The Big Nowhere

Screenplay by Chris Kazan & Nick Kazan

Based on the novel by James Ellroy

REVISED DRAFT

September 25, 1997

Words in parenthesis are (not spoken aloud).

BLACK SCREEN

SOUND: a wolverine snarling.

Very low, deep in its throat. TITLES BEGIN as we:

FADE IN:

INT. ANIMAL CAGE. DAY.

Colors violently torqued. Hard JAZZ music. Wolverine pacing in and out of view, black except the huge yellow teeth and slivers of white around the eyes...

CUT TO:

EXT. GOINES'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

A BLACK JACKET fills the screen.

A tall, SILVER-HAIRED MAN, wearing the jacket, stumbles away from us. He supports another man, MARTY GOINES, who lolls against him, apparently drunk.

CUT TO:

THE WOLVERINE

Pacing back and forth, back and forth, each turn like the tick of a time bomb...

CUT TO:

EXT. GOINES'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Front door. Silver-haired man leans Goines against the door jamb, fumbles with the key. The door opens -

CUT TO:

THE WOLVERINE

Stops suddenly. Stares. Coiled energy -

CUT TO:

INT. GOINES'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Goines lolls in a chair, head flopping, then something catches his eye. He sobers for a second. Frowns. Giggles:

GOINES
Man, what the hell is - (that?!)

SMASH CUT TO:

THE WOLVERINE

Leaping straight at us, snarling, teeth flashing -

MATCH CUT TO:

SOMETHING

Attacking Goines. Savage, snarling, all over him.

Goines fights for a moment, flailing, then SCREAMS, but the scream is cut off, degenerates into a horrible GARGLING NOISE...

SUDDEN SILENCE

BLACK SCREEN

END TITLES

FADE UP:

EXT. CENTRAL LOS ANGELES POLICE STATION. NIGHT. (1949)

Calm street. Soft period SWING MUSIC. Period pedestrians. Period cars. Ain't life easy? Wasn't America grand?!

SUPERED:

LOS ANGELES
DECEMBER 31, 1949

A Jalopy passes, merrymakers tooting paper horns. TWO GUYS lean out and whistle at an attractive, respectably-dressed YOUNG WOMAN strolling toward the police station.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION. NIGHT.

An irate OLD WOMAN arguing with the DESK SERGEANT.

OLD WOMAN
Henry spent forty years collecting those coins! They're worth thousands- (of dollars!)

DESK SERGEANT
(mock outrage)
Yes, Ma'am. But who would have done such a thing?

OLD WOMAN
I told you! The boy across the street! My neighbor saw him -

DESK SERGEANT
(happily)
Other side of the street is County territory. Call the Sheriff's department.

OLD WOMAN
But I always -

The Desk Sergeant has already turned his attention to the attractive young woman we saw outside:

DESK SERGEANT
Yes, miss?

YOUNG WOMAN
Someone outside just spat on the sidewalk!

DESK SERGEANT
Hey Clyde!
(feigns outrage)
Someone else is spitting in public!

CLYDE, a big ruddy-faced cop of 40, comes forward shaking his head gravely.

CLYDE
We better take your statement, young lady. Come this way.

We move with them as Clyde leads her toward the rear. The Desk Sergeant turns back to the Old Woman and sips from a glass of clear liquid. For the first time, we suspect he's not sober.

DESK SERGEANT
Terrible, ain't it? Expectoratin' on the sidewalk?

OLD WOMAN (O.S.)
I have never dealt with the Sheriff's Department. I have always dealt with the City Police, and I demand -

Clyde pushes a door and we enter:

INT. REAR OF STATION. NIGHT.

Raucous laughter; a radio plays the Swing Music we heard before; COPS and YOUNG WOMEN in varying states of undress. Bottles being passed, sexual play, locker-room male dominance.

GENE NILES, 45, thin and smart, sits on his desk in his underwear rubbing the naked breast of the PROSTITUTE in his lap.

NILES
You know my favorite drink? T and T.
(pours Tequila on her breast)
Tequila and -

He licks the tequila off her tit. Clyde brings the Attractive Young Woman over and says, a little too loudly:

CLYDE
Hey Niles, fresh meat!

Niles pushes the T & T girl off his lap and grabs the attractive new one. As the revelry continues, THE CAMERA TILTS SLOWLY DOWN toward the bottom of Niles's desk...

NILES
(to New Girl)
Hi. My name's Gene Niles. I'm priapic, you know what that means?

CAMERA reveals: A MICROPHONE taped to a leg of Niles's desk. A WIRE leads from the microphone to a hole in the wall...

THE CAMERA flows effortlessly out the window:

EXT. POLICE STATION. ALLEY. NIGHT.

The wire emerges from the exterior wall and leads to a RECORDING MACHINE (marked: <u>Property of Sheriff Dept</u>.) in a dark corner of the alley. JOHNNY STOMPANATO, 24, a dark handsome gangster, is listening on earphones. At his side: ICEPICK KUPFERMAN, 35 and pale as paper, cleans his fingernails with an icepick - his tool of preference for his trade, which is killing people.

JOHNNY STOMP
They sure improved the quality on these things.

(MORE)

JOHNNY STOMP (CONT'D)
(gives earphones to Icepick)
Hear the tonality on that?

Icepick listens for a moment, bored, then resumes cleaning his nails.

JOHNNY STOMP
"Yeah, Johnny, that's great tonality."
You say anything when you <u>come</u>?

Icepick shakes his head. We gather Icepick never speaks.

JOHNNY STOMP
(irritated)
Ahmo call Mickey.

As Johnny Stomp stomps off toward a phone booth, Icepick smiles to himself. Mighty weird sight.

CUT TO:

INT. MICKEY COHEN'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

MICKEY COHEN, the gangster "businessman," is on the phone. We see him only from behind. Mickey has powerful shoulders, wears a silk dressing-gown. In the background, his wife LAVONNE, 45, ex-chorus girl, is doing needlepoint in a frumpy housecoat.

MICKEY
Johnny, Johnny, I don't care about the <u>tonality</u> (on) the god-damn recording! I want <u>slime</u>! Scandal! I want -
(he's interrupted)
Okay. Okay, good. <u>Good</u>. Thank you.

He hangs up, dials another number...

MICKEY
(into phone)
Hey, Sweetlips, gimme Hash.
(beat)
Just put the fucker on the phone, will ya?!

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPT. NIGHT.

KAREN, 21, starlet material doing time as the switchboard/radio operator, is fielding Mickey's call.

KAREN
(frosty)
Mr. Cohen? One moment, please.
(to Danny)
I love to make him wait.

DANNY UPSHAW (twenties, dedicated, driven, but with a hint of sadness in his eyes) is so engrossed in his criminology text that he doesn't hear Karen. Tucked under his shirt, Danny always wears a thin leather necklace which he unconsciously touches in moments of stress.

Other DEPUTIES are playing cards. They all wear khaki uniforms in contrast to the blue of the city police.

After counting to ten, Karen puts the call through -

CUT TO:

INT. HASH'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

Chief Deputy HASH REED (forties, endearing, a mischievous boy who never grew up) is talking to Mickey on the phone.

HASH
No kidding. I thought Johnny Stomp'd get excited and catch his rope in the recorder.
(beat)
Yeah, I got your "gift."

A fruit basket on his desk. Hash roots around in the green cellophane, finds a bottle of whiskey. Examines the label with disgust.

HASH
What's this, left over, prohibition? Talk to you, huh?
(hangs up, dials, with a smirk)
Cheap bastard.
(into phone)
Hey Elmore, gimme two hundred on the Bears.
(beat, then angrily)
When didn't I pay -
(interrupts himself)
Dammit, Elmore, who you think lets you stay in business!?
(listens)
Okay. That's better.

He slams down the phone, smiles: his anger was all pretense.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT. NIGHT.

Karen sits on Danny's desk reading PHOTOPLAY. She strokes his hand as he reads. SHERIFF BISCAILUZ, 70, tough and fighting age, painfully shuffles through the office on his way home.

HASH (O.S.)
Happy New Year, Al!

Hash has emerged from his office, whiskey in hand.

BISCAILUZ
Well Hash, think I'll make it through another year?
(mutters)
Goddamned useless body.
You boys enjoy yourselves tonight.

Danny looks up, waves idly at the Sheriff, and resumes reading. Hash looks after Biscailuz, momentarily somber. Shakes off mood.

HASH
Come on, Danny, get your ass out of that book.

He pours for Danny as Karen moves back to the switchboard.

HASH
Ever had rot gut?
(hoisting)
To a new year, a new half-century!

He tosses back his drink. Danny follows suit, clearly not used to drinking.

HASH
(to Karen)
You ain't seen nothin', baby! The '50s! This is gonna be the wildest most depraved decade in the history of these United States!

The two-way radio crackles; irritated, Hash leans over Karen and snaps it off. Turns on an AM radio.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Meanwhile, in Washington, J. Edgar Hoover expressed "emphatic" opposition to the proposed creation of a national police system to control domestic Communists.

HASH
'At's all we need.

He spins the dial, finds some music.

KAREN
I don't know, Chief. Sounds like those Reds are all over the place.

HASH
Karen, you ever seen a Communist?

KAREN
I'm sure I have, but who can tell?

HASH
They're shrimps. Dress like undertakers, and talk like college professors: they're so smart they're stupid.
(pours refill for Danny)
You gettin' that smart, Deputy?, all this studying?

DANNY
Someone has to take this job seriously.

KAREN
We're going out when the shift breaks,
(winks)
see if Danny knows how to relax.

DANNY
When I relax, look out!

Hash raises a skeptical eyebrow, mutters to Karen:

HASH
Look out...
(waves)
Talk to you.

He leaves.

Following instructions in his book, Danny carefully dusts the whiskey bottle for fingerprints.

KAREN
Danny?

DANNY
Mmm?

KAREN
(playful)
Will you kiss me tonight?

He glances up at her, nods soberly (he heard nothing), and compares the fingerprints on the whiskey bottle with those on a white card.

The door flies open. Another Deputy, LOU, enters pale, shaken -

LOU
I tried you on the radio -

Karen blinks nervously, realizes... As she turns the two-way back on and the AM off:

LOU
(stares at Danny)
Jesus dog, you ain't ever seen nothing like it!

As Danny jumps up and follows Lou out:

KAREN
Danny?! What about our date?!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RHUM BOOGIE NIGHTCLUB. NIGHT.

On Hash's excited face as he walks up the red carpet. FLASHBULBS POP, ONLOOKERS, WANNA BE's and PHOTOGRAPHERS are held back behind red velvet ropes and beefy SECURITY. The crowd CHEERS as GLAMOROUS COUPLES are escorted in.

Johnny Stomp ushers Hash into the nightclub.

CUT TO:

INT. RHUM BOOGIE. NIGHT.

Hash looks around. This is it. The pulse of Hollywood. A wild scene, 1950 style. Black and white musicians playing thumping Big Band MUSIC. MOVIE STARS, and BUSINESS TYCOONS mingle with GANGSTERS. Gowns, jewels, tuxedos, cigars. Crowded tables, packed dance floor, WAITRESSES and CIGARETTE GIRLS in sexy outfits.

Then Hash spots him:

Mickey Cohen. The King of the room. Shrewd, generous, wickedly charming and extremely well-dressed.

He is obsessed with "germs:" whenever we see him, he's cleaning his hands or face with tissues.

Mickey sits at a wall table across the room. Well-wishers, thugs and gushing starlets surround the table. Mickey spots Hash and waves him over.

FOLLOW Hash toward Mickey. Glimpse people we'll see later:

ELLIS LOEW, the district attorney. Handsome politician material. He sits next to HERMAN GERSTEIN, a well-stuffed studio head who eats an enormous meal.

Clyde, the big red-faced cop we saw at the police station, grabs Hash's arm. He's totally plastered.

CLYDE
Whoa! Handsome! It's you and me!

HASH
(bewildered)
Huh?

CLYDE
Straight to the top!
(changing the subject)
Hey get a load. Mickey's feelin' so good he lets his squeeze out in public!

Hash catches a glimpse of a WOMAN in a strapless, blood-red evening gown hidden behind Mickey's admirers.

Hash sticks out his hand to Mickey. Mickey, a napkin dangling from his neck, grabs the hand, pulls Hash close, and kisses him on both cheeks.

MICKEY
This is the boy, Audrey. This is the boy.
(to Hash)
You know Audrey?

Reveal AUDREY ANDERS, who looks up wearing cat-eye glasses. She is elegant, confident, wry and mature. She stretches out an arm displaying a diamond bracelet.

HASH
How do you do, Miss Anders?

MICKEY
(proud)
She does great. Best bookkeeper I ever had. Smart as a whip.

She flashes him an amused smile and glances at Hash.

HASH
I'm Rawlins Reed.

MICKEY
Call him Hash, 'cause that's what he turns you into if you disagree with him.

AUDREY
Pleased to meet you. Hash.

MICKEY
(to Hash, overlapping)
Come on, come on, you gotta hear this.
(to Audrey)
You too, sweet stuff.

We move with Hash and Mickey going through the club. Hash feeds off the gushing FACES staring at Mickey: everyone seems starstruck.

Upstairs at a red leather door marked "Private," Mickey passes through. Hash holds the door for Audrey and looks her over appreciatively as she follows Mickey. Audrey glances over her shoulder.

AUDREY
What are <u>you</u> lookin' at?

Hash shrugs: "you caught me."

CUT TO:

EXT. VACANT LOT. NIGHT.

Outskirts of a city that isn't a city. Two county black-and-whites criss-cross their headlights over the trash-strewn lot. The lights intersect on a car with one rear door open. A FAT DEPUTY rummages around in the car. FLASHBULBS POP as Lou takes pictures.

Danny stares down at something, his face contorted in horror:

It's Marty Goines, the man we saw in the opening sequence.

Goines's eyes have been gouged out, his naked torso is covered with savage bites. Clothes are strewn nearby, as if some wild animal had torn them off.

Danny kneels down for a closer look.

LOU (O.S.)
Ever seen hickeys like that?

FLASHBULB pops over the bite marks.

FAT DEPUTY (O.S.)
Some fag killing, sure as shit.

LOU (O.S.)
I don't mind 'em killin' each other, if it was 'cross the city line.

WIDER ANGLE

DANNY
(annoyed)
How 'bout the car?

Inside the open door: a pool of blood on the back seat.

FAT DEPUTY
Reported stolen two hours ago, near a bop joint.
(glances at notebook)
Club Zombie. It checks out. The guy was half-crocked, called three times to see if we found it.

DANNY
(curt)
Start interrogating the locals. You know the drill: witnesses to the dumping, suspicious loiterers, vehicles.

As Danny turns back to the corpse, he notices something odd: near the body is a hole in the ground, 3/4" in diameter. And a similar hole a few feet away -

Danny goes to the second hole. He pulls from it a torn, crumpled, piece of paper. As he carefully bags this:

A Cadillac screeches up. A VERY FAT MAN gets out. Backlit. We dimly perceive: a soiled white smock over a tuxedo. Bright party hat: "1950." The Fat Man lurches drunkenly toward the body and proclaims <u>basso profundo</u>, like a voice from hell:

FAT MAN
I'm the Coroner.

CUT TO:

INT. RHUM BOOGIE. MICKEY'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

Leopard skin covered chairs. Tiger rug. A window looks down over the club.

Hash, Mickey, and Audrey, Johnny Stomp and Icepick listen to the police station recording:

NILES (V.O.)
"Priapic." It means I can't get it down. Wanna make a professional examination?

Everyone laughs.

JOHNNY STOMP
Whattaya say we play this for the wives at the Policeman's Ball?!

More laughter. As the recording continues:

MICKEY
You know what's wrong with this town?... I'll tell you: everybody and his fucking brother wants more, and more, and more. Problem is: cops want theirs too! They want more kickback, gotta do that
(gestures toward recorder)
to 'em, it's a cryin' shame.

HASH
You love it.

MICKEY
(grins)
Yeah, why not?
(to everybody)
You ain't got loyalty, what're you left with, huh? Tell me. No. I tell you. Nothing. That's what you're left with. Nothing.
(to Audrey)
Right?

AUDREY
Right.

Hash notices Audrey's face remains relaxed but her foot wiggles nervously. Suddenly, it stops.

Audrey catches Hash's glance and looks away.

Oblivious to this, Mickey leads Hash out of the room:

MICKEY
Things are gonna be good for you, Hash. Real good.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

Raucous scene. Deputies getting drunk. Loud MUSIC. Frustrated, Karen is all dressed now to go out and looks for Danny.

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT. DARKROOM. NIGHT.

Quiet. Red Light. Danny staring at images of the crime scene magically appear through the developing fluid.

CUT TO:

INT. RHUM BOOGIE. NIGHT.

Mickey's back at his table, talking to Hash.

MICKEY
So. You need cash?

HASH
Cash, stocks, real estate...

MICKEY
Friend of Audrey's, actress. they used to do an exotic act together, you know? Sweet kid, but she ain't careful who she's around. Boyfriend is Greek, for Christ's sake! She don't know it, but this Greek is blackmailing the studio with pictures of her and a Great Dane with a schlong like King Kong. I should have such a schlong...

Hash leans down, scratches the inside of his right knee.

HASH
Yeah, I got an itch there myself.

Mickey gives him a dirty look -

MICKEY
If you can do something... I'd send Icepick, but he gets excited, you know, his clothes get mussed, and I gotta buy him a new suit; it ain't worth it.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPT. NIGHT.

Drunk deputies, around a radio, begin the count: "10...9... 8..."

INT. DARKROOM. NIGHT.

OFFSCREEN, the deputies counting "7...6...5." Surrounded by dripping contact sheets, Danny carefully lifts a crime photo, hangs it up to dry. We hear POUNDING on door. Danny ignores it.

KAREN (O.S.)
Danny?!... Are you in there?

CUT TO:

INT. RHUM BOOGIE. NIGHT.

People counting: "two...one...zero." Bedlam. Guys screaming on tops of tables. Insane dancing. Mickey yells wildly, kisses Audrey hard on the lips. As Audrey hugs Mickey, she looks over at Hash.

Hash stands aside, watching. As the bedlam continues:

CUT TO:

INT. COUNTY MORGUE. DAY.

Danny takes notes as the CORONER inspects Goines's body:

CORONER
...six oval, irregular, circumscribed wounds on the torso between the navel and rib cage. Apparently bite marks.

DANNY
Animal bites?

CORONER
Entrails coated with congealed blood -

DANNY
That's what killed him?

CORONER
He was shot full of heroin and every vein in his body was opened up. You could've bathed in the stuff.

DANNY
Jesus!

CORONER
(resumes)
Outlines of tooth-marks too large to be human. Similar marks on the glans penis -
(arches an eyebrow at Danny)
Looks like you got yourself some new kind of killer, Deputy.

On Danny's troubled face:

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT. DAY.

Hash's car passes a rust-streaked sign:

VISTA VIEW GARDENS
CALIFORNIA LIVING AT ITS FINEST
NO $$$ DOWN FOR VETS!

EXT. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT. BUNGALOW. DAY.

A peach-colored prefab house, streaked aluminum siding with stucco accents. Hash gets out of his car. A KID ON A TRICYCLE stares at him solemnly.

Hash goes to the rickety front door, looks around, pops the lock with his knee. He grins at the kid on the tricycle and goes in.

INT. BUNGALOW. DAY.

A MANGY CAT skitters out of the way as Hash examines: yellowing shades, cheap furniture, and a stack of identical (stolen) radios. A poster shows Audrey Anders and her pretty friend, Lucy, in G-strings and pasties: "The Va Va Voom Girls!"

INT. BEDROOM. MINUTES LATER.

Hash going through bureau drawers. He finds a checkbook, sticks it in his pocket.

Runs a hand under the mattress, finds a sawed-off shotgun. He unloads it, puts it back, mutters to the cat:

HASH
Two to one he don't reload.

LIVING ROOM.

Hash walks in, leafing through the checkbook:

Among the entries, one cryptic one: initials J.S... $200.

Hash examines the wall next to the phone: names and numbers written in pencil. Mostly last names. One set of initials: J.S.

Hash dials, waits. Speaks in a "Greek" accent.

HASH
Ima the Greek, izza Johnny Stomp?
(beat)
I'ma beautiful, ma'am, thank you.
(hangs up)
Guinea is even dumber than the Greek!

CUT TO:

EXT. BUNGALOW. DAY.

Hash dozing in his car. A red Pontiac convertible drives up. The Greek, 30, small and greasy, gets out along with Audrey and LUCY, her friend.

Tottering on high heels, the women follow the Greek toward the house. As they enter, Hash gets out of his car carrying a billy-club.

Hash goes to the Pontiac, whacks off the Indian-head hood ornament. WHACK! The windshield smashes. WHACK! WHACK! WHACK! The grill and radiator. Steam billows. WHACK! The window on the driver's side.

THE GREEK (O.S.)
What the fugg?!
(louder)
Son ub a beech!

The Greek comes tearing out of the house toward Hash, carrying the sawed-off shotgun. WHACK! The rear window goes.

Five feet from Hash, the Greek pumps the shotgun and pulls the trigger. The hammer CLICKS on an empty chamber. Hash grins.

The Greek throws the shotgun away, pulls a knife. WHACK! The billy-club smashes the Greek's hand. The Greek screams.

WHACK! WHACK! Hash hits him in the ribs and belly. The Greek drops to the ground, curling up to protect himself.

Hash kneels beside him, speaking softly.

HASH
Socrates? You got some pictures you shouldn't ought to have. Rip 'em up, we'll call it quits.

THE GREEK
F-f-fugg you!

Hash clubs the ground an inch from the Greek's head. The Greek screams.

Hash glances toward the house and sees:

Audrey and Lucy standing wide-eyed on the stoop.

HASH
Hello, Miss Audrey. Lucy, sweetheart, this baklava has been selling 8-by-10's of you and Fido.

Audrey looks at Lucy in astonishment. Lucy starts to cry.

LUCY
He made me do it. He drugged me.

HASH
(to the Greek)
Whattaya think Mickey Cohen'll do (if) he finds out you're working with his right-hand man, Johnny Stomp, to blackmail Lucy? Huh? You'll be shish-ka-bob.

The Greek blinks.

HASH
Come on, say you're sorry, huh?

The Greek looks at Audrey and Lucy, who have approached...

THE GREEK
I...'pologize.

Audrey looks at him in disgust.

AUDREY
We accept.

She kicks him in the crotch. He howls. Hash takes a girl on either arm and leads them to his car.

CUT TO:

EXT. HASH'S CAR. DAY.

Hash driving, Audrey beside him, Lucy cries silently in back.

AUDREY
You're pretty tough.

He shrugs, pleased, flattered -

AUDREY
For an Okie.

He smiles, likes the tease.

AUDREY
Can you beat up anybody?

HASH
Most people.

AUDREY
Mickey Cohen?

HASH
Mickey was a professional boxer. Only a bozo would try to...
(suddenly wonders...)
Besides, I like Mickey.
(the real question:)
Why you askin' this?

AUDREY
I just like to know who's tough, that's all.

He nods. Something else going on. He looks her over.

HASH
You are.

Meaning she's cool. She smiles, pretends to be flattered, flicks her hair, but studies him carefully.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT. DAY.

Danny, too wired to sit, stands at his desk examining papers as Karen comes up behind him, startles him by touching his arm:

DANNY
Jesus!
(seeing who it is)
Good. Karen. The killer must've taken a cab home. Call the hack companies, ask about pickups of single males after midnight, near La Brea.

KAREN
(cool, petulant)
Sure, Danny.

DANNY
Karen, honey, I'm sorry, but... this is my first murder!

He walks away, marches right into:

INT. SHERIFF BISCAILUZ'S OFFICE. DAY.

Where the boss is conferring with Ellis Loew.

DANNY
Sheriff, I'm not gonna solve this murder without more help.

BISCAILUZ
It's a low priority, Danny. This is District Attorney Loew. Mr. Loew, this is Deputy -

DANNY
Dan Upshaw, sir. Excuse me, Sheriff, but a murder is a murder; even if the deceased was a homosexual -

Biscailuz's eyes scream: "Shut up!"

LOEW
Mr. Upshaw, you have an admirable concern for the law. That's why you'll appreciate what's about to happen to this office. Every available resource will be directed toward a problem more sinister than any murder.
(off Danny's look)
We're talking about the future of America, son. If there is any.

Loew waits for his message to sink in...

DANNY
(dry)
Begging your pardon, sir, but I don't understand complicated stuff like that.
(waving papers)
I'll just stick to this case.

He walks out. Biscailuz is furious. Loew blinks. Was that a put-down...?

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. HASH'S CAR/VARIETY INTERNATIONAL STUDIOS. DAY.

Opposing picket lines. The striking UAES pickets look like good honest Americans. Their placards say: "FAIR PAY FOR LONG HOURS! PROFIT SHARES FOR ALL WORKERS!." The opposing Teamsters look like hoods. (Signs: "REDS OUT! NO CONTRACT FOR COMMUNISTS!")

Hash's car is stopped by a traffic cop to let some pickets cross.

LUCY
What do they want?

On the UAES line: REYNOLDS LOFTIS (a distinguished gray-haired actor) and his fiancee CLAIRE DE HAVEN (red-haired; angry, intense.)

AUDREY
I don't know honey. They're just labor unions.

LUCY
(sarcastic)
I don't see nobody working.

The traffic cop signals for them to move, and Hash drives on past the studio and down the street...

CUT TO:

INT. RHUM BOOGIE. DAY.

As they enter, Lucy and Audrey run to the back, where Mickey's sitting at a table along with Herman Gerstein, Ellis Loew, and Clyde, the LAPD cop. Audrey kisses Mickey, Lucy hugs him and bursts out crying, telling him what happened.

Hash approaches Johnny Stomp, who's leaning against the bar listening to the ROSE BOWL.

HASH
Hey stupid.

Johnny looks at Hash incredulously -

HASH
(indicates women)
I just took care of Lucy's little problem.

JOHNNY STOMP
You want a medal?

HASH
Yeah. The Greek had your phone number written on his wall.

Johnny blinks, looks at Mickey, starts to sweat...

HASH
Mickey ever learns you were helping shake Lucy down...
(shakes his head, then:)
Of course I would never tell because I have a warm personal regard for you.

As Johnny tries to figure out how to take this, we see Mickey shoo the girls off to another table and calls to Hash:

MICKEY
Come on over here, will ya?!

Hash passes Icepick Kupferman, whispers:

HASH
Was your mom really a transvestite?!

Icepick reacts, starts to speak, then stops himself.

HASH
(grins)
Almost got you!

When Hash arrives, Mickey stuffs some bills in his pocket.

MICKEY
This job was peanuts. You're on the verge, Hash, the big verge; you know Herman Gerstein, Variety International Pictures -

HASH
(nods to Gerstein)
Mr. G. does my interior decorating.

MICKEY
(ignoring this)
Yeah. Herman and me got another employment here. You interested?

HASH
(grins)
Gentlemen: so long as there's money and an element of danger...

GERSTEIN
Perhaps I should let Mr. Loew explain.

Loew turns toward Hash and fixes him with a stare. He speaks with programmed, messianic fervor:

LOEW
Communism hides under a thousand names. UAES, NAACP, AF of L: noble-sounding organizations, but they all portray America as a land of oppression, of lynched Negroes and fat Capitalists.
(waves some papers)
These facts, if verified, will carry the battle to the doorstep of the cabal which threatens the - (American way of life)

MICKEY
Yeah, yeah. Nice speech, Governor.

LOEW
Don't call me that.

MICKEY
Not yet.
(to Hash)
What it is, these UAES geeks are giving
(MORE)

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Mr. Gerstein problems with this picketing and crap.

GERSTEIN
They want medical insurance. What is this, Russia?

MICKEY
Mr. Loew here is gonna take the play away from them. I want you and Clyde to cowboy for him, round up whatever kinds of statements and legal crap he needs, 'cause Mr. Loew is a class gentleman, he don't want to get his hands dipped in shinola.

Hash stares at Mickey.

HASH
Ahh. Can we talk, private?

Mickey nods, stands, puts an arm over Hash's shoulder. They walk away, sit at an empty table. Talk during all this:

HASH
This is bullshit, Mick.

MICKEY
Sure it's bullshit. It's business!

HASH
Those guys on the picket lines are just working stiffs.

MICKEY
Hey. You wanna be a doofus all your life?

HASH
Why stop now?

MICKEY
Yeah. Where you gonna be, twenty years? As a friend, I'm asking. Gonna be sittin' some crappy room, livin' some crappy pension, starin' some crappy window? Huh? Or you gonna have a little style maybe, a little dignity?

HASH
Rate I'm goin', that room sounds okay.

MICKEY
How's the Sheriff's health these days? I hear he won't see Easter.

Hash gives him a look: you can't possibly mean...

MICKEY
Here's the pudding. One: Reds out, Teamsters in. I bought a nice slice of Teamster action last fall, (from) a certain gentleman, New York City.
Two: this jerk Loew gets elected Governor; by then I got a nice chunk of him.
Three: with this sex scandal, Niles is kaput, Clyde gets LAPD chief. You get to be Sheriff.
(snaps his fingers; it's done. Grins)
You be fat, disgusting, and a millionaire. So. You on board?

Beat.

HASH
(hesitating)
Me and Al go way back. So forget this Sheriff thing. I don't know, Mick. Somethin' about this...

Mickey wipes his hands very carefully with a Kleenex...

MICKEY
(just the facts:)
You're my only goon in the Sheriff's Department. Either you're in, or you're dead.

Very casual. Does he mean it? Hash swallows his objection.

HASH
(resigned)
I'm in.

Mickey smiles, hugs Hash:

MICKEY
Hey, Clyde's been on it for a year, he'll do the hard part.

CUT TO:

EXT. HASH'S CAR. DAY.

Hash (looking peeved) is driving, Audrey beside him.

AUDREY
You didn't have to drive me home.

HASH
Mickey's idea.

AUDREY
You do everything Mickey wants?

Hash looks at her, shakes his head -

HASH
Hell of a question for you to ask.

AUDREY
I love Mick. He loves me.

HASH
Yeah.
(looks at her, looks away, looks back)
He loves lookin' at you. He takes you out in public 'cause he knows every man wants you and is scared to do anything. Then you go back to your place for what?, thirty-five minutes, an hour?, and you pack him home to Lavonne.

AUDREY
Mickey talks to me.

He gives her a look: "Yeah, right."

She stares at him, then points at a bungalow -

AUDREY
I'm right there.

He stops the car, and she starts to get out. Perfunctory:

AUDREY
Thanks.

HASH
(stops her)
Mickey likes you like he likes me. For what we do for him.

She shakes her head.

He stops her head with his hand, and makes as if to kiss her on the mouth. Audrey stops him gently, with a finger on his lips, but without pulling away.

AUDREY
Be smarter just to shoot yourself in the head.

HASH
Probably.

She gets out, heads toward her house. Hash shakes his head at the stupidity of what he has done.

CUT TO:

A STEERING WHEEL. Being dusted for prints. We are:

EXT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT. DAY.

Danny is doing the dusting on the car from the murder site. Karen appears at his side, hands him two sheets of paper.

DANNY
Thanks.

Not even giving her the time of day. He glances at the papers - slight reaction - and marches quickly, ahead of Karen, back:

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT. DAY.

Danny comes in, grabs some papers off his desk, and marches into:

INT. HASH'S OFFICE. DAY.

Hash is reading a newspaper: "SEX SCANDAL ROCKS LAPD!"

Danny sets file on Hash's desk:

DANNY
We got it. The dead man.

HASH
(reading)
"Martin Mitchell Goines, D.O.B..."
(looks up)
your age.

Danny hands him a photo.

The photo is a MUG SHOT of Goines looking young and tough, with a huge Butch-Waxed pompadour:

DANNY
His first possession roust.

Karen appears at the door.

KAREN
Sir, that bookmaker, Mr. Elmore, keeps calling -

HASH
I'm on vacation, Hawaii -

KAREN
And there's a Detective Niles here, LAPD -

HASH
Up his ass.

Karen blushes at the language and leaves. Danny continues, all business:

DANNY
Goines served two years County on a reefer charge, three and a half State on a burglary. One year, attempted extortion -

HASH
He never really found his <u>specialty</u> -

DANNY
Paroled August, '48, San Quentin. He's a musician with local 3126, Hollywood. Last known address: detox unit at Camarillo.

HASH
Fingerprints?

DANNY
Killer wore gloves. But there was something else: holes near the body.

HASH
Holes?

DANNY
Like from a machine. I was gonna take casts, but the tow truck ran over 'em. And I found this:

Shows Hash the wrinkled piece of paper from the murder site. Smoothes it out.

INSERT: A corner of a typewritten page: "the union (words torn off) precaution not to appear Communist dominated."

DANNY
Could be tied to the labor trouble at VIP. That D.A., Loew, was in here yesterday pushing people around.

HASH
He's a shithead.
(quick look at Danny)
No forget that. He's a dedicated fighter for truth.
(beat)
You want to get ahead, kid?

DANNY
I want to, and I will.

HASH
Not always that easy.
Sometimes you only get one shot.
When it comes, grab it.
Even if it's wrapped in a package you don't exactly appreciate.

DANNY
Does that mean something specific?

HASH
Means this case is garbage. Goines is garbage; so's the slime who killed him; and if you get too close, <u>you</u> might start to stink.
So if the DA comes back, call him <u>Mr</u>.
Loew, and give him <u>exactly</u> - (what he wants)

NILES (O.S.)
Son of a bitch! Judas! Monkey meat!

Gene Niles, in uniform, bursts in the door, followed by Karen.

KAREN
Sorry, sir, I told him to -

HASH
Why it's the priapic Mr. Niles!

NILES
You...You and that kike Cohen and that wop cocksucker Stompanato -

DANNY
There's a lady present, Niles -

HASH
(holds up newspaper)
I hear there were also ladies present at the LAPD on New Year's Eve!

Niles takes a wild swing which flies over Hash's head.

HASH
Lower.
(ducking another one)
Niles: you play with whores, you gotta expect to get screwed.

NILES
My wife's got me sleepin' on the back porch!, my kids won't speak to me! You know why I moved to California, Reed?!

HASH
Be an actor?

NILES
For my family! And now I ain't even got one! And it's all your fault, you scrofulous son of a bitch!

Niles takes another wild swing at Hash. Hash catches his arm. Danny grabs the other arm. They carry Niles toward the back door.

HASH
I like a man with a vocabulary. See this, Niles? This is my own personal posterior threshold. Convenient, huh?

Danny opens the back door, and they throw Niles down the stairs. Hash closes the door after him:

HASH
Gee I hate to lose a friend.
(off Danny's look)
What?

DANNY
Don't you think law officers should be solving murders instead of screwing whores and spying on each other?

HASH
It's an original notion.
(beat)
Okay. Stay on top of the Goines case.
(indicates torn paper)
And if there's some connection with the union, can't hurt to know it, huh?

DANNY
Thank you, sir.
(mutters, so Hash can hear)
For doing your job.

He leaves. Hash stares after him.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLUB ZOMBIE. NIGHT.

Out front, 20-foot-high stylized statue of a Negro minstrel with glowing red eyes. Sign: DICKY McCOVER AND HIS JAZZ SULTANS - ENJOY OUR DELUXE CHICKEN BASKET.

Next door to Club Zombie is Tommy Tucker's Playroom, painted in Zebra stripes. Danny exits the Playroom, enters the Zombie.

INT. CLUB ZOMBIE. NIGHT.

Smoky. Edgy jazz, colored spotlights, high-yellow HOSTESSES in low-cut tiger-striped outfits. A mostly black crowd.

At the bar, Danny flashes his ID at the stocky black BARTENDER.

BARTENDER
(dubious)
Sheriff's office?

DANNY
(lying)
I'm cooperating with the LAPD.

He offers Marty Goines's mug shot. The Bartender puts on reading glasses, holds the picture at arm's length.

DANNY
Blew trombone at the Playroom.

BARTENDER
Oh. Marty. He comes to juice between sets. They water the drinks over there.

DANNY
See him last night?

We notice COLEMAN HEALY (thin, blond, 25; an alto sax hangs around his neck) listening casually to the conversation.

BARTENDER
Stinko. Looked like he was riding that horse.

DANNY
What horse?

BARTENDER
(raising an eyebrow)
Heroin. Work these clubs, you know the look.

DANNY
What time was he...?

BARTENDER
Ain't no time here, mister.
(noticing:)
Hey Coleman, you know that white trombone from the Playroom, Marty what-the-fuck?

COLEMAN
Sure. Horn from hunger.

BARTENDER
You want to give this gentleman some skinny? I gotta work.

He leaves. Danny sticks out his hand. Coleman gives him an odd wave instead. The horn player has an arresting charm like some existential joke brought to physical form.

DANNY
Dan Upshaw. West Hollywood Sheriff's.

COLEMAN
Coleman Healy. Planet Mars. Marty in some kind of trouble?

DANNY
He was murdered last night.

Coleman reaches over the bar, seizes a double handful of ice, and rubs it over his face.

COLEMAN
Jesus!

DANNY
How well did you know him?

COLEMAN
Just around the block, you know? Chew the fat at the bar. Weather, Bird's new side, stuff like that.

DANNY
Any idea where he lived?

COLEMAN
Here, (as) far as I could see.

DANNY
Who did he hang out with?

Coleman starts to say something, then averts his eyes -

DANNY
This is murder, bud. If you withhold-

COLEMAN
Look. Marty's dead, huh?, God bless him. This is only my personal scope, but I think the guy was a fruit. He was here one night with a sugar-daddy type - distinguished, gray hair, but definitely a nance. Looked like they were playin' Roman candles under the table.

DANNY
How about last night? Was Marty here?

COLEMAN
Nix. Not here.
(thinks, then adds:)
But I only played the first set. As I was leavin', some cat was helping Marty to a car. Marty was walkin' on his ankles, like he was drunk or...

DANNY
Or using narcotics?

COLEMAN
Maybe.

DANNY
The other guy, you think you could ID him?

COLEMAN
Ixnay. You see the lighting out here?

DANNY
Okay. Okay. Thanks.
I'll probably get back to you.

He sticks out his hand again. Coleman turns it upside down, twisting the gesture into a jazzman's handshake.

COLEMAN
(grins)
See you in church, lawman.

CUT TO:

INT. LOEW'S LIVING ROOM. DAY.

Dark like a church. Curtains drawn, we watch a scratchy BLACK AND WHITE FILM. The CAMERA focuses on Reynolds Loftis walking the UAES picket line. He takes a mint from his pocket, eats it.

DR. RESNICK (O.S.)
Reynolds Loftis has been my patient for 20 years. He first came to see me to try to resolve his bisexuality.

LOEW (O.S.)
Our new friend Dr. Resnick has been the official Communist Party psychoanalyst for the past eleven years.

We see DR. RESNICK (tall, skinny, 72.) He breaks into a fit of wet, convulsive coughing.

DR. RESNICK
Loftis had one great success in the early 40s, when he won the Academy Award. Since then...

His voice trails off. Loew slaps Dr. Resnick on the back, none too gently.

CAMERA IS PULLING BACK to show Hash and Clyde, also watching the film of Loftis. Hash shakes his head:

HASH
Looks like a dangerous criminal.

Loew flashes Hash a dirty look -

ON SCREEN: a fuzzy surveillance-type shot of CHAZ MINEAR, some years younger than Loftis.

DR. RESNICK
Chaz Minear.
(coughs)
Minear was a good writer and a man of conscience.

LOEW
Communist sympathizer.

DR. RESNICK
He's been blocked since the persecution began. He starts things but he can't finish - (them)

LOEW
Can the sermons.

Dr. Resnick glares at Loew with hatred in his eyes.

DR. RESNICK
Minear had a brief affair with Loftis and was vengeful when Loftis left him, first for a young man, then for:

ON SCREEN: Claire De Haven, the woman from the picket line.

DR. RESNICK (O.S.)
Claire De Haven. Now Loftis's fiancee. Old Pasadena money. Passionate about politics.

Resnick resumes coughing. This time it won't stop. Finally he stumbles out of the room.

EXT. LOEW'S HOUSE. LATER.

Loew helps Dr. Resnick into a cab. Resnick pulls away and slams the door in Loew's face. Loew smirks, turns to Hash:

LOEW
His granddaughter's on temporary parole.

CLYDE
He stays good, she stays out.
(winks)
Matrons there like young girls.

LOEW
(mutters)
That's enough out of you. Your weird sense of humor has already...

CLYDE
(amused)
You think I got a weird sense of humor? I only do what you ask!

LOEW
(points after taxi:)
Unfortunately, we can't use Dr. Resnick's files in court, but his information...
(hands file to Clyde)
Lean on the weak guys. Like this clown, Lenny Rolff.

HASH
What kind of support do we get?

LOEW
I'll set up an office here, to keep things quiet.

HASH
Anybody else on the inside?

LOEW
Very good, Reed. You'd make an excellent Sheriff. Can you suggest someone? Young, handsome, idealistic?

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT. DAY.

Danny standing at attention. Upset.

DANNY
But sir -

We hear:

BISCAILUZ (O.S.)
Danny, are you a Communist?

DANNY
(totally bewildered)
No sir. I'm a republican.

We reveal:

BISCAILUZ
Then you heard me. You're off the Goines case until further notice. We need every available resource in this office to help the D.A. with this grand jury investigation...

On Danny's face as we realize he's not about to stop.

CUT TO:

EXT. HASH'S HOUSE. DAY.

Late afternoon. Light rain. Hash parks, gets out, goes toward the house. Stops abruptly:

Audrey Anders is sitting on the porch hidden behind a bush, smoking a cigarette, with a wet mink coat in her lap. A small package sits beside her.

Hash glances at her, takes out his keys, looks at her again...

HASH
I guess I'm supposed to ask what you're doing here.

Audrey tosses him the package. Hash opens it: it is thick with money.

AUDREY
Mickey told me to tell you Mazel tov, which I guess means he's glad you're in with this Grand Jury thing. I was supposed to send it over, but...
(shrugs)

She stubs the cigarette out in the mink coat. The fur sizzles:

AUDREY
It's last year's style. Mick'll want a new one, anyway.

Hash nods, trying to figure out what she's after. He starts to open the door, and glances around instinctively: anyone hiding in the shadows? She reads his look:

AUDREY
I parked three blocks away.

She looks at him suggestively. He nervously unlocks the door.

INT. HASH'S APARTMENT. DAY.

As they walk in:

HASH
So you really are his bookkeeper.

AUDREY
I guess you think a girl's just supposed to stay at home and bake cookies.

Audrey drops her mink on the floor and looks around. The living room is furnished in a schizophrenic riot of clashing colors and extravagant decors: zebra skins on one wall, swinging saloon doors, glitzy coffee table, etc.

AUDREY
Nice. You got a wino to decorate?

HASH
I do favors for Gerstein, the mogul. He lets me scavenge stuff off old movie sets. You want a drink?

AUDREY
I don't drink.

HASH
Religion?

AUDREY
My father and mother were drunks, I thought I'd give it a pass.

HASH
So you decided to be a stripper.

She looks him in the eye as she slowly advances. Inches away from his face.

AUDREY
What's wrong with you, Reed? I thought you'd be glad to see me.

Hash struggles <u>not</u> to respond.

AUDREY
Same decor in the bedroom?

Hash wants it badly, but:

HASH
How long you think we'd live before Mickey...

Audrey gives him a long look. Then picks up the mink.

AUDREY
(nods)
Yeah.
(a secret:)
But I have to get away from Mickey Cohen. I have to, and I will.

Hash stares at her, concerned.

AUDREY
Goodnight.

She exits. Hash groans as he leans against the door.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT. DAY.

Danny, intent:

DANNY
The killer has O-positive blood. The coroner got it from blood stains on the body and clothing on the scene.

Danny's talking to:

HASH
I thought Al took you off this thing.

DANNY
He never gave it to anyone else, so I'm kinda keeping a hand in -

HASH
Forget it. You're off it. Come on.

Hash walks towards his office; Danny reluctantly follows.

INT. HASH'S OFFICE. DAY.

Loew, Clyde, Hash, Danny. Silence. Then:

LOEW
This is a career maker, young man. Afterward, you can transfer to my staff, you'll make Lieutenant -

DANNY
Answer's still no.

HASH
He's upset he was taken off the Goines murder case -

LOEW
Goines?

HASH
Some back alley murder.

LOEW
Exactly. A fine young man like you shouldn't waste his time -

DANNY
Look. I don't think any of you will get this, but I'll say it anyway. I am offended by crime. I don't know why, maybe my mother brought me up wrong, but lawlessness actually bothers me. And it specially bothers me when someone gets killed, and most of all when someone gets killed and no one else gives a shit. So no matter what anyone says, I am not going to leave this "back-alley murder" in order to harass innocent people - or even guilty people - for what seem like political reasons.

Stunned beat.

Danny stares at the floor; to him, the conversation is over.

Loew looks at Hash: well? Shall we go?

Hash turns on Danny, his voice low and intense:

HASH
Where you think you are, boy? New Mexico? This is L.A!, the only place left that's still the real America, like it was with the Founding Fathers. Liars and thieves, murderers and convicts, riffraff who can't make it anywheres else. It's a paradise of mutts, fighting and fucking and howling, dog eat dog, man eat man, sooner or later you're either a millionaire or you're somebody else's cornflakes. So wake up, shut your mouth, and join the real world.

Everyone is stunned by this outburst. Particularly Loew.

Having said his piece, Hash smiles, turns congenially to Danny:

HASH
Why not both?
(beat)
Could you do both jobs?

Long beat. Danny looks at Hash, at Loew. Laughs sardonically, then gives his answer:

DANNY
Sure. I can work a double shift, sixteen hour day, no problem.

HASH
(to everyone)
Good?
Good.
(to Danny)
We've got an East Coast identity for you. Ted Krugman.

LOEW
You join the UAES picket line, we'll make trouble, rough you up a little -

DANNY
How little?

CLYDE
Whatever it takes, kid.

Loew hands Danny an 8x10 glossy of Claire De Haven -

LOEW
We want you to get next to this woman. Claire De Haven.

HASH
The Red Queen. They say she laid eight out the Hollywood Ten.

CLYDE
Nine, if you count a hand-job under the table at Musso's.

LOEW
She's their screener, so she'll have membership records somewhere. Or they may be in her head. If we can find former members, people who'll talk with a little encouragement... But Claire is a hard case. As far as we know, her only weakness is sex.

HASH
You may have to screw her socks off.

DANNY
(grins, man-to-man)
"Whatever it takes," gentlemen.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY PARK. DAY.

LENNY ROLFF (fat, poorly shaven, late 30's) is weeding aimlessly around the base of a palm tree. He pauses, takes a half-pint bottle from the pocket of his shabby City uniform, looks around to make sure no one is watching, and takes a swig.

Hash's car is parked nearby. He and Clyde get out of their car and walk up to Rolff. Clyde pushes him down on a bench.

ROLFF
What the hell?!

HASH
Special investigators. DA's office.

ROLFF
(raises right arm)
Sieg Heil!

Clyde cracks Rolff across the face -

CUT TO:

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. DAY.

Danny getting dressed, looking at himself in the mirror. Drastic change: bluejeans, motorcycle boots, work-shirt, and a beat-up leather jacket. The Young Rebel.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY PARK. DAY.

A YOUNG MOTHER with a baby carriage stares in horror from a safe distance at Clyde, Rolff, and Hash:

Rolff's face is red in several places where Clyde hit him. Clyde's breathing heavily; the beating has just ended.

CLYDE
And if you still aren't convinced, we can always tell wifey about the clap you banged into her sister Sarah.

Fear, consternation, on Rolff's face: he had forgotten about that.

CLYDE
Which sister was better? I'm just curious, you know?, 'cause my wife's got a younger sister; she's always makin' me peach cobbler and shit...
(silence, then very nasty:)
Which sister was better?!?

Rolff doesn't want to go near this question.

ROLFF
I... I went to meetings in Beverly Hills, West L.A., Hollywood.

CLYDE
How long were you a Party member?

ROLFF
Till Stalin proved himself -

CLYDE
Don't justify, cowboy. Just answer.

ROLFF
Early 1940.

CLYDE
Which of the following people were known to you as Party members: Claire De Haven. Armando Lopez. Mort Ziffkin. Chaz Minear.

ROLFF
All of them.

CLYDE
You and Chaz Minear wrote Dawn of the Righteous and Head 'Em East, both pictures which had leftist sentiments. Were you told by party bosses to insert pro-Russian propaganda, or was it individual - (initiative?)

ROLFF
(summoning his courage)
We put that stuff in for Joe McCarthy.

Clyde starts to hit Rolff, but Hash steps between them.

CLYDE
(mutters)
What, are you getting soft?

HASH
(to Rolff)
Tell us about Minear and Loftis. Were they good friends?

Rolff looks at them. He's exhausted. Lowers his eyes.

ROLFF
What...what do you mean by "friends?"

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. DANNY'S CAR. DAY.

Parked. The picket line is a block away. Danny changes the contents of his wallet, putting in ID for Ted Krugman. He stuffs the wallet in his pocket and heads toward the line.

As he goes, he passes an old VAN:

INT. VAN. DAY.

Niles and another LAPD COP are filming the action through a window of the van.

NILES
Here comes Sweetheart.

EXT. PICKET LINE. DAY.

Controlled pandemonium. Opposing lines within a few feet of each other. Danny talks with UAES officials at a card table. One of them hands him a sign: FAIR PAY NOW!

EXT. PICKET LINE. LATER.

A few feet in front of Danny is Reynolds Loftis, cane in one hand, picket sign in the other.

DANNY & UAES MARCHERS
Fair pay now! Fair pay now!

TEAMSTERS
Reds get out! Reds get out!

A TALL THIN GUY on the Teamster line veers toward Danny -

INT. VAN.

Niles grins.

NILES
Ever seen a cockfight?

EXT. PICKET LINE.

Sudden eruption: Danny and The Tall Thin Guy screaming at each other, then Danny lands a solid punch to the belly. But Tall Thin is some weird kind of maniac. He bangs Danny's head against his own, bites Danny, gouges at his eyes and neck...other Teamsters pile on. This is getting very, very ugly.

INT. VAN.

Niles watching through binoculars, the Other Cop through the viewfinder on the camera.

OTHER COP IN VAN
They supposed to kill him?

NILES
I told them to express our love for the Sheriff's Department.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHERIFF'S DEPT. DAY.

Sheriff Biscailuz drives up and gets out of his car as Hash comes out of the building carrying an envelope. Clyde is waiting on the steps eating a hot dog piled with relish and sauerkraut.

HASH
(friendly)
Hi Al.

On the Sheriff's hurt, angry face as he coldly ignores Hash and enters the building.

Hash looks puzzled as he and Clyde get in Hash's car.

CUT TO:

INT. HASH'S CAR. DAY.

As Hash drives, he tears open the envelope. But Clyde has something else on his mind:

CLYDE
Who do you think gets more pleasure out of arguing?

HASH
Out of <u>arguing</u>?

CLYDE
Like a domestic quarrel. Who enjoys it more, men or women?

HASH
That's a tough one, Clyde.
(reads letter, gets upset)
<u>Goddamn</u> Mickey. Biscailuz resigned. Three months and he's out.

CLYDE
You and me, Hash-man, you and me.

Off Hash's troubled look -

CUT TO:

EXT. UAES TEMPORARY HEADQUARTERS. DAY.

Danny lies there, beaten up. A UNION OFFICIAL approaches with a pan of water and a rag, but Claire waves him off.

CLAIRE
Not yet. I want this for the record.

She takes a photograph, then the union official begins to clean Danny's face. Claire crouches beside him and hands him a slip of paper. Her voice and manner are impossibly seductive:

CLAIRE
Look, kid, I don't know who you are or what your problem is, but if you really like lost causes, come to this address tonight.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. HASH'S CAR (MOVING). DAY.

Clyde starting in on his second hot dog. He eats with the relish and manners of a famished two-year-old.

HASH
You really think you got a chance to be police chief?

CLYDE
Why? Cause I'm an average Joe? Listen, my friend: mediocrity is gonna be <u>big</u>. Real big. 'Sides, Niles is ankle deep in this skunk pussy -

HASH
Does he still think I recorded him?

CLYDE
Who knows? Today he's mad at Mickey C; tomorrow...?

HASH
(nods, thinks)
He liable to do something stupid?

CLYDE
Niles? It's a lock.

Hash checks a house number, pulls over.

HASH
County turf. This one's mine.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHAZ MINEAR'S HOUSE. DAY.

Upscale L.A. Hash and Clyde wait. As Hash pushes bell again, the door is opened by a pretty GIRL of 12. MRS. MINEAR, 38, handsome but tired, comes up behind her daughter. She smiles at Hash, then sees Clyde and her face darkens. She turns back to Hash:

MRS. MINEAR
You don't look like the type.
(beat)
He's around back.

Hash's mouth tightens.

EXT. SIDE/REAR OF MINEAR'S HOUSE. DAY.

As Hash and Clyde round a corner, we hear rapid-fire TYPING. They find: CHARLES MINEAR typing by the pool on a card table. He's 45, lean, handsome, weary. Sandals, chinos, Hawaiian shirt, Yankees baseball cap. He looks at them, then resumes typing. The keys stick together.

MINEAR
Look at this! Brand new and not worth a damn!

HASH
Excuse me-

MINEAR
(unsticks keys)
The '36 Underwood, now <u>there</u> was a typewriter. You guys find out who stole mine, I'll pay top dollar to ransom it back. It has a Joe Dimaggio decal on the side-

CLYDE
You're Chaz Minear.

MINEAR
The answer is "No," gentleman.

HASH
No, what?

MINEAR
Everything. No, I will not inform on members of the UAES. No, I will not answer any questions about my own past or that of my friends and acquaintances. If you subpoena me, I will stand on the Fifth Amendment, and if you jail me, I will serve my time. No, no, and no again: I will not name names.

CLYDE
Ain't it lovely to meet a man of principle?

MINEAR
Screw you.

HASH
Mr. Minear -

MINEAR
No.

Out of Minear's view, Clyde pantomimes hitting him: come on, it'll be fun.

Hash sees Mrs. Minear looking at them through the window, and shakes his head: no hitting.

HASH
Does your wife know you're homosexual?

MINEAR
Big deal. A two-week affair.

HASH
With Reynolds Loftis.

MINEAR
My wife and I forgive each other our indiscretions. Who told you?

HASH
You and Loftis stayed pals when you broke up?

MINEAR
Of course. He fell in love with someone younger. Quite normal. And for me it was just a fluke -

CLYDE
Then he still considers you a friend?

MINEAR
I hope so. Reynolds Loftis is one of the finest and most principled men I ever...
(stares at them...)
met. Why are you asking me this?

HASH
Because you're a highly regarded member of the liberal community, admired by your friends, loved by your wife and daughter -

MINEAR
Say it. Whatever it is.

HASH
When Loftis left you, what did you do?

Minear stares at him...then slowly lowers his eyes.

HASH
You weren't "Mr. No, I won't talk" then, were you?

Slowly, desperately, Minear shakes his head in acknowledgment.

CLYDE
Hey, Chaz...if your friends find out you ratted on Loftis, how much happiness will you have left?

MINEAR
You...phrase your question very well.

Minear looks dead. His face is ashen, his eyes blank. When he speaks, all feeling is strangled from his voice:

LENNY
I can never...ever...testify in court.

CLYDE
(smiles)
Well...we hope that won't be necessary, but...

It won't be possible. It's clear from the look on Minear's face that he'll kill himself first.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMARILLO STATE HOSPITAL. DAY.

The tough looking HEAD NURSE inspects Danny's badge. Danny's face is swollen and bruised.

HEAD NURSE
You're in the wrong county, Deputy.

DANNY
You had a Martin Goines in heroin detox.

Her eyes shift toward: a PILE OF MAIL, ONE LETTER SET ASIDE.

HEAD NURSE
I can't release any information about our patients.

DANNY
I could get a search warrant...but why don't I just talk to your boss?

She shrugs dubiously and leaves the room. Danny grabs the letter from off her desk. It's addressed to a "Mr. Leo Bordoni," from "Marty Goines." As we focus on Goines's address:

DANNY
(mutters)
Shit. City.

He pockets the letter and quickly leaves.

The nurse returns with her Supervisor. They're bewildered by the empty room. Then the Nurse notices the letter is missing...

CUT TO:

EXT. GOLF COURSE. DAY.

Mickey putting on a practice green. Tables with few people having drinks nearby. Hash angrily walks up.

MICKEY
Thanks for coming.

Hash hands Biscailuz's letter to Mickey. Mickey glances at it (he already knew), hands it back -

MICKEY
You want it?

HASH
No, Mick. Biscailuz lives for his job. I told you I didn't want it.

Mickey puts an arm around Hash and leads him to a table.

MICKEY
Ya know, Hash, tomorrow it'll be 24 years since I started my business. I was about your age. I look back, I see: a good life, no regrets. But sometimes, you realize you're closer to the end, than the beginning. That's why you're gonna take this job. So when you reach my age, you too can look back and say: I had a good life. And to show my happiness for you, I want you to have this.

They've arrived at a private cabana. Mickey takes an envelope, thick with money, and stuffs it in Hash's pocket.

MICKEY
You see, now you can't afford to say no.

We sense a subtle shift in Hash. Self-loathing creeps up in his face as well as, for the first time, a real dislike for Mickey.

Slight commotion across green. Johnny Stomp and Icepick drag ROSS, big, tough and seedy towards the Cabana.

MICKEY
'Scuse me a minute.

He walks over holding his club. The boys pull Ross up to Mickey.

MICKEY
Let'im go.
(as they do)
Howsaboy, Ross?

Ross smiles, insolent. Mickey yells:

MICKEY
Goyishe shit-ass!

Mickey swings and hits Ross with the club, repeatedly striking Ross's body. The beating is savage, over in ten seconds. Ross sinks, bloody, to the green, semi-conscious.

Hash looks on, somewhat horrified. Two nearby GOLFERS, standing wide-eyed, quickly get on their cart and drive away.

MICKEY
I told you, dumb shit!, I say, "Be honest with me, tell the truth, be a man." But you don't listen. Leave town, huh? Don't make me ice you.
(turns casually to Hash:)
I got a storefront, South Central. This muzzler was running it. A little sharking, a little book.

HASH
I know it.

MICKEY
Audrey does the books. So one day my auditor asks a question, I ask Audrey, same question. She checks: sure enough, everything adds up, but somewheres we got a leak. I pay salary, the guys enforce their own stuff, so if I got a headache...
(gestures after Ross)
he's got a brain tumor. You wanna shake down the rest of the operation, see who stinks?

Hash is very concerned.

HASH
I'll take care of it.

As he leaves, we see the money left on Mickey's table.

CUT TO

EXT. AUDREY'S HOUSE. DAY.

Audrey's car, a red '49 Packard coupe, is parked in front. Hash storms up to the door and pounds on it.

Audrey opens the door and Hash pushes his way in:

INT. AUDREY'S HOUSE. DAY.

A posh and tasteful home. A sharp contrast to Hash's pad. In the open doorway:

AUDREY
You nuts? What're you doing here?

HASH
Am I nuts?

AUDREY
Mickey'll have your balls for breakfast.

Hash slams the front door shut. He shoves her against the door and holds her face in his hands.

HASH
You're skimming Mickey so you can save money so you can get out from under him, and you think he won't find out, and even if he does find out, you think he won't hurt you, so now I'm the one who's gotta protect you, meaning I'm liable to lose my head too but it's okay, babe, I got no choice, 'cause if Mickey even thinks about hurting you, I'll kill him so fast...

They kiss. Hot and heavy. When their lips part:

AUDREY
I like you too, Reed.

They kiss again. Deep, long, and hungry.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM. LATER. DUSK.

Afterward. Their bodies spread over the pink satin sheets. Audrey lights a cigarette.

HASH
Look at this face. You could'a been an actress.

Audrey picks up a MODERN SCREEN magazine. She flips through and we see PHOTOS of Hollywood life.

AUDREY
Back home in Savannah, I used to read these fan magazines. I'd look at the pretty clothes, the jewels, sophisticated make-up, the fancy parties. I thought being a movie star was about as glamorous as you could get. I thought, me too? Why not? So I tried. Came out to Hollywood like everybody else. They never tell you how tough it is. Especially when the rent comes due. They never tell you how sleazy it can all get.

She tosses the magazine aside.

HASH
How sleazy did it get?

AUDREY
Not as bad as some girls I knew. I danced in a few clubs-

HASH
I bet your shows were packed. I bet you had men lining up for your number.

AUDREY
That's how I met Mickey.
(remembering)
He was my number one fan. Then he helped me out. Gave me a job. Found I was good with numbers. Turns out I should've gone to college. Not to Hollywood.

They go silent. He studies her face.

HASH
I thought you were in love.

AUDREY
You know what my number is?

Hash doesn't understand the question.

AUDREY
(matter of fact)
Sixteen. Since he married Lavonne. Steadies, I mean. Not counting one night stands, actresses, so forth.
(MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)
(shrugs)
Mickey loves women.
(short laugh)
Young women. Makes him forget his age.

Lies back, sadder now.

AUDREY
I'm not getting any younger. It's a crummy world, huh?...

Tears glisten in Audrey's eyes.

Hash traces her face with his finger.

HASH
No, it's a beautiful world.
(touching her face)
All the bad places you been, bad people you've hung around...

AUDREY
Mmm?

HASH
Like the minister used to say back home: you see this,
(her face)
you gotta believe in God.
(soft, reassuring)
You're gonna be alright.

She turns to him with gratitude and desire. She slips her hand underneath the blanket and finds him. He closes his eyes briefly and moans low, then rolls on top of her.

HASH
(husky)
Yeah, you're gonna be just fine.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARTY GOINES'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

Dark inside. Same defeated ramshackle frame house as in opening shot. Danny on the front porch. He checks the address on the envelope skeptically. Handkerchief covering his hand, he tries the door: open.

As soon as he opens the door, his nostrils flare from some awful smell. Spooked, he takes out his gun, and slips inside:

Two messy piles of men's clothing. Danny examines them. Each is stained with large quantities of dried blood.

THE KITCHEN. MINUTES LATER.

Using his handkerchief, Danny opens the refrigerator door:

EYEBALLS. Two. Beside them on the top shelf: a SEVERED FINGER.

Danny turns, gags as if to vomit—

LIVING ROOM. MINUTES LATER.

Danny on the phone:

DANNY
Christ!, Karen, I'll buy you dinner tomorrow, just listen! I need bodies, male, city or county, found in the last 48 hours. Two of 'em, and one lost a finger. I'm at Hollywood 4619, but I could get in deep being here, so ring twice and call back.

He slams down phone.

CUT TO:

INT. GOINES'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Danny flicks the light switch. PAN OVER: great splashes of blood, as if spit onto the walls. Streaks of it like finger paint on cheap flowered wallpaper.

DANNY
Holy shit.

Pools of blood caked on the linoleum floor, splashed onto a threadbare sofa.

THE BATHROOM.

Danny turns on the faucet, splashes water on his face, then drinks from cupped hands.

In the mirror, his face: pale, eyes hollow.

[illegible] MINUTES LATER.

ANOTHER ANGLE. LATER.

Danny taking photographs of the scene. On a table at one end of the room is an old typewriter.

THE KITCHEN. LATER.

Danny carefully rolls the SEVERED FINGER on an ink pad, taking its print.

LIVING ROOM. LATER.

Danny kneels on the floor, scraping up dust samples. FOOTSTEPS on the porch.

Danny draws his gun, moves against the wall by the front door—

The door opens slowly...

A beat, then Danny yanks it open. With it comes a handsome "kid" of 35 in jeans, vest, boots (resembles the MARLBORO MAN).

MARLBORO MAN
What the hell—

Danny kicks the door shut and slams the Marlboro Man against the wall. Jabs his gun into the Marlboro Man's belly—

DANNY
I got you, I got you!, you sick son of a bitch!

MARLBORO MAN
(bewildered)
What?
(looks at walls)
Jesus. Jesus Christ!, what...what're you...?
(backing away from Danny)
Don't kill me! Please! Don't kill me! Don't hurt me!

Danny realizes: this is not the killer.

DANNY
Who are you?

MARLBORO MAN
Leo. Leo... Moscowitz.

Danny takes the stolen letter from his pocket. Shoves it in the Marlboro Man's face.

DANNY
Better known as Leo Bordoni?

Freaked, Bordoni, a.k.a. The Marlboro Man, nods and looks at the room.

DANNY
You escape from the nut house?

BORDONI
I got out yesterday. Legit.

DANNY
How'd you get this address?

BORDONI
Marty wrote me.

DANNY
How'd you meet him?

BORDONI
Around. You know.

Danny slaps him.

BORDONI
At Felix Gordean's. The agent. He has this... place in Malibu. Likes to give parties for guys.

DANNY
He tall, white-haired?

Bordoni shakes his head.

DANNY
Tell me about any tall, white-haired men, early 50's, guys who like jazz, blow dope...

BORDONI
There're lots of 'em. And they all have fat wallets, and they all like me.

The telephone rings. They both look at it. It rings again, then stops.

Danny guides Bordoni toward the front door.

DANNY
If you don't want to go to jail for a very long time: you were never here, you never met me, you never even lived.

Bordoni nods. Danny shoves him outside.

The phone rings again, and Danny picks it up.

DANNY
Yeah?
(listens, reacts)
Thanks, Karen.

He slams down the phone and hurries out the door.

CUT TO:

CHAZ MINEAR'S FACE. Dead. PULL BACK to show we are:

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK. NIGHT.

Minear (the last person Hash and Clyde questioned) is lying on his side next to the corpse of another man. Both bodies are mutilated, like Goines's body was. Danny kneels over the corpses. Behind him are two CITY COPS. Danny touches one of the bite marks. Notices something in the wound. Removes it and slips it into his palm -

NILES (O.S.)
What the fuck are you doing here?

Danny turns, sees Niles glaring down at him.

DANNY
Your job.

NILES
Fuck you! Get out of here! This is city!

Danny takes a last glance at the bodies and saunters away. As he goes, he encounters the Coroner, who's approaching the bodies.

CORONER
Get around, don't you, deputy?

DANNY
(to the Coroner)
You ever figure out what made those bite marks?

CORONER
Still working on it.

Danny hands him the small object he found in the wound.

DANNY
Same marks here. I found this in one of 'em.

CORONER
(intrigued)
Animal tooth.

DANNY
Some animal's killing these guys?

CORONER
Maybe he lets an animal attack 'em after they're dead.

He shakes his head.

Danny stands there for a second, then sees:

A hole in the ground, as at the site of the first body.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDREY'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

CU of Hash. Very slowly PULL BACK.

HASH
And I was boozing - it was like I had a big hole inside I was trying to fill with sour mash...And I used to score off anybody. One time I was boosting a lumber yard in Tulsa that belonged to the mayor, and this dog come at me. It was one of those German dogs, not the hairy ones. The skinny kind, black and tan, they look like they're naked. It didn't make a sound, just came. I hope you ain't too fond of dogs, 'cause I shot the sonofabitch. I felt as bad about that dog as anything I ever did. He was doing his job, same as I was doing mine, which I figured was rooting up anything that stood still.

REVEAL Audrey sleeping in the crook of his arm: Hash is talking to himself. He looks down at her.

HASH
Nuts to be here, you know? Not that Lavonne'd let Mickey out this time of night, but still...

He reaches to the floor, where his clothes are in a tangle, finds his gun, and sticks it under the pillow.

HASH
I know a figure guy, he'll help us refry your books, Mickey won't know a thing.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLAIRE DE HAVEN'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Danny stands nervously at the door, in his Ted Krugman outfit. Claire opens the door. Looks at him curiously. Smiles.

CLAIRE
Come on.

INT. CLAIRE DE HAVEN'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

As Danny enters, Claire takes hold of his arm.

CLAIRE
Reynolds?

LOFTIS (O.S.)
Yes?

CLAIRE
I'd like you to meet Ted Krugman.

Danny looks up, sees Loftis entering the room using a distinctive ebony-headed cane. In every respect, Loftis fits the murder suspect's description. They shake hands. Loftis notices that Danny looks at him strangely:

LOFTIS
Is something wrong?

DANNY
No. I...I thought I recognized you.

LOFTIS
I'm an actor, perhaps -

DANNY
No. I...maybe last night? Were you downtown?

LOFTIS
No, I was home. Right here.

A slight awkward beat. We know Danny is asking about Goines's murder, and he doesn't want to press it... The tension is dispelled as Claire says:

CLAIRE
Unfortunately, Reynolds has to go off to start the revolution.

A lame joke that Loftis doesn't really appreciate.

LOFTIS
(dourly, to Danny)
I'm having a drink with friends.

He heads for another room. The door closes behind him. We can hear muffled voices. Claire turns to Danny:

CLAIRE
So. Who are you?

Instant sweat. She sees his discomfort, laughs and takes his arm:

CLAIRE
Let's get something to drink.

HER PARLOR. LATER.

Wine. Her glass empty, his still full. Claire is very close to Danny.

DANNY
I just...I thought the world could be a better place and maybe I could do something about it.

CLAIRE
The world is shit. The world will always be shit. The problem is human beings. We're selfish. We're evil. We have to be in order to survive.

DANNY
Jesus.

This is not how he expected this conversation to go.

CLAIRE
But there will always be a few people, who are not shit. A few who stand up alone against the whole ugly world...and get crushed. You want to be one of those people?

Claire is staring at him. Danny stares back...takes a gulp of his wine.

DANNY
I thought...I thought you people were idealists.

CLAIRE
(standing)
We are. One can have ideals without having illusions.

She goes to get herself a refill of wine. Danny notices a checkbook lying on the table in front of him.

DANNY
I never...never really thought about this before.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
Good.
We get a lot of spies.

DANNY
Pardon me?

She can't see him. He picks up the checkbook, quickly leafs through it. He finds something:

INSERT: A check stub: Martin Goines, $500.00.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
The government sends people here to infiltrate our pitiful organization.

AT BAR:

Claire finishes pouring more wine.

CLAIRE
I'm supposed to "screen" applicants; know how I do that?

DANNY (O.S.)
No.

CLAIRE
I sleep with them. Are you interested?

A mischievous sparkle in her eyes.

BACK TO PARLOR:

Danny is not sure how to take this, but plays along.

DANNY
Definitely.

Hears her returning, slides the checkbook back in place just as she comes around the corner:

CLAIRE
Good. You see, sex is the one time men can't lie. They can't hide who they are.

DANNY
But Mr. Loftis, isn't he your...

CLAIRE
Fiancé? That's what we stand for, Ted: liberation. The freedom to be who we are. Whatever that is. Most people go through life wishing they could do things. Why not just do them?

She stands in front of him.

CLAIRE
Can you come back Tuesday night?

DANNY
Sure.

She guides him toward the door.

CLAIRE
Sometime after ten.

She opens the door for him, but before he can leave, she brushes her lips against his. And again. Erotic whisper:

CLAIRE
Don't forget.

CUT TO:

INT. LOEW'S HOUSE. DAY.

Breakfast meeting, coffee and toast. Loew staring intently.

LOEW
You mean these homosexual murders may be useful to my investigation?

DANNY
Loftis fits the description! He wrote a $500 check to Goines, his blood type is O-positive, the cane marks at the murder site...

CLYDE
(to Loew)
If he is the killer, the union's dead.

LOEW
Perfect. Minear tells us about Loftis, two days later Loftis kills him.

CLYDE
Or maybe Loftis found out we got the letters Minear wrote him.
(picks up a letter; proudly:)
I found 'em in Loftis's car!

LOEW
(takes letter, reads:)
These are Chaz Minear's own words. "Dear Reynolds. I've been in touch with Comrade Suslov, who tells me our efforts have been enthusiastically received by the Central Committee. Comrade Smolnikov will provide us with whatever funds cannot be raised from these bourgeois dupes—"

HASH
This guy's a writer?

LOEW
(irritated)
That's how they talk.

HASH
Lousy typing, too. What makes you think Minear wrote it?

CLYDE
Lab says they were definitely written on a '36 Underwood.

HASH
When we saw Minear, he was bellyaching 'cause his Underwood had been stolen.

LOEW
Of course. He threw it away when he realized we might find these letters.

A phone rings nearby.

HASH
Well. It's wonderful all this is coming together so neatly.

They all look at him.

HASH
Just that evidence tends to be a little more ragged.

One of Loew's assistants interrupts the meeting:

ASSISTANT D.A.
Deputy Upshaw, they need you back at the office -

DANNY
Not now -

ASSISTANT D.A.
Apparently your killer struck again.
(as Danny rises)
Only this victim lived.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT. INTERROGATION ROOM. DAY.

Coleman Healy, (the sax player from CLUB ZOMBIE) sits on a table. His face is cut, his shirt is off, his back and neck are scarred. MONA (young, sexy, overly-made up) sits at Coleman's side, stroking his face. Danny barely notices her.

COLEMAN
Jazz can be very...stimulating. Sometimes Mona and I go behind the club and ...
Last night, this morning, must've been almost dawn, I was waiting for her, smoking a..."cigarette"-

DANNY
He jumped you.
(off Coleman's nod)
Did you see him?

COLEMAN
No. I heard him. A growling sound-

DANNY
How'd you escape?

MONA
I found them. Screamed. He ran -

DANNY
Then you saw him?

MONA
(glances at Coleman)
From the back. Just from the back.
His hair was kind of...silvery.

DANNY
(nods)
And he ran. With a limp?

MONA
I...I didn't really notice, it was dark, and...all I cared about was...

She rubs Coleman's back.

Danny nods again, stares at them. He senses something odd, but can't figure out what it is. Finally, very casual:

DANNY
There must be something more.

COLEMAN
"More...?"

DANNY
That you remember, or...I don't know.

Coleman nods slowly...and goes into a kind of trance...He speaks with the jarring specificity of an intense memory:

COLEMAN
His breath. I'll never forget it...so sickly sweet...mints, I guess; it was like formaldehyde, and...and he held my head down and kind of kissed...bit, he bit me on the neck, it was...

Coleman shudders.

Danny doesn't know what to say:

DANNY
Thanks. I'll be in touch, huh?

He stares, turns abruptly, goes out.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE. DAY.

Danny walks out of the interrogation room and drinks water at the cooler as though to collect himself.

He goes towards Hash's office.

He's about to enter, but sees something through the glass -

INT. HASH'S OFFICE. DAY

Hash listens uncomfortably:

MRS. MINEAR
Of course I think you're responsible for my husband's death, but that's not why I'm here. My father founded the UAES, and I want you to know that the men who are the blood of our union aren't rich, they don't care about communism; all they want is to feed their families. If you bust up this union- that is what you're trying to do, isn't it?

Hash shrugs uncomfortably --

MRS. MINEAR
I thought so. If you succeed, you'll be destroying good American families, making women and children starve, so I hope you have a damn good reason, Mister, 'cause it's gonna be on your conscience the rest of your life.

She walks out.

Hash stares after her. He hates this job.

The door is open. Danny peeks in. It takes a minute before Hash even sees him.

HASH
What do you want?

DANNY
There's something strange.
(beat)
The way this is going...like you said, it's too easy, neat. The cane marks? I feel like something's wrong, something's out of control -

HASH
It's you.
You're out of control.

Danny stops pacing, turns to look at Hash.

HASH
This is what it's like, when you're close.
(MORE)

HASH (CONT'D)
(talking about himself too)
Like you're descending into some insane stinking cesspool, and until it makes sense, it makes nonsense, and you're sure it's gonna drive you right outta your tree.

Touching his necklace, Danny nods, absorbing this. Then almost to himself:

DANNY
To be a cop was all I ever wanted, and now I'm scared to keep going.

Hash focuses on Danny again, sees him holding his necklace.

HASH
What's that?

Danny pulls the necklace from under his shirt and shows Hash. It is an eagle's feather and talon on the leather strap.

DANNY
My totem. My mother gave it to me before she died. She was part Navaho and used to say: "it's not where we are going in life, it's the journey." This was to remind me that she would be with me every step of the way.

Hash nods, affected by this.

HASH
I'm proud of you, kid.

After a beat, Danny realizes: That's it. That's all he needed to stay on the case. He nods to Hash and marches out of the office.

CUT TO:

EXT. FELIX GORDEAN'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

On the beach. Danny is at the door. CHRISTOPHER, Gordean's houseboy, answers. He is 25, "pretty," with peroxide hair, wearing a red kimono. Danny says something. Christopher giggles, speaks to someone behind him, then lets Danny in.

INT. GORDEAN'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

FELIX GORDEAN, Danny, and Christopher are seated with drinks. Gordean is confident, sports a neat black beard and black kimono. The room is opulent, decadent. Soft DANCE MUSIC in the b.g.

GORDEAN
I dropped Marty Goines from my guest list when I found out he was an addict. I'm an agent, I can't afford-

DANNY
But you introduced Marty to some people?

GORDEAN
Certainly.

DANNY
To a tall man with white hair, perhaps using a cane?

Gordean shakes his head impassively. Christopher raises an eyebrow as if he's surprised by this response.

Gordean watches as Danny looks around the room: homosexual erotica, Chinese screens, antiques, nude male statues.

DANNY
What exactly do you do here, Mr. Gordean?

Gordean moves to the wall and pulls a curtain, revealing a large sheet of glass. We see into another room, where TWO MEN are dancing cheek to cheek.

GORDEAN
Watch them, Deputy. Just <u>watch</u>.

Danny <u>does</u> watch. So do we. It's sweet, strange, erotic... After a moment, Danny shivers...

GORDEAN
So many people are... unsure. I help them clarify matters by introducing them to those with whom they may be compatible. I provide a sort of... journey to the self.

Christopher giggles. Gordean smiles at him indulgently. Then puts a hand on Danny's shoulder.

Danny wants to pull away from the hand, but finds he can't.

GORDEAN
Don't you feel that everyone has some secret yearning that would shock the person himself if it were revealed?

DANNY
Not really.

Danny moves out from under Gordean's hand, heads for the door.

Gordean follows Danny:

GORDEAN
If I could do one thing in my life, only one, it would be to obliterate the concept of sin.

Danny blinks.

CUT TO:

EXT. GORDEAN'S HOUSE. REAR. NIGHT.

Seen from someone's POV. MUSIC continuing inside, crashing of waves... Christopher comes out on the back terrace, looks at the ocean.

He moves down the steps and strolls toward the ocean. The POV moves after him: Is this the killer about to strike??

ANOTHER ANGLE

Someone lunges out of the shadows, grabs Christopher. It's:

DANNY
You saw the tall guy with the cane. Who was he?

Christopher shrugs.

Danny punches him in the belly.

CHRISTOPHER
Felix told me not to talk about it.

Danny backhands him across the face.

CHRISTOPHER
Violence doesn't bother me, Deputy.

Danny stares at him. Then blurts out on instinct:

DANNY
I'll cut you.
I'll cut your face, and none of these other queers will want you anymore.

Christopher looks Danny in the eye and shakes his head. He blots the blood from his mouth.

CHRISTOPHER
A guy with a cane was hanging around a few months back. He looked...familiar.

DANNY
Like someone you've seen in the movies?

CHRISTOPHER
Maybe. The thing was: Felix set him up with a cute, young man.

DANNY
Set him up?

CHRISTOPHER
Put them alone, something in their drinks, loosen them up...
But Felix wasn't paid by the older guy, these two had never met. It was done for someone on the outside.

DANNY
Who?

CHRISTOPHER
(shrugs)
That's all I know.

Christopher stares at Danny. Danny growing uncomfortable under the gaze.

DANNY
Okay. Thanks.

Danny immediately turns and walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. DANNY'S CAR. NIGHT.

Danny driving. Very thoughtful.

Tilts the rear-view mirror, so he can look at himself. Stares.

CUT TO:

INT. LAPD. DAY.

Danny enters, goes up to the desk, flashes his I.D.:

DANNY
Dan Upshaw, for Gene Niles.

INT. NILES'S OFFICE. DAY.

Glassed-in cubicle. Danny enters, Niles looks up:

NILES
Thanks for coming by without a fuss, Deputy.
(shouts)
Hey, bring in Wyatt Earp!

Danny frowns: who?

Niles smiles; he's not telling.

DANNY
Who's the other man who was killed with Chaz Minear?

NILES
That's my case, Deputy -

DANNY
All I'm asking is five minutes cooperation -

NILES
Cooperation. That's droll.

Cop (from the van) pushes Leo Bordoni into the office.

Danny and Bordoni avoid looking at each other.

NILES
(to Bordoni)
You ever see this guy before?

Bordoni shakes his head, terrified.

NILES
How about you, Deputy? You know him from anywhere?

DANNY
No. Who is he?

NILES
I think you know. I think you guys're buddies.
(to Danny)
I think after you stole that letter from the nuthouse, you broke into Goines's place and found Leo there, huh? Isn't that why you guys don't like to look at each other?

This forces Danny and Bordoni into an awkward exchange of glances.

NILES
Unless maybe... there's something <u>else</u> going on...?
(casual joke)
Maybe the reason you're so hot about this homo beef is 'cause you're powdered sugar yourself?

Enraged, Danny flies at Niles, yelling, trying to hit him.

Niles laughs - this is way beyond the reaction he hoped for - and whirls Danny around. He and the other cop grab him from behind and carry him towards the door.

NILES
I'm gonna nail you, Deputy. <u>That</u>'s a promise.

He throws Danny out of his office...Danny flies across the lobby, hits his head on a chair. OTHER COPS who are standing around laugh -

Danny pulls himself up, forehead bleeding, and points a finger at Niles as if it were a gun: I'll get you for that!

CUT TO:

INT. AUDREY'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Audrey and Hash naked, in bed, devouring bowls of pasta.

AUDREY
You know what I've never been able to figure? Love. Everybody says it's so great, but to need someone else this much...couldn't it really be a kind of <u>weakness</u>?

HASH
(stares at her, blinks)
Let's do it again and find out.

Audrey grins like a Cheshire cat.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Danny stands awkwardly on the stoop with a bunch of flowers. Claire opens the door. Looks at him. Pulls his face toward her and kisses him on the lips.

INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Same kiss, continued. A wonderful, rapacious hunger in her, a terrible loneliness in him.

After a minute, she pulls back and stares at him.

DANNY
Could...couldn't we just talk for a while?

CLAIRE
Sure.

DANNY
Maybe about you, your upcoming marriage, your fiancé?

She stares at him....has he just given himself away?

CLAIRE
Ted: you need to relax. Want to see a movie?

CUT TO:

MOVIE SCREEN

Black-and-white numbers on the leader, counting down to 1. Silent film: a HEFTY BLONDE undressing in front of the mirror, admiring herself. We are:

INT. CLAIRE'S SCREENING ROOM. NIGHT.

Danny and Claire watching. A bottle of whiskey, two glasses.

ON SCREEN

A MEXICAN BELLBOY enters, expecting the room to be empty. The Blonde covers herself coyly. The Bellboy protests, about to leave.

DANNY & CLAIRE

Danny pours himself a shot of whiskey, throws it back. Claire watching him.

ON SCREEN

The Blonde bats her eyelashes at the Bellboy. He pretends to arrange things on the dresser. She comes up behind him, puts her hand inside the bellboy's shirt.

DANNY AND CLAIRE

Her hand inside his shirt. Rubbing. Getting no reaction.

CLAIRE
(soft, seductive)
You don't like me?

DANNY
I like you. A lot.

But he keeps staring at:

ON SCREEN

Bellboy and Blonde undressing. Awkward, feverish, human.

DANNY & CLAIRE

She pulls her hand out of his shirt. As he watches the movie, he's clearly more agitated than excited.

Claire puts her hand on Danny's thigh, strokes it.

CLAIRE
You're a spy.

For the first time in the scene he looks at her, outraged.

DANNY
No, I'm not.

CLAIRE
Then prove it.

She kisses him, hard on the lips.

CLAIRE
Prove you're one of us.

She rams her tongue in his ear. Rips his shirt.

CLAIRE
Come on, prove it! Prove it! Prove it if you <u>can</u>!

She's kissing him, climbing all over him. As her nails dig into his chest:

He suddenly EXPLODES -

Grabs her. Kisses her hard. Throws her face down on the couch. He rips off her dress, leaps onto her. Undoing his pants. Holding her immobile. Kissing her shoulder. Digging his teeth into the nape of her neck as he enters her from behind.

Claire is loving it, her face a contortion of pleasure, her gasps getting shorter.

Danny thrusts into her. Hard, strong, relentless.

We see his face is haunted, lost in his own turmoil.

PAN SLOWLY over to

THE SCREEN

The Mexican Bellboy on top of the Blonde. Slow, graceful sex.

CUT TO:

A HAND STROKING SOMEONE'S BACK.

Softly, gently.

SOUND (O.S.): A window being raised, squeaking slightly.

The hand stops moving.

SOUND (O.S.): soft footsteps. A CREAK.

PULL BACK slightly to show the hand gliding under a pillow. A man's hand. A woman beside him. We realize we are:

INT. AUDREY'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Room still very dark. A figure looms over Hash and Audrey.

THE INTRUDER
(whisper)
You're defunct, Mick.

SOUND: The Intruder's gun being COCKED.

Hash explodes. Kicks The Intruder. Throws Audrey off the bed. Pulls his own gun from under the pillow—

The Intruder fires, missing Hash—

Hash shoots twice, hitting The Intruder in the face.

The Intruder falls onto the floor.

Silence. Beat.

Hash turns on the light: the Intruder is Gene Niles.

HASH
Oh Jesus...

Audrey is completely white and shaking. Hash holds her until she nods: "I'm O.K." He releases her.

HASH
He's the bum Mickey nailed, New Year's Eve; he thought I was Mickey, so...

He stares at the body and slowly shakes his head...

HASH
Audrey...I can't stop bein' with you, but the rest of this stuff...I gotta go back to being a Sheriff...
(sardonic)
Right after I ditch this body.

She nods. He puts a robe around her. He picks up a quilt and starts wrapping it around the body.

CUT TO:

INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Claire asleep in bed. Danny quietly slips on his clothes and exits bedroom. THUNDER rumbles in the distance.

THE PARLOR:

Exhausted, Danny creeps around quietly opening drawers, looking for records. A Lightning FLASH illuminates his haggard face.

THE BEDROOM:

Claire turns over. Opens her eyes.

THE PARLOR:

Danny pulls out a ledger from a bottom drawer. Flips through it. Holds it up to streetlight:

INSERT: "Membership Dues" with a list of names....

Danny quietly tears a sheet out and stuffs it in his pocket. Lightning FLASHES and Claire's image is reflected in the window. Danny wheels around, locks eyes with:

Claire, standing in the doorway.

Tense beat. A lump in his throat. Did she see him?

DANNY
That...that was the most amazing, the most powerful...

Claire looks him up and down. She walks over to him and takes the paper from his pocket. Her face rigid.

CLAIRE
Okay, "Ted."
(Slaps him. Hard.)
Time to leave.

He stands there, stunned.

She walks to the door and opens it. Danny walks out and then turns to her starting to say something.

She slams the door in his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRUSHY HILLSIDE. NIGHT.

Hash laboring in a deep hole, tossing out shovels of dirt. Niles's body lies on the ground nearby. It's starting to rain.

EXT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT. REAR STAIRWAY. DAWN.

Raining hard now, with thunder and lightning. Hash climbs wearily up the back stairway to his office.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. HASH'S OFFICE. DAY.

Hash asleep in a chair, snoring lightly. Danny bursts in:

DANNY
I got something.

Hash shakes his head, squints as he tries to open his eyes-

CUT TO:

INT. DANNY'S CAR. DAY.

Hash with a cup of coffee, still trying to wake up, but now active again, a lawman.

HASH
These guys were killed by a <u>wolverine</u>?

DANNY
No. There was a piece of wolverine <u>tooth</u> in one of the wounds.
(thinking)
What if the killer had the teeth made into dentures by a taxidermist or -

HASH
A wolverine, that's like a small bear?

Danny thrusts a book with a marker in Hash's lap.

INSERT: a photo of a wolverine.

DANNY (O.S.)
Giant weasel. They're insatiable, they gouge out the eyes, just like this guy did.

They pull up:

EXT. ABANDONED CHICKEN FARM. DAY.

The house is a shack, most of the chicken coops are broken. Hash and Danny climb out of the patrol car. A WOLVERINE BREEDER (early 60's, patched clothes, thick glasses) comes out to meet them. Stares at them, his eyes flicking from one to the other. Tense silence. Finally:

WOLVERINE BREEDER
Come on then.

EXT. WOLVERINE PENS. DAY.

Low thick trees; the area feels hidden and dangerous. The pens are made from strengthened chicken coops. Inside them, the dark angry animals slink silently, seeming to coil upon themselves, then straighten out. In all the animal kingdom, this is the only expression of pure hatred.

HASH
Jesus, what a stink.

WOLVERINE BREEDER
Spray like a skunk, when they're riled.

Danny approaches one of the cages. The animal inside explodes, throwing itself against the heavy fence, enormous teeth glinting like sabers in its mouth, snarling-

DANNY
(jumps back)
Jesus!

WOLVERINE BREEDER
Juno's taken a shine to you.

The animal continues to throw itself against the fence, over and over. Danny is freaked by this close proximity to death, but the Breeder continues, casually:

WOLVERINE BREEDER
So ornery, they'll chase a mountain lion from its kill. Only get together to mate and don't like each other much even then.

HASH
So what?, you train 'em or...?

WOLVERINE BREEDER
(laughs)
Only thing a wolverine'll do is kill, and they do that anyways.

HASH
Then what do you keep 'em for?

WOLVERINE BREEDER
(spits, stares defiantly:)
I like 'em.
(they wait; is that all? Finally:)
Six months ago, I was feedin' 'em the same, but they were gettin' fat. Wolverine's insatiable: eat fast, digest fast, shit fast, always hungry. One night I found boot tracks; week later Caligula turned up missing.
(beat)
Whoever took him probably got cut up pretty bad!

The Wolverine Breeder laughs: aggressively, weirdly. He rattles the cage and Juno springs toward them again, fangs spread wide.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET CORNER. DAY.

Hash waiting in the car as Danny finishes a call:

DANNY
Thanks, Karen. I'll make it up to you.
(hangs up, jumps in the driver's seat)
Jorelco Dental Labs, Wilshire and Western. That's City territory-

HASH
Fuck it. Let's roll.

Danny guns it. Excited, intense:

DANNY
We got him now, we got him! I can feel it.

Takes a corner. Frowns. Hits the brakes. Up ahead:

VARIETY INTERNATIONAL PICTURES: a riot on the picket line. UAES and Teamsters whaling on each other. Lenny Rolff – the first guy Hash and Niles "interviewed" – is in the thick of the fight.

Danny starts to turn the car around–

HASH
(sees something)
Wait.

Johnny Stompanato is waving frantically to Hash–

HASH
I gotta talk to that guy.

DANNY
(disgusted)
That's Johnny Stompanato. Mickey Cohen's hump.

HASH
I know who it is.

Danny starts to make a U-turn. Hash grabs the wheel:

HASH
Stop the damn car!
(Danny does.)
To do what we wanna do, we also gotta know what the assholes are doing, okay?

DANNY
But we're close! We're gonna get the killer!

Hash glances again at Johnny Stomp, who seems to have very urgent news. Hash gets out of the car:

HASH
Sorry, kid.
I'll be right back.

As Hash walks toward Johnny Stomp, Danny jams the car into gear and screeches away.

Hash shakes his head, comes up to Johnny:

HASH
This better be good.

JOHNNY STOMP
The best. I'm paying you back.

HASH
For what?

JOHNNY STOMP
The favor you did me.
(grins)
Mickey knows Audrey's been skimming him.

HASH
Why you telling me?

JOHNNY STOMP
He also knows you're bangin' her.

HASH
Oh.

JOHNNY STOMP
She really that good?

Hash looks at Stomp: what a disgusting question. Stomp attempts to redeem himself:

JOHNNY STOMP
Also, ahh... there's a contract.

HASH
The ultimate compliment. What'm I worth?

JOHNNY STOMP
Two grand. That's alive, so Mickey can have conversation. Dead, you're just five hundred.

HASH
Audrey?

JOHNNY STOMP
Icepick's goin' to collect her.

Hash looks at Stomp for a moment, then sprints down the street: past the fighting pickets, past Rolff; he's waving his arms, chasing a taxicab.

CUT TO:

INT. DANNY'S CAR. DAY.

Danny driving. Picks up the two-way radio:

DANNY
Karen, You there?

KAREN (O.S.)
Deputy Upshaw?

DANNY
I'm headed for Jorelco. Can you see if any criminal charges have been filed against them—

KAREN (O.S.)
Please report your position, Deputy.

DANNY
Cut the crap, Karen.

KAREN (O.S.)
You are requested to report your position, Deputy Upshaw.

DANNY
Jesus Christ.
(looks around)
Fourth and Hoover.

KAREN (O.S.)
Ten-four, Deputy.

She clicks off. Danny hits the button on his radio.

DANNY
Karen? Damn it.

No answer. He drives past a City Police Car-

EXT. DANNY'S CAR. DAY.

The police car pulls out, starts its SIREN. Danny looks quizzically in the rear-view: <u>he's being pulled over</u>.

CUT TO:

EXT. AUDREY'S HOUSE. ALLEY. DAY.

Hash gets out of the cab and sprints to the back door.

Pounds on it, keeps pounding until-

Audrey answers. Her hair is in curlers, her face covered with cold cream. Hash shoves her into:

INT. AUDREY'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY.

Hash kisses her urgently.

AUDREY
Hey! You're not supposed to see me like this!

HASH
Mickey knows.

AUDREY
(blinks, thinks)
Five minutes to pack?

In answer, he pulls her toward the back door -

As she goes out the back door, she grabs a Wheaties box off a shelf -

EXT. AUDREY'S HOUSE. ALLEY. DAY.

Hash hustles her into her car, the red '49 Packard coupe.

As he starts the car, we hear a SCREECH in front of the house. Glimpse: Icepick Kupferman and another HOOD getting out of a black Chrysler.

Hash eases the car down the alley...

POUNDING on Audrey's front door. The Packard nears the end of the alley. Hash picks up speed-

AUDREY
Take it slow over the-

SCRAPE. The heavy car bottoms out loudly on a dip at the end of the alley-

We hear the other CAR DOOR SLAM, and its engine roar. Hash guns the Packard-

EXT. STREET AT THE END OF THE ALLEY. DAY.

The Packard careens out of the alley, past the CAMERA. HOLD as the Chrysler comes around the corner on two wheels, in pursuit.

THE PACKARD

Hurtling along -

AUDREY
(shouting over the wind)
It's okay, Mickey wouldn't-

BANG! A bullet punches a hole in the windshield between them. Hash puts the Packard into a skid around another corner.

ANOTHER STREET

Long straightaway, heading toward countryside. The black Chrysler gains steadily...

THE PACKARD

Hash glances back.

HASH
Cheap son of a bitch couldn't buy you a car with some juice?

Another bullet PINGS off the back of the car. The houses are further apart now. Hash abruptly turns another corner, onto a dirt road.

EXT. DIRT ROAD. DAY

Rutty, not much more than two tracks.

Audrey starts to take the curlers out of her hair...

AUDREY
I don't think this is a real road.

The car hits a big bump, shudders -

HASH
We weren't doing that great on the real road. In fact...

He turns off the dirt road, and starts driving through a field. One tooth-jarring bump after another.

AUDREY
Jesus Christ, where'd you learn to drive?

HASH
Runnin' 'shine in Oklahoma. Hold on.

As they go airborne:

EXT. HILLTOP. DAY.

The red car bursts out of a stretch of woods. A hundred feet ahead is a steep decline, almost a cliff.

Hash stomps on the brakes, wheels the car around, and comes back to face the track where it emerges from the woods.

He aims his gun out the window, two hands.

The black Chrysler emerges, full speed. Hash fires, hits a front tire. The driver of the Chrysler slams on the brakes.

The Chrysler slews one way, then another. As it reaches the decline, it flips over and rolls over and over down the hill.

It stops at the bottom, upside down. No one gets out.

THE PACKARD

Audrey shudders.

HASH
Do to others what they try to do to you.

He puts the car in gear and drives sedately away.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM. DAY.

Danny handcuffed to a chair. Two tough LAPD DETECTIVES question him as Clyde watches.

DETECTIVE #1
Your dispatcher, Karen Hiltscher, tells us you broke into Goines's house and interfered with evidence.

DANNY
(mutters)
Thanks, Karen.
(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)
(to them)
So? I'm solving a County murder, and I could be solving two of yours at the same time. Let me out of here, I'll wrap it all up for you.

DETECTIVE #2
Clyde here says you and Niles had a fight.

DANNY
We disagree about certain things.

DETECTIVE #1
Breaking into Goines's house?

Danny shrugs, uncomfortable.

DETECTIVE #1
Clyde says Captain Niles called you a queer.

DANNY
He called me lots of things.

DETECTIVE #2
Are you queer, boy?

DANNY
I'm not your boy - and I'm not queer. Fuck you!

DETECTIVE #2
Where were you last night between midnight and dawn?

DANNY
If you must know, I was screwing a Communist woman on orders from District Attorney Loew. Afterward, I went home to bed.

DETECTIVE #1
What time?

DANNY
Maybe two o'clock.

CLYDE
You know it rained last night in the hills. Heavy.

DANNY
So?

CLYDE
Gene Niles's body washed out of a hillside.

DANNY
What?

DETECTIVE #2
You look like it, sonny boy.

DANNY
You're out of your mind!

DETECTIVE #1
Are you willing to take a lie-detector test tomorrow? With pentothal?

DANNY
You bet.

The Detectives and Clyde exchange a look: release him? Clyde tosses them the keys.

INT. POLICE STATION. STAIRWELL. DAY.

Danny's about to go out an exit.

CLYDE
Interesting day for you tomorrow.

DANNY
I didn't do it.

CLYDE
Maybe not, but it's not just Niles they'll be asking about tomorrow. They'll be wanting to know about you. And if Niles and my old informant Felix Gordean are right, tomorrow will be your last day in the Sheriff's department. Know what I'm saying, cowboy?

DANNY
Fuck you.

Clyde's face is only inches away. He stares into Danny's eyes. Then kisses him full on the lips. Hard. Shocking.

Danny wrenches his head away, spits to clean his mouth -

CLYDE
(saunters away, singing)
"I wonder who's kissing her now? I wonder who's teaching her how?"

Danny is shaking.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. DANNY'S CAR. DAY.

Danny is driving wildly. Desperate. He narrowly misses another car. Screeches to a stop. Screams in frustration. Then looks at himself in the mirror. His breathing becomes calmer. His face more set.

CUT TO:

EXT. DENTAL LAB. DAY.

Danny walks toward the entrance, stops for a moment right outside to compose himself...and goes in.

CUT TO:

INT. DENTAL LAB. DAY.

A stuffed, smiling tiger's head dominates the room. Other samples of dentures, animal and human, fill glass cases. DOUWES, a dental technician, is working on a tiny set of very sharp teeth, as if for a child or midget.

DOUWES
Wolverines are not an item people want in their homes.

DANNY
Could someone who knows the basics make the dentures himself?

DOUWES
It's a special skill.

DANNY
So I'm looking for an expert?

DOUWES
Yes.

DANNY
You're the only expert in town.

DOUWES
Well...
(uncomfortable)
Any technician could do it, if you weren't particular about quality. Why don't you leave your name and number? I'll ask around.

Douwes continues work, very calm.

Danny stares at Douwes, then scribbles a number on a piece of paper and starts to leave.

But before he reaches the door, another thought comes to him. He stops. Considers it. His face becomes very grave. He turns. Looks at Douwes...

DANNY
This is the office. If you need me after hours, I'm in the book.

Douwes nods. Danny leaves. Without breaking the continuity of his movements, Douwes picks up the paper Danny wrote on Flexes it between his fingers —

CUT TO:

INT. RUN DOWN MOTEL ROOM. NIGHT.

Shabby, with a tiny kitchen, pots simmering on the stove. Audrey is sitting at the kitchen table, counting the money from her Wheaties box.

Hash on the phone, listening. No answer. Hangs up.

AUDREY
We <u>have</u> my money. Shouldn't we keep moving?

HASH
(irritable)
Mickey's goons'll be looking for your car. We'll start after midnight.

He picks up the phone, dials again.

CUT TO:

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Phone ringing. Danny ignores it. Spread out all over his floor: photographs of the dead men as they were found, photos of them in real life, and photos of Goines's house.

We see a photo of Bordoni in a g-string and Goines in make-up. Also fingerprints, sheriff's reports, etc.

As the phone stops ringing, CAMERA PULLS SLOWLY AWAY from him, out the window. We realize with a sudden chill: he is being watched. Hold on Danny from what is obviously the Killer's POV, then PAN to the next window, neighboring apartment:

Window open. SECRETARY type lounging in her underwear... Likewise: other adjoining apartments are occupied, well-lit. Clearly the wrong moment for a killer to strike.

The Killer's POV PANS BACK TO DANNY.

He brings one of the photos closer to his face as though seeing something for the first time...

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL. NIGHT.

Audrey has spread a table with newspapers in lieu of a tablecloth and served a meal on cracked plates. It has a homey feel, like they're an old married couple.

AUDREY
My mama used to serve chicken-fried steak once a month, rain or shine. Daddy once preached a sermon about it, said her gravy was so thick he was still using a chunk of it to hold up a corner of the house.

She smiles. Hash doesn't. He wasn't listening.

AUDREY
You still worried about that Deputy?

He nods. She thinks...

AUDREY
Reed. You ever been married?

HASH
You think I'm stupid?

AUDREY
Marriage isn't stupid.

HASH
Mine was.
(looks around room)
This gonna be it?
(off her look)
You know. Five years, ten years- we gonna be eatin' chicken fried steak off broken plates?

AUDREY
Could be.

Long beat as he thinks about this...

HASH
I'd rather live in a shitty room with you than in a palace with any other human being I ever saw.

Off her tender smile -

CUT TO:

EXT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. NIGHT. LATER.

Killer's POV. Danny in a different part of the living room, his attitude now obsessed, workmanlike. He's comparing the photo with something else -

JARRING CUT TO:

STRANGE ANGLE ON DANNY'S FACE.

From too far away to suddenly too close. Pull back slightly: he's holding the photograph of the "letter from Chaz Minear" in one hand. In the other hand: the slip of torn paper that he found in the hole near Goines's body. Looking at them together, with him, we see: <u>they're typed on the same typewriter</u>.

He registers this, blinks... an idea coming. He shuffles excitedly through the photos, finds the one of Goines's house:

The bloody room and table with the old typewriter...

Danny examines the photo with a magnifying glass and draws a box around something.

Very quiet. Too quiet. Danny looks up. Did he hear something?

Suddenly the phone starts RINGING again.

He looks at the phone. Picks it up, but does not speak.

HASH (O.S.)
Hello?

Danny is silent.

INTERCUT between the two men, tight on their faces, as if they were in the same room. (This is a conversation Danny could never have in person, but it must have visual intimacy and immediacy.)

HASH
Danny, it's me.
(silence)
Are you there?

DANNY
LAPD's accused me of killing Gene Niles...

HASH
(overlapping, to himself)
Oh Jesus.

DANNY
...and I have to take a lie-detector test tomorrow.

HASH
You didn't murder Niles.

DANNY
I know, but...they're gonna ask me if I'm homosexual.

HASH
So? Just tell the truth.

Beat.

DANNY
I'm gonna lose my job, Hash.

HASH
Why?

DANNY
Because I'm queer.

Silence. Hash doesn't know what to say. Then:

HASH
Lie. Those machines aren't accurate —

DANNY
I can't. Not anymore.

HASH
Then what're you gonna do?

DANNY
Prove I'm a good cop. I'll lose my job tomorrow, but I am gonna finger the wolverine killer.

HASH
You know who he is?

DANNY
No.
(half-glance toward the window.)
But I think he's coming here. Tonight.

He hangs up the phone.

ON HASH:

HASH
Shit.
Damn fool!

Hash bolts for the door, kissing Audrey as he goes:

HASH
I'll be back.

AUDREY
Mickey! Watch out for Mickey's boys!

But he's gone.

BACK TO DANNY. THE BEDROOM.

He checks his gun, places it on the night table by the bed.

He glances toward the window, aware the Killer might be watching him.

Pretending to prepare for bed: he undresses.

He walks in his underwear to the closet, slips on pajama bottoms.

He goes to his desk, puts something into his pocket.

Gets into bed. Turns out the light. Moonlight floods the room.

CAMERA MOVES in on his face. His eyes wide open in the darkness panning from the window to the door.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. HASH'S CAR. NIGHT.

Hash anxiously driving very fast through the endless suburbs of Los Angeles.

CUT TO:

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Still lying in bed, Danny stares at curtains which flutter in the night breeze. He gets up and creeps to the open window, looks out into the night:

Beyond the lawn: the city lights glittering in the distance.

The last light in the otherwise dark neighborhood goes out.

The RUSTLE of dry leaves. Is it the killer?

Danny holds his breath. A long tense moment. We can almost hear his heartbeat.

Then: a CREAK in the hallway. Danny wheels around. There it is again.

Noiselessly, Danny moves to his table and fumbles in the darkness for his gun. His breathing comes in rapid shallow breaths. He tries to calm himself. His eyes never move from the door.

A shadow passes under the door.

Danny creeps towards the door, aiming his gun.

His hand rests on the knob. Takes a deep breath. Then quickly flings open the door and jumps into the living room, sweeping the room with his gun.

THE LIVING ROOM.

Nothing. Danny looks at the dark kitchen.

THE KITCHEN.

POV of the Killer watching Danny through the crack in the door. We can hear low, ragged breathing.

THE LIVING ROOM.

Danny slowly makes his way to the kitchen. At the kitchen door he pauses. Touches his totem hanging from his neck. Then bursts through.

THE KITCHEN.

Nothing. He turns on the light. Empty. Relieved, Danny crosses to the sink and gulps a glass of water. Behind him we see a broom closet.

Danny puts the glass down. As he walks to the door, we see the broom closet open behind him.

Danny stops. Wheels around pointing gun.

The blur of a cane overhead coming down through the air:

THUD! The cane hits Danny on the head; at the same time Danny fires. BANG! The bullet shatters the overhead light, leaving the room in darkness.

Danny falls backward on to the living room floor, knocking over a table, scattering newspapers.

The gun clatters across the floor.

Danny looks up, dizzy, bloody, but his face is fierce, determined, as if to say, "I am unbeaten:"

Danny's holding in his hand: an ink pad.

The killer lunges forward, loud ANIMAL-LIKE SOUNDS -

One of the Killer's fingers presses into the pad...

- We see leaping toward us: a distorted image of a horrifying human mouth contorted by wolverine teeth: FREEZE FRAME.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Hash stands stunned, deeply saddened, looking at:

DANNY, face-down on the floor, lying in a pool of blood.

CLYDE
Queers're dropping like flies, huh?

Hash loses it. He lunges towards Clyde and viciously slams him up against the wall.

HASH
Fuck you, Clyde!

CLYDE
You don't think the kid was a fruit?

HASH
He was a damn good cop which is more than I can say for you.

Hash releases him and walks away.

CLYDE
Yeah?
(shoves gay photos at Hash)
You call this police work?

Hash glances at the photos (the ones of Bordoni and Goines), tosses them away and points to FINGERPRINTS:

HASH
No, but this is.

The Coroner and his MEN move Danny's body, revealing:

On one of the newspapers, Danny wrote in his own blood: **LOFTIS S**...ending in a smear.

CLYDE
See? Told you it was Loftis.

BUZZ
He didn't finish what he was writing.

CUT TO:

INT. LOFTIS'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Loftis is leading Hash into the room:

LOFTIS
As an insomniac, I actually like late callers. Would you care for a drink? Cigarette?

HASH
Any moment the LAPD will crash through that door and accuse you of murder, take your fingerprints. If you're guilty, I want you. If you're innocent, you better tell me now, 'cause when they get finished, you won't be dog food.

LOFTIS
(blithely eating a mint)
I never killed anyone.

HASH
January 1, Marty Goines was shot full of heroin and killed. A few days earlier, you wrote him a $500 check. January 4, Duane Lindenauer and Chaz Minear were mutilated and killed. Minear was one of your former lovers. On top of that, you fit our description of the killer, right down to those fucking mints!

LOFTIS
I knew Goines. Obviously. But I didn't kill him. The other name I don't recognize. As for Chaz: he was my friend – as you say, my former lover. Why would I harm him?

HASH
Maybe you found out he sold you out to HUAC.

LOFTIS
That's absurd.

HASH
He was jealous. You started seeing someone else...

LOFTIS
Yes, a very beautiful young man. But–

HASH
How 'bout the letters Minear wrote you.

LOFTIS
Letters?

Hash shuffles through the photographs from Danny's apartment. He hands one to Loftis: it's the letter Loew read aloud.

As Loftis examines that photo, Hash glances at the next photograph...

LOFTIS (O.S.)
But this is a preposterous fraud!

Something changes in Hash's expression.

We see: a black box on the photograph he's looking at.

HASH
Got a magnifying glass?

Loftis fetches one, hands it to Hash.

CU: PHOTOGRAPH

The same one Danny was looking at before Hash called him.

A square has been drawn around the old typewriter. With the magnifying glass we can now read the word: Underwood. And on the side is a decal of Joe Dimaggio.

HASH
Jesus. The murderer had Minear's typewriter. He was framing you.
(beat, stares at Loftis)
Mister: somebody somewhere must really hate your guts.

CUT TO:

INT. RESNICK'S ROOM. MORNING.

A shabby furnished room, stacks of old files in cardboard boxes are stacked against three walls. Resnick (the left-wing psychiatrist Loew was pressuring) is lying in bed propped up on pillows, wearing an oxygen mask. A NURSE tends to him. Hash sits by the bed.

HASH
You know Loftis's enemies. Who could hate him that much?

Resnick coughs loudly and breathes raggedly.

DR. RESNICK
(struggling)
What do you care?

HASH
A friend of mine just got killed.

DR. RESNICK
What makes you think I would help you?

HASH
Loew would like nothing better than to pin these murders on Loftis. I need your help.

Resnick breathes raggedly. He studies Hash.

DR. RESNICK
(barely audible)
Paper.

As Hash gives him a paper and pen, Resnick has another coughing fit. He struggles to write.

DR. RESNICK
Old age is not for sissies.

CUT TO:

EXT. SISTER DOLORES'S HOUSE. DAY.

SISTER DOLORES is leaning on a rake behind a white picket fence on an immaculate lawn, looking toward the street and smiling vacantly. She is 60, ethereal, a faded beauty.

Hash approaches her —

SISTER DOLORES
Are you here to make a contribution to Sister Aimee's crusade?

HASH
Sister Aimee's been out of business awhile, Ma'am.

Sister Dolores holds out her hand nevertheless. Hash finds some change and gives it to her.

HASH
I'm actually looking for a "Coleman Healy." Is he home?

SISTER DOLORES
Oh, he doesn't live here anymore, though I do take his messages.
(cheerfully)
You want to get a message to him?

INT. SISTER DOLORES'S HOUSE. DAY.

Sister Dolores pouring tea for Hash.

SISTER DOLORES
God made me beautiful and fertile so I might spawn many acolytes for Sister Aimee. Six girls and three boys.
(MORE)

SISTER DOLORES (CONT'D)
(sighs)
They've all left me now... even dear Coleman.

HASH
If he doesn't live here anymore, where is he?

SISTER DOLORES
In Hell. Those who renounce Sister Aimee are doomed to boil forever in a cauldron of puss and semen.

Hash blinks.

HASH
Mrs. Healy, is your husband around?

SISTER DOLORES
(giggles)
Why did you say you wanted to see Coleman?

HASH
I owe him money. He'll probably kick some of it back to you. Being as you're his mother.

SISTER DOLORES
I find it better in Sister Aimee's work to rely on cash in hand.

Hash looks at her. She smiles. As he digs through his pockets:

SISTER DOLORES
It's funny, your coming. Coleman never had friends, but just a year ago, a nice young man, redtop, came asking about him. He gave me ten dollars!

HASH
Redhead, huh? (meaning: Clyde)
(gives her a rumpled bill:)
He's richer than me.

She looks at the dollar, shrugs, goes to a bookcase and brings down a shoebox full of photographs. She sits beside Hash and leafs through them.

INTERCUT: PHOTOS AND SCENE

Snapshots of men in old-time clothes, posing self-consciously, for the camera. Sister Dolores shuffles through them, smiling:

SISTER DOLORES
Such handsome men. Well, most of them.

She stops at a photo of a much younger Reynolds Loftis, striking in a suit and straw hat.

SISTER DOLORES (O.S.)
I think Coleman's father was the handsomest.

HASH
(blinks, astonished)
Ma'am, do you know who that is?

SISTER DOLORES
A shame I don't remember spawning with him. After a while it all blends together.

Hash gives up rational discourse:

HASH
Do you have a picture of Coleman?

SISTER DOLORES
Certainly.
(finds one)
You can tell they're father and son, can't you?

Hash stares at the photo. Gets up, hands Sister Dolores another crumpled dollar bill.

HASH
Keep up the good work, sister.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELLIS LOEW'S HOUSE. DAY.

Many cars out front. Hash parks, slips in the front door —

INT. ELLIS LOEW'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

A bustle of desks, TYPISTS, CLERKS, papers, etc. Hash enters, nods to a Clerk, and moves toward the files. Loew is across the room conferring with an assistant. He doesn't see Hash.

Hash opens a file cabinet marked "L," starts leafing through it—

LOEW (O.S.)
Tampering with evidence?

Hash doesn't even turn to look at Loew, he just keeps searching:

HASH
I know who killed Danny and Minear. What I don't know is: why. I'm hoping something here will clue me in.

Loew watches Hash dig into the files, decides not to stop him.

LOEW
Funny you should show up now. Someone in the next room is dying to see you.
(starts to go)

HASH
By the way, the killer stole Minear's typewriter and forged those letters.

LOEW
The letters implicate Loftis. Even if they were written by someone else, the information is substantially true.

HASH
That's a hell of a way to look at it.

As Loew leaves, Hash finds Loftis's file, starts going through it. Comes to a series of PHOTOGRAPHS:

– Loftis and Claire De Haven.

– Loftis and Coleman. His arm is around Coleman. <u>Not at all a fatherly embrace.</u>

Hash blinks in astonishment. Turns to the next photo:

– Loftis and Coleman on a yacht. <u>Embracing</u>.

HASH (O.S.)
Jesus Christ.
(beat, then he realizes:)
The "beautiful young man..."

Hash stuffs the photos into his pocket –

MICKEY (O.S.)
REED!!!

Mickey heading straight toward Hash, Icepick (head bandaged from the car wreck) at Mickey's side.

MICKEY
Cocksucker!

He lunges toward Hash. Loew holds him back, muttering:

LOEW
Not here.

Too many witnesses. Mickey shakes off Loew and Icepick.

MICKEY
You should beg. You should beg me. I don't do you slow.

HASH
Would it help?

MICKEY
Hell, no!

HASH
Then I'll pass.

MICKEY
Send her back. I won't harm a hair. And I'll even do you so fast you'll never know what hit you.

HASH
Nope.

As Hash heads out the door, Mickey screams after him:

MICKEY
I'm gonna bleed you to death, drop by drop outa your dick, you crazy Okie!

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETCORNER. EVENING.

Hash at a pay phone, irate.

HASH
Sure bring Claire. I want the whole world to know what you've done.

He hangs up, dials another number.

HASH
Hey, Babe. You know the Club Zombie?

CUT TO:

EXT. CLUB ZOMBIE. NIGHT.

Hash approaching the garish entrance. Standing outside, looking for the kind of work you perform in the back of a car, is Mona, the girl who accompanied Coleman to the Sheriff's office.

MONA
Hey Sweetheart, you like Astronomy?
(off his look)
You wanna see stars?

Hash enters the club.

INT. CLUB ZOMBIE. NIGHT.

Confusion. Smoke. Wild jazz. Hash stands out in the mostly black crowd.

THE BANDSTAND

Coleman playing his sax with four BLACK MUSICIANS; all wear stylized zoot-suits.

CLAIRE AND LOFTIS

Sit at a wall table near the back. Hash makes his way over, sits-

CLAIRE
What's this all about?

He takes the photo of Loftis with Coleman and slaps it on the table. They look at it.

HASH
I thought I'd seen everything, Loftis, but this - It's a hell of a thing.

LOFTIS
If you're offended by homosexuality, that's your problem.

HASH
Come on. You know who Coleman is.

LOFTIS
(confused, gestures)
Certainly. He's a jazz musician.

Hash stares at Loftis, realizes: he really doesn't know.

CLAIRE
(slaps photo)
If this is blackmail, Reynolds doesn't care. I don't care.

HASH
(indicates Coleman)
He cares. He got very upset when you left him for Claire, Mr. Loftis.

LOFTIS
I tried to break it to him gently. Besides, I found out...
(glances at Claire; he's never told her)
I was introduced to Coleman on purpose. By a policeman. So these photos could be taken, and my name besmirched.

Hash nods and shakes his head: he kind of expected Clyde's involvement, but it's still horrible and outrageous.

HASH
Unfortunately, Mr. Loftis, it's even worse than that. It wasn't the first time you left him.

Coleman is staring at them. His music is growing wilder. Seems to recognize that Hash is a cop, the jig is up.

LOFTIS
What do you mean?

HASH
You remember a Sister Dolores?
(off Loftis's frown)
She worked for Aimee Semple MacPherson.

LOFTIS
(amused)
Oh. Sister Dolores, yes—

CLAIRE
Who's that?

LOFTIS
A long time ago. It was just one night. She was completely batty, but an extraordinary beauty.

HASH
She's Coleman's mother.

LOFTIS
So?
(blinks... glances toward the stage)
You... You can't mean...

On stage: Coleman is blowing wilder and wilder notes: raw, crazy, whipping himself into a frenzy...

HASH (O.S.)
Looks kind of like a younger version of you, doesn't he?

Loftis is shaking his head. Shocked.

LOFTIS
From...<u>one</u> evening?

HASH
When Coleman got old enough to ask, Sister Dolores showed him your picture. And eventually he came looking for his father.

CLAIRE
Oh, God!

LOFTIS
Why...?

HASH
Look at him. He grew up with a madwoman. Then he found you; he must have been afraid you'd leave him again.

Loftis looks broken, in shock.

HASH
And when you <u>did</u>, he set out to ruin you: every day, in every way. (CONT'D)

Loftis stares blankly at Hash...trying to assimilate this horror... Hash's voice seems to be distant, disembodied:

HASH (O.S. CONT'D)
Destroy your union, kill people just so he could frame you for murder...

Loftis turns to Claire, looks at her, blinking.

Then looks at the stage.

Stands. Staggers toward Coleman.

Coleman sees Loftis approaching. He blows one last insane note, drops his sax, and runs off the stage, through a curtain. Loftis hurries after him.

Hash and Claire follow.

INT. CLUB ZOMBIE. CORRIDOR. NIGHT.

Coleman streaks down the ratty, linoleum-paved corridor, and descends a set of stairs.

BASEMENT - HALL

Coleman comes to a door, rushes through it, slams it behind him.

Hash arrives, draws his gun. Loftis and Claire follow.

Hash slowly pushes the door open.

CUT TO:

INT. DRESSING ROOM. NIGHT.

Hash enters, followed by Loftis and Claire.

Coleman sits on the floor playing with the wolverine dentures, walking them across the rug, mumbling some story to himself.

LOFTIS
Coleman?

COLEMAN
(childish voice)
Yes, Dad?

LOFTIS
This man has to take you away for a while.

COLEMAN
But I want to stay with you.

LOFTIS
It's okay. Wherever you are, I'll come visit.

COLEMAN
Every day?

LOFTIS
Of course, every day.

COLEMAN
Promise?

LOFTIS
I promise.

Coleman stands and lets Hash take his arm. Then he looks down at his musician's costume.

COLEMAN
I can't wear this. The other kids'll think I'm crazy.

Hash hesitates, releases Coleman's arm.

Coleman goes behind a screen to a dressing area.

LOFTIS
(to Claire)
I can't believe he really...(killed anyone) He seems so sweet now, so -

A HIGH INSANE LAUGH -

Hash shoves the dressing-screen aside and we see:

Coleman laughing uncontrollably as he watches himself in the triple mirrors. He's wearing the wolverine teeth and a gray wig - a caricature of Loftis - and wielding a long knife.

COLEMAN
(different, horrible voice)
Look, Dad, look!

He raises his knife—

Loftis rushes forward—

LOFTIS
Stop!

Hash can't fire because Loftis blocks his view-

As Loftis approaches, Coleman stabs him - but only hits the mirror, shattering it-

Claire rushes forward-

Coleman whirls, faces Loftis-

Hash fires, hits Coleman... No. Only his reflection. Like the knife, the bullet hits a mirror, cracking it-

Coleman laughs insanely, looks at Claire, Loftis: Which one to kill?

Hash's view is totally blocked-

Coleman hysterical, raises the knife...

Claire screams-

Coleman slits his own throat.

Coleman crumples to the floor.

Everyone frozen in horror-

CUT TO:

EXT. CLUB ZOMBIE. NIGHT.

Clyde observes as Coleman's body is carried out wrapped in a sheet. Audrey waits in her car. Loftis waits in his car on the passenger's side, looking stunned, haggard. Hash talks to Claire.

CLAIRE
Once this gets out...Loftis's son killing these people...it'll destroy our union.

HASH
Who says he's Loftis's son? Only evidence is photographs.

He takes the photos from his pocket, gives them to her. She is stunned.

She folds the photos, puts them in her handbag and gets in her car. Through the window:

CLAIRE
Thank you.

As they drive away. Hash walks over to Clyde.

CLYDE
(casual as ever)
Can you make a father fall in love with his own son, a son he didn't know he had? It was an interesting question.

HASH
Fascinating.

CLYDE
Yeah. And everything worked perfectly until Jazzboy -
(meaning Coleman)
went from homosexual to homicidal when Pops broke it off.
(bemused)
Then comes the good part! Loew wet his pants!

HASH
Really.

CLYDE
Yeah! He thought some reporter might find out we were matchmaking!

HASH
So you let this kid keep killing.

CLYDE
Sooner or later these things work themselves out. Which reminds me: could <u>you</u> be a killer? I mean, I'm just askin'...

HASH
(waves to Audrey: come on)
Interesting question.

CLYDE
Upshaw packed a .38. Niles was killed by a .32, like <u>you</u> carry.

HASH
Two things, Clyde. One: why would <u>I</u> kill Niles? Two: why do other people let you keep living?
(gets into Audrey's car)
I'm just askin'.

They drive off.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDREY'S CAR. NIGHT.

Beautiful warm night.

AUDREY
There's beaches and palm trees and you can live like a king on nothing. And even if they finger you for killing that cop, there's no extradition with Brazil.

HASH
It's not the law I'm worried about. It's Mickey.

AUDREY
How's he gonna find us down there?

HASH
Only one place he <u>can't</u> find us; that's the place he's tryin' to send us to.

AUDREY
Oh.
(beat)
So what're we gonna do?

He turns off the road: we're in front of Loew's house.

HASH
For one thing, I'm gonna stop here, finish some business.

EXT. LOEW'S HOUSE. MINUTES LATER.

Audrey waits nervously in the car. The front door of the house stands open. A flicker of light appears inside:

INT. LOEW'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Hash has made piles of "evidence:" documents, photographs, everything. He's going from pile to pile, setting them on fire.

INT. LOEW'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Hash enters, turns on light. Loew is in bed with his WIFE. He wears a nightcap. Turns, blinks in the light:

LEOW
What the hell?

HASH
I was driving by, Mr. Loew, (and) I couldn't help noticing your house was on fire.

Loew and Wife scramble out of bed.

EXT. LOEW'S HOUSE. LATER.

Loew, Loew's wife, and Hash watch the fire consume the house. Audrey watches from the car.

LOEW
Arson. Destruction of federal property. You'll never get away with this.

HASH
Probably not.

LOEW
It'll take time of course, but we'll get other documents, witnesses. And it may not be <u>this</u> year, but sooner or later I <u>will</u> be elected Governor of this state.

SIRENS begin in the distance.

HASH
Maybe you're right, Mr. Loew.
Maybe this fire won't do much good.
On the other hand: when people say "No," it's like a disease.
It can spread. Next thing you know, (the) whole damn country's liable to catch it.
(doffs hat)
Evening, Mrs. Loew. You sure look like a nice person to me.

He heads for the car.

CUT TO.

INT. CAR (MOVING). NIGHT.

Audrey leaning against Hash.

HASH
You know: I don't think I've done anything that crazy since...well, since I first kissed you.

She laughs. Then her expression changes. She realizes:

AUDREY
This isn't the way out of town.

Beat.

HASH
There's only one place you're safe.

AUDREY
I don't want to be with him. I want to be with you.

HASH
If you're with me, you're dead, and I'm dead, and once you're dead and I'm dead, you're not with me anymore.

AUDREY
You sure of that?

They pull up:

EXT. RHUM BOOGIE. NIGHT.

Johnny Stomp sees them, arches an eyebrow, goes inside.

HASH
He won't keep you long when he knows you like me better. Maybe two months, (and) he'll send you packing.

AUDREY
How'm I gonna be with him?

HASH
Huh?

AUDREY
How'm I gonna spend the night with him? Even one night? Can you picture it?

HASH
I'm tryin' not to.

AUDREY
If it's hard for you to picture, it ain't exactly gonna be easy for me to do.

The restaurant door swings open for Mickey, Johnny Stomp, Icepick. As they emerge, Hash gets out of the car.

MICKEY
(charming, to Audrey:)
Hey Sweets, how ya doin'?

She doesn't answer.

Mickey registers this, turns back to Hash:

MICKEY
I didn't think you had the guts, meet me face to face.

HASH
You wanna fight?

MICKEY
(stunned)
What?

HASH
I said... (If) You're mad at me, let's fight man to man.

Mickey spreads his arms wide:

MICKEY
Hey. Why would I wanna fight you?

He unleashes it. Vicious combinations to the head, belly, groin.

Hash blocks a few blows and lands a few, but it's no contest. Mickey's a pro.

Hash falls.

Lies there.

MICKEY
(gestures to Audrey)
Come on.

Indicating: inside the restaurant.

She shakes her head.

Mickey arches an eyebrow...

They all watch as Hash climbs slowly to his feet.

HASH
Had enough?

Mickey stares at him in disbelief.

Mickey whales on him again. Real viciousness this time.

Mickey has to hold Hash up to keep him from falling...

When he lets go, Hash collapses.

It doesn't look like he'll ever get up. But he <u>is</u> conscious. Blinking. Looking up at Mickey:

HASH
(whisper)
You sure... Sure you don't wanna keep going?

Mickey stares at him.

MICKEY
You're a loon, Okie. You're some kinda loony loon.

HASH
(very painfully)
When I can stand...I'm gonna get back in that car...and we're gonna get the hell out of here.

MICKEY
"We?"

HASH
Me and Audrey.

MICKEY
That's the dumbest thing I ever heard.

HASH
Nope.
(sits)
You won, Mick, like you guys <u>always</u> win. Clyde'll be police chief. You'll get

someone else for Sheriff. Even that slime Loew will probably make Governor.
(staggers to his feet)
And the Teamsters? One way or another, they'll get their union. See what I mean? You got it all.

MICKEY
'Cept your tombstone.
(viciously, to Audrey)
And yours, you stupid quim.

HASH
That's right. To you, Audrey's just a piece of ass.

MICKEY
How do <u>you</u> know what I feel?

In that moment we realize Mickey loves Audrey more than anything.

But Hash is also right:

HASH
'Cause you'd never leave Lavonne. You just wanna use Audrey a while then throw her away.

MICKEY
So what else're <u>you</u> gonna do?

HASH
Stick with her.

He opens the car door for her.

Johnny Stomp glances at Mickey: should we stop them?

Before Mickey can respond:

HASH
No dice, Mick.
(off Mickey's incredulous look)
To kill over a piece of ass?
That's not your style.

MICKEY
(stammering with disbelief)
My...my fuckin'...my "style?!?"

HASH
I know you a long time. You're a businessman. You wouldn't think twice knocking off a bus full of school kids if it was money, but this isn't money, it's man to man, and I think you're man enough to let us walk away.

MICKEY
Wanna bet?

HASH
I am betting.

AUDREY
Even you, Mick.

The first time she's spoken. Mickey's stunned.

AUDREY
Even you can recognize love when you see it.

Said so gently it slides right into Mickey, knife to the heart. He turns his head away, won't look at her.

Hash holds the door for Audrey. This time she gets in.

Hash starts the engine.

Johnny Stomp motions to Mickey: Well? We follow them?

MICKEY
(mutters)
Not right now.

Hash drives the car away. Slowly...

As the car moves off, Mickey turns back so he can watch them go:

INT./EXT. CAR. NIGHT.

Desert road. An expansive, starry sky. The lights of Los Angeles far behind them now.

HASH
Well... We're not dead yet...

She leans her head against his shoulder again, content. Hash puts his arm around her.

AUDREY
Where we gonna go?

Beat.

Hash reaches in his pocket and pulls Danny's totem out. He drapes it on the mirror.

HASH
I don't know.

Beat.

They both look at the totem.

AUDREY
I can't wait to get there.

FADE OUT.