

# **GRAND THEFT PARSONS**

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**OPENING TITLE.**

**"ALTHOUGH THIS MOTION PICTURE IS INSPIRED BY A TRUE STORY,  
CERTAIN CHARACTERS AND EVENTS ARE FICTIONAL."**

**FADE IN:**

**SUPER: 'SEPTEMBER 1973'.**

**INT. PHIL KAUFMAN'S BEDROOM. NIGHT**

A phone rings in the dark. A little light falls from the open window, illuminating an old bakelite telephone. It sits on a small table alongside a large amount of empty bottles and a couple of overflowing ashtrays.

**EXT. PHIL'S TRIKE. NIGHT**

A three wheeled motorcycle is being driven through the night at great speed. The trike is moving very quickly, its headlights cutting through the darkness, its wheels sending a spray of sand flying towards us, as the driver fights to keep it on the road. This is PHIL KAUFMAN, and he's in a hurry.

**INT. JOSHUA TREE INN - ROOM 8. NIGHT**

Two figures are struggling on the floor. The male is naked. The woman sits astride him, her movements urgent, her breath fast. They appear to be having sex.

**EXT. TRIKE. DAWN**

The Trike cuts through the night, and we pull back to show desert, more desert, and then... a giant bright, flickering neon sign: 'Welcome to the Joshua Tree Inn'.

**INT. PHIL KAUFMAN'S BEDROOM. NIGHT**

That phone - still ringing; shrill, insistent. There is a bed next to the table. It is covered in clothes, but there is also a man's shape, which now moves.

**INT. JOSHUA TREE INN - ROOM 8. NIGHT**

A little more light, and it now appears as if our man and woman are struggling. There is fear on her face.

**INT. PHIL KAUFMAN'S BEDROOM. NIGHT**

Still that insistent ringing, and the covers suddenly fly off the bed. We see the man from behind as he shakes the sleep away and looks for the damn phone.

2.

**INT. JOSHUA TREE INN - ROOM 8. NIGHT**

The woman is screaming now, and banging on the man's chest with her fists. He is motionless underneath her.

**EXT. OUTSIDE JOSHUA TREE INN. DAWN**

The Trike skids to a halt amid a cloud of dust and the driver leaps off. He runs at the door, throwing it open in one movement, disappearing into the room. A broken striped 'No Entry - Police' band flutters to the ground.

**INT. PHIL KAUFMAN'S BEDROOM. NIGHT**

The man finally answers the phone. At last the ringing stops.

**PHIL**

Hello?

**EXT. OUTSIDE JOSHUA TREE INN - ROOM 8. NIGHT**

The door bounces back open, and we can see the Phil walking quickly through the room.

As he searches, we hear:

**WOMAN'S VOICE**

Oh my God please help me! I  
found your number in his pocket  
and I don't know... I don't know  
what to do.

**PHIL'S VOICE**

Ah, what... who are you?

**WOMAN'S VOICE**

He's dead... he's dead... and  
I'm... just... I don't know what  
to do.

The man glances into the bathroom and opens some drawers.

**PHIL'S VOICE**

Hold on. Tell me who's dead.

**WOMAN'S VOICE**

Parsons. Gram Parsons. We met  
in a bar and we had a lot to  
drink and he just...

**PHIL'S VOICE**

Are you sure he's dead?

He looks under the beds.

3.

**CON TINUE D:**

**WOMAN'S VOICE**

Yeah. He's really dead. He  
just...

**PHIL'S VOICE**

Listen. Call an ambulance.  
Where are you?

**WOMAN'S VOICE**

Joshua Tree. Joshua Tree Inn.  
Room eight.

He checks on top of the wardrobe.

**PHIL'S VOICE**

Have you got a car?

**WOMAN'S VOICE**

Yes.

**PHIL'S VOICE**

Call an ambulance. Then get out  
of there. Okay? Okay?

**WOMAN'S VOICE**

Yeah, okay. I'm goin'...

He picks up a sheet of paper from the bedside table and  
glances at it. He turns and walks past us to the car and

for the first time we see Phil Kaufman's face.

**EXT. JOSHUA TREE HOSPITAL. MORNING**

The Trike skids to a halt outside the small white hospital. There are a couple of press vehicles parked outside, and a reporter is recording a piece to camera in the background. Phil sits for a moment, and then opens the door and walks to the entrance.

**INT. JOSHUA TREE HOSPITAL. MORNING - MOMENTS LATER**

We move through the reception area up to the nurses' station. Phil is in conversation with a large woman in a nurse's uniform.

**NURSE**

You wanna run that by me again, sir?

**PHIL**

Okay. I'd like to see Gram Parsons.

They stare at each other.

4.

**CON TINUE D:**

**NURSE**

You want to see Gram Parsons?

**PHIL**

Yes. Alone, if possible. And would you have a gurney standing by in case I need to move him?

She looks carefully at the pyjamas which peek out from under the shabby overcoat. His hair is on end. He is wearing biker boots and is holding an unlit but half-smoked cigar.

**NURSE**

And you are.... his physician?  
Or perhaps a close relative?  
Phil clears his throat.

**PHIL**

Actually, I'm his road manager.

The big nurse smiles mirthlessly.

**NURSE**

So you're not his physician or a close relative?

A beat.

**PHIL**

No.

**NURSE**

Mister Parsons is awaiting a post mortem. He will then be delivered to his family. I suggest you speak to them if you wish to pick through his personal effects. Sir.

She turns away.

**PHIL**

Now listen here...

**NURSE**

No, you listen here. Mister Parsons is dead and no longer appears to need a road manager. Which makes two of us.

The nurse turns and marches down the corridor. Phil waits until she's gone and then walks through a door marked 'Admittance only to Authorized Hospital Staff'.

5.

**INT. HOSPITAL LOCKER ROOM. MORNING**

Phil slips off his overcoat and stuffs it into the trash. He tosses away the unlit cigar, grabs a white coat from a hook and puts it on. He walks out through another door.

**INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR. MORNING**

Phil wanders down the corridor, glancing into rooms and checking signs. He pushes open a door marked 'Pathology'.

**INT. HOSPITAL PATHOLOGY LAB. MORNING**

The room is empty, except for a couple of covered bodies on trolleys. Phil checks under the first sheet, and recoils at whatever it is which lies beneath.

**PHIL**

Sheesh!

He walks over to the next gurney and lifts the sheet. He stares down at the body, visibly moved.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Hello buddy. How you been?

He stands for a moment, gripping the gurney and looking down at his friend. Then he snaps out of it.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Well, I can't stand around here  
chatting with you all day.  
Things to do...

He wheels the gurney towards the door.

**INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR. MORNING**

Phil wheels the gurney down the corridor towards the exit. A doctor in green scrubs approaches and glances down at a clipboard.

**DOCTOR**

Can I help you?

**PHIL**

Naw, I'm cool thanks.

The doctor reads the tag on the body's toe.

**DOCTOR**

What are you doing?

**PHIL**

Just taking some stiff down to  
neurology.

**6.**

**CON TINUE D:**

**DOCTOR**

We don't have a neurology  
department.

**PHIL**

Urology.

The doctor grabs the end of the gurney. Phil tugs and the doctor tugs back. After a moment, Phil sighs and shakes his head in frustration.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Okay. Just hold your horses -  
I'll go check the paperwork.

The doctor holds up his clipboard.

**DOCTOR**

I have the paperwork.

**PHIL**

No. You have your paperwork. I  
need to go check my paperwork.

for He slips through the exit. The doctor waits awkwardly  
a few seconds, and then pushes open the door.

**DOCTOR**

Hello? Hello...

He glances around in surprise, but there is no-one in  
sight.

**EXT. DESERT. MORNING**

To Phil's trike accelerates as it approaches a T junction.

the right the sign points to 'Joshua Tree Town', to the  
left 'Los Angeles'. The trike doesn't even slow as it  
skids left, sending a spray of sand and gravel flying  
across the road.

NB. There will be several shots of Phil driving through  
the desert, set to music.

**EXT. PHIL'S STREET. DAY**

The Trike pulls up outside a rambling old house. Two  
enormous plaster eagles flank the front door, a giant  
Harley Davidson sign hangs from the roof, and there's a six  
foot flashing neon star in the front window. Phil gets  
out, walks up to the door and pulls some keys out of his  
pocket.

7.

**INT. PHIL'S SITTING ROOM. DAY**

Phil walks into the room and pours himself a drink. He  
slumps onto the couch, takes a sip and closes his eyes. We  
see movement behind him, as an attractive girl slips

through a door and approaches Phil from behind. This is SUSIE, and she puts her hands over his eyes.

**SUSIE**

Guess who?

**PHIL**

Martin Luther King.

**SUSIE**

Try again...

Susie leans over the back of the chair and gives Phil a long slow kiss. She jumps over the couch and resumes kissing, this time more passionately. Phil tries to pull away with little success.

**PHIL**

This.... ...isn't.... ...the  
best time... ...Baby....

Susie continues regardless, Phil is now finding it hard to resist. He eventually gives in, and they begin to kiss passionately.

**INT. PHIL'S KITCHEN. DAY**

Phil and Susie are sitting at the kitchen table. He takes a drag from her cigarette and passes it back.

**SUSIE**

God damn! I'm so sorry, baby.

**PHIL**

Yeah, out of a job again.

**SUSIE**

Would never have happened if you were there.

**PHIL**

How do you know I wasn't?

**SUSIE**

Well, if you were, you wouldn't have let him die.

**PHIL**

I was still 'on staff'. He was still my responsibility.

They sit quietly for a moment.            Then:

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

So where have you been, anyway?

She sighs, and stands up.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

How long this time? Two weeks?

**SUSIE**

Yeah, let's have this conversation again. Like you haven't just done six weeks on the road...

**PHIL**

Yeah, but I usually leave a note. And there's a paycheck involved.

Susie disappears through the door. Phil's shoulders sag and he slumps against the wall. Then Susie reappears with a bottle of Jack Daniels and a couple of glasses. She pours out two generous measures and hands one to Phil.

**SUSIE**

Come here...

After a moment, he gets up and follows her out of the room.

**INT. PHIL'S SITTING ROOM. DAY**

Susie guides Phil to a chair and sits him down.

**PHIL**

What's this?

**SUSIE**

This is a remembrance.

She crosses to a record player and turns it on, pausing to let down the blind on the way back. 'In My Hour of Darkness' (or similar music) fills the room.

**SERIES OF  
SHOTS:**

**A) PHIL TAKES A DRINK.**

**B) GIRL IN TEARS TO CAM OUTSIDE THE JOSHUA TREE MOTEL:**

**GIRL**

(Earnestly)  
He was so beautiful, and he  
understood what my heart was  
feeling. I'll...

(MOR E)

9.

CON TINUE D:

GIR L (CONT'D)

never laugh again. My inner joy  
has gone. It evaporated when  
Gram departed.

C) MUSIC 'EXPERT' ON CHAT SHOW

EXPERT

He sang country music in a way  
that it had never been sung  
before. It was 'country rock',  
if you like. And it was kinda  
catchy. At least, the young  
people seemed to lap it up. It's  
fair to say that when Gram  
Parsons died, he died a star.

D) PHIL TAKES ANOTHER DRINK. HE MAY BE CRYING.

E) HIPPIE TO CAM FROM A STREET IN LA:

HIPPIE

It's like... I can't... It was  
real, kinda... I... Oh, man.

F) PHIL SLEEPS, AND THE GLASS SLIPS FROM HIS HAND.

G) REPORTER TO CAM FROM OUTSIDE JOSHUA TREE HOSPITAL:

REPORTER

And another light burns out in  
the desert. Gram Parsons - the  
standard bearer of the new  
country music movement - is dead,  
following an overdose of drugs.  
While many of America's young  
people are today in mourning,  
their parents will view this as  
another example of how today's  
drug culture can so easily claim  
a life. We'll leave you tonight  
with the young man's own words.  
Gram Parsons wrote a song called  
'In My Hour of Darkness', which  
contains these words: 'In my hour

of darkness...'

We are back in Phil's sitting room. Fade up on the music, to match the reporter's words, as Gram's voice fills the room: (or similar music).

**GRAM'S VOICE**

In my hour of darkness, in my  
time of need, Oh Lord grant me  
vision, Oh Lord grant me speed.  
Oh Lord grant me vision, Oh Lord  
grant me speed.

10.

**CON TINUE D:**

Susie tenderly throws a blanket over the sleeping Phil as the record ends. She turns the light off and the room goes dark.

**INT. PHIL'S SITTING ROOM. DAY**

Susie walks in with a coffee. She sits beside Phil and strokes his head until he wakes. She kisses him and passes him the cup.

**PHIL**

Hello.

**SUSIE**

Hi.

He sits up and stretches. She leans over to kiss him, then stands and starts to tidy. He watches her. She picks up some clothing from near his chair and moves away. He drops another piece of clothing on the same spot. She says nothing and picks it up. He takes a sock off and drops it. It has stopped being a game and started being a statement. She picks the sock up and drops it in his lap. He pushes it back onto the floor. She opens her arms and everything falls to the floor. She walks out of the room and into the kitchen. He follows.

**INT. PHIL'S KITCHEN. DAY**

Susie leans on the table, staring out of the window. Phil walks up behind her.

**PHIL**

When you're here, I spend my time  
wondering when you're going. And  
when you're back, I wonder where  
you've been.

She turns and walks round to face him.

**SUSIE**

Phil, you give me laughs and a great time. But I'm not sure if that's enough.

**PHIL**

You mean there's more than that?

**SUSIE**

Yes, there's more than that! There's dependable, responsible, reliable...

11.

**CON TINUE D:**

**PHIL**

There's dull, boring, normal. You should hook up with someone who works in a bank. I know a guy, actually. He has fish for dinner every Friday, cleans his shoes twice a week and buys his ties in bulk because it works out cheaper that way. I'll put you in touch.

**SUSIE**

I don't mind loving a crazy bastard, Phil. But you've got to be for something and not just against everything. You have to choose something to represent.

**PHIL**

I represent the combined forces of charm, enchantment and exuberance.

**SUSIE**

Your job is to arrange other people's lives. Maybe it's time to put a little thought into your own.

Susie walks out of the room.

**EXT. SUBURBAN STREET. DAY**

A suburban street of small, neat bungalows. We move down the street, past house and identical house, until we rest outside another that is identical to the rest. The front door opens, and a nondescript man emerges, carrying a small overnight bag. He carefully locks the door and walks down the path to where a cab waits. We can clearly see 'New Orleans Taxi' marked on the door.

**MAN**

Airport, please.

This is STANLEY PARSONS, Gram's father.

**INT. PHIL'S SITTING ROOM. DAY**

There is a loud banging on the front door. Phil glances out of the window, and looks momentarily puzzled. He opens the door, and a beautiful woman stands on the step.

**PHIL**

Long time, no see, Barbara.

12.

**CON TINUE D:**

**BARBARA**

Don't try and schmooze me,  
Kaufman, you repellent slimeball.

She notices Susie standing behind Phil.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

The latest victim?

Barbara walks past them into the kitchen.  
quizzically at Phil.

Susie looks

**PHIL**

Meet Barbara.

Barbara calls out from the kitchen.

**BARBARA**

It's a lot tidier than I  
remember.

Susie raises an eyebrow at Phil.

**SUSIE**

Who the hell is she?

**PHIL**

Gram's ex-girlfriend.

Phil points at his temple as if to say she's nuts.

**SUSIE**

Girlfriend? Isn't he married?

Barbara walks back into the hall.

**BARBARA**

Welcome to the seventies.

**PHIL**

What do you want, Barbara?

Barbara lights a cigarette.

**BARBARA**

I'm here to fulfill Gram's wishes.

She waits for him to speak.

**PHIL**

That's nice. I have no idea what you're talking about.

She holds up an old piece of writing paper.

13.

**CON TINUE D: (2)**

**BARBARA**

Do you know what this is?

Phil reaches for it, but Barbara snatches it away.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

It's Gram's will.

She reads it out.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

To whom it may concern: I would like it to be known that it is my wish to leave Barbara Mansfield my assets and belongings in the event of my death. Signed: Ingram Cecil Parsons.

Phil looks surprised.

**PHIL**

Did he write that with joined up

writing or was it before he knew  
how?

Barbara gives a wry smile.

**BARBARA**

Still the jester Kaufman, and  
still very unfunny.

**PHIL**

That's not a will Barbara, and  
you know it.

**BARBARA**

It's better than a will,  
actually. It's a signed promise  
from Gram to leave me all his  
assets and belongings. And  
anyway, it's really none of your  
business what this is. I've come  
for the guitar.

Phil shakes his head.

**PHIL**

Guitar?

**BARBARA**

Yes. Gram's guitar. He always  
kept it here.

**PHIL**

It's been a while since you were  
around, Barbara.

**(MOR E)**

**14.**

**CON TINUE D: (3)**

**PHI L (CONT'D)**

Gretchen, his wife, took it back  
six months ago.

Barbara leans forward until their noses are almost  
touching.

**BARBARA**

I don't believe you, Kaufman.

Barbara pushes past Phil who gives no resistance. She  
walks straight over to the couch and starts pulling up the  
cushions. Susie moves to stop her, but Phil holds her back  
and lets Barbara carry on.

**INT. PHIL'S LOUNGE. DAY**

Phil and Susie sit on the sofa, an island of calm in a sea of chaos. Around them, the floor is covered with papers, clothing, empty record covers, torn open cushions and books. A broken drawer is propped against the table. A lampshade hangs crazily from its bearings, throwing strange shadows around the room. Suddenly, Susie gets up and kicks a cushion across the room.

**PHIL**

Hey, well done. You found the only unbroken thing.

**SUSIE**

Why did you let her in?

**PHIL**

It's all part of the grieving process.

**SUSIE**

How can she behave that way?  
Gram's not even in the ground yet.

Phil stares at her.

**SUSIE (CONT'D)**

What?

**PHIL**

Nothing.

He continues to look at her oddly.

**SUSIE**

Don't you freak out on me.

**PHIL**

Do me a favor and get the guitar, sweetheart.

**15.**

**CON TINUE D:**

He disappears into the kitchen.

**SUSIE**

Where are you going?

**PHIL**

**(O.S)**

I gotta make a call.

**INT. JOSHUA TREE FUNERAL HOME. DAY**

A man with glasses and an ill-fitting black suit does some paperwork. He is surrounded by coffins displaying garish 'special offer' price tickets. The phone rings, and the undertaker takes his time answering it.

**UNDERTAKER**

Afternoon. Joshua Tree  
Obsequies.

**INT. PHIL'S KITCHEN. DAY**

Phil is holding the phone. He frowns.

**PHIL**

(into phone)  
Obsequies? What the hell does  
that mean? I'm...

**INT. JOSHUA TREE FUNERAL HOME. DAY**

We hear the rest of Phil's mutter from the phone in the undertaker's hand.

**UNDERTAKER**

It's Latin. It means burial. Is  
there anything I can help with?  
Who am I speaking to?

**INT. PHIL'S KITCHEN. DAY**

Phil straightens up. He speaks curtly.

**PHIL**

Yes, you can help me as a matter  
of fact. I am...

**INT. JOSHUA TREE FUNERAL HOME. DAY**

Again, we hear Phil's voice trumpeting out of the phone.  
The undertaker changes his tone.

**UNDERTAKER**

Mister Parsons? I'm sorry, I'll  
take a look immediately.

He puts down the phone and flicks through a big book. He purses his lips. He wipes his nose with a white silk handkerchief. Then he picks up the phone.

**UNDERTAKER (CONT'D)**

Yeah, he was here.

Mutter.

**UNDERTAKER (CONT'D)**

New Orleans. Although he only just went, so he'll still be on his way to Los Angeles Airport. Big thrill for us here, as we're only a small facility. Nearly got Jane Mansfield in '67 when she passed through, but she got diverted to Frisco. Hello?

No mutter.

**UNDERTAKER (CONT'D)**

Hello. Hellooo...

**INT. PHIL'S KITCHEN. DAY**

The phone sits on the table but the room is empty.

**SUSIE**

**(O.S)**

Phil?

Susie walks in, looks around, and leaves.

**EXT. PHIL'S DRIVEWAY. DAY**

Phil is lying down in the back of Susie's station wagon, his feet sticking out of the back. Susie comes out of the house carrying the guitar, and sits on the steps, where she watches him. After a minute:

**SUSIE**

What are you doing?

**PHIL**

These things aren't that big.

**SUSIE**

Okay. Is that a problem?

**PHIL**

Not really.

Susie is confused.

17.

**CON TINUE D:**

**SUSIE**

Well, that's good.

her No answer. Phil continues to check out the inside of car.

**SUSIE (CONT'D)**

So what are you up to?

**PHIL**

It's best you don't know.

Without a word, Susie gets up and walks into the house. Phil lies still. After a moment, she reappears with her bag. She flounces theatrically past him and opens the car door. Phil gets out of the back.

**SUSIE**

I don't know what this madness is, but I'm not getting involved.

**PHIL**

Well, that's the point.

**SUSIE**

I mean, I don't know what it is you're planning, but I'm not bailing you out again.

**PHIL**

Right.

**SUSIE**

I'm going.

**PHIL**

Again.

She gets into the car and slams the door. She starts the engine, and Phil stands back, but the car doesn't move. After a moment the window winds down.

**SUSIE**

This time, I'm not coming back.

She gives him a 'so there' smile.

**SUSIE (CONT'D)**

I'm going to find a man who buys  
his ties in bulk.

She drives away.

**EXT. LARRY OSTERBERG'S HOME. DAY**

Phil arrives on his trike outside a small house.

18.

**INT. LARRY OSTERBERG'S HOME. DAY**

A man is sitting cross-legged on the floor. A joss stick burns beside him, and sitar music plays in the background. This is LARRY OSTERBERG, and he is meditating. There is a loud hammering on the door. Larry shows no sign of having heard anything. More hammering at the door, but still no response. Then the letter box creaks open and an eye appears in the slot. After a moment, the eye disappears and Phil's face appears momentarily at the window. The window seems to be slightly higher than Phil, so his face appears every time he jumps up to peer into the room.

**PHIL**

**(O.S)**

Hello? Anyone there?

Then Phil is gone. Larry expels a big breath. The letterbox creaks opens again and the eye is back.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

**(O.S)**

There you are. I'm looking for  
Larry Osterberg.

Larry sighs, and stretches. He gets up slowly, gently shakes himself to relax his muscles and walks to the door, which he opens.

**LARRY**

The door is unlocked.

Phil barrels in and closes the door behind him. He turns to take a look around the room.

**PHIL**

You Larry Osterberg?

**LARRY**

Yes. Welcome to my house.

This might be sarcastic, but any nuance is lost on Phil,  
who props the guitar up against the wall.

**PHIL**

Very nice.       What's that noise?

**LARRY**

Manomanjari on the sitar by  
Nikhil Banerjee.

(NB. Similar music may  
be used in this scene)

Phil stares at him.

19.

**CON TINUE D:**

**PHIL**

(carefully)

Okay.

He pops a cigar into his mouth.

**LARRY**

There's no smoking in here, I'm  
afraid.

Phil stares meaningfully at the burning joss stick, but  
puts the cigar away.

**PHIL**

Right.

**LARRY**

Who are you, please?

**PHIL**

Oh, I'm Phil Kaufman.

**LARRY**

And how may I help you, Phil  
Kaufman?

**PHIL**

I'd like to hire your car.

**LARRY**

Why?

**PHIL**

Well, I need to pick someone up  
at the airport.

**LARRY**

Don't you know anyone with a car?

**PHIL**

Yes, of course. It's just that I'm told your car is more suitable.

**LARRY**

I see. In what way is my car more suitable?

**PHIL**

Well... it's a hearse.

**LARRY**

Yes.

They both look at each other. Larry waits for Phil to speak.

20.

CON TINUE D: (2)

**LARRY (CONT'D)**

And how is a hearse going to be suitable for picking someone up from the airport?

**PHIL**

It's... a joke.

**LARRY**

A joke?

He doesn't look entirely convinced.

**PHIL**

A prank. A surprise.

**LARRY**

Well, okay. Is it two hundred dollars worth of surprise?

**PHIL**

No, it's more of a fifty dollar surprise.

**LARRY**

I can lend you a bicycle. Besides, the car is booked.

**PHIL**

Booked how?

**MAN**

I use it to carry equipment for a band.

Phil pulls some cash out of his pocket and sorts through it.

**PHIL**

Well, here's two hundred dollars to unbook it. Let 'em carry their own trombones.

Phil passes the money over. Larry starts to count it.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

You don't need to count it. You could trust me.

Larry doesn't pause counting.

**LARRY**

Let's see; I've never met you in my life, you shout through my mail slot, you want to hire my hearse as a joke, and...

**(MOR E)**

21.

**CON TINUE D: (3)**

**LAR RY (CONT'D)**

you're twenty dollars short. Why should I trust you?

**PHIL**

That last twenty is for gas. Anyway - I haven't even seen the car yet. I'm the one who's operating on trust.

**LARRY**

It's a hearse. What else do you need to know?

**EXT. OUTSIDE LARRY OSTERBERG'S GARAGE. DAY**

The garage doors swing open and a hearse drives out into the sun. It is bright yellow and covered in painted flowers. One of the side windows is broken and a headlight hangs out. Phil's jaw drops open. Larry gets out of the driving seat and pats the roof, proudly.

**LARRY**

Meet Bernice.

**PHIL**

Bernice?

**LARRY**

Bernice is a Cadillac Superior Royale Tiara Limousine Funeral Coach. We've got a Seven gallon V8 engine offering three hundred and forty bhp at four thousand six hundred revolutions per minute. You're looking at a twenty one feet beauty with a one hundred and fifty six inch wheelbase containing a four barrel Rochester Quadrajet carburetor with Turbo Hydramatic transmission. Bernice weighs over six thousand pounds.

There is a very long silence.

**PHIL**

It's yellow.

**LARRY**

Yes, it's yellow.      Bernice comes in yellow.

**PHIL**

It's supposed to be black.

**LARRY**

But they're all black.

22.

CON TINUE D:

**PHIL**

That might be my point.

**LARRY**

So how is a yellow hearse covered with flowers less of a surprise than a black hearse?

**PHIL**

I paid you two hundred dollars for a black hearse.

**LARRY**

(patiently)

No, you paid me a hundred and eighty dollars for a hearse, and a hearse is what you've got. If you take a long, hard look at Bernice, you'll see that she's one of a kind. She's big, she's fast, she's comfortable, and she's beautiful. But she's not black.

They stare at each other for a moment. Then Phil sighs deeply.

**PHIL**

Okay. Where are the keys?

**LARRY**

Why?

**PHIL**

I gotta go.

Larry looks from Phil to Bernice and back again.

**LARRY**

Oh, no. She doesn't go anywhere without me.

Phil thinks this over.

**PHIL**

Okay. Well, let's boogie.

Larry runs across and closes the doors on a pile of amps and band equipment that now sits in the garage. Phil puts the guitar in the back seat and they get into the car.

**INT. HEARSE. DAY**

Larry pulls a screwdriver out of the glove compartment and jigs it about in the ignition until the engine catches.

**23.**

**CON TINUE D:**

Then he turns the keys and pull up and down to undo the steering lock. Phil watches curiously.

**LARRY**

Someone stole her last summer.

**PHIL**

Well, I've paid top dollar, so  
it's nice to see I'm getting the  
best...

**LARRY**

How did you hear of Bernice and  
me?

**PHIL**

You are famous throughout the  
greater Los Angeles area.

Larry looks pleased.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

But you are the only guy with a  
hearse. Don't go getting carried  
away...

**EXT. LA HIGHWAY. DAY**

One backfire, and Bernice is ready. The hearse weaves  
erratically across the road and then disappears in a cloud  
of exhaust smoke.

**INT. BARBARA'S HOME. EVENING**

Barbara sits at a table in her shabby kitchen, reading the  
will. She lights a cigarette and sits back in her chair.

**EXT. LAX. EVENING**

The hearse drives under a huge sign which reads 'Welcome to  
Los Angeles Airport' and peels off the main road past some  
offices and cargo stores. Bernice drives into a giant  
hangar and pulls up outside a dark and shuttered office.

**INT. HEARSE - OUTSIDE MORTUARY. EVENING**

Phil glances out of the window.

**PHIL**

Pull over.

Larry parks, and Phil looks at his watch.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Shit.

**LARRY**

What's the matter?

**PHIL**

Nothing.

**LARRY**

Well... What flight are they on?

**PHIL**

We'll wait here.

**LARRY**

Okay. Well, what time is the flight due?

**PHIL**

Soon.

**LARRY**

Okay. How soon?

**PHIL**

Why do you ask so many damn questions?

**LARRY**

Well... I don't know.

There is silence.

Then:

**LARRY (CONT'D)**

Shouldn't we be at arrivals?

**PHIL**

Look, will you please shut up asking me stuff?

**LARRY**

Okay.

He looks out of the window, and then back at Phil, who now has his eyes closed.

**LARRY (CONT'D)**

So how long are we going to wait?

Phil doesn't answer for a moment. Just as Larry opens his mouth to ask again, Phil speaks.

**PHIL**

Morning.

Larry looks at Phil with astonishment.

25.

**CON TINUE D: (2)**

**LARRY**

Morning? What do you mean,  
morning?

**PHIL**

We'll make the pick-up in the  
morning.

Larry tries to start the car. Phil leans over and plucks the screwdriver from his hand. He reclines his seat and closes his eyes.

**LARRY**

You wait till morning. I'm going  
home.

Larry opens the door and gets out of the car. He slams the door shut behind him and stomps off into the gloom. Phil doesn't move.

**INT. HEARSE - OUTSIDE MORTUARY. EVENING - MOMENTS LATER**

The drivers' door opens and Larry gets back into the car.

**LARRY**

I'm only back because I don't  
trust you with Bernice. I don't  
even know you, and if you think  
I'm going to leave my car with  
you and just walk away, then  
you've got another thought on the  
way.

He stares at Phil, who hasn't moved an inch: eyes still closed, unlit cigar hanging out of the corner of his mouth, feet up on the dash.

**LARRY (CONT'D)**

I'm staying right here. Where I  
can keep an eye on things...

There is still no response from Phil. After a moment, Larry settles back in his seat and closes his eyes.

**EXT. OUTSIDE MORTUARY. NIGHT**

The hearse disappears into the gloom as the light fades and

night falls.

**EXT. OUTSIDE BARBARA'S HOME. MORNING**

A door swings open, and Barbara appears. She is looking quite stunning, with a tight black suit doing equal justice to her womanly curves and her duties as a mourner. She strides down the sidewalk, and as a group of schoolchildren appears around the corner Barbara scatters left and right.

**26.**

**CON TINUE D:**

Then she cuts across the road, and a delivery van skids to a halt inches away, horn blaring. The driver leans out of the window, furious.

**DRIVER**

Hey, lady!

Barbara stops and whips round, her hair cascading across her shoulders, her blue eyes flashing. The man simply stares at her, enchanted by her beauty.

**BARBARA**

Yes?

He continues to stare, and is only shaken back to his senses by a burst of abuse from further back in the road.

**DRIVER**

You... should be careful.

Barbara smiles.

**BARBARA**

Why, thank you...

**INT. AIRPORT CHECK IN DESK - LAX. MORNING**

Stanley is standing at the Airport Airlines check-in desk, facing the check-in clerk.

**STANLEY**

Parsons.

The clerk checks her paperwork.

**CHECK-IN CLERK**

You've just arrived from New Orleans, mister Parsons?

**STANLEY**

Yes.

**CHECK-IN CLERK**

And you're flying directly back  
to New Orleans? On the same  
plane?

**STANLEY**

That is correct.

The clerk awaits an explanation, but none is forthcoming.  
She raises an eyebrow.

**CHECK-IN CLERK**

Okay. Well, enjoy your stay at  
Los Angeles Airport, Mister  
Parsons.

27.

**CON TINUE D:**

**STANLEY**

Thank you.

Stanley turns to go, but then pauses.

**STANLEY (CONT'D)**

I've come to pick up my son's  
body.

The line behind him falls quiet, and the officious clerk  
wobbles slightly. Stanley raises his voice.

**STANLEY (CONT'D)**

My son died out here, you see?  
So I've come to bring him home.

Everyone looks at Stanley. Stanley looks at the  
clerk.

**STANLEY (CONT'D)**

I'm wondering if that's enough  
information for you?

**CHECK-IN CLERK**

Yes. Yes. I'm sorry. We'll...  
see to it that you get every  
assistance on your journey, sir.

**STANLEY**

Most kind.

**INT. BANK. MORNING**

There is a line leading to the information desk, but Barbara ignores it. She walks up to a female teller, who is serving another customer, and cuts in.

**BARBARA**

I'd like to see the manager,  
please.

**CUSTOMER**

Wait your turn.

Barbara's eyes immediately water, and her lower lip trembles.

**BARBARA**

I'm sorry. It's just that the  
man I loved died yesterday. I  
was forgetting my manners...

She dabs at her eyes with a lace handkerchief. The  
customer looks embarrassed.

**CUSTOMER**

I'm sorry. Please... go ahead.

**28.**

**CON TINUE D:**

Barbara fixes the teller with a no-nonsense look. The  
teller responds with a similar look.

**BARBARA**

The manager?

**EXT. MORTUARY. MORNING**

A man unlocks the shutters with a clatter and goes inside.

**INT. HEARSE - OUTSIDE MORTUARY. MORNING**

The sound wakes Phil, who glances around and stretches,  
before getting out of the car.

**EXT. OUTSIDE MORTUARY. MORNING**

Phil walks over to the door and walks inside the mortuary.

**INT. MORTUARY. MORNING**

The clerk busies himself opening up. Phil wanders around  
and knocks into a coffin. The lid bangs closed and the  
sound echoes around the hangar.

**CLERK**

Can I help you?

**PHIL**

I'm here to pick up a... coffin.

The clerk looks Phil over. He's dressed in denim, with scuffed Harley-Davidson cowboy boots, topped off with a cut-down denim jacket with 'Sin City' stitched into the back.

**CLERK**

No you're not.

**PHIL**

Yes I am.

**CLERK**

No. You're here to pick up a casket.

Phil looks irritated.

**PHIL**

Okay. A casket.

**CLERK**

What flight number?

29.

**CON TINUE D:**

**PHIL**

It was due out on the next flight to New Orleans, but I'm driving it now. The stiff doesn't like to fly.

The clerk stares at him.

**CLERK**

You're one of those funny guys, right.

**PHIL**

Yeah, but it's my day off.

**CLERK**

Name?

**PHIL**

Mine or the...?

**CLERK**

The deceased.

Phil moves to the desk.

**PHIL**

Parsons.

The clerk turns and shouts over his shoulder.

**CLERK**

Barney - bring up Parsons.

**INT. BANK - MANAGER'S OFFICE. MORNING**

The Bank Manager is staring at the piece of paper.

**BANK MANAGER**

I simply can't give you any money  
based on this piece of paper.

Barbara is totally calm.

**BARBARA**

It's not a piece of paper. It's  
a promise from Gram to leave me  
all his money.

**BANK MANAGER**

Well, I'm sorry, but it's highly  
likely that the estate will go to  
probate and be divided up  
accordingly, subject to a valid  
will existing.

30.

**CON TINUE D:**

She just looks at him.           He tries again.

**BANK MANAGER (CONT'D)**

Mister Parsons was a customer of  
ours. We can't just pass his  
money across to someone who says  
they're in the will. There  
are... rules.

Barbara, realizing that she's getting nowhere, starts to  
cry.

**BARBARA**

You don't seem to understand.  
These are his wishes.

Barbara is now sobbing, and the bank manager is becoming

increasing uncomfortable. He gives her his handkerchief.

**BANK MANAGER**

No... I do... understand, Miss  
Mansfield. Really I do.

**BARBARA**

Please tell me how I'm supposed  
to get my money.

**BANK MANAGER**

Well I imagine that you first  
need to prove that mister Parsons  
is actually dead.

**BARBARA**

Are you saying that I'm lying?

**BANK MANAGER**

No, absolutely not. But getting  
a copy of the death certificate  
would probably be a good first  
step.

**INT. PLANE - LAX. MORNING**

Stanley takes a swig from a hip flask and looks out of the window. A very overweight, red-faced man squeezes into the next seat. He bangs Stanley with his knee as he sits, but Stanley doesn't move. He peers at Stanley and shuffles in his seat, but there is still no reaction. Next, a deep sigh is forced out between his fat wet lips - he is plainly keen to start a conversation. Stanley keeps looking out of the window. He is watching the cargo being loaded.

**P. J. GAMBRELL**

Paw on the space, don'tcha think?

Stanley turns slowly.

31.

**CON TINUE D:**

**STANLEY**

I'm sorry?

The fat man smiles and extends a chubby hand, which Stanley shakes awkwardly and reluctantly.

**P. J. GAMBRELL**

P J Gambrell, at yer assistance.  
Pernell Jayson. Jes' saying paw  
on the space in dese buckets.

Stanley is obviously having problems fully understanding what is being said. After a moment:

**STANLEY**

Stanley Parsons.

**P. J. GAMBRELL**

Gowna be a trip. Besta know yer otherwise gowna be a slow one.

**STANLEY**

Yes. I suppose so.

**INT. MORTUARY. MORNING**

The clerk scribbles on a form.

**CLERK**

Papers?

**PHIL**

They'll be along. With this being a rush job, they said you'd understand.

He passes a folded banknote across. The clerk pockets it without a change of expression.

**CLERK**

Well, you'd better tell them that we've got rules.

The men stare at each other. Then Phil pulls another note out of his pocket and passes that over. Again, the clerk pockets it.

**CLERK (CONT'D)**

And this is the exception which proves that particular rule.

A beat. Then:

**CLERK (CONT'D)**

Although you don't need to tell them that.

32.

**CON TINUE D:**

Phil smiles broadly at him. The clerk turns and selects a casket from a gurney behind the counter.

**CLERK (CONT'D)**

And this... is your deceased.

**INT. MORTUARY. MORNING**

Phil is wheeling a casket on a gurney down the middle of the hangar. He can see Larry peering through the window at him. He can also see a uniformed policeman approaching Larry from the other side of the street. As he speeds up to try and reach Larry first, the clerk calls out from his desk.

**CLERK**

Good luck with her.

Phil closes his eyes and slows to a halt.

**EXT. OUTSIDE MORTUARY. MORNING**

Larry is jumping up and down nervously outside the window. The policeman appears at his shoulder.

**COP**

Excuse me, sir. Is that your  
hearse?

Larry turns slowly.

**LARRY**

Hearse?

The cop points at Bernice.

**COP**

That hearse.

Larry has started to sweat profusely.

**LARRY**

That hearse?

The cop looks at him carefully.

**COP**

Are you okay, sir?

**LARRY**

Okay? Sure...

He leans against the window for support.

**INT. PLANE - LAX. MORNING**

Stanley is looking out of the plane's window, but the fat man is now locked on. He gestures around him.

**PJ GAMBRELL**

Jes sayin' 'bout the space.

Another thoughtful pause from Stanley.

**STANLEY**

Yes.

He glances out at the cargo loaders.

**PJ GAMBRELL**

Space ma game, kinda.  
Partitions. Fixed. Slidin'.  
Demountable. Integrated.

**STANLEY**

Right.

**PJ GAMBRELL**

Always say. Why have one room?  
When you can have two?

**STANLEY**

I see.

He leans forward to watch a loader wheeling a casket towards the back of the plane.

**PJ GAMBRELL**

What's your bidness?  
Stanley watches the coffin and doesn't answer. A tear rolls down his face. The fat man pulls some candy out of his pocket and takes a bite.

**INT. MORTUARY. MORNING**

Phil and the clerk peer into the open casket.

**PHIL**

Yup. That's a she.

**CLERK**

And yours is supposed to be male?

**PHIL**

Yeah...

The clerk walks back to the counter and peers at his paperwork.

34.

CON TINUE D:

CLERK

Well... Gone.

PHIL

Gone? Whaddya mean, gone?

CLERK

We got the wrong box. Your box  
is being loaded.

PHIL

Nice work. So how do I get my  
box back?

The clerk raises an eyebrow. Phil understands  
immediately.

PHIL (CONT'D)

You're a damn thief.

CLERK

That's very hurtful.

Phil reluctantly hands another note over and the clerk  
speaks into a radio.

CLERK (CONT'D)

Barney. You receiving?

EXT. OUTSIDE MORTUARY. MORNING

Larry is standing by the hearse. The cop is reading  
his license.

COP

So, whatcha doin' here?

LARRY

Doing? Here?

INT. PLANE - LAX. MORNING

Stanley has his eyes closed. The fat man eats. Suddenly,  
Stanley's eyes snap open and he peers out of the window. A

motorized cart chugs into view with the casket covered in a blanket on the back. It is driving away from the plane.

**STANLEY**

What the hell?

He stands up and turns to the fat man.

**STANLEY (CONT'D)**

Excuse me.

**PJ GAMBRELL**

Why?

35.

**CON TINUE D:**

**STANLEY**

I need to get off the plane.

The fat man reluctantly struggles to his feet and squeezes out into the aisle.

**PJ GAMBRELL**

Sheesh. Only jes' got settled.

**INT. MORTUARY. MORNING**

Phil glances nervously out to where Larry is being interrogated by the cop. The clerk is reading a paper.

**PHIL**

Can you speed things up?

**CLERK**

What's the hurry?

Phil is distracted, watching the cop and Larry out of the window.

**PHIL**

I'd like to get to the Joshua Tree while it's still light.

The clerk looks up.

**CLERK**

I thought you were taking him to New Orleans?

**PHIL**

What?

**CLERK**

When you came in, you said you were driving the casket out to New Orleans. But just now you said you were headed for the Joshua Tree...

Phil is under pressure.

**PHIL**

Joshua Tree, yeah.

A buzzer sounds.

No-one moves.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Joshua Tree, Louisiana. Just outside the city.

**CLERK**

Never heard of that.

36.

**CON TINUE D:**

**PHIL**

It's small. Just another local community struggling to get by.

The buzzer goes again, and Phil attempts to change the subject.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Use your phone?

After a moment, the clerk nods towards the phone on the desk, before turning and disappearing into the rear of the mortuary. Phil wipes some sweat from his forehead, picks up the phone and dials.

**INT. PHIL'S LOUNGE. MORNING**

Susie is packing. The phone rings and she hesitates for a moment. Then she continues loading her case, leaving the phone unanswered.

**INT. CHECK IN DESK. DAY**

Stanley tries to ask a question at the check in desk, but gives up and walks toward an exit.

**INT. MORTUARY. MORNING**

The clerk returns with a casket on a gurney and Phil replaces the receiver as the clerk flips open the top of

the casket and peers inside.

**CLERK**

(into casket)

Hello there. We was looking for you.

He wheels the casket over and Phil has a quick look inside.

**CLERK (CONT'D)**

Need you to sign for it again.

Phil signs the papers.

**CLERK (CONT'D)**

Looks like it's your lucky day after all.

**PHIL**

Yeah. I'm a real lucky guy.

Phil again glances out of the window.

37.

**EXT. OUTSIDE MORTUARY. MORNING**

The cop is wandering around the hearse. Larry trails behind him, disconsolately.

**COP**

I don't like the look of you.

**LARRY**

(miserably)

No. Fair enough.

**COP**

Wherever there's a hippie there's a crime, even if it hasn't happened yet. That's what I always say.

**LARRY**

Right. Good saying.

He prods at the broken light with his baton.

**COP**

So whatcha doing here?

**LARRY**

We're meeting someone off a flight.

**COP**

You're meeting someone off a flight?

**LARRY**

Yes.

**COP**

In a hearse?

**LARRY**

Yes. It's a... surprise.

**COP**

Which parts the surprise: The fact that you're in a bright yellow hearse, the fact that you're dressed like something out of a horror film, or the fact that you're half a mile from the terminal and they're gonna have to walk across two runways to reach you?

Larry is looking increasingly desperate.

38.

**CON TINUE D:**

**LARRY**

Well... the first part.

The cop nods and repeats it to himself.

**COP**

The first part.

They stare at each other.

**COP (CONT'D)**

Okay, now why don't you tell me what the hell's going on?

**LARRY**

Going on?

They stare at each other. The cop shifts position and

purses his lips. Larry stares at the ground looking for some kind of inspiration. Just when the silence moves beyond uncomfortable, the door of the mortuary opens and Phil clatters out with the casket.

**PHIL**

Well, I don't care if it is first thing in the morning - but I sure need a coffee. I tell you, I've never seen so many darned bits of paper to sign! It's paperwork which is slowing this great country down. We're drowning in triplicate!

He's busying himself at the back of the hearse, and appears to notice the cop for the first time.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Good morning officer.

The cop peers at him suspiciously.

**COP**

Mornin'.

**PHIL**

I was just saying how people with work to do - people like yourself, officer - are just getting engulfed by paper. Grab the end, will you? Doesn't that just drive you plain crazy?

The cop hesitates and then takes the end of the casket and helps load it into the hearse.

**39.**

**CON TINUE D: (2)**

**COP**

I guess it does.

Phil gestures at Larry to get into the car, which he does.

**PHIL**

One casket, six sheets to sign. Six! That can't be right. Does that sound right to you?

He closes the back doors and gets into the passenger seat.

**COP**

Nope. Sure don't.

**PHIL**

And the very last thing I want to do is to hold you up further with my chatter. Thank you for your help, officer. You have a good day, now.

It looks like they've got away with it. But:

**COP**

Just a moment, boys.

Phil smiles up at him.

**PHIL**

Yessir?

**COP**

Your sidekick here has just finished telling me that you're gonna pick someone up from the terminal. A surprise, he said. And here you are loading a coffin into your vehicle...

Phil doesn't miss a beat.

**PHIL**

And there you have it, officer. You see the gentleman we're meeting from the plane doesn't yet know about the sad passing of his... aunt.

**COP**

And you're gonna meet him off his flight with her coffin?

He raises an eyebrow.

40.

**CON TINUE D: (3)**

**COP (CONT'D)**

That's a real nice touch.

**PHIL**

Yeah. We're doing it this way for the avoidance of doubt.

He gestures at Larry to start the car. Larry pulls out the screwdriver and starts to jig it about in the ignition. The cop watches. As the engine refuses to catch, Larry starts to panic.

**LARRY**

Ignition's a bit temperamental.

**COP**

Right.

More fiddling.      No ignition.

**LARRY**

Have to use a screwdriver.

**COP**

I see that.

The car starts.

**PHIL**

Thanks for everything, officer.  
We'd best be off...

He looks meaningfully at the cop, who grudgingly moves back. As they move off, Stanley hurries round the corner with his overnight bag in his hand.

**INT. HEARSE - OUTSIDE MORTUARY. MORNING**

Inside the car, Phil bangs on the dashboard in joy and exultation.

**PHIL**

Yes!      We did it!!

**LARRY**

Did what?      What did we do?

Phil changes the subject.

**PHIL**

What was all that babbling about earlier?

**LARRY**

I didn't babble. I just... have  
a problem with authority.

**41.**

**CON TINUE D:**

**PHIL**

What the hell does that mean?

**LARRY**

I don't like them and I don't know what to say to them. They make me feel uneasy.

**PHIL**

Well of course they make you feel uneasy. They're supposed to make you feel uneasy.

Larry sulks. Phil shakes his head and glances back at the cop and Larry crashes the car straight into the hangar wall.

**EXT. OUTSIDE MORTUARY. MORNING**

We pull back to reveal the enormous opening that Larry has missed.

**INT. HEARSE - OUTSIDE MORTUARY. MORNING**

They both sit there, staring out of the windshield at the wall.

**PHIL**

You hit the wall.

**LARRY**

I clipped it. I clipped the wall.

**PHIL**

(shouts)

There's a gap fifty yards wide!  
You just had to aim for the gap.  
How could you miss the gap?

**LARRY**

(babbles)

I was distracted. We're supposed to be picking someone up and you arrive with a coffin and I'd only just woken up and...

The cop peers in at the window and gestures at Phil to wind it down. As he does, the glass falls out.

**PHIL**

Hello, officer. I guess they make these hearses wider than

they need to...

The cop ignores him and concentrates on Larry.

42.

CON TINUE D:

**COP**

Are you on drugs, boy?

Larry swallows hard.

**LARRY**

Uh, not at this time, no sir.

**COP**

Not at this time. Okay, well let's see. You just missed a gap of fifty yards and hit a wall in broad daylight. Why was that?

Larry licks his lips.

**LARRY**

Well...

Pause. Phil wills him to speak.

**PHIL**

Well...

Still nothing. Larry looks like he's trying to form words, but nothing emerges.

**COP**

Now I'm gonna...

The radio in his car crackles into life. We - and he - are too far away to hear what is said. He is torn for a moment, but then:

**COP (CONT'D)**

Wait.

He walks back to his car.

Phil shakes his head.

**PHIL**

Fantastic. Well done.

**LARRY**

Oh, right. So it's all my fault?

**PHIL**

You... you just drove into a wall! Of course it's your fault. Jesus!

They both stare out of the window at the cop, who is talking animatedly into his radio. Then the flashing lights and siren go on.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Here it comes...

**43.**

**CON TINUE D: (2)**

The police car drives up to, and then past, the hearse, before disappearing out of the hanger at speed. Phil and Larry look at each other.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Well?

**LARRY**

Well what?

**PHIL**

Well, what are we doing now?

**LARRY**

He said to wait.

Phil just stares at him. After a moment, Larry reverses Bernice and then drives the battered car through the gap and out of the hangar. Phil slumps back in his seat.

**PHIL**

Nice going, hippie. Went right through the gap that time.

Larry says nothing. Phil leans back in his seat.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Well, we got it. Whoooh!!!

Larry slams the brakes on and the huge car skids to a halt in a cloud of dust. Phil is flung forward in his seat.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Jesus... What now?

**LARRY**

Get out.

**PHIL**

What are you talking about?

He looks nervously out of the back window.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

C'mon, we gotta keep moving.

**LARRY**

Get out and take your friend with you.

**PHIL**

Look, I can see you're a bit...  
sensitive about this whole...  
casket thing.

**44.**

**CON TINUE D: (3)**

**LARRY**

Get out.

**PHIL**

(shouts)

Stop saying that! I can't get  
out.

**LARRY**

Why not?

**PHIL**

I... look, it's not right to  
throw me out onto the street with  
a coffin.

Larry slips the car into gear and it moves forward.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Thank God.

Larry makes a U-turn.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

What the hell are you doing?

**LARRY**

I'm driving back to the mortuary.

**PHIL**

You can't do that.

Nearly at the turn now. Phil opens the car door with a  
mind to jump out, but one look at the fast-moving road

changes his mind. He glowers at Larry and shuts the door. The hearse skids round the corner, Larry slams on the brakes and the car slides to a halt outside the mortuary.

**LARRY**

Talk.

**PHIL**

What talk?

Larry gestures towards the back of the car.

**LARRY**

Who's the stiff?

**INT. MORTUARY. MORNING**

The clerk is standing at the counter staring at Stanley.

**CLERK**

Parsons?

**45.**

**CON TINUE D:**

**STANLEY**

Parsons.

The clerk looks worried.

**CLERK**

Long blond hair, blue eyes, mid-twenties?

**STANLEY**

Well... yes.

**CLERK**

Was he in a Berkeley?

**STANLEY**

What's a Berkeley?

**CLERK**

A luxury casket of solid mahogany, finished with a split-hinged lid, eight brass plated casket handles and an engraved inscription plate.

**INT. LA DEPARTMENT OF BIRTHS MARRIAGES & DEATHS. MORNING**

Barbara is sitting in a cubicle opposite a middle-aged woman in a suit. Her allure appears lost on the official, who gives the dress a disapproving look.

**BARBARA**

Parsons.

**OFFICIAL**

Parsons. And he's a... musician?

She says 'musician' with great distaste.

**BARBARA**

Was. He was a musician.

The woman flicks through some papers on her desk. Barbara watches her. Eventually:

**OFFICIAL**

I'm afraid we have no official notification of death.

With a flourish, Barbara places a copy of the LA Times on the table. The headline is 'Country-Rock Pioneer Dead' in large black print. The official glances at it and gives a thin smile.

46.

**CON TINUE D:**

**OFFICIAL (CONT'D)**

At this current time, the Greater Los Angeles registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths does not regard the local newspaper as an official recorder of record.

**INT. HEARSE - OUTSIDE MORTUARY. MORNING**

Larry is staring at Phil. Waiting.

**PHIL**

Can we please talk about this later? This is not a great place to be right now.

Larry moves to get out of the car. Phil grabs his arm.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Oh, just a minute. Now I understand... You think there's a

body back there.

He starts to laugh.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

You think there's a body in the coffin!

stops  
Larry watches him laugh. Phil catches the look and laughing.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

I can fully understand why you'd think that. I mean, it is a coffin and all. But would I - would I really - steal a real live dead body?

**INT. MORTUARY. MORNING**

Stanley and the clerk are staring at each other.

**STANLEY**

You just gave the body away?

**CLERK**

Well, it's not like this is a bank. People round here don't generally take dead bodies they're not entitled to.

**STANLEY**

Why did you give it to him?

47.

**CON TINUE D:**

**CLERK**

Well, he signed for it.

**STANLEY**

Who signed for it?

The clerk peers at his paperwork. When he eventually speaks, it is wearily.

**CLERK**

John Nobody.

**STANLEY**

And where do I find this John  
Nobody?

The clerk's attention switches to a point just above Stanley's shoulder. He points out through the window to where the hearse is parked over a hundred yards away.

**CLERK**

There.

**INT. HEARSE - OUTSIDE MORTUARY. MORNING**

Larry is staring at Phil.

**LARRY**

Empty?

**PHIL**

Absolutely, completely, totally.

**LARRY**

It looked pretty heavy, for an empty casket.

**PHIL**

They are made of finest... poplar. That's very heavy wood.

**LARRY**

Poplar? No way? Mahogany, or oak, but not...

**PHIL**

Look, I'm not going to argue with you now. Poplar is very well suited to the making of coffins.

Larry stares hard at Phil. We see the door of the mortuary open over Larry's shoulder and Stanley and the clerk emerge. Then:

**48.**

**CON TINUE D:**

**LARRY**

Okay. So why have we got an empty coffin in the back of the car?

Phil glances at the approaching Stanley.

**PHIL**

I'm... selling them on to a company in Palm Springs. Lots of stiff, lots of money. And then of course, it's very environmentally sound. And... look, under the circumstances, perhaps we should renegotiate the financial arrangement between us.

Larry still stares at Phil. Stanley is almost at the car.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Fifty-fifty? That baby's worth two grand.

Stanley is getting ever closer. Phil can see him in his wing mirror. Larry releases the safety brake and the giant car roars away, leaving Stanley standing in a cloud of dust.

**INT. LA DEPARTMENT OF BIRTHS MARRIAGES & DEATHS. MORNING**

Barbara picks up the newspaper and rips it into pieces, which she scatters onto the desk. She walks towards the door.

**OFFICIAL**

Don't forget now...

Barbara keeps walking.

**OFFICIAL (CONT'D)**

Notification of death.

Barbara is gone, the door slamming behind her.

**INT. HEARSE. DAY**

Larry drives. Phil is still pitching. They are driving alongside the airport runway.

**PHIL**

So then Bobby transfers 'em into hardboard boxes just prior to the cremation and I drive the caskets over to a guy I know in Palm Springs who resells them.

**LARRY**

As new?

**PHIL**

Well I'm not sure the 'one careful owner' thing works with coffins.

**LARRY**

The whole thing is completely immoral.

**PHIL**

Yeah, well. I saw how outraged you were back there, when I mentioned money. Just think of it as recycling.

**LARRY**

Look, I really need to get home.

**PHIL**

Why?

**LARRY**

I just... do.

Larry is sweating.

**PHIL**

Well, while I acknowledge the power of your argument, we have to be somewhere else. So just settle back and enjoy the ride.

Larry slows the car down.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

What now?

**LARRY**

Gas now.

Larry pulls the car onto a Gas station forecourt.

**EXT. GAS STATION FORECOURT. DAY**

An attendant is filling Bernice. He looks Phil over.

**ATTENDANT**

You an undertaker?

**PHIL**

Sure am.

50.

**CON TINUE D:**

**ATTENDANT**

Ain't yer surposed to be in  
black?

**PHIL**

Nope. We're special rock 'n roll  
undertakers. Musical morticians.

**INT. REST ROOM - GAS STATION. DAY**

Larry is sitting on the toilet seat - still fully dressed  
but bent double with cramps. Then Phil bangs on the door  
and calls from outside.

**PHIL**

**(O.S)**

C'mon, hippie - let's roll.

Larry turns to look at his reflection in the grimy mirror.  
He is shaking.

**EXT. GAS STATION FORECOURT. DAY**

The tank is full, and the attendant screws the cap back on.  
Phil reaches into the back and pulls out his jerry can. He  
passes it to the guy.

**PHIL**

High test.

**ATTENDANT**

This car runs on regular.

Phil raises an eyebrow, glances across at the casket, and  
winks.

**PHIL**

Who says it's for the car?

The man gapes at him. Larry walks over to the car and Phil  
gets into the passenger seat. He passes some money to the  
attendant and takes the can.

**ATTENDANT**

Ain't fer the car?

**PHIL**

Nope.

Larry jiggles the screwdriver, slips Bernice into gear, and they're gone. The attendant watches them go.

**INT. HEARSE. DAY**

Larry is driving, Phil is looking out of the window. They are still in a built up area with cars around them.

51.

**CON TINUE D:**

**LARRY**

We could go back.

**PHIL**

Why would we want to do that?

**LARRY**

I wasn't expecting a long trip.  
I haven't packed any spare  
clothes. We could pick up some  
supplies and drive out tomorrow.

**PHIL**

You want to go home to pick up  
fresh clothes?

**LARRY**

Well, yes.

Phil stares at him.

**PHIL**

And then drive back out tomorrow?

**LARRY**

We could do that.

**PHIL**

Just drive the car, okay?

**LARRY**

We could just...

**PHIL**

No.

**LARRY**

It would...

**PHIL**

No.

**LARRY**

I...

**PHIL**

No.

**INT. BARBARA'S HOME. DAY**

Barbara is standing in her sitting room, the phone to her ear.

**BARBARA**

You might need to repeat that.

**52.**

**CON TINUE D:**

Her mouth drops open and she sinks down onto her couch.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Stolen? What the hell do you mean, stolen? Who steals a body?

**INT. HEARSE. DAY**

Phil is smoking. Larry is driving, his fingers tapping nervously on the wheel. He looks distracted and speaks to break the silence.

**LARRY**

I still don't fully understand what you do.

**PHIL**

Well, I do everything.

**LARRY**

Everything?

**PHIL**

This little number is for drinking money. By trade I'm a Road Manager.

**LARRY**

Oh, one of those. Like a well-paid gopher.

**PHIL**

No, not like a well-paid gopher. I'm responsible for movement,

maintenance and management. I'm  
a confidante and a companion, a  
partner and a patron, an ally,  
agent and ambassador. I'm like  
an executive nanny. Not a  
gopher.

Larry backs down with hint of sarcasm

**LARRY**

An executive nanny, not a gopher.  
Thanks for clearing that up.

**EXT. 10 FREEWAY. LA. DAY**

Bernice cruises along the freeway then takes an exit for  
Joshua tree.

**INT. MORTUARY. DAY**

Stanley and the clerk are standing just inside the hangar  
door.

53.

**CON TINUE D:**

**STANLEY**

So where are the cops?

The clerk pulls the money out of his top pocket and looks  
at it. He shrugs his shoulders.

**CLERK**

I called them.

**STANLEY**

There's supposed to be a funeral  
in New Orleans. I need to find  
my boy.

**CLERK**

New Orleans?

Clerk points into the distance.

**CLERK (CONT'D)**

The man said he's going to Joshua  
Tree, Louisiana.

**STANLEY**

Joshua Tree?

**INT. PHIL'S SITTING ROOM. DAY**

Susie is moving her suitcases into the sitting room when there is a banging on the front door. Susie opens the door and Barbara is standing outside.

**BARBARA**

Where's the son of a bitch?

**SUSIE**

The son of a bitch isn't here.

**BARBARA**

Well, he's stolen Gram.

Susie looks bemused.

**SUSIE**

Stolen Gram?

Barbara lights a cigarette.

**BARBARA**

They had some kind of weird pact.  
I think Phil's taken Gram out to  
the desert.

**SUSIE**

Why?

54.

**CON TINUE D:**

**BARBARA**

Some kind of voodoo thing with  
hot wax and dolls to stick pins  
in.

**SUSIE**

Don't be ridiculous.

Barbara glances down at the packed bags and smiles.

**BARBARA**

Now that is a wise move, if you  
ask me.

**SUSIE**

I didn't ask you.

**EXT. MELON STALL. DAY**

The hearse is parked by the side of the road, near a rickety stall where an old lady sits, selling melons. Larry sits inside and Phil walks to a phone by the side of

the road. He dials.

**INT. PHIL'S SITTING ROOM. DAY**

The girls are still arguing.

**BARBARA**

You'll learn about Phil Kaufman.  
If you stick around long enough.

**SUSIE**

And you know him?

**BARBARA**

I know he's a brainless,  
interfering asshole, yes.

**SUSIE**

I don't need to listen to this  
garbage.

The phone starts to ring. Susie instinctively moves  
towards it, then stops. Barbara watches carefully.

**BARBARA**

That's him, isn't it?

**SUSIE**

Generally, it's best to answer  
the phone to discover who's  
calling.

She still makes no move to answer it.

55.

**CON TINUE D:**

**BARBARA**

Fine.

She walks across the room and picks up the phone.

**EXT. MELON STALL. DAY**

Phil is holding the phone.

**PHIL**

Hello baby, it's the love  
machine. How are ya?

**INT. PHIL'S SITTING ROOM. DAY**

Barbara smiles unpleasantly.

**BARBARA**

Hello Kaufman. I know what you're up to, you thieving bastard. I know where you're going, and I know about your sick, revolting plans, and I'm coming after you. And when I catch you...

**EXT. MELON STALL. DAY**

Phil looks surprised.

**PHIL**

Hello Barbara. How nice to hear from you again. And so soon...

Suddenly the door of the hearse flies open and Larry runs out. Phil holds the phone away from his ear as Barbara's shouting can be heard coming out of the receiver. He watches as Larry just makes it to a cactus and is violently sick. He glances across to where the old melon woman watches, expressionless, from her stall. After a moment, Larry wipes himself down and walks back to the car.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Sorry Barb, gotta go.

He goes to replace the receiver, and then pops in a last comment.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

It's been real, though.

He puts the phone down, cutting off Barbara's squawk and watches Larry get into the hearse. He frowns.

56.

**INT. PHIL'S SITTING ROOM. DAY**

Barbara slams the phone down. Then she picks up the receiver again and smashes it onto the table.

**BARBARA**

Sonofabitch!

She walks to the door, brushing past Susie. Then she stops.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Okay, honey. Do you want to see who Phil Kaufman really is? Do you want to see what he's capable of?

Barbara shows Susie the door.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Or maybe you already know I'm right.

Susie hesitantly dismisses the challenge.

**SUSIE**

You don't know shit about him.

**BARBARA**

Well why don't we find out?

Barbara turns and walks out. Susie looks at her packed bags then follows.

**INT. HEARSE. DAY**

Phil gets into the hearse, looks back at the coffin and sniffs. He looks down at the air conditioning and turns it up full. Larry starts the engine and the car stalls.

**PHIL**

So what's that about?

**LARRY**

Sunstroke.

Phil shakes his head.

**PHIL**

You've hardly left the car since we met. How can you have sunstroke?

**LARRY**

I'm susceptible.

57.

**CON TINUE D:**

Phil doesn't look convinced.

**PHIL**

You're a winner, that's what you are. A winner...

Eventually, the engine catches. Phil immediately gestures at a small road that heads off into the desert.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Turn off here.

**LARRY**

This isn't the way to Palm Springs.

Phil winks at him.

**PHIL**

It is if you're a coffin smuggler.

**EXT. HIGHWAY. DAY**

The old woman watches them go.

**START TIME**

**LAPSE:**

We stay on the old woman and her melon stall as the light rapidly changes, cars and pedestrians whizz by, and an hour passes in moments.

**END TIME LAPSE.**

As we slow to normal speed, a car drives past, stops, and reverses back to park by the stall.

**EXT. MELON STALL. DAY**

Stanley gets out of the Avis/Budget hire car.

**STANLEY**

Good afternoon.

**OLD WOMAN**

Hello.

He points at a melon.

**STANLEY**

I'll take that one, please.

**OLD WOMAN**

Fifty cents.

**STANLEY**

I was wondering... Have you seen  
a hearse pass this way in the  
last couple of hours?

**OLD WOMAN**

What's it look like?

The question throws Stanley.

**STANLEY**

Well... It... It's a big car. A  
big yellow car. Two guys inside.

**OLD WOMAN**

Was one of 'em sick in them  
bushes?

**STANLEY**

Well... I don't know. Maybe.

The old woman nods.

**OLD WOMAN**

Yup. I seen it.

**INT. HEARSE. DAY**

Larry drives and talks, Phil looks tense.

**LARRY**

See, the Yin is the negative -  
the darkside. And the Yang  
represents positive - good. If  
you like, the first is earth and  
the second heaven.

**DISSOLVE**

**TO:**

**INT. HEARSE. DAY - A LITTLE LATER**

Larry still talks. Phil now looks bored.

**LARRY**

The Yin Yang symbol is really  
evocative about the whole  
concept. As you travel around  
the circle, white or black will  
increase until the opposite color  
is almost gone. But never

totally gone, right? And this cycle then repeats for the opposite color.

**DISSOLVE**

**TO:**

**59.**

**INT. HEARSE. DAY - A LITTLE LATER**

Larry still talks, glancing across to Phil to make his point every now and then. Phil is tossing a cigarette into the air and trying to catch it between his teeth.

**LARRY**

What seems like Yin is often supported by Yang, and vice versa. Let me give you an example: To truly know good, you must first know evil, and without good as a comparison, nothing can be evil. So by allowing Yin to flourish, you welcome Yan. By letting go of Yin, you are waiting for its return. Another example is...

There is a crash, and the car slams to a halt. Larry is thrown forward, but manages to grab the wheel. Phil is not so lucky, and catapults into the dashboard, before being thrown back into his seat, the crumpled cigarette still gripped between his teeth.

**EXT. HIGHWAY. DAY**

Bernice has driven into a road sign set into a concrete pillar. In fact, the sign that Bernice has driven into is the only thing anywhere near the road for miles in any direction.

**INT. HEARSE. DAY**

Phil is dazed. He checks his forehead, which is bleeding. Then he gazes out at the desolate road and the solitary, buckled sign.

**PHIL**

It would be really nice if we could get through a couple of

hours without crashing the car.

**LARRY**

I was distracted.

Phil looks out of the window at the vast expanse of nothing but desert.

**PHIL**

Of course you were.

60.

**CON TINUE D:**

There is a faint noise. Larry hears it first and then Phil and then, as they strain to identify it, they see a tiny dot on the road ahead of them, which grows and grows as they watch it, and they peer hard into the wind to identify it and... it's a motorcycle cop.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

I don't believe it. Middle of nowhere, and... quick - stand in front of the car!

**EXT. HIGHWAY. DAY**

They jump out of the car and shuffle sideways, until they are standing in front of the actual point of collision.

**LARRY**

What now?

**PHIL**

Pretend we're having a conversation.

The buckled sign hangs dangerously above them as they both grin at the approaching policeman in a friendly manner.

**LARRY**

Okay. What about?

**PHIL**

I don't know what about! Ever since I met you, you've talked. Yabba, yabba, yabba, every waking minute. Religion, your supersonic, supercharged car, the darkside. Now you need to talk, and you can't think of anything to say.

him. The cop slows down but drives past. Phil waves at

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Whatever your damn fool religion  
is called, I think it works.

**LARRY**

Well... it's more a philosophy  
than a religion.

The cop does a U-turn and motors towards them.

**PHIL**

Oh, well done. Good work.

bike He shoots a vicious look at Larry. The cop parks his  
and removes his helmet.

61.

**CON TINUE D:**

As he opens his mouth to speak, a headlight falls off the  
car and rolls off the road. They all watch it go.

**MOTORCYCLE COP**

Afternoon.

**PHIL**

Afternoon, officer. How's it  
going today?

sideways The sign gives an ominous creak. Larry takes a  
step, out of danger.

**MOTORCYCLE COP**

Oh, it's going fine, thank you.  
How are things with you?

**PHIL**

Fine, fine. We just... stopped  
to take a look at...

He waves his arm at the desert.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

...the fine view you folks have  
got around here.

The cop takes his sunglasses off and takes a look around,

as if it's the first time he's seen it.

**MOTORCYCLE COP**

Well, it is mighty nice around  
these parts. If you like desert.

They all look appreciatively at the desert, and the cop  
glances down at the keys in Larry's hand.

**MOTORCYCLE COP (CONT'D)**

(to Larry)

And how are things with you  
today, sir?

Larry looks flustered.

**LARRY**

Ooooh, I'm well. Really well,  
actually. Thank you.

The cop doesn't respond, just keeps looking at Larry with a  
pleasant half-smile on his face.

**MOTORCYCLE COP**

The reason I ask, is that you  
appear to have driven into one of  
our road signs.

62.

**CON TINUE D: (2)**

Larry turns and appears to see the huge buckled pole for  
the first time.

**LARRY**

Oh.

**MOTORCYCLE COP**

I'm surprised that you hadn't  
noticed earlier, as it does  
appear to be impeding your  
forward progress.

Phil starts to laugh.

**PHIL**

That's a great line...

The cop turns to Phil. He is still smiling.

**MOTORCYCLE COP**

Thank you.

A long pause. Then:

**MOTORCYCLE COP (CONT'D)**

I wonder if you gentlemen can help me?

**PHIL**

Anything.

**MOTORCYCLE COP**

I'm looking for some fellows who stole a body back there at the airport.

Larry wobbles with shock.

**LARRY**

A body?            Stole a body?

**MOTORCYCLE COP**

A body. Rather like the one in the back of your car.

**LARRY**

That's an empty coffin, officer.

The cop ignores him.            Phil lights his cigar.

63.

**CON TINUE D: (3)**

**MOTORCYCLE COP**

I know it sounds strange. But these guys - there are two of them - they stole a body, loaded it into the back of an old yellow hearse painted with flowers, and they're supposed to be driving out this way.

Larry thinks hard.

**LARRY**

Hearse.    Flowers.

He looks to Phil for support.    Phil raises an eyebrow.

**PHIL**

I think he's onto us, Larry. He's just having a little fun at our expense.

The cop is no longer smiling.

**MOTORCYCLE COP**

In the car, please.

Phil opens the door and empty beer bottles cascade out into the road. They get into the car and the cop cuffs them together through the steering wheel and takes the car keys. Then he walks back over to his bike and starts to talk into the radio.

**INT. HEARSE. DAY**

Phil closes his eyes and shakes his head.

**PHIL**

God damn!

**LARRY**

He said a body. He said we stole a body.

Phil opens his eyes.

**PHIL**

He meant a coffin.

**LARRY**

He didn't say 'coffin'. He said 'body'. Tell me we haven't stolen a real person.

64.

**CON TINUE D:**

**PHIL**

Look, the place that I get the coffins from probably haven't filed a report yet. It'll all be sorted out within the hour. Trust me.

**LARRY**

Oh, I'm just overflowing with trust for you, man. I feel this overwhelming feeling of... trust every time I look at you.

He shakes his head.

**LARRY (CONT'D)**

I'm gonna check inside that box just as soon as we're out of here.

cuffs

They both stare out of the window. Phil bangs the  
against the wheel.

**PHIL**

Jesus!

They sit glowering out of different windows at different  
bits of desert. The motorcycle cop can be heard talking  
into his radio.

**LARRY**

What are we going to do?

**PHIL**

Time.

**LARRY**

What?

**PHIL**

(bitterly)

We're going to be arrested,  
that's what we're going to do.  
Then we'll go to court and then  
we'll go to jail and we'll do  
that for a while.

Larry mulls this over.

**LARRY**

What about if I could slip out of  
these cuffs?

Phil treats the theoretical question with indifference.

65.

**CON TINUE D: (2)**

**PHIL**

Yeah, that would be great. Then  
we could suspend you from a  
bridge in a straitjacket and set  
the rope on fire.

**LARRY**

No, really. I really can slip  
these cuffs.

He has Phil's attention now.

**PHIL**

Okay. Show me.

Larry pops his middle finger out of its socket, squeezes his hand and slides it out of the handcuff. He hands the other cuff to Phil, who stares at him in astonishment.

**LARRY**

Do you think we should go?

**PHIL**

Yes, I think we should go.

Larry starts the car. He throws it into reverse and the bumper slowly disengages from the metal signpost. Suddenly the car tears loose and flies backwards, smashing into the cop's motorcycle, leaving him holding the radio and its trailing wire. Larry slams on the brakes.

**LARRY**

Oh shit.

**PHIL**

Nicely done.

He rolls down his window and addresses the cop, who is staring with horror at his ruined motorcycle.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

We'll be moving on, now that your sign no longer appears to be impeding our forward progress.

Bernice accelerates away but slowly starts to turn in a wide ark and circles the smashed bike. The cop chases them.

**INT. HEARSE. DAY**

Phil screams at Larry.

**PHIL**

What the hell are you doing?

66.

**CON TINUE D:**

**LARRY**

The steering lock is on.

**PHIL**

Well... turn it off!

**LARRY**

I can't - he's got the keys.

Phil turns to watch the chasing policeman.

**PHIL**

So, we've escaped but we can only  
drive in a circle?

**LARRY**

Yes.

**EXT. DESERT. DAY**

They do another circuit. The exhausted cop stops,  
breathing heavily, and then watches in astonishment as the  
hearse turns and heads back towards him.

**INT. HEARSE. DAY**

Phil and Larry stare at the policeman out of the window as  
the car sweeps past. The cop gets his gun out of his  
holster, and Phil reaches into the glove box and pulls out  
the screwdriver. He leans across Larry, jams it into the  
wheel column, and snaps the steering lock in two. The  
hearse's direction immediately changes.

**PHIL**

Can we please go?

**LARRY**

Okay.

**EXT. DESERT. DAY**

The hearse roars away and the cop watches it go.

**INT. BARBARA'S CAR. DAY**

Barbara drives and Susie sits in the passenger seat. It  
doesn't look as if they've spoken for hours.

**SUSIE**

If you hate Phil so much, why are  
you chasing him across  
California?

**BARBARA**

He's got Gram and I need him.

67.

**CON TINUE D:**

**SUSIE**

Well, that's really touching.  
But... you've got to come to  
terms with the fact that he's  
dead.

Barbara shoots her a withering look.

**BARBARA**

I know he's dead, Honey. But he  
hasn't been officially  
identified, and there's no  
certificate of death.

**SUSIE**

I don't understand.

**BARBARA**

Let's just say I'm overly  
sentimental, okay?

**SUSIE**

This is all about money, isn't  
it?

**BARBARA**

Isn't everything?

**SUSIE**

Why do you think you deserve  
anything?

**BARBARA**

I was a great support to Gram  
before Kaufman came along and  
spoiled the party.

**SUSIE**

Phil's not responsible for your  
problems with Gram.

**BARBARA**

What do you know?

**SUSIE**

I know that he can be a pain in  
the ass, but when it came to  
Gram, Phil only ever did the  
right thing.

**BARBARA**

In his whole life, Phil Kaufman  
didn't do anything because it was  
the right thing to do. You can

bet the ranch that wherever he  
is, he's having some fun.

68.

**CON TINUE D: (2)**

**SUSIE**

Maybe that's what I like about  
him.

**BARBARA**

Sure it is, honey. That's why  
your bags were packed.

**SUSIE**

Have you any idea what it's like  
to really love someone?

Barbara laughs.

**BARBARA**

You might exclusively love Phil  
Kaufman - but unfortunately, so  
does he. You're just handy to  
have around.

**SUSIE**

I don't have to listen to this.

Susie leans over, grabs the safety brake and pulls it up  
hard. The car swerves and skids to a stop.

**SUSIE (CONT'D)**

Okay, you vindictive bitch. I'm  
going with you to Joshua Tree  
because my life seems to have  
been turned upside down and I  
want to know why. But you don't  
know me and I won't let you judge  
me. Do it again and I'll smash  
that pretty little face of yours  
off the fucking road. Got it?

Barbara dismisses her anger with a tight little smile.

**BARBARA**

The truth can hurt, can't it?

**INT. HEARSE. DAY - LATER**

Phil finishes his beer, rubs his eyes and slumps back in  
his seat. He looks terrible, but not as bad as Larry who

is pasty and sweating.

**LARRY**

Well, that's it! They're going to lock me up and throw away the key.

**PHIL**

Why would they do that?

69.

CON TINUE D:

**LARRY**

You saw what happened. I drove over that cop's bike. That's destruction of police property, or something.

**PHIL**

You worry too much.

**LARRY**

Not 'til I met you...

Phil finishes his beer and peers at the empty bottle. Then something catches his eye and he leans forward in his seat.

**PHIL**

Jesus - what the hell is that?

A large plaster dinosaur appears ahead.

**LARRY**

It's a dinosaur.

**PHIL**

Very perceptive. What's it doing?

As they get nearer, they can see that the huge model is carrying a sign.

**LARRY**

(reads)

'The Polyonax Place'.

(aside: to Phil)

A Polyonax is probably some kind of dinosaur.

Phil shoots him a look.

**LARRY (CONT'D)**

(reads)

'Dinoburgers, Reptile Steaks and  
Primeval Soup. Titanosaurion  
portions, prehistoric pricing.  
Liquor served'.

**PHIL**

Pull over - let's... eat.

**LARRY**

Let's not. The cops'll be after  
us and we should just get on to  
Palm Springs and do the thing,  
and then I can get home and you  
can... do whatever it is you do.  
Let's do that.

70.

**CON TINUE D: (2)**

**PHIL**

We need to stop. I'm starting to  
get hungry. I'm not nice hungry.

**LARRY**

You surprise me. I vote we keep  
going.

**PHIL**

What gave you the impression this  
was a democracy?

**EXT. POLYONAX PLACE. DAY**

The hearse pulls up around the back of the building, and  
parks in a place that is hidden from the road. Phil gets  
out and stretches. He is joined by Larry, and they both  
peer round the side of the building to check that they have  
not been observed. Then they walk towards the entrance.

**EXT. DESERT ROAD. DAY**

A Police Car with siren blaring and lights flashing speeds  
past on the road.

**INT. KITCHEN - THE POLYONAX PLACE. DAY**

We are with a short-order cook. He expertly flips a burger  
from a hotplate and adds it to a plate overflowing with  
bacon, sausage and fries. He slips this plate onto a tray  
on which there is a second plate containing two pieces of

plain bread and some lettuce. He dings a bell and a waiter enters and picks up the tray. We move with the tray as he carries it from the kitchen and into the dining area. He stops at the bar to load three foaming glasses of beer and a glass of water onto the tray, and delivers it to Phil and Larry, who are sitting in a window booth. Larry has his head resting on the table. He lifts it as soon as the food arrives.

**PHIL**

You frighten him.

**LARRY**

I do not.

**PHIL**

Everyone else, he announces the food when he brings it. Diplodocus this and Allosaurus that. Us he just slaps it down and runs for cover.

They both look at Larry's bread and lettuce.

71.

**CON TINUE D:**

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

It's probably the rabbit food.

**LARRY**

Look, I'm a vegetarian. I have a problem with dead flesh. Okay?

**PHIL**

I understand. Really I do. That stuff'll mess you right up every time.

Phil picks up the first beer and downs it in one go.

**INT. STANLEY'S CAR. DAY.**

Stanley is driving along the road. He puts his hand in his pocket, takes out his hip flask, pops the lid and goes to take a drink. It's empty. Then he notices the dinosaur.

**INT. THE POLYONAX PLACE. DAY**

Phil pushes his full plate away and finishes off the third beer. He gets up. Larry notices he hasn't eaten anything.

**LARRY**

I thought you were hungry.

Phil ignores him.

**PHIL**

Gotta make a call.

He glances around and then walks over to the bar.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Hey man, where's the phone?

**BARMAN**

Out back.

He jerks his head by way of direction. Phil wanders off just as the door opens and Stanley walks in.

**STANLEY**

Good afternoon.

**BARMAN**

Yup.

**STANLEY**

Do you have a telephone I might use?

**BARMAN**

In a minute, I do.

72.

**CON TINUE D:**

**STANLEY**

In a minute?

**BARMAN**

Yeah. Phone's for customers.

Stanley looks confused.

Then he understands.

**STANLEY**

I'd better order, then.

**BARMAN**

Right.

Stanley picks up a menu.

**INT. 'OUT BACK' - THE POLYONAX PLACE. DAY**

Phil dials a number on the phone.

**INT. PHIL'S SITTING ROOM. DAY**

The sitting room is empty. The phone rings. And rings.

**INT. 'OUT BACK' - THE POLYONAX PLACE. DAY**

When it becomes clear that no one is going to answer, Phil replaces the receiver and walks back into the diner. He pushes past Stanley as he goes to the bar.

**INT. THE POLYONAX PLACE. DAY**

Phil joins Larry and puts a bag of beers on the table.

**LARRY**

Speak to her?

**PHIL**

Who?

**LARRY**

Your girlfriend? Your wife?

**PHIL**

None of your damn business.

**LARRY**

So you didn't?

A pause.

**PHIL**

No.

73.

**CON TINUE D:**

**LARRY**

Maybe she's out. Shopping, or something.

Phil pours the rest of his beer down his throat, before signaling the barman to serve him another.

**PHIL**

Yeah, that'll be it. Shopping.

He raises an eyebrow at Larry. Behind him, we see Stanley walk in and take a seat at the bar.

**STANLEY**

(to barman)

Beer.

The barman gives Stanley his beer.

**STANLEY (CONT'D)**

Would you put a scotch in there,  
please?

**BARMAN**

Sure.

He pours the spirit in.

**BARMAN (CONT'D)**

Bad day?

Stanley rubs the top of his head.

**STANLEY**

Yeaaaaah. Yeah, a real bad day.

**BARMAN**

What happened?

**STANLEY**

My boy died out here the other  
day, and some punks have stolen  
his body.

Stanley reaches for his pocket. The barman puts his  
hand up to refuse the money.

**BARMAN**

That's worth a shot on the house.

The barman tips a little more scotch into the beer.

**STANLEY**

Thanks.

**74.**

**CON TINUE D: (2)**

Stanley takes a drink. Phil slips some money on the bar  
and stands up.

**PHIL**

(to Larry)

We gotta go.

Larry is listening to the conversation.

**LARRY**

Haven't finished my drink.

**BARMAN**

(to Stanley)

Why would someone steal a body?

Phil picks up the glass of water and drinks it down.

**PHIL**

All gone. C'mon.

He turns and walks to the door.

**STANLEY**

Well, maybe they were souvenir hunters or something. My boy's kinda famous...

**BARMAN**

Who is he?

Phil is back.

**STANLEY**

Gram Parsons.

The Barman looks surprised.

**BARMAN**

Gram Parsons?

Phil reaches across and grabs the back of Larry's jacket.

**LARRY**

Gram Parsons?

Both the Barman and Stanley look round, but Larry's stool is now empty, spinning. He and Phil are already at the door.

**EXT. OUTSIDE THE POLYONAX PLACE. DAY**

Phil propels Larry outside.

75.

**CON TINUE D:**

**LARRY**

Gram Parsons? Is Gram Parsons dead?

**PHIL**

Better get going.

**LARRY**

He said someone took Gram  
Parson's body. Two people...

**PHIL**

Yeah, he was a real blabbermouth.  
In fact, I thought he was never  
gonna stop talking. Anyway,  
although that's real interesting,  
we've gotta keep to the schedule.

**LARRY**

Schedule? What schedule? There  
is no schedule...

**PHIL**

Well, I think we should just make  
our delivery as soon as possible,  
don't you? Get our package to  
Palm Springs. Remember?

Larry looks horrified.

**LARRY**

Package? We've stolen that man's  
son.

**PHIL**

Stolen... his son? That's  
outrageous! I'm appalled that  
you could even think we'd do such  
a thing.

They move round the back of the Polyonax Place, where  
Bernice is hidden behind an outhouse.

**LARRY**

I don't know what you take me  
for. I want to see in that box.

Larry walks round to the back of the car.

**PHIL**

We've really got to go.

Larry swings open the back window and pulls at the casket.

**LARRY**

It's heavy.

CON TINUE D: (2)

Phil glances at his watch.

**PHIL**

Okay, then. Well, if you're satisfied, let's go.

**LARRY**

I said it's heavy.

**PHIL**

Heavy, yes. Well, it is made of wood. Wood is heavy. Actually.

**LARRY**

Yeah, I remember.      Finest poplar.  
Larry slides the top of the casket off and looks inside.  
He recoils.

**LARRY (CONT'D)**

Jesusjesusjesus...

He drops the lid and looks at Phil, horrified.      Phil walks over and looks inside.

**PHIL**

Gosh, they must have given us a full one. We'll have to sort that all out when we get to Palm Springs and...

Larry is staring at him with horror.

**LARRY**

Oh my God.      You stole Gram Parsons.

Phil gives up.

**PHIL**

Well, technically, we stole Gram Parsons.

**LARRY**

I stole a coffin, I didn't know there was a body in it.

**PHIL**

I'd save that line for court.

As the enormity of the news starts to sink in, Larry hops up and down in panic. Phil watches him.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

What are you doing now?

77.

**CON TINUE D: (3)**

Larry is losing control.

**LARRY**

I don't know! What am I doing?  
I mean... What-am-I-doing? Why  
am I here? Why am I with you?  
**WHAT IS GOING ON?**

**PHIL**

Calm down.

**LARRY**

I thought it was bad enough when  
I ran over the cop's bike, but  
now I'm a fucking body snatcher.

**PHIL**

Well, when you've quite finished,  
we should go.

Larry goggles at him. His voice takes on a level of  
hysteria.

**LARRY**

Go? You go. I tell you what I'm  
going to do. I'm going inside  
and I'm going to give that man  
his son back. I'm going to do  
the right thing, I'm going to  
follow my conscience, I'm going  
to...

Larry walks towards the bar, then quick walks, then runs.  
Phil tackles him around the legs and they both fall.  
Larry's head hits the ground hard and he lies there  
unconscious.

**PHIL**

Shit!

Phil picks him up, slings him into the passenger seat, and  
slides behind the wheel. The hearse moves off.

**INT. THE POLYONAX PLACE. DAY**

Stanley takes another drink and glances out of the window, just as the bright yellow hearse drives past. He stands up and walks to the window.

**STANLEY**

Son of a bitch!

**EXT. OUTSIDE THE POLYONAX PLACE. DAY**

The hearse picks up speed and powers down the highway out into the desert.

78.

**INT. BARBARA'S CAR. DAY**

Susie seethes and Barbara smokes.

**SUSIE**

You're not a very nice person,  
are you?

**BARBARA**

Nice? No, I suppose not. Does  
it matter?

Susie looks surprised.

**SUSIE**

It might get you further.

**BARBARA**

I do okay. Listen, I was an  
orphan at fourteen and a waitress  
at fifteen. I do what I do  
because it puts food on my table,  
and because if I don't look after  
myself, no-one else will.

**SUSIE**

So what do you want from us?

**BARBARA**

I don't want anything from you.  
It would be a bonus to see  
Kaufman crash and burn, but I  
don't need to be there when it  
happens.

**SUSIE**

Why do you hate Phil so much?

Barbara lights another cigarette.

**BARBARA**

Gram was the first good guy I ever hooked up with. He wasn't perfect, but it worked between us. We just seemed to fit together. But Gram was already wild, and I made him wilder. Kaufman watched over him like a hawk, and when he felt things were getting out of control, he turned Gram against me. I lost the only decent thing in my life.

**SUSIE**

Surely Phil was just looking after Gram?

79.

**CON TINUE D:**

**BARBARA**

Gram was an adult. He didn't need a nursemaid.

**SUSIE**

Except that now he's dead.

**BARBARA**

Yeah. Without my help and while Kaufman was babysitting.

Silence for a moment.

**SUSIE**

I don't like you much, Barbara.

**BARBARA**

That's fine. I just want what's mine and then I'm gone. Gone real fast.

**EXT. HIGHWAY. EVENING**

The hearse powers through along the desert highway. They pass a sign which reads 'If You're Looking for the Joshua Tree National Monument, You're Getting Close. If You're not, You're Getting Lost...'

**INT. HEARSE. NIGHT**

Phil is getting very tired, his vision is blurring and he shakes his head to wake himself up. He glances across and sees that Larry is awake and staring at him.

**PHIL**

Welcome back, hippie.

**LARRY**

So why d'ya do it?

**PHIL**

Do what?

**LARRY**

Have a guess.

There is a moment's silence.

**PHIL**

Well, I gave my word. This is what Gram wanted.

**LARRY**

What, cruise around the desert until he starts to smell? Were you - both bombed?

80.

**CON TINUE D:**

Phil looks offended.

**PHIL**

Do you have friends?

**LARRY**

Of course I have friends.

**PHIL**

Well, what would you do for them?

**LARRY**

Anything, within reason.

Phil stares out of the window.

**PHIL**

That's what I hate about people like you. Everything's 'within reason'. There are always boundaries, provisos. You only

operate with a safety net.

Larry is confused.

**LARRY**

Tell me something - if it was the other way round, would Gram be sitting here, driving your bones out into the desert?

Phil says nothing.

**LARRY (CONT'D)**

Well?

**PHIL**

You've missed the point. See, it doesn't matter what he would do, or what you and your tie-dyed friends think is the correct way to behave. To me, it only matters what I do. Where you have boundaries and limits and thresholds - I only have right and wrong. If I make a promise, I keep it - that's right. If I break that promise - that's wrong.

Phil rubs his eyes, tired. Suddenly, Larry smashes Phil across the head with a bottle of Jack Daniels. Phil slumps back in the seat and Larry, dropping the bloodied weapon, reaches across to grab the wheel and slow the hearse.

81.

**EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT**

Bernice fishtails across the road as Larry struggles to retain control. It eventually slides to a halt. Larry gets out and runs round to the drivers' door.

**INT. HEARSE. NIGHT**

Larry stares down at Phil.

**LARRY**

Ohmygod.

He slides Phil across the seat and slips behind the wheel. He shouts at the unconscious Phil.

**LARRY (CONT'D)**

You made me do it, you bastard!  
I've never hit anyone in my life,  
but you pushed and you pushed  
and... you gave me no choice.

Larry prods Phil to ensure he's unresponsive.

**EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT**

The hearse executes a wide U-turn before gently rejoining the highway and heading back towards town. A moment after completing the turn, the one remaining headlight stutters and goes out. Bernice pulls off the road.

**INT. HEARSE. NIGHT**

**LARRY**

Shit.

He flicks the headlight switch, but to no avail. Then, in the distance, he sees a car approaching. Stanley can be glimpsed in the driving seat as the car flashes past.

**LARRY (CONT'D)**

Shit. Shitshitshit.

**EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT**

Bernice rejoins the road and drives slowly off into the darkness after Stanley.

**INT. HEARSE. NIGHT**

Phil is motionless, and Larry peers out into the darkness as the car limps on, lit only from the light of the moon. Larry sees a glow in the distance ahead, and drives towards a neon sign; 'Welcome to the Joshua Tree Inn'.

**82.**

**CON TINUE D:**

He stops by the entrance to the inn and stares at Stanley's car parked in the bay outside room 8. He glances across at Phil, turns the car around and drives in.

**EXT. JOSHUA TREE INN. NIGHT**

Bernice glides to a stop in the bay next to Stanley's car. Larry gets out and looks around. After a moment, he walks over to the door of room eight and knocks.

**EXT. OUTSIDE ROOM 8 - JOSHUA TREE INN. NIGHT**

A tired-looking Stanley opens the door.

**STANLEY**

Yeah?

**LARRY**

Hi.

**STANLEY**

Hello.

They stare at each other.

**LARRY**

Um. I'm one of the guys that  
took your son.

After a moment, Stanley steps back and opens the door.

**STANLEY**

You'd better come in.

**EXT. HIGHWAY/CAR PARK - JOSHUA TREE INN. NIGHT**

A car drives past the inn and then brakes sharply and skids across the road. It reverses and pulls in, parking next to the hearse. Barbara and Susie get out and look around. Then Susie walks over to the hearse's passenger window and raps on the glass, and Barbara marches to the back of the hearse and attempts to open it. She can't.

**BARBARA**

Where's the catch on this piece  
of shit?

Susie notices Phil, slumped in the seat.

**SUSIE**

Phil? Phil!

83.

**INT. HEARSE - JOSHUA TREE INN. NIGHT**

Phil comes to. He looks out of the window at Susie, then at the 'Joshua Tree' sign, then at the door to room eight, then round to the back of the shaking hearse as Barbara tries to get the door open. His jaw drops open and he rubs his eyes again, before getting out of the car.

**EXT. OUTSIDE ROOM 8 - JOSHUA TREE INN. NIGHT**

Phil stands in front of Susie.

**SUSIE**

What happened to your head?

He touches his head and looks at the blood on his fingers.  
His handcuff hangs from his wrist and Susie stares at it.

**PHIL**

A hippie hit it. I thought you'd gone.

**SUSIE**

Hold that thought.

**PHIL**

What the hell does that mean?

**SUSIE**

I need to know what it is you're doing.

Barbara shouts from the back of the car.

**BARBARA**

I told you what he's doing! He's going to set fire to my Gram in some freaky ceremony with witches and black magic and... dolls.

**PHIL**

Dolls?

**SUSIE**

Dolls to stick pins in.

**PHIL**

What the hell are you talking about?

**BARBARA**

(shouts)

I want my man back!

**PHIL**

Enough of this shit.

84.

**CON TINUE D:**

Phil walks over to the door of room 8.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

They've gotta be in here.      It's  
fate.

He opens the door and walks in.

**INT. JOSHUA TREE INN - ROOM 8. NIGHT**

Larry and Stanley are sitting on the bed.      Phil  
shoots a  
vicious look at Larry.

**PHIL**

Whatever happened to peace, love  
and understanding, hippie?

**STANLEY**

You're Kaufman?

**PHIL**

Yup.

Stanley folds his arms.      Susie and Barbara follow  
Phil into  
the room.

**STANLEY**

And you are?

**SUSIE**

I'm with him.

She indicates Phil.

**BARBARA**

Hello Stanley. Remember me?      The  
psychotic girlfriend?

**STANLEY**

Hello Barbara. Nothing wrong  
with your memory.

He turns to Phil.

**STANLEY (CONT'D)**

Did you sell tickets or  
something? Now, you boys want to  
tell me why you stole my son?

**LARRY**

Well, I didn't even know he was  
in the box.

CON TINUE D:

**PHIL**

I'm going to cremate him, here in the desert where he felt most at home. That's what he wanted.

**BARBARA**

The hell you are, Kaufman.

Stanley picks up the phone and starts to dial.

**STANLEY**

You know I can't let you do that?

**PHIL**

I know you have to.

Stanley smashes the receiver down onto the table. Everyone jumps.

**STANLEY**

I don't have to do anything, Mister Kaufman. This is MY loss! This was MY son! How dare you try to take my grief away from me.

**PHIL**

It's too late to claim him now.

**STANLEY**

What the hell does that mean?

They are almost nose-to-nose now.

**PHIL**

It means that you were never there when it mattered to Gram. It means that you stopped being a father the moment he stopped doing your bidding. It means that you learned to care too late. That's what it means.

**STANLEY**

I don't have to justify my relationship with Gram to you.

**PHIL**

Not to me, no.

Stanley sits down.

**STANLEY**

It's true that when Gram left college, we drifted apart.

**(MOR E)**

86.

**CON TINUE D: (2)**

**STA NLEY (CONT'D)**

He was a disappointment to me, because he wouldn't use his brain. He had so much to offer, but he let it trickle away.

**PHIL**

No - he gave it his all, but in a way you could never understand. And all he ever wanted from you was approval. He wanted you to be proud of what he had achieved.

**STANLEY**

I kept everything. Every record, every article, every photo.

**PHIL**

It's no good telling me. You should have told him.

**STANLEY**

I loved him.

**PHIL**

Too late...

Stanley looks up at Phil.

**STANLEY**

I understand that you were his right-hand man, as well as his friend?

**PHIL**

I was both, yes.

**STANLEY**

And that you weren't there when he died? When he needed you most?

A beat, then:

**PHIL**

Yes. That's right.

**STANLEY**

So the guilt isn't all mine,  
then?

**PHIL**

I guess not.

Susie walks over and takes Phil's hand. Stanley says  
nothing for a moment, but his eyes fill with tears.

87.

**CON TINUE D: (3)**

**STANLEY**

You boys took away my son. I  
lost him once in life, and now  
you're trying to take him from me  
again.

He starts to cry. Larry shoots an imploring look at Phil.  
Barbara glances around the room.

**BARBARA**

Can we just cut through this?

She gestures at Phil and Larry.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

You two stole the body. Theft.  
Indicates Susie.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Sweetie, I'm sorry, but you seem  
to be in the whole thing up to  
your neck. Accessory.

Waves a hand at Stanley.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

And you are an old fool who  
should have called the police,  
but hasn't. Stupidity.

She walks over to the phone.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Now, let's just call the cops and  
get it done. The sooner we get

us a death certificate and bury him, the sooner his soul will be properly laid to rest.

Phil walks over to Barbara, picks her up and carries her into the bathroom.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Hey! What the hell are you doing?

He emerges and slips the back of a chair under the handle, effectively locking the door.

**STANLEY**

Son, you had your chance to look after Gram, and now he's dead.

There is a 'bang' from the bathroom, and the door shakes.

88.

**CON TINUE D: (4)**

**BARBARA**

**(O.S)**

Bastard!

**PHIL**

I only failed because I couldn't save him from himself. You failed him all his life. You never believed. I never doubted.

Stanley pauses.

**STANLEY**

Okay. You tell me why I should let you take my boy.

**PHIL**

I was his road manager and his friend. We loved it out here in the desert, and we made a pact that whoever died first, the other would come down here and set them free. Gram gave his word and I gave mine.

Stanley thinks about this.

**STANLEY**

You're a couple of druggies. Why should I believe you?

Phil doesn't like the inference.

**PHIL**

I don't take drugs.  
Another 'bang' from the bathroom. Stanley turns to Larry.

**STANLEY**

What about you? Are you a  
druggie?

There is a long pause. Then:

**LARRY**

Yes. Yes I am.

Phil closes his eyes. Stanley picks up the receiver and starts to dial. Then Phil jumps up off the bed and walks out of the room. After a moment, Larry and Susie follow.

**EXT. OUTSIDE ROOM 8 - JOSHUA TREE INN. NIGHT**

Phil is waiting by the car.

89.

**CON TINUE D:**

**PHIL**

(to Larry)  
Nice work. Let's go.

Larry gives Phil the screwdriver.

**LARRY**

I can't do this. This isn't  
right.

Larry walks away leaving Phil with Susie. He looks  
at her.

**SUSIE**

Just do whatever feels right to  
you.

**PHIL**

God damn!

After a moment, Phil walks back into room eight.

**INT. JOSHUA TREE INN - ROOM 8. NIGHT**

Stanley is sitting on the bed, the receiver in his hand.

Phil sits facing him.

**PHIL**

Did you call them?

**STANLEY**

No.

**PHIL**

Are you going to call them?

**STANLEY**

Well, you haven't given me a reason not to.

The  
There is another 'crash' from inside the bathroom.  
door shakes.

**PHIL**

There isn't a reason. If someone tried to steal my son's body, I'd stop them. For sure.

Larry and Susie quietly enter the room.

**STANLEY**

So you are prepared to go to jail?

**PHIL**

I'm expecting to.

90.

CON TINUE D:

**BARBARA**

(O.S)

Don't you worry - it's gonna happen!

**LARRY**

Mister Parsons?

Phil and Stanley look up.

**STANLEY**

What is it, son?

**LARRY**

I've been a junkie for over four years. I started taking heroin on June 5th 1969 at a concert in

Indiana. I...

**STANLEY**

You don't need...

Larry holds his hand up to stop Stanley.

**LARRY**

I've taken heroin, speed, uppers,  
downers, blues, morphine,  
methadone, mushrooms, quaaludes,  
acid, valium, barbiturates,  
straight LSD, marijuana,  
marijuana laced with opium,  
nembutal, mescaline of course, and  
medical methaqualone, which made  
me shake uncontrollably for six  
weeks and vomit every hour.

**STANLEY**

(dryly)

That's very impressive, son.

**LARRY**

Not my point.

**PHIL**

Better make the point.

**LARRY**

I started working my way through  
that list on June 5th 1969, and  
since then there hasn't been a  
day when I didn't at least smoke  
one joint.

Phil shoots Larry a dangerous look.

91.

**CON TINUE D: (2)**

**PHIL**

Are we sure that this is helping?

Larry ignores him.

**LARRY**

And now I've stopped. I stopped  
because it seems that I had  
something more important to do.

They all look at him. He gestures at Phil.

**LARRY (CONT'D)**

He's doing this because he gave his word. I'm prepared to do this now because I think it's right. And because I believe that each body has a soul. And Gram's soul doesn't belong in a family plot surrounded by strangers. It belongs here, where he was happiest.

In the silence, Susie walks over and grips Phil's hand. Then Stanley gets up off the bed.

**STANLEY**

I'm going to go say goodbye to my son.

Everyone looks surprised. Phil gives Larry a look of appreciative approval. Barbara starts to kick furiously at the door from inside the bathroom. Stanley pauses for a moment, and then walks outside. Phil and Larry watch him go, and Susie walks over to kiss Phil.

**PHIL**

What's that for?

**SUSIE**

That's for failing to reinforce my expectations.

**PHIL**

Well... I'll have to do that more often.

The three of them move to the door, and Phil turns to Larry.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Did you really take all those drugs?

**LARRY**

Of course not.

92.

CON TINUE D: (3)

He grins at Phil.

**LARRY (CONT'D)**

I may have got a little carried away...

The door of the bathroom shakes and one of the hinges flies across the room.

**PHIL**

C'mon, time to go...

**EXT. OUTSIDE ROOM 8. NIGHT**

Phil, Larry and Susie leave room eight. They look around with surprise, but there is no sign of Stanley. Phil opens the back of the hearse and takes a quick peek inside the casket.

**PHIL**

Just checking.

**LARRY**

Yeah, he took the body and stuffed it in the trunk of his car before escaping into the night.

Larry is already behind the wheel. Phil opens the car door and looks at Susie.

**PHIL**

Are you coming?

She smiles at him.

**SUSIE**

I reckon I am.

She gets in. There is a final, almighty 'crash' from inside room eight. The three of them look at each other, and then Bernice is gone into the darkness. A moment later Barbara runs outside. She leaps into her car and screeches after them. In the distance a blue flashing police light suddenly materializes.

**INT. BARBARA'S CAR. NIGHT**

Barbara is on the road, driving fast. Suddenly a blue flashing police light fills her mirror.

**BARBARA**

Thank God!

She pulls over and the police cruiser pulls in behind her. The traffic cop walks up and looks through the window.

**CON TINUE D:**

**TRAFFIC COP**

Evenin' ma'am.

Barbara gives it everything.

**BARBARA**

Please help me, they've got my boyfriend's corpse and they're going to perform a ritual with his body.

The cop turns on his torch and peers at her carefully.

**TRAFFIC COP**

May I see your driving license please, ma'am?

**BARBARA**

My driving license?

**TRAFFIC COP**

Please.

**BARBARA**

I've just told you that they've stolen a body and you want to see my driving license?

He just stares at her. Barbara is losing it.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

You people are supposed to be on the lookout for a hearse. A hearse is a big long car. You can usually tell which ones are the hearses, because they have coffins in the back. The one we're looking for is painted yellow. Does this look like a yellow hearse to you, asshole?

Long pause. Barbara realizes that she might have gone too far. He starts to write a ticket.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Is that a ticket? Are you writing me a ticket?

**TRAFFIC COP**

Yes it is, ma'am. And yes I am.

**INT. HEARSE. NIGHT**

Phil indicates an area just off the road.

94.

**CON TINUE D:**

**PHIL**

Cap Rock. This is perfect.  
Really peaceful...

Larry pulls the hearse over near the rock. They all sit there for a moment. Phil and Larry look at each other.

**EXT. DESERT. NIGHT**

Phil opens the back of the hearse and slides the casket out of the car. He notices that Larry has made no move to help. Susie sits on a rock and watches.

**PHIL**

You wanna give me a hand here?  
Larry walks over and grabs the other end of the casket. They walk it away from the car and lay it down. As they lower it, the coffin slips out of Phil's hands and bangs down in the sand.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Sorry, Gram.

They stand and stare at the casket.                      Susie walks over  
with  
the guitar and takes Phil's hand.

**LARRY**

What now?

**PHIL**

Now we... do it.

He gets the gasoline can from the car and stands over the casket.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Take the top off.

**LARRY**

Why?

**PHIL**

Flesh burns easier than wood.

**LARRY**

I can't believe you just said  
that. I'm not taking the top  
off.

He walks off. Phil puts the can down and removes the top  
of the casket. He peers inside.

95.

CON TINUE D:

**PHIL**

(to Gram)

Hey, man. Looking a little  
peaky...

**SUSIE**

Some decorum would be nice.

**PHIL**

Right.

He pours some gasoline into the casket.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

Do you think that's enough?

Against his better judgment, Larry walks over and peers  
inside.

**LARRY**

Well, I don't know. Maybe a  
little more.

Phil pours a little more fuel in. He looks over at  
Susie.

**PHIL**

Enough?

**SUSIE**

I'm not having a conversation  
with you about how much gasoline  
you need to burn a body.

She backs off.

**LARRY**

I think that'll do it.

Phil stops pouring and shakes the can.

**PHIL**

Only a little left.

He pours the rest of the can into the casket. Susie walks over to stand next to Phil. He looks down at Gram.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

I'm sorry I wasn't there for you when it mattered, but I was there before, and I've been there ever since. Gram, good luck to you, wherever you are.

They all stare at the casket. Phil wipes a tear away and tucks a can of beer into the coffin.

96.

**CON TINUE D: (2)**

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

That's my last one, man.

He rests Gram's guitar against the casket, takes big puffs on his cigar to get the flame up, then tosses it into the coffin. They wait. Nothing happens. Phil edges nearer and looks inside. Then the coffin explodes into flames. All three of them are thrown backwards by the blast.

**EXT. HIGHWAY. NIGHT**

The traffic cop is finishing the ticket when there is a ball of flame in the distance. Barbara just scowls.

**TRAFFIC COP**

Jesus! What the hell's that?

**BARBARA**

That'll be Gram Parsons, on fire.

**TRAFFIC COP**

Get in the car, ma'am. Now.

**EXT. DESERT. NIGHT**

Phil, Larry and Susie pick themselves up. They stare at the pyre. Phil is close to tears, and Susie puts her arm around him. For a moment, Phil thinks he sees the flames morph into the shape of an angel over the burning coffin. The image disappears when Larry speaks.

**LARRY**

Maybe too much fuel.

**PHIL**

Nah, I just didn't factor in the

booze inside of him. Gram  
always...

He breaks off as a flashing police light appears in the  
darkness, followed by a siren.

**PHIL (CONT'D)**

I think our work here is done.

Larry and Susie run to the car. Phil lingers a moment,  
looking down at the flames. Then he follows the others.

**INT. HEARSE. NIGHT**

Phil jumps into the car.

**PHIL**

Go!

97.

**CON TINUE D:**

The huge car screeches off into the darkness, with no  
lights.

**INT. CAR. NIGHT**

Stanley watches as the hearse flies past him. He glances  
back at the fire, smiles sadly, and bows his head for a  
moment. Then he turns on the ignition and drives away into  
the darkness.

**EXT. DESERT. NIGHT**

cop      The police car arrives at the scene.      Barbara and the  
get out. He peers into the flames.

**TRAFFIC COP**

How do you know it's your  
boyfriend?

**BARBARA**

(sarcastically)

I recognize that birthmark on his  
shoulder. Look, can I make an  
observation?

**TRAFFIC COP**

Be my guest.

**BARBARA**

We're in the desert. It is dark.  
If you want to catch someone in  
the dark, it's best not to turn  
on big flashing lights and make a  
loud noise with a siren.

**TRAFFIC COP**

Do you want to know what I think,  
ma'am?

**BARBARA**

No. But I'm really, really keen  
to find out.

The traffic cop stares into the fire.

**TRAFFIC COP**

I think it was suicide. He just  
wanted to get away from you.

**INT. HEARSE. DAWN**

Phil is fast asleep and snoring in Bernice's passenger  
seat. He wakes slowly and shields his eyes from the bright  
sunshine that pours through the windscreen. He pulls a  
flask out of the glove compartment and takes a long gargle,  
spitting the result out of the window.

**98.**

**CON TINUE D:**

Then he glances in the rear view mirror and sees the man  
sitting in the casket bay.

**GRAM**

Sure is hot.

**PHIL**

Hello, Gram.

**GRAM**

Phil.

Gram pulls himself along the bay and onto the back seat.  
He then climbs into the front, settles next to Phil and  
holds his hand out for the flask.

**PHIL**

Do you think you should?

**GRAM**

Not gonna hurt me now, is it?

He takes a drink and looks around.

**GRAM (CONT'D)**

Nice wheels. Very stylish.

**PHIL**

They're very handy for  
transporting dead people around.  
Nothing better.

**GRAM**

I am dead, then?

**PHIL**

You're more than dead, Gram. You  
and the box are down to bones and  
brass.

**GRAM**

Oh, well.      Here's mud in your  
eye.

He takes another drink and hands the flask back to Phil.

**PHIL**

What can I do for you, Gram?

**GRAM**

You assume I want something.

**PHIL**

Well, you're here. And seeing as  
I just burned you to a cinder,  
you shouldn't be.

**(MOR E)**

99.

**CON TINUE D: (2)**

**PHI L (CONT'D)**

So I'm guessing you've got some  
kind of reason.

**GRAM**

Well, okay. I just wanted to say  
thanks.

**PHIL**

What for?

**GRAM**

Doing the thing that we agreed,  
keeping your word, keeping them

all away...

**PHIL**

Well, that's okay, Gram. But I don't need thanking.

**GRAM**

You don't?

**PHIL**

I'm just taking care of business. That's what you paid me for - that's what I do.

Gram grins.

**GRAM**

You shooting for a raise?

**PHIL**

Actually, I just quit.

Gram holds his hand out for the bottle and takes a drink.

**GRAM**

Well, I s'pose I should be getting along.

**PHIL**

Goodbye, Gram. I'm glad it all worked out.

**GRAM**

What?

**PHIL**

I said I'm glad it all worked out.

And Gram is now Larry, peering down at Phil.

**LARRY**

All what worked out?

100.

**CON TINUE D: (3)**

Phil sits bolt upright and looks around the car. Larry and Susie stare back at him.

**PHIL**

Doesn't matter. Can we go now? I'm getting sick of sand.

**EXT. HIGHWAY. DAY**

We hear Gram's: 'Return Of The Grievous Angel' or some similar music.

We follow Bernice as she drives through the desert, and into Los Angeles. We follow her through the city streets, and we stay with her as she parks.  
Fade down music.

**INT. HEARSE. DAY**

Phil turns off the ignition and sits back in his seat. He and Larry look at each other.

**LARRY**

Well, we did it. We saved a soul.

He leans across to hug Phil, who looks awkward and pats him on the shoulder instead.

**PHIL**

Singed my damn mustache, that's for sure.

Phil pulls a cigar out of his pocket and lights it. The handcuff dangles from his wrist and bangs against the dash. He stares at the match as it burns.

**LARRY**

Well, shall we?

Phil blows the match out.

**PHIL**

Yeah. Let's roll, hippie.

They all get out of the car.

**EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET. DAY**

Phil turns to Susie.

**PHIL**

Where d'you think you might be when I'm done?

**SUSIE**

I'll be waiting.

**PHIL**

Yeah, but where?

There is a small moment of tension, before Phil grins at her. They kiss.

**SUSIE**

Get out of here. Finish it.

Phil pats Bernice's battered wing as he walks away and over to where Larry is waiting. They cross the road and walk into a building through heavy wooden doors. Pull back to reveal a sign: 'Los Angeles Police Department'.

FADE UP ON SUPER: Phil Kaufman and Larry Osterberg appeared in West L.A. Municipal Court on November 5, 1973 - Gram Parsons's 27th birthday. Since a corpse has no intrinsic value, the two were charged with misdemeanor theft for stealing the coffin and given a token punishment: \$708 in damages for the coffin, and a \$300 fine for each of the bodysnatchers.