

WHITE JAZZ

Screenplay by Matt Carnahan

Based on the novel by James Ellroy

Revisions by Joe Carnahan

Legend: Recife, Brazil, 1978

INT. HILLSIDE VILLA - MORNING

I'm old. Stare at my leather-tan, once-broken face in a gilded mirror. The breaks occurred a lifetime ago, healed uneven. I wear a white tropical button-down blouse, a Republican-gold Rolex, a pirate-patch over what was my left eye. My silver hair at least has the good sense to rot away at the corners first. My voice salted and cured from brown whiskey and easy access to Cuban tobacco.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
All I have left is the will to
remember...

I reach into a dresser drawer with a trembling left, pull out a yellowed black & white picture of HER: this beatific blonde, sleeping. Below me is a week-old Los Angeles Times with the headline: Matriarch of Longest Running Television Series, Empire Ridge, Retires. The picture of the Matriarch in the middle. I look at it for two breaths.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
...and the fear that I'll forget.

Slide HER over the Matriarch's picture.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
I killed innocent men. I betrayed
sacred oaths. I reaped profit from
horror. The names are dead or too
guilty to tell. The events so
brutal they never stop begging to
be retold.
(beat)
I wake up reaching, life fading
like the memories of what I was. So
I do it all over again.

Legend: Los Angeles, Fall 1958

INT. OLYMPIC AUDITORIUM - FIGHT NIGHT

Battered face of an Irish Pug -- same guy from the mirror? No. A timber-hard jab bashes the face out of frame -- and there I am: second row, next to the 'Ring' Magazine Reporter chewing the ass out of his cigar.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Lieutenant Dave Klein, Vice,
 fourteen year LAPD loyalist. That's
 what my face looked like before...

Come around behind and take my point of view: Irish Pug in de
 rigeur Kelley-green on the business end of this bantam
 Black's combos. Standing to my left: JUNIOR STEMMONS: 6'1",
 175 pounds, Caucasian, brown-brown. Stringy visible veins,
 weird-strong for a thin guy. Constantly flexing his jaw,
 jutting his chin to make himself look more story-book
 tough/righteous. Head on swivel now: eyeing phantoms.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Junior Stemmons. A partner I never
 asked for. The scowl meant to hide
 a shit-scared kid who was teaching
 an evidence class not three weeks
 ago. His Dad: Senior Stemmons, six-
 pack LAPD lifer who never got past
 Sergeant -- always third or fourth
 into a fight or through a door.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
 Let's make our move.

ME
 Mid-fight? You wanna be at the
 center of a riot?

JUNIOR STEMMONS
 I wanna move before Noonan gets
 here.

I point at the bantam Black:

ME
 We let him finish, we get his
 gratitude.

Junior eyeing the exits clockwise, waiting for 'Untouchables'
 to break doors down. Cracks knuckles by pressing each digit
 with his thumbs in succession. Nervous.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
 We gonna let Rock-a-bye fight too?

ME
 Relax, *Junior*.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The Bantam Black: SANDERLINE JOHNSON. Led through the double doors. Cheers float in, muffle as doors shut again. Sees me, then bully Junior throwing intermittent jabs inches from REUBEN RUIZ: a muscled middle-weight, fight-taped hands cuffed behind his back, dressed in pre-fight silk.

ME

Sanderline Johnson, I'm Lieutenant Dave Klein of the LAPD and a big fan-

JUNIOR STEMMONS

-you're under arrest.

Sanderline fright-wig, steps back. I fire Junior a hate-look.

ME

No. Reuben is under arrest-

REUBEN RUIZ

-FOR WHAT?

ME

Having Spic Brothers: the Hub-cap King, and other one who uses his forearms for pin cushions.

(beat)

Sanderline, if I was going to arrest you I wouldn't have let you finish the fight -- and that hook-uppercut combo with the same hand is something special.

(my look: your call Sandy)

You're the LAPD's quest...

EXT. OLYMPIC AUDITORIUM - MOMENT LATER

Me, Junior, Reuben, and Sanderline aim for the nearest exit. Behind the stands. Reuben and Sanderline in street clothes, hats pulled down tight. Feature the Ring Announcer:

RING ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gentleman, your attention please...due to circumstances beyond our control, Rock-a-bye Reuben Ruiz will not be fighting tonight-

-BOOS drown the PA. Beer and lit cigars shell the Announcer. One dozen fights bloom in the stands. I can't stifle a chuckle, or the need to watch. Three exits down: day late-dollar short Feds. WELLES NOONAN, elbows-out, surveying the scene like some half-assed Rommel, looking for his witnesses.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Welles Noonan. US Attorney. Jack Kennedy's haircut, Bobby Kennedy's self-righteousness, Ted Kennedy's morals.

(beat)

If he would have showed just five minutes earlier...the future would have been a different place.

INT. AMBASSADOR HOTEL - NIGHT

Room on the ninth floor. Four of us crammed tight. I order room service.

ME

Hungry, Sanderline?

Sanderline digging the 'auspices of the LAPD.' Sporting the Ambassador robe over his street clothes, reading the Bible.

SANDERLINE JOHNSON

Shrimps?

ME

(into the phone)

Shrimp cocktail.

(back to Reuben)

What do you want Reuben?

REUBEN RUIZ

To know why the fuck I'm here-

JUNIOR STEMMONS

-mind your tone, Shitbird-

REUBEN RUIZ

-shitbird went out with vaudeville.

I hang up as Junior smirks my way: 'you believe this guy, *partner?*' Makes fists again: small hands.

ME

You're here because we want you to remember where you live.

SANDERLINE
(grade-school mind)
City of Angels.

ME
Good, Sanderline.

REUBEN RUIZ
What?

ME
LA Stupid. You live in LA, not
'Federal Government.'

Ruiz turns 'caught-me' pink. I nod to Junior: split 'em, play adjoining hotel rooms like adjoining sweat-boxes.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
We get to spend time alone now.

REUBEN RUIZ
(with less feeling)
Want some perfume?

Junior shoves Ruiz through the inner-door connecting adjacent rooms. Sanderline snickers behind his hand. Close the door behind them. Sit inches from Sanderline, change my tone:

ME
Stop laughing.

Instant quiet.

ME (CONT'D)
Sanderline, what were you going to
tell Welles Noonan?

Sanderline flinches at the mention of Noonan's name.

SANDERLINE JOHNSON
He looked angry back there.

ME
I know you bust knees and thumbs
for the Mob. I know the Men that
pay you for that will murder you if
they hear you talked to the U.S.
Attorney.

SANDERLINE JOHNSON
But they don't know-

ME

-and don't have to. Now tell me
what you're telling the U.S. Att-

-phone rings shrill. Sanderline trades panic for pout:

SANDERLINE JOHNSON

...bet they're outta Shrimps...

ME

(into phone)

Yup.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE (O.S.)

(mid-western accent)

The spook with you?

Cold-water shock. Catalogue potential "who's."

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE (CONT'D)

Fuck: we know he is, I was just
being mysterious-

ME

-who's 'we?'

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE (O.S.)

Me and Sam G. We thinks the Nigger
might testify that Sam owns him:
grooming him for a title shot he
was gonna tank. Everybody woulda'
got flush, including the Nigger.

(beat)

Tell him to look out the window.

Click. A breath. Step to the window, open it, my eyes looking
out. Chuckle genuine:

ME

Sanderline: come look...

Trusting puppy, Sanderline steps to the window:

SANDERLINE JOHNSON

They do have shrimps? What am I-

-smash his head against the window frame using his forward
motion. He loses muscle control for the second it takes me to
pitch his legs up and over. Gurgling on his way out:

SANDERLINE JOHNSON (CONT'D)

-lookin' for?

The Ambassador robe billows like a cape. Nine stories. He detonates an overhead streetlight with a bomb sound, lands on the circular driveway, bounces. Unzip my fly, hustle into the bathroom, screams from outside now.

Flush the toilet just as Junior and Ruiz pile through the connecting door. Step out of the bathroom, play it baffled: look at them, then the wrinkled spot on the bed where Sanderline sat, then the open window, screams float...

ME

DID THAT MUTT JUST JUMP?

Lunge to the window: Sanderline post-mortem. Blood pools. Head shattered. Valets running to nearest phones. My eyes staring. Junior on the phone. Ruiz steps-up next to me: wide-eyed, horrified by the broken cranium. I keep staring at the smashed body, and whisper:

ME (CONT'D)

Remember where you live.

Reuben has to use both hands to steady himself.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS, EDMUND EXLEY'S OFFICE - MORNING

Spartan space appointed with high-ticket items, namely the mahogany table around which we sit. Mid-conversation. Outside: echoes of a protest filter through open windows:

MUFFLED PROTEST AMALGAM (O.C.)

MEXICAN BROTHERS SI! IMPERIAL
DODGERS NO!

The cast assembling at the table:

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

LA's version of the Young Turks, only meaner. Edmund Exley, Chief of Detectives. Smartest man in town. And one of the richest: Dad was the Contractor hired by the Big Three to rip out LA's street-cars and build freeways over their ghosts. Bob Gallaudet, DA. Not the smartest man in town: 'Gas Chamber Bob' cribbed my notes at USC Law. Tom Bethune, running for the City Council seat that will decide if this downtown Mexican slum called Chavez Ravine gets bulldozed and a brand new name: 'Dodger Stadium.'

(MORE)

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 (beat)
 All are big Baseball fans.

ME
 I was pissing. He was jumping...

Frosty-furious Exley reads from a newspaper:

EXLEY
 'US Attorney Noonan accused the Los Angeles Police Department in general, Lt. David Klein in particular, of murder at worst, gross incompetence at best.'

GAS CHAMBER BOB
 I'll file a defamation complaint with the Department of Justice-

ME
 -no: I think I did get too tough too quick. Noonan put a real scare in Sanderline, and after he sang to me, he panicked.

TOM BETHUNE
 Not to mention he spent a month in Camarillo Mental Hospital last year-

GAS CHAMBER BOB
 -wearing that hotel robe over his clothes when he jumped even looks looney-bin. We're fine.

TOM BETHUNE
 At the end of the day Noonan's Fight Probe is dead. He's left with nothing-

EXLEY
 -but time, a mandate, and new potential targets. I didn't want to kill his Fight Probe, I wanted to blunt it...string it out to keep him busy.
 (beat)
 Would you Gentleman allow me to speak with the Lieutenant alone?

Both nod, pat my back on the way out: proud uncles lending support before Dad drops the hammer. Door closes. I stand, stretch, go to the window, my bloodshot-eyes dig the protest: this hunched, professor-type Geek holds the biggest sign: 'BASEBALL IS AS AMERICAN AS THE TRAIL OF TEARS!'

EXLEY (CONT'D)

This morning Welles Noonan looks impotent letting us beat him to the punch in his fight probe -- pun unintended. That makes Bob happy: he wants to be State Attorney General and his likely opponent is Welles Noonan. It makes Tom happy: Morton Diskant, who's leading their City Council race by four percent, is endorsed by Welles Noonan.

(beat)

So Klein, did it put a smile on your face tossing that Negro to his death?

ME

Did it put one on yours when you shotgunned four unarmed ones during the Night Owl investigation way back when?

Exley: popped in the mouth. Pure patrician frost now. Nods in the direction of Bethune and Gallaudet outside.

EXLEY

They're not seeing the scope of this. Noonan's new target will most likely be the LAPD itself.

ME

How do you know?

EXLEY

That's where I would aim: our Laissez Faire attitude toward all things Chavez Ravine and Darktown, our Men like you...it offers the possibility of *national headlines*.

Exley drops his bomb: a Coroner's file, not a hint of relish-

EXLEY

Coroner's preliminary: white paint chips found embedded in a chunk of Sanderline Johnson's scalp. Matching dent on the window sill.

Dig my heart rate, my gray face.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

From here on I say 'jump,' you say 'how high.'

ME
 (beat, forced toughness)
 Original.

EXLEY
 No: tried and true. Just like what
 you're going to do to Morton
 Diskant to get him to drop out.
 (beat)
 This War has started Klein. Before
 I was ready...and that's your fault-

ME
 -what war?

EXLEY
 The future of Los Angeles-

ME
 -the future of you-

EXLEY
 -each inextricably linked to the
 other.

Big scoff: Ed's massive idea of himself...

ME
 If Bethune can't beat Diskant heads-
 up: a *Jew Communist* -- your side
 might wanna stock-up on white rags.

EXLEY
 My side is your side Lieutenant. If
 Diskant wins that Seat, tie-break
 goes to the Mexicans. The Dodgers
 don't get the permanent home we
 promised. If they left Brooklyn
 they can leave LA-

ME
 (mocking)
 -be bad for business-

EXLEY
 -and disastrous for you: the day of
 Diskant's acceptance speech, this
 file finds it's way to every
 Reporter in town so they can dig up
 all the rest of your graves.
 (beat)
 You handle the details. I don't
 pretend to be as skilled as you-

ME

After I do Diskant you burn that report.

Long pause. Dig him tickling my wound...

EXLEY

He works Saturdays. Usually the only person in his office...

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - MORNING

The Hollywood Hills float outside my windows.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Mine's the sprawling ranch. The one that looked *down* on City Hall. The one with the Press camped out, looking for foot-in-mouth quotes on Sanderline Johnson.

Slouch in the seat, accelerate, keep looking:

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Dig that Geek from the Herald pissing in my hedges.

EXT. WESTWOOD COTTAGE - MORNING

Knock-knock. A gift-wrapped box in my hands. MEG opens up. A smiling moment lingers between us...something off.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Meg: four years younger. She and me all that's left: Mom and Dad died in '51 when their first plane ride became their last.

INT. WESTWOOD COTTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Gift wrap shredded. Box torn open. Silver tea-pot over blue flame on olive-drab stove.

MEG

WOW!

Parading around in her gift: cocktail dress from the Towne Dress Boutique. Zipper still down in back, showing a too-wide swath of skin, dress falling off her breasts, her catching it every time, a flinch before show-time.

MEG (CONT'D)
Bee-utiful, Big Brother. Best yet.

Then clouds move over her face. Quick-steps to the table, flips over the LA Herald. Front page: Sanderline Johnson.

MEG (CONT'D)
Funny: I read stories like this,
and that same day you show up with
a dress. Eight in my closet-

ME
(pointing)
-nine.

Smile coming back slow: loves her Men mean. Screaming tea-pot saves me. She spins with a flourish, making me coffee. Quiet means creeping sleep. Set my jaw, try to open my eyes wide, shift in my seat. Futile: I've been exhausted years running.

My eyes close.

INT. NIGHTMARE

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
They attack in the same order.

The sky burns.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Fire where clouds should be.

In a backseat, point-blank Tommy-gunning two smiling men.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Faces disappearing beneath muzzle-
flashes.
(beat)
This is how they come for me. No
solace with sleep, only the dead
ripping at me...reminding me: not
long now...

Bayonetting a Japanese Officer on Iwo Jima. Chasing a 16 year-old Japanese boy-soldier, shirtless, skinny, stumbling, silent screaming. I swing so hard you flinch. A heartbeat before Sword slashes flesh -- POP -- Meg and Me in funeral black. Slow. Too close. No sound but breathing.

INT. WESTWOOD COTTAGE - SAME MOMENT

Pops me awake. Leg jerks, kicks a big wing-tip: shoes of another man. A cup of coffee pipes in front of me. Then voices. I turn: PETE BONDURANT zipping My Sister in My Dress.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Pete Bondurant: 6'5", 235. One-time 'SC Linebacker. One-time LA Sheriff. Bounced when he beat-dead a Prisoner who spit at him.

(beat)

Howard Hughes hired him on as pimp-pusher-pal. My Sister's new Hump. My oldest living friend.

Catches me watching:

PETE

Look like Death taking a shit.

Meg cackles:

MEG

And he still has that MGM-face.

PETE

Only guy who ever traded movie-potential for Police work.

MEG

'Cuz in the movies you have to pull your punches...

I drain my mug, feature Pete nuzzling Meg's nape. Too quick-

ME

-wanna do LAPD a favor tonight?

MEG

No. We're going to the Cocoonut-

-Pete puts an extended index finger in front of Meg's lips, which she bends backwards.

PETE

'Favor' mean 'free?'

ME

Means \$500 an hour.

PETE
My favorite kind.

MEG
Gimme the phone so I can find
another Date-

ME
-you're the only Woman I know who
calls Men-

MEG
-you're the only Man I know who
doesn't call Women.

Pete smiles my smile. Loves her for the same reasons I do.

EXT. LOW RENT OFFICE BUILDING, EAST LA - NIGHT

Just me in the car. Pete street-side, tucked into the shadows. I scan a little half-assed file on tonight's shakedown du jour.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Morton Diskant. First glance:
another liberal Jew who loved the
down-trodden. Second glance showed
the difference: the down-trodden
loved him back. Diskant kicking the
shit out of Tom Bethune in their
City Council Race. Despite getting
outspent 10 to 1.
(beat)
If Diskant wins, the Dodgers don't
get a Stadium, Chavez Ravine
Mexicans get to keep raising
chickens two miles from City Hall
and I probably get consecutive life
sentences...if I'm lucky.

A shingle between Pete and me: Diskant Law Offices. Worker-
bee Morton finally decides to bolt. My Hamilton: 11:04 PM.
Streets deserted. Pete walking in Diskant's direction as I
begin rolling toward both: pincer's movement. Pete close, dig
his giant head nodding 'hello.'

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Seen Pete do this a dozen times and
every time the same thought:

Pete puts his back into an uppercut: hammers Diskant from
nowhere as they pass. Instant-ugly crumble.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
God help me if he ever hits me like
that.

Pete hoists Diskant by his waist-band and neck fat, tosses him in the backseat. We accelerate out, obeying every law.

BLACK.

Then a series of strobe-flashbulbs: maybe flesh, maybe two bodies, maybe both hairy/pale. Then groaning, then flickering fluorescent lights make it all look jaundiced.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
 Junior picked up a fag jocking
 other fruits in Fern Dell. The
 Quiff was a law student who wanted
 his record kept clean. We wanted
 god-awful snapshots. We met in the
 middle.

INT. FUCK-TEL ROOM - SAME MOMENT

Lights now. Diskant awake, growling, trying to loosen his jaw. Quiff cooing, dick out, on Diskant's thigh. Junior focused, reloading the camera.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
 He should maybe suck his
 dick...y'know? Put the icing on
 it...

A baffled moment as the comment registers.

PETE
What?

JUNIOR STEMMONS
 Y'know -- sell it...

ME
 We're ruining his career, not his
 soul.
 (beat)
 Re-load the camera-

-Diskant speaks: incoherent, marble-mouthed, slurred. Pushes Quiff away so hard he falls off the bed with a nancy-yelp:

MORTON DISKANT
 ...off me...

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
 Don't waste a second, grab Diskant
 hard, narrate his immediate future.

ME
 (standard operating
 procedure)
Drop out of the City Council race.
 Gracefully. And I won't send those
 pictures to every newspaper in
 LA...

Diskant rips his head free, leaves me with a fist of salt-
 pepper wisps. Rage coursing disjointed, blood from his mouth:

MORTON DISKANT
...I can fight-

ME
 -and maybe salvage something that's
 a close cousin to 'respect.' But
 what about your wife and kid
 getting 'hold of some 8 X 10s. Dad
 wrapped up Anaconda-tight with some
 fag's dick in his lap. Family as
 tough as you?

Diskant scans each of us. I wait for the big scream...pause
 when I only see dignity. Quiff quiet:

QUIFF
 Can someone drop me off at UCLA?

Before I can turn and tell Junior to go:

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Got it.

Hesitate at his eagerness, toss him his cut on the way out.
 Pete twists his head like a dog hearing a high-pitched sound.
 Until I toss him his share. Diskant stands still, no words. I
 wish he'd cry, throw punches...

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - EARLY A.M.

Dropping Diskant at his Buick. A double-knotted blind-fold to
 keep my license plates a mystery. Pete driving.

EXT. DISKANT'S OFFICE - NEXT MOMENT

I help Diskant out. Get him upright.

ME

We're at your car.

Snatch his keys from his front pocket: big flinch. Hurl them 40 yards down the street. A sound like someone dropping a roll of dimes. Mutts startle-bark.

ME (CONT'D)

Someone from the Times will call for a quote. Whatever your reasons for dropping out, make 'em believable.

I give the blind-fold knots final tugs, start to walk away.

MORTON DISKANT

If only that money could buy sleep.

Pete with his window down. Feature He and Me: permanent black bags under bloodshot eyes. We both stop dead.

A big beat. Nothing more from Diskant. I get back in silent. We pull away. I turn in the seat: Diskant's blind-folded head aimed right at us. No movement. No scramble for keys. Just staring at our noise.

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - NEXT MOMENT

Pete turning left. Morton Diskant recedes.

PETE

(hopeful)

Is that Fuck trying to follow?
Memorize your plates?

ME

He didn't move.

Silence. Any buzz we may have had dies. Tune to an all-night Jazz signal, turn up the volume loud enough to jumble doubts.

PETE

Steak and eggs?

ME

No. Stomach's still sour.

PETE

I'll hear that Quiff sucking
Diskant's ear for eternity.

Quick-shake both hands like I'm covered in it.

ME

Sorry.

PETE

Sorry hell: easiest \$500 I ever made. Quid pro quo: Hughes has a job I think you'd be custom-fit for -- already mentioned your name.

ME

No thanks.

PETE

You gotta refuse it to his face.

ME

Tell that Freak I got a cold.

PETE

Don't pretend you're not a pig for it Klein.

ME

I still got a day job.

PETE

Tossing more Mulattos out windows?

I wait too long, answer in too high a voice:

ME

That Mutt jumped.

PETE

(laughs small, then:)

If some Investigator on the come decides to do a double-take, they could burn you down Pal. So it might be nice to be in with a millionaire who's got a fleet of planes to fly you outta the country.

(beat)

It's a cake legal gig you'll knock outta the park.

Stop in front of Meg's place. Pete leaves the engine running, jumps out, back turned, yawning:

PETE (CONT'D)

I'll set up a meet.

I watch Pete go into Meg's place: his own key. Don't turn my head or move into the Driver's seat even after he disappears.

EXT. MY HOME, HOLLYWOOD HILLS - SUNRISE

Press gone. Still sneak through a back basement window.

INT. MY HOME, HOLLYWOOD HILLS - MOMENTS LATER

Lights off but something grabs my eye immediately. Center of a side-table just inside the door: a stack of paper, a manila envelope. The paper: 100 \$100-bills. The envelope: USC season tickets, and a note: *'Thanks for proving Flying Monkeys only live in Oz. Sam G.'*

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

G for Giancana.

I sit. Flip to the same Jazz station. Reeling. So tired I feel liquored. Another futile fight vs. shut-eye. The last thing I see before black: the Japanese Officer's Samurai Sword mounted on my mantle. My War trophy. Then BLACK.

INT. NIGHTMARE

Instant barrages from Hell. Charred sky. Tommy Gun belching orange. Bayonet opening a cheese-cake white belly, then:

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

(tired, flat)

That sword. 1945. Swing like Dimaggio at a starved teenage Jap soldier.

(beat)

Keep sprinting: smiling insanity scanning new targets. Mothers and their Children dive off Okinawa's cliffs to escape me: this massive, gray-eyed Marine.

(beat)

Ready to cut Christ in two if he asks to me to quit -- because this is living. My Congressional Medal of Massacre. Flush them toward the cliffs. I even jump after them. Dropping toward a fire-bombed landscape still burning, gaining on a figure in front of me: his robe billows like a cape...

This guttural scream turns mechanical like a ringing phone when I recognize Sanderline Johnson. Snap awake.

My phone ringing. I swipe my face: cheeks wet with tears I don't remember. My Hamilton says 7 AM. Sun in-bloom. Saddle-bag sweat stains. And something boils over I'd never taken the time to name, only vent. On my way to the ringing phone, step to the side-table: shred the tickets, punch the money, hammer the table to kindling two-handed. Rip the phone from the wall to answer it:

ME

Klein-

EXLEY (O.S.)

-you know who J.C. Magdalena is?

ME

(cobwebs clear)

The Department's sanctioned Dope-Pusher.

EXLEY (O.S.)

He's missing and his house was broken into at some point within the last three hours.

ME

Then send Robbery.

EXLEY (O.C.)

The only thing taken was J.C. Knowing what he is -- or was -- chances are he's already been killed.

(beat)

This kind of timing makes for disasters, Lieutenant. 1284 South Tremaine.

ME

Why me?

EXLEY (O.S.)

Call it penance.

ME

That's what I called Diskant.

EXLEY (O.S.)

That makes one of us.

Click. Bastard. Hang up, dial another number.

ME

Junior: wake up. Meet me at 1284
South Tremaine. 20 minutes.

EXT. 1284 SOUTH TREMAINE, MAGDALENA RESIDENCE - 10 AM

Police abound. Mostly work-a-day Blues. Part as I approach:
'Enforcer Klein' half-legend to these six-packs. A plain-
clothes breaks through, aims right at me: DAN WILHITE.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Captain Dan Wilhite, Head of the
LAPD Narcotics Division. A nasally
Geek from Wisconsin turned
permanent pink from 20 years in the
desert-

WILHITE

-why are you here?

ME

Ask Exley. What do you got?

WILHITE

(disdain aimed at me)
Some Biddie down the street heard
dog yelps. Called Wilshire Station.

I wait...wait...

ME

What else you got?

WILHITE

(half-accusatory)
Ulcers.

ME

(smile mean)
Sad to see him go? It's been a good
gravy run between Narco and J.C. --
profitable.

WILHITE

It wasn't a house in the Hollywood
Hills, but nice for us-

ME

-then you weren't working it hard
enough.

(before his rebuttal)

Think he's dead?

WILHITE
 (nodding 'yes')
 And I bet they took their time.

ME
 Think we'll find a body?

WILHITE
 Who cares? I just want that this
case gets a quick burial.

ME
 (motioning to the scene)
 You talk to anyone?

WILHITE
 Biddie that heard the yelps. Said
 she saw some Peeper earlier. Said
 she's reported this Peeper two
 times before: J.C.'s little girl
 supposedly strips in front of her
 window most every other night.

ME
 When they start striping they're no
 longer little-

WILHITE
 -she was fucked at birth: look at
 her Dad. Biddie described the
 Peeper as a 'shifty Negro.' She has
 also reported flying saucers-

ME
 What about the Family?

WILHITE
 J.C.'s wife and Daughter were in
 Santa Barbara for the weekend. Got
 home about ten minutes ago.

ME
 Why wasn't J.C. with 'em-

WILHITE
 -visiting her family: Santa Barbara
 Wasps don't fancy dope-pushing
 wetbacks.

ME
 The Son?

WILHITE

(sneering hatred)

Tommy. Supposedly played his horn
at Bido Lito's all last night. Home
any minute.

ME

Good. Now bolt before people start
asking why the head of Narco is at
a Missing Persons.

He turns, still sneering. I don't like his tone:

WILHITE

Don't be afraid to yank Tommy's
leash. You're in charge.

ME

I don't need to be told.

Wilhite gets close, garlic and bile waft.

ME (CONT'D)

Christ -- step back huh -- this
close you look worse than me.

WILHITE

Don't let this go worst-case, Klein
-- don't let it get probed for real
or you might have a whole division
of disgraced Narco Cops wanting to
bite back.

I step to Wilhite, into his smell, a good six inches taller:

ME

You just threaten me Wilhite?

WILHITE

You're Exley's Toby. And you ended
the Feds' Fight Probe when you
tossed that Nigger nine-stories-

ME

-the Mutt jumped-

WILHITE

-not even the people who don't know
you believe that.

(beat)

(MORE)

WILHITE (cont'd)

And don't think I haven't thought
this far ahead: the LAPD's pusher
vanishes...pretty juicy spot to
stick a new Federal Probe.

ME

(faux-therapist)

You seem worried Dan.

Wilhite swallows, spins, walks. Watch him go, focus flutters
as my mind rebels against the litany of potential God-sized
problems I may have triggered by tossing Sanderline.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Wilhite was almost twenty years in:
that meant full pension providing
he didn't shit the bed in the next
six months.

(beat)

And something more than Federal
Probes had him spooked. I was in
the next room once when he emptied
a .38 into the face of a Witness
ready to spill how Narco Cops were
the most prolific Pushers in town.
No...

(beat)

Something else had him scared.

Junior pulls up too fast, evidence bag in-hand. Jumps out of
his car, playing the grim-faced professional:

JUNIOR STEMMONS

Show me.

INT. 1284 SOUTH TREMAINE - MOMENTS LATER

Living room: smashed. Boot-sized holes in the dry-wall. Frat-
house liquor-stink burns the nostrils: 30+ bottles smashed,
twinkling shards embedded in the shag. The faces of J.C. and
Son shredded out of every family picture within quick reach.
Frames splintered. Junior to no one in particular:

JUNIOR STEMMONS

No one touch a thing 'til I say.

Kitchen: slaughtered dogs, crying women. The two women:

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Madge Magdalena: Mother/Wife. A
vacant, bored, 'I'm a hop-head'
look. Much younger than her pancake
make-up portrayed.

(MORE)

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 Lucille Magdalena. Daughter.
 Slattern-eyed underneath those
 crocodile tears.

Upstairs: Lucille's room. Bobby-sox decor. Whore-ish petal
 pushers-blouses-dresses strewn: all slashed-torn-crotch
 ripped. But none of the pictures of her or Madge touched.

Heading toward Tommy's room when we hear high-pitched threats
 from downstairs, the dusty 'pops' of more holes in dry-wall.

HIGH-PITCHED VOICE (O.C.)
 I'LL GUT WHOEVER...

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Tommy Magdalena. Son. Punk heir
 apparent. Talent with blades, but
 bull-shit with his fists.

We step into Tommy's room as he charges up the steps. A pile
 of human shit centered perfectly on his rug. Drawers open:
 cleaned out save odd dime bags, rolling papers, a syringe. A
 Nazi flag hanging over his bed slashed, pissed on.

TOMMY (O.C.)
 OUTTA MY HOUSE! I'M HANDLING THIS-

-he rounds the corner: his room, his drugs, his flag, the
 loaf. Baffled. Maybe scared. Anger-steam vanishes:

TOMMY (CONT'D)
 My fuckin' dogs...my fuckin'
 room...

ME
 (I count to three, then:)
 ...my fuckin' Dad...

TOMMY
 Suck my Dick.

I glare sideways and low at Tommy -- look into my eyes Fuck-
 Face: *I'm letting that one slide...*

JUNIOR STEMMONS
 Watch the tongue, Half-breed.

I wave to two Uniforms: get him back downstairs. Tommy blows
 smoke in their faces. One of the Blues pulls his cuffs-

ME
 -he's not under arrest.

Tommy stops, gives me a little tough-cock half-smile:

TOMMY

God damn right he's not.

Blows another puff in their faces. Holds his arms up when they try to grab him: don't touch me. Steps out.

JUNIOR STEMMONS

(indignant)

There's enough in these drawers to
convict that little--

Grab him -- Junior turns grimace-green. Downcast eyes, moral head-shaking. I pop him in the chest, hard:

ME (CONT'D)

This is the game: like Diskant-

JUNIOR STEMMONS

-he was a Communist. That was for
the public good-

ME

-and so is an evil deal with a King
Rat like J.C. Magdalena. He was the
LAPD's sanctioned Pusher for going
on twenty years, turning over sixty
percent of his profits to the
Department and ratting-out all his
competition. We arrest Tommy, that
becomes public record and we no
longer control who knows what.

(beat)

So toughen up and call it:

JUNIOR STEMMONS

(beat, takes his medicine)

Okay.

(scanning)

Years of snitching means years of
enemies...

(gesturing around to room)

The kind that might do shit like
this. The emptied drawers mean
missing drugs-cash-weapons...I say
it's a rival getting revenge...

Junior: smart when he wants to be.

ME

Not bad.

Junior: teacher's pet grin.

ME (CONT'D)

You got on-scene command.

Teacher's Pet grin gets wider.

ME (CONT'D)

That's something for a kid your age. Be thorough but fast. We could pop ten different Dealers for this right now and make it stick, so don't get bogged down with 'who.'

I turn to go back downstairs. Junior rolling up his sleeves, glaring at Tommy's littered stash. Whatever Junior's short-comings, he's perpetually ready to tackle whatever is in front of him. Barking orders to milling Uniforms:

JUNIOR STEMMONS

I need gloves, a pen, a steno-pad and some time to think.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

The Kid will surprise you.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL POOL - BRUNCH

Bethune Campaign Fundraiser turned Bethune Victory-by-default Party. Big yellow smiles beam above sunburned double-chins. Bethune the nucleus of a Press circle-jerk, all asking his reaction to unbelievably good fortune. I try to weave around.

REPORTER #1

Candidate Bethune, was this the only way you could have won?

TOM BETHUNE

Not at all. My message of civic advancement and pride manifested in that beautiful blue baseball team was starting to hit home. Besides, I live for the big comebacks.

Bethune's beam twitches when he sees me weaving past. I give him a quick nod, get nothing back: he can't be seen this close to the Turd in the punch bowl. As I continue past:

REPORTER #2

What do you make of Candidate Diskant's reason for bowing out?

TOM BETHUNE

Any man that subjugates his political crusades, however misguided those crusades may be, to more time with his family is someone we should admire.

REPORTER #3

Anything you'd like to say to future constituents?

TOM BETHUNE

I like my ballpark franks with mustard and relish!

Exley at one of the front tables confabbing with Gallaudet. As I aim their way, one of my favorite voices quietly booms behind me: FRITZ KOENIG.

KOENIG (O.C.)

Such a function is not open to Jews, Lt. Klein.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Fritz Koenig, Captain, Robbery Division. Best Investigator in a generation.

(beat)

Think of your favorite Uncle -- now make him a 6'2", 240-pound German-born former O.S.S. Spy-master, who never takes off his \$200 derby.

ME

Someone with your accent should never be allowed to say 'Jew' again.

KOENIG

That accent allowed me to execute many a Nazi.

ME

Then we're both Traitors: Ellis Island said Grandpa's 'Kleinsasser' was two syllables too long.

KOENIG

And your Mother? She's of the chosen?

ME

If the Irish are 'chosen.'

KOENIG

Ah, the Irish -- the thinking man's slave.

Roars at his own joke. I catch Exley staring...

KOENIG

I wouldn't have expected a public showing so soon after Sanderline Johnson.

ME

The mutt jumped.

Koenig, a Great White's grin, knowing better.

KOENIG

I'm certain he did, David. And where is your young partner?

ME

Doing scut-work he thinks is his first big job.

KOENIG

And does young Stemmons' scut-work involve the LAPD's most important missing Wetback, J.C. Magdalena?

My eyes narrow but stay smiling:

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Koenig is not one to ask unless he's very interested...

ME

It does.

KOENIG

I'm puzzled as to why the Boy Chief would assign you -- no offense -- you are gifted, but you're neither Homicide nor Robbery...

ME

If I could read Exley's mind I'd live in a house the size of his.

A chuckle.

KOENIG

Last I checked you weren't living in a cottage. A favor, David?

(MORE)

KOENIG (cont'd)

Keep me abreast. J.C. was an extremely proficient burglar who used his favored-status with us as his sharpest weapon. I'm afraid some of my men may have dipped into that honey pot with him -- nothing untoward, but I'd hate to see otherwise honorable Investigators smeared by their relationship with an A.W.O.L. Mexican.

ME

Absolutely, Sir.

KOENIG

You're what Policemen used to be, David. The Boy Chief has his eyes on us -- you specifically.

ME

Wait and watch: you can see those eyes roll-back white when he bites.

A roar. Koenig slaps my back, plods back to the buffet. Two more steps toward Exley then flashbulbs pop-pop-blind. Panicky now: snapping shots of me? Relief: not me. Hollywood types at the Pool: this handsome Buff McMan Meat-type with a woman you've seen before, but only in a yellowed black & white picture: blonde, long, beatific, HER.

I can't take my eyes off her. Stop without realizing it two steps from the Press that yesterday wanted to roll in my guts the way Dogs do, within arms reach of the Herald guy who pissed in my shrubs -- he's just as entranced with her as me.

Shiver. She and McMan Meat continue past, she answering his questions for him. Deep sing-song voice. Then I realize where I'm standing, Exley waiting, focused on me and not her -- God-damned Eunuch.

EXLEY

The Magdalena case.

Sit without an offer.

ME

A snitched rival.

EXLEY

Too easy.

ME

Yes it is: but this guy had an Army of enemies.

EXLEY

If he's alive where's the ransom demand? If he's dead, where'd they dispose of him?

ME

You're assuming there was enough left of him to dump.

(beat)

Maybe they're still torturing him. Snitches tend to die slow.

EXLEY

(beat, thinking, a conclusion I'll hate:)

Push this to the top of your list Lt. Klein. A full-fledged investigation. Every detail, every lead, no stone, etc. Understood?

ME

No. Not understood. You want me to go the whole nine yards while Feds are trying to find a replacement for the Fight Probe?

(dig Exley's deadpan)

When it was you who said Noonan would probably swing his sights to the LAPD itself?

EXLEY

-paint chips. Do as I say, exactly as I say it.

Grit my teeth under a smile. Motherfucker.

ME

What about Dan Wilhite? He's practically a member of J.C.'s piece-a-shit family-

EXLEY

-don't worry about Dan Wilhite. You deal directly with me. Now leave through the kitchen: you ogled that Woman two steps from the Press.

FLASH TO:

Pissed. Pushing through an industrial door, into a hallway. You think it's the Hotel. Then I enter the largest hangar you've ever seen.

INT. HUGHES AIRCRAFT OFFICES - DAY

Hughes sitting. His Dandy Attorney on his left, Pete on his right. I shake Hughes's hand: day-old dead fish. Dig him wiping it on the sly when I turn to sit: cannister of wet-wipes bolted to the underside of the conference table.

HOWARD HUGHES

Thanks for your time on a Sunday afternoon, Lt. Klein.

ME

Dave.

HOWARD HUGHES

This job is simple, Lt. Klein, despite how difficult my in-house legal staff has made it look.

Dig Dandy's red cheeks.

HOWARD HUGHES (CONT'D)

An '*Actress*' named Glenda Bledsoe signed a Hughes service contract that she is now willfully violating by acting in a Z-grade horror picture, presently '*shooting*' in Griffith Park. Despite entreaties for her to cease her participation in this absurdity, she continues to revel in her outlaw status with me.

(beat, quick-blinking)

Thus...I would like her destroyed.

ME

What makes you think I can do a better job than your people-

HOWARD HUGHES

-if you can boil water you can do better. And Mr. Bondurant tells me you're one of the smarter men he knows-

ME

-dubious honor if you knew the other people Pete knows.

Pete mocks a witty smile. Hughes smiles genuine-small.

HOWARD HUGHES

He also tells me of your immunity to feminine charm. That's exactly the type of Operator I need as this woman is your match on both counts.

ME

So you need me to catch her in violation of her service contract?

HOWARD HUGHES

Exactly. The morality clause in particular as the damage to her reputation would be most devastating: whore, nymphomaniac, criminal -- anything along those lines. Once you visit the set of '*Attack of the Atomic Vampires*,' you'll see the void of her character. Add that this '*feature*' is being '*produced*' by Mickey Cohen, and that's almost enough in itself to violate her.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Rich: morality re-bop from a teen-fucker afraid of sneezes ten miles away-

ME

-I'd be happy to help. My price is \$10,000 though, not 5.

Hughes goes frigid. Pete flips me off while scratching a fake itch on his nose. Dandy snort-laughs haughty.

HOWARD HUGHES

\$10,000 should buy something more than 'help.'

ME

For 10, give it any name you want.

A long, cold moment drags.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Waiting for me to blink. Laughable: I'd been in tougher negotiations with nickel whores.

HOWARD HUGHES

Start tonight.

Dandy stops shaking his head. Pete's smile real now.

HOWARD HUGHES (CONT'D)
 You can find her at any one of my
 Talent Domiciles: someone's been
 stealing groceries -- no proof it's
 her but I'm installing cameras.

Tepid handshake deux, followed by another swipe on the sly.
 Dandy begrudgingly forks over an envelope with my first half.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
 Doubling my pay told me this was
 more hate than business. And when
hate perks profit follows.

INT. PAY PHONE ON SEPULVEDA - LATE AFTERNOON

Dialing the Station:

ME
 Sergeant, pass a message to
 Stemmons from me: Meet at the
 Magdalena residence tomorrow
 morning 7 AM, and at some point
 between now and then, I need him to
 do a preliminary work-up on a woman
 named Glenda Bledsoe.

I hang up, step out, yawn.

EXT. PAY PHONE ON SEPULVEDA - NEXT MOMENT

Look over the Airport. Pacific Sun beyond: orange semi-circle
 getting low, setting scattered clouds on fire.

Anybody else takes a picture. I shiver, turn. Across the
 street: a coffee shop that makes a living off the Hughes
 night-shift. I squint at the big price list: 10-cent cups.
 Reach through my passenger-side window: pull a handful of
dimes, make for the crosswalk.

EXT. ATOMIC VAMPIRE SET - DUSK

Two-fisted coffees. On top of a scrub-brush hill, looking
 down into this little valley where 'Atomic Vampires' shoots.
 Half-assed schlock. GM-Ford-Chrysler high-beams provide
 lighting. The spaceship: a totaled Cadillac replete with home-
 made canopy and cardboard extensions on the fins. Crew:
 homeless winos. Extras: homeless drug-fiends.

One of them approaching, sweating up the hill.

ADDICT

Git. Mickey don't like gawkers.

ME

Tell Mickey the guy sitting on the hill is Lieutenant Dave Klein-

-feature the Addict almost tumble down the hill at the mention of 'Lieutenant.'

ME (CONT'D)

And the Lieutenant's pretty sure they don't have a license for any of this shit.

The Addict hesitates, turns, tougher going back down: starts sliding on his ass. And while I smile at his troubles, I look over the assembled 'talent' and see-

-HER. My black and white picture twenty years from now -- the starlet getting flash-bulb attention at Bethune's victory party this morning -- Hughes's hate-lust -- GLEND A BLEDSOE. Female lead. Dressed like a Cheerleader.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Twice in a day does not happen. Not in a city like LA. Not like this.

CHICK VECCHIO steps out of a trailer, acting in the scene with Glenda: and now I want to smash his teeth because I know what he is and don't want him that close to her.

INT. SET TRAILER - DAY

Close the door behind me. Cast of characters: MICKEY COHEN, threadbare duds, boiling eggs on a hot-plate:

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Mickey Cohen: one-time LA crime boss when Jews were still tough. Five-year San Quentin sentence meant his Empire got divvied a week into his stay. Trawls slums for loose change now.

MICKEY COHEN

Where Klein goes, tsuris follows.

And TOUCH VECCHIO: lying on a bunk, giggling.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Touch Vecchio: a brutal Fag who beat his Fucks. When Mick was King, Touch was Prince. His brother Chick, outside 'acting' with Glenda, was Sergeant at Arms: the Mick's resident semi-retired mass-murderer.

TOUCH VECCHIO

You met Rock Rockwell?

Pan down: ROCK ROCKWELL. Buff McMan Meat -- guy with Glenda this morning at the Bethune victory party. Cranking push-ups.

ME

...10, 11, 12...

Rockwell pops up, juts a chin at me: faux hard-guy scowl.

ROCKWELL

Try 48, 49, 50-

ME

-not since Camp Pendleton.

MICKEY COHEN

King David was a decorated killer of Jap families. Got a Samurai sword to prove it.

ROCKWELL

Probably stole it.

Sword/War talk is when self-control fails me. Mickey knows it, tweaks me with it when he's bored and I'm near. I glaze: McMan Meat smart enough to see the change, avert his eyes. I keep staring. Touch and Mickey chuckle.

DIRECTOR (O.C.)

ROCKWELL, SCENE...

Open the door for him. Maintains his distance. Close it behind him.

MICKEY COHEN

I appreciate you not damaging the product. What's the occasion-

ME

-don't mention those things again.

MICKEY COHEN

And that's what I hate about being
down. Lip from a guy like King
David: someone who was once in my
employ.

ME

If you're 'down' I never want to
see 'out.' And I wasn't an
employee, I did work for you.

MICKEY COHEN

Difference?

ME

I said 'no' when it suited me.

TOUCH VECCHIO

(back-bench heckler)

You say 'no' to Sam G?

ME

You say 'no' to blow-jobs from 14
year-old boys?

(back to Mickey)

The Feds are about to kick the hell
out of everything Darktown and
Chavez Ravine. Pull your coin biz
and anything else illicit you got
going on there.

MICKEY COHEN

(drips facetious)

Tomorrow work for you?

(beat)

Are you feeling a little guilt
because you pitched that Schvartze?

TOUCH VECCHIO

Dave doesn't feel 'guilt'--

-snatch the boiling pot off the hot plate, throw it in
Touch's face. Steam and burn-shrieks. Half-boiled eggs burst.

ME

You're right.

MICKEY COHEN

MOIKISCH! IT'LL FOREVER SMELL LIKE
FARTS IN HERE!

Touch through the door, screaming for cold water in the b/g.
Mickey's small smile: can't help himself. Closes the door.

MICKEY COHEN (CONT'D)
Such tsuris you cause Klein.

ME
Chief Exley wants to know who your female lead is? He saw her at the Bethune lunch today-

MICKEY COHEN
-not a chance. I'm still trying to play hide the submarine.

ME
You want Exley angry with you?

MICKEY COHEN
Oy. Ten years ago I could call for that little fuck's head on a stick.
(looks around his trailer)
And now...

ME
Name.

MICKEY COHEN
Glenda Bledsoe.

ME
Why was she there?

MICKEY COHEN
This you or Exley now?

ME
Why was she-

MICKEY COHEN
-low-budget strategy: I send Glenda and Rock to any event where there are cameras -- don't exactly have funds for a PR campaign. And Glenda gets guest-of-honor treatment everywhere with that shape of her's.

ME
What's she drive?

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - NIGHT

Following the tail-lights of a '57 Corvette. Top-down despite the cold.

Whipping Blond hair split-second visible under passing street lights. Glenda pulls into what I guess is her place: tiny-tidy Glendale flat. I roll past: no eye contact, two miles-per over the speed limit.

Around the block. Park on the next street over. Waiting until I think of what comes next. Out of the car.

EXT. GLENDALE - NEXT MOMENT

Up to a fence. Scratch it: make sure a nuts-hungry Pooch isn't slobbering on the other side. Nothing. Over the fence. Dodge a pool. Over another fence and into-

EXT. GLENDA'S BACKYARD - NEXT MOMENT

-creep to a window: curtains pulled. Creep to another: there she is. Beauty that reminds you God is male. Brewing coffee. Watch her hands: elegant fingers emanate from hands only now beginning to betray age. Watch her shake her sandals off, stand on her tiptoes to stretch. Arranging four cups on a tray, pouring -- expecting company.

On cue: another car. Duck silent before headlights strafe. A '53 Cadillac: Chick, Touch, Rockwell get out. Touch rubbing some kind of ointment on his neck, whining. Chick knocking as he opens her door. I crane my neck to get as much of her as I can. She leaves the tray, cups steaming.

Muffled greetings. A chuckle at Touch's expense. More muffled bitching. Check the window: open. Slide it up gentle. Muffles re-emerge as words.

GLENDAS BLEDSON (O.C.)

-and you know him?

TOUCH VECCHIO (O.C.)

From before Mickey made movies.
Klein's a Cop. Vicious Fucker...

INT. TIDY LIVING ROOM - SAME MOMENT

Glenda clearing seats for everyone.

GLENDAS BLEDSON

Fresh coffee in the kitchen. Let's
cover this quick 'cuz I'm gonna
pass out soon.

CHICK VECCHIO

Alright: we're set on place where
we can stash you and Rock. It's in
Ojai: no A/C, but it's got an ice-
box.

ROCKWELL

(petulant)

Is it still two weeks? My body'll
fall apart-

GLENDA BLEDSOE

-think of it as 14 days of push-
ups.

(back to the Vecchios)

That gives the press time to link
us back to Mickey's movie-

TOUCH VECCHIO

-write about 'Gangster Mickey,'
what he was when he was King...

CHICK VECCHIO

Couple a' headlines. Interest in
the movie will go through the roof.
The Old Man deserves a hit.

(beat)

You decide on who'll grab you?

GLENDA BLEDSOE

George Ainge.

TOUCH VECCHIO

He okay with making it look real-

ROCKWELL

-will he punch me? Not the face-

GLENDA BLEDSOE

-he'll be happy to hurt me a bit.
Grabs us Tuesday in front of the
Pacific Dining Car.

CHICK VECCHIO

What about the Hughes angle?

GLENDA BLEDSOE

Fuck him. Pardon my French. I think
it only helps us.

TOUCH VECCHIO

Speaking of fucking him, was he the
Spruce Goose between the sheets?

EXT. GLENDA'S BACKYARD - SAME MOMENT

My face yields up a jealous-sour frown. I reach in and steal one of the steaming cups, bolt. Audible as I retreat:

 GLENDA BLEDSOE (O.C.)
Hung like a newborn and he called
my tits 'propellers.'

Belly laughter from inside.

 MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
The real howler: fake kidnappings
always bomb.

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - EARLY A.M.

Tepid pulls off the stolen mug. Drained. Toss it to the passenger side: lands soft on a bed of crumpled Styrofoam. My Hamilton says 12:30 AM. Look up: 1284 South Tremaine now. Magdalena residence. Parked two houses down.

Two heads in a black and white squad car ahead of me: securing the crime scene of an on-going investigation -- Junior following the book word for word. Dead quiet save my low Jazz. Fighting my drift. Again. Another loll-pop-awake.

 MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Exley's mandate to focus on the
Magdalena case almost 12 hours old.
 (beat)
Five hours earlier than I told
Junior to meet me. Playing with
demons, some sickness inside.

I sit back. Yawn. Not 'investigating' anything but my ceiling and dash. Hands shake. I reach back over to the passenger side, pick up the mug I just tossed, see if any drops are-

-Lucille Magdalena at her window. Sudden. Startling: candle-lit, no shirt, pig-tails, big silver-dollar nipples touch glass. Pretends a little-girl rise-n-shine stretch. Presses the full weight of her tits on her window, steam-circles where skin touches cold glass. Pushes the curtains back even further: the show is starting.

 MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Still hungry to watch. Quick peeks
of Glenda all day lit the fire.
 (MORE)

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 Maybe Lucille with her grade-school
 pig-tails and college tits would
 put 10-grand, and what I agreed to
 do to earn it, back in place.

Lucille clubbed-footed from the first: almost trips three
 sways into her tease. Rips me from my revelry.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Not a fucking chance.

I lean forward: keys in the ignition, ready to go. Look back
 up at her, not the tits, the face -- her eyes. Mine open wide
in response, pull the keys out of the ignition...

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
 But then this show wasn't for me...

Her eyes aren't sex-placid, rolled back -- they're scanning.
 Hopeful to glimpse something outside looking back at her.
Like it's happened before. Not the Six-packs: they don't
 exist in her world even though they're in full-view...

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Wilhite's report of a recurring
Peeper: this routine had been done
 before and always for the same set
 of eyes...
 (beat)
The Peeper was the link to the J.C.
Abductor/Dog Murderer/Crotch
Slasher...

She holds her scan for a blink, a different smile for
 another, then goes back to it: eyes sex-placid now, rolled-
 back now -- she just saw what she was looking for: hidden
eyes staring back at her. I look to where I think I saw her
 gaze kink. Get out.

EXT. 1284 SOUTH TREMAINE, NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Cold for LA. Walking/scanning/.45 pulled. Cross the street:
 something red in the gutter. Two homes down. Quiet steps.
 Closer: a Coca-Cola can-

-the forearm shiver that hits me flashes from nowhere:
 somebody coiled, fast, a full-extension launch, parallel to
 the ground when they hit the back of my head. If I hadn't
 heard the last footfall, I wouldn't have flinched, lived.

Nose-first into asphalt. Too angry to black out: adrenaline
 beats back the ammonia-smell of unwilling unconsciousness.

I try to stand, reflexes slow catching up, fall ugly-awkward to my hands and knees after one step. Spit blood and scream at the same time. Sounds like drowning:

ME

STOP-

Still unsure what hit me, from what direction, whether or not it or they are winding up again. The squad-car six-packs out now. I pick-up my gun. They scream at *ME* to drop it. I fire a shot in the air -- they shit pants, dive for cover.

Clear my nose of blood, throw a handful to the ground, stand again: a figure in black, to my left, sprinting away. THE PEEPER. I wipe impact-tears from my eyes, aim, realize my trigger finger is dislocated: bent back 45 degrees. Tuck the gun into my left armpit, eyes on the fleeing figure the whole time, use my left hand to pop-back the dislocation -- deep growl -- re-aim: POP-POP-POP. Third POP pitches the Peeper.

In the streetlights: a red puff, Peeper fighting for balance, right hand like a third foot keeping him upright, always moving forward, somehow regains control, keeps running. Headlights at the far end of the block, behind me, come to life. A V-8 revs.

At least we're both in pain. I sprint, round the corner: following a blood-trail, panting, bleeding myself. Headlights round the corner behind me, strafe me. Follow the blood, keep your eyes down, run, spit your own blood so you can breath.

Headlights swerve in front of me, almost run-over my foot. I watch my knees detonate the car's quarter-panel, bounce off like someone yanked a God-sized leash. Crumble-yell. Hands picking me up, fingers digging. I look around, fight back gray edges. Square-jawed types holding me. Eyes hidden by G-Men derbies. A chuckle from one of them.

Welles Noonan gets out of the passenger-side. Sneering. Punches me as hard as he can: nothing to write home about. My nose-blood spatters him, the guys holding me.

WELLES NOONAN

That was for Sanderline Johnson.

ME

I WAS CHASING A GOD-DAMN SUSPECT-

-slaps me this time: open-handed.

WELLES NOONAN

We didn't see anybody but you
firing a .45 in a residential area.

One of the Derbies takes my gun, throws it down.

ME

HE'S THE MAGDALENA CASE! We're
after the same guy-

WELLES NOONAN

(to a Deputy)

-write that name down: 'Magda-LEE-na' or 'Magda-LAY-na.' It might be important.

(back to me)

No, we're after you. But thanks for the name.

I sag under the weight of my own insomnia-fed stupidity.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

I couldn't have played this worse if I'd tried -- assumed the Feds we're smart. Assumed they were here for the bigger picture. But they had no idea -- and I just handed them the name that could unlock twenty years of LAPD corruption.

(beat)

I decided then and there that I needed real sleep:

Raise my face now, eyes intent.

ME

First punch you ever thrown Noonan?
Mom have to teach you how because
Dad was the same Ivy League, no-chin, Connecticut Faggot you are?

Noonan stops, turns back to me: blazing. I hit the family make-up dead-on. He winds up, I jut my chin to make it easy for him. Big, bright flash, then darkness that feels like laying on a lawn in summer: dream-less sleep. Over BLACK:

WELLES NOONAN (O.C.)

Drop him.

DERBY #1 (O.C.)

You don't want to take him in?

WELLES NOONAN (O.C.)

-I only want to bring him in when I know he'll never leave.

BLACK dissolves to something LIGHTER, then:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - TIME UNKNOWN

Horizontal. Someone pushed a table and two chairs to one side: space for the cot I'm on. I roll: Junior looking down at me -- 'concerned' isn't strong enough. My hand to my face: a bandage. Junior smiles: my handiwork.

ME

How long you been here?

Exley rolls in with a silver pitcher before Junior can answer. Look at my watch: 8:40 -- I assume AM. Exley sets the pitcher down.

ME

Cream and sugar?

EXLEY

Ice: it's time to wake up. What's the progress on Magdalena?

Exley eyes me. I point to Junior: kow-tow deferential.

JUNIOR STEMMONS

Yes Sir: no fingerprints, treads, blood so far. Clean scene considering the condition of the home. Canvassed the neighborhood. Only a senile woman had anything of interest: saw a possible Peeper-

-rubbing a brutal bruise that covers my knee-

ME

-confirmed Peeper.

Exley turns to me:

EXLEY

The Officers on-scene reported Men resembling Federal Agents-

ME

-they didn't 'resemble', they were.

EXLEY

Noonan?

ME

And he knows the Magdalena name, that I was there, that I chased a Peeper Lucille strips for.

Exley's brow furrows. Thinking. Cataloguing something.

JUNIOR STEMMONS

She knows someone watches?

ME

(my eyes probing Exley)
And all his hiding spots.
(my blood drips audible)
Whose shirt am I staining?

JUNIOR STEMMONS

Mine.

ME

(beat)
Who changed me?

Exley moves toward the door, leaving:

EXLEY

One alteration to my previous
orders-

ME

-previous orders being what? Assign
the Cop Noonan blames for his dead
fight probe to the case that could
now become his new crusade?

Exley's Adam's-apple bobs small: sees gleaming white where he
usually sees bloodshot red -- my sleep paying dividends.

Exley conjures the Roman visage -- but I saw the hesitation:

EXLEY

No direct approach on any Magdalena
family member.

Opens the door, turns his back. Test him. Sneer:

ME

No. I say the Daughter knows the
Peeper. The Peeper was seen the
night J.C. vanished. I say if you
don't want us talking to her, you
don't really want this case solved.

Exley hesitates a second time, door still open. Looks at boy-
scout Junior: furrowed-brow, child hearing insults and dirty
words, cataloguing them to be used at inappropriate times.

EXLEY

Step out Stemmons.

Junior hesitates, looks my way: tries to mimic my sneer.
 Until I shove him toward Exley and the door. His look back at
 me: Judas. Exley closes the door after him. Eyes back on me.

EXLEY

I'll remind you-

ME

-enough of the 'paint chip' chorus.
 I checkmate with an admission of
 guilt to Noonan himself. I bargain
 immunity in exchange for testimony
 on how the LAPD really runs:
 Darktown crimes never touched, the
 Magdalena dope profit kickbacks,
 Diskant run out of the city council
 race on your word.
 (beat, smile blood)
 Noonan gets a dozen new probes for
 the one I killed.

Exley calculates, blinks, sits.

EXLEY

If you approach Magdalena family
 members directly, Noonan may see it
 and go right back after them with
 Federal warrants.

ME

Noonan will figure out what J.C.
 meant to LAPD sooner or later-

EXLEY

You should only worry if you don't
 figure out who killed J.C. and why,
 before Welles Noonan does. Stop
thinking, and press harder to solve
this case-

ME

-so long as I don't press that
 greasy family-

EXLEY

-I've complete faith in your ample
 ability to coerce or steal any
 information you may have gotten
 more easily via direct approach.

Exley steps backward, a little curtsy on his way out.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
I'm hitting close to home, just not
his doorstep. Not yet...

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

In a clean T-shirt from my locker. Heading toward Junior's desk. All eyes on my wounds. I toss Stemmons his shirt.

ME
 Seltzer takes blood out.

Junior: Hurt Bitch without peer.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
I took care of you and you bashed
 me. Exley said leave you on the
 floor.

ME
 -a Superior Officer told you to
 leave so he and I could speak in
 private -- I needed to hear what he
 had to say. Done.

Junior balls the shirt, stuffs it in his desk drawer.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
 I made a file on the Bledsoe broad.

ME
 (too quick)
 Thank you. But forget it.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
 (beat)
 No. This Skirt's got skeletons.

Junior rips open a file: Bledsoe preliminaries.

JUNIOR STEMMONS (CONT'D)
 Shop-lifting in Bakersfield at 17.
 K.A. of a Kern County murder victim
 -- unsolved. That's just what I
 pulled while you slept-

ME
 -solid work. Now burn it.

A pause. A pout. Another pause. He's feeling for something.

ME (CONT'D)

And get me an address on a guy
named George Ainge-

JUNIOR STEMMONS

-what about Magdalena? Remember
'Superior Officer's' order-

ME

(starting to burn)
-After you get the Ainge address,
get back to the Magda-

JUNIOR STEMMONS

(picks up Glenda's file)
-Ainge related to this Cunt?

Grit, grab him: buttons from his shirt pop, bounce on tile.

ME

We're partners in name only. You
want to stay in the room next time,
Junior? Do something to impress me:
like finding that address.

Dig Junior trying to hide tears now behind that mad-dog
glare: makes me want to break the bones in his face.

EXT. DARKTOWN - MID-MORNING

Park in-front of a tiger-striped lounge. A hand-painted sign
reads: 'Bido Lito's' in jagged, peeling letters.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Magdalena over-drive now. 'No
direct approach' meant hit
Magdalena rivals. A Federal tail
meant hit his Darktown rivals first
-- pink Fed faces glow like
Martians' this far down Crenshaw.

Out of the car. Half-a-block back: white faces in an idling
Buick. I bare still-bleeding gums and teeth at them.

INT. BIDO LITO'S LOUNGE - NEXT MOMENT

Early morning patrons sport Cop-hate stares. Pour myself a
cup of coffee. A 200-pound Female Bartender sucks her cheeks.
This beautiful, big-voice Jazz pipes out of the jukebox.

ME

Get Lester.

BARTENDER

Please.

Badge on bar. She sneers, vanishes behind a stained curtain. Impotent mumbles from everywhere. Five seconds. LESTER LAKE from behind the same curtain: tall, built, handsome despite purple-pink throat-slash scars. Folds my badge back to me. His voice is like sand-paper left in the sun.

LESTER LAKE

Payin' for that coffee?

Tar. Dump it down the drain.

ME

Chargin' for that coffee?

LESTER LAKE

Yo' face is fucked-up Officer Dave.

ME

I've had worse.

LESTER LAKE

Way you live you'll get worse. Why LAPD this far south?

ME

J.C. Magdalena.

LESTER LAKE

Only thing I know is he's gone.

ME

You let his kid blow a horn here.

LESTER LAKE

Nails on a chalkboard. Blows the squarest sax you ever heard.

(beat, darkens)

But give him a blade and that Whiteboy's an artist.

ME

'Mexican' boy...

LESTER LAKE

(beat)

Ever seen a wetback with fire-hair?

(beat, absolutely serious)

(MORE)

LESTER LAKE (cont'd)
Still call it immaculate conception
if the Devil does the fuckin'?

ME
(a little chuckle)
Who snatched J.C.?

LESTER LAKE
No idea. He got more enemies than I
got friends-

ME
-it's not just any Rival. What they
did to J.C.'s pad...too sick...too
significant...

LESTER LAKE
Some a' the ways J.C. and Tommy do
people around here...that shit be
'too sick, too significant.'

ME
Names and examples.

LESTER LAKE (CONT'D)
Leroy Carpenter and his lady Ronnie
live in them purple apartments on
Hoover.

ME
This Leroy won't come after you if
he finds out where I got his name?

LESTER LAKE
That Negro don't remember his name.

I pause. Pay for my coffee.

EXT. PURPLE APARTMENTS - NOON

Down to Apartment B for 'below-street.' Try P for
'Purgatory.' Knock-knock. RONNIE answers: imagine her pretty
once, whip-thin, green-eyed, high-yellow, short-sleeves and
dungarees. Afraid but tough enough to almost hide it.

ME
You Ronnie?

Nothing but a sneer. Badge her:

ME (CONT'D)
Lieutenant Dave Klein-

RONNIE

-Leroy can't commit crimes no more.

INT. APARTMENT B - NEXT MOMENT

LEROY sits. Muted Charlie Mingus from a nearby radio. Massive Leroy: one-time muscle now full-time flab. Rhythmic chair-creaks with each inhale. Pale-purple skin. Hands obliterated: fingers at angles. Squints at the floor like it has answers.

RONNIE

Gotta tell him to use the bowl-

-Leroy stands in response. Sudden. Mechanical. 6'7". Touch my gun on reflex. His eyes trained on that spot on the floor, turning his body to keep the sight-line clear. Heading toward a tiny-tidy bathroom. Carpet gone threadbare between chair and toilet. Softly closes the door. I go ghost. Have to sit.

RONNIE

Don't sit.

ME

(point to the floor)
What's he looking for?

RONNIE

(beat)
Don't sit.

ME

His hands...how?

Ronnie: tears now. Points to the bathroom, shaking. On the verge of a bigger break.

RONNIE

He ain't done a thing more than
that in two years.

ME

What happened two years ago-

RONNIE

-if he was what he used to be-

ME

-he's not. Tell me why?

Both hands shaking now. Stares a silent plea: please don't make me. I don't budge even though something screams I should.

In a flash before I can say 'stop,' Ronnie pulls her shirt off. No bra. Lifts her hair. Turns. The nape of her neck: two-dozen orderly scars, each a half-inch long, beginning under her hairline, extending down into her back. Tribal. Or like a fighter-ace has been notching kills. Scar furthest down scabbed: fresh. Ronnie through tears:

RONNIE

He cums...then he cuts me...

Her shoulders heave small: sobs. I put her shirt back over those shoulders, careful not to touch skin.

ME

Leroy?

RONNIE

Leroy can't even look at me...he fought the first time, but that Demon brung four white men. Big. Jumped up and down on Leroy's hands with boots. Made him-
(cracking again)
-watch a bunch more times...

My hand over my mouth.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

I know the answers to all my questions. But I need her voice to gas my hate.

ME

Who's the Demon?

Buttoning her shirt. Turns back to me. Tears magnify green.

ME (CONT'D)

Who?

RONNIE

(beat, sees my anger)
Tommy Magdalena.

I ball fists. Fingernails cut into palms. Feels like steady electricity.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

And something dies or gets born: because I wasn't gonna forget her neck by lunch. She wasn't Ghetto Cooze who should've seen it coming. Leroy wasn't a Punk who let his lady get split-open.

ME
So Leroy dealt dope.

RONNIE
Got into it with Tommy when he
wanted more percent. Tommy came
back with that gang.

ME
What did the gang look like?

RONNIE
(beat)
Like You.

Rage that looks like imperfections in the film. I stand.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Off-duty Narco Officers would look
like you...

ME
You won't ever see Tommy again.

RONNIE
(beat)
I pray.

ME
His Dad is gone, dead, both.
Without him Tommy's dead too. Soon.

Leroy walking back to his chair, eyes on that same spot. Her
tears clear, but the green still penetrates:

RONNIE
If there a Jesus, then it's just
startin' for them people: Dealer
Dad, Raper Son, Hookin' Daughter-

ME
-what?

Ronnie startles.

ME (CONT'D)
'Hooker Daughter'?

RONNIE
No-

ME

-I'm not angry Ronnie -- now tell
everything you know about
Lucille...

EXT. 1284 SOUTH TREMAINE - DAY

Magdalena home. Out of my car. Growling. CLOSE-UP: Brass
knuckles. Through the tape, past the Uniforms who know enough
not to speak to me. One double-times to his car as I pass.

INT. 1284 SOUTH TREMAINE - NEXT MOMENT

Junior with a forensics team in the front room. Forensics
Guys frazzled: make-shift wadding in their ears. Junior fine:
no wadding, just another day. Surprised as I brush past:

JUNIOR STEMMONS

Dave?

Wadding because of screams from upstairs: been going for a
while hence the frazzle. Look into the kitchen: Madge with
that vacant Jackie-O visage. Offers me her coffee cup eerie
slow. Climb stairs two at a time. Screams behind Lucille's
door. Shoulder through. Tommy holding Lucille in the closet:
feet pressed against the closed door, laying on the floor,
reading a fetish magazine out loud.

Terror on his face when he sees me: stupid enough to stand,
My first punch, a haymaker whizzes wide, brass-knuckles
crushing wall studs -- Fuck Face slips it. A jab would've
been smarter. Back overtop with a cross -- uniforms on me,
aborting the blow. Shoulders pinned, arms grappled. Tommy:
all bantam bobs, little feints, taunts, fucking grinning.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

My Vow: I'll gouge his guts and
shit on his soul if it's my last
living act.

TOMMY

Take that badge off Cocksucker.
(switchblade pops, smile)
I'll open you up wide.

Hands all over me, hauling, that blade gleams. I surge,
muscles strain/pull -- break free, Tommy slashes, misses my
face. A cacophony comes to life big: Lucille out of the
closet, HITTING ME -- uniforms scream, Junior pleads:

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Dave, no direct approach!

LUCILLE
 (clawing)
 FUCK YOU COP-

ME
 -how much?

Sucks her steam: she knows I know. Wilhite in the room, asserting himself, a fucking Tuba this close to my ear:

WILHITE
FUCKING THUG WITH A LAW DEGREE!

Pulled back into the hall. Break free. Downstairs. Pull the mahogany handrail out of the wall. Take \$100 out of my wallet: ball it, throw it at a Jackie-O Madge who wears a freaky half-smile. Hands on me again: just two. Slowly rubbing, trying to soothe. Junior's hands. I shrug-swat hard:

ME
 DON'T TOUCH ME.

EXT. 1284 SOUTH TREMAINE - NEXT MOMENT

Wilhite, fire-engine red, follows me out, aims spittle at me:

WILHITE
 EXLEY ORDERED YOU TO STAY AWAY FROM
 THEM! YOU'RE GONNA FRY KLEIN!
 EXLEY'S TEE'ING YOU UP TO TAKE THE-

-spin, grab him, lock his wrist, wrench, inflict. Wilhite struggles, great-pain-tense. Spin him around, searching as I dig my fingers in deeper: then I see them, parked down the street, camera snapping.

ME
Feds drive Buicks. Feds take
 pictures when they build a case.
Smile. You and I'll share a cell
 when I rat you and that whole
 greasy fuckin' family.

Shove him hard: stumbles flat on his ass. Slaughter-house squeal as he clasps his left arm. Can't take his eyes off the Buick. Color sapped from his face.

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - NEXT MOMENT

Rip my brass knuckles off, toss them into the passenger seat.
Junior to the window:

JUNIOR STEMMONS
IT'S SUICIDE! FOR WHAT? SET FIRE TO
IT ALL... 'cuz Tommy was puttin' a
hurt on his filthy Sister?

FLASH: orderly notches on smooth brown skin, then Glenda's
beautiful face, fearless voice:

GLEND A BLEDSOE (V.O.)
...he'll be happy to hurt me...

I pause, pick up my brass knuckles again, slide them over a
swollen right fist, even more desperate to obliterate
something, trade awful shit for awful shit -- Junior steps
back wide-eyed, *cooing*:

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Easy-easy.

ME
George Ainge's address.

BLACK.

A light turns on somewhere: my gun in a round man's face just
through his front door. GEORGE AINGE. Junior behind me
bulling his neck: his tough-guy act stinks like acting.

INT. GEORGE AINGE'S PAD - NIGHT

Tough Ainge: He doesn't flinch. Drops his lunch-pail slow.
Takes off his jacket: jail-house tattoos cover giant
forearms. Sits in a chair.

ME
How do you know Glenda Bledsoe?

Junior's 'betrayed' look: this guy is tied to that Cooze...

GEORGE AINGE
I knew that whore'd get cold-feet.

ME
-don't call her a whore again.

Laughs in my face:

GEORGE AINGE

If you gave her as many paychecks
as me, you'd know 'whore' works-

-I grab a chair cushion, put the .45 against it, fire a
muffled round that blows Ainge's hair back as it passes his
left ear. Junior twitches hard enough to spot himself. Ainge
fast-talks:

GEORGE AINGE

She fucked for a fee. I paid...got
a thing for pros!

ME

This fake kidnapping?

GEORGE AINGE

(helpful now)
Pacific Dining Car. Tomorrow-

ME

-not anymore.

GEORGE AINGE

You said it.
(big beat, thinking)
You Cops?

JUNIOR STEMMONS

Sergeant Stemmons, and this is-

ME

-shut your mouth.

Ainge sees me bent on Glenda, sees I don't want Ainge to know
WHO WE ARE. Careful now: smoke still eddies out of my barrel.

GEORGE AINGE

(right at Junior)
Back in '50, Glenda the Good Witch
put a blade in her pimp 'bout as
deep as I put my pink in her -- a
high-yellow called Gillette. Dwight
Gillette.

Junior-the-Astute, steno out, scribbling *G-I-L-L* -- I grab
it, shred it. Junior's glare: hate seeping in at the corners.
Ainge grins at the voodoo between us.

GEORGE AINGE

I could use a couple LAPD favors,
and ain't guttin' a Coon pimp still
a crime?

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Capitol crime.

ME
 And those usually need a lot more
 than the testimony of some Asshole
 covered in jail-house tattoos.

GEORGE AINGE
Guess who she asked to hold the
knife? Guess why she brought me in
 on this kidnap show? Her way a'
 buying it back-

ME
 -show it to me.

GEORGE AINGE
 I'll have my lawyer take a picture
 of it for you-

-throw his TV at his head: legitimately trying to kill him
 now and he knows it. Off his chair, crawling. Build-
 up/blowback for not being able to lay hands on Tommy. Ainge
 the sucker/surrogate/stand-in for rage I didn't know I had.
Junior's tears flow now:

JUNIOR STEMMONS
STOP!
 (more question than
 statement)
 YOU'RE NOT BENT ON AN EX-WHORE-

I grab the shattered tube: throw it again. Big POP two inches
 from Ainge's chest. Angry at myself for missing twice:

ME
 GOD DAMN IT-

JUNIOR STEMMONS
 -HE'S A MATERIAL WITNESS TO A MURD-

-grab Junior, uppercut him, push him out a door for the
 second time today. Cooing again through bloody lips-

JUNIOR STEMMONS (CONT'D)
 -please don't Dave-

-final push with my boot gives me enough room to dead-bolt it
 behind him. Ainge can't fit under his bed.

GEORGE AINGE
 I AIN'T RESISTING YOU-

ME

-I'm not arresting you.

Flip the mattress. Teen Tit mags and jack-off socks fly with it. Ainge under pine slats. Panic. I put my foot through, bash his gut -- rip him out from underneath.

ME (CONT'D)

(hissing)

Where is it?

Ainge unable to speak, gasping for air. Step to his closet: shred hinges when I open it. Rip the clothes rod down: nothing. Pull shelves from the wall: a Louisville Slugger falls at my feet. I smile. Ainge does the opposite. Step over him. Next-door neighbor bashing on the wall for quiet: I answer by detonating the wall in the same rhythm.

ME

WHERE?!

A different wall now: As hard as I can. Ten holes. Breathless. I pull out my brass knucks again.

ME (CONT'D)

-that blade or your life.

Open the front door, hold the bat by the barrel, handle out to Junior:

ME (CONT'D)

Junior: help find this-

-something black-metallic ends my night: Junior, tear-streaked cheeks, with Ainge's mailbox in-hand, pulled from free from the stucco. I drop. Try to regain reality. Junior steps in. Searching, trembling. Ainge turns cheerleader:

GEORGE AINGE

NICE!

Roll to my knees: guttural groans I can't place because they're mine. Junior rips a radio cord from the wall, wraps it around my neck, pulls my head back into his pelvis. Veins in his arms go Pop. Eyes in my head go Pop. Junior punctuating every third/fourth word by pulling the back of my head into his pelvis as he quick-thrusts forward. Sobbing.

JUNIOR STEMMONS

Last time you push me out a door.

My vision grays. Ainge's ebullience turns to concern...

GEORGE AINGE
 Don't kill a Cop in my place...
 (beat)
...what are you doing?

JUNIOR STEMMONS
 I'm not gonna kill him.

Ainge: eyeing Junior's thrusts into the back of my head:

GEORGE AINGE
 I wasn't talking about that...

JUNIOR STEMMONS
 (back to me, snot runs)
 Tossing me away for a filthy split-
 tail.
 (through grit-teeth,
 straining to finish me)
For a crooked Cop, you think small.

-go black for what feels like a second. Then eyes open.
 Little gashes from a zipper on the back of my head. Hangman's
 bruise forming around my neck. Junior and Ainge gone. Smash
 the floor with the butts of both fists. Floorboards already
pried-up jump in response. Crawl to it: Ainge's floorboards
 under his bed pulled up: a little hiding-spot void, empty of
whatever was in it.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
 Call it: the knife was here. Ainge
 crawling under his bed not to
 escape me, but to hand it to me.
 And I was too hate-wired to see it.

I check my watch: 11 PM.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Junior the Player. Junior the
Underestimated. Junior the former
Evidence Teacher: a murder weapon,
 a witness, a two-hour head-start.
 (beat)
Glenda. A woman I'd never kissed,
 never smelled, never fucked, never
 held -- banking every last bit of
me I hadn't yet sold, on
her...don't let her burn.

EXT. AINGE'S PLACE - NEXT MOMENT

Few looks from few neighbors. No sirens. Thank God gun shots and screams are school-nights in this slum. Get into my car.

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - NEXT MOMENT

My glove box ripped open, contents gone.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Junior the Flush: my \$5000 down-
 payment from Hughes gone. Junior
the Half-Assed: should've put a
 bullet in my brain.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - LATE NIGHT

Phone to my ear.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
 What?

ME
 Meg, shake Pete awake.

MEG (O.S.)
 ...Jesus Christ...

Rustling and whispers.

PETE (O.S.)
 Take some pills, will you?

ME
 I'll give you a grand to locate and
 tail Junior Stemmons.

PETE
 Your partner?

ME
 Past tense.

PETE
 2 grand.

ME

Done. Tell me what he does, who he talks to, where he goes, and if he's got this fuckin' mutt named George Ainge stashed somewhere.

PETE

You want me to clip him?

ME

Ainge: yeah. Junior: not yet.

PETE

Howard wants a progress report about the Movie Broad-

-hang up.

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - LATE

Driving past Glenda's house. No Corvette. Driving past the Griffith Park 'Vampires' set: addicts/crew tucking into sleeping bags for the night. No Corvette. Pull the address list Dandy handed me: Talent Domiciles.

Glendale. Howard's fuck-pad supreme. Tudor mansion with airplane-shaped hedges. Up the driveway: Corvette. I stop at the curb, wait. Lights inside. Open shades. Flashes of her. Back and forth. Moving quick. Gathering something. I lean back into it: watching. In and out of view. Heart-rate accelerating with every glimpse...

KNOCK-KNOCK shock on my window. Her. Inches-close. Hide my surprise. Bags of groceries in her hands, a wary little smile: watch me kill Howard's new Dick with kindness. Roll the window down, stay blank-slate. She features my cuts/bruises. Tosses me band-aids from one of the bags. Her quiet, deep voice is like medicine:

GLENDIA BLEDSOE

Better looking than the last guy Howard hired. Once you heal.

ME

(pointing to the groceries)
Those his?

GLENDIA BLEDSOE

Everything's his.

ME

Except you.

GLEND A BLEDSOE

That's why I left.

ME

You just shop here now?

GLEND A BLEDSOE

Some of our extras haven't had a vegetable since Truman.

ME

(let it drip)

Attack of the Atomic Vampires...

GLEND A BLEDSOE

Beats hell out of Attack of the Grabby Millionaire. Who are you?

ME

Touch told you about me.

GLEND A BLEDSOE

(beat, smile dawning)

Then this isn't the first time you've spied on me?

I reach over to the passenger-side floorboard: the coffee cup I stole from her tray. Put it one of her bags.

ME

Or the second.

GLEND A BLEDSOE

(beat, she smiles)

What else do you know?

ME

That Hughes is installing cameras in these places to figure out who's looting the pantries. And that you should finish-out your contract.

GLEND A BLEDSOE

(smile gone)

Not if there was just one day left on it.

ME

Why?

GLENDIA BLEDSOE
Because I'm better than that...and
I don't want to be a whore...

ME
Like you were for Dwight Gillette?

Like I punched her in the mouth. Her face: embarrassment cut
with confusion. Ease her through the next few seconds.

ME
I know about Gillette. The knife
Ainge is hiding. The kidnap plot-

She recovers quick, steels herself, she's been in tighter,
tougher spots -- I fall in love a little more every second.

GLENDIA BLEDSOE
Then why are you sitting here? You
should be picking up a paycheck
from Hughes.

ME
I'm not watching you for him
anymore.

That gets her to stop, turn:

GLENDIA BLEDSOE
If you're planning on shaking me
down for 'favors,' go pick-up your
paycheck.

I show her the backs of my hands.

ME
This blood is Ainge's. Because he
wanted favors. Because he had more
in-store than 'hurting you a bit.'

GLENDIA BLEDSOE
You're protecting me? You don't
even know me...

ME
Just the parts you wish I didn't.

Honesty hits her square, takes her steam. Step slowly, grab
her grocery bags, put them in her tiny trunk.

GLENDIA BLEDSOE
How do you know he didn't hire
someone to watch you too?

ME

I don't.

GLENDA BLEDSOE

(more of a question)

Thank you...

My police radio squelches to life. Piping out of my open window. Shit-timing neither of us comment on. I turn, back to my Pontiac, key my handset:

ME

Klein.

Glenda stares back for five more seconds, unable to label me, and that might be the first thing that really scares her tonight. Turns, fires her Corvette. Backs out. Accelerates-

DISPATCH (O.S.)

You're still the Lead on Magdalena?

ME

Yeah-

-as I watch Glenda's tail-lights disappear.

DISPATCH

Found a body in Chavez Ravine.

EXT. CHAVEZ RAVINE - EARLY A.M.

No-man's land gully behind two shacks: J.C.'s eyes gouged out, his hands, cock and balls sawed off. Septic/sweet stink of days-old Death. Fritz Koenig there, pacing, mid-conversation with a Forensics-type. Sees me approaching, small smile -- looks as tired as me...

ME

What are you doing here?

KOENIG

Would you believe: 'shopping for Spic trinkets?'

ME

No.

KOENIG

(points back to a pig-necked Robbery Detective)

We were staking out a Robbery suspect three streets over.

(MORE)

KOENIG (cont'd)

(beat)

J.C.'s body was dumped post-mortem.

ME

Sure it's him?

KOENIG

Gold caps. Scars in the right spots.

ME

Imagine he smells the same.

KOENIG

(chuckles, then:)

Why leave all that money in his mouth?

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

I'm certain now: J.C.'s Killer is not a Rival Pusher...

ME

Same reason you saw his cock off: for hate not profit. Whoever did this didn't do it for money.

Wait a minute. Scanning...

ME

Where's Wilhite? He'd a' been the first one here...

My question hits Koenig at about the same exact time. His cocksure smile long gone. I'm up and moving back to my car. Hit the cordon just as Exley does from the opposite direction. Reuben Ruiz in-tow: glazed-fear. Exley's cadre of loyal press orbit, follow him like lemmings off a cliff.

EXLEY

This grisly discovery is emblematic of the area's rapid moral decay. Chavez Ravine has long been rife with crime and venality, but no more. With a brand new Stadium on these premises, we can make this horrible blight a bright spot and give our Los Angeles Dodgers the home they deserve.

Then Exley sees me. His press-friendly face contorts, the shift startling: if only a flashbulb could've framed it. He shifts back from snarl to smile...no one notices but me. To Ruiz, motioning to the Press:

EXLEY (CONT'D)
 Rueben Ruiz can tell you of his
 travails growing up in this
 horrible slum and why now is the
 time to '*Redeem The Ravine*.'

Ruiz begins his forced/coerced/do-it-or-we'll-fuck-you sob
 story as Exley steps away from the glare. I follow.

EXLEY (CONT'D)
I said no direct approach-

ME
 -I had to rattle Tommy's cage.

EXLEY
 (hints of panic)
Noonan may have already co-opted
that family, might be leveraging
 them and their relationship with
 the LAPD, against the LAPD. Start
 solving this case Lieutenant-

ME
-then start telling me everything
you're not.

Exley measures me. I don't blink.

EXLEY
 Tomorrow morning. My office.
 (heading back to the
 press, beat)
 Where's your partner?

Watch Exley put the preen back on for the press. Turn and
 walk without answering him. Steal his 'preen' right back.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
 Fuck Junior for now, Bloodhound
 Pete Bondurant in hot pursuit. The
 real head-scratcher? Where's Dan
Wilhite?

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - PRE-DAWN

The sun creeps in streaks. Parked in front of a one-story
 rambler in Hancock Park. Staring at it.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
 Two calls to Wilshire station: no
Wilhite.

(MORE)

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 I buzz officers on-scene at the
 J.C. Body dump: still no Wilhite.
 Two more calls to Central Dispatch:
no Wilhite, late for his shift.

INT. WILHITE'S PLACE - SUNRISE

Inside, off the kitchen: strong stink, hanky out, gag-reflex
 goosing dry heaves. Gun out...go slow...

INT. WILHITE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wilhite's body hanging. Already bloated-rigid. Noose anchored
 to a redwood cross-beam up high. An overturned ladder two-
 feet beneath his shoes. No note.

MY OLD VOCIE
 Sometimes your Demons whisper and
 sometimes they scream...whatever
 ripped at Wilhite...he hid it well.
 (beat)
Playing with his own sickness. One
 he stared too hard at...

TWO nooses around his neck: one rope, the other 16MM film.
 Breaching Sun hits his gray bloat just so. A bandage on
 Wilhite's left shoulder. Behind him: pictures of his football
 glory days, Wilhite a U. of Wisconsin Fullback in a better
 life, drilling a Notre Dame Safety with a forearm shiver.

FLASH TO:

EXT. 1284 SOUTH TREMAINE - NIGHT AGO

BAM: me hit with that same forearm shiver by the Peeper. BAM:
 me firing at the Peeper, hitting him in the left shoulder.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Balls: telling me about a Peeper
 unsolicited when the Peeper's you.
More balls than brains: you got
 obsessed with your Stool Pigeon's
 daughter.

Peeper doesn't go down, keeps his balance with his off hand,
 constantly moving forward like a Big-10 fullback...

RETURN TO:

INT. WILHITE'S LIVING ROOM - PRESENT

Dialing the Station. Stop before the last number...

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Even Odds: Wilhite knew who killed
J.C. 2 to 1: Wilhite did it himself
-- bent on Whore/Daughter Lucille.
Without a doubt: more than just
Lucille behind the reasons 'why?'

...hang up the phone as night black turns morning purple.

FLASH TO:

Pulling on gardening gloves. On the ladder: cutting both
nooses: trying to save as much of the film as possible. An
ugly slosh-drop as Wilhite bombs the floor. Using bleach to
clean blood-puke-shit off the tile. Pack Wilhite's suitcases.

INT. WILHITE'S GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Open the door: eyes on Wilhite's Studebaker Power Hawk.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - MORNING

Searching for tails. Nothing. Traffic moving smooth.
Wilhite's Studebaker idling ten-feet away: my new ride.
Dialing a number. Ringing. Answer.

ME

Meg.

MEG (O.S.)

(no hello)

Pete, phone!

PETE (O.S.)

(beat, on the line)

Yup.

ME

Call Fred T please, tell him I got
some film in rough shape.

PETE

Film of what?

ME

That's why I need Fred.

PETE

Guess where I just came from?

ME

(beat)

Stemmons.

PETE

Swung by on my way to get donuts --
get a lay of the land, maybe get
lucky, catch him coming or going.

(beat)

His front-door's triple pad-locked.

ME

The knife is in there.

PETE

What?

ME

Can you get in there, sit on it-

PETE

-that's why you're paying me.

ME

There's a phone around the corner
from his place on Slauson. Call me
at Fred's if he shows.

INT. FILM PROCESSING SHOP - MORNING

FRED T: average-build, Armenian-hairy, acid-bad skin.

FRED T

Raw materials royally fucked: half
the frames are wrecked, and some
kind of acid ate through the
emulsion...fuck you find this?

Waiting for answers I don't give. Drop \$500 on his desk.

ME

Can it be salvaged?

FRED T

(beat)

Pieces maybe.

ME

Wake me up when.

Fred goes to work. I sit on the floor, back against the wall. Take a long inhale-exhale. Drift. FLASHES bomb immediately: bruises, notches, gunshots, slashes, Lucille, a knife-held high, a Louisville slugger, Ronnie...then a hand held out to me. Glenda's hand. Everything slows. No more snapshots. Her face: silent, half-smile, beautiful-

-Fred T boots my foot. His face gone green.

FRED T

I like most any tit-flick...not
this one...

BLACK. Then the single bright light of a projector. No sound outside of film moving through machine. Half-destroyed images and sound now: grainy homemade porn. A fat man screaming, on-top of a younger woman we can't entirely see.

FRED T (O.C.)

This part I thought 'okay': Guy's a pig but the girl seems nice: fan a' the silver-dollar pepperonis.

FLASH TO:

LUCILLE'S face. Count-my-pores close. Scanning for the Peeper/Wilhite from her window. Her giant nipples on glass.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

The Hooker on film: slattern-eyed
Lucille Magdalena.

RETURN TO:

On screen: fat man tossing a condom into a bin beside the door. Film goes black. I panic:

ME

Anything else?

Fred T just points back to the screen. Five dark seconds. Bright flash then it starts again: a Shriner handing money to someone off-screen. A damaged, but still familiar voice:

DAMAGED VOICE ON SCREEN

...rough...want...

Shriner turns Lucille over. Frames getting worse: bits and pieces of faces, words. A third groan I can't place. The sounds and images have the same staccato as my nightmares. Images get clear for a second: Lucille on top now, riding Shriner. That third groan grows -- more of whine...

ME

What is that sound?

FRED T

It's...whoever's behind the camera
is...*weeping*...

Brittle film pops, more sounds, a sharp rasp, pain-

FLASH TO:

WILHITE'S face: count-my-pores close. Tears in his eyes after
I pushed him down, showed him Feds snapping pictures.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Call it: the Person filming was
Wilhite. Did he want to? Was he
forced to?

RETURN TO:

The film -- Lucille holds her hair up. One of her half-assed
seductress moves I recognize from her window strip. Then I
barely stanch a vomit-urge: notches on her neck.

FLASH TO:

TOMMY'S face: count-my-pores close. Smiling yellow, blowing
cigarette smoke into the Uniforms' faces.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Tommy fucks Sister Lucille. Tommy
pimps Sister Lucille. Tommy makes
Wilhite film it, watch it, ala
Leroy made to watch Ronnie's
rapes...the big question: can Fuck-
Face Tommy can pump that kind of
obedience into an LAPD Captain?

(beat)

If Wilhite butchered J.C., then why
not butcher Tommy too?

RETURN TO:

If Ronnie had 20, Lucille has 50 -- rides Shriner harder-
faster for 5 more seconds. Film fails in earnest. Last bits
of sound: sniffles evolving to sobs. Then BLACK.

FRED T

Was that acne on that Whore's back?

Eyes close. Glenda half-smiling at me. I don't open my eyes
because it's her. In a ball gown.

Turns around, lifts her hair: unzip me. I do. Two inches down: one notch on her neck, still bleeding. Glenda's face turns toward me, twists into Meg's, twists into Lucille's, twists into Ronnie's.

I open my eyes -- furious at how quickly my poison seeps. Fred T just stares at me, points back to the projector.

FRED T (CONT'D)

You know them people?

The phone on the wall rings. Grab it, hopeful, distracted:

ME

Pete?

PETE (O.S.)

Junior has left the fuckin' planet.
Went into his place like he was
expecting to get rushed-

ME

-good.

PETE (O.S.)

Scoped his Ford: a sawed-off Ithaca
on the passenger seat, full-view.
Canned tuna in the back seat. Think
he's living out of that car.

ME

He leave yet?

PETE (O.S.)

Peeled out like he thought the
world was tailing him. Last I saw
he was doing 80 down Slauson.

Beat, thinking, to Fred T:

ME

Another \$500 if I can garage that
Studebaker here.

FRED T

For that I'll tooth-brush the
spokes.

ME

(back into the phone)

Come get me.

INT. PETE'S CADILLAC - DAY

Junior's faceless-stucco-beige apartment building. Scan for anything off...

ME

Two honks if he shows. Then meet me
in the alley, back of his place.

Pete puts his blackjack on his lap for easy access. I pull bolt-cutters from the backseat.

EXT. JUNIOR'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Hustle across the street. Hang my badge over my shirt-pocket:
don't sweat my hardware.

INT. JUNIOR'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Up three flights. Junior: #303. Front-door of a madman: three padlocks -- hinge/receiver hardware extending between door and jamb. Elbow grease to cut the locks. Three kicks and a shoulder to splinter the door.

INT. APT. 303 - NEXT MOMENT

Stop dead. Sex-horror grimace: like catching Pop fingering Mom. Junior's place a tiny studio: stove six-feet from bed.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

You couldn't hide what he was
hiding -- LAPD Officer, 1958 -- and
not have it curdle your mind.

Trip-wires. Bear traps barely hidden under sheets. Mouse-traps on every flat surface. My Dress-Blue picture blown up, framed, center-wall, glass-starred from a fist. Walls tacked with sound-deadening acoustic foam. Touch the foam, call it:

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Muffles the sound of two Men
moaning in-rhythm.

Smell rotten flowers: his shirt that I wore/bled-on crumpled on his pillow -- yellowed jizz stains cover black blood stains. Stifle a gag. Put on Wilhite's gardening gloves again: hands shaking. Toss the place. Under the bed: dildos, beefcake mags, first-person perspective snapshots of Junior's dick sucked by the Diskant Quiff and vice-versa.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
 Eager-beaver with Quiff at the
 Diskant job. Eager-beaver gives
 Quiff a lift back to UCLA.

Open this massive steamer trunk. Arsenal: handguns, shotguns, a surplus M-1 in pieces. Move into his kitchenette: check the frig/freezer even though Junior is smarter than that: amyl-nitrate poppers, vodka. Not that smart: heroin, reefer, cocaine, pills. Close it. Look down as I turn. STOP: indents in cheap tile from where the refrigerator used to sit.

Pull to see what's behind. Eyes catch the bear-trap near the bed as I tug: ugly-rusted-*waiting*. Stop part II: don't be an idiot. Contort, peer behind the refrigerator: pineapple grenade duct-taped to the wall, next to a built-in safe.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
 The safe scared me more than the surplus pineapple: a safe didn't get installed overnight -- he'd been working on something, planning something, who knew for how long.

A line leads from the grenade's pin, attached to the back of the refrigerator, already taut. Bolt-cutters snap it. Pull the refrigerator all the way out. The safe bolted into the drywall. Stare at it: the dial, the black paint-job...

CUT TO:

Loading shells into a shotgun from the steamer-trunk. Back into the kitchen. Exhale. BEGIN BLASTING. Massive noise. Six shots. Reload fast: no foam can muffle this riot. SECOND VOLLEY. Eyes closed to keep chunks of dry-wall out. Gaggling on cordite. Rip at the safe -- something gives. Use the butt of the rifle. Butt splinters. Keep going -- everything gives. Safe comes loose, hits the floor, leaves a hole.

Through the ringing in my ears: something that sounds like three honks. I said two. Quick peek: Pete gone. A 56 Buick with two white-walled buzz-cuts in front...FEDS.

Still looking out wide-eyed: Junior gets out of the backseat.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Junior the Cunning: cutting a deal with U.S. Attorney Welles Noonan.

Toss the shotgun. Scoop the freezer drugs, the stack of man-porn, the dildo, the mutual B-J snapshots. Toss the whole armful into the hallway in front of Junior's door.

Turn on the gas but don't light the burners. Pull the grenade off the wall. Drag the safe to the rear of his place: fire escape.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - NEXT MOMENT

Out the window, on the escape, push the safe over the railing. Feature it almost crush the back of Pete's idling Cadillac. Turn, pull the pin on the pineapple-

INT. JUNIOR'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NEXT MOMENT

-Junior on the second-floor landing, heading to his floor. To the Feds with him:

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Stay right here. I'll get it all,
and come back. Don't move.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - SAME MOMENT

Ricochet the grenade back into the kitchen. Leap down half a flight: put exterior brick between my head and the-

-BIG BOOM.

INT. JUNIOR'S APARTMENT BUILDING - SAME MOMENT

Junior knocked on his ass halfway up the last flight. Feds come sprinting. Screaming Junior tackles one on the way up. Neighbors out, wide-eye terror. Juniors' front-door blown in-half. Neighbors greeted with images of Sodom scattered from Junior's Apartment: drugs, fag mags, a dildo rolling down the steps. The Fed that didn't get tackled picks up a photo: Junior's first-person perspective dick-suck.

And Junior's mind snaps cleanly in-half -- sprint-crawls away growling like a bear caught in one of his own rusty traps.

INT. MEG'S PLACE - AFTERNOON

I shake uncontrollable. Psyche rising up against me. More FLASHES with each blink: notches, sisters, nipples, stab wounds, Junior bobbing on a lap. I bend forward and literally hold my eyes open. Teeth chatter like I'm freezing.

PETE
I know what Feds look like...those
were Feds with Junior, yeah?

ME
 (nod 'yes')
 But we got what they came for.

PETE
 Why didn't he just take whatever he
 had stashed this morning when I saw
 him lay rubber down Slauson-

ME
 -paranoid, smart. Noonan could
 arrest him, confiscate everything
 before he could cop a plea. Get the
 deal on paper first, then deliver.

PETE
 (beat)
 You need sleep...that safe'll be
 open when you wake up.

See Pete's fists, see the scars, pre-empt:

ME
 You could find things in
 there...might make it sticky
 between me and you. You might find
 other things, could burn down a lot
 of powerful people, capsize shit.

Pete laughs, believes it's bull-shit.

ME (CONT'D)
 I wish I was kidding.
 (beat, Pete getting it)
 You just gonna hand it back to me?

PETE
 Yeah.
 (solemn, almost square)
 Meg asked me to marry her.

Another quake-fit hits me. HARD.

PETE (CONT'D)
 I said yes. And I never take angles
 on family.

ME
 (speak through chatter)
 Lucky me.

PETE

You're welcome. You got some place
quiet I can dump you?

ME

I'll get a Taxi.

INT. GLENDA'S LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Clean and cool. Draws the curtains. Sits. Stares at me:
something less than 'unsure.' Something more than 'caution.'
I still shake. She hands me a blanket I wave off.

ME

I knew you didn't have plans
tonight-

GLENDA BLEDSOE

-because you cancelled them.

(beat)

Would you have broken-in here if I
wasn't home? Waited?

ME

Yes.

(beat, eye contact, no
blinks, still chattering)

Tell me anything.

(beat)

Tell me everything.

Label her surprise, her brow that furrows and unfurrows just
as quickly. Another long moment as she waivers...commits:

GLENDA BLEDSOE

Give me a place to start...

ME

Why did you kill Dwight Gillette?

GLENDA BLEDSOE

(beat)

Why haven't you told Hughes I did?

Long moment as I waiver...

ME

...haven't had time...

Enough 'play' in my answer to make her smile small. Enough
'doubt' that I might not be joking -- keep her talking.

GLEND A BLEDSOE

(beat)

He asked me to take his 'niece and nephew' to their cousin's house in Oxnard -- beautiful, funny little kids.

(beat, tears well that she doesn't swipe away)

I dropped them off. A week later I saw their pictures in the Post Office. A week after that two tiny bodies came in on the tide.

(beat)

I'll never shake that they maybe thought I was in on it. So I pray God let them look down at me when I drove that knife into him.

(beat)

Why do they call you the Enforcer?

ME

(beat)

I've killed 44 men.

She blanches. My eyes: tears I don't swipe.

ME (CONT'D)

33 for War. 2 for principle. 9 for profit -- mostly. Why did you sign with Hughes, knowing what he was?

GLEND A BLEDSOE

(beat)

'For profit -- mostly.'

Silence then...a feeling like: "And there we are..."

ME

(beat)

I'm not much good.

GLEND A BLEDSOE

Neither am I.

She reaches over, touches my quake. Two breaths with her hand on mine and it all goes quiet: the shakes, the images, the fear. She sits down next to me and takes my head into her lap. I close my eyes for the first time ever. Just black: no memories. The only things audible: my breathing, a grandfather clock ticking. Both slowly fade out.

BLACK.

A tea pot screams. Low light. On the couch: pillow under my head, blanket over me, shoes off, lined neatly at the foot of the couch. Look up: 4:10 on the grandfather clock. Glenda at the stove, making coffee, freshly scrubbed, dressed like a cheerleader. A small but real smile:

GLEND A BLEDSOE

Early morning call. I can drop you
on my way...

INT. GLEND A'S CORVETTE - EARLY MORNING

Pulls up in front of Meg's place. Dig my sweaty-palm 'kiss-or-not' debate. Her eyes scan my face.

ME

...am I bleeding again?

GLEND A BLEDSOE

(beat)

Looking for a clean patch to kiss
good-bye.

ME

(beat, smile)

Let me go wash my lips.

Her real smile again. Kisses me back on my cheek, closer to my ear. I take her face in my hands, check her eyes, a beat before they tell me it's okay...I lean in, takes a lifetime -- and kiss her soft until she kisses back, her mouth moving over my split lips, she puts her hands on my face, pulling me in. I want to swallow her whole.

We break. I need more. I pile out of the car before I can fuck it up. Her taste lingers like promise.

INT. MEG'S HOUSE - NEXT MOMENT

Dark. Stay quiet. Maneuver into the kitchen. Turn on a light. On the table: safe opened, all of it's contents laid-out neatly, short-stacks of files, \$1000 in twenties. I sit, start searching for something else...Pete's voice behind me:

PETE (O.C.)

Knife ain't there. File on top a'
that middle pile: George Ainge in
an 'undisclosed locale, keeping it
on his person as insurance.'

I don't turn. Pete sits next to me. Sets a shotgun down.

ME

Junior documented everything?

PETE

Like a fuckin' Monk.

(pulls a file)

Like here: s'all down how you
invest your hit fees in real
estate, how Meg runs it all with
'knowledge.'

ME

(staggered)

You been up all night?

PETE

In-case Stemmons thought to make
house-calls...you should've told me
about the Bledsoe broad, Dave.

ME

(beat)

There's nothing to tell.

Hands me the phone. Righteously pissed:

PETE

Then call Hughes about this dead
Bakersfield Pimp she used to fuck
for. I'm no legal scholar like you,
but I'd bet charges like 'murder'
and 'prostitution' would violate a
fuckin' 'morals clause.'

(beat, hands phone)

Dial. Collect the rest of your
payment -- a payment you Jewed-up.

ME

(beat, no eye contact)

I don't want it anymore.

PETE

Then give the first 5-grand back.

ME

Junior stole it.

Pete scoffs, stands, turns back toward Meg's bedroom:

PETE

People are going to start lining-up
to see you bleed.

Door closes. I flip through Junior's files: architect-neat block printing. Hyper-detailed: subscript clarifications, attachments, pictures, procedural notes to the U.S.A.W.N.: United States Attorney Welles Noonan. The tab of the folder furthest down: EDMUND EXLEY...

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - MORNING

Head down the hallway. Frenzy in the station: like somebody kicked a bee-hive. Habitual eye toward Junior's desk: Koenig sitting in his chair, going through drawers. Stop dead. Move toward him. Patented, avuncular smile when he sees me.

ME

You getting sentimental for the bull-pen?

KOENIG

Never. Your young partner called me at my home, too early this morning.

Teeth grit.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Junior-the-Desperate. Looking to double-dip fuck me with the Feds and the PD at the same time -- feeding frenzy on Enforcer Klein.

ME

I'm sorry.

KOENIG

(smile shrinks a bit)

What are you apologizing for?

ME

(beat)

He's my Partner.

KOENIG

No need.

ME

Why would he call you?

KOENIG (CONT'D)

Stemmons Sr. and I beat Gangsters together at the Victory Hotel years ago. I said a few nice, albeit untrue words to Junior about his Father at the latter's funeral.

ME

(beat)

What was he calling about.

KOENIG

I could ask you the same.

(beat)

I'm at his desk looking for clues because I don't know. He was inebriated with Lord-only-knows-what-poison -- speaking inarticulately of '*true love's betrayal*,' how the LAPD was set to be '*blitzed by justice*'

(beat)

I sense it was some kind of warning...

Then it hits me like a punch:

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Open your eyes: the LAPD's best Investigator was sitting at Junior's desk. Was unexpectedly at J.C.'s body dump. And you're linked to both Death and Disappearance by sheer proximity.

(beat)

Would a decorated war vet who executed Nazis for a living have any qualms with stringing up a dirty Cop like me even if he was a Cop himself? No.

(beat)

Welles Noonan might not be the only Crusader I need to worry about...

I hesitate, look at Koenig in a whole new way, then nod back to the bee-hive feel to the station -- change the subject if nothing else...

ME

He call everybody?

KOENIG

No. This morning's ill-wind is in regards to the untimely demise of Bob Gallaudet and Thomas Bethune.

My breath catches.

ME

What? Both?

KOENIG
Shotguns. Each.

Head spins.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Three bodies in 12 hours -- Chavez
Ravine part of each. Something huge
happening...

I turn, bolt for an Office at the end of the hall without parting words to Koenig. He looks after me probably much the same way he looked at his phone after Junior hung-up.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Dead Bethune means a new election.
A new election might mean no Dodger Stadium. Dead Bethune and Dead Gallaudet means Exley is now without friends.
(beat)
Somebody, a Third Party, just hit back for what was done to Diskant.
And he, she, or they hit harder
than anyone imagined.

CUT TO:

8 X 12 black and white photos arrayed on a desk: macabre. The left side of Thomas Bethune's head sheered off uneven. Brains leaking into a gutter. The back of Bob Gallaudet's head and neck gone. Blasted at barrel-touch range. Eyes-wide-dead.

Lift up to see we're in:

INT. EDMUND EXLEY'S OFFICE - MORNING

Exley deathly-pale, looks like he didn't catch a wink, can't take his eyes off the pictures.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
And for the first time I could ever remember, Chief Edmund Exley was
scared...

EDMUND EXLEY
They were at Dinner...last
night...asked me to come...

Attack without further pause. Quiet:

ME

To discuss how you all would split
the proceeds?

Exley looks up at me glazed, reeling, before he can play stupid with: *'What?'*

ME (CONT'D)

You, Bethune, and Gallaudet bought big chunks of Chavez Ravine over the past two years through a company called Hurwitz Holdings.

(beat)

If the Dodgers move there the value of that land booms...you could sell it off to Developers for a fortune.

Exley coming to, realizing his day just got infinitely worse.
But I don't let the Fucker breath:

ME (CONT'D)

But if you look at all your land on a map, you can't help but see the God-sized parking lot you could build right next to the would-be front gate of the would-be Stadium.

A morning of Exley firsts: 1. Visibly Afraid 2. Painfully Speechless.

ME (CONT'D)

6 or 7,000 cars, 80+ times a summer...right? Even at a buck-per that kind of money sets up families forever. Funds political campaigns.

EXLEY

...how?

ME

Junior Stemmons the ex-evidence teacher.

EXLEY

(beat, sad groping)
It isn't illegal...

ME

(laugh at him)
Who gives a shit?

(MORE)

ME (cont'd)

Word gets out that the three City Officials who were pushing hardest for a Stadium, also stood to gain as much as the O'Malley's -- that might color public opinion, especially since now we're gonna have brand new elections with brand new candidates.

(beat)

Might even be the wake-up call Noonan needs: why worry about a crooked Cop like Klein when my real political rival: Chief Edmund Exley, is building a legitimate War Chest?

Silence. I smile wide at it.

EXLEY

(beat)

I suppose...you want to trade files now: Sanderline for Hurwitz-

ME

-Diskant was for Sanderline. I already told you that. You're going into your wallet for this...and I'm not ready to trade. Yet.

Exley doesn't blanch. Goes from green to gray back to green again. Thinking.

EXLEY

Where is Stemmons?

I point to a stack of pink notes skewered neatly on a sterling-silver stake:

ME

Don't know. But I'll bet one of those messages you haven't read yet will be from I.A.: Junior's apartment caught fire. Deeply Homosexual material discovered inside.

(beat)

You'd better post APBs for him state-wide. Round him up, and anyone he's with.

EXLEY

(beat, scanning me...)

Why would Stemmons investigate me?

ME

He knew you were leveraging me in some way. I think he was going to gift it to me, some queer crush he had. Once he clued-in I'm not his type, he went nuts, tried to give the whole package to Welles Noonan.

EXLEY

How do you know that?

Hand him Noonan's business card: dig the big Federal Eagle in American Blue.

ME

From his file tabbed Edmund Exley.

Exley transfixed on the card:

EXLEY

...I'll issue an A.P.B. saying Stemmons is a known deviant targeting kindergarten children.

Go back after him with more body-blows.

ME

You used me as bait for Noonan.

EXLEY

(beat, he hates having to answer my questions)
And while he focused on you, I use the lull to expose the Magdalena-Narco Division connection.

My God. At least when he moves, he moves BIG.

ME

(beat, believe it)
You were going to take Narco down yourself? Before Noonan?

EXLEY

I still am.

ME

You take Narco under his nose like this, he'll never leave LA...

EXLEY

I don't want him to leave. Noonan has an eye for what Crusades the Voter wants undertaken, but not the ability to close them out. I adopt his crusades as my own, and take action -- let Noonan pick the fights, so long as I win them.

(beat)

And after these Chavez Ravine evictions, I'll need to fight many battles on behalf of the-

(like it's a concept he's read-up on)

'Common man.'

Exley: chin-high pride. Me: half-shock at the boldness.

ME

A big IF.

(beat)

And what if his next crusade is you?

EXLEY

By then I'll have the Narco victory to my name won't I: proof of my willingness to break blue-wall covenants for the public good.

ME

(beat)

How does any of this explain why you're so bent on me solving the J.C. Magdalena case?

EXLEY

Because I think everything is linked.

ME

What?

EXLEY

By a Third Party.

INT. FILE VAULT - TIME UNKNOWN

Files laid open. Thick. Reading glasses on. Filling a stenopad with scrawl. Entire Narco Division splayed open on the table: past/present Officers. Wilhite's in front of me.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Dan Wilhite chart-toppers: killed 4 men in the line of duty. All small to mid-sized Pushers. Last one: February '56.

(beat, pulling photos)

'Restrained' Leroy and Ronnie Carpenter six times: 'resisting arrest.' Call it rape complicity.

FLASH: Tommy's smile. Leroy's hands. Ronnie's neck.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Call it a reason to kill yourself when you realize Tommy is also rape-notching Sister Lucille -- the girl you love through a window-pane, but can't protect because doing so might ruin a 20-year relationship and your own career.

(beat)

Joined LAPD in '38. War service: Decorated. Medals meant we got fast-tracked -- a Distinguished Service Cross meant him faster than most. Served in Third Army...

I write 'Third Army' in my notebook: block letters instead of scrawl. Underlined. A knock on the door. A Sergeant:

SERGEANT

Message at the desk from Sergeant Stemmons. Left a number -- guy wouldn't stop screaming...

INT. WATCH SERGEANT'S DESK - MOMENTS LATER

Dial. Wait.

JUNIOR STEMMONS (O.S.)

Klein?

Can't help but tweak the Geek:

ME

This is Lieutenant Klein. Yes?

JUNIOR STEMMONS

MOTHERFUCKER -- *you better meet me!* That Cooze you threw everything away for is still done -- I got the knife. I got Ainge-

ME

-you're a broom-closet Queer
Junior. Your life here is over.

JUNIOR STEMMONS

The knife for MY file on Exley. I
know you already burned yours and
that Whore's but don't think I
can't re-do investigations. Fern
Dell Park-

ME

-where you used to snare Quiffs for
Vice? Let me ask: did you volunteer
for that gig?

JUNIOR STEMMONS

(voice goes growl)

I swear to Christ you better bring
Exley's file...one hour or I
scratch your scabby Bitch-

ME

-Feds dig your Pad?

The phone on the other end of line breaks-in half.

EXT. FERN DELL PARK - EVENING

Rolling green. Half-dirt, half-asphalt path. I scan for any
back-up. Nothing. Junior already there. Astride like Gary
Cooper. Flexing his neck. Pathetic. Sees I carry nothing.

JUNIOR STEMMONS

(voice trembles)

Where's my file?

ME

Snitch to Noonan then what?

JUNIOR STEMMONS

Fuck the Feds. I got better Allies.

ME

...who: the Soviets?

JUNIOR STEMMONS

MY FILE-

ME

(disgust breaks through)

-shut the fuck up Junior.

(MORE)

ME (cont'd)
Like I'm gonna give you the file
without seeing that knife-

JUNIOR STEMMONS
-thought so.

Darts drill me from either side. The first one buries in my ribs, the second through my right ear and into my jaw. I half-laugh at them, the thought of actually getting hit with fucking darts. Pull my gun on Junior: I want to murder him. Dig his wide eyes, looking to where his shooters are, a crouch-cower:

JUNIOR STEMMONS (CONT'D)
HIT HIM AGAIN!

I fire a shot way wide: trees splinter. Two more darts hit me in the face: left cheek into bone. Eyes immediately blur/leak tears. The other through my lower lip, chipping a bottom tooth. Rhino trang-drugs coursing. Fall hard. Clawing my way toward Junior who's standing tall again, laughing at me now, boots me hard in the neck.

BLACK.

INT. NIGHTMARE

Tranquilizers mean no waking from this. Hell-scape wrapped in entrails. More families diving off cliffs in the b/g. My back engulfed in flame now as I take my DiMaggio swings at the Japanese Colonel: laughing at me like Junior laughed at me. Dismembering the Colonel only makes him laugh harder.

I burn brighter: razorback jets of fire off my spine. Chop-slice-hack. The Jap Colonel: no arms, no legs, bellowing laughter, eyes gone, mouth three sizes too large. A flash of another face screaming at me in the back of the Colonel's throat...

INT. MY HOME, HOLLYWOOD HILLS - TIME UNKNOWN

My own bed: on top of the sheets, stark naked. You think it: what did Junior do to me while I was out? Stand. Fall. Drug hazy. Stand again. Stagger toward the bathroom. STOP. Notice: place completely ransacked. Holes bashed in every wall. Refrigerator on it's side oozing perishables. Everything fucked-torn beyond belief. One of my boots sticking out of a shattered television screen. Shake cobwebs fast now.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Looking for the Exley file.

INT. MY BATHROOM - NEXT MOMENT

Grope in the semi-dark for a light switch. BAM: my appearance as shocking as my home. Black bruises with outer rims of purple from where the tranq-darts hit. My bottom front tooth chipped. Turn: my back completely covered in dry-ice burns.

FLASH TO:

My Nightmare: spine on fire as I dismember the Jap Colonel.

RETURN TO:

INT. GREAT ROOM - NEXT MOMENT

Step out. STOP again. One light on: my Samurai Sword/War Trophy. An inch out of its scabbard: steel gleam. A reel of film beneath the sword on the mantle. Puke without preamble.

EXT. ATOMIC VAMPIRE SET - AFTERNOON

Time a foreign concept now. Me: half-assed dressed. Panicked to see Glenda. Make sure she's okay. I see her laughing and say another prayer. Getting ready to shoot for the night. First breath since I woke-up.

INT. MEG'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Looks just like mine: torn beyond belief. Nobody home. Safe there: files gone. Pete there, Meg not.

ME

Where's my sister?

PETE

We stayed at my place last night.
(beat, Pete's knuckles
snap like gunshots)
I'd have given anything to catch
'em...

ME

(searching the
destruction)
This was a first class sack.
(beat)
Like the way we do it.

PETE

Pros?

ME

(half-nod)

Cops.

PETE

Exley?

ME

Not even he's this Vicious.

(beat)

They took the files.

PETE

You think I'm a Retard? I got 'em
in my trunk.

Second breath since I woke up.

PETE (CONT'D)

(surveying)

I'm going to murder Stemmons now.

No charge.

INT. PETE'S CADILLAC - AFTERNOON

Block from Junior's pad. Pete scanning. Making his own notes:
Writing down the license number of a Buick with two squared-
off buzz cuts looking at Junior's front door.

ME

You have to hide them both Pete:
Meg out in the Oaks...Glenda in the
Canyon. Both places are
untraceable. Meg knows the
addresses.

PETE

(big beat, looks away)

Where do I find her?

ME

The set in Griffith Park. Or at
1973 Huron Court in Glendale.

Say nothing. A long moment.

ME (CONT'D)

All my slum pads, all my Fuck-tels.
I'll sign them over. Call it a
wedding gift.

PETE

(beat, turns back to me)
You going somewhere Brother?

INT. FILM PROCESSING SHOP - EVENING

Pop on the reel with shaking hands. Kick a protesting Fred T out of his own shop. On his way out-

FRED T

-something in that Studebaker
stinks-

-slam/lock the door. BLACK. Then projector light -- on the screen: same room as Lucille's fuck-film. Jap flag hung high on the wall over JUNIOR STEMMON'S head. Feature Junior: his brown hair spray-painted black, his eyes pulled back Oriental with scotch tape, mouth gagged, hands tied. Muffled, barely discernible screams through the gag at the two-way mirror:

JUNIOR STEMMONS ON SCREEN

NUT-D-I DO? P-EASE! D-I-DO-

-lower right hand corner: watch myself coming around -- Rhino trang wearing off, replaced with something else. Hands holding my sword. Somebody steps in-frame, dumps chunks of steaming dry ice down my shirt, scampers. I stand like the Reaper spin-swing at air. Laughter I think I recognize.

Junior thrashing like mad the taller I get. My drug-laced, burn-driven movements jerk forward Kabuki-like. Junior trying to rip his leg from the shackle holding him to an old radiator. I rear-back with ceremony, start swinging. So hard I stumble. Junior dodging as far as his tether will let him. Four misses. Shrieking incoherent through the gag.

First hit: screams turn to lamb bleats. Blood spray slashes walls with red. Junior tries to kick my feet out.

I stop watching, pull up my pant legs: bruises covering my shins. Lift my eyes back to the film as my image takes Junior's left arm off at the shoulder. Someone with a black hood covering their face steps in front sudden, shocking. Flicks bits of bone and blood off the two-way mirror, then holds a sign in front of it: 'We should talk.' Tape runs out.

My hands to my face. Sobs from my soul. Think about destroying this entire room...re-rack the film instead. Play it again to the person dumping dry-ice down my back. Backward-forward. Study it: anything-everything-something. Backward-forward: Junior pleading-me standing-Mr. Dry-Ice. Bring Fred back in to freeze Mr. Dry Ice, before I swing at Junior.

FRED T

Holy fuck...what is this?

ME

Freeze it when they pour dry-ice down my shirt.

FRED T

...it'll ruin the film, freezing it like that-

ME

-I don't care.

Freeze. Five seconds. Image wobbling. Seven more seconds. Image deteriorating...then I see it: kinky red hair protruding from under the black hood -- the guy who stepped in-frame, holding up the sign. Hair I know.

ME

Tommy.

My vision rots as red as that hair. Image on-screen bubbles, film catches fire in the gate, mini-inferno. I think clear enough to shove Fred T away...

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Let it burn like the souls of all involved.

Give him a \$100-bill for a new rig as he douses the melting projector with half-gone bottles of beer.

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - NIGHT

70 M.P.H. Rattle-trap. Violence in my visage. Who cares who, who cares how many. Outside 1284 South Tremaine. All lights off. No cars. Leave fast, blow through the light. I think headlights follow. I know I should care.

INT. BIDO LITO'S LOUNGE, DARKTOWN - NIGHT

Packed. Jazz band playing. Patrons dancing wherever the feeling hits.

Men/Women get my elbows/fists/shoulders as I force march to the Bar. Drinks thrown at me in response. Lester chatting up regulars at the far end.

ME
TOMMY MAGDALENA.

Lester hesitates, steps closer, leans in.

LESTER LAKE
Came and left.

ME
Where?

EXT. PHILIGREE'S PIMP-STEP PALACE - NIGHT

Shoulder my way to the front of the line. Uppercut the Doorman's balls when he doesn't step lively at the sight of my badge.

INT. PHILIGREE'S PIMP-STEP PALACE - NEXT MOMENT

Zoot-Suit Blacks at three women a-piece. Same drill. No band this time: Juke-box I unplug:

ME
TOMMY MAGDALENA.

UNKNOWN VOICE
FUCK YO' SELF.

Juke-box I shatter. Punch my way back out.

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - NIGHT

Darktown speeding. Headlights behind keep up. I smash the breaks, let them rear-end me. BIG POP. Peel-away, 'round the corner. Up and to the left: Tommy Magdalena exiting the Zombie Lounge, pocketing a bankroll. Hustling to his car.

Knuckles go white around the steering wheel. I rev the engine: ready to T-bone him. Then see another head in the car. Hold...tail him. Three blocks to the Kleen Inn. Let him park. Circle the block. Pull in 30 seconds later.

EXT. KLEEN INN - NEXT MOMENT

Thoughts returning in bunches: pat myself down. Stupid: no weapon. Bet Tommy has a dozen stashed in his car.

Smash his window, brazen, hope he heard it. Fuck the world.
Grab a pistol-gripped sawed-off double-barrel from underneath
the seat. Pop-check the breach: loaded.

Sex sounds from inside one of the three rooms with the lights
 out. Smile. Step to it as Buicks haul into the parking lot,
 cut me off. From nowhere. One with a shattered front-end.
 Four buzz-cut Feds on me, buzz-kill my head-hunt. Sneer at
 them. Think odds: six Men, two shells.

Drop the sawed-off. Sex sounds stop. Two of the Feds go
 through the door. Come back out empty:

FED #1
 200-pound colored broad and an open
 back door.

I just step to the doorway. Feds go red-alert:

FED #2
 HALT!

Look at him: *'did you just say 'Halt?'* Look inside: Lester
Lake's big-girl bartender. Her 200-pounds to Tommy's 150.

ME
 Who fucks who?

Feds grab me by the collar.

INT. L.A. FEDERAL BUILDING - LATER

Sitting across from Welles Noonan. Wrong side of the
 interrogation table. The pistol-gripped sawed-off between us.

WELLES NOONAN
 Where did you get the sawed-off?

ME
 You were tailing me. You saw where
 I got it. Tommy Magdalena's car.

WELLES NOONAN
 (slow head shake)
 We saw you holding it.
 (beat)
 Bethune and Gallaudet were killed
 by a double-barrel blast. Close-in.
 (pointing)
 Is that their blood on the barrel?

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

I don't know why that shocks me but it does. A **Third Party** made me kill Junior. A **Third Party** killed Bethune and Gallaudet. **Tommy** is or knows that **Third Party**.

ME

Ask the guy that killed them.

WELLES NOONAN

(beat)

Where is Junior Stemmons?

I fight panic...point to a divot in my forehead. Behind my next blink: a flash of Junior's death-pale, blood-spattered face, mumbling something. Avoid eye-contact with Noonan.

ME

Haven't seen him since he did this.

WELLES NOONAN

Because you took his files.

Deep breath and a smile: he doesn't know.

ME

See some of his brown-eye smut? You going to try to prop-up paperwork and testimony from a turbid Fag?

WELLES NOONAN

I don't need his testimony anymore Klein. I'll take yours.

ME

(big beat, get slippery)

On my terms-

WELLES NOONAN

-fuck your terms. Do what I say when I say or I come after you for Sanderline Johnson, your links to Giancana, to Mickey Cohen, your slum tenements, this Actress you follow like a fucking Puppy...

ME

Everyone knows I'm a piece-a-shit Noonan. What are you proving? Exley ruined Morton Diskant. The guy flanking you as we speak.

(MORE)

ME (cont'd)

The guy who will either be or fund
your political competition in the
future. The guy who is all alone,
right now...

WELLES NOONAN

You're a Rat Bastard: why trust-

ME

-you done anything with the
Magdalena case?

WELLES NOONAN

(beat, off-guard)

Prelims: drug pusher turned up
murdered, as most pushers do-

ME

(scoffing)

-dealing for 20 years running and
one arrest. Hall a' fame career,
huh? Captain of the Narco Division
photographed in-front of his house-

WELLES NOONAN

-why?

ME

(can't hide my disgust)

Do your God damn job. Come after
me: you get me. Go after that: you
get the LAPD's power-set on a slab.
Don't make me do all your thinking
Noonan or I'll ask for a salary.

WELLES NOONAN

(shark smells blood)

Tell me where those files are now-

ME

-I'll bring them to you.

WELLES NOONAN

-you're not leaving here.

ME

Then like I said: you only get me.

Noonan stands, hesitates:

WELLES NOONAN

I'll take it.

On his way out I speak fast -- the last cards in the deck:

ME

The body of Captain Dan Wilhite,
LAPD Narcotics Division. Proof of a
twenty-year relationship to J.C.
Magdalena that prompted his
suicide, plus my testimony to link
the dots...after that, I leave L.A.
(beat)
Permanently.

Noonan at the door: please bite...

He walks out. Hard to breath under the collapse. No ideas on
what comes next, what to do next. 15 seconds. Door opens
again: one of Noonan's deputies. Pushes a sheet. Scan it
scared: Federal Witness Agreement. Another smile as I sign.
Noonan back in: two cups of coffee.

WELLES NOONAN

I want Stemmons or the things
Stemmons had, and Wilhite's body by
morning-

ME

No more tails. I don't want anyone
else incriminated.

WELLES NOONAN

(big beat)
Agreed.

ME

(nod to agreement)
I get a copy of that?

WELLES NOONAN

When it's signed by a judge.

Stand-nod-take my coffee-leave. Door closes. Noonan shreds
the Witness agreement. Deputy baffled:

WELLES NOONAN (CONT'D)

We wait for him to deliver, then we
arrest him. You never saw any
agreement.

DEPUTY #1

Tail him?

WELLES NOONAN

No. Let him get comfortable -- let
him believe me.

EXT. COLD WATER CANYON - NIGHT

Flying up Cold Water. No headlights behind. Nerves pump electric distraction. Trying too hard to focus.

EXT. COLD WATER CANYON BUNGALOW - MOMENTS LATER

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
Shaking to see Glenda. To remind
myself of the stakes -- her face
helps me think the right way...

Knocking.

ME
It's Dave.

Pete opens up. Pissed nod: you put me in a tough spot.

INT. COLD WATER CANYON BUNGALOW - NEXT MOMENT

I smell liquor on his breath as we walk in.

ME
You been drinking?

PETE
Rough day.

ME
Is Meg tucked away in the Oaks?

PETE
She was asleep when I left.

ME
Girl can sleep anytime, anywhere.
Thank you.
(beat, non sequitor)
You fought in the Big Red One?

PETE
Africa-Sicily-Normandy-Germany.

ME
You remember who commanded the
Third Army?

Round the corner: Glenda shaking but refusing to cry. I go
pale: what is this? Somebody to the left, look: Hughes.

Sitting-smiling. Look back at Pete: tears in his bleary eyes as he crushes me with an uppercut.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
*Seen Pete do this a dozen times and
 every time the same thought: God
 help me if he ever hits me like
 that...*

Instant-drop, moan. Glenda screaming.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
 Something prays: kill me -- it's
 the easiest way out of it all.

Then I roll, see Glenda's face, being tortured by watching me being tortured.

ME
Don't kill me...

Pete looks to Hughes, wipes blurred eyes.

HOWARD HUGHES
 The harder you hit the quicker I
 say 'stop.' Stop crying.

Pete bludgeons me. I try to stand after each swing, get closer to Glenda. Feel my nose shatter. Another swing: right cheek detonates. A left hook to take advantage of my momentum: left eye explodes. Glenda's crying/screaming gets me madder than anything. I try to push Pete back so I can get to Hughes.

GLENDIA BLEDSOE
 (at Hughes)
 YOU IMPOTENT FUCK-

HOWARD HUGHES
 -touch me and he dies.

Pete knocks me down again. My face in pieces.

HOWARD HUGHES (CONT'D)
Kick him-kick him-kick him.

Pete hesitates, puts his boot into my guts: 1, 2, 3-

HOWARD HUGHES (CONT'D)
 (prim, official)
 -you may stop.
 (beat, for the room)
 (MORE)

HOWARD HUGHES (CONT'D)
 That's the price for your time
 together. And General Patton
 commanded the Third Army. My planes
 protected his flanks.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
General Patton's Third Army...my
link to the Chavez Ravine **Third**
Party. ...I can almost see it now.

Hughes on his way out, to Pete, keeping his distance:

HOWARD HUGHES (CONT'D)
 You still have a job.

Hughes gone. I spit volumes of blood. Open my jacket. Inside
 pocket: sheets of paper folded length-wise. I'll talk with a
 slur for the next two years:

ME
Sign. File them by noon tomorrow.

Pete reaches, still crying: all my land deeds. Twelve total.

ME (CONT'D)
 You're a slumlord now. If my
 tenants thought they had it bad
 with me, wait 'til they get a load
 of you.

PETE
 No. Not after what I just did...

ME
I put you here. Sign them. Overpay
 the taxes: give Noonan no room.

Glenda panicking, trying to stanch blood that keeps rushing.
 At bleary-eyed Pete:

GLENDIA BLEDSOE
Get out.

ME
 Take my car. Let me have yours.

Pete, reeling drunk, just turns, walks out. Glenda's eyes
 burn after him.

ME (CONT'D)
Please.

Front-door closes. Glenda softly cooing me as I try to stand. She looks for something other than her already-soaked clothes to stanch prolific bleeding. Door opens again: Pete hands a First Aid kit to Glenda. Takes my keys, gives me his. To Glenda:

PETE

Stitch the eye or he loses it.

GLEND A BLEDSOE

(venom)

There's nothing left of it.

I put my hand on her face, my smile pure horror:

ME

...it's all worth it...

Pete eyeing the aftermath: he'll drink everyday from here on out. Glenda's eyes: tears rolling over my hand.

INT. SHOWER - TIME UNKNOWN

Steaming water. Almost painful. I sit in the tub, let the shower rain down. Drain floods diluted red. Wash my wounds, my soul. So many bruises/burns I look bubonic. My face still swelling, already purple-black. My left eye starting to sag. On the other side of the curtain:

GLEND A BLEDSOE

You're not going anywhere.

ME

I have to. And you have a movie...

GLEND A BLEDSOE

Calling it that is generous. You need to heal.

Long silence. Just the running water, the steam.

ME

No...I need to finish.

Another long silence. Then the curtain opens: Glenda naked. Beauty that catches in my chest. Try to stand, turn my destroyed face. She gently pushes me back down. Sits into me, holds my face in both hands so that the water hits my lips, a clean spot to kiss me full. No nerves, no unease. Home. I cup her breasts as she closes the curtain.

INT. COLD WATER CANYON BUNGALOW KITCHEN - BLACK A.M.

Head shaved. Head-to-toe Black. Stopped bleeding. Healing.
You clearly see what my face will look like 20 years hence.

Clean white gauze taped over my left eye. Look down at the paper I'm reading. Below-the-fold: my dress-blue picture you saw on Junior's wall, a picture that looks nothing like me anymore. Headline: LAPD Officer Wanted in Connection with Recent Rash of Deaths. *U.S. Attorney Welles Noonan issued a nationwide warning to law enforcement...*

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

My noon deadline with Noonan: three noons ago. City bat-shit since.
Exley and Noonan playing chess by press release. Memorial service for Bethune and Gallaudet. Exley turned it into a stump speech. Two new candidates, same battle lines. Dodgers on hold. Chavez Ravine tired of limbo, on Riot Control.

(beat)

Blame refrain: Captain Dan Wilhite and Lt. David Klein. Only two not around to rebut. I Thank God for Pete's penance beating: a new face.

INT. BEDROOM - BLACK A.M.

Moonlight splashes the bed. Just sit and watch Glenda. Drink your coffee *slow.* Listen to her sleep: rhythmic breathing. The little natural smiling curl to her lips. Blonde hair splayed. Place a letter on the night stand:

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

"My Heaven: the hours with you. My Hell: the years without. Someday I'll see you before you even know I'm looking."

Last sip. I stand quiet, 'grief' the best word but still not enough. Lift-up a camera, and in the moonlight take the black and white picture you've seen before.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - BLACK A.M.

A cross-country route. High weeds and backyards. I know which ones have dogs. Avoid them. Almost invisible. Scan constant. Side-streets: Buzzcuts in Buicks half-asleep.

The back of my House. Quiet. In through that basement window.

EXT. MY STREET - SAME MOMENT

Buzzcuts in a Buick on one side of the street. Plainclothes LAPD in a Dodge on the other, further down. Facing each other: all-night Mad-Dogging contests.

INT. FED BUICK - NEXT MOMENT

Watch as a black and white slowly rolls up to the Plainclothes Dodge. A window rolls down: a pink carton emerges -- universal sign of one-dozen donuts. Two cups of Coffee: Feds feature the steam, lick lips. One of the Plainclothes raises his Styrofoam cup: here's to you, Dicks.

FED #1
Maybe someone could grab us
breakfast...

No response. Turns to his partner/driver: wide-eyed disbelief, aimed at Klein's place. Fed #1 snaps his head back around: smoke just now billowing out windows. First licks of orange everywhere. FED #1 on the radio screaming:

FED #1
KLEIN'S HOUSE-

-Driver jumps out.

EXT. SIDE-STREET - SAME MOMENT

Same route down. My U.S.M.C. field-pack slung over-shoulder. High behind me: my pad ablaze. False sunrise. Put my pack in Pete's trunk, right next to a box holding Junior's files. Calmly get in, pull away observing every traffic law.

EXT. TUDOR MANSION - PURPLE MORNING

Still early. Exley on his way out the door. I'm sitting at his dining room table:

ME
Why didn't you tell me who the
Third Party was?

Shock flashes across his face before he strains to recognize me. I put Junior's Exley file on the table.

EXLEY
(excited)
You figured it out?

ME
Yes.

EXLEY
How?

ME
Patton's Third Army.

EXLEY
What?

ME
(don't answer him)
I'm finishing it my way. You're not
going to use me to flush him out,
then expect me to stop the hunt so
you can alert the press, craft
things just so...

Exley more than tweaked now: but that file is so close...

EXLEY
So long as you finish it without
equivocation.

ME
Read tomorrow's paper.

EXLEY
If you fail me...if you turn on me-

ME
-where will I get the money for a
new life?

EXLEY
What's my file going to cost?

ME
Whatever Bethune's stake of the
Dodger Stadium Parking Lots was
going to be. In perpetuity. Be glad
I'm not asking for both shares.
(beat)
Tonight a man will call with a
plan.

(MORE)

ME (cont'd)

If you squelch, ever, you'll read about Hurwitz Holdings in the next morning's paper, be it 1958, 1968, 1978...you and I are tied 'til death do us part...don't fuck us over.

I pick-up the file: coming with me. Stand. Begin leaving.

EXLEY

Wait: the File-

ME

-after. And you better move if you want to take Narco down -- Noonan will know the whole story by noon.

EXLEY

(beat, panicky)

I have men positioned on either side of the block.

ME

Fire them: I practically walked through the front door.

EXLEY

I could have you shot as you leave: *Fugitive Klein*. I could take that file from you, no charge.

I draw, cock my .45, keep walking:

ME

Pressure really rattles you...I wouldn't have guessed that.

(beat, push out a smile)

You think I'd walk into your place with the only copy of your file?

Fuck you Ed...today, somebody else is smarter.

INT. FILM PROCESSING SHOP - MORNING

Fred T's. Through an unlocked door: Projector with my snuff reel, burnt black, dumped in the trash. Inside: sloppy Fred, passed out with a empty bottle of t-bird, his pants around his ankles. The Lucille loop slapping off the projector.

Pull \$500, slam the stack down with Pete's Caddy keys. Fred rears up, spittle dragging off his chin.

ME

Where's the Studebaker key?

FRED T

(beat, clearing cobwebs)
...there's a body in back...

ME

(beat, deadly serious:)
You tell anyone?

FRED T

Fuck no: I know your nickname...

I put another \$500 down next to the first stack.

ME

Grab that reel. Follow me into town.

EXT. LA FEDERAL BUILDING - MORNING

Wilhite's Studebaker pulls into an empty spot. Folks late for work straggle/hustle past. Engine dies. Trunk pops. I get out with an envelope in-hand. Lift the trunk-lid open all the way: a blanket covering a human shape. A reel of film on top.

I tuck the letter under the reel so it won't blow away. Don't close it. Just turn my back and walk calm to the street as passing stragglers notice nearby rot-stink...an open trunk...

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

"Noonan: I know that witness agreement wasn't worth the paper it was printed on. Still, here's more than you deserve. Do your job."

To the sidewalk: Fred T waiting in Pete's Caddy. Hand him another \$100.

ME

Get a cab back.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - AFTERNOON

On the phone. Already into the call.

ME

Tell him it's Lt. Dave Klein. He'll cancel his meeting...I'll wait.

Scan for Buzzcuts in Buicks. Only black faces. I blink-

FLASH TO:

The black-hood in Junior's snuff film holding up the sign: we should talk.

RETURN TO:

INT. PHONE BOOTH - SAME MOMENT

My eyes react to a voice on the other end of the line we can't hear.

ME (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
We should talk. The Ravine. Two
hours. I'll find you.

Hang up. Lift my eyes to Purple Apartments: Leroy and Ronnie's place. Go to Pete's trunk: pull \$2000 and a train ticket from my field-pack...

EXT. LOS ANGELES FEDERAL BUILDING - NOON

A contingent of Feds surround Wilhite's Power Hawk, keep morbidly curious co-workers back. Noonan approaches with Aides in-tow, hustling as though he just got news of something in the parking lot: his half-assed Rommel routine.

WELLES NOONAN
How long has it been here?

DEPUTY #1
First report of someone leaving
their trunk open came to the front
desk at around 9:30-

WELLES NOONAN
(checks his watch, anger)
-THAT WAS HOURS AGO!

DEPUTY #1
(hands my letter to
Noonan)
This had your name on it.

Noonan takes the envelope, moves to the trunk, pulls the blanket back from Wilhite's decaying face. Hands the film reel to an Aide, opens my letter. Reads. Apoplectic:

WELLES NOONAN

I want Agents covering every train station, bus station, and airport for 100 miles. NOW. Every Ticket Agent and bellboy gets a picture of LAPD Lieutenant Dave Klein-

EXT. CHAVEZ RAVINE - LATE AFTERNOON

Dodger Fever. Spitting Mexicans and fair-play Whites with a cause vs. LAPD. Two-day old standoff. Just needs a spark to kick it from 'fighting words' to 'blood-letting.'

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Prelude to a riot: half the residents already accepted low-ball buy-outs from the City and firms like Hurwitz when it looked like Candidate Bethune was going to coast.

(beat)

A new election but no refunds.

I'm parked above it in Pete's Caddy, looking down.

INT. PETE'S CADILLAC - NEXT MOMENT

350-400 people total. I'm searching for one person in particular -- the Third Party. Track my vision as I bounce from one face to the next. You don't know who. Scanning routes in/out of the fray. You don't know why. Finally stop on a fresh-faced kid in-uniform trying to keep 20 tattooed Mexicans back by himself. I get out...

EXT. CHAVEZ RAVINE - MOMENTS LATER

Heading right toward fresh-face. Badge out, smile as I step:

ME

You need help, Son?

Big relief on his face: just sees the badge, no time to make a name: Fugitive Klein. Nudges a barricade while pushing people back so I can just squeeze through, the kid gets a lot bolder with back-up whose face looks like mine.

FRESH-FACE

GET BACK!

ME

Move you fuckin' Beaners.

That get's me shoved through the crack in the barricade:
 Spics elevate to 'supremely pissed.' Start pushing/punching
 Fresh-Face back. Barricades topple. And I keep walking
without a backward glance. Even when a bottle shatters on
 cinder-blocks inches from my head. Inside the uneasy
 perimeter now. Pete's keys out of my pocket.

And as I make my way to the biggest hot-spot -- 30 Uniforms
 squared off against 100 protesters -- I use the keys to dig
into my scabs from Pete's penance beating. Rich, red blood
 streams over broken dams. Behind a shack I scrub dirt into my
 hands, over my shirt and pants, shred my collar.

Look up: a little angel-faced Mexican girl looks at me half-
 smiling, half-horrified.

ME

(in Spanish)

Go inside little one.

Pull the bandage off my destroyed eye. Horrific. Fake stumble
 now. Closer to the big hot-spot. Fall. Get-up. Protestors
 starting to notice. Wide-eyed at my blood, my dirt. I point
 back to the hornet's nest I just kicked: Fresh-Face in the
 middle, throwing punches to protect himself, other Uniforms
 running to his aide, batons out, swinging. I keep pointing,
scream at my fellow Protestors:

ME

IMPERIAL DODGERS NO! MEXICAN
BROTHERS SI!

Cops turn to look: baffled moment. One tries to step to me --
 a rock detonates the side of his face. Nose-first
 unconsciousness. An electric collective inhale. Then a
 Medieval clash bursts to life. Bike chains and Police batons:
 lacerated chests and fractured skulls by the bushel.

Witty chants and stone-visages devolve into KILL THESE
MOTHERFUCKERS screams. The big hot-spot becoming fully
 engulfed catches the entire Ravine's attention: fist-feet-
blood-bludgeon-trample-scream over a square-mile...

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

And that's exactly how the 1958
Chavez Ravine Riots began.

Put my shoulder down and bull-rush into the middle of the big
 fray. Odd fists and heels can't knock me off track.

I hit a Plainclothes wearing a \$200 Derby fighting next to the Uniforms from behind, wrap my arms form-tackle tight, take him down hard. CLOSE-UP: me saying:

ME

We should talk.

My words warp Fritz Koenig's blood-spattered face.

KOENIG

Get up -- Follow...

Let go. Stand. Feature Koenig and me laying waste to everyone in front of us: Cops and Protestors alike. Brass knuckles on his left fist, police baton in his right. I stay on his ass, punching left-overs. Step over moaning carcasses.

CUT TO:

INT. A ROOM WE'VE SEEN BEFORE - MOMENTS LATER

Where Lucille got fucked. Where Junior got butchered. Bottles of bleach and rubber gloves in a corner. Over a ratty-dresser: a mirror -- a two way mirror. Door opens: Koenig and me pile through, riot screams/sirens filter in behind us.

My shocked scan: I've been here, seen this, fight the urge to go blank, to go back to the newest additions to my nightmares.

KOENIG

Destroying your face for anonymity,
sparking a Riot to occupy the Men I
brought with me...gifted.

Koenig washes blood off his hands with bleach. Sits. Flashes the avuncular smile that just seems evil now.

ME

I need questions answered.

KOENIG

I need your file on Edmund Exley.

ME

Junior's file on Exley.

(beat)

He came to you through his Dad:
'beat Gangsters together at the
Victory Hotel.' You killed him.

KOENIG

You killed him. To make the useless
useful: you had the File, not
Junior.

ME

What do you think is in that file?

KOENIG

The future of this City.

ME

You're as delusional as Exley.

KOENIG

Chavez Ravine, Darktown, and East
LA I ceded to Human Vice.

(beat)

And as much as I have profited from
that Vice in those sacrificial
neighborhoods, I'm even more
determined to ensure it stay
sacrificed -- contained. Destroying
Chavez Ravine won't destroy it's
Demons. They'll just flee to other
neighborhoods: Anglo neighborhoods.
I will never let that happen.

(beat)

Exley can't fathom what it takes to
Police a city. He can only fathom
profit. And in that file is proof.

ME

...Wilhite ran Magdalena for you.

KOENIG

(big smile again)

That's the first time any one has
made that connection.

(for future reference)

How?

ME

You were both Cops before the War.
Both served in Patton's Third Army
during the war: your piss-in-the-
Rhine photo story, Wilhite's
personnel jacket...

Koenig leans back. Louder Riot echoes filter in.

KOENIG

You've built Kingdoms from scraps,
my Boy.

ME

Wilhite's body and the Lucille-film
are both with Noonan.

Smile vanishes.

ME (CONT'D)

Why'd Wilhite film Lucille fucking?

KOENIG

My gun to his head. His feelings
for Lucille threatened Containment.
So I made him look at what she was-

ME

(like the dawn)
-Wilhite killed J.C
(beat, add it quick:)
For not protecting his
Daughter...for who he was...
(beat)
Dumped his Body in Chavez as
punishment to you: more ammo for
Exley. You counter by killing
Bethune and Gallaudet.

Koenig done with this. Work needs to be done, and fast:

KOENIG

Where is the file?

ME

But why wouldn't Wilhite butcher
Tommy too?
(beat)
That piece-of-shit fucks and pimps
Sister Lucille...

Koenig transforms. Face turns to shadows. I think about how
many people saw that shadowed face, heard this razor-tone
seconds before their deaths. He slowly pulls his hat
off...and I realize it's the first time I've ever seen him
without the Derby: kinky red hair underneath...

KOENIG

Because he knew I'd murder his
family if he murdered mine...

Koenig raps on the two-way mirror. Tommy emerges from what looks like a closet door. A reel of film in his hands. Each have almost the same hair, facial features start to pop similar now that I look for the resemblance. My eyes fixed.

FLASHBACK TO:

LESTER LAKE

Ever seen a wetback with fire-hair?

(beat)

*Still call it immaculate conception
if the Devil does the fuckin'?*

RETURN TO:

The fuck/death room. Don't sit. Let the shock burn itself out.

ME

He's not J.C.'s...

TOMMY

I'm white Christian.

Blink-FLASH: the slashed Nazi banner in his room.

KOENIG

Mine and Madge's. I couldn't raise him: my own wife, my own Daughters. And the Church dictates Rape as a sin...

I see it, spit to not vomit. Tommy laughs.

ME

Wilhite didn't flip J.C. You did.

KOENIG

A Zoot-suit Spic moving drugs from Mexico, dating a white UCLA co-ed. I busted him, demanded a cut, just beginning my containment strategy. He laughed.

(beat)

So I made him watch while I tore into her...

FLASH TO:

Madge's vacant Jackie-O visage, handing me her coffee cup.

RETURN TO:

The fuck/death room.

KOENIG (CONT'D)

Make him marry her when she gets pregnant. She gets pregnant again: their own child.

ME

Lucille. And Tommy gets someone to deaden his senses on...J.C. can't discipline Fritz Koenig's son...

Koenig takes no offense. Still smiling at my surprise.

KOENIG

Enough now: film for file...

Hide weak knees. Stare at Tommy. You see my hatred, my quiver: but I have to let him walk.

ME

You follow me now.

EXT. CHAVEZ RAVINE - EVENING

Many fires. Police in battle-gear move in teams. Roman-sized clashes have devolved into 100 2-on-2 running street-fights: Coke bottles and rocks proxies for artillery.

EXT. PETE'S CADILLAC - MOMENTS LATER

Tommy, Koenig and I. All of us edgy, anxious to finish this, get away. Pop the trunk. Tommy:

TOMMY

How we know it's the only copy?

Point to the film he's holding:

ME

Exactly. Junior was housing someone called George Ainge -- where?

KOENIG

That's a different deal.

ME

I'm finished in LA. You know it. So send the film to the Times, and I'll keep Exley's file: plus or minus one murder won't change my prospects.

KOENIG

(hackles up, menacing)

Then why bother with files and films in the first place David?

ME

Because I despise Edmund Exley: never known real fear in his hand-fed life because he works with an eight-figure safety net. Because I respect you for actually building something. Because I hate baseball. Because there is a woman who I pray never actually sees what I am.

KOENIG

(big beat)

Ainge is holed up in this whore-John motel you actually own in Inglewood. Junior was being clever. Said it was 'the last place you'd look.'

Tommy chuckles.

KOENIG (CONT'D)

Will he be your last bit of business David? The last remnants of the 'The Enforcer?'

ME

He'll be the last man I watch die.

(beat)

But not the next one.

Hand the file to Koenig. Hold it up high. Koenig's face registers it -- movement from the left. His eyes go wide.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. PURPLE APARTMENTS - SEVERAL HOURS AGO

Just off the phone after the "we should talk" line. Booth behind me.

Open Pete's trunk: the \$2000 in cash and the train ticket out of my field pack...Close the pack, sling it over my shoulder. Head toward Leroy and Ronnie's place.

INT. APARTMENT B - NEXT MOMENT

Mid-conversation. Ronnie scared, staring at the cash, the ticket:

RONNIE

There's just one here...

ME

For one new life.

Turning the ticket over and over in her hands. Looking around her: this broken/dark Apartment -- lights on mid-day. This broken/lost Man: Leroy still staring at the floor. Tears flood her green eyes as she stares at ticket.

RONNIE

Easy to say-

-I open my jacket: my own ticket sticking out.

ME

-tougher to do.

A long moment. Tears she won't swipe. Still not sold.

RONNIE

What about Leroy?

CUT TO:

Kneeling on the floor where Leroy stares, field-pack at my side. Methodically begin taking things out: a picture of Fritz Koenig -- no reaction from Leroy. A picture of Dan Wilhite -- tears from Leroy. A picture of Tommy Magdalena -- a snarl from Leroy. A roll of duct-tape. Last: two K-Bar combat knives. Everything laid out orderly in the spot Leroy stares.

No movement. Just rhythmic blinks. Ronnie kneels next to him now. Gently takes one of his destroyed hands and puts it on the back of her neck -- rape notches. CLOSE-UP: Leroy's deformed hand on Ronnie's neck tries to ball into a fist.

RONNIE

Here's the sign you been looking for...get up.

RETURN TO:

EXT. CHAVEZ RAVINE - EVENING

The File held high -- that's the sign. 6'7", 300-pound Leroy hitting full-sprint. His shattered hands traded for blades that reflect fire-light from below: the K-Bars thick-wrapped to his wrists with the duct-tape.

Tommy's soul buckles faster than his knees. Koenig's last ever look at me: Satan's glowing eyes. He was reaching for the file with his gun-hand -- I was handing it over with my off-hand. I pull: shoot him in the chest and neck with three quick POPS. Blow him back into Leroy's bee-line for Tommy. Koenig gets his gun out, fires a shot that rips through Leroy's guts. But Leroy never slows.

Lowers his shoulder, rips through Koenig's stumbling mass like a Defensive End ripping through an Offensive Lineman: Koenig falls shredded. Arterial blood-flood. A whimper.

And when Leroy hits Tommy, Tommy has his hands out-stretched: we could talk. Leroy stabs him five times a second for ten seconds. Shrieks and red clouds from how hard Leroy swings. Tommy rolls to his stomach. Fading. Crawling. Leroy kneels, begins driving the K-Bars into the back of his neck. Over and over. Different spots...orderly...like notches. Tommy's shrieks go gurgle go whimper go mum.

Koenig still breathing shallow. Still pushing at the air with feet that find no purchase. I step to him as he tries to craft his last words -- pithy tribute to his time on the planet. Put my gun in his face, put my off hand behind it as a shield to block the blood-bone-brain blow-back. Pull the trigger before he can manage a 'fuck-you-world' syllable.

Turn: Leroy dragging Tommy's body down-hill, toward Riot Police, fucking howling. Outlined by fire. Pick up the file, the reel of film. Get in the car. BLACK on the door slam.

INT. LAX - MORNING

A Times vending machine: paper blazing with Riot news, murdered Cop news. Edmund Exley center-story: his Narco move begun, Narco blamed for almost everything. I talk on a terminal pay phone -- two Buzzcuts looking for Dave Klein walk right past my new face. Mid-conversation:

PETE (O.S.)

You were a part of all this?

ME

More than that.

PETE (O.S.)
Where are you now?

ME
Gone.

PETE (O.S.)
Where'd you wash off the blood?

ME
My Whore-John Motel in Inglewood.
(beat)
Your Motel in Inglewood now --
don't let anyone stay in Room 5
until you clean the blood-stains
out of the carpet.

PETE (O.S.)
Whose blood?

ME
George Ainge.

PETE (O.S.)
Will Noonan come after Meg?

ME
Yeah. But he's got nothing since I
signed the land to you. Pay the
legal bills with the money I'm
going to start sending you.

PETE (O.S.)
(beat)
From where?

ME
Let you know when I get there.
(big beat)
Protect them both...

Click. BLACK.

Legend: Recife, Brazil, 1978

INT. HILLSIDE VILLA - MORNING

I'm old. Stare at my leather-tan, once-broken face in a gilded mirror. The breaks occurred a lifetime ago, healed uneven. I wear a white tropical button-down blouse, a Republican-gold Rolex, a pirate-patch over what was my left eye.

My silver hair at least has the good sense to rot away at the corners first. My voice salted and cured from brown whiskey and easy access to Cuban tobacco...

I start to pack my suitcases. Old files you think you may have seen before. An old gun you know you've seen before. Movements slow and steady in my advancing age...

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

My will to remember. My confession complete. But still not enough.

(beat)

Post-scripts. Me: gringo exile rich off unnamed funds. Meg and Pete: still married. Three boys. Edmund Exley: Police Chief, Lt. Governor, Gubernatorial primary loser to a guy who acted in Chimp movies. Welles Noonan, convicted of jury tampering in '67. Prison suicide in '69. Fritz Koenig: full honor corps burial. Televised. Daughters given lifetime annuities on Exley's orders. Howard Hughes: shitting in coffee-cans at the Vegas Hilton.

(beat)

Junior Stemmons: body never found. George Ainge: body never found. Lucille Magdalena: dead from syphilis. Tommy Magdalena: never mentioned. Dan Wilhite: root of all evil per Exley. Leroy Carpenter: first seeds of LA's burning future.

Look back down at HER picture.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)

Glenda Bledsoe: two decades avoiding her name, her picture, her news. Never asking. Only a black and white shot, yellowed with decades-passed, reminding me of everything I never was.

(beat)

Two decades penance.

(beat)

Then a week-old Times at the place I buy coffee. Her picture sees me before I ever realize she's looking. Face eternal-beautiful...

Put her black and white in my chest pocket. Push the week-old Times into a waste-basket: Pan-Am ticket to LA underneath.

MY OLD VOICE (V.O.)
*...and it asked me to revoke our
time apart, redeem it...tell her
anything...tell her everything...*

I stand, shatter the mirror that reminds me of how long. And
as I step out: an old man twenty-years too late, my MGM-
handsome face from 1958 smiles back at me through the shards.

WHITE JAZZ