

RISING STAR

Written by

Stephen Hall

shsc21441@gmail.com

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

1985

A filthy, sun-bleached New York block. Steam hisses from a manhole. Boom boxes blast. Taxi horns scream.

DETECTIVE LOGAN FORD [44] barrels down the sidewalk - trench coat flapping, tie loose, sweat pouring. He's tough, but the years are catching up.

Ahead of him, DARREN [25] - wiry, fast - shoves pedestrians aside.

Darren cuts into the street-

-SCREECH!

A patrol car SLAMS the brakes too late. Darren hits the hood, rolls over, and CRASHES onto the asphalt.

OFFICER CUNNINGHAM [29] jumps out, flips Darren onto his stomach, cuffs him.

OFFICER O'REILLY [31] leans casually against the squad car as Logan finally jogs up, bent over, catching his breath.

Passersby cheer at the arrest.

POLICE OFFICER O'REILLY  
You're seriously outta shape,  
Logan.

LOGAN FORD  
I'd like to see you run five  
blocks.

POLICE OFFICER CUNNINGHAM  
Surprised you made it this far.

POLICE OFFICER O'REILLY  
Too much , man.

POLICE OFFICER CUNNINGHAM  
You're a fuckin' mess Logan.

LOGAN FORD  
Speak for yourself, O'Reilly

POLICE OFFICER O'REILLY  
We'll take it from here.

POLICE OFFICER CUNNINGHAM  
(to O'Reilly)  
He couldn't catch a cold.

They laugh, shove Darren into the squad car, and drive off.

The cheering crowd lingers - staring.

Logan notices.

Beat.

LOGAN FORD  
What you looking at?

INT. POLICE STATION OFFICE - LATER

A tired, nicotine-stained bullpen. Fluorescent lights buzz.  
Phones ring. Typewriters CLACK. Cigarette smoke hangs low.

Detectives work in cliques.

The doors swing open - LOGAN FORD enters.

A few heads turn.

A few smirks.

On Logan's desk: a giant "GET WELL SOON" card.

The word "WELL" has been aggressively scratched out.

Above it, in thick marker: "GET FIT SOON."

Snickers from nearby desks.

Logan stares at it. Beat.

He drops his coat on the chair, unfazed - or pretending to be.

RONNIE JACKSON [31] approaches.

RONNIE JACKSON  
You got the papers for that guy  
they brought in?

Logan searches through his paperwork.

RONNIE JACKSON (CONT'D)  
Christ, you've not lost them?

LOGAN FORD  
They're here somewhere.

RONNIE JACKSON  
Jeez, Logan. You need to get a  
secretary for this place. It's like  
a dump.

LOGAN FORD  
You my mother?

Ronnie Jackson sniggers as he shuffles away.

RONNIE JACKSON  
Interview Room 2 when you're ready.

Logan follows the officer.

A cassette recorder plays Spencer Davis Group's song 'Keep  
On Running'.

LOGAN FORD  
Yeah, very funny.

INT. POLICE STATION/INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

A bare concrete box.

Metal table bolted to the floor. Two chairs.

A single overhead lamp casts a hard white cone. Everything  
else in shadow.

Cold. Clinical.

Darren slouches bored in his chair, his wrists cuffed.

A UNIFORMED OFFICER leans against the wall, arms folded.  
Silent. Watching.

The door opens.

Logan enters and sets a thin file on the table.

An ashtray. A pack of cigarettes.

He sits.

Studies Darren.

Silence.

The perp reclines in his chair, uninterested.

LOGAN FORD  
We got the stash you threw away.

Darren stares up blankly at the ceiling, yawning theatrically.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)  
There's enough to get you maybe  
five years.

DARREN  
Man...you've got nothin' on me.

The detective stares hard at him.

Beat.

LOGAN FORD  
Darren, how's your mother keeping  
these days?

Darren's jaw tightens.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)  
I hear her ticker's not quite  
running like clockwork these days.  
Not surprising with a kid like you  
to keep her on her toes.

DARREN  
I wanna speak to a lawyer.

LOGAN FORD  
You think we'll find anything at  
her place?

DARREN  
I WANT A LAWYER!

Logan slams the table into the seated perp who flips backwards onto the floor.

Logan rises.

The officer in the background watches, unmoved.

DARREN (CONT'D)  
You're fuckin' crazy.

Logan circles Darren.

LOGAN FORD  
You reckon?

He sneers down at the perp.

Darren stiffens - wary.

The detective picks up the chair.

He returns and sits down, tense.

He watches Darren return to his chair, then sits.

Beat.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)

If I were to find a similar bag in  
her place - like in the kitchen. I  
reckon she wouldn't see out the  
year.

DARREN

You got no fuckin' right!

Logan slams his hand on the table.

Darren recoils.

LOGAN FORD

I make my own rights.

He leans forward.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)

Now either you're gonna talk or  
start thinking about a eulogy for  
your old dear.

Darren mumbles.

The detective calmly leans back.

He pulls out a packet of cigarettes, lights one.

Darren watches.

Logan reaches over and offers it.

Beat.

Darren takes it.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)

Good.

DARREN

You'll drop the charges?

LOGAN FORD

Let's just see what you have to  
offer.

Logan lights a cigarette for himself.

He pulls a cellophane bag from his pocket and lays it on the table.

The perp studies it dismissively.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)  
They're new.

Darren thinks.

The detective flicks ash on the floor.

DARREN  
Rising Star. Folks are hitting on  
it for parties. Makes them feel  
good...like really fuckin' good.

Logan glances at the watching officer who shrugs.

LOGAN FORD  
Acid?

DARREN  
Fuck no, man. Like fuckin' Loving  
Spoonful. Makes you wanna embrace  
the world and dance till sunrise.

The perp stubs out his cigarette in the ashtray.

Logan studies the contents of the bag.

LOGAN FORD  
So who's the source?

DARREN  
Man, I don't know. I just get the  
stuff delivered.

Logan glances around to the other officer.

LOGAN FORD  
Tell the desk we'll be charging  
him.

The officer makes for the door.

DARREN  
C'mon, man!

LOGAN FORD  
Then spill it.

The perp slumps back in resignation.

DARREN  
Giacomo Pulcinella runs the spot.  
That's all I know, man. Some dude  
just delivers. That's the God's  
honest truth.

The detective stubs out his cigarette and rises.

He stares hard at Darren.

Silence.

LOGAN FORD  
You'll get charged with possession.

DARREN  
What!

LOGAN FORD  
Hey. Consider yourself lucky. I  
could push for intent to supply.

Logan picks up the folder and leaves.

DARREN  
You're full of shit, man!

EXT. LOGAN'S HOME - LATER

A quiet Queens street. Kids playing. Lawns trimmed. A world  
away from the city grit.

Logan's car rolls up outside his home. His son, CALLUM FORD  
[9] cycles on his bike.

Next-door-neighbour PETER DENTON [36] mows his lawn.

CALLUM FORD  
Dad! Look!

He lifts the bike slightly.

CALLUM FORD (CONT'D)  
Mr. Denton fixed it.

Peter Denton offers a friendly wave from the lawn.

LOGAN FORD  
Good.

Logan heads for the house.

INT. LOGAN'S HOME/KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Warm but worn. Family photos on the fridge. Dinner cooking on the stove.

AUDREY FORD [39] chops vegetables with efficient irritation. She checks the clock.

AUDREY FORD  
You're early.

He gets a beer from the fridge.

LOGAN FORD  
Making up for lost time.

Audrey turns away.

AUDREY FORD  
Why break the habits of a lifetime now?

Logan takes a sip.

LOGAN FORD  
I'm trying.

Audrey finally turns.

AUDREY FORD  
Trying?

She nods towards the bottle.

AUDREY FORD (CONT'D)  
Instead of reaching for a beer, like you always do...how about setting the table?

Beat.

AUDREY FORD (CONT'D)  
Now that'd be trying.

Logan studies the bottle then sets it on the counter.

He grabs some plates and starts setting the table.

LOGAN FORD  
I'm working my ass off, Audrey.

AUDREY FORD  
You're always working your ass off,  
Logan.

She stirs a pot.

AUDREY FORD (CONT'D)  
Go get Callum.

Logan nods and heads for the door.

Audrey glances at the beer on the counter.

EXT. LOGAN'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Logan steps out onto the porch.

Across the open lawn, Denton shuts off the mower and wipes  
his hands on a rag.

He raises a hand.

PETER DENTON  
How's things?

LOGAN FORD  
Hanging in there.

Denton approaches.

PETER DENTON  
I'm Peter.

LOGAN FORD  
Logan Ford...welcome to the  
neighbourhood.

They shake hands.

PETER DENTON  
You been here long?

LOGAN FORD  
Ten years.

He gestures down the quiet street.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)  
Good spot. Quiet.

Down the block, Callum rides his bike toward the house.

Logan cups his hands.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)  
Callum! Inside!

Logan turns back to Denton.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)  
You got family?

PETER DENTON  
Nah. Just me.

Logan smirks.

LOGAN FORD  
Don't let my wife know. She'll have  
you fixed up before you can say  
"blind date".

Denton laughs politely.

A small beat.

LOGAN FORD (CONT'D)  
Moved far?

PETER DENTON  
Philly.

LOGAN FORD  
Change of scenery?

Denton shrugs.

PETER DENTON  
Yeah. You could say that.

Logan's cop instincts kick in as he studies him briefly.

Then he relaxes.

LOGAN FORD  
Happy to share a few beers one  
night. Get you up to speed on the  
neighbourhood.

PETER DENTON  
That'd be nice.

Callum reaches the driveway.

LOGAN FORD  
Better go. See ya later.

Denton offers a small wave.