

City of Furious Angels

Episode guide

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#1x01: Pilot, part 1

*I hurt myself today
To see if I still feel
I focus on the pain
The only thing that's real*

-Nine Inch Nails, *Hurt*, performed by Johnny Cash

The characters met at Broken Illusions, an L.A. night club familiar to all of them. DJ Lucent was playing, but not at his usual level – perhaps he was distracted by a woman named Tara Porch, as he certainly kept her under surveillance... They ran into Roberto Belmonte, who told them that tonight would be a fight night where visitors were allowed. They also met Denise Bone, the other hotshot DJ at the club. Eventually all four decided to look for some action and left for the fight club event.

At the abandoned warehouse that housed the fight club, Max Revere fought Kristen Whitlock in a savage, bloody match that ended when Whitlock surrendered. Both sustained nasty injuries. Then Richard van Horn fought Lewis Donelson and defeated him quickly and easily, almost knocking him out before he could surrender. The night took a sudden turn into weirdness when Henegar, the undefeated local champion, struck down newcomer Eddie Cousar who reputedly had mob connections. His brutal finishing move left Cousar in a coma and the victim was loaded into his friend's Cadillac for transport to the nearest hospital. But that wasn't all: during the defining moment of the fight, Lucent thought he saw Henegar momentarily transform into a monster with horns and red eyes. Outside, Yoshiko Knight also saw the victor as a humanoid beast.

The group tailed Donelson and Henegar to the former's house in Watts using Max's 1971 Ford Mustang Mach 1. Henegar walked two blocks further and then descended into the sewers. Bewildered, the heroes decided to question Donelson. After some rather intimidating diplomacy, Richard was admitted in and sat down to talk with the man he had fought earlier. When the interrogation didn't proceed to his satisfaction, he tried to grab Donelson's gun, but this ended in tragedy. Donelson was faster and shot Richard, wounding him. Then Lucent tried to shoot into the darkened room from outside, missing Donelson. The hurried return shot went wide. Then Richard struck a fierce blow that knocked Donelson out and caused severe internal trauma. The group panicked somewhat, packed the unconscious man into their vehicle and drove off. When Yoshiko tried to administer first aid, she found that Donelson wasn't breathing anymore. Cue further panicked attempts at bringing the man back to life – to no avail. The mortified heroes drove to Anaheim and left the body in a trash dumpster on some dark alley.

Following this, they drove to Richard's mansion in the Hollywood Hills and tried to deal with what had just happened...

#1x02: Pilot, part 2

*Undefined, no signs of regret
Your swollen pride assumes respect
Talons fly as a last disguise
But no return, the time has come*

-Portishead, *Cowboys*

The characters slept the night at Richard's place. They were awakened around 11 AM by a call from Gretchen Fricks, a lawyer who was interested in the events of last night. She had got Richard's card from Eric Quirk, the man who drove Eddie Cousar to the hospital. Also, the TV news informed them that Donelson's body had been found by Anaheim refuse workers. The lawyer arranged to have lunch with Richard at Astro Burger on Santa Monica Boulevard. Yoshiko went there as well. The meeting was very polite and friendly, even though Richard suspected Ms. Fricks was working for the Southside Mob. She didn't want to name her client.

Meanwhile, Max took his car to Lewis Penwell's custom shop to have the right front seat replaced, as it was soaked with Richard's blood, while DJ Lucent went home. Before separating the group had agreed to meet at Broken Illusions tonight to discuss what the hell had happened. During the afternoon, Yoshiko got a call from her agent Randall Opitz, who had got her band Western Missile a gig for Thursday, supporting 12 Hammer, a popular local band.

At the club the heroes decided to enter the sewers Henegar had disappeared into, and to disguise themselves as city repairmen. They spent the night and next day getting some supplies. Lucent called in a favor and borrowed an official city van from his friend Clyde Gelman. Richard purchased a black market TEC-9 from a dealer called Vallone, who had illegally converted it to autofire. Everyone bought coveralls, rubber boots, and assorted pieces of equipment. They got helmets with mounted lights from Lucent's friend. Thus equipped, they drove to Watts and descended below street level.

Max had decided to bring his stunt bicycle with him, and a video camera too. The characters ended up shooting their very own "Jackass Witch Project" video while exploring the sewer system. The discovery of very large hoof prints unsettled them a bit, and the discovery of a huge, angry horned monster even more so. It mauled Lucent badly with a huge lead pipe before falling to Max's rifle fire. At this very moment they found out that they hadn't actually killed Henegar, but rather another being of his kind, as the fight club champion came out of his hideout roaring. A TEC-9, Winchester 94, Glock 17, katana, and even some old-fashioned kung fu were brought against the monster in a literally dirty battle among the sewage, and it replied with thrusts of its horns and swipes of its powerful arms. Henegar seemed to have the upper hand at first, but then the tide turned. The beast finally fell to a .444 slug through the back of its skull. Both dead monsters dissolved soon after their death, leaving the heroes with no tangible evidence except fuzzy, blurry images on a videotape.

Lucent and Yoshiko were barely alive; both had suffered several broken bones. After cleaning off the worst of the filth at Max's apartment they took a taxi to the nearest hospital. Richard was given a good thrashing but miraculously had no serious wounds, while Max escaped unhurt. They simply stayed home to unwind. Before falling asleep, Max thought about the videotape the party had shot in the sewers, thinking about asking one of his film industry friends to check out the footage...

#2x01: High Desert Fire, part 1

*Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery
None but ourselves can free our minds
Have no fear for atomic energy
Cause none of them can stop the time*

-Bob Marley, *Redemption Song*

It had been a few months since our heroes battled Henegar and his mate in the sewers of Watts; it was now April 2004. Their wounds had healed, but their world would never be the same. DJ Lucent & Yoshiko's story about street violence was believed at the hospital and they were released in a couple of days, just in time for Yoshiko to make her Thursday gig.

Richard had almost got his big break in the form of a major part in a new western-themed sci-fi series, but it had been canceled after the pilot was filmed and shopped around. Other than that, he and Max had appeared as evil henchmen in the latest Steven Seagal vehicle, *Thunder Siege*, which also starred Michael Ironside. Max had also been a stunt driver in that film and several others, performing predictably well. Yoshiko's J-punk band Western Missile had had a steady series of gigs around California, and the word was that they might be on the verge of breaking through. Their first single *Parachute in a Bar* was currently getting some radio airplay. DJ Lucent had been performing as usual after healing from his injuries. The group hadn't talked about the monster incident to anyone, believing it was something best kept to themselves.

Everyone was going to go to Frontier 5, a big open-air party in the California desert, some three hours from Los Angeles. Lucent was going to play a set and Western Missile would play on the band stage. Richard had decided to do some promotion work for the band and was coming along in that capacity. Max wanted to take part in the big quarter-mile race. However, he was delayed by film work and missed the races entirely in the end. The others headed out early on Saturday in the band's shiny, new, lime-colored Ford Econoline van that packed a GameCube and mini-fridge for entertainment on the road. Band members Nicole, Dave, and May were naturally in the car, as was Lucent's dog, Detroit. Our heroes were packing heat, having become a little more paranoid since meeting Henegar.

They arrived around noon. Lucent and Richard wrangled good performing slots from chief organizer Cathy Caron. After setting up camp, they mingled among the VIPs and regular party people. Lucent had met Tara Porch once again at Broken Illusions the night before and had talked her into coming to the party. The lovely dance instructor and music video performer was as good as her word and rolled up in a Ferrari F355. Tara did seem to enjoy Lucent's company, as well as that of his friends. Richard talked to Hollywood middleweight producer Matthew Flemming and well-known, achingly beautiful actress Rebecca Potter, who looked momentarily a little weird to Yoshiko. The feeling passed quickly, however, and she didn't mention it to the others. Yoshiko also spotted Kristen Whitlock in the crowd, recognizing her as the woman who almost defeated Max at the fight club. On the race track, Dean Kingston cleaned up in Max's absence, winning the final heat and the accompanying pile of cash. Some no-name DJs and the bands Massive Denial and Struggle Kids had finished playing by the time the sun touched the horizon and the real party was about to start...

#2x02: High Desert Fire, part 2

*We drove out to the desert just to lie down beneath this bowl of stars
We stand up at the Palace like it's the last of the great Pioneertown bars
We shout out these songs against the clang of electric guitars
You can see a million miles tonight
But you can't get very far*

-Counting Crows, *Mrs. Potter's Lullaby*

Lucent and Tara danced by the DJ stage while Richard and Yoshiko watched 12 Hammer's display of true metal from afar. Statue of the Trial followed, but our heroes did not stick around for their intelligent college rock. Max called in and told Richard that he wouldn't be able to come at all; apparently his stunt scene shooting was still in progress. Next Richard ran into Kristen Whitlock and dazzled her with his tall tales of Yosemite rock climbing and long distance biking. They grabbed some free beer and food before watching Sand Imprint's performance with Yoshiko. Meanwhile, Lucent and Tara were walking Detroit and enjoying each other's company.

Then it was Western Missile's turn. One by one the band members came onstage and proceeded to play a fast and furious set, much appreciated by the audience. They left the stage victorious and made slow progress towards the VIP area, shaking hands and writing autographs for eager fans. DJ Lucent's set had started while they were playing; it concluded with mixed results. After the last song in the set everyone gathered in the VIP area. Western Missile made friends of Sand Imprint's band members while Richard got himself quite drunk. Yoshiko had another of her brief visions and mentioned it to the others now, but they didn't see anything weird about Rebecca Potter.

Sometime after midnight Glenn Champagne, Sand Imprint's vocalist (the other members being Richard Mounts, Norma Wilford & Bolt), invited Yoshiko, her band and her friends to an afterparty on the top of a mesa a few miles away. Everybody agreed readily, so the group packed their things and drove out to follow Glenn's van to the mesa. Upon exiting the car they found out that Ms. Potter was accompanying the Sand Imprint guys to the party. A bonfire was built at the top and everyone gathered around it. Richard embarrassed himself with a crappy rendition of *Paranoid* and an unforgettable drunken Ozzy imitation. Pretty soon a boombox was employed to provide background music and people cuddled by the fire, some toking spliffs provided by Bolt, some preferring Corona beer, and some just chilling out. Lucent continued his determined conquest of Tara, Richard engaged in a deeply meaningful conversation with Nicole, and Yoshiko decided to get to know Glenn a lot better.

This bliss was disturbed when Lucent heard noises from the path. He went to investigate and found someone dressed in desert fatigues who was pointing an MP5 submachine gun right at him and told him to stay quiet. Naturally, Lucent blurted out "There's some guy with a gun here!" which caused havoc in the camp. Richard yelled "It's the Feds! Burn the weed!" and Bolt rushed to the bonfire to comply. However, the intruder turned out to be a young woman with decidedly canine features. Lucent's dog felt ill at ease around her. She claimed to be an escapee from some facility where she had been held her whole life and subjected to radical experiments, with the obvious results. She said that she was likely being followed, which turned out to be true when the party walked down to their vehicles to get the hell out. Lucent saw more people in identical fatigues searching the cars. The group decided to go back up and pretend they were sleeping, while their new associate would hide nearby.

Three men wielding MP5s appeared and started questioning the party. They claimed to be military police from the Vandenberg AFB looking for a dangerous, armed fugitive. However, Richard noticed that they had no military insignia. When one of the men found his TEC-9 in the campsite, the questions became a little more pointed. The man who the others called Corporal walked away to speak to someone on his radio. Lucent managed to overhear that he was reporting to somebody and urging him to arrive ASAP. This tallied with what the escapee had told the party earlier, namely that her pursuers would probably work in two teams, one following the other in jeeps. The Corporal came back smiling, but everyone could feel the mounting tension in the air...

#2x03: High Desert Fire, part 3

*There's a buzz hanging over my head
From my broken neon halo
Like a movie that I slept through
I just don't get the point*

*But if I get to California
Before I lose my mind
I'll lay my burden on you
For one last time*

-Jeff Klein, California

Richard and Lucent stretched their legs a little, which the soldiers permitted since they stayed in sight. They decided to subdue the three gunmen before their backup arrived. Lucent diverted the Corporal with an angry tirade about civil rights, which let Richard to slip close to the man and try to knock him out, unsuccessfully. Yoshiko engaged one soldier, their hidden ally fired upon the second, Richard and Lucent kept struggling with the Corporal, and everyone else hit the deck. Soon it was all over. One trooper was shot down, Yoshiko's savage kick broke the neck of another, and Lucent's faithful dog tore out the throat of the last one. Richard received a flesh wound from the Corporal's bullet.

The others were stunned by the sudden violence. Lucent dragged Tara up and started downhill. Yoshiko and Richard convinced the others that it would be best to clear out quickly. On the way down Richard spotted two jeeps crawling towards the mesa with their lights turned off, so the party ran the rest of the way, managing to avoid accidents on the dark path. Then the headlights came on. Lucent, Tara, Western Missile, Richard, and Rebecca piled into the Econoline and Yoshiko accelerated towards the gap between the two jeeps. Muzzle flashes lit up on both sides, but only one round struck Yoshiko's vehicle, shattering the rear window. Lucent leaned out of the side window and blasted away towards the headlights with his Glock.

They darted past the black Jeep Grand Cherokees. Richard stuck his TEC-9 out of the back window and fired the whole magazine in one long burst, trying to suppress the assailants. To his horror, he saw the Sand Imprint van veer violently off the road and roll several times. Yoshiko did not take long in making her decision: she stood on the brakes and turned the car around. They would not abandon the others. Richard slammed in a new magazine, his last. They raced back, stopped near the other jeep and poured out. Yoshiko circled left towards the enemy with her katana, Lucent took cover under the van, and Richard approached from the right. To his surprise, he was followed by Rebecca who had a pistol in her hand now. On the other side of the road, a fierce firefight was in progress.

Yoshiko charged one soldier, dodging his hasty shot and running him through with the ancestral blade. As Richard joined the fray, the second soldier engaged him, drawing blood, but Yoshiko came upon the enemy from behind and severed his spine with a horizontal cut. Then they saw that the other side of the road was now ominously quiet and two soldiers were searching the overturned van. One last charge was the solution chosen by these furious angels. A soldier shot at them, but wounds could not stop them now. The elite trooper met their charge confidently, drawing a combat knife. Richard beat his face raw and Yoshiko slashed at him. Sadly, he stabbed Richard in the gut twice before the katana sliced his throat wide open. Richard went down with a horrifying scream. Then a long burst was heard from inside the wrecked van and the last soldier jumped out. He duelled with Yoshiko while Rebecca and Lucent tried to shoot him from the road. Finally the DJ fired the decisive bullet and the trooper keeled over with blood running from his mouth.

Yoshiko, badly hurt herself, crawled into the wreck, shouting "Glenn!" A horrible sight awaited her. The strange fugitive woman was dead. Bolt, Norma, and the other Richard were dead. They had been coldly executed. Glenn was nearly dead, too, but Yoshiko's desperate efforts staunched the flow of blood. Outside, Lucent went down to his knees, not wanting to acknowledge that he had just killed a man. Rebecca ran up to Richard and administered first aid. As Richard came to, he finally saw the angelic vision of Rebecca that Yoshiko had been talking about. All still among the living limped or were carried to the van and Lucent started off towards L.A. No one wanted to stay there for a moment longer even if it meant leaving the incident clouded in mystery...

#3x01: Thunder Siege II, part 1

*Sink the eight ball
Buy the lady a drink
And nobody knows my name
Bodies float up
From the bottom of the river
Like bubbles in fine champagne*

-Faith No More, *Crack Hitler*

More than half a year had passed since the shootout in the desert; it was December 2004. Somehow, they had gotten away with it all, but not without losses. Glenn Champagne, the sole surviving member of Sand Imprint, was committed to a mental institution as he was unable to cope with what had happened. After several months he showed no signs of improvement. Tara Porch, the woman DJ Lucent had been seeing, had moved out of L.A. soon after the incident. Yoshiko's band mates were, unsurprisingly, shaken by the events and as a result Western Missile hadn't done much in the past months. This confused people who thought they had had everything lined up nicely after the thunderous gig at Frontier 5.

And then there was the mysterious Rebecca Potter. She had left the group soon after they got to L.A., promising to return one day. And return she did. Richard was in Europe on a business trip with his father when Rebecca's call came, but she reached everyone else and arranged to meet them in a quiet restaurant. It was awkward for everyone, but she eventually brought up the reason for her call: she had knowledge of another situation somewhat similar to the one in the desert. Namely, it involved supernatural or paranormal forces – although she added that no one was quite certain whether the unfortunate fugitive who was killed by the nameless soldiers was truly supernatural or just a victim of illegal experiments. “No one” referring to her contacts in this rare field.

Rebecca was there to offer the characters work, both legitimate and the Shadow-hunting kind. She said she would get them in touch with the production team of the latest Steven Seagal direct-to-DVD feature, *Thunder Siege II*, and arrange for everyone to have a small part in the film. Max and Richard had performed in the first film, which would add credibility to their cover story.

Thunder Siege II would put Seagal against drug dealers who funneled funds to terrorists. William Sadler would play the gang boss, and Rebecca herself would appear early in the film as a lawyer who was hard on drugs and also happened to be Seagal's lady friend. She'd be assassinated which naturally led to Steven taking law in his own hands. Max would be one of the thugs who came to kill Rebecca, Danny the DJ at the club where the hit took place, and Yoshiko a club goer who talked with Lucent just before the guns started blazing. All this, while potentially good for the characters' careers, was only a front to get them close to Seagal without anyone asking questions. For Steven Seagal, that overweight has-been action star, was secretly a monster hunter. A real-life monster hunter.

Naturally our protagonists balked a bit at this revelation. But Rebecca managed to convince them that it was true, and furthermore, that Seagal needed some help in hunting a dangerous target. There was no organized secret society of slayers with ritual handshakes and the works, just a few scattered individuals with the gift, or curse, of being able to see the Shadow creatures as they truly looked like. People like the heroes, in other words, only somewhat more experienced at it.

Thus everyone ended up in a meeting at Screen Gems Inc. offices. Seagal was there, as were producer/director Matthew Flemming (whom Richard had met at Frontier 5) and stunt coordinator Angel Montagna (whom Max recognized as a former Ultimate Fighter and a very tough hombre). As Rebecca had arranged everything with Steven beforehand, things went smoothly and Max, Yoshiko and DJ Lucent were all hired.

#3x02: Thunder Siege II, part 2

*Cocaine cannot kill my pain
Like a freight train through my vein*

-Steve Earle, *CCKMP*

After the first day of filming the assassination scene, Steven Seagal invited our heroes and Rebecca into his trailer. There they were filled in on the rest of the story. Steven had frequented some nasty joints while "doing research" for the film, and in one of them he had spotted a man who was clearly a thing of Shadow. Its limbs were unusually long and gangly and its inhuman face was pale and emaciated. Steven had returned there later, but the creature was nowhere to be seen. By carefully asking around, he had found out that it was called Otto and known to be the chief enforcer of a drug dealer known only as... Crack Hitler.

Apparently, Crack Hitler demanded that everyone in his posse was a white man, preferably fit, and dressed mostly in black. They were mostly a bunch of racists and some obviously neo-Nazis, but it was unknown whether Crack Hitler himself believed in a Fourth Reich or if he just liked the visual style. Steven supplied the characters with a rough idea of the neighborhood where the posse operated and asked them to locate Otto and report back to him. He would have helped more, but had to keep up the film star appearances. When Otto was found, Steven would join the heroes for a final assault on its hideout. "We are not a secret society, we don't have a handshake, and we don't have a Batcave in which to imprison these things. We just kill them."

Max, Yoshiko and Lucent completed their acting jobs in a few days. Max played a decent thug and Yoshiko died very dramatically, but the DJ's moment of death probably ended on the cutting room floor. While the filming was still ongoing, they also started the investigation. After rolling around the streets and hanging out at a bar called Silver Pistol for some time, they located a young street dealer named Kevin, whose appearance linked him to Crack Hitler's posse. Lucent's social skills soon convinced Kevin that it would be worth his while to introduce the group to the next highest level in the organization. The two rocks of crack the DJ bought to solidify their story helped too. What nobody could have predicted was that Lucent decided to try out the stuff, taking undercover work a bit too far.

Unsurprisingly, he couldn't quit any time he wanted to. He couldn't quit, period. But initially his friends suspected nothing. Their undercover act went on and soon Kevin arranged a meeting at a place called Andy's Pool, one of L.A.'s less reputable pool halls. It was a big place and obviously a favorite of Crack Hitler's men. Lucent talked to Szabo, a well-dressed dealer, while Max stood security and Yoshiko kept an eye out for trouble. Szabo seemed to buy their act and agreed to sell them a couple of pounds of crack, an amount thought absurdly large by everyone but Lucent, who bankrolled the purchase. They returned some days later to make the buy, and while it went well, Yoshiko noticed a tough-looking woman in a nearby table who seemed to be interested in the proceedings. This led into confused driving all over town while trying to shake real and imaginary tails. They did get down a license number of a red 1996 Dodge Avenger, which turned out to be an publicly unlisted number – probably indicating a law enforcement vehicle. This did not ease their paranoia.

Around this time Richard returned from Europe earlier than expected and was promptly briefed on the situation. The group also noticed Lucent's changed behavior and confronted him on the drug issue. In the end they forcibly restrained him and took him to Dr. Francis Bannon's rehab clinic, which specialized in treating its patients discreetly. The briefcase of crack, enough to land them in a federal prison for a long time, was locked in the safe of Richard's mansion until they could decide what to do with it. Lucent's plan on selling it gradually to get his money back was not well received. At a loss on how to proceed, they decided to visit Andy's Pool once more, and this time Otto was there! Richard succeeded in seeing through the creature's illusionary appearance and easily spotted the monstrous face in the crowd. He also spotted Crack Hitler himself, a very tall blond man, surrounded by a bunch of toadies and heavies.

He retreated to the car to wait with the others and they placed a call to Steven, who arrived ASAP. When Otto left in his white Dodge Viper SRT-10, they succeeded in tailing him to his home – a nice two-story house in a respectable neighborhood. Steven quickly organized a two-pronged assault, with himself and Max going through the front door and Yoshiko and Max taking the rear entrance via the porch. The house was dark and quiet. The first sign of Otto was a burst of suppressed gunfire towards Max!