

FADE IN :

SUPER : **"STILLWATER MINNESOTA, 1983"**

EXT. MCCLUENÍS HOUSE - BACKYARD -- DAY

Behind the tree tops, the sky is vibrant blue. The kind of blue you only see in dreams.

BABY JEANETTE squints as the sunlight hits her delicate face.

FIVE-YEAR-OLD MELINDA MCCLUEN peers into the carriage at her baby sister, shaking her golden curls.

YOUNG MELINDA

Oh, no. Is the sun too bright for your
little eyes? Don't worry, I'll fix it.

She pushes the carriage across the yard, parking it under the shade, at the side of the house.

YOUNG MELINDA (CONT'D)

There. All better.

She tucks the blanket around the happy infant.

EXT. STREET

A CLASSIC, SHINY RED 69 CHEVY PICK-UP, drives up ominously in front of the McCluen house. Slowly, it rolls to a stop.

EXT. MCCLUENÍS HOUSE -- BACKYARD

Melinda drop-kicks a ball. It flies over the neighbor's fence. She hoists herself over the fence to retrieve it.

A MAN'S COWBOY BOOTS creep cautiously down the long driveway.

All alone in the secluded back yard ... is the baby.

The man moves toward her.

MAN (O.S.)

(whispering)

Hello, little baby girl.

HIS FACE is striking. Rugged. Handsome. Trouble. As he picks up the baby--

Her blanket drops gracefully, to the lawn.

YOUNG MAN

(whispering)

Where's your sister? Does she want to come
with us?

The man waits with baby Jet, at the side of the house as Melinda emerges from over the fence.

She bounces the ball, unaware of the man behind her... quietly approaching.

Suddenly, the porch door SWINGS open, alerting the intruder. The man ducks out of sight as CATHERINE MCCLUEN steps out with a tray of refreshments--

CATHERINE

Melinda, would you like some lemonade?

YOUNG MELINDA

Mmm. Yes, please.

But Melinda sees something that startles her--

JET'S BLANKET on the grass, a good two feet from the carriage.

Concerned, she trots over to the carriage.

Jeanette is gone!

Melinda spots the man running down the driveway with her baby sister.

Her face clouds with confusion.

YOUNG MELINDA (CONT'D)

(confused)

Daddy?

The man, JAMES DANIEL MCCLUEN (Jimmy Dee), hesitates, turning toward his oldest daughter.

Their eyes lock.

Catherine GASPS, dropping the tray.

The GLASSES TOPPLE TO THE PORCH AND SHATTER.

Melinda bolts toward her father.

Catherine TEARS down the stairs after her.

CATHERINE
(to herself)
Oh, my God!
(shouting)
James!?

EXT. STREET

Hearing Catherine, Jimmy Dee panics. LEAPS in the truck.

Melinda runs desperately after him, but is left in the dust.

YOUNG MELINDA
(screaming)
Daddy! *Daddy!!*

Catherine catches up to her hysterical daughter, restraining her.

Both are devastated.

INT. TRUCK

IN THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR, Jimmy watches the reflections of his daughter and X-wife, fade away.

The oblivious infant on the seat, giggles, watching trees whip past her, through the window.

EXT. STREET

Melinda's eyes are filled with the shame and anger of abandonment.

MELINDA (VO)
When my father, the man that promised me
he'd take me to the moon and back, ran off
with my baby sister, I thought my heart was
going to implode inside my solar plexis and
swallow my whole body down with it, like a
black hole in the universe. I didn't think
I'd ever see either one of them again.

EXT. SKY

Beyond the trees, a CLOUD BLOTS OUT THE SUNSHINE.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SKY -- DAY

As days and nights pass, clouds glide across the magnificent sky.

MELINDA (V.O.)

I don't know what destiny guided her back
to me on twenty years later on--what would
turn out to be-- the worst day of my life.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- SUNRISE

The MORNING SKY IS DUSTY PINK.

MELINDA (V.O.)

Was it destiny or just plain luck?

In the distance, THE SAME 69 CHEVY PICKUP, now old and beat up,
rambles down the highway.

INT. TRUCK - MOVING

AN UPBEAT ROCK TUNE BLARES on the radio.

A cigarette dangles from JEANETTE "JET" MCCLUEN'S lips, as she
jives to the beat. Now 21, she's a waif-lover's dream, with her
skin-tight, leather hip-huggers, a pout that could sink a ship,
and plenty of hot-blooded attitude, working overtime. But as
she attempts to navigate with a precarious road map, she almost
misses her exit.

JET

Shit!

She SLAMS on the brakes, JERKING the steering wheel to the right.

EXT. HIGHWAY

Tires SCREECH. Two following cars SMACK into each other, as
Jet's truck LURCHES over the shoulder, just making the
ìSTILLWATERî exit.

INT. JET'S TRUCK

JET

(amused)

Oops.

EXT. OFF RAMP

The truck bounces down the road. Her Colorado plate spell, "*OH BABE.*"

EXT. SAM'S DINER - MORNING

The truck is parked out front.

LILLY (O.S.)

So, where are you from, honey? We don't get too many strangers in Stillwater.

JET (O.S.)

Northgate, Colorado. Just passing through.

INT. SAM'S DINER

Jet wolfs down bacon and eggs. LILLY, the gangly waitress, refills her coffee.

JET (CONT'D)

Come to think of it though, I used to know someone who lived around here. You ever hear of a Melinda McCluen?

LILLY

Lyndy McCluen? Are you kidding? Who hasn't?

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

The walls are lined with FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS OF MELINDA growing up ... as a cheerleader ... an actress ... a prom queen, and finally ... a bride.

LILLY (V.O.)

She was only the most popular girl at Stillwater High. Always having her picture in the paper for one thing or another, track records, drama awards-- course, she's Melinda Nelson, now. Can't say I approve of that husband of hers, but to each his own, know what I mean?

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Gliding past the pool table ... the big screen TV ... the plush leather couch ...

JET(V.O.)

Oh, right. Doesn't he own a tire store or something?

LILLY (V.O.)

ìNelson's Tires.î They hitched up real sudden. Thought she was pregnant. False alarm.

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

MELINDA MCCLUEN NELSON, now 26, is cooking breakfast. Beams of sunlight spill through the curtains, softly illuminating her angel hair and ivory complexion, creating a storybook picture of the perfect little housewife. Perfect that is, until she turns.

There's a nasty bruise on her cheek, and her eyes reveal a weariness, older than her years.

LILLY (V.O.)

Course, I really can't help but pity the girl now, what with her momma passing away last year and all.

BACK TO SAM'S DINER"

LILLY (CONTÍD)

If you do get a chance to look her up, you tell her Lilly Hanks says, "hey".

JET

(feigning sincerity)
I sure will, maíam.

Jet looks down and GASPS.

LILLY

What's the matter dumpling'?

JET

Uh ... you know this guy?

Meaning the DEAD COCKROACH, on her fork.

LILLY

Oh, my lands!
(calling out)
Sam! Sam! You better get out here! There's
a bug the size of a Mac Truck in this sweet
little girls eggs!

BIG SAM lumbers out.

JET
Look, don't sweat it. It's extra protein,
right?

SAM
(ripping the bill)
Well, this meal's on us. Real sorry about
that, young lady.

JET
No worries. These things happen.

She heads out.

SAM
Hold on, now!

She stiffens slightly.

Catching up to her, Sam presses a couple of candy bars in her
hand.

SAM (CONT'D)
Take these for the road.

JET
Thanks.

Sam ands Lilly watch her go.

SAM
Not a word of this to anyone, you hear me,
Lilly? We never even saw that girl. I mean,
if a word of this ever leaks out--

LILLY
I already forgot.

EXT. SAM'S DINER

Jet hops in her truck.

SAM (O.S.)
I just don't get it. Biggest darn roach I
ever saw.

LILLY (O.S.)
Might not be a bad idea to have this place
fumigated.

INT. TRUCK

Jet removes a clear plastic vial from her pocket.

It's packed with dead bugs.

She tosses it in the glove compartment, starts her engine, and
drives off.

EXT. LARKSPUR ROAD -- MINUTES LATER

A wealthy neighborhood with large country homes on green acres
of property.

INT. TRUCK

Slowing down in front of a large beautiful home, Jet refers to
a torn phone book page, and checks the address.

The plaque over the door reads, "*The Nelsons*".

JET
(sarcastic)
Oh my, a white picket fence and everything.

INT. NELSON HOUSE - BEDROOM

MARK NELSON lays on the water-bed, dead asleep. He's a athletic,
muscular guy with dark chiseled features.

MELINDA
Mark, you better wake up. It's after eight.

MARK
Damn!

EXT. SIDE STREET

Jet pats her truck, lovingly.

JET

Wish me luck, Babe.

INT. KITCHEN

A teapot simmers on the stove. Melinda leans back on the counter, intently reading the newspaper cover story.

The headline reads, "**LOCAL MARINE RETURNS HOME, BECOMES COP.**"

The photo shows an *intense looking man in a military uniform*.

Melinda GASPS, startled by LOUD KNOCKING at the door.

She crams the paper in the trash can.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Melinda opens the door a crack, and peers through. Jet is all charm and smiles.

JET

I'm here about the ad in the paper.

MELINDA

(guarded)

What ad?

JET

The ìlive-in housekeeper wantedî ad.

MELINDA

You must have the wrong house.

JET

(teasing)

Are you sure, cause, no offense, your house does looks a little untidy and I noticed some weeds over there-- did I mention I do gardening?

MELINDA

No, I didn't place any ad. Thank you.

Jet's dusty boot stops the door.

She shoves an old newspaper clipping under her nose.

JET

This your picture?

Melinda opens the door a bit wider. Studies the news clip, hesitantly.

MELINDA
(suspicious)
Yes. That's me in high school. Why?

Jet takes a deep breath.

JET
I'm Jet.

MELINDA
Excuse me?

JET
Jeanette.

No response.

JET (CONT'D)
Your "sister."

Melinda just stands there, her mouth gapping open.

MELINDA
Uhhh ... how do you know?

JET
Don't worry, I didn't expect you to recognize me. I mean it has been eighteen years since I made headlines. Is this at all, starting to click for you?

MELINDA
(cautious)
I don't know what to say.

JET
Well, since I flew halfway 'cross the country to find you, I think, "come on in and make yourself at home" would do.

Jet raises her eyebrows.

MELINDA
Wait a minute, if this is some kind of a joke--

JET
(produces her ID)
Proof. My birth certificate. Wasn't easy
tracking that down ... not knowing my real
last name and all.

Once convinced, Melinda's mood completely changes. Suddenly,
she explodes with child-like emotion--

MELINDA
Jeanette!?

Throwing her arms around Jet, squeezing her in an air-tight bear
hug.

JET
Okay, now. Let's not over do it.
She peels Melinda arms off.

MELINDA
(gushing)
Oh, wow! I can't *believe* it! Please, ...
come in!

Self consciously, she touches the bruise under her eye.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
I must look awful.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Jet's dirty boots soil the plush carpet as she struts in,
lighting a smoke.

JET
Nice pad. Your hubby must rack in the
bucks.

Melinda obediently fetches an ash tray.

MELINDA
How did you know ... I was married?

JET
Oh, I know all about you, sis. Ole Jimmy
Dee's been keeping a scrapbook.

MELINDA

Jimmy Dee?

JET
James Daniel.

Melinda stares blankly.

Jet wonders if she's daft.

JET (CONT'D)
Your father.

MELINDA
(amazed)
Oh! He does? Where is he?

JET
Tahoe.

MELINDA
That's where you flew in from?

JET
No, Colorado.

Jet puts her cigarette out in a plant. Melinda is beside herself.

MELINDA
Look, I could use a cup of tea. How about
you?

JET
No thanks. Wouldn't mind a cold beer though,
if ya got one handy.

Melinda scurries off.

INT. KITCHEN

MELINDA
Beer? When did you turn twenty-one?

BACK TO LIVING ROOM

JET
When I was twelve.

Instinctively, Jet examines the bottom of a crystal vase, sizing
up it's value.

Melinda returns, neatly placing Jet's beer, on a pretty doily.

MELINDA

Please, sit down. Relax.

Jet starts to sit--

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Anywhere, but that chair! Sorry. That's Mark's football chair and he's a little ... fussy about it.

JET

Well, we sure as hell don't want to upset Mark now, do we?

Jet falls back on the sofa. She notices Melinda's hand trembling, as she sips her tea. The woman's a bundle of nerves.

MELINDA

So, my father ... that sounds funny, "James Daniel" is in Tahoe, but he was in Colorado with you?

Jet sets her beer on the polished table top, missing the doily.

JET

Yup. For a whole eight months. Last week he decides to spring it on me that I have a sister and a mom ... or *had* a mom I should say. I was seriously lethal. I mean the man's been lying to me my whole damn life. So I tell him exactly where he can stick it, he splits for Tahoe with "bimbo of the month," and I decided it's due time for some traveling. I'm headed for Aruba ... you know, in the Caribbean ...?

MELINDA

Aruba. That sounds incredible.

JET

(conning her)

But the airfare's a bit steep, four hundred and twenty bucks-- which ain't a lot if ya got it-- but--

(ever-so-sincerely)

I just spent my last dime on a plane ticket to here, cause I just had to meet you first.

MELINDA

(missing the hint)

You must be exhausted. The farthest I ever traveled was to St. Louis once, for a cheer leading convention.

Jet racks her brain for a response.

JET

Well. That's ... something.

These two have nothing in common.

JET (CONT'D)

Wanna see some photos?

She shows Melinda a recent snapshot of their dad.

His face is still handsome.

JET (CONT'D)

That's your daddy. Mister happy-go-lucky, king-of-the-con-artists, here today, gone tomorrow, Jimmy Dee.

(beat)

And this one's us.

It is a family portrait, with young Melinda holding baby Jet.

Melinda's face is a plethora of emotions.

MELINDA

What made him finally tell you ...?

JET

No doubt, guilt ... I guess. He's got himself an ulcer over it.

Mark interrupts.

MARK

What's with the tea party?

MELINDA

Mark! You're never going to believe who this is! This is, um ...uh ...

JET
The long lost baby sister.

MARK
(short)
Uh, nice to meet you, but you've caught us
at a bad time. It'd be best if you could
stop back by tomorrow.

MELINDA
Mark!

Jet all ready can't stand this guy.

JET
Actually, I don't have anywhere to go. I
was kind of hoping I could crash here, for
say, a day or two.

MELINDA
Of course, you can.

MARK
Lyndy, can I speak to you in private for a
moment.

He drags his wife into the bedroom.

Jet takes a swig of beer.

INT. BEDROOM

MELINDA
How dare you?!

MARK
She's not staying. This is probably the
worst day of the year she could decide to
pop up here.

MELINDA
I can't believe I'm hearing you correctly!

MARK
Damn it, Lyndy! I have situations going on
with my work right now that you don't know
nothing about! And it's making me very
tense and very unsociable. Now, I told you

to wake me up at seven o'clock. What time is it?

MELINDA

But I--

MARK

What time is it?!

MELINDA

But it's Sunday, and--

MARK

Read my lips. What the hell time is it, Lyndy?!

MELINDA

(meekly)

Nine o'clock. But you've been so run down, and since it's Sunday, I was just thinking--

MARK

Who asked you to "think". When I tell you to do something, you do it. Now, I missed Tucker and you've completely screwed things up.

(sighs)

Get your purse. You're gonna have to drive me to the shop. And get rid of the sibling, We'll put her in a hotel.

MELINDA

Mark, she's staying here.

Mark's arm jerks up, in an automatic reflex. Melinda flinches, but holds her ground.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Go ahead. I'm not kicking out my own sister.

MARK

(controlling himself)

All right. One night. Then she goes. Now get your butt in gear, get in that van, and try to make yourself useful for a change.

MELINDA

You know I can't drive that thing.

MARK

Well, maybe next time you'll wake me up on time.

She scurries out. Mark dials the phone.

MARK (CONT'D)

Long lost baby sister. I don't believe this crap.

He cracks his neck.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Jet, listening at the wall, leaps back to the sofa before Melinda enters.

MELINDA

Jeanette, I'm so embarrassed. Mark hasn't been himself, lately. He totaled his car last week, they suspended his license and he's--

JET

Look, I can split if this isn't--

MELINDA

Don't be ridiculous. You're staying, and I don't want to hear another word about it.

INT. BEDROOM

MARK

(into phone)

Rusty. I missed Tucker. Change of plans.

(listens)

No, no, no don't worry. I'm going to take care of you myself. Meet me at the shop in twenty minutes.

INT. LIVING ROOM

MELINDA

(to Jet)

We have a lot of catching up to do. So, don't disappear again.

Mark plows through.

MARK

Let's go!

MELINDA

Promise me, you'll be here when I get back.

JET

(smiles)

What's for lunch?

They go. Jet watches them from the window.

They continue to argue as she attempts to drive, obviously inept with a clutch.

Jet CRANKS UP THE STEREO and jams into the kitchen, returning with another beer. She leaps into Mark's football chair, kicks off her boots, and flicks on the T.V.

EXT. NELSON'S TIRE CENTER -- THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Mark's van is parked backwards by the huge garage/warehouse at the end of a long driveway. Melinda sits up front. As Mark retrieves his carpet knife from the back, he YELLS at her at the top of his lungs.

INT. VAN

MARK

I just wish you'd think about me for a change! I work my rear end off for you and all you do is --

MELINDA

(topping his anger)

Stop it! Just stop it!

Do you think we can at least pretend we like each other for a couple of days ... for my sister's sake!

MARK

(mocking her)

My sister this, my sister that.

(beat)

She's probably home, robbing us.

RUSTY BALDWIN, a sleazy looking guy, drives his station wagon past them and into the front entrance of the garage. Mark trots down to greet him.

Melinda turns on the radio, and lays down across the bench seat. *IT'S MY PARTY, AND I'LL CRY IF I WANT TO* plays.

EXT. ROAD (ABOVE NELSON'S TIRES)

At the top of the driveway, A PATROL CAR CRUISES by.

INT. PATROL CAR

Two officers scope out the action below.

The driver is NATHAN GREER, ***the intense looking guy from the news photo***. He's a stocky, pale man with a reddish mustache, cold blue eyes and constant nasal drip. Fresh out of the military, Greer is a new cop, ready to prove himself. The other cop is BRENT NASH. High on enthusiasm. Low on IQ.

They watch Mark disappear inside the garage. Melinda remains out of sight, so the van looks empty to them.

NASH

This is a wild goose chase, Greer. Nelson doesn't seem the type to deal with Rusty Baldwin. He has a squeaky clean reputation. I mean you went to high school with the guy, come on.

GREER

He's a scum bag.

NASH

His wife sure is fine. I wouldn't mind a little taste of what he's getting every night.

Suddenly, Greer explodes, his rage bordering on psychotic.

GREER

Shut your God damn trap, Nash!!

NASH

(taken aback)

Okay, okay. But ease up on the military shit. You're back home, remember? Where

we're all just donut dunking,
watch-for-jay-walkers kind of cops.

GREER

(into radio mike)

This is Clifford-twenty. We got a possible
640 in progress at Nelson's Tires, 412
Spring Road. Request backups.

DISPATCHER

(from radio)

Ten four, Clifford twenty.

NASH

(skeptical)

You're calling in backups on a hunch?

Greer pushes "PLAY" on his MINI RECORDER.

MARKS VOICE

(from recorder)

Baldwin. I missed Tucker. Change of plans.

RUSTY'S VOICE

(from recorder)

Oh no, don't tell me that. This has got to
come down today or we'll blow 100 grand!

MARK'S VOICE

(from the recorder)

No, no, no, don't worry. I'll take care of
you myself. Meet me at the shop in twenty
minutes.

NASH

(impressed)

You dog.

INT. NELSON'S TIRES

Mark loads TIRES into the back of Rusty's wagon.

EXT. NELSON'S TIRES (BACK ENTRANCE)

Greer's patrol car crawls down the alley and parks. Greer and
Nash slink out, drawing their guns.

NASH

Shouldn't we wait for the back ups?

GREER
Probably.

INT. NELSON'S TIRES (BACK ENTRANCE)

Greer's creepy face appears through the dusty window, scanning the back warehouse. He sniffs.

EXT. NELSON'S TIRES (BACK ENTRANCE)

GREER
(to Nash)
Go inside, keep out of sight, and sit tight.
No matter what happens, wait for my signal
before you make any move.

Nash nods. Crawls through the window. Greer sneaks around front.

EXT. NELSON'S TIRES (FRONT ENTRANCE)

Greer creeps toward the garage. He still doesn't see Melinda, laying down in the front seat of the van.

INT. VAN

Melinda doesn't see him either. She sings softly with the radio.

SINGER ON RADIO
"You would cry too if it happened to you."

INT. NELSONS TIRES (GARAGE/WAREHOUSE)

Nash makes it inside, and hides behind some crates. His gun is drawn. His heart is POUNDING, as he watches--

Mark, SLITTING OPEN A TIRE and pulling out a BAG OF COCAINE.

MARK
You'll get a lot of mileage out of these
re-treads.

Rusty tastes the coke and nods. Removing a wad of money from his boot, he hands it to Mark.

Greer watches from behind a stack of tires. He's about to make a move when--

Mark ducks down to check Rusty's back tire.

MARK (CONT'D)

Hey, man. This one's about to go.

At this angle, Mark is blocked by the car, from Greer.

But he's an open target for Nash.

NASH

(jumping out)

Hold it right there! Hands in the air!

GREER

(under his breath)

Damn.

Mark raises his hands.

But Rusty ducks down inside the car.

MARK

What's the problem, Nash? I'm just selling
a few tires.

NASH

Sure, Nelson. And my grandma is Phyllis
Diller.

INT. WAGON

Rusty reaches into the glove box for his revolver.

INT. NELSON'S TIRES

NASH

Baldwin! Parties over! Get out of the car
or I'll spill your pal's guts.

MARK

All right now, kid. Let's not panic.

(to Rusty)

Rusty?! You hear what he's saying?!

Rusty OPENS FIRE on Nash, PENETRATING his chest with bullets.

Greer FIRES at Rusty, SHATTERING the window.

Rusty returns FIRE at Greer.

The bullets graze his neck, KNOCKING him off balance.

Rusty PEELS OUT, leaving Mark unarmed ... a sitting duck for Greer.

MARK (CONT'D)
(running after Rusty)
Wait! Rusty! What in the fuck are you
doing?!

Melinda races in, just in time--

To watch her unarmed husband, *get shot down by Greer.*

EXT. NELSON'S TIRES

An approaching patrol car SCREECHES to a halt as Rusty's wagon FLIES past him. The patrol car spins a one-eighty, and SPEEDS after the wagon.

INT. NELSON'S TIRES

Melinda kneels down, and cradles Mark's body. She shakes him, unable to accept his death.

MELINDA
Mark! Talk to me! Oh God! Mark!

Greer watches her for a moment before speaking. He's wounded, but mobile.

GREER
Lyndy. What a pleasant surprise.

She tries to make out who's there, but Greer's hidden in the shadows.

GREER (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Remember me? We were in high school
together. But then, you never paid much
attention, did you? You were too busy
cock-teasing the football team to hang with
scum like me.
(he cocks the trigger)
Well, baby. Now, you better pay attention.

MELINDA
(disoriented)
What ... what do you want?

Greer BLASTS a round of ammunition at a tire, RIPPING it apart. Cocaine GUSHES out of the tire.

Melinda can't believe her eyes.

GREER
You mean, you didn't know?
(laughs loudly)
You're in serious trouble "Miss
Most-Likely-To-Succeed."

He yanks her to her feet, seductively stroking her hair with his gun. Overcome with fear and shock, she's incapable of resisting.

GREER (CONT'D)
There, now. Don't worry. I might be
persuaded to let you go. That is, if you're
"nice" to me. What'd ya say? Just for old
time's sake ... Mel Mel?

His use of this old nickname, snaps her to her senses. Her eyes
ice with recognition.

MELINDA
You.

She SHOVES him away and runs out of the warehouse. Greer laughs,
enjoying this.

EXT. NELSON'S TIRES

She THROWS herself inside the van and starts the engine.

Behind her, Greer appears, gun raised.

GREER
(calling out)
Don't make me shoot your beautiful little
brains out.

Unaware that the van is in reverse, Melinda SLAMS down on the
gas.

The van PLOWS backwards into Greer.

GREER (CONT'D)
Ahhh!

INT. VAN

Melinda gasps.

EXT. NELSON'S TIRES

She stumbles out to check his condition. One of his legs is broken. His gun has been knocked from his hand. He reaches for it, but she grabs it first--

Aiming it at his head with trembling hands.

GREER

Now there's a swift move, grabbing the murder weapon.

(laughs)

Better give it up, Lyndy. This could look real bad for you.

SIRENS ARE HEARD, approaching. Panicking, she runs for the van.

GREER (CONT'D)

Go ahead, run. I'll find you Lyndy. And when I get you.

(cold)

I'll get you good.

Melinda DIVES inside, sets the gun on the seat, CRAMS the clutch into drive, and SPEEDS up the driveway.

Greer laughs. The game is on.

EXT. DEAD END STREET

Rusty leans against the patrol car, as a couple of cops cuff him.

RUSTY

I'm telling you, you want the Nelsons. I'm just the runner, here.

EXT. STREET

Cop cars FLY by, their SCREAMING SIRENS turn into ...

INT. NELSON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

THE SCREAMS of a blues singer from the stereo; Jet wails away with her, while slopping mustard on a ham sandwich.

There's a DEAFENING CRASH outside. Jet drops her lunch.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Melinda staggers in, drenched with blood.

JET

Melinda?!

Melinda dials 911.

JET (CONT'D)

Jesus!

MELINDA

(into phone)

There's a wounded cop at Nelson's Tire Center. My husband is dead.

She drops the phone and falls to her knees.

JET

Melinda! Talk to me! What the hell is happening here?

MELINDA

I don't know! I don't know!

As the SIRENS PEAK, Melinda begins to laugh with hysteria.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Oh, my God. They're going to take me to jail!

JET

Please, I need you to try and get a hold of yourself.

MELINDA

I can't ...

JET

Then damn it, talk to me!

Melinda's laughter is frightening.

JET (CONT'D)

Hey!

Jet slaps her.

Melinda becomes deadly sober. Her eyes glaze over. Her voice drops an octave.

MELINDA
(barely)
I'm sorry, Jet. I'm so sorry.

Jet makes a snap decision.

JET
Come on!

In a flash, they're out the back door.

EXT. BACK YARD

The SIRENS GROW LOUDER. Jet and Melinda sprint for the back wall. Jet hoists her sister up it.

JET
Hurry! Hurry!

EXT. NELSON'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY

Twenty patrol cars SCREECH to a halt. Cops draw their guns, investigating the van ... retrieving Melinda's purse ... and *the gun*.

Cops run for the front door and around back.

EXT. BACKYARD WALL

Jet disappears over the wall, just as the cops appear.

They run to the back door and KICK IT DOWN.

EXT. REAR NEIGHBORS HOUSE

The girls TEAR down the side of the house. The neighbor's dogs go berserk.

JET
Go, go, go, go!

EXT. STREET

They make it to Jet's truck. Jet shoves Melinda inside.

INT. JET'S TRUCK

JET
(climbing in)
Stay down!

She starts the ignition.

MELINDA
You're *stealing* this truck?

JET
No, no, it's mine.

MELINDA
I thought you said you flew here.

JET
I lied.

EXT. STREET

Jet pulls away and calmly drives down the street. More cop cars
SPEED past them.

EXT. NELSON HOUSE

A police helicopter flies overhead.

The neighbors watch the excitement. SERGEANT HOUSTON gets out
of his car. He's a rugged man in his late forties. A solid,
honest cop with an impeccable track record.

HOUSTON
Any luck?

OFFICER
The house is empty, but she left a weapon
in the van with her purse. All her credit
cards and bank accounts were in her
husbands name. She won't get far.

HOUSTON
Famous last words.

INT. TRUCK

Jet speeds down the road. Melinda is ducked down on the floor.

MELINDA
Where are you going?!

JET

Far away, as far away as we can get.

MELINDA

No! This is crazy! We have to go back!

JET

Think so?! You know what they do to girls like you in the slammer?

MELINDA

Turn around!

JET

Don't do this to me! I don't know what all happened back there, but I know enough that if we go back now, we both go to jail!

MELINDA

What are we going to do?!

JET

I don't know!

MELINDA

Where in the hell are you going?!!

JET

I said I don't know!

IN SLOW MOTION the tires SCREECH as Jet almost sideswipes a bus, before turning onto the highway--

EXT. HIGHWAY ON RAMP

They makes it out on the highway, just in time.

Behind them, a road block team, sets up.

INT. TRUCK

After a moment, Jet breathes a sigh of relief.

JET

You can sit up now.

She does.

Jet's lights a cigarette. Notices the blood on Melinda's blouse.

JET (CONT'D)

There's some clothes in that knapsack.
Better change outta that top.

Like a child obeying orders, Melinda finds a tee-shirt and changes into it. Not exactly her style, it reads, "BITE ME"

MELINDA

I shouldn't have left Mark there. I just left him there.

JET

What happened to him?

MELINDA

Nathan Greer, one of the cops, just shot him.
Mark didn't even have a gun.

She starts to break down again. Jet offers her a flask.

JET

Here. Take a swig of this.

Melinda takes a swig and chokes.

The GAS GAUGE reads near EMPTY.

JET (CONT'D)

How much cash do you got on you?

MELINDA

What? Nothing. You?

The glint of Melinda's DIAMOND RING catches Jet's eye.

JET

Don't worry, I'll figure something out.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The truck speeds down the highway.

EXT. NELSON HOUSE -- TWENTY MINUTES LATER

A television reporter interview's Houston.

REPORTER

Sergeant Houston, was the surviving officer able to disclose any information

about this morning's shoot out at Nelson's Tire Center?

HOUSTON

According to Officer Greer, after he was badly wounded, Melinda Nelson disarmed him and shot her own husband. When she fled for the get-away vehicle he tried to stop her. And she tried to run him over.

REPORTER

Do you have any leads to her whereabouts?

HOUSTON

Not yet. But we're on it.

INT. PICK UP - MOVING -- LATER

The gas gauge reads FULL. Jet drives, eating chips from a bag of groceries.

Melinda is very tipsy. Her wedding ring is gone.

MELINDA

That ring was worth a lot more than a hundred dollars.

JET

We didn't exactly have time to shop around.

Melinda takes another sip from the flask.

MELINDA

We were never in love. I thought I was pregnant, so Mark did the proper thing.

(laughs bitterly)

But somebody had messed up the test. And then, he finds out that I'm ... broken inside. He never forgave me for that. I guess he never really wanted a wife. Just a baby making machine.

She laughs sadly and takes another swig. Jet tries to take the flask.

JET

Hey, Bogart? Think you've had enough?

MELINDA

Then he changed. And got mean. But I just said to myself, oh well Melinda, at least he's a hard working man, making an honest living. I guess that makes me pretty darn stupid. But, hey. What can you do? He's gone now. He's gone. Just like mom. Everything "poof" gone.

She drops the empty flask out the window.

It's gone too.

Jet grasps for the right words.

JET

You know, Lyndy, life isn't always about ... what you've got, right?

Melinda doesn't respond.

JET (CONT'D)

Sometimes it's about ... what you do. Think of it like this. Right now, we can do just about whatever we want. We sure can go wherever we want. We made a damn good clean get away. Hell, a lot of people would envy our position. We've got a full tank of gas, a bag full of the "Stop and Go's" finest junk food, and this empty road just sitting there ... waiting for us.

EXT. HIGHWAY

A DRAMATIC BALLAD SWELLS as the truck drives off into the magnificent magenta sunset.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

Houston sits at Greer's bedside. Greer's chest is bandaged and his foot is in a full cast.

HOUSTON

Looks like you'll be just fine in a week or two. Until then you're on leave with pay.

GREER

I'll be back in the saddle tomorrow. This is my case. I want to go after her.

HOUSTON

Greer, believe me, I appreciate your enthusiasm, but you got a busted foot and a couple of fractured ribs.

GREER

I can get around.

HOUSTON

Forget it, Greer.

GREER

You can't take me off of this. My partners dead.

HOUSTON

That's exactly why I don't want you on it.

GREER

That's bullshit and you know it!

HOUSTON

Look, I know how you feel, Nathan. You just got back into town and you want to be the hero. But you're going to be out of commission for at least a week. And with a little luck, we'll have found her by then. I hear the fishing at Minnetonka is pretty good this time of year. Why don't you go catch yourself a big one.

He leaves. Greer pulls a piece of paper from his wallet and stares at it intensely.

It's an old torn out, YEAR-BOOK PAGE with MELINDA'S PHOTO. Feminine handwriting is scrawled next to the photo: *"Dear Nathan, Sorry I never really got to know you. Best wishes-- Melinda McCluen"*

GREER

I'll catch myself a big one, all right.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- NIGHT

Jet's truck passes a sign which reads, *"NOW ENTERING WYOMING"*

INT. TRUCK - MOVING

Sober again, Melinda stares blankly out the window. She hasn't spoken for hours.

JET

You're going to dig this place.

(beat)

Jackson Lake. We used to cut classes And hang out here when I was 13.

They turn onto a dirt road. The sign reads, "*JACKSON LAKE - NO CAMPING.*"

JET (CONT'D)

We lived here almost a year. A record for us. Jimmy Dee and I never stayed anywhere long. We were always running away from one situation or another. See, Jimmy Dee's a "scammer", you know, a con man.

EXT. JACKSON LAKE -- LATER THAT NIGHT

The girls have set up camp. Melinda sits as if in a trance, starrng at the moon's reflection on the water. Jet sits by the campfire, smoking, and babbling on, trying to break her sister's long silence.

JET

... and then he made some dough boxing, till he got back problems. That's when he took up counting cards, hustling pool, and liar's dice. Somehow, we always managed to make a buck. But then he got lazy and started hitting the bottle. Now, he's a big mooch, charming old broads into supporting him. The ones that are too dumb to notice or too bored to care. He's left himself a trail of broken hearts all the way to Shanghai and back again.

Jet stands, stretching her legs. Flicking out her cigarette, she looks out at the lake.

JET (CONT'D)

(after a beat)

Know what old Jimmy Dee told me, right 'fore I split? That he hated himself for cheating

on our mother. Claimed she was the only
women he ever loved.

Finally Melinda speaks.

MELINDA

She never gave up on you, Jet. She always
said you'd come back some day.

JET

Yeah, well, they call me the "Comeback
Kid." But thanks to dear old dad, the big
screw up, it was too late.

MELINDA

Not for me, it wasn't.

She crawls under the blankets.

Jet stares out at the lake.

The only sound heard is the crickets ... until Melinda begins
to cry.

JET

You okay?

MELINDA

I don't know, Jet. I mean, seriously, what
are we going to do?

JET

We just have to ... you know, take it as it
comes.

Silence again for a moment.

MELINDA

You know what?

JET

What?

MELINDA

If Mark were alive right now, I'd kill him.

Melinda's sobs are heartbreaking.

Jet isn't good at this. She pats her sister on the head like a child patting a dog.

INT. HOSPITAL -- THE NEXT MORNING

A NURSE walks down the hallway with a tray of breakfast.

INT. HOSPITAL -- GREER'S ROOM

The nurse enters.

NURSE
Breakfast time.

The bed is empty.

NURSE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Mr. Greer? Mr. Greer?

EXT. JACKSON LAKE -- MORNING

Sun rays pierce the pine trees casting jagged shadows across the empty campsite.

The sound of FOOTSTEPS and HEAVY MASCULINE BREATHING are heard as someone approaches ... observing ... the remains of last night's campfire ... the license plate on the truck ... and continues, toward the lake.

The man's pudgy fingers push an aspen branch aside as he watches--

Melinda and Jet skinny dipping in the lake.

JET
... so I'm left alone with the skanky old sailor with bad breath, on the back of this carriage in New Orleans!

MELINDA
How could he just leave you like that?

JET
Jimmy Dee? You obviously don't remember how considerate he is.

MELINDA
All I remember is the smell of his cigars ... and him telling me I had some kind of

animals in my eyes ... lions, I think.
No ... panthers? Darn it, what was it?

MANS VOICE (O.S.)

All right, ladies! Please step out of the
water!

Alarmed, the girls duck down in the water.

RANGER ROGER, a paunchy, middle-aged man, stands on the shore.
With his head turned politely away, he holds two towels out for
the girls. Not your usual mountain man, Roger's about as tough
as a marshmallow.

JET

Who are you?

RANGER ROGER

I'm the forest ranger for this area. I need
for you both to get out of the lake.

They do. He turns his head away until they've wrapped their
towels around themselves.

JET

(innocently)

What seems to be the problem, sir?

RANGER ROGER

Is that your campfire twenty yards up?

They nod yes.

RANGER ROGER (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

There's no camping permitted in this area.
I'm afraid I'm going to have to write you
up a ticket. You girls have
identification?

JET

Not on us.

They giggle. Ranger Roger is a bit flustered.

MELINDA

It's back in the truck, Officer ...?

RANGER ROGER

Dunfree. Roger Dunfree. All right. Let's go.

EXT. CAMPSITE -- MOMENTS LATER

Roger copies their license plate number on the citation.

JET
Do you mind if we get dressed, sir?

RANGER ROGER
(bumbling)
Oh, no. Of course. Go ahead.

He turns his back. The girls hold up a towel for each other, and dress behind it.

As honorable as he is, Roger can't help but sneak a peak. Jet, sliding into her cutoffs, flashes him a smile-- he averts his eyes.

JET
We're real sorry about this, Ranger Roger. Cynthia and I were so exhausted by the time we got in, that we just set up the first chance we got.
(whispers, to Melinda)
Help me.

MELINDA
We would've been more than happy to pay for a campsite, but we were kind of lost. Mary Beth, here, isn't very good with maps.

JET
You can turn around now. We're decent.

He turns and loses his train of thought. Melinda stands, smiling, in her wet clinging tee-shirt, and Jet is bent over pulling on her boots. For a man who hasn't seen another human in months, this is kind of hard to take. He wipes the perspiration from his brow.

RANGER ROGER
(softening)
Yes. Well those maps can be confusing. So, did you sleep all night? No bear problems?

MELINDA

There's bears in this area?!!

RANGER ROGER

Of course. See them all the time.

MELINDA

Aren't you afraid of them?

RANGER ROGER

Oh, heavens no. Just bang some tin cans together and it scares 'em right off. So does a high pitched frequency, like a whistle. But if you ever see a bear with a red tag in his ear, you don't want to mess with him. That means they've already caused trouble.

JET

What kind of trouble?

RANGER ROGER

Oh, they can be real nasty if they want to be. They've been known to rip right through a car if they smell food inside.

MELINDA

You must be pretty brave to have a job like yours.

RANGER ROGER

(sheepish)

Uh, well. You get used to it.

JET

(whispers, to Lyndy)

Don't ya think you're pouring it on a little thick?

MELINDA

(whispers)

Pouring what on?

RANGER ROGER

I'll tell you what. It gets a bit lonely out here in the boonies. So, I'll rip this ticket up, on one condition; if you girls come back to my cabin and let me, you know ...

Melinda's eyes widen. Jet gulps.

RANGER ROGER (CONT'D)
... cook you breakfast.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S DINER -- DAY

Bacon and eggs SIZZLE on the grill.

Lilly serves Greer his breakfast. His foot is in a cast. His crutches lean on the counter.

LILLY
Oh, it's a crying shame. A crying shame what happened. I still can't believe it about Lyndy. Course, I always knew that Mark was no good. Why, just yesterday I said that to this young gal who was asking 'bout them. Yep, a real bad seed, that man was. It was his jaw that gave him away. The way it just set there--

GREER
Whoa, hold on Lilly. Back it up. Someone was asking about them?

LILLY
Yeah-- uh, no. I mean ...

GREER
Lilly?!

LILLY
Well, shoot. I promised Sam I wouldn't mention that gal, cute little thing that she was, cuz a the dead bug. Said she was an old friend of Lindy McCleunís.

GREER
What was she driving?

He takes notes.

LILLY
A red truck. Didn't catch the license plate, but she said she was from somewhere in Colorado. Northgate.

GREER

Did you report any of this to the police?

LILLY

(looking for Sam)

Well, no. I suppose maybe I should have,
but she said she was taking right off, so
I didn't see how--

GREER

Listen, Lilly. We'll keep this our secret,
but I need a favor. I have this artist
friend that could sketch her if you
remember what she looks like.

LILLY

Oh, I never forget a face.

INT. POLICE STATION -- MORNING

Houston holds up a photo of Melinda.

HOUSTON

See this face. I'm going to make it famous.
I want this face on every news station, on
every post office wall, and on every
magazine cover that wants to do a story.
Once the public gets a load of this pretty
little mug, she'll have no where to run. No
where to hide. We're gonna smoke her out!

INT. GREER'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Lilly guides the artist as he sketches a face that is starting
to look a lot ... like Jet. Greer watches nearby.

INT. ROGER'S CABIN - DAY

The girls sit near the fire place, finishing their pancakes. The
TV plays in the background.

RANGER ROGER

Well, you girls kept your end of the bargain,
so I'll keep mine.

He crumples up the ticket, tossing it into the fire.

He clears their plates, feeding a scrap of bacon to his Persian
cat.

RANGER ROGER (CONT'D)
There you go, Prisilla.

A newscast plays ON THE TV.

NEWSCASTER
(from the TV)
And the search continues for Melinda Nelson,
the ex-homecoming queen turned drug
dealer.

Both Melinda and Jet's eyes widen.

But Roger is absorbed with his cat.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)
The girl who vanished without a trace
yesterday, after one local police officer
was killed along with the suspect's husband,
Mark Nelson, at the scene of a surprise drug
raid in Stillwater, Minnesota.

ON THE TV: *A photograph of Melinda fills the screen.*

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)
(from the TV)
Melinda Nelson is twenty-four years old,
with long blonde hair and--

Jet suddenly hollers.

JET
Look!! Oh wow! Did you see that?

RANGER ROGER
What? See what?!

JET
A bear I think! With a red tag!

Roger lumbers outside. The girls follow.

EXT. ROGER'S CABIN

As Roger takes a quick look around, the girls huddle up.

MELINDA
I can't believe this! This is insane!

JET

We gotta get outta here.

Catching his breath, Roger makes his way back.

RANGER ROGER

Looks like who ever you saw, went on his merry way.

JET

Thank God. Well, I guess we should be on our merry way ourselves.

RANGER ROGER

So soon? I was going to show you my butterfly collection. I know it may sound silly to young girls like you, but I have some butterflies as rare as they come.

JET

Well, your a pretty rare man yourself, Ranger Roger.

MELINDA

But we're trying to keep on schedule.

RANGER ROGER

Well, maybe some other time. You're always welcome.

They give him a peck on the cheek and head for the truck. He blushes.

RANGER ROGER (CONT'D)

(to his cat)

Now, those are nice honest girls.

(to girls)

Bye, Mary Beth! Bye, Cynthia!

Dust rises as the truck bounces down the road.

INT. TRUCK

MELINDA

That's it! It's over! Anywhere we go people are going to recognize me!

JET

Not when I'm through with you, they won't.

EXT. TRADING POST -- LATER

Outside the building several Indians mill around. There is a sign that reads. *"We Pay Cash For Your Hair"*.

INT. TRADING POST

Jet browses around, looking at wigs made from Indian hair.

MELINDA (O.S.)
So, what do you think?

Melinda's long pale hair has been dyed red, and waved. She wears dark shades ... and looks completely different.

The Indian hairdresser stands nearby, smiling.

JET
(impressed)
Swank. I told you Shoshaunna would hook us up.

Melinda smiles in spite of herself.

EXT. TRADING POST -- MOMENTS LATER

The girls climb in the truck. Jet leans out and waves to Shoshaunna.

SHOSHAUNNA
Bye. Good luck!

JET
Now, remember. What do you say if anybody asks about us?

SHOSHAUNNA
(playing dumb)
Sorry, no English.

INT. TRUCK -- MOMENTS LATER

The girls pass a sign reading, *"YOU ARE NOW ENTERING UTAH"* LOUD MUSIC BLARES on the radio.

Melinda turns it down.

MELINDA
How much money do we have left?

Jet counts her money, cigarette dangling from her lips.

JET

Umm, let's see. Enough to pour into Babe
and get us to Salt Lake City.

Jet turns up the radio.

Melinda turns it down again.

MELINDA

Utah? And then what?

Melinda yanks the cigarette out of Jet's mouth. Tosses it out
the window.

JET

Would you relax, already. According to
that news bulletin, they don't have a clue.

INT. AIRPLANE -- DAY

Greer sits alone, ruffling through the contents of his briefcase.
He opens a file and leafs through it, studying ... a copy of
Melinda's phone bill, with various numbers circled ... old
newspaper clippings with headlines reading, "*McCluen Mother
Wins Custody Battle*" and "*Ex Husband Kidnaps Baby*" with a picture
of James McCluen and Baby Jeanette, and finally ... the
composite drawing of Jet.

INT. TRUCK -- DUSK

Melinda is asleep. Taking a drag on her cigarette, Jet eyes the
"empty" gas gauge. She pulls into the parking lot of a dinner
house.

MELINDA

(waking)

Where are we? Oh, my neck is stiff.

JET

Salt Lake City. Hungry?

MELINDA

(coughing from the smoke)

I'm freezing. What's wrong with your
heater?

Jet tosses Melinda a sweater.

JET

Just shut up and put this on.

MELINDA

It's too tight. I wish I had my parka.

Jet is sick of Melinda's whining.

EXT. DINNER HOUSE

They climb out of the truck.

MELINDA

What are you doing, anyway? We can't afford to eat here.

JET

Don't worry. I've got it covered.

INT. DINNER HOUSE -- THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Jet wolfs down her spaghetti while Melinda picks at her food.

WAITER

More coffee?

JET

Please. And a piece of that chocolate pie.

She dunks her roll in her coffee, takes a bite, talking with her mouth full.

JET (CONT'D)

(to Melinda)

You barely touched your clams.

MELINDA

They're cold and greasy and disgusting.

JET

I'll eat 'em.

Jet dunks one in her spaghetti sauce.

MELINDA

I'll be right back.

She heads for the rest room.

The waiter returns with the pie.

JET

Thanks.

Jet takes a big bite.

INT. REST ROOM

Melinda washes her hands, starring at her reflection in the mirror. She barely recognizes herself.

BACK TO DINNER HOUSE

Jet removes a SMALL CHIP OF GLASS from her purse. She looks around, then carefully pushes it into the pie.

Melinda returns to the table.

MELINDA

Listen, I've been thinking. We can't go on like this. I should go back alone, and face the consequences. It was wrong to drag you into this.

JET

Well, that's real sweet of you, but no one *drags me* anywhere. *I do what I want to do.*

UNDER THE TABLE, Jet fingers with A TINY CAPSULE. She pushes it in her mouth, hiding it with her napkin. Melinda watches her intently.

JET (CONT'D)

What are you starring at?

MELINDA

Your eyes. Just then, they looked exactly like moms. She used to get this mischievous look when she was up to something.

JET

(taking a bite)

Is that right? Mmmm, great pie.

Suddenly, she drops her fork and clutches her mouth in pain.

MELINDA

What's the matter?

JET

Ouch.

Jet dabs at the blood on her lip, with the napkin.

MELINDA

What happened!

JET

Glass.

WAITER

Is everything all right here?

MELINDA

It most certainly isn't. My sister just cut her lip.

(she sees the glass)

There's *glass* in her pie!

JET

It's okay, really. Let's not make a scene.

MELINDA

I'd like to speak to the manager of this establishment, immediately!

The waiter scurries off.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

You poor thing.

CUSTOMER

What happened?

MELINDA

There was glass in her dessert!

CUSTOMER

Oh, that's awful!

The MANAGER rushes to their table.

MANAGER

Maíam? Should I call a doctor?

JET

Nah, I just want to split. Can we get the check?

MANAGER

It's been taken care of. And I'd like to make it up to you. Here are free dinner coupons for your next visit.

MELINDA

Well, that won't help because we're from out of town. I have to tell you sir, I am extremely disappointed with this establishment.

JET

Do you have your lawyer's number on you, Cynthia?

MANAGER

(hush-hushed)

No, no, no, wait. How does fifty dollars sound?

The girls exchange looks.

MELINDA

A hundred sounds a lot better.

EXT. DINNER HOUSE -- NIGHT

The girls climb in the truck, and pull out.

MELINDA

Maybe we should get you to a doctor.

INT. TRUCK - MOVING

JET

I don't think so. These things are perfectly harmless.

She shows Jet the vial of "BLOOD CAPSULES" and spits hers out.

MELINDA

Jeanette McCluen, what did you just do?

JET

You're the one that caused the scene. You were awesome, by the way.

She pulls into a gas station.

MELINDA

I'm sorry, but this isn't funny!

JET

(counting money)

Neither is charging eight bucks for spaghetti. Wait a second, there's only ninety two bucks here!

MELINDA

I tipped the waiter.

JET

You tipped him *eight dollars*? !

EXT. GAS STATION

Jet climbs out to gas up. Melinda follows.

MELINDA

Listen to me, Jet. I've put up with the cigarettes, I've put up with the loud music, but I won't put up with dishonesty!

JET

That's a pretty funny coming from someone whose picture is probably hanging in the local post office. Hold this.

Jet leaves Melinda to pump gas, as she checks the oil.

MELINDA

Are you insinuating that I'm guilty? Do you think I was involved in drug dealing? Or shooting people? Because if you do, then maybe you should just go on with out me!

JET

I believe you're not a drug dealer. As a matter of fact, I'd believe you if you told me you never J-walked. What I can't believe, is this babe-in-the-woods routine. We are on the run now, you and me, and you have *got* to learn to roll with the punches. This is basic survival here. You're stuck with it, girl. This is it.

She SLAMS the hood. Melinda looks hurt.

JET (CONT'D)

(softening)

Look, Lyndy. We were running past empty and we spent our last dime in Ogden. Face it. Sometimes ya just gotta get what you need. And right now, we need enough cash to get us out of the country. Then we can go straight, we can be fucking saints if you want.

Neither girl speaks for a moment.

MELINDA

Okay. Okay, you win. But after we're out of this mess and we don't need it anymore, we are paying everyone back!

JET

Fine! Whatever!

The girls just sit there a moment. Suddenly, Melinda smiles, mimicking Jet.

MELINDA

îWe should call our attorney, Cynthia...?î

JET

What about you?

(mimicking Lyndy)

"A hundred sounds better."

Jet takes off to get her change.

JET (CONT'D)

Talk about pushing your luck!

MELINDA

(calling, to Jet)

Well! We got it didn't we!

Melinda falls back into the truck, exhausted.

EXT. THE MOONSHINE -- LATE AFTERNOON

The rustic tavern is tucked away on the hillside. The sign reads "*Northgate's Finest Ale*"

INT. THE MOONSHINE - EVENING

Customers drink, shoot pool, and play various bar games.

Greer shows the manager, RJ, the composite drawing of Jet.

RJ

Yeah, she used to come in here. Seven card stud was her game. They called her the "Comeback Kid" 'cause she could be down to her last damn nickle, and somehow she'd turn it 'round and make bank.

Greer shows him Jimmy Dee's picture.

GREER

How about this guy?

RJ

Baker. The girl's father. The two of them could clean the place out.

GREER

Do you know where I could find them?

RJ

Can't help you there, bud. They just disappeared. Used to live up on Buckwillow. Old Mickey rented to them, you might ask him.

EXT. SHABBY HOUSE -- EARLY EVENING

The place is small, overgrown with weeds, and desperately in need of paint. The sign out front says "*For Rent*".

INT. SHABBY HOUSE

Greer talks to the owner, OLD MICKEY, who takes measurements of a boarded-up window.

OLD MICKEY

I have no idea where they went. And I'm out two months rent. Plus they trashed the place.

GREER

They paid you in cash?

OLD MICKEY

When I got rent, it was usually paid by a check from a "Coleen Montgomery." She owns "Coleen's Delights" in Hilldale. I think Mr. Baker had a thing going with her.

INT. SALT LAKE MOTEL -- NIGHT

The wind ROARS outside.

Melinda sleeps peacefully.

Jet paces by the open window, smoking.

A commercial on the TV, catches her attention.

T.V. ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
So come join us in the Caribbean, where the
skies are always blue.

ON THE TV: *HAPPY FAMILIES, VACATION IN THE CARIBBEANÍS.*

EXT. SMALL TOWN GIFT SHOP -- DAY

Jet slinks slyly out of the gift shop with a small purchase and sits near Melinda. She removes a BIRTHDAY CARD, a PINK ENVELOPE, and a PURPLE PEN.

Jet writes the words "sorry" in the card, sealing it inside the pink envelope. With the purple pen she writes "MOM" on the envelope, and draws a heart around it.

MELINDA
You sure this'll work?

JET
Like taking candy from a baby.

A young sales clerk, TYLER, strolls into the gift store.

JET (CONT'D)
This must be the relief.

INT. GIFT SHOP

Tyler scoots in behind the SALES MANAGER at the register.

SALES MANAGER
See you, in a bit.

The sales manager walks out, waving to Jet who smiles.

EXT. GIFT SHOP

JET

Okay, he's gone. Now, don't forget. Your cue is, "*you remind me of my old boyfriend, Skip*".

Jet slips the pink envelope under her shirt.

INT. GIFT SHOP

Jet casually selects an identical birthday day card with the same PINK ENVELOPE.

At the register, she eyes the display of PURPLE PENS, and puts on her finest helpless-female facade.

JET

Would you mind terribly if I borrow one of these pens?

TYLER

Go right ahead.

Melinda enters, browsing around.

As Tyler watches her, Jet writes, "*MOM*" on the front of the card and circles it with a heart (identical to the one on the hidden envelope).

JET

Do you have any gift ideas for a great mom? My budget is sixty dollars.

TYLER

How about one of these perfumes?

Jet sprays some on her neck. And leans over to him.

JET

Hmmm. What do you think?

TYLER

(sniffing her neck)
I think it smells good on you.

JET

I don't know. I just can't make up my mind about anything, today. You know us Libra's.

(giggles)

Maybe I should just send her cash. Then she can decide. You think?

TYLER

Sounds good to me.

She smiles and takes out a wad of ones.

JET

Shoot. You wouldn't by any chance, happen to have three twenties would you?

TYLER

I'll check.

(he does)

Today must be your lucky day.

He gives her three twenties in exchange for the ones, and starts counting them.

Jet slips the TWENTIES inside the PINK ENVELOPE, and SEALS IT.

JET

Can I ask you something? What sign are you?

TYLER

Capricorn.

JET

I knew it! Know why?

(giving the cue)

Because ... *you remind me of my old boyfriend, Skip.*

Melinda SQUEALS as she accidentally-on-purpose, knocks over a huge display of stuffed animals.

MELINDA

Ahhhh!

As Tyler turns to Melinda--

Jet quickly SWITCHES THE ENVELOPES, hiding the CASH ENVELOPE (with the twenties) under her shirt and presenting the DUMMY ENVELOPE (filled with paper).

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Sorry.

TYLER

No problem.

He goes back to counting Jet's ones.

TYLER (CONT'D)

There's only thirty ìonesî here.

He hands them back to her.

JET

(counting)

That can't be-- oh, that *is* right. I forgot how much I spent. Shoot. Can you do me an iddy biddy favor and hang on to this, while I run to the ATM?

She pushes the SEALED "DUMMY" ENVELOPE toward him, (with the paper inside).

JET (CONT'D)

It's right across the street.

TYLER

(flirting)

Oh, I think I can handle that.

She puts the ìonesî back in her pocket.

JET

Oh, thank you. You're saving my life.

TYLER

You hurry back, now.

He watches her ass as she goes.

Pleased with himself, he checks his hair in the mirror.

EXT. GIFT SHOP

Jet BARRELS around the corner and SMACKS right into someone.

The envelope falls to the ground.

It's the sales manager! Jet freezes as he reaches for the envelope. But someone else beats him to it--

Melinda.

MELINDA

Mary Beth?! Mom's right there. You almost blew the surprise.

Shoving the envelope in her purse, she whisks Jet away. The sales manager shrugs.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK -- MOVING

Jet pulls out of the parking lot. Melinda rips open the envelope and takes out the twenties.

JET

You're a natural. I can't believe it. What a team.

MELINDA

We almost got caught! I'm still shaking.

Melinda opens a notebook and starts writing in it.

JET

Nah, he was clue-less. What's that?

MELINDA

Our book of debts. I'm keeping track of everyone we "borrow" from. Remember, once we don't need it, pay back time.

JET

You swiped that!

MELINDA

(defensive)

It's on my list. See. *"The Gift Horse; Sixty dollars, plus two-dollar note book."*

INT. COLLEEN'S DELIGHTS -- AFTERNOON

Greer sits at an elegant table, enjoying chocolate mousse. COLLEEN, a plump, bohemian woman, wearing lots of bangled jewelry, swishes toward Greer.

COLLEEN

You wanted to see me?

Sniffing, Greer wipes his nose with the back of his hand.

GREER

Colleen?

COLLEEN

The one and only.

GREER

I'm trying to find James Baker.

COLLEEN

Oh really? What'd he do now?

GREER

I have reason to believe--

COLLEEN

Never mind. I don't want to know.

GREER

Any idea where he is?

COLLEEN

Not exactly. But if I wanted to find him, I'd look up that tramp singer he ran off with.

GREER

And who might that be?

COLLEEN

She goes by "Rosie Galore" and I think she's performs in Tahoe somewhere. That's all I know.

GREER

Thank you. You've been a great help.

She starts to go, then hesitates.

COLLEEN

Mister? If you find him, tell him Coleen says, ihello.î

She exits. Greer crunches up the pink paper place mat and blows his nose into it.

INT. WESTERN SALOON -- NIGHT

Four or five people are line dancing on the floor. Melinda follow along, but keeps messing up.

Across the room, an ASIAN MAN, IN AN EXPENSIVE WHITE COWBOY OUTFIT, watches her. He puffs on a fat cigar.

Nearby, Jet plays "liar's dice" with a TRUCKER, a CHUBBY COWBOY, and an OLD MAN. They've each wagered twenty dollars.

At the game, the bluffing begins.

TRUCKER

Fours.

CHUBBY COWBOY

Fives.

OLD MAN

Two sixes.

JET

Three sixes.

TRUCKER

Let's see 'em.

The men lift their cups, revealing their dice. Only one "six" between them.

The Trucker grins.

TRUCKER (CONT'D)

(to Jet)

You better have two.

JET

(lifting her cup)

Well, what do you know.

She has them.

The trucker throws in his money. He's out of the game.

ON THE DANCE FLOOR, Melinda is getting the hang of the dancing.

The man in white, tips his hat to her.

AT THE TABLE, the players go another round. The old man reveals his dice. It's no good.

OLD MAN

Dang it.

He's out. He slides his ten dollars into the pot.

CHUBBY COWBOY

It's down to you and me, honey.

They each have one die left. They shake their cups, SLAM them down, and peek underneath.

It's Jet's call.

JET

One six.

The cowboy grins.

CHUBBY COWBOY

Two sixes.

JET

(showing her dice)

Can't help you here.

She has an ace.

JET (CONT'D)

Sorry, Charlie.

She pockets the eighty dollars. The cowboy's a good sport.

CHUBBY COWBOY

Shazam. You are luckier than a baby sweat
hot hog laying in a puddle a mud.

She laughs. Melinda grabs her arm, and pulls her aside.

MELINDA

Come on, we're leaving.

JET

Hey, slow down, Lyndy. What's up?

MELINDA

That man in the white hat just said, "If you come home with me tonight, I'll make you feel like a woman."

He smiles from across the room. His gold tooth sparkles, catching the light.

JET
I've heard worse.

MELINDA
And he told me he'd *pay me a hundred and fifty dollars!*

JET
What?! A girl like you would never ever take less than three hundred.

MELINDA
Jeanette!

JET
Okay, okay. Four hundred. That's enough gas to get us all the way to Baja.

MELINDA
Jeanette McCluen, please tell me, you're not serious.

JET
Melinda. We need it.

INT. BUDGET MOTEL -- NIGHT

Melinda enters followed by BEN YAMAMOTO, (the man in white).

MELINDA
(nervously)
This is it, Mr. Yamamoto.

YAMAMOTO
Please, call me, Ben.

He TURNS ON THE RADIO, throws off his jacket, and slithers up behind Melinda. She shudders at his touch.

YAMAMOTO (CONT'D)
Relax, fine lady. Together we will climb to great heights of pleasure.

He tries to kiss her neck.

MELINDA

I'm sorry. But I have to get the money first.

YAMAMOTO

No problem.

(handing her four hundred)
Pocket change. If things work out for us, there will be no end to the rewards you will receive.

She slips the money inside her blouse, smiling weakly. He lays back on the bed, kicking off his boots.

BEN

(patting the mattress)
Come, my pet.

MELINDA

Just one moment. I have to take care of something first. A girl thing.

BEN

(unbuttoning his shirt)
Take your time. We have all night.

He starts to unzip his pants. Melinda escapes into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

She locks the door, and turns on the faucet. Then, very carefully ... she climbs out the bathroom window.

EXT. BUDGET HOTEL

One of Melinda's high heels SMACKS Jet in the head. Melinda hoists herself into a large tree next to the window. She loses her grip and drops. Jet catches her, they fall in a heap on the grass.

MELINDA

Ouch!

JET

Shhhh! Let's get outta here!

They sprint for the truck, jump in, and PEEL out.

INT. BUDGET HOTEL

Completely oblivious, Ben grooves to a sexy tune in his underwear.

INT. TRUCK - MOVING

Melinda flings the bills in the air. The girls laugh hysterically, giddy from the drinks and the con.

MELINDA

Four hundred dollars! I can't believe it!
That was ... that was just sooo easy!!!

JET

Ouuuu eeee!!

MELINDA

He was right. I do feel like a women!

This cracks them both up.

JET

Thank you Mr. Yamamoto!
(they both howl)
I am soooo happy!

MELINDA

How happy are you?!

JET

(imitating the fat cowboy)
I'm happier than ... a baby sweat hog, lying
in a puddle of mud, just um ... looking up
at my momma's teat just *shinning* in the
sunlight!

They laugh so hard it hurts. A car full of teenaged boys, hoot at them. Melinda HOOTS back. This triggers another outburst of laughter. Melinda wipes tears from her eyes.

MELINDA

It feels so good to laugh again.

"Run, Baby Run" comes on the radio.

JET

My song!

She CRANKS UP THE VOLUME. The girls sing along, passionately.

JET & MELINDA (O.S.)

(singing)

And her daddy marched on Birmingham singing
mighty protest songs ... and he pictured
all the places where he knew that she'd
belong ... he failed and taught her young,
the only thing she'd need to carry on... He
taught her how to ... run baby, run baby,
run baby, run baby run!

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

They continue SINGING as the truck rolls off into the distance.

JET & MELINDA (O.S.)

From the old familiar faces and their old
familiar ways to the comfort of the
strangers slipping out before they say so
long ... baby loves to run!

INT. HOUSTON'S OFFICE -- DAY

Houston is on the phone.

HOUSTON

(into phone)

So, you burned up the ticket. But you're
sure it was a 69 Chevy pickup?

INT. ROGER'S CABIN

RANGER ROGER

(into phone)

Yes, and the license plate was spelled
something like ...HONEY? No ... DEAR?
No ... darn! It's on the tip of my tongue.

BACK TO HOUSTON

HOUSTON

(into phone)

What about the carbon? Do you have that?

BACK TO ROGER

RANGER ROGER

(into phone)

As a matter of fact, it's still in my book.
Let me see.
(checks the carbon)
Here it is! O-H. B-A-B-E. Oh, *babe*. That's
it.

BACK TO HOUSTON

He scribbles the words OH BABE on a note pad.

BACK TO ROGER

RANGER ROGER (CONT'D)
Sergeant Houston, I have to tell you, I had
a hard time making this call. They seemed
like such nice girls. But when I saw that
Cynthia, err ... Melinda was wanted ...
well, I felt it was my duty.

BACK TO HOUSTON

HOUSTON
(into phone)
Rest assured, you did the right thing.
Thank you.

He hangs up, and re-dials.

HOUSTON (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Caesar. Melinda has a friend. I just got
a make on their vehicle.

BACK TO ROGER

RANGER ROGER
(to his cat)
Well, Prisilla, we did it. But right or
wrong, I still can't help but wish those
girls good luck.

INT. TRUCK DAY -- DAY

Melinda pulls into a grocery store and parks. Jet studies a road
map.

JET

So, if you want to stop at the Grand Canyon,
and then Vegas, I'd say we could make it to
Tijuana by Friday.

MELINDA

Then, we go straight. We could start some
kind of a business. What could we do? We
could open a gift store.

JET

Or a garage. Jimmy Dee taught me how to
rebuild an engine. We'll figure something
out. I hear the beaches in Baja are
outrageous.

INT. GROCERY STORE -- MOMENTS LATER

Melinda and Jet suck on Tootsie Pops, waiting, as the CHECKER
rings up their groceries. Melinda checks her list.

MELINDA

The lawn chair!

JET

Oh yeah. Hang on.

Jet snags one from a nearby display. As she returns, a CUSTOMER,
at the end of the line, grabs her arm. He's a swarthy, guy named
WILLY.

WILLY

Hi, there. Name's Willy. I couldn't help
but notice the two of you. What do ya' say
to joining me and my buddies 'cross the
street fer happy hour?

JET

Maybe some other time.

But he pulls her close, inundating her with stale breath.

WILLY

Ah, come on, honey. I'm buying. Anything
you and yerí friend want, is on me. If you
treat us right, that is.

Jet's eyes dart to the check-out girl and back, as a scam forms
in her mind. She smiles at Willy.

JET

Actually, I could use a drink. Lemmeí ask Cynthia.

She joins Melinda at the front of the line.

JET (CONT'D)

Don't ask why, just flirt with that skinny guy at nine o'clock.

Willy smiles at Melinda. She smiles back.

The checker rings up the lawn chair with the rest.

CHECKER

That'll be fifty six, fifty.

JET

(quietly)

The guy at the end of the line, the one in the gold chains, is paying for this.

(calls to him)

It's on you, right, Willy?

Jet and Melinda wave to him. He waves back.

WILLY

That's right, honey! All on me!

CHECKER

(shrugs)

Whatever.

The checker saves the receipt, as the girls dash out.

INT. HOUSTON'S OFFICE -- DAY

Houston chats with CAESAR, a detective on the Nelson case.

CAESAR

Baldwin is sticking to his story. He says Melinda hated Mark because he kept her under complete control. He thinks she wanted to run off with the drug money, but when things went wrong, she shot him.

HOUSTON

What do you think?

CAESAR

Personally, I think he's lying. He's trying to pin the rap on her, because she's not here to dispute his story.

HOUSTON

Yeah, well, I smell a rat. A big stinky smelly fat one.

CAESAR

None of this adds up. Melinda Nelson was considered practically an angel by everyone who knew her. Went to church every Sunday, baked pies for charity, volunteered time teaching children's theatre. But Greer's story backs up everything Baldwin is saying. And her prints are on the gun.

HOUSTON

Like I said. I smell a rat. And the sooner we find Melinda Nelson and her traveling companion the better.

CAESAR

Won't be long. How far can two girls in a red pickup with OH BABE plates get?

BACK TO GROCERY STORE

The checker finishes ringing up Willy's items: cigarettes and a lighter.

CHECKER

That'll be ninety-one dollars and ten cents.

WILLY

Huh?

EXT. HIGHWAY -- DAY

AN UPBEAT CARE-FREE SONG, PLAYS ON THE RADIO AND CONTINUES UNDER THE FOLLOWING MONTAGE OF SCENES ...

Jet's truck passes a sign that reads: "WELCOME TO ARIZONA". Melinda reclines in back, on the lounge chair. She's wearing shades, eating grapes, and getting a tan.

INT. TRUCK

Jet talks into the CB as the drives.

JET

(into CB)

This is The Comeback Kid comin' at you south bound, on "I-fifteen." If anybody sees a Mr. Bear, come back at me, cuz I'm doin' eighty, and I'd like to hang on to my green stamps.

VOICE

(from CB)

Coast is clear, Ms. Kid, but we'll keep a look out.

EXT. GRAND CANYON -- DAY

Melinda leans over the rail, taking in the view of the canyon.

Jet barter for a rabbit's foot, at a souvenir stand.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- DAY

Melinda drives. Jet reclines in the back. A truck blasts by honking. Jet waves.

INT. BIG RIG -- DAY

QUARTER POUNDER a big trucker, spots a cop car.

QUARTER POUNDER

(into CB)

Come in Stargazer, this is Quarter Pounder, warnin' you and the Kid, of a Smoky Bear one mile back, cookin' with his radar range. Come back.

INT. JET'S TRUCK -- DAY

MELINDA

(into CB)

This is Stargazer. Thank you, kindly mister Pounder, ten-four out.

(to herself)

This might be a good time for a picnic.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The truck pulls off and heads into a rest area.

EXT. GRAND CANYON -- DAY

A couple of policemen talk with the owner of the souvenir stand. Nearby, Greer sits in a WHITE RENTAL CAR, stroking his mustache and watching.

INT. RENTAL CAR -- DAY

Greer marks his road map, crossing out the Grand Canyon and circling Las Vegas and Los Angeles.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- DAY

A man with a gas can is hitch-hiking. His wife and child sit on their broken down car. Jet and Melinda pull over and give them all a lift. The road sign overhead reads, "*LAS VEGAS 20, MILES*".

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP -- NIGHT

They drop off the hitch-hikers. Jet drives, as Melinda stares at the casino lights.

The rabbit's foot dangles from the mirror.

INT. FRENCH RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Dressed to the nines, Jet and Melinda dine in a i5 Starî restaurant. The CAPTAIN refills their champagne.

CAPTAIN

How was the chateaubriand?

With a napkin, Jet dabs blood from her lip.

MELINDA

You don't want to know.

INT. JET'S TRUCK -- MOVING

Melinda writes, "*Le Petite Chateau - \$280.00*" in her book of debts.

EXT. LAS VEGAS MOTEL -- NIGHT

Melinda crawls out of the second story window, grabs a tree limb, swings down to the grass, and dives in the truck with Jet.

She's getting good at this.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK -- DAY

The girls groove with the radio, and sip milk shakes.

EXT. TRUCK

They zip past the sign, "WELCOME TO CALIFORNIA".

THE MUSIC FADES OUT.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOUSTON'S OFFICE -- DAY

Caesar knocks. Houston, on the phone, waves him in.

CAESAR

You're not gonna like this. Now Baldwin's claiming he was illegally tapped, and his lawyers are screaming entrapment.

HOUSTON

What?

CAESAR

If his story checks out, it's gonna be tough to nail him.

HOUSTON

Just let me know if he calls.

INT. JET'S TRUCK -- DAY

Melinda is driving. She's beaming, confident and happy.

MELINDA

Come on. Let's stop in Los Angeles for a couple of days.

JET

Have you ever seen the skies in L.A.?

MELINDA

No.

JET

Don't feel bad. Nobody has. I say, pass.
We could be at the border in four hours. I
think we should stay on track.

MELINDA

Oh, come on. Lets live it up. We've got
twelve hundred dollars. Please, I've never
seen the ocean.

JET

(amazed)

We have twelve hundred dollars?

(coy)

There is someone I know in San Diego that
I wouldn't mind looking up.

EXT. BEACH MOTEL -- SUNSET

Jet's truck is parked in the lot.

INT. BEACH MOTEL

The ocean breeze sweeps through the sliding glass door. Melinda
enjoys the view from the back porch, while savoring a shrimp
cocktail.

Jet soaks in a bubble bath Jacuzzi, sipping champagne, as she
speaks into the phone.

JET

(into phone)

Hey, baby, guess whose stylin'-it-up right
down the beach?

EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

Fog obscures the view. Jet and Melinda sit, staring at the ocean.

JET

Lyndy??

MELINDA

Yeah?

JET

What was she like?

MELINDA

You mean Mom?

Jet nods.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

(smiles)

We had a complicated relationship. It took a toll on her, for a long time, losing you. I mean it was ten years before everyone finally convinced her to give up looking.

Jet looks surprised.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Oh yeah, she tried real hard to find you. But after she stopped, she didn't seem to know what to do with herself and sort of ... shut down. I remember her just sitting there, looking out the picture window for hours, smoking cigarettes. And no matter how hard I tried I couldn't snap her out of it. Then, a couple years back she dated Dino, this chef, for a while. Didn't last, but he was a pretty great guy, and it helped her finally, start to heel. She pretty much did a 180. She was laughing, and singing at the piano, she even took up belly dancing for a while.

JET

No shit?

MELINDA

She said, "It's due time I took a hold of my life, Lyndy."

(beat)

She went at night. I heard her call my name and ran in, and she was clutching her chest. I held her till the ambulance came. She went pretty quick. I'm just glad we had made our peace, finally.

A wave crashes against the sand.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Jet?

JET

Yeah?

MELINDA

What do you want to do with your life? You know, to take hold of it?

JET

I think I should get paid for existing.

MELINDA

Seriously.

JET

I dunno. I want to take it slow someplace. In the tropics. Where there's no hurries. No troubles. Just warm water, Jamaican coffee, and beautiful blue skies, everyday.

A HOOT penetrates the serenity.

A jeep, packed with five guys from the band, *Whiplash*, races toward them. Driving is HAZE, the lead singer. With his long silky hair, and pretty boy smile, he's quickly becoming a heart throb in the local rock/blues circuit.

In true James Bond style, he scoops Jet aboard the speeding vehicle. Haze wears a white tux jacket, faded Levis, and cowboy boots.

JET (CONT'D)

Lookin' good, Haze. Cool jacket.

He rips it off, exposing his heart & dagger tattoo.

HAZE

It's yours.

She slips into it as they circle back for Melinda.

JET

Where are we going?

HAZE

My pad. I'm throwin' a party in your honor.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE -- NIGHT

A small beach party is in progress. Haze and his band, are JAMMING on the back porch. An assortment of PARTY GOERS, dance, drink and hang out.

Jet smiles at a girl with a blue mohawk.

JET

Nice color. Is it natural?

Nearby, Melinda watches kids set off fireworks on the beach.

They EXPLODE over the ocean.

PUPPY, a girl dressed, head to toe, in leather, approaches Melinda.

PUPPY

Got a light?

MELINDA

Sure.

She hands a lighter to Puppy. Puppy ignites a cherry bomb and HEAVES it into the water.

There's a HUGE EXPLOSION. Melinda shrieks.

PUPPY

Kicks butt, huh? Give it a try.

Puppy hands Melinda a cherry bomb.

MELINDA

Maybe later.

Not knowing what to do with the thing, she drops it in her purse.

Haze WAILS into the mike, gyrating as he sings. The girls scream for him as he goes into a riff on his harmonica.

They scream again when he finishes. He winks to Jet.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE DEN -- LATER

Only the die hards remain. Three of the band guys, are cutting up for Jet.

Nearby, Haze is in deep discussion with Melinda, Puppy, and an *really* skinny pseudo surf-punk, known as FATBOY.

HAZE

(holding in his hit)

I'm tellin' you man, this
ozone-deterioration is going to wipe our
butts off the face of the planet, man. I'm
serious. If we don't start drivin'
magnetic cars we're all history, right
Fatboy?

He passes a beer to FATBOY, the rail thin keyboard player.

FATBOY

It's all B.S. The Mafia pays for propaganda
to tell the Mexicans not to use birth
control so they'll pump out working class
babies to pay taxes for bigger bombs, which
the CIA trades to the terrorists for drugs
to smuggle into Watts, expanding crime and
distracting us with fear, so we'll swallow
the fake wars, and the fictional deficit.
It's B.S. I'm telling you. Total B.S.

MELINDA

I think we need a woman for president.

PUPPY

If she looked like you I'd vote for her.

HAZE

No way, man. There'd be nuclear threat once
a month.

Everyone laughs.

FATBOY

Besides, girls aren't deceptive enough to
become political heavies.

Jet swipes a cigarette from his pocket without him noticing.

MELINDA

(watching Jet)

That's what you think.

Jet pulls Haze over to the stairway.

JET

Got a light?

He kisses her gently and throws his lighter to the top of the
stairs.

HAZE
Upstairs.

They walk up hand in hand.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Melinda stands alone on the porch, looking out at the sea.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Haze backs Jet toward the bed, his fingers hooked into her belt loops.

HAZE
You sticking around for a while this time,
Tonto?

JET
'Fraid not Kemosobe. We're risking are
asses just being here. Gotta split first
thing m`anana.

They kiss.

HAZE
Awe, man. You're breaking my heart, here.

JET
You'll get over it.

HAZE
(fondly)
I always do.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT -- LATER

Melinda strolls down the deserted foggy beach.

MANS VOICE (O.S.)
Melinda?

A SHADOWY FIGURE approaches. But the fog's too thick for her to see.

MELINDA
Whose there?

MAN

It's me.

The fog clears for a moment ... it looks like her father.

MELINDA

Daddy?

MAN

Melinda?

They run toward each other, slowly, arms outstretched.

Just as they are about to touch, the fog dissipates, and his face becomes clear ... it's Greer.

Melinda screams, backs up, and trips over something--

Marks dead body.

INT. BEACH HOUSE -- MORNING

MELINDA AWAKENS FROM HER NIGHTMARE, sprawled out on the sofa. The clock says, 9:00 AM. The place is pretty trashed.

Still shaken from the dream, she climbs upstairs and knocks on the bedroom door. Jet peaks out.

MELINDA

I'm going to go back to the hotel.

JET

Okay, I just want to say good-bye. I'll catch you in a few.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE

Melinda crosses the street, passing the high school.

EXT. MAIN-MART -- TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Melinda comes out, carrying a bag of groceries. She rounds the corner to their hotel, stopping dead in her tracks.

Police cars have surrounded Jet's truck.

She backs away and takes off running in the opposite direction. No one seems to notice Melinda.

But in a rental car, across the street ... is Greer.

He pulls out, making a quick U-turn--

EXT. SIDE STREET

Pulling up along side of Melinda.

GREER
Morning, Lyndy.

Melinda gasps. Thinking quick, she HURLS the bottle of orange juice. It SHATTERS the windshield, causing him to duck, and swerve.

Melinda drops the groceries, and cuts through the high school parking lot. Greer follows.

She TEARS down the bleacher stairs toward the football field below.

Near the top of the bleachers, Greer gets out of his car.

There's no road down this way, and with his foot still in a cast, he can't go after her. He climbs back in the car.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD

Melinda RACES across the field, toward the exit, (which is directly across from Haze's house).

EXT. BEACH HOUSE

Haze REVS UP his dune buggy. Jet, still wearing his tux jacket, kisses him good-bye. He takes off.

Greer's car SPEEDS by her, SCREECHING around the corner and into the high school entrance.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD

Melinda sees Greer speeding toward her, SHRIEKS and does a quick about face.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE

Jet faintly hears her cry and intuitively realizes something's up. She sprints toward the football field.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD

Greer pulls along side of Melinda. Exhausted, her pace has slowed, considerably.

GREER

(smiling)

See Melinda run. See Melinda sweat. Where will she go? What will she do?

She staggers underneath the bleachers, breathing heavy.

Greer parks and hobbles after her, on foot.

Under the bleachers, Melinda has reached a dead end.

Hyperventilating, she collapses against a cement pillar. Her head is spinning.

Greer has her trapped.

GREER (CONT'D)

You have the right to remain silent and all that crap.

(laughs)

Don't look so surprised. I told you I'd find you, didn't I?

Melinda drops her purse and begins to cry. Her legs give out. She sinks to the ground.

GREER (CONT'D)

And that when I found you, I'd get you good. What do you think I meant by that, Lyndy? That I'd arrest you? Oh, I'll arrest you, all right. But first things first.

He removes his holster and moves slowly toward her.

MELINDA

You're scaring me.

Pretending to break down, she huddles over her purse. Slyly, she gropes around inside it.

GREER

What are you going to do, Lyndy? Call the police?

(he laughs)

Kind of ironic, isn't it? Being here, under the bleachers. You should feel right at home, right Mel, Mel?

Melinda WHIPS out the cherry bomb and lights it.

MELINDA

Wrong.

She hurls it at him. Greer shields himself as it BLOWS UP in his face, knocking him to his ass.

JET (O.S.)

Jeez!

Jet stands there, aghast, as Melinda KICKS him in the stomach with everything she's got. He winces.

JET (CONT'D)

Melinda!

Completely transformed, Melinda grabs his gun.

MELINDA

Come on!

Greer's face is badly singed. He curses under his breath, attempting to pick himself up.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD

Melinda and Jet LEAP into his car. Jet FLINGS Greer's briefcase out on the field.

It POPS OPEN, spilling A CELLULAR PHONE and RECORDING EQUIPMENT onto the grass.

Melinda starts Greer's car and makes a U-turn.

INT. GREER'S CAR

JET

Who the hell was that?!

MELINDA

Our cop friend, Nathan Greer.

WHAM! From out of nowhere, Greer DIVES onto the windshield!

Both girls SCREAM!

EXT. GREERÍS CAR

Melinda CRANKS the wheel HARD, BREAKS AND SWERVES VIOLENTLY, trying to loose Greer. But the door WHIPS open and Greer somehow, hangs on to it.

Melinda CRAMS the gear into reverse and FLOORS the gas.

SPEEDING BACKWARD, Greer is about to be SLAMMED into the goal post.

He has no choice but to jump, just before the door is RIPPED from it's hinges.

INT. GREERÍS CAR

Jet looks back at Greer as he--

TUMBLES across the green, shielding himself from the CATAPULTING door.

JET

How did he find us?!

MELINDA

There were police all over the hotel.

JET

What? Oh, no! No! No! Not my Babe! Not my beautiful Babe.

EXT. HIGHWAY

Melinda and Jet SPEED by a HIGHWAY PATROLMAN, parked on the side of the road. He IGNITES his siren and takes off after them.

INT. GREERÍS CAR

MELINDA

Now what?

JET

I'm taking over.

Jet takes the wheel as Melinda slides over to the passenger side.

INT. PATROL CAR

PATROLMAN

(into radio)

This is one, out of nineteen, on Northbound
283 at Rosemead. We're in hot pursuit of
a white late model Ford. License number
"FLK-394"

INT. GREERÍS CAR

Jet waits until she reaches 80 mph, then SLAMS on the brakes.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- DAY

Jet SPINS A ONE EIGHTY and accelerates into oncoming traffic.

The patrol car SHOOTs past them.

He SLAMS on his breaks, turns onto the shoulder and SPEEDS after them.

INT. GREERÍS CAR

Jet BLASTS her horn, SWERVING around oncoming vehicles. Melinda clasps her hands together and looks upward.

MELINDA

Dear God, please don't let us die.

They LURCH to the right VIOLENTLY, avoiding a bus.

BOTH GIRLS

Ahhhhh!!!

EXT. HIGHWAY

Jet SWERVES onto the shoulder, still driving against traffic. The patrol car follows, gaining on them. Jet WHIPS another U-turn.

The patrol car attempts the same move, but loses control, and SPINS out in front of A LUMBER TRUCK, causing it to JACKKNIFE--

BUSTING the trailer hitch. The logs SPILL out and TUMBLE across the highway, CREATING A GIANT ROADBLOCK.

Jet, ahead of the jam, SPEEDS for the exit.

The patrol car detours around the accident, *PLOWING* up and over the embankment. Several other patrol cars catch up, following his path.

From out of nowhere, a police helicopter appears.

HELICOPTERS POINT OF VIEW

It quickly gains on the girls in the speeding car. There appears to be no way out of this.

INT. CAR

JET
Give me your bra!

MELINDA
Why in the-- ?

JET
Just give it to me!!!

Melinda unclasps it, whipping it out from under her shirt. Jet *SNATCHES* it and loops one end around the stick shift.

JET (CONT'D)
Help me.

SHOT FROM ABOVE THE HELICOPTER:

The girls speed up the off ramp, approaching a four-way intersection. Straight ahead, leads back onto the highway.

The helicopter pulls down toward them.

HELICOPTOR COP (O.S.)
(over loud speaker)
Turn right and pull over to the side of the road.

They run the stop sign, *SCREECHING* around the corner, where they are *TEMPORARILY SHIELDED FROM VIEW BY THE MASSIVE TREE*.

INT. GREERÍS CAR

Jet has attached the other end of Melinda's's bra to the steering wheel; it's locked it into place.

JET

Jump!

EXT. INTERSECTION

The girls LEAP out the (doorless) passenger side of the car and roll into the bushes.

HELICOPTER'S'S POINT OF VIEW

The (now empty) car reappears, picking up momentum as it heads down the steep windy road. The helicopter blindly takes off after it.

The patrol cars make the intersection, swinging wide to turn right--

Nearly colliding with an APPROACHING VAN--

Which TOWS A HUGE MOTOR BOAT, behind it.

TEN PATROL CARS BLAST their HORNS and SPEED after the rental car--

EXT. WINDY ROAD

Which heads for a sharp hairpin turn--

And PLUMMETS dramatically over the side of the cliff.

The cops SPRING from their cars, as the rental car EXPLODES INTO FLAMES below.

PATROL MAN

(watching)

These kids just never learn.

EXT. HIGHWAY

But the girls are safe--

Laying in the back of the motorboat as the unsuspecting driver tows them along in his van.

Jet pulls out a pack of cigarettes, but they're squashed.

JET

How much cash do you got on you?

Melinda pulls two quarters, a couple of pennies, and a lip stick from out of her pocket.

MELINDA

Our stash is under the mattress at the hotel.

Jet's eyes go cold as she looks up at the sky.

An ominous cloud swallows the sun.

EXT. ROAD -- SIX HOURS LATER

It's gloomy and windy on the desolate roadside. Jet and Melinda fight to stay warm, as they hitchhike. A car approaches, but passes them by.

JET

Damn. 400 miles off track. I knew we should've kept going. We'd be well across the border, right now, soaking up the sun. But, no. You had to stop and see the ocean. I can't believe I lost my truck. What a drag.

MELINDA

Maybe you can ... get it back, eventually.

JET

Oh, come on, Lyndy. Use your brain. It's history. Comprendo?

MELINDA

Look, I'm sorry. When this is all over, I'll buy you another truck.

JET

(cold)

I don't want another truck. I knew we shouldn't have stopped.

MELINDA

I said, I was sorry. Come on. It was just ... an old truck.

JET

I happened to have loved that old truck. Not everybody has cars and houses handed to them on a silver platter. I knew it, man.

The moment I saw your picture, I thought,
stuck up, pain in the butt.

MELINDA

Well, why did you bother looking me up?

JET

Good question.

MELINDA

Why don't you try answering it.

JET

Cash, sweetheart. For a plane ticket out
of this God forsaken rat race. You sure as
hell at least owed me that.

MELINDA

Oh, I owe you? Is that what you think?

JET

Well, we are family. And it's obvious who
the hell had it easy.

MELINDA

That's really all you cared about, money?

JET

Believe me, if I had any idea that within
one week with you, I'd be penniless,
smokeless, truckless and freezing my ass
off on the side of the road, I would've
never bothered.

MELINDA

Well, why don't you just leave, then?

JET

Best idea you've had all week.

MELINDA

Good riddance.

JET

Same to you.

Jet crosses the highway. The rain starts to fall.

MELINDA

(under her breath)
Stupid, son of bitch truck.

(to Jet)
You know, you are such a hypocrite! You
told me that life isn't about what you have,
it's about what you do!

JET
I'm doing it!

She holds out her thumb. Melinda's anger is mounting.

MELINDA
You think I had it easy?! You didn't get
abandoned by your own father! You didn't
spend your whole life fighting to get your
mother's attention ... only to have her die
in your arms! You didn't have a husband who
hated you so much he wouldn't even touch
you! Except to hit you! I'd have traded
places with you, anytime!

A truck shoots by Jet and then stops. She runs for it.

JET
I'm outta here!

MELINDA
Fine! Run away! Go find your ... blue
skies! But I got news for you! There are
no blue skies, Jeanette! This is as blue
as they get!!

The rain POURS DOWN mercilessly.

Jet makes it to the truck. The door opens. The red necks inside
are very drunk.

REDNECK #1
Ya cold, honey?

REDNECK #2
We'll keep ya warm!

Melinda watches as the truck pulls away.

But Jet isn't in it. She walks to a bus shelter and sits. The
rain is pouring so hard, Melinda has little choice but to join
her.

The fight is out of both girls. They catch their breath, staring straight ahead for a moment. Finally--

JET

Look, I'm sorry, okay? I just ... went off.

MELINDA

It doesn't matter.

JET

It wasn't just the truck. It was, I dunnoí, everything. We were so close, you know.

Melinda just nods.

JET (CONT'D)

Know what I really felt when Jimmy Dee showed me your picture? Scared. You and mom looked ... just ... so happy. And normal. And better than me. Hell, I didn't wanna like you.

MELINDA

Yeah, well, I cursed your name more than a few times, too.

JET

Me?

MELINDA

Oh, yeah. The one the father risked jail for. The one the mother spent all her attention looking for. And I was sure she blamed me for letting you out of my sight. So I despised you both. I remember being really little, curled up in my bed at night, fantasizing for hours that my dad would come back and kidnap me too.

JET

Dear old dad. You know, Tahoe's probably only a couple hours from here.

MELINDA

Oh, no. Don't even think about it.

A local bus RUMBLES UP toward them. The sign reads "Sacramento"

JET

I know how you feel, Lyndy. But, if anyone could get us out of this mess, it'd be Jimmy Dee.

The bus pulls over.

BUS DRIVER
Going into town?

JET
Can we get there on 50 cents?

EXT. VACANT HOUSE -- NIGHT

The rain has let up. Jet sneaks off with the *"HOUSE FOR RENT"* sign.

Melinda writes on the back of the sign, with a black marker.

EXT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

A corvette approaches.

Melinda signals to Jet. Jet flips the sign around, and digs it into the planter stand.

She's written, "VALET PARKING" on the back.

The Corvette pulls up and stops.

Looking official in Haze's tux jacket, Jet opens the door for the unsuspecting driver.

SNOOTY DRIVER
Keep the windows and doors locked at all times. And FYI, I check the mileage.

She heads inside the restaurant.

Jet jumps in the car, picks up Melinda, and they speed off.

EXT. HIGHWAY/CORVETTE

JET
We're in luck, Stargazer. She just gassed up.

INT. HOUSTON'S OFFICE -- DAY

Houston sits at his desk. The phone rings and he answers.

HOUSTON
(into phone)
Houston here.

INT. PAY PHONE -- DAY

It's Greer and he looks hideous. His face is blistered from the explosion, which has left him with no eyebrows and no mustache.

GREER
(into phone)
Houston. Just checking in on the progress.

BACK TO HOUSTON

HOUSTON
(into phone)
We found the bug you placed at Baldwin's.
You better get your butt back here, pronto.

GREER
(from phone)
What are you talking about?

HOUSTON
(into phone)
Cut the charade, Greer. We ran a make on the car the girls were last seen in, and it turned out to be rented to you. I know what you're up to Greer, and you can't do this. You're out of your jurisdiction and you're breaking every rule in the book. Consider yourself suspended. You hear what I'm saying, Greer? Greer? Answer me!

BACK TO INT. PAY PHONE

The phone dangles off the hook. Greer is gone.

REVEAL that the booth is located at a gas station *in Tahoe*.

INT. CASINO -- NIGHT

FIVE PLAYERS, are in the middle of a high stakes poker hand.
PLAYER #1 has two queens showing.

DEALER

Queens talk.

PLAYER #1
(poker faced)
Fifty.

PLAYER #2
I'm in.

PLAYER #3 ponders his hand. It's JIMMY DANIEL MCCLUEN (BAKER), still looking good, at fourty-nine. He has four hearts showing.

JIMMY DEE
I'll see your fifty, and raise you fifty.

PLAYER #4
Ah, he's bluffing. I'm in.

PLAYER #5
Too rich for my blood.

He folds.

PLAYER #1
I'll see your fifty, and raise you fifty.

PLAYER #2
I'm out.

JIMMY DEE
I'm in.

Player #4 folds. It's down to Jimmy Dee and Player #1. The dealer deals the final cards.

DEALER
Down and dirty.

Jimmy Dee draws a club, making his hand worthless.

Jet spots Jimmy Dee, and struts toward him, snagging a glass of champagne from a waitress.

DEALER (CONT'D)
Queens still talk.

PLAYER#1
One Ben Franklin.

JIMMY DEE
(bluffing)
I'll see your hundred and ...

Jet gives Jimmy Dee a kiss on the cheek. She acts drunk.

JET
Hiya honey.

His surprise quickly turns to annoyance.

JIMMY DEE
(under his breath)
Not now, lady, please.

JET
Don't be a grouch. I'm bored. My machine
stopped paying and--

She notices Jimmy Dee's hand and her mouth drops open in awe,
supporting his bluff.

Then, as if to catch herself she acts overly nonchalant.

JET (CONT'D)
Didn't mean to interrupt.
(she hiccups)
Whoops.
(whispering too loud)
Bet it all.

JIMMY DEE
(under his breath)
Would you shut up.

DEALER
Well, what's your bet?

JIMMY DEE
(acting perturbed)
I'll raise you two hundred.

All eyes fall on player #1. He glances at the poker-faced Jimmy
Dee ... and then at Jet, attempting to hold back a smile.

PLAYER #1
Take it.

He folds. They bluffed him out. Jimmy Dee takes the pot.

JIMMY DEE

Thanks boys, it's been a pleasure.

He throws his arm around Jet and they take off.

INT. CASINO

JIMMY DEE

Hi, angel. What perfect timing. What are you doing here? Couldn't stay mad at your old man, huh? Couldn't live without me. That's all right. I understand. Who could?

JET

(holds her hand out)

My cut?

JIMMY DEE

Oh, yeah.

He gives her a handful of chips. They continue through the casino.

JET

Jimmy, the reason--

JIMMY DEE

Hey, have you seen Rosie, yet? She's gonna crap when she sees how much money I won. Maybe you better not tell her.

JET

Jimmy--

JIMMY DEE

I'll buy her a new dress. That ought a shut her up for a while.

JET

Jimmy Dee! There's something very important I have to tell you.

JIMMY DEE

You're not pregnant are you?

JET

No, I'm not pregnant.

She guides him to the bar.

JET (CONT'D)

There's someone here I want you to meet.

JIMMY DEE

He better be rich.

JET

It's not a he.

JIMMY DEE

What are you saying? You like girls, now?

Melinda sits at the end of the bar, with her back turned. Jet straightens Jimmy Dee's tie.

JET

It's your first daughter.

This takes a second to register. Jimmy Dee's face turns white.

JIMMY DEE

What!? Wait, don't leave now.

JET

She won't bite.

Jet splits.

Melinda turns. Father and daughter stare at each other as a difficult moment passes between them. (The last time they looked into each other's eyes, he was leaving her).

He takes off his hat and walks toward her. There are no words right now that, so Jimmy Dee just says--

JIMMY DEE

Hi.

MELINDA

Hi.

JIMMY DEE

How are you?

MELINDA

Actually ... not so good. Haven't you, um, been watching the news?

He shakes his head.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Well. I'm in a lot of trouble. Jet thought maybe you could help.

JIMMY DEE

Oh, boy. Figures. Why else would you be here? Right?

MELINDA

(immediately angry)

Never mind. This was a mistake.

She starts to push past him.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Why would you start caring, now?

JIMMY DEE

Wait a minute. I'm sorry. This isn't easy for me either. Give me a chance. Please.

Skeptical, she finally sits at a table with him.

JIMMY DEE (CONT'D)

What kind of trouble are you in?

MELINDA

It's ... complicated.

JIMMY DEE

Well, whatever it is, I'll fix it. But none of this "I don't care about you" crap. The one thing I never did, was stop caring. Ask Jet. I've got every picture they ever put of you in the "*Stillwater Reader*." You must be the most famous person in that whole town.

MELINDA

Not as famous as I am now.

(hard)

Why did you leave me?

JIMMY DEE

I didn't want to leave you. You were the one I came for. Don't you remember? I panicked.

MELINDA

All I remember is calling out to you over
and over, but you just kept going.

JIMMY DEE

Oh, God. I'm so sorry. I was a first class
idiot. You have every right to be angry.
But I've never stopped paying for it,
Melinda. Not for a moment.

He stares into her deep intelligent eyes.

JIMMY DEE (CONT'D)

God, you're beautiful.
(quiet laugh)
You still have those tigers in your eyes,
don't you?

Her eyes soften for a split second as she remembers their old
game, "*tigers in your eyes*".

He touches her cheek with his hand. Longing to melt, instead,
she stiffens at his touch.

MELINDA

That was over twenty years ago. Why didn't
you ever call? Just one simple phone call.

Jimmy Dee looks down.

JIMMY DEE

I was going to. Swear to God, I was. But
then I--
(sighs)
I couldn't. And the longer I waited--

He summons up his courage, looks her right in the eyes.

JIMMY DEE (CONT'D)

I was scared.

There is a long tense moment. His vulnerability is so obvious,
it melts through her anger.

A slight smirk emerges across her face.

MELINDA

Okay.

JIMMY DEE

Okay? Okay what?

MELINDA
(simply)
I forgive you.

And just like that, she gives him a huge bear hug. This child like display of unconditional love, takes them both by surprise.

Jimmy Dee blinks back tears.

Melinda laughs softly.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Tigers. Of course.

Jet watches from the bar. Shaking her head, a smile tugs at the corners of her mouth.

EXT. CASINO PARKING LOT -- NIGHT.

Tyrone, the bodyguard escorts ROSIE (Jimmy's girlfriend) to the car. She's a voluptuous broad, in her late thirties.

TYRONE
I don't know Rosie, what should I do?

ROSIE
Take her to a movie, wine her, dine her. I'm telling you, she wants it.

TYRONE
How do you know?

ROSIE
Did you notice her legs?

TYRONE
Yeah, she has great legs. So?

ROSIE
She was wearing stockings with garters.
When a woman wears garters, she wants to catch her man. Because she sure ain't wearing 'em for comfort.

She climbs into her Mustang.

TYRONE
(grinning ear to ear)
Rosie, you don't miss a thing.

ROSIE
Details. Pay attention to details.

She pulls out as Tyrone waves good-bye.

EXT. STREET

As Rosie drives onto the street, headlights turn on behind her.
Greer's car pulls out from the curb, following.

INT. MUSTANG

Rosie adjusts her rear view mirror.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Jimmy Dee, Melinda and Jet sit on cushions, in a private room,
eating a nice meal.

JIMMY DEE
So, how well did you know this Greer
character?

MELINDA
Just barely. He was this weird sort of ...
loner. After high school, he joined the
army, and that was the last anyone heard of
him.

JET
And now he's obsessed with her.

JIMMY DEE
I don't know. But, it doesn't make sense
for a wounded rookie to chase you across the
country, just because you ignored him in
high school.

Melinda averts her eyes.

JET
You got to understand, Jimmy, the man is
a couple sandwiches short of a picnic. So

can you get us new I.D.s, and help us get out of the country?

JIMMY DEE

We'll work something out. But for now, we need to get you in a safe place. If this Greer character is as smart as I think he is, it won't take him long to track you down again.

EXT. ROSIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Rosie parks her Mustang in the driveway of a small rather shabby suburban house. Rosie walks up to the door, goes in, and flicks on the lights. The phone is ringing, inside.

Greer pulls his car up in front of the house and watches her.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - LOBBY

Jimmy Dee waits on the phone.

INT. ROSIE'S HOUSE

Rosie flips on the light and answers the phone.

ROSIE

(into phone)

Hello?

(listens)

Where the hell are you?

Rosie peeks through the curtains.

BACK TO JIMMY DEE

JIMMY DEE

(into phone)

Something urgent has come up. I'll explain later. But, I need you to find a rental cabin, for me. What about those cabins where you said you put up your pops?

BACK TO MELINDA AND JET

JET

I knew the old man would know what to do. By this time next week, we'll be lying on

that beach in Aruba, looking at those blue
skies.

MELINDA
(nervously)
I hope you're right.

EXT. LAKE SHORE COTTAGE -- MORNING

A secluded cottage overlooking the lake. Foreboding clouds loom
over jagged peaks, in the background.

INT. LAKE SHORE COTTAGE

Melinda has her wet hair, wrapped in a towel. She retrieves a
blow dryer from her over-night suitcase. The phone RINGS,
startling her.

MELINDA
(into phone)
Hello?

INT. ROSIE'S KITCHEN

Rosie hair is in rollers and she wears a leopard robe.

ROSIE
(into phone)
Hi sweetie, it's Rosie. I just got a call
from Jet. She and your Dad have had some
kind of hold up and they're going to have
to meet you at the airport.

BACK TO MELINDA

MELINDA
(into phone, anxiously)
Is everything all right? Did they get the
passports?

BACK TO ROSIE

Steals a quick glance out the window.

ROSIE
(into phone)
Relax, Stargazer. Everything's fine. I'll
pick you up in an hour. You're on Lakeshore
road, right?

MELINDA
(from phone)
Yes ...

INT. GREER'S CAR

GREER is listening to their phone conversation, WITH HIS PHONE TAPPING DEVICE.

MELINDA'S VOICE
(through the speaker)
Cabin number thirteen-eleven.

GREER
(pleased)
Gottcha.

EXT. ROSIEÍ'S HOUSE

Greerís starts the car and SCREECHES around the corner.

EXT. LAKESHORE COTTAGE - DAY (TEN MINUTES LATER)

A car pulls slowly up, into the shadows, and parks.

Through the bathroom window, Melinda can be seen, getting ready.

INT. BATHROOM

Melinda finishes blow drying her hair. She wears a simple dress. She tries to put on mascara, but her hand is trembling.

INT. BEDROOM

She crosses to the dresser. Puts on her sweater. She starts to put on her earrings, but gasps.

IN THE REFLECTION OF THE DRESSER MIRROR-- *is Greer, lying on the bed, behind her.*

GREER
Surprise.

Their eyes lock in the mirror. Every muscle in Melindaís body tenses.

Greer lies on his back, with a pint of whiskey. His muddy boots soil the quilt.

Slowly, deliberately she turns and walks toward him, then--

BAM! She grabs her suitcase, making a bee-line for the door. But Greer's too quick.

She SCREAMS as he carries her, CLAWING AND KICKING toward the bed. Her belongings FLY OUT of her suitcase as he THROWS her down, pinning her on the bed.

She's helpless. But now that Greer finally has her, he hesitates. Melinda senses something. Self doubt? Fear?

MELINDA

Go ahead, big man.

(no response)

What are you waiting for?

He releases her. Walks away. Takes a swig of whiskey. They both catch their breath. Minds racing.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

What do you want from me?

For the first time we see an odd vulnerability in Greer, as he says, quite out of the blue ...

GREER

I love you, Lyndy.

MELINDA

Yeah, right. I can tell.

Another awkward pause.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Look, I'm not afraid of you anymore. And all your lies.

GREER

What about your lies?

MELINDA

You broke the law the minute you stepped out of Minnesota. They'll throw your testimony out of court. Now, I'm going to get my things and walk out of here, and you better not try to stop me. I'm telling you, for your own good.

She starts gathering her things.

GREER

You're telling me? That's a good one. You got me shaking in my boots here.

(chuckles, to himself)

You're telling me?

(suddenly, violent)

I'm the one giving the orders around here, Lyndy! You hear me? Huh?

She nods, barley.

GREER (CONT'D)

Good.

(takes a drink)

I don't know what you're so upset about. You should be thanking me. I mean, I could've splattered your brains out, but I let you go. What do I get in return? I get plowed down in cold blood, Melinda. You ran over a wounded man.

MELINDA

Thatís your story?

GREER

Everyone else seemed to like it.

MELINDA

You no damn well I wasn't involved in Mark's business. I didn't know anything about it.

GREER

But how much brains does it take? That husband of yours took you for a fool. You were the perfect wife. Pretty willing, and stupid.

MELINDA

(starting to crack)

What do you want from me?

GREER

The truth.

She can't look him in the eyes.

GREER (CONT'D)

Why do you look away from me, Melinda? You
can't handle it when it's real, can you?

FLASHBACK: INT. AUDITORIUM -- NIGHT

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD MELINDA sits with a friend. Couples dance by.
THE BANNER reads "*Father's Day Ball.*" She just stares at it.

MELINDA'S FRIEND

What's the matter, Lyndy?

TEENAGE MELINDA

Enough of this punch. I want to try a *real*
drink. What's the strongest kind of
alcohol?

BACK TO THE PRESENT

MELINDA

You're insane.

GREER

Then why do you look away, from me?

MELINDA

(cracking)

Because, I'm ashamed.

FLASH BACK: INT. AUDITORIUM -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Teen-aged Melinda dances wildly. She's had way too much to
drink.

TEENAGE MELINDA

I just need some air.

Her friend shrugs. She wobbles outside.

FLASHBACK : EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD -- NIGHT

Melinda walks alone across the dark football field. She looks
back over her shoulder. She seems frightened.

BACK TO THE PRESENT

GREER

Why? It was beautiful.

MELINDA
It was sick!

GREER
Come on. You wanted it as much as I did.

FLASHBACK: EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Melinda hides under the bleachers. A young Greer appears from the shadows. He's also very intoxicated.

GREER (CONT'D)
Mel, Mel!

BACK TO PRESENT

MELINDA
I was sixteen.

BACK TO FLASHBACK -- (UNDER THE BLEACHERS)

Greer has her down. She closes her EYES, too terrified to move. He TEARS at her shirt.

TEENAGE MELINDA
(barely audible)
Let me go. Please. I won't tell, if you just--

GREER
Shhhh. Don't you understand that this is *supposed* to happen? I love you, Lyndy. And that makes it everything all right.

He's kisses her neck. She's crying so hard she can't speak.

BACK TO PRESENT:

GREER (CONT'D)
Afterwards, I would have done anything for you. But you pretended you didn't even know me.

MELINDA
I wanted to forget it happened.

GREER
You completely shut me out. Do you have any idea what that feels like?

MELINDA

We all get hurt, Nathan.

GREER

Why Mark? Why him? Because he was some big football star?

MELINDA

Why can't you understand that-- ?

GREER

He never respected you. You should be thanking me for getting rid of him for you.

She sighs, putting her head in her hands.

GREER (CONT'D)

Look at me. I want to know why you stopped loving me? Just tell me!

Greer grabs her, forcing her to look him in the eyes.

GREER (CONT'D)

The truth.

MELINDA

I never loved you, Nathan.
(intensely)
I hated you.

Greer releases her. Devastated, he moves to the night table. His anger takes back over.

GREER

(matter of fact)

Well. I guess that makes you a whore then.
So maybe I better treat you like you one.

He turns, aiming his gun at her head.

GREER (CONT'D)

Take off your sweater.
(beat)
Do it!

He starts to rip it himself. She stops his arm. Trembling, she removes her sweater.

GREER (CONT'D)

Now, the dress.

As she starts to unbutton her dress, a single tear streams down her face. She fights to keep control of herself.

MELINDA

You can't hurt me anymore.

He wipes her tear gently with his finger and begins to caresses her body with his gun.

GREER

Is that what you think? I can do anything I want to you right now. It's your word against mine. Maybe I'll say you seduced me.

He pushes her back on the bed.

MELINDA

You think they're that stupid?

He pulls off his belt and lies it beside her.

GREER

I bought myself another witness. He'll back up everything I say. Just like Baldwin did.

He tries to reaches up under her slip. She stops his hand.

MELINDA

Nathan. Don't do this.

GREER

(mocking)

My poor little victim. See I'm the only one who knows you're innocent. So that's all you'll ever be ... my victim.

He puts his gun down on the night stand and leans over her.

MELINDA

Now!

Everything happens at once.

Melinda kicks his gun and it FLIES ACROSS THE ROOM--

The door flies open as Houston and his men FLY in--

Just as the gun hits the floor and FIRES--

Grazing the first cop, stalling them just long enough for--

Greer to GRAB Melinda around the neck and back into the closet behind him.

His powerful hands wrap around her throat into a death grip.

The cops can't shoot. Only Melinda is exposed to them.

Greer's powerful fingers dig firmly into her neck, choking her ... just enough for emphasis.

HOUSTON

Let her go, Greer-- !

GREER (O.S.)

Get out-- !

HOUSTON

Let her go-- !

GREER (O.S.)

I'll snap her neck-- !

HOUSTON

It's all over, Greer-- !

GREER (O.S.)

I'll do it! I'll snap her fucking neck!

Greer jerks her neck. Melinda coughs, her eyes bulging.

HOUSTON

All right everyone. Drop your weapons.

The men obey.

GREER (O.S.)

I want everyone out of here!

HOUSTON

Do as he says.

Slowly, they back out. Greer edges his way out with Melinda.

GREER

Now, you tell your boys, if I see one gun
out there or one person hiding on the roof,
it's lights out for Lyndy.

Houston backs out.

Greer retrieves his gun and puts it to Melinda's head. He
maneuvers toward the front entrance. He FIRES A ROUND through
the door, for insurance.

We hear SOMEONE FALL TO THEIR DEATH BEHIND THE DOOR.

GREER (CONT'D)

(to Lyndy)

Idiots. If I die, you die with me, baby.

(kisses her forehead)

Kind of romantic, aye?

Using her as a shield, he KICKS opens the front door.

EXT. CABIN

Greer keeps Melinda held tight up against him as he slides along
a brick wall toward his car.

GREER

(shouting, to Houston)

If I so much as see a cop car in any vicinity
of me for the next thirty minutes ... you'll
have a very lovely corpse on your hands!

He yanks her hair for emphasis. Melinda winces.

Houston stands across the lot. He holds both hands up.

HOUSTON

We're working with you, Greer. Take it
easy.

Greer makes it to his car with Melinda.

JET (O.S.)

You won't get far with out these.

Jet stands on the other side of the retaining wall, dangling his
car keys.

GREER

Throw them!

JET
Why should I ?

GREER
Because I'll call your bluff, bitch.

Melinda notices that "look" in Jet's eyes. Something is up.
Behind Greer, Melinda sees her father, hiding inside Greer's car.

JET
Okay, okay, man. Lighten up. You're way
to hyper.

She winds up to throw the keys, giving the old icueî ...

JET (CONT'D)
You remind me of my old boyfriend, Skip.

Jet throws the keys. They fly threw the air in SLOW MOTION.
Greer reaches out for them ... loosening his grip on Melinda.
She ducks out of the way, as the car door WHIPS open SMACKING
Greer in the back--

Sending his gun spinning.

Jimmy Dee DIVES out of the front seat and lands on top of Greer.
The two men roll in the dirt.

Jet grabs the gun.

SIRENS BLARE as more cops pull in.

Jimmy Dee SLAMS Greer's face with punches, until the cops manage
to pull him away, and apprehend Greer.

JIMMY DEE
(clutching his fist)
Ouch.

Jet throws her coat around Melinda and helps her toward the
cottage.

As the cop car pulls away we see Greer's intense bloody face looking to Melinda.

He blows her a kiss.

MELINDA

I never told anyone what he did to me. Not even Mom.

JET

Shhh. It's all over now. It's okay.

Jimmy Dee and Rosie exchange a hug.

ROSIE

See, honey.

JIMMY DEE

Okay, okay, you guys were right. But it was a little bit too darn close, as far as I'm concerned.

HOUSTON

I have to admit I grew a few gray hairs waiting for the son-of-bitch to hang himself.

JIMMY DEE

You and me both.

They shake hands.

HOUSTON

You did the right thing, Jimmy Dee.

JIMMY DEE

Yeah, well, it's about time.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NELSON HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY

SUPER: "THREE MONTH LATER"

It's raining outside.

On the table is a newspaper article. It reads "Jury Sides with Tiger Eyes and The Comeback Kid."

Melinda signs a check, puts it in an envelope, and seals it. She crosses off the last name in her *Book of Debts*.

Jet comes in from the bedroom carrying a suitcase.

MELINDA

Glad I made us keep this, now?

JET

I'm glad for hubby's life insurance. If you hadn't paid em' back I doubt they would have dropped the charges, book or no book.

(a beat)

Well, this is your last chance. Check out these brochures. Look at that ocean.

Jet whips out some tropical brochures.

MELINDA

It is tempting.

JET

A little store would do great there, with all those tourists.

MELINDA

How about if we start a business, here.

JET

No way. The Caribbean is calling my name.

Through the window, they see a cab pulling up.

EXT. NELSON HOUSE

The girls walk past Jet's truck. It has a new paint job.

JET

Take care of my Babe.

The CABBY puts Jet's bags in his trunk. Jet lights a cigarette.

MELINDA

You promised you'd give that up.

JET

I know, but I'm nervous.

MELINDA

Why?

JET

What if it doesn't turn out the way I've
always imagined it?

MELINDA

Then you'll reinvent it as you go.

The girls hug. Jet hops in the back seat. Rolls down the window.
Melinda hands her an envelope. Jet opens it.

JET

What's this?

Inside is a check for fifty five thousand dollars.

MELINDA

That's your half of the inheritance. Mom
left the house to both of us.

It's more money than Jet's ever imagined. She's stunned.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

(playfully)

So, you finally got what you came for.

Jet smiles, teasing back.

JET

Hey, I worked for it.

The cab starts to pull away. Jet leans out the window and calls
after Melinda.

JET (CONT'D)

Don't go watching soap operas, eating
chocolate, and getting fat on me now!

MELINDA

Bye! I love you Jeanette.

INT. CAB

CABBY

How about a little music?

The cabby turns on the radio and we hear again, "Run, Baby Run."

Jet watches Melinda as she fades into the distance.

BACK TO EXT. HOUSE

Melinda's smile fades. She heads in out of the rain.

BACK TO INT. CAB

The lyrics from the ballad hit home, for Jet.

LYRICS

(from radio)

She counts out all her money, in the taxi
on the way to meet her plane, stares hopeful
out the window, at the workers fighting
through the pouring rain.

She blinks back a tear. The first time we see her cry.

JET

(singing softly, With the radio)

She's searching through the stations for an
unfamiliar song And she pictures
all the places where she knows she still
belongs...

EXT. CAB

THE MUSIC CONTINUES as the drive off into the distance.

LYRICS (O.S.)

And she smiles the secret smile because she
knows exactly how to carry on ...

EXT. NELSON HOUSE

Melinda picks up the newspaper and heads inside.

INT. NELSON HOUSE

Melinda picks up the paper and sits on the sofa. She flips it over.

The headline reads, "*Board Meeting Canceled Due To Flu.*"

She laughs to herself. This town seems much more simple than it used to. She helps herself to a chocolate and flicks on the T.V. A soap opera plays. She smiles to herself, drumming her fingers on the arm of the sofa ...

INT. AIRPLANE -- DAY

Jet sits at an aisle, picking at her lunch. THE STEWARDESS approaches.

STEWARDESS
Is everything all right here?

JET
Can't complain. Thank you.

The stewardess repeats the question to a passenger behind her.

STEWARDESS
Is everything all right?

PASSENGER(O.S.)
There's glass in my rice!

STEWARDESS
Oh no. You're cut. Let me get some first aid.

A surprised look crosses Jet's face. She looks back at the passenger behind her.

It's Melinda!

Jet beams. She gets up and takes the empty seat next to her.

JET
You poor thing.

Melinda dabs at her lip with the napkin.

JET (CONT'D)
(under her breath)
What in the hell...?

MELINDA
(under her breath)
I didn't like the soap opera.

The stewardess returns with the CAPTAIN FLIGHT ATTENDANT. He carries a first aid kit.

STEWARDESS
(returning)

This is Rick Donalds, our Captain
Attendant.

He hands her cotton and disinfectant.

CATHERINE

If you need a doctor we can arrange for one
to meet you at the airport.

JET

I don't mean to pry. But maybe you should
consult an attorney about this--

PASSENGER BEHIND MELINDA

(whips out his card)

I'm an attorney.

JET

Really? Because Cynthia is a model. She
does lipstick commercials, and so her lips
are worth quite a lot--

CHIEF ATTENDANT

(under his breath)

Listen. We don't normally do this but I'll
bet we could get the airlines to *comp* your
ticket if we can keep this under your hat.

MELINDA

That's quite all right. I'm fine. And I
won't be needing a doctor. Or an attorney.

CHIEF ATTENDANT

Are you sure?

MELINDA

Yes. Thank you, anyway.

The stewardess and captain walk away. Melinda winks at Jet.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

I just wanted to make sure I still had it.
In case we ever *need* it.

EXT. PLANE -- DAY

The plane flies out of the clouds and off into the distance.

There's not a cloud in sight.

Just blue, blue skies.

FADE OUT.