

H a r d T a r g e t

by

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PRODUCTION REWRITE

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1 EXT. FRENCH QUARTER BACK STREET - NIGHT 1

Gaslight casts a flickering glow on a street adrift in time. On a once grand New Orleans boulevard, footsteps ECHO on the wet brick sidewalk.

DOUG BINDER emerges from shadow. A solid man in his late 40's, Binder's face is lined with tough life. Avoiding a small circle of street light, he nervously checks behind him. Satisfied he's alone, Binder moves from the doorway and steps into the street.

O.S. there is a WHISTLING sound- Binder ducks quickly... With an evil CRACK, a two foot long hunting arrow punctures the wall next to him.

Panicked, Binder backs out of the light and breaks into a dead run.

2 A HAND 2

threads a four-bladed arrow into a complex looking crossbow.

3 OTHER HANDS 3

rack the slide of an evil looking automatic shotgun.

4 SHADOWS 4

move against the glare of headlights. The shapes of men, armed men loom in the rain...they stand casually and watch Binder run for his life.

5 BEHIND A RAIN SPATTERED WINDSHIELD 5

a face is obscured by the glimmer of streetlights A big Land Rover clunks into park.

Two men alight from the vehicle. EMIL FOUCHON is the larger of the pair, elegantly dressed, a twisted kind of European evil clings to Fouchon like expensive cologne.

With Fouchon is an ORIENTAL MAN, late forties, also well dressed- his name is CHANG. Mr. Chang carries a thin bundle- it is crossbow covered by a folded rain coat.

6 BINDER 6

is pressed against a darkened wall- he scans the street around him. Wrought iron balconies loom over high doorways and windows- all are shuttered tight. Then Binder's eyes flash like a pursued animal...

7 ACROSS THE STREET

a MAN stands next to a pair of over sized dogs. THUNDER ROLLS. Binder quickens his step and ducks around the corner.

8 CLOSE ON THE MAN

It looks like Satan is walking his dogs. PIK Van CLEAVE is lean and ruthless- his dogs don't seem any friendlier. Once Binder has rounded the corner, Van Cleave halts his animals and kneels beside them.

Around the neck of each dog, a small radio transmitter is mounted on a thick leather strap. Van Cleave fingers the transmitters- each begins to BEEP softly.

Van Cleave pets the vile-looking animals and slips their leashes. The man's voice is the lilting, nasal twang of an of a hard-line Afrikaner.

Van CLEAVE
Easy, pretties...easy.

Van Cleave's eyes flicker across the street.

Van CLEAVE
Track!

In a flash, the dogs are away after Binder.

9 EXT. DESERTED STREET - NIGHT

Binder pushes desperately against a door- it's locked tight.

BINDER
Dammit!

He backs away and trots down the street.

10 AT A STREET CORNER

Van Cleave walks toward Fouchon and Chang. There is an electronic contraption in his hand. The dogs track the man, the box tracks the dogs.

Van CLEAVE
He's turning south...

(CONTINUED)

Fouchon turns and walks back to the Rover- he checks the knot of his tie in the rear view mirror.

FOUCHON
(flat calm)
I want men between him and the
river.

In the street behind Fouchon, pair of motorcycles kick to life. Van Cleave and Chang slip back into the Rover. Fouchon drops into a sedan and steps on the gas. The deadly convoy heads south.

11 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

11

Binder is in full flight. He looks left, cuts right and plunges deeper into the space between two buildings. Binder slows- it's a dead end.

Backed against a plywood wall, Binder wheels about...At the head of the alley, the first dog scratches around the corner.

As the dog streaks toward Binder, the only sound is the BEEPING of its radio collar. Like a guided missile, the dog streaks in on the trapped man.

12 BINDER

12

puts his shoulder against a trash can and pushes it to the wall. He quickly clambers onto it and pulls himself up... but the dog's on him.

SNARLING, the dog rips Binder's shoe from his foot. As it leaps for another bite, Binder kicks back, knocking the dog to the wet pavement.

Binder pulls himself up and over. From the other side of the wall, the other dog appears from thin air. All Binder sees coming at him are TEETH.

GROWLING, the dog rips into Binder's shoulder. Locked together, man and animal fall from the top of the wall and back into the alley.

13 ON THE PAVEMENT

13

both dogs now circle the fallen man...O.S. a single short WHISTLE comes from the darkness. The dogs immediately turn away. Binder pulls himself up on an elbow.

14 AT THE HEAD OF THE ALLEY

14

Chang steps from the darkness. Carrying an MP-5 machine pistol, Fouchon joins him. Obedient as house pets, the dogs take their station and sit next to their masters.

Chang lifts the crossbow to his shoulder and aims. Cradling his machine pistol, Fouchon watches with the leisurely disinterest of a safari guide.

15 BINDER

15

backs against the wall. With a sickening THWACK, a four bladed arrowhead finds bone and flesh. An arrow strikes Binder solidly in the shoulder- pinning him to the plywood wall.

16 CHANG

16

casually draws a second arrow from his quiver and threads it into the bow. He lifts the weapon and lets fly...

17 AT THE WALL

17

Binder snaps off the shaft of the arrow and dives to the pavement half a second before the arrow punches through the wall.

Shocked that he missed, Chang reaches for another arrow, but Binder is quicker. Like a man possessed, he bounds up onto the trash can and leaps over the plywood wall.

Fouchon seems only marginally amused.

FOUCHON

You're going to have to be faster
than that, Mr. Chang.

18 EXT. RIVERSIDE DOCK - NIGHT

18

Buildings and streetlights are reflected in a wide, shallow puddle. Binder splashes face first into the muddy hole- half of Chang's arrow still juts hideously from his shoulder.

Binder pulls himself up and runs furiously toward the water.

19 INT. RANGE ROVER - NIGHT

19

headlights sweep down the newly darkened street. Binder is two hundred yards ahead, running, stumbling...

lurches though a shell strewn parking lot. Vehicle lights pin him- the Rover, the sedan and a pair of motorcycles are coming on fast.

Binder sprints toward the water's edge. In middle distance, the glimmering towers of downtown New Orleans loom across the Mississippi. The water between Binder and the city seems impossibly wide and dark.

Binder jukes and breaks toward the river's edge. Ahead of him, a small shack is perched at the base of a short pier. As the vehicles enter the parking lot, Binder runs toward the water with every dram of his remaining strength.

steps from the sedan. Van Cleave and Chang join him. Although the dogs are now in hot pursuit, it looks like Binder is going to make it to the water.

FOUCHON

(lifting his gun)

If he makes it to the river, he wins. I'm afraid I can't allow that, Mr. Chang...

Chang steps forward, an arrow is threaded in his string.

gallops the remaining yards to the water. Panicked, he turns around in mid-stride to look back at the hunters.

releases the bowstring. The arrow cuts the distance between hunter and prey- striking Binder between the shoulder blades.

The impact sends him tumbling. Quick, fierce gasps shake him... Binder claws his way back to his feet and struggles into the shack.

Fouchon and Van Cleave aim their guns...Two silenced machine pistols spit lead and fire. Their combined noise is only slightly louder than the rattle of an electric drill.

26 THE SHED

26

is ripped by GUNFIRE. The old wood splinters and disintegrates in a cascade of lead. Shielding his face- Binder claws through the back wall of the rickety structure and crashes onto the pier.

27 IN THE PARKING LOT

27

Behind him in the parking lot, Fouchon and Van Cleave keep up the BARRAGE- they're still aiming at the shed- they're intent is only to flush Binder from cover.

28 BINDER

28

staggers to his feet and runs for the end of the pier. Behind him, Chang coolly aims and fires...Binder jerks as the four bladed arrowhead sticks suddenly from the front of his shirt.

This was a kill shot. Struck through the heart, Binder pirouettes at the end of the dock. Eyes pinned open, the standing corpse tumbles into a rowboat tied to the end of the pier.

29 FOUCHON

29

steps up to Chang. In his hand is an elegant silver flask. He unscrews the top and hands it to man with the crossbow.

FOUCHON
Brandy, Mr. Chang?

Chang takes the flask and drinks heartily.

In the glare of the headlights, Van Cleave walks to the end of the pier. He bends down into the boat and pulls up the bloody corner of Binder's shirt.

Van Cleave rips a thick belt from around the dead man's waist, then walks back toward the others.

30 CLOSE ON BINDER

30

Sprawled across the gunwale of the rowboat, Binder's fingers dangle an inch from the water. Hanging from the collar of the dead man's shirt are a set of military dog tags- one of them is punctured neatly.

A single drop of blood runs from the silver dog tags and falls into the black water.

SMASH CUT TO:

- 31 OMITTED 31*
- 32 OMITTED 32*
- 32A EXT. INTERSTATE 10 - DAY 32A
- Heading south, a BMW convertible is moving fast. Behind the wheel is NATASHA BINDER...late twenties, bright, pretty, NAT is a self-sufficient product of the 90's.
- Nat finds an off ramp and descends onto the streets of the City. Through her windshield is displayed a visual gumbo of wealth and want.
- 33 EXT. NEW ORLEANS SKY - DAWN 33 -
- Atop a church steeple, a weather-beaten cross jabs into the red eye of Louisiana morning.
- PULL DOWN SLOWLY...
- 34 EXT. NEW ORLEANS - DAWN 34
- Shotgun shacks and grand maisons tumble together, surging like a wave toward a modest skyline. The streets are still empty.
- 35 EXT. CITY STREET - DAWN 35
- A street cleaning truck cruises a back street, spraying water from its side vents. On the sidewalk, the water gushes down on several lumps of newspaper.
- As the water hits them, HOMELESS MEN stir beneath their papered beds. Roused by the water, they stand and curse as the truck rolls by.
- At a corner, a HOMELESS WOMAN looks through a trash can. Standing next to a shopping cart nearby, her YOUNG DAUGHTER looks on stoically.
- 36 Nat's car creeps by, peering at a rusty street sign. Nat doesn't look too happy. UNTIL TEN SECONDS AGO, Nat was lost - she thought maybe permanently. Nat turns onto a residential boulevard and parks in front of a once grand old house. 36* *
- 37 EXT. MARIE'S HOUSE - DAY 37
- Nat checks an address in her book and walks to the front door. She finds the bell, which is broken, and then knocks on the door.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

After a moment, an ELDERLY LADY appears, call her MARIE. She obviously isn't the person Nat's looking for.

NAT

(unsure)

I must have the wrong address. Is this 1954 St. Claude?

The Old woman picks up a brass number from the porch.

MARIE

It is if the damn numbers will stay on.

NAT

I'm looking for Douglas Binder-?

The woman looks puzzled. Nat pulls a snapshot from her wallet. It is a twenty year old photograph of man in a much-decorated Marine uniform. Take a close look- it's the same man who caught the arrow on page 5.

*
*
*

MARIE

(recognizes the face)

Doug? Honey, he doesn't have a room here any more.

*

Marie hands back the photo.

NAT

He doesn't live here?

MARIE

Doug used to- he moved out. 'Bout maybe three months ago.

NAT

But I just wrote to him... three weeks ago. I wrote him at this address.

MARIE

He still comes by to pick up his mail- now and again.

(looks her over)

Are you a friend a' Mr. Binder's?

NAT

I'm his daughter.

The old woman's hard edge evaporates.

MARIE

Why didn't you say...? Come on in, honey.

Nat is seated alone in a threadbare parlor. Marie walks in with a tray of coffee and pecan pie. The house and it's owner may have seen better days, but the hospitality hasn't changed.

MARIE

Doug was a nice man, he had manners.

The old woman pours coffee and hands a cup and saucer to Nat.

NAT

He didn't tell you where he was moving?

MARIE

(not angry)

He owed some rent, honey.

Nat is shocked. Seeing the concern, the Lady's voice is kind.

MARIE

I told him he could make it up when he got back on his feet.

NAT

What do you mean? Was my father in an accident or something?

MARIE

He lost his job with the oil tool company.

Nat is stunned.

MARIE

You didn't know?

NAT

No. No, I didn't.

Marie lifts a small leather box from the coffee table.

MARIE

(hands the case to Nat)

When Doug moved out, he left these.

Nat opens the case. Inside is a rack of medals- top shelf decorations for gallantry in combat: a Navy Cross, Silver and Bronze Stars, a couple of others.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

MARIE(cont'd)

...He told me to sell them to make
up for his back rent.

Nat's hands are literally shaking. These medals were the most
precious things her father owned.

MARIE

A man over in Metairie told me the
blue one was worth a thousand
dollars...

(her voice trails)

MARIE (CONTINUED)

But I just couldn't bring myself to
sell them.

Nearly in tears, Nat open her checkbook.

Nat

How much did he owe you?

MARIE

Honey, you don't have to...

Nat quickly scribbles a check and hands it to Marie.

Nat

Is this enough...?

Marie looks at the check. It's more than enough. She pushes
the medal box across the table to Nat.

MARIE

Give these back to your father.

Nat tries to pull herself together.

NAT

Do you have any idea where he is
now?

The old woman's voice is quiet.

MARIE

You might try checking down at the
mission.

CUT TO:

39 EXT. PAULIST MISSION - DAY

39*

The Mission is a SOUP KITCHEN in a bad part of town.
Heartbroken. Nat walks across the street toward the building.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

Scattered on the steps are about a dozen of the city's POORER CITIZENS. MOTHERS with CHILDREN, a smattering of DRUNKS. They're here early for dinner, or late for lunch. For alot of them, it hardly matters which.

39A EXT. PAULIST MISSION

39A*

Rays of sunlight stream through high windows, lighting the hall like a Goya painting.

Clearly out of her depth, Nat approaches a man sweeping the floor. ELIJAH ROPER is wearing a tattered Army field jacket- its patches include a master parachutist's badge, Ranger and Special Forces tabs. It is the coat of a war hero.

NAT

Excuse me...do you work here?

ELIJAH

(pleasantly)

I eat here.

NAT

I'm looking for someone...a man. I was told to ask at The Harbor.

(fumbles with her purse)

I have a picture.

Nat pulls a snapshot from her wallet. Elijah studies it.

ELIJAH

Marine, huh? Recon. I was in the service for a while myself.

NAT

Do you know him?

ELIJAH

He comes here sometimes. Nice guy, too.

(hands back the picture)

You the Po-lice or something?

NAT

I'm his daughter. I'm trying to find him.

Elijah returns to his sweeping.

(CONTINUED)

39A CONTINUED:

39A

ELIJAH

(helpful)

If I see him, I'll tell him your
looking.

NAT

Don't you know where he lives?

The broom stops. Elijah sees Nat doesn't get it; he chooses
his words as best he can.

ELIJAH

I'm afraid your Daddy...he was like
the rest of us. Out of doors, you
know?

The revelation breaks over her like a ten foot wave.

NAT

Do you mean he was...homeless?

ELIJAH

Everybody's got a home. He just'
didn't have no place to spend the
night.

NAT

(stunned)

Where is he now? Where could I find
him?

ELIJAH

You might try askin' out in the
park. I think he had himself a
cart.

40 EXT. PLAZA D'ITALIA - DAY

40*

Around a squalid park, there are OLD FOLKS siting in patches
of shade and more than a few HOMELESS PEOPLE...

Nat gathers her courage and walks up to a wildly UNKEMPT MAN
sitting on a piece of cardboard. Nat pulls the picture from
her purse.

NAT

Excuse me...?

The Man looks up blankly. He doesn't know and he doesn't
care.

NAT

(to herself)

Oh God.

CUT TO:

41 INT. CAFE - DAY

41*

The Utility Lunch is a culinary nightmare. DRUNKS slumber face down in the booths- what's left of the seating is heaped with TOUGH CUSTOMERS.

Alone at the end of the lunch counter, Chance Boudreaux scrapes the last bit of gumbo from a bowl in front of him. Chance nods at the not-so pretty WAITRESS. She walks over with the coffee pot.

(CONTINUED)

WAITRESS
How was that Gumbo, Chance?

CHANCE
(hands her the bowl)
A tragedy. The coffee was tolerable
though.

WAITRESS
It ain't free, neither.

Chance reaches into his pocket and lays some change on the
Formica. He's a little short.

WAITRESS
Leave the wallet in your tuxedo?

CHANCE
I use that one on you before...?

WAITRESS
(pouring coffee)
Yeah... for the gumbo.

Chance slowly sips his coffee. A little charm can get you a
long way in this town.

The door opens and Nat enters. In the mirror above the
counter, Chance watches Nat collapse into a booth behind him.
Exhausted and demoralized from her search- Nat has no idea
she's a woman very much in the wrong place.

WAITRESS
You gonna eat something, honey?

Nat takes a moment to answer.

NAT
Just coffee, please.

Chance continues to watch in the mirror as a cup placed in
front of her. Visibly distraught, Nat stares out the window-
cars pass on the dirty street outside.

Chance takes his eyes from Nat and sips his coffee. He's got
his own problems. Finally, Nat stands and walks for the cash
register.

Some of the BARSTOOLS turn to ogle her. At a dirty booth,
MUTT and JEFF both have their radar on. As Nat passes, Jeff

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

slurps his coffee lewdly. His buddy is staring a hole in the back of Nat's jeans.

Oblivious, Nat pulls a wallet from her purse and puts a dollar on the counter. At the booth, Mutt nudges Jeff under the table. They both stare real hard at the wallet.

Swallowing his coffee, Chance watches it all.

Nat pushes through the cafe door out into the street. A moment later, Mutt and Jeff slide from their booth and ooze out the door.

At the end of the counter, Chance puts down his cup. Trying his best to be unconcerned, Chance zips up his jacket and walks out.

42 EXT. CAFE - DAY

42*

Half a block up, Nat walks for her car. She doesn't have a clue. Chance stands in front of the diner and watches as the two Hoods circle in behind her.

Chance walks about ten steps and halts. The look on his face says 'keep walking'- the voice in his head says 'turn around'.

CHANCE

Shit.

43 AT NAT'S CAR

43

as she opens the car door, Mutt steps up behind her and kicks it- the door SMASHES closed heavily.

MUTT

Hello, pretty Lady.

Nat spins around to face the two hoodlums. Somebody told her to do this in a rape prevention class...

NAT

Leave me the hell alone!!!

Mutt SNAPS open a buck knife. Nat steps back against the car.

MUTT

(lifts the blade)

...We'll take the wallet- and
maybe a little extra.

(CONTINUED)

Chance appears suddenly behind them.

CHANCE

(howdy)

How you all are?

Mutt turns with his knife. He isn't afraid of Chance- but he ought to be.

MUTT

Do yourself a favor, boy, this don't concern you.

CHANCE

No... it 'prolly don't. But right now, I think the favor's gonna be done for you. You're gonna fold up. that 'lil pig stick, and you and your boyfriend, you're gonna find a bus to catch.

JEFF

(maximum threat)

This one's funny...

Mutt looks at Jeff and smiles- in that instant, he slashes at Chance. Big mistake. Chance parries the knife, reverses it around the thug's elbow and neatly pops the knife out of his hand. Before he can even groan, Chance ONE PUNCHES him into a heap.

Jeff doesn't have time to swallow- Chance jabs an elbow under his chin and flips him across the hood of the car. The whole shebang's over in 3.2 seconds. The two muggers are running for their lives.

44 NAT STANDS IN SHOCK. Chance calmly kicks Mutt's knife down a storm drain. Chance sees small trickle of blood drip from the corner of Nat's mouth. 44

CHANCE

You'll be okay, you're just a little shaken up.

He reaches into his jacket and produces a handkerchief. It's dirty. Chance tucks it back into his pocket with an embarrassed smile.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

He opens her purse, finds a Kleenex and dabs the corner of Nat's mouth.

CHANCE

You know, it's a shame. This used to be such a nice part of town.

Chance gallantly hands back her pocketbook and turns on his heel. Clutching her purse and keys, Nat stands locked back against the fender as Chance walks away.

At the car, the keys slip from Nat's fingers and drop to the pavement. Flabbergasted, she watches Chance round a corner and disappear.

CUT TO:

45 EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Strung out in front of the building is a picket line of STRIKING POLICE OFFICERS. Some in uniform, some in street clothes- all of them shoulder signs that say stuff like: "CITY COUNCIL UNFAIR" and "YOUR POLICE DESERVE BETTER PAY".

Nat manages to get past the Officers and into the station house.

46 INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Nat makes her way to the high desk of the DUTY SERGEANT. The phones are RINGING crazily. The Old Cop literally has three phones pressed to his ear. The cops who did show for up are working their asses off.

Nat says something to him. Annoyed, the Sergeant only nods into deeper into the building. Nat wanders past the desk; around her, the remainder of station house is empty and quiet.

47 IN THE DETECTIVE SQUAD ROOM

The place is a wall-to-wall with dark and empty desks. In a corner there's one light on. Powering through a foot of paper on her desk, CARMINE MITCHEL is the only detective in the city who isn't carrying a picket sign.

Nat walks up to the desk.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

NAT

Excuse me... The Sergeant told me I could file a missing person report with you.

Scribbling, Carmine does not look up.

CARMINE

I think what he meant to tell you is that I just pulled a double shift.

(looks at Nat)

Why don't you catch me tomorrow?

Carmine studies Nat's face. It can't wait.

CARMINE

Okay...Why don't you catch me now.

Exasperated, Carmine fishes a stack of forms from her desk and threads a blank one into her typewriter. She calls out the blanks as she types.

CARMINE

What's the name of the missing individual?

NAT

Douglas Charles Binder.

CARMINE

Relationship of reporting party?

(Nat stares blankly)

That's you, honey.

NAT

Daughter.

Carmine types.

CARMINE

Do you have a photograph?

Nat hands over a wrinkled snapshot. In it, Binder stands with a fishing pole- next to him, a skinny seven year old girl poses proudly with her Daddy. The little girl in the photo is Nat- the picture is at least 20 years old.

CARMINE

You got something a little more recent?

(CONTINUED)

NAT

No...I mean I have another one, but it's just as old. My parents were divorced twenty years ago.

Carmine puts down the photo.

CARMINE

So why the sudden interest?

NAT

(defensive, touchy)

Because he's missing.

Carmine holds on Nat for a second, then sticks the photo into the cover of her typewriter. The Detective squints at it as she types Binder's description.

CARMINE

Right. You got an address?

Nat takes a moment to answer.

NAT

I think that my father was...Uh...homeless.

(falters)

I didn't even know myself until I came down here...

Carmine lights a cigarette and blows smoke across the desk.

CARMINE

Look, I'm not sure what you want me to do here.

Nat looks at the half-completed form.

NAT

(pissed)

I want you to take my report.

CARMINE

(patiently)

Well, generally to be considered missing you need some place to be missing from.

Nat stands up to leave.

(CONTINUED)

NAT

If it's too much trouble for you to do your job, I'll find someone who isn't so busy.

Unflappable, Carmine stubs out her cigarette. Under the hard-boiled exterior is someone who cares- a little.

CARMINE

I'm going to give you the nasty truth here. If you want to find your father, canvass the missions. Ask at the shelters. But get someone who knows the city to show you around- or I'll be filling one of these out on you.

NAT

(pissed)

Thanks so much for your help.

Nat snatches back the picture from Carmine's desk. Frazzled, Carmine watches Nat storm from the Squad Room.

CARMINE

(to herself)

Hey, don't mention it.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER FRONT DOCKS - DAY

It is early morning. An office trailer is parked on a river pier overlooking the city. There's a sign nailed to the door. It says: MARITIME SEAMAN'S UNION.

On the dock, Chance stands among a crowd of MERCHANT SAILORS. The men are hoping to 'shape up' (be called by the shop steward) for a day's work. While the others smoke and joke, Chance stands apart and alone- a monument of patience and dignity.

After a moment, the door opens and the well-fed SHOP STEWARD steps onto the porch. He is carrying a clipboard. The MEN crowd around to hear him.

STEWARD

All right, pipe down. We got 12 positions this morning- Able Seaman or better.

A GROAN from the Men.

(CONTINUED)

STEWARD (cont'd)

When I call your name, come into the office, show your papers and get your ship...Gombas, Luigi- Able Seaman. Slay, Robert- 3rd Mate. Leslie, Francis Robert- Oiler.

As their names are called, the LUCKY MEN push through the group and into the trailer. The Steward CONTINUES. From out of the crowd, Nat walks up to Chance.

NAT

They told me at the cafe you might be down here.

Chance barely acknowledges the woman he saved.

NAT

Uh...I'd like to talk to you.

CHANCE

(not looking at her)

I don't think this is a good time.

NAT

Why not?

CHANCE

Because I'm already listening to someone else.

The Steward DRONES on.

NAT

How'd you like to do some work for me?

Chance hardly even glances at Nat.

NAT

I'll pay you...One hundred dollars a day.

CHANCE

For doing what?

NAT

For a hundred dollars, does it matter?

(CONTINUED)

Chance is listening to the Steward again.

CHANCE
(flatly)
Yeah, actually it does.

NAT
I need you to help me find someone.
You know the city...you seem to be
able to take care of yourself.

Chance gives Nat a wait-a-minute look as the Steward winds it up...

STEWARD (cont'd)
... Pybus, Sean- Wiper. Okay, last
man...

You can practically hear the drum roll.

STEWARD
...Boudreaux, C. Able Seaman.

CHANCE
(to Nat)
I'd like to help you, Cherie, but it
looks like I'm gonna be out of town.

Elated, Chance pushes through the dispersing crowd. Nat walks away, dejected.

At the door to the trailer, the Steward recognizes Chance.

STEWARD
Chance..? Man, I thought you got
black balled for that thing with
Captain MacDonald...

Chance hands the Steward his 'Z' card and union book.

CHANCE
(big smile)
It was all a big misunderstanding.

STEWARD
Broke his jaw is what I heard.

CHANCE
(shoulders past him)
You be sure to tell him I said
Hello.

(CONTINUED)

The Steward blocks Chance's path.

STEWARD
Whoa...Wait a minute...

CHANCE
Erskine told me I was reinstated.

The Steward's found something in Chance's union book.

STEWARD
With the company...
(shakes his head)
...Not with the union.

Chance is stunned.

STEWARD
Looks like you owe some dues here...
(checks the clipboard)
...two hundred and seventeen bucks.

CHANCE
I'll pay it off on this cruise.

No way.

STEWARD
I can't let you ship out if you're
in arrears.

Chance looks like a man whose plow just broke.

CHANCE
How am I gonna pay my dues if I
can't get work?

STEWARD
I don't make the rules, mate.
(scribbles on the clipboard)
Look, your ride doesn't sail 'till
the end of the week. I'll hold your
number for a couple of days.

Dejected, Chance takes back his papers.

STEWARD
That's the best I can do.

(CONTINUED)

CHANCE
I get the money- what happens then?

STEWARD
(turns away)
I'll let you ship out.

The Steward closes the door in Chance's face.

49 AT THE EDGE OF THE DOCK

49

Nat unlocks the door to her car. Chance walks up sheepishly.

CHANCE
So this guy you're looking for, he
owes you money or something?

NAT
He's my father.

CHANCE
Okay...I change my mind...

Nat sizes up the man standing in front of her.

CHANCE
I'll help you, for two days. You'll
pay me two hundred and seventeen
dollars.

NAT
It's a deal.
(tosses him the keys)
You drive.

Chance makes the catch, but looks more than a little
embarrassed.

CHANCE
(quietly)
I don't have a driver's license.

CUT TO:

50 INT. NAT'S CAR - DAY

50

Plowing through the city, Nat is sizing up her new employee.

NAT
So what's your name?

(CONTINUED)

CHANCE

Chance. Chance Boudreaux.

Nat drives silently. Chance doesn't take his eyes off her.

CHANCE

So, you're going to tell me your name?

NAT

My name is Nat.

Chance stifles a chuckle.

CHANCE

Your parents named you for an insect?

NAT

It's short for Natasha.

Nat glares at Chance.

NAT

(frosty)

So what kind of a name is 'Chance'?

CHANCE

It's an old family name...

(million dollar smile)

It's the kind of name you get when your Mama don't plan to have family.

Nat smiles- Boudreaux's hard charm is difficult to resist.

CHANCE

You have to excuse me for asking- but how'd you manage to lose your father?

NAT

My parents were divorced when I was seven. My Father moved away.

Nat's voice trails off.

CHANCE

It must be hard for a man to lose his family.

(CONTINUED)

NAT

What about a child who lost her father?

Chance lets it sink in.

CHANCE

That too.

NAT

Until a couple of months ago, I had no idea where he was. We didn't hear from him since I was a little girl. But I got a letter last summer when I graduated from law school.

(a beat)

We started to write...He even called me a couple of times...I wanted to come down and see him, but he kept saying he was too busy. Three weeks ago, the letters just stopped.

CHANCE

What makes you think he's still in New Orleans?

NAT

Do you know the 9th Ward?

CHANCE

Enough to get out before dark.

NAT

He had a room there. He'd been working for an oil tool company... he apparently lost his job. I went to the place he was staying...but he'd moved. He owed rent.

Chance is beginning to get the picture.

NAT

He never said anything to me about being-

CHANCE

On the street?

Nat is silent for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

50

NAT

I don't know where he is. If I can
find him, I can help him.

CUT TO:

51 EXT. PAULIST MISSION - DAY

51

On a street corner in a decayed part of town, HOMELESS MEN and WOMEN wait patiently in a bread line. Chance and Nat watch as a couple of YOUNG CATHOLIC PRIESTS ladle chow into a surge of paper plates.

Appalled, Nat gets a first hand look at life below the safety net.

CHANCE

You gonna be alright?

NAT

(shaken)

Yeah...sure.

Chance's voice is even.

CHANCE

We're going to be looking in some
pretty bad places.

(then gently)

You get used to it.

Nat looks as though she's about to cry. This is probably the worst place she's ever been in her life.

CHANCE

Why don't you check the line? I'll
look around inside.

Scanning the faces, Nat moves off. Chance steps inside the building.

52 EXT. PAULIST MISSION - DAY

52*

An open, over lit room. It is totally generic, only the heartbreak around here has a face. Chance walks down a row after row of cheap picnic tables. Around them. HOMELESS CITIZENS are eating what passes for dinner.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52

Chance takes in the crowd. He draws a blank, but there's someone who recognizes him- Elijah...the man who helped Nat.

ELIJAH

(shoveling in food)

You don't have a bottle of hot sauce
in that Navy jacket, do 'ya?

Chance shakes Elijah's hand warmly. The two men are solid friends.

CHANCE

Elijah. What are you doin' way over
here?

ELIJAH

(gestures with his plate)

Wednesday meatloaf. I mean, they
said it was meatloaf.

Elijah tosses his plate into a trash can.

ELIJAH

I thought you were gonna get a
ship...?

CHANCE

So did I. My travel plans got a
little postponed.

Dejected, Nat walks up to them- she struck out too. Elijah recognizes her at once.

ELIJAH

Hey, I got somethin' to show you.

CHANCE

You two know each other?

NAT

We met yesterday. Have you seen
my Dad...?

ELIJAH

I saw the next best thing. I was
over at Plaza D'Italia yesterday-
and I saw this sleeping bag in a
cart. It was tiger stripe- like the
kind they used to issue to Recon
guys. They didn't make a lot of them.

Nat isn't following. Elijah drops a bomb.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52*

ELIJAH

Your daddy had one just like it. *

CHANCE

Take us there. *

53 EXT. PLAZA D'ITALIA - DAY

53*

Built for the World's Fair, the Plaza D'Italia is a modernist park. It has been taken over by the city's homeless. *
Chance, Nat and Elijah walk from her car. *

ELIJAH

I was lucky to have seen it. If
it'd been cold last night, somebody
would've taken it...

Parked next to a pile of refuse is a shopping cart. A *
battered suitcase and a sleeping bag are visible inside. The *
name BINDER is stenciled plainly on the bag.

Nat is struck dumb. Her father's life sits in front of her-
reduced to the pitiful contents of a single shopping basket.

Chance helps Nat remove the suitcase. She places it on the
ground and opens it. There are clothes, neatly folded, some
books.

In the suitcase are a bunch of Nat's letters. Chance and
Elijah watch as she touches them tenderly. The moment is
heartbreaking.

Nat finds a picture in a gold frame. It's obviously a prized
possession- it's an 8x10 of Nat and her Mother. Nat's hands
shake as she lifts the photo. For Chance and Elijah, Nat's
discoveries are painful to watch.

Tucked into the corner of the shopping cart is a bundle of
printed handbills. Nat pulls one out; the flyers are for a
New Orleans phone sex operation. She is shocked and hurt.
Chance's voice is solemn.

CHANCE

Don't take offense. You pass those
out for money.

Nat is saddened. Elijah gently takes the flyer from her hand.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

ELIJAH
(quietly)
I've had to do it myself.

CUT TO:

54 INT. RANDAL POE'S OFFICE - DAY

Nat and Chance move up a staircase in a dismal old building. On the second floor, Chance stops at a grimy door. On it is painted: 'DIRECT ADVERTISING SERVICES: RANDAL POE PROPRIETOR'.

Nat can't help but stare at the MEN standing in line outside the off. Broken, dejected, they are the city's most unfortunate form of life.

55 INSIDE THE OFFICE

RANDAL POE is a cigar chomping fat man in his late 40's. As Chance and Nat enter, Poe tosses a paper boy's sack to a SKINNY OLD MAN.

POE
(to the old timer)
Barracks Street all the way to
Rampart. Both sides this time,
Grandpa.

Carrying his bundle, the Old Man staggers away. Poe catches sight of Chance- there's no love lost between them.

POE
Well, if it ain't my good frien'
Boudreaux. (taunting)
I thought you were 'gonna catch a
ship.

CHANCE
(ice cold)
I thought I'd stick around and run
for mayor.

Poe's eyes flicker to Nat.

NAT
We're looking for someone who might
have worked for you. The man's name
is Douglas Binder.

(CONTINUED)

POE
(bald face lie)
Never heard of him.

Chance drops one of the flyers to the desk.

CHANCE
I think he knows you.

NAT
Did he work for you?

POE
Maybe he did, maybe he didn't. See,
I'm not too good with names.

NAT
(fumbles with her purse)
I have a photograph...

Poe isn't paying attention. Chance takes the photo from Nat's fingers.

CHANCE
I think what Mr. Poe's trying to say
is he's not too good with faces,
either.

From the back door, Van Cleave enters the office. His eyes
nail Chance.

Van CLEAVE
(like Satan)
Randal, I didn't know you had
company.

Chance knows when to call retreat.

CHANCE
Actually, pal, we were just leaving.

Chance guides Nat for the door.

56 IN THE HALLWAY

56

Chance and Nat clomp down the stairs.

NAT
That man was lying.

CHANCE
Imagine my surprise...

Chance pushes out the door and out onto the street.

NAT

Then we should go back up there.

Chance shakes his head.

CHANCE

I'm not sure that would be real healthy.

NAT

Poe knows something about my father. If you don't want to go back up there, I'll talk to him myself.

Nat starts back up the stairs, Chance stops her.

CHANCE

Hey, if you want to find your Daddy, you're gonna have to look smarter, not harder.

Nat reluctantly follows Chance back to her car. A POLICE DETECTIVE is leaning against her fender...the look on the cop's face is grim. Nat steps hesitantly up to the car.

DETECTIVE

Are you Natasha Binder...?

NAT

What's the problem?

DETECTIVE

(flashes his badge)

Miss Binder, I'm afraid I have some bad news.... They've found your father's body.

CUT TO:

waxed floor, three chairs and a potted plant. This is the place where the poor are mourned. In a corner, Nat is slumped in a plastic chair. Hands in his pockets, Chance stands nearby.

(CONTINUED)

After a moment, the door to the examining rooms opens and Carmine comes out. Carrying a small plastic bag and a file folder, Carmine walks to the chair- this is the part of her job she hates the most.

CARMINE

I'm sorry. They've made a positive ID.

Carmine hands Nat the plastic bag- in it is one of her father's dog tags. Nat bares her grief with a heartbreaking dignity.

NAT

(very quietly)
How did it happen?

CARMINE

There was a fire last night in an abandoned warehouse in the 9th Ward.

(continues slowly)
The fire department discovered your father's body in one of the rooms.

NAT

I want to see him.

Carmine starts to hand Nat the file. Shaking his head no, Chance takes the folder from Carmine.

CARMINE

(quietly)
I'm afraid he was burned pretty badly. The identification had to be made by the dental charts in your father's service record.

Carmine's words are like body punches to Nat. Bereft, she turns on her heel and leaves. Carmine and Chance stand together.

CARMINE

What's your involvement here...?

CHANCE

I was helpin' her find her Daddy.

CARMINE

(quietly)
Look, I'm really sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CHANCE

Yeah. Me too.

Carmine watches Chance push through the front door and out into the parking lot.

CUT TO:

59 EXT. MOTOR HOTEL - NIGHT

59

Nat guides the car under the neon sign of Cajun themed tourist Motel. Still shaken, Nat puts the car in to park.

CHANCE

You gonna be okay?

The rain beats softly on the roof of the car. Nat grips the steering wheel tightly.

NAT

Yeah. I have to call my mother...

CHANCE

It's good to have someone to talk to.

NAT

(falters)

God, what am I going to say to her...?

Chance watches as Nat begins to cry. A little at first, then great sobs break over her. Chance puts his arm around her.

NAT

All of this is my fault.

CHANCE

That's not true. You didn't know.

NAT

I didn't ask...

CHANCE

You came to him as soon as you thought he was in trouble.

(CONTINUED)

NAT

I came too late. God, Chance, he was living out of a shopping cart... Why didn't he tell me? Why didn't he ask for help?

CHANCE

Some people just can't, Cherie. Bearing the weight...that's the only thing they know how to do.

Nat pulls herself together, a little.

NAT

I remember when he came back from the war. How quiet he was... I remember how he used to sit with the lights out, just sit...listening. He just seemed so old...and tired. He was just boy really...younger than I am now.

The rain beats against the car softly.

NAT

He lost his job- and one day I came home from school and Mother just said- your father left. I never knew why.

Chance's eyes are on hers.

NAT

I wanted to die when he went away. I wanted to tell him that I loved him...I prayed every night that God would find him and whisper it to him.

Nat wipes her eyes.

NAT

(a beat)

Now I'll never know if he loved me...

CHANCE

He loved you, Cherie...

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED (2):

59

NAT

Then why didn't he ask for help?

CHANCE

I've been there myself. On the street. I don't think you can know how hard it is to put your hand out. How hard it is to ask...how hard it is to admit.

Nat's eyes still wet.

CHANCE

Your father didn't ask for your help because he didn't want to pull in the people he loved.

Nat is silent- what Chance has said makes perfect sense.

CHANCE

Call your mother.

Chance gets out of the car. Nat quickly opens her door.

NAT

Where are you going?

CHANCE

To get out of the rain.

Nat pulls a wallet from her coat.

NAT

Wait, I owe you some money.

Chance shakes his head.

CHANCE

Not until it's over...

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED:

59

NAT

But you'll miss your ship...

CHANCE

I still have two days.

Nat watches Chance walk into the rain.

CHANCE

We still do.

CUT TO:

60 INT. RANDAL POE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

60

Poe's sleeping nook is a bad, dirty place. In a dark corner of his office, Poe is sprawled face down in a pull out sofa. He snores away for a few moments, then wakes up with a snort. Confused, Poe rolls over in bed. He fumbles across the night stand for the light. It clicks on- there's Van Cleave.

Van CLEAVE

Wake up, you fat fuck.

Before Poe can even blink- Van Cleave has him by the throat. Choking, Poe tries to sit up. Van Cleave's other hand appears, and opens a pair of scissors- they fit right over Poe's ear- ready to slice.

Fouchon steps into the light.

POE

Oh God...Mr. Fouchon! What are you doing here?!

Scissors ready, Van Cleave jerks Poe out of bed and smashes him against the wall.

FOUCHON

Don't talk, Randal. Listen.

Van CLEAVE

He's all ears.

Fouchon leafs through a stack of hard core magazines on Poe's night stand. They're pretty gross.

(CONTINUED)

FOUCHON

When Mr. Van Cleave came upon your visitors yesterday, you neglected to tell us that they were asking questions about one of our volunteers...

POE

(desperately)

That...that was nothing, Mr. Fouchon...

Fouchon lowers his gaze- Van Cleave takes the cue and CLIPS off a piece of Poe's ear.

POE

OOOOWWW!!!!

Pressing his hand against his wound, Poe slumps to the carpet.

FOUCHON

It was something, Randal. This man we hunted last week- why don't you tell us his real name...?

POE

Binder...Douglas Binder.

Fouchon shakes his head in mock reproach.

FOUCHON

He wasn't the one we asked you to select.

POE

I couldn't get the guy you asked for. Look, you wanted a combat veteran...I sent Binder- he had more medals...!

Van Cleave smashes Poe against the wall.

FOUCHON

He had family, Randal. Now they're asking questions.

(CONTINUED)

This time, Van Cleave places the scissors under the fat man's nose.

POE
DON'T!!! PLEASE!!!
(then whimpering)
I said I was sorry...

FOUCHON
(quietly)
Careless is what you are, Randal.
Careless and stupid and now sorry
too.

POE
Binder told me he was alone...How
could I know he had relatives?!

Fouchon wanders over to Poe's night stand, he adjusts the mirror and checks his hair.

FOUCHON
(eyes on the mirror)
You made a mistake, Randal. And I
know you're anxious to make up for
it, aren't you?

POE
(blubbering)
Yeah...Yeah...Yeah.

FOUCHON
We have another client- he is about
to select a playmate.

Inching up on his tip toes, Poe tries to keep his nose ahead of the cutting edge. Fouchon gets right in Poe's face.

FOUCHON
This time Randal, send us the one we
ask for.

POE
I will Mr. Fouchon...I swear...

The scissors snip air as Van Cleave pushes Poe back on his bed.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

FOUCHON

I hope we understand each other,
Randal. I don't think Mr. Van
Cleave will be so polite if we have
to come down here again.

Fouchon pushes out of the room. Van Cleave wads up a center
fold and shoves it into Poe's mouth.

Van CLEAVE

Sleep tight.

Van Cleave slams the door.

CUT TO:

60A INT. RANDAL POE'S OFFICE - DAY

60A*

A phone JANGLES on Poe's desk. When the chair turns, Poe's
got a huge bandage taped to his left ear. In a huff, he
picks up the receiver and jams it right into the bandage.

POE

(pained)

Damn it... !!!

Poe switches ears.

POE

What... ?!

(expression changes)

Okay... alright, send him right
up.

The next face through the door is a recognizable one- Elijah,
the man from 'the Harbor' who helped Nat. Poe rolls an eye
to Elijah's field jacket.

POE

Were you in the service, friend?

Filling his sack with flyers, Elijah pays little attention to
the fat man.

ELIJAH

Long time ago.

POE

You in 'Nam?

Heading out the door with his bundle, Elijah's answer is only
a grave nod. Poe closes the door in front of him.

(CONTINUED)

60A CONTINUED:

60A*

POE

Seems to me a man of your obvious
experience could be pulling down a
lot more money.

ELIJAH

(yeah right)

Passing out fliers?

POE

How'd you like to make a hundred
dollars?

ELIJAH .

(suspicious)

Doin' what?

Poe pulls a typewritten application from his desk.

POE

All you gotta do is fill out this
application...

ELIJAH

You're gonna pay me a hundred bucks
to fill out a form?

POE

Hey, it's hard work...

Ignoring the question, Poe comes up with a pen.

POE

All I need you to do is fill in the
blanks pertaining to your military
service.

Elijah hesitates. Poe pulls a thin stack of twenties from his
pocket and fans the money out in front of him.

POE

Maybe... you're not interested.

Elijah takes the pen and the money.

ELIJAH

I'll fill out the application.

POE

You got a problem working nights?

Elijah shakes his head no.

(CONTINUED)

60A CONTINUED:

60A*

POE

What about family? You have people
who are going to worry? Friends or
anything?

ELIJAH

I got nobody.

POE

(like a snake)

That's a shame...

Poe's smile is sickening.

61 EXT. JEFFERSON PARISH - DAY

61

Down a narrow tunnel of oak and Spanish moss, a four door
Jaguar winds it's way to an elegant old estate. On a low
hilltop, a columned mansion overlooks the river- it is the
kind of house money can no longer buy.

The passenger in the back seat is urbane and cultivated.
ISMAL ZENAN has the quick, predatory glances of a person born
vicious. The car stops in front of the grand old house. A
tough looking THUG opens Zenan's door for him.

62 INT. JEFFERSON MANSION - HALLWAY - DAY

62*

Van CLEAVE

You're late, Mr. Zenan.

Walking toward the house, Van Cleave is carrying a pair of
thin file folders- he and Zenan appear to have been talking
business.

ZENAN

(following Van Cleave)

If I should decide to secure your
services...how will the payments be
arranged?

Van Cleave hands Zenan a small slip of paper.

(CONTINUED)

Van CLEAVE
Deposit \$300,000 into this account
in the Bank of the Cayman Islands.
Do not call me, or refer to this
arrangement in conversations on the
telephone. Our dealings will be
strictly in person.

The men cross the wide verandah and walk to the front door of the house.

ZENAN
And for the fee I pay you...?

Van CLEAVE
You'll be provided with a guide,
tracking animals, and the weapon of
your choice. We'll dispose of the
body and provide you with an
airtight, out-of-town alibi.

At the front door, Van Cleave gestures Zenan inside.

Van CLEAVE
All you have to do is point and
shoot.

63 INT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY

63

In an elegant parlor, Fouchon plays a grand piano. Killing people isn't the only thing Fouchon's good at- the music is beautiful.

Draped on a couch across the room is a shady looking character, DR. MORTON. About 50 years old, Morton is a bad physician with an even worse cough.

Lost in the music, Fouchon's eyes are fixed on an ornate mirror behind the piano. He loves to watch himself play.

Van Cleave and Zenan enter - Fouchon does not take his fingers from the keys.

FOUCHON
(still playing)
Make yourself a drink, Mr. Zenan.
Make me one, too. Bourbon.

As Zenan pours, Fouchon bangs out the last notes of his

(CONTINUED)

sonata. Van Cleave places one of the files on the music stand.

Van CLEAVE

Mr. Zenan has made his selection.

Fouchon glances at the file. Clipped to a print out of a military service record is a Polaroid photo of Elijah Roper.

Van CLEAVE

A colored named Roper. Used to be in Special Forces.

FOUCHON

Excellent...Then I assume you'll be going out with us?

Zenan carries the drinks to Fouchon- he's as coy as a Baghdad rug merchant.

ZENAN

I've been giving it some thought.

FOUCHON

If you hadn't thought about it, Zenan, you wouldn't be here.

Fouchon sips his drink.

FOUCHON

The fact is, you think about it all the time.

Zenan looks nervously at Morton. The Doctor's face shows nothing.

ZENAN

I am interested- but I'm sure the government has a less than positive view of your enterprise.

FOUCHON

It's always been the privilege of the few to hunt the many. Soldiers, policemen, fighter pilots...People who kill for the government do so with impunity.

Zenan listens closely.

FOUCHON

Now, all we do is provide that same opportunity to private citizens.

(CONTINUED)

ZENAN

These opponents...they are volunteers?

FOUCHON

More or less. You see the same governments that have made murder their sole preserve...they train our targets. We only hunt combat veterans. Men who have skills necessary to make our hunts interesting.

ZENAN

What about the police? I'm sure they'd be interested if they were to find out.

Fouchon languidly lights a smoke.

FOUCHON

It's not an accident that we've set up shop here in New Orleans. The police strike makes this a particularly...auspicious time for our little hunts.

Zenan reacts. There's a weird light in Fouchon's eyes...he loves th

FOUCHON(cont'd)

... Last month we conducted hunts in Rio de Janeiro at Carnival. Before that, Yugoslavia during the late unpleasantness.

(sips his drink)

There is always some unhappy little corner of the planet where we can operate.

Zenan thinks it over.

ZENAN

All right, Mr. Fouchon, you have a client.

Zenan removes a leather checkbook from his jacket.

Van CLEAVE

The payment is cash.

(CONTINUED)

Emil Fouchon's hospitality is served at 25 degrees below zero. This meeting is over.

FOUCHON

Thank you for visiting, Mr. Zenan.
Dr. Morton will show you back to
your car.

Morton puts down his drink and starts for the door- Zenan hangs back.

ZENAN

My bank will arrange the transfer of
funds within the hour.

(Fouchon faces him)
When do we go out?

FOUCHON

(cold smile)
Mr. Van Cleave will contact you when
the arrangements are complete.

Fouchon nods politely as Morton leads Zenan away. Van Cleave hands Fouchon another file- this one is stamped: USMC.

Van CLEAVE

I thought you might want to have a
look at this.

Fouchon takes the print out- it's Chance's military record.

FOUCHON

Our friend, Mr. Boudreaux...

Fouchon paces as he reads from the file.

FOUCHON

Marine Force Recon...
(nods appreciatively)
Silver Star...

Van CLEAVE

He was sailing in the merchant
service after he got out. Six
months ago, he lost his Mariner's
license.

Fouchon hands the file back.

FOUCHON

And how did he do that?

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

63

Van CLEAVE

In Hong Kong, his Captain was promising refugees passage to the US, then cheating them. When Boudreaux found out- he threw him overboard.

(a beat)

His Captain managed to swim to Kowloon...Boudreaux's been looking for work ever since.

Fouchon lifts the shotgun and pops in a fresh pair of shells.

FOUCHON

(hands the file back)

Obviously, this one is not a person we should underestimate.

Van CLEAVE

He's still asking questions.

With a flick of his wrist, Fouchon snaps closed the shotgun.

FOUCHON

How unfortunate. Do send some people down to have a chat with him, won't you, Pik?

CUT TO:

63A INT/EXT CHANCE'S APARTMENT - DAY

63A*

Rain drips from a rusted neon sign outside the window. In the street below, a pick up Jazz band plays for quarters.

Smoking a cigarette Chance sits on the window ledge, a sea bag in the corner and a pile of books are Chance's only possessions.

The file Carmine handed him in the morgue lays on the sill next to Chance. For a long moment, Chance sits perfectly still. The street sounds roll off him - a hard man in a hard place.

Chance opens the file. He looks at the photos - we don't see much, but what we do see isn't pretty. Clipped to the corner file there's a dog tag in a plastic envelope. Chance looks at the tag for a moment, then closes the file.

(CONTINUED)

63A CONTINUED:

63A*

Chance walks back into his apartment. Hanging from a dirty dresser mirror are Chance's dog tags. A pair of dog tags. Chance touches them and stares at his reflection in the mirror.

CHANCE

Shit.

64 INT. BURNED WAREHOUSE - DAY

64

Chance ducks under a yellow POLICE ribbon and enters the scorched building.

Sunlight streams through the damaged roof. Chance walks through the rubble to a white tatted silhouette on the charred floor.

He kneels and begins to poke around the rubble. Looking intently for something, he sifts through debris and ash with his bare hands. After a moment, he stands...then something catches his eye.

In the ash is a small, twisted piece of aluminum- Binder's other dog tag. Chance turns the tag over in his hand. It is punctured by a triangular hole- the cut made by Chang's arrow.

CHANCE

Bingo.

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly a loop is thrust over Chance's head. He is jerked back violently. Meet FRICK and FRACK. - Frick's got a long handler's pole- it's the kind of rig Dog Catchers use. The business end of the pole is wrapped tight around Chance's throat. Frack is mean looking tough with a wandering eye and a very bad attitude.

FRACK

Morning, Fido.

Chance struggles to his feet. Frack's got a baseball bat. WHAM!!! The bat smashes down on the pole- the impact drives Chance to his knees.

FRICK

SIT!

WHAM!!! Before Chance can blink, Frack connects with a home run shot right into his chest.

FRICK

We're down here 'cause you been a bad puppy. A bad dog who's been sniffing 'round places he don't belong.

Chance tries to get up but Frick pins him down with the pole. WHAM! WHAM! Frack swings again and again- body shots. Helpless, Chance can only curl up and take the blows.

FRICK

This is friendly advice, Boudreaux. Get the fuck out of Dodge...Do it today. And tell your bitch girlfriend to point her titties North and step on the gas.

Beaten nearly to unconsciousness, Chance groans. Frack jerks Chance's head up...

FRICK

We're not going to ask you nice again.

Frack slips the collar off Chance's throat. Nearly strangled, Chance falls into the ashes. On the way out, Frick kicks Chance in the head.

CUT TO:

A UNIFORMED COP leads Chance through the Detective squad room. Handcuffed and beaten, Chance looks a bit worse from his 'conference' at the fire scene. As he approaches the desk, Carmine puts down her coffee.

CHANCE
(brightly)
Cherie, nice to see you again.

Carmine is not amused.

CARMINE
You seem to have a real talent, Mr.
Boudreaux- for attracting violence.

CHANCE
(shrugs)
That doesn't make me a bad person.

The Cop releases the handcuffs from behind Chance's back and tosses a manila envelope on Carmine's desk.

CHANCE
What did I get arrested for, getting
beat up without a license?

Nat comes up to the desk.

NAT
They called me at the hotel...
(aghast at his
appearance)
My God...

CHANCE
Please, Cherie...you'll hurt my
feelings.

Carmine lights a cigarette. There is a typed form on the desk in front of her.

CARMINE
(blows smoke)
What I have here is a charge sheet.
Willfully crossing a police line is
considered criminal trespass.

CHANCE
(sits painfully)
Yeah, the officer was kind enough to
mention that to me.

(CONTINUED)

Chance fumbles with the manila envelope. He takes out his personal effects- three dollars and a Swiss army knife.

CARMINE

What were you doing at the house?

CHANCE

You found one dog tag at the fire scene. They usually come in a pair. I went back to the house to have a look around.

Chance fishes around in the bottom of the envelope.

CHANCE

Your father didn't die in that house fire...he was murdered.

CARMINE

There's no indication of foul play.

Chance tosses Binder's punctured dog tag on the blotter in front of Carmine.

CHANCE

There is now.

(flicks the tag)

The hole in that tag was made by something sharp and hard and I'll bet my rent it was made while Binder was wearing it.

Carmine leans back in her chair.

CARMINE

Why would someone go to that much trouble to kill a homeless man?

NAT

You believe us now?

Carmine stands slowly. The interview is over.

CARMINE

Look, the wheels turn slow down here...but they do turn. I'll press for a new autopsy-
(lifts the tag)
This is going to help.

Nat is fuming. Carmine lowers her voice slightly.

(CONTINUED)

CARMINE

I'm not sure how much more you can do down here.

(concerned)

It might be smart for you to go back home.

NAT

I want to find the people who killed my father.

CARMINE

And I want to make sure they don't find you first.

NAT

Maybe these people need to know somebody still gives a damn.

Carmine looks directly at Nat.

CARMINE

I give a damn.

NAT

Are you going to reopen the case?

CARMINE

I'll call you when I know something.

(then pointedly)

Get him out of here...

Carmine crumples the charge sheet and tosses it into the trash can.

CUT TO:

Chance and Nat exit the building and walk for Nat's car. Limping slightly, Chance is doing his best to act like he doesn't hurt.

NAT

You should be seen by a Doctor.

CHANCE

You ever been to a New Orleans emergency room at two in the morning?

(CONTINUED)

NAT
No.

CHANCE
I think I'll just bleed for a while
instead.

Nat looks at the nasty welt above Chance's eye.

NAT
You're going to have to take care of
that.

CUT TO:

67 INT. CHANCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

67

Chance enters and turns on the light. Nat stands behind him in the doorway, in her hand is a bag from an all night pharmacy.

CHANCE
It ain't much- but it's better than
sleeping under a bridge.

Nat enters tentatively and sets the bag on the table. She removes a bottle of peroxide and cotton swabs.

NAT
Take your shirt off and sit down.

Chance pours red wine into a tumbler.

CHANCE
I think I'm gonna need a little pain
killer first...
(waves the bottle)
You want some?

NAT
No thanks.

Chance pours and places the bottle on the table. He pulls off his shirt and sits. Nat starts to dab at the cuts on Chance's neck.

CHANCE
Owww...

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

67

NAT

You probably could have used a couple of stitches here.

Nat continues to dab. Chance takes a swallow of wine and winces in pain.

NAT

Are you going to be able to get a ship?

CHANCE

Maybe. I just got my license back.

NAT

How'd you lose your license?

Chance takes a swallow of wine.

CHANCE

It kinda fell overboard.

Nat's eyes are on Chance's...if you had to name the moment that they fell in love- this would be it.

NAT

Do you have family here in New Orleans?

CHANCE

I have an uncle down in Point de Chien.

NAT

Where are your parents?

CHANCE

(quietly)

I never met them. My Uncle brought me up.

(a beat)

We lived so far back in the bayou, he used to paddle me to the road so I could catch the school bus. They didn't even pave the road until after hurricane Camille...

*
*
*
*
*

Nat reacts. Outside, the falling of the rain is small sound. Chance's voice is even.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

67

CHANCE
What about you?

NAT
Michigan.

CHANCE
Pretty far North. Can't say I been.

(CONTINUED)

NAT

It's beautiful. On the Upper Peninsula there are places that are just...untouched. My mother had a house in Grand Marais...you should see it in the summer.

Nat's voice trails off. Chance's eyes are locked to hers.

NAT

The trout used to jump right into your boat...

They draw together. Nat's eyes are locked on his- she's falling hard and fast...

NAT

(softly)

I might be exaggerating...a little.

For a moment they are close- then Chance bends toward her and kisses her. Nat puts her arms around him- a kiss like this is going places...then Nat pulls away.

NAT

(trying to compose herself)

I...I think I'd better...get back now.

Nat lingers close. She wants to kiss him again, desperately...but she gets up from the table. Chance stands after her.

NAT

I didn't mean for that to happen.

CHANCE

Nobody's fault...

Nat takes a small step backwards.

NAT

I think I better go.

Nat takes her coat from the hook. Chance's eyes are burning through her.

CHANCE

(please don't)

Okay...

Nat opens the door.

(CONTINUED)

NAT

Good night.

The door closes. Chance puts down his glass and falls onto the couch. He sits, for a while, brooding, then slowly slides in a full recline.

For a long moment, Chance stares a hole in the ceiling. O.S. THUNDER rolls. Chance turns his head and stares at the front door. Finally, he rolls over and folds his arms across his chest.

The front door opens. Chance looks up as Nat walks slowly over to the couch. Their eyes meet.

NAT

I...changed my mind.

Nat lowers herself on top of Chance.

CHANCE

It happens...

He kisses her deeply- a kiss like this could burn down a house...

CUT TO:

68 INT. MESSAGE PARLOR - DAY

68

Chance walks through the painted door. Behind the counter, the MADAM looks up and smiles. Everybody knows Chance.

MADAM

Chance- What are you doin' here?

Chance puts his finger to his lips.

CHANCE

Secret mission.

69 IN ONE OF THE BOOTHS

69

Randal Poe lies face down on a massage table- there's a major league bandage on his ear. Eyes closed tight, Poe looks like he's enjoying himself. Kneading the rolls of fat on Poe's back, the MASSEUSE looks like she'd rather be dead. After a few moments, she stands and moves out of frame.

Poe turns his still bandaged head. The massage resumes...

(CONTINUED)

harder...it looks like this is starting to hurt. Poe rolls over in a huff- there's Chance.

CHANCE

Hello, Randal. I missed you.

Before Poe can even blink- Chance jerks him from the table. Wrapped in a sheet, Poe can barely resist.

POE

Oh God...Not again...

Chance twists the sheet up around Poe's throat and shoves him into a wall.

CHANCE

Looks like you're short an ear so I want you to listen carefully.

(bangs his head)

You payin' attention?

Poe nods desperately.

CHANCE

Who sent those two apes after me...?

POE

I don't know what you're talking about!

Chance twists the sheet tighter- Poe begins to choke.

CHANCE

There's half a million people in this city, fat boy. And right now- not one of them is thinking of you.

Poe's memory improves- fast.

POE

(sputtering)

Van Cleave...his name is Van Cleave...He wanted you out of the way!

CHANCE

Where do I find him?

(CONTINUED)

POE
I don't know...I don't know where he
lives...He ain't even American!!!
(desperate)
Look...he'd kill me if I didn't do
like he says. Please...You've got
to believe me!

Chance cuts him off by pulling the sheet over Poe's mouth.

CHANCE
You tell your friend Van Cleave,
that I ain't leaving. You tell him
I'm going to find out who killed
Douglas Binder...

Peeking over the sheet, Poe is mute.

CHANCE
You can just nod if you understand
me.

Poe does. Chance drags him over to the door, opens it and
pushes Poe out into hallway.

CHANCE
Tell him now.

Clutching the sheet to his naked body, Poe sprints down the
hallway.

70 EXT. MESSAGE PARLOR - DAY

70

Chance exits the building and walks to Nat's car. He gets in
like nothing happened.

NAT
What was that all about?

CHANCE
(deadpan)
What was what?

NAT
Oh, it just isn't every day that I
get to see a fat man in a bed sheet
running for his life.

(CONTINUED)

CHANCE

(shrugs)

You liked that, Cherie, you gonna
love Mardi Gras.

Nat pulls away from the curb.

CUT TO:

71 INT. DR. MORTON'S OFFICE - DAY 71

Carmine enters and walks right to Morton's desk.

CARMINE

Did you get my memo?

Back to the camera, the CORONER is staring at an X-RAY viewer. Carmine digs through the stack of folders in Morton's basket. She retrieves Binder's file.

CORONER

(not turning)

I'm busy, Detective Mitchel.

CARMINE

(holds out the file)

Binder, Douglas C. I'd like you to
take another look at the post
mortem.

Exasperated, the man in the lab coat turns... You're looking at a familiar face- Dr. Morton, the physician hanging out at Fouchon's mansion!

DR. MORTON

Why would I want to do that?

Carmine hands the file to Morton- clipped to it is a plastic bag containing the punctured dog tag.

CARMINE

If you'd read the memo, you'd know
this turned up at the crime scene.

Morton's poker face is flawless.

DR. MORTON

Look, I get almost 600 suspicious
fatalities a year in this city- not
to mention natural deaths and drunks
like Mr. Binder who fall asleep in
burning buildings...

(CONTINUED)

Carmine tosses the file on his desk.

CARMINE

That memo informs you of evidence that might make Binder's death a homicide. You can act on it; Doc- or you can file it. But if I have to get a court order for a formal inquest- I will.

Carmine splits. Morton glares at the closing door for a second, then turns and rips the X-rays from the viewer.

CUT TO:

72 INT. DOCTOR MORTON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

72

The fastidious home of an old bachelor. In the living room, Morton crouches in front of his fire place. At his elbow is a briefcase- it is open and full autopsy reports- maybe a dozen.

Nervous and agitated, Morton peels pages and feeds them into the fire. As he tosses the last page and reaches for another folder... there is movement behind him. Morton turns, there's Fouchon.

MORTON

(startled)

Don't you ever knock?

(flustered)

I've been trying to call you all day...

Fouchon stares hard at the Doctor- malice seeps from him.

FOUCHON

I'm here now.

Morton continues to shovel pages into the fire.

MORTON

We have a problem...a big problem. They want me to re-do the autopsy on Binder.

Fouchon's shows neither surprise or anger.

(CONTINUED)

FOUCHON

It appears we've over stayed our welcome... Tonight's hunt will be our last here in New Orleans.

Morton is coming apart at the seams.

MORTON

That's great for you...you just move on. But what am I going to do? What if they order an inquest on Binder...?

FOUCHON

Then you'll have to do your indolent, bureaucratic best to slow them down.

The doorbell RINGS. Morton is beside himself- his fireplace is full of burning public records. Fouchon's expression is blank.

FOUCHON

(shrugs)

Go ahead. Answer it.

Nervously, Morton walks through the entrance hall. He stops at the front door and puts his eye to the peep hole.

73 OUTSIDE

73

there's Van Cleave- he presses the muzzle of a silenced pistol against the small circle of glass. BANG!!!!

74 MORTON

74

is killed instantly. Blasted back from the door, he collapses in the hall.

A MIRROR IN THE HALLWAY is splattered with blood. Reflected in the mirror, the front door opens and Van Cleave enters. He unscrews the silencer from his pistol and tucks it into his jacket.

Van CLEAVE

(looking at the body)

What a funny little man.

Fouchon steps in front of the mirror. Ignoring a long drop of blood sliding down the glass, Fouchon adjusts his tie.

(CONTINUED)

FOUCHON

I think a change of climate is what we need, Pik. Something less tropical. Rolling hills, castles...

Fouchon steps over Morton's body as Van Cleave wipes the doorknob with a handkerchief.

FOUCHON(cont'd)

...Eastern Europe is a place we could work for years.

The door closes quietly.

CUT TO:

75 EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER LEVEE - NIGHT

75

Alone in the moonlight, Elijah Roper sits on a low embankment. Across the river, the lights of New Orleans sparkle against a dark sky. He turns suddenly behind him, Van Cleave and the dogs have appeared from nowhere.

At that moment, headlights sweep over them, the Range Rover and a pair of motorcycles lurch down the dirt road and stop near by. Elijah shields his eyes as Fouchon alights.

ELIJAH

(puzzled)

Where's Poe...?

FOUCHON

Mr. Poe won't be joining us tonight.

ELIJAH

Look, he said he's have some work for me.

Van CLEAVE

That might still be a possibility...
You sober?

ELIJAH

I don't drink, Mister.

Fouchon removes a thick, black money belt from his jacket.

FOUCHON

Do you like sports, Mr. Roper?

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED:

75

Through the windshield of the Rover, Zenan watches intently.

ELIJAH

What the hell are you talkin' about?

FOUCHON

What we'd like you to do is play a little game with us...

Fouchon zips open the money belt- it is filled with cash.

FOUCHON(cont'd)

...This is 10,000 dollars. It's all yours...if you want it.

Elijah steps up and looks at the money. His mouth is almost watering.

ELIJAH

What do I have to do?

FOUCHON

The rules of our game are very simple. All you have to do is get to Lake Pontchartrain. Ten miles through the city. You and the money belt make it to the water- and you're 10,000 dollars richer.

Elijah starts to walk away.

ELIJAH

Bullshit...

Fouchon's voice is even and frightening.

FOUCHON

Maybe you enjoy being an object of pity, Mr. Roper.

Elijah wheels about. Fouchon pulls the strings like a pro.

FOUCHON

Maybe you don't mind sleeping in the rain...Or listening to an hour's worth of fire and brimstone for a bowl of soup.

ELIJAH

Fuck you!

(CONTINUED)

FOUCHON

You could change all of that.
Tonight.

Elijah stares hard at the money belt.

FOUCHON

What could you do with 10,000
dollars? Buy some clean clothes?
Look people in the eyes when they
pass on the street? This kind of
money could make you a man again,
Roper. It could give you a new life.

Fouchon's playing one angle. Van Cleave tries another.

Van CLEAVE

'Course ten miles is a long way,
Snowball. Maybe you just couldn't
make it.

Elijah glares back at the Afrikaner.

ELIJAH

I get to the river...I get the cash?

FOUCHON

Every nickel.

ELIJAH

And if I don't make it?

Van CLEAVE

You're a sports fan, Roper- figure
it out.

Elijah walks to Fouchon and takes the money belt. The
challenge is accepted.

FOUCHON

In five minutes, my associate here
will release the dogs. I suggest
you put some distance between
yourself and them.

Elijah fastens the belt around his waist and takes a couple
of steps backwards.

FOUCHON

Good luck.

(CONTINUED)

Elijah starts to run. Sitting next to Van Cleave, the dogs WHINE impatiently.

As Fouchon and Van Cleave watch Elijah disappear into the woods, Zenan slips out of the Blazer. Zenan reaches onto the front seat and removes a CAR-15 assault rifle. Fitted onto it are a silencer and a sleek night scope.

Zenan lifts the weapon to his shoulder and draws a bead on the fleeing man. Fouchon gently pushes the gun aside.

FOUCHON

This is New Orleans, Mr. Zenan- not Beirut.

CUT TO:

76 EXT. GRAVEYARD GATE - NIGHT

76

scrambles out of a vacant lot and into the street in front of a grand old cemetery. Trying to avoid the light, Elijah sprints down the block. O.S. the sound of MOTORCYCLE ENGINES putter and stop.

Silhouetted at the end of the block, a pair of motorcycles stop in the street. The RIDERS stare impassively at their quarry. Elijah turns and doubles back- at the other end block, the dogs are closing fast...

Elijah runs toward the front gate of the cemetery. Scrambling up the flamboyant grill work, Elijah narrowly avoids the snapping jaws of the dogs. He flips over the top and drops to the other side.

The dogs claw furiously at the gate, but can't get in. Just when you think Elijah might be safe- headlights pin him. Elijah sprints away as the Blazer, the Rover and the motorcycles roll to a stop in the street outside the cemetery.

The hunters alight and survey the plots before them. Fouchon walks to the gate with a pair of bolt cutters.

FOUCHON

(to Van Cleave)

Put men at the other gates...

Van Cleave and Fouchon clearly are enjoying themselves. Only Zenan appears anything less than composed. Fouchon snaps off the padlock and gestures Zenan inside.

FOUCHON

After you, Mr. Zenan...

Elijah stops to get his breath. His eyes search the still cemetery about him. Silence. Thinking he's lost his pursuers, Elijah darts into the moonlight.

As he passes an ornate mausoleum, a red finger of light sweeps onto it. In the next instant, the dull RATTLE of Zenan's silencer cuts the air.

Bullets spatter into the side of the tomb- now the laser dot appears right on Elijah's forehead. Elijah ducks as another BURST tears the night.

78 EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

78

The laser searches through the unreal vision of a New Orleans cemetery. Row upon row of above ground sepulchers loom in the moonlight. There are thousand of places to hide.

79 AT THE SHOT UP MAUSOLEUM

79

Fouchon bends down. Amid the pieces of broken marble, several thick spots of blood glisten darkly.

As Zenan watches, one of the dogs puts his nose to the splatter of blood and licks it up.

Van CLEAVE

He's close.

Fouchon presses a switch on the night scope, and lifts his machine pistol to his eye.

80 POV NIGHT SCOPE

80

Bright as day, the graveyard is revealed in grainy green and white. Fouchon pans right and left, looking for his quarry. Finally, he sees a figure clad in olive drab... Elijah's field jacket is visible on a crouched figure.

81 FOUCHON

81

smiles. Fouchon sinks into position next to Zenan; he nudges the reluctant hunter forward.

FOUCHON

Finish him.

Zenan inches forward warily- as he fumbles with the strap of his weapon, the Saudi's hands are seen to be shaking badly. Disgusted, Fouchon frowns at Van Cleave.

(CONTINUED)

The SILENCER RATTLES as Zenan empties an entire magazine into the shadow. Literally beaten down by the stream of bullets, the form lurches over and falls heavily. A dull CLUNK resounds through the graveyard.

Fouchon knows immediately they've been had. He jumps forward and pushes the shattered form with his foot. The face revealed in moonlight isn't Elijah's- it's the marble pout of the Virgin Mary. Elijah hung his jacket on a statue!

FROM OUT OF A NEARBY MAUSOLEUM- A SHOVEL POKES OUT. WHAP!!! ELIJAH BASHES ZENAN BEHIND THE KNEES WITH THE BROAD SIDE OF THE BLADE. HUNTER AND RIFLE GO FLYING...

Elijah explodes out of the tomb, picks up Zenan's rifle and pulls the trigger. BRRRRRAP!!! A long burst rips into Zenan. He falls as Fouchon and Van Cleave dive for cover.

Fouchon pops up and FIRES. He hits Elijah in the shoulder. Driven down by the impact of the bullet, Elijah drops the gun and runs for his life.

Fouchon and Van Cleave stand from behind cover. They look impassively at Zenan's corpse- these guys could care less.

FOUCHON

Well, now you know why we arrange
payment up front...

Fouchon lifts Zenan's weapon. The two MOTORCYCLISTS step from the darkness and toss Zenan's body into the open tomb. As the door is pushed closed, Fouchon and Van Cleave watch Elijah scramble over the cemetery wall. Neither of them seem to be in much of a hurry.

FOUCHON

Put the dogs on him, won't you Pik?

Van Cleave urges his pets forward.

Van CLEAVE

Track.

The dogs are away in a flash. Walking back for the land Rover, Fouchon unscrews the lid from his flask.

FOUCHON

(takes a sip)

Well, let's get this over with. We
don't want to be out here all night.

Elijah runs in headlong panic. At the end of the block, there are lights, a French Quarter street is scattered with late night REVELERS.

Blood stains Elijah's clothing- his eyes roll wildly. As he runs through the CROWD he looks like a crazy man.

ELIJAH

HELP ME!!! SOMEBODY HELP ME!!!

Elijah stumbles up to a YOUNG COUPLE leaving a bar. They don't even want to look at him.

ELIJAH

Please Mister, you gotta help me!!!

MAN

(turning away)

I don't have any change, man

Elijah's making a scene...the crowd parts around him. They think he's just another delirious drunk.

ELIJAH

Help me...please...

The laser cuts the air next to him- a thin ray of ruby colored light. Elijah moves like a man in a nightmare... THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!! The sound of the silencer is not at first even recognizable as gunfire. On Elijah's shirt, blood stains bloom astonishingly.

ELIJAH

Oh GOD!!! Somebody...please....
help me...

Elijah staggers back as more bullets BEAT into him. THE CROWD around Elijah slowly becomes aware of the gunfire... they panic. The bullets seem to be coming out of nowhere.

In a weird ballet, Elijah jerks as gunfire rips through him. Finally, he drops to the wet pavement- dead. SPECTATORS stand horror struck as the big man falls.

Footsteps CLICK slowly across the street. Van Cleave steps from the shadows and bends over Elijah's body. The crowd slinks back- mute. They can only watch terrified as a switchblade knife clicks open in Van Cleave's fist.

(CONTINUED)

With perfect arrogance, Van Cleave slices through the money belt and slips it from around Elijah's waist. Slinging the money over his shoulder, Van Cleave strolls away. There isn't anybody in the city who could stop him.

DISSOLVE TO:

83 EXT. CITY STREET - DAWN

83

Your basic crime scene. Elijah's body is sprawled under a yellow plastic sheet. At the curb, a pair of UNIFORMED COPS slouch indolently against a patrol car- this is just another crime in the French Quarter.

Standing by the open door of her cruiser, Carmine and Nat watch as Chance leans over and lifts the tarp slowly. Chance's face pinches into a mask of bitter grief.

Chance drops the tarp.

CARMINE

I'm sorry. Where you close?

CHANCE

(quietly)

He was a friend.

Chance's grief is building quickly to anger.

CHANCE

Who did this?

CARMINE

The witnesses all say the same thing. They said the devil did it...

Chance turns and starts to walk away.

CARMINE

Boudreaux... Hey, where're you going...?

CHANCE

I'm gonna talk to Randal Poe about a devil. You wanna come along...?

Nat follows Chance. Carmine takes a walkie talkie from the folds of her rain coat.

(CONTINUED)

CARMINE
(into her radio)
Lou, it's Carmine. Wake up Judge
Franklin... I think I'm gonna need a
warrant.

CUT TO:

84 EXT. POE'S BUILDING - DAY

84

Huffing and puffing, Poe lumps down his stairs with an overstuffed suitcase. Parked in front of his apartment, a beat up Chevy is packed for a long trip.

Poe looks up and down the street nervously. He drops the suitcase into the trunk and slips behind the wheel. Still scanning the street around him, he jams his keys into the ignition.

The car starts with a reassuring ROAR... Poe thinks he's safe. But as his hand reaches for the gear shift lever- the driver's side window SHATTERS.

Poe blinks in shock- the barrel of Van Cleave's shotgun is pressed against his temple. Van Cleave leans in through the broken window.

Van CLEAVE
Randal, I'm shocked... You were
going to leave without saying good
bye...?

Van Cleave keeps the muzzle of the gun against Poe's head.

POE
My ...Uh... Mom got sick up in
Tupelo...
(losing it)
Yeah... I was gonna call you Mr. Van
Cleave...

Van CLEAVE
(cocks the shotgun)
Of course you were, Randal... I know
you didn't mean to hurt my
feelings...

KABBOOOM!!! Blood, brains and safety glass spray out of the passenger side window. As Poe slumps over the steering wheel, Van Cleave saunters out of frame...

Carmine's police cruiser rolls toward Poe's apartment. In the car with Carmine, Nat and Chance see Poe's Chevy parked in the street ahead. Slumped over the steering wheel, Poe's body is plainly visible.

Carmine pulls to the curb behind the Chevy. Glass litters the street around them- blood drools slowly from the rear view mirror.

CHANCE

Looks like we're a little late...

Carmine draws her pistol as Chance and Nat exit the car. Carmine stands behind the open door of the cruiser, shielding Nat from the murder scene. At that moment, Van Cleave appears from behind a parked car- he aims the shotgun and FIRES.

Carmine is the first to see the gun. She pushes Nat back into the cruiser.

CARMINE

GET DOWN!!!

Carmine swings her weapon over the car door as buckshot shatters the window. Glass and chrome fly as Carmine is knocked to the ground.

Chance piles out of the passenger side door as Carmine FIRES from the ground back at Van Cleave.

Rolling across the hood of a parked Toyota, Van Cleave appears on the other side of row of cars-

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Chance rolls over the hood of the car just as Van Cleave FIRES. The windshield of the patrol car is shattered by a .12 gauge deer slug.

tumbles across the hood and drops back onto the driver's side next to Carmine and Nat. Carmine crouches behind the open car door she keeps up a steady stream of bullets aimed at Van Cleave.

As Carmine FIRES her pistol, the Range Rover drifts into frame... in the window, Frack levels a CAR-15 and OPENS FIRE.

87 IN THE ROVER

87

Carmine's bullets smash into Frack's weapon. Frack is knocked back into the Rover as it SQUEALS from the curb. Van Cleave emerges from cover and sprints for the truck as it rolls down the block.

88 AT THE ROVER

88

Van Cleave shoulders the shotgun and lets fly. BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! The driver's side door is nearly blown off as buckshot rips through the metal and into Carmine.

Tossed into Chance's arms- Carmine is killed instantly.

NAT

Oh my God...

As she falls, Chance takes the gun from her hand... FIRING wildly, Chance opens up on the Rover- the truck SKIDS down the street and retreats around the corner.

89 BEHIND THE ROVER

89

A motorcycle appears- the RIDER aims a machine pistol at Chance and squeezes off a LONG BURST...

90 CHANCE

90

pulls the trigger. CLICK. He tosses Carmine's gun and leaps over the hood as the Rider RAKES the patrol car with an entire magazine of shells.

As the motorcycle passes, Chance runs down the other side of the car, swings himself over the trunk and plants a flying side kick right on the chin guard of the Rider's helmet...

WHUMP!!! the Rider is knocked from the bike and into oblivion. Riderless, the bike streaks down the block and smashes into a parked car.

Chance runs to the curb where Nat cradles Carmine's body.

CHANCE

We have to go...

NAT

(shock)

But we can't leave her...

Chance pulls Nat down the block.

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED:

90*

CHANCE
She's dead... Come on...
(lifts the bike
from the pavement)
Come on...

*
*
*

Chance swings his leg up over the bike. Nat jumps onto the seat behind him.

*
*90A DOWN THE BLOCK

90A*

The Rover and a the Blazer SQUEAL from the curb.

90B IN THE LAND ROVER

90B*

The sun roof inches back... Van Cleave pops through and FIRES the shotgun.

90C ON THE MOTORCYCLE

90C*

Nat hangs on for her life as Chance cranks through the gears. Tires smoking, the MOTORCYCLE makes a nearly perpendicular turn onto 4th Street.

Behind, the Rover keeps up the pursuit. In the rear view mirror, the Rover continues to close...

90D ON THE MOTORCYCLE

90D*

Bullets SLAM into a mailbox next to Chance and Nat. Behind them, the Rover churns down the median strip. Fouchon is closing the gap. The Blazer plunges in from a side street and joins the pursuit.

HORNS DOPPLERING, cars SKID past as Chance cuts the oncoming traffic and roars down a side street.

NAT
No wonder you don't have a license.

Behind them, the Rover makes the turn. The Blazer skids into the intersection- it missed.

90E DOWN THE ROAD

90E*

Chance quickly turns the motorcycle around and heads for a drawbridge over the industrial canal...

He roars over the bridge and up the railroad over pass on the other side. At the top of the bridge, Chance slows and stops.

90F AT THE FOOT OF THE OVERPASS

90F*

the Blazer is turned across both traffic lanes. Frack and another GUNMAN stand casually out in the road. They don't even aim their guns... their job is only to bottle Chance up.

Nat hangs on tight as Chance cranks the bike through a quick 180°. Crossing the canal bridge and closing on them is the Rover.

CHANCE

You're gonna have to wait here for a second.

NAT

What?

Chance pulls a wheelie and Nat slides off the back of the bike. Nat watches in shock as Chance heads right for the oncoming Range Rover.

As Chance bares down on the oncoming bad guys, he pulls Carmine's pistol from the waist of his pants...

90G IN THE RANGE ROVER

90G*

Fouchon slams a fresh magazine into his weapon. Van Cleave leans out the window and gleefully aims at the oncoming bike.

90H CHANCE

90H*

aims the motorcycle for the front bumper of the Rover. Pulling his hands off the handle bars, he stands like a surfer on the seat.

Van Cleave OPENS FIRE, but it's too late. Chance puts FIVE SHOTS into the driver's side windshield. The DRIVER of the Range Rover is killed outright.

As the motorcycle SMASHES into the front bumper, Chance bounces across the hood, up and over the roof, and off the back of the Range Rover.

(CONTINUED)

90H CONTINUED:

90H

Chance lands in the roadway as the driverless Range Rover skids past. Aiming with both hands, Chance stands and keeps up the barrage. Hit by a dozen more bullets, the Rover SCREECHES into the low curb and flips over.

91 OMITTED

91*

92 OMITTED

92*

93 OMITTED

93*

Below the overpass, a train passes, it's big diesel engine THROBBING. At the curb, the flipped over truck hisses like a wounded beast. Nat runs up to Chance, it's hard to tell if she's relieved he's alive, or furious at the stunt.

NAT

Are you alright...?

Chance looks over at the demolished Rover. Fouchon and Van Cleave are kicking out the windshield. In a moment, they'll be free of the wreckage.

CHANCE

Yeah, and so are they...

Chance drags Nat to the railing. She stares down at the passing freight train... below them, a mile and half of flat cars are bound for southern mills.

CHANCE

We got the jump of a lifetime, or we got a sure case of lead poisoning. Whatta 'ya want?

NAT

You've got to be kidding me....!

Free of the wreck, Van Cleave aims and FIRES. His second BLAST hits the pavement an inch from Nat's heel.

CHANCE

I wish I was, Cherie...

Chance gets a crazy look in his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED:

94*

CHANCE
Hang on to you-self.

Chance grabs Nat by the waist and jumps from the bridge.

95 FOUCHON

95

watches the pair hurtle from the span.

96 IN MID-AIR

96

Chance and Nat plummet for the tracks.... below, the train passes in a whirling blur...

97 NAT AND CHANCE

97

land in a flatcar full of cotton!!! Bales of raw fiber cushion the fall.

AT THE RAILING

Fouchon and Van Cleave OPEN FIRE on the flatcar. Secure behind an inch of steel, Chance and Nat are safe. Fouchon can only watch in frustration as the pair ride away.

FOUCHON
It appears we'll have one last hunt
after all.

CUT TO:

Miles south of the city, the Texas & Pacific R.R. makes a long turn west across the flat swampland of Terrebonne Parish. Van Cleave and a pair of thugs named JEROME and PETERSON lead the dogs down the side of the tracks.

O.S. the sound of ROTORS begins to grow. Van Cleave leans into the down blast as a jet helicopter hovers and lands nearby. Fouchon and three MEN alight. Get a close look at these guys- rich and well equipped, they are the best hunters of men in the world.

Chang and his compound bow are the only repeat performers. STEPHAN is wearing Khakis and carrying an exotic Druganov sniper rifle. Dressed in overalls and a baseball cap, BILLY BOB is a mean cracker with a M-60 machine gun. These guys, literally, are loaded for bear.

Van CLEAVE

I got him. Train passed here two,
two and a half hours ago... He
didn't get far.

Fouchon turns to the hunters.

FOUCHON

First of all, I'd like to thank you
for making yourselves available on
such short notice. Today, we have a
once in a lifetime opportunity. We
are stalking an exceptional
opponent. One who is truly a
trophy. To participate in this
event, each of you will be charged
five hundred thousand dollars.

Not a one of the hunters even blinks.

FOUCHON

Due to the somewhat... personal
nature of this hunt, Mr. Van Cleave
and I will also be participating.

Stephan doesn't know if he likes that.

STEPHAN

(Russian accent)
What if you or Van Cleave make the
kill...?

(CONTINUED)

FOUCHON

Then you all pay... Should one of you be fortunate enough to bring him down... I will consider that hunter's account paid in full.

Smiles from some.

FOUCHON

I trust those terms are agreeable...

The hunters look eager.

FOUCHON

We can assume Boudreaux will head south for the Gulf of Mexico. I have placed additional men between him and Route 90. They will keep him off the highway.

Fouchon accepts his weapon from Van Cleave and shoulders it.

FOUCHON

Well, gentlemen. Good hunting.

Pulling tight against their leads, the dogs splash across the ditch and up the far bank.

CUT TO:

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

Hand in hand, Nat and Chance wade through a stand of cypress. The black water swirls up around their waists.

NAT

Isn't there a trail or something?

CHANCE

Hey, sometimes you gotta hide in places people don't want to look.

Chance leads Nat out of the water and down a slender embankment. This is what passes for high ground in these parts.

NAT

They won't be able to find us out here...

(CONTINUED)

CHANCE

The railroad only goes one place.
All they have to do is get dogs and
check back along the track... I
figure we've got a couple hours...
maybe less.

As Nat continues down the bank, Chance bends and puts his ear
to a small hole. He listens for a moment, then takes off his
shirt and wraps it around his hand.

Nat turns when she realizes Chance is no longer behind her.

NAT

What's the matter?

Chance is now up this shoulder in the hole. He's feeling
around gingerly for something...

CHANCE

(very quietly)

Shhhh... You'll wake up the
neighborhood.

Chance clamps down on something and removes it from the hole.
It's six and a half feet of Eastern Timber Rattlesnake! Nat
is awed.

NAT

You caught that... with your hand?

CHANCE

(no problem)

Catching them isn't hard. The trick
is keepin' your fingers out of their
mouth...

The big viper starts to twist slowly as Chance grips it
behind the head- the snake is alive, but seemingly asleep.
Chance pulls a thin vine from the ground and quickly ties the
rattler into a compact bundle.

CHANCE

These boys hibernate in the winter
time. The big ones sleep a little
harder than the little ones...

Chance bites the rattles off the viper's tail.

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED:

99

CHANCE (cont'd)
(spits out the rattles)
...But they all wake up pissed.

Writhing in his hands, the snake is now very much alive.

NAT
What are you doing?!

CHANCE
I'm leavin' a surprise for our
friends....

Chance places the tightly bound reptile in the crotch of a nearby tree, and loosely winds the remaining vine across the trail. The now silenced viper is the business end of a reptilian booby trap.

CHANCE
See, what we got here is a home game
for the good guys, and an away game
for the bad guys.

CUT TO:

100 EXT. EMBANKMENT - DAY

100

Van Cleave is led by the dogs out onto an embankment. This place should look familiar, it's the same piece of "high ground" where the rattlesnake menaced Nat. Fouchon and the remaining Goons struggle from the brush.

Van Cleave looks out over the territory- he knows they've been this way before. Even Billy Bob figures this one out.

BILLY BOB
The 'sumbitch is lost... he's going
in circles.

Van Cleave kneels next to the dogs and fingers the trackers. The collars begin to BEEP softly.

Van CLEAVE
(serious)
He's going in circles, but he isn't
lost...

Fouchon knows better.

(CONTINUED)

FOUCHON
He's behind us.

Astounded, the hunters turn and point their weapons back the way they came. Knowing they've been flanked, the men are tense, paranoic. Jerome goes to pieces.

JEROME
We've got to get back to the road!
He lured us down here! That son of
a bitch is going to kill us all...

Van Cleave smacks Jerome in the back of the head.

Van CLEAVE
Shut the fuck up.

Fouchon squints into the brush.

FOUCHON
(to Chang and Stephan)
I suggest you lay an ambush along
our trail. If Boudreaux is behind
us, bring me his ears.

Chang and Stephan scurry off. Van Cleave quickly slips the dog's leads.

The dogs inch ahead. Behind them, Van Cleave, Fouchon and remaining hunters move in single file. The dogs halt. Ahead, on the trail is the faintest of shadows- the vine Chance rigged across the trail.

Van Cleave comes to the place the dogs have stopped. After a moment, Van Cleave steps forward...

101 THE VINE

101

pulls taught against shoe... Van Cleave is oblivious- but something makes him freeze. Agonizing seconds pass. In the tree above Van Cleave's head, the rattlesnake is coiled and ready to drop.

Van Cleave steps back. In front of him, the vine slackens. Van Cleave pushes one of the dogs forward with his foot.

Van CLEAVE
(almost a whisper)
Advance...

(CONTINUED)

One dog passes to the left of the vine, the other jumps neatly over it. Still, the men have no idea.

Fouchon and Van Cleave follow the first dog. Both get by without hitting the vine. Billy Bob and Jerome pass on either side of the tree. They, too, get by safely- Peterson does not.

102 THE VINE

102

is pulled tight. Yanked from it's perch, the snake drops...

PETERSON
Ohhhh... SHIT!!!

The snake strikes Peterson in the face as it falls. Writing in agony, Peterson collapses- bites above the neck are lethal.

Casually, Van Cleave walks over, reaches down and grabs the viper behind its neck. Van Cleave puts a pistol to its head and pulls the trigger. KA-BLAMM!!! End of snake.

The others are stunned. Fouchon steps over Peterson and tosses his gun to Jerome.

FOUCHON
(to Jerome)
Take the point, Jerome.

Jerome doesn't look happy about his new job.

JEROME
Why me?

Van Cleave cocks his weapon and points it at Jerome's chest.

Van CLEAVE
(like death)
Because we're in a hurry.

Jerome presses down the trail.

CUT TO:

103 EXT. DOUVÉE'S CLEARING/HOUSE - DAY

103

A fire burns in an old, pot bellied stove. But this is no charming antique- nozzles, tubing and bailing wire are rigged into a familiar backwoods contraption- a whiskey still.

(CONTINUED)

A rough-hewn table is covered with jugs, bottles and jars of all descriptions; each is filled with amber colored moonshine. Follow the still's tubing down, down, down- whiskey is dripping directly into Douvee's mouth.

Swallowing a couple of drops, he makes a face like a man who just stepped on a mouse trap.

DOUVEE

Hooo man... sometime I amaze myself.

O.S. comes the lilting call of a MEADOW LARK. Douvee's face brightens as he stands.

DOUVEE

Chance... E'sque tu?

Chance and Nat step from the brush- Douvee embraces Chance then turns warmly to Nat.

DOUVEE

So tell me- who is this you brung all the way down here with you...?

CHANCE

Nat, this my Uncle Douvee.

Steadying his shaking hand, Douvee kisses Nat's hand and bows graciously. He's a drunk, but a charming one.

DOUVEE

Enchanted, Ma'amselle.

CHANCE

Douvee, I got some people behind me.

DOUVEE

Yeah, I smelled them...

104 INT. DOUVEE'S SHACK

104

Ten feet off the ground, a small cabin is mounted on pilings- Douvee's house is little more than a shack on stilts.

The old man opens a chest and takes out an ancient looking double barrel shotgun. Like Douvee's still, it's seen better days. He hands the weapon to Chance.

(CONTINUED)

CHANCE

What happened to that nice AK-47 I bought for your birthday?

DOUVEE

(shrugs)

An alligator ate it... I been using the shotgun this season.

Douvee brings out a cardboard ammunition box. Chance blows dust out of the barrel of the gun.

DOUVEE

These men, they mad at you for business or pleasure?

CHANCE

A little of both. You got gas in the boat?

DOUVEE

I jes' filled it.

Chance fills his pockets with shotgun shells.

CHANCE

I'm gonna head South- for Bayou La Fouché... then to the Mardi Gras graveyard. I need you to take her back north... See if you can get to Morgan City. Find Sheriff Quave and tell him where I'm going.

NAT

I'm not going to leave you...

Chance threads a pair of shells into the breech of the shotgun.

CHANCE

Look, the only way you're going to make it to the road is if I draw them south. You want to help me? Get to the road and find the Sheriff.

Nat knows he's right. Chance heads for the door.

(CONTINUED)

CHANCE

Those men...they're going to have a pretty good idea I stopped here, Douvee.

DOUVEE

(big smile)

Oh Cherie, don't worry about us.

Chance bounds down the stairs.

DOUVEE

(calling after him)

I love company!!!

CUT TO:

105 EXT. CLEARING - DAY

105

Shadows slink forward...Fouchon waves Van Cleave and Billy Bob toward Douvee's shack. Behind Fouchon, Chang threads an arrow into his compound bow.

106 EXT. CLEARING

106

Weapons ready, Fouchon and Van Cleave take positions covering the back... Stephan bounds up the stairs, switches his weapon off safe and KICKS the door from it's hinges.

107 INSIDE THE SHACK

107

There's no one home. Stephan scans the room for a moment, then steps back out on the porch. He shakes his head- the place is empty.

108 IN THE BUSHES

108

Douvee and Nat are under cover. Douvee peers at the shack- and takes a drink from an earthen jug. He takes one of his arrows and splashes moonshine over the end. He then hands the jug to Nat.

DOUVEE

Now, don't spill none of that... It kills the grass.

Douvee notches the arrow into his bowstring and Nat flicks a lighter at it. The arrow bursts into flame.

Weapon pointed out into the surrounding swamp, Van Cleave walks down the steps. Douvee's voice rings from out of the brush.

(O.S.)DOUVÉE

Y'all better duck!

ZZZZZZIIIIIPPPP! the flaming arrow cuts the air- it passes right between Chang and Van Cleave and into the shed. It slams squarely into Douvee's STILL.

110 KAABBOOOM!!!!

110

the still and the shed DETONATE. The flames spread quickly to the bottles stacked on the table. Licked by flames, Douvee's stockpile starts to go off like Roman candles. In seconds, the clearing looks like a 200' proof Fourth of July celebration.

111 OUT IN THE FOREST

111

Nat is amazed. The clearing is ablaze...

NAT

What a shot!!!

Douvee looks stunned.

DOUVÉE

(heartbroken)

I wasn't aiming for the still.

Douvee moves to unlimber another arrow- Nat grabs his wrist.

DOUVÉE

Hey...!

NAT

We don't have time for this macho crap. Chance needs help... We're supposed to get it...Now come on!

Nat scurries away into the woods- Douvee follows.

112 EXT. BAYOU BOAT DOCK - DAY

112

Behind Douvee's shed, Fouchon walks onto a short dock. A boat wake ruffles the surface of the bayou. You don't have to be a Jeopardy champion to figure out where Chance went.

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED:

112

Fouchon's gaze is deadly- he turns as Van Cleave steps onto the pier..

FOUCHON

Get the helicopter! Find Boudreaux
and force him down Bayou La Fouché.

Fouchon storms back toward the shed. Riding a dirt bike, Frick putters into the clearing. Frack skids down the dirt road in the Blazer; there are FOUR scurvy looking SHOOTERS in the truck with him. Fouchon's cavalry has arrived a little late.

FOUCHON

(to the other hunters)
The rest of you, get in the truck.
We'll cut him off at Point de
Chien...

CUT TO:

113 EXT. BAYOU LA FOUCHÉ - DAY

113

Visible through the woods, a pillar of smoke winds up from Douvee's burning still. Chance pilots Douvee's speedboat through the narrow twists of the channel- putting maximum water distance between himself and the hunters.

114 THE HELICOPTER

114

pops over the tree line and streaks down the bayou. Closing at 100 mph, Van Cleave slides back the door and swings his weapon forward...Stephan and Billy Bob also poke their weapons from the doors.

115 IN THE SPEED BOAT

115

Chance lifts the shotgun from the deck. He turns and aims the both barrels at the oncoming helicopter. He squeezes off a SHOT.

116 IN THE HELICOPTER

116

Van Cleave slides open the breech of his weapon- connected to his assault rifle is an M-203...a 40mm grenade launcher. He aims down and fires.

117 KAWHUMP!!!

117

The grenade detonates next to the boat. A twenty foot column of water rains down... Chance shakes the water from his hair and quickly reverses course.

Failing to anticipate the turn, the helicopter overshoots and ROARS overhead.

118 IN THE HELICOPTER

118

Van Cleave is screams at the pilot.

Van CLEAVE
YOU IDIOT!!! TAKE US AROUND!!

The helicopter banks into a long turn, leaving the much slower boat far behind.

119 IN THE BOAT

119

Roaring down the channel, Chance reloads and snaps closed the breech. Behind the speedboat, the helicopter clears the trees and streaks in for another pass.

120 HANGING OUT OF THE STARBOARD DOOR, Billy Bob lets loose with the M-60. The big gun works just as good as it did in Viet Nam. Bullets rip the water around Chance's boat.

120

121 IN THE BOAT

121

Chance puts the tiller hard over and heads for a rinky looking bridge just down the bayou. He presses the throttle forward and points the bow right at the middle of the span.

As the speeding boat passes under the bridge, Chance leaps up and sticks the shotgun between two of the gerters. He is instantly yanked up and out of the boat. Hanging from the gun, he pulls himself up...

122 THE HELICOPTER

122

has completed its turn... Leaning from the open door, Van Cleave sees the boat's wake heading under the bridge. He aims the grenade launcher and FIRES.

123 VAN CLEAVE HAS LED HIS TARGET PERFECTLY...the instant the boat emerges from under the bridge, a grenade slams into it. KAAW-WUMPF!!! A direct hit shatters the boat. Fire and wood splinters are everywhere...

123

124 The helicopter settles to a hover as water and debris slowly drift down...then Van Cleave's jaw drops. Standing on the bridge, not ten feet away- is Chance!! 124

125 Chance lifts the shotgun and FIRES. Both barrels rip into the pilot's side windshield. 125

126 IN THE HELICOPTER 126

Blood spatters across the windscreen as the Pilot collapses over the stick. The helicopter lurches nose high, veers wildly to the left... The water is coming up fast. KA-BOOMMMM!

127 EXT. FIELD - DAY

CUT TO:
127

Douree and Nat emerge from a canebrake just as the THUDDING EXPLOSION of the helicopter crash rolls over them.

Nat turns, almost two miles distant, a black pillar of smoke rises from the crash site.

NAT

We have to go back and help Chance.

Douree stares across the field.

DOUREE

You got that half right...

Douree slings his bow over his shoulder and starts back for the fence.

DOUREE(cont'd)

...I have to go back and help
Chance...you have to find Sheriff
Quave.

NAT

By the time I get town, it might be
too late... Chance needs help now.

Douree's still trying to climb over- it takes most of his attention and all of his breath.

DOUREE

Alright, Missy. You wanna play
hero...? Don't come crying to me
when you skin your knee.

Nat beats Douree by a full step- she vaults over the rail fence effortlessly and starts running hard for the smoke.

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED:

127

Not to be out done, Douvee gallops to the fence- but this Cajun is no Moses Mallone. Douvee catches an ankle, trips over the top railing and lands on his face.

DOUVEE
(from the ground)
Man, I'm gettin' too old for this.

128 EXT. ABANDONED SUGAR MILL - DAY

128

Chance runs down a sandy road. Almost lost in a surrounding cane field, an abandoned sugar mill looms at the end of 300 yards of dirt road.

A monument to Louisiana's bust economy, the factory is slowly surrendering to itself to rust, bird shit and the encroachment of the nearly tropical forest. Chance dashes up to a door- a thick padlock swings from its hasp. The place is locked tight.

CHANCE
SHIT!

Down the road, Chance can hear the SNARLING of a motorcycle engine...it's coming fast. Chance aims both barrels at the lock... KABLAMM!!!

Putting his back against the frame, Chance slides open the hangar-sized door and ducks inside.

129 INT. SUGAR PLANT - DAY

129

The place is a picture of neglect. Pallets and boxes are scattered around- huge separators and processing machines are cast about in various stages of disrepair.

The motorcycle SNARLS into the plant. Chance sprints for his life as Frick opens FIRE.

Chance hurtles a generator and plunges down a long hallway. Bullets spark off the concrete around him as the bikes take up the chase.

Weaving through machinery and storage areas, the motorcycle sweeps the plant floor. Finally, the bike stops- engine PUTTERING, Frick's helmeted head swivels left and right...he's lost him.

Fouchon and the truck skids to a halt. The hunters start to pile from the vehicles. Fouchon walks to the back of the truck and lifts open the cargo door. A huge PILE of firearms is stacked on the floor of the vehicle.

131 INSIDE THE PLANT

131

The bike rattles up a set of cement stairs deep in the factory. Turning a circle, the bike stops on a wide cement landing- the plant's main floor spreads below Frick.

Overhead, there is a flapping noise. Frick looks up- pigeons cluster on a beam high overhead. Frick shifts on his seat- from above comes a white drop of pigeon shit. It bounces off his helmet.

Frick looks up, points his weapon at the skylight and FIRES off an entire magazine.

As the shots ECHO through the empty plant, Frick watches as several gray feathers drift slowly to the floor. When he looks down...there's Chance! Frick is looking down both barrels of Chance's shotgun.

CHANCE

Hello, Fido.

KABLAMM!!

SMASH CUT TO:

132 EXT. PAINTED WINDOWS - DAY

132

A bank of painted, green factory windows...light, orange light seems to be leaking through the panes...Then, CRRAAASSSHHH!!!

133 AT THE TRUCKS

133

Fouchon and the Hunters turn as a massive FIREBALL explodes through the windows. What's left of a man and a motorcycle hit the ground and bounce in a crazy, flaming cartwheel.

The wreckage grinds finally to a stop directly in front of the trucks. It's hard to tell where burning human starts and burning Honda ends.

(CONTINUED)

The Hunters stand dumb struck. Fouchon's eyes narrow... coming up the road is another amazing sight. Van Cleave, Billy Bob and Stefan trudge up to the trucks. Wet, torn, bleeding, the crash survivors are a horrendous sight.

FOUCHON

What happened?

Van Cleave snatches an automatic shotgun from one of the trucks and JAMS back the cocking handle.

Van CLEAVE

(pissed)

What the hell does it look like?

BILLY BOB

(even more pissed)

That son of a bitch downed your helicopter.

Fouchon turns to them in disgust. His glare is baneful.

FOUCHON

Let me review the tactical situation for you, Gentlemen. Boudreaux has been wounded, he has been pursued and harried across eight miles of open country. Now he is cornered and out numbered twelve to one.

(poisonous contempt)

He is an annoying little... fucking...insect and I want him stepped on...hard.

The hunters pour into the building and fan out. Van Cleave locks eyes with his boss. Fouchon beams menace.

FOUCHON

(make my day)

You're not upset with me...are you, Pik?

Van Cleave's brave- but he isn't brave enough to say anything. A cold smile twists Fouchon's face as Van Cleave slips meekly into the factory.

The place is almost Gothic in proportion. Light streams through green skylights, illuminating the place in other-worldly patches of color.

(CONTINUED)

134 CONTINUED:

134

Weapon ready, Van Cleave steps into a patch of light. Fouchon, Billy Bob, Jerome, Frack and the remaining Hit Men walk in behind Van Cleave. Stephan finds a breaker box and the lights flick on...a couple of them anyway...

Van Cleave's eyes scan the room...Stored haphazardly are a number of old Mardi Gras floats. Covered with dust and dirt, many are ten or more years old. Grinning rabbits, cartoon characters and King Rex are piled together like the ruins of some pagan religion.

Nine pairs of eyes scan the vast room- the place is a maze.

FOUCHON

Boudreaux has a pistol, Gentlemen.
Try not to get in front of it.

Weapons pointing into darkness, the hunters move forward and spread out.

135 ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FLOAT

135

Chance is moving quietly, the stalking part of this hunt has begun. In the half-darkness there are ECHOES, but nothing he can place.

Chance drops to a shadow on the concrete floor. Above him, the accusing face of Uncle Sam stares out at the other floats. Chance stands and moves around the float... There's Billy Bob!

Billy Bob swings a ham sized fist at Chance- WHUMP. Chance is knocked six feet. His pistol falls from his hand and clatters across the floor.

Billy Bob lifts the barrel of the M-60...

BILLY BOB

It's slice and dice time, coon ass..

Billy Bob FIRES... the big machine gun CHUGS out thirty rounds. Bullets and tracers rip the concrete floor as Chance handsprings to his feet. Spinning, turning, Chance manages to get inside the barrel length of the M-60.

This gun will cut down trees... but it wasn't designed for close-in fighting. Chance leaps into the air- steps up, and off the big gun and knee kicks Billy under the chin.

(CONTINUED)

135 CONTINUED:

135

The blow was a man killer, but it takes more than that to knock down two hundred and seventy pounds of Georgia cracker.

As Chance lands, Billy rips off another burst... splinters, wood, and tissue paper fly as the guns CHATTERS.

Whirling like a Dervish, Chance spins inside the barrel again. Chance is eyeball-to eyeball with the towering red neck.

Two things happen very quickly. Chance's left hand reaches out and grabs the ammunition belt feeding into the big gun. Chance loops the ammunition belt over the big man's head, and pulls the trigger.

As the belt is drawn into the gun, it tightens against Billy's throat- strangling him. Chance's right hand simultaneously rips the .45 from Billy's low draw holster. Diving backwards, Chance FIRES eight .45 caliber slugs into the big redneck.

Rocked back- Billy turns, takes a single step toward Chance and then drops the 36 pound gun. Eyes pinned open, Billy tips straight over like a falling redwood.

136 EXT. CANEFIELD - DAY

136

Nat and Douvee trot toward the factory. Douvee doesn't look like he's enjoyed their little jog.

DOUVEE
(breathless)
Next time, dammit, we're stealin' a
car.

The factory looms before them, enormous, scary and full of people with guns. Douvee finds some cover and peers into the plant. Nat sinks beside him...

NAT
Okay... Okay
(no clue)
What are we gonna do now?

As Douvee threads an arrow into his bow as a long rattle of GUNFIRE drifts from the plant.

DOUVEE
We put an arrow into everybody who
ain't Chance.

Nat follows the old man into the plant.

Frack, Stephan and Hit Men #1, #2 and #3 are sweeping forward. Eyes searching the darkened mill, they are covering and moving carefully. These guys are pros.

Behind a piece of equipment, Chance removes the magazine from his pistol- he has only a single bullet left. He slide the magazine in and quietly puts forward the slide. The bad guys are less than 100 feet away.

Chance stands from cover and dashes at them. Pigeons are startled from their roosts as Chance aims and fires in a sprint. Frack catches a bullet between the eyes.

As he falls, Chance grabs his pistol from the air, hookslides across the floor and OPENS FIRE. Stephan and Hit Man #1 fall. Chance scoops up his weapon and rolls.

Bullets tear the concrete around him as he EMPTIES both pistols at #2 and #3.

Chance quickly reloads his empty weapons and heads for the back of the plant. As Chance leaps over the corpses, Stephan appears from behind a post- Chance BLASTS him point blank.

pops up from behind a crate and fires. The arrow slams into Chance's shoulder and pins him to the wall. The pistol drops from his hand. Pinned like a bulletin to a board, Chance can't reach his weapon.

Chang walks casually toward Chance. Savoring his \$500,000 discount, Chang loads his last arrow into the crossbow and cocks it.

O.S. there is a small sound- a short, sharp TWANG. Chang turns...

streaks through pipes and machinery. Chang stands locked as a one hundred yard shot closes in and smashes into the front of his chest.

The impact of the arrow thrusts Chang back- flipping over a railing, he drops a long way into an empty molasses vat.

run over to Chance. Like Saint Sebastian, the arrow nails Chance solidly to the wall. It's a horrible sight.

NAT

Oh my God... let me help you...

Chance reaches up and snaps off the tail of the arrow. His shoulder slides off the shaft as he drops to his knees. Douvee is on him at once, pressing a handkerchief into the wound and binding it up.

CHANCE

I thought you went for help...

DOUVEE

I am helping. When it looked like you got you-self in a full on weenie roast, we came back.

Chance pulls himself to his feet.

CHANCE

You should've kept going.

Chance walks to the body of one of the fallen hit men. Rifling through the man's jacket, he finds a 9MM SIG pistol and one magazine of ammunition. He hands them to Nat.

CHANCE

You're gonna need that- it's a long way to the road.

NAT

You have to come with us...

Chance shakes his head.

CHANCE

No.

NAT

Why not? What good can you do here?

CHANCE

What good would it do if I ran?
Where am I gonna run to? These
guys are doing this because they
like it. They're not going to quit
until somebody makes them stop.

(CONTINUED)

140 CONTINUED:

140

Chance lifts his pistol from the floor and cocks it.

CHANCE

With you they're hunting me...
without you, I'm hunting them. Get
to the road.

Chance trots back into the factory. Reluctantly, Douvee pulls Nat away.

141 THE PLANT FLOOR - LATER

141

Van Cleave kicks a spent cartridge across the floor. Fouchon walks onto the cement and stares down. The bodies of Hit Men #4 lies in a pool of blood; we didn't see what hit him. Neither did he.

Van Cleave lifts the corner of the dead man's jacket... there is an empty pistol holster on the floor next to the body. Guess who's got the gun?

Jerome mills around uneasily. This isn't exactly going as planned.

Van CLEAVE

We don't need this shit... We could
be in Mexico in 5 hours.

Fouchon is on for the duration.

FOUCHON

What's the matter, Pik? Don't tell
me hunting drunks in alleys has made
you soft?

Van Cleave's eyes flash.

FOUCHON

Find him. And kill him.

Van CLEAVE

I'll get Boudreaux... but I'm not
going to die to put a head on your
fucking mantle.

Fouchon watches Van Cleave walk away.

A small office area is partitioned from the manufacturing area by a prefabricated wall and windows. Dirty venetian blinds and grimy windows make the partition translucent. Inside, the desks and floors are heaped with forgotten and yellowing documents.

Nat and Douvee creep past the offices. The sound of footsteps ECHO behind them. They quickly duck behind a pair of desks.

143 OUTSIDE THE DOOR

143

Van Cleave walks toward the front of the plant. Just outside the office, Van Cleave pauses. A breathtaking moment passes, then he moves on.

144 NAT AND DOUVEE

144

Slink from their hiding place and head toward the warehouse.

145 VAN CLEAVE

145

turns... he catches sight of Nat and douvee. Van Cleave aims the shotgun.

146 CHANCE

146

appears out of nowhere and opens FIRE with both weapons. Bullets decimate the office walls. Spinning through a hail of lead, Van Cleave manages to roll onto the other side of the prefabricated partition.

Chance assumes cover on the other side of this same wall. Van Cleave quickly jams a fresh magazine into the shotgun.

Van CLEAVE
(calling to Chance)
It's you and me coon ass...

147 ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL

147

Chance reloads both his weapons. The wall that separates them. Chance looks ahead... in the suite of other offices, the partitions of glass and wood alternate.

(o.s.) Van CLEAVE
You don't have a fucking swamp to
hide in this time...

148 VAN CLEAVE

148

aims his shotgun right at the wall and FIRES.

Chance ducks an EXPLOSION of buckshot and plaster- he starts to run. On the other side of the wall, Van Cleave does the same.

SHOOTING and moving, the two men blaze away at each other through the office windows. The battle occurs at a full sprint. Bullets, buckshot, glass and curtains fly. Only John Woo could get this one on film.

Chance reaches the end of the office first. On the other side of the wall, Van Cleave rolls over a desk and table.

He aims the shotgun at the wall, but Chance bashes through a perpendicular window, hits the floor and slides across the concrete. Both guns BLAZING, Chance slides under the table Van Cleave sought cover behind.

The South African convulses as Chance EMPTIES BOTH GUNS into his belly. Blown backward, Van Cleave hits the floor in a tattered heap. His eyes are glassy- Chance's face is the last thing he'll ever see.

CHANCE

Game's over pal. You lose.

Van Cleave dies. Chance bends down and takes the weapon's belt from around his waist.

Chance dumps a pile of shotgun shells and hand grenades from the pouches. He stuffs a handful into the pockets of his jeans. He picks up Van Cleave's automatic shotgun and thumbs in several shells.

Tears the desk. Papers and twenty year old coffee cups go flying as Fouchon opens fire.

Chance rolls to cover on the other side of a big metal desk. Cradling Van Cleave's shotgun, Chance puts his back against the big piece of furniture and pushes with all his might.

Fouchon keeps up the BARRAGE- but Chance is safe behind eight feet of 1950's American craftsmanship. Chance is using the desk like a tank- closing the distance between himself and Fouchon.

Fouchon continues to FIRE at the desk. Finally his weapon

(CONTINUED)

clicks empty. Chance rolls free and OPENS FIRE.

As Fouchon sprints past a pile of 55 gallon drums, Chance aims and fires- KA-BOOM! The drum detonates. Fouchon disappears in a swirling wall of flame.

Chance takes a step back, then runs headlong through the wall of fire. He dives through and emerges smoldering on the other side.

151 IN THE WAREHOUSE

151

There's Fouchon- he expected that. What he didn't expect is to find Douvee lying on the floor, an arrow stuck in his shoulder. He isn't conscious.

Chance lifts the shotgun. Backed against an enormous Mardi Gras float, Fouchon has one of Douvee's hunting arrows placed against Nat's throat.

Chance steps forward- at his back is a wall of fire.

FOUCHON

(to Chance, calmly)

Don't, Boudreaux. I promise you,
I'll make a mess of her...

Chance keeps the shotgun aimed at Fouchon's head. Nat is defiant.

NAT

Shoot him!

Fouchon is cool.

FOUCHON

Oh, he won't do that, Miss Binder.
Will you, Boudreaux?

Chance leans into the weapon. Frustration grips him like a vice.

FOUCHON

Pull back the bolt, and eject the
shell from the chamber.

Chance does not move. Fouchon lifts the arrow head and places it against Nat's cheek.

FOUCHON

Do it or I'll cut her fucking nose
off.

(CONTINUED)

Chance pulls the bolt back and ejects the shell. Fouchon does not relax his guard.

FOUCHON

Now place the weapon in your left hand, and toss it.

Chance tosses the gun at the base of one of the nearby floats. When he does, something small and green is visible in his fist. Fouchon doesn't see it.

FOUCHON

I really have to congratulate you, Boudreaux. You were an interesting opponent. The girl's involvement was something I could understand- a matter of family. But you, you had no obligation to those people-

CHANCE

Didn't I?

Fouchon still has the arrow against Nat's throat. He moves her slowly over to the place the shotgun landed.

FOUCHON

Poverty hardly seems enough of a bond to die over... Tell me, just what was it that made you want to complicate my life...?

CHANCE

Poor people get bored too.

A crooked smile spreads across the villain's face. He pushes Nat away and reaches for the weapon. As Fouchon bends down, the round pin of a hand grenade CLINKS on the concrete in front of him.

Fouchon looks up- the safety handle flies from Chance's fist. With a crisp SNAP, the grenade's percussion hammer falls- it's live.

Fouchon can only gape as Chance vaults into the air- executes a complete flip and stuffs a live grenade down the back of Fouchon's jacket.

Chance lands on Nat and tackles her clear. Like a man with a bee in his shirt, Fouchon tries to rid himself of the grenade. Finally, he pulls out his shirt tail.

(CONTINUED)

The grenade falls to the concrete. Fouchon kicks it upward- it sails right into the eye of a CHINESE DRAGON. Shielding Nat, Chance can only watch as Fouchon picks up the shotgun and slams home the bolt.

Nobody's ready for this- inside the dragon's head, there is a rattling- like the sound of a Patchinko ball passing through an oriental slot machine. Fouchon's head snaps around...

The grenade bounces off the dragon's long, pink tongue, hits a tusk and lands right at Fouchon's feet.

CHANCE

Hey, Cherie... thanks for coming down.

KAA-BBBOOOMMMM!!! Fouchon is vaporized by the grenade. It couldn't have happened to a nicer guy.

152 Chance lifts himself from Nat. She gapes at the twitching pile of tatters that used to be her father's murderer. Chance turns her eyes away.

152

Together, they rush to the place Douvee is lying. His eyes flutter open.

DOUVEE

What's all the goddamn noise?

Chance embraces his uncle. Douvee's wound isn't as bad as it looked.

CHANCE

Lay still, uncle.

NAT

We're gonna get you outta here, Douvee. Just hang on.

Douvee takes Chance's hand in his own. The grip is strong. It takes more than one arrow to take out 65 years of tough.

DOUVEE

Do me a favor... No fences this time? Okay?

Nat embraces them both. You know he's gonna make it.

Downtown Point de Chien is a gas station with a Greyhound sign out front. On a sunny morning, Nat and Douvee stand with Chance. Uncle and nephew have matching arm slings.

In clean clothes, Chance looks a little better than he did back at the factory. Beside him, Nat is radiant in a pretty sundress.

A Greyhound bus pulls from the two lane and crunches to a halt on the oyster shell driveway. PASSENGERS alight and embark as they talk.

DOUVEE

Well, I can't say it wasn't
thrilling to see you.

CHANCE

I appreciate the help, Douvee.

DOUVEE

Anytime my frien'. Seein' you is
good for the circulation.

They shake hands, then the old man embraces him.

DOUVEE

Come back when you don't want so
much excitement.

CHANCE

I will.

Douvee pats him on the shoulder and walks away. Chance
stares into Nat's eyes.

NAT

Are you sure this is what you want
to do?

CHANCE

I can get a ship in Galveston...

Chance's voice trails off. Nat looks down sadly.

CHANCE

Hey...

Chance lifts her face to his.

(CONTINUED)

CHANCE

What am I gonna do up in Michigan?

They embrace.

NAT

I'm going to miss you.

CHANCE

These good-byes- I'm not too good at them.

The bus HISSES- it's ready to go. Nat pulls away- her eyes are wet.

NAT

You'd better go.

CHANCE

Yeah, I better.

Chance kisses her, lifts his duffel and climbs aboard. Nat's heart breaks as the big bus grinds into gear.

She watches it pull onto the road, then turns and walks slowly toward her car. Over her shoulder, the Greyhound rolls down the two lane.

As the bus rolls out of frame, the brake lights come on.... From down the road, the HISSING of the air brakes is a small sound.

NAT

Continues to walk. The wind pulls at her... then something makes her turn. There's Chance, walking back to her.

CHANCE

Hey... I change my mind.

NAT

It happens...

As the bus drives off, they kiss tenderly.

FADE TO BLACK