

PARKER

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EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF PARIS, FRANCE - DAY (1944)

The sky bleeds black smoke. Buildings lay in ruins. Cannons roar in the distance as we HEAR:

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Where is she?!

INT. ABANDONED CHURCH - DAY (1944)

Crack! Knuckles smash into a face.

Fists of fury pound as two SOLDIERS brawl to the death. One of them is JACK PARKER (a rusty, relentless force driven by some unforgivable sins). The other's a goddamn NAZI.

They rail like gladiators until Jack gets the upper hand -- pins the Nazi bastard's throat with his knee -- shoves a PICTURE of a GIRL (20s) in his face.

JACK PARKER
(in German)
Where is she? I know they took her!

NAZI
I'm only a reconnaissance scout.

Jack eyes the German's KAR 98k Sniper Rifle still perched in a nearby window.

JACK PARKER
Armed with that? Your unit raided her building this morning. Where did they take them?
(off his silence)
Her name is Audrey Marceaux. I saw--

NAZI
I've never seen that woman before in my life.

Jack scrutinizes the Nazi's face as we go ECU on: *His mouth curls, eyebrow twitches, pupils dilate.*

JACK PARKER
Don't lie -- The Allies occupy the west and it's too treacherous through the mountains. They either took them south or east across the river.

NAZI
Please, I know nothing...

Jack presses harder into his throat.

JACK PARKER
East. Or south?

NAZI
 (relents)
**East. There's a resettlement camp
 in Laon.**

But there it is again -- the Nazi's cheek TWISTS ever so slightly.

JACK PARKER
**South. They went south. Where?!
 Where?!!**

SMACK! Jack slams his head into the ground -- pivots away and snatches the rifle, leveling it at the German.

NAZI
 (broken)
**...there's a train. But you're too
 late.**

Off Jack -- BLAZING inside -- as we CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION PLATFORM - DAY (1944)

SS OFFICERS lead Jewish PRISONERS onto cars. Loved-ones cry farewell in the ordered chaos.

Jack (wearing the Nazi's uniform) storms through the bustling crowd and finds the commanding Officers. He flashes Audrey's picture.

JACK PARKER
This woman -- have you seen her?

The Officers shrug indifferently -- *Nein*.

Jack marches up to the train and shows the picture to the prisoners.

JACK PARKER (CONT'D)
 Audrey Marceaux! Audrey Marceaux!?

The captives shrug, at a loss. His pleas are cut short by:

WHOOOOWOOO! The train's horn blares, and the cars chug into motion.

Jack races along the platform -- searches desperately for her face as--

A set of EYES buried deep within the prisoners LOCK ON Jack.

But her screams are useless amid the chaos and Jack can only watch helplessly as --

The train disappears over the horizon. Broken, he stares at the picture of that beautiful woman, REMEMBERING as that image comes to life and we see:

AUDREY MARCEAUX (like an angel) -- handing out water to broken Allied TROOPS as Jack snaps a picture, watching her from among the soldiers. A BLUE PENDANT on her necklace flares the sunlight and she catches his stare. THEY LOCK EYES and their worlds go Boom! as we FLASH TO THEM:

Kissing.

Dancing.

Fucking.

SMILING together until--

GORDON (V.O.)

Parker! ...Parker! Goddamnit, Jack -
- Wake up!

INT. JIMMY VONG'S DEN - DAY

OPIUM hangs in the air. Lost souls fuck in the shadows. It's a place where sins are born baby and Jack's splayed out on a couch, riding HIIIGH until--

Beefy hands rattle him back to now. Jack comes to and sees: GORDON HOLLENBECK (50s. An old school ball-buster who'd be cool if it weren't for the whole racist thing).

GORDON

Jesus -- You look as ragged as a
whore on nickel night.

JACK PARKER

Sergeant Hollenbeck? What-- what's
going on?

GORDON

On your feet soldier!

Gordon wrenches him up -- leads Jack out the front door into:

EXT. LOS ANGELES, 1947 - DAY

Sunshine! The City of Angels sparkles with fedoras, furs and whitewall tires. Billboards scream of a better life. *Opportunity.* It's Postwar Paradise and America's on top.

But Jack just WINCES at the blazing sun.

GORDON
When d'you get back?

JACK PARKER
Last fall.

GORDON
The hell took so long?

JACK PARKER
Musta got lost...
(then)
...how'd you find me?

GORDON
Johnny Stompanato.

Shit. Jack clocks him a nervous look.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Don't worry, Parker. I covered it.
(off Jack's surprise)
That's right: You owe *me* now.

JACK PARKER
What do you want, Gordon?

GORDON
Relax! You saved my life over there
-- I'm just returning the favor.

Jack scrutinizes Gordon's face -- catching those micro-expressions pop pop pop.

GORDON (CONT'D)
You're doing it again aren't ya,
you freak? That interrogation
trick.

JACK PARKER
It's called a leak -- shows your
brain's trying to conceal an
emotion. And it's not a trick. It's
a fact.

GORDON
Never was much of a good liar.

JACK PARKER
What's your angle, Gordon?

GORDON
I'm a businessman now, Parker.

Gordon hands Jack his business card featuring: **Patriot Mutual Insurance**. Their slogan:

JACK PARKER
"Let us do the worrying for you"?

GORDON
Catchy 'aint it? That's my outfit.
(now, with a toothy grin)
And you're going to come work for me.

JACK PARKER
You want me to sell insurance?

GORDON
Hell no, I don't need a salesman --
I need an interrogator.

JACK PARKER
Why?

GORDON
Insurance fraud. False claims cost my company over a *million* dollars last year. We run into all sorts of trouble. Arson. Kidnapping and ransom. Even murder.

JACK PARKER
Over *insurance*?

GORDON
Over money. And I'm tired of forkin' it over to these crooked bastards.

JACK PARKER
Don't the police help you with that?

GORDON
Know better than to trust Horrall's goons. I want *you*. I paid for you.

JACK PARKER

Gordon, I'm the *last* person you want.

GORDON

Get in the car, Parker.

Gordon nods to a shiny Hudson Commodore Eight.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Or else I sell back your loan to Stompanato at twice the rate.

(then, with a shit-eating smile)

You work for me now.

OFF: Jack up against it as --

INT. PATRIOT MUTUAL OFFICE - DAY

Gordon leads Jack inside as a secretary EVELYN STAFFORD greets them.

*

EVELYN

James Dewhurst called... *again*.

GORDON

Dewhurst?

EVELYN

Funeral home -- outstanding invoice for Prescott's service?

GORDON

...just get me his files.

EVELYN

They're still on his desk.

Gordon leads Jack past a crew of insurance agents: MURPHY, SINCLAIR and BOYD -- aka the Fellas: arrogant buttoned-up lads in their 20s.

GORDON

Fellas -- This is Jack Parker. He'll be taking over for Prescott. Boyd, you close that three o'clock?

BOYD

Still needs a little polish, boss.

GORDON
Christ, the guy called *us*. You
stick to the text?

BOYD
Hit him with that closer like a
goddamn thunderbolt, and he still
shook off.

Gordon just barrels on, infuriated --

GORDON
Kid couldn't sell a blowjob in a
whorehouse.

JACK PARKER
Who was Prescott?

GORDON
Poor bastard fell off a balcony
workin' a case over in Boyle
Heights. Hell of an accident.

JACK PARKER
That kind of accident happen a lot
in this line of work?

GORDON
Not if you got wits, kid.

They arrive at an empty desk and Gordon motions to a stack of
files.

GORDON (CONT'D)
These were his outstanding cases. I
want your eyes on them. Now suck
back some coffee and dig in!

Jack stares at the tall stack of files as we HARD CUT TO:

INT. PATRIOT MUTUAL, GORDON'S OFFICE - LATER

That same stack of files on Gordon's desk.

JACK PARKER
...and if you ask me the Johnson
kid is lying. His timeline's dirty.
Plus he contradicts his statement
on page 19 -- could have easily
double-backed and set the fire
himself.

GORDON

So it could've been arson...

JACK PARKER

As for the Montgomery widow? She's clean. Lady may be bat-shit crazy but she didn't have her glasses at the hospital. How does a short-sighted woman drive 30 miles in the pouring rain at night without her glasses?

Gordon takes it all in, impressed as--

JACK PARKER (CONT'D)

Then there's this.

He holds up a separate file labeled:

GORDON

The Des Jardins Matter? Prescott said it was a dead end. 67-year-old French lady out in Orange County croaked in her house.

JACK PARKER

File said she was a Jewish immigrant. Came over in '41.

GORDON

Still got a soft-spot for those people, eh Parker?

Jack shrugs -- pulls a picture of a clean-cut MAN (30s) from the file.

JACK PARKER

What can you tell me about her son, Luc?

GORDON

I can tell you he's a \$100,000 richer thanks to his mother's cushy life-insurance policy. Luc was the sole beneficiary.

JACK PARKER

And the police never found anything suspicious?

GORDON

No, why? You think he had something to do with her death?

Jack stares at the face in the picture.

JACK PARKER

I don't know... but something feels dirty.

GORDON

Then go talk to Detective Doyle. He was the one handling the investigation.

INT. ORANGE COUNTY POLICE PRECINCT - DAY

Jack speaks with Detective A. J. DOYLE (40s Irish. Usually drunk but a damn good cop when he needs to be).

DOYLE

Yeah, we all knew Mrs. Des Jardins. Margot -- she baked pies for us every Thanksgiving. Sad stuff -- Mahoney and Jenkins were on-scene.

He motions to a couple of beat cops MAHONEY & JENKINS behind him.

JACK PARKER

What happened?

MAHONEY

She tripped down her own basement stairs.

JENKINS

Snapped her neck right clean.

Doyle hands Jack the POLICE REPORT.

DOYLE

Hell of a thing. She was a sweet lady. Had one of those bellowing laughs that carried for blocks.

JACK PARKER

She lived with her son?

DOYLE

That's right. Luc Des Jardins. Jewish fella -- sells cash registers for a living. Just moved back from Boston a couple months ago to look after her.

JACK PARKER

Did something happen?

MAHONEY

Poor old broad was losing her mind -
- sufferin' from dementia somethin'
fierce.

JACK PARKER

(reading)

And who's this Anna Whitmore?

*

DOYLE

Neighbor -- She saw the commotion
when we showed up. Saucy little
tart too.

JENKINS

(to Doyle, realizing)

So that's why she's in the report!

Mahoney and Jenkins give Doyle shit as Jack scrutinizes the report.

JACK PARKER

Says Mrs. Des Jardins had moss
under her nails..?

(off their blank looks)

What kind of moss was it?

DOYLE

What *kind*? I don't know. *Moss*.
Green shit. Grows everywhere...?

(then eyeing him)

Look, I know how you insurance
dicks think. Working an angle so
you can weasel out of paying some
up a legitimate claim? Well, lemme
tell ya -- Luc is clean. CLEAN.
Alibi checks out -- his client
confirmed he was in Hancock Park
when she took that tumble.

MAHONEY

This happens more than you think,
Parker.

JENKINS

Old lady fetches a can of soup--and
whoop! Snaps a hip.

DOYLE

Just so happens Mrs. Des Jardins
snapped her neck.

As Jack stares at the photo of Mrs. Des Jardins' body
sprawled out on cold cement in her basement...

EXT. DES JARDINS RESIDENCE - DAY

Knock! Knock! Jack waits on the doorstep. He turns and examines the front GARDEN. *No sign of any moss...*

Finally, LUC DES JARDINS (40s, kinda soft) greets him covered in sweat and sawdust.

LUC DES JARDINS
Apologies, I was working in the
basement.

JACK PARKER
My name's Jack Parker, I'm with
Patriot Mutual.

LUC DES JARDINS
The insurance company?

JACK PARKER
I know this must be a difficult
time but the sooner you can answer
my questions the sooner this can
all be over with...

LUC DES JARDINS
(respectfully)
Please -- come in...

INT. DES JARDINS RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

A modest dwelling with classic old woman crap littered about.

JACK PARKER
I am sorry for your loss.

LUC DES JARDINS
It's been a difficult week.

Jack looks around the room -- spots some pictures of Margot and Luc as a boy in France.

JACK PARKER
I read your file -- You grew up in
Paris?

LUC DES JARDINS
Yes.
(sensing)
Have you been?

JACK PARKER

I was stationed near there for a summer. It's a terrible thing what happened to that city.

LUC DES JARDINS

Mother and I were evacuated just three days after the Germans invaded.

JACK PARKER

And your father?

LUC DES JARDINS

He died when I was nine. Mother was always so protective...

(then, pointedly)

Honestly, Mr. Parker, I didn't even know about the policy until after the accident.

JACK PARKER

I gather she was sick?

LUC DES JARDINS

Dementia. Started slipping about six months ago. I moved back from Boston to look after her. They told me I should put her in a convalescent home but I just couldn't muster the strength...

(then, distraught)

I thought I could take care of her.

Jack watches him like a hawk. But it's clear Luc's telling the truth. Jack lets the moment play out... then motions to the nearby downstairs basement.

JACK PARKER

May I?

INT. DES JARDINS RESIDENCE, BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Jack takes in the surroundings: Crooked stairs. Bad lighting. Exposed pipes drip water into buckets next to Luc's construction gear.

JACK PARKER

Nasty leak.

LUC DES JARDINS

Mother found it and forgot to tell me. That's dementia for you.

JACK PARKER

Any idea why she came down here
that day?

LUC DES JARDINS

She adored plum chutney. I told her
to keep more jars in the kitchen...

Luc points to the storage pantry stacked with homemade
chutneys. Anyone could slip down these stairs let alone a
senile old woman. *Just like the Detective said.*

INT. DES JARDINS RESIDENCE, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Luc leads Jack back to the front door -- crossing past
Margot's BEDROOM.

LUC DES JARDINS

Haven't had the courage to step
foot in there since the accident.

Jack glances in -- it's like any old woman's room. Pictures
on the dresser. Old books by the bedside. A cane. Cold cream.

JACK PARKER

You haven't touched the room?
(off his nod)
Why didn't she have her cane with
her?

LUC DES JARDINS

Her cane?

JACK PARKER

Yeah. The one in her room there.
And the one she has with her in all
those pictures around the house?
Did she use it to walk?

LUC DES JARDINS

Yes. She must have forgotten it.
Maybe that's why she slipped.

Riiiiight. Jack considers this as they cross to the front
door. Then--

JACK PARKER

Oh, the police report said she had
green moss under her nails?

LUC DES JARDINS

Green moss?

JACK PARKER

Didn't see any in your garden --
Any idea how that might've got
there?

LUC DES JARDINS

Hard to say for sure. But Mother
loved to visit the botanical
gardens up in Brentwood. Perhaps
someone there might know.

JACK PARKER

I'll look into it -- thanks.
(then)
We'll be in touch. And again, I'm
sorry for your loss.

Off: These men, shaking hands as Jack scrutinizes Luc's EYES.

GORDON (PRE-LAP)

So is he lying?

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Jack slams scotch with Gordon and the Fellas.

JACK PARKER

Something isn't straight. I suppose
anyone could have tripped down
those stairs. But why didn't she
have that cane with her? And then
there's the *moss*...

SINCLAIR

Moss? Stuff's a bloody weed.

GORDON

You're hanging this case on a weed?

JACK PARKER

I'm hanging it on my instincts,
isn't that why you brought me in?

GORDON

I brought you in because you can
crack a liar.

(then to the Fellas)

I'm telling you boys, Jack Parker's
the best interrogator this world's
ever seen. Japs. Krauts. Wops and
whores -- He cracks 'em all.

BOYD

Then he oughta take a crack at your wife, Sinclair -- see what she's been up to all these nights.

The Fellas HOWL at Sinclair's expense. But not Jack:

JACK PARKER

I don't crack lies, I crack faces.

SINCLAIR

Just how in the hell can you do that?

JACK PARKER

It's simple. Faces are blueprints. We're all coded the same way.

MURPHY

Coded?

JACK PARKER

Emotional reactions are evolutionary. Like a smile. Or a wince of pain -- they're universal traits. Even Darwin said so. Now, when a person lies they *conceal* those emotions. You test men long enough you can spot those triggers. Like tiny fireworks on a face that POP.

(then, to Gordon)

And if you ask me, Luc Des Jardins's hiding something.

GORDON

Like what?

JACK PARKER

I don't know yet. But if you want me to see this case through I'm going to need an advance.

GORDON

An advance? After the money I put down on you -- why, what for?

JACK PARKER

Travel expenses. Need to check out some gardens up in Brentwood.

GORDON
 (eyeing him)
 Or are you going to check back into
 that opium joint?

JACK PARKER
 I gotta figure out where this moss
 came from.

BOYD
 This guy and his goddamn MOSS!

GORDON
 I'm not forking over another nickel
 until I see some evidence. If he
 killed her we need proof.

MURPHY
 Come on, Gordo this Des Jardins
 situation could cost us a hundred
 grand. Don't be a Jew about it --
 give the man some money.

Jack turns on Murphy --- FIRE in his eyes.

JACK PARKER
 What'd you say?

MURPHY
 What? I'm with you here. Gordo
 oughta stop being a goddamn kike
 about it and give you--

CRACK! SLAM! BOOM! Jack's knuckles bust into Murphy's jaw --
 The Fellas yank him back...

MURPHY (CONT'D)
 Jesus. I'm on your side
 Parker!

BOYD
 Woa! Woa! Calm down Jack!

SINCLAIR
 You believe this guy?!

JACK PARKER
 Watch your mouth!

GORDON
 Aw'right, aw'right! Take it easy
 Parker. Jesus. Here -- now get out,
 and go cool off!

Gordon hands over a wad of CASH into Jack's bleeding hand as
 we CUT TO:

INT. JIMMY VONG'S DEN - NIGHT

Jack's surrounded by sin. A HOSTESS offers a hit off an opium pipe but he waves it away -- WAITING -- until a swarthy Brit named WRENCH (a pleasant rat until you cross him) arrives.

WRENCH
Got your message.

JACK PARKER
I want the *best* this time.

Wrench pulls a small GLASS VIAL from inside a black bag.

WRENCH
Just picked it up in Pedro. Hot off a can out of Shanghai. They say even Gable's hooked. Swears by the stuff.

JACK PARKER
What is it?

WRENCH
Jaguar semen. Boiled in Chink herbs. Hercules in a bottle, my friend. Guaranteed results.

JACK PARKER
From Shanghai? Sounds expensive.

WRENCH
(shrugs)
Price of potency, Parker. Sixty a pop. But there's a catch: takes two doses -- twenty-four hours apart. Otherwise it's useless.

Jack pulls his wallet and holds up a stack of cash.

JACK PARKER
One dose now. The rest tomorrow.
Deal?

Wrench SMILES -- accepts the cash. He hands over the vial and watches as Jack swallows the revolting concoction.

WRENCH
You got twenty-four hours.

Now, Jack settles in and lies back on a sofa. He flags down that Hostess carrying the opium pipe.

Then SUCKS back that bliss...

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jack trudges inside the barren apartment. Cot. Sink. Fridge. Chair -- it's just the bare essentials, save for Audrey's PENDANT, that lies next to the bed.

As he steps inside, he drops some Patriot Mutual paperwork on the counter then -- **Slop!** He sees at his feet: A trail OF MILK seeping out from under his front door. **WTF?** He steps back out into the--

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The trail of milk leads to a neighbor's door. He moves over and raps a fist: **KNOCK! KNOCK!**

The door swings open to reveal a young black kid, MOSES (10 -- a fearless buck) sporting a raw black-eye.

MOSES

Sorry, Mister, I'll clean it right up.

JACK PARKER

Everything all right in there?

Jack angles his head inside. Broken chairs. Smashed walls. Like a grenade ripped through the joint. There's a MAN lying on the floor.

Jack steps in and examines him -- discovers he's liquored to the gills.

MOSES

He gets tired is all!
(then)
Say, you got a mop?

Moses hustles over into Jack's apartment--

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The kid scurries around like a restless rat.

MOSES

Nice digs! You got any food?

Moses cracks the fridge but it's barren. He rips through the cupboards -- finds some CRACKERS. Then clocks Jack a puppy-dog stare.

JACK PARKER
Help yourself.

MOSES
(eyeing the paperwork)
Patriot Mutual? What's that?

JACK PARKER
What happened to your face, kid?

MOSES
(by rote)
I forgot to listen proper.

JACK PARKER
That your Dad in there?

MOSES
Nah my Daddy's still in St. Louis --
That's Ray, Mom's friend. She works
nights.

JACK PARKER
You got any brothers or sisters?

MOSES
How *old* are these crackers?
(off Jack's shrug)
Nah... just me.

Jack steps away to a nearby CLOSET and grabs a mop.

As he returns, Moses snatches the mop and makes for the door.

MOSES (CONT'D)
Thanks a lot, Mister!

JACK PARKER
What's your name?

MOSES
Moses Bellefonte.

JACK PARKER
I'm Jack.

MOSES
Thanks for the cracker, Jack.
(then, a bit awkward)
...get it?

Jack eyes the kid -- *something's off*. He looks around and realizes immediately.

JACK PARKER

Hand it over.

Busted, Moses pulls the PENDANT from his pocket. Flashes that puppy-dog stare.

Jack eyeballs the little thief -- lets him see the betrayal in his face, then--

JACK PARKER (CONT'D)

...this belonged to a friend of mine. It's all I got left of her.

The kid hides his eyes.

JACK PARKER (CONT'D)

We're neighbors, Moses. You know what that means?

MOSES

...that we live close.

JACK PARKER

No. It means we look out for one another. Like *brothers* might.

Finally, Moses looks him in the eye --

MOSES

Are you going to tell my mom?

RAY (O.S.)

MOSES!

JACK PARKER

Just listen proper next time, kid.

Relieved, Moses jams some crackers in his pocket, grabs the mop and scurries off.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DAWN

The sun rises -- shining glory over 1940s L.A. bringing us to:

EXT. BOTANICAL GARDENS - DAY

Jack flashes Margot's picture to employees. Among them: GERTRUDE (40s).

*

GERTRUDE

People come in and out at all hours. But I've never seen that woman.

As we HARD CUT TO another, MARY (20s) --

MARY

I don't recognize her, sorry.

And to another, HAROLD (50s) --

HAROLD

Moss? Afraid not. No, we've got too much sunlight for any significant amount of moss to grow in these gardens. Too dry...

He moves off, stumped, as the SOUND OF KNOCKING brings us back to:

EXT. DES JARDINS RESIDENCE - DAY

Jack waits for Luc at the front door but no one's answering. He circles around to the --

BACKYARD. Jack glances through the basement window hoping to find Luc but the construction gear lays idle.

As he returns out FRONT, something catches his eye--

A WOMAN eyeing him suspiciously from her window across the street. And she's awfully curious...

EXT. WHITMORE RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

He knocks on the door where -- ANNA WHITMORE (20s, a brassy mink) opens the door.

JACK PARKER

Mrs. Whitmore? My name's Jack Parker, I'm with Patriot Mutual Insurance.

ANNA

I'm not interested.

JACK PARKER

Actually, I'm here in regards to Margot Des Jardins. You were listed in the police report. May I ask you a few questions?

ANNA
 (sizing him up)
 It's *Miss* Whitmore. Please -- come
 in.

INT. WHITMORE RESIDENCE - LATER

Jack sips some coffee. Spots wedding photos of Anna with an
 AMERICAN SOLDIER.

ANNA
 His name was Henry -- flew B-24s
 over the Pacific. Japs hit him
 somewhere off the coast of New
 Guinea.

JACK PARKER
 I'm sorry.

ANNA
 Don't be. Henry was proud to be a
 soldier. Weren't you?

Jack looks at her: *How'd she--?*

ANNA (CONT'D)
 Come on -- you've got that look in
 your eye.

JACK PARKER
 And what look is that?

ANNA
 Like you're a little broken on the
 inside. ...and trying desperately
 to hide it.

Jack pretends that doesn't eat at him. Sucks back the coffee.

JACK PARKER
 What can you tell me about Mrs. Des
 Jardins?

ANNA
 It's so tragic... I picked up
 Margot's groceries on Fridays.
 ...she was such a kind woman. We'd
 grown close the last couple months,
 especially since she started
 fading.

JACK PARKER
 You mean with her dementia?

ANNA

Yes.

JACK PARKER

Did anything seem out of the ordinary with her?

ANNA

No, not really. Except when I last saw her, she seemed... distracted.

JACK PARKER

Distracted?

ANNA

Yes. She'd just returned home in a taxi. It was odd because she rarely went out past 5 PM.

JACK PARKER

What happened?

ANNA

I have no idea. I tried to ask her about it but she wouldn't say. Poor woman looked like she'd seen a ghost.

PARKER

Do you remember the taxi company?

ANNA

Imperial. I told the police all of this.

JACK PARKER

It wasn't in the report. I appreciate you telling me.

(then)

Oh, she had moss under her nails. Any idea where she might have gotten that?

ANNA

Moss? No.

Jack stands, finishes his coffee.

ANNA (CONT'D)

You sure I can't offer you something a little *stronger*?

As tempted as he is, Jack tips his hat...

JACK PARKER
 Maybe some other time, Miss
 Whitmore.

INT. PATRIOT MUTUAL OFFICE - DAY

Jack scribbles down some notes and hangs up the phone --
 spins to Gordon.

JACK PARKER
 That was Imperial taxi. Turns out
 Mrs. Des Jardins went to a church
 the night she died.

GORDON
 A church? Why's an old Jewish lady
 going to a church?

JACK PARKER
 According to the driver, she was
 only there for all of five minutes.
 Came busting out the basement door
 in a fluster. Driver said he asked
 what was wrong but she never said a
 word.

GORDON
 What church was this?

INT. ST. PAUL'S CHURCH - NIGHT

Stained-glassed ANGELS stare down at Jack as he speaks with a
 priest, FATHER BERTRAM (a warm soul).

FATHER BERTRAM
 I was so sorry to hear about poor
 Mrs. Des Jardins.

JACK PARKER
 How well did you know her, Father?

FATHER BERTRAM
 Hardly well at all -- but she was a
 community-minded woman. Donated her
divine cranberry chutney every
 Christmas.

JACK PARKER
 High praise coming from a man of
 your faith.
 (but seriously)
 (MORE)

JACK PARKER (CONT'D)
 Apparently she was here the night
 before she fell. Last Wednesday.
 Did you see her?

FATHER BERTRAM
 Wednesday? No, I wasn't here but
 Sister Helen was, she might know
 more...

He flags down a nun, SISTER HELEN (40s, icy).

FATHER BERTRAM (CONT'D)
 Do you recall seeing Mrs. Des
 Jardins last Wednesday?

SISTER HELEN
 Yes, she was standing by the exit
 behind the pews. I was in the
 middle of prayer and then before I
 had a chance to say hello she was
 gone. It was odd but I just
 presumed she left.

JACK PARKER
 Was she with anyone?

SISTER HELEN
 No.

JACK PARKER
 The taxi driver I spoke to said she
 came out through the basement?

SISTER HELEN
 The basement?

FATHER BERTRAM
 That's strange. The cellar's the
 only room with an exit, but that
 room's all locked up.

JACK PARKER
 Would you mind showing me?

FATHER BERTRAM
 Of course.

INT. ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, BASEMENT - DAY

As they move through the basement hallway, Jack stiffens at
 the sight of the iconic Christian imagery. Bertram clocks it.

FATHER BERTRAM
Are you a Christian Mr. Parker?

JACK PARKER
Not anymore, Father.

FATHER BERTRAM
Sounds like you had a change of heart. Something in particular?

JACK PARKER
Disgraceful things, father. Things men should never experience.

FATHER BERTRAM
Perhaps we could talk about it sometime.

JACK PARKER
Gonna take more than just a talk to restore my faith, Father.

FATHER BERTRAM
Then how about we add some whiskey?
(off his look)
I'm Irish -- and committed to saving souls.

They arrive at the back door and try to open it but--

FATHER BERTRAM (CONT'D)
See, as I suspected, it's locked.

JACK PARKER
And you don't have a key?

FATHER BERTRAM
Not on me. I haven't been down here for months. I'd have to search the rectory for it.
(then)
It's possible Mrs. Des Jardins could have gotten *lost* down here.

JACK PARKER
But you have no idea how she might have gotten out?

FATHER BERTRAM
No.

Jack eyeballs this here man of God but his pious face reveals nothing.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

As night falls, Jack sits in his car -- spies on the church from across the street. Waits until no one's around and then...

Jack steps out with a FLASHLIGHT and a TIRE IRON. He crosses the street -- heads for the basement door.

With the coast clear, he smashes a small window pane open and unlatches the lock.

INT. ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, BASEMENT ROOM - EVENING

Jack snoops through the dusty church artifacts being watched by a statue of St. Paul. *What the hell did this old lady see down here?*

There's nothing suspicious until he sees -- FRESH FOOTPRINTS. He traces them through the dusty storage area towards the back when -- CREAK. Something stirs behind him.

Jack spins as-

CLUNK! A wooden crucifix slams into his head and our boy Jack falls stone cold to the ground as we **FADE TO BLACK.**

INT. JAIL CELL, POLICE PRECINCT - DAY

VOICE

On your feet, Parker!

Jack comes to -- sees he's behind steel bars as Detective Doyle debriefs Gordon.

GORDON

Breaking and entering?!

DOYLE

Father Bertram reported some vagrant broke into his basement. Neighbors confirmed seeing Parker here, staking it out from his car all afternoon. We found him passed out in an alley a block up.

GORDON

Jesus, you got drunk and broke into St. Paul's?

JACK PARKER

I'm not drunk. Someone rattled my cage -- Knocked me out cold.

DOYLE

I'd a done the same thing if you were trespassing on my property! Lucky they didn't shoot you.

GORDON

What the hell happened?

JACK PARKER

I needed to see for myself what Margot Des Jardins was running from in there.

DOYLE

Doesn't give you the right to break the law. Lucky for you Father Bertram has agreed not to press charges.

GORDON

Then let the man outta there, Doyle.

Doyle relents and unlocks the cage.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Well, did you find anything?

JACK PARKER

No. But what can you tell me about Bertram?

DOYLE

Father Bertram?

JACK PARKER

He knew I was looking into that basement -- it's possible he attacked me.

DOYLE

The man bakes muffins for the hobos down on Jefferson. He's pillar of this community. A *saint*. Why on earth would he attack you?

JACK PARKER

Maybe Margot Des Jardins discovered something about him down there.

GORDON

So Bertram committed murder to shut her up?

DOYLE

That's absurd. My officers searched that basement -- they didn't find anything suspicious.

JACK PARKER

He could have covered it up.

DOYLE

Covered *what* up? The man's a priest.

Jack motions to the fresh wound on his head.

JACK PARKER

You honestly think I did this to *myself*? I'm tellin you: Something about that church is rotten.

DOYLE

That right? You got any evidence to prove this outrageous accusation?

JACK PARKER

(shit)
No. Not yet.

DOYLE

Then, we're done here.
(then to Gordon)
You best keep your soldiers in check, Gordon -- understand?!

Off: Gordon and Jack...

INT. PATRIOT MUTUAL OFFICE, HALLWAY - DAY

Gordon and Parker approach the office.

GORDON

A reckless stunt like that'll put a stain on this company faster than shit through a goose.

JACK PARKER

May sound crazy but--

GORDON

Damn right it does. We're not in the business of solving homicides, Parker. If she was murdered -- how does Luc fit into all this? After all, he's the beneficiary.

They round the corner to find Evelyn, LAUGHING, charmed at the antics of one Moses Bellefonte.

GORDON (CONT'D)

(bristling)

What is *this* doing here?

MOSES

Mr. Parker! Thought I'd swing by your fancy digs! Evelyn said you got a kitchen here, too.

EVELYN

He's a charming little rascal, Jack.

GORDON

This is a place of business!

JACK PARKER

I'll deal with him.

GORDON

Just find out what Luc has to say about this church -- without breaking the goddamn law next time!

Gordon thunders away. Jack turns to Moses and holds out his hand, wise to --

Moses sheepishly pulls a BRACELET from his pocket. Jack hands it back to Evelyn and leads the kid out...

EVELYN

Why that little rat!

EXT. DES JARDINS RESIDENCE - DAY

Jack's car pulls up. Moses rides shotgun -- spots Luc Des Jardins in the window.

MOSES

I thought you said you're taking me home?

JACK PARKER
 Need to talk to someone first. Just
 sit tight, kid or else I spill the
 whole story to your mom.

INT. DES JARDINS RESIDENCE - DAY

Jack updates Luc on his discovery at the church.

LUC DES JARDINS
 St. Paul's church? No, mother never
 mentioned anything.

JACK PARKER
 A taxi driver witnessed her fleeing
 the basement the night before she
 died.

LUC DES JARDINS
 She used to take Sunday walks in
 that neighborhood back when she
 wasn't so sick. Perhaps mother got
 confused that night...

JACK PARKER
 She obviously witnessed something
 significant in there.

LUC DES JARDINS
 And you really think this Father
 Bertram might have had something to
 do with her death?

JACK PARKER
 I can't say for sure -- but whoever
 attacked me in that basement could
 have broken into your house and done
 the same to your mother.

LUC DES JARDINS
 Good lord.

JACK PARKER
 Now, did you see anything? Or can
 you think of *anyone* who might have
 accessed your house that night?

LUC DES JARDINS
 No...

But there it is: Luc's EYEBROW ticks. He flicks his eyes to
 the floor, shifts his weight from left to right...

LUC DES JARDINS (CONT'D)
 I wish I could be more help but I
 just can't think of anyone.

JACK PARKER
 Try not to worry.
 (then, with a smile)
 I'll be in touch.

EXT. DES JARDINS RESIDENCE - DAY

Jack returns to his car. Cranks up the ignition and drives off.

MOSES
 So what happened?

JACK PARKER
 He's lying.

MOSES
 Then don't you want to talk to him
 more? Why are we leaving?

JACK PARKER
 We're not.

Jack pulls into the shadow of a nearby alley...

JACK PARKER (CONT'D)
 We're gonna ride his tail, kid.

Jack spies on the house until sure enough -- Luc hurries out, hops into his car and races away...with Jack and Moses hot on his tail.

INT. DINER - DAY

Luc sits at a booth -- Checks his watch and looks over his shoulder. Clearly *anxious*. Waiting for someone, as we REVEAL:

MOSES (PRE-LAP)
 This is *torture*.

INT. JACK'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Moses burns with boredom next to Jack -- watching Luc from his car across the street.

MOSES

I'm starving! How long we have to keep waiting here? It's been hours already.

JACK PARKER

Just hang in there.

MOSES

You get paid for bein' some kinda peeping Tom? Ask me you need a new line of work, Mr. Parker.

(off his silence)

Why's he just sittin' there all alone?

JACK PARKER

Looks like whoever he was meeting got cold feet.

Luc tosses down some change and makes for a PHONEBOOTH at the back of the diner. Jack gets an idea--

MOSES

How's a milkshake sound, kid?

Moses LIGHTS UP as --

INT. DINER - MOMENTS LATER

Moses throws open the doors like he owns the joint -- saunters up to the counter.

MOSES

Chocolate shake to go! Big one.

The RACIST SLUGS sipping coffee inside stare him down as he strolls toward the phonebooth at the back, overhearing--

LUC DES JARDINS

You can't just shut me out like this! Yes, I know it's getting dangerous but...I love you.

(then)

Alright, fine. I suppose you're right. For now. ...mon petite moineau.

Luc catches the kid eyeing him -- he shoos him away like a gnat as--

MANAGER

Eeny, meeny, miny, moe!

A MANAGER grabs Moses by the scruff of the neck -- steers him out.

MOSES

Hey I got money! Alls I want is a milkshake. Make that TWO!

As he holds up the CASH for them to see.

INT. JACK'S CAR - LATER

Jack and Moses slurp back milkshakes.

JACK PARKER

"Mon petite moineau"?

MOSES

Uh huh -- what's that?

JACK PARKER

French for sparrow. And he said "I love you" and "it's getting dangerous"?

Moses nods, sucks back his earnings.

JACK PARKER (CONT'D)

Not bad, kid.

(then, putting it together)

'cause I got a hunch who that little bird was...

As he CRANKS the ignition key.

INT. WHITMORE RESIDENCE - DAY

CLINK! Jack's tumbler of scotch meets Anna Whitmore's glass.

JACK PARKER

Thanks for the burst Miss Whitmore...

(then)

Or should I say: Petite Moineau?

ANNA

Petite what?

Jack scrutinizes her pristine, smooth face. But she's good. He can't spot a tell. Yet...

JACK PARKER

Tell me, when did you start helping Mrs. Des Jardins?

ANNA

About two months ago. Helped deliver groceries. Wash dishes. It was *sublime!*

(off his stern look)

I'm just teasing. I was happy to help her. She was so sweet.

JACK PARKER

Did you have a key?

ANNA

Yes. Probably still around here somewhere.

(curious)

...why?

JACK PARKER

What can you tell me about Luc?

ANNA

(shrugs)

He seems like a nice man. Quiet fellow. I honestly don't know him all that well.

JACK PARKER

I thought you said you helped around the house.

ANNA

Yes. So--?

JACK PARKER

So surely you would have gotten to know him a little?

ANNA

The man practically lives out of his car selling cash registers. And he only moved back a couple months ago.

JACK PARKER

Just around the time you showed up.

ANNA

I suppose...

(then, eyeing him)

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)

What exactly are you *implying* Mr. Parker?

JACK PARKER

That neither of you did a very good job of looking after that old lady.

ANNA

How dare you--!

JACK PARKER

Come on, it all fits. A woman like you, all alone out here?

Anna looks at him -- furious.

ANNA

A woman like me?! And just what is that suppose to mean?

JACK PARKER

It means you're beautiful, baby, and you know it. But you're a widow -- got no one to look after you now... Until he showed up. Then let me guess, you buttered him up, figured you'd knock off the broad then split the money. Tell me, did he push that poor old woman down those stairs? Or was it you?

Whack! Anna SLAPS him across the face. Jack grabs her wrist.

JACK PARKER (CONT'D)

Yeah, that's more like it. Just like down in that basement.

ANNA

What basement? What on earth are you talking about?!

Jack locks on her face but her expression exposes no lie.

JACK PARKER

My apologizes, Miss Whitmore. I was testing you.

ANNA

Testing me?

JACK PARKER

A psychological interrogation technique I learned overseas.

ANNA

Psychology? I thought you said this was about insurance.

JACK PARKER

Lucky for me, they're connected.

Anna, all keyed up now, lights a cigarette.

ANNA

You got some nerve -- throwing around accusations like that.

JACK PARKER

Didn't mean to push your button.

ANNA

You couldn't hit my button if you *tried*, Mr. Parker.

Oh really? Jack can't resist the bait...

JACK PARKER

Funny, because I was right about one thing.

ANNA

Think you're the first man to come in here and tell me I'm beautiful, "baby"?

JACK PARKER

No.

(but then)

I was talking about how sad and lonely you are inside...

It cuts through Anna's brassy armor -- she turns away, *vulnerable!*

Jack takes her face in his hands -- kisses her, deeply. And Anna let's go. Kisses him back -- even deeper.

Their bodies smash up against one another -- Jack runs his hands up her skirt. She writhes with anticipation, reaches down to his crotch but -- *he moves her hand away*. She tries again until he swipes away her advance.

She looks at him -- confused. And when Jack finally meets her eye, she sees: This man is painfully ashamed of himself.

JACK PARKER (CONT'D)

Guess you were right about me too.
...I *am* a little broken.

ANNA
 (realizes)
 I'm sorry -- I...

JACK PARKER
 Don't be. Wasn't always this way...

But it is now. And it's killed any chemistry between them.
 Jack backs down, excuses himself--

ANNA
 Stay.

JACK PARKER
 I can't. Luc's lying to me. And I
 need to prove it.

ANNA
 Wish I could be more help -- but
 I've told you everything I know
 about what happened before that
 poor woman died.

The notion suddenly rattles through Jack, as he realizes --

JACK PARKER
*Before she died. But... what about
after? Did you see him with anyone?
 See anything strange at all?*

ANNA
 No. ...although one night last week
 I woke up and there was a car
 parked in his driveway. Must've
 been there in the morning and then
 it was gone the next day. First
 time I'd ever seen it.

JACK PARKER
 What kind of car?

ANNA
 I don't know -- it was green. And
 it had a big 'ol dent in the back
 bumper.

INT. ORANGE COUNTY POLICE PRECINCT - DAY

Jack confronts Doyle who's skeptical at this latest lead.

DOYLE

You want me to run a list of all green cars that have been in an accident in the last six months?

JACK PARKER

If there's a police report it'll tell us who was there that night.

DOYLE

Yeah, "if." Who's to say they even reported the accident?

JACK PARKER

We're talking about a potential homicide, Detective, doesn't that interest you?

DOYLE

Your lead's as thin as piss on a plank, Parker. Could be anybody's car. A friend, family...

JACK PARKER

But if it's someone Luke was having an affair with you might actually have a suspect here.

Doyle grunts. Marches back to a wall of filing cabinets and pulls out two sets of LONG drawers brimming with police reports.

DOYLE

You wanna waste your *own* time with this balderdash go right ahead.

Doyle sits back down at his desk -- tops off his coffee with help from a flask. Jack approaches the daunting stack and begins sifting through the files as we TIME CUT TO:

INT. ORANGE COUNTY POLICE PRECINCT - LATER

Jack's loosing faith -- still combing through endless files.

DOYLE

You're a persistent bastard I'll give you that much.

(off his silence)

I can't figure you out, Parker. You're not like those other insurance buzzards. What's got you burning so bright on all this?

JACK PARKER

A woman was murdered -- isn't that enough?

DOYLE

(bullshit)

Justice? Spare me the yarn -- you got your own angle here.

JACK PARKER

I was hired to do a job.

DOYLE

Never seen a man get so riled over insurance...

(then)

Almost like there's something about this case that's *eating* at you. Almost like it's personal...

And the look on Jack's face tells us Doyle might be right. But Jack's quick to hide it.

JACK PARKER

Just isn't right seeing a woman like Mrs. Des Jardins murdered for nothing but greed. Seen too much of it, Detective.

Except right now, Jack's hit a wall. He's ready to quit but pulls one last file and -- blazes WIDE-EYED at the sight of a name. Doyle catches it.

DOYLE

Find something?

Jack buries the buzz inside -- slides back the file and makes for the exit.

JACK PARKER

You were right. Waste of time...

EXT. ST. PAUL'S CHURCH - DAY

Jack crosses past a GREEN BUICK with a dent in the bumper sitting in the church parking lot. As he makes his way inside we hear:

FATHER BERTRAM (PRE-LAP)

For even the devil disguises himself as an angel of light...

INT. ST. PAUL'S CHURCH - DAY

Father Bertram belts out Corinthians from a podium. He spots Jack, tightens up, trying not to lose step in his sermon.

But Jack's not paying him any attention. Instead, he steps in and finds Sister Helen.

JACK PARKER

A word, Sister?

He takes hold of her elbow -- steering her to a secluded corner of the church.

SISTER HELEN

We're in the middle of a service--

JACK PARKER

And I'm in the middle of a murder investigation.

SISTER HELEN

I had nothing to do with that poor woman's death.

JACK PARKER

But you were having a love affair with her son?

SISTER HELEN

A love affair?

JACK PARKER

That is your green Buick outside right?

SISTER HELEN

Yes. So?

JACK PARKER

So you may as well drop the act...
mon petite moineau.

Sister Helen blanches.

SISTER HELEN

(covering)

I don't understand.

JACK PARKER

Oh, but I understand. Margot followed Luc that night and caught you together down in that basement.

(MORE)

JACK PARKER (CONT'D)
Then instead of facing your sins --
you pushed her down those stairs.

SISTER HELEN
Quiet please!

JACK PARKER
Quiet?! Like it was in that
basement where you attacked me.

SISTER HELEN
Attacked you?

JACK PARKER
Way I see it this plays out two
ways: You come clean. Or I yell
SINNER.

Sister Helen wavers. Jack turns and faces the congregation.

SISTER HELEN
Stop, please--!
(breaking)
I'm weak. I admit -- I fell in love
with Luc but I didn't kill that
poor woman.

JACK PARKER
Come on, Sister -- it all lines up.

SISTER HELEN
No, you don't understand. Margot
knew all about my relationship with
Luc! She'd known for weeks.
(then)
She came to the church that night
to warn me.

JACK PARKER
Warn you? About what?

SISTER HELEN
I don't know, exactly. She
confronted me in the basement that
night. But the woman was in a state
-- she insisted the affair had to
stop. That it was for my own good.

JACK PARKER
Why?

SISTER HELEN
How should I know -- she wasn't
making any sense.

(MORE)

SISTER HELEN (CONT'D)

She kept ranting on that I had to stop, she said I was "dancing with the devil".

Jack processes this tall-tale -- eyeballing this fragile woman who's clearly telling him the truth.

SISTER HELEN (CONT'D)

(ashamed)

And she was right -- even if she was out her mind.

JACK PARKER

If all that's true then why did you attack me in that basement?

SISTER HELEN

I may be a disgrace to God, Mr. Parker, but I'm no barbarian. I never attacked you.

JACK PARKER

Well someone sure as hell did!

The congregation stirs.

SISTER HELEN

(broken)

You can yell all you want now, I'm telling you the truth.

JACK PARKER

I'm not here to disgrace you Sister, frankly I don't give a damn about your precious faith. But someone connected to this church killed that old lady.

SISTER HELEN

I already told you everything about that night -- she came in here all filthy and wet, ranting out of her mind that the affair had to stop--

JACK PARKER

Filthy and wet?

(processing it all)

The police found moss under her nails -- Did she tell you where she was before coming here? What garden she might have visited?

SISTER HELEN

Garden? I've known Margot for years
-- the woman hated gardens.

JACK PARKER

But Luc told me--

And it all hits Jack like a punch in the gut.

JACK PARKER (CONT'D)

SONOFABITCH!

Bertram and the congregation startle as Jack storms out...

INT. DES JARDINS RESIDENCE, BASEMENT - DAY

SMASH! The window *SHATTERS* open as Jack busts in, sliding through into the dark dank basement.

He switches on a *LIGHT* revealing Luc's construction gear next to the dripping pipes and a *WATER-LOGGED* area.

He approaches the wall and reaches his hands up into the wet dark crevices. As his nails scrape against the cement he feels something -- looks at his fingers in the light revealing:

Traces of *GREEN MOSS*.

He continues to run his hands along the walls, feeling each crack and crevice until something lodged up above in the shadows *NUDGES LOOSE*. He pulls it down to see:

It's a small wooden *BOX*. Emblazoned with a *BLACK SWASTIKA*.

Jack stares -- confounded. He opens it to reveal: A *GERMAN PASSPORT* next to stacks of letters and photographs. He opens the passport to see: Luc clad in a high-ranking *SS Uniform* and his real identity -- Jürgen Heinrich.

He scours through the rest of the contents. Finds a journal and pictures. Stacks of them -- of Luc/Jürgen next to his motherfuckin' Nazi friends alongside hundreds of prisoners in concentration camps.

It's dark shit but Jack's compelled to look -- he rifles through the images, sickened, until --

HE FREEZES -- eyes locked on a group of prisoners. Among them, a *GIRL'S FACE*. It's Audrey Marceaux -- the girl from the opening.

Jack reels, staring at that tortured face -- a hurricane of emotions running through him when--

WHHAAAMM!!!!

A metal pipe cracks his head. He buckles over in pain -- FIGHTS to stay conscious at the sight of:

Luc standing over him -- the pipe up above his head, on its way down for one final deathblow until --

Jack rolls right -- sweeps Luc off his feet.

Luc crashes to the ground and Jack launches himself at this Nazi fuck.

Boom! Crack! Bang! These two rail like gladiators.

Finally, Jack spots a HAMMER lying near a workbench -- SNATCHES it up and slams it into Luc's kidneys.

Luc shutters back and Jack pounces -- wraps his arm around Luc's throat into a choke-hold. He drags him over and shoves the picture of Audrey in his face.

JACK PARKER

This girl! Do you know her?! Where is this?

A flash of recognition behind Luc's eyes.

LUC DES JARDINS

Yes!

JACK PARKER

(tightening)
Don't lie to me!

Jack's heart POUNDS.

LUC DES JARDINS

If you let me go, I will explain.

Is he lying? With Luc in a choke hold, he can't get a good read -- so Jack eases up, *slightly*.

LUC DES JARDINS (CONT'D)

She was being held at Les Mazures. One of the guards was in love with that girl and spared her life. And he's hiding, here, in America just like the rest of us. He might know what happened to her.

(then)

(MORE)

LUC DES JARDINS (CONT'D)
 If you let me go I will tell you
 his name.

JACK PARKER
 If you're lying to me...
 (and he means this)
 I'll kill you.

LUC DES JARDINS
 I believe you.

Jack picks up the hammer -- ready if the weasel tries anything. Then: Jack shoves Luc to the ground.

JACK PARKER
 What's his name?

LUC DES JARDINS
 Please -- it's been years. I didn't
 know him well. But I kept a
 journal.

Luc motions to the box of files. *May I?*

Jack clocks every micro-expression on the man's face and it's clear to him, Luc's telling the truth. Jack nods *Okay*. Lets Luc reach for the journal...

JACK PARKER
 (putting it together)
 ...you're not Margot's son, are
 you?

LUC DES JARDINS
 (shrugs)
 I murdered him years ago.

JACK PARKER
 But you escaped using his identity.
 And when you found out Margot was
 losing her mind, you came back.
 Killed her for the money.

LUC DES JARDINS
 Very perceptive.

Luc's hands emerge holding two leather-bound JOURNALS. But as he cracks one open we see it's hollow -- instead holding a snub-nosed Walther P38 Luger.

Now this next shit happens FAST:

Luc snatches the GUN and angles it at Jack --

Jack's EYES WIDEN and *in a flash*, he JAMS the back of the hammer into Luc's skull as

BANG!

The bullet rips through Jack's EAR -- sending him back, reeling. He recovers up, only to see:

Luc's head bounce off the concrete -- his lifeless eyes staring at Jack with the hammer stuck in his head.

JACK PARKER

No!!!

Jack scrambles over -- sweeps the gun aside and tries to revive the bastard. ...but it's useless.

Resigned, he pulls out Luc's wallet and pockets the CASH. Looks on -- broken at the sight of it all as we hear:

GORDON (PRE-LAP)

You gotta be shittin' me.

INT. PATRIOT MUTUAL, GORDON'S OFFICE - DAY

Gordon stares at Jack's BANDAGED EAR -- handing off a stiff scotch as Detective Doyle stands nearby.

JACK PARKER

He was a Commander for the SS.
Turns out the bastard was hiding in Boston. Had everybody fooled.

DOYLE

Showed up here when his "mother" was too sick to remember him. Thought he could collect easy on her insurance.

GORDON

I thought he had an alibi?

DOYLE

He paid off some drunk to steer us in the wrong direction. Pretty damn smart if you ask me.

GORDON

Goddamn Kraut.

Doyle slams back the rest of his drink and tips his hat, respectfully.

DOYLE
 Helluva job, Parker.

As Doyle exits, Gordon turns to Jack.

GORDON
 Did you know all along? What he
really was?

JACK PARKER
 No.

GORDON
 Come on, be straight. That's why
 you picked that poor woman's case
 over all those others, wasn't it?

JACK PARKER
 ...I guess you could say I had a
 feeling about it.

GORDON
 Jesus -- it's even worse than I
 thought.
 (off his look)
 You've been huntin' those bastards
 so long it's in your blood. Like a
 disease.

Jack takes that in -- drowns it with a swallow of scotch.

JACK PARKER
 Say, you know anyone who can read
 German?

GORDON
 Leave it alone! You'll get yourself
 killed drowning in all that madness
 -- need to get your mind off it.

Gordon pulls a file from his desk labelled: The Molson
 Matter.

GORDON (CONT'D)
 Two days ago Abe Molson's yacht
 sank off the coast of Catalina.
 Boat's insured for twice its worth.
 You ask me, that's one hell of a
 lucky fire.

JACK PARKER
 I just saved this place a hundred
 thousand dollars -- and you're
 squeezing another case on me?

GORDON

Damn right. You were built for a job like this. Stick with me and I'll clear your debt in no time.

(then, with a grin)

Hell, we might even be *friends* some day.

Jack wavers -- finishes his drink and makes for the door.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Come on, Jack -- open your eyes. Look around. *This is America*. And we've earned it.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jack hands Wrench, the dealer from the opium den, the blood-smearred cash he stole from Luc. Wrench eyes the stains as he hands over the second glass vial.

WRENCH

Desperate times calls for desperate measures eh, Parker?

Moses spies the exchange from across the hall.

WRENCH (CONT'D)

Howdy little man. You looking for some fun?

Jack waves Moses over -- hands the kid the rest of the cash.

JACK PARKER

Go on and get some food, Moses.

MOSES

(beaming)

Thanks, Mr. Parker.

As Moses wanders off -- Jack grows cold, turns to Wrench:

JACK PARKER

You ever talk to that boy again, I'll turn your life into a mountain of pain.

WRENCH

Relax, Jack. He your bastard kid or somethin'?

JACK PARKER

He's my associate.

As Jack slams the door and we CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Exhausted, Jack places the VIAL on the desk. Then he pulls out LUC'S JOURNAL concealed under his shirt. He stares at the picture of AUDREY. Gets ready to slam back the concoction when--

Knock! Knock!

He sets the vial down and opens the door to reveal: Miss Anna Whitmore who barges inside.

ANNA

I called your office. They said you were a hero today.

JACK PARKER

Then they were out of line.

ANNA

Still, sounds like a thirsty line of work...

Anna holds up a bottle of BOURBON, hands it to Jack. He obliges, pours out two tall glasses as she sizes up the place.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Nice headquarters. Could use a woman's touch.

Clink! They sip on the cheap bourbon.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Is it true what they're saying about Luc? That he wasn't Margot's son?

JACK PARKER

He was a monster.

Jack motions to the photos of Luc dressed as a Nazi. Anna's floored. She spots that picture of Audrey and the other prisoners and picks it up. Jack instinctively tightens.

JACK PARKER (CONT'D)

Please be careful with that.

ANNA

(sensing)

Did -- did you know them?

JACK PARKER

I knew *her*.

Jack points to Audrey. Anna eyes Jack -- some of the pieces falling into place.

ANNA

I'm sorry. She was very beautiful.

JACK PARKER

Luc said she might have escaped.

ANNA

So then she could be alive...

JACK PARKER

He told me there were others. Like him. Hiding here in America. I'm going to hunt them down -- find out what happened to her...

ANNA

How?

JACK PARKER

With this.

Jack grabs the JOURNAL -- shows it to Anna.

JACK PARKER (CONT'D)

It's--

ANNA

(reading)

His journal.

JACK PARKER

You speak German?

ANNA

I'm a woman, Parker -- I can do a lot of things.

JACK PARKER

Her name was Audrey Marceaux. She was being held at Les Mazures. And there was a guard. I don't know his name but -- does it say anything about them?

Anna sets down her drink to search through the pages when --

Clunk! She accidentally knocks over the VIAL and it SMASHES to the ground, leaking out into the rug.

FUCK NO FUCK! Jack drops to his knees -- desperately tries to preserve the precious serum.

Anna balks at the stench.

ANNA
Good heavens, what on earth is that!?

JACK PARKER
(frantic)
It's... it's... medicine.

ANNA
(realizing)
You mean, for your--?

But Jack just focuses on saving those precious tablespoons until he realizes it's useless.

And the room gets awfully quite...

ANNA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. It was an accident.

JACK PARKER
Why did you really come here --
What do you want!?
(pointedly)
There's nothing for you here.

ANNA
How about a friend.

JACK PARKER
You know as well as I do--

ANNA
You think the answer to your problem lies in that little *concoction*?

JACK PARKER
You wouldn't understand.

But in fact, Anna does. Because she's a woman.

ANNA
The problem's in you, Jack. You have to try--

JACK PARKER
(exploding)
I've tried everything!

Anna sizes him up. Now, let's be clear, she wasn't anticipating this. This wasn't some deep ploy. But she genuinely like this man. And so:

She takes his hands and leads him over to a chair.

She steps back and takes off her shoes.

Then, she reaches under her skirt and pulls down her leggings.

Then, she unbuttons her blouse.

Jack watches.

She unsnaps her bra, and drops it to the floor, exposing her breasts.

Then, she pulls down her skirt.

Then, she takes off her panties.

Naked now, she stands there. A beautiful woman.

Jack looks at her.

Anna looks at Jack.

Then, she waits. And waits -- letting him stare at ALL of her. And finally, when she *knows* the moment is right --

She steps toward him.

She closes her eyes.

She takes his hand and slides his fingers in her mouth.

Then, she takes his fingers and puts them in all kinds of special places inside her.

Then, she *enjoys* them.

No one has ever done this for Jack.

Now, if you're still paying attention you'll notice she has never met his eyes, until --

She looks at him.

He looks at her.

And in that charged moment -- a spark FIRES inside Jack Parker turning his world into *POSSIBILITY* as --

He pulls her in close. Anna straddles herself on top of him and as they start to fuck we FADE TO BLINDING WHITE--

Sunshine!

EXT. CATALINA ISLAND BEACH - DAY

The California shores sparkle. Much like Jack as he approaches a rich FAT MAN sipping a martini next to a wiener dog.

JACK PARKER

Abe Molson? I'm here about a yacht.

Jack hands over his crisp new business card:

JACK PARKER

PATRIOT MUTUAL

Fraud Investigator

ABE MOLSON

Pleasure to meet you, Mr. Parker.

Abe's cheek FLINCHES in the sunlight -- and Jack flashes a WISE smile as we--

END PILOT