

MULHOLLAND FALLS

by

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EXT. THE DESERT - DAY

Vast, empty, eternal, the landscape of a thousand Westerns. At first we hear only the wind, but then another sound insinuates itself...it's Peggy Lee singing her trademark "Fever." And with that we notice something moving out there, something beside the windblown tumbleweed. It's coming this way, fast and straight, and as we move down toward it we see that it is...

A 1951 CHEVY CONVERTIBLE

Red and white with the top down, driven by a woman in a red-and-white dress and something red in her long blond hair. Her name is ALLISON POND. She is a heart-stopping, reckless beauty with a reckless little smile. We watch her flash past at 100--driving with one hand--then brake sharply and pull into a gravel parking lot.

EXT. SUN SPOT CASINO, LAS VEGAS - DAY

The Sun Spot sits on the north edge of Las Vegas. In 1953, Vegas is still a new town, a place in the desert where someone has built a couple of dozen casinos and bars, with gas stations, a wedding chapel and a lot of trailers. The casinos all have what passes for live entertainment -- mostly singers and comics, some magic acts, once in a while a jazz band. Everyone is white, even the musicians.

As Allison's car skids to a stop, a VALET opens the door for her, and his gaze can't help following her as she crosses the gravel in her red mules, her body swaying in the heat like a music too deep to hear.

The Sun Spot sports an outdoor bar sheltered from the sun by a huge canopy. Under it, cocktail waitresses come and go delivering drinks; an awful singer can be heard inside; a fat man in shorts sits with a hooker, her hand rest on his chubby, thigh under the table; a pimp in a Hawaiian shirt sits with a bunch of working girls who listen to a radio out of which we continue to hear Peggy Lee.

At another table, a young man points a 16mm movie camera here and there, like a bored documentary filmmaker. And now, As Allison crosses the room--every eye in the place following her--he turns the camera on her, and she mugs for him, a little pout and tilt of the head, at once glamorous and self-mocking.

When he finally puts down the camera and picks up a Bloody Mary, we see him clearly for the first time. He is a slim, flawlessly handsome, almost too-beautiful young man. His name is JIMMY FIELDS, and we realize that Allison is here to meet him. They

kiss cheeks. As she sits, he catches a waitress's eye, indicates his drink and holds up two fingers. He has a turquoise ring on one of them.

JIMMY (annoyed)
You said noon. It's past two-thirty..

ALLISON
They delayed the test so I got a facial.
What do you think?

She displays her skin for his inspection. He is unamused.

JIMMY
While I sit here in the goddam sun.

Mocking him, Allison picks up the camera and films Jimmy looking petulant until finally he laughs despite himself. She puts down the camera and laughs with him. The waitress brings their drinks, Allison raises hers in toast. They drink. Allison checks her watch, looks out toward the north.

JIMMY
This is so boring, Allison.
(as she shrugs)
I mean how many of these things can you
watch? They're all the same after a
while...

ALLISON
I like them.

She smiles, sips her drink. Jimmy looks around the garish place.

JIMMY
Why do I have to come along?

ALLISON
Because you're my friend...

He gives a tight smile, resenting the consequences of that fact while acknowledging its claim. She pats his hand.

ALLISON (smiles)
...My best friend...And I need your help.

JIMMY (dry)
My benign presence.

Everybody in the place is drinking, wearing sunglasses, all their chairs turned to face north. There is a festive mood here, more like a shipboard party than a casino.

Allison warily eyes the working girls. She picks up the camera and films a lizard crawling across one girl's high heel shoe. She pans the place: the blazing sun, windless air. When the radio music finally ends, an announcer's voice takes its place.

ANNOUNCER

That was Peggy Lee taking us into three o'clock on the first day of June. The temperature outside in downtown Las Vegas is 110 degrees, the wind is four miles an hour from the northeast. The weatherman says the cloud will pass west of the city ...just nick the corner, out by Spring of Youth Trailer Park, so all you trailer dwellers ought to come into town with the rest of us and enjoy the show.

Everyone looks to the north.

CUT TO

EXT. DESERT - DAY

A long distance shot of the desert, a platform sticking up in the middle. A coyote eats something dead, little desert flowers ruffle in the breeze. MANNEQUINS dressed in regular clothing are set out on a blanket as if at a picnic...

EXT. TESTING GROUNDS - DAY

A protected bunker full of guys in sweat-stained uniforms and dark glasses. Cameras running everywhere. A lot of movement, people hustling back and forth.

VOICE

Two minutes...

In the center of the movement, erect and handsome, is GENERAL THOMAS TIMMS, head of the Atomic Energy Commission. Timms is 53, calm, focussed; he wears his power lightly.

Standing beside him is his aide, COL. FITZGERALD, a Marine, a tough, hard, very loyal guy. Fitzgerald is bumped by personnel moving back and forth, people setting up cameras and technical equipment. He moves as he is bumped, undistracted.

TIMMS (to Fitzgerald)

The timing switches?

FITZGERALD

At 0-eight hundred.

TIMMS

I want all yield rates and temperature readings strictly--

FITZGERALD

Yes, sir. I already told them.

Timms smiles at Fitzgerald's efficiency, glances at his watch, then at the sky. Again Fitzgerald seems to know what he's thinking.

FITZGERALD

We'll be going off right on time, General.

Timms nods. When he turns to the horizon, there's a little stiffness in his movement, a wince of discomfort.

ON THE HORIZON: a brief flash followed, several seconds later, by a tremendous explosion. Every face in the bunker turns toward the blast. A sudden wind presses their clothing against their skin.

EXT. SUN SPOT BAR - DAY

Here, too, the sunglasses all stare toward the northern sky. The tables shake, glasses rattle, the strange wind whips and billows the canopy.

Every eye watches as the mushroom cloud slowly rises: immense, terrifying, beautifully colored by the sun. If Jesus reappeared on earth, the reception could not be more attentive.

INT. NIGHTCLUB IN A VEGAS CASINO - NIGHT

A TORCH SINGER is singing the blues. At a table near the stage Gen. Timms and Col. Fitzgerald sit with Jimmy Fields and Allison Pond. Allison and Jimmy have been placed side by side as if they were a couple. An open bottle of champagne stands in an ice bucket. Timms and Allison exchange looks from time to time; her foot touches his leg under the table.

The singer and song seem throwbacks to an earlier time, before the Bomb, before the War. Her heartfelt abandon contrasts with the neutral faces of the audience.

Fitzgerald, however, seems uninterested in the singer and instead stares with undisguised contempt at Jimmy Fields. Allison sees that, addresses Fitzgerald in a confrontational sort of way.

ALLISON

You're missing the show, Colonel.

FITZGERALD (considers her)
I've seen the show, Miss Pond. Many, many
times.

TIMMS (mildly)
Colonel...

Fitzgerald turns away. Allison smiles at Timms. A Floor Manager comes over and whispers something in Fitzgerald's ear. The Colonel whispers to Timms. Both men rise.

TIMMS (gracious)
Would you excuse us a moment?

Jimmy and Allison watch them go.

JIMMY
You believe he's going to divorce his wife
and marry you?

ALLISON
You don't?

Jimmy shrugs, takes a long drink.

JIMMY
He must be fifty years old.

ALLISON
Fifty-three.
(beat)
That's not so old.
(looks at Jimmy)
That's not what matters, you know...

JIMMY
What matters?

Allison gives this a moment's thought.

ALLISON
I think I love him.

JIMMY (jealous?)
I thought you loved them all.

She backhands him hard across the mouth. He slaps her back, almost as hard. A man at the next table gets up, ready to intervene, but Allison gives the man a look, and he sits back down. Jimmy is blotting his lip with a napkin. Allison lowers her eyes. Nothing has changed between them.

ALLISON (a quiet pride)
He likes me. He says I'm smart.

JIMMY
Did you need him to tell you?

ALLISON (smiles)
It's like being beautiful, honey. It
never hurts to hear it.

JIMMY
Who cares if it's true.

ALLISON
Why would he lie?

JIMMY
How many guys have you lied to to make
them feel good?

She knows he's right, and it shakes her confidence.

ALLISON
What do you think?

JIMMY
I think he likes fucking you. And fucking
doesn't last. We both know that, don't we?

Her bright beauty momentarily darkens, revealing someone more
complex and touching. Timms and Fitzgerald return to the table.
Allison covers her nervousness with an intrusive curiosity.

ALLISON
What was that?

Fitzgerald looks at Timms as if to say that the very question
proves some point he has been making. But the General's easy
openness mildly rebuke his aide's judgment.

TIMMS
I have to go out to Sunol in the morning.

ALLISON
I'll go with you.

Timms looks to Fitzgerald who vehemently shakes his head.

TIMMS (to Allison)
It's in the desert. There's nothing to do
there. Nothing even to look at.

ALLISON

I'll look at you.

Timms can't help smiling, and the success of the remark makes Allison happy. Timms decides to torment Fitzgerald a little.

TIMMS (to Fitzgerald)

Shall we let her come, Colonel?

FITZGERALD

Absolutely not.

Timms laughs at Fitzgerald's fussiness.

FITZGERALD

It's your job, Sir.

Allison raises her glass, offers a toast to Timms.

ALLISON

To your job in the desert, General. And your beautiful explosions there.

Fitzgerald looks away in disgust. But Timms smiles, touches his glass to hers. Allison's radiance and beauty make any vulgarity forgivable. She is dazzling.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - NIGHT, 1953

A big Cadillac convertible pulls up in front of an Italian restaurant. The car is white with white upholstery, and filling the seats, front and back, are FOUR VERY BIG MEN in white suits and white hats.

A VALET opens the door, and as the men climb out, they convey not only massiveness but an implacable menace. Their lumbering bulk, the flashy car and clothes, the glimpsed shoulder holsters all announce that these are gangsters. As they move toward the restaurant, they separate, three climbing the carpeted stairs to the front door, one going around the side toward the back.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A mob place that attracts Hollywood types. The men are well-dressed, the women expensively done up in the manner of starlets. The air hums with the faint thrill of criminality.

AT A LARGE TABLE

is a group of men drinking too much, laughing too loud. Except that their suits are dark, they seem just like the ones who got out of the Cadillac. They, too, carry concealed weapons and are big, tough-looking guys.

The noisiest of them, VINCENT DIMONE -- a thin, dark-haired, slicked-down sort of guy with a lot of jewelry -- peels a wet ten dollar bill off the table and drops it down the back of a waitress's pants. Then he retrieves it and slaps it against the forehead of the guy sitting next to him where it sticks. Everybody laughs. The man with the bill on his forehead is different from the others: smaller, better-looking, with the fine features and anointed bearing of a Hollywood star.

Smiling at Dimone's slapstick as if he thought it were funny, the Hollywood star says something inaudible to the waitress. She smiles, peels the bill off his forehead and tucks it between her breasts. The men laugh harder.

POV - THE DOOR

Another tough-looking guy sits in a chair, watching the place. The door itself is heavy wood. It opens and

THREE OF THE MEN IN WHITE

enter the room. MAXWELL HOOVER comes first. Hoover is in his 40s, an aging lion of a man who, in this setting at least, shows nothing but determination and a capacity for violence. He is the unquestioned leader of the group. Behind him comes EDDIE HALL. Hall is five years younger than Hoover, good-looking in a broken-nosed way, charming, profane, a ladies man. Even in his first moments in the restaurant, Hall makes eye contact with one of the pretty waitresses, smiles at her, and she smiles back. Behind Hall is ELLERY COOLIDGE. Coolidge is bigger than the others and softer; he could stand to lose 50 pounds. Naturally messy, naturally friendly, he talks too much.

The men at the large table notice this entrance and shift in their seats, checking them out.

The men in white stop inside the door. The guard senses trouble and starts to get up, but Eddie Hall stops him with a stare.

HALL (matter of fact)

Sit still.

He puts a hand on the man's shoulder, and the guard falls back in his chair, twisting in pain until Hall, eyes scanning the room, casually releases him.

As Hall and Coolidge follow Hoover to the bar, a door opens at the far end of a hallway behind the bar, and the fourth white suit enters. This is ARTHUR REDBONE, a big, handsome Indian. Redbone is perhaps the most fearsome member of the group, the least approachable. He rarely speaks.

POV -- HOOVER, APPROACHING THE BAR

Sees Redbone in the hallway, confronted by another GUARD who says something we cannot hear. Redbone does not acknowledge the question of the man and continues down the hall toward the bar.

The guard comes after Redbone and grabs his arm from behind. Grabs it hard. Redbone's hand moves quickly, takes the Guard's middle finger and pulls it backward. The hand comes off his arm, and the Guard moves in the same direction it does, bending backward and falling to his knees to ease off the pain. Delicate as a pickpocket, Redbone reaches inside the man's coat and comes out with nickel-plated automatic that he pockets. He lets the Guard go -- the man falls into a sitting position, holding his finger -- and continues toward the bar without looking back.

By now, almost everyone in the place is aware of the men in white, and the room has quieted noticeably.

Hoover motions with his finger for the bartender. Coolidge walks among the tables, stopping at one where a young gangster is eating a plate of clams and fettuccine. Coolidge bends to the plate and takes a long smell.

COOLIDGE (to gangster)

Is that basil?

The young gangster turns to his friends and makes a face.

YOUNG GANGSTER (to friends)

Basil who?

Coolidge gestures at a bread basket and raises his eyebrows. The young gangster looks blank. Coolidge takes a piece of bread, dips it in the clam sauce and eats it. Eddie Hall watches this with vague disapproval.

HOOVER (to bartender)

We're looking for a Vince Dimone. Just got in from Detroit.

The bartender puts his chin on his fist and pretends to think.

BARTENDER

Dimone like the singer?

Hoover leans closer until his face is inches from the man's.

HOOVER

Dimone like you don't tell me who he is,
we're going to take this establishment of
yours and put it over on the other side of
Sunset.

The bartender looks from Hoover to Hall, then sees Redbone. Redbone looks right at him and this seems to frighten him more than the others. He moves one finger from the fist supporting his chin and points it at the man who stuck the ten-dollar bill on the movie star's forehead.

HOOVER

Thank you very much.

Hoover and the others converge on the table. Some of the bigger gangsters start to get up and then quickly, without us quite seeing what has happened, they're sitting down again, some of them doubled over. Big hands squeeze big shoulders, and big men who are not used to such indignities writhe to escape grips that hold them seemingly without effort. There's a good deal of pain being dispensed here, and the casual, near invisibility with which it's doled out is impressive and a little alarming.

Dimone remains seated, smiling around a cigarette.

HOOVER

Vincent Dimone?

Dimone pulls a hundred dollar bill out of a puddle on the table and hands it to Hoover.

DIMONE

Here you are, pal. Buy yourself a pretty girl.

He laughs, looks to his friends for support, but the place has gone quiet. These are tough-looking guys, but they are afraid of the men in white. Dimone feels his support eroding.

DIMONE

(thinks he's being tough, but his
fear is showing)
Who the hell are you?

HOOVER

My name is Maxwell Hoover. I am with the
City of Los Angeles police department...

DIMONE
(thinks this is a joke)
Yeah, and I'm Mamie Eisenhower.

HOOVER
(uninterrupted)
...and I came to give you a message that
you're presence is required back in
Detroit.

DIMONE
It's cold in Detroit. I just moved here.

HOOVER (nodding)
But you're moving back.

The seriousness of this is impressing Dimone. He looks to the
Movie Star for help.

MOVIE STAR
Is Mr. Dimone being charged with a crime?
Has he done anything illegal?

HOOVER
He did things in Detroit.

DIMONE
I beat all that. I beat the indictments.

HOOVER
That's great, Vince. But we got a quiet,
little town here. We're not loud enough
for a guy like you.

MOVIE STAR
You can't do this. It's prior restraint.

As Hall helps Dimone up from his chair, the Movie Star stands,
too. But once he has, it's apparent how much smaller he is than
the cops, how much his toughness resides in facial features and
expressions that may work on camera, but do him little good here.

MOVIE STAR
Do you know who I am?

HOOVER (to Hall)
You know who he is, Eddie?

HALL (studies the man)
He used to be an actor, didn't he?
Maurice something...He played tough guys.
Maybe he thinks he really is a tough guy.

HOOVER

Maybe he thinks he's a lawyer. Do you think that, Maurice?

MOVIE STAR

No, but I'm represented by a good one. Would you like me to call him?

HOOVER

I sure would. Here's money for the phone.

He slaps the still wet hundred-dollar bill on the man's forehead so hard it knocks him into his chair and the chair over backward.

Hoover's violence toward a celebrity stuns the place. It is as if the basic rules of society have been suspended. Everyone stares, silent, as the cops walk Vincent Dimone out the door. Coolidge takes the plate of clams and fettuccine as he goes.

EXT. CAR, HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT

The Cadillac winding up a steep hill.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The four cops are in their usual places: Hoover at the wheel, Hall beside him, Coolidge and Redbone in back. Vince Dimone sits squashed between Redbone, who terrifies him, and Coolidge who's finishing up the clam dish. Dwarfed by these much bigger men, he's torn between fear and insolence.

Hall turns, resting a muscular arm across the back of the seat and considers Dimone. Vince takes a quick look out the window.

DIMONE

Where're we goin'?

HALL

The airport. You're going to the airport, Vince. You got to get back to Detroit as soon as possible.

DIMONE

This ain't the way to the airport.

The car radio squawks, a dispatcher asking for "Car 38." Hall picks up the radio mike, but responds to Dimone before speaking into it.

HALL (to Dimone)
It's a shortcut. The gentleman next to
you, Mr. Redbone, he discovered it.
(into radio mike)
Thirty-eight.

Dimone looks quickly at Redbone. Redbone returns the look
without expression. Dimone is now terrified.

RADIO VOICE
We got a multiple homicide out in Toluca
Lake. You guys busy?

HALL (into radio mike)
Sorry, honey. We're taking a friend to
the airport. We'll check in after.

They exchange formal sign-offs. Hall hangs up the mike, gives
Dimone a reassuring pat on the knee and turns back to his normal
position. Hoover, driving, watches in the mirror.

HOOVER
Listen, Vince, if Mr. Redbone's talking
gets on your nerves, just tell him to shut
up.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT

A clear, moonlit night. The white Cadillac runs along the ridge
crest, then slows and pulls onto a gravel shoulder.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Hoover brakes to a stop, looks around.

HOOVER
I think this is it right here.

He turns off the engine but leaves the lights on. Hall turns in
his seat again. This time he is looking at Redbone.

HALL
What do you think, Mr. Redbone? Is this
it?

DIMONE
Is this what?

HALL
The shortcut. Mulholland Falls.

DIMONE
Mulholland Falls...?

HALL
You know, like Niagara Falls.

DIMONE
(as he gets it, terrified)
You can't do this, not in America.

HOOVER
This isn't America, Vince. It's L.A.

DIMONE
What about the Constitution? They don't
got the Constitution in L.A? They don't
got the fucking 4th Amendment?

HOOVER
No. They just got us.

Dimone looks out the window into the darkness.

DIMONE
Anyway, there ain't no falls in Los
Angeles.

HOOVER
Oh?

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT

The Cadillac's headlights illuminate the hillside as Dimone tumbles over rocks, through brush and small trees down a steep incline. He's screaming and bouncing all the way. It's funny and scary. It hurts.

EXT. TOP OF INCLINE - NIGHT

The four cops stand at the edge, looking down, watching him bounce out of sight. Coolidge seems uneasy.

COOLIDGE (serious)
Ouch.

The others look at him.

HALL
Coolidge, shut up.

HOOVER

Don't tell him to shut up.

COOLIDGE (to Hoover)

This isn't right. You know that, don't you, Max?

Hoover doesn't respond.

HALL

They tell you that in the hospital?

COOLIDGE

You don't understand how it works. They don't tell you what to think. They help you see what you think already but maybe didn't know you thought.

HALL

I know what I think.

COOLIDGE

That's what you think.

The sound of crashing has stopped and the screams with it. Hoover cups his hands to his mouth and calls down the hill...

HOOVER

Vince?

No answer. He calls louder.

HOOVER

Vince? Can you hear me?

Still nothing.

HALL (matter of fact)

Maybe he's dead.

The possibility appears to trouble only Coolidge. They make their way down the slope.

EXT. LOWER ON THE INCLINE - NIGHT

They come upon Dimone crumpled against a rock. A deep, broken groan is all that indicates he's alive. Hoover squats over him.

HOOVER

You all right, Vince?

DIMONE . .

Oh, God...

HOOVER

Vince, we're going to take you to the airport now, but before you go, I want you to look around here and remember what it's like, can you do that? You don't have a stick in your eye or anything...?

(no answer)

Can you hear me, Vince?

DIMONE

Help me, please...

HOOVER

Good, just look around and remember it. It's important, because this is the way back to Detroit. Every time you come to L.A., this is your route home. Mulholland Falls.

(as Dimone groans)

Keep it in mind, Vince, okay?

CUT TO

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Redbone does paper work. Hoover sits at his desk, talking on the phone. Someone hands him a stack of messages and as he talks, he goes through them. Hall is advising Coolidge on an upcoming court appearance.

HALL (to Coolidge)

...You just say he was makin' an attempt, it happened then.

Hoover talking, flipping through the messages. We see the names go by, hear Coolidge and Hall.

COOLIDGE (concerned)

What if they don't believe--

HALL

Just keep sayin' it, over and over. "He was makin' an attempt." They're jurors. They don't got to believe you, they just got to wonder.

COOLIDGE

Have to, not got to.

Hall rolls his eyes, gets up and goes to a sink. Hoover comes to a message that stops him. It says only:

ALLISON POND -- Please call. Please!

Hoover is surprised by this and not happily. He looks at it the way a dry alcoholic looks at a drink. Redbone, sensing something, glances up from his paperwork. Hoover crumples the note, tosses it in a metal ashtray. To distract himself he turns to Coolidge.

HOOVER

What about the Abelson business, what do we have on that?

Startled, Coolidge pulls out a notebook, flips through until he finds what he wants:

COOLIDGE

We have the daughter is all, the life insurance. But the lawyer told her not to talk to us, so, you know...

HOOVER

Be friendly.

COOLIDGE

I was. I was polite.

Hall turns from the sink where he's just finishing combing his hair. It looks a little like Elvis's hair is going to look in a year or so.

HALL (Mr. Excitement)

Who wants to go have a drink? Meet some girls? Stay up late? Get in trouble?

Redbone indicates his interest. Hoover stretches.

HOOVER

I'm going home.

Hall looks to Coolidge, asking him. Coolidge looks to Hoover for guidance. Hoover ignores him. Coolidge gets up and goes out with Hall and Redbone. They all say goodnight to Hoover.

Hoover sits another minute. He looks at the balled up note in the empty ashtray, but he masters the temptation, finally gets up and goes out.

CUT TO

EXT. FEATURELESS LAND - DAY

A cloud of red dust is roiling toward us--vaguely reminiscent of the mushroom cloud. The white Cadillac emerges out of the cloud, the four cops in white suits in their usual places as the car bounds over the uneven ground. Coolidge is eating an ice cream cone, the drippings blowing on his shirt. As the Cadillac passes a yellow bulldozer we realize we are

EXT. A CONSTRUCTION SITE, SAN FERNANDO VALLEY - DAY

Where the 405 freeway is being built. Heavy equipment moves back and forth, smoothing out the coming roadway. The Cadillac stops near a work crew.

As the men get out, Redbone stops to stare out over the miles of tract housing being built in either direction, the poured foundations, the new road, the coming city... It is as if he has been watching this for a thousand years.

The other three go down a sloping embankment to where several WORKERS are gathered around a hole in the ground. Hall and the FOREMAN go over to the hole and look into it together.

HALL

You found her just like this?

FOREMAN

It was the college boy that found her, but she was just like this. We didn't touch it...

Now Hoover comes forward and looks in himself.

THE HOLE

In the ground is what is left of the body of a woman. She has been driven face first into the earth and, like a figure from Pompeii, all we can see is her naked back. She has long blond hair that covers her shoulders and reaches halfway to her waist. We know at once that this is Allison Pond.

ON HOOVER

staring into the hole. Behind him, Coolidge turns away, not wanting to see it.

HALL (off camera)

Where are we here?

CONSTRUCTION FOREMAN

It's one of the new freeways.

HALL

I mean this part.

CONSTRUCTION FOREMAN

It's a cloverleaf, the ramp. So you don't have to slow down to get off...

Two black-and-whites, sirens going, and a truck marked L.A. COUNTY CORONER bounce over the dirt headed this way.

HOOVER - still staring into the hole. Somewhere a cop or construction worker is laughing.

The CORONER (suit and tie) gets out of the truck and scrambles down the embankment. Two UNIFORMED COPS borrow shovels from the construction crew and follow him. The coroner wipes his glasses, then draws a line around the body, about a foot outside it.

CORONER (to the cops)

Stay outside the line, we don't want spade marks on the body.

The cops begin digging carefully, dirt falling down into the hole on top of the body. Hoover watches. Hall glances at him as he continues talking to the foreman.

HALL

What kind of a machine do you have that could push a girl into the ground like that?

The foreman thinks about that, then shakes his head.

CONSTRUCTION FOREMAN

I don't know. Most of them would've tore her all up. Maybe a big roller.

The cops have dug a trench around the body about a foot deep. Now one straddles the body, looking for a way to pick it up.

CORONER

Careful...

The policeman in the hole touches the body three or four different places, without finding what he wants.

POLICEMAN IN THE HOLE

Something's wrong here...

(tries another spot)

...Jesus, there's nothing to hold onto...
They must of broke every bone in her body.

Hoover and Hall exchange looks. Hoover seems oddly affected. That puzzles Hall, but he doesn't think any more about it.

CORONER

Just roll her over then.

The two uniformed policemen manage to push the body over onto a litter. The limbs flop horribly. The face is nothing but a crushed mask of blood. Even Hall has to turn away, but Hoover goes on looking. He's the only one.

CUT TO:

INT. HOOVER'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Hoover and Katherine are doing the dinner dishes together. He washes, she dries then stacks the dishes on a table behind her. Classical music is playing. Katherine is five years younger than Hoover, quiet and calm. Her chestnut hair is touched with grey. She has the kind of face that looks better at forty than it did at twenty.

Hoover is preoccupied with his thoughts. He washes the last dish, rinses it, sets it in the rack. Katherine takes it out, dries it, and as she turns to place it on the stack, sees that Hoover has picked them all up and put them back in the water.

She sets the last one down on the table.

KATHERINE

Max?

He looks at her, coming back a long way from his thoughts.

KATHERINE

How many times are we going to wash the plates?

For a moment, he doesn't understand what she's talking about. Then he looks at the plate on the table, the ones in the sink...

HOOVER

I'm sorry. I was thinking about a case.

KATHERINE

How long have you been on this case?

HOOVER (doesn't understand)

How long? We just got it this...

He trails off as he realizes what she's saying, that he's been acting this way for some time. Katherine looks at him strangely,

as if wondering whether to worry, to pry. But then she smiles.

KATHERINE

I think you need a hobby.

INT. HOOVER'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Katherine is in bed reading a library copy of From Here To Eternity. Hoover comes in from the bathroom wearing a t-shirt and shorts. He slides into bed. She reads for another moment, then marks her place, puts down the book and turns out the lamp.

She rolls toward Hoover and kisses him. He responds slowly, his tenderness with her contrasting sharply with his behavior as a cop. Their kisses are gentle, familiar, the well worked out sexual relations of a married couple. After a time, Katherine rolls onto her back and pulls her nightgown over her head. Hoover climbs carefully onto her. She closes her eyes, her arms resting lightly on his shoulders.

FADE TO

INT. LOS ANGELES COUNTY MORGUE - DAY

A long room with perhaps 70 tables, each holding a body, covered and tagged. Hoover and Coolidge wait near the door as a CORONER (middle-aged, Japanese) approaches, his footsteps echoing on the cement floor. He's looking through a sheaf of papers.

CORONER

Let's see, she was Wednesday, June 10th, right?

Hoover nods. The coroner turns, counts tables, starts toward one a few rows away. Hoover and Coolidge follow, Coolidge removing his hat. The coroner pulls off the cover, and the cops stare at the ruined body of Allison Pond. Only her hair is intact and beautiful, like the living part of an otherwise dead thing.

Hoover notices one of Allison's hands. The fingertips are smudged in black from the technicians who took her prints. There is a small ring on the little finger, scarring on her wrists. The coroner reads from the records, not looking at the body.

CORONER

No record of her prints. If she's local, she's never been arrested.

HOOVER

What's this?

He indicates the wrist. The coroner picks it up, looks at it.

CORONER (shrugs)
Razor blade. Suicide attempt probably.
Halfway serious.
(drops the wrist)
Within the last year...

Hoover takes a breath, blows it out slowly, glances at Coolidge.

HOOVER
How'd she die?

CORONER
(reading from the report again)
"Massive trauma to head, neck, torso,
shattered cranium, lacerated heart..."
(whistles: it was bad)
She took a beating...
(his own speculations)
Probably a fall. Like from a tall
building...

HOOVER
There aren't any buildings out there.

CORONER
...or a cliff.

HOOVER
And they moved her?

CORONER
(scanning the report)
Except they didn't move her. She died
where they found her. You can tell by how
the blood puddled...Piece of big road
equipment maybe.

He shows Hoover the report, points to the passage. Hoover sees
something else written below.

HOOVER
What's that?

CORONER
(reading)
Malignant tumor...
(shrugs, mild surprise)
She had ovarian cancer. Metastasized to
the uterus and liver.

HOOVER

That's not what killed her...?

CORONER (smiles)

No, no. It would've, but the other event occurred first. Whatever it was.

He scans the report, puzzled himself.

INT. HOOVER'S OFFICE - DAY

Hoover on the telephone, opening mail.

HOOVER

What do you mean you can't indict? You got a weapon. You got the employment contacts. You talked to the bookkeeper...

While the other person speaks, Hoover goes through the mail. A letter marked OFFICE OF THE MAYOR, URGENT--he tosses it unopened in the trash. OFFICE OF THE CITY CONTROLLER--he tosses it, too.

HOOVER

What are you, Jimmy, a D.A. or do you work for the damn Civil Liberties union?

Hoover picks up a thin, square package wrapped in brown paper. It's marked PERSONAL and addressed to him c/o the Los Angeles Police Dept. He begins opening it with one hand.

HOOVER

Go see his widow, then tell me you're not going ahead with it...Maybe I'll come down and we'll discuss it in person.

He hangs up. He empties the package onto the desk: a reel of film and a folded piece of paper. He opens the piece of paper. It contains only a phone number. He turns it over, nothing on the other side. He puts it in his shirt pocket.

HOOVER (shouting)

Newberg?

(no answer)

Newberg! You out there?

The door opens, and a face appears. A small, tough-mouthed woman who should have been a cop.

HOOVER

Get me a projector.

She looks at the ceiling.

ESTHER

We don't have one.

HOOVER

What do you mean? What about the one they show the training films on, how not to get the clap and all that...

ESTHER

Stolen.

HOOVER

Bullshit.

ESTHER

Somebody took it out of the storage room, never brought it back.

Hoover thinks about that a minute, realizes where it is.

HOOVER

Shit...I took it myself.

(as she shrugs, waits)

Find one someplace else.

(as she still waits, not moving)

I think Parker's got one in the conference room. The F.B.I. sends him films of J. Edgar Hoover solving cases.

She turns to leave.

HOOVER

And get me Coolidge, he knows how to run it.

INT. PROJECTION ROOM - DAY

Hoover sits in a chair in a windowless projection room waiting while Coolidge threads the machine. Esther sits against the wall. Coolidge has a hot dog between his teeth, but is having trouble with the machine. Hoover watches impatiently.

HOOVER

I thought you were going on a diet.

COOLIDGE (through hot dog)

I am on a diet.

HOOVER

What kind of diet is it, Ellery, if you got a hot dog in your mouth while you're threading a projector?

COOLIDGE

The idea is, I eat so I don't think about food. It's psychological.

He continues fumbling with the machine; Hoover stands up to help.

HOOVER (pointing)

I think we need a bend in the film there. See where they put the marks? Stick your finger in there and bend it.

Coolidge tries, but his finger, which is huge, won't fit.

HOOVER

So you eat so you don't think about food? ...I don't want to butt into your business, Ellery...But I think this guy they got you going to is in worse shape than you are.

COOLIDGE

She, Max. It's a girl.

(looking at the projector)

I can't get my finger in there; it won't fit.

ESTHER

Have him try his dick.

HOOVER

Newberg, don't you have something better to do?

ESTHER

Nope. Not than this.

Hoover takes a pencil out of his pocket, hands it to Coolidge who sticks it into the machine and threads it.

HOOVER (to Coolidge)

I didn't know you were going to her about food. I thought it was for the other thing.

COOLIDGE

They're related, Max, the anger and the eating. They come from the same place.

Hoover stares at Coolidge who turns on the projector. An empty white square illuminates the screen. Coolidge puts out the lights and drops into a chair beside Esther. Hoover sits alone in back.

ON SCREEN: the white square is replaced by the image of the Sun Spot Casino in Las Vegas. Brief shots of things we saw there: the fat man and the hooker, a waitress bringing the camera a Bloody Mary, the canopy over the outdoor bar...Allison Pond enters, comes toward the camera, mugs for it.

HOOVER -- leans forward.

COOLIDGE (in the dark)
That's her, isn't it, Max? The girl from
the freeway.

Coolidge looks back at Hoover in the darkness. Hoover doesn't respond.

ON SCREEN: Now Jimmy Fields appears (the shot Allison took of him), the lizard on the girl's shoe. A distant, almost unreadable shot of the mushroom cloud...

Then the shots become shorter, jerkier: views of the desert from a moving car, amateurish pans of a man in uniform (out-of-focus) laughing, and another uniform, not laughing. Mountains over a desert plain, a low white building in the foreground, a jerky sweep of a large, white room, beds, dark faces, some with their mouths open as if perhaps singing...Home movies.

ESTHER (in the dark)
What is this? Somebody's summer vacation?

Hoover is getting up to leave when the scene abruptly switches.

ON SCREEN: A stationary shot: a bedroom dominated by a large bed, stuffed animals all over the place.

HOOVER -- Stops where he is.

ON SCREEN: A man appears. He wears boxer shorts, a sleeveless t-shirt, shoes, socks (the shoes are spit-shined) and a tie. He is carrying a drink. He says something to someone off-screen, but there is no sound, only the clicking and hum of the projector. The man looks directly toward the camera for a moment without seeming aware of it. In that moment, we see that it is General Timms. He turns away again and does a quick dance step across the room...

Now Allison appears. At her approach, Timms smiles broadly. He moves the glass to his mouth. She crosses the room, takes the glass and drinks from it.

COOLIDGE (in the dark)
That's her again.

Hoover sits back down, eyes on the screen.

ON SCREEN: Allison reaches into the glass and pulls out an ice cube. She sets the glass down, says something to Timms, then reaches into his shorts, touching the ice to his private parts. The General tries to pull away, but she won't let him. His face takes on an expression halfway between pain and ecstasy.

ESTHER (in the dark)
Do people really do this stuff, or is it just in movies?

COOLIDGE (in the dark)
Don't we know this old guy? I've seen him somewhere.

ESTHER (in the dark)
He's not so old.

COOLIDGE (in the dark)
Esther likes him, Max.

HOOVER: staring at the screen. He doesn't answer.

ON SCREEN: Allison, her hand still inside the General's shorts, pulls closer until his face is an inch from hers. Timms tries to kiss her, but she won't let him. Her hand moves, his eyes begin to close, and he breathes visibly. Allison stops, Timms freezes. She says something. He says no and shakes his head.

COOLIDGE (in the dark)
I think we busted him once.

ESTHER (in the dark)
You don't bust people like that.

COOLIDGE (in the dark)
People like what?

ON SCREEN: Allison says it again, a command. She points to the ground. Maintaining a military bearing, Timms drops to his knees in front of her. She gives another command. He salutes crisply. Allison lifts her skirt and pulls his face to her.

The projector suddenly cuts off, and the room is pitch black.

COOLIDGE
(doesn't like the dark)
Max...?

HOOVER (dead serious)

Turn on the lights, Ellery.

A beat. The sound of Coolidge getting up, bumping into something.

HOOVER (impatient)

Turn on the damn lights!

The lights come on. Esther has found them first. The room is as it was except a garbage can has been kicked over and its contents splayed across the floor. Hoover sits behind the can, staring at the empty screen, still holding the electrical cord he pulled to kill the projector.

COOLIDGE

I've seen that guy somewhere, Max.

Hoover gets up and walks out. Coolidge doesn't understand.

COOLIDGE (to Esther)

What's going on?

Esther says nothing, begins to put the trash back in the can.

INT. DETECTIVES' BULLPEN - DAY

Hoover is sitting at his desk doing absolutely nothing. Coolidge approaches, a bit warily.

COOLIDGE

Is something wrong?

HOOVER

I want you to do me a favor, Ellery.

(Coolidge nods)

I want you to get yourself another hot dog and go back to your desk.

COOLIDGE

If something's wrong, you know...it can be helpful just to talk it over.

(as Hoover doesn't answer)

If it's anything like that.

HOOVER

It's nothing like that.

COOLIDGE

All right, but don't be afraid to ask. Any problem can be solved. You just have to break it down into parts. Then deal with the parts, one by one.

Hoover nods. He knows Coolidge is trying to help, but he just wants him to go away.

HOOVER

Go back to your desk, Ellery, please.

Coolidge is a little hurt, but he leaves. Hoover sits, staring into space. His gaze falls on the ashtray where he threw the balled up message from Allison Pond the other night. It was empty then; it's filled with ashes now.

He dumps the ashes on the desk and sifts through them until he finds the note. He brushes the ashes off his hands, uncrumples the note and smooths it out on the desk top.

"ALLISON POND - Please call. Please!" It tells him nothing he didn't know already. But now it seems to accuse him.

He opens the piece of paper that came with the film and picks up the telephone.

EXT. AN EMPTY FIELD - DAY

The Cadillac driving along a dirt road running through an alfalfa field. Hoover is alone in the car. The road ends at the edge of a cliff. Beyond is the vast expanse of the ocean.

Hoover gets out. There is no one around. A few hundred yards down the cliff edge is a beach bungalow. Hoover walks to the edge of the cliff and peers down at an empty beach. Behind him he hears the CLICK of a revolver. He freezes.

VOICE (FIELDS)

Hoover...?

Hoover looks back over his shoulder, sees Jimmy Fields holding a gun on him. Fields is by far the more frightened of the two.

FIELDS

You came alone?

HOOVER

Like you said.

Fields looks out over the palisade: no one could approach unobserved. He lowers the gun without really giving up his fear. Hoover turns around.

FIELDS

We met before once, remember? At the High Brow.

HOOVER

I remember.

Hoover does not conceal his distaste, but Fields hardly seems to notice. He has changed since we last saw him. His clothing and person are dirty, his hair unwashed, and a trembling dread invests every movement of his body. He seems frightened almost literally to death.

FIELDS

I need protection.

HOOVER

From what?

FIELDS

You look at the film I sent you?

(as Hoover nods)

You know who the guy in it is?

HOOVER

No.

FIELDS

He killed her.

HOOVER

Killed who?

FIELDS (deeply agitated)

Spare me the crap, all right? I don't have time for it. Our mutual friend. She's dead, and I know she's dead, or she'd have called me. She always did. Always. Always.

(ravaged)

And unless I get some help here, I'm going out the same way.

HOOVER

Why?

FIELDS

You know why.

HOOVER

The film?

Fields nods. Hoover thinks about that.

HOOVER

There's more than one?

FIELD'S (after a beat)
Of course there's more.

Hoover lets out a breath.

HOOVER
Where are they?

FIELD'S
Well, that's the question. They used to
be at my place, but now they're not.

Hoover glares at him. Fields shows his palms: out of his hands.

HOOVER
Who's the guy with her?

FIELD'S
You really don't know? Cops, man...
(shakes his head, laughs)
Well, you go find out, 'cause I'm not
saying it. And don't tell anyone I did.

HOOVER
Then go protect yourself.

He starts to turn away.

FIELD'S
She cut her wrists when you left, did you
know that?

Hoover turns back.

FIELD'S
I took her to the doctor.

HOOVER
Why you?

FIELD'S
I was her best friend.
(off his look)
That means I didn't fuck her.

HOOVER
What did you do with her? Share make-up
tips?

FIELD'S
Make you nervous, Lieutenant?

Hoover sticks his face inches from Fields, lowers his voice.

HOOVER

Tell you the truth, Mr. Fields, I don't care if you fuck snakes.

Fields lowers his own voice in half-mocking imitation.

FIELDS

Oh, and I do. Lots and lots of snakes.

Hoover wants to hit him, but Fields seems so thoroughly unafraid, as if he might almost like it, that Hoover turns away, appalled and disgusted and walks back toward the Cadillac.

FIELDS

(calls after him, desperate)
Help me, Hoover. Get me someplace safe.
You're supposed to be a cop.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOOVER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The convertible pulls into the driveway, and Hoover climbs out, beer bottles spilling out of the car after him. He stands for a moment, swaying slightly. A light is on in the living room, music is playing. He staggers across the lawn.

INT. HOOVER'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Katherine is curled into a corner of the couch, dressed only in one of Hoover's t-shirts. She's watching an old black-and-white television, news footage of the Rosenbergs alternating with shots of John Cameron Swayzee. She holds a clothbound book, her finger marking the place as if she were about to resume reading any minute. She looks up at Hoover, unsteady in the doorway.

KATHERINE

...As a skunk.

He nods.

KATHERINE

You step in the flowers?

He looks down and is horrified to find colorful petals crushed flat against the soles of his shoes.

HOOVER (contrite)

Ah, geez...

He peels them off, tries to shape them into a semblance of a bouquet. He carries this to the couch, kneels beside her and lays the flattened flowers on her belly like an offering.

He takes the book out of her hand. "A Farewell to Arms." He puts it on the coffee table.

HOOVER

The way this guy writes, he never talked to a woman in his life.

He lays his head on her stomach.

KATHERINE

When did you read this guy?

HOOVER

He has no understanding of the things that make a woman happy. He thinks they all want to be called my darling.

She studies her husband's head. There's a reserve in her manner in contrast to Hoover's warmth, a troubling thought crossing her features.

KATHERINE

And what they really want...

He pulls back and looks at her face. Then he lifts the t-shirt over her bottom and puts his face back against her stomach.

HOOVER

They want a man who will listen to their stomachs.

KATHERINE

Don't drool on me, Max.

He rolls off her onto the floor beside the couch. Her look softens.

KATHERINE

Tell me about it.

She's changing the subject, asking what he's upset about. He sits a long beat before he answers.

HOOVER

What is cancer?

Katherine is surprised by this.

KATHERINE

It's a disease.

HOOVER

I know that. But what is it? How do you get it?

KATHERINE

I think it has something to do with cells.

HOOVER

Cells...?

KATHERINE

The body's made up of cells, and something goes wrong with them.

HOOVER

Why?

KATHERINE

I don't know. I don't know if they know.

She watches him sitting there on the floor. Her look softens a little.

KATHERINE

Who has cancer?

HOOVER

Nobody.

(beat)

A dead girl. We found her in a hole out by one of the new freeways.

KATHERINE

That's how she died?

HOOVER

No, no. She was murdered. Somebody broke her up so bad you couldn't look at her... You just couldn't...

(shakes his head)

KATHERINE

But you looked.

He raises his eyes to her, grateful for this understanding. She slides down onto the floor beside him and kisses him. It is as if this very commerce with death and horror, his "looking," were part of why she loves him.

KATHERINE

Who was she?

Another long pause. Then he shakes his head.

HOOVER

I don't know.

She nods. She senses there's something he's not saying, but she isn't ready to press for it yet.

CUT TO

EXT. POLICE STATION, PARKING LOT - DAY

Hoover is just getting into the convertible when an unmarked car carrying Coolidge, Redbone and Hall pulls in next to his. Hall and Coolidge get out. Redbone stays where he is.

HALL

Where're you going, Max?

HOOVER

I've got some business to take care of.

HALL

Is this about the girl in the hole? Our movie star.

Hoover looks straight at Hall. It is not a friendly look. Hall doesn't blink.

HOOVER

Who told you about the movie?

Coolidge, leaning against the other car eating potato chips, looks down guiltily.

HALL (indicating Coolidge)

Louella Parsons.

Angry, Hoover closes the door, starts the engine. Hall hoists himself up onto the Cadillac's front fender.

HALL

Coolidge thinks he knows the male lead, but can't quite place him.

COOLIDGE

It'll come to me.

Hoover doesn't want to talk about it. He puts the car in gear.

Hall doesn't get off the fender.

HALL

I got to ask you, Max. Were you banging this girl or something?

A long beat, the three detectives watch Hoover.

HOOVER

Eddie, I want you to trust me.

HALL

We do. We want you to trust us... We're supposed to partners here.

Hoover looks at Hall, then Redbone, then Coolidge. Finally he puts the car in neutral, implicitly accepting their intrusion. Redbone gets out of the other car, and the three of them climb into the convertible with Hoover.

HOOVER (to Hall)

I thought you and Arthur had that Grand Jury testimony today.

HALL

We'll do it another time. Right, Arthur?
(glances at Redbone who says nothing)
I don't think they can indict us on this one anyway.

Hoover considers objecting, drops it, and starts to drive. Hall sits back, stretches out luxuriously in the sun.

HALL

So, where're we going?

CUT TO

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

The white Cadillac speeds through the desert. The road is straight and empty. They flick past a sign: PALM SPRINGS 30 MI.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

The speedometer holds steady at 90. The men sit in their usual positions. It is a beautiful day, the top is down, there's music on the radio. The tune ends and announcer is heard...

RADIO ANNOUNCER

That was Dexter Gordon and this is Palm Springs, California, where it's 69 beautiful degrees at 11 o'clock in the AM, winds out of the north...

Coolidge leans forward in the seat to speak to Hoover.

COOLIDGE

I've been thinking, Max...

Hoover closes his eyes and waits. Hall smiles, looks away.

COOLIDGE

Why is it we always sit in the same places? Why are you always the one that drives?

HOOVER (thinks about it)

I guess 'cause I got the keys.

COOLIDGE

But why do you have the keys? That's what I'm asking. There's reasons for everything, you know.

HALL

Is there a reason why you're always talking?

COOLIDGE

What's wrong with talking?

HALL

What's wrong with shutting up?

COOLIDGE

Max...

HOOVER

Don't tell him to shut up, Eddie. You know you aren't supposed to tell him that.

HALL

Because his psychiatrist says so.

HOOVER

That's right.

HALL

Before they made him go to the psychiatrist, he didn't talk all the time.

HOOVER

But he beat the living hell out of people.
That was a problem, wasn't it?

HALL (after a beat)

I liked him better that way. At least he
wasn't telling us we don't know what we
think.

COOLIDGE

You don't.

HOOVER

Maybe there're things there aren't reasons
for, Ellery. You ever think of that?

EXT. HIGHWAY TO PALM SPRINGS - DAY

The car blows through the desert.

INT. CONVERTIBLE - DAY

The speedometer is still on 90, and the radio is playing jazz,
but now Coolidge is behind the wheel, Redbone next to him in the
front seat; Hoover and Eddie Hall are in back.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PALM SPRINGS - DAY

The car rolls through Palm Springs and turns into the driveway of
a two-story apartment complex. The building is U-shaped, built
around a swimming pool and brand new. A number of young women --
would-be starlets--sit by the pool, sunning themselves. Coolidge
pulls into a parking space marked MANAGER, running into a chain
link fence behind it.

COOLIDGE

Sorry, Max.

HALL (to Coolidge)

Maybe that's why he has the keys.

Hall and Hoover exchange glances. The cops get out of the car
and start toward the pool. One of the women notices them. She
stands up slowly, showing off terrific legs, fastens her bathing
suits straps.

COOLIDGE

Gee, what long legs...

HALL

Shut up, Coolidge.

HOOVER (monitory)

Eddie...

The woman holds her nose and jumps into the water. She comes up smiling, looks at the men a moment, then dives and proceeds to swim the length of the pool underwater.

COOLIDGE

What's she doing?

REDBONE

Practicing her smile...

Hoover and Hall look at Redbone, not understanding.

REDBONE

Like Esther Williams. She's practicing her smile underwater.

As they enter the pool area, every woman in the place turns to look. The cops are all in white, all huge. The women primp, some smile in seductively, running their tongues over their teeth or their hands over their legs. Screen tests.

COOLIDGE (uncomfortable)

What are they looking at?

He's asking Hoover, but Hoover is too affected by something here to respond. Hall answers for him.

HALL

They think we're producers.

The woman in the pool breaks the surface at the end near their feet, gasping for air but still smiling.

HALL

How do you know these things, Arthur?

HOOVER (to Redbone)

Arthurt, talk to the manager. Eddie, you and Ellery see if the girls saw anything.

COOLIDGE

I'll go with you.

HOOVER

Talk to the girls, Ellery.

He starts up a flight of stairs to the second floor. Below him, Hall begins talking to the women. They immediately laugh, come closer...

EXT. SECOND FLOOR - DAY

Hoover walks along a corridor toward a corner of the building. A woman coming out of an apartment looks him up and down, but he doesn't seem to see her. At the corner apartment, he tries the door. It's locked. He takes a key from his pocket and opens it.

INT. ALLISON POND'S APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment has been tossed, but in a systematic way. Clothing lies in piles. Drawers have been emptied and dropped, furniture overturned, the linings slashed, the upholstery cut open. In the kitchenette, the refrigerator door stands open, all the food has been dumped onto the floor.

Hoover walks through the rooms, looking at everything, touching nothing. He has been here before, and the place affects him.

In the bathroom, the medicine cabinet has been emptied into the sink. The water cabinet lid lies broken in the tub. A pair of black nylons hangs from the shower curtain rod.

INT. ALLISON'S BEDROOM - DAY

In the middle of the room is a large bed. A sheet still covers the mattress, but both have been cut open in a long, vertical slash. We recognize the room (the stuffed animals, likewise cut open) from the sex film of Allison and Timms.

The bedside table has been turned over, the drawer dumped. Almost mechanically, Hoover begins to straighten up.

The floor is littered with broken glass, like the fragments of a windshield but cloudy and rougher. He looks at them, then rights the table, putting a metal candlestick with a stub of candle back on it. He starts to put things back in the drawer. He comes upon a cheap, imitation leather address book. He flips through it until he comes to an entry: M.H. PR-3133.

He laughs a little. Then, between the pages, he finds an old snapshot with wavy edges.

THE PHOTOGRAPH

A 6-year old girl with blond braids sits on the hood of a pre-

Depression roadster. A young man, presumably her father, leans against the car. He's fair, handsome, gazes into the camera with a surly charm. The girl smiles at him adoringly; she's missing her front teeth.

HOOVER

sitting on the ruined bed, staring at the picture. When he looks up, his eyes fall on a mirror that covers most of the far wall. In it he sees A REFLECTION OF THE ROOM, BUT AT ANOTHER TIME...

INT. SAME - NIGHT

The room is back in order. The candle, much longer now, burns beside the bed on which Hoover and Allison Pond are making love. It's a wild, desperate love-making. They're turned cross-wise to the mattress and have slid half off it. Allison is pulling at the thick muscles of Hoover back, biting his shoulder as he hurls her about. Then the image fades, and we see...

INT. SAME - DAY

Allison is gone, and the room is a mess again, and Hoover is staring into the mirror.

He notices something there, gets up and approaches it. When he is close enough, we see him as well as his reflection. He's looking into the mirror itself, at a speck of light there that isn't in the room behind him.

VOICE BEHIND HIM

Oh, there you are.

Hoover turns, startled, as Coolidge enters the bedroom.

COOLIDGE

I didn't know where you'd gone.

(looks around)

This was the room in the movie...

He goes to the bed and picks up the photo of little Allison and her father. He doesn't seem to notice the address book, also lying there, open to Hoover's phone number.

COOLIDGE

It's funny looking at pictures of people that are dead now.

HOOVER

What's funny about it?

COOLIDGE

It's like here they're alive, and over there they're dead. Both at the same time.

HOOVER

It's just a picture, Ellery.

COOLIDGE

I know that. But here we are, we're alive here. Maybe there's someplace else where we're already dead.

Hoover tries for a moment to understand what Coolidge is saying, gives up.

HOOVER

I need the key to the apartment next door, on that side. Have Arthur get it from the manager.

Coolidge nods, puts down the photo and goes out. Hoover waits until he's gone, goes to the bed, puts the photo back in the address book and the book in his jacket pocket.

EXT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ALLISON'S APARTMENT - DAY

Hoover and Coolidge stand by as Redbone unlocks the door to the apartment next to Allison's.

REDBONE

The manager said the guy who lived here was her best friend. Jimmy Fields. He disappeared just after she did.

INT. JIMMY FIELDS' APARTMENT - DAY

Flashier than Allison's, but equally ripped apart.

INT. FIELDS'S BEDROOM - DAY

The closet has been particularly violated. All the clothing (suits, shoes...) has been thrown in a pile, the shelves and hangar pole torn out, the door pulled off its hinges.

Inside the closet is a one-way window looking into Allison's bedroom. This is the perspective from which the Timms film was shot. On the floor is a wooden tripod with Fields' 16mm camera mounted on it.

Through the window they watch Hall enter Allison's bedroom, accompanied by one of the women from the pool. They faintly hear him call, "Max...?" When there is no answer, the woman says, "He's not here..." She kisses Hall, fondling him as she does. Hall is trying to extricate himself when Redbone, grinning, raps on the glass. The woman springs back from Hall, who's laughing, and the two of them peer at the mirror, then go out.

Redbone sets the tripod on its feet. The camera has been opened, the film chamber is empty. Hall now appears behind them, without the woman. He looks over the set-up...

HALL

Is this where they made the films?

Hoover suddenly doesn't want to be in this place, and turns abruptly and brushes past them.

HALL

Max?

HOOVER

Outside.

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

Hoover leans on the railing, catching his breath. Hall comes out the door behind him, stands there a moment.

HALL

How long were you seeing her?

HOOVER

Couple of months. Every chance I got.

He says it as if describing an illness. Redbone and Coolidge come out, too.

HALL

How many films were there?
(as Hoover doesn't answer)
More than the one?

HOOVER (after a beat)

Yeah, more than the one.

Redbone and Hall exchange looks.

COOLIDGE

This girl's a long time ago, right, Max?

HOOVER

For a minute there, I couldn't breathe...

He starts down the wrought-iron stairs toward the pool.

HOOVER

I want samples of everything. From both apartments.

CUT TO

EXT. DESERT - TWILIGHT

The Cadillac speeding west toward the sunset. Nobody is relaxed the way they were on the trip up. They ride in silence a while.

HOOVER

You remember Kenny Kramer? We roused him about a year ago...

INT. A DECO APARTMENT - NIGHT

A gangster's pad from a '40s movie. A small party is going on, a half-dozen flashy men and good-looking women. We see, but barely hear as if it were all being remembered. As we watch, Hoover, Hall and Redbone barge into the place.

HOOVER (VO)

...That's where I met her.

The men at the party are big and tough, but at the sight of the cops they become strangely docile. Hoover asks one a question. He points toward a bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Allison Pond is here with a handsome gangster named KENNY KRAMER. They appear to be arguing, but stop abruptly as the door BURSTS INWARD, and Hoover enters, quickly filling the small room.

Kenny goes for the bureau (and, presumably, a gun), but before he gets there, Hoover drops him from behind with a kick to the crotch. Kenny writhes on the floor, holding himself. Allison watches dispassionately, drink in hand. She and Hoover exchange glances. Some more SOUND has begun to leak into the scene, and, as Hoover pulls Kenny to his feet, we distantly hear:

HOOVER

I thought we talked about this, Kenny. I thought you understood you had to leave town, go back home.

KENNY

L.A. is my home. I was born here.

HOOVER

Then you gotta find a new one. Start over someplace else. I thought I explained all this. Now we're gonna have to have that long talk I warned you about.

Even as Hoover speaks to Kenny, his attention is all on Allison, not just her beauty, but her cool detachment, her sense of being separate from all this. He looks at her, and she looks right back at him. The whole scene is about them.

Kenny uses their mutual interest to make a break for the door. Hoover grabs him, throws him face first into the door, glancing at Allison as he does. And she's looking at him.

Hall and Redbone appear at the door. They see Kenny, bleeding from the mouth and nose, but don't get a good look at Allison.

HOOVER

We've got to have a conversation with Kenny, then put him on the bus.

Hall and Redbone take Kenny out.

HALL (VO)

I never saw her.

Hoover pushes the door closed, revealing Allison behind it with her drink. They stare at each other.

HOOVER (VO)

Yeah, I know.

HOOVER (live, to Allison)

Get your stuff together. You're going with him.

She doesn't move, just looks at him, expressionless, conveying at once a hard-bitten experience and, behind it, an untouched purity. They seem locked in a battle of wills. Hoover is huge, towering over her, yet unable to dominate her.

This angers him. He grabs her arm. She yields without yielding. Her eyes never leave his. She knows what she does to him, how he feels. He's helpless and she knows it.

HOOVER (VO)

I should've roused her with him.

As he says this we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROAD/INT. CADILLAC - EVENING

Still racing across the desert.

COOLIDGE

Why didn't you?

HOOVER (long beat)

I was weak.

HALL (sympathetic)

A dick doesn't have ears.

They all look at him: what is he talking about?

HALL

You tell it stuff, it doesn't even hear you.

INT. ALLISON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hoover and Allison making love, a continuation of the scene he glimpsed in the mirror above. And at once we understand Hoover's "weakness." She is gorgeous and passionate, and Hoover is having the sex of his life. He's hurling her about as if he'd just as soon kill her as have sex, but she has no fear, and despite the differences in size, they seem evenly matched.

From time to time elements change, the color of the sheets, the time of day, yet it is all one continuous act. Allison's eyes are shut tight, her back arches, and her head turns from side to side as she reaches toward orgasm. Hoover's going crazy, shouting (unheard), thrashing about. And just before they get there...

ABRUPT CUT TO

EXT. HOOVER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The Cadillac pulls into the driveway. The house is dark save a single light in the window.

INT. HOOVER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

He sits in a chair beside the bed, watching Katherine sleep. He cannot bring himself to get up and into bed. He hasn't the right.

INT. ALLISON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hoover sits on the foot of the bed, fully dressed. Allison is curled up in a chair, naked, crying, her blond hair covering her face. Hoover appears more upset than we've ever seen him or ever will.

She comes across the room, kneels between his legs and begins to undo his fly. He tries to stop her. Again, we distantly hear:

ALLISON

Once more. Just once, please let me...

Hold on his face, then dissolve to the SAME FACE, and he is saying:

HOOVER

I didn't see her after that...

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET - NIGHT

The four detectives have bought hot dogs and fries from a small shack and are eating on the street by a newsstand.

HOOVER

...She called a few times, but she just wanted to... So I stopped calling back.

(a beat)

One night a couple weeks ago I got another message from her. I didn't answer it. Three days later, we found her body out by the freeway. So maybe it was about something else. Maybe if I'd called...

HALL

You couldn't know that.

Hoover shrugs. He doesn't forgive himself.

COOLIDGE

How could you do this to Katherine, Max?

HALL

You look at the girl, Ellery?

COOLIDGE

You mean just 'cause she's pretty?

HOOVER

She knew the score.

COOLIDGE

Katherine doesn't know the score?

HALL

Katherine's a nice lady. She's not making movies to blackmail people.

COOLIDGE (to Hoover)

Do you want her to be?

HOOVER (to Hall)

You don't know she was making the movies.

HALL

The fairy with the camera, Jimmy Fields, he's her best buddy. He lives next door. She had to know...

(beat)

Is he shaking you down, Max.

HOOVER

Not yet.

HALL

We could take him out. No trouble.

He glances at Redbone whose impassive face tells us nothing.

COOLIDGE

I thought we said we weren't doing that anymore. I thought we agreed.

HALL

Shut up, Coolidge.

COOLIDGE

(angry)

Don't tell me to shut up.

HALL

Shut up.

HOOVER

Eddie...

HALL

Fuck him.

Coolidge rises up, ready to fight, and Hall steps forward. He wants a fight, wants to provoke Coolidge out of his passivity. Redbone and Hoover stay out of it. But then, as if Coolidge remembered something, he backs down, turns away, frustrated,

ashamed, caught between competing impulses. And then he spots something else...

COOLIDGE (suddenly)

There he is!

The others start, look around.

HOOVER

Who is? Where?

COOLIDGE

The guy from the film. The old guy.

They see no one except the newsie and a couple of old ladies. Coolidge walks over to the magazine racks and takes down a copy of Time. On the cover is Thomas Timms, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. Behind him is a mushroom cloud. In the billowing cloud appear the words "Prophet of the Atomic Age."

HALL

That's the guy? How do you know?

COOLIDGE

'Cause it's him.

Hoover takes the magazine, looks at it. The others crowd around.

HOOVER

It's him.

HALL

Head of the Atomic Energy Commission.
Jesus Christ...

They look at each other. The case just got more serious.

HALL

You got film on this guy, you could have a problem.

Hoover looks at the magazine a long minute.

HOOVER

Let's talk to Fields again.

CUT TO

INT. POLICE STATION, INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Hoover talking to Fields who's smoking a cigarette.

HOOVER

You made the films.

(Fields nods)

By yourself?

(Fields nods again)

But Allison knew.

FIELDS (after a beat)

Yeah... Mostly.

HOOVER

Mostly?

(as Fields shrugs)

You made some of me?

Fields drags on the cigarette, looks at it with distaste, stubs it out in a metal ashtray.

FIELDS

Filters. The worst idea since Jap watches... I made them of everybody. All Allison's fellas.

HOOVER

For what? Blackmail?

FIELD .

Not really. We talked about that, for a rainy, but it was really just for fun. Have a few drinks, watch the boys get impassioned...

Fields smiles.

HOOVER

You watched us together, Allison and me?
...And she watched with you?

Field sits back in his chair, clasps his hands behind his head, studies Hoover for a minute.

FIELDS (a confession)

She didn't know I took any of you.
She told me not to.

HOOVER

But you did anyway.

FIELDS (after a beat)

I had to. It made me feel part of it.

(as Hoover shakes his head)

She was different with you, Hoover. It

FIELDS (Cont'd)

wasn't like the others. You know that, don't you?

(as Hoover shrugs)

You said you loved her. I heard it.

To Hoover's horror, this fairy is the only witness to his feelings for Allison. He turns away, ashamed and overcome.

HOOVER

What makes you think the General killed her?

FIELDS

Allison and I were up in Las Vegas with him--I was her "date." Timms had to go out in the desert for something, so she went along, and I came back to Palm Springs.

(lights another cigarette)

She thought he was going to divorce his wife and marry her. He wasn't, of course, they never do. And I think while they were in the desert she figured that out and started talking about the films. Not blackmail necessarily, just, you know, you hurt me, I'll hurt you. You know what Allison was like...

HOOVER

That doesn't prove she did it. Or that he killed her.

FIELDS

They got to Palm Springs Monday evening. I just saw them for a minute. Allison gave me my camera, that she'd borrowed for the trip...

HOOVER

The movie camera?

FIELDS

Yeah. There was some film left on the roll...

(shrugs)

...So I shot them that night through the window in the closet. She probably knew. I could tell sometimes by how she did it.

He smiles to himself at the memory.

FIELDS

In the morning, I drove into L.A. Allison was supposed to come meet me here. She never did. I think she told him about the films that night, and the next day they took her out in the desert and killed her.

HOOVER

She didn't die in the desert. She died here...in Los Angeles.

FIELDS (shaking head)

She'd have called me if she'd gotten here. She always called me, first thing.

HOOVER

What happened to the other films?

FIELDS

When she didn't show up, I went back to Palm Springs. They'd torn up my place; took them all--except the one I sent you. That was still at the lab.

Hoover sits a time thinking about that.

HOOVER

Did you know she had cancer?

FIELDS (stunned)

Allison? She couldn't have. She would have told me.

HOOVER (thinks about that)

Maybe she didn't know.

He gets up, goes out the door and down the hall.

INT. DETECTIVES' BULLPEN - DAY

Hoover talking to the team. Coolidge is eating his way through a small stack of donuts, washing them down with cartons of milk.

HALL

Maybe he's right. They killed her in the desert, then dumped her body here.

HOOVER

The coroner says she died where we found her...Besides, why dump her? Why not leave her there?

HALL

Out there, it's linked to them; he was seen with her. Here it's just another L.A. murder.

Something in that bothers Hoover, but he's not sure what.

COOLIDGE

You know what I thought a blow job was when I was a kid?

They look at him, not following the connection.

HALL

What do you think it is now?

COOLIDGE (ignoring Hall)

I thought it was somebody blew on you down there. I'd get these balloons, these things were six feet long, I'd go into the bathroom and blow them up and let the air go on my weenie.

HALL

Let's see. You been going to this psychiatrist--what, three months?--and now you're calling you're dick a weenie.

COOLIDGE

My mother'd listen outside the bathroom door. She never asked what I was doing, but all of a sudden she's making me drink a pint of Pepto-Bismol a day. Thinks I got diarrhea.

HALL

That's the kind of stuff you tell the psychiatrist?

COOLIDGE

I'm repressed, it's best to get it out. You ought to get it out, too, Max. You'd feel better.

Hoover looks at him a long minute. Little pieces of chocolate have fallen off the donut, and as Hoover watches Coolidge wipes the chocolate off, staining the front of his white suit.

COOLIDGE

(feeling Hoover's eyes)

Everybody's got weak moments, it helps us to acknowledge them.

HOOVER

The doctor told you that?

Coolidge nods. Hoover slides over, closer to him. When he speaks again, he is furious.

HOOVER

Let me tell you something that doesn't cost thirty bucks an hour. You meet somebody who tells you the truth, and you like them, and one thing leads to another, you end up in bed. That's weak, Ellery, but nobody gets hurt. You go home afterwards and tell your wife, who isn't going to understand that you need somebody else because she tells you the truth, too, that's weak, and it's also cruel.

(beat)

You got to carry your own water, Ellery.

It is quiet again. Hoover suddenly slaps away one of Coolidge's empty milk cartons; it hits the wall and rolls across the floor. Hall glances at Redbone. Hoover already regrets his outburst.

HOOVER (forgiving Coolidge)

Look at yourself. Eleven o'clock in the morning, you already look like you've been rolling in pig slop.

Coolidge looks down at his suit.

HALL

What about the protection for Fields?

REDBONE

Parker won't give us the money.

HOOVER

Hell with Parker, we'll do it ourselves. You and Eddie take him back to his friend's house. We'll do stagger shifts.

They all get up except Coolidge who looks down at his suit.

COOLIDGE

It's the suits, Max. You can't keep a white suit clean.

Hall and Redbone laugh. Even Hoover can't help smiling.

HOOVER

You talk to the Abelson girl?

COOLIDGE

Not yet. I was gonna wait until--

HOOVER

Go talk to her, will you?

Coolidge nods, happy to be accepted again.

INT. MAXWELL HOOVER'S BOMBSHELTER - EARLY EVENING

Hoover sits in the light of the projector--displaying the label: PROPERTY OF THE L.A. POLICE DEPARTMENT, DO NOT REMOVE FROM SCREENING ROOM--watching Allison Pond doing the ice thing with General Timms. He drinks from a bottle of beer. He looks tired, but he can't take his eyes off the screen.

There is a knock at the door -- a deep, metallic knock -- and Hoover shuts off the machine. He walks to the door, turning on the lights before he opens it. The room is full of boxes of food. K-rations from the Army, gallons and gallons of bottled water, enough beer for 20 or 30 years. There is a refrigerator, a bed, and half a dozen car batteries sitting in a corner.

He pulls open the door -- it is steel, several inches thick -- and sees Katherine there in the long summer evening. She steps inside, looking around.

KATHERINE

What are you doing down here?

He shakes his head, uncomfortable. She walks into the room, noticing the projector and the movie reels next to it.

HOOVER

I had to go through some evidence...

KATHERINE (smiles)

Let me look...

HOOVER

You don't want to see this.

KATHERINE

Show me.

Hoover looks at his wife a long minute, then shrugs, turns off the light and walks back to the projector and turns it on. Katherine stands against the wall.

ON SCREEN: Allison Pond has tied General Timms to the headboard using his necktie. She straddles him, looking down. He smiles

as she lowers herself, closing her eyes. When she opens them again, Timms is pumping up into her, saying something.

She stops as abruptly as she started, pulls herself off him and moves forward until she is sitting over his face. She lowers herself, moving slowly back and forth.

Hoover glances over at his wife. She watches the screen, transfixed.

KATHERINE

I don't know how you can stand to be around people like that all the time.

HOOVER

I'm not around them all the time.

She looks over at him. Their eyes meet. She looks back at the screen where Allison's mouth has fallen open slightly, her eyes have closed, her movements taken on a slow urgency.

KATHERINE

Is that the girl they found...all broken up?

HOOVER (after a beat)

Yeah.

KATHERINE

She's beautiful.

(Hoover says nothing)

You wonder how someone like that...

HOOVER

(interrupting, almost rude)

You never know.

(beat; then, kinder)

You never know what someone's thinking.

On screen: we see but do not hear as Allison cries out, and her whole body shakes with an orgasm. Hoover and Katherine watch in silence. Katherine puts a hand on her husband's shoulder.

INT. HOOVER'S BEDROOM - TWILIGHT

Hoover and Katherine are making love. It is fairly rough, Hoover throwing her about a bit as he had done with Allison. Katherine, though unused to this, is transported, crying out in amazement. Hoover slides half off the bed and, standing above her, feet on the floor, pulls her to him. She wraps her legs around his waist. He presses her down onto the mattress even as she tries

to rise to him. Her orgasm catches her by surprise. She cries out, twisting from side to side. Hoover comes with her, shouting over her cries until they fall apart, and lie there, gasping, shaken, thrown back into the privacy of being.

KATHERINE

Oh, Jesus God, I never...what was that?

He looks over at her, as if caught at something.

KATHERINE

Who were we, Max? Who was I?

HOOVER

We were just us.

She looks at him, still panting. An awkward moment. Something's wrong here, despite the great sex, or maybe because of it. Katherine rolls out of bed.

KATHERINE

I'm hungry. You want dinner?

He says nothing. She grabs her robe and goes out. Hoover lies there, staring at the ceiling.

CUT TO

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - TWILIGHT

The one we saw when Hoover first talked to Fields. We see Fields moving around out in the yard.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - TWILIGHT

A thin, balding man in a short-sleeve sport shirt (EARL) is cooking dinner. Hall, in shirt sleeves and shoulder holster, towers over the man, watching him cook.

EARL

The trick is to get the pan very hot before you put anything into it.

Hall glances at Redbone who stands at the window looking out into a small garden. Jimmy Fields moves among the rows of vegetables, picking things and placing them in a wicker basket. Redbone looks up and down the palisades. Fields starts back toward the house. We think something might happen right now, but it doesn't.

INT. SAME - NIGHT

A nicely set table for four. Redbone and Hall sit on opposite sides as Earl serves food and Redbone pours wine. The cops are unused to this sort of dinner.

FIELDS (raises his glass)

To our guests...

Everyone clinks glasses, and they begin to eat. Hall is impressed with the food and wants to compliment it, but his mouth is full so all he can do is point at a dish and grunt enthusiastically.

EARL
(translating for him)
You like the tomatoes...
(as Hall nods)
They're Hollywood reds, they're very good
this year. I'll get some more...

He touches Fields' shoulder as he goes into the kitchen. The cops exchange glances.

Earl has just picked up a platter when the kitchen windows explode in a burst of AUTOMATIC WEAPON FIRE, tearing him to pieces and blasting him back into the dining area where he falls dead on top of Redbone.

Fields begins to scream.

Hall throws him to the ground as Redbone flings the dead man off him and flips the table on its side for cover.

The gunfire hasn't stopped, in fact, it's intensified, has become a ROAR that seems to be shredding the little house. The lights are all shot out, and in the darkness we hear glass breaking. The cops have their guns out, but they are overwhelmed by the firepower outside.

And now shooting begins from the other direction. Redbone and Hall scramble to turn furniture to protect themselves on that side. But Fields becomes hysterical and crawls away seeking better cover. Hall screams at him to stay here, but his voice is lost in the ROAR of the guns. The noise is unbelievable. He tries to go after Fields, but he's driven back. It's like being in the center of a maelstrom.

Suddenly the door bangs open. Powerful lights fill the room, but nothing can be seen behind them. Redbone and Hall fire at them, but are again forced down the return fire. They huddle behind the furniture.

REDBONE (screaming)
Where's Fields???

HALL (screaming)
I don't know!!!

Now the lights move away and the gunfire diminishes. They hear the sound of heavy engines. When the firing stops, they jump up and run around looking for Fields in the darkness. They can't find him. They run outside.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Nothing except taillights receding across the palisades. All the cars are ruined, undriveable.

INT. HOUSE - DAWN

Earl lies dead on the floor, and there is hardly anything left of the house. Hall and Redbone are talking to Hoover as the coroner and other cops move through the place doing their work.

HALL
He wasn't anywhere. They took him.

HOOVER
You didn't see them.

HALL
We just heard.

REDBONE
M-1s. Army weapons.

They look at each other. Someone calls from outside.

COP
Lieutenant...

They look out what used to be the front windows and see a UNIFORMED COP beckoning from the edge of the cliff.

EXT. EDGE OF THE CLIFF - DAWN

The cops arrive, look down at the beach where some people are gathered around something. They start down a flight of wooden stairs built into the cliff face.

EXT. BEACH - DAWN

On the beach, a boy is standing over a body that has washed ashore. It is wearing pants and socks and nothing else. On one finger is a turquoise ring. There are cops around. Hoover, Hall and Redbone arrive. They look at the body. Then walk away.

EXT. SAME - DAY

A young ASSISTANT CORONER is kneeling over the body in the sand. Hoover and Redbone stand behind him.

CORONER
Completely conventional drowning.

HOOVER
No sign of anything...

CORONER
No bullet wounds, no trauma, no apparent hemorrhage, except presumably in the lungs ...I'll know better when I've opened him up, but it looks like he fell off a boat.

Hoover sighs, walks away. Redbone follows.

A HUMAN FOOT

Blue with death. A pair of tweezers probes the faint striations that appear on the heel. It pulls out a tiny flake of something, turns it so it glints dully in the light.

HOOVER (OS)
What is it?

MAN'S VOICE (OS)
Glass.

INT. MORGUE - DAY

Hoover and the Japanese CORONER who showed him Allison's body now again stand over Allison Pond's corpse.

HOOVER
Glass?

CORONER
There are tiny pieces embedded in both feet. It's a funny kind of glass, naturally occurring, but funny....

He hands Hoover a transparent envelope containing several such flakes, like bits of mica.

CORONER

There's none at the site where her body was found, so she must have picked it up before she got there.

HOOVER

It didn't have anything to do with...

CORONER (laughs)

It didn't kill her. It didn't give her cancer.

He puts the flakes of glass in the envelope and hands it to Hoover.

HOOVER

How would you find out where it's from?

CORONER

You'd have to do a whole chemical analysis.

(before Hoover can say it)

It'll take time, Max.

HOOVER

When?

He looks at a calendar hanging from the wall.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Hoover, Hall, Redbone and Coolidge drinking. Hoover has a box of evidence on the desk and is comparing the glass flakes Pete gave him with some of the chunky glass crystals that were all over the floor of Allison's bedroom.

HALL

Do we think it was Timms?

REDBONE

It was military.

They drink a minute in silence, thinking. Hoover looks up from the glass.

HOOVER

Why would Timms kill Allison Pond?

The others are surprised by the question: isn't it obvious?

HALL

Because he's screwing her, and she's got the film, and he doesn't want it to get out.

HOOVER

It wouldn't get out.

(off their surprise)

The government doesn't care who he goes to bed with. And the press wouldn't touch a guy like Timms, national figure, part of the defense effort...

COOLIDGE

What about his wife?

HOOVER

It's not like Katherine. She already knows he's doing this stuff, that's the kind of guy he is.

HALL

She's probably doing it herself.

COOLIDGE

Then why did he kill her?

HOOVER

Maybe he didn't. Let's go ask him.

(to Redbone)

Arthur, get us a couple plane tickets. You and I are going to Washington.

A PHOTOGRAPH OF AN ATOMIC EXPLOSION

Black-and-white, the mushroom cloud billowing up at us from the desert floor. We are:

INT. AN ANTEROOM, THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - DAY

A marble corridor. Armed guards at either end. Hoover and Redbone in between, waiting. Redbone is studying the framed shots of atomic explosions that line both walls, one after another, each different, all similar.

Hoover, who has been nervously smoking, dropping the ashes into his hand, joins him. They look at another photo. In it we see tiny figures: buildings, cars and still smaller dots, mere specks, all reduced to insignificance by the immense scale of the

blast. Hoover steps back to get a better a look at the dots.

HOOVER

What is all that?

REDBONE

It's the people. Watching it.

The Indian's features make an interesting comment reflected over this explosion in the southwestern desert. A voice behind them:

VOICE

Lt. Hoover...?

As they turn, Colonel Fitzgerald is coming down the corridor toward them, checking his watch, making a show of patience.

FITZGERALD

I'm Nathan Fitzgerald, the General's adjunct.

He extends a perfunctory hand. Hoover dumps the ashes, wipes his hand and shakes. He begins to introduce Redbone.

HOOVER

This is Sgt. Redbone...

But Fitzgerald is already walking off.

FITZGERALD

Right this way, gentleman...

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Together they enter a large, expensively furnished office. At the far end, Timms sits at a big desk speaking softly into a telephone. There is a window behind him, and through it the Washington Monument can be seen gleaming in the sun.

The three men stand at a respectful distance until Timms has finished his call. Then he comes around the desk to greet them. He limps slightly.

HOOVER

General, thank you for seeing us. We know you're busy.

Hoover observes the limp, and Timms sees him do so.

TIMMS

A skiing injury. I had to have a minor operation.

He smiles as if at his own clumsiness, takes Hoover's hand, looks at Redbone. Redbone watches him evenly. For a moment Timms seems unsure what they're doing here. He looks to Fitzgerald.

FITZGERALD

This is Lt. Hoover of the Los Angeles Police Department, and Sgt. Arthur Redbone.

Timms nods, remembering, walks behind his desk and sits down.

TIMMS

What can I do for the Los Angeles Police today?

HOOVER

(glances at Fitzgerald)

We wonder if we might speak to you privately, sir.

TIMMS

Whatever you have to say, you can say in front of Colonel Fitzgerald. I tell him everything anyway...

Hoover walks over and shuts the door.

HOOVER

We want to speak to you about a girl named Allison Pond.

Timms waits, his face betraying nothing.

HOOVER

Miss Pond is deceased, did you know that?

TIMMS (nods slowly)

I heard that.

Now it is Hoover who waits.

TIMMS

Colonel Fitzgerald informed me of it this morning.

Redbone stares directly at Timms. Timms is aware of this--he seems aware of everything--he looks at Redbone and smiles, but the Indian's gaze does not waver.

HOOVER

Did the Colonel mention the condition in which Miss Pond was found?

Timms nods his head, waits.

HOOVER

Do you know anyone who might have a reason...

Timms is smiling, shaking his head no before Hoover can finish.

TIMMS

If I might cut through the formalities, Lieutenant, you are aware that Miss Pond and I had a certain relationship...

(smiles, unembarrassed)

And that Miss Pond had similar relations with any number of other men.

Hoover takes much longer to nod this time. He glances at Redbone. Redbone stares at Timms.

TIMMS

And now you are talking to as many of these men as you can find...Suspects.

(Hoover shrugs)

Who might have killed Allison.

It is quiet in the room. Timms turns to Fitzgerald.

TIMMS (to Fitzgerald)

A girl like that, I suppose a lot of people might have a reason...

Fitzgerald nods. Timms turns to Hoover.

TIMMS

I think if you look carefully, you might be surprised at who would have a reason. Wouldn't you say, Lieutenant?

He smiles at Hoover. Fitzgerald smiles, too.

HOOVER

There's reason, General, and there's also opportunity.

Fitzgerald's smile fades. The room remains very silent.

HOOVER

I believe Miss Pond was in your company from Thursday June 1 through at least the evening of Monday the 4th. Is that correct?

TIMMS (smiles, unflustered)
It sounds right. I'll have to check with
my staff.

HOOVER
And after that?

TIMMS
I believe I spent Monday night with her in
Palm Springs and left the next morning. I
was driven to Edwards and flew back here
that afternoon. When did she die?

HOOVER
Late Tuesday night or early Wednesday
morning.

TIMMS
I was in Washington by then.

HOOVER
Of course.

A skeptical remark, but Timms remains affable.

TIMMS
Do you know much about atomic energy,
Lieutenant? What it means?

HOOVER (shrugs)
It ended the war.

Timms smiles, as if at a child's naivete.

TIMMS
Did you know that the atom itself is
mostly empty space?

Hoover glances at Redbone whose eyes never leave Timms.

HOOVER
I never really thought about...

TIMMS
Almost completely empty with tiny
fragments of matter. And since the entire
universe is made of atoms, everything we
see and touch, the very floor we're
standing on, is mostly empty space. The
only reason we don't fall through it is
that those tiny bits of matter are
whirling about at such speed they give the

TIMMS (Cont'd)
illusion of solidity. The floor is
actually spinning under us, Lieutenant.
Can you feel it?

He looks down and smiles as if at a parlor trick. Hoover and Fitzgerald look, too. Redbone's gaze remains on the General.

HOOVER
Then we're just empty space ourselves.

TIMMS (pleased)
Exactly! And yet those bits of matter--
which are so small no one has ever seen
them, not even with the most powerful
microscope, whose existence we can infer
only by theory and experiments that seem
to confirm the theory--those minute specks
of nothingness contain enough energy to
destroy this building, the entire city,
every person on earth. It's
inconceivable, isn't it.

HOOVER
I suppose.

TIMMS
Yet we must conceive it. That is the task
for man, today. The power of nature, the
fundamental force of the Universe has been
put in our hands. What will we do with it?

HOOVER (after a beat)
I don't think much about those things,
General....I probably see too much.

TIMMS
Things that have no purpose.

HOOVER
People dead before their time.

It is quiet in the room. Fitzgerald, infuriated, is ready to intervene, but Timms calmly waves him off.

TIMMS
It's the history of the world, Lieutenant.
People die before their time so others can
live. It's the cornerstone of civilization
--war, religion, the sacrifice--it's been
going on for thousands of years.

HOOVER

I take 'em one at a time, General. Right now I've got Allison Pond.

Limping, Timms guides Hoover to a window. They look out at the Monument, the Capitol Dome, the Mall...Hoover towers over Timms, but the General's tone is intimate, confidential, unafraid.

TIMMS

Do you remember what Plato said? That we should judge the act, not the man. Certain men, a doctor, a national leader, an officer of the law--give to society in ways most people do not, and in turn we give them a certain consideration. We cannot acknowledge this publicly. We don't teach it in school, but those who accept the burden of leadership understand. You've accepted leadership, haven't you, Lieutenant?

HOOVER

In what sense?

TIMMS

You protect society, the city where you live. You protect it for the ordinary citizen, and in doing so you sometimes take certain burdens on yourself. Perhaps you even break the law, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, search and seizure... Perhaps it is known that you do so, and nothing happens because it is understood that that is a burden of leadership. And you accept it. You accept your own sins.

Hoover looks like a man who is not sure he accepts his own sins.

TIMMS

We're not so different, you and I. Do you see what I mean?

He smiles a worldly smile. Hoover sits a long moment.

HOOVER

General, I'm going to need your appointments calendar for the last two weeks. When you were on the other coast, when you were here.

TIMMS (smiles)

Of course you are.

He turns to Fitzgerald.

TIMMS

Give Lt. Hoover anything he needs,
Colonel.

Fitzgerald nods. Timms returns to his desk as Fitzgerald accompanies Hoover and Redbone toward the door. Just before he goes out, Hoover stops, turns back.

HOOVER

Did you know that Miss Pond had cancer,
General?

For the first time, Timms seems genuinely surprised. He glances quickly at Fitzgerald, but the Colonel's face reveals nothing.

TIMMS

No, I didn't. Is that relevant?

HOOVER

We're not sure.

Hoover goes out, and Redbone follows. Timms absently touches his injured hip.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Redbone and Hoover returning to Los Angeles in a Tri-Star. Hoover is smoking a cigarette. Redbone is looking out the window, studying the wings, the propellers.

HOOVER

He was threatening me.

Redbone turns and looks at him. A stewardess walks up the aisle, carrying drinks. Long, blond hair.

HOOVER

Timms.

REDBONE

He was afraid.

HOOVER

Not of us...?

Redbone shrugs. The stewardess stops by their seats.

STEWARDESS

May I get you gentlemen something to drink?

HOOVER

Do you have a beer?

As she nods, begins to get it.

REDBONE

I'll have a Manhattan.

She gives Hoover the beer. Redbone accepts his drink, sits back in the seat, sipping it, looks out the window again. Hoover is watching the stewardess go up the aisle. Blond hair.

REDBONE (looking out)

It's a long way down.

Hoover looks over, not understanding.

REDBONE

I think they threw her out of an airplane.

HOOVER (startled)

Who?

REDBONE

Allison Pond...That's how they killed her.

Hoover is shocked. He leans across Redbone to look out the window. The western desert is passing below, the same landscape where the bombs are tested.

Hoover sits back and takes out Allison's address book. It falls open to the photograph of her as a child with her father. He looks at the picture. Something is going on inside Hoover, a deep, internal rumbling we neither see nor hear, yet which is palpable over the roar of the engines.

CUT TO

INT. A GEORGETOWN TOWNHOUSE - EVENING

Timms, in evening dress, is briefed by Fitzgerald, still in a business suit. Mrs. Timms mixes cocktails in the background.

FITZGERALD

After the dinner, you and Mrs. Timms have drinks with the Speaker and his wife. Then in the morning you have Senator McCarthy.

Timms grimaces.

FITZGERALD

You won't be in there more than ten minutes.

TIMMS

The man is a liar and a parasite.

FITZGERALD

He's on our side, sir.

As Mrs. Timms brings the drinks, we see her well for the first time. She is 44, handsome, worldly, beautifully dressed. She knows who she's married to. Timms and Fitzgerald each take a drink, murmuring thanks. Mrs. Timms takes one for herself. The conversation continues over this without pause.

FITZGERALD

You're asking for 50 million dollars.
Unless we can give Eisenhower a good...

TIMMS

That idiot.

He shifts in his chair, winces, touches his hip. Fitzgerald and Mrs. Timms exchange looks. Timms sees their worry.

TIMMS

I'm fine.

He swallows a pill with his drink. A phone begins to ring. Mrs. Timms goes to answer. Timms uses her absence to raise a delicate matter.

TIMMS

Now this fellow Hoover, from Los Angeles...

FITZGERALD

He's not a problem, General. We're having somebody out there talk to his people.

Across the room at the telephone, Mrs. Timms laughs, a rich, throaty, happy laugh. Timms glances at her.

TIMMS (low, angry)

You didn't have to kill the girl, Colonel.
It was stupid and unnecessary.

FITZGERALD

I felt there was a danger, sir.

TIMMS

She would never have said a thing. I doubt she even understood the situation.

FITZGERALD

I couldn't take the chance.

Fitzgerald's implacable calm enrages Timms.

TIMMS (whispered fury)

You should have spoken to me first.

FITZGERALD

I knew what you would say, General.

Timms is exasperated. He takes a big swallow of the drink and touches his hip.

TIMMS

But now there's the film. With Allison alive, it wouldn't have been an issue.

FITZGERALD

We'll have it within twenty-four hours.

TIMMS

I think we need to be careful with Mr. Hoover. He is a man of the Middle Ages. He would have made an excellent crusader.

FITZGERALD

He is a Los Angeles policeman. If we can deal with the Congress of the United States, we can deal with an L.A. cop...

CUT TO

EXT. LOS ANGELES AIRPORT - DAY

Hoover and Redbone are coming down the stairs from the plane. Hall and Coolidge meet them on the tarmac.

HALL

Parker wants to see you.

This is significant. Hall and Coolidge are worried and expect Hoover to be, as well, but he treats it like a minor irritant.

HOOVER

I told Katherine I'd be home for dinner.

HALL

He said, right now.

Hoover grimaces.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES CITY HALL - EARLY EVENING

The familiar ziggurat tower, the old Dragnet building.

INT. CHIEF PARKER'S OFFICE - EARLY EVENING

Hoover is straightening his jacket as a SECRETARY shows him in.

SECRETARY

Lt. Hoover, sir.

Across the room is the legendary police chief, seated behind his desk. Opposite him, legs crossed and smoking a cigarette, is Assistant Regional Director for the L.A. Bureau of the F.B.I., JEFFERY McCafferty.

Parker has a hard, uncompromising look; the federal agent is more relaxed. The agent stands to greet Hoover. The Secretary goes out, closing the door as she withdraws.

PARKER

Maxwell, this is Assistant Regional Director, Jeffery McCafferty of the F.B.I.

The agent offers his hand in a practiced, friendly way. He is a big, sturdy, confident kid of 30; looks like he played football at Notre Dame. Hoover takes the hand, then glances at Parker. Parker doesn't understand what the F.B.I. is doing here and doesn't try to hide it. He is not happy about all this.

PARKER

Mr. McCafferty dropped in to ask about the status of one of our cases.

(noticing Hoover still on his feet)
Sit down, Maxwell.

(as Hoover sits opposite McCafferty)
Allison Pond, I think is the girl's name...

Hoover nods slightly, giving nothing away.

HOOVER (to Parker)

You mind if I ask, sir, what business is this investigation of the F.B.I.'s?

Before Parker can answer, McCafferty shifts in his chair and then, smiling, interrupts.

McCAFFERTY

If I may, Chief...

(turning to Hoover)

Our role here is purely informational. We are aware that a man of fundamental importance to the national security has been somehow brought into the investigation of this young woman's death, and in light of the damage that could be done here, not only to the man's reputation but to his work, we thought it was appropriate, without stepping on your jurisdiction, to come here informally and share our knowledge of the matter.

(smiles)

HOOVER

And what would that be?

The Assistant Regional Director leans forward, earnest, genial.

McCAFFERTY

I am authorized to offer you the Director's personal guarantee that General Timms had nothing to do with the death of Allison Pond.

Hoover looks at Parker, then back at McCafferty.

HOOVER

And how would the Director know something like that?

McCAFFERTY

(smiles, sits back in his chair)

I am afraid I am not at liberty to discuss that.

Hoover waits for McCafferty to go on. He doesn't.

HOOVER (to Parker)

That's it?

Parker shrugs. McCafferty stands up as if to leave.

HOOVER

If I call J. Edgar Hoover, he'll vouch for your being here, and he'll stand behind this pile of crap you're handing us?

McCAFFERTY (affable)

The Director specifically authorized me to say he appreciates your co-operation. He is sure you understand the delicate nature of the situation, the woman being a prostitute...You a married man yourself.

HOOVER

How do you know that, Mr. McCafferty?
That she was a prostitute?

McCafferty smiles again, full of himself, confident.

McCAFFERTY

We're not without our resources, Lieutenant. We would be more than happy to share them. We give you what we have, you give us what you have...

McCafferty is talking about the film and Hoover knows it, but Parker doesn't. McCafferty offers Parker his hand.

McCAFFERTY

Thanks for your time, Chief. If we can ever be of service...

He nods at Hoover and goes out. Hoover remains seated, silent.

PARKER

Do you have anything hard on the man, Maxwell?

HOOVER

Like fingerprints?

PARKER (suddenly angry)

Do you have anything hard?

HOOVER

They shot the hell out of the that beach house, killed a man...

PARKER

A fairy.

HOOVER

...with government caliber shells.

PARKER

I know three gun dealers just in North Hollywood where you can get military ordnance in the back room.

Hoover stares at him.

PARKER

Leave it alone, Max.

HOOVER

As a favor to the Director?

PARKER

As a favor to you.

HOOVER

They've killed people, Tom. People in your city.

PARKER

There're people you fellas have talked to that no one's seen around afterward. Nobody looked into that too carefully.

HOOVER

Allison Pond never hurt anybody.

PARKER

She must have, Max. Or we wouldn't be talking about her like this.

CUT TO

INT. SIXTH STREET DINER - EARLY EVENING

Hoover walks in. Hall, Coolidge and Redbone are in a booth, drinking coffee. Coolidge is eating pie. Hoover slides in with them.

HOOVER

Parker says we're off the case.

The others are surprised.

HALL

That wasn't the deal. The deal was we work the cases we want, they leave us alone, we get things done.

HOOVER

The deal just changed, Eddie.

A waitress brings Hoover a cup off coffee. He picks it up, then sets it back down in its saucer without drinking, watching cup and saucer adjust slightly to the pressure of each other.

HALL

It isn't dropping it that bothers me. I said from the start we should leave this one alone. But him telling us to drop it. That signals something's different.

HOOVER

It signals General Timms called the F.B.I. and they talked to Parker. One of them was there when I went in. He gave us the Director's personal guarantee Timms didn't have anything to do with it.

HALL

Which proves he did.

HOOVER

They wanted the film.

COOLIDGE

How'd they know you had it?

REDBONE

Jimmy Fields. His final words.

It is quiet a moment while that sinks in.

HOOVER

He threatened me with Allison. Like Timms did in D.C.

He nods at Redbone. Hall is furious.

HALL

So what do we do? Just walk away?

He wants Hoover to say, "We strap on our guns..." Hoover turns the cup and saucer on the table stop, studying the circle where the two objects meet.

HOOVER

Yeah, I guess we walk away.

They look at each other as if something precious has been lost.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOOVER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Hoover pulls the convertible into the driveway, the headlights sweep across the figure of his wife, sitting on the front lawn. She's wearing her nightgown, her arms wrapped around her knees.

The front door to house is open. Hoover jumps out of the car leaving the engine running, the lights on.

HOOVER

Katherine...?

She looks up, dazed. He squats beside her, touches her face.

HOOVER

What happened? Are you hurt?

She shakes her head no, then buries her face between her knees, and her shoulders shake as she tries to stifle the tears. Hoover picks her up off the ground and carries her inside.

INT. HOOVER'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ransacked exactly like the apartments in Palm Springs: furniture upside down, books on the floor. Still holding Katherine, Hoover rights a chair with one foot, sets her in it. He looks around at the smashed pictures, the broken coffee table, shattered glass...

KATHERINE

It's like this everywhere.

HOOVER

When were they here?

KATHERINE

I don't know, an hour ago.

He goes into the kitchen. Every door is open, including the refrigerator -- the floor is a mess of broken jars, spilled milk, cleaners, glassware...

HOOVER

How many were there?

KATHERINE

Five, I think. They all had badges. They said they were from the F.B.I. Oh, Max, I was so scared...

She is trembling. Hoover puts a comforting hand on her shoulder.

HOOVER

Did they have a warrant?

(off her blank look)

A court order, authorizing them to come in the house.

KATHERINE

They didn't show me anything.

Hoover nods. Then another thought...

HOOVER

Did they go to the bombshelter?

KATHERINE (nodding)

They blew the door.

HOOVER

With what?? It's a goddam bomb shelter.

KATHERINE (shrugs)

It didn't make much noise.

EXT./INT. BOMBSHELTER - NIGHT

Hoover hurries into the shelter, Katherine behind him. The door has been blown; inside it's a mess. He goes to an air vent, removes the grating and reaches inside. He brings out the film tin. For a moment he feels better, then he looks around the room.

HOOVER

They blew up my atomic bomb shelter without making any noise?

KATHERINE

A little pop was all.

Hoover picks up the door, looks at the hinges, drops it. He doesn't get this. He stumbles through the litter until he finds an unbroken bottle of whiskey. He unscrews the cap, wipes the mouth, offers it to Katherine. She doesn't even look at it.

KATHERINE

You want to tell me anything?

He takes a drink, then sets the bottle down beside the projector, sets it down carefully, just as he did with the coffee cup. Katherine watches him.

HOOVER

Did you know that an atom is mostly empty space?

He looks up from the bottle. She hits him in the face as hard as she can. Hoover is surprised, but not especially hurt.

KATHERINE

What's going on, Max? And don't give me any crap about atoms.

Hoover sits silent a beat.

HOOVER

I went to D.C. to ask a man about a dead girl, and he told me the world is mostly empty space. Things we can't see, that maybe don't even exist, can blow us all up. I come home, my wife's sitting on the front lawn, my bomb shelter's in pieces, and the FBI's been going through the house.

He begins to laugh, a helpless, giddy laughter that rises toward hysteria and fury. She hits him again. When she swings a third time, he catches her hand and stops it cold. Furious at his power over her, she tries to bite him to get free.

KATHERINE

Bastard...

He bends her wrist, forcing her backward, showing her, just for a second, his strength. She winces in pain. He eases up on the wrist a little without letting go, then pulls her to him and holds her against him. She clings to him, shuddering.

CUT TO

EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING, DOWNTOWN L.A. - DAY

It is early morning, the sprinklers are running, a Mexican is mowing the lawn. Hoover's Cadillac pulls into the parking lot and into a spot marked ABSOLUTELY NO PARKING.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - DAY

An elevator door opens, and Hoover gets out -- along with a dozen guys in business suits and strong chins. A sign points to the office of the Asst. Regional Director, and he heads that way.

INT. OFFICE OF THE ASST. DIRECTOR - DAY

Hoover walks in, smiles at a middle-aged RECEPTIONIST who does not smile back.

HOOVER

I'd like to see the Assistant Director, please.

RECEPTIONIST (studies him)
Do you have an appointment?

HOOVER
I'm with the Los Angeles Police
Department. Mr. McCafferty dropped by to
see me yesterday evening, and I wasn't in.

She thinks for a moment, then picks up the telephone.

RECEPTIONIST
Mr. McCafferty, there's a gentleman
here...

Hoover places his police identification on the desk so that she
can read it.

RECEPTIONIST
...A Lt. Hoover of the Los Angeles Police
Department...Yessir...Thank you, I'll tell
him.

(hangs up; turns to Hoover)
Assistant Director McCafferty is busy at
this time, but if you will be kind enough
to leave your number and the nature of
your business, he will contact you at the
earliest opportunity.

HOOVER (smiles)
Thank you very much.

He walks around her desk and through the door behind her.

RECEPTIONIST
Sir, I said the Assistant Director is...

INT. McCAFFERTY'S OFFICE - DAY

Hoover comes through the door and closes it on the receptionist.
McCafferty looks up from his paperwork.

HOOVER
Do you even know this bastard, Timms?

Keeping his hand hidden, McCafferty opens a drawer and turns on a
hidden tape recorder.

HOOVER
You send guys into my house, scare my wife
half to death, wreck the furniture, blow
the basement door, and you don't even know
who you're protecting.

McCAFFERTY (strangely loud)
This is federal property, Lt. Hoover. I
am instructing you to leave.

HOOVER
(closing on him in a fury)
And I am telling you in the clearest way I
can, you do what you want to me, but if
you ever go in my house again, you
sonofabitch, if you go near my wife, if
you look at her, if you talk to her, if
you communicate with her in any way, by
word or deed, not even your fairy boss in
Washington...

McCafferty is startled by these words. Hoover comes around to
McCafferty's side of the desk, yanks open the drawer, and speaks
directly into the hidden tape recorder.

HOOVER
Not even your fairy boss in Washington
will be able to protect you on that one.

By now Hoover's face is inches from the F.B.I. agent's.
McCafferty rises to meet the intimidation. He is nearly as big
as Hoover, younger and unafraid. On the wall behind him is a
framed photograph of the 1947 Notre Dame football squad. He
speaks right back into Hoover's face, slowly.

McCAFFERTY
This is federal property, Lt., and you are
trespassing.

HOOVER (right back at him)
Look out there, you see that?

He indicates the window. McCafferty looks, sees nothing.

HOOVER
That isn't Federal property. That's Los
Angeles. Out there, you're the trespasser.
Out there, I can pick you up, burn your
house, fuck your wife and kill your dog.
The only thing that'll protect you is if I
can't find you. And I can always find you.

McCAFFERTY (grins at him)
I'll look forward to it.

Hold on McCafferty's smile. Then Hoover walks out.

CUT TO:

INT. McCAFFERTY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

He finishes writing a report. He stops, stretches, rubs his eyes. He puts away his papers, tidies his desk. He tightens the knot of his tie, puts out the desk lamp, stands, puts on his suit jacket. The solitude and silence suggest danger.

He picks up his briefcase and walks to the door. At the door, he turns out the ceiling lamp and goes out, shutting the door behind him. We hear the lock turn.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

McCafferty going down the deserted, half-darkened corridor. An eerie feeling. He goes past us. Stops. We hear an elevator bell.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

McCafferty steps onto an elevator with two other big guys with square jaws. The doors close. They stand in silence a while, not looking at each other. Finally...

FIRST BIG GUY

Hey, McCafferty, you dumb Mick faggot, you wanna get a beer?

McCafferty glances sidelong at the other two who look sidelong at him. Male posturing.

McCAFFERTY

All right.

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

The three men come out of the building.

FIRST BIG GUY

We can go down here to the Hebe's.

They turn left on sidewalk. They've only gone a few steps when someone gets out of a parked car and steps into their path.

McCAFFERTY (amused)

Well, Lt. Hoover, it looks like you found me.

Hoover and McCafferty face each other. There's going to be a fight. The other two agents flank their friend.

HOOVER

(to the other two)

This is between me and the Assistant Regional Director, but if you guys would like to join us...

FIRST BIG GUY

Sounds like fun.

Hoover smiles, slouches deferentially, then he brings his foot down hard on the First Guy's instep. The man practically falls to the ground, but before he gets there, Hoover turns sharply and elbows McCafferty just below the breastbone. McCafferty folds in half. The Second Big Guy gives Hoover a shot to the head. Hoover hits him twice to the body, then gives him a right cross that knocks his upper body through the rear window of a parked car.

It's all over in a moment. Hoover grabs the doubled-up McCafferty by the shoulder, the younger man writhing helplessly in his grip. The First Guy is just beginning to recover. Hoover kicks him in the teeth, and he goes down again.

HOOVER

(to McCafferty, amiable)

Come here, I want to show you something.

He steers him over to the Cadillac.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT

McCafferty going over "Mulholland Falls," yelling, cursing and finally disappearing into the darkness with a thud. Hoover, standing at the top, doesn't bother to ascertain his condition. He just gets in the convertible and drives away.

CUT TO:

INT. A BAR - NIGHT

Hoover and the other Hats are in a booth together. Hoover is still furious, but there's a strange happiness just below that.

HOOVER

What if we don't walk away.

The other three grin, shift expectantly in their seats.

HOOVER

What if we go out in the desert and look around.

COOLIDGE

Why the desert?

HOOVER

Allison was out there with the General just before she died.

HALL

She was in Palm Springs before she died, screwing him on film.

HOOVER

Maybe it wasn't the film. Maybe it was something else. In the desert.

REDBONE

The desert's big.

Hoover thinks about that, then he has an idea.

HOOVER

I think I know how to narrow it down.

INT. A LABORATORY - NIGHT

The Japanese CORONER, his lab coat pulled on over pajamas and slippers, is busy completing a chemical analysis of the glass from Allison's foot. We see the flakes in the clear envelope as well as the crystalline chunks from the apartment. He grumbles as he works.

CORONER

You have no right to disturb a man's sleep. It's his only opportunity to escape ordinary consciousness.

The cops stand around the lab table, watching him.

HOOVER

It's a police emergency, Pete.

CORONER

You told me.

Abruptly, watching the results appear, his bad mood changes to one of beaming, scientific satisfaction.

CORONER

I know exactly where the glass came from. There's only one place it could possibly be.

EXT. DEATH VALLEY - DAY

The Cadillac blasting across the desolation. They see a sign: UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ATOMIC RESEARCH CENTER - RESTRICTED ENTRY. They take that turn.

EXT. A GUARDHOUSE - DAY

Beyond the gate, half visible, is a cluster of buildings that looks vaguely familiar. Hoover and the others sit in the Cadillac outside the gate while one of two guards--both with M-1s--talks on a phone. The Guard hangs up and comes out, hands Hoover back his badge.

GUARD (22)

They say you can't go in.

HOOVER

This is official police business.

GUARD

I told them that. They said you had to get a security clearance.

HOOVER

What do they have in there they don't want us to see.

GUARD

Just about everything, sir.

Hoover and the others exchange glances. Hoover backs the car up and speeds off away from the gate.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

The Cadillac speeds past endless miles of chain-link fence topped with barbed-wire. Metal signs at hundred-foot intervals read:

NO ADMITTANCE
UNITED STATES MILITARY TESTING GROUNDS
DANGER

We whip along this fence until a paved road forks off the highway and passes under a locked gate. The Cadillac stops at the gate. Hall hops out, shoots off the lock without ceremony, pushes open the gate and jumps back into the car as it goes through.

EXT. TESTING GROUNDS - DAY.

The Cadillac follows the road until it simply ends. They find themselves in a strange landscape. All around are the blackened, ghostly after-images of desert scrub while before them lies a vast crater, hundreds of feet across. The surface glints smooth and hard, like an unusual porcelain. The men approach the crater with some trepidation.

HALL

This is it?

COOLIDGE (excited)

The pictures in the magazines look just like this. They drop it from a tower.

HALL

Where's the tower?

COOLIDGE

It gets incinerated in the blast... What about radiation, Max?

HOOVER

Supposedly it's all dissipated by now.

Hoover steps onto the edge of the crater. It cracks under his weight, making chunks of hard crystal like the glass found in Allison's apartment. He picks up a handful.

HOOVER

Pete says the heat from the bomb melts the sand, turns it into glass...

They are collectively impressed, like kids watching "Mr. Wizard."

HOOVER (looks around)

Allison was here. She must have brought some glass back for a souvenir, and got the flakes in her foot without realizing.

HALL

How did that get her killed?

Hoover shrugs, shakes his head. He doesn't know.

REDBONE

Max...?

Redbone is standing on a rise above them. They climb up there in time to see two U.S. Army desert vehicles speeding this way across the desert.

HOOVER

I guess we should go.

They move quickly to the Cadillac and take off down the road.

EXT. PAVED ROAD - DAY

The Cadillac is going fast, but the road makes loops, and the desert vehicles, cutting across the sand, close on it...

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The gate visible ahead, the Cadillac going for it. A burst of machinegun fire (from a hood mounted weapon) forces Hoover off the road.

The big car flounders in the sand, the Army vehicles closing quickly. Redbone and Hall draw revolvers and return fire, but a prolonged burst from automatic weapons flattens one of the Cadillac tires. The car comes to a stop. The army vehicles pin it in, and the cops find themselves looking up at a dozen M-1s and the two hood mounts.

Everyone holds in this position until a Jeep drives up. Colonel Fitzgerald swings out of the passenger seat before it has come to a full stop.

FITZGERALD

What are you doing out on the test range, Lieutenant? This is a restricted area.

HOOVER

We didn't know that, sir. The gate was wide open when we got there.

Fitzgerald glances at the CAPTAIN of the arresting detail. The man hands Fitzgerald the lock Hall shot off the gate.

FITZGERALD (to Hoover)

You're in violation of Federal law whether it was open or not. And you're way outside your jurisdiction.

HOOVER

We just go where the case takes us.

FITZGERALD

Not if it takes you here you don't.

HOOVER

You wouldn't withhold evidence in a murder case, would you, Colonel?

Fitzgerald glares at Hoover a moment.

FITZGERALD

Captain, let's lock these men in B-6 for a few days while the [prosecutorial staff] formulates charges...

CAPTAIN

Yes, sir...

He's giving orders to his men when a field telephone rings in the Jeep and the driver, answers, then calls:

DRIVER

It's for you, Colonel.

As Fitzgerald speaks on the phone, some of the soldiers take the cops' guns and begin to usher them into one of the Army vehicles. Fitzgerald, meanwhile, is arguing with someone on the phone. He loses, signs off with a sullen, "Yes, sir," and again addresses the Commanding Officer.

FITZGERALD

Captain, change of plans. Help the policemen repair the car and escort them off the site.

(to Hoover)

If you come out here again, you'll be prosecuted under military law.

He walks back to his Jeep as the cops exchange puzzled glances.

INT. HOOVER'S HOUSE - DAY

Katherine is cleaning up the mess the FBI agents left and now carries a load of trash out the door.

EXT. HOOVER'S HOUSE - DAY

She drops the trash in a can and is turning to go back inside when a car pulls up in front of the house. She comes down the drive. The car has U.S. Army plates. She bends over to see the driver. He hands her a package.

KATHERINE

Thank you...

The man nods and drives off. Katherine looks at the package. It's addressed to Hoover and is marked "Personal & Confidential." As she walks up the driveway, she idly pulls at the string holding it together. Finally she tears open the paper and takes out a circular film tin. The word COPY is written on a piece of tape stuck to the can. She opens the can and finds a reel of film. Puzzled, she carries it into the house.

CUT TO

EXT. HOOVER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The Cadillac pulls into the driveway. Hoover climbs out and starts toward the house when he notices a light on in the bombshelter. A sound is coming from there, he can't quite place it. He goes to the door and looks in.

HOOVER

Katherine...?

INT. BOMBSHELTER - NIGHT

He comes down the steps into the shelter. We recognize the noise now. It's the movie projector. Katherine is sitting on the floor against one wall watching a movie projected on the screen. She glances up at Hoover, then back at the movie without speaking.

ON SCREEN: Hoover is with Allison Pond in the bedroom of her Palm Springs apartment. She is kneeling beside the bed. He has mounted her from behind, and her face, looking directly into the camera, is distended with pleasure.

KATHERINE (eyes on screen)

How long was it going on?

HOOVER (a beat)

Most of last summer.

KATHERINE

That whole time?

He says nothing, looks at the ground.

KATHERINE

I knew. I just didn't know what I knew.
Deliberately stupid...

Hoover sees the film can and paper wrapping. He picks them up, looks at them.

KATHERINE

Why did you stop?

(looks at the screen)

Not 'cause you weren't enjoying yourself.

I've never seen you like that.

She says it with a little laugh, then suddenly is in such pain she can't stand it. She gets up and walks out.

Hoover stares at the screen, the reflected light playing across his face. In the middle of the act, the film runs out. A moment later, the tail of the film begins to slap the projector housing, over and over as it turns on the take-up reel. The shelter is empty; Hoover has gone.

INT. HOOVER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hoover stands outside the closed bedroom door. He knocks twice. There's no response. He calls through the door.

HOOVER

Katherine...?

Still nothing. He tries the door; it's locked. He goes into the kitchen, leans against the counter. His life is coming apart. He looks at the telephone. He picks it up and dials a number which rings a half dozen times before Colonel Fitzgerald answers.

FITZGERALD'S VOICE

Fitzgerald.

HOOVER

This is Maxwell Hoover.

FITZGERALD'S VOICE

I thought we might hear from you...

HOOVER

I want to see Timms.

FITZGERALD'S VOICE

There's no need for that.

HOOVER

I have a need.

Hoover takes down a bottle and a glass, pours a drink.

FITZGERALD'S VOICE

You've got something of ours, and, as you see, we have something of yours.

Hoover swallows the drink, pours some more.

FITZGERALD

The package you got today was a copy. We have copies for your wife, the newspapers, your superiors, the men who work under you. Do you understand, Lieutenant?

HOOVER

No Timms, no deal.

Silence on the other end. Then, finally...

FITZGERALD'S VOICE

Ten o'clock tomorrow at the airfield west of the city. We'll have somebody take you up here.

(beat)

You bring everything, we bring everything. Originals, all copies. Agreed, Lieutenant?

Hoover presses the disconnect button, then lays the receiver on the counter, off the hook. He downs the second drink.

CUT TO

THE FILM JIMMY FIELDS SENT HOOVER

We see again the footage in the Sun Spot: Allison's arrival, the lizard on the shoe, shots of the desert, of what we recognize as Timms laughing, Fitzgerald not laughing... We see some buildings, a white room full of dark faces, many with their mouths open.... The film stops. We are:

INT. HOOVER'S BOMBSHELTER . - NIGHT

Hoover rewinds the projector, looks at the shot of the buildings again, then the dark faces in the white room, then Timms entering Allison's bedroom. He sits watching the sex scene unfold as before. He drinks as he watches.

INT. HOOVER'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Hoover is dressed in a suit--a black suit this time--brushing his teeth over the kitchen sink. He walks back into the livingroom where a blanket is mussed up on the couch. The empty bottle and glass sit on the floor next to it. He clips his pistol and holster to the back of his trousers under the suit jacket.

He listens at the bedroom door, hears nothing. He removes a pick

from his pocket and quickly picks the lock.

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Hoover enters on tip-toe. Katherine sleeps on her side, fully dressed down to her shoes, without a cover. He goes close enough to observe her face, her even breathing, then he tip-toes out.

INT. HALL - EARLY MORNING

He is just re-locking the bedroom door with the pick when he hears a knock at the front door. He takes out his gun, goes to it, opens it carefully. Coolidge is standing on the other side, not eating anything. He appears very worried.

COOLIDGE

We got a problem, Max.
(looks around nervously)
It's Parker.

Hoover checks his watch. He's not especially interested in Coolidge or Parker or any of that.

HOOVER (absently)

What about him?

COOLIDGE

The assistant regional director, the guy you showed him Mulholland Falls?

(as Hoover nods, Coolidge nods with him)

The FBI called Parker from Washington, five o'clock this morning; Parker's been trying to get you ever since. He wants to see you right now.

Hoover seems unconcerned. He moves about the room, picking up things to take with him.

HOOVER

Tell him I have something to do.

COOLIDGE

Max, this is serious. He's pissed...

HOOVER

(impatiently)

I've got something to do, Ellery. I've got something I need to do.

COOLIDGE

The Chief...

HOOVER

You want to know the truth? I don't give a damn about the Chief.

Coolidge is silent, not knowing what to do. Hoover goes outside and Coolidge follows.

EXT. HOOVER'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Hoover walking toward his car. Coolidge tagging along.

COOLIDGE

I can't tell him that. I can't tell Parker you've got something else to do.

HOOVER

Why not?

COOLIDGE

It's Parker.

HOOVER (looks him over)

Coolidge, look at the size of you. What's there to be afraid of.

COOLIDGE

We're all afraid of something, Max.

HOOVER

Hall's right. This psychiatrist, he's turning you into a piano teacher.

COOLIDGE

She.

Hoover looks at him, not understanding.

COOLIDGE

It's a woman.

Hoover looks at him another moment, then gets into the convertible. Suddenly Coolidge gets in next to him.

COOLIDGE

I'm coming with you.

(off Hoover)

I'm not going back there and tell Parker you wouldn't come...He'd kill me.

Hoover closes his eyes and starts the engine.

INT. CAR, L.A. ROAD - DAY

They drive along. Hoover turns off the road into

EXT. MILITARY AIRFIELD - DAY

The convertible drives through a gate into an area where planes are parked. Hoover studies them as they pass.

COOLIDGE

Where're we going?

HOOVER

We're taking a plane ride up to Las Vegas.
(off Coolidge's alarm)
You like planes, Ellery?

COOLIDGE (very nervous)

I've never been on one.

Hoover spots a parked DC-3 and heads for it. It's got the seal of the United States on the nose.

COOLIDGE (worried)

Max, this doesn't have anything to do with the F.B.I., does it?

HOOVER

Atomic Energy Commission, Ellery.

COOLIDGE

(relieved, looking around)

Good. We don't need any more trouble with Parker than we've got.

Hoover drives up to the plane. As they get out, the PILOT comes down the ramp to greet them, looks from one to the other.

PILOT

Lt. Hoover...?

HOOVER

Yeah.

PILOT (looks at Coolidge)

They said there would only be one.

HOOVER

There's two.

The pilot shrugs, and they all walk up the ramp.

INT. DC-3 - DAY

The plane is customized. There is a bar on the far side of the main cabin, big comfortable leather chairs anchored to the floor near the windows. Hoover and Coolidge sit in them.

PILOT (indicates bar)

If you want anything, help yourselves.

Hoover smiles, nods. The pilot goes forward into the cockpit. The engines come to life. Coolidge is very nervous.

EXT. PLANE - DAY

The plane turns and heads toward the runway.

INT. DC-3 - DAY

The plane is picking up speed. Coolidge looks nervously at Hoover. Hoover holds briefcase in his lap.

EXT. RUNWAY - DAY

The plane gathers speed, lifts off.

INT. DC-3 - DAY

Cruising altitude. Hoover and Coolidge looking out the window. The desert passes below.

EXT. ATOMIC RESEARCH CENTER, AIRSTRIP - DAY

The DC-3 touches down, taxis to a stop.

Hoover and Coolidge coming down the ramp. The Captain they met yesterday greets them.

CAPTAIN

We expected only you, Lieutenant.

HOOVER

Sgt. Coolidge and I always work together.

The Captain considers objecting, shrugs it off. He leads them to a Jeep.

EXT. RESEARCH CENTER - DAY

The Captain drives Hoover and Coolidge toward a long, modern, one-story building flanked by quonset huts.

Hoover reacts with dawning recognition. He has seen this before. He looks out over the desert toward the distant mountains. He looks back at the research center. He saw this on the film Jimmy Fields sent him, in the footage before the sex scene. He looks at Coolidge who also saw the film. He also recognizes it. A sense of deja vu or of a dream...

The Jeep parks. The Captain leads Hoover and Coolidge inside.

INT. RESEARCH CENTER, SMALL ROOM - DAY

CAPTAIN

We're having another test today, so we'd like to do this quickly.

HOOVER

Nothing happens until I see the General.

The Captain takes a beat, heads for the door.

CAPTAIN

I'll get Colonel Fitzgerald to take you to him.

He leaves. The moment he is out of the room, Hoover opens the briefcase, takes out a handgun, checks the clip, puts it back in.

COOLIDGE (in a panic)

Max, what're you doing?

HOOVER (matter-of-fact)

I'm going to kill the General.

And he's out the door.

INT. RESEARCH CENTER, CORRIDOR - DAY

Hoover striding purposefully along, Coolidge hurrying after him.

COOLIDGE (whispered terror)

You can't do that, Max, it's...

He trails off as a TECHNICIAN APPEARS. Hoover stops him...

HOOVER

Do you know where we can find General Timms?

TECHNICIAN (pointing)

I think he's back in the medical wing somewhere.

He keeps going. Coolidge hurries after him, whispering the rest of what he was saying.

COOLIDGE

It's wrong, Max. It's--

HOOVER (cutting him off)

No, it's right! He killed Allison and Fields...And he killed my marriage. He's going to die...

They hear strange shouting and screams and go toward this. Hoover finally pushes open a door into

INT. A LARGE ROOM - DAY

The size of a small gymnasium. The walls are white and lined with white metal hospital beds covered with white sheets. The beds are filled with patients, most of whom, we come to realize, have black or brown faces.

Hoover has seen this before, too, also on the film. There, too, the mouths were open, but he couldn't hear the voices. Now he can. They are screaming, cursing, crying out in pain. An elderly BLACK WOMAN with no hair looks up at him and cries:

BLACK WOMAN

Help me. Oh, God, help me, please! It hurts so much.

HOOVER

(reading her chart; to Coolidge)
Hepatic cancer. What's that?

COOLIDGE

I think it's the kidneys, Max.

A nurse comes across the room toward them.

NURSE

Can I help you?

HOOVER

What are all these people doing here?

NURSE

This is a government treatment center.
Who are you?

HOOVER

What's the matter with them? Why are they
screaming like that?

NURSE

They have cancer. It's very painful...
(lowers voice)
...in the later stages.

HOOVER

(looks at Coolidge)
They all have cancer?

NURSE (suspicious)

Are you looking for a particular patient
or... Do you have a pass?

HOOVER

We're here to see General Timms. We have
an appointment.

NURSE (not fully convinced)

Down the hall. I think it's Room 11.

INT. HALL - DAY

Hoover and Coolidge see Room 11. Hoover pushes open the door,
sticks his head in.

INT. ROOM 11 - DAY

A small hospital room, a single bed, a patient hooked up to an
i.v. A nurse turns at their entrance. Hoover is exasperated at
finding himself once more in the wrong room.

HOOVER

Where's General Timms?

She glances at the bed, then back at Hoover.

NURSE

He's asleep.

Hoover and Coolidge exchange looks. This is not what they envisioned. They enter the room.

HOOVER

I need to speak to him, privately.

NURSE

I'm sorry, but no one is allowed to--

HOOVER

Ellery...

COOLIDGE

Could you come with me, Ma'am...

She starts to object but Coolidge already has her by the arm, is ushering her out the door. Hoover closes it behind them and approaches the bed.

Timms lies there asleep. He's thinner, greyer, has aged badly. His breath comes in shallow gasps. Hoover gets out his gun and screws on a silencer.

He points it at the General's head. The breath rattles in the man's throat -- he seems only an inch from death already -- but he sleeps on. Hoover wants to pull the trigger, but can't quite bring himself to do it. Instead he taps Timms on the forehead with the silencer. He has to tap several times before the General opens his eyes. He looks around, confused, as if he's forgotten where he is. When he finally notices Hoover, it takes him a moment to remember who he is.

TIMMS

Lt. Hoover, how nice of you to come.

He notices the gun in Hoover's hand.

TIMMS

Are you going to kill me? You'd better hurry, or you'll miss your chance.

(laughs, begins to cough)

Give me some water, would you, please?

He indicates a pitcher beside the bed. Hoover fills a glass, holds it to the General's lips, lifting his head so he can drink. When he has, Timms lies back, exhaling with relief.

TIMMS

That's better. Thank you.

Hoover stares at Timms, unable to decide what to do. Finally he takes the film tin from his briefcase, places it on the table

beside the water pitcher. Timms is puzzled.

TIMMS

What is that?

HOOVER

It's the film. Of you and Miss Pond.

TIMMS

Really?

Pleased yet cautious, he picks it up, opens the can, takes out the reel. He gazes up at the big policeman.

TIMMS

You've looked at it, of course.

Hoover nods. Timms brightens, leans closer...

TIMMS

She was spectacular, wasn't she, Hoover?

(Hoover's face is blank)

She showed me pleasures I never knew existed. It's almost all I think about these days.

(puts a hand on Hoover's arm)

You're the only one who knows what I mean.

When Hoover doesn't answer, Timms seems puzzled for a moment. Then he understands.

TIMMS

You loved her, didn't you, the poor girl.
You must have been the only one.

HOOVER (after a beat)

Jimmy Fields. He loved her, too.

This quiets Timms. He frowns, looks at the reel of film.

TIMMS

It's all there, isn't it?

HOOVER

All what?

TIMMS

The film.

HOOVER

There's you and Miss Pond. That's what you wanted, wasn't it?

Timms regards Hoover a long moment, then smiles and sits back in bed as if finally getting a joke he'd been missing.

TIMMS

I'm very embarrassed...

(off Hoover's quizzical look)

You're much more intelligent than you seem. That must be an advantage in your field. In mine, everyone's desperate to seem cleverer than he is. You took off the front part of the film, didn't you?

HOOVER

Yes, sir.

This is bad news for Timms, yet he's amused and impressed.

TIMMS

How did you know?

HOOVER

I didn't. I guessed. I couldn't see Allison being killed over sex.

TIMMS (ironic)

Not at the governmental level, no. Sex is too insignificant here.

HOOVER

Then when everyone got nervous about us being on the test site yesterday, I watched the film again. There were shots that looked like this place. So I thought I'd keep that part. It wasn't until I got here today that I realized.

TIMMS

And what have you realized?

HOOVER

All those people out there with cancer, the Colored and the Mexicans. That's why you killed her. Because she saw them.

TIMMS

(sharply, a real anger)
I didn't kill her.

HOOVER

Who did?

Timms starts to give one answer, stops, changes course...

TIMMS

Do you know why she died? It's a lesson in the workings of large institutions. She died by mistake.

HOOVER

Mistake?? Whose mistake?

TIMMS

Mistake. Stupidity. Fear. She died because ...because it was believed she knew things she shouldn't, that she'd taken certain pictures, and was therefore a danger.

HOOVER

Wasn't she?

TIMMS

What's on the film, Lieutenant? You've seen it, I haven't. Random images? Little snippets of this and that that only a paranoid mind would find threatening?

HOOVER

These people have been experimented on, haven't they?

TIMMS

Can you prove that from the film? Would you even guess? I bet not.

HOOVER

Then if it wasn't sex, and it wasn't what she saw here, she died for nothing.

TIMMS

Yes.

The horror of this makes Hoover close his eyes a moment.

HOOVER

How'd she get cancer?

TIMMS

How did I?

HOOVER

You?

TIMMS

Oh, yes, I have it, too. Like those poor bastards down the hall. Rather worse, in fact. It's in my blood, my bones, even, they tell me now, my brain. Apparently my thoughts are going. I lie here all day thinking of women.

HOOVER

Who killed her, Timms?

TIMMS

Let it go, Hoover. There's nothing you can do. Nothing to be set right. No revenge to be had.

HOOVER (points gun at him)

I can shoot you.

TIMMS

But I don't matter anymore, don't you see? I never really did. No one does. This thing you're after, that killed Miss Pond and Fields and sent the film to your wife, you can't fight it. It isn't a person. It isn't even a government.

HOOVER

What is it?

TIMMS

(simply; surprised he doesn't know)
It's power....It uses you and uses me, but it's stronger than any of us, or all of us together. Stronger than a thousand suns.

HOOVER

Then what can we do?

TIMMS

We can oppose it and be destroyed. Or serve it and be rewarded.

HOOVER

It sounds like God.

TIMMS

Except it's real.

The General looks at Hoover almost fondly.

TIMMS

Don't waste yourself on this. Go home to your wife. Love her if you can...I hear she's a handsome woman.

Hoover is startled by the intimacy and impudence of this last remark, but Timms only smiles.

He finally puts away his gun, and at that moment the door bursts open and half a dozen SOLDIERS rush in, pointing weapons at him. Fitzgerald comes behind them in a fury. Outside the Captain has a gun at Coolidge's head. Timms immediately rises to full authority, pushing himself up in bed.

TIMMS

What is going on here?

FITZGERALD

They breached the security of the center. We believe they intended to do you harm.

Timms surveys the situation a beat.

TIMMS

These men are my friends. They brought me the film that we wanted...

He holds it up. Fitzgerald appears surprised.

TIMMS

...Give them what we promised and take them back to Los Angeles.

FITZGERALD

But, sir, they entered the scientific areas without clearance or--

TIMMS (bellows)

That is an order, Colonel.

Fitzgerald glares, but is silent.

TIMMS

Do it quickly. The test is in less than an hour.

At Fitzgerald's nod, the men usher Hoover and Coolidge out. Fitzgerald remains behind. He picks up the reel of film. Timms takes it out of his hands.

TIMMS

And have someone bring me a projector.

EXT. AIRSTRIP - DAY

A soldier driving Hoover and Coolidge up to the DC-3. They get out, Hoover carrying a package wrapped in paper, like the one Katherine received, as well as his briefcase. The two cops walk up the ramp onto the plane.

INT. DC-3 - DAY

As Hoover and Coolidge enter the cabin, they are surprised to find Colonel Fitzgerald and the Captain already there.

FITZGERALD (amiable)

The Captain and I have business in Los Angeles. We're going to ride down with you. You don't mind, do you?

HOOVER

(looks right at him)

It's your plane.

Fitzgerald smiles. Hoover sits in one of the leather chairs. Coolidge takes the one next to him. There's a tension in the cabin belied by the amiable chatting between Fitzgerald and the Captain.

The plane begins to taxi. The four of them sit facing each other. Hoover and Coolidge tense for the lift off, but the soldiers seem relaxed.

EXT. AIRSTRIP - DAY

The plane rises into the sky.

INT. DC-3, CABIN - DAY

As the plane levels off, Fitzgerald gets up and goes to the bar.

FITZGERALD

Would you care for a drink, Lieutenant?
There's some nice bourbon here.

He pours two glasses, hands one to Hoover.

COOLIDGE

I'll have a beer.

Fitzgerald ignores Coolidge. Another soldier comes out of the forward cabin. This is a surprise to the two cops who look at

the man, then at each other.

FITZGERALD (to Hoover)
You didn't give us the whole film. Part
of it is missing.

Hoover looks at him without responding.

COOLIDGE
(with unexpected ferocity)
Hey, I want the goddam beer.

FITZGERALD (to Hoover)
You have it with you, don't you?

Hoover says nothing for a long time. Finally a faint smile appears on his face, and he nods. Fitzgerald smiles more broadly, even the Captain appears jolly. Only Coolidge seems surprised and confused.

FITZGERALD
Would you give it to us, please? We've
given you everything we promised.

He indicates the wrapped package, now at Hoover's feet.

HOOVER
What's on the film, Colonel? You don't
even know, do you?

The captain glances at the other soldier. He opens the door to the front, and two more soldiers come out. They are all big, tough-looking guys without smiles. They stand about the cabin, one near the door.

Hoover and Coolidge look at each other, and a little smile begins to appear on Coolidge's face. It's the first smile we've seen on him, and it transforms him into a much more imposing figure.

The plane banks sharply, the desert floor appearing in the port windows.

FITZGERALD
That piece of film is going to be
destroyed, Lieutenant...

HOOVER
Just like Allison Pond.

FITZGERALD
...The only question is if you and your
fat friend are going with it.

HOOVER

You misunderstand the situation, Colonel. The film you sent to my house...my wife saw it. That was the only hold you had on me.

FITZGERALD

No copies of it have been shown to anyone in the Los Angeles Police Department, nor do they need to be. We have other copies of everything there...

(indicates Hoover's package)

...they can go anywhere.

HOOVER

You mean you told me you'd given me all the copies, but you hadn't...?

Fitzgerald leans against the cabin wall, exasperated yet also relieved, as if he had known all along it would come to this.

HOOVER (to Fitzgerald)

Now you open the door, right?

(beat; he smiles)

Why don't you open the door?

As if to answer, Fitzgerald nods to the slider nearest the main cabin door. The man starts to open it. The Captain and Coolidge are locked in death stare.

HOOVER

Does Timms know about this part, too?

FITZGERALD

The General is no longer relevant.

HOOVER

Who decided to push Allison out of the plane?

FITZGERALD

If such a thing had happened, the General would not have been informed.

HOOVER

He wouldn't have made the decision.

FITZGERALD

Of course not.

HOOVER

It would have been you.

Fitzgerald looks directly at Hoover. He is unashamed.

FITZGERALD

That's right.

Hoover nods, smiles slightly. Fitzgerald gestures to the soldier by the door.

HOOVER

Just so I know.

The soldier by the door is already reaching for a gun, but before he can get it, Hoover is out of his chair, moving with a speed we wouldn't of thought possible. He kicks Fitzgerald in the knee so hard that Colonel bounces off the wall and crumples to the floor. In a continuous motion, Hoover swings one arm out to the side, shattering the nose of soldier going for his gun. The man's face erupts in blood, but before he can react to the pain, Hoover grabs him by the hair and hurls him out the open cabin door.

The whole thing has taken no more than three seconds. For a moment, the cabin remains frozen, but when Fitzgerald begins to scream in pain, everyone suddenly moves. The soldiers go for their guns, but Hoover is among them, so fast and huge they can't get them out or find a line of fire.

A bellow is coming out of Hoover, an inhuman roar. He is smashing faces, breaking bones, like a maddened Samson, hurling bodies about as if they were sticks.

The soldiers grab him. Coolidge pulls one of them off. The Captain shoots Coolidge in the back. Coolidge hardly notices, repeatedly slamming the one he has hold of into the cabin ceiling until the man's skull caves in and blood washes down his face.

Hoover, meanwhile, grabs the Captain, snaps his gun arm like a twig. He screams, claws at Hoover's eyes. Hoover swings him face first into a bulkhead, then hurls him out the door like a piece of refuse.

EXT. PLANE OVER THE DESERT - DAY

The Captain comes out the cabin door. A second later another one appears behind him. Then a third. All three float silently downward.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Hoover and Coolidge stand alone in the cabin, blood spattered, breathless, terrible. It is oddly quiet. Only Fitzgerald

remains, crumpled on the floor. Hoover picks him up. Hoover is calmer now, an Old Testament patriarch whose need for justice has been nearly appeased.

HOOVER (softly)
You shouldn't have killed her, Colonel.
That was beyond your purview.

Fitzgerald just stares at him, speechless with fear.

HOOVER
(firmer, demanding a response)
Do you hear me?

FITZGERALD
Yes...

That appears to satisfy Hoover. He sets Fitzgerald down on his feet. It's all over now. Everyone relaxes. Then with an access of fury, Hoover grabs him, shouts into his face.

HOOVER
And you shouldn't have gone near my wife.
You do what you want to me, but not her.

He hurls Fitzgerald out the door. At that moment, the front cabin opens, and yet another soldier comes out to see what's wrong. He has a gun. Still shouting, Hoover goes for him, too.

COOLIDGE
No, Max! Don't!

Hoover doesn't seem to hear. He throws this one out, too. Coolidge looks at Hoover in astonishment, then comes to the door and together they watch him fall, Fitzgerald still visible below.

COOLIDGE
Gee, Max, I think that was the pilot.

Hoover looks at Coolidge, surprised. He hurries to the front, looks into the cockpit. It's empty, no one at the controls.

HOOVER
Shit.

COOLIDGE
It's only a problem. We can break it down into parts.

INT. PLANE, COCKPIT - DAY

Hoover slides into the pilot's seat. Coolidge takes the chair next to him. They look at the maze of controls. Hoover touches one of the pedals with his foot, and the plane jerks suddenly to the side. He immediately lets go.

COOLIDGE

Didn't you fly one of these during the war?

HOOVER

I flew in one of these, it's not the same thing. I was a tail gunner.

(beat)

I think you're supposed to land into the wind. Something like that.

Coolidge nods. Hoover studies the controls, touches the wheel in front of him and when the plane doesn't jerk, he pushes it slowly forward.

COOLIDGE

Did you happen to notice which way the wind was blowing?

Hoover is looking out the window,

HOOVER

I think we're going to need the landing gear. See if you can find it.

Coolidge studies the myriad switches. Experimentally throws one or two.

COOLIDGE

Would it be marked?

Hoover pushes the wheel further forward. The plane is dropping like a rock toward the desert floor. Hoover studies the controls.

COOLIDGE

You want me to try?

Hoover reaches out, touches a switch. The drop slows and becomes more gradual.

EXT. PLANE OVER THE DESERT - DAY

The plane is diving, but the pitch of the fall has flattened out.

INT. PLANE COCKPIT - DAY

COOLIDGE (surprised, happy)
That was good, Max.

Coolidge smiles. Hoover becomes cheerful as he realizes they may not be dying after all.

HOOVER
That wasn't bad, was it? I think we're going to be all right.

COOLIDGE
Max, can I ask you a question?

Hoover focuses on the controls, the ground coming up at them.

HOOVER
Forget the questions, Ellery. Find the landing gear.

Coolidge tries different switches.

COOLIDGE
Did you really have that piece of film the Colonel wanted?

HOOVER (focused on flying)
No.

COOLIDGE
I didn't think so.

He hits at switch and the radio comes on. Coolidge twists a dial until it picks up a commercial radio station playing popular MUSIC. The music continues through the rest of the scene.

He throws another switch. We hear the landing gear come down.

COOLIDGE
(pleased with himself)
I did it.

Hoover smiles at him. The ground is coming up at them, filling the field of vision. The blood is coming out of Coolidge, running down his front.

HOOVER
I'll have us down in a minute.
(laughs)
One way or another.

Beat. Coolidge smiles, doesn't laugh.

COOLIDGE
What are we going to tell Parker about the plane?

HOOVER (shrugs)
It crashed and we got out. It's lucky we weren't killed.

COOLIDGE (shakes his head)
That doesn't sound very plausible.

Hoover works the controls.

COOLIDGE
Did you ever tell Katherine, Max?

HOOVER
Our friends back there did it for me.

COOLIDGE
Oh...At least, then it can heal.

Despite the uprushing ground--or because of it--Hoover takes Coolidge's remark seriously. In some way he is showing Coolidge more respect than these guys ordinarily show each other.

HOOVER
You want to know what I think, Ellery? I think thirty years from now, I'm on top of her at night, our bones so old they creak, this dead girl's still going to be somewhere in the back of her mind.

EXT. OVER THE DESERT - DAY

The DC-3 drops toward the ground, the wings dipping, first one, then the other. The door is still open. The plane hits, bounces, comes down again...

INT. PLANE - DAY

Hoover and Coolidge being throw about as the plane hits.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The plane comes to a stop.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Hoover gets himself out of his seat belt, turns to Coolidge.

HOOVER

All right, Ellery, it's time to leave.

Coolidge looks up. The front of his shirt is soaked in blood, his eyes are as forlorn as a lost child's. He struggles to get enough breath to speak.

COOLIDGE

I can't.

Hoover reaches over, releases Coolidge's seatbelt and tries to pull him out of the seat. With considerable difficulty, he manages to get him up over his shoulder.

HOOVER

You're too damn big, man.

COOLIDGE

I know, Max. I'm sorry.

Hoover staggers out of the cockpit.

EXT. PLANE - DAY

The cabin door is open. Hoover puts Coolidge in the doorway, jumps to the ground, then reaches up to pull him down. He staggers under the weight, but finally sets him on the sand in the shade of the wing. The plane radio is playing Big Joe Turner singing "Flip, Flop & Fly," a sound that augers the coming of rock-and-roll.

HOOVER

You all right?

COOLIDGE (a bad thought)

I don't know, Max, I've been thinking... my psychiatrist isn't going to like what happened up there.

Hoover is busy trying to make Coolidge comfortable.

HOOVER

Forget the psychiatrist, Ellery.

COOLIDGE

You know what she isn't going to like the most? While it was all happening, I felt good again. She isn't going to like that. I'm right back where I started.

(dazed at the realization)

I like hitting people.

HOOVER (gently)

There's a place for that. There's always a place for it.

Coolidge is comforted by that, smiles up at Hoover. Suddenly he sees something, points...

COOLIDGE

Look, Max...

A FLASH ON THE HORIZON

A sheet of light shoots out silently in both directions. A column of dust begins to rise from the desert floor, slowly swelling against the sky....

Only then does the SOUND reach us, an OVERPOWERING ROAR accompanied by a wind that blows sand and gravel, whips the Hoover's clothing and hair. He averts his face and sees Coolidge stretched on the ground.

HOOVER

Ellery! Ellery!

He grabs him, shakes him. It's too late, he's dead. Hoover turns away in pain, looking back toward the bomb blast. Big Joe Turner is still singing.

A LOW ANGLE SHOT: Hoover stands like a western lawman watching the mushroom cloud rise and rise until it dwarfs him. Until it is so large we can no longer see him at all.

ON THE CLOUD

A roiling crown of dust, the massive billows of brilliant white and color and darkness. We move deeper and deeper into it until there is just...

DARKNESS

It fills the screen. Sound fades. Then in the darkness a tiny light appears, and we hear:

KATHERINE'S VOICE

Tell me about her.

HOOVER'S VOICE

Why?

KATHERINE'S VOICE

I need to hear it.

A silence. We're moving toward the light.

KATHERINE

Did you ever think about leaving me for her?

HOOVER'S VOICE

No.

Now we realize that we are

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT

The whole hill is dark except this one light, burning in a window of the Hoovers' house.

KATHERINE'S VOICE

She was very beautiful.

We're close enough now to make out Hoover and Katherine sitting at the kitchen table, a candle burning between them.

HOOVER (long beat)

It wasn't just that...The people I deal with, most of them know they're no good. But with her...maybe she was a whore, I don't know, but she acted like no matter what she saw, what she did, none of it could ever touch her. She was cleaner than it was dirty.

KATHERINE

But it did touch her. She's dead.

They sit in the near darkness. We keep moving closer.

KATHERINE

Why did you stop seeing her?

HOOVER

Because of you. Because I loved you and I wanted to die in your arms, and I didn't want that between us...And now it is, and it always will be. I can't even ask forgiveness.

KATHERINE

I couldn't give it to you if you did.

(beat)

It's never going to be the same, Max.

Hoover exhales heavily. He can't even look at her. The camera keeps moving in on Katherine as she stares into the candle.

KATHERINE

But I won't stop loving you. For this or anything. Maybe I shouldn't tell you that. Maybe it doesn't make sense. Maybe it's not even you I love. But I gave my heart once. I gave it to you, and I can't take it back. Even if I wanted. It's not mine anymore to take. Now it's yours...

She stops. She's beyond tears, abject and suffering and powerful.

KATHERINE

But one thing. Die in my arms, fine. Just don't do it yet, okay.

Suddenly she is virtually yanked out of frame. We see the table rocking slightly and the candle rocking with it, the saucer it's sitting on rattling a bit, the flame burning and twisting alone.

THE END