

**FEMME FATALE**

by

**BRIAN DE PALMA**

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## INT. THE PALAIS SURVEILLANCE ROOM -NIGHT

A wall of TV monitors face four weary, red-eyed, security men. They show various interior and exterior views of the PALAIS DES FESTIVALS ET DES CONGRÈS during a late evening premiere at the CANNES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL. From its spotlighted entrance via the famed red carpeted staircase to the interior corridors leading into the grand auditorium, this place is wired for video like a casino.

## EXT. PALAIS ENTRANCE -NIGHT

The FORMALLY DRESSED CELEBRITIES slowly parade up the Palais steps pausing before the various banks of photographers.

And finally the arrival of the man of the hour. All eyes turn toward the film's DIRECTOR as he gets out of his stretch limo and starts the walk up the red carpet. On his arm is a breathtaking MODEL, VERONICA, decked out in a king's ransom's worth of diamonds. WE PASS a TV COMMENTATOR describing the clarity, weight, and price of each jewelled item. TWO BODYGUARDS walk discreetly behind her. The COMMENTATOR explains they are special security men detailed to accompany VERONICA'S JEWELS throughout the evening's festivities.

As the celebrity couple poses for photographers, one in particular catches VERONICA'S EYE. She's our Femme Fatale, LAURE ASH. She's mid-twenties, tall and slick with large, liquid, blue-green eyes that spell nothing but trouble. Everything about her is a lie, including the phony name on her press credentials.

LAURE pursues the bejewelled beauty shooting an endless series of photos. But a lot more is going on. She's shamelessly flirting with VERONICA at the same time. And our stunning model is definitely interested. Her tongue darts out, sliding lustily across her bottom lip as she gets a load of Laure's ass when she leans over to reload.

(CONTINUED)

There's no taking your eyes off it, except maybe for those breasts, that just can't seem to stay in a dress that clings helplessly to her body.

Plugged in to Laure's ears are the phones of a RIO HEADSET.

MOVING into her eyes, WE HEAR the music of a sensuous French pop song. A lascivious smile crosses Laure's face when she catches VERONICA watching her. She slithers closer to bag her voluptuous prey.

3 INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM -NIGHT 3

PIERRE, one of the security men, makes a low whistle.

PIERRE

(in French)

*Get a load of that.*

One by one, all eyes shift to the monitor showing a TOP SHOT of LAURE'S swaying body as she photographs VERONICA. From this angle, just for a maddening second, two rock hard nipples pop out of her dress. A couple of the GUYS abandon their surveillance posts to get a closer look. PIERRE joins the crowd...

CAREFULLY PLACING HIS LARGE ASS IN FRONT OF THE MONITOR SHOWING THE EXTERIOR OF THE PALAIS OVER THE WATER.

All those croissants packed into his fleshy middle-aged body are finally being put to good use.

PIERRE'S bald head is starting to shine. A drop of sweat rolls down between his bushy black eyebrows. He checks his watch. It's just a minute after 11.

CUT TO:

4 EXT. WALKWAY OVERLOOKING THE SEA SIDE OF THE PALAIS -NIGHT 4

And here's the view that PIERRE'S ASS is blocking. And for good reason because RACINE, ex-Algerian dive-master, just popped above the water. He's outfitted in full scuba assault gear, complete with NIGHT VISION GOGGLES. Combined with his black complexion, he's almost invisible in the dark water. But this guy doesn't look like he's going to a movie.

5 EXT. WALL OF THE PALAIS -NIGHT 5

RACINE swims soundlessly to the side of the PALAIS.

Locating a marked panel a few feet above the water line, RACINE, using a hammer and rock climbing nails, anchors himself to the side of the building.

He then takes out a LASER DRILL and begins cutting through the concrete.

6 INT. POWER ROOM -NIGHT 6

The head of the LASER DRILL emerges from the hole. It's intensity is dialed down to supply just enough illumination for the PIN CAMERA fixed to its head.

Progressing a few feet into the room and swaying back and forth, it looks like a cobra in search of prey.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. WALL OF THE PALAIS -NIGHT 7

EXTREME CLOSE UP OF RACINE'S EYE STARING INTO A MINI MONITOR SET INTO THE DIVING GOGGLES.

7 CONTINUED:

4.  
7

It's the view from the LASER SNAKE CAMERA: A tangled mass of cables and control boxes. Using the remote in his hand, RACINE guides the SNAKE forward.

CUT TO:

8 INT. CORRIDOR LEADING TO THE LOUIS LUMIERE AUDITORIUM -NIGHT 8

LAURE has managed to move directly behind VERONICA as the formally dressed crowd moves slowly toward the entrance of the theatre. Pressing her body close, LAURE whispers in her ear. VERONICA smiles wickedly reaching behind her to grip LAURE'S ASS. LAURE spins away and peeling off from the crowd toward the LADIES ROOM. VERONICA says something to the DIRECTOR and follows after her.

9 INT. LADIES ROOM -NIGHT

9

It's empty. LAURE enters and crosses over into one of the stalls. She goes inside and leaves the door slightly ajar. Seconds later VERONICA comes in. She looks at the stalls. She sees the one with the open door and heads for it.

10 INT. STALL -NIGHT

10

LAURE greets VERONICA with a passionate kiss. While she works her way over to her neck, her cheek brushes up against a huge diamond earring. LAURE jerks her head back in pain. VERONICA, abruptly awakened from her seduction, looks questioningly up into her lover's eyes. LAURE smiles as she slowly reaches up and removes VERONICA'S EARRINGS, letting them fall to the floor. She replaces them with earphones plugged into her RIO. Now they can listen to the sexy song together. VERONICA laughs and pulls LAURE to her and the make out continues.

11 INT. POWER ROOM -NIGHT 11

The LASER SNAKE jerks to a stop. It's found what it's looking for:

THE MAIN POWER BOX

THE LASER SNAKE backs away, positioning itself at the right ZAPPING DISTANCE.

12 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE LADIES ROOM -NIGHT 12

The TWO BODYGUARDS are getting restless. VERONICA has been in there a long time.

Down at the end of the corridor, the DIRECTOR looks at his watch. The passing crowd is beginning to thin. Where the hell is his date? She's going to make him late to his own premiere.

13 INT. STALL -NIGHT 13

CLOSE UP FLOOR. A huge diamond ring falls next to the earrings. A black hand moves in and silently slides the booty across the floor into the adjacent stall. It returns seconds later with exact glass replicas of each jewel carefully placing them where the originals fell.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. WALL OF THE PALAIS -NIGHT 14

RACINE WATCHING ON THE MINI MONITOR.

He delicately adjusts the LASER SNAKE until the POWER BOX IS DEAD CENTER.

15 INT. ADJACENT STALL -NIGHT

15

WICKS, the brains behind the heist, carefully loads the earrings and the ring into a ladies handbag. He's tall, wiry, British and mean. Taking out the glass replicas of a bracelet and a necklace, he flattens his head on the floor, and waits for Laure's next score.

16 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE LADIES ROOM -NIGHT

16

The DIRECTOR gives up on VERONICA and goes into the theatre.

17 INT. STALL -NIGHT

17

LAURE kisses VERONICA'S WRIST as she slips off her diamond bracelet. She lets it drop to the floor and moves up her arm to her breasts. VERONICA shivers with sexual excitement as LAURE slides her hand gently behind VERONICA'S NECK and unclasps the diamond necklace.

18 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE LADIES ROOM -NIGHT

18

WE HEAR a series of high-pitched beeps. One of the BODYGUARDS reaches into his pocket and pulls out an ELECTRONIC ALARM. It's flashing red indicating the necklace has been unhooked.

19 INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM -NIGHT

19

PIERRE sees the BODYGUARDS enter the LADIES ROOM. Turning away from the other security men, he whispers into his lapel mike.

PIERRE

(in French)

*Countdown to blackout.*

20 INT. STALL -NIGHT

20

LAURE gets PIERRE'S warning through her earphones. VERONICA hears nothing but the song. LAURE quickly drops the necklace to the floor, pulls out one of her earphones and listens to the approaching footsteps.

21 INT. AUDITORIUM -NIGHT

21

The DIRECTOR joins the CAST of his film on the dress circle.

22 INT. ADJACENT STALL -NIGHT

22

WICKS scoops the necklace up, drops it in the handbag, pulls a dark silk mask over his face, and raises a TRANQUILIZING PISTOL. He quietly steps on the toilet seat and stands up to get a peek at the approaching BODYGUARDS.

23 INT. LADIES ROOM -NIGHT

23

The BODYGUARDS move tentatively into the room. The lead one calls out in French.

BODYGUARD ONE

*Mademoiselle Veronica? Are you alright?*

He is answered by a husky laugh. The BODYGUARDS move toward the source of the sound.

24 INT. STALL -NIGHT

24

LAURE is frantically helping a giggling VERONICA slip back on her jewels.

25 INT. ADJACENT STALL -NIGHT

25

WICKS has managed to find a slit in the stall door where he can see one of the BODYGUARDS eying the electronic alarm. Once the girls come out of the stall, they will discover the theft and his subtle exit plan is out the window.

(CONTINUED)

He silently swings open the his stall door and moves up behind the closest BODYGUARD and fires, point blank, into his thick neck.

STUNNED, the man whips around to face his attacker. WICKS COLD COCKS him between the eyes. The FIRST BODYGUARD slumps to the floor.

Now things are moving fast and dangerous.

The SECOND BODYGUARD, realizing what's happening, goes for his gun. WICKS shoots him in the eye.

26 INT. STALL -NIGHT

26

LAURE freezes. What the hell is going on out there?

27 INT. LADIES ROOM -NIGHT

27

Half blind, the SECOND BODYGUARD is helpless against Wicks' brutal onslaught. But as he goes down he manages to get off a shot. It SLAMS INTO WICKS' SIDE.

WICKS, roaring in agony, hits the floor. He desperately flips over on his side and fires back. The projectile buries itself in the GUARD'S CROTCH and he falls back in a spasm of pain. WICKS leaps on top of him, pistol whipping him into unconsciousness. But during the struggle his silk mask is ripped off.

28 INT. AUDITORIUM -NIGHT

28

The DIRECTOR is introduced and stands up to acknowledge the applause from the crowd.

29 INT. STALL -NIGHT

29

VERONICA, eyes closed and still hearing the song, is oblivious to the mayhem outside. LAURE moves toward the door, checking her watch. Less than a half a minute to blackout.

30 INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM -NIGHT

30

PIERRE sneaks a look at the monitor showing THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE LADIES ROOM. No one has emerged. Sweat streams down his face. He swallows hard.

31 INT. LADIES ROOM -NIGHT

31

Exhausted and wounded, WICKS slowly pulls himself out of the body heap. He accidentally touches his blood soaked waist and a savage jolt rips through his body. He must have cracked a rib. He grabs hold of the stall door to keep from passing out. Gritting his teeth, he reaches down for the handbag full of jewels and painfully moves over to the stall holding LAURE and VERONICA.

WICKS opens the stall door. VERONICA, jolted out of her musical reverie, pulls off her earphones and stares, in horror at the BLOOD-SOAKED THIEF.

WICKS

(speaking to LAURE)

Get out of the way.

He pulls a gun from his belt and points it at VERONICA.

32 EXT. WALL OF THE PALAIS -NIGHT

32

RACINE dials up the laser to "HIGH". He checks his watch.

10 SECONDS TO GO.

33 INT. LADIES ROOM -NIGHT

33

Before WICKS can shoot, LAURE delivers a brutal kick to his ribs. He screams in pain and collapses, falling back onto the bathroom floor. LAURE grabs VERONICA and shoves her out into the bathroom.

LAURE

(in French)

*Get help!*

VERONICA flees out the door. LAURE walks over to the fallen WICKS. She rips the gun out of his hand.

LAURE (CONT'D)

You said no guns.

34 EXT. WALL OF THE PALAIS -NIGHT

34

EXTREME CLOSE UP OF RACINE'S THUMB OVER THE LASER "FIRE" BUTTON.

5 SECONDS TO GO.

35 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE LADIES ROOM -NIGHT

35

VERONICA runs down the hallway screaming. TWO USHERS turn toward her.

36 INT. LADIES ROOM -NIGHT

36

LAURE checks her watch. 4 seconds to BLACK OUT.

37 EXT. WALL OF THE PALAIS -NIGHT

37

RACINE PRESSES DOWN on the "FIRE" BUTTON.

38 INT. LADIES ROOM -NIGHT

38

LAURE scoops up the bag of jewels and starts for the exit.

39 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE LADIES ROOM -NIGHT 39

VERONICA speaks frantically to the USHERS pointing toward the LADIES ROOM.

40 INT. POWER ROOM -NIGHT 40

The LASER SNAKE spits a RAY OF PURE FIRE.

41 INT. LADIES ROOM -NIGHT 41

As she walks past WICKS, a blood-soaked hand grabs her ankle.

WICKS

You better kill me now bitch or you're  
dead! Understand! Dead!

LAURE silences WICKS with a kick to the face and rushes for the door.

42 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE LADIES ROOM -NIGHT 42

The USHERS move toward the LADIES ROOM. One speaks urgently into a walkie-talkie.

USHER ONE

(in French)

*Get security down here!*

The door opens and LAURE rushes out.

43 INT. POWER ROOM -NIGHT 43

The POWER BOX explodes.

THE WHOLE PALAIS goes black.

44 INT. AUDITORIUM -NIGHT 44

The movie is just beginning when the whole theatre is plunged into blackness.

(CONTINUED)

Instant chaos.

ESTEEMED PATRONS, USHERS, and SECURITY PERSONNEL collide. They either try to escape or stand still trying to figure out what the hell happened. They haven't a clue. And even if they did, they wouldn't know where to go anyway because it's so pitch-black they can't even see their own noses.

45 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE LADIES ROOM -NIGHT

45

LAURE shifts from Salome into Zen priestess. She's dead calm. This blackness is the ideal environment for her escape. She puts on her NIGHT VISION GOGGLES and moves down the pitch-black corridor easily slipping past the confused USHERS.

46 EXT. WALL OF THE PALAIS -NIGHT

46

RACINE reels in the LASER SNAKE, pushes off from the side of the building, drops into the water and swims toward a SPEED BOAT, anchored off the WALKWAY.

47 INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM -NIGHT

47

There are cries in French of "What the fuck happened?", "Does anyone have a Walkie?", "Get some flashlights". Bodies collide in search of illumination. In the confusion, PIERRE manages to knock over the monitor covering the PALAIS WALKWAY.

48 EXT. PALAIS WALKWAY OVER THE WATER -NIGHT

48

No time for precision transfers. LAURE, grabbing hold of the bag of jewels, goes right over the side.

Falling through the air and splashing down into--

49 EXT. WATER -NIGHT

49

RACINE fishes LAURE out. He points to the engine, indicating she should start it up. LAURE nods and moves past him to the rear of the boat.

RACINE leans over the side to haul in the anchor as LAURE hits the ignition. The engine roars to life.

LAURE pulls out WICKS' GUN. Noiselessly she raises it behind RACINE'S BACK, aims it down at his leg and slowly squeezes the trigger.

THE BULLET BLASTS A HOLE RIGHT THROUGH HIS LEG.

RACINE shrieks and tumbles down into pitch-black water.

The boat rolls knocking LAURE over.

Tumbling backwards, her head smashes into the throttle.

RACINE, roaring in agony, leaps out of the water and makes a desperate grab at the rear of the boat.

THE BOAT LURCHES FORWARD, speeding blindly into the blackness.

LAURE slumps to the floor, unconscious.

DISSOLVE TO:

50 EXT. BEACH -MORNING

50

Lying in a shallow tidal pool is LAURE. Motionless, her head floats face down. Her face is bruised and battered.

Suddenly, her whole body is engulfed in a wave of surf. Her head rolls over on its side and peacefully floats.

(CONTINUED)

Her eyes flicker open. She stares blankly through the clear water. Suspended in time between life and death.

WE MOVE INTO HER EYES.

She seeing things.

Future things.

Horrible things.

OH MY GOD, I'M DROWNING!

LAURE gasps for breath and sucks in a lung full of water. She violently starts coughing. Pulling herself up on her elbows, she yanks her head out of the deadly pool.

Her body is chilled to the bone. And what's left of her clothes, barely covers her ass. LAURE looks around and sees a road. On it is a bus stop. A YOUNG MOTHER, yakking on a cell phone, plays catch with her ten year old SON.

LAURE drags herself to her feet. She's got to get moving. She fucked up Big Time on that jewel heist and those guys are going to be after her.

51 EXT. BUS STOP -MORNING

51

LAURE walks barefoot toward the YOUNG MOTHER. She notices the woman's HANDBAG sitting on a SUITCASE next to the bus stop sign. The rubber ball flies over the boy's head and rolls to a stop at LAURE'S feet. She picks it up and, all smiles, throws it back to him.

Down the road, LAURE sees an approaching bus. The BOY catches the ball and pitches it back. LAURE grabs at air, purposefully missing it. The ball sails over her head, rolls off the road, and down onto the beach. The BOY chases after it.

(CONTINUED)

The YOUNG MOTHER, hearing the bus now, calls after her SON.

YOUNG MOTHER

(in French)

*C'mon, Henri! We're going to the miss  
the bus.*

LAURE walks up to the YOUNG MOTHER. She's about to launch into one of her "Aren't kids great" routines when a racking cough cuts her short. The BUS pulls into the stop and the front door swings open. She takes another breath and starts again.

LAURE

(in French-speaking with a  
deep, hoarse voice)

*Don't worry. I won't let them leave  
without you.*

YOUNG MOTHER

*Merci.*

THE YOUNG MOTHER, picking up her conversation on the cell phone, runs after her SON who has disappeared behind a large rock.

LAURE picks up the YOUNG MOTHER'S POCKETBOOK AND SUITCASE and climbs on board the BUS.

52 INT. BUS -MORNING

52

The BUS DRIVER watching the YOUNG MOTHER go down on the beach.

BUS DRIVER

(in French)

*Are they coming too?*

(CONTINUED)

LAURE

(in French)

*No. They just came to say goodbye.*

The BUS DRIVER closes the door and steps on the gas.

CUT TO:

53 EXT. BEACH -MORNING

53

The YOUNG MOTHER looks up, just in time to see her BUS speeding away. She turns back and gasps in horror. Emerging from behind the rock next to her son is a battered vision of pure hate. His wetsuit ripped to tatters, his face grotesquely swollen, his leg torn and bloodied. RACINE rips the phone out of her hand. We hear his voice for the first time and it's chilling.

RACINE

(in French)

*Where's that bitch going?*

CUT TO:

54 INT. BUS STOP LADIES ROOM -DAY

54

CLOSE UP OPEN SUITCASE.

LAURE pulls out a simple black dress and tries it on. She's standing in front of the bathroom mirror. The dress is a little big but it fits okay. She lays it back in the suitcase and goes to work on a more pressing problem.

Her hair.

(CONTINUED)

Raising a scissor to it, she starts to cut. As hair begins to fly, WE MOVE INTO A BOTTLE OF BLACK HAIR DYE resting on the edge of the sink.

CUT TO:

55 INT. BUS -DAY

55

Now in short, jet black hair, black sunglasses, and wearing a shapeless black dress, LAURE looks like a widow on the way to a funeral. What she's lost in sex appeal, she's made up in camouflage. LAURE no longer looks like LAURE.

56 EXT. PONT D' IENA BRIDGE-PARIS -DAY

56

As LAURE'S bus crosses over onto the right bank she watches a large barge pass underneath the PASSERELLE DEBILLY (a pedestrian bridge).

57 EXT. BUS STOP/AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE -DAY

57

LAURE exits the bus with the other passengers. She stiffens at the sight of hundreds of cops up and down the avenue.

How could they have found her so fast?

A WISE GUY AMERICAN TOURIST in front of her stops before one of the cops.

WISE GUY TOURIST

(joking)

Who did we kill?

COP

(not amused)

Could I see your passport please?

The WISE GUY TOURIST hands over his passport. Not too happy about the way he's being treated. LAURE starts to sweat.

(CONTINUED)

If this cop asks her the same question-she's dead.

WISE GUY TOURIST

What happened to Gallic humor?

COP

(returning his passport)

There's an important reception at the residence of your Ambassador this afternoon. We take security in this country very seriously.

LAURE looks toward the entrance of the AMERICAN AMBASSADORS' RESIDENCE. Elegant couples exit sleek limousines and are greeted on the steps by the AMBASSADOR and his wife. A roped off group of PHOTOGRAPHERS are frantically snapping pictures. All eyes are on the parade of dignitaries except...

LAURE catches sight of a DARK FIGURE (RACINE) staring at her from across the street. As soon as she's made him, he slips back into the shadows.

What the hell was that? Is she getting paranoid or was someone just watching her?

Whoever it was, he's gone now. But she's got to get out of here. This place, this city, this country! Or she's doomed to spent the rest of her life looking over her shoulder. LAURE walks quickly over to a TAXI STAND and gets into the first cab.

58 EXT. PLACE PIGALLE -DAY

58

The taxi pulls up in front of a SEX SHOP. LAURE gets out and walks over to a STREET WHORE. They talk for a few seconds, then LAURE follows the STREET WHORE into the shop.

(CONTINUED)

Through the store window, WE watch LAURE talk to the MANAGER. He picks up a phone and dials a number. WE hear a cellphone ringing.

WE PULL BACK over the shoulder of the DARK FIGURE (RACINE). He's been watching LAURE through the window. He puts the cellphone to his ear. He listens. Then he speaks into the phone.

DARK FIGURE (RACINE)

(in French)

*Tell her to go the cafe in front of the  
church at place Maurice Chevalier.*

*Passport will call her there.*

59 EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE-PLACE MAURICE CHEVALIER-BELLEVILLE -DAY 59

LAURE sits waiting at a table. Directly behind her is NICOLAS BARDO, ex-King of the Paparazzi, contemplating a different life. He's in his late thirties, dark and unvarnished. He smokes a cigarette staring at the table that LAURE is seated at. There is something about it that's giving him a picture idea. A big picture. A great picture. LAURE suddenly turns to face him extending her unlit cigarette. NICOLAS absentmindedly lights it and LAURE turns away. Both lost in their own thoughts, they don't realize they have met. But the way she's smoking that cigarette, seated at that table, complete an image in NICOLAS'S head. He jumps up and rushes across the street disappearing from view.

LAURE looks at her watch and then around the deserted square. The facade of the church across the street is dark but the top floor of the apartment building behind is bathed in sunlight. NICOLAS is on the balcony looking through a camera that appears to be pointed at her.

(CONTINUED)

Christ! Is she going crazy or is everyone in the fucking world watching her?

LAURE turns away at the sound of a phone ringing. Suddenly it stops. A few seconds later a WAITER, carrying a portable, emerges from the cafe. He hands it to her. LAURE listens for a second, writes down an address, and then hands it back. Across the square the DARK FIGURE (RACINE) pulls his cellular phone away from his mouth. LAURE catches this action out of the corner of her eye just before he vanishes into the shadows. Was that the man she was just talking to? Why is he hiding from her? What does he want?

LAURE grinds out her cigarette and stands up. There's one way to find out. She pays for the coffee and crosses the street into the Church.

60 INT. CHURCH -DAY

60

LAURE takes a seat in the back and looks over her shoulder to see if the DARK FIGURE followed her inside. Behind her, a large group of MOURNERS wait for a funeral to begin. Lying in front of the altar are two coffins - an adult's and a child's. An elderly couple, IRMA and LOUIS, seated at the back of the group stare at LAURE like they know her. They point her out to the other MOURNERS. By the time LAURE turns around to face front, the whole funeral party is staring at her. Now LAURE is sure she's in the grasp of some paranoid fantasy. As IRMA and LOUIS rise and begin walking toward her, LAURE leaps to her feet and rushes out the side door.

61 EXT. CHURCH -DAY

61

The DARK FIGURE is gone. LAURE jumps into a taxi at the foot of the church steps. LOUIS and IRMA run to their car.

62 EXT. HIGHWAY -DAY 62

LAURE'S TAXI heads towards the AIRPORT passing by a PHARMACY. But before the turnoff, it pulls into the driveway of--

63 EXT. SHERATON -DAY 63

LAURE gets out of the cab and goes inside the Sheraton. A ship-like modern hotel at CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT.

64 INT. SHERATON-RECEPTION DESK -DAY 64

The place is deserted. She walks up to a CLERK who stands behind the reception desk. They speak in French.

LAURE

*Do you have a reservation for Gris?*

CLERK

*Everything's been taken care of.*

He hands her a room key.

CLERK (CONT'D)

*On the third floor, opposite the balcony. Number 33.*

LAURE takes the key and walks across the lobby to the elevator. She presses the up button and the doors immediately pop open. She steps inside and presses number three.

65 INT. SHERATON-ELEVATOR -DAY 65

The car moves upward. LAURE opens her purse and sees she just has 50 francs left. That's not going to get her very far with PASSPORT.

What the hell is she going to pay him with?

(CONTINUED)

The elevator doors slide open. LAURE walks out into a empty corridor.

66 INT. SHERATON-3RD FLOOR CORRIDOR -DAY

66

She follows the corridor adjacent to a large atrium to where the railing ends. To the left is the door to room 33. To the right, directly below her, is the entrance of the hotel covered by a huge panelled glass roof. From three flights above, she watches the OLD COUPLE go into the hotel. They must have followed her from the church. Why? She doesn't have time to figure it out, she better just keep moving. She shoves her key in a lock, and enters the hotel room.

67 INT. SHERATON-ROOM 33 -DAY

67

The room is dark. Seated in a chair facing the door is the DARK FIGURE. They speak to each other in French.

DARK FIGURE

(in a muffled voice)

*Don't turn on the light. Do you have the money?*

LAURE

(bluffing)

*I didn't think you'd take plastic.*

He takes out a camera from beneath his coat.

DARK FIGURE

*I need a picture.*

(Standing up and slowly  
advancing toward her, his face  
covered by the camera)

*That's good. Now look right into the lens.*

(CONTINUED)

He's almost on top of her and, just before the flash explodes in her face, she recognizes

RACINE!

Huge hands clamp down on her throat. She tries to twist away but they grip harder, remorselessly squeezing the life out of her.

RACINE

*Payback time, bitch.*

LAURE'S mouth opens wide, gasping for air.

RACINE (CONT'D)

*Next time. And there's not going to be a next time. When you're double crossing someone---remember to shoot them in the head.*

LAURE knees him in the balls, knocking him back as she whips open the door behind her.

68 INT. SHERATON-3RD FLOOR CORRIDOR -DAY

68

She just makes it out when he's all over her again, shoving her over the rail. She grasps out in vain as she falls two flights down crashing through the glass panelled roof.

69 INT. SHERATON-GROUND FLOOR -DAY

69

By some perverse miracle, her fall is broken by a cart full of tarp covered ROLLS OF INSULATION. She tumbles off of it on the floor of the walkway. The OLD COUPLE from the church rush over and kneel down beside her.

IRMA

(in French)

*My god, Lily!*

(CONTINUED)

Before LAURE can wonder why she's being called Lily, she passes out.

DISSOLVE TO:

70 INT. LOUIS' CAR -DAY

70

LAURE, with a blanket resting behind her head, lies across the back seat. LOUIS drives. It's raining. IRMA does most of the talking. LAURE listens as they fill in the rest of the puzzle. They speak in French.

IRMA

*I told you we should have done...something.*

LOUIS

*It's none of our business.*

IRMA

*You read two words and she falls apart. That's none of our business?*

LOUIS

*It had to be done. People die and wills have to be read.*

IRMA

*Did you see the look on her face? And look what she did to her hair?*

LOUIS

*What do I know about looks? I'm just a notaire, for Christ Sakes!*

IRMA

*What would you do if the kids and I were killed? Would you give a damn what I left you?*

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS stares glumly ahead at the road.

IRMA (CONT'D)

*I just knew when your gun was gone she  
was going to do something crazy.*

LOUIS

*We don't know she stole it?*

IRMA

*Who else?*

71 EXT. TRUCK STOP GAS STATION -DAY

71

Over the station is a simple two bedroom apartment. LOUIS and IRMA help LAURE inside. It's raining harder.

72 INT. APARTMENT-LILY'S BEDROOM -DAY

72

The place is filled with dead flowers. Desiccated condolences for a recent passing. Moving through the room, LAURE reads some of the cards: "We are so sorry for your great lost", "Never could one women lose so much", "God giveth, God taketh away, Glory be to God".

IRMA tucks LAURE into bed and hands her a hot cup of tea.

IRMA

(in French)

*Feeling better, Lily?*

LAURE nods but still doesn't understand why IRMA keeps mistaking her for "LILY".

Then it all becomes clear when LAURE gets a load of the PHOTO resting on the bedside table. It's a candid of a happy smiling family. The YOUNG WOMAN holding a LITTLE GIRL, particularly catches LAURE'S EYE.

(CONTINUED)

IT'S HER. Or one dead ringer for her.

Now this is really freaky. LAURE'S face drains of blood. She turns to IRMA for some sort of explanation.

LAURE

(hoarsely)

Qu'est-ce que...?

IRMA cuts her off, answering in French.

IRMA

*Now you just shut up, honey, and save your strength. You just have to rest. You've had a terrible tragedy and you need time to get better. And if you get any urges to...do anything silly, I want you to give me a call. Now, before we leave I want you to answer just one question. Did you borrow Louis's gun?*

What the fuck is this gas bag talking about? LAURE shakes her head "no".

IRMA (CONT'D)

*Are you sure?*

LAURE shakes her head again.

IRMA (CONT'D)

(unconvinced)

*Okay. But if you come across it you'll tell me, won't you?*

This gets the "yes" nod.

(CONTINUED)

IRMA (CONT'D)

Good. I'll turn on the TV so you'll have some company. We'll be back tonight with some dinner.

IRMA switches on the TV and she and LOUIS leave.

On the screen is a mid-day talk show.

As the TV drones on, LAURE ponders the advantages of having a look-a-like. Could be the solution to all her problems. But first she needs more information. Climbing out of bed, she starts exploring her new found life.

73 INT. APARTMENT-BRIDGET'S ROOM -DAY

73

LAURE opens the door to find a meticulously kept child's room. The bed is freshly made. A TEDDY BEAR rests on fluffed-up pillows. Embroidered on them is a name: Bridget.

At the foot of the bed, little stuffed animals are lined up on a play chest.

Against the window wall stands a little table and chairs. In the center of the table is a CRYSTAL BALL.

On a bulletin board hang many framed snapshots of Bridget. They form a grid of pictures (this grid will be repeated in BARDON'S cafe pictures on the wall of his apartment). In each one she wears the same shiny PENDANT. A closer look reveals the PENDANT to be a MINIATURE CRYSTAL BALL.

There's something a little eerie about this place. It's like some kind of shrine. Where one comes to remember and to suffer.

LAURE closes the door, and moves on to--

74 INT. APARTMENT-LIVING ROOM -DAY

74

At a table, LAURE paws through a woman's handbag. She pulls out a WALLET. Inside are credit cards, a driver's license, and a passport.

LAURE studies the I.D. photo on the passport. No mistaken that face. It's her's. But there's something else. Inside the passport is a plane ticket. A one-way Air France reservation for LILY DUVAL departing for Washington at noon tomorrow.

LAURE just shakes her head and smiles. She couldn't have thought of a better plan herself: Get the fuck out of France and start a new life in the land of opportunity.

CUT TO:

75 INT. APARTMENT-LILY'S CLOSET -DAY

75

LAURE sorts through LILY'S CLOTHES. Not much of a fashion plate but they fit and that's all that matters.

CUT TO:

76 INT. APARTMENT-LILY'S BEDROOM -DAY

76

THE OPEN SUITCASE

LAURE dumps in some travelling wear, LILY'S HANDBAG and checks out the clock radio. It's just past two. IRMA won't be returning for hours. Plenty of time to relax a little. She walks toward the bathroom.

77 INT. APARTMENT-BATHROOM -DAY

77

LAURE goes to the bath tub and turns on the water. She adjust the spigots until she has the right temperature and returns to the bedroom.

78

INT. APARTMENT-LILY'S BEDROOM -DAY

78

LAURE returns to LILY's bed, sits down and takes a long sip of warm tea. She stares at the TV talk show.

The MODERATOR addresses the camera.

MODERATOR

(in French)

*Can we see the future? In a crystal ball? On the palm of our hand? Or in a dream? And once we know it, can we change it? Today, we're going to visit with guests that have...*

She undresses and walks back to the bathroom.

79

INT. APARTMENT-BATHROOM -DAY

79

She slips into the three-quarter filled tub, stretches out, and starts thinking about her future. Warm relaxing water continues to flow softly out of the spigot.

First, she's got to be out of this house before that dumb blabbermouth figures out that LAURE'S VOICE doesn't go with LILY'S FACE.

Of course that wouldn't be a problem in America.

AMERICA!

LAURE lies her head back on rim of the tub, closes her eyes and starts dreaming about her new life when...SUDDENLY A DOOR SLAMS

80 LAURE (INT. APARTMENT-BATHROOM -NIGHT)

80

is jolted awake. She jerks her head out of the bath water and looks out the bathroom door to see HERSELF standing in the living room. The resemblance is uncanny. The only noticeable difference is Lily's hair. IT'S LONGER. LILY abruptly turns away to face the door. A turbulent thunderstorm rages outside.

81 INT. APARTMENT-BATHROOM/LIVING ROOM -NIGHT

81

LAURE quickly turns off the water, slips out of the tub, pulls on a robe, and tip-toes into the clothes closet. She turns around, grabs the door knob, and eases the door slightly ajar.

FROM INSIDE, she watches LILY cross the living room, go over to the desk, drop a BROWN SHOPPING BAG on the floor, and sit down.

LILY opens a drawer, takes out a piece of paper, picks up a ballpoint and starts writing. She scribbles a few sentences and then stops. Her body begins rocking. LAURE hears sobbing.

LILY suddenly stands up, and turns around. Her face filled with anguish. She bows her head, clutching at the CRYSTAL BALL PENDANT hanging from her neck. Her grief is unbearable. Abruptly, she crosses the room and exits LAURE'S VIEW.

LAURE hears a kitchen cabinet open, bottles clinking, a cap unscrewed, a glass on a tabletop, and liquid poured.

LILY returns INTO VIEW with a gin bottle, and a half-filled glass. She sits back down at the desk and finishes writing the note.

She reads it, crying uncontrollably, and then tapes it on the 2001 CALENDAR facing the desk.

(CONTINUED)

Pulling herself together, she reaches down into the BROWN SHOPPING BAG, and pulls out a HAND GUN and some loose BULLETS.

So that's the gun that got stolen.

LAURE pushes the door ever so gently. It opens just enough so she can read the NOTE in French:

*"I thought I'd go to America and start a new life. My English isn't too good but I'm a fast learner. I even bought a ticket. But I just can't go on without my Jon and Bridget. Please God, forgive me, and let us now all be together."*

LILY downs another shot of gin. Then, slowly and now a little unsteadily, shoves a bullet into the chamber of the gun.

LAURE watches uneasily.

LILY spins the barrel, snaps it into place, and jams the nose of the gun into her mouth.

LAURE'S front teeth dig into her lower lip.

LILY grips the trigger and pulls it.

"CLICK"

LILY pulls the gun out of her mouth, takes another shot of gin, and loads another bullet in the chamber.

Now LAURE'S starting to sweat. The last time she kept someone from getting killed it almost cost her her neck.

So if this suicidal look-a-like, holding Laure's ticket to a new life, wants to blow her head off...well, so be it. Now the only question is: Where to hide the body?

(CONTINUED)

LILY spins the barrel again, sticks it back into her mouth, and slowly pulls the trigger.

MOVING TIGHT INTO LAURE'S EYES

There's an agonizing wait until...

"BANG"

82 INT. AIRPLANE- TOURIST CLASS -DAY

82

LAURE holds her ticket out as a FLIGHT ATTENDANT checks the seat number. Seated before them is a middle-aged couple. The MAN shows his ticket to the FLIGHT ATTENDANT. The FLIGHT ATTENDANT studies both tickets for a second and then turns back to LAURE.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

(in French)

*There's been a mistake. The computer has sold the same seat twice. I'm terribly sorry. Could we accommodate you in our First Class Cabin?*

LAURE smiles, nodding. So far her new life is great!

DISSOLVE TO:

83 INT. AIRPLANE-FIRST CLASS CABIN -DAY

83

LAURE is fastening her seat belt. Seated next to her is BRUCE HEWITT WATTS, an attractive man in his early forties. Judging by the expensive suit he's got on, LAURE gets right to work using her most lovable broken English.

LAURE

Do you live in America?

(CONTINUED)

WATTS

Yes, I do. I grew up in Northern California, but now I live in Washington.

LAURE

What do you do?

WATTS

Well, I started out in the software business, made some money, and found I was interested in other things.

LAURE

Like what?

WATTS

The whole world, I guess. So I went back to school in Washington and got a degree in Foreign Relations. Taught a little, made some political donations and got a job in the State Department.

LAURE

(eyes filling with wonder)

America is a very big country, no?

WATTS

Yes it is. Is this your first visit?

LAURE

(intensely)

Yes. I begin my new life there. France is no good for me. I never go back.

Watts is a little puzzled by her emotional answer.

(CONTINUED)

WATTS

But France is such a wonderful country.  
Why would you never want to go back?

He's stepped right into her trap. On come the water works.

LAURE

(beginning to cry)

It took my baby...

LAURE plays the grief struck widow to the MAX.

WATTS, sweet schmuck that he is, puts his arm around her. She rests her tear-covered face on his shoulder and looks up into his concerned eyes.

There's something about this shattered French flower that touches him deeply. He pulls her close, whispering:

WATTS

Everything is going to be all right.

LAURE grips him, smiling to herself as she softly weeps.

This guy is toast.

CUT TO:

TITLE: CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND- SEVEN YEARS LATER

84 EXT. COUNTRY MANOR -MORNING

84

Every girl's dream house. A combination of Tara and Monticello. Surrounded by a 1000 foot-long garden terrace, an eight-acre flower garden, designed romantic grottoes, garden temples, ornamental groves, and stables.

The door of the house slowly opens and a formally dressed BUTLER walks out and retrieves the morning newspaper lying in the driveway.

85 INT. COUNTRY MANOR-KITCHEN -MORNING 85

The newspaper is placed on a silver breakfast tray which is picked up by a MAID and carried out of the kitchen.

86 INT. COUNTRY MANOR-GRAND STAIRCASE -MORNING 86

The MAID carries the breakfast tray upstairs.

87 INT. COUNTRY MANOR-MASTER BEDROOM -MORNING 87

The MAID enters, puts the tray down, and opens the curtains. Morning sunlight streams into the darkened bedroom. LAURE as LILY is gently awakened. Stretched out on white satin sheets in an antique canopy bed, she looks like some thirties movie goddess.

She sits up, drinks some orange juice and spreads out the morning paper. The perfect beginning to another perfect day.

She gasps out loud.

The startled MAID looks at her questioningly.

LILY jumps out of bed, dropping the newspaper to the floor, and rushes from the room. The MAID picks up the newspaper and looks at the front page.

WE MOVE INTO THE HEADLINE:

WATTS APPOINTED FRENCH AMBASSADOR.

88 EXT. COUNTRY MANOR-GARDEN -AFTERNOON 88

WATTS discovers LILY standing in the rose garden quietly weeping.

WATTS

(concerned)

Honey, what's the matter?

(CONTINUED)

LILY

Are you unhappy with me?

WATTS

What are you talking about? My life with you has been nothing but happy.

LILY

I've been a good wife?

WATTS

None better.

LILY

I've made a nice home for us?

WATTS

It's paradise.

LILY

Then why are you leaving me?

WATTS

I'm not leaving you.

LILY

You're going to Paris.

WATTS

Yes. I was going to tell you at dinner but the newspapers broke the story this morning. I thought you'd be happy.

LILY

I am happy for you. It's something you've always wanted but I can't go with you.

WATTS

Why not?

(CONTINUED)

LILY

It brings back too many...

She starts to cry again. He puts his arm around her shoulder to comfort her.

WATTS

But that was years ago. You have a new life now and that part of your past should all be forgotten. You'll see when you get there...

LILY

I can't go back.

WATTS

How do you know unless you try? You know how important this post is to me but I'm not going to take it unless you come with me.

LILY

I'm afraid.

WATTS

All I ask is you come over just once and see how you feel. If it's too upsetting, I'll tell the President that...I don't know. Some reason I can't do it and that will be that.

LILY

Just once? You promise?

WATTS nods and LILY rushes into his arms. WE MOVE into her face. She sighs in relief. Another bullet dodged. She begins to smile. What's she so worried about? What are the chances of her running into her past in Paris? One in a million?

(CONTINUED)

One in a 100 hundred million? One trip--in and out. What could possibly happen?

DISSOLVE TO:

89 EXT. PLACE MAURICE CHEVALIER, BELLEVILLE -DAY

89

We move into the sixth story window overlooking the church square. This is a low rent neighborhood you don't find on the tourist map.

NICOLAS BARDO, stares at a large computer monitor displaying a live streaming video of the cafe table his saw LAURE at seven years ago. The video is coming from a camera mounted on a tripod resting on the balcony outside his apartment window. He likes what he sees and hits a key on the computer keyboard and the picture freezes. He hits another key and the laser printer on the desk begins printing out the image. Covering the wall are a series of shots of the same table. Sometimes it's empty, sometimes people are seated at it. These 142 pictures form an abstract mosaic that needs two more photographs to be complete.

The phone rings. NICOLAS picks it up. It's JEAN, Nicolas's agent.

JEAN (V.O.)

Hi, what are you doing?

NICOLAS

Working.

JEAN (V.O.)

Something I can sell?

NICOLAS

Could be. I just need one more piece.

(CONTINUED)

JEAN (V.O.)

Another shot of that table? What's happened to you? Are you eating?

NICOLAS

Barely.

JEAN (V.O.)

How would you like to take a break from your masterwork and make some real money?

NICOLAS

What are you selling?

JEAN (V.O.)

You know who Bruce Hewitt Watts is?

NICOLAS

Strange as it may seem to you, Jean, photographers actually read...books, magazines, and even daily newspapers.

JEAN (V.O.)

So, smart ass, who is he?

NICOLAS

The new American ambassador?

JEAN

Bingo. Well, guess what? He's got a wife but no one seems to have a picture of her.

NICOLAS

Maybe she's camera shy?

JEAN (V.O.)

She's more than shy- she's got a past she's not talking about.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JEAN (CONT'D)

I did some checking and found out she's really French. Married before with a kid.

NICOLAS

I've got an ex I don't talk about either. What's wrong with that?

JEAN (V.O.)

Nothing except that you don't dodge photographers like you've got something to hide.

NICOLAS

And you want me to nail her.

JEAN (V.O.)

You are the best.

NICOLAS

Was the best. I'm retired.

JEAN (V.O.)

On what? IOUs? I'm not just your agent Nicolas, I'm your bank and you're way past due. Now I want you to do yourself a favor and go to work. I can get 5 figures for this picture.

NICOLAS thinks for a beat and decides to take a bite out of the carrot.

NICOLAS

What's her schedule?

JEAN delivers the boot in the ass.

JEAN

She's arrives by private jet tonight.

90

EXT. AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE -NIGHT

90

And here it is, in all its 19th century elegance: The American Ambassador's Residence formerly owned by the Baron Edmond de Rothschild.

NICOLAS stands in the shadows outside its tall gates. He wears a pair of dark glasses and carries a white cane. Poised and ready to run the Blind Man's Bluff.

He doesn't have long to wait. An elegant black limo pulls into the entry way. As the gates begin to open, NICOLAS goes into his act. Concealing the camera under his coat, he taps his way over and crashes into the passenger side door. Lying face up on the ground, he waits for his concerned prey to come to his aid. And sure enough, seconds later, the limo door swings open and there she is. He just catches a glimpse of those long, slender legs but that's enough.

NICOLAS whips the camera up to his eye and snaps off two quick shots before SECURITY CHIEF SHIFF can push his way past a stunned MRS. WATTS and make a futile grab for him. By that time, NICOLAS has bounded to his feet and is gone.

91

INT. NICOLAS'S APARTMENT -A FEW DAYS LATER -DAY

91

The phone rings. NICOLAS picks it up.

SHIFF (V.O.)

Is this Nicolas Bardo?

NICOLAS

Speaking.

SHIFF (V.O.)

You're a hard man to find. You took a picture of Mrs. Watts?

(CONTINUED)

NICOLAS

Who wants to know?

SHIFF (V.O.)

Leonard Shiff. Head of Watts' security.  
I'd like to buy it.

NICOLAS

Well, I'm sorry Mr. Shiff but it's  
already been sold.

SHIFF (V.O.)

Unsell it. We'll double whatever you got.

NICOLAS

That's very generous but I...

SHIFF (V.O.)

I don't think you realize who you're  
dealing with. We know all about you, Mr.  
Bardo , your overdrawn account, your  
criminal record.

NICOLAS

Criminal record?

SHIFF (V.O.)

First degree assault.

NICOLAS

When I was in college? You've got to be  
kidding. We were protesting...

SHIFF (V.O.)

You struck an officer of the law.

(beat)

We are not your victims, Mr. Bardo.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

## SHIFF (CONT'D)

On the contrary, Mr. Watts has vast resources at his disposal to make your life a living hell. So I suggest you get that picture back and bring it to me at the residence at 11AM sharp. Don't keep me waiting.

The line goes dead before NICOLAS can answer. He quickly dials JEAN'S NUMBER. He gets his answering machine.

## NICOLAS

Hey, Jean, it's Nicolas. That picture of Mrs. Watts? Whatever deal you made --- blow it! I got a better offer. I'll explain later.

92 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD-THE NEXT DAY -DAWN

92

A PRISON BUS rolls to a stop before a BUS STOP SIGN. WICKS and few other INMATES are deposited on the barren crossroads. WICKS is wearing the bloody tuxedo he was arrested in. The PRISON BUS pulls away. WICKS looks around. Down the road he sees a HUGE SILVER TRAILER TRUCK approaching. He's fascinated by its size and speed. He hasn't seen anything moving that freely in seven years. He steps into the road. Crazy to feel the power of this great machine as it roars past him.

There's the sound of a frantic horn.

WICKS just closes his eyes.

The shriek of sudden air brakes followed a blissful:

"WOOOOOOOOOSSSSSSSSSSSHHHHHHH"

As the truck swerves past him.

(CONTINUED)

When the dust clears, WICKS sees an idling car across the road. The DRIVER is hidden by deep shadows. WICKS crosses over and gets in the front seat.

93 INT. CAR -DAWN

93

WICKS sits next to RACINE who hands him the latest PARIS MATCH. WICKS stares at the cover. His face fills with rage.

DISSOLVE TO:

94 INT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT-PARIS -MORNING

94

WICKS and RACINE walk out of the arrival terminal and over to a MAP OF PARIS DISPLAY. WICKS carries the PARIS MATCH MAGAZINE. They find the location of the RESIDENCE on the map and walk toward the Metro entrance. WICKS drops the MAGAZINE on the ground.

WE MOVE INTO THE COVER. IT'S NICOLAS'S PICTURE OF LILY.

SHE'S STARING STRAIGHT INTO HIS CAMERA WITH THAT STARTLED "DEER CAUGHT IN HEADLIGHTS" LOOK.

THE CAPTION in French READS: "AMBASSADOR WATTS' FRENCH WIFE LILY ARRIVES AT THEIR RESIDENCE IN PARIS"

95 EXT. AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE-STREET -DAY

95

WICKS and RACINE walk up out of a METRO EXIT.

Coming down the street is NICOLAS on his MOTORCYCLE. He pulls off the avenue into the Mansion's driveway. He stops at the-

96 EXT. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE-SECURITY GATE -DAY

96

A UNIFORMED GUARD steps out from the booth to meet him.

UNIFORMED GUARD

May I help you?

(CONTINUED)

A SECURITY CAMERA mounted on the wall above, eyes him curiously.

NICOLAS

Nicolas Bardo to see Mr. Shiff.

UNIFORMED GUARD

One moment, please.

The GUARD steps back into the booth and makes a call.

97 ON THE MOTORCYCLE

97

NICOLAS reaches into a saddlebag to get a DIGITAL DISK RECORDER. If things go badly with SHIFF, he wants to have a record of the meeting.

98 INT. SHIFF'S EXPLORER -DAY

98

SHIFF watches NICOLAS from a black American SUV with tinted windows parked across the street.

He's in his forties, angular, with receding wispy blonde hair. If there is a shadow to be found, SHIFF will be lurking in it. A classic HEAD OF SECURITY, he doesn't want anyone to ever get a really good look at his face. But he does want to see their's, especially in an unguarded moment.

And sure enough, he's caught NICOLAS wiring himself before their meeting. He picks up his car phone and speed dials a number.

SHIFF

I got hung up in traffic. Park Bardo in my office while I...

There's an sharp rap on the window.

(CONTINUED)

SHIFF (CONT'D)

(to the person on the other end  
of the line)

I'll call you back.

SHIFF hangs up and rolls down the window. It's suddenly filled with WICKS' SMILING FACE. It's quite a shock. Smiles don't go with this face.

WICKS

(in tourist French)

Pouvez-vous m'aider, ou est-ce le Place  
Charles De Gaulle?

99 EXT. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE-SECURITY GATE -DAY

99

NICOLAS snaps a disk in place and slips the RECORDER into his jacket as the adjacent DRIVEWAY GATE swings open.

A CREME-COLORED LEXUS CONVERTIBLE roars down the gravel path. THE DRIVER'S FACE is obscured by a white silk scarf and dark glasses. NICOLAS jumps on his bike. The LEXUS passes through the gate and swerves right.

As the driver's side of the LEXUS sweeps past him, NICOLAS catches a glimpse of a face. A classic model's profile if wasn't marred by that ugly shiner spreading out from under her sunglasses and down her left cheek.

Could this be the LADY OF THE HOUSE with "photo op" written all over her face?

NICOLAS speeds after her to find out.

100 INT. SHIFF'S EXPLORER-MOVING POV -DAY

100

THROUGH THE EXPLORER'S FRONT WINDOW WE SEE NICOLAS'S MOTORCYCLE CHASING AFTER THE LEXUS. THE LEXUS TURNS ONTO THE--

101 EXT. PLACE VENDOME -DAY

101

NICOLAS follows. It comes to an abrupt stop before a red light. NICOLAS eases in directly behind it. A group of French school girls file across the street in front of the Lexus.

THE DRIVER seems to be having difficulty getting her breath. Her body quakes with a racking cough. She frantically ransacks her bag and comes up with an INHALER. She jams it into her mouth and breathes in.

The light changes. She takes another hit on the INHALER but it's empty. She throws it down in frustration and stamps hard on the gas. The LEXUS lurches forward with NICOLAS right behind.

AS WE PULL BACK AND TILT UP we see the LEXUS, NICOLAS' MOTORCYCLE, and the BLACK EXPLORER all headed north into Montmartre.

102 EXT. PLACE PIGALLE -DAY

102

The LEXUS parks in front of a SEX SHOP. NICOLAS parks across the street as MRS. WATTS gets out of her car and walks over to a STREET WHORE. They talk for a few seconds, then MRS. WATTS follows the STREET WHORE into the shop.

NICOLAS, grabs a camera out of the car, and crosses the street to get a closer look.

Through the window, he watches MRS. WATTS talk to the MANAGER. NICOLAS snaps off a few shots. A little insurance in case SHIFF tries to muscle him again.

The MANAGER motions MRS. WATTS to follow him. As they move toward the rear of the store, the STREET WHORE turns to face the front door. NICOLAS ducks down out of sight. He retreats back behind a newsstand.

(CONTINUED)

When he turns back to look, the STREET WHORE has returned to the street and MRS. WATTS and the MANAGER have vanished. NICOLAS rubs his hand across his mouth. What the hell is going on? He looks up and sees two figures silhouetted in the second story window. One's a woman. One's a man. They appear to be in a heated argument. Finally the woman opens her purse and flings something down on the floor. The man kneels down to retrieve it. The woman slowly pulls up her skirt, turning her back to the window. Her hand reaches behind her back and grips at the shade cord. Grabbing hold of it, she pulls down the shade, cutting off NICOLAS' VIEW

A few minutes later, MRS. WATTS emerges from the SEX SHOP carrying a BROWN SHOPPING BAG. She gets back into the LEXUS and drives off.

What was that all about? A bag of sex toys for an afternoon adventure? A perplexed NICOLAS continues tailing her.

DISSOLVE TO:

103 EXT. TURNOFF- NICOLAS' MOTORCYCLE-POV -DAY

103

A busy highway. The LEXUS heads towards the CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT. But before the turnoff, it comes to a stop at a crosssignal. NICOLAS, a few cars behind, pulls to the side of the road and stops. He watches MRS. WATTS try to control another wave of coughing. SHE looks desperately through the passenger side window and sees the PHARMACY off the road but there's no way to get to it from here. The signal changes and in frustration she stomps down on the accelerator speeding onto the turn off. NICOLAS follows.

104 EXT. SHERATON -DAY

104

The LEXUS comes to a stop. A VALET opens the door and MRS. WATTS steps out. SHE hands him the CAR KEYS and he gives her a TICKET. SHE goes into the hotel.

(CONTINUED)

The VALET gets in the car. NICOLAS pulls up beside the car and looks into the side window of the LEXUS. Resting in the bottom of the SHOPPING BAG is a GUN and a BOX OF BULLETS. The VALET is about to drive off when MRS. WATTS rushes out of the hotel entrance waving at him to stop.

In the confusion, NICOLAS takes off unnoticed. MRS. WATTS runs over to her car, takes out the SHOPPING BAG and returns to the hotel. NICOLAS parks his bike and follows.

105 INT. SHERATON-3RD FLOOR CORRIDOR -DAY

105

NICOLAS watches MRS. WATTS put a key into the lock of her hotel room door (number 33), open it, and disappear inside.

He's seen enough.

NICOLAS rushes down the hallway to the door and urgently knocks. He's gambling she didn't get a look at his face at their last encounter.

After a few tense moments, it swings open. MRS. WATTS stands in the doorway, motionless. The look on her face tells him she's never seen him before.

The big sunglasses cover much of her face. All you can see are high cheek bones and full lips. And they aren't talking.

NICOLAS fills the void with improvised chatter.

NICOLAS

I'm sorry to bother you but I rented this room last night and I think I left my disk here.

LILY

(speaking English with hardly a trace of a French accent)

A disk?

(CONTINUED)

NICOLAS

I'm a writer and come here to work sometimes. It being so quiet. I mean you could shoot off a gun and no one would hear a thing.

LILY nervously bites the bottom of her lip.

NICOLAS (CONT'D)

Anyway, when I got home this morning and checked my laptop, the backup disk was gone! It was my only copy so I searched like hell for it. Then I remembered the only place I could have left it was here.

Her body remains still. She not exactly brimming with hospitality. NICOLAS keeps pitching.

NICOLAS (CONT'D)

So would you mind if I come in and take a look around?

She takes a sudden nervous breath and starts coughing.

LILY

Of course not. Come in.

106 INT. SHERATON-ROOM 33 -DAY

106

NICOLAS enters and makes a elaborate search. In his rush he makes sure he accidentally knocks over the SHOPPING BAG.

The HAND GUN tumbles on the floor followed by the BOX OF BULLETS. NICOLAS picks the gun up. He studies it slowly and then looks at LILY. She nervously tries to get another breath but her asthmatic cough gets worse.

NICOLAS

Are you all right?

(CONTINUED)

LILY

No.

NICOLAS

I know I have been accused of having an overactive imagination but when a classy woman, with a beat-up face, checks into a airport hotel, in the middle of the day, with a bunch of bullets and a gun--- there's only one word that follows.

LILY

(breathing heavily)

What's that?

NICOLAS rolls three fingers into a fist, sticks his thumb straight up, and points his forefinger to his temple.

NICOLAS

"Bang".

LILY sits down on the bed trying to catch her breath. NICOLAS tucks the GUN into his pocket and sits down next to her.

NICOLAS (CONT'D)

But if a guy walks in. May be there doesn't have to be a "Bang"? Maybe there's something to talk about?

107 INT. SHERATON-COFFEE BAR -DAY

107

NICOLAS and LILY sit across each other at a small round table sipping espresso. There's a long silence. Finally, NICOLAS puts down his cup.

NICOLAS

Maybe we should start with some introductions?

(CONTINUED)

LILY

I don't care who you are. And I definitely don't want you to know who I am.

NICOLAS

Okay. Let's just call me "HARRY" and let's start with that shiner. Who's been beating you up?

LILY

Must we talk about this?

NICOLAS

Yes. Or we're going to find the local police station and talk about it there.

She thinks for a moment then slowly replies.

LILY

My husband.

NICOLAS

Why?

LILY

He has difficulty controlling his temper.

NICOLAS

Why does he lose it?

LILY

Because I can't live with him here.

NICOLAS

Why not?

(CONTINUED)

LILY

I have a past here. A past that can ruin his career. I was safe in the States but here- it only takes one picture...

NICOLAS

Like the one today?

LILY

Like the one today.

NICOLAS

I took that picture.

She stares at him hard for a beat; then slowly shakes her head.

LILY

So "Harry" is Nicolas Bardo--King of the Paparazzi. Why did you follow me, to get some more?

NICOLAS

No. I came to tell your security goon, a Mr. Shiff, that I couldn't stop the picture from being published.

LILY

Anyone can see that. You should have saved yourself the trip.

NICOLAS

And the only way out of this is a discrete bullet to the head?

LILY

That was my idea. Not too original but I was desperate.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LILY (CONT'D)

(beat)

This espresso is cold.

NICOLAS

Can I get you another cup?

LILY

Why? There's nothing more to say.

(coughing again)

Can I go now? You have the gun.

NICOLAS

Sex shops are open all day.

LILY

I don't think I'll be going to one.

NICOLAS

How can I be sure?

LILY

Just stay with me. I need some air but I don't want to talk anymore.

NICOLAS

Okay. I'll do all the talking.

108 EXT. AIRPORT WALKWAY -DAY

108

NICHOLAS talks to LILY as they walk near the hotel.

109 EXT. AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE -DAY

109

It's a grey day.

DISSOLVE TO:

110 INT. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE-PHILLIPS' OFFICE -DAY

110

STANFIELD PHILLIPS, Watts' high profile English attorney, is on the phone.

(CONTINUED)

## PHILLIPS

Then where is she? The Ambassador is extremely concerned.

(beat)

The Police! God, no. Just keep calling Shiff.

111 INT. SHIFF'S EXPLORER (EXT. SHERATON) -DAY

111

A CAR PHONE is ringing.

TIGHT CLOSE UP OF SHIFF

His face is bathed in sweat. He stares blankly down at the phone like it's the first time he's ever heard it ring. He listens hard, real hard. And hears something else. The sound of approaching footsteps. He looks up.

POV FROM THE DRIVER'S SEAT OF THE EXPLORER. IN THE DISTANCE, NICOLAS AND LILY WALK into the SHERATON.

112 EXT. SHERATON-3RD FLOOR CORRIDOR -DAY

112

NICOLAS and LILY stop in front of the door to LILY'S ROOM. A ROOM SERVICE WAITER carrying a tray of coffee cups passes by them. He wears dark pants, a white shirt, and a black jacket. He's MRS. WATTS' size and pinned to his lapel is a name tag with "Oliver" printed on it. MRS. WATTS takes this all in while NICOLAS rambles on.

## NICOLAS

So I was sitting at this table at my corner cafe and I saw something that changed my life.

LILY turns to face him. She raises her hand up to his face and gently places a finger on his lips.

(CONTINUED)

NICOLAS (CONT'D)

What? You've heard enough? This is the best part. Don't you want to know what changed my life?

LILY

It's a very interesting story Nicolas. Could be one of the best life stories I've ever heard. But I'm getting a little tired now. It's been kind of an exhausting day and I'd just like to get into a hot shower, wash my hair and relax a little before I go home.

NICOLAS

Okay.

(taking his KEYS out of his  
JACKET POCKET)

I'll wait here... or the in the car...

LILY

You don't trust me, do you Nicolas?

NICOLAS

Just being careful.

She gives a despairing sigh, breathing in deeply. She starts coughing again.

NICOLAS (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

LILY

(tired)

No. I'm not okay. I'm all out of my prescription.

(CONTINUED)

NICOLAS

There was a pharmacy on the road to the airport.

LILY

I know, and if you get the inhaler from my car, they will refill the prescription.

NICOLAS

(thinks for another beat)

That wouldn't be being careful.

She opens her purse and hands him the TICKET FOR HER CAR.

LILY

Take my car. In case you worried about me going anywhere.

NICOLAS puts his KEYS back in his pocket and takes the TICKET.

NICOLAS

You could call a taxi.

LILY

That's true Nicolas, I could call a taxi.  
But I'm not going to.

She opens the door, steps inside, and starts taking off her clothes, handing him one item at a time.

LILY (CONT'D)

I'm not going to need these in the shower and you can be sure that I'm not going to be going anywhere without them.

(CONTINUED)

NICOLAS stares deep into those dark glasses. He can't read her eyes but now he's sure he detects an ever so slight smile of those full lips.

NICOLAS

Are you flirting with me?

LILY

(all innocence)

Was I?

NICOLAS

I believe so.

LILY

Didn't mean to be. It just that all those boyhood adventures make you so...so...damn lovable. Was that the point?

She moves her body closer and kisses him gently on the lips. He kisses her back. She doesn't resist and NICOLAS wraps his arms around her.

While he thinks he's stealing her heart, LILY slips her hand into his JACKET POCKET and steals his KEYS.

113 INT. LILY'S LEXUS (EXT. SHERATON) -DAY

113

Her blouse, skirt, and bra are folded neatly on the passenger seat. Next to it is the SHOPPING BAG containing the GUN AND CARTRIDGES.

NICOLAS drives down the airport exit ramp smiling to himself. This Mrs. Watts. She's really something.

114 INT. SHERATON-ROOM 33 -DAY

114

Not exactly "the something" that NICOLAS had in mind.

(CONTINUED)

Wearing a towel, MRS. WATTS speaks quickly into the phone. She's no longer breathless and there's not a cough anywhere to be heard.

LILY

(in French)

Could you send Oliver up here with a bottle of champagne? Thank you.

She disconnects, waits for a dial tone, and then presses in more numbers.

LILY (CONT'D)

(in broken French)

Hello. Is this police? My name Sophia. I call now from the airport. De Gaulle. A man just hit a lady in the parking lot. In front of the pharmacy at the turn off. He steal her car. Big car expensive. White, maybe. No. No. He still here but I see lady no more. You come fast? Yes? Can no talk more. I go now. I get my kids.

LILY hangs up.

DISSOLVE TO:

115 INT. SHERATON-ROOM 33 -DAY

115

LILY wrapped in a bath towel sits before a desk mirror removing the make-up bruise around her eye. There's a knock at the door.

LILY

(in French)

Come in.

(CONTINUED)

The door and OLIVER enters the room, carrying a tray with a bottle of champagne and two glasses.

LILY (CONT'D)  
(in French)  
*Just put it down here.*

OLIVER places the tray on the desk.

LILY (CONT'D)  
(in French)  
*Could you hand me my bag. It's over there on the bed.*

When OLIVER turns to look, LILY picks up the bottle of champagne and bashes it over his head.

116 INT. SHIFF'S EXPLORER (EXT. SHERATON) -DAY

116

POV THROUGH CAR WINDOW OF MRS. WATTS LEAVING THE HOTEL, WEARING OLIVER'S CLOTHES. SHE GETS ON NICOLAS' MOTORCYCLE AND DRIVES OFF.

117 EXT. TURNOFF- DAY

117

LILY looks over as she drives past the pharmacy on Nicolas' motorcycle.

Bumper-to-bumper with her LEXUS is a POLICE CAR. She smiles to herself as NICOLAS is greeted by TWO POLICE OFFICERS as he crosses the parking lot.

DISSOLVE TO:

118 INT. POLICE STATION -DAY

118

NICOLAS is ushered into CHIEF DETECTIVE INSPECTOR SERRA'S OFFICE. SERRA is a tall, dark man with stiff black eyebrows, calm eyes and square jaw.

(CONTINUED)

NICOLAS sits down in a chair across from his desk. The ARRESTING OFFICER hands a report to SERRA and leaves. SERRA studies it for a long minute and then looks up at NICOLAS.

SERRA

This doesn't make much sense. Maybe you can help me out?

NICOLAS

Mrs. Watts was going to kill herself. I stopped her before she could do anything. So she set me up for your guys to get me out of the way.

SERRA

How did you come up with that?

NICOLAS

I read a lot mystery novels and can always figure out the endings half way into the book. I just put the facts together and figured out what happened.

SERRA

What happened, Mr. Bardo, was a car belonging to Ambassador Watts was found in your possession. On the front seat was a gun, bullets, blouse and dress. The only thing missing is the woman? Where is she?

NICOLAS

I don't know...did you check the hotel?

SERRA

Yes, we checked the hotel. We found a unconscious waiter without any clothes.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SERRA (CONT'D)

He doesn't know anything except he walked in the door, delivered a bottle of champagne, and got mugged from behind. How do you explain that?

NICOLAS

I don't know. I wasn't there. I was buying an inhaler.

SERRA

Inhaler?

NICOLAS

Mrs. Watts has asthma. I went to a pharmacy to get her prescription refilled.

SERRA

So you figured by having her car and her clothes she wasn't going anywhere?

NICOLAS

Right!

SERRA

And you kept the gun so she wouldn't shoot herself?

NICOLAS

Right.

SERRA

Why would she want to do that?

NICOLAS

Her husband was beating her up because she wanted to leave him.

(CONTINUED)

SERRA

The American Ambassador beats his wife?

NICOLAS

That's right and she had the face to prove it.

SERRA stands up, turns around and stares out the window for a beat. He looks like he just ate a bad oyster. Finally he turns back to NICOLAS.

SERRA

I'm kind of a mystery buff myself. And you know what kind of mystery this is? A kidnapping. Ambassador's wife held for ransom. Everything was going fine until someone reported a stolen car. You didn't even have time to send the ransom note... or did you?

NICOLAS

What are you talking about? I'm no kidnapper.

SERRA

Why don't we take a ride down to the Residence and see what the Ambassador has to say about that?

119 INT. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE-PHILLIPS' OFFICE -DAY

119

WATTS AND STANFIELD PHILLIPS stand behind a large, antique, 17th Century wooden desk. They stare at NICOLAS like he tracked shit onto their oriental rug. SERRA stands a little to his side.

(CONTINUED)

WATTS

I'm afraid this has been a terrible misunderstanding. Mrs. Watts explained to me that she let Mr. Bardo use her car. We don't know who reported it stolen because it wasn't. I've been advised by my attorney, Mr. Phillips that no crime has been committed so I'm a little confused as to why we are all here?

SERRA

You spoke to your wife yourself?

WATTS

Yes.

SERRA

Could I speak with her?

WATTS

(getting visibly upset)

I don't think that's necessary. This is an ...awkward situation for all concerned and I don't wish to prolong it.

PHILLIPS leans over to WATTS and whispers something in his ear. WATTS nods and stands up.

WATTS (CONT'D)

So if you excuse me, gentleman, I believe Mr. Phillips will be able to answer the rest of your questions.

WATTS crosses the office and exits by a side door. PHILLIPS turns to face SERRA.

(CONTINUED)

PHILLIPS

Inspector Serra you've displayed a boorish lack of sensitivity to the American Ambassador. We don't need or want your investigative skills employed to uncover the reasons why Mrs. Watts was in a hotel room this morning with Mr. Bardo. No car has been stolen. No crime has been committed. I suggest you return to your duties and drop this unfortunate matter. The less said about it the better.

Unmoved by Mr. PHILLIPS use of the "Big Stick."

SERRA

I'd still like to talk to Mrs. Watts.

PHILLIPS eyes narrow into a cold blackness.

PHILLIPS

And what crime is she charged with?

SERRA

No crime, I just want to see her.

PHILLIPS

Well, I'm sure we'd all like to see a lot of people but fortunately in our country and in yours, they aren't compelled to see us. Good day, Inspector Serra.

120 EXT. AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE -DAY

120

SERRA and NICOLAS stand before SERRA'S CAR.

(CONTINUED)

SERRA

Do you know the penalty for having an illegal hand gun?

NICOLAS

I told you, it's not my gun.

SERRA

Then we'll just keep it. Now about your motorcycle... You really want to report it stolen?

NICOLAS

Of course I want to report it stolen.

(getting a little hot)

If it wasn't at the hotel, somebody stole it.

SERRA

Why don't you look a little harder? If it doesn't turn up in a few days, give me a call.

SERRA gets into the car.

NICOLAS

Don't you believe one God damn thing I've said?

SERRA, first, starts up the engine and then looks over at NICOLAS.

SERRA

Not only don't I believe you, I don't even like you. You think you're smarter than everybody else. But what you're doing now? It's not smart.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SERRA (CONT'D)

And if you keep it up, you're going to wind up on a cell block full of smart guys just like you.

SERRA slams into gear and drives off. Sweat beads form on NICOLAS' forehead. What the hell has he gotten himself into?

121 INT. NICOLAS' APARTMENT -DAY

121

THROUGH NICOLAS' APARTMENT WINDOW, WE WATCH HIM walk across the square and stop. There's his MOTORCYCLE. Parked on the street. He looks at it a second thinking the police must have found it and dropped it off.

NICOLAS crosses the street in front of his apartment building and disappears from view.

WE PAN AROUND THE ROOM and get a look at the living quarters of the not so successful photographer. A lot of French detective novels stacked helter skelter on homemade shelves, photography equipment, a mini ice box, gas stove, microwave, unmade bed, work desk, laser printer and COMPUTER. The SCREEN SAVER IS ON.

SWISH PAN BACK TO:

122 THE DOOR (INT. NICOLAS' APARTMENT)

122

IT'S UNLOCKED.

NICOLAS pushes it open, flips on the light switch and looks around the room. Nothing seems to be missing. Not surprising because he owns nothing of value except his cameras and his computer. And it's untouched except... THAT IT'S ON.

Lying on the desk, next to it, are his missing KEYS.

NICOLAS crosses the room and sits down in front of his computer, and touches it's mouse.

(CONTINUED)

The SCREEN SAVER is replaced by a note that fills the screen:

"CHECK YOUR E-MAIL"

NICOLAS logs on.

He's not disappointed.

There's one message.

He double clicks it.

It reads: "The cat's in the bag. Meet me at the Passerelle Debilly at 10 PM. Did you send the ransom note?"

NICOLAS starts sweating. His life has become a film noir nightmare. What's next?

He checks his SENT MAIL.

An e-mail has been sent! He reads the address.

WATTSLINK.COM

He clicks on the message with increasing horror:

"Mr. Watts,

If you ever want to see your wife again bring 10 million dollars in Bearer Bonds to the Passerelle Debilly at 2AM this morning. If you inform the police or arrive with anyone besides yourself.-she will be killed."

123 EXT. THE PASSERELLE DEBILLY WALKWAY -NIGHT

123

And here we are at the steel arched bridge that LAURE saw when she arrived in Paris seven years ago.

(CONTINUED)

NICOLAS drives up to the staircase leading onto the bridge and gets off his motorcycle. Standing at the rail, looking down into the water, is LILY. She's wearing a light, tan, trench coat. She watches a large barge pass underneath the bridge. It's loaded with rolls of industrial insulation that are covered with tarps.

NICOLAS walks over to her.

NICOLAS

Mrs. Watts...

LILY

You can call me Lily.

He grabs her hard on the shoulders and whips her around to face him.

NICOLAS

Okay, Lily. What the hell do you think you're doing?

She looks up at him. No more glasses and her bruises are nowhere to be seen. Her blue-green eyes go soft and innocent.

LILY

Why, Nicolas? Are you mad at me?

NICOLAS

You're making everyone think I've kidnapped you.

LILY

Haven't you?

NICOLAS

That isn't funny.

(CONTINUED)

She turns away from him and looks back down into the restless water.

LILY

When you sold my picture to the papers, I knew I was dead. But then you came to what? Explain, apologize, lie? I turned the problem into the solution.

NICOLAS

What are you talking about?

LILY

I'm a bad girl, Nicolas. Real bad. The last scrape I was in - I fucked up a lot of people. Bad people like me. People that don't forget.

(beat)

But I was given a second chance. And if it meant letting some pathetic asshole shoot herself and burying her body. So be it.

(beat)

Like so many before me, I travelled to the new world and found untold riches and got everything a bad girl ever wanted. Watts was really a sweet guy until being the richest man in the world wasn't enough. He had to be God. So he gives away a ton of money and because he's half French, he gets the French Ambassadorship. Which meant the Misses gets dragged out into the Parisian limelight. I couldn't do that. Bad people read newspapers too.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LILY (CONT'D)

I pleaded with him not to take the post but couldn't understand what my problem was and I couldn't tell him the truth. So I got the photographer turned blackmailer to kidnap me.

NICOLAS

Blackmailer? You offered me money! And I never kidnaped anybody.

LILY

Then, where am I? Why did you have my car, my clothes, and a gun? And why was a ransom note written on, and e-mailed from, your computer? Everyone knows you did it.

In hopeless frustration he grips her harder.

LILY (CONT'D)

(laughing)

What are you trying to do? Kill me? Why would you want to do that? I'm the only one that can keep you out of jail.

NICOLAS realizing she's right, releases her.

NICOLAS

I've got to think.

LILY

Don't bother. I've got it all thought out for you. Watts is coming up here at 2 AM with 10 million dollars in a briefcase. I'm going to take the briefcase from him and walk right back here. You're going to be standing with your back to the rail and your gun on him.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LILY (CONT'D)

If he makes any move toward me, you shoot him. He won't know it's you, because you're not going to say anything and your face is going to be masked. When I hand you the case, I'm going to try and knock the gun out of your hand. I'm going to fail. The gun is going to go off between us. I'm going to spin around, making sure Watts sees the phony blood on my chest. and then I'm going over the rail with the money. My body is never going to be found. You get in your car and take off. Now if you start being a little nice to me, I might cut you in on the take.

NICOLAS thinks a minute then grabs LILY by the arm and starts dragging her to his car.

NICOLAS

We're going to the police.

LILY

Why would you want to do that?

NICOLAS

So you can tell them the crazy story you just told me now.

LILY

But I'm not going to tell them that story. I'm going to tell them a kidnapping story and you're going to be the leading character.

He opens the car door and starts to shove her in.

NICOLAS

Get in the car!

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly NICOLAS feels cold steel pressing into his heart.

LILY

Yes Nicolas, I did have time to go back  
to that sex shop. Don't make me use it.

NICOLAS releases his grip and backs away. LILY, still holding  
the gun to his heart, moves with him.

LILY (CONT'D)

Don't go away.

NICOLAS stops. She lays her head on his shoulder.

LILY (CONT'D)

Where's the other gun?

NICOLAS

The cops took it.

LILY

I kind of thought something was going to  
happen to that gun, so I got you another.

(snuggling close)

I like having your arms around me.

She looks up into his eyes, pulls him close and kisses him.  
Her lips are warm and persuasive. He can't help but respond.

LILY (CONT'D)

That's better. Don't you know a girl  
likes sugar better than vinegar?

NICOLAS is way in over his head here and by the look on his  
face, sees no way out.

LILY (CONT'D)

We have a little time, lover. Time to mix  
a little business with pleasure.

124 INT. SAILOR'S BAR-TABLE -NIGHT

124

LILY and NICOLAS sit in a table at the back. It's a seedy, rowdy place filled with an odd mix of sailors, boat captains, and rough trade. Since LILY is the best looking woman ever to hit this room, she's getting a lot of attention. Not from NICOLAS, however, who stares morosely into his drink. LILY, getting a bit pissed, knocks back another tequila.

LILY

What is your problem? I offer you the best deal of your life and you look like your dog died.

NICOLAS looks up at her.

NICOLAS

Why me?

LILY

Something Shiff said. He'd done a background check and said you were broke and had a record. Music to my ears.

She reaches across the table and takes his hand.

LILY (CONT'D)

I knew I had found my kidnapper.

NICOLAS pulls his hand away. LILY shakes her head and looks over at the bar. She's got many admirers.

LILY (CONT'D)

How come you're the only man in this room that doesn't want to fuck me?

NICOLAS gets up.

(CONTINUED)

LILY (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

NICOLAS

To get some cigarettes. And don't worry  
I'll be going anywhere while you've got  
my balls in your pocket.

NICOLAS turns his back on her and heads for the bar.

125 INT. SAILOR'S BAR-AT THE BAR -NIGHT

125

A beefy, pony-tailed, BARTENDER looks over at him

BARTENDER

(in French)

*What will it be?*

NICOLAS

(in French)

*A pack of cigarettes. Anything American.*

The BARTENDER reaches under the counter and hands him a pack  
of Camels.

BARTENDER

(in French)

*That's 21 francs.*

NICOLAS reaches into his pocket for the money and FEELS  
SOMETHING COLD, METAL, AND SQUARE.

His expression changes.

THERE STILL MAY BE A WAY OUT OF THIS!

NICOLAS pulls out a roll of bills and peels off a 50 franc  
note.

(CONTINUED)

The BARTENDER hands him the cigarettes. NICOLAS cracks open the pack, pulls out one, and lights up. He needs a plan. He inhales deeply, thinking.

Finally it comes to him and he turns around, and heads back towards Lily.

126 INT. SAILOR'S BAR-TABLE -NIGHT

126

Seated in his place is a tall, burly, BARGE CAPTAIN. He and LILY are knocking back tequilas together.

LILY

Hey, Nicolas, I want you to meet my friend here, Napoleon. He owns his own cement tug. Just what I need to be going under the bridge when I take my dive.

(running her hand up his thigh)

I think he's in love.

NICOLAS

Great. You want me to wait out in the car?

LILY

No way. We don't want to leave Nicolas in the car, do we Napoleon?

NAPOLEON smiles contemptuously as though he could give a flying fuck.

LILY (CONT'D)

If we hit it off, and judging by the size of this package...

(an erotic purr)

...hmmmmmm... I was thinking of letting you off the hook. I mean, you don't seem to enjoy my company much.

(MORE)

LILY (CONT'D)

Maybe I should just sail away with Napoleon here and you can go fuck yourself.

.She gets up, pulling NAPOLEON with her.

LILY (CONT'D)

Let's go see that pool table.

NICOLAS watches as they go past the bar and disappear down a dark hallway.

HIS FACE fills with concern. For his plan to have a chance, he's got to get LILY into a quiet place, alone.

NICOLAS goes after them.

127 INT. SAILOR'S BAR-POOL ROOM AND HALLWAY -NIGHT

127

The room is deserted. LILY follows NAPOLEON to the end of the pool table. He stops and turns around to face her. She puts her arms around his neck and spins him so his back is to the hallway.

As NICOLAS comes to a stop in the doorway, LILY pulls NAPOLEON'S FACE down to her and gives him a long luscious kiss.

Her head is abruptly yanked back. LILY stares into NAPOLEON'S cold eyes.

LILY

(in French)

Oops. I forgot. You don't kiss whores, right?

NAPOLEON answers by shoving her to her knees. Now she's eye level with that bulging crotch. She grips his heavy metal belt buckle and snaps it open.

(CONTINUED)

NICOLAS watches from the hallway as NAPOLEON'S greasy jeans hit the floor. His body, from the waist down is blocked from view by the end of the pool table. All he can see of LILY is the top of her head moving into NAPOLEON'S CROTCH.

LILY zips down NAPOLEON'S FLY and is about to reach inside his pants when he grabs her by the hair and yanks her up on her feet.

What does this ape want?

NAPOLEON picks LILY up and slams her, stomach down, on the pool table. He yanks up the back of her skirt and spreads her legs. He brutally begins to mount her from behind.

LILY looks up in to NICOLAS' shocked eyes.

She smiles. This is really getting to him.

NICOLAS moves quickly across the room and shoves NAPOLEON off her. He whips back around and pulls LILY up off the pool table.

She stumbles on to her feet, giggling.

Seizing hold of her hand, he turns toward the door when NAPOLEON viciously buries a pool cue into the back of his skull.

Everything goes black.

128 INT. SAILOR'S BAR-BACK ROOM -NIGHT

128

NICOLAS wakes up lying face down in bed. LILY'S behind him holding an ice pack on the throbbing welt on the back of his head.

LILY

My Prince awakes.

(CONTINUED)

NICOLAS

He could have killed you.

LILY

What are you talking about? He's going to save me from a dip in the Seine.

NICOLAS

What?

LILY

I'm going off the bridge into his boat. Poor Lily, whatever happened to her? Must have drowned and washed out to sea.

NICOLAS just stares at her, shaking his head.

LILY (CONT'D)

Why, Nicolas. I think you're a little bit jealous.

(feeling the ice pack)

Is this thing cold enough?

NICOLAS

Forget it.

LILY

I'm going to get some more ice.

LILY gets up from the bed and goes into the bathroom. He listens for a second as he hears her chipping off fresh ice.

NICOLAS reaches into his jacket and takes out his DIGITAL DISK RECORDER. Presses the record button and slips it into a slot between the headboard and mattress.

And not a second too soon as he hears LILY finish in the bathroom and walk back over to the bed.

(CONTINUED)

LILY (CONT'D)

Roll over. I'm sick of looking at the  
back of your head.

NICOLAS turns over to face her.

NICOLAS

How much time do we have?

LILY lifts his head and slips the ice pack under it. She  
rests her hands back on his chest and smiles.

LILY

Enough.

NICOLAS reaches up and pulls LILY down to him.

NICOLAS

I was jealous.

LILY

If you're trying to sweet talk me, save  
your breath. You can fuck me anytime you  
want.

NICOLAS

Why do you act like that?

LILY

Like what?

NICOLAS

Like a whore.

LILY

Because I am one.

(beat)

What do you want Nicolas? The sad story  
of my life? Because I've got a beauty.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

## LILY (CONT'D)

Where do you want me to begin? How about my childhood? I never had one. My parents? I never knew them. They dumped me in an orphanage the day I was born.

(beat)

The holy sisters were both mother and father to me. And they really loved me, Nicolas. How did I know? Because they were always pushing me into dark corners to touch me and kiss me. When they started shoving their fingers inside me - it hurt. I cried and they beat me. I pleaded with them to stop and they beat me harder. So I ran away to Paris and started living on the street. A kindly drug dealer took me in and taught me how to get guys off. I was a fast learner and he was so impressed he sold me to his clients. I could do a lot of guys in a day and made him plenty of extra cash. And I had a special talent. I was invisible. I could blow a guy while his girlfriend jacked up right next to him. You know why? I was ten.

Her delivery is tough but NICOLAS sees pain in her eyes.

## NICOLAS

I'm sorry about ... all that.

## LAURE

Why be sorry? He taught me how to lie, cheat, and steal. Everything a girl needs to know to have the good life. And it's just about to all pay off.

(CONTINUED)

NICOLAS

Listen to me. You don't have to do this tonight. We could just disappear...

NICOLAS takes her in his arms, looks deep into her eyes, and lies his ass off.

NICOLAS (CONT'D)

...together.

LILY

How romantic. But without the money? Are you nuts?

(pushing him away)

Look Nicolas, you're just a dumb guy that stumbled into hell. My husband didn't beat me up and suicide is the last thing on my mind. It was all an act. Just like the story I just told you. And you fell for it because you think people tell the truth. Well, you're wrong. They lie.

NICOLAS

That's a choice. A bad choice. There can be others.

He pulls her close again. She stares at him for a few seconds and then smiles.

LILY

Like doing the right thing?

NICOLAS

What goes around, comes around.

LILY

I've been there, Nicolas. Believe me. A long time ago I did the right thing to keep some ditz from having her head blown off. And you know what I got? A lifetime of looking over my shoulder. I'll never make that mistake again.

CUT TO:

129 INT. APARTMENT-BEDROOM/LIVING ROOM -NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 129  
TO LAURE WATCHING LILY JAM A GUN IN HER MOUTH AND PULL THE TRIGGER.

130 INT. SAILOR'S BAR-BACK ROOM -NIGHT 130

LILY

You know why no good deed goes unpunished? Because this world is hell and you're nothing but a fucking patsy. I made everyone think you kidnapped me so I could fuck my husband out of 10 million bucks. That's what it's all about Nicolas, me disappearing with 10 million bucks. So get the fuck up and let's go get it.

She shoves him away, gets up from the bed and goes into the bathroom. Nicolas takes a long breath, and starts to reach into the slot and pull out the disk recorder. LILY suddenly pops into the bathroom doorway. Nicolas freezes.

LILY (CONT'D)

And remember, you do just like I said, or people will die.

(CONTINUED)

NICOLAS stares back at her until she disappears back into the bathroom. She didn't see what he was doing. NICOLAS lets out a sigh as he checks his recorder. It's running and still recording.

Mrs. Watts just hung herself.

131 INT. SHIFF'S EXPLORER (EXT. SAILOR'S BAR) -NIGHT

131

POV FROM INSIDE CAR OF MRS. WATTS AND NICHOLAS EXITING THE BAR. IT'S A CONVERTED BARGE MOORED TO A SHORT PIER. THEY STEP OFF INTO A PARKING LOT.

THEY GET INTO MRS. WATTS' LEXUS AND DRIVE OFF. THE EXPLORER MOVES AFTER THEM.

DISSOLVE TO:

132 EXT. PASSERELLE DEBILLY -NIGHT

132

WATTS steps out of his car carrying the briefcase. NICOLAS, his face covered with a black ski mask, stands next to the rail holding a gun on him. LILLY is a few paces ahead of NICOLAS, watching her husband with a fearful look.

133 INT. SCHIFF'S EXPLORER (PASSERELLE DEBILLY) -NIGHT

133

POV THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD.

Fifty yards away from the ACTION but concealed in shadows, the VIEW from the front seat couldn't be better.

CUT TO:

134 SLIDING SHOT OF SHIFF (EXT. EXPLORER) -NIGHT

134

STARING OUT THE FRONT WINDOW. THE VIEW MOVES BACK REVEALING THE LONG MUZZLE OF A SILENCER, JAMMED INTO THE BACK OF HIS SKULL.

(CONTINUED)

HOLDING THE GUN IS WICKS.

CUT TO:

135 EXT. PASSERELLE DEBILLY- NIGHT

135

A cement barge slowly approaches. It's about 100 yards away.  
LILY takes a step towards WATTS.

LILY

Don't do anything foolish darling.

(moving closer)

He just wants me to take the money and  
bring it back to him.

WATTS

(calling out to NICOLAS)

Please don't hurt her. I did just as you  
said.

(holding up the briefcase)

All your money's here. I have told no  
one.

Suddenly, NICOLAS pulls off his ski mask revealing his face.

NICOLAS

Mr. Watts, it's Nicolas Bardo. Your wife  
is staging this kidnapping so she...

THERE ARE TWO QUICK SHOTS AND WATTS' CHEST EXPLODES.

NICOLAS stands motionless, shocked by LILY'S brutality. WATTS  
crumbles to the ground, dead. LILY whips around to face  
NICOLAS. The gun in her hand is still smoking.

LILY

What the fuck do you think you're doing?

(CONTINUED)

NICOLAS

(shaking his head in disbelief)

Why did you have to kill him?

LILY

Just being careful.

She starts to pull the trigger again. NICOLAS fires back.

TWO GUNSHOTS RING OUT IN THE NIGHT

136 EXT. EXPLORER -NIGHT

136

WICKS, still holding the gun on SHIFF, whispers vehemently to RACINE.

WICKS

That fucking bitch. She's at it again.

WICKS leans to the side to get a better view letting the gun barrel shift momentarily off SHIFF'S SKULL.

That's all SHIFF needs. Like a coiled snake, he whips around, grabbing WICKS' GUN with one hand and smashing him in the face with the other.

WICKS is knocked backwards into RACINE. SHIFF leaps over the seat and a ferocious fight to the death begins.

137 EXT. PASSERELLE DEBILLY -NIGHT

137

NICOLAS lies against the rail. He clutches his stomach. He's bleeding badly. LILY kneels down in front of him. She pulls the gun out of his gloved hand, empties it, and pitches it over the rail.

LILY

You didn't think I'd give you a gun loaded with real bullets, did you?

(CONTINUED)

She pulls off his gloves and dumps them in the river. She takes her gun and puts it in NICOLAS' HAND. He's so weak now he can hardly grip it. LILY, clamps her hand around his and points the gun right at his heart.

She freezes for a second. Listening.

There's a sound of a car starting up.

She turns back, staring right into NICOLAS' EYES.

LILY (CONT'D)

C'mon lover, we've got to do one more thing.

Brakes squeal. A car door opens. And there's the sound of distant footsteps.

LILY SCREAMS OUT FOR HELP AS SHE PRESSES NICOLAS' FINGER DOWN ON THE TRIGGER, FIRING A BULLET STRAIGHT INTO HIS HEART.

CUT TO:

138 RUNNING POV OF THE TRAGIC DEATH SCENE (PASSERELLE DEBILLY) 138

AS WE RACE ONTO THE BRIDGE, THERE IS MRS. WATTS CRADLING HER DEAD HUSBAND IN HER ARMS. HER GRIEF FILLED WAILS ARE AGONIZING TO HEAR. AS WE MOVE UP TO HER SHE TURNS HER TEAR STREAKED FACE RIGHT TO CAMERA.

HER LOOK OF SHOCK IS CLASSIC.

A DARK HAND SWEEPS INTO FRAME AND BRUTALLY SMACKS HER ACROSS THE FACE.

CUT TO:

139 WICKS (PASSERELLE DEBILLY)

139

His face covered with blood, stands over her. RACINE is right behind him.

He grabs LILY by the hair and yanks her to her feet.

WICKS

Fucking over everyone again! Not this time.

WICKS spins her around.

LILY

How did you find...?

RACINE holds her still while WICKS grabs hold of her right arm and twists it back until it snaps. LILY screams in pain.

WICKS

You should have stayed in America instead of posing for pictures in Paris.

He savagely grabs her other arm and breaks it too. LILY falls to the ground, almost passing out.

WICKS picks up the BRIEFCASE and flips it to RACINE. Then they drag her on to her feet.

WICKS (CONT'D)

C'mon, bitch, let's go for a swim.

They haul her over to the rail and shove her head over. The river rushes by below.

RACINE opens the briefcase takes out most of the money and stacks it on the road. He then closes the case and throws it over the side.

(CONTINUED)

WICKS (CONT'D)

Let's see now... you carry the briefcase over here to the kidnapper, he doesn't give a fuck and shoots your husband anyway. No witnesses. No problems. Overcome with grief, you valiantly charge him, grabbing his gun hand. The gun goes off and this poor fucker is dead. But the money...

He bangs her head against the rail.

WICKS (CONT'D)

...and you...

He bashes her head against the rail again, knocking LILY senseless.

WICKS (CONT'D)

... fall into the river...

They heave her limp body over the rail.

WICKS (CONT'D)

...all the money is lost and you...

LILY falls straight down into the deadly river. There's a rumble of thunder and a flash of lightning.

WICKS (CONT'D)

...DIE!

140 FROM UNDERWATER

140

WE SEE LILY HIT THE SURFACE OF THE RIVER AND SINK LIKE A STONE.

WE MOVE CLOSER TO LILY AND THE MOTION SLOWS UNTIL SHE FLOATS MOTIONLESS. ANOTHER FLASH OF LIGHTNING.

(CONTINUED)

SUDDENLY A DOOR SLAMS

LILY IS JOLTED AWAKE. HER EYES JERK OPEN AND SHE DESPERATELY FLOATS UPWARDS UNTIL SHE BREAKS THE SURFACE OF THE WATER AND FIND HERSELF IN...

SMASH CUT:

141 INT. APARTMENT-BATHROOM -NIGHT

141

...LILY'S BATH TUB.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN.

LAURE stares out the bathroom door to see LILY standing in the living room, distraught, depressed, and suicidal.

What the hell is going on?

LAURE thinks for moment and then...

From the TV, she hears the talk show MODERATOR.

MODERATOR (O.S.)

(in French)

*Can we see the future? In a crystal ball? On the palm of our hand? Or in a dream? And once we know it, can we change it?*

In the brief seconds, when LAURE closed her eyes, and dreamt about her future as LILY. She had a prophetic nightmare.

Live like a Scorpion. Die like a Scorpion.

142 INT. APARTMENT-BATHROOM/LIVING ROOM -NIGHT

142

LAURE turns off the bath water, pulls on a robe and scrambles into the nearby closet.

(CONTINUED)

She pushes the door slightly ajar and watches LILY cross into the living room, go over to the desk, drop the BROWN SHOPPING BAG, and sit down.

LILY opens the drawer, gets out the stationary, and starts writing the suicide note. And again, she goes to the kitchen and returns with the glass and bottle of gin.

When she's finished writing the note, she tapes it on the CALENDAR.

She then reaches down into the BROWN SHOPPING BAG, and pulls out a GUN and a BOX OF SHELLS.

LILY downs another shot and shoves a bullet into the gun.

LAURE watches with increasing emotion.

LILY spins the barrel, snaps it into place, and jams the nose of the gun into her mouth.

LAURE'S upper teeth dig into her trembling lower lip.

LILY grips the trigger and pulls it.

"CLICK"

LILY pulls the gun out of her mouth, takes a final shot of gin, shoves another bullet in the chamber, sticks the barrel back into her mouth, and...

LAURE RUSHES OUT OF THE CLOSET AND RIPS THE GUN OUT OF HER HAND.

LILY is first shocked, then just plain scared. Who is this apparition that looks exactly like her?

LAURE

(pointing the gun at LILY)

You know what's in this?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LAURE (CONT'D)

The bullet that's going to spread your brains all over that wall. You know how I know? Look at me! I'm your fucking fairy godmother and I know everything about you. So listen, asshole, because I'm giving you a chance to change your miserable life.

The storm starts to subside.

LAURE (CONT'D)

I know you got a bad break but that's history. Forget it, because if you can't, you might as well go ahead and pull the fucking trigger.

LILY stares at her, too frightened to move.

LAURE (CONT'D)

But if you don't end it here and get your ass on that plane to America, your future will be sitting right next to you. His name is Bruce and he's a wonderful man and rich man and he will look into your eyes and fall in love.

(beat)

From then on, you're on your own. But if you have a brain in your head you will open your heart to this man and fall in love too.

LAURE presses the gun to LILY'S forehead.

LAURE (CONT'D)

So what do you say? Do I pull the trigger or do you get on that plane and have a wonderful life?

(CONTINUED)

LILY grips the CRYSTAL BALL PENDANT, finally getting up the courage to speak.

LILY

(in schoolgirl English)

How do I know what you say is true?

LAURE

How do I know there is a bullet in the chamber?

LAURE JERKS TO GUN TO THE SIDE and pulls the trigger.

CUT TO:

143 EXT. TRUCK STOP GAS STATION -MORNING

143

On a brilliantly sunny day.

AN EXPLOSION OF SCREECHING AIR BREAKS.

THE REAL LILY, carrying a little suitcase stands before a HUGE SILVER TRAILER TRUCK. A FRIENDLY DRIVER opens the cab door and beckons her inside. LILY hands him her suitcase and climbs up into the passenger seat. He smiles at her and then shifts in to gear and stamps down on the gas.

144 INT. TRUCK -MORNING

144

The DRIVER looks over at the CRYSTAL BALL PENDANT the hangs around LILY'S NECK. They speak in French.

DRIVER

*That sure is pretty. Where did you get it?*

LILY

*In a curio shop in Nice. I got it for my daughter.*

(CONTINUED)

DRIVER

*I got a little girl myself. She's going to be ten next June. Do you remember the name of the store? I'd sure like to get her something like that for her birthday.*

LILY thinks for a moment, then takes the PENDANT from around her neck and hands it to the DRIVER.

LILY

*You give this to her.*

DRIVER

*(touched by her generosity)  
That's sure nice of you. She'll just love it.*

LILY

*It's just for a little girl. When she grows up, she'll think it's too silly. So you just take it and hang it right here.*

She points to the rear view mirror.

LILY (CONT'D)

*So that when you're driving your little girl will always be with you.*

CUT TO:

TITLE: PARIS--SEVEN YEARS LATER

145 EXT. PLACE MAURICE CHEVALIER, BELLEVILLE -DAY

145

Again WE MOVE INTO the sixth story window overlooking the CHURCH SQUARE. NICOLAS, sits in front of his computer screen, watching the live streaming video from the cafe table across the square.

146 INT. NICHOLAS' APARTMENT-ON THE COMPUTER MONITOR -DAY 146

There's a BEAUTIFUL GIRL seated at the table. She seems to be looking up at him and smiling.

147 NICOLAS (INT. NICOLAS' APARTMENT) 147

only catches a brief glimpse of her before she's blocked from view by the passing traffic. The phone rings. NICOLAS answers it. It's JEAN.

JEAN (V.O.)

Hi, what are you doing?

NICOLAS

Looking at a very beautiful girl across the street.

JEAN (V.O.)

I could of told you that years ago. Nobody is interested in tables unless there's a pretty girl at it.

NICOLAS

The light and the way she's smiling, it's just the piece I need.

JEAN (V.O.)

Are you eating?

NICOLAS

Barely.

JEAN (V.O.)

How would you like to make some real money?

NICOLAS

What are you selling?

(CONTINUED)

JEAN (V.O.)

You know who Bruce Hewitt Watts is?

NICOLAS

The new American ambassador?

JEAN (V.O.)

Bingo. Well, guess what? He's got a this wife and three kids but no one seems to have a picture of them.

NICOLAS

Maybe they're camera shy? I know it's hard to imagine, Jean, but some people like to keep their home life private.

JEAN (V.O.)

What's happened to you? You found God or something? You owe me pal.

NICOLAS

And I guess I'm going to have to keep on owning you. C'mon Jean, the sun's perfect and that girl is still smiling at me.

He hits the keyboard and the picture freezes on the screen.

NICOLAS (CONT'D)

Au revoir.

His masterwork is complete. Now all he needs is someone to celebrate with. NICOLAS hangs up the phone, grabs a jacket, and runs out the door.

148 EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE-PLACE MAURICE CHEVALIER-BELLEVILLE -DAY 148

WE WATCH NICOLAS cross the street and walk over to the table where the GIRL is seated. She turns to face him and for the first time...

(CONTINUED)

WE SEE IT'S LAURE.

NICOLAS says something and she throws her head back and laughs.

CUT TO:

149 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -DAY

149

The prison bus pulls away and WICKS, wearing his blood-stained tuxedo, moves out on to the dusty country road. He looks around and he sees a huge SILVER TRAILER TRUCK approaching.

150 INT. TRUCK -DAY

150

That FRIENDLY DRIVER that gave LILY a lift, watches WICKS step into the road. He hits the horn. WICKS doesn't move.

THE DRIVER starts to turn the wheel when suddenly, his eyes are BLINDED with sunlight.

151 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -DAY

151

WICKS is mesmerized by the truck's size and speed. He hasn't seen anything this wild in seven years. He closes his eyes.

152 INT. TRUCK-MOVING -DAY

152

HANGING FROM THE TRUCK REAR VIEW MIRROR IS THE CRYSTAL BALL PENDANT..

magically sparking with reflected sunlight.

153 INT. TRUCK-DRIVER'S EYES -DAY

153

Suddenly widening in the glare.

154 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -DAY

154

The TRUCK SWERVES.

(CONTINUED)

But too little. Too late.

It mercifully drives WICKS so far into the ground that he won't be hurting anybody, ever again.

And RACINE, watching helplessly from the car across the road, just has time to cross himself before the truck plows into him head-on sending him on his own infernal journey.

THE END