

OVER BLACK.

TOMMY (V.O.)  
For as long as I can remember, I  
knew I had a gift.

FADE IN:

INT. NURSERY - DAY

In the middle of a large, Victorian style nursery, stands BABY TOMMY in his crib. His MOTHER and FATHER, perfectly styled for some ambiguous decade of the past, cover their faces, playing peek-a-boo.

MOTHER  
Where's mommy? Where did mommy go?

Tommy points at his mother. They gently clap.

FATHER  
Yay! You did it!

MOTHER  
Oh, we should get a picture.

Tommy smiles.

TOMMY (V.O.)  
I was a prodigy.

CUT TO:

INT. DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

Years later, Tommy, now ten, stands in front of a group of his PARENT'S FRIENDS as they lounge about, drinking and chatting.

TOMMY (V.O.)  
Before long, there was no mystery I  
couldn't solve. Nothing got past  
me.

Mother clinks her glass.

MOTHER  
If I could have your attention, I  
believe little Thomas would like to  
perform for you all.

TOMMY

Not quite, mother. The only thing I'm here to perform is justice.

Father drunkenly smiles.

FATHER

Whatever you say, champ.

TOMMY

Thanks to my investigative prowess, and this tube of lipstick I found in Mrs. Mulberry's purse. I am able to deduce that she can be the only culprit! She's the one who's been sneaking into our laundry room and vandalizing father's shirts!

He holds up a dress shirt, the collar smudged with lipstick marks.

Mother shoots daggers at Father, who happens to be sitting next to the accused MRS. MULBERRY. She awkwardly scoots away.

TOMMY

I guess the only question that remains is why?

Infuriated, Father stares at the young boy, who innocently smiles back at him.

TOMMY (V.O.)

They were all so impressed. My parents knew what they had to do.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. DOYLE ACADEMY - FRONT GATES - DAY

In the front of the hallowed halls of Doyle academy, STUDENTS mill about, each adhering to the school's strict dress code, Inverness capes and deerstalker caps.

A CAR speeds by, slowing down just enough to push young Tommy out onto the gravel before driving off.

TOMMY (V.O.)

Enroll me in the best, technically non-accredited, school money could buy.

Tommy looks up at the school's sign "Doyle's Academy for Budding Detectives". A wide smile spreads across his face.

TOMMY (V.O.)  
Doyle's Academy for Budding  
Detectives. Where a boy like me  
could flourish.

His suitcase comes flying at him from off-screen and knocks  
his face back into the ground.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOYLE ACADEMY - QUAD - DAY

A group of STUDENT DETECTIVES are marching in a military  
style line, each one bent over, staring at the ground,  
magnifying glass pressed to their eyes.

The COACH blows his whistle, they change directions. He then  
claps his hands together.

COACH  
Alright, that's enough for the day.  
Hit the showers.

The line disperses. One detective pop backs up, it's Tommy,  
now 20 years of age. Clean shaven and neatly dressed, the  
young man still retains that twinkle of innocence from his  
boyhood.

TOMMY (V.O.)  
And flourish I did.

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

Tommy sits amongst his peers, focusing intently on his  
PROFESSOR.

PROFESSOR  
Now, like all great detectives, we  
need to know-

Tommy's hand shoots into the air. The others around him  
silently roll their eyes.

TOMMY  
The exact time of the crime!

QUICK CUTS OF TOMMY ANSWERING VARIOUS QUESTIONS:

TOMMY  
Sneezing powder!

TOMMY  
Life insurance policies!

TOMMY  
Laser beams!

TOMMY  
Mariska Hargitay!

The professor throws their chalk down in frustration.

PROFESSOR  
Please! Can I finish the question!?

Tommy smiles to himself. A paper plane flies at the back of his head but he doesn't even notice.

TOMMY (V.O.)  
They loved me. And finally, the day  
I had dreamt of for years finally  
came...

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

The professor stands at the podium, addressing the graduating class.

PROFESSOR  
I've had the distinct honor of  
watching all of you-

Their eyes fall on Tommy in the front row, who eagerly waves at them.

PROFESSOR  
Most of you, turn into honorable  
young sleuths. From this day forth,  
whenever a rich oil tycoon is  
mysteriously poisoned at a dinner  
party, or a masked business owner  
is terrorizing teenagers at an  
abandoned carnival or something,  
you will be there. Now, for your  
final assignment. Hidden somewhere  
on campus is an envelope with your  
name on it. Inside, you'll find the  
details of your first official  
case. Now, go on and show the world  
what being a detective truly means!

The graduates CHEER, tossing their deerstalkers in the air, and rushing out of the auditorium in pursuit of their envelopes.

EXT. DOYLE ACADEMY - QUAD - DAY

Chaos erupts as the hunt for the envelopes unfolds. STUDENT 1 runs over to STUDENT 2, waving her envelope in the air.

STUDENT 1

I got it!

STUDENT 2

Me too! Open it, open it!

She tears open the envelope.

STUDENT 1

(reading)

You have been assigned to work  
under the Danish Queen in the case  
of the missing family jewels!?

She excitedly claps her hands together.

STUDENT 1

I'm going to Denmark!

STUDENT 2

Okay, okay, my turn!

He opens his letter.

STUDENT 2

(reading)

You have been assigned...

His face drops.

STUDENT 2

T-To go undercover within a  
suspected drug cartel in Albany,  
New York? You'll be wearing a wire?

STUDENT 1

Fun! You'll get to break out your  
fake mustaches!

TOMMY (O.S.)

I found it! Guys, look!

They turn to find a trash covered Tommy crawling out of a dumpster. His soggy envelope dangling in his hands.

TOMMY

I swear, they always hide my stuff  
in there. Give me a challenge for  
once, you know what I mean?

STUDENT 1

And, it's over. Let's go.

They walk off as Tommy approaches them.

TOMMY

Okay! See you guys! Good luck in Albany!

He rips open his envelope.

TOMMY

Time to see where ole' Tommy Terwilliger is gonna stake his claim.

Tommy pulls a wrinkled piece of receipt paper out of the envelope.

TOMMY

Hmm, this seems to be from the liquor store down the block...Aha! Maybe that's my first job!? Perhaps a case of someone sipping the dinner sherry, when it is in fact not dinner! Oh, wait.

He giggles and flips the paper over. Written crudely in marker is just the word "MUDTOWN".

TOMMY

Mudtown, eh? There's not even an address, or like, a zip code...I love it! A real challenge for a true detective.

TOMMY (V.O.)

As thus, my adventure began! Fret not, Mudtown. I am here to save you...just as soon as I figure out where you are!

CUT TO:

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

Tommy sits on the moving bus, staring out the window and taking in the sights. The sights in question are of a dilapidated town falling more and more apart with each passing moment.

He turns to the PASSENGER seated next to him.

TOMMY

Hi. I'm starting an adventure.

The passenger puts in their headphones. Tommy turns his attention back to the window. He spots a DRUNK MAN violently puking against a building.

TOMMY

Fascinating.

He holds up a large, obnoxiously clunky, vintage style camera and takes a picture. The flash nearly blinds the entire bus. He turns back to his seat partner.

TOMMY

I'm making a scrapbook. When I told my dad I was going to solve my first case, he laughed and said 'I'd like to see you try', so now he can! I'm debating whether or not to give it to him for his birthday, or wait until Christmas-

The passenger gets up and heads towards the front of the bus.

TOMMY

Oh, you're leaving. Must be your stop.

He looks out the window and spots the 'Mudtown' sign.

TOMMY

Oh! Oh, oh, oh! This is my stop too! Wait, I'm coming new friend!

He gathers his many belongings and rushes to the front of the bus.

EXT. MUDTOWN ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Tommy hops off the bus and tips his deerstalker hat at the DRIVER.

TOMMY

Thank you. You have no idea how vital you have been to my journey. I'll never forget this.

He snaps another picture as the bus driver closes the door. The flash momentarily blinds the driver, who begins to swerve all over the road.

INT. MUDTOWN PD - NAGLE'S OFFICE - DAY

MIKE NAGLE, 50's, weathered police chief of the small town, sits at his desk watching a video on his desktop.

ON COMPUTER: "TOP TEN PUBLIC FIGHTS (NOT CLICKBAIT)"

He chuckles, pouring a brown liquid from his flask into a coffee cup.

There's a KNOCK at the door, he quickly hides the flask and turns off the video. His secretary, KEVIN, opens the door for Tommy who strolls up to Nagle's desk.

KEVIN  
Nagle, kid wants to see you.

NAGLE  
Kevin, I said-

Kevin SLAMS the door shut. Tommy approaches the desk, reaching out his hand.

TOMMY  
It's honor to meet you sir.

Nagle eyes Tommy's detective outfit.

NAGLE  
What are you, trick or treating?

TOMMY  
Hardly. I'm here to help you.

Tommy takes a seat. A beat.

NAGLE  
What?

TOMMY  
I believe my employment was  
arranged by the Doyle Academy.  
Here.

Tommy slides a folder of his academic records across the desk.

TOMMY  
This may jog your memory.

NAGLE  
Oh. You're the intern. Got it.



Nagle thumbs through the folder.

NAGLE

Thomas T. Terwilliger?

TOMMY

Please, call me Tommy. Thomas is my father's name, and he explicitly told me he wishes for no one to confuse us. Ever. He was very adamant about that.

NAGLE

Right. What kind of school was this? Community college?

TOMMY

Only the breeding ground for the greatest detectives the world has ever known! I doubled majored in anagram studies and cryptology research, with a minor in Celtic music. I love Enya.

Nagle tosses the folder to the side.

NAGLE

Mhm.

TOMMY

So, where do you want me? Staking out the local criminal's den? Inspecting the old mill? Parking patrol? I do it all!

Nagle turns his attention back to his computer.

NAGLE

How about you go solve the mystery of why I don't have my lunch in front of me.

TOMMY

W-Well, I assume it's because no one's ordered it.

NAGLE

Look at you! School does pay off. Get on it.

TOMMY

If my ears aren't deceiving me, I'm sensing a bit of sarcasm.

(MORE)

TOMMY (CONT'D)

No disrespect chief, but I believe my abilities are far more suited for a task outside of food delivery.

Nagle turns to look him in the eye.

NAGLE

You know what? You're right. How about when you're done grabbing my lunch, I set you up with a very, very special case. One only a real PI can handle.

TOMMY

Yes, sir! I promise, you won't regret this.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. MUDTOWN PD - UNDER DESK - DAY

Tommy is scraping hardened pieces of gum off the underside of a desk.

TOMMY

I'm starting to think this was a trick. There's no gum vandal-AGH!

A piece of gum falls from the desk and into his mouth. As he hacks it up, his attention is pulled towards a nearby conversation happening a desk over.

OFFICER DICKENS

(on phone)

-Alright. I understand. Yes. Yes m'am.

OFFICER DICKENS snaps his fingers, getting OFFICER JOHNSON'S attention. He hands him a piece of paper.

OFFICER DICKENS

Reported break-in over on Averly. Put it in the file.

TOMMY

(to self)

A file?

OFFICER JOHNSON

What's that? Third one this month?

Dickens shrugs.