

"WHEN YOU NEED A GUNN"

Written by

Karl Ritter

FADE IN:

EXT. SUNSET BLVD. 2 A.M. - 1947

A cream-colored Lincoln Continental moves casually west on Sunset, the lonely car on the boulevard. LINDA HEATHROW, 40's, is at the wheel. Once, a beautiful woman, makeup keeps her relatively pretty, and hides her inner toughness.

The car pulls up to the stoplight at Whittier Blvd. A motor bike pulls alongside the driver's door. The woman in the sedan looks over, a dismissive smile, then looks straight ahead. The rider, wearing goggles and a cap(think Brando in "The Wild One"), loses control, and the bike falls against the door of the sedan. Startled at first, the woman becomes angry, rolls down her window, and berates the rider.

WOMAN

You idiot! Watch what you're doing!

She looks out the window at her scratched car door, as the rider straightens up the motor bike. The irate woman starts to open her car door, but the rider kicks the door closed, pulls out a pistol, and shoots her twice in the head; then reaches into the car, and retrieves a small leather portfolio from the passenger seat, ignoring the woman's purse.

The bike drives around the sedan and turns up into the streets of Beverly Hills. The CAMERA assumes the rider's POV as we continue and:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. 1949 TWO YEARS LATER - BEVERLY HILLS - EVENING

We are now following a luxury sedan as it winds through the streets. The sedan pulls up to the gates of a large mansion. Two guards greet them. One of the guards approaches the driver's side window, and is handed an ornate invitation. He checks the invitation, looks in the back seat, then motions for his partner to open the gate.

The sedan follows a long path up to the front door of the mansion. A valet opens the rear passenger door, and CONGRESSMAN THOMAS BEACON, 50's, dressed like a 17th Century nobleman, steps out, walks to the front door, where another valet opens it for him. He steps into a pleasure palace, where the theme is Marie Antoinette meets Marquis De Sade.

A string quartet provides the music as we waltz through the party. The ladies wear provocatively tailored ball gowns, the men in their powdered wigs and waistcoats.

The "QUEEN" holding court is LILI, 30ish, moderately attractive. And these are her "ladies in waiting", a kaleidoscope of beauties, entertaining an international array of wealthy businessmen, celebrities, politicians and sports stars.

Close on LORETTA and JENNIFER, chatting away off to themselves. Lili notices the Congressman enter the main room. She catches Loretta's eye, and motions for her to attend to him. Loretta nods and goes to greet him. Lili gives Jennifer a stern look as if to say, "Get out and mingle". She quickly obliges. When Loretta meets up with Beacon, it's obvious this is not their first encounter.

FADE TO:

INT. JENNIFER AND LORETTA'S APT. - 3:30AM

Inside a luxury apartment in Brentwood, the girls are in their respective bedrooms, changing into their pajamas.

LORETTA

(up)

What a night. That congressman had me in more positions than a Chinese acrobat. How 'bout you?

JENNIFER

(up)

I ended up with an Arab prince. He wanted me to fly back with him and join his harem. I don't think so.

LORETTA

(up)

Don't worry. We won't be doing this much longer. I'll see to that

JENNIFER

(up)

An' how are you gonna manage that?

LORETTA

I've got my ways.

Jennifer has finished dressing, and stands outside Loretta's doorway as she finishes.

JENNIFER

Dangerous ways if you ask me. Might get yourself hurt.

LORETTA

What're you talkin' about?

JENNIFER

C'mon, Loretta, don't gimme that little miss sunshine act. You got something somebody wants. I can tell that.

LORETTA

Yea, but here's the beauty of it. I'm totally anonymous. I'm just a phone call to them. One that has certain information that is worth something in return. And as soon as I get it, I'm gone.

JENNIFER

Well, good luck. I'm gonna go open the champagne.

LORETTA

Surprise, surprise! You're gonna drink some champagne with me? What happened to your friend, Mary Jane?

JENNY

I just wanna have some champagne. Is that okay with you?

FADE TO:

INT. HALLWAY - NEXT MORNING

AN HISPANIC MAID knocks on the girls door.

MAID

(up)

Housekeeping.

There's no answer so she pulls out her master key, opens the door and peeks inside.

MAID (CONT'D)

Girls. You home?

INT. APARTMENT

The maid brings her cleaning cart into the living room and stops. She sees Loretta and Jennifer lying on two sofas. She shakes Jennifer, who stirs and becomes partially coherent.

She does the same to Loretta, who is lying with her back to the maid.

As Loretta rolls over, her face is a dull gray-blue, with bloodshot eyes, and a needle sticking out of her left arm. The maid screams hysterically. CLOSE on Jennifer as she looks at Loretta's lifeless body. She turns white as a sheet and rolls away, as she tries to keep from throwing up.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. NORMANDY, FRANCE - NIGHT 1944 (FLASHBACK)

A hard rain hammers the cobblestone streets of a village square, recently the scene of a dramatic fire fight. Bodies of Germans and French resistance, litter the area. Two figures sprint through the wreckage --JASON GUNN, 29, tough and lean, beside him is the beautiful French Resistance fighter, VIVIENNE MARCHAND.

They press against a stone wall, hidden in shadow. Jason checks his pistol. Four rounds left. He looks at Vivienne, who seems more excited than afraid.

VIVIENNE  
(in French, subtitled)  
Two more Bosch in the church tower.

JASON  
Then we need to get out now, before  
they can radio for backup.

VIVIENNE  
Jason.

She pulls him by the collar and kisses him with a desperate passion.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)  
(subtitled)  
After the war, no matter what.  
Paris. Our cafe on Rue De Marlene.

JASON  
I always keep my promise.

He seals it with a kiss. They break into a run - -

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. GUNN INVESTIGATIONS - JASON'S OFFICE - MORNING 1949

Jason Gunn, now 34, is not running anywhere. He's on his office couch, soaked in a cold sweat, one arm thrown over his eyes, body shaking. In his dream, he's still in France, he calls out:

JASON  
(in his sleep-- French)  
Vivienne! Vivienne, careful...

CUT TO:

EXT. BLDG. HOLLYWOOD, MORNING

VICKY GUNN, late 30's, attractive, smartly dressed, walks up the steps from the sidewalk to the front door of "GUNN INVESTIGATIONS". She unlocks the door, steps inside, and as soon as she closes it, she hears moans and groans coming from her brother's office. She peeks in his door. Jason is tossing and turning in a cold sweat on his couch:

JASON  
Vivienne no! Don't go out there!

Vicky turns, and heads straight for the office bathroom. She's been here before. She wets a towel, and goes back to her brother.

INT, JASON'S OFFICE.

Vicky pulls a chair right up next to Jason, sits. She gently holds his hand, and soothes his forehead with the cool towel. He immediately calms down, but tightens his grip. She whispers:

VICKY  
You're home now, little brother.  
Come back home Jason.

Jason moans and stirs a bit more, then gradually opens his eyes. As they focus on his "big sister", a faint smile comes to his mouth. She asks:

VICKY (CONT'D)  
Bad one?

He moans, squeezes Vicky's hand again, and closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. LATER THAT DAY - KIBOSH'S HORSE RANCH, CHATSWORTH

KIBOSH, 60's, good shape, his weathered face speaks of many stories, some better left unspoken. He is the "O.G./Obie-Wan" of Los Angeles/Hollywood Fixers. The man powerful people call when they run out of legal options. He is the owner of these twenty acres in what is now, Chatsworth. He escorts JASON GUNN from the main house, past a corral with a dozen horses, to a large barn. He waves to his cowboys.

KIBOSH

Jason, I can't thank you enough for finding my granddaughter. If anything had happened to our little princess... I dread to think.

JASON

Kibosh. I would've gone to the ends of the earth for that little sweetheart. Thank God nothing serious happened before I got to her. By the way, what happened with those kidnapers?

KIBOSH

They won't be trouble to anyone any more. Come on, I've got something to show you.

They arrive at the barn, Kibosh slides open the large barn door. Inside are nine beautiful, collectable automobiles. He motions to Jason.

KIBOSH (CONT'D)

Take your pick.

Jason is flabbergasted.

JASON

Are you serious?!

KIBOSH

Of course I am. You deserve it.

Jason gives Kibosh a one-armed shoulder hug, and only takes a brief moment to look them over. He goes straight for a classy 1948 dark blue Jaguar sports car. He looks back at Kibosh as if to say, OK? Kibosh gives him the nod.

KIBOSH (CONT'D)

The keys are in it, and the paperwork is in the glove box. I knew you'd want that one.

Jason is all smiles as he jumps in behind the wheel. Just then the phone rings. Kibosh goes over to a desk, and picks up the phone. Jason keeps playing race car driver.

KIBOSH (CONT'D)

Hello? Oh, hi Vicky. Yeah, he's right here. For you, Jason. It's your big sister.

Jason jumps out of his new toy, walks over and Kibosh hands him the phone.

JASON

Hey, Vicky. Wait til you see what I got for my birthday. What's up?

Jason listens for a bit, pulls out a small notebook and pencil, scribbles something down.

JASON (CONT'D)

So this didn't come from Benjamin? Uh, huh. Lili Sinclair? Hmm. One of her girls? Congressman Beacon's name got mentioned? Well, it's just not complete without one of them. Thanks, sis, I'll head right over. (Hangs up phone. To Kibosh) You know of a Thomas Beacon, congressman, running for the senate this fall?

Kibosh's face grows pensive. His few words speak volumes:

KIBOSH

I know who he is. Be careful with that one. He's got deep roots.

JASON

Thanks for the warning.

Jason looks over his new present, hugs Kibosh again:

JASON (CONT'D)

I think this is "thanking me enough". Jenkins is gonna love me even more when I pull up in this.

Jason hops back in his new prize, and when he turns the engine over, it's a sound like...

KIBOSH

That's God clearing his throat.

EXT. LORETTA, AND JENNIFER'S APT. BUILDING, AFTERNOON

Jason roars to a halt outside the apartment building on Wilshire. Two uniform officers are standing guard outside. Jason hops out of his new Jaguar. They've seen Jason before, but not like this. As Jason walks past them, he says:

JASON

Hey guys. Jensen up there pulling out fingernails?

OFFICER #1

He might just be. He knows you're gonna be coming along soon to jump his gun.

They laugh, used to this, and wave him on through.

INT. APT. HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

In the hallway of the girls' apartment, the elevator doors part, and Jason begins to step out, but is prevented from exiting by TWO ORDERLIES pushing a gurney with a covered body on it.

Jason quickly retreats inside the elevator without being seen by the police outside the girls' apartment. He ushers the two orderlies into the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR

JASON

Hey guys. Whatcha got?

ORDERLY #1

We're not suppose to let anyone see the bo--

Jason whips out a couple of five dollar bills, and stuffs one into each of their pockets. The orderly pushes the "L" button.

ORDERLY #1 (CONT'D)

You got 'til we hit the lobby.

He and his partner turn their backs and chat, while Jason inspects Loretta's body.

He first notices the hideously discolored face, then checks the torso and arms, noticing the exaggerated needle marks on Loretta's left arm.

There is a bit of substance built up around a couple of the needle marks, where they looked less fresh than where the needle itself had been sticking from. Jason quickly pulls out his switchblade, and scrapes off some of the substance. He places it between one of his little note pad pages, and tucks it away.

The elevator stops and they just get the body covered up as the doors open to a busy lobby.

JASON

Thanks, guys.

A couple of ELDERLY LADIES are slightly aghast as the body is brought past them. Jason breaks their stupor.

JASON (CONT'D)

Going up, ladies?

They both melt to his good looks and boyish charm. Entering the elevator, one says:

ELDERLY LADY

Thank you young man. We're too old for going down.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY

The elevator doors open to the previous floor. Jason bids adieu to the ladies and strides down the hallway.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT

Jason enters the apartment where crime scene officers are busy at work. DETECTIVE LT. JENSEN, 40's, ALL BUSINESS; "Robert Ryan" type, and in charge of the investigation, is questioning a groggy Jennifer, when he notices Jason.

SGT. LAWRENCE

Ahh, for fuck's sake. Gunn, I knew it wouldn't be long before you'd come sniffin' around. Can't be left out of the action.

JASON

Just like you, Jensen. And getting paid more for it.

(MORE)

JASON (CONT'D)

Go ahead and call your boss. I'm officially on the case.

LT. JENSEN

Lili's got her ears up pretty early for a Sunday morning. Got you on her leash, huh?

JASON

Yep, Gonna meet the legend later. This the dead girl's roommate?

LT. JENSEN

Yeah, she is, and I'll let you know when I'm done questioning her. You might be my boss's pet, but I got the badge, an' I'm runnin' the show here, so move along, and don't step in anything.

Jason strolls around the apartment, perusing the scene, as Lt. Jensen continues questioning Jennifer.

LT. JENSEN (CONT'D)

Now, what were you saying? You don't remember seeing your friend shooting up?

JENNIFER

No, I must've passed out first.

LT. JENSEN

Did she do a lot of drugs?

JENNIFER

I don't know, I don't think she did, but that's how she died, right?

Jason notices Jennifer's reluctance.

LT. JENSEN

We won't know for sure until the lab is finished with her.

JENNIFER

You make it sound so clinical.

LT. JENSEN

That's how we keep from getting affected by it.

Jason interrupts, handing Jennifer his business card. It reads: "When You Need A Gunn".

JASON

Give me a call later when you feel better. Lili says hi. Oh, and careful what you say here. You can get in a lot more trouble with him.

Lt. Jensen didn't like that.

LT. JENSEN

Get the hell out of here!

CUT TO:

EXT. CONDO COMPLEX - DAY

Jason exits the front door and skips down the steps to where his new Jaguar is parked. He hops in behind the wheel. The engine roars to life. The two officers cheer Jason as he "peels out" with a screech of the tires.

OFFICER #1

We're in the wrong business.

Across the street, a man in a gray sedan watches with interest as Jason drives off. The fingers on his left hand drum a specific beat on the car door: thrump, thrump, thrump tump tump. He walks over to a nearby pay phone.

MAN

(into phone)

Yep, he's on it.

He hangs up, gets into his car and drives away.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT BUNGALOW, MELROSE PL. "LINDA'S FLOWERS"- LATER

This is the "front" for Lili's operation. Jason enters the foyer where three women are talking. Two are in their early forties, attractive; the third and youngest, and unbeknownst to Jason is Lili. His presence sure grabs their attention. Jason addresses the two older women.

JASON

Good afternoon ladies, I'm looking for Lili.

The youngest one says:

LILI

Right this way.

She leads Jason to a back office and closes the door.

LILI (CONT'D)  
Nice to meet you. I'm Lili.

JASON  
Yeah, surprised to meet you, too.

LILI  
Have a seat Mr. Gunn.

He does, while she sits in her chair behind the desk. She gives him a quick study. As he does her.

LILI (CONT'D)  
You come highly recommended, Mr. Gunn.

JASON  
Jason.

LILI  
Jason. Discretion was the key word I heard regarding your reputation.

JASON  
Yeah, loose lips and all that.

LILI  
I assume you know what we do here.

JASON  
Sure, you're a party planner.

LILI  
Clever, but matchmaker is how I like to think of myself.

Jason gives her a sly smile.

LILI (CONT'D)  
You just came from the girls' apartment. What did you find out?

JASON  
Lt. Jensen is over there now, working on your girl. What's her name?

LILI  
Jennifer. Loretta's the one who died. He's not being too hard on her, I hope.

JASON

Naw, he's got the kid gloves on.  
Still, she's pretty shaken.

LILI

Well, that is a helluva way to  
start the day. Was it drugs?

JASON

She had tracks, but they looked  
kinda obvious. Was she into junk?  
How about Jennifer?

LILI

No, Loretta was not into drugs at  
all, she liked champagne. And  
Jennifer just likes the reefer.  
That's what's so weird about this.

JASON

Gotcha. Loretta doesn't do drugs,  
but she O.D.'s. Jennifer likes to  
smoke, but she looks like she's  
been drinking all night.

LILI

What did Jennifer have to say.

JASON

Said she can't remember. Says she  
passed out first. But she sounded  
like she was hiding something.

LILI

They were pretty good friends. If  
Loretta was that much of a user,  
Jennifer would have known.

JASON

I think someone wanted it to look  
like she was a big time user.  
Those tracks couldn't all have come  
from one night.

Jason doesn't mention what he scraped off Loretta's arm.

LILI

Believe me, I know what vices my  
girls have. A little booze, a some  
weed, I don't care, that's  
manageable. But I don't tolerate  
hop-heads or junkies in my stable.

(beat)

(MORE)

LILI (CONT'D)

By the way, which arm had the tracks?

JASON

The left.

LILI

Loretta was left handed.

JASON

So she would have slammed in her right. And I'm sure your clientele enjoy a clean stable.

LILI

You better believe it. These people want the best, and they pay for it. Strange bedfellows I like to call them. But as long as they leave their guns at the door, and treat my girls right, they're all welcome. This is the first time I've had to deal with something like this. It really upsets me. Find out what's going on.

JASON

That's what you're paying me for. I'm getting together with Jennifer later on. I'll see if I can soften her up.

LILI

Take her to the beach, she loves it. She's from Ohio, never saw the ocean 'til six months ago.

JASON

Nothing like a Malibu sunset.

As he's exiting the door, Lili calls after him:

LILI

Find out, and for a bonus, you can have your pick.

He smiles and closes the door behind him.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

Jason exits Lili's office, and takes off in his Jaguar. A block down the street, the same man in the gray sedan, drumming his fingers, merges into traffic and follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

A huge beautiful mansion/estate in Santa Barbara.

FADE TO:

INT. STUDY - DAY

Congressman Beacon sits in a chair facing the very rich and powerful ANDREW CHARLES LONGSWORTH. Everything about the room spells wealth and power. Expecting to be feted, Beacon is surprised with a trip to the principal's office.

Standing off to Longworth's right is his right hand man, (Ret.)Major CLARK EDWARDS, at near attention. He has the bearing of military/intelligence. His hawk eyes constantly scanning the room, never still.

LONGSWORTH

Someone hasn't been playing well with others. You are creating chaos in the sandbox. I don't like these problems. I just get rid of them. We don't have any problems, do we?

SEN. BEACON

Oh, no sir, no. A minor bump in the road. That's all, I swear.

LONGSWORTH

I didn't spend thousands on your campaign to end up with a dead hooker. What I need to know is what she knew, who she told, and if that leads to anywhere near this room. I believe in putting my money in smart places. Are you smart money?

SEN. BEACON

Oh, yes. Yes sir.

LONGSWORTH

Some men go to Africa to hunt big game. I go to Washington to hunt for the crack in a man's character. The supposedly honest man I know is corrupt. That's you, Beacon. You know it and I know it. You're in this up to your eyeballs. I can make you rich or ruin you. Choose. You're not the only one I own. Now get back to school and learn how to play nice in the sandbox.

The Senate campaign will continue. You will be elected, and you will sit on the Armed Services Committee, as planned. Now make this problem go away, or I will.

SEN. BEACON

Consider it gone, sir.

Beacon meekly exits.

LONGSWORTH

(to Edwards)

Now, who is this investigator?

EDWARDS

Jason Gunn. Private. Former OSS -- European theater, '42 through '45. Decorated. He ran courier operations for the Resistance network out of Paris. Captain Benjamin is his connection. Fixer for the studios. I've got men keeping an eye on him.

LONGSWORTH

You were in the OSS in France at that time, right? Did you know or hear of this guy at the time?

EDWARDS

No, sir. I was in Paris, he was near the coast I believe. We never crossed paths.

LONGSWORTH

Keep an eye on him. Don't try any harm. Not yet, any way.

(MORE)

LONGSWORTH (CONT'D)

I want to learn more about this man. He interests me.

CUT TO:

INT. JASON'S OFFICE - MORNING

Jason enters the front door of the outer office, where his sister/secretary is working at her desk; one hand typing, the other holding the phone to her ear. She is VICKY, pretty, and very smart. She keeps the place an organized mess. Her only shortcomings are men, and an occasional bout with the bottle. One usually follows the other. She and Jason are very close.

JASON

'Morning. Missed you at Eddie's mom's for dinner last night.

VICKY

I met somebody at a meeting, and, well, you know. I'll make sure I'm there next week.

JASON

She'll be glad to see you.

VICKY

I did some digging. A couple hours at the library on the microfilm recorder. We should get one. Found some interesting info on Lili. Quite the climber. Here, look.

Jason looks over her shoulder as she brings up some pages she printed out.

VICKY (CONT'D)

Lili Sinclair, AKA Marjory Maclen. Junction City, small town outside Topeka. Honor roll, cheerleader, Drama club. Check out these yearbook pictures. (Points) That's her, always on the edge.

JASON

Never in the middle.

VICKY

Nope. But she made the papers, alright. Check this out.

(MORE)

VICKY (CONT'D)

First year out of high school she became assistant manager at the local hardware store. Guess how.

JASON

She's a fast learner?

VICKY

That's one way to put it.

Vicky pulls up an article from the local newspaper.

VICKY (CONT'D)

(reads)

Grace Kincaid filed for divorce today from her husband Gus, after learning of his ongoing affair with Asst. Manager Marjory Maclen.

JASON

Working her way up. What's next?

VICKY

A couple years go by and she shows up here in LA. Bit parts in B movies, then moves over into production, nothing big. A couple more years go by and she ends up over at "Linda's Flowers", the front for Linda Heathrow's "house of hospitality". That's when she becomes Lili Sinclair.

JASON

Linda Heathrow. That was the woman who got murdered on Sunset a couple years ago.

VICKY

Bingo. Lili was her personal secretary for the last two years, and when Linda got zapped, she stepped right in and took over.

JASON

They never found Linda's killer. D'ya think?

VICKY

That's a big step up from shtuppin' to murder.

JASON

Yea, but that's a big pay raise from assistant manager to LA's leading madam. Anyway, I'm gonna go pay a visit to the coroner, then drop by Benjamin. Great work, sis. Oh, by the way, I scraped this stuff off the dead girls arm. It was caked around the edges of some of the needle marks.

He shows it to Vicky. She pulls a magnifying glass out of a desk drawer, and checks it out. Soon she says:

VICKY

Theatrical putty, like the kind they use for special effects in the movies. Meant to look very real. Hard to tell unless you're up close.

JASON

I'm sure that's what they wanted. Whoever "they" are. Let's keep this tidbit of information to ourselves for now. Might flush somebody out.

VICKY

We're not talking about a suicide, any more. That's an execution. And whoever "they" are, they are not going to leave any loose ends.

JASON

So, this guy Beacon, how deep in the mud is he?

Vicky taps the Beacon file.

VICKY

Beacon announced his Senate run six weeks ago, and he's got some deep pockets in his corner. Andrew Charles Longworth is backing him to the tune of forty thousand dollars, so far. And get this, Beacon is already on the House Armed Service Committee, and slated for the Senate version.

Jason reads over her shoulder:

JASON

Longsworth. Shipping, rail, what else?

VICKY

Defense contracts. Three aircraft sub-contractors building components for the Air Force; also arms and ammo manufacturing. These last investments made him extremely wealthy during the war. And he doesn't seem to be slowing down any time soon.

Vicky continues reading down the page on Longsworth:

VICKY (CONT'D)

(sarcastic)

But gee, look. Now he's trying to help. What a guy. He's now invested in hospitals and medical supplies. He's gonna patch up all the damage his war machine created.

She looks up at Jason:

VICKY (CONT'D)

Don't you want to just punch him in the face.

JASON

I'll see to it next time I run into him. (Beat)  
And to think there's a dead girl in a Brentwood apartment, just to keep all this under wraps.

Vicky slides over a photostat of a government document, partially redacted. She know it's big.

VICKY

Here's something else. I found a name in the OSS liaison records from the Lyon network, '43 and '44. It seems that Longsworth had a wartime contract with the OSS, coordinating supply routes through neutral Switzerland. He would have had access to the agent rosters, and the resistance networks.

Jason stares at the document. Something has gone out of his face.

VICKY (CONT'D)  
(carefully)  
Jason. Do you know something about  
Longsworth from the war?

A very long beat.

JASON  
I'm going to see the coroner, then  
Benjamin. Hold on to that document.

He's out the door before she can ask again. She sets the document on the desk, then opens the top drawer. She looks at her silver flask, looking back at her. She closes the drawer, and picks up the phone instead.

CUT TO:

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE - DAY

Jason is being frustrated by a stoic CORONER concerning Loretta. No mention of his evidence.

CORONER  
Drug overdose. Period.

JASON  
I saw the body. There had to be something else.

CORONER  
Look, if you saw the body, you saw her arm, right?

JASON  
Yea, but that doesn't necessarily mean...

CORONER  
Then you saw the needle tracks. Like I said, death by heroin overdose. Good day, Mr. Gunn.

The coroner just stares at Jason a few moments, then turns and leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Outside the office, an INTERN brushes against Jason as he passes by.

INTERN

Oh, excuse me, sorry.

The intern surreptitiously slips a small piece of paper into Jason's coat pocket, then hurries away.

END ACT ONE

BEGIN ACT 2

INT. CAPT. BENJAMIN'S OFFICE, POLICE STATION - DAY

Capt. Benjamin, 50's, large and imposing, but fair and patient to a point; he'll let you know where that point is. He sits at his desk, as Lt. Jensen paces the room in front of him, blowing off steam.

LT. JENSEN

His old man might have saved your ass back in the stone age, but if he gets in the way of my investigation again, I will arrest him! He practically told the girl not to say anything until she clears it with him!

CAPT. BENJAMIN

I'll talk to him.

LT. JENSEN

And he better listen.

Right then, Jason pokes his head in the door.

JASON

Officer Jensen, still my biggest fan.

LT. JENSEN

That's Lieutenant, asshole!

JASON

Okay, Lt. Asshole.

CAPT. BENJAMIN

Enough! Christ almighty. I have to separate you two like a couple of kids.

LT. JENSEN

Gonna lock you up for obstruction.

CAPT. BENJAMIN  
Jason, don't be telling witnesses  
what and what not to say in the  
middle of our investigation.

JASON  
Hey, just want to let the girl know  
she's got rights.

CAPT. BENJAMIN  
Don't. That's our job. Now, what do  
you want.

JASON  
(to Jensen)  
I need to talk to Dad.

Lt. Jensen looks over at Capt. Benjamin, who nods. Jensen  
leaves.

Jason pulls out the paper inscribed POISON, and tosses it on  
the Captain's desk. He examines it. Jason is still holding  
back on the putty evidence, keeping an ace in the hole.

CAPT. BENJAMIN  
What's this?

JASON  
Oh, just something an intern  
slipped into my pocket right after  
the chief coroner got through  
swearing it was a heroin overdose  
that killed the girl.

CAPT. BENJAMIN  
Difference of opinion.

JASON  
I think it was more than opinion.  
That kid knew something he couldn't  
stick around and talk about.

CAPT. BENJAMIN  
So you think the coroner was lying.

JASON  
Covering up. Someone got to him  
before I did.

CAPT. BENJAMIN  
Could be, we'll handle it. That's  
our job. Anything else?

JASON

Right. OK, well I'm being shadowed by a gray sedan. Regular plates but it looks like an unmarked government car. White male, carbon copy Fed behind the wheel.

CAPT. BENJAMIN

You want me to look into that too?

JASON

Just thought you ought to know.

CAPT. BENJAMIN

Probably a jealous husband. Anything else? I got work to do.

JASON

Oh, I get it, hit the bricks, huh? Okay, well I'm letting you know -- officially -- that I'm gonna be talking to the girl this afternoon.

CAPT. BENJAMIN

Fine. No rubber hoses.

JASON

I know... that's your job.

After Jason leaves, Capt. Benjamin opens the top drawer of his desk, and takes out a box of aspirin. He downs a couple, puts the box back. He then opens the bottom drawer with a key, and takes out a private phone and starts dialing.

CUT TO:

INT. JENNIFER'S APT. - AFTERNOON

She is being harassed by the man from the gray sedan.

MAN

Now you better find it!

JENNIFER

I don't even know what I'm supposed to be looking for.

Right then the DOORBELL RINGS.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

That's him.

(up)

Just a minute.

Jennifer grabs her sweater and purse as the MAN retreats from view. She looks in the mirror and applies a smile before opening the front door. Jason stands there holding a single beautiful rose.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Hi! Oh, how pretty!

She takes the rose from Jason and smells it. Mmmm.

JASON

Hi. Glad you like it. I spent ten minutes in that flower shop, looking at every single...

Jennifer tosses the flower onto the light-stand next to the door and brusquely escorts him into the hallway, closing the door behind her. She smiles at Jason nonchalantly.

JENNIFER

Let's go.

She grabs his arm and leads him down the hall to the elevator.

FADE TO:

EXT. MALIBU BEACH - SUNSET

Jason and Jennifer are walking along the water's edge, enjoying a balmy evening with a beautiful sunset.

JENNIFER

You sure don't get this in Ohio.

JASON

It's beautiful, alright. Attracts a lot of people. Romantic dreams. Pot o' gold.

JENNIFER

Ain't that the truth. Things sure change once you get here.

(beat)

I guess you know what I do for work at Lili's.

JASON

Yea, I know.

JENNIFER

There's worse things I could do.

JASON  
I'm not judging.

JENNIFER  
You see, girls like me an' Loretta, we come out here looking to be famous actresses. Only some of us don't really have the talent. Then you wake up one day and realize you're one of them. But we're lucky 'cause we're pretty. Or maybe unlucky. I'm not sure. We find a place like Lili's to shake our tail, and hopefully get noticed by a producer, director, or somebody with money.

JASON  
Some powerful people come through Lili's, don't they?

JENNIFER  
Oh boy, you're not kidding. But I'm not supposed to talk about that.

JASON  
"Strange Bedfellows", Lili called them.

JENNIFER  
That fits. Politicians, sports stars, movie stars and movie big shots, gangsters. They're all in there rubbin' elbows.

JASON  
You see them mingling, talking?

JENNIFER  
(pleading)  
Yes, but don't ask me anymore.

JASON  
I'm just trying to solve a murder... of your friend.

JENNIFER  
But they said it was an accidental overdose.

Jason gives Jennifer a questioning look.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

I was passed out. I really don't remember.

Jennifer is shocked, and stops walking.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

What do you think, that I killed her?! Is that what you're getting at?!

JASON

Hold on, hold on. I didn't say that.

(beat)

But I think you know more than you're letting on. I've been in this business long enough to spot scared. And you been scared since I first saw you this morning.

JENNIFER

Then you've also been in this business long enough to know that if you ask too many questions of the wrong people, somebody gets hurt.

JASON

Are you afraid of getting hurt?

JENNIFER

I'm afraid of poverty and the streets. That's what scares me. Can we go now?

FADE TO:

EXT. BEACH PARKING LOT - DUSK

Jason and Jennifer approach his car in an isolated part of the parking lot. Jason notices that the light pole is dim in this sector, leaving his car in a semi-darkened area.

Jason reaches for his keys as TWO MEN approach from behind a van in front of him. He gently pushes Jenny behind him, and assumes a defensive stance.

JASON

You guys want something?

MAN #1

It seems to me it's you that wants something. Asking questions about dead hookers. You should stick to starlets trying to find out if their boyfriend's got a boyfriend.

JASON

It's not as much fun.

MAN #2

I'll bet it's a whole lot more fun than you're gonna have right now.

The two men in front distract Jason, when suddenly a huge man, 6'5", 250 lbs., comes from behind. He knocks Jennifer down on her rear end, and grabs a distracted Jason in a bear hug. Jason struggles, but can't break free from the ape-like arms. As the other two men approach from the front, Jason stomps on the giant's instep, cracking bones. He lets out a holler and immediately releases Jason, who back-head butts him, breaking his nose. Jason elbows him in the solar plexus, then spins around and kicks him in the balls. All with lightening quickness. The giant falls to the ground, into a fetal position.

Startled, the two men rush Jason. He fakes to his left, they bite, then moves quickly to his right. One goes flying past. The other, Jason solidly punches in the side of his head, then trips him. He goes down on his face.

The first man recovers quickly and spins around to meet Jason. He's an able fighter and they trade blows. He connects with Jason's mouth, cutting his lip. But that's all. Jason responds with a left-right combination, and the man goes down for the count.

As the other guy climbs to his feet, Jennifer appears from nowhere, pulls a small bottle of perfume from her purse and sprays his face. He goes back down screaming, clawing at his eyes.

Jason grabs the second man in a choke hold.

JASON

Who sent you ?! Huh?! Who wants me to stop?!

Just then, from about fifty feet away, a pair of bright headlights illuminate+ their presence. It just sits there, watching. Jason tosses the man down.

JASON (CONT'D)

C'mon Jen, let's get outta here.

Jennifer sprays the man one more time in the eyes.

JENNIFER

And I'm not a hooker, asshole!

JASON

C'mon, let's get outta here!

They hurry to Jason's car and speed away.

The car with the headlights cruises up to where the three men are licking their wounds. It's the man in the gray sedan. He pauses, looks at them disgustedly, drums his fingers, and drives off.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. JASON'S HOUSE - EVENING

Jason's Laurel Canyon home has a panoramic view overlooking Hollywood.

In the living room, Jennifer is nursing Jason's cut as they sit on the couch. A first aid kit is on the coffee table, the RADIO is on in the background.

Jennifer applies a little too much alcohol to his cut lip.

JASON

Ow! Careful. We don't need to cauterize it!

JENNIFER

Oh, hush up, ya big baby. I can't lose faith in my knight in shining armor.

JASON

And what about you? "Watch out for my sidekick there. She wields a mean perfume".

JENNIFER

I got him pretty good, huh?

JASON

Sure did.  
(beat

JENNIFER

I'll tell ya, that stuff ain't cheap, either. Straight from Paris France, 20 bucks a bottle.

JASON

"Asking questions about dead hookers". Thanks, mister, for confirming it was murder.

JENNIFER

You said we weren't going to talk about it.

JASON

You're right, I did. Okay, that's enough nursing for me. How about you? You got knocked down.

Jennifer coyly pats her right butt-cheek.

JENNIFER

It does feel a little sore.

JASON

(clinically)

Well, we should take a look at that.

Jennifer smiles demurely, stands and unbuttons her shorts in front of him. She turns saucily away from him as she unzips, and pulls down the right side of her shorts. She pulls up the bottom of her undies a bit, and a baseball sized bruise on her beautiful round buttocks, stares him right in the face.

JASON (CONT'D)

My, that's a beaut.

JENNIFER

You think so?

JASON

Oh yes. Absolutely. I'll bet it's awful tender.

JENNIFER

Uh-huh.

Jason reaches into the first-aid kit and pulls out some ointment.

JASON

I hear this stuff is really good  
for these kinds of bruises. Shall I  
rub some on?

JENNIFER

(Coos)  
Would you?

Jason applies some ointment to his hand and rubs it gently on her bruise. She lets out a sigh and guides his hand with hers. She is swooning.

After a bit, Jennifer is distracted by the radio. She drops Jason's hand, transfixed by the broadcast.

On the radio is a political ad for Rep. Beacon. He's delivering a speech with his family next to him.

REP. BEACON

(on the radio)  
... And when I am elected, I will  
restore the moral fiber and  
character of this great state. I  
make this solemn vow to you, the  
people, as well as my beautiful  
wife, and lovely children here  
beside me.

Jennifer's butt flexes into iron as she listens to the congressman's speech. Jason is shocked, but he keeps rubbing softly. He pays close attention to Jennifer as she listens intently, her face contorting in anger.

REP. BEACON (CONT'D)

We need to instill family values,  
because they are the bedrock upon  
which our lives and this great  
nation are founded. We are nothing  
without our values.

Jennifer is bristling now. She reaches back and clasps Jason's hand.

JENNIFER

Family values? That goddam  
hypocrite. He's got a charge  
account at Lili's. Paid with  
political favors.

She grips his hand tighter, tears streaming down her face.

JASON

He's the one that killed Loretta,  
isn't he?

(beat)

Why did he have to kill her?

Jennifer stares into space while responding. She gently releases Jason's hand, buttons up her shorts, and sits down.

JENNIFER

Loretta had some kind of dirt on  
him. Pretty damaging stuff.

JASON

She didn't tell you what?

JENNIFER

No, just that she was blackmailing  
him with it. I don't think she  
realized how serious that was. She  
was so damn sure she'd get away  
with it.

Jennifer turns to Jason.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Now, can we PLEASE not talk about  
this anymore?

Jason has no choice but to acquiesce. He turns off the radio.

JASON

You're absolutely right. Hey, I'm  
gonna grab a beer. You thirsty?

JENNIFER

I'd love a glass of wine.

JASON

Even better. Red's all I got.

JENNIFER

That's fine. Meet you outside.

Jason goes to the kitchen while Jennifer heads for the patio deck outside.

FADE TO:

EXT. PATIO DECK - EVENING

Jennifer leans on the railing, enjoying the view. Jason approaches with their drinks. Hands Jennifer hers:

JASON

Here's lookin' at you, kid.

She looks at Jason quizzically, as they clink glasses;

JENNIFER

What? What's that about?

Jason is a bit surprised she doesn't get the connection.

JASON

Never mind.

Jennifer goes right past it. Ponders the stars.

JENNIFER

I'm gonna get out, soon.

JASON

Of L.A.?

JENNIFER

That too. I mean this life. It's so easy to fall into; the money, the gifts, the travel. Everything is first class. No trailer-park queen like me would ever taste this lifestyle without working for someone like Lili.

(beat)

You ever chase rats out of your bedroom? I used to keep a slingshot with me at night. Got pretty good, too. I don't ever want to see that place again.

JASON

What are you gonna do when you "get out"?

JENNIFER

Travel... on my own. Go to school. I can do whatever I want. I've been a good girl, saving my pennies. It won't be long now, and I'll be free as a bird.

(beat)

And free to make love to whomever I choose.

She steps close to Jason, takes the glass from his hand, and places it along with hers on the patio railing.

Jason takes her in his arms and they kiss passionately. He lifts her up and carries her into the bedroom.

INT. JASON'S BEDROOM - EVENING

The light from the moon through the bedroom window bathes the room in a soft silvery glow. Jason and Jennifer kiss and undress each other. As Jason deeply snuggles Jennifer's ear, he catches a strong whiff of her Paris perfume, and is instantly sent back to France and the resistance, but is making love with Vivienne in the upstairs bedroom of a French Villa, not in his own bedroom with Jennifer. He is having a severe LSD FLASHBACK.

FADE OUT.

INT. JASON'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Jennifer is lying across Jason's chest when the PHONE rings, interrupting their slumber. Jason reaches for the phone on the bedside table.

JASON  
(into phone)  
Hello?

CUT TO:

INT. ASST. D.A.'S OFFICE - MORNING

ASST. D.A. DARLA ALSTOTT is mad as a wet hen, as she yells into the phone:

DARLA  
(into phone)  
What the hell are you doing with my prime witness?! I'll have you arrested for tampering!

AT JASON'S

JASON  
(into phone)  
Good morning to you too. Hang on to your shorts, Darla. Jensen already questioned her, and Benjamin gave me the green light. You wanna talk to her now?

AT DARLA'S OFFICE

DARLA  
(into phone)  
You bastard. Just get her dressed  
and down here quick, or I'll have  
the marshals on you.

ON JASON

As the phone slams off in his ear. He turns over and strokes  
Jennifer, who coos in response.

JASON  
You get to go visit the wicked  
witch today.

Jennifer just cuddles up closer. Whispers:

JENNIFER  
Who is Vivienne?

Jason startles awake. Might as well tell the truth, most of  
it anyway:

JASON  
She was a lady I knew in France  
during the war. She was part of the  
resistance.

JENNIFER  
Mmm, she must've been quite a gal.

FADE TO:

EXT. BUILDING - DOWNTOWN - MORNING

Jason pulls up to the curb in his Jaguar to let Jennifer out  
for her appointment with Darla Alstott.

JASON  
Don't worry, you'll be fine. She  
just hates me and all men.

He gives her a kiss.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I'm not sure how long I'll be...

JENNIFER  
Don't worry, I'll catch a cab. Call  
me at my apartment.

She kisses him back and exits the car. He drives off.

CUT TO:

INT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Jason is talking to Lili.

JASON

(into phone)

Hey Lil, got a question for you.  
You wouldn't be expecting some  
business from a certain congressman  
anytime soon, would, you?

LILI

(V.O.)

Tonight, as a matter of fact. He  
wants to double down at the  
Biltmore. Uh-oh, is he our man?

JASON

(into phone)

I think so. Looks like Loretta was  
blackmailing him over some kind of  
dirt. Don't know exactly.

LILI (V.O.)

Had to be something heavy. Those  
guys don't kill for nothing.

JASON

(into phone)

You're right about that. One last  
thing. You wouldn't happen to know  
Beacon's whereabouts today, would  
you?

LILI (V.O.)

Yeah, his main headquarters,  
Wilshire and Doheny. What are you  
going to do?

JASON

(into phone)

Rattle some cages.

LILI

Careful, handsome. Those boys play  
rough.

JASON

So do I.

CUT TO:

EXT.INT. OFFICE- VASQUEZ LANDSCAPING, MORNING

This is the office building of Jason's best friend since their teens, Eddie Vasquez. Jason is met by Eddie's mother, Mrs. Vasquez. As he approaches the front door, she is coming out, he holds the door for her. She notices Jason's Jaguar.

MRS. VASQUEZ

Thank you, Jason! Oh, my! What did you do, rob a bank?!

Jason and Mrs. Vasquez, who is like Jason's second mother, give each other a hug and kiss on the cheek.

JASON

Hola, mama. Looks like it, huh?  
It's my "THANK YOU" from Kibosh.

MRS. VASQUEZ

You deserve it. How is his granddaughter doing, OK?

JASON

Yeah, she's fine. And Vicky sends her love. She'll definitely make dinner next Sunday. She promises.

MRS. VASQUEZ

I'm going to hold her to it. I'm off to do some shopping. Bye, bye. Eddie's in his office.

JASON

Via con Dios, mama.

They hug again. Jason enters the front door.

ON SCENE: OFFICE LOBBY

Jason steps into an empty lobby, and turns left to Eddie's office. Suddenly, a strong hand grabs his shoulder from behind, and stops him. Jason calmly turns and looks into the Latin man's face, eyeball to eyeball.

MAN

Going somewhere?

JASON  
Yeah, I'm going to see Eddie.

MAN  
Yeah, and who the fuck are you?

A voice calls out from behind. It's one of Eddie's boys, MANOLO. He sees what's going on.

MANOLO  
Jason! Amigo. Que paso?

The Man is perplexed.

MANOLO (CONT'D)  
I see you've met Joachin. He's new.

Jason sticks his hand out, Joachin slowly reaches for it.

MANOLO (CONT'D)  
Careful, this guy will have your balls in his pocket in two seconds.

Joachin puffs up, thinking the warning was meant for Jason. Manolo slaps his arm.

MANOLO (CONT'D)  
I'm talking to you, S.A.!

Joachin shrinks back a bit and looks Jason up and down. Jason just smiles.

MANOLO (CONT'D)  
Eddie's in his office. Go ahead.

JASON  
(to Joachin)  
Nice to meet you.

Jason turns and leaves, as Monolo chastises Joachin.

EXT.INT. EDDIE'S OFFICE

Jason knocks on the door and pokes his head in.

JASON  
Anybody home?

Eddie smiles, steps around from his desk to greet Jason. They give each other a reserved hug, and a fake spar.

EDDIE  
Have a seat. Something to drink?

JASON  
No, I'm good.

Eddie gives Jason a quick study.

EDDIE  
You got some last night, didn't  
you?

JASON  
You got cameras in my house, too?

EDDIE  
I can always tell. You get a glow.  
That's witness tampering, you know.  
So, what's up?

JASON  
I need a little favor. One of your  
hotel connections. Speaking of  
eavesdropping.

EDDIE  
This have anything to do with that  
Lili business?

JASON  
Wow, you're pretty quick today.

EDDIE  
I hear things. And one of our maids  
found the girl.

JASON  
That must've been quite a shock for  
her, huh? She OK?

EDDIE  
Yeah, she'll be alright. Yolanda's  
a tough old bird, but she's used to  
finding the guests naked and  
hungover, not dead.

JASON  
Yeah, no shit, huh? Anywho, a  
certain congressman's gonna be  
entertaining at the Biltmore  
tonight. Like to see what kind of  
appetites he's got. Oh yeah, and I  
met your new guy out there,  
Joachin. He's very attentive.

EDDIE

Uh, oh. What do you mean? He try to stop you?

JASON

Yeah, but that's okay. Doing his job. Don't worry about it. Manolo came and let him know.

EDDIE

I'll talk to him.

JASON

No, don't. Keep him off balance a little, wondering whether or not we spoke.

CUT TO:

INT. BILTMORE HOTEL - DAY

An Hispanic maid enters the penthouse suite, pushing her cleaning cart. She goes to the bedroom, looks around, the coast is clear. She retrieves a clock/radio from under some linens, and switches it with the identical clock/radio on the night-table next to the bed. She aims the face of it at the bed, and turns on a small switch on the back.

CUT TO:

EXT. WILSHIRE AND DOHENY - DAY

Jason pulls up and parks his Jag a block from the corner where Rep. Beacon's campaign is headquartered.

The congressman is out front addressing a small group of supporters, shaking hands, kissing babies, and answering questions.

The gray sedan is parked across the street, the driver drumming his fingers.

Jason hangs on the fringe of the crowd and hollers out his questions, his identity unknown to the congressman.

JASON

(up)

Congressman Beacon, how do you feel about capital punishment?

REP. BEACON

It's a hard thing to do -- kill a man. No matter what side of the law you take to justify it. But if you commit murder, you should pay the ultimate price. Eye for an eye.

JASON

(up)

What about adultery?

REP. BEACON

Inexcusable!

JASON

What about Loretta Martin? Was that family values?

The congressman is rattled; he tries to cover.

REP. BEACON

Who? What? Who are you talking about? Some commie sympathizer?

An aide whispers something to the congressman, who quickly waves off the crowd.

REP. BEACON (CONT'D)

My aide tells me I'm late for my appointment with the mayor. Now get out and vote!

He manages a plastic smile and ducks back into the sanctuary of his headquarters followed by two Secret Service agents. Jason doesn't look at the grey sedan he knows is parked up the street, as he goes straight to his car.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. JASON IN HIS CAR AFTERNOON

Jason is driving his Jaguar west on Sunset when he notices a maroon coupe in his rear-view mirror. He makes a quick right onto Rexford, and the coupe follows. Jason hits the gas and continues up Coldwater, while the coupe is still on Rexford. At the first side-street off Coldwater is a huge garbage truck. Jason pulls a hard right, goes around the truck and parks in front of it. He is blocked by the truck and can't be seen from Coldwater. As the maroon coupe roars past, Jason can see him in his side-view mirror. After the coupe passes, Jason pulls out and continues up Coldwater.

The driver in the coupe is puzzled as he continues up Coldwater. "Where is he?" Suddenly Jason appears in his rear-view mirror, and roars up behind him. "Oh shit!" The tables are turned and the follow car is now the followed. The driver hits the gas, trying to elude Jason. The two of them speed up the hill, weaving in and out of traffic. The maroon coupe pulls a hard right onto Mulholland with Jason in hot pursuit. The passenger in the coupe shoots back at Jason. Around the winding curves they go, but one curve comes up too sudden, the coupe goes over the side, and crashes at the bottom of the canyon. Jason stops, gets out, and looks over the edge at the wrecked car.

JASON

Too bad. (Pause) That was a nice car.

END ACT 3

BEGIN ACT 4

INT. POLICE STATION, LT. JENSEN'S OFFICE, LATER

LT.JENSEN

What the hell were you doing up there, playing chicken at ninety miles an hour?

JASON

Actually, it was only about sixty. And I was testing out my new toy.

LT.JENSEN

And now two men are dead.

JASON

Not my fault they couldn't handle the curves. I wanted to find out who they were, and why they were following me; which they were at first, until I pulled a move, and got behind them. Look, Jensen, that's the second car that's been tailing me in the last two days. And I'm sure they both have to do with me investigating that girl's murder. The three bullet holes in my windshield will attest to that.

LT.JENSEN

According to the coroner, it was an overdose.

JASON

Overdose, my ass. He's covering for somebody, and I got a good idea who it is.

LT.JENSEN

Who?

JASON

When I know for sure, you'll be the first I tell. Anything else?

LT.JENSEN

Naw, get outta here. Next time you wanna race your go-cart, put a red flag on it, so we'll know it's you.

CUT TO:

INT. JENNIFER/LORETTA'S APT. - LATE AFTERNOON

Jason and Jennifer are rummaging through Loretta's room.

JENNIFER

What are we looking for?

JASON

Not sure. Letters, photos. Check the closet.

Jennifer goes to the closet as Jason goes through the desk. He finds a few photos of the girls together and separately. He sees a bundle of receipts; a phone bill, rent, and then a few for the Malibu Riding Club. He grabs one.

JASON (CONT'D)

C'mon Jen, let's go.

INT. JASON'S CAR - DUSK

Jason and Jennifer cruise through the Malibu hills.

JENNIFER

I had no idea she was into horses. Never said a word about them.

JASON

She probably didn't want anybody to know. A good way to keep secrets is don't tell anybody. Anyway, we're running out of places to look.

(MORE)

JASON (CONT'D)  
(notices the sign)  
Here we go.

They turn off the main road into the parking lot of the Malibu Canyon Riding Club. The place is deserted

CUT TO:

EXT. MALIBU CANYON RIDING CLUB - DUSK

Jason pulls into a space and parks.

INT. AUTO

He reaches under his seat and pulls out his .45 pistol, and a flashlight from the glovebox. Jennifer is a little astonished.

JASON  
It's good to be prepared.

JENNIFER  
Okay, Mr. Boy Scout.

They exit the car. Jason tucks his gun in the back of his trousers, and pulls his shirt down over it.

CUT TO:

EXT. MALIBU RIDING CLUB - EVENING

As they walk between the barns, Jason pulls out the receipt for the riding club, scans it with his flashlight.

JASON  
We're looking for barn number  
three. There it is. We want stall  
number seven.

INT. BARN - EVENING

Jason slides open the barn door, he and Jennifer cautiously enter the big, empty barn. Jennifer sees a lantern hanging on the wall. She pulls a lighter from her clutch purse, and fires up the lantern. Jason notices with surprise and approval. A couple of horses stir as the strange couple tip-toe past. They find number seven at the back. Jennifer hangs the lantern on a hook, lighting up the whole stall.

There's a locker, padlocked on the wall, and an open chest on the floor.

JASON

Look through that chest. I'll see  
if I can get this opened.

Jennifer opens the chest, going through blankets, chaps, and other gear.

Jason takes out his picklock kit, and soon has the locker opened. Inside are a bridle, brushes, and a saddle bag. He pulls out the saddle bag and looks inside. One side is empty but the other contains a manila folder.

Jennifer has searched the entire chest.

JENNIFER

I can't find anything.

JASON

I might have something.

She moves closer.

JENNIFER

What do you got?

JASON

Ah, it's just Loretta's head-shots  
and resumes.

As he looks further, a small envelope falls out. He opens it to find some negatives. He holds them up to the light "Hmmm".

JENNIFER

What do you see?

Jason shows her the negatives. She sees as well that they are pictures of Loretta and Beacon having sex in various positions. She turns them upside down and around.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Wow, he's a lot more nimble than  
you'd think.

Jason takes the negatives back, looks again.

JASON

We got him now. Let's see him  
nimble his way out of this.

Jennifer caresses his shoulder. She coos:

JENNIFER

Babe, why don't you let me have these?

JASON

Why? YOU want to turn him in? Okay, we'll do it together.

JENNIFER

No, I mean I want to burn them.

JASON

What for?

JENNIFER

Because these are what Loretta died over. The papers get a hold of them, her name will be destroyed.

JASON

Not anymore than his will. This is evidence.

JENNIFER

C'mon, he's a congressman. You can't hurt him.

JASON

He's a murderer, and yes, we can. But that's not why you want them. What is it?

Jennifer's demeanor changes completely, to a real bitch.

JENNIFER

(up)

I said I just want them!

She tries to grab the negatives out of Jason's hand, but they go flying. She tries to go for them, but he grabs her and shoves her back. She stops.

JASON

What the hell has come over you?!

Jennifer calms down.

JENNIFER

I'm sorry... I'm sorry.

JASON

Get a hold of yourself!

Jason bends down and picks up the negatives.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Jeez, you'd think there was a  
reward out or something.

As he stands and faces her, he's shocked to see her holding a  
small automatic on him.

JENNIFER  
There is.

JASON  
Whoa! Jenny, put that down! What  
else you got in that purse?

He takes a step toward her. She levels the gun at his head.

JENNIFER  
I like you, Jason, I really do.  
But I'll shoot you if you try to  
stop me.

JASON  
Why are you doing this?

JENNIFER  
Twenty five grand.

JASON  
YOU killed Loretta.

JENNIFER  
No. I just got her knocked out so  
the guys would have an easier time.  
They told me she wouldn't be hurt.

JASON  
You should stay here in LA and  
become an actress, 'cause that was  
a hell of a performance you put on  
in front of the radio.

JENNIFER  
That was no act. I hate Beacon's  
guts and would love to see him fry.  
But right now I'll settle for his  
money.

JASON  
You're dreaming if you think  
they're gonna let you walk away.  
You're gonna end up just like  
Loretta.

JENNIFER

I made a deal. I give 'em whatever we find, no peeky, and I get twenty five grand, which is a helluva lot cheaper than the fifty Loretta wanted. I'm not so greedy.

(up)

And I don't want to talk about it anymore!

(beat)

Put the negatives and your gun in the envelope. And your keys. Easy. Now gently slide it over to me.

Jason follows her orders.

She picks up the package and holds it up triumphantly.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Now, lay down flat on your face and don't move. I mean it. Goodbye Jason. It was fun. And like a Hollywood movie, now for my happy ending.

Jennifer takes two steps backward, keeping her gun on Jason. As she turns to leave, TWO SHOTS RING OUT. One strikes Jenny through the heart, killing her instantly. The other just misses Jason. The horses stomp and whinny at the noise and excitement.

Jason dives over to where Jenny lay dead, picks up her gun, and the package, and escapes behind the stable wall.

(FLASHBACK SEQUENCE)

We are now in another of Jason's periodic flashbacks, where he is physically acting out in the present, but what Jason sees and thinks he's going through, is that he's back in France during WW2. He's cornered in a small cafe with the French resistance fighter, Vivienne, by a few German soldiers. When we see the scene and are looking at Jason, we see the actual barn, and Jennifer lying dead on the ground. When we are looking from Jason's P.O.V., we see the French Cafe, and Vivienne next to him.

(Cont.) Jason peeks out from the stall. Two men (soldiers) are advancing through the open barn (cafe) doors, one on each side. Jason opens fire with Jenny's small automatic, sending each of them diving for cover.

One of the men tries to advance. Jason drives him back, emptying the gun. He tears open the envelope, takes out his .45, and pockets his keys and the photos.

Jason spies a back door opposite him. Firing a cover volley, and dodging theirs as well, he dashes across the back of the barn, and takes cover behind the back stall. He flings open the door but only pretends to escape out the back.

MAN #1

(to the other)

Go out and around. I'll follow him  
this way.

The 2nd man exits as the first cautiously approaches the back of the barn, keeping an eye on the open door.

Just as the man approaches the last stall, Jason rolls out from below and fires two shots into the man's chest, dropping him instantly. He pulls a similar movement in his flashback.

Jason peeks out the back door to try to catch the other man coming around, but that man has heard the shots and circled back to the front of the barn. He plants himself against the outside of the barn wall, waiting for his prey to emerge.

Jason cautiously re-enters the back of the barn (cafe), peeking out before coming out from the rear stall. Jason slowly approaches the front. He steps cautiously out and over the first gunman, and keeps his gun pointed at him. But as Jason clears the front of the barn (cafe), he doesn't see the hidden gunman around the side. He's a sitting duck. The shooter steps out from the barn wall and takes careful aim at Jason. Suddenly an oddly familiar voice rings out:

VOICE

Jason! Down!

That man aims his gun right past Jason, and shoots the second gunman dead. Jason whirls around to see the man drop, then as he turns back, reality spirals in, and Jason is back in the real world, bewildered. As Jason comes to his senses, Jensen walks past him and approaches the body with his gun drawn. He kicks the body to be sure, then puts away his gun. He notices Jason's state:

JENSEN

That must've been some shoot-out.  
You don't usually get this  
frazzled.

Jason barely keeps it together. He knows something strange has happened, but tries to keep it hidden. The present asserted itself rather quickly. He sort of brushes it aside. He looks Jensen in the eye to help regain his bearings, and pronounces his name loudly and distinctly to help reestablish him in his original reality. Jason never refers to him as "Lieutenant" Jensen:

JASON

Lieutenant Jensen, what the hell are you doing here?! Not that I'm not glad to see you.

LT.JENSEN

Saving your ass.

JASON

How'd you know I was here?

LT.JENSEN

"Dad" sent me. He told me to keep an eye on you. Returning some old favor, I guess.

(beat)

Now take whatever you got and go, he's waiting. I'll take care of this shit.

(beat)

Well, go.

JASON

Just a minute.

The present is rushing back to Jason as he walks slowly to where Jennifer lies on her back, her dead eyes staring at the ceiling. This kind of reality check is really sobering. From the chest, he grabs a blanket and gently spreads it over Jennifer's body; he brushes the hair out of her face, closes her eyes with his hand, and kisses her forehead.

JASON (CONT'D)

Paradise lost.

He solemnly walks past Jensen.

CUT TO:

INT. CAPT. BENJAMIN'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

An irate Jason paces angrily around the captain's office while Benjamin sits peacefully in his chair.

JASON

Thank you, that'll be all?! Are you kidding me?! Let's nail this bastard! You got the evidence, those negatives. I'm sure you've had them developed. That's some juicy stuff.

CAPT. BENJAMIN

We did, and yea, there is a lot of incriminating evidence in there. That's why I burned them.

JASON

Burned them?! You can't be serious! He killed two girls. Not to mention what's in those pictures.

CAPT. BENJAMIN

We don't have proof he had those girls killed, and the photos are evidence of adultery, not murder. This is out of our hands. And we don't feed the movie rags.

JASON

I can't believe you don't have any pull. You can't do anything?

CAPT. BENJAMIN

I do, and I can. That's why you're still alive and here in my office, bothering me.

(beat)

Sorry, Jason, but this game is over. We're done. Got it? Now, I've got work to do.

A dejected Jason plods out of the office. But he's kept one of the negatives. His insurance.

CUT TO:

INT. GUNN INVESTIGATIONS - DAY

Vicky is at her neatly cluttered desk, examining a new file. Jason mopes in the front door, and right up to his sister's desk. She can read her brother like a book.

VICKY

Let me guess. Benjamin burned them.

JASON

(Chuckles)

Yeah, that's what he said. I think he had to turn them over to the Feds. I swear, every time I talk to him, I get the feeling there's someone higher up listening in.

VICKY

Probably is. (Pause) I did some more digging. Your reaction to hearing Longsworth's name made me suspicious. So let's hope my curiosity doesn't kill the cat, because I dug up some nasty shit about that man.

Jason moves behind Vicky, looking over her shoulder.

JASON

Why am I not surprised. What did you find?

VICKY

I found the OSS liaison records with Longsworth's name attached, and traced the routing codes for the supply lines through Switzerland.

She slides out a sheet of paper. He reads as she narrates:

VICKY (CONT'D)

The Lyon network, your network, was targeted in the fall of '44. The Germans knew everything. The safe houses, the agents names. Resistance fighters were executed.

JASON

I was there. I remember. I was with a group that was hiding in a furniture store basement. The Krauts poured in like a flood. They set fire to whatever would burn, including the store I was in. Fortunately there was an exterior exit out the back. Most of us got out, and we scattered like rats. Every man for himself. But some didn't get out, and died in the fire. Others got captured.

VICKY

The leak was traced to the Swiss supply chain. Someone in Longsworth's operation sold out the network to Nazi intelligence.

Jason has been still, pondering the situation.

JASON

So, it all comes back to Longsworth. He had to get something for that treachery. Future German contracts I'll bet. Oh, what a tangled web we weave.

INT. JASON'S OFFICE NEXT MORNING

Jason is at his desk, talking to Lili on the phone. She is in her office. INTERCUT CONVERSATION, JASON IN HIS OFFICE, LILI IN HERS.

JASON

Sorry, Lili, but Benjamin's not going to release the photos. Too sensitive. He said he burned them as a matter of fact, but I wonder. I think he got the word from some higher-up.

LILI

Oh, well. We'll get him next time. What exactly did you find out?

JASON

There were some negatives.

LILI

Did you see them? What was on them?

JASON

A bunch of shots of Loretta and Beacon doing the dirty deed. Pretty graphic stuff.

LILI

Really, that's it? Nothing else?

Jason gets curious about Lili's last questions.

JASON

No. What else did you expect?

Lili covers herself.

LILI

Oh, nothing. Just seems that murder is kind of an over-reaction to a few pictures.

JASON

If those pictures can ruin your life, career and marriage. People have been killed for less.

LILI

Yea, I guess you're right. We just have to move on. You did your job, so don't you worry about a thing. Come and get your check, and don't forget, there's a bonus.

They both hang up; Lili with a satisfied grin, Jason unsettled by the conversation.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EDDIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jason is now standing behind Eddie at his desk, and they are both looking at pictures of Beacon and Loretta having sex.

JASON

These are your pictures, Eddie? You just got them?

EDDIE

Yea, just got them developed this morning. These should nail Beacon pretty good.

JASON

Unfortunately, he's gonna skate. Benjamin's not gonna touch it. Wait, I saw the pictures that got the girl killed. They looked different than these. If they didn't come from you, then who? The girl was blackmailing him with her own set. How did she get them?

Jason and Eddie look at each other.

JASON/EDDIE

Lili.

CUT TO:

INT. LILI'S OFFICE - LATER

Jason doesn't bother to knock, just barges right in and closes the door behind him. Lili is startled, looks up, knows something is wrong, but composes herself.

LILI

Oh Jason, I just heard. You didn't tell me about your gunfight at the OK corral. So glad you weren't hurt. And terribly sorry about Jennifer. Poor girl. Oh, and here's your check. Great job.

Lili places an envelope with Jason's name in fancy lettering on the edge of her desk, in front of him. Jason ignores her and the check.

JASON

Cut the crap, Lili. This isn't a social call. Or should I call you Marjory?

Lili is shocked at first, tries to look innocent, then becomes her hard-boiled self. A confident smirk on her face as Jason continues.

JASON (CONT'D)

The outside looking in. But always moving up, whatever it takes. Hardware store, movie bit parts, production. And then the big one, Linda Heathrow's personal assistant. Wow. But she's "mysteriously" bumped off, and what do you know, heere's Lili! Step right in, have a seat in the big chair, and the business just keeps right on rolling.

LILI

Of course it did. Nobody else knew how this place worked like I did. It would have fallen apart without me. Even while Linda was here. And she didn't have an eye for the future, either. What a place like this could really do, if you got the right clientele. And I went out and got them.

JASON

But Linda didn't want to share, did she?

(MORE)

JASON (CONT'D)

As far as she was concerned, you were just an employee, a secretary, nothing more.

LILI

That bitch. All I wanted was a little cut of the profits, for all the work I did.

JASON

But she wouldn't go for it.

LILI

No. She thought I was trying to take over. "No white trash floozy is gonna put me out to pasture". That's what she told me.

JASON

So you did something about it.

LILI

You're damn right I did. I... kept my nose to the grindstone, and learned all I could. And boy, did I. This town, this country, hell, this whole fucking planet is full of dirty secrets. Dirty men AND women with sexual appetites that would curl your hair. And I made sure they all got fed. Linda didn't want to go "there", but I knew where the real money was. She pimped to this city, I pimp to the world.

JASON

Is blackmail a part of that, too? Filming it all. I saw Loretta's pictures, and the ones from last night that could've sunk Beacon. But Benjamin wouldn't go for it. You got your claws into him, too?

Lili chuckles, decides to throw Jason a bone.

LILI

Benjamin? Let's just say we swim in the same pool of sharks. All my girls carry a purse that has a camera in it. They place it on a chair aimed at the bed. It's for their protection.

(MORE)

LILI (CONT'D)

In case anything goes wrong, it's evidence, insurance.

JASON

Evidence? Insurance? It all adds up to blackmail. And that's what Loretta was doing to Beacon. Somehow she made her own copies. And THAT'S why you hired me. You already knew who killed her. You just wanted to know what kind of dirt she had on him. You thought Jennifer knew more than she did, maybe as much as you. I was getting too close, so you thought you'd get rid of us both at the same time. How did those gunmen know we'd be at those stables? You sent them. If we found the evidence, they'd kill us, then bring it to you. Insurance.

LILI

Oh please, spare me your dime-store sleuthing. I'm a matchmaker, it's that simple. I put two people together who each need something. One wants sex, the other needs money. The world's oldest profession. And yes, I was going to leak those photos. I wanted to take that son of a bitch Beacon down, but Benjamin stopped me. Kill one of my girls, and get away with it? Think again, asshole. Besides, I liked Loretta, she was a sweetheart. Not too bright. Jennifer was a snake. Very popular with the clients, though. Do just about anything they wanted. But you know that.

JASON

And you've got all the pictures to prove it.

LILI

That's right. And only I know where they are.

Lili is quite proud of herself.

JASON  
Careful, Lili. There's always a  
bigger fish. (A beat) Tell me, did  
you kill Linda Heathrow?

A long pause and a wry smile.

LILI  
What difference does it make now?

Jason turns to walk out the door, but stops and snatches his  
check off the desk as Lili gloats.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LONGSWORTH'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Longsworth has been listening to this entire scene from a  
wire he had planted in Lili's office. He's not pleased. He  
shouts.

LONGSWORTH  
Edwards, come in here.

CLARK EDWARDS enters Longsworth's office.

EDWARDS  
Yes, sir?

LONGSWORTH  
We have a problem.

EDWARDS  
Yes, sir. Taken care of.

CUT TO:

INT. LILI'S OFFICE, EVENING

Lili is talking on her phone.

LILI  
You got all that info I sent you,  
right? Good to hear your voice  
again. See you soon.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN VICENTE BLVD. LATER THAT NIGHT

Lili is driving her Cadillac west through Santa Monica. She turns left off San Vicente onto 14th St. And into the heart of Santa Monica. At one of the stop signs, a large van pulls in front of her from the cross street, blocking her path. She curses and hits her horn. Suddenly, a motorcyclist pulls alongside on her left. She looks over at the rider as he reaches into his jacket and pulls out a pistol. "Oh my God", are her final words.

END ACT 4

FINALE

INT. "BLUE MOON" NIGHT CLUB, EVENING.

It's late at night, close to last call, as Jason sits alone at a corner table in the club, watching the owner, RUBY LOVE, crooning a bluesy/jazz tune. Jason has sulked his way through a few drinks, while immersing himself in the sultry voice of the lovely Ruby. She has taken notice. Ruby finishes her last song to the applause of the select few remaining. She goes straight for Jason's table, sits and looks him in the eye:

RUBY

A skeleton walks into a bar, "I'd like to order a pitcher of beer and a mop."

Her joke is met by a dead stare from Jason.

RUBY (CONT'D)

Benedict really threw a stick in your spokes, huh?

JASON

Forgot where his balls are.

RUBY

You think he's really that far up the flag pole?

JASON

Naw, you're right. I'm just pissed. It's always guys like Beacon that get away with this shit.

RUBY

I doubt if he's at the top of that pole, either.

JASON

I know. It doesn't stop til God.

At that point, a waitress comes up to the table, and is about to ask if Jason wants another drink, but Ruby waives her off. Says to Jason:

RUBY

Let's go home there, Lone Ranger.  
We'll get him next time.

JASON

It all started with one girl's death, and has gone down a rabbit hole of who's pulling whose chain.

RUBY

We all answer to somebody, sugar.

JASON

Yeah, but this guy Longsford, who lives five miles from here, seems untouchable. He has a Federal operation protecting him. He has the local police compromised at the top. He has a U.S. Congressman in his pocket, who is about to sit on the Armed Services Committee. He even managed to have an impact on the war. And has somehow dug up enough dirt on enough powerful people to keep himself nice and squeaky clean.

Ruby takes that all in:

RUBY

Wow. Think I can get his number?

Jason blurts out a laugh.

JASON

Hang around me long enough, doll,  
and he'll have yours.

Ruby waives for one of the security personnel to come and help Jason to the door. They give each other the side cheek to cheek kiss. Jason is fine, but accepts the bouncer's adherence to his boss's directive. When they reach the door, Jason gives the man a \$10 bill, which is gratefully received.

INT./EXT. BLUE MOON NIGHTCLUB, EVENING

The Blue Moon is a classy nightclub on the inside; located in a nondescript industrial area. Jason is saying good night to the doorman/bouncer, aptly named JUMBO. He's a 6'5", 300 lb, African American, with a look that can warm your heart, or tighten your colon. He opens the door for Jason, who puts a \$10 spot in the big man's hand.

JASON

'Night, there, Jumbo.

JUMBO

Be cool, boss.

Jason takes one step out the door when suddenly, a shot rings out, and a bullet pierces the top of the door jam, right above their heads. Jumbo reaches out and grabs Jason by the collar and yanks him back in, then slams the door.

END PILOT