

Ken (V.O.)

Two councilmen, a lounge singer, a conspiracy, and me. I feel like I bought a puzzle outta the discount bin, and none of the pieces fit. Like a hand me down suit. Only thing to do is find the corners and try to put it together from there. Of the puzzle, I mean. A bad suit never fits right. It also doesn't have any corners. Kind of the shoulders, if it's an old fashioned suit. The kind of old fashioned suit powerful men wear. Men like Councilmen DeWhitt and Kingsley. My first corner. 6 years ago I get a hunch he's cutting corners and skimming money for his personal kitty, and I don't mean his new wife. I shout loud enough to get everyone's attention and with all the moon's eyes on me, I get the drip. His junior partner, Councilmen Kingsley gets fed to the public to save face. The only lead I have is something vague about the water supply. My next stop then, my next corner piece, is to get wet.

(Transition. Bar noises)

Nick

Kennedy. The usual, as usual?

Ken

Not today, Nick. I'm working a case. Gotta ask questions down at the Water Processing Unit. Just a beer and a shot to wet my beak.

Nick

Comin' up.

(drink pouring noises)

Nick

Still working Miss Dewhitt's case?

Ken

Not sure what I'm working, Nick. She told me to stop looking into it.

Nick

so why not leave it? You got it stuck to your gum-shoe?

Ken

Good thing pouring a drink is easier than crafting metaphors.

(he drinks his shot and walks away)

Nick

People expect a bartender to be colorful.

Ken

and a gum-shoe is cop, Nick. I'm a private eye.

Nick

Right. If you come up dry at Water Processing, a lady came in here asking for your services. Something about her mom.

Ken

Find out what she wants, and what she wants to pay. I'll be in later.

Nick

You got it Kennedy.

(Kennedy leaves the bar. Transition. Train noises)

Ken (V.O.)

At my age I've seen enough to hate a lot, but also enough to accept with ease the body of an ocean of humanity that ebbs and flows, holding a solid shape unyielding enough to kill, wet enough to drown, but too dry to quench. A salty sea that seizes on sight and sighs with Gods might, but not his possibility. Basically, anytime I take a family case, the answer is: someone died, someone stole, or it turns out they're not actually family. No matter which way you slice it, all blood is bad blood. I'll stick to water, thanks.

(transition. walking on sidewalk sounds)

Ken (v.o.)

You can sneak into almost any building as long as no one knows who you are. Do it all the time in this line of work. Getting into the Water Processing Plant should be as easy. I walk up to the gate in my suit, announcing confidently that I'm so-and-so with such-and-such, I'm here to inspect the place, or I've got reports of violations of some kind. If the guard tries to call anyone, I tell him it's a surprise inspection. No warnings. It'll be his ass in the can if he picks up the phone. Sometimes you get an old pro who knows better, or some young buck who wants to impress the boss and they'll push back. That's when you toss on the gas. Start yelling, start threatening, make yourself as much an inconvenience as you can. They'll let you through just to get rid of you. Then you'll have about 20

minutes before you get kicked out or arrested. Sometimes doing what I do means you have to be an actor, and a bad review means curtains. I pull my gloves a little tighter at the wrists.

Security Guard

Excuse me ma'am. The water processing plant is off limits to all private citizens without special permit or appointment. Can I have your name please?

Ken

No, but I'll give you 5 blue backs to let me look around for half an hour.

(beat)

Security Guard

Uh..I ah..

Ken

Alright you silver tongued devil, 10 for 20 minutes.

(transition. factory/warehouse/water sounds)

Ken (v.o.)

Course the best way in is just to throw money at somebody who doesn't have any. I can't act for shit anyway. Since I don't know why I'm here, I don't know what I'm looking for. It's all pipes and basins, everything labeled with directions and warnings. It's hot. I decide follow the biggest pipe, and laugh about what Dr Freud would think of that decision. It leads me to a metal staircase, heading down. 5 minutes of going deeper down than I can guess, I find myself nowhere. Not lost, just...nowhere. All the machinery is upstairs. down here is just the pipe. It feeds into a solid concrete wall. No more noise, no more heat, no more directions. Just the warnings. And even those are just in my head.

(Walking back up steps)

Ken (V.o.)

Okay I'm not an engineer, or a...water worker. I need to find someone in a hard hat and give them the evil eye till they spill something.

Worker

Hey! You're not supposed to be here.

Ken (V.o.)
Perfect

Ken

I'm Heather Oswald, I'm here for a surprise inspection of this facility, and I sure hope you're not in charge of this department, 'cause I have a lot of angry questions for whoever is. First of all, I know this is a water processing plant, but there shouldn't be this much condensation on the walls, this is at least 20% over the safety limit. Second, your auxiliary pipe, I followed it down those stairs, I'm gonna need to see where that comes out.

Worker

No, you're Kennedy Roundhouse. You bribed Sammy and because he has a gambling problem he let you in, and now I'm keeping an eye on you till the police show up.

Ken (v.o.)
shit.

Ken

Shit. Did I interview you about six years back?

Worker
Yeah.

Ken
right. Still workin' here, huh?

Worker
Yeah. I know how to keep my job.

Ken (v.o.)
Dick

Ken

Fair enough. Where does that pipe come out?

Worker
several miles outside the city. The Reserves. For emergencies.

Ken
Right right. You even seen em?

Worker
I don't work the reserves.

Ken
Who does.

Worker
I don't know.

Ken (v.o.)
But you know "Sammy" the security guard has a gambling
problem. You're not lying to me, so someone's lying to you.
Either way...

Ken
I gotta go.

(footsteps)

Worker
No, I can't let you go.

(footsteps stop)

Ken
You gonna knock me down?

Worker
the police are on their way!

(footsteps)

Ken
They know where I live.

(Transition)

Ken (v.o.)
I don't want to be in the crater anymore. I try to walk
out, but the ground is too soft. And too dry? I don't like it. I
want out right now. I try to run, toward the ridge, toward Old
Earth. I won't make it. Feels like none of us will. But I don't
see anyone else.

(gasp! train noises)

Ken (v.o.)

Fell asleep on the train. I must have been making noise 'cause all eyes are on me. I try to ignore 'em and reach for my bottle. It's on my night stand, and it's as empty as my bed anyway.

Guy on Train
Bad dreams?

Ken
Just the one.

Guy on Train
Oh, the crater dream? You still get those?

Ken
Doesn't everybody?

Guy on Train
Ha, sure sure. I just haven't had one in a few years.
Thought maybe...I don't know.

Ken
Yeah. Lucky you I guess.

(Transition. Bar noises)

Nick
Kennedy. The usual, as usual?

Ken
Yeah, and another bottle for the road.

Nick
two bottles in as many days? Your case is either going swell or going terrible. Or something in between.

Ken
It is definitely doing one of those three ways. Have the cops shown up yet?

Nick
Guess the case isn't going so swell then.

(Bar door opens, heavy footsteps)

Felder

Excuse me ladies and gentlemen, my name is officer Felder,
I'm looking for a woman called 'Kennedy Roundhouse'.

Barfly

She lives down the block! Close the door, you're lettin all
the light in!

(laughter from other barflys)

Ken (quietly)

I was here all afternoon.

Nick

You know I don't lie to cops, Kennedy.

Ken (quietly)

It's barely a lie, I'm in here all the time.

Felder

I was made clear to me that I might have better luck
finding mr roundhouse if I started here.

Nick

Sorry pal. I get on the cop's bad side and there goes the
whole operation. No more Earthshine, no more Nicky.

(heavy footsteps)

Felder

You own this bar?

Nick

Yes sir. Nicky Nontadopolis.

Felder

And are you familiar with Ms Roundhouse, Mr Nontadopolis?

Nick

Yes sir I am. This is she right here.

Ken

Thanks Nick.

Felder

You know why I'm looking for you Ms Roundhouse?

Ken

Hey I'm a good detective, but not THAT good. Gimme a clue and a deposit and I'll see what I can do.

Felder

You want to tell me about the water processing plant?

Ken

It's a big grey building on the edge of town. They process all our water. Only a 20 minute walk from the last train stop.

Felder

You want to tell me what you were doing there today?

Ken

Not me. I've been here all day 'cause I'm a lousy alcoholic. Tell him Nick.

Nick

Ah don't say that Kennedy, you're a great alcoholic. Never misses a day, this guy.

Felder

I see, so are you saying to me right now Mr Nontadopolis that Ms Roundhouse has been in your bar all day?

Ken

Look, Felder, I-

Felder

Shut up, Roundhouse. Let's hear it, Nontadopolis. You got something to say to me?

Nick

I...she may not have, that is to say, I wouldn't swear to it that I've seen her in this building ALL DAY, but I'm serving other drinkers, getting bottles from the back, I can't keep track of everyone.

Felder

And for how long today do you suppose you didn't keep track of Ms Roundhouse?

Nick

uh..

Felder

Or maybe you'd rather show me exactly what's in those bottles in the back that have you too distracted to keep track of everyone.

Ken

Alright Felder ease off. No I wasn't in here all day, I stepped out for a bit.

Felder

And where did you step out to?

(footsteps as Lin slides up to the bar)

Lin Yao

He was with me.

Felder

And where was that, Ms...

Lin Yao

Lin Yao Fang.

Felder

What is your relationship with Ms Roundhouse, Ms Fang?

Lin Yao

Private. I met Kennedy here, late in the morning. We talked, we drank, we stopped talking, went back to her place, and now we are here again.

Felder

What exactly did you and Ms Roundhouse talk about.

Lin Yao

That is also private. I understand you came here ascertain Kennedy's whereabouts this afternoon, I have just given them to you. You may arrest us both, leave us alone, or I will take this up in a more official capacity with your captain.

(beat)

Felder

I don't know why these people are hiding you from me Roundhouse, but sooner or later they'll stop. And once you're out in the open, I'm putting you in the dust.

(heavy footsteps receding. door slams closed)

Ken
What was that all about?

Lin Yao
You're welcome.

Nick
Don't take it personally Lin, she's just a bastard.
Kennedy, this is who I was telling you about earlier.

Ken
Pretty sure I would have remembered if you had mentioned a
gorgeous as- oh hell. This is the woman who has the thing with
the mom, right?

Lin Yao
Lin Yao Fang, Miss Roundhouse. My mother is Dr Bao Fang-

Ken (almost to herself)
I don't, I don't care.

Lin Yao
-she used to work at the university. Her health has been
declining for months, and now I'm afraid her mind may be in
ruin.

Ken
Look, Ms Fang, I appreciate you helping me out back there,
and I'm sorry your mom's not doing well, but I don't take family
cases. If you want a drink, or need your boyfriend followed or
something, I'd be glad to pay you back for saving my skin
but...That's it.

Lin Yao
I'll take a drink then.

Ken
Great. Nick, stack me up and give Ms Fang whatever her lips
desire.

Lin Yao
What is the most expensive drink you serve?

Nick
Ha. I have a pretty expensive Earthshine somewhere in the

back. Real thick. You get tipsy just smelling it.

Lin Yao

Bring me a bottle of that please.

Ken

I don't know what kind of point you're trying to make, but this is exactly the kind of garbage only gets taken out when it's a family case. Have a good night, Ms Fang.

Lin Yao

My mother has said nothing but your name since yesterday morning, Miss Roundhouse. And I want to know why.

Ken (v.o.)

I look at her. Hard. Never seen her before today. And I would remember. She's the kind of beautiful makes you feel like you're taking a cold drink on a hot day. Like your eyes are supposed to be looking at her, and everything else they see is just a distraction. Never heard of this doctor Fang at the university either. I want to go sit in the corner and work on my puzzle, but something tells me Lin Yao is bringing me another corner piece. There's only one question I need to ask to be sure, but I already know the answer.

Ken

What time yesterday did you mom start asking for me?

Lin Yao

Around 12.30.

Ken (V.O.)

That's about when Mandy came calling. There's a connection here and my gut is telling me no one's walking away from this clean.

Lin Yao

What makes you think she was asking for you?

Ken

If she was tryin' to warn me she was too late. Let's go see her.

Lin Yao

Now? I just got a bottle.

Ken
bring it. I'm gonna need it.

Lin Yao
you're so sure?

Ken
I always need it.

(Transition. House door opening. Two sets of footsteps on hard wood.)

Lin Yao
I'll skip asking you to make yourself at home if you'll skip the sharp deflection.

Ken
Sharp deflections are the only way I can feel at home.

Lin Yao
She is through here.

(footsteps. A door slides open)

Lin Yao
Muquin, ta shi zai zheli.

Bao Fang
Kennedy Roundhouse.

Ken
Dr Fang, do you know anything about the moon's water supply, a conspiracy involving former councilmen DeWhitt or Kinglsey, or anything at all about woman named Mandy DeWhitt, formerly Mandy Licks?

Bao Fang
Kennedy Roundhouse.

Ken
Oh shit, that's right.

Lin Yao
That is all she has said for almost-

Ken

Yeah I remember. I forgot but now I remember. Dr. Fang, how lucid do you feel? Do you understand what I'm saying? Do you know who I am?

Bao Fang
Kennedy Roundhouse

Ken

Okay. How 'bout this: If you understand where you are or what's happening, walk over to your daughter.

Bao Fang
Kennedy Roundhouse

Ken

If you understand that I am Kennedy Roundhouse, I'd like you to take my hand.

(small footsteps receding, pacing)

Bao Fang
Kennedy Roundhouse. Kennedy Roundhouse..

Lin Yao

She hasn't been lucid for some time now. She hasn't been able or willing to speak in weeks. Miss Roundhouse, it's time for you to tell me what you know.

Ken

I have a few questions first.

Lin Yao

Then let's open that bottle.

(door slides shut. Footsteps. Drinks being made)

Ken

What is Dr Fang a doctor of?

Lin Yao

Sociology. Why did you ask me what time she began saying your name?

Ken

I started working a case about the same time your mom started up. Does she have any connection to the city council or

involvement in the water supply?

Lin Yao

None. If the case you are working is connected to the council and the water supply, where does my mother enter into it?

Ken

Working on that. What did she teach?

Lin Yao

Mostly sociology. Sometimes literature. But she hasn't taught a class in almost a year.

Ken

Why not?

Lin Yao

She got sick. Her mind began to fade. The doctors could not diagnose her. They had hoped working would help focus her but, no.

Ken

Yeah, sure, doctors.

Lin Yao

Am I boring you, Mr Roundhouse?

Ken

I hadn't heard of you or your mother until an hour ago, but she starts saying my name the moment I get a new case that's actually an old case. Everyone's a step ahead of me and every bit of this is connected to every other bit of this except your ma. This has to be connected, I can feel it. I can't see how but I can feel the connection. It's staring right at me.

Lin Yao

My mother often spoke of connections. She was beginning research on a book before her illness took her focus. She is an educated woman and serious minded, yet she believed there is a shared connection between all living beings; A common source of information that is passed from one subject to another over great distances, soundlessly. Her book was to be a dissection and exploration of the moon dream, and its connective source.

Ken

THE moon dream? The crater dream?

Lin Yao

She does not believe it is a cultural or socially induced shared experience. Neither does she believe that only a majority of the population has had the dream. She believes everyone on the moon has had the dream, and she believes it is significant.

Ken

I'm going to need to take Dr Fangs research back to my flat.

Lin Yao

I doubt you would understand even half of it.

Ken

So do I. That's why it's homework and not a class lecture.

Lin Yao

You believe my mother may be correct?

Ken

I believe the dream is your mom's connection to the rest of my case.

Lin Yao

You are very good at responding to questions without answering them, Miss Roundhouse. Is that a professional skill, or something you use to protect yourself from others?

Ken

Protecting myself from others is a professional skill, Ms Fang.

Lin Yao

I will have copies of my mother's research sent to you tomorrow morning.

(transition noises. Footsteps on the sidewalk)

Ken (v.o.)

The water supply. Councilman DeWhitt. And now the moon dream. I've got 3 corners. If I get one more I can solve the case. Something's telling me I don't want to solve the case. Something's telling me to leave the corner alone. The only corner I should concern myself with is the corner my bar's on.

Mandy already paid me for the case. She doesn't it solved. So
why am I stretched out on the pavement?

Mandy (flashback V.O.)

Consider my question. Consider it a statement. Then
consider why no one has ever questioned that statement.

Ken (v.o.)

That's right. It's not the case. It's not the money. It's
the digging. It's rattling the cage.

Mandy (flashback V.O.)

I know enough to know there is something to know worth
knowing. I know I won't be allowed to know it

Ken (v.o.)

It's not about the truth. It's not about righteous lines
drawn across black and white sand. It's not about making peace
with yourself or your past or with Gods that watch unblinking
and passively cruel.

Mandy (flashback V.O.)

I am married to George Dewhitt, Mr Roundhouse. One of the
"men in charge".

Ken (v.o.)

It's about taking down the gatekeepers. Dragging them
across the black and white sand and rubbing their faces in it
until we're all the same shade of grey. Grey as the moon. Grey
as the god damned moon.

Mandy (flashback v.o.)

Consider the question mark a period.

Ken (v.o.)

A period is just the precursor to an ellipses, Miss Licks.

Mandy (flashback v.o.)

leave it alone.

Ken (v.o.)

Not on your life.

Mandy (flashback v.o.)

Leave it all alone, Kennedy Roundhouse.

Ken (v.o.)

If it's the last useful thing I do in my life, I'm gonna find out what's going on and who's pulling these strings. If I have to stare down the sun itself and sink into the dust with the city behind me, forgetting me and cursing me, I will sink into hell a happy woman.

(transition. Ken enters bar)

Ken

Nick! I'll have the usual, as usual. I'm fired up tonight.

Felder

That so, Roundhouse?

Ken

Officer Felder, nice to see you again. We really shouldn't let so much time go by between visits, it makes catching up a nightmare.

Nick

Ken...

Felder

Shut up, Nicky.

Ken

Will you stop bullying my bartender? He's already practically on your side, and if you bully him then I don't get to.

Felder

I'm gonna need you to come with me.

Ken

Didn't we do this already? I told you I was with Ms Fang all afternoon.

Felder

And where were you all night?

Ken

Locked in a box wrestling God. What do you care?

Felder

Don't make me threaten to take you in for the bottle in

your pocket Roundhouse, answer the question.

Ken

I was with Ms Fang. Her mom can vouch for me.

Felder

We have two witnesses that put you at the water treatment plant today, which makes Ms Fang guilty of obstructing justice, and a nasty liar. So you're coming to midtown with me and we're gonna figure out where you really were tonight.

Ken

Okay, okay. Busted. I did go to the water treatment plant today. You are one ace police hound. Really. Can't you just roll the trespassing charge into the next thing you arrest me for? I was hoping to polish off at least half a bottle of legally produced alcohol.

Felder

Sure Roundhouse. We'll add trespassing to the homicide charge.

Ken

Homicide?

Nicky

Ken. Mandy Licks was killed a few hours ago. She's dead.

Ken (v.o.)

Looks like I found my fourth corner.