

Untitled

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Title: The Last Message
Genre: Crime / Thriller

FADE IN:

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Dim light fills the room. Papers and case files are scattered across the desk.

DETECTIVE ALEX MORGAN (late 30s, tired but sharp) studies a crime board.

His phone BUZZES.

He checks the screen. A text message from an UNKNOWN NUMBER:

TEXT: *"You're running out of time. Find her before midnight."*

Alex frowns.

ALEX

(whispers)

Who is this?

Another message arrives.

TEXT: *Address: 14th Street Warehouse.*

Alex grabs his jacket and gun.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Police lights flash. The place is silent and eerie.

Alex enters cautiously.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dust floats in the air. Footsteps echo.

He finds a chair in the center. A ROPE lies on the ground. No victim.

His phone BUZZES again.

TEXT: *Too late.*

Alex clenches his jaw.

ALEX

This isn't a rescue... it's a game.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - TECH ROOM - NIGHT

TECH ANALYST MAYA (early 30s) works quickly on her computer.

MAYA

The messages are encrypted and rerouted. Whoever this is, they're good.

ALEX

Can you trace anything?

MAYA

One thing... all signals come from different locations, but they started after the Carter case.

Alex freezes. The Carter case was his biggest failure a victim he couldn't save.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Another message arrives.

TEXT: *Final location. Midnight.*

Alex rushes upstairs, breaking into the apartment.

Inside — photos of Alex cover the walls. Surveillance images. Notes. His schedule.

On a table: a phone and a voice recorder.

The recorder plays.

VOICE (DISTORTED)

You failed her. Tonight, you get
one last chance.

Alex hears a faint sound from the closet.

He opens it.

Inside is LISA CARTER alive, weak but breathing.

Relief floods his face.

Suddenly, the lights go out.

A figure steps from the shadows — THE KIDNAPPER.

KIDNAPPER

You were supposed to feel what I
felt.

The kidnapper removes the mask Lisa's brother.

KIDNAPPER (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

When you gave up on her.

Alex lowers his weapon slowly.

ALEX

I never gave up.

Sirens approach outside.

The kidnapper breaks down, dropping the weapon.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Paramedics take Lisa away safely.

The kidnapper is arrested.

Alex checks his phone.

A final message appears:

TEXT: *You passed.*

Alex looks around confused.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Police cars and ambulances crowd the street. Red and blue lights flash across Alex's face as he stands frozen, staring at his phone.

TEXT ON PHONE: *You passed.*

Maya approaches.

MAYA

They're taking Lisa to the hospital. She's stable.

Alex barely nods.

ALEX

Maya... this message. I didn't tell anyone about the phone.

Maya reads it, confused.

MAYA

That number isn't the same one from before.

Alex's expression darkens.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - TECH ROOM - LATER

Maya types rapidly.

MAYA (CONT'D)

This signal... it's active.
(MORE)

MAYA (CONT'D)
Whoever sent that last message is
still online.

ALEX

Can you trace it?

Maya pauses, surprised.

MAYA

It's coming from.. inside the
building.

Alex looks around slowly.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alex walks cautiously down the quiet hallway. Most officers
have gone home.

His phone BUZZES again.

TEXT: *Level 3. Evidence Room.*

Alex's hand moves to his weapon.

CUT TO:

INT. EVIDENCE ROOM - NIGHT

The lights flicker as Alex enters.

Rows of sealed boxes. Old cases. Forgotten evidence.

His phone buzzes again.

TEXT: *The case you never solved.*

Alex walks toward a shelf labeled: **CARTER CASE - CLOSED**

He opens the box.

Inside is a small burner phone.

It suddenly RINGS.

Alex answers slowly.

DISTORTED VOICE

You did well tonight, Detective.

ALEX

Who is this?

DISTORTED VOICE

Justice isn't about saving one person. It's about finishing what you started.

Alex scans the room.

ALEX

Where are you?

A soft CLICK behind him.

Alex turns.

Standing in the doorway is **CAPTAIN REYNOLDS**, calm and composed.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Captain?

Reynolds steps inside, closing the door.

CAPTAIN REYNOLDS

You were never meant to let the Carter case go, Alex.

Alex lowers the phone slowly.

ALEX

You've been behind this?

CAPTAIN REYNOLDS

Not behind it. Guiding it.

Reynolds walks closer.

CAPTAIN REYNOLDS (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

The system fails. Cases get buried.
Victims get forgotten. I needed to
know if you still cared enough to
fight.

ALEX

You endangered lives to test me?

CAPTAIN REYNOLDS

No. I chose cases where the outcome
was controlled. Every step was
monitored.

Alex's anger rises.

ALEX

This isn't justice. This is
manipulation.

Reynolds smiles faintly.

CAPTAIN REYNOLDS

And yet... you saved her.

Sirens echo faintly outside.

Maya's voice comes through Alex's radio.

MAYA (V.O.)

Alex, we traced the signal. It's Reynolds. What's going on?

Reynolds notices the radio.

CAPTAIN REYNOLDS

You see? You still have good people around you.

Reynolds slowly raises his hands.

CAPTAIN REYNOLDS (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Arrest me if you need to. But remember this the system won't change. Not unless people like you refuse to give up.

Alex hesitates... then cuffs him.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAWN

Reynolds is placed into a patrol car.

Maya stands beside Alex.

MAYA

Did he really do all this just to test you?

Alex looks at his phone.

Another message appears.

TEXT: *Level One Complete.*

Alex's face goes pale.

ALEX

No... this wasn't just him.

Maya looks concerned.

MAYA

Then who else is playing?

Alex stares at the rising sun.

ALEX

I don't know. But the game isn't over.

INT. POLICE STATION - TECH ROOM - MORNING

Maya sits at her workstation, replaying data from the previous night. Multiple signal routes appear on her screen.

Alex enters, holding coffee but looking exhausted.

ALEX

Tell me you found something.

Maya turns the monitor toward him.

MAYA

The "Level One Complete" message didn't come from Reynolds' system. Different encryption. Different network.

Alex stiffens.

ALEX

So someone else was watching... the whole time.

MAYA

And they're good. Whoever this is
has access to internal police
frequencies.

Alex's phone BUZZES.

Both of them freeze.

TEXT: *Ready for Level Two?*

A second message arrives immediately.

TEXT: *Tick tock.*

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Heavy traffic. Crowds moving.

Alex and Maya step out of the station quickly.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Did it send a location?

Alex shows her the phone.

TEXT: *Central Transit Terminal. 45 minutes.*

Maya's eyes widen.

MAYA (CONT'D)

That place holds thousands of
people during rush hour.

ALEX

Then we don't have time to wait.

They rush toward the car.

CUT TO:

INT. TRANSIT TERMINAL - DAY

A massive crowd. Announcements echo overhead.

Alex and Maya push through people, scanning everything.

MAYA

If this is a bomb threat, we need
to evacuate.

Alex's phone BUZZES again.

TEXT: *No explosions. Today is about choice.*

Another message follows.

TEXT: *Locker 217.*

CUT TO:**INT. TERMINAL - LOCKER AREA - DAY**

Rows of metal lockers.

Alex finds **217** and opens it slowly.

Inside: a tablet device and a pair of headphones.

Maya connects the tablet.

The screen turns on.

A live video feed appears.

A MAN is tied to a chair in an unknown location. Next to the
video is a file.

Maya opens it.

Her face drops.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Alex... this is Daniel Price.

ALEX

The financial fraud suspect?

MAYA

Yes. He's been under investigation
for months.

The screen splits into two windows.

The second window shows a **YOUNG WOMAN** locked in a room.

Text appears:

ON SCREEN:

*One is guilty. One is innocent.
You can only save one.
Choose within 30 minutes.*

Alex's jaw tightens.

ALEX

This isn't a game anymore.

The tablet displays two location pins.

MAYA

They're on opposite sides of the
city. No way to reach both in time.

Alex struggles with the decision.

MAYA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

If the man is Price, he could have
ruined hundreds of lives. But the
woman

ALEX

We don't play judge.

Alex grabs his radio.

ALEX (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Dispatch, I need units at both
locations now!

The tablet flashes.

ON SCREEN:

*Rule violation detected.
You must choose.*

The timer drops faster.

Alex looks at Maya.

ALEX

Which location is closer?

MAYA

The woman.

Alex makes the decision.

ALEX

We save the innocent.

They run.

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - DAY

Alex kicks the door open.

Inside, the young woman is tied to a chair, terrified.

Alex frees her quickly.

YOUNG WOMAN

He said you'd come.

Alex's phone BUZZES.

TEXT: *Choice recorded.*

A pause.

TEXT: *The guilty one is dead.*

Alex closes his eyes, anger building.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

Maya approaches with her laptop.

MAYA

The man wasn't Daniel Price.

Alex looks at her.

MAYA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Price is alive. That was an
undercover officer.

Silence.

Alex's phone BUZZES again.

TEXT: *Level Two Complete.
How much guilt can you carry, Detective?*

Alex grips the phone tightly.

ALEX

Whoever this is... they're testing
morality, not just skill.

Maya looks shaken.

MAYA

Then what happens at the final
level?

Alex stares ahead.

ALEX

We find them... before they make the
next move.