

Beneath the Snow

Snowy streets of winter New York City: a homeless man walks down the sidewalk. Time period – around 1970s. The person is covered in layers of dirty rags, yet it is obvious, that he is still freezing. The man slows down and, eventually, sits down near one of the buildings. The hot air coming from the ventilation shaft nearby warms him up. Homeless man puts a small metal plate in front of him, yet there are hardly any people left on the street in this weather and the ones that still are do not seem to be inclined to give him money. A homeless man takes out a mangled cigarette out of his pocket, lights it with the lighter; a curious thing – his lighter is decorated with fancy engravings and it looks very expensive. However, the audience's gaze cannot linger on it for too long, as one of the building's windows is revealed. It is a TV store. It is closed, however, one of the TVs seems to have been left on. A single policeman can now be seen patrolling through the street. He is middle-aged with unkempt facial hair; a tired and generally quite-miserably looking man. Policeman absent-mindedly drops a couple of quarters into the homeless man's plate. Extreme close up on the policeman's hand reveals a light mark, left (presumably) by the wedding ring. The ring, however, is missing. The working TV catches policeman's attention. The news report is shown on a flickering, black-and-white screen. Policeman approaches the window to see more closely.

Close-up on the TV screen. The footage shows a smartly-dressed young man talking with a reporter. Both of them have concerned looks on their faces. The map of USA appears behind them, on it – a black line, connecting five towns and cities throughout the continent, on each town – a small skull symbol. The trail ends with a puncture line leading to New York City, a question mark is put there instead of a skull. At the edges of the TV screen four different pictures appear one after another – all of them seem to be from the various crime scenes. The dead bodies are hidden behind TV mosaic, but the blood and other secondary signs, like yellow police lines, etc., are visible. The young man points towards the question mark, behind him another photo appears – this time it is the same young man, just with FBI jacket, the picture is taken at one of the crime scenes he appears to be securing.

The TV screen is reflected in the policeman's eyes. The man looks even more tired than before. Suddenly his old-looking, personal police radio starts buzzing. Policeman quickly rubs his hands together to warm them up and answers the radio. The man's eyes widen – he does not seem to be tired anymore, but nervous and on the edge. Policeman hurries down the street. He appears extremely shaken. He takes a turn into a dark alley nearby. The snow starts getting heavy.

Close up on the blocked-off ending of the dark alley. The couple of trash containers are there, the overflowing trash is covered in snow. In front of the trash-bins – a dead woman's body face-down in a puddle of blood. The killing seems to be recent. Two zoom-ins commence; one showcases the light mark on the woman's ring finger, another – the quite distinctive footprints beneath the body, left in such a manner as to indicate struggle. Footprints definitely do not belong to the woman; those are man's shoes. Now a wider scene is shown: the policeman has just entered the alley, we saw the details of the crime from his point of view. Police officer is stopped by a young man wearing a coat, who is talking on his own personal police radio at the same time. With his other hand the young man holds up an FBI badge. This FBI agent is the person from TV news, the only difference is a hint of the facial hair (necessary to demonstrate that at least a day has passed since his interview). The policeman backs down to not contaminate the crime scene. His own police radio goes off, but the officer pays no attention to it.

Some time has passed. Now the crime scene is blocked off by the police lines. A person from forensics is looking at the body, a young FBI agent is talking to someone, who looks like a higher ranking police officer. There is a reporter, already trying to get some details about the incident; another police officer is trying to get rid of her. At the corner of the alley stands the middle-aged policeman, his arms are crossed. First he looks at the body – the fresh snow has mixed with the warm blood, melting the footprint outlines. They are now impossible to read. Then the officer takes a glance at the FBI agent's feet – he wears a pair of well-made shoes, which go well with his smart outfit. The couple of footprints left by FBI agent look eerily similar to the ones that were present at the crime scene. The main character looks up and meets the FBI agent's gaze. Agent looks distressed and suspicious. After couple of seconds of eye contact the main policeman gives a few remarks to another officer, who, in turn, writes them down. Then the main character leaves.

Policeman walks back and forth the same street the TV store is located at. There are no people left outside, except the homeless man, who is now snoozing. The officer is clearly in deep thought. Various still-images flash to show the audience his trail of thought. The first one is of the dead body; the second – dead woman's ring finger; then – something that appears to be a family photo. In it the policeman is with his wife (very similar to the woman that was found outside; perhaps it was the same woman), they both look happy. Afterwards – another flash of the dead woman's ring-finger, followed by the images of policeman's ring finger, bloody footprints, agent's shoes and finally, suspicious-looking agent's face. Now we can see, that the policeman is holding a gun. However, he holsters it, stops and, hands shaking, starts tuning in to some specific frequency on his police radio.

Someone approaches him from the back. We cannot yet see who they are, as only the dark, menacing silhouette is visible. The police officer jumps up a bit, grabs the gun and turns around. The street lamp illuminates the approaching person from behind, hiding him in the shadow; the person seems extremely creepy.

As he steps forwards, it is revealed that the person is the young FBI agent. The agent has a stern, suspicious look on his face. Policeman is hiding his gun behind his back, he says something to the agent. The man from FBI takes another step, he reaches for something inside his coat pocket. Three rapid flashes of the family photo, ring finger and the bloody footsteps are followed by the gunshot – the police officer has fired his gun at the FBI agent. Agent trips and falls down right in the middle of the street with the look of complete befuddlement on his face. Policeman slowly approaches the body with the expression, which indicates he cannot yet believe what he just did. The officer kneels down near the body, now quite oblivious to his surroundings.

The homeless man gets up upon hearing the gunshot and seeing a dead body falling in the distance. He calmly walks towards the dark alley and three times clicks his lighter. Two policemen, forensics guy and the reporter walk out of the alley, quickly taking off police lines and all the other equipment. The woman gets up as well – she was not dead, just pretended to be. Now we can see her face; she is indeed the same woman the policeman was married to. The blood on her is fake. The homeless man gives the woman a bundle of cash, while revealing the sleeve of the expensive jacket he wears beneath his rags. Woman takes the cash and quickly disappears into the snowfall, which is getting heavier and heavier. The fake police officer opens the doors of one of the cars stationed at the side of the street and respectfully helps the “homeless man” to get into it. The other two conspirators get into the car as well; one of them seems to be carrying a pair of shoes, very similar to those worn by FBI agent. The automobile quickly drives out of the audience’s sight.

The policeman’s face is white as death. As he crouches down near the dead FBI agent it is revealed, that the thing agent was reaching for in his pocket was just a credential card. Policeman drops the gun, he is frozen in fear. A realization of what he has done finally hits. A couple of onlookers have already gathered to check, what the source of the gunshot noise was. Some cars stop, because the victim and the killer are blocking the street. The last crane shot, depicting the scene from the above, is intertwined with the fading in and fading out images of the fake crime scene, the space where the homeless man was sitting, and the space where the car was stationed. All these spaces are being covered with snow. The heavy snow turns into a blizzard, everything is consumed by the total whiteout. The film’s title – “Beneath the Snow” – appears on the screen and the film ends.