# WHITE JAZZ

Screenplay and Current Revisions by
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**9/16/07**

Based on the novel "White Jazz" by James Ellroy

Legend: *Recife, Brazil, 1983*

INT. HILLSIDE VILLA - MORNING

Stare at my broken face in a gilded mirror. The breaks occurred a lifetime ago, healed uneven. I wear a white tropical button-down, a Republican-gold Rolex, a pirate-patch over what was my left eye.

ME (V.O.)
I'm old. And all I have left is the will to remember...

I reach into a dresser drawer, pull out a yellowed black & white picture of HER: this beatific blonde, sleeping. Below me is a week-old L.A. Times with the headline: ***Matriarch of Television Series, Empire Ridge, Retires***.

The Matriarch's picture in the middle. *

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...and the fear I'll forget...

Slide HER over the Matriarch's picture: the Matriarch 30 years younger now. Lift my eyes back to my reflection.

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I killed innocent men. I betrayed sacred oaths. I reaped profit from horror. The names are dead or too guilty to tell. The events so brutal they beg to be re-told...

Legend: *Los Angeles, Fall 1958*

INT. OLYMPIC AUDITORIUM - FIGHT NIGHT

The battered face of an Irish Pug. Same guy? No. A hard jab bashes the Pug out of frame. And there I am: next to the 'Ring' Magazine Reporter chewing the ass out of his cigar.

ME (V.O.)
Lieutenant Dave Klein, Vice Division. LAPD. That's what my face looked like before.

My point of view now: Irish Pug on the business end of this bantam Black's combos. Standing to my left: SERGEANT RICHARD "JUNIOR" STEMMONS. Twenty-six.

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Junior Stemmons. A partner I never asked for. The scowl meant to hide a shit-scared kid who'd been teaching evidence classes three months ago. His Old-Man was an LAPD lifer who never got past Sergeant.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
We should make our move now.

ME
Mid-fight? Look at the crowd: you wanna be at the center of a riot?

JUNIOR STEMMONS
I don't wanna be here when Noonan and the Feds show up.

I point at the bantam Black:

ME
We let Sanderline finish this beating, we get his gratitude. *

Junior eyes the exits clockwise, nervous, waiting for 'Untouchables' to break the doors down. I hate the way panic smells when I stand this close to it.

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

ME
-relax *Junior*.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The Bantam Black: SANDERLINE JOHNSON. Led through the double doors. He sees me, then his gaze shifts to Junior popping jabs inches from REUBEN RUIZ: a muscled middle-weight, fight-taped hands cuffed behind his back. I smile big:

ME
Sanderline, I'm Lieutenant Klein of the LAPD and a real big fan-

JUNIOR STEMMONS
-you're under arrest.

Sanderline spooks, steps back. Turn and make sure Junior sees the fire in my eyes, keep staring at Junior as I speak to Sanderline again:

ME
No you're not. Reuben is-

REUBEN RUIZ
-Lieutenant Dave why you arrest-

ME
-for being a ranked fighter who still steals hubcaps. Shut up.
(off Ruiz, back to Sanderline)
If I was gonna arrest you, I wouldn't have let you finish: and that hook-uppercut combo you got is something special.
(from Reuben, beat)
Reuben's in custody. But you could be our *Guest*. Whaddya say?

EXT. OLYMPIC AUDITORIUM - MOMENT LATER

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

RING ANNOUNCER
Ladies and Gentleman...due to circumstances beyond our control, Rock-A-Bye Ruiz will not fight this-

-BOOS drown the PA. Beer and lit cigars shell the Announcer. Fights erupt in the stands. I can't stifle a chuckle. Three exits down: day late-dollar short Feds. WELLES NOONAN, elbows-out, surveying the scene like a half-assed Rommel.

ME (V.O.)
Welles Noonan, US Attorney. Ivy League Crimefighter. Launching a big boxing probe as a way to begin prying into everything else crooked and corrupt in LA.

Move faster.

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Unaware the LAPD was walking away with his two big witnesses.

As we near the side exit **I stop.** Junior pauses, less than a foot from my face, pointing up at Noonan, pure panic.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
C'MON-JESUS-HE'S RIGHT THERE!

My P.O.V.: second row, washed-up gangster Mickey Cohen with a Blonde *far* too beautiful for his world, a woman you've seen before, but only in a yellowed B&W picture 30 years in the future. I can't take my eyes away...five seconds-

JUNIOR STEMMONS (CONT'D)
-HE SEES US!

Noonan's gaze strafes us. I see him squint.

ME
Then you can stop pointing at him.

Double-time out the double-doors.

INT. AMBASSADOR HOTEL - NIGHT

9th floor suite. All four of us. I order room service.

ME
Hungry Sanderline?

Sanderline digs the digs: sports the Ambassador robe over his street clothes, reading the Bible.

SANDERLINE JOHNSON
If they got shrimp.

ME
(into the phone)
Shrimp cocktail.
(over to Reuben)
You want something Reuben?

REUBEN RUIZ
To know why the fuck I'm here-

JUNIOR STEMMONS
-mind your tone, Shitbird...

REUBEN RUIZ
Shitbird went out with Vaudeville.
You get your badge in a cereal box?

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

SANDERLINE
(grade-school mind)
City of Angels.

ME
Excellent Sanderline.

REUBEN RUIZ
*What*?

ME
You live in LA, Asshole. You do not live in '*Federal Government*.'

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

JUNIOR STEMMONS
We get to spend time alone now.

REUBEN RUIZ
Want some perfume?

Junior shoves Ruiz through the inner-door connecting the rooms. Sanderline giggles. Close the door behind them. Sit down inches from Sanderline, change my tone:

ME
Stop laughing.

Instant quiet.

ME (CONT'D)
What were you gonna tell Welles Noonan?
(watch as he flinches)
He has a subpoena with your name on it, Sanderline. Why would someone like you need to talk to the U.S. Attorney?

Sanderline staying silent...

ME (CONT'D)
You're a legbreaker for the Mob. I know the Men that pay you for that will murder you if they hear you're about to talk to the U.S.-

SANDERLINE JOHNSON
-but they don't know...

ME
(beat, small smile)
And they don't have to. Now tell me what you were gonna tell Noonan-

-phone rings. Sanderline flinches for the second time.

SANDERLINE
Bet you they ran outta shrimp.

I stand, step, answer it:

ME
Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE (O.S.)
The Spook with you?

Mild shock. Catalogue potential “who’s”...

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE (CONT’D)
C’mon, we know he is. We’re just trying to be mysterious-

ME
-who’s ‘we?’

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE (O.S.)
Me and Sam G.

ME (V.O.)
G for ‘Giancana.’ I owe him favors for the rest of my life.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE (O.S.)
We’re out at the place in Palm Springs. You should come out for the weekend.

ME
Tell Sam if I get minute-

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE
-yer gonna have to make a minute for him. Now. See, we think the Spade might testify that Sam owns him and how we was grooming him for a title shot he was gonna tank. A fight everybody woulda’ got flush off of, including the Spade. *
(beat, quieter)
Have him look out the window Klein.

Click. A breath. Drop the phone on the cradle...step to the window...open it...then I chuckle genuine:

ME
Sanderline, you gotta see this...

Trusting puppy Sanderline steps to the window:

SANDERLINE JOHNSON
What'm I-

-smash his head against the frame using his forward motion. He loses muscle control for the split-second it takes me to pitch his legs up and out. My face a quick-change evil mask.

Feature Sanderline's nine-story fall. That Ambassador Hotel robe billows behind him like a cape. He detonates an overhead streetlight with a bomb sound, then hits the driveway.

Unzip my fly, hustle into the bathroom, screams from outside now. Flush the toilet as Junior and Ruiz pile through the door. Step out, play it baffled: look at the bed where Sanderline sat, then the open window, screams floating up...

ME
*DID THAT MUTT JUST JUMP?*

Lunge to the window: Sanderline post-mortem. Head shattered. Valets sprinting. Junior on the phone. Ruiz steps-up next to me: horrified. I keep staring at the smashed body...whisper:

ME (CONT'D)
*Remember where you live*.

Reuben has to use both hands to steady himself.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - BRADLEY'S OFFICE - MORNING

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

MUFFLED PROTEST AMALGAM (O.C.)
MEXICAN BROTHERS SI! IMPERIAL DODGERS NO!

Four of us at the table glued to the T.V, watching U.S. Attorney Welles Noonan lambasting the LAPD.

ME (V.O.)
LA's version of the Young Turks, only meaner. Boyce Bradley, Chief of Detectives. Smartest man in town. And one of the richest: Dad was a Real Estate Developer who owned a strip of land that's now known as the *Santa Monica Freeway*. On either side, Bradley's book-ends: D.A. Bob Gallaudet, not the smartest man in town: 'Gas Chamber' Bob cribbed my notes at USC Law.
(MORE)

ME (V.O.) (cont'd)
And Tom Bethune, running for a City Council seat that'll decide if this Mexican slum called Chavez Ravine gets bulldozed and renamed '<u>Dodger Stadium</u>.' *

BRADLEY
Turn it off.

Bethune leaps like a lapdog, hits the power.

ME
I was pissing. He was jumping.

Bradley picks up a newspaper:

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

ME
Noonan had Sanderline scared. After he sang to me he panicked & jumped.

TOM BETHUNE
He did spend a month in Camarillo Mental Hospital last year-

GAS CHAMBER BOB
-and wearing that hotel robe over his clothes makes him look even more looney-bin.

TOM BETHUNE
Plus, Reuben Ruiz recanted. So Noonan's Boxing Probe is dead. He's got nothing-

BRADLEY
-<u>but time, a mandate and new targets</u>...I need to speak to the Lieutenant alone.

Bob and Tom nod, pat my back on the way out: proud uncles lending support before Dad drops the hammer. Door closes. I stand, step to the window, big Pro-Mex protest below: Geeks and placards: '*BASEBALL IS AS AMERICAN AS THE TRAIL OF TEARS!*

BRADLEY (CONT'D)
Describe to me your duty, as you understood it, regarding Sanderline Johnson and Reuben Ruiz.

ME
Take both men into custody before Noonan and the Feds could, and find out what they were going to tell- *

BRADLEY
-and why did I choose you for this?

ME
Because I'm a Cop with a law degree, and you thought my legal-

BRADLEY
-because your a thug with a law degree. Because I thought by now you'd be so indebted to this Department for not indicting and/or imprisoning you, that diligent, honest discharge of duty would be assured. *
(beat)
And I made a horrible misjudgment. *

ME
Bethune and Gallaudet don't think so.

BRADLEY
Bob's happy because he wants to be State Attorney General and his most likely opponent will be Welles Noonan. Tom's happy because Morton Diskant, who's leading their City Council race, is *endorsed* by Noonan. Thus, they're not seeing the larger play.
(with calculated emphasis)
Noonan's new target will likely be the LAPD itself.

ME
How do you know that?

BRADLEY
Because that's where I would aim: a subpoenaed Federal witness plummets to his death in the company of *two* LAPD detectives?
(beat)
(MORE)

BRADLEY (cont'd)
This screams Police Corruption. *
This offers Noonan the possibility of payback in the form of *national headlines*.

I wave it all off:

ME
Johnson did that stint at the Nut House -- leak his file to your friends at the times-

-and Bradley drops his bomb: Coroner's file. I stare...guess the contents...try to keep my heart rate in-check...

BRADLEY
My friends would be more interested in this.
(beat, flipping file open)
Coroner's preliminary: white paint chips found embedded in a chunk of Sanderling Johnson's scalp. A matching dent on the **white** window sill. I checked with the hotel switchboard and found a call was patched to your room at about the same time Johnson flew out of it.
(beat, proclamation:)
It shocks and sickens me that your allegiance to the Chicago mob would take precedence over the LAPD.

ME
(fuck drawing this out)
Alright. Where's this going? *
(pull my badge, table it)
Gun? Shield? What?

BRADLEY
The appearance of disciplinary measures taken against you are mandated post-Sanderline Johnson, *
so your suspension will be recorded but sealed...and kept quiet for now- *

ME
So if the papers or Noonan come sniffing around-

BRADLEY
-we can provide adequate proof of your dismissal.

ME
But you're not dismissing me.

BRADLEY
Just on paper.
(closes the file)
Since I misjudged the Cop I thought you were, I'm going to leverage the Cop that you <u>are</u>.

Bradley slides the morning paper over. <u>Front page</u>: '***Candidate Diskant Hears The Hue and Cry of The Underclass...***' The photo shows a smiling Diskant, rolled shirt-sleeves, in the middle of a sea of LA Immigrants, all smiling back.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)
Morton Diskant is to be removed from the City Council race. The means and methods implemented to that end I will entrust to you.

ME
(throw a thumb at Bethune)
You want me to torpedo Diskant so your buddy Bethune can win a City Council seat uncontested-

BRADLEY
-or spend the next month in lock-up before being arraigned on charges of gross misconduct and dereliction of duty. The preamble before you face life in prison for murder.

I stare back. Feel myself getting fitted for strings...

BRADLEY (CONT'D)
Diskant works Saturdays. Late.

Bradley waves me out. I intentionally drag my badge back across the desk, scratching his Mahogany heirloom.

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - MORNING

Hollywood Hills loom in the distance.

ME (V.O.)
Bradley's stooge now. A smart play suspending me: a built-in shield for him if things go sideways.

Traffic teeming up Fairfax, tourettes-like glances in my rear-view...<u>a Black Buick</u>...maybe mirroring my lane changes.

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Black Buick...five Cars back...feels like a tail...

Brake hard. They hang a left on Fountain.

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...or maybe I just need sleep.

Cruising up Nichols Canyon to the pad, cameras and copywriters loom on my front lawn.

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Press camped out post-Sanderline, looking for quotes to hang me with. *

Slouch in the seat, accelerate, keep looking back...dig that geek from the Hearld pissing in my hedges.

EXT. WESTWOOD COTTAGE - MORNING

Up the walkway.

ME (V.O.)
Retreat to Meg's. My kid sister and only living family. Mom and Pop died in '51 when their first plane ride became their last.

Scoop Meg's LA Herald of the ground. Headlines condemn me. Tuck it under my arm as Meg opens the door:

MEG
(glances from paper to me)
I already got the Times inside.

INT. WESTWOOD COTTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Silver tea-pot over blue flame on olive-drab stove. The Times open on the table between us...Same shitty headlines.

MEG
How much is true?

ME
How many times have I lied to you?

MEG
Zero.

Shrug. Play aloof. Hope it suffices.

ME
You've always liked your Men mean.

She looks up at me. Feels the shame I shun... *

ME
What would Mom and Dad say?

ME
Nothing. That's where I learned it.

She stands, goes to the stove.

MEG
Poor you.

ME
Yeah, pour me...a cup please.
Black, no sugar.

Meg stares darts. I smile to defuse.

ME (CONT'D)
Pretty please.

She fetches cups and saucers.

ME (CONT'D)
How's work? *

MEG
It's work.

ME
How's Pete?

MEG
More work.

Quiet while we wait for the pot...and quiet always means creeping sleep: an Enemy I never stop fighting. Force my eyes open, shift in my seat: <u>I've been exhausted for years</u>.

I drift despite my best efforts <u>and for a split second you see the Hell I see when sleep wins</u>:

INT./EXT. <u>NIGHTMARE</u>

Fire where the clouds should be -- **POP** -- in a backseat, point-blank Tommy-gunning two smiling men -- **POP** -- Marine fatigues soaked in blood, plunging my bayonet into a cheesecake-white belly -- **POP** -- <u>that beautiful blonde from the Olympic, *smiling*</u> -- **POP**- * *

INT. WESTWOOD COTTAGE - SAME MOMENT

-awake. My leg jerks, kicks a big Wing-Tip. A cup of coffee pipes in front of me. Then voices. I turn: PETE BONDURANT has his hands on my sister's shoulders.

ME (V.O.)
Big Pete Bondurant. One-time LA Sheriff. Bounced when he beat-dead a Prisoner who spit at him. A duly impressed Howard Hughes hired him on as his full-time muscle. My Sister's new Hump. My oldest living Friend.

PETE
(turns back at me)
You look like Death taking a shit.

Meg cackles.

MEG
He's still got that MGM-face.

PETE
You're still the only guy who ever traded movie-potential for Police work.

MEG
Because in the movies they make you *pull* your punches.

Drain my mug. To Pete:

ME
Wanna do LAPD a favor tonight?

MEG
No. We're going to the Cocoanut-

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

PETE
'Favor' mean 'free?'

ME
Means $500 an hour.

MEG
Gimme the phone so I can find another Date-

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

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

Pete laughs, then: *

PETE
What are we doing?

EXT. LOW RENT OFFICE BUILDING, EAST LA - NIGHT

Me and Junior in the car. Pete street-side, tucked into the shadows -- mimes jacking off, checks his watch. Everybody bored. Glance again at the file in my lap:

ME (V.O.)
Morton Diskant, a man who preferred migrant workers to million dollar ballparks. Beating Bethune in their City Council Race despite getting outspent 10 to 1.
(beat)
If he wins, the Dodgers don't get a Stadium, Mexicans get to keep raising chickens two miles from City Hall and Bradley makes sure I * burn for Sanderline Johnson. *

Junior in the backseat, penning in a steno, mouthing something to himself.

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Junior brought along because he begged. I think he's already hip to how many ways you can make money with a badge.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
You got a birthday coming up.

ME
*What?*

JUNIOR STEMMONS
On the 16th, right? How old?

ME
Old. *What are you writing?* *

Head down, scribbling mid-sentence, makes me wait a beat.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Just notes...about work-

ME
-what 'work'?

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Mostly compare and contrast stuff. Street work versus textbook-

ME
-chapter 1: don't write shit down. Chapter 2: or other Cops might kill you. *

Junior's look practiced in a mirror: clicks the pen, slides the steno away.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
So you think Noonan will come after you for the Sanderline thing? He seems like a real hard charger.

Bait him, see if he bites.

ME
(the deadest deadpan)
I heard he was coming after <u>both of us</u>.

Feature <u>real concern</u> from Junior.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
*What?*

ME
Indictments. Prison time. Whole nine apparently.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Holy Jesus. *Is this true?*

ME
I'm seriously thinking about turning Junior...testifying against you.

Junior goes sour...gets he's being goosed. I laugh, glance out the windshield: see <u>Diskant</u> finally exiting the office.

ME (CONT'D)
<u>Here we go</u>.

I start the car, slow-roll up the street. My Hamilton says 11:04 PM. Streets deserted. Pete walking in Diskant's direction now as I continue to roll toward both. Pete close, dig his giant head nodding 'hello.'

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

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

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
God help me if he ever hits me like that.

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

CUT TO:

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

INT. LOW RENT FUCK-TEL ROOM - SAME MOMENT

Lights now. Diskant awake, trying to loosen his jaw.

ME (V.O.)
Junior picked up this Quiff jocking other Fags in a Men's Room. But Quiff was a Law Student who wanted his record kept clean.

Quiff nervous but cooing, dick out, on Diskant's thigh. Junior just as nervous...reloading a camera.

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

A baffled moment as the comment registers.

PETE
*What?*

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Tell me that wouldn't sell it...plus he's a Communist.

ME
We're ruining his career, not his soul. Reload the camera.

Diskant finally speaks: marble-mouthed. Pushes Quiff away:

MORTON DISKANT
*Off me!*

Don't waste a second: grab Diskant by the hair, narrate his immediate future.

ME
Drop out of the City Council race or I send these pictures to the papers.

Diskant rips his head free. Rage. Blood from his mouth. * Scanning the room, sizing up the situation, then: *

MORTON DISKANT
*I'll fight you rotten-*

ME
-and maybe salvage something that's a close cousin to 'respect.' But what about your wife and kid getting hold of those pictures?

Wait for the big futile scream/struggle. Keep waiting. Diskant just sits. No words. And now I wish he'd cry, throw punches, anything...but he doesn't. I turn to Junior:

ME (CONT'D)
Take the Quiff home.

QUIFF
My name's Franklin-

ME
-of course it is.

Junior pulls Quiff out the door. By his hand. Just Pete, Me, and Diskant now. Silent moments drag sour...

ME (CONT'D)
I need a nod from you Morton, let's me know you get it-

DISKANT
-don't say my name...

PETE
He gets it.

ME
Someone from the Times will call for a quote. Whatever your reason for dropping out make it real.

As Pete and I turn to leave:

DISKANT
(not looking at us)
You eventually lose the ability to reconcile the things you've done to people. That's Hell.

A long moment on me and Pete. Blunted by what we just heard.

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - NEXT MOMENT

Pete driving. Silence. Tune to an all-night Jazz signal, turn up the volume loud enough to jumble doubts. Toss Pete his cut. A $500 roll.

PETE
(pocketing the money)
Y'know Hughes has a job you're tailor-made for. I already gave him your-

ME
-no thanks.

PETE
Stop pretending you're not a pig for all this, Klein.

ME
I still got a day job, Pete-

PETE
-tossing more Bantamweights out windows? *

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

ME
The Mutt jumped.

PETE
(laughs small, then:)
Not even the people who don't know you believe that. If somebody from the DA's office decides to dig, you could fry Boy-o.
(MORE)

PETE (cont'd)
Be nice to be in with a billionaire who's got a fleet of planes, fly you outta the country on a moment's notice.
(beat)
C'mon -- it's a cake legal gig. He just wants you to burn some actress that stopped fucking him. *

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

PETE (CONT'D)
Tomorrow. Hughes Aircraft, 7pm *
It'll be worth it.

I watch Pete go into Meg's place. Drive on. Stop sign. A block away: Black Buick parallel to me. Exhaust plumes. Like they're waiting. I keep my eyes on the rear-view as I pass...but it just stays put...idling.

INT. MY HOME, HOLLYWOOD HILLS - MOMENTS LATER

Lights off but something grabs my eye instantly. Kitchen table: a manila envelope. 100 $100-bills. USC season tickets. A note: '*Thanks for proving Flying Monkeys only live in Oz. Sam G.*' Exhale. Flip to the same jazz station. Sit. Start another futile fight with sleep. The last thing I see before I nod black: my War Trophy, a Japanese Officer's Samurai Sword mounted on my mantle.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT./EXT. NIGHTMARE

Artillery barrages from Hell: Okinawa, 1945. A hate-fueled frenzy hacking up half-starved Jap Soldiers. They dive off the Cliffs to escape me: this massive, gray-eyed Marine.

I dive after them. Bombing toward a world below already ablaze. Falling. Gaining on a figure in a bathrobe. This guttural scream turns mechanical, like a ring as I recognize Sanderline Johnson: his pieced-together face smiling up. Snap awake. My phone ringing. 1 AM. Rip the phone from the wall: *

ME (CONT'D)
Klein-

BRADLEY (O.S.)
-you know who Hector Magdalena is?

ME
(as cobwebs clear)
...yeah...Narco's Snitch.

BRADLEY (O.S.)
He's missing. His home was broken into at some point within the last hour.

ME
So send Robbery.

BRADLEY (O.C.)
The only thing taken was him. Wilshire Station is on-scene. Get over there right now.

ME
Why me?

BRADLEY
Call it penance.

ME
I thought that's what Morton Diskant was-

BRADLEY
-that makes *one* of us. 1284 South Tremaine. *
(edge to his voice)
This kind of timing makes for disasters, Lieutenant.

I hear the first split-second of Bradley smashing his phone down. Click my own cradle. Wipe my face. Dial another number.

ME
Junior. Meet me at 1284 South Tremaine. 20 minutes. *

EXT. 1284 SOUTH TREMAINE, MAGDALENA RESIDENCE - LATE NIGHT

Police abound. Mostly work-a-day Blues pounding coffee. They part as I approach: Dave "Enforcer" Klein half-legend here. A plain-clothes breaks through, aims right at me: DAN WILHITE.

ME (V.O.)
Captain Dan Wilhite, Head of the LAPD Narcotics Division. A Michigan Catholic poisoned by 25 years in this desert. Recently divorced despite seven kids with his Ex.

WILHITE
*Why are you here?*

ME
You smell like bourbon Wilhite-

WILHITE
-<u>fuck off. This is handled</u>. And pull your idiot partner out of there-

ME
*-Junior's already here-*

WILHITE
-Magdalena was my Snitch, <u>so it's *my* scene</u>.

-push past him, toward the house.

ME
Then get Bradley on the horn, so you can relay that order. I'm here on his word. <u>Now, what happened</u>?

WILHITE
(dragged out of him)
Guard dogs are dead. Magdalena's missing.

ME
And presumed what?

WILHITE
I could give a shit. I just want to this case to get a quick burial.

ME
I'll bet. Who made the call?

WILHITE
Some old broad heard an 'argument' and buzzed Wilshire Station. *

ME
Where's the family?

WILHITE
The wife and daughter were in Santa Barbara. Just got back.

ME
(check my Hamilton)
At 2 AM? *

WILHITE
The Wife said she got into a fight with her Parents, left ASAP.

ME
Why wasn't Hector with 'em?

WILHITE
What do you think they were fighting about? Santa Barbara Wasps don't fancy dope-pushing Wetbacks.

ME
What about the Son?

WILHITE
(sneering hatred)
Tommy. Make him your #1 suspect.

ME
Why's that?

WILHITE
He's got a mean streak. And he and Hector had been at each others throats for months. Have Tommy picked up. He likes to loaf at those nigger jazz joints in Watts.

ME
Alright, you better cut out before people start asking why the head of Narco is at a missing persons.

Wilhite gets close, still sneering:

WILHITE
Get a conviction. Grab Tommy and pin this thing fast or you'll have a whole division of disgraced cops at your front door.

ME
What are you talking about Wilhite?

WILHITE
You queered the Fed's Fight Probe by killing that boxer and they *already* had a hard-on for the LAPD- Bradley sent you down here as damaged goods...*think about it.* Everybody sees what's coming.
(beat, closer)
*Now close this quick.*

Wilhite bolts. I pause. Clarity finally dissolving the bloodshot: this is the disaster Bradley was talking about:

ME (V.O.)
The God-sized problems I triggered tossing Sanderline take shape: the LAPD's sanctioned dope-pusher vanishes -- that's pretty juicy spot to stick a new probe.

INT. MAGDALENA RESIDENCE - MOMENTS LATER

All money, no taste. In the foyer: a Wilshire Station six-pack interviews the old BIDDIE in a threadbare bathrobe. Dyed orange hair and a burnt-butter grin. Leans-lunges as she relays her story. I zoom in to catch the performance.

BIDDIE
(mid-sentence)
*-shifty...colored...y'know Negros are planning an invasion! After our white women and our water supply-*

OFFICER
-where was this Peeper you saw?

BIDDIE
*Bushes. Spyin' on Lucille. Seen him there before! He's a black saboteur looking for fertile white wombs. Wanna breed a mulatto master race-*

-cut into the crazy:

ME
Officer.

The Six-Pack crosses to confer.

ME (CONT'D)
Besides bat-shit insanity, is there anything else about her that rings true?

OFFICER
Heard an argument, loud, maybe a minute or two, then silence.

ME
What's this 'Peeper' riff she's on?

OFFICER
She saw someone in the bushes earlier. She's reported that kind of thing a dozen other times. She's also reported flying saucers, so...

ME
See if any of the other Neighbors can verify this 'Peeper' thing. *

Roam. A hallway. Junior the grim-faced professional, He's got that damn steno out, scribbling like he's on a deadline.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
No one touch a thing 'til I say.

He's hovering over a lake of blood, drag marks originating in that lake lead out to the garage. Junior sees me. See him startle, then jut his tough-guy chin on reflex:

JUNIOR STEMMONS (CONT'D)
Dave-

ME
-*Lieutenant Klein*. I said '*meet me in twenty minutes*' not '*go in without me*.'

JUNIOR STEMMONS
All I've been doing-

ME
(hard/harsh/low)
-is stepping on dicks. You don't know the history, the players or the play.

Pull Junior aside, impart the following *tightly*:

ME (CONT'D)
The Department gave Magdalena a monopoly on the LA dope trade decades ago- *

JUNIOR STEMMONS
-*what Department?*

ME
Us Pollyanna -- *LAPD*. We bullet-proofed him in exchange for 60% of his profit and a promise he only deal drugs in Darktown and East LA- *

JUNIOR STEMMONS
-Black and Mexican-

ME
-*give the man a prize*. He'd also rat his competition and kill the ones we couldn't convict.
Now keep your mouth shut and <u>stay on my hip</u>.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Fine.

I want to bounce his head off the wall. I continue my tour instead. Follow the blood-trail out into the garage where it ends in another smaller lake of blood.

JUNIOR STEMMONS (CONT'D)
Loaded him into a car-

ME
-are all the Magdalena vehicles accounted for?

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Except for the Son's: *Tommy*.

Continue the tour. Kitchen. Two Dobermans, shot dead. Feature matching bullet wounds right between their eyes -- yell to the Officer with the Biddie:

ME
OFFICER.

As he pokes his head around the corner:

ME (CONT'D)
The old lady hear dogs barking? Gunshots?

OFFICER
No, I asked. Just the yelling.

Examine the wounds closer. Catch myself petting the deceased pooches. To Junior:

ME
She didn't hear barking...so they were either lousy guard dogs...<u>or they knew the Killer</u>.
(point to the wounds)
You can't hit something this clean unless you're point blank.
(MORE)

ME (cont'd)
He could've been petting them when he fired: look at the burn pattern- *
(point)
Like when you shoot something with a silencer.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
How do you know that?

ME
(stare so he gets it)
I've shot things with silencers... And the old lady didn't hear any * gunshots.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
You make a family member for it? Tommy?

ME
Maybe... *

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Do you want to issue an APB?

ME
I want to talk to Bradley first. Where are the Mother and Daughter? *

INT. FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Feature this old Matriarch hanging by the thinnest thread: * MADGE MAGDALENA, fifty-plus, dyed blonde bouffant pulled at and picked. Sad clown tears smearing too much mascara. She pitches a boo-hoo in between belts of wine to a bored stiff Wilshire Station six-pack.

LUCILLE MAGDALENA, 20's: Daughter. Big bedroom eyes. A top two sizes too tight. Pops a palm of pills. Doesn't look too shattered about Daddy's demise. I make eye contact. <u>I catch bruises on her arms</u>. *She sees me see*, tries to cover * nonchalant. The wall phone rings. Grab without asking. *

ME
It's Klein.

BRADLEY (O.S.)
<u>Update</u>.

ME
Hector's gone. Blood that may or may not be his leads out to the * garage.
(MORE)

ME (cont'd)
Two guard dogs shot dead but no other signs of a struggle. The house is intact.

BRADLEY
Family?

ME
Wife and Daughter are here.

BRADLEY
Describe their state.

ME
Mother Madge aggrieved. *
(aim my gaze at Lucille)
Daughter Lucille...indifferent. The * son is persona non grata and a strong early suspect.

BRADLEY
Alright, kick everyone out. Including all police personnel.

ME
*How's that?*

BRADLEY
Don't question me. Is your partner on hand?

ME
Yeah... *

BRADLEY
Have him bag and seal <u>everything</u> and bring it to Wilshire Station. Find Tommy Magdalena <u>post-haste</u> and take him into custody. No APB's, nothing to alert Noonan and the FBI to this situation.

ME
You want me to-

BRADLEY
-no more information over an open * line. I'll be at the Bethune event later on today. Find me there.

Click. Second time he's hung up on me in an hour. Pull Junior to me just as he's going through a stack of mail:

ME
I'm giving you on-scene command. *
Bradley wants everyone removed from
the premises and the entire house
bagged for evidence and brought to
Wilshire Station.
(more of a dare)
Can you handle this?

Big brown-nose nods from an aim-to-please Junior.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
*Entirely*. Where are you going?

ME
To find Tommy Magdalena.

INT. CAR - EARLY MORNING

Rolling up Hollywood to Highland.

KLEIN (V.O.)
Big yawns. Half haze from no sleep.
Buzz dispatch. A message from Pete.
*'Reminder: Hughes aircraft, 7 PM.* *

Glance street-side: Sanderline smiling blood in a wind blown bathrobe. Blink and he's gone, replaced by a kid hawking the Times.

Pull-over. Toss the kid a coin. Front page: **LEADING CANDIDATE BOWS FROM CITY COUNCIL RACE,** next to a picture of Diskant. Pissed for reasons I won't name. Back to the Car. A Black Buick passes, slower than the rest of traffic, act like I'm oblivious. It turns. I slide in, start my Pontiac.

ME (V.O.)
Another Black Buick. Call it a Fed *
Tail. Noonan already up my ass. *
(beat)
Let's see if they got guts enough
to keep following me South.

EXT. DARKTOWN - DAWN

Cruising the Crenshaw district, up through Central Ave.

ME (V.O.)
Dispatch gave me Tommy's make and
model: A '32 Ford Deuce with a bent
eight. Hot-rodder Tommy liked to
goose the cops into giving chase.

Check my mirrors. That Black Buick hangs way back. Cruise past jazz clubs: The Savoy, Joe Morris's Plantation, Shepp's Playhouse, the Down Beat...no sign of a Ford Deuce. Pull up to the Club Alabam. Valets stare: a white man in Watts at this hour can only be Cop. Park. *

Half-a-block back: buzzcuts in that black Buick.

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Noonan tail confirmed: Fed faces glow like Martians this far down Crenshaw. *

Smile big, give 'em a thumbs-up.

INT. CLUB ALABAM - DAWN

Barely sober patrons sport Cop-hate stares, some on reflex, some because of Sanderline Johnson. Doorman escort the bewildered, strong-arm the belligerent. Almost 6 AM and the club is still half full. * * * *

Press on, scan the stage: A Bebop trio toils over an Erroll Garner tune as a beautiful black girl sings in a satin soft lilt. This whispering falsetto that makes your hair stand on end. I stop and listen. Get my only smile of the day from her. Smile back because her voice reminds me to. *

Hear beer bottles rattle behind and break. Turn. Squeeze that smile into a sneer, stare down this massive BARTENDER. *

ME
(flop badge on bar)
Get Lester and get me a scotch straight. * *

The bartender glowers, grabs a bottle, pours, hands the size of catcher's mitts. He slides the glass. I sip. * *

BARTENDER
Sanderline Johnson was my second cousin, Peckerwood. I wouldn't drink that with my gun hand. * *

He vanishes behind a stained curtain. Feel those voodoo stares from behind...*and I switch the scotch glass to my left hand as nonchalant as possible*. Bartender reappears, motions me back. I follow. Backstage. I see a figure stretched prone, ice-pack pressed to his face, rolled reefer between his lips. * *

ME (V.O.)
Lester Lake. One-time velvet voiced crooner.
(MORE)

ME (V.O.) (cont'd)
But a dabble in the dope trade cost him a set of slashed vocal cords at the hands of none other than Hector Magdalena. *

Only as I get closer do I see the badly swollen black eye. He looks up at me. A voice like sand-paper left out in the sun: *

LESTER LAKE
Lieutenant Dave Klein. Slayer of Sanderline Johnson...y'got stones showing up this far South. *

ME
What happened to your face?

LESTER LAKE
(beat)
Tommy Mag wanted to make sure I understood something he was saying.

ME
Where is he?

LESTER LAKE
Left an hour ago. Emptied my safe.

ME
Shit. He's wise.

LESTER LAKE
To what? You looking for him?

Lester hands me the reefer, take it, toke geeky, belch smoke.

ME
(at the reefer)
Just never got this...

Lester takes it back, draws deep.

LESTER LAKE
Too white to appreciate good grass. *

Now watch Lester's attitude improve toot sweet:

ME
Hector Magdalena is missing, *presumed dead*. Tommy is our sole suspect.

He spurts smoke, sits up like a shot, beams. *

LESTER LAKE
Muthafucker -- there is a God.
If only I'd known this an hour ago.

ME
Heartbreaker, huh? You let him gig
here last night?

LESTER LAKE
I don't let him, he just does.
Nails on a chalkboard too. He
rushed the stage last week when we
had Charlie Mingus drop in for a
set. Mingus looked at this half-Mex *
greaser kid trying to play 'Round *
Midnight,' said that fool couldn't *
find them keys with a flashlight.'

ME
Tommy's playing days are over.

LESTER LAKE
Hallelujah.

ME
What time did he show up?

LESTER LAKE
Around four. Him and these Pachucos *
poppin' switchblades like punks.
(mops his brow of blood)
The only thing that was keepin' him *
'untouched' was Hector... *
(beat, hopeful-prayer)
*Is he really dead?* *

ME
There's blood all over his house,
seems to belong to him. There's
just no body. Not yet.

LESTER LAKE
(a toke, a thought)
I don't feature Tommy for it. *

ME
(my head kinks a bit) *
How's that? How many times has he *
been in here, busted you up?

LESTER LAKE
Yeah, but he ain't got the salt *
to truly take a Man's life. *
(MORE)

LESTER LAKE (cont'd)
Especially not Hector's...he was scared of him.

ME
Why?

LESTER LAKE
'Cuz Hector been whippin' Tommy's ass from the time he could talk.

ME
What about the Wife? Beat her too?

LESTER LAKE
We used to call that old bitch 'the Burglar'...eyes were so black, it looked like she had a mask on.

ME
And the daughter? Lucille?

Lester can't quip that one as quick. Tokes. Shaking his head.

LESTER LAKE
Things up off the street. Rumors.

ME
Like?

LESTER LAKE
Hector had turned her out. Using her the way the Romans used to use their daughters when they did business: Some pussy to sweeten the pot. Rumor was she got picked up in this trick sweep few weeks back.

ME
Hector was whoring her?

LESTER LAKE
Hector was an evil Muthafucker.

...Lester tilts his neck back, points to a long keloid scar that stretches across his throat...

LESTER LAKE (CONT'D)
...born with ruthless bones.
(sitting up)
And if he really is dead and gone, this game 'bout to explode.

ME
What game?

LESTER LAKE
Drugs. Especially here in South Central. Hector ran it uncontested. Lotta cats gonna rush in now, try to plant a flag. *

ME
Tommy can't hold the throne? *

LESTER LAKE
Tommy couldn't hold his pecker without Hector's help *and he knows that.* He's gonna bury himself like a tick. Good luck turning him up, he took six or seven grand out the safe tonight. * * * * *

ME
Eyes and ears for me Lester. He turns up, you get in touch.

LESTER LAKE
If I don't kill him first. * *

EXT. UNION STATION BALLROOM - DAY

Bethune Campaign Fundraiser turned Victory Bash. Big smiles beam above sunburned double-chins. Bethune the nucleus of a Press circle-jerk. I weave around, lack of sleep and a miserably wrinkled suit make me look like something dug up.

REPORTER #1
Councilman Bethune, was Mr. Diskant dropping out the only way you could have won this race?

TOM BETHUNE
Not at all. My message of civic advancement manifested in that beautiful blue baseball team was starting to hit home.

Bethune's beam twitches when he sees me weaving past. Give him a quick nod, get nothing back: he can't be seen this close to the turd in the punch bowl. Moving by:

REPORTER #3
Anything you'd like to say to future constituents?

TOM BETHUNE
I like my Dodger Dogs with mustard and relish!

Bradley at one of the front tables confabbing with DA Gas Chamber Bob Gallaudet. As I aim their way, one of my favorite men aims at me, wearing this Great White grin: FRITZ KOENIG.

ME (V.O.)
Fritz Koenig. German born. Former US Spymaster, current Head of the LAPD's Intelligence Division. He and Bradley in the middle of their own Cold War -- each fighting to be the second most important member of the LAPD behind Chief Parker.

KOENIG
These functions aren't normally open to Jews.

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

KOENIG
That accent allowed me to execute many a Nazi.

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

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

ME
He jumped Fritz.

Koenig flashes that grin again.

KOENIG
I'm sure he did. And where is your young partner this day?

ME
Working his first big job.

KOENIG
Might the job involve the LAPD's most important missing Wetback, Hector Magdalena?

My eyes narrow but stay smiling:

ME
It does.

Koenig nods, casts his gaze out over the crowd.

KOENIG
I've known Stemmons since the academy. He was a top pupil. A peculiar little pain in the ass, but very good with details.

ME
Kid might have some climb in him.
(look back at Bradley)
Reminds me of another pain in the ass.

Koenig roars this big frightening laugh of his.

KOENIG
I'm puzzled as to why the Bradley would assign you to the Magdalena case when you're neither Homicide nor Robbery...

ME
There's no body, and nothing was taken except Hector.

KOENIG
He does know how to delegate doesn't he...and also I'm sure that poor Negro's nosedive has put you squarely in his debt.

ME
Something like that.

KOENIG
Keep me abreast will you? Chief Parker is understandably nervous. Situations like these tend to yield grief...and we've the FBI poking around our garden patch.

ME
My ass first Fritz, yours second.

Koenig's big laugh again. Moving toward Bradley now. Then flashbulbs pop-blind. Panic: snapping pix of me? Relief: not me. Hollywood types: this Buff McMan Meat-type and **Her**. I go slack inches from the Press that yesterday wanted to roll in my guts...but now they're just as entranced with her as I am.

She and McMan Meat continue past as I stare, she answers his questions for him. I think her eyes see mine. Then I realize where I'm standing. Bradley waiting. Focused on me and not her -- God-damned Eunuch. I step over, speak without preface:

ME (CONT'D)
Tommy Magdalena has gone to ground and he's got a war chest to keep him there. The only way we take him quickly is to issue a citywide APB-

BRADLEY
-no. We can't risk that. Do you make him for the murderer? *

ME
Yeah. Hector's disappearance is *definitely* an inside job. That whole family feels hinky. The daughter was all bruises and no tears and Hector's hop-head wife looks part punching bag. *

BRADLEY
Do you suspect either of the women? *

ME
According to Wilhite, they were in Santa Barbara at the time.

BRADLEY
Verify that. Where is your partner?

ME
Vouching in evidence at Wilshire Station.

BRADLEY
Keep him on that. He had excellent ratings as an evidence teacher and I trust him more than you. *
(beat)
*Find Tommy Magdalena*. Focus everything on that effort & I want him apprehended Klein, not killed.

ME
What about Hector? Still missing.

BRADLEY
And most likely dead. Find the Son. Stakeout the residence. *
(MORE)

BRADLEY (cont'd)
Put tails on both the mother and daughter -- I want this investigation working quietly, and around the clock.

ME *
And what do we do if Hector turns * up? *

BRADLEY *
If he's alive, bring him to me. If he's dead, have him John Doe'd at * the morgue until Noonan can be * drawn off and this FBI situation * sorted out. *

ME
Wilhite. He was operating Hector-

BRADLEY
-<u>don't worry about Dan Wilhite</u>. You deal directly with me. Now go out the back. I don't want the press recognizing you.

Swallow my sneer. Push through the service doors. Hard. Headed back toward the kitchen, an exit sign. I pass an alcove: **<u>Her</u>**. Alone. Smoke break. Beauty you almost never get to examine up close. I stop, stammer, she gives me a once-over, thinks I'm a Reporter...

ME
You got a light?

WOMAN
(searches my empty hands)
You got a cigarette?

I fumble for a Chesterfield. She pulls a Zippo slow.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
If you snap a picture of me, I get to set you on fire. Fair?

I smile too wide -- fuck. I kill it, try to gather up the bits of 'cool' that shattered with the sophomore smile.

ME
It didn't look like you were all that upset with the attention.

WOMAN
Good thing you're not a cop.

ME
(beat)
How's that?

WOMAN
Your power of observation leaves lots to be desired.

Lights my cigarette. I hold it in my mouth to hide shaking hands.

ME
Thank you.

WOMAN
Don't thank me: these things are bad for you.

ME
You believe everything you read?

Stubs her cigarette.

WOMAN
You believe *anything* you read?

She starts walking back the way I came.

ME
(hail-mary)
Do you eat Dinner?

WOMAN
No.

I can't stop watching her, even after she pushes back through the double doors, re-entering the fray head-first. I step after her. A reporter finally makes me. Random catcalls of '*Klein!* '*Hey, Enforcer!*' Shutterbugs beeline my way, firing flashbulbs from the hip. Close the door quick and bolt.

ME (V.O.)
Make a note: steal Bethune's guest-list, then go door-to-door until you find her again.

INT. WILSHIRE STATION - DAY

Stroll. Sidelong stares on the periphery. Muted whispers from desk cops. Feature this rookie chump clear a path as I pass. Down a flight of stairs to the evidence lockers.

Junior writes seizure abstracts, sealing materials in green-banded evidence bags. A pile stacked neatly on the table next to him. That red steno pad in full view.

ME
This everything from the house?

A beat. He makes me wait as he finishes writing.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Everything worthwhile.

ME
What did you tell the Watch Commander upstairs?

JUNIOR STEMMONS
(schoolboy proud)
That this was a random drug seizure. I'm not using names and I'm number coding everything. A load of interesting stuff too.
(points to each stack)
I got unregistered fire-arms, more dope than I've ever seen, and some mail from business associates that seem hinky. We should follow up-
(grabs an envelope)
-here, this one, '*Hurwitz Holdings' Hector* had some real estate dealings-

ME
-bag it until Bradley orders us otherwise.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
(like I'm speaking Greek)
*How do you solve a case when the evidence is in bags?*

ME
You don't. Our job is to find Tommy.
(point to the red steno)
And why is that out?

JUNIOR STEMMONS
(like he's caught)
I'm making notes separate from-
(gear change off my glare)
*-I thought we were investigating Magdalena's disappearance-*

ME
-Don't write shit down. What do you need Kid? A little bouncing ball, bottom of the screen?
(brace him harder)
Magdalena is twenty years dirty with this Department...do you think a *word* of that exists on paper?

JUNIOR STEMMONS
...No.

ME
And there's reasons. Respect them.

Junior tucks the steno away, chastened.

ME (CONT'D)
Now we need surveillance set up on the house and revolving tails on both Madge and Lucille Magdalena. Their alibi is they were in Santa Barbara when Hector vanished. Find out if that's real. The tails and the stakeout start tonight.
(beat)
Can you manage this?

Junior jacks his chin just high enough to save face, tucks that steno away, this X-Ray stare.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Sure, Lieutenant.

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - DAY

Rolling. Crenshaw south. Darktown.

ME (V.O.)
Police blotter gets me bupkis. Buzz dispatch. Looking for license hits on that '32 Ford Deuce. Nothing. Zoom Darktown again. Zilch. Tommy dug in deep.

Startle, check my watch: 7:17 pm.

ME
Shit.

INT. HUGHES AIRCRAFT HANGAR - EVENING *

Cruise in, crossing the hangar to Pete.

ME (V.O.)
Howard Hughes. Billionaire germ freak. Boob man. Pete's prime benefactor. Nobody had seen him in years. Now he only communicated through a small standing army of lapdog lawyers he kept on staff.

A small, effete blonde man: GEOFFREY MILTEER extends his tiny hand, plastic-cordial, rubbed raw from waiting... *

MILTEER
Gregory Milteer. Attorney-at-Law. A pleasure Lt. Klein.

ME
Dave. Sorry I'm late. *

MILTEER
Indeed.
(motions to sit)
Please.

We sit at a huge drafting table. I shoot a sidelong to Pete.

MILTEER (CONT'D)
Thanks for your time on a Sunday.

ME
(a wink for Pete)
Where's Mr. Hughes?

MILTEER
Unavailable. Unfortunately. But I've been given full authority to-

ME
-I'm not contagious...if that's what he's worried about.

Pete hate scowls me: *have your fun, Asshole...*

MILTEER
I don't find that the least bit humorous Lt. Klein.

ME
Yes you do. What's your pitch Mr. * Milteer?

Milteer looks at Pete. Pete half-shrugs. Back to me now:

MILTEER
An '*Actress*' named Glenda Bledsoe signed a Service Contract that she's now willfully violating by acting in a Z-grade horror picture presently '*shooting*' in Griffith Park. Despite entreaties for her to cease participation in this absurdity, she continues to revel in her outlaw status with us. Thus we would like her destroyed.

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

MILTEER
Mr. Bondurant says you're one of the smarter people he knows-

ME
-dubious honor if you knew the other people Pete knows.
(beat)
So you want to catch her in violation of her Service Contract? Something like that?

MILTEER
Exactly. The morality clause in particular as the damage to her reputation would be most devastating: Nymphomaniac, Criminal, Communist...anything along these lines. Once you visit the set of her '*Attack of the Atomic Vampires*,' you'll see the void that is her character. We haven't a photograph handy, but she's playing the lead female role. *

ME
I'm happy to help. But my price is $10,000. Not 5.

Pete laughs out loud. Milteer goes frigid.

MILTEER
$10,000 should buy more than help.

ME
For 10 give it any name you want. I'm a salaried employee of LAPD, that means I'll have to find time off hours to do this. *

A long, cold moment drags... *

MILTEER
Agreed. Start tonight. Someone's been stealing groceries from our talent domiciles. There's no proof that it's her, but it's her. Peter will provide you addresses. *

ME
(faux fey)
Thank you Peter.

MILTEER
We look forward to your updates.

INT. PAY PHONE ON SEPULVEDA - LATE AFTERNOON

Dialing the Station:

ME
Sergeant, pass a message to Stemmons: I want him to meet me at the one-thousand block of South Tremaine tonight at 11 and at some point between now and then, I'll need him to do a preliminary work-up on a woman named Glenda Bledsoe.
(beat, check spelling)
B-L-E-D-S-O-E. Thanks.

I hang up, step out, yawn.

EXT. ATOMIC VAMPIRE SET - DUSK

Two-fisting coffees. On top of a hill overlooking the '*Atomic Vampires*' shoot. Pure schlock. The spaceship: a totaled Cadillac replete with home-made canopy and cardboard extensions on the fins. Crew: homeless winos. Extras: homeless drug-fiends. Scan the assembled 'talent'...and see:

HER. My black and white picture. The Beauty at the fight. The starlet I threw a Hail Mary dinner pass to at Bethune's victory party: GLENDA BLEDSOE. Emerging from a small trailer.

ME (V.O.)
Twice in a day doesn't happen. Not in a city like LA. Not like this.
(beat)
This is fate. This is Cupid firing his whole fucking quiver. Move. Make sure she's real.

HER laughing. Melodic. I hike down through the bramble.

EXT. ATOMIC VAMPIRE SET - DUSK

Walk past a pair of beat Airstream Clippers. Watch her propping up this silver-haired junkie. She grabs a sound blanket, drapes him, hands him her coffee before siting down next to another Woman and rehearsing.

I eyeball the rest of the 'set.' Winos in werewolf masks and capes, holding wooden ray-guns spray-painted silver: One pisses, bottle in one hand, cigarette/dick in the other.

The "Director" is a fey manic, fingering a snuff-box.

DIRECTOR
This is the big Armada landing, so I need everybody's energy *up, up up!* Where's my Alien Commander?

The Pissing WEREWOLF careens back to set, pulling at his zipper, mask askew, covering his eyes.

WEREWOLF
RIGHT HERE GOD DAMN IT.

MICKEY COHEN, 62, former mob boss. He boils eggs on a hot-plate and slings hash to extras lining plywood picnic tables.

ME (V.O.)
Mickey Cohen: one-time LA crime kingpin and West Coast Mob heavy who now trawls for loose change.

Winos vibe LAPD, make a hole as I approach:

ME (CONT'D)
*Cecil B. Demoted.*

MICKEY COHEN
Where Klein goes tsuris follows. This is what I hate about being down, lip from the likes of you.

ME
If this is ‘down’ I never want to see ‘out.’ How the mighty have fallen.

MICKEY COHEN
(gives it right back)
Which one of us are you talking about Klein? Word is the Federal Bureau is all hot and bothered with you Gonif. Hey, I hear J. Edgar schtups his personal assistant and makes him wear ladies hose.

ME
What else are you hearing?

MICKEY COHEN
That this Welles Noonan character has developed quite a crush. That you might want to consider relocating to Dogdick, Delaware.

ME
Been a marked man for years Mick.

MICKEY COHEN
But the bullseye on your back’s never been quite so big...if you need a new line of work, I got this faygele leading man needs replacing-

-follow Mickey’s gaze over to ROCK ROCKWELL. Buff McMan Meat- * the guy with Glenda at the Bethune party. He’s primping with * other boys decked in surplus SS uniforms, checking the side * mirror of one of the ‘Alien craft’ before his big close-up. *

MICKEY COHEN
His agent told me he could play straight.

ME *
His agent lied. *

MICKEY COHEN *
You interested? *

ME
No. But I am interested in your * leading lady. Bradley sent me. Saw * her at the Bethune-

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

ME
You want Chief Bradley angry?

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

ME
And now the only thing you're putting on sticks are corn dogs. What's her name, Mick?

MICKEY COHEN
Glenda.

ME
(still looking for HER)
Why was she there? *

MICKEY COHEN
Low-budget strategy: I send Glenda and Rock to any event where there's cameras -- Glenda gets guest-a'-honor treatment *everywhere* with that shape a' her's...

ME
What she drive?

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - NIGHT

Following the tail-lights of a 56 Corvette. Top-down, whipping Blond hair split-second visible under passing street lights. Glenda pulls into what I guess is her place: tiny-tidy Glendale flat. I roll past: no eye contact.

Around the block. Park on the next street over. Waiting until I think of what comes next...get out now...

EXT. GLENDALE - NEXT MOMENT

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

EXT. GLENDA'S BACKYARD - NEXT MOMENT

-creep to a window: curtains pulled. Creep to another: there she is. Watch her: elegant fingers emanate from hands only now beginning to betray age. Watch her shake her sandals off. Arranging three coffee cups on a tray: company coming.

On cue: another car. A '53 Cadillac: the Director and Rock Rockwell. I crane my neck to get as much of her as I can. She leaves the tray, cups steaming. Muffled greetings. Check the window, open. Slide it up gentle.

INT. TINY LIVING ROOM - SAME MOMENT

Glenda clearing seats.

GLENDA BLEDSOE
Coffee's in the kitchen. Let's go over this quick because I'm beat.

DIRECTOR
We're set on a place where we can stash you and Rock. It's in Topanga Canyon, two weeks-

ROCKWELL
(petulant)
-two weeks? My body'll fall apart-

GLENDA BLEDSOE
-think of it as 14 days of push-ups-
(to the Director)
Are you sure about this Sid? Seems shaky. Was this Mickey's idea?

DIRECTOR
And I think it's brilliant! Inspired! The two leads of Mickey Cohen's magnum opus get kidnapped! The press'll eat it up! They'll write about 'Gangster Mickey,' the glory days. Couple a' headlines like that and interest in Atomic Vampires will go through the roof!
(to Glenda)
Who's gonna grab you?

GLENDA BLEDSOE
A charmer I knew in another life...George Ainge.

Pat myself down for a pen, scribble on my hand: **"A-I-N-G-E"**

SID FRIZELL
Is he okay with making it look real-

ROCKWELL
-he can't hit me in the face! *
That's a deal-breaker!

GLENDA BLEDSOE
He'll be thrilled to knock me around. Plus he's holding something of mine, so we can kill two birds. He'll grab us Tuesday in front of the Pacific Dining Car. *

ROCKWELL
What about Hughes?

GLENDA BLEDSOE
What about him? That angle can only help us.

SID FRIZELL
I'm dying to know...was he the Spruce Goose between the sheets?

EXT. GLENDA'S BACKYARD - SAME MOMENT

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

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

Belly laughter from inside.

ME (V.O.)
The real howler: <u>fake kidnappings always bomb</u>.

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - NIGHT

Parked. Tepid pulls off the stolen mug. Done. Toss it to the * passenger side: lands on a bed of crumpled Styrofoam. Look up: the Magdalena residence looms a few doors down. Glance at the passenger seat: an envelope lined with fifty $100 bills. The name: *BLEDSOE* written across the front. Pick it up.

ME (V.O.)
Thinking I could tip Milteer off to the kidnap plot and pick up the other half of my payment...
(MORE)

ME (V.O.) (cont'd)
(stare at that money)
Thinking I should just give the first half back now...'cuz I know right now I'll never hurt her.

Toss the envelope into the glove-box, slam it shut. Scan. Two heads in one of the unmarked patrol cars I ordered. Cursory nods as they pass. Tail-lights fade. Dead quiet save my low Jazz. Fighting my drift. Check my Hamilton. *10:00.* Grimace. *

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
No sense of time. Exhaustion steals it. A full hour earlier than I told * Junior to meet me. I need sleep. *

Yawn. Look up...Lucille Magdalena at her window. Sudden. * Startling: no blouse, pig-tails, big silver-dollar nipples touch/steam glass. Pushes the curtains back even further. Adrenaline cuts through the lactic acid: wide awake now.

I see her eyes aren't sex-placid or rolled back -- they're scanning -- hopeful to glimpse someone outside looking back. *

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D) *
This routine had been done before. That old broad babbling about a Peeper. The only other link to Hector Magdalena's disappearance. *

She holds her scan for a blink, a different smile, eyes sex-placid now, rolled-back now -- she just saw what she was looking for: hidden eyes staring back at her. I look to where I saw her gaze kink...unholster my .45. Get out quiet.

EXT. 1284 SOUTH TREMAINE, NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Cold for LA. Walking/scanning, .45 flush against my leg. Sticking to shadows. Cross the street: two homes down. Quiet steps. Closer: *a snubbed cigarette smoulders in the gutter...*

Glance back up at the window, Lucille gone -- a forearm shiver flashes from nowhere blunts/blasts the back of my head. Nose-first into asphalt. Too angry to black out. Spit * blood and scream at the same time so it sounds like drowning:

ME
***STOP-***

Still unsure what hit me. Pick-up my gun, clear my nose of gouting blood, stand, weave: a figure in black, sprinting away: **PEEPER**. Wipe away impact-tears, aim, realize my trigger * finger is dislocated -- bent back ugly. Tuck the gun use my * left hand to pop it back in -- deep growl -- re-aim:

POP-POP-POP. The Peeper pitches. Visible in the streetlight: a red puff off his right shoulder. Headlights at end of the block, behind me, come to life now- Baritone of a big V-8. * Peeper fighting for balance, keeps running.

I sprint heedless, round the corner: follow a blood-trail, panting, bleeding my own trail. Lift my eyes to see the Peeper shoulder through a fence, vanish into a backyard. Neighborhood mutts yelp a chorus. I cross the street-

-those headlights swerve hard in front of me: **Black Buick**. I * look down in time to watch my knee detonate a quarter-panel. I bounce off like someone yanked a leash. Crumble-yell. Hands pick me up. I fight back before I even see at whom I'm swinging: square-jawed types, eyes hidden by Bureau derbies. *

Welles Noonan gets out of the passenger-side of the Buick. Punches me as hard as he can without provocation: nothing to write home about. My gun clatters to the ground.

WELLES NOONAN
That's for Sanderline Johnson.

ME
(nod at the Peeper trail)
ARE YOU BLIND-

WELLES NOONAN
-what were you firing at?

ME
The only lead on Magdalena -- we're after the same guy you idiot!

WELLES NOONAN
(to one of the goons)
-write that name down: 'Magda-LEE-na' or 'Magda-LAY-na.'
(back to me)
No, we were after you. But thanks for the name.

Sag under the weight of my own insomnia-fed stupidity. *

ME (V.O.)
Assumed the Feds were smart.
Assumed they were ready to stick a new probe into the LAPD's deal with Hector, like Bradley warned, like everyone feared. *But they had no* * *clue and I just handed them the whole God damn thing.*
(beat)
Like I said: I need sleep...

Raise my face now, eyes intent, chin out.

ME (CONT'D)
First punch you ever thrown Noonan? Your Mom have to teach you how because Dad was the same no-chin, Connecticut Faggot you are?

Noonan stops, turns back to me: blazing.

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I think I hit the Noonan family dynamic, dead-on.

He winds up an overhand right: a big-bright flash, then darkness that feels like lying down on a sunlit lawn. *

FLUTTERING BLACK:

WELLES NOONAN (O.C.)
Drop him.

DERBY #1 (O.C.)
You don't want to take him in?

WELLES NOONAN (O.C.)
I only want to bring him in when I know he'll never leave.

BLACK dissolves to something LIGHTER, then:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - TIME UNKNOWN

Horizontal. Someone pushed a table and two chairs to one side: space for the cot I'm on. Look up. Junior looking down: 'Concerned' isn't strong enough. In his undershirt. He slips the red steno pad into his back pocket. Sit up. A balled dress shirt in my hand, blood sopped.

Gaze at my Hamilton, face cracked, '*5:16am*'-- Fritz Koenig walks in, silver pitcher in hand. I gape up, still punchy.

ME
Coffee?

KOENIG
Ice. Bradley's on his way down.

Toss the dress shirt to the floor.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
That's mine...you needed some mopping up. *

ME
Who found me?

JUNIOR STEMMONS
I did. I got there at eleven like you said, right as two black & white's pulled up: you were out cold in a gutter 'round the block.
(this blithe little grin)
Did Noonan knock you out?

ME
He hit me with his car first.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
(a nod to Koenig)
The Captain was the only one here at this hour...

Look from Junior and Koenig to the window behind him -- Bradley steam-rolling our way. To Koenig, *conspiratorial*:

KLEIN
If I need your help later on, can I count on it?

KOENIG
Of course you can.

Take the pitcher from him, drop my head, douse myself, the cold cuts cobwebs. Bradley walks in, imperious. Koenig moves past -- ice forms between the two.

KOENIG (CONT'D)
Chief.

BRADLEY
What are you doing here?

KOENIG
The Lieutenant was thirsty.

Koenig closes the door. I refuse to look up at Bradley.

BRADLEY
Progress on Magdalena.

I point to Junior -- happy to play teacher's pet:

JUNIOR STEMMONS
No fingerprints. Clean crime scene. Canvassed the neighborhood. A senile neighbor did report a possible Peeper-

-rubbing the back of my head where the Peeper bashed me-

ME
-confirmed Peeper.

Bradley turns to me:

BRADLEY
Is that who knocked you out?

ME
Noonan knocked me out.

BRADLEY
(beat)
He's having you tailed then...

ME
And he knows the Magdalena name and that I was chasing a suspect -- the Peeper Lucille strips for.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
*She knows someone watches?*

ME
And who he is. She has to.
(back to Bradley)
I want access to her juvie sheet or whatever arrest records exist. Rumor was Hector whored her out to dealers he did business with.

BRADLEY
That's immaterial.

ME
(as my teeth grit)
*It is if you're eliminating her as a suspect-*

BRADLEY
-did you confirm their alibi?

Point to the ever-studious Junior.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
I spoke with a Mr. and Mrs. Preston Mott of Santa Barbara, the parents of Madge Magdalena nee Mott and they've confirmed their visit and also corroborated the argument that resulted in them leaving early.

BRADLEY
(back to me now)
One alteration to my previous orders-

ME
-<u>previous orders being what</u>? Assign the Cop Noonan blames for his dead boxing probe to the case that's becoming his new crusade?

Bradley conjures the Roman visage...then slowly opens the door, staring holes in me.

BRADLEY
Step out Stemmons.

Junior balks, looks my way: tries to mimic my sneer. I stand and shove him toward the door. His look back at me: <u>*Judas*</u>. Bradley closes the door behind him.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)
No direct approach on the mother or the daughter.

ME
<u>No</u>. Madge was a battered wife and Lucille was a suborned whore. If that's not motive, *what is?* You want answers then we brace those two <u>hard</u>.

BRADLEY
If you do so <u>directly</u>, if they're formally questioned then Noonan may find out and go after them with Federal warrants.

ME
Noonan will figure out who and what Hector was sooner or later.

BRADLEY
Yes he will, so we buy time, keep him busy-

ME
-until when?

BRADLEY
Until Tom Bethune votes on the floor of the city council in two days, ratifying the official start of construction on Dodger stadium-

ME
-this is bigger than a fucking ballpark! Hector Magdalena and Narco is the powder-keg, blows the whole Department to hell.

BRADLEY
Don't be dramatic, it looks weak. Right now, Noonan needs a pursuit, so I supply him with one-

ME
-me. You want me to draw him off-

BRADLEY
-you've *been* drawing him off. And the more he sees you the less he'll think of anything other than *getting* you. Now find Tommy and take him alive. *Do not let Noonan get to him.* As a potential major case witness against the LAPD, Tommy Magdalena isn't just a powder-keg, he's an atom bomb.

Bradley walks. Watch him disappear down the hall.

ME (V.O.)
Bradley has a bigger angle and I'm getting close to it...I just haven't hit home. *Yet.*

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

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

ME
Seltzer will take the blood out.

Junior bitchy, like some broad you stood up:

JUNIOR STEMMONS
I give you the shirt off my back *and you bash me!*

ME
When a Superior Officer tells you to leave the room, you leave the fucking room.

Junior balls the shirt, stuffs it in his desk drawer. Takes a deep breath.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
I made a file on the Bledsoe broad.
The one you asked about.

ME
Thanks. But forget it.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
I spent a whole *day* putting it
together and this skirt's got
skeletons.

Reminded, glance at my hand: **"A I N G E"** in smeared ink.
Junior rips open a file, blathers Bledsoe preliminaries:

JUNIOR STEMMONS (CONT'D)
Shoplifting in Bakersfield at 17.
Prostitution arrest at 21. Known
associate of a Kern County homicide
victim, this convicted pimp named
Dwight Gillette, probably *her* pimp.
Stabbed to death in his home,
weapon never recovered-

ME
Forget it. Burn it, s'not important
now.

Take the file from him, flip through; thorough, detailed.
Glenda priors scream back *instant conviction.*

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Why is it not important?

Plant the file in his chest as my answer.

ME
I need an address on a guy named
Ainge, George Ainge- *

JUNIOR STEMMONS
-what about Magdalena?

My temper turning threadbare.

ME
-after you get the Ainge address, *
get back to the Magda-

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

Snap-grit-grab him: buttons from his shirt pop, bounce.

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

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

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - MORNING

Driving, running parallels to avoid Fed tails. No Black Buicks...But a <u>Gray Packard</u> shifts behind me on a cadence. *

ME (V.O.)
Noonan replaced the Buick with a Packard and a better Shadow-Man. But I could still spot the tail. *

Run a red light at Rossmore, leave the Packard behind. *

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
This jet-engine urge to see **<u>her</u>**. Needing it like a junkie does. No logic. Just the push.

Driving past Glenda's house now. No Corvette. Driving past the Griffith Park 'Vampires' set: addicts/crew rolling up sleeping bags. No Corvette. Pull the address list Dandy handed me: <u>Talent Domiciles</u>. *

Pasadena. Howard's Fuck-Pad supreme: A tudor mansion with airplane-shaped hedges. A <u>Corvette</u> in the drive. Stop at the curb. Open shades. <u>Flashes of her</u>. Gathering something. Check my Hamilton, look up as: <u>KNOCK-KNOCK</u> on my window. Her face, inches-close. Bags of groceries in her hands and this wry little smile: <u>watch me kill Hughes's new Dick with kindness</u>. *

Roll the window down, stay blank-slate. She features my cuts/bruises. Her quiet, deep voice is like medicine:

GLENDA BLEDSOE
Better looking than the last guy Howard hired. Once you heal.
(she recognizes me)
Wait a minute. You were there, the other night, the Bethune Party... *

My heart jammed up into my throat. Push past it. *

ME
Yeah. *

GLENDA
Mickey told me this 'Bent Cop' everybody used to call-
(mocking, I love it:)
-'*The Enforcer*' was asking about me. Told me to be careful. So you're LAPD after all...

ME
In theory.

GLENDA BLEDSOE
You're going to arrest me for breaking and entering?

ME
Depends.
(nod to groceries)
Those Howard's?

GLENDA BLEDSOE
Everything's Howard's.

ME
Except you.

GLENDA BLEDSOE
That's why I left.

ME
You just shop here now?

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

ME
Attack of the Atomic Vampires...

GLENDA BLEDSOE
(smiles, no flinch)
We can't all be Audrey Hepburn. Plus it pays bills.

ME
Better than a billionaire does? Go make amends and finish out your service contract Ms. Bledsoe.

GLENDA BLEDSOE
Not even if there was just *one day* left on it.

ME
Why?

GLENDA BLEDSOE
I'm better than that.

ME
You're also better than a starring role in schlock horror flick that'll never see a screen, regardless if it's leading lady gets 'kidnapped' or not. *

Drop that coffee cup from the other night into her bag. She's beat, but bluffs by.

GLENDA BLEDSOE
This isn't the first time you've spied on me.

ME
Nor the second.

GLENDA BLEDSOE
(beat)
Well you've got me all giftwrapped, *Enforcer-*

ME
-Dave. You're on Hughes' bad side Ms. Bledsoe. It's not a bright place to be. So please go-

GLENDA BLEDSOE
-Glenda.
(this smile just for me)
And tell Howard I'll take my chances with the *fake* vampires.

And she twirls off, gone...watch her go...my radio buzzes.

ME
Klein. Go ahead... *

DISPATCH
*Message from a Lester Lake: asked that you contact him immediately.*

Ignition. Gas. Tires catch smoke as I peel away.

EXT. PASADENA PAYPHONE - DAY

Out of dimes, drop slugs instead. Three rings, somebody snags it before the fourth. Background reverb blares, bar racket. Hear a muted male growl '*Club Alabam...*'

ME
Get me Lester. This is Lieutenant Klein, LAPD-

-<u>click</u>. Fuck. Fish for another slug. Redial. One ring. Picked up, same background din-

ME (CONT'D)
(push this out pronto)
*-this is LAPD-put Lester on the phone or I'll have your liquor license and after-hours permits yanked inside the hour...*

A muffled back and forth before Lester comes on the line:

LESTER LAKE
Dave?

ME
Got your message.

INTERCUT: *

LESTER LAKE
Girl that works here, gigs the late sets, the torch stuff Fridays and * Saturdays, name of Tilly Hopwell. *

ME
I saw her singing the other night.

LESTER LAKE
I think she's been truckin' with Tommy Mag. Got pipes like Ella but she's a junk fiend: caught her * mainlining in the ladies room a month back. *

ME
Heroin? Tommy get her hooked?

LESTER LAKE
Dunno, but when he'd get drunk, * he'd trade Horse for blowjobs out * back a' the club. *

ME
Where's this girl now? *

LESTER LAKE
Didn't show up for work last night. *
Called a friend of hers, a waitress
that works here too, said she was *
at Bido Lito's in Hollywood. Said *
she was 'hiding out.'

ME
She actually said '*hiding out?*' *

LESTER LAKE
Then she got off the phone. Fast.
If Tilly's running with that demon, *
*you gotta get her out of there*. She *
got a lot more good in her than not- *

-Hang up. Paw the phone book. Tear out the address for Bido * Lito's.

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - DAY *

Driving.

ME (V.O.)
Smart Tommy. Dodging Darktown
altogether. Holed up in Hollywood.
Hiding in plain sight.

INT. DINER - DAY

Back booth with a view of the street. Bido Lito's across the way. Eyeball the entrance and adjoining alley. On the table in front of me, mugshots: known Tommy Magdalena associates. * Mostly greaser kids with low-rent juvie sheets. *

Stare at that photo of Tommy.

ME (V.O.)
Stakeout work. Browse mugs. Match a
face out front if I get lucky. Wait
till Bido Lito's gets busy before I
make my move.

INT. DINER - NIGHT (LATER)

Snub my last Chesterfield, stifle a yawn, check my Hamilton. 9:20 PM. Bito Crowd bops out front. Valet ballet. *

Scanning...spot a face...pull my mugshots...*Steve Wenzel,* Okie white-trash from El Monte, shoving his way through the crush out in front of the club, hits the side alley. *

I'm up. Dump a pocketful of coins on the table. Hit the door.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Cross fast, play the wall and the shadows close. Watch as Wenzel climbs steps to a flop overtop of the club. Get deeper into the alley: a padlocked two-car overhang at the rear. Grip my .45, stock down, swing, split the lock. Chain spools at my feet, slide inside the overhang...a car concealed under a tarpaulin, peel it off slow...**revealing a red '32 Ford.** *

ME (V.O.) *
Tommy's Deuce. *

Pull the pig-sticker off my ankle, stab the Driver-side tire. *

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D) *
Now he's on foot. *

INT. SECOND FLOOR FLOP - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy the door, slide inside silent. Muffled sounds through the floor, some jazz combo wailing away at Bido Lito's below. Voices down the hall, male, laughter, goofball guffaws. George Gobel on the tube: '*Well, I'll be a dirty bird!*

Creep in a crouch, my .45 at the hip, safety off. Move toward the flicker at the far end of the hall. Sounds of pissing nearby, ease around a doorjamb .45 first: bedroom barren, dust-caked mattress, a half dozen bottles of Old Crow lie scattered among sash cords & used heroin spikes. *

Light from the bathroom...a pair of legs visible, female. Dark but pale, splayed from inside the bathroom...the right foot slowly moves back and forth like the heel is trying to gain some purchase on fast-draining life. Somebody flushes, zips up, steps over the two legs.

Duck back into the hall as this Greaser stinking of pomade wafts past, weaving back toward the TV room.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Inside. Move fast now. A fist-sized lump swells mid-chest, blossoms into my throat. I don't want to see what I know is there. Turn the corner:

Club Alabam songbird Tilly Hopwell. Three breaths from death. A spike snapped off in her greyish, motionless left arm. Her right hand claws at tile. These beautiful dark eyes stare up at me like she was hoping for someone sooner. Throttle marks on her neck, one breast exposed, bra pulled down for a grope.

I don't want to touch her face but I do...she closes her eyes the moment my fingertips hit. That gases my hate. Choke back sudden tears.

VOICE BEHIND ME
*FUCK YOU DOIN'?*

Turn back. GREASER in the doorway, brown-bagged T-Bird hits the floor as he reaches for his waist -- stand and shoot him in the throat. Drive the .45 into his sternum like a blade before I fire the second-third-fourth shots. He falls/flails. Jump-shock from the other room.

ME
POLICE!

Bodies scramble. No words. Just Pistol fire through the half-rotted walls -- punks taking potshots. No compliance means I hit the hallway shooting back. Firing dead-bang at a couple fleeing silhouettes -- see them pop-stumble-fall-

-the archway above my head shreds, collapses. Somebody firing a sub-machine gun. Flat on my ass, my back finds the wall, cough up plaster, sleeve my eyes to see. Then quiet, save the rattle-clap of changing clips.

ME
PUT THAT GOD DAMN GUN DOW-

TOMMY MAGDALENA (O.C.)
***-YOU SET ME UP YOU COCKSUCKER!***

Machine-gun fire lights up my left side. Roll. Taste floor grime as subsonic zips snap close...bullets miss by inches.

TOMMY MAGDALENA
***-RAT FUCK COP! YOU KILLED HIM WILHITE!***

Every part of me pauses...*'Wilhite'*...back door gets blunted open, frantic footfalls recede. That big bent V-8 on Tommy's '32 Deuce roars to life. Up now, plow through the cloud of cordite. See one of Tommy's Pachucos propped up against the wall, unhit, unhurt. Point my .45 and pull the trigger a I pass. Hit an empty chamber...this punk's lucky day.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Out the door reloading as the '32 Deuce barrels away. Tommy fires shots into the air to clear traffic. Wenzel in the passenger seat, screams to do the same. The Driver's side rim sparks fireworks.

Pandemonium out in front of Bido Lito's as the crowd stampedes ass-over-elbows. Sprint to my car, inside, key dispatch fast as I wheel rough off the curb:

ME
*Shots fired, 1600 block of Ivar. Suspect fleeing scene in red '32 Ford Deuce travelling westbound on Wilcox, vehicle impaired, intercept at Hollywood Blvd-*

-horns blare as I slalom club-goers scrambling across Ivar. Punch it over-top Sunset, parallel to the Deuce. Rip a left on Selma. Stay on my radio:

ME
*-and I need an ambulance to respond to 1607 North Ivar, second floor, female negro, possible overdose.*

Up ahead I catch a fireworks show: the Deuce gouges pavement across the 4-way. Clip 90 MPH catching up. Squeal onto Wilcox as Tommy hooks a right onto Hollywood.

Two prowlers pass the next second, sirens lit, full scream.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD AND VINE - CONTINUOUS

Haul ass up to Hollywood, round it: See Tommy and Wenzel sitting upright, the Deuce spun sidelong, firing M3 'Grease Guns' into the approaching prowlers. Both cars go helter-skelter under fire. Six-packs spill to the street, belly crawl, brandish .38 service snubs and pop flimsy return fire.

Tommy jumps down, runs, rifling his jacket for clips. Wenzel stays atop the car -- <u>gun my engine</u>, split the abandoned prowlers. Wenzel looks up mid-reload <u>as I T-bone</u> <u>the 'Deuce'</u> <u>at speed</u>. The impact rockets him rag-doll end over end before he bombs back down to the street, wet sack, multiple bruises/fractures/breaks...blood pooling in <u>pints</u>.

Tommy wide-eyes the heap that was Wenzel. Kick my driver's side door open <u>firing</u>. Tommy cuts loose with that Grease-Gun, sprays wild. Crouch-move as bullets thump wreckage and whiz by overhead. <u>More sirens approach</u>. Tuck behind the front end of the mangled 'Deuce.'

Another salvo from the Grease-Gun skips up off the pavement in front of me. The six-packs have regrouped, start laying down fire on Tommy. Tommy running now -- I'm up on one knee, aiming, tucking into the .45: take his legs *but don't kill h-*

-that Gray Packard materializes across the intersection in front of Tommy: shotgun blasts from the driver's side backseat obliterates Tommy's mid-section.

My mouth gapes at what just happened...then I remember to fire at the Packard as it continues down the street, running lights extinguished, no plates visible.

Get to Tommy. Crying. Fading. Roll him on his back.

ME (CONT'D)
*Where's your father!? Did Wilhite kill him!?- TELL ME!*

-bubbling blood in place of words. Mouth moves like a grouper's...get close...his last gasp...pray it's profound. He breathes out...nothing.

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - NIGHT

Driving. Pissed. Radiator steam from under my crunched hood.

ME (V.O.)
That Gray Packard: not the Feds.
Make them Magdalena rivals. I left Bido Lito's too fast to catch a tail. *So where did they come from?*

EXT. 1284 SOUTH TREMAINE - DAY

Magdalena home. Pull up onto the front lawn. Grab my brass knucks from the glove box. Out of my car. Growling. A pair of Narco brims, Wilhite's boys, break wide on my approach. Junior stumbles from the stakeout car, rushing up the street toward me.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
*Dave?*
(when I don't respond)
Dave!

INT. 1284 SOUTH TREMAINE - CONTINUOUS

Inside. Madge, this vacant glaze, tear-smudged, mock mourning with more booze and pills...word of Tommy's demise has reached her.

ME
Where's Dan Wilhite?

Nothing from her. Music upstairs. Climb the steps two at a time. Beeline Lucille's room. Shoulder the door off the jamb.

INT. LUCILLE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wilhite and Lucille in the middle of some close conversation. Giant startle from both:

WILHITE
KLEIN GET OUT OF HERE!

Grab Wilhite. He reeks of bad scotch. Present him like Exhibit A to Lucille:

ME
*Did he kill your piece-a'-shit pimp Dad?*

Wilhite rips free. Beet-red.

ME
*Or was it that Peeper across the street that jacks off to your sad little shows-*

WILHITE
-GOD DAMN YOU!

Junior behind me. Urgent:

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Dave, please! *CHIEF BRADLEY!*

At Wilhite:

ME
*Where's Magdalena's body!?*

LUCILLE
FUCK YOU COP!

ME
(step to Lucille)
HOW MUCH -- *OR ARE YOU GIVING IT UP FOR FREE NOW?*

Sucks her steam: she knows I know. Her eyes shoot to Wilhite. Grab Lucille's bruised arms. Wilhite grabs me in return. Hear footfalls coming hard up the steps, Wilhite reinforcements.

WILHITE
YOU FUCKING THUG! LET GO OF HER!

ME
*You murdered him! That's why the dogs didn't bark: they knew you-*

-hands on me, ripping/hauling. Bull-rushed back into the hall by Wilhite's boys. I spin free. Wilhite flinches-trips. Junior too-close, plant my shoulder into him -- push off.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
(reeling back)
NO DIRECT APPROACH ON MAGD-

-grab Wilhite hard, haul him into a hallway bathroom, slam the door, lock it.

WILHITE
*What the fuck are you-*

-shove him, show him the brass knucks-

ME
*-you're gonna shell it out for me or I'm gonna kick your teeth in...*

Junior beating on the door.

ME (CONT'D)
(at the door)
FUCK OFF.

Wilhite tries to push past. Gut-punch him hard, trying to rupture something. Shove him back into the wall. Drywall implodes. He squeals/shrieks, seizes his shoulder.

WILHITE
*I outrank you Klein!* Are you out of your mind?

Brass knucks gleam, get close, kow him completely.

ME
*You fingered Tommy for his father's disappearance and pressed me to do the same to cover your ass!*

WILHITE
He was the prime suspec-

ME
*-he was screaming about 'set-ups,' and about how a 'Cop' killed Hector --he thought I was **you** Wilhite.*
(get closer, growl this)
*The gray Packard that gunned him down showed up three minutes after my dispatch call...*

WILHITE
-so cops killed *him* too, is that the kind of bullshit you wa-

ME
-not just cops. Narcotics Cops. You clip Hector, then his kid becomes collateral & you gotta clip him too.

WILHITE
*-you're paddlin' air pal.*

ME
*Am I?* Where's Hector? You can't file murder charges without a corpse. Who knows this? Cops know this- You would know this.

WILHITE
-I'm going to the review board and have you cited for-

-keep him off balance. Big curveball-

ME
-When'd Hector start pimping Lucille?

Read it: that stung him...

WILHITE
*What-*

ME
*--When did he start whoring out his own daughter to sweeten business deals?*

WILHITE
I have no fucking idea what you're-

ME
-he ever offer her to you?

Watch his face. Something flickers. *

WILHITE *
I'm married! *

ME *
And about to be divorced. *Have you* *
*ever fucked Lucille?* *

Stare it out of him...already pink features go fuchsia. *

ME
I don't care where you get your *
dick wet Wilhite. I care that *
you're *covering*. Twenty years dirty *
with this fucked-up family...<u>your</u> *
<u>secrets must stink like rot</u>. *

Red and blue light strobe from outside. Look: an unmarked *
caravan arrives. Bradley leading the charge, leaping from his *
sedan. Wilhite gets a split-second's worth of gloat/glee. *

WILHITE *
You're worried about every wrong *
thing Klein. <u>Bradley's tee'ing you</u> *
<u>up to take a big fat fall</u>- *

ME *
-then we'll hold hands on the way *
down: <u>look further up the street</u>. *
(directing his gaze) *
<u>The Black Buick</u>. *

Wilhite focuses, <u>sees the Feds inside</u>, snapping pictures of *
the Magdalena home... *

ME (CONT'D) *
<u>Feds</u>. They're all over this. You *
think I'm the only one that burns? *
Two decades worth of twisted shit *
between your division and the *
biggest dope dealer in LA? *

Wilhite wide-eyed. Slouching/sinking down onto the toilet. *
Somebody beating on the bathroom door <u>hard</u>. Bradley's voice *
behind it. *

ME (CONT'D) *
I ***<u>know</u>*** I'm going down Dan...<u>that's</u> *
<u>the difference between you and me</u>. *

Open the door. *

INT. MAGDALENA HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT *

Shoulder past, start down the stairs. Bradley follows. *

BRADLEY *
Klein! *

Hit the front door, moving toward my car, Junior and the Narco brims cagey, primed for another atomic outburst. Bradley still behind -- a prissy, patrician gait as he catches up -- spooked by that Black Buick up the street. *

BRADLEY (CONT'D) *
*I said 'no direct approach!'* *

ME *
(my back still turned) *
Then what are you doing here? *

BRADLEY *
You were instructed to take Tommy Magdalena alive. Do I have to remind you of the coroner's file- *

ME *
(turn on him, fierce) *
-enough of your 'Sanderline' bullshit. *
(nod to the Black Buick) *
I'll checkmate with an admission of guilt to Noonan himself. *

BRADLEY *
(sharp, shrill) *
*Keep your voice down!* *

ME *
I'll bargain immunity in exchange for testimony on how the LAPD really runs: Magdalena dope profit kickbacks, Diskant run out of the city council race on your word, suspended cops pulling shakedowns. I'll give Noonan a dozen new probes for the one I killed. *

Bradley stoic, assessing me...sees only 'fuck-you' resolve. *

BRADLEY *
I'm assuming command of this investigation myself. *

ME
What investigation? Tommy's murder? Hector's disappearance? *What are you investigating?*

BRADLEY
You're on one month's unpaid leave as of this moment.

Go right at him, cut his steam.

ME
<u>You're scamming something big.</u>

BRADLEY
-if you make any further inquiries into this case I'll strip you of rank, have your pension revoked and walk that coroner's file into the Times myself...<u>stay away from this</u>.

See red. <u>Launch</u>. Try to wrap my hands around his throat. Watch him feather back just out of reach. Junior and a pair of six-packs restrain me.

ME
*What's your fucking angle Bradley!?*

His eyes beam back <u>doom</u>.

BRADLEY
You're done Klein. <u>Soon</u>.

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - CONTINUOUS

Reach the car, slide in, anger in aftershocks rattle across still balled fists. Junior at my window blathering white noise. He might as well be speaking Greek.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Dave listen: don't do anything else to jeopardize yourself...<u>I can protect you</u>...I've been putting some things together-

Rip my radio, punch the call button.

KLEIN
Central, this is Klein, I need an update on that overdose I called in. What's the girl's condition?

<u>Static</u>. Wait. Anger make my eyes ache, fuzz my focus.

DISPATCH
*Lieutenant Klein, the girl, Tilda Hopwell was pronounced D.O.A. at Hollywood Presbyterian Hospital-*

Rage flares, slam the radio into the dash console, crushing it- fists flex, blood seeps from a battered knuckle, look at my hands: blood drool over the faint remains of the pen-scrawled '**A I N G E**'...Glare up at Junior:

ME
(God-like import)
George Ainge's address.

EXT. ROW HOUSE - CULVER CITY - NIGHT

Up the walk, Junior tailing, feel his stare.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
You're in no state to conduct yourself as a Police Offic-

ME
-shut up. Don't identify yourself, don't badge him, don't talk.

BLACK. Then a light turns on somewhere: my gun in a round man's face just through his front door. GEORGE AINGE.

INT. GEORGE AINGE'S PAD - NIGHT

Tough Ainge: He doesn't flinch. Drops his lunch-pail slow. Takes off his jacket: jail-house tattoos abound. He sits.

ME
How do you know Glenda Bledsoe?

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

GEORGE AINGE
Knew that whore'd try to muscle me-

ME
-don't call her a whore again.

Laughs in my face:

GEORGE AINGE
If you gave her as many paychecks as me, you'd know 'whore' fits like a fuckin glov-

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

GEORGE AINGE (CONT'D)
*She fucked for a fee! Jesus Christ she's a pro! What is she paying to get that blade back-*

-get the gun in his face, burn his nose with the barrel.

ME
*What?* What 'blade?'

GEORGE AINGE
*What's she paying you to recover her knife?*

Just then Junior banana peels it -- deliberately:

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Lieutenant!

A hate-scowl for Junior: trying to put enough heat behind it to melt his head. Ainge lights up.

GEORGE AINGE
*Y'all are Cops!?*

ME
Shut your mouth.

Ainge sees me bent on Glenda. Looks past me, past the gun in his face, aims right at Junior.

GEORGE AINGE
Back in '50, Glenda the Good Witch put a blade in her pimp 'bout as deep as I put my pink in her, this mongrel named *Dwight Gillette*.

Junior fixes me, pulls that steno, starts scribbling openly -- I grab it, shred it. Ainge grins at the voodoo between us.

GEORGE AINGE (CONT'D)
Could use a couple LAPD favors, and ain't guttin' a pimp still a crime?

JUNIOR STEMMONS
(aimed at ME)
Capitol crime.

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

ME
-show it to me.

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

-throw his TV at his head: legitimately trying to kill him now and he knows it. Off his chair, crawling.

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

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

ME
GOD DAMN IT-

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

-grab Junior, sharp jab him, push him out a door for the second time-

JUNIOR STEMMONS (CONT'D)
*-YOU WILL CEASE AND DESIST KLEIN-*

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

GEORGE AINGE
I AIN'T RESISTING YOU!

ME
*I'm not arresting you.*

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

ME (CONT'D)
(hissing)
*Where is it?*

Ainge unable to speak, gasping for air. Step to his closet: shred hinges when I open it. Rip the clothes rod down: nothing. Pull shelves from the wall: a Louisville Slugger falls at my feet. I smile. Ainge goes frightwig. Step to him.

ME (CONT'D)
WHERE?!

Swing it into a wall. Gaping holes in holster. Bring it back like Babe Ruth over his head.

ME (CONT'D)
*-that blade or your life.*

Door bashed open behind me -- deadbolt assembly pops, pieces hit me -- then something big/black-metallic ends my night: Junior, tear-streaked cheeks, Ainge's mailbox in-hand, pulled free from the stucco. I drop. Ainge turns cheerleader:

GEORGE AINGE
NICE!

Roll to my knees: guttural groans I can't place because they're mine. Junior rips a radio cord from the wall, wraps it around my neck, pulls my head back, feel his tears hit my shoulders. Veins in his arms go Pop. Eyes in my head go Pop.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
***Last time you push me out a door!***
***For a dirty split-tail! You're-***
(cinches hard)
***-not dragging me down! If Bradley doesn't get you, Noonan will! And-***
(through gritted-teeth)
***-you're gonna burn all by yourself!***

-go black. Then eyes open...out for hours/days/months...what?

Feel. Hangman's bruise forming around my neck. Junior and Ainge gone. Floorboards under Ainge's bed pried-up. Crawl to the hole: a hiding spot, empty of whatever was in it.

ME (V.O.)
Call it: *the knife was here*. Ainge was crawling under his bed not to escape me, but to hand it over. Too hate-wired to see it.

I check my watch: 11 PM.

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Junior the Player. Junior the Underestimated.
(MORE)

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Junior the Former Evidence Teacher: a murder weapon, a witness, a two-hour head-start.

EXT. AINGE'S PLACE - NEXT MOMENT

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

INT. MY 1955 PONTIAC - NEXT MOMENT

My glove box ripped open, contents gone.

ME (V.O.)
Junior the Flush: my $5000 down-payment from Hughes gone. Junior the Merciful: He should've put a bullet in my brain.

INT. PRECINCT - LATE NIGHT

Nobody around this late. Only a desk sergeant on the doze. Zero-in on Junior's desk, search it: files squared, pencils in precise alignment, evidence books arrayed alphabetically.

ME (V.O.)
Everything inspection neat. No mail, no personal items. Eagle scout perfect.

Rip at a locked return, jimmy the desk drawers, feel the underside for a key -- zilch. Slide under, looking...nothing. Sit up, grab his phone, dial out...

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
What?

ME
Meg wake up Pete.

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

Rustling and whispers.

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

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

PETE (O.S.)
Your partner?

Find a letter opener, fuck it -- pry the drawer loose.

ME
Past tense.

PETE (O.S.)
Two grand.

Pop. The lock snaps. Ease it open...

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

Look inside. Red steno pads. A small orderly pile. Pull one, thumb it-- blank.

PETE (O.S.)
A-I-N-G-E?

ME
Yeah.

PETE (O.S.)
What's Stemmons' address?

ME
I'm working on it.

Hang up. Voices arrive. Hustle to my desk, sit, grab a reverse directory, fake flip through it as Fritz Koenig and two Robbery Blueshirts arrive, seizure bags over their shoulders. I clear sweat and leftover blood with my sleeve, trying to look busy as Koenig sidles up.

ME (CONT'D)
(nod to shoulder bag)
You moonlighting?

KOENIG
Doing some ad hoc dope seizures for Dan Wilhite.
(that shark grin)
Still love taking the occasional door down.

ME
You were born for the street Fritz.
I never featured you for the suit
and tie set.

KOENIG
We're of a common bloodline Boy-o.

ME
Where'd you get that haul?

KOENIG
(dropping bag)
Some reformed spic dope dealers
that normally dabble in reefer.

Koenig, his knuckles and fingernails caked with blood, pulls a three-pound brick of heroin from the bag.

KOENIG (CONT'D)
Seized from Chavez Ravine. Thirty
pounds. The City is cracking down
on the dreaded to make room for
their beloved Dodgers. They remove
the Mexicans, we remove the rest.

Scramble a joke to keep Koenig from looking at me too closely...

ME
Why? They could hawk heroin right
along with peanuts and hot dogs.
Have the whole bleacher section
goofing on horse.

Koenig laughs big, re-shoulders the bag.

KOENIG
A new found dedication these days?
What's prompting such odd hours?

ME
Playing catch-up.

KOENIG
The boy Chief seems to be running
both of us ragged.

ME
He currying favor with Chief Parker
with this Chavez Ravine sweep?

KOENIG
Parker appreciates Bradley's political skills...and the addition of a professional Ball-club to our fare city fulfills his own personal mandate of a cleaner, brighter, LA.

ME
Sounds boring.

KOENIG
Stale milk to me too. And how are you faring? Is our visiting U.S. Attorney still in hot pursuit?

Look up. Let him see it in my face: humorless and half lit.

ME
Borrowed time Fritz.

KOENIG
Anything I can do?

ME
Yeah...a small favor.
(beat)
Stemmons home address if you have it. He's in a bit of a bind.

KOENIG
(beat)
Bigger than your own?

ME
A lot bigger.

EXT. PAY PHONE - LATER

Drop loose change. Dial. Pete picks up on the first ring.

ME
3160 Rossmore. Apartment #6.

PETE
Did you want me to clip Stemmons?

ME
Not yet. By now, he's stashed Ainge, so he's travelling solo.

PETE
Who's this 'Ainge' clown anyway?

ME
Not important.

PETE
Oh, Milteer wants a progress report on the Movie Broad -- Bledsoe-

-hang up. Roll to my car.

EXT. GLENDA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Late. Pull in, plop the dishrag loaded with ice on the front seat. Blood still seeping, slick it back in my hair. Step from the car-- woozy/weaving, the goose-egg on my head feels like a hand grenade.

Up the front walk, lean on the doorbell. She answers, Silk chemise barring tan shoulders, her hair swept up a long, perfect neck. If she just woke up, she doesn't look it.

GLENDA BLEDSOE
I could say something witty about "gentleman callers at this hour, covered in blood" but--

No time to trade repartee. Out with it:

ME
George Ainge.

She goes rigid, clutches her robe.

GLENDA BLEDSOE
Is that his?
(off my nod 'yes')
Is he dead?

ME
No. But I know about Dwight Gillette and the knife you're trying to barter back. All of it.

Like I punched her in the mouth. Her face: embarrassment cut with confusion. She recovers quick, steels herself.

GLENDA BLEDSOE
Then why are you here? Y'should be picking up a paycheck from Hughes.

ME
I'm not watching you for him anymore.

GLENDA BLEDSOE
(beat)
If you're planning on shaking me down for 'favors,' go pick-up your paycheck Mr. Klein. Or are you being a policeman right now?

ME
The good ones are called 'Policemen.' The bad ones are called 'Cops.' I'm a Cop.

She steps closer. I can smell her.

ME (CONT'D)
Another 'cop' has this information on you. He has the murder weapon too. He might use it against you before I can stop him. Can you go somewhere?

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

ME
Just the parts you wish I didn't. The place in Topanga Canyon where your going to hole up for the kidnapping thing. Is it safe?

She nods, drifts somewhere, a part of her life thought dead, threatening everything again...

ME (CONT'D)
Get your coat.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Driving. Glenda close. I want to pull her closer. We wind along Topanga Canyon. Constant mirror checks, looking for Packards/Buicks/Ghosts...seeing nothing...I roll my window up. Light jazz on the radio gives way to the news:

ANNOUNCER
*-KGFJ news at the top of the hour. U.S. Attorney Welles Noonan today announced his intention to probe what he called 'widespread corruption' within the Los Angeles Police Department and promised an equally widespread round of criminal indictments before-*

-click it off. Abrupt. She notices, says nothing. After another half mile she points to a side road: 655 TOPANGA CYN RD on the mailbox. I pull in. A gravel drive gives way to a bungalow, tucked into the trees.

ME
Did Ainge know about this place?

GLENDA BLEDSOE
No. I didn't want to tell him till after.

ME
Good.

Put the car into 'park.' Idle. She looks over, her eyes asking something. I hold her gaze, hesitate, then:

ME (CONT'D)
Nothing's going to happen to you...

She frets with her hair, her eyes glassy.

GLENDA BLEDSOE
I don't know that.

ME
I'm not gonna let it.

A beat...I want to grab her and kiss her. I convince myself otherwise, grab a card from my coat and a pen, scrawl.

ME (CONT'D)
This is my sister's number. Name is Meg. Call if there are problems.

Hand her the card. We touch. I linger. So does she.

ME (CONT'D)
Sleep.

GLENDA BLEDSOE
Impossible.

ME
Me too.

INT. MY CAR - NIGHT

Driving. Blood-shot. Slowly being squeezed on all sides.

ME (V.O.)
Looking for leverage. Figure out Bradley's angle before I fry. Madge and Lucille in custody. No Hector and no Tommy equals No leads. Save one.

EXT. SANTA MONICA HOTEL - EARLY A.M. *

Slouched in my front seat, watching a small flop-style motel * near the beach.

ME (V.O.)
Dan Wilhite.
(beat)
Dispatch shot me his temporary address. Some beach flop he fled to after his wife put him out.

Check my Hamilton: *7:32 AM.* A car pulls into the parking lot. Two suits step out, ramrod straight, starched officious: Process Servers if ever I've seen them. One of them bears a sealed envelope as they walk to room #11 and knock. No answer. They knock rude. I roll down my window.

Dan Wilhite answers in a robe: Groggy-pissed-hungover. Before he utters a word, he's handed the sealed envelope and the pair depart. Wilhite calls after, tearing open the envelope and reading what's inside...*then rereading it.*

Gauge his reaction: ruined.

He puts his hand on top of his head...like he's trying to protect it from the sky that is now falling down around him. Another big pause staring at nothing...then he just calmly walks back inside the room, closing the door behind him.

EXT. SANTA MONICA HOTEL - NEXT MOMENT

Out of my car. Quietly hustling up to Wilhite's door: Reach it and hear a distinct **POP** -- see the flash-snap from behind the curtains: Gunshot. I know what it is. *Hit the door.*

INT. WILHITE'S ROOM - NEXT MOMENT

Wilhite's service revolver a foot away from one hand, a sheet of paper still gripped in the other. Body half onto the bed, half off. Blood drains from a round wound in his temple.

Check behind me, nobody coming- close the hotel door. Pick up the sheet of paper/contents of the envelope. The first word I see: **SUBPOENA**.

ME (V.O.)
My first thought, pure panic: *Noonan figured the Narco-Magalena connection.*

Flip the Subpoena over to see his Signature: not Noonan's. This subpoena has been issued and signed by LA District Attorney Bob Gallaudet. Flip it back over, wide-eyed:

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But it wasn't a Federal Subpoena. Wilhite was being called to testify by Bob Gallaudet, a man who doesn't piss without Bradley's say-so.
(beat)
Bradley trying to beat Noonan to the punch and burn the LAPD himself...*why?*

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATER

A quick check of the lot. Empty. A housekeeping cart sits nearby. Swipe a bottle of bleach from it. Walk to Wilhite's Studebaker Powerhawk. Pop the trunk, return to his room.

Move quick. Fireman's carry, dump Wilhite's body in the trunk. Toss his service .38 too. Pour the bottle of bleach to stanch the inevitable rot smell.

ME (V.O.)
Swap my car for Wilhite's. The former head of the LAPD's Narcotics division dead in the trunk. Call it the leverage I was looking for -- his body can buy me out of bad spot-

-and that's when I see it: a bandage poking out from under Wilhite's collar...undo a couple buttons, lift the bandage. *

FLASH TO:

EXT. 1284 SOUTH TREMAINE - NIGHT *

**BAM:** me hit from behind by the Peeper. **BAM:** me firing at the Peeper. Hit him in the left shoulder. **BAM:** Grabbing Wilhite's shoulder in the Magdalena bathroom, him howling in pain. *

RETURN TO: *

INT. WILHITE'S GARAGE - NEXT MOMENT *

The kind of wound a grazed bullet leaves. *

ME (V.O.) *
Wilhite was the Peeper. Bent on *
*Lucille*, a girl younger than his *
youngest daughter. Call it grounds
for divorce...*Call Wilhite Hector
Magdalena's murderer...*

Slam the trunk as Wilhite's glazed eyes stare back at me.

EXT. STREET - A.M. *

Slow cruise, new ride means no tails. Check my mirrors *
anyway. Back to the pad, back-streets all the way. *

INT. MY HOME, HOLLYWOOD HILLS - A.M. *

Rounding the corner -- break hard: those same process servers leaning on my doorbell now.

ME
Bradley trying to bury me too. That
subpoena means my fifteen year
career with the LAPD just went up
in smoke.

Continue past. Those Process Geeks keep buzzing my doorbell.

INT. BREAKFAST JOINT PAY-PHONE - MORNING

Drop dimes. Dial Pete.

ME
Hey-

PETE (O.S.)
-Junior's left the fucking planet.

ME
You find him?

PETE
Yeah. I swung by his apartment, car
was out front. I scoped it: a sawed-
off shotgun in front, canned tuna
in the back seat. Think he's living
outta that car.
(MORE)

PETE (cont'd)
After he left, I tried to get inside his place: The front door is triple pad-locked.

ME
(out loud)
That knife is in there-

PETE
*-the what?*

Shit. Ignore it, maybe Pete will too.

ME
Meet me down the street from his place. You got bolt cutters?

PETE
I'll bring 'em.

ME
Thirty minutes.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Junior's stucco-beige apartment building looms a block up. Cursory checks of the rear and side-view mirrors. Sans tail as I pull the Powerhawk in behind Pete's Caddy. Step out, sidle up driver's side.

PETE
Who's car is that?

ME
Long story.

PETE
Junior looked real skeezed this morning. Like he was on a dope jag.

ME
Yeah?

PETE
Sweated up like a stuck pig. And be careful. He was fucking around with his front door before he left. I don't know what he was doing.

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

PETE
(handing me bolt-cutters)
What about this Bledsoe broad?
Milteer has called me twice.

ME
(taking the bolt-cutters)
One thing at a time pal.

EXT. JUNIOR'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Hustle across the street. Hang my badge over my shirt-pocket.

INT. JUNIOR'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Up three flights. Junior: #303: three padlocks:hinge/receiver hardware extending between door and jamb. Three kicks and a shoulder to splinter the door. Stop, look: Some kind of twine stretched taut, just inside the door...trip-wire. Pull my pig-sticker, extend it between door and jamb...see the twine stretching tighter -- flick the blade, snag twine, slice it.

Stand. Put my boot into the door full. Snaps at the hinges.

INT. APT. 303 - NEXT MOMENT

Move slow. Examine close: Eye-bolt pulley system, jerry-rigged around the door. Severed twine attached to the trigger of a shotgun taped atop a jello mold at knee level.

Continue to look around. Sex-horror grimace: like catching Pop fingering Mom. Junior's place a tiny, filthy one bedroom.

ME (V.O.)
Junior the Insane: You couldn't
hide what he was hiding in 1958 LA,
*and not have it rot your mind.*

Bear traps barely hidden under sheets. Rat-traps garnished with razor blades across the floor. Smell rotten flowers: his shirt that I wore/bled-on crumpled on his pillow -- yellowed jizz stains cover black blood stains. Stifle a gag.

Card table: an empty green-banded evidence bag. Gape at it. Then walk over, read the abstracts: **1284 South Tremaine**.

ME (V.O.)
Junior stealing evidence from the
Magdalena crime scene.

Then I see the bookcase. Top shelf: Police manuals. Bottom two shelves: wall-to-wall **red steno-pads**, all exactly the same brand. Shock. Step over. Flip through them: tiny, architect-neat script covers every page. The running dialogue of a functional fucking freak:

**MAGDALENA RESIDENCE. 1284 S. TREMAINE. RECOVERED: MAGDALENA FINANCIAL RECORDS/LEDGERS. SOME ENTRIES REDACTED. TRANSLATED 'HH' INTO 'HURWITZ HOLDINGS' AFTER RECOVERING MAIL. SEEMS SUSPICIOUS. BROUGHT TO ATTENTION OF KLEIN. BRUSHED OFF. PRESS IN SPITE OF KLEIN'S LAZINESS OR LACK OF INTEREST.**

A hand drawn cock doodled beneath that, then below:

***DAVE WEARING FORM-FITTING SHIRT TODAY. HANDSOME. I WANT TO PULL IT-***

-drop the steno like it might bite. Pick up another: same drill.

**WELLES NOONAN WILL WIN OUT. KLEIN NOT SKILLED OR SMART ENOUGH TO DUEL WITH A U.S. ATTORNEY MUCH LESS THE FBI. DEEP ADMIRATION FOR NOONAN'S CAUSE. HIS PURPOSE IS PURE. DON'T WANT TO GET DRAGGED DOWN WITH POISON PILL KLEIN. MAKE HIM PAY FOR PATRONIZING ME.**

Pick up yet another, hands shaking, turn to the last page:

**MAKE KLEIN HURT LIKE I HURT. TRADE HIM. TRADE EVERYTHING. TRADE UP TO THE BUREAU. THINK OF IT: AGENT RICHARD STEMMONS JR. PROUD-PROUD. 1 DREAM DOWN, 10,000 TO GO!**

ME (V.O.)
Junior the Climber, trading me up to Noonan. Thinks bootlicking will buy him a Bureau gig.

Now, rifle for that knife. Systemically destroy the place. Dump the stenos in a trash can, sift for matches, strike, watch the pads catch and floosh, feed the fire with random paperwork, sift -- Junior's cock-obsessed doodles scribbled by the dozen.

Under the bed now, carpet covered in rat-traps. Spring them, clear a space. A Box: beefcake booty, gay smut mags, gay classified ads. First-person perspective Polaroids of Junior's stomach being kissed by the Diskant Quiff and vice-versa.

Open a massive steamer trunk against a far wall. Arsenal: handguns, shotguns, a surplus M-1. Dump it, kick contents. Only interested in that knife.

Move into his kitchenette. Check the freezer even though Junior is smarter than that: amyl-nitrate poppers, vodka, benzedrine, cocaine. Close it. Look down. STOP: indents in the cheap tile floor from where the refrigerator used to sit.

Pull to see what's behind. Eyes catch the bear-trap near the bed as I tug: ugly-rusted-*waiting*. STOP part II: Contort, peer behind the refrigerator: a pineapple-shaped hand grenade duct-taped to the wall, next to a built-in safe.

MY NARRATOR VOICE (V.O.)
The safe scared me more than all of it because a safe doesn't get installed overnight...he'd been working on something, planning something...

Twine leads from the grenade's pin to the back of the refrigerator. My bolt-cutters snap it. Pull the refrigerator out now. The safe bolted into the drywall. Stare at it: the dial, the black paint-job...

CUT TO:

Loading shells into the shotgun that was atop that jello mold. Back into the kitchen. Exhale. BEGIN BLASTING. Massive noise. Six shots. Reload fast: nothing can muffle this clatter. SECOND VOLLEY. Eyes closed to keep chunks of drywall out. Gagging on gunsmoke. Rip at the safe -- something gives. THIRD VOLLEY. The Safe hits the floor, leaves a hole.

Through the ringing in my ears: something that sounds like honks. Quick peek: Pete gone. A Black Buick with two white-walled FEDS up front. Then Junior gets out of the backseat...

Scoop the freezer drugs, the stack of man-porn, the snapshots, and toss a whole armful into the hallway in front of Junior's door. Grab the green-banded evidence bag and tuck it under my arm. Back into the kitchenette. Turn on the gas but don't light the burners. Pull the grenade off the wall. Drag the safe to the rear of his place: the fire escape.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - NEXT MOMENT

Out the window, on the escape, toss the evidence-bag down to Pete, then push the safe over the railing. Feature it almost crush the back of Pete's idling Cadillac. Pete jumps, yells:

PETE
*Asshole!*

ME
Get it open if you can *and meet me back at Meg's!*

Doesn't move until I pull the pin on the pineapple, drop the pin down on him. He jumps back in, peels off-

INT. JUNIOR'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NEXT MOMENT

-Junior on the second-floor landing, heading to his place. Bloodshot bleary wide eyes, spun on a combo of drugs, the Feds herding him like a rabid dog:

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

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - SAME MOMENT

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

-BIG BOOM -- the grenade goes off.

INT. JUNIOR'S APARTMENT BUILDING - SAME MOMENT

Junior knocked on his ass halfway up the last flight. Feds come sprinting. Screaming Junior tackles one on the way up. Juniors' front-door blown off. Terrified Neighbors greeted with images of Sodom scattered from the explosion: drugs, mags, dildos. The Fed that didn't get tackled picks up a photo: Junior kissing a hairy stomach.

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

EXT. ALLEY - NEXT MOMENT

I step calm. Clear the alley slow. Don't let your stride give you away. Another Black Buick arrives. More Bureau stiffs. Keep moving. Looky-Loos pop up along the block, pointing. I'm the only one not looking back toward Junior's now flaming pad. The Powerhawk still another street up. Fire engines wail close.

Shouts from behind now. Look back: a Bureau putz pointing my way -- one of the Buicks tearing up the block toward me.

ME (V.O.)
Call it. Keep going and give up Wilhite's car and the corpse inside, or lay back and deal with Noonan's Buzzcuts.

Lace my fingers behind my head, turn to face them -- catch a form tackle from this geeked up junior G-Man diving from the Buick, drives his shoulder and takes me down sprawling.

INT. L.A. FEDERAL BUILDING - LATER

Welles Noonan staring. He picks nipped/mutilated fingernails.

ME (CONT'D)
Civil servants can't afford manicures?

WELLES NOONAN
Breaking and entering, theft, and willful destruction of private property...and I'll add attempted murder to the current first degree murder charge I'm about to file against you.

ME
Proof. If you had it, you wouldn't be fucking around with shitty shakedown routine -- you'd file. Coercion equals confession. So let's see you pound it out of me.

WELLES NOONAN
Where are the files you stole from Sergeant Richard Stemmons.

ME
Junior. Your secret weapon right? I mean, I know J. Edgar is a slanted fuck, but traditionally 'vicious fags' don't make the best major case witnesses.
(beat, keep pushing)
I'm worried those burning dildos may have damaged his credibility.

WELLES NOONAN
Oh I don't need his testimony Klein. I'll just force yours.

ME
Not if you had the next *hundred* years.

WELLES NOONAN
Sanderline Johnson, your links to Sam Giancana to Mickey Cohen, extortion, bribes, murder-for-hire. I'll put you in every pair of cross-hairs I can find. I'll torch everything you've ever touched. You have *no idea* how deep I run Klein.
(MORE)

WELLES NOONAN (cont'd)
And how far I'm willing to go to fuck you-

ME
-everyone knows I'm a piece-a-shit. What are you proving? Bradley's the guy flanking you right now. The guy who's vulnerable right now.

WELLES NOONAN
You're all angles and graft Klein. Why trust a God damn word that comes out of your-

ME
-you done anything with the Magdalena case?

WELLES NOONAN
(thrown)
Prelims: drug pusher gone missing, presumed dead, we're investigat-

ME
(scoffing)
-Dealing drugs for 20 years! Arrested *once*. Hall a' fame career! You photographed the head of Narco *in-front of his house...*

WELLES NOONAN
AND?

ME
Jesus Christ, you need cue cards?
(sell this fucker now)
Come after me: you get me. Go after what I can give you and you get the LAPD's power-set on a slab.

WELLES NOONAN
I don't believe you'd turn. Treacherous yes, traitorous no. Tell me where Stemmons' files are.

ME
I'll bring them to you.

WELLES NOONAN
You're not leaving here Klein.

ME
Then like I said: *you only get me.*

Noonan stands, firm:

WELLES NOONAN
I'll take it.

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

ME
I give you the body of Dan Wilhite, head of LAPD's Narcotics Division. Proof of a 20-year criminal collusion between his department and Hector Magdalena and my testimony to link the dots.
(beat, make him believe)
Then I leave LA for good.

Noonan at the door: please bite-please bite...but he just smirks, walks out. Real panic now: no ideas on what comes next. 15 seconds. Door opens again: one of Noonan's deputies pushes a sheet. Scan it: Federal Witness Agreement. Noonan back: two cups of coffee. Read it over.

WELLES NOONAN
What happened to Wilhite?

ME
Suicide.

WELLES NOONAN
Like Sanderline Johnson?

Ignore him. Sign the agreement.

WELLES NOONAN (CONT'D)
Get me Stemmons files and Wilhite's body by noon tomorrow.

Gulp the coffee back, the burn feels good.

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

WELLES NOONAN
Agreed.

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

WELLES NOONAN
After a judge signs it. Now Leave.

Stand-nod-take my coffee-leave. Door closes. Noonan shreds the Witness agreement. Tosses it in the trash. Off the baffled Deputy.

WELLES NOONAN (CONT'D)
We wait for him to deliver, then we arrest him. You never saw that agreement.

DEPUTY #1
Tail him?

WELLES NOONAN
No. Let him get comfortable...let him believe me.

INT. CAB - NIGHT

Backseat. Suborned Cabby driving fast. LAPD on board.

ME (V.O.)
Running out of room, time, both. Trapped between Bradley and Noonan.

Jump out of the cab, into Wilhite's Powerhawk. Slide in, slam the door.

INT. MEG'S PLACE - LATER

Bust in shaking. Teeth chatter like I'm freezing. Pete in the garage adjacent the kitchen, welder's goggles and a power drill, punching holes in Junior's safe.

PETE
I know what Feds look like -- those were Feds with Junior...

ME
Yeah and they made me leaving the scene. Had to barter out.

PETE
Barter what?

ME
My Testimony. I signed a Federal Witness Agreement.

Pete drops the drill.

PETE
*You what?*

ME
It's bullshit. Noonan's got no intention of honoring it.
(beat)
They want Stemmons files though. I think Junior's been working angles for awhile, doing his *own* investigations.

PETE
What did you do to his place? Nice quiet neighborhood one minute, *Nagasaki* the next.

ME
(point to safe)
He had a hand grenade tied to that.
(as Pete resumes drilling)
How much longer do you need?

PETE
Few more hours. Maybe. Junior didn't skimp on this thing. I gotta bore right through the face plate.
(beat)
You got some time now, why don't you get Milteer off my back and go work that Bledsoe broad.

ME
You read my mind.

EXT. TOPANGA CANYON BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Pull in. Glenda's Vette parked behind. Lights on low inside.

EXT./INT. BUNGALOW - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens. She's dressed for bed. I don't hesitate, afraid she'll shun me. Move to her, she doesn't startle. An arm around her waist, drawing her in, my mouth close to hers.

I take her face in my hand, check her eyes, a beat before they tell me it's okay...I lean in, takes a lifetime...and kiss her soft until she kisses back, her mouth moving over my split lips, she puts her hands on my face, pulling me in.

She feels exactly like I imagined.

My coat comes off. Her camisole follows. We're moving toward a bed in back. I stop, pull back, the moonlight moves over her shoulders. I whisper:

ME
*...tell me if I'm being too rough.*

Tears squeezed through smiling eyes, she kisses me even harder, pulls me down to her. We make love like we've never touched another. Everything blurs, burns down: Bradley. Wilhite. Tommy. Hector Junior. Ainge. She takes it all away. I escape into her. Hours fall. I could stay here forever...

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Lying there, staring at her. A silence and peace I've never known. Not once.

ME
Tell me anything. Tell me everything.

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

GLENDA BLEDSOE
Where would I start?

ME
Why here?

GLENDA BLEDSOE
Why L.A.?
(this amazing smile)
Why is anybody here? Want the rest of the world to know who they are.

ME
You?

GLENDA BLEDSOE
No...I don't think so.
(beat)
I just love it. I grew up in Seattle. My aunt, every week, she'd take me to the movies.

Me watching her...tucks her hair back over his shoulders.

GLENDA BLEDSOE (CONT'D) *
The idea that you can outlive yourself...that a part of you goes on, long after you're gone.
(beat, grins)
Sounds silly doesn't it? '*Attack of the Atomic Vampires*' being-

ME
-your ticket to immortality?

Make her laugh. Swear a thousand silent oaths to protect her. He face slowly goes dark.

GLENDA BLEDSOE
Hughes told me he could get me in for this screen test two years ago. Movie with Gregory Peck at Universal. He thought he was humoring me...until *I got it*. They offered me the role...there in the room. So Howard, who I'm sure never thought in a *million* years I'd land that part, makes some phone calls and just like that they don't want me anymore.
(beat)
Nobody calls now. I can't get in to see any studio casting people. He's ruined me in those circles.

ME
And you still want it-

GLENDA BLEDSOE
-bad enough to put on a silly cheerleading skirt and try to make the most god-awful dialogue sound decent.

ME
Surrounded by winos in werewolf suits.
(she laughs, I laugh)
That's...*dedication*.

GLENDA BLEDSOE
Or desperation. Depends on the day.

The laughter ebbs, her eyes still shine.

GLENDA BLEDSOE (CONT'D)
I'll get there though.
(beat)
I'll get there.

I let the silence take...try not to shatter it with:

ME
Dwight Gillette.

She doesn't blanch.

GLENDA BLEDSOE
He asked me to take his 'niece and nephew' to their cousin in Oxnard. These beautiful, funny little kids.
(tears she doesn't swipe)
I dropped them off. Didn't ask any questions -- I believed Dwight. A week later I saw their pictures in the Post Office. A week after that their little bodies came in on the tide near San Pedro.
(beat, tears stream)
I'll never shake the thought that maybe those poor kids thought I was part of it. That I knew what was going to happen to them. So I pray to God that he let them look in when I put that knife into Dwight.
(beat)
But I'll never ask his forgiveness for doing it...
(beat, clears her eyes)
Why do they call you 'Enforcer?'

She actually gets <u>closer</u>, I can feel her breath on me.

ME
I've killed 44 men.

She blanches, but never blinks...never takes her eyes away from mine.

ME (CONT'D)
33 for War. 2 for principle. 9 for profit -- mostly. Why did you sign with Hughes, knowing what he was?

GLENDA BLEDSOE
'For profit -- mostly.'

Silence. A feeling like: 'and there we are...'

ME
I'm not much good.

GLENDA BLEDSOE
Me neither.

She touches my quake. Two breaths with her hand on mine and it all goes quiet: the shakes, the images, the fear. She takes my head, pulls me to her bare breasts. The only things audible: my breathing, a clock ticking. Both slowly fade out.

BLACK.

Wake up quiet, look at my Hamilton. 6 AM. Sit up slow.

Look back at her, sleeping, just stare. I lean down, kiss her lightly, her taste lingers, inhale her, hold that...*it's the last good thing you'll get today*.

INT. MEG'S HOUSE - EARLY A.M.

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

PETE (O.C.)
The Knife ain't there. File on top of that middle pile: George Ainge in an 'undisclosed locale.'

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

PETE
Junior documented everything like a fucking Monk.
(pulls a file)
Like here: 'has evidence' you murdered Sanderline Johnson. Kept track of 'suspected contract killings' you pulled for the mob.

Look at Pete. Dark rings, deathbed eyes.

ME
You been up all night?

PETE
In-case Stemmons made a house-call. He's got every goddamn address of everybody you know...
(beat, hard)
And you should've told me about the Bledsoe broad.

ME
There's nothing to tell.

Feature Pete, righteously pissed:

PETE
Then call Milteer about this dead Pimp Gillette. I'm no legal mind like you, but I'll bet a murder beef would violate her morals clause quick.
(MORE)

PETE (cont'd)
(beat, hands phone)
Collect the rest of your money.

ME
I don't want it anymore.

PETE
Then give that five grand back.

ME
Junior stole it.

Pete pauses, scoffs, turns back toward Meg's bedroom walks:

PETE
People are gonna start lining-up to see you bleed, Pal.

Door closes. I flip through Junior's files: the same architect-neat block printing. Find a Glenda entry:

**SUBSEQUENT TO HER FATAL STABBING OF DWIGHT Gillette, MISS BLEDSOE SECRETED THE MURDER WEAPON WITH GEORGE AINGE. I HAVE ACQUIRED THIS KNIFE. IT IS A SIX-INCH BLADE WITH A MOTHER-OF-PEARL GRIP WHICH SUSTAINED RIGHT THUMB AND RIGHT INDEX PRINTS WHICH MATCH ELEVEN COMPARISON POINTS TO FINGERPRINTS ON FILE FROM MISS BLEDSOE'S 1946 JUVENILE SHOPLIFTING ARREST.**

Shred it. Grab another file. Hyper-detailed: subscript clarifications, attachments, pictures, procedural notes to the U.S.A.W.N.: United States Attorney Welles Noonan.

Then I see the tab of the file furthest down: **BOYCE BRADLEY.** Open it: Noonan's business card stapled to the front cover. Flip forward. Scan. See Bradley's name, finger tracks across a page. A company name: **'HURWITZ HOLDINGS'**

*I read it all...and feel my jaw slowly unhinge...*

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - MORNING

Barrel down the hallway toward Bradley's office. A habitual eye toward Junior's desk: Koenig going through his drawers. Stop. Veer toward him...

KOENIG
(formal-frosty)
Your young partner called me at my home, early this morning.

Teeth grit. Hide it. Let Koenig talk.

KOENIG (CONT'D)
Heavily inebriated. Speaking inarticulately of '*betrayal*,' & how the LAPD was set to be '*blitzed by justice*.' Is this the 'bind' of which we spoke earlier?

ME
Yeah.

KOENIG
And his apartment -- there was some type of disturbance? A fire?

ME
That's why I needed his address. I was trying to help him before something like this happened. The kid snapped-in-half Fritz. He's literally lost it.
(beat, deadpan)
He say anything else to you?

Koenig looks back at me. Give nothing away...one gesture that doesn't read right and he'll know. He lets more seconds pass than he should. Trying to shake me.

KOENIG
Only that he was in possession of materials that might deeply damage Chief Bradley...and yourself.

ME
Like I said Fritz, he's flipped his lid. I don't want to go to Internal Affairs but I'm afraid Junior might've forced just that.

KOENIG
Let me try to locate the lad first Dave. Be a shame to ruin such a young career so soon.

ME
Be careful Fritz. He's dangerous.

Spin, press on toward Bradley's office.

ME (V.O.)
Fritz Koenig, the best inspector in the LAPD, digging. He'll find Junior and when he does he'll find Ainge...then *Glenda*...

Reach Bradley's office, burst in. Empty. To his Secretary:

ME
Where is he?

SECRETARY
(frowns at my informality)
Out at the Ravine Lieutenant.

EXT. CHAVEZ RAVINE - DAY

Park the Powerhawk. Downwind. Out. Walking. Check my Hamilton: 12:10 PM.

ME (V.O.)
Noonan's deadline lapsed ten minutes ago. An official fugitive from justice now.

Down below, Bradley with Reuben Ruiz in-tow: glazed-fear, following him like he's handcuffed. PROTESTORS gather, placards hoisted, chants: "*Dodgers, No! Mexico, Si!*" The group gathers steam, supporters pack in, the chorus continues: "*DODGERS NO! MEXICO SI!*'

ME (V.O.)
Bradley doing damage control, the forced relocation of the Ravine's immigrants has the press in a feeding frenzy. Reuben Ruiz forced along as the token Mexican mouthpiece.

Reporters press. Bradley handles them with ease and aplomb.

BRADLEY
-this area has long been rife with crime and venality, but with a brand new Stadium, we can make this horrible blight a bright spot and give our Los Angeles Dodgers the home they deserve.
(like Ruiz was an orphan)
Reuben Ruiz can tell you of his travails growing up in this horrible slum and why now is the time to '*Redeem The Ravine*.'

REPORTER #2
Chief Bradley, U.S. Attorney Noonan has promised to deliver surprise witnesses before the Federal Grand jury on-

-Bradley, this brilliant rebuke:

BRADLEY
-Welles Noonan is an unscrupulous hack politician whose smear campaign against us will fail, for he has *grievously* underestimated the moral rectitude of the Los Angeles Police Department.

Then Bradley sees me. His press-friendly face contorts, the shift startling: if only a flashbulb could've framed it. He shifts back from snarl to smile...

BRADLEY
Now if you'll excuse me, I'll leave you with Reuben Ruiz.

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

ME
Your subpoena hasn't caught up to me yet, Chief...

Bradley spins back.

ME (CONT'D)
(hand him Junior's file)
<u>Hurwitz Holdings</u>.

Bradley blanches, buckles. I see it. Before he can play stupid with: '*What?*'

ME (CONT'D)
You, Bethune, and Gallaudet bought big chunks of Chavez Ravine over the past two years through a shell company called <u>Hurwitz Holdings</u>.
(beat, look around)
If the Dodgers move here the value of the land <u>booms</u>...you could sell it off for a *fortune* -- <u>or hang onto it and make even more</u>. The parking lots alone would make you all multi-millionaires.

Bradley removes his glasses, staring at documentation that <u>dooms</u> both his immediate and distant future...

ME
Word gets out that the three City Officials who were pushing hardest for a Stadium also stood to gain a mint -- might color public opinion. Might color it even more to know that the LAPD's Chief of Detectives was trying to purchase a huge tract of that land from the biggest dope dealer in town.

Slap another file over the one he's reading.

ME
Hector Magdalena owned ten and half acres of this land.
(beat, ram him)
You didn't give a shit about solving his disappearance. You were worried that your real estate deal was going south. That's why you wanted Tommy found, not because he was a murder suspect or you were concerned that Noonan might tap him as a federal witness...you needed him to finalize your fucking land grab. To sign paperwork in place of his dead Dad. *That's why you've got Madge and Lucille in custody now.*
(beat)
Maybe I'll let your subpoena find me now Chief, *maybe I'll walk right into it*...the tales I could tell.

All Bradley can muster is:

BRADLEY
*How?*

ME
Junior Stemmons. The ex-evidence teacher. His 'excellent ratings' didn't stop him from stealing the Magdalena seizure and doing his own investigation.

BRADLEY
Why would he investigate me?

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

ME
That was stapled to the cover.
(beat)
Why would Noonan worry about a Turd like me now...when a high profile target like ***you*** can be taken down.

Silence. I smile wide at it. Bradley, scrambling.

BRADLEY
Where is Stemmons?

ME
No idea. If you haven't spoken to Internal Affairs today, I'm sure they've called. Junior's apartment caught fire. Deeply deviant material inside. Round him up-
(my angle)
-and anyone he's got with him.

Bradley readjusts his glasses.

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

ME
Now, quid pro quo...you subpoenaed Wilhite too.

Bradley's reaction: Feature the angler getting angled.

BRADLEY
How do y-

ME
-don't worry '*how.*' Why?

Bradley says nothing. Then, like a klieg-light, it hits me.

ME (CONT'D)
You're going after Narco *yourself*.

BRADLEY
Exposing the corrupt parts of the LAPD will redeem the whole. I'll prove that Police can police themselves-

ME
-so you show-up Noonan...co-opt his crusade and condemn your own before he can...Jesus Christ can you turn lemons to lemonade.

BRADLEY
No Cop will testify against other Cops. This is why Wilhite has suddenly disappeared.

ME
And how.
(beat)
So where do we go now Chief?

BRADLEY
(beat, eyes flick again to the files I'm holding...)
There are other forces at work here...faces we need to identify. Names we need to know. A third party. Find out who Klein and I'll reinstate you, rescind that subpoena & burn the coroner's report on Sanderline-

ME
-that report is only useful to Noonan now.

BRADLEY
No. It ensures our mutual destruction should you choose to share the contents of that Stemmons file. Which I know you won't do until you figure out how it will best benefit you.

He walks off, imperious, impervious, gets engulfed by the press ranks once again.

ME (V.O.)
A mistake to underestimate me now Chief. The price to keep your secrets is steep...and you're going to pay up. Soon.

Back to the Powerhawk, fresh-scrubbed six-packs standing near it, the trunk stink ripe past the point of concealment. They see me, deferential nods. One squeaky wheel offers:

SIX-PACK
Something in your trunk smells to high hell Lieutenant.

ME
Dead body.

Laughter. Easily amused academy types. Brush by grinning, give ‘em an “Enforcer” story to tell the other rookies. I jump in the Powerhawk and tear off.

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Borrowed time burning fast. My days are done. Only hours remain. Whatever moves I have left...make them now.

INT. MEG’S HOUSE - LATER

Going through files. Filling my own steno pad with scrawl. Pete walks in from the garage, face bunched up, bit-lemon.

PETE
Fucking Christ. You can’t keep that car in the garage, the smell’s coming into the house.

Meg wanders in, dressed for work.

MEG
Open the windows.

PETE
That’s not gonna help.

ME
(still scribbling)
Take a couple bottles of bleach, pour it over the trunk.

PETE
What do you got in there?

ME
My foreseeable future.

MEG
I’m going to work.

She kisses me on my head. I turn:

ME
You taking her?

PETE
(God damn glowering)
I'm taking her.

Meg walks out. Pete lingers. I'm starting to sour him. Not smart. He stares. I look up.

ME (CONT'D)
What?

PETE
Hughes.

ME
This is almost over Pete -- I'll give Milteer the five-grand back.

PETE
It's more than that.

ME
I'll square it. It's my thing.

PETE
That you made *mine.*

ME
I'm sorry.

A beat. Pete sketches me head to toe.

PETE
Look as bad as I've ever seen you.

ME
Things are as bad as they've ever been...

Pete exhales. Stalks off. I keep scribbling.

ME (V.O.)
Bradley's Third Party Theory. Everything linked: Wilhite, Magdalena, the Ravine...I've got my own theories...*and the one that sticks is the one I pray I'm wrong about.*

Meg's phone blares, I answer it on reflex.

ME (CONT'D)
Klein.

I hear rasp on the other end, hyperventilating, unhinged.

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

Junior. Jesus.

ME
How'd you get this number Junior?

JUNIOR STEMMONS
*I got everything on you! AND I'M GONNA USE IT!*

ME
-you're a broom-closet Queer. Your career is over.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
The knife for MY file on Bradley. I know you already burned that Whore's but don't think I can't re-do investigations.

ME
You snitch to Noonan, then what?

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Fuck Noonan. I got stronger Allies.

ME
Who? The Soviets?

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Meet me in one hour with that file, Fern Dell Park-

ME
-Where you used to snag fruits for Vice? A *volunteer* gig I'm guessing.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
Be there with Bradley's file or I scratch your scabby Bitch.

ME
Hey, did the Feds dig your pad?

The phone on the other end seems to break-in half. Hang up, it rings a beat later. Junior still wanting to spar. Snag the receiver, rip his shit:

ME (CONT'D)
-I see anybody near there Junior, the deals off and I gift that file to Bradley to *fuck you with-*

GLENDA BLEDSOE
-Dave?

ME
(big beat)
*Glenda?*

*He's got her*. Junior. Sick. Evil. My mind cannibalizes itself with "where-is-she-how-do-I-get-her-back" when:

GLENDA BLEDSOE
Sorry...you gave me this number...

He *doesn't* have her. A sigh so big, it steals all my air...

ME
Jesus...hey...

INTERCUT:

GLENDA
Who were you talking-

ME
-no, no. It's nothing. I had a phone call, just before yours.

A beat. Glenda in a chaise lounge on a small deck overlooking the canyon. She sits up.

GLENDA
Was it him? The Cop you were telling me about?

ME
I don't want you to worry. I'm handling it. But I might send my friend Pete out there.

GLENDA
You don't think it's safe?

ME
I'd just rather have someone there with you.

GLENDA
I wish you would've woken me up this morning.

ME
I'm better-looking in low light, I didn't want to blow it for myself.

She laughs. Makes me smile despite my world caving-in...

ME (CONT'D)
Stay by the phone.

GLENDA
I miss you.

And I melt. Love-struck at possibly the worst fucking moment of my life. Hang up before your voice breaks. Grab a pen, scrawl for Pete, post it on the fridge magnet: '**PETE: 655 TOPANGA. STAY WITH HER. PLEASE.**'

EXT. FERN DELL PARK - EVENING

Rolling green. Half-dirt, half-asphalt path. I scan for any back-up. Nothing. Junior already there. Astride like Gary Cooper. His eyes bloodshot from here. My gun riding quick-draw style. The heft feels good. Unbutton my coat to show him the file as I approach, tucked right behind my .45.

ME
Where's the knife.

Junior, this evil little curl. He turns. Follow him over a small knoll: that Gray Packard, waiting. A silhouette behind the wheel. As we near it the lights come on, blind me.

ME
Turn your lights off...and just come out and talk to me...Fritz.

A pause in the car, Junior looks at me like I'm Rasputin, divining answers from the marine-layer moving-in over LA. The lights pop off and I hear a tired laugh coming from the car that we've all heard before.

ME (V.O.)
Third Party Confirmed...I fucking knew it.

Fritz Koenig steps out of the Packard.

KOENIG
Not much with these sub-rosa things...

ME
(a nod to the Packard)
I thought it was Noonan tailing me.

KOENIG
Bradley's greatest stroke was enlisting you to his side.

Junior, jumpy in my periphery. I don't like it.

ME (CONT'D)
Wilhite ran Magdalena for *you*, not Narco.

KOENIG
When did you know?

ME
I didn't. I had a feeling. I smelled cover-up all over Hector's disappearance and Wilhite wouldn't have the muscle or the mind-set to kingpin something that big by himself...you knew about Bradley trying to buy him out?

KOENIG
He was offering to exonerate Hector and clear his criminal record. Hector met with Wilhite and I to inform us of his decision...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. 1284 SOUTH TREMAINE - PAST

For the first and only time, WE SEE Hector Magdalena, alive and well...for the moment...speaking to Koenig and Wilhite.

KOENIG (V.O.)
...to accept Bradley's deal...

Koenig pets Hector's twin Doberman guard dogs.

KOENIG (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...and although the terms of that deal worked well for him. I found them less than favorable...

Koenig draws a silenced pistol and shoots both dogs before shooting a shocked Hector twice in the chest. Wilhite staggers to his feet as Koenig steps over and delivers the coup de grace head-shot to Hector.

KOENIG
Darktown. Chavez Ravine. Hot Spots for Human Vice. These are slums I run & profit from. If these slums suddenly become Stadiums, that profit goes *elsewhere...that crime goes elsewhere.*

ME
Bradley...you two got greed in common.

Koenig grins. Junior keeps shifting. Dying to shoot him dead.

ME
You knew about Wilhite and Lucille. That's how you were operating him.

KOENIG
I was aware of his sexual predilections.

ME
(a scowl for Junior)
...and someone else's...

KOENIG
(that great white grin )
We share an eye for human frailty and we're both born blackmailers Dave.
(beat)
I knew young Stemmons here had a fondness for Lads, stretching back to his days at the academy.

ME
And now you're his only ally.
(back at Junior)
This sad queer who fell out with cops and flunked out with the Feds.
(back to Koenig)
So you get this file to battle Bradley with. What's Junior get in return?

And like he was waiting for those words: Junior lunges. I twist to deflect but he's too fast -- feel something sink and drag in my side. I go down, gouge/groping for my gun. Instant trauma zaps nerves numb up the arm, fingers failing. Then a pain like boiling oil moves through my blood.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
***JUST YOU! YOU FUCK!***

Look down, **SEE:** A mother-of-pearl knife hilt in my side, the business end stuck deep. Junior laughing as I fall to my knees. He pulls the file from the waist and tosses my .45.

JUNIOR STEMMONS (CONT'D)
(two inches from my face)
*THERE'S YOUR KNIFE KLEIN!*

Koenig takes the file, opening it.

KOENIG
(turning his back)
I don't want to watch...I'm sorry it came to this, Dave.

Junior, his own .45 pulled, put to my head.

JUNIOR STEMMONS
*I hope the Bledsoe whore was worth it...'cuz she's still fucked. For a crooked cop, you think small.*

Koenig reads the file's first page, lifts it...a blank page behind...and behind that one...

ME (V.O.)
Whatever moves I had left...I just made.

Koenig spins back, more blank pages spilling from the file.

KOENIG
*This isn't it!*

-Junior looks: that's all I need. Pull the pig-sticker off my ankle and corkscrew it into his calf, twisting. Junior bleats slaughtered-lamb as I reach up a wrench his gun free. Grab his tie, pull him down as I jut *his gun up under his chin* and fire two shots through the top of his head.

Haul him down dead by his tie, turn -- Koenig's gun-hand flashes to his shoulder. Shoot him twice. He goes down gargling '*fuck*'. Stand-up on me sea-legs, bad wobble/weave as I slowly pull the knife from my side, pocket it. Feel blood flow saturate my pant leg. This weird wooze overcomes me as I approach Koenig.

He pulls himself into a sitting position, shaking his head. This bemused, beaten, half-grin as he flicks blood from his hand like his fingers had just brushed something sticky.

KOENIG
Poorly played Dave...poorly played...

Say nothing. Keep Junior's .45 out. My intention crystal clear: endgame. Koenig looks up, this odd squint, like a bum about to beg for change.

KOENIG
Could I talk you into something?
Cut you in on something?

Give him no hope.

ME
Won't work for me Fritz.

He nods, remorse, resignation...it at all looks the same now.

KOENIG
Give me a minute then?

I do. Watch his hands as he removes his shoes, waiting for an ankle grab, his back-up piece...none comes. He sets his shoes aside, gazing up at the starless sky before issuing this short, gruff laugh...some inside joke that will die untold.

KOENIG
(with a nod)
Okay...

...and he holds his last breath and seems completely content as I shoot him. Cross to Junior now, rifle his clothes, retrieve a hotel key, Room 16, read it: **MOTEL COMMODORE - 1195 Centinela Ave. Inglewood, CA 90302**

INT. MOTEL COMMODORE - INGLEWOOD - LATE NIGHT

George Ainge, sweating on a stained bedsheet, smoking reefer, goofing on a TV test pattern, randomly pulling at his dick. Walk by his window, he sees me, recognition kinks -- thinks this is a good sign...I shoot him right through the glass.

EXT. TUDOR MANSION - EARLY A.M.

Bradley, roused from sleep, silk robe, coming down the stairs, his back door wide open. Reaches the landing, turns on the light.

Feature me, this bobble-eyed ghoul, bloodying his settee. I look like something exhumed. His monogrammed serving napkins soak up blood from my knifed side. He startles school-girl. Throw the file at his feet: marred, mangled, stained. He inches forward, cinching his robe.

BRADLEY
Who?

ME
Fritz Koenig.

BRADLEY
(going pale)
Where?

ME
Dead. Along with Wilhite, Junior...and Hector Magdalena.

BRADLEY
Why are you here?

ME
To collect. I have the things you need to destroy Noonan's play. These same things can be used to destroy you.

Bradley, prim, proper, even this early. He sits down across from me like some fucking Duke.

BRADLEY
Things like?

ME
Stemmons files...and Wilhite's body. He committed suicide after you subpoenaed him.

BRADLEY
This body is in your possession?

Just nod.

ME
And it's what you need to burn Narco to the ground...but if those files and his body were to be given to Noonan and the Feds, with me providing the cherry-on-top testimony of a rogue cop. Well. The word 'Cataclysmic' comes to mind.

BRADLEY
What will this cost?

ME
A percentage of your Dodger Stadium stake in perpetuity.
(MORE)

ME (cont'd)
You buy my silence for a fourth of Hurwitz Holdings.

Bradley scoffs, pithy smile.

BRADLEY
*Doubtful.*

ME
What'd you expect? A stick-up? Empty your safe? I'm about to disappear for good, and you're gonna fund my new life. You can't counter-punch out of this. Arrest me and *I snitch the world.*
(point to the file)
I'll hold that over your head for the rest of your life. Renege on our deal and it won't matter if it's tomorrow or ten years from now...I'll fry you with that file.
(at my cracked Hamilton)
I'm officially outta time now Chief. Call it.

Bradley: an actual, full-blown facial tic. His Adam's apple bobs as he realizes that he's finally been beaten.

BRADLEY
Wilhite's body...Bury it.

INT. PETE'S CADILLAC - MORNING

Cruising up the Topanga Canyon. Almost home...

ME (V.O.)
Shaking to see her, touch her...

EXT. BUNGALOW - MORNING

Door locked. Knocking. Pete opens up. Standing drunk. A pissed-off nod.

INT. BUNGALOW - NEXT MOMENT

Liquor wafts off of him.

ME
You go to bed drunk, or just been up all night.

No answer as I follow him into the house.

KLEIN
Where's Glenda, is she asle-

-round the corner: Glenda shaking but refusing to cry. I go pale: what is this? Somebody to the left, look: Milteer. Look back at Pete: tears in his bleary eyes as he crushes me with a right cross.

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

Instant-drop, moan. Glenda screaming.

ME (CONT'D)
Don't kill me.

Pete looks to Milteer, wipes blurred eyes.

MILTEER
The harder you hit him the quicker I say 'stop' -- and cease that absurd crying.

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

GLENDA BLEDSOE
(at Milteer)
THAT IMPOTENT SHIT-

MILTEER
-touch me and he dies.

Pete knocks me down again. My face in pieces.

MILTEER (CONT'D)
Kick him-kick him-kick him.

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

MILTEER (CONT'D)
(prim, official)
-you may stop.
(beat, for the room)
Howard determined that this was the price for your time together.

Milteer produces a Polaroid, takes a snapshot of my shattered husk, hands the camera to Pete on his way out:

MILTEER
You still have a job.

Milteer gone. I spit volumes of blood. I'll talk with a slur for the next year. Pete reaches for me, blotto, sobbing.

PETE
*...I'm sorry Dave...*

Pushing out words past shattered teeth.

ME
I put you here...that Powerhawk-

PETE
-there's a body in the trunk-

ME
-burn it.

Big drunk nod from Pete. Glenda panicking, trying to stanch blood that keeps rushing. Pete, reeling drunk, leans down, stuffs something in my jacket.

PETE
I'm so sorry....

INT. SHOWER - TIME UNKNOWN

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

Glenda naked. Beauty that catches in my chest. Try to stand, turn my destroyed face. She gently pushes me back down. Sits into me, holds my face in both hands so that the water hits my lips. No nerves, no unease. Home. She closes the curtain.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Post-coital. Both wide awake. Still scared.

GLENDA
Let me take you to a hospital.

ME
We'd never make it inside.

GLENDA
(big beat)
I'm worried.

ME
I'm through the worst of it.

She frames my face with her hands.

GLENDA
I don't believe you.

Lies will only leak, expose. The silence makes me just as guilty. She lets me off the hook, her head on my arm, leaning in. I kiss her.

GLENDA (CONT'D)
(at a whisper)
*Was I worth this?*

ME
Whatever the cost.

GLENDA
Just like that then?

ME
Just like that.

A nod. An understanding. Another kiss, the last one I'll remember.

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

Head shaved. Stopped bleeding. You clearly see what my face will look like 25 years hence. Gauze over my left eye. Reading the Paper: my dress-blue photo, the one that looks nothing like me now. Headline:

*'LAPD Officer Wanted in Connection with Recent Rash of Murders...U.S. Attorney Welles Noonan issued a nationwide warning to law enforcement...'*

ME (V.O.)
My deadline with Noonan: two days old. He and Bradley playing chess by press release. Bradley relocates the deaths of Captain Fritz Koenig and Sergeant Richard Stemmons to Chavez Ravine...both given posthumous Medals of Valor. Junior dies a hero after all.

INSERT: TELEVISION SCREEN

Bradley: Professorial in glasses and pinstripes, mid-press conference. Watch him work...a statesman's guile.

ME (V.O.)
Cop-killings clear the way for Bradley's "Redeem The Ravine' mandate. Dodger Stadium construction moves forward.
(beat)
Captain Dan Wilhite and Hector Magdalena. Missing. APB's issued. Bradley's press fodder cast them as 'outlaw cop and drug dealer' who most likely fled to Mexico. Narco under a full-blown, Bradley-led investigation.

BRADLEY (ON SCREEN)
*...police unit run amok, who's long tradition of graft, does not extend to other divisions of the LAPD...*

INT. BEDROOM - BLACK A.M.

Just sit and watch Glenda. Listen to her sleep: rhythmic breathing. The little natural smiling curl to her lips. Blonde hair splayed over white sheets. Touch her.

ME (V.O.)
I haven't loved you long enough to leave it all behind...Too many enemies. Too many ways for you to get hurt. Too close to me...a decision that will haunt me the rest of my days...

The Gillette knife, fold it in a kerchief, gift-wrap it to Glenda. Place a letter under it on the night stand:

ME (V.O.) (CONT'D)
"My Heaven: the hours I had with you. My Hell: the years ahead, without. Someday I'll see you before you even know I'm looking."

I stand quiet, 'grief' the best word but still not enough. Choke back tears as I lift Pete's camera and take the black and white picture you've seen before.

Put my jacket on, pull the paper out of my pocket that Pete planted...a TWA Airline voucher. I smile small...

FLASHBACK TO:

PETE
*...be nice to be in with a billionaire who's got a fleet of planes, fly you outta the country on short notice...*

RETURN TO:

INT. LAX - MORNING

A Times vending machine: paper blazing with front page photos of wanted cop Dave Klein. I walk right past my old face. Past Cops and Feds camped out, looking for me.

ME (V.O.)
Pete's penance beating built me a brand new face...nobody gives me a second glance...not even the cops I recognize.

Up to the TWA counter: glance up at the departures board-

BLACK.

Legend: *Recife, Brazil, 1978*

INT. HILLSIDE VILLA - MORNING

*I'm old. Stare at my leather-tan, once-broken face in a gilded mirror. The breaks occurred a lifetime ago, healed uneven.* I start to pack my suitcases. Old files you think you may have seen before. An old gun you know you've seen before. Movements slow and steady in my advancing age...

ME (V.O.)
My will to remember. My confession complete. Still not enough.
(beat)
Post-scripts. Me: gringo exile rich off funds from Stadium Parking lots. Meg and Pete: still married. Three boys. Boyce Bradley: Lt. Governor, then a Gubernatorial primary loser to some chump who acted in Chimp movies.
(MORE)

ME (V.O.) (cont'd)
Welles Noonan, convicted of jury tampering in ‘64. Prison suicide in ‘66. Howard Hughes: a shut-in shitting in coffee-cans at the Vegas Hilton.
(beat)
George Ainge: body found, murder unsolved. Madge Magdalena, liver failure in ‘68. Lucille Magdalena: *Mother of five*.

Look back down at HER picture.

ME (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Glenda: twenty-five years avoiding her name. Only a photograph, yellowed with years-passed, reminding me of everything I never was.
(beat)
Then a week-old Times at the place I buy coffee. Her picture sees me before I realize she’s looking. Her Face eternal-beautiful...

Put her photo in my chest pocket. Push the week-old Times into a waste-basket: a Pan-Am ticket to LA underneath.

ME (V.O.)
*...and it asked me to revoke our time apart, redeem it...tell her anything...tell her everything...*

I stand, shatter the mirror that reminds me of how long. And as I step out, an old man twenty-five years too late, and my MGM-handsome, 1958 face smiles back at me through the shards.