

ED
Holden, right?

HOLDEN
Edward.

ED
Edmund.

HOLDEN
Oh, I'm sorry. I just assumed that it was . . .

ED
Are you tired?

HOLDEN
How could you tell?

ED
It's a beautiful drive, but it's long. Edmund was my mom's idea, so you can call me Ed.

HOLDEN
Sure thing.

ED
So how can I help?

HOLDEN
Okay. Um . . . I'm an instructor working out of the Behavioral Science Unit at Quantico, and I had this idea - -

ED
Have you had breakfast? Can I get you something? You want a sandwich?

HOLDEN
No, I'm okay.

ED
What kind of sandwich you like?

HOLDEN
Um - - I'm good . . .

ED
You want an egg salad sandwich?

HOLDEN

I'm fine. Really.

ED

I'll get us an egg salad sandwich. I can almost anything you want from the canteen.

HOLDEN

Okay. Do you have tuna?

ED

Oh, the egg salad's better. Hey, Jim.

JIM

Yeah, Ed?

HOLDEN

Have you seen Mitch this morning? You think you can find him for me?

Cut to finish sandwiches

ED

Good, huh? I've been here five years. We just clicked right off the bat.

HOLDEN

You like the guards?

ED

Well, they like me. I'm polite.

HOLDEN

You know, I heard that you used to drink at the Jury Room.

ED

You mean in Santa Cruz? Yeah, those are good guys. I applied to California Highway Patrol. My mom spoke to the cops to get my psychiatric record expunged. Turns out my record didn't bother them at all, I was just too tall.

HOLDEN

Too tall. *Laughs* I mean I've heard of being too short, but . . .

ED

What?

HOLDEN

Nothing. It just seems . . .

ED

You think they lied to me?

HOLDEN

No.

ED

Well, cops like me because they can talk to me . . . more than they can talk to their own wives, some of them.

HOLDEN

Really. What do you talk about?

ED

You know, books, movies. I watch all the cop shows on TV.

HOLDEN

Do you know, uh . . . Joseph Wambaugh, "Police Story"? You ever watch that?

ED

Laugh Huge fan. I got a lot of my insights right there.

HOLDEN

Really? What kind of insights?

ED

Well, so, for example, with cops, I would not allow myself to walk into a trap because I knew exactly how their minds worked from watching Wambaugh.

HOLDEN

What kind of trap are you talking about?

ED

The classic is talking too much about the crimes. Over interest. You have to remain casual. They tried everything to trick me. I'm too savvy. I don't fucking talk, period.

HOLDEN

Really? That's interesting.

ED

So . . . you had this idea?

HOLDEN

Yes, uh, yes. It's kind of, uh . . . Well, it's more of a research thing.

ED

Research.

HOLDEN

Just a series of interviews, chatting with . . . individuals not unlike yourself.

ED

We're just talking? I don't get to go someplace, do a bunch of tests?

HOLDEN

No. Yeah, no tests. Just right here.

ED

Why?

HOLDEN

Well, because I believe it could be useful.

ED

Talking about what?

HOLDEN

Well, I don't know. Your . . . behavior, I guess. If you want to, that is. We don't have to talk about anything at all if you don't want to.

ED

Why are you so tense?

HOLDEN

Hm?

ED

You're tense, right now.

HOLDEN

No, I'm not tense.

ED

Well, I'll be honest, I don't get many visitors. When I do, you think they want to talk about this shit? Fuck no. It's like if you worked at a slaughterhouse with livestock, real conversation stopper.

HOLDEN

Did you?

ED

No, I'm just saying . . . People who hunt other people for a vocation, all we want to talk about is what it's like. The shit that went down. The entire fucked-upness of it.

HOLDEN

Right, sure.

ED

It's not easy. Butchering people is hard work. Physically and mentally. I don't think people realize. You need to vent. What are you writing down?

HOLDEN

Oh, I just think it's an interesting choice of words, "vocation."

ED

Well, what would you call it? A hobby? I'd say it's more than that. Look at the consequences. The stakes are very high. Is this helping? Are you getting what you came for?

HOLDEN

I think.

ED

Good.

HOLDEN

Can I – Could I just ask you something? Do you believe that prison can help you?

ED

Are you kidding?

HOLDEN

You think you shouldn't be in prison?

ED

I think it's shutting the barn door after the horse has bolted, somewhat.

HOLDEN

What do you think the state should do with you instead?

ED

Well, Holden, a lobotomy's not out the question.

HOLDEN

Lobotomy?

ED

Like Frances Farmer. You remember Frances Farmer?

HOLDEN

No.

ED

I loved Frances Farmer. She was an actress. They lobotomized her in the '50s. She was very smart and intense . . . very misunderstood. She was a lot like me.

HOLDEN

You don't think you could benefit from psychiatry.

ED

I already did all that in the institution. It didn't take. For me, I think surgery might give me the best chance.

HOLDEN

And if surgery doesn't . . . take, in this modern society, what do we do with the Ed Kempers of the world?

ED

Well, isn't that your department?

HOLDEN

From your perspective.

ED

Death by torture? So what are you not telling me? Why do you keep looking at me like that?

HOLDEN

Like what?

ED

Funny. You keep looking at me like I'm a specimen.

HOLDEN

Well, to be honest . . . It's just, you seem like a nice, ordinary . . . It's difficult for me to square you with what you're in prison for.

ED

Oh. Well, sure. I was a regular guy most of my life with a nice home, nice suburb. I had pets, I went to a good school. I was a thoughtful, educated, well brought up young person. There's no question about it. But, at the same time . . . I was living a vile, depraved entirely parallel other life filled with debased violence and mayhem, and fear, and death.

HOLDEN

Well . . . it certainly seems to me like you had your own unusual . . .

ED

An unusual MO. Oh, sure.

HOLDEN

Well, I was gonna say . . . signature.

ED

An oeuvre, if you will. You could study it. You can spell oeuvre can't you, Holden? You know, there's a lot more like me.

HOLDEN

Do you think so? People that kill in sequence like you did?

ED

Sequence?

HOLDEN

One right after another. At regular intervals. I've just been calling them . . . "sequence killers" . . . if you will. How many would you say?

ED

Well . . . it would be a guess, but I'd say right now . . . North America, more than 35.

HOLDEN

Thirty-five?

ED

But you're never gonna find them if they don't want you to. Not even close.

HOLDEN

That can't be right.

ED

Well, Holden, I'm not an expert. I'm not an authority. I'm just an extremely accomplished murderer who spent my adult life successfully evading capture . . . until I gave myself up because I despaired of ever being caught. So take it or leave it. What do you want from me?

HOLDEN

I have no idea.