

NECESSARY EVILS ©

An original screenplay

by

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FADE IN:

EXT - VENICE BEACH - NIGHT

The churning black surf.

Ambient sounds of a COCKTAIL BAR: tinkle of ice in a glass, quiet murmurs,
HAUNTING SAXOPHONE.

TITLES appear over the black surf and punctuate the rhetorical pauses in the opening
VOICE-OVER dialog between ERICA CLIFF and THE PLAYBOY.

ERICA (over throughout)

Are you still here?

PLAYBOY (over throughout)

Still looking for the perfect love.

ERICA

The blonde is Egyptian.

PLAYBOY

And *your* lover?

ERICA

He never talks.

PLAYBOY

How does he tell you he loves you then?

ERICA

He carries a mummy in his pocket. Why don't you drink?

PLAYBOY

A toy for his lover?

ERICA

I wouldn't know. He never talks.

PLAYBOY

Then it must be the thing he carries that attracts you.

ERICA

I never said I was attracted to him.

PLAYBOY

No, you said he carries a mummy in his pocket.

ERICA

I have a knife in my purse.

PLAYBOY

I have a mummy in my pocket.

ERICA

But you talk too much. The knife is a penknife.

PLAYBOY

It has only a tiny blade.

ERICA

But while you're dreaming of the blonde, I could slip it under your ribs and puncture both lungs.

PLAYBOY

Or you might cut my wrists if I allow you to.

ERICA

The incisions are so small only a trained eye can detect them. There is almost no blood.

PLAYBOY

So it is the blood you find distasteful.

ERICA

You would simply ease forward onto the bar.
You would be taken for another drunk.

PLAYBOY

The bartender would demand that someone pay.

ERICA

He is the Pharaoh of the bar. Money means nothing to him.

PLAYBOY

I thought we agreed the supernatural was out of bounds.

INT - POSH BAR

ON ERICA'S HANDS, especially the large DIAMOND on her index finger as she lights her cigarette and drops the lighter into her purse.

ERICA

Why don't you drink?

PLAYBOY

It dulls my senses.

ERICA

For what?

PLAYBOY

Having fun.

ERICA CLIFF, 30ish and a little drunk, pulls hard on her cigarette, blows out the smoke, lifts her glass and drinks. Her beauty seems veiled by doom.

ON ERICA THROUGHOUT. She can't escape the camera. Hers is the *only* face we see. Behind her, through a large window, the powerful angry sea.

ERICA

You find it fun, taking bodies from bars?

PLAYBOY

What would you prefer?

ERICA

Putting fireflies in your eyes. Or a scotch and soda. You decide.

PLAYBOY

If you get too drunk, we can't play, the fun ends.

ERICA

You're wrong. About everything.

PLAYBOY

Then we need a ruling.

ERICA

Then ask the blonde. Or the Pharaoh.

PLAYBOY

She's gone. She left with a new love.

ERICA

A new love. *New* love. Imagine that.

PLAYBOY

Yes. It's not hard to tell. They were perfect for one another.

ERICA

Then they were having fun.

PLAYBOY

They were perfect for each other.

ERICA

In what ways?

PLAYBOY

In every way.

ERICA

That counts, you mean.

PLAYBOY

In every way.

ERICA

How can you tell about people? When you are so blind, I mean.

PLAYBOY

Other ways.

ERICA

In every way?

PLAYBOY

Yes, in every way.

ERICA

Excluding the supernatural.

PLAYBOY

Yes.

ERICA

That rules out kissing me then.

PLAYBOY

That rules out nothing. Everything is permissible.

ERICA

Except new-love.

PLAYBOY

You're drunk. It's two words not one.

ERICA

Then I suppose you must kiss me.

He kisses her deeply, then violently pushes her away.

PLAYBOY

Ahhhh! You bitch, you nearly bit my tongue in half.

ERICA

No one who talks as much as you can be a very good lover. That is what you want to be, isn't it?

PLAYBOY

I'm bleeding. Who is this bitch? My mouth is bleeding.

ERICA

The blonde has a mummy in her purse that will stop the bleeding. But she isn't here, is she? Why don't you drink? You'd like to drink but you don't do it very well. If you kiss me again, perhaps you can bite off my tongue.

PLAYBOY

Look at this blood.

ERICA moves in on him. He retreats.

ERICA

Kiss me again. Please. Kiss me and bite off my tongue.
We'll call it even. We'll call it a draw if you like.

EXT - ON THE STREET OUTSIDE THE BAR - NIGHT

ON ERICA plunging out of the bar. She looks about, as if lost in an alien world, seeking her bearings. She recoils from what she sees: a GREY LIMO parked at some distance. She turns, running helplessly for her life; but the run becomes a walk, becomes measured steps of resignation. She opens her purse and begins DROPPING ARTICLES FROM INSIDE, leaving a trail up the sidewalk: her watch, lighter, wallet, PHOTOS; then she drops the purse, still walking, pieces of her life behind her. She pulls away her necklace and two rings. They fall to the sidewalk. The DIAMOND ON HER INDEX FINGER remains.

THE FENDER OF THE GREY LIMO enters the frame. Erica stops. The limo's door opens. She steps inside.

In the backseat of the car, CARL ROSS, 50ish, wears an expensive suit and DIAMOND CUFF LINKS. ROSS takes ERICA's wrists. She doesn't resist as he wraps tape around them.

ROSS

You could avoid this, Erica, if you would just hand over the telephone tapes, the papers.

ERICA

(terror-laugh)

Avoid. I love it. Get it? It's two words, not one. "A void."

ROSS

It doesn't have to be this way. You will tell us, you know.

ERICA

(speaking to no one)

No Carl.

(beat)

When was the last time you heard a dead woman's voice?

The GREY LIMO speeds away.

ON THE PLAYBOY as he enters the street from the bar. He holds a cane. Removing his glasses, he wipes the blood from his mouth.

ON PROFILE OF THE PLAYBOY'S FACE. His head suddenly jerks toward us, his ENORMOUS, GLAZED EYES responding to a sound we can't hear. HE IS BLIND. He puts on his dark glasses. The LENSES REFLECT a large illuminated petroleum sign that looms above the city, one of its letters burned out: "-HELL."

MUSIC FADES IN

Guns 'n Roses: "WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE."

INT - WORKING-CLASS BAR - NIGHT

HAL, late thirties, handsome in a road-worn way, stands on the bar thrashing air guitar. He needs a shave. He is obviously drunk. Some patrons seem amused. A WAITRESS looks up at Hal as she walks by.

WAITRESS

To protect and to serve.

Sitting in a booth are FRANK, KURT, and CHARLIE. They are watching Hal. They are cops too.

FRANK, late thirties, has a conservative, military look about him. His face shows something deeper than scorn for Hal. He is deeply bitter.

KURT, a rookie cop, is a younger version of Frank. They could be a father/son team.

CHARLIE, 60ish, any kid's grandfather, sits opposite Frank and Kurt.

ON HAL, burning away on air guitar

FRANK

One fine specimen of human scum.

KURT

I still can't believe Internal Affairs didn't nail that bastard.

CHARLIE

Not getting your ass shot off ain't against the rules, Kid.

FRANK

Three cops. Three *good* cops get blown away. And you're covering for the son of a bitch.

ON FRANK, KURT, AND CHARLIE IN BOOTH; HAL IN BACKGROUND ON THE BAR.

CHARLIE

Hal's clean and you know it, Frank.

KURT

(seeking Frank's approval)

The thing about fucking a woman who sells
pharmaceuticals – your dick comes out clean, huh?

CHARLIE

He never fixed a traffic ticket for a blowjob from a
minor, Kurt. Think about it, junior.

FRANK

Three cops. What do you tell their wives, their kids,
Charlie? Look at that asshole.

Hal has unzipped his fly, his index finger wiggles out his zipper.

CHARLIE

Give it a break, Frank. It's not every day a man gets
divorced.

FRANK

Yes it is. Three cops get blown away, that's what don't
happen every day.

CHARLIE

If you want to get even, get Carl Ross. If Hal'd been
there, it means you got four dead cops, not three.

Hal thinks the old finger-out-the-fly ought to get the waitress's attention. But she doesn't
seem to notice. Then:

WAITRESS

(in passing)

Don't flatter yourself, big boy.

Charlie extends a hand to Hal, guides him from the bar.

HAL

You know, Charlie, you never know how big a woman's ass is till you start to kiss it.

EXT - VENICE BEACH - SUNRISE

A crashing wave deposits a tangle of seaweed on the shore. A loping ST. BERNARD

rushes to the ball of seaweed, buries his nose in it. In the distance we see his owner jogging up the beach. The dog lifts the seaweed, then flings it from his huge jowls. He gallops forward -- a HUMAN FINGER in his mouth.

INT - POLICE STATION - DAY

Hal, still unshaven, disheveled, glides between computer-topped desks and busy cops.

KURT looks up from his screen and gives Hal a stern, superior look. Hal doesn't break stride.

HAL

What's your problem, Kurt? Frank not shit in your doggie bowl this morning?

As Hal approaches the Lt.'s office, the Lt.'s attractive secretary, RITA, can only sigh and nod.

RITA

The Lt.'s waitin'. Which means he ain't happy.

Hal stops, takes her hand, looks into her eyes, kisses, then gently sucks, the tips of her fingers.

HAL

Miss me?

Rita returns his look with an unflinching eye, places those same fingers between her perfect lips and softly sucks them.

RITA

Not particularly.

INSIDE THE LT.'S OFFICE

Charlie buttons, unbuttons his cuff, takes Tums from his pocket. THE LT. stands at a distance with his back to Charlie, his hands in his pockets. The office door opens. The Lt. doesn't turn.

THE LT.

This what you call a new start, Hal? Shut the fucking door and sit down.

Hal gives Charlie a look that says, "What's eating him?"

The Lt. turns. He's in his late 40's. Looks like coffee and cigarettes and no sleep in weeks.

THE LT.

(cont.)

We got a call from some weirdo, Venice Beach, some lady. Says she found a big diamond ring in her yard. Charlie will fill you in.

Charlie stands. Hal looks around like, "What the hell?"

HAL

Whoa. What about the Ross case? I thought –

THE LT.

It's been decided. Frank is handling the Ross case from now on.

HAL

Hold on!

CHARLIE

Hal...

THE LT.

Take a walk, will ya' Charlie.

Charlie exits.

THE LT.

(cont.)

Sit down, Hal.

Hal doesn't move. The Lt. steps over to his desk, opens a drawer, and takes out two shot glasses. He looks up at Hal.

THE LT.

(cont.)

Sit-the-fuck-down.

Hal sits. The Lt. pours Pepto Bismol as he talks.

THE LT.

(cont.)

What's true is what people *think* is true, Hal, even when it ain't true. Know what I mean?

Hal starts out of his seat. The Lt. gives him a look that puts him back in his chair, then hands him a shot of Pepto Bismol.

HAL

What are you saying, Lt.?

THE LT.

I'm talking appearances, Hal.

HAL

(standing)

You said we were going to cover the Ross investigation.

THE LT.

I stood by you, Hal. When the shit started flying, I was there.

HAL

Ross is mine.

The Lt. pours himself another Pepto Bismol.

THE LT.

Not any more.

HAL

Okay, I give. What's the deal?

THE LT.

Wasn't for me, your ass would be in a sling. Problem is, you don't play it by the book, Hal. Shit starts flying, could get on everybody. You play my way or you don't play.

Hal stands to leave.

HAL

Fuck it.

THE LT.

No. Fuck *you*. Unless you play it strictly by the book.

HAL

Bull shit. There ain't no book. You know it; I know it. So, you gonna tell me what the hell is going down around here, or not?

Hal waits for a reply, but The Lt. only downs the shot of Pepto. Hal turns and starts for the door.

THE LT.

(sincerely)

Oh, Hal – that business about you banging that woman, the pharmaceutical sales rep. I don't know who leaked that to the press. That had nothing to do with the investigation.

(beat)

Charlie told me about your divorce. I don't know who leaked. You got to trust me on that one.

Hal nears the door.

THE LT.

(cont.)

Wait. I didn't tell you – that ring out at Venice Beach. It's attached to a finger.

INT - POLICE CRUISER - DAY

ON THE STREETS OF LOS ANGELES. Hal drives; Charlie eats breakfast biscuits from a bag.

HAL

Eating that shit is bad for you, Charlie. Rule number one, don't eat shit.

CHARLIE

Stop, drop, roll with the punches. What's so hard about that, Hal?

HAL

That's how you lose your face, one punch at a time.

CHARLIE

Guys like Ross, they're insulated from guys like us, you know. Don't have to be you who puts the cuffs on him.

HAL

(lifting his sunglasses)

Hello. It's *me*, Charlie.

Charlie glances down at the turn signal blinker.

CHARLIE

Don't do it, Hal. I know it means a lot to you, but not again. Not today. This ain't Venice Beach, Hal.

Hal turns left at the light.

EXT - DAY CARE PLAYGROUND - DAY

ON TWO CHILDREN, BROTHER AND SISTER, FOUR AND THREE, playing in a sandbox together.

ON Hal, sitting in the cruiser across the street watching HIS CHILDREN at play.

CHARLIE

This ain't doing you any good, man.

INT - CITY MORGUE - DAY

MR. CLARK, the attendant in a white jacket, pauses, holding a metal probe in a cadaver's nose. He downs his coffee.

CLARK

You can see he has plenty of nose here. No needle marks on the body. Girlfriend said he jogged, worked out.

HAL

Jogging junkies – only in America.

CHARLIE

How much dope did you find in this one?

CLARK

That's the interesting thing...

Clark's beeper sounds, offscreen.

CLARK

(cont.)

That's my phone.

As Clark exits, a black attendant, ANTHONY, young and hip, enters through double doors with a covered body in tow. He imitates the sound and motion of a steam locomotive.

HAL

Anthony, my man.

ANTHONY

CO-caine jun-kies, CO-caine jun-kies, CO-caine jun-kies...

ANTHONY looks up at Hal and Charlie, puts a fingernail under his nose:

ANTHONY

Toot! Toot! Train-a-death, man. Train-a-death.

CLARK returns.

CLARK Bad news, fellas. We got another one of these across town.

HAL

Holy Bat shit, Charlie, can you believe it? Another drug-related death in Gotham City?

CLARK

Wrong. Poisoned. Hi-tech stuff. Wasn't dope that killed them. Dope laced with something that would make anthrax jealous. My guys don't even have a name for it yet. Somebody out there is poisoning his customers, gentlemen.

Charlie and Hal exchange looks, turn and walk.

HAL

It's gonna be one of those days, Dad. I just know it.

CHARLIE

God, I'm sick of drugs.

EXT - VENICE BEACH HOUSE – DAY

It's late afternoon. THREE YOUNG BOYS hover around ANNE'S MAILBOX. One keeps watch, ants in his pants; the other two take out catalogues: *Victoria's Secret*, *Fredrick's*, and begin thumbing through them.

KID

Cops!

The boys dash away as the cruiser rolls to a stop in front of Anne's house. By the looks of Hal and Charlie it has, indeed, been one of those days.

CHARLIE

I've got to side with your ex on this one, partner. You send those kids fancy, expensive toys every week, they come to expect it.

HAL

You'll make Captain one day.

ON HAL AND CHARLIE

as they approach the Venice Beach house.

CHARLIE

She can't compete, and you can't afford it. When was the last time you paid your rent, for Christ's sake?

Hal presses the button on the intercom. The voice that answers is ANNE'S.

ON HAL AND CHARLIE

ANNE (V.O.)

Did you know that in the time it takes to get two Los Angeles police officers, you can get twenty-four pizzas?

Hal and Charlie exchange looks.

ANNE (V.O.)

Think about it. What inferences can be drawn from that?

Hal and Charlie exchange looks.

ANNE (V.O.)

That's three an hour. They promise twenty-minute delivery, you know. I called the station eight hours ago. That makes twenty-four pizzas.

Hal and Charlie exchange looks. The door opens suddenly, on ANNE – about thirty, dorky glasses, hair in a bun. She steps back from the door. There are stacks and stacks of BOOKS. Books everywhere.

ANNE

Shall we count them?

ON THREE COLUMNS OF PIZZA BOXES on a small table. Anne's CAT eats from one of the boxes.

Hal and Charlie exchange looks.

ANNE (cont.)

And now the evidence has disappeared.

EXT - ANNE'S YARD

Hal, Charlie, and Anne stand in the afternoon sun on the lawn looking down at nothing.

ANNE

It was right here, and now it's gone.

HAL

My number's on this card.

ANNE

You don't seem to understand, officer. This is my place. I feel some responsibility here. A human finger, a woman's finger. Something awful happened here.

HAL

If anything suspicious turns up, you just –

Charlie speaks from a few yards away. He holds up a ring on the end of his pen.

CHARLIE

Hal.

ANNE

That's it! Thank God.

Hal places the large diamond in Anne's palm, wraps her fingers around it.

HAL

Here's your ring, Lady.

Hal and Charlie turn, heading back toward the cruiser.

ANNE

Now we have to find the finger.

Hal stops, rolls his eyes, turns to Anne.

HAL

Look. We understand. Really we do. It's an expensive ring. You lose the ring, you search for the ring, you can't find the ring, you get a little panicky, you call the cops.

ANNE (searching)

We have to find the finger.

HAL

There *is* no finger.

ON ANNE on all fours.

ANNE

It *must* be here.

HAL

Look lady, it's getting late. Tell you what. I'll take the ring.
(taking it)

I'll secure it downtown. When the owner comes to claim it, she'll get it, no questions asked, okay? Nobody has to be embarrassed.

Anne continues searching, terrier-like.

ANNE

We're talking about a human being here.

HAL

I'll take care of it, lady, understand?

ON ANNE springing up, snatching the ring from Hal's hand.

ANNE You'll do no such thing. I'll keep this, if you don't mind!

Hal and Charlie sit in the cruiser staring straight ahead into nothing.

HAL

I can't take this shit.

There is a tap at Charlie's window. Charlie cranks it down.

ON A SMILING ANNE from behind a stack of pizzas.

ANNE

You guys got kids? I'll bet they love pizza.

INT - CHEAP STRIP BAR - TWILIGHT

THE MULATTO, mid-fortyish charismatic, sits in a dirty dressing room. He strokes a

small PUPPY on his lap. The puppy licks his finger. The Mulatto looks up slowly from the puppy to TERRI, a stripper. Terri sits fetal-like, shivering in a chair across from him.

The Mulatto's hand moves from the puppy to a syringe, which rests beside a spoon on a small table. He gives her a look that says, Yes? or No.

TERRI

(pleading)

Oh, God...oh, God.

OUTSIDE THE STRIP BAR

RODGIGUEZ, early twenties double for Charles Manson, sits behind the wheel of a black '57 Chevy. The Mulatto exits the bar, gets into the Chevy. As it pulls away from the curb, HAal crosses the street and enters the bar.

INSIDE THE STRIP BAR DRESSING ROOM

ON TERRI, who sits stroking the puppy on her lap, looking vacantly into nothingness.

HAL

So which is it, Terri, too much junk or not enough?
Still stashing dope in these make-up jars.

TERRI

Get out.

HAL

Let me guess, cold cream?

TERRI

What do you want?

HAL

Carl Ross.

TERRI

You got no respect for the dead.

HAL

His love for you has grown cold? Imagine that.

TERRI

You never give up, do you?

HAL

Old habits are hard to break, huh Terri?

TERRI

I'm clean.

Hal's hand darts out, catches Terri's wrist. She recoils, PROTECTING THE PUPPY. Hal spreads her fingers. There are needle scars there. Terri has tears in her eyes.

TERRI

(cont.)

When Carl is done with a woman, he's done with her.

HAL

You're lying.

TERRI

Then bust me, Hal. For God's sake, bust me.

Hal stands on the curb outside the bar waiting to cross.

Terri sits stroking the puppy on her lap. The puppy is DEAD.

INT - OUTSIDE HAL'S APT. DOOR - NIGHT

The paper nailed to Hal's door says, "Eviction Notice." He rips it down.

HAL

Jesus!

Behind Hal, the sound of a young voice. Hal turns. The accent is West Virginia, the BOY'S face thin with HOLOCAUST EYES.

BOY

We live here now.

Hal is too taken by the boy's ghostly look to answer.

BOY

(cont.)

People are moving. Everything's different.

ON HAL as the weight of the boy's words settle on him.

INT - HAL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Hal's apartment has the look of a yard sale. He sits in a low chair, pizza remains and empty beer cans on a folding table. He scrolls through the channels with the remote.

The TV SCREEN GOES BLACK. He stares on, then looks down at the TELEPHONE on the floor beside him.

He listens as the phone on the other end rings, rings again. His wife doesn't even say hello.

HAL'S WIFE

It's eleven o'clock, Hal. If you had children, you'd know that.

HAL

Happy divorce.

CLICK!

Hal aims the remote at the TV. ANCHOR WOMAN appears.

ANCHOR WOMAN

Bad news from the city's war on drugs as drug-related deaths reached a one-day high...

ON HAL

These words have no effect on him; he seems far away.

ANCHOR WOMAN

(cont.)

...And we'll take you to the Valley, where police are investigating an abandoned pickup in which officers say they found a male human arm. Sports and weather, too, after this.

The dope deaths and the human arm begin to connect in Hal's mind. The CAMERA SLOWLY MOVES IN ON HIS FACE.

EXT - FISHING PIER - NIGHT

SOUND OF VIOLENT SURF. The only person on the pier sits on a small bench, hooded, holding a fishing rod. The wind blows hard; the line sings. The tip of the rod bends, then rises again. Nobody is here for the fishing.

We move DOWN THE LINE, DOWN INTO THE WATER.

FLASHBACK TO

The metal probe entering the cadaver's nose.

INT - HAL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CLOSING IN on Hal's face.

EXT - FISHING PIER - NIGHT

ON FIGURE MOVING DOWN THE PIER, walking in and out of islands of light toward a bait shop, rod in hand.

INT - HAL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

HAL'S FACE, closer now.

FLASHBACK TO

CHARLIE's pen entering and lifting the diamond ring.

EXT - VIOLENT SURF - NIGHT

CHURNING, BLACK, WHITE-CAPPED SURF

INT - HAL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

HAL'S FACE, HIS EYES.

EXT - SURF - NIGHT

FOAM deposits seaweed on the wet sand. FEET AND LEGS enter the frame. A HAND reaches down and lifts a Jackknife clamshell (which resembles a human finger). The hood blows back to reveal ANNE, who studies the shell.

INT - HAL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

FOAMY WATER. HAL'S HAND goes into the water, FLINCHES. Hal looks down at the KNIFE he has grasped in the dishwater, and at his BLEEDING FINGER.

FLASHBACK TO

Terri's needle scars, between her fingers.

INT - ANNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ON ANNE'S HAND as it reaches through the darkness to her bed, to a *Victoria's Secret* nightgown. In the dim light, Anne stands near the window, opens it. The SOUND OF THE SURF rises, stronger, crashing, stronger still to become:

INT - HAL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

HAL'S STEAMY SHOWER. HAL'S FACE in the dense, cloudy STEAM.

INT - POLICE STATION - DAY

The Lt. downs the last of his coffee as a room of about fifty cops settles down. Frank hands out group assignments. As The Lt. begins to speak, Frank deliberately places the assignment sheet before HAL, then walks on.

Hal looks up from his paper. Pissed, he looks at Frank, who gives him a cool smile, and then up at the Lt.

THE LT.

Listen up. We need perfect coordination here.

Hal balls up the sheet of paper, drops it on the floor.

THE LT.

(cont.)

Look, I know we all got other things to do; but until we get this poisoned dope business worked out, we're in the shithouse.

COP #1

I don't get it. Ain't it bad business to kill your customers?

THE LT.

Thinking now is this guy's flipped out. Guy who puts razor blades in apples? Same loon.

COP #2

What are we up to now, Lt.?

THE LT.

Fourteen dead in the city, in three days. Five yesterday. Word is they're showing up in San Francisco and San Diego. I got a call this morning from Denver.

(beat)

Anything else?

Hal, visibly angry, throws up his hand. The Lt. ignores him.

THE LT.

(cont.)

Stop whatever you're doing and bust anything that even smells like dope. Squeeze your people on the street. Follow up every lead. Don't forget this is re-election season. If one goddamn breath of this leaks out of this building, somebody's gonna pay. The Press gets wind of this, there'll be questions, lots of 'em, and we got no answers. So, not one goddamn word. Understand?

ON HAL AND THE LT. walking up the hall.

HAL

Somebody left my name off the list.

THE LT.

I've another assignment for you.

HAL

Ah, Lt. –

THE LT.

Somebody's stealing chemicals, heavy shit. Shit for making hi-tech explosives.

HAL

Don't do this to me.

THE LT.

Got a call from a warehouse owner. Says he thinks he's being staked out.

HAL

Drop everything, huh, Lt.?

THE LT.

Surprise me. Tell me you wouldn't have used any one of those assignments as an excuse to go for Ross.

Hal's look confirms The Lt's charge.

THE LT.

(cont.)

There are guys on the force who are out for your ass, Hal. I don't want you around if things get hot.

HAL

Just say it. At least have the balls to say it.

THE LT.

Get the Warehouse guy's statement from Rita. If you don't make any unofficial day care stops, you just might make it over there before dark.

The Lt. walks away, leaving Hal in his tracks.

HAL

This stinks, Lt. It stinks!

Hal turns. Frank stands at the end of the hall.

FRANK

You take things too personal, Hal.

INT - WAREHOUSE - DAY

ON Hal and Charlie as they walk up a long aisle, barrels of chemicals tower above them. Charlie takes a sandwich from his coat pocket.

HAL

Stinks in here. What is that?

CHARLIE

Egg salad.

(Hal grimaces.)

You see, makes no difference to me, chicken or the egg. I go with the flow. Secret to good health.

HAL

And you don't call that kissing ass?

CHARLIE

I call it a sandwich. Just think to yourself, "I don't make the rules, I just enforce them."

HAL

You're a goddamn philosopher, you know that?

CHARLIE

Got your health, you got everything. Here, try some of this.

SOUND OF GUNSHOT: CHARLIE FALLS IN HIS TRACKS.

ANOTHER PART OF THE WAREHOUSE

Rodriguez, the shooter, drops his rifle and connects wires on an explosive device. Beside him lies a BODY, the warehouse owner.

ON HAL OVER CHARLIE

HAL

Charlie! For Christ's sake, Charlie...

ON RODRIGUEZ as he runs for it.

Hal spots him, charges after him, pistol drawn...when: KA-BOOM! The warehouse bursts into flames, hurling Hal backwards, nearly knocking him unconscious.

Hal pulls himself up amid the flames. He stumbles toward Charlie, lifts him, and carries him to safety outside the warehouse. A TRUCK, followed by A LOW-RIDING 57 CHEVY, speeds by, RODRIGUEZ at the wheel. Hal levels his revolver and fires, KNOCKING OUT A TAIL LIGHT, then turns back to Charlie.

Ambulances and fire trucks race onto the scene.

INT - THE POLICE STATION - DAY

Still stained with smoke and Charlie's blood, Hal charges toward The Lt.'s office.

ON THE LT. who is hanging up the phone when Hal enters.

HAL

I want everything you've got, the warehouse, the owner –

THE LT.

The files are on your desk.

Hal turns to leave.

THE LT.

(cont.)

I'll give you all the help I can spare on this one, Hal.

HAL

I'll take care of it myself.

THE LT.

These dope poisonings are all over. We didn't turn up anything this morning.

HAL

I understand.

THE LT.

Charlie's gonna be alright, Hal. Word from the hospital.

Walking out of The Lt's office, Hal looks up. Kurt, at his computer, gives Hal an accusing look. Hal jerks open the door to...

HIS OFFICE

ON ANNE, standing at the window, her back to him. She turns.

HAL

Oh, Christ.

ANNE

Well?

HAL

Get out of here.

ANNE

I was told you had been assigned to my case.

HAL

Out.

ANNE

What have you got so far?

HAL

Out!

ANNE

I've been doing my own research, and I'd like to share it with you. You know, compare notes.

HAL

(attempting restraint)

Listen Miss What-ever-your-name-is. I'm a cop. I solve problems. I'm good at it, understand. People have problems with the law, I take care of them.

ANNE

That's why I'm here.

HAL

But there are some problems I can't solve. Personal problems, you know what I mean?

Anne smiles, amused, as Hal continues.

HAL

(cont.)

Now when people have personal problems, they should seek professional help, understand, but that ain't my line, Miss Giggles. Yours is a personal problem, what's so goddamn funny?

ANNE

Personal problems. Don't you get it. The only creatures on earth who *have* problems are people, I mean if somebody's got problems, what kind are they gonna have? Personal problems.

HAL

You're a goddamn lunatic.

ANNE

I mean, can you imagine, for example, Feline problems?

HAL

You have to go. You can't stay.

It's clear she's not going. Hal sighs, TURNS HIS BACK TO HER and looks out at the city of Los Angeles.

ON HAL

HAL(cont.)

Look at all that, Lady. All kinds out there. All kinds.
Think of it as a big Cracker Jack box if you want.

(Beat)

Think any goddamn thing you want.

ON ANNE taking out the DIAMOND RING and a scrap of paper. As Hal resumes speaking, SHE WRITES something on the paper, then SETS THE RING ON IT.

HAL

(cont.)

Now in that Cracker Jack box there are some nuts, you follow me? And there are surprises. You got the prize, the ring.

(Beat)

Listen Lady, if I told you all the shit that washes up on Venice Beach ...

HAL TURNS. ANNE IS GONE.

ON CECILE, Charlie's daughter, petite, mid-twenties, as she makes her way toward Hal.

ON HAL

HAL

(cont.)

Cecile, I'm so sorry about your dad.

Cecile is close now. Her face is swollen from crying. Reaching Hal, she throws a powerful punch, hitting him hard.

CECILE

(sobbing)

Why don't you do something that doesn't get people shot?

She attempts another swing but hasn't the strength. Hal catches her arm; she folds. Rita leads her away. Hal closes his office door behind him, sits down and lays his head back against his chair, sighing, rubbing his face and eyes. Opening them again, he spots something on the corner of his desk...

THE DIAMOND RING. He reaches for it and spots something else: The SLIP OF PAPER ANNE LEFT under it. He reads it, then looks up into some deep unknown.

HAL
(whispering)
Carl Ross.

EXT - ANNE'S HOUSE - DAY

Hal, roses in one hand, paces outside Anne's door. Anne's voice again comes over the intercom:

ANNE
Who is it?

HAL
You know who it is. Open up.

ANNE
The policeman?

HAL
Yes.

ANNE
Who called and asked me out to dinner?

HAL
Are you going to let me in?

ANNE
No.

The door springs open. Anne: hair in curlers, nerd glasses.

Hal swallows hard and offers her roses.

Anne bursts into laughter, takes him by the arm and marches him down the sidewalk.

ANNE
(cont.)
I didn't think you'd show. I really didn't.

INT - DRESS SHOP - DAY

ON HAL HOLDING ROSES, shell-shocked, outside a dressing booth. Anne is inside the booth. We can see her from the knees down.

ANNE

This will only take a minute, I swear. I mean, I want to look nice, you know.

HAL

What's your connection with Carl Ross?

ON ANNE brushing her hair.

ANNE

Are you really taking me out to dinner, or are we conducting police business now?

ON HAL

HAL

Well, yes.

ANNE

Which?

HAL

Sure I'm taking you to dinner. But I've got to know about Ross.

ON THE DRESSING BOOTH, ANNE'S LEGS. She steps out of her shoes. Her dress comes down. Then her BRA FALLS. Then, step one. Step two: her PANTIES COME DOWN.

ANNE

Dutch?

HAL (offscreen)

Ah ah, no no – I'm taking *you* to dinner, see?

ANNE

Where?

A black dress comes down over her knee.

HAL (offscreen)

Oh, where...ever. Now listen –

ON ANNE applying lipstick.

ANNE

My choice?

ON HAL

HAL

Well, yes.

ANNE (offscreen)

Then we're going to the most expensive place.

HAL

What?

ANNE (offscreen)

Takato's. That's the most expensive place, isn't it?
That's where we're going.

THE CURTAIN OPENS. ANNE IS RAVISHING, a total transformation. Hal is speechless.

ANNE

(cont.)

Why did you think I needed this dress?

Anne stoops, picks up HER PANTIES AND BRA, and stuffs them in her purse. Her look says, "I'm ready now."

INT - JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The thing is, she's wearing no panties and she's beautiful. And Hal is watching her walk toward the MAITRE D', who isn't missing any of it either. Hal is really out of his element here. ANNE and THE maitre d' SPEAK IN JAPANESE. We see SUBTITLES.

ANNE

Good Evening.

Hal's look says, "This woman speaks Japanese?!"

MAITRE D'

You look stunning.

HAL's not following any of this.

ANNE

Thank you, I'm a nymphomaniac, you know.

ON THE FACES OF FOUR JAPANESE MEN at a nearby table as they spin like flash cards toward Anne.

MAITRE D'

The dress tells the story.

ANNE

(nodding toward Hal)

Thank you. He bought it for me. He is my lover.
He's a hired killer.

FOUR JAPANESE MEN

Ooooooooooh.

Hal doesn't say it, but his face says, "What the hell's going on here?"

ON HIRO, young, hip Japanese waiter, as he approaches.

HIRO

Hal. Promotion, huh? Things must be looking good for
you at L.A.P.D.

HAL

Better since you don't spend so much time there.

HIRO

Better for me, too. This way, please.

They walk, Anne in the lead. Hiro smiles at Hal.

HIRO

(cont.)

Yummy, yummy.

AT THEIR TABLE

ANNE

I've always wanted to eat here, but I can't afford it.

Hal takes the SLIP OF PAPER from his pocket.

HAL

How do you know this man?

ANNE

This is such a romantic place.

(beat)

Let's talk about that later.

Hiro places menus before them.

ANNE

(cont.)

Ooh, you order for us.

HAL

I don't read Japanese, but I do pretty well with English.
Now let's have it. How do you know Carl Ross?

ANNE

Then I'll order for us, okay?

Hal's look says it: "You can't decoy me, Babe."

Anne looks up brightly at Hiro, folds the menu. Speaks in English now:

ANNE

(cont.)

We'll both have the most expensive thing.

Hal, at the end of his rope, starts to speak when: Anne stands, begins to walk away:

ANNE

(cont.)

I think I'll freshen up before we have drinks.

(stopping, turns)

My, my, I can't *tell* you the last time I had dinner with a man as good looking as you.

LATER

Hal downs his bourbon. Hiro picks up the glass.

HIRO

Another?

HAL

Make it a double.

ON ANNE as she returns from the ladies' room. Japanese men ogle.

TIGHT ON CHOPSTICKS as HAL FUMBLES with them.

HAL

Why can't I do this, Hiro?

HIRO

Too much time spanking your monkey.

HAL

Very funny.

Anne joins Hal as Hiro serves his second drink. She smiles at Hiro as he leaves the table.

HAL

A fork, Hiro. Bring me a fork, will ya'?

ANNE

He's such a nice man.

HAL

He's a safecracker, the best there is....Now. Are you comfortable, Dear?

ANNE

Oh, yes.

HAL

I can see why you like this place.

ANNE

Isn't it wonderful? I don't get out much.

HAL

You like it then?

ANNE

Oh, yes.

HAL

Good. I want you to have a good time. It's important to me.

ANNE

That's sweet.

HAL

Because if you don't tell me everything you know about Carl Ross and how you came to know it, I'm going to break your fucking neck.

ANNE

Oh my.

HAL

Here. In our little goddamn love nest.

ANNE

That seems like a desperate act.

HAL

(demonic)

I'm a desperate man. You might say I have nothing to lose.

ANNE

Oh my.

HAL

Nothing to lose, you might say. You see, I had three friends, three cops, the best. And the four of us had arranged a little meeting having to do with your friend Carl Ross, the name on the paper there –

ANNE

Oh, he's not my friend; I've never even seen him.

HAL

It was like top secret, you see. Only the four of us were supposed to know. You follow?

ANNE

Uh-huh.

HAL

Somebody leaked.

ANNE

Who?

HAL

And then three good cops were dead. The Best. You ever seen a man without a face?

(beat)

So I lost my friends, and I lost a lot of respect from other cops because they think I was in on the set-up, see, and I almost lost my job, and I did lose my wife and my kids and my home and today my partner got a big hole shot in him. So, you see, lady, the way I figure it, wringing your neck would be easier than you think if it meant nailing Ross. So let's have it – *now!*

The EYES of the JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN are fried eggs.

Anne is trembling, fighting back the tears. Hal slams his hands on the table top.

HAL
(cont.)

Lady!

The eyes of the four Japanese men are closed. One man's hands are pressed to his ears.

Anne defies the tears, but fails finally.

ANNE
I'm sorry.
(beat)
You don't even know my name.

The sincerity and simplicity of Anne's reply catches Hal off guard.

Anne, in tears now, opens her purse, takes out her PANTIES and lays them on the table, dries her eyes with tissue.

ONE JAPANESE MAN turns and speaks to another.

JAPANESE MAN
I love America.

HAL
I'm good with faces, I'm real good with faces, but –
(beat)
We'll have dinner. We don't have to talk now.

ANNE
It's Anne.

HAL
I knew that.

ANNE
Which is not really a name; it's an adjective, one of the parts of speech, you know. Think about that. Actually it's a 'determiner'.

HAL
I knew that.

ANNE

That's what kind of adjective it is, which I guess isn't too bad – 'determiner'. Gives the impression of someone who's in control, huh?

HAL

Look, Anne --

ANNE

Somebody who gets things done; I sort of like that, and ooh, ooh, it's also an article, you know the articles: *a*, *an*, and *the*. Now that would be the thing, to be referred to as an article I mean. "She's an article," people would say, like she's the real thing, the genuine article. What do you think?

Hal is zombied by this barrage.

ANNE

(cont.)

Your dinner's getting cold. I'm not eating, myself. I'm on a diet. Last time I wanted to lose weight, I just ate candy bars and chocolate shakes. Only ate what I wanted when I wanted and I lost weight. Lately, it's been pizza. Did you know that every day Americans eat over 75 acres of pizza. It's a fact. 75 acres.

HAL

I didn't know that.

ANNE

Go ahead, eat. Go on. Go ahead.

(beat)

I've never made friends very easily.

HAL

What do you know about Carl Ross?

ANNE

Nothing. I just got his name.

HAL

How?

ANNE

Would you like to go to the most exciting place in Los Angeles?

HAL

I don't think I can afford it.

ANNE

If you have a membership card, it won't cost you a dime.

EXT - DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

ON HAL. By the look on his face, you'd think it was a spaceship Anne is leading him into as they walk up the steps, she holding his hand, into the Los Angeles Public Library.

They enter. Hal looks about, still perplexed. Anne leads him past the reference desk, where RUTH, who could be a double for Aunt Bea, gives Hal the once over.

ANNE

Good evening, Ruth.

RUTH

Oh, Honey, he *is* a hunk.

Hal's look says: Where am I?

ANNE

I work here.

ON ANNE as she sits at a computer screen, working the keyboard.

ANNE

(cont.)

I started with "diamonds," but I found what I needed under "gemology." Now these, you see, are subject headings, other places to look.

THEME MUSIC OVER THE FOLLOWING:

Anne jots down information. Hal takes out a cigarette pack, showing the first signs of interest. He bumps out a cigarette. Without taking her eyes from her work, Anne points at a "no smoking" sign.

Anne stands at a file. She pulls blue plastic squares, microfiche. She walks, Hal follows.

Anne points at information on the MICROFICHE SCREEN. Hal is beginning to understand. Anne looks up at him and smiles, pleased at his interest.

Having removed her high heels, Anne searches the stacks for a book – in that black dress that hides nothing, and Hal is watching. She places a pencil between her teeth, steps up on a stool, and reaches high for the book, revealing THE BEAUTIFUL LINE OF HER BODY. Hal can't take his eyes off her.

She takes the pencil from between her teeth.

ANNE

Admit it, we're a great team.

She steps down from the stool and gives him a quick, spontaneous KISS on the lips; then she's on the move again.

ON HAL as he sits at the microfiche viewer and Anne instructs him. She points at something on the SCREEN. They exchange a look of having discovered something important.

Anne opens a trade magazine to an ARTICLE entitled, "New Laser Technique Protects Consumers."

She takes the DIAMOND from her purse and holds it under a thick magnifying glass.

HAL

I can't make it out.

ANNE

Neither could I, but the jeweler could.

The Library lights blink once.

ANNE

(cont.)

That means we're closing.

Anne takes Hal by the hand. THEY WALK:

ANNE

(cont.)

The key is the diamond itself. You see, the finer the diamond, the finer the base edge of the stone.

HAL

Yeah?

ANNE

I know all sorts of things about diamonds now.

HAL

Yeah, but how do you know it's Ross's ring?

ANNE

Only the best jeweler in Los Angeles could have lasered this ring. So, I called him.

HAL

Ross had it lasered?

ANNE

No. He bought it, but his girlfriend – I guess it was his girlfriend, the jeweler didn't have her name. Anyway, *she* had it lasered.

HAL

The guy's had a hundred girlfriends.

(beat)

What's on the ring?

ANNE

Just some numbers. You want to know what they are?

HAL

Jesus. Why would he have her killed?

ANNE

We could research the psychological patterns of murders. That might turn up something.

HAL

Do you do everything by the book?

INT - HAL'S CAR - NIGHT

They ride in silence through a fringe area of the city. Hal is preoccupied with what he's learned. He slowly cruises by a CHEAP STRIP BAR. ANNE studies the DIAMOND.

ON ANNE

ANNE

I wore it one day. All day. I shouldn't have, but I had to. I don't suppose you'd understand.

Hal is deep in thought.

ANNE

(cont.)

Will this help you find the person who killed her?

HAL

Ross killed her, had her killed.

ANNE

Who do you suppose she was?

HAL

Who knows.

ANNE

Or, who *cares*?

HAL

If I can tie *Ross* to this...

ANNE

Sounds like you're half glad she's dead.

HAL

I'm just doing my job.

ANNE

I see. Is this the way all cops do things?

HAL

Meaning what?

ANNE

You know, get a tip, make deals with informants, take people out to dinner; you know, stuff like that.

ON HAL

HAL

(turning his attention to Anne now)

Do you always take your dates to the library?

ANNE

Never have dates.

Hal's look says, "With looks like yours, I can't believe that."

ANNE

(cont.)

'Tis sad but twue. When men realize my brains are bigger than my tits, they don't know what to do with me.

(beat)

But it's not so bad. People can live alone and be happy. They really can, I think.

Their eyes meet.

HAL

Can I buy you a drink?

ANNE

You wolf.

As they drive, Anne takes out a small mirror. Hal turns the REARVIEW MIRROR for her to see.

TIGHT ON ANNE'S LIPS as she smoothly applies lipstick.

BACK TO SCENE as she smiles up at Hal, who has missed none of it.

ANNE

Did you know that the average weight of a Chinaman's testicles is 19.01 grams.

HAL

Where do you come up with this stuff?

ANNE

I just run across these details, you know, in reference books and such.

(beat)

The average Great Dane's testicles weigh in at 42 grams.

At a stoplight, Hal looks with wonder and amazement into the SLANTED MIRROR, into that lovely face, when something catches his eye.

ON The BLACK LOW-RIDING 57 CHEVY driven by Rodriguez, the shooter at the warehouse.

HAL jams the accelerator. The car SPINS AROUND.

ANNE

Ohhh!

RODRIGEUZ AND HIS PASSENGER see Hal and race away.

ON ANNE as she grips the dash.

HAL'S CRUISER leaps curbs, crosses medians... races up a narrow alley, near the freeway now. The Chevy is gone.

Hal spots it, races up the exit ramp. The Chevy races against the freeway traffic. Hal races against the traffic in the emergency lane.

A MOBILE HOME, being pulled by a semi, heads toward them. Hal pulls the cruiser against the concrete wall. SPARKS FLY. The mobile home closes in, its corner coming at Anne. It grazes the side of the car. SPARKS FLY ON BOTH SIDES.

Ahead, RODRIGUEZ races down an entrance ramp. HAL races toward him. CARS SPIN OUT OF CONTROL.

Hal is closing in now. RODRIGUEZ slides into a parking lot, hits the gas. Hal CUTS HIM OFF. But RODRIGUEZ PRESSES THE GAS, plowing into ANNE'S side of the car, which caves in. RODRIGUEZ doesn't let up. And the CHEVY'S NOSE digs into HAL'S car like a bull into a steer, pushing it sideways, slamming it into a brick wall, spinning AWAY finally to a stop.

The doors of the Chevy spring open and RODRIGUEZ and THE PASSENGER hightail it, RUNNING IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS.

THE CRUISER

HAL

You okay!?

Anne can only nod; she is rattled but okay.

HAL forces open his door and runs for Rodriguez. He has some ground to cover, but this guy ain't getting' away. By the time Rodriguez nears the entrance to the parking lot, Hal is only steps behind him. Hal reaches for him. His FINGERS are inches from the guy. He reaches again. Lunging forward, Hal grips the guy's COLLAR and jerks him backward. Down they go.

Hal is over him, breathing hard into his face. Rodriguez pants, cowers. Now Hal has one hand on the guy's throat, pinning him to the pavement. The other hand IS AN IRON FIST. Hal slowly raises it – he's gonna steamhammer Rodriguez's face. The guy's eyes squeeze shut.

Hal stops. He stands, jerks Rodriguez up by the collar. They trudge back toward the wrecked cars.

ON ANNE attempting to free herself from the car.

HAL, with Rodriguez IN TOW, approaches the Chevy. Hal presses him against the PASSENGER DOOR and frisks him, then turns toward Anne.

HAL

Anne? Anne?

Rodriguez 's HAND snakes down inside the window of the Chevy, finds something; we're not sure what.

HAL

(cont.)

You okay?

RODRIGUEZ WHIRLS around, SLAMMING A SMALL PIPE INTO HAL'S FACE. HAL staggers but doesn't lose his grip. And now there is no force that can stop him. He beats him mercilessly, punching him again and again until his fists bleed.

ON ANNE as the horror of the bloodbath registers on her face.

ANNE

Oh, God! No! No! Oh, God, No!

SIRENS APPROACH FROM A DISTANCE. Anne is trapped in her seat; the beating is only inches from her face. She struggles to free herself, to stop the fighting somehow, but she can't.

Blood streams down HAL'S cheek; Rodriguez's FACE is a blood sponge.

Near exhaustion, Hal lifts the guy to his feet, his distorted, bloody face pressed against Anne's window.

HAL

You shot my partner, Pal. And you're gonna tell me why.

RODRIGUEZ SPITS BLOOD IN HAL'S FACE. HAL knocks him to his knees.

ON THE PASSENGER, who eases around the corner of a building close by.

ON HAL, who grabs the shooter by the hair, then pulls him to his feet.

TIGHT ON THE SIDE MIRROR, HAL AND SHOOTER'S REFLECTION

HAL

(cont.)

"Objects in mirror are closer than they appear, Pal."

HAL slams the guy's FACE into the mirror, snapping the mirror from the side of the car.

THE PASSENGER, standing at a distance, aims a revolver in Hal's direction.

ON THE GUN'S BARREL, as its sights move unsteadily. He's going to shoot ANNE.

SOUND OF GUN'S BLAST. THE PASSENGER FALLS DEAD.

ON FRANK, standing in the blue light of his cruiser, revolver in hand, at a distance behind the passenger.

FRANK

Forgive me, brother.

EXT - OUTSIDE MANN'S CHINESE THEATER - DAY

The grey limo glides to a stop outside the theater. The bodyguard opens the rear door, and Ross and a beautiful woman step out.

FROM INSIDE HIS CRUISER, Hal watches as the limo pulls away.

THEATER - INT.

The film is *Cleopatra*. HAL takes the seat beside Ross.

HAL

I saw this when I was a kid, had a boner for weeks.

ROSS

Excuse me?

Hal smiles, offering Ross popcorn.

ROSS

(cont.)

Who are you?

HAL

For her sake, I hope your dick's longer than your memory.

ROSS

I beg your pardon.

HAL

I'm the guy who put the cuffs on you. You know, cuffs.

ROSS

Oh, so you're the officer –

Hal, eating popcorn, smiles and nods at the woman.

HAL

That's me.

ROSS

What do you want?

HAL

I'd *like* to maybe rip off your head and shit down your throat. For starters.

Ross snaps his fingers and the bodyguard looms over Hal. Hal offers him popcorn, then turns back to Ross.

HAL

(cont.)

Hear you got some killer dope, Ross. Killer.

The bodyguard lays a firm hand on Hal's shoulder.

ROSS

Escort the officer out, please, before he's seen with me. To some, it might appear that he's a cop on the take.

Rising from his seat, Hal speaks to the woman beside Ross.

HAL

If he invites you to see *Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend*, do yourself a favor. Make other plans.

INT - LT.'S OFFICE - DAY

ON Pepto Bismol being poured into a shot glass.

THE LT.

What I'm saying is, I'm getting calls from The Police Commissioner, The *Commissioner*, for Christ's sake.

HAL

Ross bought the ring. He killed her.

THE LT.

You got a body? No. I got bodies, plenty of bodies, part dope, part state-of-the-art poison crap, and I got a Commissioner who wants numbers, every two hours.

HAL

We can get ROSS on this one.

THE LT.

You got a motive? No. Me, I'd kiss your ass for a motive. The Commissioner would kiss *my* ass for a motive.

HAL

Dammit, I've got something here.

THE LT.

Then give it to Frank. The Ross case is his; we've been over this before.

HAL

To hell with Frank.

THE LT.

He saved your ass, way I hear it.

HAL

Frank is an asshole.

The phone rings. The Lt. and Hal look down at the phone.

THE LT.

Tell it to the Commissioner.

FRANK'S OFFICE, as Frank pours himself a cup of coffee.

FRANK

You had your chance and we both know what happened.

HAL

Which is more important to you, Frank? Being an asshole or nailing Ross?

FRANK

Your boy? The guy who shot Charlie? He made bail.

HAL

What?

FRANK

Excessive force, Hal. Guy was a mess.

HAL

He walked?

FRANK

You never identified yourself as a cop. I had to agree with the judge.

HAL

You bastard.

FRANK

Coffee?

Frank pours.

FRANK

(cont.)

I think about my kids, Hal. I go out there on the street, I see what's happening out there, the filth, and I think about my kids.

HAL

I'm gonna nail Ross.

FRANK

I think about what it's going to take to make this a place for my kids to live a normal life, you know?

HAL

You're an asshole, Frank. You think I'm an asshole. Nick, Tony, and Rossetti, they don't think cause they're dead. They were good cops, Frank, and Ross killed them.

FRANK

It don't seem too complicated, cleaning up the scum, I mean. You know what has to be done, you find the people who can do the job, then you leave them alone to do it. You're not one of those people, Hal.

HAL

What is it you want, Frank? What is it you're after?

FRANK

The guy who shot your partner, he walked, Hal. You're a fuck-up.

HAL

Fuck you.

FRANK

There's no room for fuck-ups, Hal. No room for second chances. I'm not lecturing you; I'm thinking of my kids, that's all. I'm telling you to lay off the Ross case before you fuck it up.

Frank wipes his coffee mug clean with his handkerchief, signaling that the conversation is over; Hal turns to leave, determination burning in him.

FRANK

(cont.)

Don't take it personal, Hal. I'm asking it as a favor. Wasn't for me, you'd be at your own funeral now.

ON HAL, leaving FRANK's office.

RITA

Hal, I've got a message for you.

HAL

Look, Rita, I need all the files on the Ross case. Just overnight.

RITA

That's Frank's case.

HAL

This means a lot to me, Rita.

Rita looks away. Hal turns to go.

RITA

Oh, Hal, your message. Detective Walters is your temporary till Charlie comes back.

HAL

Yeah.

RITA

He called, Hal, said he's taking vacation time, says he might be sick after that.

Hal starts for the door.

RITA

(cont.)

I'll get those files for you, Hal.

EXT - BEACH - DAY

ON HAL, as he walks across the sand toward the blue water.

Near the water's edge, ANNE stands with her back to him. The sound of a dog barking somewhere on the beach

ON ANNE, staring at the horizon.

HAL

You didn't return my calls.

Anne is still out there somewhere.

HAL

(cont.)

I just wanted to say I'm sorry.

ANNE

16 billion toys have been given away in boxes of Cracker Jack since 1912. Can you imagine? I read it today.

HAL

About last night. I'm sorry you had to see that.

ANNE

But this is the most interesting thing I read today: Did you know there are over 300 Americans walking around right now who have someone else's heart?

Hal turns her around and kisses her, when an enormous ST. BERNARD gallops up and nudges them. When Hal and Anne turn, it drops something at their feet playfully: the REMAINS OF A RUBBER TEETHING TOY. But it is the shape, size, and color of a FINGER, and Hal and Anne exchange a look that says just that.

The dog's OWNER, a jogger, pants up to them.

OWNER

Gee, sorry folks.

The St. Bernard gobbles up the rubber toy and dashes away.

OWNER

(cont.)

He'll eat anything but rocks and shells.

Hal and Anne again exchange looks.

ON HAL AND ANNE walking back towards Anne's house.

HAL

Have dinner with me.

ANNE

I've resigned from police work. I can't stomach it.

HAL

No, just dinner.

ANNE

Face it. I've nothing else you want.

HAL

We'll go any place you'd like.

ANNE

I'm of no more use to you.

HAL

I'll cook dinner for you.

They stop. Hal's sincerity is written all over his face.

ANNE

You cook?

HAL

Oh, anything. I have recipes you wouldn't believe.

INT - A SMALL MARKET - DAY

We can't hear what he's saying, but it's obvious Hal is explaining to Anne how to select tomatoes. He holds one up, points at a blemish, puts it down. Lifts another, gives it a professional squeeze, puts it in the cart. As he turns his attention to the next bin, Anne replaces the tomato with a really fine one without Hal's noticing.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

Hal studies a bundle of spinach, holds forth on its virtues. Anne isn't listening; she studies his handsome face. A soft smile emerges, complimenting her shining eyes. Hal, realizing she's not listening, shrugs and tosses the spinach back on the heap.

THE CASHIER is ringing out the last item, when Anne throws up her hand to say, "wait." She hands over two boxes of Cracker Jack.

AS THEY LEAVE THE MARKET, Anne takes Hal's arm. They exchange smiles, when a...

CHILD'S VOICE (offscreen)

Daddy?

Flanked by his son and daughter, HAL'S WIFE, pretty but exhausted, looks expressionlessly at Hal and Anne. Anne drops Hal's arm.

ANNE

I'll wait in the car.

HAL'S WIFE

I hope her pharmaceuticals are good, Hal. Damned good.

EXT - ANNE'S CAR

Hal sits in the passenger seat staring at nothing.

ANNE opens the door. She hands over A KITTEN, takes the driver's seat.

ANNE

People who live alone need a pet. All the books say so.

INT - HAL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The kitchen is a wreck, theme music from *Jeopardy*. Hal runs his finger down the page of a recipe book, mumbles directions to himself. We hear the TV in the other room but can't make it out. Anne calls from the other room:

ANNE

Sure I can't help?

HAL

Everything's under control.

HAL looks like a juggler with too many balls in the air. He looks around, unsure of what he's supposed to be doing just now. Again, we hear ANNE from the other room. She shouts answers to Jeopardy:

ANNE

What was *Romeo And Juliet*?

Hal cuts vegetables for the salad.

ANNE

(cont.)

Who was Galileo Galilei!!

Hal has the screw in the cork, but the cork is tight. He pulls once, twice. He notices SMOKE coming from the oven. He pulls harder. Then: POP! The cork comes out. WHOP! The salad bowls fly. SPLAT! The wine bottle splatters on the floor.

ON ANNE, standing at the kitchen door: salad everywhere, wine and glass on the floor. Her EYES TURN. HAL'S EYES TURN – to the stove. Smoke. BLACK SMOKE.

OUTSIDE ON THE FIRE ESCAPE

ANNE sops ketchup from the paper plate with the last of her fries. They're sitting at a card table. Smoke meanders up from the tiny grill behind Hal, who finishes off his hamburger.

HAL

More? It'd only take a second, I got hotdogs in the fridge,
how's about another beer?

ANNE

I'm stuffed.

HAL

How about dessert?

Anne gives him a hesitant look.

HAL

(cont.)

No kidding, I'm great with deserts.

Hal takes their plates inside. Anne looks out at the night sky.

Hal returns with boxes of Cracker Jack. She smiles, takes the candy. They look out at the night.

ANNE

Back home, we could see the stars on nights like this.
I'm from Kansas.

HAL

Yeah?

ANNE

I knew all the constellations. Stand here.

ANNE positions him in front of her, then lifts his arm like a pointer.

ANNE

(cont.)

If we were away from the city, we would see the
Pleiades...there.

She is close behind him, and her lips are near his ear. She moves his arm slightly.

ANNE

And there we'd see Orion.

HAL

I never could connect the dots.

ANNE

Orion is the hunter. The Pleiades, the daughters of Pelias. Since the beginning of time, he has been crossing the heavens to reach them. But they can't stop for him, and he can't make up the lost ground.

Hal turns to her and they kiss.

LATER, on the KITTEN DRINKING MILK FROM A SMALL DISH. This is the love-making scene and we know it. We look into Hal's bedroom. There, framed by the door, are the two lovers. In the half darkness, Anne lies on Hal's bed, her head back, her eyes closed. Hal lies behind her – tenderly brushing her hair.

EXT - DAY - A PUBLIC PARK

Hal looms over JOE-RAY, an informant, the personification of addiction, who sits on a park bench. CHILDREN PLAY at a distance. Hal is waiting for an answer:

JOE-RAY

You know, sometimes I feel like a God, like I know everything, you got me?

HAL

How would a punk like Rodriguez make bail? Who's his sponsor?

JOE-RAY

But sometimes I can't even remember my own name.

Hal puts a twenty in the guy's hand.

JOE-RAY

(cont.)

I had a TV but I had to sell it, you know. Used to watch all the reruns of Star Trek. Ones I saw as a kid. I dug it.

Hal puts another twenty in the guy's hand.

JOE-RAY

(cont.)

Found God there.

HAL

If you don't talk to me, I'm gonna fuck you up, Joe-Ray.

JOE-RAY

Name's Cap'n. I still ain't got no money for a cab.

INT - IN HAL'S CAR, LA STREETS

ON JOE-RAY as he looks out at the underbelly of the city.

JOE-RAY

The Enterprise. I like that. Enterprise. That where God lives. Pull over here.

On the corner, half a block ahead, are crews of drug sellers selling dope openly. Joe-Ray raps on the action.

JOE-RAY

(cont.)

24/7, Gates of Heaven, man. 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the boys, they be working like St. Pete.

(beat)

Only I ain't got enough for no offering, you know?

Hal unfolds a twenty, holds it out of Joe-Ray's reach.

JOE-RAY

(cont.)

You got to talk with The Mulatto, that crazy preacher guy. He think he's God. Rodriguez, he one of his killer-choirboys.

Hal allows him to take the money. Joe-Ray starts out of the car.

JOE-RAY

(cont.)

God lives on Enterprise. Scotty, he about to beam me up. You don't know Scotty. When you know Scotty, you don't have to worry about right and wrong no more. Scotty, he take care of all that.

UP THE STREET, the drug transactions move like turnstiles.

HAL

Where is The Mulatto?

JOE-RAY

You a cop or ain't you? You can find him.

JOE-RAY, looking at the money in his hand, laughing:

JOE-RAY

(cont.)

Shit man, I bet sometime you don't know if you's t he solution or the problem.

He puts his hand on Hal's shoulder.

JOE-RAY

(cont.)

But it don't matter. Scotty, he know.

INT - POLICE STATION - NIGHT

HAL'S DESK is cluttered with papers, files, coffee cups and bits of food. He studies yet another file. Rita, clearly apprehensive, opens Hal's door, enters with purse and jacket. She hands over a bundle of files she's hidden under the jacket.

RITA

This is everything on the Ross case.

HAL

Thanks, Rita.

RITA

I've got to have these back first thing, Hal. It'd be my job.

HAL

You're an angel, Rita. Thanks.

LATE AT NIGHT, as HAL reads one of the folders. He lifts a group photo, Ross in the center, women on each side. Hal looks it over, sets it aside. Stops. Picks up the photo. Erica Cliff has her hand over Ross's' shoulder. The diamond is on her index finger.

ON HAL'S FACE as he stands over a copy machine in a dark room. Every copy illuminates his face with a spooky green light.

EXT - A CITY PARK - NIGHT

Joe-Ray loads a syringe from a spoon.

ON BLACK SHOES as they glide over the dark, wet grass.

JOE-RAY makes a fist and is about to inject the dope.

THE BLACK SHOES come to a stop. Joe-Ray looks up.

JOE-RAY

What the fuck you want?

ON THE HAND of the man standing as it goes into his trousers, brings out a handkerchief.

ON THE SYRINGE as it slowly fills with blood.

JOE-RAY

(cont.)

I done gave at the office, know what I mean?

ON THE HAND of the man, folds THE HANDKERCHIEF, places it over the barrel of a revolver.

JOE-RAY closes his eyes as the dope reaches his brain.

ON THE BARREL, JUST BEHIND JOE-RAY'S EAR.

JOE-RAY

(cont.)

Scotty. He beaming me up.

A muffled explosion: BLACK SCREEN.

JOE-RAY lies across the bench.

The killer walks past the bench, past JOE-RAY'S ARM; A NEEDLE HANGS FROM A VEIN.

EXT - OUTSIDE HAL'S APARTMENT

Hal walks up the steps of his apartment building.

ON HAL as he approaches his apartment door. He takes out his key. IT WON'T FIT THE LOCK.

EXT - A PHONE BOOTH

HAL

They changed the locks on my apartment.

ANNE

(laughing)

Liar.

EXT - OUTSIDE ANNE'S DOOR

Hal and ANNE'S CAT exchange looks; both wait. Anne speaks to him over the intercom, affects A SOUTHERN ACCENT THROUGHOUT. SOUND of running water behind her voice.

ANNE

Hello Darlin', I'm in the bath.

HAL

Well, ah, just unlock the door.

ANNE

Do you know how good it feels to relax naked in a cool bath? I really don't think I can tear myself away right this moment.

HAL

Ah, come on. Don't do this.

ANNE

I wish I could tell you how good this feels.

HAL

Anne, please, open up the door.

ANNE

If you don't want to wait – and it may be a while – you'll just have to figure out for yourself how to get in.

HAL

Don't do this to me.

ANNE

"Listen Miss-what-ever-your-name-is, I'm a cop. I solve problems. I'm *good* at it."

HAL

You got a key hidden somewhere? You do, don't you?
I think it's going to rain. Swear to god it's going to rain.

ANNE

Do you know why it is a woman's nipples get hard when they are cool and wet?

Hal is walking in circles, looking for any place a key might hide. The cat follows him.

HAL

Jesus!

ANNE

I'll tell you sometime, I read it in a book.

ANNE begins to hum "I'm In The Mood For Love."

Hal is going nuts. He feels around the door facing; he looks under the rug; he feels for loose bricks. Finally, he lifts a dirty work boot, then drops it. Bingo. Out rolls a key with a piece of paper wrapped around it.

Hal reads the paper.

HAL

"Ethel Walters sang this song in the musical, 'Cabin in the Sky.' It is considered one of her best." ...What?

Hal, hormones pumping, crams the paper into his pocket, opens the door with the key and charges in. Anne's cat follows.

INT. – ANNE'S APARTMENT

BOOKS line the walls all the way past the TWO GLASS DOORS between him and ANNE, who now he can see at the far end of the hall -- IN THE BATH. Hal smiles and goes for the first glass door. IT, TOO, IS LOCKED.

Hal is wired now. Anne lifts her leg, and it is some leg, from the bath – so close and yet so far – and washes it. Hal paces.

HAL

(cont.)

Okay, stop, drop, and roll.

But he is anything but calm. He begins looking for another key and then: The NOTE. He takes it out, looks at it again, then races over the books. He mumbles titles. Then he stops.

HAL

(cont.)

"Show Tunes: 1905-1985."

Hal opens the book. And there it is: the answer, the key.

HAL

(cont.)

"Taking A Chance On Love." I love you, Ethel Waters.

ANNE interrupts her humming of "I'm In The Mood For Love."

ANNE

Can you put that in the form of a question?

ON THE KEY as Hal slips it into the lock, turns it.

ON HAL as he makes for the second glass door. The closer we get to Anne the more we want to be in that bath with her. The cat is beside Hal.

ON THE DOOR KNOB as Hal gives it a turn. You guessed it: locked. On the floor, another note.

HAL

"The title of this poem, written by the author of Songs of Innocence/ Songs of Experience, would have been a hit with Adam and Eve."

Hal looks up. He's pleading now. When:

ANNE RISES FROM THE BATH, reaches for a towel. And what we see would make any man gasp. Hal gasps.

ON BOOKS as Hal rips them from the shelves. He's tearing through them now, books flying everywhere, and looking up every few seconds as...

ANNE slowly, slowly, dries her delicious body.

Hal races through the table of contents of a BOOK.

HAL

(cont., shouts)

"Garden of Love"!

Anne seems not to hear him. She slowly dries her lovely hair.

HAL

(cont.)

What *is* "Garden Of Love"?!

Anne smiles up at him. THE KEY falls from the book.

ON Hal as he races up the hall towards ANNE, as she gives the door a slight push. It slowly swings – shut. Hal grabs the knob, panting. The cat rubs against his leg.

ANNE

She was the goddess of love.

Hal hasn't a clue. Count three.

THE DOOR OPENS: ON ANNE

ANNE

(cont.)

Aphrodite.

(beat)

Can you put it in the form of a question?

A MINUTE LATER, ON THE CLOSED BATHROOM DOOR as it opens. Anne puts the cat out.

INT - POLICE STATION - DAY

Hal looks surprisingly happy as he strolls towards his office.

HAL

Morning, Kurt.

Kurt looks around as if he's about to be ambushed. Hal opens his office door.

ON RITA as she ravages Hal's desk drawers.

RITA

Frank asked for those files first thing, Hal.

HAL

Here, I found what I needed. Thanks.

RITA

I said first thing, Hal.

HAL

What's eating you?

RITA

Something ain't right here. Something bad is comin' down. Phones ringing every five minutes. Calls from Washington. The FBI, I think.

INT - JAPANESE STYLE HOME - DAY

Hiro, the waiter from the restaurant, is laying out what look like dental tools.

HIRO

Don't they teach you nothing in cop school?

Hal picks up one of the tools, studies it.

HIRO

(cont.)

Let me do the job for you, Hal. Hell, I owe you, man.

HAL

Just show me, Hiro.

Hiro inserts one of the tools into a door lock. He takes Hal's hand.

HIRO

Here. Feel this? She gives.

He inserts a second tool.

HIRO (cont'd)

This one here. Squeeze them like chopsticks, and...
bingo.

Hiro turns the knob with his free hand.

HIRO (cont'd)

Nobody knows you been there.

Hal inserts the tools, finds the soft points in the lock, but the CHOPSTICKS MANEUVER he can't do. When he reaches for the door knob, the TOOLS FLY.

HAL

Why can't I *do* this?

HIRO (cont'd)

Too much spanking the monkey, you pay the price.

HAL

Very funny.

INT - HAL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Hal attempts to pick the lock of his apartment door. He grips the tools like CHOPSTICKS. TOOLS FLY.

EXT. - ON HAL standing on the fire escape outside his apartment. He takes out a handkerchief, wraps it around his hand, looks around, and breaks a window. He unlocks the window, raises it, and climbs inside.

EXT - OUTSIDE A MODERN APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Hal and Anne enter from the street.

FROM A DISTANCE, ROSS watches them from inside his limo. He reaches for a phone. His DRIVER, beyond the glass, lifts a receiver. Ross speaks to him.

ROSS

Find out who the woman is.

DRIVER

Yes, sir.

ROSS

Get the *L.A. Times* on the line.

INT - INSIDE THE APARTMENT BUILDING ELEVATOR

ANNE

Do you know how much plutonium is needed to build an atomic bomb?

HAL

Just turn the knob when I say so. You won't be breaking the law. Just don't step inside.

ANNE

15 pounds, that's how much.

HAL

Then wait in the car.

ANNE

Do you know how much plutonium is missing from U.S. inventories – "lost?"

HAL

Just wait in the car.

ANNE

Guess.

HAL

Guess what?

ANNE

Guess how much is missing.

HAL

How much is missing?

ANNE

9,600 pounds, last count.

The elevator doors open. Anne leaves Hal in his tracks.

HAL

9,600 pounds ?

OUTSIDE ERICA CLIFF'S APARTMENT DOOR

as Hal holds the tools in the lock and Anne turns the knob. The door opens.

INSIDE, the overly bright room seems stirring with life. There's a presence there: a radio softly plays a HAUNTING SAXOPHONE; TENNIS SHOES and WORKOUT TIGHTS lie at the foot of the sofa; video cassettes and a PIZZA BOX sit on the coffee table. A magazine lies open to an article titled "10 Tips For Living Alone." BOOKSHELVES ARE FILLED WITH BOOKS.

Anne feels drawn inside. Hal stops her, puts car keys in her hand. She steps inside past him.

ANNE

I'm the only partner you've got.

HAL

You don't know what you're getting into.

TIGHT ON ANNE'S HANDS as she holds withered flowers under the kitchen faucet. Nearby is a microwave cookbook: *Cooking for One*.

HAL scans the apartment for clues. He takes out a pencil, stirs around an ashtray, flips the cover of a magazine: *100 Home Ideas*.

ON THE ELEVATOR DOORS as they slowly open.

HAL walks into the bedroom. On the walls are pictures of ERICA CLIFF. Her life is told in those pictures: a little girl on her father's lap, riding a horse, homecoming queen, and pictures of hands, Erica Cliff's hands.

ON THE LIGHTS OF THE ELEVATOR. IT RISES.

TIGHT ON ANNE as she takes in the images of Erica's life: the radio, the books, the magazines, the videos, the pizza box, the TENNIS SHOES AND WORKOUT TIGHTS. She lifts the book Erica was reading: *THE HEART IS A LONELY HUNTER*. This is all too familiar to her, too much a mirror of her own life.

HAL opens a PORTFOLIO on ERICA'S bed. It is filled with photos of her HANDS. She is a hand model.

ANNE lifts a photo from a table: a smiling ERICA CLIFF, Miss South Carolina, 2nd Runner-Up.

HAL opens a jewelry box full of rings.

ANNE presses the RE-DIAL BUTTON ON THE PHONE.

VOICE ON PHONE

Carl Ross and Associates.

The ELEVATOR comes to a rest. We see the shoes of two men.

ON HAL, from behind, as he rifles through lingerie from a dresser drawer.

ANNE

No!

HAL

Go down to the car.

ANNE

What can you possibly find?

HAL

A motive, that's what.

TIGHT ON footsteps as they make their way up the hall.

ANNE

(pulling at Hal)

What kind of man are you?

From the bottom of the drawer, Hal lifts a ring box, opens it, places ERICA'S DIAMOND in it.

A KEY goes into a lock.

HAL REACTS.

THE DOORKNOB TURNS.

HAL AND ANNE stand in a BEDROOM CLOSET: Hal has his gun drawn.

THE LEGS OF THE TWO MEN as they enter the apartment.

A PENCIL flips over the VIDEO CASSETTE CASE. One man's leg brushes the "Living Alone" MAGAZINE; it falls to the floor. The WATER FAUCET drips like the clock of doom.

THE TWO MEN stand with the BRILLIANT LIGHT at their back, framed like Titans in the doorway.

HAL DRAWS ANNE back, when:

ANNE STEPS ON SOMETHING. She looks down – gasps in horror.

HAL SPRINGS from the closet, pistol drawn.

FRANK AND KURT stand in the doorway.

HAL

Jesus, Frank!. Jesus, man.

KURT

Ross's girlfriend hadn't paid her rent. We wanted to know why.

FRANK

You're way out of bounds here.

ON ANNE inside the closet, tenderly lifts a DEAD KITTEN.

HAL

Yeah, well Ross killed her and nobody seems particularly interested.

FRANK

This is illegal entry, Hal. You running a tab?

IN THE BEDROOM, Anne lays the kitten on the bed, stands at the window with her back to the scene.

HAL

Look...

ANNE STARES INTO NOTHING.

FRANK

No, *you* look. I'm not asking, I'm *telling*. I'm watching you, Hal. Don't you forget, I'm watching you. You can't take a crap, I'm not watching. Understand?

KURT is looking at ANNE at the window.

KURT ("singing")

Just a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down, the medicine go down.

HAL starts for him. Frank raises his arm; Hal stops.

KURT

Your ass is ours, Cowboy.

Kurt tosses the key onto the bed beside Anne.

KURT (cont.)

Mind locking up when you two are done?

INT - INSIDE HAL'S CAR

Hal and Anne ride in silence. There seem to be ten feet between them.

EXT - OUTSIDE HAL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The KID WITH HOLOCAUST EYES sits in a dilapidated station wagon stuffed with household goods. He watches his MOTHER descend the apartment steps with another moving box. She crams the box in the rear of the car.

MOTHER

Lock your doors, I said.

She turns and starts back toward the building. The kid watches, then pushes down the door lock.

A FEW MINUTES LATER:

The MOTHER backs out of her apartment, holding a mountain of clothes. Behind her someone POUNDS ON HAL'S DOOR: THE LT. AND A UNIFORMED COP.

THE LT.

Break it in.

ON HAL as he opens the door; he's more asleep than awake.

The LT. charges in. He is livid. Hal backpedals.

THE LT.

(cont.)

You'd better have some answers. This better be damned good.

HAL

I do. I mean I'm sure I do. What was the question, Lt.?

THE LT.

I made excuses; I covered your ass; I believed in you, Hal.

HAL

Of course you did, Lt. Could I fix you guys a cup of coffee.

THE LT.

Goddammit, Hal...

HAL

Only take a second. I must have another cup around here somewhere.

THE LT.

(to cop)

Arrest him.

HAL

Whoa, whoa. I can explain. I can.

THE LT.

Let me make it easy for you. You got the reports on the laced dope and you made copies – the boys in supply told us that – then you leaked to *The L.A. Times*.

HAL

The Times?

THE LT.

That I know. What I don't know is *why*, Hal. That's what I want to hear from you.

HAL

I don't know what you're talking about.

The Lt. tosses down a newspaper. The title reads: "Dope Death Epidemic?"

THE LT.

That ain't all, Hot Rod. We made sixteen pops yesterday. Guess what we got? Nothin'. Shops closed. No goin-out-a-business sales. Nothing.

HAL

Why would anybody leak this stuff?

THE LT.

This ain't a leak, it's a goddamn geyser. You're finished, Hal. I wash my hands of your sorry ass. Clean out your desk.

The Lt. and the cop turn to leave. the Lt. stops, turns, looks around Hal's apartment.

THE LT.

(cont.)

You live like a pig, Hal. Like a goddamn pig.

INT - POLICE STATION - DAY

Hal approaches his office. RITA is CLEANING OUT HER DESK.

Hal is about to speak to her, when:

RITA

Fuck off.

INSIDE HAL'S OFFICE, the phone rings. Hal jerks up the receiver.

HAL

Yeah.

EXT - THE BEACH - DAY

ANTHONY, the black attendant from the city morgue, STANDS IN A PHONE BOOTH.

Behind him are uniformed cops, detectives taking statements, ambulances, people milling about at a distance.

ANTHONY

That's right. Washed up about a mile south of Venice Beach. Thought you'd want to know your name came up in the conversation.

LATER, a SHEET COVERED BODY on a stretcher is lifted by two men.

ANTHONY and HAL stand at the rear of the morgue van. Hal pulls back the sheet. The dead man, RODRIGUEZ, the guy who shot CHARLIE, wears a POLICE UNIFORM.

ANTHONY

Ring a bell?

HAL

I don't get it.

ANTHONY

We got two more. Dressed like cops, too. One washed up about a mile farther down. The other, maybe two miles farther.

HAL

Got anything on them?

A voice comes from behind, offscreen:

KURT

One was a car dealer from Dallas. The other one, an insurance salesman from Bettendorf, Iowa. No real cops this time, Hal. Sorry to disappoint you.

KURT FALLS as Hal decks him.

ANTHONY MOTIONS to the van attendants.

ANTHONY

He ought to come to by the time we get to the morgue. Do the fucker good to ride wid' a dead man.

INT - CHEAP STRIP BAR - DAY

TERRI removes her leopard skin top and dances bare-breasted down the lighted runway to the BLAST of "WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE." The few drunks and junkies don't even know she's there. The song ends, and a vast, dead silence fills the bar. TERRI lifts her top from the runway and swaggers toward her dressing room.

ON HAL, leaning against her DRESSING TABLE. She enters; turns to run. Hal has her by the arm, then one wrist. She spins around, flies free, falls against her dressing table, comes up with a small PISTOL.

Neither speaks. She holds Hal at bay with the unsteady pistol. Without taking her eyes from him, she picks up small jars of make-up cream and splatters them on the cement floor: *Splat!...Splat!*

HAL

Tell me about the Mulatto, Terri.

Splat!...Splat!

HAL

(cont.)

Wasn't for me, Terri, you'd be cleaning shit cans in the big house.

Terri pulls out the dressing table drawers, dumps their contents on the floor, then OPENS HER PURSE and empties it on the pile.

Now she closes in on Hal, her finger tight on the trigger. She holds the barrel inches from his belly, when:

She slowly GOES DOWN ON HER KNEES in front of him. As she speaks, she loosens his belt with her free hand.

TERRI

All you got to do is promise me you won't kill me. It's down to killing. Cops killing all the dopers.

She puts her hand on his zipper. He stops her.

HAL

Tell me about the Mulatto.

TERRI

I just want to live. Everybody who's holding is ending up dead, seems like. I ain't holding.

HAL

The Mulatto, Terri.

TERRI

I'm a dead woman.

Terri begins to cry. She lowers the gun, lays her head against Hal's leg, sobbing – HER KNEES BLEED IN THE GLASS ON THE CEMENT FLOOR.

TERRI

(cont.)

You're a whore just like me, Hal. You're a whore, too,
you just don't know it.

EXT - STREETS OF L.A. - SUNSET

HAUNTING SAXOPHONE. Hal drives the streets. He smokes. The city seems to swallow him up.

HE STANDS IN A PHONE BOOTH.

INTERIOR - ANNE'S HOUSE

On a table we see the phone and hear it ring.

EXT - A FISHING PIER

Anne walks the pier.

EXT - STREETS OF L.A.

Hal drives. At a light, we see hookers working the streets. Drunks and homeless sleep against a wall.

EXT - ANNE'S HOUSE

Hal stands outside Anne's door. Nobody's home.

EXT - BEVERLY HILLS

Hal sits in his parked car, watching the drive that leads to Ross's mansion. He smokes.

INT - ELEVATOR, ERICA CLIFF'S APARTMENT

Anne rides up the elevator in Erica Cliff's apartment building. The lights blink as she passes floors. The elevator stops. The doors begin to open.

EXT - BEVERLY HILLS

The electric gates at the entrance to the drive begin to open. A long, gray limo, Carl Ross's limo, pulls out onto the street.

INT - ERICA CLIFF'S APARTMENT

In the near-darkness, Anne moves ghost-like through the apartment, past Erica's photo on the table, past magazines for the lonely, past her tennis shoes and workout tights. Past *The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter*.

EXT - L.A. STREETS

Hal follows the grey limo at a distance. A left turn. Another left. A right. Hal pulls to a stop behind the Limo at a light. The passenger door of the limo opens. The bodyguard, a hulk, steps out. He lumbers toward Hal's car. Stands inches from his bumper. Just stands, staring down at Hal. The light changes.

THE LIMO PULLS AWAY.

TRAFFIC behind Hal blows horns. He can't move.

SOUND OF CAR HORNS BECOMES HAUNTING SAXOPHONE AS:

INT - ERICA CLIFF'S APARTMENT

Anne's dress falls to the floor. She takes another from a hanger.

She stands in front of a mirror in Erica Cliff's dress.

ANNE

I know you. I know you.

INT - L.A. PUBLIC LIBRARY - NIGHT

Hal seems lost in the maze of stacks of books. He looks about when he spots Anne

pushing a cart of books.

ON ANNE as she reshelves books. Hal approaches:

ANNE

Go away.

HAL

No.

ANNE

You don't know which side you're on, do you, Hal? A murdered woman is nothing more than bait to you.

HAL

This is Los Angeles, Anne. I'm a cop.

ANNE

All you care about is clearing your precious name, what's left of it.

HAL

You think you can live here, don't you? Where there's a card for every book.

ANNE

I can't stomach this.

HAL

...No, you can't. You think you can, but you can't. Sometimes you can't play it by the book, Anne, because there *is* no book.

ANNE

Tell me this: name one thing you wouldn't do to get Ross.

HAL

I wouldn't hurt you.

ANNE

Who haven't you already hurt?

(beat)

One name, Hal. That's all I'm asking. Just one.

The lights blink, signaling closing time. Anne pushes the cart.

ANNE

(cont.)

She was somebody, Hal. She had a name. Erica Cliff. She was lonely and alone, but she was somebody. Somebody's daughter, somebody's friend maybe, or lover. And nobody in this city cares.

EXT - L.A. GHETTO - DUSK

Hal drives slowly through the streets of the city's underbelly. He is looking.

He walks the wasteland. The buildings are shells, their broken windows like hollow eyes. Although it seems uninhabited, we hear muted radios, the cries of babies, and there is a sense that there are eyes out there, eyes everywhere. On a lonely corner, standing solitarily against the pink sky is a YOUNG GHETTO BOY of about ten.

ON THE YOUNG GHETTO BOY, who is crying.

Hal goes to him. The kid is crying hard and doesn't respond to HAL.

HAL

Are you hurt, son? Where do you live?

Bending down, Hal reaches into his pocket.

HAL

(cont.)

How's about a stick of gum.

The boy whips out an automatic pistol, holds it inches from Hal's eye.

INT - A "BUNKER" SOMEWHERE IN L.A. - NIGHT

BLACK SCREEN

THE MULATTO (over)

We are your brothers and sisters, but you do not see us, or hear our cries, or feel the suffering of our souls.

CHORUS OF VOICES (over)

We are the people!

ON HAL, blindfolded, hands bound at his back, stripped to his shorts, on his knees, as the Mulatto continues:

THE MULATTO (over)

This is our home. One day it will be yours. But you are too blind to see. We are your eyes and ears.

Hal is surrounded by barrels of chemicals, weapons and ammo, stockpiled. Disciples from every possible walk of life, ordinary "good" people of all ages, fill the room.

ON THE MULATTO, a charismatic, dressed in military garb. He is old enough to be a Vietnam Vet.

THE MULATTO

(cont)

You are here because the Revolution calls you. The war of words has ended; the war has begun. Our victory will be the victory of all decent people over the filth that has robbed us of what is sacred to all good people: our schools, our communities, our government, our children. You are one of us.

ON THE CROWD

as car dealers, house wives, insurance salesmen, and children recite:

CHORUS

We are the new children!

THE MULATTO

We must learn to tell the truth. The war makes soldiers of us all. You too.

ON HALsurrounded by the crowd.

CHORUS

In adversity there is opportunity!

THE MULATTO

It is upon these truths that we declare revolution:

CHORUS

In adversity there is opportunity!

The circle of vigilantes tightens around Hal.

THE MULATTO

When a government contributes to injustice and deprivation – willingly or helplessly – that authority becomes the enemy of the people.

TIGHT ON THE MULATTO

THE MULATTO

(cont.)

Our government's leaders are controlled by the world's drug lords. They talk of a war on drugs. Where is that war? This is the battleground. Where are their soldiers?

ON THE BLACK SHOES we have seen earlier.

CHORUS

In adversity there is opportunity. We are the people, born of necessity!

ON THE SPELLBOUND FACES OF "THE PEOPLE".

THE MULATTO

In the absence of legitimate authority, the People have the right to act in their own best interests. Drug lords rule our nation. People who use drugs are slave soldiers of the Drug lords. We tell our children drugs kill. We must show them that drug users die. We are the people.

ON the face of the YOUNG GHETTO BOY.

CHORUS

The will of the people, the rule of the people!

The fervor rises; the crowd closes in on HAL.

THE MULATTO

We make the laws; we can remake the laws. The first law is the law of self-preservation. We have been the victims of killers, killers that drug us, and of drugs that kill us.

CHORUS

Victims no more!

ON A SWITCHBLADE in a man's hand.

THE MULATTO

You, officer, and others like you are the victims, victims
(MORE)

THE MULATTO (CONT'D)

of blindness: asked to enforce laws the courts won't uphold,
forced to dirty your hands on the scum that rules, pledged
to defend the orders that paralyse its people.

HAL struggles to loosen his ropes.

THE MULATTO

(cont.)

Our purpose is to educate, to regain what we have lost, to
save our children.

TIGHT ON THE SWITCHBLADE AS THE BLADE SPRINGS OPEN.

THE MULATTO

(cont.)

Every free man serves a higher master. You will join your
brothers and sisters, living and dead –

CHORUS

We are the new children!

THE MULATTO

– or you will die.

THE KNIFE COMES DOWN – on Hal's ROPES.

ON THE MULATTO AS HE CHANTS WITH THE OTHERS:

CHORUS

In adversity there is opportunity!

THE MULATTO takes out a HANDKERCHIEF and wipes his mouth.

EXT - FIRE ESCAPE OUTSIDE HAL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Hal attempts to open the window. It won't budge; it's been nailed shut.

INT - A CAR PARKED ACROSS THE STREET FROM HAL'S APARTMENT

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD OF A CAR we see Hal round the corner of his
apartment building and enter the dim light.

FIRST SPEAKER

Shit! Think we can take him before he gets inside?

SECOND SPEAKER

Not a chance.

Hal takes the elevator up. The lights blink, the SOUNDS of the ancient elevator are creepy. He goes up and up. Finally the elevator stops. The doors slowly open.

ON HAL as we follow him toward his door. He stops, looks cautiously around. Takes BURGLARY TOOLS from his pocket. He finds the soft spots in the lock. He reaches for the knob, the TOOLS FLY.

Desperate, he turns the knob. THE DOOR OPENS.

Hal draws his gun and slides into the dark apartment.

INT - APARTMENT as he looks down the narrow hall toward the rear.

TIGHT ON THE FOOD DISH of the kitten Anne gave him.

INSIDE THE BEDROOM CLOSET, a TOWEL FALLS to the floor near its folding doors.

HAL walks stealthily down the hallway.

TIGHT ON hand inside the closet as it WRAPS A HANDKERCHIEF AROUND THE BARREL OF A PISTOL.

HAL is just outside the closet now. Slowly he pushes a folding door. It moves INCHES FROM...

THE BLACK SHOES INSIDE. The door STOPS, jammed by the TOWEL on the floor.

HAL sees the towel, that it jams the door. He creeps toward the bedroom.

TIGHT ON THE HAND inside the closet as it LIFTS THE TOWEL, DROPS IT OUT OF THE WAY, REACHES SILENTLY FOR THE INSIDE HANDLE.

HAL is just outside the bedroom now, exposed in the door frame.

THE FOLDING DOORS SILENTLY INCH OPEN behind him.

TIGHT ON ONE BLACK SHOE, about to come down near the KITTEN'S DISH.

TIGHT ON HAL'S FACE AS the KITTEN SCREECHES OFFSCREEN.

HAL TURNS

THE GUNMAN FIRES – missing.

HAL hits the deck as the gunman fires again. Hal fires once, and the gunman goes down in the darkness. Hal inches toward the figure on the floor, revolver extended. He stands cautiously and pulls the string for the closet light.

THE GUNMAN is Frank.

FRANK

(dying)

You don't know what you're into, Hal.

HAL

Christ, *Frank!*

FRANK

I couldn't let you get in my way.

HAL

I'll get an ambulance.

FRANK

He's gonna walk, Hal. Ross is gonna walk.

HAL turns, he's about to break for the phone, when:

THE DOOR CRASHES OPEN. A SWAT TEAM. FLOOD LIGHTS. AUTOMATIC WEAPONS EVERYWHERE.

HAL'S arms go up. Behind him, one of the team is HAMMERING FRANK'S CHEST.

SWAT TEAM LEADER

(showing his badge)

F.B.I.

SWAT COP

(over Frank)

He's dead.

THE SWAT LEADER looks at Hal, speaks to the other officer:

SWAT TEAM LEADER

Get him out of here!

THE OFFICER pulls Hal toward the door, but Hal, looking at Frank's body, resists. Another cop grabs him too.

SWAT TEAM LEADER

You weren't here. You understand? You weren't here tonight.

THE SWAT COPS drag Hal away.

EXT - ANNE'S HOUSE

SHELL-SHOCKED, HAL rings the doorbell. NO REPLY. ANNE'S CAT joins him. He looks around, sees THE OLD BOOT, reaches down for it. There is a slip of paper inside: "GO AWAY."

EXT - A MODEST SUBURBAN HOME

Having rung the bell, Hal stands at the door waiting. It opens:

ON CECILE, CHARLIE'S DAUGHTER. For a long moment, she appears to block the door. Then we see past her to CHARLIE, one arm in a sling but jolly and eating POPCORN on the sofa. He looks up from the TV and smiles.

INT - L.A. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

A formal occasion, small tables with flowers in the center. Ruth, the Aunt Bea librarian, sits across from an EMPTY CHAIR, looking around for someone she appears to be waiting for. A SPEAKER takes the podium. On either side sit several DIGNITARIES.

RUTH

Did you know that the average length of human intercourse is two minutes?

ANNE

No, I didn't know that.

RUTH

Two minutes. And think about all the shit we go through. It helps to remember that when you feel lonely.

SPEAKER

Ladies and gentlemen...the purpose of the gathering
(MORE)

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

becomes clearer now. We've all heard the expression "the Silent American." But there are few who have attained the American Dream who are silent about it. And even fewer who are generous in their support of area arts. After all, this is Los Angeles.

He pauses for the highbrow chuckles. Ruth gives him her sexiest look.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

But thanks to our guest – a million thanks I might say – the Los Angeles Public Library today announces plans to begin construction of an addition devoted to the art, literature and culture of ancient Egypt. That room will be named for its benefactor. Please welcome the honorable...Carl Ross.

ON ANNE entering the room late.

Ross rises. The crowd is on its feet now, clapping. Ross, mid-50's, cultured, professionally handsome, smiles graciously.

RUTH

(to herself)

You could call me mummy anytime.

TIGHT ON ANNE as she takes her seat, a look of scorn on her face.

LIBRARY LOBBY LATER as Anne reaches for a cup of punch.

ROSS

(from behind her)

You have beautiful hands.

She looks up at him.

ROSS

(cont.)

Egyptian kings chose their mistresses for the beauty of their hands, since those hands would serve the divinity of kingship.

He takes the cup and passes it to her, first stroking the length of her fingers.

EXT - OUTSIDE THE L.A. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Sitting in the CRUISER outside the library, Charlie takes a bite of his egg salad sandwich.

CHARLIE

Won't you have some?

Hal doesn't answer.

CHARLIE

(cont.)

You've got to eat sometime.

Suddenly Hal spots something. He sits up, stunned.

Ross and Anne, arm-in-arm, descend the steps. Ross's LIMO pulls up to the curb.

CHARLIE

Damn, she looks familiar. Who is she, Hal?

HAL

I don't know, but I'm sure as hell finding out.

EXT - VENICE BEACH - NIGHT

The churning black surf. AMBIENT SOUNDS OF A COCKTAIL BAR: tinkle of ice in a glass, quiet murmurs, haunting saxophone.

INT - POSH BAR - NIGHT

TIGHT ON a WHISKEY pushed across the bar until it touches a MAN'S FINGERS. The fingers grasp the glass, lift it to the lips of THE BLIND MAN, THE PLAYBOY from the opening scene.

Behind him, sitting across from one another in a booth, are Anne and Ross. Ross puts his hand on Anne's.

EXT - OUTSIDE THE BAR

TIGHT ON BURST OF FIRE FROM A MATCH which illuminates HAL'S FACE. He lights a cigarette, blows out the match, looks up at the bar entrance. Behind him, in the distance, we see the petroleum sign, one letter missing: _HELL.

EXT - ANNE'S HOUSE

ROSS' DRIVER, the BODYGUARD, looks at his watch, then at Anne's door. He turns his attention back to his body-building magazine.

INT - ANNE'S HOUSE

Ross and Anne walk up the hall toward her front door. Anne takes his cup and saucer, sets them on a table.

ROSS

Thank you. It's always a pleasant surprise to find someone with a true knowledge and sincere interest in ancient Egypt.

ANNE

Vanity and cruelty remain essentially unchanged by time.

ROSS

A cynical view of ancient man.

ANNE

Enlightened view of modern man.

ROSS

You're right. Some things remain unchanged. A man's desire for a beautiful woman, for instance.

Ross tries to kiss her, but she turns away. Instead, he takes her hand, lifts it to his lips and kisses it.

ROSS

(cont.)

Have you thought of the patience necessary to building the pyramids?

ANNE

And were they worthy of the wait?

ROSS

My driver will be around for you tomorrow.

Parked at a distance, Hal watches as Ross steps into the gray limo in front of Anne's house.

INSIDE, ANNE undresses, reaches for a gown. She turns at the sound of the doorbell.

ON HAL outside her door. He speaks into the intercom:

HAL

Open up.

ANNE'S VOICE

I'm very tired, Hal.

Hal kicks in the door.

ON HAL as he charges up the hall. Anne, housecoat half on, sees him and turns in fear. But she can't close her bedroom door before he forces it open. She backpedals:

ANNE'S BEDROOM

ANNE

This is my place! *My place!*

Hal grabs her by her wrists.

HAL

You were connected from the start. You set me up.

He slings her onto the bed. Then goes for her, grabs her as she tries to flee.

HAL

(cont.)

This is the last time I'm asking: What is your connection to Ross?

She jerks free.

HAL

(cont.)

It was you who called the *L.A. Times*, wasn't it?

ANNE

You're out of your mind.

HAL

Wasn't it?!

ANNE

Her name was Erica Cliff, Hal. And nobody cares.

HAL

She's dead, understand? She's dead!

ANNE

Get out!

HAL

You're gonna tell me about Ross!

ANNE

You love the taste of blood. Are you going to beat me up, too, Hal?

Hal releases her.

Anne picks up the phone.

HAL

Everything's out of control, Anne.

ANNE

Could you send an officer to 2240 Pine Street. I think I have an intruder. Thank you.

HAL

He'll kill you; Ross will kill you in a minute.

ANNE

You are right, Hal.

(beat)

Sometimes you can't play it by the book.

SECONDS LATER, Hal nears the door on his way out. He stops beside a small table. ANNE'S PURSE is there. He opens it. Reaches into his pocket for...

THE DIAMOND. He looks at it, drops it into her purse.

ANNE stands at her window, looking out at the violent sea.

INT - L.A. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

TIGHT ON the AGONIZING FACE OF BERNINI'S "APOLLO AND DAPHNE"

RUTH (offscreen)

Look closely and you'll see the tears. Daphne was Apollo's first love.

WIDE SHOT - And now we see that Ruth is discussing art slides before an audience of blue hairs.

RUTH

(cont.)

Cupid was responsible. Apollo saw him playing with bows and arrows.

Hal heads toward her down the aisle.

RUTH

(cont.)

Apollo said to him: "What have you to do with warlike weapons? Behold the conquest I have won by means of them over the serpent who stretched his poisonous body over acres of the plain."

HAL takes her by the arm and begins to lead her away.

RUTH

(cont.)

Oh, my! I'll, ah, I'll be right back.

Hal pulls her up the aisle.

HAL

I need maritime information, boating and shipping regulations.

RUTH

Well, we, ah, we might begin at the vertical files...

LATER, HAL sits alone at a library table studying documents.

INT - A CITY OFFICE - DAY

A young gum-chewing FEMALE CLERK is on the phone:

CLERK

...And then my roommates give me my birthday present. And I unwrap it, and it is this *thing* and Tonya says, "And we bought batteries too." And I'm all like clueless right? So I say "What do you *do* with this?"

Hal depresses the receiver button, hands her a piece of paper.

HAL

I want the names of the operators of every boat who filed *this* report on *these* dates.

CLERK

Yes, Sir.

INT - WORKING CLASS BAR - DAY

Hal is at a pay phone:

HAL

Run some names through the computer for me.

L.A.P.D.

CHARLIE

You got it, Pal.

EXT - BOAT DOCKS - DAY

Hal, standing on a fishing boat, holds his gun loose at his side. He operates a WINCH LEVER with the other hand.

ON TWO MEN IN A FISHING NET as they are slowly lowered into the water.

HAL

The way I figure it, the crabs will clean your bones before anybody thinks to look in your own net for your sorry ass.

FIRST MAN

We done told you we don't know nothin'.

HAL

And chances are, there ain't a trace of Carl Ross dope on this whole boat, right?

They are getting wet now, slowly going down.

HAL

(cont.)

Wanna know the world's record for holding your breath?
I read it in a book once.

The water rises. Down they go.

SECOND MAN

I tell you we ain't killed nobody.

HAL

Ever think about coincidence? You boys have engine problems, call the Coast Guard, next day three guys dressed as cops wash up.

FIRST MAN

But we ain't killed nobody.

HAL

Welcome to the worst case of crabs you ever had.

They go under. Bubbles. More bubbles. Then no bubbles. Then still no bubbles.

A MINUTE LATER, it's mostly gagging and coughing, but we make out the second man.

SECOND MAN

Ain't no way we could drift back to shore with them bodies aboard!

FIRST MAN

But we didn't kill nobody; you got to remember that!

HAL

The money?

FIRST MAN

One of Ross's boys!

HAL

Tell me about Erica Cliff!

FIRST MAN

We don't know about no woman!

Hal reverses the winch, and as the net slowly descends, he turns and begins to walk away, leaving them to go under.

SECOND MAN

All I know is we got this bag of shark food and a thousand bucks for feeding the animals!

Hal stops.

SECOND MAN

But we ain't killed nobody!

Hal turns and looks at them as they enter the water.

EXT - L.A. STREETS - DAY

Hal drops a quarter in the pay phone and dials.

RUTH

She took the afternoon off.

EXT - ANNE'S HOUSE

Hal rings the bell. He waits.

The door opens: The Lt. holds a gun in his face. The swat team leader stands behind him.

SWAT TEAM LEADER

Hand over the Erica Cliff diamond.

EXT - ROSS'S MANSION - NIGHT

The water is richly blue. Reflected in it are the formally dressed guests at Ross's party. All is glamour and sparkle. People stand near the pool in clusters and chat.

FIRST GUEST

The thing is, I told him up front, I said, "Mr. Ross, this is an *art* film. I want to do something special here."

SECOND GUEST

But you didn't tell him how much money he would lose.

FIRST GUEST

I told him. I said I didn't want to make it here, I wanted to shoot on location, in Egypt.

SECOND GUEST

The man's a saint.

ANNE AND ROSS round the corner arm-in-arm.

ROSS

It's an awful film.

ANNE

Then why all this?

ROSS

Once you begin a thing, it seems fatal not to follow through, wouldn't you say?

ANNE

Absolutely.

ON TUXEDOED WAITER as he places drinks before Anne and Ross, who sit at a private table inside the SCREENING ROOM.

ROSS

I don't think I've ever met a woman quite like you.

ANNE

You disappoint me. A line like that indicates a failure of the imagination.

ROSS

I assure you, my imagination knows no limits.

ANNE

Then you know little about women.

ROSS

I have known any number of women.

ANNE

And what did you know about them?

ROSS

That they generally talk to a man as if he is blind. Which is fatal.

ANNE

To the relationship, you mean.

ROSS

Unless, of course, he *is* a blind man.

The lights go out. The film begins. Ross takes Anne's face into his hands, his hold more powerful than tender. He kisses her on the lips.

ROSS

(cont.)

Kisses in the dark make blind men of us all. I have some business to attend to.

MINUTES LATER, TIGHT ON ANNE'S PURSE, which holds the diamond, as she reaches for it on the seat beside her. On the screen before her, the camera slowly moves in on an open tomb, which, in effect, appears to swallow Anne.

She lifts the purse and looks around. She slips out of the screening room, into a...

LONG HALL. At a distance, she sees Ross's bodyguard open a door for a waiter pushing a cart. They both enter the room.

INSIDE THE CONFERENCE ROOM, the waiter pours coffee. Ross listens as one of the twenty or so MOBSTERS reports:

FIRST MOBSTER

We can't very well go to the cops and say, "Hey, we got these lunatics ripping off our dope, spiking it, selling the shit, buying goddammed bazookas for their own version of 'Just Say No.'"

Ross sips his coffee.

ROSS

Why not?

Mobsters exchange perplexed looks.

ANNE moves cautiously up the HALL, turning doorknobs. Ahead, the door to the conference room opens; the bodyguard appears. Anne ducks into a recessed space. The bodyguard senses movement and walks toward Anne. He turns the corner. Nothing, just a door. He turns the knob. It's locked.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR, Anne holds the lock. She hears him walk away. She turns. The room looks like a museum of Egyptian artifacts.

BACK INSIDE THE CONFERENCE ROOM:

ROSS

(cont.)

So, what you're saying is, you want to do it your own way. Is that what you're saying?

The mobsters look away, squirming a little.

ROSS

(cont.)

Max?

MAX

It's war now, Carl. I mean *war-war*.

Anne creeps through the statues and vases. She sees a staircase that leads up to a second level, which has large glass panels. She starts toward the stairs, passes a MUMMY CASE.

ON THE BODYGUARD, who sits with his back to A BANK OF MONITORS watching wrestling on a small TV. Anne's every move is followed on one of the monitors.

SECOND MOBSTER

Maybe half a million of 'em. Maybe more. They're like religious nuts.

ROSS

And have you considered the effect of mowing down America's "den mothers"?

ANNE is looking down on the meeting, listening.

SECOND MOBSTER

There are elements, former KGB, eager for work. When we locate the core of vigilantes, they'll do the work.

The bodyguard turns from the wrestling toward the BANK OF MONITORS...grabs a SANDWICH and turns back to the TV.

ROSS

And how quickly can this "core" be located. How long will it take your Russian cowboys to eliminate them all? This, friends, is a time for diplomacy.

The mobsters squirm.

Anne is horrified at what she has heard.

ON THE MONITOR IMAGE OF ANNE AS THE BODYGUARD turns from his TV for a can of dope. And now he looks up, at the monitors, at Anne listening and watching.

THE BODYGUARD barrels up the hall. The door ahead opens; Anne steps out, sees him coming, and runs for it.

She runs into ROSS'S OFFICE, slams the door and locks it. She runs to a telephone. Dials a number.

INT - HAL'S APARTMENT

Hal's PHONE rings. And rings.

INT - ROSS'S MANSION

The bodyguard turns the handle on Ross's office door.

EXT - OUTSIDE THE OPEN GATES OF ROSS'S MANSION

Hal sits in the cruiser smoking, watching, waiting.

INT - ROSS'S MANSION

Anne slams down the phone. Thinks for half a second, looks over at a CLOCK, then lifts the phone again.

THE BODYGUARD walks quickly toward Ross's office. It's locked.

Anne looks around for a way out.

INSIDE THE CONFERENCE ROOM, the bodyguard whispers in Ross's ear.

ROSS

Pour her a glass of wine. I'll be there shortly.

BACK IN ROSS'S OFFICE, Anne unlocks the window and begins to push it up. But with THE SOUND of the door unlocking, she hurries away from the window.

ROSS

(cont.)

I thought you'd like some wine.

Anne doesn't answer.

ROSS

(cont.)

Bring me her purse.

OUTSIDE, Hal sits in the CRUISER. He takes out a cigarette, lights it off the one he's just finished.

TIGHT ON the DIAMOND RING in ROSS'S HAND. Then the look of SURPRISE on ANNE'S FACE, followed by the realization that Hal must have left it for her.

ROSS

You and Erica must have been very close. As I recall, this was an expensive gift.

ANNE

I knew her as well as anybody. Why did you kill her?

ROSS

Then you must know how fond she was of the sea. Max, do you think you could arrange a little deep sea fishing for Anne?

Anne looks over at a CLOCK; TWENTY MINUTES HAVE PASSED. THE DOORBELL RINGS.

The door opens ON A STACK OF PIZZAS with legs. Anne makes a break for it. Hal tosses the pizzas, holds his revolver on Ross. But he's surrounded by Ross's thugs, pistols drawn, one at Anne's head.

MAX

I'll book the boat ride for two, Carl.

Ross looks down at THE DIAMOND IN HIS HAND.

ROSS

The Egyptians were the greatest engineers the world has ever known.

He places the diamond under what appears to be an ancient tool.

ROSS

(cont.)

What they understood better than anyone is...

He applies the tool, suddenly reducing the diamond to DUST.

ROSS

(cont.)

Leverage. Put your guns away. I think Anne and the officer will be leaving now.

ROSS

(cont.. turning)

Tell me, officer, what is a cop without evidence? A cop without a case. And a cop without a case isn't a cop. Right? Show the officer out. He looks like a cop on the take.

INT - POLICE CRUISER, L.A. STREETS - NIGHT

HAL

She was feeding information on ROSS to the F.B.I.

ANNE

Why?

HAL

Maybe money. Maybe a score to settle.

ANNE

They promised to protect her, didn't they?

HAL

(hesitating)

...Yes.

ANNE

So that's why Ross let us go. Without the ring they can't touch him.

Hal's silence answers her question.

HAL

Unless we can find what Ross killed her for.

INT - ERICA CLIFF'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Hal switches on a light. Erica's apartment has been RANSACKED. Pictures slashed, books scattered everywhere. Sofa shredded. Hal and Anne walk through the remains. Hal turns over wreckage, searches for clues.

Anne, shocked, nevertheless gathers up the books, as if to protect them. One has some of its pages torn out. Anne picks it up. We see its title: *The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter*. She holds it tenderly, opens it to its ripped pages, then sifts through the wreckage for the missing pages.

HAL TURNS THE COMBINATION LOCK, opens the door. He pulls out a gym bag, opens it.

CASSETTE TAPES, PHOTOCOPIED PAPERS.

ANNE AND HAL exchange looks.

ANNE
Is this everything?

HAL
Not quite.

INT - ROSS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

THE WOMAN sleeping beside Ross looks like Cleopatra. Ross rises, walks to the window, which overlooks the pool, ties the silk belt of his Pharaoh's robe. Way out on the horizon we see the sign: _HELL.

He takes out a cigarette, feels in his pocket for a light. But finds none. He crosses the room, enters the hall, opens the door to his office. Switches on a light.

ON HAL, who sits behind Ross's desk, his feet up, his REVOLVER before him. Halfway between the two men is the GYM BAG of cassettes and papers.

ROSS
Who let you in here? Do you have a light?

Tossing his lighter:

HAL
A Japanese waiter.

Ross lights his cigarette, looks down at the bag.

ROSS
(inhaling)
Mmm, it's hard to get such good service in Los Angeles.

HAL
It's all there, Carl. Phone calls, accounting records, everything you killed Erica Cliff for.

ROSS
The Egyptians were preoccupied by death, you know.

Hal sets the revolver on the floor, slides it to within inches of the bag.

HAL

Pick it up.

Ross looks at the gun, then up at Hal.

The door opens. The bodyguard lumbers in, pistol drawn.

ROSS

The problem with Erica was that she seemed to be at the wrong place at the wrong time once too often. Same thing happened to three of your colleagues. And now it has happened to you, sir.

(beat)

Remove this man from the grounds.

The bodyguard tucks his pistol in his slacks and starts for Hal. Hal pulls a gun from his coat. The bodyguard freezes.

Hal turns the pistol on Ross.

HAL

Now, pick up the gun.

The bodyguard takes a half step toward Hal. He swings the muzzle of the pistol. THE BULLET HOLE is dead center between the eyes. The bodyguard falls in his tracks. The muzzle swings back to Ross.

HAL

(cont.)

Pick it up.

ROSS

No.

HAL

Suit yourself.

ROSS

You lack perspective, Officer America. You can't see the big picture. You are blind.

Hal takes careful aim. His finger slowly grips the trigger, when:

ANNE AND HIRO rush into the room, having heard the shot.

ROSS

You see, the only thing more predictable than a cop who always plays by the rules – I think you knew three of them once, now deceased? Is a cop who never plays by them.

ON ANNE as she looks at Hal. He slowly pulls back the hammer. This is it: Hal's moment of choice.

They stand frozen, the revolver leveled at Ross, Anne and Hiro standing at a distance in the doorway.

HAL

You are under arrest for the murder of Erica Cliff. You have the right to remain silent...

INT - L.A. POLICE STATION - DAY

Hal, Anne and Charlie wait anxiously in The Lt.'s office. Anne stands at the window looking out over the city. Hal lights a cigarette.

The door opens. The LT., Ross, and the SWAT team leader enter. Hal hands over the gym bag to the Lt.

SWAT TEAM LEADER

I'll take that.

Hal looks at the Lt. for an explanation.

THE LT.

I'm sorry, Hal.

SWAT TEAM LEADER

Mr. Ross has agreed to provide us with information necessary to prevent a national emergency.

Hal isn't believing this. Anne for the first time knows Hal's frustration.

ROSS

Call it public service.

Hal goes for Ross. Charlie and the Lt. subdue him.

THE LT.

Sometimes, the best you can hope for is a draw, Hal.

Hal feels it all crashing down now.

ROSS

We all want to live forever.

The swat team leader puts his hand on Ross's shoulder, turning him around to leave, when:

KURT STANDS IN THE DOORWAY, revolver drawn. The gun moves unsteadily.

KURT

All Frank wanted was a decent place for his kids to live.

THE LT.

Put it away, Son.

KURT

He was a good cop. Somebody has to clean up the filth.
Somebody has to do it. Frank, he just loved his kids.

His finger squeezes the trigger. HAL IS IN HIS SIGHTS. He squeezes. The trigger moves. The hammer moves back.

THE LT.

No. No!

The gun fires. Ross staggers backward, falls dead.

KURT HOLDS THE GUN to his own head.

KURT

In adversity there is opportunity.

BLACK SCREEN.

ANNE

(over)

Nooo!

EXPLOSION.

INT - L.A. POLICE STATION - DAY

The FACE OF HAL'S CAT (older now) looks up at us from his desk drawer. Hal's arm sweeps across his desk, raking everything from it into a trash can. He stands back, takes a breath.

He walks out of his office, past Rita, back at her job. She smiles up at him as he passes.

OUTSIDE IN HER CAR, Anne waits on the passenger side. She sees HAL walking toward her and smiles. Hal gets into the car and they drive away.

ON THE FREEWAY, Hal takes a MAP from the center console. Anne reaches for it, makes a ball of it and tosses it to the cat in the backseat.

They leave L.A.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END

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