

PERRY MASON

(Inspired by the early novels of Erle Stanley Gardner)

Episode 3 – “Chapter Three”

Written by
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Directed by
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SETS

INTERIORS

COURTHOUSE
- PRESSROOM
- COURTROOM
- HALLWAY

BARBERSHOP

RADIANT ASSEMBLY OF GOD
- CONGREGATION
- LOBBY
- COFERENCE ROOM
- DRESSING ROOM

CITY HALL
- JAIL CELL
- COUNTER

CITY MORGUE

NEWTON DIVISION HQ

MUSSO & FRANK GRILL

LUCKY LAGOON CASINO
- BAR
- DANCE FLOOR
- THE PIT

E.B.'S HOUSE
- BEDROOM
- BREAKFAST NOOK
- BATHROOM

MADAM JIN'S GENTLEMAN CLUB
- BACK ROOM

E.B. JONATHAN'S OFFICE
- WAITING ROOM
- INNER ROOM

PAUL DRAKE'S BUNGALOW
- LIVING ROOM

L.A. ATHLETIC CLUB
- CLUB ROOM

BAGGERLY MANSION
- STUDY

BASEMENT BACKALLEY SPEAKEASY

MASON'S MILK TRUCK

LOS ANGELES COUNTY MORGUE

EXTERIORS

COURTHOUSE
- STEPS

BOO KOO BURGER STAND

CENTRAL AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD

FARMER'S MARKET

CITY HALL

DESERT SKY

LUCKY LAGOON CASINO
- COURTYARD

NEW CHINATOWN CURIO SHOP

BAGGERLY MANSION
- DRIVEWAY

ALLEY

CAST LIST

PERRY MASON
DELLA STREET.....
PAUL DRAKE
SISTER ALICE McKEEGAN.....
E.B. JONATHAN.....
PETE STRICKLAND.....
DETECTIVE HOLCOMB.....
DETECTIVE ENNIS.....
D.A. MAYNARD BARNES.....
BIRDY McKEEGAN.....
HERMAN BAGGERLY.....
EMILY DODSON.....
MATTHEW DODSON.....
ELDER SEIDEL.....
ELDER ETHAN BROWN.....
LUPE GIBBS

PHOTOGRAPHER.....
BARBER
REPORTER
TROY CHISOM
DOCTOR BUNDY.....
VIRGIL SHEETS.....
JOE MORTON
NINA PREER
BAILIFF
JUDGE WRIGHT.....
CLERK
DERELICT
BARBARA
CLARA DRAKE
DRUG ADDICT

LENNY
VELMA FULLER.....
RAMON CORTEZ.....
AL HOWARD
MADAM JIN
MESSENGER
ACOLYTE
LYLE SUTTON
DESK SARGEANT.....
HAMAN
CAPTAIN CAIN.....
GOMMOARAHSMAN.....
JOINT SMOKIN' JEZEBEL.....

DAYS & NIGHTS

DAY/NIGHT	SCENE #
DAY 1	#1-13
DAY 2	#14-23
NIGHT 2	#24-27
DAY 3	#28-42
NIGHT 3	#43-51

1

INT. COURTHOUSE, PRESS ROOM - DAY (D1)

1

An unused courtroom is the setting for an impromptu press conference. D.A. MAYNARD BARNES (flanked by HOLCOMB) holds forth to a swarm of REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS. Barnes brandishes EMILY'S LETTERS TO GEORGE (from Ep 2).

BARNES

Gentlemen, I have here the purple prose of a written correspondence between Charlie Dodson's kidnapper, George Gannon, and his lover and co-conspirator, the child's mother, Emily Dodson.

Barnes hands the letters off to Holcomb who pins them to a black felt board. The Photogs pop off a few shots.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Get out of the way.

BARNES

We'll allow close-ups in a moment. But gentlemen, I suggest a warning to your readers. The thoughts expressed therein are not for the pure of heart.

2

INT. BARBERSHOP - DAY

2

E.B. JONATHAN getting a trim and a shave from a BARBER while holding court with a smaller set of reporters. DELLA STREET holds his briefcase and watches from the corner.

E.B.

Co-conspirator my shirt! They didn't have a thimble of evidence when they arrested her husband for the same crime! I proved Matthew innocent and I shall do the same for Emily. Those letters are mere titillation and distraction!

3

INT. COURTHOUSE, PRESS ROOM - DAY

3

As Holcomb adds the warehouse crime scene photos to the board: two dead bodies, bullet hole briefcase.

BARNES

Emily knew her husband was the bastard son of a wealthy man and was angry she wasn't getting her piece of it. She confessed this to George Gannon...

HOLCOMB

...N, N, O, N, get it right.

BARNES

So the lovebirds worked up a kidnapping scheme.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

3

CONTINUED:

3

BARNES (CONT'D)

George called in two hoodlums who worked their own snatching ring in Milwaukee. And, as you can see, there was a disagreement when it came time to divvy up the ransom cash.

REPORTER

Saved us the price of a trial.

Chuckles from the press. Barnes frowns.

BARNES

And so received their just desserts? No, gentlemen. For we the people were denied our right to judgement, denied our duty to administer justice as we see fit.

Barnes poses near the board as reporters scribble and cameras pop. Then he nods to Holcomb and steps away.

HOLCOMB

Alright, c'mon up, get your shot and let the next guy get his... you're all gonna get your turn...

As The Photogs surge forward...

4

INT. BARBERSHOP - DAY

4

E.B.

It's all part of the game fellas. You know that. The D.A. expects us to play the sap for him. But let's use our eyes, let's use our heads. Emily Dodson's no killer. She's a hundred-three pounds soaking wet, gentles. Kind neighbor, devoutly religious, devoted mother.

5

INT. COURTHOUSE, HALLWAY - DAY

5

Barnes on the move, Reporters, including TROY CHISOM, nipping at his heels.

BARNES

A whore? No, I wouldn't say that. I've never heard of a whore who killed her own baby. This is much worse.

TROY CHISOM

You're charging her with murder?

BARNES

Conspiracy kidnapping which resulted in murder, but should we find it was Emily's needlepoint used on that blue-eyed boy, I'll strap on tap shoes and add a murder rap, don't you doubt it.

6

INT. BARBERSHOP - DAY

6

E.B.

She was conned by some cons that much is true and the only reason she's sitting in jail now... Jimmy don't forget the neck...

BARBER

I got your neck, no worries.

E.B.

Why hair grows there I'll never know. No, the only reason Emily's... she's what...

DELLA

...sitting in jail.

E.B.

...She's sitting in jail 'cause the District Attorney is eyeballing the mayor's seat and knows corpses don't swing pretty for a hungry electorate.

7

EXT. COURTHOUSE, STEPS - DAY

7

Barnes on the steps, wrapping up.

BARNES

Her lawyer can rehearse his defense in the papers all he wants. I'll save it for a sworn jury. Justice for Charlie Dodson. The noose for his mother!

A final pose, more camera clicks and then Barnes departs. A HANDLER disperses The Press *"that's it for today, thanks for coming, yes, I'll let you know"*. As the crowd dissipates, we follow some Reporters down the stairs towards the street...

And there, leaning against his car, enjoying the spectacle and finishing a smoke is ENNIS. He flexes his bandaged hand, flicks his butt into the gutter. It's gonna be a good day.

SISTER ALICE (PRE-LAP)

God is gone, I said to myself. God is gone...

8

INT. RADIANT ASSEMBLY OF GOD, CONGREGATION - DAY

8

SISTER ALICE preaches. The pews are packed (including HERMAN BAGGERLY and FAMILY.) An Organist plays beneath.

SISTER ALICE

...Near twelve years to the day, leaning beside my mother, in a three times broke down, four cylinder Peterson Touring Car.

ANGLE ON BIRDY as ELDER BROWN leans over and whispers.

(CONTINUED)

ELDER BROWN

Should I expect another "surprise" today?

BIRDY

Sister and I had a little heart to heart about going off script. She's been sent to her room without a cookie.

SISTER ALICE (V.O.)

It was just the two of us... Strangers in the middle of Oklahoma halfway home to Canada.

SISTER ALICE (CONT'D)

It's raining sheets, hadn't seen a plate of meat for months...

ANGLE on collection plates being passed in the congregation. More coin than folded money, times are still tough.

SISTER ALICE (V.O.)

..and that thought, like a worm digging into my ear, into my heart, into my soul.

Sister Alice makes a small gesture, the Organist stops.

SISTER ALICE

...God is gone...

Sister Alice reaches her hand out to an African-American Parishioner. Elder Brown looks away. ANGLE ON PERRY MASON, watching her work.

SISTER ALICE (CONT'D)

And suddenly, everything went quiet. And Brothers and Sisters, when I say everything went quiet...

Mason sees an USHER take a plate through a set of doors.

SISTER ALICE (CONT'D)

...I mean the wind, the rain, the crank shaft on that Peterson, everything went absolutely silent. Just like it is now.

Mason's heard enough bunk, follows the usher out those doors.

INT. RADIANT ASSEMBLY OF GOD, LOBBY - DAY

Mason makes his way through the lobby doors, sees a handful of ushers EMPTYING COLLECTION PLATES INTO A BRIGHT BLUE BUCKET. Alice's sermon can be heard from mounted speakers.

SISTER ALICE (V.O.)

...And then, just as suddenly. Such a noise in my head. Like a great swarm of insects shouting to one another. Or a thousand trumpets blowing in unison trying to flatten the world into powder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mason notices a built-in diorama depicting the history of the church, including the story Alice is preaching about now.

SISTER ALICE (V.O.)

I fell outta the car going twenty-five miles an hour, broke my collar bone, laid there, with the noise taking me over.

Mason moves onto illustrations of all the charitable work the church has done; Soup Kitchens, Child Adoption, Housing relocation, Adult education. A MAP of its radio network.

SISTER ALICE (V.O.)

Brothers and Sisters, that was the voice of God I heard. Past all my doubt and despair, there was a Voice. Our Lord and Savior's Voice telling me to pick up my Bible, and head for Los Angeles. City of Angels.

Mason watches an USHER TAKE THE MONEY BUCKET UP THE HALLWAY.

SISTER ALICE (V.O.)

Actually, he said, El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Angeles de Porciúncula. Whoo that's always a mouthful, ain't it?

Sound of a big laugh from the congregation.

INT. RADIANT ASSEMBLY OF GOD, CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Mason sits across from ELDER SEIDEL, ACOLYTES, Birdy, and Sister Alice as DOCTOR BUNDY administers an IV drip.

MASON

Some eulogy you gave at Charlie's funeral. Blessed is the hangman.

BIRDY

You didn't expect that coming from a woman, is that it?

MASON

From a woman, from a man... pretty big hats in the audience that day.

SISTER ALICE

Hats who sat there while Emily was arrested. Nothing big in that, Mr. Mason.

MASON

What's in the drip bag? Holy Spirit?

DOCTOR BUNDY

(indignant)
Vitamins and saline.

(CONTINUED)

BIRDY

I believe we made room in our schedule to talk about George Gannon.

Mason gets out his notebook and stubby pencil.

MASON

Okay. George was employed by your church?

BIRDY

Firstly Mr. Mason, we are all horrified to know we had anyone under our roof capable of such acts of evil. It has shaken our Church to its very foundation.

MASON

Shaken all of us.

Elder Seidel slides a manila envelope in front of Mason.

ELDER SEIDEL

He had good references from previous employers. We plugged him in wherever there was a hole.

Mason opens the envelope, pulls out letters of reference.

MASON

And what holes was George plugging other than Emily's?

Glares from Birdy and Seidel. Tiny smile from Sister Alice.

MASON (CONT'D)

Sorry. I've got words sometimes outrun my head. Sorry.

ELDER SEIDEL

Mr. Gannon helped us organize some of our charity drives. He also did a little bookkeeping when we were shorthanded.

MASON

What sort of charity drives?

BIRDY

We open our doors to all kinds, Mr. Mason. Whatever they enter with, we offer redemption through the unconditional love of Christ.

SISTER ALICE

You should come by when you have an hour.
(she taps her IV bag)
I'm on twenty-one times a week.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

Save that seat for someone that's buying.

SISTER ALICE

Maybe you don't know what you need until you see it.

MASON

I've seen it, Sister.

SISTER ALICE

But you haven't felt it.
(hand on her heart)
Not in here. If you had, you wouldn't think you were so alone.

MASON

This is where you tell me you got a message from my dear departed mother.

SISTER ALICE

I did. She says you should be ashamed to leave the house with your fingernails like that.

Beat. Mason laughs, collects the references, stands.

MASON

Well, thanks for these. Anybody in the choir I can talk to? That's where they met, right?

SISTER ALICE

God's with your work.

MASON

God left me in France.

SISTER ALICE

Belief is irrelevant, Mr. Mason. God is with you whether you acknowledge Him or not.

JAIL MATRON BARBARA looks on as EMILY sits across from E.B. and Della. MATTHEW, a bit on edge, stands.

E.B.

(to Matthew)

At the arraignment, you'll be seated up front. This way, when Emily announces to the Judge that she's not guilty, he'll see a husband supporting his wife. That's very important. Do you understand?

(Matthew nods)

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

E.B. (CONT'D)

We caught a break with the judge. Fred
Wright's an old friend.

DELLA

(to Emily)

You'll be out of this cell very soon.

E.B.

Now Barbara here is gonna make certain
you're never alone. That's her job.

(MORE)

E.B. (CONT'D)

If any detectives come to talk to you,
clam up and tell 'em that you're
represented by counsel. It's not legal
for them to try, but sometimes detectives
don't play fair, isn't that right,
Barbara?

(she just stares)

Stone-face Barbara.

DELLA

Did you hear that, Emily?

EMILY

Yes. Yes, I heard.

MATTHEW

Did you fuck him in our bed?

E.B.

Let's save this for home talk, shall we?

EMILY

No.

MATTHEW

His bed?

EMILY

It wasn't like that.

MATTHEW

You're a liar!

EMILY

What about you!?! I'm stretching pennies
while you're out...

MATTHEW

Oh, cry me a river.

EMILY

...gambling. Not at work. Not--

MATTHEW

Charlie was missing for three days and
you said nothing about this George son of
a bitch...

DELLA

Enough of this...

MATTHEW

If you had said something, maybe they
could have saved him.

EMILY

No, no, no.

MATTHEW

They arrested me, and you still said nothing! They put Charlie in the ground, and I wasn't there! You let strangers bury our son! You killed our Charlie Boy!

Emily covers her ears, tries to scream it all away.

EMILY

Shut up, shut up, shut up!

Stunned silence. E.B. tries to get things back on track.

E.B.

Let's stay focused on the task at hand. Husband and wife. Together. We'll have you home tomorrow. The judge knows me.

INT. CITY MORGUE - DAY

A BLINDING FLASH! Mason lowers his camera, looks down at his subject and winds the film as...

STRICKLAND

But what the hell is George's body even doing over at County?

VIRGIL

As it happens, his little love roost is situated across the city line. So Frank Nance got him. And I got these guys.

VIRGIL gestures to the bodies of Marcin Sarecki (formerly LOW RUMBLING VOICE) and Stanislaw Nowak (formerly BLACK HAT).

MASON

This the exit wound, yeah?

As Mason raises his camera for another shot, REVERSE TO SEE -- Nowak, star shaped hole sprouting from the back of his neck.

VIRGIL (O.S.)

You gotta stop hanging around so many stiffs. But yes. Exit wound.

FLASH! Back on Mason.

MASON

What's Frank saying about George?

VIRGIL

Not much. Blew his own head off with a shotgun. Case closed.

MASON

Can we flip him over?

VIRGIL

Sure.

(to Strickland)
Get his legs.

STRICKLAND

No fucking way.

VIRGIL

He won't hurt ya. Right?
(as the corpse)
"Come on, Strick, I thought we were friends. Put 'er there."

He raises a dead hand for a shake. STRICK swallows his bile.

MASON

I got it.

VIRGIL

(as they turn body)
I ever tell you boys 'bout the night man we had? Used to dress up like a Cherub, wings and everything, and when a particular stiff caught his particular fancy, he'd do this ceremony, see and--

MASON

Verge.

VIRGIL

Yeah?

MASON

What the hell is this?

Nowak's crushed windpipe in all its purple glory.

VIRGIL

Oh. Well. Way I figure it, guy's on the floor and someone stood on his throat. And squish goes your hyoid bone.

FLASH! Mason takes another pic.

STRICKLAND

We're gonna need their personals.

(CONTINUED)

VIRGIL

Yeah, only I can't. Detectives came and bagged the whole lot.

MASON

Holcomb and Ennis?

VIRGIL

So I'm told.

Mason, frustrated, looks over the naked body.

MASON

You catch a look at anything? Driver's license? Laundry marks?

VIRGIL

They was in the buff and slabbed out when I came in. So that guy, the Cherub guy? He does this whole ceremony, you know, with the stiff and the wings and some candles and--

STRICKLAND

We fucking done here yet?

MASON

I guess. Thanks Verge.
(slips him a five)
If you ever need a favor...

As Virgil watches them head off.

VIRGIL

Sure. Okay.
(looks at the stiff, then)
Never would've caught him if it weren't for the mayonnaise.

Mason and Strickland stand, munching on some food.

MASON

D.A.'s story is our man George goes into that warehouse and guns down the Polacks.

STRICKLAND

'Cept the one ain't properly dead.

MASON

Right. He's crawling along the floor. And George, he uh, he...

Mason pantomimes the throat stomp.

STRICKLAND

Makes applesauce with his Florsheim.

MASON

Then he runs home, grabs a shotgun.

STRICKLAND

Because he can't live with the sin.

MASON

And adds suicide to his list of unforgivables.

STRICKLAND

Our George was a complicated little guy.

Mason hands Strick the envelope he got from Birdy.

MASON

I want you to chase down these references. Maybe somebody throws some new light on Mr. George. I'm going to hunt down those missing personal effects.

STRICKLAND

Didn't E.B. want us bagging witnesses to talk nice about the Dodsons?

MASON

I'm shifting our priorities.

POLICE, THIEVES and SUPPORT STAFF grinding out another day. Mason trails an irritated JOE MORTON, who flips through the duty roster clipboard, as he heads for THE SWITCHBOARD.

MORTON

I don't care what they told you. All the evidence from that warehouse mess been boxed up and hauled off for the D.A.

MASON

I'm not talking about stuff from the crime scene, they said--

MORTON

Yeah, yeah, clothes and wallets from the stiffs. I don't fucking have it.

(to Switchboard Operator)

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

MORTON (CONT'D)

Find out where the hell Broome and
Williams are, would ya?

Morton grabs a stack of DISPATCH SLIPS, rifles through them.

MASON

You have the inventory list, right?

NINA PREER arrives with a report for Morton.

MORTON

If I had an inventory I still wouldn't
give it to you because the Dodson cunt's
got a lawyer. Tell him to file his
motions and leave me alone.

NINA

The crime scene report you wanted.

MORTON

It's for this asshole.

She holds it out to Mason. He takes it from her, smiles.

MASON

I like your nails.

NINA

I like them too.

Mason looks over Drake's crime scene report as Nina heads off.

MORTON

Her nails? What're you a fag?

(to Nina)

Hey Nina? My coffee's gone cold. Warm it
up and bring it to me in filing.

Nina eye-roll. Morton grabs A PILE OF INCIDENT REPORTS.

MASON

(re: Drake's report)

This is a joke. There's barely a
paragraph here and it coulda been written
in crayon. I wanna talk to Drake.

MORTON

(heading off)

Christ, you cry either way. You're
welcome and we're done.

Mason looks at the report, thinks. Spots Nina coming with
Morton's coffee.

MASON

Forgot to mention how fetching I find
your shoes...

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

NINA

Uh huh. Whatta ya want?

15 **EXT. CENTRAL AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY**

15

There's a car parked next to a fire hydrant. PAUL DRAKE tears a ticket he just wrote off his pad and tucks it in the seam between the hood and the quarter panel.

MASON (O.S.)

You Officer Drake?

Drake turns around, sees Mason.

DRAKE

You police?

MASON

(extending his hand)

Perry Mason. Private Investigator.

(which Drake ignores)

I read your report on the warehouse murders. Got a few questions.

DRAKE

Huh. Well, private white folks mostly avoid this neighborhood. Seen more than one chalky fella in a cheap-ass suit, lying in the gutter with his throat cut.

MASON

Fortunately you're here to make sure that doesn't happen.

DRAKE

Mister, you only think you see me.

MASON

I just wanted to ask you about...

Drake turns, walks away.

MASON (CONT'D)

...that report.

As a frustrated Mason watches him go, we REVEAL: Ennis, in his car, wondering what the fuck they were talking about.

16 **INT. COURTHOUSE, COURTROOM - DAY**

16

ARRAIGNMENT OF THE DECADE CIRCUS. REPORTERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, LOOKY-LOO CITIZENS, CLERK. Emily, sits at the defense table next to E.B. Della, Matthew and Herman are in the gallery just behind them. Holcomb loiters near the entrance.

(CONTINUED)

BAILIFF

All rise! Arraignment part two is now in session. The honorable Frederick Wright presiding.

As JUDGE FREDERICK WRIGHT enters and takes the bench, E.B. looks to Matthew and nods over to Emily. Matthew reaches over the rail, takes Emily's hand. Cameras take in the begrudgingly staged moment. D.A. Barnes and his team rise.

E.B.

(to Emily)

You're doing great, sweetie. You cleaned up well. That's very important.

JUDGE WRIGHT

Bailiffs, clear out the standers. If they can't find a seat, get 'em out.

(they do)

Call the case.

CLERK

This is number one on the calendar. The People of the State of California versus Emily Dodson.

E.B.

(to Emily)

We'll be fine. Just do as I say.

JUDGE WRIGHT

Appearances for the record please.

E.B. jumps the gun.

E.B.

Your honor, my client is an innocent woman presently incarcerated on the most risible of charges...

JUDGE WRIGHT

Your appearance, please.

E.B.

...My apologies. Elias Birchard Jonathan for the defendant, Emily Dodson.

BARNES

For the People, Maynard Barnes, District Attorney.

Mason enters, Holcomb finger-guns him.

JUDGE WRIGHT

Noted. Arraign the defendant.

(CONTINUED)

CLERK

The defendant, Emily Dodson, is charged with conspiracy to commit the crime of kidnapping.

The BAILIFF hands E.B. a copy of the indictment. He searches for his reading glasses.

JUDGE WRIGHT

How does your client plead? Guilty or not guilty?

While E.B. is distracted, a confused Emily quietly mutters...

EMILY

Guilty.

A DERELICT LOOKY-LOO shoots up from her seat in the gallery.

DERELICT

She said guilty!

JUDGE WRIGHT

Order! Throw her out!

DERELICT

You got ears! She killed her kin!

As the bailiffs subdue the Looky-Loo, Della clocks Herman and Matthew looking at one another. E.B. springs back to life.

E.B.

Not guilty, your honor! She said not guilty.

JUDGE WRIGHT

I'll hear it from her.

E.B. whispers to Emily.

EMILY

(barely audible)

Not guilty.

JUDGE WRIGHT

Noted. On the question of bail.

BARNES

Your honor, the defendant conspired with her lover to kidnap her own baby, resulting in the murder of said child. Given these grave charges and the strength of the case, the People request bail be set in the amount of \$25,000.

The crowd murmurs, that's a huge request in 1932.

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE WRIGHT

Mr. Jonathan, I will hear you.

E.B. dramatically walks out from behind the defense table.

E.B.

Your honor, \$25,000 is exorbitant! Emily Dodson is innocent. She is a hardworking housewife coping with the death of her child. We intend to prove at trial that--

JUDGE WRIGHT

The trial is forthcoming, Mr. Jonathan, not at present. Given the seriousness of these charges, bail is set at \$25,000.

E.B.

Fred?

Judge Wright, not liking the familiarity, glares at E.B., bangs his gavel, leaves. Della glares at Mason.

EXT. COURTHOUSE, STEPS - DAY

In the background, E.B. is being MOBBED BY REPORTERS at the top of the steps. Della, with Mason on her heels, descends.

MASON

What did you want me to do with those letters, Della? Like E.B. said, we had a legal obligation to--

DELLA

Oh please, don't give me that load of horse shit. You think I don't know how many times you've "misplaced evidence"?

MASON

Matthew was innocent.

DELLA

And what's Emily? Huh? You cleared Matthew by putting him at that dice game. But you handed Emily over anyway. At her, her, Jesus, her baby's funeral.

MASON

Wasn't supposed to happen that way.

DELLA

Well, then I guess you're off the hook. Meanwhile that poor woman's head is so turned around, she's ready to hang herself out of guilt.

MASON

She shouldn't have lied. She should've told us that George--

DELLA

Matthew lied too! But no one seems to care about that anymore. Because he's got money and she's a slut. You're supposed to be on her side. You're supposed to do better by her.

MASON

I'm not the one who fucked the kidnapper. If she's feeling guilty, maybe it's cuz--

DELLA

If she's feeling guilty, it's because every man around her is saying she is!

MASON

Della...

DELLA

Don't you have some windows to peek in?

He stops, stung. And she's gone.

Strickland sits at a table engrossed in the latest Lipstick Girl. Before him lies A SUMPTUOUS SURF AND TURF SPREAD. Mason glares at the food, his stomach still churning from Della.

STRICKLAND

Get this: Lipstick calls her mom "Mumsy". Can you imagine? "Mumsy"? Ruthie'd shit herself the kids did that.

MASON

Really not in the mood for--

STRICKLAND

So remember how Percy DuMott offered Lipstick the sales job traveling all over the world?

MASON

No.

STRICKLAND

Well, she gets the okay from "Mumsy" to go. But listen here: "Marcia's freehearted vision of life included the fact that danger is within yourself, not without."

(looks up expectantly)

Huh? Huh?

MASON

What?

STRICKLAND

She's gonna suck Percy DuMott's
sophisticated cock is what.

A warning "cough" from a nearby couple. Strickland glances
over, throws the next bit purposely that way.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

And juggle his distinct balls.
(back to Mason)
You should really try that steak.

MASON

This where that advance went?

STRICKLAND

No, no, this here is all going to be
expensed. Because, settle down, because
of what I'm about to tell you. George
Gannon, mumsy seducer and church warbler,
kept a little secret from the Bible
bangers. He counted the take at Lucky
Lagoon for a spell.

MASON

You sure?

STRICKLAND

Took some digging, but I found a note
from Al Howard himself.

MASON

Could be that's where he connects with
the kidnapping Polacks.

STRICKLAND

Thinking you and me should head out
there, have a gander, few drinks, little
roulette, just to blend in, and--

MASON

Ah, no but you can't. No, see, you're
gonna be doing the stuff that gets this
fine meal written off in my little book.
Which is, dig up all the reports you can
find written by a cop named Paul Drake.

Mason grabs a hunk of lobster, eats it.

STRICKLAND

But, but, but, wait a minute.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

I'll settle up here. You enjoy your meal.
And hey... good work.

Mason heads off. Strickland, stunned, wakes, calls out.

STRICKLAND

The casino is my fucking lead!

Another "cough."

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Oh, drink some goddamn water.

EXT. FARMER'S MARKET - LATER

Fresh produce is neatly displayed in stacked crates. The windows are nearly covered with announcements of the week's specials: Peaches, butter, fresh pork, Sunday roast and so on. Drake looks on as CLARA instructs a YOUNG CLERK.

CLARA

And two pounds of the green beans. Not those spotty ones. Look, Babe, peaches.

DRAKE

They too soft? I don't like them soft.

ENNIS

Officer Drake?

Drake and Clara turn to see Ennis.

DRAKE

Detective?

ENNIS

Thought that was you. And this must be the missus.

DRAKE

My wife, Clara.

CLARA

How do you do.

ENNIS

Well, ma'am, I'm just dandy. Mind if I borrow this fella for a heartbeat?

Smiling, Ennis pulls him aside, without waiting for a reply.

DRAKE

Something wrong, sir?

ENNIS

I hear some private dick is sniffing around those warehouse shootings. You know anything about it?

DRAKE

Man come up to me on the beat. Told him I got nothing to say, read my report.

ENNIS

Perry Mason?

DRAKE

Yeah.

ENNIS

Guy's a bum. Makes a living hooking suckers and filing claims against the city. Don't talk to him.

DRAKE

I didn't.

Ennis eyes Drake, then abruptly turns back to Clara.

ENNIS

Forgive my impertinence, ma'am, but you're what, four months along?

CLARA

About that.

Ennis puts his hand on her belly. Clara looks to Drake, *wtf?*

ENNIS

Child's a wonderful gift. A kind blessing in an all too cruel world. I'm thinking this here's a boy.

DRAKE

We were thinking girl.

ENNIS

Nah. Hey, kid.

(hands Clerk money)

Get my friends whatever they need. In fact, get them more than they need. They got a little Paul on the way.

CLARA

That's very generous, Detective, but...

ENNIS

But what?

DRAKE

It's unnecessary.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

ENNIS

Course it's unnecessary. Just my way of saying I'm glad we're friends. World can be rough on people that got no friends.

20 **EXT. CITY HALL - EVENING**

20

A group of RADIANT ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH MEMBERS serenades a lighted window with the hymn, "Get Right, Stay Right." Surrounding them are Looky-Loos, Reporters, Uniformed Police.

A stunning white Chrysler Imperial pulls up. Radiant Assembly of God imagery and slogan painted on the side. The DRIVER gets out, opens the door for Sister Alice who emerges with a picnic basket. Reporter Troy Chisom pushes close enough for a question as she makes for the entrance.

TROY CHISOM

You here to see the Guilty Mother, Priestess?

SISTER ALICE

"Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or the righteous."

TROY CHISOM

Old Testament?

SISTER ALICE

It ain't Irving Berlin.

She sings along with her followers without breaking stride.

21 **INT. CITY HALL, JAIL CELL - MINUTES LATER**

21

Emily and Sister Alice in the corner of the cell, watched by PROSTITUTES, DRUGGIES and DRUNKS in adjoining cells. Barbara watches from the other side of the bars. Emily looks through the basket, hands shaking. Sister Alice. Through a window, we faintly hear the church members singing.

SISTER ALICE

Your sisters in the choir put it together for you. A few things, baked goods...

Sister Alice looks at Emily's breastmilk-stained dress.

SISTER ALICE (CONT'D)

You know, I think there's a sweater somewhere in here. Such a draft in here, gotta keep yourself warm.

(helping with the sweater)

That's right, just one, two, three and there we are.

EMILY

How are you, Sister?

(CONTINUED)

SISTER ALICE

Well...I'm tired. Mother's got me on a choke leash... But all's I can think about is you and what they're doing to you.

EMILY

You shouldn't waste yourself on me.

SISTER ALICE

Emily, I...I could be you.

EMILY

No, Sister, you, you wouldn't...

SISTER ALICE

Wouldn't what? Fall in love?
(then)

I know what it's like to need someone.
And what it's like to be lied to.

She holds Emily's hand.

EMILY

Someone like George?

SISTER ALICE

There's lots of Georges in this world.
And lots of women like you and me.

EMILY

Not like you, Sister.

SISTER ALICE

Long road from Saskatchewan to here. A young girl can find herself awfully alone on it. And not know who to trust.

EMILY

But you weren't alone. You had your mother. You had the Lord.

SISTER ALICE

Lord can be a hard companion. And Mother...

(dancing away from something)

Mother was always there.

EMILY

Why did God have me meet George?

SISTER ALICE

I don't know. We can't always see these things clearly.

EMILY

My husband Matthew says if I hadn't been with him, Charlie wouldn't... he wouldn't ...I killed my baby.

DRUG ADDICT

I knew she done it.

SISTER ALICE

Shut your mouth. You look to yourself and what got you here. This woman's innocent!

DRUG ADDICT

Well so am I!

A chorus across the cells of "Me too," "Let me out," "I ain't done nothing." As the chaos spreads, a slight BUZZING in the ear of Sister Alice, half-drowning out the noise of the women and Barbara's nightstick rapping against the cells trying to silence them. After a moment, Sister Alice snaps out of it, grabs Emily's face. Emily tries to look away.

SISTER ALICE

Did you steal your baby out of his crib?
Did you press a pillow over his mouth?
Stitch his eyes open for a bag of money?

Emily answers with her eyes, but no words.

SISTER ALICE (CONT'D)

You didn't kill your baby anymore than I did. Bad men did that. Your husband's mistaken.

BARBARA

You're inciting the populace.

Alice pulls out a Bible. Holds it out.

SISTER ALICE

I'm just here to pray.

Barbara backs off. Sister Alice opens up a dog eared page. She puts an arm around Emily, reads as jailbirds watch.

SISTER ALICE (CONT'D)

Keep me safe, Lord, from the hands of the wicked; protect me from the violent, who devise ways to trip my feet. The arrogant have hidden a snare for me and have set traps for me along my path. I say to the Lord, "You are my God."

22

EXT. DESERT SKY - SUNSET

22

From high above we follow THE RED WITCH floating out into the desert outside Los Angeles.

SISTER ALICE (V.O.)
Hear Lord, my cry for mercy. Sovereign
Lord, my strong deliverer, you shield my
head in the day of battle...

Find LUPE in her element. Find Mason much less so.

SISTER ALICE (V.O.)
Do not grant the wicked their desires,
Lord. Do not let their plans succeed.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

REVEAL the LUCKY LAGOON CASINO on the horizon. Lupe dips her wings and drops towards the desert floor...

23 **EXT. LUCKY LAGOON CASINO - MINUTES LATER**

23

Mason leans against the tail of the Red Witch. Lupe changes into her party dress on the side away from the casino.

LUPE (O.S.)

You know, until about now, I was pretty sure you were gonna jump out and try to fly back to the farm.

MASON

I felt like I owed you a good time.

LUPE (O.S.)

Well, you do owe me a decent New Year's Eve, so here's the plan. We're gonna get drunk, we're gonna dance, and at midnight, I'll count down from 10 and you'll kiss me.

MASON

Should I write that down?

She appears. Yowza!

LUPE

You'll remember.

(she gives him a kiss)

I need to powder my thighs. Get me a real drink, would ya?

24 **INT. LUCKY LAGOON CASINO, BAR - NIGHT (N2)**

24

A band plays for dancing couples nearby. Mason watches the bartender, LENNY (Asian-American), pour out some martinis.

MASON

I hear the gin tastes like your socks.

Lenny looks up, recognizes Mason, smiles.

LENNY

That's the vermouth. The gin tastes like my balls.

MASON

In that case, two manhattans.

LENNY

Excellent choice, sir.

Lenny works on the drinks.

(CONTINUED)

LENNY (CONT'D)

No offense Mason, but I never clocked you for the gambling type. Mostly on account of how you're always broke.

MASON

Actually Lenny, I'm on the job.

LENNY

Meaning you might pay for these?

Mason puts a folded ten on the bar.

MASON

George Gannon worked here a while back. Know anything about him?

LENNY

Sure. He kidnapped and killed some kid. You want cherries?

Mason starts to take the ten back. Lenny stops him.

LENNY (CONT'D)

Okay, okay. I don't know much. He worked in the counting room. Seemed nice enough.

MASON

He quit? Get fired?

LENNY

You'd have to ask Al.

Lenny pours as Lupe approaches and overhears...

MASON

Was hoping you would talk to him for me. A little of his time would help me out.

LUPE

Wait, are you working right now? *Pinche Culero*.

MASON

What? No. I'm catching up with...

(Lenny has moved on)

Here. This one's for you.

(he hands her the drink)

Happy New Year!

Lupe slams hers down before Mason has taken a sip.

Mason and Lupe twirl the light fantastic. Mason seems to be focused on having a good time.

CONTINUED:

However, when he pulls Lupe in close he shoots Lenny a questioning look over her shoulder. Lenny signals: *"it's on."*

MASON

How about we take a little break? I'll get us a bottle for midnight.

Before Lupe can reply, a familiar voice calls "Mr. Mason?" He turns to see VELMA FULLER approaching.

VELMA

Oh, Mr. Mason, it is you. Do you recognize me with my clothes on?

LUPE

What?

MASON

I was just taking pictures of her.

LUPE

What?

MASON

For work.

(moving along)

Velma Fuller. Lupe Gibbs.

VELMA

Did he tell you about my pumpkin pie?

MASON

I should probably get that champagne.

And now, an annoyed RAMON CORTEZ arrives.

RAMON

Lying bastards say they don't know how to play "*Cielito Lindo*".

LUPE

(in Spanish)

People lie about the strangest things.

VELMA

Oh, yours speaks it, too.

Lenny calls over.

LENNY

Mason. Al's ready. Now.

Awkwardly to the group.

MASON

If you would all please excuse me for a moment, I need to, to...

(to Lupe)

I'll be right back, I promise.

LUPE

So you are working tonight.

MASON

I have to.

Mason heads off with Lenny. Velma slips her arm around Ramon's hips. Leers at Lupe.

VELMA

Well. You seem like an open minded person...

INT. LUCKY LAGOON CASINO, THE PIT - NIGHT

AL HOWARD, casino manager, offers Mason a drink.

AL HOWARD

I've heard about you, Mason. Not all of it's bad.

MASON

Wait'll you get to know me.

AL HOWARD

Is that something that needs to happen?

MASON

I'm working the Dodson case.

AL HOWARD

Oh. Yeah. Ugly stuff. Who stitches up a kid's eyes?

MASON

D.A. says George Gannon did.

AL HOWARD

We must be reading different papers. Seems to me he likes the slut for it.

MASON

Why'd Gannon stop working for you?

AL HOWARD

I suppose it was God's will.

MASON

You fire him?

AL HOWARD

I never even noticed he was here. And then one day, he up and quits. Talking about wages of sin, and den of iniquity, what's true in the Bible, blah blah. His cheap dentures flapping, spit going everywhere. I wrote him a solid reference just to get out of the rain.

MASON

Well, he palmed your recommendation when he applied at the church.

AL HOWARD

(chuckles, shrugs)

Figures. He caught God fever, but good.

MASON

Doesn't sound like much of a killer.

AL HOWARD

The scary ones never do.

Al finishes his drink, moves towards his desk.

MASON

When George was here, you ever see him hanging around the hard types?

AL HOWARD

I'm quite choosy when it comes to my counting room. I like 'em brainy and dull as dishwater.

MASON

Mind if I ask around?

AL HOWARD

Now why would I mind that?

With that, Mason is dismissed. He starts out.

AL HOWARD (CONT'D)

Oh hey. Between us. Who you think killed that kid?

MASON

You looking to make book on it?

AL HOWARD

I'd take the action.

27 INT. LUCKY LAGOON CASINO, BAR - MOMENTS LATER

27

Mason steps back into the casino. Lupe nowhere to be seen. He goes up to Lenny at the bar.

LENNY
Find what you were looking for?

MASON
Does anyone?
(beat)
Have you seen, uh--?

Lenny ticks his chin toward the roulette table, where a CHEER FROM ONLOOKERS goes and spots Lupe raking in a pile of chips.

28 EXT. LUCKY LAGOON CASINO, COURTYARD - DAWN (D3)

28

The water burbling in the fountain. A string of bulbs overhead casts a romantic glow. Mason stands with Lupe.

MASON
How much did you clear?

LUPE
Enough to buy a shitty run-down dairy,
turn it into a second runaway.

MASON
You can't be talking about my dairy. It's
a historical monument.

LUPE
Is that right?

MASON
Oh yeah, six of the last seven presidents
made a pilgrimage there just to taste
Mason's Certified Quality Milk.

LUPE
Papi brought the golden bullshit with him
tonight.

MASON
Hoover, Coolidge, Harding, Wilson,
Roosevelt, Mckinley. Taft was too fat to
get in the door.

She laughs.

LUPE
Did you find your killer, killer?

MASON
Did all right for a night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She looks at him. Beat.

LUPE

I had this dog once. Terrier, like this
big. Always picking fights.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

28

CONTINUED:

28

LUPE (CONT'D)

Always getting his ass kicked. That little bastard made me laugh.

MASON

You could just tell me you like me, Loops.

She goes to the fountain, slips off her shoes, and steps into the water. Looks at Mason.

LUPE

I want my kiss.

Beat. Mason steps into the fountain getting his shoes and socks wet.

LUPE (CONT'D)

(moving in close)

How do you feel, Papi?

MASON

Wet.

She tilts her face up. Mason kisses her. It's not so bad.

29

INT. E.B.'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

29

E.B. lies in bed, awake, staring up at the ceiling. Early morning light can be seen slanting through the windows that face the street. We hear: THE STEADY SQUEAK of a bicycle that could use some grease approaching. SLAP! The newspaper hits E.B.'s front walk. The PAPERBOY peddles past the windows.

30

INT. E.B.'S HOUSE, BREAKFAST NOOK - DAY

30

E.B., in a robe over pajamas, puts the newspaper down on the table. The headline blares: "I'M GUILTY" over A PICTURE OF EMILY DODSON. Opposite her image is one of HER LOVER, GEORGE. E.B. fills a bowl with water. He adds sugar, stirs. Unfolds the paper. Puts on his glasses. Looks at the headline, the pictures. Stirs, slowly dissolving the sugar.

31

INT. E.B.'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - DAY

31

E.B. works on his tie in the mirror. When he has the knot and collar adjusted properly, he puts on his glasses to check it over. Looks fine. He smooths the tie down. Spots something in the sink. It's a little bit of blood. His toothbrush sits in a nearby cup. He examines it. Little bit of blood there too. He turns the water on to rinse the sink and brush. Checks his gums in the mirror.

32

INT. E.B.'S HOUSE, BREAKFAST NOOK - DAY

32

E.B., now in full coat and tie, sits at the table, looking out the window. The HUMMINGBIRD FEEDER, which he filled with the sugar water, has done its job.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A lone hummingbird darts among the nectar points, feeding. E.B. watches the bird, almost in a trance. A HORN TOOTS out front. He doesn't seem to notice. The hummingbird flies off. He continues his watch. A KNOCK at the front door. E.B. doesn't register it. We hear the front door being opened and Della calling from the other room: "E.B.? Hello? You ready to go?" E.B. turns towards her voice, coming out of his fog.

E.B.

Yes. Della. Of course. I'm just. I'm just, um...

He pulls himself up, grabs his briefcase, leaves.

EXT. CENTRAL AVENUE, NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Paul Drake closes a CALLBOX, locks it. Sees Mason coming, STACK OF PAPERS in hand.

DRAKE

I got no time for you.

MASON

Got a bunch of your reports here, Officer Drake. Not one of them reads like that warehouse bullshit.

Drake turns into an alley. SHANTIES/SHACKS line one side.

MASON (CONT'D)

You've got a good eye for detail, you're thorough, you--

Drake suddenly spins and sinks his fist into Mason's gut. POW! The air goes out of Mason, who collapses into some trashcans.

DRAKE

Word around Division is you're a nosey son of a bitch. Well, you best keep well clear of me. You got it?

Drake starts off. Mason tries to get his breath back.

MASON

Listen... wait...

DRAKE

Nothing I want to hear from you.

Drake keeps going.

MASON

So you're just gonna play "nigger" for the D.A. and his boys, that it?

Drake stops, turns, *who the fuck are you calling nigger?*

MASON (CONT'D)

George Gannon ain't a killer and you know it. You saw something at the warehouse. You changed something in that report that--

Drake quickly closes the distance between them and POW! Sinks another fist into Mason's gut. Mason drops, pukes.

DRAKE

(points to his badge)

You see this? Means I can kick your white ass dead and no one would say a goddamn thing. Reckon that makes you the nigger.

EXT. NEW CHINATOWN CURIO SHOP - DAY

Holcomb and Ennis pull up and park in the bustling hood.

ENNIS

I'm gonna be twenty, twenty-five.

HOLCOMB

Be five. Subpoenas before pussy.

ENNIS

You're the boss, boss.

We follow Ennis through the front door into the Curio shop. Music from a Radio plays Mei Gui Mei Gui Wo Ai Ni (Rose Rose I Love You). He nods to the SHOPKEEPER, who nods back. Ennis walks to a door in the back. The Shopkeeper hits a buzzer. We follow Ennis inside...

INT. MADAM JIN'S GENTLEMAN'S CLUB - DAY

A lounge area with CHINESE WORKING GIRLS on display. Another radio, this one playing Ambrose & Orchestra's "She's My Secret Passion."

ENNIS

Ladies, it's a raid.

Ennis gets a decidedly mixed reaction from the girls. An INDECISIVE JOHN reading a "Menu" looks up worried.

ENNIS (CONT'D)

What's for lunch?

He looks over his shoulder at the "menu": pictures of the pleasures one can have. Ennis leans over and flips the pages. MARIE, who'll spank you. EVIE will let you lick her feet. CLAUDIA, for a price, will abuse your scrotum. Next page.

ENNIS (CONT'D)

Go with her. You look like a likes-girls-to-piss-on-him type.

CONTINUED:

MADAM JIN enters from down the hall.

ENNIS (CONT'D)

How do, Jin?

MADAM JIN

(to Ennis, re: the girls)

You take a room today?

ENNIS

Partner's got the engine running. Just
the paperwork.

(CONTINUED)

ENNIS (CONT'D)

Partner's got the engine running. Just the paperwork.

She takes him down the hallway. The doors that are open reveal bedrooms built for sex and drug use. The doors that are closed have the sound of romping behind them. They enter a room around the corner of the hallway.

INT. MADAM JIN'S GENTLEMAN'S CLUB, BACK ROOM - DAY

Two CHINESE ACCOUNTANTS counting money at two of the desks. On the third desk, a lit cigarette burning and some Chinese food for Chinese people. Madam Jin sits behind that.

MADAM JIN

(in Mandarin)

Police. Number 5.

One Accountant spins in his chair, searches a box, hands Ennis the envelope. He looks inside, less cash than usual.

ENNIS

Little light.

She blows smoke at him.

ENNIS (CONT'D)

I can shut this place down in a minute.

She pulls out a newspaper with "Guilty?" headline, she circles a picture of George Gannon with her finger.

MADAM JIN

Mr. Woo Sing is not happy.

Ennis takes it in, circles the word Guilty and Emily's face.

ENNIS

Tell the mysterious Mr. Woo not to worry.

MADAM JIN

(re: picture of George)

Police asking questions about him at Lucky Lagoon last night.

ENNIS

What policeman?

She flips over the newspaper, a note written in the margins.

MADAM JIN

Mason. Something Mason.

ENNIS

He ain't a cop... But he won't matter.
The girl's about to roll on herself, so
tell Woo Sing, She Sing.

He cracks himself up. We hear the sound of the buzzer.

MADAM JIN

Leave out the back. Cops make customers
nervous.

ENNIS

Do I make you nervous, Jin?

She blows smoke at him. He heads out.

37

INT. E.B. JONATHAN'S OFFICE, WAITING ROOM/INNER ROOM - DAY 37

Della works the phones in the waiting room -- reporters trying to get a quote from E.B., crazy tips from crazy citizens, etc. In the inner room, Mason waits across from E.B., on the phone, while reading Mason's reports.

E.B. (ON PHONE)

She said NOT guilty... were you sitting in the back row or did you get it third hand on the toilet?

VOICE ON PHONE (V.O.)

I was three feet from her, Counselor.

E.B. (ON PHONE)

...Write the truth, you'll sell twice the papers.

He hangs up. Mason jumps at the opportunity.

MASON

They're squeezing this negro cop, E.B. He's sitting on something, I'd bet my house on it.

E.B.

Your house ain't worth the nails holding it up.

(loud)

Della, for the fourteenth time will you get me Herman Baggerly on the phone?

DELLA

I've left three messages already.

E.B.

Then that means you've ignored me eleven times. Emily's withering away in there, we need that bail.

(to Mason, re: his report)

What did you get on Gannon? Your penmanship's atrocious.

MASON

His church choir called him wallpaper. He used to count coin at a desert casino and County already shipped his body off to the crematorium.

E.B.

Wallpaper?

MASON

Point is I don't make him for a throat stomping gunman. And my gut's telling me neither does Drake...

(CONTINUED)

DELLA
Chicago Tribune calling, Chief.

E.B.
Who's Drake?

MASON
The cop that found the bodies.

E.B. picks up the phone.

E.B. (ON PHONE)
What's the mightiest paper in the Midwest
want with E.B. Jonathan?

BASS VOICE ON PHONE (V.O.)
...Emily Dodson is a murdering gash who
don't deserve nothing but...

E.B. hangs up, shouts to Della.

E.B.
That was not the Chicago Tribune, Della!
Della... Della?!

She leans in the door frame, on the other line.

E.B. (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Sometimes I think this is no longer my
world.

MASON
So my gut's telling me--

E.B.
Your gut ain't running this show, boy-o.
I tell you what to do. I tell you what to
bring me. You're making holes in your
soles, chasing after things I can't use.

ANGLE ON: Della as A MESSENGER enters.

MESSENGER
Jonathan and Associates?

Della nods. The Messenger hands her a letter. She signs and
opens it. A letter and a check. She reads, concerned.

E.B. (O.S.)
Maynard's crucifying her and it's having
an effect. A jury isn't gonna give two
bits for what some Negro flatfoot thinks
about dead gangsters who got what was
coming to them. It's a simple case.

BACK TO MASON and E.B.

(CONTINUED)

MASON

But Holcomb leaned on him to change--

E.B.

I'm talking now! You work for me!

Mason leans back in his chair. *The floor is yours, E.B.*

E.B. (CONT'D)

...You made me lose my thought.

MASON

It's a simple case...

E.B.

Thank you. Simple. Emily's in on it with George or she's not. Now this casino angle, that's maybe something I can use.

Della enters, tries to get E.B.'s attention.

E.B. (CONT'D)

Did the Poles ever frequent this place, that kind of thing. What is it, Della?!

DELLA

It's from Mr. Baggerly.

E.B.

Finally. Well, bring it here.

She brings him the check and the letter.

MASON

You getting enough sleep, E.B.?

ANGLE ON the letter, thanking the firm for its work on behalf of MATTHEW DODSON. No further services required.

MASON (CONT'D)

Something up?

E.B.

I think we got fired.

Alice looks into her mirror, the multiple reflections. She checks her make-up. We hear Elder Brown warming up the crowd from a monitor speaker. Birdy is annoyed, de-linting a Sea Admiral's Outfit hung amongst Alice's costume rack.

BIRDY

You need to tell me next time you're going to visit that girl.

SISTER ALICE

That girl is one of our own, Mother.
And if you'd seen them singing outside
her jail window, you'd know the Brothers
and Sisters are behind her.

BIRDY
Behind *you*, not her.

She holds up the Sea Admiral's Outfit for Alice to see.

BIRDY (CONT'D)
(imitating Sister Alice)
"I Think Ya Mean, Holy Miracle?!"

SISTER ALICE
That again?

BIRDY
It always plays.

SISTER ALICE
Corn. A can of corn. A field of corn.

BIRDY
Well, it's what we're doing three times
today. So suit up.

Alice starts dressing into her Sea Admiral's outfit.

SISTER ALICE
I'm gonna murder someone with that
fishing pole one day.

BIRDY
Wonderful, then they can put you in a
cell with your best friend, Emily.

SISTER ALICE
You've never seen someone more forsaken.
Tried a reading. Tried prayer. Words
would not come out of her mouth.

BIRDY
Maybe she has no words because she's done
the very thing she's charged with.

Alice turns back to her mirror.

SISTER ALICE
God is testing us, Mother.

BIRDY
No, you're just bored and you found
yourself a new toy. A frog in a mason
jar.

SISTER ALICE
It's lizards in Los Angeles.

BIRDY

We had a murderer amongst us! She laid with that man!

SISTER ALICE

...It's only my opinion. I'm not forcing it on anyone in the Assembly.

BIRDY

You are the Assembly. You are this Temple. You are every cornerstone laid of every chapter church we build.

SISTER ALICE

You shouldn't say that, Mother. Even if it's true. It's not helpful to hear that.

BIRDY

...I don't mean to pile it on, sweetheart. I really don't.

A knock on the door. An ACOLYTE pokes his head in.

ACOLYTE

Five minutes, Sister Alice.

The Acolyte withdraws. Birdy picks up a fishing pole.

BIRDY

It's only me saying, this girl may not walk the path of God. We need to distance ourselves from her. For all the wonder we've made here.

Sister Alice takes this in. She grabs a Sea Admiral's hat and the fishing pole and heads out.

INT. PAUL DRAKE'S BUNGALOW, LIVING ROOM - LATER

Music plays from another room, "Uncle Ned, Don't Use Your Head", as Paul enters post-shift. He starts taking off his uniform, gun belt and so on. From the other room...

CLARA (O.S.)

That you, babe?

DRAKE

Yeah.

Paul pulls a liquor bottle out of the closet. Takes a gulp.

CLARA (O.S.)

Got something to show you.

Takes another gulp. Clara enters with a tin, sees the bottle.

CLARA (CONT'D)

That kind of day?

DRAKE

Seems like.

CLARA

Well, you just put your feet up and have
a look at this... Baby Powder!

He takes the tin Johnson & Johnson baby powder and she exits.
Paul sets the tin down, has another gulp of booze.

CLARA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Now I know your mom used corn starch. My
mom used corn starch. Hell, every baby
ass on the block dusted halfway to a
hushpuppy with the stuff. But I thought,
what with all the money we saved getting
that free food, we could just try it out.
Smell it.

Instead, he takes a gulp and puts the bottle in the closet.

DRAKE

It's real nice.

She returns. Sees the tin sitting there.

CLARA

You must have one hell of a nose.

He picks up the tin, sniffs at it.

DRAKE

It's real nice.

CLARA

Stop it. Paul...

Beat. She waits him out.

DRAKE

Shouldn't have taken that food.

CLARA

What?

DRAKE

Shouldn't have taken nothing from that man.

CLARA

Don't be silly.

DRAKE

You seen him. You know what he is.

CLARA

Yeah, I know what he is.

DRAKE

Then how am I supposed to swallow it?

CLARA

With a smile and a thank you. Because we're lucky to have it. There's plenty around here that don't.

DRAKE

This ain't luck. He got his hooks in us now. That's what this is.

CLARA

Baby, you gotta think about--

DRAKE

I beat a man down today, Clara. He weren't doing nothing but his job.

(MORE)

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Trying to, trying to find the truth and I
beat him down. I'm supposed to be police,
not some...

CLARA

What you're supposed to be is my husband
and a father to your child. I don't know
this man. And I do not care about him. I
care about us. You got a good job, Paul.
You are police. Not a porter, not a
janitor, not busting dirt back home.

(MORE)

39

CONTINUED:

39

CLARA (CONT'D)

So if that peckerwood son of a bitch wants to fill our bellies cause you do him a favor, you do it. You do it. Not for him. You do it for us.

40

INT. L.A. ATHLETIC CLUB, CLUB ROOM - DAY

40

E.B. sits in a dark leather chair across from his old law partner LYLE SUTTON as a waiter brings another round.

LYLE

How's Della? Still driving you around?

E.B.

Della's Della. More so with every day.

LYLE

Great set of gams.

E.B.

I have her doing a little more than when you were around. Clients like her.

LYLE

Tell her I said hello.

E.B.

I'll do that.

(then)

You know I wouldn't be here asking if--

LYLE

It's a no, E.B.

E.B.

I'm not asking for a gift, just a short term loan... and I think, considering all I've done for you...

LYLE

You're kidding, right?... Escrow juggling bullshit...

E.B.

There's no reason to bring up the particular past...

LYLE

...Nearly got us disbarred. I came here out of courtesy, maybe some hot gossip. "All I've done for you"? Fuck off, E.B.

E.B.

Herman Baggerly has withdrawn his support.

(CONTINUED)

LYLE

Baggerly's out?

E.B.

Yeah. Yeah.

(downs half his drink)

What kind of lawyer am I if I can't get my client out on bail?

LYLE

Jesus, man. Get her a plea.

E.B.

She didn't do it, Lyle.

LYLE

Maynard called me. Wanted to talk about our old partnership.

E.B.

What?

LYLE

Yeah. Told him it wasn't in my interest to discuss the past. But if he digs, you know there's trouble there...

E.B.

How about this? Forget the loan. Put in a call to Judge Wright. See if you can pull a bail reduction for me.

LYLE

You're not listening, Elias.

E.B.

I can save this girl.

LYLE

You can *what*?

E.B.

I just need a little help.

LYLE

Plead the case out.

(standing)

And don't call me again.

As Lyle leaves, a distraught E.B. sucks down the remains of his drink while calling for another.

A long driveway leading up to a huge mansion.

CONTINUED:

MATTHEW (V.O.)

I shouldn't have been shooting dice. I
should've been home that night.

42

INT. BAGGERLY MANSION, STUDY - CONTINUOUS

42

Victorian interior, furniture, bookshelves, maps of the world, the props, the posing adventurer.

MATTHEW

You get behind in a dice game, you want to square it. But I should've been home.

BAGGERLY

The kidnapers had a detailed plan. They knew who you were, where you were. Had it not been that night, it would have been the night before or the one after.

MATTHEW

You really think Emily was part of it?

BAGGERLY

She laid with the man who murdered your son. You heard her say guilty. Consider the cold light, Matthew.

Matthew ponders her guilt.

MATTHEW

I came home mean sometimes. Maybe that's why she went with that guy.

BAGGERLY

It's in our blood. A weakness for degenerate femininity.

Wait, what?

MATTHEW

My mother was not a degenerate.
(Herman has no response)
While you were here living it up, my mother and me, we did with nothing.

BAGGERLY

I didn't mean to imply...

MATTHEW

Not easy what we've been doing here. Wasn't easy our deal. Sitting in church, watching you with your family.

BAGGERLY

It was cowardly of me. It was not Christian. I'd like to atone for that.

Baggerly goes to an armoire, looks for something.

(CONTINUED)

MATTHEW

She couldn't even breastfeed when we brought Charlie home from the hospital. Took her a whole month to get that right. I should've known something. Right then. Should've...

BAGGERLY

Life reaches forward, Matthew, not back. Spare yourself an arduous journey and take my word for it.

(pulls out a large map)

I want to show you something.

He spreads it out on a long table. Matthew takes a look.

MATTHEW

What's this?

BAGGERLY

Town of Girard. It's about thirty miles away in the western corner of this very valley. Help me build a city of faith. Of family. Far from the corruption of Los Angeles. At, oh maybe, thirty dollars an acre. What do you say?

MATTHEW

What about the grocery, Mr. Baggerly?

BAGGERLY

No son of mine should be working at a grocery. And call me father.

INT. CITY HALL, COUNTER - NIGHT (N3)

A few stringer reporters, half-playing a game of cards. Della enters, carrying her bag and a manila envelope. The DESK SERGEANT stands behind the counter and his log book.

DELLA

Good evening, Sergeant.

DESK SERGEANT

Visiting hours are--

DELLA

You know me. I have a document for Ms. Dodson to sign.

DESK SERGEANT

What kind of document?

DELLA

A new retainer agreement.

CONTINUED:

DESK SERGEANT

Why does she need a new retainer?

(CONTINUED)

DELLA

...I don't have to tell you that.

Della spins the log book around. Signs in. She looks over and sees Barbara taking a cigarette break. She sees a number of cigarettes in the ashtray. A half hour of cigarettes.

DELLA (CONT'D)

Why aren't you with Emily?

Barbara looks at the Desk Sergeant. Something's not right. *

DELLA (CONT'D) *

I know how things work around here. Where is she? I need to see Emily Dodson, now. *

DESK SERGEANT *

Ma'am, I can't do that. *

DELLA *

This precinct has been court ordered to have a Matron with our client at all times! You can't do it?! *

The stringer reporters rise. *

DESK SERGEANT *

Lower your voice, ma'am. *

DELLA *

I will call Judge Wright's office, I will call him at home, I will find him wherever he is and tell him you are in violation of his order, Sergeant! *

She heads to the jail door. *

DELLA (CONT'D) *

Open this door! *

Della shouts through the slats of the jail door. *

DELLA (CONT'D) *

EMILY! EMILY DODSON! *

SERGEANT *

I'm opening it...just need to find the right key. *

DELLA *

Find me your badge number, while you're at it. EMILY! *

Della sees through the slats of the door to a holding cell of Female Prostitutes, Drunks, and Druggies, among them is the Druggie who Sister Alice told to shut up, who nods her head to down the hall. *

(CONTINUED)

DELLA (CONT'D) *
EMILY DODSON! *

DESK SERGEANT *
DETECTIVES! *

We hear a SCREAM coming from down the hall, and some rough *
talk from male voices. *

DELLA *
EMILY! *

The Desk Sergeant opens up the jail door. Della heads down *
the hall. *

DESK SERGEANT *
DETECTIVES!!! *

INT. CITY HALL, JAIL CELL HALLWAY - LESS THAN A MINUTE LATER *

Holcomb steps out of a door, uncontrollable sobbing and deep *
breathing of a female heard from within. *

HOLCOMB *
Something you need, Sergeant? *

Della looks past Holcomb into a supply closet. Very few *
supplies. A "Blue Room." Emily cuffed to a chair. Ennis *
hovers near, holding a typed document. Della pushes past *
Holcomb, Ennis, covers Emily in a bear hug. *

EMILY *
(a drained whisper) *
I didn't do it... I didn't do it... *

DELLA *
What's that? Her confession? You slapping *
a confession out of her? *

Ennis balls/crushes the paper in his fist. *

ENNIS *
You got the wrong impression, Miss. *
There's rules here. She was getting a *
little hysterical, we had to restrain her *
for her own good. I think she wants to *
hurt herself. Ain't that so, Mrs. Dodson? *

EMILY *
Yes... no... I don't know... I don't *
know... *

44 CONTINUED:

44

DELLA
It's okay. It's okay.
(turns to the hallway)
You're all in big fucking trouble!

*
*
*
*

45 **INT. BASEMENT BACK ALLEY SPEAKEASY - NIGHT**

45

VARIOUS MEN AND WOMEN have a good drinky time. Follow TWO SHOPGIRLS past the libating crowd and along the bar...

STRICKLAND (O.S.)
Come on, it's not like we never been
fired before.

...to Mason and Strickland. Strick eyes the passing girls.

MASON

No one's fired.

STRICKLAND

Yeah? Who's paying us? I got four kids. I got a wife. I got a house to maintain. You got one kid, an ex, and you don't maintain a goddamn thing.

Strickland leans over the bar, grabs whiskey, refills them.

MASON

I still got a cow.

STRICKLAND

The cow eats grass.

MASON

E.B. will get it figured. He always... he always comes through in the end.

STRICKLAND

Oh, well, then consider me reassured. Christ. Ruthie's gonna shit herself. I was working on the biggest case in the city. I was getting blowjobs Mason. Actual fucking blowjobs.

MASON

To Ruthie...

STRICKLAND

Look, I'm trying to get drunk, not grow a conscience. Happy days...

MASON

This one really got its hooks in me.

STRICKLAND

Me too.

He slams his whiskey. Mason pulls out his cigarettes as Strick reads from the paper, trying to lighten the mood.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

"The employees of the store presented Marcia with an elegant and complete set of baggage..."

Mason lights up. Then holds the flame to Strick's paper.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

"All matched in dark green grosgrain leather and monogrammed in gold. My entire life is changed, she thought..."
God fucking dammit!

45

CONTINUED:

45

As Strickland contends with the burning newspaper.

MASON

Give my love to Ruthie.

Strickland gets the fire out, watches Mason leave. Then reaches for the bottle and refills himself again.

46

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

46

Mason, still smoking, heads for his truck. He sees a man leaning against it.

MASON

That's my truck there, pal.

The man doesn't move.

MASON (CONT'D)

There's no milk inside it. An eighth of a tank if you're looking to siphon some...

The man doesn't move. Mason pulls out his gun.

MASON (CONT'D)

Or you could just get the fuck off my truck cause I'm pissed, I carry a gun and I already asked you once.

The man lights up a cigarette, revealing the face of Paul Drake.

DRAKE

Been looking for you.

MASON

You found me. What's next?

Drake eyes the gun. Mason decides to pocket it.

DRAKE

Papers all say the Dodson lady confessed. And from where I sit, it looks like the D.A. got her rails greased straight to the noose. So why you digging so hard?

(CONTINUED)

MASON

Because she's innocent.

DRAKE

That's a fucking stupid answer.

MASON

It's the way I play the game. Now quit trying to talk yourself out of doing the right thing.

Drake thinks it over. Then lets it out.

DRAKE

Blood trail at the warehouse led onto the roof. Not down like how they changed it.

MASON

Who changed it?

DRAKE

Holcomb and Ennis. Made me write it how they said. But the blood went up the fire escape, to the edge of the roof. Down in the alley, I, I found what I think was dried blood. And this...

Drake hands the partial denture he found to Mason.

MASON

What is this? Teeth?

DRAKE

That's all I got. That's it. Any of this comes back to me, I'll deny every word.

Drake leaves. OFF Mason, holding the teeth up to the light.

INT. RADIANT ASSEMBLY OF GOD, CONGREGATION - NIGHT

Center stage, surrounded by the band and the choir, four CHURCH MEMBERS SLASH COMMUNITY THEATER ACTORS are cavorting in the large row boat, the S.S. HELLSUPONUS pretending to be sinners (HAMAN, CAPTAIN CAIN) living it up at sea. BALSAWOOD WAVES are thrust back and forth in front of the Boat.

HAMAN

(looking through a scope)
Five miles to Gomorrah, Captain Cain!

CAPTAIN CAIN

(looking through a
spyglass telescope)
I can only see her golden shores now
Haman, hand me over another bottle of
that moonshine-y hooch, HaHa!

CONTINUED:

The choir boos. The congregation joins the boos as they pass a good night's take on the collection plate!

REPORTERS that we saw on the steps of City Hall (Troy Chisom among them) are seated near the front. They snap photos, documenting the crazy scene.

GOMMOARAHSMAN

That's your third one already, Captain Cain. Save some for the rest of us boozers!

CAPTAIN CAIN

Hands off Jezebel and back on the oars, Gommoarahsman.

JOINT SMOKIN' JEZEBEL

(puffing away)

Oh Captain Cain, you never let me have any fun.

REVEAL Sister Alice hiding under a linen cloth at the bottom of the boat, waiting for her cue.

CAPTAIN CAIN (O.C.)

Well then show me them gams girl or we'll heave you over for Davy Jones to ravage ya!

Jezebel shows some leg. The Trombonist lets out a big WAH-WAH! The congregation loves it! A sudden BUZZING in Sister Alice's ear again. She shakes it off.

HAMAN

Look out captain. There's a swell swell approaching!

Thunder, Lightning and mighty winds from cheese-y folio solutions. All the actors get "thrown from the boat."

CAPTAIN CAIN

(going overboard)

Holy Mackerel!

Sister Alice rises from the boat.

SISTER ALICE

I think ya meant, Holy Miracle?!

She puts on her Admiral's hat and holds up her fishing pole. The crowd leaps to their feet! The buzzing in her ear again.

48

INT. MASON'S MILK TRUCK - NIGHT

48

Mason urges the truck forward. Strickland bounces around.

STRICKLAND

Whoa! Take it easy, would ya? George is dead. Not going anywhere.

MASON

What if they already cooked him?

Bounce!

STRICKLAND

Then he's still dead. And now a burned up pile of ash. Hey, hey, car, car!

Swerve!

MASON

Burned! Burned! Goddammit.

Mason smacks the steering wheel.

MASON (CONT'D)

All the contradictions. The mousy wallflower who's a cold killer.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

MASON (CONT'D)

The God-fearing Christian who commits the sin of suicide. We missed the most fucking obvious one of all.

STRICKLAND

Yeah, what's that?

MASON

What kind of accountant burns money?

49 INT. RADIANT ASSEMBLY OF GOD, CONGREGATION - NIGHT

49

Elder Brown narrates as Sister Alice is fishing out the last of the newly converted drowning Sinners. They each put on little Halos above their heads, the name of the boat is switched out to read "S.S. REEL BLESSED."

ELDER BROWN

They were drowning in sin, now they're bone dry in deliverance. Bow to Stern, Port to Starboard, tanning their hides in the light of our Father's Kingdom!

CAPTAIN CAIN

Thank you, Admiral Alice.

The BUZZING comes back in her ear. A look of concern on her face. Elder Brown hands Sister Alice the microphone. The prelude to the gospel hymn "God's Got a Crown" begins.

SISTER ALICE

(trying to push through)

Let's sing these Sinners to sturdier land, what do you say, Brothers and Sisters?!

CONGREGATION

Let's do it, Sister Alice, Hallelujah, Praise the Lord, etc.

The Balsa Wood "Waves" are switched out for "Shoreline". The BUZZING and VOICES return to Sister Alice's ear.

SISTER ALICE

They're gonna need all our strength...
(fighting through it)
To make it back to shore...

The Voices knock her off her equilibrium. She hands Elder Brown the microphone back. He vamps a bit (****SEE APPENDIX ON PAGE 56 FOR BROWN'S VAMPING****), then begins singing with the choir and the holy-ghosted congregation.

(CONTINUED)

CHOIR, ELDER BROWN & THE CONGREGATION
GOD'S GOT A CROWN MADE UP IN HEAVEN FOR
ME/ NOBODY'S CROWN MADE LIKE MINE/ GOD'S
GOT A CROWN MADE UP IN HEAVEN FOR ME/
NOBODY'S CROWN MADE LIKE MINE

The voices in her head grow louder. The Voices becoming
harmonious. She reaches out to the actor playing Jezebel.

SISTER ALICE

Can you hear the... the voices?

CHOIR, ELDER BROWN & THE CONGREGATION
MUST JESUS BEAR THE CROSS ALONE/ AND ALL
THE WORLD GO FREE? NO, THERE'S A CROSS
FOR EVERYONE AND THERE'S A CROSS FOR ME

Birdy watches Sister Alice fall back into the boat.

The Voices in her head now DEAFENING. Like a great swarm of insects, a thousand trumpets flattening the world into powder. The boat begins to spin. The air around her begins to burn unnaturally bright, as if lit from heaven. Actors, Acoyltes and choirmembers begin to stop singing. Birdy charges after her. Alice's body goes stiff! Her body begins quivering, jerking, her jaw locks up, her eyes grow wide and terrified.

SISTER ALICE

(rapidly, rhythmically)

Ch. Ch. Ch. Ch. Ch. Ch. Ch. Ch. Ch. Cha.
Cha. Cha.

INT. LOS ANGELES COUNTY MORGUE - LATER

A pile of dead bodies, almost neatly stacked like cordwood, waiting to be cremated. Mason and Strickland use flashlights to check toe tags. Mason struggles to read a bottom guy's. They speak in hushed tones.

MASON

Starting to get E.B.'s point about penmanship. Can't hardly make this writing out.

Strickland works the other side of the pile.

STRICKLAND

Hey, you got yellow toenails? Cause it's a sign of fungus if you do.

MASON

Where the fuck are you, George?

The sound of SOMEONE WHISTLING. Mason signals Strickland. They kill their flashlights. Freeze. A JANITOR pushes his mop bucket past the frosted glass of the room's door. He's gone.

STRICKLAND

I can't get to the back ones.

Mason considers the issue.

MASON

All right. Help me move these.

STRICKLAND

No fucking way.

MASON

Fucking do it.

STRICKLAND

No.

MASON

Want me to tell Ruthie about the Hat-
Check Girl? Or the Cigarette Girl? Or the-

STRICKLAND

Fuck you.

Mason and Strickland lift/throw/roll three bodies off the
pile to the floor.

STRICKLAND (CONT'D)

Aw, Jesus. Aw, fuck. Aw--

MASON

Shut up.

STRICKLAND

(hissing)

They're naked!

Mason uses his flashlight to read newly the exposed tags.

MASON

...George... Gannon...

(yes!)

Help me get him on the table.

STRICKLAND

So many dicks. I'm gonna...

Strickland looks green. They lay him on an autopsy table.

MASON

(to the body)

Tell me George, you kidnap little
Charlie? You walk into that warehouse and
gun those men down?

Mason unwraps the partial denture he got from Paul Drake.

MASON (CONT'D)

(to the body)

Or did something else happen? Something
you've been waiting to tell me?

Mason works the denture into George's gaping dead mouth.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

50

MASON (CONT'D)
 (to the body)
 Something I never thought to ask.

It's a perfect fit. Mason smiles down at the corpse. THE SOUND OF SISTER ALICE'S VOICE creeping up on the soundscape.

MASON (CONT'D)
 Who killed you, George?

51 **INT. RADIANT ASSEMBLY OF GOD, CONGREGATION - NIGHT**

51

PULL UP FROM SISTER ALICE'S CONTORTED FACE:

SISTER ALICE
 Char. Char. Char. Char. Char. Char. Char.
 Char. Char. Charl. Charl. Charl. Charl.

Splayed out in the prop boat, encircled by her parishioners, Acolytes, Birdy, Elder Brown and Doctor Bundy.

SISTER ALICE (CONT'D)
 Charlieeeeeeee!

Sister Alice sits up suddenly! The Voices go out. Birdy holds Sister Alice up. The Doctor prepares a sedative.

BIRDY
 It's okay, everyone.

DOCTOR BUNDY
 Please give us room.

Folks move back, some standing on anything to get a better look. Troy Chisom jumps on-stage.

BIRDY
 It's okay. This has happened before. It's me, honey. You okay, baby?

Sister Alice nods. Doctor Bundy administers the sedative.

SISTER ALICE
 Charlie. We don't have to worry about Charlie Dodson. God told me just now.

Murmurs from the encircled: *Hallelujah, Praise Be, etc.*

BIRDY
 He told you Charlie went to Heaven?

SISTER ALICE
 No, Mama.

BIRDY
 (growing suspicious)
 What did he tell you?

(CONTINUED)

SISTER ALICE

God told me...

Tears stream down Sister Alice's face.

SISTER ALICE (CONT'D)

...that I'm going to resurrect him.

Birdy's eyes narrow. Elder Brown looks very angry. Troy Chisom leans into the frame, aims his camera at her.

TROY CHISOM

Would you mind repeating that, ma'am?

CLOSE-UP on SISTER ALICE: A beautiful Messianic smile comes across her face. CAMERA FLASH.

END OF EPISODE

APPENDIX

49 The Voices knock her off her equilibrium. She hands Elder 49
Brown the microphone back. He vamps a bit:

ELDER BROWN

*How about that, folks? Our own Sister
Alice, steering from the rough water into
the harbor of Heaven! This is her work on
earth. This is the good work we witness.
Now, I can barely hear you, and if that's
so... how's our Father in his kingdom
gonna hear you? Sing it with me!*