

THE KILLER INSIDE ME

by
JOHN CURRAN

Revisions by
MICHAEL WINTERBOTTOM

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REVOLUTION FILMS
9A DALLINGTON STREET
LONDON EC1V 0BQ

TEL: 020 7566 0700
FAX: 020 7566 0701
EMAIL: email@revolution-films.com

THE KILLER INSIDE ME

1 EXT SHERRIFF'S OFFICE TEXAS DAY 1 *

1952. The Sherrif's office of Central City, a small oil town in West Texas.

SHERIFF MAPLES (O.S.)

Name of Joyce Lakeland. Lives four-five miles out on Derrick Road, just past the old Branch house.

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*

2 INT. SHERRIFF'S OFFICE MORNING 2

BOB hands a complaint file to Lou

LOU

I think I know the place. Hustlin' lady, Bob?

SHERIFF MAPLES

We-el, I reckon so but she's bein' mighty decent about it. She ain't takin' on no roustabouts or shepherders. If some of these preachers around town wasn't rompin' on me, I wouldn't bother her a-tall.

LOU

So how shall I handle it? Tell her to lay off a while, or to move on?

SHERIFF MAPLES

We-el, I dunno, Lou. Just go out and size her up, and make your own decision. I know you'll be gentle, as gentle and pleasant as you can be. So go on out, an' see how she looks to you.

3 EXT CENTRAL CITY DAY 3

Lou Ford drives out through the old town square, through the new town with the cinema and department store, the cheap new housing and the refinery, on out past the oil rigs and pulls off onto a dirt track road that leads to a small white cottage

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4 EXT. COTTAGE DAY

4 *

Lou picks his way over the rotted boards on the porch and knocks on the front door.

JOYCE LAKELAND answers in a robe, her unpainted face drawn with sleep. It wouldn't have mattered if she'd crawled out of a hog-wallow in a gunny sack. She has that much.

JOYCE LAKELAND

(yawns)

Yes?

Lou stares open-mouth like a country boy.

JOYCE LAKELAND (CONT'D)

Oh, my goodness! Come on in. I don't make a practice of it this early in the morning, but...

LOU

I'm sorry, ma'am, but-

JOYCE LAKELAND

It's all right. But I'll have to have some coffee first. You go on back.

Lou goes down the hall to her bedroom to wait. He glances into the dresser mirror: spots in the reflection a .32 AUTOMATIC in the open top drawer.

He takes it out just as Joyce appears with a coffee tray. She slams the tray on a table.

JOYCE LAKELAND (CONT'D)

What are you doing with that?

Lou opens his coat, shows her his badge.

LOU

Sheriff's office, ma'am. What are you doing with it?

Joyce pulls a gun permit out of her purse.

JOYCE LAKELAND

Satisfied, cop?

LOU

I reckon it's all right, miss. And my name's Ford, not cop.

JOYCE LAKELAND

Jesus! The nicest looking guy
I've seen in this stinkhole and
he's a boy scout with a badge.
How much? I don't jazz cops.

LOU

Lady, that's not very polite. I
just came out for a little talk.

JOYCE LAKELAND

You dumb bastard! I asked you
what you wanted!

*

LOU

Since you put it that way. I'll
tell you. I want you out of
Central City by sundown. If I
catch you here after that I'll
run you in for prostitution.

He slams on his hat and starts for the door. Joyce
blocks the way.

JOYCE LAKELAND

You lousy son-of-a-bitch. You-

LOU

Don't you call me that, ma'am.

JOYCE LAKELAND

I did an' I'll do it again! You
son-of-a-bitch, bastard, pimp...

Lou watches her mouth moving silently. He tries to push
past her.

Joyce SLAPS him so hard his ears ring. She swings and
keeps swinging. Lou's hat flies off. He stoops to pick
it up and she slams her knee under his chin.

He falls on his ass and her mean laugh turns
apologetic.

JOYCE LAKELAND (CONT'D)

Gosh, sheriff, I didn't mean to-
I- you made me so mad I- I-

LOU

Sure, ma'am, I know how it was.
Used to get that way myself.
Give me a hand, will you?

JOYCE LAKELAND

You- you won't hurt me?

LOU

Aw, now ma'am...Me?

4 CONTINUED: (2)

4

Lou holds onto her wrists and stuns her with a SLAP.

LOU (CONT'D)

No, baby. I'm not going to hurt you. I wouldn't think of hurting you. I'm just going to beat the ass plumb off of you.

Lou pushes her onto the bed, pulls her jersey over her head, pulls her sleeping shorts down to her ankles, turns her over onto her stomach and pulls his belt out of his trousers and winds it onto his wrist. He starts to beat her...

*
*
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*
*

5 INT. JOYCE'S BEDROOM MINUTES LATER

5

HIS BELT drops to the floor.

LOU flops onto the bed, sucking air and sweating buckets. He looks over at Joyce's BRUISED REAR END and panics.

He UNTIES her feet and hands from the bedposts and sinks to his knees. Joyce's EYELIDS flutter open

JOYCE LAKELAND

D-don't.

LOU

I won't. Honest to God, ma'am, I won't ever, please -

She brushes her lips against his

JOYCE LAKELAND

Don't say you're sorry.

She kisses Lou, and fumbles at his tie.

6 EXT DERRICK ROAD DAY

6

Lou driving back into town. He passes a billboard

7 CONWAY CONSTRUCTION - BUILDING A BETTER CITY

7

Pictures of cheap, new houses, a picture of a smiling Conway

*
*
*

WATCH US GROW!!

Lou's face, as he thinks about Joyce, thinks about what he has just done

(CONTINUED)

LOU (V.O.)

I went back the next day and the day after that. I couldn't help it. It was like a wind had been turned on a dying fire. I began needling people. I began thinking of settling scores with Chester Conway of the Conway Construction Company.

*

INT. MAX'S DINER FRIDAY NIGHT

A clock on the wall: 11:55

Lou sits at the counter, sipping coffee. He notices A BUM staring at him through the window. The bum sees Lou looking and steps back into shadow.

Lou lights a cigar and slides off his stool. The young waitress watches him button his coat.

WAITRESS

Why, you don't even carry a gun!

LOU

No. No gun, no blackjack, nothing like that. Why should I?

WAITRESS

What if some crook should try to shoot you?

LOU

We don't have many crooks in Central City ma'am.

Lou strolls to the front to pay. MAX PAPPAS shoves his money back and lays a couple of cigars on top.

MAX PAPPAS

Thank you again for speaking to my Johnnie about school, he's a different boy. Stays in nights; gets along with his mother. Always talk about you -what a good man is Deputy Lou Ford.

*

LOU

I didn't do anything, just talked to him. Showed a little interest. Anyone could have done as much.

MAX PAPPAS

Only you. Because you are good, you make others so.

LOU

Well, I tell you, the way I look at it, a man doesn't get any more out of life than what he puts into it.

MAX PAPPAS

I guess you're right Lou.

LOU

I was thinking the other day, Max; and all of a sudden I had the doggonedest thought. It came to me out of a clear sky: The boy is father to the man. Just like that. The boy is father to the man.

Max smile starts to strain. His shoes squeak as he begins to fidget.

LOU (CONT'D)

Even when I'm asleep these things just pop into my head. Take the heat wave we had a few weeks ago; a lot of people think it's the heat that makes it so hot. But it's not the heat Max, it's the humidity. I'll bet you didn't know that, did you?

MAX PAPPAS

(clears his throat)

Lou...

LOU

Well I better shove off. I've got quite a bit of getting around to do and I don't want to rush. Haste makes waste in my opinion.

Lou tips his hat and strolls out, leaving Max with a frozen smile on his face.

Lou exits with a grin on his face. He stops and lights his cigar. He sees the BUM watching him. Lou takes a long pull on his cigar. The BUM approaches with his hand out.

BUM

How about it, bud? How about it, huh?

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

BUM (CONT'D)

I've been on a hell of a binge,
and by God if I don't eat some
food pretty soon-

LOU

Something to warm you up, eh?

BUM

Yeah, anything at all...

Lou grabs him by the wrist and grinds his lit cigar
into his palm.

BUM (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Jesus, bud! What the hell you
tryin' to do?

Lou flashes his badge.

LOU

Beat it.

BUM

Sure, bud, sure. But you better
watch that stuff, bud. You sure
better watch it

The bum hurries off and Lou watches him go.

EXT. CENTRAL CITY LABOR TEMPLE NIGHT

Lou steps onto the sidewalk and ducks to avoid the
window into the pool hall on the ground floor. He
enters a side door and climbs the stairs.

He walks down a dark corridor to a door - the sign on
the glass reads:

BUILDING TRADES UNION**Joseph Rothman, Pres.**

JOE ROTHMAN, 40, with sharp black eyes, opens the door
before Lou can knock. Joe hustles him in, and CLOSES
THE DOOR behind them.

JOE ROTHMAN

Sorry to ask you to come around
so late, but with you being a
public official and all...

LOU

Yeah.

Lou follows Joe to back to his cluttered office. Joe
nods to a chair, then sits at his desk and slowly rolls
a cigarette. Lou watches patiently.

(CONTINUED)

JOE ROTHMAN

How did you feel about Mike Dean?

LOU

Feel? I'm not sure I know what you mean, Joe.

JOE ROTHMAN

He was your foster brother, right? Your father adopted him?

LOU

Yes. Dad was a doctor -

JOE ROTHMAN

And a very good one, I understand. Excuse me, Lou. Go on.

LOU

He and the Deans were old friends. When they got wiped out in that big flu epidemic, he adopted Mike. My mother had been dead since I was a baby. Dad figured Mike and me would be company for each other.

JOE ROTHMAN

You're the only son and heir and your dad brings in another son. Didn't that rub you a little the wrong way?

LOU

Hell, Joe, I was six years old at the time, and Mike was eight. You're not much concerned with money at that age.

JOE ROTHMAN

You liked Mike, then?

LOU

I couldn't have loved a real brother any more.

JOE ROTHMAN

Even after he did what he did?

LOU

And just what would that be?

JOE ROTHMAN

(raises his eyebrows)

(MORE)

JOE ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

I liked Mike myself, Lou, but facts are facts. The whole town knows that if he'd been a little older he'd have gone to the chair instead of reform school.

LOU

No one knows anything. There was never any proof.

JOE ROTHMAN

The girl identified him.

LOU

The girl was five. She'd have identified anyone they showed her.

JOE ROTHMAN

Mike admitted it. And they dug up some other cases.

LOU

Mike was scared. He didn't know what he was saying.

JOE ROTHMAN

Let it go, Lou. I'm only interested in your feelings about Mike...Weren't you pretty embarrassed when he came back to Central City?

LOU

No. I wanted Mike to come back. So did Dad. He pulled strings for months to get Mike his job as city building inspector. It wasn't easy to do.

JOE ROTHMAN

That's my understanding of things. But I have to be sure: You weren't sort of relieved when Mike got killed?

LOU

The shock killed Dad. As for me, well, all I can say is that I wish it had been me instead of Mike.

Joe nods, satisfied.

JOE ROTHMAN

Okay, Lou. That all squares. Now it's my turn...Mike was killed six years ago...

(MORE)

*

(CONTINUED)

JOE ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

He threw himself backward so he'd fall inside the building, onto the decking. But the floors hadn't been decked in properly.

*

JOE ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

He fell all eight floors to the basement.

*

LOU

So. What about it, Joe?

JOE ROTHMAN

I'll tell you what about it. Conway didn't put in the decking.

LOU

As President of the building unions, you know that the Ironworkers are under your jurisdiction, Joe. It's their obligation, and yours, to see that each floor is decked in as a building goes up.

JOE ROTHMAN

The Ironworkers are weak out here! We couldn't make him.

LOU

You could have struck the job.

Joe shakes his head.

*

JOE ROTHMAN

Well, that's a kind of funny attitude for you to take, Lou. It seems to me you're pretty impersonal about all this. Perhaps I'd better tell you about the witness -

*

LOU

- The riveter up there with Mike at the time he took his dive?

*

JOE ROTHMAN

You know it takes two men to rivet- one to run the gun and one on the bucking iron.

LOU

Maybe he was just gathering up tools or something like that.

JOE ROTHMAN

The guy was an iron tramp, working on permit.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOE ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

He blew into town without a dime. Three days after Mike's death he left in a new Chevy which he paid cash on the line for.

LOU

Tell me something I don't know Joe.

JOE ROTHMAN

Seems to me you know it all already.

Joe smiles and begins rolling another cigarette. His eyes drift up slow and lock into Lou's.

JOE ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

So Lou. You never felt inclined to uh...take any action?

Lou doesn't bite.

LOU

No matter what happened to Mike, your locals couldn't close their eyes to a dangerous situation like that decking. You could be tried for criminal collusion.

Joe throws up his hands in mock defeat.

JOE ROTHMAN

Lou. You're a hundred per cent right.

LOU

Sure. You just haven't thought this deal through, Joe. You've been getting along pretty good with Conway, and now he's taken a notion to go non-union, and naturally you're kind of upset about it. But I reckon if you thought there'd really been a murder you wouldn't have waited six years to speak up.

JOE ROTHMAN

Me? Did you ever stop to figure that there's all ways of dying, but only one way of being dead?

LOU

Guess I don't know what you're driving at, Joe.

JOE ROTHMAN

Let it go.

The men eye each other. The tiniest hint of an understanding passes between them. Joe nods a little, and a smile spreads across his face.

JOE ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

Well. I'm sorry I troubled you for nothing, Lou, but I've certainly enjoyed our talk. I hope we can get together again sometime.

LOU

That would be nice.

JOE ROTHMAN

Meanwhile, of course, I haven't seen you. Understand?

They walk the corridor to the outside door. It's WIDE OPEN.

JOE ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

Didn't I close that damn thing?

Lou shrugs, and goes to leave.

JOE ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

Hey Lou. Could I make a suggestion to you?

LOU

Why, sure you can, Joe.

JOE ROTHMAN

Save the bullshit for the birds.

Joe winks. Lou leaves.

11

EXT. FORD HOUSE LATE FRIDAY NIGHT

11

Lou turns off his headlights and coasts into the barn.

12

INT. BARN

12

Lou stands in the barn, smoking. He stares at the empty horse stalls, remembering back...

13

INT. BARN DAY TWENTY YEARS AGO

13

Lou, aged 13, and MIKE DEAN, 15:

Happily CHASING each other around the barn. SWINGING on ropes hung from the rafters. SPLASHING in the horse trough.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

MIKE DEAN, grinning, climbs a ladder to the hay loft.
He reaches the top and sees:

THE FRIGHTENED FACE OF A FIVE YEAR OLD GIRL WITH TEARS
RUNNING SIDEWAYS OFF HER CHEEKS.

A rat SCREAMS.

CUT BACK
TO:

14 INT. BARN LATE FRIDAY NIGHT 14

Lou exits and closes the barn door, shutting out the
light.

15 INT. FORD HOUSE - FATHER'S OFFICE LATE FRIDAY NIGHT 15

Lou walks along the bookcases, browsing at titles of
bulky psychology texts.

Lou sits at the desk reading a German periodical.

AMY (O.S)

Lou....

Lou spins - Amy stands in the doorway with a coat
wrapped around her.

LOU

Amy! Where-

AMY

Upstairs, waiting for you.

LOU

But someone might've-

AMY

No one did. I snuck out after
the folks went to sleep. Aren't
you glad?

LOU

Well, sure. Let's go back up,
huh?

16 INT. BEDROOM LATE FRIDAY NIGHT

16

Amy whips off the coat and flops back on the bed,
naked. Lou barely notices.

AMY

My! Such enthusiasm!

(CONTINUED)

LOU

Oh, I'm sorry, Amy.

AMY

Sorry! I shed my decency and my clothes for him and he just stands there sayin sorry.

LOU

Aw, now, honey. It's just that I wasn't expecting you, and-

AMY

No! And why should you? The way you avoid me and make excuses for not seeing me. If I had any pride left I'd - I'd-

LOU

Aw now, cut it out, honey.

AMY

(starts to cry)
Oh, Lou, I've been so miserable...

Amy tells him why - but Lou isn't listening. He watches her blubbering lips flap away silently. Her hand waves a cigarette in the air.

Lou takes the cigarette and sucks on it.

AMY (CONT'D)

Lou! You aren't listening to me!

LOU

Of course I am, honey.

AMY

Well?

LOU

Well what?

AMY

You want to marry me, don't you?

Beat.

LOU

Sure I do.

AMY

I think we've waited long enough, Lou. I can go on teaching school. We'll get by a lot better than most couples.

(CONTINUED)

LOU

But...but that's all we'd do,
Amy. We'd never get anywhere!

AMY

What do you mean?

LOU

I don't want to go on being a
deputy sheriff all of my life. I
want to be..oh I don't know.
Somebody.

AMY

Like what, for example?

LOU

There's no use in talking about
it. *

AMY

A doctor, perhaps? Is that what
you had in mind, Lou? *

LOU

I know it's crazy, Amy. But-

AMY

Oh, Lou! You're twenty nine
years old, and y-you don't even
speak good English *

Amy smiles *

LOU'S CIGARETTE burns down between his fingers.

AMY (CONT'D)

I'm s-sorry, darling. I don't
mean to hurt your feelings. *

Lou gets up and finds a cigar. He sits on the bed.

AMY (CONT'D) *

You don't want to marry me, do
you, Lou?

LOU

I don't think we should marry
now, no.

AMY

I'm afraid you'll have to marry
me, Lou. You'll have to, do you
understand?

LOU

No. I won't have to. You're not
pregnant, Amy.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LOU (CONT'D)

You've never gone with anyone else, and you're not pregnant by me.

AMY

I'm lying, I suppose?

LOU

Seems as though. I couldn't get you pregnant if I wanted to. I'm sterile.

AMY

You?

LOU

Sterile isn't the same thing as impotent. I had a vasectomy.

AMY

Then why do you use-?

LOU

It saved a lot of explanations. Anyway, you're not pregnant, to get back to the subject.

Amy is torn by anger and sympathy

AMY

I just don't understand! Did your father do it?

Lou nods

AMY (CONT'D)

Why, Lou?

LOU

Oh, I was kind of run down and nervous, and he thought-

AMY

He thought! He did a terrible thing like that- made you so we can never have children! Just because he thought something! Why, it's terrible! It makes me sick!...

She starts to sob. Lou holds her and calms her down.

AMY (CONT'D)

When was it, Lou?

LOU

What's the difference? I don't really remember. A long time ago.

(CONTINUED)

Amy pulls away a little and stares at him silently, adding him up point by point.

LOU (CONT'D)

What's the matter? What have you got that pretty little face all puckered up for?

Lou walks his fingers up her belly and squeezes one of her breasts. Then rests his hand against her throat.

AMY

(slowly)

I think...I'd better go home now.

LOU

Maybe you'd better.

Amy dresses in silence. Lou watches her.

AMY

Will I see you Sunday?
For dinner?

LOU

I'm busy Sunday night, honey. I promised to do a favour for a fellow, and I don't see how I can get out if it.

AMY

I see. It never occurs to you to think about me when you're making all your plans, does it?

LOU

I'll only be tied up til ten o'clock or so. Why don't you come over and wait for me? I'd be tickled to death to have you.

AMY

All right, Lou. But we'll have a good long talk. You're going to tell me why you've acted as you have these last few weeks, and no lying or evasions. Understand?

Lou helps her put on her coat

LOU

Ma'am, Miss Stanton. Yes, ma'am.

17 INT. FORD HOUSE- KITCHEN SUNDAY MORNING 17
 Lou sits at the table reading the paper and sipping coffee.

18 EXT CENTRAL CITY DAY 18 *
 Lou Ford driving through the quiet Sunday streets. *

19 INT CONWAY'S OFFICE DAY 19 *
 Lou stands up as CHESTER CONWAY comes in. *

CHESTER CONWAY
 Keep you seat, boy, keep your seat. *

LOU
 Thanks. *

CHESTER CONWAY
 Well. Got everything fixed for tonight, have you? You'll wind this thing up so it'll stay wound?

LOU
 I'm not doing anything. I've done all I'm going to do.

CHESTER CONWAY
 Don't think we'd better leave it that way, Lou. That damned crazy Elmer sees her again no telling what'll happen. You take the money yourself, boy. I've got it here, ten thousand in small bills, and-

LOU
 No.

CHESTER CONWAY
 -pay her off. Bust her around a little, then run her across the county line.

LOU
 Mr. Conway.

CHESTER CONWAY
 That's the way to do it. Pay her, bust her and chase her...You say something.

(CONTINUED)

LOU

Miss Lakeland insisted on Elmer bringing the dough alone. Those were her terms.

CHESTER CONWAY (cont'd)

But I don't see-

LOU

I'll tell you what you don't see, Mr. Conway. You don't see that you've got a hell of a lot of gall.

Chester blinks a few times.

CHESTER CONWAY

What d'you say?

LOU

How would it look if it got around that an officer of the law had made a blackmail payoff? Elmer got into this trouble and he came to me-

CHESTER CONWAY

Only smart thing he ever did.

LOU

-and I came to you. And you asked me to see what could be done about getting her out of town quietly. That's all I'm going to do. I don't see how you can ask me to do anything more.

CHESTER CONWAY

Well, uh- maybe not, boy. Reckon you're right. But you will see that she leaves after she gets the money?

LOU

If she's not gone within an hour, I'll move her along myself.

Chester nods, gets up goes to the door.

CHESTER CONWAY

I'm sending Elmer over to your place as soon as I can locate him. I want you to see that he's got everything down straight, understand?

*
*

LOU
 Yes, sir. It's mighty nice of
 you to let me talk to him.

CHESTER CONWAY
 No trouble at all.

20 INT LOU'S CAR 20 *
 Lou singing along to the music on the radio. *
 FLASHBACK TO *

21 INT JOYCE'S HOUSE DAY 21 *
 Joyce and Lou lying naked in bed. *
 JOYCE LAKELAND (cont'd) *
 Lou, let's pull out of this *
 crummy town together, just you *
 and I. *

LOU *
 You're crazy. You think I'd- *
 Lou catches himself. *

JOYCE LAKELAND *
 Go on, Lou. Let me hear you say *
 it. Tell me what a fine ol' *
 family you-all Fords is. *
 (drawls) *
 "We-all Fords, ma'am, we *
 wouldn't think of livin' with *
 one of you mizzable ol' whores, *
 ma'am." Say it, Lou. Say it and *
 I'll say something. *

Lou's face goes dead. *

LOU *
 Don't threaten me, baby. I don't *
 like threats. *

Joyce doesn't catch it. *

JOYCE LAKELAND *
 I'm not threatening you. I'm *
 telling you. You think you're *
 too good for me- I'll- I'll- *

LOU *
 Go on... *

JOYCE LAKELAND

I wouldn't want to, Lou, honey,
but I'm not going to give you
up. Never, ever. If you're too
good for me now, then I'll make
it so you won't be.

Lou kisses her just a little too hard.

LOU

Well, now, baby, you've got your
bowels in an uproar and all over
nothing. I was thinking about
the money problem.

JOYCE LAKELAND

I've got some money. And I can
get more. A lot of it.

LOU

Yeah?

JOYCE LAKELAND

I can, Lou. I know I can! He's
crazy about me and he's dumb as
hell. I'll bet if his old man
thought I was going to marry
him, he-

LOU

Who? Who are you talking about,
Joyce?

JOYCE LAKELAND

Elmer Conway. You know who he
is, don't you? Old Chester-

LOU

Yeah. Yeah, I know the Conways.
How do you figure on hookin'
'em?

CUT BACK TO

Elmer Conway, as big and flabby as his old man, lumbers
up the front steps sweaty and flushed with drink.

Lou opens the door for him.

LOU

Getting started pretty early in
the day, aren't you?

ELMER

So what?

LOU

Not a thing. If you ball it up,
it's your headache.

ELMER

I dunno, Lou. What if the old
man never cools off? What'll me
and Joyce do when the ten
thousand runs out?

LOU

Well, Elmer. I understood you
were sure your father would come
around in time. If that isn't
the case, maybe I'd better tell
Miss Lakeland and-

ELMER

No, Lou! Don't do that! Hell,
he'll get over it. But-

LOU

Why don't you do this Elmer? Buy
some kind of business; you and
Joyce can run it together. When
it's going good, get in touch
with your dad. He'll see that
you've made a darned smart move,
and you won't have any trouble
squaring things.

Lou sees Elmer isn't so sure.

LOU (CONT'D)

But don't let me talk you into
it. I already stuck my neck out
a mile to give you and her a
fresh start together -

ELMER

Why'd you do it, Lou? Why'd you
do all this for me and her?

LOU

Maybe I figured you'd do
something for me...say, in a
money way.

ELMER

Well...I could give you a little
out of the ten thousand I guess.

LOU

Oh, I wouldn't take any of that.
I figured a man like you must
have a little scratch of his
own.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (2)

22

LOU (CONT'D)

What do you do for you
cigarettes and gas and whiskey?
Does your Dad buy'em for you?

ELMER

Like hell! I got plenty of
money!

Elmer pulls out roll of money, peels off a few notes.
Lou shakes his head.

ELMER (CONT'D)

Aw, hell.

Elmer throws a big roll of notes to Lou.

ELMER (CONT'D)

See you tonight.

Lou fans the wad of money, ALL TWENTIES.

LOU

At ten o'clock.

Elmer leaves.

*

*

23 EXT. DERRICK ROAD SUNDAY NIGHT

23

A RABBIT squats frozen in the road, caught in the glare
of approaching headlights. It scampers away just as
LOU'S PATROL CAR races past.

24 EXT. LANE OFF DERRICK ROAD

24

Lou turns into the weed-choked lane and kills the
lights and motor. Up ahead there's a light on in
Joyce's cottage.

*

25 INT. PATROL CAR NIGHT

25

LOU'S FACE IN THE DARK: lit by the glow of a cigar.

LOU'S POV: Up ahead in the cottage, Joyce's SHADOW
moves across a curtain.

*

Lou stubs his cigar out in the ashtray.

26 EXT. PATROL CAR

26

Lou kneels by the rear wheel of the car, pulls a rusty
SPIKE from his pocket and drives it into the tire with
a rock. FFFFFFFSHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

ClunkCLICK...ClunkCLICK...ClunkCLICK

Lou JACKS the car up a foot or so. Then he rocks the car until the axle slides off the jack.

27 EXT. OLD SHACK NIGHT 27 *

Lou approaches a small abandoned shack across a field from the house. He pulls off a plank of wood siding.

Lou carries it across the field towards the cottage, and leans it against the front fence. *

28 EXT. JOYCE'S COTTAGE NIGHT 28 *

Lou knocks on the door. Joyce opens, and is startled to see Lou.

JOYCE LAKELAND

Lou! What-where's your car? Is something wrong?

LOU

Nothing but a flat tire. I had to leave the car down the road a piece.

Lou enters living room, Joyce puts her arms around him.

JOYCE LAKELAND

Lou, honey...

LOU

Yeah?

JOYCE LAKELAND

It's only about nine and Stupid won't be here for another hour, and I won't see you for two weeks. And...well, you know.

LOU

Well, I don't know, baby. I'm kind of pooped out, and you're all prettied up-

JOYCE LAKELAND

Oh, I am not! Hurry, so I can have my bath.

LOU

You twisted my arm, baby

Lou sweeps her up and carries her into bedroom.

29

INT. BEDROOM A FEW MINUTES LATER

29

Two bodies tangle in the dark. Right in the middle of the sweet talk and sighing, Joyce suddenly goes still and pushes Lou's head back. She looks him in the eye.

JOYCE LAKELAND

You *will* join me in two weeks, Lou? Just as soon as you sell your house and wind up your affairs?

LOU

That's the understanding.

JOYCE LAKELAND

I want to be sweet to you, but if you let me down I'll be the other way. I'll come back here and raise hell. I'll follow you around town and tell everyone how you-

LOU

-robbed you of your bloom and cast you aside?

JOYCE LAKELAND

Crazy! But just the same, Lou...

LOU

I know. I won't keep you waiting, baby.

LATER...

Joyce emerges from the bathroom wiping herself with a towel. She steps into some panties, humming, and brings her bra over to Lou. He helps her put it on and gives her a pinch or two. She giggles and wiggles.

JOYCE LAKELAND

Lou...You suppose Elmer will make any trouble?

LOU

I'll tell him you changed your mind. What can he do? He can't squawk to his Dad.

JOYCE LAKELAND

Oh it all seems so complicated! We could have got the money without dragging Elmer into it.

LOU

Well...

(CONTINUED)

Lou looks at clock: 9.33. He sits up beside her and casually pulls on a pair of gloves.

LOU (CONT'D)

Well, I'll tell you, baby. It *is* kind of complicated, but it has to be that way. You've probably heard the gossip about Mike Dean, my foster brother?

JOYCE LAKELAND

I've heard some things.

LOU

Well, Mike didn't do that. He took the blame for me.

Joyce goes blank. Studies his face.

LOU (CONT'D)

So if you was to do your talking around town 'bout me, people might start to thinking and remembering and...

JOYCE LAKELAND

(smiles)

But..Lou. I'm wouldn't ever say anything. You're going to join me and-

LOU

Better let me finish. I told you how Mike fell from that building? Only he didn't fall; he was murdered. Old man Conway arranged it and-

JOYCE LAKELAND

Lou. I won't let you do anything to Elmer! You mustn't, honey, don't even think about it!

LOU

They won't catch me. They won't even suspect me. They'll think he was half-tanked, like he usually is, and you got to fighting and both got killed.

Joyce laughs and frowns a little at the same time.

JOYCE LAKELAND

But, Lou- that doesn't make sense. How could I be dead when...

LOU

Easy

He gives her a slap. Joyce still doesn't understand

JOYCE LAKELAND

You better not do that now Lou.
We've got to travel

LOU

You're not going anywhere.

He hits her again and now she gets it. She jumps up but Lou gives her a quick one-two and she bounces against the wall. She staggers to her feet and comes towards him.

*
*

JOYCE LAKELAND

Guh - gubby....

*
*

Lou hears a car pulling to a stop outside. He lets her have it again. He pounds her face like a pumpkin and she slumps down. Somehow she lifts her head and tries to say something and he gives her one last uppercut and there's a sharp crack, and she is still.

*

Lou wipes his gloves on her body, takes her gun from the dresser, turns off the light and leaves

EXT HOUSE NIGHT

Elmer is crossing the porch as Lou comes out.

ELMER

Hiya, Lou ol' boy. Right on time, huh?

LOU

Have you got the money?

Elmer pats the thick brown folder under his arm.

ELMER

What's it look like? Where is Joyce?

LOU

In the bedroom. Why don't you go on back? I'll bet she's all stretched out waiting for you.

ELMER

Oh, you shouldn't talk like that, you know we're going to be married.

Elmer goes down the hall to Joyce, and Lou hears his scream when he sees the body.

(CONTINUED)

Lou strolls into the bedroom and Elmer is on his knees, blood on his hands, and a streak across his chin.

ELMER (CONT'D)

Who did it Lou?

LOU

It was suicide.

ELMER

That doesn't make sense.

LOU

Sure it does. It was suicide.

Lou shoots Elmer in the mouth, then empties the gun into his face.

EXT BRANCH HOUSE NIGHT

Lou comes out, picks up the plank, and walks back to his car.

30 EXT. PATROL CAR NIGHT

30 *

Lou puts the plank under the jack and puts the spare tire on the car. LOU'S HANDS toss the jack and tools into the trunk. SLAM.

31 EXT. DERRICK ROAD NIGHT

31 *

Lou backs the car onto the road, into THE GLARE of approaching headlights. A SPEEDING CADILLAC fishtails wildly to a stop, just missing Lou's car.

CHESTER CONWAY, 50's, red faced and flabby, swarms out of his car, sees who it is and whips his cigarette on the ground.

CHESTER CONWAY

Goddamit, Lou, you trying to get killed, for Christ's sake?

Lou stares at Chester with a dopey grin on his face.

LOU

(slow drawl)

Sorry Mr. Conway. I had to pull in there with a flat tire and -

CHESTER CONWAY

Well, come on. Let's get going. Can't stand here gabbing.

LOU

But it's still early.

CHESTER CONWAY

The hell it is! It's a quarter past eleven and that damned Elmer ain't home yet. Promised to come right back, and he ain't done it.

LOU

Maybe we'd better give him a little more time -

CHESTER CONWAY

I'm going now! And you follow me!

32 INT. PATROL CAR NIGHT 32 *

Lou watches through his rearview as Conway leaps into his Cadillac and pulls around him.

Lou sighs. Then starts the car.

33 EXT. JOYCE'S COTTAGE NIGHT 33 *

Lou pulls up behind Conway's car. He gets out and climbs the steps to the porch.

34 INT. JOYCE'S COTTAGE 34 *

Lou enters and sees Conway on the phone puffing hard on a cigarette.

CHESTER CONWAY

(into phone)

Sure, it's too bad. Don't tell me that again I know all about how bad it is...

Lou peers into the kitchen - JOYCE LAKELAND, face beaten to a pulp, lies on the floor, a gun clutched in her hand. Nearby sits ELMER CONWAY slumped against the wall, his face blown away.

CHESTER CONWAY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

He's dead and that's that, and what I'm interested in is her...Well, do it then! Get on out here! We ain't going to let her die, not this way. I'm going to see that she burns.

Lou stares at the bodies, unable to move.

35 INT. COURTHOUSE ROOM NIGHT 35 *

The clock on the wall reads 3:20

Lou sits at a table cross from SHERIFF BOB MAPLES, late 50's; big and doughy with a kind face. County attorney HOWARD HENDRICKS, 40, paces angrily. Nobody speaks.

HENDRICKS

So? That's it? That's all you have to say?

Lou scratches his head, thinks real hard.

LOU

'Cept to say I'm real sorry.

HENDRICKS

Sorry?

LOU

For trying to handle this blackmail deal by myself. Didn't figure Elmer to screw it up so bad

Hendricks groans. Lou looks to Bob.

LOU (CONT'D)

Sure wish I'd come to you with it Bob - and y'know I would have - if it was anybody other than Mr. Conway askin' me to help.

Bob cuts him off with wave of the hand and glances away.

Lou follows Bob's eyes to the window of a nearby office: The GLOW OF A CIGARETTE moves in the dark.

36 EXT. COURTHOUSE NIGHT 36 *

Lou nods good night to Hendricks and Sheriff Bob as they pile into their cars.

37 INT. MAX'S DINER NIGHT 37 *

Empty except for Lou and the Greek owner, MAX PAPPAS. Lou finishes a coffee he doesn't want, and throws some change on the counter.

LOU

Thanks Max.

MAX PAPPAS

Lou....I need to ask you something

Max moves closer looking anxious, and lowers his voice.

MAX PAPPAS (CONT'D)

It's my boy, Johnnie. Just today I learn he's taken a job at Slim Murphy's, and well...I hear things about this Slim Murphy and...I was wondering...

Lou touches his shoulder gently.

LOU

I'd be happy to check up on him Max.

MAX PAPPAS

(smiles, relieved)

Thank you Lou.

38 EXT CENTRAL CITY NIGHT 38 *

Lou Ford drives through the scruffy suburbs of Central city. A few workers are on the way out to the oil field. *

39 EXT. SLIM MURPHY'S GARAGE NIGHT 39 *

Lou's PATROL CAR pulls in. JOHNNIE PAPPAS, 19, appears from under the hood of his hot rod and makes a face. He sidles over slowly.

Lou leans on the car, smoking.

LOU

Heard about your new job, Johnnie. Congratulations.

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

You're up pretty late.

LOU

(laughs)

Well, so are you. Now how about filling 'er up with gas and checking the oil?

MOMENTS LATER

Johnnie finishes pumping gas. He feels Lou watching him.

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

I'm sorry if I acted funny, Lou.
I thought Dad was having you
check up on me.

LOU

You know me better than that,
Johnnie.

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

Sure, I do.

Johnnie pops the hood to check the oil.

JOHNNIE PAPPAS (CONT'D)

You're the only real friend I've
ever had in this lousy town. Why
do you do it, Lou? Why bother
with a guy everyone else is down
on?

LOU

Maybe it's because I was a kid
myself not so many years ago.
And fathers are funny. The best
ones get in your hair most.

Lou smiles his sweet dumb smile. Johnnie shuffles his
feet impatiently.

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

Yeah. Well...

Johnnie slams the hood and wipes his hands. Lou gets
into his car and fishes for his wallet.

LOU

There's just one thing, Johnnie.
Slim Murphy hasn't got a very
good reputation. We've never
proved he was mixed up in any of
these car-stripping jobs, but...

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

I know. I know. I won't get into
any trouble, Lou.

LOU

Good enough. That's a promise,
and I know you don't break your
promises.

Lou hands him a crisp TWENTY DOLLAR BILL. Johnnie snaps
it, and runs off.

Lou angles his SIDE MIRROR and watches Johnnie ring the
register.

40 EXT. FORD HOUSE DAWN (MONDAY) 40 *

Lou's car pulls into the driveway. He cuts the engine and coasts silently into the barn. *

41 INT. FORD HOUSE DAWN 41 *

Lou climbs the stairs on tiptoes carrying his boots.

42 INT. LOU'S BEDROOM DAWN 42 *

Lou enters quietly. The light snaps on. AMY STANTON lies in bed smoking. Furious.

LOU

I'm sure sorry, honey, but I've had a lot of trouble tonight.

AMY

I'll bet!

LOU

You want to hear about it or not?

AMY

I've heard so many of your lies and excuses I may as well hear a few more. *

LOU

Well. About three months ago...

Lou's voice fades and his MOUTH moves silently.

Outside, the SUN pops up. LIGHT streams through the window. THE CLOCK ticks to 6:13

LOU (CONT'D)

...and that's pretty much the all of it.

Amy cuts loose on him.

AMY

How could you be so stupid, Lou? Getting yourself mixed up with some wretched prostitute and that awful Elmer Conway! Now, there'll be a big scandal and you'll probably lose your job and -

LOU

Why? I didn't do anything.

(CONTINUED)

AMY

I want to know why you did it!

LOU

Well, it was kind of a favour, see? Chester Conway wanted me to see what I could do about getting Elmer out of this scrape, so -

AMY

Why do you always have to be doing favors for other people? You never do any for me! Answer me, Lou Ford!

LOU

All right. I shouldn't have done it!

AMY

You shouldn't have allowed that woman to stay in this county in the first place!

LOU

No. I shouldn't have.

AMY

Well! All I've got to say is...

Lou grabs Amy by the crotch

AMY (CONT'D)

Lou! You stop that!

LOU

Why?

AMY

(shivers)

Y-you stop it. You s-stop or...Oh Lou!

Amy and Lou fall onto the bed. Amy tugs at his belt and gropes him hungrily.

After working at it in vain she pulls away.

AMY (CONT'D)

Lou...? What's the matter, dear?

LOU

All this trouble. I guess it's thrown me for a loop.

AMY

You poor darling. Just forget everything but me, and I'll pet you and whisper to you, mmm? I'll...

Amy whispers in his ear what she's going to do, then moves her head down to do it.

Suddenly she spits and grabs the sheet, scrubbing her hands and mouth with it.

AMY (cont'd) (CONT'D)

You son-of-a-bitch. You dirty, filthy bastard.

Amy's cussing hits him like a punch in the guts.

LOU

Wha-at?

AMY

You're dirty, I can tell! I can smell it on you. Smell HER! You can't wash it off. It'll never come off. You-

LOU

Jesus Christ! What are you saying, Amy?

AMY

You screwed her. You've been doing it all along. You've been putting her dirty insides inside of me, smearing me with her!

Amy leaps out of bed. As Lou gets up she backs behind a chair.

AMY (cont'd) (CONT'D)

K-keep away from me! Don't you dare touch me!

LOU

Amy, Amy, honey. Look at me.

AMY

I don't want to look at you.

LOU

This is Lou, honey, Lou Ford, remember? The guy you've known all your life. I ask you, now, would I do what you said I did?

AMY

You did do it. I know you did.

(CONTINUED)

LOU

Why, why would I fool around
with some chippy when I had you?
What could she give me that
would make me run the risk of
losing a girl like you? Huh?
Now, that doesn't make sense,
does it, honey.

*

Amy picks up her panties and pulls them on, still
standing behind the chair.

AMY (cont'd)

There's no use arguing about it,
Lou. I suppose I can thank my
lucky stars that I haven't
caught some terrible disease.

*

LOU

But dammit...!

Lou moves around the chair and takes Amy in his arms

LOU (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Stop talking that way!

AMY

Let me go Lou!

LOU

I don't mind for myself, but you
can't say that the girl I'm
going to marry would sleep with
a guy who plays around with
whores!

AMY

Let me - What did you say?

LOU

You heard me.

AMY

But just two days ago you said-

LOU

So what? No man likes to be
yanked into marriage. He wants
to do his own proposing, which
is just what I'm doing right
now. If we were married we
wouldn't be having all these
quarrels and misunderstandings.

AMY

Since that woman came to town,
you mean.

Lou pulls away

LOU

All right. I've done all I could. If you're willing to believe that about me, I wouldn't want-

Amy clings to him

AMY

Wait! I'm sorry, Lou. I was wrong.

*

Lou watches her.

*

*

AMY (CONT'D)

When shall we do it, Lou? Get married, I mean.

*

LOU

The sooner the better. Let's get together in a few days when we're both more ourselves, and talk about it.

Lou climbs into bed.

AMY

Huh-uh. Let's talk about it right now.

LOU

Well, I'm pretty tired.

AMY

I'll make you some coffee, darling. That'll wake you up.

LOU

But, honey it's almost daylight. Someone will see you leavin'

The phone rings. Lou picks it up.

LOU (CONT'D)

Yeah, Bob. What's on your mind?

Bob tells him. Lou hangs up the phone.

AMY

Your job, Lou? You've got some work to do?

LOU

Yup. Sheriff Bob's driving by to pick me up.

42 CONTINUED: (5)

42

Amy hurries to finish dressing.

AMY

You poor dear! And you're so tired! I'll get dressed and get right out.

43 EXT. FORD HOUSE SUNRISE - MONDAY MORNING

43

Amy blows a kiss and trots off down the lane. Lou stands on the porch smoking a cigar, taking in the day's first light.

44 EXT. FORD HOUSE MOMENTS LATER

44

Bob Maples pulls up in a patrol car. Hendricks peers out from the back seat. Lou gives Howard a nod and gets in the front seat.

45 INT. PATROL CAR DAY

45 *

Sheriff Bob puts the car in gear.

BOB

Sure hate to bother you, Lou. Hope I didn't interrupt anything.

LOU

Nothing that can't wait.

46 EXT. ROAD DAY

46 *

The car heads out of town.

47 INT. PATROL CAR DAY

47 *

The car heads out through the oil fields. Hendricks talks to the back of Lou's head.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

You had a date for last night?

LOU

That's right.

HENDRICKS

For what time?

LOU

A little after ten. The time I figured I'd have the Conway business finished.

(CONTINUED)

HENDRICKS

Who was the girl?

Lou twists to face Hendricks

LOU

None of your-

BOB

Howard, you're kind of a newcomer out this way, still y'ought to know better'n to ask a man a question like that.

HENDRICKS

What the hell? It's my job. If Ford had himself a date last night, it- well. You know what I mean Ford.

LOU

No offense meant, but I figured you'd done all the jawing you had to do when I talked to you an hour ago.

HENDRICKS

Well you're dead wrong, brother!

BOB

(getting angry)

Easy, Howard. I know the girl. I know her folks. She's one of the nicest little ladies in town, and I ain't got the slightest doubt Lou had a date with her.

Hendricks slumps back in his seat and sulks.

HENDRICKS

The more I'm around you people the less I understand you.

He peers out the window.

HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

Well, here we are.

Lou and Bob lean against the car. Hendricks nods toward the weed-grown trail.

HENDRICKS (cont'd)

Do you see that track through there, Ford? Do you know what caused that?

LOU

Why, I reckon so. A flat tire.

HENDRICKS

You admit that? You concede that a track of that kind would have to be there, *if* you had a flat tire?

Lou's face goes blank for moment. He pushes back his Stetson.

LOU

(frowning a little)

What's all this about , Bob?

BOB

This is Howard's show. Maybe you'd better answer him, Lou.

LOU

I've already said it once. A flat tire makes that kind of track.

Howard smiles smugly.

HENDRICKS

And do you know *when* that track was made?

LOU

I ain't got the slightest idea. All I know is that my car didn't make it.

HENDRICKS

Huh?

Hendrick's mouth hangs open foolishly.

LOU

I didn't have a flat tire when I turned off the highway.

HENDRICKS

Now wait a minute! You said-

BOB

(interrupts)

Howard. I don't recollect Lou tellin' us his tire went flat on Derrick Road.

LOU

I knew I had a puncture, sure; I felt the car sway a little.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LOU (CONT'D)

But I turned off in the lane
before the tire could really go
down.

Bob stares at Howard. Howard kicks the dirt. Lou
scratches his head.

LOU (cont'd) (CONT'D)

I sure hope you fellows didn't
chew up a perfectly good tire
for nothin'.

Sheriff Bob sputters and lets out a whoop of laughter

BOB

Whaaaw, haw! Doggone it,
Howard, if this ain't the
funniest-

Hendricks starts laughing too. Lou wears a puzzled
grin.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

I'm a damned fool, Lou I should
have known better.

LOU

(the penny
dropping)
Say, you don't mean you thought
I-

BOB

Of course we didn't think so.

HENDRICKS

This woman Lakeland is as good
as dead. Conway isn't going to
be able to lay the blame for
this mess on her -

BOB

He'll want to stick someone else
with it and he'll be snatching
at straws -

HENDRICKS

That's why we have to head him
off on anything that looks-uh-
even *mildly* peculiar.

LOU

Shucks, anyone could see what
happened. Elmer'd been drinking,
and he tried to push her around,
and-

Bob puts a fatherly arm around Lou

BOB

Sure Lou. But Conway don't want to admit that.

HENDRICKS

And he won't admit it, if there's any way out.

Howard and Bob smile warmly at Lou.

49 INT. PATROL CAR MONDAY MORNING

49

Lou rides in the front seat squeezed between Hendricks and Bob. Bob whistles merrily. Hendricks watches the road.

LOU'S EYES: as a sudden crazy notion comes over him. *Maybe they know he killed Joyce and Elmer.* He jerks a little.

*
*

HENDRICKS

Feeling twitchy?

LOU

Just hunger pains. I haven't eaten since yesterday afternoon.

BOB

Wouldn't mind a bite myself.

50 *EXT PATROL CAR DAY*

50

*

It drives the old town square of Central City.

*

51 INT. DINER MONDAY MORNING

51

*

Lou sits in a booth watching Bob inhale his eggs. He glances back at Hendricks in the phone booth and catches a table of oil workers looking at him.

Lou nods and tips his hat.

Hendricks returns in a huff and slides into the booth.

HENDRICKS

That Conway! Now he wants to fly the woman to Forth Worth. Says she can't get the right kind of medical attention here.

BOB

Maybe I'll go myself. You like to take a little flight into Forth Worth, Lou?

Lou's expression suggests he wouldn't.

LOU

Well...I ain't never been on a
airplane before.

HENDRICKS

Now hold on! She hasn't even
been booked yet, let alone
arraigned.

Bob butters his toast casually

BOB

Can't see that it makes much
difference, as long as she's
going to die.

HENDRICKS

Maybe I got a lot to learn, but
by God I know the law and-

BOB

So do I. The one that ain't on
the books. Conway wasn't asking
you if he could take her to Fort
Worth. He was telling you. Did
he mention what time?

Howard sighs.

HENDRICKS

Ten this morning.

BOB

Uh-huh. Well, that ought to
give Lou and me time to scrub up
a little and pack a bag. Right
Lou?

Lou doesn't say anything. Bob raises his eyebrows at
him.

BOB (CONT'D)

Something wrong with your eggs
Son? Better eat'em before they
get cold.

Lou carries his bag to the front door and opens it
cautiously. Wind rushes in and suddenly he's looking
down from 10,000 feet over cotton candy clouds. He
grips the door frame for dear life.

53 INT. PLANE MONDAY MORNING

53

Lou jerks awake in his seat. Bob chuckles from across the aisle.

BOB

First time out of the county and you waste your time sleeping!

LOU

Where's Mr Conway?

BOB

Back in the baggage compartment.

LOU

She still unconscious?

BOB

Uh-huh. And she ain't ever gonna be any other way if you ask me.

LOU

Sorry Bob. I shouldn't have ever let her stay in town.

BOB

I reckon we've been over that ground enough. It's done now, and there's nothing we can do about it.

LOU

Nope. I guess there's no use crying over spilled milk.

Bob studies Lou's face. Nods.

54 EXT. FORT WORTH AIRPORT MONDAY AFTERNOON

54 *

A tent-covered stretcher is wheeled from the plane to a waiting ambulance. Lou stares at the outline of the body within.

A heavy hand comes down on his shoulder

CHESTER CONWAY

Lou, you come with me in the police car (to Bob) Sheriff, you ride in the ambulance. We'll see you at the hospital.

Bob frowns, pushing back his Stetson. His face sags and he shuffles away.

55 INT. POLICE CAR

55

Conway closes the glass partition between the back seat and the driver. He turns to Lou

CHESTER CONWAY

Didn't like that, did you? Well. I'm not letting someone's tender feelings get in my way.

LOU

I don't suppose you would. It'd be pretty hard to start in at your time of life.

Conway isn't listening

CHESTER CONWAY

If that woman pulls through the operation, she'll be able to talk tonight. I want you there just as soon as she comes out of the anesthetic.

LOU

But what about -

CHESTER CONWAY

Bob Maples is too old to be on his toes. Now I've got a room reserved at a hotel. Stay there until I call you.

LOU

Don't know as I understand you.

CHESTER CONWAY

Get some rest. Get rested up good, so's you'll be raring to go when the time comes.

LOU

All right, but I slept all the way up on the plane.

CHESTER CONWAY

Sleep some more then, son.

56 EXT. ROAD

56

The ambulance races past with siren blaring, followed by the police car.

*

BOB

There at the airport- seeing
Conway order me around? A lot of
men in your place would have got
a big bang out of that, but I
knew you wouldn't Lou. Not
you...

LOU

You got something on your mind
Bob?

SHERIFF MAPLES

It'll keep. I just wanted you to
know that I...

LOU

Yes, Bob?

SHERIFF MAPLES

It'll keep.

Bob pours another big drink.

LOU

You had some trouble at the
hospital, Bob?

SHERIFF MAPLES

Yeah, I had some trouble. She's
dead, Lou. She never came out of
the ether.

Bob downs the glass in one gulp, and turns to the
window.

Lou sits on the edge of the tub, smoking a cigar.

After awhile, the door slams open. Bob grins broadly,
drunk as a skunk.

SHERIFF MAPLES

Hey, you running out on me, Lou?
Come on in here an' keep me
company!

LOU

Sure, Bob. Sure, I will. Be
there in a minute.

Bob swigs from a bottle of whiskey and stumbles back
into the room.

Lou smokes. Thinks.

63 INT. HOTEL ROOM 63
 The bottle is empty. Bob lies on the bed mumbling, fading in and out of a drunken stupor. Lou takes his hat and leaves. *

64 INT HOTEL BAR DAY 64 *
 There' s a small crowd of travellers and Fort Worth society. Lou goes up to the bar and orders a drink. He looks pretty lonely and out of place. *

65 EXT STREETS DAY 65 *
 Lou walks along a busy downtown street - looking for something. *

66 INT STATION DAY 66 *
 Lou is at one of the ticket counters. *

LOU
 I need a berth for two on the eight o'clock to Central City.... *

67 INT. TRAIN NIGHT 67 *
 Lou sits across from Bob in a small cabin. Bob's passed out, his head wobbling with the sway of the train.
 Suddenly Bob's fist wobbles out and pokes Lou in the chest

LOU
 Hey. Watch yourself Bob. *

SHERIFF MAPLES
 T-tell you somethin'. T-tell you somethin'. I bet you never thought of.

LOU
 Yeah?

SHERIFF MAPLES
 It's- it's always lightest j-just before the dark.

Lou laughs

67 CONTINUED:

67

LOU

You got it wrong, Bob. You mean-

SHERIFF MAPLES

Huh-uh. You got it wrong.

Bob stares at Lou, and slowly nods off.

68 EXT. TRAIN DEPOT **CENTRAL CITY** TUESDAY MORNING 68 *

Bob looks sick, disheveled and hungover. Lou helps him into a taxi, and watches it drive away. *

69 INT. FORD HOUSE TUESDAY MORNING 69

Eggs cook in a frying pan. Lou wears fresh clothes.

A knock on the door. Lou opens it to find Joe Rothman.

JOE ROTHMAN

Mind if I come in Lou?

LOU

Not at all Mr Rothhman.

70 INT. FORD KITCHEN A LITTLE WHILE LATER 70

JOE SITS AT THE TABLE rolling a cigarette

JOE ROTHMAN

The very discreet newspaper stories are correct in their hints? Elmer tried to dish it out and got it thrown back at him?

LOU

That's the way it looks.

JOE ROTHMAN

I couldn't help wondering how a woman with her face caved in and her neck broken could score six bulls-eyes on a man, even one as large as the late Elmer Conway.

Joe looks up slowly until his eyes meet Lou's. Lou shrugs.

LOU

She was shooting him while he was punching her.

JOE ROTHMAN

From what I hear she was still alive after he died; and almost any one-well,two-of the bullets she put into him was enough to lay him low. Ergo, she must have acquired the broken neck et cetera, *before* she did her shooting.

Lou looks away. Joe grins.

JOE ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

The genuine article, Lou; no substitutes accepted.

LOU

I don't know where you get off at questioning me.

JOE ROTHMAN

That's the way you see it, huh?

LOU

That's the way I see it.

JOE ROTHMAN

I'm involved in the matter, Lou. Not directly, perhaps, but-

LOU

But not indirectly, either.

JOE ROTHMAN

Exactly. I knew you had it in for Conway; in fact, I did everything I could to set you up against the old man. Morally- perhaps even legally-I share the responsibility for any untoward action you might take. Me and the unions I head could be placed in a...very unfavorable light.

LOU

You said it. Your words.

JOE ROTHMAN

Incidentally, what's the score as of to date? One or two? *

LOU

She's dead. She died yesterday afternoon.

Joe takes this in.

JOE ROTHMAN

Well. They can't prove anything.

He smiles at Lou.

JOE ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

Then again. If they knew what I know, about your having a motive-

LOU

For killing her? Why would I want to do that?

JOE ROTHMAN

OK. Leave her out of it. Say she was just a piece of stage setting.

LOU

I've known about Mike's accident for six years. Why would I wait that long to pull something? Beat some poor whore to a pulp just to get at Chester Conway's son. Now, tell me if that sounds logical.

Joe frowns thoughtfully. Drums his fingers on the table.

LOU (CONT'D)

I can't tell you what happened, because I wasn't there. But I know there are flukes in murder the same as there are in anything else. A woman crawls a mile with her brains blown out. A man is hanged and poisoned and chopped up and he goes right on living. Don't ask me why those things are Joe. I don't know. But I do know they happen, and so do you.

Joe eyes him steadily.

JOE ROTHMAN

I guess so, Lou. I guess so. I've been sitting here watching you, and I couldn't tally it with the picture I've got of *that* guy. Screwy as things are, you don't fit the part.

LOU

What do I say to that?

JOE ROTHMAN

Not a thing, Lou. I should be
thanking you for lifting a
considerable load from my mind.

Joe stands to leave.

JOE ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

What were you trying to pull
off? *

LOU

The money was supposed to be a
payoff to get her out of town.
Conway was paying her to leave
Elmer alone. But-

JOE ROTHMAN

- Elmer was going to leave with
the whore, right?

Lou nods. Joe puts on his hat.

JOE ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

I almost wish I'd thought of it. *

LOU

Aw, it wasn't nothing much. Just
a matter of a will finding a
way.

Joe winces at the corny line.

JOE ROTHMAN

Ouch. Better watch that stuff,
Lou. Save it for those birds.

Joe tips his hat and leaves.

Jeff Plummer reads the paper, his boots on the desk. He
looks up as LOU ENTERS. Hank spits tobacco juice into a
cup. *

JEFF *

Right pretty little piece they
got about you Lou. You're a hee-
ro. I was just fixin' to clip it
out and save it for you.

LOU

I'll autograph it for ya and you
can keep it.

Jeff's eyes flick to Lou to see if he's serious. Lou
flashes a friendly grin. *

71 CONTINUED:

71

LOU (CONT'D)

Where's Bob?

JEFF PLUMMER

In bed. Sick as a dog. *

72 EXT COURT HOUSE DAY 72 *

As Lou arrives he is greeted by a couple of secretaries
leaving for their lunch. *

73 INT. HOWARD HENDRICK'S OFFICE DAY 73

A secretary ushers Lou into Howard's office. Howard
looks up from his desk and waves him in.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Hello, there, Lou. Come on in
and sit a minute.

LOU

Just talked to Bob's wife a
little while ago. He's not
feeling so good.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

So I hear. Well, it doesn't
matter much. I mean there's
nothing more to be done on this
Conway case.

Lou sits.

LOU

I wonder, Howard...

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Yes, Lou?

LOU

Well now, I've always felt we
were one big happy family here.
Us people who work for the
county...

Behind Lou's back, we see the secretary wink at Howard.
Lou spots the quirk of Howard's mouth as tries not to
laugh.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Uh-huh. One big happy family.

LOU

We're kind of brothers under the
skin...

(CONTINUED)

Howard's eyes stray again. He swallows a giggle.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Y-yes.

LOU

We're all in the same boat, and we've got to put our shoulders to the wheel and pull together.

Howard pulls a hanky from his pocket and whirls in his chair, coughing and sputtering. His secretary chokes a laugh, and runs from the room, her heels tap-tapping down the corridor.

Lou watches Howard pull himself together.

LOU (CONT'D)

Better take care of that cold.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

(pulling it together)

I appreciate your concern (coughs) What did you wish to tell me, anyway?

LOU

Oh, it wasn't any-

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Please, Lou!

LOU

Well, here's what I was wondering about....how could she fire six bullets at him whilst he was beating her to a pulp. It doesn't seem to make sense.

Howard flops back in his chair.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Jesus. It's right there isn't it? Right out in the open, so plain and simple you don't see 'it. No matter how you turn it around, he just about had to kill her after he was dead. After he couldn't do it!

LOU

Or vice versa.

Howard wipes his forehead, excited but sick-looking.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

What do you think this means,
Lou?

LOU

Don't necessarily mean anything.
Just one of those damned funny
things that no one can explain.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Yes. Of course. That's bound to
be it. You- uh- you haven't
mentioned this to anyone, Lou?

LOU

Just popped into my mind a
little while ago. Should I tell
Conway?

HOWARD HENDRICKS

I don't believe I would, Lou.

LOU

You mean I should tell Bob
first?

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Bob isn't well. I don't think we
should trouble him with anything
else. Something which, as you
point out, is doubtless of no
consequence.

LOU

Keep it to ourselves huh?

HOWARD HENDRICKS

What else can we do? What have
we got to go on?

LOU

Nothing much. Probably nothing
at all.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Exactly! I couldn't have stated
it better.

LOU

I tell you what we might do. It
wouldn't be too hard to round up
all the men that visited her.
Probably ain't more than thirty
or forty of 'em, her being a
kind of *high-priced* gal...

Howard starts to sweat at the thought of rounding up
well-to-do citizens

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: (3)

73

HENDRICKS

Whoa now Lou..let's not be too
hasty about this. Leave it with
me. You look after yourself,
you're looking pretty worn out.

74 EXT. STREET DAY

74

Lou saunters down the sidewalk, whistling. In his
mind's eye Lou sees Joyce lying naked on her bed

LOU

I'm sorry baby. You'll never
know how sorry I am. You
understand why, don't you?

75 INT. DAD'S STUDY EVENING

75

Lou browses the bookshelves, but nothing grabs his
attention. He grabs a chair and searches the higher
shelves, and finds a BIBLE. He pulls it down and blows
the dust off.

He opens the book, and snapshot falls out.

INSERT: a faded photo of a girl peering through what
appears to be the crotch of a tree.

Lou studies it closer; turns it around, confused.

INSERT: it's a naked girl on her knees looking back
through her legs.

LOU

Helen...

76 INT. FORD KITCHEN FLASHBACK

76

HELEN, the teenage housekeeper, sweeps the kitchen.
Lou, 6, dances around her, shadow boxing.

LOU

Want to fight Helen? Want to
learn how to box?

77 INT. FORD LIVING ROOM FLASHBACK

77

Helen boxes on her knees, throwing light punches

HELENE

Oh, I'm tired. You just hit
me...

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

77

Lou swings and she takes it in the face

78 INT. BEDROOM FLASHBACK

78

Helene lies across the bed on her stomach, her buttocks exposed.

Little Lou stands to the side holding a belt.

HELENE

But you'll like it darling. All
the big boys do it...

DR.FORD (O.S.)

HELEN!

DR. FORD stands in the doorway looking horrified

79 INT. FORD HOUSE FLASHBACK

79

Lou, terrified, aching from a beating, crouches at the foot of the stairs listening to hushed angry voices upstairs.

DR.FORD (cont'd)

Consider yourself lucky that I
don't prosecute you!

HELENE

Oh yeah? I'd like to see you try
it!

DR.FORD

Why, Helene? Why in the world
would you do such a thing?

HELENE

Jealous?

DR. FORD

GET OUT!

HELENE

Or what?

80 INT. DAD'S STUDY PRESENT

80

Lou studies the snapshot with a magnifying glass

CU PHOTO: Helene's smiling face peering through thighs crisscrossed with belt marks.

LOU

Dad.

81 INT. KITCHEN

81

Lou watches the photo burn in the sink.

ANGLE: As the flames melt the image, the face turns from Helen to Joyce to Amy before shriveling to black ash.

The phone rings.

LOU

Lou Ford, speakin'.

HOWARD'S VOICE

Howard, Lou. Remember what we were talking about this afternoon? About the- you know- the possibility of an outside party being the murderer.

LOU

Yeah...?

HOWARD'S VOICE

Well, you, we were dead right. Our hunch was right!

LOU

What? But -

HOWARD'S VOICE

We've got him, Lou! We've got the bastard cold, and-

LOU

You mean he's admitted to it?

HOWARD'S VOICE

He's not admitting to anything! He won't even talk! You can soften him up if anyone can. I think you know him, incidentally.

LOU

Yeah, w-who?

HOWARD'S VOICE

The Greek's kid, Johnnie Pappas.

LOU

I'll be right there Howard.

Lou hangs up and quickly pulls out his wallet.

He spreads the TWENTY DOLLAR BILLS on the desk.

82 INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE NIGHT

82 *

Lou enters. Hank Butterby gives him a hurt look.
Another deputy, Jeff Plummer winks and says howdy.

Hendricks bursts in and hustles Lou to his office.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Sweet talk him, know what I
mean, and get his guard
down...Oh, hell. Who am I to be
telling you what to do.

LOU

You haven't told me anything
yet. I know Johnnie's kind of
wild, but I can't see him as a
murderer.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Elmer took ten thousand bucks
out there to that chippy's
house. But when he counted it
up, five hundred dollars was
missing...

LOU

Yeah?

HOWARD HENDRICKS

The bills were all marked, see,
and the old man had already
tipped off the local banks. If
she tried to hang around town
after the payoff, he was going
to squeeze her for
blackmail...That Conway! They
don't put many past him!

LOU

It looks like they put a few
past me.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Now, Lou. There's no reason to
feel that way at all. We trusted
you. But it was Conway's show,
and- well...

LOU

Let it go. Johnnie spent some of
the money?

HOWARD HENDRICKS

A twenty. He broke it at the
drugstore last night.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

We traced back to him a couple of hours ago.

Lou goes pale

HOWARD HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

The kid could have taken the twenty in and paid himself with it. But he couldn't say he did - wouldn't say anything!

Howard grips Lou's shoulder

HOWARD HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

And here's the kick: From about nine Sunday night until eleven, his time can't be accounted for. We can't account for it, and he won't. It's a cinch Lou, anyway you look at it.

LOU

Yeah. Yeah, I guess you're right, Howard.

Lou looks a little sick

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Oh, I know how you feel, Lou. He's just a kid; you know him. But think of how that poor woman must have felt while he was beating her face in. You saw what her face looked like. Stew meat, hamburger-

LOU

Don't. For Christ's sake!

Howard droops an arm around Lou.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Sure, Lou, Sure. I'm sorry. I keep forgetting that you've never become hardened to this stuff.

LOU

Well. I guess I better get it over with.

INT. BASEMENT JAIL

A TURNKEY opens a gate for Lou, and escorts him past the regular cells to A HEAVY STEEL DOOR. Lou peers through the PEEPHOLE, but it's too dark to see anything.

GUARD

Want to borrow a flash, Lou?

LOU

I guess not. I can see all I need to.

Lou slides in and the door SLAMS SHUT. In the dark there's a squeak, and a shadow moves forward and falls into Lou's arms. Lou pats Johnnie's back.

LOU

It's all right, Johnnie Boy. Everything's going to be all right.

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

J-jesus, Lou. I kn-ew you'd come, they'd send for you. But it was so long, and I began to think maybe- maybe- you'd-

LOU

You know me better'n that, Johnnie.

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

S-sure. You got a cigarette, Lou? Those dirty bastards took all my-

LOU

Now, now. They were just doing their duty, Johnnie. Have a cigar and I'll smoke one with you.

They sit on the bunk in the dark. Lou lights their cigars - as they huff and puff the glow comes and goes from their faces.

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

How soon can I leave?

LOU

Very soon. It won't be long now. Where were you Sunday night?

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

To a picture show. What's the difference?

LOU

You know what I mean, Johnnie.
Where'd you go after the show-
between the time you left it and
started to work?

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

Well. I don't see what that's
got to do with this. I don't
ask you- where you-

LOU

You can. I intend to tell you.
I guess maybe you don't know me
as well as I thought you did,
Johnnie.

Lou puffs his cigar. Johnnie watches Lou's face glow
then fade into shadow.

LOU (CONT'D)

Maybe you'd better lie down for
a while, Johnnie. Stretch out on
the bunk, I've got a little more
talking to do.

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

But...

LOU

You'd better do that. The air
gets kind of bad with both of us
sitting up.

Johnnie lies back. Lou puffs his cigar.

LOU (CONT'D)

You didn't tell them you got
that twenty from me, Johnnie?

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

Hell, no! What do you think I
am, anyway! Piss on those guys.

LOU

Why not? Why didn't you tell
them?

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

I know you don't make a hell of
a lot of dough, if someone
should slip you a little tip-

LOU

I see. I don't take bribes,
Johnnie.

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

Who said anything about bribes?
Who said anything? I just
wasn't going to let 'em hit you
cold with it until you figured
out a- until you remembered
where you found it.

LOU

I wish you hadn't done it,
Johnnie. It was the wrong thing
to do.

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

You mean they'll be sore? To
hell with 'em.

LOU

They don't like you guys. Guys
who know what makes 'em feel
good and aren't going to be
talked out of the motion. And
the way it looks to me they're
going to be cracking down on you
even harder as time goes on...

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

Gosh, Lou. I sure enjoy hearing
you talk - but it's getting kind
of late and-

LOU

Maybe you did the right thing
Johnnie. Maybe it's best this
way. Because it would get harder
all the time, kid, and I know
how hard it's been in the past.

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

I...I don't get you.

Lou leans close and whispers something in Johnnie's
ear.

JOHNNIE PAPPAS (CONT'D)

(scared)

I...I'll bet you had a good
reason, Lou. I bet they had it
coming.

LOU

No one has it coming to them.

Lou smokes in silence.

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

Lou?

LOU

Yes, Johnnie.

JOHNNIE PAPPAS

Y-you mean I-I should take the rap for you?

LOU

No. (pause) Yes.

84 INT. BASEMENT JAIL

84

Lou slips out and the TURNKEY closes the door.

THE TURNKEY

Give you any trouble, Lou?

LOU

No, he was real peaceful.

85 INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE NIGHT

85 *

Lou stands by the door with Hendricks. Jeff and Hank eavesdrop from their desks.

LOU

Just leave him alone for an hour or so. If I haven't made him see the light, then he just ain't going to see it.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Certainly, Lou, certainly.

86 INT. LOU'S BEDROOM NIGHT

86

Lou opens the door slowly and moves quietly into the room. Lou pulls off his pants. A coin drops from his pants and rolls across the floor. Amy wakes.

Instead of yelling, she smiles. Lou scoops her up in his arms and they kiss passionately.

LATER:

Lou and Amy lay side by side, limp, almost breathless. Amy burrows her head in his shoulder and whispers in his ear.

AMY

(baby-talking)
You hurt me.

LOU

I did? Gosh, I'm sure sorry,
honey.

AMY

Hurt real bad. 'Iss one. Punch
elbow in it.

LOU

Well, gosh-

AMY

Not mad.

Amy squirms closer, hiding her face

AMY (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Bet I know something...

LOU

Yeah, honey?

AMY

About your vas-that operation.

LOU

What do you think you know?

AMY

It was after that- after Mike -
well, you know...

LOU

What about Mike?

AMY

It was then, wasn't it? Your
father got worried and...?

FLASHBACK

MIKE DEAN, grinning, climbs a ladder to the hay loft.
He reaches the top and sees:

- NAKED LEGS FLAILING

- THE BACK OF LOU'S HEAD

- THE FRIGHTENED FACE OF A FIVE YEAR OLD GIRL WITH
TEARS RUNNING SIDEWAYS OFF HER CHEEKS. The image of her
face ROTATES: It's a young girl lying sideways, crying.

LOU has the girl bent over his lap, spanking her. He
TURNS to Mike with a serene grin on his face.

88 EXT. FORD HOUSE NIGHT FLASHBACK 88

A YOUNGER SHERIFF BOB, looking sad, places MIKE in the patrol car. Mike stares at his shoes, ashamed.

On the porch, DR. FORD remains stoic, but tears well in his eyes. He glances at LOU standing nearby, and reads the guilt on the boy's face.

89 INT. LOU'S BEDROOM NIGHT 89

Amy snuggles closer and waits for Lou's response...

LOU

It was about that time..

*

AMY

Honey...

LOU

Yeah?

AMY

Why do you suppose some people like to...?

LOU

What?

AMY

D-dont some women...I'll bet you would think it was awful if-

LOU

If what?

Amy pushes up against him, on fire. She shivers and begins to cry.

AMY

D-dont, Lou. (whispers) Just do it...Don't make me ask.

SOON:

Lou stands over Amy, smacking her bare ass. Amy's still crying, but in a different way.

The phone rings. Lou picks it up.

HOWARD'S VOICE

Lou, kid, you really did it!
You really softened him up!

LOU

He signed a confession?

(CONTINUED)

HOWARD'S VOICE

Better than that, boy! He hanged himself! Did it with his own belt! That proves he was guilty. Goddamit, Lou, I wish I was there right now to shake your hand!

Lou hangs up. Phone rings again.

CHESTER CONWAY'S VOICE

Great work, Lou. Fine job. Fine! Guess you know what this means to me. Guess I made a mistake about-

LOU

Yes?

CHESTER CONWAY'S VOICE

Nothing. Don't matter now...See you, boy.

Lou hangs up. The phone rings.

SHERIFF BOB'S VOICE

I know how much you thought of that boy, Lou. I know you'd just about as soon it'd happened to yourself.

LOU

Yeah, Bob. I just about would have.

Lou hangs up, and slumps down on the bed. Amy sits up beside him.

AMY

For heavens sake! What was that all about, Lou?

Lou starts to tell her...

LOU

Oh, darling! That's wonderful. My Lou solving the case!...Will you get a reward?

LOU (CONT'D)

Why should I? Think of all the fun I had.

AMY

Oh, well...I'm sorry, Lou. You have every right to be angry at me...

89 CONTINUED: (2)

89

Amy lies down on her stomach and spreads her arms and legs.

AMY (CONT'D)

Very, very angry.

LOU'S FACE

Lou brings his hand down hard...

90 INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE DAY 90 *

Lou sits at his desk watching Bob wheeze and shuffle around the office looking for a pencil.

91 EXT OLD TOWN SQUARE DAY 91 *

LOU leaves the Sheriff's office. *

92 INT. PATROL CAR/EXT. MAX'S DINER DAY 92 *

LOU drives past the diner slowly. There's CLOSED SIGN on the door and the windows are soaped over.

93 EXT. MAX'S DINER DAY 93 *

Lou tries to peer into the window and hears BANGING and CLATTERING coming from inside. The door suddenly opens and MAX PAPPAS emerges.

THE GREEK

I'm sorry, Officer Ford. We are not open for business.

LOU

Just thought I'd drop by to-

THE GREEK

Yes?

LOU

I wanted to see you since the night it happened, but, I couldn't bring myself to do it.

THE GREEK

I am glad you did come by, Lou. I have felt, at times, he regarded you as his one true friend.

LOU

I aimed to be his friend.

(CONTINUED)

Lou nods. Max nods. Max shakes his head, and Lou shakes his.

LOU (CONT'D)

I'm sorry you're closing the diner.

THE GREEK

I am not closing it. Why should I close it?

LOU

Well, I just thought that-

THE GREEK

I am remodeling it. I am putting in leather booths and an inlaid floor. Johnnie would have liked those things.

Lou nods. Max stares at the ground.

94 EXT OILFIELDS DUSK 94 *

Lou drives out of town. *

95 EXT. DERRICK ROAD DUSK 95 *

Lou is parked on the shoulder facing the large billboard:

96 CONWAY CONSTRUCTION - BUILDING A BETTER CITY 96 *

Chester Conway's smiling face looks down. *

97 INT. PATROL CAR DUSK 97 *

Lou gazes out across the fields. *

Suddenly HEADLIGHTS dance across billboard. Lou watches a car pull up behind him in the rearview mirror.

Footsteps approach. JOE ROTHMAN opens the passenger door and climbs in.

JOE ROTHMAN

Mind if I join you? Thanks, I knew you wouldn't.

Lou doesn't say anything.

JOE ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

Well, it's a nice view all right.

(CONTINUED)

LOU

Yeah, that's quite a sign.

*

JOE ROTHMAN

I thought that must be the attraction. After all, what else is there to see aside from those blackjacks and a little white cottage? The murder cottage, I believe they call it.

LOU

What do you want?

JOE ROTHMAN

How many times were you there, Lou? How many times did you lay her?

LOU

I'm not so hard up for it that I have to lay whores.

JOE ROTHMAN

Sure. Tail like that man can live without I suppose. But what could you substitute for bullshit? Where would we be without it?

LOU

Well. I wouldn't be listening to you.

Joe smiles. Lou doesn't.

JOE ROTHMAN

You were talking with Max Pappas.

LOU

I was.

JOE ROTHMAN

Did you notice the remodeling he's doing? Where do you suppose he got that kind of money?

LOU

How the hell do I-

JOE ROTHMAN

Chester Conway's jobbing all the materials, paying off the men. No one's seen a nickel coming from Pappas.

Now Lou is listening.

(CONTINUED)

JOE ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

Doesn't it strike you as rather odd that he'd do a job for a guy whose son killed his boy?

LOU

Conway takes all the turnkey stuff he can get. He cuts a half a dozen profits instead of one.

JOE ROTHMAN

Yeah. Yeah, I suppose so...Say, you been out to Johnnie's grave?

LOU

I'm ashamed to say I haven't done it yet.

JOE ROTHMAN

I'll bet. Johnnie's buried in Sacred Ground...You know what that means, Lou?

LOU

I reckon the church didn't call it suicide.

JOE ROTHMAN

And the answer, Lou? You do have an answer?

LOU

He was young. Maybe the church figured to give him a break.

JOE ROTHMAN

Maybe. Maybe, maybe, maybe. One more thing, Lou. The big thing...On the Sunday night that Elmer and the late occupant of yon cottage got it, one of my carpenters went to a picture show at the Palace. He parked his car around in back at nine-thirty. When he came out, all four of his tires were gone.

LOU

Funny, I didn't hear anything about it.

JOE ROTHMAN

It'd been funnier if you had, Lou. Because he didn't report it. But he did mention it to some of the boys at the Tuesday joiners meeting.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOE ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

And one of them, as it turned out, had bought two of the tires from Johnnie Pappas.

Lou pulls his eyes from Joe's and stares at the dashboard.

JOE ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

Do you have a chill, Lou? Are you catching cold?

LOU

I guess I don't get you.

JOE ROTHMAN

For the birds, Lou, remember? The starving sparrows? Those tires were stolen after nine-thirty on the night of Elmer's and his lady friend's demise. We are driven to the inevitable conclusion that Johnnie was engaged in relatively innocent pursuits until well after ten o'clock.

LOU

If Johnnie had an alibi for the time of the murders, he'd have told me so, wouldn't he? He wouldn't have hanged himself.

JOE ROTHMAN

Fine, Lou. Perfect. Humpty-Dumpty Ford, sitting right on top of the labor temple. You're going to have to move, Lou. Fast. Before someone...before you upset yourself.

LOU

I was kind of figuring on leaving town. Not that I've done anything, but -

JOE ROTHMAN

I think you might just have a little trouble in leaving. I think it so strongly that I'm getting in touch with a friend of mine, one of the best criminal lawyers in the country. You've probably heard of him- Billy Boy Walker?

Lou nods

JOE ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

How soon can you leave town?

97 CONTINUED: (4)

97

LOU

I can't do it right away. You know, it would look pretty funny. Not that I've done...

Joe waves it away

JOE ROTHMAN

Don't bother. Just move. It shouldn't take you more than a couple of weeks at the outside.

LOU

All right, Joe. Two weeks. And thanks for-

JOE ROTHMAN

For what? For you, I haven't done a thing.

98 INT. PATROL CAR NIGHT 98 *

LOU'S EYES IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR watch Joe start his car pull around him. Lou waits until the taillights disappear into the night.

99 EXT. DERRICK ROAD 99

The patrol car does a tire peeling U-turn in front of the "WELCOME TO CENTRAL CITY" billboard and speeds off. *

Just as quickly it squeals to a STOP.

100 INT. PATROL CAR 100

Lou grips the wheel, sweating and breathing heavily.

LOU

Amy.

101 INT. LOU'S BEDROOM NIGHT 101

Lou lies in bed, waiting

Amy enters, they fall into an embrace.

AMY

Lou, why don't we?

LOU

Amy, why don't we?

AMY

Bread and butter

LOU

Bread and butter

(CONTINUED)

AMY

You do want to, don't you
darling? Honest and truly?

LOU

Didn't I just start to ask you?

AMY

How- when do you-

LOU

Well, I was thinking a couple of
weeks we could -

AMY

Darling! That was just what I
was going to say! What are you
thinking about, darling?

LOU

No, what are you thinking about?

AMY

Well...

LOU

Well...

TOGETHER

Why don't we elope?

They laugh and Amy throws her arms around Lou. They
whisper in each other's ear.

AMY

Bread and butter...

LOU

Bad luck, stay 'way from my
darling.

102 INT. FORD HOUSE NIGHT

102

Lou is reading a book. A thought hits him and he
smiles.

103 INT. LOU'S BEDROOM NIGHT

103

Lou holds Amy in bed

104 INT. DAD'S OFFICE NIGHT 104

Lou sits in the dark, staring into space when he hears FOOTSTEPS on the porch. He goes to the office door...

105 INT. FRONT HALLWAY NIGHT 105 *

...out into the front hall, and stands face to face with A FAMILIAR LOOKING BUM.

LOU

I'm sorry, stranger. The doctor doesn't practice any more.

STRANGER

That's okay, bud. It's just a little burn.

LOU

But I don't-

STRANGER

A cigar burn.

The stranger steps into the light and holds up his SCARRED PALM

Lou recognizes the BUM FROM THE DINER.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

We got some talking to do, bud, and I'm thirsty. You got some whiskey around?

LOU

I've got a phone around, and the jail's about six blocks away. So drag your ass out of here before you find yourself in it.

Lou places his hand on the phone

STRANGER

Go right ahead, bud. Go 'head. But it'll cost you. And it won't be just the price of one burned hand.

LOU

Let's have it.

STRANGER

I spent a year stretch on the Houston pea farm, and I seen a couple guys like you;

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STRANGER (CONT'D)

and I figured it might pay to watch you a little. So I followed you that night. I heard some of the talk you had with that labor fellow...

LOU

And I reckon it meant a hell of a lot to you, didn't it?

STRANGER

No sir, hardly meant a thing to me. Fact is, it didn't mean much to me a couple of nights later when you came up to that old shack I was camping in, and then cut cross-prairie to that little white house. You say you had some whiskey, bud?

Lou brings out a bottle.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

But I caught up on the news, bud, and those things you'd done and said suddenly meant plenty.

LOU

I haven't got much money.

STRANGER

You got this place. Must be worth a pretty tidy sum, too.

LOU

Yeah, but, hell. If I'm not going to have a window left to throw it out of, there's not much percentage in keeping you quiet.

STRANGER

You might change your mind about that.

LOU

I reckon you're in kind of a hurry-

STRANGER

You reckon right, bud.

LOU

Well, it would take quite a while The deal couldn't be swung in a hurry.

STRANGER

I don't know. I don't know much about them things.

LOU

Maybe I could swing a loan on it.

STRANGER

Huh-uh. How long will it take you to swing this loan? A week?

LOU

Well...I'd say two weeks.

STRANGER

Five thousand. Five thousand in two weeks. Two weeks from tonight. We'll call that a deal. An' I ain't no hog about money or nothin'. I get the five thousand and that's the last we'll see of each other.

LOU

Well, all right.

STRANGER

But don't get to notions about runnin' out on me.

LOU

How could I? You think I'm crazy?

STRANGER

Ask unpleasant questions, bud, and you may get unpleasant answers.

The Stranger gets up to leave.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Five grand. Two weeks from tonight.

LOU

Don't worry. You'll get it.

THE STRANGER slips off the porch and disappears into the trees. LOU watches from the door grinning.

A SWEET, WESTERN SWING LOVE SONG CONTINUES OVER:

107 INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE DAY 107 *

Lou leans back in his chair, blowing smoke rings. Jeff Plummer sits on the window ledge, studying his nails. Bob Maples sifts through papers at his desk.

LOU'S VOICE

*I went to work every working day
of those two weeks.*

Bob and Jeff feel Lou's eyes on them. They glance up and nod. Lou smiles back.

108 INT. MAX'S DINER AFTERNOON 108

Workers scurry about. Max and Lou tour the work-in-progress.

LOU'S VOICE

*I stopped by the Greek's place
every afternoon...*

Lou admires the new counter.

LOU

Johnnie would sure like it. Bet he's looking down right now, admirin' things the way we are.

Max smiles uncomfortably.

109 EXT. CHESTER CONWAY'S OFFICE 109

Chester waves for a taxi.

LOU'S VOICE

*Chester Conway had been staying
in Fort Worth, but he came back
in town one day for a few hours
and I made it my business to
hear about it.*

Lou appears out of nowhere, grabs Chester's briefcase, and hustles him into the patrol car.

110 INT. PATROL CAR - DRIVING 110

Lou drives, talking non-stop. Chester listens.

LOU

I wouldn't blame you a bit if you were put out with me, Mr Conway, because I ain't ever had much sense and I guess I've made a hell of a mess of things. I knew a woman like that just couldn't be much good. I shoulda done like you said and gone there with Elmer, if cussing me out will help any or if you want to get my job - and I know you can get it - I won't hold any grudge.

Chester's too dumbfounded to respond.

111 EXT. AIRPORT DAY 111

The patrol car cuts across the tarmac toward a waiting prop plane.

112 INT. PATROL CAR 112

Lou pulls up to the plane and throws it in park. He turns to Chester.

LOU

I never got to know Elmer real well, but in a way kinda I felt like I did. I'd see him from a distance some times and I'd think it was you. I guess maybe that's one reason I wanted to see you today. It was kinda like seein' Elmer again, I could sorta feel for a minute that he was still here an' nothing had ever happened. An'...

Chester leaps out and strides towards the plane without looking back. He climbs the steps to the plane, moving slower now, dragging his feet. He pauses in the doorway; turns to face Lou...and WAVES.

LOU shakes his head sadly.

113 INT. FORD LIVING ROOM NIGHT 113

Lou reads the paper in his bathrobe. Amy serves him a plate of pie and coffee

LOU'S VOICE

*Amy came to see me every day.
She always bought some cake or
pie or something,*

Amy eases onto a chair, wincing a little.

LOU'S VOICE (CONT'D)

*And she had to take it kind of
easy when she sat down.*

Lou smiles. Amy giggles.

114 INT. LOU'S BATHROOM NIGHT

114

Amy soaks in a hot bath. Lou sits on the closed toilet, smoking.

LOU'S VOICE

*She'd take a bath and I'd sit
and watch her and think how much
she looked like her.*

JOYCE lies naked in the tub. She looks up and smiles.

115 INT. LOU'S BEDROOM NIGHT

115

Lou holds Amy close

LOU'S VOICE

*And afterwards she'd lie in my
arms, and I could almost fool
myself into thinking it was her.*

Lou kisses JOYCE'S FACE. And then it's AMY again.

LOU'S VOICE (CONT'D)

*But it wasn't her, and for that
matter, it wouldn't have made
any difference if it had been.
I'd just be right back where I
started.*

AMY sleeps. Close on LOU'S EYES, watching.

116 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL

116

Lou and Amy sitting in the patrol car watching the baseball team practice.

LOU'S VOICE

*I took her everywhere she wanted
to go; did everything she wanted
to do. It wasn't any trouble.*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

- 116 CONTINUED: 116
- LOU'S VOICE (CONT'D)
She didn't want to go much or do much.
- 117 EXT. TRAIN DEPOT 117
- Amy and Lou sit holding hands, watching the approaching train.
- LOU'S VOICE
For the first time in I don't remember when my mind was really free.
- 118 EXT. CENTRAL CITY DAY 118 *
- Amy and Lou sit walk down the modern street window shopping. *
- Amy and Lou having a drink in a diner. *
- Amy and Lou (at night) going to the cinema. *
- 119 INT. DAD'S STUDY 119
- The tic-tock of the old clock's SWAYING PENDULUM fills the silence.
- Lou holds Amy on his lap in Dad's chair, his head resting on her bosom.
- LOU'S VOICE
I'd sit there listening to the ticking of the clock, listening to her heart beat with it, and I'd wonder why it had to tick so fast; I'd wonder why.
- Tic-tock becomes thump-thump-thump of her heart.
- 120 INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE SATURDAY, APRIL 5TH AFTERNOON 120 *
- Lou is talking to Bob
- LOU
Amy and me got something mighty important to do tonight, and I won't be getting in Monday...or Tuesday either.
- Lou winks. Bob frowns.
- SHERIFF MAPLES
Well, now. Well, now, you don't think maybe that-

Bob forces a smile and pumps Lou's hand.

SHERIFF MAPLES (CONT'D)

That's real good news, Lou.
Real good. I know you'll be
happy together.

LOU

I'll try not to lay off too
long.

SHERIFF MAPLES

Go on and buss Amy for me, and
don't you worry about nothing.

121 EXT. FORD HOUSE SUNSET

121

Bucolic details of Lou's front yard: The setting sun
blinking through the leaves of the giant oak tree; long
shadows dancing across the yard; the old rail fence
bordering the dirt road beyond it.

Out on the road, an older couple stroll past arm in
arm.

122 INT. AMY STANTON'S BEDROOM EARLY EVENING

122

Amy stands in front of the mirror, frowning and
smiling, pouting and tossing her head, studying herself
frontwards and sideways.

Happy enough with what she sees Amy darts from the
mirror and grabs her suitcases

123 INT. FORD KITCHEN EARLY EVENING

123

Lou stands in the kitchen - shirtless. Waiting.

Amy bursts into the room lugging her suitcases. She
drops one of her cases and gives it a kick.

AMY

Well! I don't suppose it would
occur to you to give me a little
help! I'll swear, Lou Ford!
Sometimes I think- And you're
not even ready yet! You're
always telling about how slow I
am, and here you stand, on your
own wedding night of all things,
and you haven't-

She stops suddenly and shuts her mouth tight. Lou
listens to the kitchen clock tick ten times.

AMY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry darling. I didn't mean-

LOU

Don't say anything more, Amy.
Just don't say anything more.

Amy smiles and moves towards him with her arms out.

AMY

I won't darling. I won't ever say anything like that again. But I do want to tell you how much-

LOU

Sure, you want to pour your heart out to me....

And he hits her in her guts as hard as he can. His fist goes all the way to her spine and she flops forward like she is hinged. Her hat falls off. She topples over onto her back, her eyes bulging, her head rolling from side to side. Lou puts his hand into her blouse and rips it down to the waist. He jerks her skirt over her head and she shakes a makes a funny sound like she is trying to laugh.

He sits down and opens the newspaper but his eyes are drawn to her as she moves on the floor. Her hand brushes his boot, touches his ankle, and he stands up and moves away from her.

Amy's FINGERS slide and crawl across the floor until she grabs hold of her PURSE. She drags it down inside her skirt.

Lou sits and returns to his paper. Amy gulps and wheezes. Lou looks up at the clock and frowns.

SOUND of someone tugging at the front door.

Lou opens the door. The STRANGER enters. Lou hands him the roll of MARKED BILLS.

LOU

Stick this in your pocket. I've got the rest back in the kitchen.

Lou leads him down to the hall to the kitchen...

125 INT. KITCHEN

125

...then moves aside as they enter. The Stranger practically steps on Amy.

The Stranger's eyes roll in his head and his lips shake like he's playing a juice-harp

STRANGER

Yeeeeee!..

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Yeeeeee!

The Stranger keeps 'yeeeeeing' and shivering and doing a screwy dance with his hands.

Lou doubles over laughing.

Lou's face goes dark

LOU

You son-of-a-bitch! I was going to marry that poor little girl!

Lou, mad as hell, grabs the butcher knife from under the newspaper, lunges for the Stranger, but SLIPS in Amy's blood. The knife FLIES from his hand and he falls flat on his back.

Lou's face is inches from Amy's. He turns and looks into her dead, staring EYES.

The Stranger RUNS.

126 EXT. FORD HOUSE NIGHT

126

The Stranger flies out the front door, down the steps, and across the yard 'yeeeeeing' all the way.

A beat later Lou emerges holding the KNIFE.

127 EXT. STREET NIGHT

127 *

The Stranger runs down the middle of the road - sort of skipping rather than running - tossing his head, greasy hair flying, his hands doing that funny floppy dance.

STRANGER

YEEEEEEE! YEEEEEEE! YEEEEEEE!

A half-block behind, Lou's running as fast as his boots will let him.

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED:

127

LOU
MUR-DER! Stop him, stop him! He
killed Amy Stanton! MUR-DER...!

Along the street, windows start BANGING UP and doors
SLAM OPEN. PEOPLE start running down off their porches.

128 EXT. STREET - BUSINESS DISTRICT

128

Pedestrians and shopkeepers are drawn to the commotion.

STRANGER (O.S.)
YEEEEEEE! YEEEEEEE! YEEEEEEE!

The Stranger jerks and flops past them, Lou close on
his heels.

LOU
MUR-DER! Stop him! He killed
Amy Stanton...!

VISITOR
YEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

Cars pull to the curb, clearing the road.

Up ahead in the intersection, A ROADSTER swings
sideways and stops. JEFF PLUMMER climbs out holding a
RIFLE.

He leans back against the fender and taking his time,
easy-like, he brings the gun to his shoulder.

DEPUTY JEFF PLUMMER
HALT!

The Stranger panics and skips toward the sidewalk. JEFF
fires and hits the Stranger in the knee. He stumbles
but gets up again, jerking and flopping his hands, and
reaching into his clothes....

Jeff fires three times. The Stranger drops with the
first shot, but all three get him.

LOU catches up and falls on the body, beating it with
his fists, screaming and babbling. LOCALS struggle to
pull him off.

A DOCTOR pushes through the crowd to Lou, and SEDATES
HIM with a shot in the arm.

129 INT. LOU'S BEDROOM MORNING

129

Lou wakes, looks around. He's alone.

130 INT. BATHROOM DAY 130 *

Lou gulps water. Throws up in the sink.

131 INT. KITCHEN DAY 131 *

Lou enters, dressed and scrubbed. The mess from the night before has been cleaned up. Lou puts on the coffee and hears a noise from the porch.

132 EXT. PORCH DAY 132 *

Lou opens the front door. Jeff Plummer is sitting on the steps, his back to the porch post. He slants a glance at Lou without turning his head.

LOU

Gosh, Jeff. How long you been out here?

DEPUTY JEFF PLUMMER

Reckon I been here quite a spell.

LOU

Well, come on in! I was just-

DEPUTY JEFF PLUMMER

Kinda like it where I am. Air smells real good. Been smellin' real good, anyways.

LOU

Has there...hasn't anyone been-?

DEPUTY JEFF PLUMMER

Told 'em you wasn't up to it. Told 'em you was all broke up about Bob Maples.

LOU

Bob?

DEPUTY JEFF PLUMMER

Shot hisself around midnight last night. Yes, sir, pore ol' Bob killed hisself, and I reckon I know just how he felt.

And still he doesn't look at Lou.

133 INT. HALLWAY DAY 133 *

133 CONTINUED:

133

Lou closes the door and leans against it.

134 INT. BEDROOM DAY

134 *

A SAD WESTERN SWING BALLAD OVER:

Lou stretched out on the bed, smoking a cigar.

Howard Hendricks enters the room, and pulls up a chair.
Jeff Plummer leans in the doorway.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Last night's events--these recent
events- I don't like them a bit.

LOU

Don't hardly see how you could
like 'em.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

You know what I mean! Now take
this drifter you'd have us
believe robbed and raped Miss
Stanton...

LOU watches HOWARD'S MOUTH and drowns out the sound of
his voice, hearing ONLY THE MUSIC:

The action continues as pantomime, cutting between
HOWARD ranting and counting off facts on his fingers -
and LOU calmly shooting holes his evidence. JEFF'S eyes
follow the action back and forth.

HOWARD HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

Four- five murders; six counting
poor Bob Maples who staked
everything he had on you, and
you sit there explaining and
smiling. You aren't bothered a
bit. How can you do it, Ford?
How can-

LOU

Somebody has to keep their head.
You got some more questions,
Howard?

*

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Yes. I've got one. How did
Miss Stanton get those bruises?

THE MUSIC STOPS.

HOWARD HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

The same kind of bruises we found on the body of the Lakeland woman. How did she get them, Ford?

Lou's face goes blank.

LOU

Gosh, you got me there, Howard. How would I know?

HOWARD HENDRICKS

How? Why goddam you! You'd been screwing that gal for years! You-

LOU

Don't say that.

DEPUTY JEFF PLUMMER

No, don't say that.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

All right, I won't say it! I don't need to say it. That girl had never gone with anyone but you!

LOU

And Amy just took it huh, Howard? I bruised her up, and she went right ahead seeing me? Got all ready to marry me? You sure didn't know Amy Stanton.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Maybe, you didn't know her. Not as well as...

LOU

Yeah?

Howard pulls a LETTER from his pocket.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

This was in her purse. Apparently she intended to have you stop at a restaurant up the road and have you read it while she was in the rest room. Now, it begins, 'Lou Darling...'

LOU

Let me have it.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

I'll read-

(CONTINUED)

DEPUTY JEFF PLUMMER

It's his letter. Let him have it.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Very well.

Lou takes the letter and starts to read.

AMY'S VOICE

*Lou, Darling:
Now you know why I had you stop
here, and why I've excused
myself from the table....*

135 INT. BUS STOP RESTAURANT LOU'S IMAGINATION 135

Amy enters the restroom. Lou sits in a booth reading the letter.

AMY'S VOICE

*It was to allow you to read
this, the things I couldn't
somehow otherwise say to you...*

LOU'S VOICE

Blah...blah...blah...

136 INT. RESTROOM 136

Amy peaks out the door: Lou is still reading. She closes the door and leans against it for support.

AMY'S VOICE

*Lou, I beg you please, please,
please not to take it the wrong
way. But I'm afraid-are you in
trouble? I don't want to ask you
more than that, but I do want
you to believe that whatever it
is, even if it's what I-
whatever it is, Lou, I'm on your
side.*

Amy moves to the sink and stares at her reflection in the mirror, frightened and nervous.

AMY'S VOICE (CONT'D)

*I love you (are you tired of my
saying that?) I know you'd never
knowingly do anything wrong. So
even if it should involve being
separated for a while, a long
while, let's - we'll make it
all right, you and I together.*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED:

136

AMY'S VOICE (CONT'D)

*If you'll only tell me. If
you'll just let me help you.*

137 INT. BUS STOP RESTAURANT

137

Lou flips yet another page...

AMY'S VOICE

*I hope that when I come back to
the table, you'll still be
there. But if you feel that you
can't ...then just leave my bags
inside the door. I have money
with me and I can get a job in
some other town...*

138 INT. RESTROOM

138

Amy cries softly into a handkerchief.

AMY'S VOICE

*I've always loved you and I
always will, what ever happens.
Always, darling. Forever and
forever.
Always and forever,
Amy*

139 INT. LOU'S BEDROOM

139

Lou folds the letter and tosses it back to Howard.

LOU

She sure was a talky girl. Sweet
but awful talky.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Th-th-that's all you have to
say?

LOU

You starting to stutter, Howard?
You ought to practice talking
with a pebble in your mouth.

*

HOWARD HENDRICKS

You dirty son-of-a-bitch!

LOU

Don't call me that.

DEPUTY JEFF PLUMMER

No, don't call him that. Don't
never say anything 'bout a man's
mother.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

You killed that little girl. She
as good as says so!

LOU

She wrote it down after I killed
her, huh? That's quite a trick.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

You killed them, Ford. You
killed them all.

LOU

You see that opening there
behind you? Well, that's a
door, Howard, in case you were
wonderin', and I can't think of
a thing to keep you and Mister
Plummer from walking through it.

DEPUTY JEFF PLUMMER

I sure liked Bob Maples. I sure
liked that little Miss Amy.

LOU

That door, I wish you'd close it
real careful. I'm suffering from
shock, and I might have a
relapse.

Lou lies down on bed.

HOWARD HENDRICKS

Now, Jeff.

Jeff holds a gun to Lou's head.

DEPUTY JEFF PLUMMER

You right sure you ain't coming
with us? You don't reckon you
could change your mind?

140

INT ASYLUM CORRIDOR DAY

140

*

Lou is walked down the long echoing corridor, escorted
by two nurses.

*

*

141

INT. ASYLUM CELL DAY

141

Lou sits on his bed staring up at a row of SMALL SLOTS
high on the wall.

*

Close on the slots: EYES stare back.

142 INT. ASYLUM CELL NIGHT 142

Lou lies on his bed staring at the ceiling

The lights dim. There's a click and a flash and a large PROJECTED IMAGE OF AMY STANTON stares down at Lou from the far wall.

One by one, snapshots of Amy pop up on the wall, beginning at age 15 and moving up through the years.

Lou watches the slide show, fascinated.

THE LIGHTS COME UP.

EYES peer through the slots in the wall.

143 INT. ASYLUM CELL NEXT MORNING 143

A NURSE places a tray inside the door. Lou reclines on the bed looking relaxed.

LOU

Will they be showing the pictures of my girl tonight?

The nurse turns to see if he's serious

LOU (CONT'D)

Well tell them not to do so fast. I hardly get to see her before she's gone.

The nurse backs out of the room. Lou grins at the sound of her heels clicking quickly down the hall.

144 INT. ASYLUM CELL NIGHT 144

Lou lies in his **bed**, staring at the ceiling. *

145 INT. ASYLUM CORRIDOR MORNING 145

We hear him before we see him

BILLY BOY WALKER (O.S.)

Where is he? What have you done with the poor man? Have you torn out his tongue?

BILLY BOY WALKER, short and pot-bellied in a baggy old suit and big floppy hat rounds the corner, yelling at the top of his lungs.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY BOY WALKER (CONT'D)
 Have you roasted his poor broken
 body over slow fires?

A NURSE, TWO ATTENDANTS, AND A DOCTOR scurry along
 beside him trying to shush him.

Billy Boy arrives Lou's door, and beats on it.

BILLY BOY WALKER (CONT'D)
 Mr. Ford! My poor man! Can you
 hear me? Have they punctured
 you eardrums? Are you too weak
 to cry out? Be brave, my poor
 fellow!

THE NURSE scrambles to unlock to the door. Billy Boy
 Walker rushes in and flings his arms around Lou,
 patting his head.

BILLY BOY WALKER (CONT'D)
 Poor man.

THE DOCTOR and ATTENDANTS quickly help Lou into his
 clothes

BILLY BOY WALKER (CONT'D)
 Fiends! Will you not clothe this
 poor tortured flesh, this broken
 creature that was once a man
 built in God's own image?

He shoves the night-can under the DOCTOR'S nose

*

The Doc shakes his head, then nods. Billy Boy takes
 Lou by the arm.

BILLY BOY WALKER (CONT'D)
 Haste Mr. Ford!

Billy Boy pushes Lou out of door.

Billy's car roars out onto the highway, past a sign
 reading:

WARNING! WARNING!

Hitchhikers may be escaped

LUNATICS!

147 INT. BILLY BOY'S CAR

147

Billy Boy bites off a plug of tobacco.

BILLY BOY WALKER
Dirty habit. Got it young,
though, and I reckon I'll keep
it.

He offers some to Lou. Lou declines.

BILLY BOY WALKER (CONT'D)
You know somethin' Mr. Ford?
There wasn't a bit of sense in
what I did back there.

LOU
No.

BILLY BOY WALKER
No, sir, not a bit. I didn't get
you free, Mr. Ford. They let me
have a writ. That's why you're
here.

LOU
I figured it would be that way.

BILLY BOY WALKER
You understand? They're not
letting you go; they've gone too
far to start backing water.

LOU
I understand.

BILLY BOY WALKER
They've got something?
Something you can't beat?

LOU
They've got it.

BILLY BOY WALKER
Maybe you'd better tell me what
it is.

LOU
There's nothing you can do.
You'd be wasting your time, and
you might get Joe and yourself
in a fix.

BILLY BOY WALKER
I reckon I might be a better
judge of some things than you
are, Mr. Ford.

(CONTINUED)

LOU

I just don't want anyone else to get hurt.

BILLY BOY WALKER

Good enough. I sure hate to give up, though. Never got in the habit of giving up, I reckon.

Lou glances in the side view mirror: sees a COUNTY CAR following them.

LOU

You're not giving up anything Mr. Walker. It's been lost for a long time.

They ride in silence for awhile.

BILLY BOY WALKER

I wonder if you'd like to tell me your story Mr. Ford. You don't need to, you understand, but it might be useful to me. I might be able to help someone else.

Lou stares ahead, ignores the question.

BILLY BOY WALKER (CONT'D)

I never had any legal schooling, Mr. Ford, picked up my law by reading in an attorney's office. All I ever had in the way of higher education was a couple years in agricultural college, and that was pretty much a plain waste of time. I just learned two things there at that college, Mr. Ford that was ever of any use to me. One was that I couldn't do any worse than the people that were in the saddle, so maybe I'd better try pulling 'em down and riding myself. The other was a definition I got out of the agronomy books, and I reckon it was even more important than the first: *A weed is a plant out of place.* Means the name you put to a thing depends on where you stood and where it stands. I find a hollyhock in my cornfield, and it's a weed. I find it in my yard, and it's a flower. You're in my yard, Mr. Ford.

Lou considers Billy Boy for a long moment, then starts in on his tale...

LOU'S VOICE

So I told him how it went, the whens and whys and whos of it all.

LONELY WESTERN SWING WALTZ OVER A MONTAGE OF FACES FROM LOU'S PAST...

DOCTOR FORD'S HORRIFIED EXPRESSION as he walks in on Lou whipping the housekeeper

MIKE'S WIDE EYES peering into the loft at Lou spanking the little girl

JOYCE'S SHOCKED FACE as Lou whirls her around and gives her a quick one-two, bouncing her off the wall

ELMER'S DUMB GAPE as he takes a bullet in the mouth

JOHNNIE'S BULGING EYES as Lou's belt tightens around his neck

AMY'S HEAD snapping forward from a punch to the stomach

THE STRANGER'S CONTORTED FACE, eyes rolling, lips quivering and YEEE-EEING

BOB'S DRUNKEN FACE on the train back from Fort Worth

SHERIFF MAPLES

It's- it's always lightest j- just before the dark.

LOU'S VOICE

Hell, don't you see? Don't you get it?

148 INT. BILLY'S CAR - EXT. FORD HOUSE

148

Lou and Billy sit in the parked car.

LOU

They had it right from the beginning. I'd let it go because I had to. But I reckon you've known the truth all along.

Billy Boy nods, and spits out the window.

BILLY BOY WALKER (cont'd)

That's the whole thing huh?

LOU

That's it.

(CONTINUED)

They sit in silence staring out at the Ford House.

BILLY BOY WALKER (cont'd)
 Would you care to have me come
 in for a while, Mr. Ford?

LOU
 I don't think it'd be smart. I
 got an idea it's not going to be
 very long, now.

BILLY BOY WALKER
 I'm sorry, Mr. Ford. I'd hoped,
 if I couldn't do any better, to
 be taking you away from here
 with me.

Lou shakes Billy's hand.

BILLY BOY WALKER (CONT'D)
 You said you didn't want anyone
 else to get hurt. You meant it?

LOU
 I meant it. You can't hurt
 people that are already dead.

Lou nods to Billy, and gets out.

149 INT. FORD HOUSE DAY 149

The clock on the wall

150 INT. DAD'S LABORATORY 150

LOU'S HANDS swipe at boxes on shelves, smash bottles to
 the floor LOU'S BOOTS stamp and kick at the wreckage.

151 INT. DAD'S OFFICE 151

A BOTTLE OF NITRIC ACID is splashed across books lining
 the shelves. The leather bindings smoke and curl.

152 INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOMS 152

Lou goes from room to room splashing GASOLINE from a
 can.

LOU'S HAND'S drip wax from lit candles, and stick them
 to the floor.

153 INT. KITCHEN

153

Lou emerges from the basement and tosses the empty gas can aside. He grabs a carving knife from a drawer and sits at the table.

Lou smokes and practices lowering his arm and catching the knife as it slides out.

Lou hears something and stares at the ceiling

Lou grins

154 EXT. FORD HOUSE DAY

154

Deputies gripping Winchesters creep behind bushes and trees. Conway's men crawl low around the house, loading pistols and rifles.

155 INT. KITCHEN

155

Lou finishes his last cigarette, watching the red-gray ash burn down to his fingers.

He hears a car door slam. Then feet on the porch and the front door creak open.

Lou places his cigarette in a saucer and waits.

CONWAY, HENDRICKS AND JEFF PLUMMER enter the kitchen. They fall back letting her move ahead. *

JOYCE LAKELAND...

Steps forward, her neck in a cast and her face a white mask of gauze and tape. Nothing much shows but eyes and lips. Her walk is jerky and stiff-backed.

JOYCE LAKELAND

(struggling to
speak)

Lou...I didn't...

LOU

Sure, I didn't figure you had,
baby.

She moves towards Lou. He stands, his face twisting into a manic smile.

JOYCE LAKELAND

...this, Lou. Not like this...

(CONTINUED)

LOU

Sure, you can't. Don't hardly
see how you could.

JOYCE LAKELAND

...not anyway without...

Lou bursts out laughing

LOU

Two hearts that beat as one. T-
wo-ha, ha, ha, -two-ha, ha, ha,
ha, ha- two- J-jesus Chri- ha,
ha, ha, ha, ha, - two hearts...

Lou whips the KNIFE into his hand and lunges at her

TIME SLOWS

The knife point moves slo-mo towards Joyce's chest

SMOKE pours up through the floor. GUNS are pulled.
TRIGGERS are squeezed. MOUTHS yell.

Bullets rip into Lou as the kitchen erupts in a BALL OF
FIRE. And he seems to erupt and explode, laughing and
yelling as the flames consume him. The whole house on
fire, and the deputies race around outside in panic
outsie and a jaunty Spade Cooley tune adds a comic air
to the mayhem, and the black smoke gradually fills the
whole screen

THE END