

"The Phantom Limb"

An Original Screenplay

by

Kevin W. Koehler

Contact:
Brent Lilley
Foursight Entertainment
(310)358-3150

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Through changing shapes, through devious ways, *
By noon or night, through cloud or flame, *
My heart has followed all my days *
Something I cannot name. *

- Don Marquis, *The Name* *

OVER BLACK: *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
The first time I considered
amputating my left arm was the
night Vicki asked that I, well... *
come through the back door. *
(beat)
Sexually.

FADE IN

CLOSE ON A MASKED FACE

His features cloaked by women's NYLONS, the NOCTURNAL
PREDATOR eyes:

A SUBURBAN MIDDLE-CLASS HOME

DOCTOR CAIRO (V.O.)
That was the first time you thought
about cutting off the arm?

Your standard Southern California craftsman. The SILHOUETTE
OF A WOMAN undresses behind a closed window shade.

SUPER TITLE: THE PRESENT...SORT OF *

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (32), strikingly handsome, considers his
girlfriend's sexual proposition. She kneels on all fours, *
her buttocks high.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
I've *thought* about cutting off the
arm for as long as I can remember.
That night was the first time I
considered *doing* it.

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE THE SUBURBAN MIDDLE-CLASS HOME

The Nocturnal Predator tries the front door - it's locked.
Helpfully, a FRONT WINDOW beckons, slightly ajar. *

There's a NOISE - it's an approaching car. The Predator
takes refuge behind some bushes. *

PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.)

Did you comply with her sexual
request? *

IN THE STREET *

A vintage POLICE CAR cruises past. 1955 Chrysler Imperial
with white wall tires and tailfins. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.) *

Sure. *

The OFFICERS inside see nothing of concern and drive on. *

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

John David Booth and Vicki lie in bed after consummating
their back door sex act. He spoons her sleeping form. But
he just can't get comfortable. *

DOCTOR CAIRO (V.O.)

How'd you feel about it? *

The right arm drapes over her naturally, but the other arm -
either raised over his head or jammed awkwardly between them -
it just doesn't seem to fit anywhere.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

A JANITOR mops the floor, his attention drawn to THE SOUNDS
OF FUCKING that can be heard from behind: *

A PEBBLE-GLASS DOOR *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.) *

Jake, I guess. But you know how
these things escalate. *

It's helpfully labelled "*JOHN DAVID BOOTH - PRIVATE
DETECTIVE*"

*
*

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN DAVID BOOTH'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Booth engages in some spirited sex with a BEAUTIFUL BRUNETTE while Vicki lends a helping hand. The exercise quickly grows tiresome for him - with each thrust comes diminishing returns.

*
*
*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
Satisfaction is relative, doc.

*
*

With an exasperated sigh, the girlfriend reaches into a desk drawer, withdrawing a STRAP-ON DILDO CONTRAPTION

*
*

LATER

Booth is nothing more than a spectator. His eyes move to:

*

SOME PAINTING HANGING ON THE WALL

*

An unpretentious, Norman Rockwell-esque bit of Americana kitsch. A tire swing overhangs an idyllic pond, everything bathed in a hazy glow of nostalgia.

*
*
*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
Dead to the pleasures of yesterday.

*
*

The painting RATTLES in rhythm to unseen sex acts.

*

CUT TO:

*

EXT. SUBURBAN BACKYARD - DAY

*

A child's BIRTHDAY PARTY in full swing. TEN-YEAR-OLD BOYS run past Booth dressed as Cowboys and Indians.

*
*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
You find yourself committing acts
you didn't know existed, much less
had a name.

*
*

Vicki makes flirtacious small-talk with a CIRCUS CLOWN.

*

CUT TO:

THE NOCTURNAL PREDATOR

He stealthily creeps down the hallway, pushing the bedroom door open. Inside:

A WOMAN

She's dressed in her pajamas, her back to us. The Predator reaches into his waistband, raising a KITCHEN KNIFE.

NOCTURNAL PREDATOR
Scream and you get the big sleep.

She turns - it's Booth's Girlfriend. This is VICKI, and her look of horror is quickly replaced by anger. *

VICKI
Jesus, John, is that my good hose?

Booth lifts the nylons off his face - he sweats profusely.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I didn't look at the tag.

VICKI
Don't you know how much those cost? *

Vicki shakes her head before dropping her pajama bottoms. *
She bends over, leaning her hands against the bed. *

Booth regards her for a few long seconds. She peers back over her shoulder.

VICKI
What are you waiting for? Carry on, Scary Man.

Booth pulls the nylons back over his face and advances.

DOCTOR CAIRO (V.O.)
And it was after one of these subsequent sex acts that the incident occurred?

BACK TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Booth spoons his girlfriend once more. He still has trouble getting comfortable.

DOCTOR CAIRO (V.O.)
That you tried to take off the arm?

POV - BOOTH

God damn that useless left arm.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Wouldn't necessarily connect the
two, Doctor Cairo.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOOTH'S SUBURBAN MIDDLE-CLASS HOME - LATER

A neighbor's DOG barks as Booth watches his garage door rise.

INSIDE THE GARAGE - LATER

Booth steps toward a CIRCULAR SAW. It GLOWS unnaturally in
the moonlight.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
My sex life has become prolific.

*

He switches it on.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
Anything I do will inevitably take
place just prior or afterwards.

*

CLOSE ON BOOTH'S LEFT ARM

He gradually lowers it down into the path of the circular
blade.

DOCTOR CAIRO (V.O.)
You wouldn't draw any special
significance in the timing?

WIDE ON THE GARAGE

Blood SPRAYS and Booth SCREAMS right before he PASSES OUT,
dropping to the hard floor.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - LATER

Strapped to a gurney, Booth fades in and out of
consciousness.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
Seemed as good an occasion as any.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR CAIRO'S WAITING ROOM - DAY

Booth, his left arm bandaged, reads a WOMEN'S FASHION MAGAZINE. He wears a wrinkled grey suit without tie, as he will most days - perpetually under and over dressed for any occasion. *

The FEMALE RECEPTIONIST eyes him flirtatiously. Booth smiles out of politeness - he's used to attention from the ladies. *

The door to the Psychiatrist's office OPENS and a MALE TRANSVESTITE exits through it. *

The Psychiatrist - DOCTOR CAIRO - appears at the open door, waving us in. We see the waiting room is packed with transvestites - Booth is the only patient dressed gender appropriate.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR CAIRO'S OFFICE - LATER

Booth shakes some pills into his mouth, swallowing them dry before lighting a cigarette. *

DOCTOR CAIRO
You can't smoke in here.

Booth pays him no mind. After a brief contest of wills, Cairo reaches into a desk draw, tossing an ashtray at Booth.

DOCTOR CAIRO
In the psychiatric community, we call it B.I.I.D. - Body Integrity Identity Disorder. The desire to amputate one's own limb.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
You have a name for it?

DOCTOR CAIRO
We have names for everything.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
So what do we do now?

DOCTOR CAIRO

About?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

About getting this arm taken care of.

DOCTOR CAIRO

We don't take care of arms here, Mister Booth.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

You take care of cocks though, right?

DOCTOR CAIRO

I'm sorry?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Sex changes. Some sissy likes to play dress-up, 'cept this time he wants to play it for keeps.

DOCTOR CAIRO

It's rather more complicated than that.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Just need a doctor's note from you to do it. Do I misunderstand how the process works?

DOCTOR CAIRO

Surgical amputation of healthy limbs isn't something we write doctor's notes for. You have a *disorder*, Mister Booth, treated with medication and therapy, not a bone saw.

*
*
*
*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Is that how you talk to the daisies in the waiting room?

DING. Time's up.

DOCTOR CAIRO

I apologize for being short, Mister Booth. Trust me when I say it is only for your own good. What you ask of me simply cannot be done.

*

Cairo scribbles in his pad and tears off a prescription.

*

DOCTOR CAIRO

You have two arms. The sooner you
accept this truth, the happier
you'll be.

*

CUT TO:

EXT. BOOTH'S SUBURBAN MIDDLE-CLASS HOME - THAT EVENING

Booth pulls his car into the driveway, a rusty '58 Porsche
356 Speedster Coupe. Once upon a time, it probably looked
quite nice, stylish even, but that was a long time ago.

He grabs some letters from the MAILBOX. For the first time,
he notices the Circus Clown sitting on his front porch.

*

Booth unlocks the door.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

You're early, Clown.

*

The two enter the house as we...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

*

Booth stands at an AUTOMATIC TELLER MACHINE, slipping a
WITHDRAWAL SLIP into a slot on its face. This is not like
any ATM we've ever seen before.

*

*

*

Its metallic, low-fi exterior holds --

*

WITHIN

*

-- a MIDGET BANKER seated at his own tiny desk. He takes
Booth's withdrawal slip and counts out CURRENCY.

*

*

ON THE STREET

*

Booth grabs his money from the slot.

*

MIDGET BANKER (O.S.)

*

Have a nice day, Mister Booth.

*

He starts off...

*

MIDGET BANKER (O.S.)
And say hello to Vicki for me.

WIDE ON THE STREET

All manner of 1940s and 1950s CARS shoot by on the road.
Strangely, some have TROLLEY POLES branching from their
hoods, rigged to a network of unshielded overhead wire.

A cable car system...but with automobiles. These wires are
ever-present - above every street, inside parking garages,
even extending down freeways.

CLOSE ON THE BUMPER OF ONE OF THESE ELECTRIC CARS

A sticker familiar to Hybrid drivers: CAR POOL ACCESS OK,
CLEAN AIR VEHICLE.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. STARBUCKS - LATER

A vintage, illustrated sign announces this as the coffee shop
we're all familiar with. But not like this.

Like everything else, it's the present filtered through the
1950s. Pristine, silver percolators brew today's two
solitary selections: regular and decaf.

BARISTAS in white paper hats ring up customers on a
mechanical cash register. Starbucks coffee beans in tin cans
line the counter.

At tables, beret-wearing HOPEFUL WRITERS clatter away on
their Apple brand TYPEWRITERS.

Booth eyes a GLASS CASE and the food choices held within.
Frou-frou salads and panini have been replaced by meatloaf
sandwiches, deviled eggs, and tuna-potato chip casserole.

CUT TO:

EXT. MODERNIST RANCH HOME - DAY - ESTABLISHING

A single-level, pastel blue house with typical mid-century,
unadorned blandness. Booth's car sits in the driveway.

INSIDE

Porcelain DOLLS with silk hair and lace dresses sit at
attention on shelves. FIGURINES of children, their eyes
wide, posed to inspire in their precious moments.

MRS. PANGBURN (O.S.)
I really do not know how else to
account for it, Mister Booth.
Someone is breaking into my home
while I am gone and moving them
around.

Booth turns one over in his hands. A BOY carrying ANOTHER on
his back. Engraved it: *He's not heavy, he's my brother.*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
The figurines?

He returns it beside the others, its place easily delineated
by a circle of dust. An OLDER WOMAN (55) reaches out,
turning it slightly to replicate its former position.

This is MRS. PANGBURN

MRS. PANGBURN
My dolls. My figurines. Items in
the cupboard. All moved.

THE KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Mrs. Pangburn yanks out a drawer of SILVERWARE, clean,
organized.

MRS. PANGBURN
See?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Were your utensils in a different
drawer?

She points to the forks.

MRS. PANGBURN
See here. This is where the spoons
used to be. And here...that's
where the knives go. It's all
wrong.

MOMENTS LATER

Booth stares into her cupboards, the rows of non-perishable
foods. Nothing looks out of the ordinary.

The older woman clutches his shoulder.

MRS. PANGBURN	*
All wrong.	*
Booth shuts the cupboard.	*
JOHN DAVID BOOTH	*
How about you show me this mirror.	*
THE BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER	*
Booth and Mrs. Pangburn stare into a MIRROR.	*
MRS. PANGBURN	*
It's been altered.	*
JOHN DAVID BOOTH	*
How so?	*
MRS. PANGBURN	*
Don't you see? Someone has warped	*
the mirror. To make me look...	*
(whispers)	*
...wider.	*
Booth looks at the mirror with a new curiosity. In truth,	*
she could lose a few pounds.	*
JOHN DAVID BOOTH	*
Why would someone do this?	*
MRS. PANGBURN	*
Isn't it obvious? To drive me	*
crazy. And I think I know who it	*
is.	*
JOHN DAVID BOOTH	*
Oh yeah?	*
MRS. PANGBURN	*
My ex-husband.	*
JOHN DAVID BOOTH	*
You peeped him doin' it?	*
MRS. PANGBURN	*
Well, no.	*
JOHN DAVID BOOTH	*
Mrs. Pangburn, you really think	*
your ex-husband is moving around	*
your figurines and warping your	*
mirror. To make you think	*
you're...	*

She points to the mirror. *

MRS. PANGBURN *
The mirror lies! *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *
Okay. *

MRS. PANGBURN *
Can't you see I'm in a very fragile *
state?! *

Booth can't bring himself to say the word. He doesn't have *
to. *

MRS. PANGBURN *
I'm not crazy, Mister Booth. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *
No. Of course not. *

Booth stares back into the mirror. And smiles. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *
It'll be fifty a day plus expenses. *

MRS. PANGBURN *
I'll get my purse. *

CUT TO: *

INT. JOHN DAVID BOOTH'S OFFICE - DAY *

Booth enters, picking some MAIL up off the floor. Bills. *

ON HIS PAINTING *

The idyllic pond and the tire swing. One side tilts. Booth *
fixes it, stepping back to take it all in. *

As though transported to this other place, we HEAR cicadas *
HUM, frogs CHIRP. *

Booth's PHONE RINGS. He declines to pick it up, lost in *
reverie. *

His bulky two-reel ANSWERING MACHINE gets it instead. We *
hear DOCTOR CAIRO'S NERVOUS VOICE on the other end. *

DOCTOR CAIRO (O.S.)
This is your psychiatrist, Doctor
Cairo.

*

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODED AREA - NIGHT

Trees, darkness, and rain. We wouldn't be able to see a
thing if it weren't for a FLASHLIGHT. It illuminates the
ground, searching. It finds what it's looking for:

*

DOCTOR CAIRO (V.O.)
It is a matter of urgency...

*

A PATCH OF EARTH

It lacks the cover of grass and bulges with packed soil.
Looks like something has been buried here.

REVERSE ON DOCTOR CAIRO

He carries the flashlight, a hand-drawn MAP, and a SHOVEL.
Cairo begins to dig.

CUT TO:

INT. THE ELBOW ROOM - EVENING

Booth enters a dark, harshly-lit dive bar with sawdust on the
floor. Driving rain splashes against painted windows.
Female heads turn his way.

*

*

Doctor Cairo, out of place with his nebbish appearance, waves
him over from a corner booth.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
You fit in here like a set of false
whiskers, Cairo. Make a habit of
meeting with patients sipping from
the tiger's tit?

Cairo drinks self-consciously from a SCOTCH. Booth notices
the man's fingernails, caked in DIRT.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Strange time to be resodding the
lawn, doc.

DOCTOR CAIRO

After some consideration, I may
have been a touch too dismissive of
your plea, even if your
expectations were, well,
unreasonable. I've decided to
refer your case to a colleague. A
friend. I believe he could be of
great service to you...and you to
him.

*

*

*

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

What happened to accepting myself
with two arms?

*

DOCTOR CAIRO

Yes, that. You see, even if I
wanted to, I couldn't prescribe
surgery for you. It would violate
my Hippocratic Oath. I'd be
stripped of my license and made an
example of, a mockery of the mental
health profession. But my
colleague...he takes a different
tact. On occasion, he has
performed procedures that
require...a little more discretion.

*

*

*

Making sure they are not overheard...

DOCTOR CAIRO

I've spoken to him about your
circumstances. It appears he has a
need for services that require a
certain discretion as well.
Services you are known to provide.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Go on.

DOCTOR CAIRO

I'll leave the elaborating to him.

*

Cairo throws back the remainder of his drink and rises...

DOCTOR CAIRO

I trust you'll keep this meeting in
the strictest of confidence. Best
of luck to you.

(beat)

(MORE)

DOCTOR CAIRO (cont'd)
His name is Wendell Multhorpe. He
will be in touch.

FADE TO:

EXT. BEACHWOOD CANYON - AFTERNOON

Dark skies have given way to another bright and sunny
Southern California day.

Booth's car passes through the old HOLLYWOODLAND GATE in the
famed Hills that share its name.

OUTSIDE THE CAR - LATER

The passing residential neighborhood is a mismatch of
architectural styles. Minimalist modern abodes clash with
replica Spanish villas, English country cottages, and other
eccentric living spaces.

CUT TO:

EXT. MULTHORPE RESIDENCE - DAY

Booth exits his parked car and turns towards the MULTHORPE
RESIDENCE - less a home than a replica English stone castle,
in both design and scale, complete with a MOAT. *

He narrowly avoids stepping in a HOLE, dug into the otherwise
immaculate lawn. *
*

LATER

Booth waits patiently for a DRAWBRIDGE to lower for him,
looking down at the LIVE ALLIGATORS below.

A FAT MAN appears, late 40s, his arms raised in welcome.
This is the king of the castle, WENDELL MULTHORPE.

WENDELL MULTHORPE
Welcome, Mister Booth. I've been
expecting you.

CUT TO:

INT. MULTHORPE CASTLE - MOMENTS LATER

Booth and Multhorpe pass through an atrium, adorned with
emblems of genteel British society - medieval heirlooms,
tapestries, suits of armor and such. *

In other places, scaffolding and white cloth draped over
walls - renovations, presumably.

*
*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Interesting design aesthetic.

*

WENDELL MULTHORPE
They say a man's home is his
castle. I've spared no expense to
ensure this fact.

MULTHORPE'S PARLOR - MOMENTS LATER

Booth helps himself to some scotch from a tastefully arranged
bar. He looks at one of Multhorpe's business cards.

*

WENDELL MULTHORPE
I do appreciate the haste with
which you've honored my invitation.
It is not often that two men are so
ideally placed to be of intimate
assistance to the other. As you
can see, I am in the business
of...self-improvement.

*

*
*
*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Says "cosmetic surgeon" on your
business card. Should get that
fixed.

WENDELL MULTHORPE
Never been fond of the expression.
"Cosmetic" implies the superficial.
What I do is no such thing.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
That right?

*

WENDELL MULTHORPE
Oh no. I change people, from the
outside in. We are what we pretend
to be, someone once said. And I
make it easier to pretend.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
So be careful what you pretend to
be.

*

WENDELL MULTHORPE
You know the quote! How
delightful! I do respect a man who
is well-read.

*

Booth motions toward the bar with his empty glass.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
You mind?

*

WENDELL MULTHORPE
By all means.

As Booth tongs some ice cubes into his glass...

WENDELL MULTHORPE
I'll get right to it as your time
is quite valuable...

*

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
You'd be surprised. I'm about as
cheap as it gets in this business.

Multhorpe digs into a drawer, withdrawing a PHOTOGRAPH of a
BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN. He hands it over to Booth.

WENDELL MULTHORPE
This is my wife, Sylvia Multhorpe.
She's missing, and has been for
quite some time. I would like her
found and it is you I would like to
find her.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
What's the buttons have to say
about it?

With some embarrassment...

WENDELL MULTHORPE
I have not informed the
authorities.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
With all due respect, a looker like
this takes the run-out and
disappears for...

WENDELL MULTHORPE
Three months.

Booth looks to the man incredulously.

WENDELL MULTHORPE
I'm afraid it just isn't possible
to involve the "buttons," as you
put it.

(MORE)

WENDELL MULTHORPE (cont'd)

You see, she has somewhat of a history, vanishing for long passages of time then reappearing with empty pockets and a general disinterest in recounting her whereabouts. I know it may seem strange to you, but I love my wife, Mister Booth.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Gees who love their missing wives don't usually wait three months to look for'em.

*

*

*

WENDELL MULTHORPE

Sylvia hasn't the best judge of friends and there's no doubt she's taken to their vices. If the police were involved, I can only imagine what depravity they would find her in. Despite my eccentricities, I'm a private man and would like to keep it that way. I'd prefer any transgressions committed by my wife did not become a matter of public record.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Certain you want her back?

WENDELL MULTHORPE

No sir, in all honesty I am not sure I do. But love is a strange thing and she has never been missing for this long before. I fear for her safety.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Any other reason to suspect she may be in danger? She mention anything before the disappearing act? Was she afraid of anyone?

*

WENDELL MULTHORPE

No, nothing that I can think of.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

And no one has contacted you since?

WENDELL MULTHORPE

I'm afraid not.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

How about a name?

WENDELL MULTHORPE

A name?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

A name. These shady characters
got'em, don't they?

WENDELL MULTHORPE

Do you know a man by the name of
Shoulders Marquard?

Booth's expression gives away his answer. He paces the room, *
taking a look --

OUTSIDE A WINDOW

-- where he sees a team of MEXICAN GARDENERS at work on
Multhorpe's backyard topiary.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

She sure knows how to pick'em,
boss. Shoulders Marquard is about
the wrongest number there is. If
she's taken up with his mob, it
ain't gonna be eggs and coffee.

(beat)

So what's your angle?

WENDELL MULTHORPE

I'd like to make a proposition.
There's something I'd like found
and, if I understand the
circumstances correctly, there's
something you would like lost. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Spit it out, Multhorpe. I'm a
simple man. *

WENDELL MULTHORPE

I admire your directness. Yes, I
speak of your arm, Mister Booth. *
While I do not pretend to
understand the impulse that drives
you, if my profession teaches me
anything, it is not to pass
judgment. You wish the arm to
disappear and that is good enough
for me. There are those that frown
upon these kind of procedures, so
our contract must be made in
secret.

(beat)

(MORE)

WENDELL MULTHORPE (cont'd)
If you can find my Sylvia and
return her to me, your arm will be
no more. Do we have an agreement?

Booth looks at the picture in his hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. MULTHORPE RESIDENCE - LATER

Booth exits the castle via the drawbridge, where the
Gardeners now trim some hedges. He takes one last gander at
the alligators down below. Upon closer look...

CLOSE ON THE ALLIGATORS

They're fake. Animatronic, like Disney World.

*

BACK TO:

INT. MULTHORPE PARLOUR - EARLIER

Booth regards his new client.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Don't expect any miracles.

WENDELL MULTHORPE
Our fates are now intertwined,
Mister Booth. I have every
confidence in your success.

Booth turns to leave...

WENDELL MULTHORPE
One more thing...she likes shoes.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOSTER CLUB - NIGHT

An ugly cinder block of a building, unmarked except for the
flashing sign of a neon ROOSTER. An incongruous, tuxedo-clad
DOORMAN holds open the door for Booth.

*

INSIDE

An underground CASINO, fashioned out of a former-ballroom.
Crystal chandeliers, hardwood floors, even a small corner
platform with a JAZZ QUARTET.

High society and high rollers in formal attire swamp the various games of chance - poker, roulette, craps, et cetera. Women, per usual, regard Booth's passage with interest.

Booth sidles up to the bar. The BARMAN is quickly at his attention.

BARMAN

What can I get you?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Shoulders around tonight?

*

BARMAN

I'll have to check on that, sir.
Who may I say is asking?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Tell'em Detective Booth wants to
have words.

This has gotten the Barman's attention. He moves off to the phone, out of earshot, speaking into it without dialing.

*

The Barman returns, pointing to some STAIRS.

BARMAN

Go right up.

*

Booth ascends the staircase, coming to a MAHOGANY DOOR guarded by a rather large THUG.

THUG

Grab air, Booth.

Booth complies, raising his hands. The Thug checks him for weapons. All clean. Booth now enters:

SHOULDERS MARQUARD'S OFFICE

Elegant and expensive, more befitting a Prohibition-era mobster than anything else. Behind a huge desk is an intimidating, wide-shouldered man in a black overcoat and fedora. He wears a pencil-thin moustache across his lip.

This is SHOULDERS MARQUARD.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD

Still callin' yourself a detective,
are ya? Thought you had enough of
the law.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Still peepin' it, now it's for a
sad story and pocket change.

*

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Who says this ain't a great
country? Where a bunny like you
can still land on his feet? Truly
is the land of opportunity,
cheapie. What do I owe the honor?

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
A lay. Looking for a doll by the
name of Sylvia Multhorpe. Wire is
she's friendly with your mob. Got
a weakness for the hop. Name ring
any bells?

*

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Sylvia Multhorpe? Can't say it
does.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Sure about that?

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
It's a name I'd remember.

There's something uneasy about Shoulders' manner - his jovial
demeanor is gone. Booth lets it go, instead showing him the
PHOTOGRAPH of Sylvia Multhorpe.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Maybe she's using a different
moniker?

That unease elevates with the photo. Shoulders tries to
disguise it with a furrowed brow.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Real looker, ain't she?

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
What was the name again?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Sylvia Multhorpe.

Shoulders leans closer. Finally, he shakes his head.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Sorry, shamus, never laid eyes on
this dame.

Booth doesn't believe it, but chooses not to press.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
If she turns up, you'll give me the
buzz?

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Certainly.

Booth rises to leave.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Who's looking?

Booth smiles.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Good barberin' with ya, Shoulders.

*

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN DAVID BOOTH'S OFFICE - EVENING

Booth throws on his jacket, about to leave when the phone
RINGS.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (INTO PHONE)
Booth Investigations.

The unheard reply has gotten his attention.

*

CUT TO:

EXT. MACARTHUR PARK - NIGHT

The beauty of the place - palm trees, lake, and fountain - is
diminished by the abundance of HOMELESS PEOPLE and DRUG
DEALERS.

Booth takes a seat next to a JUNKIE. Silence.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Gonna make me wait all night?

JUNKIE
Still looking for Sylvia Multhorpe?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Who's asking?

JUNKIE

The egg who knows where she is.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Well?

The Junkie smiles. It's not a pretty sight.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Don't suppose you'd tell me for a cigarette.

JUNKIE

If President Grant were puffing it.

Booth takes out his wallet.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

How about a twenty?

*

The Junkie accepts it. Booth waits.

*

JUNKIE

The cigarette?

Booth pulls out his cigarettes, offering one to the Junkie. He takes two, lighting one and saving the other for later.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Let's have it.

JUNKIE

You mind? I'm trying to enjoy my cigarette.

Like turning a switch, Booth is on top of the Junkie, taking him over the bench by the throat. The cigarettes and money go tumbling.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

What's the grift, Junkie!? Do I look like the weak sister to you!?

*

*

JUNKIE

Can't...breathe...

*

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

I know ya can't breathe! I'm the one doin' it to ya, ain't I!? Now give up the goddamn address!

*

*

*

*

JUNKIE

...okay...

*

Booth releases his grip but keeps the man pinned. *

JUNKIE
She's renting a dump on El Centro. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Number?

JUNKIE
What?

Smack! *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
What's the goddamn number on the building?

JUNKIE
Two-sixty-one. Jesus Christ. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
You sure?

JUNKIE
That's the crop, bo. On the square. Ask anyone. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I ain't asking anyone, snow bird.
I'm asking you.

JUNKIE
And I'm sayin' that's the number.

Booth releases him.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Two-sixty-one El Centro?

The Junkie rubs his throat and nods. Booth collects the money on the ground and stuffs it back in his wallet.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
If she ain't there I'm coming back
for my cigarettes. Dangle, hopper.

CUT TO:

EXT. EL CENTRO AVE - NIGHT

Booth steps out of his car and approaches an apartment building, its address prominently displayed above the door:

261 EL CENTRO

*

It's a little nicer than we expected. Booth scans the outside mailboxes, each labeled with a name. Thompson, Jacobs, Stevens, Chandler, Escobar, and so on. No Multhorpe.

But there is a CAIRO. Booth cocks his head - does his shrink live here? After a moment of contemplation, we follow him --

*

*

INSIDE THE APARTMENT BUILDING

-- and up a flight of steps to his destination.

*

Booth KNOCKS on apartment number six. No answer. He waits a moment and knocks again, harder this time. Still nothing.

*

Into his pocket now, withdrawing a LOCK-PICKING TOOL. Booth goes to work on the door.

*

CLICK. It unlocks. He throws the door open.

INSIDE THE APARTMENT

Upscale, minimalist furniture from the 1950s. Some envelopes lie on the floor by the mail slot. Booth examines one.

*

It's addressed to "Dr. Theodore Cairo." A framed photo of the man on a nearby shelf confirms it - oddly enough, Booth's shrink does live here.

*

*

Booth gives the room the once over. A bookshelf full of medical texts. Neatly arranged magazines on a coffee table.

*

*

IN THE KITCHEN

A clean, immaculate refrigerator, everything in its right place.

Booth thinks, setting a cigarette upon his lip like a cowboy would a length of straw. He searches his pockets for a light but comes up empty.

*

He opens a drawer, finding a matchbook there. Before he can strike a flame:

A NOISE

It came from another room. Sounded like a squeaking floorboard, but it could just be the building settling.

Booth slowly puts the matches away in his pocket. He waits for the sound to repeat itself. It doesn't.

We follow him down a hallway toward the source of the noise.
He draws his pistol, turning the light switch on in:

A BEDROOM

By all appearances, empty. But then there's that CLOSET. *
Gun at the ready, Booth approaches the closed closet door.
He doesn't hear --

THE FOOTSTEPS BEHIND HIM

-- SOMEONE advancing on him UNSEEN. Only visible from the
waist down, they carry with them a DIRTY CANVAS SACK in one
hand, a BLACKJACK in the other.

ON BOOTH

Oblivious to the danger that stalks him. He extends his hand *
to the door knob. *

The blackjack raises behind him.

Booth JERKS open the closet. *

INSIDE THE CLOSET

It's Dr. Cairo, propped against the door frame bound and
gagged. His eyes stare back at us in fear before he TOPPLES
OVER like a fallen tree. Before Booth can react -- *

THE BLACKJACK STRIKES

-- viciously swinging down upon the detective's neck. The *
effect is instantaneous. We quickly...

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN

SERIES OF SHOTS - DREAM SEQUENCE - VISTAVISION

A throwback to the kind of Saul Bass-style graphic-infused
credit/dream sequences (such as employed in *Vertigo*).

-- Booth falls through frame against the backdrop of a
turning spiral

-- SMOKE rises, clouding our vision *

-- Doctor Cairo peers at us from across a table

DOCTOR CAIRO

It appears he has a need for
services that require a certain
discretion as well.

-- Booth continues to fall; his arm detaches from his body

DOCTOR CAIRO (V.O.)

Services which you are known to
provide.

-- The smeared, painted lips of the Sex Clown as he slathers a gerbil with VASELINE *

-- The blade of Booth's circular saw gleams in the moonlight

-- Even more smoke now, surreal, making it hard to see *

-- Vicki stares back over her shoulder, her hips thrust out

VICKI

Carry on, Scary Man.

-- Animatronic alligators snap their metal jaws

-- Wendell Multhorpe shakes our hand

WENDELL MULTHORPE

One more thing...

-- Booth's arm drifts off, falling, lost in the smoke... *

WENDELL MULTHORPE (V.O.)

...she likes shoes.

FADE TO: *

CLOSE ON BOOTH

He gradually awakens on Cairo's bedroom floor. His hand goes to the back of his head, coming away red with BLOOD. It's the least of his worries as the SMOKE was no delirium: *

THE ROOM IS ON FIRE *

FLAMES dance up the walls, eating the curtains, upholstery, everything in sight. Booth leaps to his feet, seeing -- *

CAIRO'S BODY *

-- lying on the floor, his neck crooked awkwardly. He feels for a pulse, confirming the obvious - this man is DEAD. *

There isn't much time. Pulling his blazer over his head, *
Booth charges down the FLAMING HALLWAY to the front door. *

It's LOCKED from the outside. Booth throws his body up *
against it, once, twice, his eyes tearing from all the smoke. *
It won't give. *

He looks for another way out, his eyes locking on a BAY *
WINDOW and the night sky beyond. This is going to hurt. *

Grabbing a DUFFEL BAG sitting on the floor, Booth HURLS it *
through the window, GLASS SHATTERING everywhere. He takes a *
running start, quickly following that bag with -- *

A FLYING LEAP OUT THE WINDOW *

-- launching into the night sky, tumbling down to the ground *
like a bird with a broken wing. Thankfully, some BUSHES *
break his fall. *

Booth is bloodied, covered with scratches. But he's alive. *

SIRENS wail as fire trucks and police cars SCREECH to a halt *
at the curb. Nearby, that duffel bag hangs conveniently from *
a branch. *

A SEARCHLIGHT illuminates his supine form in the bush. *

TED SPANGLER (V.O.) *
You really did it this time,
gumshoe.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER

Focused light shines down on a seated Booth, smoking a *
cigarette. DETECTIVES EDDIE O'MALLEY and TED SPANGLER give *
him the third degree. We're in the middle of an *
interrogation.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *
You got me, fellas. Send me over *
and throw away the key. I bumped *
Cairo and tried to pull the dutch *
act by lighting us both on fire. *
No point arguing the obvious.

TED SPANGLER *
Think you're a funny guy, huh?

EDDIE O'MALLEY

So this Multhorpe bird hired you to
find his wife, did he? Don't
suppose you got a receipt for that?

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

I look like a chink dry cleaner to
you?

EDDIE O'MALLEY

Come off it, Booth. Wise head like
you don't think it's queer a man
don't know where his own wife is?
For three months?

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Said she had a taste for the
gutter. Can't say it all added up,
but math was never my best subject.

EDDIE O'MALLEY

What makes you think Multhorpe's
moll was shackin' with Cairo?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

A little birdie told me.

TED SPANGLER

Ain't good enough, hatchetman.

*

EDDIE O'MALLEY

What if I told you we jawed with
Multhorpe and he hasn't the
faintest clue who John David Booth
is?

*

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

I'd say you're lying or he is.

Booth waits for a response that doesn't come. O'Malley is
not lying.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Christ Eddie, think about it. You
really think I chilled Cairo and
tried to toast marshmallows over
the stiff?

*

*

Spangler gets in his face.

*

TED SPANGLER

Maybe you did the shrink and your
partner sapped you and set fire to
the dump to stick you with the rap.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

What's my motive?

TED SPANGLER

I don't claim to know how a sick
mind like yours works.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Shouldn't drink on the job. I can
smell the barrel on ya.

Spangler knocks the lit cigarette from Booth's hand. Booth
calmly fires up another one. Spangler knocks that one away
as well. Booth looks to O'Malley...

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Your partner's getting a little
punchy.

EDDIE O'MALLEY

Give him some space, Ted.

Spangler steps back. Booth lights another cigarette.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Look, if I had a partner who gave
me the dry-gulch, why wouldn't I
put the finger on him? You think I
want that guy walking free so I can
swing for the both of us?

EDDIE O'MALLEY

Because that would incriminate you
in a murder?

Spangler slams his fists on the table.

TED SPANGLER

Stop wasting time! Tell us who
your partner is already!

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

What did you do to get stuck with
this one, Eddie?

TED SPANGLER

Got something to say, cheapie, say
it to me.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I talk to the mechanic, not the
dirty rag.

WHAM! Spangler slugs Booth, sending him toppling over.
O'Malley restrains his partner from behind.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Goddamn it, Ted! Go cool off!

TED SPANGLER
This loogan bunks with your wife
and now you're taking his side?

Both Eddie and Booth stare at Ted with disbelief. No one
appreciates this airing of dirty laundry.

TED GRADY
Well it's true, ain't it?

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Just shove off, will ya?

Spangler slams the door on the way out. Booth picks himself
off the ground, noticing his cigarette is broken.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I hope we can be adults about this,
Eddie, personal differences aside.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
How about you tell me about the
bag?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
What about it? It ain't mine.

O'Malley lifts the duffel bag from the floor, dropping it
onto the table.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I needed something to break the
window. The bag was there.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Open it.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I said it ain't mine.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Just open it, will ya?

Booth complies, slowly working the zipper down. He can smell it before he can see it... *

INSIDE THE BAG *

AMPUTATED FEET, blackened with dirt and decay. They're quite deformed, barely resembling their natural form. *

It appears that they've been dug up from somewhere. *

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Queer thing to be carrying around,
Booth. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Someone wanted to get rid of'em
like they wanted to get rid of
Cairo. Like they wanted to get rid
of me. *

EDDIE O'MALLEY
How'd you know Doctor Cairo? *

Booth ponders how to phrase this one. *

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Should really be more careful with
that circular saw. *

Booth can't believe he's having this conversation. *

EDDIE O'MALLEY
We all got our vices, far be it
from me to judge. Whatever you do
behind pulled shades is your own
business.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Stop playing me, Eddie. I didn't
croak anyone and you know it.
(nods at the mirror)
Maybe you gotta put on a show for
the boss, but come on, you know me.

O'Malley slaps Booth on the arm, leaving his hand there. *

EDDIE O'MALLEY
That's right, Booth. I know you.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
A guy's got different ideas about
personal appearance and now he's a
hatchetman? *

(MORE)

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (cont'd)
And just for the record, ain't
exactly jake for you to be snooping
in Cairo's files. Doctor-patient
privilege and all that.

*

EDDIE O'MALLEY
(laughing)
Poolhouse lawyer now, are ye? Your
shrink was killed, in your
presence, and you got pinched
jumpin' out his window with a pair
of severed feet. Doctor-patient
privilege? That's a good one.

*
*
*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Just talk to Multhorpe, will you?
He'll put ya wise.

*

EDDIE O'MALLEY
I told you, Multhorpe don't know
who you are from some corner gink.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
And I'm tellin' you he does. Just
take me to'em.

*
*

EDDIE O'MALLEY
I'll do you one better. How about
I bring Multhorpe to you?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Multhorpe's here?

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Sure as the air we're breathing.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Well then, by all means.

O'Malley disappears outside the door. Booth sees he's left a
folder behind. Some crime scene photos peek out from inside.

There's also a picture labeled "Wendell and Sylvia
Multhorpe," clipped from the society page of the newspaper.

They are not the Multhorpes we know.

O'Malley reappears with another man: crisp suit, tall and
slender, late forties, salt and pepper hair, the man in the
photo. Physically, he is the very opposite of the person we
believed was Wendell Multhorpe, but this is:

THE REAL WENDELL MULTHORPE

He looks down on Booth with disgust.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Ever seen this man before?

WENDELL MULTHORPE
I most certainly have not. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Ask me the same question. You *
might be surprised by the answer.

Booth can't help but smile. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
That ain't the Multhorpe I know.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
What do you mean that ain't *
Multhorpe? That's Multhorpe.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
He very well might be Multhorpe. *
But he ain't the Multhorpe that
hired me.

CLOSE ON THE PHOTO OF THE REAL SYLVIA MULTHORPE

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
And this ain't the dame I was hired *
to find.

CUT TO:

EXT. MULTHORPE RESIDENCE - DAY

O'Malley, Spangler and Booth pull up the vacant driveway in a *
police car. A "For Sale" sign sits at the open gate. *

FLASHBACK TO: *

BOOTH'S PRIOR VISIT TO THE MULTHORPE RESIDENCE *

He narrowly avoids stepping into a hole dug into the lawn. *

BACK TO: *

THE PRESENT

*

The hole is there no more, filled by the "For Sale" sign post. Someone had removed it.

*

*

O'Malley exits the vehicle and heads off to the house. We watch from the car as the Detective knocks on the front door and waits.

Spangler faces the man in the back.

*

TED SPANGLER

*

You must take us for some real mugs, shamus.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Just you.

There's no answer at the door. O'Malley walks around the building, disappearing out of sight.

*

TED SPANGLER

*

They're gonna love that pretty mouth of yours up in the joint.

O'Malley comes back with the Latino Gardener. We remember him from Booth's visit. O'Malley jerks a finger at Booth.

*

*

EDDIE O'MALLEY

Know this guy?

The Gardener speaks no English. O'Malley tries some BROKEN SPANISH. It works - the Gardener nods in affirmation.

*

EDDIE O'MALLEY

Who owns this place?

Again, some trouble in communication. O'Malley tries some charades to no avail. Booth taps on the glass.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Quien posse esta casa?

As though it were the most logical answer in the world...

GARDENER

Senor Multhorpe.

*

AN HOUR LATER

Two UNIFORMED LATINO OFFICERS have joined the others,
speaking to the Gardener in Spanish and translating for
O'Malley and Spangler.

*

IN THE WINDOWS OF THE MULTHORPE RESIDENCE

*

Inside, we see furniture covered by ghostly white sheets. It
doesn't look like anyone is living here anymore.

*

ON BOOTH

*

He leans against a police cruiser. It appears, at least for
the time being, that he has been let off the hook. He sees:

*

A CAR PULLS UP THE DRIVE WAY

It's a silver, 1955 gullwing Mercedes-Benz coup. Perfect
condition. A beautiful piece of machinery, all considered.
Multhorpe steps out. The real Multhorpe. He looks puzzled.

*

Multhorpe joins the Gardener, the Officers, and the
Detectives in their little circle.

*

Keeping one eye on Multhorpe and the others, Booth strolls
over to the Benz, taking special note of the license plate:

DR IS IN

Moving closer, he sees there is SOMEONE in the passenger
seat: it's SYLVIA MULTHORPE. The real Sylvia Multhorpe.

*

Much younger than her husband, she nervously fumbles in her
purse for a cigarette. Booth is there with a light.

*

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

*

You look just like your photograph,
Mrs. Multhorpe.

*

*

*

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

*

My photograph?

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

*

Society page. In the paper.

*

She nods politely but it's clear she doesn't want to talk.
She looks over to see if her husband is looking. He isn't.

*

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

*

Most people, the camera never
catches'em right. Life is rarely
like it is in pictures. But you?
Dead ringer.

*

*

*

*

*

She has no response, refusing to even make eye contact. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *
That's a compliment, Mrs. *
Multhorpe. Pretty dames like you, *
they tend to look better in two *
dimensions than three. *

Her husband calls over.

WENDELL MULTHORPE *
Excuse me! You over there! Excuse *
me! I'd be obliged if you wouldn't *
speak to my wife! *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *
I was just making polite *
conversation. *

WENDELL MULTHORPE *
If it's all the same, I'd prefer *
you kept your conversation to *
yourself. *

Booth steps back from the car, raising his hands innocently. *
He still remains within earshot, though. *

After a few moments, Mrs. Multhorpe calls out to him, a *
raised whisper. *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE *
My husband can be rather *
possessive. It's often quite *
endearing. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *
I bet. *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE *
Other times, it's much like this. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *
Mrs. Multhorpe, why would someone *
impersonate your husband, say *
you're missing when you ain't, only *
to try the knockoff with me and my *
shrink? *

Slightly flustered... *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE *
I believe that's a question better *
addressed to the police, don't you? *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *
 Know anything about amputated feet? *

There's recognition in her face. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *
 Mrs. Multhorpe? *

Wendell Multhorpe is getting impatient. Even O'Malley gives *
 him a scolding glance. *

WENDELL MULTHORPE
 Do we have a problem, sir?

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
 (to Booth)
 You better do what the man says. *
 His chivalrous nature can get the *
 best of him. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *
 Yeah? What happens then? *

She opens her mouth to answer, but her husband's surveillance *
 makes her reconsider. *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE *
 Good day, Mister Booth. *

Her window slowly rises, returning Sylvia Multhorpe to the *
 isolation of her automobile. *

Booth steps away, returning to his previous position - *
 leaning against the squad car. *

MINUTES LATER

Looks like the questioning is done. O'Malley approaches,
 taking a place next to Booth.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
 Dump is owned by Multhorpe,
 alright. The real Multhorpe.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Let me guess, he doesn't live here
 any more.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
 Been on the market for a month.
 Multhorpe and the dish live in some
 designer mansion on Rockland. *
 Doors and windows are locked. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
The Greaser?

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Saw some lard-can hanging around
but figured he was just angling to
buy it.

*

ANGLE ON THE MERCEDES-BENZ

Multhorpe gets back in his car and pulls away.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Sure is something queer about those
two.

*

*

*

CUT TO:

EXT. 261 EL CENTRO APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

*

Booth and O'Malley stand on the sidewalk, back at the scene
of the crime. The charred remains of 261 El Centro still
smolder behind them. However, their attention is directed --

*

*

*

ACROSS THE STREET

*

-- where Booth had parked his car. It is there no more.

*

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Positive that's where you left it?

*

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
You're a witness to this. When it
shows up at another homicide, I
didn't drive it.

*

*

*

*

EDDIE O'MALLEY
I'll give you a lift.

*

*

CUT TO:

*

INT./EXT. O'MALLEY'S CAR - DAY

They drive in extended silence until...

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Look, Eddie, I know we never really
cleared the air about Vicki-

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Leave it be.

Booth nods. But he can't leave it be.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I'd just hate if it affected your
judgement.

*

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Vicki's your problem now.

*

Booth puts a cigarette in his mouth, again searching his
pockets for fire. He finds a matchbook in his jacket pocket,
the one from Cairo's apartment. But wait...

*

*

CLOSE ON THAT MATCHBOOK

*

A WORD is hastily scrawled on the inside: *SIMULACRUM*. Could
mean nothing. Could mean everything.

*

*

Booth strikes a match.

*

CUT TO:

INT. BOOTH'S SUBURBAN MIDDLE-CLASS HOME - LATER

Booth - disheveled and rubbing a growing lump on the back of
his head - enters his home. A SOUND stops him in his tracks:
the loud REVERBERATIONS OF SOMETHING VIBRATING. Something
very large.

*

*

*

*

It's Vicki exercising. She stands within a fitness fad of
the 1950s - the VIBRATING BELT MACHINE.

*

*

She switches it off, rushing to Booth's side.

*

VICKI
Are you okay?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I'm breathing. Suppose that counts
for somethin'.

*

VICKI
Oh my God, what happened to your
head?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Someone mistook it for a piñata.

*

LATER

They now sit on the sofa. Booth sips from a scotch, wincing
as Vicki holds an ice pack to his head.

VICKI

I worry about you, John.

Vicki runs a hand across his forehead. For the first time, we really see real affection between them. *

VICKI

When you didn't come home, I thought something had happened to you. I called all the hospitals...

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Some punk just sapped me, that's all.

(raises his glass)

Nothing dipping the bill won't fix.

VICKI

They tried to kill you.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Not wearin' the wooden kimono, doll, so you ain't rid of me yet. *

She nuzzles in close to his ear.

VICKI

I have a surprise for you.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

I think I've had enough surprises for one day.

VICKI

You're going to like this surprise. I met her at the market. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Really, Vicki...

VICKI

Go wash up. I just need to make a phone call. *

Booth really doesn't want any surprises that involve phone calls. *

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Booth dries off after a shower. He takes a long, hard look at his reflection, checking out the lump on his skull. *

And then there's that left arm. He bends it, hiding the forearm behind his back. *

IN THE MIRROR *

Booth as he wishes he were - missing half his arm. But it's only just pretend. *

The door bell RINGS. He waits for Vicki answer it. It RINGS AGAIN. *

We follow Booth to the FRONT DOOR. He opens it. *

ON THE PORCH

A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN in a trench-coat.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN
Mister Booth?

Booth nods. She smiles, walking past him into the home.

THE BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Booth spits toothpaste into the sink.

BEHIND HIM IN THE BEDROOM - RACK FOCUS

Vicki fits a BLACK RUBBER SHEET to the bed.

VICKI
John, have you seen the rubber top sheet?

He has no response. She goes in search of it.

Nearby, the Beautiful Woman peels off her coat - she wears fifties-era lingerie underneath. Breathtaking. *

ON BOOTH

He watches the scene, reflected in the mirror. He's oddly indifferent to her beauty, but something is peculiar about this woman. He turns to take a closer look. *

ON THE BEAUTIFUL WOMAN

She hoists a LEG onto the bed - it TWISTS awkwardly, an
unnatural movement. We don't understand exactly what we're
seeing until the Beautiful Woman -- *

REMOVES THE LEG COMPLETELY

-- and tosses it aside. It's a PROSTHETIC LIMB.

She looks our way, realizing she's being watched. Self-
consciousness and uncertainty overwhelm her. *

Booth approaches, his eyes on the stump that remains of her
right thigh. He extends his hand for it, tender, fingertips
caressing the rounded base. *

His interest is less sexual than inquisitive, a coin
collector examining a rare penny. She watches him,
fascinated. *

Vicki returns. Nude. *

LATER

Vicki sleeps on the bed. *

The Beautiful Amputee reattaches her prosthetic limb. Booth
watches with interest.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
How did you do it?

BEAUTIFUL AMPUTEE
Do what?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
The leg. How'd you lose it? *

BEAUTIFUL AMPUTEE
Car accident.

She puts on her overcoat. Booth waits for her to elaborate.
She doesn't. It's not a subject she likes talking about. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
On purpose?

BEAUTIFUL AMPUTEE
Excuse me?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Did you smash the heap on purpose?

She looks at him like he's crazy.

BEAUTIFUL AMPUTEE
No. No I didn't.

He's ventured into choppy waters and can tell.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I'm sorry.

BEAUTIFUL AMPUTEE
Why would you ask something like
that?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
We just got our lines crossed,
that's all.

She leaves.

LATER

Booth spoons behind Vicki. He just can't get comfortable.
God damn that useless arm.

*

CUT TO:

EXT. BOOTH'S SUBURBAN MIDDLE-CLASS HOME - LATER

Booth stands in the rain, watching his garage door rise.

INSIDE THE GARAGE - LATER

There it is, the circular saw. It begins to GLOW again, as
though a bright light were fixed upon it.

Because there is. Booth turns, looking --

TOWARD THE STREET

-- where we see HEADLIGHTS pointed our way. It's a car,
sitting in Booth's driveway. Not his car, or O'Malley's for
that matter. Booth shields his eyes.

A SILHOUETTED FIGURE steps out of the passenger side. He
opens a rear door, the clear indication being that Booth
should join him.

Booth stays where he is.

SILHOUETTED FIGURE
You need an engraved invitation,
cheapie? Get in.

His jacket opens slightly, allowing us the slightest glimpse of gun metal. Not a man to mess with. *

Booth walks toward the open door. Seated in the back of the car is SHOULDERS MARQUARD. *

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
We meet again.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF LOS ANGELES - LATER

Shoulders' vintage Cadillac passes out of Booth's neighborhood into an area that isn't so nice. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
Where are we going, Shoulders?

INSIDE THE CAR

Booth reclines next to Shoulders, TWO THUGS in the front. *

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Where it ain't raining, shamus.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
This have to do with the dead doc?

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Perhaps.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Then I'm already wet.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Your lucky day. I'm here to offer
an umbrella. You think you're in
dutch? You ain't, not with me in
your corner. You can make a clean
sneak without drowning. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Sounds silk, but I gotta tell ya
I'm a pretty good swimmer.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Chained to a cinder block you
ain't. Man can drown in two inches
of water with a foot on his neck. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
You threatening me?

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
I don't make threats. Sun don't
threat to set each day. Like
death, some things just are.
Ocean's filled with right gees like
you who think they can outsmart a
bullet.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Where are we going, Shoulders?

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Already told you, just trying to
find some shade. Never should've
got involved in this sick business
and you really don't want to be
around for the cure. That way lies
a dead end. Believe it or not, I
like you. I think of myself as a
friend to the common man and they
don't come much more common than
you.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Thanks.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Do yourself a favor and sit this
out. I could make you sit it out.
Sit it out in a wood box. But I'm
not going to. Do you know why?

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Because you're a friend to the
common man?

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Common men get the chill same as
the rest. No shamus, I'm doin' ya
one 'cause I know you're an
innocent man. A mark, same as me.
Dame just wants to make a new life
of it and some no good chiseler
comes around telling tales about
the past. It's goddamn un-
American. Even roundheel chippies
got a right to reinvention, don't
they, shamus?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Write it in stone.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Glad we're on the same page. How
about we try things the easy way?

*

Shoulders hands Booth a new \$5,000 BILL. Booth regards James
Madison's face on it.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Madison's the carrot. You don't
want the stick, savvy?

The car pulls over to the side of the street. One of
Shoulders' Thugs gets out.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
You cutting off feet, Shoulders?

*

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Angling to get rid of yours? Here
I was thinkin' it was just the arm.

*

*

*

Booth shakes his head with exasperation.

*

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Word travels fast, cheapie. Don't
worry, I can keep a secret. People
like to tell me things. I can't
help it. All over town, little
birdies, whisperin' in my ear.

*

*

*

*

*

*

Booth's door is opened from the outside.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Most people, they like to talk.
Sure hope you ain't one of'em.

*

*

Shoulders' Cadillac drives off. Booth ponders his new
environs. That's when he sees it:

*

HIS CAR

*

Parked on the side of the street, but not exactly in the
condition he left it. The TIRES are gone. Windshield
SHATTERED. GANG GRAFFITI.

*

*

*

A FEMALE CATCALL from places unseen...

*

FEMALE CATCALLER (O.S.)
Papacito que bueno te miras!

*
*

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS STOP - LATER

*

SPARKS fly from the overhead trolley wire as an ELECTRIC CITY
BUS stops to pick up Booth.

*
*

INSIDE THE BUS - LATER

*

Booth is eyed by some TEENAGE GIRLS. He tries not to notice.

*

POV - BOOTH

*

That cursed left arm. He extends it before him, opening and
closing the hand.

*
*

Open. Close. Open. Close.

*

A BOY sits nearby, watching Booth with wonder over the top of
his coloring book. He speaks up.

*
*

BOY
Hey mister, watcha doin'?

*
*

Open.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Cursin' God, kid. Cursin' God.

*
*

Close.

*

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN

INT. BOOTH'S SUBURBAN MIDDLE-CLASS HOME - MORNING

*

Booth fills his cereal bowl with Corn Flakes, splashing some
MILK on top. It's barely a teaspoon. He looks quizzically
at the carton until turning towards --

*
*
*

THE CLOWN

*

-- sitting on the sofa, OVERSIZED SHOES propped on the coffee
table. He watches PORNOGRAPHY on Booth's 1950s black & white
console television - a Betty Page-style light bondage serial.

*
*
*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Is that pay per view?

In the Clown's hands: his own BOWL OF CEREAL, practically
drowning in milk.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Getting pretty comfortable around
here, Clown.

The Clown peers back over his shoulder.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Phone's over there if you want to
make some long distance calls.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. ENTERPRISE CAR RENTAL AGENCY - DAY

Booth signs some paperwork.

LATER

Booth eyes his new car, at least for the time being: a baby
blue '57 FIAT with a TROLLEY POLE. It's absurdly tiny, more
of a clown car than one befitting a full-sized human being.

LATER

Booth pulls the Fiat out of the lot. It makes quite a racket
- not a smooth ride by any stretch.

ON A MYSTERY ELECTRIC BUICK

Parked at the curb, it roars to life and begins stealthy
pursuit.

CUT TO:

EXT. MRS. PANGBURN'S MODEST RANCH HOME - DAY

Booth sits in the Fiat, across the street. Mrs. Pangburn
pulls out of her garage and drives off, giving a wave as she
passes.

As soon as she's out of sight, Booth reclines the seat back
and relaxes.

LATER

The SOUND OF AN ENGINE summons Booth awake. He sees -- *

A CAR *

-- pull into Mrs. Pangburn's driveway. An OLDER MAN gets out, looking around to make sure he isn't being watched. *

Booth ducks down in his seat. *

His privacy affirmed, the Man unlocks the front door with his own key and enters. *

Booth can't believe his eyes. *

.

INSIDE THE HOUSE - LATER *

Booth tip-toes on the tile floor, peering into -- *

THE SUNROOM *

-- where he sees that Man moving around Mrs. Pangburn's figurines. Just as she said. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *

Hands off the figurines, pal. *

THE MAN *

Calm down, fella. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *

Who are you? *

THE MAN *

Jack Pangburn. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *

Well Jack, just what do you think you're doing? *

THE MAN *

What are you doing? This is my house. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *

Your wife got it in the settlement, or don't you remember? Maybe we should call copper and have them sort it out. *

The Man stands put. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
You know where the blower is, don't
you?

THE MAN
Installed it myself. Should know
where it is.

Mexican standoff.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Look pal, whatever queer game
you're running is your business,
but I've been hired to do a job.
Ain't here to bake a cake.

THE MAN
She hired someone? I'll be
goddamned.
(takes out his wallet)
So what's it gonna take, fella?
(no answer)
Well? How much is she paying you?

Booth considers the offer. There's a lot of money in that
wallet.

THE BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Booth looks through a bathroom closet. He grabs a HAIR
DRYER.

THE BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The detective holds up the hair dryer.

THE MAN
Yeah, that's it.

MOMENTS LATER

The hair dryer ROARS. Booth stares at his widening
reflection as Mrs. Pangburn's ex-husband goes to work warping
the mirror.

CUT TO:

EXT. JOHN DAVID BOOTH'S OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Booth approaches the entrance of the building. At the street
corner, one of Shoulder's THUGS stands watching. He tips his
fedora.

The detective raises his Starbucks coffee in reply. *

INSIDE - MOMENTS LATER *

Booth stops before his office door - it's ajar, the door-frame cracked. Someone broke in. *

INSIDE

The office is completely, utterly TRASHED.

Seat cushions torn apart, drawers emptied, furniture overturned. His beloved painting lies on the floor, a LONG TEAR knifed through its center. Someone was searching for something. *

A FIGURE sits in a chair. Smoke rises from a lit cigarette. *

IT'S SYLVIA MULTHORPE

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Is this some joke? *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
You don't think I did this, Mister Booth? Do you believe me capable of such a thing? *

The way things are going, Booth isn't exactly surprised. He puts his painting back on the wall. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
How should I know what you're capable of? *

Sylvia shuffles in her seat. Booth surveys the damage. He notices her BLACK EYE for the first time, though she's tried to hide it under a layer of concealer. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Been waiting long? Private dicks get to make their own hours. Benefit of being your own high pillow. *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
Like being rude to your clients? *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
You're not a client.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

I'd like to change that.

*

Booth sits in his chair, sifting through the mess surrounding his desk. He finds what he's looking for: a cigarette. He lights it with a match.

*

There's that word again, written on the inside of the matchbook: *SIMULACRUM*.

*

*

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

Did you hear what I said?

Rummaging through the mess once more, Booth comes away with a DICTIONARY.

*

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Things ain't exactly hitting on all eight, Mrs. Multhorpe. Business is slow, my shrinker's been bopped, I nearly got the same, and my lady's a sex pervert. But I gotta tell you, more than anything I'm bored with everyone yanking my chain, so how about tippin' your mitt? I hope you didn't come just to tell me you don't know nothin'. If you did, the gate's over there and you can take it on the bounce. I ain't in the mood.

*

*

*

*

*

CLOSE ON THE OPEN DICTIONARY

*

Booth's finger finds the word he's looking for:

*

sim·u·la·crum (noun) 1. An image or representation. 2. A copy of something for which an original does not exist.

*

*

Booth tosses the dictionary aside. Sylvia Multhorpe has not gone anywhere.

*

*

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

I believe my husband is being blackmailed.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

By Shoulders Marquard?

He's guessed correctly.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

How-

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Me and Shoulders go way back. I
 used to wear tin, or didn't you
 know? Peeped it for real before I
 got in this sorry racket. I should
 probably tell you Shoulders has
 already given me the buzz.

*
 *
 *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
 He has?

Booth takes out the Madison and lays it on the desk, making a
 show of the presentation. She seems surprised at seeing it.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 I've never seen one either.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
 What did he ask you to do?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Nothing.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
 Mister Booth, please-

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Ain't fibbin', sister. He hired me
 to do nothing. Awfully generous of
 him. I usually do it for free.

*

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
 I don't understand.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Neither do I.

She stands up to leave.

*

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
 I've come to the wrong place.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Sit down, Mrs. Multhorpe. He gave
 me the Madison. Don't necessarily
 intend on keeping it.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
 I thought business was slow.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
It's picking up. Trust me, you'd
rather have this conversation here
than at the clubhouse. I can be
bought.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
So can the law.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I'm cheaper. What's Shoulders got
on your husband?

After a moment's contemplation, she sits.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
Mister Marquard runs a gambling
establishment, of which my husband
was a customer.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I know it well.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
Wendell was a frequent customer,
against my wishes. Even after he
promised to discontinue his visits,
he persisted, in secret, his
attendance relayed to me by others.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. ROOSTER CLUB - NIGHT

Sylvia sits in the rear of a taxi cab, watching HER HUSBAND
enter Shoulder's casino, adorned by the neon sign rooster.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE (V.O.)
I'm not proud to admit I even
followed him there once.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. MULTHORPE RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Husband and wife argue. He grabs her by the arm. Despite
his slender build, Multhorpe can be intimidating when angry.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE (V.O.)
 Wendell denied it, of course. "It
 must have been someone else," he
 said. "I would never do that."
 Well he did do it, Mister Booth,
 and he did other things as well.

BACK TO:

THE PRESENT

Booth puts his feet up on the desk.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Let me guess. He lost some money. *

Her expression confirms it. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Should know better than to go to
 that clip joint. Ain't nothing
 there but a rigged game. *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
 My husband has an addiction, for
 which logic as you or I know it
 does not apply. Substantial
 amounts of money began to disappear
 from our bank accounts. Assets
 liquidated. Wendell tried to
 explain it all away, but I knew
 better. Then one day, that man
 appeared at our home.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. MULTHORPE RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Sylvia Multhorpe answers the front door. Waiting there is...

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
 Shoulders.

LATER

A nervous Wendell Multhorpe disappears into the study with
 Shoulders. Sylvia watches as the door shuts behind them. *

SERIES OF SHOTS - WENDELL MULTHORPE'S NEW JOB

-- a ringing phone wakes Wendell and Sylvia from sleep *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE (V.O.)
 What agreement was reached between *
 them I do not know, but Wendell *
 began receiving phone calls at all *
 hours, presumably from Mister
 Marquard or someone in his employ.

-- Wendell quickly dresses

SYLVIA MULTHORPE (V.O.)
 After these conversations, he'd *
 leave, disappearing for hours at a
 time.

-- Wendell returns to bed some time later, undressing; Sylvia pretends she is asleep

SYLVIA MULTHORPE (V.O.)
 Sometimes he would return with
 blood on his clothes.

-- Sylvia lifts Wendell's discarded clothes from the floor, *
 unmistakable red drops of blood on his white shirt

SYLVIA MULTHORPE (V.O.)
 This went on for some time. A
 year, year and half perhaps.

-- Wendell argues with someone over the phone *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE (V.O.)
 One night, during one of these *
 calls, my husband argued with
 whomever he was speaking. It
 became quite heated.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
 What did your husband say?

-- Wendell sees that Sylvia is watching, so he shuts the door

BACK TO:

THE PRESENT

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

He said he wouldn't do it anymore.
 He said he had repaid the debt,
 many times over. He refused to be
 made an indentured servant.
 Shortly after, Mister Booth, we
 were contacted by Doctor Cairo.

*

CUT TO:

INT. MUSSO & FRANK'S GRILL - EVENING

*

The Multhorpes eat dinner. Wendell excuses himself, likely
 for the bathroom. Sylvia pours herself some wine.

*

*

Cairo appears at her side. He places an envelope on the
 table - it's addressed to her husband.

*

DOCTOR CAIRO

I'll be in touch.

As quickly as he materialized, he leaves. Sylvia eyes the
 envelope. After a moment's contemplation, she opens it.

BACK TO:

THE PRESENT

Sylvia hands Booth a folded letter, a blackmail collage
 created with letters cut from newspaper. He reads it:

I know what you did. \$100,000 or everyone else will.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Was he in touch?

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

No. Days passed without
 interruption until, about a week
 later, the police appeared at our
 door saying that a man who claimed
 to be in the employ of my husband
 had just leapt from a burning
 building.

*

*

*

CUT TO:

INT. MULTHORPE RESIDENCE - DAY

Sylvia and Wendell stare down at two PHOTOGRAPHS held by Ted Spangler. One is Booth. The other is Cairo. *

TED SPANGLER
Recognize either of these mugs? *

Wendell quickly shakes his head. Sylvia takes a little longer. Spangler eyes her curiously. *

TED SPANGLER
Sure about that? *

She nods. It's not convincing.

BACK TO:

THE PRESENT

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
So you think Cairo and Shoulders
were in it together?

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
I don't think my husband's
disagreements with Mister Marquard
and the sudden appearance of this
Doctor Cairo is a coincidence. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
So who blipped Cairo?

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
I don't know.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Think your husband did it?

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
Certainly not.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
He had the motive, didn't he?
Cairo was blackmailing him. *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
My husband isn't a killer.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
That's what Pollock Joe's wife said
before he got the electric cure.
So what do you think Cairo had on
your husband?

*
*
*

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
I don't know.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
You think your husband was cutting
off feet for Shoulders?

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
Excuse me?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Trouble boys gotta have a
signature, something to show
they're harder than the rest of the
wrong gees.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
You think Wendell amputated feet?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Somebody did. There was a pair
of 'em in Cairo's apartment when it
was torched. You say your husband
came home nights with blood on his
shirt. Don't take a genius to
connect the dots.

*
*
*

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
Mister Booth, I would like you to
find out what my husband did before
the police do. If there is
evidence of a crime, I'd prefer you
brought it to me if possible.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
If it isn't?

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
Then there's nothing to be done.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Can I speak with him?

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
If you think it might help, but
please-

*
*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

What?

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

Keep our arrangement between us.
If he knew I'd come to you about
this, he'd-

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Close the other eye up?

Her hand goes instinctively to her swollen eye.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

I fell.

She looks away, embarrassed.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Pollock Joe's wife used to say that,
too. Don't worry, you want to be a
punching bag it's your own
business. But this is going to
cost ya.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

I have money.

Booth holds up the Madison and smiles.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

So do I. I'll need something else.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

I'm a married woman.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

From your husband.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

He's a married man.

He smiles. So does she. He stops smiling.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

I have a queer request.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

Okay.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
If my suspicions pan out, the
doctor rates rather highly with a
bone saw.

Pardon? SYLVIA MULTHORPE

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
When I caught this lay from your husband, the fake one, that is, it was barter, savvy? An exchange. I would sure like to get paid and your husband, the real one, is one of the few people who can.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
I don't understand.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I want your husband to cut off my
left arm.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
Your...left arm?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Not the whole arm. Just from here
down.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
Is there something wrong with your
left arm? It looks fine to me.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
You're not the one who has to live
it. It's really not that much
different than a nose job. Once
you get past the visceral horror of
it all.

(she's unconvinced)
It has a name.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
Your arm?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
My condition.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
What is it?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *
Body Integrity Identity Disorder. *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE *
That's an awful name. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *
Do you want my services or not? *

Sylvia ponders his offer. She stands. *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
If you can save my husband, he will
certainly return the favor in a
manner meeting your...satisfaction. *

LATER *

Booth sits at his desk, regarding Shoulder's money. A LIGHT
FLASHES from beneath the wreckage of his office. *

Booth fishes it out. It's his two-reel ANSWERING MACHINE.
And it has a message. *

MRS. PANGBURN (ON MACHINE) *
Mister Booth, it's happened again. *
Someone moved my figurines. *

CUT TO: *

INT. STAPLES CENTER - NIGHT *

A fierce BOXING MATCH rages. The air glows with cigar SMOKE
and FLASHBULBS. SPECTATORS cheer. *

IN THE RING

"WOP" BOYD delivers a savage beating to his overmatched
opponent, "KID" GILMORE. The BELL allows Kid a momentary
reprieve. *

IN THE CROWD

Booth's eyes are trained, not on the fight, but on --

SHOULDERS MARQUARD

-- seated only a few rows ahead of him. The large man
doesn't see he's being watched, himself focused on -- *

"WOP" BOYD'S TRAINER

-- to whom he gives a subtle tip of the fedora. Perhaps insignificant.

Perhaps not. Words are exchanged between Boyd and his Trainer. Shoulders leaves before the next round ever begins.

IN THE RING

Ding! The Boxers are off their stools. Boyd has lost his initiative, his punches lacking their earlier sting. *

The round doesn't last long. Gilmore throws a WILD HOOK, barely making contact. It doesn't matter as -- *

BOYD THEATRICALY GOES DOWN

-- under the phantom punch. The REFEREE counts him down for the count as the crowd HISSES. They know the fix is on. *

THROWN REFUSE rains down on the ring. Kid Gilmore regards the heretofore unrealized power of his right hand. *

CUT TO:

INT. LOS ANGELES CITY MORGUE - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

The Morgue's MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT regards a business card with skepticism. *

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT

I don't know, Booth. Aren't you a suspect?

The business card is O'Malley's.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Downgraded to material witness. O'Malley asked me to come down and get a slant at the feet.

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT

He should have told me you were coming.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

He didn't? Well, why don't you go ahead and give him a ring? I'm sure he'd appreciate you telling him how to do his job. O'Malley loves hearing about his mistakes. *

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT
It's after two in the morning.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Is it? Then I guess forget about
the phone call and just let me see
the feet.

LATER

The Attendant speaks on the phone.

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT (INTO PHONE)
Yes sir, Booth is standing right
here.
(extends receiver)
He wants to talk to you.

Booth accepts the phone.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (INTO PHONE)
I asked him not to call.

EDDIE O'MALLEY (ON PHONE)
What in the hell do you think
you're doing, Booth?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (INTO PHONE)
I just want to see the feet.

EDDIE O'MALLEY (ON PHONE)
At two in the morning?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (INTO PHONE)
Is this a bad time?

EDDIE O'MALLEY (ON PHONE)
Put the Med Student back on.

Booth complies.

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT (INTO PHONE)
Yeah...Uh huh...Okay...

He hangs up.

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT
You have five minutes. And don't
touch anything.

MOMENTS LATER

The Attendant yanks out a SLAB. On it, the TWO AMPUTATED FEET.

However, these are no ordinary feet. Closer inspection reveals a severe DEFORMITY.

The soles of the feet are arched to an amazing extreme, to the point where the heels practically touch the toes. The entire foot is only about six inches long. *

They're dirty, like they'd been buried and dug up.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
What happened here?

The Attendant is as perplexed as Booth.

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT
Couldn't tell you. Not any disease I've ever seen. Possibly a birth defect. If I didn't know any better...

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Pretend you don't.

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT
Well, if I didn't know any better, I'd say it looks a lot like Chinese foot-binding.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
How do you know it ain't?

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT
They stopped doing it a hundred years ago.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Maybe the feet are a hundred years old.

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT
They aren't.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
But they could be.

There's something the Attendant isn't telling him.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
What?

Booth follows the Attendant over to another drawer. He yanks out the slab. On it a BODY, covered by a white sheet. *

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT
They fished this Jane Doe out of
the bay last week.

The Attendant pulls the sheet back from the face. Despite the bloat and bruising, we recognize it. *

FLASHBACK TO:

THE FAKE MULTHORPE SHOWS BOOTH A PHOTO OF HIS MISSING WIFE
She's a blonde, striking beauty. *

BACK TO:

THE PRESENT

She's not so beautiful anymore, but the women are one in the same. This dead woman is the fake Sylvia Multhorpe.

The Attendant now reaches to the end of the slab, lifting the sheet there as well.

No feet.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Ain't that somethin'. I take it
she didn't drown.

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT
Cyanide.

Booth paces, trying to wrap his mind around this wrinkle.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Put me wise on this foot binding.

CUT TO:

INT. MORGUE OFFICE - LATER

Booth and the Attendant stare at an OPEN MEDICAL BOOK.

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT
It was a Chinese symbol of wealth
and class for a thousand years.
(MORE)

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT (cont'd)
 They called it the "Lotus Foot."
 From the age of six, women's feet
 were wrapped with bandages so
 tightly that the foot was unable to
 grow except onto itself. The four
 smaller toes would break and curl
 under. A four inch lotus foot was
 considered ideal.

CLOSE ON THE MEDICAL BOOK

PHOTOGRAPHS and X-RAYS of lotus feet. Quite unpleasant.
 They look a lot like the amputated feet we just saw.

*
 *

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT
 Men considered the sight of these
 deformed feet and the smell of the
 infected flesh erotic.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 How common was this?

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT
 Among the upper classes, very.
 Poor families couldn't afford to
 cripple their women just to make
 them pretty. The lotus foot was a
 status symbol.

*
 *
 *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 So what happened?

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT
 The twentieth century happened.
 Chinese government banned foot
 binding in 1911. Made the practice
 punishable by death.

*
 *

CUT TO:

INT. BOOTH'S CAR - DAY

Booth drives through West Hollywood. He adjusts the rear
 view mirror. We catch a glimpse of --

THAT MYSTERY ELECTRIC BUICK

*

-- a few car-lengths back.

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT (V.O.)
 That was the end of that.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S WAITING ROOM - DAY

Booth finds himself in yet another Doctor's waiting room, and again the only "man." This time, instead of transvestites, he finds himself surrounded by ATTRACTIVE WOMEN. *

MIDNIGHT ATTENDANT (V.O.)

In the course of twenty years, it essentially disappeared off the face of the Earth.

POV - BOOTH *

He stares at a PAIR OF FEET, shoehorned into some expensive HIGH-HEELED SHOES. *

Their OWNER feels his eyes on her. She wiggles her toes in acknowledgment. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *

How do you walk around in those? *

HIGH-HEEL WOMAN *

Practice. *

He nods. *

HIGH-HEEL WOMAN *

They're actually quite comfortable. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *

Reminds me of what the cons say to each other in the joint. You can get used to anything. *

A NURSE peaks her head in.

NURSE

Mister Booth? *

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Waiting in his fashionably-decorated office is Wendell Multhorpe. The real one. The Nurse leads Booth in. *

WENDELL MULTHORPE

Robin, would you mind closing the door behind you?

She complies. Booth takes in the office - the golf trophies, *
the fishing trip photos, the envelope opener that could be
used as a weapon should the need arise.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
If the waiting room is any
indication, you're quite an artist
with scalpel.

Multhorpe watches him curiously.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
A Rodin of the rhinoplasty. He was
a sculptor. French, I think.

WENDELL MULTHORPE
I know who Rodin is.

CLOSE ON A REPLICA OF THE VENUS DE MILO STATUE

Booth regards it closely, especially the missing right arm,
severed half-way between elbow and shoulder.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
It was a compliment, Doc. You
might learn how to accept one.
(off the Venus de Milo)
Why do you think this statue is so
famous?

WENDELL MULTHORPE
Did you come here for a history
lesson, Mister Booth?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
(ignoring him)
They say it's a perfect rendition
of feminine beauty, but that's got
to be some kind of a joke, right?

WENDELL MULTHORPE
I don't think it's a joke, no.

CLOSER ON THE STATUE

The Greek nose. The small breasts. The padding on the
stomach. The missing arms.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
You get many skirts asking you for
a beezer like this?
(MORE)

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (cont'd)
 Bet you more come in looking like
 Venus than leavin' that way.
 Goddamn patronizing if you ask me.

*
 *
 *

WENDELL MULTHORPE
 I didn't, so if you don't mind...

*

Booth takes a seat.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Do you know any reason why someone
 would impersonate you for the
 purpose of hiring me?

Multhorpe smiles like a man trying hard to act calm. He
 grabs the envelope opener and starts at his mail with it.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Why would someone say your wife's
 missing when she ain't?

*
 *

Just digging at envelope after envelope with the opener.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Do you know anything about foot
 binding, Doctor Multhorpe?

A LAUGH escapes his lips.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Something funny?

He SLAMS the opener down on his desk.

*

WENDELL MULTHORPE
 You may dispense with the charade,
 Mister Booth! That act may work on
 your friends downtown, but how
 about we cut to the chase? What is
 it you are really after?

*

Not what Booth was expecting. Before he can answer...

WENDELL MULTHORPE
 It's money you want, isn't it?
 Fine. How much?

Playing along...

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 How much is it worth to you?

WENDELL MULTHORPE

What's it going to take for me to
never see or hear from you again?

*

Booth thinks. What number is not going to make him sound
stupid?

WENDELL MULTHORPE

Well?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

One hundred thousand dollars.

*

Multhorpe stares at Booth with what must be disbelief. Booth
keeps a straight face.

It looks like he will have to revise that number when
Multhorpe begins writing on a PRESCRIPTION PAD.

*

*

WENDELL MULTHORPE

You needn't have done Cairo like
that. There really is no honor
among thieves.

*

*

He tears the top sheet off with a flourish before digging in
a drawer, pulling from it a KEY. He pushes the prescription
and the key across the desk.

CLOSE ON THE PRESCRIPTION

Written on it: *Union Station, Locker 16B*

WENDELL MULTHORPE

I need time to arrange for that
kind of money. Check the locker in
two days. You'll find your price
has been met.

*

(dripping with sarcasm)

*

It's been a pleasure, Mister Booth.
I'd be obliged if you gave
Shoulders my sincerest regards.

CUT TO:

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Booth addresses an envelope to himself, care of a P.O. Box,
and puts the prescription and key inside.

*

*

EDDIE O'MALLEY (V.O.)

Shoulders? You mean Shoulders
Marquard?

INT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

A large room filled with desks. O'Malley finishes a report. Booth casually puts his feet up beside the man's typewriter. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
You know another one?

O'Malley eyes Booth's feet but decides to let it go.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Runs a coupla shine boxes over in smoke town. Still got that clip joint, as far as I know, the one with a rooster on it.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Think he's running skirts or dirty pictures?

EDDIE O'MALLEY
What do you want to know about Shoulders for? *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Healthy curiosity.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
People who are curious about Shoulders don't stay healthy for long. Sometimes they develop a limp.

Spangler spies Booth from across the room. *

TED SPANGLER
Hey Booth, looks like you stepped in shit! *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Try using a toilet next time!

POLICEMEN laugh. Spangler gives Booth the finger before returning to his own work. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Somebody should arrest that sap for impersonating an officer.
(beat)
The clink still hasn't caught up with Shoulders, huh?

EDDIE O'MALLEY

And it never will. Marquard's got money and he's got friends. As long as he don't make headlines, he gets to keep both.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

And if he does make headlines?

EDDIE O'MALLEY

People around here start drivin' expensive cars. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Last time I checked, floatin' some broad with no feet wasn't maintaining a low profile.

O'Malley looks up from his typing.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

I saw the stiff, Eddie. She got a name?

EDDIE O'MALLEY

Yeah. Jane Doe. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

No record? *

EDDIE O'MALLEY

She didn't mention it. Maybe you should ask her.

Booth shoots him a look. O'Malley jerks a thumb over his shoulder.

EDDIE O'MALLEY

Mugshot books are in there. Go for it.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Think she was workin' it for Shoulders?

EDDIE O'MALLEY

What makes you say that? *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

A hunch.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
If you're looking for information,
you'll have to do better than that.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Who said I'm looking for
information? This is just a former
colleague, giving the lay on a bird
you may want to talk to.

*

*

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Shoulders Marquard?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
The one who shaves dice on the east
side. Building's got a rooster on
it. You might ask if he ever heard
of Chinese foot-binding.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
That another hunch?

Booth stands with a wink and a slap on the back.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I don't have hunches, Eddie.

Booth heads to the exit. O'Malley yells out...

EDDIE O'MALLEY
What the hell is Chinese foot-
binding!?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
You know how to read! Look it up!

THE MUG SHOT ROOM - LATER

Booth flips through pages of pages of female mug shots, a
tedious endeavor.

LATER

Still more mug shots. Nothing.

EVEN LATER

He's about ready to give up when SOMETHING catches his
attention:

A MUG SHOT

Blonde and pretty, but definitely not the Fake Sylvia Multhorpe.

FLASHBACK TO:

BOOTH AND SHOULDERS IN THE BACK OF THE CADILLAC

The gangster addresses Booth.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
 Dame just wants to make a new life
 of it and some no good chiseler
 comes around telling tales about
 the past. It's goddamn un-
 American.

BACK TO:

THE MUG SHOT

It is, however, the REAL SYLVIA MULTHORPE.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD (V.O.)
 Even roundheel chippies got a right
 to reinvention, don't they, shamus?

He writes some numbers down off the photo. We follow Booth out into --

THE POLICE STATION PROPER

-- avoiding the attention of O'Malley and Spangler, taking a
 straight path to a FEMALE OFFICER. She smiles. Booth has
 this affect on women. *

OFFICER DORIS
 John, what are you doing here? *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Just doing some homework. How's
 Sam?

OFFICER DORIS
 Oh, you know, any time he's got two
 pennies to rub together- *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Think you could do me one?

OFFICER DORIS
Why even ask about him if you don't
want to know?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Just being polite, sorry. Need you
to get some info on an arrest for
me. Be a sweetheart, will ya?

OFFICER DORIS
Got a number?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Zero-three-eight-twenty-four dash
forty-one.

OFFICER DORIS
You could have called, you know. I
don't...
(leans in close)
...normally do things like that.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I know you don't, doll. And it was
great. But I'm pressed for time.

Finally, she acquiesces, disappearing off to places unseen.
Booth remains at her desk, trying to be inconspicuous.

A DIFFERENT FEMALE OFFICER uses the water cooler near by.
She sees him. More smiles.

DIFFERENT FEMALE OFFICER
John Booth?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Patty? How long's it-

The smile fades.

DIFFERENT FEMALE OFFICER
You're a real ass, you know that?

SPLASH - She throws a cup of water in his face. More history
here.

DIFFERENT FEMALE OFFICER
Your girlfriend fucks better than
you do.

She walks off. Doris returns with a file, choosing not to
comment on what has just transpired.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I owe ya. What was she pinched
for?

OFFICER DORIS
Soliciting.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Come again?

OFFICER DORIS
Yep. Prostitution.

She shows it to him. Sure enough, Sylvia "Bascom" was
arrested for prostitution. A detail at the bottom of the
arrest report catches his interest:

Arresting officer: E. O'Malley

Even further down:

Bail posted: S. Marquard

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN DAVID BOOTH'S OFFICE - DAY

Booth fixes the tear in his painting with SCOTCH TAPE. He
steps back to admire his handiwork.

Ever so faintly, his daydream: the sounds of CICADAS, FROGS,
and then, the LAUGHTER OF PLAYING CHILDREN.

The office door CREEPS OPEN. Booth looks over to see:

MRS. PANGBURN

She looks distressed, holding one of her figurines.

MRS. PANGBURN
Mister Booth, you haven't been
returning my calls.

She takes in Booth's mess of an office - he still hasn't
straightened up since the break-in.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Ain't nothing to tell you.

MRS. PANGBURN
But...but someone...my ex-husband-

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Lady, I'm about to do you a favor.
 Ready? You're fat and you stare at
 those dolls far too much.

MRS. PANGBURN
 Mister Booth!

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Just tellin' it to you straight.
 Consider the case closed. Bill's
 in the mail.

He pushes past her to the door.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 If you'll excuse me, I got some
 real gumshoeing to do. Be a good
 girl and close the door on your way
 out, will you?

CUT TO:

EXT. JOHN DAVID BOOTH'S OFFICE BUILDING - LATER

Booth returns to his car. Parked down the block is that
 MYSTERY BUICK again.

Booth drives off.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES CITY STREETS - LATER

We watch from inside --

THE MYSTERY ELECTRIC BUICK

-- as Booth's car navigates the city streets. A right here,
 another right, a left, and then:

A LEFT INTO A DEAD END STREET

It's a TRICK - Booth knew he was being followed. He gets out
 of his car, running over to the Buick as it attempts a
 desperate three-point turn. We see a WOMAN behind the wheel.

ON THE OVERHEAD TROLLEY WIRE

The Buick's trolley pole TWISTS in the electrical wires.
 Maneuverability is not their strong suit. SPARKS fly.

Booth's at the driver's side window before the Woman can get away. She looks to us in panic. The car stalls. *

A closer look reveals it's not a woman after all, but a FAT MAN IN DRAG. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
You've got to be kidding me.

As it happen, it's no ordinary man, either.

IT'S THE FAKE WENDELL MULTHORPE

CUT TO:

INT. RAINBOW LOUNGE - NIGHT

A DRAG QUEEN performs on stage to a scattered crowd. We find Booth and the Fake Multhorpe at the bar.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Do you have any idea what kind of
jam you're in?

The Fake Multhorpe cannot hide his anxiety. He changes the subject.

FAKE MULTHORPE
I do a cabaret act here on
Thursdays. Perhaps you've seen it.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Do I look like I go to gunsels shows
on Thursdays?

FAKE MULTHORPE
We get all types in here, you know.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
No, I don't know.

Fake Multhorpe sips from his frozen daiquiri.

FAKE MULTHORPE
Doctor Cairo told me you were a
patient.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Christ, doesn't doctor-patient
privilege mean anything anymore?
What else did he tell you?
(MORE)

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (cont'd)
 Somethin' about what accessories to
 murder get in this town?

*

FAKE MULTHORPE
 Mister Booth-

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Let me fill you in. You get to try
 on the newest style in neckwear.
 Sound good, daisy, since you like
 to play dress-up so much?

*

FAKE MULTHORPE
 Please-

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Rope don't go with a flower print,
 I'm afraid, so wear something else
 when you take the leap.

*

FAKE MULTHORPE
 Please, Doctor Cairo, he-

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 He ain't takin' requests anymore or
 haven't you heard?

Fake Multhorpe begins to cry.

FAKE MULTHORPE
 He promised me...

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 He promised you what?

FAKE MULTHORPE
 He promised me my surgery. He said
 if I did...if I did what I did...

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Pretend to be the Multhorpe bird?

*

FAKE MULTHORPE
 If I did that, he'd make sure I got
 on the list. Then I read in the
 news, about Doctor Cairo's murder.
 I knew something had gone terribly
 wrong. Now I'm afraid to go home.
 (beat)
 I've been living out of my car.

*

Booth regards the Fake Multhorpe. Wrinkled clothes, wig
 slightly askew, makeup smeared. He does look to be living
 out of his car.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Give me your wallet.

FAKE MULTHORPE
What for?

Booth grabs the man's PURSE. He finds Fake Multhorpe's wallet, and in it, his DRIVER'S LICENSE. Finally, a name: FRANK GOODIS.

*
*
*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Go home, Fat Frank.

*

FAKE MULTHORPE
What if someone is waiting there for me?

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Who'd be waiting for you? The only jasper you can finger is Cairo which is about how someone wanted it. If you were in danger, you'd already be dead, same as the doc.

*

FAT FRANK
(formerly Fake Multhorpe)
But-

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Safest place for you to be is where I can find you.

Fat Frank is not convinced. There's something unsaid.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
What?

*
*

Fat Frank rummages in his purse. Lipstick, a compact, and empty candy bar wrappers pile up on the bar. Finally, here it is: a HOUSE KEY.

*
*
*

FAT FRANK
I was told to get rid of it. Drop it down a sewer drain. But I didn't.

*
*
*
*

He extends it to the Detective.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
What do I want with your house key?

*
*

FAT FRANK
It's not my house key, detective.

*
*

The significance dawns on Booth. He takes the key from him and stands. Booth leaves some money on the bar and even more for Frank. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *

Get outta town and stay there, *

savvy? *

Frank nods, sipping anxiously on his daiquiri. Booth gives him a final once over. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Do you think you actually look like a woman?

FAT FRANK

What does a woman look like, detective? *

CUT TO:

EXT. NEWSPAPER STAND - NIGHT

Racks and racks of fashion magazines. Scantily-clad models captioned by the promise of clear skin and adventurous sex. *

A newspaper bundle flies out the back of the MIDNIGHT TRUCK. Booth is off with his paper as soon as the twine is cut. *

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOSTER CLUB - NIGHT

That flashing sign of a neon ROOSTER.

REVERSE ON BOOTH

He sits inside his car, reading the NEWSPAPER. Unremarkable articles in a sea of clothing, fitness club, and cosmetics advertisements.

A CAR pulls to a stop outside the Rooster Club. Shoulders' car. The driver holds the door open as the man himself exits the club and disappears into the back seat.

It pulls away. Booth begins pursuit.

LATER

Shoulders' car shoots along DOWNTOWN CITY STREETS. Booth *
follows. He's better at this than Fat Frank. *

CUT TO:

EXT. GARMENT DISTRICT - NIGHT *

Fabric shops, flower venders, and flea markets, all *
retrofitted into dilapidated Downtown architecture. *
Everything is in a state of disrepair. *

Aging BILLBOARD peel, their promises of eternal youth through *
night cream losing to time and the elements. *

IN AN ALLEYWAY *

Booth waits in the shadows, eyes focused on: *

AN ART-DECO BUILDING *

Four stories of blue-green terra-cotta facade. The windows *
are blacked out, seemingly abandoned to time. Yet a number *
of expensive cars are parked outside, Shoulders' among them. *

What was once a marquee now holds a cheap, vinyl banner: *
SUGAR AND SPICE AND EVERYTHING NICE. Accompanying *
illustrations suggest a clothing manufacturer. *

ANGLE ON SOME DRUNK MEN *

They exit from a side door, clasping to each other with the *
camaraderie of the intoxicated. Booth watches the men climb *
into a Mercedes and peel off. *

LATER *

Shoulders and his Driver appear soon after from the same *
exit, hopping in their own car. Booth flattens against a *
wall, avoiding their HEADLIGHTS as they drive away. *

Booth hurries across the street to that side entrance. *

INSIDE THE BUILDING *

A dark, winding passageway. The SOUNDS OF MACHINERY emanate *
from places unseen. Booth progresses forward, discovering *
the source in: *

AN OPEN SPACE *

It takes up most of the entire first floor. Rows and rows of
MID-CENTURY INDUSTRIAL SEWING MACHINES manned by LATINO MEN
and WOMEN. A WORKER passes without acknowledgement.

This is a SWEAT SHOP.

Booth walks the aisles, taking in their work. Looks like
CHILDREN'S CLOTHING. Miniature party dresses, shirts, and
short pants. It all seems so innocuous, non-threatening.

No one gives him even the slightest notice. No one except an
OVERWEIGHT SEAMSTRESS. Her eyes move from Booth to a far
wall - what you're looking for is over there. He sees it:

A STEEL DOOR

It's partially obscured by some CLOTHING RACKS. Booth tries
the handle - the door's locked. Before he can contemplate
his next move --

A SLOT OPENS UP IN IT

-- TWO BEADY EYES staring out at us from behind. Booth
doesn't know quite what he's supposed to do.

DOORMAN
Password?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
What?

DOORMAN
Password.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I'm a pal of Shoulders. He told me
to check out the joint.

DOORMAN
Still need the password, sir.

Booth searches his brain. Password?

DOORMAN
Would you like me to phone Mister
Marquard for you?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
No, it will come to me, just one-

It does come to him, as though it were the most obvious thing
in the world...

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Simulacrum.

Those eyes study him for an extended moment until the slot
CLOSES SHUT. Seconds pass without activity. Maybe that
wasn't the password.

It's Booth's lucky day. The Door SWINGS OPEN. We see the
tuxedo-clad DOORMAN for the first time. Behind him looms a
STAIRCASE to places unseen.

Booth starts past the Doorman when an ARM blocks his path.

DOORMAN
Sir?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Yes?

DOORMAN
How will you be paying?

The Detective reaches into his wallet, withdrawing SHOULDERS'
FIVE THOUSAND DOLLAR BILL. He hands it over.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Cash.

MOMENTS LATER

Booth ascends that staircase towards the sounds of THUMPING
BASS MUSIC, the journey lit by dull RED BACKUP LIGHTS. A
GAGGLE OF SCANDINAVIAN BUSINESSMEN pass him on the way out,
conversing in their own tongue.

THE SECOND FLOOR

A HALLWAY. A hallway with DOORS. Some closed, some open.
In the open doors stand:

WOMEN

Dead-eyed PROSTITUTES catering to eccentric tastes. They get
stranger the farther Booth walks.

A heavily-tattooed ASIAN WOMAN. Another who's MORBIDLY
OBESE. Her opposite, a WOMAN WITH A LIGHT-LACED 19-INCH
WAIST. Someone's 70-year-old GRANDMOTHER. SIAMESE TWINS.

We can only imagine what's behind the closed doors, the
hallway filled with the SOUNDS OF SEXUAL DEBAUCHERY. A door
opens and --

A POLICE OFFICER

-- exits through it, straightening his uniform. He pushes past Booth to the stairs without acknowledgement. Instinctively, the Booth's eyes go to --

HIS OWN LEFT HAND

-- seeing it tighten into a fist as though controlled by a power not his own.

FLASHBACK TO:

BOOTH RIDING THE ELECTRIC BUS

That Young Boy watches him with rapt fascination, peering over the top of his coloring book.

BOY

Hey mister, watcha doin'?

BACK TO:

THE PRESENT - ON BOOTH'S FIST

Open. Close. Open. Close. Booth's breath quickens, overwhelmed by the GRUNTS, MOANS, and SLAPPING BODIES heard behind the hallway's peeling wallpaper.

Booth moves on, stained carpet under foot. Down the end, he stops at a doorway, its door slightly ajar. The MUSIC POUNDS.

FLASHBACK TO:

THE BOY ON THE BUS

He returns to his coloring book, scribbling with crayon, pleased by his artistry. So innocent.

BACK TO:

THE PRESENT

We HEAR the fucking before we see it. Booth's left palm extends with peculiar helplessness, pushing that door OPEN.

INSIDE THE ROOM

A PREGNANT WOMAN has ROUGH SEX with a CUSTOMER. They're not
alone. The man grasps her extended stomach with one hand,
the other caressing: *

THE STUMP OF THE BEAUTIFUL AMPUTEE *

He thrusts into the Pregnant Woman with disturbing rapidity
and force. A man frustrated by his inability to feel. *

The Customer looks in our direction. He likes being watched,
inviting it. For the first time, pleasure shows in his face. *

Booth is disgusted by the depravity. *

CLOSE ON THE CUSTOMER'S EYES *

They narrow, glassing over as climax approaches. *

CLOSE ON BOOTH'S OWN EYES *

Narrowing for a different reason - passive repulsion evolving
into active violence. The switch has been flipped. *

His hand goes to his waistband, coming away with a GUN.
Booth RUSHES inside -- *

PISTOL-WHIPPING THE CUSTOMER *

-- with a shocking brutality. The naked man falls to the
floor, spitting up teeth. *

He tries to crawl away, but Booth is on him, savage,
BATTERING him across the back of the neck with a bloodied
fist until he stops moving. *

The Pregnant Woman raises a sheet over her round form, backed
into a corner, but Booth's interest lies elsewhere: *

THE BEAUTIFUL AMPUTEE *

She tries to make an escape on her half-fastened artificial
limb, but Booth is too quick for her. He sends the leg
FLYING from her body with a swift KICK. *

She falls with a THUD. Booth kneels on her spine, cocking
his gun with a steely grip. He sets the muzzle on the back
of her head. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Tell me about the woman with the
lotus feet. *

SMASH CUT TO: *

INT./EXT. BOOTH'S PARKED CAR - LATER

Booth sits inside his parked Fiat, needing this moment to collect himself.

His BLOODY LEFT FIST tightens on the steering wheel, squeezing with such FORCE we fear his own fingers might break.

WIDE ON THE SCENE

He is parked in his own driveway.

CUT TO:

INT. BOOTH'S SUBURBAN MIDDLE-CLASS HOME - LATER

Booth's hands lift a hand-written NOTE from the kitchen table:

Be back later - Vicki

THE BEDROOM - LATER

Clothing flies through the air. Bras. Underwear.

Booth is going through Vicki's drawers. Lotions. Sex toys. Pornography. He finds what he's been searching for - a SCRAP OF PAPER with a single word written on it. *Simulacrum*.

MOMENTS LATER

He stares down at the bed sheets, wrinkled and unmade. Dirty. Booth YANKS them from the mattress with a strange ferocity.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN

EXT. MULTHORPE RESIDENCE - POOL

Sylvia Multhorpe swims in her lap pool. She begins to climb out when a HAND extends a towel to her. It's Booth.

She accepts it, but stays where she is, nude below the water.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
How are things progressing, Mister
Booth?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Swimmingly.

She doesn't get out of the pool.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
Would you mind turning your back?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Modest all of a sudden? You can
cut the virgin act. *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
I beg your pardon? *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Stop pretending you know from
nothing. I seen the mugshot,
chippy. I know you worked for
Shoulders. Your whore'in is a
matter of public record. *

She still won't get out of the pool. Finally, he turns
around. She steps out, wrapping the towel around her. *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
You have the wrong idea.

Booth swings back to her. He's had enough, RIPPING the towel
off her body. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Do I? *

She stands there in her birthday suit, unflinching, refusing
to be intimidated.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Gambling debts? You must be having
a laugh. Sounds like I ain't the
only one who still works by barter.
Shoulders gets a crooked doc for
his creep joint and your husband
gets one of the prize whores. Tell
me another one, sister.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
Can I have my towel back?

Booth considers the towel in his hand. He hands it to her.

Rather than cloak herself with it, she uses the towel to dry her hair. Booth doesn't know what to say. *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

You think you know what's in a person's heart, Mister Booth. But you don't. *

Wrapping it now around her head, her nude form on display...

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

No one owns me.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

What would you call it when one man buys you from another? *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

That's between them. What I do, I do because I want to. If they believe their agreement is binding over me, then they are as mistaken as you are. *

She walks over to a lounge chair, casually grasping another towel - this one she drapes around her body. Show's over. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Why string me along? *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

My husband has been in Shoulders' employ, fulfilling duties to which I have not been privilege to. The reasons for that service do not matter, regardless of whether they engage your prurient nature.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

My prurient nature? You have a smart mouth for a roundheel chippy two years removed from the screw. You clean up nice, but I can still smell the gutter on you. That eye's healing up nice. I'm startin' to believe you did fall down. *

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

Tell me, Mister Booth. What do you think you know? *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Cairo was blackmailing your husband
alright.

*
*

FLASHBACK TO:

*

CAIRO'S BLACKMAIL LETTER

*

I know what you did. \$100,000 or everyone else will.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
The way I figure, Cairo found out
you were one of Shoulders' pro
skirts. Thought he could get a few
leafs from your husband to clam up.
Except Wendell Multhorpe ain't no
dummy. He knows blackmail's got a
way of not stayin' bought. So he
calls Cairo's bluff.

*
*
*
*
*

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. WOODED AREA - NIGHT

A dark, stormy night. Cairo begins to dig into a mound of
packed earth.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
But see, this is where it all gets
queer. Cairo doesn't disappear.
He doesn't because he finds a pair
of deformed feet.

*
*
*

FLASHBACK TO:

*

INT. MAKESHIFT OPERATING THEATER - NIGHT

*

Wendell Multhorpe studies grotesque PHOTOGRAPHS OF LOTUS
FEET. Seated nearby, nude except for her surgical gown:

*
*

THE WOMAN WITH THE LOTUS FEET

*

She has yet to be transformed.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
Suddenly, it's not just some dirty
doc at the end of the hook but the
hardest gee in town.

*
*
*
*

LATER

*

HER NORMAL FEET protrude from underneath a white sheet, each *
held by a WOODWORKING VICE. Life for her is about to change. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.) *
Ain't too many things that can bend *
Shoulders Marquard over a barrel, *
but smashin' some chippy's feet for *
sex perverts with a chinky exotic *
taste just might be one of'em. *

Wendell Multhorpe regards the task at hand with apprehension. *
His employer steps from the shadows... *

SHOULDERS MARQUARD *
Do we have a problem? *

WENDELL MULTHORPE *
You've met my price? *

SHOULDERS MARQUARD *
Your price, Multhorpe, waits *
downstairs. Now get to work. *

Multhorpe reaches to a tray of surgical tools, grasping a *
RUBBER Mallet. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.) *
Takes a special kind of depravity, *
sister. To find beauty in broken *
bones and rotting flesh. *

He swings it towards the feet... *

SMASH CUT TO: *

EXT. DOWNTOWN BUILDING - NIGHT *

Multhorpe takes drags from a cigarette clasped in trembling *
hand, shaken. But things are looking up. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.) *
That kind gets the newshawks all *
excited, John Q Public askin' what *
the law's doin' about it, and the *
politicians scratchin' their heads *
wondering how some beat cop drives *
a nicer crate than they do. *

Waiting for him on a bench is his future wife, Sylvia. *

BACK TO: *

THE PRESENT

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

That's some story.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

You act surprised, like this is all news to you.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

It is.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Cairo just happens to find the feet when he's already trying to chisel your husband? That's a big coincidence, Mrs. Multhorpe, and I don't believe in coincidences.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

What are you trying to say?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

I'm sayin' Cairo had a partner. And when he got bumped, they needed some sucker to be a front man on the graft, even if he didn't know he was. I'm that sucker. And I can't shake the feeling you're pulling all the strings.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

You've got quite an imagination.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

I ain't even done yet.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. ROOSTER CLUB - SHOULDER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Booth shows Shoulders the photo of the Woman with Lotus Feet. A moment of recognition in the mobster's face.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)

Cairo sees in me a desperate man. Maybe I am. Has me on a fakeloo search for Sylvia Multhorpe, flashing the dead woman's picture around town.

MOMENTS LATER

Shoulders watches the detective leave. He lifts up his phone and dials.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)

There's only one way Shoulders
shuts up a blackmailer and that's
making so they don't talk to no one
without a Ouija board. Wouldn't
want to put your own pretty neck on
the chopping block, so that's where
I come in.

BACK TO:

THE PRESENT

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

You should leave now, Mister Booth.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

What if I don't? How about you get
the law on the horn? While you're
at it, put 'em wise to how your
husband resurrected barbaric
practices from a century ago for a
goon like Shoulders. Cut off a
dead chippy's dogs to hide the
evidence. Didn't she deserve
better than to have her feet
smashed with a hammer, her corpse
fed to the fish? Got any feeling
in that ice cold pump of yours?
She was a whore, just like you.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

My husband-

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Your husband is rotten as
Prohibition and you goddamn know
it! Better hope the law is, too,
else nothing's gonna stop him going
over, least of all me.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

I suppose you'll be keeping that
arm of yours.

He regards his arm.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *
 You know, I think I'm getting used *
 to it. But don't worry about me. *
 I'll be getting paid. *

Booth reaches into his pocket, taking out the HOUSE KEY Fat *
 Frank gave him. He tosses it over. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *
 That's your key, ain't it? Funny *
 how these things get misplaced. *
 Find their way into the hands of *
 blackmailers and fat gunsels *
 angling to get a little lighter *
 between the legs. *

She doesn't need to say it's her key - her face says it all. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *
 You want your husband to swing, *
 that's jake with me. Just stop *
 pretending you love him. *

CUT TO:

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Booth opens up a post office box. A single ENVELOPE waits *
 inside, addressed by his own hand. He holds it up to the *
 light, silhouetting the KEY held within. *

CUT TO:

INT. UNION STATION - DAY

Mission revival architecture, roman marble, and Spanish tile. *
 We pick Booth out of the packed train station crowd. *

LATER

Booth sits at the counter of a Union Station DINER, his eyes *
 focused about fifty feet away on a ROW OF LOCKERS. *

CLOSE ON THOSE LOCKERS

One is labeled "16B." It's the one he has a key for. *

No one loiters near it and no one appears to be watching him. *
 Just commuters buying newspapers and boarding trains. *

Booth makes his move. He traverses the distance between diner and locker as inconspicuous as possible. Puts the key in - it fits, it turns. *

The locker opens. There, inside: a BRIEFCASE. He grabs it. *

INSIDE A PUBLIC BATHROOM - LATER *

Booth waits for the last person to wash their hands and exit before he disappears into: *

THE LAST STALL

He places the briefcase on the toilet, flips the latches and opens it - stacks and stacks of MONEY. *

ON THE MAIN BATHROOM DOOR

UNKNOWN HANDS close it and lock it.

BACK ON BOOTH

He thumbs through the bills. Sure looks like a hundred thousand dollars. *

OUTSIDE THE STALL

We see Booth's feet underneath the door. Two MEN enter the frame, standing just outside. Between them, they carry a large LUGGAGE TRUNK. You could fit a body inside.

ON THESE MEN

We recognize them as SHOULDERS' THUGS. They nod to each other before REACHING UNDER THE DOOR and dragging Booth out by his ankles.

He twists onto his back, getting a good look at the FIST that comes swinging down, bringing us to...

BLACK

SMASH CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS - DREAM SEQUENCE - VISTAVISION

Another graphic-infused dream sequences.

-- the door to locker 16B OPENS and Booth falls into it, through the rabbit hole

-- we watch the lid of the trunk OPEN from the inside; the THUGS pull us out *

-- Sylvia Multhorpe accepts a towel from Booth

SYLVIA MULTHORPE
How are things progressing, Mister
Booth?

*

-- we are tossed into the trunk of SHOULDER'S AWAITING CAR

*

-- the tight-laced Prostitute stares at us from an open door

*

-- Booth falls through smoke and into blackness

*

-- the Junkie who sent Booth to Cairo's apartment leans down,
staring into our faces; He smiles a toothy grin despite his
bruised throat

*

*

*

JUNKIE
Got any more smokes, Mister
Detective?

-- the Junkie slams the trunk SHUT

*

-- X-ray images of lotus feet

*

-- the Beautiful Amputee removes her prosthetic leg

*

-- a lotus flower BLOOMS

-- Wendell Multhorpe hands over the locker key

*

WENDELL MULTHORPE
You really needn't have done Cairo
like that.

-- Fat Frank looks at us over his strawberry daiquiri

FAT FRANK
What does a woman look like, Mister
Booth?

FADE OUT.

FADE IN

EXT. WILDERNESS - NIGHT

*

Things are hazy at first, slowly gaining clarity when --

SPLASH

-- we're drenched by a bucket of water wielded by unseen hands.

REVERSE ON BOOTH

Shivering from the cold, deep gulps of air, his face bloody and swollen.

Booth hugs an OAK TREE, prostrate on a mound of grass. He tries to get up, but he can't - his hands are handcuffed around the tree. *

He takes in his surroundings. Forestation as far as the eye can see. A dirt road. *

On that road, there's a PARKED CAR. Shoulder's car. Two Thugs stand beside it, playing POKER on the trunk. *

Then there's the broad-shouldered MAN who stands before us holding an AXE. This can only be one person. *

SHOULDERS MARQUARD

Remember me?

It takes a moment for Booth to gather a response.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

My fairy godmother?

Shoulders approaches. He regards the axe in his hand, admiring his own reflection in its enormous blade. *

SHOULDERS MARQUARD

That's remarkable, Booth. You've guessed correctly. Shoulders Marquard is your fairy godmother because he is about to give you a very special present. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

A briefcase full of money? It's a popular gift this season. *

SHOULDERS MARQUARD

Just gave away my last one. I have something even better for you. Something I know you want. *

(beat)

A new shape. How does that sound?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Ace.

Shoulders stands over his captive. The axe shines brightly
in the afternoon light. He holds it over Booth's left elbow.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD

It's here you want it, am I wrong?
My memory is always letting me
down. Easy to forget things you're
not looking at. Man can forget his
own face if he didn't have a
mirror.

It's Booth turn to see his own reflection in that massive
blade. Fear shows on his face.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD

Father was a lumberjack, you know.
I was practically raised with one
of these in my tiny hand. Alas,
the family business wasn't for me,
but maybe I can still make papa
proud. We chop other things in
these woods now.

Nearby, an empty HOLE, dug into the dirt. The significance
dawns on Booth.

FLASHBACK TO:

A STORMY NIGHT

Cairo plunges a shovel into these same woods. He comes upon
the LOTUS FEET.

BACK TO:

THE PRESENT

Shoulders lights a CIGARETTE in his own mouth, extending it
teasingly towards his captive.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD

Sorry they ain't your brand, but I
ain't below giving a condemned man
his last puff.

He puts the cigarette in Booth's left hand. The detective
holds it there impotently, far out of reach of his own mouth.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD

The skills aren't what they used to
be, I'm afraid.

(MORE)

SHOULDERS MARQUARD (cont'd)
 We'll have to start small and work
 up to it. Like getting your hair
 cut, Booth. A little at a time.
 You're going to look wonderful,
 just the way you always imagined.

Booth has no time to react as --

THE AXE SWINGS DOWN!

-- FOUR FINGERS on that left hand dropping to the ground like
 twitching caterpillars.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Ahhhhh!!!!

The barbarity has caught the attention of Shoulders' Thugs,
 interrupting their poker hand to take a long look over.
 Concern washes across their faces.

Booth tries to hold it together.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 You get your rocks off breaking
 feet, hardman?

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
 I'm a business man, not a sex
 pervert.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 You're a goddamn sadist.

Shoulders leans in close.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
 I'll let you in on a little secret.
 That skirt wanted them feet.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Why would she want that?

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
 Better to cut one off, shamus?
 Without'em, she's just some corner
 chippy waving down passing cars for
 pocket change. I made her a twist
 men cross oceans for.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Is that why she took cyanide? To
 show her gratitude?

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Said she wanted the feet.
Keepin' em was a different tale.

*
*
*

Shoulders sizes up Booth's arm once more with the axe,
raising it into position.

*
*

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Beauty can be painful in ways
unforeseen.

*
*
*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
You're being set up.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Were you born without brains,
shamus?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
By the Multhorpes. I thought it
was just the dame, but it's both
of'em. It's a bad frame, but
they're trying to make it fit.
Don't get goofy, Shoulders. Do
this and you're icing the only bird
that can tell people otherwise.
They want you to bump me.

*

*

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Couldn't just sit and stare at the
five grand I gave you. Should've
stuck to bindle stiffs. Blackmail
ain't your racket.

*
*
*
*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Blackmail? You're making a
mistake.

*
*

Shoulders pulls a folded PIECE OF PAPER from his pocket.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
Someone else wrote this, did they?

He shoves it in Booth's face. It's too close to read the
whole thing, but we see a few details. *\$100,000...if you
know what's good for you...Union Station...16B.*

*
*

SHOULDERS MARQUARD
On your stationery!? And you just
happen to make the pick-up!?

FLASHBACK TO:

*

BOOTH'S DESTROYED OFFICE

Sylvia Multhorpe sits in a chair, as innocent as could be.

SYLVIA MULTHORPE

You don't think I did this, do you?

BACK TO:

THE PRESENT

Shoulders is right. The letter is written on Booth's letterhead.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

My office got broken into-

SHOULDERS MARQUARD

You're a goddamn liar!

Booth struggles against his restraints but it's a lost cause.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Please don't do this.

SHOULDERS MARQUARD

I'm late for an engagement, cheapie. What do you say we go for it all?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Don't goddamn it!

SHOULDERS MARQUARD

Be careful what you wish for. It just might come true.

SHOULDERS SWINGS THE AXE DOWN!

It cuts straight through Booth's LEFT ARM, severing it completely from his body. BLOOD SPRAYS.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Ahhhhhh!!!!!!!

The axe remains lodged into the tree trunk. Shoulders tugs on it, but it remains stuck.

One of his Thugs VOMITS. The other follows suit. They are used to barbarity, but not like this.

ON BOOTH *

He's going into shock. He must act fast. *

Booth rolls away from the tree, discovering that the axe has de facto freed him from his restraints - the severed left forearm now hangs from his right wrist. *

ON SHOULDERS *

Still tugging on that axe, unable to free it from the tree. *

BACK ON BOOTH *

Stretching with his right arm, reaching for that METAL WATER BUCKET lying nearby. He grabs it, swinging it up at Shoulders with a vengeance. *

CONTACT! *

Shoulders hits the ground with a THUD. Booth rises above him, the left limb still dangling from the right. It's a nightmare vision. *

Booth grabs the axe handle, yanking it, trying desperately to pull it free. The stunned gangster stirs at his feet until finally -- *

THE AXE COMES AWAY IN HIS HAND *

-- like Excalibur from the stone. It GLOWS. The Thugs notice Booth but it's too late: *

BOOTH BRINGS THE AXE DOWN! *

Again and again and again, blood flying everywhere, covering Booth's face with tribal war paint. What was once Shoulders Marquard is now a slab of meat. *

ON THE THUGS *

What should they do? The decision comes quick: *

THE THUGS DISAPPEAR INSIDE THE CAR AND DRIVE OFF *

Booth is quickly becoming delirious. He has to do something about the arm. Using his jacket sleeve, he tourniquets the wound. But it must also be cauterized. *

From the jacket pocket: the MATCHBOOK. With some effort, he manages to get it fired up. *

That scribbled word - SIMULACRUM - disappears inside the flame. *

He holds the matches to what's left of his jacket - it erupts in FIRE. Booth steels himself for necessity. *

WIDE ON THE SCENE *

Shoulders' car REAPPEARS from whence it came, racing now in the other direction, further into the woods. SIRENS follow: POLICE CARS in hot pursuit. *

One comes to a screeching, dirt-cloud-billowing halt in Booth's vicinity. TED SPANGLER peers out from the passenger seat at the scene, mouth agape. *

WHAT HE SEES *

Booth covered in blood, left arm hanging from the right, standing over Shoulder's dead body with an axe handle poking out of the corpse. *

The oak tree burns behind him like a Roman candle. He holds the flaming jacket. *

And puts it to his bleeding, severed limb. STEAM rises from the wound. *

Booth promptly passes out. *

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN

EXT. AN ARCADIAN WILDERNESS - DAY

The image of rustic perfection. The sun reflects off an idyllic pond, its banks protected by high grass and reeds. Unseen frogs CHIRP, birds SING, cicadas DRUM.

Everything is bathed in the gauzy haze of nostalgia. Of dreams. Booth's office painting, come to life. *

REVERSE ON A YOUNG BOY (5)

He's dressed in an over-sized grey suit made for a man. A suit, in fact, made for John David Booth. *

The Boy looks to his left arm, raising it in front of his face, surprised to find it's still there. *

Pleasantly surprised.

*

He clogs toward the pond, a foot slipping out of the size 12 SHOE which had held it. He cinches his trousers to keep them from falling, pant legs muddled with each awkward step.

*

*

LATER

The Boy kneels at the water's edge, entranced by the fish that skim just beneath the surface.

LATER

Reaching into the reeds, the Boy comes away with a TOAD, grasping the creature between his fingers. He gently places it in the grass, watching it hop away.

*

*

LATER

*

The Boy searches the ground for smooth rocks, skimming them across the water's surface.

*

*

LATER

Leaving the other shoe behind, the Boy wades into the pond, soaking his pants and jacket.

The pond water RIPPLES. We hear the SOUNDS of LAUGHTER.

IN THE DISTANCE

A previously unseen TIRE SWING drifts lazily over the pond, dangling from the extended branch of an old OAK TREE. In the water below swims a YOUNG GIRL (5)

LATER

The Boy trudges toward the tire swing. The Girl waits for him there, clothing likewise over-sized and caked with dirt.

*

Her features and dress remind us of a young Vicki.

LATER

Both children go HURTLING through the air on the tire swing, SPLASHING down into the water with LAUGHTER and the excitement of youth.

They race each other back to shore.

LATER

Their clothes dry on a rock. The Boy and the Girl recline nude in the sun, soaking in the bright afternoon sun. Blissful, prelapsian innocence. *

The Girl smiles at her new friend and he returns it. Even when she closes her eyes to sleep, the Boy continues to stare.

Finally, he closes his eyes as well. Together, among the frogs, the insects, and the birds, these two young children fall asleep.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Booth wakes up from a long slumber. He looks to his left arm, not knowing exactly what to expect. Everything below the elbow: *

GONE *

It barely has time to register before the PRIVACY CURTAIN is jerked aside. Vicki stands there in a NURSE'S UNIFORM, the top few buttons left unclasped. *

VICKI

I believe it's time for your sponge bath, Mister Booth.

Booth says nothing.

VICKI

You don't like the uniform?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH

Just come here. Lie next to me.

She can tell he means it.

VICKI

Okay, John.

He cradles her in his arms. Well, arm. They lie there in this position we've seen them in before, but now without his troublesome appendage. *

Yet he still can't get comfortable. Neither can she, though she puts on a good show. *

She sits up. A few moments pass before...

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Where'd you find her?

VICKI
Who?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
The woman with the peg leg.
Where'd you get her from?

VICKI
I told you. We met at the market.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Don't lie to me.

VICKI
John, I'm not lying to you.

He doesn't believe her.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I know you been there, Vicki. I
know you been there 'cause I been
there, too. Just say it, damn it.

She has no answer. It says everything.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I don't know where we got lost,
where we took a wrong turn, but now
it's dark. I'm afraid we won't
find our way back.

VICKI
Back where?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Back to where we weren't so damn
numb to the simplest pleasures.
Where this - lying here - it meant
something. I want to go back
there, Vicki. Can we go back
there? We can do it. Just by
saying it, speaking the words, we
make it real.

VICKI
John, you're not talking sense.
You've been through a lot.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Don't you want to stop running?
 There ain't no finish line, doll.

*
 *

VICKI
 Maybe I like the race.

*
 *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Please. Let's go back.

*

VICKI
 I don't want to *go back*, John.
 This is me.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 How do ya know that? How do ya
 know who you are?

VICKI
 I just do, John.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 Nobody knows who they are until
 someone tells'em.

*

She gets out of bed.

VICKI
 No one tells me anything. I like
 who I am. I won't change. Not for
 anybody.
 (beat)
 Not even you.

Vicki disappears out the door. Booth looks to a large bunch
 of BALLOONS, some shaped into ANIMALS, other into SEXUALLY-
 SUGGESTIVE FORMS. There's a card:

*

Get well soon - Ned the Clown

The NURSE appears. She takes a THERMOMETER from her own
 mouth, putting it in Booth's.

NURSE
 How are you feeling, Mister Booth?

He doesn't have an answer. She takes the thermometer from
 his mouth, taking a look.

NURSE
 I'm not getting a reading. Looks
 like we'll have to get that
 temperature the old fashioned way.

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
I'd rather you didn't.

Someone COUGHS O.S. - it's O'Malley and his partner,
Spangler.

TED SPANGLER
Aw Booth, let the lady do her job,
will ya?

The Nurse leaves, Spangler getting a good look at her
backside.

TED SPANGLER
I got a thermometer for you, doll.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
How about you go find one and give
me and your partner a minute?

TED SPANGLER
Remind me. Do I take orders from
you?

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Do what the man says.

Spangler looks to his partner with incredulity.

TED SPANGLER
Would it hurt you to take my side
for once?

Spangler leaves the room in a huff. O'Malley pulls up a
chair.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
That was some timing. Just the
right moment to turn up in some
dark woods in the middle of
nowhere.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Yeah, lucky for you, huh?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Lucky for whoever gets that hundred
thousand, Eddie. Watch out, she's
a dangerous woman. Don't trust
her.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Who is?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
We go back, don't we?

*

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Sure.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Then how about you stop playing me
for the sap? You knew she was a
whore. You copped her for Christ's
sake.

*

*

*

*

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Be careful, Booth.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
That's what my mother used to tell
me. Didn't listen to her, either.
So who keeps the hundred grand?

*

EDDIE O'MALLEY
What hundred grand?

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
The keister full of a hundred
grand.

*

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Did you have a keister full of a
hundred grand? That's a lot of
dough. How'd you come by that?

*

*

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Blackmail.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
That legal, Booth?

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
It's okay, I was just pretending.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
I hope so, wouldn't wanna run you
after all you been through.

*

*

CUT TO:

*

INT. MULTHORPE RESIDENCE - DAY

*

A POLICE DETECTIVE shoves a SEARCH WARRANT in the face of the
Multhorpe's Latino MAID. A GROUP OF OFFICERS push past her,
looking for the man of the house.

*

*

*

EDDIE O'MALLEY (V.O.)
 Look Booth, Shoulders was a wrong
 gee, the worst this town has seen
 in a long time. And now...now he
 ain't.

They can't find him. But then there's:

A LOCKED DOOR

EDDIE O'MALLEY (V.O.)
 You know how the business works.
 He wouldn't have gone over.
 Witnesses disappear. Evidence gets
 lost. Juries are bought.

One of them KICKS it open, splintering the frame.

BACK TO:

THE HOSPITAL ROOM

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 And the Doc? What are you going to
 do about him?

O'Malley rises.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
 The Doc was kind enough to take
 care of that for us. Wise move.

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE LOCKED ROOM

Multhorpe SWINGS by his neck from a WOODEN BEAM, a PLASTIC
 BAG fitted over his face. He wasn't taking any chances.

EDDIE O'MALLEY (V.O.)
 Better a funeral than the big
 house. Some eggs ain't built for
 that.

An OFFICER corners the maid, pointing to a framed photo of:

THE MULTHORPES ON THEIR WEDDING DAY

OFFICER
Donde esta la esposa?

BACK TO:

BOOTH'S HOSPITAL ROOM

O'Malley pats Booth on his bandaged flipper.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Word of advice. Stay away from the
cutting tools. No good will come
of it.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Eddie, I'm tellin' you she's
dangerous.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
They're all dangerous, Booth.
That's why we keep'em in cages.
Pretty cages, made of lace and
feathers. Cages that don't look
like cages at all.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
She *should* be in a cage. The kind
with bars and a sink that doubles
for a toilet.

EDDIE O'MALLEY
Best prison is the one you don't
know you're in. Enjoy yours,
Booth.

FADE TO:

EXT. NEWSPAPER STAND - NIGHT

Hands grab for the midnight edition. The HEADLINE reads:

BLACK WIDOW ESCAPES WITH TOP COP

PHOTOGRAPHS of O'Malley and Sylvia blanket the cover. Booth
grabs a copy.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
 I don't know when O'Malley got
 mixed up in it. Maybe he was in
 dutch from the beginning.

*

CUT TO:

INT. BOOTH'S SUBURBAN MIDDLE-CLASS HOME - LATER

Booth looks to the floor. There, just inside the front door,
 are a row of SHOES. Somewhat out of place among them is an
 enormous pair of CLOWN SHOES.

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
 He and the dame, scheming to put
 two wrong numbers in cold storage.
 Me as the sap to stick his mug in
 the firing line.

*

*

As he hangs his KEY on a hook, we see for the first time he
 carries a SUITCASE in hand, that POND PAINTING under his arm.

*

Booth exits, having to put the painting on the floor before
 he opens the door.

*

*

He lifts the painting back up only to put it down once more
 to close the door.

*

*

A time-consuming endeavor.

*

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BODY SHOP - AFTERNOON

*

Booth collects the keys to his newly-repaired '58 Porsche
 from a MECHANIC. It's still rusty and dented, much like the
 first time we saw it.

*

*

*

He tosses his suitcase and painting in the trunk after having
 once again set them down to get the trunk open.

*

*

All in all, this one arm business has made things
 complicated.

*

*

CUT TO:

*

INT./EXT. BOOTH'S CAR - SUNSET

*

Booth idles his car at a RED LIGHT. Off to his left:

*

VICTORIA'S SECRET *

Window Mannequins display 1950s GIRDLES, CONICAL BRASSIERES and CORSELETTES. Through the doorway, Booth sees: *

MRS. PANGBURN *

The woman with the widening mirror. She examines a girdle with interest. A car horn BLARES behind us - the traffic light has turned GREEN. *

LATER *

Booth drives along the PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY, the SUN setting on the distant horizon. In the passenger seat, the midnight edition blows open. Staring back at us: *

A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE MYSTERY LOTUS WOMAN *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
Her name was Margaret Minehan. *

MATCH CUT TO: *

EXT. SMALL TOWN U.S.A. - DAY - FLASHBACK *

MARGARET MINEHAN, pride of American Falls, Idaho, looks back from the steps of a GREYHOUND BUS. She waves, filled with the enthusiasm of the young and beautiful. *

Assorted TOWN FOLK and FAMILY have gathered to send her off. Destination: Los Angeles. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Same initials as Marilyn Monroe and
the identical dream. *

Her PARENTS give her a kiss on each cheek. *

MATCH CUT TO: *

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - NIGHT *

The years have not served Margaret Minehan well. She competes with other STREET WALKERS for the attention of passing cars. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
Took different paths, but ended up
in the same place. *

A CADILLAC pulls over beside her. A REAR WINDOW descends,
its dark tint replaced by SHOULDERS' VISAGE. *

MATCH CUT TO: *

INT. LOS ANGELES CITY MORGUE - DAY *

Harsh fluorescent lights illuminate Margaret Minehan's pale,
dead, face. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH *

One of Cinderella's poor, desperate *

sisters. *

REVERSE ON HER PARENTS *

Identifying their daughter's corpse. Margaret's Mother is
beyond solace. *

CLOSE ON MARGARET MINEHAN'S FEET *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.) *

Cuttin' off their heels and toes... *

Or at least, where those feet should be, now just the shallow
pools of a white sheet. *

CUT TO: *

INT. UNKNOWN APARTMENT - DAY *

An OVERWEIGHT BUILDING SUPER eats cereal in front of his
black & white TELEVISION. Something DRIPS into his bowl from
above, turning the white milk RED. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.) *

...just to net some pervert prince *

with a foot kink. *

He peers UPWARDS, seeing a SPREADING STAIN OF CRIMSON on the
ceiling. *

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER *

The Super unlocks the apartment above for a PATROLMEN.
Inside, this small residence has been turned into -- *

AN UNDERGROUND CHOP SHOP *

-- where illegal surgeries are performed. *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
 Just another pretty farm girl with
 a bus ticket and stars in her eyes
 who took a wrong turn and couldn't
 find her way back.

*
 *
 *
 *
 *

There, amidst the stacks of week-old newspapers, overflowing
 ashtrays, and vials of medicine:

*
 *

FAT FRANK'S CORPSE

*

He lies on a rusty cot, BLOOD pooling on the floor below from
 his mutilated groin.

*
 *

A botched sex change. His doctors have escaped for greener
 pastures, leaving his body to rot.

*
 *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH (V.O.)
 In the dark, all roads look alike.

*
 *

BACK TO:

*

BOOTH'S CAR SHOOTING DOWN THE HIGHWAY

*

The Detective puts his truncated left arm out the window,
 like a dog lifting its snout to the passing wind.

*
 *

JOHN DAVID BOOTH
 The same shape, just different
 names.

*
 *
 *

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END

*