

THE GOOD (BAD) SHEPARD

S1:E2

Written by

Herb Schultz

PO Box 391
Saugerties, NY 12477
845 224-7088
212 242-4520
herbschultz3@yahoo.com

S2:E2 "LEX TALIONIS"

FADE IN:

INT. FBI OFFICE/TAFT'S OFFICE - DAY

Tracy sits in the antiseptic FBI office of Special Agent TAFT who sports a conservative suit and military haircut. Tracy is dressed in a dark suit.

TRACY

I met this man, Fischer Cuttbate on a flight to LA. He told me his company was working on a cure - I mean a therapy - for an eye disease. It's the same disease my father suffers from.

Taft nods sympathetically.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Anyway, Fischer told me his twin brother Fletcher was interfering in the business, so I agreed to try to sort it out for him, but what I discovered was that Fischer was trying to screw over Fletcher. Or so it seemed.

TAFT

How did you come to that conclusion?

TRACY

I mistakenly received...

Tracy hesitates.

TAFT

Yes?

TRACY

Uh, I received a spreadsheet that showed Fischer was cooking the books. Anyway, I passed on the information to Fletcher who then called the FBI and they shut down the company. Fischer disappeared. Then I found out from Fletcher that he had a real cure for the eye disease that he had kept secret from his brother.

(beat)

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

You have to understand Agent Taft... a cure for retinitis would be a godsend for my father. It would change his whole life. I had to see that it got developed.

TAFT

Completely understandable.

TRACY

So I invested money - a million - into Fletcher Cuttbate's new company. Believe me, I did due diligence. My lawyer checked on patents, incorporation documents, tax data. Anyway, two weeks later I discovered it was a scam.

Taft offers a box of Kleenex. Tracy scowls

TRACY (CONT'D)

Agent Taft, I never cry.

TAFT

Sorry.

Taft puts the box down.

TRACY

So help me God, I'll see to it that the Cuttbates get the chair, or the needle, or whatever they use these days.

TAFT

OK, OK. We don't execute people for running scams, but I appreciate your outrage, Mrs. Shepard. Let's go back to the part about the FBI raid on, uh...

(Checks his notes)

...RodCone Labs. Tell me more about that.

TRACY

I got a call from the Labs' receptionist when I was in Texas.

Taft works on his computer as Tracy speaks.

TRACY (CONT'D)

She told me that the FBI raided the place and that Fischer and his business director, Chad Knecht had gone missing. They couldn't pay for my--

TAFT

--There's nothing in our records about any raid on RodCone Labs, or any warrants on Cuttbate or Knecht. Nothing.

TRACY

N-nothing?

TAFT

It appears that not only was RodCone Labs a front, but that the raid was fabricated as part of the scheme to get you to ally yourself with the brother.

(beat)

I'm sorry, Mrs. Shepard. We'll initiate an investigation. I must tell you though that a con involving so many people in so many places over such a long period of time would have to've been perpetrated by a clever cast of characters.

TRACY

I... I... uh--

TAFT

--Do you have any pictures of the culprits?

TRACY

Uh, no. I don't.

TAFT

OK. Let's see if we can develop a composite picture of this guy Cuttbate.

INT. FBI OFFICE/FORENSICS UNIT - DAY

Tracy sits on an uncomfortable wooden chair across from a COMPOSITE ARTIST, a young woman in an FBI uniform. The Composite Artist sits in front of a computer screen.

COMPOSITE ARTIST

Before we get started putting together a composite sketch, give me some basics, Ms. Shepard. Hair color and style?

TRACY

Dirty blonde, medium length, combed straight back.

COMPOSITE ARTIST

Facial shape?

TRACY

Uh, oval-ish?

COMPOSITE ARTIST

Ears? Close to the head? Sticking out?

TRACY

Ears? I would say... normal. Not pasted to his head but not jug-eared either.

COMPOSITE ARTIST

Lobes?

TRACY

Geez. Lobes? Regular. I don't know.

COMPOSITE ARTIST

I know it's difficult, Ms. Shepard. If you had been robbed we could show you a book full of mug shots--

TRACY

--I was robbed.

COMPOSITE ARTIST

I mean, robbed at gunpoint or something like that. There aren't too many mug shots of successful confidence men.

(beat)

I understand the person who conned you had an identical twin.

TRACY

That's right. Clearly he was party to the crime.

COMPOSITE ARTIST

Do you think it's possible these twin brothers were actually one man?

TRACY

What?

COMPOSITE ARTIST

Did you ever see them together?

TRACY

Well, no, I never did actually, y'know, see the two of them together. They didn't get along.

COMPOSITE ARTIST

I see. Before I forget, can you tell me: did either one of these men have any distinguishing physical characteristics that might help identify them? A scar, maybe, or a tattoo? Anything like that?

TRACY

Uh, um... Tattoos? No. No tattoos. None that I know of.

COMPOSITE ARTIST

Alright. Let's move onto the eyes. Color and shape?

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Tracy and RICHARDS, a private investigator sit at a table. Tracy hands Richards a thick folder.

TRACY

Thank you for meeting me on such short notice, Mr. Richards. I understand from a friend that you're a very competent PI. I hope she's right.

RICHARDS

Thank you for your confidence, Ms. Shepard. What do you have for me?

TRACY

Here's everything I know. As I explained to you on the phone Mr. Richards, I want this bastard Fletcher Cuttbate found and prosecuted. The FBI doesn't impress me.

RICHARDS

I understand, Ms. Shepard. My firm has a solid track record.

TRACY

On top of your fee, you can keep 25 percent of any money you recover as an added incentive. I expect results, Mr. Richards.

RICHARDS

From what you've already told me, Ms. Shepard, I am convinced that Fischer and Fletcher Cuttbate - no doubt aliases - are one and the same person.

Tracy shrugs, her legs crossed, a stiletto heel dangling from her toe.

C.U. Of the shoe and its pointy heel.

Richards notices.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

Have you ever seen "Vertigo", Ms. Shepard? Great movie. Jimmy Stewart, Kim Novak, San Francisco?

TRACY

No.

RICHARDS

It involves a man who murders his wife with the cooperation of a woman who poses as her double. You should check it out sometime.

Tracy checks her watch. Richards opens the folder.

TRACY

What else?

RICHARDS

How do you think this Cuttbate fellow knew to meet you at JFK airport and to be ready to forfeit his seat for you? That couldn't have been a coincidence.

TRACY

I don't have any idea.

RICHARDS

Well, I do. You said you were flying that day to meet with some clients in LA.

TRACY

That's right.

RICHARDS

My guess, Ms. Shepard, is that Cuttbate had a co-conspirator inside one or both of those companies. Someone who knew you were planning to fly that day at that exact time and on what carrier. You said you met Cuttbate again on the return flight. Coincidence? Not in my business, Nothing is a coincidence. Everything is planned.

Tracy nods sadly.

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

I'd even go so far as to postulate that members of Cuttbate's gang were on that plane to ensure it was overbooked by the time you showed up at the airport. You told me your limo driver was late picking you up that morning. Do you trust him?

TRACY

(Flustered)

Well, I, never, uh--

RICHARDS

--I'll need a list of everyone who attended the meeting you had with these two companies. That's where I'll start. OK?

TRACY

Whatever you say, Mr. Richards.
You're the expert.

Tracy escorts Richards to the door. They shake hands. As Richards steps out, Tracy pipes up. They face each other, Tracy standing taller than Richards by four inches in her heels.

TRACY (CONT'D)

One more thing I forgot to mention.
Fletcher Cuttbate has a, um... he
has a snake tattooed on his penis.

Richards raises an eyebrow slightly, takes out a pad of paper and writes a note on it.

RICHARDS

I'll check with some of the tattoo
parlors and see if I come up with
anything. Good day.

Tracy closes the door, cradles her head in her hands and bursts into tears.

FADE TO WHITE.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Tracy sullenly strolls the park in the drizzle.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Tracy drinks coffee and works a newspaper puzzle.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tracy is on the phone with Richards, her PI. From the intercut action it is clear she is not impressed with his status.

INT. AUCTION HOUSE - NIGHT

Tracy's Kandinsky is on the block. An AUCTIONEER drives up the price between two BIDDERS. The Gavel comes down.

EXT. TRACY'S APARTMENT (LOBBY) - DAY

Tracy stands by a saddened Hannah.

TRACY

Good luck, Hannah. If you need me to write a letter of reference, give me a call.

EXT. EMPLOYMENT OFFICE - DAY

Tracy's Driver, dressed in casual clothes instead of his uniform, walks up to the front door of the Employment Office holding a manila folder.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tracy and Dad sit together on the sofa.

DAD

What's the matter, dear? You sound tired.

TRACY

Nothing. Well, maybe I am a bit tired.

DAD

You work too hard, Tracy. Too much traveling.

TRACY

Not really. I haven't been working too much lately. Not at all actually.

DAD

I don't get it.

TRACY

I made a bad investment decision, Dad. Lost some money. Kind of took the wind out of my sails.

DAD

Gee, I'm sorry to hear that.

(beat)

You don't need help, do you? I mean, you aren't in trouble, are you, dear?

Tracy hesitates

DAD (CONT'D)

Are you?

TRACY
 No, no. Of course not, Dad. I'm
 just using the experience to
 reflect on what matters.

DAD
 That's the way to go.

TRACY
 Find a way to make it right.

DAD
 Are you seeing anyone, Tracy?

Tracy stands and walks O.C.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - DAY

INSERT: TITLE CARD "THREE MONTHS LATER"

Tracy sits at her desk in front of her laptop, scrolling through webpages while somber jazz music PLAYS in the background. She is dressed casually. The wall has a slightly faded outline where the Kandinsky once hung.

SOUND - TELEPHONE RINGING

Tracy answers the telephone.

TRACY
 Hello? Ah, Special Agent Taft.
 Has it been another month already?
 Don't tell me, let me guess...
 Fletcher Cuttbate remains at large.
 (beat)
 Right, yeah, I know.
 (beat)
 I understand. Thanks.

Exasperated, Tracy hangs up the phone. She trains her attention back to her laptop. She stops scrolling and takes special notice of a business news headline on the screen.

TRACY'S P.O.V. - NANONANO ANNOUNCES I.P.O.

INT. MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

Matt's Office is a sleek place, furnished in blonde, adorned with mid-century art.

A flat-screen TV on the wall broadcasts silently. Matt sits at his desk casually browsing a brochure for Citation jets.

SOUND - BUZZER

SECRETARY (O.S.)

(Over speakerphone)

Mr. Blankenschein. A Ms. Tracy Shepard is asking to speak with you. She says she's done business with you in the past.

MATT

(Into speakerphone)

Sure. I know her. Great legs. Put her through.

(beat)

Tracy Shepard... the Medea of Mediation. How're you? What can I do you out of?

INTERCUT with Tracy's Apartment. Tracy grimaces at the mention of "Medea of Mediation."

TRACY

Calling to congratulate you on the IPO, Matt. Mazel Tov.

MATT

Why that's sweet of you Tracy. We're very happy how it turned out. What're your series B shares worth now? 50K?

TRACY

That's about right. Fifty.

MATT

You were a smart cookie to take your fee in stock instead of cash for that mediation session with PicoTech.

(beat)

If you don't mind my asking, how many shares did they give you?

TRACY

None. I took cash from them. I didn't think their future was as rosy as yours, Matt. I've read a lot about nanotechnology and I like what I see. I want to increase my stake in the company.

MATT

That's a nice vote of confidence. Listen, we're having a little dinner party next week to celebrate the IPO. Why don't you come out here as my guest? It'll be fun and you can meet the exec team.

TRACY

Meet the exec team. Oh, I can't think of anything I'd like to do more.

MATT

Did you know we moved our headquarters to San Diego? No core talent in LA. I'll have my admin send you the particulars.

TRACY

Sounds wonderful. And I'd appreciate it if you didn't call me the Medea of Mediation. That was an unfortunate situation.

MATT

Um, of course. I had no idea. That article--

TRACY

--Ciao, Matt.

Tracy hangs up and mutters to herself with a devious grin.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Meet the whole fucking exec team.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Tracy hangs up the phone and smiles deviously.

EXT. SAN DIEGO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

A jet lands on the runway.

INT. SAN DIEGO RESTAURANT/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Numerous ATTENDEES of the NanoNano IPO party enjoy meals at large tables in the San Diego Restaurant.

Tracy sits on Matt's right at one of the tables situated in a prime spot, accompanied by six others: NanoNano EXECUTIVES and their WIVES and GIRLFRIENDS. Food has already been served and everyone eats. MARILYN, a bubbly, 40-year-old with salt-and-pepper hair sits across from Tracy.

MATT

Did anyone else order the burricotti with braised artichokes? These currants and the mint pesto really go well together.

EXECUTIVE #1

A far cry from crackers and Easy Cheese, huh Blankenschein?

MATT

Jesus. Don't remind me. That was the staple back at Stanford. There's something not quite right about aerosol cheese, but it makes sense when you think about it.

TRACY

I didn't know you were a Stanford grad, Matt.

MATT

Hell yeah, Tracy. All the good technology shit we enjoy today came out of Stanford. Google, GPS, spy satellites, the internet--

EXECUTIVE WIFE #1

--Easy Cheese?

MATT

(Chuckles)

Shit. Maybe. Wouldn't be surprised. The guys at this table, Tracy - my dream team, my brain trust - all Stanford boys.

MARILYN

I went to Vassar.

MATT

Oh, right. I forgot. Marilyn here is our VP of Personnel--

MARILYN

--Human Resources.

MATT

I brought Marilyn on board to hedge against a y-chromosome bubble. She came over last year from Oracle.

TRACY

Oracle. Must be a big change coming to a start-up.

MARILYN

Oh yeah. All good though. It's easy to get lost in big company bureaucracy. I needed something more personal. Besides, my options were under water.

EXECUTIVE #2

Join the club.

MARILYN

When I hired in I got options at 45. Unfortunately, the next time the stock hit 45 was never.

MATT

I remember when Oracle dropped below eight bucks. I was gonna short the pig, but my old man advised me to load up on it instead. Hell, eight bucks? I picked up just about a million shares. Dumped it two years later when it hit 22.

Oohs and ahs from the Executive team.

MATT (CONT'D)

I bought the Astondoa with the proceeds. You should have seen the look on the dealer's face when I told him I'd pay cash for it.

The table laughs. Tracy rolls her eyes.

MATT (CONT'D)

I threw my dad a C-note for his sage advice.

Clapping now. Attendees at other lesser tables gawk enviously. After the table settles down, Marilyn presses on.

MARILYN

I'm hoping my financial luck will turn around.

(MORE)

MARILYN (CONT'D)

I've been talking to a biologist who's looking for an investor for his cure for acromegaly. Ron Slomsky introduced me to him.

MATT

(To Tracy)

Slomsky was our corporate strategist, but he quit and joined the enemy - PicoTech.

Boos and hisses.

MATT (CONT'D)

He has acromegaly. Huge hands, fingers like sausages. I think you met him in the mediation meeting last year. Looks a lot like that huckster on TV, uh... Tony Roma.

MARILYN

Tony Robbins. Anyway, this biologist - Calvin - is close to a cure for acromegaly, but his twin brother won't help him get the money to move it along. His brother wants to develop a pill you have to take everyday. I guess that makes more money than a cure. Calvin's ready to go to clinical trial but he's stuck. He doesn't really want to deal with VC's - he calls them vulture capitalists.

EXECUTIVE #2

I resemble that remark, Ms. Jenkins.

MATT

Clinical trials are super expen--

TRACY

--Marilyn, does this Calvin guy have a snake tattooed on his co--

The entire table stops what they're doing and looks at Tracy, waiting for her to complete the question. Finally Marilyn replies hesitantly

MARILYN

On his... what?

TRACY

On his, uh, collar... uh,
collarbone?

MATT

Y'know, Tracy, I thought you were
gonna say a snake tattooed on his
cock.

EXECUTIVE #2

Oh, for God's sake, Matt.

Some at the table smirk, but Tracy and Marilyn appear aghast.
Marilyn avoids looking at Tracy.

MATT

I wonder if that would fuck up your
sperm, you know, make you squirt
ink like a squid.

Laughter at the table.

EXECUTIVE #2

Jesus, Matt.

Matt grins and reaches for his wine glass, annoyed to find it
empty. He snaps his fingers at an ELDERLY WAITER.

MATT

Garçon!

The Elderly Waiter cringes then turns and approaches Matt
with a shit-eating smile on his face.

INT. SAN DIEGO RESTAURANT/DINING ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Dinner's over, the band plays non-intrusive music. Attendees
of the IPO party mill around. Matt and Tracy stand off to
the side alone.

MATT

A tattoo on some guy's cock?
Seriously?

TRACY

I never said that.

MATT

Yeah, but it sounded like--

TRACY

--I never said that.

MATT

OK. OK.

(beat)

Y'know, I read your book on mediation tactics. Very Machiavellian. I bet you could persuade a man to do anything you want.

TRACY

What do you think I want you to do?

MATT

Bring you into the action. Put you on the NanoNano board, perhaps?

TRACY

You could use someone like me on the board. Too many Stanford frat-boys on the team.

MATT

Yeah, you may be right. Where are you staying?

TRACY

I'm not. Taking the red-eye back to the city.

MATT

That's a shame. I was going to offer you a ride on the Astondoa. I'm taking her out tomorrow afternoon.

(beat)

It's a yacht.

TRACY

I know what an Astondoa is, Matt.

(beat)

Y'know, you're cute. The rich son of a rich father... squashing your competition, conquering the world. Young and fulla cum. I like that.

MATT

You'd better come back out here soon, Tracy. I want to talk to you some more.

Tracy walks toward the Lobby.

MATT (CONT'D)

Hey.

Tracy stops and turns around.

MATT (CONT'D)
Love the shoes.

INT. SAN DIEGO RESTAURANT/WOMEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tracy stands over a sink and washes her hands. She examines her face in the mirror. Suddenly she sees the image of Marilyn in the mirror fidgeting behind her. Tracy turns around and faces her.

MARILYN
Um, he does have a tattoo of a snake. On his... y'know.

INT. SAN DIEGO BAR - NIGHT

Tracy and Marilyn sit in a booth drinking exotic-looking cocktails.

MARILYN
Tell me, Tracy - you don't mind if I call you Tracy, do you? How did you know about the tattoo? Do you know Calvin?

TRACY
I don't know anyone named Calvin. And neither do you, Marilyn. This guy is using an alias. When I knew him he called himself Fletcher Cuttbate. He had a twin brother, supposedly.
(beat)
What does he look like?

MARILYN
He's a bit taller than me. Shorter than you. Blondish hair. A little overweight.

TRACY
Uh-huh. Did you ever see Calvin and his twin together, in the same place at the same time?

MARILYN
Hmm. Now that you mention it, I don't think so.

TRACY

How odd. Listen, Marilyn, you're in the middle of being conned.

MARILYN

What?

TRACY

You're being conned. An elaborate scam.

MARILYN

I've seen Calvin's work - his computer printouts, and stuff. I've spoken to his chief scientist. I've done my own research, Tracy. Ron Slomsky, who I worked with for almost a year, vouched for Calvin.

Tracy counts out the arguments on her fingers.

TRACY

Computer printouts? Easily fabricated. Chief Scientist? One of Calvin's stooges. Ron Slomsky? I met him during the mediation session between NanoNano and PicoTech. Most likely a co-conspirator. A common thread.

MARILYN

That's quite a theory, Tracy. Very "grassy knoll."

Tracy narrows her eyes with thinly-veiled contempt.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Matt showed me that New York magazine article where they called you the "Medea of Mediation". Well, Medea was a jealous bitch.

TRACY

For God's sake, Marilyn, I'm not jealous. Forget that stupid article. I never agreed to the cover photo. Never knew about it until after it was published.

(beat)

Listen to me. Calvin's story about cures and therapies is a scam. He's preying on your good nature, inventing a phony twin brother as a foil.

MARILYN

C'mon--

TRACY

--How much does he want from you?

Marilyn looks askance, checking whether anyone is listening. She hunches down and whispers.

MARILYN

Two hundred and fifty thousand.

TRACY

Is that all? He wanted a million from me. And guess what - I gave it to the bastard. Two weeks later he and his entire charade of a business were gone. Disappeared. No trace. Do you get what I'm saying?

MARILYN

(Swallowing hard)

A million dollars?

TRACY

You're a smart woman, Marilyn. That's obvious. Think - deep down - do you really believe there are two different guys in the world with a snake tattooed on their junk? Two different tattooed-cocked, breakthrough-drug-developers who are also identical, greedy twins?

MARILYN

Sounds impossible, I must admit.

(beat)

So, what do you want from me?

TRACY

I was supposed to fly back tonight but this is too important. Tell me more about Calvin. Ron Slomsky put you on to him. Then what?

MARILYN

I felt bad for Ron. I wanted to help.

TRACY

Help how?

MARILYN

I thought I could connect him to some investors, but Calvin was wary of them. He called them vulture cap--

TRACY

--Yeah, I know.

MARILYN

Then I thought, why not make an investment of my own.

TRACY

Persuasive little man, isn't he?
(beat)
I know you wanted to do good, Marilyn. I admire that.

Tracy sips her drink.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Um, you saw the tattoo so you obviously, y'know... Where did this take place?

MARILYN

I'm not going--

TRACY

--I'm saving your ass, Marilyn. You owe me details.

MARILYN

What for?

TRACY

I have to know. I have to know everything so I can get satisfaction. I got taken for a million, Marilyn. I have to try to get some of it back.

Marilyn slouches and sips her drink.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Please.

MARILYN

Alright. Jesus. I fucked him if that's what you're so intrigued about.

TRACY

Where was this?

MARILYN

His house... in a little town in Jersey. Calvin's attractive in a vulnerable sort of way.

TRACY

Well, I'll go along with that, I suppose. Tell me about his house.

MARILYN

Small place. Worn out furniture. Nothing special.

TRACY

What else?

MARILYN

He has a weird painting of a man with veins coming out of his eyes. Kinda creepy. Let's see... what else? Oh, he has a rare vintage electric guitar.

Tracy chuckles and shakes her head in disgust.

TRACY

I suppose he played rock tunes for you. Am I right?

MARILYN

Well, I mentioned I liked Boston. He played "More Than a Feeling." He's really pretty good.

Tracy, the "Medea of Mediation", feels pretty jealous now.

TRACY

Jesus Christ. That fucking bastard. What an operator. OK. I've heard enough. Calvin is Fletcher Cuttbate. No doubts.

MARILYN

Well, I have to admit it sounds convincing.

TRACY

Tell me you believe me, Marilyn.

Marilyn plays with her cocktail glass for a second.

MARILYN

Yeah, OK. I believe you.

TRACY

Finally. When are you meeting Calvin Shithead again?

MARILYN

Never. Not after all this.

TRACY

I mean, when would you have met him again if you hadn't found out what a scumbag he is?

MARILYN

I was supposed to meet him in a couple of weeks for dinner in Philadelphia, y'know, to, uh...

TRACY

To what?

MARILYN

Make my investment.

Tracy writes on a piece of paper and passes it to Marilyn.

TRACY

Take this. Now, listen carefully. I want you to accept Calvin's swell dinner invitation. Insist he take you back to his place in Jersey afterwards. And see to it he gets nice and drunk. I know he can pound the booze. I've seen him in action.

MARILYN

I don't und--

TRACY

--I need you to reconnect me with Fletcher, Calvin, whatever. I need to see him again. To get some restitution. To get him to confess to his crimes. To put an end this unfunny comedy of errors.

Marilyn scratches the back of her neck and nibbles on a cuticle. She sips her drink to delay responding.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I need your help. Please.

MARILYN

(Sternly)

I don't want to get involved.

TRACY

Hell, Marilyn, you are involved!
You're vulnerable! We need to
bring this bastard to justice
before he fucks up any more women!

A few nearby PATRONS stop conversing among themselves and look over to size up Tracy's outburst.

MARILYN

Why don't you just call the police
or the FBI? Why do you have to
meet him in person?

TRACY

Do you know what Lex Talionis is?
(beat)
Never mind. Look, Calvin is a con
artist, Marilyn. A very good con
artist. He and his cronies left no
tracks. I've been to the FBI
already... they're stumped. So is
my expensive PI.
(beat)
And even if I turned him over,
they'd probably let him go for
insufficient evidence. I've got to
get him to confess on tape.

MARILYN

How are you going to get him to do
that?

TRACY

(Smiling smugly)

I'm a professional negotiator,
Marilyn.

INT. MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

Matt presses a button on his office phone.

MATT

Tracy Shepard. How was your flight
back to Gotham City?

TRACY (V.O)

I decided to stay. Your invitation for a ride on your yacht was too tempting. Of course, that's if you still want me to come.

MATT

I want you to come. I'll send a driver for you, Tracy.

TRACY

Should I buy some Dramamine?

MATT

The Astondoa is 115 feet long. You won't feel a swell... unless you want to.

INT. SAN DIEGO MARINA - DAY

Tracy struts into the Marina where Matt, drinking a Bloody Mary, awaits. She's decked out. He's a bit foppish in a maritime-inspired outfit. Matt stands and greets her.

MATT

Ms. Shepard. You look marvelous.

TRACY

Why thank you, Admiral Blankenschein.

MATT

Cute. If you're a good girl, I'll let you pilot her out of the harbor - of course, the real pilot has to stand next to you.

TRACY

That's OK, I'd rather hang out on the fo'c's'le.

(beat)

You do have a fo'c's'le, don't you?

Cocky Matt hesitates, flatfooted.

MATT

Um...

INT. YACHT (TRAVELING) - DAY

Tracy and Matt stand mid-ship by the rail looking out at the coast in the distance. Each holds a glass of red wine.

MATT

Why didn't you go back on the red-eye, Tracy?

TRACY

What else? I succumbed to your irresistible charms. I also got into a long conversation with Marilyn last night and missed my flight.

(beat)

Your boat is amazing.

MATT

The Astondoa is a work of art. I christened her Brobdingnagian.

TRACY

Ironic coming from the maker of Lilliputian devices.

MATT

Thank you! That was my intention. You're the only one who noticed.

(beat)

You're quite perceptive, Tracy. Maybe I do need someone like you on the board. What advice would you give a bright young CEO like me?

TRACY

Seriously? Let me think.

(beat)

Okay. I just want to say one word to you - just one word.

MATT

Yes?

TRACY

Are you listening?

MATT

Shit yeah, Tracy. What is it?

TRACY

(Gravely)

Plastics.

Matt stares dumbly for a split-second, then laughs.

MATT

That's good. You're good.

A moment of silence. Tracy smiles and sips her wine.

TRACY

Where are we, Matt?

Matt points to the horizon at the Hotel Del Coronado, its red shingles gleaming in the sunset. Matt points off in the distance.

MATT

That's Coronado Island. And that's the Hotel Del Coronado.

TRACY

Ah, the Del.

MATT

That's right. I'll bet you're a movie buff, aren't you Tracy? Plastics. You had me going.

TRACY

I know "Some Like it Hot" was filmed at the Del. My father is a huge Billy Wilder fan. I've seen all his movies a dozen times each.

(beat)

Even though he can't see now, he still listens to the dialog and follows along.

MATT

Your father is blind? That's too bad. I'd like to meet him sometime. Chat about the classic American films.

TRACY

I know he'd enjoy that.

(beat)

This wine is excellent. What is it?

MATT

1997 Screaming Eagle. I have a case of 1992, but I like to save that for very special occasions.

The breeze kicks up. Matt drapes his sport coat across Tracy's bare shoulders.

TRACY

You have nice hands.

Matt looks down at Tracy's sexy feet.

MATT

And you have nice--

TRACY

--Matt, I know you read that silly article about me. Where they called me the "Medea of Mediation".

MATT

Medea?--

TRACY

--I'm not like that. Really. In my business I have to project an image--

MATT

--I underst--

TRACY

--An image of impartiality. Y'know, I can never let my true feelings show through. That can make me appear cold-hearted--

MATT

--That's not--

TRACY

--I just want you to know that I'm really a very passionate person. It's just that my work has kept me so busy--

MATT

--Tracy--

TRACY

--And I have so much on my mind right now--

Matt gently places his finger on Tracy's lips, cutting her off. He leans forward and kisses her.

MATT

Would you like to go below deck?
Relax a bit? Taste that '92?

Tracy turns her back on Coronado Island and embraces Matt.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

The Astondoa cuts through the waters.

INT. PHILADELPHIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Marilyn and CALVIN (Fletcher) sit at a table near the wall and next to a potted plant. WAITERS remove the plates of food. A few PATRONS remain in the mostly empty Restaurant. STAFF mill around, checking watches, anxious to close up.

CALVIN

I gotta take a leak, Marilyn. Man,
I'm pretty smashed. I hope you can
drive. I'll be back in a minute.
Get th' check, will ya?

Calvin weaves his way around the corner from the slick bar. When he's gone Marilyn dumps her vodka-tonic into the potted plant and refills it with bottled water. She hails the Waiter who arrives table-side.

MARILYN

Another Manhattan for him.

INT. PHILADELPHIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT (LATER)

Calvin returns to the table where a tall Manhattan straight up awaits him.

CALVIN

Wha' the fuck's this, Marilyn? I
can't drink another one.

MARILYN

Are you sure, baby?

Fletcher slumps into his chair.

CALVIN

Well... maybe one more. But
this's the las' one.

MARILYN

OK, baby. I just want to savor the
moment. This is such a nice place
and it's been such a nice
evening... so far.

Marilyn flashes Calvin the sexy-eyes.

CALVIN
 You're a - errrrp - vixen, y'know
 that?

Calvin takes a sip and purses his lips.

CALVIN (CONT'D)
 I jus' hope I don't fuckin' blow
 chunk.

EXT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Calvin's Bungalow is similarly broken down as Fletcher's Bungalow was. Calvin fumbles with his keys as he attempts entry. After a moment he finally stumbles in. Marilyn looks plaintively over her shoulder, then follows Calvin in, closing the door behind her.

INT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Calvin pivots clumsily, embraces Marilyn and plants a slobbery kiss on her lips and mauls her boobs. Marilyn looks like she wants to back away, but she finds the courage to force her hand against Calvin's crotch.

MARILYN
 Ooo, I feel something waking up.
 Why don't you get ready for bed,
 Cal, and I'll freshen up a bit. I
 missed you.

She squeezes Calvin's crotch again.

CALVIN
 Ouch! Not so hard, Mare.

INT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Marilyn locks the bathroom door. She slowly washes her face and hands, then makes a cell phone call.

MARILYN
 Where are you?

INTERCUT with Tracy in the Driveway of Calvin's Bungalow.

TRACY
 Right where I'm supposed to be -
 parked next to your car. I saw you
 and Mr. Shitface go inside. Where
 are you now?

MARILYN

In the bathroom. He's in the bedroom. You better be on your toes. He's really drunk, but, amazing, he's still able to get around. At least a little.

TRACY

I'll be ready. I've been ready. Is the door unlocked?

MARILYN

Yes. I made sure.

Marilyn hangs up the phone, takes one last look at herself in the mirror, breathes deeply and shuts off the light.

INT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Calvin's bedroom is dark. A pile of clothes lies on the floor. Marilyn strides to the side of the bed and sits on the mattress next to a naked Calvin.

CALVIN

What - errrp - took ya s'long, Mare.

Calvin reaches for Marilyn's leg.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

How cum yer not undressed?

Marilyn collects Calvin's clothes.

MARILYN

I have to go. Goodbye, Calvin.

Marilyn turns and strides briskly out the bedroom with the clothes.

INT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Marilyn approaches the door.

CALVIN (O.S.)

Wha' th'hell, Mare? Wha'd I do?
D'I do sump'n wrong? Wha'bout the
money?

Marilyn opens the front door.

INT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Calvin rolls out of bed and bangs his shin on a space heater.

CALVIN
Fuck! Fuckin' fuck that hurts!

SOUND - Door slamming O.S.

CALVIN (CONT'D)
Come back here, Marilyn!

Calvin slumps onto the edge of the bed and rubs his shin, mumbling.

CALVIN (CONT'D)
Wha' the fuck's wrong wi'tha' bitch?

TRACY (O.S.)
The more appropriate question would be "what the fuck is wrong with you"?
(beat)
Hello, Fletch. How's the head?

Calvin (Fletcher) looks at a silhouette in the doorway of a tall, imposing female figure.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Aren't you going to say "hello" Fletch? Don't you miss me?

FLETCHER
Wha' d'ya want, Tracy? Why're you here?

TRACY
I think you know why. Stand up and turn on the light.

FLETCHER
I'm goin' t' bed. I'm tired and a li'l drunk. Lock the door on your way out, please.

Fletcher flops back onto the bed and exhales long and loudly. Tracy flicks on the light switch; Fletcher shields his eyes.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)
Shut that off!

TRACY

I said stand up you misogynist
piece of shit.

Fletcher stands up slowly after spotting Tracy pointing a
pistol at him. It's her father's old semi-automatic.

FLETCHER

Easy, Tracy. Shit. What d'ya
want? Your million dollars? I
ain't got it. It got split up an'
spent. I'm sorry, but tha's the
way the game works.

Tracy notes the easel propping up the painting with veins
coming out of eyes.

TRACY

I see you're still ripping off
Frida Kahlo.

FLETCHER

Why're you pointin' a gun at me?

TRACY

I came to negotiate for something
that might make us whole again.
You took a lot of money from me and
you didn't hold up your end of the
bargain. You let my father down,
too. That wasn't nice, Fletch.

FLETCHER

Sorry.

TRACY

Tell me, how did you come to know
my business? And my father's
affliction? How did you put it all
together?

FLETCHER

You're the Medea of Mediation,
aren't you? Interesting article.

Tracy smirks and shakes her head in disgust.

TRACY

You know, I've done some reading
myself. I read that Keith
Richards' middle finger is insured
for one point six million. Did you
know that? One point six mil. I'm
sure you do, a big fan like you.

Tracy steps to the end of the bed and tosses a paper bag onto the mattress. It bounces, suggesting heft.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Open the bag, Fletch.

Fletcher hesitantly opens the bag and peers inside.

TRACY (CONT'D)
You're a very good guitar player, Fletch. I really enjoyed your performance that day I came out to help you and your phony brother.
(beat)
You know, you may play as well as Keith Richards, but your middle finger isn't possibly worth as much as his. In fact I'm sure your whole arm isn't worth as much as his middle finger. Still, I'm willing to accept your finger in exchange for the million you stole from me.

Fletcher removes a brand new pair of sheet-metal snippers from the bag and looks at Tracy incredulously. She maintains her emotionless disposition. Fletcher's expression turns to horror.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Place the tool on your middle finger, Fletch.

Tracy extends her arms straight out, bringing the gun closer to Fletcher's face.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Do it now.

FLETCHER
Listen, Trace--

TRACY
--Put the fucking shears on your fucking finger. Now!

Tracy cocks the pistol. Fletcher cowers. He opens the snippers, then pukes all over his legs and feet. Tracy recoils.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Put the cutters on your finger, you worthless piece of shit!

FLETCHER

C'mon--

TRACY

--Now!

Fletcher slides the snippers onto his middle finger.

FLETCHER

(Whimpering)

Fuckin' bitch... fuckin' bitch.

Gripping the snippers, Fletcher stands before Tracy shaking, completely naked, hair tussled, chunks of barf spattered on his shins. Tracy grips the pistol steadily in both hands, her legs spread slightly for stability.

TRACY

Cut it off, Fletch. It's a good deal. You owe me a million dollars, plus interest, but I'll take your finger instead. That, or I can lodge a bullet in your cranium.

FLETCHER

What kinda options are those?

TRACY

Fair enough. As a negotiator, I always like to offer my clients options. How about I let you confess your sins on tape? I have the video camera in my bag ready to go.

FLETCHER

You're a cunt, you know that? An evil cunt. You're mad at yourself - not me - 'cause you wanted t' be the big hero. Instead you fell for a scam like a stupid schoolgirl. Tracy the bigtime hero - curin' diseases, tryin' t' prove somethin' t' your lame-o father. Hah! I owe you nothin', cunt!

TRACY

Shut up!

FLETCHER

Is that gun even loaded?

TRACY

Cut off your fucking finger now or
I will kill you! Or you can make a
confession--

Suddenly, Fletcher lunges at Tracy with the snippers. Tracy flinches. The pistol fires a bullet through Fletcher's throat and he falls to the floor, face up. He clutches his throat and writhes like a fish out of water. A wheezy gurgling sound emanates from the hole in his throat, then a hiss, and then silence. Tracy drops the pistol and stares aghast at the body. She stoops down and reaches toward his neck to feel for a pulse, but stops short.

INT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Tracy throws up in the sink, runs some water, blots her face, and throws up again. She sits on the closed toilet, cradling her head.

INT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tracy walks tentatively toward Fletcher's body. In death, he still grips the snippers. Tracy walks around to face him head on and spots his tattoo. She sneers, bends down and after a moment gouges Fletcher's face with her fingernails. Then she presses her spiked heel into his penis.

She takes the pistol and walks out.

INT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Tracy cursorily polishes door knobs and other surfaces to wipe away any fingerprints.

EXT. CALVIN'S BUNGALOW/DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Tracy climbs into her car. Fletcher's clothes lie on the passenger seat where Marilyn stashed them. Tracy moves to pick up the pants but stops short. She takes a pair of gloves from the glove compartment and puts them on. Then she reaches into a pants pocket and retrieves Fletcher's cell phone. She starts the car and backs out of the Driveway.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Tracy drives down the dark, desolate highway, eventually pulling off into a Pine Forest.

EXT. PINE FOREST - NIGHT

Tracy turns off the lights and shuts off the car. She steps out, removes her heels and does a few seconds of jumping jacks. Huffing, she walks away from the car to place a call on Fletcher's cell phone.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
Nine one one. What's your
emergency?

Tracy affects an agitated, young-girl voice.

TRACY
I need help! I just shot a guy who
tried to rape me! I don't know
where I am!

911 OPERATOR
Calm down dear. You say you shot
someone? Is he dead?

TRACY
I don't know! I'm not sure! I'm
afraid he might come after me!

911 OPERATOR
OK, dear. OK. Where are you?
Where do you think you are?

TRACY
He attacked me! I ran out of his
house into the woods. I'm lost! I
think he's... oh my god!

911 OPERATOR
Stay where you are and leave your
cell phone on. We can track your
location with it. What's your
name?

TRACY
Tiffany. He forced me to go with
him. He was drunk. He attacked me
with a big pair of scissors. I
shot him with his own gun.

911 OPERATOR
How old are you Tiffany?

TRACY
Sixteen.

Tracy drops the cell phone, still powered on, onto a bed of pine needles. Unintelligible squawking SOUNDS emanate from the cell phone. Tracy runs to the car.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Tracy peels out onto the highway.

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

Driving through a dicey section of a Town, Tracy tosses Fletcher's wallet out the window into the gutter.

EXT. MANHATTAN RENTAL CAR GARAGE - NIGHT

Tracy hands the keys to an attendant.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Frazzled, Tracy takes a bottle of vodka from the freezer and pours a stiff one which she downs in one gulp. She pours another.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Tracy examines her body as though looking for a wound. In the background, water fills the bathtub. Tracy climbs into the bathtub with the glass of vodka. She stretches out.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tracy lies on top of the covers, dialing her phone.

MATT (V.O.)

Matt Blankenschein - leave an intelligent message.

BEEP sound over phone.

TRACY

Matt, Tracy. I'm missing you.
Call me when you can. I want to
see you again soon. I need a hug.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Tracy prepares for the day, applying makeup, getting dressed. The TV drones in the background. She steps around the bed and glances at the morning news report.

TV NEWSCASTER (ON TV)

The Brooklyn DA's office is scheduled to make a formal statement at noon.

(beat)

Now let's go to Hamilton Square where Barry Graham is standing by.

Tracy stops and pays attention

BARRY (ON TV)

Ernie, I'm standing on County Road 524 which runs past the pine forest you see behind me where State Police recovered a cell phone they say might have belonged to a man who was killed last night in his home in Hamilton Square. According to 9-1-1 records a young girl called from this forest claiming a man had attacked her in his home with a knife. The man who police just found shot to death in his bedroom. I had a chance to talk to Sergeant Baldwin of the New Jersey State Police earlier this morning and here's what she had to say.

TRACY

Shit.

BALDWIN

After receiving the 9-1-1 call, we dispatched troopers who followed the cell signal to the pine forest, where the phone was found lying on the ground. About an hour ago we discovered the body of a middle-aged man shot once through the throat.

TRACY

Shit.

BARRY

Do the police have a positive ID on the victim?

BALDWIN

Not yet.

BARRY

Did the cell phone belong to the victim?

BALDWIN

We think so. And other details cited in the 9-1-1 call match the scene we found at the house.

BARRY

A source tells me the body of the deceased bore some marks. Scratches. Mutilation. Is that true?

TRACY

Shit.

BALDWIN

I'm not going to comment on speculation. Although I will say that it appears the victim turned the tables on the attacker.

BARRY

What about the girl?

BALDWIN

Still looking for her. Undoubtedly she was frightened beyond imagination.

BARRY

I can't imagine. Thank you, Sergeant.

(beat)

Ernie, back to you.

INT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY

Tracy hands a boarding pass to the same Gate Agent who gave her a hard time before.

GATE AGENT

Welcome, Ma'am.

Tracy walks a few steps toward the jetway.

GATE AGENT (CONT'D)
Glad to see you have your own
ticket this time.

Tracy freezes in irritation, then proceeds down the jetway.

INT. MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

Tracy and Matt sit next to each other at a coffee table in Matt's big office nursing glasses of wine. Papers are strewn about the table.

MATT
I expect year-on-year revenue
growth to exceed 150 percent, and
if we get that contract with the
Defense Department we'll surpass
our earnings per share target of
nine cents.

TRACY
Have you looked at the cosmetics
industry? I read that
nanotechnology could be used to
make some of the ingredients.

MATT
That's true, but we haven't focused
there. Why do you ask?

TRACY
Just seems like a lucrative
segment. Women are always open to
trying new twists in makeup,
cleansers and the like.
(beat)
Y'know, you may want to promote one
of your women execs in advance of
entering a female-oriented market.
Your uber-male management team
could be a liability.

MATT
Well, we only have one woman exec,
but I'll definitely look into it.

Tracy looks at her wristwatch.

TRACY
Damn! I have to go Matt. Meeting
someone for lunch.

Tracy stands, followed by Matt.

MATT

I'll pick you up at your hotel
around seven? Do you have a place
in mind for dinner?

TRACY

You pick, but I'd like to work up
an appetite first. Got any ideas?

EXT. SAN DIEGO BISTRO - DAY

Tracy walks to the big plate-glass window of the Bistro and
sees Marilyn inside seated at the bar with a drink in her
hand. Tracy backs away and takes a couple of deep breaths.

INT. SAN DIEGO BISTRO - DAY

Tracy walks up to Marilyn and sits on a bar-stool next to
her. Some BUSINESSMEN sit farther down the bar.

TRACY

Marilyn. So nice to see you again.
Thanks for making the time.

The two women exchange air-kisses.

MARILYN

No trouble at all.

TRACY

And thank you so much for helping
me with Fletcher, Calvin, whatever.

A BARTENDER arrives.

BARTENDER

Good afternoon, ma'am. May I get
you something?

TRACY

I'll have a Martinez.

MARILYN

I'll take another Dirty Shirley.

The Bartender acknowledges the orders and departs.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

How did your meeting go with Matt?

TRACY

Very well. We had a really nice conversation, and he didn't even bring up the tattooed collarbone incident.

Marilyn chuckles. A WAITER arrives and sets a plate of food on the bar between the women.

WAITER

Compliments of the chef, ladies. Mustard glazed pork belly, green lentils, eggplant caviar, and plums. Enjoy.

Marilyn spears one of the slimy-looking hors d'oeuvres and stuffs it in her mouth.

MARILYN

I didn't have time for breakfast this morning.

She spears another chunk and devours it like a hungry dog. The Bartender brings the drinks.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

I'm really anxious to hear how you worked things out with Calvin in the end. I'll bet he shit his pants when you walked into the bedroom.

(beat)

Oh wait, he wasn't wearing pants.

TRACY

Uh, Marilyn. I've got something--

MARILYN

--What did the FBI say? I'm ready to testify against that rat.

TRACY

Testify?

MARILYN

Yes. Of course. I want to face that bastard in court.

TRACY

Shit.

MARILYN

I hope he's not out on bail. God, maybe I should install a security system.

TRACY

Shit.

MARILYN

What's wrong?

Tracy takes a big gulp of her drink.

TRACY

I've got something to tell you about my encounter with Fletcher, uh, Calvin. Whatever.

(beat)

Things didn't go exactly quite as planned. Now be cool, Marilyn. Calvin, Fletcher. They're... I mean, he's... dead. I shot him. I had to shoot him.

Marilyn stops chewing and widens her eyes. After a second she swallows the glob of food.

MARILYN

What!? You... you killed him?

The Businessmen look over. Tracy clutches Marilyn's forearm.

TRACY

Be cool, Marilyn. Jesus, do you want the whole place to hear you? I know this is unsettling--

Marilyn yanks her arm from Tracy's grip.

MARILYN

(Whispering)

--Unsettling?

TRACY

Listen. I didn't plan on killing the fucker. I tried to reason with him, but instead of working with me he attacked me. He lunged at me with a knife... a sharp object. Do you understand? He tried to kill me. It was self-defense.

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

I thought in his drunken condition he'd be easy to handle, but he caught me off-guard. I had no choice, Marilyn.

MARILYN

I... don't... know, Tracy. This is serious. You know I didn't want to get involved from the beginning. I told you that a million times. Now you've connected me to a homicide.

Tracy arches her eyebrows.

MARILYN (CONT'D)

OK - self-defense. But even if you did kill him in self-defense, everyone's going to think you killed him out of revenge for scamming you. And in two seconds, they'll connect me to the crime too - another ditzy broad who was sucked into one of his scams. It looks bad, Tracy.

(beat)

Why were you there with a gun anyway?

TRACY

Doesn't matter.

(beat)

OK, I brought my fathers old pistol for intimidation. I didn't know it was loaded. I didn't even know it worked. I popped out the magazine but... what difference does it make now? It's under control, Marilyn. The police think he was killed by an underage prostitute.

MARILYN

Why do they think that?

TRACY

I called 911 and played the role. They bought it.

MARILYN

Jesus! They'll trace the call back to you.

TRACY

Do you think I'm an idiot? I used
Cuttbate's cell phone.

MARILYN

You're amazing. Now what?

TRACY

Now nothing. No one's gonna
connect us to it. I've been
monitoring the local news, and
that's the way the winds are
prevailing. He was killed during
the commission of debauchery. He
attacked a young girl and she blew
him away. She gouged his face and
stomped on his cock.

MARILYN

What!? You stomped on his cock?
What the fuck, Tracy!

TRACY

Calm down. I had to make it look
like something violent had
happened.

MARILYN

Where's the gun?

TRACY

Back with my father. He never
missed it.

MARILYN

What about--

TRACY

--No more questions! Listen
carefully. You and I were never
there.

A pause.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Say it.

MARILYN

You and I were never there.

TRACY

We're two successful female executives with better things to do than consort with a slug like Fletcher Cuttbate. Let's not descend into a folie à deux. Cooperate.

Marilyn samples her drink coyly, delaying a response.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Maril--

MARILYN

--You want my cooperation? OK, you're a big-time negotiator, Tracy. Negotiate for it.

TRACY

C'mon, Marilyn. I saved you a quarter million dollars. Isn't that enough?

MARILYN

I don't feel any richer than I did yesterday. Besides, it's not about money.

TRACY

I see. Power, authority, position, status.

MARILYN

Something like that.

TRACY

Ultimately all negotiations come down to self-worth. How much of it you're willing to sacrifice... How much you can exact from someone else.

MARILYN

What are you going to do for me, Tracy?

Tracy plops an hors d'oeuvre in her mouth.

TRACY

Satisfy your sense of self-worth, of course. What do you know about nanotechnology and cosmetics, Marilyn?

EXT. RICHARDS' PI OFFICE - DAY

Tracy's limo pulls to the curb outside Richards' PI Office in Brooklyn. A NEW DRIVER, a stocky, white man in a uniform opens the door. Tracy steps out.

TRACY

Stay here. This will only take a minute.

Tracy walks to the PI Office.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tracy, Matt and Dad sit together on the sofa eating popcorn and watching "Ace in the Hole" on TV. Dad sits between Matt and Tracy.

CLOSE-UP - TV Showing Kirk Douglas's character Chuck Tatum falling wounded to the floor, ending the movie.

DAD

How about that, Matt? Good movie, huh?

MATT

Very good. Great suggestion.

DAD

"I don't go to church. Kneeling bags my nylons". What a great line.

MATT

And the one about belts and suspenders. Genius.

Dad fingers his belt and suspenders sheepishly.

TRACY

While you two recap the entire movie, I'm going to make some coffee.

Tracy leaves.

DAD

Is she gone?

MATT

Yeah.

DAD

Tracy's a great woman, Matt. A real winner. I hope you respect that.

MATT

Sure. I most definitely do.

DAD

She works too hard. Never really had any lasting relationships. Maybe you can change that.

MATT

I think so.

Matt reaches into his pocket.

MATT (CONT'D)

I want to show you something. Hold out your hand.

Dad extends his palm into which Matt places a diamond engagement ring.

DAD

What's this?

MATT

What do you think it is?

DAD

Is this a diamond? It's too big to be a diamond.

MATT

That's what eight carats feels like.

DAD

Good God, Matt. Eight carats?

MATT

Shhh. I'm going to ask Tracy when she comes out to San Diego next week. Of course, I want your blessing.

Dad begins to tear up. His feeble eyes dart around.

DAD

Oh, Matt. Of course you have my blessing.

SOUND of cups clinking O.S. Matt quickly stuffs the ring back into his pocket. Dad blots his eyes. Tracy walks in carrying a tray with coffees and creamers.

TRACY
What's wrong, Dad?

DAD
Nothing dear. Something in my eyes.

INT. SAN DIEGO RESTAURANT - NIGHT

GUESTS of NanoNano sit at several tables at the same San Diego Restaurant where NanoNano celebrated its IPO party. Some Guests dance to Latin music. Matt and Tracy sit together at a center table with a few other EXECUTIVES including Marilyn.

INSERT: TITLE CARD "ONE MONTH LATER"

EXECUTIVE #1
Hey, did you hear about Ron Slomsky?

Most of the table pays attention. Tracy continues chatting with the person sitting next to her.

MARILYN
What?

EXECUTIVE #1
He got fired from PicoTech. Someone told me they found kiddie porn on his computer.

MATT
Jesus. What an asshole.

MARILYN
(Shocked)
I can't believe it.

Marilyn looks at Tracy who expresses no shock.

MATT (CONT'D)
Good thing he left us when he did. That kinda press we can do without.

Matt stands and taps his glass to attract the attention of the room. The band stops playing.

MATT (CONT'D)

May I have your attention everyone. We are gathered here today to celebrate the union of our fair maiden NanoNano and the deep-pocketed Department of Defense in the holy sacrament of government contracts. Hang on to your options, boys and girls.

The room erupts in applause.

MATT (CONT'D)

The contract will give us the cash flow to pursue new avenues of R&D including cures for a variety of eye diseases - a market we believe is very lucrative.

More applause. Tracy nods sublimely.

MATT (CONT'D)

Now, I have another announcement to make. Marilyn, would you please stand up.

Marilyn stands and modestly clasps her hands in front of her.

MATT (CONT'D)

I'm thrilled to announce that Marilyn Jenkins has been promoted to General Manager of our soon-to-be opened facility in Malaysia where we'll start up our cosmetics operation. Marilyn brings enormous experience to the role, and we're happy to have such a talented woman on the senior executive team.

Marilyn acknowledges the applause.

MATT (CONT'D)

You all better get your face time in with Marilyn tonight. She leaves for Kuala Lumpur tomorrow morning and we won't be seeing her much around here after that.

Tracy smiles deviously. Guests step up to congratulate Marilyn.

INT. SAN DIEGO RESTAURANT/WOMEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tracy stands at the sink, examining an eyelash in the mirror. Like before, she sees the reflection of Marilyn watching her from behind. Tracy turns to face her.

TRACY

Hello Marilyn.

MARILYN

(Testily)

I earned my promotion, Tracy.

TRACY

Of course you did. Why would you even bring it up?

MARILYN

I suggested the idea of cosmetics with Matt a long time ago, just so you know.

TRACY

Insightful, Marilyn.

MARILYN

I don't want you telling people I asked you for help... I mean negotiated for... Shit!

(beat)

Now that you're screwing my boss, I don't want anyone thinking you had something to do with my promotion. Like payback for saving your ass on that Calvin thing--

TRACY

--Jesus Christ, Marilyn! What's wrong with you? Did you drink too many Dirty Shirleys again?

Tracy bends down low to inspect the stalls for the telltale feet of accidental interlopers, finding none.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Look, you're a General Manager now, Marilyn. The biggest big-shot woman in nanotech. You got what you wanted. Don't blow it.

MARILYN

You don't think I deserve it, do you?

TRACY

C'mon, Marilyn. Deserve's got nothing to do with it. You should know that. You don't get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate.

MARILYN

Is that a fact?

TRACY

That's my experience.

MARILYN

I see.

TRACY

Just keep your big mouth shut, understand? Forever. You do that and I promise you'll do well in our company.

MARILYN

Huh? What? Our... what does that mean?

TRACY

Didn't you hear? Matt proposed last night and I said yes.

MARILYN

Amazing.

TRACY

And I'm joining the board of NanoNano at the next meeting.

MARILYN

Unbelievable.

TRACY

Congratulations again on your promotion, Marilyn. Have a safe flight to Malaysia.

INT. SAN DIEGO RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Tracy and Matt dance among others to a Latin version of "Day and Night."

FADE OUT.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Matt and Dad watch TV together. Dad wears thick glasses.

INSERT: TITLE CARD "ONE YEAR LATER"

MATT

It's not too bright for you, is it?

DAD

No. I'm getting used to it. The picture is still a bit blurry but I ain't complaining. I forgot how sexy Barbara Stanwyck used to be. Even with that atrocious wig.

Tracy walks in from O.C. with a plate of sandwiches. She puts the plate on a coffee table and rubs her father's neck.

TRACY

How's the movie, Dad?

DAD

One of my favorites. So nice to see it again after all these years.

MATT

I can't believe that dude from those "My Three Sons" reruns was such a piece of shit in real life.

Tracy shakes her head. Her cell phone RINGS and she answers.

TRACY

Tracy Shepard.

RICHARDS (V.O.)

Ms. Shepard. Grayson Richards. You hired me to--

TRACY

--Yes, yes. What can I do for you?

RICHARDS

I have a solid lead. I came across a coroner's report in Hamilton County. It mentioned that the deceased had the type of tattoo you described. I don't know his name yet, but he has to be your con man.

TRACY

I'm over that, Mr. Richards. I don't care anymore.

INTERCUT with Richards's office.

RICHARDS

I feel bad that I let you down. I want to complete the mission you hired me for.

TRACY

Well, I appreciate that, but I really just want to drop it.

RICHARDS

The guy was murdered. I've been looking through the police reports. No one was ever charged. If I can connect some dots back to the person who killed him, it may lead to your money.

TRACY

(agitated)

I just want to drop it, OK?

An uncomfortable pause.

MATT

Something wrong, Trace?

Tracy walks into the Kitchen.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/KITCHEN - DAY

Tracy cups her hand around the cell phone.

TRACY

Who told you about this coroner report? Are you certain of it? It sounds so--

RICHARDS

--No one told me anything. I dug it up myself. That's what I do. I uncovered the report and contacted the coroner who told--

DAD (O.S.)

--Tracy, bring me a glass of lemonade, will ya? And one for Matt, too.

RICHARDS

He confirmed they had a stiff come in with a weird tattoo on his, well, you know.

TRACY

Yeah, I know.

(beat)

I stopped paying you a long time ago, Mr. Richards. Why are you still working on this?

RICHARDS

I don't get it, Ms. Shepard. Don't you want to find out if this guy is your con man? Gain some closure. Maybe get some of your money back.

TRACY

I'm happy now. I don't need closure. I don't need money. I just want to forget the whole ugly thing. Understand?

RICHARDS

I suppose so.

TRACY

Thank you. I appreciate your diligence, but I think you should move on to another case.

RICHARDS

Interesting.

TRACY

What?

RICHARDS

Oh, nothing. Sorry to have bothered you, Ms. Shepard.

TRACY

Wait--

RICHARDS

--Have a nice day. Maybe we'll see each other again in the future. I'd enjoy that.

TRACY

I didn't mean to sound--

Richards hangs up.

TRACY (CONT'D)

--Hello?

Tracy puts the phone down on the countertop. After a moment of contemplation about what just transpired, she opens the drawer revealing her father's pistol back in its original position amidst some hand towels.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tracy sits on the sofa, Matt puts his arm around her.

MATT

Who was that?

TRACY

No one. An old client. Whatcha watching, Dad?

DAD

"Double Indemnity."

MATT

A scam leads to murder.

C.U. of Tracy's fraught face.

FADE OUT.