTO (O.S.)
[What does that even mean?]

Jake's EYES WIDEN in shock. She's GIVING HIM A HAND JOB. He cuts his eyes to the woman's face, but she's looking off in the distance--cool and detached, a professional at work.

JAKE
[It...means..."hunh."]

INT. YAMAMOTO'S SIDE OF THE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Yamamoto's massage continues; he continues.

YAMAMOTO
[If there is a murder and we can't solve it, that brings our clearance rate down.]

INT. JAKE'S SIDE OF THE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jake's masseuse quickens her pace.

JAKE
 (fighting to sound regular)
[Then what happens?]

INT. YAMAMOTO'S SIDE OF THE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

YAMAMOTO
[Shit gets bad for us. So we make shit bad for you.]

INT. JAKE'S SIDE OF THE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jake's breath is quickening as we see on his FACE:
Holy shit. This is going to happen--right here.

YAMAMOTO (O.S.)
**[Things work best when there's
mutual back scratching.]**

Jake's EYES BUG OUT. He GASPS. We realize that with her other hand...yeah...she's working a finger into Jake's anus.

YAMAMOTO (O.S.)(CONT'D)
[I do you, you do me....]

Jake closes his eyes, overwhelmed, giving over to this.

YAMAMOTO (O.S.)(CONT'D)
[Everyone's happy.]

He opens his mouth, stiffening, about to cum...

and the mood is shattered by the jarring SOUND of a PAGER.

YAMAMOTO (CONT'D)
[Shit.]

The loud urgent "beep"-ing continues as we also HEAR the detective slide off his massage table...slip into clothes.

Jake's masseuse has stopped, mid-motion.

Jake half-sits; dazed, blinking.

JAKE
[What is it?]

YAMAMOTO
[Work.]

SOUND of Yamamoto and his pager: OUT THE DOOR.

For a second Jake is frozen.

His masseuse is looking at him: *Continue?*

We see his mind whirling, torn with what do to, then:

Jake LEAPS UP, grabs at his CLOTHES, starts PULLING THEM ON.

JAKE
(bowing, dressing, at once)
[Sorry. Thank you. Sorry.]

EXT. STREET NEAR MASSAGE PARLOR - KABUKICHO - MOMENTS LATER

SOUNDS of SIRENS...MEN YELLING...We see a FIRETRUCK...COP CARS.

Jake, clothes askew, is on the street, taking in the packed CROWD, backs to him, filling the street, blocking his view.

Jake plunges into the crowd, PUSHING PEOPLE out of his way...

EXT. STREET NEAR MASSAGE PARLOR - KABUKICHO - CONTINUOUS

...until he reaches the front, out of breath, to see:

Yamamoto, UNIFORMED POLICEMEN, and geared-up FIREMEN all in a ring, surrounding a silent, well-dressed OLD JAPANESE MAN.

Jake stands there, trying to understand what's going on.

Yamamoto's body is coiled. The faces of the cops and firemen are gaunt. Like they're dreading what comes next.

The crowd is eerily silent. Eyes glued on the silent Old Man.

YAMAMOTO
(slow, to the old man)
[Let's go easy.]

The Old Man stands still, his silent courtliness jarring in this raucous place. Old Japan knocking up against the new.

YAMAMOTO (CONT'D)
[What's your name?]

The man says nothing, his eyes staring off in the distance.

Jake stares at his threadbare but pressed suit...he realizes the Old Man is SOAKING WET.

YAMAMOTO (CONT'D)
[Okay. Then where are you from?]

Jake sees a red metal GASOLINE CANISTER at the Old Man's feet. In his hands: a BOX OF MATCHES.

Silence. Stillness. The Old Man TAKES OUT A MATCH.

As one, the CROWD PULLS BACK.

Jake's EYES WIDEN.

YAMAMOTO (CONT'D)
(fury, desperation)
[Fucking don't!]

EVERYTHING SLOWS DOWN as we see:

Jake moving instinctively toward the gasoline-soaked man.

Yamamoto imploring as the old man SCRAPES A MATCH ACROSS THE MATCH BOX--it's wet, it doesn't light.

The ONLY SOUND now, the SCRAPING of MATCH ON MATCHBOX, as the Old Man tries again--and fails.

Jake almost at the Old Man...

Who fixes his gaze on Jake. The Old Man's EYES are haunted, pleading...

He strikes the match a third time--

He BURSTS INTO FLAMES--

and we

SNAP BACK INTO REAL TIME, SOUND rushing back in:

CROWD SCREAMING. First responders YELLING.

The Old Man is a tower of fire, hands seesawing back and forth...

The firemen throw a BLANKET on the Burning Man; it too BURSTS INTO FLAME...

The Burning Man stumbles toward Jake...

Who trips, falls, scrambles back in terror, as the TOWER OF FIRE FILLS THE SCREEN, and we

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET NEAR MASSAGE PARLOR - KABUKICHO - LATER

Jake sitting alone on the street corner, hunched over, face drained of color, a BLANKET draped over his shoulders. He stares at the BLANKET-COVERED CORPSE lying in the middle of the street.

It's quiet. The crowd is gone. So is the firetruck and all but one cop car. Across the street, Yamamoto confers with the remaining two uniformed cops. Voices low; shoulders slumped.

Jake RISES. He walks slowly toward the body. Yamamoto and his brethren keep talking, paying him no attention.

He reaches the man, looking down at the covered body. A FLESH-CHARRED HAND is visible.

Jake sees something. He leans down to get a closer look.

On the pavement, next to the corpse, is the box of matches. He stares at it. It's blackened, but on its front...We recognize the ORNATE BLACK KANJI. It's the same one as on the letter Jake took from that dead man's mailbox.

As we hold on the charred box, we HEAR a RINGING PHONE, and we

CUT TO:

INT. STUDY - ADELSTEIN HOME - COLUMBIA, MISSOURI - AFTERNOON

A cozy wood-paneled room with BROWN-AND-ORANGE WALLPAPER. Through the CURTAINS, sunlight dapples a cork BULLETIN BOARD with push-pinned mementos and a wall with FRAMED FAMILY PHOTOS, as the PHONE RINGS ON.

As we PAN across the mementos and photos, the ANSWERING MACHINE picks up.

JAKE'S MOM'S VOICE

(slow, cheery)

"Hello, you've reached the Adelsteins."

The message continues as we take in:

Sixth Grade Jake in his Little League uniform--"Boone County Bank Bruins"--in a crouch, helmet on, bat gripped.

JAKE'S MOM'S VOICE (CONT'D)

"Neither Eddie, Willa, Jake, or Jackie are here right now..."

Beaming, pimplly Jake in green-and-yellow Rock Bridge High School CAP AND GOWN...his framed GRADUATION CERTIFICATE.

JAKE'S MOM'S VOICE (CONT'D)

"Please leave your full name and number, slowly and clearly, and we'll get back to you."

A MONTHLY CALENDAR...on every Sunday, written in BLACK MAGIC MARKER: "Jake calls."

We end on a push-pinned recent SNAPSHOT of Jake, his sister, and his parents. As we hold on the grainy picture of the family--arms around each other, grinning at us--we HEAR:

JAKE'S VOICE

(on the answering machine)

Hey. It's me.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - STREET CORNER - ROPPONGI - CONTINUOUS

Jake stands in the same glass fish-bowl, eyes staring out into the dark Tokyo night, receiver to his ear.

JAKE
Thought I'd call.

His face is still pale from what he just saw. He grips the phone so tightly, his fingers are white.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Just wanted to say...

He pauses. Body motionless. Utterly still. Then:

JAKE (CONT'D)
(forced cheer)
Everything's great. Really great.
(beat)
Just wanted you to know. Bye.

He HANGS UP, hand staying on the phone. Not moving.

He takes a deep breath. He PULLS OPEN THE PHONE BOOTH DOOR.

EXT. STREETS OF TOKYO - LATER

Jake walks along with the CROWD, eyes ahead.

As he moves, he reaches into his sweatshirt pocket...and takes out the charred box of matches. He stares down at it. He turns it with his fingers. He puts it back in his pocket.

CLOSE on his face, mind churning, walking on, and we

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF PILOT.