

"ACTION JACKSON"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

1 BLACK SCREEN 1

As the sound of a helicopter THUNDERS over our heads, we TILT DOWN from the pitch black sky to reveal:

2 AERIAL DETROIT - NIGHT 2

We soar over the river and swoop toward the city following the helicopter, whose mechanical insect shape is just a silhouette before the sparkling city. Directly ahead of us is the Renaissance Center, a quartet of cylindrical glass skyscrapers which resemble the July, 1954 cover of AMAZING SCIENCE FICTION.

As we CLOSE IN on the darkened structure, we hover before one lighted window and peer in at the office. A balding man dictates across his desk to his secretary.

3 INT. STRINGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT 3

Through the curtainless window, we catch a brief glimpse of the spinning chopper blades before they silently RISE OUT OF FRAME. We hear a gruff, gravelly voice, like that of a man who gargles with lye and enjoys it.

STRINGER (V.O.)

... and I assure my esteemed colleague that since the death of our mutual friend and co-worker, Samuel Moran...

We PULL BACK from the window and get our first good look at FRANK STRINGER. His fleshy forehead begins at his brows and stretches all the way back to his collar. The kind of man who should carry a spittoon with him at all times.

STRINGER

... the Auto Workers Alliance has made a substantial recovery...

We PULL BACK farther and reveal his SECRETARY, a severe woman with glasses and a rather equine face. That is to say

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

she could play Mrs. Ed.

STRINGER

... and will continue to improve
in the months ahead. Yours
truly, Frank Stringer.

He gets up from behind his desk and stops, hearing a THUMP
from the roof above him.

STRINGER

You hear that?

The secretary shakes her head, and he puts his hand on her
shoulders, talking seductively in her ear.

STRINGER

You in any hurry to get home?

SECRETARY

(giggling
girlishly)

Why no, Mr. Stringer.

STRINGER

Good.

He grabs a remote control from the desk and switches on the
TV. A prizefight is in progress. The secretary sighs,
apparently the only secretary in the country who wants to
sleep with her boss.

STRINGER

Whatsa matter? You got
somethin' against violence?

They both look up, at the sound of RUNNING FOOTSTEPS on the
roof. Stringer gives a "There it is again" look.

SECRETARY

Maybe it's maintenance men.

STRINGER

Yeah, right, or maybe it's just
jolly old Saint Nick, spreading
joy to all the --

An EXPLOSION of glass. They turn.

Three windows. Bursting inward. All at once.

The secretary shields her face. Glass flying around her like

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3 CONTINUED (2):

3

a hailstorm.

As three men swing in through the windows. Each dressed in black. Stockings obscuring their faces.

They are: BIRCH -- a body encased in armor-like muscle.
MARLIN -- darting eyes and spidery fingers.
SHAKER -- with fists as heavy as anvils.

They are called the "Invisible Men." And Frank Stringer is about to find out why.

They land on the floor. Glass littering the carpet at their feet.

The secretary SCREAMS. Shaker strikes her backhanded across the face. She is flung through an opaque glass wall. The glass dropping like a curtain. She hits the carpet, her dead eyes wide open. Stringer gives her a stunned, saddened look.

And opens a nearby desk drawer, yanking a pistol out and aiming it. At no one.

They are gone. Wind HOWLS through the shattered windows.

Behind him, a shadowy figure appears to emerge from the wall. Stringer whirls and fires. His bullets shatter a glass bookcase. The figure gone.

Another shape moves behind him. Stringer turns, fires. And a couch is riddled by his bullets.

The desk begins to slide toward him. He fires at it. Bullets lodging in the thick wooden bulk. The desk stops. And the clip is empty.

He pulls out another clip. Loads it quickly into the gun.

A figure drops to the carpet before him. THAW, with legs that would do a grasshopper proud.

There is a moment of calm between them. But just a moment.

Stringer raises his gun. Thaw launches a kick. Stringer flies toward the door. Thaw spins, kicks again. Sending Stringer into the wooden door.

... make that through the wooden door.

4 INT. A LARGER OFFICE - NIGHT

Stringer lands on the floor, sliding across the tile. His gun and clip each sliding away from him.

He grabs them off the floor, scrambling to his feet. He runs through the darkened office, reloading his gun. As a strange sound follows him.

KLAK KLAK

He fires blindly behind him. Hitting nothing that moves. He reaches a door, grabbing for the knob.

Marlin appears from the darkness. Flicks his wrist. A knife flies through the air. Pinning Stringer's hand to the wooden door.

Stringer fires his gun. Or at least he would. If he had any bullets left.

Marlin jerks his wrist. The knife flies back. Along a thin metal cord. Into Marlin's hand.

Stringer yanks the door open. And Shaker is there. He lifts Stringer and heaves him across the room. Stringer lands on a desk. Sliding to the floor amidst a landslide of office supplies. At Birch's feet.

Stringer crawls away from him on his back. As Birch advances toward him. One by one he is joined by his three comrades. The four men forcing Stringer toward an open door.

5 THE HALLWAY

Stringer crawls through. Scrambles to his feet. Sweat stains the size of place mats. He turns toward the elevator.

Birch is there. Fire hose in hand. Thaw and Shaker on either side. As Marlin turns on the water.

Stringer starts to run. Toward the other end of the hall.

The hose fills up. A jet of water launches from the nozzle. Striking Stringer in the back with the impact of a bazooka. He hurtles toward the window, arms flailing. To no avail. He barrels through the glass. Plummeting down the side of the building. Toppling end-over-end like a pinwheel. Toward a glass-ceilinged restaurant.

6 INT. THE RESTAURANT

Waiters scurry between the tables. A man raises his glass to

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6 CONTINUED:

his glamorous date.

As a human meteorite explodes through the ceiling, and we

CUT TO:

7 A SIGN - MORNING

7

Accompanied by a burst of MUSIC, it reads "Welcome to Motor City."

8 MIDTOWN DETROIT

8

The air is ionized with the buzz of a modern metropolis, and as the CREDITS begin, we catch a series of brief glimpses of Detroit life --

A skinny young MUGGER in his late teens passes by a newspaper box as a MAN puts a quarter in and takes out a dozen copies of the DETROIT FREE PRESS. The headline reads "AWA FIGURE STRINGER KILLED IN OFFICE FIRE."

Two DRIVERS pass each other on Grand Boulevard and engage in a mutual one-fingered salute. Behind one driver is a police car, containing the comedy team of KORNBLOU and LACK -- the former young and spontaneously combustible, the latter older and just too cool to be bothered.

A group of crisply dressed SECRETARIES pass through an immense blue cloud of bus fumes on their way to the Burroughs Building, as the mugger watches them with dollar signs flashing in his head. But mostly ones and fives.

The police car passes by a theatre marquee heralding the double feature of Scream For Help and Driller Killer.

Two MEN on a forklift argue about the previous night's Pistons game, as the mugger walks by.

A gaggle of CATHOLIC SCHOOL GIRLS pass a cigarette amongst themselves, the cops ogling them from their car.

The mugger passes a DERELICT in a raincoat, sitting in the blazing sun as he lectures a shrub on Social Darwinism.

The mugger sits on a front stoop, barely able to keep the July wind from carrying his frail body away as he scopes out the passersby.

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8 CONTINUED:

8

As his head turns back and forth like a spectator at Wimbledon, he fails to notice the police car parked down the street, or the two uniformed cops inside it.

KORNBLAU

It was a regular fuck-a-rama at my place last night --

LACK

Can the shit, Kornblau. There ain't been any pussy at your pad since your mother helped you move in. They oughta call your place the "House of Whacks."

Kornblau's balloon has been thoroughly deflated, and he looks for a subject to change to. He finds it in the young loiterer.

KORNBLAU

I'm surprised he just don't wear a shirt that says "I Steal Shit."

The mugger's eyes flash like kleig lights at a premiere, and the cops turn to witness the approach of the MUGGEE. She has more or less the same build as ex-football star Rosey Grier, but lacks his feminine frailty. This woman is built like the cathedral at Notre Dame.

KORNBLAU

He's gotta be kidding.

LACK

This boy'd have to go to college for four years, just to reach the level of "shit for brains."

A starter pistol goes off in the mugger's head, and he bolts off the steps, tearing toward the woman. As he zooms by, he grabs the strap of her purse. She maintains her grip, and as legs soar off the ground, he falls painfully on his behind.

KORNBLAU

Better call the meat wagon.

LACK

Nah, best to let it percolate.

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8 CONTINUED (2):

8

She begins to walk away, her purse strap caught on his wrist-watch, and he is dragged behind her, mewling pitifully as he is scraped along the sidewalk.

9 EXT. SECOND AVENUE - MORNING

9

The police car drives leisurely down the bustling street, the mugger's head bobbing in back.

10 INSIDE THE CAR

10

The mugger sits in back, fearing the worst, as Kornblau and Lack observe his obvious discomfort with relish.

KORNBLAU

What's your name?

MUGGER

Albert. Albert Smith.

LACK

Your parents weren't by any chance brother and sister, were they?

Albert thinks for a moment, and the two cops exchange nods.

ALBERT

What's gonna happen to me?

KORNBLAU

Nothing much. You might have to endure a little session with... Action Jackson.

Albert doesn't like the sound of that at all, and responds with a GULP that can be heard all the way to Ontario.

ALBERT

Who?

KORNBLAU

Now, young gentleman, I hope you'll notice that this vehicle has been recently cleaned. The back seat on which you are reposing has neither a scratch nor a stain on it. If we tell you about Action Jackson, do you promise not to go befoulin' our patrol car?

(CONTINUED)

ALBERT

I promise.

LACK

Perhaps the boy could use a cork.

ALBERT

Who's Axin --

LACK

Action. Action Jackson.

KORNBLAU

Some say he didn't even have a mother, that some researchers from NASA created him in a test tube, to be the first man to walk on the moon without a space suit. Others say his mother was molested by Bigfoot, and Jackson is their mutant offspring.

LACK

They bring Jackson in when they want to re-educate some ne'er-do-well such as yourself.

KORNBLAU

I remember one kid got re-educated so bad, his testes crawled back up into his belly and wouldn't come out.

LACK

They called it a medical miracle.

KORNBLAU

Another kid was cuffed to a chair, and gnawed his own hand off to get away, like some kinda trapped skunk or wolverine.

Albert looks like he's about to lose it, but manages to keep his insides on the inside.

11 INT. THIRTEENTH PRECINCT STATION - MORNING

11

We FOLLOW Kornblau and Lack as they lead Albert into bedlam.

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11 CONTINUED:

11

The dictionary should have this shot to illustrate the word "cacaphony." Imagine sitting in the engine of a Concorde during takeoff, or lying in a cannon during Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture." We're talkin' mondo soundo.

Phones RINGING, doors SLAMMING, typewriters CLATTERING. A string of OBSCENITIES that would make a longshoreman blush.

The station also seems to be in the middle of a heatwave, as streamer covered fans and air conditioners spread the sweaty, reeking air to all four corners.

Across the stationhouse, Kornblau and Lack sit Albert down at a desk.

ALBERT

Where's... where's Jackson?

LACK

Keep your dick on, kid.
They're probably cleaning
out his cage.

Albert's eyes dart around the station, looking for a way out. He spots one. The other end of the station. The door to the street. EDISON and REGER block it, engaged in heated debate.

Meanwhile, Kornblau and Lack approach a nearby HOOKER, who is wearing more makeup than Emmett Kelly. Not even pancake makeup; more like Belgian Waffle.

LACK

How much do you charge for a
handjob? My partner sprained
his wrist.

HOOKER

Maybe he'd like to try a
footjob instead.

Lack nudges Kornblau, giving him the thumbs up sign.

KORNBLAU

How much is it?

HOOKER

For you it's free.

Her foot springs up, launching a heavily armed attack on Kornblau's groin.

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11 CONTINUED (2):

11

KORNBLAU

Shiiiiiiiiiii....

He falls over forward, knocking the hooker off her chair.

Albert's head whips around, seeing:

Kornblau and the hooker tumbling to the floor.

Lack rushing to help his fallen comrade.

Other cops turning to stare at the melee.

Edison and Reger moving to help.

He gets a grip on his chair. Leans back. Pushes with his legs.

And he's OFF!!!

Lack spins and sees him.

LACK

Stop that kid!

BOTHWELL turns. Reaching for him. And gets an armful of air.

YIPPS blocks his path. Albert grabs the edge of a desk. Vaults over. Landing on a wheeled wooden chair.

SARNO carries a sheaf of papers. Albert's chair slams into him. The papers scatter around the station. Slowly drifting to the floor.

Albert jumps off the chair. Darts between the desks. Edison and Reger pursue him.

Albert pushes a garbage can in their path... and Edison and Reger hit the floor.

Bothwell and Yipps converge on him. Albert drops to the floor. The two cops crash together like rams.

Albert throws a glance at the cops behind him. And slams against a desk. Tipping over a nameplate and a pot of coffee. A full pot of coffee.

The steaming java flows over the desk like a raging tsunami, as waves of coffee crest and break over neatly typed reports.

The desk looks like a Malibu hillside during the rainy season.

Albert gets to his feet, surveying the damage. He turns the nameplate up and reads the last name.

- JACKSON -

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED (3):

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As his body begins to shake like a maraca, he looks up at a taut, firmly muscled hand holding a liquid paper brush suspended over a coffee-drenched report.

We TILT UP to reveal the man himself, Police Sergeant JERICHO "ACTION" JACKSON. A strikingly handsome man in his late thirties. A calm, intelligent face, atop a body that is clearly built for... well... action.

You're probably wondering why a man like this is wasting his time dabbing out typos.

Good question.

Albert stares in awe and horror at the formidable figure, and Jackson speaks in a resonant, commanding voice.

JACKSON

Mellow out.

Albert faints dead away, and Jackson looks around at the watching cops, baffled.

JACKSON

I guess I need some breath mints.

Edison and Reger pick up Albert and take him to a nearby cell as Jackson throws napkins over his stacks of reports, now members of the coffee generation.

He leaves his desk and reaches the door to Captain Armbruster's office, intercepted along the way by DETECTIVE DALE COTTERMAN. He is about Jackson's age, but looks like he lives off of cigarettes. And he doesn't even smoke.

Jackson and Cotterman act like old friends, but either would be more than willing to beat the living shit out of the other if given half a chance.

COTTERMAN

What's on the agenda today, Jackson? Umping at a little league game? Or maybe a dangerous supermarket detail?

JACKSON

I meant to congratulate you on that collar you made in Paradise Valley.

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11 CONTINUED (4):

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COTTERMAN

Thank you, Jackson.

JACKSON

Takes some mighty sharp police work to track down a man holding a bloody knife and screaming, "I did it, I did it."

COTTERMAN

You know, I can't figure how we stayed partners for so long.

Jackson shrugs, knocking on the door.

JACKSON

Someone had to carry you.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER (o.s.)

Come in.

Cotterman opens the door, closing it in Jackson's smiling face.

12 INT. CAPT. ARMBRUSTER'S OFFICE - MORNING

12

Cotterman stands before the desk as CAPT. EARL ARMBRUSTER sits, carefully paring his nails with shiny metal clippers. The closest he ever got to real police work was the day his car was towed from the handicapped zone.

COTTERMAN

... and though it wasn't usual for Mr. Stringer and Miss Massetori to be working so late, the coroner didn't seem to think he was slipping her the old protein pickup.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER

Detective Cotterman, please try to keep a leash on your vocabulary.

COTTERMAN

Yes, Captain. There wasn't enough left of Stringer for an autopsy, but examination of Miss Massetori's remains indicate she died before the fire started..

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER

How's that?

COTTERMAN

No sign of smoke inhalation. Not even seared lungs.

13 OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

13

Jackson waits by the door, eavesdropping discreetly. Albert watches him from the holding cell, petrified. Jackson absently looks his way. Albert faints again. The door opens and Cotterman steps out, grinning at Jackson.

COTTERMAN

Anything you'd like me to repeat?

JACKSON

No, thanks, I think I got it all.
(chuckling)

"The old protein pickup." You really give the department class. I'm surprised they don't make you Captain.

COTTERMAN

If Armbruster fucked up as bad as you did, they probably would.

Cotterman notices Albert laying unconscious on the floor of his cell.

COTTERMAN

Looks like your friend fainted again. What'd you do, threaten to white him out?

JACKSON

No, I just showed him a picture of your girlfriend.

He grins, and closes the door on Cotterman's angry face.

14 ARMBRUSTER'S OFFICE

14

The captain looks up at Jackson.

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14 CONTINUED:

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER
Jackson, please have a seat.

He does.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER
Sergeant, how long has it been
since you lost your Lieutenant
stripes?

JACKSON
Almost two years, sir.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER
How would you describe those
two years?

Jackson thinks for a moment, trying to find a polite word
for the most frustrating, degrading period of his life.

JACKSON
Uneventful.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER
It was by no means an easy
decision for me to make. Do
you understand why I had to
demote you?

JACKSON
I think so, Captain.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER
Jackson, in my years on the
force, I have never met a more
dedicated policeman. I know
you are a very proud man, and
you have much to be proud of.
High school track star, Harvard
law degree... frankly, if I had
a Harvard law degree I would
never have become a policeman.
I have every faith in your
determination to do your best at
your job. But police work is not
a one-man operation. It is a
cooperative effort. A policeman
has to exist with society in a
reciprocal relationship.

JACKSON
Yes, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER

You may feel that the duties I assign you are trivial, but they are crucial in maintaining the good will of the public.

JACKSON

I understand that, sir.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER

Like tonight, for example. I need you to represent the department at the Detroit Businessmen's League's Man of the Year fundraiser. I was scheduled to attend, but I had forgotten that this is my wife's Parchessi night.

Another ribbon cutting. Jackson tries to hide his waning interest.

JACKSON

That sounds pretty painless.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER

It won't be that painless. Their man of the year is... Peter Delaplane.

The name gets a noticeable reaction from Jackson. Like a red flag to a bull.

JACKSON

Peter Delaplane is Man of the Year? That's like hiring Charles Manson as a high school guidance counselor.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER

Just because the man had some family problems...

JACKSON

Family problems? His son is a sexual psychopath. If I had family problems like that, I'd get myself neutered.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER

I understand that you take this matter very personally, Jackson, but...

(CONTINUED)

JACKSON

Personally? Captain, the man cost me my stripes!

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER

No, Jackson. You cost you your stripes. No one else. You could have handled Sean Delaplane more delicately.

JACKSON

How? Send him an engraved invitation to visit us at the City Jail? Dress casual. RSVP.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER

Jesus, Jackson, you nearly tore the kid's arm off.

JACKSON

So? He had a spare.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER

I'm not sure I'm getting through to you, Jackson. You're acting like you'd do it all over again. Do I have to remind you that the Delaplane case cost you your Lieutenant stripes, your marriage, and gave the department the kind of publicity that we can gladly do without. The public does appreciate charges of police brutality, substantiated or not. It was only Cotterman's testimony that kept you from losing your badge altogether, and if there'd been a different judge on the case, that kid might be on the street today.

From his look, it's clear Jackson knows the captain is right.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER

Jackson, I'm not sending you there to brown-nose Peter Delaplane. I just need you to put up a good front. I know you can do it. I just need to be sure that your "Action Jackson" days are far behind you. Then we'll see about getting your Lieutenant stripes back.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED (4):

14

JACKSON
Thank you, Captain.

He gets up to leave.

15 OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

15

Jackson fills up a cup at the water cooler near Kornblau and Lack, who have been waiting for their cue.

KORNBLAU
That Action Jackson is a mean
muthah --

LACK
Shut you' mouth!

KORNBLAU
I was just talkin' 'bout Action.

Jackson takes a sip from the cup, and calmly turns to Kornblau.

JACKSON
How does your groin feel?

Kornblau shrugs, and Jackson tosses the cupful of water onto his crotch.

JACKSON
That should help.

He walks back to his desk.

16 INT. HYATT BALLROOM - NIGHT

16

A smoky hall lined with dining tables, like rows of freshly planted crops. Seated at this almost medieval banquet are RICH GUYS and their WIVES, dressed in the three T's: tuxes, ties, and tails. The men aren't badly dressed, either.

An especially POMPOUS MAN stands at the podium, nearing the end of an epic length introduction, the kind Jerry Lewis is famous for.

POMPOUS MAN
... on my television, I came
across a commercial for Delaplane's
car, the Halley, and I was struck
by how apt the name is.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

POMPOUS MAN (cont'd)

For Peter Delaplane is himself a comet, a man whose bright and blazing tail leads the way for the few with the courage to follow. And like Halley's Comet, he is the kind of man who occurs only once in a lifetime. Ladies and gentlemen, our Man of Nineteen Eighty Seven, Mister Peter Anthony Delaplane.

There is an explosion of APPLAUSE from the tuxed crowd, as PETER DELAPLANE walks to the podium. He has carefully coiffed silver hair, and wears a tuxedo that fits like a birthday suit. This is a man who never has to go to the bathroom; he pays other people to go for him.

DELAPLANE

Thank you, Chester. I hope the fire marshal isn't too alarmed by my blazing tail.

Polite LAUGHTER from the audience.

DELAPLANE

When I was a child in my father's library, one not much smaller than that of Congress, I came across a book by Horatio Alger.

At the back of the auditorium we see Jackson, spectacularly dapper in his black tux, standing near the ballroom doors.

DELAPLANE

I read this book and, as you might guess, the gist of it was that a young boy from the lower class uses his brains and self-taught business acumen to rise to a position of financial security and personal happiness.

Jackson, bored, takes a jawbreaker from his pocket and rolls it around his mouth.

DELAPLANE

And as I grew up, I discovered that this is a society which favors a boy who pulls himself up by his own bootstraps, rather than a boy who makes something of himself despite the hardships of wealth, power, and impeccable social standing.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED (2):

16

More LAUGHTER from the audience, and as Delaplane continues, a ravishing BLONDE joins Jackson at the back of the hall. She has the kind of body that goes well with diamonds, and her skin is as flawless as a summer sky in Ohio.

While the rest of us are choking on our Raisinettes at the sight of her, Jackson merely glances at her with gentlemanly appreciation.

DELAPLANE

But doesn't this country have just as much need for men who are able to capitalize on the accident of a noble birth, and expand their fortune into a multinational empire?

The blonde notices that Jackson is eating, and casually moves closer to his side without a hint of flirtation.

BLONDE

You can hardly hear what he's saying back here.

JACKSON

I know. Best seat in the house.

BLONDE

I take it you're not a friend of Mr. Delaplane.

JACKSON

Not unless they've changed the definition. What's he saying anyway?

BLONDE

Something about how he earned his money the old fashioned way.

JACKSON

That's right. He married it.

She gives him a look of genuine surprise.

BLONDE

You really think so?

Delaplane seems to be wrapping up his acceptance speech.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED (3):

16

DELAPLANE

And they say that behind every man is a woman. I wish I could say that mine is behind me, but perhaps she will be in a moment. Patrice?

BLONDE

(smiling)

I bet I can make you change your mind.

She leaves Jackson and walks the length of the auditorium to join Delaplane at the podium.

DELAPLANE

Ladies and gentlemen, my bride, Patrice Delaplane.

The crowd APPLAUDS, and Jackson stares in shock at the happy couple.

17 THE SAME - LATER

17

The guests have left their seats, and are mingling in molecular clusters between the tables.

Jackson has found himself trapped with a STUFFY OLD GUY, whose affected accent reeks of tobacco pouches and dusty velour lounge chairs.

STUFFY OLD GUY

But didn't Corfield versus North Carolina demonstrate that liability applies to government as individuals and not as a unit?

JACKSON

Only if the individuals were shown to be acting on their own accord and not as representatives of the governing body.

Jackson is distracted by the sight of Delaplane talking nearby, his arm around Patrice's slender waist.

STUFFY OLD GUY

What do you think of our Man of the Year?

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

Delaplane kisses Patrice on the cheek, whispering something in her ear, and she responds with a tinkling laugh.

JACKSON

I think he's a greedy, conceited, two-faced, backstabbing asshole.

The old guy thinks for a moment.

STUFFY OLD GUY

Yes, I'd say that about sums it up.

Patrice leads Delaplane to them, and the old guy wanders off.

PATRICE

Peter, I'd like you to meet...

(to Jackson)

I'm sorry, I forgot to ask your name.

JACKSON

It's --

DELAPLANE

Jackson. Sergeant Jericho
Jackson.

This is the point at which most people would shake hands. Fat chance. Patrice is puzzled by her husband's atypical breach of etiquette, and more so by the diamond hard look in his eyes.

DELAPLANE

But you have some kind of nickname, don't you? What was it? "Excitement?" "Enthusiasm?" "Esprit de Corps?"

JACKSON

"Action."

DELAPLANE

Yes, of course. That rhymes.

PATRICE

How do you two know each other?

DELAPLANE

We met through my son.

(CONTINUED)

JACKSON

Yes. In fact, I helped him to relocate. How is he doing, by the way?

DELAPLANE

He's adjusting. The Delaplans have always been adept at dealing with obstacles.

JACKSON

He always seemed like a popular boy. I'm sure he's very popular at his new home. I hear all it takes is the right opening.

PACE, the Delaplans' chauffeur, steps up to Delaplane's side. He is short, with close cropped hair, and would look more at home sitting on a lily pad than behind the wheel of a limo.

PACE

The car is ready, sir.

DELAPLANE

Thank you, Pace. We'll be there in a moment.

Pace stares at Jackson, committing his face to memory, and leaves.

JACKSON

Please say hello to your son for me. I know the last time I saw him was very painful for him.

DELAPLANE

It was nice to see you again, Lieutenant. Oh, I'm sorry, it's Sergeant now, isn't it?

He slithers away, and Patrice stays with Jackson for a moment.

PATRICE

I guess I didn't make you change your mind after all, did I?

She leaves, and he pops another jawbreaker into his mouth, grinding it to powder between his teeth.

18 EXT. THE DETROIT RIVER. - NIGHT

18

A yacht rests on the freezing water, its exterior dark. The only sounds are the waves lapping against its sides, and the muffled echoes of an OPERATIC ARIA.

19 INT. GRANTHAM'S YACHT - NIGHT

19

A lushly appointed den, with plush furniture, paintings on the wall, and a well-stocked bookcase. We would think we were in a mansion if not for the constant rocking motion. "Pagliacci" blares from a compact disc player.

LIONEL GRANTHAM paces the carpet, cordless phone in hand. He is pear-shaped, with a shock of stiff reddish hair where the stem should be.

GRANTHAM

Pal, pal, you're trying to unload
a field of fertilizer on me.
Stringer's death was neither tragic
nor accidental. Somebody diced him.

20 THE DECK

20

A small flame lights a cigarette in a dark corner of the yacht, and shows us the faces of two GUARDS, armed with automatic weapons.

A third GUARD stands at the prow, looking at the water, silhouetted against the lights of Detroit.

On the other side of the yacht, two more GUARDS stand several feet apart, talking in whispers.

GUARD FOUR

Guy with no arms and legs who
sits on the porch.

GUARD FIVE

Matt.

21 GRANTHAM'S DEN

21

Grantham plops down on a couch and kicks off his slippers, scratching this feet.

GRANTHAM

Ray, Ray, you're talking to Mister
Security himself. I've got this
place tighter than the Pope's
poopchute.

22 THE RIVER

22

A small boat floats, several hundred feet away from the yacht, and four scuba masked forms drop off its edge into the icy water.

One man remains behind.

23 THE YACHT DECK

23

Guard Four whispers a question to Guard Five.

GUARD FOUR

Guy with no arms and legs who sits on the wall.

GUARD FIVE

Art.

GUARD FOUR

Guy with no arms and legs who floats in the water.

Guard Three appears out of the darkness.

GUARD THREE

Both of you assholes, if you don't shut the fuck up.

He disappears back into the darkness.

GUARD FIVE

Bob.

Guard Four suddenly GROANS, clutching his side.

GUARD FOUR

Shit!

GUARD FIVE

It's the rocking that does it. I've got some Tums if you need 'em.

Guard Four pulls his hand away, and it is covered with blood.

GUARD FOUR

What the fuck?

He suddenly doubles over, as something seems to fly out of his stomach.

(CONTINUED)

GUARD FIVE

Jesus!

He rushes to Guard Four, who falls to the deck, a huge gash ripped in his stomach.

Guard Five's head snaps toward the water.
THWACK. THWACK.
Like suction cups.

He steps toward the edge. Gun in hand.

Peers over.

CLICK.

A small metal spear lodges in his chest.

A hand reaches up. Yanking the body off the deck and into the water.

The hand grabs the boat railing. Birch launches himself onto the deck. A high tech compact spear gun held in one paw. A rotating unit with five remaining spears.

As the sound of opera wafts across the water.
... tu se Pagliacci...

Nearby, Guard Three stands next to a ladder. Hears a SPLASH. Steps toward a railing.

He looks over. Something in the water. Floating.

He leans over the railing. As Thaw's silhouette looms on the yacht above him.

The guard peers into the darkness. Two floating shapes come into view.

Thaw gets a running start.

Two bodies float by. Guards Four and Five.

Thaw jumps. Legs extended.

Guard Three hears a WHOOSH in the air above him. Starts to turn. And Thaw's feet land in the center of his spine.

CRAAK!

Another guard takes a dive.

... vesti la giubba...

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED (2):

23

FOOTSTEPS approaching. Thaw turns.

Guard Two appears around the corner. Sees Thaw. Starts to raise his gun.

Thaw smiles. The guard aims at his chest. As a spear emerges from his torso.

He drops to the deck. Birch standing directly behind him.

... eo gnum applaudi...

24 GUARD ONE

24

He stands in the dark. Listening to the guard's ECHOING SCREAM.

He bolts. Running for the door.

25 YACHT CORRIDOR

25

The door opens. Guard One zips through. And slams it.

Turns the lock. Stops.

Catches his breath.

Whew.

A fist slams through the door. Splitting the wood apart.

The hand grabs his head. Yanks it back. Through the hole.

The body struggles. Arms flailing. Splintered wood piercing his neck.

We hear a hideous SKITCH!

The arms stop flapping.

... tramuta in lazzi...

26 GRANTHAM'S DEN

26

Grantham has his feet in a tub of Epsom Salts, the phone still glued to his ear, as Pagliacci nears his apotheosis.

GRANTHAM

No, that's fine. I know, but
you're interrupting an aria.
Good night.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

He CLICKS the phone off and drops it on the couch.

KNOCK KNOCK.

GRANTHAM

Later!

KNOCK KNOCK.
KNOCK.

GRANTHAM

Better start thinking about a
new career, pal!

He goes to the door and yanks it open.

A handcuff is clamped on his wrist. Attached to a black case.
Two strong hands shove him in the chest.

He falls back against the carpet. Looks up.

In time to see Shaker smile and slam the door.
CLICK goes the lock. FOOTSTEPS running away.

Grantham looks at the case. The black cover has a zipper
running down its side. He unzips it. Pulls it off.

The case is made of transparent plastic. And inside is a
mechanism.

... smorfia il singhiuzzi...

A digital clock counting off the seconds. A tangle of wires
and connectors. A gigantic hunk of plastic explosive.

GRANTHAM

Oh shit, oh shit, oh fuck shit...

He yanks at the cuff. It won't come off.
He pulls at the case. It won't open.
He smashes it against the wall. It won't break.

He goes toward the door and slams the case against the lock.
Running out of breath.

He stops and looks at the clock.

-05... 04... 03... 02...

... ridi, Pagliaccio...

A supernova erupts at the end of his wrist.

27 EXT. THE RIVER

27

A fireball explodes from the center of the yacht, completely engulfing it.

Nearby, the four men climb into the small boat, as the fifth one stares at the fire, the yellow glow of the inferno illuminating his face.

Pointed, hawklike features. Eyes set so deep they seem to be empty sockets. This is GAMBLE.

The others remove their stocking masks, and Gamble turns on the motor. The boat glides across the screen as we

WIPE DISSOLVE TO:

28 CASS AVENUE - NIGHT

28

as Jackson's car glides down the street, passing the Masonic Temple. The car is a 68 Chevy Impala, with a gleaming white paint job that makes it look like it came out of the factory only minutes earlier. The night is warm, and Jackson drives with the top down.

He parks in front of his apartment building, a clean, quiet two-story job just north of Selden Ave.

29 INT. JACKSON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

29

Jackson enters, still in his tux and carrying a plastic bag of groceries, and walks through the living room, switching on the TV by rote. Despite the presence of an elaborate stereo system, what we have here is a house of books. Books on the coffee table. Books on the couch. Books in tall, heavy bookshelves.

He passes by a shelf, lined with framed photos: Jackson as a track star (50 yard dash, long jump, javelin toss); Jackson at Harvard; Jackson and his ex-wife.

He drops the groceries by the fridge and opens it, taking a healthy swig from a carton of orange juice. The fridge has no caffeine, no sucrose, no preservatives. It looks like the loot from a health food store holdup.

He glares at the TV, as a streamlined, shiny white sports car speeds out of a Detroit factory.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Hot.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

Shots of the car cruising through city streets.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Hotter.

The car leaves the city and zooms across desert roads.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Hottest.

The car hurtles off a cliff over the Grand Canyon and flies away, breaking out of the Earth's atmosphere with a blazing streak of light.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

The Halley, from Delaplane.

Jackson gives a disparaging laugh as he turns on the answering machine. A JITTERY VOICE emerges from it, but Jackson is distracted by the TV.

JITTERY VOICE

Jericho? This is Tony. Tony
Langlois. I don't know if you'd
be interested, but I've got some...

Jackson steps back into the living room, as the local news broadcasts live footage of a blazing fire in the Detroit River.

NEWSWOMAN (V.O.)

The yacht belonged to Lionel
Grantham, head of AWA Local
one-thirty-two, and he is
believed to have been on board
when the boat exploded.

As Tony's message trails off, unheard, Jackson picks up one of his chairs and overturns it. He pries off the bottom of the seat cushion and pulls out a well-stuffed file folder.

He riffles through, stopping at the page headed LIONEL GRATHAM, and starts to read.

30 INT. 13th PRECINCT STATION - MORNING

30

Cotterman walks through the precinct door, with Jackson dogging his trail.

COTTERMAN

... and the coroner's looking at
what's left of Grantham, but that
shouldn't take too long.

(CONTINUED)

JACKSON

The Moran case was like that. Wasn't enough of him left to spread on a pizza. What about evidence connecting the two deaths?

Cotterman stops suddenly, and makes an ear-cleaning gesture.

COTTERMAN

Am I hearing correctly? Is the one-man army really asking for help?

Before Jackson has time to answer, Yipps speaks up.

YIPPS

Call for you, Jackson.

JACKSON

Who is it?

YIPPS

Are you mistakin' me for a secretary?

JACKSON

Yeah. Must be the cologne.

He takes the phone from Yipps.

JACKSON

Jackson here.

TONY (V.O.)

Jericho, it's me. Tony.

JACKSON

Hey, Tony, sorry I didn't call --

TONY (V.O.)

Come to my apartment, soon as you can. We're talkin' life and death here.

CLICK! Dial tone. Jackson puts the phone down and heads for the door.

31 EXT. JOHN R STREET - LATE MORNING

31

After dark this is the hub of Detroit nightlife, but right now it's just another congested street.

Our attention is drawn to a neon sign, quietly buzzing in the morning air. It reads "THE CLUB ELITE."

32 INT. THE CLUB ELITE - LATE MORNING

32

The chairs are stacked on the tables, and one light shines down onto the stage. Standing at the microphone is SYDNEY ASH, gently swaying to pre-recorded music.

She is in her mid-twenties, and extravagantly thin. Her jet black hair spreads out in all directions like a fountain, and her eyes have a directness and focus that could cut through steel as if it were paper.

She grabs the cordless mic from the stand and begins singing, a rich, purring sound like the rustling of a silk negligee on a woman's thigh.

She directs her song to one point in the seemingly empty club. A table near the back.

There, we see one arm extended from the darkness, a carefully manicured male hand resting on the table.

She makes her way through the club toward him, directing each phrase of her song like a diamond drill into his heart.

She stops two tables away, running her hand along a chair leg as she sings to him teasingly.

As the music builds, she moves slowly, forcefully toward the man, her voice rising with passion and fire.

She reaches the table and the end of the song, her final note suspended in the air like a crystal chandelier, at last expiring with a silken whisper.

She places one slender, long-nailed hand on the table, and strokes his fingers.

SYDNEY

I expected a standing ovation.

MAN (O.S.)

You're getting one.

She looks under the table provocatively and pulls on his hand, bringing him out of the darkness.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

It is Peter Delaplane, and he lets her lead him toward the exit.

DELAPLANE

I have something for you.

SYDNEY

You always do.

As they walk toward the back door, a massive figure steps out of the darkness. At six-foot seven and two hundred and seventy pounds, he would give a stegosaurus reason to worry. His name is EDD.

EDD

Will you be leaving now, Miss Ash?

Delaplane steps between Sydney and the waiting giant.

DELAPLANE

Yes, she will, Edd.

EDD

(ignoring him)

Would you like me to accompany you?

SYDNEY

No, thank you, Edd. This part I can do on my own.

She starts to go, and Delaplane waits, locking eyes with Edd.

DELAPLANE

You do know who pays your salary, don't you?

EDD

You do, Mr. Delaplane, and most generously.

Delaplane nods, smiling, and leads Sydney out the door.

33 TONY'S APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - LATE MORNING

33

Jackson steps up to the front door and KNOCKS. The door swings open gently at the first rap of his hand, and he steps in.

The apartment looks as if it has been picked up and shaken like a child's Christmas present. Drawers are overturned, lamps rest on their sides, the edges of the carpet are yanked off the floor. The kind of location where corpses are often found.

As Jackson walks in, a short, almost skeletal MAN in loosely hanging clothes steps out of the bedroom, a gun held in one jittery hand. His eyes have a red-rimmed, over-caffeinated look, and he seems to be in the final stages of a paranoid breakdown.

JACKSON

Jesus, Tony, you look --

TONY

I know, Jericho. Kind of shitty. Sort of trying a new look. Guess you don't like it too much. How did you get in here?

JACKSON

It was open. Tony, what happened here? Who did this?

TONY

I did. Told you it was a new look. Walls have ears and all that.

JACKSON

Tony, I'm calling the hospital.

Tony jerks the gun up at him, barely able to keep it level.

TONY

No, Jericho, you're sitting down and listening. Well, first you're shutting the door, then you're sitting down.

Jackson does so.

JACKSON

You look like you haven't slept in days.

TONY

Actually weeks. I can't afford to sleep, Jericho. Moran dead. Grantham dead. Stringer dead. Tony alive. Now. Right now. Right?

(CONTINUED)

JACKSON

Who would want to kill you?

TONY

Three guesses. First two we forget about. Here's a little hint. Hot... hotter... hottest.

JACKSON

Peter Delaplane?

TONY

I knew you wouldn't need those first two.

35 INT. SYDNEY'S APARTMENT - NOON

35

The door opens, and Delaplane follows Sydney into her trendily furnished apartment. No expense has been spared. Everything that reeks of eighties chic is here, and she stands in the middle like the main attraction in a museum of modern art, casually kicking off her shoes.

SYDNEY

You said you'd come to see me more.

She walks backward across the carpet and he follows, like a 78 rpm tango played at 33-1/3.

SYDNEY

You said a man from Motown would come to hear me sing.

She unbuttons her blouse, still facing him, moving effortlessly backwards, and drops it on the floor.

SYDNEY

You said I could make a demo tape.

She unhooks her black lace bra and tosses it onto his shoulder.

SYDNEY

You said I would be going places.

She pulls at the zipper on her skirt, and lets it slide to the floor as they move through the hallway into:

36 SYDNEY'S BEDROOM

36

The room is dominated -- subjugated, even -- by a huge bed, covered with glossy white satin sheets. She backs toward it, tugging at the edge of her silk panties.

She lies down on the bed, and he reaches toward her panties.

He tugs at her panties, sliding them down her slender legs and off her feet.

He pulls out a jewelry case and places it on her bare stomach.

DELAPLANE

It's supposed to be a girl's best friend.

She opens the case, revealing a gleaming hypodermic, its chamber full.

She stretches out an arm, and he ties a piece of rubber tubing around it, caressing the skin to make the vein rise.

He pricks her arm with the tip of the hypo, and slides the needle in. Her eyes flutter and close, as she pictures the heroin racing through her blood.

SYDNEY

What would I do without you?

He pulls the needle out gently, and replaces it in the case. He lies on top of her, fully dressed, and she rolls him over, pinning him between her naked body and the bed.

DELAPLANE

Let's hope you never have to find out.

Their mouths lock together, and their bodies make a slichering sound on the satin sheets.

37 INT. TONY'S BEDROOM - EARLY AFTERNOON

37

Decorated in early Hiroshima. Jackson watches as Tony methodically tears apart the room's contents, looking for hidden devices.

TONY

... working for Stringer, my job was to keep tabs on people. Ask questions, find out who's planning what power plays, that kind of thing.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TONY (cont'd)
 (pulls off his sheet)
 Delaplane was working his way
 through the union, finding out
 who was for him and who against.
 (pulls off the
 pillowcases)
 Who agreed with him, who resented
 him his money, his power.

He ruthlessly cuts open the pillows, spreading the stuffing
 around the room.

JACKSON
 What did that have to do with
 Stringer?

TONY
 Stringer didn't like him. Didn't
 trust him. Hated his guts, in
 fact.
 (cuts open the
 mattress)
 Same for Moran. And Grantham.
 Delaplane needed them out of the
 way.

Tony picks up the mutilated mattress and hurls it to the floor.

JACKSON
 For what?

Tony picks up a framed picture from the wall.

TONY
 That's where it gets a bit rickety.
 (smashes the picture
 over his knee)
 I don't know.

JACKSON
 Tony, what you're saying is that
 Delaplane is killing off unfriendly
 AWA leaders, but you have no idea
 why he's doing it, and no evidence
 to show that he's doing it. Is
 that right?

TONY
 If you want to put it that way, yes.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TONY (cont'd)

Don't tell me you're afraid of Delaplane, Jericho. The Jackson I used to know, he wasn't afraid of nothing. We all thought he was really gonna make a name for himself. If I got the wrong Jackson, please tell me.

JACKSON

You've got the right Jackson, Tony. He just made a different name for himself than he'd planned.

TONY

One person you might try. Delaplane's mistress. A singer, name of Sydney Ash. The Club Elite, on John R Street. I promise I'm not wasting your time, Jericho. I'm onto something. I know it.

Jackson takes some bills from his coat and sticks them in Tony's shirt pocket.

TONY

No need, Jericho. On the house.

JACKSON

I know. It's just to help out with your new look.

Tony smiles at him, watching him go out the front door.

38 BUILDING HALLWAY

38

As Jackson walks into the elevator, an American Parcel Delivery man steps out, a bagful of packages hanging from one shoulder.

Jackson watches him go, getting a quick look at his hawklike features and deep set eyes.

The door closes, and the APD man walks down the hall to Tony's open apartment. He peers in, and KNOCKS.

GAMBLE

Mister... Lang-loy?

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

Tony goes to the door, and the APD man hands him a package. He starts to leave, but stops in his tracks.

GAMBLE

I think there's another for you.
You must be a real pop'lar guy.

TONY

That's me, a regular --

Gamble pulls a gun from his bag. Blows a hole in Tony's chest the size of a fist.

The package flies out of Tony's hand. And Gamble catches it.

39 INT. CITY MORGUE - MORNING

39

A sheet is pulled back, revealing the cold, stiff body of Tony Langlois. His face is calm, and his limbs have finally stopped shaking.

Jackson stands over the slab, his eyes downcast, as coroner WALTER "WALT" WALTERS stands beside him. Walters looks surprisingly hale and hearty for one in his profession. Apparently death agrees with him.

WALTERS

Amphetamines. Malnutrition.
Insomnia. If the bullet hadn't
gotten him, he might have been
dead within the week.

JACKSON

That's very consoling, Walt.
You've got a fine bedside manner.

WALTERS

In this job, I need a bedside
manner like I need another nose.
He was a friend of yours, wasn't
he?

JACKSON

From high school. We were both
on the track team. Always a high
strung kid. I hadn't seen him
much since he started working for
the union.

WALTERS

Cotterman thinks its suicide.

(CONTINUED)

JACKSON

Cotterman wouldn't know a suicide if it crawled up his ass and died there. They say Tony killed himself with a forty-five. I saw his gun, and it was a thirty-two. Somebody planted that forty-five on him.

WALTERS

You got any leads?

JACKSON

Not to speak of. I know a very beautiful woman who might be able to help me, but first I have to get her away from her husband.

WALTERS

Story of my life.

40 INT. SILVIO'S - MORNING

40

Delaplane and the always decorative Patrice are breakfasting with a DISTINGUISHED OLDER MAN, whose sparse white hair rests over his granite face like a cloud atop the rock of Gibraltar.

DISTINGUISHED MAN

All right, Peter, but if I see a cake with sixty-three candles on it, I'm heading out the door faster than shit out of Secretariat.

A figure steps behind Delaplane and hands him a small menu.

JACKSON (O.S.)

The wine list, sir.

Delaplane takes the list, and sees the 8 x 10 clipped to the front. A police photo of Tony's corpse at the scene of the crime.

Delaplane smiles, not even turning around to speak.

DELAPLANE

I didn't know you listed photography among your interests, Sergeant.

JACKSON

Is that all you've got to say?

(CONTINUED)

DELAPLANE

(looking at
photo again)

The negative is quite poor, but the print quality is excellent. It's too bad the subject wasn't more cooperative. Who was he?

JACKSON

His name was Tony Langlois. He worked for Frank Stringer. They both knew what you were planning for the AWA. And now they're both dead. Is that a clear enough picture for you?

DISTINGUISHED MAN

(to Delaplane)

Just what are you planning for the AWA?

DELAPLANE

Where are my manners? Ray, this is Jericho Jackson, one of Detroit's... finest. Sergeant Jackson, this is Raymond Falk, president of the Auto Workers Alliance. I'm sure he'd be delighted to hear exactly what I'm planning.

Checkmate. Jackson has neatly painted himself into a corner.

JACKSON

Good morning, Mister Falk. I'm sorry you couldn't find a more suitable breakfast companion. If you'll excuse me.

He leaves the photo on the table and heads for the exit.

FALK

Has he been giving you trouble?

DELAPLANE

His kind of trouble is no trouble at all.

Patrice looks at the photo and then up at her husband, seeing that glint in his eyes for the second time.

41 INT. DELAPLANE'S GYM - AFTERNOON

41

We join Delaplane and his INSTRUCTOR in mid-lesson, each dressed in the traditional clothes of the martial artist. The instructor is a short, compactly muscled man who could put his fist through your abdomen and out again so fast he wouldn't even get his toes wet.

The two men move around the mat, as quickly as hummingbirds and not much louder. No Bruce Lee-like whoops and hollers for these two. This is serious business.

The instructor attacks. Delaplane dodges, parrying his blows. He's no slouch either.

But he may have met his match. The instructor's assault increases in speed and fury. His features remaining calm and impassive.

Delaplane lets his guard down for a second. A second too long. The instructor's foot strikes him in the face. Knocking him off balance. Sending him to the mat. Face down.

Delaplane remains on the mat. His face turned away from the instructor. His eyes gleaming red.

The instructor walks over to him. Reaching out an arm to help him up.

Delaplane grabs the arm.
SNAP!

The instructor falls. His arm bent backwards.

As Delaplane walks to the door, Face enters, and Delaplane gestures toward the grimacing instructor.

DELAPLANE

The lesson is over. Show him
to his car.

42 EXT. DELAPLANE'S ESTATE - AFTERNOON

42

Delaplane and CARTIER, his butler, walk up the path to the front of his palatial Grosse Point Shores estate. Cartier is dressed in formal attire, with a chest as broad as a barn. But you would never be tempted to hit it.

As they approach the door, passing by several large ornamental fountains, we hear PIANO MUSIC from inside. One phrase repeated incessantly, never quite right.

43 INT. DELAPLANE'S MANSION - AFTERNOON

43

Delaplane walks down the main hall, crossing over several priceless, intricately woven rugs, and stops at a grand piano, where Patrice is practicing. Seeing him approach, she gives up the elusive phrase and launches into a vigorous rendition of "Chopsticks."

DELAPLANE

Please, dear, what will the neighbors say?

He leans over the piano to kiss her.

PATRICE

What's on the agenda today?

DELAPLANE

Nothing much. Burning down one of my buildings to collect the insurance money.

She kisses him playfully on the nose.

PATRICE

Don't forget to collect the mortgage on the orphanage.

DELAPLANE

Damn, you're right.

PATRICE

What would you do without me?

Delaplane laughs, thinking of Sydney's similar query.

PATRICE

What is it?

DELAPLANE

Never mind. You wouldn't appreciate it.

He walks off, still laughing, and she launches into "Chopsticks" again.

44 INT. PATRICE'S BATHROOM - AFTERNOON

44

In a cloud of steam, Patrice steps out of the shower and into a bathrobe, slowly enough that we see that she is one fabulously put together woman.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

She goes to the mirror and wipes the condensation away. She looks at herself closely, searching herself for the right thing to do.

45 PATRICE'S BEDROOM

45

Everything is white, off-white, and tan. The kind of room that has to be cleaned almost continuously, by a house staff the size of the Boston Pops. The lights are off, and as Patrice steps into the room, she reaches for the switch.

She stops, hearing a voice from the next room, and quickly crosses the carpet to the door. She quietly turns the knob and pulls the door open an inch, peering through.

VOICE

We're having some problems with Mulrooney, but we should have him in shape by this Sunday.

In the next room, Cartier is on the phone, his back to Patrice. His eyes move at the sound of the door.

CARTIER

No, Jackson got to Langlois before we did. It doesn't matter. What could he tell him? He had no proof.

He looks toward the mirror on the wall and sees Patrice peering into the room.

CARTIER

Jackson? No need to. He doesn't know enough to hurt us, so why should we give him any encouragement.

She pulls the door silently shut, creeping away. The latch suddenly CLICKS shut, as loud as a gong in the silent bedroom.

She waits. Her breath coming in little gasps. Nothing.

46 SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

46

Patrice steps out of her bedroom, now fully dressed, and hurries down the hall.

She walks among an assortment of priceless vases on pedestals, passing by door after closed door, her head constantly turning to keep everything in sight.

47 DOWNSTAIRS

47

She rushes down the stairs, her hand trailing along the bannister to keep herself from losing her balance.

She walks across the main hall. Her footsteps CLATTER on the tile floor.

She nears the front door. Her arm outstretched, ready to grab the knob.

Her hand touches the cold brass --

-- and a massive figure materializes behind her. Cartier.

PATRICE

Where's my husband?

CARTIER

Pace drove him into town on business. Will you be leaving, madame? If so, I would be happy to drive you.

He steps closer to her. A little too close. She backs up toward the door.

PATRICE

I can do it myself, thank you.

She yanks open the door, and walks smack dab into a looming figure on the porch --

-- Jackson.

PATRICE

Sergeant! Are you going back into town?

JACKSON

I am if you are. Would you like a ride?

She looks at Cartier defiantly, then back at Jackson.

PATRICE

I thought you'd never ask.

As they walk down to the driveway, Cartier watches them from the door, a secret smile playing across his lips. Bad news.

A greasy diner, named for the high percentage of uniformed policemen who patronize it. Jackson and Patrice sit at a table by the window, the 13th precinct house visible across the street.

PATRICE

I couldn't figure out exactly what he was talking about, but I heard him say the name "Langlois," and he definitely said your name. There was also something about a man named Mulrooney, how they were having trouble with him, but that he should be in shape by Sunday.

JACKSON

That might be Oliver Mulrooney. He worked for your husband a long time ago, but I think he's working for the AWA now. You're not familiar with his name?

She shakes her head.

JACKSON

What do you know about Frank Stringer and Lionel Grantham?

PATRICE

Only what I read in the paper. Peter's never mentioned either of them. He never brings his work home with him... except this weekend. He's giving a party for that man we had breakfast with.

JACKSON

Raymond Falk? Are he and your husband friends?

PATRICE

Not at all. In fact, until today I could have sworn they hated each other.

JACKSON

He should be used to that by now.

(CONTINUED)

PATRICE

I know how you feel about Peter, Sergeant, but you don't know him the way I do. People look at him, but they only see his mansion, his money. There's a very complex man behind that polished front. He may seem greedy and arrogant to most people, but few people have made it big in industry and remained loved by everyone. I met him after his first wife died and his son went to prison, and I think the whole experience changed him. He's not the man you think you know.

JACKSON

And what kind of man do you think I am?

PATRICE

I think you're not really so different from Peter. You're both stubborn, both intent on getting what you want. You know, I think Peter admires you a little bit. Not many people have caused him so much trouble and gotten away with it.

JACKSON

Who says I got away with it?

PATRICE

Do you really have a Harvard law degree?

JACKSON

Guilty as charged.

PATRICE

I suppose you've been asked this a million times, but why did you give that up to become a cop?

Jackson thinks for a moment.

JACKSON

I wanted to be where I was needed.

49 OUTSIDE THE DINER

Jackson holds the door open as Patrice steps out onto the sidewalk.

JACKSON

Can you get me into your husband's party?

PATRICE

Not and keep my marriage.

She steps in front of a parked Cadillac, and spots a taxi approaching from down the street.

JACKSON

I cut a fine figure on the dance floor...

(laughs)

... but not if your husband has my legs brogen.

The taxi gets closer. Speeding up.

PATRICE

Why do they call you "Action," anyway?

JACKSON

(shrugs)

When I'm around, things happen.

Jackson looks over her shoulder. The taxi barrels toward her.

He sees the driver. Hawklike features. Hooded eyes.

Jackson lunges. Scoops her off the ground. Tosses her over the Cadillac's hood.

The taxi sideswipes the Cadillac. Scraping the paint off. Right where Jackson's legs were.

It zooms away down the street.

Jackson goes to her side.

JACKSON

Wait at the station. I have to catch a cab.

He leaves her, dashing into...

50 EXT. CANFIELD AVENUE

50

He looks west, at --

The taxi. At the intersection. Left turn.

He dashes across the street. Cutting off cars. SCREECH.
HONK. Not so mild profanity.

Jackson doesn't even look.

Dashes toward the corner. Toward a huge mound of garbage bags.

Leaps over them.

Like stepping over a crack in the sidewalk.

Cuts across the corner. Darts through a cluster of pedestrians. So fast they barely notice him.

Reaches the curb. Still running.

Looks down the street.

Woodward and Adelaide. A green light. The taxi crosses the intersection.

Jackson tears into the street. Sidewalk, sidewalk.

Legs pumping. Feet a blur. Sweat? Never heard the word.

He spots the taxi. Waiting at another red light.

And runs even faster.

Tired? Not spoken here.

Gamble sits in his taxi. The NOT IN SERVICE sign on. His eyes in shadow.

He glances into the mirror. And guess who he sees.

Gamble jerks the wheel. Turning the car into the wrong lane. Clearly he didn't have my Driver's Ed teacher.

Speeds toward the intersection. As the light turns green.

Jackson in pursuit. Maybe starting to wish he didn't dress so warmly. But other than that he's fine.

The taxi cuts a swath through the oncoming traffic. Cars peel off to either side. No garbage can or newspaper stand is safe.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

50

Jackson nears the back of the taxi. Takes a flying leap. Hits the roof. Grabbing the plastic TAXI sign.

The taxi turns into a side street. Heading toward the river.

Gamble pulls out his gun. Fires up. Through the roof of the car.

Jackson lays on top. The bullet holes mere inches from his face.

He slides forward.

Gamble jerks the wheel to the side. The taxi scrapes against a parked car. Jackson is jolted. But keeps his grip.

Gamble steers the car from side to side. Firing through the roof. Emptying his clip.

Jackson swings over the Taxi sign. Lands on the hood. And drives a fist through the windshield.

Gamble is showered with glass. Dropping the empty gun on the seat. He slams on the brakes. Sending Jackson off the hood.

He rolls to his feet. Faces the car.

Jackson
You dripped something.

Gamble revs the engine. Stares at Jackson. Jackson stares back.

JACKSON
Right this way.

Gamble hits the gas. Jackson starts to run. Toward the car.

The taxi speeds toward him. Jackson is in high school again. The long jump.

Jackson leaps over the car. Landing on the street in the taxi's wake. Gamble rubbernecks.

And the taxi runs into the front of a Porsche. The car leaves the ground. Spinning through the window of a sporting goods store.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED (2):

50

Jackson walks to the broken window and peers in. The taxi is propped up on its back wheels, amidst a pile of bicycles.

And Gamble is nowhere to be seen.

51 EXT. 13TH PRECINCT STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

51

Kornblau and Lack walk toward the station steps.

LACK

Jesus, Kornblau, couldn't you see the guy had a white cane? No one's ever gonna accuse you of impersonating a police officer.

They stop as Jackson rides up on a sportsbike, his clothes torn and battered.

JACKSON

Something you'd like to ask?

They shake their heads, and watch him walk to the station-house.

LACK

It must be the Action Mobile.

52 INT. 13TH PRECINCT STATION - AFTERNOON

52

Jackson walks through the door, and all heads swivel to follow him, eyes agog at his new summer wardrobe. Capt. Armbruster accosts him on his way to his desk.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER

I'm afraid to ask.

JACKSON

Dry cleaners.

Sarno pops his head out of Armbruster's office.

SARNO

Captain, there's a Raymond Falk on the line for you.

Jackson's head turns at the name. He can guess what this is about.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER
I'll take it in my office
(to Jackson)
It's the martinizing that does it.

He goes into the office and picks up the phone, as Jackson goes to Bothwell.

JACKSON
Was a woman waiting for me? Blonde,
about twenty-nine?

BOTHWELL
Christ, I thought I dreamed her.
Yeah, she left a note on your
desk.

Jackson picks it up and reads it. It says "I'm going to tell Peter everything. I know you think it's wrong, but I love him. Patrice."

BOTHWELL
(reading over
his shoulder)
How do you do it?

JACKSON
It's the clothes.

Their heads turn at the sound of Armbruster's voice from inside the office.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER (O.S.)
JACKSON!!!

The door flies open, and Armbruster bursts out like one of the bulls at Pamplona.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER
WHERE'S JACKSON??!!

Bothwell turns to Jackson but he is gone, leaving the note fluttering to the floor.

53 INT. THE CLUB ELITE - NIGHT

53

Jackson sits at a small table near the stage, dressed in his finest, with no sign of the afternoon's wear and tear. A WAITRESS stands beside his chair.

(CONTINUED)

JACKSON

Just an orange juice please.

(noticing
her look)

Don't worry. The tip will make
up for it.

She smiles her way back to the bar, and as the lights grow dim, an EMCEE'S VOICE fills the rapidly hushing club.

EMCEE (O.S.)

She's Our Lady of John R Street,
the uncrowned Queen of Detroit...
ladies and gentlemen, the Club
Elite is proud to present...
Sydney Ash!

The stage lights snap on with a burst of MUSIC, and Sydney is standing before the crowd. The purring balladeer of the previous day is gone, replaced by an emotional livewire.

Jackson watches her, wondering how a stiff like Delaplane could attract such a firebrand.

She sings, and the silken whisper rises quickly to a fever pitch in the first few bars, pouring all the frustrations of her caged life into this song.

She catches Jackson's eye and sizes him up, clearly finding him up to snuff. She directs her song to him, like a woman hoping to find release in a one-night stand.

Jackson leans forward in his chair, putting every thought of the case out of his mind. Peter who?

The club seems empty but for the two people, the tired cop and the fiery singer, as a communication passes between them more direct than any song.

As she nears the end of her number, the tone changes. No longer a passionate cry of dissatisfaction, but a slow, mournful ballad of regret. Nothing lasts more than a moment, her look says.

I will prove you wrong, his eyes reply.

The music fades, and the audience APPLAUDS. She bows her head, her eyes remaining level with Jackson's. He applauds quietly.

54 EXT. DELAPLANE'S MANSION - NIGHT

54

A pair of headlights scan the manicured lawns as Delaplane's limo drives past the house to the garage.

55 INT. DELAPLANE'S MANSION - NIGHT

55

As Delaplane reaches the top of the stairs, he is met by Cartier, who hands him a freshly oiled pistol.

CARTIER

It should be as good as new.

DELAPLANE

Thank you, Cartier. We can test it in the morning.

Delaplane puts the gun under his belt at the small of his back and takes off his tie, exhausted after the long day.

56 INT. DELAPLANE'S BEDROOM

56

The room is dark as Delaplane walks in, closing the door behind him. He drops his coat on the bed and reaches for the bedside lamp.

PATRICE

(whispering)

Peter.

He clicks on the lamp, and Patrice is seated on the edge of the bed, looking at him.

DELAPLANE

Patrice, I was worried about you. They said you hadn't come home.

PATRICE

I came in through the back door. Peter, something is wrong.

He goes to her side, taking her hands in his.

DELAPLANE

You don't have to be afraid. Whatever it is, we can talk about it.

PATRICE

It's Cartier. I heard him talking on the phone today. About that man Langlois. The one Sergeant Jackson showed you the picture of.

(CONTINUED)

DELAPLANE

(blankly)

You must be mistaken.

PATRICE

I'm sure of it. He said that Jackson got to him first, but that he couldn't tell him anything. Peter, what's going on?

DELAPLANE

I don't know, Patrice. I honestly don't know.

PATRICE

Now don't bullshit me, Peter. Please tell me the truth.

His hand goes to the gun behind his back.

DELAPLANE

Don't you trust me?

PATRICE

Of course I do. But I have to hear you say it. Please, Peter. For me.

DELAPLANE

All right, then. I swear I had nothing to do with anyone's murder. Not Frank Stringer, not Lionel Grantham, and not any friend of Jericho Jackson.

PATRICE

Thank you, Peter.

She clutches him to her and he gently pats her on the back, as if she were a small child.

DELAPLANE

Patrice, you know I would never do anything to hurt you.

Her hand rubs his back, straying dangerously close to the gun.

PATRICE

I hope Sergeant Jackson will understand.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED (2):

56

He steps away from her, his hand unconsciously moving for his gun.

DELAPLANE

What about Jackson? You didn't tell him about this, did you?

PATRICE

(embarrassed)

I'm afraid I did. He came by right after I overheard that call. I assured him you weren't involved, though. I knew you couldn't be.

He smiles, not an easy thing for him to do.

PATRICE

You were away, I didn't know what to do. Please don't hate me for it.

DELAPLANE

Hate you?

He steps to her again, and takes her in his arms.

DELAPLANE

Patrice, I love you more than life itself.

They kiss, and her hand runs down along his back, down to where the gun was.

A muffled EXPLOSION is heard, and a gaping exit wound explodes from Patrice's back, spraying the bed with blood.

Her eyes go wide with surprise, and Delaplane keeps their bodies tightly together, their lips locked.

He lays her down on the bed, and their lips part. He watches as the light fades from her eyes, a look of incalculable shock on her face.

He sits down on the edge of the bed, pulling a cigarette from his pocket.

The door bursts open, and Cartier and Pace jump in, guns drawn. They register the scene before them, and put their guns away.

DELAPLANE

Gamble failed. How?

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED (3):

56

CARTIER

It was Jackson, sir.

Delaplane calmly lights a cigarette

DELAPLANE

I figured as much. I think
Sergeant Jackson is ready for
another demotion.

The servants start to leave.

DELAPLANE

Cartier?

Cartier turns, and Delaplane tosses him the gun.

DELAPLANE

We won't need to test it tomorrow
after all.

Cartier nods, and he and Pace leave. Delaplane puffs on his
cigarette, relaxed, as Patrice's body grows cold on the bed
beside him.

57. INT. SYDNEY'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

57

Sydney walks in, locking the door behind her, looking drained
after her exhausting set.

She sits down at her dressing room mirror and opens a drawer,
pulling out the jewel case.

She opens it up, and holds the hypo before her, staring at
the heroin through the light.

58 OUTSIDE THE DRESSING ROOM

58

Jackson walks in from the stage area, peering at the various
doors, and approaches Sydney's.

As he reaches it, a mountain steps in his path. The ubiqui-
tous Edd.

EDD

May I help you?

JACKSON

I'd like to see Miss Ash.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

58

Jackson tries to go past him, and Edd grabs his arm in a meaty grasp.

EDD

I don't recommend that course of action.

JACKSON

I do.

He pats Edd gently on the stomach. Well, actually, he punches him with all his strength, but it has all the impact of a pat on the stomach.

JACKSON

Jesus, you're a big guy. How much do you weigh?

EDD

Two hundred and seventy pounds.

JACKSON

Damn, you're big.

He lightly caresses Edd's cheek. Well, actually, he wallops him in the jaw with enough force to stop a herd of bison. Same thing.

JACKSON

Do you make a good living at this?

EDD

Good enough. It's helping put me through medical school.

JACKSON

Now, if I try to hit you again, you're probably gonna slam me against that wall, aren't you?

EDD

It goes against my Muslim beliefs, but I was thinking about it.

JACKSON

Good.

He swings at Edd, and Edd grabs his arm, shoving him back against the wall. Jackson raises his legs, and gives Edd a full two-barrelled kick in the chest.

59 THE DRESSING ROOM

The door bursts open. Propelled by Edd.

He slams against the floor. Hitting his head against a table.
KO.

Sydney quickly replaces the empty hypo in the jewel case and looks up at Jackson. Her speech patterns are slurred, and her eyes are a little glassy.

SYDNEY

I take it you enjoyed my act.

JACKSON

Very much. Are you through for the night?

SYDNEY

I'm through singing. You know, I'm impressed. It takes a lot to get through Edd.

JACKSON

Not so much. Just the edge of that table. He should be out for a while.

She shakes her head, laughs.

SYDNEY

You don't know Edd.

A small CROWD gathers at the doorway, staring at the fallen giant.

SYDNEY

Do you mind? This is private.

The crowd disperses.

SYDNEY

What do you say we hasten to your chariot?

JACKSON

My chariot awaits.

He takes her arm to help her out the door, and notices the rubber tube still tied there.

JACKSON

(coldly)

You forgot something.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED:

59

She sees the tube and takes it off.

SYDNEY

I never leave home without it.

She puts the jewel case in her purse, and carries it out the door. He follows her out, his infatuation dwindling.

60 EXT. DETROIT STREETS - NIGHT

60

Jackson's Impala drives along Woodward Avenue, the languorous Sydney at his side.

61 INT. JACKSON'S CAR

61

Sydney slides over to Jackson and starts playing with his belt. She goes for his zipper, and he pulls her hand away.

SYDNEY

You waitin' 'til we're married
or somethin'?

JACKSON

I'd just prefer some place more
romantic.

SYDNEY

Romance is where you find it, hon.
And I find it wherever and
whenever I can.

She starts stroking the back of his neck, and he pulls her hand away. She doesn't like that.

SYDNEY

You must be some kind of a priest.
Damn, I don't even know your name.

JACKSON

It's Jericho.

SYDNEY

Jericho? See, I knew you was a
priest. Don't you have any
nickname or somethin'?

JACKSON

Some people used to call me Action.

She looks at him, and bursts out laughing.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

SYDNEY

Shit, I ain't seen much action tonight. Sure wasn't no woman gave you that name.

A SIREN BLARES behind them, and a police car passes by, lights flashing.

SYDNEY

If it's for me, don't answer it.

Jackson pulls up to the corner, and stops, looking down the street to his apartment building. The curb is lined with a veritable fleet of police cars, their lights turning the block into a giant kaleidoscope.

JACKSON

This isn't good.

He backs the car into an alley, and watches the street.

SYDNEY

An alley. That's real romantic.

Jackson stares as a tan sedan drives toward the building, Cotterman inside.

SYDNEY

Maybe now you'll live up to your name.

62 INT. JACKSON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

62

Cotterman goes through the open door, and Kornblau tags along beside him. The apartment looks like the Policeman's Ball, as COFS photograph, examine, and dust everything.

KORNBLAU

Jesus, do you really think Action Jackson did it?

Cotterman gives him a withering look, and Kornblau tries to swallow his teeth.

They walk into the bedroom, where Walters sits in a small chair, making notes on a pad.

WALTERS

Your old partner seems to be some kinda magnet for trouble.

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED:

62

COTTERMAN

He'd never have it any other way.

Walters goes to the bed, reaching for the sheet, and stops.

WALTERS

Women this beautiful don't come
around too often, And I always
have to see them like this.

He pulls back the sheet. Underneath is Patrice's naked body,
her blood making an odd pattern on the sheet below.

COTTERMAN

He's gonna wish he'd stayed at
Harvard.

63 INT. JACKSON'S CAR - NIGHT

63

They are still parked in the dark alley. Jackson listens to
his POLICE RADIO, stunned, as Sydney rests her head on his
shoulder, completely out of it.

RADIO VOICE

... identified as Patrice Delaplane
squawk, squawk - no sign of Jackson
squawk, squawk - believed to be...

He turns off the radio and turns on the ignition, steering out
of the alley and away from his building.

SYDNEY

Where we going?

JACKSON

Your place.

SYDNEY

It's about time.

64 INT. SYDNEY'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

64

The apartment is dark. We hear KEYS TURNING in the lock and
the door opens, letting Sydney and Jackson in. She reaches
for the light switch, but he pulls her hand away.

JACKSON

No lights.

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED:

64

SYDNEY

That's right. You're the
romantic.

She ambles into the kitchen, past a row of inverted wine
glasses hanging from their stems, and he follows her.

SYDNEY

I got the munchies like you
wouldn't believe.

As he peers around her apartment, Sydney opens the refriger-
ator door, flooding the apartment with light.

SYDNEY

Let's see...

Jackson pushes her aside and slams the door. She sidles up
to him, starting the foreplay phase.

SYDNEY

What's the matter? Food not
romantic?

RRRIINNNNNNGGGG!!!
The phone.

She moves toward it, but he stops her.

JACKSON

You usually get calls at this
time of night?

SYDNEY

I'm a very popular girl.

RRRIINNNNGGGGGG!!

She tries again, but he keeps a grip on her arm.

JACKSON

Do you?

SYDNEY

Not usually,

RRRIIIN--
It stops.

He throws her to the floor. Covering her with his body.

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED (2):

64

SYDNEY

Now, this is roman--

Her words are cut off by a tremendous EXPLOSION from the living room. The phone detonates in a huge flare of light.

The plates in the cupboard smash against the floor. The pipe under the sink bursts. The hanging glasses shatter, leaving only the stems.

Jackson helps pick the stunned Sydney up off the kitchen floor, brushing the glass and porcelain shards off her.

JACKSON

That's why we don't turn on the light or answer the phone.

SYDNEY

Right.

He leads her through the living room, dodging the burning patches of carpet, and they stop at the front door. It is a sheet of fire.

He steps back, and plants a kick on the door that knocks it off its hinges. He helps her through.

65 INT. JACKSON'S CAR - NIGHT

65

They are driving through Paradise Valley, a less advantageous part of town. Sydney stares off into space, the image of her friend running over and over again through her mind.

She puts her hand down on the seat next to her, noticing that her purse is gone.

SYDNEY

Wait. We have to go back for my purse.

JACKSON

We're not going back. We're going to a hotel.

SYDNEY

But my makeup. I must look beautiful.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

65

JACKSON
You look beautiful. You don't
need your purse.

She looks out the window, before it dawns on her what Jackson just said.

SYDNEY
What did you say?

JACKSON
I said you look fine. We can't
go back for your purse.

Sydney looks puzzled. I must be hearing things.

66 EXT. PARADISE VALLEY - LATE NIGHT

66

Jackson backs the car into a narrow alley and parks it, as he and Sydney get out. She looks at the neighborhood, which would have to have a substantial increase in property value to be called a slum.

SYDNEY
You sure travel in weird circles.
I didn't know there was a hotel
around here.

JACKSON
Neither does anyone else.

They walk around the corner, reaching a brick building with a crumbling sign: HOTEL HOOVER.

SYDNEY
Nice name. Should be clean,
anyway.

67 INT. HOTEL HOOVER LOBBY - LATE NIGHT

67

The hotel was popular for a week after the end of World War II, but has been decaying rapidly ever since. The lobby is about the size of a grave.

Sydney and Jackson step to the front desk, where a sign reads RING BELL FOR SERVICE. There is of course no bell.

JACKSON
Hello?

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

67

A MAN on the turnpike, between middle and old age ambles out from the back room with surprising speed.

MAN

They stole the bell. They'd steal me if I weren't nailed to the floor.

He reaches the desk and looks up at the newcomers.

JACKSON

You son-of-a-bitch.

He swings a fist at the old man, who deftly grabs his wrist.

MAN

The force may fade...

MAN AND JACKSON

(together)

... but the reflex never dies.

The two men embrace heartily, as Sydney throws up her hands in confusion.

SYDNEY

If you girls want to be alone, I can wait out in the car.

JACKSON

Sydney, I'd like you to meet an old friend. In this century, Paradise Valley has produced two great fighters. Joe Louis, and Kid Sable.

SYDNEY

Pleasure to meet you, Mr. Louis.

She shakes his hand, and sits down on the steps groggily.

KID SABLE

I see you found yourself a real fight aficionado. So, how's Detroit's favorite son doing? Seems like we don't hear your name much in these parts anymore. What happened to all those highfalutin ambitions?

JACKSON

She divorced me.

(CONTINUED)

KID SABLE

Seems to me a wife who'd run out
at the first sign of trouble ain't
much of a wife to begin with.

JACKSON

Seems to me nobody asked you, Sable.

KID SABLE

Seems to me you're right.

JACKSON

Have you got a room for us?
Something on a relatively...
unoccupied floor.

He whispers, tapping his arm significantly.

JACKSON

She's got a sweet tooth.

Sable takes a key out from under the counter and hands it
to Jackson.

KID SABLE

Room four-fourteen. No roaches,
and the shower sometimes works.
We call it the President's Suite.

Jackson starts to go, but stops and turns back to Sable.

JACKSON

Show me again what you used on
Vince Welton.

Sable shrugs, as if it were nothing at all.

KID SABLE

The Sable Surprise.
(demonstrates)
You soften 'em up with rights to
the jaw, and then knock 'em flat
with a left out of nowhere.

Jackson shakes his head, smiling.

JACKSON

Kid, how come you never get any
older?

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED (3):

67

KID SABLE

(shrugs)

I wouldn't mind gettin' older if
I'd only get better.

Jackson goes to Sydney and helps her make the long trek up the stairs.

68 INT. ROOM FOUR FOURTEEN - LATE NIGHT

68

Like a closet, only with nothing to hang your clothes on. A bed, a rickety stuffed chair, and a card table. Sydney stumbles over to the bed and plops herself down, not bothering to take off her shoes. Jackson does it for her, and pulls the blanket over her body.

JACKSON

It wasn't the makeup you wanted,
was it?

SYDNEY

(sleepily)

Leave me alone.

JACKSON

Why do you do it?

SYDNEY

What else is there?

She closes her eyes, and Jackson turns off the light. Jackson sits on the chair, barely visible in the light from the street, and Sydney's voice is heard, as if from a dream.

SYDNEY

One more chance. Wanna fuck?

JACKSON

No thanks.

SYDNEY

Good night.

And she is asleep. No such luck for Jackson.

69. INT. ROOM FOUR-FOURTEEN - MORNING

The sunlight slaps Sydney in the face and she wakes up, the room appearing in a cloud of purple spots around her. If she looks beautiful, she certainly doesn't feel it, and she winces at the sticky heroin taste in her mouth.

The sound of a SHOWER can be heard from the bathroom, and Sydney bangs on the locked door.

SYDNEY

Lemme in.

The shower is turned off, but the door remains shut.

SYDNEY

Open the door, Jackson. Believe me, they all look the same.

Jackson steps out of the bathroom, a large towel draped around his middle, carrying a box marked RAT POISON.

JACKSON

I got your fix for you.

SYDNEY

Yuk, yuk, yuk. Everyone's a comedian.

The door opens and Albert steps in, bringing a tray loaded with orange juice, bacon, eggs, and toast. He stares at Jackson, the tray barely reaching the table without leaping out of his shaking hands.

ALBERT

You're Action Jackson!

Sydney bursts out laughing, and Jackson gives her a reprimanding look as Albert leaves.

SYDNEY

I swear, Jackson, a fine looking woman like me, and you didn't even touch me all night. You must be a queer or a cop.

She goes into the bathroom and shuts the door behind her.

JACKSON

I'm not a queer.

A beat. The bathroom door opens slowly, and Sydney peers out at him.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED:

69

JACKSON
Sergeant Jericho Jackson.
Thirteenth Precinct, city of
Detroit.

She leans against the doorway, staring at him, putting the pieces together.

JACKSON
I want to get Peter Delaplane.
I think you can help me.

SYDNEY
What's Delaplane got to do with me?

JACKSON
Are you kidding? He owns you.

SYDNEY
He rents me.

JACKSON
Six of one, half a dozen of the other. Either way, you can consider us officially joined at the hip 'til I get this case closed.

She smiles at him, feeling like she has the upper hand.

SYDNEY
So you need me, huh?

JACKSON
What makes you think I need a worthless junkie like you? If it weren't for me you'd be splattered all over your apartment. You need me to stay alive.

She glares at him, locking herself in the bathroom.

70 EXT. HOTEL HOOVER - MORNING

70

Jackson and Sydney, dressed in their rumpled clothes from the night before, walk out of the lobby and down the street, heading toward the alley where the car is parked.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

70

SYDNEY

Okay, if we stop somewhere to pick up a fix? Just a little one?

He gives her an incredulous look.

JACKSON

Sorry, Sydney. You're just gonna have to make do.

They turn the corner into the alley, and spot Jackson's car. At least, it's what Jackson's car would look like if you took off the tires and doors, smashed the windows, raised the hood, removed the engine, tore out the seats, and drew racing stripes along the sides with a set of keys.

Jackson's jaw drops open and the color seems to drain from his face, as he searches desperately for any sign of no-damage.

SYDNEY

Sorry, Jackson. You're just gonna have to make do.

Jackson looks as if he's going to live up to his nickname by rendering her face concave, but he restrains himself. Instead, he puts up the convertible top, the only part still intact.

JACKSON

Do you know how long I've had this car? Do you know how much work I've put into it? Do you know how much a fully operational sixty-eight Chevy Impala is worth?

SYDNEY

Are we gonna start playing "Do You Know How?", cause if so, I've got one. Do you know how badly I need a fix right now? Why don't you just call up your buddies on the force and have 'em track down the stolen parts.

Of course, Jackson can't do that, but Sydney doesn't know it. He takes her arm, and leads her away from the car.

SYDNEY

You're right. How foolish of me, trying to expect Action Jackson to do the logical thing.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED (2):

70

They step out of the alley, and a PASSERBY bumps into Jackson, moving aside to let them pass.

He stops at a nearby doorway and pulls out a wallet. He opens it up, revealing Jackson's ID and badge.

PASSERBY

Fuck A. Duck!

71 INT. THE SAND BAR - MORNING

71

The door opens, and Sydney and Jackson enter in a burst of glaring sunlight. They look around the place, waiting for their eyes to adjust, but the bar is dark enough for bats to live in.

They walk to the counter and sit down, as an overly smiley, BARTENDER approaches them.

BARTENDER

What can I get for you folks?

JACKSON

I'm looking for Papa Doc. I was wondering if he still works here.

The bartender blinks, and his mouth keeps smiling even after his eyes stop.

BARTENDER

Wonder no more. If you'll just hold on a moment, I can lead you to him.

As he goes to the other end of the bar and confers with the BARMAID, Jackson gets up off his stool and Sydney follows.

SYDNEY

You did say we were attached at the hip. I thought you might need a tour guide.

JACKSON

Don't worry, Sydney. If they give me any smack, I'll be sure to save some for you.

The bartender comes around the counter, and Jackson joins him as they walk down a dark hallway.

72 INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE

72

The bartender lets Jackson in, and directs him toward a cabinet on the wall.

BARTENDER

Open it up.

JACKSON

What's this? A secret passage?

BARTENDER

Open it up.

Jackson opens it up, revealing a glass jar filled with murky fluid and something floating inside it.

JACKSON

(Laughs)

Is this Papa Doc?

The bartender laughs as well, pulling a small whiskey bottle from his back pocket.

BARTENDER

It's his balls.

He smashes the bottle across the back of Jackson's head, and Jackson crumples to the floor.

73 INT. THE BACK ROOM

73

The door flies open and the bartender comes in, dragging the dazed Jackson. Inside the room is a ping-pong table, on which two MEN are playing, as a GOON watches, drinking a glass of Coke Classic. They stop their game, and the goon helps the bartender prop Jackson up against the wall.

The first player, a tall man so thin he barely casts a shadow, motions to the second player, who grabs a Coke can from the shelf.

The second player shakes up the can of Coke and holds it under Jackson's nose. He pulls the tab, and a jet of spray bursts into Jackson's sinus cavity, rendering him wide awake.

As the bartender and the goon hold him against the wall, the second player stands eye to eye with him like a drill sergeant.

PLAYER TWO

You a big John?

(CONTINUED)

JACKSON

What?

PLAYER TWO

You think I'm geechie or somethin? Don't bogard me, lightfoot. Nuthin' we like better than to take a Tom slick like you 'n' have a little blanket party.

JACKSON

I'm sorry, I can't understand what you're saying.

PLAYER TWO

You basin' me? Let me break it down for you. You be a Charlie Irvine, and we gonna dance on yo' lips, then we deprive you of your firck and frack.

JACKSON

Nope. Can't understand a word of it.

PLAYER TWO

(to the player)

He ain't holdin' no air. We best jam him up.

The first player motions for the second player to step aside, and goes to Jackson, bouncing a ball on a paddle in front of him.

PLAYER

He'd like to know why you're looking for Papa Doc. I'd like to know why you're looking for Papa Doc.

JACKSON

Where is he?

The ball bounces faster and faster on the paddle.

PLAYER

What I'm trying to do here is establish a relationship. A question and answer relationship. I ask and you answer. Let us try a fresh start. Why are you looking for Papa Doc?

(CONTINUED)

JACKSON

Where is he?

The player catches the ball in mid-bounce and strikes Jackson across the face with the paddle, drawing blood.

PLAYER

Papa Doc was a very valuable source of information to us. A regular Library of Congress. Unfortunately, like so many libraries, his books were open to the public.

He begins bouncing the ball again.

PLAYER

Have you ever heard the sound a man makes when his balls are cut off?

Jackson shakes his head.

PLAYER

Then you're in for a treat.

He motions to the second player, who pulls out a massive knife.

PLAYER

You're gonna sing for us, friend. The question is whether you sing like a man or a woman.

As Jackson struggles with the men holding him, the second player pulls down Jackson's pants, jamming the knife between his legs.

PLAYER

Why are you looking for Papa Doc?

Jackson stares him in the eye.

JACKSON

Where is he?

PLAYER

This relationship isn't working. Cut 'em off.

All heads turn as the door opens, Sydney entering.

(CONTINUED)

SYDNEY

What're you doin' with my brother?
Ain't you all a little old to be
playin' doctor?

PLAYER

You're his sister?

SYDNEY

(scornfully)

No, he's just my soul brother.
Of course I'm his sister. Come
along, Jericho.

She tries to take Jackson with her, but the player stands in her way. She leans toward him, speaking in a whisper loud enough for all to hear.

SYDNEY

You might have noticed he's not
driving with a full tank. Spent
a year in Bellevue. Has the
delusion he's some kinda holy
messenger.

JACKSON

I'm gonna bring you down, brother!
I'm gonna bust your asses and wipe
the streets clean. I am the Man!

PLAYER

Why are you looking for Papa Doc?

The player stares him in the eye, trying to figure him out, and Jackson stares right back, his voice rising with an almost religious fervor.

JACKSON

You may have his righteous manhood,
but his soul still sings free and
clear!

SYDNEY

He's got a metal plate in his head.
The boy eats so much, sometimes I
think he's got a full set of
silverware up there too.

The player gestures to his cohorts, and they let him go. Jackson pulls his pants back up.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED (4):

73

JACKSON

Don't be fuckin' with the Man,
brothers! The word is on the
streets, and you are goin' down!

The four men stare as Sydney leads him toward the door.

JACKSON

Jericho has spoken!

The player shakes his head, and the goon steps in their path,
Coke glass in hand.

JACKSON

Please, brother, allow me to lay
my healing hand upon you.

He reaches out a hand and clasps the goon's hand in an iron
grip, the glass shattering and tearing through the goon's
hand.

Jackson slams the goon's head against the door. One down.

He beans the bartender with a Coke can thrown at escape
velocity. That's two.

He grabs the player and uses his paddle to cold cock the second
player. Three, if you're counting.

He bends the player's arm back and knocks him out with his own
paddle. And baby makes four.

All in the space of about five seconds.

Sydney looks at him with shock and admiration. "Action" indeed.

74 OUTSIDE THE SAND BAR

74

Sydney and Jackson emerge from the front door and walk down
the street, Jackson checking his pockets.

JACKSON

Great. First my car, now my
wallet.

SYDNEY

You're just lucky it wasn't your
balls. Jackson, I saved your life
back there.

(CONTINUED)

JACKSON

We saved each other. Do you think they were gonna let us go on just a song and dance?

SYDNEY

I don't know, Jackson. I'm a damn fine singer, and back there it looked like you dance pretty well.

JACKSON

If you're trying to say we make a great team, I beg to differ.

SYDNEY

You got something against women?

JACKSON

No. Just against junkies. You got a real quick mind. You shouldn't be wasting it on that shit.

SYDNEY

Did you have to remind me? I hadn't thought about it in ten minutes. Now I got that taste in my mouth.

75 INT. HOTEL HOOVER LOBBY - EARLY AFTERNOON

75

Jackson and Sydney enter and find Kid Sable behind the front desk, alert as always. He hands Jackson the key to four-fourteen, and Jackson hands it to Sydney.

JACKSON

Why don't you go upstairs? I have some things to talk over with the Kid.

Sydney gives him a stunned look.

SYDNEY

You trust me to go upstairs alone?

JACKSON

(thinks)
Wait... yeah, I guess I do.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED:

75

She smiles, and disappears up the stairs.

KID SABLE

Where'd you go off to this morning?

JACKSON

I was looking for Papa Doc?

KID SABLE

I coulda saved you some time. The man's dead. Word on the street is that his balls are in a jar at the Sand Bar.

JACKSON

They are. In fact, they almost had company.

Kid Sable shakes his head, whistling.

KID SABLE

Jackson, you must surely lead a charmed life. You need a new source of information, don't you?

JACKSON

You got that right.

KID SABLE

Barber shop, corner of Custer and Saint Antoine. Man by the name of Dee.

76 INT. DEE'S BARBERSHOP - AFTERNOON

76

Jackson is seated in the barber's chair while DEE stands behind him, shaving the back of his neck with a straight razor. Dee is completely non-descript -- so much so that if you saw him holding a cup of coffee, you'd think the cup was levitating.

DEE

Delaplaine's former partner was a multi-millionaire and all-around de-viate named Enzo Catelli. Catelli lived in Rome, and as a defense against kidnapping attempts, he formed an elite group of bodyguards which he called the "Invisible Men," due to their almost de-monic ability remain completely unde-tected.

(CONTINUED)

JACKSON

Catelli's dead, isn't he?

DEE

Alas, he had no de-fense against his bodyguards' greed. Delaplane financed Catelli's de-mise, and the untimely de-parture of the first Mrs. Delaplane as well. He might even have de-ployed them against you, but your de-motion made that unnecessary.

JACKSON

Were they responsible for the AWA killings?

DEE

Unde-niably so. Moran was de-capitated in an auto accident, Stringer was de-fenestrated, and Grantham joined the de-bris in the D-troit River. It is likely that they intended to de-nounce Delaplane and de-fy his de-termined attempts to de-vice a power base in the AWA... but alas, motives are not my de-partment. Just the de-livery of de-tails.

JACKSON

How can I get in touch with Oliver Mulrooney?

DEE

He can usually be found late at night at the Red Devil...

(Jackson waits)

... unless I am de-ceived.

He takes Jackson's bib off, and Jackson admires Dee's handiwork in the mirror.

JACKSON

As I said before, I can't pay you today, but...

Dee makes a dismissing gesture.

DEE

I am always de-lighted to help a de-ctective, especially the de-fiantly inde-fatigable Action Jackson.

77 INT. ROOM FOUR-FOURTEEN - AFTERNOON

77

Jackson walks into the empty hotel room.

JACKSON

Sydney?

No Sydney. Not in the bathroom either. Jackson hurries out the door.

78 HOTEL HOOVER LOBBY

78

Jackson bolts down the stairs to the front desk.

JACKSON

Where's Sydney?

KID SABLE

She didn't go by me

JACKSON

There's a pusher in the building, isn't there?

KID SABLE

Jackson, I run a respectable --
(Jackson gives
him a look)
Calls himself Mister Quick. Room
five-oh-three.

Jackson runs up the stairs, and Sable calls to him.

KID SABLE

Easy on the door!

79 ROOM FIVE-OH-THREE

79

Sydney is seated on the bed, her arm bared, as MISTER QUICK, a muscular man with a badly broken nose and enough facial stubble to scour a tile floor, sterilizes the needle of his fully loaded hypo.

Suddenly, the door to the hall is kicked off its hinges, followed by an angry Jackson.

JACKSON

Always one when you don't need one.

Jackson grabs her by the arm, and she tries to resist.

MISTER QUICK

She's with me, motherfucker.

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED:

79

Sydney looks at Jackson, waiting for the explosion.

SYDNEY
(to Mister Quick)
You have made a very bad career
move.

JACKSON
You better watch your language
in front of the lady.

The pusher lunges at him, jamming the needle into Jackson's arm. He steps back, trying to dislodge it, and the pusher whips out a switchblade, clicking it open.

SYDNEY
You don't wann pull that shit on
Action Jackson.

MISTER QUICK
This is Action Jackson? Shit this
is gonna be easier than I thought.

Quick dodges back and forth in front of him, living up to his nickname.

MISTER QUICK
I'm gonna cut you bad, motherfucker.

JACKSON
Very good. You write your own
material?

Quick makes several darting lunges at him, and Jackson is barely able to keep out of the knife's path.

MISTER QUICK
You ass is mine!

JACKSON
You see? That's just what I was
gonna say.

Quick swings again, slashing open the front of Jackson's coat, and Jackson yanks the needle out of his arm, jamming it into the pusher's wrist.

80 THE STREET BELOW

80

Kornblau and Lack slowly cruise by in their patrol car, Lack scanning the sidewalk.

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED:

80

KORNBLAU

... so the rabbi says to the Pope...

LACK

Shit, Kornblau, can't you put a sock in it? I got roaches in my apartment that tell better jokes, and they don't laugh during the punchlines.

They approach the Hotel Hoover, and Lack spots the stripped Chevy Impala in the alley.

LACK

Hey, isn't that Jackson's car?

They stop the car at the mouth of the alley.

81 FIVE-OH-THREE

81.

Quick is really mad now, and the needle in his wrist is barely slowing him down.

MISTER QUICK

I'm gonna cut your heart out and stuff it down your throat, cocksucker!

He lunges, and Jackson grabs his arm, forcing him to drop the knife.

JACKSON

I warned you about the language.

He runs toward the window, his hand locked on Quick's arm, and hurls him at the glass.

82 THE ALLEY

82

Kornblau and Lack approach the dismembered car.

KORNBLAU

It looks like the same --

A window above them SMASHES. A body flies through. Across the alley. And through the opposite window.

83 FIVE-OH-THREE

83

Jackson dusts himself off, and Sydney peers out the window.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED:

83

JACKSON
Not quick enough.

SYDNEY
There's two cops heading our way.
You wanna stop and chat with 'em?

JACKSON
Some other time.

He looks out the window and down to the alley. His car is parked directly beneath them.

84 THE LOBBY

84

Kid Sable looks up from the desk as the two rookies run by, heading up the stairs.

KID SABLE
Would you like a double bed?

85 FIVE-OH THREE

85

Jackson drags Sydney toward the open window.

SYDNEY
Jackson, there's no fire escape.

JACKSON
You gotta learn to leap before
you look.

He lifts her to the window sill and puts his arm around her waist.

Kornblau and Lack reach the hall and look through the missing door.

LACK
Stop!

Jackson and Sydney jump.

86 THE ALLEY

86

The two bodies plummet from the window. His hand on her arm. Her hair streaming behind her like a geyser.

They land. On Jackson's Impala. The convertible top breaking their fall.

He helps her off the car, and they hurry to the street.

SYDNEY

Why are we running from the cops?
You're a cop, aren't you?

He doesn't answer, only running faster.

SYDNEY

Aren't you?

JACKSON

Of course I am. That's why we're taking this.

They reach the rookie's car and get in.

87 HOTEL LOBBY

87

Kornblau and Lack run down the stairs, past Kid Sable.

KID SABLE

I can recommend a good bathhouse
if you like.

88 THE STREET

88

Kornblau and Lack bolt through the front door just in time to see their car screech by, Sydney waving to them.

SYDNEY

Thanks, officers.

The rookies run into the street and flag down the next car. A HEAVYSET DRIVER is inside.

KORNBLAU

Police business. We're commandeering your car.

HEAVYSET DRIVER

The fuck you are.

He hits the gas and drives away.

The police car darts into the avenue from the side street, Sydney staring at Jackson with more than her usual distrust.

SYDNEY

You haven't answered my question.
Why are we running from the cops?

JACKSON

You're right. Where are my manners?

He hits the brakes, stopping the car in the middle of the lane.

JACKSON

I'm gonna go back right now and apologize.

SYDNEY

You got my fix, didn't you?

JACKSON

I guess so.
(looks out at
the other cars)
Why is this heap going so slow?

A banged-up Volkswagen pulls up beside them, with Kornblau and Lack inside. He waves to them.

JACKSON

How do you like the new Action Mobile?

He hits the accelerator, leaving the beetle in the dust, and turns on the siren.

SYDNEY

Maybe I better drive.

JACKSON

If you're gonna be that way about it...

He takes his hands off the wheel, and she slides up next to him, frantically trying to steer. He kisses her ear, and nuzzles her neck.

JACKSON

We oughta do this more often.

The beetle pulls up alongside them, and Jackson glares at the two rookies.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

89

JACKSON
Can't a man have a little privacy?

LACK
Pull over, Jackson.

JACKSON
Blow me.

He hits the accelerator and the car zooms away. He looks at Sydney

JACKSON
You know, that's not a bad idea.

They speed toward a dead end -- Palmer Golf Course, its greens spreading out behind a cyclone fence.

SYDNEY
Which way do we turn?

JACKSON
We don't.

He takes the wheel from her.

SYDNEY
You're a sick fuck, Jackson.

The police car barrels toward the fence. Sydney covers her face with her hands. Jackson lets out a WHOOP.

90 PALMER GOLF COURSE

90

The police car tears through the fence. Sailing off the embankment. Landing bumpily on the green.

The rookies stop behind them, watching their patrol car speed away across the grass.

LACK
Turn left. We can cut 'em off.

The police car zips over the rolling green, Jackson struggling to regain control of himself.

SYDNEY
You still haven't told me why we're running.

(CONTINUED)

JACKSON

Delaplane killed his wife, and
planted the body in my apartment.
The cops think I did it.

(looks at her)

Does this stuff ever wear off?

SYDNEY

Yeah, unfortunately.

JACKSON

Are you still gonna help me?

The car heads up a steep, grassy hill, as Jackson keeps the pedal pressed to the floor.

SYDNEY

How can I trust you? You're a
cop... you're wanted for murder...
your name's Action...

She stops, her eyes bulging at the sight in front of her.
He turns to look.

The beetle reaches the crest as they do. At top speed.

The police car hits the front of the other car. Tipping
it over. The beetle rolls on its back like its namesake.

The police car veers off to the side, spinning sideways.

The bug slides backgrounddown the hill. Hits a bump. Begins
to roll.

The police car spins in the air. Landing on its wheels with
a CRUNCH.

The bug rolls down the hill. Like a lopsided soccer ball.
Bumping and jarring the cops inside. Finally coming to a
stop. Upside down.

Jackson speeds away across the grass, as Sydney tries to
clear her head.

SYDNEY

Now I really need a fix.

He looks at her scornfully, and veers the police car toward
a massive brick wall.

(CONTINUED)

SYDNEY

Jackson, I think you've made a wrong turn.

JACKSON

If you're gonna keep poisoning yourself with that shit, we might as well end it here.

He keeps the pedal pushed to the floor, and she stares at him, realizing he's perfectly serious.

SYDNEY

What do you want from me??!!

JACKSON

Quit. Cold turkey.

SYDNEY

I can't.

JACKSON

Then this way you won't have to.

The wall is getting nearer, and Sydney is getting vivid flashes of paramedics trying to peel her off it.

SYDNEY

I'll do it!

JACKSON

I'm sorry, I didn't quite catch that.

SYDNEY

I'LL DO IT!! I'LL DO IT!!

He jams on the brakes and spins the wheel, and the car does a sharp 180°, the back fender stopping inches away from the wall.

JACKSON

That wasn't so bad, was it?

She GULPS and manages a weak smile, as the police car pulls away.

They sit in the inverted Volkswagen, pinned to their seats.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED:

91

KORNBLAU

... so the Pope says...

LACK

Kornblau, have you ever had your
head rammed up your own asshole?

Kornblau thinks for a moment, trying to remember.

LACK

That day is coming. Mark it on
your calendar.92 EXT. THE RED DEVIL - LATE NIGHT

92

The battered police car pulls up to the bar, and Sydney
prepares to get out.

JACKSON

You understand what to do?

SYDNEY

Of course, Jackson. It's real
simple.

JACKSON

How do you feel?

SYDNEY

I feel like shit. I feel like
my teeth are hollow, and my gums
are made of dry rubber, and
someone's trying to start a
bonfire in the back of my head.

JACKSON

I felt that way once, but I think
it was love.

SYDNEY

You were married once, weren't
you?

JACKSON

She left me two years ago. She
felt my career was advancing in
the wrong direction.

SYDNEY

Her loss.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED:

92

She leans over, and gives him a kiss that could melt the polar ice cap.

JACKSON

If I get out of this alive, they're gonna have to call me "Blueballs" Jackson.

She gets out and shuts the door, walking toward the bar. She clutches her arm, trying to pull herself together, a sweat breaking out over her tightly drawn features.

93. INT. THE RED DEVIL - LATE NIGHT

93

A real Last Chance saloon. To call the clientele losers would give them more credit than they ask for. If you ever wake up one night and find yourself here, you can be pretty sure that the end is near.

OLIVER MULROONEY sits at the bar, looking slightly above the rest of a crowd, the way a leper with one finger feels superior to a leper with none. His face seems almost to be melting, draining into a puddle at his belly.

Behind him, we see Sydney enter the bar. She goes to the BARTENDER, asks him a whispered question, and he directs her to Mulrooney. She sits on the stool behind him.

SYDNEY

Mind if I join you?

He turns around, and a waxy grin forms at the sight of her.

MULROONEY

What's a nice girl like you doing in a place like this?

SYDNEY

I'm not that nice.

MULROONEY

Even better.

He reaches one puffy hand out to touch her.

SYDNEY

Delaplane sent me.
(he recoils)
He wants to see you.

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED:

93

MULROONEY

I don't believe you.

SYDNEY

It's about tomorrow night.

He believes her. He drops a bill on the counter, and hurries out the door, Sydney following closely behind.

A massive figure watches them from a booth. It is Edd, the bouncer.

94 HIGHLAND PARK - EARLY MORNING

94

Mulrooney sits at the wheel of his gas-guzzling Cadillac, Sydney in the passenger seat, as the car passes by several huge, crumbling buildings. The first glimmerings of sunrise are visible behind them toward the river.

MULROONEY

Why does Delaplane want to meet me out here?

SYDNEY

Probably doesn't want you soillin' his house. You're not questioning his judgment, are you?

Mulrooney shakes his head vehemently, and Sydney taps him on the shoulder, pointing out their destination.

They park in front of a decaying tenement. Even in its heyday this building wasn't much to look at -- now it's just a deserted, rotting shell.

95 INT. THE TENEMENT - EARLY MORNING

95

Sydney and Mulrooney climb a rickety wooden staircase toward the top floor. The rising sun sends shafts of dusty light across their paths.

MULROONEY

Couldn't he have met us on the first floor?

SYDNEY

I'm sure your convenience is one of his main concerns.

They reach the top floor, and Sydney leads him past the crumbling bannister through an empty room and into another, its gaping window hole overlooking the street.

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED:

95

A man stands before the window, silhouetted by the sunrise, as Mulrooney shields his eyes to get a better look.

MULROONEY

You're not Delaplane.

The man steps forward, the sunlight revealing Jackson's face.

JACKSON

Do you know who I am?

He holds up a gin bottle, and Mulrooney moves toward it, almost against his will.

MULROONEY

You're Jackson. The local boy who didn't make it so good after all.

Jackson holds the bottle in front of the gaping window hole, and Mulrooney reaches for it.

JACKSON

That's me.

Jackson drops it out the window, and Mulrooney tries to make a grab for it. Jackson grabs him by the shirt, barely keeping Mulrooney from falling to the street below.

JACKSON

What's happening tomorrow night?

MULROONEY

Party. Party for Raymond Falk.

JACKSON

I know that. What's happening at the party?

Mulrooney shrugs, smiles.

MULROONEY

Dinner, dancing...

Jackson shoves his closer to the drop.

JACKSON

Don't... fuck... around.

MULROONEY

He's going to kill Falk.

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED (2):

95

Jackson shoves him back into the room, and he skids along the floor.

JACKSON

Why?

He advances on Mulrooney, blood-lust in his eyes.

MULROONEY

So I can take his place. So I can become President of the union.

JACKSON

Who's going to kill him?

Mulrooney giggles childishly.

MULROONEY

Are you sure you want to know?

Jackson punches a hole in the wall for emphasis.

JACKSON

Do I look like someone who has trouble making up his mind? Who's gonna kill Falk?

MULROONEY

You are.

Before Jackson has time to fully register this, there is the sound of RETCHING from the next room, and Jackson goes to see.

He finds Sydney curled up in the corner, sweat dripping down her face, coughing her guts out.

JACKSON

Sydney...

·SYDNEY

Please... go way... don't want you to see me like this...

She keeps coughing and Jackson, powerless to help, goes back into the next room.

It is empty. Mulrooney is gone.

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED (3):

95

He looks up. a NOISE above him. Like a STOMPING sound. Plaster begins to crack and fall.

The ceiling caves in on him. He covers his head.

As five figures drop through and surround him. Birch. Gamble. Marlin. Shaker. Thaw. Welcome back.

Jackson turns to face Shaker. Shaker swings a fist. Contact.

Jackson reels.

Thaw spins. Kicks. An iron foot planted in Jackson's chest.

He stumbles back.

Marlin flicks his wrist. The knife impeds in the floor.

Jackson trips on the cord. Falls. Against Birch.

Birch grabs him around the chest. Runs with him. Through the wall.

The two men explode into the next room. Jackson collapsing to the floor.

Birch picks Jackson up: Dusts him off. Heaves him through the doorway.

Jackson crashes through the bannister. Falling off the stairwell. One hand clinging to the edge. Suspended over a six-story drop.

Marlin walks over to him. Kneels down before him.

Jackson bashes him in the face with a broken bannister rail.

Marlin falls back. Jackson climbs up. Marlin flicks his wrist. The knife imbeds.

In Jackson's weapon. He grabs the wire. Snaps it off. Pulls the knife from the wood.

As Thaw launches at him. Hitting him at stomach level.

The two men fall over the edge. Crashing onto the next stairwell.

Thaw raises a foot to kick. Jackson slashes his leg with Marlin's knife.

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED (4):

95

He runs to the nearest room. As Birch drops through the ceiling.

Jackson slashes him across the face. Birch falls to the floor. Hand pressed to his wound.

Jackson climbs onto his shoulder. Grabs onto the hole in the ceiling. Starts to pull himself up.

Birch grabs at his leg. Jackson kicks him in the face. Birch falls back.

Jackson looks up. Shaker peers down through the hole. Ready to crush his fingers with his fists.

Jackson flings the knife. Striking Shader in the shoulder.

He falls back. Jackson pulls himself up.

He hears a SCREAM. Sydney.

He bolts through a doorway. Through another empty room. To find Gamble. Forcing Sydney up against the wall.

Jackson steps forward. And finds him teetering on the edge of a hole. He looks down. Another hole in the floor below. A two-story drop.

Gamble's hands wrap around Sydney's throat. Jackson calls out.

JACKSON

SYDNEY!!

Shaker looms behind him. Raises his fists together. Brings them down on Jackson's head.

Jackson tumbles into the hole. The screen goes BLACK.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

96 JACKSON'S POV

96

He is in motion, a factory ceiling looking down on him. Fluorescent lights. Hooks and chains.

Delaplane comes into view, looking down at him. And the movement stops.

97 FULL VIEW - INSIDE DELAPLANE'S FACTORY

97

Jackson is securely strapped to the assembly line, as Delaplane stands over him, an almost paternal smile on his face. He is accompanied by Birch, Shaker, and Thaw, their faces covered by protective goggles.

DELAPLANE

You probably have a lot of questions you'd like to ask. Please feel free.

JACKSON

Why do you want to kill Falk?
Controlling the union won't help your business that much.

DELAPLANE

You're right. If it were cars I cared about, it wouldn't be worth the effort. But cars are just a hobby. My real interest is power. The AWA is more than just a union, Sergeant. It's a power bloc. Their influence cannot be over-estimated. In nineteen-seventy-fix, they helped elect a Georgia peanut farmer to the highest office in the nation.

JACKSON

Are you saying we have President Delaplane to look forward to?

Delaplane shakes his head, smiling at the thought.

(CONTINUED)

DELAPLANE

Not very likely. I would rather be a king maker than a king anyway. There's an old cliché that the true power rests behind the throne. Fortunately, we have a government which has proven this cliché true time and time again. You must understand, Sergeant. I don't kill for mere entertainment, though I must admit it is a great deal of fun. Murder is a tool. My partner and my first wife had to die for financial reasons. Patrice was going to jeopardize this operation, and I couldn't let that happen. When the time comes, my son will have to join them. An altercation in the prison shower... that kind of thing happens all the time. You probably think I'm insane, don't you?

JACKSON

No, I think you're perfectly sane. That's what makes you so loathsome.

Delaplane laughs.

JACKSON

How do you expect to get away with killing Falk?

DELAPLANE

Gamble is going to take care of that. Of course, he'll be dressed like you at the time. To most of the guests, all of you people look the same anyway. Everyone will assume you were making an attempt on my life after your senseless murder of my wife, but unfortunately your car will crash and burn during your getaway. Your charred body will be identified by your dental records, and the entire case will be neatly closed.

JACKSON

Immaculate.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED (2):

97

DELAPLANE

I know. That only leaves Sydney.
She will die of an overdose...

(leering)

... but not before I fuck her in
the ass one last time.

Jackson struggles in his bonds, trying to tear open Dela-
plane's throat.

DELAPLANE

Poor Sergeant Jackson. You shouldn't
wear your heart on your sleeve.

He gestures to Birch, who pulls a large machine toward
Jackson. It is a welding-iron, operated with two hands,
which hangs on a chain for support.

JACKSON

What do you want from me?

DELAPLANE

Just the sound of your scream.

He looks toward Birch, who turns on the welder. He pushes
the torch end into Jackson's arm, and Jackson responds with
a blood-chilling HOWL.

DELAPLANE

You see. I'm easy to please.

Jackson stares at him, his teeth clenched, his face awash
in sweat.

DELAPLANE

Die well, Sergeant.

Jackson watches as Deleplane walks to the factory exit, the
door shutting behind him with a resounding CLANK.

His executioners advance on him. Staring through plastic
covered eyes.

BIRCH

Just tell me where it hurts.

He turns on the welder. Pushes it toward him. As a voice
calls out behind them.

VOICE

Knock Knock.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED (3):

97

They turn to look. Edd stands behind them on a conveyor belt. Hose and nozzle in hand.

EDD

You called about a paint job.

He turns on the nozzle. White paint sprays out the end. Coating their goggles.

The welding iron swings toward Jackson. He raises one bound arm. The torch cuts through the strap.

The three men tear off their goggles. As a mountain flies toward them. Hanging from a hook.

His feet strike Thaw and Shaker in the chest. Knocking them over the assembly line.

Jackson tears off his bonds. Birch lunges at him. Jackson grabs the welder. Swings it in his direction.

The electrical arc strikes Birch in the chest. He falls back screaming, his clothes smoldering.

JACKSON

Chill out.

Edd advances on Shaker. Shaker picks up a metal car frame. Swings it.

The razor sharp edge strikes Edd across the chest. Drawing blood.

Jackson turns around. As Thaw swings toward him. Clinging to a hook.

His legs lock in a scissor grip around Jackson's neck.

Shaker swings the car frame. Edd backs away. Toward a jungle of hanging cables.

Thaw's legs tighten around Jackson's throat. Jackson starts to turn blue. Looking around frantically.

Edd bumps against the cables. Shaker attacks with the frame. Severing the cords.

Thaw pushes Jackson to the floor. Jackson's hand reaches out. A drill just beyond his reach.

Edd ducks. Split cables hissing and sparking around him.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED (4):

97

Jackson grabs the drill. Turns it on. Drives the bit into Thaw's ankle.

Thaw drops to the floor.

Shaker pushes the frame toward Edd. Edd grabs two cables. Jams them against the contoured metal.

And Shaker begins to smoke.

Thaw dives toward Jackson. Jackson whips the drill up like a pistol. Driving the point through Thaw's heart.

He lets go of the drill. Stepping back. As Thaw messily expires.

Jackson is joined by Edd.

JACKSON
Thanks, Edd.

EDD
You should thank Allah.

JACKSON
Allah's pretty good with his hands.

EDD
No, that was me.

98 INT. PATRICE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

98

Delaplane, dressed in his black tux, sits on the edge of the bed as Sydney writhes about uncontrollably, wracked with withdrawal pains.

DELAPLANE
Your suffering will soon be over.

He pulls out a hypodermic, and waves it in front of her face like a magic wand.

DELAPLANE
Jackson's dead. There's no reason for you to hold back now.

She buries her face in her hands, turning away from the hypo, and he pats her on the back.

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED:

98

DELAPLANE

There, there. I understand. You want to save it for later. Very wise.

He leaves her on the bed and goes into:

99 THE NEXT ROOM

99

He locks the door behind him and joins Gamble, who has a rifle case opened up on the table. Gamble is dressed like Jackson.

DELAPLANE

Take position in five minutes.

Gamble nods, and Delaplane heads out the door.

100 EXT. DELAPLANE'S MANSION - NIGHT

100

Delaplane walks out the front door and into the middle of a massive lawn party. Over a hundred well-dressed GUESTS mill around buffet tables, under multi-colored awnings and hanging strings of lights.

On display nearby is Delaplane's Halley. A couple of CHILDREN are playing on it.

Falk holds court at a table, chatting it up with several SOCIETY LADIES, as armed BODYGUARDS watch discreetly.

Delaplane is all smiles as he passes through the crowd, shaking hands and trading quips right and left.

Nearby, a tuxedoed Cotterman and the stuffy old guy watch Delaplane's act.

COTTERMAN

He seems to have gotten over his wife's death pretty fast.

STUFFY OLD GUY

Peter Delaplane's periods of mourning last about the time it takes to write a check.

At the bar, Mulrooney looks around furtively before reaching for a glass of wine.

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED:

100

Marlin's hand intercepts Mulrooney's, giving him instead a cup of fruit punch.

MULROONEY

Thank you.

Marlin smiles; the kind of smile you see on a mongoose when it sights a snake.

101 THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LAWN

101

An elm tree, its branches rustling in the warm summer wind. A string of lights passes through its branches, and a spiked iron fence runs beneath it. The kind that Vlad the Impaler would have around the house.

We CRANE UP through the branches to reveal Gamble, assembling his sniper rifle.

The last piece in place, he raises the rifle and tests the sight.

Falk comes into focus, a bodyguard at his side.

Gamble waits calmly. He has time.

102 THE FRONT GATE

102

Two GUARDS in dress suits stand at the front of the driveway, waving a car through towards the parking area.

FIRST GUARD

I gotta piss. If someone asks,
tell 'em my mother died.

The second guard nods, and the first guard scampers off toward

103 THE FOUNTAIN

103

The guard reaches the fountain and stands before it, ready to unzip his fly.

FIRST GUARD

Bless the Lord.

He looks at his reflection, only then seeing Jackson looming over him.

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED:

103

JACKSON
You're the wrong size.

He knocks the guard out with a right hook.

104 THE FRONT GATE

104

The second guard watches the driveway, not noticing Jackson appear behind him.

JACKSON
What size are you?

SECOND GUARD
Huh?

He turns, and Jackson flattens him with his fist.

JACKSON
You'll do.

105 THE SAME - A FEW MINUTES LATER

105

Jackson steps out from behind a hedge, now dressed in the second guard's suit, as a car passes through the gate.

Jackson steps in its path, and it stops in front of him. He walks over to the driver's window which is immediately rolled down, revealing Kid Sable and Edd in the front seat.

JACKSON
Where's Junior?

Edd reaches into the back seat and lifts up Albert by the scruff of the neck.

ALBERT
Can I get out now?

Jackson opens the back door and gets in beside him.

JACKSON
Home, James.

They drive toward the parking area.

Cotterman pours himself a drink at the bar and raises it to his lips, looking out over the crowd.

Jackson appears amidst the sea of faces. Cotterman spills his drink in surprise, and looks again. No sign of Jackson.

At a buffet table, Edd fixes himself a light salad.

Jackson makes his way through a throng of people accompanied by Albert, who looks uncomfortable in his white busboy's outfit.

ALBERT

What I don't understand is why you brung me along on this thing in the first place.

JACKSON

You remind me of an old friend.

ALBERT

Then why didn't you bring your old friend along instead of me?

JACKSON

He's dead.

ALBERT

Shit, Jackson, why'd you have to go and tell me that?

Delaplane and Falk stand near a raised platform, as a WOMAN GUEST presents herself to Delaplane.

WOMAN GUEST

Peter, I'm scandalized. There was no one there to help park our car.

DELAPLANE

Forgive me, Catherine. I'll see that something is done about it.

She moves on and Delaplane snaps his fingers, Marlin and Pace appearing instantly at his side.

DELAPLANE

(whispering)

Something happened to the parking guards. Fan out.

(CONTINUED)

They disappear into the crowd, and Delaplane steps up onto the platform, speaking into the standing microphone.

DELAPLANE
Ladies and gentlemen, if I could
have your attention.

The crowd stops milling around, and all heads turn to face him.

DELAPLANE
I'd like to present our birthday
boy... Raymond Falk.

There is a round of APPLAUSE as Falk steps up to the podium, Delaplane remaining at his side.

Jackson stares at the two figures, standing above the crowd. Perfect targets.

He turns and faces the opposite direction. An elm tree, far past the edge of the crowd.

FALK
This is very embarrassing.

The audience LAUGHS. Jackson stares at the tree. Light glints off the sniper scope. Marlin and Pace spot Jackson. Run toward him.

Albert taps Jackson on the shoulder.

ALBERT
We got company.

Jackson turns. Sees the men approach. Pushes Albert toward them.

JACKSON
Run!

Albert dashes toward the men. Jackson dashes toward the tree.

Gamble raises his rifle. Targets on Falk's chest.

Pace and Marlin grab for Albert. He runs between them. Leaping up onto the buffet table.

FALK
It looks like someone's having a
little too much fun.

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED (2):

106

Jackson bolts toward the tree. Dashing amongst a row of lawn umbrellas. He grabs one along the way.

One of Falk's bodyguards makes a grab for Albert. He leaps over the guard's head.

Gamble sights on Falk's heart. His finger gripping the trigger. Jackson hurls the umbrella like a javelin. It knocks the rifle upwards. As the gun fires.

The bullet hits the microphone. Falk recoils. The bodyguards draw their pistols.

Mulrooney steps out from the crowd.

MULROONEY
It's Delaplanel!

All heads turn to him.

MULROONEY
It's Delaplanel! He plan --

Marlin flicks his wrist. A knife hits Mulrooney in the throat.

Marlin dashes into the crowd. The bodyguards turn to shoot. But there are too many people in the way.

Delaplane jumps down from the platform. Joins Pace.

DELAPLANE
Take the chopper to the roof.
I'll meet you there.

They run off in separate directions.

The bodyguards chase after Marlin.

BODYGUARD
Down!

The partygoers hit the dirt.

The elm tree. Jackson runs toward a pole, supporting the string of lights. Gamble struggles to aim the rifle. Jackson kicks the pole. It falls.

The wire snaps. The lights tangle in the cree.

Gamble aims the rifle. The wire end falls into the fountain. The bulbs explode. Showering Gamble with sparks. He loses his balance. Falls.

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED (3): 106

And dies on the iron spikes of the fence.

107 INSIDE THE MANSION 107

Delaplane runs through the front door. He is joined by Cartier. An Uzi held at his side.

DELAPLANE

I'll take care of Sydney. No one is to get through that door.

Cartier nods, and Delaplane runs up the stairs.

108 OUTSIDE THE GARAGE 108

Pace reaches a large, tarp-covered shape. Pulls off the covering. Revealing a helicopter. He opens the door, and Kid Sable appears behind him.

KID SABLE

Going somewhere?

Pace turns. Sable jabs him with a right hook.

109 THE LAWN 109

Marlin bolts through the crowd. People diving for cover around him.

But not Edd.

He looms in Marlin's path. Like a Sherman tank on legs.

Marlin dives for the nearest table. Grabbing a large carving knife.

EDD

Please. Do me the honor.

110 OUTSIDE THE GARAGE 110

Sable punches Pace repeatedly. A right. Another right. Another right.

Pace lunges at his throat. And receives the Sable Surprise. A left hook out of nowhere.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED:

110

Pace falls against the open helicopter. Reaching in.
Pulling out a gun.

He cocks it. And a bullet tears through his chest.

Sable turns. As Cotterman approaches him with a smoking gun.

COTTERMAN

You're Kid Sable, aren't you?

Sable bows modestly, and Cotterman hurries off.

111 THE LAWN

111

Marlin jabs at Edd with the knife. Edd dodges.
Surprisingly light on his feet.

Marlin makes a final lunge. Edd grabs his arm. Yanks it
off his body. And slashes Marlin's throat with the knife.

Jackson runs through the crowd. Cotterman running parallel.
Intercept course.

COTTERMAN

Jackson!

They stop. Stare at each other.

COTTERMAN

Busy night?

Jackson shrugs.

JACKSON

You gonna take me in?

COTTERMAN

Any reason I shouldn't?

JACKSON

A hundred.

COTTERMAN

Any good ones?

In the distance, a window SMASHES. They turn.

Sydney leans out of the bedroom window. SCREAMS.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

SYDNEY
JACKSON!!

Jackson looks at Cotterman.

COTTERMAN
Fuck it.

He tosses him the gun, and Jackson runs off.

Albert zig-zags through the crowd. Which magically begins to part before him.

He stops.

As the Halley barrels toward him. Jackson behind the wheel. This isn't a test drive.

Jackson HONKS. Swears. Invokes many obscure gods. Albert just stares. One young man who doesn't handle fear very well.

Finally, he jumps out of the way. Landing at Sable's feet.

KID SABLE
I hope this teaches you that crime
doesn't pay.

112 INSIDE THE MANSION

112

Cartier stands by the staircase. Holding the Uzi.

He hears a noise from outside. A car engine.

He steps toward the front door. As it explodes.

The Halley tearing over the priceless rugs.

Cartier lifts the Uzi. Fires.

Jackson ducks. Bullets decimating the windshield.

The car smashes into Cartier. Shoving him through the piano.
Into the wall.

Jackson backs up. Shifts gears. Turns toward the staircase.
Floors the gas.

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED:

112

The Halley zooms up the stairs.

JACKSON

Hot.

He bounces over the top. Down the hallway.

JACKSON

Hotter.

The car races down the hall. Barely avoiding the walls. Smashing priceless vases right and left.

JACKSON

Hottest.

113 PATRICE'S BEDROOM

113

Delaplane stands over Sydney. The needle barely pricking her arm.

As a comet tears through the bedroom door.

The door opens. Delaplane fires his gun. Jackson jumps out onto the carpet.

Delaplane dives aside. The car rockets past him. Through the wall.

And out onto the back lawn. Crashing into the ground, fender first.

Jackson gets to his feet. Pistol drawn. But Delaplane's gun is against Sydney's throat.

DELAPLANE

You haven't learned your lesson.

Jackson keeps his gun leveled, but the look in Delaplane's eyes tells him that Sydney has only seconds to live.

JACKSON

Teach me.

He puts his gun on the table. Delaplane smiles. Puts his gun on another table. Shall we dance?

They circle. And fight.

The street fighter against the martial artist. It is quick. And rough. And bloody.

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED:

113

And no one wins.

Delaplane steps back. Half-dead. Looks at his opponent.
Who's half-alive.

They grab for their guns. Another standoff.

Delaplane holds Sydney in front of him. His left hand
holding the hypo at her throat. His right aiming a gun at
Jackson's chest.

They lock eyes. Neither moving. Neither breathing. Time
stands still.

DELAPLANE

You won't.

JACKSON

I will. And you will too.

DELAPLANE

When?

JACKSON

Count of three.

Delaplane smiles.

DELAPLANE

I admire you.

They both steady their aim.

JACKSON

one...

Sydney closes her eyes.

JACKSON

Two...

Both guns fire. A deafening ROAR.

A small red hole appears in Delaplane's forehead. As the
back of his head explodes like a grenade.

His body drops to the carpet, and the shaken Sydney runs to
embrace Jackson.

SYDNEY

How did he miss?

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED (2):

113

JACKSON

He didn't.

He steps back from her. Opens his coat. Revealing the oozing red hole in his chest.

Jackson smiles, laughs.

JACKSON

I didn't think --

He drops to the carpet. She bends over him. As Cotterman enters through the demolished doorway. He puts a hand on her shoulder. Looking down at his fallen friend. Tears streaming down Sydney's face.

FADE TO:

114 INT. A HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

114

Jackson lays in a hospital bed, his chest wrapped in gauze, an IV tube leading out of his arm.

His eyes open, and he looks to the right.

His POV: A blurry mass of color, slowly focusing as a bouquet of flowers.

He looks up at the flower bearer. It is Capt. Armbruster.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER

I can only stay for a moment...
they're not from me... she'll be
back any time now...

JACKSON

(foggy)

She?

Armbruster puts the flowers down uncertainly on the bedside table, and gets up as if to leave.

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER

I'm sure you two have a lot to
talk about. Call me when you
feel up to it, Lieutenant.

He starts to leave, but Jackson's voice stops him.

JACKSON

Lieutenant?

(CONTINUED)

CAPT. ARMBRUSTER
(smiling)
That's right. Lieutenant.

He leaves, and as he reaches the end of the ward, he meets up with a young woman.

Jackson tries to focus on the pair, but they are too far away.

Armbruster leaves the ward, and the young woman walks to Jackson's bed, gradually coming into focus.

Needless to say, it's Sydney.

She pulls the curtain shut around them, and sits on the edge of the bed.

SYDNEY
You know what you're looking at?

Jackson shakes his head.

SYDNEY
A cold turkey.

JACKSON
Glad to hear it. And what are you looking at?

SYDNEY
Let's see.

She steps back and looks under the sheet. He modestly tries to pull the sheet back down, but not before she has had a good look.

SYDNEY
And I said they all look the same. How could you let me get away with that?

She climbs up onto the bed and straddles him, trying not to put too much weight on his bruised body.

JACKSON
I didn't have the time to prove you wrong.

Her face descends onto his, and they kiss.

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED (2):

114.

114

SYDNEY
The time is yours, Jericho.

They kiss again.

JACKSON
Call me Action.

SYDNEY
I always wanted to be action-
packed.

We gracefully exit through the curtains, and leave them to
their own devices.

FADE OUT.

THE END